

# Packers Individual Report Card:Offense

*By Bob McGinn of the Journal Sentinel*

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## WIDE RECEIVERS (7)

**Davante Adams:** Fluid, smart and competitive. Zipped past injured Jarrett Boykin as No. 3 in Game 4 and never looked back. Dropped four of 79 passes for drop rate of 5.06%, lowest at the position, and averaged a solid 5.41 yards after the catch. Doesn't have tremendous size or burner speed. Plays with strength, can work outside or inside and doesn't scare from traffic jams. Has starter's capability. **Grade: C+**.

**Jared Abbrederis:** Looked like a natural returning punts in the off-season and had a shot at the kickoff-return job, too. Then he blew out his knee July 30 in the fourth practice of training camp. Possession-type receiver fared surprisingly well against the jam in limited exposure.

**Grade: Incomplete.**

**Jarrett Boykin:** Fell off the map after playing so well as a No. 3 in 2013 that coach Mike McCarthy deemed James Jones expendable. Played 119 snaps in Games 1-3, sat out Games 4-6 with a groin injury and played just 119 more snaps as a No. 4 in Games 7-18. Dropped three of 12 passes thrown to him. Played faster than he timed a year ago but didn't show it this year. Declined interviews all season, and Sunday in the Seattle locker room was heard seeking to persuade Andrew Quarless to stop speaking to reporters. His good plays on special teams were offset by just as many bad ones. Restricted free agent for whom the minimum tender of \$1.574 million might be too rich for the Packers' blood. **Grade: D-**.

**Randall Cobb:** Sluggish in training camp and Games 1-3, he then emerged as one of the NFL's brightest young stars. Made play after play from the slot. Quick-twitch athlete could gain instant separation against almost every nickel back. Led the team in yards after catch with an average of 5.98 yards and in 20+ plays with 26, nine more than his previous high of 17 in 2012. Developed into a fearless, effective blocker. Actually appeared to like drawing assignments cracking back on strong safeties, even linebackers. Also played 46 snaps stationed in the backfield, including 33 in the last five games after Mike McCarthy saw how dynamic he was in that role. Re-signing Cobb is priority No. 1 in the off-season. Agent Jimmy Sexton won't make it easy, but Cobb earned all the leverage. Dropped nine of 145 passes after not having a drop in 46 targets last year. **Grade: A-**.

**Kevin Dorsey:** Similar to Boykin, just not as seasoned. Like Boykin, he's a wide receiver with the toughness to tackle and block on special teams. Unlike Boykin, he's fast and athletic. Beat out by Boykin and Jeff Janis in training camp before being brought back from the practice squad. Broke his foot on 12th snap from scrimmage and was lost for season. **Grade: Incomplete.**

**Jeff Janis:** Sat inactive for final 12 games behind Boykin, an inferior talent. McCarthy, however, insisted the difference between them from scrimmage and on special teams was clear-cut. Drafted in the seventh round out of Division II Saginaw Valley State, he made a remarkably rapid two-week recovery from shingles to capture the No. 5 berth. Demonstrated breathtaking speed in exhibition season on receptions (34, 33) and KO return (62). Size, speed and poise offer immense promise.

**Grade: Incomplete.**

**Jordy Nelson:** Dominant force until late in the season. Signed to a four-year, \$39.8 million extension July 26, the morning of the first practice. Epitomizes professionalism, consistency, work ethic and discipline. Always the same. Seems to play faster every year. Grooved route runner. Caught eight passes for more than 35 yards, two fewer than his career-best of 10 in 2010. Encountered some problems separating against physical press-man cornerbacks down the stretch. No doubt teams expended even more effort trying to stop him. Also dropped nine of 163 passes, including six in the last five games. Was the Sports Illustrated cover boy Dec. 1. Did the SI jinx strike again? **Grade: B+**.

