



1938



THE
PACKERS CENTURY

P R O J E C T

ALL THE GAMES. ALL THE STORIES.

1919-2019

BY JIM RICE

packerscentury.com



1938

Record: 8-3-0 1st Western Division

Coach: Curly Lambeau

- City Stadium's capacity was increased to 24,000.
- To back up veteran quarterback Arnie Herber, Green Bay selected quarterback Cecil Isbell of Purdue with their first draft pick. As a rookie, Isbell led the team in both passing and rushing yardage.
- Offensively, the Packers were again the most productive team in the league with 223 points. Defensively, they improved slightly and remained strong.
- The Packers lost the NFL Championship to the Giants in front of 48,120 fans at the Polo Grounds.



1919-2019

CLEVELAND
RAMS
PACKERS

17 9.11.1938
26

It was reported that a brief shower just before game time kept many fans home to listen to the game on the radio. What they missed was “an offensive exhibition and a crowd pleaser from the start.”¹

After they trailed 3-0, the Packers took over. Clark Hinkle started it with a field goal, and quarterback Arnie Herber took it from there. He threw his first two touchdown passes of the season to Don Hutson in the second quarter. The touchdowns went for seven and 53 yards.

In the second half, a fumble by Cleveland’s Johnny Drake opened the door for touchdown #3 to Hutson from the 18-yard line. It extended Green Bay’s to 26-10 lead in the fourth quarter.

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Cleveland | 3 | 7 | 0 | 7 | 17 |
| Green Bay | 3 | 17 | 0 | 6 | 26 |
| Attendance: | 8,247 | | | | |

“Two examples of Packer drawing power are Stan Egdahl of Wausau and Dick Steinberg of Appleton. They represent thousands of fans who support the Packers from outside communities.”²

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/12/38, Walter, p. 14

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/12/38, Flatley, p. 15



1919-2019

CHICAGO
BEARS
PACKERS

2
0 9.18.1938

Dreaded Bears!

“No collection of football players is calculated to strike quite as much terror into the hearts of Packer friends as those big, tough Bears from Chicago.”¹

The rain never stopped, and it slowed down the offenses of both squads. The Bears generated just 75 total yards, and Green Bay managed a whopping 118. It had been a scoreless, 45+ minutes when a bad snap went over the head of quarterback Arnie Herber in the fourth quarter. It sailed into the end zone, and Tom Jones recovered it for Green Bay. The Bears were awarded a safety, and the two points held up when Clarke Hinkle missed a 37-yard field goal in the final minute.

| | | | | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Chicago | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Green Bay | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Attendance: 15,172

“More than 15,000 braved the inclement weather, and the surprising part of the crowd was the large number of women who failed to let the rain come between them and love of sports.”²

¹ Green Bay Press Gazette, 9/13/38, p. 13

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/19/38, Flatley, p. 15



1919-2019

CHICAGO

CARDINALS

PACKERS

7
28

9.25.1938

This is the first of back-to-back games against the Cardinals, and 18,000 fans in Milwaukee saw a young, rookie quarterback, Cecil Isbell, lead the way!

The Packers "outpassed, outran, outblocked, outkicked and entirely outplayed their rivals, giving one of the greatest demonstrations of offensive excellence in their history."¹ Green Bay opened the scoring with a Bob Monnet pass to Milt Gantenbein for a 7-0 lead. Rookie Cecil Isbell led the next touchdown drive that Clarke Hinkle took home on a three-yard run. In the second half, Isbell threw the first touchdown pass of his career, a 15-yard pass to veteran back and fellow quarterback, Arnie Herber!

The defense was dominant as they held Chicago to 17 yards rushing. The Packers also outgained them 285-189. After the game, the performance so disturbed Chicago coach Milan Creighton that he "warned his charges of possible drastic measures"² after this uninspiring effort.

| | | | | | |
|------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Chicago | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| Green Bay | 0 | 14 | 14 | 0 | 28 |

Attendance: 18,000

Milwaukee

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/26/38, Walter, p. 13

² When Football was Football, Ziemba, p. 197



1919-2019

CHICAGO

CARDINALS
PACKERS

22
24

9.28.1938

At night, three days later in Buffalo, New York, the teams met again, and the Cardinals played a more inspired game. They outgained Green Bay 302-219, but in the end, they still came up short on the scoreboard.

