



# VERNON BIEVER'S FAVORITE PACKERS PHOTOS

By Martin Hendricks • Packer Plus Columnist

Vernon Biever's images captured the essence of a franchise, a dynasty, and the legends that played and coached in them. From Lambeau to Lombardi. From the Ice Bowl to Super Bowl XXXI. From Hutson to Favre.

His award-winning photography hangs on the walls of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, the National Football League headquarters, and in the offices and homes of Green Bay Packers fans across the country.

"He was the master at capturing the feeling of Green Bay Packer football—the bloodied knuckles, the dirty jerseys," said Joe Horrigan, vice president of communications at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

Vince Casey, former NFL director of football information, said he walks by wall-sized murals of NFL history every day. "Many of the

murals are Vernon's photos, and they're very emotional and symbolic of the league and our history," Casey said. "In the 1960s, the Packers, the Colts, the Giants, the Bears—they were the NFL. The league was just becoming popular, and Vernon Biever was there shooting, in the rain, the cold, the snow. His images captured the history of the NFL. Only a handful of photographers took the really great photos. It's a skill and creative talent very few have."

For 67 years, Biever, 85, has photographed some of the greatest moments in the 90-year history of the Packers. He pioneered the use of color photography in professional football and has seen his profession revolutionized by digital technology. The following are five of Biever's favorite photographs and insights into how they happened.

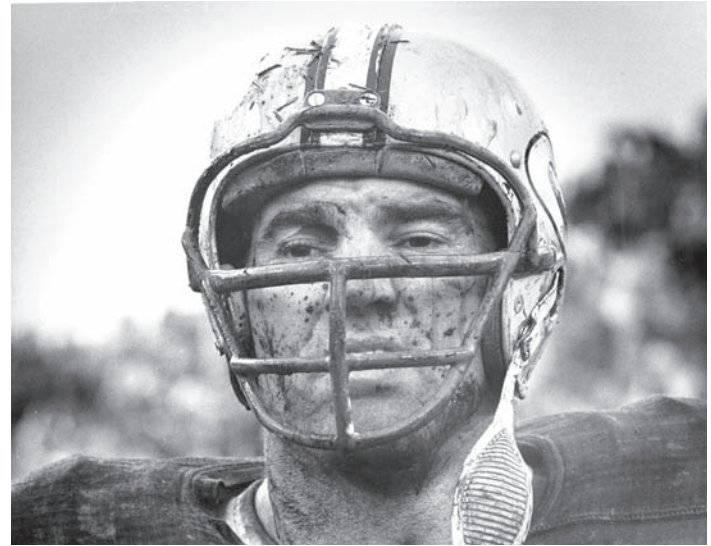
## #5 - Paul Hornung's Diving Touchdown



Vernon's comments: "The funny thing about this photo is that Hornung had scored a touchdown earlier in the game almost the exact same way, but I screwed up and missed it. I got it the second time around. It was against the 49ers in Milwaukee in 1965.

"Hornung is up in the air almost parallel to the ground, sailing into the end zone with bodies all around him. He could smell the end zone."

