



WHERE'S THE TURKEY? FOX PLANNED ON A DIFFERENT OUTCOME FOR THANKSGIVING TRADITION

Green Bay Packers quarterback Jordan Love asks Fox Sports' Erin Andrews about his turkey leg after the Packers defeated the Detroit Lions 29-22 on Thanksgiving Day. Traditionally, the player or players of the game get a turkey leg or a hunk of turducken after winning an NFL game played on Thanksgiving. John Madden started it in 1989 when he gave the first turkey leg to defensive end Reggie White after the Philadelphia Eagles beat the Dallas Cowboys. In 1997, Madden added turducken (a chicken stuffed into a deboned duck stuffed into a deboned turkey) to the tradition. When Love asked about the turkey, he was told there was no turkey to eat because the only turkey had been torn apart earlier by announcer Greg Olsen. That was not the case. Fox is always prepared for two turkeys on Thanksgiving - one in the booth and one postgame on the field. As it turns out, the turkey they saved for after the game had a Lions logo seared into the turkey as Fox expected Detroit to win, so Fox just dumped the tradition. Andrews said the network would make a donation to a charity of Love's choosing.

GREG MELLIS | GREEN & GOLD EXPRESS

Packers take down Lions on Thanksgiving

Green Bay keeps playoff hopes alive

By **LUKE REIMER**
Green & Gold Express

The Green Bay Packers shocked both Detroit and those watching at home as they dismantled the Lions on Thanksgiving Day, winning 29-22 in Detroit.

Packers' quarterback Jordan Love registered another great performance as he completed 22-of-32 for 268 yards, three touchdowns and no interceptions.

In what may have been Love's best game as a starting quarterback, the success started early. On the very first play of the game, Love dropped back and threw a bomb to a streaking Christian Watson, who came down with a jump ball for a 53-yard gain.

"I almost changed that first play call; I was kind of mulling it over a little bit," said Packers' head coach Matt LaFleur. "I texted Jordan (Love) this morning and told him that I was going to change it to something else, and he said he wanted this call. So, I said OK."

That early bomb to Watson helped to set up a quick scoring strike for Green Bay. Four plays later, Love connected with Jayden Reed for a 10-yard touchdown, giving the Packers a 7-0 lead with 12:16 remaining in the first quarter.

Though Detroit also scored on its first possession, Green Bay's defense was the story of the game. The Pack scored on its second possession of the game to give the team a touchdown lead — one that was quickly extended when linebacker Rashan Gary hit Lions' quarterback Jared Goff as he loaded up to throw. The ball was knocked out of Goff's hand before his arm came forward, resulting in a fumble. The fumble was then picked up by Packers defensive back Jonathan Owens and brought back 25 yards for a touchdown, making the score 20-6 just 13 minutes into the game.

That wasn't Gary's only impact on the game, though. The Michigan alum, who tore his ACL on the same field last season, finished the game with five combined tackles, three sacks and



Christian Watson caught five passes for 94 yards and one touchdown against the Lions on Thanksgiving Day. Watson caught a 53-yard pass from Jordan Love on the opening play of the game.

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one fumble recovery. He also forced two fumbles.

"What we were doing up front was really the difference," said LaFleur. "(Gary) had a big day, which was huge for him to come back to the place where, obviously, last year it was a pretty emotional experience. He experienced a different kind of emotion today to have three sacks, and I am just really happy for him and our whole locker room."

After Detroit's opening drive touchdown, Green Bay held the Lions to five straight drives of forcing a punt or a turnover on downs. That allowed the Packers to enter halftime with a 23-6 lead.

Detroit got the ball rolling again right away in the second half though, as they marched down the field, resulting in a David Montgomery 6-yard touchdown plunge. That touchdown was followed up by a successful two-point attempt from Montgomery. That touchdown marked the fourth time Montgomery has scored against Green Bay this season.

After the Packers were forced to punt, the Lions got the ball back on their own 3-yard line. A few plays



Packers quarterback Jordan Love celebrated the team's 29-22 victory over the Detroit Lions. The win kept alive some playoff hopes for Green Bay.

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later, Detroit was facing a fourth-and-four from its own 23-yard line. Lined up to punt, the Lions snapped the ball to an upback in an effort to catch the Packers sleeping and pick up the first down. That wasn't the case though, as Green Bay was all over the fake punt and tackled the ball carrier short of the first-down marker.

"We just know how aggressive

they are," said LaFleur, on the fake punt. "We were kind of alerting for that. Great job by Rich (Bisaccia) and Conner Lewis up in the box calling for it. Rich was obviously well prepared and prepared our guys for it. That obviously was a very critical play in the game."

That translated into a touchdown, as Love connected with Watson on a 16-yard touchdown three plays later.

The Lions made a last-ditch effort late in the game, as Goff connected with receiver Josh Reynolds for a 12-yard touchdown. The ensuing onside kick attempt was recovered by Green Bay though and gave the Packers a 29-22 victory.

The win over Detroit now gives the Packers a 5-6 record, which is good for eighth in the NFC and one spot behind the Seattle Seahawks for the seventh seed. Green Bay will host the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday night this week, as the team looks to continue to climb into the playoff picture.

For whatever it is worth, according to the New York Times Playoff Predictor, the Packers now hold a 45% chance of making the playoffs.

