

GO PACK GO!

Kansas City Chiefs head coach Hank Stram and Packers head coach Vince Lombardi meet leading up to Super Bowl I (then known as the AFL-NFL World Championship Game) in January 1967.

Collecting Lombardi's Dominating Packers

BY DAVID LEE

Vince Lombardi called Lambeau Field his “pride and joy.” Specifically, the ground itself—the grass and the dirt. He loved that field because it was his. He controlled everything that happened there. It was the home where Lombardi built one of the greatest sports dynasties of all-time.

Fittingly, Lambeau Field was the setting for the 1967 NFL Championship, famously dubbed “The Ice Bowl” before the game even started. Temperatures plummeting to 12 degrees below zero blasted Lombardi’s field. Despite his best efforts using an elaborate underground heating system to keep it from freezing, the field provided the perfect rock-hard setting to cap Green Bay’s decade of dominance—a franchise that bullied the NFL for nine seasons.

The messy game came down to a goal line play of inches with 16 seconds left, the Packers trailing the Cowboys 17-14. Running backs were slipping on the ice, and time was running out. So, quarterback Bart Starr called his last timeout, and ran to the sideline to tell Lombardi he wanted to run it in himself. It was a risky all-in gamble on third down.

“Well then run it, and let’s get the hell out of here,” Starr said Lombardi told him.

The famous lunge into the endzone gave the Packers their third-straight NFL title (their fifth in the decade) and a second-straight trip to the Super Bowl to face the AFL’s best. It was the end of Lombardi’s historic run as Green Bay’s coach. He was spent. The game had worn him down, and his star players were well into their 30s. But the dynasty took its throne with a riveting final chapter.

Lombardi’s 1960s Packers ushered pro football into its golden era. They helped legitimize the game and launch its nationwide popularity. After winning six titles in the NFL’s infancy years, the Packers suffered 11-straight non-winning seasons through most of the 1950s, including a 1-10-1 record the year before Vince Lombardi took over.

“I’ve never been a loser, and I’m not about to start now,” offensive lineman Jerry Kramer says Lombardi told the team when he arrived.

They went 7-5 his first season of 1959, lost the in the championship game the next year, then won five titles in and the first two Super Bowls within seven seasons with some of the greatest teams ever assembled.

From 1959-1967, Green Bay won 89 games. Signature wins came against powerhouses such as the Giants, Colts, Cowboys and Browns. Twenty-one Packers are in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, and 13 of them were part of the 1962 team alone. With a 14-1 record, that squad outscored opponents a combined 431-155. Late 1950s and ’60s Topps and Philadelphia sets are full of key cards, as well as some bargains, of the legends who made up those teams.



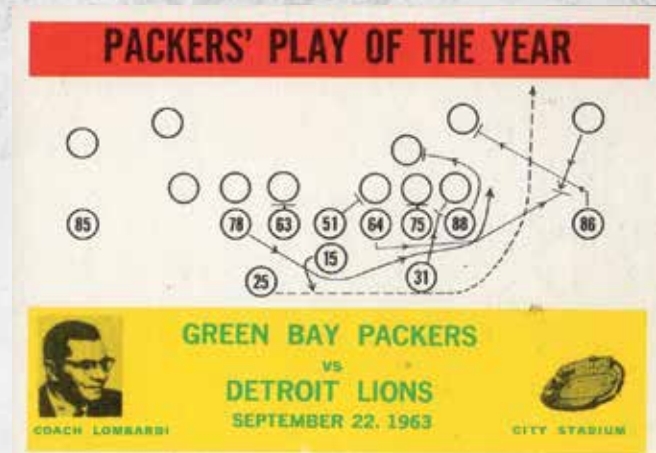
Bart Starr

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Collecting the Hall of Famers

VINCE LOMBARDI, COACH

Lombardi's success as the New York Giants offensive coordinator in the mid-1950s vaulted him to the head coaching job for a one-win Packers team. He never had a losing season. His teams won five NFL titles within seven seasons plus the first two Super Bowls. No team has won three-straight championships since the Packers did it from 1965-1967. Lombardi died at the age of 57 in 1970, three years after coaching his final season for the Packers. That same year, he was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, the Super Bowl trophy was named in his honor, and the AFL and NFL completed their merger. If Lombardi had mainstream cards during the '60s, they likely would be worth more than any of his players' cards. He does have two coaches play cards from 1964 and 1965 Philadelphia sets that sell for around \$15-\$30.



