

Rating the Packers: Week 3 at Bears

Coaching looks bad, too, in loss

Posted: Sept. 29, 2010

Green Bay —The Green Bay Packers looked as poorly coached as they have in some time during their 20-17 loss to the Chicago Bears on Monday night at Soldier Field.

Coaching his 70th game early in his fifth season, Mike McCarthy watched his team commit 19 penalties (a team-record 18 were accepted). Drawing penalty after penalty after penalty didn't speak well for McCarthy's ability to have his team focused for one of the National Football League's greatest rivalries.

The Packers had chance after chance to pull out the victory, but they kept killing themselves with miscues and were unable to match the Bears' physical and emotional edge.

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

RECEIVERS (3)

The best of the bunch was Donald Driver, who was the default receiver from the slot with nine catches for 61 yards and four first downs. All nickel back D.J. Moore could do was funnel him inside toward Brian Urlacher, but the reality of working with a 258-pound LB lurking nearby has never deterred Driver. Jermichael Finley's nine catches for 115 yards included five from the slot, two as a WR with a side to himself, one as a wing and one as an in-line TE. The fact that cramping kept Finley out of a nine-play stretch in the fourth quarter was a black mark. Even worse was his blocking. He ruined two runs by failing to get DE Julius Peppers blocked on back-side cutoffs and then didn't give much effort even trying to cross behind the formation and trap Peppers. Thus, the unblocked Peppers smeared Brandon Jackson after a 3-yard gain. Andrew Quarless' debut included a dropped TD pass. Donald Lee was blown up by Lance Briggs on a run for minus-2 and offered nothing as a receiver. Greg Jennings got shut out after the first series. He needs to catch that 57-yard bomb against SS Danieal Manning. James Jones got CB Zackary Bowman benched with his run after the catch, then added to his reputation for inconsistency by fumbling on a strip by Urlacher.

OFFENSIVE LINE (1 ½)

Peppers, the featured rusher, lined up over Chad Clifton on 27 of his rushes and over Mark Tauscher on 11. Despite 35% double-teaming, Peppers had 4 ½ pressures. Tauscher had another bad first half, when he gave up most of his six pressures to Peppers, Israel Idonije and Mark Anderson. He kept kicking out too far and leaving the inside open. Several times, Tauscher was belted so far off balance that his amazing powers of recovery were rendered useless. He also drew three of the unit's unforgivable total of eight penalties and failed to cut off DE Henry Melton on a goal-line run for no gain. Clifton also had three penalties (one of his false starts should have been charged to Daryn Colledge) and yielded 2 ½ pressures. Given Peppers' rare size and athleticism, Clifton's pass protection was OK. It's getting to the point where Scott Wells could write the book on how to reach block, but his pass protection (2 ½ pressures) wasn't up to par. On a pair of minus stretch plays to the left, Colledge failed to get out on Urlacher before he blew up Jackson. Josh Sitton was the steadiest protector and went after people in the run game.

QUARTERBACKS (4 ½)

Bears coordinator Rod Marinelli seldom pressed the issue, blitzing on 17.3% of passes and usually maintaining a two-deep safety shell. There was no run game, to speak of, and so Aaron Rodgers basically was responsible for the 379 yards. Despite significant crowd noise, the menacing presence of Peppers and the soft corners provided by the veteran tackles, Rodgers kept his cool. He took six check-downs, scrambled for the late go-ahead TD and two first downs and made very few obvious mistakes. After operating from shotgun 37.8% in the first two games, Rodgers was in shotgun 69.7% Monday. His off-season diligence has helped him get the ball out faster. His accuracy on the move is something else.

RUNNING BACKS (1 ½)

Jackson played more than double John Kuhn's snap count (35-17), but the better back was Kuhn. On maybe three of Jackson's seven carries (for 12 yards) he didn't see cutback lanes that presented themselves. He stretches and stretches without pressing the line of scrimmage and decisively slamming into a hole. Jackson is more successful catching the ball because then he can charge north and south and pinball off tacklers. At this point, Jackson basically is just running into people on inside and outside zone. Kuhn is a powerful inside banger. He's just limited, evidenced by his inability to take the open avenue outside when the Bears were caught in a late second-quarter substitution. The FB snap count showed 13 for Quinn Johnson, six for Korey Hall.

DEFENSIVE LINE (3 ½)

Calling the Packers a 3-4 defensive team is becoming a misnomer. They played one snap of base defense. Other than five plays when Cullen Jenkins was the lone D-lineman and four snaps of 4-4 goal-line (Sitton was in for two of those), the Packers played only two linemen at a time. B.J. Raji (48 snaps) had 2 ½ pressures, Ryan Pickett (27) had two plus a deflected pass, and Jenkins (26) had two. Matt Forte couldn't get anything going between the tackles because the unit wasn't giving ground against the Bears' weak interior. Rookie C.J. Wilson (four) didn't look good at the point.

LINEBACKERS (2 ½)

This was the first extended look at rookie Frank Zombo, who started for Brad Jones (knee). With Clay Matthews drawing 32% double-teaming, Zombo had a lot of one-on-ones against LT Frank Omiyale and beat him for two of his three pressures. Zombo seems to be thinking more than reacting at times. But he does have a bull rush, a spin move and pretty good hand use. Matthews didn't have a sack but came up with 5 ½ pressures in another stalwart showing. He also set the table for two "bad" runs, knocking off three blockers on the first and two on the second. He's a bit whirling-dervish unorthodox, which tends to unnerve opponents. Brandon Chillar, the cover linebacker in nickel, blew the TD pass to Greg Olsen by letting him cross his face. He was a step late all day. Nick Barnett and A.J. Hawk combined for 15 blitzes but didn't have a pressure. Barnett's exceptional interception was lost when Zombo drilled Cutler helmet-to-helmet.

SECONDARY (1 ½)

Nick Collins dropped two interceptions, including a floater at the 2-minute mark of the fourth quarter. Those gaffes were inexcusable. A nice interception by Collins was wiped out when Morgan Burnett drew a critical 24-yard interference penalty. The Bears stayed away from Tramon Williams. The Bears' target was Charles Woodson, who had three or four disappointing plays. His interference penalty against Devin Hester was blatant, and he drifted into areas on other occasions that led to sizable gains for Cutler. Burnett doesn't seem interested in punishing opponents. Rookie Sam Shields was victimized twice by Johnny Knox for 66 yards.

KICKERS (1 ½)

Tim Masthay was close to having Hester return two of his three punts for TDs. On Hester's 62-yard score, Masthay did out-kick his coverage, but that's mostly the fault of the late-arriving coverage. His 35-yard line drive down the middle with 2.69 hang time was horrendous. Masthay did make a miracle tackle to halt Hester after a gain of 28. Mason Crosby hit from 38 and had a 37-yard field goal blocked. His three long kickoffs were excellent (73 average, 3.96 hang time), but his squib kick that went out of bounds was atrocious.

SPECIAL TEAMS (½)

The coverage on Hester's TD was abysmal. Brett Goode missed the tackle, Quarless was shoved out of his lane and Hawk got leveled. The coverage was almost as poor on Crosby's bouncing kick in the corner that Danieal Manning brought back 44 yards. Derrick Martin's illegal block shortened Williams' 23-yard punt return. The FG block by Peppers primarily came at the expense of Sitton. Desmond Bishop was offsides on a kickoff, and then the Packers lost 16 yards on the re-kick. This was a case of more domination by the units of Bears coach Dave Toub.

OVERALL (2)

From the Sept 29, 2010, editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel