

7A IHSA Playoffs (Game 11): St Rita 34, Marian Catholic 14



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

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

Tickets: Are SOLD OUT. There will be **NO TICKETS** sold at the gate on Friday.

Records: St. Rita 8-2; Marian Catholic 7-3.

7A seeds: St. Rita #4; Marian #8 (in 8-school quadrant).

Streaks: Mustangs- 1 win; Spartans- 1 win.

7A First Round: St. Rita 40, Plainfield North 14; Marian Catholic 49, Bogan 6.

At stake: Winner plays winner of Geneva at W.-Warrenville South in Quarterfinals.

The series: With three consecutive victories, the Spartans hold a 3-2 series edge, as Marian won the last encounter, 14-9, in 1999. In the only other playoff meeting, the Mustangs notched a 10-8 second round victory in the 1995 Class 5A playoffs.

Notes: These foes are former combatants in the Chicago Metropolitan Conference... Both teams have played six of their 10 contests against IHSA playoff qualifiers... Marian enters the contest with a 4-1 record at home and a 7-1 record on artificial turf... Both teams started the campaign with 6-0 marks... The Spartans own a 6-0 record when outrushing their opponent... St. Rita played the fourth most difficult schedule (playoff points) among 7A qualifiers.

PLAYOFF HISTORY

Appearances: St. Rita 24; Marian Catholic 19.

Last: St. Rita advanced to 2008 Class 7A quarterfinals before falling to East St. Louis, 35-28; Marian lost to Naperville North, 21-0, in first round of 2007 8A Playoffs.

Playoff records: St. Rita 45-21; Marian Catholic 25-17.

Best advancement: St. Rita owns a pair of state titles, winning the 1978 5A crown over Buffalo Grove, 15-9, and recently capturing the 2006 7A title with a 35-21 decision over Lake Zurich; Marian beat Geneseo, 13-6, for 1993 Class 4A title.



Nov. 6	1	2	3	4	Total
ST. RITA MUSTANGS	0	10	14	10	-34
at MARIAN SPARTANS	0	0	0	14	-14



Marian's Nolan Berens eyes down the St. Rita offense on Friday during the host Spartans' 34-14 Class 7A playoff loss to the Mustangs.

Spartans bounced from 7A playoffs by St. Rita

Marian Catholic was hoping to see a lot of the St. Rita punter on Friday when the Spartans hosted the Mustangs in the Class 7A Second Round IHSA playoff game.

Next time, the Spartans better be careful what they ask for.

The Mustangs' Kyle Jachim punted just one time Friday, but he rushed for two scores and caught a 49-yard pass for another touchdown in leading the Mustangs (9-2) into the quarterfinals with a 34-14 decision.

Marian, which followed up a 1-8 campaign with a magical year, finished the season with a 7-4 mark.

Seeking their first trip the IHSA quarterfinals since 1999, the Spartans appeared to have things going at times Friday with a stingy defense and an offense that was moving the chains.

However, St. Rita proved to be the closer of the two teams on Friday. The Spartans compiled 14 first downs for the night. But after notching three on its first possession, Marian couldn't string together chain-movers until they faced a 31-0 deficit in the fourth quarter.

Meanwhile, while the Mustangs had to work hard to find the end zone, they put points on the board on six of their first seven possessions. While Marian didn't make things easy behind strong play from linebackers Nolan Berens, Javar Murphy and Ryan Chambers, St. Rita constructed scoring drives of 60, 66, 60, 80, 49 and 44 yards.

"They're going to score... they're a very good team," assessed senior linebacker Berens. "You just try to minimize things and make some plays when you get the chances. We just didn't sustain things and execute. It was just the little things like missing tackles and making blocks."

Underdog Marian looked like it was ready to exchange blows in the early going. The Spartans ran off 12 plays with the opening drive to the St. Rita 31-yard line, but saw the drive fizzle with an interception-the lone turnover in the contest.

