

SEASON
85

2003



THE
PACKERS CENTURY

P R O J E C T

ALL THE GAMES. ALL THE STORIES.

1919-2019

BY JIM RICE

packerscentury.com



2003

Record: 10-6-0 1st NFC North

Coach: Mike Sherman

- The Vikings defeated the Packers in the first game at newly renovated Lambeau Field.
- Brett Favre played with a broken thumb most of the season. He still led the league in touchdown passes and broke several team records along the way.
- Green Bay had a top-five offense. The defense was not as strong.
- The Packers were 3-4 before the bye week and 7-2 after. They made the postseason only after Arizona beat the Vikings on the last play of the final game of the season.
- Ahman Green broke Dorsey Levens' single-game rushing record with 192 yards against the Eagles. Seven games later, he broke his own record with 218 yards against the Broncos!



1919-2018

MINNESOTA
VIKINGS
PACKERS

30
25 9.7.2003

Dud of an Opener

The final score belies the poor performance by Green Bay. The Vikings scored on their opening drive with Dante Culpepper's first of three touchdown passes. They dominated the first half and led 20-3 at the break.

Culpepper's third-quarter touchdown pass went to Randy Moss and stretched the lead to 27-3. Two touchdowns by Ahman Green and another by Javon Walker made the final score respectable. But Green Bay couldn't overcome a sluggish ground game – Ahman Green 53 yards – and four interceptions by Brett Favre. Favre's all-time record against the Vikings fell to 10-12.

Minnesota	10	10	7	3	30
Green Bay	0	3	8	14	25

Attendance: 70,505

The Packers gained just four yards in the first quarter.

"One year a friend of my son's gave him a purple Geo. It ran and everything, but I had this idea. I put a stripe on it and had Viking horns put on it. I parked it out front and charged people to hit this car with a sledgehammer... All proceeds went to the snowmobile club. I raised \$180.00"¹

¹ For Packers Fans Only!, Wolfe, p. 239



1919-2018

DETROIT
LIONS
PACKERS

6
31 9.14.2003

After a rousing pre-game speech by Brett Favre, a wet field couldn't slow down Green Bay. In the first minute, Ahman Green broke through Detroit's front seven for 65-yards and a touchdown. On their next possession, Favre tossed the first of two touchdown passes to running back Tony Fisher for a 14-0 lead. The game was just 10 minutes old.

The Packers controlled the trenches with 200 yards on the ground. They held the Lions to just 56. Rookie linebacker Nick Barnett prowled the middle of the field with a team-leading 12 tackles. A 56-yard pick-six by newcomer Al Harris topped off a strong, all-out effort on both sides of the ball.

Detroit	0	6	0	0	6
Green Bay	14	3	7	7	31

Attendance: 70,244

Favre: 15-28-132-2-1

"I still think the Packers will make it to the playoffs," said Steve Gramolini who flew in from New York for the game. "I just don't know if they can make it to the championship game."¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/15/03, De Jesus, p. 4



1919-2018

PACKERS

ARIZONA

CARDINALS

13

9.21.2003

20

Can't beat the Heat

In record-breaking heat of 106 degrees, the Packers wilted in the second half. The Cardinals took the lead on quarterback Jeff Blake's one-yard run. Favre opened Green Bay's scoring with a short touchdown pass to tight end David Martin. At the halftime, the game stood 10-10.

After trading field goals in the second half, the 0-2 Cardinals broke the 13-13 tie with a seven-minute, 68-yard drive. Blake's one-yard touchdown pass to James Hodgins put Arizona in front.

In the final minutes, Green Bay drove to the Arizona seven-yard line. Favre's pass to Javon Walker was intercepted by safety Dexter Jackson, his second pick of the game. In explaining the loss after the game, Favre said, "I thought I could squeeze it in there. You have to go down shooting."¹

Green Bay	0	10	0	3	13
Arizona	7	3	3	7	20

Attendance: 58,784

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 9/22/2003, p. 14



PACKERS

CHICAGO

BEARS

38

9.29.2003

23

It's Monday Night Football at newly renovated Soldier Field. Ahman Green led the Packers right out of the gate with a 60-yard touchdown run in the first quarter. By halftime, Green ran for another touchdown, and fullback William Henderson caught a Brett Favre touchdown pass for 24-6 led at halftime.

