



1997



THE
PACKERS CENTURY

P R O J E C T

ALL THE GAMES. ALL THE STORIES.

1919-2019

BY JIM RICE

packerscentury.com



1997

Record: 13-3-0 1st Place

Coach: Mike Holmgren

- The Packers named their two practice fields across from Lambeau Field after two Hall of Fame players – Clarke Hinkle Field and Ray Nitschke Field. After winning the Super Bowl a street was also named after Mike Holmgren – Holmgren Way.
- The defending champions made a few roster changes. Sean Jones and Keith Jackson retired. Desmond Howard, Chris Jacke, and Andre Rison were not resigned.
- Brett Favre signed a 7-year extension worth \$42 million, plus a signing bonus of a \$12 million.
- In the preseason, Edgar Bennett tore his Achilles and was lost for the year.
- The Packers finished second in points scored and fifth in points allowed. Their run defense dropped from #4 to #20.
- Brett Favre won his third straight MVP award. This time, he shared the award with Barry Sanders of the Lions.
- “We know there could come a time when we just won’t have the money to stay competitive. And, well, I can’t sit here and say that for 10, 15, or 20 years this stadium is going to be fine. Because I am not sure that it is.”¹ Packers’ President Bob Harlan
- In November, the franchise launched its fourth stock sale. Funds would be used to renovate Lambeau Field. Shares were sold for \$200, and sales continued into 1998.
- Green Bay lost to Denver in Super Bowl XXXII 31-24.

¹ Frozen In Time, Howard, Sports Illustrated, Great Football Writing, by Peter King, 2006



CHICAGO
BEARS
PACKERS

24
38

9.1.1997

"I always hated the Bears," said Merton Eberlein of Mauston, Wisconsin, celebrating his 95th birthday. He saw his first Packers game in 1922. "I took a bus to the east side. I stood on the sidelines and they passed the hat and I put a silver dollar in the hat."¹

The defending champions opened on Monday Night Football against their ancient rival. The Packers easily smacked around the Bears and led 31-11 before the bruins scored twice in the final minutes to make it somewhat respectable.

After a Green Bay field goal, the Bears scored the first touchdown. A two-point conversion by Chicago signaled the high-scoring game ahead. Brett Favre's fine outng began with two first-half touchdown passes. An interception by Doug Evans set up the first to Jeff Thomason to retake the lead 11-8.

After the Bears tied it, the Packers ran off the next 20 points! Favre completed two straight passes to Robert Brooks that covered 62 yards, including the 18-yard touchdown pass with 48 seconds left in the half. After Ryan Longwell nailed two more field goals in the third quarter, Dorsey Levens scored with eight minutes left in the game for a 31-11 lead.

Chicago scored twice in the final 3:28. They also fumbled away the ball on their one-yard line, and the Packers capitalized with six more.

Chicago	0	11	0	13	24
Green Bay	3	15	6	11	38
Attendance:	60,766				

CB Craig Newsome injured knee on game's first play from scrimmage and was lost for the season.

Photo Caption: "Packer fans Jim Johnston, John Johnston, and Leo Liegeois dish-up black bear for Monday's tailgate festivities."²

“The people in Green Bay are simply the greatest,” said Ruben Mendez, from Chicago who came to the game with three pals and bravely wore a Bears jersey. “There’s a lot of teasing, but it’s really good-natured.”³

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/2/97, Anderson, p. 1

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/2/97, p. 1

3 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/2/97, Anderson, p. 1



PACKERS
PHILADELPHIA
EAGLES

9

9.7.1997

10

The Packers suffered their first loss since losing in Dallas last November! The Packers rolled up 380 yards of offense, but they could not get into the end zone. The offense produced three field goals, and Brett Favre was chased all game by Philadelphia's blitzing defense. Though he was sacked only once, the pressure had the desired effect (19-41-279-0-1).

The game's only touchdown came very late. With Green Bay in front 9-3, a long, 19-play drive by the Eagles wore down Green Bay's defense. Former Packer Ty Detmer marched the Eagles 80 yards, and threw a short touchdown pass to Freddie Solomon 1:56 left.

