

Ron Kramer, All-American:

Michigan Legend, Packer Great, Lion Hero

By Jim Sargent

Ronald John Kramer, one of the greatest athletes in the tradition-rich history of the University of Michigan, enjoyed a stellar career as the prototype tight end for several great Green Bay Packer teams during the Vince Lombardi era and for Kramer's home state Detroit Lions.

Total Football (1997) listed him as one of the 300 greatest players in the game's history. A member of the College Football Hall of Fame, Ron is one of a handful of Michigan heroes—including halfback Tom Harmon and former President and center Gerald Ford—who have had their maize and blue jerseys retired.

Kramer, who stood 6' 3 ½" and weighed 220 as a senior in college, was an all-around athlete at Michigan. Competing from 1954 through 1957, he earned recognition as a football All-American in his junior and senior years, as MVP and top scorer on the Wolverine basketball team for three straight seasons, and as the team's best shot putter and high jumper in track. In fact, big Ron is the last nine-letter performer at U-M.

The Green Bay Packers, then a doormat in the National Football League, drafted Kramer first in 1957. The Packers also had a "bonus" choice, and they used it to select Notre Dame All-American back Paul Hornung. After coach Vince Lombardi joined Green Bay in 1959, he transformed the franchise, turning the Packers into an NFL powerhouse in the 1960s.

Kramer became the league's best tight end in 1961. A punishing blocker who could handle defensive ends, tackles, and linebackers, Ron was also an excellent receiver. He won All-Pro twice.

Born on June 24, 1935, in Girard, Kansas, Ron grew up during the Great Depression and World War II. When he was five, his family moved to Detroit and his father began working at Chevrolet Forge. A determined young man who loved sports, Ron attended East Detroit High. As a freshman he was awkward, but he developed into an unusual athlete—big, strong, fast, and agile. His talent and dedication allowed him to star in football, basketball, and track.

Ron earned All-State honors in all three sports during his last two years. For example, as East Detroit's center, he led the state in scoring as a junior and senior. A one-man track team, he usually won the high and low hurdles, the shot put, and the high jump. By his senior year, Ron had decided to attend the University of Michigan.

Speaking in a 2003 interview, Kramer explained how college sports have changed:

"In those days they didn't recruit as much. You went to a school because you wanted to go there. The atmosphere in the 1950s was a whole lot different than it is now. There wasn't all the big hoopla about high school kids like we see today.

I was pretty good in high school. I was All-State in football, basketball, and track. But I decided to go to Michigan very early. We went to school for one main reason, to get an education.

"Some of us were on scholarships, and some of us weren't. The guy who played the opposite end was Tom Maentz. We were fraternity brothers at Sigma Chi and did things together, but Tom didn't have a scholarship. If you didn't have a *need* for a scholarship, you didn't have one. There were a lot of guys who played football for Michigan in the 1950s who weren't on scholarship, because their fathers were doctors, or dentists, or bankers, and so on. My dad worked at Chevrolet Forge in Detroit, so I had a need."

A New Game

Thoughtful, articulate, and witty, Ron commented on the changes in sports and society:

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"The whole scenario of athletics didn't really become a boom until, I would say, the early 1960s, especially when the Packers and the Giants played for two NFL championships, and the Packers won both times. That's when television became dominant in our society.

"We had football on television, like the 'Big Ten Game of the Week' in the 1950s. The one game I think that changed the atmosphere a tremendous amount was when the Baltimore Colts beat the New York Giants in overtime for the NFL title in 1958.

"Everything has changed since the 1950s. I took an Astronomy course from one of the greatest professors at the University of Michigan, and we were talking about space travel. Guys are going, 'Yeah, yeah.' But a few years later the United States landed a man on the moon. It's phenomenal! Everything has changed about sports, including the whole process of television.

