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Vikings, Marian Initiate Rivalry

'We're Set,' Says Spartans Coach

By Bob Lueder

"We're ready, both physically and mentally for Homewood-Flossmoor," said Marian coach Tom Mitchell regarding the season opening grid contest Saturday.

Mitchell, who came to Marian this season after serving as an assistant at Mount Carmel, thinks the game at H-F will be the key to his season.

Marian is classed by most local observers as being a young school in a weak league.

Athletic Director Don Berg has been making attempts over the past two years to book a tough schedule, but the response was not too favorable.

Now the Spartans are in the thick of what could be a strong rivalry and the top opening game in the South Suburban area.

"If we don't beat them (H-F), they'll know it was a real battle all the way," was the way Mitchell put it.

The youthful and aggressive Marian coach is high on his veteran club and points to both the H-F and Gary Andean matches as the biggest obstacles.

Saturday's game could turn into a battle of speed with the Vikings hoping to spring Steve Biitner loose and Marian countering with Jerry Nicolas and Steve Bergstrom.

Bergstrom went into last spring's district track finals with the best clocking for the 100 yard dash while Biitner was tops in the 440.

Just a step behind Bergstrom, Nicolas was Marian's top offensive weapon last year and is out to set some new or top his own marks this season.

Tim Tierney will open at quarterback, but will be relieved at times by Dennis Schmal. Jack Thar, a junior slot-back, will be the only member of the backfield who has not started a varsity game.

The only underclassmen that will be in the offensive line are end Joe Kalinowski and tackle Dave Mattio, both up from starting roles with last year's frosh-soph squad.

Ed Scott will be the other end, while John Mulhollan teams with Mattio at tackle. The pair were regulars at year ago, but Mulhollan will be shifting from an end position.

Working in the middle of the line are guards Tom Bijak and Tony Schrementi, while Tom Czech rates a slight edge over Emery Harmon to handle the center duties.

Only three changes will be made when the Spartans switch to the defense, with Tim Massey, Chuck Urewicz and Jim Ranierir moving into the lineup.

"We're bound to do some changing once we get under game conditions, but at the present, this is the lineup we hope to win with," Mitchell remarked.

This is the closest Marian will be home until October 10 when it meets Andean in a homecoming contest. The Spartans will play at Lockport West and Little Flower after H-F.