BEAT The Expert

Week 13 Games: Sunday, Dec. 3



Luke Reimer
New Media

Seattle @ Dallas...Thurs., Nov. 30

Detroit @ New Orleans

Atlanta @ New York Jets

San Francisco @ Philadelphia

Tie Breaker Game:

Kansas City @ Green Bay

**Week 11
Winner :
Kevin Passon
New Media**

**Week 12
Winner :
Jacob Westendorf
New Media**

Weekly Standings	Weekly Record	Overall Record
Tim Murphy, New Media.....	3-2	42-18
Jacob Westendorf, New Media.....	4-1	42-18
Jim Weigand, Tower Clock.....	3-2	41-19
Robert Buss, Buss Automotive.....	4-1	38-22
Staff, Iverson's Piggly Wiggly.....	4-1	36-24
Shane Senn, Senn Insurance.....	2-3	35-25
Luke Reimer, New Media.....	4-1	35-25
Kevin Passon, New Media.....	1-4	34-26
Staff, Shawano Health.....	3-2	34-26
Staff, Walsh Dental.....	2-3	30-30
Sue Moede, Moede Plumbing.....	3-2	29-31



Jim Wiegand
Tower Clock
Eye Center

This Week's Picks:

Dallas
Detroit
Atlanta
San Francisco

Tie Breaker Game:

Final Score: Kansas City 27 @ Green Bay 17



Robert Buss
Buss
Automotive

This Week's Picks:

Dallas
Detroit
Atlanta
Philadelphia

Tie Breaker Game:

Final Score: Kansas City 20 @ Green Bay 24



Shane Senn
Senn
Insurance

This Week's Picks:

Dallas
Detroit
New York Jets
Philadelphia

Tie Breaker Game:

Final Score: Kansas City 31 @ Green Bay 13



Staff
Walsh Dental Group
Shawano

This Week's Picks:

Dallas
Detroit
Atlanta
Philadelphia

Tie Breaker Game:

Final Score: Kansas City 23 @ Green Bay 20



Staff
Shawano
Health Services

This Week's Picks:

Dallas
Detroit
New York Jets
Philadelphia

Tie Breaker Game:

Final Score: Kansas City 17 @ Green Bay 21



Moede & Sons
Plumbing
Shawano

This Week's Picks:

Dallas
New Orleans
Atlanta
San Francisco

Tie Breaker Game:

Final Score: Kansas City 27 @ Green Bay 30



Staff
Iverson's
Piggly Wiggly

This Week's Picks:

Dallas
Detroit
New York Jets
Philadelphia

Tie Breaker Game:

Final Score: Kansas City 17 @ Green Bay 20



Jacob Westendorf
New
Media

This Week's Picks:

Dallas
New Orleans
Atlanta
Philadelphia

Tie Breaker Game:

Final Score: Kansas City 23 @ Green Bay 20



Luke Reimer
New
Media

This Week's Picks:

Seattle
New York Jets
Detroit
Philadelphia

Tie Breaker Game:

Final Score : Kansas City 31 @ Green Bay 17



Tim Murphy
New
Media

This Week's Picks:

Dallas
Detroit
Atlanta
Philadelphia

Tie Breaker Game:

Final Score: Kansas City 26 @ Green Bay 20



Kevin Passon
New
Media

This Week's Picks:

Dallas
Detroit
New York Jets
Philadelphia

Tie Breaker Game:

Final Score: Kansas City 21 @ Green Bay 28

NOTEBOOK

Chiefs' strength lies with defense this year

By JACOB WESTENDORF
Green & Gold Express

Packers' offense vs. Chiefs' defense

While the Chiefs' offense gets the majority of the attention due to Travis Kelce and Patrick Mahomes heading up that unit, the Chiefs' strength this year has been on defense.

Chris Jones is one of the best interior pass rushers in football, but they will line him up all over the formation in obvious passing situations.

Jones is going to be one of the biggest tests for this Packers offensive line that is coming off a great performance against Aidan Hutchinson and the Lions' pass rush.

Across from Jones is former first-round pick George Karlaftis, who has come on this season. He has seven sacks on the year and has proven to be a great sidekick for Jones in rushing the passer.

In the secondary, Trent McDuffie is playing as well as anyone at cornerback, and he's flanked by L'Jarius Sneed. McDuffie and Sneed combined to hold AJ Brown to one catch for eight yards in their matchup against the Philadelphia Eagles.

Coordinating the defense is former Super Bowl champion Steve Spagnuolo. Spagnuolo is known for coordinating the defense that shut down Tom Brady in Super Bowl XLII.

He's as respected as anyone in his position.

The Packers' offense is coming off what is probably its best performance of the season. That's something you've been able to say for the last three weeks.

Perhaps the short-term pain is turning into a long-term gain right in front of our eyes.

Jordan Love threw three touchdown passes to three different receivers against the Lions. He spread the ball around to all of his pass catchers. Seven different Packers caught a pass on Nov. 23.

Christian Watson had his best game of the season, hauling in a 53-yard pass to start the day and finishing with five catches for 94 yards.

Watson, Jayden Reed and Tucker Kraft all provided touchdown receptions, and the Packers piled up 29 points with 377 total yards.

Love played clean football again, and he looks to be proving that he is the Packers' quarterback of the



Preston Smith forced an incomplete pass from Lions quarterback Jared Goff on a fourth-and-four in the second quarter. The play resulted in Detroit turning the ball over on downs.

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future.

The run game is still struggling, and that may be the case all season. AJ Dillon was flanked in the backfield by James Robinson and Patrick Taylor.

