

# THE PREMITY

ALL THE GAMES. ALL THE STORIES.

PROJECT

1919-2019

BY JIM RICE

packerscentury.com



#### 2001

Record: 12-4-0 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

**Coach: Mike Sherman** 

1919-2019

- Stadium Renovation: "Work begins in January, but the official groundbreaking is delayed until May 19th in deference to warmer weather. As part of the ceremonies, 872 people will form a semicircle from the south end zone to the 50-yard line for a group hug, coming just short of a world record for grouphug participants but raising almost \$30,000 for Special Olympics."1
- On June 1<sup>st</sup>, Ron Wolf stepped down as General Manager.
   President Bob Harlan gave those responsibilities to coach Mike Sherman.
- The team had a top-five ranking on both offense and defense, and they went undefeated in the NFC Central.
- Brett Favre and Ahman Green led the offense. Favre threw 32 touchdowns and 15 interceptions. In February, Favre signed a lifetime contract with the Packers.
- Ahman Green, for the second straight season, led the team in rushing and pass receptions.
- The Packers made the playoffs for the first time since 1998.



6 28 9.9.2001

When talks broke down between the NFL and the union representing the referees, replacement officials worked this game.

The Packers "put on a show in the first quarter unlike any before." 1 They gained 223 yards in 15 minutes. They opened the season with 21 points in the first quarter, which had only been done once before in an opener – 9/15/40.

Green Bay led 21-0 after only 10 minutes. Big plays jump-started the offense. Ahman Green scored twice on long touchdown runs (31 and 83 yards), and Brett Favre and Bill Schroeder hooked up for a 23-yard score. Schroeder led Packer receivers with 104 yards and one touchdown.

The Packers defense gave up just two field goals. They held them to 56 yards on the ground, intercepted two passes, and sacked quarterback Charlie Batch seven times. KGB had three of those sacks, and Green Bay outgained Detroit 424-288.

Detroit 3 3 0 0 6 Green Bay 21 0 7 0 28

Attendance: 59,523

Scott Mitchell, Detroit Lions: "Lambeau was far and away my favorite place to play. It's located right in a neighborhood. There are all these houses, and then all of a sudden up pops this massive stadium." 2

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/10/01, Gozka, p. 19

<sup>2</sup> Facing the Green Bay Packers, Carlson, p. 120



**0** 9.24.2001

Thirteen days after September 11th, pro football resumed on a Monday night in Green Bay. In a moving, pre-game tribute to the nation, Packers linebacker and Air Force reservist Chris Gizzi sprinted out of the tunnel holding an American flag to the chants of "USA! USA!"

Green Bay had no trouble with Washington. The Redskins generated just 137 total yards as quarterback Jeff George was sacked five times. and the 'Skins turned the ball over three times.

Brett Favre opened the scoring with a touchdown pass to Antonio Freeman. In the second half, he threw two more to Bill Schroeder and Bubba Franks. Ahman Green ran over and around the Redskins for 116 yards, and he caught six passes for another 30. By any measure, a shutout was a great sign for the defense. After the game, Sherman remarked, "When you win convincingly like we did, I think we did take a step."1

Washington 0 0 0 0 0 Green Bay 7 3 10 17 37

Attendance: 59,771

"I was seven years old and knew nothing about the game, but I was at Lambeau field with my dad for Brett Favre's first preseason game with the Packers (8/8/92). My memories of that game are faint, but since that day, I have gone from an admiring child to an adult. To this day, when I watch him play, I am taken back to that warm August afternoon, and feel like a kid again." 2

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/25/01, Dougherty, p. 2

<sup>2</sup> Brett Favre: A Packer Fan's Tribute, Kertscher, p. 144



**28** 9.30.2001

7

#### 3-0

One minute into the second quarter, Carolina took a 7-0 lead on a Wesley Walls touchdown catch. After that, it was Green Bay's game. On very muddy turf that was being torn apart on every play, the Packers scored the next 28 points.