Rookie quarterback Cecil Isbell threw two touchdown passes. One went to Don Hutson and a second to Clarke Hinkle. After Green Bay led 21-6 early in the second half, the Cardinals scored 16 unanswered points. Touchdowns by Jimmy Lawrence and Pete Tyler made 22-21 Chicago with three minutes left. The Cardinals gave it away with a fumble on their 37-yard line. Baby Ray recovered for Green Bay. Five plays later with 20 seconds left, Paul "Tiny" Engebretsen kicked a 24-yard field goal for the win.

| | | | | | |
|------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Chicago | 0 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 22 |
| Green Bay | 0 | 14 | 7 | 3 | 24 |

Attendance: 10,678

Passing Yards: GB 107 CHI 202



DETROIT
LIONS
PACKERS

17
7 **10.9.1938**

A 3-0 first half didn't stop the Lions from putting together a convincing second half to pull away from Green Bay. Detroit stayed with a potent ground game and overpowered the Packers for 188 yards. Right after halftime and leading 3-0, the Lions powered their way 60-yards on the ground for a 10-0 lead. After the Packers cut the lead to 10-7 in the fourth quarter, they took a gamble. On a fourth-and-three from their 27-yard line, a Cecil Isbell pass was batted down, and Detroit scored two plays later to seal the deal.

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Detroit | 3 | 0 | 7 | 7 | 17 |
| Green Bay | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 7 |
| Attendance: 21,968 | | | | | |

"All seats in the stadium were sold, and the S. R. O. sign was hung out early as the beautiful fall day attracted fans from all over the state."¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/26/38, Walter, p. 13



BROOKLYN
DODGERS
PACKERS

7
35 **10.16.1938**

It took Green Bay five plays to score the first time they had the ball as quarterback Cecil Isbell threw the first touchdown pass of the game to Joe Laws. The Packer ground game punished Brooklyn for 233 total yards, and Clarke Hinkle and Andy Uram both scored on the ground for a 21-7 halftime lead. Brooklyn's points came on an Ace Parker touchdown pass.

Two more Green Bay touchdown passes in the second half wrapped it up. Cecil Isbell's second touchdown went to Don Hutson, and Bob Monnett connected with end, Bernard Scherer. Brooklyn went quietly as they were outgained 354-249.

| | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Brooklyn | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Green Bay | 14 | 7 | 14 | 0 | 35 |

Attendance: 11,892

Milwaukee

Yards Rushing: GB 233 BKLYN 55

Milwaukee Boys: "The day was Eddie Jankowski's. Between halves he was presented with a new automobile by Milwaukee admirers." And "It was Bucket Goldenberg's birthday and he was carried off the field at the end of the game."¹

¹ Green Bay Press Gazette, 10/17/38, Flatley, p. 15, 31



PITTSBURGH
PIRATES
PACKERS

0
20 10.23.1938

On top!

Another strong performance by Green Bay put them in first place. They scored on the opening drive of the game on a 38-yard run by quarterback Cecil Isbell.

After halftime, a pick-six by Joe Laws went for 38 yards. With under five minutes left, Green Bay's Bob Monnett threw a 19-yard touchdown strike to Carl Mulleneaux. Amazingly, before he caught the ball, Mulleneaux batted it into the air!

Green Bay also intercepted five passes. Twice, when the Steelers drove deep into Green Bay territory, Joe Laws stopped the drives with interceptions.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Pittsburgh | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Green Bay | 7 | 0 | 6 | 7 | 20 |

Total Yards: GB 356 PGH 233



1919-2019

PACKERS

CLEVELAND

RAMS

28

10.30.1938

7

The Packers hit the road for four games to close out the season. Their defense stepped up and shut down Cleveland's potent offense by intercepting seven passes. On offense, Bob Monnett threw three touchdown passes, and Cecil Isbell also threw one.

