

Ratng the Packers vs. Seahawks

Getting the job done

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Green Bay — The Green Bay Packers clinched a wild-card playoff berth Sunday at Lambeau Field in one of those frigid late-season games in which a downtrodden opponent from the West Coast had little interest even in being present.

Strong safety Deon Grant, by turning down tackles and blowing coverage, and tackle Sean Locklear, by giving minimal effort and taking a cheap shot on Nick Barnett, embarrassed themselves and the franchise in the Seahawks' 48-10 pratfall.

Actually, the Packers are capable of playing much better than this. The offense was flat for the first quarter and a half and there were a total of 15 missed tackles, including 11 on defense and four on special teams. Usually the team has about five.

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

RECEIVERS (4)

The Seattle secondary, especially Grant and CB Marcus Trufant, provided only token resistance. Jennings made Trufant and CB Josh Wilson look absolutely awful on a hitch pattern that ruptured into 24 yards because of their missed tackles. On the previous play, Jennings ran a stylish fade-go route against CB Kelly Jennings and hauled in a perfect pass over the top for 40. When Aaron Rodgers looked off the safety, Jennings ran fearlessly into a vertical seam patrolled by 250-pound MLB David Hawthorne, caught a 13-yard pass in stride and weaved his way for another 25. When you least expect it, Donald Driver will explode. But he dropped another pass in another pedestrian performance. It appeared as if Trufant was only too happy to take a dive in the end zone, which cost Spencer Havner a 1-yard TD reception on a weak offensive pass-interference penalty. Jermichael Finley availed himself of Grant's disgraceful showing for catches of 28 and 38 yards.

OFFENSIVE LINE (3 ½)

Josh Sitton drew the toughest matchup against DT Brandon Mebane. Week after week, Sitton is sound in protection, blocks the right people and gets movement as a drive blocker, both one-on-one and on double teams. Not only is he the team's most robust blocker but also probably the most physical. Although Mebane had 1 ½ pressures against him, it still might have been Sitton's best game of the season. Everyone else had their share of bad plays. Scott Wells had some problems getting out on the hard-charging Hawthorne and absorbed a rare trashing by DT Cory Redding when he got overextended on a rush, but he did get better as the game went along. Mark Tauscher was late on three cut-off blocks but really had a good day pass-blocking against DE Patrick Kerney. Chad Clifton had his hands full with DE Darryl Tapp, an underrated player. He gave up 2 ½ "pressures" and almost got Ahman Green killed on a run for minus-5 when he got too nonchalant and let Tapp slip by him inside. Daryn Colledge remained too inconsistent, giving up three "pressures" and one "bad" run.

QUARTERBACKS (4)

Gus Bradley blitzed less often (6.1%) than any opposing coordinator since Atlanta's Brian VanGorder in Week 5 last season. Early on, Rodgers was holding the ball a bit too long, made some inaccurate short throws, took a delay of game penalty and fumbled when the ball inadvertently slipped from his grasp at the start of his follow-through. Yet, for the umpteenth time, he didn't do anything crazy. He played to the run game, completed three runs-to-passes for 40 yards and didn't turn the ball over. When he had time and open receivers downfield, his quick release and strong arm got them the ball on a tough-weather day. Matt Flynn saw the most extensive action of his career (three full series) and demonstrated that he can be effective. He can move, he can throw and he knows what he's doing. When Colledge was beaten on a stunt, Flynn flushed right and drilled Jordy Nelson on the dead run for 17. That was impressive.

