



1986



THE
PACKERS CENTURY
PROJECT

ALL THE GAMES. ALL THE STORIES.

1919-2019

BY JIM RICE

packerscentury.com



1986

Record: 4-12-0 4th Place

Coach: Forrest Gregg

- Forrest Gregg and many in the organization were tired of finishing 8-8. A housecleaning got underway for a fresh start.
- Changes reigned. Lynn Dickey could not agree on a new contract and was released. Offensive coordinator Bob Schnelker was dismissed. Mike Douglass, Paul Coffman, and Greg Koch were also let go.
- Randy Wright started at quarterback. Vince Ferragamo and Chuck Fusina served as back-ups.
- This squad still owns the franchise record for consecutive losses from the start of the season (6).
- November's game at Soldier Field was marred by Charles Martin's body-slam of quarterback Jim McMahon. Martin was suspended for two games.
- Sexual assault charges ended James Lofton's career in Green Bay. Lofton was acquitted of all charges.
- Both offensively and defensively, the Packers ranked at the bottom of the league.



HOUSTON
OILERS
PACKERS

31
3

9.7.1986

A depressing home opener. The Packers were taken completely apart by quarterback Warren Moon, and by a team that had a worse record than they did in 1985.

Al Del Greco's field goal started the scoring, but that was it for Green Bay. Houston moved the ball easily. They ran for 157 yards, and they outgained Green Bay 375-224. Warren Moon threw two touchdown passes to Larry Moriarty and Tony Hill. He also ran for a touchdown in the third quarter which gave the Oilers a three-touchdown lead.

Houston ran 28 more plays from scrimmage than the Packers, and Green Bay generated just nine first downs.

Houston	7	7	10	7	31
Green Bay	3	0	0	0	3
Attendance: 54,065					

"But the magic that once existed between team and fans doesn't seem to be the same. And that should be a matter of concern, particularly for those in the Packer organization."¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/8/86, Christl, p. 19



PACKERS

NEW ORLEANS

SAINTS

10

9.14.1986

24

This was another loss to a team Green Bay had hoped to beat. But quarterbacks Randy Wright and back-up Vince Ferragamo couldn't get it done. They threw 59 passes, including seven interceptions.

New Orleans wasted little time scoring. With 1:32 gone in the game, Bobby Hebert connected for a 72-yard touchdown with Eric Martin. Minutes later, Martin caught another bomb from Hebert (84 yards) to set up a Morten Andersen field goal. Two interceptions led to 14 more points the Saints, and they led 24-3 at the break. The Packers scored their only touchdown late in the third quarter on a Randy Wright to James Lofton touchdown.

Green Bay	0	3	7	0	10
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New Orleans	17	7	0	0	24
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Attendance: 54,065

"James Lofton tossed the ball to a youngster seated in the wheelchair section following his touchdown in the third quarter."¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/15/86, p. 21



1919-2019

CHICAGO
BEARS
PACKERS

25
12

9.22.1986

It's Monday Night Football at Lambeau Field against the Super Bowl Champion Bears. The Packers "gave it their best shot"¹ which amounted to four field goals by Al Del Greco. His kicks came from the 22, 46, 45, and 50 yards away.

The Packers also suffered a devastating loss in this contest. Cornerback Tim Lewis suffered a career-ending neck injury in a collision with receiver Willie Gault. Lewis never played again, though he remained in the game as a coach.

After the teams traded field goals, Walter Payton's touchdown run gave Chicago a 10-3 lead. All of Green Bay's points came on field goals, and they led 12-10 after three quarters. The Bears came back in the fourth quarter. Two Kevin Butler field goals, a safety, and a 42-yard touchdown pass from backup Steve Fuller to Keith Ortego took the game from Green Bay.

After the game, Steve McMichael of the Bears said this about the Packers: "I can't believe they're 0-3 the way they played us today. If they don't get up for everybody like they did for us, they should. They'd win a lot more games."²

Chicago	3	7	0	15	25
Green Bay	3	6	3	0	12

Attendance: 55,527

"ESPN, the cable TV sports network, had a crew roaming the grounds for local color. And it struck gold when it found about a dozen fans lounging in a portable hot tub bearing the sign, "It Don't Get No Better Than This."³

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/23/86, Christl, p. 21

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/23/86, McGinn, p. 22

³ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/23/86, Langenkamp, p. 2



PACKERS MINNESOTA VIKINGS

7
9.28.1986
42

0-4

A bad performance against the rivals to the north dropped Green Bay to 0-4.

An interception thrown by quarterback Randy Wright on the first play from scrimmage led to a Minnesota touchdown. A few minutes later, Wright, who had been ill the day before, fainted from being dehydrated. Vince Ferragamo replaced him.