## TIGHT ENDS (4)

**Brandon Bostick:** On paper, he's the fastest of the team's three tight ends, the best downfield receiver, the best blocker and the best on special teams. So why did Bostick play just 33 snaps from scrimmage (he also played 244 on special teams, most of any offensive player)? The leg fracture that he suffered Aug. 16 sidelined him a month and disrupted his momentum. More to the point, the coaches simply didn't consider Bostick as dependable as the others. They kept Bostick over Ryan Taylor when a roster berth was needed but still never played him. His inability to follow orders and then failure to catch the decisive onside kick in Seattle probably ended his career, at least in Green Bay. **Grade: F.**

**Justin Perillo:** Rookie free agent from Maine hung around because of a knack for finding windows in zone coverage and his persistent blocking. He needs considerable strength development. Can run a little. Worth another look. **Grade: Incomplete.**

**Andrew Quarless:** Had his best season since missing all 2012 following reconstructive knee surgery. As confidence in his knee grew, so did his reliability as a blocker. Trimmed his total of "bad" runs from 15 to 4½. Too tall and upright to be more than a position-and-shield blocker but he usually stayed on his man. Had a career-high 58.1% playing time. Most of his 33 receptions were check-downs, flats or stick routes. Coaches weren't confident letting him run the seam. Anything but smooth in the open field but still averaged a career-best 5.46 after the catch. Too-high drop rate of 11.5% (six of 54). **Grade: C.**

**Richard Rodgers:** Finished with 44.5% playing time. Third-round draft choice with soft, sure hands. Dropped just two of 34 (5.9%). All but ignored by many defenses. Became a respectable fourth option by reading the blitz and presenting his numbers to the quarterback. Shows pedestrian speed off the line and into his routes. Woeful (1.9 average) after the catch as more of a catch-and-stumble guy. Played most of the season weighing in the mid-to-high 260s but needs to learn how to play more physically. His total of 13 "bad" runs was second-worst on the team. **Grade: C-.**

## OFFENSIVE LINE (10)

**Aaron Adams:** The Packers kept the "street" tackle around on injured reserve all year after he suffered a season-ending knee injury Aug. 28. Not expected back. **Grade: Incomplete.**

**David Bakhtiari:** Added much-needed strength and weight (to 312) in the off-season and improved as a second-year starter. Played 96.3% of the snaps at left tackle, where he and Detroit's Riley Reiff shared the top spot on the All-NFC North team. With new-found strength came confidence and a more physical approach. Won't be 24 until September so he still can improve by leaps and bounds. Allowed more sacks (5½), pressures (33) and "bad" runs (19½) than any lineman. Drew more penalties (eight), too. Despite the numbers, he was never close to being a liability. Anchored much better against bull rushers and cut off better on the back side in the run game. Now he needs to become more consistent blocking edge speed for pass and sustain longer at the point of attack for run. **Grade: B-.**

**Don Barclay:** Ticketed as the top backup at both tackle and guard spots before tearing an ACL Aug. 5. Missed two games in 2013 with what a source said was a torn MCL in the same right knee. Played 86.7% of the snaps at RT in 2013, allowing 39 pressures but only 11½ "bad" runs. The Packers will tender him as a restricted free agent in March. Tenacious, proud and resourceful. No, most teams wouldn't want Barclay starting, but there are far worse swingmen playing than him. **Grade: Incomplete.**

**Bryan Bulaga:** All-NFC North RT in 2011, '12 and '14. Bounced back from ACL surgery in August 2013 and played more forcefully as the season went on. Only starter on offense to miss a start (Game 2, sprained knee). Began really punishing defenders from about midseason on. More of a RT or guard than a LT based on body type and athletic ability. Slightly more consistent blocking for run than pass. Had fewest "bad" runs on O-line with 10. Can be walked back in pass protection when his hands get too wide. Generally able to settle in and halt bull rushers before they get home. Four of his 22½ pressures were sacks. Expected to be the top tackle on the unrestricted market if he's still available March 10. **Grade: B+.**

