

Grading The Green Bay Packers:

Green Bay Press Gazette • January 25, 2015

Quarterbacks

Aaron Rodgers

Missed first extensive action of career. In eight games he sat out with broken collarbone, Packers went 2-5-1. In nine games he started and finished, Packers went 6-3. Directed signature 87-yard game-winning drive in regular-season finale to beat Bears for NFC North title, with 48-yard fourth-down TD pass to Randall Cobb with 38 seconds remaining the highlight of season. Had better regular-season completion percentage (66.6) than career mark (65.7) entering 2013 season and matched his career passer rating (104.9). Tied single-game franchise record with 480 yards passing vs. Washington in Week 2. **Grade: A-.**

Matt Flynn

After being cast off by three NFL teams, was signed Nov. 12 and helped salvage the Packers' season by directing three improbable comebacks (two wins, one tie) during Rodgers' absence. Became first QB in franchise history to throw four second-half TD passes, which helped turn a 26-3 halftime deficit against Dallas Cowboys into dramatic 37-36 victory. He also rallied Packers from 23-7 second-half deficit to 26-26 tie against Minnesota and a 21-10 halftime deficit into 22-21 victory against Atlanta. Finished with 86.1 passer rating. Endured rough outing at Detroit and finished 2-2 as starter. **Grade: C.**

Scott Tolzien

Came on in relief of Seneca Wallace against Philadelphia, then struggled in two starts before getting benched in favor of Flynn. Threw just one TD pass compared to five interceptions and Packers went 0-2 on his watch. Signed to practice squad after training camp but a student of the game who impressed coaches by picking up the offense quickly. Showed enough potential to be given chance to become Rodgers' primary backup in future. **Grade: D+.**

Seneca Wallace

After sitting out 2012 season, was signed after training camp to serve as the No. 2 QB when Graham Harrell, B.J. Coleman and Vince Young didn't make the grade. Struggled to a 53.4 passer rating when Rodgers went down early in Chicago Bears game, then completed 5 of 5 passes in start against Eagles before suffering season-ending groin injury. Not expected to be back next season. **Grade: D.**

RECEIVERS

Jordy Nelson

Recorded career highs with 85 regular-season receptions for 1,314 yards despite Rodgers going down for half the season. Besides catches and yards, led receivers in total targets (120), yards per catch (15.5), touchdowns (8) and yards after catch (428). Had 10 catches for 161 yards in regular-season finale against Bears. Used effectively as slot receiver, and especially adept at catching sideline passes. Dropped six passes all season. Made 14 would-be tacklers miss. **Grade: A-.**

Randall Cobb

Opened season with pair of 100-yard receiving games but broke leg in Week 5 and missed 10 games. Made triumphant return in regular-season finale in Chicago when he caught two touchdown passes, including game-winner with 38 seconds left. Remains a dangerous weapon who forces defenses to game plan for him, and along with Nelson forms formidable 1-2 punch. Dropped just one pass in 42 targets. **Grade: B.**

James Jones

Had two 100-yard receiving games in first four games but after suffering knee injury in Week 5 at Baltimore and missing nearly three games, was never the same and never went over century mark again. Production dropped from last season in targets (93 to 88), catches (64 to 59) and touchdowns (14 to 3). Dropped four passes, none more crucial than a downfield throw in traffic in playoff game against 49ers. **Grade: B-.**

Jarrett Boykin

With Cobb missing more than half the season, the second-year receiver found his niche. Didn't catch a pass in first four games but finished with 49 catches, 681 yards and three touchdowns. Dropped five passes but only two came after Week 2. Alertly picked up Rodgers' fumble and ran it in for touchdown to help beat Bears in regular-season finale. Was targeted just once and got shut out in 49ers' playoff game. **Grade: C.**

Chris Harper

Drafted by Seattle in the fourth round and claimed off waivers from San Francisco on Oct. 18, the 6-foot-1, 228-pound Kansas product appeared in four games, mostly on special teams, and didn't catch any passes. **Grade: Incomplete.**

Myles White

Opened season on practice squad. Signed to active roster Oct. 15 after Cobb and Jones suffered knee injuries. Appeared in seven games and caught nine passes for 66 yards. Suffered knee injury in Week 14 and landed on injured reserve. **Grade: Incomplete.**

OFFENSIVE LINE

Josh Sitton

Switched from right guard to left guard in the offseason and enjoyed a smooth transition by turning in his best season. Named Pro Bowl alternate. Allowed just one sack and his total of eight quarterback sacks/hits/hurries allowed was big improvement from last season's 21, when he played in Pro Bowl. Rated second-best guard in NFL by Pro Football Focus and best pass-blocking guard. Played all 1,205 offensive snaps. Called for seven penalties, one more than last season. **Grade: A-.**

T.J. Lang

Switched from left guard to right guard in offseason and showed improvement in third full season as starter, particularly his run-blocking. Gave up three sacks compared to nine last season. Total of 26 sacks/hits/hurries allowed is same as 2012. Shifted to center mid-game against Eagles and second Lions game after Evan Dietrich-Smith got hurt. Played 98 percent of snaps, going out with concussion in first Bears game. Called for five penalties, one less than last year. Rated 15th-best NFL guard by Pro Football Focus. **Grade: B-.**

Evan Dietrich-Smith

Provided upgrade over an over-the-hill Jeff Saturday, last season's primary starter at center, especially as a run-blocker. Allowed five sacks and a total of 16 sacks/hits/hurries. Missed parts of two games with injuries but played 94 percent of offensive snaps. Called for three penalties. Rated 8th-best NFL center by Pro Football Focus. **Grade: C+.**

David Bakhtiari

Became first Packers rookie to start all 16 games at left tackle since 1978 after preferred starter Bryan Bulaga suffered season-ending knee injury in training camp. Allowed 10 sacks, including three in Detroit on Thanksgiving and two in each of the 49ers games. Left plenty of room for improvement as run-blocker. Was called for team-high 13 penalties and gave up combined 43 sacks/hits/hurries, tied for highest among starters. **Grade: C.**

Don Barclay

Struggled at times in first full season as starting right tackle. Allowed 10 sacks, including two in playoff loss to 49ers. Had a combined 43 sacks/hits/hurries, tied for team high. Graded out slightly worse as run-blocker. Called for five penalties. Suffered knee injury in Week 10 and missed two games. Played 86 percent of offensive snaps. **Grade: C-.**

Marshall Newhouse

Lost battle for starting right tackle job to Barclay in training camp and never regained his edge. Started twice when Barclay was injured but didn't play well, giving up six combined QB hits/hurries against the New York Giants and seven hits/hurries in the second Vikings game. Inserted at right guard against Lions on Thanksgiving but struggled badly and was benched. Played just 13 snaps the rest of season. Gave up team-high average of one sack/hit/hurry every 12.4 snaps. **Grade: D-.**

Bryan Bulaga

Tore ACL during Family Night scrimmage Aug. 3 and underwent season-ending knee surgery. Has missed last 26 games after injuring hip in Week 9 of 2012 season. Rehabbing in preparation for 2014 training camp. **Grade: Incomplete.**

Derek Sherrod

Still suffering effects from broken leg in December 2011, opened season on physically unable to perform list. Returned to practice Oct. 16 and was added to 53-man roster Nov. 5. Appeared in eight games, mostly on special teams, and played six offensive snaps at Detroit at right tackle. **Grade: Incomplete.**

Lane Taylor

Appeared in 10 games, mostly on special teams, and played just 14 offensive snaps at right guard. Inactive for final four games. **Grade: Incomplete.**

JC Tretter

Began season on physically unable to perform list after breaking ankle in spring. Returned to practice Nov. 19 and activated Dec. 10. Spent final four weeks on game-day inactive list. **Grade: Incomplete.**

Greg Van Roten

Started season as top backup at interior line positions. Appeared in first three games on special teams. Suffered foot injury in practice following Week 4 bye and landed on injured reserve Oct. 15. **Grade: Incomplete.**

Running Backs

Eddie Lacy

Set rookie franchise regular-season records for carries (284), rushing yards (1,178) and touchdowns (11). Second-round draft choice led all rookies in rushing yards and is candidate for NFL rookie of year honors. Missed all but first series vs. Washington plus the Cincinnati game due to a concussion. Had 35 catches for 257 yards. His 21-carry, 141-yard effort at Dallas helped spark Packers to second-half comeback victory after trailing by 23 points. His only fumble came in season opener at San Francisco. Considered above-average pass-blocker. Punishing runner who picks up extra yards with second and third efforts. Made would-be tacklers miss 62 times. Of his 1,259 rushing yards, including playoff game, 55 percent came after contact. **Grade: A-**