The Packers started with two Ryan Longwell field goals before halftime. Brett Favre, who threw two first-half interceptions, made amends after the break with two touchdowns passes. He had lots of help on the third quarter from Steve Smith of the Panthers fumbled the ball back to Green Bay on back-to-back kickoffs! Favre capitalized on both with his two touchdowns to Bill Schroeder and Bubba Franks for a 21-7 lead.

Favre threw for 308 yards, and he finished the scoring in the fourth quarter with a five-yard toss to Corey Bradford. "The guys made some plays. The bottom line is, in the second half, we made plays when we had to," Favre said later. The Packers outgained the Panthers 383-169, and the defense held them to just nine first downs!

Green Bay 0 6 15 7 28 Carolina 0 7 0 0 7

Attendance: 73,120

On a blistering hot day – 114 degrees on the field – Brett Favre's first pass was intercepted by Donnie Abraham. Though Tampa Bay couldn't capitalize, they picked-off another in the second quarter. Linebacker Shelton Quarles returned the interception 98 yards for a touchdown. Later in the quarter, Favre evened it up with a 67-yard touchdown strike to Bill Schroeder.

A field goal by Ryan Longwell made it 10-7 in the third quarter. Midway through the fourth quarter, after a costly penalty on Bill Schroeder for a late hit, the Buccaneers took over. Quarterback Brad Johnson marched the Vikings 95 yards. On the eighth play of the drive, Mike Alstott went 39 yards around left end to score with 6:45 to go. It proved to be enough as Favre threw his third interception on Green Bay's next series.

Green Bay 0 7 3 0 10 Tampa Bay 0 7 0 7 14

Attendance: 65,510
Total Yards: GB 322 TB 253

1919-2019

"To post questions for our Packers experts online and for our daily Web-only columns, visit Packers news @ greenbaypressgazette.com." 1



**23** 10.14.2001

#### **Bounce back win!**

Green Bay won behind an outstanding game from Brett Favre and the defense. Favre threw three touchdown passes, and the defense held the Ravens to 10 points until the final three minutes.

After an early fumble by Ahman Green, the Ravens opened the scoring with an 18-yard touchdown pass by Elvis Grbac to Travis Taylor. The Packers scored the next 17 points before a Ravens field goal briefly interrupted their march to a 31-10 lead!

Favre led touchdown drives of 59, 74, 80, and 82 yards. He threw for 337 yards against Baltimore's highly-rated defense. Antonio Freeman topped all receivers with nine catches for 138 yards and a touchdown. "Those guys made some phenomenal catches downfield today," 1 said a happy Favre who moved past Bart Starr as the winningest quarterback in Packers' history with 95 wins.

Baltimore 7 0 3 13 23 Green Bay 0 17 7 7 31

Attendance: 59,866

"The best thing I remember about Favre is that he saved me from gutting my entire house. Every time they lost, I ripped out a wall on the second floor. With Favre, they finally started winning, and I finished the upstairs remodeling." 2

<sup>2</sup> Brett Favre: A Packer Fan's Tribute, Kertscher, p. 145



**13** 10.21.2001 **35** 

The Packers never had a chance. "The Vikings drubbed the dreadful-looking division leaders" with a powerful offensive performance. They outgained Green Bay (377-234), and they racked up 23 first downs compared to only 10 for the Pack.

Midway through the first quarter, the Vikings took a 7-0 lead on a 43-yard touchdown bomb from quarterback Dante Culpepper to Cris Carter. Twenty-two seconds later, Brett Favre threw a pick-six to middle linebacker Kailee Wong. After being shut out in the first half, Favre threw his first touchdown pass in the third quarter to Bubba Franks. The Packers didn't score again until there were 45 seconds left in the game.

Defensively, Green Bay didn't have an answer for Minnesota. With an injured LeRoy Butler leaving the game in the second quarter, Green Bay struggled to stop the Vikings. Linebacker Bernardo Harris summed it up with, "Whatever we called, they called something and executed it better than we did."

