

PACKERLAND™

Regular-season success absent in playoffs

Packers still had plenty to celebrate in 2024

BY MIKE WARREN
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

GREEN BAY – Despite an 11-6 regular-season record, Green Bay Packers fans were left wondering where some of the post-season magic of the 2023 season was, after a disappointing Wild Card playoff loss in Philadelphia abruptly ended the 2024 season.

Losses to the Eagles served as bookends to a season that provided its share of highlights, but also failed to capture the excitement and surprise element of a year ago.

The Packers improved upon their 9-8 record from last season and clinched a playoff spot, their fifth in six seasons under Packers Head Coach Matt LaFleur and their 37th in franchise history, the most by any team in NFL history.

With a win in their home opener Sept. 15 vs. Indianapolis, the Packers also became the first team in NFL history to win 800 regular season games.

What the Packers could not do, however, was beat the teams in their own division. Green Bay finished 1-5 against the rest of the NFC North, including a series split with the 5-12 Chicago Bears.

The Packers opened the season more than 5,000 miles from home, against Philadelphia in São Paulo, Brazil, — the first NFL game in South America. Trailing 34-29, Packers QB Jordan Love suffered an MCL sprain on the third-to-last play of the game.

In Green Bay's home opener the following week, Malik Willis — acquired from Tennessee less than three weeks earlier — started in place of the injured Love and led the Pack to a 16-10 win.

Packers fans also got their first look at new running back Josh Jacobs, who rushed for 151 yards on 32 carries, in 85-degree heat.

Willis remained the starter the following week, as he returned to



Tight end Tucker Kraft had a breakout season, catching 50 passes for 707 yards and a team-high seven touchdowns. **Tori Wittenbrock photo**

Tennessee and led the Packers to a dominating, 30-14 win over the Titans, this time on an 87-degree day in Nashville.

Willis played well, throwing for a touchdown and running for another. Jaire Alexander also returned an interception for a Green Bay score.

Love returned a week later and led a valiant comeback effort, in

a 31-29 loss to Minnesota at Lambeau Field.

The Vikings took a 28-7 lead into the fourth quarter, but the Packers outscored Minnesota 22-3 down the stretch.

The Packers were back in the win column the following week in Los Angeles, beating the Rams 24-19 at SoFi Stadium.

See **SEASON REVIEW** page 4



Known for seeing talent where no one else seems to, GM Ron Wolf found WR Donald Driver in the seventh round (213th overall) of the 1999 NFL Draft. Driver played 14 seasons and 205 games (third most) for the Packers, while becoming the team's all-time leader in receptions (743) and receiving yards (10,137). Driver also holds franchise records for the most seasons with 50 or more receptions (9), most consecutive games with a catch (133) and the most seasons with 1,000 or more yards receiving (7). **Green Bay Packers photo**

NFL Draft largely a crapshoot

BY MIKE WARREN
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GREEN BAY – One of the biggest complaints we hear from NFL fans is that their coaches and general managers don't draft well. What they don't realize is that the odds are stacked against them from the outset.

Consider the fact that only 250-plus players are chosen by 32 teams each year as part of the Annual Player Selection Meeting — or 0.016% of the 15,000-plus draft-eligible college football players in the country.

Of those, just 30% ever make the cut and are added to an NFL roster.

The Draft is a losing proposition from the get-go.

What adds to a fan base's frustration is when top quality draft picks collectively don't equate to championship — or even playoff — teams, many times leading to the unwarranted "bust" label being placed on individual players, and to the top brass being publicly chastised.

Such was the life of Packers fans for more than two decades from the late 1960s to the early 1990s.

From 1968 — the second of ten years of 17-round drafts — to 1991 — the second-to-last draft of the 16-year, 12-round era — the Green Bay Packers selected 333 players.

One could argue the Packers really hit on just six.

Larry McCarren, taken by Head Coach/General Manager Dan Devine in 1973, anchored the center position for nearly a dozen years and played in 162 games, tied for 15th most in Packers history (Ron Hallstrom).

The only decision Devine is really remembered for in Tittletown is pulling the trigger on one of the most disastrous trades in team — or NFL — history, and one that would handcuff the team in future Drafts.

On Oct. 22, 1974, Devine sent first-, second-, and third-round selections in the 1975 Draft and first- and second-round picks in the 1976 Draft to the Los Angeles Rams in exchange for their aging and deteriorating quarterback, 34-year-old John Hadl, who nine days earlier had been benched following a loss to the Packers.

After his third losing season and one playoff appearance in four years, Devine bolted for Notre Dame, and left a Green Bay legend to clean up his mess.

Incoming Packers Head Coach/General Manager Bart Starr focused on other needs at first, taking a guard, a running back and a safety in rounds two, three and four of the 1975 NFL Draft.

See **DRAFT** page 3



“All of us in the organization, we really view ourselves as stewards, and we have this tremendous asset. We need to do everything we can to make sure that we left the organization better than we found it.” - Packers President/CEO Mark Murphy

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DRAFT
from page 1

Six days before the 1976 Draft, Starr attempted to untangle the Hadl debacle, sending the 14-year veteran, DB Ken Ellis and two draft picks to Houston in exchange for Lynn Dickey.

The highlight of Starr's tenure, as GM anyway, came in 1978, when he used the sixth overall pick of the Draft to select future NFL Hall of Fame wide receiver James Lofton.

Starr had eleven first-round draft picks over the course of his nine seasons at the helm, but could never put together a winning team.

After going 52-76-3 with just one playoff appearance (in the strike-shortened '82 season), Starr was fired Dec. 19, 1983 and replaced five days later by a former Green Bay teammate.

The Forrest Gregg era highlight came when the former right tackle traded the 14th overall pick and Green Bay's second-round selection (42nd overall) to Buffalo for their fourth-round pick in 1986 and the seventh-overall pick in '85, which was used to grab USC's Ken Ruettgers, who would become a mainstay at left tackle for

10 of the next 12 seasons and 156 games.

Gregg's teams went a combined 25-37-1. After four seasons, he resigned (Jan. 15, '88) to become head coach at his alma mater, Southern Methodist University.

Recognized as a brilliant offensive innovator, Cleveland Browns offensive coordinator Lindy Infante was brought in to replace the Packers' former Hall of Fame tackle.

Infante wasted no time building his offense of the future, drafting wide receiver Sterling Sharpe with the seventh overall pick in the 1988 NFL Draft, adding him to a roster which already included QB Don Majkowski.

Holding the second overall pick in the 1989 NFL Draft, the Packers were poised to make a big splash and turn things around in Tiletown.

Green Bay's first-round selection certainly made headlines, but for all the wrong reasons.

Tony Mandarich would start more games for Lindy Infante in Indianapolis than he would for the coach and team that drafted him.

Unable to live up to expectations, the former Michigan State standout was released following

four seasons with the Packers.

After five years away from football, he returned with the Infante-led Indianapolis Colts, where he spent his last three seasons.

He is the only top five pick in his draft class not inducted to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

The lone bright spot of the '89 Draft for the Packers turned out to be their sixth-round selection, placekicker Chris Jacke, who went on to play in 126 games over eight seasons and is the team's fourth all-time leading scorer.

The rookie kicker was a pivotal part of Green Bay's success in 1989, drilling four game-winning kicks (including the deciding PAT in "The Instant Replay Game") and helping the "Cardiac Pack" to a 10-6 record.

