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1919-2019

BY JIM RICE

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- On January 8th, Mike Holmgren resigned. Ray Rhodes replaced him on January 11th. Rhodes had been the team's defensive coordinator in 1992-93.
- Green Bay began discussions about building a new stadium or renovating Lambeau Field.
- The Packers drafted three defensive backs to counter Randy Moss of the Vikings. Despite the moves, the defense slipped further, and they still could not stop Moss.
- 78,184 saw the Packers play a preseason game at Camp Randall Stadium in Madison, Wisconsin.
- Early season comebacks were spectacular, but nothing came easy in 1999. The offense continued to fall from its high point in 1996.
- After the last game, Ray Rhodes was fired by Ron Wolf.



Ray Rhodes won his first game as head coach. The opener was dominated by Brett Favre, who threw for 333 yards, four touchdowns, three interceptions. He started it all with a touchdown to Bill Schroeder, but by halftime, Oakland led 10-7.

Early in the third quarter, Favre reinjured both his right thumb and hand that he first hurt in August. "It looked like somebody ran it over with a car,"1 said, LeRoy Butler. Favre stayed in the game and threw a touchdown pass to Antonio Freeman later in the same drive to retake the lead 14-10. Favre played the rest of the game.

Quarterback Rich Gannon bought the Raiders back on their next two possessions. Touchdown runs by Tyronne Wheatley, and Randy Jordan put them back in the lead 24-14 four minutes into the fouth quarter. In the final 11 minutes, an injured Brett Favre snatched victory from defeat by courageously leading two touchdown drives. He went 12 for 17 on the two drives, and Corey Bradford caught the first touchdown. With 11 seconds left in the game, Favre hit tight end Jeff Thomason for the winner!

Afterward, Favre was too emotional to answer questions from reporters. Trying to compose himself at the podium, bowing his head and pulling his cap down, he couldn't. "Sorry, fellas,"² he said as he left.

Oakland	3	7	7	7	24
Green Bay	7	0	7	14	28
Attendance:	59,87	2			

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/13/99, Havel, p. 35

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/13/99, Havel, p. 35





Silverdome Jinx?

Green Bay put up 437 yards, but the offense was inconsistent. Mark Chmura left the game with an injured neck, and Brett Favre's thumb hampered him in this game, and for the rest of the season.

Fortunately, the Packers didn't have to worry about Barry Sanders who had surprisingly retired. But quarterback Charlie Batch did the damage with two touchdown passes to put the Lions in front 14-6 at halftime.

Two turnovers by Favre kept the Packers off the scoreboard in the third quarter. It stayed 14-6 until three seconds into the fourth. The Lions snapped the ball out of the end zone for a safety (14-8), and the resulting punt gave Green Bay good field position. Levens, who ran over the Lions all day for 153 yards, finished the short drive with a two-yard plunge for a 15-14 lead with 13 minutes remaining.

On the ensuing kickoff, Terry Fair returned it 92 yards to Green Bay's eight-yard line. Three plays later, Batch scored on the ground to take the lead for good 20-15. This was the Packers' sixth loss in their last seven visits to the Silverdome.

Green Bay	3	3	0	9	15
Detroit	0	14	0	9	23
Attendance:	76,20)2			



4th quarter magic

This was Brett Favre's 12th fourth-quarter comeback of his career. His time, he teamed-up with Corey Bradford to pull it off in the last 12 seconds!

Green Bay's only touchdown in a 10-10 first half came on a pick-six by rookie cornerback Antuan Edwards. After trading field goals in the third-quarter, Longwell kicked another in the fourth quarter with 4:25 left. With Minnesota now trailing 16-13, quarterback Randall Cunningham stepped up and appeared to put the game away. With 1:56 left, Cunningham and Randy Moss connected for only the second time in the game for a touchdown that put Minnesota back in front 20-16.

With their backs against the wall, the Packers went 77 yards n seven plays. Favre went five for six on the drive before he lofted the 23-yard winner to Corey Bradford! Bradford sped right past cornerback Jimmy Hitchcock, who bit on Favre's pump fake.

