

# Packers Individual Report Card:Offense

*By Bob McGinn of the Journal Sentinel*

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## WIDE RECEIVERS (7)

**JARED ABBREDERIS:** Finally was able to show what he was about in a 12-game, 199-snap stint over season's second half. Played outside for the Badgers, but the Packers put him in the slot. Wiry, anticipates, reads coverage and isn't afraid of taking a lick for a catch. Upright runner has and probably will continue to take a lot of punishing hits, which in turn probably will lead to more injuries. Worth bringing back to camp, although durability issues cloud his future. **Grade: D.**

**DAVANTE ADAMS:** Fell flat on his face when presented with the chance to be a suitable replacement for Jordy Nelson. Dropped 12 of 96 targeted passes, a 12.5% drop rate that led the team and was altogether unacceptable. Lacks the speed to outrun most cornerbacks and the quickness and route refinement to win consistently in the possession game. Offered next to nothing (3.02-yard average) after the catch. Missed 3 ½ of Games 3-6 with an ankle injury but maintained he was fine by mid-season. The Packers know they can't play Adams next year as much (61.8%) as they did this year, but as a second-round draft choice it's worth giving him another extended look. Needs to put away some of the bravado and become more of a professional. **Grade: D-.**

**RANDALL COBB:** Was paid in March like an elite slot (\$40 million, four years) but certainly didn't play like it. Dropped 14 passes (of 138 targets), more than any receiver in Green Bay over the last 25 years. Considering he dropped 10 of 110 in 2012 and nine of 145 in '14, his hands and concentration should be considered suspect. Doesn't have enough game to beat concentrated coverage and isn't fast enough to run by many defenders. He is quick, tough and able to find open areas. Of his 1,131 snaps, he was most impressive in a career-high 77 at running back with his run vision, elusiveness and guts. Played just 14 snaps on special teams. **Grade: C+.**

**JEFF JANIS:** Established himself as one of the team's two best players in the kicking game. Reckless, nasty and fast. Offensive player with a defensive temperament. Straight-line kickoff returner with an impressive 28.1 average in 18 runbacks. Played 80 of his 175 snaps from scrimmage against San Diego and Arizona in the playoffs when injuries left the coaches without another option. Seized the moment with receptions of 46, 33, 60 and 41 yards in those two games. His nine catches averaged a team-high 24.9 yards, and he dropped just one of 26 targets. His litany of shortcomings — speed is straight-line, body catcher, raw on releases and adjustments — is falling on deaf ears. Must be given the chance in 2016 to prove that he can't play. **Grade: C+.**

**JAMES JONES:** Saw 91.6% playing time at age 31. Caught 57 passes in 18 games, dropped just five of 107 targets and led the NFL in average per catch (17.8) among the top 50 receivers. That's a ton of production for seldom having routes designed to get him the ball. Vastly underpaid coming from the Giants a week before the opener for one year at the \$870,000 veteran minimum. Tremendous low-ball and back-shoulder catcher. Heavily penalized, had five of the WRs' total of 13. Mismatched by some top cornerbacks (see Arizona's Patrick Peterson), stifled by others. However, he never quit competing. Where would this sluggish offense have been without his team-best 971 yards and soothing veteran presence? **Grade: C+.**

**TY MONTGOMERY:** Flashed big-play potential as a kickoff returner (31.1), slot receiver (15 catches, 18 targets, one drop) and gadget player (three rushes, 14 yards). Limited to 242 snaps (10 at RB) in six games before an ankle injury eventually required surgery. Didn't play enough outside to determine if he has a future there. Something of a heavy-legged runner. Will need to become tougher. **Grade: C.**

**JORDY NELSON:** Will be 31 by the time he commences his comeback on the field from the torn anterior cruciate knee ligament suffered Aug. 23 that ended his eighth season. Indicated on a national radio show last week that there was a chance he might have been ready to play in the Super Bowl if the Packers had advanced and he hadn't been placed on injured reserve. Three years remaining on a four-year, \$39.8 million extension. Had a very good but not a great season in 2014. **Grade: Incomplete.**