Green ran for a career-high 176 yards. When Chicago cut the lead to 24-16 in the fourth quarter, Brett Favre put it away with his second and third touchdown passes of the night. This was Favre's 10th straight road win against the Bears.

Green Bay	17	7	0	14	38
Chicago	0	6	3	14	23
Attendance: 60,257					

"My wife, Karen, from central Illinois, is a Bears fan. When we were dating, when the Bears scored, she started jumping around. I almost left her apartment. Then we had to come to an agreement where, 'Okay, you can be a Bears fan, but don't cheer during the game.' Then it became. 'Okay, if we go to a game, you can't wear your Bears stuff.' Before long, she was totally converted, and her father is too."¹

¹ For Packers Fans Only!, Wolfe, p. 168



SEATTLE
SEAHAWKS
PACKERS

13
35 10.5.2003

In a huge game early in the season, the 2-2 Packers saved their best performance to date for their former coach, Mike Holmgren, and his undefeated Seattle Seahawks.

Favre directed five consecutive touchdown marches with an outstanding game (19-25-185-2-0). His touchdown passes went to Donald Driver and William Henderson. Former Seahawk, Ahman Green, added 118 yards on the ground and two more touchdowns. The Seahawks moved the ball against the Packers easily with 343 total yards, but two turnovers and seven critical penalties derailed their efforts.

After the game, Holmgren generously praised his former pupil. "We just lost a game to one of the best players to ever play the game. He played real well. It doesn't surprise me."¹

Seattle	7	6	0	0	13
Green Bay	7	14	14	0	35
Attendance:	70,365				

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 10/6/2003, Wideman, p. 17



1919-2018

KANSAS CITY
CHIEFS
PACKERS

40 10.12.2003
34 (OT)

Huge Letdown

On a beautiful fall afternoon, the Packers threw away a 31-14 fourth-quarter lead. While Green Bay was in control most of the game (there were three ties), K. C. won it 6:18 into overtime.

Before the collapse, Brett Favre threw two touchdown passes, and Ahman Green had scored twice. With under nine minutes to play, a pick-six by Jerome Woods cut the lead to 31-28. At the end of regulation, the Chiefs tied it with a field goal.

In a stunning turn of events in overtime, Cledius Hunt of the Packers blocked a Kansas City field goal attempt giving Green Bay the ball. On the next play, Ahman Green fumbled the ball right back to the Chiefs. On first down, K. C. quarterback Trent Green threw a 51-yard touchdown pass to Eddie Kennison to win it.

Kansas City	7	7	0	20	6	40
Green Bay	14	7	10	3	0	34

Attendance: 70,407

Total Yards: GB 440 / KC 482

Steve Schumer, Member, Green Bay Packer FAN Hall of Fame *

"Devastating. Everybody filed out of that stadium, and I didn't hear anybody talking to anybody. I walked out consoling my 13-year old son."

* Interview: 1/6/17



PACKERS

ST. LOUIS

RAMS

24

10.19.2003

34

Major Trouble

Other than a 3-0 Green Bay lead in the first quarter, the Rams led the rest of the way. Ahman Green ran for only 35 yards, and Green Bay turned the ball over four times leading to 17 points for St. Louis.

After Brett Favre found William Henderson for a touchdown in the third quarter to narrow the lead to 21-17, Rams quarterback Marc Bulger threw his third touchdown pass of the day. The touchdown took back the momentum and the game. Green Bay dropped to 3-4.

Of more concern though was Favre's thumb injury. He broke his right thumb when it hit a teammate's shoulder pad. Fortunately, the bye week came at the perfect time for the Packers to regroup, and for Favre to heal.