Michigan Days

"When I played football at Michigan, we played the whole game, offense and defense. It wasn't just a one-way affair. When I went to Green Bay, that was the first year they built the new stadium, Lambeau Field. They just expanded it to hold 70,000, but it held 31,000 in 1957."

At Michigan Kramer started all three years (freshmen were ineligible). Head coach Bennie Oosterbaan was a three-time Michigan All-American as well as a nine-letter winner in football, basketball, and baseball in the mid-1920s. With Kramer and Maentz at the ends, Oosterbaan's teams had winning records, going 6-3 in 1954 and 7-2 in 1955 and 1956.

Kramer quickly became the Wolverines' best receiver, blocker, linebacker, punter, kickoff and extra point man, and occasional running back—often in the same game. Ron carried the ball 14 times in three years, gaining 65 yards. In an offense based on running, he caught 53 passes and gained 880 yards, an average of 16.6 per catch, and he scored nine touchdowns. He punted, mainly in his junior and senior years, averaging 41.3 yards per kick. As a place-kicker, he converted 43 of 51 extra point tries, and he kicked two field goals. Altogether, Ron contributed 103 points to Michigan's scoring during his three years.

But statistics can't tell Kramer's story. Aggressive and hard-nosed on the gridiron, but a thoughtful, considerate person in private life, he was an intense competitor and a perfectionist. No matter how well he played, he could see room for improvement. In an article for *Sport Magazine* in November 1956, Hal Butler called Kramer a dominant player and a take-charge guy, the type of athlete who inspired others to perform better.

Michigan's star halfback Tony Branoff observed, "Ron's the best blocking end I've ever seen. I can't remember him ever missing one. But he'll still come back in the huddle after the play and ask if he made the hole big enough!"

Considered the finest pass receiver in Michigan history before Kramer arrived, Bennie Oosterbaan called Ron's blocking and tackling abilities his greatest assets to the Wolverines. Bennie also commented, "To top off his marvelous physical gifts of size and speed and strength, plus an uncanny coordination, Kramer was one of the fiercest competitors I've ever seen. Nothing was impossible for him—the impossible was only a challenge."

A rugged, handsome, hard-working athlete who kept striving to improve, Kramer seemed to specialize in leaping, fingertip catches. He made some of the best receptions in U-M history. But he played with various injuries, including a collapsed lung during the Army game in his senior year. As Oosterbaan said, if Ron sustained an injury, he worked harder in practice to come back.

Fritz Crisler, Michigan's athletic director, once said, "Kramer and Oosterbaan would be my choice if I could name two all-time ends for my dream team." To the Michigan faithful, Kramer was not only a great athlete, but he became a football legend.

On to Green Bay

The Packers drafted Kramer and Paul Hornung as the club's two top picks in 1957. Kramer said in 2003, "I was Green Bay's first draft choice, and Paul Hornung was the first round 'bonus' draft choice. We always say they built the stadium for us! At that time, if a team was on the bottom rung for several years, the league gave

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them a bonus choice, plus their first round draft choice. The Packers took Hornung first as the bonus choice, and I was the first draft choice."

Green Bay suffered a losing season in 1957, finishing last in the NFL's six-team Western Conference with a 3-9 mark. Packer fans had to remember back to 1947 for the team's last winning season, when coach Curly Lambeau's squad fashioned a 6-5-1 record. Lisle Blackburn took over Green Bay's reins in 1954. His first three teams had records of 4-8, 6-6, and 4-8.

Kramer and Hornung, however, got off to a good start as NFL rookies. Hornung led the Packers in rushing average, gaining 5.3 yards per carry. Totaling 319 yards in 60 runs, Hornung, a three-time All-American at Notre Dame and the 1956 Heisman Trophy winner, scored a team-best three touchdowns. Don McIlhenny led the club in yards gained with 384, averaging 3.8 yards per carry, scoring one touchdown on the ground, and catching two TD passes.