Now trailing 10-9, rookie Bill Schroeder returned the kickoff 40 yards to help to set up a 28-field goal for fellow rookie Ryan Longwell with 15 seconds left. Longwell slipped on slick surface, and the kick went wide right.

Green Bay	0	6	3	0	9
Philadelphia	0	0	3	7	10

Attendance: 66,803

Total Yards: GB 380 PHI 258



MIAMI

DOLPHINS
PACKERS

18
23

9.14.1997

The Packers shut down Miami quarterback Dan Marino and the undefeated Dolphins. Even though Gilbert Brown had to leave the game in the first quarter with a injured knee, the Packers kept the Dolphins out of the end zone until it was too late.

Marino was held in check by Green Bay (21-47-240-1-1), and the Dolphins also had trouble running the ball (59 yards). Olindo Mare scored almost all of Miami's points with four field goals. Their only touchdown came with 1:37 left in the game on a Marino to Charles Jordan touchdown.

Brett Favre easily outplayed Marino (24-37-253-2-0), and his two touchdowns went to Antonio Freeman early and William Henderson late. Kicker Ryan Longwell bounced back with three field goals, and Dorsey Levens powered Green Bay's ground attack with 121 yards.

As defending Super Bowl champions, the Packers were struggling to meet early expectations. "They find themselves being measured by the quality of the victory, and in that respect they haven't fared well."¹

Miami	6	3	3	6	18
Green Bay	0	10	3	10	23

Attendance: 60,075

*Dave Robinson: "In this town everybody's a Green Bay Packers fan. This is the best place in the league to play football as far as fans and the town are concerned."*³

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/15/97, Dougherty, p. 34

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/15/97, Dipko, p. 2



MINNESOTA
VIKINGS
PACKERS

32
38

9.21.1997

Favre passes Starr

The Packers won their 21st consecutive at Lambeau Field. Brett Favre threw four first-half touchdown passes to begin his five touchdown day! Favre's touchdowns moved him past Bart Starr for the most touchdown passes in Packer history!

After the Vikings took an early 7-0 lead, Green Bay scored 31 unanswered points to close out the first half. Favre's threw touchdowns went to Antonio Freeman (2), and one each to both Robert Brooks and Terry Mickens. His fifth touchdown pass in the fourth quarter went to Mark Chmura in the fourth quarter.

In the second half, two turnovers by the Packers were turned into two quick Brad Johnson touchdown passes to Chris Carter and Jake Reed. Reed caught a second touchdown pass with 6:44 left in the game that cut the Packers' lead to 38-32.

It all came down to Minnesota's final drive. Green Bay's defense forced three straight incomplete passes to end the comeback. After the game, LeRoy Butler said about Brett Favre, "Guys were rushing him and kicking him and pushing him and spitting on him, and he's hanging in there delivering touchdowns."¹

Minnesota	7	0	15	10	32
Green Bay	7	24	7	0	35

Attendance: 60,115

Favre's second TD to Freeman, #154, moved him past Bart Starr.

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/22/97, Dougherty, p. 32



PACKERS
DETROIT
LIONS

15
9.28.1997
26

Two field goals by Ryan Longwell started the scoring, but a pick-six in the second quarter by Reggie Brown of the Lions fueled the upset. Smith’s touchdown kicked-off a 17-point surge that included Scott Mitchell’s touchdown pass to rookie tight end, Pete Chryplewicz.

Favre threw a second interception that led to a field, and the Packers trailed at the break 17-9. But on the opening drive of the second half, a seven-yard touchdown pass from Favre to Bill Schroeder trimmed the lead to 17-15. The pass bounced off receiver Terry Mickens before Schroeder dove for the catch!

But that was it for the Packers offensively. Favre threw another interception that killed a drive, and Dorsey Levens fumbled on Detroit’s two-yard line to doom another. Great games by Barry Sanders (159 total yards) and Jason Hanson (4 field goals) helped the Lions put away Green Bay and move into a second-place tie with both the Vikings and the Packers.