Though Hutson was covered like a blanket by the Rams, he caught three of the touchdowns, and Clarke Hinkle caught the other. Hutson's came on passes from 53, 42, and 47-yard lines!

In front of the biggest pro football crowd in its history, Cleveland didn't score until they trailed 21-0. The Rams were outgained by Green Bay 315-216, and they were held to just 31 yards on the ground.

| | | | | | |
|------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Green Bay | 7 | 14 | 7 | 0 | 28 |
| Cleveland | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 |

Attendance: 18,843

The Packers wore new white jerseys for this game instead of green.



1919-2019

PACKERS

CHICAGO

BEARS

24

11.6.1938

17

The rivals scored 38 of the game's 41 points in the first half! Two fumbles by Chicago in the first three minutes led to touchdown catches by Clarke Hinkle and Don Hutson. After a Packer fumble helped the Bears trim the lead to 14-10, and the teams traded touchdowns before halftime.

In the second half, the Packers shut out the defending champions, and Clarke Hinkle's third quarter field goal finished the scoring. Nine Green Bay players were injured in "the roughest, toughest, most bitterly fought engagement in which the Packers have been involved this year."¹

| | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Green Bay | 14 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 24 |
| Chicago | 10 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 17 |

Attendance: 40,208

"My grandfather (Lee Joanness) used to lend a few hundred bucks to George Halas. Then, Halas would lend a few hundred dollars back to the Packers so that the team could keep going. George Halas was probably the kindest man my grandfather ever met as far as lending money and things like that. So, on the inside, George was the nice, kind guy.....but on the outside, he was just mean as nails."¹

¹ Green Bay Press Gazette, 10/17/38, Walter, p. 15

² For Packer Fans Only!, Wolfe, p. 30



1919-2019

PACKERS

DETROIT

LIONS

28

11.13.1938

7

This fifth straight win and the third in a row on the road paid back the Lions for one month ago. The Packers stayed on the ground for 219 yards, and Clarke Hinkle's two touchdown runs gave Green Bay a 14-0 lead. Green Bay's used, "coal truck blocking that cleared the home players from the paths of speeding, twisting Green Bay backs time after time."¹

Detroit got on the scoreboard in the third quarter, but two second-half touchdowns clinched the game and the division for Green Bay! The only bad news for the Packers were the injuries, especially to Don Hutson. Hutson hurt his knee, and the injury would affect Green Bay's title chances.

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Green Bay | 0 | 14 | 7 | 7 | 28 |
| Detroit | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| Attendance: 45,139 | | | | | |

"The little group of Green Bay enthusiasts in the stands cheered themselves dizzy, and the band responded, with each member taking out a tiny megaphone and singing the words to rapid march time. "On, you Green and Gold to glory, Win this game, the same old story, Fight, you Packers - fight, and bring the bacon Home to old Green Bay."²

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/14/38, Walter, p. 11

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/15/38, Walter, p. 21



1919-2019

PACKERS

NEW YORK

GIANTS

3

11.20.1938

15

In his entire career, this was the only game Don Hutson missed. It was this last game of the 1938 season, and the Packers needed a win to clinch the Western Division.

It was a scoreless first half between Green Bay's #1 offense and New York's #1 defense. The scoring started on the second half kickoff when Clarke Hinkle couldn't handle the football and was tackled in the end zone by Ward Cuff. Later in the quarter, a short punt by New York's Ed Danowski was downed at the Giants 24-yard line. The Packers capitalized only with a field goal to make it 3-2.

After Green Bay recovered a fumble, a second field goal attempt came up short. Tuffy Leemans of the Giants returned the short kick to New York's 26-yard line. On the first play from scrimmage, Danowski handed off to Leemans who went over left tackle for 76 yards and a 9-3 lead. New York's Mel Hein sealed the deal in the fourth quarter with a 50-yard pick six.

