

GAME 1: Homewood-Flossmoor 33, Marian Catholic 14

Kickoff: 7:30 p.m. Friday at Homewood-Flossmoor High School.

Where: 999 Kedzie Avenue, Flossmoor.

Tickets: Will be limited and on sale at the gate (\$4 adults; \$2 students with IDs).

2009 records: Marian Catholic 7-4; Homewood-Flossmoor 1-8.

Streaks: Spartans- 1 loss; Vikings- 1 win.

Week 2: Marian at Bloom (Sat., 12 p.m.); H-F at Evanston (Fri, 7:30 p.m.)

Last year: Marian Catholic 34, Homewood-Flossmoor 18.

The series: The Vikings hold an overall 8-5 series advantage, although Marian has captured three of the last four meetings, including two in overtime. The Spartans have not won in Flossmoor since a 14-6 decision in 1987.

Notes: Nine of the 13 meetings have been decided by one score or less... Marian opens its campaign in "rivalry" fashion, as the Spartans will visit crosstown foe Bloom Township in week two and also have neighborhood Crete-Monee on the nonconference schedule... Marian owns a 5-5 record in season openers since 2000... The *SouthtownStar* featured the Spartans' two opening games in its Aug. 22 editions.

Aug. 27	1	2	3	4	Total
MARIAN CATHOLIC SPARTANS	0	0	7	7	-14
at HOMEWOOD-FLOSSMOOR VIKINGS	0	7	7	19	-33



Marian's Byron Munoz pulled in an interception on Friday during the Spartans' 33-14 season-opening loss at rival Homewood-Flossmoor.

Rival Homewood-Flossmoor spoils Spartans' opener

For a few minutes on Friday night in Flossmoor, it had the makings of heroic nights for the likes of Wes Fleming and Trevor Woolfolk.

Seconds apart, Fleming had a critical block on a conversion kick, then Woolfolk broke off a 55-yard scoring run to put visiting Marian Catholic in position for a thrilling comeback.

However, the host Vikings were the team that made big plays when it counted, as H-F outscored Marian, 19-7, in the fourth quarter en route to a 33-14 nonconference decision in the battle of neighborhood rivals. The win was just the Vikings' second in the last five meetings, but gives H-F a 9-5 overall command in the series.

Woolfolk, who finished with 109 rushing yards on eight carries, needed just one play to respond to H-F's 50-yard scoring strike that gave the host team a 20-7 lead when Fleming blocked the conversion. The second Jabari Danzy conversion kick of the night pulled Marian within 20-14 with 9:09 to play in the contest.

"I was happy to get the long run and score," Woolfolk explained. "But we were pushing to get more touchdowns. The offense and defense both were making some plays, but we just couldn't get it done or sustain anything when we needed to."

Meanwhile, H-F responded with a punishing 10-play, 74-yard drive to gain a 26-14 cushion. Then Marian's second turnover of the night saw the Vikings strike quickly with a 50-yard touchdown run for the clincher.

Marian never led in the contest, but was in position to take command on a handful of occasions.

Facing an athletic and veteran H-F offense, the Marian defensive unit appeared to pitch a first-half shutout, coming up with key turnovers twice when the Vikings advanced into Marian territory.

With H-F working second down and goal on its first possession, linebacker Byron Munoz picked off a ball in the end zone to thwart the home team and disappoint a packed house. On H-F's next possession, Fleming pounced on a fumble after the Vikings

had moved inside the Marian 35-yard line.

Despite managing just one first down on its first five possessions, Marian's offense looked like it would get a chance in the second half with a 0-0 stalemate.

But a poor snap sent punter Danzy racing back toward his end zone for a ball. Unable to boot the ball out of the end zone, Danzy wound up taking a 29-yard loss on the play and H-F recovered the ball in the end zone for a 7-0 command with just 25 seconds to play in the opening half.

Marian didn't back down, as junior quarterback John Rhode quickly moved the Spartans downfield. However, Danzy missed a 35-yard field goal as time expired in the opening half.

Rhode finished six of 15 for 51 yards, thwarted by a handful of dropped passes.

Overall, Marian did a solid job moving the ball behind an offensive line of Brian Kelly, Phil Faso, Steven Jackson, Jeffrey Bona, Trent Podnar and David Angell.

Along with Woolfolk's 109 yards, Jeruel Taylor toted 14 times for 94 yards. Taylor was also the Spartans' leading receiver with four catches for 40 yards. His 10-yard touchdown burst early in the second half culminated an 80-yard drive as the Spartans pulled even at 7-7 with 7:53 to play in the third quarter.

"We did a lot of good thing tonight," Woolfolk assessed. "Jeruel Taylor made some nice plays and I thought we were going to come back when we got down. We just made a couple key mistakes and we didn't capitalize on opportunities when we had them."

H-F and its athletes had answers, however.

After Marian played right with the Vikings in the first half, H-F used scoring drives of 80, 81, 74 and 50 yards to take command in the second half.

Meanwhile, while Marian punted only one time in the second half (after four in the opening half), the Spartans didn't penetrate the H-F 38-yard line on its other non-scoring drives of the final 24 minutes.

Unable to duplicate its 6-0 start of last season, Marian will try to get things going with its second straight rivalry contest when the Spartans visit crosstown foe Bloom Township for a 12 p.m. kickoff next Saturday.

"Bloom is next and we need to just keep moving on to what's next," Woolfolk concluded. "We'll put this behind us and try to build on things and just keep moving forward."

Sophomores: H-F broke a late 8-8 tie with a fourth-quarter score and avenged last year's setback with a 16-8 decision over the Spartans.

CATEGORY	Marian Catholic	H.-Flossmoor
First downs	10	17
Rush attempts / yards	29-208	39-272
Passing yards	51	134
Pass completions	6	10
Pass attempts	15	18
Had intercepted	0	1
Fumbles / lost	2-2	1-1
Penalty yards	5-55	5-40
Next	at Bloom Twp.	at Evanston

SCORING

HF- Denzell Wilkins fumble recover in end zone (Anthony Crescenti kick), 0:25 first.

MC- Jeruel Taylor 10-yard run (Jabari Danzy kick), 7:53 third.

HF- Willie Ross 6-yard pass from Tim Williams (Crescenti kick), 3:36 third.

HF- Gerald Butler 50-yard pass from Williams (kick blocked), 9:25 fourth

MC- Trevor Woolfolk 55-yard run (Danzy kick), 9:09 fourth.

HF- Williams 12-yard run (pass failed), 3:37 fourth.

HF- Malik Norman 50-yard run (Crescenti kick), 2:22 fourth.

Rushing: MC- Woolfolk 8-109 (TD); Taylor 14-94 (TD), John Rhode 3-22, Matt Simmons 2-7, Brandon Spruill 1-5; Danzy 1-(minus 29). HF- Norman 23-174 (TD); Lance Sims 13-72, Williams 3-26 (TD).

Passing: MC- Rhode 6 of 15, 51 yards, 0 TD, 0 INT. HF- Williams 10 of 13, 134 yards, 2 TD, 1 INT; Stephen Roman 0 of 5, 0 yards.

Receiving: MC- Taylor 4-40; Randall Wells 2-15. HF- Butler 6-89 (TD), Sims 2-40, Ross 1-6 (TD), Norman 1-(minus 1).

Interceptions: Byron Munoz (MC).