Green Bay	6	3	6	0	15
Detroit	0	17	3	6	26
Attendance:	78,110				

“I don’t think there are too many teams whose fans travel as well as the Packers fans do. Maybe Steelers fans, but that’s about it. And a lot of times they’re not even at the game, but they still came to the city where the Packers were playing. It’s just such devotion to a team.”¹

¹ Facing the Green Bay Packers, Carlson, p. 118



TAMPA BAY

BUCCANEERS 16
PACKERS 21

10.5.1997

The undefeated Buccaneers could not overcome a very productive second quarter for the Packers, nor their *bend don't break defense*. Two Brett Favre touchdown passes to Antonio Freeman wrapped around a 77 yard-pick-six by defensive end Gabe Wilkins made it 21-3 Packers at halftime. Wilkins' interception was spectacular. His 77-yard sprint to the end zone drew praise especially, from Brett Favre, after the game. "I am so happy for Gabe that I could've gone up to him and given him a great big kiss. I fumbled, and on the next play, he comes along and looks like O. J. Simpson running through the airport."¹

In the second half, after blocking a field goal, the Buccaneers rallied. With an almost unstoppable ground game due partly to Gilbert Brown's absence, the Bucs cut up the Packers for 217 yards rushing. They put together two second-half touchdown drives of 63 and 90 yards to trim the lead to 21-16. Though Green Bay gave up a lot of yards (372), they stopped the Bucs at the end. On Tampa Bay's final drive, they moved past midfield into Green Bay territory when Wayne Simmons and Reggie White came up big defending against Warrick Dunn to end the rally.

Tampa Bay	3	0	7	6	16
Green Bay	0	21	0	0	21

Attendance: 60,100

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/6/97, Havel, p. 30



PACKERS
CHICAGO
BEARS

24
23

10.12.1997

The Packers were 11.5 point favorites, but no one told the Bears (0-6). Chicago jumped in front 10-0 in the first quarter, and they outgained the Packers overall 353-227.

The Bears took the early lead on a touchdown run by Raymont Harris following an interception of Brett Favre on his third play from scrimmage. Brett Favre brought the Packers right back in the second quarter with touchdown passes to Mark Chmura and Dorsey Levens. Green Bay led at the break 14-10.

Eight minutes into the third quarter, Chicago quarterback Erik Kramer ran for a touchdown to put the Bears back on top. Favre struck back later in the quarter with a third touchdown pass for a 21-17 lead. The fourth quarter stayed quiet until the final three minutes. Ryan Longwell's field goal extended the lead to 24-17, but the Bears weren't finished. It took just 30 seconds to go 67 yards, and Kramer's 22-yard touchdown pass made it a one-point game with 1:59 left. But the Bears, rather than kick the extra point for the tie and give the football back to Favre, went for two points and the lead with 1:59 remaining on the clock. An incomplete pass from Kramer to Raymont Harris sealed the deal, and the victorious Packers headed into their bye week at 5-2!

Green Bay	0	14	7	3	24
Chicago	10	0	7	6	23

Attendance: 62,212

GB cashed-in on two CHI turnovers 10 points.



PACKERS
NEW ENGLAND
PATRIOTS

28
10.27.1997
10

After their bye week, the Packers won their Super Bowl rematch on Monday Night Football behind three Brett Favre touchdown passes. A fumble recovery by Reggie White led to an early 81-yard touchdown drive by Green Bay. Favre’s touchdown to Dorsey Levens made it 7-0.

New England pulled even after on a fumble by Favre, and a field goal gave them a 10-7 lead with two minutes left. Favre executed the two-minute drill perfectly and closed the half with a 32-yard touchdown pass to Mark Chmura to make it 14-10.

New England went quietly in the second half. After a goal-line stand by the Packers, Favre took them 99 yards for another touchdown! A 19-yard touchdown pass to Robert Brooks completed a third long drive by Green Bay – 75, 99, and 86 yards. For good measure, Dorsey Levens scored on the ground late in the game.

