

# Marian Taborn Deny Marist Share Of ESCC Crown



## ***Chris Taborn***

*Kevin Kelly, Marian Catholic*

*Marian Catholic goal Chris Taborn clears the net during Wednesday's game against Marist.*

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## **Marian Catholic 0, Marist 0, 2OT**

Chris Taborn made seven saves for the Spartans.

CHICAGO HEIGHTS | For a change, especially in Chris Taborn's four years on the varsity, Marian Catholic's boys soccer team has bigger plans than playing spoiler in the East Suburban Catholic.

"I think we can win the regional," said Taborn, Marian's goalie.

But for a day, playing spoiler was nice.

"I heard (Marist's players) yelling, 'this is for conference,'" Taborn said. "I thought, 'We're not going to let them win conference on our field.'"

Marist is now tasked with winning Thursday at perennial power St. Viator, unbeaten and unscored on in league play, to secure its first outright conference crown ever after playing Marian to a 0-0, double-overtime tie in Chicago Heights.

"Our energy was the key," Marian coach Nasser Shahtaji said. "Our kids played with real intensity. The fighting spirit was there."

Occasionally, too much so. As Marian (13-5-5, 2-2-3) headed toward the bench at the end of the first half, two Spartans players were engaged in a heated argument.

"We were getting kind of frustrated," Taborn, not one of the combatants, said. "It happens. We talked at halftime and said, 'Boys, whatever happened, it's over.'"

As the second half wore on, Marist (13-4-1, 6-0-1) was the team doing the bickering.

"I was a little disappointed," Marist coach Sean Maxwell said. "With 11 straight wins, sometimes you don't have the opportunity to learn how to deal with adversity. It's an important coaching moment."

Marist put itself in position to win the conference by beating Benet 2-0 last week. In September, Benet beat Marian 5-1.

"When we have a full team like this, we could beat Benet, too," said Taborn, whose previous Marian teams never won more than nine games. "We were missing three guys when we played them."

Marist outshot the Spartans 7-3, but Taborn got his 10th shutout of the season. Four of those came in the first half, including one as the 6-foot Taborn dived to his right, punching away a Brian Greenfield effort.

Marian's leading scorer, Alec Guarino, had two shots on goal for the Spartans in the first half. But the RedHawks otherwise did a nice job bottling him up, often with a double-team.

Neither team put a shot on net in either overtime period.

Marian may have suffered a costly injury. At the 14:26 mark of the second half, Cody Rodas, a junior midfielder, went out with a left ankle injury. The Spartans finished with two players on the bench.

"He's our captain and playmaker," Shahtaji said. "It's going to be a huge loss if he can't come back for the playoffs."

The Spartans, seeded fourth in the Lincoln-Way West Sectional, are the highest-seeded team in the Rich East Regional, which begins Oct. 22.