

# *The* AMERICAN LEGION *Monthly*

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## *Their* NAME *is* LEGION

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Far from home, the Green Bay Packers show Hawaii a bit of pro football, a sweep around end, Hinkle blocking

**O**N A hot summer afternoon in Green Bay, Wisconsin, seventeen years ago, a former Notre Dame football star entered the sanctum of a high official of the packing company for which he worked.

"Will you furnish a bunch of us boys with uniforms?" he asked. "I think we can get a good team together. We'll call ourselves 'The Packers,' and it will be good advertising for your firm."

The official looked up bewildered from the sheaf of papers before him. He couldn't understand why his young employe, E. L. (Curley) Lambeau, desired to start a baseball team so late in the season.

"I mean football," quickly explained the caller.

The official looked surprised, for in those days professional football did not command much public interest. He hesitated a minute, then—

"Come back in a few weeks, Lambeau," he replied, again busying himself with his papers. "This idea is new to me. I want to think it over."

So the young man waited, and meanwhile remained watchful for promising football material. After several weeks the persistent youth again called on the packing company official. The football season was almost at hand, and other teams had already put in several weeks of practice. A brief conversation ensued.

"All right," agreed the official. "We'll take a chance on you lads. You can count on us for the uniforms."

Young Lambeau then hastened to the home of the local post commander of The

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*Curly Lambeau*

*(image added)*

American Legion, who agreed to take up the matter of sponsoring the team. The idea was enthusiastically received by the American Legion members, and E. L. Lambeau started on his coaching career which was destined to attract attention of fans from coast to coast, and to give The American Legion credit for backing one of the greatest professional football teams ever assembled.

Following a week of stiff practice in the fall of 1919, the Green Bay Packers made their home debut in an old field adjoining a brewery. Nobody realized then that out of the nucleus of those first eleven players, among whom Curley Lambeau was included, would grow a top flight pro football team.

In those early days the team and its backers hardly dared to charge admission to its games. Late in each game one of the substitutes would circulate in the crowd with a hat. The spectators would part with anything from a penny up, or suddenly become engrossed in a bird flying overhead. Apparently watching the birds was a favorite pastime, because the collections were often inadequate even to buy hamburgers and coffee for the players after the game. Twenty-five dollars was regarded as a magnificent collection for some of those early encounters.

But Lambeau refused to give up his idea, and the Legion stood by him. The records attained by his team spurred him on. In their first year, the Packers won ten out of eleven games, scoring 565 points and holding their opponents to eighteen. In the following year they won nine games, lost one and tied one.

The Green Bay Packers today are organized as a corporation and share their profits with The American Legion, which stood by them so staunchly in the lean years. Curley Lambeau is himself a member of the Legion, and a graduate of a hotbed of football—Notre Dame.

In 1932 when the Green Bay Packers played the New York Giants at Yankee Stadium in New York more than 40,000 people witnessed the game. The cash receipts were close to \$100,000. In the years that followed the Packers played to many other 40,000 crowds. This proves that the Wisconsin pigskin toters are one of the best drawing cards in the game. Even in their home city the Packers draw 15,000 in a small stadium, a far cry from the meager crowds of 200 to 300 people who witnessed the first games in 1919.

Although the Packers had few followers when they first began playing football, they now have the entire State of Wisconsin behind them. To mention "Packers" to any Wisconsin football fan evokes the same respect and attention as does the mention of Allah to a devout Mohammedan, or the smell of fried chicken to a colored veteran. When the Packers execute a smart play, and one of their shifty, powerful backs goes racing down the field for a touchdown about \$5000 worth of fall felt hats sail high, thousands of throats become hoarse from shouting, and broad palms slap nearby neighbors with resounding whacks between the shoulder blades. The crowd resembles a bunch of college boys.

Consider for a moment the success this team has had—coming as it does from the smallest city in the pro league. After battling first division teams in the National Professional Football League for many years, the Packers finally came through and won three successive world championships in 1929, 1930 and 1931. The team copped almost twice as many games as its nearest rivals in 1933, but lost the championship to the Chicago Bears, because of the rating system used in the league that year. In 1934 the team also placed high in the standings. Then in 1935 they lost the championship to the Detroit Lions by but one game, after whipping the Lions twice during the regular season.

If you were to ask most college football stars which pro team they would like to play on, most of them would invariably answer, "The Green Bay Packers." There are many reasons for such a choice. Not only has the team one of the smartest football coaches in America, but it has spirit. And while the players naturally get paid for performing, this spirit is what makes them like to play for Lambeau and his Packers.





The Packers have on their roster such famous college stars as Don Hutson, Alabama, Clark Hinkle, Bucknell, Ade Schwammel, Oregon, Buckets Goldenburg and Milt Gantenbein, Wisconsin, Arnie Herber of St. Regis, Hank Bruder, Northwestern, Roger Grove and Bob

Monnette, Michigan State, and many others.

