

Defense could have big day against Cleveland

Packers need to start strong on offensive side

BY JACOB WESTENDORF
Green & Gold Express

Green Bay will travel to Cleveland to take on the Browns at noon Sept. 21. **Packers' offense vs. Browns' defense**

Green Bay's offense has been a mixed bag through two games to start the year.

They've looked unstoppable at times and inept at others.

Jordan Love has yet to turn the ball over on the young season. He's thrown multiple touchdown passes in each of the first two games.

He looks much healthier and in total command of Green Bay's offense in his third season as a starter.

Tucker Kraft is coming off a monster game in Green Bay, the first 100-yard game of his professional career. The Packers came into the season saying they wanted to feature him more, and they have certainly done that through two games, most notably the Sept. 11 win over the Commanders.

Kraft has one touchdown in each game this year and is the team's leading receiver.

The rest of the pass catchers have been good by committee. There is no receiver who has really separated himself in the team's competitive situation at the position.

Romeo Doubs, Dontayvion Wicks and Matthew Golden have all found ways to be involved.

Golden just missed two explosive plays, with Love underthrowing him once and overthrowing him another time.

Golden's time will come. He still looks the part as a receiver; there



Green Bay Packers defensive end Micah Parsons (1) and linebacker Edgerrin Cooper (56) wrap up Washington Commanders quarterback Jayden Daniels (5) on Sept. 11 in Green Bay. The Packers won 27-18 to improve to 2-0 on the season. AP PHOTO/JEFFREY PHELPS

have just been limited opportunities thus far.

The offensive line could be in makeshift mode for a second consecutive week depending on the health of Aaron Banks and Zach Tom, who both missed the last game due to an ankle and oblique injury, respectively.

Darian Kinnard and Anthony Belton rotated at right tackle in Tom's absence, while Jordan Morgan started at left guard for Banks.

Whoever is blocking for Love better have his

chinstrap buckled extra tight, because one of the best defensive players in football is coming to face off against them Sept. 21.

Myles Garrett was locked into a contract dispute this offseason and, before Micah Parsons became available via trade, there was some speculation the Packers could make a play for Garrett if the Browns could not come to terms with their All-Pro.

Instead, Garrett and the Browns came to terms on a contract, and now he'll face the Packers in Week 3.

Garrett already has 3.5 sacks on the young season, with 1.5 coming against Lamar Jackson in last week's loss to the Baltimore Ravens.

He's as good as it gets, and the Packers are going to need to have a plan for him regardless of who is suited up for them. Cleveland's defense was solid against Joe Burrow in the opener, giving up only 17 points, but struggled against Baltimore's offense.

Mason Graham was the fifth overall pick, and he'll start on the interior lining

up next to Garrett.

Denzel Ward and Greg Newsome form an interesting cornerback tandem, with Grant Delpit as a nice player in the safety group.

This still should be a group the Packers can exploit offensively but not a group to be taken lightly.

Packers' defense vs. Browns' offense

Year 2 of Jeff Hafley is off to a roaring start. Green Bay is fresh off dominant performances against two of the best offenses in football from a season ago.

If you needed to feel

any better about Green Bay's defense, the Detroit Lions hung 52 points on the Chicago Bears, after only being able to muster 13 against the Packers.

Washington's offense was held to its lowest yardage output since Jayden Daniels became the starting quarterback a season ago.

Green Bay's defense has had four sacks in each of the first two weeks and this week should be primed for more.

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Green Bay Packers tight end Tucker Kraft celebrates with fans after catching a touchdown pass during the second half against the Washington Commanders on Sept. 11 in Green Bay. AP PHOTO/MATT LUDTKE

Kraft lights up Thursday Night Football

Tight end records first 100-yard receiving game in career

LUKE REIMER
Green & Gold Express

It was a career night for Tucker Kraft as the Green Bay Packers jumped to 2-0 on the season after defeating the Washington Commanders 27-18 on Sept. 11 in Green Bay.

Kraft finished the game with six receptions, totaling 124 yards and one

touchdown.

The tight end led both teams in receiving in this one, but to take it one step further, this was Kraft's first 100-yard receiving performance and in turn the highest receiving total of his career.