Green Bay	3	7	7	7	24
St. Louis	14	7	7	6	34

Attendance: 66,201



1919-2018

PACKERS

MINNESOTA

VIKINGS

30

11.2.2003

27

Metrodome Win!

With the season on the brink after Brett Favre's injury, the Packers win in Minnesota. Favre roared back with three touchdown passes while still recovering from a hairline fracture of his right thumb. Even Packer guard Marco Rivera was amazed. "I don't know if I could even throw the ball with a broken thumb and he's doing it. He's unbelievable."¹

The Packers ran the ball at will for 261 yards, and Ahman Green set the pace with 137. Overall, Green Bay churned out 451 total yards. "We knew coming in it was do or die, and we played like it,"² said a happy Mark Tauscher.

The Vikings led early on a Randy Moss touchdown. Favre was sharp (18-28-194-3-1), and he appeared unaffected by the thumb injury. Javon Walker caught two touchdown passes with the second score breaking a 20-20 tie in the fourth quarter. Longwell followed with his third field goal that turned out to be the winner when quarterback Dante Culpepper scored with 33 seconds left.

Green Bay	6	14	0	10	30
Minnesota	7	7	6	7	27

Attendance: 64,482

Total Yards: GB 451 / MN 323

¹ If These Walls Could Talk, Larrivee/Reischel, p. 28

² Green Bay Press-Gazette, Dougherty, p. 13



PHILADELPHIA
EAGLES
PACKERS

17
14 11.10.2003

A wet field didn't stop Ahman Green from setting a new Green Bay single-game rushing record with 192 yards. He broke Dorsey Levens' record set in 1997.

In this contest, in spite two Favre fumbles that were recovered by the Eagles, the Packers still held a slim 7-3 lead in the fourth quarter. Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb caught fire. He took over with a touchdown run, and a winning touchdown pass to Todd Pinkston with 27 seconds left in the game.

Because of the loss, the next day's paper reported, "The reality the Packers stare down to today is they now need five victories in their final seven games for a 9-7 record which still may not be enough for anything more than some parting gifts."¹

Philadelphia	0	0	3	14	17
Green Bay	0	7	0	7	14
Attendance:	70,291				

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/11/03, Woods, p. 20



PACKERS

TAMPA BAY

BUCCANEERS

13

11.16.2003

20

Brett Favre “played with a broken right thumb”¹ and defeated the defending NFL champs! The Packers kept the pressure away from Favre with an unstoppable ground game that rolled over Tampa Bay for 190 yards.

Favre completed 13 of 28 passes for 92 yards, and the game stood tied 13-13 at the end of three quarters. Early in the fourth quarter, Green Bay ate up 10 minutes of the clock to drive 98 yards for Ahman Green’s touchdown from the one-yard line. The defense protected the lead stopping three Tampa drives in the fourth quarter. It closed out a fine game that included three sacks, two picks, and a fumble recovery.

Green Bay	7	6	0	7	20
Tampa Bay	0	6	7	0	13
Attendance:	65,614				

1 packershistory.net/2003Packers



1919-2018

SAN FRANCISCO
49ers
PACKERS

14
20 11.23.2003

Brett Favre threw only 15 passes. Two went for touchdowns, and three others went directly to the 49ers. Fortunately, Green Bay had little trouble with the Niners and their back-up quarterback Tim Rattay.

Green Bay never trailed in this one, and they ran the ball for 243 yards on 48 attempts. Ahman Green led the ground attack with 154 yards which moved him past John Brockington to become the second-leading rusher in franchise history.

The game's first points came on the longest touchdown pass of the season, a 66-yard bomb from Favre to Javon Walker. The second touchdown went to Robert Ferguson in the second quarter. Staked to a 14-0 lead, Ryan Longwell's field goals and a dominant running game were enough to hold off the 49ers.

