

# 2019 Grades Offense

---

By Bob McGinn

## Quarterbacks (2)

### Tim Boyle (1.7 percent)

The No. 2 quarterbacks in the NFC North this season were Chase Daniel of Chicago, Jeff Driskel of Detroit (after he was injured it became David Blough) and Sean Mannion of Minnesota. In late December, here's how three NFC personnel men sized up Boyle. Said the first: "If I had to pick one of these guys I'd pick him. He didn't even play but I like him. He looked good in the preseason, but he's never played." Said the second: "He has the most upside, for sure. He's really interesting. I think he does (have a chance)." Said the third: "He does (have a chance). He's talented. Throws it well. He gets the ball out." It was high praise for a player that posted a 12-26 touchdown/interception ratio as a starter at Connecticut and Eastern Kentucky. His NFL passer rating in college was 60.3. Boyle caught Mike McCarthy's eye to stick as his No. 3 in 2018 before Matt LaFleur retained him as No. 2 this season over DeShone Kizer. Boyle (6-3 ½, 232) has ideal size, solid athletic ability (35-inch vertical jump) and good speed (4.78). He scored 20 on the Wonderlic intelligence test. In 109 snaps last summer, Boyle registered a passer rating of 112.9. His completion percentage (59.6) and average gain per pass (6.25) weren't good, but he had a 6-0 ratio of TDs to interceptions. He was best throwing inside the numbers, appeared poised in the pocket and showed a quick release. He's not a scrambler. He's a big pocket passer with intriguing game-manager abilities. **Grade: Incomplete**

### Aaron Rodgers (98.3)

On the Packers' three trips to the West Coast (Chargers, 49ers twice), he could hardly have been more ineffective. Against the Raiders, Giants and Seahawks, he was exceptional. Counting playoffs, in his 12 seasons as the starter his numbers in 2019 rank 10th in completion percentage (63.0), 10th in average yards per attempt (7.20) and 10th in passer rating (96.4). His per-game rushing average (10.9) was a career-low. He also played every meaningful snap for a team that finished with a 14-4 record and advanced to the NFC Championship Game. Rodgers was the quarterback for a team that won largely because of injury differential, turnover differential, penalty differential, a favorable schedule and overall red-zone performance. As an individual, he had another season that was slightly above average. For certain stretches, Rodgers was the ultimate game manager. He avoided interceptions and his crisp fakes and ballhandling helped make LaFleur's play-action game go. Even at 36, his durability remains exceptional. He is a tough guy. Once or twice in almost every game, he made a great throw. It's the same for every quarterback. Those plays help decide games. In almost every game, however, Rodgers missed some easy throws as well as some difficult throws that once separated his game from so many others.

If Rodgers has declined, it would be in the number of plays he makes on the move and his accuracy. In 2016, 16 of his 49 touchdown passes (32.7 percent) came on extended plays. In the last three seasons, just 11 of his 71 TD passes (15.5 percent) came on extended plays. Maybe he can't accelerate away from the rush as before. Maybe he has lost a step. Maybe he'd rather just stand in the pocket and throw the ball. His willingness to make contested throws has diminished over the years. Maybe he has less confidence in his arm or his receivers. Maybe he is less interested in risking an interception. By holding the ball Rodgers was responsible for 24 pressures, the same number as LG Elgton Jenkins, for example. That total included seven sacks. Brett Favre threw many more interceptions than Rodgers, but in his last three seasons for the Packers, he was responsible for merely 8 ½ sacks, or 2.7 per year. For his career, Rodgers' career sack is 10.5 per year. Part of the problem is Rodgers is staring down Davante Adams. His progression, once world-class, has regressed. He doesn't look off safeties as well as he once did, either. Often the result of this hesitation was another season of overthrown deep balls or throwaways. He threw the ball away 40 times in 2019, four fewer than last season. Some would say Rodgers is the best at executing the hard count or catching opponents trying to substitute resulting in a free play. This season, his cadence resulted in seven offsides penalties by opponents and 22 false starts by his teammates. Opposing defenses were penalized three times for having 12 or more players on the field, and Rodgers converted two into touchdown passes. Fumble avoidance, long a Rodgers' trademark, was not a plus this season. His lost fumble total of five was his most in 11 seasons. Over time Rodgers has been less willing to step into throws. He'll then miss a little swing pass or throw behind a receiver. Certainly, no one can know how he interacts with LaFleur behind closed doors. At times, the cameras on Sunday will show Rodgers looking away from the coach when he's speaking to him. It appears to reveal a degree of condescension, but that's open to interpretation. Perhaps a second year in this offense will enable Rodgers to rekindle past glory and return to his last great stretch (Games 10-19, 2016). Supporting casts come and go. Franchise quarterbacks make their supporting casts look better than they are. At one time, Rodgers did that. Can he do it again? **Grade: C+**

## **Wide Receivers (7)**

### **Davante Adams (66.2 percent)**

Led the team in receiving for a third straight season after assuming the No. 1 role from Jordy Nelson in 2017. Asked to do it all for a mediocre corps of receivers. Almost impossible to jam. Eats up press coverage with his fast feet. Dances away from tacklers on bubble screens. Has developed compatibility with Aaron Rodgers. Able to score any time and from anywhere on the field. Missed four games near midseason with turf toe. Before the injury, he hadn't dropped a pass in 36 targets. After returning, he equaled his career-high in drops with 12 (out of 113 targets). His 8.1 percent drop rate was his highest since 2015 (12 of 96, 12.5 percent). His inconsistent hands were in direct contrast to 2018 when he dropped just three of 168 targets (1.8 percent). Played with hesitation for about a month after the injury, sometimes running out of bounds rather than selling out for the extra yard. Won't turn 28 until late next season and shows no signs of slippage physically. Averaged 13.0 yards in 100 total receptions (4.74 after the catch). Very ordinary blocker. **Grade: B**

### **Geronimo Allison (57.4)**

Second at the position in receptions with 37 but last in average yards per catch (8.3) and average yards after the catch (2.49), by far his career-low. A journeyman tough guy with length and some value on special teams. Took several blows in the first half of the season and didn't appear as reckless down the stretch. Top-notch blocker. His 4.6 speed isn't conducive to running vertical routes. The ease with which he plays both outside and slot positions should land him a job either as a re-signing in Green Bay or modestly-priced unrestricted free-agent elsewhere. **Grade: D+**

### **Ryan Grant (0.0)**

Was on the street for three weeks after being cut by the Raiders on Sept. 25. Joined the Packers after the sixth game but was inactive for the final 12 games. The Colts signed Grant to a one-year, \$5 million guaranteed contract in March 2018 as a second-tier free agent from Washington after his best season (45-573-12.7-4) of a six-year career. Average size (6-0 ½, 194), average athlete (35-inch vertical jump) and below-average speed (4.65). Crafty possession receiver struggles to release from bump coverage. Limited deep dimension and not much of a blocker. No role on special teams. There's little reason to re-sign him as an unrestricted free agent. **Grade: Incomplete**

### **Jake Kumerow (31.3)**

Another big, physical receiver in a receiving group that needs more speed. Led the team in average yards per catch (18.6) and average after the catch (7.39). Flashed big-play potential in limited opportunities. Dropped one of 23 targets after not dropping any of 10 targets a year ago. Hard-nosed style of play proved to be well-suited blocking for the run and covering kicks. Special-teams value will make him a hard guy to run off here or elsewhere. **Grade: D+**

### **Allen Lazard (46.2)**

Possibly the most pleasant surprise on the roster. One week before the opener, the six-member group of wideouts on the 53-man roster included Darrius Shepherd and Trevor Davis but not Lazard, who was released Aug. 31. To the practice squad he went the next day, and on Sept. 4 to the roster. He played a total of six snaps in the first three games, and no more than 17 in any of the first six games. Given a chance because of injuries to Marquez Valdes-Scantling and Adams, Lazard gradually rose to overcome Geronimo Allison as the No. 2 by Game 14. Lazard (6-4 ½, 227) isn't as big as Jermichael Finley but in some ways he provided what the Packers haven't had since their tight end played his final game in October 2013. That is a big target that can get down the middle of the field. Lazard's speed (4.57) isn't bad at all for his size. He's smart (25 on the Wonderlic intelligence test), athletic (38-inch vertical jump) and strong. Aaron Rodgers became a fan after seeing that Lazard would go anywhere to catch a ball. Lazard didn't offer much after the catch (3.89), lacks wiggle and precision on his routes and was penalized too much (four). He also got after people as a blocker and on special teams. Whether Lazard's future is at wide receiver or tight end, he has found a home. **Grade: C+**