“Both teams had changed considerably since the Super Bowl. The Patriots have a new coach Pete Carroll and the Packers have been hurt by injuries. But Green Bay still has Favre.”¹

Green Bay	7	7	7	7	28
New England	0	10	0	0	10
Attendance:	59,972				

“A New London, Wisconsin man and his son who were cheated out of seeing the NFC Championship Game (1/12/97) will get to see a Green Bay Packer game next month for free, thanks a local tavern owner who read about their ordeal. Charles Runge, 49, and Todd Runge, 27, paid a scalper \$230 for two tickets to the January 12, 1997 game at Lambeau Field between the Green Bay Packers and Carolina Panthers. The tickets turned out to be counterfeit and the Runge’s were ejected from Lambeau Field. They got home to watch the second half on television. Danny Shandor, who owns Packer Stadium

Lounge 1342 S. Broadway with his wife Kathy, read about the Runge's tale in the Press Gazette. 'My wife said it was a shame how they were done wrong.' So the Shandors offered the Runge's two tickets to the Sunday, November 9 game against the St. Louis Rams. 'We're real appreciative of them,' Runge said. They're offer says a lot about the people of Green Bay.'"²

1 packershistory.net/1997 Packers

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/21/97, Hoeft, p. 1



1919-2019

DETROIT

LIONS

10

PACKERS

20 11.2.1997

Payback!

This was sweet payback for September as Brett Favre and a stingy defense showed the way. The Lions took an early 7-0 lead until Favre found Robert Brooks from 23-yards out to tie it in the second quarter. From that point forward, it was Green Bay's game.

The Packers defense played its best game of the season. They stole four passes from quarterback Scott Mitchell and sacked him four times. LeRoy Butler grabbed two of the interceptions, and rookie safety Darren Sharper's 50-yard pick-six gave Green Bay a lead it never lost. In the third quarter, with the Packers leading 14-10, the Lions recovered a fumble pun on Green Bay's 17-yard line. But three plays later, Doug Evans intercepted Scott Mitchell to end the threat.

The defense controlled Detroit's big weapons, and Barry Sanders was held to 32 yards in the first half, and 105 for the game. Lions receiver Herman Moore caught nine passes 50 yards. Neither star scored a touchdown, and Reggie White explained Green Bay's success, "We did a good job against Barry Sanders, particularly in the first half. We wanted to make them throw the ball, and that's what we did."¹

Detroit **7** **3** **0** **0** **10**

Green Bay **0** **14** **3** **3** **20**

Attendance: 60,126

Total Yards: GB 244 DET 256

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/3/97, p. 31



1919-2019

ST. LOUIS
RAMS
PACKERS

7
17 11.9.1997

For the first time this season, Brett Favre threw for over 300 yards! Antonio Freeman was his favorite target with seven catches for 160 yards and a touchdown. The only points in the first half came on Ryan Longwell's 44-yard field goal!

After halftime, the Packers stormed out of their locker room and scored the first time they had the ball. They went 80-yards in seven plays with Antonio Freeman grabbing a 25-yard touchdown pass to make it 10-0. Late in the third quarter, the Rams narrowed the lead to three.

On the Packers' next drive, Favre got the points back with a 79-yard march that he finished-off with a seven-yard run. The defense had another strong outing giving up just 269 yards. They stopped the run (66 yards) and delivered four sacks.

The win was Green Bay's 21st in a row at home, a team record that surpassed the 1929-1931 Packers.

St. Louis	0	0	7	0	7
Green Bay	0	3	7	7	17
Attendance:	6,093				

"The Lord and I, well, we had a little talk earlier today," said Sister Barbara Mathe, a Catholic nun from Kaukauna. "He had a serious listen, and I had a serious talk, actually."¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/10/97, Dipko, p.



PACKERS
INDIANAPOLIS
COLTS

38
41

11.16.1997

The winless Colts, coached by former Packers' head coach Lindy Infante, upset Green Bay. In a game with plenty of offensive fireworks, 908 total yards were generated!

Brett Favre threw three touchdown passes as well as two interceptions. For the Packers, Dorsey Levens scored three touchdowns, and Antonio Freeman scored twice. The lead changed hands seven times! The Packers led 14-3 lead, fell behind 24-14, and reclaimed the lead 31-30 before falling 41-38 on a field goal as time expired.