Emotions ran rampant after the dramatic finish. A drained Brett Favre, "collapsed onto a sideline bench shortly after throwing the final pass and was helped off the field by medical staff."1

Minnesota	7	3	3	7	20
Green Bay	0	10	3	10	23
Attendance:	59868	3			

"My son and I were sure they were going to win," said Gloris Sarandos of Milwaukee. "It was money in the bank," said her son Steven Sarandos. "It's just Minnesota. They ain't nothing." 2

1 packershistory.net/1999Packers

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/27/99, Cole, p. 1



After the bye week, the Packers returned and looked ready to roll with 450 total yards. Brett Favre put together 390 yards passing with two touchdown passes! He hurt his right thumb three different times during the game, and he was sacked five times, twice by tackle Warren Sapp. After Sapp's second sack in the fourth quarter, "he stood face-to-face with Favre and exchanged had butts and grins."1

The game opened and closed with touchdown passes from Brett Favre to Antonio Freeman (5-157-2). The Packers took a 10-0 lead in the first seven minutes, but Tampa tied it at 13-13 before halftime. In the second half, three field goals, two by Ryan Longwell, put Green Bay back in front 19-16. With six minutes left in the game, the Bucs marched 64 yards, and Mike Alstott's 22-yard touchdown run made it 23-19 with 1:45 to go.

After the kickoff, the Packers went 73 yards in six plays. With Favre in the shotgun, a 42-yard pass to Bill Schroeder set up another great finish. Favre went to Freeman for the win, and they connected on a 21-yard touchdown pass with 1:05 left!

Tampa Bay	0	13	0	10	23
Green Bay	10	3	3	10	26
Attendance:	59,868	3			

Reggie White returned for this game to celebrate his jersey being retired, and Brett Favre's birthday!

Mike Alstott, Tampa Bay: "And I'll always remember Packer fans. It's a great fan base, and it was always such a great atmosphere. We'd come over on the bus on game day and go through those neighborhoods, and then you'd see Lambeau Field rise up. That really impressed a lot of the new guys when they first saw that. And you see those neighborhoods where people charged \$20 to park on the front lawns. I thought that was pretty cool."2

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/11/99, Christopher, p. 35 2 Facing the Green Bay Packers, Carlson, p. 109



In a late afternoon game in the mountains, Brett Favre had one of the more forgettable games of his career. Against the 1-4 Broncos, he completed just seven passes for 120 yards and three interceptions. He did not throw a touchdown.

After a quiet, 3-3 first half, Denver's offense caught fire even though they did not have Terrell Davis or Shannon Sharpe. They were dominant as quarterback Brian Griese got into a rhythm and threw two touchdown passes to Ed McCaffery. The second touchdown, midway in the third quarter, was a 78-yard bomb that broke a 10-10 tie. The Packers never recovered, and the Broncos went on to score 14 more.

For the game, the Packers had the ball for only 14:46. They ran for just 21 yards, five first downs, and generated 133 net yards. "As long as I've been here, this is the worst we've played,"1 was General Manager Ron Wolf's frank assessment.

Green Bay	0	3	7	0	10
Denver	3	0	21	7	31
Attendance:	73,35	2			
Total Yards: GB	133 DI	EN 514			

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/18/99, Dougherty, p. 33



<u>4-2</u>

In their best game of the season, the Packers hammered the Chargers. The defense had no trouble with first-place San Diego, and they gave up just 76 yards rushing. New blitz packages designed for LeRoy Butler and Brian Williams kept quarterbacks Erik Kramer and Jim Harbaugh on the run. They were sacked three times, and they threw six interceptions!

For Green Bay, Brett Favre threw three touchdown passes to William Henderson, Bill Schroeder, and Antonio Freeman. Dorsey Levens led the backfield with 102 total yards and one touchdown. After last week's blowout, "this was a character win"1 said, LeRoy Butler. The Packers had bounced back nicely.

Green Bay	7	7	14	3	31
San Diego	0	3	0	0	3
Attendance:	68,27	4			

"There was a huge contingent of Packer fans, numbering perhaps 20,000. 'This felt like a home game today,' said LeRoy Butler." 2

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/25/99, Dougherty, p. 34 2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1025/99, p. 35



<u>Ouch</u>

Former coach Mike Holmgren came back to Green Bay on a Monday night and pounded the Packers in front of a national television audience. Playing their former coach, the Packers were uncomfortable. That's one plausible explanation for theirseven turnovers, 10 penalties, one ejection, and 25 incomplete passes.