## TIGHT ENDS (4)

**KENNARD BACKMAN:** Didn't have a pass thrown to him, let alone a catch, in eight games. On offense (11 snaps), the coaches didn't trust his grasp of things or his blocking. On special teams (44 snaps), the coaches were leery how aggressive and aware he would be. After coming dangerously and unnecessarily close to touching a live ball in Game 11, Backman blew contain a month later on a 41-yard run from punt formation by Minnesota's Adam Thielen. Despite the fact he was the fastest tight end on the roster, the staff played Justin Perillo ahead of him. **Grade: F.**

**JUSTIN PERILLO:** Former Maine free agent was promoted from the practice squad Nov. 15 as a rookie (played 11 snaps) before the same routine unfolded this year (promoted Oct. 14, played 121 snaps). Snagged 11 of his 13 targets without a drop. Lacks a distinguishing characteristic. Isn't big, isn't fast and isn't a heavy-duty blocker. **Grade: D.**

**ANDREW QUARLESS:** Played more and better than Richard Rodgers a year ago in what probably was his best season. Then his career derailed July 4 in Miami during a late-night incident in which he discharged a semiautomatic handgun in public. Eventually, he was sentenced to a year's probation. Later in July, his daughter was dead upon delivery. The Packers went with Rodgers instead starting the season, and then Quarless had to sit out Games 4-14 with a sprained knee. He finished with 128 uneventful snaps, failing to catch any of his meager four targets. He's an unrestricted free agent, and the NFL still might impose a suspension. **Grade: D.**

**RICHARD RODGERS:** Sure-handed, massive target. One year after dropping two of 34 as a rookie in 44.5% playing time, he dropped just four of 96 in 71.2%. He caught fastballs, bad balls and a heroic Hail Mary from 61 yards out to beat the Lions at Ford Field. The problem is what he does after the catch. That's limited, although his post-catch average did improve from a scant 1.88 last year to 3.62. More distressing were Rodgers' poor speed (4.87) and lousy blocking. He was responsible for 16 ½ "bad" runs, 3 ½ more than he had as a rookie and the most for a McCarthy-coached tight end. He might weigh about 270, but his punch as a blocker is comparable to someone in the 245-pound range. **Grade: C.**

## OFFENSIVE LINE (9)

**DAVID BAKHTIARI:** Progressed blocking both for run and pass in his third season. Reduced his "bad" run count of 15 ½ in 2013 and 19½ in '14 to a line-best eight in '15. Ranked third among O-line starters in playing time (79.5%). Some scouts didn't see the toughness in Bakhtiari at Colorado that has been evident in Green Bay. He's missing less and sustaining more in the run game. Bakhtiari yielded the most pressures (combination of sacks, knockdowns and hurries) of the starters, but his total of 27 stood as a reduction from 37 as a rookie and 33 in '14. Everyone tries to bull rush him, but over time he's become stronger and needs fewer steps to set his anchor. Penalties have been and remain a big problem. He tied for the team lead with 10 after having 18 in 2013-'14. He needs to clean that up. **Grade: B.**

**DON BARCLAY:** Maybe he'll be better another year removed from ACL surgery in August 2014. But after watching Barclay get routinely destroyed in 111 snaps at LT and 304 at RT, the Packers probably will just move on. Barclay's numbers were just awful: 33 pressures (nine were sacks) and 12 ½ "bad" runs in just 32.6% playing time. Barclay usually did struggle in protection over his four-year career. However, he was a much more reliable run blocker in 2012-'13, when he had to start 21 games at RT, than he was this year. The coaches admire Barclay's no-excuse, no-nonsense approach, but there does come a time. **Grade: F.**

**BRYAN BULAGA:** He was limited to 73.8% playing time by Sept. 18 knee cartilage surgery and later an ankle injury. Injuries have been the bane of Bulaga's existence since his second year (2008) at Iowa. His blocking (17 "bad" runs) was much better on stretch plays at the point of attack than it was cutting off defenders on the back side. He allowed 22 ½ pressures, the exact number as last year. The Packers will try to get as much as they can out of Bulaga, who has four years left on his \$33.75 million contract and won't be 27 until March. **Grade: C+.**