John Kuhn

Pro Football Focus rates him as third-best fullback in the NFL and second-best blocking fullback. He's a reliable, tough and savvy veteran who brings stability on field and in locker room. His block against Chicago's Julius Peppers that enabled Rodgers to escape long enough to throw winning touchdown pass to win the NFC North title in the regular-season finale will be long remembered. So will his plunge for first down on fourth-and-1 to keep game-winning drive alive against the Bears. When not helping offense in limited snaps, he's core special teams contributor. Scored fourth-quarter touchdown to give Packers short-lived lead against 49ers in playoffs. Mishandled blocked punt at Baltimore in rare special teams gaffe. **Grade: B-**

James Starks

Runs hard and serves as capable backup behind Lacy. Including the playoff game, rushed 94 times for 522 yards, a 5.6-yard average. A total of 54 percent of his rushing yards came after contact. He made 20 would-be tacklers miss and scored three touchdowns. Missed 3½ games with knee injury, but appearance in 14 games matches career high. Had one fumble and one dropped pass. Considered average pass-blocker. **Grade: C+**

Johnathan Franklin

Fourth-round rookie came on in relief of Starks in second half of Week 3 game at Cincinnati and rushed 13 times for 103 yards and touchdown. Rushed six times for 4 yards the rest of season. Suffered concussion/neck injury in Week 12 and placed on injured reserve Nov. 27. Fumbled twice in 23 total touches on offense. Struggled to find rhythm on kickoff returns (four runbacks, 82 yards, 20.5 average). **Grade: D+**

Kahlil Bell

Signed Dec. 3 to serve as No. 3 halfback but played only special teams in four games. Returned one kickoff for 22 yards and made two tackles. **Grade: Incomplete.**

DuJuan Harris

Started two playoff games last season and entered training camp No. 1 on running back depth chart but was placed on season-ending injured reserve in August.

Grade: Incomplete.

TIGHT ENDS

Jermichael Finley

Caught 25 passes for 300 yards and three touchdowns in five games he played, which projected to his best season. Sustained concussion against Cincinnati in Week 3, returned for three games only to sustain severe season-ending neck injury in Week 7. Had two drops in 34 targeted passes. Struggled at times with run-blocking duties. Made 10 would-be tacklers miss. Averaged 9.5 yards after the catch. **Grade: B-.**

Andrew Quarless

Posted career-highs with 32 catches for 312 yards and two touchdowns. Assumed starting tight end duties after Finley was lost for season. Posted back-to-back six-catch, 66-yard performances in victories over Atlanta and Dallas. Caught winning touchdown pass vs. Falcons and drew pass interference call on winning drive vs. Cowboys. Inconsistent run-blocker. Had two drops in 47 targeted passes. Caught just four passes in final three games. **Grade: C-.**

Brandon Bostick

Appeared in seven games and caught seven passes for 120 yards (17.1-yard average) and a touchdown. Made seven special teams tackles. Played 144 snaps, had three drops in 14 targeted passes. Averaged 8.9 yards after the catch. His first and only touchdown came on a 22-yard pass from Scott Tolzien against Philadelphia. Suffered foot injury against Dallas and was placed on injured reserve Dec. 21. Needs work on run-blocking. **Grade: D+.**

Ryan Taylor

Considered one of team's best special teams players. Had five special teams tackles. Played career-high 173 offensive snaps. Caught six passes for 30 yards. Had two drops in nine targeted passes. Missed one game because of knee injury. Blocked first punt of career against Baltimore. Lacked consistency as run-blocker. **Grade: D+.**

Jake Stoneburner

Opened season on practice squad but signed to active roster Oct. 15. Played in nine games, mostly on special teams, where he recorded two tackles, one missed tackle and two penalties. Played 10 offensive snaps. Was never targeted for pass. **Grade: D-.**