It's likely that will be the team's backfield again when the Chiefs come to town, as Aaron Jones would seem unlikely to play just two weeks removed from a knee injury that he originally thought might cost him the rest of his season.

The Chiefs are likely the best

defense Green Bay will play between now and the end of the season. This is an excellent test for the Packers' young offense.

Packers' defense vs. Chiefs' offense

Mahomes and Kelce are still one of the best duos in all of football.

That is no surprise. The issues in Kansas City have been at the receiver position. Tyreek Hill left before last season, and the Chiefs did not miss a beat, winning Super Bowl XVII.

This season has been a different

story. Mahomes has struggled to build chemistry with Skyy Moore, Kadarius Toney and Rashee Rice, among others.

Rice has had some nice moments with Mahomes, but he's a rookie and prone to the ups and downs of being a young player in the NFL.

Where the Chiefs might lean in this game is on a ground game that just gashed the Philadelphia Eagles for 168 yards.

The Packers have had their struggles against opposing ground

games. They've allowed more than 200 yards rushing in three games this season. Andy Reid knows that, so he'll likely test them early and often.

The Packers' defense is coming off a solid game against Detroit. They held the Lions to 14 points until the final drive of the game when the team began to play soft to help bleed the clock.

Rashan Gary had three sacks and two forced fumbles. The Packers forced three turnovers and held the Lions to 1-5 on fourth-down conversions. That situational excellence is something that has been missing from Green Bay this season.

As great as Mahomes is, he will put passes in harm's way. The Packers don't have an interception against a team's current preferred starting quarterback since Rudy Ford picked off Jared Goff in late September at Lambeau Field.

They'll need to force a turnover or two to slow the Chiefs down.

Special teams

The Packers' kicking game has officially become a problem. Anders Carlson is starting to struggle and has missed a kick in every game except for one since the bye week. He missed two more kicks on Thanks-



Detroit Lions quarterback Jared Goff had three fumbles against the Packers on Thanksgiving Day. In the first quarter, the fumble was recovered by Green Bay's Jonathan Owens and returned 27 yards for a touchdown.

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giving Day, although one was from more than 60 yards. He's missed a PAT in three straight games. The Packers need him to be better. They cannot afford to leave points on the field against the Chiefs.

Keisean Nixon did not have an opportunity to return any kicks against

the Lions. With the indoor stadium that is Ford Field, the Lions were able to kick the ball out of the end zone to avoid him.

That is unlikely to be possible on Sunday. With temperatures expected to dip into the low 30s on Sunday night, Nixon should have some op-

portunities to make some plays.

The Packers coverage units had a big day against the Lions on Thanksgiving. Henry Pearson and Lukas Van Ness snuffed out a fake punt attempt that gave the Packers the ball deep in Lions territory. That proved to be one of the biggest plays of the game.

The Chiefs' special teams is led by coordinator Dave Toub. Toub was the special teams coordinator in Chicago during the Devin Hester era. He is one of the most respected special teams' coordinators in the sport.

The Chiefs have used a variety of returners, but the most dangerous one is Toney, a former first-round draft pick. Toney had a big return in last year's Super Bowl against the Eagles, and he has the ability to take the ball back for a touchdown any time he touches it.

He's been banged up as has Mecole Hardman, so it will be interesting to see how the Chiefs navigate that situation.

Harrison Butker remains one of the best kickers in the sport.

The Chiefs ranked 31st in last year's special teams rankings from Rick Gosselin. Sunday's matchup could prove interesting as these two teams are volatile in this phase of the game.

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VITALS

GREEN BAY PACKERS VS. KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

TIME AND DATE: 7:20 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3

LOCATION: Lambeau Field

TV: NBC

RADIO: Flagship WRNW-FM Milwaukee — 97.3; Packers Radio Network includes WIXX-FM Green Bay — 101.1, WRLO-FM Antigo — 105.3, WLST-FM Marinette — 95.1, and WSAU Wausau — 550 AM and 95.1 FM

2023 RECORDS: Packers, 5-6. Chiefs, 8-3.

HISTORY: The Chiefs and Packers are part of one of the most famous games in the history of the NFL.

After winning the NFL Championship Game in 1966, the Packers faced off against the AFL's Chiefs in the first ever version of the Super Bowl.

Max McGee would go on to catch two touchdown passes after Boyd Dowler left the game with an injury, making for one of the most legendary stories in Super Bowl history.

Overall, the two teams have faced off 14 times, with the Chiefs holding an 8-5-1 advantage in the series.

The most recent matchup was in 2021, which was Jordan Love's first career start. The Packers lost 13-7.

The last time the two teams met at Lambeau Field was in 2015 where the Packers won 38-28. Aaron Rodgers threw five touchdown passes.

