

Oilers' defense carries team to 34-0 victory against Metro East-Madison

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WOOD RIVER — Before Friday night’s game against Metro East Lutheran-Madison at Memorial Stadium, East Alton-Wood River head coach Garry Herron’s game plan was simple: Come out of the blocks fast and dominate.

By the end of the first quarter of the Oilers 34-0 win over the Knights, it was mission accomplished as the Oilers struck for four touchdowns in the opening term.

“We dominated right off the bat,” Herron said. “I just wish that we could have done that throughout the whole game.”

The Oiler defense took care of the rest, only allowing the Knights three first downs—all in the second half—and only one sustained drive late in the game.

“The defense carried the whole team,” Herron said. “They did an amazing job. Even when they got their first first down in the second half, after that, we didn’t quit. Our kids kept playing, (then) we got a turnover. They did an excellent job.”

MEL-Madison coach Matt Tschudy was in agreement that the Oilers’ dominant first quarter was the difference.



“The first quarter—horrible football. Absolutely horrible football,” Tschudy said. “The second, third and fourth quarter, very pleased with the football game. We go to smash mouth football, we’re hitting people, they’re hitting people, I mean, that’s what the game’s all about.

“We’re very happy with the second, third and fourth quarter,” Tschudy continued. “Our defense really stepped up. But that first quarter, as you saw, it was bad football. We didn’t come out ready, we didn’t come out prepared, and that’s what killed us.”

The Oilers came out buzzing on the opening possession, going 61 in seven plays to establish control early. Zach Womack carried the load in the drive, while quarterback Justin Englar mixed in a couple of passes to both Christian Hunter and T.J. Lawson. Womack carried the ball around end for a 13 yard touchdown run to complete the drive. Austin Carlisle’s convert was good to give EAWR a 7-0 edge after only 3:29 of the game.

The Oilers’ special teams set up the next score, partially blocking a punt on the Knights’ opening possession to set up shot at the MEL-Madison 36. It only took EAWR five plays to hit pay dirt, as Englar passed nine yards to Womack for the touchdown, making it 14-0 after the PAT.

The Oilers' defense recovered a fumble on the next series, setting up another short field for their offense to work with. A four plays 41 yard drive ended with a 35 yard touchdown run by Womack, making the score 21-0 after the point with 3:06 left in the period.

The final score of the quarter came with 1:03 remaining, when Englar connected with Lukas Westbrook over the middle for a 50 yard touchdown. The Carlisle convert was good, making the score 28-0.



Both defenses dominated the way during the second term. The Oiler defense gave ground very stingily, although quarterback Darrien James and running back Vince Wilson made a couple of nice runs. The Knights defense was just as tough, bottling up the Oiler offense. The half ended at 28-0.

The Knights were able to sustain a drive on their opening possession of the second half. Earl Green made a very nice run, reversing his field to pick up 11 and MEL-Madison's initial first down of the game. The drive stalled however, forcing the Knights to punt. Gabe Grimes made a couple of key runs, gaining 16 on a good run. But MEL-Madison held on downs to regain the ball.

The final Oiler score came on a 15 play, 51 yard drive that took 5:15 to complete. Grimes carried the load most of the way with three good runs, Both teams had a big scare near the end of the drive when on a third and goal from the Knights 15, Englar went around right end on a keeper and collided knee to knee with a Knight's player. Englar came off on his own power, but the MEL-Madison player was helped out.

"He's got a little pain in his knee," Herron said. "They're going to get him checked out just to be safe. He played his heart out tonight, and we hope for the best for that."

"I think he's okay," Tschudy said of his player. "He got a knee to knee collision. We're going to have to get that looked at. We put some ice on that."

The Oilers scored on the next play, as Grimes went nine yards up the middle with 8:52 left for the touchdown. The conversion kick was blocked, keeping things at 34-0.

The final Knights' possession was their best, as James and Wilson combined for most of the yardage, putting the Knights in EAWR territory for the only time in the game. Wilson made a nifty 10 yard run to put MEL-Madison in the red zone, but three incomplete passes help to end the drive, helping the make the score 34-0 at full time.

Herron tipped the Knights as a team that opponents shouldn't overlook.

"You can't look over a team like this," he said. "I think a couple of other teams in the conference have, and you've seen it in the scores. We didn't want to look over this team' we know they're young, maybe a little inexperienced, but they've got talent and they've got athletes. If you look over a team like that, they can surprise you real quick."

The Oilers travel to Pawnee for a Saturday afternoon tilt next week, but Herron will continue to emphasize his one game at a time philosophy.

"With our kids, we've taken the stance each week that we want to go 1-0," Herron said. "So we want to go out and get that one win, not worry about last week, not worry about the next week, worry about the team being 1-0. That's how we really emphasize that to the kids."

Meanwhile, the Knights travel to Mt. Olive next Friday, and there's one thing that Tschudy will be working on with his team.

"Discipline. Discipline. Discipline." Tschudy said. "That's it."