Quarterback

Aaron Rodgers

Rodgers came close statistically to replicating his MVP season from 2011. Those numbers should be good enough to earn the NFL's highest honor for the second time in his seven years as a starting quarterback. His 112.2 passer rating and 8.4 yards per completion were second only to Dallas' Tony Romo (113.2) among quarterbacks with a minimum of 400 passing attempts. He was among the league leaders in passing yards (4,381, seventh), touchdowns (38, third) and fewest interceptions (five, first). His 65.6 completion percentage was ninth in the NFL, though he was a victim of 35 dropped passes. His ability to get out of the pocket and an improved offensive line resulted in Rodgers taking a career-low 1.75 sacks per game. After a slow start, he had three of the best games of his career during a 10-week stretch in the middle of the season when he completed 212 of 314 passes (67.5 percent) for 2,955 yards, 30 touchdowns and two interceptions. Rodgers tied a franchise record with six touchdown passes against Chicago. He had the worst game of his career against Buffalo on Dec. 14 when he completed only 17 of 42 passes for 185 yards with two

interceptions. He bounced back the next week against Tampa Bay, but suffered a calf strain that would hamper him through the final four games of the season. Rodgers showed he was still better with one good calf than most of the league. He was off in the Packers' 28-22 loss to Seattle in the NFC championship game (19-of-34 passing for 178 yards, one touchdown, two interceptions), but limited against the league's top defense. The Packers went as far as Rodgers took them. Green Bay was 0-5 when his passer rating was under 95. His ability to force defenders offside (nine penalties) and take advantage of 12 men on the field (six) make him the league's most dangerous quarterback in the no-huddle.

Grade: A.

Matt Flynn

The Packers overlooked Flynn's mediocre preseason (18-of-38 for 232, three touchdowns, one interception) and kept him as their No. 2 quarterback on game days. Only three of his 67 offensive snaps came at a meaningful time — the first series of the second half against Detroit on Dec. 28 — and the results weren't great. He was sacked for a 7-yard loss to end a three-and-out. Flynn had a 34.9 passer rating in seven appearances, completing 7 of 16 passes for 66 yards and an interception he threw directly into the arms of Minnesota safety Harrison Smith on a rollout Oct. 2. He'll be an unrestricted free agent, but Rodgers and the coaching staff value his presence on the sideline.

Grade: D.

Scott Tolzien

The former University of Wisconsin standout outperformed Flynn in the preseason but was the third-string quarterback in the regular season. He completed 38 of 56 passes for 477 yards and three touchdowns in the preseason, which forced the Packers' hand in taking three quarterbacks into the regular season for the first time since 2008. This was the third time in his four NFL seasons that Tolzien stayed on a 53-man roster for an entire season without appearing in a game. He was a clean scratch for the first 15 games before suiting up in the final three games (including playoffs) in the wake of Rodgers' calf injury. The coaching staff is high on his work ethic and intellect, but he is an unrestricted free agent this offseason.

Grade: Incomplete.

PACKERSNEWS

Green Bay Packers grades: Defense

PACKERSNEWS

Green Bay Packers grades: Specialists

PACKERSNEWS

Green Bay Packers grades: Coaching/personnel
Packers running back Eddie Lacy has become an all-around

Packers running back Eddie Lacy has become an all-around threat in his second season.
(Photo: Evan Siegle / Press-Gazette Media)

Running back

Eddie Lacy

Lacy got off to a slow start — 3.0 yards per carry in September — but proved his NFL offensive rookie of the year season was no fluke. He finished as one of the league's most effective running backs. He was seventh in the NFL in rushing yards (1,139), ninth in yards per attempt (4.6, minimum 200 attempts) and tied for third in rushing touchdowns (nine). The Packers limited his touches early in the season, which helped him stay healthy and fresh for the stretch run. He rushed for 373 yards and a 4.5-yard average in the four games Rodgers was hobbled. He took on a greater role in the passing game (42 catches for 427 yards, four touchdowns) and became more reliable in pass protection. That allowed the Packers to press forward with their plan to use him as an every-down back in the no-huddle instead of giving way to John Kuhn on third downs like he did as a rookie. His 73 forced missed tackles (49 rushes, 24 receptions) was fourth-most in the NFL. He fumbled three times (losing two) after having his streak of 325 carries without a fumble snapped in Week 3 against Detroit. That tied for fourth-most in the NFL. Lacy remains one of the league's up-and-coming backs so long as he stays healthy.