Key additions in the 1990 NFL Draft included future Hall of Fame DB LeRoy Butler (second round, 48th overall).

Tom Braatz, executive vice president of football operations, was relieved of his duties with five games left in the 1991 regular season.

He was replaced by Ron Wolf, who fired Infante the day after the season ended. In four seasons,

Infante's teams went 24-40 with no playoff appearances.

Wolf, inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2015, almost immediately embarked on one of the most remarkable rebuilding efforts in NFL history.

And while he is mostly remembered as the man who introduced us all to Brett Favre, and who in 1993 convinced All-Pro Reggie White that small-market Green Bay was his best career move, Wolf also orchestrated nine stellar drafts (1992-2000) which produced the second-best regular-season record in the NFL, six straight trips to the playoffs and back-to-back Super Bowl appearances.

The 1996 Green Bay Packers team that steamrolled its way to a 13-3 regular-season record, dominated the 49ers and Panthers in the playoffs and won Super Bowl XXXI featured 27 players whom were drafted over the course of eight different annual player selection meetings, dating as far back as 1985 (Ken Ruettgers).

Just three key contributors — Brett Favre, Keith Jackson and Eugene Robinson — were acquired via trades. Seventeen others were free agent signings — including White and Desmond Howard, the MVP of Super Bowl XXXI.

The team that Ron Wolf and Mike Holmgren built and took to Super Bowl XXXI was largely the same squad that also made it to Super Bowl XXXII the fol-

lowing season.

Key additions in the 1997 NFL Draft included T Ross Verba in round one (30th overall) and S Darren Sharper in the second round (60th overall).

Kicker Ryan Longwell was a pivotal free agent acquisition that year as well.

And although the Packers came up short in their effort to repeat as champions, the seven-point win by the Denver Broncos is widely considered one of the greatest games in Super Bowl history.

The Wolf-Holmgren era fizzled quickly, however.

Five days after the 11-5 Packers were stunned by the 49ers in a last-second Wild Card loss in San Francisco to end their 1998 season, Holmgren stepped down to become head coach and director of football operations for the Seattle Seahawks.

Wolf retired two years later.

Four years after Wolf's departure, 'the team president, Bob Harlan,' restructured the team's football operations, naming Ted Thompson general manager while giving him full authority over football decisions.

The move proved monumental, as Thompson helped deliver the franchise's league-best 13th championship just a handful of years later.

Thompson wasted no time in putting his stamp on Green Bay history.

With Brett Favre still performing at a high level, and coming off three consecutive division cham-

pionships, Thompson turned heads at the 2005 NFL Draft by selecting QB Aaron Rodgers with the 24th overall pick.

Fast forward nearly six years, Rodgers was now leading a Packers team which had just won Super Bowl XLV, largely featuring players whom had been drafted over the previous decade.

All but five of Green Bay's 22 starters in a 31-25 win over the Pittsburgh Steelers were drafted between 1999 and 2010.

The following 14 years would feature plenty of regular-season and division success, followed by a series of near misses in the postseason.

From 2011 through 2024, the Packers posted a regular-season record of 146-80, but a postseason mark of just 8-11.

During that time span, the Packers drafted 134 players, including Randall Cobb, David Bakhtiari, Davante Adams, Kenny Clark, Aaron Jones, Jaire Alexander, Rashan Gary and Tucker Kraft.

However, with a 14th championship eluding the franchise that plays in Tiletown, team officials continue searching for answers, while frustrated Packers fans quite liberally continue tossing around the "bust" label.

We will take a more in-depth look at Packers Draft history, in a special edition of Packerland due out just prior to the 2025 NFL Draft, to be held April 24-26 in Green Bay. 🏈



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2025 NFL DRAFT NEWS

NFL OnePass: Your one-stop shop for the NFL Draft

BY PACKERLAND STAFF

GREEN BAY – As the 2025 NFL Draft unfolds in Green Bay, April 24-26, the NFL OnePass app is the ultimate companion for every fan, whether they're in Green Bay or watching from home.

Fans worldwide eagerly anticipate the next generation of football stars, and OnePass will be their “digital gateway” to all the action.

As fans arrive at the Draft Experience, they will use OnePass to check in and begin their personalized journey.

The app grants them access to interactive games, autograph sessions with NFL legends and exclusive merchandise.

Based on their favorite teams and players, OnePass curates recommendations for events and attractions, ensuring every fan maximizes their experience.

For those who can't make it to Green Bay, OnePass offers a front-row seat from home.

Live streams of the Draft are available with real-time analysis and commentary.

Fans can explore in-depth profiles of every Draft prospect, complete with stats, highlights and scouting reports.

Throughout the three-day event, OnePass keeps fans engaged with interactive games and quizzes.

The app provides detailed maps of the venue, schedules of events and real-time updates on wait times for attractions.

Current information on the app reflects what has taken place during previous Drafts as the NFL focused on the playoffs and Super Bowl in January.

“Details about the 2025 NFL Draft in Green Bay are still being finalized,” the app stated.

“Fans are encouraged to visit Discover Green Bay and Travel Wisconsin to plan their visit and check back in the coming months as more information is announced.

The NFL said that “the main portion of the event is expected to take place



As the 2025 NFL Draft unfolds in Green Bay, April 24-26, the NFL OnePass app is the ultimate companion for every fan.

Packerland staff photo

on the Lambeau Field and Titledown campus, with a variety of venues to be utilized within close proximity to the stadium campus.”

“In previous years, the three-day event has also included free musical performances and entertainment as part of the NFL Draft Concert Series, along with a variety of community events taking place throughout the host city’s area,” the app reads.

“Opportunities for attending the 2025 NFL Draft are still being finalized and will be announced in the coming months.”

For more information and to stay on top of Draft news, download the app in the App Store or on Google Play.

Adults 18 and older must register for the 2024 NFL draft through the app or at nfl.com/draftaccess. 📱

SEASON REVIEW

from page 1

Tucker Kraft led the Green Bay offense with four catches for 88 yards and two touchdowns, including a 66-yarder.

Back at Lambeau Field the following week, the Packers dominated Arizona, 34-13.

Jordan Love threw four touchdowns, including two to Romeo Doubs.

The Packers went into a week 7 matchup at Lambeau Field with new uniforms and a new kicker.

In the team’s first-ever “Winter Warning” game Oct. 20, the Packers wore white alternate helmets.

The brand-new helmets included a solid white face mask and a white shell, with the traditional dark green Packers “G” logo on the sides and dark green stripes down the middle.

The white helmets were paired with the fan-favorite combination of the team’s white away jerseys, white pants and solid white socks.

The Packers were also featuring new kicker Brandon McManus, signed four days earlier following the release of Brayden Narveson, who had missed a league-high five field-goal attempts after six weeks.

The move paid off.

After the Texans kicked a go-ahead field goal with 1:44 remaining, Love led the Packers from their own 30-yard line to the Houston 26, where McManus kicked a game-winning 45-yard field goal as time expired.

A week later, McManus — a former Jaguar — returned to Jacksonville, where he repeated his last-second heroics from the week before.

And the circumstances were nearly identical.

After the Jaguars had tied the game at 27 by scoring 10 straight points, the Packers got the ball back with 1:48, once again at their own 30.

After a gain of four by Josh Jacobs on first down, Malik Willis — in for the re-injured Love — found Jayden Reed open down the left sideline for 51 yards and a first down at the Jacksonville 15.

