

# Grading The Green Bay Packers:

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## DEFENSIVE LINE

### **Mike Daniels**

Made big jump from Year 1 to Year 2, leading defensive linemen with 6½ regular-season sacks. Started just twice, including playoff game against 49ers. Was used primarily in subpackages as an interior pass rusher. Had team-high 33 QB hits/hurries. Played 553 snaps, nearly double his total from rookie season. Added size and strength and appears to be an anchor on the line for years to come. In playoff game, recorded sack, quarterback hit and five tackles, including one for loss. Plays with consistently high effort. Rated one of team's best run defenders by Pro Football Focus. **Grade: B-**.

### **Ryan Pickett**

Started all 17 games at nose tackle, with primary role to eat up blocks. In his 13th NFL season, played 48 percent of snaps (546), down from 658 last season, resulting in lower tackle total. Run defense was adequate, although it fell off from 2012 levels, according to Pro Football Focus ratings. QB hits/hurries (5) almost identical to last season. Still shows mobility for 34-year-old with two passes defended. Didn't miss a game for second straight year and showed no signs of wearing down — played 47 snaps (third-highest total of year) in playoff game. Well-respected, provides solid veteran presence in locker room. His contract will expire and return is uncertain. **Grade: C.**

### **B.J. Raji**

Had perhaps his poorest season. Didn't make many impact plays, which is surprising for a player in a contract year. Started at end in all 17 games (14 at right end, 3 at left end) and led linemen in snaps, although played 102 fewer snaps (666) than last season. Had no sacks for second straight season and 13 QB hits/hurries compared to 26 last season. His tackle numbers also were down. Part of his job is to absorb blockers, which doesn't show up on stat sheet. Regressed markedly in run defense, according to Pro Football Focus ratings. Could be better suited as nose tackle, where he started exclusively in 2010 and 2011. As an unrestricted free agent, his return is uncertain. **Grade: C.**

### **Johnny Jolly**

Held his own after missing three full seasons due to NFL substance-abuse suspension. Played in 13 games, including eight starts at end, before injuring his neck in Week 15 at Dallas and landing on injured reserve. Played on 33 percent of snaps (294) and alternated at right and left end. By comparison, played on 79 percent of snaps (853) in 2009, his last season before suspension. Had sack, fumble recovery, pass defended, one batted pass and four QB hits/hurries. Run defense was rated so-so by Pro Football Focus. Provided emotional spark in locker room. Brought much-needed mean streak to line. Faces possible surgery and uncertain future. **Grade: C-**.

### **Josh Boyd**

Late-emerging fifth-round draft pick was inactive for seven of first nine games but used as reserve at both ends and nose tackle in final seven games. In games he was active, played 20 percent of defensive snaps (117). Recorded five QB hurries and seven tackles. Most extensive action came at Dallas (32 of 74 snaps) when he had three solo tackles, including one for loss, a QB hit and pressure, and drew holding penalty. **Grade: D+.**

### **Datone Jones**

Played in all 17 games and used primarily as an inside rusher on passing downs. Used on 24 percent of downs (276 snaps). Considering his first-round pedigree, wasn't used much in line rotation, especially late in season. Played only 22 snaps in final three games, including playoff game, when he was used as emergency fill-in at outside linebacker. Had 3½ sacks plus 14 QB hits/hurries. Led linemen with four missed tackles. **Grade: D+.**

### **C.J. Wilson**

Forgotten man on line. Went from starting eight games in 2012 to landing on inactive list for eight games this season. Snaps dropped from 359 last year to 127. Couldn't seem to play his way into rotation on deep line. Played 19 snaps in 49ers playoff game but recorded no statistics. His effectiveness as run defender fell off, according to Pro Football Focus rating. **Grade: D.**

### **Jerel Worthy**

Started season on physically unable to perform list following knee injury in December 2012. Returned to practice Nov. 13 and made season debut 11 days later against Minnesota. Appeared in three games, including playoff game, and totaled 14 snaps and one tackle. **Grade: Incomplete.**

## **OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS**

### **Clay Matthews**

For the first time in five seasons, didn't earn Pro Bowl recognition. Played fewest games (11) and snaps (571) of his career due to broken thumb, and upon his return was limited because of cast. Led team with 7½ sacks. His total of quarterback hits/hurries/sacks (32½) was down from 52 last season. His tackle total also dropped from 45 to 30. **Grade: B-.**

