

Press Times

JANUARY 2023

PACKERLAND™



After a solid NFL career, Johnnie Gray traded his talent on the field to the classroom, helping students at Syble Hopp.

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FROM THE EDITOR



With the snow starting to come down early in their game on Nov. 17, Green Bay's defense gets ready to go after Tennessee quarterback Ryan Tannehill.

JOSH STALOCH PHOTO

Raise your hand if you're looking forward to the 2023 Packers season.

I think we can all hope that next year is going to bring a Super Bowl-caliber team. I tend to think most Packers fans are eternal optimists.

As I type this during the Packers' bye week, this season looks like a bust. But with so much uncertainty with the offense at the start of the season, late in the year has shown a few bright spots for the future.

Christian Watson's emergence as the team's top receiver has been a breath of fresh air. The second-round pick in last April's draft had a phenomenal stretch during Weeks 10-13. The rookie had 15 catches for 313 yards and seven touchdowns. That's after having just 10 catches for 88 yards and no scores in his first six NFL games. A healthy Christian Watson is a productive — crazy productive — Christian Watson.

Also Jordan Love showed glimpses of looking solid in the pocket when he was inserted into the Eagles game on Nov. 28. The third-year quarterback was 6-for-9 for 113 yards and one touchdown in mop-up duty. Packers fans hadn't seen Love in a regular-season game in a while. It gives them hope as Aaron Rodgers becomes one step closer — but who knows how close — to retiring.

It will be interesting to see if Love and Watson can connect on the field in the two weeks of regular-season action.

In this issue of Packerland, we dive into some fun stories.

Writer Kevin Damask had a riveting conversation with Packers legendary guard Jerry

Kramer had the 1962 Packers team that won the NFL championship. Kramer — who shies away from telling things like they were — was on his game. That '62 season was special for Kramer and his teammates as Green Bay captured its eighth world championship title.

Also in this publication, we have a story on former Packers defensive back Johnnie Gray's most rewarding of his career. P.S., it's not for his nine seasons playing with the Packers. For the past 30 years, Gray has been an aide for Syble Hopp School, which provides an educational setting and program option for students with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

Memorabilia collector Glen Christensen, who has quite possibly the world's best Packers collection, decided it was time to sell some of his coveted pieces. Through Heritage Auctions, the Grapevine, Texas resident sold some special items, including a game ball from the 1967 NFL Championship game. Check out the story and see how crazy high some of the pieces were sold for.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Feel free to reach out to me — gbates@mmlocal.com — with any comments, thoughts or story ideas.



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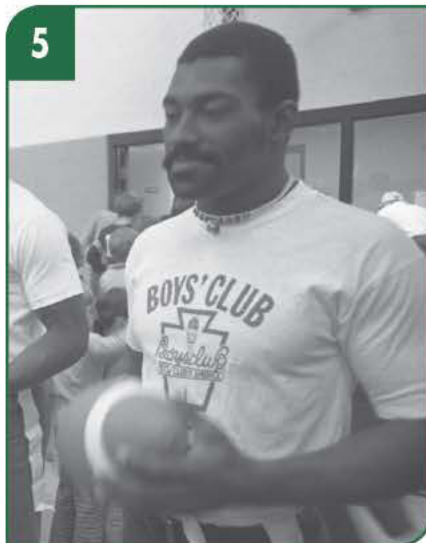
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Johnnie Gray spent 10 years playing for the Packers. Upon wrapping up his NFL career, he transitioned into teaching students.