RUNNING BACKS (4 ½)

It'd be hard to ask for much more from Brandon Jackson (17 snaps). On one of the Seahawks' two six-man rushes, he actually slowed down two rushers so Rodgers could find Finley for 28. With the ball, he made LB Leroy Hill miss and converted a third-and-2 check-down, made two savvy cuts on a screen for a 13-yard TD, reversed his field on a play that wasn't all that poorly blocked and scored from the 6 and then surreptitiously lined up at FB and dragged Mebane most of the way for a 4-yard TD. Ahman Green (season-high 16 snaps) bounced off clean shots from two defenders on a new third-and-1 toss play and turned it into a gain of 16. Later, the 292-pound Redding flattened after a poor cut block by Lee and slammed head-long into Green from the side at the 6. Not many backs would stay up after a hit like that but the motivated Green did all way to the end zone. The reads and aggressiveness of Ryan Grant (29) weren't quite up to his recent standards, but his overall play was plenty good enough. The inverted-wishbone formation was used a season-high eight times, getting Quinn Johnson (37) and Korey Hall (18) their most playing time. Johnson dug out some linebackers but didn't always keep his pads square to the target.

DEFENSIVE LINE (3 ½)

Replacing injured NT Ryan Pickett (hamstring), B.J. Raji was up and down during a 33-snap stint. In the opening sequences, Raji ended up on the ground four times, a fate that usually doesn't befall Pickett more than two or three times in an entire game. Matt Hasselbeck prefers playing at a fast tempo with quick counts and Raji wasn't ready for it. He also was displaced badly on three runs totaling 23 yards. Yet, as the game wore on, he began trashing rookie C Max Unger and the weak interior of the Seattle line. Raji didn't record a single pressure but played a part in three tackles for loss. Johnny Jolly probably is still kicking himself for missing the tackle on Julius Jones on an early third-and-2. Later, he beat RT Ray Willis inside and stuffed Jones on another third-and-2 and batted two passes, including one that was intercepted. With the group short-handed and D-line coach Mike Trgovac unwilling to use backups Jarius Wynn and Michael Montgomery until garbage time, Jolly sucked it up and played the first 51 snaps. Cullen Jenkins had an average day.

LINEBACKERS (4)

Nick Barnett has regained the reckless, downhill style of play that marked his break-through 2007 season. He got real physical with FB Justin Griffith. He timed his interior blitzes beautifully, eluding Unger for a sack and Locklear for a hurry. And his range keeps getting better. A.J. Hawk made a big play on an interception forced by Brad Jones but didn't seem in sync and wasn't a factor. Hawk was replaced in nickel by Brandon Chillar, who roared by RB Justin Forsett for a sack but also missed Jones on a 17-yard check-down. On the outside, Brad Jones gave way to Brady Poppinga on about 25 snaps largely because he wasn't feeling well. Jones doesn't seem to be making the same mistake twice and knows how to finish as a rusher. The maturity of Clay Matthews shows by the way he won't take gratuitous shots on QBs. He had four pressures against the lazy Locklear and was flitting around Hasselbeck all day. It's hard for a young rusher to pull off but, because Matthews gets it, he has just one roughing the passer penalty.

SECONDARY (4 ½)

Atari Bigby is healthy, finally in tune with the system and playing his best football since December 2007. Although Bigby did miss Forsett on a 14-yard run, he alertly took away Hasselbeck's only receiver on the first interception and showed very good ball skills on his two picks. It was rather obvious that Hasselbeck tried not to throw near Charles Woodson. He worked on Jarrett Bush, who made a terrific interception underneath T.J. Houshmandzadeh but gave up a 31-yard go route and a 16-yard TD to TE John Carlson when he was at safety late in the game.

KICKERS (3)

Under scrutiny for recent misses, Mason Crosby hit from 52 and 29 yards off the left hash and kicked off pretty well, averaging 63 yards and 3.77 seconds of hang time. Since being asked to diversify his kickoffs, Crosby has made the adjustment. Despite the benefit of 13 yards of roll, Jeremy Kapinos' four-punt numbers reflected a bad day: Gross of 41.0, net of 36.0 and average hang of 3.55.

SPECIAL TEAMS (4)

Wynn walked back ancient LS Jeff Robinson and partially blocked one of Jon Ryan's punts (24 yards). Nelson broke two tackles on a 33-yard KO return but gave up 21 yards of roll by not fielding a punt. Havner (three tackles) led the excellent KO coverage. Forsett returned a line-drive punt for 20.

OVERALL (4)

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