After runs by Jacobs and Chris Brooks gave Green Bay a 1st-and-goal at the 4, Willis took two kneeldowns and McManus trotted out with two seconds left and chipped in a 24-yard field goal as time expired

for the win.

The Detroit Lions snapped the four-game win streak a week later at Lambeau Field, as the Packers headed into their bye week at 6-3.

Following the two-week break, the Packers then headed into Chicago to face a 4-5 Bears team that had just lost three in a row. *No problem, right?* Guess again.

Trailing 19-14 heading into the fourth quarter, the Packers scored the go-ahead touchdown on a one-yard run by Jordan Love with three minutes remaining.

But Bears QB Caleb Williams drove Chicago into field goal range with just three seconds on the clock. Now, it was the Packers facing defeat on a last-second field goal as time expired.

Their only hope was to block the attempt by Cairo Santos from 46 yards out.

And that’s just what they did.

Just over a year after he had done the same against Minnesota in 2023, Packers defensive lineman Karl Brooks reached up and got just enough of the ball to send it flailing into the Soldier Field turf as time expired and sending the Packers to their seventh win of the season.

Green Bay improved to 9-3 after dominating wins over San Francisco and Miami four days apart, including a 30-17 Thanksgiving night win over the Dolphins.

The following week, the Packers headed into Ford Field to face the division-leading Lions. In a back-and-forth ballgame, the Packers fought to the bitter end, losing 34-31 on a last-second field goal by Detroit’s Jake Bates as time expired, after Green Bay had rallied from a 17-7 halftime deficit to take a 28-24 lead early in the fourth quarter.

Ten days later, a rested Packers team went into Seattle and did something they had not done there since 2008 — win.

Green Bay jumped out to a 20-3 halftime lead and won, 30-13. Jacobs ran for 94 yards and a touchdown, while Love completed 20 of 27 pass attempts for 229 yards and two scores, both to Doubs.

The truly fun and relaxing game for Packers fans to watch came the following week, when Green Bay

hosted New Orleans on ESPN’s *Monday Night Football*.

The Packers jumped out to a quick 7-0 lead and never looked back, notching a 34-0 win, the first shutout of the season in the entire NFL.

The good news was that the win clinched a playoff berth for the Packers.

The bad news? The lopsided victory over the Saints was Green Bay’s last of the season.

Following back-to-back two-point losses to the Vikings and the Bears to close out the regular season, the Packers once again snuck into the playoffs as a seventh-seed Wild Card team.

For the first time since 2013, Green Bay failed to make it out of the Wild Card round of the playoffs when they lost to the Eagles Jan. 12 in Philadelphia, 22-10.

Despite finishing the regular season at 11-6, the Packers finished in third place in the NFC North, behind 14-3 Minnesota and 15-2 Detroit.

All three teams, however, were one-and-done in the postseason.

In 15 games, Jordan Love threw for 3,389 yards and 25 touchdowns.

He also threw 11 interceptions and had a completion percentage of 63.1.

Willis, appearing in seven games and starting two, threw for 550 yards and three scores.

He completed 74% of his passes with no interceptions.

Josh Jacobs ran the ball 301 times for 1,329 and 15 touchdowns.

He also had 36 receptions for 342 and one score — the first pass-receiving touchdown of his career.

Emanuel Wilson carried the ball 103 times for 502 yards and four scores. Chris Brooks had 36 carries for 183 yards and a touchdown.

Jayden Reed led the Packers in receiving, with 55 catches for 857 yards and six touchdowns.

Tight end Tucker Kraft had a breakout season, catching 50 passes for 707 yards and a team-high seven receiving touchdowns.

In 11 games, Brandon McManus hit 20 of 21 field goal attempts and all 30 PAT attempts.

This was also the 17th and final season for Mark Murphy as CEO, as he prepares to retire in July, after reaching the club’s mandatory retirement age of 70. 📅



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The evolution of it all

BY TORI WITTENBROCK
SPORTS EDITOR

Continued from the last edition

GREEN BAY – Having the chance to be a trail-blazer in the professional cheerleading industry was once in a lifetime opportunity for some of the most treasured women in the Packers franchise — the Golden Girls.

“For me, it was the exposure of doing what we had been doing. I had been asked to speak — like at the State Capital, or different events and getting into sports marketing — so it was no big deal to get up in front of crowds of people who would come. I even did a cooking show with Leroy Butler once. It prepared us to be able to not fear anything, especially when it came to speaking and being out in the public. I’m always grateful for where the opportunity allowed me to go personally because I did a lot of publicity work afterwards,” said Golden Girls Cheerleader Sandy Borkovetz.

Physically cheering on one of the greatest teams in NFL history is an unmatched memory according to Borkovetz, but the secondary skills she learned while on Lambeau Field far surpassed the dance routines and media training.

“At the same time I was doing this I was working for the Door County Chamber of Commerce as a good will ambassador for the county. Tourist buses would come into town and I would hop on and narrate the whole history of Door County. That’s probably something I wouldn’t have been able to do prior to that,” said Borkovetz. “It’s interesting to see how much it changed all of our lives.”

The opportunities that came as a subsequent response to the experience of cheering for the Packers were life-changing for many of the girls according to Former Cheerleader Anne Maedke.

“A lot of us took paths we never would have gone down had it not been for



Mary Jane Van Duyse Sorgel, in red, stands with her Golden Girls on Lambeau Field.

the experience cheering on the Green Bay Packers field,” said Maedke.

According to Maedke, many of the life lessons that were instilled in the Golden Girls were the result of the high expectations set for them by Mary Jane Van Duyse Sorgel.

“The thing that I want to make a bigger deal about is that we were brought up with a very wholesome attitude towards being everyone’s equal. We weren’t special, we were just part of the entertainment and it was a really healthy environment,” said Maedke. “I was so grateful to see the contrast of how human interaction in a positive way unfolds as opposed to how the world is today.”

Maedke also recounted a special memory of being a young girl in a professional environment that was expected to embrace the rarity of her opportunity with poise.

“It was just the coolest thing to be able to stand there cheering them on as they were coming out of the tunnel,” said Maedke.

“Mary Jane would line

us up outside the tunnel according to height. At 5’2” I was always at the end and would have to lean around to see them coming out. I remember thinking, ‘I hope they don’t mow me over,’” said Maedke.

Despite her age, Maedke said that she was never left without proper mentorship or guidance at the hands of Van Duyse Sorgel.

“Some of us were so young. The girls that were older than us that were there and cheered and then moved on with their lives left it to us. Mary Jane had a blend of the new girls with the old girls. We were never too green — she was really clever about how she did that so that it was always the same level of polished, of showmanship, the same accuracy and talent. It was nice that way,” said Maedke.

Everything changes

Borkovetz and Maedke said that reflecting on their experiences on the field has bred an interesting comparison to how different their role would

have been in today’s world.

“I went on to order pom-poms for Mary Jane’s funeral and found they have a whole set up now for cheerleading. They didn’t have that back then. You can say, ‘I want that sweater with that skirt and have 16 sets in the mail. Back in

Mary Jane’s day, she had to go through 32 magazines that were sent to her,” said Maedke.

Nowadays, not only has the ease of access to cheer uniforms changed dramatically, but the once modest and respectable styles have changed as well.