### **Mike Neal**

Made transition from defensive lineman to outside linebacker. Still learning new role as evidenced by 11 missed tackles. Played career-high 751 snaps, more than any other outside linebacker, and for first time in career appeared in all games, although he went down early in 49ers playoff game. Recorded career highs in sacks (5) and tackles (47), and added forced fumble, first career interception and pass defended. Recorded team-high 46 combined QB hits/hurries/sacks. **Grade: C.**

### **Nick Perry**

Missed five games with foot injury but doubled his snap count (433 to 211) from rookie season, when he missed 12 of 18 games with knee and wrist injuries. Started six of 11 regular-season games and recorded four sacks and three forced fumbles. Produced sack, quarterback hit and two tackles for loss in playoff game against 49ers. His QB hits/hurries/sacks total (27) nearly equaled Matthews' despite 138 fewer snaps. **Grade: C.**

### **Andy Mulumba**

One of three undrafted free agents to make opening-day roster. Made transition from college defensive end to outside linebacker. Proved to be a better run-stopper than pass-rusher. Appeared in all but two games (ankle injury). Had one sack and one fumble recovery in 361 snaps, including two starts, and added just nine QB hurries. Flashed potential. **Grade: D+.**

### **Nate Palmer**

The sixth-round rookie had minimal impact, appearing in eight games but left inactive in six of the last seven, including the 49ers' playoff game. Was forced into starting duty for two games because of injuries to Matthews and Perry in Weeks 6-7. Had just two QB hits and two hurries in 200 snaps. Struggled at times to make transition from college defensive end.

**Grade: D.**

## **INSIDE LINEBACKERS**

### **A.J. Hawk**

Started all 17 games and has missed just two to injury in his eight-year career. Led team in tackles (118), had career-high five sacks and recorded an interception, forced fumble, fumble recovery and five passes defended. Missed 13 tackles, more than double his total from last year. Led defense with 1,078 snaps. Run support wasn't as strong this season, but showed improvement on pass defense. **Grade: C+.**

### **Brad Jones**

Missed four games to injuries, and snap count (649) was down more than 20 percent from last season. Third on team in tackles (84), but also had seven missed tackles. Recorded three regular-season sacks plus another in playoff game. Had a forced fumble, fumble recovery and two passes defended in regular season. Didn't improve after signing free-agent contract last spring. **Grade: C-.**

### **Jamari Lattimore**

Core special teams player who started for first time in career for an injured Brad Jones (Weeks 2-4, 17). Had two sacks and forced fumble on defense but continues to shine brightest on special teams, where he blocked a punt and recovered an onside kick. Displays potential but needs to show more consistency. **Grade: D+.**

### **Sam Barrington**

Seventh-round rookie inside linebacker played exclusively on special teams in first half of season before sustaining season-ending hamstring injury in Week 9 against Chicago.

**Grade: D.**

### **Victor Aiyewa**

Signed to practice squad Oct. 15 and added to active roster for final six games. Was limited to special teams duty, where he made five tackles. **Grade: Incomplete.**

### **Robert Francois**

Played in first four games, including just 13 snaps on defense, before sustaining season-ending injury (Achilles) in first Detroit game. **Grade: Incomplete.**

## **SAFETIES**

### **Morgan Burnett**

Didn't take expected step forward after signing long-term contract last summer. Missed first three games with hamstring injury and didn't make season debut until Oct. 6. Struggled in coverage at times with no interceptions, and missed 11 tackles. A total of 71.4 percent of passes thrown in his area were completed, compared to 63.2 percent the year before.

Rating of opposing QBs was 135.8 for passes thrown in his area, compared to 83.2 in 2012. Finished second on team in tackles (96), had career-high three fumble recoveries, including one for a touchdown, and eight passes defended. Led team in tackles in playoff game vs. 49ers but was late in coverage on touchdown pass to Vernon Davis. **Grade: C.**

### **Sean Richardson**

Started season on physically unable to perform list with neck injury suffered in 2012 season. Returned to practice Nov. 13 and played in first game Nov. 24. Ascending player who brings a physical presence to run defense. Missed one tackle in 174 snaps. Played second-most safety snaps behind Burnett in December games against Atlanta, Dallas and Pittsburgh. **Grade: D+.**

### **Chris Banjo**

Cut by Jacksonville in late July and signed by Packers early in training camp. Surprise final-cutdown survivor who played in all 17 games and started in Week 3 at Cincinnati. Second on team in special teams tackles. Missed five tackles on defense. Played only 11 defensive snaps over final six games when Richardson emerged. **Grade: D.**

