

SEASON
51

1969



THE
PACKERS CENTURY

P R O J E C T

ALL THE GAMES. ALL THE STORIES.

1919-2019

BY JIM RICE

packerscentury.com



1969

Record: 8-6-0 (3rd Place)

Coach: Phil Bengtson

- Fans rallied behind the slogan “The Pack will be Back!” The team won two more games in 1968 than the year before.
- In a stunning development, Vince Lombardi was released from his contract to become part owner, executive vice-president, and coach of the Washington Redskins. Phil Bengtson was given the General Manager responsibilities.
- A strong start (5-2) and a strong finish (3-1) was torpedoed by a three-game losing streak in November. The defense was the strength of the team, especially the secondary.
- Injuries took their toll throughout the season. Bart Starr was injured on and off throughout the season. Back-up quarterback Don Horn threw 20 more passes than Starr in 1969.
- Kicking continued to be a problem.
- After the season, several veterans moved on: Jerry Kramer, Zeke Bratkowski and Bob Skoronski retired; Ron Kostelnick and Tom Brown were traded for draft choices.



1919-2019

CHICAGO
BEARS
PACKERS

0
17 9.21.1969

The Packers turned 50 on August 11, 1969. NFL Commissioner, Pete Rozelle, attended this opener, and what looked like an impressive win for the Packers in September, lost much of its luster when the Bears finished the season with one win.

Bart Starr and Travis "The Roadrunner" Williams hooked up for a 31-yard touchdown in the first quarter. It remained 7-0 until Doug Hart's second interception of the game in the fourth quarter. Hart returned the theft 44 yards to Chicago's one-yard line. Jim Grabowski scored on the next play.

"It's a heckuva feeling beating those Bears and winning the opener,"¹ said "The Roadrunner." Chicago did little offensively. Gale Sayers ran for just 36 yards, and the Bears generated 204 overall. They also turned the ball over twice.

Chicago	0	0	0	0	0
Green Bay	7	0	0	10	17
Attendance:	50,861				

*"Picketing patrons won their point and assembled Sunday before a color tv set at Don Lambrecht's tavern to watch the Green Bay Packers. His customers had begun threatening a friendly boycott on 8/1 unless he replaced his black and white set with a color model. He yielded Thursday, and ordered a color tv in time for Sunday's game."*²

*"Packer President Dominic Olejniczak expressed the team's appreciation for 50 years of support. On hand were Johnny Blood, Mike Michalske, Arnie Herber, Ted Fritsch, Clayton Tonnemaker and three particular latter day favorites Paul Hornung, Max McGee, and Fuzzy Thurston."*³

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/22/69, p. 18

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/22/69, p. 15

3 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/22/69, p. 18



1919-2019

SAN FRANCISCO

49ers

PACKERS

7

9.28.1969

14

A scoreless battle broke open in the first 36 seconds of the second half. The Packers struck first when rookie Dave Hampton took the kickoff back 87 yards for a touchdown. The Niners matched it seconds later with an 80-yard pass from quarterback John Brodie to running back Clifton McNeil.

The winner came early in the fourth quarter. From the two-yard line, fullback Jim Grabowski took a short pass from quarterback Bart Starr into the end zone for a 14-7 lead. In a dramatic effort to tie the game, the 49ers were on Green Bay's seven-yard line with 17 seconds left. Willie Wood saved the day for the Packers with "a leaping interception of a John Brodie pass at the goal line."¹

San Francisco 0 0 7 0 7

Green Bay 0 0 7 7 14

Attendance: 48,184

Milwaukee County Stadium

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/29/69, Wagner, p. 17



1919-2019

PACKERS

MINNESOTA

VIKINGS

7

10.5.1969

19

This game was played at Memorial Stadium on the campus of the University of Minnesota. With two straight wins to start the season, the Vikings, the defending division-champs, were a big test.

The teams combined for only 403 yards of offense, and they dug in for a low-scoring battle. Green Bay's offense never got untracked. Two early fumbles led to Minnesota points, and Bart Starr was sacked eight times. Green Bay held the Vikings to four field goals by Fred Cox and a touchdown run by Dave Osborn.

