

SEASON  
**13**

**1931**



THE  
**PACKERS CENTURY**

---

**P R O J E C T**

*ALL THE GAMES. ALL THE STORIES.*

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**1919-2019**

BY JIM RICE

[packerscentury.com](http://packerscentury.com)



## 1931

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**Record: 12-2-0 NFL Champions**

**Coach: Curly Lambeau**

- During the offseason, the Packers put together a basketball team that traveled around the state. The Green Bay Basketball Club played games against Wisconsin towns and cities including Sturgeon Bay, Clintonville, Milwaukee and Racine to name a few.
- Green Bay became the first NFL team to win three straight titles.
- The Packers were fined \$1,000 for signing college players whose "class" hadn't graduated. The Bears and Spartans were also.
- An injury caused Verne Lewellen to miss seven games.
- Green Bay's offense scored 116 more points than any other team. Their defense ranked second only to Portsmouth.
- One game separated the Packers and Spartans at season's end. Portsmouth claimed the Packers had pledged to play a game after the season. Green Bay denied doing so. Portsmouth appealed to Commissioner Joe Carr, but the appeal was denied.

- **Go! You Packers Go! *Eric Karll, 1931***

Hail, hail the gang's all here to yell for you,  
And keep you going in your winning ways,  
Hail, hail the gang's all here to tell you too,  
That, win or lose, we'll always sing your praises Packers.

Chorus:

Go, you Packers, go and get 'em,  
Go, you fighting fools upset 'em,  
Smash their line with all your might,  
A touchdown, Packers, Fight, Fight, Fight,  
Fight on, you blue and gold, to glory,  
Win this game the same old story,  
Fight, you Packers, Fight,  
And bring the bacon home to Old Green Bay.



CLEVELAND  
**INDIANS**  
**PACKERS**

**0**  
**26**

**9.13.1931**

The rain, the heat, and the humidity did not slow down Green Bay. As they began their defense of the championship, the “new men in particular looked good, and veterans were just as impressive as ever.”<sup>1</sup> Roger Grove, Milt Gantenbein and Hank Bruder topped a strong rookie class for Green Bay and newcomer “Mule” Wilson, acquired from the Giants, got off to a great stat.

The Packers scored in each quarter with four different players scoring the points. “Mule” Wilson threw an early touchdown pass to rookie Frank Baker. Baker played in just two games in 1931 before calling it a career! In the fourth quarter, after a Bo Molenda interception, Wilson ran for a 39-yard touchdown to end all doubt.

Green Bay also scored on rookie Russ Sanders’ touchdown run in the second quarter. Then, after a poor punt left them deep in Cleveland territory in the third quarter, they scored six more. Green Bay outgained Cleveland 262-101 with 189 yards coming on the ground!

<b>Cleveland</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	<b>5,000+</b>				

*Packer President I.H. Joannes of the Football Corporation said: "We aim to make it possible for the high school teams to see the Packers in action. The Packer management feels that the reduced rate for the boys is a step in the right direction and if successful, we intend to repeat it in following years."*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/14/31, Bystrom, p. 13  
<sup>2</sup> packershistory.net/1931Packers



1919-2018

BROOKLYN

**DODGERS**

**6**

**9.20.1931**

**PACKERS**

**32**

### **Easy Win!**

On a hot day, Green Bay enjoyed a second straight blowout. Five different Packers scored including veteran lineman Whitey Woodin, whose pick-six in the third quarter made it 26-0. Lavvie Dilweg, Verne Lewellen, Milt Gantenbein and Arnie Herber also put up points for the Pack.

Green Bay's defense allowed just 10 net yards rushing and they outgained the Dodgers 301-110. Brooklyn finally in the fourth quarter when it was 32-0.

During the game, Green Bay Packer fan Willard Bent fell from the northwest section of the bleachers and sued the team for \$20,000. The lawsuit was not settled until 1933, and it contributed to the team's financial problems.

<b>Brooklyn</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>32</b>

**Attendance: 7,000**

*St. Norbert's College radio station WHBY aired the game.*



CHICAGO  
**BEARS**  
**PACKERS**

**0**  
**7**

**9.27.1931**

Waiting to get in, 200 fans got tired of being bumped around online and they crashed the gate to get in.

