

Even Bullets Don't Stop Gandino's Love of Game



Vinny Gandino

Vincent Gandino (St. Francis Prep): The whole Terriers offense. He alternated between halfback and quarterback and sometimes lined up as a wide receiver. He was also the punter (32.3 average) and played cornerback earlier in the year.

"He was truly a versatile performer," said veteran coach Vince O'Connor.

Marc Thompson (Bayside): An explosive receiver, Thompson was

It was late in Vincent Gandino's high school career when he got the opportunity to play college football. I-AA Marist College came calling for the former St. Francis Prep star's services, and the former all-

"I felt weak. I wasn't too was in the b shot down."

Gunshot Victim Returns to Marist

Former St. Francis Prep Star Inspires Teammates

By **ROBERT PINCUS**

One year ago, Vincent Gandino was shot twice after a car accident, putting his budding football career in jeopardy. The former St. Francis Prep star has since rehabilitated and is the leading candidate to be a starting defensive back for Marist College this fall.

Gandino was returning home around four in the morning on the night of Aug. 15 of last year when another car tried to pass him at a stop sign.

"My left rear wheel and his right front one scraped when he tried to pass me," Gandino said. "When I got out of the car, I saw the other car there with a weird calm look on its face, starting Tuesday, as they aimed an attack with a two-run drive to the endzone."

"Sitting in the hospital I must times 'Why me?'," he added. "I had the summer and then this happened."

Gandino's parents wanted him to get off after the accident, but he wanted to stay at home. He thought it would be better to stay at home. He started work shortly after classes started.

"I got right back into working out here even though the doctors told me to rest for a few months," Gandino said. "I'm not the kind of person who gives up."

Marist coach Jim Parody has praised Gandino's work effort.

"He has a love for the game and a life," the coach said. "We told him to know that he wanted to get back on the field as soon as possible."

Gandino worked hard this summer to get back on the field.

1993 ALL-STATE

QUEENS



MARK H. BICKEL



COMMENTARY

Gandino is well aware of his blessings

Vincent Gandino remembers looking down at his white shirt and seeing it turn red. Blood red.

And he remembers a lot more from the night when three bullets punctured his body and a fourth just missed him as he stood on a section of

Marist's Gandino overcomes adversity

Sophomore recovers from gun shooting; now a key player

By **Rich Thomaselli**

If you are looking for reasons why the Marist College football team is 3-1, if you are looking for good stories off of this team, look no further than Vinnie Gandino.

A sophomore defensive back, Gandino has played superbly in the first four games of this season. Satisfaction.

He had his heart set at playing from Sullivan. And he

AT A GLANCE

MARIST AT IONA

When: Today, noon
Where: Mazella Field, New Rochelle
Radio: WKIP (1450 AM)

perbly, competently, horribly... does it really make a difference? That Gandino is playing at all is success enough. That he is thriving and making important contributions to the Red Foxes is icing on the cake.

He will be back out there again

today when Marist wraps up a four-game road trip with a Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference game against Iona. The Red Foxes are 3-1 overall and 1-0 in the MAAC. The Gaels are 1-2 overall, 1-1 in the MAAC. Kickoff at Mazella Field is at Noon.

It is an important game as far as MAAC supremacy goes. Of course, every game for Gandino is an important triumph.

Two summers ago, before he was to make the trip north from his Maspeth home for his first collegiate football camp, Gandino was out with some friends attending a movie. On the way home, his car

was bumped from behind while stopped at a traffic light. Gandino and his friends got out of the car to assess the damage and talk to the other driver.

The other driver had no intentions of listening.

He pulled a gun and shot Gandino three times. In fact, one of the bullets is still lodged in Gandino's arm, but apparently poses no threat to his playing.

Naturally, Gandino's freshman year at Marist — at least as far as playing football — was wiped out. He still attended classes and did well. And now, for his sophomore year, he is back to show everybody

Please see **Marist**, 3C



Darryl Bautista/Poughkeepsie Journal

Vinny Gandino is sixth on the team in tackles with 25.

Wilson, Gandino lead locals in MAAC

By **ROBERT PINCUS**

Mario Wilson and Vincent Gandino don't differ with the coaches pre-season poll which named Marist College third in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Football League. The two Catholic High School Athletic

"Mario is also a great returner for us."

In 1996, Wilson led Marist with six interceptions, including one for a touchdown.

"I have to make sure we don't miss big plays and pick off some passes. The right calls," Wilson said at the

Wilson likes the idea of playing in the backfield with a fellow CHSAA alumni. The

partly because of the Francis quarterback Tom his anterior cruciate

SPORTS SECTION

Thursday, September 16, 1993

Francis Defeats Kellenberg for First Win

BY **BOSSCO, MATT TURK**

Francis Prep 14, Kellenberg 10. Vincent Gandino played six positions and compiled 10 carries on offense to lead the St. Francis Prep team to a win over Kellenberg on Saturday at the Bayside High School Athletic Field.

Gandino caught three passes, including a reception for the last score of 63 yards from passes. He had 71 yards on 10 carries out of the back position. "His running was very, very good," head coach Vince O'Connor said. "He's a clever, instinctive runner as far as using Gandino in positions seems to be going in the right direction."