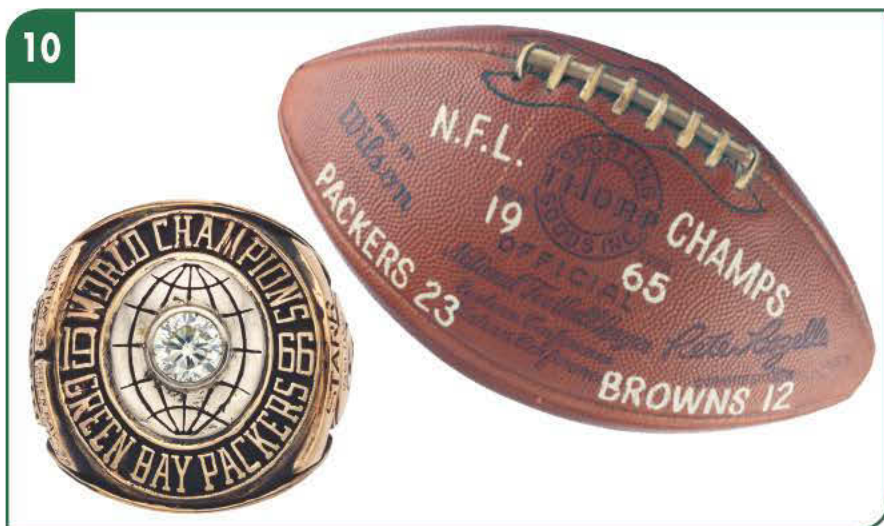


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We look back 60 years after the Packers had a phenomenal squad in 1962. It went 13-1 and won the franchise's eighth world title.

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Longtime Packers memorabilia collector Glen Christensen recently auctioned off some of his rare pieces.



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Former Packers defensive back Johnnie Gray transitioned from the football field to the classroom where for the last 30 years he's taught at Syble Hopp School.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SYBLE HOPP

Local sports coverage online
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A MEANINGFUL CAREER AFTER THE PACKERS

BY RICH PALZEWIC
SPECIAL TO PACKERLAND

Despite having a successful career with the Green Bay Packers and being inducted into the team's hall of fame, former player Johnnie Gray said it's not what makes him most proud.

"I'm very proud to say I've helped shape many children's lives throughout my 30-year career working at Syble Hopp School," he said. "I wouldn't change that for the world. I've seen a lot of people come and go, it's been fun and challenging. It's everything a person could want in a job."

Syble Hopp, located at 755 Scheuring Rd. in De Pere, provides an educational setting and program option for students with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

"The students have made it all worthwhile," Gray said. "It's fun to see when they come in — maybe they don't have much of a personality, but it's good to bring some of that out of them."

Gray, currently listed as an instructional aide on the school's website (Syblehopp.org), said his role has changed slightly over the years.

"When I first started working, I was out on-site and in the workforce with the kids," he said. "I got away from that — I was more in the classroom. When the COVID-19 pandemic ended, I've had a chance to get out again. I work at St. Vincent de Paul (of Green Bay) on Mondays with a group of students. It's been wonderful to get out there again."

The 68-year-old Gray, who played safety for the Packers from 1975-84, said his football days are starting to catch up with his physical being — which he said will dictate how long he stays at the school.

"I've had a few back surgeries, and my hips are starting to feel it," he said. "I meet with my doctor this month, so I think this year will make me decide how much longer I continue."

Gray said some of the students talk to him about his playing days.

"I had one student tell me recently, 'My dad said you were a legend when you played,'" he laughed. "Comments like that

Johnnie Gray has been helping out at Syble Hopp School for the last 30 years.



Johnnie Gray really enjoys his time working with students at Syble Hoop School. The former defensive back was inducted into the Packers' Hall of Fame in 1993.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SYBLE HOPP

are pretty cool and bring me back to my playing days."

GROWING UP

Born in Lake Charles, La., Gray's family transferred to Puerto Rico for four years, and Tampa for four years before settling in California, north of Santa Barbara.

"That's where my dad retired, so I'll say that's where I grew up," Gray said. "I think it was the fifth or sixth grade when we moved there. I think I changed schools three times."

FOOTBALL DAYS

Unlike a high majority of professional football players, Gray got a very late start in the sport.

"I didn't start playing football until my senior year in high school because I was a baseball guy," he said. "I was on the scout team, and because I was only out for football my senior year, I was able to play on the junior varsity team. The varsity team made it to the state finals but lost. I like to say I helped them get there."

Enrolling at Hancock Junior College

in Santa Maria, the football coach asked him to go out for the team.