The Packers didn't score until there were five seconds left. Forrest Gregg was ejected from the game after a fight with former Packer Dale Hackbart. Gregg insisted he "wanted to continue the discussion afterward in the parking lot."¹

Green Bay	0	0	0	7	7
Minnesota	6	7	3	3	19

Attendance: 60,740

¹ Cold Wars, Mischler, p. XV



PACKERS

DETROIT

LIONS

28

10.12.1969

17

3-1

Carroll Dale and Bart Starr controlled the game from start to finish. Dale caught seven passes for 167 yards and two touchdowns. Most of that effort came against the great cornerback, Lem Barney.

After a Travis Williams touchdown gave the Pack a 7-0 lead, the Starr-Dale connection struck for a 40-yard score to make it 14-0. The Lions cut it to 14-10, but Starr found Dale again right after halftime for a 21-10 Packer lead. "He ran some good routes, and Starr threw perfect passes,"¹ said a dejected Lem Barney. Mel Farr's second touchdown kept the Lions close, but Starr wrapped it up with a 58-yard completion to Dave Hampton. On the next play, Hampton scored from the one.

Green Bay	14	0	7	7	28
Detroit	0	10	7	0	17
Attendance:	58,384				

*Lem Barney, Detroit Lions, Member, Pro Football Hall of Fame: After Lombard left, they struggled. The power shifted to the Minnesota Vikings and Coach Bud Grant. Grant was the quiet Lombardi. I don't think he ever had a bad thing to say."*²

¹ Green Bay Press Gazette, 10/13/69, Wagner, p. 21
² Facing the Green Bay Packers, Carlson, p. 8



PACKERS

LOS ANGELES

RAMS

21

10.19.1969

34

L. A. raced to a first-half lead, and they were never in danger. Green Bay cooperated with three fumbles that the Rams turned into 13 points. Quarterback Roman Gabriel threw a 51-yard touchdown pass, and he ran for a touchdown. Lou Gossett's two field goals made it 20-0 before the Packers scored.

Bart Starr's touchdowns to Boyd Dowler and Elijah Pitts cut the deficit to 20-14. With six seconds left before the half, the Rams elected to go for a touchdown rather than a field goal from the 11-yard line. Quarterback Roman Gabriel fired a momentum-changing touchdown pass to Wendell Tucker for a 27-14 halftime lead.

The second half was comparatively quiet. Each team scored once, and Packers could not get the big break. L. A.'s strong defense allowed just 38 yards rushing all game. Because Starr was getting some "pretty rough treatment"¹ from Deacon Jones and company, Don Horn played in the fourth quarter. Starr and Horn were sacked six times. "There are nine games left to go. We know what we have to do," Coach Bengston said after.

Green Bay	0	14	0	7	21
Los Angeles	7	20	7	0	34
Attendance:	78,947				

¹ Green Bay Press Gazette, 10/20/69, Rummel, p. 15

² Green Bay Press Gazette, 10/21/69, Rummel, p. 15



1919-2019

ATLANTA
FALCONS
PACKERS

10
28 10.26.1969

Gold Dust Twin!

Donny Anderson returned to the starting lineup after an injury to Travis Williams. He had the best day of his career with 114 yards on 18 carries, and his one-yard touchdown run in the first quarter opened the scoring.

Anderson led a blistering ground attack that put up 241 yards and two touchdowns. Asked whether Anderson would retain the starting spot, Coach Bengtson was evasive, "Well, you've always got room for two good men."¹ Before the half, Dave Hampton also scored on the ground for a 14-3 Packers lead.

The defense kept the lid on the Falcons all game with three turnovers and six quarterback sacks. When Atlanta cut it to 14-10 in the third quarter, the Packers put it out of reach. Bart Starr's touchdown to Marv Fleming and Herb Adderley's 80-yard pick-six wrapped it up.

Atlanta	0	3	7	0	10
Green Bay	7	7	0	14	28

Attendance; 50,861

GB outgained Atlanta 337-219

Larry Primeau, Packer fan: "My whole life, my allegiance has been with the Packers. I don't care how bad they play, and I don't care what goes on. The Packers are my life. I'll die a Green Bay Packer fan. It's just been in my blood since I was old enough to know."²

¹ Green Bay Press Gazette, 10/27/69, Wagner, p. 17

² For Packer Fans Only!, Wolfe, p. 50



PACKERS

PITTSBURGH

STEELERS

38

11.2.1969

34

In a game filled with seven lead changes and nine turnovers, the Packers came from behind to defeat the winless Steelers.

