

GAME 1: Marian Catholic 42, Hyde Park 3

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

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

Live media: game broadcast on [High School Cube](#).

2012 records: Hyde Park 6-3; Marian Catholic 1-8.

Streaks: Thunderbirds- 2 losses; Spartans- 3 losses.

Next week: Harper at Hyde Park (Sat., 3 p.m.); Shepard at Marian Catholic (Fri., 7:30 p.m.).

Last meeting: This will mark the first meeting between the schools.

The series: The Spartans have not competed against a Chicago Public League foe since a 49-7 victory over Chicago Bogan in the Class 7A playoffs in 2009.

Notes: Friday will mark the debut of Coach Jerry Verde, a 1995 Marian grad who helped lead the Spartans to the IHSA Class 3A state championship as a player in 1993... The Spartans have split their last six season openers, winning every time in the odd numbered years... The powerful ESCC conference sent six of nine teams to the IHSA playoffs last fall... Marian's last victory at Spartan Stadium came with a 38-0 nonconference pasting of Champaign Central last Sept. 28... The Spartans will actually start their 2013 schedule with three consecutive home games at Spartan Stadium.

Aug. 31	1	2	3	4	Total
HYDE PARK THUNDERBIRDS	0	0	0	3	-3
at MARIAN CATHOLIC SPARTANS	21	21	0	0	-42



Marian's Chris Taborn boots one of six conversions Saturday during the Spartans' 42-3 nonconference victory over Hyde Park.

Spartans rout Hyde Park in season opener, Verde's return

Efficiency was the name of the game as Marian Catholic began the Jerry Verde coaching era on Saturday night. By the time the Spartans had run five offensive plays, the home team jumped to a 21-0 command and made the debut of 1995 graduate Verde a laugher in a 42-3 nonconference victory. Marian (1-0), which hosts Shepard on Friday, turned the contest into a second-half running clock after vaulting to a 42-0 halftime differential.

Marian compiled just seven first downs in the contest (all in the first half), as Ki-Jana Crawford scored twice on returns and a dominant Spartan defense set up the home squad with superb field position throughout the opening half.

Following a 1-8 campaign last fall, Marian made sure it set the tone for equaling that win total on Saturday night. Just 13 seconds into the contest, Marian claimed a 7-0 command when senior Ki-Jana Crawford raced 82 yards with the opening kickoff. The first of six conversion kicks by Chris Taborn gave Marian a 7-0 command and one that would never be challenged.

Marian scored on four of its next five possessions, all on touchdown runs by Dillon Burns. By the 7:57 mark of the second quarter, the lead had swelled to 35-0.

"The line blocked the edge very well tonight," understated Burns, who needed just seven carries to compile 85

rushing yards and the four scores. "The offensive line was very focused and got the job done."

The likes of Jarek Harrington, Vincent Magana, Brian Richardson, Kyle Taylor, Justin Avant and Drew Robinson opened holes for touchdown runs of 44, 7, 9 and 4 yards by Burns.

Between the two return touchdowns and great field position, Marian was unable to compile gaudy numbers on the offensive end. The Spartans rushed for 102 yards and senior quarterback Patrick Schmidt was for 4-of-6 for 80 yards.

After a two-play, 77-yard drive gave Marian a 14-0 advantage, the Spartans started their next six possessions in Thunderbird territory.

A stingy defensive line of Bryan Hurt, Tim Mason (sack), Apelete Houngbo and Robinson helped limit Hyde Park to four first downs and 62 total yards. Meanwhile, linebackers Emilio Garza, Kyle Taylor and Jared Rogers spent plenty of time in the Thunderbird backfield, as 12 of 42 snaps went for zero or negative yardage.

While things seemed easy at times on Saturday, the Spartans are pleased to equal their 2012 win total in the opening game of the season.

"It's real good to get a win under our belts," explained Burns, who also pulled in a reception for 30 yards. "Now we know we can play well and have a good year."

Burns assured that the clock would run in the second half. With 7:30 to play in the opening quarter, his 7-yard touchdown dash gave the Spartans a 21-0 command.

The senior tailback scored from 9 and 4 yards away in the second period, as none of Marian's first four offensive scoring drives lasted more than four plays. After the 77-yard scoring drive, the next three Marian scoring drives started at the Hyde Park 34-, 39- and 25-yard lines.

The Spartans capped off the first-half scoring with 3:43 to play in the half, as Crawford grabbed a punt and dashed 45 yards for a 42-0 command. Crawford also hauled in a pair of Schmidt passes for 17 yards and added a sack on the defensive side of the ball. Emilio Garza had the other Spartan reception, hauling in an aerial for 33 yards.

With several reserves in action and the clock running after intermission, Hyde Park notched the lone first down of the second half. The lone movement of the chains led to a 28-yard field goal by Thunderbird Mohamed Sylla to conclude the scoring for the night.

The debut for Verde, who helped lead Marian to the 1993 IHSA Class 4A state crown as a player, was an easy one. While Marian certainly expects challenges to get tougher, the early momentum is clearly welcome.

"This was a big confidence-booster," Burns said. "Now we know we can do something. We executed pretty well tonight and we know we can score some points."

Freshmen: The young Spartans opened the campaign with a 12-0 shutout of Niles West.

CATEGORY	Hyde Park	Marian Catholic
First downs	4	7
Rush attempts / yards	37-59	20-102
Passing yards	0	80
Pass completions	1	4
Pass attempts	5	6
Had intercepted	1	0
Fumbles / lost	1 / 0	2 / 1
Penalty yards	2-20	5-34
Next	HARPER	SHEPARD

SCORING

MC- Ki-Jana Crawford 82-yard kickoff return (Chris Taborn kick), 11:47 first.

MC- Dillon Burns 44-yard run (Taborn kick), 9:29 first.

MC- Burns 7-yard run (Taborn kick), 6:37 first.

MC- Burns 9-yard run (Taborn kick), 9:54 second.

MC- Burns 4-yard run (Taborn kick), 6:19 second.

MC- Crawford 45-yard punt return (Taborn kick), 3:43 second.

HP- Mohamed Sylla 28-yard field goal, 3:00 fourth.

Rushing: HP- Antwon Carter 15-25, Derek Austin 10-23, Malik Blan 5-14, Kendell Lashley 4-3, Thomas Hawkins 1-3, Reginald White 1-4, Kimani Harris 1-(minus 10). MC- Burns 7-85, 4 TD, Garza 1-16, Crawford 1-8, Matthew Mindak 3-(minus 1), Steven Adams 6-(minus 2), Andrew Leavell 2-(minus 4).

Passing: HP- Harris 1 of 4, 0 yards; Austin 0 of 1, 0 yards, 1 INT. MC- Patrick Schmidt 4 of 6, 80 yards, 0 TD, 0 INT.

Receiving: HP- Austin 1-0. MC- Garza 1-33, Burns 1-30, Crawford 2-17.

Interceptions: Jared Rogers (MC).

