

# Rating the Packers: Week 2 vs Redskins

## Packers' spirit gets broken by 49ers' Anquan Boldin

*By Bob McGinn – Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*

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**Green Bay** - The score was 31-0 late in the third quarter and 38-20 at the end, but the Green Bay Packers were so sensational on offense that their margin of victory Sunday could have been much larger against the Washington Redskins.

If Randall Cobb's foot doesn't graze the out-of-bounds line, the Packers have another long touchdown pass rather than a field goal.

If James Jones doesn't fumble away a first down at the 1, it's another touchdown.

Then the Packers killed off the final 7½ minutes, driving 77 yards to the Washington 10 without even having to put forth much effort.

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

### RECEIVERS (5)

Wide receiver and tight end play don't get much better than this. Playing 69 of 72 snaps, James Jones basically did whatever he wanted against rookie CB David Amerson. With the Redskins playing off in three-deep looks, Jones and the others had a field day making uncontested catches underneath and then running hard. When Amerson began creeping up, Jones ran by him once for 57 yards (Amerson said he didn't hear the check) and again on a double move that would have been a 35-yard TD if Amerson hadn't slowed Jones with a hold. Jones gained 89 of his 178 yards (8.1 average) after the catch, breaking two tackles. No one dropped a pass; Jones' fumble off the pylon was the lone negative. Jordy Nelson played 68 snaps, scored two TDs and had another called back. He ate up veteran CB DeAngelo Hall, using his big body and long stride to get free. Ten of his 66 yards (3.3 average) were after the catch. Cobb (62 snaps) almost seems to have a sixth sense reading coverages. Operating almost exclusively from the slot (he was alone to a side just once), he was given free releases off the line and kept separating and finding open areas. He averaged 8.2 after the catch (74 of 128) and broke two tackles. What a shock it was to see Cobb brought down by FS E.J. Biggers between the hash marks with 50 yards of open space ahead. Operating on a bad toe, Jermichael Finley played 43 snaps (25 from a three-point stance) before giving way to Andrew Quarless (34). Finley gained 59 of his 65 yards (9.8) after the catch and broke three tackles, all on a short flat pass that ruptured into 27 yards. He's become more adept shielding his long legs from tacklers with his forearms and improved pad level. Finley was pretty good as a blocker, too, handling OLB Brian Orakpo on James Starks' 20-yard run after Orakpo beat him on the same play earlier. Quarless did an excellent job of sustaining a run block on OLB Ryan Kerrigan on Starks' 14-yard run. However, he also blew an assignment not securing the edge on Orakpo's sack, and made a feeble dive at Orakpo's feet as a lead blocker on a "bad" run. In all, the wideouts and tight ends collected 237 yards after the catch (7.2).

## **OFFENSIVE LINE (4 ½)**

Guards T.J. Lang and Josh Sitton bounced back from shaky performances in San Francisco. This was the best that the zone run game has looked in ages. Lang didn't fall off blocks this week, got movement and kept pushing on the back side. The only negative pass play for either guard came on an inside twist that resulted in a knockdown by Orakpo. Nursing a bad back, Sitton went the distance and had just one-half miss in the run game. Other than a holding penalty on an edge rush by Orakpo, David Bakhtiari didn't have a glaring blemish. He's a fluid mover in space, doesn't show a hint of backing down and gets some displacement for the run. Don Barclay let Kerrigan get his hands inside him and suffered a bad bull-rush sack, false-started on a hard count and had one-half of a "bad" run at the end. Otherwise, his performance was a winner. Evan Dietrich-Smith is so much more explosive to the second level than Jeff Saturday. At the same time, EDS gave up a sack to Kerrigan on an inside twist and had three "bad" runs, all when he failed to execute a reach block against NT Barry Cofield.

## **QUARTERBACKS (5)**

Aaron Rodgers confronted coordinator Jim Haslett's defense at the line, making a series of checks that kept the Redskins on their heels. Haslett rushed five or more on 34.9% of dropbacks, but showing respect for Rodgers' release and command, he sent more than five just once. Rodgers whipped the ball with accuracy all over the place, following his progression to the open man. On slants and skinny posts, he never hangs his receivers out to dry. The ball is thrown to the proper window. On the missed stunts inside, Rodgers sprinted right and flipped it to Finley against Hall for a 3-yard TD. When Haslett massed eight at the line, Rodgers had a blitz and no-blitz play ready. When the Redskins backed five off in coverage, he drilled the slant to Nelson for a 14-yard TD. Haslett caught Rodgers two or three times by sending slot blitzes, and one by CB Josh Wilson was a 12-yard sack. Basically, it was quarterbacking at its finest.

