



The 1928 Oilers lost to Sharon, 108-0, but finished with a 3-4-2 record under coach R.E. Brown. Stars of the team include Gene Stoughton, Jack Hadley, Jack Hershelman, James "Red" Dorwart, Jack Reynolds, Phil "Nooky" Olmes and Eddie Yorke. Hershelman, a tackle, returned a fumble 81 yards for a touchdown in a 6-6 tie with Titusville that season. Home games were moved to the West End field from Hasson Ramage in 1926. School officials said Hasson Ramage was too rough.

Nov. 17, 1928.

The day that lives in infamy in Oil City High School football annals.

Sharon 108, Oil City 0.

"Defeat Worst Sustained in O.C. History," the drop-head of The Derrick shouted. And it still is.

The newspaper then began the account of the game, "Battered, baffled and utterly helpless against the onslaught of a team out to win and win decisively..."

But I'm here to tell you it wasn't as bad as it sounds.

And, fear not, it wasn't a state record. That would be Tamaqua 194, St. Clair 0 in 1915, according to a website called luckyshow.org.

What's more, 100-something to nothing (or very few points) games were not uncommon in the early part of the 20th century.

From 1912-32 there were 525 100-point high school games in the United States, including six of 200 or more points. Hazen, Kansas, holds the national high school record with 257 points, and Staunton, a school in Illinois, scored 233 points in the *first half* against an opponent. The second half wasn't played.

Locally, Franklin once lost to Warren, 104-0, and Warren bowed to Erie High, 104-0, two years before in 1913. A 1914 game between Monaca and Ambridge, two respected Beaver County rivals, wound up 126-0. Does it really matter who won?

Altoona, Berwick, Hazleton, Smethport and Chambersburg all once took it on the chin like Oil City did.

And since the Year 1, there were scads more college and other types of games decided by scores like that. Penn State once lost to Lehigh 106-0.

Oh, and the weekend of Sept. 26-27, 1914, there were 19 high school games and 30 on all levels that ended up 100-something to very few points, usually zero, according to the luckyshow website.

Sharon-Oil City was one of the last 100-point games in Pennsylvania; there were three more in 1930, one in 1933 and then none until Journey Brown ran for 722 yards and scored 10 touchdowns as Meadville hung 107 points on DuBois on Sept. 11, 2015. But even the losing Beavers lit up the scoreboard for 90 points in that game.

The reason for all the early scoring sprees? One that sticks out is that the team that allowed a TD had the option of kicking off to the team that just scored. The idea was to pin the scoring team deep in its territory (and pray for a fumble.) I have no idea if this happened in the Oil City-Sharon game.

One thing I do know is length of quarters varied back in the day and Sharon and Oil City were haggling about how long they would be in their game. Sharon wanted 15-minute quarters, Oil City 12 minutes. Officials told the schools to decide on their own, otherwise they would side with homestanding Sharon. The schools compromised with 14-minute stanzas.

Two other factors: (1) teams sometimes had players as old as 20 and (2) teams sometimes had only 20 players so substitutions were few; rules prevented free substitution, and once a player left the game, he was unable to return until the second half.

Sharon led 40-0 at halftime, or after 28 minutes of play. "A small knot of Oil City fans stood with mouths agape..." The Derrick reported.

Today, the mercy rule clock would well be into action. Not then at Sharon, where the Tigers would score 68 more points in the second half. Mike Sebastian, who became an All-American at Pitt, tallied nine touchdowns in the game – six in the second half. It seems he was in a Mercer County scoring race with Grove City's Jimmy Dunn, so Sebastian needed the points.

Presumably, Sebastian overtook Dunn, but Sharon didn't break the Mercer County scoring mark. That would still belong to Grove City with 109 points against Farrell in 1921.

The Tigers went into the game with a modest 3-3-1 record and 106 points scored all season. Not that it would have made a big difference, but the Oilers were without injured star fullback Maynard Hipwell and sophomore lineman Gene Stoughton, who was out for the season with a broken wrist. Stoughton would also go on to play for Pitt.

The same weekend Sharon was taking it to the Oilers, Franklin wasn't faring much better, losing 73-6 to unbeaten Punxsutawney. The two rivals had one game remaining: the annual Thanksgiving Day clash on Nov. 29.

Hipwell was back in the lineup, but it was Jack Haley who stole the show for the Oilers, returning two interceptions for touchdowns in the 18-0 victory over the Nurserymen. Good thing, because coach R.E. Brown said he wouldn't coach basketball if the Oilers didn't beat Franklin.

So Oil City finished with a respectable 3-4-2 record, the big win coming against Sharpsville, 6-0. And, no, Franklin wasn't the worst; the Nursery ended 1-6-1, its lone win coming against another Mercer County foe, Greenville, 25-0.

By the way, Franklin's 104-0 loss to Warren in 1915 came three weeks after the Nursery tied the Dragons 6-6. Sometime after that coach Billy Connors quit, the team wasn't practicing and games with Sharon and Oil City were canceled – although it did take on the alumni on Thanksgiving Day.

Strange times, back in the day.



"RED" DORWART
Captain

RECORD

Oil City.....	30	Parkers.....	0
Oil City.....	0	Erie Aca.....	27
Oil City.....	6	Sharpsville	0
Oil City.....	0	Franklin.....	0
Oil City.....	18	Franklin.....	0
Oil City.....	6	Titusville.....	6
Oil City.....	0	Meadville	36
Oil City.....	0	Sharon.....	108
Oil City.....	0	Warren.....	31



ED. RICHARDS
Manager