### **Equanimeous St. Brown (0.0)**

Suffered a high-ankle sprain Aug. 22 in the third exhibition game and spent the entire season on injured reserve. Thus, his second season consisted of 45 exhibition snaps and about 20 practices in training camp. When it comes to size (6-4 ½, 214), speed (4.47) and smarts (Wonderlic of 27), St. Brown has it all. He didn't drop any of his 36 targets as a rookie and averaged a hefty 5.38 yards after the catch (21 receptions). He also showed a surprising willingness to block. He's worthy of a long look in 2020. **Grade: Incomplete**

### **Marquez Valdes-Scantling (45.5)**

The coaches became so frustrated with MVS' imprecise route running and feel for reading coverage that by the playoffs they gave him a mere six snaps in the two games. After a dud of a second season, his career is at the crossroads. He's more of a build-up speed guy than an instant accelerator. He struggles to get off press coverage, too. When given a free release, he will run by the vast majority of cornerbacks on straight-line, vertical routes into the middle of the field. Standing 6-4 and with a long stride, he's choppy on the top of routes and isn't fluid in and out of his cuts. His hands (two drops in 55 targets) are fine. Under Mike McCarthy, his unenthusiastic blocking wouldn't have been that big of a problem. Under Matt LaFleur, it seems to be. The fact remains that MVS produced five receptions of 40 yards or more compared to Davante Adams' four. **Grade: D+**

## **Tight Ends (4)**

### **Jimmy Graham (55.9 percent)**

He's entering the final year of a three-year, \$30 million contract (\$11M guaranteed) that he signed in March 2017. The Packers would save \$8M against the cap by terminating him before the start of the off-season program. At 33, what does Graham have left? By cutting Graham it would force the Packers at least to try to upgrade. However, there's a degree of risk involved because the three veterans behind him inspire little confidence. Perhaps the most impressive part of Graham's game in 2019 was the fact he lined up and played every game despite nagging injuries. His speed has declined from his salad days in New Orleans. Some of his biggest receptions in the last two seasons have come when the defense ignored him. Some coordinators didn't consider him a threat any longer. For their part, the Packers increasingly asked Graham to pass block, a sign of their decreasing confidence in his ability as a receiver. It also enabled him to gain entry into space on late leak-outs from the box. He caught the ball appreciably better than a year ago (three drops compared to six). As a run blocker, he aligned on the backside more than the play side. It isn't that Graham lacks toughness. It's just that's his height and limitations in strength lead to leverage problems at the point of attack. Graham played 26.2 percent from a three-point stance, the least of the four tight ends. **Grade: C**

### **Marcedes Lewis (45.1)**

Lewis' play-time breakdown included 62.8 percent with his hand down, 29.7 percent from a wing position and 7.5 percent as a split receiver. He averaged 30.2 snaps under Matt LaFleur compared to 11.9 under Mike McCarthy. LaFleur praised his blocking. He was solid in the middle of the season but wasn't in the first or last month. Lewis was charged with 8 ½ "bad" runs, more than twice what he was responsible for in 2018. Despite his size, he found himself overmatched against some edge rushers and allowed two sacks and three other pressures. During his 12 years in Jacksonville, he often was a highly capable blocker. Now he's more of a steady blocker that struggles to bend and sustain. As a receiver, he's slow off the line and stiff adjusting to the ball. His contract has expired. He'll be 36 in May. The bell has tolled. **Grade: D**

### **Jace Sternberger (8.2)**

A concussion in early August cost the rookie practice time. An ankle injury in the final exhibition game cost him the first eight games. The Packers were smart to give him enough of a look (99 snaps) to know what they have entering Year 2. Sternberger probably would have been better served returning to Texas A&M in 2019 after playing just one season there. Judging by word and action, he's motivated to become at least a competitive blocker. He isn't now. Despite limited exposure, his 4 ½ "bad" runs were the second-most among tight ends. He needs much better lower-body strength to move defensive ends. He has a chance to be a capable downfield receiver because of speed (4.75 seconds in 40), body control and hands. His confidence borders on arrogance, according to scouts a year ago. He has a long way to go but the tools to get there. **Grade: D**

**Robert Tonyan (19.3)**

This was somewhat of a lost season for Tonyan. Limited to 13 games by a hip injury, he didn't play a whole lot more than last year and finds himself in about the same insecure spot on the depth chart. The first thing personnel people say about Tonyan is, "He can run." McCarthy probably looked for that more than LaFleur, but every coach wants speed. That gives Tonyan a chance. The previous staff didn't trust him, though, and this one doesn't seem to, either. He has made strides as a blocker, but games against the 49ers (regular season) and Redskins demonstrated he has strides to make. Indiana State or not, Tonyan isn't a shrinking violet. He's worth another look. **Grade: D**