“I’ve seen the pinned up look with the low cut shirts and the midriffs showing. I can see the part that would sell, but it just kind of takes the imagination and the wholesomeness of the whole thing,” said Maedke.

See CHEERLEADERS page 7

Harmann Studios photo



Former cheerleaders Sandy Borkovetz, far left, and Karen Cowen, left, stand with Mary Jane Van Duyse Sorgel, middle; Christine Woldt Tierney, second from right; and Betty McAllister.

Karen Cowen photo



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CHEESEHEAD NATION

BRIAN WITTE

BY TORI WITTENBROCK
ASSOCIATE SPORTS
EDITOR

GREEN BAY – The Green Bay Packers have been known for having a large, nationwide fanbase that spreads far beyond the local Green Bay area.

Long-time Packers fan Brian Witte is just one example of how the Packers have affected people from all over the country.

Witte of Burlington County, New Jersey, said that like many other young, impressionable football fans, witnessing a significant Packers victory was part of what drew him in to the Green Bay Packers fanbase.

“The reason I became a Packers fan was because of my earliest memories of watching football and understanding in 1997 when they beat the Patriots in the Super Bowl and I’ve always had the image of (Brett) Favre taking his helmet off and running around the field,” said Witte.

“I was so young and just had that image etched in my head, so I’ve stuck with them ever since and now forget it, I’m full-blown obsessed.”

“I also loved the 2016 run

when they ran the table and went all the way to the end and that’s one of my favorite years.”

In addition to some of his favorite memories of the team, one thing that has always kept him an avid Packers supporter is seeing the drive and talent of the team come together to create success on the field.

“My favorite part of being a Packers fan is the competitiveness of them being a contender with playoffs almost every year. Obviously in my lifetime — I’m 34 — they have had two of the greatest quarterbacks ever, so I think just always being in it and the tradition of the team and just how that all comes together,” said Witte.

Although he lives in New Jersey, Witte said that he was able to make it out to one game a few years ago, which was an unforgettable experience.

“I’ve been to one game in 2018 when they played San Francisco,” said Witte.

“I’m not in town for a game this weekend — I’m here for work, but I just had to stop by Lambeau Field.”

Although Witte is a die-hard supporter of the team, like most Packers fans, he has one player that he said he especially enjoys watch-

ing, both on and off the field.

“Right now, there are so many young guys who are awesome, but I would probably say Jaire (Alexander) is my favorite. He kind of just has always brought a different energy and been a different breed for the team which I have always loved, so I’m always rooting for him, but I’m sure that will change in years to come because there is so much good, young talent on this team right now,” said Witte.

Though the Packers have been using this season to grow and develop with a young roster, Witte said he has enjoyed witnessing them come together as a team.

“My favorite thing this season was that three-game stretch where Jordan (Love) looked awesome and the defense was coming together, so I think just seeing the young playmakers kind of just start to come together and start to mesh, which I think was the vision early on. Even though the season didn’t start off that way, it’s coming together now, so I think I’m really looking forward to seeing those players grow and who emerges as the future stars of the team.”



DRAFT
2025

This year, we will release a special Packerland Draft edition, to come out for the April 24-26 event.

If you are are hosting an event for the Draft, please contact:

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Listen to stories about the Green Bay Packers' long history in what became known as Titledown. From Lambeau to Lombardi to LaFleur, we'll cover it here. Find Season 2 of the Packerland podcast on Spotify.



The Lumberjack Band: Hayseeds don't march

BY KRIS LEONHARDT
EDITOR

Continued from previous edition

It was November 1927 before the community came together again for a “fund gathering” to get the “Lumberjack Band” transported back to Chicago for the final game of that season.

Contribution buckets were circulated around City Stadium during the Dayton-Packers game the week before the Packers-Chicago clash.

“The members of the Legion band, who will turn Lumberjacks for a period of about 35 hours are getting together their hob-nailed shoes, rough mackinaws and corduroy pants for the occasion. On about next Tuesday, the musicians will start letting their whiskers grow to complete the lumberjack picture,” a Nov. 9, 1927, *Press-Gazette* article stated.

The Lumberjack Band accompanied the Packers, along with an estimated 1,000 fans, and helped cheer the team to a 14-6 win over the Bears.

The following year, the band traveled to Wrigley Field once again for the Packers’ October match up



A 1930 photo of the band playing in Chicago.

with the Bears, and walked away with a reported world record.

“The Green Bay American Legion band — the lumberjack organization that played for the Packers-Bears game in Chicago Sunday — claims a world record for continuous playing without stopping to change music, or for any other reason,” an Oct. 23, 1928, *Press-Gazette* story stated.

“The bandsmen dressed as lumberjacks, marched in

ragged formation and were purposely out of step, a fact that may not have been appreciated by the WGN radio announcer, the band thinks, but surely was appreciated by both the Green Bay and Chicago fans.”

The following week, the band was back on the field as the Packers beat Dayton 17-0 at City Stadium.

Whether at home or taking the train to Chicago, the band made a big show of it, marching from the Elks

Club to the Northwestern train forming a parade in their Lumberjack gear.

In 1929, 1930 and 1931 the band continued to return to the Chicago games to cheer on the Packers, financed by a community collection; however, area residents began to struggle with their non-conventional attire.

While locals voiced their displeasure, an Green Bay resident defended their choice.

“Our band tries to be



A 1929 ad invites fans to travel with the Lumberjack Band. Chicago & Northwestern Railway ad

something really different, not to the point of having hay in their hair, but rather as something novel and unique. They do not make Chicago fans think of us as a bunch of hicks, because ‘hayseeds’ do not march or play like our band does. Appearance counts a lot so

it is used in this case for effect,” a “Packers and Band Booster” wrote in the Oct. 13, 1931, *Press-Gazette*.

As this is our last edition of Packerland until the April Draft, this story will continue in the Press Times. 🍷

CHEERLEADERS

from page 5

“And there’s nothing wrong with having some leggings on if it’s 40 below.”

Despite the “frozen tundra” conditions of Lambeau Field, Borkovetz explained that many of the Golden Girls had to experience the famed Ice Bowl according to strict uniform standards that didn’t allow for modifications to their attire.

“You couldn’t just get pantyhose anywhere that didn’t have the dark lines around them. We’re talking the late 60s when they would double knit them from the thigh up so you could tell they were under the skirts,” said Borkovetz.

Though the NFL cheerleading culture has endured some major changes in their public perception over the years, Borkovetz and Maedke said that they will forever treasure the time in which they were able to occupy the sidelines at Lambeau Field.

“I can’t say enough about the contrast I see when you ask the question of cheerleaders today. This is professional football. I know the goal is to get the attention of the fans, to interact, to market the pictures and make a buck on it. If you’re going to do that, well then bring out some football cards or cheerleader cards and sell them for charity or something like that,” said Maedke.

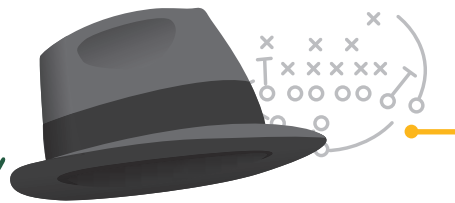
“I think I would involve some kind of advertisement of the cheerleaders to advertise for a good cause. Yes — the Packers are a good cause, but couldn’t you take that opportunity for this charitable endeavor and pass it on to honor the people

like Curly Lambeau and Vince Lombardi and Mary Jane Van Dueyse Sorgel and all the other older football players that made the game and put Green Bay on the map?”