COACHES: Packers - Matt LaFleur (fifth season, 52-25). Chiefs - Andy Reid (11th season 125-47)

PACKERS SCHEDULE

Sept. 10 at Chicago W 38-20
Sept. 17 at Atlanta L 25-24
Sept. 24 vs. New Orleans W 18-17
Sept. 28 vs. Detroit L 34-20
Oct. 9 at Las Vegas L 17-13
Oct. 15 BYE
Oct. 22 at Denver L 19-17
Oct. 29 vs. Minnesota L 24-10
Nov. 5 vs. LA Rams W 20-3
Nov. 12 at Pittsburgh L 23-19
Nov. 19 vs. LA Chargers W 23-20
Nov. 23 at Detroit W 29-22
Dec. 3 vs. Kansas City 7:20 p.m. NBC
Dec. 11 at NY Giants 7:15 p.m. ABC
Dec. 17 vs. Tampa Bay Noon FOX
Dec. 24 at Carolina Noon FOX
Dec. 31 at Minnesota 7:20 p.m. NBC
Jan. 7 vs. Chicago, TBD

NFL SCHEDULE

Thursday, Nov. 30

Seahawks at Cowboys, 7:20 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 3

Colts at Titans, Noon
Falcons at Jets, Noon
Panthers at Buccaneers, Noon
Lions at Saints, Noon
Chargers at Patriots, Noon
Cardinals at Steelers, Noon
Dolphins at Commanders, Noon
Broncos at Texans, 3:05 p.m.
49ers at Eagles, 3:25 p.m.
Browns at Rams, 3:25 p.m.
Chiefs at Packers, 7:20 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 4

Bengals at Jaguars, 7:15 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 7

Patriots at Steelers, 7:15 p.m.

KEYS TO THE GAME

Packers can use momentum against Chiefs

By JACOB WESTENDORF
Green & Gold Express

The Green Bay Packers are riding high coming into Lambeau Field for a showdown against the defending Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs.

The Packers won a game in which they were eight-point underdogs against the Detroit Lions at Ford Field on Thanksgiving Day.

Their offense piled up more than 370 yards, with Jordan Love staring down the Lions' pressure and continuing to deliver big throw after big throw.

Christian Watson had his best game of the season. Tucker Kraft found the end zone for the first time.

The Packers didn't turn the ball over, and the offense looked like the one that Brian Gutekunst had to have hoped he'd see sooner rather than later.

The Lions are a good defense, but the Chiefs should provide a much stiffer test. Steve Spagnuolo is one of the best defensive coordinators in football.

For all the fanfare the offense receives, it's been Kansas City's defense that has carried them through the first three months of the season.

The smart bet is that Patrick Mahomes and company will find their form, but this is not a group that is as talented as they have been in recent years.

The Packers have a chance to get back to .500 and set themselves up for a run at the postseason.

Here is what they need to do to beat the Chiefs:

Packers vs. Chief's run game

The Chiefs recently stared the top run defense in football in the face and rammed the ball down their throats for the better part of three quarters.

The Philadelphia Eagles were ranked No. 1 against the run going into the Nov. 20 Super Bowl rematch.

The Chiefs piled up 168 yards



Malik Heath collected 46 yards on his four pass catches. Signed by Green Bay as an undrafted free agent in May, Heath spent one season at Mississippi (2022), two at Mississippi State (2020-21) and two at Copiah-Lincoln Community College (2018-19).

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against them and controlled the game for the better part of three quarters until they wilted late.

Isiah Pacheco is a violent runner who could give the Packers some problems as they've struggled against running backs with his running style.

The Packers' run defense has been up and down this season. They've had some really strong performances, but it's certainly been more bad than good.

As crazy as it sounds, the Packers should want to force Patrick Mahomes to beat them with his inexperienced group of receivers.

At the bare minimum, they cannot allow this running game to make things easy for Mahomes and a struggling passing game.

This will need to be another big matchup between the two interiors on offense and defense.

Joe Thuney, Creed Humphrey and Trey Smith form one of the best interior offensive lines in all of football.

They'll be going up against Kenny Clark, who is coming off one of his best games of the season.

That came primarily in pass rush situations, however. Clark, along with TJ Slaton and Devonte Wyatt, need to hold up at the point of attack; otherwise, the Chiefs will be able to move some guys on their way to a big day on the ground.

Packers' offensive line vs. Chris Jones

The Packers' offensive line held up well last week against Aidan Hutchinson. That's not a normal occurrence. Hutchinson has typically dominated when he's played against Green Bay.

This week, the Packers face another great pass rusher in Chris Jones.

Jones lines up all over the formation but is able to wreck things on the interior, which is where the Packers have typically struggled.

Josh Myers and Jon Runyan Jr. have been inconsistent, to say the least. Runyan is currently rotating

with former third-round pick Sean Ryan.

Myers has played better of late but still has a couple of reps per game that leave you scratching your head.

Rasheed Walker is essentially in an even rotation with Yosh Nijman at left tackle, while Zach Tom has been an anchor on the right side of the offensive line.

They'll need to be aware of where Jones is on the field at all times. He's a game-wrecker, and the Packers have seen first hand what those types of players can do against them.

The passing game made some strides on Thanksgiving, but none of those things is going to matter if the team cannot block.

Jordan Love and Matt LaFleur vs. Spagnuolo

Sunday's game marks a little bit of a full circle moment for Jordan Love. Love's first start of his career came against the Kansas City Chiefs.

That week was a little different. He did not find out that he was starting until the game plan was already in progress. Aaron Rodgers tested positive for COVID-19 and was ruled

out of that week's game.

Love struggled after being thrown into the fire. The Packers didn't score until their final possession of the game.

Matt LaFleur has talked about that game since then. He's stated on several occasions that they did not put their offense in the best position to succeed.

The Chiefs, knowing they were facing a rookie quarterback, threw a ton of pressure at Love. Neither the Packers nor Love were prepared for that, and they struggled as a result.

Spagnuolo is an interesting case as a defensive coordinator, because they run a little bit of everything. The Chiefs will throw a variety of looks at this young Packer offense, and how they respond will determine how the game goes.