San Francisco	0	3	7	0	10
Green Bay	7	10	0	3	13

Attendance: 70,250

Total Yards: GB 379 / SF 192

*Regarding the "new" Lambeau Field: "I'm so glad the Packers didn't tear down the old stadium. They did a great job fixing it up. They've made it so much nicer now. Here I am 44 years old, and I'm planning this trip to Green Bay. I'm all excited, talking about getting there early and maybe getting some autographs, maybe getting some stuff. I am old enough to be most of the players' dad, and I'm still like that 17-year old going to my first game. To me Green Bay is better than Disney World."*¹

¹ For Packers Fans Only!, Wolfe, p. 98



PACKERS

DETROIT

LIONS

14

11.27.2003

22

No Happy Thanksgiving

Five turnovers by Green Bay and five field goals by Jason Hanson spoiled the holiday. For the second week in a row, Favre threw two touchdown passes as well as three interceptions.

Pumped up for their nationally televised game on Thanksgiving, Detroit kept Brett Favre under pressure most of the afternoon. They sacked him four times, and they held Ahman Green to 57 yards rushing.

Late in the third quarter, Favre's 45-yard touchdown bomb to Javon Walker gave Green Bay a 14-13 lead. But three turnovers in the fourth quarter doomed Green Bay. A fumble by Javon Walker along with Brett Favre's fumble and interception set up three more field goals. After the game, Favre commented, "We certainly haven't helped ourselves by the up and down way we've played this year. It's upsetting. It's frustrating. We're running out of chances."¹

Green Bay 0 7 7 0 14

Detroit 10 3 0 9 22

Attendance: 62,123

This was Favre's 187th straight game tying Forrest Gregg's record.

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 11/28/03, Dougherty, p. 20



1919-2018

CHICAGO
BEARS
PACKERS

21
34 12.7.2003

The Bears grabbed a 14-0 lead, but their five turnovers were costly. After Brett Favre and Ryan Longwell cut it to 14-13 before halftime, Longwell put the Packers in front 19-14 with two more field goals in the third quarter.

Having been burned earlier in the game by Marty Booker's 61-yard touchdown, cornerback Mike McKenzie redeemed himself with a 90-yard pick-six with 9:16 left in the game for a 27-14 Packer lead. The teams traded touchdowns late in the fourth quarter and Green Bay prevailed.

Chicago	14	0	0	7	21
Green Bay	0	13	6	15	34

Attendance: 70,458

GB picked off three passes.

"What makes the Packers so special with fans everywhere is the fact that they're in a small town. The big towns have their fans of course, but more of the country is made up of small towns and fans can identify more closely with Green Bay. A few years ago there was a commercial (in Green Bay) where a family was saying a tearful goodbye to someone leaving the area. As soon as the family was out of sight, everyone hopped in their cars and bikes and scooters and rushed to the ticket office to see if they could get the family's tickets."¹

¹ For Packers Fans Only!, Wolfe, p. 139



PACKERS
 SAN DIEGO
CHARGERS

38
 12.14.2003
21

It was a record-smashing day all around for Green Bay as Brett Favre led a fourth-quarter comeback with three touchdown passes. In the process, he surpassed a team record for throwing touchdown passes in 22 consecutive games (held by Cecil Isbell). Ahman Green also broke Jim Taylor's single-season rushing record (1,474), and Ryan Longwell passed Don Hutson as the team's all-time leading scorer (823).

Before the Packers led 17-10 going into the fourth quarter. In an exhilarating 15 minutes of action, 36 points were scored. San Diego quarterback Drew Brees and LaDainian Tomlinson connected twice in the first three minutes for a 24-17 lead. Not to be outdone, Favre responded. He threw two touchdown passes of 40 and 16 yards to Robert Ferguson. In between, a Drew Brees fumble on San Diego's one-yard line, set up Ahman Green's touchdown.

San Diego may have outgained Green Bay 424-361, but the Packers capitalized on turnovers for 17 points!

