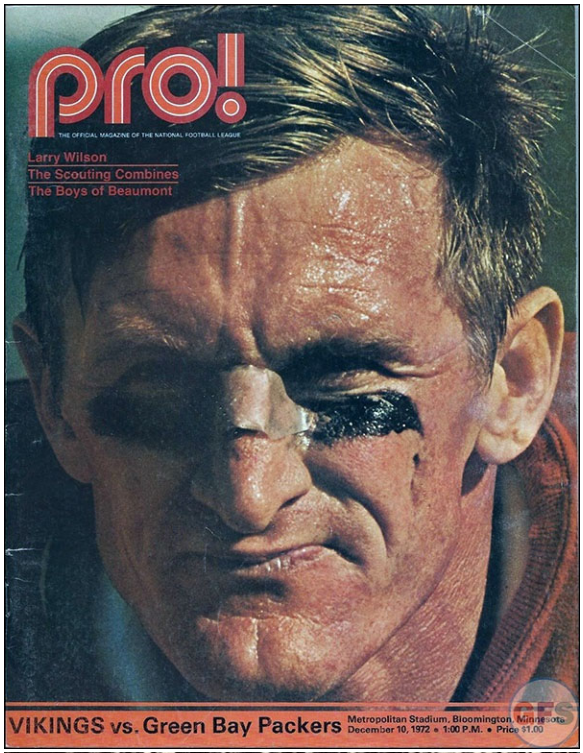
Green Bay Packers (9-4) 23, Minnesota Vikings (7-6) 7
Sunday December 10th 1972 (at Minnesota)

Central Division Champions

Packers End Viking Reign 23-7

GAME RECAP (GREEN BAY PRESS-GAZETTE)

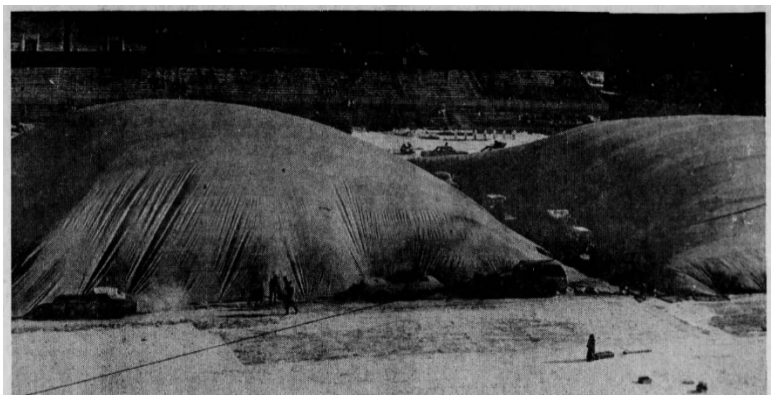




(MINNESOTA) - Still attired in his white "long johns," apparel which had helped shield him from 18-below-zero chill factor Sunday afternoon, Dan Devine weighed the question with care as the sounds of celebration reverberated around him in the Packer dressing room. "No, I can't say it is ahead of my schedule," he said with meticulous emphasis. "We expected a lot – we expected to have a good football team this year. So I can't say it's ahead of my schedule. "But I can say," Devine appended with a wink, "that it is ahead of a lot of people's schedules." "It," if formal explanation is needed, was the NFC Central Division championship his Packers had just wrested from the stunned Minnesota Vikings in frosty Metropolitan Stadium, a development which is going to leave most of the nation's pro football pundits with faintly crimson complexions in view of their off-season writeoff of the green and gold. And that is not to mention the Vikings, who obviously did not have this kind of thing in their "schedule" either. Poetically, there was nothing remotely spurious about the Packers 23-7 conquest of the previously invincible Purple Gang, shattered by 17-point third quarter which impaled the Norsemen on their own sword and abruptly ended a 4-year reign as Central champions. It also brought the Packers their first division title since 1967 and assured them a berth in the NFC playoffs against the Eastern Division champion Redskins, a confrontation which will follow the Pack's regular season finale at New Orleans next Sunday. Devine, who has transformed the Packers from a division doormat into a champion within just two years, was patently pleased they had demonstrated their right to the crown with explosive emphasis. "These (Sunday's resounding victory, which followed a 33-7 rout of Detroit a week earlier) were two ball games we had to win. Nobody wanted to back into it. We welcomed the opportunity to play Detroit and Minnesota back to back." He suggested the devastating second half turnabout, which came without warning after the Vikings had nursed a 7-0 lead into the intermission, had been largely a case of mind over matter. "You can say 'forget it' in the dressing room after we failed to score in the final minutes of the first half," Devine said, "but we had to talk positively. I've never been one to second guess, to replay that last golf shot. We had to get on the board, and we had to move the ball. That's just what we talked about at halftime. "What we did in the second half is the sign of a good football team," he acknowledged, "and one that wants to win. That's why we came. "We played better than we did in the first half. We got the key defensive plays to put us into field position." Bud Grant, the Vikings' rangy and stoical leader, agreed in substance.

'A GOOD TEAM'

"The Packers are a good team," he said. "We give them a fumble and an interception and they turn both into scores. You can't do that against a good team. We had our chances. "Unfortunately, this year, the fumbles, the interceptions and penalties have gone against us." Although such items later were to figure prominently in the Vikings' demise, the tide actually began to turn when MacArthur Lane cut back for a 37-yard, "against-the-grain" ramble that carried to Minnesota's 38 on the third play of the second half, with the aid of big blocks by Ken



Heat Treatment - It was bitterly zero weather at kickoff time in Bloomington, but the playing field had been kept in reasonably good condition. For several days, warm air was forced under huge tarpaulins that covered the gridiron.



Happiness is clinching the Central Division title, and Green Bay Coach Dan Devine was all smiles yesterday. Leland Glass signifies where Pack

Bowman and Bill Lueck. Chester Marcol, who earlier had been short from 45 yards in the second quarter, subsequently converted that breakthrough into a 36-yard field goal at 4:10 of the third quarter and the ice, at long last, had been broken. Marcol also the author of 42 and 10-yard bullseyes in the second half, explained, "I hit that first one pretty well, and it went straight. But the ball doesn't carry very far in this cold air. I think maybe 42 yards was the limit today - and then you had to hit it very well. With the wind, maybe 47 yards." Battered but exuberant, the versatile Lane explained the genesis of the Packers second half revival. "We had to score and we had to move the ball and eat up the clock," he explained. "And John Brockington ran fantastic. There were a lot of stunts up front (by the Vikings), but we overcame them." Improved footwork also had contributed," Lane said. "My old reliable shoes came through," he said, holding aloft a pair with blue, rubber cleats. "I changed to them at halftime. I think everybody did. The cold? It bothered us as much as it bothered them. We all had to play in it. My hands didn't even get cold for a while." Though Lane himself emerged with 99 yards in 19 attempts, Brockington indeed had been "fantastic" in that second half surge, amassing 81 of his 114 yards in those last 30 minutes. Almost lost in the championship shuffle was the fact that en route, he became the first runner in National Football League history to rush for 1,000 yards in each of his first two pro seasons. "It actually started to come for us before halftime," Brockington said. "In the second quarter, we moved the ball well. We stalled on the 3-yard-line just before the first half ended, but that drive gave us the confidence we could move it in the second half. Once the offense had demonstrated its mobility, the defense had to prove it could assist with the big play - and it did, with heartwarming dispatch.

JOLTS THE BALL

On the second Viking play following Marcol's first field goal, explosive Al Matthews tackle jolted the ball from the arms of Bill Brown, who had just been the recipient of a Fran Tarkenton pass. The ever vigilant Freddie Carr scooped it up and stormed 27 yards down the sidelines to the Minnesota 28, shedding tacklers en route. "I finally got one," said Carr with fervor, "and it couldn't have come at a better time. Both Matthews and I were converging on Brown and when Al hit him, the ball popped loose." Freddie attributed his pick-up to some sound advice. "The coach just said at halftime if we kept hitting hard, we'd come up with the ball. He said we'd just have to keep hitting. We didn't change anything. We just tried to play our ball game - what the coaches told us to play." Although the Packers didn't know it then, the Central Division title was sealed six plays later when Scott Hunter vaulted over the pile into the end zone from the one-yard-line, sending Green Bay into the lead for the first time. The pattern of victory began to emerge on the ensuing series, when free safety Jim Hill put a crushing hit on receiver John Gilliam just as a Tarkenton pass arrived. Willie Buchanon, an exceedingly handy young man to have around, picked off the deflection and threaded his way 25 yards to the Minnesota 24 and the Vikings quickly found them- selves with their backs to the wall again. "I was surprised to see that ball coming to me," Buchanan smiled. "But Jim hit him so hard, the ball just popped out. We were in a zone on the play and I had a deep coverage. All of the other receivers went away. I have to be as deep as the deepest receiver, in that situation, so when Tarkenton threw, I just went over that way (to Gilliam's area)...I knew we had our momentum going after that interception. Our defense just went out there and played some ball - like we should be playing. We were aggressive, we flew around and we made the big plays." Aided by an interference call on Bobby Bryant at the 9, the Packers had it home in four plays, Lane barging into the end zone behind Dick Himes' block at 13:04 of the third quarter. Buchanon later pilfered a second Tarkenton pass, a "bomb" intended for Dave Osborn, on the final play of the third quarter and Ken Ellis waylaid another in the fourth, both of which led to Marcol field goals and the Packers' final points. Neither could be classified as entirely accidental, middle linebacker Jim Carter suggested. "Our plan was to cut off the run, make them pass and then intercept," he said. "We wanted to get Tarkenton to pass and then pick 'em off with our great deep backs - Willie, Kenny, Jimmy and Al - we figured we'd get the ball. "At the same time, we felt we had to stop Tarkenton because he's so dangerous. He reads things real well. He read me a couple of times real well today when I was in a man-to-man situation. Our plan to keep him from running?" Carter echoed. Chuckling, he replied, "Tackle him." When the dressing room din had somewhat subsided, it remained for Brockington and Devine to put the day in perspective. "We've

been talking about this ever since July, when we were doing those doggone up-downs on the grass," Brock said with a reflective smile. "But those drills are paying off now." Devine put it another way, with quiet pride. "We deserve the championship," he said. "This is a very receptive team. The players have done everything I've asked, and to the best of their ability."

GREEN BAY - 0 0 17 6 - 23
MINNESOTA - 0 7 0 0 - 7

	GREEN BAY	MINNESOTA
First downs	18	9
Rush-yards-TDs	45-214-2	21-54-1
Comp-Att-Yd-TD-INT	14-7-74-0-1	21-11-118-0-3
Sacked-Yards Lost	3-18	4-28
Net Passing Yards	56	90
Total yards	270	144
Fumbles-lost	3-1	4-1
Turnovers	4	4
Yards Penalized	4-74	4-30

SCORING

2nd – MIN – Stu Voight, 1-yard run (Fred Cox kick) MIN 7-0
3rd – GB – Chester Marcol, 36-yard field goal MIN 7-3
3rd – GB – Scott Hunter, 1-yard run (Marcol kick) GB 10-7
3rd – GB – MacArthur Lane, 3-yard run (Marcol kick) GB 17-7
4th – GB – Marcol, 42-yard field goal GB 20-7
4th – GB – Marcol, 10-yard field goal GB 23-7

RUSHING

GREEN BAY – John Brockington 25-114, MacArthur Lane 19-99 1 TD, Scott Hunter 1-1 1 TD
MINNESOTA – Bill Brown 6-22, Dave Osborn 7-17, Jim Lindsey 1-8, Oscar Reed 6-6, Stu Voight 1-1 1 TD

PASSING

GREEN BAY - Scott Hunter 14-7-74 1 INT
MINNESOTA – Fran Tarkenton 21-11-118 3 INT

RECEIVING

GREEN BAY – Carroll Dale 3-32, Leland Glass 2-30, Jon Staggers 1-9, John Brockington 1-3
MINNESOTA – Bill Brown 3-20, John Henderson 2-31, John Beasley 2-15, Dave Osborn 2-12, John Gilliam 1-43, Oscar Reed 1-(-3)

Pro Football At A Glance
By The Associated Press
NFL

American Conference

East

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts	OP
x-Miami	13	0	0	1.000	369	171
New York Jets	7	5	0	.583	341	274
Baltimore	5	8	0	.385	235	236
Buffalo	3	9	1	.280	233	360
New England	3	10	0	.231	171	401

Central

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts	OP
y-Pittsburgh	10	3	0	.769	319	173
Cleveland	9	4	0	.692	242	239
Cincinnati	7	6	0	.538	238	212
Houston	1	12	0	.077	147	319

West

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts	OP
x-Oakland	8	3	1	.708	313	211
Kansas City	7	6	0	.538	270	240
San Diego	4	8	1	.346	262	320
Denver	4	9	0	.308	280	326

National Conference

East

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts	OP
x-Washington	11	2	0	.846	319	194
y-Dallas	10	3	0	.769	316	217
New York Giants	7	6	0	.538	308	244
St. Louis	3	9	1	.280	169	280
Philadelphia	2	10	1	.192	122	328

Central

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts	OP
x-Green Bay	9	4	0	.692	274	206
Detroit	7	5	1	.577	305	273
Minnesota	7	6	0	.538	284	232
Chicago	4	8	1	.346	204	247

West

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts	OP
San Francisco	7	5	1	.577	333	232
Atlanta	7	6	0	.538	255	257
Los Angeles	6	6	1	.500	274	252
New Orleans	2	10	1	.192	195	331

x-Clinched division title
y-Clinched playoff berth

Saturday's Games

Cleveland 27, Cincinnati 24
Dallas 34, Washington 24

Sunday's Games

Kansas City 24, Baltimore 10
Denver 38, San Diego 13
San Francisco 20, Atlanta 0
Chicago 21, Philadelphia 12
Green Bay 23, Minnesota 7
St. Louis 24, Los Angeles 14
Detroit 21, Buffalo 21, tie
Miami 23, New York Giants 13
New England 17, New Orleans 10
Pittsburgh 9, Houston 3

Monday's Games

New York Jets at Oakland, 9 p.m. EST, national television

5,000 GREET PACK

DEC 11 (Green Bay Press-Gazette) – The Central Division champion Packers were greeted by 5,000 exuberant fans as they deplaned at Austin Straubel Field Sunday night, shortly after dethroning the Minnesota Vikings. Many of the faithful were chanting, "We're number one, we're number one," as the Packers filed through the crowded airport terminal from their United Airlines charter, where they also were welcomed by family and friends. There were no speeches but there were many cheers, led by green and gold clad "Packerettes," and there also was a pep band which provided a spirited musical backdrop for the occasion. And, inevitably, there was a profusion of signs, among them a number of green and gold "No. 1" banners and one which proclaimed, "The All No. 1 Temp-A-Cheer Packers," presumably referring to the Packs resounding 23-7 victory in the 18 below zero chill of the Vikings' Metropolitan Stadium. And a more temperate placard with a friendly word of warning: "Don't Burn Out."

BOWMAN PROOF PACK NO PATSY

DEC 11 (Bloomington, MN-Green Bay Press-Gazette) – Minnesota Coach Bud Grant has made much of the fact that he won't allow any heating devices around the Viking bench because the process of warming up detracts attention from the game. The Packers, on the other hand, not only asked for heaters but had requested a shelter be built around their bench. The former request was granted but the latter was not because, the Vikes pointed out, it would limit the viewing by fans in the lower seats. But if this gave the Vikes any impression that the Packers were patsies because of the cold, it was dispelled when Kenny Bowman came out to "warm up" with his jersey sleeves rolled up to his elbows. Whatever concern there was for the weather, however, was legitimate. The temperature at game time was a perfect zero, the wind at nine miles per hour and the chill factor at minus 18. Dick Peal, one of the bench hands for the Packers, had a special mission in this weather. He carried around a pair of huge mittens and made sure that quarterback Scott Hunter slipped them on the moment he came off the field. The field itself was in good condition for most of the game, though it began hardening up by halftime. It had been covered by a pair of huge vinyl bubbles, anchored around the perimeter with warm air forced inside. The Bubbles were kept in place all week and were removed only about noon Sunday. Blow torches were then used on the field to fluff

up the grass and remove any remaining snow spots. The grass itself had been spray painted earlier to provide a nice green color.