Kramer became the Packers' second leading receiver. In his first season as a regular, Bart Starr, who went on to a Hall of Fame career as the winningest quarterback in pro football, completed 117 of 215 passes for 1,489 yards and eight touchdowns. Split end Billy Howton, a sixth-year pro who led the NFL in 1956 with 1,186 receiving yards and 12 touchdowns, paced Green Bay in 1957 with 38 receptions, good for 727 yards and five touchdowns. Kramer, displaying his toughness as a blocker, also hauled in 28 passes and gained 337 yards, a 12 yard-per-catch average, but he didn't score.

However, Ron's rookie year ended too soon when he suffered leg and knee injuries while grabbing a pass early in the Packers' next to last game, a 42-17 loss to the Los Angeles Rams.

In 2003 Ron recalled, "I broke my leg and tore up my knee badly in the next to last game. The doctors said I should never play again. But after I recouped it, I played another ten years.

"I sat out the 1958 season because I went into the Air Force, and I came back in 1959. I had served in the Air Force ROTC at Michigan. You had to do the military thing, the marching, all that crap. I was commander of Michigan's Air Force ROTC as a senior, and I served one year in the Air Force. At Bolling Air Force Base, they wanted me to play football, but I couldn't run.

"I failed three physicals, but they took me into the Air Force at the 'convenience' of the government. The general at Bolling thought I could play for their team. When they found out I couldn't, they sent me to Fort Myer. I was an adjutant for about 400 master sergeants."

Lombardi Arrives

Kramer returned to football in 1959, the first year that Vince Lombardi took over the Packers. He was limited to special teams and reserve (he caught no passes) at tight end. In the meantime, Lombardi's leadership turned the franchise into a winner, starting with a 7-5 record and a third place finish in 1959. In 1960 Ron remained a reserve, after running a pattern against the Detroit Lions that led to an interception. Mainly he played on special teams and got into better shape, honing his blocking skills while making four catches for 65 yards.

"I got to Green Bay a week before the 1959 season started, and I was not in shape to play. I weighed 212 pounds. I had ulcers. My health was a mess. It took me a year and a half to get back in shape. But Vince Lombardi said, 'You're either going to make it, or I'm going to get rid of you.' I said, 'Okay, let's have a show at it.' The rest is history.

"In 1965 I came back home to Detroit. My son had lost an eye, and my daughter's health was bad. She had asthma. I told the Packers, 'I'm either going to retire, or you can trade me to the Lions.' They ended up trading me to the Lions for a first draft choice, which was Jim Grabowski. Jim still loves me, because he started his career with world championship Packer teams in 1966 and 1967, instead of the Lions."

In the 1960 season Green Bay won the franchise's first Western Conference title since 1944. Finishing at 8-4, the Packers topped the West by winning the last three games over the Chicago Bears, 41-13, the San Francisco Forty-Niners, 13-0, and the Rams, 35-21. Paul Hornung won his second of three straight scoring titles, setting an NFL record with 176 points in 1960.

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In the NFL title game at Franklin Field in Philadelphia against the Eastern Conference champion Philadelphia Eagles, the Packers lost, 17-13. Paul Hornung kicked a first period field goal. Philadelphia shut down Green Bay's running game, while the Packers stopped Norm Van Brocklin's passing. The Eagles led at the half 10-3, and neither team scored in the third quarter.

Early in the fourth period Starr capped an 80-yard drive with a TD pass to Max McGee, giving the Packers a 13-10 lead. But Philadelphia's Ted Dean returned the kickoff to the Packer 39, and seven plays later Dean scored from the five-yard line. Starr drove the Packers downfield in the closing minutes, but time ran out with Green Bay on the Eagles' 9-yard line.

Talking about his comeback with the Packers, Kramer said, "I played in all of the games in 1960, but I wasn't rounding out like Vince Lombardi wanted. He didn't have the confidence in me that he needed. After the season, I wasn't happy, and we talked it over. Lombardi said, 'Next year you come back and get your butt going, and I'm going to play you, one way or another.'

