



**1996**



THE  
**PACKERS CENTURY**

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**P R O J E C T**

*ALL THE GAMES. ALL THE STORIES.*

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**1919-2019**

BY JIM RICE

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## 1996

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**Record: 13-3-0 NFL Champions**

**Coach: Mike Holmgren**

- Brett Favre's personal struggles shocked some in management and most of the fan base.
- During the off season, Favre admitted to an addiction to pain killers. He entered the Menninger Clinic for 46 days.
- On his return, he predicted a Super Bowl win. He threw 39 touchdowns, won his second MVP, and led the Packers to a win in Super Bowl XXXI.
- Injuries stacked up: Robert Brooks torn ACL. Antonio Freeman broken forearm. Several injuries weakened the receiving corp and Ron Wolf signed Terry Mickens, Anthony Morgan and Andre Rison.
- The Packers scored the most points in the league and gave up the fewest. They outscored opponents their 246 points!
- Green Bay's resurgence was complete with a victory in Super Bowl XXXI.



**PACKERS**

TAMPA BAY

**BUCCANEERS**

**34**

**9.1.1996**

**3**

A great start in warm Tampa Bay – 81 degrees. The Packer offense was hot right out of the gate, and Brett Favre was phenomenal. Favre tossed three touchdown passes to Keith Jackson in the first half and one to Dorsey Levens in the second.

The game turned into a blowout with Favre’s two touchdown passes to Jackson in the last seven minutes of the first half. The second touchdown was a 51-yard strike to the big tight end and it came with 10 seconds left in the half. Tampa Bay never recovered. Green Bay capitalized on six turnovers by the Buccaneers for 17 points. LeRoy Butler intercepted two passes, and Tampa Bay gained 176 total yards compared to 406 for the Packers.

<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Tampa Bay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	<b>54,102</b>				



PHILADELPHIA  
**EAGLES**  
**PACKERS**

**13**  
**39**      **9.9.1996**

Monday Night Football returned to Lambeau Field for the first time since 1986, and the game was over “shortly after the coin toss.”<sup>1</sup> With a dominant performance, the Packers moved to 2-0 for the first time since 1982!

In the first half, Philadelphia turned the ball over four times and Green Bay cashed-in for 13 points. For the game, Brett Favre threw for 261 yards and three touchdowns. Robert Brooks caught two of the scores in the first half, and he introduced America to the Lambeau Leap! Brooks’ second touchdown gave the Pack a 30-7 at the half. “It was so loud my ears are still ringing. The crowd was great,”<sup>2</sup> safety LeRoy Butler said. Edgar Bennett balanced the offense with 93 yards rushing and 49 yards receiving. He caught Favre’s fourth touchdown pass in the second half.

“The Packers have won 19 of their last 20 at Lambeau Field, a feat unmatched even by Lombardi’s teams. This is a team whose present has outrun its past, fueled by a team whose future seems limitless.”<sup>3</sup>

<b>Philadelphia</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Attendance: 60,666</b>					

*Two Lambeau Leaps for Robert Brooks!*

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/10/96, Havel, p. 13

2 Green Bay Press Gazette, 9/10/96, p. 1

3 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/10/96, Havel, p. 13



SAN DIEGO

**CHARGERS**  
**PACKERS**

**10**  
**42**

**9.15.1996**

### **Easy Peasy!**

San Diego's only touchdown came in the fourth quarter off a Brett Favre interception with the Packers leading 28-3. Two spectacular plays followed less than two minutes later, that removed any doubt about the outcome. LeRoy Butler's pick-six of quarterback Stan Humphries went for a 90-yard touchdown, and Desmond Howard's 45-yard punt return put up the final points!

Green Bay's defense was spectacular. Reggie White had two sacks, and they held the Chargers to 33 yards rushing and just 11 first downs. Favre's three touchdown passes led an offense that outgained San Diego 336-141.

<b>San Diego</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>42</b>

**Attendance: 60,584**

*Before this game, former Packers from Super Bowl I & II "gathered with members of the community to benefit the local Boys & Girls Club and to celebrate the Packers' Super Bowl championship teams of 1967 and '68. Each player, when introduced, was escorted by a child from the club."<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/16/96, Morton, p. 1



**PACKERS**

MINNESOTA

**VIKINGS**

**21**

**9.22.1996**

**30**

The Packers lost for the 5<sup>th</sup> straight time in the Metrodome, and the Vikings moved into first place. Minnesota scored five touchdowns from more than 20 yards away, with quarterback Warren Moon leading the charge.

The Vikings defense controlled the game with relentless pressure on quarterback Brett Favre. He was sacked seven times, knocked down eight times, hurried 15 times, and he lost two fumbles. The high-flying Packer offense was brought down to earth with just eight first downs and 217 total yards.

After the Packers led early 7-0, Warren Moon's touchdown passes, and a field goal put the Vikings in front 17-7 in the second half. Green Bay grabbed the lead back in the third quarter with two long-distance strikes. Favre and Don Beebe hooked up for a 90-yard touchdown and, on defense, George Koonce picked off a pass and took it 75 yards to the house for a 21-17 Green Bay lead.

