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1919-2019

BY JIM RICE

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# 1998

Record: 11-5-0 2nd Place

**Coach: Mike Holmgren** 

The team's fourth stock sale was a huge success raising \$24
million for the Lambeau Field's renovation. For the first time,
a shareholder's meeting was held at Lambeau Field, and
18,707 owners attended!

- Though it was their seventh consecutive winning season, the Packers did not return to the Super Bowl. They extended their home winning streak during the regular season to 28.
- This would be Reggie White's last season in Green Bay. With 16 sacks, he was named the Defensive Player of the Year by the Associated Press.
- Brett Favre signed a seven-year contract that made him the highest-paid player in NFL history. Dorsey Levens held-out through training camp, and 10 days after signing, he broke his leg and missed nine games. Before the season, Edgar Bennett signed with the Chicago Bears.
- They started the season 4-0 before losing to the Vikings, but both the offense and defense slipped slightly from 1997.
- Speculation about Mike Holmgren's future in Green Bay increased. Five days after the season ended, he resigned and took a position with the Seattle Seahawks.



The defense got the season off to a good start as Green Bay led from start to finish, and they held Barry Sanders to 70 yards rushing!

The Packers enjoyed a 17-6 halftime lead. After a Ryan Longwell field goal, Green Bay linebacker Brian Williams stripped quarterback Scott Mitchell of the ball, and LeRoy Butler returned it 32 yards for a touchdown. Favre also looked sharp on an 80-yard drive that Dorsey Levens took home on a four-yard run.

On the opening drive of the second half, the Lions hit back with a 25-yard touchdown pass from Mitchell to Herman Moore. It stayed 17-12 Green Bay until there were 17 seconds left in the quarter. After Favre hooked up for the first of two touchdowns to Antonio Freeman, the Lions came right back with a 101-yard kickoff return by Terry Fair to close out the quarter 24-19 Packers. Twenty-two seconds later, Green Bay's Roell Preston did the best Terry Fair imitation he could with his own 100-yard return to make it 31-19. Late in the game, an interception by safety Mike Prior led to Favre's 84-yard touchdown missle to Freeman to finish the scoring.

Detroit 3 3 13 0 19 Green Bay 10 7 7 14 38

**Attendance: 60,102** *Favre: 24-32-277-2-0* 



# **Down goes Dorsey**

A rematch of last year's playoff game was a satisfying win for Green Bay. Though they lost Dorsey Levens for nine games with a broken leg, quarterback Brett Favre had another strong outing, and the defense was dominant. Quarterbacks Trent Dilfer and Steve Walsh were sacked six times with Reggie White landing three. Tampa also turned the ball over four times.

Dilfer's early fumble led to Brett Favre's first touchdown pass to Tyronne Davis. Three Ryan Longwell field goals finished the first-half scoring.

In the fourth quarter, Favre and Antonio Freeman connected for a 38-yard touchdown pass and a 23-0 lead. In the final four minutes, Tampa By scored twice. A 95-yard punt return by Jacquez Green and a two-yard touchdown pass by Dilfer mattered little. Favre had outgunned the Buccaneers once again (22-33-237-2-0), though Warren Sapp got to him twice. "We're just out there having fun," Sapp said. Brett Favre would agree.

Tampa Bay 0 0 0 15 15 Green Bay 10 6 0 7 23

Attendance: 60, 124

Total Yards (both teams) - 471

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/14/98, Demovsky, p. 36



## Big D!

For the 12<sup>th</sup> time in their history, the Packers were 3-0. They had their defense to thank. "Our defensive line basically took the game over," said linebacker Brian Williams. The front four controlled the trenches, and the Bengals ran for just 28 yards and generated seven first downs.

In a game of field goals, Cincinnati took an early 3-0 lead. Midway through the first quarter, Robert Brooks made a spectacular catch of a Brett Favre pass for a 7-3 lead. After they traded field goals, Green Bay ended the first half with a goal line stand that set the tone for the rest of the game. The final points in the game came on Ryan Longwell's 35-yard field goal at the start of the fourth quarter.

