

Packers individual report card: Offense

By Bob McGinn of the Journal Sentinel

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WIDE RECEIVERS (8)

Jarrett Boykin: Hardworking, no-nonsense second-year player increased his snap count from 92 to 689. His rapid development was somewhat shocking. Plays faster than he clocked (4.62-second 40) out of Virginia Tech. Deceptive deep with buildup speed and a long stride. Aggressive at the ball, vastly improved after the catch (4.96-year average) and the best blocker of the bunch. Has huge hands (10 3/8 inches) but must become a more consistent catcher. Will fight for No. 3 job in 2014 and might even be a No. 2 down the road: **Grade: B-**.

Randall Cobb: Missed most of training camp with biceps injury. Limited to 30.8% playing time after suffering broken leg in Game 5. Has rare explosiveness from the slot, is lightning fast into routes and almost always shows elusiveness with the ball. Dropped 10 passes in 2012, none of 46 this year. Now the powers that be must figure out a way to keep Cobb and Jordy Nelson, both of whose contracts expire after next season. **Grade: B.**

Sederrick Cunningham: Street free agent underwent emergency wrist surgery July 26 after being injured in the first practice. Probably won't return. **Grade: Incomplete.**

Kevin Dorsey: The rookie went down early in camp with a hamstring injury and then played 24 snaps in his only exhibition game before being stashed on injured reserve with a sore toe. Strong, rangy and raw seventh-round draft choice from Maryland. Really went after people as a blocker in the Seattle game. **Grade: Incomplete.**

Chris Harper: One of Ted Thompson's rare waiver claims. Was Seattle's fourth-round draft choice out of Kansas State; released by Seahawks (Sept. 3) and the 49ers (Oct. 18). Played one snap from scrimmage and a handful of others covering kicks. At 6 feet ½ inch and 228 pounds, his thickness doesn't seem to fit the offense. Worth another peek. **Grade: Incomplete.**

James Jones: Turns 30 in March, a few weeks after he's able to test the unrestricted free-agent market. Played the same number of snaps as Nelson in the first month before suffering a sprained posterior collateral lateral knee ligament. Missed just 2½ games and played hurt for about a month, struggling to separate. Also played through broken ribs suffered in Game 15. Tough, strong and extremely confident in his routes and hands. Improved this season by an average of 2.41 yards after each catch compared to 2012. Class act all the way. **Grade: B-**.

Jordy Nelson: Outstanding in every category. Played 96.5% of the snaps after undergoing arthroscopic knee surgery Aug. 5. Played extensively from the slot for the first time in place of the injured Cobb and made a fine adjustment. Even more dangerous outside, where he can pitter-patter the sideline on double moves, fades and back shoulders. A hard tackle on hitches. Lone career fumble was back in 2010. Caught 22 passes for 20 yards or more, 10 more than his career high. No penalties for second straight season. Consummate pro. **Grade: A.**

Myles White: Willowy deep threat cut from the mold of former Bear Bernard Berrian. Probably the fastest WR in training camp. Summoned from practice squad when injuries struck, playing 123 snaps in Games 6-13 before partially torn meniscus cartilage sent him to injured reserve. Can track the long ball and isn't afraid of traffic. Just 185 pounds soaking wet; needs 10 good pounds by August. **Grade: Incomplete.**

TIGHT ENDS (5)

Brandon Bostick: Beat out D.J. Williams and Matt Mulligan in second season as small college WR turned TE. Striking resemblance to Jermichael Finley in mannerisms and route-running; even more fluid in and out of his cuts. Most impressive development in Year 2 was his willingness to mix it up on special teams and as a blocker. Still not dependable blocking, but doesn't shy away from the rough stuff anymore. Can really run. Intriguing matchup piece on vertical deep shots. Underwent surgery to repair a broken foot in mid-December. **Grade: D+.**

Jermichael Finley: It's 50-50 at best that he resumes his career in Green Bay, if anywhere. After suffering a concussion Sept. 22, he underwent a cervical fusion Nov. 14 for a spinal-cord contusion. It's a serious injury, not unlike other cases in which the Packers wouldn't run the risk of allowing players to play football again. By signing Finley to a short-term contract (two years) in February 2012, the Packers now are off the hook financially. Finley is hell-bent on resuming his career. However, he would collect \$10 million tax-free from an insurance policy if he can't play. In 252 snaps, Finley dropped three of 34 balls, the worst drop rate on the team. He also averaged a team-high and career-high 9.32 yards after the catch, often dominating safeties in the short flats. Used his 10 extra pounds to block a little better, too. **Grade: B.**