PACKER HAMMER HIT VIKINGS HARD

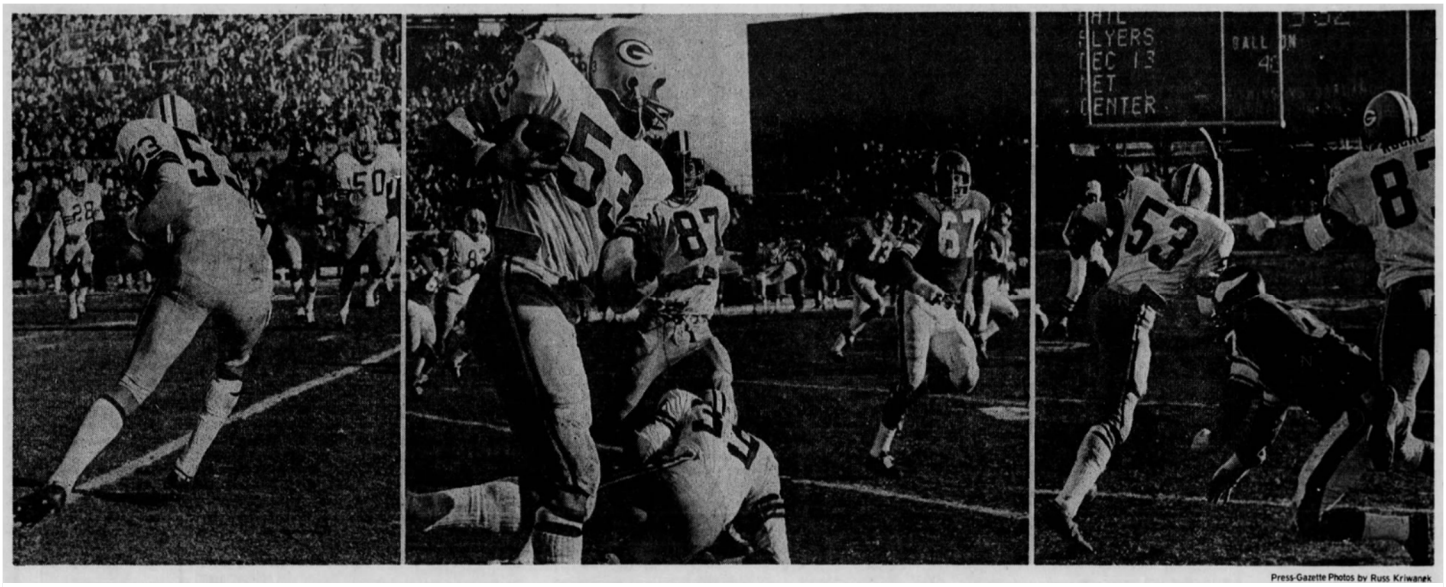
DEC 11 (Bloomington, MN-Green Bay Press-Gazette) – The Minnesota Vikings, their bodies and egos bruised to the hue of their helmets, tramped slowly and unsmilingly through the cold, dark caverns of Metropolitan Stadium to their dressing room. Above the door they solemnly marched through, a radio speaker was carrying the wrap up of the Vikings' championship era in dull tones and encouraging people to tune in again next week for the game in San Francisco. Then from behind the iron gate that kept the curious away, a man's frenzied voice pierced through the gloom and over the radio's final commercial. He indicated the Vikes got a raw deal. Hammered would have been a better description. The' Vikes were hit by the Packers - and hit and hit. This Packer team has given a whole new meaning to the football interpretation of hit. A ton of bricks no longer is an adequate scale by which to measure hitting. In the last two weeks, the Packers have left in their wake more ruins than the Mongolians, Hannibal, Ceasar or Patton's tanks. Port Plaza looks like the garden of Eden next to the remains of the Detroit Lions and Minnesota Vikings. And this time it wasn't just the defense. Superb as that unit was, the offense broke loose as well as it did it against what Packer scout Wally Cruice had said was the best defense he has ever seen. The Packers may never believe ol' Wally again. After finishing the first quarter with minus one yard the Packers dominated the game, even though the blunder at the end of the first half recalled the nightmare of last year's venture into Gopher land. For the game, the Packers, stacked up 270 yards, 214 by rushing. That leaves only 56 by passing, but Scott-Hunter actually collected 74 through the air. He lost 18 on three sacks. More important, though, Hunter hit on 7 of 14 passes and that's the 50 per cent that is needed to keep the defense loose. John Brockington and MacArthur Lane hit like thunderbolts on legs behind some fierce blocking that consistently neutralized the vaunted Norse front line. Alan Page? The Pack ran right at him as often as away from him. Brock and Mac teamed for 213 yards...Hunter getting the other. This helped the Packers run off 62 plays to Minnesota's 46 and isn't that nice? But the most significant aspect to all of this is that the Packers punched over two touchdowns when the opportunities came up, something that had been missing for most of the season. The defense? Look at the scoreboard. Check the statistics. Watch the replay of Al Matthews smacking Bill Brown...of Jim Hill clobbering John Gilliam...of Clarence Williams dropping Fran Tarkenton...of Fred Carr knifing through blockers for tackles. Need I go on? To a man, the Vikes agreed with all of this. To a man - and they are men, especially Coach Bud Grant – they praised the Packers as distinctly the better team on this memorable day. Most of the fans supported that diagnosis. Buy they took it hard anyway. A Minneapolis radio station opened it's Sunday night sports report with taps.



Waiting for the winners: A young Packer fan waits the return of the Green Bay Packer football team Sunday night at Austin Straubel Field after the Packers' 23-7 victory over Minnesota gave them the divisional title. (AP Wirephoto)

JOHN, MAC RUN...RUN...RUN

DEC 11 (Bloomington, MN-Green Bay Press-Gazette) – John Brockington had just made history again. But, somehow, it didn't seem all that important to the Packer fullback. He was too caught up in the green and gold's heady new status as Central Division champions of the National Football Conference. "The championship overshadows my getting 1,000 yards for the second year in a row," Brockington said in a relatively quiet corner of the Packers' dressing room, understandably boisterous after a title-clinching, 23-7 victory over the Minnesota Vikings. He modestly refrained from appending that he had just become the first man ever to scale that plateau in each of his first two pro seasons. Brockington, who had surged over the magic mark with approximately two minutes remaining in the game, said, "No, I wasn't aware when I hit 1,000. I was thinking about getting first downs, eating up the clock and getting closer to that goal line." The former Ohio State bulldozer, who closed out the day with 114 yards and a season total of 1,022, set an NFL rookie record in 1971 by amassing 1,105 in 216 carries. "You have to play for a break against the Vikings because they come so hard," he said, then illustrated his point. "Alan Page usually comes hard, but on one particular play, he just read and I went around a Bill Lueck block and just ran." Reflecting upon an earlier point, Brockington volunteered with a chuckle, "I think they Murphy-ed me out of a touchdown there in the third quarter, but I don't care as long as we got it. I thought I was in the end zone when they ruled I was down at the one-yard-line." Asked if he considers himself impatient, he replied, "I'm always patient. I'm always looking for



Fred Carr Scoops Up Fumble and Returns It 26 Yards to the Viking 28, Setting Up Go-Ahead TD

touchdowns. When you get a great field goal kicker, and I think Chester Marcol is the best in the league, you have to overcome the tendency to relax and think, 'Chester will get us three, anyway.' I think you've got to concentrate on going for touchdowns and not be content to settle for field goals." Returning to his original subject, the newly-acquired title, Brockington laughed and observed, "I don't know if we snuck up on people this season or what, but I don't care. We beat 'em."

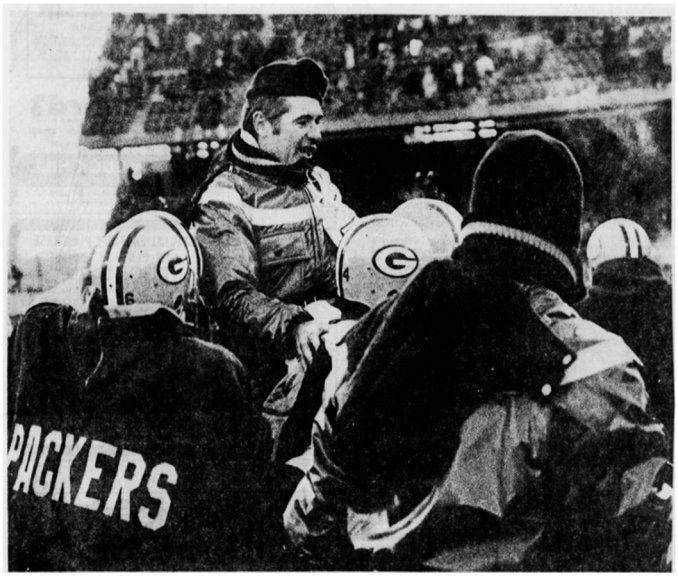
GRANT LABELS PACK FINE REPRESENTATIVE

DEC 11 (Bloomington, MN-Green Bay Press-Gazette) – The Green Bay Packers will be a "fine" representative of the NFC Central Division in the NFL playoffs. That was the evaluation of conquered Minnesota Coach Bud Grant here Sunday afternoon after his defending champion Vikings had relinquished the crown to Green Bay's resurgent Packers. But Grant had a warning too. "They've got to be in the ball game. They won't be able to come back," he said, inferring the Pack lacks explosiveness and relies on a formula that calls for taking advantage of breaks and not making mistakes. "They've played the same all year long. They wait for some breaks. It's an easy formula if you don't break down. You give them a fumble and an interception and they turn them into scores. You can't do that against a good football team." The Vikings also had their chances, Grant acknowledged, pointing out, "Bryant (Bob) had the ball three times (on possible interceptions) and couldn't hang onto it.". From the Vikes' offensive point of view, quarterback Fran Tarkenton expressed much the same thought, offering, "we just didn't make the plays." Tarkenton pointed out, however, that the Vikes didn't have the ball very much to make many plays after the first quarter. Green Bay had the ball for only six plays to Minnesota's 17 in the first quarter but dominated by an overwhelming 58-29 margin over the final three periods. "We haven't run much on anybody and a couple passes bounced to Green Bay today," Tarkenton summed up rather succinctly. He was quick to add, however, that the Packers are a "fine, sound football team." It was suggested that outside of the three sacks by Clarence Williams, the Packers didn't really have too strong a pass rush but the nimble-footed quarterback shot back, "Three times. I'd say that's pretty good. Three every game and you'd lead the league." The other Vikings talking in much the same vein about the Packers, using the same description over and over again. Bill Brown, asked what the difference was in this year's champion Packers from last year's also-rans, said, "Hell, they just play good, solid football. They played a lot better than we did and I can't add anything more than that." Center Mick Tinglehoff used the word "aggressive" in his description. "They really come at you, hard and aggressive. They have a close knit defensive team and they really have spirit." Brown attested to Tinglehoff's observation while discussing the pass he fumbled that the Pack turned into its first touchdown in a 17-point third quarter blitz. "I just caught the ball, turned and he (Al Matthews) popped me. The ball came loose, that's all. No the cold didn't make any difference. I should have hung onto it but he hit me just right." John Gilliam, on the other hand, insisted that the jarring hit by Jim Hill had nothing to do with the ball bouncing away from him and into Willie Buchanon's hands, a parlay that set up the Pack's second TD of that delightful period. "I never had it, the tackle didn't do anything," he said.

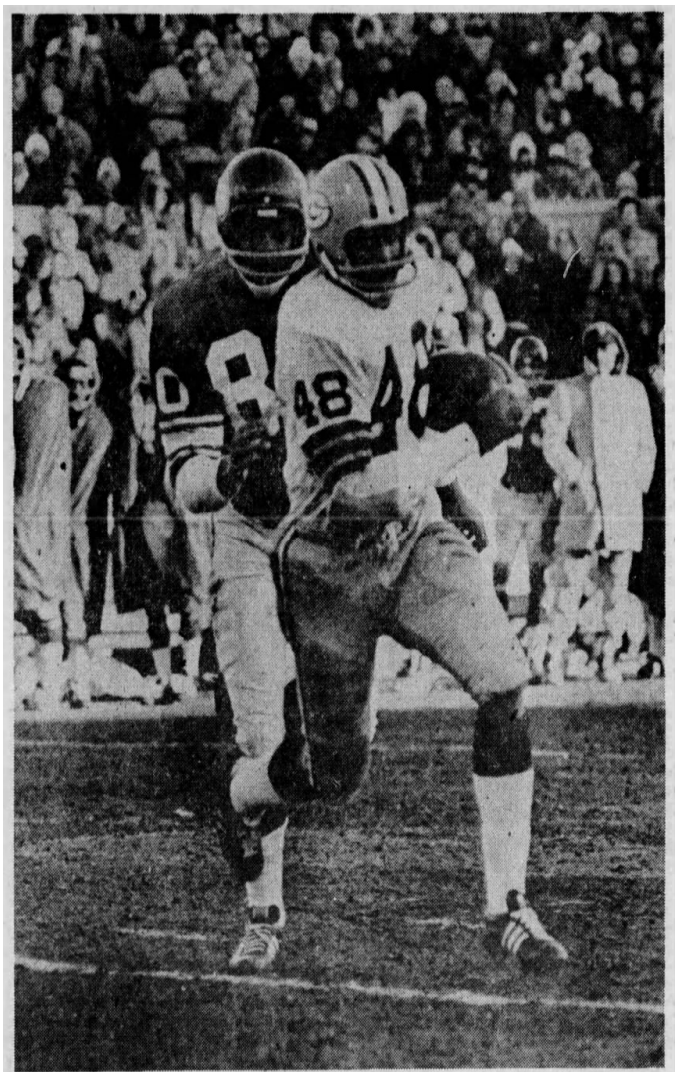
PAGE SAGA: FROM MVP TO GOAT

DEC 11 (Bloomington, MN-Green Bay Press-Gazette) – From the NFL's unique most valuable player to a three-horned goat. That was the story of Alan Page here Sunday afternoon as the Green Bay Packers used three late game penalties on the fierce Minnesota Viking tackle to preserve a victory and pocket the NFC's Central Division Championship. Taking a 17-7 lead into the fourth quarter, and the ball as well, thanks to Willie Buchanon's sensational interception on the final play of the third quarter, the Packers' mission obviously was to drain the clock. And this they did, starting from their own 18 and picking up first downs on the 29 and the 40 before being stalled with fourth and 10 at that line. So Ron Widby was to punt. The snap came in high, delaying the kick and giving Page and several cohorts a shot at blocking it. But Widby got the ball off and Page was charged with running into the kicker, bringing a.five yard penalty and a first down at the 45. This time the drive stalled at the 50 and Widby was to punt again. But Page was ticketed for being a bit overanxious and offside. Now it was fourth and five at the Viking 45 and Widby tried again. And again Page was fined five yards for offside, giving the

Packers a first down at the 40, which eventually they cashed in for a field goal and a virtually insurmountable 20-7 lead...insurmountable because all those starts, stops and restarts had used up nine minutes and 18 seconds, leaving just 5:42 to play. But in the Viking dressing room, where Page's misfortune (obviously the Vikes' point of view) was a primary topic of discussion, there seemed to be some question about whether the story should be labeled fact or fiction. Coach Bud Grant, examining his fingernails with an amazing degree of casualness even for one of his temperament, insisted that Page had not only brushed Widby after Ron's foot was back on the ground, thereby negating any penalty, but that he had charged only when Packer center Cal Withrow lifted the ball to snap it. When the center moves the ball you can come," Grant said. "Page is quick off the ball. Their center lifts the ball before he snaps it. It's something he does. We've talked to the officials about it before. We've even attempted to hit the ball when he lifts it, which is legal, but the officials have told us not to do that because it is difficult to detect and would only confuse everybody." Grant admitted that he hadn't talked to the officials about Withrow's alleged pre-snap movement of the ball Sunday but had done so before other games. As to the officials, Grant said "They won' explain anything to you. They're all shook up out there. Their eyes are dilated. They're under a lot of pressure, more pressure than the players." And what did Page have to say about it? "I don't have anything to say," was his comment.



The Packers gave coach Dan Devine a ride off the field after they clinched their first division title since 1967.



Turnover: Here's Ken Ellis executing a critical interception of a Fran Tarkenton pass for the Packers. John Henderson is the Viking aiming to lay him low on the freezing Minnesota turf.

DEVINE HAD HIS ORDERS

DEC 11 (Bloomington, MN-Green Bay Press-Gazette) – Packer Coach Dan Devine had his orders here Sunday. "Dan's brother (Father Pat Devine) is studying advanced theology at Louvain, Belgium," Mrs. Mary Devine, mother of the coach, reported here over the weekend, adding with a twinkle, "He called today and said, 'Tell Dan I don't care if he wins next week at New Orleans, but he'd better win this one."

HEFNER, HUDSON PUT ON ROSTER

DEC 11 (Bloomington, MN-Green Bay Press-Gazette) – The Packers made two roster changes immediately prior to Sunday's kickoff, activating linebacker Larry Hefner and running back Bob Hudson, both rookies, to replace Tommy Joe Crutcher and Ward Walsh, nursing thigh and knee injuries, respectively.

QUICK QUOTES: ROBINSON LAUDS WILLIAMS' COUP

DEC 11 (Bloomington, MN-Green Bay Press-Gazette) – Quick Packer-Viking quotes: Dave Robinson: "I've been in Green Bay 10 years and I've never seen anybody tackle Fran Tarkenton three times in one game. But the Big Cat (Clarence Williams) did it today."…Ken Ellis (on second quarter interference call): "I don't know for sure. I thought he (Viking John Henderson) pushed me. Somebody said they thought our feet got tangled up, but I'll have to see the film to be sure. But if they don't get that penalty, they don't score. We would have shut 'em out."…Dan Devine: "Loyalty is the best word I can use to describe this team. Loyalty to each other, loyalty to the coaches."…Bill Hayhoe: "On that goal line series, we took out one end, which made me an eligible receiver. I was supposed to take a three-yard split on that play and sort of drift across the end zone. I was open, but I guess Scott (Hunter) didn't see me. We ran a couple more plays and I was supposed to go out and Francis Peay was supposed to stay in, but there was a misunderstanding when a play was brought in. I stayed in and moved to tackle, while Francis went out. Then we got the 15-yard penalty because you're supposed to go out for one play when you change positions in that situation."…Scott Hunter: "After that first game against the Vikings, when they intercepted me four times, I kind of wanted to redeem myself today in the eyes of some of our players."…Dan Devine again: "Ray



THE PACK IS BACK, and it was all smiles as Green Bay clinched the NFL Central title by defeating the Vikings, 23-7, on December 10. Players Scott Hunter (16) and John Brockington (lower right) led the way as Coach Dan Devine was carried off the field. (The Sporting News)

Nitschke has been a great, inspirational leader on the ball club, particularly in the last two weeks. Even in our darkest moments, he typified the loyalty to me that our older players have - that we had to have."…Jon Staggers: "I guess somebody hooked the ball out of my arm on the punt return in the second quarter. I was trying to 'break' it. There will be another time."…Scott Hunter again: "Every coach I've ever played for, in high school, college and now here, has always been the kind of guy who stresses execution in big games, and no mistakes. In big games, I just seem to be able to concentrate better. I suppose I shouldn't say that, but that's the way it is. I lost track of it on that tackle eligible thing with Bill Hayhoe. That was my responsibility."…Jim Carter (on his 'chat' with Alan Page): "It was a little blue. When he was called offside the first time, he told the referee 'I was not offside, you blankety-blank.' And I said to the umpire: 'He can't call you a blankety- blank.' Then Page called me that. On the very next play, the umpire called the same thing on Page. I think he was still mad about what Page said to him on the previous play."

