

SEASON
31

1949



THE
PACKERS CENTURY

P R O J E C T

ALL THE GAMES. ALL THE STORIES.

1919-2019

BY JIM RICE

packerscentury.com



1949

Record: 2-10-0 5th Place - Western Division

Coach: Curly Lambeau

- Escalating salaries, poor play, and slipping attendance created severe financial challenges. By mid-November, the Packers had a deficit of \$90,000.
- On Thanksgiving Day November 24th, an exhibition game between the players on the current team was held. At halftime, an alumni game was played which also honored the 1919 team. The event brought-in \$50,000.
- On the field, the team hit rock bottom. They scored the fewest points in the league (114), and gave up the most (329).
- After being shutout in the opener, Lambeau turned the coaching over to his three assistants Charley Brock, Bob Snyder, and Tom Stidham. Lambeau served as an *advisory coach* and worked primarily to rebuild the franchise.
- Lambeau's decision surprised the Executive Committee. It changed little about the team's performance, but it opened the door to more involvement by the board in daily operations. Many thought Lambeau was too distracted by a social life that was, by this time, taking him to Hollywood.
- Tony Canadeo became the first Packer and the third player all-time to run for over 1,000 yards in a season.
- On December 9th, the Packers survived as the league reorganized to absorb three teams from the All-America Football Conference.
- A stock sale was approved for March 1950 with 9,500 shares to be offered at \$25 each.



CHICAGO
BEARS
PACKERS

17
0 **9.25.1949**

An ominous start. The Packers did not complete a pass the entire game, and the Bears won easily. Though Green Bay played with renewed spirit and enthusiasm, the emotions didn't produce any points.

After a scoreless first 30 minutes, Chicago quarterback Johnny Lujack won this game. After some pushing and shoving in the third quarter after the whistle, Lujack took over. He broke the ice with a field goal. In the fourth quarter, he threw touchdowns to Ken Kavanaugh and J. R. Boone. Kavanaugh made a spectacular catch for his points, and Boone's 37-yard touchdown came after a Packer fumble to put the game away.

Four days after the loss, Curly announced that he was turning the team over to his three assistant coaches Charley Brock, Bob Snyder, and Tom Stidham. Curly felt this would give him the time he needed to rebuild the franchise and address other administrative issues. "My aim is to have a solid, spirited organization from the waterboy on up and to build the Packers into a championship club again."¹

Chicago	0	0	3	14	17
Green Bay	0	0	0	0	0
Attendance:	25,571				

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/30/49, p. 13



LOS ANGELES
RAMS
PACKERS

48
7 **10.2.1949**

0-2

Curly Lambeau sat up in the press box with Don Hutson and watched the game. There were not a lot of positives to build on. In the first quarter, the Rams scored on a pick-six by Frank Hubbell, and they never looked back. They ran for 247 yards, and they outgained Green Bay 425-285. The Packers didn't score until it was 48-0.

The Manitowoc Herald-Times had this to say. "If Lambeau and others responsible can't see the moss on some of those ancient performers they've got hanging around the Packer club - well, the fans can, and they're the guys who pay the freight. Perhaps the Packer organization is not financially able to enter into the spirited bidding for the services of top college stars on the pro grid mart. If that is the case, someone had better find a solution to that vital problem, or Wisconsin is going to lose one of its most valuable assets, the Green Bay Packers."¹

Los Angeles	10	7	14	17	48
Green Bay	0	0	0	7	7
Attendance:	24,308				

*"The Packers lost 15, yes – that's right – 15 balls to light fingered spectators.....The result was a loss of approximately \$300 to the corporation. Footballs are \$18.75 each."*²

¹ packershistory.com/1949Packers (News & Notes, Oct. 5)
² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/3/49, Rempel, p. 20



1919-2019

PACKERS

NEW YORK

BULLDOGS

19

10.7.1949

0

On a Friday night game in the Polo Grounds, Green Bay shut out the only team in the league that won fewer games than they did. Quarterback Jug Girard led the offense, and Nolan Luhn and Tony Canadeo scored the touchdowns. Ted Fritsch kicked two field goals, and the Packers outgained New York 385-178!

Green Bay	0	9	3	7	19
New York	0	0	0	0	0

Attendance: 5,009

"The back judge marked the forward point of progress and waited for the pile of players to untangle. Three Bulldogs got up, then Tony Canadeo leaped to his feet. "You still in the league?" cracked the official. "Aren't you a little old to be running around out here?" Canadeo bristled. A crimson flush swept over his face from his stubbled chin to his gray hair line. "Maybe," he snapped, "but I can still run a helluva lot better than you can see!"¹

¹ packershistory.com/1949Packers (News & Notes, Oct. 14)



CHICAGO

CARDINALS

PACKERS

39

17

10.16.1949

The defending division champions were outgained, but not outscored. They jumped in front two minutes into the contest with the first of two interceptions that were returned for touchdowns. By halftime, they led 23-10.

The Cardinals strong running game of Charley Trippi, Pat Harder, Elmer Angsman led a third-quarter touchdown drive for a 30-10 lead. The second pick-six gave them an insurmountable 37-10 lead. For the game, the Cardinals gained 213 of their 244 total yards on the ground.

“We didn’t have too good of a team. Indian Jack Jacobs was our quarterback and Jug Girard. We’d get in trouble and coach would say, ‘Ok, Stan (Heath) get in there.’ And he’d expect (rookie) Stan to pull us out of the fire.”¹

Chicago	17	6	14	2	39
Green Bay	3	7	0	7	17
Attendance:	18,464				
Milwaukee					

¹ Dan Orlich: The last survivor of the Lambeau Era, Christl



PACKERS

LOS ANGELES

RAMS

7

10.23.1949

35

The Rams led 28-0 before Ted Fritch scored Green Bay's only touchdown and kicked the extra point.

L. A. scored quickly in the first quarter with a Bob Waterfield touchdown pass and 62-yard punt return by Tommy Kalmanir. In the second half, all three L. A. touchdowns came after Packer fumbles.

Green Bay	0	0	7	0	7
Los Angeles	14	0	14	7	35

Attendance: 37,546

*Green Bay's practice schedule according to former Packer, Dan Orlich, looked like this: "Monday off. We did nothing but wind sprints Tuesday to get rid of all the booze, the hangovers. Then, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, we'd have a hell of a practice. Saturday we were in sweatsuits."*¹

¹ Dan Orlich: The last survivor of the Lambeau Era, Christl



DETROIT
LIONS
PACKERS

14
16 10.30.1949

A win!

After last year's 3-9 finish, fans were anxious about the slow, 1-4 start. Only 11,000 bothered to show up.

There were nearly 200 yards in penalties in this slugfest. Green Bay snapped its two-game losing streak, and they left Detroit alone in last place. After trailing at halftime, the Packers rallied with Tony Canadeo's touchdown run to take a 9-7 lead. In the fourth quarter, "Jug" Girard's touchdown pass to Ted Cook sealed the deal. This was Green Bay's the last win of the season.

Years later, teammate Bob Forte had this to say about the "Gray Ghost of Gonzaga" Tony Canadeo: "For a while, he was almost our whole offense. In 1949, we didn't have much of a team, but Tony gained more than 1,000 yards (5.1 yards per carry)."¹

Detroit	7	0	0	7	14
Green Bay	3	0	6	7	16

Attendance: 10,855
Milwaukee

Richard "Ike" Eisenhower, Member, Green Bay Packer FAN Hall of Fame *

Ike loved watching Earl "Jug" Girard play football. Ike especially enjoyed it when Jug, who played several positions for the Packers, played quarterback. "Jug used to jump in the air and throw his passes. I'll never forget him."

* Interview: 2/27/16

¹ Greatest Packers of All-Time, Johnson, p. 85



PACKERS
CHICAGO
BEARS

3
11.6.1949
24

Always winners

In a fairly even game statistically, the Bears pulled away in the second half.

Rookie George Blanda's field goal opened the scoring, and it was followed by the first of two touchdown runs by Julie Rykovich. It stayed 10-3 into the fourth quarter when quarterback Johnny Lujack led the Bears on two 80-yard touchdown drives. Lujack put up points with a 20-yard touchdown run on the first drive, and Rykovich's second touchdown came a short time later.

The Packers got inside the Bears' 20-yard line four times, but they managed just three points.

Green Bay	0	0	3	0	3
Chicago	3	7	0	14	24
Attendance:	47,218				

"Green Bay Packer football fans again demonstrated early this morning personal support for their football team, win or lose. A crowd estimated at 500 Packer fans was waiting at the Milwaukee Road Station at 12:40 a.m. today to welcome the Packers on their return from Chicago."¹ The Lumberjack Band and the cheering for Tony Canadeo were the highlights!

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/7/49, Yuenger, p. 17



1919-2019

NEW YORK
GIANTS
PACKERS

30
10

11.13.1949

Four Charley Conerly touchdown passes led New York to another easy win over Green Bay. Conerly threw for 342 yards! Three of his four touchdowns went to halfback Gene "Choo-Choo" Roberts. Green Bay's only touchdown came in the fourth quarter on a 57-yard punt return by Ralph Earhart.

