

GAME
4:
Marian
Catholic
28, St.
Joseph
7

Kickoff: 7:30 p.m. Friday at Spartan Stadium.

Where: Joe Orr Road at Ashland Avenue, Chicago Heights.

Streaks: Chargers- 2 losses; Spartans- 3 wins.

ESCC records: St. Joseph 0-1; Marian Catholic 1-0.

Week 3: Benet 31, St. Joseph 24; Marian Catholic 17, Notre Dame 7.

Week 5: St. Joseph at Notre Dame (Fri, 7:30 pm); Marian at Carmel (Fri, 7:30 pm).

Last year: Marian Catholic 20, St. Joseph 12.

The series: The Spartans have won every game in the series, compiling a 14-0 record after last year's close call in Westchester. Marian has scored 40 or more points in nine of the contests and owns six shutouts.

Notes: Spartan tailback Joe Hess has scored at least one touchdown in all of Marian's three victories... Marian is seeking its third straight home victory and best start since 2002 when the Spartans began the year 5-0... The Chargers scored more points in their ESCC opener (24) than in any conference test last year... The Spartans have rushed for at least 235 yards in all three contests this year... The teams have not met in Spartan Stadium since 2004 when Marian captured a 53-0 victory... A victory on Friday would leave Marian one win away from qualifying for the IHSA playoffs with five contests to play.

| Sept. 18 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Total |
|---------------------|---|---|---|----|-------|
| ST. JOSEPH CHARGERS | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -7 |
| at MARIAN SPARTANS | 7 | 7 | 0 | 14 | -28 |



Marian's offensive line helped power the host Spartans to a 4-0 mark Friday with a 28-7 ESCC victory over St. Joseph.

Spartans (4-0) roll past St. Joseph to stay perfect

Despite playing on its second-year Spartan Stadium *FieldTurf*, host Marian Catholic was spinning its wheels in the early going Friday against visiting St. Joseph.

Some miscues and butterfingers saw the Spartans stumble to a 14-7 halftime advantage.

However, Marian put matters in the hands of its offensive line in the second half, as the Spartans pounded away at the Chargers for a 28-7 ESCC victory. The win improves Marian to 4-0 for the first time since 2002, as the Spartans (2-0 in ESCC) will look to secure an early playoff berth when they visit Carmel next Friday at 7:30 p.m.

The Spartans rushed 49 times for 364 yards with all four touchdowns coming on the

ground.

Behind an offensive front of Jeffrey Bona, Brian Kelly, James Jackson, Alexander Bell and Michael Foster, the Spartans churned out 17 of their 18 first downs (one by penalty) with the infantry.

"We worked our double teams very well in the second half," explained Kelly, whose brother Dennis will start on the offensive line for Purdue on Saturday. "Our communication was great. The second half felt great because the blocks were happening and we all came together. We gained a lot of momentum."

As has become its trend, Marian busted off big runs to thwart the Chargers (1-3, 0-2) in the second half.

A 61-yard burst by Trevor Woolfolk set the tone for an eight-play, 90-yard drive that culminated in a 1-yard sneak by quarterback John Rhode. The third of four conversion boots by Adam Hutchison gave Marian a 21-7 command early in the fourth quarter.

Shortly after the defense stifled St. Joseph with an interception on the goal line by Joe Walker, the Spartans used the big play again to put away the decision.

Jesse Steward hit paydirt for the second time Friday with a 47-yard jaunt that sealed matters with 2:25 to play. Marian threw the ball just two times after the intermission, as it posted its fourth consecutive contest of 235 yards rushing or more.

"In the first half, we had a really tough time getting our stuff together," Kelly explained. "A lot of the seniors and some of the juniors talked at halftime and we just decided we had to come out and play. It was still a ball game."

