

SEASON
23

1941



THE
PACKERS CENTURY

P R O J E C T

ALL THE GAMES. ALL THE STORIES.

1919-2019

BY JIM RICE

packerscentury.com



1941

Record: 10-1-0 1st Place - Tie - Western Division

Coach: Curly Lambeau

- Before the season, Lambeau released veteran quarterback Arnie Herber, and receiver Milt Gantenbein retired.
- After starting 2-1, the Packers reeled off nine straight wins.
- Green Bay's offense and defense were top-notch. They finished second to the Bears in points scored and yards allowed.
- Cecil Isbell threw at least one touchdown pass in every game. He was the league's top passer, and Don Hutson caught the most touchdown passes.
- This was one of the finest seasons in Packers history. They finished tied with the Bears for the Western Division title at 10-1. A third game, to settle the tie, went to the Bears.



1919-2019

DETROIT
LIONS
PACKERS

0
23 9.14.1941

All smiles!

On the eighth play of the opener, running back Clarke Hinkle became the NFL's all-time leading rusher with 3,479 yards. It set a victorious tone for a team that had its sights set on overtaking the defending champion Bears in 1941.

The Lions were held to just five first downs, and 133 total yards. They also turned the ball over six times. Green Bay held a 9-0 lead until the fourth quarter when Don Hutson caught a touchdown pass from quarterback Cecil Isbell, and rookie Tony Canadeo scored on the ground.

Detroit	0	0	0	0	0
Green Bay	0	6	3	14	23

Attendance: 16,734

*"Green Bay may be smaller than the others, but it has the type of spirit that puts it in the major league class," said new Lions' owner Fred Mandel. That type of opinion helps dispel any fears about moving the Packers out of Green Bay - unless the fans do not consider it worth their while to keep them here."*¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/15/41, Flatley, p. 134



CLEVELAND
RAMS
PACKERS

7
24 **9.21.1941**

On a hot day, the Packer defense stepped up again. It allowed just six first downs and 179 total yards!

Green Bay took the lead on a short touchdown pass from Tony Canadeo to Joe Laws. It stayed 7-0 until the fourth quarter when the Packers blew it open. Cecil Isbell threw a touchdown pass to Clarke Hinkle, and Tony Canadeo scored from the eight-yard line for a 21-0 lead.

Green Bay dominated the game on the ground with 235 yards. The defense also harassed Cleveland quarterbacks into five costly interceptions.

Cleveland	0	0	0	7	7
Green Bay	7	0	0	17	24

Attendance: 18,463

Milwaukee

“When the Rams perspired, their lighter blue jerseys became almost as dark as the Packers' jerseys.”¹

“The advance sale for the crucial contest with the ‘Halasmen’ has smashed all marks in Green Bay's 23 years of postgraduate footballing. This unusual situation has prompted the Packer management to make an appeal to its many fans outside Green Bay that they remain home Sunday if they have no tickets.”²

1 packershistory.net/1941Packers (Milwaukee Journal, Sept,22)

2 packershistory.net/1941Packers



1919-2019

CHICAGO
BEARS
PACKERS

25
17

9.28.1941

Bears roar

After Green Bay rookie Tony Canadeo came up “spitting teeth” on the opening kickoff, the defending champion Bears proceeded to pound the Packers in the trenches for 258 yards rushing.

Chicago grabbed a 15-0 lead on touchdowns by Ken Kavanaugh and Scooter McLean. The Packers got going in the second quarter on Cecil Isbell’s 45-yard touchdown pass to Don Hutson. Clarke Hinkle’s field goal before intermission cut the deficit to 15-10.

The Packers took the lead on a 60-yard march in the third quarter. The drive was topped off by Hinkle’s one-yard scoring plunge for a 17-15 lead. The ensuing kickoff was brought back to midfield by George McAfee. A few plays later, he also ran the final 14 yards to put Chicago back in front.

The Bears defense which held the Packers to 255 total yards, came up big late in the game. They recovered an Isbell fumble and the capitalized with a field goal for an eight-point lead. When Green Bay threatened again, Isbell was intercepted on the Bears’ five-yard line as time ran out.