Indy staged the upset with back-up quarterback Paul Justin calling the shots. He threw for 340 yards and one touchdown. Four different Colts scored, and Cory Blanchard kicked four field goals. Indianapolis put up 17 points after Favre's interceptions and his fumble that was returned for a touchdown by Al Fontenot.

Green Bay	14	14	0	10	38
Indianapolis	9	18	3	11	41

Attendance: 60,928

GB's defense gave up 467 yards, the most since 1992.



1919-2019

DALLAS

COWBOYS

17

PACKERS

45 11.23.1997

Eight straight losses to Dallas were enough! The Packers delivered some serious payback and proved their superiority on many fronts. Brett Favre delivered four touchdown passes with three coming in the second half, and the ground game pounded the Cowboys for 220 yards. Behind a strong game by the offensive line – Earl Dotson, Aaron Taylor, Frank Winters, Adam Timmerman, and Ross Verba – Dorsey Levens set a new franchise record with 190 yards rushing!

After a 10-10 first half, it was Green Bay's game. They scored every time they had the ball, and the defense controlled Dallas after last week's disaster in Indianapolis. They held the Cowboys to 211 total yards, and Emmitt Smith led the ground game with only 53. Dallas was outscored in the second half, 35-7.

Late in the game, Deion Sanders of the Cowboys reminded Favre of his 50-yard pick-six in the second quarter. "Sanders playfully raised one finger to signify the play. Favre responded by raising four, one for each of the touchdown passes he threw against a reeling Cowboy defense that came in ranked #1 against the pass."¹

"There's no question as to who was the better team."² said safety, LeRoy Butler. With the win, the 9-3 Packers took over sole possession of first place in the NFC Central.

Dallas	3	7	0	7	17
Green Bay	7	3	14	21	45

Attendance: 60,111

Total Yards: GB 409 DAL 213

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/24/97, Havel, p. 33

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/24/97, Dougherty, p. 32



PACKERS
MINNESOTA
VIKINGS

27
11

12.1.1997

Clinched!

The day of this Monday Night game, a radio personality in the Twin Cities claimed Brett Favre had been in a hotel room with a woman other than his wife. The accusation flew like wildfire, but eventually it was determined to be a hoax, and the radio personality was fired.

Such was the intensity of the rivalry when the Packers and Vikings met in Minnesota. Fortunately for Green Bay, the Packers won the game and clinched a playoff berth. It was also Mike Holmgren's first win over the Vikings "in their own ear-splitting lair"¹ known as the Metrodome!

Green Bay swept the season series with fine games from Brett Favre and Dorsey Levens. The defense also came through with a dominant performance. In a 3-3 game late in the first half, an 88-yard drive and Favre's touchdown pass to Robert Brooks made it 10-3 Green Bay. In the second half, Levens, who ran for 108 yards, scored twice. His touchdowns came after an interception, and a fumble recovery both by Doug Evans!

Green Bay pulled away easily as the defense rose to the occasion. They held Minnesota to 253 total yards compared to the 393 they put on the Packers in September. They sacked quarterback Brad Johnson six times, and Reggie White had a hand in 2.5 of them!

Green Bay	3	7	7	0	27
Minnesota	0	3	0	8	11

Attendance: 64,001

*Rick Hanson, Packers Fan: "Thank you to all the Packer fans in the dome tonight. You've done your job."*²

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/2/97, Havel, p. 42

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/2/97, p. 41



PACKERS

TAMPA BAY

BUCCANEERS

17

12.7.1997

6

The Packers won the NFC Central for a third straight year as Brett Favre and the Green Bay defense smacked down the Buccaneers. Favre threw two touchdowns passes, and the defense dominated. The Packers gave up two field goals, eight first downs, and 161 total yards. They also ravaged the Tampa gridiron with four sacks, one pick, and a fumble recovery!