Andrew Quarless: Made it all the way back from a devastating knee injury in December 2011 to play 738 snaps as Finley's replacement. Caught the ball well enough (three of 56 drops), had 33 receptions and averaged a respectable 4.15 after the catch. Isn't a quick-twitch athlete in the passing game. Stiff in the upper body. Was a solid in-line blocker in 2011, when he had just one-half "bad" run in 190 snaps. This season, Quarless had 15 bad runs, most by a Green Bay TE since Bubba Franks was charged with 19 in 2003 (Finley's high was 9½ in '12). It's doubtful now that Quarless will ever be much more than an inconsistent shield-type blocker. His contract is expiring, too. **Grade: D+.**

Jake Stoneburner: Promoted from the practice squad Oct. 15 and was active for 11 of 12 games. Despite a myriad of injuries at the position, the coaches felt confident giving him just 10 snaps from scrimmage. Removed from special teams after six weeks of regular turns because his limited athleticism showed up and he made too many mistakes. Shared special-teams penalty lead with three, and all three (roughing the punter, roughing the passer on a fake punt and an illegal block) were major. Bull in a china shop. **Grade: F.**

Ryan Taylor: From Game 12 on, he was the No. 2 TE. Played 167 snaps, up from 138 in 2012 and 30 as a rookie. Gives it all he's got as a blocker but still was responsible for too many (five) bad runs. Progressed running routes. Isn't an imposing target downfield and a limited athlete. Played the second-most snaps on special teams (335) and usually did the job. Always competes. **Grade: D+.**

OFFENSIVE LINE (11)

David Bakhtiari: The Packers' first full-season rookie starter at LT since Mark Koncar in 1976. Both were Colorado Buffaloes. Bryan Bulaga's blown knee Aug. 3 opened the door for Bakhtiari and he never looked back. Playing virtually every snap, he maintained his poise, played hard and wouldn't back down against a who's who list of elite pass rushers. Only Ziggy Ansah of Detroit and Aldon Smith of San Francisco knocked Bakhtiari around and made him look bad. Finished second in pressures allowed (37, including 6½ sacks) and second in bad runs (15½), and had far too many penalties (10). Bulaga also had 10 penalties as the rookie RT in 2010. Bright, willing and doesn't make excuses. Needs to get bigger and stronger. **Grade: C+.**

Don Barclay: Played 86.7% of the snaps, missing two games with what a source said was a torn medial collateral knee ligament. Beat out Marshall Newhouse for RT job. Not particularly big, strong or light on his feet. Has enormous hands (10 7/8) and a get-it-done, tenacious approach. Misses inside too much against run and pass. Otherwise, a hard man to beat in the run game, allowing 11½ bad runs. Led the team in pressures with 39. Might be ticketed as a four-position swing man but won't submit to backup status without a fight. **Grade: C.**

Bryan Bulaga: It remains to be seen if he's aligned at LT or RT. The Packers know Bulaga can play the right side, but he hasn't started on the left side since 2008-'09 at Iowa. He's much bigger and much stronger than Bakhtiari and Barclay. He will have had 12 months from ACL surgery to the first week of training camp. **Grade: Incomplete.**

Evan Dietrich-Smith: As a full-season starter for the first time, he was better than Jeff Saturday and worse than Scott Wells. Scrappy, can be quick to the second level, loves to play and has played hurt. Applied himself to football and achieved beyond his score of 15 on the Wonderlic intelligence test. Ran a pretty smooth ship over center. Better blocking for pass than run. Gave up 22 bad runs, most on the team, and yielded 11½ pressures. Struggled reach-blocking some nose tackles in the zone scheme early, and benefited from more angle-type blocking down the stretch. Gave up six sacks, the most by a Green Bay center from 1991-2013 (Frank Winters was second with 4½ in '94). Team apparently has made no effort to re-sign him. **Grade: C-.**

