

# **Rating the Packers: Week 14 vs. Jaguars**

## **Streaking in wrong direction**

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Green Bay - The Green Bay Packers haven't had a five-game losing streak in almost 20 years but that's what they're staring at now.

It was 1990 when the Packers polished off a 6-10 season for coach Lindy Infante with five straight defeats. Anthony Dilweg and Blair Kiel were doing the quarterbacking, and not very well, either.

The modern-day squad extended its losing skid to four on Sunday with a 20-16 loss in Jacksonville. The Jaguars carried the fight to the Packers from the onset, keeping them off-balance with more creativity on offense and gang-tackling with more fervor on defense. Even Jacksonville's coaching staff seemed more jacked up.

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

### **RECEIVERS (4)**

The forgotten man, James Jones, had the best game of his career with long catches for 46, 40 and 34 yards. On the Packers' third play, the Jaguars rushed three on third and 10. The Packers tell the quarterback to buy time against minimal rushes and the receivers to extend their route. When Jones raised his arm, Rodgers found him sprinting behind dime back Will James for 46. Greg Jennings (3 for 22, seven targeted passes) had his least productive game. For maybe the first time, Jennings didn't really go get a pair of long passes that ended up being too far. Donald Driver will be 34 in February but he remains as tough and crafty from the slot as anyone in the league. It was a forgettable day for Donald Lee. He was beaten inside twice by SLB Clint Ingram on runs that went nowhere. Then, in the red zone, a post-corner route designed for Lee to score came apart at the seams when he ran smack-dab into Driver. That's inexcusable. The Packers are finding out first-hand the pitfalls of drafting a third-year sophomore with just two collegiate seasons under his belt. Almost every play is an adventure with Jermichael Finley.

### **OFFENSIVE LINE (1)**

After watching Tony Moll play poorly against ordinary DEs, isn't it time to see if Breno Giacomini could hold up any better? If he's ready, let him play and see what he's got. It's hard to imagine anyone pass-blocking worse than Moll did. Reggie Hayward turned the corner twice against him for sacks in 3.4 and 2.9 seconds, and Moll gave up 3½ other pressures. Jason Spitz wasn't very good, either. He was too wide on the Packers' second play when DT Rob Meier penetrated to make a tackle for minus-5. He also missed Ingram on a run for minus-4 and didn't show much anchor in protection. Daryn Colledge did some good things, including an exceptional block on an early 15-yard screen, but when push came to shove in short-yardage neither he nor his linemates measured up. There just isn't enough power in this group, and it usually shows up most in road games. Chad Clifton protected well against talented rookie DE Derrick Harvey until exiting before the final series with two sprained thumbs. The Jaguars' front just seemed to want it more.

### **QUARTERBACKS (3)**

Aaron Rodgers had 1:50 left and two timeouts to go 84 yards for the winning TD. With the Jaguars playing deep, he started by firing a terrible ball down the middle into Cover 2 that should have been intercepted by SS Gerald Sensabaugh. After completing three in a row for 32 yards, he became impatient at the 46-second mark and overthrew Lee down the seam for the game-ending pick. An NFL quarterback worth his salt must make plays at the end of close games. Rodgers keeps failing. Coordinator Gregg Williams kept Rodgers guessing with more zone coverage, a ton of stunts and two seven-man blitzes. When the stunts led to lost lane integrity, Rodgers ran for 22 yards and two first downs. He even ran his first QB draw of the season. Plus, he skipped away from two or three sacks. One of the three sacks was on him for holding the ball 3.8 seconds. Rodgers' accuracy and all-around game haven't been as sharp as early in the season.

### **RUNNING BACKS (3)**

Ryan Grant's 2.7 average was mostly the residue of poor blocking. When given a sniff of daylight, he roared through, lowered his head and sent bodies flying. He broke a total of five tackles, including two by FS Reggie Nelson. Grant (40 snaps) took some fearsome licks from the Jaguars' hard-hitting LBs but that never deterred him. He did run up the back of John Kuhn once, but there wasn't much there overall that he didn't get. Playing 27 snaps with Korey Hall injured, Kuhn was stopped again on fourth and 1 and blocked better early than late. Brandon Jackson touched the ball only twice in 20 plays.

### **DEFENSIVE LINE (2)**

There weren't any sacks but six knockdowns represented a veritable field day for this group. Of course, the Jaguars' offensive line is a makeshift mess, but let's not be picky. The leader, as always, was Aaron Kampman. The last two games, Kampman played every snap in the first half. This time, he sat out seven of 31 first-half plays and might have been fresher later. He had 2½ knockdowns against RT Tony Pashos and was a split-second away from three or four more. Ryan Pickett (42) and Johnny Jolly (48) stood toe-to-toe against backup guards and took away the inside run. Jolly was unable to take advantage of LG Uche Nwaneri's major pass-blocking flaws. Michael Montgomery (39) always gives tremendous effort but with his bad knees he looked bad in space. Jeremy Thompson (14) returned after a month's hiatus and didn't play smart or strong. Jason Hunter (13), Alfred Malone (six) and Brady Poppinga (six) got shots on passing downs but were non-factors.

### **LINEBACKERS (3)**

A.J. Hawk made several strong tackles, showed burst and close for a sack and didn't shy away from taking on blockers. He was physical. But he always seems to make a costly mistake or two. At times, he gets almost preoccupied with fitting the right gap at the expense of finding the ball. Poppinga was the focus of a good share of the Jaguars' passing game and held up well other than a 15-yard penalty for interference against TE Mercedes Lewis. Brandon Chillar had a terrific break-up on a crossing route to Maurice Jones-Drew. Later, Chillar suffered the embarrassment of hitting Jones-Drew at the 4 with maybe his best shot and getting dragged into the end zone for the winning TD.

## **SECONDARY (1½)**

With the game on the line, Al Harris didn't get deep enough and gave up a 41-yard pass to Dennis Northcutt in his third of a three-deep zone coverage. Nick Collins didn't stay deeper than the deepest and thus was in no position to help Harris. Collins was brutal. He was out of position on the 30-yard TD pass to Northcutt, blew the coverage on a 19-yard pass to TE Greg Estandia and took a bad angle and missed the tackle of Jones-Drew on his 14-yard TD. Collins' performance level has really dipped in the last month.

Cornerbacks Will Blackmon and Tramon Williams also gave up big plays. Blackmon went for a nod-and-go route by Northcutt for the TD on third and 19, then gave up a 17-yard pass to Northcutt on third and 18 by not playing deep enough in a Cover 2 zone. Consigned to obscurity years ago, Northcutt also ran past Williams for a 35-yard gain. Charles Woodson got caught on an early bootleg and should have had two sacks rather than one, but he also was very active and delivered some strong face-up tackles of Jones-Drew. Aaron Rouse has got himself into a position where he didn't even play a snap from scrimmage.

## **KICKERS (3½)**

Mason Crosby went 3 for 3, extending his FG streak to nine. He also had an amazing hang time of 4.53 seconds on one of his four excellent kickoffs. He did mis-hit another. P Jeremy Kapinos' two-punt averages were 43.5 yards (gross and net) and 3.95 seconds (hang time).

## **SPECIAL TEAMS (2½)**

Remember the Carolina game? When the Panthers fell behind late, Mark Jones returned the kickoff 45 yards and so Jake Delhomme could start the winning drive from the 45. Given almost the exact same situation, the Packers saw FB Montell Owens blow up their crucial return and Blackmon was overrun at the 16. The kickoff-return unit has been dreadful for more than month. Conversely, the kickoff coverage continues to improve.

## **Overall (2)**

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