



Hornung goes for touchdown in happier days. His all-around abilities made him top scorer.

WILL GREEN BAY WELCOME BACK PAUL HORNUNG?

Their star halfback, their "Golden Boy" has been tarnished by a gambling suspension; the question now is loyalty—his and the town's

By BOB CURRAN

UNTIL ONE dark Tuesday last spring, the city of Green Bay, Wis., was involved in one of the greatest city-loves-man romances since Mayor Jimmy Walker and New York. The recipient of the requited love was Paul Hornung, star of the Green Bay Packers professional football team.

Then Pete Rozelle, commissioner of the National Football League, announced that he had suspended Hornung from football for a year for betting on games. Hornung hadn't bet against his team but, he admitted, he had made small bets on games, and that broke a league rule.

No matter who the player was, the loss would have been taken with bitterness in Green Bay, where the football team is the pride of the town. But "Golden Boy" Hornung was team leader and the symbol of Green Bay's greatest effort: its success in matching (and beating) the biggest cities in the country in big-league football. And even more than that, Hornung was someone Green Bay loved.

More than anything else, they liked his way of being himself. In a small city a public figure might worry about who was looking. Not Hornung. Almost any morning you could find him playing gin rummy at the Lyceum Lounge. Often in the evenings he danced up a storm at Speed's, a local hot spot. At other times he would be seen talking with anyone and everyone around town. He was "folks."

After the news broke, there were arguments and accusations; then in the early summer the 1963 Packer Yearbook was published and contained a written apology from Paul Hornung to the Green Bay fans (see box).

How did the apology affect the people of Green Bay? Will they welcome him back after his suspension is lifted? I went to Green Bay to find the answers.

Maybe I could have picked a better day to visit Green Bay. I arrived there the day after the Packers had opened the 1963 season with a 20-17 loss to the College All-Stars in Chicago.

ONE OF THE FIRST PERSONS I talked to was Jerry Atkinson, general manager and executive vice-president of Prange's Department Store. Jerry is also on the board of directors of the Packers and is the man credited with saving the Packer franchise during its last financial crisis. The questions I asked were those I would ask of everyone I talked to in Green Bay: Were you shocked when Hornung was banned? Will you welcome him back?

Atkinson, a man in his early fifties with the enviable talent of exuding competence without any discernible effort, answered:

"We were, of course, shocked. No one had reason to suspect betting by anyone. Naturally, action would have been taken if we had. After Paul's acknowledgment of error, however, the commissioner's decision was accepted.

"Many people feel that in view of the rules which forbid betting—and which do not qualify them as to how much or how often—all offenders should have been treated the same. In fairness to a group of fine young men on the Detroit team and to our Hornung, we believe the fans of the nation have kept in proper perspective this deviation from the NFL rules.

"Sure, we'll welcome Paul back—he's a good boy, and our folks in Green Bay like him."

Not everybody was "shocked" by Hornung's involvement. "Once the gambling investigation started, we knew Paul would be brought into it," the wife of a man close to the team told me. "He certainly didn't hide his actions. What did surprise us was that so few players were punished all around the league. Of course, he'll be welcome."

My next stop was Holzer's Drug Store, where drugs and medicines fight a losing battle for space with Packer memorabilia. John Holzer pulls no punches about how he feels about the banning. "Isn't it just wonderful," he says bitingly, "that none of the Chicago Bears ever was ex-