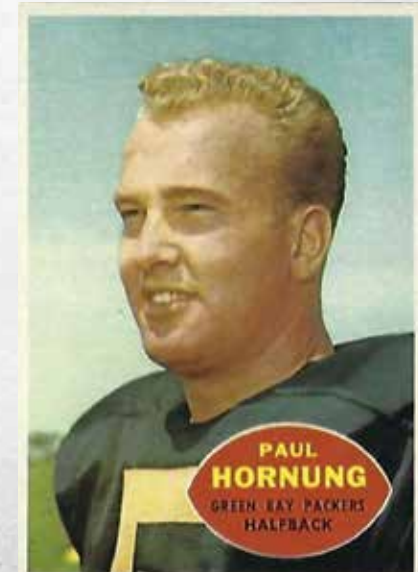
BART STARR, QUARTERBACK

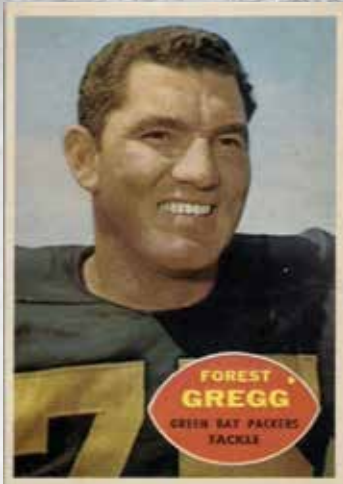
Starr played 16 seasons, all for Green Bay. He led the NFL in completion percentage four times and led his teams in 10 playoff games. His top card is of course the 1957 Topps #119 RC, which has increased in value to \$750 over the last few years and drawing more attention after his death in 2019. Starr's 1962 Topps #63 is his sixth base Topps card (\$125), but would be a key part of any collection since its short-printed and features one of the most popular vintage designs. It also represents the '62 season, which many say is the best team in the Packers' run.



PAUL HORNUNG, HALFBACK

If there could be a poster boy for the 1960s NFL, it would be The Golden Boy. Hornung was a do-it-all weapon who thrived during Green Bay's early run. He totaled more than 430 yards and three touchdowns in five postseason games. He also kicked five extra points. The 1957 Topps #151 RC is his must-have card. Hornung's best season was 1960 when he led the NFL with 15 total touchdowns. You can find a 1960 Topps #54 for less than \$45.





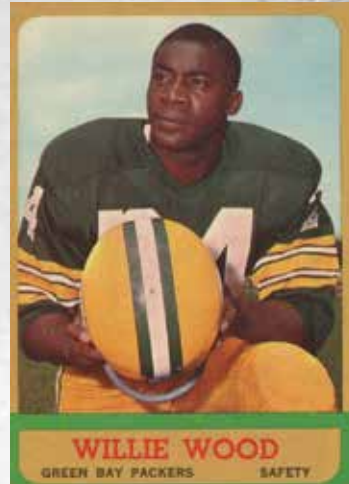
**FORREST GREGG,
OFFENSIVE TACKLE**

Lombardi said Gregg was the finest player he'd ever coached. One of seven offensive tackles selected to the NFL's All-Time Roster, Gregg started 155 games for the Packers. He was a seven-time All-Pro during Green Bay's incredible run. "He was the best drive blocker I've ever seen," said Hall of Fame defensive end Deacon Jones, who had many battles with Gregg. Even though he joined the NFL in 1956, his first mainstream card is 1960 Topps #56 RC. His cards throughout the '60s can be found for no more than \$5.



**JERRY KRAMER,
OFFENSIVE GUARD**

Kramer was Green Bay's star offensive guard for 11 seasons through 1968, starting 119 regular-season games and nine postseason games. He was the core of Lombardi's run blocking scheme and famously paved the way for Starr's title-winning play in the Ice Bowl. A five-time All-Pro, he was only recently inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2018. Kramer has just a handful of mainstream cards from his playing days: 1959 Topps #116 RC, 1961 Fleer #95 and 1964 Philadelphia #76.