Quarterback Tommy Kramer of the Vikings was the story of this game with six touchdown passes. The annihilation began in the first six minutes when he threw three touchdowns to Steve Jordan, Darrin Nelson, and Hassan Jones. By the end of the first quarter, he threw another to Jordan for a 28-0 lead. For his fifth touchdown, Kramer went back to Jones for a 35-0 halftime lead.

After the break, early in the third quarter, Kramer capitalized on an interception. His sixth touchdown to Mike Mullarkey was the game's final points with 12:47 left in the quarter!

The Packers did little offensively and were outgained 383-220. After the game, Forrest Gregg had some choice words about the performance. "I thought the opening game of the season was the worst game I'd ever seen a team play. But this one right here will have to live in my mind forever as the worst."¹

Green Bay	0	7	0	0	7
Minnesota	28	7	7	0	42

Attendance: 60,478

Linebacker John Anderson broke his leg.

¹ Cold Wars, Mishler, p. 84



CINCINNATI
BENGALS
PACKERS

34
28

10.5.1986

This was the first of two games against teams formerly coached by Forrest Gregg.

The loss christened the 1986 team with the worst start in franchise history (0-5). After the Packers took a 7-0 lead, it went south quickly. The Bengals exploded for 27 points in the second quarter. Boomer Esiason tossed his first two touchdown passes, and James Brooks scored twice on the ground.

Green Bay rebounded with a 21-point second half. Paul Ott Carruth, James Lofton and Gary Ellerson scored. But as the Packers heated-up, Esiason also threw his third touchdown pass to Eddie Brown for a 34-14 cushion with 11:15 left.

James Lofton caught seven passes catches for 109 yards and one touchdown. He moved past Don Hutson for the most pass receptions in Packers' history!

Cincinnati	0	27	0	7	34
Green Bay	7	0	7	14	28

Attendance: 51,230

Milwaukee County Stadium

*Tim Krumrie, Bengals Defensive Tackle, Wisconsin Native, "I wanted to be a Packer, and I wanted fans cheering for me. We had great fans in Cincinnati, and they always supported us. But there was always something different about Packers fans. It always seemed they were actually out there on the field with the team."*¹

¹ Facing the Green Bay Packers, Carloon, p. 110



DETROIT
LIONS
PACKERS

21
14

10.12.1986

0-6

The Lions followed the lead of rookie Garry James who broke away early for a 41-yard touchdown run. Detroit stretched it to 14-0 before Randy Wright and James Lofton connected. On Lofton's touchdown, Wright threw into the end zone, and Lofton came down with the high toss with 20 seconds left in the first half.

After a scoreless third quarter, the first play of the fourth quarter proved decisive. A fumble on the snap by Wright was recovered by Eric Williams of the Lions. Detroit went 70 yards in 14 plays to take a two-touchdown lead, 21-7, with seven minutes left. With six seconds left in the game, Wright and tight end Dan Ross made the score more respectable.

Green Bay's inability to run the ball (42 yards) or stop the run (236 yards) proved costly. "Something's screwed-up here, but I don't know what it is,"¹ was all linebacker Brian Noble could say.

Detroit	0	14	0	7	21
Green Bay	0	7	0	7	14
Attendance: 52,290					

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/13/86, Langenkamp, p. 2



PACKERS CLEVELAND BROWNS

17

10.19.1986

14

Upset!

The Packers rallied and defeated the 5-1 Browns for their first win. Cleveland started fast as quarterback Bernie Kosar threw two first-half touchdown passes for a 14-3 lead. Green Bay's only points in the first 30 minutes came after John Dorsey's fumble recovery set up Al Del Greco's 24-yard field goal.

Early in the second half, the Packers went 84-yards for Gerry Ellis' two-yard touchdown run. Trailing 14-10 late in the third quarter, the Packers went in front to stay. On the first play of the drive, Randy Wright hit Phillip Epps streaking down the right sideline for a 47-yard touchdown!

Wright played very well (21-27-277-1-0), and he led the way in the second-half comeback. The defense kept the Browns in check (265 total yards), and they beat the team that gave Forrest Gregg his first head coaching job in 1975.

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

Attendance: 76,438

Rushing Yads: GB 96 CLEV 32



SAN FRANCISCO

49ers

PACKERS

31

17

10.26.1986

No Joe

The Packers jumped in front quickly, scoring the first two times they had the ball for a 14-0 lead. Paul Ott Carruth and tight end Mark Lewis scored the touchdowns.

Without quarterback Joe Montana who was out injured, the Niners were led by back-up Mike Moroski. He drove them 80 yards in eight plays, and Jerry Rice caught the first touchdown on a short pass. At halftime, Green Bay led 14-7.