I respectfully said, 'No thank you,'" Gray recalled. "He said to me, 'Your high school coach said you had some skills as a football player.' I told him I got my butt kicked every day — I wasn't used to that."

Gray said he was told to at least meet the staff, so he spent a weekend in the mountains with the coaches.

"We put some steaks on the grill and played a little baseball," he said. "Because I loved baseball, it was great. I was out there shagging balls and high pointing it. After that, I agreed to play."

Gray played both corners and got immediate playing time at Hancock.

"The starter got hurt in the first game, so I finished the second half," he said. "The next week, I had three interceptions — that's where my career started."

After his two years at Hancock, Gray was offered a scholarship to play at Cal State-Fullerton.

"I wasn't fast — maybe a 4.7 guy,"



Even during his playing days, Gray (far right) was a big advocate of the Green Bay community. In this photo, Gray and teammate Steve Luke were at the Boys' Club of Green Bay in September 1976.



Packers coach Bart Starr (second from left) goes over some information with some of his players, including Gray (next to Starr). Gray was an honorary co-chairman of the Brown County A Better Chance program.

PACKERS PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NEVILLE PUBLIC MUSEUM OF BROWN COUNTY

he said. “I learned good technique and fundamentals and listened to what my coaches said.”

PACKERS DAYS

Gray went undrafted in the 17 rounds of the 1975 NFL Draft, but the Packers signed him as a free agent — the head coach was Bart Starr.

“It was Bart’s first year; he was so cool,” Gray said. “My previous college coaches said to me, ‘Make the Packers cut you. When there’s a drill, you run. Make them make a decision when it comes down to it.’”

Gray then told a story about what type of person Starr was.

“I was sitting around my locker, and Starr’s business manager asked me to go out to dinner,” he said. “We went out and had a good time, and by this time, it was early in the morning. We went over to the Starr’s house later, and Cherry (Bart’s wife) made us breakfast. Coach was still at Lambeau Field breaking down film. When he got home, we went for a walk down the hallway.”

Gray said he figured Starr was going to tell him to “never set foot in his house again.”

“He took me into his office and told me to take a look,” he said. “He showed me his MVP trophies, all the awards and his Super Bowl rings. He told me, ‘This is from hard work. If you keep working hard, Johnnie, you’ll get awards, too.’ It gave me a bolt of confidence.”

Gray said maybe Starr’s success didn’t

show in wins and losses, but his character made up for it.

“He meant the world to me,” he said.

In 124 games played, Gray had north of 800 tackles and intercepted 22 passes.

He injured his knee in 1981 and missed the final seven games, but returned as a starter in 1982-83.

Gray then suffered a quadriceps injury during training camp in ’84 and spent all but the last game on injured reserve.

He was waived by the Packers in April 1985.

Gray was inducted into the Packers Hall of Fame in 1993.

STILL INVOLVED WITH FOOTBALL

If you’re ever inside Lambeau Field for a game, there’s a good chance you’ll see Gray on the sidelines with a clipboard.

In the mid-1990s, Gray got a phone call from the National Football League, and it led to another one of his current gigs.

“They told me I was recommended by (former general manager) Ron Wolf for a uniform inspector’s job,” he said. “I’ve been doing it ever since. Like teaching, whether I continue with that job will depend on what my doctor says.”

Gray said he looks for specific things on the sidelines.

“I look to make sure all the players are wearing the same things,” he said. “Safety is a concern, so I’m looking for knee and thigh pads — you want uniformity. Some coaches want their teams to look

neat, while others don’t care — they say, ‘Fine them.’”

Gray said over the course of almost 30 years doing that job, other things have changed.

“When I first got the job, I’d give warnings before the game and halftime,” he said. “When the new commissioner took over, he said, ‘No, these guys are millionaires. They know the rules, so, ‘Write ’em up.’”

MORE ON SYBLE HOPP

According to the school’s website, its aim is to ensure each student can reach their fullest potential, becoming self-confident individuals who have grown and developed into productive community members.