Green Bay 0 0 7 6 13 Minnesota 0 20 0 15 35

Attendance: 64,16

On their final series with 45 seconds left, Favre hurt his wrist and elbow.

After their bye week, a fourth-quarter comeback gave Green Bay the game. A strong defensive effort led the way with seven sacks, and the Buccaneers were held to 61 yards rushing and 197 yards overall.

Green Bay took a 7-0 lead on a 21-yard touchdown pass from Brett Favre to Antonio Freeman. They had trouble holding onto the football, however, and they turned it over three times. Tampa Bay turned two interceptions and a fumble recovery into 17 unanswered points.

Late in the third quarter, Ahman Green made up for an earlier fumble with a 63-yard dash to the end zone. It cut the deficit to three, 17-14. When the defense held the Bucs to a Martin Gramatica field goal with seven minutes left, it stayed a one-score game. Those points came in spectacular fashion with three minutes left on Allen Rossum's 55-yard punt return!

"Good riddance to Tampa," 1 Favre declared in the locker room. The Buccaneers would move to the new NFC South in 2002.

Tampa Bay 0 10 7 3 20 Green Bay 7 0 7 14

Attendance: 59,861

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"WIN a pair of tickets to the Packers vs. Bears Game on Dec. 9. Send entry to Packers Getaway, Press-Gazette, P.O. 10235, GB, 54307"2

<sup>2</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/6/01, p. 10



#### **Blinded**

Another strong performance against the Bears by the defense and Brett Favre. They held Chicago to 47 yards rushing, and allowed four just field goals!

With 45 seconds left in the first half and the Packers trailing 6-3, Favre launched a 41-yard touchdown pass to Bill Schroeder for a 10-6 lead. After halftime, Antonio Freeman caught Favre's second touchdown pass that sealed the deal at 17-9.

The Bears who had won their previous two games with dramatic comebacks almost pulled it off again. With four minutes left and trailing by eight, the Bears drove deep into Packers territory. On their final fourth-down call, running back, James Allen did not see the pass that bounced off his arm on Green Bay's 20-yard line, "citing a blinding sun."1

Green Bay 0 10 7 3 20 Chicago 6 3 3 0 12

Attendance: 66,944

"When I was a young boy living in California, I would watch my beloved Packers whenever possible on a snowy, obscure UHF channel on my black-and-white TV. I cried when they carried Bart Starr off the field and straight to the hospital toward the end of his career. Twenty-plus years later, Brett Favre made me cry again, this time with tears of joy, watching the Packers hoist the Lombardi Trophy as champions of Super Bowl XXXI."2



**23** 11.18.2001

Though the Packers were confident after a road win, turnovers dashed all hope. They also suffered a huge loss during the game when safety LeRoy Butler suffered a broken shoulder blade that ended his career.

Brett Favre threw three interceptions and lost a fumble to derail the offense. All three of the interceptions were intended for Bill Schroeder, and the turnovers helped set up 13 points for Atlanta.

Favre's first and final pass of the game were intercepted by cornerback Ashley Ambrose. He also threw two touchdown passes to Schroeder and Antonio Freeman, but the Packers never caught up. With 1:18 left in the game, and the Packers moving into field goal range, Ambrose snared his second pick to clinch the upset.

Atlanta 6 10 0 7 23 Green Bay 3 7 3 7 20

Attendance: 59,849



**29** 

11.22.2001

27

## **Happy Thanksgiving!**

The last time the Packers played the Lions on Thanksgiving was 1986. Both teams wore *throwback* uniforms, and the game had a classic feel to it for a national audience. It was also Green Bay's last game in the Pontiac Silverdome.

It was a nasty battle with 19 penalties for 180 yards. The Packers had the lead for all but four minutes with Ahman Green and Brett Favre leading the way. They grabbed the early lead on Ahman Green's 26-yard touchdown run. Green Bay scored again just before halftime for a 17-13 lead.

After intermission, they extended it to 24-13. Nate Wayne's interception led to Favre's short pass to Green who took it 35 yards for a touchdown!

