

Grading The Green Bay Packers Coaching/Personnel: Mike McCarthy, Ted Thompson make right moves

By Rob Demovsky - Green Bay Press Gazette • January 16, 2010

Coaching

Mike McCarthy and the offensive staff adjusted their passing attack at midseason, focusing more on short and intermediate throws. That helped overcome most of the protection issues they had in the first half. But why didn't they figure that out sooner? They may also have erred in not giving rookie T.J. Lang a chance to win the right tackle job in training camp. The offensive line problems have been chronic under McCarthy. They developed tight end Jermichael Finley into a playmaker. Dom Capers upgraded the defense significantly, especially against the run. The Packers led the league in run defense and were second overall, although the overall ranking was no doubt inflated by all the bad offenses they played. Capers couldn't disrupt some of the better quarterbacks he faced — Brett Favre, Ben Roethlisberger and Kurt Warner. Despite promoting Shawn Slocum to coordinator, the special teams weren't appreciably better than they were in 2008. All in all, the staff deserves credit for salvaging a season that after eight games (with a 4-4 record) looked like it was going nowhere.

Grade: B-minus

Personnel moves

General Manager Ted Thompson appears to have struck gold in Clay Matthews. Thompson made the boldest draft-day move of his career by trading up into the first round to nab the outside linebacker. He was the perfect fit for Capers' 3-4 defense. The draft class, as a whole, looks good. B.J. Raji will be a force if he's healthy. Lang looks like a starter. Quinn Johnson and Brad Jones have potential. Re-signing tackle Mark Tauscher in October might have saved the season. He provided much-needed stability on the offensive line. However, there wasn't a natural backup left tackle on the roster when Chad Clifton got hurt early in the year. Cutting safety Anthony Smith at the end of camp was a mistake, especially after Atari Bigby got hurt in the opener. Derrick Martin, who was acquired from Baltimore in a trade, couldn't fill in adequately, although he was a strong special-teamer. Matching Jarrett Bush's contract offer from Tennessee was a head-scratcher, and Thompson didn't add anything of value in free agency.

Grade: B-minus