

SEASON
26

1944



THE
PACKERS CENTURY

P R O J E C T

ALL THE GAMES. ALL THE STORIES.

1919-2019

BY JIM RICE

packerscentury.com



1944

Record: 8-2-0 NFL Champions

Coach: Curly Lambeau

- The Packers opened the season at Milwaukee County Stadium, and they won their first six games.
- Don Hutson came back for another year. Hutson was the principal difference between Green Bay and the rest of the league.
- Quarterback Irv Comp led the NFL in passing yards and passes attempted.
- Tony Canadeo, who had led the team in rushing in 1943, played only three games in 1944 due to his military obligations.
- Assistant Coach Red Smith left Green Bay for a coaching position with the New York Giants. Lambeau hired former Chicago Bear rival George Trafton as his new assistant coach.
- Green Bay won its sixth and final championship under Curly Lambeau. When Lambeau left Green Bay in 1950, he had won one more NFL championship than George "Papa Bear" Halas.



BROOKLYN
TIGERS
PACKERS

7
14

9.17.1944

A Game of Penalties

This is the first time the Packers opened the season in Milwaukee. It wasn't the cleanest beginning as the whistles of the officials were busy all afternoon. They called a league record 31 penalties for 254 yards! Brooklyn committed 22 of the infractions for 170 yards.

The Packers took the lead in the first quarter on a 24-yard touchdown pass to Don Hutson. Brooklyn tied it on their first possession of the second half. On their second possession, the Packers went back in front when "Baby" Ray blocked a Brooklyn punt. Ray's block was recovered by Charley Brock on Brooklyn's 17-yard line. On the next play, halfback Lou Brock took it 17 yards around left end for the win.

Brooklyn	0	0	7	0	7
Green Bay	7	0	7	0	14

Attendance: 12,994

Milwaukee County Stadium

GB began playing games in Milwaukee in 1933. Their record is 20-4.



CHICAGO

BEARS

PACKERS

28

42

9.24.1944

Non-Stop Action

The reigning NFL Champions arrived in Green Bay and fans were treated to an exciting game of nearly 700 yards of offense.

For the first 20 minutes, the Packers dominated with quarterback Irv Comp leading the way. Comp threw two touchdown passes, and he ran for a touchdown as Green Bay got out to a 28-0 lead. Midway through the second quarter, quarterback Sid Luckman began to bring the Bears back. He threw three touchdown passes to narrow the Green Bay lead to 28-21.

The Bears tied it with six minutes left to silence the City Stadium crowd. The Packers rallied and sprung back to life just in time. Lou Brock took off around right end behind a slew of blockers to go 42 yards to retake the lead. On Chicago's next drive, Ted Fritsch intercepted Sid Luckman and the big fullback went 50 yards to put the defending champions away!

Chicago 0 7 7 14 28

Green Bay 14 14 0 14 42

Attendance: 24,362

Game #50. Bears lead all-time series 27-18-5.

"Six-year-old Carol Collard – it was her birthday – who is growing up with the Packers, opened her third season as a drum majorette and delighted the crowd."¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/25/1944, Hickok, p. 1



DETROIT

LIONS

PACKERS

6

27

10.1.1944

A light rain fell most of the day. Detroit started the scoring, and they held a 7-6 lead when a goal-line stand by the Packers helped turn the tide. Green Bay scored the next 27 points, and the offense outgained the Lions easily 333-156. Lou Brock tossed two touchdowns for Green Bay.

The Packer defense had little trouble with the Lions. They allowed just nine first downs, and 161 total yards.

Detroit	6	0	0	0	6
Green Bay	0	7	13	7	27

Attendance: 18,556

Milwaukee County Stadium

“(The) most disappointed fan was an unfortunate Green Bay man, unidentified, who started out in his car for Milwaukee Sunday morning to see the game. He got as far as Cedarburg, had a flat tire there, and couldn’t find a garage open to have it fixed. He repaired the tire with borrowed equipment and got to West Allis just in time to turn around and start home.”¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/2/1944, Hickok, p. 12



CARD-PITT

CARPETS

PACKERS

7

34

10.8.1944

Carpets Get Rolled

During World War II, some franchises combined to stay afloat. In 1944, the Chicago Cardinals and the Pittsburgh Steelers were one such team. They returned as separate teams in 1945.

With Curly Lambeau still coaching from the press box, Irv Comp was the star of this blowout. He completed 12 of 23 passes including two touchdown passes to Don Hutson. A 55-yarder started the scoring in the first quarter and a seven-yard pass in the second made it 21-0 lead.