The fourth quarter started with a safety when Lamont Warren of the Lions was tackled in the end zone by defensive end John Thierry. When Ryan Longwell's field goal made it 29-13, Detroit scored 14 points behind quarterback Mike McMahon, who had replaced Charlie Batch. In the game's final seven minutes, the elusive rookie took the Lions 71 yards for a touchdown. With a two-point conversion, it narrowed the Packer lead to 29-21 with 1:17 left.

When the onside kick was recovered by Todd Lyght, the Lions scored again on McMahon's touchdown pass with 10 seconds left. But when they missed the two-point conversion, the safety by Thierry made all the difference. The "last seven minutes had

to have lasted an hour,"1 said relieved Packers cornerback Bhawoh Jue.

Green Bay 7 10 7 5 29 Detroit 3 10 0 14 27

Attendance: 77,730

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/23/01, Demovsky, p. 22



**28** 12.3.2001

21

This was a memorable come from behind win on the road. On Monday Night Football, Brett Favre threw three touchdown passes and scored the winning touchdown with 1:30 left in the game. Along the way, Jacksonville cooperated with four turnovers.

After a touchdown pass by former Green Bay quarterback Mark Brunell (26-4-311-1-2) and two field goals, the Packers trailed 13-0. Favre returned fire 25 seconds before halftime with his first touchdown pass to Ahman Green.

Late in the third quarter, as Favre dropped back t pass, he was stripped of the football by Tony Brackens. The loose ball was returned 60 yards by safety Ainsley Battles for 21-7 Jacksonville lead.

In the next 18:45, the game belonged entirely to Favre and the Packers! Favre (24-42-362-3-0) orchestrated two scoring drives with touchdown passes to Bill Schroeder and Bubba Franks that tied the game. On the Packers' final drive, a 42-yard screen pass to Green set up Favre's six-yard bootleg around left end for the win with 1:30 remaining! "That ranks as one of the better wins I've been a part of," Favre said later.

Green Bay 0 7 14 7 28 Jacksonville 3 10 8 0 21

Attendance: 66,908

Yards Rushing: GB 37 JACK 62

"If you want to buy or sell your tickets outside Lambeau Field, the rules are relatively simple. Sellers are legally confined to an area on Packer Drive, between the Hutson Center and the Brown County

Arena. Those who sell tickets above face value must have a seller's permit. People selling their own tickets a face value do not need a permit."2

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/4/01, Dougherty, p. 15 2 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/5/01, p.9



7 17

With the Packers one-game behind the first-place Bears, the rivals met at Lambeau Field. The Packers prevailed for the 16<sup>th</sup> time in the last 20 games!

"The Packers beat the Bears between the tackles and between the ears." They rolled over Chicago for 352 yards, and they held them to 189. The Packers used the screen pass very effectively evn though guard Marco Rivera played with a broken left hand suffered in practice.

Late in the first quarter, a Favre touchdown pass to Antonio Freeman got it started. Ahman Green ran for 125 yards, and he caught two passes 49 more. He became Green Bay's first running back since John Brockington in 1972 to rush for over 1,000 in two straight seasons! His third-quarter touchdown run gave Green Bay the lead for good. The Packers' defense allowed just 11 first downs and 50 yards rushing.

Chicago 0 0 7 0 7 Green Bay 7 0 7 3 17

Attendace: 59,869

Favre became he first QB in NFL history to pass for 3,000+ yards in 10 straight seasons.

"Miller Brewing Company and the Vince Lombardi Titletown Legends Charity announced the formation of a long-term alliance to help raise money for Wisconsin-based charities." 2

<sup>2</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/10/01, p. 9



20 12.16.2001 26

## **Big flop**

The Packers failed to clinch a playoff berth with a win. Steve McNair (25-35-282-2-0) outplayed Brett Favre (20-38-199-2-1), and Tennessee led most of the game behind the two McNair touchdown passes.

After a 3-2 lead for Green Bay, a Brett Favre to Donald Driver touchdown pass made it 10-2. McNair's touchdown passes came in the second quarter. The second touchdown, to Derrick Mason, capitalized on Brett Favre's fumble and gave Tennessee a 15-13 edge at the half.