Grade: B-plus.

John Kuhn

The Packers' desire for Lacy and James Starks to become every-down backs meant less initial playing time for Kuhn. He averaged seven snaps per game through the first half of the season before the Packers started calling more three-receiver, two-back packages over the last month. He improved as a lead blocker and provided extra pass protection for an injured Rodgers. Despite playing only about 17 percent of the offense's snaps, Kuhn was voted to his second Pro Bowl and first-team All-Pro. He had 24 carries for 85 yards and a touchdown, but was stuffed on three goal-line situations in the final four weeks. Kuhn, who'll turn 33 next season, said he plans to play another year.

Grade: B-minus.

James Starks

The backup job to Lacy seems to be a perfect fit for Starks, who didn't miss a game for the first time in his five-year career. He wasn't as explosive as 2013, but productive in rushing for 333 yards and two touchdowns on 85 carries (3.9 ypc). He didn't offer much as a pass catcher, but that's nothing new. His four dropped passes tied for ninth-most in the league despite being targeted only 27 times. Although pass protection isn't his strong suit, Starks wasn't the sieve he was earlier in his career. He'll turn 29 in February and is under contract for another season. His presence makes the position an afterthought this offseason.

Grade: C.

DuJuan Harris

Harris ran the ball well with a backup offensive line in the preseason (31 carries for 126 yards), but didn't find many opportunities running behind Lacy, Starks and Kuhn. Most of his carries came in mop-up duty against Chicago in Week 10 when he rushed for 52 yards on eight carries. The Packers tried to use him on kickoff returns, but his production was

minimal (22 returns, 20.7 average). In need of an extra spot for a third quarterback, the Packers deactivated him for the final three games. He is an exclusive-rights free agent.

Grade: D-.

Green Bay Packers receiver Jordy Nelson (87) makes

Green Bay Packers receiver Jordy Nelson (87) makes a catch over Tampa Bay Buccaneers cornerback Johnthan Banks (27) in the fourth quarter during Sunday's game at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Fla. (Photo: Evan Siegle/P-G Media)

Wide receiver

Jordy Nelson

After signing a four-year extension in July, Nelson responded with the first Pro Bowl season of his career. He caught a career-high 98 passes on a team-high 146 targets and established a franchise record for single-season receiving yards (1,519 yards), the fourth-most among NFL receivers. He tied for second in the league in touchdown receptions (13) and led all receivers with seven touchdowns off catches of more than 40 yards, which tied Billy Howton's franchise record set in 1952. Nelson caught nine passes for a career-high 209 yards and an 80-yard touchdown in Week 2 against the New York Jets. Nelson slowed down near the end of the season with only one touchdown catch in his last five games. He averaged 69.4 receiving yards per game in that stretch after averaging 97.3 in the 13 games prior. His 128.2 receiver rating on passes thrown in direction finished second in the NFL only to teammate Randall Cobb. He had eight dropped passes on 106 catchable targets (7.5 percent), including one that likely would have gone for a 93-yard touchdown in the Packers' 21-13 loss to the Bills on Dec. 14.

Grade: A-minus.

Randall Cobb

Cobb erased any questions of possible diminishment after breaking his tibia last year when he started every game. He earned his first trip to the Pro Bowl after catching a career-high 91 passes for 1,287 yards and 12 touchdowns. Cobb's slow start hit bottom when he dropped two passes in a three-catch, 29-yard performance against Detroit in Week 3. He broke out of it by catching at least one touchdown in his next six outings. His utilization out of the backfield created matchup problems for opposing defenses late in the season. The Packers put him back on punt returns and platooned him with Micah Hyde, though he averaged only 8.0 yards per return. There were a few times when Cobb's stature (5-10, 192) resulted in a pass sailing high out of his reach, but his ability to operate in traffic was critical for an offense lacking a tight-end threat in the seam. He dropped eight passes on 125 targets. His 134.3 receiving rating was tops in the NFL.

Grade: B-plus.