New York	10	0	14	6	30
Green Bay	0	3	0	7	10

Attendance: 20,151

Total Yards: GB 288 NY 456

*"A hundred of this little city's businessmen banded together today with the slogan, "Save the Packers". They pledged \$50,000 as a backlog against the possible loss of \$90,000 this season."*¹

*"An intra-squad Thanksgiving Day football game, matching two Green Bay Packer teams, was arranged Monday by businessmen frankly worried about the club's financial condition. The group set out immediately to sell tickets, with a monetary goal of \$50,000."*²

¹ packershistory.net/1949Packers (New & Notes, Nov. 15)

² packershistory.net/1949Packers (News & Notes, Nov. 14)



PITTSBURGH
STEELERS
PACKERS

30
7

11.20.1949

Only 5,000 fans in Milwaukee came to witness this blowout. Surprisingly, though, it proved to be a close skirmish for three quarters. With the Steelers leading 14-7 in the fourth quarter, Carl Samuelson blocked a Packer punt by Jug Girard. It went out of the end zone for a safety. The Steelers scored two more touchdowns and won going away.

Pittsburgh	0	7	7	16	30
Green Bay	0	0	7	0	7

Attendance: 5,483

Milwaukee

Total Yards: GB 285 PGH 454

"A crowd of 20,000 is expected to pay \$50,000 to view the Green Bay Packers in an intra-squad game in City Stadium Thursday afternoon. Businessmen reported Wednesday night \$39,000 had already been collected and no trouble was expected in meeting the \$50,000 quota. The Thanksgiving Day game was initiated to safeguard the Packers reserve funds in a losing season. A big program of festivities is planned, including several thousand prizes for fans. Famous old Packer passing combinations will suit up and take part in the halftime ceremonies. Gov. Oscar Rennebohm will fly here to take part in the show."¹

¹ packershistory.net/1949Packers (News & Notes, Nov. 23)



PACKERS

21

CHICAGO

11.27.1949

CARDINALS

41

After the Cardinals built a 34-0 lead in the second quarter, the Packers snapped back with 21 points before the half. Jug Girard threw two touchdown passes, and Tony Canadeo scored on the ground. The only points in the second half belonged to running back Elmer Angsman of the Cardinals.

When the league expanded in 1950, this proved to be the last game between of these long-time rivals until 1955.

Green Bay	0	21	0	0	21
Chicago	27	7	0	7	41
Attendance:	16,787				



PACKERS

WASHINGTON

REDSKINS

0

12.4.1949

30

Green Bay turned the ball over four times and managed just 10 first downs. Their effort though never wavered. In a positive comment about their performance, the Press-Gazette observed, "the Packers never gave up. In the last two minutes of the game, they traveled 69 yards in a brilliant attempt to score."¹

Green Bay	0	0	0	0	0
Washington	0	13	17	0	30

Attendance: 23,200

Former Packer defensive end, Dan Orlich: "The Astor. That used to be the hangout. There was a nice room in the back. That's where all the guys and gals went. Everybody kind of soothed their wounds and drank a lot of beer. It was just a fun place to gather after the game, evenings and when practice was over."²

¹ packershistory.net/1949Packers

² Dan Orlich: The last survivor of the Lambeau Era, Christi



PACKERS
DETROIT
LIONS

7
12.11.1949
21

The Lions struck first with a 64-yard touchdown pass from Frank Tripucka to Bob Mann. Green Bay tied it in the second quarter when Dan Orlich blocked a punt that Glenn Johnson fell on in the end zone. Quarterback Frank Tripucka's second touchdown pass to Mann and a 67-yard touchdown run by Paul Dudley ended all doubt and the season.

Green Bay	0	7	0	0	7
Detroit	7	0	0	14	21
Attendance:	12,576				

Curly Lambeau resigned in February 1950. For 31 years, he steered the Packers through the ups and downs of the young National Football League. His enormous success set the bar sky-high for those who followed. When Curly left Green Bay, the Packers had won six NFL championships, one more at the time than George "Papa Bear" Halas of the Bears. Today, the Packers have won the most NFL titles (13), the city of is known as "Titletown USA" and Lambeau Field is hallowed ground. Quite a legacy!



THE
**PACKERS CENTURY
PROJECT**

1919-2019

1949 Team Statistics

FINAL STANDINGS - Western Division

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>
Los Angeles	8	2	2
Chicago Bears	9	3	0
Chicago	6	5	1
Detroit	4	8	0
Green Bay	2	10	0

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Girard
Receiving	Cook
Rushing	Canadeo
Scoring	Fritsch
Interceptions	Cook

ALL-PRO

Tony Canadeo	Fullback
Dick Wildung	Tackle

NOTEABLE DRAFT PICKS (Round, Position)

Stan Heath (1, B)
Louis Ferry (2, T)
Bob Summerhays (4, B)
Dan Orlich (8, E)



1919 - 2019

PACKERS CENTURY

with Jim Rice

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