The game turned around in the second half. Ronnie Lott's first interception of Randy Wright led to the tying touchdown. In the first minute of the fourth quarter, Lott struck again with a 55-yard pick-six to put the Niners in front 21-14. After trading field goals, defensive back Tory Nixon grabbed a third Randy Wright interception and went 88 yards to wrap it up.

Green Bay outgained San Francisco 464-222. Wright threw for 326 yards, but his three interceptions were the difference.

San Francisco 0 7 7 17 31

Green Bay 7 7 0 3 17

Attendance: 50,557

Milwaukee County Stadium

"An opportunity to learn pon-pons and cheerleading techniques with the Green Bay Packer Cheerleaders is being offered for girls currently enrolled in grades 6-9."¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/27/86, p. 8



PACKERS PITTSBURGH STEELERS

3
27

11.2.1986

Oy

In the first five minutes, two fumbles by fullback Gary Ellerson helped the Steelers to a 10-0 lead. Veteran quarterback Mark Malone had a great afternoon completing 20 of 32 passes for 195 yards and three touchdowns. All three touchdown passes went to wideout Weegie Thompson.

The Packers could not match the physical play of the Steelers, and they produced just one field goal.

Green Bay	0	3	0	0	3
Pittsburgh	10	3	7	7	27

Attendance: 52,831

Rushing Yards: GB 61 PITT 126



1919-2019

WASHINGTON
REDSKINS
PACKERS

16
7

11.9.1986

The Packers stayed close thanks to a "swirling 25mph wind that served to equalize the talent."¹ But the equalizer wasn't enough.

On their opening drive, Green Bay looked impressive. They marched 87 yards and scored on a three-yard touchdown pass from Randy Wright to Phillip Epps. Late in the first half, Wright was injured when he was sacked by defensive end Charles Mann. Chuck Fusina replaced him.

Washington quarterback Jay Schroeder rallied the Redskins with two touchdown passes. The second score came after a Packers fumble by rookie Kenneth Davis near the end of the third quarter. Washington drove 78 yards and scored on a six-yard pass from Schroeder to Kelvin Bryant for a 13-7 lead. The Packers dropped to 1-9.

Washington	6	0	7	3	16
Green Bay	7	0	0	0	7
Attendance: 47,728					

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/10/86, McGinn, p. 25



TAMPA BAY

BUCCANEERS

7

11.16.1986

PACKERS

31

Blowout!

The 31 points were the most the Packers scored all season. They had their way with Tampa Bay, running the ball for 154 yards and passing for another 238. Randy Wright threw three touchdown passes to Phillip Epps (2) and James Lofton for a 21-0 lead at the break.

Gary Ellerson's touchdown run kept the offense rolling in the second half. Defensively, Green Bay Packers gave up only 63 yards rushing. They contained Tampa quarterback Steve Young by mixing blitzes and getting through for six sacks. Young ran for only 33 yards, and he lost 34 yards on the six sacks. Tampa Bay finally scored with three minutes left in the game.

Tampa Bay	0	0	0	7	7
Green Bay	14	7	10	0	31

Attendance: 48,271

Milwaukee County Stadium

Total Yards: GB 437 TB 263

"A pilot who has admitted to flying his small plane at low altitude over Milwaukee County Stadium during a Green Bay Packers football game will be penalized for his actions, a Federal Aviation Administration said."¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/18/86, p. 7



1919-2019

PACKERS CHICAGO BEARS

10
12

11.23.1986

Charles Martin of the Green Bay Packers committed one of the most vicious acts of unsportsmanlike conduct in the game's history. In the second quarter, quarterback Jim McMahon of the Super Bowl Champion Bears threw an interception. Far from the action and well after the play ended, defensive tackle Charles Martin picked up McMahon and slammed him to the turf of Soldier Field on his throwing shoulder. It completely tore McMahon's partially torn rotator cuff, and he was out for the season. "Many of the Bears believe the cheap shot contributed to the arm woes that plagued McMahon for the remainder of his career, and that it also cost them the chance to win other Super Bowls."¹

The flagrant foul brought an immediate ejection and a two-game suspension for Martin. At the time, it was the longest suspension for an on-field incident in NFL history.

In the game, Packers quarterback Randy Wright threw an interception on the first play from scrimmage. But Green Bay's defense finally stuffed "The Refrigerator!" They forced a fumble that linebacker John Dorsey recovered on the Packers' two-yard line. The jubilation ended quickly when rookie Kenneth Davis was tackled in the end zone by Dan Hampton for a safety. Bears 2-0.

In the second quarter, Chicago struck again with a blocked punt that they recovered in the end zone for a 9-0 lead. The Packers finally scored on an Al Del Greco field goal. In the fourth quarter, they scored on a 78-yard drive in just three plays. Wright found tight end Ed West for a 46-yard touchdown. Packers 10-9.