Coach Lambeau says that many of his men who have been out of the lineup in various games because of injuries, have begged him at crucial points in star games to permit them to play. If these boys were only out for the money, it would seem most logical that they would not be so magnanimous as to risk further injury. Any fan who watches the Green Bay Packers in action knows that the team's will to win is one of the reasons it goes on year after year copping most of its games against the strongest kind of competition.

Curley Lambeau had the honor of playing half back on one of the late Knute Rockne's first Notre Dame teams. Rockne at this time had just taken over the coaching reins, and was embarking upon one of the greatest collegiate coaching careers in the history of the country. And the young, husky Lambeau, who packed a sharp, cool brain as well as (Continued on page 58) plenty of brawn, was an important cog in that first great football team of the Old Master. Lambeau played at one of the halfback posts.

Listen to the roster of some of the men who were on that team. Heading the list was the wing-footed, ball-carrying speed demon, the great George Gipp. On that team, too, was Hartley "Hunk" Anderson, now serving as head coach at North Carolina State College; Eddie Anderson, coach at Holy Cross, and Clipper Smith, who has made a reputation as a coach at Santa Clara in California, a school whose teams have frequently toppled proud Stanford and Southern California in the dust.

It was only natural that Curley Lambeau should assimilate the tactics of the great Rockne and add to them many of his own. Curley was only twenty years old when he organized the Packers. Today at the comparatively young age of 37 he ranks tops with many gray-headed veterans of the collegiate game. If Curley has hung up such an excellent record in his first seventeen years of pro-coaching, think of what he will be able to do in the next ten years.

The Packers' greatest rivals are the famed Chicago Bears. Since the early days of pro football these two teams have made the fur fly each time they met.

Back in 1929 the Packers trimmed the Bears three times in one season, for which the Bears never forgave them. Then in 1934 the Bears beat the Packers in each of the three games they played that year. The two teams met but twice in 1935, but the Packers won each time, the first by a score of 7-0 on a long sixty-yard pass early in the game; the second by a score of 17-14, scoring two touchdowns in the last two and one-half minutes of play.

Inability to beat the Chicago Cardinals in 1935 cost Green Bay the pennant. The Cards beat Green Bay three times, each by a close score. Green Bay beat the Detroit Lions twice, New York Giants once, and the Bears twice, but couldn't master the Cards. Things like this are what make football an interesting game.

You will see from this record that of late years, as the competition got stiffer, the team representing the smallest city in the league didn't become a doormat for the big town aggregations. The Packers have no inferiority complex in going up against the Chicago Bears, Detroit Lions and New York Giants. They can always say, "We've beaten these fellows before; let's do it again." And more often than not, they do.

Punch? It's as important in pro football as it is in pounding at the enemy's infantry line, says Coach Lambeau. The Packers differ from the average college team in that they can sense the weak spots in an enemy line and make sharp, deadly thrusts at those spots for long gains. Once a weak spot is discerned in an opposing line, the Packers often score touchdowns in one or two plays. Power? These Packers apply it like Max Schmeling applied it when he swung those rights to Joe Louis' chin.

Coach Lambeau has no rigid system to which he makes every recruit subscribe. He uses the general style of play that is characteristic of Notre Dame teams, speed, accurate timing, open signal calling, but allows enough flexibility for the development of a player's good points.

"We try to build our plays each season





around our best players," states Lambeau. "By using this system we find that inasmuch as our team roster changes every year, that our plays change also. This helps, of course, to keep the opposition guessing."

Curley Lambeau says that some football players can catch a pass over the right shoulder nine times out of ten, but that they miss most passes they must catch over the left shoulder, and vice versa. Likewise, some linemen are better straight-blockers than split-blockers. A pro coach must know all these points of his men and map his method of play accordingly.

The college coach observes faults like this in his players and may be able to correct them, for he is dealing with growing boys, states Lambeau. The pro coach on the other hand is dealing with mature men, and any faults they may have after college will probably be difficult to eradicate. Few pro football players are perfect in every respect, declares Lambeau. Knowledge of weak points of opposing players always makes a football game interesting.

Pro players who are wizards on offense are often weak on defense, or vice versa, he says. Therefore, the pro coach, if he wants to win his games from the other highly-trained teams in the league, must use his players carefully, inserting them into the plays where they will do the most good.

The Packers used one touchdown play in their championship years which was a honey. It was a scoring play, used from within the twenty-yard line, with a full-back spinner going into the line on a fake, and the quarterback dropping back for a pass to a half-back over the goal line. Time and again it won games for the Packers over such outstanding teams as the Chicago Bears, Chicago Cardinals, Portsmouth Spartans, New York Giants and the Brooklyn Dodgers. Other teams, professional and collegiate, have since worked variations of this play.

In the Army a recruit naturally comes in for a lot of kidding. The same is true of the highly touted college star who becomes a pro football recruit. Part of the game is riding the other fellow in a good-natured way. Many of the college stars, however, are sitting on a high horse when they enter the professional game. The famous college halfback or fullback often thinks that all he must do is run through holes in the line opened for him by members of his team, but he often gets a rude awakening. He learns in a hurry that if he expects to get interference, he must give interference to others. The pro team is a well balanced unit with eleven important moving parts in contrast to many college teams built around one star player.