FUNERAL PENDING FOR RIVER FALLS MAYOR

DEC 12 (River Falls) – Services were pending for Maynard "Spike" Hoffman, former River Falls mayor who died at a Minneapolis hospital Monday after having been stricken during Sunday's Green Bay Packers-Minnesota Vikings football game at Bloomington, Minn. Hoffman, 53, suffered an apparent stroke, according to officials at the hospital, Fairview Southdale. Hoffman served six two-year terms as mayor from 1957-1969. He also had been a salesman here.

GIVES BEARS A LIFT: GIBRON'S GLAD BAYS WON

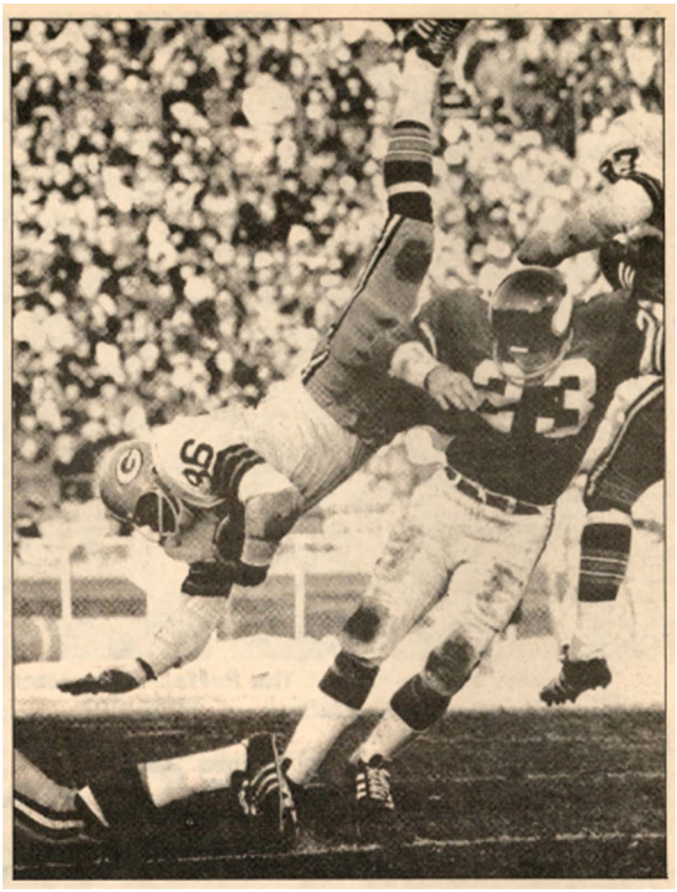
DEC 12 (Chicago) - Abe Gibron is the head football coach of the Chicago Bears and is of Lebanese extraction. Kahlil Gibran was the poet, painter, philosopher from Lebanon. Abe deals with offenses, defenses, quarterbacks, running backs and split ends. Kahlil wrote of gods and kings and love and nature. Although Kahlil, the poet, knew little of football, Abe, the coach, knows a little about the gods. Commenting on Green Bay's clinching the Central Division of the National Football Conference and qualifying for the National Football League playoffs, Abe remarked about religion. "I'm glad Green Bay won the division," said Abe. "It gives our guys a big lift because we played the Packers twice and could have won both games. A year ago they finished last in our division and now they're on top. "We can do the same thing next year," continued Gibron. "I'll never forget our first game against Green Bay. All game long they couldn't get a punt off for more than 18 yards. Then they try a 40-yard field goal with seconds left and what happens. The wind dies down, the sun comes up and Chester Marcol puts it through. They win 20-17. I'm sure the Lord had something to do with it," said Gibron. "Maybe I ought, to change my religion." But Gibron admitted that the Packers deserved their divisional title. They beat us twice, the Lions twice and split with Minnesota. You can't ask for more than that. What can they do in the playoffs? When you've got runners like John Brockington and MacArthur Lane, you have a chance to beat anybody." Gibron had just returned from a scouting meeting which set the basis of the upcoming pro draft in which the Bears could make hay. They have two choices in the first round and two more in the second. "It's been a funny year," said Gibron, whose Bears wind up the season at Oakland Sunday. "We've established a foundation. We've taught the players respect. They know they can win. Our biggest improvement has been the offensive line. But our defensive line also has improved. "We have to fill in spots in the upcoming draft," said Gibron. "We'll take almost anything. A young quarterback, running backs, receivers, offensive linemen, defensive linemen. The only thing we don't need are linebackers." Gibron averts questions concerning quarterback Bobby Douglass, who runs much and passes little. We'll take a young quarterback," he says. "But you have to be wary in drafting quarterbacks. The quarterbacks who get outstanding ratings are the ones who play for teams who do a lot of passing. What about the college quarterbacks who work in the wishbone?" Gibron pointed out that such top quarterbacks as John Reaves of Philadelphia, Jim Plunkett of New England, Dan Pastorini of Houston and Archie Manning of New Orleans don't have winning records. "It takes more than a guy who can just pass," said Gibr on. "The zone defenses and the big pass rush is taking it away from the passer in pro ball. The runners are carrying the teams these days. Look what Brockington has done for Green Bay and Franco Harris has done for Pittsburgh. The game is changing and we're getting close. Wait and see."

DOTSCH SPIKES RUMOR

DEC 12 (Green Bay Press-Gazette) - Packer assistant coach Rollie Dotsch, rumored as a possible successor to Duffy Daugherty as head football coach at Michigan State University, said today, "I haven't made any application for the job and I haven't been contacted by the school's athletic department. There have been some people, some of the old Spartans from the days I played at Michigan State, pushing for me, but that's about the extent of it," Dotsch said. "I'm certainly not in a position to apply for any job right now. We're too involved in finishing the season and getting ready for the playoffs. Things are going well here and I'm happy in Green Bay with Coach Devine. He's done a great job of turning things around."

NOTES AND NOTIONS

DEC 12 (Appleton Post-Crescent) - Irish eyes (notably Dan Devine's) are smiling today. , .and there also are a multitude of non-Irish smiles in Packerland. Another momentous chapter has been added to Green Bay's rich football tradition.



MacARTHUR LANE heads for a landing after being upended by Jeff Wright. (The Sporting News)

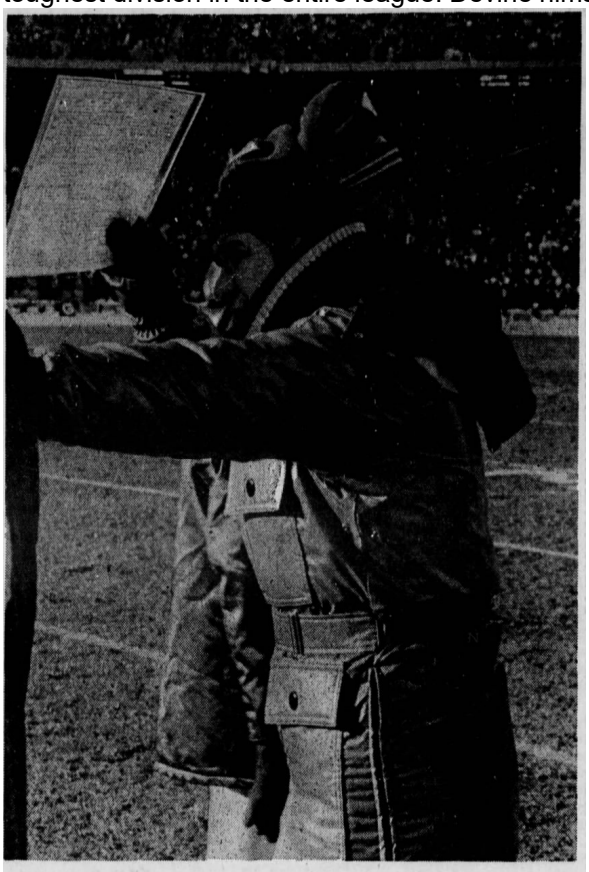
Championships are welcome any time, of course. But winning one at an unexpected time is especially savory. And, the Packers certainly weren't expected to do it this year. I don't know what the Las Vegas odds were, but I've heard a range of 34-1 to 100-1 against the Packers in the Central Division. Most pre-season analysts rated the Packers third - behind Minnesota and Detroit – and some even listed Green Bay fourth in a 4-club division. Although Devine has stated that the division title is no particular surprise to him - that it wasn't ahead of his personal schedule – one has to wonder if in his heart-of-hearts he really felt the Packers could make the big jump from virtual oblivion to the top in one short season. At any rate,

practically no one else did...the general feeling was that the young team was at least a year or two away. The reasoning was something like this: (1) How can you win a title with 15 of the 40 players either first-or second-year players? (2) How can you win with so much inexperience in the sensitive areas of quarterback and the defensive secondary? (3) How can you win without a super receiver, such as a Paul Warfield or an Otis Taylor. (4) How can you win without a proven pass rush? Some of these "facts" were proven erroneous while others became inconsequential as the Packers stormed through one of the NFL's toughest schedules to reclaim the Black-and-Blue division penthouse after a 4-year absence…If Devine doesn't rate "coach of the year" honors in the NFL, there wasn't a jarring tackle made Sunday at Bloomington, Minn. Starting practically from scratch, Devine built a new "Big Green Machine" and turned a 4-8-2 record into a division-dominating standard in one year. He proved beyond a doubt that a "college" coach can be a winner in the pro ranks. Devine made believers out of many skeptics – and they were at least as numerous as Devine-backers - who had judged his coaching ability strictly on the basis of a .333 first season. A year ago, I pointed out that the Packer coaching staff must take part of the blame for a disappointing season. If Devine did make some mistakes in his year of transition (and he admits he did), he certainly proved a lightning-quick learner. Between seasons, he made some major adjustments in playing and coaching personnel and got "his kind of people." The results (as Howard Cosell would say) speak for themselves. Devine's first "real" draft (he hardly had time to become indoctrinated for the 1971 draft) produced such blue-chippers as Chester Marcol, Willie Buchanon, Jerry Tagge and Leland Glass. In the trade market, Devine came up with such gems as MacArthur Lane, Jim Hill, Ron Widby, Ike Thomas and Malcolm Snider. Valuable free acquisitions include Jon Staggers, Bob Kroll and Pete Lammons…In coaching changes, Devine brought in John Polonchek, Hank Kuhlman and Bart Starr. Kuhlman's special teams played a big role in the championship drive, while Starr's tutoring and play calling helped upgrade a position (quarterback) which wasn't the team's strong point. Devine, incidentally, had not figures on going with a sophomore and a freshman as his QB corps. He had penciled in a "rehabilitated" Bart Starr as his 1972 QB, but received a jolt when Bart wasn't able to come back. Devine also had to overcome the loss of Rich McGeorge - one of the best of the young tight ends - and Gale Gillingham, probably the best of the NFL's blocking guards. Devine got his team "up" for a succession of big games, but the ultimate in readiness came in the last two games - back-to-back meetings with the Packers' two principal rivals, Detroit and Minnesota…The way the Packers mauled the Lions for 60 minutes and decimated the Vikings in the final 30 minutes wiped out all question of who the rightful 1972 division ruler is. The packers were out of first place for just 24 hours this season - from Oct. 29 to Oct. 30, when Dallas beat Detroit in a Monday night game and enabled Green Bay to reshare the lead…It was the "Lombardi days" all over again as Devine matched Vince's feat of winning a division title in his second year. Sunday's similarities to the Lombardi era included: the ability to recoil from adversity (several bad first-half breaks); magnificent defensive play; a penchant for making the big play; the conditioning and the will to dominate the second half; the ability to play well on any kind of field; and a "thunder and lightning" ball-carrying duo. (John Brockington and MacArthur Lane are unquestionably the new Hornung (Paul) and Taylor (Jim)… Just when did the Packers develop that all-important "championship-type" attitude? It might have been early in the exhibition season when they edged Miami, 14-13. It might have been in the final pre-season tilt against Kansas City, when they came off a horrible game against St. Louis (their last bad game) and blanked the then highly-rated Chiefs. Or it might have come in the third game of the regular-season when an injury-depleted lineup shook off a frustrating loss to Oakland to beat Super Bowl champion Dallas. Whenever the transformation took place, the newly-acquired confidence had a snowballing effect. The Packers won 10 of the last 14 games (including the KC date) and were in the thick of the other four and could have won any or all of them. Incidentally, the Packers clinching of the division title takes the NFL officiating organization off the hook...because if the Packers had lost the title because of that "gift" touchdown acquired by Oakland, it would have been mighty embarrassing indeed…The Packers should feel no added playoff pressure since they've been on

a steady diet of tough opponents. Of their 13 league games, 10 were played against division champions or top contenders. The Packers, in the regular season, have already played five of the other seven playoff teams – assuming that either San Francisco or Atlanta wins the remaining NFC spot. (Green Bay has met Oakland, Cleveland, Dallas, Washington and the 49ers (as well as the Falcons). On the other hand, Miami hasn't met a single playoff qualifier.

THE PACK IS BACK

DEC 12 (Green Bay Press-Gazette) - It's like old times. The Green Bay Packers again have established themselves championship football team. They have turned the expectations and optimism of July into a reality in December. In so doing, they have vindicated the choice of Dan Devine as head coach and general manager to restore the winning spirit which has been a hallmark of the Packers for over half a century in professional football. But success is compounded of many ingredients and blended and coordinated to achieve a goal, whatever major obstacles stand in the way. In this respect, it is apparent that Devine's assistant coaches have played an important part in bringing the team to its present title status in the toughest division in the entire league. Devine himself has described his assistants as the hardest working staff he has ever had, a tribute to his deft leadership as well as the talent and dedication of the individual coaches. The final payoff in victories comes only through what happens on the field of play. On whether the players put into practice what they have been taught. On mental and physical conditioning achieved through grueling hours of preparation. And on recognition of the fact that individual skills can only be effective if they are in harmony with the efforts and talents of others. This year's team has proved individually and collectively that it recognized its challenges and did what it had to do to meet them. The season already can be counted a success. Ahead, however, lie further challenges. There is the season finale against New Orleans, which should not be dismissed as a too-easy mark. Then, the Washington Redskins in a playoff to win the right to play in the conference championship game where victory means the Super Bowl. All difficult tests which euphoria over winning the Central Division championship should not obscure, however much the championship is to be relished by players and Packer fans alike. This year's Packers deserve congratulations for the way they have won and the way they have come back from defeat in what must be measured as the toughest schedule of all the teams in both conferences of the National Football League. The road ahead will be tough, but this team has convincingly demonstrated that it recognizes the challenges and what is necessary to subdue them.



Dan Devine—Long Way From Miami

ONE YEAR AGO ...

DEC 12 (Green Bay Press-Gazette) - The time was mid-December of 1971 and, back in Green Bay, the faithful were huddled around their fireplaces against the onset of winter. But. in Florida, the Packers perspiring in summery, 85-degree heat on a Fort Lauderdale practice field, priming for an artistically meaningless finale against the Dolphins in neighboring Miami. It was, somebody said in the wake of a concentrated, 1-hour and 15-minute workout, just like training camp. And that, Coach Dan Devine indicated, was no accident. In fact, he was prompted to observe, "The benefit of being here the entire week is that we get in a lot of good work which should help us next fall." Monday, as he traced the genesis of a revival which was resoundingly certified in Minnesota by Sunday's clinching of the NFC Central Division championship, Devine pinpointed that seemingly routine. playing-out-the-string period as critical to the current success. "A big part of the development of this squad was the week we spent in Florida last December," he said. "We went through practically a two-a-day situation down there and it was a nothing game that was going to be played for pride alone. We were 4-7-1 and going nowhere. But we just worked our butts off in that hot sun and I was able to get a good reading on what guys wanted to sacrifice to have a winner in Green Bay. That was a crucial week - in my mind - in the evaluation and development of the squad, and the game also was very important. It may sound a little strange. but that probably was the most beneficial week we've spent since I've been here." Though he made no mention of what maneuvers that searching appraisal had spawned, there can be little doubt the trades of Donny Anderson for MacArthur Lane and Lionel Adlridge for Jim Hill stemmed from the judgments made in that palm-fringed backdrop. Both Lane and Hill have had a profound impact upon the Packer personality and performance, contributing 'to the sharp turnabout with their leadership as well as by their play. It was Lane, of course, who triggered the Packers' second half surge against the Vikings with a 37-yard run that led to a Chester Marcol field goal and the first Green Bay points. And it was Hill whose thunderous tackle caused the pass deflection which Willie Buchanon picked off, setting up the Packers' second touchdown. Devine, reflecting upon the significance of that historic victory during his customary Monday review, admitted he was relieved. "I feel good about it," he said. "I can't deny that." "It's been a long struggle and, with the exception of the second Detroit game here the week before last when we could breathe easy the last five or six minutes, every game has gone down to the wire. Even Sunday, when we were kicking field goals there in the fourth quarter, I was concerned. There's the potential of their blocking it and returning it for a touchdown,

New York	7	6	0	3—16
Oakland	3	7	7	7—24

Oak—FG Blanda 47
NY—Caster 49 pass from Namath (Howfield kick)
Oak—Biletnikoff 39 pass from Lamonica (Blanda kick)
NY—FG Howfield 25
NY—FG Howfield 30
Oak—Smith 1 run (Blanda kick)
NY—FG Howfield 42
Oak—Chester 68 pass from Lamonica (Blanda kick)

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING—New York, Harkey 11-24, Boozer 4-12; Oakland, Hubbard 28-118, Smith 12-41.

RECEIVING—New York, Maynard 7-131, Bell 6-88, Caster 4-81; Oakland, Biletnikoff 5-96, Smith 3-22, Chester 2-84.

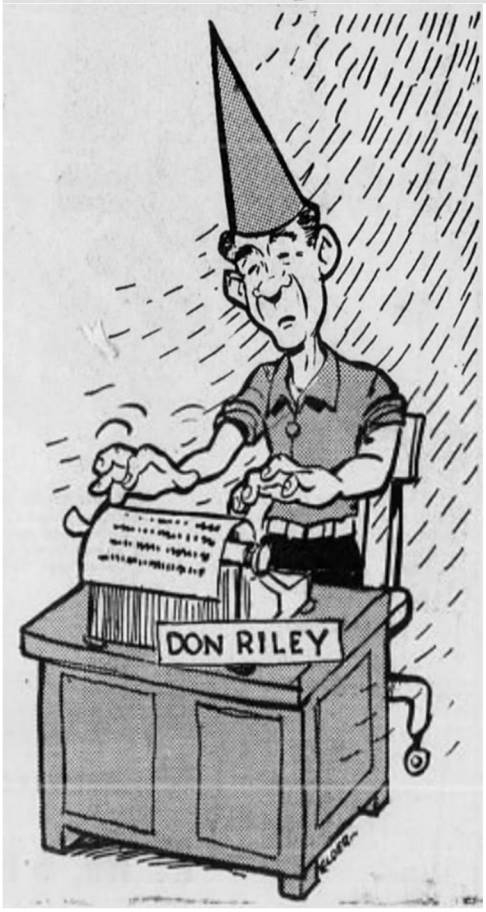
PASSING—New York, Namath 25-46-2, 403 yards; Oakland, Lamonica 10-17-2, 202.

which weighs on your mind, and which they are so darned good at. I'm very, very happy for the squad and the coaches. That's the first thing I want to say about winning the championship. They've worked hard since July. It was a heck of a rough training camp. There had to be some of the younger guys wondering, 'What are we doing this for?' And some of the older guys must have been saying, 'We never worked this hard before and we won.' "But there never has been any question. In other words, the squad attitude has been
simply great." Asked if he felt the margin of victory over Detroit and Minnesota in successive weeks indicated his team had come of age, Devine parried the question by replying, "Each game is so different. Washington and Miami have the best records in the league and they have played a lot of close games. We have been extremely opportunistic," he admitted. "We haven't done anything really bad. Well, we've done a few things that weren't too good, but you're going to have those things happen in a ball game." Are the Packers now playing the way he would like them to play? 'It's kind of the way I like to play." Devine said, "Although I'd like to be a little more explosive. But on a day like Sunday, it's kind of hard to be explosive." Could he detect before the game that his team would perform as well as it did? "Every game is different, every week is different, every player is different," Devine said. "Once we've been together four or five years, I should be able to tell pretty well. But a lot of guys on that 40-man roster, like Ron Widby, Malcolm Snider, Jim Hill and Willie Buchanon, are new to me." Devine said he doubted if that decisive triumph over the Vikings would have any long range value, even though it appeared to have exploded the "jinx" theory which inevitably surfaced after the Purple Gang had won eight of their previous nine meetings with the Packers. "I don't think it will have any particular effect of that kind," he said. "I think by the time we play the Vikings again, there'll be a lot of water over the dam. I think every victory has a certain amount of value, of course, but I think the next time we play, they're going to play just as hard and so are we." Launching into an analysis of that one, Devine noted, "Carl Eller had a good, sustained effort all game but we did a good job of blocking in our offensive line. "We had problems in the first half because we didn't force the turnovers early and we let them off the hook when they fumbled the kickoff deep in their territory and we had them third and long. The long drive before the half was good, other than our not scoring. It was just a real poor series. Part of the fault was with the coaches, and a lot of it lies with myself. The whole series was bad, not just where we got the penalty on the tackle eligible thing. The bootleg pass was bad, too. As far as the penalty is concerned, Bill Hayhoe was playing end and moved back to tackle. I sent a player in with a play and I prefaced the play call by telling him, 'Go in for Hayhoe.' Bart Starr heard me tell him and so did Rollie Dotsch, but the player didn't. But it's my responsibility that the player hear it, and also that we should have worked on it a little more. That failure to score was a real disappointment," Devine admitted, "but that you don't let it bother you is the big thing. Nobody sat around the dressing room, griping about it - and there could have been a lot. What you don't do is go out in the third quarter and press or panic – throw an interception and have them run it back for a touchdown, or fumble. A big thing was that field goal at the start of the second half -just getting on the board - because I knew our defense was going to play a little more aggressively and force turnovers. I could sense that at halftime." Documenting the overall quality of the Packer performance, Devine said, "It was kind of like the Detroit game a week ago. It's hard to find anybody who really stood out more than anybody else. Not everybody played up to what we expect. but it's doggoned near impossible to pick out anybody." He foresees no diminution of that effort in next Sunday's regular season finale at New Orleans, even though the Central Division has been resolved and there is the inevitable temptation to look ahead - to that Dec. 24 playoff date with the Redskins in Washington. "We'll only rest people Sunday if they're injured," he assured. "And there is nothing serious that we know of. We don't want to lose our momentum. By the same token, the guys want to play and they need to play. We certainly can't beat New Orleans on form. We have to play the way we've played the last two weeks to beat New Orleans. Yes, I do think it's necessary to beat them." Devine replied to a question. "Any time you play, you want to win. "You can't play like we have for the last 14 weeks, and I keep going back to the Kansas City game, because that's where our season actually started, and then say, 'Boys, it doesn't make any difference who wins, because it does make a difference. That's why we're playing. The forecast for Sunday in New Orleans, incidentally, is for temperatures in the high 70s and high humidity. That's a heck of an abrupt change for our players." The Packers will enplane for the Louisiana metropolis Thursday to begin acclimating themselves to those conditions. Practice plans for the following Sunday's showdown in Washington are uncertain at this point, Devine reported. "We probably will make a decision on that as we see how the weather develops here," he said. I would prefer to stay in Green Bay, but I don't think that's possible. It's not the weather so much, but an adequate place to practice. An unfrozen, dry field is an absolute must for that one. We're investigating several possibilities."

MONDAY WAS BEAUTIFUL IN MINNESOTA

DEC 12 (St. Paul, MN-Green Bay Press-Gazette) - It was cold here Monday morning. 7-below, the TV announcer said as I was dressing in my downtown hotel room. But the task ahead of me had me so excited that I didn't even care about the temperature. I really wanted to get all dressed up fancy but I forgot to bring my bowling shirt along. So I just put on my regular duds, shrugged into my mackinaw, stuffed my dirty socks into my coat pocket (us Bushers travel light) and ventured out onto the street. My destination was six blocks away. I kept walking Into my breath but even for one who dislikes the cold as I do, it was a beautiful morning. I whistled happily as I walked down Cedar Street, past the G and M saloon and Dayton's department store. And as I almost skipped along, my thoughts wandered back to that column 1 had read when I arrived here Sunday. The one in the St. Paul Pioneer Press by Don Riley..."Here's my written guarantee to the 8,000 dog-sledding, profane, ornery, boozeried kettle-heads in hob-nails, bowling shirts and portable spittoons from Green Bush today at the

Monday Was Beautiful in Minnesota



Met: "Ken Ellis will be burned so much in the secondary, he'll feel like poor Joan of Arc at a stakeout. Brockington'll be stripped of his shoestrings at the line of scrimmage so often he'll be running bare-toed and on a treadmill in two periods. Scott Hunter's glass arm'll fall off in the third quarter and Jerry Tagge will try to remember the plays the last quarter. Ancient grizzled Carroll Dale will announce his retirement at 3:28 p.m. after catching less passes than a life termer. MacArthur Lane will he checking out plane reservations to St. Louis at the half. The Vikes will rise to such a plateau of pure proficiency, the pink-cheeked Busher kiddies will be mesmerized by the occasion, suffocated by the blue chips and be sending for the rescue squad with five minutes left to play. The Pack disintegration will start in the second period when their game plan is turned into pudding by Vike infantry thrusts, ball control and Pack errors. The dissipation of the Pack's strength will continue under second half pounding and the game will be in complete control of the Vikes by the final session. It is difficult for me to find compassion in my heart for the growling infiltrators called Pack supporters. But even I must apologize for their long sojourn into oblivion. Your final statistics, for the Bush throng unable to navigate their covered wagons through the St. Croix: Score, Vikings 28, Packers 14; Yards gained, Vikings 263, Packers 142 ... " I had to chuckle as those words came back to me, especially that bit about the Viking ball control and Packer errors. The six blocks disappeared quickly under foot and there it was, the front entrance to the St. Paul Pioneer Press and Post-Dispatch building. Riley's cage. I walked jauntily inside, hopped an elevator to the newsroom on the fourth floor and searched out Riles' red nosed Irish kisser. Spotting him, I glided over quickly, reached into my pocket, pulled out a Pack is Back bumper sticker, tore off the backing and planted it right in the middle of his desk. I had been waiting for that moment...and it was worth waiting for. I was ecstatic at the success of my mission. Those stickers are very difficult to remove, you know. Riles looked up, acknowledged that I was standing there at his desk and asked if I had stayed over Sunday night just to bring him that sticker. I told him no, but that I had made it a special point to walk to his office that morning and it was one of the most beautiful walks I had ever taken. Just then the phone rang. Riles answered politely enough but after a few moments growled something about "Go tell it to Bud Grant, not me." Then, another few moments later, he snarled, "who the hell are you anyway? Bart Starr's father?" He hung up. But while he was talking, I had noticed a slip of paper on his desk, one of those "message" forms that said there had been 23 phone calls for him that morning and the message was "The Pack is back, etc., etc., etc." Actually, ol' Riles accepted the whole thing pretty well. He smiled a little and we chatted for awhile. In his Monday morning column, be was almost as hard on the Vikes as he had been on the Pack, calling the Minnesotans "a tiring, worn team, losing its zest." And be added: "Let us sincerely hail a splendid young. Dedicated team of Bushers. It is not great by any stretch of the dim-witted Busher imagination. But it has beautiful coaching. Nobody runs six plays with mere precision." But one thing still nagged at the St. Paul scribbler. Seems he had two extra tickets for Sunday's biggie and a good friend begged for them, citing a terrifying need to please a couple of clients. So Riles relented and gave the ducats to his friend. But when he took a look at his seats Sunday afternoon, he gagged. Sitting there were two guys in green, Packer caps enjoying themselves as only a Packer Backer in Viking territory could Sunday. Riles repeated his reaction for me but I can't repeat it for you. Needless to say, however, he declared he was now minus one friend. Too bad, I don't think he can afford to lose too many…Note-worthy...North Central Airlines has a huge sign with a revolving message board on it just a mile from Metropolitan Stadium and within two hours after the game, the sign was reading "Congratulations Pack…Good luck in the playoffs." And almost unnoticed in a small room next to the Viking dressing room there was a garbage box stuffed with a big floral piece of the sort you see in funeral homes. And there was a carefully lettered message with it reading "May You Rest in Peace."

EVERYTHING IS 'COOL' WITH PACKERS

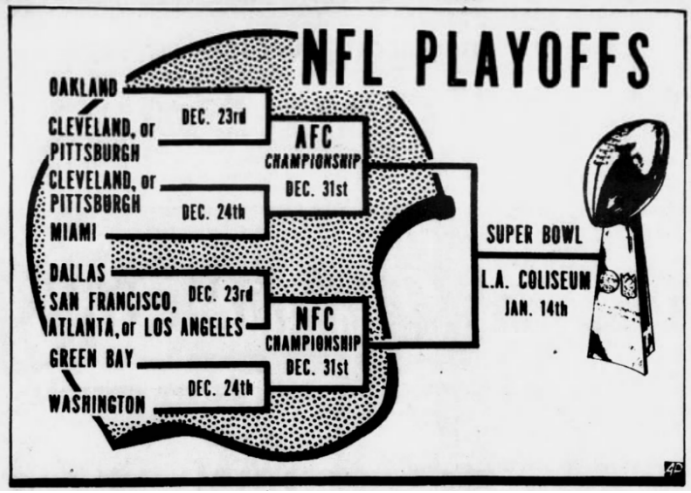
DEC 13 (Green Bay Press-Gazette) – "Everything is cool," John Brockington ebulliently annouriced, flashing a wide, toothy grin. Although the comment would hardly have been inappropriate, Brockington was still: talking about the pervasive afterglow of Sunday's title-clinching victory in Minnesota, not the weather. But Dave Robinson was. Diligently brushing heaps of snow off his car in the Packers' parking lot during the height of Tuesday's storm, the 10-year veteran jovially made the best of it. "It's just like the other championship years," sang out Robby, a member of the Pack's 1965-66-67 title teams. "Snow up to your hips and money in the bank." That, in essence, was the kind of a day it was on Lombardi Avenue as the light-hearted Packers began to focus upon their final regular season assignment, Sunday's invasion of New Orleans. Even Dan Devine, who doesn't approach any game lightly, was able to take it in stride when the weather forced him to call off Tuesday's scheduled practice. "We wanted to work today." he said, then exhibited a cheerful smile and jested, "but we've had a couple of other interference calls this year." He shortly made it clear, however, that one day was all he was willing to

Everything is 'Cool' With Packers

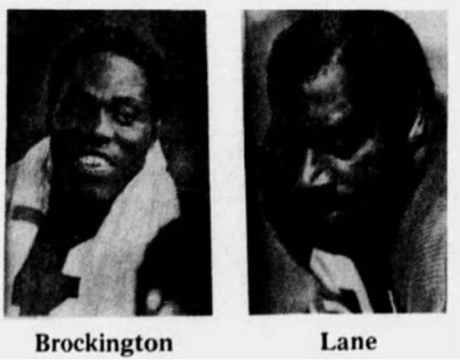
concede to the elements. "We'll work outside tomorrow, regardless of conditions,' Devine declared, "hopefully on the practice field rather than in the stadium." "If we get completely ballooned out .by the weather, we'd go inside somewhere. In other words, we'll work tomorrow - somewhere." Although there was no formal practice, not all of the new NFC Central Division champions escaped exertion. All but members of the two starting units took three laps around the perimeter of the stadium beneath the Lambeau Field stands after viewing the film of Sunday's 23-7 triumph over the Vikings and hearing the scouting report on the Saints from Wally Cruice. As might be expected, considerable levity later prevailed in the dressing room, an exuberant reflection of what Brockington had put into words. "We're more relaxed now," the record-breaking fullback said, chuckling only because it felt so good to be a champion. "The pressure's off for a week. Although we've got to play to win in New Orleans Sunday, it's not like it's been the last six weeks. Ever since we lost to the Vikings in our first game against them, there's been a lot of pressure. First we couldn't lose to San Francisco because it would have been three losses in a row. Then we played in Chicago, and we couldn't lose because it was a game in our division. Then it was Houston, and we couldn't afford to lose because we would fall behind in the race. It's been like that every week - including a week ago against Detroit, which was a big pressure game, and, of course, the one in Minnesota Sunday, which we had to win." Across the room, mammoth Mike McCoy typified the relaxation Brockington had pinpointed, dressing in front of his locker with what appeared to be a new maturity and pride of performance. But he insisted there would be no low key carryover into Sunday's finale. "I don't think there's going to be any kind of letdown," he said. "We've got a shot at some team records, for one thing (one of them an all-time low for touchdown passes allowed). And we've got to keep up our momentum for that playoff game with Washington. I think there's just too much pride on the club not to go down there and play as hard as we can. We've got a reputation now and we have to live up to it. They judge our division by the way we play. They call our division the black-and-blue division, so we're going to have to play well to represent it properly." McCoy, who broke in with the Packers in 1970 as a much heralded rookie, finds the current atmosphere considerably different than he did his first two seasons. "I think there's a more relaxed, confident feeling now than there was last year and the year before," he said. "We've got the people who can do the job. We've always had the people, but now we've got together. My rookie year we were 6-8 and last year we were 4-8-2. And you tend to get down on yourself when you don't win, and people get down on you. You get into a rut and it's hard to get out of it. As Coach Hanner says, winning becomes a habit, and so does losing unfortunately. I think Coach Hanner deserves a lot of credit. His being named defensive coordinator unified our defensive team. And he's been patient with us - he's held us together. He's had confidence in us and that had to help build our defensive team up. The special teams are a really big difference I've noticed from a year ago," McCoy added as he continued his analysis of 72's success. "They give us great field position all the time. They set the tempo for the game. When you're a defensive player and the other team has to start from the 20 following a kickoff, instead of from the 40 and 50 like last year and the year before, it's got to give you a lift. In fact, there are so many little things that have made this year different," Mike said, shaking his head in appreciation. "Chester (Marcol), the kicking game, you name it. And we like each other - love each other, that's the big thing. I've heard Ray Nitschke talk about it so often, about loving your teammates and what it means. And this year, we all experienced it. You can't replace that. That's got to be a big part of winning. If everybody plays as individuals, you're not going to win." Although this is a considerably younger team than any of those which captured five NFL championships in the '60s, Nitschke finds the overall climate largely the same. "This team is much like those I was on in '61 and '62 and '65, '66 and '67," he said thoughtfully. "It's getting more confident with each game. And it's a great time to have momentum, really come together. That's when those other teams came together, too, looking back." Though this is the seventh division title for the "Bald Eagle," the 15-year veteran is finding it no less exhilarating than any of the others. "I'm enjoying this one just as much - just to be part of it," the 35-year-old defensive co-captain earnestly assured. "It's a great thrill to be part of a team that believes in each other, and plays like a team. I'm proud to be associated with it."…PACKER PATTER: Devine said Tuesday's weather had given him no cause to regret his decision to delay the Packers' departure for New Orleans until Thursday. They originally had been scheduled to leave this morning and work out in Tulane Stadium the balance of the week. "I don't know if working on synthetic turf down there for four days would be such a good idea either," he explained. The artificial surface reportedly is more likely to produce "tired legs" than natural grass. Plus we wanted to put in our game plan here," Devine said. "We have our equipment here, we've got our meeting rooms, our training room. It's just easier to do it here. Putting in your game plan on the road is tough."…The Packers will return from New Orleans Sunday night and then on Tuesday leave for Wake Forest University at Winston-Salem N.C. where they will prepare for the championship game with Washington on Dec. 24…Commenting on casualty list, Devine reported. "Ken Bowman is having a shoulder problem again but otherwise everybody is in relatively good shape."…One of the most elated members of the new Central Division champions is Dave Kopay, the veterans running back previously employed by five other NFL teams. "It's the first time for me," he beamed, "and it's a great experience. Like Mac Lane said, 'A lot of these young fellows don't know how lucky they are. He's 30-years-old and it's the first title for him. It took him five years – and it took me nine."