With Bart Starr out with a sore arm, Travis Williams ran all over the field for three touchdowns. His 83-yard punt return gave the Packers an early lead, and a 93-yard kickoff return in the third quarter tied the game 24-24. "The Roadrunner's" third touchdown came early in the fourth quarter to put Green Bay back on top 31-24. For the game, Williams gained 314 total yards which remains a Packer record.

When Don Horn threw his third interception, Bart Starr came off the bench in the third quarter. The Steelers went back in front 34-31 with 10 minutes left, but the Packers weren't done. Starr threw a dramatic, 43-yard touchdown to Carroll Dale for the win! After the game, Starr said, "I think the one I threw to Carroll Dale....I was afraid it wouldn't get it to him."¹

Green Bay	0	14	10	14	38
Pittsburgh	10	7	7	10	34
Attendance:	46,403				

¹ Green Bay Press Gazette, 11/3/69, Rimmel, p. 17



PACKERS

BALTIMORE

COLTS

6

11.9.1969

14

QB troubles

Bart Starr left the game after Green Bay's first series with pain in his throwing arm. In his absence, the Packers did little offensively after Mike Mercer's two first-half field goals.

Johnny Unitas stole the spotlight with two touchdown passes. He also threw three interceptions, but Green Bay managed just three points after the thefts. Baltimore's first touchdown, a 51-yard pass to Tom Mitchell, went the distance when Ray Nitschke and Doug Hart collided. In the second quarter, with the Packers trailing 7-6, the Colts blocked a field goal. Unitas then took it 11 plays before a pass to Ray Perkins made it 14-6.

Don Horn, who filled-in for Bart Starr, was ineffective. Unitas fared much better, and as Willie Davis reminded everyone, "A guy like Unitas is a master at picking up certain things. I thought today he was very, very sharp in his play-calling."¹

Green Bay	6	0	0	0	6
Baltimore	7	7	0	0	14

Attendance: 60,238

"Editor: Just a quick note to say the Packers have fans in the South as well as in Wisconsin. I and many other Wisconsin soldiers at Fort Gordon, Georgia, enjoyed watching the Packers on television. Keep up the good work!"² Sp4 Larry B. Kohnen

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/10/69, p. 17

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/11/69 p. 6



MINNESOTA
VIKINGS
PACKERS

9
7 11.16.1969

3 FGs

The Packers held the first-place Vikings to three, short Fred Cox field goals. That was all the Vikings needed on their way to their first Super Bowl later in the season.

The Packer offense, with Starr at the helm the entire game, managed just 225 total yards and *no* points. Kicker Mike Mercer missed two field goals. Doug Hart's 85-yard pick-six did all of Green Bay's scoring.

Bart Starr struggled (12-21-151-0-2). In the closing minutes, he led a final drive to the Minnesota eight-yard line with a series of quick, short passes. With 1:47 left, on a pass intended for Dave Hampton, Starr was intercepted by Bobby Bryant to end the drive and the game.

Minnesota	3	0	3	3	9
Green Bay	0	7	0	0	7

Attendance: 48,321

Milwaukee County Stadium



1919-2019

DETROIT
LIONS
PACKERS

16
10 11.23.1969

For the first time since 1959, the Packers lost three games in a row. The loss also eliminated Green Bay from the postseason.

Late in the first quarter, Bart Starr suffered a shoulder injury, and his replacement, Don Horn, threw for 243 yards and a touchdown. But, five turnovers (four fumbles) sealed Green Bay's fate. A fumble by Elijah Pitts and an interception thrown by Horn were turned into 10 points by the Lions. Errol Mann, former Packer, kicked three field goals for the Lions who led 16-0 at the half.

Detroit's strong defense held Green Bay to 70 yards on the ground and they sacked Starr and Horn five times. Green Bay's touchdown came with 15 seconds left in the game. The touchdown was the first visit to the end zone for the offense in almost three games! After the game, an exasperated Coach Bengtson said, "We can't score."¹

Detroit	3	13	0	0	16
Green Bay	0	0	0	10	10
Attendance:	50,861				

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/24/69, Wagner, p. 23



1919-2019

NEW YORK
GIANTS
PACKERS

10
20 11.30.1969

Starr done for season

With Bart Starr ruled out for the remainder of the season, Don Horn had his best game to date. He threw two touchdown passes while quarterback Fran Tarkenton of the Giants had trouble all game completing just 13 of 31 attempts.