"I respected that. I came back in 1961, and 1962, and 1963, and 1964, and I had years that were as good if not better than anyone in the league. At 6'3 1/2" and 250 pounds, I could still high jump 6'3". Once I got my legs back, I could do all kinds of things.

"You know, we didn't have the recoup stuff they have today, with trainers and all kinds of equipment. I carried with me a 100-pound weight that you strapped onto your foot. I kicked it with each leg 1,000 times a day for two years. My recoup was my own. Luckily, I have always had great recuperative powers, and I could play with hurts.

"But being a tight end is a multi-position. I was sort of the first one with my physical stature to play tight end. Lots of teams used to use a wing tee formation. They used to have halfbacks out in front. As a tight end, you could play on or off the line. Well, I played on the line most of the time. I was as big as our tackles, and I could block as well as our tackles, and I could catch the ball as well as our flankers. This is why I was the premier tight end in those years.

"Vince Lombardi said in his book, 'Having Ron Kramer on the team is like having a twelfth man.' I'm very proud of that statement. We didn't have to double-team the defensive ends. I could block the end alone. So I was the prototype at tight end."

Championship Years

In 1961 and 1962 the Packers again ranked first in the West, and Green Bay won the NFL title both years by defeating the New York Giants. Built on strong blocking and tackling, the Packers finished at 11-3 in 1961. Behind the blocks of guards Jerry Kramer and Fuzzy Thurston and Kramer at tight end, Green Bay pounded opponents, with Taylor, Hornung, and Tommy Moore running power sweeps. After the '61 season, Lombardi, who handed out praise sparingly, said, "Ron is as fine a blocker as I've ever seen."

In 1961 Bart Starr completed 58 percent of his tosses, and Green Bay's top three receivers proved to be potent weapons. Split end Max McGee caught 51 passes for 883 yards and seven touchdowns, flanker Boyd Dowler made 36 receptions for 633 yards and three scores, and Kramer caught 35 passes for 559 yards and four TDs.

The Packers featured the league's toughest run defense. Opposing ball carriers faced Bill Quinlan and Willie Davis at defensive ends and tackles Henry Jordan and Dave Hanner, while the smart, aggressive linebacking corps included Ray Nitschke, Bill Forester, and Dan Currie.

In 1962 the Packers enjoyed another banner season, losing only to the Lions on Thanksgiving Day in Detroit, 26-14. Hornung, who led the NFL in scoring the previous three years, was slowed by injuries. But Jim Taylor took over the league's scoring lead with 19 touchdowns, Starr led the league in passing, McGee caught 49 passes for 820 yards and three scores, Dowler caught 49 aerials for 724 yards and two touchdowns, and Kramer contributed 37 catches for 555 yards, plus the former Michigan All-American scored seven times.

Green Bay, strong at every position, got All-Pro seasons in 1962 from Taylor at fullback, Kramer at tight end, offensive linemen Forrest Gregg, Jerry Kramer, Fuzzy Thurston, and Jim Ringo, defensive linemen Willie Davis and Henry Jordan, linebackers Bill Forester and Dan Currie, and cornerback Herb Adderley.

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In the 1961 championship game, the first ever played at Green Bay, the Packers beat the Giants, 37-0. Green Bay took a 24-0 halftime lead when Hornung, on leave from the Army, scored on a 6-yard run, Dowler caught a touchdown pass from Starr, Kramer hauled in a scoring pass, and Hornung kicked three extra points and a field goal.

The game turned on a key play by Kramer. Following Hornung's touchdown, the Packers intercepted Y.A. Tittle on the next series. After Starr and Hornung threw incomplete passes, Green Bay faced third and 10 on the Giants' 34-yard line. On the next play Ron faked a drive-block into linebacker Cliff Livingston. Livingston slipped the block to the outside, Kramer slanted to the middle, which linebacker Sam Huff had vacated to cover Jim Taylor swinging to the left flat. The hard-running Kramer grabbed Starr's pass and carried tacklers another 10 yards, giving Green Bay a first down. Three plays later, Starr connected with Dowler for a 14-0 lead. Six minutes later, big number 88 great caught his first scoring pass in a championship game.