'PACKERS PLAY AS TEAM'

DEC 13 (Green Bay) - Just one short year ago, Jim Hill was reluctantly residing on the San Diego Chargers' bench and pondering his pro football future. It was an unaccustomed role for the tall, articulate Texan, who had been a 3-year starter at free safety for the Chargers until Harland Svare suddenly stepped down as general manager to succeed Sid Gillman as head coach late in the season. Today, the acknowledged leader of the Packers skilled secondary, Hill can discuss those



days with detachment, although he admits it was more than a little unsettling at the time. "Coach Svare took over for the last four games and no one knew what was going to happen," says Jim. "He made a lot of changes, so everybody was pretty much in limbo. We didn't know what was going to happen except that we knew something was. It's just like in any business. When somebody new comes in, he wants to bring in his own people, and you have to expect that. One day, when I was at the television station where I was working in sports, I got a telephone call from Coach Svare's secretary. I knew right away that this was it. I said to myself, 'I'm gone.' It was just a matter of where I was going to. And I was right." Not unexpectedly, considering the Packers present eminence, Hill says, "I'm glad it worked out the way it did - despite the cold weather." Considerably more attuned to San Diego's 70-plus degree, year-around temperatures, Hill was sporting two frostbitten fingers on one hand, souvenirs of the title-clinching triumph over the Minnesota Vikings. But he added with an appreciative grin, "In fact, in the second half, it got quite warm." The former Texas A. & I. athlete, who has known the frustration of a consistent loser with the Chargers, attributes the Packers rise to Dan Devine's direction and example. "You have to have the right atmosphere to win," he said. "It starts from the head man and goes right down to the guys in the equipment room. The atmosphere here is the kind a lot of guys, an awful lot of guys, would like to be in, but never get the chance to experience. I wish now I'd started my career here. But maybe things work out best when they work out. I just hope my contribution has been pretty good. If I were to use one word to describe what makes Coach Devine a winner, it would be discipline. Once you have the respect of your ball players, you're on your way. Then you put in the discipline and you have the players doing things your way. And it's pretty hard to beat a disciplined ball club." Talent, he noted in this connection, is only a part of winning. "I've always felt the Chargers had just excellent talent," Hill said. "I don't know why they didn't win. I think the big difference between here and the Chargers is that the Packers play as a team. That is, the Chargers play as a team, but not as a complete team. Here, it starts with the natural closeness of the guys - the closeness we have off the field carries over on the field. In other words, once practice is over, it isn't that he goes his way and I go my way and we don't see each other until the next day. We go anywhere and everywhere together. That's the only way you're going to succeed. You've got to know each other." Hill, who was the Packers interception leader until Willie Buchanon pilfered a pair in Minnesota Sunday afternoon, has all but forgotten last December's time of trial. I don't have any ill feelings about being traded," he said. "That's just part of the business. And you have to accept it in a businesslike way. Besides," he said with a sly smile, "if you get traded to a division champion, you certainly can't be mad about it."


Brockington Lane

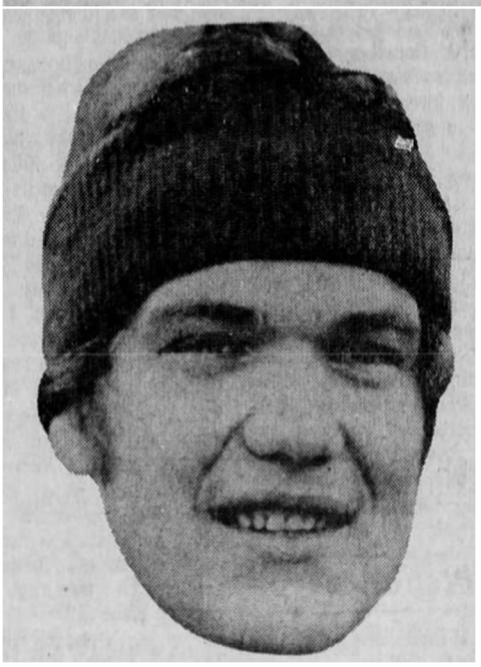
BROCK, LANE GET AP HONOR

DEC 13 (New York) - John Brockington and MacArthur Lane, the running bulls who ignited Green Bay to new post-Lombardi heights, shared today the honor of NFL offensive player of the week. Brockington, a second-year pro from Ohio State, ran for 114 yards and topped 1,000 for the second straight season - the first man to accomplish that feat his first two years in the league - as the Packers slammed Minnesota 23-7. The Pack, 9-4, locked up the National Conference Central Division title against the Vikings and are headed for a Christmas Eve playoff game against the Redskins in Washington. Lane came to Green Bay in a trade with St. Louis. The Packers gave up onetime $600,000 bonus boy Donny Anderson and it's working out wonderfully. The 225-pound veteran from Utah State crunched for 99 yards against Minnesota and broke a key 37-yarder that set up the first Packer score. "Both these guys appreciate what the offensive line does for them," said Packer Coach Dan Devine. "I like that. Any coach likes that." Devine said the 220-pound Brockington had "his best blocking games the past two weeks. And Lane, from what I've seen and heard, is one of the best blocking backs in the National Football League. Green Bay hasn't been so excited over its Packers since the late Vince Lombardi quit as coach in 1967. The Pack had suffered through a 24-29-3 record including Devine's rookie season of 1971. If Green Bay can upset Washington, the Packers would earn the host role for the National Conference championship game and the Devine boys would be one step from the Super Bowl that the Packers twice won in the Lombardi Era. Other NFL offensive stars receiving serious consideration were Cincinnati wide receiver Chip Myers, St. Louis quarterback Jim Hart, Kansas City runner Wendell Hayes, Miami runner Mercury Morris, San Diego wide receiver Gary Garrison and New York Jets quarterback Joe Namath.

MARCOL 'MARRIED' ONLY TO PACK FOR NOW

DEC 14 (Green Bay Press-Gazette) - This has to be the most hectic – and delightful -- month of Chester Marcol's young life. Not only is Czeslaw a member of a division championship team in his very first pro season, a project to which he has made a spectacular contribution, but he is within reach of an all-time National Football League record for field goals. And, as the scoring leader of the National Football Conference, he is an obvious and major contender for offensive "Rookie of the Year" honors. If this were not enough, matrimony also is imminent for the Polish-born placekicker. In fact, Chester had the latter item all worked out...in early November. Announcing his plans to wed the night of Dec. 30, he said. "I know there's

Marcol 'Married' Only to Pack for Now



a good chance we'll be in the playoffs the next day, but that will be no problem. I've got it all figured out. My girl (Barbara Pullan) lives in Grand Rapids (Mich.) and it only takes 27 minutes to fly from there to Green Bay," he said. "So we can have a 7:30 wedding, have a little reception and I can get back here the same night before curfew (11 o'clock).' It sounded simple. But Chester, confronted by certain realities which hadn't occurred to him, admitted Wednesday he has decided to abandon his original plan after due consideration. The Packers, who left this morning for New Orleans and their final regular season assignment, still must get past the Washington Redskins Dec. 24 in order to bring about a New Year's Eve playoff in Lambeau Field. But Marcol is reluctant to gamble there will not be one, for obvious reasons. "I'm not going to get married December 30," he said, explaining, "That's too much hassle. Who knows about the weather?" The suggestion was there might not be any commercial flights that night, which would make it a bit awkward if he were to find himself in Grand Rapids. Asked how his fiancee was adjusting to the change in plans, Marcol replied with great practicality, "Barbara doesn't have any choice. Right now, we're working on new arrangements." Those, he indicated, are likely to remain a secret - at least for the present. "Actually, the original date was set so long ago," Chester informed, "I wasn't even drafted then. I didn't know what was going to happen." If the nuptials do occur between now and that possible playoff, Marcol assured it will be business as usual as soon as they have taken place. "There will be no problem concentrating on my kicking," he assured with a surprisingly straight face. "I'll get married and then it will be back to football." Exhibiting a boyish smile, he added, "We'll have our honeymoon later." Although he is considered to be a prime candidate for the NFC's offensive "rookie of the year" honor, the Polish-born placekicker says he has given little thought to this possibility. "I have no time to think about it," he said, "with all these trips and playoffs. If it comes, it comes. If it doesn't come, it wouldn't bother me. Especially if we go to the Super Bowl," he noted with a grin. "Anyway, first it's the team, then the individuals. If the team does well, those statistics look pretty good. If you don't win, they don't look very good." The curly-haired freshman takes the same off-hand approach to his chances of erasing the current NFL single season record for field goals. That mark, held by Jim Turner, is 34. Marcol presently has 30 successes - in 43 attempts. "It doesn't happen many times that you get to try five field goals in one game," Chester realistically points out. "So I'm not giving the record a lot of thought. If we try and make that many, it's good. If not, that's all right, too." Marcol attributes a large part of his sensational success to his holder, ex-Cowboy Ron Widby, and center Ken Bowman. "After I've seen what other holders around the league do, I'm glad to have Ron holding for me," he said. "I don't think there was one time this season I kicked a ball with the laces backward (facing him). I can't remember any bad snaps either. I can remember a couple that weren't right on the button like most of them are, but not any that were bad. Those two (the center and holder) mean close to 50 per cent of your success," Chester asserted. "If the ball doesn't come back there like it should, and if the holder doesn't get it down there like it should be, you're not going to make it."

'OASIS' ALLOWS PACKER PRACTICE

DEC 14 (Green Bay Press-Gazette) – Coach Dan Devine, deprived of the week's first scheduled workout by Tuesday's snowstorm, expressed satisfaction with Wednesday's one-hour session, held on the South Oneida Street practice field. "The field (the inner field was cleared for the occasion) was in good shape," Devine said. "They (custodian John Proski and his crew) did a great job of clearing the field. It was like a little oasis in the middle of all that snow. I told the squad when we went out New Orleans had just called and said they were having trouble finding a place to practice, and wondered if they could use ours," he confided with a chuckle. "But they didn't buy that." The Packers find out today what the weather is like in the home of the Sugar Bowl. They will be working out in Tulane Stadium, where Oklahoma meets Penn State New Year's Eve, the balance of the week. That, of course, also will be the site of Sunday's match with the Saints. Devine, who has listed center Ken Bowman as questionable for Sunday's finale indicated cornerback Ken Ellis continues to appear "sound" after playing two full games with a dislocated shoulder. "I don't know what his medical situation will be when the season is over," Devine said. "I would think there would have to be some post-season consultation between the team physicians, the trainer and myself." The Packer leader, turning his attention to the Saints, admitted, "You have to be concerned about the possibility of a letdown, now that we have the championship clinched, but I'm not expecting one." Two of the many congratulatory messages Devine has received since the title-clinching came from St. Louis Cardinal stars Johnny Roland and Roger Wehrli, who played for the Packer coach when he was at the University of Missouri. "Congratulations on winning your first divisional title," Roland said in a wire. "Wish I could be there with you sharing in your moment of triumph." A Christmas greeting from Wehrli and his wife exhorted "Green Bay all the way. Good luck." Devine is still chuckling over a heartfelt comment, made Saturday by his daughter, Sarah, a Pulaski High School student. Looking anxiously ahead to that confrontation with the Vikings, she said, "Gee, I hope we win tomorrow. Daddy's been pretty tense all week. In fact, everybody at our house has been pretty tense. Everybody's been yelling at everybody." The Redskins' Sunday finale against Buffalo will be well scouted,

Devine indicated. "Wally Cruice may have a helper in Washington," he said. Flanker Carroll Dale, taking note of the many "friends" who suddenly surface at title time, reported with a chuckle, "I'm getting requests for Washington tickets already. I thought' I had heard from everybody I knew the first time we played in Washington last month, but it looks like there are some new ones in the latest mail." Bob Harlan, Packer assistant general manager, didn't make the trip to New Orleans. He couldn't be spared from the home front because of the Dec. 31 playoff possibility. "It's amazing how many things there are to do in connection with that," he said, adding, "Jan Van Duser of the NFL is coming in tomorrow to re-examine a few things, like accommodations, and so forth, just in case." Van Duser is the assistant to NFC President George Halas.

PACKERS REBOUND DUE TO MANY REASONS

DEC 14 (New Orleans Times-Picayune) - Green Bay finished last in the NFC Central Division last season when only six teams in the National Football League had poorer records than the Packers' 4-8-2 mark. Today, the Packers are 1972's NFC Central Division champions with a 9-4 record and will end their regular season Sunday when they meet the Saints in Tulane Stadium. Green Bay is in the playoffs for the first time since their 1967 team went on to become Super Bowl II champion and there have been few success stories to top the Packers' comeback. "No doubt about it," said Saints head coach J. D. Roberts. "This is a completely different Green Bay outfit from the one we beat in Milwaukee last year. Coach Dan Devine shook up his squad and came up with a combination that's been tough to beat. They're tremendously improved in their defensive secondary and, of course, Scott Hunter has continued to develop nicely in his second season at quarterback and John Brockington is still Brockington. The Packers are a solid team and particularly strong defensively." There are many reasons for this metamorphosis of the Packers from a team which has had one winning season since its glorious Vince Lombardi era of the early to mid '60s and now has visions of sugar plums dancing in the heads of the hardy residents of that small Wisconsin city. Last January, second-year head coach Devine came away from the draft with two youngsters destined for key roles in 1972 - cornerback Willie Buchanon (first round) and kicker Chester Marcol (second round). In February, running back MacArthur Lane was acquired from St. Louis. In April, free safety Jimmy Hill came from San Diego. And, two weeks before this season began in September, guard Malcolm Snider joined the Pack. This transaction gained import when All-Pro guard Gale Gillingham was sidelined by knee surgery. Bart Starr retired and was added to the coaching staff, a move which aided the development of young quarterback Scott Hunter and provided the second-year signal-caller with a confidence factor on the sideline as Starr relayed each play to the field via a wide receiver shuttle. Things fell into place and Green Bay won four of its first five games. After dividing their next six games, the Packers were faced with their big challenge - victories in their next two games against Detroit and Minnesota could be part of a combination that would deliver the Central title. The Lions never had a chance. Green Bay forced six turnovers in the first half and turned four of them into a 23-0 halftime lead that cushioned a 33-7 victory. The same day, Minnesota lost. Last Sunday, the Vikings felt the same sting of the Green Bay opportunists. Trailing 0-7, the Packers took the second half kickoff and moved in for the first of Marcol's three field goals. Then the defense and offense blended to virtual perfection. Linebacker Fred Carr ran a recovered fumble to the Minnesota 28. Six plays later, Hunter scored from the one. Buchanon returned an interception 25 yards to the Minnesota 24. Four plays later, Lane went three for the TD. Again, Buchanon intercepted. Eighteen plays later, Marcol got three more points from the 42. Cornerback Ken Ellis ran back an intercepted pass to Minnesota's 35. In seven plays, the Packers got a 10-yard Marcol FG. Five second-half possessions. Five second-half scores. These are some of the reasons Green Bay is NFC Central champion.

ABRAMOWICZ WILL MISS PACKER GAME

DEC 15 (New Orleans) - The New Orleans Saints placed wide receiver Danny Abramowicz on the injured reserve list Wednesday, taking him out of the Saints' starting lineup for the first time in six years. The team said the action will not endanger Abramowicz' record of having caught at least one pass in 77 consecutive games played, since he will not be on the game roster. The league record for consecutive games with passes caught is 96. Abramowicz suffered a torn knee ligament last Sunday against New England. Replacing Abramowicz on the active roster will be Creston Whitaker, a wide receiver pulled up from the taxi squad. The Saints said Dave Long missed the Thursday practice but is responding to treatment and probably will work out Friday. He is expected to play Sunday against Green Bay.