Green Bay	7	10	0	21	38
San Diego	3	0	3	15	21

Attendance: 64,978

Favre Stats: 23-33-278-4-1

"There were an estimated 20,000 or more Packer backers in the crowd of 64,978."¹

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, Levin, 12/15/03, p. 18



PACKERS

OAKLAND

RAIDERS

41

12.22.2003

7

The day after his father passed away, Brett Favre decided to play in this game because he believed that's what his dad would have wanted. On a Monday night in Oakland, in one of the greatest games of his career, Favre played through a rollercoaster of emotions in front of a national television audience.

The fans understood the personal sorrow of the son whose father was also his lifetime football coach. "After booing heartedly during the introduction of the first ten Green Bay offensive starters, the Oakland fans gave Favre a standing ovation."¹

Favre came out on fire. After an emotional speech to the team in the locker room, Favre lit up the Oakland Coliseum. His play was phenomenal. To start the game, he completed nine straight passes and 12 of his first 13. In the first half, he threw for 311 yards and four touchdowns. The touchdowns were caught by Wesley Walls, Javon Walker (2), and tight end David Martin. The Packers led at halftime 31-7.

In the second half, Green Bay's defense held the Raiders scoreless while Ahman Green and Ryan Longwell made it 41-7. Overall, the defense forced three fumbles, delivered five sacks, and held Oakland to 298 total yards.

The offense was unstoppable with 548 total yards, and Favre finished with 399 yards and four touchdowns. On his miraculous performance, Al Micheals of Monday Night Football said, "You bring this script to a studio, and they throw it out. I mean, this is like a fantasy."²

After the game, Favre shared his thoughts. "I knew my dad would want me to play. I love him so much and love this game, it's meant a great deal to me, to my dad and to my family. I didn't expect this type of performance, but I know he was watching tonight."³

Green Bay	14	17	3	7	41
Oakland	7	0	0	0	7
Attendance:	62,298				

1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/23/03, Tomlinson, p. 16

2 Gunslinger, Pearlman, p. 276

3 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/23/03, p. 1



DENVER
BRONCOS
PACKERS

3
31 12.28.2003

A complete blowout. Ahman Green's 218 yards rushing broke his own franchise record that he set two months ago against Philadelphia!

Green scored touchdowns in the third and fourth quarters. His second touchdown run of 98-yards remains the longest touchdown run in franchise history. It put Green Bay in front 24-3, and with the Broncos resting their starters for the postseason, it put the game away.

The win, coupled with Minnesota's last second-loss in Arizona, put the Packers in the postseason as a Wild Card. The Vikings went home.

Denver	0	0	3	0	3
Green Bay	7	3	7	14	31
Attendance:	70,299				

*"The sale of decorative bricks and tiles at Lambeau Field has generated more than \$1 million in its first year, helping to reduce the debt amassed by the \$295 million stadium renovation. The brown bricks form the walkway around the outside of the north side of the stadium. The tiles are displayed on the walls of the Lambeau Field Atrium."*¹

¹ Green Bay Press-Gazette, 12/29/03, p. 5



NFC Wild Card Game

SEATTLE
SEAHAWKS
PACKERS

27
33 (OT) 1.4.2004

OT Thriller!

For the second time this season, the Packers faced former coach, Mike Holmgren, and former back-up quarterback, Matt Hasselback. Seattle was eager for revenge after being slaughtered by Brett Favre and company in October.

Nine lead changes marked this game. In the first half, Seattle was held to two field goals. Brett Favre had another fine game, and his touchdown pass to Bubba Franks and Ryan Longwell's field goals made it 13-6 at intermission.