That's where it is up to Love, who is a veteran at this point, and LaFleur to help the rest of the young offense navigate through what they are seeing on the field.

LaFleur said that he had regrets from Love's first matchup against Kansas City. Now he'll have a chance to prove he learned something from that day.



AJ Dillon led Packers rushers with 43 yards on 14 carries. He gained another 38 yards on three pass receptions.
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Watson's explosive play needed down the road

By **LUKE REIMER**
Green & Gold Express

During the past two weeks, Packers fans, players and coaches have been witnesses of Jordan Love's best games as the starting quarterback in Green Bay.

Whether that is due to Love's progression as a passer, Green Bay's pass catchers stepping up in big spots or the game plan as a whole, the offense is clicking in Green Bay right now.

That hadn't been exemplified more than in Green Bay's win over the Detroit Lions on Thanksgiving. It seems that the team has found a core weapon in Jayden Reed, as the rookie has shown his athleticism and skill both as a receiver and runner. Romeo Doubs has also been a solid, reliable target to whom Love has been completing passes in big spots. On Thanksgiving though, it was Christian Watson who was the best out of the three.

Now Watson was projected to take a big jump from year one last year to year two this year, but early injuries and inconsistent play quickly hampered those expectations. That seemed to change though, as Watson



Packers wide receiver Christian Watson celebrates after scoring a touchdown against Detroit. The Packers need Watson to continue to perform as he has the past few weeks if they hope to turn things around enough to earn a playoff spot.

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EXPRESS

gashed the Detroit Lions for 94 yards on seven catches and one touchdown.

It was obvious that the game plan was to get Watson involved early, as on the very first play of the game, Love threw a 53-yard bomb downfield, which Watson won on a jump ball. That play was quickly followed up by an eight-yard completion to Watson. On the next drive, Watson saw two targets for two catches and 17 yards.

Getting Watson involved early was not the main reason why the Packers won this game, but it was definitely a winning factor. With Watson's speed and athleticism,

he should be able to command two defenders every time he steps on the field. There is not a corner in this league who can run deep with him, so defenses are going to have to give him safety attention. Once the defense gives him that attention, that opens up so much more for guys like Doubs and Reed to work the middle of the field, something that Packers have been successful doing in the past month.

"We continue to put that work in every week and build that chemistry," said Love. "Obviously Christian's got trust, and he is just going out there and making plays right

now. It was a big-time performance by him."

That trust is exactly what is going to continue to keep Watson engaged and effective in games. All year long, Love has talked about how he thinks Watson can beat anyone in one-on-one situations, but from a fan's perspective, that was looking dicey. Now, it is no secret that Watson has the talent to take over a game, something that he is probably going to need to do against the Kansas City Chiefs.

The Chiefs have been stingy against the pass this year, as they have given up just 1,708 yards through the air, which is good for second in the NFL. For Green Bay to break that pass defense, the offensive line is going to need to give Love time to set up deep shots to Watson. Once again, Love does not need to throw those bombs to Watson and can settle for other receivers replacing the spot of those safeties and corners who are running with Watson.

That is why it is so important to have your "speed" receivers produce. The No. 1 key in football is to stop the long play, and if that can't be done, it is going to be a long day for the defense.

Despite wins, questions persist

By JACOB WESTENDORF
Green & Gold Express

1. Is Christian Watson coming on as the team hoped?

At this point, there's no question that Christian Watson is not having the season that the Packers would have hoped for. One of the reasons the Packers did not pursue a veteran receiver in free agency was the belief they had in Watson and Romeo Doubs to lead the way in the receiver room.

By all accounts, both receivers have been helpful to the young pass catchers as they try and learn Matt LaFleur's offense.

The issue has been production, or lack thereof, on the field.

Watson had an excellent stretch last season where he finished the year with 611 yards, and he had a big performance on national TV against the Dallas Cowboys where he scored three touchdowns.

By the end of the season, he was the Packers' top receiver.

Thursday's game in Detroit could have been a turning point for him

much in the same way that the Dallas game was a season ago. The Packers' offense appears to be at its best when they run through Watson. He is still their most talented receiver.

Watson needs to deliver on those opportunities when his number is called.

He helped set the tone in Thursday's 29-22 win over the Detroit Lions with a 53-yard catch to start the day. That's the version of Watson the Packers need on a weekly basis moving forward.

2. Does a two-game win streak quiet the naysayers about Jordan Love?

For now, it should. This is what the Packers likely envisioned when they started the season with the most inexperienced group around Jordan Love in the history of the NFL.

Love had his struggles. There was a scenario that could have played out this season where Love was one-and-done as the Packers' starting quarterback.

That would have required an absolute disaster, but after consecutive losses to the Las Vegas Raiders

and Denver Broncos, it appeared the Packers were on their way to disaster. Rock bottom had to have been only scoring 10 points against the Vikings — and being largely uncompetitive in their own stadium.

Since then, Love has rebounded. For three consecutive weeks, you could have come out of the game saying Love has played the best game of his career.

That stretch includes a fourth-quarter comeback combined with a 300-yard passing day against the Chargers. Love may have topped that with his three touchdown performance on the road against the Lions.

The Packers were an eight-point underdog. They were truly not expected to win.

Love is proving Brian Gutekunst right and all of the naysayers wrong. It's hard to imagine the Packers not rewarding Love with a contract extension sooner rather than later.

