



1977



THE
PACKERS CENTURY

P R O J E C T

ALL THE GAMES. ALL THE STORIES.

1919-2019

BY JIM RICE

packerscentury.com



1977

Record: 4-10-0 (5th Place)

Coach: Bart Starr

- Bart Starr's third season was a major disappointment.
- Fans became more restless for success, and the team was booed on more than one occasion.
- Lynn Dickey returned from a separated shoulder. He played six games, but his season ended with a broken leg on the final play against the Rams. Dickey was replaced by rookie David Whitehurst.
- The offense was pitiful. It ranked 27th out of 28 teams. They threw more interceptions (21) than touchdowns (6).
- Stopping the run was the team's biggest challenge on defense.



PACKERS
NEW ORLEANS
SAINTS

24
9.18.1977
20

Green Bay dominated the first half, and New Orleans owned the second. The Packers struck on their first series, and Will Harrell's 75-yard punt return led to a 24-0 lead.

Though it wasn't necessary, Bart Starr reminded fans after the game that "we had to struggle and hang in there in the second half."¹ The struggle began on the Saints opening drive. They marched 60 yards after the kickoff for Chuck Muncie's first touchdown. When Lynn Dickey was intercepted a short time later, Muncie's second touchdown cut the Green Bay lead to 10.

The Saints continued their comeback as the Packers produced only 28 yards in the second half. With 24 seconds gone in the fourth quarter, Archie Manning's 59-yard touchdown pass to Henry Childs made it 24-20. Green Bay's defense stopped the Saints the rest of the way, and they kept the pressure on Manning. They finished with seven sacks.

Green Bay	14	10	0	0	24
New Orleans	0	0	14	6	20

Attendance: 56,250

John Brockington was released after this game.

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/19/77, Christl, p. 17



HOUSTON
OILERS
PACKERS

16 9.25.1977
10

Lynn Dickey's three interceptions, including a 95-yard pick-six with under five minutes left in the game, spelled disaster.

Before the interception, a blocked punt by the Packers opened the door for Dickey's 40-yard touchdown to Steve Odom. After the Oilers tied it with an 80-yard, 15-play drive, the teams traded field goals.

It stayed 10-10 until Green Bay drove to the Houston nine-yard line with five minutes left to play. A pass from Dickey to Barty Smith was deflected by Al Burton and intercepted by Willie Alexander. Alexander took it 95 yards to the house for a 16-10 lead. "We just didn't go after him,"¹ Barty Smith admitted later. The shocked Packers were 1-1.

Houston	0	10	0	6	16
Green Bay	7	3	0	0	10
Attendance:	55,071				

Dickey had a poor game against his old team (16-26-196-1-3).

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/25/76 Christl, p. 19



PACKERS
MINNESOTA
VIKINGS

7
10.2.1977
19

On the third play of the game, quarterback Lynn Dickey and Steve Odom connected for a 95-yard touchdown. The Packers never scored again as they managed just one first down in the first half. Dickey completed only eight passes all game.

The Vikings also scored the first time they had the ball. They came back to score thanks to Chuck Foreman's one-handed catch that kept the drive alive. Quarterback Fran Tarkenton threw the 311th touchdown pass of his career to Sammy White to tie it up.

Chuck Foreman scored on the ground in the second quarter, and the Vikings had the edge at halftime 13-7. Midway through the fourth quarter, they put it away after a missed field goal by Chester Marcol. Tarkenton's 64-yard drive culminated in Sammy Johnson's two-yard touchdown run.

Green Bay	7	0	0	0	7
Minnesota	7	6	0	6	19

Attendance: 47,143

GB ran 18 plays in the first half.



CINCINNATI
BENGALS
PACKERS

17 10.9.1977
7

The Packers scored first again.....they were also shut out in the second half for the fourth straight game.

With 2:31 left in the first half, Green Bay scored on Lynn Dickey's touchdown pass to Barty Smith in the back of the end zone for a 7-0 lead. Smith made a fantastic catch! A touchdown pass from Bengal quarterback Kenny Anderson to Issac Curtis tied it with 23 seconds left in the half.

Cincinnati seized the second-half momentum on their opening drive. The Packers couldn't stop their running game, especially when they ran right. They marched 75 yards with halfback Tony Davis scoring on a two-yard run.