## **Running Backs (6)**

### **Tyler Ervin (3.5 percent)**

The successful waiver claim from Jacksonville for Ervin with a quarter of the regular season remaining saved the return game and injected a measure of explosiveness into the offense. Ervin touched the ball just six times on 42 snaps but his total of yards from scrimmage was a whopping 53 (8.8). He's a north-south, decisive type of back. He's fast, too, clocking 4.39 seconds in the 40 out of San Jose State in 2016 before being drafted in the fourth round by the Texans. Ervin scored 21 on the Wonderlic intelligence test, leaped 39 inches in the vertical jump and bench-pressed 17 times. He's 5 foot 10, 192 pounds. He hadn't done anything before joining Green Bay, which is his fourth team. He's worth another minimum-type contract. **Grade: C-**

### **Malcolm Johnson (0.0)**

A fullback, he spent the last month of 2018 on the Packers' practice squad and all last season on injured reserve. The undersized Johnson (6-1, 231) is more of a receiver than a blocker. He runs well (4.67) and as a two-year starter at Mississippi State (2013-14) demonstrated he could run the seam and stretch the field laterally out of the backfield. He lacks the size to dig linebackers out of the hole, but that isn't what Matt LaFleur wants in his fullback. He can tie people up when asked to block on the move. Started six of 19 games for Cleveland from 2015-16. Because of injury, he played just 18 snaps in exhibition games. His contract has expired. **Grade: Incomplete**

### **Aaron Jones (62.9)**

At the combine in February 2017, Aaron Jones ran 4.58. A few weeks later, at UTEP pro day, he ran 4.57. Some players can't run for the watch. Jones must be one of them. This is a player that has proved he can go the distance every time he touches the ball. Jones emerged as the team's best player on offense by scoring 23 touchdowns, rushing for 1,202 yards and catching 55 passes. He fumbled three times, losing two, and dropped four of 74 targeted passes. Jones is an impatient slasher who doesn't need a lot of room. Trusting his blockers, his mentality is to rip through the hole come hell or high water and leave the defense behind. His style invites punishment, but by depressing his snaps the Packers have limited his time missed due to injury to five games in three seasons. While Jones is a surging, attacking runner, he isn't running up the backs of his blockers. He reads the zone scheme increasingly well, changes directions in a hurry and can avoid defensive linemen that penetrate the backfield. Jones broke at least one tackle in every game except at Minnesota. In all, he broke 70 tackles, including 17 in Dallas (six by LB Leighton Vander Esch). Attempting to become a more complete back, Jones worked to improve his pass protection, receiving and running between the tackles. Once a liability against the blitz, he isn't now. He's comfortable and dangerous running a substantial route tree from a split position. He's fearless inside. He forces defenses to be sound in their gap control. What a fifth-round pick Jones was by GM Ted Thompson in his final draft. **Grade: A**

### **Danny Vitale (14.1)**

LaFleur wants a fullback. Vitale was OK, but the Packers no doubt would like better. He made some noise against the Broncos and Raiders, catching 20+ downfield passes off play-action. Otherwise, he's just an average route runner who struggles adjusting to off-line throws. His hands were adequate. Vitale is a tightly wound athlete who runs fast (4.59) in a straight line. As a blocker, he isn't fluid enough to adjust his track, slip through the cracks and reach his assignment. On contact, he is average to below. He doesn't explode into defenders or sustain/finish them. **Grade: D**

### **Dexter Williams (0.8)**

When Jamaal Williams was dinged in October, the coaches played Tra Carson rather than Dexter Williams. The only time the sixth-round draft choice got on the field was for 10 snaps late in the rout against Oakland and four snaps at Detroit when Jamaal Williams didn't play. He has talent. That was obvious at Notre Dame and on a few carries in his 86-snap exhibition season. Almost as obvious were his struggles in pass protection. It was a major weakness of his in college and again in the second and fourth exhibition games. If Williams can learn what it takes to be a pro, he might have a future. **Grade: Incomplete**