With 4:13 remaining, Minnesota put it away with a 37-yard touchdown run by Robert Smith and two field goals. Packer fan Scott Olson said it best about of the Packer offense, "You can't pass the ball when your laying on your back."<sup>1</sup>

<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Minnesota</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>30</b>

**Attendance: 64,168**

*Favre threw for just 198 yards.*

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/23/96, p. 21



**PACKERS**

SEATTLE

**SEAHAWKS**

**31**

**9.29.1996**

**10**

**Favre Throws Four!**

The Packers lost Robert Brooks to a concussion of the first play. But the Packer offense stayed in high gear as Brett Favre threw four touchdown passes and was sacked just twice.

Quarterback Rick Meir of Seattle threw four interceptions and lost one fumble. The five turnovers cost the Seahawks 24 points. Eugene Robinson, formerly of the Seahawks, grabbed the first interception. Green Bay's first touchdown came quickly on a Favre to Antonio Freeman connection. Freeman led all receivers with seven catches for 108 yards and two touchdowns while filling in for Robert Brooks.

On Seattle's next series, Reggie White intercepted Meier, and he lumbered 46 yards downfield to set up a field goal. Favre threw three more touchdown passes, one in each quarter, to Dorsey Levens, Keith Jackson, and a second to Antonio Freeman. Running backs Edgar Bennett and Dorsey Levens had their best game of the season with 122 yards, and they caught five passes from Favre including Levens' touchdown.

<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Seattle</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>

**Attendance: 59,973**

*1<sup>st</sup> sellout of the season for Seattle.*

*The Kingdome crowd of 59,973 was crawling with Packer fans, discernible by their green jerseys, cheeseheads and chants of "Reggie!" "Reggie!"<sup>1</sup>*

*“The second annual Participate to Educate campaign kicks off Tuesday with a parent pep rally. Sara White, wife of defensive end Reggie White, will be the keynote speaker.”*

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/30/96, Havel, p. 17

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/30/96, p. 6





**PACKERS**

CHICAGO

**BEARS**

**37**

**10.6.1996**

**6**

### **Another Four!**

This blowout made it five straight wins over the Bears! Brett Favre led the slaughter with three first-half touchdown passes. He threw four touchdowns overall, with a fifth called back because of a penalty!

Two of the four touchdowns were pivotal. They came in the last 35 seconds of the first half and turned a 7-3 game into a rout. Keith Jackson caught the first, and after a Doug Evans interception, Antonio Freeman caught a 50-yard bomb from Favre.

The slaughter continued in the third quarter with a 90-yard kickoff return by Don Beebe. Antonio Freeman's emergence as a receiving threat continued with seven catches for 146 yards and two more spectacular touchdown grabs. The defense continued its dominance with three interceptions, and they held the Bears to 53 yards rushing.

<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Chicago</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>

**Attendance: 65,480**

*I have a good name for the Packers defense: the Baker Boys because they create so many turnovers.”<sup>1</sup> Robert Karbon, Oconto, Wisconsin*

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/7/96, p. 18



SAN FRANCISCO

**49ers**  
**PACKERS**

**20** 10.14.1996  
**23** OT

### **Jacke Wins It!**

In a much-anticipated Monday Night game, injuries played a critical role. Quarterback Steve Young of the 49ers didn't play because of an injury, and the Packers lost Robert Brooks for the season with a knee injury on the first play of the game.

This was a physical game between two NFC powerhouses battling for an early edge for home-field advantage in the postseason. The Packers got out in front behind two Chris Jacke field goals – he would kick five – for a 6-0 lead. In the last three minutes of the first half and trailing 6-3, Jerry Rice caught two touchdown passes from Elvis Grbac. The second came after Dana Stubblefield's interception and San Francisco led at the break 17-6.

Green Bay's defense hit back hard in the final 30 minutes. They shut down the 49ers allowing one field goal and 75 total yards! Favre began the Packer comeback with a 59-yard touchdown bomb to Don Beebe. Beebe, who replaced Brooks, caught 11 passes for 220 yards and one touchdown. With a two-point conversion, Green Bay trailed by three 17-14.

The teams slugged it out in the fourth quarter. With 1:42 left, Favre marched the Packers 69 yards to the 31-yard line where Chris Jacke tied it with eight seconds left.

Early in the overtime, Mike Holmgren gambled, and Jacke hit #5 from 53 yards away for the win!

<b>San Francisco</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23</b>

**Attendance: 60,716**

*Favre threw 61 passes for 395 yards.*

*"I used to think the NFL was all about personalities and individuals. It's not like that at all. These guys aren't individuals at all, with all the hugging and tears floating around here. They're one big team. Maybe it's not like that everywhere. Around here it's pretty sweet."<sup>1</sup>*  
Jason Helgeson, Packer Training Room Intern

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/15/96, Havel, p. 13



TAMPA BAY

**BUCCANEERS**    **7**  
**PACKERS**            **13**

10.27.1996

After the bye, the Packers won this defensive battle, but they also lost Antonio Freeman for four-six weeks with a broken left forearm. Green Bay scored all 13 points in the first half and held on.

