

Marian Catholic 34, Homewood-Flossmoor 18

Marian Catholic starts off on right foot

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(Photos by Carol Dorsett)
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More things went right for Marian Catholic during the first 20 minutes of Friday night's nonconference opener against visiting Homewood-Flossmoor than they probably did for the Spartans in their final five games of 2008.



A lot more will go right if the Marian Catholic backfield keeps resembling a set of hammers.

Capitalizing on a handful of H-F mistakes to blow the game open early, the Spartans cruised 34-18 behind three rushing touchdowns by Joe Sanfratello and two from Joe Hess to claim the SouthtownStar Rivalry Series Turf War trophy.

The win matched Marian Catholic's victory total from 2008.

"Being 1-8 last year was painful," Spartans coach Dave Mattio said. "These kids committed themselves. We had a talk this week about competition and competing with one another and I think it's sunk in what the need is on our part."

The fun - for Marian, anyway - began when sophomore quarterback John Rhode and the backfield trio of Joe Walker, Hess and Sanfratello took the Spartans 61 yards on their second possession. Hess had the final plunge from the 1 with 51.4 seconds left in the first period, and kicker Adam Hutchison booted the first of four extra points.

H-F began to unravel on its next possession. Running back Malik Norman fumbled on the first play and Michael Foster recovered for Marian at the 11. Three plays later Sanfratello went in from the 1.

Hutchison's ensuing kickoff was a high one and hit the ground before an H-F player could catch it. Tony Alozie grabbed it for Marian at the 18. Another 1-yard TD run by Sanfratello and a PAT by Hutchison made it 21-0 with 8:09 remaining in the half.

H-F then committed three personal foul penalties over the next five minutes. Marian made the Vikings pay by scoring with 3:48 showing on a 5-yard run by Sanfratello.

"I did not see that coming at all," said Sanfratello, who missed much of 2008 with a broken collarbone. "I thought it was going to be a battle the whole way. But things went our way. It just felt nice to be actually winning for a change at halftime."



Hess made it 34-0 Marian with a 2-yard run midway through the third period.

H-F didn't quit.

Sophomore quarterback Tim Williams threw TD passes of 18 and 55 yards to Norman and 16 yards to Gerald Butler.