**WILLIE WOOD,
DEFENSIVE BACK**

Wood passed away this February at the age of 83. Going undrafted out of college, he didn't join the Packers until he was 24. He was an eight-time Pro Bowler and full-time starter at defensive back from 1961 to 1971. He totaled 48 career interceptions and started in 10 postseason games. His 1963 Topps #95 RC (\$40) was issued during his fourth season. You can get his 1964-1967 Philadelphia cards for around \$5.



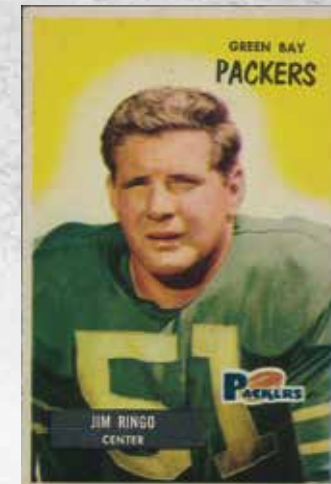
**HERB ADDERLEY,
CORNERBACK**

Adderley joined the Packers at the beginning of the championship runs in 1961 and played through 1969 before joining the Cowboys. The four-time All-Pro missed just one game in nine seasons, totaled 48 career interceptions and seven touchdowns. His Rookie Card didn't appear until 1964 Philadelphia #71. You can find it for no more than \$35. Since Philadelphia owned the NFL market for four years, his first Topps card is the 1968 Topps #131.



**WILLIE DAVIS,
DEFENSIVE END**

Davis was a five-time All-Pro from 1962-67 and was selected to the 1960s NFL All-Decade Team. Drafted by the Browns, Davis was traded to the Packers in 1960 and was an immediate starter. He once estimated that he must have totaled more than 100 sacks during his career, even though sacks and tackles were not official stats in his day. His most famous play was forcing a Johnny Unitas fumble that secured Green Bay's trip to the 1966 NFL title game. Davis's first mainstream card is 1964 Philadelphia #72 RC (\$30), and he never had a Topps card produced during his playing days.



**JIM RINGO,
CENTER**

Ringo was the starting center from 1954 through 1963. He was a first-team All-Pro for the '61 and '62 championship teams. Ringo was a core factor in Lombardi's sweep running scheme, providing the cutoff block that allowed the guards to pull. His first cards came in the mid-1950s, and most can be found for less than \$10. His Rookie Card is the 1955 Bowman #70 for around \$30-\$50. The 1962 Topps #68 is a short print for around \$15.



Guard Jerry Kramer (64) leads the blocking for Elijah Pitts in the famous Packers sweep.