**Garth Gerhart:** Squatty third-year free agent realized lifelong dream of making a team after being promoted from practice squad on the day before the opener. Height (6-1½) makes center his best position but can play guard in a pinch. Played 25 snaps, didn't look overmatched. **Grade: Incomplete.**

**T.J. Lang:** Made his second season at RG the best of his career and was unanimous pick on the All-NFC North team. Tied his career-low for "bad" runs with 11½, which was tied for second on the O-line. Also served as the primary puller on 32 runs for 93 yards (2.9). Generally makes sound decisions on combo blocks, able to adjust easily on pre-snap checks and relishes the rough-and-tumble aspect of the job. Views himself as an enforcer ready to protect teammates at all costs. Made significant strides as one-on-one pass blocker and against stunts. Allowed one sack in both 2013 and '14 after yielding 5½ in '12. Can be a step slow getting to the second level. Always hustling and looking for somebody to hit. Played on a bad ankle for about six games. **Grade: B.**

**Corey Linsley:** Didn't take one snap with the No. 1 offense before practice on Aug. 24. Thrust into the starting role, he was the team's only player to take every snap (1,050) from scrimmage. Became the first center from Green Bay in the 41-year history of the all-rookie team. Extremely strong for his size, quick enough to snatch and reach in the zone scheme and showed good feel on combo blocks and twists. Highly intelligent, well-prepared and rugged. Didn't give up a sack until the second quarter of Game 17 against Dallas, when he flustered and allowed two. Still was low on the O-line in pressures with eight. Gave up 11½ "bad" runs, a major upgrade from a year ago over Evan Dietrich-Smith (22). Jeff Saturday allowed 18 in '12. Wasn't used to pull until midseason but finished with 16 on runs totaling 71 yards (4.4). **Grade: B.**

**Josh Sitton:** Suffered a torn ligament at the base of his left big toe in Game 8 but still logged 95.4% playing time over 18 games. A massive man who's light on his feet and a keen student of the game. Makes precious few mistakes. Hates to get beat. Unanimous All-NFC North guard for the fifth year in a row. Finest guard in Green Bay since Marco Rivera and Mike Wahle a decade ago. Primary puller on 30 runs for 153 yards (5.1). Hasn't allowed a sack in two seasons at LG. Last sack came at RG in Game 16 of 2012 when Minnesota's Everson Griffen beat him with a bull rush and secondary move. Yielded 12 ½ "bad" runs, his highest total since 2011, but some of that was due to an inability to push off the toe. **Grade: A-.**

**Lane Taylor:** After not playing a down as a free-agent rookie in 2013, he played 103 snaps at RG, 19 at LG and six at TE. Replaced Lang after the first series in New Orleans and the results weren't pretty (four "bad" runs, two pressures in 63 snaps). Granted, the circumstances couldn't have been more difficult, but that showing wouldn't have made the Packers feel good about his future. Taylor is a square-jawed built tough guy with a go-for-the-throat mentality. Modest athleticism will determine his future. **Grade: F.**

**JC Tretter:** Sat out the first eight games with knee damage, giving Linsley a shot at center. Otherwise, the job had been Tretter's since the start of the off-season program, and that wasn't just by default. The Packers liked what they saw from Tretter. Subsequent utility role (60 snaps) included 25 at LT, nine at LG, 12 at RT and 14 at TE. Played LT at Cornell from 2011-'12 after playing TE from 2009-'10. Best position appears to be center, but with Linsley that door's closed barring injury. Might not be big enough or strong enough to play tackle or guard. Responsible for one safety, 2½ pressures and 1½ "bad" runs. Marginal contributor in new role. **Grade: F.**

## QUARTERBACKS (3)

**Matt Flynn:** Withstood a stiff challenge from Scott Tolzien in August and held the No. 2 job all season. The Packers need to draft a quarterback fairly high, however, and if they do it's likely Flynn would be the odd man out. He played 67 snaps of largely mop-up duty on a one-year, \$1 million contract and wasn't impressive. Flynn will be 30 in June, has had arm problems and failed with three other teams. He more than served his purpose in 2013 when Rodgers was injured. **Grade: D.**