Syble Hopp is a public school funded through Brown County.

Educational programming is provided to meet the needs of children with disabilities between the ages of 3 to a student’s 21st birthday residing in Brown County in the seven districts served — De Pere, West De Pere, Wrightstown, Denmark, Ashwaubenon, Howard-Suamico and Pulaski.

Additionally, through early intervention and the programming available in each district’s integrated setting, attempts are made to avoid the need for continued special programming. However, in the cases where continued special programming is necessary, education can take place in the least restrictive environment in which the child is successful at Syble Hopp. 🍌

Kramer kicks his way to redemption

Packers legend reflects on 60th anniversary of 1962 championship team

BY KEVIN DAMASK
SPECIAL TO PACKERLAND

Green Bay Packers legend and Pro Football Hall of Famer Jerry Kramer is considered one of the best guards in league history.

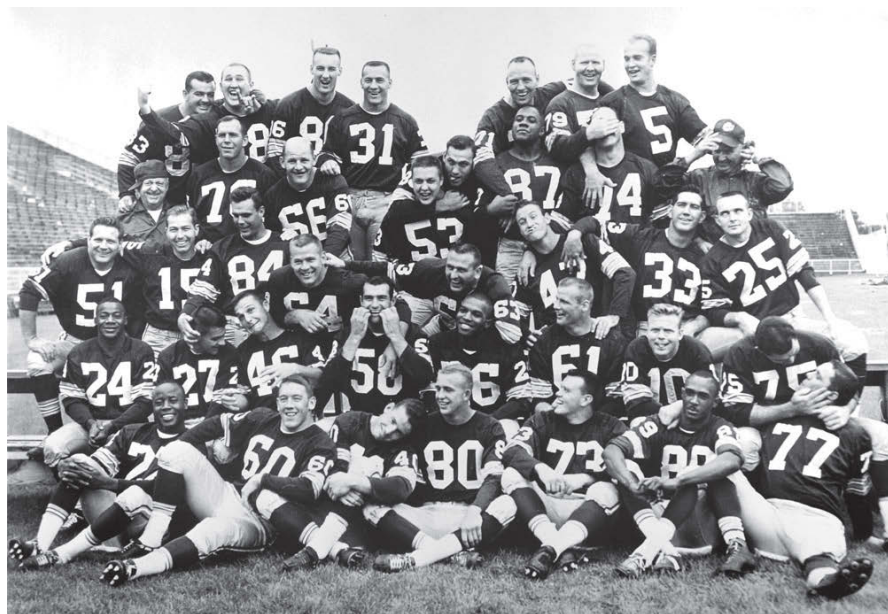
However, in the NFL Championship game 60 years ago, it was Kramer's kicking skills that sealed a title, capping off one of the greatest seasons in Packers' history.

Booting the ball through the uprights, he was never more clutch than in that title game on Dec. 30, 1962. Fending off a cold, blustery New York City wind, Kramer banged three field goals, leading the Packers to a 16-7 victory over the Giants at old Yankee Stadium. The title sealed back-to-back championships for Green Bay, a difficult feat in pro sports. After falling to the Philadelphia Eagles in a hard-fought championship game in 1960, the Packers topped New York in two straight title games, outscoring the G-Men, 53-7. In '61, the Packers blasted the Giants 37-0 to win the organization's first championship of the Lombardi Era and first since 1944.

Overall, Lombardi's team was firing on all cylinders in '62, finishing the season 13-1.

"We came into that '62 season with a little resolve," Kramer said in a phone interview with Packerland. "The Philadelphia game was very painful to lose. We felt like we should have won it; we could have won it, but we didn't and it hurt pretty good. That loss stayed with us for a long time and that's probably why we won it in '62."

Winning the title in '62 couldn't have felt sweeter for Kramer. He was coming off a series of injuries and setbacks,



Packers players on the 1962 team ham it up for a photographer. There were a lot of laughs that season as the Packers went 13-1 and won their second straight NFL championship.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NEVILLE PUBLIC MUSEUM OF BROWN COUNTY

starting with a detached retina in the '60 season. Doctors wanted Kramer to have surgery to fix the eye ailment at the end of the regular season, but he put it off to play in the frustrating 17-13 loss to the Eagles.