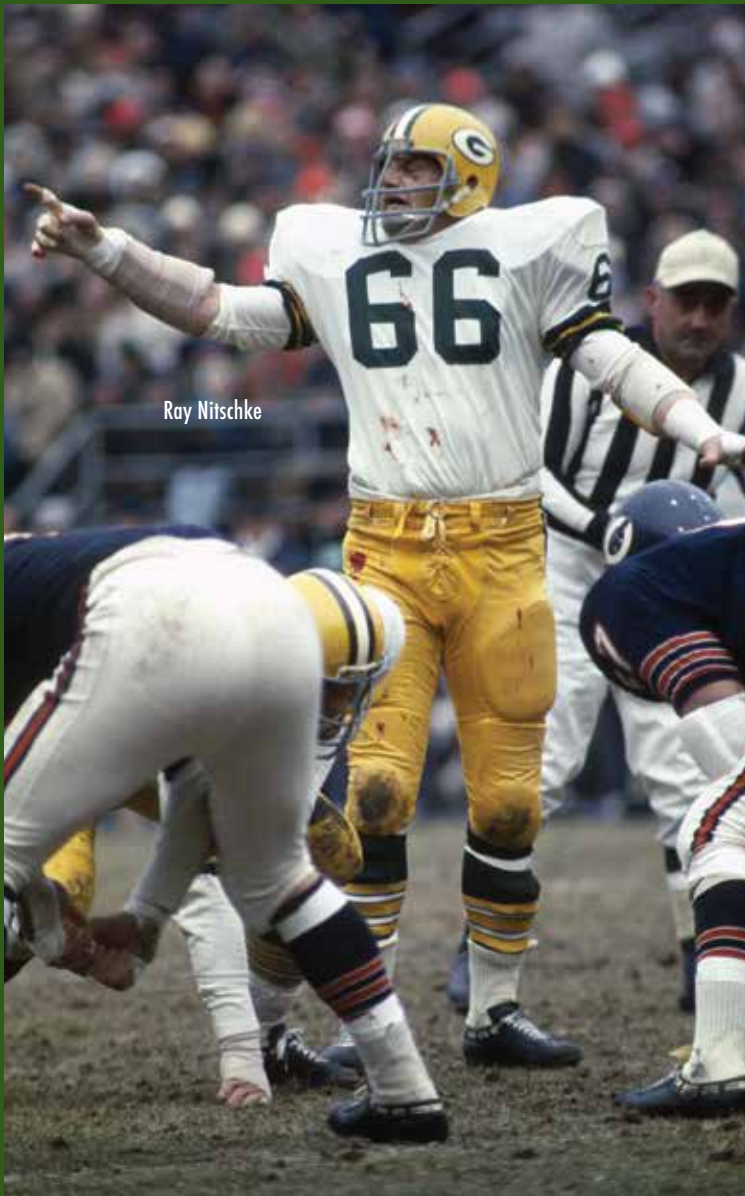


**JIM TAYLOR,
FULLBACK**

Taylor is one of the most underrated and toughest players of his era. "It's combat, and you have to know that you're going to be subjected to pain or suffering. So, it's a matter of accepting all this up front," Taylor once said in an interview. The thunder to Hornung's lightning, he was the team's main rushing attack from 1959 through 1966. Taylor had five-straight seasons of more than 1,000 yards rushing and led the NFL in touchdowns twice. His 1959 Topps #155 RC is a steal at about \$25-\$35, but the picture on the card is not Taylor, making it an uncorrected error and likely less desirable for Packers collectors. A correct photo wasn't actually used until 1961 Fleer and Topps sets.

Team of the '60s

YEAR	RECORD	RESULT
1969	8-6	3rd in NFC Central
1968	6-7-1	3rd in NFC Central
1967	9-4-1	Won NFL Championship and Super Bowl II
1966	12-2	Won NFL Championship and Super Bowl I
1965	10-3-1	Won NFL Championship
1964	8-5-1	2nd in NFL West
1963	11-2-1	2nd in NFL West
1962	13-1	Won NFL Championship
1961	11-3	Won NFL Championship
1960	8-4	Lost NFL Championship

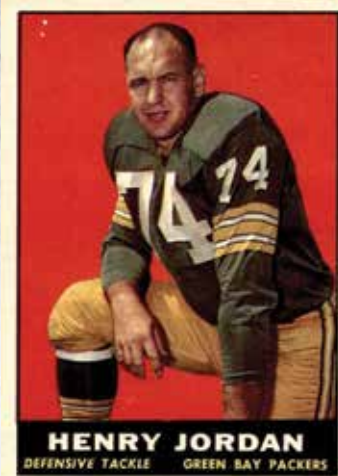


Ray Nitschke



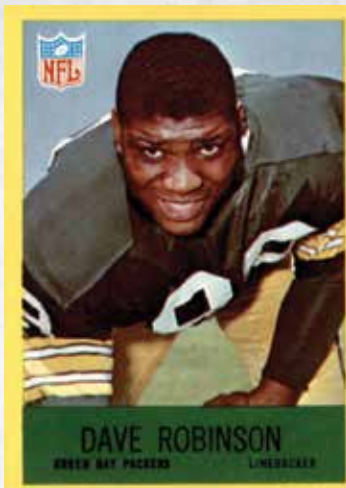
RAY NITSCHKE, LINEBACKER

Nicknamed "Wildman," Nitschke's image epitomized the personality of the 1960s Packers. "He was kinda like a junkyard dog," Kramer once said of him. The leader of the defense at middle linebacker, Nitschke started 158 games from 1958 to 1972. His 1963 Topps #96 RC tops out at \$150, and his 1968 Topps #157 is an overlooked card with a cool design for no more than \$10.



HENRY JORDAN, DEFENSIVE TACKLE

Jordan joined Green Bay in 1959 and became a starter at defensive tackle for 10 seasons. He was a first-team All-Pro from 1960 through 1964 and played in 10 postseason games for the Packers. He has six mainstream vintage cards, starting with his 1961 Topps #45 Rookie Card at \$20-\$40. The rest, including three cards from the Philadelphia sets, can be found for less than \$20.