Another expanation was Seattle's defense. Brett Favre was being hit, chased, and sacked so often he was visibly uncomfortable most of the game. He completed just 16 passes, and Mike Holmgren's star pupil, coughed-up four interceptions and two fumbles.

It looked bleak from the start for Green Bay. Shawn Springs returned a blocked punt 61 yards for a touchdown for a 7-0 Seattle lead. Favre's 74-yard touchdown to Corey Bradford tied it, but not for long. The Seahawks scored the next 20 points including quarterback John Kitna's touchdown passes to Derrick Mayes and Sean Dawkins.

The Packers record slipped to 4-3. It was "their second dismal performance in three weeks,"1 and more than a few eyebrows were raised about the performance.

Seattle	7	7	7	6	27
Green Bay	0	7	0	0	7
Attendance	59,86	9			

"A standing ovation. That's how Green Bay Packers fans welcomed former coach Mike Holmgren back to Titletown." 1

"Former Packers guard Fuzzy Thurston is moving to Green Bay. Moving his bar, that is. On Wednesday, December 1, Fuzzy's will open at 2511 W. Mason Street." 2

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/1/1999, Stur, p. 1 2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/2/1999, Bruss, p. 1



Six days before this game, Walter Payton passed away. Somehow the Bears kept it together and rallied to beat the Green Bay for the first time since 1993.

This one got away from Green Bay. Brett Favre's second-quarter touchdown pass to Tyronne Davis gave them a 10-7 halftime lead. Late in the third quarter, a touchdown pass by back-up quarterback Jim Miller put the Bears in front 14-10. Miller replaced Cade McNown, who was hurt early in the first quarter.

Early in the fourth quarter, Ryan Longwell cut it to 14-13. With 3:19 left in the game, the Packers got the ball back. Favre went six for seven on a 73-yard drive that stalled at the 11-yard line. In the final seconds, the Packers ran three straight running plays to set up the field goal try rather trying for the end zone. Longwell's 28-yard kick was blocked by big defensive tackle Bryan Robinson as time expired.

This game was also Brett Favre's 117th consecutive start. He broke Ron Jaworski's quarterback record, and "Jaws" was on hand to congratulate him.

Chicago	7	0	7	0	14
Green Bay	3	7	0	3	13
Attendance:	59,86	57			

First time since 1991 that the Packers lost back-to-back games at home.

Headline: "Harlan urges stadium action, Packers President says team slipping behind financially" 1

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/8/1999, Berghaus, p. 1



<u>4-5</u>

The Packers lost for the fourth time in five games and for the eighth straight time in Dallas. Even though the Cowboys played without quarterback Troy Aikman, running back Emmitt Smith and wide receiver Michael Irvin, they still handled the Packers easily. Back-up quarterback Jason Garrett threw touchdown passes to David LaFleur and Rocket Ismail, and the Cowboys never trailed.

For the first 45 minutes, Green Bay managed only one Ryan Longwell field goal. They couldn't run the ball, and Brett Favre threw 50 passes (26-50-260-1-2).

With Dallas in front 20-3 with eight minutes left in the game, Favre and Antonio Freeman hooked up for a 28-yard touchdown to make it 20-10. Green Bay crept to within seven on Ryan Longwell's second field goal with 1:21. When they recovered the onside kick, the Packers got to Dallas' 25-yard line. With 21 seconds left, Favre was intercepted by former Packer George Teague, who returned it 95 yards to end it. General Manager Ron Wolf was miffed, "Somehow we have to figure out how to score. It's another game where we scored seven points, our offense. Ludicrous."1

Green Bay	0	3	0	10	13
Dallas	7	3	7	10	27
Attendance:	64,63	34			

Rushing Yards: GB 40 DAL 149

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/15/1999, Dougherty, p. 30



The Packers split the season series with Detroit as Brett Favre "played better than he has all season"1 with 309 yards passing and one touchdown. His thumb was much better, and it showed with exuberance both on and off the field. Dorsey Levens ran for a first-half touchdown, and he caught 10 passes for 99 yards!