**T.J. LANG:** He's a hard man to beat in protection. Generally he's too strong to be bull-rushed. He sees and passes off stunts readily. He has learned how to compensate on the edge for athletic shortcomings. Appears to have reined in his emotional tendencies and plays a smarter game. His pressure total of 18 ½ was close to the past three years; has yielded only four sacks from 2013-'15. Emerged as the most successful puller in the run game. On plays he was the primary puller, the gain was 112 yards in 29 carries. Took a step back at the point of attack, leading the team in "bad" runs with a career-high 19 ½. Plans to undergo shoulder surgery in the off-season. **Grade: B-.**

**COREY LINSLEY:** Played every snap as the all-rookie center a year ago, but an ankle injury in November cost him 4 ½ games this year. Despite playing just 71.1%, he finished second to Barclay in sacks allowed with seven after giving up only two in '14. For whatever reason, he wasn't as sharp technically or mentally. He's somewhat undersized, but usually is able to compensate with strength, quickness and preparation. He allowed 17 pressures (nine more than last year) and 14 "bad" runs (2 ½ more). There's no dominance in Linsley's game, but he's committed to his craft and should be a fixture inside. **Grade: C+.**

**JOSH SITTON:** One of the top five guards in the NFL. Not quite as dominant as in previous seasons due in part to chronic back pain. Missed just eight snaps in 18 games. Agreed to the coaches' misguided notion that he was the best option at LT against Minnesota's Everson Griffen in Game 16. His pressure total of 15, his highest since '10, was misleading because six came at the hands of Griffen. He also suffered two "bad" runs at Griffen's expense; his total of 15 ½ was his highest since '11. Sitton also had more penalties (10, including seven in the last eight games) than ever before. Just wasn't as consistent getting his man blocked or as focused as he has been over the years. **Grade: B.**

**LANE TAYLOR:** Started at RG in Game 12 and at LG in Game 16. Those were the first two starts of Taylor's three-year career, and though he wasn't exceptional he certainly didn't look out of place. While not a great athlete, he has become much better protecting his edges in pass protection. What makes Taylor an interesting player is his willingness to get after people. His totals – 2 ½ "bad" runs, 3 ½ pressures – were acceptable. **Grade: D+.**

**JC TRETTER:** Fooled around as an extra TE (nine snaps) in Games 1-8 before Linsley's injury gave him a chance to play 346 snaps at center in Games 10-14. He isn't as powerful as Linsley and can't always win leverage battles, but he is decisive in his calls and fast to the second level in the run game. He moves well, thinks on his feet and is good under pressure. After watching Tretter put out the fire at RT over the final 16 plays in the debacle at Arizona, the coaches started him at LT in the playoffs against Washington. He isn't big enough to play out there on a regular basis, but after an early safety his performance was one of the keys to victory. Tretter should believe fully in himself now. The Packers will have him for one more season before Tretter might depart for a starting center job elsewhere. In 33.9% playing time, he allowed 7 ½ "bad" runs and five pressures. **Grade: C+.**

**JOSH WALKER:** At 6 feet 5½ inches and 328 pounds, he's the biggest of the O-linemen. He's also much better at guard than tackle, which showed in Arizona when he had a devil of a time in 20 snaps at RT. His best moment came at RG against St. Louis' dominating DT Aaron Donald, who beat him just once in a 32-snap stint. Walker is smart, hard-nosed and somewhat versatile. There will be competition galore in 2016, but don't expect him to go away without a fight. **Grade: D.**

## QUARTERBACKS (3)

**BRETT HUNDLEY:** Would move up to the No. 2 slot with the expected departure of Scott Tolzien. Displayed dramatic improvement from the first week of training camp through the final exhibition game. His passer rating of 129.6 ranked second in the NFL. Was the Packers' finest rookie quarterback in years. Made gigantic strides in footwork, accuracy and reading defenses.

**Grade: Incomplete.**

**SCOTT TOLZIEN:** Handed the top backup berth in spring with the decision not to re-sign Matt Flynn and held off Hundley all season. At 28, Tolzien would like the chance to compete as a starter. If that doesn't materialize, his exhibition and regular-season tape might warrant a solid contract as a No. 2 elsewhere. His mental and physical toughness, keen intellect, improving arm strength and first-class tutoring by the Packers should make him a fairly attractive unrestricted free agent.