DAVE ROBINSON, LINEBACKER

Robinson was a first-round draft pick in 1963 as an All-American out of Penn State. He totaled 21 interceptions during his years with Green Bay. His teammates say his main job was to attack the ball, which is why he made so many big plays. Robinson famously took down Dallas quarterback Don Meredith as he threw a wobbly pass that was intercepted in the end zone to end the 1966 NFL Championship Game. His first card is the 1967 Philadelphia #80 RC for about \$20-\$30. He has three other vintage Topps issues as a Packer (1969, '70, '72).

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5 Other Stars to Collect



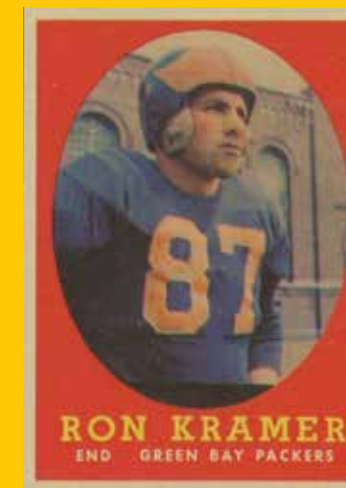
MAX MCGEE, END

McGee was a critical part of the passing game through 1964, totaling more than 800 yards during the first two championship seasons. His most famous play was his one-handed touchdown catch in Super Bowl I, and he ended the game with 138 yards and two touchdowns. His Rookie Card is the 1959 Topps #4 RC topping out at \$30.



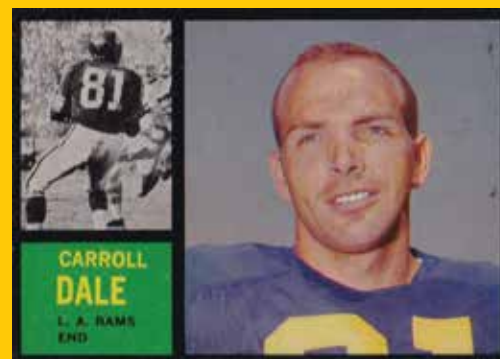
BOYD DOWLER, FLANKER

Dowler and McGee were the top two receivers for most of the '60s. Dowler was a two-time Pro Bowler and part of all five championship teams. His best postseason performances came in the Ice Bowl, scoring two touchdowns, and in Super Bowl II with 71 yards and a score. He has two Rookie Cards for around \$10-\$15—1961 Fleer #92 and 1961 Topps #43.



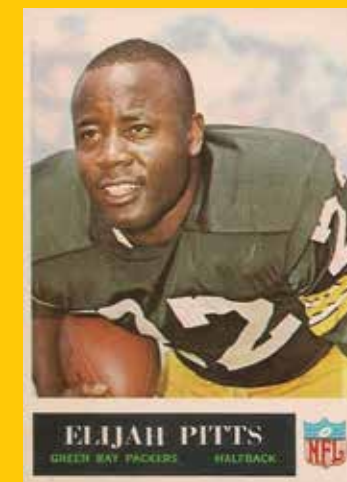
RON KRAMER, END

Kramer was a consistent offensive weapon from 1961 through 1966, totaling at least 500 yards receiving four straight years. He played in three playoff games, including the 1961 NFL title game where he caught four passes for 80 yards and two touchdowns. His Rookie Card is 1958 Topps #58 for about \$5, and he didn't have another card until 1963.



CARROLL DALE, FLAKER/TIGHT END

Dale was another top-producing receiver during the later championship years, and didn't come to Green Bay until 1965. His best title game performance was in the 1966 win over Dallas with five catches, 128 yards and one touchdown. His Rookie Card is the 1962 Topps #82 from his days with the Rams, and his first Packers cards didn't release until the late 1960s.



ELIJAH PITTS, HALFBACK

Pitts was used as a dual-threat weapon most of his career, even though he wasn't a full-time starter. His best season was 1966 when he totaled more than 800 yards and 10 touchdowns. He also totaled more than 150 yards and three touchdowns in that season's NFL Championship and Super Bowl I. His 1965 Philadelphia #80 Rookie Card and two other 1960s Topps cards can be had for around \$5.