Green Bay's offense did little the rest of the game, and Chris Bahr added a field goal with 1:09 left. After the game, Starr observed, "We didn't run the ball last week, and we didn't pass it this week. We've got to be more consistent."¹

Cincinnati	0	7	7	3	17
Green Bay	0	7	0	0	7
Attendance: 53,653					
Milwaukee County Stadium					

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/10/77, Christl, p. 25



PACKERS

DETROIT

LIONS

6

10.16.1977

10

To describe the action and the result, the Press-Gazette said “Packers Worse Than Lions.”¹ The dismal Packer offense produced just two Chester Marcol field goals. They turned the ball over six times, and Lynn Dickey was sacked five times. Overall, they gained only 149 yards.

Marcol’s second field goal though gave Green Bay a 6-3 lead into the fourth quarter. The Lions marched 72 yards to retake the lead on quarterback Greg Landry’s touchdown pass to Ray Jarvis with 12 minutes left. Trailing 10-6, the Packer offense went nowhere. Dickey threw four interceptions in the game, and concerned Packer fans understood all too easily that, “It took the Packers just one half to score it first 24 points this season.....and nine more halves to get the next 30.”²

Green Bay	3	0	3	0	6
Detroit	0	3	0	7	10

Attendance: 78,087

Marcol passed Clarke Hinkle on GB’s all-time scoring list.

“From my seats you can see the whole play forming – it’s a great seat. It’s like a family reunion in that section because I’ve had the seats since I was a kid. The difference now is, that in the beginning years, I was the kid and there were grandparents sitting around me. Now, I’m the grandparent and those people’s kids and grandkids are sitting all around me.”³

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/17/77, p. 25

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/17/77, Langenkamp, p. 21

3 For Packers Fans Only!, Wolfe, p. 143



PACKERS

TAMPA BAY

BUCCANEERS

13

10.23.1977

0

Turnaround?

In the last four games, the Packers turned the ball over 12 times and given up seven sacks. In this Battle of the Bays, those tendencies continued with two more turnovers and three sacks.

Chester Marcol's two field goals gave Green Bay a 6-0 in the first half. In the third quarter, a blocked punt by Jim Gueno of the Packers set up their winning touchdown drive. Green Bay recovered on Tampa's 24-yard line, and with the help of three five-yard penalties by Tampa Bay, they cashed-in with Eric Torkelson's five-yard touchdown run.

Tampa turned the ball over three times, gained only 188 yards, and lost for the 20th straight time. "In the aftermath of loss No. 20, spanning two seasons, the Bucs dressing room was a virtual tomb."¹

Green Bay 0 6 7 0 13

Tampa Bay 0 0 0 0 0

Attendance: 47,635

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/24/77, Edrington, p. 21



1919-2019

CHICAGO
BEARS
PACKERS

26 10.30.1977
0

"It's embarrassing. We weren't in the ball game"¹ said Starr after the blowout. Walter Payton and the Bears' ground attack dominated this rivalry game. "Sweetness" ran for 117 yards in the first quarter, and the Bears pounded the Packers for 375 yards rushing by game's end.

Payton finished with 205 yards which tied the club record set by Gale Sayers against the Packers in 1968. He began the day with a key 11-yard run that set up Chicago's first touchdown. He scored touchdowns in the first and fourth quarters, the second coming after an interception by Gary Fencik. Payton outgained the entire Packer offense (197 yards) and, "on this Sunday, Payton was an artist...a Picasso in pads."²

Chicago	13	3	0	10	26
Green Bay	0	0	0	0	0

Attendance: 56,002

Payton came out of the game with 11 minutes left.

Tired of losing, especially to the Bears, "Connie Lempke had finally had it. The Packers had lost another game, this time by a humiliating 26-0 defeat by their age-old rival, the Chicago Bears. And so she did what she felt she had to do. And so did some of her friends. Sunday night, five of them brought her, in her coffin, to the Downtowner Motel Bar. They hoisted a final drink to her, and in memorium, ordered one for the lady. The lady ever gracious, opened the lid of the coffin and promptly downed her shot glass of brandy. It was, by the way, on the house."³

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/31/77,Christl, p. 25

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/31/77, Langenkamp, p. 25

3 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/31/77, Aaron, p. 1



1919-2019

PACKERS

KANSAS CITY

CHIEFS

10

11.6.1977

20

Starr vs. Bettis!