Green Bay's defense held Cincinnati to 160 total yards. On offense, Raymont Harris, acquired after Dorsey Levens went down, ran for 76 yards in his first action since last December. The difference, of course, was Favre with 274 yards passing and the game's lone touchdown pass (23-35-274-1-1).

Green Bay 7 3 0 3 13 Cincinnati 3 3 0 0 6

Attendance: 56,346

Total Yards: GB 328 CINN 160



## <u>4-0!</u>

For the third straight time, the Packers defeated the Panthers. Carolina took a quick 10-0 lead, but Brett Favre continued his mastery over Carolina with five touchdown passes and 388 passing yards!

In the first half, Favre threw touchdowns to Mark Chmura (25 yards), Derrick Mayes (21 yards), and Tyrone Davis (20 yards). Carolina kept pace with a 16-yard pick-six by Eric Davis, and a touchdown pass by Kerry Collins to Raghib Ismail.

After a 20-20 first half, the Packers took control in the final 30 minutes fairly quickly. Two more Favre touchdown passes went to Derrick Mayes, who had five catches for 87 yards and three touchdowns. Touchdown #5, a 33-yard strike, sealed the deal 37-23 with 10 minutes to go.

The defense kept Carolina contained. "Reggie White and rookie Vonnie Holiday played havoc with Carolina QB Kerry Collins. Each sacked Collins twice, Holliday also being credited with two passes defensed and White with one pass defensed and one forced fumble." Green Bay stayed on top of the Panthers to the end, and they moved to 4-0.

Green Bay 6 14 10 7 37 Carolina 10 10 0 10 30

Attendance: 69,723
Total Yards: GB 487 CAR 230



**37** 10.5.1998

## **No Chance**

On a rainy Monday night, the undefeated Packers were brought down to earth by the undefeated Vikings. The loss also snapped Green Bay's home winning streak at 28 games.

Quarterback Brett Favre had an awful game (13-23-114-0-3.) He threw three interceptions, and the Packers never led in the game. After Green Bay tied it 10-10 on Roell Preston's 101-yard kickoff return, it was all Minnesota. Quarterback Randall Cunningham sliced and the Packers' defense for 442 yards – the most ever against the Packers to date. He threw four touchdown passes, two to sensational rookie wideout Randy Moss, who burned Green Bay for 190 yards on just five catches.

The Packers didn't score again until it was 37-10, with under five minutes left. Packers fan Ed Beale put it perfectly, "This was an old fashioned butt-kicking." 1

Minnesota 3 21 3 10 37 Green Bay 0 10 0 14 24

Attendance: 59,849

Total Yards: GB 306 MINN 545



**20** 

10.15.1998

27

After the bye, the Packers were upset on the artificial turf of the Silverdome. On a Thursday night, Brett Favre passed for 300 yards and two touchdowns. He also threw three interceptions, which the Lions turned into 10 points.

The Packers struck early with a 65-yard touchdown pass from Farve to Antonio Freeman. The Lions evened it up after they intercepted Brett Favre before halftime. After the break, Ryan Longwell's field goal gave the lead back to Green Bay 13-10. But Detroit took it from there.

Nine seconds into the fourth quarter, rookie quarterback Charlie Batch found another rookie, Germane Crowell, for a 68-yard touchdown. Crowell's amazing one-handed catch gave Detroit the lead 17-13. Midway through the fourth quarter, Barry Sanders ran left for a 73-yard touchdown to put the game away. The touchdown topped-off his great day: 155 yards rushing, 27 yards receiving, and one touchdown.

Trailing 27-13 with three seconds left, a second Favre to Freeman touchdown pass made the final score more respectable.