3. What about the late round and undrafted rookies, like Malik Heath, Karl Brooks?

One of the pleasant surprises over the last two weeks is the emergence of Malik Heath.

Heath was one of the darlings of preseason and may have worked his way as high as fourth on the receiving depth chart.

That did not last long. Heath was a healthy scratch in the early portion of the season before surpassing Samori Toure on the depth chart. Toure has been active once since Heath effectively took his place, and that was due to an injury to Dontayvion Wicks.

Heath is a nice role player in the offense. His blocking abilities flashed immediately when he got to training camp.

Last week, he showed off his abilities as a pass catcher. He caught all four of his targets for 46 yards. That performance is not going to set any records, but the Packers finding use from an undrafted free agent is a big development at this point of the season.

On the defensive side of the ball, a sixth-round pick potentially has a claim to the best defensive lineman on the roster not named Kenny Clark.

When Jarran Reed and Dean Lowry were allowed to leave in free agency, the plan was for their snaps to go to TJ Slaton and Devonte Wyatt.

Slaton has had some nice mo-

ments in the run game. Wyatt has had some nice moments as a pass rusher.

In terms of big plays, however, Karl Brooks is the one who has made the most of his opportunities.

Brooks had a forced fumble in Thursday's win over Detroit. He has three sacks on the season and appears to be getting better as the year goes along.

4. What about the other areas of concern — Love throwing the long ball, and AJ Dillon and the running game?

Of course the Packers are not perfect. Two wins in a row covers up some of the issues they've had, but it's important to note that they still exist.

AJ Dillon and the ground game as a whole has struggled all season long. Some of that is attributed to Aaron Jones missing time with various ailments. Even when Jones has been healthy, however, the Packers have not had an individual rusher go over 100 yards on the season.

That's not what was expected when this team came together in late July for training camp. This offense was supposed to be built around a strong run game led by Jones and Dillon. That has not happened.

Dillon is now surrounded by players who were not in Green Bay prior to a week ago Tuesday.

The run game just is what it is at this point. It's hard to imagine it getting appreciably better before the end of the season.

Love's deep ball is improving, but there were some caveats in Thursday's win over the Lions.

Love's first pass of the day was a 53-yard completion to Christian Watson. Watson did well to adjust to a pass that was underthrown.

Later in the game, Love missed another deep pass to Watson, albeit under pressure.

Those are plays that the Packers need to start hitting. Whether its receivers making catches or Love hitting them in stride, they'll need more big plays down the stretch to make a postseason run.

5. Another missed extra point?

Anders Carlson looked to have shaken off his early season issues when he started the season strong. He did not miss a kick prior to the bye week.

That strong start has turned into a bit of a nightmare.

Carlson has missed an extra point



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in three straight games. He's missed a kick in every game except for one against the bye week.

The one week he didn't, Carlson missed the initial field goal before being given another opportunity thanks to a Vikings penalty.

Carlson is officially a problem at this point in the season. The Packers talked about weathering the storm with him, but they're at a point now where every point matters.

Missing a PAT could be the difference between going to the playoffs or sitting at home when the calendar turns to January.

Carlson rebounded nicely from the missed PAT and drilled a 43-yard field goal later in the game. The talent is evident, but as Andrew Brandt says, kickers are like lawyers, you never think about them until you need a good one.

The Packers are thinking about their kicker far too often.

6. How safe is defensive coordinator Joe Barry today?

Over the last 16 games, the Packers have given up an average of 19.5 points per game. Only one of those last 16 games have they allowed more than 25 points, which was Week 4 against Detroit.

For all the gnashing of teeth over



Romeo Doubs is tackled short of the end zone on a failed two-point conversion. Kicker Anders Carlson has missed an extra point kick in three straight games.

GREG MELLIS | GREEN & GOLD EXPRESS

Green Bay's defense, some of which is justified, they just held two high-powered offenses to 20 and 22 points, respectively.

Yes, the Chargers and Lions made

plenty of mistakes to aid the Packers in that way, but that's still impressive considering who they are playing at this point of the year.

The Packers entered their game

against the Chargers with all but one of their preferred starters in their nickel defensive back group on the shelf.

The same was true on Thursday against the Lions.

Rasul Douglas is in Buffalo. Darnell Savage is on injured reserve. Rudy Ford missed the last two games with an injury, as has Jaire Alexander.

That doesn't include Eric Stokes, a former first-round pick who has yet to play a single defensive snap this season.

The Packers' cornerback room is currently anchored by a rookie seventh-round pick (Carrington Valentine), a bargain-bin free agent (Keisean Nixon), and a practice squad player (Corey Ballentine).

Their safeties last week were a bargain-bin free agent (Jonathan Owens) and a seventh-round pick (Anthony Johnson Jr.).

If Joe Barry had a different reputation, he'd likely be garnering more praise than what he's currently getting from the fan base.

With some of the putrid offenses the Packers are set to face down the stretch, it's hard to imagine them performing poorly enough to let Barry go at the end of the season.

