

Curly Lambeau

Just when most of the small town teams were disappearing, Lambeau had his Packers at the top of the NFL standings. He built a juggernaut that won league championships in 1929, '30, and '31. No team has ever topped that 3-straight record.

Always, Lambeau's teams emphasized the forward pass, using it as a main part of the offense when other teams treated it as a desperation tactic. In 1935, Don Hutson joined the pack, and – coupled with passers Arnie Herber and Cecil Isbell – he became the most devastating receiver the NFL had ever seen.

Featuring Hutson, Lambeau's Packers continued as a power into the 1940s, winning championships in 1936, '39, and '44. With six champions and 33 consecutive years as an NFL head coach, Lambeau was a shoo-in as a charter member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1963.

Today, the Green Bay Packers are the only remaining reminder that the National Football League was once studded with "small town" teams. Rock Island, Dayton, Canton and dozens of others competed against Chicago and New York. That little Green Bay survived where so many others failed was, more than anything else, due to the efforts of Earl "Curly" Lambeau.

In 1919, when he should have been back at Notre Dame as George Gipp's sophomore sub, Lambeau organized his first Green Bay team and talked a local meat packer into sponsoring it. Two years later, Lambeau brought the Packers into the young NFL. Almost immediately, disaster struck! After only one season in the NFL, the Packers were found to have violated some league rules and the franchise was lifted.

Curly borrowed \$500, drove to the annual league meeting, and purchased a new franchise for Green Bay.

In their early years, Lambeau was not only the Packer coach but also their biggest star. A good runner and fine kicker, he excelled as a passer. In 19223, he was named All-Pro.