Davante Adams

Adams was thrown into the fire when Jarrett Boykin was sidelined by a groin injury in the week leading up to a Sept. 28 showdown in Chicago. Even if he hadn't, it was only a matter of time before the second-round pick took the job. He stepped into the spotlight when he caught a quick snap near the goal line from Rodgers during the Packers' game-winning drive in a 27-24 win over Miami in Week 6. He had one or fewer catches in seven of his 13 starts,

but stepped up during critical points of the season. Adams caught six passes for 121 yards in a 26-21 win over New England in Week 13 and hauled in another seven catches for 117 yards and a touchdown in a 26-21 decision over Dallas in the divisional round of the playoffs. Adams failed to bring in two passes against the Bills that would have converted third downs. He dropped four passes on 42 catchable targets. The Packers will be looking for more consistency in his sophomore season, but his 38 catches for 446 yards and three touchdowns made for a promising debut.

Grade: C-minus.

Jarrett Boykin

By most metrics, it's admirable what Boykin accomplished as a former undrafted free agent who played the past three seasons on a contract he signed off a tryout. However, the Packers needed more this season after James Jones left for Oakland. Coach Mike McCarthy praised him during the offseason and camp for taking the next step, but he wound up being one of the season's bigger disappointments. After getting shutout by Richard Sherman in the opener, it took him less than a month to lose the No. 3 receiver job to Adams. Boykin finished the season with as many drops (three) as catches and missed three games with a groin injury. Targeted only 12 times on 225 offensive snaps. He re-established himself on special teams to stay ahead of Jeff Janis on the depth chart, forcing Chicago punter Patrick O'Donnell to botch a punt on Nov. 9.

Grade: D-minus.

Jeff Janis

Janis became a training camp darling with his slew of eye-popping catches in practice and carried that into the preseason. His only two catches were explosive plays (34-yard touchdown against St. Louis and a 33-yard touchdown against Kansas City). He disappeared on the depth chart during the regular season, suiting up for three games when Boykin was out with a groin injury. While Boykin struggled, the Packers still kept him active over Janis, who was a clean scratch for the last 12 games (including playoffs). He finished with two catches for 16 yards. Equipped with great size (6-3, 219), the Packers will be looking for the Saginaw Valley State speedster to take another step next year.

Grade: Incomplete.

Kevin Dorsey

The Packers liked how his size (6-1, 207) translated to special teams enough to cut veteran Ryan Taylor and promote Dorsey to the active roster Oct. 6. Dorsey leap-frogged Janis on the depth chart and played in three games before sustaining a foot injury in practice that landed him on injured reserve for a second consecutive season. He can play on any special teams unit, but hasn't been able to stay healthy since arriving in Green Bay as a seventh-round pick in 2013.

Grade: Incomplete.

Jared Abbrederis

The Wautoma native and former walk-on at Wisconsin immediately gained a cult following after the Packers drafted him in the fifth round last May. However, he tore his ACL a week

into training camp and spent the season on injured reserve. There are questions about his size (6-1, 195) and durability, but the Packers remain excited about his potential as a slot receiver.

Grade: Incomplete.

Tight end

Green Bay Packers tight end Andrew Quarless (81) eludes

Green Bay Packers tight end Andrew Quarless (81) eludes Minnesota Vikings linebacker Anthony Barr (55) after making a catch in the first quarter at TCF Bank Stadium on the campus of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Sunday, Nov. 23, 2014 (Photo: Evan Siegle/Press-Gazette Media)

Andrew Quarless

Quarless started as the de facto starting tight end with Jermichael Finley's departure, but lost the job coming out of camp to rookie Richard Rodgers before regaining it Week 4. Quarless never caught more than four passes in any game, but had moments in catching 29 passes for 323 yards and three touchdowns. His finest hour came against Miami when he called for the ball with 6 seconds remaining on a 4-yard touchdown pass over linebacker Philip Wheeler in the right corner of the end zone. His drop near the goal line against New Orleans was a turning point in the game and resulted in a David Hawthorne interception. He had two drops on 31 catchable passes and was flagged three times for false starts and once for holding. It still doesn't seem like he has regained all of his strength after blowing out his knee in 2011, giving up a sack.

Grade: C-minus.

Richard Rodgers

Rodgers impressed early with his hands and won the tight end job coming out of camp. He started three games without a reception before Detroit defensive end Jason Jones blew Rodgers off the ball to force a safety late in the Packers' 19-7 loss to the Lions in Week 3. Quarless jumped into the starting lineup the next week. Still, Rodgers improved as a blocker as the year went on. He finished fourth among NFL rookie tight ends with 20 catches for 225 yards and two touchdowns. Rodgers caught a crucial 13-yard bullet from Rodgers in the back of the end zone in the divisional playoffs against Dallas. He was penalized once in 483 snaps (offensive pass interference). He dropped one pass.

