

IHSA 7A PLAYOFFS (Game 10): Wheaton North 27, Marian Catholic 12



Kickoff: 7 p.m. Friday at Rexilius Field, Wheaton North High School.
Where: 701 W. Thomas Road, Wheaton ([map](#)) ([directions](#)).
Tickets: Priced at \$5; Available at gate or Wheaton North Athletic Office, 7:30 a.m. 3 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.
Streaks: Spartans- 2 wins; Falcons- 3 wins.
Overall records: Marian Catholic 7-2; Wheaton North 7-2.
Class 7A seeds: Marian Catholic #5; Wheaton North #4.
Week 9: Benet 10, St. Viator 7; Marian Catholic 29, Nazareth Academy 28.
At stake: Victor plays winner of #8 Benet (5-4) at #1 Wheaton-Warrenville South (9-0) in second round.
The series: This will mark the first meeting between the schools. The Spartans have played one playoff contest against current DuPage Valley teams, a 21-0 loss to Naperville North in 2007.
Notes: The ESCC completed an impressive nonconference season with an overall mark of 23-3... Both squads have played five teams that qualified for the playoffs... The Falcons have played the second toughest schedule among Class 7A qualifiers... Despite a 7-2 mark, the Spartans have had more first downs than their opponent in just one game... Marian has won two of its last three playoff openers and is 13-6 overall in first-round games... The Spartans have won four straight contests away from Spartan Stadium... Marian tied for second in the ESCC (5-1), while the Falcons were third in the DuPage Valley (5-2).

PLAYOFF HISTORY

Appearances: Marian Catholic 20; Wheaton North 18.
Last: Marian lost to St. Rita, 34-14, in second round of 2009 7A Playoffs. Wheaton North lost to Lake Zurich, 24-17, in 2009 7A quarterfinals.
Playoff records: Marian Catholic 25-18, Wheaton North 29-14.
Best advancement: Marian beat Geneseo, 13-6, for 1993 Class 4A title; Wheaton North has captured three state championships, defeating LaSalle-Peru, 14-6, in 1979 (4A), Geneseo, 14-0, in 1981 (4A) and Mount Carmel, 34-14, in 1986 (5A).



Oct. 29	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
MARIAN CATHOLIC SPARTANS	0	6	0	6		-12
at WHEATON NORTH FALCONS	7	13	0	7		-27



Marian's Jacob Bishop recovered a fumble Friday, but the Spartans' still sustained a 27-12 loss to host Wheaton North in the Class 7A Playoffs.

Marian toppled by Wheaton North in Class 7A playoffs

When you've been at this for 35 years and 246 victories, you have a pretty good knack for summing up things. "I thought (running back) Jeruel Taylor played hard and played very well tonight, and I thought (quarterback) John Rhode did a great job," assessed veteran Marian Catholic Head Coach Dave Mattio. "In the second half, we had a

couple nice drives with the passing game, but we couldn't sustain anything."

And so goes the story of Marian Catholic's season.

While the Spartans proved stingy on occasion, Wheaton North was the team that sustained outstanding ball control and made it add up to a 27-12 victory over the visiting Spartans (7-3) on Friday in the first round of the IHSA Class 7A playoffs.

For the ninth time in 10 games, Marian watched an opponent rack up more first downs.

Meanwhile, Wheaton North (8-2) churned out possessions to score on its first four possessions, as the Falcons didn't punt the ball until just more than four minutes remained in the contest. Leading up to the late punt, Wheaton North was stopped only by a missed field goal and fumble in the second half.

"You've gotta tip your hat to Wheaton North tonight," Mattio assessed. "They created a tempo in the game that we just didn't match. When you lay the ball on the ground and commit the penalties we did, you put yourself in a tough situation. We came back in the ball game, but we were unable to play at the pace they set."

While the Falcons move on to play top-seeded and conference rival Wheaton-Warrenville South in the second round, Marian looked like it was ready to challenge for its fifth straight road win in the early going.

With standout kicker Jabari Danzy (knee) sidelined for Marian, Wheaton North took advantage early after the game's opening kickoff sailed out of bounds. A grinding 14-play drive traveled 64 yards for a quick 7-0 Falcon lead.