**Aaron Rodgers:** Superior arm strength, release and intellect have put Rodgers at or near the head of the line when it comes to quarterbacks. Posted four passer ratings of 139.6 or above in his seventh season as a starter. In the absolute prime of his career, which was readily apparent this season. Yet, for all his accolades and the support system around him, he still has played in and won only one Super Bowl. His playoff record dipped to 6-5 when he struggled in the red zone, threw two interceptions and didn't make enough plays against Seattle. Played through a non-surgical calf injury in Tampa, aggravated it in another place the next week and went the distance in two playoff games. His passer rating in the four games was 104.4. Rodgers excelled in the little things, too. His lethal hard counts drew off-sides penalties 17 times, and nine times he rushed to the line and had Linsley snap the ball to draw 12-men-on-the-field penalties. He didn't throw an interception that was his fault until Game 14 in Buffalo; 3½ of his eventual seven picks were charged to him. Extremely dangerous on extended plays, Rodgers also was responsible for one-third (11) of the 33 sacks by holding the ball too long. **Grade: A.**

**Scott Tolzien:** Probably outplayed Flynn (112.0 to 82.3 in passer rating) in exhibition games but the coaches went with the more known commodity as their main backup. Streamlined his delivery during the off-season while improving his strength and agility. Like Flynn, he'll be an unrestricted free agent. **Grade: Incomplete.**

## RUNNING BACKS (4)

**DuJuan Harris:** Seems like years ago, not December 2012, that this short (5-foot-7), tough player was the Packers' featured runner. Beat out Michael Hill in training camp for the No. 3 job and stayed there all season because Eddie Lacy and James Starks never got hurt. The coaches found ways to use his quickness and under-appreciated pass protection for 20 snaps in Games 1-3 and 26 more in Games 7-10. Probably didn't endear himself to the powers that be by reversing field or dancing on a few carries. Played just three snaps in Games 11-15, then was inactive for the final three games after his KO-return average dipped to 20.7. Look for the Packers to seek a better return man as their No. 3 RB. **Grade: D-.**

**John Kuhn:** No longer needed to protect and check down in third-and-long situations, Kuhn's snap total (244) was his lowest since 2009 (241). He'll be 33 by the start of next season, but his blocking was adequate enough to warrant another one-year deal near minimum salary. Carried 27 times, 15 more than a year ago, for 92 yards (3.4) as an up-back in inverted wishbone, I and pistol formations. Had diminished role on special teams (105). Bulkied up almost 10 pounds (to 257) looking to have more punch as a lead blocker. "Bad" run total increased from one to 5½. **Grade: C-.**

**Eddie Lacy:** Brings an element of toughness to the team. Established himself as an outstanding power runner and the Packers' best back since Ahman Green. Made major strides as a receiver, where his average per catch jumped from 7.1 to 10.2, and as a pass blocker, where his sack count crashed from five to one. Dropped two of 57 passes (3.51%), slightly better than three of 48 (6.25%) a year ago. Weight held fairly steady near 240 after having to play his way into shape in August with some extra conditioning inside the Hutson Center. Broke three to five tackles almost every game with sheer power, piston-like leg drive, a wicked spin move, recklessness and subtle cuts in-line. His "bad" run count shot up from five to 10½, the result of a little too much dancing. **Grade: A-.**

**James Starks:** After averaging a whopping 5.5 yards in 94 carries last year, Starks averaged just 4.14 in 95 attempts this year. He can be a tad erratic making cuts in a zone scheme, and his "bad" run count jumped from three to five. Nevertheless, the Packers are only too happy to have the spirited Starks back for another year as Lacy's backup. He runs like a bucking bronco, he's an all-out competitor and he's even become a little less hesitant in the passing game, both as a receiver and blocker. **Grade: C+.**