After a Brett Favre interception, the defense stopped Tampa and forced a punt. Reggie White blocked the punt which led to Chris Jacke's 40-yard field goal. A Dorsey Levens touchdown run made it 10-0, and Jacke's second field goal from the 48 was good, though it appeared to drift back and forth before going through. After the game, Jacke joked, "Maybe Vince Lombardi was up there blowing on it a little."<sup>1</sup>

The Packers didn't score in the second half, but their defense held the Bucs scoreless until quarterback Trent Dilfer's fourth quarter touchdown pass with 5:28 left. On Tampa Bay's final drive with 1:14 left, Dilfer was sacked on fourth down by LeRoy Butler and Brian Williams to seal the deal.

<b>Tampa Bay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	<b>60,627</b>				

*Antonio Freeman broke his forearm.*

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/28/96, Dougherty, p. 21



DETROIT  
**LIONS**  
**PACKERS**

**18**  
**28**

**11.3.1996**

### Old Friends!

Before the game, Vince Lombardi's daughter, Susan, returned to Lambeau Field to unveil a stamp of her father issued by the U.S. Postal Service. Quarterback Don Majkowski also returned, and he was outplayed by his replacement, Brett Favre. Favre threw for 281 yards and four touchdowns while Majkowski collected 153 yards passing and one touchdown.

Favre's first touchdown pass made it 7-3 Packers in the second quarter. Barry Sanders put the Lions back on top with an 18-yard sprint off left tackle. Trailing 10-7, Favre came right back with an 80-yard drive – and the first of 21 unanswered points – with a touchdown pass to Terry Mickens. Mickens was re-signed after injuries to Robert Brooks and Antonio Freeman.

On their first series of the second half, Favre and Mickens hooked up again for a 21-10 lead. At the end of the third quarter, Favre unloaded a 65-yard bomb to Don Beebe for a 28-10 lead that pretty much sealed the deal.

An impressive defensive performance by the Packers held the Lions to 293 total yards and they sacked Majkowski five times.

<b>Detroit</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>

**Attendance: 60,695**

*Best start (8-1) since 1963.*

*"I came all the way from Cincinnati to eat brats, wear cheese on my head, watch players jump in the stands and watch the MVP, Brett*

*Favre. You all don't know what you have up here." Steve Stoll,  
Cincinnati*

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/4/96, p. 29



**PACKERS**

KANSAS CITY

**CHIEFS**

**20**

**11.10.1996**

**27**

### One Man Band?

Green Bay's second three-game road trip began with a dud. The Packers never led in this game, and a strong first half by the Chiefs determined the outcome. A touchdown run by Greg Hill and Steve Bono's 34-yard touchdown pass to Hill gave them a 20-6 lead at intermission. They moved the ball on the ground at will with 182 yards rushing.

Early in the third quarter, a Favre fumble led to another Greg Hill touchdown run. It stayed 27-6 until two late touchdown passes from Favre made it respectable. But as Ron Wolf noted, "we have to go on the road and win some games"<sup>1</sup>

**Green Bay    3       3       7       7       20**

**Kansas City 3       17      7       0       27**

**Attendance: 79,281**

*Mark Chmura went down with a foot injury.*

<sup>1</sup> The Road to Glory, McGinn, p. 80



**PACKERS**

DALLAS

**COWBOYS**

**6**

**11.18.1996**

**21**

### **Downer in Dallas**

On Monday Night Football, Green Bay suffered its seventh straight defeat in Dallas. Though they kept the Cowboys out of the end zone this time, they couldn't keep them far enough away from the goal posts. Chris Boniol provided all the offense Dallas would need with seven field goals from 29, 35, 37, 39, 42 and two from the 45.

Green Bay's offense couldn't move the ball as Edgar Bennett led the ground game with 48 yards. The Packers didn't put together a sustained drive until the third quarter. With his receiving corps decimated by injuries, Brett Favre completed just 21 of 37 for 194 yards and one touchdown. He was sacked four times, and the Packers only touchdown came with 1:53 left in the game.

With 20 seconds left in the game, the Cowboys sent out Boniol for a seventh field goal try to tie an NFL record. It angered the Packers, and Reggie White lectured the Dallas bench. Afterward, announcer Frank Gifford summed it up well. "While the Cowboys dominated, they dominated between the 25-yard lines, and that was it."<sup>1</sup>

<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Dallas</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>

**Attendance: 65,032**

*After this loss, the Packers signed wide receiver Andre Rison.*

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/19/96, p. 1





**PACKERS**

ST. LOUIS

**RAMS**

**24**

**9**

**11.24.1996**

### **Oh, Brett!**

St. Louis scored the first nine points of the game. Isaac Bruce caught a touchdown pass, and 21 seconds later, a safety was called on Brett Favre for grounding the ball in the end zone. On the safety's ensuing punt, the Rams fumbled, and Mike Prior recovered for Green Bay. Before the half, Chris Jacke's 37-yard field goal field trimmed the lead to 9-3.