In '61, Kramer suffered a broken leg and missed several games, including the blowout victory over the Giants for the league championship. After two tumultuous seasons, Kramer was determined to battle back from injuries and stay healthy. Before the '62 season kicked off, he spent the offseason chasing rabbits to strengthen his agility and quickness. Kramer knew the Packers had the opportunity again to be the league's best. He was hungry to contribute.

"I was running at anything that would run and let me chase it," Kramer said. "I had a number of those moments where I didn't know whether I was going to ever play again."

While the era of the two-way player, starting on both offense and defense, was mostly phased out by the early '60s, most starters still played on special teams. In '62, Kramer split place-kicking duties with halfback Paul Hornung. He didn't disappoint, nailing 9 of 11 field goals, leading the league with an 81.8% success rate. Kramer was also successful on 38 of 39 extra-point attempts.

Heading into the championship clash with the Giants, the Packers were a bit awestruck playing in the Big Apple in venerable Yankee Stadium.

"Yankee Stadium was a wonderland," Kramer said. "We'd all seen World Series games and championship fights and a variety of great sporting events there. It was an awesome venue."

To tame the players' anxiousness, especially the rookies, Lombardi pulled Kramer aside right after the Packers arrived to the visitor's locker room. The coach asked Kramer to walk around the stadium with the young players, get comfortable with the famous venue to ease their trepidations before kickoff of the biggest game of their lives.

"It was very emotional to be in that venue and very intimidating," Kramer said.

The magnitude of the moment wasn't lost on Kramer as well, despite being a five-year veteran and no stranger to big games.

"The first field goal I tried, I was a little bit nervous and a little uncomfortable in that stadium," Kramer said. "But ... I focused on staying down. I told myself, 'Stay down! Even after the ball is gone — magnify it.' We tried going from about 35 yards in the open-end of the field and I kept my head down really well and when



In a hard-fight game, the Packers beat the visiting Detroit Lions 9-7 at City Stadium on Oct. 7, 1962. The Packers' only loss that season came at the hands of the Lions, falling 26-14 on the road on Nov. 22.

I looked up, the ball had been outside the uprights. I thought I had missed. Then I see the official raise his hands as if its good. I'm like, 'What the hell is he doing?'"

Quarterback Bart Starr, serving as Kramer's holder, didn't want the kicker to stand around pondering what just happened.

"Bart is standing there next to me and he says, 'Shut up and get off the field,'" Kramer remembers. "I said, 'Yes, sir!'" Well, the wind had blown so hard, it had gone through the uprights and then blown it outside and I was so focused on not looking up and keeping my head down to make a good kick that I absolutely didn't see it until it was outside the goalposts."

Kramer's 26-yard field goal gave the Packers a 3-0 lead in the first quarter. In the second quarter, fullback Jim Taylor busted through for a 7-yard touchdown run and Kramer's extra-point kick pushed Green Bay's lead to 10-0.

The Giants finally broke through to score in the third quarter. Tight end Jim Collier recovered a special teams fumble in the end zone to slice the Packers' lead to 10-7. Kramer answered with his second field goal of the day, booting a 29-yarder to give Green Bay a 13-7 advantage. With the previous year's beat-down fresh in their minds, the Giants fought hard to stay in the game, knowing

another championship loss to the Packers would be devastating.

"I think they were a little embarrassed the year before," Kramer said. "And we came into their home, their fans, their stadium, their lives, so they were pretty pumped up about the year before, the score and the embarrassment they encountered that they really came out with a firm jaw and a gleam in their eye like, 'We're here to take care of business.' They played awfully well and I think a lot of that was due to the year before."

Holding on to a slim lead in the fourth quarter, Kramer kicked the Giants out of contention with a 30-yard boot to ice the championship.