### **Jamaal Williams (33.4)**

He dropped five of 32 targeted throws as a rookie in 2017. He didn't drop any of 36 in his second season, and one of 48 this year. After allowing 6 ½ pressures in 2018, he cut that total down to two this season. In 479 career touches from scrimmage, he has yet to fumble. The Packers could hardly ask for more from a complementary back. Williams runs stiff and upright, takes a lot of hits and isn't great laterally. He's an old-fashioned grinder who converts in short-yardage situations, gets what's blocked almost all the time (and often a yard or two more) and is reliable in the passing game, whether on screens or even as a split receiver. If a defense isn't ready to tango he'll run right over it. There's much to admire about a player who keeps plugging away, doesn't complain about his role and rates as one of the most consistent players on the roster. **Grade: C+**

## **Offensive Line (13)**

### **David Bakhtiari (99.8 percent)**

He won't be 30 until September 2021. With one season remaining on the four-year, \$49.7 million extension he signed in September 2016, Bakhtiari is in position to land another blockbuster deal. Nevertheless, to break the bank, he'll probably need to return to his form of 2016 and '17. This was a tale of two seasons for Bakhtiari. In the first half, he was a tremendous disappointment. In the second half, he epitomized a franchise left tackle. His statistics bear it out. Through 12 games he had 12 penalties (six holds, five false starts, one illegal hands), two more than his previous season-high of 10. He wasn't penalized in the last six games. After being charged with 3 ½ sacks in the first nine games, he didn't have any in the last nine. After allowing 4 ½ "bad" runs in the first five games, he gave up 4 ½ in the last 13 games. Was it deficiencies in strength or technique? Lapses in concentration? Overconfidence? The change in line coaches from James Campen, his only coach from 2013-'18, to Adam Stenavich? All of the above. Bakhtiari is an outstanding football player. He can mirror speed off the corner, set the edge, react inside, run block in-line or on the move. He was a little soft against strength rushers in September and October. After kick-stepping outside, he wasn't anchoring as well against rushers working speed to power. Down the stretch, he was back on point. **Grade: B**

### **Bryan Bulaga (79.8)**

The front office's decision to keep Bulaga and cut DT Mike Daniels, another highly-paid, oft-injured veteran, proved to be the key for the entire offensive line. Now the people upstairs get to decide if Bulaga should be given a new contract. For the second year in a row, he failed to finish four games because of injury. He sat out two full games in 2018, one this year (illness). Otherwise, Bulaga probably played a little better in his 10th season than he did in his ninth. His totals in sacks (four), pressures (21), "bad" runs (a unit-low 5 ½) and penalties (six) reflected a top-half right tackle in the NFL. As the decision-makers deliberate Bulaga's future, they should remember how he shut down Minnesota's Danielle Hunter, not once but twice. The two-time Pro Bowl DE could muster only 1 ½ pressures against Bulaga in the two games. Even in his 10th season, he still was able to control both speed and strength rushers. Like Bakhtiari, Bulaga brings a degree of nastiness to his work. He'll take that extra shot when it's available and it won't lead to laundry on the field. That's important. However, with his bad knees and everything else, his career will not last forever. **Grade: B**

### **Elgton Jenkins (90.5)**

A second-round draft choice, he watched Game 1 and was rotating in during Game 2 when Lane Taylor suffered a season-ending biceps injury. From there, he played all but two snaps at left guard and made the NFL All-Rookie team. He was charged with 24 pressures, third on the line and 8 ½ "bad" runs, which ranked fourth. His nine penalties were excessive; Taylor had two in the previous two seasons combined. Pass protection was his forte. He showed the strength and base to withstand power. At times, he had problems against interior quickness. He's a big man (6-4 ½, 311) who takes up a lot of space. Jenkins was less

effective in the run game. Sometimes he came off the ball too high, and that in turn reduced his ability to sustain blocks and reach the second level. Some scouts still think Jenkins would be a much better fit in a power-gap scheme rather than the Packers' zone scheme in which his deficiencies in range and quickness to cut off are accentuated. His mass served the Packers well on combo blocks with Corey Linsley, a lighter man. His aiming points in the run game and ability to think on his feet will need to improve. He's already a middle-of-the-pack starting guard. The mental part of the game might determine if Jenkins can take the next step. **Grade: C+**

### **John Leglue (0.0)**

He was signed off the Saints' practice squad Dec. 21 as the 53rd man after Yosh Nijman was injured. Leglue joined the Saints one day after being let go by Denver on the last cut in August. He's 6-6, 301, ran a slow 5.42 40 in March coming out of Tulane and scored 28 on the Wonderlic intelligence test. He tested well athletically, bench-pressed just 17 times and had his arms measured at an appealing 34 1/8 inches. For the Broncos, who gave him a \$5,000 signing bonus, Leglue played both tackles in training camp. At Tulane, he was a three-year regular with starts at all five positions. He's a finesse player who relies on fundamentals and balance to pass block but doesn't bring much thrust in the run game.