The game belonged to the Lions early, and they held the lead in the first half behind quarterback Gus Frerotte. With his team trailing 17-12, Favre got Green Bay's offense rolling in the third quarter. Corey Bradford's one-handed touchdown catch gave them a 20-17 lead – after a two-point conversion – also Favre to Bradford!

After the touchdown, Favre received an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for his second throat-slitting gesture to cornerback Robert Bailey. Bailey had taunted the Packers earlier in the game. Two more Ryan Longwell field goals (he kicked four) put it away as the defense shut out the Lions in the second half.

As far as the immediate future is concerned, the victory will either be a "catalyst for a strong finish or the basis for a shortlived reprieve."²

Detroit	7	10	0	0	17
Green Bay	0	12	11	3	26
Attendance:	59,86	9			
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Penalties: GB 10-90 DET 8-119

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/22/1999, p. 1

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/22/1999, Havel, p. 36



Brett's back!

On Monday Night Football, the struggling 49ers (2-7) took a 3-0 lead at the start of the second quarter. It was all Green Bay from that point on as Brett Favre connected with nine different receivers for 236 yards and two touchdowns!

Favre's thumb looked completely healed as he tore apart the 49ers defense with pinpoint passes, both long and short. Two big penalties on San Francisco kept early drives alive that Favre converted into points. The first led to his touchdown pass to Corey Bradford and the second to Ryan Longwell field goal.

Late in the third quarter, Tyrone Davis caught Favre's second touchdown pass that gave Green Bay a comfortable two-touchdown lead, 17-3. The loss was San Francisco's seventh straight.

Green Bay	0	10	7	3	20
San Francisco	0	3	0	0	3
Attendance: 6	8,30)4			



Three in a row felt awfully good, but on a cold, wet December day in Chicago, it didn't start out that way. Six minutes in, linebacker Barry Minter intercepted Brett Favre and went 25 yards for a touchdown. After a field goal, it was 10-0 Bears.

Favre rebounded, and the Packers exploded in the second quarter. Bill Schroeder caught Favre's only touchdown pass of the game, and William Henderson's touchdown run gave the Packers a 14-10 edge. Two minutes later, defensive end Keith McKenzie picked up a fumble by Chicago punter Todd Sauerbrun and lumbered 45 yards for a 21-13 halftime lead!

The Bears made it 21-19 on a touchdown run by Curtis Enis. In the fourth quarter, Green Bay rookie back De'Mond Parker ran for two touchdowns to put it away. Parker ran for a career-best 113 yards.

Green Bay	0	21	0	14	35
Chicago	7	6	6	0	19
Attendance:	66,94	4			

For the eighth straight season, Favre passed for 3,000+ yards.

"Noting the Green Bay Packers' history as a publicly-owned team, Packers President Bob Harlan and several state legislators have recommended a referendum on public financing for a new stadium or renovating Lambeau Field." 1

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/6/1999, p. 1



BIG Loss

This was the first home loss in December for the Packers since 1993. Eighty passes were thrown on the frozen tundra, and the lead changed hands 10 times!

Green Bay could not slow down Carolina quarterback Steve Beuerlein. Without a running game (13 yards), it all fell on Beuerlein. He rose to the occasion by picking apart Green Bay's secondary for 373 yards and three touchdowns. He also scored the winning touchdown on a five-yard run as time expired.

For the Packers, Brett Favre threw for 303 yards and touchdown passes to Antonio Freeman and rookie Donald Driver. On defense, other than Mike McKenzie's first-quarter pick-six, Carolina, "scored at will,"1 said a disappointed Coach Ray Rhodes. Later, Rhodes was heavily criticized for not calling a timeout on Carolina's winning drive with 45 seconds left. Doing so, would have given Favre more time.

The loss critically damaged Green Bay's postseason chances.