The 1-6 Chiefs were playing their first game with their new coach, Tom Bettis. Bettis, a K. C. assistant coach, knew a few things about both winning and losing from playing his playing days in Green Bay from 1955-1961.

The Chiefs jumped out to a 10-0 lead before Chester Marcol's field goal in the third quarter got Green Bay on the scoreboard. Seven seconds into the fourth quarter, the Chiefs scored to push their advantage to 17-3. On the ensuing kickoff, the Packers scored their only touchdown of the game on an 85-yard return by Terdell Middleton after a handoff from Steve Odom!

With nearly a full quarter to play, that was all the Packers could do offensively. Overall, they put forth a good effort, but their talent came up short against the Chiefs. After the game, new Chiefs coach Tom Bettis reflected on the win. "He (Starr) wished me good luck and said it was a great win for me. I appreciate that because I think a great deal of Bart as an individual and as a coach."¹

Green Bay	0	0	3	7	10
Kansas City	10	0	0	10	20
Attendance:	62,687				

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/7/77, Fox, p. 23



LOS ANGELES

RAMS

PACKERS

24

11.13.1977

6

Green Bay's fourth loss in five games brought out "the worst booing the Packers ever received at a home game."¹ From start to finish, this game was all Rams.

L. A. jumped out to a 17-0 lead. Their second touchdown, and the field goal that followed came after Packer turnovers. After the miscues, boo-birds let loose. Green Bay's only points came late in the third quarter on a 65-yard bomb from Lynn Dickey to Steve Odom that made it 17-6. The Rams got the touchdown back in the fourth quarter.

On the last play of the game, Dickey broke his left leg. He was booed as he was taken off the field, and he was sidelined for the season. On why Dickey was still in a hopeless game so late, Starr explained, "(He) didn't want to look like he was abandoning his quarterback in the face of crowd pressure. Dickey was moving the offense. And rookie David Whitehurst was cold and stiff standing on the sidelines the entire game."²

Los Angeles	0	17	0	7	24
Green Bay	0	0	6	0	6

Attendance: 52,948

Milwaukee County Stadium

"There was the elderly lady with determination etched on her face, announcing, 'We're not giving up on them yet.' There was the guy with his features screwed up into a grimace, pleading, 'Leeme see somethin'. Anything!' "³

¹ The Scrapbook History of Green Bay Packer Football, Zimmerman, p. 149

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/14/77, Christl, p. 19

³ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/11/77, Langenkamp, p. 19



PACKERS

WASHINGTON

REDSKINS

9

11.20.1977

10

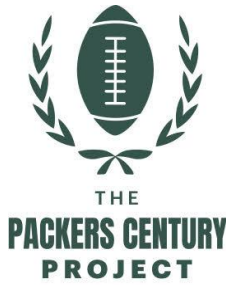
Whitehurst's Debut

With quarterback Lynn Dickey done for the season, David Whitehurst started his first NFL game. In a tight battle with the 5-4 Redskins, a seven-yard touchdown pass from Joe Theismann to Mike Thomas in the fourth quarter won this Monday Night matchup.

Prior to the touchdown, field goals ruled the night. Before the fourth quarter, Chester Marcol kicked two and Washington's Mark Moseley kicked one.

David Whitehurst's first NFL start was shakey. He threw three interceptions and was sacked six times. Playing a spirited and competitive game, he brought the Packers to within striking distance in the final minute. Trailing 10-9 with 23 seconds left and no timeouts, the comeback fell short with two incomplete passes, a sack, and an interception.

Green Bay	0	3	3	3	9
Washington	0	3	0	7	10
Attendance:	51,498				



1919-2019

MINNESOTA
VIKINGS
PACKERS

13 11.27.1977
6

Snowbound!

An eight-inch November snowstorm had everyone slipping and sliding at Lambeau Field. The Packers took an early lead 6-0 on David Whitehurst's three-yard run around left end – his first NFL touchdown. The Vikings rallied in the second quarter to lead 13-6 after Fran Tarkenton's 40-yard touchdown pass to Sammy White, and two field goals by Fred Cox.

