

Rating the Packers vs. Buccaneers

Failing in almost every facet

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Green Bay - This was total defeat for the Green Bay Packers on Sunday in Tampa.

They couldn't run the ball. They couldn't protect their quarterback. They were awful on special teams. And they couldn't stop the one-dimensional Buccaneers from controlling the game on the ground.

The ineptness of quarterback Brian Griese made it anyone's game until the last 3 minutes before the Packers finally folded, 30-21.

Here is a rating of the Packers against the Buccaneers, with their 1 to 5 football totals in parentheses:

RECEIVERS (1½)

The Packers aren't even trying to get the ball to Donald Driver these days. Sometimes veteran receivers will stop running routes hard given similar circumstances, but Driver has always been about effort and coach Mike McCarthy vouched for the level of his performance. Greg Jennings was the offense, eluding Ronde Barber's man-to-man coverage at the line for a 25-yard TD and finding the seam window in two-deep coverage for a 48-yard TD. But Jennings is far from perfect. He dropped a routine 16-yard pass at the end of the half, squandered a promising screen pass to Ryan Grant by blowing his block on CB Aqib Talib and tried in vain to execute a lame shoulder-block tackle on LB Barrett Ruud after his interception. Jordy Nelson was OK as the No. 3 ahead of Ruvell Martin and inactive James Jones (knee). TEs Donald Lee and Tory Humphrey were below-average blockers.

OFFENSIVE LINE (½)

Chad Clifton looked like a lazy football player. Yes, he was on an island and had a difficult angle on third and 1 when Grant ran a stretch play behind him for no gain. But he can't permit DE Gaines Adams, whom he outweighs by almost 60 pounds, to displace him by 3 or 4 yards. He also was lazy with his hands and drew another holding penalty, then overset and yielded a sack to DE Jimmy Wilkerson on a three-step drop. Clifton might have been the poorest player of the group but no one did much. The best of the bunch was Mark Tauscher, who at least competed and didn't give up a pressure. Other than two "bad" runs against NT Chris Hovan, the return to action by Scott Wells went OK. Jason Spitz's adjustment back to RG went fine in protection but he had a hand in four of the nine "bad" runs. Daryn Colledge didn't have an outright miss in the run game but did allow a team-high four "pressures," including two against Wilkerson on stunts and a blown pickup for a sack.

QUARTERBACKS (1)

Some say Monte Kiffin is the finest defensive coordinator of his generation. Kiffin certainly did a number on Aaron Rodgers, giving him his first brutal game as a starter. Amazingly, Kiffin rushed more than four just three times in 37 dropbacks (8.1%), and he dropped a lineman off into coverage only four times. But Rodgers never caught up to him. A master at pressuring "empty" sets, Kiffin fooled Rodgers with a four-man zone blitz and the result was a blown hot read and game-clinching interception. Rodgers also ran into a sack and knockdown with protracted scrambles. He forced one interception downfield, then forced a ball back inside late that was dropped by LB Derrick Brooks at point-blank range. He was much too fast on an aborted screen. He looked a little rattled by the Buccaneers' impressive four-man rushes, threw some bad balls and injured his shoulder on a mid-third quarter scramble. Matt Flynn was tentative in his seven-snap debut.

RUNNING BACKS (1/2)

Right now, the Packers just aren't good enough at this position. Kiffin made adjustments to his front one series in and after that Grant never had anywhere to run. His only glaringly bad read came on a second-quarter draw play for 2 yards when he went to the right when there was a lane to the left. On Grant's first failed third-and-1 run, he ran hard over LB Cato June but got a questionable spot. On the second, he ran where the play was supposed to go but had no chance. He played a season-high 32 snaps and emerged without aggravating a tight hamstring. His lack of practice time was evident when he went out on a screen before his linemen left the box. Brandon Jackson continues to serve as the third-down back (15 snaps) and is a much better screen receiver than Grant, but it's hard to take him seriously in that role when a check-down bounces right off his hands to Brooks for a pick. Without injured Corey Hall, the productive inverted-wishbone formation lies in mothballs. FB John Kuhn blocked OK.

DEFENSIVE LINE (3 1/2)

Until exiting with a pectoral injury early in the fourth quarter, Cullen Jenkins was dominant in 46 snaps against LG Arron Sears and LT Donald Penn. He had four "pressures," a tackle for loss, a batted ball and drew a holding penalty on TE Alex Smith. The Buccaneers couldn't block him. His replacement on run downs, Michael Montgomery (29), got after people and made a great play just to spot Smith sneaking out on his 9-yard bootleg TD. On passing downs, Kabeer Gbaja-Biamila (26) was just plain awful. He isn't getting off the ball, can't redirect at all and wound up getting punched by Penn 4 or 5 yards deeper than Griese. Aaron Kampman (73) had two knockdowns against RT Jeremy Trueblood in the Buccaneers' first four plays but none thereafter. Trueblood drifted way back and was able to absorb the bull rushes by Kampman, who then didn't counter inside even though Griese was no threat to run. Ryan Pickett (52) gobbled up almost every double team, enabling Johnny Jolly (54) to do damage against the overrated Sears.

LINEBACKERS (2)

Nick Barnett did some good things in coverage, once denying WR Michael Clayton an 18-yard TD by staying with him on a stop-and-go route. He also missed Warrick Dunn, tacking 14 additional yards on what would have been a 3-yard pass. Against the run, Barnett is kind of getting lost this year. Coordinator Bob Sanders rushed four men 15 straight times before he brought his first blitz. Barnett was given four blitzes and came up with one hurry. Buccaneers coach Jon Gruden kept trying to isolate TE Jerramy Stevens on Brady Poppinga and A.J. Hawk. Their coverage wasn't special but for various reasons he never caught a ball. Hawk is physical but sometimes get too high and tries to spin out, which can create another gap. Smith was Tracy White's man on the TD pass in the short-yardage defense.

SECONDARY (4½)

Missing injured Al Harris and Atari Bigby, this unit intercepted three passes and didn't allow a completion longer than 17 yards. Nick Collins' interception from the deep middle was amazing. He missed two tackles but delivered so many punishing hits it almost didn't matter. The only negative was a dropped pick. Charles Woodson hasn't practiced in three weeks but keeps throwing his body around at the line and making brilliant interception returns for TDs. He broke up one third-down pass but was penalized for illegal contact on two others. Tramon Williams showed good hands securing an interception and making a 39-yard return. Clearly, the game wasn't too big for him in his first start. Aaron Rouse drew a 33-yard interference penalty and didn't play with a whole lot of suddenness.

KICKERS (½)

Protection breakdowns on his first two punts got Derrick Frost off to a bad start. With his team clinging to a one-point lead, Frost hit a 38-yard liner (3.38 seconds of hang time) for a net of 19. His five-punt averages were 38.0 (gross), 30.2 (net) and 4.00 (hang time). Mason Crosby mis-hit one of his four kickoffs, finishing with four-boot averages of 68.5 and 3.65 (hang time).

SPECIAL TEAMS (1)

Struggling rookie Dexter Jackson had a 45-yard kickoff return, then broke two tackles on a critical 19-yard punt return. Rookie Pat Lee had a chance to down a punt inside the 5 but couldn't find the ball. The blocking for Blackmon was substandard. The Buccaneers' units appeared to be more inspired.

OVERALL (1½)

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