**Grade: Incomplete.**

**AARON RODGERS:** This was the worst of his eight seasons as a starter. It was business as usual in the six games before the bye. Tom Clements, his mentor and friend, was calling the plays, and he relished the enhanced freedom at the line of scrimmage. But when the schedule stiffened in Game 7, Rodgers didn't respond. Almost all those beautiful throws of the past disappeared. His deep-ball accuracy, once a strength, went south, too. Ten of the 48 sacks were his fault. He became less willing to stand in and take a hit to deliver the ball. Instead, he began bolting the pocket prematurely, extending plays when they didn't need to be extended. Often times, he made quick throws off his back foot using all arm. His receivers didn't help, dropping 44 passes (four more than '14, slightly fewer than in '10 and '11). At times, he just seemed peeved at his predicament. Instead of rallying the troops, too often he came across as sullen and frustrated. His hard count drew 23 penalties for offsides, and his acute awareness resulted in 13 penalties for 12 men. Early in the season, they were an integral part of the attack. Other than interception rate (1.4%) and rushing (364 yards), his numbers were way down across the board. He also fumbled eight times, his most since '09. All eight came on sacks, and three were run back for touchdowns in Games 15-16. Some quarterbacks lift their teams in adverse times. He didn't. **Grade: B-.**

## RUNNING BACKS (5)

**JOHN CROCKETT:** When Alonzo Harris, his fellow rookie free agent, ran afoul of regulations in Detroit, Crockett replaced him as No. 3 RB for the final seven games. On the field for 16 snaps, he had nine carries for 21 yards. He debuted at Ford Field, showing the ability to gear down and cut. He's not especially big or fast, but he has a 40-inch vertical jump and a worker-bee personality.

**Grade: Incomplete.**

**JOHN KUHN:** With McCarthy calling plays, Kuhn played 223 snaps in six games (37.2). He logged a career high with 47 at Oakland before breaking it with 53 against Minnesota. With Clements calling plays, Kuhn had 140 snaps in 12 games (11.7). Kuhn offers multi-position versatility and encyclopedic knowledge of the system. His blocking is OK (six "bad" runs equaled his career high), but at 33 he's almost no threat with the ball anymore. **Grade: C-.**

**EDDIE LACY:** Ranked by Pro Football Weekly as the NFL's third-best RB entering training camp. With the team defending him publicly, Lacy played 20 to 25 pounds overweight in the mid-250s and had one of the most disappointing seasons of any player in the league. Lacy seems to like playing on Sundays, but doesn't appear much for the training, diet and discipline that is required. He has made strides in the passing game. He's still no better than an average pass blocker, but after allowing five pressures as a rookie he gave up just two the past two seasons. After dropping five passes in 2013-'14, he didn't drop any of 29 targets this year. However, the instances in which he was attacking, spinning and plowing over tacklers were few and far between. It showed in short yardage and goal-line. He fumbled too much (five, losing three), and was careless with the ball most of the season. His total yards from scrimmage dipped from 1,750 to 1,100. If Lacy doesn't change his habits, he'll be out of football in a year or two and never receive the rich second contract that could become the key to his future. His rookie deal has one year left; the Packers will take a show-me approach. **Grade: C.**

**AARON RIPKOWSKI:** The sixth-round draft choice from Oklahoma made the team but took just 18 snaps from Kuhn after an impressive August. He's smart, tough and an adequate receiver. Despite ranking fourth in special-teams snaps with 309, he tied for fifth in tackles with nine. His impact in the kicking game waned as the season went along. **Grade: D.**

**JAMES STARKS:** Starks forever will be known as the effective starter during the championship drive in 2010. But this year, given 46.3% playing time compared to Lacy's 41.1%, he set personal bests in touches (216) and yards from scrimmage (1,084). Starks still dances a bit too much. Most of the time, he makes one cut, keeps his eyes up hunting for the cutback and is a hard tackle. Starks certainly isn't the most aware player in protection, and his 8 ½ pressures were two more than Lacy. But he has become a little more fluid in the check-down game, and it's remarkable that in six years he has been penalized only once. What damaged his grade this year were fumbles. He had five, losing three, after having had five, losing one, in his first five seasons. **Grade: C+.**