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GREEN BAY PACKERS

Player	#	Pos	HT	WT	Age	Exp	College
Jaire Alexander	23	CB	5-10	196	26	6	Louisville
Zayne Anderson	39	S	6-2	206	26	1	BYU
Corey Ballentine	35	CB	5-11	196	27	5	Washburn
Karl Brooks	94	DL	6-3	296	23	R	Bowling Green
De'Vondre Campbell	59	LB	6-4	232	30	8	Minnesota
Anders Carlson	17	K	6-5	219	25	R	Auburn
Kenny Clark	97	DL	6-3	314	28	8	UCLA
Sean Clifford	8	QB	6-2	218	25	R	Penn State
Brenton Cox Jr.	57	LB	6-4	250	23	R	Florida
Josiah Deguara	81	TE	6-2	238	26	4	Cincinnati
AJ Dillon	28	RB	6-0	247	25	4	Boston College
Romeo Doubs	87	WR	6-2	204	23	2	Nevada
Kingsley Enagbare	55	LB	6-4	258	23	2	South Carolina
Rudy Ford	20	S	6-0	210	29	7	Auburn
Rashan Gary	52	LB	6-5	277	25	5	Michigan
Malik Heath	18	WR	6-2	213	23	R	Mississippi
Elgton Jenkins	74	G/T	6-5	311	27	5	Mississippi State
Anthony Johnson Jr.	36	S	6-0	205	23	R	Iowa State
Aaron Jones	33	RB	5-9	208	28	7	Texas-El Paso
Caleb Jones	72	T	6-9	370	24	2	Indiana
Kyu Blu Kelly	24	CB	6-0	191	22	R	Stanford
Tucker Kraft	85	TE	6-5	259	23	R	South Dakota State
Jordan Love	10	QB	6-4	219	25	4	Utah State
Isaiah McDuffie	58	LB	6-1	227	24	3	Boston College
Josh Myers	71	C/G	6-5	310	25	3	Ohio State
Royce Newman	70	G/T	6-5	310	26	3	Mississippi
Yosh Nijman	73	T	6-7	314	27	4	Virginia Tech
Keisean Nixon	25	CB	5-10	200	26	5	South Carolina
Matt Orzech	42	LS	6-3	245	28	4	Azusa Pacific
Jonathan Owens	34	S	5-11	210	28	5	Missouri Western
Jayden Reed	11	WR	5-11	187	23	R	Michigan State
Sean Rhyan	75	G	6-5	321	23	2	UCLA
Robert Rochell	22	CB	6-0	193	25	3	Central Arkansas
Jon Runyan	76	G	6-4	307	26	4	Michigan
Ben Sims	89	TE	6-5	250	23	R	Baylor
T.J. Slaton	93	DL	6-4	330	26	3	Florida
Preston Smith	91	LB	6-5	265	31	9	Mississippi State
Patrick Taylor	27	RB	6-2	217	25	3	Memphis
Zach Tom	50	OL	6-4	304	24	2	Wake Forest
Samori Toure	83	WR	6-1	191	25	2	Nebraska
Carrington Valentine	37	CB	6-0	189	22	R	Kentucky
Lukas Van Ness	90	LB	6-5	272	22	R	Iowa
Quay Walker	7	LB	6-4	241	23	2	Georgia
Rasheed Walker	63	T	6-6	324	23	2	Penn State
Christian Watson	9	WR	6-4	208	24	2	North Dakota State
Kristian Welch	54	LB	6-3	240	25	4	Iowa
Daniel Whelan	19	P	6-5	216	24	1	UC Davis
Dontayvion Wicks	13	WR	6-1	206	22	R	Virginia
Eric Wilson	45	LB	6-1	230	29	7	Cincinnati
Colby Wooden	96	DL	6-4	273	22	R	Auburn
Devonte Wyatt	95	DL	6-3	304	25	2	Georgia
Reserve/Injured							
David Bakhtiari	69	T	6-4	310	32	11	Colorado
Tyler Davis	84	TE	6-4	252	26	4	Georgia Tech
Luke Musgrave	88	TE	6-6	253	23	R	Oregon State
Darnell Savage	26	S	5-11	198	26	5	Maryland
Eric Stokes	21	CB	6-0	194	24	3	Georgia
Luke Tenuta	78	T	6-8	314	24	2	Virginia Tech
Emanuel Wilson	31	RB	5-11	226	24	R	Fort Valley State Univ.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