Grade: D-plus.

Brandon Bostick

It looked like Bostick was in line for an increased role after working with the starting two-minute offense in training camp. However, Bostick missed a month with a leg injury he suffered in the second preseason game against St. Louis and then sat out more two games in November with a hip injury. The coaches didn't trust him enough to put him on the field for more than a handful of offensive snaps. He played a lot on special teams, but made the biggest blunder of the year when he jumped in front of Nelson and fumbled the onside kick against Seattle. The Packers have invested three years into converting the former Newberry College receiver to tight end. Bostick has nine career receptions for 123 yards and two touchdowns to show for it.

Grade: F.

Justin Perillo

Colt Lyerla had the name. Justin Perillo had the mindset. While the troubled but talented Oregon talent tight end fumbled away countless opportunities, Perillo caught everything thrown his way to get on the Packers' radar. After starting on the practice squad, Perillo was promoted to the active roster Nov. 15 when Bostick injured his hip. He played two games before being a healthy scratch for the final six. He offers insurance as a backup long snapper.

Grade: Incomplete.

Green Bay Packers center Corey Linsley (63) and guard

Green Bay Packers center Corey Linsley (63) and guard Josh Sitton (71) blocks for quarterback Aaron Rodgers (12) against the Chicago Bears . (Photo: Evan Siegle/Press-Gazette Media)

Offensive line

Josh Sitton

Sitton has been one of the league's premier guards for the past few years, and finally is starting to be recognized for it. He didn't miss a start despite playing with torn ligaments in his left big toe, an injury that's been known to end a player's season. He was limited in practice the rest of the season. Sitton lost a bit of his power and mobility, but didn't allow a sack and only four hits while playing nearly 1,000 offensive snaps. He remained a linchpin as the pulling guard on screen plays and counters. He was penalized three times with only one pre-snap. When the toe injury forced him off the field-goal protection unit, his absence showed in Mason Crosby having two field goals and two extra points blocked in the second half of the season. Sitton returned as a left wing during the playoffs. For his efforts, Sitton was voted to his first Pro Bowl and second-team All-Pro.

Grade: A.

Bryan Bulaga

This was the kind of year Bulaga needed after spending most of the past two seasons on injured reserve. He suffered a scare when he sprained his MCL against Seattle in the opener, but missed only one game. Bulaga also was forced out of the Packers' 21-13 loss to the Bills on Dec. 14 with a concussion. In both instances, his absence was felt at right tackle. He allowed four sacks and was penalized seven times. Bulaga had a team-high five false starts and picked up two more against Seattle. Still, he got better as the year went on, especially when Rodgers was hobbled. He has the best pedigree on the line and will be among the most coveted offensive tackles on the free-agent market.

Grade: B.

Corey Linsley

The drafting and development of Linsley was paramount to the Packers' success, especially after being thrust into the starting lineup after starter JC Tretter was sidelined for the first

eight games with a knee injury. Linsley wound up being the only individual to play all 1,050 offensive snaps, allowing one sack and being penalized five times (three holding, one false start, one ineligible receiver). He had his share of rookie moments, especially early. He and Rodgers missed an exchange on the first play against the New York Jets in Week 2, resulting in a fumble. Linsley also misheard a call and snapped to Rodgers too early in the divisional playoffs against Dallas, which led to a turnover. Still, his weight-room strength translates to the field. He's also instinctive enough to keep pace in the no-huddle. Rodgers has been calling for a long-term answer at center after having a different starter in each of the past four seasons. By all indications, Linsley is the guy.

Grade: B.

T.J. Lang

You have to give Lang and Sitton a lot of credit for being able to shift gears after spending the entire offseason program and most of camp next to Tretter. Rodgers has total confidence in both guards, who picked up calls when Linsley was getting his feet wet. Like Sitton, Lang played through injury during the second half of the season. He suffered a sprained ankle against New Orleans, but didn't miss a start. He allowed three sacks and was penalized three times (two holding, unnecessary roughness), though he wasn't flagged for a pre-snap penalty. Better in pass protection than the run game, but a tenacious leader in the clubhouse. Contributed to the line giving up only 30 sacks (fewest since 2007) and paved the way for Lacy's second consecutive 1,000-yard season.