On another hot day, Green Bay's defense stated its case as another championship unit. They shut down the big Bear backfield of Bronco Nagurski and Red Grange. Grange ran for *minus* six yards, and Nagurski gained only nine. At the end of the first quarter, Lavvie Dilweg recovered a fumble by Joe Lintzenich on the Bears' 22-yard line. A few plays later Verne Lewellen slipped between Nagurski and Grange and into the end zone.

<b>Chicago</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>

**Attendance: 13,500**

*This is the 20<sup>th</sup> straight win at home for GB.*



NEW YORK

**GIANTS**  
**PACKERS**

**7**  
**27**

**10.4.1931**

“What a team! How those Green Bay Packers handed it to the New York Giants here Sunday - and made them like it! How they smashed! How they ran! How they blocked and played perfect football as a crowd of 14,000 cheered.”<sup>1</sup>

There’s not much else to say except the Giants scored first. Red Flaherty blocked a punt, picked it up and returned it for six. The Packers tied it up quickly on Verne Lewellen’s 10-yard touchdown run. Later in the first quarter, Lewellen scored again when a bad punt gave Green Bay great field position. Wuert Englemann’s 42-yard touchdown run topped off a strong first half 20-7.

Quarterback Red Dunn put the icing on the cake in the fourth quarter when he teamed up with Johnny Blood for a 25-yard touchdown strike.

<b>New York</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	<b>14,000</b>				

*“Directors of the Green Bay Football Corporation, at a regular meeting held Tuesday evening at the Press-Gazette, voted unanimously to turn over the profits of the Packer-Stapleton game, which will be played here on Sunday, Nov. 8, to charity. President Leland H. Joannes of the Football corporation will immediately get in touch with the Community Chest executives in regards to the game, and it is anticipated that a ticket sales campaign for the charity contest will be mapped out in a few days.”<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press Gazette, 10/5/31, Bystrom, p. 13

<sup>2</sup> packershistory.net/1931Packers (12/7)



1919-2018

CHICAGO

**CARDINALS**  
**PACKERS**

**7**  
**26**

**10.11.1931**

### **Blood's Game!**

The Packers faced the team that ended their historic unbeaten streak last season.

It started very slowly for the Packers, and they were shutout in the first half. They came close a few times, but the Cardinals held firm. The visitors took the lead on an Ernie Nevers touchdown pass in the first quarter.

Green Bay rallied in the second half behind Johnny Blood and quarterback Red Dunn. Blood made two spectacular leaping touchdown catches. One went for 40-yards and the other 14. Late in the game, he also grabbed an interception and took it 35-yards to the house for touchdown #3 to close the scoring.

<b>Chicago</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>

**Attendance: 8,000**

*Cal Hubbard was ejected for fighting.*



FRANKFORD YELLOW

**JACKETS**  
**PACKERS**

**0**  
**15**

**10.18.1931**

The Yellow Jackets seriously threatened to score three times, but the Packer defense wouldn't allow it. Green Bay started the scoring when they blocked a punt out of the end zone for a safety. Big Cal Hubbard also contributed an interception!

Johnny Blood starred again by scoring both touchdowns and providing a number of other "highly exciting moments."<sup>1</sup> His first touchdown was a great catch that he held onto as he landed on his face. In the third quarter, he put the game away with 19-yard touchdown run.

<b>Frankford</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>

**Attendance: 6,000**

*GB outgained the Jackets 296-163.*

*"Organized cheering, with East and West high school's cheerleaders leading the fans, was inaugurated."<sup>2</sup>*

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/19/31, Bystrom, p. 21

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/19/31, p. 22





PROVIDENCE STEAM

**ROLLER  
PACKERS**

**20  
48**

**10.25.1931**

This was Homecoming for many former Packers. The enjoyable celebration and reunion had a perfect finish with the victory over Providence.

The current team put on quite a show. The 48 points set a new record for the most points to date in Packer history! Fifty-five passes were thrown in the game, and at times "it probably looked like three were in use."<sup>1</sup> In the first quarter, a 21-point explosion by Wuert Engelmann – two touchdown catches and a kickoff return for six – appeared to put the game away by intermission.

But Providence rallied behind running back Oran Pape. Pape, a former Packer, scored three touchdowns to keep the Roller close. In a 28-20 game after three quarters, the Packers stormed back and won going away with three more touchdowns in the fourth quarter.