Horn's first touchdown, a 39-yard strike to Donny Anderson, came in the first quarter. Horn confided to reporters later that Bart Starr had actually sent in the play!! In the second quarter, a 57-yard punt return by Travis Williams set up Horn's second touchdown pass to Carroll Dale.

But with a minute left before halftime, Tarkenton rallied the Giants with a 35-yard touchdown to Aaron Thomas to cut the Packers' edge to 13-10. The second half was quiet on the scoreboard with only Green Bay scoring. A 27-yard touchdown run by Travis Williams in the third quarter sent the Giants to their seventh straight loss.

New York	3	7	0	0	10
Green Bay	7	6	7	0	20

Attendance: 48,156

Milwaukee County Stadium

In a season celebrating 50 years of Green Bay Packer football, a sign was spotted along the sidelines that said "We'll back the Pack 'til the Pack is back! For 100 Years of Glory!"¹

Not only were Bart Starr, Henry Jordan and Mike Mercer ruled out with injuries, but "Sally Spiad one of the Packetttes twisted her knee while leading the Packer cheers and had to be helped from the field.

Sally who just turned 17-years old today, is from Algoma. She was treated by a physician at the stadium and told to give the knee a couple of weeks rest.”²

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/2/69, p. 17

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/2/69, p. 18



PACKERS

CLEVELAND

BROWNS

7

12.7.1969

20

In rainy, muddy Cleveland, the first-place Browns of the Century Division had little trouble with Green Bay. Leroy Kelley ran for 151 yards, with 114 of the yards coming in Cleveland's 13-0 first half. A pick-six made it 20-0 before Green Bay scored in the final minutes on a Don Horn to Dave Hampton touchdown. The Browns outgained the Packers 347-218.

Green Bay	0	0	0	7	7
Cleveland	0	13	7	0	20
Attendance:	82,137				

*"A college scholarship fund has been established in the name of Green Bay Packer defensive captain Willie Davis, who plans to retire after this season."*¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/9/69, p. 22



PACKERS

CHICAGO

BEARS

21

12.14.1969

3

The Bears are swept!

In a scoreless first half, the 1-12 Bears played the Packers to a standstill. Green Bay finally erupted for 21 points in the third quarter to take control.

Three minutes after halftime, Travis Williams broke through right tackle and sprinted 39-yards for a 7-0 lead. On Green Bay's next possession, quarterback Don Horn and tight end Marv Fleming stretched it to 14-0. An interception by Willie Wood followed, and Horn unloaded a 60-yard pass to the "The Roadrunner" for the 21-0 lead.

For Chicago, Gale Sayers ran for 90 yards, and the team gained 196. After the game, quarterback Virgil Carter lashed out at Bears management. George Halas traded him to Cincinnati.

Green Bay	0	0	21	0	21
Chicago	0	0	0	3	3
Attendance:	45,216				



ST. LOUIS

CARDINALS

28

12.21.1969

PACKERS

45

8-6-0

Don Horn's five touchdown passes tied a Packer record at the time first set by Cecil Isbell in 1942! Horn also threw for 410 yards, a Packer record that stood until 1980.

Green Bay's two game improvement over 1968 came to a close with a 24-point second quarter, 28 overall first downs and 530 total yards. Packers fans were cautiously optimistic.

St. Louis	14	0	7	7	28
Green Bay	7	24	7	7	45
Attendance:	50,861				



THE

**PACKERS CENTURY
PROJECT**

1919-2019

1969 Team Statistics

FINAL STANDINGS – Central Division / Western Conference

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>I</u>
Minnesota	12	2	0
Detroit	9	4	1
Green Bay	8	6	0
Detroit	1	13	0

Team Leaders

Passing	Horn
Receiving	Dale
Rushing	Williams
Scoring	Dale
Interceptions	Williams

All-Pro

Adderley	Cornerback
Gillingham	Guard
Nitschke	Linebacker
Robinson	Linebacker
Wood	Safety

Notable Draft Choices (Round, Position)

Dave Hampton (9, RB)



1919 - 2019

PACKERS CENTURY

with Jim Rice

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