

# Defensive lineman James Malone is one of Marquette Catholic's unsung heroes

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
October 23 2016 7:36 AM



**ALTON** – Defensive linemen can sometimes be unsung heroes on a football team. The chaos a defensive line can create, however, sometimes means the difference between victory and defeat.

Some great defensive lines in the game's history have become celebrated for their ability to disrupt a team's offensive game plan, though. **Marquette Catholic's junior defensive tackle James Malone** has had several such games this season. He is now preparing for the rest of the Explorers to host a playoff game this week.

“It has been fun and a great season,” Malone said of the Explorer season. “Recently, I came off a four-week injury, a torn meniscus (cartilage). I came back to practice and worked hard. The team was out there supporting me.

“The coaches call me 'manimal', but I couldn't do it without my friends. That's like my brothers out there; they're out there supporting me, they want me back in there. When they do that, this is what happens.”

Malone said no matter what, the Explorers come out and play 100 percent in both practices and games.

"We never take it easy," Malone said. "I've learned you practice like you play. You do it in a game, and this is what happens – you get these victories like this.”

The Explorers concluded the regular season with seven straight Prairie State Conference wins to go with no defeats. The Explorers are 7-2 overall for the season. Marquette Catholic will host 7-2 Taylorville in the opening round of the Class 3A playoffs this week. Date and game time of Marquette's playoff opener will be announced Monday.

Malone has his sights set on some far more loftier goals than just the conference title.

“We want a state championship,” Malone said; the Explorers reached the 1982 Class 3A final, falling to Kankakee Bishop McNamara that year. “We want one for Marquette. We want state.”