On the second play of the second half, a pick-six by Doug Evans put Green Bay in front 10-9. The pick gave the Packers momentum, and Favre seized control.

After a fumble by St. Louis quarterback Tony Banks, a Favre to Keith Jackson touchdown pass made it 17-9 Packers. A few plays later, in the fourth quarter, Favre made the play of the game. He "avoided two potential sacks on the play, covered at least 25 yards of the field scrambling back and forth,"<sup>1</sup> before finding Dorsey Levens for a five-yard touchdown.

After the season, many players thought the interception by Doug Evans, "was the biggest play of the season."<sup>2</sup>

**Green Bay      0      3      14      7      24**

**St. Louis      0      9      0      0      9**

**Attendance: 61,499**

*Andre Rison caught five passes for 44 yards.*

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/25/96, Dougherty, p. 21

<sup>2</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, The Glory Returns, 1/19/97, Silverstein, p, 11



CHICAGO  
**BEARS**  
**PACKERS**

**17**  
**28** 12.1.1996

### **Six Straight!**

Antonio Freeman returned to action with 10 catches for 156 yards. In the first half, Brett Favre and Dave Krieg each threw one touchdown pass. Favre's came on a 60-yard drive in the final seconds of the half to get the offense heated up for the final 30 minutes.

In the second half, the Packers ran for 113 yards! Late in the third quarter, Desmond Howard returned a punt 75-yards untouched into the end zone. Chicago came back with a field goal to stay close at 14-10.

In the fourth quarter, Dorsey Levens and Brett Favre ran for touchdowns to put the game away. Favre completed another fine performance against the Bears (19-27-231-1-0), and it was the Packers sixth straight over Chicago.

The defense gave up just 88 yards rushing and 292 yards overall. The Packers so impressed Chris Havel of the Press-Gazette that he stated emphatically, "There is only one team left on their schedule capable of costing them the home-field advantage throughout the playoffs. That team is the Packers."<sup>1</sup>

<b>Chicago</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>28</b>

**Attendance: 59,682**

*Photo on Page 1 of the Press-Gazette: "Green Bay Packers fan Brian Wojtasiak attacks a stuffed Bear in the parking lot of Lambeau Field."<sup>2</sup>*

*“An indication that the grand old rivalry isn’t what it used to be was the fact that scalpers’ prices 40 minutes before kickoff were in the \$40 to \$70 range – a far cry from the \$250-and-higher-prices of some earlier home games.”<sup>3</sup>*

- 1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/2/96, Havel, p. 21
- 2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/2/96, p. 1
- 3 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/2/96, Langenkamp, p. 1



DENVER  
**BRONCOS**  
**PACKERS**

**6**  
**41** 12.8.1996

### Elway Rests

Since the Broncos had already clinched home field advantage in the playoffs, John Elway sat out this game.

Denver's offense struggled, and two Jacob Elam field goals was all it could produce. The Packers' offense rolled and hammered the Broncos with four Brett Favre touchdown passes.

Favre began his assault late in the first half with the Packers leading 6-3. He threw his first touchdown to Antonio Freeman 13 seconds before halftime. He came out firing in the second half and threw three more touchdowns! Two went to Antonio Freeman, and Keith Jackson caught the other.

The Broncos never had a chance. Freeman caught nine passes for 175 yards and three touchdowns. Tight end Mark Chmura, who also returned to action, caught four passes for 70 yards. The Packers outgained the Broncos 379-176.

<b>Denver</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>41</b>

**Attendance: 60, 712**



**PACKERS**

DETROIT

**LIONS**

**31**

**3**

**12.15.1996**

Against the last place Lions, Green Bay managed a field goal and a 92-yard punt return by Desmond Howard for a 10-0 first half lead. The action picked up in the second half and Brett Favre ran for a touchdown in the third quarter.

Green Bay put the Lions away in the fourth quarter with Dorsey Levens' touchdown run and Favre's touchdown to Antonio Freeman. Overall, he completed 16 of 25 passes for 240 yards and one touchdown. A great performance by the defense was spearheaded by Reggie White's two sacks. They held an opponent without a touchdown for the fifth time this season!

The win assured Green Bay of a first round bye in the postseason. After the game, though, Packer General Manager Ron Wolf re-focused the team's exuberance with, "We have to be the dominant team in our division. If we beat Minnesota, we'll be that."

<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Detroit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	<b>73,214</b>				



MINNESOTA  
**VIKINGS**  
**PACKERS**

**10**  
**38**

**12.22.1996**

### **Conference Champs!**

"I'm coming to Lambeau Field ready to headhunt,"<sup>1</sup> was how former Packer Jeff Brady put it. It didn't work out for Brady as Green Bay won easily and secured home-field advantage throughout the playoffs.