In the third quarter, Seattle scored twice on one-yard touchdown runs by Shaun Alexander. Ahman Green matched Alexander with two one-yard touchdown runs of his own. All four touchdowns came after long drives by both squads. On both of Green Bay's marches, fourth-and-one calls by Mike Sherman went Green Bay's way. He later said, "we had to be aggressive because in playoff games you have to go out and get them. They don't come to you. You have to take them."¹

With Green Bay leading 27-20 with three minutes left, Hasselback directed a 67-yard drive and Alexander scored again from the one-yard line to force the overtime. After winning the coin toss, Matt Hasselback, the former Packer boasted, "We want the ball, and we're going to score."² On Seattle's second series, Al Harris stepped in front of a Hasselback pass for a 52-yard pick-six and the win!

Seattle	3	3	14	7	0	27
Green Bay	0	13	0	14	6	33

Attendance: 71,457

Favre: 26-38-319-1-0

This was the season's last home game. Packer President, Bob Harlan, was optimistic about the future with the newly renovated stadium. "The newness might wear off, but history and tradition continue. I think the people love the building as much as they do the team."³

- 1 Green Bay Press-Gazette, Woods, 1/5/04, p. 41
- 2 Packer Insider, 1/5/04, p. F-2
- 3 Green Bay Press-Gazette, 1/6/04, Anderson, p. 1

NFC Divisional Playoff



1919-2018

PACKERS

PHILADELPHIA

EAGLES

17

1.11.2004

20 (OT)

In November, the Eagles beat the Packers in Green Bay. They went on to win the NFC East, and they looked forward to hosting their first NFL playoff game at new Lincoln Financial Field.

The Packers took command early. Quarterback Brett Favre ignited the offense with two touchdown passes to Robert Ferguson. The first was a 40-yard strike after a Philly fumble, and the second was a 17-yard touchdown at the end of the first quarter. Philadelphia quarterback, Donovan McNabb, threw a first-half touchdown pass to Duce Staley, but the Packers led at the half 14-7.

After a scoreless third quarter, McNabb and Todd Pinkston hooked-up in the fourth quarter to tie it. Four minutes later, Ryan Longwell's field goal put Green Bay back in front 17-14.

With 2:30 left in the game, Green Bay faced a fourth-and-one on the Eagles' 41-yard line. Sherman elected to punt and rely on his defense to stop the Eagles. He did so despite having the second-leading rusher in the league who also ran for 156 yards in this game. In deciding to punt, one reporter felt, "Mike Sherman stepped so far out of character you thought he'd pulled a hamstring"¹

Philadelphia took over with 2:21 left. On fourth-and-26 from their 26-yard line, McNabb found Freddie Mitchell for a 28-yard completion to keep the drive going. They drove 61 yards in 12 plays before David Akers kicked a 37-yard field goal that forced the overtime.

On Green Bay's first play in the overtime, Favre overthrew Javon Walker and was intercepted by Brian Dawkins. Donovan McNabb (21-39-248-2-0) and the Eagles moved into field goal range where David Akers sent Philadelphia to the NFC Championship Game.

Green Bay	14	0	0	3	0	17
Philadelphia	0	7	0	10	3	20

Attendance: 67,707

Bob Harlan, Former Packer President: *"I was as devastated as I've ever been at a football game. That (loss) ranked right up there with watching Steve Young throw for the final touchdown to Terrell Owens and losing the Super Bowl in 1998."*²

¹ Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/11/04, Hoffman

² Green & Gold Moments, Bob Harlan, p. 221



THE
**PACKERS CENTURY
PROJECT**

1919-2018

2003 Team Statistics

FINAL STANDINGS – NFC North

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>
Green Bay	10	6	0
Minnesota	9	7	0
Chicago	7	9	0
Detroit	5	11	0

Team Leaders

Passing	Favre
Rushing	Green
Receiving	Driver
Scoring	Green/Longwell
Interceptions	Sharper
Sacks	Gbaja-Biamila

All-Pro

Green	Running Back
Longwell	Kicker
Rivera	Guard
Wahle	Guard

Notable Draft Choices (Round, Position)

Nick Barnett (1, LB)
Kenny Pederson (3, DT)
Hunter Hillenmeyer (5b, LB)



1919 - 2019

PACKERS CENTURY

with Jim Rice

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