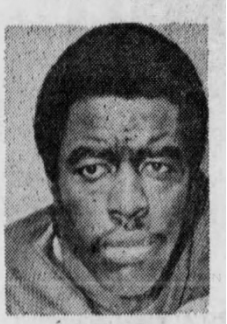
PACK SECONDARY SEEKS SHUTOUT

DEC 15 (New Orleans-Green Bay Press-Gazette) – Although they bear no malice toward the New Orleans Saints, members of the Packer secondary would like to pitch a shutout in Sunday's regular season finale here. That kind of performance would put the Messrs. Jim Hill, Ken Ellis, Al Matthews and Willie Buchanon in the National Football League record book under "Fewest Touchdown Passes Allowed, Season." The revamped outfield, which has made a dazzling turnabout from 1972 sporosity. has permitted only five TDs by air in 13 games this championship year - one less than the record, set in 1970 by the Minnesota Vikings. If that mark should elude them, the Packer foursome still could emerge with the team record, which happens to be seven, set in 1967. Necessarily, the concentration was upon winning for momentum's sake as the Packers arrived here Thursday under overcast - and sometimes weeping skies - to continue preparations at Tulane Stadium for Sunday's contest. But Ellis, the Pack's ever candid cornerback, admitted following a full scale workout staged in relatively balmy, mid-50s temperature, "It (the record) has to cross your mind. It means a lot to us and we're going out Sunday and work like heck so we can keep it." That, he admitted, may take considerable doing. The Saints throw a lot, too," he said. "Threw 52 times in their last ball game. And Archie Manning has a good completion percentage, too. It's going to be a challenge," Ellis avowed. "As far as that's concerned, every game seems to have been a challenge for us back there. Because we were doing well, I think our opponents came out and tried to do us in. Like before our game against San Francisco in Milwaukee last month, I understand they were building our record up pretty good out in San Francisco because we hadn't allowed a touchdown pass up to that point. That's why they threw at us a lot - plus we shut off their running game

The Packer Outfield



KEN ELLIS



JIM HILL



AL MATTHEWS



WILLIE BUCHANON

- and they did get two touchdowns off us." Although the members of the Packer Quartet had not played together as a unit until mid-July, Ellis says he was confident from the outset they would be an instant success, despite the premium that is placed upon experience in the NFL. "In training camp you could see it," he said, "and once we started the pre-season games, we were a well-coordinated unit. There was no doubt in my mind even then that we would do as well as we've done." Jim Hill, the quarterback of the revamped secondary, admits the record would be desirable but he insisted, "Right now, the most important thing is that we win. If we can win and get a record in the process fine. Setting records isn't any good unless you win. Gale Sayers set a lot of records for the Bears but they didn't win. Whether we win or lose is going to affect our attitude going into Washington," the mustachioed defender added. "And your attitude is a lot better preparing for a game when you've just won. You work harder and you concentrate better. "There's a lot of individual pride going into a game like this. You want to have the feeling you can go out and beat any team on any Sunday. The thing that has been to our benefit this year, and the main reason we want to win Sunday is we have a bunch of winners on this ball club."…PACKER PATTER: The Packers let out a collective whoop when Coach Dan Devine blew a final whistle in Tulane Stadium Thursday afternoon, signaling the end of practice after a steady drizzle had suddenly erupted into a downpour. Although light and intermittent rain fell through most of the afternoon's workout, Devine expressed satisfaction with the results. "We were able to do some things in the area of pass defense (obviously because of the good footing on artificial turf) that we haven't been able to do for a long time," he said…Devine, holding forth at an evening press conference for the benefit of New Orleans' fourth estate, insisted he did not expect his NFC Central Division champions to be taking the Saints for granted. "The Saints beat us last year and we made Bob Gresham look like the greatest back in the league," he said. "I don't see how we could possibly be overconfident playing a team that beat us last year. We were both 4-8-2 in 1971 and they now have an improved quarterback in Archie Manning. "But I'll be honest with you," DD admitted. "This game isn't like the Detroit and Minnesota games the last two weeks, which we had to win. By the same token, I would be doing our squad an injustice if we looked at this as anything other than a football game."…Asked if he had not per- mitted himself to look beyond Sunday to that playoff game in Washington Dec. 24, Devine smilingly conceded, "Yes, there is lots of thought about Washington. Miami has a great football team," he volunteered in this connection, "But I think the Redskins probably have the best personnel of anybody in the league."…The Packers are 10-point favorites over the Saints. according to the oddsmakers. Sunday's game. Incidentally, will start at 12 o'clock, Green Bay time…Rumors persist that J. D. Roberts, New Orleans coach, will be fired following Sunday's game but John Mecom, the club's youthful owner, has steadfastly refused to confirm them…Quote of the Week: A New Orleans fan, watching the informally attired Packers board the bus at their Marriott Hotel headquarters Thursday en route to practice, candidly observed, "These guys don't like those dudes who have been doing all that stuff on TV."

PERSONALITY PARADE (WARD WALSH)

DEC 15 (New Orleans-Green Bay Press-Gazette) – Suddenly division champions after a five-year drought, the Packers are content to enjoy the moment, not to mention the anticipation of their Dec. 24 playoff date in Washington, when they permit themselves to think past Sunday's regular season finale here against the Saints. But one of their number, running back Ward Walsh, cannot help occasionally looking ahead to 1973 even though he too is enjoying the fringe benefits of winning while biding his time on the move list. "I'm just a sack now on the taxi squad," the boyishly handsome University of Colorado alumnus said as the Packers United Airlines charter droned toward this Louisiana metropolis Thursday, "But I feel I can make the club next year." There was no suggestion of braggadocio. Rather, it was said with a quiet, inner conviction - the kind which stems from long experience with overcoming both adversity and physical limitations. "The big reason I think I can make it with the Packers is that I'm hungry," explained Walsh, who was a starter for the Houston Oilers for half of the 1971 season and four games this year before incoming Coach Bill Peterson released him as the Oilers continued to flounder. "I grew up as an orphan in California and I lived in five foster homes," Ward said. "I didn't do anything wrong to get moved around that much. It's just hard to find homes for 12-year-old boys. All of my foster parents treated me well except for the first ones. But they didn't yell much when I broke something. You could see they didn't care. When I was in fourth grade, I was always a ball boy for a high school in my home town. They took me along on their trips. That's when I first decided I wanted to be a football player. For me, pro football was a way out. Just like somebody in the ghetto. I had a basic game plan - a plan for life. Play high school football, get a college scholarship, play in the pros and then get enough money together to go into business for myself. That was my way out of the predicament I found myself in. It's important to me that I eventually be able to be my own boss in business. I want to be involved - I don't want to be a clock puncher. I think too many people just put their time in at the job and go home." Walsh has a new "game plan" at this point - one designed to put him among the Packers final 40 come 1973's season opener. "I'm going to have to lift weights real regularly this winter and try to gain about 10 pounds," he said, "because this is a big team. I'm 202 now and I think 210 or 121 is about the maximum I can carry. I don't have any special ability - I only have average

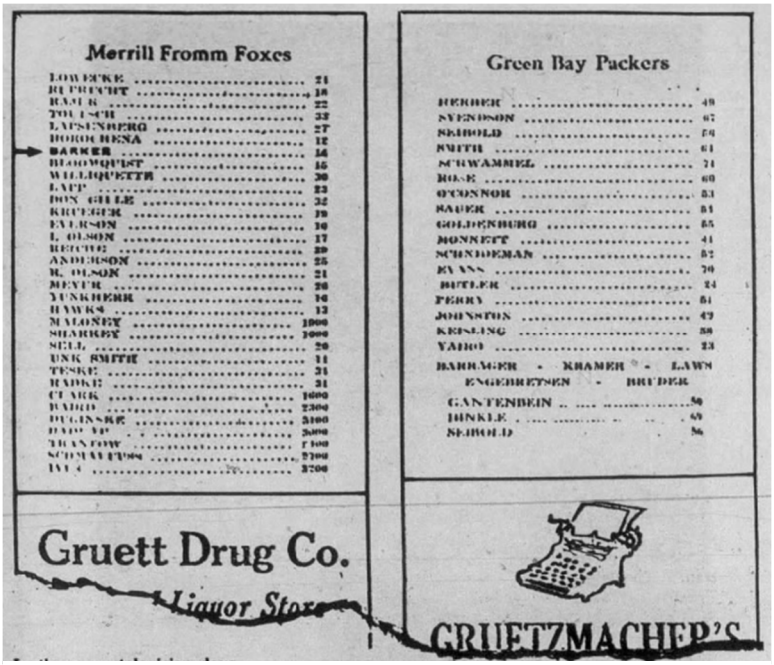
speed, so I'll have to make it on other things," Ward says with engaging candor. "At Colorado, they made me a fullback but I was mostly a blocker for Bobby Anderson. When you play Oklahoma and Nebraska, you do learn techniques and I think this has carried over and helped me in the pros. I think that's my long suit - blocking. I thought I was as good a blocker as there was around until I saw MacArthur Lane," Walsh ruefully confided. "He put me in my place. I've never seen a blocker like that before. He's amazing. I can get the job done, too. But Mac hits people in the letters and still knocks them on their back. I tend to stay lower. I just don't have the strength to knock 'em over like Mac does. Of course a lot of things influence your chances of making the team," Walsh noted. "But if I work hard this winter and play to the best of my ability next pre-season. I think I have a good chance of making it. I worked hard in the off-season this year to make the Oilers but there's going to be a little more incentive this winter. It's sort of like going from the minor leagues to the pros. I think Green Bay is just about the top. I think to the mind of the average kid of my generation, Green Bay is the most. Just the name is prestigious. There's a lot of pride that goes along with this team."

HALF OF FIRST-ROUND NFL DRAFT CHOICES ARE STARTING

DEC 15 (New Orleans) - Led by Pittsburgh running sensation Franco Harris, half of pro football's 26 first-round draft choices made it as rookie NFL starters. John Reaves, the all-time collegiate passing yardage king from Florida, was the only quarterback among the top selections to become No. 1 with his National Football League club. But, it wasn't all fun. Reaves was dumped on his posterior an incredible 33 times by onrushing defenders while hitting 47 per cent of his throws for 1,285 yards and only five touchdowns. Harris became a starter after a half dozen games and then set the NFL ablaze. The 230-pounder, who played in the shadow of Lydell Mitchell in the Penn State backfield, has romped for 1,021 yards and nine scores. Middle linebacker Jeff Siemon of Minnesota and former Villanova wide receiver Mike Siani, making it big with Oakland, are two other glittering success stories. Siemon, as brilliant in the classroom as on the field at Stanford, received an early shot when veteran Viking linebacker Lonnie Warwick was hurt in October. The kid was so solid that Warwick was shipped to the taxi squad when he healed. Siani cracked a strong Raider receiving corps as a running mate with Fred Biletnikoff and Ray Chester. He has grabbed 26 passes for 477 yards and five scores. Due to trades, four teams - Washington, Los Angeles, New England and San Diego - got no picks in the first round last January. Picking up two each were Green Bay, Chicago and both the New York Jets and Giants. Walt Patulski, chosen first out of Notre Dame among all of 1971's college heroes, showed steady improvement at defensive end with Buffalo as the Bills build around him and O.J. Simpson for the future. Willie Buchanon, a San Diego State product who was one of Green Bay's No. 1 picks, became a major tool in the Packers rise. The talented cornerback has been a starter from the beginning and is tied with Ken Ellis for the team lead in interceptions with four. The Pack also took Nebraska quarterback Jerry Tagge, who has spent his rookie year behind Scott Hunter. Tagge-has hit-9-of-23-in brief appearances. Tom Darden's first year parallels that of Buchanon. An instant starter at safety for Cleveland, the ex-Michigan ace has three interceptions with one return of 64 yards. Bobby Moore was an All-America running back at Oregon, but the St. Louis Cards have used him more as a wide receiver. He already has a role in a 98-yard pass play, the longest in NFL history. Moore grabbed a short bullet from Jim Hart last week against Los Angeles and blazed from the Cardinal one-yard-line to the Rams' one, 98 yards without scoring. He has caught a team high 27 for 451 yards and two touchdowns, has run nine times for 44 yards and is the top St. Louis kickoff returner with a 22-yard average. Sherm White, a superstar talent at defensive end, has performed spectacular feats for Cincinnati but remains inconsistent. He missed three recent games with injury, but the 240-pounder from California is loaded with talent. Clarence Ellis, Atlanta's free safety from Notre Dame, came back from summer knee surgery to become a main cog in the National Conferences best pass defense. Offensive guard Royce Smith, the New Orleans Saints' No. 1 pick from Georgia, was thrust into the pit early when veteran Del Williams was hurt and started 10 games. His first efforts were opposite Merlin Olsen of LA and Curley Culp of Kansas City and he learned fast. Larry Jacobsen, last year's Outland Trophy winner as the top college lineman, made steady progress with the Giants and "Baby Huey" from Nebraska has the New Yorkers smiling as the season nears the end. Wide receiver Eldridge Small from Texas A&I has been a second teamer all year. He was the second No. 1 of the Giants. The Chicago Bears' top pick, tackle Lionel Antoine from Southern Illinois, had surgery after twice injuring his knee. But, Coach Abe Gibron has him ready for this week and will try Antoine both ways to help determine how the Bears will draft next month. Mike Taylor, a linebacking terror from Michigan, recently jumped into the Jets' starting defense when old pro Larry Grantham was injured. Gerald Barkum of Jackson State, a wideout and the Jets' other No. 1 selection, has spent most of the year behind all-time pass receiving champ Don Maynard but has grabbed 16 for 304 yards. Boston College's Bill Thomas made the Dallas squad as a running back, but has settled for a role as a kick returner and special teamer following shoulder surgery. Herb Orvis, a gangling 240-pound defensive tackle from Colorado, is playing more and more with Detroit and was finally given a start by the Lions last week at Buffalo. He Terry Beasley, Heisman Trophy winner Pat Sullivan's premier target at Auburn, is a three-time loser to injury but remains a hot future threat at San Francisco. He pulled a hamstring in July, later broke a toe that cost him six weeks and then turned an ankle. Offensive tackle Tom Drogas from Oregon went No. 1 to Baltimore and found himself behind 10-year star Bob Vogel. His playing time increased slowly and when it was learned that Vogel will retire, the Colts began looking to the former Duck star. Mike Kadish, a Notre Dame defensive tackle, got behind Coach Don Shula's eight ball for being overweight and, after slimming, picked up an injury. He has not played a minute at Miami and rests on an undefeated taxi squad. Another Nebraska man, runner Jeff Kinney, is a second unit member with Kansas City although he started two games when Ed Podolak and Wendell Hayes were hurt. He has 38 rushes for 122 yards. Tight end Riley Odoms, Denver's No. 1 pick from the University of Houston, has alternated with Billy Masters as a "messenger" carrying Bronco plays. He has 18 receptions for 290 yards. Chicago's other pick, running back Craig Clemons from Iowa, and the Houston Oiler choice. defensive end Greg Sampson of Stanford, are part-timers who rank as valuable in their teams' rebuilding.

REMEMBER THE DAY PACKERS PLAYED FOXES?

DEC 16 (Wales-Waukesha Freeman) - The names on that old program read like a litany of the football saints - Packer-style saints - Hinkle, Engebretsen, Sauer, Herber, Monnett, Bruder, Laws. Aug. 31, 1935: the Green Bay Packers vs. the Merrill Fromm Foxes. The Packers vs. the WHO? That's right. The Merrill Fromm Foxes, at the Merrill Athletic Field. The Great Depression was a blight on the land, but in many respects it was the Golden Age of Sport. It wasn't just the high schools then that drew local fans - the community teams drew them, too. Exhibitions by these groups often drew large crowds. Norman Barker, of 117 South St. remembers those years well. He played as an end on the Merrill Fromm Foxes team that played against those storied Packers. As Barker, now 58, recalls it, Mr. Fromm owned a successful fox farm, was interested in football and was willing to spend some of his success to watch people play - and give them a chance to play. It seems like the price of a season ticket now, in the end zone behind a pole. but the Packers then were willing to risk their hides for a $600 guarantee - as a team. At a reunion in Merrill recently Barker and the few others from the Foxes team who showed up reminisced a Bit, Barker said, "I think we lost 35-0. One of the guys there said it was 35-7, but I don't think we ever scored. They ran it up to 21-0 quick and then fooled around." The Foxes played 8 to 10 games a year, going around against other community-based teams in places like Wisconsin Rapids. Stevens Point, Tomahawk, Wausau. In those pre-television days crowds gathered for those games at 10 to 50 cents a customer. Fans were "down on the field" and could see their favorites, hear the thud of contact. The players played because they enjoyed it, and profits, if any, went for equipment. The players were rugged, too, Barker says. "I don't think we had any insurance, but there were always a couple of doctors around on the bench." Barker played his high school football at Merrill, then spent three years with the Foxes. The year of the game with the Packers, 1935, was the year one of the most famous and talented of all Packers came to Green Bay – Don Hutson. "I think he was at the All-Star game then," Barker recalls. He saw the first game the fabled Hutson ever played for the Packers. It was against the hated Bears at Lambeau Field. "In those days if you were deep in your own territory a lot of time you'd kick on first or second down. Herber could throw the ball 90 yards. It looked like a punt. Hutson got past Beattie Feathers on the first play of the game. He had a touchdown, and that's the way it ended, 7-0." The game itself was different, a little, anyway. Teams ran out of the "Notre Dame box," and short punt formation. The single-wing was used, the double wing rarely. As for being rugged, the rules were designed along those lines. A player who was taken out of the game couldn't return to action in the same quarter, which made the offensive and defensive units pretty much the same. A passer had to be at least five yards behind the line of scrimmage, Barker says. There was a lot of dropkicking, and the terminology of today's game was unknown. In 1937 Barker left Merrill and went to college for a year at Whitewater, "but I went broke." Since then he has lived mainly in the Waukesha County area with his family of six children. He works at Waukesha Motors. And it's only now, just this year, that he went back for the first reunion of that old team. It brought back memories, memories many a man would be proud to have, to be able to say, "Well, in this game I played against the Packers..." But that's something Barker never has done - brag. But it really is something.



