

# Rating the Packers vs. Seahawks

## Lowly Seahawks provide lift

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**Green Bay** - Let's be honest. The Green Bay Packers beat an awful football team Sunday in the Seattle Seahawks.

Quarterback Charlie Frye couldn't make plays with his arm or his mind. The Seahawks' corps of wide receivers was brutally bad. And their running game lacked sizzle.

What several months ago appeared to be a game the Packers stood a legitimate chance of losing became a game that they had no business losing. Green Bay's 27-17 victory at Qwest Field didn't answer many questions about where the team is headed but relieved some of the doubt associated with a three-game losing streak.

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

### **RECEIVERS (3½)**

Marcus Trufant is a Pro Bowl cornerback in the prime of his career, but the Packers still went after him for six completions and 90 yards. Trufant is the player whom Greg Jennings burned for a game-changing 45-yard touchdown. That was no surprise; the way Jennings is playing, he's headed for the mid-season all-pro team. But the fact that Jordy Nelson caught three for 33 against Trufant bespoke development. The rookie is coming on as a route runner. Donald Driver flitted around shifting formations for six receptions, his highest total in a month. With James Jones still down with a knee injury, Ruvell Martin had a chance to strike a blow for the No. 4 job. Instead, Martin hurt himself by dropping two slants; he had just four drops in 2½ seasons. So much of Tory Humphrey's game lacks consistency, from blocking to routes. But one reason the Packers aren't playing rookie Jermichael Finley more is the fact he's late off the ball so much.

### **OFFENSIVE LINE (2½)**

The unit played its third straight game together and had an adequate showing. Scott Wells probably had the top performance, but in some ways he's still rounding into shape. Wells allowed the group's one sack, and the only two line-related "pressures" went late against Mark Tauscher. A whopping 13 of Ryan Grant's 33 carries went for 1 yard or less. Tauscher had three of the "bad" runs, but the three inside starters also combined for 6½. For the first time in 2008 the Packers mixed in some power runs with their zone stuff. Five times Jason Spitz pulled left in an attempt to wear down Seattle's smallish front seven. Spitz looked rusty, wasn't sure where to fit and didn't make much headway. Tauscher and DE Patrick Kerney probably played to a draw. Many times, Chad Clifton would step properly on a run-block but then either lack the body snap or the want-to to sustain initial contact. Daryn Colledge had a good day getting off the double-team and picking off a linebacker.

## **QUARTERBACKS (4)**

Defensive coordinator John Marshall gave Aaron Rodgers much more than the "Tampa-2" looks Rodgers has seen extensively of late. The Seahawks tried to confuse Rodgers with late safety movement and by blitzing on 32.4% of dropbacks, most against Green Bay in '08. Moreover, Marshall blitzed six or more four times, an onslaught compared to the mere six the Packers had seen in the first five games. For the most part, Rodgers kept a cool head and didn't force the issue. He absorbed a sack/fumble by holding the ball 3.9 seconds, hardly a cardinal sin. He also danced away from two sacks, showing excellent feel in the pocket. Rodgers gets back, reads and throws quickly, but if nothing is there, he enjoys rolling into open sectors as he scans downfield. Despite a sprained shoulder, Rodgers sneaked for one first down and then sneaked almost 1½ yards for a touchdown.

## **RUNNING BACKS (2½)**

Grant's first three carries were worth 29 yards; his last 30 were worth a scant 61. One can't fault Grant's get-up-and-go. He brings it to the defense, asking no quarter. But at some point he needs to start breaking some tackles. All he broke in 33 carries were two or three. A lot of backs can do that. At least Grant didn't fumble. His hamstring held up. And the large majority of his reads were sound, although on an early third-and-5 he bounced outside when the crease was inside. At this point, Grant is way too one-dimensional. Despite playing 195 snaps, he has had just three passes thrown his way. Pressed into service, DeShawn Wynn made his debut with 10 snaps on third downs and didn't make any glaring errors. FB John Kuhn (15 snaps) blocked better than Korey Hall (23).

## **DEFENSIVE LINE (3½)**

Aaron Kampman (48 snaps) and Colin Cole (35) played their best games of the year. Kampman was able to shed RT Sean Locklear repeatedly, both run and pass. The Seahawks doubled Kampman less than most teams and Locklear wasn't up to the challenge. Kampman controlled the matchup with two sacks, two knockdowns and a flush. A penalty cost Cole his first sack since Week 10 of 2006, but it still was a neat one-on-one move against RG Floyd Womack. Cole proved to be almost impossible for Womack to move at the point, he set up Charles Woodson's sack with a bull rush against C Charles Spencer, and he batted down a ball. Jeremy Thompson (26) experienced greatness in LT Walter Jones, beat him inside to stop a third-and-1 and played with more resolve. Once again, Kabeer Gbaja-Biamila (32) contributed next to nothing. How much longer can they play him? He's playing without upper-body strength and seems to labor even picking up his feet. Johnny Jolly (44) had to play even more after Ryan Pickett (21) went down in the third quarter and posted two pressures.

## **LINEBACKERS (2½)**

The Seahawks had some success matching receivers in coverage against Brady Poppinga, who gave up a 13-yard completion to FB Leonard Weaver and drew an illegal contact penalty trying to cover TE John Carlson. Coordinator Bob Sanders blitzed more than he has all season (25.8%) on passes. Linebackers were sent six times, but the lone hurry was by Nick Barnett. Neither Barnett nor A.J. Hawk missed a tackle but they didn't make many, either. With Hawk still affected by a sore groin, Brandon Chillar played some in nickel. He helps in coverage but is less effective playing run.

## **SECONDARY (4)**

On the third play of the game, Charles Woodson stumbled on his break or otherwise he probably would have returned an interception in the flat for a 36-yard score. On his only blitzing opportunity, he went with a plan, spun away from Weaver and got the sack. And in the fourth quarter, when Frye had to air out his weak arm, Woodson picked him on a play young players should not emulate. Woodson had seen that route combination once all week in tape review. But when it unfolded before his eyes, he broke ahead almost at the exact split-second that Frye fired short and not long to Koren Robinson, the man that he left. Playing with ever-growing confidence, Nick Collins is making the game look easy. He made three or four jarring and/or saving tackles, swooping in from the back with his blazing speed. Neither Aaron Rouse nor Charlie Peprah distinguished himself at SS. All Rouse had to do on the fourth-and-1 rush for 9 yards was get up the field. Peprah bounced off Frye on his 27-yard scramble, the same play in which Will Blackmon slipped and fell down as the QB was approaching. Tramon Williams is learning from his mistakes and playing the ball much better.

## **KICKERS (3½)**

Mason Crosby hit field goals of 29 and 51 yards, and his six kickoffs averaged 65 yards and 3.92 seconds of hang time. Derrick Frost had two high pooch punts result in fair catches inside the 20. However, his two punts from deep in Green Bay territory had hang times of 3.39 and 2.85 seconds.

## **SPECIAL TEAMS (3½)**

Blackmon doesn't always run north-south on kickoffs. But he changes direction well, makes sound decisions and offers spark. After missing four tackles on a first-quarter KO return by Josh Wilson, the substitute-filled cover teams were solid. Jarrett Bush, who recovered an onside kick, has three of the 11 penalties on special teams in '08.

## **OVERALL (3½)**

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