

GAME 9: Marian Catholic 45, St. Viator 21

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

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

Streaks: Lions- 3 losses; Spartans- 1 win.

Overall records: Saint Viator 4-4; Marian Catholic 6-2.

ESCC records: Saint Viator 2-4; Marian Catholic 4-1.

Week 8: Benet 10, St. Viator 7; Marian Catholic 29, Nazareth Academy 28.

Week 10: St. Viator TBA; Marian Catholic- first round of IHSA Playoffs.

Last year: Saint Viator 25, Marian Catholic 0.

The series: The Lions have won two straight, but Marian owns an overall command of 12-4 in the series that dates back to 1966. Saint Viator won the last meeting in Chicago Heights, 16-10.

Notes: The Lions need a win to secure an IHSA playoff berth, as eight of nine ESCC teams remain playoff eligible... Each squad has played only two teams with overall losing records... Spartan tailback Jeruel Taylor eclipsed the 1,000-yard rushing barrier last weekend and is an ESCC leader with six touchdowns in league play... Marian has won three ESCC contests by a single point, while the Lions have played only one game decided by 12 points or fewer... the ESCC continues to rack up playoff points with a 23-2 nonconference record... Marian is seeking a seven-win season for the 23rd time in school history and the third time in the last five years... Last year's result was the lowest scoring game between these ESCC foes since 1968, as the winner has scored 23 or more points on 12 occasions... IHSA playoff pairings for Marian Catholic will be announced Saturday night at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Oct. 22	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
SAINT VIATOR LIONS	0	7	7	7		-21
at MARIAN SPARTANS	0	14	21	10		-45



Marian's Randall Well looks into the line of scrimmage Friday during the host Spartans' 45-21 ESCC romp over Saint Viator.

Marian rolls into playoffs with ESCC romp over Saint Viator

Marian did several little things well on Friday night and they turned into big results.

The Spartan defense forced three turnovers and had six sacks, while the offense exploded for five scoring plays of 34 yards or more.

The small stuff added up to a 45-21 ESCC romp over visiting Saint Viator, sending the Spartans into the Class 7A IHSA playoffs with a 7-2 overall mark, including seven victories in their last eight games.

"It feels great when we're able to put the other team under some pressure," explained senior defensive end Michael Tolliver, who notched a pair of sacks and led a defense that forced two turnovers that ignited a 21-0 third-quarter blitz. "We put the pressure on up front and we helped out the defensive backs. We played great on both sides of the ball and had a strong overall team effort.

"We had to show that we could react when we had something to prove. We had to show we can finish a game. Now, we're going into the playoffs with some nice momentum."

Marian tried to set the tone in the trenches early, blanking the Lions (4-5, 2-5) in the opening quarter and establishing a polished running game.

But when things opened up for the home team, the fans got a display of exciting scoring plays.

Marian quarterback John Rhode opened the game's scoring with a 1-yard sneak. After Jabari Danzy added his first of six conversion kicks (32-for-32 on the season), Marian owned a 7-0 lead that it would never relinquish. From there, explosive scoring plays became the theme.

Marian used twin 55-yard marches to open the scoring, but the second one lasted just four plays as Rhode found Trevor Woolfolk down the

right sideline for a 34-yard touchdown.

Saint Viator added a 1-yard touchdown run for a 14-7 margin at the intermission.

But then Marian unleashed that ability to "finish" with an exhilarating third quarter, as the defense ignited the offense.

The Lions initial possession of the third quarter ended when Jason Martinez picked off a tipped pass. Three plays later, Woolfolk took a pitch and, breaking several tackles, scampered 38 yards for a 21-7 Spartan lead.

Next time, Martinez thwarted Saint Viator when he picked off a pass in the end zone for a touchback. It took the Spartans just five plays to march 80 yards as Rhode hit Randall Wells (two catches, 67 yards) on a fly down the right sideline for a 54-yard touchdown and 28-7 margin.

Marian had the ball back quickly, as a Marc Grkinich sack led to a four-and-out, setting up the Spartans at the Lions' 39-yard line. Nine seconds later, Rob Cifelli had taken a pitch the 39 yards for a score and suddenly, the close halftime margin had swelled to a 35-7 cushion.