With 10:42 left in the game, the Titans sealed the deal on a 22-yard touchdown run by halfback Skip Hicks. For the game, they outgained the Packers by 198 yards (423-225), including 167 yards rushing. The Packers couldn't run the ball, and Favre led he team in rushing with 20 yards. Ahman Green was held to 11.

Green Bay 10 3 0 7 20 Tennessee 2 13 3 8 26

Attendance: 68,804

After the game, Mike Sherman and Brett Favre met privately 30 minutes.



7 30

#### <u>11-4</u>

A blowout puts the Packers in the playoffs for the first time since 1998!

Favre started the offensive roll and directed a 66-yard drive for his first touchdown pass to Bubba Franks. Green Bay's defense stepped-in with Bernardo Harris' pass deflection that was intercepted by Bhawoh Jue. The pick led to Favre's second touchdown pass to Bubba Franks. Ten minutes into the game, and the Packers led 13-0! A 69-yard pick-six by Tyrone Williams pretty much put the game away before halftime, 23-7. It was the first of two picks by Williams.

In between all the defense, Brett Favre had another stellar performance. He threw two touchdown passes to Bubba Franks and one to a Dorsey Levens. Ahman Green also ran for 150 yards. Cleveland helped by turning the ball over five times, and the Packers took advantage scoring 21 points! Cleveland's offense was all about running back Jamel White, who generated 216 all-purpose yards, and scored their lone touchdown.

"We still want to win our division and keep pace with the Bears," 1 Sherman reminded everyone after the game.

Cleveland 0 7 0 0 7 Green Bay 13 10 0 7 30

Attendance: 59,824

Sacks: GB 4 CLEV 0



**13** 12.30.2001

The game started slowly for the Vikings (5-9), and Green Bay had a 7-3 halftime lead. The Packers scored on a reverse to Donald Driver, who took it 31 yards to the house. Driver's touchdown was just the "10th rushing touchdown scored by a Packers receiver since 1921." On the play, Driver picked up a block from quarterback Brett Favre.

After trading field goals to start the second half, the Vikings stunned the Packers with a 47-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Spergon Wynn to tight end Byron Chamberlain, and the Vikings led 13-10. Who?! Randy Moss, Green Bay's usual nemesis who had burned the Packers repeatedly with "38 receptions and 826 yards in his previous seven matchups,"2 caught just two passes for 10 yards.

Undeterred, Favre came right back. He marched the Packers 79 yards in seven plays, and with 6:28 left, Ahman Green ran it in from the four to retake the lead 17-13! On Minnesota's next series, cornerback Mike McKenzie iced it with a 38-yard pick-six.

Minnesota 0 3 3 7 13 Green Bay 0 7 0 17 24

Attendance: 59,870
Total Yards: GB 13 MINN 30



A home playoff game was at stake, and the Packers came up big! The victory secured the home field for the Wild Card Game against the 49ers.

Green Bay won so despite giving up 524 yards to the 7-8 Giants! On the Packers first possession, it took Brett Favre 2:13 to go 62 yards and find Bill Schroeder for six. Green Bay went up 14-0 lead after an interception and a touchdown run by Ahman Green. The Giants stayed close on quarterback Kerry Collins' touchdown to Ike Hilliard. After trading field goals, the Packers led 17-10 at halftime.

Green Bay poured it on in the third quarter with 20 unanswered points. After Dorsey Levens brought back the opening kickoff 53 yards, Ahman Green scored his second touchdown of the game just 2:53 into the new half. Two field goals by Ryan Longwell and a 54-yard touchdown from Favre to Corey Bradford settled the issue 34-10.

With the game all but over, the Giants scored twice in the fourth quarter. With less than three minutes to play, defensive end Michael Strahan of the Giants "sacked" Favre to break Mark Gastineau's NFL sack record with 22.5 sacks.

