

Marquette Catholic captures its fifth victory over MELHS 48-0

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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MADISON – Marquette Catholic had a huge opportunity presented to them Friday night after East Alton-Wood River defeated South Fork 13-6 thanks to a last-minute touchdown pass.

The chance to take sole possession of first place in the Prairie State Conference.

The Explorers didn't waste the opportunity as they defeated **Metro East Lutheran-Madison** 48-0 Saturday afternoon at **Sam Dymas Memorial Field** at **Madison High's campus**, thanks to **D'Avion Peebles** running for 58 yards and three touchdowns while finding John Blachford (who scored twice on the day) for a 21-yard touchdown pass in the third term and a 70-yard, one touchdown performance from Treven Swingler on the ground.

The win put the Explorers at 5-2 overall and 5-0 in the PSC, a game ahead of South Fork who fell to 4-1 in the league after their loss to the Oilers Friday night with two games to go. Marquette hosts Mount Olive at 7 p.m. Oct. 15 and travels to South Fork for a 7 p.m. Oct. 21 game with the Ponies. The Knights fell to 0-7 overall, 0-5 in the league.

“The defense has played well all year,” said **Explorer coach Darrell Angelson** about the Marquette performance Saturday. “The last rushing touchdown we gave up was in the second quarter of (the Explorers' Week 2 loss) to (Breese) Mater Dei. The front six have been touch all year, and the thing is, our pass coverage has been improving.”

Once the Explorer defense holds an opponent, it gives the Explorer single-wing offense a chance to dictate what happens next. “At any given time,” Angleton said, “I can speed it up or I can run no-huddle, but I can also take my time and grind the clock out.

“Both D'Avion and Tre have both thrown a touchdown pass, but the thing is that when people think – you can watch it on film and say, 'I see what they're doing.' The thing is, when you run the single-wing and I'm running, running, running on you, it makes it difficult to defend any passing, and these guys sell it really well.”

Knight coach Matt Tschudy knew his team was in for a huge challenge this week with the Explorers. “Marquette's a pretty good football team,” Tschudy said. “They've got some pretty big, athletic linemen and linebackers, so we knew going into this week it was going to be a tough challenge for us.

“We're a pretty young team with a lot of freshmen and sophomores; our line isn't anything huge, so we knew it was going to be a challenge. We were proud of them that they stuck through it for four quarters.”

Tschudy and his staff realize it hasn't been an easy task for the Knights. "Obviously, you want to try to keep it positive," Tschudy said. "Most of the players on the team are freshmen and sophomores, so we realize we have a young team; I think they realize it. At the (junior varsity) level, we're 3-0; that's important."

The Knight defense did come up big a couple of times early on, forcing a field-goal attempt by Liam Maher that went wide early on, but the Explorers got on the board first four seconds from quarter time when Peebles scored from six yards out and Maher added the convert to give Marquette a 7-0 lead. Marquette scored again with 4:27 left in the second when Brady McAfee hit Blachford from 2 yards out for a 13-0 lead, the extended it when Peebles ran it in from 10 yards out for a 20-0 lead for the Explorers at the half.

Knight miscues allowed the floodgates to open up in the third term when Peebles ran it in from 12 yards out and Peebles hit Blachford from 21 yards out to extend the lead to 34-0. Swingler then scored from 3 yards out with 2:49 left to get the Marquette lead to 40-0 and trigger the running-clock rule; Jake Reiter capped the scoring right before three-quarter time with a 12-yard carry to make it 48-0 after Maher's convert.

Marquette hit all five passing attempts they had on the day, McAfee going 3-for-3 and Peebles and Jayce Maag each hitting their only attempts; Damien James was 3-for-10 passing for the Knights for 24 yards; the Marquette defense held the Knights to minus-27 yards of total offense while the Explorers had 242 yards of total offense on the day.

The Knights travel to Pawnee for a 7 p.m. Friday game, the conclude the regular season with a 7 p.m. Oct. 21 game at Bunker Hill.