This was the first time a Packers tight end registered 100 receiving yards in a game since Jimmy

Graham did so in 2018.

A big chunk of Kraft's receiving yards came on Green Bay's first scoring drive of the game in the first quarter. After rookie Matthew Golden was tackled on the Packers' 4-yard line, Jordan Love and the offense stared down a 96-yard field to score a touchdown. On the third play of the drive, Love

surveyed the field before finding a wide-open Kraft streaking down the seam, eventually coming away with a 52-yard gain. That drive ended with a Romeo Doubs 5-yard touchdown reception.

"Hopefully I can keep stacking games like that," said Kraft of his perfor-

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KEYS TO THE GAME

Packers need to bury Browns early

BY JACOB WESTENDORF
Green & Gold Express

The Green Bay Packers are off to as good of a start as they could have hoped for. When the schedule was announced in April, the Packers and those around them likely would have settled for a 1-1 start with two games coming against NFC playoff contenders.

Of course, the Packers have done better than that. They have not just won, they've been dominant through two weeks — winning both of their games by two scores.

This week will be different.

For one, they'll be on the road, traveling to Cleveland for the first away game of the year.

The other difference is that the Browns were not an AFC playoff team a year ago. They are not expected to be a playoff team this year. They're 0-2 on the season and are coming off a blowout loss to the Baltimore Ravens.

The Packers have a prime opportunity to get to 3-0, and here are the keys to doing just that:

1. Myles Garrett
The Cleveland Browns do not have a lot of great players, but they do have one great one on the defensive side of the ball. Myles Garrett is on track to be fitted for a gold jacket when his playing career ends. After an offseason contract dispute, Garrett



Green Bay Packers wide receiver Romeo Doubs (87) catches a touchdown pass as Washington Commanders cornerback Mike Sainristil (0) defends during the first half Sept. 11 in Green Bay.

AP PHOTO/MATT LUTKKE

agreed to a contract extension to keep him in Cleveland for what will likely be the rest of his career. One issue in Green Bay currently is the health of their offensive line. Aaron Banks is injured and missed the Washington game. Ditto for Zach Tom, who missed the game with a torn oblique muscle.

Coach Matt LaFluer said he'd give the two guys all the way up to game time for whether they'd be able to play, but it did not sound like either one was close. If Tom cannot go, Darian Kinnard and Anthony Belton were in rotation a week ago, and they'll have their work cut out for

them. The Packers used a bunch of two tight end sets against Washington and likely will need to do the same against Cleveland to make sure they keep Garrett under control. **2. Sound the alarm** It's a small complaint, but no doubt one that Jeff

Hafley is talking about through the first two games. Hafley said his goal was for his team to lead the league in forced fumbles and takeaways. When they do take the ball away, the Packers have an alarm they'll sound as the turnover alarm. Through two games,

the Packers have just one takeaway, with Evan Williams picking off Jared Goff in the season opener. This week, there will be some opportunities to take the ball away. Joe Flacco is Cleveland's starting quarterback. Flacco has had a penchant for putting the ball in harm's way during his career. He threw one interception against the Ravens.

The Packers' secondary should be at full strength with Nate Hobbs making a cameo in the team's game against Washington.

They'll need to catch the ball when it is thrown to them.

3. Avoid the lull
Again, complaining about a 2-0 start can feel nitpicky, but the Packers have had some struggles during their 2-0 start.

Most of those struggles have come on offense. In the 27-18 win over the Commanders, the Packers led by two scores for a majority of the game but failed to deliver a decisive blow early.

As a result, the Commanders pulled within one score early in the fourth quarter.

The Packers, ultimately, were able to put together a drive that ended in a touchdown pass to Tucker Kraft to put the game out of reach.

The reality is the game should have been out of reach much sooner than that. Against an inferior opponent, the Packers need to look to bury them early.

Packers, Browns six pack of what-ifs

BY JACOB WESTENDORF
Green & Gold Express

The Green Bay Packers will take their show on the road after an impressive 2-0 start with wins over NFC contenders at Lambeau Field.