Borkovetz said that her appreciation for the opportunity to be a Golden Girl has never faltered.

“We couldn’t have had a better time than to be there with the likes of Willy Wood, Willy Davis, Henry Jordan, Ray Nitzzke, Bart Starr. We wouldn’t have had a better opportunity to cheer on a greater team in the whole history of the Packers,” said Borkovetz. 🍷

A few words from Lombardi



“Once a man has made a commitment to a way of life, he puts the greatest strength in the world behind him. It’s something we call heart power. Once a man has made this commitment, nothing will stop him short of success.”

-Vince Lombardi



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PACKERS vs. BEARS

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Running back Emmanuel Wilson fends off a tackle from the Bears.

Tori Wittenbrock photos

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Tight end Tucker Kraft heads for the endzone.



Packers Running Back Chris Brooks trudges forward for some extra yards in his team's 24-22 loss to the Bears.

Tori Wittenbrock photos



Green Bay Packers Wide Receiver Dontayvion Wicks lurches through pressure from the Chicago Bears defense in their final game of the 2024-25 season.

UNPACKING History



The Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame generously opened their vault to share pieces of Packers history with the Press Times to be highlighted each week for our readers. For more information on the hall of fame, visit www.packershofandtours.com. If you would like to donate Green Bay Packers memorabilia to the Packers Hall of Fame, contact Katie at (920) 965-6986 or katief@gbphof.com.

Frank Winters' Super Bowl XXXI game worn shoes, signed by Winters. The Green Bay Packers defeated the Patriots 35-21 at the Superdome in New Orleans. It was the Packers' third Super Bowl victory — their first since Super Bowl II in 1968.

Katie Foust photo

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Fan Photo Gallery



Chris Pamperin photos





Chris Pamperin photos

Fan Photos Wanted!



Submit your Packer fan photos for a chance to have them published in Press Times Packerland. Email them to the editor, Kris Leonhardt at kleonhardt@mmclocal.com.

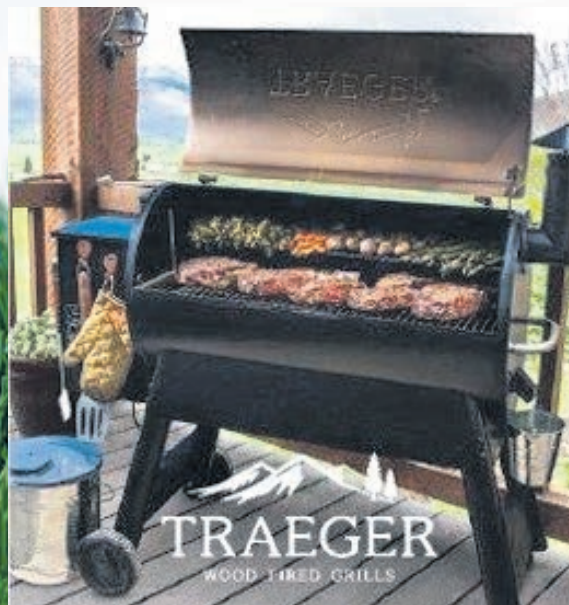
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DRAFT
from page 1

Six days before the 1976 Draft, Starr attempted to untangle the Hadl debacle, sending the 14-year veteran, DB Ken Ellis and two draft picks to Houston in exchange for Lynn Dickey.

The highlight of Starr's tenure, as GM anyway, came in 1978, when he used the sixth overall pick of the Draft to select future NFL Hall of Fame wide receiver James Lofton.

Starr had eleven first-round draft picks over the course of his nine seasons at the helm, but could never put together a winning team.

After going 52-76-3 with just one playoff appearance (in the strike-shortened '82 season), Starr was fired Dec. 19, 1983 and replaced five days later by a former Green Bay teammate.

The Forrest Gregg era highlight came when the former right tackle traded the 14th overall pick and Green Bay's second-round selection (42nd overall) to Buffalo for their fourth-round pick in 1986 and the seventh-overall pick in '85, which was used to grab USC's Ken Ruettgers, who would become a mainstay at left tackle for

10 of the next 12 seasons and 156 games.

Gregg's teams went a combined 25-37-1. After four seasons, he resigned (Jan. 15, '88) to become head coach at his alma mater, Southern Methodist University.

Recognized as a brilliant offensive innovator, Cleveland Browns offensive coordinator Lindy Infante was brought in to replace the Packers' former Hall of Fame tackle.

Infante wasted no time building his offense of the future, drafting wide receiver Sterling Sharpe with the seventh overall pick in the 1988 NFL Draft, adding him to a roster which already included QB Don Majkowski.

Holding the second overall pick in the 1989 NFL Draft, the Packers were poised to make a big splash and turn things around in Titledown.

Green Bay's first-round selection certainly made headlines, but for all the wrong reasons.

Tony Mandarich would start more games for Lindy Infante in Indianapolis than he would for the coach and team that drafted him.

Unable to live up to expectations, the former Michigan State standout was released following

four seasons with the Packers.

After five years away from football, he returned with the Infante-led Indianapolis Colts, where he spent his last three seasons.

He is the only top five pick in his draft class not inducted to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

The lone bright spot of the '89 Draft for the Packers turned out to be their sixth-round selection, placekicker Chris Jacke, who went on to play in 126 games over eight seasons and is the team's fourth all-time leading scorer.

The rookie kicker was a pivotal part of Green Bay's success in 1989, drilling four game-winning kicks (including the deciding PAT in "The Instant Replay Game") and helping the "Cardiac Pack" to a 10-6 record.

Key additions in the 1990 NFL Draft included future Hall of Fame DB LeRoy Butler (second round, 48th overall).

Tom Braatz, executive vice president of football operations, was relieved of his duties with five games left in the 1991 regular season.

He was replaced by Ron Wolf, who fired Infante the day after the season ended. In four seasons,

Infante's teams went 24-40 with no playoff appearances.

Wolf, inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2015, almost immediately embarked on one of the most remarkable rebuilding efforts in NFL history.

And while he is mostly remembered as the man who introduced us all to Brett Favre, and who in 1993 convinced All-Pro Reggie White that small-market Green Bay was his best career move, Wolf also orchestrated nine stellar drafts (1992-2000) which produced the second-best regular-season record in the NFL, six straight trips to the playoffs and back-to-back Super Bowl appearances.

The 1996 Green Bay Packers team that steamrolled its way to a 13-3 regular-season record, dominated the 49ers and Panthers in the playoffs and won Super Bowl XXXI featured 27 players whom were drafted over the course of eight different annual player selection meetings, dating as far back as 1985 (Ken Ruettgers).

Just three key contributors — Brett Favre, Keith Jackson and Eugene Robinson — were acquired via trades. Seventeen others were free agent signings — including White and Desmond Howard, the MVP of Super Bowl XXXI.

The team that Ron Wolf and Mike Holmgren built and took to Super Bowl XXXI was largely the same squad that also made it to Super Bowl XXXII the fol-

lowing season.

Key additions in the 1997 NFL Draft included T Ross Verba in round one (30th overall) and S Darren Sharper in the second round (60th overall).

Kicker Ryan Longwell was a pivotal free agent acquisition that year as well.