**Grade: Incomplete**

### **Alex Light (12.5)**

After seeing Light play 26 snaps as a free-agent rookie (Richmond) in 2018, the Packers went with him as their No. 3 tackle. Of his 151 snaps, 146 came at right tackle for an injured Bulaga. The numbers told his dismal level of performance: 2 1/2 sacks, 11 total pressures and 3 1/2 "bad" runs. Light has enormous hands (11 1/4 inches) but kept getting beat off the ball and allowed too much penetration against run and pass. At 6-5, 309, he lacks functional strength, length (33 1/4 arms) and speed (5.55). Once Jared Veldheer settled in, Light was inactive for three of the last four games. **Grade: F**

### **Corey Linsley (89.4)**

What you see is what you get. Linsley might be as consistent as any player on the roster. Efficient, scrappy and smart. On the smaller side but knows how to play the game. Gets better all the time as a reach blocker. When he gets beat in the run game, it's usually because he's overpowered or back-doored. His "bad" run total of 16 1/2 led the club and marked his career-high. On the other hand, Linsley's total of 14 1/2 pressures (3 1/2 were sacks) was the lowest on the line. With some centers, the shotgun snap is an adventure. With Linsley, it's become automatic. Since the Packers had four fumbles from the shotgun in 2014, Linsley's rookie year, they've had just four in the last five seasons. The back problem that knocked him out of the second Lions game bears watching in the future. **Grade: B-**

### **Cole Madison (0.0)**

It was a surprise when the Packers drafted Madison in the fifth round in 2018. It was equally surprising that he made the team after sitting out his rookie season to deal with mental-health issues. He didn't play a down before suffering a season-ending knee injury Nov. 21 in practice. In three exhibition games, Madison played 108 snaps, all at left guard, before suffering a right knee injury late in the third game and missing the finale. He drew at least four holding penalties, was charged with several "bad" runs and showed little ability to hold his ground against power rushers. He was catching blocks and getting pushed around. He also didn't show the range or length (32 ¼ arms) to play right tackle, the position where he started 47 games at Washington State. **Grade: Incomplete**

### **Yosh Nijman (0.0)**

Played 110 snaps at left tackle in four exhibition games before being released and then coming back immediately on the practice squad. He was promoted to replace Madison after 11 games before landing on reserve/injured three weeks later with a torn triceps. A freakish athlete with fantastic speed (4.81) and superb size (6-7, 314), Nijman failed to impress in August. He was at least partially responsible for two sacks, was late off the ball consistently, wasn't physical and didn't demonstrate the feet necessary to play tackle. His only chance might be at guard. **Grade: Incomplete**

### **Lucas Patrick (11.4)**

One day before the regular-season finale the Packers kept Patrick off the upcoming unrestricted free-agent market with a two-year extension worth \$3.68 million (\$350,000 guaranteed). It was similar to March 2016 when Lane Taylor, who had started two games in his first three years, signed a two-year, \$4.15M extension (\$600K guaranteed). Taylor, a free agent from Oklahoma State, was looked upon as a solid backup with starting potential. The same probably holds for Patrick, who should be given every chance to unseat Billy Turner at right guard next season. Buoyed by his new deal, Patrick went out 24 hours later and played an outstanding game against NT Damon "Snacks" Harrison in Detroit after Corey Linsley had to depart after 20 snaps. It was a much better performance than Patrick turned in for an injured Linsley three months earlier in Dallas. His shotgun snaps were awry that day and he had several bad plays. Patrick had played center in exhibition games but never when it counted. It added to a four-year résumé that included 326 snaps at right guard and 182 at left guard. Patrick will push, shove and bloody your nose. That's how he overcomes short arms (32 1/4), a subpar 40 (5.26) and barely adequate athleticism. Patrick would fit beautifully in a Pier 6 brawl. Now his combativeness has brought him a level of job and financial security he probably never thought was possible. Green Bay didn't sign Patrick right after the 2016 draft. They added him a month later following his appearance at a minicamp cattle call. The Duke product didn't get a penny for a signing bonus. He has a signing bonus now, one that was earned. **Grade: D+**

### **Jason Spriggs (0.0)**

His career in Green Bay effectively ended in early August when he was waived/injured and then reverted to reserve/injured. He remained there all season, counting \$1.6 million against the salary cap. In 2016, the Packers gave up fourth- and seventh-round picks to move up in the second round (No. 57 to No. 48) and select Spriggs, who they thought was the last available left tackle with starting potential. As it turned out, he couldn't play.

