

GAME 5: Marian Catholic 42, Saint Patrick 35

Kickoff: 7:30 p.m. Friday at Chicago's Hanson Stadium.

Where: Central and Fullerton, Chicago.

Current overall records: Marian Catholic 2-2; Saint Patrick 3-1

ESCC records: Marian Catholic 2-2; Saint Patrick 2-1.

Streaks: Spartans- 2 losses; Shamrocks- 1 loss.

Week 4: Carmel 44, Marian Catholic 20; Nazareth 35, Saint Patrick 32.

Week 6: Marist at Marian (Fri., 7:30 p.m.); Carmel at St. Patrick (Fri. 8 p.m. at Hanson)

Last year: Marian Catholic 49, St. Patrick 33.

The series: The Spartans advanced their series advantage to 11-6 with last year's victory.

Notes: The Spartans last visit to Saint Patrick (2007) resulted in a 7-0 loss to the Shamrocks, but the last Marian appearance at Hanson Stadium was a 49-6 playoff victory over Chicago Bogan in 2009... Marian has scored in three of four quarters in all of its four contests this year... The Shamrocks own the second-highest scoring offense (176 points) among ESCC teams this year... Marian flex back Randall Wells has scored in every contest this season (six touchdowns) and ranks third overall in ESCC scoring (36 points), tied with St. Patrick's Ryan Tentler... The Spartans own a 1-1 road record this year, while the Shamrocks are 1-0 at Hanson Stadium... The five combined victories from Marian/St. Patrick have come against foes with a combined 0-20 record.

Sept. 23 (Hanson Stadium)	1	2	3	4	Total
MARIAN CATHOLIC	0	14	14	14	-42
at SAINT PATRICK	7	14	7	7	-35



Spartan Justin Harris had a key interception to help spark visiting Marian Catholic's 42-35 ESCC victory over Saint Patrick on Friday.

Spartans (3-2) outslug Saint Patrick for ESCC victory

Marian Catholic's Jeruel Taylor knew he could take care of business if the defense made just one key stop Friday.

With Marian and host St. Patrick swapping scores at a pace that produced 82 points a year ago, the Marian defense did that plea a couple better with three consecutive second-half stops to temporarily stall an explosive Shamrock offense.

Taylor and his mates did the rest, as Marian came back from a onetime two-touchdown deficit to move above the .500 mark with a 42-35 East Suburban Catholic Conference victory at Hanson Stadium.

Along with a pair of touchdowns, Taylor also did the dirty work in grinding out the fourth-quarter clock en route to a 36-carry, 247-yard effort to lead the Spartans (3-2, 3-2).

"I just kept turning my legs and driving to get first downs," explained Taylor, who spearheaded a Marian rushing attack that netted 434 yards on Friday. "I was getting tired at times, but you just keep going because I love the game.

"We've got some great weapons and some great speed on the outside, so they can't key on me. All I really did was run behind my offensive line," added Taylor, acknowledging the likes of Jesse Kilbourn, David Angell, Michael Coda, Kevin Pawlak and Phil Faso. "They are my core and they did a great job of blocking."

Great offense appeared to be a given when the two ESCC foes slugged it out on Friday, but it was obvious that a key defensive stop would determine the outcome.

The Shamrocks (3-2, 2-2) showed no signs of slowing down when they marched 69 yards midway through the third quarter for a 28-21 lead.

Marian was quick to answer as a 39-yard jaunt by Taylor set up Matt Simmons to add the tying score on a 5-yard counter for a touchdown.

Finally, the Marian defense broke the trend of trading scores.

The Spartans forced three straight incomplete passes, as St. Patrick turned the ball over on downs at the Marian 20-yard line. The Marian offense was unable to respond this time, but the Spartan defense had made a statement.

St. Patrick had its next drive stymied with the lone turnover of the night, as Justin Harris picked off a pass to set up the visitors at their own 42-yard line.

This time, the Marian offense was not denied. After four carries by Taylor netted a pair of first downs, Randall Wells took a pitch and scampered 25 yards for his second score of the night. The fifth of six conversion boots by Chris Taborn gave Marian its first lead of the night at 35-28.

Marian's defense made it three straight stops, as Jacob Forney and Jake Anderson put a jarring hit on St. Patrick's receiver to force another turnover on downs at the Marian 49-yard line.

One, two, three... seven straight carries by Taylor moved the ball to the Shamrock 10-yard line.

