

SO MANY QUESTIONS, SPECIAL TEAMS HAS ANSWERS



Green Bay's offensive line is a mixed bag of starters, injured players and backups. The quality depth of the line will have a huge impact on the entire Packers season. From left, are five-year veteran Zach Bako-Bewele, third-year veteran Jacob Monk, five-year veteran Sean Rhyhan, second-year veteran Donovan Jennings and third-year veteran Jordan Morgan. GREG MELLIS | GREEN & GOLD EXPRESS

Roster depth will determine team success

Packers injury report grows, Bako-Bewele, Reed suffer severe injuries



Jordan Love wonders what's next for the offensive line. GREG MELLIS | GREEN & GOLD EXPRESS

By LUKE REIMER
Green & Gold Express

While it is encouraging that the Green Bay Packers came away with a victory in its week two matchup with the New York Jets, it is becoming more apparent the offensive line is going to be an issue moving forward. Coming into the season, it appeared that while it wasn't the greatest

offensive line in the league, the Packers had experienced and somewhat reliable players with Jordan Morgan, Aaron Banks, Sean Rhyhan, Anthony Belton and Zach Bako-Bewele (formally Tom) on the front. Through two games though, that thought of experience and consistency couldn't be farther from the truth. First, the Packers offensive line got dismantled in

Week 1 by a very good Vikings defense. Minnesota was able to come away with four sacks, seven tackles for a loss and 15 quarterback hits. That number was improved in the Week 2 victory over the Jets, as New York came away with three sacks, six tackles for a loss and three quarterback hits. While Week 2 seems like an improvement, those numbers are still too

high for Jordan Love and the offense to work into sort of consistency. While the pass game certainly suffered against Minnesota, the run game as a whole has yet to get going this season. Through two weeks, Green Bay has totaled just 99 rushing yards and no rushing touchdowns. Without a consistent run game, passing the ball is going to be just as difficult

if the Packers' can't get linebackers and safeties to cheat up and respect the run. Through two weeks, the Packers have seen eight different offensive linemen log snaps: Jacob Monk, Sean Rhyhan, Jordan Morgan, Anthony Belton, Aaron Banks, Jager Burton, Donovan Jennings and Zach Bako-Bewele. DEPTH, continued on page 2

EARLY RETURNS, SPECIAL TEAMS DELIVER AN OT 'W'

By LUKE REIMER
Green & Gold Express

Rookie kicker Trey Smack was thrust into the spotlight early in his career as a 26-yard field goal attempt in overtime sailed through the uprights giving the Green Bay Packers a 20-17 win over the New York Jets on Sept. 20. After seeing a revolving door at the kicker position over the past four years, it appears that Green Bay's willingness to spend a sixth-round pick at the position in the 2026 NFL draft is on the right path to success. With the inconsistent play from a majority of the team through the first two weeks of the season, Smack has been one of

Green Bay's better and more reliable players, connecting on all five of his field goal attempts and three out of four of his extra point attempts. While Smack was the player to put Green Bay over the top, it looked unlikely that Green Bay was even going to get to a chance to win the game, as according to ESPN's win probability chart, the New York Jets had an 88.7% chance to win when it had a 10-point lead with just under 11 minutes left in the game. From that point, the Packers scored 10 points in the fourth quarter to send the game into overtime, before ultimately holding the Jets on the first drive of the extra period

and setting up Smack for the game-winning kick. "It is hard to win in this league, especially on the road," said Packers head coach Matt LaFleur. "For our guys to continue to battle, hopefully that'll give us some momentum moving forward, because it was tough sledding in there for about three quarters." The Packers finished the game with 199 total yards on offense, but the play of edge rusher Lukas Van Ness and the defense did just enough to slow the Jets offense down all game to keep the score at a manageable deficit. Van Ness' career day saw the Iowa alum total 10 total tackles, RECAP, continued on page 2



Kicker Trey Smack delivered a 26-yard game-winning field goal in overtime to help the Packers defeat the Jets 20-17 on Sept. 20 in East Rutherford, New Jersey. GREG MELLIS | GREEN & GOLD EXPRESS



Third-year running back MarShawnno Lloyd made his first NFL start in Week 1 against the Vikings. Leading him down the field were Sean Rhyen, front, and Anthony Belton (71). The Packers are still without Josh Jacobs, their top running back.

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RECAP, continued from page 1

including three tackles for a loss, four quarterback hits and 1.5 sacks.

“I am drained, I am exhausted, but it feels good,” said Van Ness, on his performance. “I laid it all out there for the team, and more than anything, I just had a lot of fun today.”

No play was bigger for Van Ness though than on fourth-and-one from the 50-yard line with 1:02 left in the game. The Jets attempted to keep the drive going, but the Packers edge rusher penetrated the offensive line and stuffed New York (and former Wisconsin Badger) running back Braelon Allen for no gain, ending the drive.

“We called a pressure from the right side, so I was able to tighten down. I saw the back step up (and) before I knew it, I was kind of able to just sneak through the back-field and come clean,” said Van Ness. “Obviously it was a huge turning point in the game, and obviously it was a big play.”

Quarterback Jordan

Love finished the game completing 16-of-29 passes for 145 yards and two touchdowns.

Christian Watson was on the receiving end of one of Love’s touchdown passes, as he totaled 41 yards on four receptions. It was Matthew Golden, though, who led the Packers in receiving, catching four passes for 58 yards.

Running back MarShawnno Lloyd was the other Packer who caught a Love touchdown, marking his first career touchdown.

In the run game, Kaleb Johnson led the way for the Packers, totaling 32 yards on eight carries, while Lloyd went for 20 yards on six carries. Chris Brooks added another 11 yards on four carries.