**Grade: Incomplete**

### **Lane Taylor (9.5)**

A forgotten man. Taylor started 48 games from 2016-18 and then the first two in '19 before going down with a season-ending biceps injury. It seemed only a matter of time, however, before rookie Elgton Jenkins would be starting ahead of him. The 30-year-old Taylor has one year remaining at \$4.55 million. His future might depend on what the Packers think of Billy Turner. If they're happy with him at right guard, Taylor will likely be released this month. If not, it's conceivable Taylor could return, possibly on a reduced contract. Taylor didn't get off to a great start in 2019 after struggling in '18. His best season (B- grade) was 2017. **Grade: D**

### **Billy Turner (99.8)**

By my count, Turner was responsible for 12 sacks. The last player charged with more was all-time bust Tony Mandarich, who allowed 12 ½ in 1990. Turner also allowed 41 pressures, the most in Green Bay since Marshall Newhouse gave up 42 ½ in 2012. Turner played 1,203 snaps, two under the maximum. Availability is important. Performance is more important. Byron Bell, Turner's veteran predecessor at right guard, played 527 snaps in 2018 and allowed ½ sack and 13 ½ pressures. In 2017, veteran Jahri Evans played 912 snaps at RG and gave up five sacks and 28 ½ pressures. Neither Bell nor Evans got another job after Green Bay said goodbye. In the ground game, Turner was charged with 13 "bad" runs, second-most on the unit. Initially, Turner was adequate. In the first eight games, he gave up 3 ½ sacks. He fell apart after that, giving up nine sacks in the last 10 games. San Francisco abused Turner twice, as did Chicago on opening night, Philadelphia, Dallas, Seattle and others. At 6-5, Turner is a tall guard. His hand placement and punch can be wildly inconsistent, and when he misses rushers get into his chest. At his weight (310), he often was unable to regain leverage and wound up getting walked back. Turner tries to play an aggressive style but after the initial strike will get stood up in the hole and shed. He's a finesse player. He wasn't able to root out defensive tackles one-on-one. He lacked the ease of movement and range to get to and sustain blocks on the second level. Was he an upgrade on Bell and Evans? That's for the Packers to decide. His four-year, \$28 million contract contained a \$9 million signing bonus. If he's on the roster the third day of the league year (March 20), the Packers must pay him a \$3M roster bonus. His cap number of \$4.25M in 2019 swells to \$8.1M in '20, \$8.05M in '21 and \$8.1M in '22. If the Packers decide to go with Patrick and/or Taylor at right guard and release Turner before March 20, they would have to count \$6.75M in "dead" money against their 2020 salary cap but would

be out from under three years of base salaries, roster bonuses and workout bonuses.

**Grade: D-**

### **Jared Veldheer (8.2)**

In 2018, Veldheer started the first four games at right tackle for the Broncos before suffering a bone bruise and being replaced by Turner for four games. When Veldheer returned to start the last eight games, Turner wound up starting the last seven at left guard after Denver's top two left guards suffered season-ending injuries. Veldheer went to the Patriots as an unrestricted free agent in mid-May on a one-year, \$3.5 million deal (\$1.25M guaranteed). He retired shortly thereafter because of a hip injury, then regained the itch to play and was accommodated by New England. He arrived Nov. 29 on waivers from the Patriots. With Bulaga ailing in Games 16-17, Veldheer allowed nary a pressure and two "bad" runs in 99 snaps. He's a giant (6-8, 321) with below-average arm length (33). Still a respectable athlete entering his 11th season, Veldheer looked to be a patient, stable, smart (Wonderlic score of 26) pass blocker on the edge with vulnerabilities against bull rush and inside counter moves. His weakest area is the run game. He doesn't play strong, loses leverage at the point of attack and falls off blocks. He'll be 33 in June. If the Packers re-sign Veldheer, it would presumably be as a swing tackle. There's little reason to think he could hold up physically as a starter for more than a few games. **Grade: C-**