This week, they'll be guests of the Cleveland Browns, who are looking to get off the mat after losing their second consecutive game to start the season.

The goal this week is a little different. The team they're facing is not as good, so they'll need to learn not to play with their food.

Here's a six-pack worth of thoughts as the Packers head to Cleveland.

 **1. Clash of the Titans**
When these two teams face off, it could represent a bit of a passing of the torch in a way. The Cleveland Browns

have one of the best pass rushers in all of football with Myles Garrett.

The Packers recently traded for a guy like that with Micah Parsons bringing his talent to Green Bay.

Both players have been incredibly impactful during their careers — and to start this season.

Garrett has 3.5 sacks on the season, with at least 1.5 in each of the first two games.

Parsons has been playing with a limited workload due to a lack of practice time in the offseason. Despite that, he has at least 0.5 sacks in each game, and he had a whopping eight pressures against Washington.

This week, they'll never be on the field at the same time, but it will be something worth watching.

 **2. Kraft YAC and Cheese**
Tucker Kraft had his best game as

a professional in the Sept. 11 win over Washington. He is one of the best players in football with the ball in his possession. Of his 124 receiving yards, 74 of them came after the football was in his hands.

He also had a career-long 57-yard reception that led to the team's first touchdown.

Getting him involved against a linebacker corps that struggles in coverage will be paramount for this week's game.

 **3. Wildcat?**
One of the wrinkles the Packers threw in last week was the expansion of Savion Williams' role.

Williams had one catch on a pop pass in the season opener, but he was largely otherwise nondescript in his NFL debut. His second game, however, showed some of the juice the Packers likely saw when they drafted him in the third

round. Williams played snaps at receiver, running back and wildcat quarterback in college. He went to his roots as a wildcat quarterback on Sept. 11, taking a direct snap from Elgton Jenkins and rushing for 16 yards before falling down. Had he not slipped, he might have scored. Williams can create some easy offense by simply getting the ball in his hands, and the Packers may look to do more of that this week.

 **4. Sitting duck**
Last week, the Packers faced what Preston Smith used to call the fastest chicken in the yard with no fence to contain him. Jayden Daniels is an excellent runner, and the Packers were able to hold him down as a runner.

This week, they'll face someone who is not a runner. Joe Flacco has never been overly mobile during

his career. He's less mobile than he's ever been as he continues to age.

The Packers' pass rush has been excellent through two weeks and will face an offensive line that has allowed two sacks in each of the first two games. If Green Bay's pass rush turns up the heat, Flacco won't be able to escape.

 **5. Old friend.**
Punters are people, too, or something like that. One former Packer who will take the field against them this week is Cory Bojorquez.

Bojorquez lasted one season in Green Bay and started off well before tailing off down the stretch of the 2021 season.

When Maurice Drayton was fired after the disastrous showing during the season, Bojorquez was replaced with Pat O'Donnell.

The Packers now have stability with Daniel Whel-

an in the kicking game.

 **6. Jayden Reed**
Who is going to replace Jayden Reed is a two-fold question.

The answer at wide receiver is built in. Matthew Golden, Dontayvion Wicks and Romeo Doubs have all been solid to start the season.

The Packers have also leaned on their two tight end package early in the year.

The bigger question might be: Who is returning punts?

Golden and Keisean Nixon were the answers Sept. 11, but with a full week of practice and preparation, the Packers may go in another direction.

Mecole Hardman could be a candidate for a practice squad call-up, or a signing to the Packers' roster to take over Reed's roster spot when he is placed on injured reserve.

PREVIEW, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Cleveland’s offensive line has had its struggles; Joe Flacco was sacked twice and had a fumble returned for a touchdown in Week 2’s loss to the Ravens.

After facing Daniels last week and having to chase him all over the field, the Packers’ front should likely relish the opportunity to face a quarterback who is more apt to stand in the pocket.

They should have a full workload ready for Micah Parsons, who has been everything the team could have asked for and more through his first two games. He was dominant against Washington, with eight pressures and 0.5 sacks.

He was not alone. Rashan Gary and Devonte Wyatt have a sack in each of the first two games. Lukas Van Ness has looked

better, and the Packers are more than willing to send Edgerrin Cooper and Quay Walker from the second level if they need to create pressure.