Chicago	6	9	7	3	25
Green Bay	0	10	7	0	17

Attendance: 24,876

“For living the farthest from Green Bay, though, Walter Lazak of Cape Town, South Africa, must take first honors. Very British, Mr. Lazak is suffering his first exposure to the American brand of football, and he really likes it.”¹

¹ packershistory.net/1941Packers (News & Notes, Sept. 29)



1919-2019

CHICAGO
CARDINALS
PACKERS

13
14 10.5.1941

Surprisingly, a beautiful day didn't bring out the fans. Green Bay took a 7-0 lead, but the Cardinals pulled in front 13-7 before halftime. Touchdown bombs of 80 and 76 yards flew from the arms of two different quarterbacks, Ray Mallouf and Johnny Clement.

Late in the game, after Clarke Hinkle's punts had pinned the Cardinals deep in their territory, the Packers took over at Chicago's 41-yard line. With three minutes left, Isbell connected with Lou Brock for a touchdown, and Don Hutson's extra point gave Green Bay a one-point lead. With under one minute left, Ernie Pannell blocked a 45-yard field goal attempt by the Cardinals to preserve the victory!

Chicago	6	7	0	0	13
Green Bay	7	0	0	7	14
Attendance: 10,000					
Milwaukee					

*"The Green Bay Packers' Lumberjack Band will play an outdoor concert at the Columbus Club at 8:00 p.m. Thursday night. Best known for its appearance at Packer games, Sunday, the musicians played at Sheboygan, Manitowoc, and Three Rivers. Large crowds were on hand for all. At Sheboygan, a police escort conveyed their bus through the city."*¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/7/41, p. 15



1919-2019

BROOKLYN
DODGERS
PACKERS

7
30 10.12.1941

The Packers dominated the Dodgers. Green Bay led 23-0 in the third quarter before Brooklyn scored. They also outgained them 345-234.

The highlight of the contest was Andy Uram's 90-yard punt return in the first quarter. The long run back went right down the sideline. It brought everyone to their feet including, "Dan Topping, owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers, who was perched on the roof of the stands with the motion picture camera operators."¹

Don Hutson and Cecil Isbell had fine afternoons with Isbell completing 12 of 15 passes for 141 yards. Hutson caught eight of the aerials for 126 yards and a touchdown. He also started the scoring in the second half with 18-yard touchdown run. Green Bay won easily, and as Lambeau looked ahead he said, "We are capable of winning every ball game on the rest of our schedule. It will require great effort and personal sacrifices. But, there isn't the slightest doubt in my mind that we can do it."²

Brooklyn	0	0	7	0	7
Green Bay	13	3	7	7	30
Attendance:	15,621				
Milwaukee					

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/13/41, Flatley, p. 13

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/13/41, Flatley, p. 13



1919-2019

PACKERS

CLEVELAND

RAMS

17

10.19.1941

14

Whew!

The Packers let the football slip through their hands with three fumbles in the first half. They also had a field goal blocked, and the Rams capitalized with an 80-yard touchdown drive. As was the rule at the time, Cleveland took over at their 20-yard line after blocking the field goal.

Green Bay shot back with a fantastic touchdown catch by Carl Mulleaneux. Clarke Hinkle's touchdown run followed which gave Green Bay a 14-7 lead after three quarters. With another long touchdown drive, the Rams pulled even with four minutes left in the game.

With time slipping away, Green Bay's last drive featured passes from Isbell that "rained all over the field and a steady advanced was made."¹ At the six-yard line, with Hinkle holding after he had missed two earlier kicks, Don Hutson nailed the first field goal of his career with just over a minute left for the win!

Green Bay	7	0	7	3	17
Cleveland	7	0	0	7	14

Attendance: 13,086

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/20/41, Flatley, p. 13



1919-2019

PACKERS

DETROIT

LIONS

24

10.26.1941

7

Another dominant performance by the Packers over the Lions! Green Bay battered Detroit 440 total yards while the Lions managed 213. Cecil Isbell threw three touchdown passes with two going to Don Hutson. The Packers led 24-0 before the Lions scored in the fourth quarter on an 80-yard punt return.

