

Rating the Packers: Week 3 vs Chiefs

By Bob McGinn – Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel

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Green Bay - Andy Reid doesn't rank 19th on the all-time list for victories by an NFL coach (161) without being exceptional at what he does.

The ashen look on Reid's face and his terse remarks both Monday night and Tuesday spoke volumes about how distressed and undoubtedly angry he was about his Kansas City Chiefs' 38-28 loss to the Green Bay Packers at Lambeau Field.

With 11 days to prepare, the Chiefs still were outmatched by the Packers in terms of scheme, emotion, hustle, aggressiveness and execution. They were embarrassed and outcoached at every turn, and laying an egg of that magnitude back where he worked from 1992-'98 will linger with Reid for quite a while.

"The whole thing here, offensively and defensively, was my responsibility," Reid said after the game. "We are not disciplined enough. It was my fault."

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

RECEIVERS (4 ½)

With top CB Sean Smith suspended and slot CB Phillip Gaines (sprained knee) being forced to leave late in the first quarter, the Packers had no reason to challenge rookie starter Marcus Peters deep. It became a turkey shoot, with Green Bay wide receivers open at every turn. Watching SS Tyvon Branch try to cover Randall Cobb (66 snaps) was similar to Game 7 a year ago when converted safety Charles Godfrey of Carolina went through that mismatch. Cobb's TD catches of 3, 4 and 4 yards (a fourth, for 17, was called back) all came off quick slot routes to the outside and were poorly defended. Besides seven receptions for 91 yards, he drew illegal-contact penalties on FS Eric Berry and RC Marcus Cooper. He runs to get open, not into people, which sounds elementary but isn't. He broke tackles (49 yards after the catch), wisely went out of bounds on a 12-yard reverse to save his shoulder and blocked extremely well. In some ways James Jones (66) toyed with defenders. He wasn't really open on his 52-yard catch against Branch and his 27-yard TD against Cooper. In each case, he peeked back toward Aaron Rodgers when his man was alongside and saw a back-shoulder fade humming his way. It was like stealing. Jones is catching everything away from his body, too, including a low inside route against Peters. He even put a nifty move on Peters, making him miss on a hitch worth 12. Davante Adams (aggravated ankle) had the only drop before leaving after three plays. Ty Montgomery (66) took over and, aside from two downfield blocking penalties, was solid. He's strong, quick and knows what he's doing. The same can't be said for Jeff Janis (16), who ran out of bounds on a take-off route and had a motion penalty. He didn't look ready. Richard Rodgers (53) was splitting time with Andrew Quarless before the veteran left on his 14th snap with a sprained knee. Rodgers is getting his head around quickly on stick routes.

OFFENSIVE LINE (3 ½)

Mike McCarthy, Tom Clements and Aaron Rodgers did everything they could to protect Don Barclay against Justin Houston and David Bakhtiari against Tamba Hali. The fact Barclay allowed one-half sack (to Hali) and Bakhtiari didn't allow any was a victory in itself. Barclay is back to being the player he was in 2012-'13. He moves OK, never quits, stays focused and uses his massive hands (107/8 inches) to steer elite rushers just wide enough. Houston walked Barclay back with big bull rushes for two pressures, but only once did he knock him off his feet. Of the 13 "bad" runs, the unit was charged with 10. Barclay had 5 ½, including 2 ½ when he was unable to cut off rampaging DT Jaye Howard on the backside and two partials at the point against Houston. Bakhtiari gave up two hurries to the bull-rushing Hali due in part to poor hand placement. He's becoming lazy with his hands. They're too far outside, and it led to another holding penalty. He would anchor better if his hands were inside. Corey Linsley gave up considerable poundage to both NT Dontari Poe and Howard, who had their way with Denver's interior Sept. 17. Linsley allowed one pressure and two "bad" runs. Josh Sitton and T.J. Lang, along with Linsley, prevented Howard from registering a pressure. At times, Sitton manhandled DE Mike DeVito, and he combo-blocked to the second level effectively. Sitton didn't have a glaringly poor play and Lang had just one. Josh Walker took six snaps at TE; he missed ILB Derrick Johnson on a down block.

QUARTERBACKS (4)

Defensive coordinator Bob Sutton spent four seasons on Rex Ryan's staff in New York and shares some of his schemes and attack mode. Sutton blitzed on 31.8% of passes, most the Packers have encountered since Game 10 (Eagles) last year. Rodgers recognized most of it, although the overload sack was partially his fault. Despite steady pressure, he stayed remarkably collected. In the end zone, he bounced away from a collapsed pocket, moved left, squared his shoulders and tossed a dart to Cobb for 29. Twice he made off-balance throws on screens totaling 45 yards. He helped save the tackles using a hard count (two off-sides penalties), changing plays at the line and catching Howard twice 1 yard away from the sideline for drive-sustaining substitution penalties. Each week, he makes throws and escapes almost no other quarterback can make. He is controlling the game with his eyes. He missed ILBs Josh Mauga and Johnson in the progression and was fortunate both players dropped interceptions. After holding the ball for 5.9 seconds and fumbling the ball away on a sack, he was saved by an illegal-contact penalty. He overthrew Cobb on a routine corner route for an 8-yard TD.