With six minutes left in the game, Gary Ellerson's fumble was recovered by Dave Duerson on Green Bay's 34-yard line. With two minutes left, Kevin Butler kicked the winner from the 32.

Green Bay	0	0	7	3	10
Chicago	2	7	0	3	12

Attendance: 59,291



1919-2019

PACKERS DETROIT LIONS

44
40

11.27.1986

Both quarterbacks, Randy Wright, and Joe Ferguson, threw three touchdowns passes. "It wasn't much of a defensive battle, but who really cares as long as it's a good game,"¹ was Forrest Gregg's assessment.

It certainly was a good game that kept the attention of the fans! Five changes, six touchdown passes, and lots of points kept up the excitement. Walter Stanley made sure of that as the 2-10 Packers enjoyed a Happy Thanksgiving. Stanley caught two touchdown passes from Randy Wright that went for 21 and 36 yards. The 21-yarder gave the Packers a 23-20 halftime lead.

After Detroit went back in front 37-23, the Packers didn't fold. Walter Stanley caught his second touchdown pass, and Paul Ott Carruth caught Wright's third touchdown to cut it to 40-37 with 3:31 remaining. For the game, Stanley caught four passes for 124 yards!

After Detroit picked up a first down, they were forced to punt with a minute left in the game. Stanley took it back 83 yards to win it and top off his incredible Thanksgiving afternoon!

Green Bay	13	10	7	14	44
Detroit	10	10	17	3	40
Attendance: 61,199					

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/28/86, McGinn, p. 26



MINNESOTA
VIKINGS
PACKERS

32 **12.7.1986**
6

Minnesota swept the season series, and for the first time in their history, the Packers finished winless at home.

In this edition of the border battle, Green Bay managed just two field goals. Their new punter, Bill Renner, had problems on his first two punts – one was blocked and the other a bad snap – which helped the Vikings to a 13-3 lead. Their lead was never in danger.

Green Bay had the ball inside Minnesota's 25-yard line five times, but they came away with only two field goals. Former Packers offensive coordinator, Bob Schnelker, now with the Vikings, relished beating his old team. In the two games against Green Bay this year, Vikings outscored them 74-13.

Minnesota	13	0	9	10	32
Green Bay	3	3	0	0	6

Attendance: 47,637

Total Yards: GB 367 MINN 303

"With my dad, I was a Packer-backer from the get-go. As a kid growing up around the Packers' first Super Bowl teams, you followed all those great guys, Paul Hornung, Jim Taylor, Fuzzy Thurston. After the Vikings showed up, a piece of my allegiance naturally went to them, but in the depths of my soul it was still the Packers. So with us, we would win no matter what."¹

¹ Cold Wars, Mishler, p. 158



PACKERS

TAMPA BAY

BUCCANEERS

7

12.14.1986

21

It's the 3-11 Packers against the 2-12 Buccaneers in The Battle of the Bays. Only 30,099 fans showed up.

The Packers put together three touchdown drives of 80, 65 and 63 yards. All three touchdowns were scored on the ground by Randy Wright, Gerry Ellis, and Paul Ott Curruth. The Packers' defense held the Bucs to 242 total yards, and they sacked Tampa quarterbacks Steve Young and Steve DeBerg seven times.

Green Bay 0 7 7 7 21

Tampa Bay 0 0 0 7 7

Attendance: 30,099

"Hey, we got more fans here than they do,"¹ linebacker Brian Noble pointed out.

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/15/86, Langenkamp, p. 25



PACKERS
NEW YORK
GIANTS

24

12.20.1986

55

Amen!

A crash-landing put an end to a dismal 4-12 season.

The Packers were overwhelmed, and they gave up 448 yards to the soon-to-be Super Bowl Champions. The Giants jumped out to a 24-0 lead, but Green Bay stayed close with 17 in the second quarter. Randy Wright and Eddie Lee Ivey connected for a touchdown, and a 56-yard pick-six by Ken Stills cut it to seven by halftime. In the second half, the Giants outscored the Packers 31-7 with Phil Simms throwing two of his three touchdown passes.

Green Bay	0	17	7	0	24
New York	21	3	14	17	55

Attendance: 71,351

First Downs: GB 17 NY 30



1986 Team Statistics

FINAL STANDINGS – NFC Central

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>
Chicago	14	2	0
Minnesota	9	7	0
Detroit	5	11	0
Green Bay	4	12	0
Tampa Bay	2	14	0

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Wright
Rushing	Davis
Receiving	Lofton
Scoring	Del Greco
Interceptions	Lee

ALL-PRO

NOTABLE DRAFT PICKS (Round, Position)

Kenneth Davis (2, RB)

Tim Harris (4a, LB)

Burnell Dent (6, LB)



1919-2019

PACKERS CENTURY

with Jim Rice

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