

The old “throw out the record books” cliché lived up to its hype Sept. 16 when Franklin gave Oil City all it could handle — at least in the first half.

The winless Knights bottled up Ethen Knox but good, but in the end the star running back got his yards and the Oilers got their win by a 36-15 count.

The Knights even drew first blood, taking an 8-0 lead with 6:23 left in the first half on a 7-yard run by Bryson Watson and Cole Buckley’s PAT after a fake kick. A 32-yard pass from junior quarterback Jason Carey to Trystin Boocks preceded the TD.

This was after Darrius Graham tossed Knox for a 3-yard loss on a fourth down play from the Oil City 38. At that point, Knox had just 27 yards on 13 carries.

Needless to say, the Knights were over the moon over that sequence of events.

But Oil City quickly responded and the balloon was somewhat deflated.

On the second play after the kickoff, sophomore quarterback Cole Findlay tossed a 61-yard strike to speedster De’Vaughn Griffen for an Oiler first down on the Franklin 15. Three plays later, Knox was in the end zone after an 11-yard run before adding the PAT.

Tie score, 8-8. And slowly but surely, it was pretty much all Oil City after that.

There was an exchange of interceptions (Oil City’s Hank Lockhart and Franklin’s Dreyden Payne) before the Knights were forced to punt.

Then the Oilers took the lead for good after another big play not involving Knox – 58-yard punt return to the 22 by Sean Alexander.

Three plays later, Findlay threw a 10-yard touchdown to Justen Dunkle, giving the Oilers a 14-8 lead 30 seconds before halftime.

Oil City extended the lead to 22-8 after a Findlay interception on Franklin’s first possession of the second half. With the Oilers starting on the FHS 41, Knox carried five straight times, scoring from the 6. Findlay passed to Jon Hargenrader for the PAT and it was 22-8.

Meanwhile, Knox was now nearing the 100-yard mark.

The Knights did have one more answer, though. A 34-yard burst by Watson (20/74) gave them a first down on the OCHS 12 before tight end-turned-fullback Alex Wible rumbled into the end zone with Nate Pfennigwerth adding the kick to cut the lead to 22-15.

The Oilers, however, were not finished, scoring on their next two possessions on runs of 18 and 60 yards plus a PAT by Knox to set what turned out to be the final score just as the third quarter was ending.

By this time, Knox was well over 200 yards – finishing with 262 on 39 carries.

He moved into fourth place on the District 10 all-time rushing list ahead of Sharon's T.J. Phillips with more than 6,300 yards. His four and two PATs also gave him 488 career points – 12 shy of 500.

While Franklin was thwarting Knox in the first half, Oil City was containing the Knights' passing game, which racked up some 250 yards last week against McLane. Besides the two INTs, the Oilers had at least three sacks and Henry Milford (now No. 85 for the time being) batted another pass down at the line of scrimmage. And Buckley, an all-timer on the Franklin receiving list, was limited to one catch for minus 2 yards.

The Oilers outgained the Knights, 402-126.

Hargenrader (4/62) replaced Knox at tailback about midway through the fourth quarter. When the Oilers reached the Franklin 18 with 1:20 left, they took a knee on their last two plays.

And then they got out of Dodge...aka Franklin...fast.

OIL SPILLS -- The Oilers are 24-8 vs. Franklin since 1994; the Knights counter with a 31-4-1 mark against the Oilers from 1958-93...Oil City has won seven straight against Franklin...Linebacker Kevin Pearsall continues to lead the Oilers in tackles on the season with 30. His six against the Knights gave him 200 for his career...Hank Lockhart led Oil City in tackles with nine and Ben Garland added eight...While the Knights have stymied Knox at the start in each of the last two meetings, the Oilers pulled a few surprises out of their bag of tricks by so-called lesser knowns. There was Hayden Wilson's 44-yard TD reception last year and the catch by Griffen and punt return by Alexander this year. Not to mention Dunkle's TD grab on fourth down...Knox is Oil City's all-time touchdown leader with 70, moving ahead of Christian Cole (68)...Knox finished his career with 1,176 yards rushing in three games against Franklin, easily the most dominating player stats-wise in the 127-year history of the series...As for long runs for touchdowns (40 yards or more), Knox trails Cole, 20-17...Pfennigwerth was 3/3 in touchbacks with a long KO of 69 yards and averaged 43.5 on six punts, including a long of 61 yards...