### **M.D. Jennings**

Started all 17 games at free safety, although his defensive snaps were reduced later in the season in favor of Richardson. Missed nine tackles, but an even bigger struggle came in pass coverage. Opposing QBs had a 148.8 rating on passes in his area and completed 88.9 percent of passes (16 of 18) against him, a huge step backward from 2012 when those numbers were a 69.3 percent and 40.9 completion percentage (9 of 22). Gave up five touchdowns and had no interceptions. **Grade: D-.**

### **Jerron McMillian**

2012 fourth-round draft pick was expected to seize starting job opposite Burnett but instead regressed so badly he was cut Dec. 3. Blew coverage on pair of late-game passes at Baltimore that almost cost a victory. After that played just seven defensive snaps the rest of season because he couldn't be trusted. Missed four tackles in season opener at San Francisco when he was only player on defense to play all 81 snaps. Lost starting job by Week 3. **Grade: F.**

## **CORNERBACKS**

### **Sam Shields**

Usually matched up against opponent's top receiver. Posted career highs in tackles and passes defended (team-leading 24). Intercepted four passes, none bigger than a fourth-quarter pick of Dallas' Tony Romo that set up winning touchdown in dramatic comeback. Tied career high with four picks. Quarterbacks completed 50 percent of passes thrown at him (42 of 84) with a rating of 72.7. Gave up four touchdowns, same as last season. Missed nine tackles compared to five last year. Penalized just twice. Inactive in Weeks 11 and 12 because of hamstring injury. Injured knee in first quarter of playoff game and didn't return. **Grade: B+.**

### **Tramon Williams**

Returned to 2010 form in second half of season when he was at top of his game. Started every game and had career highs for tackles and sacks (2½). Forced two fumbles, had two fumble recoveries and four interceptions, including momentum-turning pick against 49ers in playoffs. Effective pass rusher with three QB hits and three hurries in addition to his sacks. Missed 10 tackles compared to six last season. Penalized 11 times, compared to five last year. Opposing quarterbacks completed 57 percent of passes against him (53 of 93) with a modest rating of 78.0. Gave up four touchdown passes. **Grade: B.**

### **Micah Hyde**

Contributed as slot cornerback, primary kick and punt returner and special teams coverage man. Fifth-round draft pick climbed to No. 3 on the cornerback depth chart. Played in every game, including three starts. Led rookies in tackles, had a sack, forced fumble, four passes defended and eight special teams tackles. Sure-handed return man averaged 12.3 yards on punt runbacks, eighth-best in NFL, and went 93 yards for touchdown at Minnesota. Averaged 24.1 yards on 22 kickoff returns. Dropped fourth-quarter interception of Colin Kaepernick in playoffs that might have been game-winner. Missed only three tackles in 448 snaps. **Grade: C+.**

### **Jarrett Bush**

Missed four of first six games with hamstringing injury. Remains one of team's best special teams players with seven coverage tackles. Used as dime defensive back on limited basis (129 snaps). Made pair of game-deciding, fourth-quarter plays in 22-21 win over Atlanta on Dec. 8 — he jarred ball loose from Tony Gonzalez on fourth-down pass and later intercepted a Matt Ryan pass to seal game. Didn't allow any touchdown passes. Gave up completions on 10 of 15 targeted passes. Called for two special teams penalties after getting flagged for eight in 2012. **Grade: C-.**

### **Davon House**

Struggled with consistency in coverage. Gave up five touchdown passes, 94.1 QB rating in passes thrown in his area and 52.2 percent completion rate (35 of 67). Appeared in every game and made five starts. Led team in special teams tackles. Missed five tackles in 533 defensive snaps. Can be strong and physical in coverage. Made first and only career interception against Cleveland. Committed just one penalty. **Grade: C-.**

### **Casey Hayward**

Injured hamstring the week before training camp, then aggravated it during preseason. Made season debut Oct. 27 at Minnesota. Appeared in three games and made 12 tackles before re-aggravating the hamstring in Week 10 and getting placed on injured reserve Nov. 23. **Grade: Incomplete.**

### **James Nixon**

Signed from practice squad to active roster Oct. 7. Appeared in three games, mostly on special teams. Sustained season-ending knee injury in Week 11. **Grade: Incomplete.**

### **Jumal Rolle**

Signed to active roster Dec. 27 after being on practice squad since Oct. 8. Was on the game-day inactive list for regular-season finale and playoff game. **Grade: Incomplete.**