For the fourth straight week, the Spartans proved tough to defend by spreading the ball around. Steward (88 yards) and Woolfolk (74 yards) were the top two rushers, yet needed just a combined nine carries to compile the gaudy numbers. Meanwhile, Joe Sanfratello rushed for 65 yards, Jeruel Taylor 58, Joe Hess 50 and Walker 30.

The Spartans never trailed as Taylor scored from 12 yards away behind blocks by Jackson and Austin Guaccio late in the first quarter and Steward broke a 7-7 tie with his first score, a 33-yard rush, early in the second quarter.

While the Chargers (Marian's lone victory last year) were certainly in the contest at halftime, Marian never appeared in danger in improving to 15-0 all-time against the Chargers. St. Joseph did engineer a 70-yard drive to pull within 7-7 on the final play of the opening quarter, but Spartan miscues played a hand in not achieving the five-touchdown leads Marian enjoyed in its first two home contests.

The stat sheet will show that the Spartans didn't commit a turnover on Friday. However a handful of dropped passes helped the Chargers' cause, as well as two muffed punts and a bad snap on a Marian punt attempt.

Despite having its back put to the wall on a couple occasions, the Marian defense responded by holding its third straight opponent to single-digit scoring.

The Chargers did eventually gain 243 yards through the air, but that was because the Spartans' defensive front of Dan Schmidtke, Josh Mayers, Foster and Michael Tolliver helped limit the visitors to 34 yards rushing and 1.9 yards per attempt.

Aside from the St. Joseph scoring drive, the Chargers were inside the Marian 45-yard line on just three other occasions- the Walker interception, a near red-zone drive thwarted by an Aaron Simmons' sack, and the final play of the first half.

While the 4-0 start is a welcome sight and a good springboard toward a run at the ESCC title, the road is just starting toward reaching some long-term goals.

"The biggest thing is knowing that we have to stay focused," Kelly said. "We have to avoid the little mistakes. We've taken advantage of some things the first four weeks and the teams we have coming up will take advantage of little mistakes too. So we have to overcome those things and keep improving."

Sophomores: The young Spartans improved to 4-0 as well, breaking away from a close contest in the early going for a 34-14 victory over the Chargers.

| CATEGORY | St. Joseph | Marian Catholic |
|------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| First downs | 11 | 18 |
| Rush attempts / yards | 18-34 | 49-364 |
| Passing yards | 243 | 8 |
| Pass completions | 19 | 1 |
| Pass attempts | 31 | 11 |
| Had intercepted | 1 | 0 |
| Fumbles / lost | 3 / 0 | 1 / 0 |

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Penalty yards | 8-70 | 3-20 |
| Next | at Notre Dame | at Carmel |

SCORING

MC- Jeruel Taylor 12-yard run (Adam Hutchison kick), 2:26 first.

SJ- Sterling Jackson 5-yard pass from Cameron Meredith (Stephen Stacassa kick), 0:00 first.

MC- Jesse Steward 33-yard run (Hutchison kick), 11:05 second.

MC- John Rhode 1-yard run (Hutchison kick), 9:14 fourth.

MC- Steward 47-yard run (Hutchison kick), 2:25 fourth.

Rushing: SJ- Anthony Boddy 9-47, Roosevelt Carr 1-6, Cameron Meredith 8-(minus 19).
MC- Steward 5-88 (2 TD), Trevor Woolfolk 4-74, Joe Sanfratello 10-65, Taylor 10-58 (TD),
Joe Hess 8-50, Joey Walker 4-30, Austin Guaccio 1-11, Alex Obanor 2-1, John Rhode 5-
(minus 13, TD).

Passing: SJ- Meredith 19 of 31, 243 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT. MC- Rhode 1 of 11, 8 yards, 0 TD,
0 INT.

Receiving: SJ- Jackson 6-113 (TD), Dan Quintana 6-55, Ladell Nance 3-50, Marcus
Ginwright 1-19, Boddy 2-8, Mark Cyras 1-8.

Interceptions: Walker (MC).