RUNNING BACKS (3)

Eddie Lacy was limited to 31 snaps because of a week-old ankle injury. He broke four tackles, including two by Mauga and two by Parker, and cut back twice on carries for 9 yards against an overpursuing defense. Lacy looks as if he can't be in tip-top shape or at his best playing weight, but he still had the athleticism to skip over Parker when the safety went low instead of wrapping up. James Starks (39) broke just one tackle in 17 carries, and his net was 32 yards. Nine of the "bad" runs came with Starks carrying, and you might ding him on one or two for questionable decisions. Lacy was charged with one "bad" run, too. Starks still has his speed, but there are times he relies on it too much bellying toward the boundary. Rookie Alonzo Harris' four-play debut was solid. On his 16-yard run off left tackle, he made two subtle cuts behind the line taking best advantage of his blockers. Rookie FB Aaron Ripkowski (three) also played for the first time from scrimmage.

DEFENSIVE LINE (4 ½)

This was a huge game for Mike Daniels (38), who had been ordinary in the first two weeks. He piled up five pressures (1 ½ sacks, 3 ½ hurries), including 3 ½ against RG Laurent Duvernay-Tardif. Daniels seemed to have Alex Smith's cadence down. All day, he was off the ball like a shot. Duvernay-Tardif, with a 4-inch height advantage, lost the leverage battle consistently and was physically manhandled a bunch. Daniels played so hard on a warm, humid (93%) night that he ran out of gas at the end and was on the field for just one of the last 11 snaps when the issue still was at hand. When Daniels was too quick for RT Eric Fisher on a down block, he swallowed Jamaal Charles for minus-3. B.J. Raji (25) was stout and active. He didn't have a pressure but did draw a holding penalty against each of the guards. Mike Pennel (10) barely broke a sweat because the Packers used the 3-4 base just four times. Based on how he was springing back off double-teams, he should have played more. Bruce Gaston (11) took over for Datone Jones (22) as an interior sub rusher and failed to impress. He offered little as a rusher and was pushed 6 yards back on one of Charles' three TD runs. Before leaving with a possible concussion, Jones was unable to break down in space and blew a sack of Smith.

LINEBACKERS (4)

McCarthy and Dom Capers made a major personnel change, replacing Clay Matthews as the dime LB with Joe Thomas rather than Nate Palmer. It got Matthews back into the game as a pass rusher; of his 67 snaps, he played 37 on the front line in nickel, four up front in the "Bear" defense and 26 at ILB. The switch revitalized the pass rush; Matthews had six pressures. He terrorized LT Donald Stephenson for three and split a double-team from C Mitch Morse and LG Ben Grubbs for one of his two sacks. When Smith directed a running play toward Matthews' side in "Bear," the result was minus-3. Matthews made a great read on a double screen for minus-7, timed A-gap run blitzes well and seemed extra motivated with his role change. Thomas' debut was so-so. He played 38 snaps, made an outstanding tackle of Charles to hold him to 3 late in the half, and cleaned up a flush by Julius Peppers for a sack. He also missed the tackle on two of Charles' TD runs. Palmer (35) is more of a heady, controlled player, which is something of a change from violent, reckless Sam Barrington. Peppers (50) split time between OLB and DT in sub. The Chiefs paid him close attention (33% double-teaming), and he posted just the one hurry. His encroachment penalty took Casey Hayward's interception off the books. Nick Perry put up 3½ pressures in 33 snaps, including a strong up-the-field sack against Stephenson in 2.5 seconds. Mike Neal (44) played much more than expected with a groin injury. Jayrone Elliott played 15 snaps as the No. 4 OLB whereas Andy Mulumba had none. Elliott's zone drops weren't always on point. However, he exploded for a sack between the fan-blocking Grubbs and Charles. He also probably saved a TD with a great read and apparent bat of a sucker delay pass to TE Jason Kelce.

SECONDARY (3½)

Without injured Morgan Burnett (calf) and Sean Richardson (ankle), Ha Ha Clinton-Dix and Micah Hyde played all 71 snaps. Chris Banjo logged 33 snaps alongside Clinton-Dix when Hyde shifted to cover assignments in nickel and dime. When the strapping Kelce was running through the secondary, Clinton-Dix was the one player willing to take him on. At the same time, he was late reacting on one big play and took an unnecessary roughness penalty that probably will result in a fine. If he had just hit WR Jeremy Maclin and not celebrated, he might have been OK. Kelce appeared to be gloating after a 38-yard reception but it still was surprising to see Hayward (70) pop off and pick up an unsportsmanlike-conduct penalty. Hayward made two big plays, including an artful breakup on third and 3 and a knifing tackle of Kelce for minus-3. Sam Shields (70) had another tackle for loss, chased down Maclin from way behind and took a chance on a scramble to the left by a desperate Smith and intercepted. When the Chiefs threw for 251 yards in the second half, maybe Shields should have matched on Maclin. Damarious Randall (54) was crossed over by Maclin on a 61-yard pass that included 40 after the catch. He also had a holding penalty, but did cover Kelce well on a long stop-and-go route.

KICKERS (3)

Mason Crosby mis-hit his first kickoff (2.12 seconds of hang time) and the result was Knile Davis' 54-yard return. His seven-boot averages were 71.7 yards and 3.58. Tim Masthay paled in comparison to Dustin Colquitt with averages of 43.0 (gross), 39.4 (net) and 4.0 (hang time). Brett Goode's long snaps could be more precise.

SPECIAL TEAMS (3)

Clinton-Dix and Mulumba were flattened at the point of attack on Davis' long return. The powerful Montgomery averaged 32.0 on two kickoff returns. Hyde is a clever, secure punt returner. He also recovered a tricky, bouncing onside kick after an alert Ripkowski blocked instead of trying to be a hero. Banjo made three tackles and Janis, a developing force as a punt-team gunner, had two.

OVERALL (4)

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