"On the third kick, we were at the other end (of the field) and the wind was still blowing pretty damn good," Kramer said. "We're at about the 35- or 40-yard line and I aimed 10 or so yards outside the goal post and I look up and the ball is going outside the goal post and the win catches it and brings it perfectly down the middle. That was a huge sigh of relief."

Kramer's third field goal of the afternoon was key because it meant the Giants would have to score twice to win the game. With the Packers' defense holding firm, however, two scores in the waning minutes seemed unlikely. After Kramer's final field goal sailed through the up-

rights, his teammates celebrated with the All-Pro guard turned clutch kicker.

"The guys pounded me on the back and I felt like a quarterback or a running back or ... somebody that was human," Kramer joked.

Overall, the game was evenly split with both teams gaining 18 first downs. The Giants outgained Green Bay in total yardage (291-244). But turnovers and an excellent effort from Taylor proved to be a major difference in the contest. The Giants committed three turnovers with two fumbles and an interception, while the Packers had zero turnovers. On the ground, Green Bay rumbled to 148 yards on 46 carries and a touchdown. Taylor had 31 carries for 85 yards, while Hornung had eight attempts for 35 yards.

On defense, middle linebacker Ray Nitschke scooped up two fumble recoveries and left-side linebacker Dan Currie picked off Giants quarterback Y.A. Tittle, returning the ball 30 yards.

Kramer, tallying 10 points, received the game ball, but Nitschke was named MVP and scored an even bigger prize.

"The team voted for me to get the game ball. The writers voted Nitschke the game Corvette," Kramer said. "In the classic, typical life of a frickin' lineman, I got the ball, he got the Corvette."

Packers dominate in '62

For the most part, Green Bay steamrolled through the competition 60 years ago, leading the league in both points for, averaging 29.6 points per game, and points against, allowing only 10.6 points per game.

Defensively, paced by four All-Pros and a Pro Bowl selection, the Packers posted three shutouts in a 14-game schedule. The unit forced an astonishing 64 turnovers with 31 interceptions and 33 fumble recoveries. They collected seven turnovers twice in wins over the Vikings and Bears and five turnovers three times. Defensive backs Willie Wood, Herb Adlerley and Hank Gremminger combined for 21 interceptions, with Wood leading the NFL with nine.

On offense, Taylor enjoyed his best season, earning Associated Press MVP honors. The future Pro Football Hall of Famer led the league in yards rushing (1,474), touchdowns (19) and yards per game (105.3).

“Jimmy used to have ‘thunder thighs,’ great legs on him,” Kramer said. “He would dip that shoulder and bring that thigh up and if he had a shot at an elbow, kneecap, or shoulder, he would run over your ass and go on down the field a little bit. He would turn a corner and maybe a safety would be coming after him in the middle of the field, Jimmy would turn and head toward the safety. He would bring that thigh up, knock him on his ass and go on. It would drive coach Lombardi nuts that he would turn toward the tackler. ‘I don’t want you to turn. I want you to run down the sideline!’ Jimmy said, ‘Got a sting ‘em a little bit, Coach. Make them respect you.’”

“I don’t want you to sting them. I want you to gain yards!”

The team’s only hiccup was a deflating 26-14 loss to the Detroit Lions on Thanksgiving Day. Lombardi, so disheartened by the setback, vowed never to schedule another Thanksgiving game in Detroit. However, Lions were a formidable team, having nearly upset Green Bay earlier in the season, falling 9-7. Detroit finished 11-3 in ‘62, second place in the



Packers Willie Davis (87) and Jim Taylor (31) receive outstanding player awards from Bishop Bona at the second annual Bishop's Charities Game on Sept. 3, 1962. The Packers beat the New York Giants, 20-17.

Western Division behind the Packers.

The Lions, steaming mad from dropping the first meeting and trying to chase down the Packers for the division title, entered the Thanksgiving game fueled by anger and emotion. Kramer said Green Bay couldn’t match Detroit’s fire and motivation.