And although the Packers came up short in their effort to repeat as champions, the seven-point win by the Denver Broncos is widely considered one of the greatest games in Super Bowl history.

The Wolf-Holmgren era fizzled quickly, however.

Five days after the 11-5 Packers were stunned by the 49ers in a last-second Wild Card loss in San Francisco to end their 1998 season, Holmgren stepped down to become head coach and director of football operations for the Seattle Seahawks.

Wolf retired two years later.

Four years after Wolf's departure, 'the team president, Bob Harlan,' restructured the team's football operations, naming Ted Thompson general manager while giving him full authority over football decisions.

The move proved monumental, as Thompson helped deliver the franchise's league-best 13th championship just a handful of years later.

Thompson wasted no time in putting his stamp on Green Bay history.

With Brett Favre still performing at a high level, and coming off three consecutive division cham-

pionships, Thompson turned heads at the 2005 NFL Draft by selecting QB Aaron Rodgers with the 24th overall pick.

Fast forward nearly six years, Rodgers was now leading a Packers team which had just won Super Bowl XLV, largely featuring players whom had been drafted over the previous decade.

All but five of Green Bay's 22 starters in a 31-25 win over the Pittsburgh Steelers were drafted between 1999 and 2010.

The following 14 years would feature plenty of regular-season and division success, followed by a series of near misses in the postseason.

From 2011 through 2024, the Packers posted a regular-season record of 146-80, but a postseason mark of just 8-11.

During that time span, the Packers drafted 134 players, including Randall Cobb, David Bakhtiari, Davante Adams, Kenny Clark, Aaron Jones, Jaire Alexander, Rashan Gary and Tucker Kraft.

However, with a 14th championship eluding the franchise that plays in Titledown, team officials continue searching for answers, while frustrated Packers fans quite liberally continue tossing around the "bust" label.

We will take a more in-depth look at Packers Draft history, in a special edition of Packerland due out just prior to the 2025 NFL Draft, to be held April 24-26 in Green Bay. 🏈



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2025 NFL DRAFT NEWS

NFL OnePass: Your one-stop shop for the NFL Draft

BY PACKERLAND STAFF

GREEN BAY – As the 2025 NFL Draft unfolds in Green Bay, April 24-26, the NFL OnePass app is the ultimate companion for every fan, whether they're in Green Bay or watching from home.

Fans worldwide eagerly anticipate the next generation of football stars, and OnePass will be their “digital gateway” to all the action.

As fans arrive at the Draft Experience, they will use OnePass to check in and begin their personalized journey.

The app grants them access to interactive games, autograph sessions with NFL legends and exclusive merchandise.

Based on their favorite teams and players, OnePass curates recommendations for events and attractions, ensuring every fan maximizes their experience.

For those who can't make it to Green Bay, OnePass offers a front-row seat from home.

Live streams of the Draft are available with real-time analysis and commentary.

Fans can explore in-depth profiles of every Draft prospect, complete with stats, highlights and scouting reports.

Throughout the three-day event, OnePass keeps fans engaged with interactive games and quizzes.

The app provides detailed maps of the venue, schedules of events and real-time updates on wait times for attractions.

Current information on the app reflects what has taken place during previous Drafts as the NFL focused on the playoffs and Super Bowl in January.

“Details about the 2025 NFL Draft in Green Bay are still being finalized,” the app stated.

“Fans are encouraged to visit Discover Green Bay and Travel Wisconsin to plan their visit and check back in the coming months as more information is announced.

The NFL said that “the main portion of the event is expected to take place



As the 2025 NFL Draft unfolds in Green Bay, April 24-26, the NFL OnePass app is the ultimate companion for every fan.

Packerland staff photo

on the Lambeau Field and Titledown campus, with a variety of venues to be utilized within close proximity to the stadium campus.”

“In previous years, the three-day event has also included free musical performances and entertainment as part of the NFL Draft Concert Series, along with a variety of community events taking place throughout the host city’s area,” the app reads.

“Opportunities for attending the 2025 NFL Draft are still being finalized and will be announced in the coming months.”

For more information and to stay on top of Draft news, download the app in the App Store or on Google Play.

Adults 18 and older must register for the 2024 NFL draft through the app or at nfl.com/draftaccess. 📱

SEASON REVIEW

from page 1

Tucker Kraft led the Green Bay offense with four catches for 88 yards and two touchdowns, including a 66-yarder.

Back at Lambeau Field the following week, the Packers dominated Arizona, 34-13.

Jordan Love threw four touchdowns, including two to Romeo Doubs.

The Packers went into a week 7 matchup at Lambeau Field with new uniforms and a new kicker.

In the team’s first-ever “Winter Warning” game Oct. 20, the Packers wore white alternate helmets.

The brand-new helmets included a solid white face mask and a white shell, with the traditional dark green Packers “G” logo on the sides and dark green stripes down the middle.

The white helmets were paired with the fan-favorite combination of the team’s white away jerseys, white pants and solid white socks.

The Packers were also featuring new kicker Brandon McManus, signed four days earlier following the release of Brayden Narveson, who had missed a league-high five field-goal attempts after six weeks.

The move paid off.

After the Texans kicked a go-ahead field goal with 1:44 remaining, Love led the Packers from their own 30-yard line to the Houston 26, where McManus kicked a game-winning 45-yard field goal as time expired.

A week later, McManus — a former Jaguar — returned to Jacksonville, where he repeated his last-second heroics from the week before.

And the circumstances were nearly identical.

After the Jaguars had tied the game at 27 by scoring 10 straight points, the Packers got the ball back with 1:48, once again at their own 30.

After a gain of four by Josh Jacobs on first down, Malik Willis — in for the re-injured Love — found Jayden Reed open down the left sideline for 51 yards and a first down at the Jacksonville 15.

After runs by Jacobs and Chris Brooks gave Green Bay a 1st-and-goal at the 4, Willis took two kneeldowns and McManus trotted out with two seconds left and chipped in a 24-yard field goal as time expired

for the win.

The Detroit Lions snapped the four-game win streak a week later at Lambeau Field, as the Packers headed into their bye week at 6-3.

Following the two-week break, the Packers then headed into Chicago to face a 4-5 Bears team that had just lost three in a row. *No problem, right?* Guess again.

Trailing 19-14 heading into the fourth quarter, the Packers scored the go-ahead touchdown on a one-yard run by Jordan Love with three minutes remaining.

But Bears QB Caleb Williams drove Chicago into field goal range with just three seconds on the clock. Now, it was the Packers facing defeat on a last-second field goal as time expired.

Their only hope was to block the attempt by Cairo Santos from 46 yards out.

And that’s just what they did.

Just over a year after he had done the same against Minnesota in 2023, Packers defensive lineman Karl Brooks reached up and got just enough of the ball to send it flailing into the Soldier Field turf as time expired and sending the Packers to their seventh win of the season.

Green Bay improved to 9-3 after dominating wins over San Francisco and Miami four days apart, including a 30-17 Thanksgiving night win over the Dolphins.

The following week, the Packers headed into Ford Field to face the division-leading Lions. In a back-and-forth ballgame, the Packers fought to the bitter end, losing 34-31 on a last-second field goal by Detroit’s Jake Bates as time expired, after Green Bay had rallied from a 17-7 halftime deficit to take a 28-24 lead early in the fourth quarter.

Ten days later, a rested Packers team went into Seattle and did something they had not done there since 2008 — win.

