

**GAME 6: Marian Catholic 16, Nazareth 10 (HOMECOMING- [Assembly](#))**

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

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

**Streaks:** Roadrunners- 1 win; Spartans- 5 wins.

**ESCC records:** Nazareth 1-2; Marian Catholic 3-0.

**Week 5:** Nazareth 32, Benet 21; Marian Catholic 20, Carmel 17 (OT).

**Week 7:** Notre Dame at Nazareth (Sat, 1:30 p.m.); Marian at St. Viator (Fri, 7:30 p.m.)

**Last year:** Nazareth Academy 42, Marian Catholic 13.

**The series:** The Roadrunners have won two straight to even the overall series at 3-3. The winning team in the contest has scored at least 26 points in each of the six contests.

**Notes:** Marian's upset win at Carmel last Friday vaulted the Spartans to a ranking of #15 in the *Chicago Tribune* and #16 in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, as well as the #1 it enjoyed in the *Illinois Times*... Along with Marian at 5-0, Nazareth is one of seven ESCC teams with a record above .500 and in strong shape to vie for an IHSA playoff berth... This will mark the sixth contest this year in which Marian has played on artificial turf... The Spartans own a 10-1 turnover differential in five games, including zero interceptions in 59 passing attempts... For rushing touchdowns, Marian owns a 15-2 advantage over five opponents... The Spartans have had six different rushers gain 167 yards or more on the ground.

**Sun-Times:** ["Mattio stuck around to see Spartans' turnaround"](#)

Oct. 2	1	2	3	4	Total
NAZARETH ROADRUNNERS	7	3	0	0	-10
at MARIAN SPARTANS	0	9	7	0	-16



**Joey Walker rushed for two scores Friday to ignite host Marian Catholic to a 16-10 Homecoming victory over Nazareth and its first 6-0 start since 1993.**

## **Spartans stave off Nazareth for first 6-0 start since 1993**

Coming down to earth off an upset win over Carmel. Distractions of Homecoming. Pressure of facing the most explosive running back in the ESCC.

Host Marian Catholic would have no part of a letdown on Friday night when the Spartans hosted Nazareth.

Joey Walker exploded around end for a pair of touchdown runs and the Marian defense registered a second-half shutout, as Marian came from behind for 16-10 East Suburban Catholic Conference victory and the first 6-0 start to a campaign since the state championship season of 1993.

Walker's second TD jaunt of 21 yards around right end propelled the Spartans (6-0, 4-0) from a 10-9 halftime deficit. Adam Hutchison added his second conversion boot to give Marian a 16-10 command with 2:56 to play in the third quarter.

"I noticed when I was blocking that they started to crack and seal on the corner, and they were doing it too hard sometimes," Walker explained. "A couple times, I just got around the corner and (receiver) Austin Guaccio did an incredible job blocking on the corner."

Once Walker gave Marian the lead, the Spartan defense was the story of the second half. Marian limited the Roadrunners (3-3, 1-3) to a single first down through five possessions, adding a forced turnover that resulted in a Danny Vargas recovery.

But Nazareth gained one more possession with 3:06 to play in the contest.

The Roadrunners marched to a first-down at the Marian 29-yard line, but Marian forced three straight incomplete passes before time expired to give the host squad a happy Homecoming and its fifth revenge accomplished from the 2008 season.

While the Spartan defense held on its final test, it did the job all night on the ESCC leading scorer, LaSteven McKinney.

Behind a forceful effort up front from Dan Schmidtke, Marc Grkinich, Michael Foster and Michael Toliver, along with linebackers Nolan Berens, Javar Murphy and Ryan Chambers, the Spartans limited the explosive McKinney to 34 yards on 14 carries. Sixteen of those yards came on a single, late carry.

For the night, courtesy of a minus-22 on a punt snap that resulted in a Spartan safety, Nazareth was limited to 57 yards on the ground on 25 attempts.

