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After 81-6 Have Spartans Quit? 'I Don't Know,' Joe

By Jack Jeneson

What do you tell your football team after they've taken a brutal beating? How do you get them ready for their next game?

A much-shaken Joe DeSoto of Marian, his nerves jangling like a conductor's change pocket, wasn't sure of the answer to either question this week, as his Spartans began preparations for Saturday's final home game – a 2 p.m. encounter with Thornton Fractional South at Bloom field.

To learn why DeSoto is distraught these days, let's go back to 10 p.m. last Saturday and watch a tableau unfold. The Spartans' game with Gary Andean had just ended at Gary's Gilroy Stadium and DeSoto gathered his charges beneath the goalposts.

"Look at that," he said, pointing to the scoreboard, "and remember it."

The board read: Andean 81, Marian 6.

"I told you he (Andean Coach Red Dornbos) would run it up," DeSoto offered to an aide. "Well. . .?"

Evidently, not all of Marian's gridders took the setback quite as hard as DeSoto. "They were taking it all as a big joke at practice Monday," he said.

Did that mean the Spartans could laugh off the loss and try to salvage something of the season in their remaining four games?

Or did it mean Marian gridders were throwing in the towel, indifferent to the possibility of adding four more losses to their first five?

"I don't know," admitted DeSoto.

But picking up the pieces has to begin somewhere— and begin it did this week. The Marian coach opened the week by hustling ailing halfback Mike Schreiber over to the whirlpool bath at Bloom, hopeful that the swirling waters would soothe the young speedster's injured hip enough to enable him to face TF South Saturday.

DeSoto already is faced with the fact that quarterback Tim Tierney, who has a bone chip in his elbow and didn't face Andean, will not be available until the final game of the season- if at all.

Thus the quarterback duties will fall mainly to Bob Dyke, who'll be flanked in the backfield Saturday by Jerry Nicholas, Joe Bijak and either Jack or Mike Schreiber. Bijak, incidentally, scored Marian's only touchdown last week on an 80-yard kickoff return.

To beat TF South, the Spartans must concentrate on stopping the Rebels' passing game. South has two first-rate throwers in Bob VanLaningham and Norm Quenzler and an outstanding end in Bill Ciskos.

VanLaningham is the more accurate short passer, but can throw the long strike on occasion. Quenzler's appearance usually heralds a long pass.

The Spartan pass defense against Andean was something less than sensational as the victors completed their first seven passes for 154 yards.

TF South's best success on the ground to date has come from end runs with flashy Ron Taylor heading the Rebel halfback corps. South fullback John Sweet is a far cry from Alan Ameche, but he's a strong enough runner to prevent the defense from overloading the flanks.

The less said about the Andrean fiasco, the better— as far as Marian partisans are concerned. But, for the record, here is the capsule summary:

1. Andrean's 476 yards rushing was 82 more than Marian's first four opponents (Maryville, Plainfield, St. Francis DeSales and St. Francis of Wheaton) were able to manage. (Marian's rushing total Saturday: 15 yards).
2. Andrean's total yardage (630) was six yards more than the combined total registered by Marian's first four foes. (Marian's total yardage Saturday: 17).
3. The 59ers' first down total Saturday (34) equaled the combined output of Marian's first four foes. (The Spartans' first down total: 3, two of them by penalty).
4. Andrean's point total against Marian was only two less than the combined efforts of the first four Spartan foes. Also, the 30-point first half effort of the 59ers' Dale Marino equaled Marian's entire five-game scoring output.

The Gary team's offensive show also was abetted by these two factors:

1. The 59ers had possession of the ball 89 plays to Marian's 32.
2. Marian relinquished the ball seven times on errors— five times on fumbles and twice by failure to cover kickoffs.

If it's any consolation to Spartan fans, things have to get better this week. Just how much better remains to be seen.