They should have their whole secondary ready for this week’s game after Nate Hobbs played in limited fashion against Washington.

On the other side of the ball, it’s Flacco running the show for Cleveland’s offense.

The Browns are in rebuilding mode, but they do have some weapons in their offense. Jerry Jeudy is a former first-round pick whom the Browns acquired via trade. David Njoku can cause some problems as a tight end.

Their run game is spear-headed by Jerome Ford and second-round pick Quinshon Judkins.

Judkins made his NFL debut on Sept. 14 with 61 yards on 10 carries. He should be able to handle a heavier workload another week removed from his off-season issues that kept him out of training camp.

The Browns have yet to score more than 17 points in a game this season. They have really struggled on offense in the early going.

Special Teams

Green Bay’s special teams was pretty disastrous in the win over the Commanders after having a strong debut to the season against Detroit.

Some of that could be attributed to missing Bo Melton and Zayne Anderson, two of the team’s core players.

They still gave up an explosive return in both the kicking and punting game, and Brandon McManus

missed a field goal.

The punt return game is in flux with Jayden Reed down for the next 6-8 weeks due to a collarbone injury. Matthew Golden and Keisean Nixon both took reps there last week, so it will be interesting to see how the Packers choose to navigate the Reed injury from here.

Presumably, Reed will be placed on injured reserve, which could open a roster spot for Mecole Hardman, who has plenty of experience as a returner from his days in Kansas City.

Cleveland’s return game is headed by running back Jerome Ford and undrafted rookie Isaiah Bond out of Texas.

Andre Szmyt is a rookie and made all three of his kicks last week against Baltimore.



0 Matthew Golden.....WR	0 Greg Newsome II.....CB
1 Micah Parsons.....DL	2 DeAndre Carter.....WR
2 Malik Willis.....QB	3 Jerry Jeudy.....WR
7 Quay Walker.....LB	5 Rayshawn Jenkins.....S
8 Josh Jacobs.....RB	8 Dillon Gabriel.....QB
10 Jordan Love.....QB	9 Grant Delpit.....S
11 Jayden Reed.....WR	10 Quinshon Judkins.....RB
13 Dontayvion Wicks.....WR	12 Shedeur Sanders.....QB
16 Bo Melton.....CB	13 Corey Bojorquez.....P
17 Brandon McManus.....K	15 Joe Flacco.....QB
18 Malik Heath.....WR	16 Isaiah Bond.....WR
19 Daniel Whelan.....P	17 Jereome Baker.....LB
20 Javon Bullard.....S	19 Cedric Tillman.....WR
21 Nate Hobbs.....CB	20 Jarrick
23 Emanuel Wilson.....RB	Bernard-Converse.....CB
24 Carrington Valentine....CB	21 Denzel Ward.....CB
25 Keisean Nixon.....CB	22 Dylan Sampson.....RB
27 Kitan Oladapo.....S	23 Damontae Kazee.....FS
29 Xavier McKinney.....S	25 Andre Szmyt.....K
30 Chris Brooks.....RB	26 Myles Harden.....CB
31 Nick Niemann.....LB	29 Cameron Mitchell.....CB
33 Evan Williams.....S	30 Devin Bush.....LB
36 Kamal Hadden.....CB	31 Donovan McMillon.....S
39 Zayne Anderson.....S	33 Ronnie Hickman.....S
42 Matt Orzech.....LS	34 Jerome Ford.....RB
50 Zach Tom.....OL	35 Raheim Sanders.....RB
52 Rashan Gary.....DL	42 Easton
55 Kingsley Enagbare.....DL	Mascarenas-Arno.Id.....LB
56 Edgerrin Cooper.....LB	43 Mohamoud Diabate.....LB
58 Isaiah McDuffie.....LB	44 Harold Fanin Jr.....TE
59 Ty’Ron Hopper.....LB	49 Carson Schwesinger.....LB
63 Rasheed Walker.....T	50 Rex Sunahara.....LS
65 Aaron Banks.....G	51 Mike Hall Jr.....DT
67 Donovan Jennings.....G/T	55 Ethan Pocic.....C
70 Darian Kennard.....T/G	56 Luke Wypler.....C
71 Anthony Belton.....T	57 Isaiah McGuire.....DE
74 Elgton Jenkins.....C/G	70 Zak Zinter.....G
75 Sean Rhyan.....G	71 Cornelius Lucas.....T
77 Jordan Morgan.....T/G	72 KT Leveston.....T
83 Savion Williams.....WR	74 Teven Jenkins.....G
85 Tucker Kraft.....TE	75 Joel Bitonio.....G
86 John FitzPatrick.....TE	77 Wyatt Teller.....G
87 Romeo Doubls.....WR	78 Jack Conklin.....T
88 Luke Musgrave.....TE	79 Dawand Jones.....T
89 Ben Sims.....TE	80 Jamari Thrash.....WR
90 Lukas Van Ness.....DL	85 David Njoku.....TE
91 Warren Brinson.....DL	86 Blake Whiteheart.....TE
93 Nazir Stackhosue.....DL	90 Joe Tryon-Shoyinka.....DE
94 Karl Brooks.....DL	91 Alex Wright.....DE
95 Devonte Wyatt.....DL	93 Shelby Harris.....DT
96 Colby Wooden.....DL	94 Mason Graham.....DT
99 Barryn Sorrell.....DL	95 Myles Garrett.....DE
	96 Maliek Collins.....DT
	98 Ardin Huntington.....DT
	99 Cameron Thomas.....DE

