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Spartans See Win As Title Guarantee

By Bob Lueder

The Catholic Metropolitan conference crown will be on the line when Marian travels to Gary Andean for its only night contest of the season at 7:30 o'clock Saturday.

"Andean has a fine looking club, most likely the strongest we'll face, but we'll be ready," coach Norm Mack said.

Mack watched the Fighting 59'ers as they whipped Gary Roosevelt 9-0 last week and reported his opponents were a sound club in all phases of the game.

It will mark the fifth meeting of the two teams and the Spartans were handed some one-sided losses, with the exception of last year when Andean scored on the final play of the first half to win 7-0.

A pair of starters are back from that team in tackle Bob Bainton and halfback Don Warner. The latter does the bulk of Andean's ball carrying and is an outstanding kicker.

Tom Rykovich is the quarterback, while John Bennett and Bill Coggins round out the backfield of the 59'ers, a team that has posted a 3-won, 1-lost record to date.

Marian won its first game of the year, 13-6 over Little Flower, but that was its first struggle in the CMC. Andean also dumped the Lancers by a touchdown earlier in the year.

"We'll stand pat with the lineup that was used in the Little Flower game," Mack declared. "I was hoping Cerulli (Claudio) would be recovered from his injury for the game, but that won't come true."

The backfield that got Marian's offense on the move was made up of Mike Platt, Mark Klausner and Tim Massey doing the running, Jack Thar the blocker and Greg Lee calling the signals.

Cerulli, who was slated to be the Spartans leading runner, has his leg out of a cast and is doing light workouts in preparation for a return to action.

"I would have to rate Andean a little tougher than Homewood-Flossmoor," Mack said. "However, we've got to show a lot of improvement."

Guido Damiani, a junior guard, is one player that is lending a big help to the line. Damiani's role is to allow Mack to rest the other members of the line so they can play on defense.

The move has allowed Mike Fanning and John Towle to be rated as two of the best linebackers in the area as they are now used mainly on defense.

Platt has now moved well in front as the team's top runner, with 137 yards gained in the Little Flower victory to give him a four-yard average in 44 carries this year.

The 175-pound senior is also aiding Marian with his punting.

"We could still be a far better ball club if we had one breakaway runner," Mack commented. Jim Olson, a junior, is the fastest back on the team and is slated to get a chance to perform.

Mack reported early in the year that much of his offense would be in the passing department, but the Spartans have gained only 89 yards there to date.

The coach is still hopeful Lee's arm will come around as the Spartans have a pair of capable receivers in ends Joe Kalinowski and Steve Grivish.

Marian came out of the Little Flower game without injuries and Mack said his club will be sound for the Andrean game.