In the third quarter, Hornung kicked another field goal and Kramer made another touchdown catch. Hornung's fourth quarter field goal finished the scoring, as the Packers' defense shut down the vaunted Giants' offense. Playing perhaps the greatest game of his remarkable career, Kramer, who delivered one punishing block after another, led all receivers that afternoon with four receptions good for 80 yards and two touchdowns.

In a story for *Sport Magazine* in December 1962, Dick Schaap wrote that Green Bay ran off the right side most of the afternoon, using Kramer's beautiful blocking to take Sam Huff out of the defense: "On the snap of the ball, he [Kramer] stepped forward from his right end position, cut abruptly toward his left and smeared Huff each time the linebacker headed toward the hole." Turning an appropriate phrase, Schaap called Kramer an outstanding "broken tackler runner."

Talking about Green Bay's championship games in 2003, Kramer commented, "It was only about 19 degrees in that game. That was like summertime to us! Hornung scored three touchdowns, and I caught four or five passes for two touchdowns.

"I also spent the afternoon beating the crap out of Sam Huff, the Giants' linebacker. I saw Sam at the Kentucky Derby this year. A bunch of us, myself, Hornung, and McGee, were sitting around a table having breakfast, and Sam Huff said, 'Kramer, you S.O.B., I feel embarrassed being in the National Football League Hall of Fame and you're not there with me. You were the best.' I appreciate that comment."

Speaking in a 2003 interview, Paul Hornung recalled, "We're pretty good friends. If you want to kill me, I always say, you gotta go through Ron Kramer. He was not only one of the best athletes at Michigan, he was one of the best athletes in America during his time. He was very unique. He and Mike Ditka were the best tight ends in the business. Nobody realized what a great blocker Kramer was. He could run, and he had a great pair of hands.

"Lombardi's sweep was predicated on Ron Kramer's block. The sweep depends on the tight end's block of the linebacker. Ron was big, strong, and had great technique. Ron was what made Green Bay's sweep go. We wish he never would have gone to Detroit. If your teammates know what a contribution you made, that's . . . important."

In 1962 the Packers played the Giants for the NFL title again, this time at frigid Yankee Stadium. At game time the temperature stood at 20 degrees, but the thermometer fell all afternoon as winds gusted more than 30 miles per hour through the stadium.

Green Bay won, 16-7, scoring once in each quarter. Jerry Kramer kicked three field goals. After a Packer interception on the Giants 28-yard line in the second period, Hornung completed a 21-yard pass to Dowler, and Taylor scored on a seven-yard run, giving Green Bay a 10-0 halftime lead. The Giants scored in the third quarter after Erich Barnes blocked a McGee punt, and Jim Collier fell on the ball in the end zone.

"Jerry Kramer had a hell of a day that afternoon," Ron remembered. "But Ray Nitschke also played tough defense, and he was the MVP of the game. That was a bad day. The wind was blowing like 30 to 40 miles per hour, and it was like five degrees. My wife went to the game, but she was a 'style expert' and didn't dress for cold weather. She didn't bring a blanket to sit on. She got so cold she had to leave. There was a crust of ice on the surface of Yankee Stadium.

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"But we were always a good team. Lombardi was the best coach around. Nobody could compare to him. He was just the *best*. He worked hard. He was the smartest. He knew how to motivate everybody. He knew how to yell at some people, and how to talk quiet to some people. He had a great demeanor. He was the best. He was a *dominant individual*."

Kramer enjoyed two more good seasons with Green Bay. In 1963, when Bart Starr sat out four games with a broken hand, the Bears won the Western Conference with an 11-1-2 record, and the Packers finished second at 11-2-1. The Michigan great caught 32 passes for 537 yards and four touchdowns, and he made All-Pro for the second time.