Green Bay	7	10	0	7	24
Detroit	0	0	0	7	7
Attendance:	30,269				



1919-2019

PACKERS

CHICAGO

BEARS

16

11.2.1941

14

A Classic!

“When we started to go through our calisthenics, several Bears walked over and started to push us around. When things got a little bit sticky, tackle Bill Lee drew a line on the grass with his shoe. ‘Step over this line and I’ll beat your brains out,’ he yelled. The milling around didn’t stop until Lambeau and Halas came running out.”¹

In the early 1940s, the T-formation offense of the Bears was gaining in popularity around the NFL. Chicago scored 138 more points than the league’s next best offense - the Packers! Lambeau tried to slow down the Chicago machine by surprising the Bears with a seven-man defensive line.

Two thousand Packers fans took the train to Wrigley Field to see their boys as they faced off against the undefeated Monsters of the Midway. The Packers were not intimidated and, “at times, the Bears were made to appear downright foolish by a smarter and harder-fighting Green Bay team.”²

Green Bay surprised Chicago with a seven-man defensive line. It frustrated their ground game especially, and they were shut out for 45 minutes! They gained a total of 25 yards in the first half, and their explosive offense was held to 183 yards for the game!

While the defense controlled the Bears, the offense got rolling the first time it had the ball. The Bears cooperated with two pass interference calls. Quarterback Cecil Isbell and Clarke Hinkle starred on the drive with Isbell scoring from the one-yard line. That was all the scoring until the third quarter when the teams traded fumbles. Green Bay recovered Chicago’s fumble on their 36-yard line, and Isbell hooked up with end Lou Brock for 38 yard touchdown and a 13-0 lead. Near the end of the

quarter, Clarke Hinkle also kicked a 44-yard field goal that proved to be the difference for 16-0 lead.

After being shut out for 45 minutes, a quick drive bore fruit for the Bears when Norm Standlee scored from the three-yard line. On Green Bay's next series, things got interesting. With six minutes left, Cecil Isbell threw an interception that George McAfee returned 55 yards to the Packer 15-yard line. Ray Nolting scored to make it 16-14.

The Bears got the ball back with four minutes still on the clock. They threatened again with a first down from Green Bay's 36. Quarterback Sid Luckman was sacked by Harry Jacunski, and he fumbled. Pete Tinsley grabbed it for Green Bay and the Bears were 5-1!

Green Bay	6	0	10	0	16
Chicago	0	0	0	14	14

Attendance: 46,484

Total Yards: GB 274 CHI 156

Clarke Hinkle remembers: Bill Osanski of the Bears "tore open my leg so bad that the shinbone was all exposed. Lambeau really chewed me out for calling a timeout so early. Well, I played the rest of that half. I played the whole second half, and I kicked the field goal that beat 'em."³

1 Packers of the Past, Milwaukee Journal, Letwin, p. 14

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/3/41, Pagel, p. 15

3 The Game That Was, Cope, p. 105



CHICAGO
CARDINALS
PACKERS

9 11.16.1941
17

To date, this was the latest home game ever played in Green Bay. It didn't slow down the Packers as Don Hutson scored two touchdowns, one through the air and one on the ground.

After the Cardinals went up 3-0, Hutson caught a 25-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Cecil Isbell. Clarke Hinkle then nailed a 34-yard field goal for a 10-3 halftime lead.

In the third quarter, the Cards cut it to 10-9 with a touchdown pass and a missed extra point. Green Bay regained control of the game on the next drive with five straight running plays. Hutson scored on an end-around play that went for 11 yards! With his two extra points, Hutson scored 14 of Green Bay's 17 points.

Chicago	3	0	6	0	9
Green Bay	7	3	0	7	17
Attendance:	15,495				

Photo Caption: "Buckets Goldenberg, Don Hutson, Clarke Hinkle, and Lee McLaughlin joined the Red Cross during its annual drive for members."¹

¹ packershistory.net/1941Packers



PACKERS

PITTSBURGH

STEELERS

54

11.23.1941

7

An easy win for Green Bay, but the Steelers scored first.

For the Packers, Clarke Hinkle scored twice on the ground in the first half, and Don Hutson caught a touchdown pass from Cecil Isbell. Halfback Hal Van Every scored three times in the fourth quarter. He ran for two touchdowns, and his 86-yard pick-six finished the scoring!