At one point, Comp completed nine consecutive passes. Hutson caught 11 passes in all for 207 yards. The Packers easily outgained Card-Pitt (388-192), and the Carpets finally scored in the fourth quarter.

Card-Pitt	0	0	0	7	7
Green Bay	7	14	0	13	34

Attendance: 16,535

Comp's nine straight completions went for 151 yards



CLEVELAND

RAMS

PACKERS

21

30

10.22.1944

Someone Had To Lose

With nearly 800 yards of offense between them, the undefeated Packers beat the undefeated Rams on a Sunday night. The winner took undisputed possession of first place in the Western Conference.

The first 30 minutes was a back and forth battle. Rams' tailback with Tom Colella scored on touchdown runs of 75 and 25 yards. The Packer backfield responded with touchdown runs by Ben Starret and Joe Laws. Irv Comp's touchdown pass to Lou Brock gave Green Bay 21-14 lead at the break.

In the third quarter, a beautiful 68-yard march led by Irv Comp found Lou Brock open for an eight-yard touchdown. Ted Fritsch then pretty much wrapped it up with a short touchdown run. Fritsch and Tony Canadeo led the ground game with 183 of Green Bay's 293 rushing yards.

Cleveland 7 7 0 7 21

Green Bay 7 14 7 2 30

Attendance: 18,780

The Packers put up 456 total yards.



PACKERS
DETROIT
LIONS

14
0

10.29.1944

Winning Streak Continues

A shut out by the first-place Packers and their 19th win over the Lions in their last 23 meetings.

Both Green Bay touchdowns came in the first half. Ted Fritsch scored at the end of a nine-play drive with a one-yard plunge. The drive started on Detroit's 47-yard line after a quick kick. In the second quarter, Irv Comp loosened up his throwing arm and crossed-up the Lions with a 29-yard touchdown pass to veteran Joe Laws.

The closest Detroit came to scoring came in the third quarter when they got as far as the Packer 13-yard line before being pushed back by the stingiest defense in the division!

Green Bay	7	7	0	0	14
Detroit	0	0	0	0	0

Attendance: 30,844

The second half was a punting due



PACKERS
CHICAGO
BEARS

0
21

11.5.1944

Luckman Upsets The Pack

The defending champion Chicago Bears rode the arm and legs of quarterback Sid Luckman to upset undefeated Packers at Soldier Field.

Luckman's quarterback sneak from the one-yard line made it 7-0 early. In the third quarter, a poor punt gave Chicago good field position. In three plays they went 53 yards, and Luckman's 31-yard touchdown pass went to Ray *Scooter* McClean. Later in the quarter, the Bears capitalized on an interception with Luckman's second touchdown pass to big George Wilson.

The Bears defense was dominant as the Packers managed just eight first downs and 146 total yards. The Bears also grabbed four interceptions and stopped Don Hutson's "consecutive game scoring record at 41.....he had scored one or more points in every league tussle starting midway in the 1940 season."¹

Green Bay	0	0	0	0	0
Chicago	0	7	14	0	21

Attendance: 45,553

2,500 Packer fans traveled to Wrigley Field.

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/6/1944, Yuenger, p. 13



PACKERS
CLEVELAND
RAMS

42
7

11.12.1944

Turnovers Doom Rams

Cleveland turned the ball over nine times, and the Packers annihilated the Rams three weeks later.

While quarterback Irv Comp's early touchdown run provided the winning points, Don Hutson's two touchdown catches were the highlights. Comp threw both with the first coming from 35 yards away. Along with Hutson, veteran running back Joe Laws also scored two touchdowns.

Trying to keep pace with Green Bay, the Rams threw 31 passes. They completed 11, seven were intercepted, and three fell incomplete. Of Green Bay's seven interceptions, three led to Packer touchdowns.

This was an incredible game for Don Hutson. Of Green Bay's six completed passes, The *Alabama Antelope* caught five of them for 96 yards. Two of the catches went for touchdowns and Hutson also kicked six extra points!

Green Bay	7	14	7	14	42
Cleveland	0	0	7	0	7

Attendance: 17,166



PACKERS
NEW YORK
GIANTS

0
11.19.1944
24

New York shut out Green Bay before 56,481 fans. They did it while completing only one pass in the second quarter! They won by running over Green Bay for 221 yards and capitalizing on three of their five interceptions.

A pick-six by the Giants started the scoring in the first quarter. Their only pass completion came in the second quarter on a 36-yard touchdown pass by former Packer Arnie Herber to Frank Liebel. It put New York in front at halftime 14-0.

