

GAME 9: Marian Catholic 21, Bloom Township 13

Kickoff: 6 p.m. Friday at Spartan Stadium.

Where: Joe Orr Road, just west of Ashland Avenue, Chicago Heights.

Current overall records: Bloom Township 2-6; Marian Catholic 3-5.

Streaks: Blazing Trojans- 1 loss; Spartans- 3 losses.

Week 8: Rich East 12, Bloom Township 7; Notre Dame 27, Marian Catholic 21.

Last year: Marian Catholic 38, Bloom Township 0.

The series: Marian has captured eight of the last nine contests, outscoring the Blazing Trojans, 73-6, during a current two--game winning streak. The Spartans hold a 10-2 overall series command, as well as a 1-0 mark against Bloom Trail.

Notes: Friday's contest is a varsity-only affair, as lower level games will be played Thursday at Bloom Trail with frosh kickoff at 4:30 p.m. and sophs at approximately 6:30 p.m... the Battle of Chicago Heights will not be played in 2012 because of a scheduling conflict, but the school's are committed to trying to renew the rivalry in the future... this represents the lone nonconference game of the year for Marian, which is 2-0 in its last two regular-season non-league tests... in the last meeting played in Spartan Stadium, the Spartans recorded a 35-6 victory in 2009... Marian senior tailback Jeruel Taylor will try to build on a brilliant season that includes 1,357 rushing yards and 12 total touchdowns... the two schools will also co-host the Eighth Annual Chicago Heights Classic to open the men's basketball season.

Oct. 21	1	2	3	4	Total
BLOOM TWP. BLAZING TROJANS	7	0	0	6	-13
at MARIAN CATHOLIC	0	0	14	7	-21



Marian Coach Dave Mattio earned his 250th victory Friday with a 21-13 nonconference decision over visiting Bloom Township.

Spartans (4-5) top Bloom for Dave Mattio's 250th career victory

Visiting Bloom Township held a first-half 7-0 lead and Marian's Spartan Stadium was lifeless, both on the field and in the stands on Friday.

The Spartans needed something to come to life, so they brought out their Catch-22.

Senior defensive back David Sowell, wearing #22, prevented Bloom from expanding the lead with a second-quarter interception inside the Marian 20-yard line. In the third quarter, he blocked a Blazing Trojan field goal attempt.

That was the play that finally provided a spark.

Marian scored on back-to-back possessions to take the lead for good and eventually gained a milestone victory with a 21-13 nonconference decision over its crosstown rivals.

The decision improved Marian to 4-5 in its season finale and provided 36-year head coach Dave Mattio with his 250th career victory. Ironically, many of those early victories occurred at Marian's former home field, at Bloom's Sarff Field.

"I just had to make a play to get the team energized," explained Sowell of his blocked field goal. The senior also blocked a conversion kick later to preserve a one-point Marian lead. "I just had to take things into my own hands. I try to play 100 percent all the time and I knew it would eventually pay off."

Following the blocked field goal, Spartan senior tailback Jeruel Taylor (19 carries, 103 yards) scored on runs of 53 and 4 yards to give Marian the lead for good.

While it didn't come easily, the Spartans eventually salted away another victory for the IHSA's 16th overall winningest head football coach (250-133 overall).

"He's taught people for a long time how to do things the right way," longtime defensive coordinator Tim Swanson said of his former head coach (middle 1980s) and coaching comrade of 20 years. "He's got on kids when the time called for it and he's consoled kids when they've needed help.

"To have 250 wins in today's environment is unbelievable."

The 250th victory, which included nine of Marian's 11 wins over Bloom (11-2 overall), was very much in doubt until Sowell

provided a spark.

"He's a great coach," Sowell said. "I'm so proud to play for him and to be part of the history of this program."

The Spartans needed Sowell's "Catch 22" ignition on Friday. Marian didn't have a gain of more than 8 yards until its 25th snap, including five plays that went for negative yardage. The home team went to the locker room with a 7-0 deficit and things didn't look much better when Bloom (2-7) took the second-half kickoff and gained three first downs to move inside the Marian 10-yard line.

After the defense held, Sowell blocked the 25-yard field goal attempt and the Marian offense finally responded.

After quarterback Robbie Cifelli rushed for back-to-back first downs, Taylor finally busted loose on a 53-yard scamper to paydirt. Carlos Gallegos booted the first of three conversion kicks to force a 7-7 stalemate with 6:06 to play in the third quarter.

The Spartan defense force a three-and-out, and Marian was back in business on its own 33-yard line.

Eight plays later, Taylor followed Phil Faso and Kevin Pawlak into the end zone from 4 yards out and Marian held the lead a 14-7.

Upset-minded Bloom still had fight in it, however. Despite a huge tackle-for-loss from Sowell, the Blazing Trojans marched 85 yards in 12 plays for the potential tying score.

Enter Sowell, with his second blocked kick to preserve a 14-13 Spartan edge.

Marian bounced right back to add to the cushion. The Spartans moved into the red zone courtesy of first down runs from Cifelli (57 rushing yards) and Matt Simmons (50 rushing yards). Then on a fourth-down play, Cifelli hit Dominic Pascale on an 11-yard slant for the touchdown and a 21-13 lead.

With Sowell leading a secondary of Patrick Swanson, Justin Harris, John Hotchkiss and Jason Martinez, the defense held two more times to preserve the victory. Marian eventually stamped out the last Bloom blaze with an interception by Martinez.

With Pascale (three catches, 50 yards) as his primary target, Cifelli finished five of 10 for 79 yards.

Things weren't quite as easy as Mattio's first victory, a 20-0 decision over Bolingbrook in 1976. However, he had some seniors looking to go out with a win on his side on Friday.

"We had to go out with a big one tonight," an elated Sowell said. "We just wanted to go out with a bang for all the seniors."

CATEGORY	Bloom Twp.	Marian Catholic
First downs	12	15
Rush attempts / yards	35-158	48-210
Passing yards	88	79
Pass completions	6	5
Pass attempts	17	10
Had intercepted	2	0
Fumbles / lost	1 / 0	4 / 1
Penalty yards	4-40	0
Next	season over	season over

SCORING

BT- Shijuan Rogers 22-yard pass from LaVante Blackful (Eufemio Fonseca kick), 5:34 first.

MC- Jeruel Taylor 53-yard run (Carlos Gallegos kick), 6:06 third.

MC- Taylor 4-yard run (Gallegos kick), 1:13 third.

BT- Blackful 10-yard run (kick blocked), 8:31 fourth.

MC- Dominic Pascale 11-yard pass from Robbie Cifelli (Gallegos kick), 5:27 fourth.

Rushing: BT- Blackful 25-150 (TD), Kevin McGinnis 9-10, Randall Wade 1-(minus 2). MC- Taylor 19-103 (2 TD), Cifelli 21-57, Matt Simmons 4-50, Randall Wells 2-3, Eric Hurley 2-(minus 3).

Passing: BT- Blackful 6 of 15, 88 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT; Justin Banks 0 of 2, 0 yards, 0 TD, 1 INT. MC- Cifelli 5 of 10, 79 yards, 1 TD, 0 INT.

Receiving: BT- Rogers 2-46 (TD), Malcom Hurt 1-27, Banks 1-19, Charles DeLoach 1-(minus 4). MC- Pascale 3-50 (TD), Taylor 1-17, Wells 1-12.

Interceptions: David Sowell, Jason Martinez (MC).