The Buccaneers led 3-0 when Favre stepped into the pocket and found Robert Brooks open for a 43-yard missile and a 7-3 lead. After halftime, Favre stunned the Florida crowd when he flicked a pass across his body at the last second to Dorsey Levens for a touchdown and a 14-6 lead! "He does things out there on the football field that you really can't plan for,"¹ acknowledged Tony Dungy, Tampa's coach.

Ryan Longwell completed the scoring with a 27-yard boot in the fourth quarter. Favre played very well (25-33-280-2-1), and he became the first quarterback in NFL history to throw for 30+ touchdowns four seasons in a row.

Green Bay	7	0	7	3	17
Tampa Bay	3	3	0	0	6
Attendance:	75,523				

*Brett Favre: "The Packers' fans are the best fans in the league. It really makes a difference when you're ahead (on the road) to hear the home team getting booed."*²

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/7/97, Dougherty, p. 36

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/8/97, Havel, p. 37



PACKERS
CAROLINA
PANTHERS

31
12.14.1997
10

The last time these two teams met, the winner went to Super Bowl XXXI. While the stakes weren't nearly as high, the Packers ended Carolina's playoff hopes in 1997 with this win.

Brett Favre's hot streak continued with three touchdown passes. Antonio Freeman led all receivers with 10 catches for 166 yards and two touchdowns. The ground game also punished the Panthers with 218 yards. "When I thought they were going to pass, they ran, and when I thought they were going to run, they passed. We never seemed to get it right,"¹ said defensive tackle Les Miller.

On the road without an injured Gilbert Brown (ankle), the Packers still held Carolina to 172 total yards. It was their fourth straight strong defensive performance with Carolina's only touchdown coming in the fourth quarter. Quarterback Kerry Collins completed just seven passes for 56 yards in the blowout, and it was only the "fifth time in the last 37 years that Green Bay has held an opponent to a completion percentage of less than 30 percent."²

Green Bay	14	3	7	7	31
Carolina	0	3	0	7	10

Attendance: 70,887

Total Yards: GB 458 CAR 172

Deborah Gaesswitz, Packer Fan: "The 1997 season was it! It ended with the Pack winning its second consecutive NFC Championship but losing to John Elway's Broncos in Super Bowl XXXII. We have so many great emories. My husband, Lou, was a dishard Marine and Packers fan. We loved the gunslinger, Brett Favre! Lou passed away in 2008, and I got this memory tattoo of the Packers "G" in 2009."

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/15/97, Hoogervorst, p. 33
2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/15/97, Gozka, p. 34



1919-2019

BUFFALO
BILLS
PACKERS

21

31 12.20.1997

The Packers won their 26th consecutive game at Lambeau Field to finish the 1997 regular season at 13-3. After two Brett Favre touchdown passes built a 21-0 lead by halftime, back-up quarterback Steve Bono replaced Favre in the second half.

For the first time in Green Bay's history, two receivers, Antonio Freeman and Robert Books, both finished with over 1,000 receiving yards. Running back Dorsey Levens fell just 40 yards short of Jim Taylor's all-time single-season rushing record with 1,435 yards.

Buffalo	0	0	8	13	21
Green Bay	17	7	3	7	31

Attendance: 60,108

"For Garth Seiler and Mike Drexler it's a once a week tradition. Seiler and Drexler, both from Oshkosh (Wisconsin), watch every Packers home game in the parking lot while friends go into the stadium. 'We do this every week,' said Seiler, 43, 'We come out for the party before the game and after the game. Plus, it's warmer in the van.'"¹

"The Green Bay Press-Gazette makes it move into cyberspace today with the debut of its Packer-dominated internet site."²

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/21/97, Bruss p. 2

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/21/97, Content, p. 1

NFC Divisional Playoff



TAMPA BAY

BUCCANEERS 7

PACKERS

21 1.4.1998

After overcoming six dropped passes and seven penalties, the Packers defeated Tampa Bay for the third time this season in a hard-fought defensive battle. To many fans in attendance, it appeared that the Packers took the Buccaneers too lightly.

Quarterback Brett Favre put Green Bay on the scoreboard in the first quarter after the Packers blocked field goal attempt. Favre connected with Mark Chmura for a 7-0 lead, and two Ryan Longwell field goals stretched it to 13-0 before halftime.