T.J. Lang: Moved from LG to RG and showed slight improvement in key categories, trimming his pressures from 21½ to 17½ and his bad runs from 14½ to 13½. He's a reliable, solid starter. Has some athletic limitations but is big, strong, tough and competitive. A little stiff and a little slow on the move. Best getting after ILBs in the run game. Always looking to finish. **Grade: B-.**

Marshall Newhouse: Tried to play with more aggressiveness in camp but it just isn't him. Regressed badly in his fourth season. Didn't appear to play with much pride. Allowed five sacks (and 18 pressures) in just 248 snaps, including 218 at RT, 16 at RG and 14 at LT. He has feet and is a quick study. He either can't or won't play mad and get after people. One thing Newhouse didn't do in 2013 was flat miss in the run game; he wasn't charged with a single bad run. He didn't get any movement, either. No reason at all to bring him back on another contract. **Grade: F.**

Derek Sherrod: Was in uniform for eight of his nine games back from leg-ankle injuries but played only six snaps. The Packers say he did OK in practice. The guess is that Sherrod will be back in camp to fulfill the final year of his contract at a base salary of \$1.275 million. He is the best-looking O-lineman on the club. Now it remains to be seen if Sherrod can develop the necessary quick hands and feet that he didn't show as a rookie in 2011. **Grade: Incomplete.**

Josh Sitton: Among the NFL's top five to 10 guards. He doesn't have the feet of the premier guards but recovers well against edge rushers. His pressure total of 11½ included one sack. Playing heavier this season at 322, he anchored up well against even the strongest interior rushers. Overcame "why me" syndrome over side switch and by midseason was back in the groove. Uses his mass to seal defenders on zone runs and to engulf linebackers pulling on power plays. Keeping his guy out of the play means a lot to him. An outrageous character who keeps it light during the tough times. **Grade: A-.**

Lane Taylor: Rookie free agent from Oklahoma State made the team as the last O-lineman and played 14 snaps. Won a job because he's a tough guy and worked hard to finish blocks. Better player than athlete. **Grade: Incomplete.**

JC Tretter: Figures to get every chance to start at center. Suffered a broken fibula and ankle damage May 20 rolling around in one of the Packers' fumble-recovery drills. Practiced for seven weeks late in the season but never played. An inch taller than Dietrich-Smith at 6-3½, Tretter is strong, smart (Wonderlic of 29) and fast (5.04). He split his four-year career at Cornell between TE and LT. **Grade: Incomplete.**

Greg Van Roten: Beat out free agent Patrick Lewis for the backup center job but suffered a foot sprain Sept. 30 in practice and was done for the year. Another Ivy Leaguer (Penn), he gained traction among the staff because of his five-position capability. Pass protection is his forte. He really struggled executing reach blocks in exhibition games. **Grade: Incomplete.**

QUARTERBACKS (4)

Matt Flynn: Traded by Seattle to Oakland on April 1 for a fifth-round pick. Released by the Raiders on Oct. 7. Signed by Buffalo on Oct. 14, cut Nov. 5. Signed by the desperate Packers on Nov. 11 for one year at the \$715,000 minimum. Despite those three discouraging experiences, Flynn didn't forget Mike McCarthy's offense or how to play. His arm didn't seem as strong as it had been before his departure in March 2012. Still, Flynn moved the offense just fine in 3½ games sandwiched around a bad day in Detroit. No matter his arm, height and ball-holding tendencies, he is a gamer. If the Packers draft a QB, they probably won't have need for Flynn, a free agent to be. If not, he served his purpose in 2013. **Grade: C+.**

Aaron Rodgers: Coming off two months of inactivity, Rodgers escaped pressure and made the unforgettable 48-yard TD pass to beat the Bears and win the division. He wasn't sharp that day, nor was he against the 49ers in another playoff defeat for a team that badly needed a dose of magic from its quarterback. He was brilliant against tail-enders Washington and Minnesota in the first seven games before the fateful broken collarbone knocked him out of almost eight full games. His record this season was 6-3. Rodgers' regular-season rating of 104.9, which ranked fifth behind Nick Foles, Peyton Manning, Josh McCown and Philip Rivers, was his fifth straight above 100 but lowest since 2010. **Grade: B.**