Green Bay 10 0 3 7 20 Detroit 0 10 0 17 27

Attendance: 77,932

Headine: "Nitschke bridge gets stuck open; traffic snarls" 1



**10** 10.25.1998

The Packers took a first-quarter lead and never looked back. With less than two minutes gone, Roell Preston zig-zigged his way through the Ravens on a 71-yard punt return for a 7-0 lead. Near the end of the first quarter, the Packers tried the no-huddle offense. They marched 69 yards, and Brett Favre's touchdown pass to Antonio Freeman touchdown extended the lead to 14-0. The no-huddle kept Baltimore's defense in check, and as Favre pointed out, "It's hard to call blitzes when you can't huddle up."1

After halftime, Favre and Robert Brooks made it 21-0 as Brooks made a diving catch for a 28-yard touchdown. "It was great to see

him come in, make some big catches, and also get in the end zone and do his famous jump in the stands (Lambeau Leap)."2

After the Ravens got on the board with a field goal, an interception by LeRoy Butler set up the clincher. Four plays later, Favre scored from the four-yard line (28-3). The defense allowed just 233 total yards, and the Ravens gained only 56 on the ground. The win pleased Holmgren as they stopped the two-game losing by running 18 more offensive plays than the Ravens.

Baltimore 0 0 3 7 10 Green Bay 14 0 14 0 28

Attendance: 59,860

Penalties: GB 9-70 BAL 12-98



Brett Favre and Antonio Freeman dominated this game. Favre threw for almost 300 yards with three touchdowns and three interceptions. Freeman caught seven of the passes for 193 yards and two scores.

Green Bay's defense also shined. They sacked San Francisco quarterback Steve Young nine times! Reggie White delivered three sacks, and the defense gave up just 266 yards.

Brett Favre was "awesome, and he was awful." 1 The Packers took control with Favre's two touchdown passes in the first quarter to Freeman and Robert Brooks. But quarterback Steve Young kept the Niners close. His touchdown pass to Jerry Rice and his own one-yard touchdown run made it 19-13 at the half.

The 49ers tied it up after Brett Favre was intercepted by Zach Bronson. Two plays later, it was 19-19 when Garrison Hearst sprinted 30-yards to the end zone. When Favre was picked-off again, the 49ers took the lead 22-19.

Green Bay responded and owned the fourth quarter! Ryan Longwell tied it with a field goal, and Favre heaved a 62-yard touchdown pass to Antonio Freeman for a 29-22 lead. An 11-yard touchdown run by Travis Jervey then put it away. "My hat is off to the Packers. They're still the team to beat," 2 said 49ers coach, Steve Mariucci.

 San Francisco
 6
 7
 9
 0
 22

 Green Bay
 16
 3
 0
 17
 36

Attendance: 59,794
Total Yards: GB 372 SF 266

Favre's second touchdown pass to Freeman moved him past Bart Starr to become Green Bay's all-time leading passer (24,720 yards).

"I have a picture in my office where I was standing at pregame warm-ups before a regular season game between us and the Packers in 1998. I'm playing catch with Steve Young, and suddenly some balls go flying by me. I look over, and Favre's on the other side of the field, and he's throwing balls at me. He comes over and says, "Steve, let's get a picture." So Vernon Biever took a picture of the three of us at the 50-yard line. It was just like old friends. It was crazy. It's a classic photo of the three of us. But that was Brett. Before a game, and he wants to get a photo. And the Packers beat us." 3

- 1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/2/98, Havel, p. 41
- 2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/2/98, Demovsky/Dougherty, p. 43
- 3 Facing the Green Bay Packers, Carlson, p. 138



**20** 11.9.1998

27

This was a disaster at the confluence of the three rivers. The final score doesn't do justice explaining how badly Green Bay was beaten on this Monday Night.

The Steelers scored the first five times they had the ball. They easily carved-up the Packers, and quarterback Kordell Stewart led the charge. In the first quarter, Stewart threw one touchdown pass and he ran for a score as well. "They basically took it to us and we were in a hole we couldn't come out of," said linebacker George Koonce.

The Steelers led 27-0 midway through the third quarter when the Packers found some traction. Twenty unanswered points made the final score respectable. One of the touchdowns was an 88-yard pick-six by cornerback Mike McKenzie. Ryan Longwell's 37-yard field goal cut Pittsburgh's lead to seven with 2:40 left, but that would be it. Fullback Jerome Bettis of the Steelers ran for 100 yards, and he came through when it counted in the fourth quarter.