However, Marian matched the drive and then some when it started at its own 20-yard line. The Spartans also marched to paydirt in 14 plays, primarily using their bread and butter- Taylor. The ESCC Offensive Player of the Year carried six times for 49 yards in the drive. Meanwhile, Rhode was a nifty 2-for-2 on the drive, his second aerial attempt carrying 7 yards to Rob Cifelli for the score.

For the first time all season, Marian missed a conversion kick, but trailed just 7-6 with 10:20 to play in the second quarter.

That's when the "sustain" issued reared its ugly head for the Spartans.

Marian didn't gain a first down the remainder of the half, and the Falcons' final three possessions of the half resulted in touchdown, field goal, field goal for a 20-6 margin at the intermission.

The Spartan offense gained proficiency in the second half, moving the chains on each of five second-half possessions. But apparent great starts didn't add up to necessary results, as Marian was forced to punt and committed two turnovers the first three times it owned the football in the second half.

The Marian defense also became more stingy in the second half behind the play of linebackers Mark Crosetto, Xavier Munoz, Byron Munoz, Mitch Weissenhofer and Jacob Bishop (fumble recovery).

But following a scoreless third quarter, by the time Marian found the end zone again, it proved to be a consolation score.

Wheaton North improved its cushion to 27-6 with a quarterback draw for a score with 11:14 to play in the contest. The Spartans gained a glimmer of hope midway through the final quarter when Rhode hit Randall Wells on a short slant, as the fleet receiver dashed 48 yards for a 27-12 deficit with 6:11 to play.

With an offensive line of Brian Kelly, Trent Podnar, Jeff Bona, Steven Jackson and Phil Faso protecting Rhode, the Spartans had one more shot after forcing the lone Wheaton North punt of the night. Three completions for first downs moved the ball to the Falcons 14-yard line, but the next play resulted in Rhode's second interception and sealed any chance for Marian to win its second straight playoff opener.

Despite the strong start, Taylor finished with 78 yards on 16 carries, as Marian was outgained via the terrain, 180-105. With a strong second half, Rhode finished 11 of 20 for 176 yards. Taylor made three grabs for 30 yards and Wells proved to be the favorite target with five catches for 99 yards.

Fortunately, the loss of Danzy did not cost Marian in the end. The senior kicker was 32-for-32 on conversion kicks this year and was a key in a trio of one-point victories. Had Marian been able to keep matters closer on Friday, that trademark resiliency could have added up to a difference in the end as it had much of the year.

"I couldn't be any more proud of the way these kids played," Mattio explained. "They did a great job of making football at Marian exciting, and making it relevant. They showed that with some hard work and a good attention to detail, you can make some good things happen."

Even in defeat... after 35 years... the class still comes forth.

CATEGORY	Marian Catholic	Wheaton North
First downs	14	17
Rush attempts / yards	32-105	35-180
Passing yards	176	177
Pass completions	11	19
Pass attempts	20	24
Had intercepted	2	0
Fumbles / lost	3 / 1	1 / 1
Penalty yards	5-35	6-51

Next

Season over

at W-W South

SCORING

WN- Micah Penn 1-yard pass from Reece Butler (Margin Gawlak kick), 5:45 first.

MC- Rob Cifelli 7-yard pass from John Rhode (kick failed), 10:20 second.

WN- Richard Finley 33-yard pass from Butler (Gawlak kick), 9:15 second.

WN- Gawlak 23-yard field goal, 3:55 second.

WN- 29-yard field goal, 0:01 second.

WN- Butler 7-yard run (Gawlak), 11:14 fourth.

MC- Randall Wells 48-yard pass from Rhode (run failed), 6:11 fourth.

Rushing: MC- Jeruel Taylor 16-78, Rhode 6-18, Cifelli 4-5, Trevor Woolfolk 6-4. WN- Butler 9-77 (TD), Patrick Sharp 15-60, Matt Sambo 9-38, Dan Bell 2-5.

Passing: MC- Rhode 11 of 20, 176 yards, 2 TD, 2 INT. WN- Butler 19 of 24, 177 yards, 2 TD, 0 INT.

Receiving: MC- Wells 5-99 (TD), Cifelli 2-35 (TD), Taylor 3-30, Dominic Pascale 1-12. WN- Finley 10-94 (TD), Penn 3-34 (TD), Johnny Daniels 2-27, Shaniel Katariwala 2-19, Dan Bell 1-15, Sambo 1-3.

Interceptions: John Bloss (WN), 2.