Thanks to a Detroit loss the following week, the 8-3-0 Packers would meet the 8-2-1 Giants for the NFL title.

| | | | | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Green Bay | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| New York | 0 | 0 | 9 | 6 | 15 |

Attendance: 48,279

Total Yards: GB 312 NY 164

1938 NFL Championship Game



PACKERS

NEW YORK

GIANTS

17

12.11.1938

23

Three weeks later in the Polo Grounds, in the first of five NFL Championship Games between them, the Packers returned. This was a brutal clash between NFL heavyweights. A number of players were injured during the game including the league's MVP Mel Hein of the Giants and Don Hutson of Green Bay. The New York Times reported that "the full sixty minutes was absolutely ferocious. Stray punches were tossed around all afternoon. This was the gridiron sport at its primitive best."¹

New York's defense wasted little time having an impact. They blocked two punts to go in front 9-0. The Packers came back with an interception, and a 50-yard touchdown bomb from Arnie Herber to Carl Mulleneaux! A midfield fumble by Ed Jankowski of the Packers led to Ed Danowski's first touchdown pass to Charles Barnard. It extended New York's lead to 16-7. Green Bay came right back with a Cecil Isbell to Wayland Becker completion that went for 66-yards. From New York's 17-yard line, it took six plays, and Clarke Hinkle scored.

Trailing 16-14 at intermission, Curly Lambeau got lost on the way to the Green Bay locker room!! He ended up outside the Polo Grounds and had difficulty getting back inside. "By the time he reached the locker room, the second half was about to begin."²

The Packers didn't seem to mind, and they took the lead on the opening drive of the half with a field goal. The Giants returned fire and stormed downfield on a legendary 61-yard drive. All-pro fullback Hank Soar gained 58 of the yards in eight dominating plays. Quarterback Ed Danowski threw a 23-yard touchdown pass to Soar for a 23-17 lead. Later in the locker

room, Soar explained his great effort on the winning play. "Clarke Hinkle grabbed me by one leg, but I pulled and pulled and jerked loose and went in."³

In a tense fourth quarter, a Packers comeback was stalled by two turnovers and two controversial calls. One was a completed pass that Lambeau argued was incomplete. The second surrounded a key second down completion to Milt Gantenbein at the New York 43-yard line. Head linesman Larry Conover ruled that on Green Bay's pre-snap shift, the end moved too close to the line and covered up Gantenbein. Conover nullified the catch and gave the ball to the Giants!?!?

In desperate move, the Packers put Don Hutson back in the game near the end, but to no avail. The Packers had moved the ball easily all game and outgained the Giants 378-212, but New York won the championship. After the game, Lambeau blamed the loss on "incompetent officiating."⁴

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Green Bay | 0 | 14 | 3 | 0 | 17 |
| New York | 9 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 23 |
| Attendance: | 48,120 | | | | |

1 What a Game They Played, Whittingham, p. 182

2 The Scrapbook History of Green Bay Packer Football, Zimmerman, p. 144

3 Pigskin, Peterson, p. 102

4 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/12/38, p. 15



THE
**PACKERS CENTURY
PROJECT**

1919-2019

1938 Team Statistics

FINAL STANDINGS - Western Division

| | W | L | T |
|---------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Green Bay | 8 | 3 | 0 |
| Detroit | 8 | 3 | 0 |
| Chicago Bears | 6 | 5 | 0 |
| Cleveland | 4 | 7 | 0 |
| Chicago | 2 | 9 | 0 |

TEAM LEADERS

| | |
|-----------|--------|
| Passing | Isbell |
| Receiving | Hutson |
| Rushing | Isbell |
| Scoring | Hinkle |

ALL-PRO

| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Milt Gantenbein | End |
| Clarke Hinkle | Fullback |
| Don Hutson | End |
| Cecil Isbell | Quarterback |
| Russ Letlow | Guard |

NOTEABLE DRAFT PICKS (Round, Position)

Cecil Isbell (1, QB)
Andy Uram (6, RB)



1919 - 2019

PACKERS CENTURY

with Jim Rice

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