Sometimes Kramer was slowed by injuries. "If I had to wear as much tape as Ron does," Green Bay tackle Norm Masters once said, "I'd quit football. He's amazing."

In 1964, when the improved Baltimore Colts won the Western Conference with a 12-2 record, the Packers placed second at 8-5-1. Again Green Bay's third leading receiver, Kramer made 34 receptions for 551 yards, but he didn't score.

By that time he had to deal with serious family matters, including health problems of his son and daughter as well as the breakup of his marriage. He asked to be traded to the Lions, or he would retire:

Long Years in Detroit

"My son had lost an eye," Ron said in 2003, "and we didn't know whether he was going to lose the other eye. My daughter was very asthmatic. The marriage was on the rocks. I said, 'I gotta go home.' It was driving me crazy playing up there in 1964.

"I told Vince Lombardi, 'I'll play every single play, and I'll have Marv Fleming ready for you next year, when I'm gone.' And I did. Marv Fleming and I are still very, very close. I saw him at the Super Bowl this year, and he and I have a great relationship.

"I arrived in Detroit in 1965 and, Lo and behold, I met the dumbest coach in the world. His name was Harry Gilmer. I came from playing for a coach like Vince Lombardi, who was the best, to Harry Gilmer, who had no idea of how to be a head coach."

Kramer may have been close to home, but the Lions were not close to the championship level of the Packers. George Wilson, who coached the Lions to the franchise's last NFL title in 1957, saw his club finish fourth in 1964 with a 7-5-2 record. In Harry Gilmer's two seasons as head coach, Detroit finished sixth both times, going 6-7-1 in 1965 and 4-9-1 in 1966.

Hall of Fame linebacker Joe Schmidt, an assistant to Gilmer in 1966, became head coach in 1967. In Kramer's final NFL season, Detroit finished third in the four-team Central Division at 5-7-1, and Green Bay won the first "Super Bowl" over the Kansas City Chiefs, 35-10.

Kramer gave Detroit three good seasons. In 1965, with Milt Plum handling most of the quarterbacking duties, Ron turned in his usual strong blocking performance. Pat Studstill led the receiving corps with 28 catches for 389 yards and three touchdowns, while Kramer ranked fourth among receivers, hauling in 18 passes for 206 yards and one touchdown. Jim Gibbons, a Lion since 1958 and the club's tight end through 1964, caught 12 aerials for 111 yards and two TDs.

In 1966 Karl Sweetan, a rookie quarterback who played more than Milt Plum, targeted Studstill. The speedy flanker made a career-high 67 catches for a league-best 1,286 yards, scoring five times. Fullback Tom Nowatzke caught 54 passes for 316 yards and one touchdown, split end Gail Cogdill made 47 catches for 411 yards and one touchdown, and Kramer contributed 37 receptions for 432 yards, but no TDs.

In 1967, when Kramer missed three games due to injuries, Plum and Sweetan alternated at quarterback. Both attempted 172 passes, but Kramer found himself on the receiving end only four times. Instead, Plum and Sweetan threw mainly to the running backs, and speedy halfback Mel Farr topped the receivers with 39 catches for 317 yards and three touchdowns.

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Asked about his experiences with the Lions, Ron recalled, "I was the premier tight end in football, and the trainer told me to get down to 229 pounds. I said, 'What? Are you crazy?'"

"I played for Green Bay for eight years at 250 pounds. Why change?"

"The first day I came out, Harry Gilmer was going to show me he was the boss. Instead of playing me at tight end, he puts me at defensive end. I hadn't played defense since college, and then I played outside linebacker. At defensive end, I thought they were going to kill me. So they beat me up for a while, and I played defensive end through the preseason.

"All of a sudden, Gilmer said, 'We're going to play you at tight end.' So they moved me to tight end for the season opener. That's the way the organization was run. Harry Gilmer was not very smart in any aspect of the game.