Green Bay 0 0 3 17 20 Pittsburgh 14 10 3 0 27

Attendance: 60,507
Total Yards: GB 256 PITT 360



The Packers "played their most complete game of the season and throttled the New York Giants." 1 Brett Favre threw two touchdown passes, both to tight end Tyrone Davis. The first was the 200<sup>th</sup> touchdown pass of Favre's career.

Favre directed an offense that amassed 433 yards and controlled the ball for 39 minutes! The offensive line responded to a challenge from Holmgreen, and Darick Holmes became the first Packers running back this season to top 100 yards. He ran for 111 and scored one touchdown.

The defense completely shut down the Giants. The 127 yards they gave up were the fewest they've allowed since 1985 when they held Tampa Bay to 65.

 Green Bay
 7
 13
 10
 7
 37

 New York Giants
 0
 3
 0
 0
 3

Attendance: 76.272

<sup>1</sup> packershistory.net/1998Packers



11.22.1998

28

# **Division shift**

The Packers ended their three-game road trip with a dud that dropped them three games back in the division race. They were also swept by the Vikings for the first time since 1993.

The game didn't start well. On the fourth play from scrimmage, Brett Favre dropped the football, and the Vikings recovered to kick a field goal. Later in the quarter, Favre was intercepted by Jimmy Hitchcock, who took it to the house for a 10-0 lead.

After Gary Anderson's second field goal made 13-0, Favre got seven back with a touchdown pass to Tyrone Davis. But the Vikings retaliated with 24 seconds left in the half. Minnesota quarterback Randall Cunningham hit back with a touchdown pass to Cris Carter.

Still trailing 20-7 in the fourth quarter, Favre found a red-hot Tyrone Davis for a second touchdown that cut Minnesota's lead to 20-14. With 3:17 left, Cunningham and Randy Moss "put the Packers out of their misery and in all likelihood out of the NFC Central Division race" with a 49-yard touchdown.

Green Bay 0 7 0 7 14 Minnesota 10 10 0 8 28

Attendance: 64,471

Most Packer fans hadn't lost faith in their team. As Linda Robinson of Oneida put it, "We're going to do it. We may not win our division, but we'll make it through the Super Bowl. I have faith in my boys." 2 (

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/23/98, Demovsky, p. 34

<sup>2</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/23/98, Gorczyc, p. 1



**16** 11.29.1998

"Coming off the game last week, it was a big emotional letdown to go up and lose that game. (Today's) game was terribly hard to get up for,"1 said Santana Dotson admitted. It showed.

After three games on the road, the Packers came home and were 19.5 point favorites. But the Eagles (2-9) put up a good fight. After a scoreless first quarter, Ryan Longwell's field goal and Brett Favre's touchdown pass to William Henderson made it 10-0. Twenty-eight seconds before the half, quarterback Koy Detmer's touchdown pass to Jeff Graham narrowed it to 10-6.

Right out of the locker room, the Eagles drove 78 yards in 13 plays to go in front 13-10. They scored on Detmer's second touchdown to Graham. "After the score, Detmer taunted the Packers' sideline. Bad move." In five plays, Brett Favre, had the Packers on Philly's 33. He hit Antonio Freeman on a crossing pattern that went the distance to put them back on top 17-13.

After Favre was intercepted, the defense came up big-time and held the Eagles to a field goal. On the ensuing drive, Green Bay put it away when Darick Holmes ate up the clock and gained with 41 of the drive's 73 yards. William Henderson's touchdown run clinched it with three minutes left. For the game, Holmes ran for 163 yards, and he caught five passes for 53. Quite a day!

Philadelphia 0 6 7 3 16 Green Bay 0 10 7 7 24

Attendance: 59,862

"A Burlington man banged a portable seat on his stadium seat until he attracted attention, then dropped his pants at Lambeau Field. 'He was entertaining a group in the skyboxes,'"3 said Capt. Bruce Tilkens.