In a 10-10 first half, the teams traded touchdowns and field goals. In the last 30 minutes, Green Bay's offense broke loose with Brett Favre's three touchdowns passes to Dorsey Levens, Andre Rison, and Keith Jackson. He got started three minutes into the half with a 13-yard toss to Levens for a 17-10 lead. Rison caught his first touchdown as a Packer, and in the fourth quarter, Keith Jackson caught a 23-yard touchdown.

When the Vikings looked-up they trailed 31-10. As if that wasn't enough, Levens scored a second touchdown on the ground to lead a ground game that put up 233 yards. The defense shut out the Vikings in the second half, and Green Bay became the first team since 1972 to lead the league in both points scored and fewest points allowed!

<b>Minnesota</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>38</b>

**Attendance: 59,306**

*Favre breaks his own team record with 39 touchdown passes.*

*"Fans participation at Lambeau is reaching new heights, just in time for the playoffs. What was once an occasional uproar when the opposition has the ball is now a deafening, unrelenting din when the quarterback tries to call signals."<sup>2</sup>*

*The wind chill stood at 10 degrees. “They drink beer no matter what,” said vendor Bill Van Camp, De Pere. “Wait until the playoffs – it’ll be 15 degrees colder – and they’ll be even thirstier.”<sup>3</sup>*

1 Cold Wars: 40 Years of Packer-Viking Rivalry, Mishler, p. 108

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/22/1996, Langenkamp, p. 1

3 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/22/1996, Langenkamp, p. 1

## NFC Divisional Playoff



SAN FRANCISCO

**49ers**

**PACKERS**

**14**

**35**

**1.4.1997**

A rematch of last year's divisional round catches the 49ers short-handed. They lost quarterback Steve Young and defensive tackle Bryant Young early in the game to injuries Green Bay capitalized!

In a steady downpour, Desmond Howard returned the first punt of the "Mud Bowl" 71 yards for a touchdown. He eluded seven 49ers on the way. Two punts later, Howard went 46 yards to set up Brett Favre's four-yard touchdown pass to Andre Rison. In the second quarter, Craig Newsome's interception deep in 49er territory led to Edgar Bennett's first touchdown run and a 21-0 lead.

But just before halftime and right after the break, the Packers courted disaster. The first miscue was a muffed punt that was recovered by the Niners on Green Bay's 26-yard line. With 24 seconds left in the half, quarterback Elvis Grbac and running back Terry Kirby connected to make it 21-7. To start the second half, Desmond Howard did not get on the field in time for the kickoff. Don Beebe let the kickoff bounce past him, and the Niners recovered on the four-yard line. On the next play, with only 16 seconds gone in the second half, Grbac ran it in. It was a new game 21-14.

The Packers regrouped and put together a memorable drive. They dug into the mud and ran the ball 10 times in 12 plays. Edgar Bennett fumbled the ball on the goal line and it was recovered in the end zone by Antonio Freeman, "who leapt from beneath the pile holding the football, and the victory, in his hand."<sup>1</sup> One minute later, after a fumble by Terry Kirby, Edgar



Bennett scored what should have been his third touchdown of the game to flatten the Niners!

**San Francisco 0 7 7 0 14**

**Green Bay 14 7 7 7 35**

**Attendance: 60,787**

*Howard returned punts for 117 yards.*

*"The bad weather had some wondering how many fans wouldn't show up. When the public address announcer announced the attendance of 60,787, he announced no-shows: Three!"<sup>2</sup>*

*"What a show they put on rolling in the mud like it was a sunny September afternoon. Wow!"<sup>3</sup> Marguerite Cygan, Green Bay*

*"Female tailgaters seeking male tailgaters. We play to win." Lisa Brunner and her older sister, Susan Lemke, put that sign in their minivan's window which was parked next to Lambeau Field. They hoped to attract a few good men on their way to the game. Unfortunately, "their luck was about as good as the San Francisco 49ers' performance."<sup>4</sup>*

*"Packers pro personnel assistant Reggie McKenzie had two reasons to celebrate. Not only were the Packers big winners, but his wife, June, delivered a baby boy Friday night. 'He (Reggie Jr.) might be cheering for the Pack right now,' McKenzie said."<sup>5</sup>*

*"James Lofton served as honorary captain for the game and watched the game from the auxiliary press box with his wife, Beverly. 'It is quite an honor. We're excited for the Packers. To get to a winning level is a whole different ball game.'"<sup>6</sup>*

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/5/97, Havel, p. 15

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/5/97, Dougherty/Morton, p. 17

3 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/5/97, p. 18

4 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/5/97, Stewart, p. 5c

5 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/5/97, Gardner, p. 9c

6 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/5/97, Gardner, p. 9c

## NFC Championship Game



CAROLINA

**PANTHERS**

**PACKERS**

**13**

**30**

1.12.1997

### **Never A Doubt**

At kickoff, the temperature stood at three degrees with minus 17-degree wind chills. This bitterly cold day, like the Ice Bowl 30 yards earlier, would send the Packers back to a Super Bowl!