For the Jets, quarterback Geno Smith completed 27-of-41 passes for 247 yards and one touchdown.

Running back Breece Hall and wide receiver Adonai Mitchell tied for the receiving leaders, both totaling 63 yards. Garrett Wilson added another 57

yards on five receptions, including Smith’s lone touchdown.

In the run game, Hall was only able to manage 29 yards on 16 carries, while Allen totaled seven yards on five carries, including a touchdown.

While the win over the Jets in overtime gives Green Bay its first victory of the season, it may have come at a major cost.

Wide receiver Jayden Reed left the game early, as he was carted off on a spine board after a vicious hit in the first quarter. Following Reed leaving the game, right tackle Zach Bako-Beweale (formally Tom) also left the game in an inflatable cast.

“Jayden Reed – he’s got movement in all of his extremities; he will be staying overnight,” said LaFleur. “That was obviously a very scary deal anytime you see anybody down on the field and have to get carted off. An update on Zach Tom, that doesn’t look good either as far as – I think he could be out a long time.”



One of the bright spots for the Packers’ defense is the tandem of third-year linebacker Edgerin Cooper (56) and nine-year veteran linebacker Zaire Franklin (44). The duo celebrate a tackle for a loss in Week 1 against the Minnesota Vikings.

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ATLANTA FALCONS AT GREEN BAY PACKERS

Time and date: 7:15 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 24
Location: Lambeau Field
TV: Prime Video
Radio: Flagship WRIT-FM, Milwaukee, 95.7. Packers Radio Network includes WRLO-FM Antigo, 105.3; WMJQ-FM, Clintonville, 92.3; WIXX-FM, Green Bay, 101.1; WLST-FM, Marinette, 95.1; and WSAU Wausau, 550 AM and 95.1 FM
2026 records: Packers 1-1, Falcons 0-2
History: The Packers have played the Falcons 36 times, including four postseason games, with Green Bay leading the

series 19-17.

The most recent game, in 2023, saw the Falcons come from 24-12 deficit at the start of the fourth quarter to win 25-24. Younghoe Koo kicked the winning field goal with less than a minute on the clock.

The last time the Falcons came to Lambeau Field was in an empty stadium.

COVID-19 restrictions forced the stadiums to be empty for most of the year. Aaron Rodgers and Green Bay’s offense rang up 30 points, and did just enough against Matt Ryan and the Atlanta offense to coast to a

two-score victory.

Coaches: Packers, Matt LaFleur, eighth season, 76-40-1. Falcons, Kevin Stefanski, first season, 0-2.

Packers Schedule
Sunday, Sept. 13, at Minnesota, L 39-22
Sunday, Sept. 20, at NY Jets, W 20-17 (OT)
Thursday, Sept. 24, vs. Atlanta, 7:15 p.m., Prime Video
Sunday, Oct. 4, at Tampa Bay, noon, FOX
Sunday, Oct. 11, vs. Chicago, 3:25 p.m., FOX
Sunday, Oct. 18, vs. Dallas,

7:20 p.m., NBC
Sunday, Oct. 25, at Detroit, 3:25 p.m., FOX
Thursday, Oct. 29, vs. Carolina, 7:15 p.m., Prime Video
Sunday, Nov. 8, at New England, 3:25 p.m., FOX
Sunday, Nov. 15, vs. Minnesota, noon, FOX
Week 11 BYE
Wednesday, Nov. 25, at LA Rams, 7 p.m., Netflix
Sunday, Dec. 6, at New Orleans, noon, FOX
Sunday, Dec. 13, vs. Buffalo, 7:20 p.m., NBC
Sunday, Dec. 20, vs. Miami, noon, FOX

Friday, Dec. 25, at Chicago, noon, Netflix
Monday, Jan. 4, vs. Houston, 7:15 p.m., ESPN
Week 18, vs. Detroit, TBD

NFL Schedule
Thursday, Sept. 24
Atlanta at Green Bay, 7:15 p.m.
Sunday, Sept. 27
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh, noon
New England at Jacksonville, noon
Tennessee at NY Giants, noon
Seattle at Washington, noon
NY Jets at Detroit, noon

Carolina at Cleveland, noon
Kansas City at Miami, noon
LA Chargers at Buffalo, noon
Houston at Indianapolis, noon
Arizona at San Francisco, 3:05 p.m.
Minnesota at Tampa Bay, 3:05 p.m.
Las Vegas at New Orleans, 3:25 p.m.
Baltimore at Dallas (at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), 3:25 p.m.
LA Rams at Denver 7:20 p.m.
Monday, Sept. 28
Philadelphia at Chicago, 7:15 p.m.

MOMENTS

VICTORY IN OVERTIME



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KICKER TANDEM LIFTS SPECIAL TEAMS

Green Bay’s special teams got a boost this year with new coordinator Cam Achord, return specialist Skyy Moore and kicker Trey Smack (28). They join fourth-year punter Daniel Whelan (19). Against the Jets, Whelan had six punts with an average of 54 yards, including a long punt of 66 yards. Smack started his NFL career with a 59-yard field goal against Minnesota and kicked a 26-yarder to beat the Jets in overtime.

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MOMENTS

GREEN BAY 20, NEW YORK JETS 17 (OT)



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VAN NESS FINALLY EMERGING

Fourth-year edge rusher Lukas Van Ness is a late bloomer, as the former first-round pick is finally breaking out. In Week 2 against the New York Jets, Van Ness recorded 10 tackles, including three tackles for a loss, 1.5 sacks and four quarterback hits. Pro Football Focus tallied six pressures and seven stops, which are tackles that constitute a failure for the offense.

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