## **RUNNING BACKS (4 ½)**

Eddie Lacy jumped over a fallen Nelson on his fifth snap, somewhat exposing himself to the helmet-to-helmet shot from SS Brandon Meriweather that forced him to depart with a concussion. Enter James Starks, whose 64 snaps bettered his career high of 51 against Denver in 2011. The attack hummed better with Starks than it did with Lacy. He did miss Wilson on a pressure and got Rodgers nailed. Perhaps you could ding him for one run read. Other than that, this was the Starks from the Super Bowl run. He's not as heavy as Lacy, but Starks (6-2, 224) always has packed a heavy punch. He broke six tackles, including five by defensive backs. In the second quarter, Starks didn't hear Rodgers change the run from inside to outside zone. When he started inside, ILBs Perry Riley and London Fletcher were unblocked and ready to pounce. Starks fled right, patiently found a hole behind Quarless and then slammed through for 14. It was the sign of a maturing running back. Even with the outcome long since decided, Mike McCarthy wouldn't put in Johnathan Franklin. It's hard to say why the rookie's on the roster if he can't play in that situation.

## **DEFENSIVE LINE (3 ½)**

Not only did Mike Daniels lead the unit in snaps (32), he also was the top performer with two hurries and 2½ of the team's three tackles for loss. Wide bodies B.J. Raji (31), Johnny Jolly (23) and Ryan Pickett (19) are better suited against a ground-and-pound running attack like San Francisco's. The Redskins' zone scheme and smaller O-linemen fit Daniels. With strength, quickness and a gung-ho approach, Daniels has been the best sub rusher. Conversely, Datone Jones (18) has been invisible. Mike Neal took 11 snaps in a three-point stance as a sub rusher. Copying Jolly, Pickett is starting to play the passing lanes and swatted down a throw. Jolly returned soon after suffering a stinger on a 32-yard run by Alfred Morris in which he got too high and was pancaked 12 yards downfield by elite LT Trent Williams.

### **LINEBACKERS (3)**

Paying no heed to the once-vaunted running ability of Robert Griffin III, Dom Capers rushed six or more on 25% of passes. His previous high in four-plus seasons was 20.6% against Cleveland's Derek Anderson in 2009. His blitz rate of five or more was an extreme 56.8%. The Redskins protected Griffin, but he was on edge and didn't convert a third down until late in the third quarter. Clay Matthews spent about 40 of his 55 snaps over Williams and didn't get much done. Later, Capers gave Matthews nine snaps against RT Tyler Polumbus, a pedestrian player, and he had one pressure. The only production by Nick Perry (39) in the rush was a batted ball. Several times he did get off blocks and upend Morris after short gains. Andy Mulumba got his welcome-to-the-NFL moment in a nine-snap debut, getting decleated by Williams from the side. In 23 snaps, Neal intercepted a tipped pass on a zone drop and really hustled. Brad Jones (61) started fast but had a few bad plays, including Morris' 32-yard run when he ended up being on the wrong side of the lead block by FB Darrel Young. The presence of A.J. Hawk (45) was negligible.

### **SECONDARY (4)**

After Micah Hyde missed a tackle and was just OK in 24 snaps, Capers shifted Tramon Williams to the slot and inserted Davon House outside. House was impressive, showing deep cover speed. Williams broke up two passes and Sam Shields broke up four, including a pair to Santana Moss in the Redskins' stack-bunch formations. When Matthews was out of position, it was left to the fleet Shields to chase down Pierre Garcon on a 44-yard bubble screen. In garbage time, Shields seemed to lose focus and gave up some too-easy completions. Rotating safeties M.D. Jennings (61), Jerron McMillian (48) and Chris Banjo (29) were adequate. The trio's only missed tackle was by Banjo on Morris' second 32-yard run.

### **KICKERS (3 ½)**

Tim Masthay probably has a stronger leg than Mason Crosby. He's also more prone to the mishit. The results (four touchbacks) were excellent; his seven-kickoff averages were 73.6 yards and 3.54 seconds of hang time. One hung just 1.42 seconds. His three punts averaged 40.3 (gross), 37.3 (net) and 4.69 (hang time).

### **SPECIAL TEAMS (3)**

Neither team had success returning. House led sharp coverage. Jeremy Ross needs to use his size and rugged running ability and get up the field faster. Cobb let a punt bounce that he should have fielded. Aggressive Ryan Taylor challenged two punts, drawing a holding penalty on his first rush. Hyde replaced Jarrett Bush (hamstring), who missed his first game in six years. A poor block by Ross almost resulted in a blocked punt by Niles Paul.

### **OVERALL (4 ½)**

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