<b>Providence</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	---				

*"Special trains will take fans to and from Chicago Sunday to see the Green Bay Packers play the Chicago Bears. A special train leaving Green Bay at 7 a.m. Sunday will carry the Lumberjack band in addition to several hundred fans. This train will pick up passengers at Manitowoc, Sheboygan and other cities along the lake shore. Another special will come down through Appleton, Oshkosh and Fond du Lac. Green Bay will send about 1,500 fans to the game."<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/26/31, Bystrom, p. 13  
<sup>2</sup> packershistory.net/1931Packers (10/27)



**PACKERS**

CHICAGO

**BEARS**

**6**

**11.1.1931**

**2**

This was a hard fought, defensive gem with the defenses scoring all the points! After a scoreless first quarter, Packer lineman Big Cal Hubbard swatted at a pass and managed to deflect it into the arms of defensive tackle Mike Michalske. Michalske returned it 80 yards for Green Bay's touchdown! Years later, Papa Bear Halas said of Big Cal Hubbard of Green Bay, "There was never a better lineman."<sup>1</sup>

Chicago scored a safety in the third quarter when Red Dunn was tackled in the end zone after fielding a punt on the two-yard line. On offense, the Bears got inside the Packer 25-yard line six times, but they came away empty-handed. In the fourth quarter, interceptions by Johnny Blood and Mule Wilson preserved the lead.

<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Chicago</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	<b>30,000</b>				

<sup>1</sup> Packers of the Past, Milwaukee Journal, 9/28-12/9/65, p. 15



STATEN ISLAND

**STAPLETONS**  
**PACKERS**

**0**  
**26**

11.8.1931

### Overpowered by Offense

Green Bay was never threatened, and Johnny Blood took over! The Packers scored on four long touchdown marches, one in each quarter.

Lavvie Dilweg and Johnny Blood caught touchdown passes in the first half for a 13-0 lead. In the third quarter, Blood finished off a 65-yard touchdown drive with a 13-yard run. He then intercepted a pass on defense in the fourth quarter which led to his touchdown pass – after a lateral from halfback Paul Fitzgibbons – to Hank Bruder!

The Stapletons completed just one pass for 11 yards, and they never got inside the Packer 15-yard line. They were outgained 425-130.

<b>Staten Island</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Attendance: 7,000</b>					



**PACKERS**  
CHICAGO  
**CARDINALS**

**13**  
**11.15.1931**  
**21**

### **Upset Specialists**

This time in the mud, the Cardinals (2-3-0) brought to an end another Packer winning streak (see 1930). They followed their star back Ernie Nevers who threw two touchdown passes.

Late in the first quarter, Nevers connected on four of six passes including a 25-yarder to Mil Creighton for a touchdown and a 7-0 lead. In the second quarter, Nevers' quick-kick backfired. Dick Stahlman blocked the kick, and Tom Nash recovered for the Packers and he scored.

In the second half, trailing 7-6, Green Bay's offense continued to struggle. Four times in the game, they drove inside Chicago's 25-yard line but couldn't score. The Cards though scored twice and extended the lead to 21-6. Their second touchdown came after an interception by rookie George Rogge. It led to Nevers' second touchdown pass that snapped Green Bay's 9-0 start.

<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chicago</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>

**Attendance: 9,000**



**PACKERS**  
NEW YORK  
**GIANTS**

**14**  
**10**

**11.22.1931**

## **Big Win!**

As the defending champion Packers headed East, there was a big buildup in New York for this game. Thirty-five thousand fans came out to see how the 5-4-1 Giants would handle the 9-1 Packers.

The Pack jumped in front on a Red Dunn screen pass, just over the Giant defensive front line, that Johnny Blood took untouched for a 53-yard touchdown. New York returned fire with quarterback Benny Friedman's passing and Hap Moran's running. Moran's touchdown run tied it up early in the second quarter, and his 22-yard field goal gave New York a 10-7 lead at intermission.