"I split time with Jim Gibbons my first year, and then Jimmy got hurt in 1966. The Lions kept Jimmy on for a year after I left, and they drafted Charlie Sanders as a tight end in 1968.

"By that time most of the tight ends were pass receivers. The tight end that we needed in Green Bay, and what made our teams so good, was the end being able to play the left side, the right side, and be involved in the passing game and the running game. The Green Bay tight end was like a tackle who could catch the ball. I had the ability as a tight end to do all these things.

"I caught a fair amount of passes for Detroit, but we didn't have good quarterbacks in Milt Plum and Karl Sweetan. With Gilmer as coach, it just didn't work."

But Kramer shared his experience, knowledge, and dedication with new teammates. Tom Nowatzke, the Indiana All-American who began his pro career with the Lions in 1965 and finished with the Colts in 1972, said recently, "Ron taught me more than the coaches. He was a great guy and a great player. He taught me how to block coming out of the backfield in 1965. I never knew how poor Detroit's coaches were until I went to Baltimore in 1970."

Looking back on his impressive career, Kramer said, "To me the best thing about football, or any athletic career, is to have as many friends as I still do, and enjoy all the associations that I've always made through athletics. I mean not only my teammates, but also the guys I played against.

"I was president of the NFL Alumni, Detroit Chapter, for a long time. I'm still involved in a lot of golf tournaments for the NFL Alumni. I still see Paul Hornung and all the Green Bay Packers, and guys like Tommy Nowatzke and Mike Lucci, who was my roommate with Detroit."

The Michigan legend has operated his manufacturers' representative business since 1982, Ron Kramer Industries. He works with a large number of philanthropic organizations, including the American Cancer Society, the March of Dimes, the United Foundation, Special Olympics, and the National Football Foundation.

Big Ron has received honors and awards almost too numerous to list, including membership in the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame (inducted in 1971), the Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame (1974), and the College Football Hall of Fame (1978).

"The important thing about team sports," the former Packer said, "is that it's like going through a war. You never forget the camaraderie that you have together, more so if you win than if you lose. But even if you lose, it matters how well you played the game.

"I still hang around with two good friends from Michigan, Tom Maentz, the other end—we appeared on *Sports Illustrated* in 1956, and Terry Barr, the longtime Lions defensive back. We all graduated together, we were fraternity brothers, and we see each other once or twice a week."

Total Football called the Michigan hero the first modern tight end, and at least for a time, the best. He epitomized the All-American ideal of athletic glory and community involvement.

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"Everywhere you go, you see some of your football friends," Ron Kramer reflected. "And it's like we played the game just yesterday. That's more important than any list of statistics. Football is a team game, and you make those friendships because it is a team game."

RON KRAMER

OE-TE

Kramer, Ronald John

6-3, 234

Michigan

HS: East Detroit [Eastpointe, MI]

B: 6 / 24 / 1935, Girard, KS

Drafted: 1957 Round 1 GB

All-America 1955-56

Michigan Sports Hall of Fame 1971, Citizens Savings Hall of Fame,

Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame 1974, College Football Hall of Fame 1978

Pro Bowl 1962 season; All-Pro 1962

<u>Year Team</u>	<u>Gm</u>	<u>PC</u>	<u>YDS</u>	<u>AVG</u>	<u>TD</u>
1957 GB	11	28	337	12.0	0
1958 ms					
1959 GB	12	0	9	---	0
1960 GB	12	4	55	13.8	0
1961 GB	14	35	559	16.0	4
1962 GB	14	37	555	15.0	7
1963 GB	12	32	537	16.8	4
1964 GB	14	34	551	16.2	0
1965 Det	14	18	206	11.4	1
1966 Det	14	37	432	11.7	0
1967 Det	11	4	40	10.0	0
10 Seasons	128	229	3272	14.3	16