St. Rita chipped away for a 12-play drive of its own, marching 60 yards for a Jachim score and 7-0 command. Marian forced a punt on the Mustangs' next possession and played some ball control to help keep the ball away from the explosive St. Rita offense.

Although the opening half lasted just seven possessions, the Mustangs added a 31-yard field goal by Chris Donahue in the final two minutes to take a 10-0 edge into the intermission.

Knowing the initial score of the second half would be critical, St. Rita tallied the first three times it touched the ball after halftime, as a Travis Starks touchdown run and two more scores from Jachim saw the lead swell to 31-0.

With the season fate likely in hand early in the fourth quarter, the host Spartans displayed some tremendous character down the stretch.

"I was glad to see we didn't quit," Berens said. "We played to the final second."

Marian did show plenty of fight down the stretch, outscoring the Mustangs, 14-3, after Jachim had found the end zone for a third time.

The Spartans marched 80 yards in nine plays, as first-down runs by Jeruel Taylor, Joe Hess and Joey Walker set up a 19-yard scamper by Walker for a score. Adam Hutchison split the uprights with a conversion boot to make it 31-7 with eight minutes to play.

An unsuccessful onside kick set up the Mustangs with great field possession, but the Marian defense

forced the visitors to settle for a 27-yard field goal by Donahue to make it 34-7.

Not finished, Marian continued its surge behind an offensive line of James Jackson, Brian Kelly, Alexander Bell, Tim Michels, Jeff Bona and Michael Foster. This time, Marian marched 72 yards, bouyed by first-down runs of 21 yards by Walker and 28 by Jesse Steward. After Taylor picked up 6 yards, the Spartans called his number again for an 8-yard score to account for the final margin.

Walker topped Marian in rushing with 75 yards on six totes, while Taylor rushed 15 times for 63 yards. Meanwhile, sophomore signal-caller John Rhode finished 8-of-17 for 63 yards. Senior receiver Austin Guaccio capped out a strong campaign with four catches for 33 yards.

While there's little consolation in a season-ending loss, Rhode will lead a strong cast of returnees, a Marian tries to put together a second successful campaign in 2010 with the goal of a fourth playoff appearance in five years.

CATEGORY	St. Rita	Marian Catholic
First downs	17	14
Rush attempts / yards	38-305	32-182
Passing yards	74	63
Pass completions	5	8
Pass attempts	9	17
Had intercepted	0	1
Fumbles / lost	0 / 0	0 / 0
Penalty yards	9-65	7-50
Next	Quarterfinals	Season over

SCORING

SR- Kyle Jachim 5-yard run (Chris Donahue kick), 10:48 second.

SR- Donahue 31-yard field goal, 1:37 second.

SR- Travis Starks 28-yard run (Donahue kick), 10:41 third.

SR- Jachim 23-yard run (Donahue kick), 1:09 third.

SR- Jachim 49-yard pass from Robert Gallik (Donahue kick), 11:08 fourth.

MC- Joey Walker 19-yard run (Adam Hutchison kick), 8:00 fourth.

SR- Donahue 27-yard field goal, 3:57 fourth.

MC- Jeruel Taylor 8-yard run (Hutchison kick), 2:09 fourth.

Rushing: SR- Starks 18-148 (TD), Jachim 4-82 (2 TD), Jahwon Akui 10-70, Carlton Simmons 3-6, Mitchell Saffold 1-0, Gallik 2-(minus 1). MC- Walker 6-75 (TD), Taylor 15-63 (TD), Jesse Steward 1-28, Joe Hess 5-16, Joe Sanfratello 3-14, John Rhode 2-(minus 14).

Passing: SR- Gallik 5 of 9, 74 yards, 1 TD, 0 INT. MC- Rhode 8 of 17, 63 yards, 0 TD, 1 INT.

Receiving: SR- Jachim 2-57 (TD), Matthew Mullen 1-9, Starks 2-8. MC- Austin Guaccio 4-33, Walker 3-22, Steward 1-8.

Interceptions: Charles Elmor (SR).