It was a rocky start though against the young franchise from North Carolina. An interception by linebacker Sam Mills helped the Panthers to an early 7-0 lead. In the second quarter, Favre fumbled near midfield, and Lamar Lathon recovered. A field goal followed that made it 10-7 Carolina.

In between the turnovers, Favre threw a 29-yard touchdown pass to Dorsey Levens. Later in the second quarter, his six-yard toss to Antonio Freeman gave Green Bay the lead 14-10. Just before halftime, a one-handed interception by cornerback Tyrone Williams helped extend the lead when Chris Jacke kicked the first of three field goals.

Favre directed six scoring drives of 73, 71, 48, 73, 74 and 36 yards! His passing and the Packers' powerful ground game overwhelmed Carolina. Edgar Bennett and Dorsey Levens ran for 187 yards, and they broke seven plays for 20 yards or more!

The teams traded field goals in the third quarter for a 20-13 Packer lead. With two minutes left in the quarter, Favre led a decisive, 74-yard drive in three plays. Edgar Bennett took it home on a four-yard run over right guard for a 27-13 lead. After Jacke's third field goal sealed it with 4:58 left, "the tiny franchise at the mouth of the mighty Fox ruled one-half of the football world again."<sup>1</sup>

<b>Carolina</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30</b>

**Attendance: 60,215**

*Total Yards: GB 479 yards / Carolina 251*

*"This team and its town stuck together, side by side in sickness and in health, waiting for the cure."<sup>2</sup>*

*"When the Packers are this close to the Super Bowl, you want to be as close to Green Bay as you can be."<sup>3</sup> Steve Domitrovich, Ontonagon, Michigan*

*"The victory celebration lasted into the evening at Merkle's Saloon near Little Sturgeon in Door County. "I'm telling you it was great," bartender Elaine Dart said. "There were many people in their 30s crying. They've followed the Packers for so many years, and, finally, they get to feel what they're parents felt. And now they're dancing," she said. "And we'll be dancing for the next two weeks."<sup>4</sup>*

*"Vince Lombardi wasn't here to say it, so Boyd Konowalski said it for him. 'Vince wants his trophy back' proclaimed the sandwich board worn by the Green Bay resident. I bet 100 people have stopped me, and I've been here for about a half hour."<sup>5</sup>*

*Giles Clark plays the accordion. "Whenever the Menasha resident gets the feeling, he brings his instrument to the Packers' parking lot on game days and takes requests. The crowd's favorite song? The Beer Barrel Polka. I love to come up and add to the experience."<sup>6</sup>*

*Several former Packers were on hand to watch the '96 Packers exorcized the ghosts of titles past. Bart Starr spoke for Jerry Kramer, Willie Davis, and Ray Nitschke when he said, "It's time for the other generation to have their champion. They have it. That's what we're so thrilled about."<sup>7</sup>*

*While Terry Bradshaw of FOX Sports was presenting the NFC Championship Trophy to the Packers, he felt someone "tugging at his south side. That something was Brett Favre's hand. 'He was goosing me on my butt, I'm trying to present the trophy and this guy is grabbing me on my butt. I turn around, and he's (Favre) laughing.'"<sup>8</sup>*

*"On Sunday, we all will be in front of our consoles. The Green Bay Packers are Wisconsin. And if I'm not knowledgeable about Wisconsin, I'll still turn the game on. I feel as if I'm supposed to have*

*the game on because even though my mother and father are gone, they would have wanted to see it. My father would crack open a beer, and my mother would fix herself a cup of cocoa, and they would give the New England Patriots hell. Isn't it wonderful, I think, how just by moving a ball around on a field, a bunch of guys I've never even met can give me back my parents, bring them back as young and innocent as they were in the beginning?"<sup>9</sup>*

*With the NFC Championship Trophy in hand, Reggie White told the Lambeau Field crowd, "Green Bay, I hope you are proud of us because we're proud of you."<sup>10</sup>*

- 1 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Bauman, Packers Extra, p. 1
- 2 Return to Glory, Super Bowl XXXI Anniversary, p. 54
- 3 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/13/97, Anderson, p. 28
- 4 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/13/97, Anderson, p. 28
- 5 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/13/97, Stewart, p. 10
- 6 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/13/97, Stewart, p. 10
- 7 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/13/97, Lea, p. 5
- 8 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/23/97, Wolfley, p. 8
- 9 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/24/97, Cherry, p. 6
- 10 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/19/97, Gardner, p. 7

## Super Bowl XXXI



1919-2018

NEW ENGLAND

**PATRIOTS**

**PACKERS**

**21**

**35**

**1.26.1997**

Going home to play in the Super Bowl had to be like a dream come true for Brett Favre. He grew up one-hour northeast of New Orleans, and he would play the most important game of his life in the Superdome!