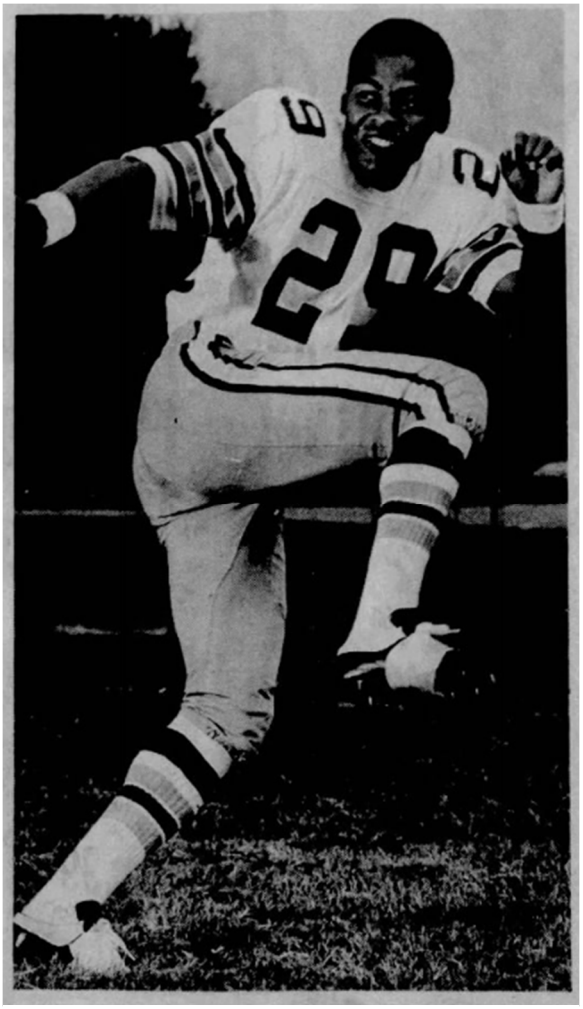
The program for the 1935 Packer game, besides Barker in the Foxes columns, listed such Packer greats as "Buckets" Goldenberg.

PUT WHITAKER ON SAINT ROSTER

DEC 16 (New Orleans Times-Picayune) - Rookie receiver Creston Whitaker will replace Danny Abramowicz on the Saint roster Sunday when New Orleans takes on Green Bay at noon in Tulane Stadium. Whitaker and Margene Adkins worked with the first unit during drills this week and one of them will replace Abramowicz in the starting lineup. The Saints also said there is a chance running back Jim Ford, who has spent much of the season recovering from knee problems, will get his first start of the year. The only other lineup spot not decided is at right defensive end where either Dave Long or Richard Neal will open. The nod would likely go to Long who is stronger against the run, but he suffered a bruised instep against New England last week and hasn't worked. The game will begin at noon to facilitate national television.

NEW ORLEANS' COACH MAY HAVE JOB ON LINE AGAINST PACKERS

DEC 16 (New Orleans) - The New Orleans Saints take on the playoff-bound Green Bay Packers Sunday in a game that doesn't mean much except, perhaps, to Saint Coach J.D. Roberts whose job may be on the line. Green Bay, a team that went from 4-8-2 last season to 9-4 this season, has the Central Division title wrapped up and meets Washington next weekend in a playoff game that could lead to the Super Bowl. New Orleans, meanwhile, needs a victory to avoid equaling the six-year-old team's worst record, 2-11-1. That mark came in 1970 when Roberts took over in midstream from Tom Fears, who was fired by owner John Mecom Jr. The Saints were 4-8-2 under Roberts last year but slipped back this season with victories only over Los Angeles and Philadelphia. The most disappointing loss of the season came last week when the Saints lost to the New England Patriots 17-10 despite being favored by more than a touchdown. The day after that game,



THE PACK IS BACK: And Billie Hayes, 6-1, 175 cornerback, from San Diego State, hopes to put on the Green Bay Packs on their backs, when the New Orleans Saints host the Packers in the season finale. The game is scheduled to get underway at 12:05. (Louisiana Weekly)

Mecom held a lengthy meeting with Roberts and other team officials. Afterwards, he said Roberts' status with the Saints in the future would not be decided or even discussed until after the Packer game. Another loss and the underdog Saints would be assured of getting the second choice - behind Houston - in next month's draft. The game is just about the first chance all year for the Packers to relax after week after week of proving themselves, and Coach Dan Devine fears the letdown may cause trouble. "We've had good workouts, but they have not been intense as the last couple weeks," he said Friday. "If the game is worth playing, it's worth playing to win." Devine, who would boast a 10-4 record in only his second year as a pro coach if Green Bay wins Sunday, said the only way to play pro football is all out. "Anything less and you're risking getting hurt," he said. Two players will sit on the bench in the tuneup for the Christmas Eve playoff at Washington. Center Ken Bowman will rest his sore shoulder, and receiver-punt returner Jon Staggers will stay off his injured ankle. The Packers have the opportunity to set some records Sunday, including one for fewest touchdown passes allowed in a season. Minnesota holds the mark with six, but Green Bay's secondary has allowed only five so far in 1972. Saints' quarterback Archie Manning has thrown more often than any other NFL quarterback, with 424 pass attempts, 212 completions, 2,639 yards, 16 TD passes and 20 interceptions. "Manning can look bad on three plays and then blow you out," Devine said. Rookie kicker Chester Marcol has already set a Packer season record with 30 field goals, but he is within reach of the NFL record of 34 in a season, set by Jim Turner with the New York Jets in 1968. "It doesn't happen many times that you get to try five field goals in one game," Marcol said. "So I'm not giving the record a lot of thought. If we try and make that many, it's good. If not, that's all right, too." Kickoff Sunday is 12 noon, CST.

PACK'S FEW TURNOVERS TELL '72 SUCCESS STORY

DEC 16 (New Orleans-Green Bay Press-Gazette) – Just one year ago, the Packers and the New Orleans Saints were two of a kind. They finished a mutually dismal 1971 season with identical 4-8-2 records, the Saints victory total including a 29-21 decision over the green and gold. Sunday afternoon, they meet in their regular season finale at Tulane Stadium with the Packers bound for a National Football Conference playoff and the Saints for a high draft choice. The Packers have made a full, 360-degree turnabout numerically in the interim with a record that now reads 9-4 following successive and critical triumphs over the Detroit Lions and Minnesota Vikings. But the Saints have continued to decline. They find themselves with a 2-10-1 mark at this point and no chance to even match last year's inartistic figure. That, however, is another story. Our concern today is how the '72 Packers wrought their starting revival while the Saints were floundering. One obvious explanation is a drastic reduction in turnovers. Last year the Packers surrendered the football 24 times on interceptions and 23 times on fumbles. In 13 games this season, they have been intercepted only nine times and lost but 10 fumbles. A related development has been a sharp rise in the Pack's takeaway-giveaway ratio, a highly accurate indicator of a team's success. They have waylaid 16 opponent passes and recovered the same number of fumbles, giving them a plus-13 rating, one of the most favorable figures in the NFL. Significant in statistics, of course, is the human factor. This is not the same team, individually or phychologically, which settled for 4-8-2 a year ago. There has been a substantial turnover in personnel, particularly on offense. Five of the 11 starters are new, chief among them MacArthur Lane as an all-purpose partner for John Brockington at running back, who also has contributed greatly to team morale with his clowning in the dressing room and during tense moments on a stadium-bound bus. Rookie Leland Glass also has supplanted John Spilis at split end, huge Bill Hayhoe has stepped in for Francis Peay at left tackle and Malcolm Snider, acquired from Atlanta in the Dave Hampton trade, has replaced the injured Gale Gillingham at right guard. The other offense change has found Leonard Garrett, a 15th round draft choice from New Mexico Highlands, to be an adequate fill-in for Rich McGeorge. The talented three-year performer who, like Gillingham, has been sidelined for the season by knee surgery. These developments have been in addition to a complete overhaul of the kicking game, which finds rookie Chester Marcol threatening the NFL's single season field goal record as the successor to Tim Webster and Ron Widby, acquired from the Cowboys, ranking among the league's premier punters after succeeding the departed Donny Anderson in this role. Coach Dan Devine still shudders when he thinks about having to go through the season without Snider. "I think the trade really did Dave Hampton a lot of good," he said here this week, "and it really saved our season. When Gillingham got hurt, we would have to move tackles to guard and shuffle people around, which you don't like to do, if we hadn't had Snider." There are only two new faces on defense, where rookie Willie Buchanon moved in at cornerback and Jim Hill at free safety, but both have been major additions. Buchanon, a prime



Standings

American Conference

East	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts.	OP
x-Miami	14	0	0	1.000	383	171
New York Jets	7	6	0	.538	347	298
Baltimore	5	9	0	.357	235	250
Buffalo	3	9	1	.280	233	360
New England	3	10	0	.231	171	401
Central						
y-Pittsburgh	10	3	0	.769	319	173
y-Cleveland	9	4	0	.692	242	239
Cincinnati	7	6	0	.538	238	212
Houston	1	12	0	.077	147	319
West						
x-Oakland	9	3	1	.731	337	227
Kansas City	7	6	0	.538	270	240
San Diego	4	8	1	.346	262	320
Denver	4	9	0	.308	280	326

National Conference

East	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts.	OP
x-Washington	11	2	0	.846	319	194
y-Dallas	10	3	0	.769	316	217
New York Giants	7	6	0	.538	308	244
St. Louis	3	9	11	.280	169	280
Philadelphia	2	10	1	.192	122	328
Central						
x-Green Bay	9	4	0	.692	274	206
Detroit	7	5	1	.577	305	273
Minnesota	7	7	0	.500	301	252
Chicago	4	8	1	.346	204	247
West						
x-San Francisco	8	5	1	.607	353	249
Atlanta	7	6	0	.538	255	257
Los Angeles	6	6	1	.500	274	252
New Orleans	2	10	1	.192	195	331

x-Clinched division title
y-Clinched playoff berth

Saturday's Games
Miami 16, Baltimore 0
San Francisco 20, Minnesota 17
Only games scheduled

Sunday's Games
All Times EST
Buffalo at Washington, 1 p.m.
Chicago at Oakland, 4 p.m.
Cincinnati at Houston, 2 p.m.
Cleveland at New York Jets, 1 p.m.
Detroit at Los Angeles, 4 p.m.
Green Bay at New Orleans, noon
Kansas City at Atlanta 1 p.m.
New England at Denver, 2 p.m.
New York Giants at Dallas, 4 p.m.
Philadelphia at St. Louis, 2 p.m.
Pittsburgh at San Diego, 4 p.m.

candidate for defensive "Rookie of the Year" honors, gives the Packers the best deep coverage at the left corner since Herb Adderley was at his peak, and Hill has become the acknowledged leader of the secondary, left without a "quarterback" when Willie Wood retired following the 1971 season. Buchanon's arrival also made it possible to transfer Ken Ellis to right cornerback, where he has found an immediate home…PACKER PATTER: Although it was slightly more comfortable than Green Bay would have been at this point, the Packers found Friday's practice weather nothing to write home about. It was a chilly 45 degrees as they worked out in Tulane Stadium under gray skies. Following the one-hour session, Devine listed both center Ken Bowman and wide receiver Jon Staggers as questionable for Sunday's exchange with the Saints. Bowman is nursing a chronic shoulder injury while Staggers has an ankle problem. "If I were to make an educated guess," Devine said, " I would say that Cal Withrow would start in place of Bowman Sunday."…On another personnel matter, he repeated what he had said earlier in the week about Jerry Tagge's prospects of playing against the Saints. "It's possible Tagge will see some action," Devine said…The Packers closed out their preparations with a brief workout in Tulane Stadium this morning. In a continuation of the "togetherness" theme Devine launched just prior to the Detroit game Dec. 1, the team was scheduled to have lunch and dinner together…Devine, asked at a press conference if he thought Bart Starr would make a good head coach in the NFL, replied, "I think Bart has a tremendous number of things going for him. He's dedicated and he's loyal. He would be loyal to any organization he worked for. I think Bart would be successful in anything he would undertake.'…Saints wide receiver Dan Abramowicz Sunday will miss his first regular season game since breaking into the New Orleans lineup as a rookie in 1967. Abramowicz, sidelined by torn knee ligaments, had been placed on the Saints' injured reserve list and Creaton White has been activated from the cab squad to replace him. The Saints' leading scorer and no. 2 pass receiver, Abramowicz has caught at least one pass in 77 consecutive games, a string he now must wait until 1973 to continue…Members of the Saints' offensive unit are impressed with the Packer defense. Harry Hulmes, New Orleans Public Relations Director, reports "The guys on our offense say that, from what they have seen on film, the Packer defense will be the best they've played this year. They say 'We haven't seen anything like this.'"

NOTES AND NOTIONS

DEC 17 (Appleton Post-Crescent) - On the basis of Bart Starr's TV remarks of last Sunday, one would have to say that the chances of his returning as quarterback coach for the Packers next year aren't too bright. He was quite noncommittal when asked about his plans. There'll be some coaching changes in the NFL next year, and it's entirely possible, of course, that Starr will be offered some head mentorship. If such were the case, the salary and prestige would be much greater than he could command as a Green Bay assistant. Starr has certainly played a major role in this year's turnabout…Another former Packer star who has made sizable contribution as a coach is Dave Hanner. Since Green Bay's major improvement has come on defense this year, "Hawg" - as defensive coordinator - deserves a good deal of credit. "Hanner's Howitzers" were reminiscent of "Bengtson's Bombers" of the Lombardi era, in that they were at their best in the two biggest games of the regular season. They limited Detroit and Minnesota to seven points apiece to shrink the season's defensive average to 15.8 points per game (by contrast, the rate was 21.3 in 1971). When the Packers invade Washington Dec. 24, the two stingiest defenses of the NFC will square off. The Redskins have permitted about one point less per game than Green Bay. In the Packer's reign of the '60s, some of the season-long defensive rates were in the ultra-miserly range of 10-12 a game. Since the current defensive unit is exceedingly young - with the exceptions of Dave Robinson and Bob Brown - continued improvement in the next few years is hardly an unrealistic expectation…One of the incentives for today's "meaningless" game, of course, is for the defensive secondary to shut off the air corridor over the Green Bay goal line and thus set a new NFL record for fewest touchdown passes allowed. The Bays will also try to help Chester Marcol set a new league field goal record (he needs four) and/or to capture the NFL scoring title he's only one point behind the Jets' Bobby Howfield. But the biggest incentive will be to remain sharp and retain their momentum for the major confrontation at D.C. There is every indication - on the basis of their big wins over the Lions and the Vikings - that the Packers have reached their peak in late season rather "than fading in the face of an arduous campaign…In one of the pro football weeklies, there was a comment by Minneapolis writer Dick Gordon that although John Brockington and MacArthur Lane had good efforts against the Vikings they can't really be compared to the great Jim Taylor and Paul Hornung. I'm not at all sure about that. I'm a Hornung-Taylor backer from way back, but I must say that the Lane-Brockington combo is coming close to that storied pair in skill and productivity. The current stars run just as hard and are at least as fast as their predecessors (and they're even bigger than Hornung and Taylor were). In nine seasons, Taylor had a husky average of 4.6 yards per carry while Hornung (in nine years) averaged 3.7. For the current season, Lane is averaging 4.4 per try while

PROBABLE STARTING LINEUPS:

OFFENSE

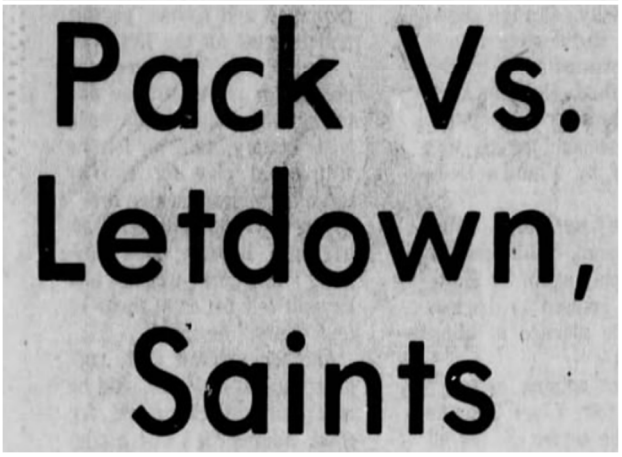
GREEN BAY		NEW ORLEANS	
Glass	W	Newland	R
Hayhoe	L	Morrison	T
Lueck	L	Johnson	G
Withrow		Dieion	C
Snider	R	Williams	G
Himes	R	Hines	T
Garrett	T	Parks	E
Dale	W	Adkins	R
Hunter	Q	Manning	B
Lane	R	Gresham	B
Brockington	R	Butler	B

DEFENSE

C. Williams	L	Neal	E
McCoy	L	Pollard	T
Brown	R	Moers	T
Roche	R	Long	E
Robinson	LL	Roussel	B
Carter	ML	Federspiel	B
Carr	RL	Coiman	
Buchanon	L	Jackson	C
Ellis	R	Lee	C
Matthews	L	Wyatt	S
Hill	R	Holias	S

PACKER-SAINT SERIES

Packers won 1, Saints won 1; points — Packers 50, Saints 36.