Carolina	3	7	14	9	33		
Green Bay	7	7	7	10	31		
Attendance: 59,869							
Turnovers: GB 4	4 CAR 2	2					

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/13/1999, Dougherty, p. 1



On Monday Night Football, Randy Moss led the Vikings over the Packers. Moss caught five passes for 131 yards and two touchdowns. The first, a 57-yard bomb, tied the game in the second quarter, and the second gave the Vikings the lead briefly in the third quarter.

The Packers enjoyed a 13-10 advantage at halftime on a Dorsey Levens touchdown run and two field goals. After Moss put Minnesota back in front 17-13 late in the third quarter, a successful faked field goal by the Packers took back the lead. Back-up quarterback Matt Hasselback, the holder, threw a nine-yard touchdown pass to Jeff Thomason for a 20-17 lead with 12 minutes still remaining.

With the game on the line, Green Bay's defense faltered. It took Jeff George just eight plays to put the Vikings back on top. Randy Moss' catch right down the middle of the field put the ball on the one-yard line with 8:58 to go. Leroy Hoard's touchdown run proved to be enough when Favre was intercepted in the end zone on Green Bay's final drive.

Green Bay	0	13	0	7	20
Minnesota	0	10	7	7	24
Attendance:	64,20	3			



With the defeat, the Packers lost control of their postseason destiny. Tampa Bay shut down Green Bay's ground game (12 yards), and they intercepted Brett Favre twice.

The Packers' only touchdown came in the first half on a Brett Favre to Dorsey Levens connection. Until the second half, Tampa Bay's only points came from kicker Martin Gramatica who drilled three field goals.

The Packers led 10-9 at halftime, but they would "wilt in the second half for the third straight week."¹ They were shut out after halftime, while Tampa scored on its first series to retake the lead for good 16-10.

Green Bay	0	10	0	0	10
Tampa Bay	3	6	7	13	29
Attendance:	65,27	3			

Mike Alstott, Tampa Bay Buccaneers: "There's no question that playing against some of those great Packers teams helped us grow as a team. We grew up awful fast because we had to. It was a great division we played in, and we had to grow up if we wanted to be competitive."₂

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/27/1999, Dougherty, p. 35 2 Facing the Green Bay Packers, Carlson, p. 159



It was still possible for the Packers to squeeze into the postseason. First, they needed to defeat Arizona* and hope the Giants would beat Dallas.

The Packers won, but so did Dallas. The season ended with Brett Favre throwing for 311 yards and two touchdowns. Dorsey Levens ran for four touchdowns and gained 146 yards overall. Both offenses were unstoppable, and Green Bay barely outgained Arizona 475-464.

Green Bay finished 8-8. "As a team, we didn't get this thing done this year. I will be the last to try to make any excuses for anything,"1 said Coach Rhodes.

Arizona	0	3	7	14	24	
Green Bay	7	7	14	21	49	
Attendance	: 59,81	8				
T 00.4.47.4						

Turnovers: GB 1 AZ 4

Ron Wolf: What we need "is a well disciplined, tough, hard-nosed football team. That is the way you are successful in this business. We don't have that here." 2

* "The logjam for the sixth playoff spot created a situation in which the Carolina Panthers (to make the postseason instead of the Packers) needed to beat the New Orleans by 18 more points than the Packers beat the Cardinals. The victory by Dallas in a late-afternoon game ultimately made these exertions pointless, but the Packers responded to this remote challenge by scoring three fourth-quarter touchdowns." 3

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/4/2000, p. 19

2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/4/2000, p. 1

3 http://archive.jsonline.com/sports/packers/307233151.html/



1999 Team Statistics

PROJECT

1919-2019

PACKERS CENTURY FINAL STANDINGS – NFC Central Division

_		W	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>
	Tampa Bay	11	5	0
	Minnesota	10	6	0
	Detroit	8	8	0
	Green Bay	8	8	0
	Chicago	6	10	0

Team Leaders

Passing Favre Receiving Freeman Rushing Levens Scoring Longwell Interceptions M. McKenzie Sacks K. McKenzie

<u>All-Pro</u>

Winters Center

Notable Draft Choices (Round, Position)

Antuan Edwards (1, CB) Fred Vinson (2, CB) Mike McKenzie (3a, CB) Cletidus Hunt (3b, S) Deond Parker (5a, RB) Donald Driver (7b, WR)



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