KRAFT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mance. “It is the first time that I have ever gotten over 100 yards including college, so I am feeling it now — you just tackled that many more times.”

Along with Kraft’s big day, it was another dominant performance from Green Bay’s defensive unit in this game.

Washington, which made it to the NFC Championship game last season, was held to 230 total yards. Quarterback Jayden Daniels threw for 200 on 24-of-42 passes and two touchdowns.

It was Washington tight end Zach Ertz who led the Commanders in receiving, as he totaled 64 yards and a touchdown on six receptions. Deebo Samuel was the other recipient of Daniels’ touchdown passes, finishing the game with 44 yards on seven receptions.

As it did in the team’s first game of the season against the Detroit Lions, the Packers defense excelled against the run. The Commanders were only able to muster 51 rushing yards on 19 attempts.

“We came out and did it again — played consistently,” said Packers defensive lineman Micah Parsons, on how the defense built upon the week one victory. “We gave up things we did not want to, some more points than we wanted to, but we made (Washington) earn everything, and that is just important.”

As for Green Bay’s offense, Love registered another solid game in 2025, as he completed 19-of-31 passes for 292 yards and two touchdowns. With Kraft having the big game for the receivers and tight ends, Dontayvion Wicks finished second on the team in receiving, totaling 44 yards on four receptions. Malik Heath added another 37 yards, while Luke Musgrave recorded 32 yards.

In the running game, Josh Jacobs led the Packers, taking 23 carries for 84 yards and one touchdown. Jacobs’ second-quarter touchdown extended his franchise record of most consecutive regular season games with a rushing

touchdowns to 10.

Wide receiver Savion Williams was the team’s second-leading rusher as he finished the game with 24 yards on two carries. The exciting play from Williams came when he took the snap on a sweep to the left. He faked a reverse to Love who was running to the right and picked up 16 yards.

Even without starting offensive linemen Zach Tom and Aaron Banks, who were both out due to injury, things seemed to click for the Packers offense for the most part.

Those successes may take a little halt in the near future though, as wide receiver Jayden Reed was knocked out of the game with a shoulder injury on a touchdown reception that was called back due to a holding penalty. Packers head coach Matt LaFleur said in his post-game press conference that Reed left the game after breaking his collarbone.

A broken collarbone can take anywhere from six to 12 weeks to heal, so it

is likely that Green Bay is without one of its top pass catchers for a majority of the regular season.

“He is going to miss a lot of time,” said LaFleur. “Certainly I would expect him back at some point this season, but obviously it is a big blow to us. He is a guy that is a catalyst for our offense and our football team quite frankly. Fortunately for us, I feel like we have a pretty deep wide receiver room and there are going to be opportunities there for other guys to step up and take advantage of.”