Green Bay	0	26	7	21	54
Pittsburgh	7	0	0	0	7

Attendance: 15,202

Pittsburgh committed 10 turnovers.



1919-2019

PACKERS

WASHINGTON

REDSKINS

22

11.30.1941

17

In a game the Packers had to win for any hope of a championship, it didn't start out very well. The Redskins put together three long drives in the first half, and they led 17-0 after 30 minutes. Their second touchdown came on a Sammy Baugh 41-yard touchdown bomb to Bob Seymour.

The tide turned Green Bay's way when Washington quarterback Frank Filchock fumbled early in the second half. Green Bay stormed downfield, and Cecil Isbell tossed an eight-yard pass to Don Hutson to get on the board. Veteran linebacker George Svendsen then intercepted Baugh, and Green Bay was back in business at Washington's three-yard line. Isbell and Hutson connected again to cut it to 17-13.

After the start of the fourth quarter, Isbell tossed a 10-yard pass to Hutson. *The Alabama Antelope* "was hit, staggered, but resumed even keel"¹ to go another 30 yards for touchdown before an amazed crowd! The three touchdowns to Don Hutson completed the biggest Packer comeback to date. It left many Redskin fans "babbling in hysteria when the final gun sounded."² The win also secured a playoff game against the Bears for the Western Division title.

Green Bay	0	0	13	9	22
Washington	10	7	0	0	17
Attendance:	35, 594				

Hutson broke the NFL's single season scoring record with 95 points.

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/1/41, Davis, p. 15

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/1/41, Davis, p. 15

Western Division Playoff



1919 - 2019

PACKERS

14

CHICAGO

12.14.1941

BEARS

33

Done.

Prior to 2010, this was the only postseason game between the Bears and the Packers. The game was played one week after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the start of World War II. The Packers and Bears battled for the de facto NFL title* in front of 43,425 fans with "about one-quarter of them cheering for the visitors."¹

On a windy, 19-degree day at Soldier Field, Chicago's Hugh Gallarneau fumbled the opening kickoff. Clarke Hinkle cashed-in five plays later for 7-0 Packer lead. Gallarneau made up for his mistake a few minutes later with an 82-yard punt return for six. When Lee McLaughlin blocked the extra point, it stayed 7-6 Packers.

Green Bay's advantage didn't last long as the Monsters of the Midway woke up. They scored 24 unanswered points in the second quarter. For the game, they ran over the Packers for 267 yards, and Green Bay turned the ball over four times. They held the Packers 35 yards rushing, and Don Hutson to one catch for 19 yards! Green Bay never had a chance.

Green Bay 7 0 7 0 14

Chicago 6 24 0 3 33

Attendance: 43,425

** Fans thought this game would a better match-up than the Bears would face in the championship game. Only 13,341 fans showed up next week to see them beat the Giants 37-9 for the championship.*

¹ New York Times, 1/22/11, Branch



THE
**PACKERS CENTURY
PROJECT**

1919-2019

1941 Team Statistics

FINAL STANDINGS - Western Division

	W	L	T
Chicago Bears	10	1	0
Green Bay	10	1	0
Detroit	4	6	1
Chicago	3	7	1
Cleveland	2	9	0

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Isbell
Receiving	Hutson
Rushing	Hinkle
Scoring	Hutson
Interceptions	Van Every

ALL-PRO

Clarke Hinkle	Fullback
Don Hutson	End
Cecil Isbell	Quarterback
Baby Ray	Tackle
Ray Riddick	End
George Svendsen	Center
Pete Tinsley	Guard

NOTEABLE DRAFT PICKS (Round, Position)

George Paskvan (1, B)
Ed Frutig (5, E)
Herman Rohrig (6, B)
Bill Kuusisto (8, G)
Tony Canadeo (9, B)
Del Lyman (14, T)
Ernie Pannell (16, T)



1919 - 2019

PACKERS CENTURY

with Jim Rice

NOTICE:

You may print out a copy for your own personal use.

Not for republication or resale.

Do not forward.

©2019 Jim Rice / Packers Century Project

All rights reserved.

packerscentury.com