Green Bay 14 3 17 0 34 New York 7 3 0 15 25

Attendance: 78,601
Total Yards: GB 413 NYG 524

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



15 25

1.13.2002

Green Bay's last playoff game was in 1998 against the 49ers. It ended in shocking fashion. This time, the Packers held on, and "everyone who suited up contributed."1

Brett Favre had another excellent game (22-29-269-2-1). "He made all the throws. I tip my hat to him," 2 said San Francisco safety Lance Schulters. After a 35-yard punt return by Allen Rossum, Favre opened the scoring with a touchdown pass to Antonio Freeman. The extra-point was blocked. Just before the half, the 49ers jumped in front 7-6 on a 15-play, 86-yard drive. Garrison Hearst scored from the two.

"Favre lobbied with coaches at halftime to open up the passing game." Ryan Longwell's field goal made it 9-7 Packers. A 19-yard touchdown pass from Favre to Bubba Franks extended it 15-7 as the two-point conversion failed. The 49ers fought back with quarterback Jeff Garcia's touchdown pass to Tai Streets. A successful two-point conversion tied it at 15 early in the fourth quarter.

The Packers took care of business in the remaining 12 minutes. Longwell's 45-yard field goal, and Ahman Green's nine-yard touchdown run – that topped off a clinching 83-yard drive with 1:55 left – made it 25-15.

In preparing the defensive plan for the game, the Packers changed some of their tendencies that opponents saw on video. The defense was stout, and it was led by the return of Gilbert Brown, who sacked Jeff Garcia on the game's first play! The "Gravedigger" helped hold San Francisco's potent ground game

to 71 yards. At one point, Brown "encouraged fans in the north end zone (to get) up and on their feet and thumped his heart for them." 4 Terrell Owens had only four catches in this game for 40 yards!

 San Francisco
 0
 7
 0
 8
 15

 Green Bay
 6
 0
 9
 10
 25

Attendance: 59,825
Total Yards: GB 368 SF 290

Barry Rawlins, 49ers Fan: "Just being at Lambeau Field, they don't even have to play a game for me." 5

<sup>1</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/14/02, Havel, p. 13

<sup>2</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/14/02, Schwab, p. 17

<sup>3</sup> Geeb Bay Packers Meia Guide 2019, p. 504

<sup>4</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/14/02, Rauen, p. 4

<sup>5</sup> Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/14/02, Rauen, p. 1

#### **NFC Divisional Playoff Game**



Crash and burn best describes this performance by the Packers.

An unhinged Brett Favre tied an NFL playoff record with six interceptions, and three of the picks were returned for touchdowns. St. Louis cornerback Aeneas Williams scored the first and last points of the game with interceptions. He returned the first for a 29-yard touchdown and the second for a 32-yard score.

Quarterback Kurt Warner, a former member of Green Bay's practice squad, threw two first-half touchdown passes to get the Rams out to a 24-10 first-half lead. Dick Vermeil's "Greatest Show on Turf" cruised to an easy victory. In all, Favre threw six interceptions, and the Packers turned the ball over eight times.

The knockout punch came in the second half with Marshall Faulk's touchdown run. To put it completely out of reach, Favre put up two more passes that were returned for touchdowns, the latter belonging to Aeneas Williams.

Green Bay 7 3 0 7 17 St. Louis 7 17 14 7 45

Attendance: 66,338
Total Yards: GB 383 STL 292



# **2001 Team Statistics**

# **PROJECT**

# 1919-2019

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

	<u>VV</u>	<u>L</u>	<u> </u>
Chicago	13	3	0
Green Bay	12	4	0
Tampa Bay	9	7	0
Minnesota	5	11	0
Detroit	2	14	0

#### **Team Leaders**

Passing Favre Receiving Green Rushing Green Scoring Longwell Interceptions Sharper Sacks **KGB** 

#### <u>All-Pro</u>

Quarterback Favre **Running Back** Green

Safety Sharper

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

Jamal Reynolds (1, DE) Robert Ferguson (2, WR) Bhawoh Jue (3a, CB) David Martin (6, TE)



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