Fighting for its playoff survival, Saint Viator didn't back down and scored late in the third quarter and early in the fourth. However, the Spartans also added a fourth score in as many possessions when Jeruel Taylor burst around left and danced 39 yards for a tally at the 11:52 mark of the fourth quarter for a 42-14 command.

Taylor finished with a game-high 172 rushing yards on 18 carries, as he increased his regular-season rushing total to 1,190 yards. As a squad, Marian rushed for 351 yards as Cifelli added 68 yards, Rhode 46 and Woolfolk 41. Rhode was equally efficient in the passing game, tossing four completions in eight attempts for 137 yards and two scores.

For good measure, Danzy concluded the scoring with a 24-yard field goal with 8:30 to play.

For a game that started with a 0-0 stalemate after 12 minutes, the Spartans eventually scored on plays of 34, 38, 54, 39 and 39 yards after the initial 1-yard sneak by Rhode.

Tolliver was the one that ignited the Marian defense early, as he combined a sack with a fumble recovery on St. Viator's initial possession.

"It feels good to get the sacks," Tolliver said. "But I just wanted to hit the quarterback and keep the pressure on them consistently."

Tolliver's teammates got into the act too, as Grkinich, Byron Munoz, Jake Anderson and Robert Ruiz also recorded sacks.

The initial sack only netted a missed field goal, but the Spartans quickly gained solid field position after forcing the Lions into a three-and-out. Taking possession on their own 45-yard line, Rhode fired chain-moving arials to Wells (13 yards) and to Dominic Pascale (36 yards) on a diving catch. Two plays later, the Rhode sneak gave Marian the lead for good and proved to be the Spartans' lone short scoring play of the night.

Marian will learn its playoff destiny on Saturday night around 8:30 p.m.

Sophomores: The Spartans jumped to an early lead, but eventually concluded the season with a 7-6 ESCC loss to the Lions.

CATEGORY	Saint Viator	Marian Catholic
First downs	20	16
Rush attempts / yards	45-194	49-351
Passing yards	160	137
Pass completions	15	4
Pass attempts	23	8
Had intercepted	2	0
Fumbles / lost	2 / 1	1 / 0
Penalty yards	7-50	7-53
Next	Season over	IHSA Playoffs

SCORING

MC- John Rhode 1-yard run (Jabari Danzy kick), 11:17 second.

MC- Trevor Woolfolk 34-yard pass from Rhode (Danzy kick), 7:44 second.

SV- Jimmy Menges 1-yard run (Will Solimene kick), 5:43 second.

MC- Woolfolk 38-yard run (Danzy kick), 9:33 third.

MC- Randall Wells 54-yard pass from Rhode (Danzy kick), 5:28 third.

MC- Rob Cifelli 39-yard run (Danzy kick), 3:35 third.

SV- Frank Laterza 29-yard pass from Cameron Korab (Solimene kick), 1:18 third.

MC- Jeruel Taylor 39-yard run (Danzy kick), 11:52 fourth.

SV- Menges 3-yard run (Solimene kick), 11:11 fourth.

MC- Danzy 24-yard field goal, 8:30 fourth.

Rushing: SV- Menges 26-142 (TD), Korab 18-49, Pat O'Malley 1-3. MC- Taylor 18-172 (TD), Cifelli 6-68 (TD), Rhode 11-46 (TD), Woolfolk 7-41 (TD), Matt Simmons 2-9, Troy Nutall 1-9, Byron Munoz 3-4, Marcus Burden 1-2.

Passing: SV- Korab 15 of 23, 160 yards, 1 TD, 2 INT. MC- Rhode 4 of 8, 137 yards, 2 TD, 0 INT.

Receiving: SV- Quinn Murray 5-49, Laterza 2-33 (TD), Nick Frett 3-32, Peter Trunk 1-26, Kyle Martin 1-15, Menges 3-5. MC- Wells 2-67 (TD), Dominic Pascale 1-36, Woolfolk 1-34 (TD).

Interceptions: Jason Martinez (MC), 2.