Turnovers doomed the Packers late in the game. With five minutes left, and after driving 76 yards, Whitehurst threw an interception on Minnesota's five-yard line. Moments later, a fumble by Chuck Foreman gave the ball back to Green Bay on Minnesota's 21. Barty Smith's first fumble of the season came three plays later on the eight-yard line to give the football and the game to Minnesota.

Minnesota	0	13	0	0	13
Green Bay	6	0	0	0	6

Attendance: 50,000

GB had 9 first downs and 4 turnovers.



DETROIT
LIONS
PACKERS

9
 12.4.1977
10

Losing Streak Ends

The Packers snapped a five-game losing streak by taking a first half-lead and hanging on. They scored on their opening drive that went 70-yards with Will Harrell scoring on a two-yard run. Chester Marcol's field goal attempt hit the left upright, but went through, for 10-0 Packer lead before the half.

The Lions threatened with nine minutes left in the game. After blocking David Beverly's punt, they took over on Green Bay's 16-yard line. They scored on the next play. When Green Bay had to punt again, rather than kicking from their end zone, David Beverly stepped out of bounds for a safety with 2:36 left. The punt after the safety – plus a penalty on the Lions – pushed the ball back to Detroit's 15-yard line. With a "goal line defense in the middle of the field"¹ as Starr called it, the Packers prevailed.

Detroit	0	0	0	9	9
Green Bay	7	3	0	0	10

Attendance: 50,000

GB ran for a season-high 176 yards.

"How often do you see goal posts torn down after a team posts its third win in 12 games by one measly point? And how often do you see a defensive tackle (Dave Roller) carried off the field?¹

"Growing up in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, it was just natural to be a Packers fan. I didn't get to go to my first game until December of 1977. Ironically, it was against the Lions. It was a cold winter day, and it was just wonderful. One of my favorite players

was a defensive lineman named Dave Roller. I have an autographed picture of him. After the game, we went down to the field, and it was pure mud. It was the last game of the season, so they let us run out there. It was quite an experience.”²

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/5/77, Langenkamp, p. 24

2 For Packers Fans Only!, Wolfe, p. 97



1919-2019

PACKERS

CHICAGO

BEARS

10

12.11.1977

21

Going down...

Quarterback Bob Avellini's first quarter touchdown pass to James Scott put Chicago in front to stay 7-0. The Bears tore up the Packer defense all afternoon with 234 yards on the ground. Walter Payton led the chase with 163 yards.

After Avellini's touchdown pass, Payton scored twice on the ground. The first came from the one-yard line and the second he took in on a seven-yard run. In between, Barty Smith scored Green Bay's only touchdown that cut the lead for a time to four points. Payton's second touchdown run restored Chicago's 11-point lead, and the Packers never mounted another serious threat. Walter Payton proved too much to overcome.

Green Bay	0	10	0	0	10
Chicago	7	7	0	7	21

Attendance: 33,557

This was Payton's 4th straight game vs. GB with over 100 yards rushing.



SAN FRANCISCO

49ers

PACKERS

14

12.18.1977

16

A win put an end to a dreadful season. David Whitehurst had his best game (17-22-219-1-0), and Willie Buchanon's two interceptions led to 10 Green Bay points. The season couldn't end soon enough for both teams.

Detroit	7	7	0	0	14
Green Bay	9	7	0	0	16

Attendance: 44,902

Milwaukee County Stadium

*A banner in the stands read, "The Pack Will Be Back!"
Beaver Dam*



THE
**PACKERS CENTURY
PROJECT**

1919-2019

1977 Team Statistics

FINAL STANDINGS – NFC Central

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>
Minnesota	9	5	0
Chicago	9	5	0
Detroit	6	8	0
Green Bay	4	10	0
Tampa Bay	2	12	0

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Dickey
Rushing	B. Smith
Receiving	B. Smith
Scoring	Marcol
Interceptions	Luke, McCoy

ALL-PRO

NOTEABLE DRAFT PICKS (Round, Position)

Mike Butler (1a, DE)
Ezra Johnson (1b, DE)
Greg Koch (2, G-T)
Terdell Middleton (3c, RB)
David Whitehurst (8, QB)



1919 - 2019

PACKERS CENTURY

with Jim Rice

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