Grade: B-minus.

David Bakhtiari

Bakhtiari put on an extra 10-15 pounds to stand up better to bull rushes. He started every game for the second consecutive season and brought stability to the left tackle spot. He had a pair of rough outings against Miami and New Orleans, but battled through them. While there's still room for improvement as a run blocker, Bakhtiari has been reliable protecting Rodgers' blind side. He trimmed his sacks allowed from 10 to seven and was flagged for four fewer penalties than his rookie season. He still led the team with nine, including seven holding calls. Bakhtiari, a Pro Bowl alternate, has built a good rapport with Sitton and mostly has been an afterthought on the offensive line, a perfect description for a starting NFL left tackle.

Grade: B-minus.

Lane Taylor

Taylor played in all 16 games on special teams, but saw his only meaningful playing time on offense against New Orleans when Lang exited. He was fine as a pass blocker, but struggled against the run. During a critical fourth-and-1 play, Saints' Tyrann Walker blew past Taylor to stop Lacy for a 1-yard loss. He also got pushed back by Chicago's Willie Young and Atlanta's Ra'Shede Hageman on two blocked kicks on the protection unit. Taylor served as an extra lineman on short-yardage situations late in the season.

Grade: D.

JC Tretter

Tretter spent the offseason program being groomed as the Packers' starting center until he suffered an impaction fracture of his knee in the third preseason game. He spent the first eight games of the season on temporary injured reserve. He played 11 snaps against Buffalo at right tackle in place of an injured Bulaga, giving up a late strip sack of Rodgers to Bills defensive end Jerry Hughes that ended chances of a comeback in the 21-13 defeat. He entered as an extra short-yardage blocker late in the season. Detroit safety Isa Abdul-Quddus also split Tretter and Quarless to block a field goal in the regular-season finale.

Grade: Incomplete.

Garth Gerhart

Gerhart didn't make the initial 53-man roster, but was promoted before the regular-season opener against Seattle when Tretter was placed on temporary injured reserve. He played in two games and was active in three others. He was a healthy scratch during the last eight games.

Grade: Incomplete.

Don Barclay

Although Bulaga reclaimed his post at right tackle, Barclay provided a lot of value to the Packers as a swing tackle. That was exemplified when Bulaga sprained his MCL in the opener in Seattle and Derek Sherrod had to fill in with disastrous results. The Packers were fortunate Bulaga missed only one game the rest of the way after Barclay started in his place for 1½ seasons. A restricted free agent, Barclay's stability might be worth the first-right-of-refusal tender of \$1.5 million.

Grade: Incomplete.

Aaron Adams

Adams stayed in Green Bay last offseason and made a lot of changes to his body, adding 10 pounds to his frame for training camp. The practice-squad holdover gave up a sack and three quarterback hits before tearing his ACL in the preseason finale against Kansas City.

Grade: Incomplete.

Grading scale

A: Elite NFL player

B: Above average

C: Average

D: Below average

F: Failed to perform at an NFL level

Note: Dropped passes, missed tackles, touchdowns allowed and sacks allowed were according to Pro Football Focus. Penalties according to NFLPenalties.com.

By the numbers

Key 2014 statistics, with NFL ranking out of 32 teams in parentheses.

Total offense: 386.1 yards per game (sixth).

Rushing offense: 119.8 yards per game (11th).

Passing offenses: 266.3 yards per game (eighth).

Total defense: 346.4 yards per game (15th).

Rushing defense: 119.9 yards per game (23rd).

Passing defense: 226.4 yards per game (10th).

Turnover differential: Plus-14 (first).

Takeaways: 27 (18 interceptions, nine fumble recoveries).

Giveaways: 13 (six interceptions, seven lost fumbles).

Net punting: 37.0 yards (31st).

Kickoff return average: 19.1 yards per return (31st).

Punt return average: 11.5 yards per return (fifth).

Sacks: 41 (tied for ninth).

Sacks allowed: 30 (tied for ninth fewest).

Penalties: 104 (tied for 13th fewest).