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/30/98, Dougherty, p. 30

<sup>2</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/30/98, p. 36

<sup>3</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/30/98, p. 9

Not a good start to start the month of December. In their first game at new Raymond James Stadium on a Monday night, the Packers played a game they'd rather forget. For injuries alone, they wish they hadn't played. Frank Winters and Bill Schroeder were lost for the season, and three other receivers left with hamstring injuries.

Brett Favre played well (29-41-260-2-0) despite being chased and hit all day. He was sacked eight times. Though defensive tackle Warren Sapp got to Favre just once, he was satisfied. "We wanted to make Brett Favre uncomfortable," 1 and we did.

A field goal gave the Packers a 3-0 lead, but it was all Tampa Bay from there. Quarterback Trent Dilfer connected on two long touchdown passes to Jacquez Green (64 yards), and Bert Emanuel (62 yards). Tampa led at halftime, 14-6.

In the third quarter, the "Bays" traded field goals before a Favre to Mark Chmura touchdown pass in the fourth quarter narrowed the Tampa lead to 17-15 (after the two-point conversion failed). On Green Bay's next series, receiver Derrick Mayes fumbled, and Tampa Bay recovered near midfield. They went 53 yards, and Dilfer ran it in from the six. With 2:20 left, Favre found Chmura again, but Tampa Bay held on.

With the loss, Green Bay missed a chance to clinch a wild card berth in the postseason.

Green Bay 3 3 3 13 22 Tampa Bay 7 7 3 7 24

Attendance: 65,497



20 12.13.1998

# **Injuries no excuse**

Never before had Green Bay and Chicago met for the first time this late in the season. They played twice in the last three weeks! This was also Edgar Bennett's return to Lambeau Field after signing as a free agent with the Bears.

In a quiet first half, Chicago scored the first time they had the ball. Ryan Longwell's three field goals gave Green Bay a 9-7 lead, but a pick-six by Chicago's Walt Harris put the Bears in front 13-9 at the half.

The return of Dorsey Levens energized Green Bay's offense. He ran for 105 yards and added 28 more on three catches. In the second half, Brett Favre was unfazed by the earlier interception. He directed two touchdown drives with Mark Chmura and Antonio Freeman catching the touchdowns. Favre was 11 of 15 on the drives, and Green Bay had regained control 23-13.

After a fourth field goal by Longwell, the Bears persisted, and they cut the lead back six on a Glyn Milburn's 94-yard kickoff return. With Chicago looking for more on in the final minutes, consecutive sacks by Billy Lyon, Reggie White, and Santana Dotson put the Bears away.

 Chicago
 7
 6
 0
 7
 20

 Green Bay
 3
 6
 7
 10
 26

Attendance: 59,813

Former Packer Edgar Bennett, "got a loud ovation afterward from the Lambeau Field crowd, a gesture he said words could not describe. 'It was just a phenomenal feeling. The fans here in Green Bay are unbelievable." 1



22 12.20.1998

This was Reggie White's last game at Lambeau Field. Green Bay gave him a fitting send-off with a temperature of -1 with the wind chill! The defense stood tall, especially against the run as running back Eddie George did little with 30 yards on 15 carries.

Brett Favre and the Packers took control early. Favre threw three first-half touchdown passes. The barrage began with only 1:38 gone in the game. All three touchdowns went to Antonio Freeman, who scored from 57, 68, and 32 yards away! At halftime, the Packers led 21-7.

Two more touchdowns passes by Tennessee quarterback Steve McNair sparked a comeback in the second half. The Packers continued to move the ball, however, and three second-half field goals by Ryan Longwell held off Tennessee.

Tennessee 0 7 7 8 22 Green Bay 14 7 3 6 30

Attendance: 59,888

)

Total Yards: GB 362 TENN 341

After the game, Reggie White, "took a victory lap around the field after the Packers beat the Tennessee Oilers. 'I didn't want to just walk off the field and not greet everybody,' said White." 1



## **Last second woes**

Déjà vu? Similar to two weeks ago, the Bears had the ball in Packers territory in the final minutes, but they could not score. With 54 seconds left and the ball on Green Bay's 33, safety LeRoy Butler blitzed and slammed untouched into quarterback Steve Stenstrom. Down went Stenstrom, and out came the ball which Butler recovered to finish off the surging Bears.