The secondary of Vargas, Pat Healy, Wes Fleming and Walker certainly did the job on the final possession. But for the night, the Roadrunners had passing efficiency of just nine for 26.

"McKinney is a real talented back," praised Walker. "We focused on stopping him all week in practice. We knew if we stopped him, we could shut down their offense. He got into a crease on one run, but overall we did a pretty nice job on him."

Both of Walker's scoring runs rallied the Spartans from deficits.

Nazareth had taken a 7-0 lead on its first possession, but Marian responded early in the second quarter with a four-play, 41-yard drive. After workhorse Jeruel Taylor (25 carries, 120 yards) broke off a pair of 9-yard runs to help get Marian into the red zone, Walker broke around the corner and followed Guaccio and lineman James Jackson into the end zone for a 7-7 tie.

Marian's defense forced a punt attempt on the next possession, and when the snap sailed over punter Patrick Dunn's head, he had no choice to boot it through the end zone for a 9-7 Marian lead with 7:05 to play in the half.

Dunn's huge foot netted a 43-yard field goal with 1:49 to play in the half to give Nazareth a 10-7 edge at the intermission and set up the Spartans' second comeback win in the ESCC this year.

The eventual winning drive came on Marian's second possession of the second half. Quarterback John Rhode's lone completion of the night found Joe Hess on the initial first down of the drive and chain-moving runs by Trevor Woolfolk and Taylor set up Marian at the Roadrunner 28-yard line.

Three plays later, the Spartans chose to go on fourth-and-three, with Walker responding with the 21-yard scoring burst.

"A 6-0 record feels awesome and we want to keep it going," Walker concluded. "Every game, our goals change a little bit. First, we wanted to beat H-F. Now, we want to win the conference and make a run at state. If we keep playing well, the sky's the limit."

The Spartans now control their own ESCC destiny as the league's lone team at 4-0.

Walker finished with 55 yards rushing on just seven carries, while Hess toted nine times for 53 yards. While the Marian offense netted just 264 yards on Friday, the Spartans were their typical clock-eaters with a 59-51 advantage in snaps from scrimmage.

**Sophomores:** Marian improved to 5-1 overall with a 14-6 come-from-behind victory over the Roadrunners.

CATEGORY	Nazareth	Marian Catholic
First downs	8	17
Rush attempts / yards	25-57	50-252
Passing yards	94	12
Pass completions	9	1
Pass attempts	26	9
Had intercepted	0	1
Fumbles / lost	2 / 1	2 / 0
Penalty yards	8-55	2-30
Next	<b>NOTRE DAME</b>	<b>at St. Viator</b>

## SCORING

**Nz-** Adam Marske 30-yard run (Patrick Dunn kick), 8:02 first.

**MC-** Joey Walker 12-yard run (Adam Hutchison kick), 9:07 second.

**MC-** Safety- punt snap booted out of end zone, 7:05 second.

**Nz-** Dunn 43-yard field goal, 1:49 second.

**MC-** Walker 21-yard run (Hutchison kick), 2:56 third.

**Rushing:** NZ- LaSteven McKinney 14-34, Marske 4-32 (TD), Reggie Jennings 2-19, Michael Williams 2-7, Vincent Angeloni 1-1, Michael Dore 1-0, Patrick Dunn 1-(minus 22). MC- Jeruel Taylor 25-120, Walker 7-55 (2 TD), Joe Hess 9-53, Trevor Woolfolk 5-26, Jesse Steward 3-2, John Rhode 1-(minus 4).

**Passing:** NZ- Marske 9 of 25, 94 yards, 0 TD, 0 INT; McKinney 0 of 1, 0 yards. MC- Rhode 1 of 9, 12 yards, 0 TD, 1 INT.

**Receiving:** NZ- Bryan McCray 3-49, McKinney 3-25, Scott Patterson 1-10, Matthew Behrendt 1-5; Jennings 1-5.

**Interceptions:** Kevin Curtin (Nz).