To start the second half, Antonio Freeman's 90-yard kickoff return was called back on a holding call. The Packers then marched to Tampa's 25 before cornerback Donnie Abraham made the first of his two interceptions. He grabbed Favre's pass on Tampa's six-yard line, and the Bucs went 94 yards to cut the lead to 13-7 on Mike Alstott's touchdown run.

Dorsey Levens saved the day for Green Bay with a great second half. He ran for 94 of his 112 yards rushing after intermission. In the fourth quarter, his touchdown run restored Green Bay's two-touchdown lead after Favre's two-point conversion on a quarterback draw play. "When we went up 21-7 (early in the fourth quarter), I knew it was over,"¹ Favre said later.

In their first appearance in the postseason since 1982, Tampa Bay failed to capitalize on their opportunities. They managed just seven points on three Green Bay turnovers. Gilbert Brown's return for the Packers also solidified the run defense. Warrick Dunn and Mike Alstott were held to just 90 yards.

Tampa Bay	0	0	7	0	7
Green Bay	7	6	0	8	21

Attendance: 60,327

Total Yards: GB 289 TB 263

“Here’s your chance to nominate the No. 1 family of Green Bay Packers fans. We’re looking for families with the wackiest, most outrageous, or just plain total devotion to the green and gold. Tell us in a few lines why your nominee is No. 1. The deadline for nominations is noon Wednesday.”²

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/5/98, Havel, p. 28

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/5/98, p. 1

NFC Championship Game



PACKERS

SAN FRANCISCO

49ers

23

1.11.1998

10

“When we saw the rain and sloppy field, we said to ourselves, ‘This is our weather,’ said Antonio Freeman. “We felt like we were at home.”¹

With another Super Bowl appearance hanging in the balance, the final score did not reflect how convincingly the Packers beat the 49ers. Green Bay’s defense stole the show. They kept San Francisco out of the end zone until a 95-yard kickoff return in the fourth quarter. They sacked Steve Young four times and held the 49ers to 33 yards on the ground.

The Packers took the early lead on Ryan Longwell’s field goal. In the second quarter, Eugene Robinson’s 58-yard interception return set up Green Bay’s first touchdown. Two plays later, Brett Favre and Antonio Freeman connected for a 27-yard touchdown.

With a 10-3 lead in the fourth quarter, the Packers put it away. Two more field goals by Longwell and a fourth-quarter touchdown run by Dorsey Levens took care of business. Levens had another huge game with 114 yards on the ground, and he caught four passes for another 27.

Green Bay’s defense kept the lid on Steve Young. He threw for 250 yards, one interception, and no touchdowns. The Packers looked ready to defend their Super Bowl title.

Green Bay 3 10 0 10 23

San Francisco 0 3 0 7 10

Attendance: 68,987

Total Yards: GB 325 SF 257

*Gary Plummer, 49ers Linebacker: "What the Packers and their fans care about is winning. For so many other teams, it's about the money. You just don't see that kind of attitude anymore."*²

*At 1:15 a.m., about 1,000 fans were on hand to welcome home the Packers. "You can sleep any day of the year," said Trisha Kann, of Green Bay as she stood next to her sister and mother at the front of the waiting area. "This is more exciting."*³

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/12/98, Dougherty, p. 28

2 Facing the Green Bay Packers, Carlson, p. 6

3 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/12/98, Dipko, p. 1

Super Bowl XXXII



PACKERS

24

DENVER

1.26.1998

BRONCOS

31

The Denver Broncos, the AFC Wild Card winner, hoped to win their first Super Bowl. The Packers were the defending champions and riding a seven-game winning streak. They were an 11-point favorite, and the Broncos looked like easy prey.

As the heavily-favored defending champions, the Packers received most of the pre-game attention. Their explosive offense and strong defense looked formidable, and there was talk by many of a possible dynasty in the making. The Broncos went along with all the flattery sent Green Bay's way, and "bit their tongues for two weeks."¹

In a very exciting Super Bowl Bowl, Green Bay took the opening drive and marched 76 yards for a 7-0 lead. Denver came right back to tie it on Terrell Davis' first touchdown run. He followed a quick and agile offensive line that frequently got the best of Green Bay's front seven. Though Davis missed the second quarter with a severe migraine, he still scored three touchdowns and ran all over Green Bay for 157 yards.