## #4 - Forrest Gregg – "Mud Face"

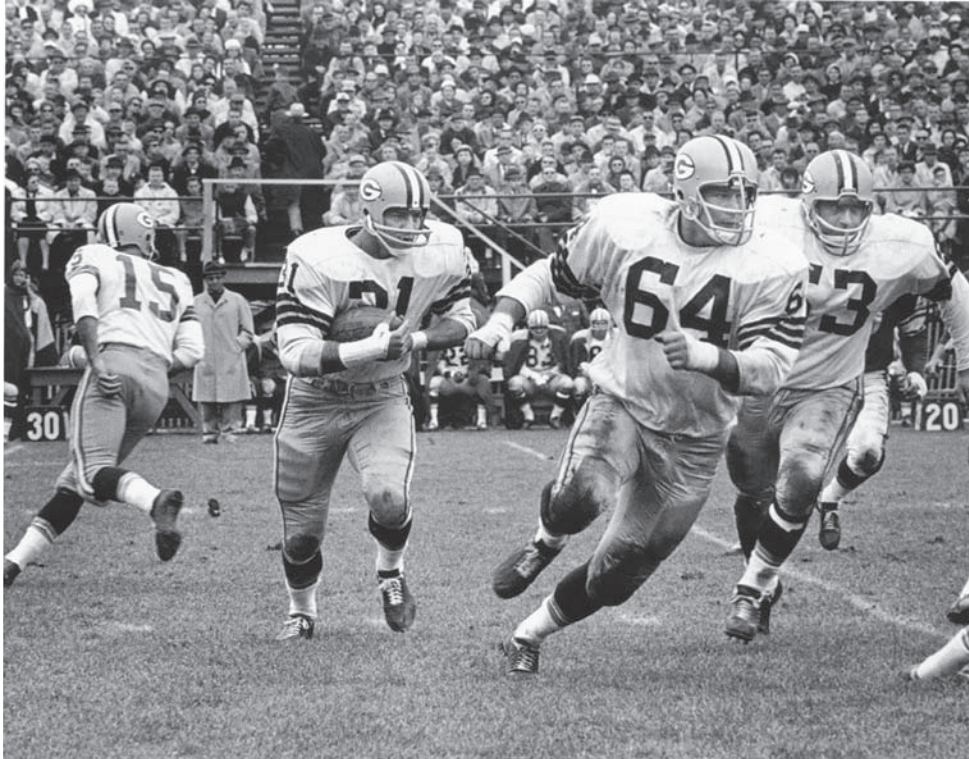


Vernon's comments: "I took this one in Minneapolis but I'm not sure of the exact date. I think in the mid-1960s. It was a miserable, muddy day and I took a picture of three players walking off the field after the game.

"But I liked Gregg's face with the mud on it. I kept my distance and used a long lens. That way I couldn't get in trouble. I just talked to Forrest the other day and he mentioned the photo and that it's one of his favorites. Mine too. It's a lineman's face from the trenches."



### #3 - The Packers Sweep



Vernon's comments: "This picture, this play, is the symbol of Vince Lombardi's regime. It was taken at the old Met Stadium in Minneapolis in 1961—the first time the Packers ever played the Vikings.

"It was Green Bay's signature play—one that Lombardi stressed. It's got everything. Lombardi is in the background, watching across the way on the sideline. It has Starr, Taylor, Kramer, and Thurston. The photo almost looks posed, but of course it wasn't. I had no idea when I first took the photo that I 'captured' the sweep, but I was happy when I saw the result."

### #2 - The Ice Bowl – Starr's Sneak



Vernon's comments: "It's one of the best photographs in NFL history—a unique picture of the winning play of the Ice Bowl.

"Before the play, I told John (Biever's son) to stay in the end zone and that I'd try to get Lombardi's reaction if the Packers scored. John got Bart's winning touchdown and I got a great shot of Lombardi's back. But I'm very happy the way it turned out. John got a picture for the ages. I'm so proud of him—he was just 15 at the time and cold as heck like the rest of us. None of us knew how famous that game or that photo would become. It's part of Packer and NFL history."



## #1 - Super Bowl I Trophy Presentation



Vernon's comments: "I've always said it's an important picture because it was history—the first Super Bowl. I thought that game was very important to the NFL and that it would be remembered for a long time.

"I was the only still photographer in the locker room in the (Los Angeles) Coliseum. I had a pass for the field, but I was able to get in the locker room. You don't ask any questions sometimes, you just follow the

leader. I followed Lombardi and (NFL commissioner) Pete Rozelle right into the locker room after the game. That's how I got to be there when the award was presented to Lombardi.

"I refer to it as the best picture I ever took. It's not an action shot, but it is a feature shot that will be remembered long after the game. It's NFL history."