

# Lambeau: Watching from the sidelines

BY KRIS LEONHARDT  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Continued from previous week

Earl Louis Lambeau was a burly young man with full lips and curly, thick, dark hair and mischief in his eye.

A roving lifestyle in his youth may have set the stage for a life of seeking new and different conditions, as his family moved from home to home in the Green Bay area.

In some instances, his father, Marcel, worked on the home before selling it, and in other situations, there was a new business venture to be pursued.

In the early 1900s, the family was living at the Michigan House on Green Bay's Main Street where Marcel ran the bar and rented out rooms.



Curly Lambeau's fourth grade classroom at Whitney School. Lambeau is in the third row, furthest right.

UW-Green Bay Archives photo

Marcel also maintained his masonry work throughout the northeast region of Wisconsin, becoming responsible for the foundation of structures peppered around the area.

Marcel also served as president of the Masons' Union and in the leadership of the Building Trades Council.

Curly attended grade school in the first Whitney School — a smaller facility that was later replaced in 1918 by a larger three-story, brick building — named in honor of Daniel Whitney, the man who founded Navarino which is now part of the city of Green Bay.

He then attended Howe School — named for Timothy O. Howe, a Brown County resident who became a U.S. senator.

At Howe, Curly's leadership skills became evident.

A June 1913 *Press-Gazette* article noted Lambeau as the graduating eighth-grade class president.

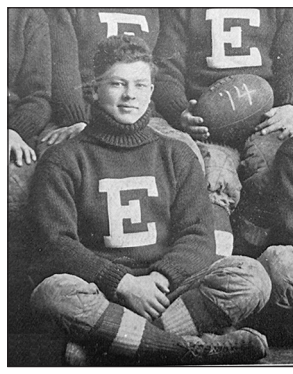
Lambeau then entered East High School for his secondary education.

There, Curly made the high school football team as a freshman, where began to shine a light on his athletic skills.

*Green Bay Gazette* coverage of the Oct. 3, 1914, game against Oconto reflects not only Lambeau's athleticism but also his budding connection with the forward pass.

"It was a high-class parade, with Oconto walking backwards. The final score was 100 to 0 and the result might have been still more overwhelming but for a couple of forward passes which missed with the receiver all ready to step over the goal," the article read.

"William Wittig with seven touchdowns grabbed the



Curly Lambeau pictured with the 1914 East High football team.

East High School photo

major honors, although the entire backfield, especially Lambeau, deserves credit." An Oct. 26, 1914, *Green Bay Gazette* article described Lambeau as a large right halfback for East.

"Lambeau is a sophomore and has two years of high school football ahead of him. He weighs 175 and is an expert in the sending department of the forward-pass game," the article stated.

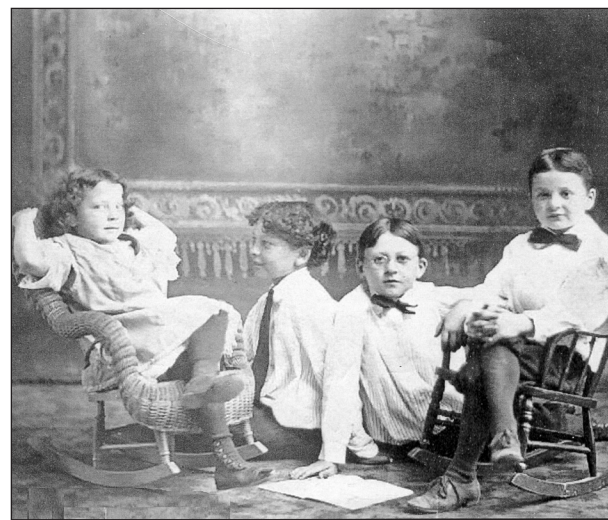
The Saturday before, Lambeau had gained his Letterman Sweater after making the first touchdown of the game.

"Professor Don Birdsall had promised a sweater to the East High man making the first touchdown against the (Appleton) Papermakers. Lambeau made the only East High touchdown of the game and naturally hauls down the prize," a *Press-Gazette* article stated.

The following day, the *Press-Gazette* called Lambeau "the strongest man in the East High backfield."

Meanwhile, Lambeau was also becoming a star in both track and field events, in hurdles, discus and shot put, even though East High — then located at Chicago Street and Webster Avenue — did not have its own track and did not have a team, as a result, during Curly's senior year.

He was noted in the East High Hilltoppers yearbook



Curly, second from the left, with, from left: sister, Beatrice, and brothers, Raymond and Oliver.

LaTour Family Descendants, Gillis and Des Jardins families/The Greatest Story in Sports Volume I photo

as the winter of Third Individual Honors at Appleton and first at the Inter-Class Track Meet.

For the start of his junior year — 1915 — Curly was out with a football injury incurred during pre-season practice.

"East High's football aspirations were dealt a severe blow, when Earl 'Curly' Lambeau, star halfback and one of the most promising men on Coach (Carroll) Nelson's team fractured a leg and will as a result be laid up for a month or six weeks," a *Press-Gazette* article stated.

"The accident at this time of the year is very unfortunate as Lambeau was one of the best high school athletes in the city and Coach Nelson depended upon him for great work this year.

"The casualty occurred during light scrimmage. The young man was rushed to a hospital and an x-ray photograph revealed a distinct fracture of the right limb just above the ankle joint."

The East High community waited eagerly for his return.

"Curly Lambeau may get a chance at the Marinette team, as his foot is practically healed. However, unless it is absolutely necessary the star East High man will not take his place," an

Oct. 22, 1915, *Press-Gazette* article stated.

"Jubilation was evident among the student body when Curly Lambeau appeared on the campus without his crutches. Lambeau has now reached the cane stage, and may be able to play in two weeks," an Oct. 26 article stated.

Curly finally made his first suited appearance on the field the first week of November, but was not expected to play until the following week.

Lambeau was back on the field for the Thanksgiving East-West game, but the team lost the contest 6-0 — West's seventh win in a row for the rivalry.

The year had been a frustrating one for Lambeau as he watched from the sidelines, but his senior year at East High would look much different.

Continued next week

As we begin this series, we want to thank Deb and Hannah at the UW-Green Bay Archives, Sam and Katie at Packers Hall of Fame Inc., Packers Historian Cliff Christl, Mary Jane and Jeff at the Brown County Library History Room, Kristin and Joe with the Belgian Heritage Center, Tom Hutchison and all of those individuals who shared their knowledge and memories over the past year of research.

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