This time, quarterback Rob Cifelli faked to Taylor and dashed around the right side on a bootleg for a 10-yard touchdown run and 42-28 Marian command with 73 seconds to play.

The Shamrocks' explosive attack needed just two plays to get back in the end zone on a 58-yard pass play to pull within one score with 53 seconds to play. Marian compounded matters with a personal foul on the play, meaning St. Patrick's onside kickoff attempt would take place starting in Spartan territory.

However, Spartan Lorenzo Aldridge fell on the onside attempt to seal a victory that kept Marian on a playoff pace.

"This was a big win," Taylor understated. "The coaches talked a lot about the playoffs this week and this was an important game toward getting to that goal. There was a little pressure tonight, but we got the job done."

Getting the job done was a precarious proposition early on, as St. Patrick scored first and took a 21-7 lead late in the first half.

Marian moved the ball early, but sputtered on its initial two possessions with a failed fourth-down effort and a punt. With the Shamrocks also not making the most of seven early first downs and just a 7-0 lead, Marian finally struck with a 67-yard drive that culminated with Taylor's 1-yard touchdown plunge.

But St. Patrick sandwiched scoring drives around a Marian punt to take a 21-7 lead with just 1:31 to play in the opening half. After Taylor rushed twice to move the chains, Marian faced a third-and-six when Wells took a pitch and darted around left end for a 66-yard score that pulled the Spartans within 21-14 at the intermission.

Wells finished with 122 rushing yards on an efficient four carries as he found the end zone for the seventh and eighth times this season. Along with his clinching score, Cifelli added 39 yards rushing as the Spartans averaged 8.0 yards on 54 totes via the infantry.

Marian displayed it meant business by taking the second-half kickoff and marching 56 yards in eight plays before Taylor scored on a 22-yard burst for a 21-21 count. After the teams swapped scores one more time, the Marian defense finally made the stand that determined the outcome.

After being thwarted on its initial two possessions, the Marian offense scored on six of its final eight chances. The 434 rushing yards were a season-high, but represented the fourth time Marian has eclipsed 300 rushing yards in five games. For Taylor, his season total stands at 873 yards on the ground.

He'll take a shot at the 1,000-yard plateau next Friday when the Spartans host Marist in their Homecoming contest at 7:30 p.m. in Spartan Stadium.

CATEGORY	Marian Catholic	Saint Patrick
First downs	18	24
Rush attempts / yards	54-434	38-237
Passing yards	15	264
Pass completions	2	18
Pass attempts	5	33
Had intercepted	0	1
Fumbles / lost	0 / 0	1 / 0
Penalty yards	3-45	3-23
Next	MARIST	CARMEL CATH

SCORING

- SP-** Ryan Tentler 8-yard run (Juan Gonzalez kick), 2:39 first.
- MC-** Jeruel Taylor 1-yard run (Chris Taborn kick), 8:57 second.
- SP-** Tentler 3-yard run (Gonzalez kick), 5:49 second.
- SP-** Guy DiBalsamo 1-yard run (Gonzalez kick), 1:31 second.
- MC-** Randall Wells 66-yard run (Taborn kick), 0:23 second.
- MC-** Taylor 22-yard run (Taborn kick), 9:14 third.
- SP-** DiBalsamo 1-yard run (Gonzalez kick), 4:59 third.
- MC-** Matt Simmons 6-yard run (Taborn kick), 2:31 third.

MC- Wells 25-yard run (Taborn kick), 6:26 fourth.
MC- Rob Cifelli 10-yard run (Taborn kick), 1:13 fourth.
SP- Anthony Ferraris 58-yard pass from Tentler (Gonzalez kick), 0:53 fourth.

Rushing: MC- Taylor 36-247 (2 TD); Wells 4-122 (2 TD), Cifelli 8-39 (TD), Simmons 4-16 (TD), Eric Hurley 1-8, Troy Nutall 1-2. SP- Tentler 13-81 (2 TD), Quinn Vanderah 9-72, DiBalsamo 13-62 (2 TD), Jeremy Molina 3-22.

Passing: MC- Cifelli 2 of 5, 15 yards, 0 TD, 0 INT. SP- Tentler 18 of 33, 264 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT.

Receiving: MC- Wells 1-12, Lorenzo Aldridge 1-3. SP- DiBalsamo 9-117, Ferraris 3-74 (TD), Michael O'Brien 5-73, Vanderah 1-0.

Interceptions: Justin Harris (MC).