Scott Tolzien: Against the Giants, he completed passes for 25, 45, 26, 29 and 52 yards. "I have never seen a quarterback hit all big throws like that in a game," McCarthy said the next day. "Every big shot we called, we hit them." Tolzien, 26, also was intercepted three times, and with the offense stagnant the next Sunday against Minnesota McCarthy replaced him with Flynn. All things considered, the former Badger acquitted himself well. McCarthy is eager to work with him in what would be their first off-season together. Yet, it's true that the more Tolzien played, the worse he got. His arm and athleticism were better than some scouts thought. **Grade: D.**

Seneca Wallace: Signed Sept. 2, Wallace had two months of scout-team reps before Rodgers went down. Given the circumstances of his abrupt insertion, he was adequate. He completed his first five passes the following Sunday against the Eagles before suffering a torn left adductor muscle for the second time and underwent surgery. "They cut it and reattached it so it won't happen again," Wallace said last Sunday. "I'd love to play here (in 2014)." At 33, his re-signing is unlikely. **Grade: D.**

RUNNING BACKS (6)

Kahlil Bell: The former Bear was signed off the street Dec. 3. He played extensively and without impact on special teams. He didn't play from scrimmage. He'll be unrestricted in March. **Grade: Incomplete.**

Johnathan Franklin: Other than Sept. 22 in Cincinnati, his first season was a washout. Alex Green probably outperformed him in training camp but the Packers kept the rookie. He played smaller than his size and was a liability in blitz pickup, one of his strengths at UCLA. Against the Bengals, Franklin broke eight tackles on six different carries showing exceptional change of direction and burst. Then, with the outcome at hand, he fumbled the ball away on fourth and 1 and the Bengals returned it 58 yards for the winning TD. His work as a returner was poor before his season ended Nov. 24 with a concussion. **Grade: D.**

DuJuan Harris: Talk about a forgotten man. A year ago, the 5-7 Harris was the team's best back. In early June, he underwent surgery to have a large benign cyst removed from his chest. A knee injury then kept him sidelined until Aug. 12. On Aug. 23, he ruptured his right patellar tendon and was done for the season. He returns in spring. **Grade: Incomplete.**

John Kuhn: His three-year contract averaging \$2.5 million is expiring. There's a good chance the Packers will re-sign Kuhn if he's amenable to a deal near the veteran's minimum of about \$855,000. He averaged 20.3 snaps per game, about on par with his past marks of 26.6 ('12), 24.9 ('11), 20.6 ('10), 16.1 ('09), 17.5 ('08) and 10.4 ('07). According to position coach Alex Van Pelt, Kuhn didn't allow a pressure all season. Van Pelt called Kuhn's late blitz pickup of Chicago's Julius Peppers and Lacy's 60-yard run in Dallas the two finest plays made by Green Bay's RBs in 2013. Kuhn also was somewhat stronger and more on-target as a run blocker, allowing just one bad run after averaging 4.2 in the previous six seasons. He also played the second-most snaps (230) on special teams by an offensive player. Kuhn isn't a hammer blocking and his limitations with the ball are obvious. **Grade: C+.**

Eddie Lacy: He figures to be the Packers' first offensive rookie of the year since RB John Brockington in 1971. Counting playoffs, Lacy rushed 305 times for 1,259 yards (4.13) and 11 TDs. He also caught 37 passes and allowed five sacks, the most by a Packers RB in more than two decades. Lacy also dropped three of 48 passes. He didn't have a penalty. Lacy usually made the right reads, showing the vision and patience that is born to the great ones. He punished some tacklers, spun away from others and even outran a few. He looks like the Packers' best back since Ahman Green. **Grade: B+.**

James Starks: The Packers would like him back but probably won't pay him much over minimum. If he departs in free agency, they can look forward to a compensatory draft choice in 2015. Starks averaged just 16.8 snaps in 14 games after averaging 20.7 in 2012, 32.7 in '11 and 29.4 in '10. He averaged a whopping 5.5 yards per carry, charging and darting for explosive gains of 20, 32, 25, 32, 34 and 41 yards. Starks is a downhill, straight-line speed back, and at 6-2 he's one of the tallest runners in the league. He's a better receiver than pass blocker, but both areas are more weaknesses than strengths. **Grade: B.**