“A close friend of mine from college, Wayne Walker, was on Detroit for many years as a linebacker and never won a championship. He tried to clip my ass in that game on a punt. After that, he was so bitter about losing to Green Bay and the fact he never played in a championship game that it destroyed our friendship,” Kramer said. “I remember (defensive tackle) Alex Karras on one of his best shows, too.”

As the years drift by and Kramer sees teammates pass away, he savors all five championships his Packers won in the ‘60s a little more. Kramer, who will turn 87 on Jan. 23, and wide receiver Boyd Dowler, 85,

are the only remaining members still alive from the ‘62 squad. Kramer and Dowler chat over the phone from time to time to catch-up and reminisce.

“We support each other now. We’ve both had health issues,” Kramer said. “Boyd is a very bright kid. He’s well thought of and deserves to be in the (Pro Football) Hall of Fame.”

Dowler was unable to be reached for this story. 🏈

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Packers memorabilia collector auctions off prized items



Christensen's Super Bowl I ring brings in \$15K; 1965 championship game ball sells for \$12K

Longtime Packers collector Glen Christensen decided it was time to sell some of his extensive collection. His memorabilia rooms were getting a little too packed.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GLEN CHRISTENSEN

BY KEVIN DAMASK
SPECIAL TO PACKERLAND

Glen Christensen's Green Bay Packers memorabilia collection has grown so vast through nearly 30 years of collecting, it would make the Packers Hall of Fame curator do a double take.

Two rooms in his Grapevine, Texas home are literally a Green and Gold museum, packed floor to ceiling with pennants, hats, photos, jerseys, game balls, rare tickets, signs, lockers, equipment trunks, helmets and just about every autographed item a fan could conjure up.

Christensen began his collection in the early '90s when his mother, a member of the Packers' Lumberjack Band in the '40s, passed along items she had displayed for decades.

As time went on and the collection started filling every crevice and corner, however, Christensen thought it was time



to share some of this wealth and sell off some of his items. In mid-November, in an online auction facilitated by Heritage Auctions, which is based in Dallas, the avid Packers fan sold 43 phenomenal pieces.

"I had so much that it got to the point to where my room was just crazy," Christensen said in an interview with Packerland. "I would give tours and was like, 'Shoot, I didn't even know I had that.' When you get to that point, you know it's gotten a little crazy. I had a few people tell me over the years, 'Hey, if you ever sell a piece of your collection, keep me in mind.' I would hear that and it didn't really register. But when I started selling a few pieces, guys would email or call me and were so excited to get a piece of my collection, I knew it was a great feeling. I wanted pieces of my collection to go to people who appreciate it as much as I do."

The sale was Christensen's second auction through Heritage, after selling more than 60 items in a previous auction. While Christensen definitely has some unique pieces, he was impressed how much bidders were willing to fork over

for a few items. A salesman's sample ring from Super Bowl I in 1967 sold for \$15,000, while a game-used ball from the 1965 NFL Championship game went for \$12,000. In that contest, the Packers held off the Cleveland Browns 23-12 to win the team's third title in the Vince Lombardi era on a mud-soaked Lambeau Field.

"It was called the Mud Bowl and there was even dried mud in the laces of this ball," Christensen said. "It was so cool."

Christensen was also a bit shocked that a pennant sold for more than \$3,000. Pennants were a big draw a few years ago, but have since cooled down, Christensen said. Currently, jewelry is a "hot" seller, which likely explains the Super Bowl ring going for \$15K.

"Honestly, the memorabilia market is so hot, too, as an investment that makes for another reason why it's a good time to do it," Christensen said.

Other major items of Christensen's that sold in the most recent auction included a ball signed by the entire 1938 Packers team, selling for \$10,200; a full ticket (including stub) to the fabled Ice Bowl that brought in \$3,500; and a 1939 NFL Championship game program for \$3,000.

"I think that might be a record for a championship program," said Chris Nerat, who is a consignment director for Heritage Auctions and a big Packers fan and collector himself.

Bidding was open online for about a month. Overall, Christensen was pleased with the auction.