For the Packer franchise, it had been for 29 long years since Lombardi walked off the field a winner in Super Bowl II in 1968. For New England, rumors swirled before the game about the future of coach, Bill Parcells. In his fourth year, he was rumored to be on his way out after differences with ownership.

A 34-point first half in the Super Bowl was amazing, and it couldn't have started any better for the Packers. "Favre was plenty loose coming out of the locker room,"<sup>1</sup> and on the second play from scrimmage, he audibled and threw a 54-yard touchdown pass to Andre Rison. A delirious Favre charged downfield – helmet sky-high – to join the celebration. The fast start continued as a pick by Doug Evans led to Chris Jacke's first field goal four plays later.

It was 10-0 with less than six minutes gone in the game. Dreamland?!!

New England rallied on their next drive after a pass interference call against Craig Newsome put the ball at the Green Bay one-yard line. Keith Byars scored to make it 10-7. New England's speed on defense forced a quick three-and-out by Green Bay. A gutsy call then by Parcells on third-and-one fooled the Packers. Quarterback Drew Bledsoe used what LeRoy Butler called, "the best play fake I've ever seen,"<sup>2</sup> for a 44-yard completion to Terry Glenn that put the ball at the Green Bay

four-yard line. Bledsoe to tight end Ben Coates made it 14-10 New England.

In the second quarter, Favre reclaimed the lead for good. With single coverage by rookie safety Lawyer Milloy, Antonio Freeman faked inside and headed toward the sideline. Favre hit him in stride in front of the New England bench for an 81-yard touchdown. It was the longest touchdown pass in Super Bowl history at the time.

Chris Jacke's third field goal and Mike Prior's interception helped extend the lead. Favre capitalized on the interception with a nine-play drive that culminated with his two-yard run around left end for a 27-14 halftime lead.

After the intermission, late in the third quarter, a seven-play drive by the Patriots was capped off by Curtin Martin's 18-yard touchdown run up the middle to make it 27-21. The Packers still had a game on their hands. Desmond Howard made sure it wasn't too much of a game by returning the ensuing kickoff 99 yards to halt the momentum shift.

Those would be the game's last points, and Green Bay's defense held New England to six net yards in the fourth quarter. The Patriots couldn't run the ball all game (43 yards), and Bledsoe threw four interceptions, and he was sacked five times. Reggie White delivered three of those sacks in the second half to squash any comebacks attempts.

Though Desmond Howard's 244 return yards earned him the MVP, any dream Brett Favre may have had about winning on Bourbon Street, couldn't have turned out any better. His triumphant return home (14-27-246-2-0) and a strong showing by a Reggie White-inspired defense put the Green Bay back on top of the NFL mountain!

<b>New England</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35</b>

*"John O'Neill, a corrections officer from Madison, might have been the most photographed object outside the Dome, not counting the*

dome itself. O'Neill was dressed in green-gold papal raiments – complete with a staff topped with a wedge of cheese and a miter on which he had written 'St. Vince.' Packers and Patriot fans alike stopped to have their picture taken with O'Neill. Hundreds of them.”<sup>3</sup>

“Just as the football players got dressed, prepared for the big game and put on their game faces Sunday, Bill Fonti and Tom Vickerman took several hours to transform themselves into lean, mean fighting Packers machines. The pair cruised the French Quarter in their Packers fan personas before taking their seats near the 50-yard line in the Superdome's upper deck. 'We've had 300 to 400 pictures taken of us,' said Fonti.”<sup>4</sup>

Dick Schapp on the Lombardi Packers: “They wanted it so badly. I was sitting next to Fuzzy Thurston the last few minutes of the game, and he was shivering, he was so excited. Bob Skoronski was here. Paul Hornung. Max McGee. Bart Starr was here. They're all excited.”<sup>5</sup>

“Packer fans had a variety of headgear Sunday. Among them: Cheeseheads decorated with fish lures, tiny football players and little goal posts; a Cheesehead with a foam muskellunge sticking from the front and a yellow football stuck in its mouth; a Packers hard hat with a hurricane glass (for the drink, not the storm) glued to the top, three-tiered, green and gold pagoda hats; a Cheesehead with life-size plastic lobsters and crabs on top; a yellow cheese headband with two cheese antennas bobbing; and Cheesehead with a furry cow on top that was wearing little cheese wedge earrings.”<sup>6</sup>

Former Packer great Jim Taylor celebrated the Packer win with current fans. “The Packers' Hall-of-Fame running back, who'll sign anything for \$20, slips off his ring from the Packers championship team 31 years ago and presents it to Gary Kowalke, 45, a plumbing contractor from Baraboo, Wis., and lifelong Packers fan. Kowalke is awed. Timidly he slips the ring on his own finger. A huge smile crosses his face. “It's a beauty,”<sup>7</sup> he says.