Green Bay jumped out to a 20-3 halftime lead and won, 30-13. Jacobs ran for 94 yards and a touchdown, while Love completed 20 of 27 pass attempts for 229 yards and two scores, both to Doubs.

The truly fun and relaxing game for Packers fans to watch came the following week, when Green Bay

hosted New Orleans on ESPN’s *Monday Night Football*.

The Packers jumped out to a quick 7-0 lead and never looked back, notching a 34-0 win, the first shutout of the season in the entire NFL.

The good news was that the win clinched a playoff berth for the Packers.

The bad news? The lopsided victory over the Saints was Green Bay’s last of the season.

Following back-to-back two-point losses to the Vikings and the Bears to close out the regular season, the Packers once again snuck into the playoffs as a seventh-seed Wild Card team.

For the first time since 2013, Green Bay failed to make it out of the Wild Card round of the playoffs when they lost to the Eagles Jan. 12 in Philadelphia, 22-10.

Despite finishing the regular season at 11-6, the Packers finished in third place in the NFC North, behind 14-3 Minnesota and 15-2 Detroit.

All three teams, however, were one-and-done in the postseason.

In 15 games, Jordan Love threw for 3,389 yards and 25 touchdowns.

He also threw 11 interceptions and had a completion percentage of 63.1.

Willis, appearing in seven games and starting two, threw for 550 yards and three scores.

He completed 74% of his passes with no interceptions.

Josh Jacobs ran the ball 301 times for 1,329 and 15 touchdowns.

He also had 36 receptions for 342 and one score — the first pass-receiving touchdown of his career.

Emanuel Wilson carried the ball 103 times for 502 yards and four scores. Chris Brooks had 36 carries for 183 yards and a touchdown.

Jayden Reed led the Packers in receiving, with 55 catches for 857 yards and six touchdowns.

Tight end Tucker Kraft had a breakout season, catching 50 passes for 707 yards and a team-high seven receiving touchdowns.

In 11 games, Brandon McManus hit 20 of 21 field goal attempts and all 30 PAT attempts.

This was also the 17th and final season for Mark Murphy as CEO, as he prepares to retire in July, after reaching the club’s mandatory retirement age of 70. 📅



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The evolution of it all

BY TORI WITTENBROCK
SPORTS EDITOR

Continued from the last edition

GREEN BAY – Having the chance to be a trail-blazer in the professional cheerleading industry was once in a lifetime opportunity for some of the most treasured women in the Packers franchise — the Golden Girls.

“For me, it was the exposure of doing what we had been doing. I had been asked to speak — like at the State Capital, or different events and getting into sports marketing — so it was no big deal to get up in front of crowds of people who would come. I even did a cooking show with Leroy Butler once. It prepared us to be able to not fear anything, especially when it came to speaking and being out in the public. I’m always grateful for where the opportunity allowed me to go personally because I did a lot of publicity work afterwards,” said Golden Girls Cheerleader Sandy Borkovetz.

Physically cheering on one of the greatest teams in NFL history is an unmatched memory according to Borkovetz, but the secondary skills she learned while on Lambeau Field far surpassed the dance routines and media training.

“At the same time I was doing this I was working for the Door County Chamber of Commerce as a good will ambassador for the county. Tourist buses would come into town and I would hop on and narrate the whole history of Door County. That’s probably something I wouldn’t have been able to do prior to that,” said Borkovetz. “It’s interesting to see how much it changed all of our lives.”

The opportunities that came as a subsequent response to the experience of cheering for the Packers were life-changing for many of the girls according to Former Cheerleader Anne Maedke.

“A lot of us took paths we never would have gone down had it not been for



Mary Jane Van Duyse Sorgel, in red, stands with her Golden Girls on Lambeau Field.

the experience cheering on the Green Bay Packers field,” said Maedke.

According to Maedke, many of the life lessons that were instilled in the Golden Girls were the result of the high expectations set for them by Mary Jane Van Duyse Sorgel.

“The thing that I want to make a bigger deal about is that we were brought up with a very wholesome attitude towards being everyone’s equal. We weren’t special, we were just part of the entertainment and it was a really healthy environment,” said Maedke. “I was so grateful to see the contrast of how human interaction in a positive way unfolds as opposed to how the world is today.”

Maedke also recounted a special memory of being a young girl in a professional environment that was expected to embrace the rarity of her opportunity with poise.

“It was just the coolest thing to be able to stand there cheering them on as they were coming out of the tunnel,” said Maedke.

“Mary Jane would line

us up outside the tunnel according to height. At 5’2” I was always at the end and would have to lean around to see them coming out. I remember thinking, ‘I hope they don’t mow me over,’” said Maedke.

Despite her age, Maedke said that she was never left without proper mentorship or guidance at the hands of Van Duyse Sorgel.

“Some of us were so young. The girls that were older than us that were there and cheered and then moved on with their lives left it to us. Mary Jane had a blend of the new girls with the old girls. We were never too green — she was really clever about how she did that so that it was always the same level of polished, of showmanship, the same accuracy and talent. It was nice that way,” said Maedke.

Everything changes

Borkovetz and Maedke said that reflecting on their experiences on the field has bred an interesting comparison to how different their role would

have been in today’s world.

“I went on to order pom-poms for Mary Jane’s funeral and found they have a whole set up now for cheerleading. They didn’t have that back then. You can say, ‘I want that sweater with that skirt and have 16 sets in the mail. Back in

Mary Jane’s day, she had to go through 32 magazines that were sent to her,” said Maedke.

Nowadays, not only has the ease of access to cheer uniforms changed dramatically, but the once modest and respectable styles have changed as well.

“I’ve seen the pinned up look with the low cut shirts and the midribs showing. I can see the part that would sell, but it just kind of takes the imagination and the wholesomeness of the whole thing,” said Maedke.

See CHEERLEADERS page 7

Harmann Studios photo



Former cheerleaders Sandy Borkovetz, far left, and Karen Cowen, left, stand with Mary Jane Van Duyse Sorgel, middle; Christine Woldt Tierney, second from right; and Betty McAllister.

Karen Cowen photo



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BRIAN WITTE

BY TORI WITTENBROCK
ASSOCIATE SPORTS
EDITOR

GREEN BAY – The Green Bay Packers have been known for having a large, nationwide fanbase that spreads far beyond the local Green Bay area.

Long-time Packers fan Brian Witte is just one example of how the Packers have affected people from all over the country.

Witte of Burlington County, New Jersey, said that like many other young, impressionable football fans, witnessing a significant Packers victory was part of what drew him in to the Green Bay Packers fanbase.

“The reason I became a Packers fan was because of my earliest memories of watching football and understanding in 1997 when they beat the Patriots in the Super Bowl and I’ve always had the image of (Brett) Favre taking his helmet off and running around the field,” said Witte.

“I was so young and just had that image etched in my head, so I’ve stuck with them ever since and now forget it, I’m full-blown obsessed.”

“I also loved the 2016 run

when they ran the table and went all the way to the end and that’s one of my favorite years.”

In addition to some of his favorite memories of the team, one thing that has always kept him an avid Packers supporter is seeing the drive and talent of the team come together to create success on the field.

“My favorite part of being a Packers fan is the competitiveness of them being a contender with playoffs almost every year. Obviously in my lifetime — I’m 34 — they have had two of the greatest quarterbacks ever, so I think just always being in it and the tradition of the team and just how that all comes together,” said Witte.