"It's always kind of nerve-racking because some of the items don't sell for what they should and some of the items sell for three times what they should. It's amazing to me," Christensen said. "The pennant sold for a lot more than I thought it would but then I had signed jerseys from Donny Anderson and Carroll Dale sold for about half of what I thought they would sell for. From auction to auction, things get hot and then they get cold. You have to figure out what's hot now and sell and then hold on to a few things for a few years until they become hot again."

Christensen chose Heritage Auctions to sell his items because it has a worldwide following with years of experience in moving sports memorabilia.

"They're reaching people who may not even be sports collectors, they may be some guy in New York who wants a really cool Vince Lombardi signed ball on his desk as a conversation piece for clients," he said. "They find people I could never find and do so much marketing and hyping of the auction, it's just the way to do it."

Nerat said vintage Packers memorabilia is typically scooped up quickly.

"For football items, the Packers are always the hottest. The numbers just speak for themselves," Nerat said. "Other teams that are really sought after are the Steelers, Redskins, Raiders, Cowboys to an extent,

but the Packers blow away every other team as far as their value."

Game-used memorabilia, championship rings, autographs and vintage cards are the most sought-after items on the market, according to Nerat. He said Christensen's collection is among the best he's seen in sports memorabilia.

"One thing I like about Glen's collection is how he has it displayed," Nerat said. "You'll have some of these guys with really great stuff or a great collection and they'll have it stored away in a storage locker or safety deposit box. Glen's is at his house and it's like a mini Lambeau Field. As far as displayability, Glen's is right up there in the industry. It's really amazing."

Heritage Auctions is planning another large sports memorabilia auction in February and Christensen was thinking about taking part. Despite being a part of two auctions and selling off more than 100 items, Nerat said the auctions haven't even put a "dent" in Christensen's vast collection.

"He told me he's only going to sell through Heritage for auctions and that's pretty exciting for us because he's got some really high-end, museum-caliber pieces," Nerat said.

Items that Christensen might decide to sell include a football used in the Ice Bowl, an overcoat Lombardi wore on the sidelines, and numerous other extraordinary pieces. He also has a sideline bench from the Ice Bowl and believes it's one of three known to exist from the iconic game. While he'll have to make a few difficult decisions of what to sell before the next auction, there are heartfelt items that Christensen never plans to part with.

"I'll never sell any of my mom's stuff because that means more to me than anything," Christensen said. "That will be passed on to my kids. They've grown up looking at all this stuff and I'm sure they all have favorite things they'd like to have as well."

When these auctions end, my wife always asks, 'How are you feeling?' Well, obviously I'm a little down because I've sold a piece of myself and while I know I'm not going to get it back, I feel good they're going to good homes. That's the bottom line to me." ❖



PACKERS vs. TITANS Nov. 17, 2022

JOSH STALOCH PHOTOS



With Tennessee safety Kevin Byard trying to secure a tackle, Randall Cobb picks up enough yardage for a first down following a completion from Aaron Rodgers.



Green Bay running back Aaron Jones tries to recover a fumble after Tennessee's Joshua Kalu put his helmet perfectly on the ball to jar it loose.



Packers defenders Preston Smith (91), Kenny Clark (middle) and Jarran Reed (90) swarm Tennessee quarterback Ryan Tannehill and come up with a sack.



Dean Lowry (middle) gets a hand on Titans running back Derrick Henry (22).



After reeling in a pass from Rodgers, Green Bay tight end Robert Tonyan looks to put a move on Byard.



Packers kick returner Keisean Nixon finds a big lane to run through after a punt by the Titans' Josh Lambo (6).



A fully extended Titans linebacker Monty Rice tries to slow down Packers running back Aaron Jones in the opening half.



Green Bay wideout Christian Watson gets hit prior to the ball getting to him. Tennessee defender Kristian Fulton was not called for pass interference on the play.

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Veteran wide receiver Randall Cobb tries to escape a tackle as Titans cornerback Roger McCreary closes in.



Packers defensive tackle Kenny Clark (97) fights through a Titans' blocker as he tries to wrap up running back Derrick Henry.

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