Player	#	Pos	HT	WT	Age	Exp	College
Nick Allegretti	73	G	6-4	310	27	5	Illinois
Felix Anudike-Uzomah	97	DE	6-4	255	21	R	Kansas State
Blake Bell	81	TE	6-6	252	32	9	Oklahoma
Harrison Butker	7	K	6-4	199	28	7	Georgia Tech
Mike Caliendo	66	OL	6-4	301	26	1	Western Michigan
Leo Chenal	54	LB	6-3	250	23	2	Wisconsin
Jack Cochrane	43	LB	6-3	236	24	2	South Dakota
Chamarri Conner	27	DB	6-0	206	23	R	Virginia Tech
Bryan Cook	6	S	6-1	206	24	2	Cincinnati
Mike Danna	51	DE	6-2	257	25	4	Michigan
Matt Dickerson	93	DT	6-5	292	28	3	UCLA
Mike Edwards	21	S	5-10	205	27	5	Kentucky
Clyde Edwards-Helaire	25	RB	5-7	207	24	4	LSU
Neil Farrell	92	DE	6-4	325	25	2	LSU
Blaine Gabbert	9	QB	6-5	235	34	12	Missouri
Willie Gay	50	LB	6-1	243	25	4	Mississippi State
Noah Gray	83	TE	6-3	240	24	3	Duke
Mecole Hardman	12	WR	5-10	187	25	5	Georgia
Darius Harris	59	LB	6-2	238	27	4	Middle Tennessee State
Malik Herring	94	DE	6-3	275	26	3	Georgia
Creed Humphrey	52	C	6-4	302	24	3	Oklahoma
Richie James	17	WR	5-9	185	28	6	Middle Tennessee State
Cam Jones	44	LB	6-2	227	24	R	Indiana
Chris Jones	95	DT	6-6	310	29	8	Mississippi State
Nic Jones	31	CB	6-0	189	22	R	Ball State
George Karlaftis	56	DE	6-4	263	22	2	Purdue
Travis Kelce	87	TE	6-5	250	34	11	Cincinnati
Patrick Mahomes	15	QB	6-2	225	28	7	Texas Tech
Trent McDuffie	22	CB	5-11	193	23	2	Washington
Jerick McKinnon	1	RB	5-9	209	31	10	Georgia Southern
Skye Moore	24	WR	5-10	195	23	2	Western Michigan
Wanya Morris	64	OL	6-6	307	23	R	Oklahoma
Lucas Niang	77	T	6-6	315	25	3	TCU
Derrick Nnadi	91	DT	6-1	317	27	6	Florida State
Charles Omenihu	90	DE	6-5	280	26	5	Texas
Isiah Pacheco	10	RB	5-10	216	24	2	Rutgers
Justin Reid	20	S	6-1	207	26	6	Stanford
Rashee Rice	4	WR	6-1	204	23	R	SMU
Donovan Smith	79	T	6-6	338	30	9	Penn State
Trey Smith	65	G	6-6	321	24	3	Tennessee
L'Jarius Sneed	38	CB	6-1	192	26	4	Louisiana Tech
Jawaan Taylor	74	T	6-5	330	26	5	Florida
BJ Thompson	53	DE	6-6	243	24	R	Stephen F. Austin
Joe Thuney	62	G	6-5	304	31	8	N.C. State
Kadarius Toney	19	WR	6-0	193	24	3	Florida
Tommy Townsend	5	P	6-1	191	27	4	Florida
Drue Tranquill	23	LB	6-2	234	28	5	Notre Dame
Marquez Valdes-Scantling	11	WR	6-4	206	29	6	University of South Florida
Jaylen Watson	35	CB	6-2	197	25	2	Washington State
Justin Watson	84	WR	6-2	215	27	6	Pennsylvania
Tereshawn Wharton	98	DT	6-1	280	25	4	Missouri S&T
Joshua Williams	2	CB	6-3	193	24	2	Fayetteville State Univ.
James Winchester	41	LS	6-3	209	34	9	Oklahoma
Reserve/Injured							
Nick Bolton	32	LB	5-11	237	23	3	Missouri
Jody Fortson	88	TE	6-4	226	27	3	Valdosta State
Nazeem Johnson	13	S	5-10	199	25	2	Marshall
Prince Tega Wanogho	76	T	6-5	308	26	3	Auburn
Reserve/Suspended by Commissioner							
Justyn Ross	8	WR	6-4	210	23	2	Clemson

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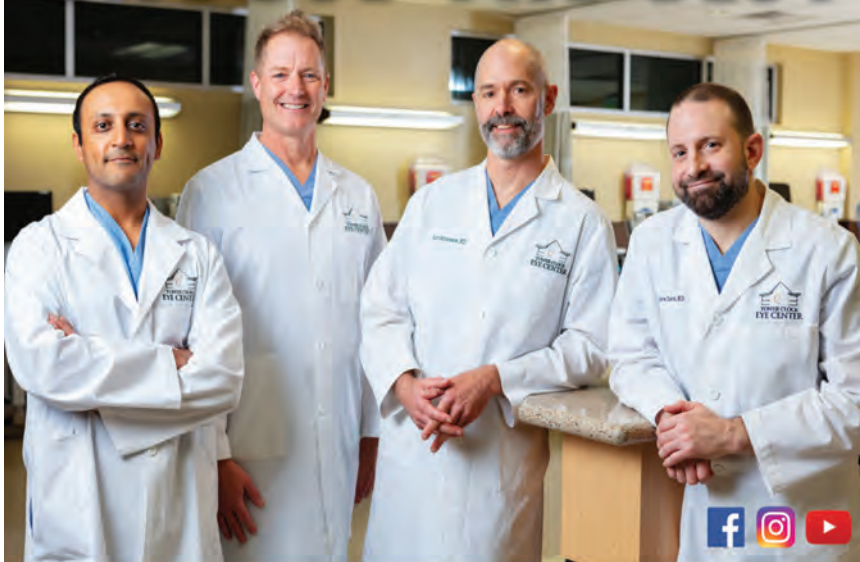
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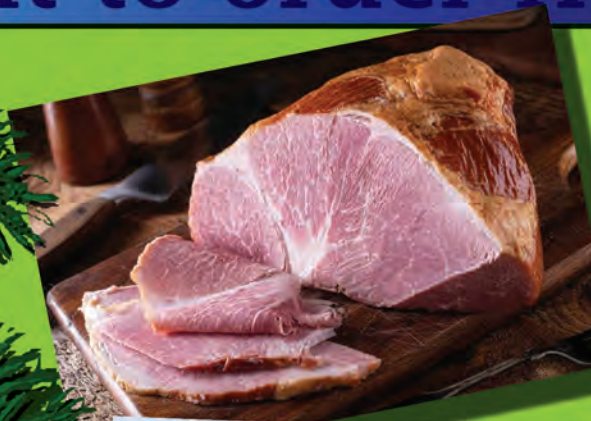
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