Brockington has a 3.8 mark. Hornung and Taylor were excellent receivers, while Lane and Brockington are the current Packers' top two receivers. And, all rate highly as blockers. Taylor and Hornung, of course, were at their clutch-playing best in championship games...and that's a quality.

Lane and Brockington will have a chance to display starting next Sunday. Each will be performing in his first playoff game. Other than that, the big plus for the Hornung-Taylor duo is that it stood the test of time. Though they were marked men in every game after the inception of the championship era, Jim and Paul met every challenge and came through in high style. Don't bet that Brockington and Lane won't have the same staying power.

SAINTS CLOSE OUT SLATE AGAINST PACKERS

DEC 17 (New Orleans Times-Picayune) - New Orleans closes out its 1972 season Sunday at high noon, (instead of the usual 1 p.m. starting time), hosting Central Division champion Green Bay in Tulane Stadium with high hopes that history won't repeat itself. The Packers come to town with that championship safely tucked away and, with a playoff game the following weekend with Washington awaiting, don't figure to have their minds solely on business at hand - namely the Saints. In other words, the Pack could be ripe for the picking and should the Saints pull an upset, it would keep them from repeating the 2-11-1 record of 1970, worst in the club's six-year history. The Saints will have to do it without wide receiver Dan Abramowicz, who hasn't missed a game in those six years. The plucky Abramowicz injured a knee in last week's 17-10 loss to New England was placed on injured reserve Thursday. Starting in his slot will be Creston Whitaker, recalled from the cab squad when, Abramowicz was removed from the active roster. The Saints took the opportunity Saturday morning to make their final two moves of the season, activating guard Jake Kupp and cornerback Delles Howell. Kupp had been out since the start of the season because of knee surgery. Howell was injured three games ago. Back on the cab squad went quarterback Bobby Scott and center Wimpy Winther. The Saints may also make a change in an effort to bolster the running attack. Bill Butler will start at one setback, but indications are strong that James Ford, last year's No. 1 runner who has seen little action this season since undergoing knee surgery, would start at the other slot. The Saints' defense will get a steady diet of Packer runners John Brockington and MacArthur Lane. It is however, expected to be a small taste, as most of the Pack regulars will probably be rested for that playoff opener against the Redskins. Two second year quarterbacks will again face off. This time Archie Manning, who set a Saints' record by passing 52 times last week, faces Scott Hunter, who led the Pack to its title win over Minnesota last week.

PACK VS. LETDOWN, SAINTS

DEC 17 (New Orleans-Green Bay Press-Gazette) - The temptation merely to play out the string will be strong. Except pride, there is little for the Packers to gain here today in their regular season swan song against the New Orleans Saints (12 o'clock, WNFL, Channel 2) in venerable Tulane Stadium. But Dan Devine is confident his newly crowned Central Division champions, who have fused into a poised, free-hitting unit in the last weeks, will be entirely respectable. "I think, if they're human, there will be some kind of let-down," he admits. "I noticed even the Redskins (who also had their division title clinched) said they had a letdown in their game at Dallas last week. "But I still don't think there's going to be any dramatic dropoff. We've had good practice, so I'm expecting we will play well." In readying his troops for this one, Devine has emphasized the need for them to maintain their competitive edge for next Sunday's playoff game in Washington. Once dulled, he has warned, it is hard to regain. Although the championship issue already has been resolved, and the lowly Saints are not the kind of opponents to inspire an optimum performance, the Packers will not be without incentives, both team and individual. For example, a victory would give them their best record (10-4) since 1966 when the green and gold emerged with an 11-3 mark en route to a second straight NFL title. And the Packer secondary will crash the National Football League record book if Jim Hill, Willie Buchanon, Et al, can hold the Saints' air-minded Archie Manning without a touchdown pass. It has allowed only five to date, one less than the Minnesota Vikings permitted while setting the record in 1970. Chester Marcol, whose footwork has been a revelation to the Packer faithful, stands a chance of joining them in the NFL. Archives if enough opportunities come his way. Going into action, the place kicking pole is just four short of the league's single season field goal record of 34, established by Jim Turner while with the New York Jets in 1968. Even should the mark elude him, Marcol could match or surpass the second highest field goal total ever, which also belongs to Turner. The latter, now with the Denver Broncos, had 32 successes for the Jets in '69. It also is possible the Saints will have some incentives, aside from the customary desire of the also-ran to embarrass the champion, depending upon how they feel about their coach, J.D. Roberts. Rumors have persisted that Roberts will be dismissed following today's finale because of the Saints' dismal

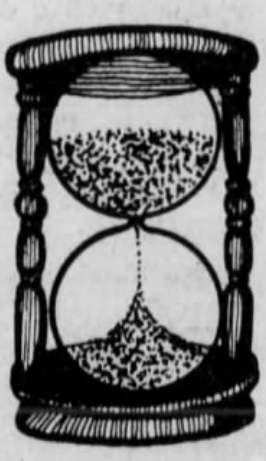
2-10-1 record. However, owner John Mecom, appearing on television late last week, said, "Roberts chances of staying are better now than they were a week ago." For whatever that is worth. A sidelight to today's contest will be a rematch of the Packers Scott Hunter and the Saints' Archie Manning, who staged a memorable passing duel as collegians three years ago, a pointfest in which Hunter and his Alabama teammates ultimately prevailed, 34-33. They were not paired in last year's Packer-Saint meeting. Bart Starr, attempting a comeback from shoulder surgery, was the starting quarterback in that one. Manning, who unfurled 52 passes in his last outing, has the more impressive statistics. He has completed 216 of 424 attempts for 2,639 yards, 16 touchdowns and a 50.9 percentage, figures which are causing the Packers record-seeking secondary some concern. Hunter, a more disciplined quarterback than he was a year ago, has taken to the air less often. He has attempted 191 passes, completing 83 for 1,224 yards, 6 touchdowns and a 43.5 percentage. Although Manning will be without the services of one of his prime targets, the injured Dan Abramowicz the Saints' No. 1 pass catcher still will be available to him. He is sophomore flanker Bob Newland, a former University of Oregon athletic, who has caught 44 for 561 yards and 2 TDs. The veteran Dave Parks, at tight end, also is still in evidence. The former San Francisco 49er has managed five touchdown receptions among 28 catches for 492 yards and an impressive 17.6-yard average. Bob Greshman, who frisked the Packers for better than 100 yards in Milwaukee last year, continued to be the Saints' primary ground threat. He is their leading rusher with 380 yards in 116 attempts. There also is a good possibility Cal Withrow will open at center to give Ken Dowman's battered shoulder a rest. Like Bowman, wide receiver Jon Staggers has been listed as questionable because of an ankle problem.

Can pride carry Packers?

Green Bay PACKERS

NO.	NAME	POS.
13	Marcol, Chester	K
16	Hunter, Scott	QB
17	Tagge, Jerry	QB
20	Widby, Ron	P
21	Hall, Charles	CB
22	Staggers, Jon	HB
23	Hudson, Bob	RB
28	Buchanon, Willie	CB
29	Matthews, Al	DB
31	Williams, Perry	RB
36	Lane, MacArthur	RB
37	Thomas, Ike	CB
39	Hill, Jim	S
40	Kopay, Dave	RB
42	Brockington, John	RB
44	Kroll, Bob	DB
46	Glass, Leland	WR
48	Ellis, Ken	CB
50	Carter, Jim	LB
51	Hefner, Larry	LB
53	Carr, Fred	LB
57	Bowman, Ken	C
58	Withrow, Cal	C
62	Lueck, Bill	G
65	Wortman, Keith	G
66	Nitschke, Ray	LB
67	Snider, Malcolm	G
71	Peay, Francis	T
72	Himes, Dick	T
73	Vanoy, Vern	DT
75	Pureifory, Dave	BE
76	McCoy, Mike	DT
77	Hayhoe, Bill	T
78	Brown, Bob	DT
83	Williams, Clarence	DE
84	Dale, Carroll	WR
86	Lammons, Pete	TE
87	Roche, Alden	DE
88	Garrett, Len	TE
89	Robinson, Dave	LB

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New Orleans SAINTS

NO.	NAME	POS.
8	Manning, Archie	QB
10	Fagan, Julian	P
11	Lee, Bivian	CB
14	Hargett, Edd	QB
15	Durkee, Charlie	K
18	Hollas, Hugo	S
20	Howell, Delles	CB
23	Wyatt, Doug	S
24	Williams, Joe	RB
26	Adkins, Margene	WR
29	Hayes, Billie	CB
30	Jackson, Ernie	CB
35	Gresham, Bob	RB
36	Brown, Bob	TE
37	Myers, Tom	S
38	Butler, Bill	TB
41	Newland, Bob	WR
42	Strong, Jim	RB
45	Green, Arthur	RB
46	Abramowicz, Dan	WR
51	Didion, John	C
54	Roussel, Tom	LB
55	Stincic, Tom	LB
56	Hall, Willie	LB
58	Federspiel, Joe	LB
59	Colman, Wayne	LB
64	Hester, Ray	LB
65	Prudhomme, Remi	G-C
66	Smith, Royce	G
70	Robinson, Craig	T
72	Owens, Joe	DE
74	Mooers, Doug	DT
75	Crangle, Mike	DE
76	Morrison, Don	T
77	Johnson, Carl	T
78	Hines, Glen Ray	T
82	Pollard, Bob	DT
83	Parks, Dave	TE
87	Neal, Richard	DE
89	Long, Dave	DT

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PACKERS ARE GREETED BY 5,000 AFTER ARRIVING IN GREEN BAY FROM MINNESOTA WHERE THEY DETHRONED VIKINGS FOR CENTRAL DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIP. (SOURCE: 1973 PACKERS YEARBOOK)



COACH DAN DEVINE GETS TRADITIONAL RIDE FROM HIS PLAYERS AFTER PACKERS CLINCHED CENTRAL DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIP AT MINNESOTA DEC. 9. (SOURCE: 1973 PACKERS YEARBOOK)

Packer Statistics

1972 GREEN BAY PACKERS
(13 GAME STATISTICS 9 - 4)

GB	RESULTS & ATTENDANCE	OPP.
(w) 26	Browns at Cleveland (75,771)	10
(l) 14	Raiders at Green Bay (56,263)	20
(w) 16	Cowboys at Mil. (47,103)	13
(w) 20	Bears at Green Bay (56,263)	17
(w) 24	Lions at Detroit (54,418)	23
(l) 9	Falcons at Mil. (47,967)	10
(l) 13	Vikings at Green Bay (56,263)	27
(w) 34	49'ers at Mil. (47,897)	24
(w) 23	Bears at Chicago (55,701)	17
(w) 23	Oilers at Houston (41,752)	10
(l) 16	Redskins at Wash. (53,039)	21
(w) 33	Lions at Green Bay (56,263)	7
(w) 23	Vikings at Minn. (49,784)	7
	12/17 SAINTS AT NEW ORLEANS	

SCORES BY QUARTERS	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	TOTAL
GB.	73	85	56	60	274
OPP.	37	54	50	65	206

Rushing	ATT.	YDS.	AVE.	LONG	TD.
Brockington	269	1022	3.8	30t	8
Lane	166	737	4.4	36t	3
Williams	20	97	4.9	9	0
Hunter	21	36	1.7	12	4
Hudson	9	27	3.0	17	0
Kopay	5	30	6.0	20	0
OTHERS:	Glass 2/13; Davis 2/0 Staggers 1/-8; Tagge 5/-8; Hudson 1/3				
GB TOTAL	501	1950	3.9	36t	15
OPP.TOTAL	425	1467	3.5	26	14

TEAM STATISTICS	GB	OPP.
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS	180	197
By Rushing	99	82
By Passing	68	101
By Penalty	13	15
Third Down Efficiency	59/171	68/169
TOTAL NET YARDS	3296	3322
Total Off. Plays	727	764
Ave. Gain Per Play	4.5	4.3
NET YARDS RUSHING	1950	1467
Total Rushing Plays	501	425
Ave. Gain Per Rush	3.9	3.5
NET YARDS PASSING	1346	1855
Lost Attempting to Pass	15/95	25/212
Gross Yards Passing	1461	2040
Attempts/Completions	222/95	317/160
Percent Completed	.428	.505
Had Intercepted	9	16
Ave Net Passing Per Game	103.5	142.7
PUNTS/YDS.	60/2670	61/2551
PUNT RETURNS/YDS.	22/345	31/220
KICKOFF RETURNS/YDS.	45/1037	41/796
MISC. RETURNS/YDS.	6/78	7/204
INTERCEPTIONS/YDS.	16/207	9/69
PENALTIES/YDS.	60/585	49/445
FUMBLES/BALL LOST	22/10	32/18
TOTAL POINTS	274	206
Ave Points Per Game	21.1	15.8
Touchdowns	26	23
by Rushing	15	14
by Passing	7	5
by Returns	4	4
Field Goals	30/43	15/24
Conversions	26/26	23/23

RECEIVING	NO.	YDS.	AVE.	LONG	TD.
Lane	24	274	11.4	49	0
Brockington	18	233	13.5	48t	1
Dale	16	311	21.5	48	1
Glass	14	254	18.1	31	1
Staggers	8	123	16.3	48	1
McGeorge	5	50	10.0	23t	2
Garrett	3	53	17.7	21	0
Davis	4	119	29.8	68t	1
Kopay	3	18	6.0	8	0
Lammons	1	19	19.0	19	0
GB TOTAL	96	1454	15.1	68t	7
OPP.TOTAL	160	2030	12.7	62t	5

PUNTING	NO.	YDS.	AVE.	LONG	BLK
Widby	62	2670	43.1	64	0
GB TOTAL	62	2670	43.1	64	0
OPP.TOTAL	61	2551	41.8	61	0

INTERCEP.	NO.	YDS.	AVE.	LONG	TD.
Ellis	4	106	26.5	40	1
Buchanon	4	62	15.5	26	0
Hill	3	21	7.0	21	0
Matthews	2	8	4.0	8	0
Robinson	2	10	5.0	7	0
Carter	1	0	0.0	0	0
GB TOTAL	16	207	12.9	40	1
OPP.TOTAL	9	69	7.7	32	2

K.O.RET.	NO.	YDS.	AVE.	LONG	TD.
Thomas	18	481	26.7	89	0
Staggers	11	260	23.6	39	0
Hudson	10	230	23.0	55	0
OTHERS:	Robinson 1/25; Garrett 1/0; Williams 1/9; Kroll 1/23; Wortman 1/0 Ellis 1/10				
GB TOTAL	45	1037	23.0	89	0
OPP.TOTAL	41	796	19.4	37	0

FIELD GOALS (Good, b=blocked):
Marcol: 51, 42b, 41, 19, 49, 17; 44; 16, 27b, 26, 41, 22; 26, 34, 27; 36, 34; 32, 44, 35, 39; 41, 43, 34; 30, 40; 51, 21, 21; 33b, 51, 37, 39; 24, 42, 26, 42, 41b, 36; 45, 36, 42, 10;

F.G.	1-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
Marcol	3-4	7-8	10-14	8-13	2-3
OPP TOTAL	4-4	3-3	2-3	3-9	2-3

SCORING	TDR	TDP	TDRt	FG.	PAT.	TOTAL
Marcol	0	0	0	30/43	26/26	116
Brockington	8	1	0	0	0	54
Hunter	4	0	0	0	0	24
Lane	3	0	0	0	0	18
McGeorge	0	2	0	0	0	12
Ellis	0	0	2	0	0	12
Staggers	0	1	1	0	0	12
Glass	0	1	0	0	0	6
C. Williams	0	0	1	0	0	6
Dale	0	1	0	0	0	6
Davis	0	1	0	0	0	6
Brown	0	0	0	0	0	2*
GB TOTAL	15	7	4	30/43	26/26	274
OPP. TOTAL	14	5	4	15/24	23/23	206

* = SAFETY

PUNT RETURNS	NO.	F.C.	YDS.	AVE.	LONG	TD.
Ellis	11	1	196	17.8	80t	1
Staggers	9	20	148	16.4	85t	1
Hudson	1	1	0	0.0	0	0
Glass	1	0	1	1.0	1	0
GB TOTAL	22	22	345	15.7	85t	2
OPP. TOTAL	31	5	220	7.1	33	0

PASSING	ATT.	COMP.	YDS.	PCT.	AVE/ATT	TD.	PCT TD.	LG.	INT.	PCT INT.	LOST/ATT.
Hunter	191	83	1224	43.5	6.4	6	.031	49	9	.042	11/77
Tagge	23	9	141	39.1	6.1	0	.000	31	0	.000	3/27
Patrick	4	1	9	25.0	2.5	0	.000	9	0	.000	1/11
Lane	2	2	19	100.0	9.5	0	.000	10	0	.000	0/0
Staggers	1	0	0	0.0	0	0	.000	0	0	.000	0
Widby	1	1	68	100.0	68.0	1	1.000	68t	0	.000	0/0
GB TOTAL	222	95	1461	42.8	6.6	7	.032	68t	9	.036	15/115
OPP.TOTAL	317	160	2040	50.5	6.5	5	.016	62t	16	.050	25/212

QB TACKLES: C. Williams 9; Vanoy 4; Brown 4; Robinson 3; Roche 3; McCoy 1;