Without Reed and Christian Watson for the foreseeable future, players like Matthew Golden, who did not record a catch in the team’s Week 2 game, and Luke Musgrave have an opportunity to make a major impact.

By way of its defense, Green Bay looks like one of the better teams in the NFL through the first two weeks and will look to continue that momentum before matching up with the Cleveland Browns on Sept. 21.

GREEN BAY PACKERS AT CLEVELAND BROWNS

TIME AND DATE: Noon on Sunday, Sept. 21

LOCATION: Huntington Bank Field

TV: FOX

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

2025 RECORDS: Packers 2-0. Browns 0-2.

HISTORY: The Packers lead the all-time series 14-7 over the Browns, with the most recent meeting coming in 2021 on Christmas Day at Lambeau Field.

Aaron Rodgers set the franchise record for career touchdown passes that day, as the Packers escaped with a 24-22 victory. The last time the two teams met in Cleveland was in 2017, when the

Packers rallied late to win over the eventual 0-16 Cleveland Browns.

The most famous meeting, however, was in 1966, when the Packers won the first of three consecutive NFL championships, with a 23-12 victory at Lambeau Field over the Browns.

COACHES: Packers, Matt LaFleur (sixth season, 69-33). Browns, Kevin Stefanski, (sixth season, 40-46).

PACKERS SCHEDULE

Sunday, Sept. 7, vs. Detroit Lions, W 27-13

Thursday, Sept. 11, vs. Washington Commanders, W 27-18

Sunday, Sept. 21, at Cleveland Browns, noon

Sunday, Sept. 28, at Dallas Cowboys, 7:20 p.m.

Bye Week

Sunday, Oct. 12, vs. Cincinnati Bengals, 3:25 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 19, at Arizona

Cardinals, 3:25 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 26, at Pittsburgh Steelers, 7:20 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 2, vs. Carolina Panthers, noon

Monday, Nov. 10, vs. Philadelphia Eagles, 7:15 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 16, at New York Giants, noon

Sunday, Nov. 23, vs. Minnesota Vikings, noon

Thursday, Nov. 27, at Detroit Lions, noon

Sunday, Dec. 7, vs. Chicago Bears, noon

Sunday, Dec. 14, at Denver Broncos, 3:25 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 20, at Chicago Bears, TBA

Saturday, Dec. 27, vs. Baltimore Ravens, TBA

Sunday, Jan. 4, at Minnesota Vikings, TBA

NFL SCHEDULE

Thursday, Sept. 18

Miami and Buffalo, 7:15 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 21

Cincinnati and Minnesota, noon

Houston at Jacksonville, noon

Indianapolis at Tennessee, noon

Las Vegas at Washington, noon

LA Rams at Philadelphia, noon

Atlanta at Carolina, noon

Pittsburgh and New England, noon

Green Bay at Cleveland, noon

NY Jets at Tampa Bay, noon

Denver at LA Chargers, 3:05 p.m.

New Orleans at Seattle, 3:05 p.m.

Dallas at Chicago, 3:25 p.m.

Arizona at San Francisco, 3:25 p.m.

Kansas City at NY Giants, 7:20 p.m.

Monday, Sept. 22

Detroit and Baltimore, 7:15 p.m.

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MOMENTS

GREEN BAY PACKERS 27, WASHINGTON COMMANDERS 18



Green Bay Packers tight end Tucker Kraft (85) runs after making a catch against the Washington Commanders on Sept. 11 in Green Bay. Kraft finished the game with six receptions for 124 yards and one touchdown in Green Bay's 27-18 win. Kraft is coming off his best season in 2024, as he posted 707 yards and seven touchdowns from 50 receptions to surpass his rookie season stats. And now, after his quiet Week 1 outing (16 yards, one touchdown), he reminded everyone that of all of the Packers' offensive weapons, his name still needs to be mentioned as one to watch.

AP PHOTO/MATT LUDTKE

TUCKER KRAFT EXPLODES

TIGHT END NETS FIRST 100-YARD GAME OF HIS CAREER

HO-CHUNK



GAMING

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