The second half didn't any get better for Green Bay. For the game, they completed just 14 of 34 passes for 152 yards. Despite the loss, the Packers clinched the Western Division because the Bears lost to the Lions!

After the game, accusations of the Giants spying on Packer practices flew back and forth between Green Bay and New York. Lambeau insinuated that former Packers Arnie Herber and Red Smith, who were now with the Giants were involved. Though the accusations were never proven, the Giants did shut out the powerful Packers and intercepted five passes. After the game, when Don Hutson was asked about the possibility, he thought, "...it was possible. They were shifting to meet those new plays of ours...and we hadn't run them off against any other team in the league this year."¹

Green Bay	0	0	0	0	0
New York	7	7	3	7	24
Attendance:	58,481				

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/24/1944, Davis, p. 11



PACKERS
CARD-PITT
CARPETS

35
20

11.26.1944

Though they scored 35 points, the Packers were not as impressive as the score made it look. They beat the winless Carpets after a close first half. An interception by Don Huston set up the first of two touchdown runs by Bobby Duhart that gave Green Bay a 14-13 lead at the half.

In the second half, the Pack pulled away with two Irv Comp to Don Hutson touchdowns. The first was a 36-yard bomb to start the scoring. For the game, Hutson scored 17 of Green Bay's points. The defense held the Carpets five first downs, 19 yards rushing and they intercepted three passes.

Green Bay	7	7	7	14	35
Card-Pitt	7	6	0	7	20
Attendance:	7,158				

1944 NFL Championship Game



PACKERS

NEW YORK

GIANTS

14

12.17.1944

7

A month after losing to the Giants in New York City, they met again for the championship, and Curly Lambeau boasted “we will be seeking revenge.”¹ Rather than practicing near New York City, a week before the game, Lambeau took his squad to Virginia to prepare for the rematch.

As the Giants proved in November, they had the best defense in the league. They also had Arnie Herber, the former great Packer quarterback whose passing led them to the championship game. Unfortunately, their league-leading rusher, Bill Paschal, was hurt and played only a few plays.

All Green Bay needed was the “crushing ground attack led by Ted Fritsch.”² “The Bull” did all the damage in the second quarter. His first touchdown, a one-yard plunge, came on a fourth down. The second, just before halftime, came after Don Hutson’s great catch that put the ball at New York’s 28-yard line. Two plays later, with the defense all over Hutson, Fritsch was caught a 28-yard touchdown pass from Irv Comp.

In the second half, an interception by Howie Livingston helped the Giants bounce back. After a long completion from Arnie Herber to Frank Liebel, fullback Ward Cuff scored on the first play of the fourth quarter to narrow the lead to 14-7. But Herber struggled in this game against his old team and threw two of his four interceptions after the Giants had cut into the Packer lead in the fourth quarter.

Three Packers played the entire 60 minutes – Don Hutson, Larry Craig, and Charley Brock – and Packers won their sixth NFL

championship. Veteran Joe Laws had an outstanding game with three picks, and he ran for 74 yards on offense. He also deferred to Hutson in the post-game celebration when Hutson again announced that he would retire. "If I ever play on this field again, I'll jump off the Empire State Building – and I mean it."³ Hutson changed his mind and played in 1945!

Green Bay	0	14	0	0	14
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New York	0	0	0	7	7
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Attendance: 46,016

The only time the Giants got beyond their 35-yard line was on the touchdown drive.

Headline: "World Champion Packers Return to Green Bay on Milwaukee Road at 10:05 tonight."⁴

"The Packer Lumberjack Band will also be on hand to greet the champions. Red torchlights will be used to brighten the station platform."⁵

1 The Scrapbook History of Green Bay Packer Football, Zimmerman, p. 75

2 Wellington, DeVito, p. 105

3 The Green Bay Packers, Johnson, p. 87

4 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/18/1944, p. 1

5 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/18/1944, p. 1



1944 Team Statistics

FINAL STANDINGS - Western Division

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>I</u>
Green Bay	8	2	0
Bears	6	3	1
Lions	6	3	1
Rams	4	6	0
Carpets	0	10	0

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Comp
Receiving	Hutson
Rushing	Fritsch
Scoring	Hutson
Interceptions	Fritsch/Comp

ALL-PRO

Charley Brock	Center
Don Hutson	End
Baby Ray	Tackle

NOTEABLE DRAFT PICKS

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1919 - 2019

PACKERS CENTURY

with Jim Rice

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