Although he lives in New Jersey, Witte said that he was able to make it out to one game a few years ago, which was an unforgettable experience.

“I’ve been to one game in 2018 when they played San Francisco,” said Witte.

“I’m not in town for a game this weekend — I’m here for work, but I just had to stop by Lambeau Field.”

Although Witte is a die-hard supporter of the team, like most Packers fans, he has one player that he said he especially enjoys watch-

ing, both on and off the field.

“Right now, there are so many young guys who are awesome, but I would probably say Jaire (Alexander) is my favorite. He kind of just has always brought a different energy and been a different breed for the team which I have always loved, so I’m always rooting for him, but I’m sure that will change in years to come because there is so much good, young talent on this team right now,” said Witte.

Though the Packers have been using this season to grow and develop with a young roster, Witte said he has enjoyed witnessing them come together as a team.

“My favorite thing this season was that three-game stretch where Jordan (Love) looked awesome and the defense was coming together, so I think just seeing the young playmakers kind of just start to come together and start to mesh, which I think was the vision early on. Even though the season didn’t start off that way, it’s coming together now, so I think I’m really looking forward to seeing those players grow and who emerges as the future stars of the team.”



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2025

This year, we will release a special Packerland Draft edition, to come out for the April 24-26 event.

If you are are hosting an event for the Draft, please contact:

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Listen to stories about the Green Bay Packers' long history in what became known as Titledown. From Lambeau to Lombardi to LaFleur, we'll cover it here. Find Season 2 of the Packerland podcast on Spotify.



The Lumberjack Band: Hayseeds don't march

BY KRIS LEONHARDT
EDITOR

Continued from previous edition

It was November 1927 before the community came together again for a “fund gathering” to get the “Lumberjack Band” transported back to Chicago for the final game of that season.

Contribution buckets were circulated around City Stadium during the Dayton-Packers game the week before the Packers-Chicago clash.

“The members of the Legion band, who will turn Lumberjacks for a period of about 35 hours are getting together their hob-nailed shoes, rough mackinaws and corduroy pants for the occasion. On about next Tuesday, the musicians will start letting their whiskers grow to complete the lumberjack picture,” a Nov. 9, 1927, *Press-Gazette* article stated.

The Lumberjack Band accompanied the Packers, along with an estimated 1,000 fans, and helped cheer the team to a 14-6 win over the Bears.

The following year, the band traveled to Wrigley Field once again for the Packers’ October match up



A 1930 photo of the band playing in Chicago.

with the Bears, and walked away with a reported world record.

“The Green Bay American Legion band — the lumberjack organization that played for the Packers-Bears game in Chicago Sunday — claims a world record for continuous playing without stopping to change music, or for any other reason,” an Oct. 23, 1928, *Press-Gazette* story stated.

“The bandsmen dressed as lumberjacks, marched in

ragged formation and were purposely out of step, a fact that may not have been appreciated by the WGN radio announcer, the band thinks, but surely was appreciated by both the Green Bay and Chicago fans.”

The following week, the band was back on the field as the Packers beat Dayton 17-0 at City Stadium.

Whether at home or taking the train to Chicago, the band made a big show of it, marching from the Elks

Club to the Northwestern train forming a parade in their Lumberjack gear.

In 1929, 1930 and 1931 the band continued to return to the Chicago games to cheer on the Packers, financed by a community collection; however, area residents began to struggle with their non-conventional attire.

While locals voiced their displeasure, an Green Bay resident defended their choice.

“Our band tries to be



A 1929 ad invites fans to travel with the Lumberjack Band. Chicago & Northwestern Railway ad

something really different, not to the point of having hay in their hair, but rather as something novel and unique. They do not make Chicago fans think of us as a bunch of hicks, because ‘hayseeds’ do not march or play like our band does. Appearance counts a lot so

it is used in this case for effect,” a “Packers and Band Booster” wrote in the Oct. 13, 1931, *Press-Gazette*.

As this is our last edition of Packerland until the April Draft, this story will continue in the Press Times. 🍷

CHEERLEADERS

from page 5

“And there’s nothing wrong with having some leggings on if it’s 40 below.”

Despite the “frozen tundra” conditions of Lambeau Field, Borkovetz explained that many of the Golden Girls had to experience the famed Ice Bowl according to strict uniform standards that didn’t allow for modifications to their attire.

“You couldn’t just get pantyhose anywhere that didn’t have the dark lines around them. We’re talking the late 60s when they would double knit them from the thigh up so you could tell they were under the skirts,” said Borkovetz.

Though the NFL cheerleading culture has endured some major changes in their public perception over the years, Borkovetz and Maedke said that they will forever treasure the time in which they were able to occupy the sidelines at Lambeau Field.

“I can’t say enough about the contrast I see when you ask the question of cheerleaders today. This is professional football. I know the goal is to get the attention of the fans, to interact, to market the pictures and make a buck on it. If you’re going to do that, well then bring out some football cards or cheerleader cards and sell them for charity or something like that,” said Maedke.

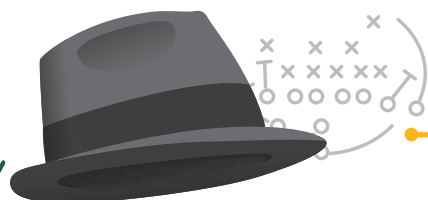
“I think I would involve some kind of advertisement of the cheerleaders to advertise for a good cause. Yes — the Packers are a good cause, but couldn’t you take that opportunity for this charitable endeavor and pass it on to honor the people

like Curly Lambeau and Vince Lombardi and Mary Jane Van Dueyse Sorgel and all the other older football players that made the game and put Green Bay on the map?”

Borkovetz said that her appreciation for the opportunity to be a Golden Girl has never faltered.

“We couldn’t have had a better time than to be there with the likes of Willy Wood, Willy Davis, Henry Jordan, Ray Nitzzke, Bart Starr. We wouldn’t have had a better opportunity to cheer on a greater team in the whole history of the Packers,” said Borkovetz. 🍷

A few words from Lombardi



“Once a man has made a commitment to a way of life, he puts the greatest strength in the world behind him. It’s something we call heart power. Once a man has made this commitment, nothing will stop him short of success.”

-Vince Lombardi



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PACKERS vs. BEARS

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GB	3	10	0	9	22
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Running back Emmanuel Wilson fends off a tackle from the Bears.

Tori Wittenbrock photos

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Tight end Tucker Kraft heads for the endzone.



Packers Running Back Chris Brooks trudges forward for some extra yards in his team's 24-22 loss to the Bears.

Tori Wittenbrock photos



Green Bay Packers Wide Receiver Dontayvion Wicks lurches through pressure from the Chicago Bears defense in their final game of the 2024-25 season.

UNPACKING History



The Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame generously opened their vault to share pieces of Packers history with the Press Times to be highlighted each week for our readers. For more information on the hall of fame, visit www.packershofandtours.com. If you would like to donate Green Bay Packers memorabilia to the Packers Hall of Fame, contact Katie at (920) 965-6986 or katief@gbphof.com.

Frank Winters' Super Bowl XXXI game worn shoes, signed by Winters. The Green Bay Packers defeated the Patriots 35-21 at the Superdome in New Orleans. It was the Packers' third Super Bowl victory — their first since Super Bowl II in 1968.

Katie Foust photo

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