Green Bay's defense was aggressive from start to finish. They started the game with a tipped pass by Reggie White that defensive end Keith McKenzie caught and returned 28 yards for a 7-0 lead. The Bears returned the favor with an interception by linebacker a Andre Collins that led to a touchdown. By halftime, Chicago led 10-7.

Green Bay opened the second half with a 13-play scoring drive. A Brett Favre to Antonio Freeman touchdown pass made it 13-10. When the extra-point went wide, a Bears field goal tied it at 13. Early in the fourth quarter, an 18-yard field goal by Ryan Longwell proved to be the winner.

This was Green Bay's 10<sup>th</sup> straight win over the Bears, and it set-up a wild card game with the 49ers. "Our offense has to be more effective for us to win in the playoffs," said Mike Holmgren after the game.

Green Bay 7 0 6 3 16 Chicago 7 3 3 0 13

Attendance: 58,393

#### **NFC Wild Card Game**



This is the most stunning loss in Green Bay's postseason history. It also would be a painful final game for both Mike Holmgren and Reggie White. Holmgren left for Seattle, and White retired.

The 49ers took a 7-3 lead on Steve Young's touchdown to tight end Greg Clark. The Packers snapped back on their next series with Brett Favre's first touchdown pass to Antonio Freeman for a 10-7 lead. Before halftime with the game 10 all, linebacker George Koonce intercepted Steve Young. Eight plays later, Dorsey Levens scored for 17-10 lead at intermission.

In the third quarter, linebacker Lee Woodall intercepted Brett Favre deep in Green Bay territory. A second Steve Young to Greg Clark touchdown pass tied the game at 17. Three field goals followed, two by the 49ers, for a 23-20 lead with 6:12 left in the game. Favre was intercepted again, but the defense forced a three-and-out! An 89-yard drive by Green Bay capped off by a great catch by Antonio Freeman from Favre, made it a 27-23 Packers lead with 1:55 left!

On the fifth play of the 49ers final drive, Jerry Rice was ruled down before his fumble was recovered by Green Bay. The drive continued, and two plays later with 0:08 left from the 25-yard line, Steve Young threw a bullet down the middle of the field to Terrell Owens. Owens caught the pass in front of two Packers and he landed on the goal line. A split-second after the catch, hits by Darren Sharper and Pat Terrell dropped Owens in the end zone, but failed to dislodge the ball. Season over.

Green Bay 3 14 0 10 27 San Francisco 7 3 10 10 30

Attendance: 66,506



# 1998 Team Statistics

## **FINAL STANDINGS** – NFC Central Division

	W	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>
Minnesota	15	1	0
Green Bay	11	5	0
Tampa Bay	8	8	0
Detroit	5	11	0
Chicago	4	12	0

## **Team Leaders**

Passing Favre
Receiving Freeman
Rushing Holmes
Scoring Longwell
Interceptions Williams
Sacks White

### All-Pro

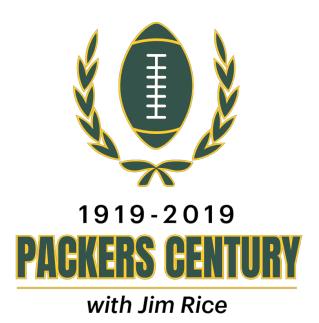
Butler Safety
Freeman Wide Receiver
Jervey Special Teams
Preston Kick Returner
White Defensive End

## **Notable Draft Choices** (Round, Position)

Vonnie Holiday (1, DT) Roosevelt Blackmon (4, CB) Corey Bradford (5, WR) Scott McGarrahan (6a, S) Matt Hasselback (6b, QB)

# **Supplemental Draft** (Round, Position)

Mike Wahl (2, T)



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