“There are educated fans all across the country, but in terms of being there no matter what the temperature or the climate, Packer fans are unparalleled. And by climate, I don't mean weather, but climate in terms of how your team is doing. That's what really differentiates them from other fans around the league.”<sup>8</sup>

Colleen Murphy hugged and kissed the frozen green walls of the stadium (Lambeau Field). “This is the best moment of my life” Murphy

*said, her arms stretched against the green wall, just below the yellow Packers lettering. "I'm going to cry."*<sup>9</sup>

*"I am saving the snow that fell on my car in the parking lot of Lambeau Field during the game. I'm going to melt it down, put it in a jar and save it,"*<sup>10</sup> *said Jim Gittings of Moline, Illinois*

*On Water Street in Downtown Milwaukee, "Many in the crowd tackled others in the snow, tore off their shirts and paraded a fake Lombardi trophy around the street."*<sup>11</sup>

*From The Sports Bar in Prague, Packer fan Chip Erwin said, "We're outnumbered by chowderheads, but the cheeseheads are having more fun."*<sup>12</sup>

*"Roger Van DeHay, drove 2,800 miles from his home in Gridley, California to see the game. Why? 'In 1967-68 I was in Vietnam. I didn't get to see the game. That's why I am here.'" <sup>13</sup>*

*"It's time the Lombardi Trophy goes home to Lambeau Field where it belongs."*<sup>14</sup> *Bob Harlan, Team President*

*A crowd estimated at 10,000, greeted the team on its arrival back in Green Bay in snowy, 20-degree temperatures. It took nearly three hours to make it from the airport to Lambeau Field. Thousands of fans lined the streets. "People on crutches hobbled over snow and ice to salute the buses. Nurses emerged from St. Vincent and Bellin hospitals in scrubs to wave their greetings. A woman in a wheelchair sat in in the doorway of a home, holding a sign that simply said. "Thank you.""*<sup>15</sup>

*"And they engaged in more than a bit of nuttiness along the way. Some women bared their breasts for the buses. A group of bare-chested men spelled out "GO PACK" on their bodies with black electrical tape."*<sup>16</sup>

*"And some 30 minutes later, Michael Castle walked into a virtually empty stadium. He'd driven Monday to Green Bay from Beloit, he said, but his car broke down about 40 miles away. Alternately hitchhiking and walking, Castle managed to make it to Lambeau too late for the show, nut not too late to pay homage. He stood in the empty seats, held a newspaper aloft and whooped for joy."*<sup>17</sup>



*“Other teams have fans. The Packers – The NFL’s proudest franchise, owned by the people of the league’s humblest city – have devotees.”<sup>18</sup>*

*Reserve tackle John Michels of the Packers said, “I think it is safe to say we are the true America’s Team. You don’t see fans like this shut down and entire town.”<sup>19</sup> John Michels, Green Bay Packers*

*“A Bay View couple waited until the Green Bay Packers delivered their Super Bowl victory before leaving for the hospital and a delivery of their own. The intense interest of Irene Galati and her husband, Santo, in watching the game on television, coupled with a missed signal that turned out to be labor, resulted in the couple barely making it to the hospital in time for the delivery. ‘It happened so fast we could have had the baby in the house.’”<sup>20</sup>*

- 1 Brett Favre, A Packers Fans Tribute, p. 89
- 2 The Road to Glory, McGinn, p. 166
- 3 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/27/1997, p. 23
- 4 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/27/97, Jones, p. 25
- 7 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/27/97, Christl, p. 21
- 8 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/27/1997, p. 23
- 9 USA Today, 1/27/97, Howlett, p. 7c
- 10 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Extra, D’Amato, 1/27/97, p. 1
- 11 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/27/97, p. 6a
- 12 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/27/97, p. 6a
- 13 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/27/97, p. 6a
- 14 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/27/97, Heinen, p. 8a
- 15 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/27/97, Jones, p. 27
- 16 The Scrapbook History of Green Bay Packer Football, Zimmerman, p. 85
- 17 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/28/97, Romell, p. 5a
- 18 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/28/97, Romell, p. 5a
- 19 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/28/97, Romell, p. 5a
- 20 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/28/97, Romell, p. 5a
- 21 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/28/97, Romell, p. 1a
- 22 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/28/97, Rosenberg, p. 6a



THE  
**PACKERS CENTURY  
PROJECT**

1919-2018

## 1996 Team Statistics

### FINAL STANDINGS – Central Division / Western Conference

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>
Green Bay	9	4	1
Chicago	7	6	1
Detroit	5	7	2
Minnesota	3	8	3

### Team Leaders

Passing	Favre
Receiving	Freeman
Rushing	Bennett
Scoring	Jacke
Interceptions	E. Robinson
Sacks	White

### All-Pro

Butler	Safety
Favre	Quarterback
Howard	Punt Returner
E. Robinson	Safety
White	Defensive End

### Notable Draft Choices (Round, Position)

John Michels (1, OT)  
Derrick Mayes (2, WR)  
Mike Flanagan (3a, C)  
Tyronne Williams (3b, DB)  
Marco Rivera (6b, G)  
Keith McKenzie (7b, LB)



1919 - 2019

# **PACKERS CENTURY**

*with Jim Rice*

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