The third quarter was scoreless though the Packers began their winning drive as it ended. Red Dunn returned to the game and sparked Green Bay's offense. They went 78-yards in 15 plays with Dunn's 20-yard pass to rookie Hank Bruder securing the win. One New York writer was so impressed with the Pack he wrote, "anything less than a spear stubbed Chinese wall would have looked sick against such devastating force."<sup>1</sup>

<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>New York</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>

**Attendance: 35,000**

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/24/31, p.13



**PACKERS**

PROVIDENCE STEAM

**ROLLER**

**38**

**7**

**11.26.1931**

Happy Thanksgiving! "Lambeau and company won in a walk."<sup>1</sup> The Packers dominated from the opening kickoff, and they led 32-7 after 30 minutes.

Johnny Blood and Bo Molenda knocked the Rollers around all game. Blood caught three touchdown passes for 26, 55 and 30 yards. Molenda threw two of those touchdown passes, and he scored twice on the ground himself. He kicked an extra point too!

<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Providence</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	<b>5,000</b>				

*Red Grange on Johnny "Blood" McNally: "I played a couple of postseason exhibition games for Green Bay, and I roomed with Blood. What a guy! I remember a couple of girls wanted Johnny to sign a program, and he said, "I'll do better than that. I'll sign it in blood." He cut his wrist with a knife and signed that program in blood, and he had to have about four stitches."<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/27/31, Calhoun, p.15

<sup>2</sup> The Game That was, Cope, p. 54



**PACKERS**

BROOKLYN

**DODGERS**

**7**

**11.29.1931**

**0**

Verne Lewellen made the big play in this one score game! In the first quarter on fourth down, Lewellen lunged off the muddy turf from the two-yard line and landed in the end zone. The defense made it stand up to clinch Green Bay's third straight NFL championship!

<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Brooklyn</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	<b>10,000</b>				

*"To the chargin of the "more sophisticated" big cities, obscure and "uncultured" Green Bay would beat them again, again and again during this glorious three year reign."*<sup>1</sup>

*"You see, we try to get every fellow who plays for us to live in Green Bay. We give him a job there, and try to get him interested in the town."*<sup>2</sup>

*"Telegraph wires from the Atlantic seaboard, as well as radio dispatches and special broadcast programs, brought the news that Wisconsin's entry in the National league will once again be entitled to stage its flag raising ceremony at City stadium; a performance which is rapidly becoming traditional in the eyes of Badger sport followers."*<sup>3</sup>

2 The Scrapbook History of Green Bay Packer Football, Zimmerman, p. 74  
 2 packershistory.net/1931Packers (11/30)  
 3 packershistory.net/1931Packers (11/30-Green Bay)



**PACKERS**

CHICAGO

**BEARS**

**6**

**12.6.1931**

**7**

Eighteen thousand fans witnessed this upset that included nine interceptions, six by Chicago. On the first play from scrimmage, the Packers tried a quick pass that was intercepted by Carl Brumbaugh at the 30-yard line. Halfback Joe Lintzenich caught Brumbaugh's 28-yard touchdown pass for an early advantage. The winning extra point followed.

In the second quarter, the Packers scored on a 34-yard touchdown pass from Bo Molenda to Johnny Blood – who caught the ball when Red Grange fell. A missed extra point by Red Dunn proved costly. Late in the fourth quarter, interceptions by Red Grange and Dick Nesbitt stopped Green Bay's final drives.

<b>Green Bay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Chicago</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>

**Attendance: 18,000**

*GB won two of three vs. Bears in 1931.*

*"A judge in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, granted a divorce to Mrs. Daisy Goldstein in 1931 because her husband was more devoted to the Green Bay Packers than to her."<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> The National Forgotten League, Dan Daly, p. 77





## 1931 Team Statistics

### FINAL STANDINGS

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>
Green Bay	12	2	0
Portsmouth	11	3	0
Chicago Bears	8	5	0
Chicago Cardinals	5	4	1
New York	7	6	1
Providence	4	4	3
Staten Island	4	6	1
Cleveland	2	8	0
Brooklyn	2	12	0
Frankford	1	6	1

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing TDs	Dunn
Receiving TDs	Blood
Rushing TDs	Lewellen
Scoring	Blood

### ALL-PRO

Barrager	Center
Blood	Back
Dilweg	End
Dunn	Dunn
Hubbard	Tackle
Michalske	Guard
Molenda	Back
Nash	End
Stahlman	Tackle



1919 - 2019

# **PACKERS CENTURY**

*with Jim Rice*

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