The next two possessions were a disaster for Favre as he turned the ball over twice on an interception and a fumble. The pick, by Tyrone Braxton, led to a one-yard touchdown run by John Elway. On the third play from scrimmage after Denver's touchdown, Favre fumbled after being hit by safety Steve Atwater. Denver capitalized with Jacob Elam's 51-yard field goal for a 17-7 lead.

With 7:38 left before the half, Favre bounced back. He drove the Packers to the end zone 95 yards away in 17 plays. He completed nine of 13 passes, and a six-yard toss to Mark Chmura cut Denver's halftime lead to 17-14.

On Denver's first play from scrimmage in the second half, Terrell Davis fumbled on his 23-yard line! The Packers settled for a field goal and a 17-17 tie. Two drives later, The Broncos came went 92-yards, and John Elway made the play of the game. On third-and-six at the 12-yard line, Elway scrambled to his right and took-off. As he lept for the first down at the seven-yard line, he was hit by both LeRoy Butler and Mike Prior, which sent him "pinwheeling to earth at the four."² Two plays later, Davis scored his second touchdown of the game for a 24-17 lead, and the Broncos set their sights on an upset.

When Antonio Freeman fumbled the ensuing kickoff on the 22, Denver recovered, and the momentum was clearly with Denver. Fortunately, safety Eugene Robinson snatched away Elway's first pass. On cue, Favre threw four straight completions to Freeman and Brooks, and his third to Freeman went for a 13-yard score, and Longwell tied it at 24 with 13:32 left.

The break came for Denver on a short, 39-yard punt by Craig Hentrich. The Broncos took over on Green Bay's 49 with 3:27 left. Elway, Davis, and fullback Howard Griffith pounded Green Bay's tired defense to the one-yard line in five plays.

With 1:47 left, coach Holmgren let Davis score to get the ball back as soon as possible. A controversial call, to say the least. "Even if you buy his Monday statement that he thought it was first down instead of second down before Davis scored – which would have allowed Denver to kill more time – the truth remains. The Packer coach stopped believing in the Packer magic. Somewhere about now, Ray Nitschke is gnashing both of his teeth."³

Now trailing 31-24 at their 30-yard line, the Packers had 1:39 left. Favre stayed hot with four straight completions to Levens for a second-and-six on Denver's 31 with 42 seconds remaining. Three straight incompletions came next to Freeman, Brooks, and Chmura, and the Lombardi Trophy was Denver's.

Green Bay	7	7	3	7	24
Denver	7	10	7	7	34

Attendance: 68,912

Rushing: GB 20-95-0 DEN 39-179-4

On January 27, 1998, 25,000+ fans came to Lambeau Field to welcome home the Packers.

- 1 The Ultimate Super Bowl Book, McGinn, p. 244
- 2 The Ultimate Super Bowl Book, McGinn, p. 245
- 3 Los Angeles Times, 1/27/98, Plaschke



THE
**PACKERS CENTURY
PROJECT**

1919-2018

1997 Team Statistics

FINAL STANDINGS – NFC Central Division

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>I</u>
Green Bay	13	3	1
Tampa Bay	10	6	0
Detroit	9	7	0
Minnesota	9	7	0
Chicago	4	12	0

Team Leaders

Passing	Favre
Receiving	Freeman
Rushing	Levens
Scoring	Longwell
Interceptions	Butler
Sacks	White

All-Pro

Butler	Safety
Evans	Cornerback
Favre	Quarterback
Hentrich	Punter
Jervey	Special Teams
White	Defensive End
Williams	Linebacker

Notable Draft Choices (Round, Position)

Ross Verba (1, OT)
Darren Sharper (2, S)
Brett Conway (3, K)



1919 - 2019

PACKERS CENTURY

with Jim Rice

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