

Rating The Packers vs Jaguars

Packers just plowed under

They can't match Jaguars' intensity

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Green Bay - It wasn't so much that the Green Bay Packers' aura of invincibility in cold weather was smashed by a club from sunny Florida. What made it worse for coach Mike Sherman on his 50th birthday was that Jacksonville was the more physical team.

The Jaguars hit harder and gang-tackled with more intensity. They ran the ball better and stopped the run better. And nothing that the 70,437 fans at Lambeau Field did or said could keep them from taking the Packers apart, just as AFC teams have been doing to NFC teams all season.

Here is a rating of the Packers in the 28-25 defeat, with their 1 to 5 football totals in parentheses:

Receivers (4)

Javon Walker was the target of 16 passes, the most by a Packers WR since Antonio Freeman saw 17 in Week 2 of 1999. He caught 11 for 152 (nine were first downs), including 4-52 against both Rashean Mathis and Dewayne Washington. He made tough catches despite 12-degree weather, showed surprisingly good body control and ran well after the catch (29 yards). Antonio Chatman beat Washington on a slant for his first touchdown but also dropped a pair of 25-yard throws down the middle. It's next to impossible to expect Robert Ferguson to pick up slot blitzer Kiwaukee Thomas on Ahman Green's second fumble. Ferguson paid a brutal price from S Donovan Darius but amazingly still hung on for a 31-yard reception. Bubba Franks blew a block on the bootleg when Brett Favre damaged his left thumb, took forever to get moving on a flat pass and was only marginally better than Ben Steele as a run blocker. Steele's lack of pop at the point of attack hurts the ground game.

Offensive Line (2½)

Marco Rivera's remarkable run of not having given up a full sack in 66 straight games came to an end when LB Daryl Smith beat him on an inside stunt. Rivera said he would lean toward Marcus Stroud over Warren Sapp as the best defensive tackle that he has ever faced. Stroud recorded two pressures against Rivera but Rivera pancaked him twice on run blocks. Mike Wahle drew massive John Henderson in a marquee matchup that probably was a draw. Henderson came off Wahle on two counters plays for minus-1 and 1-yard and had one pressure, but Wahle also worked well off Henderson to the linebacker level. Rookie Scott Wells wasn't nearly as effective in his second start. He was trashed by Henderson for one knockdown and was unable to get out and block MLB Mike Peterson on two runs by Ahman Green for no yardage. He pinned Henderson to a side on three runs but wasn't consistent sustaining. Rookie Bobby McCray's sack on the fourth play was the first full sack against Chad Clifton in 20 games. Clifton drew two more false-start penalties and allowed a flush to Henderson. Stroud's penetration inside against Mark Tauscher contributed to Green's first fumble.

Quarterbacks (2)

Brett Favre completed 68.2% and threw for 367 yards in arctic weather but in the end wound up hurting his team. His first of three interceptions was as much a backbreaker as it was inexcusable. Favre has been running that red-zone rollout for years. He should have just thrown it to Franks right away or thrown it away because it was only first down. He tried to get too fine with another floating touch pass and was intercepted on an underthrown corner route. And he never should have thrown the ball into double coverage that Deon Grant wrestled away from Donald Driver in the end zone. Walker was open on the other side for a possible touchdown. He was fortunate not to have been intercepted on three other occasions and made a bad low throw to an open Walker that would have been a 13-yard touchdown. Against a defense as sound as Jacksonville's a quarterback gets only so many chances. Favre squandered too many.

Running Backs (1½)

It was shocking to see CB Dewayne Washington, 31, haul down Green from behind. Washington isn't supposed to be true speed anymore and Green almost has never been caught in break-out situations. Green was charged with two fumbles but the fumbled handoff that was given to Favre actually was much more Green's fault. That would have given him three. Stroud's penetration against Tauscher wasn't extreme; it's Green's job to hang on to the ball. On his other lost fumble, Green seemed to glance at the blitzing Thomas instead of concentrating on the handoff. Just take your minus-2 and reload on second and 12 from the Jacksonville 25. Nothing wrong with Green's attacking style when he hung on to the ball. He averaged 5.5 yards. Tony Fisher replaced Green for the final 13 snaps after he landed hard on his ribs. Fisher was impressive picking up the blitz. Nick Luchey has had much better blocking games.

Defensive Line (3)

In the last six games Grady Jackson has had just 1 ½ tackle for loss. He has been missing extensive practice time with a lingering knee injury, has lost some endurance and gets too high when fatigue sets in. Kabeer Gbaja-Biamila played off the block of a pulling guard very well on fourth-and-goal but Jackson had been blown back so far into the end zone that FB Greg Jones was able to cut up for the easy winning touchdown. "KGB" blew around LT Ephraim Salaam in 2.8 seconds and forced the fumble that became a touchdown. Cullen Jenkins dealt out punishment to Byron Leftwich on four first-half knockdowns, including two on stunts. He gets caved in against the run but is a keeper as a pass rusher. Inactive for the last four games, Corey Williams played a season-high 38 snaps. Not only did he stack the point but also disengaged and made six tackles. He's better right now than Kenny Peterson. NT Colin Cole (18 snaps) was active for the first time in place of James Lee and showed some body snap. Cletidus Hunt wasn't effective and gave up some playing time to Jenkins in the third quarter.

Linebackers (1½)

Point Paris Lenon toward an isolation play, tell him to stuff the fullback and he'll do it better than any of the linebackers. He is tough. On the other hand, Lenon has proven to be slow reacting in two starts for injured Na'il Diggs. Fred Taylor ran right by him on his 21-yard draw play. Nick Barnett didn't have a great game by any means but at least he continued to attack the line, especially on the goal line. Barnett is doing a much better job scraping over the top of counter plays and maintaining leverage on the running back until pursuit arrives. Sometimes, though, Barnett needs to slow down and read, almost like a running back. The downside of using Barnett in the dime was evident on Taylor's two long runs on trap plays. Barnett didn't get off a guard's block either time but the Packers basically know he can't do that. Hannibal Navies is trying to play with a battered shoulder and isn't the player that he used to be.

Secondary (1½)

The starters almost didn't show up. Darren Sharper was the smartest player on the field scooping up that fumble for a touchdown but then inexplicably filled the incorrect gap on both runs by Taylor that totaled 85 yards. It should be a simple read for an eight-year veteran if he's studying during the week. Mark Roman and Sharper each missed four tackles. Roman takes poor angles, has no speed and doesn't really compete. It's past time to start Bhawoh Jue. Al Harris looked like the career nickel back that he was in Philadelphia instead of the nominal No. 1 that he is in Green Bay during his futile attempt to cover Jimmy Smith. He was whipped in man coverage on two touchdown passes and was out of position on a 26-yard corner route that Sharper lacked the range to defend. Harris drew two more coverage penalties whereas Ahmad Carroll and Joey Thomas each had one. Carroll keeps using his hands when there's little reason to do so. Carroll's feeble block-down tackle of Taylor was just awful. For a change, there were no cornerback blitzes.

Kickers (1½)

Ryan Longwell mis-hit a field-goal attempt from 31 that leaked wide right after hitting from 35. His four kickoffs averaged 53.3 yards and 3.4 seconds of hang time. Bryan Barker's three punts averaged 38 (gross), 24.7 (net) and 3.6 (hang time).

Special Teams (4½)

Steele made a superb strip of David Allen on a punt return and Michael Hawthorne recovered. Vonta Leach played off a block by Smith and partially blocked a punt. Chatman broke a bunch of tackles and averaged 10.8 on five punt returns. Steele had a shot at the late onside kick but couldn't wrestle it away this time from S Nick Sorensen.

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