

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

### Kevin Colbert

### Mike Tomlin

#### Weekday Press Conference



KEVIN COLBERT: Thanks to all you folks for being here. I can't say how good it feels to see this happening in a live venue. We've all been kind of looking at monitors and talking and trying to do the same type of work, so I'm sure it's good for you, and it's very appreciated by us to be able to do this in this setting.

Speaking of which, the pandemic has challenged us in so many different ways, and it's not unique to our industry, but it was challenging this year to get to this point with this draft process, almost more than last year.

Last year when the pandemic hit we had already gone through the combine; this year we had to do this without a combine. Last year we didn't have pro days; this year we had pro days.

So it's been a real different, challenging kind of a road. And again, I want to thank everybody, Coach Tomlin and his staff for the work that they did. I'd also like to congratulate Coach on his extension officially. It's great to know that we'll be working together this year, and see where it goes beyond that, but real excited to have Coach here for this season.

The scouts, the administrative staff, again, it was a different challenge for them. My guys were able to get out, and we probably visited live and watched games for every school for maybe but six where there were prospects. Real challenging. The pro days, they did an awesome job, as did Coach and his group.

John Norwig, our doctors, our trainers, our radiologists, everybody involved with that process, again, without a combine physical we had to go about it in a completely different manner, and hopefully -- I know John and our docs did the best they could under the circumstances -- but hopefully we got the information we need.

Bob McCartney and his video staff, taking, again, no

combine, but he had to take and condense all the pro day workouts for us. Scott Phelps and his IT staff getting us set up for the draft. We will be live, in person at the draft in our building, in our facility, albeit spaced out according to league guidelines and of course governmental guidelines.

Burt and his group accommodating us and trying to keep us up to date with all the media factions that are occurring. Jack Kearney, Bob Jones, our security people. Again, there's just so many people. I just want to make sure we step out and thank for getting us to this point.

As we sit here today, our roster is currently at 75 players. It's probably a little higher number than we anticipate or usually have at this time of the year.

I do want to step out first and thank our veteran players who decided to stay with us. First and foremost, Ben Roethlisberger told us from the end of the season that it was his intention to be here, and then for him to follow that up and be willing to adjust his pay to be able to not only keep himself here but give us the opportunity to have some other folks stay is very much appreciated, and I think it started a real positive off-season for us.

We knew going into this free agency period, pre-pandemic we knew this was going to be a real tough year. We knew we had a lot of players, quote, in their senior season, and they were going to be coming to an end. It was going to be challenging.

When the pandemic hit and the cap was challenged and reduced, it made it even more difficult. But again, with guys like Vince Williams, Tyson Alualu, JuJu Smith-Schuster, Joshua Dobbs deciding to stay with us, I think they followed Ben's lead, and that's very much appreciated by us.

We did sign more players. The other thing that the -- not the pandemic, but the opt-out of the draft issue that the NCAA allowed this year, it probably cut in half the players that will be available to us to sign as free agents after the draft. It's roughly -- I want to say it went from 800 to 400, with that not being the actual numbers. But anticipating we would have less guys to sign after the draft, we were conscious of that when we were at pro days, and maybe



the one-year vet guy that worked out, we signed five or so players from that venue just to try to keep us as current as we could be in anticipation of not being able to sign as many guys after the draft.

Currently right now of the 75 that we have in this group, 50 of those are players that have played in NFL games. Like Coach and I, we look at our board, and we talk, we could play a game today if need be. Saying that, going into the draft, we're wide open. We're not going in looking for any one position, any one group of position. We're going to be wide open to anything and see where this thing goes, okay.

There is good depth we believe on the offensive line, the wide receivers, the running backs, the linebackers both inside and outside and the corners.

There is okay depth at the tight end, the quarterback, and the safety positions, and I can be very up front and honest, there's very limited depth in this year's draft on the defensive line. It's probably as lean as it's been in recent memory.

Again, we always get asked about trade up, trade down. I'm very doubtful that we'll trade up. We really value those eight picks that we have, five of which are in the top 140.

Coach?

MIKE TOMLIN: Thank you. It's great to be here today. As Kevin mentioned, with some of the things that we've faced, dealing with the pandemic, it makes you appreciative of these moments, the face-to-face moments, the getting the chance to interact with you guys. The pandemic has also created some challenges through this process of team development here in 2021.

We're not complaining about it. You guys know our attitude. The challenges that it has created have been global ones, so from that standpoint, it's been fair. None of us got an opportunity to see a collection of talent at the combine, and so that's created some challenges for us as an organization, scouting department, coaching staff. We've had to be more mobile. We've had to work harder to gather information, working along with Kevin and the scouting department has been a pleasure in that regard. The number of Zoom calls and things that we've had with prospects, when you look back at it is really impressive.

But we formulated a plan to kind of circumvent the challenges of the pandemic early, and I think that aided us in terms of being able to sit here comfortably today.

We started the process immediately once we realized some of the challenges, and so it gave us attitude to adjust

and to really take our time to get to know the guys as best we could in a remote manner.

We hit select pro days, as well. We always do, but it felt a little different this year. It felt like there was more riding on those days because of the lack of exposure that we didn't have in Indy.

And so we got a lot done on the road and remotely at pro days and dealing with players via Zoom. As Kevin mentioned, I too am appreciative of our players displaying their want to be here. Free agency was challenging for us. Free agency is probably challenging for everybody in this environment with the cap being what it was.

Our players displaying their desire to be here, taking less, if you will, to be here, the guys that Kevin mentioned, man, it really makes you excited about this group, about the makeup of this group, about the intentions of this group.

So we're excited about building. We did what we needed to do in terms of free agency. We're preparing ourselves for the upcoming draft, and those are the two major components in terms of acquiring talent. We've started the process in terms of developing our talent.

I've been pleasantly surprised by the participation in the off-season program, given the circumstances that have been well-documented. I just left the facility, and we've got a nice number of guys over there working and working safely and appropriately, and I'm appreciative of that.

I understand the climate that we're in, but more than anything, man, we want to provide an environment that's safe and has expertise, particularly that the young developing or the financially strapped player that can be on your roster this time of year needs.

So we're excited about some of those developments.

But really, as we lean in on this draft, man, we're just at kind of the beginning stages of our off-season in terms of the development of this group and starting to formulate plans.

It's been an exciting process with the coaching staff, working on some schematics and exploring wrinkles in all three phases and making some hard-core decisions about how we're going to go about our business given the players that we have and the ones that we intend to add.

And so excited about where all those things are.

Last week we met via Zoom with our players, but just hitting on large, broad, sweeping things, some foundational

things in terms of culture building. This week we'll continue with remote meetings, but we're probably going to get into some more details, schematics, and start laying a foundation and introducing particularly some of the new guys in terms of some of the things that we do.

Obviously the guys that have been here have an understanding of largely how we operate in the three phases, and so that's a snapshot of where we are.

Again, I just wanted to repeat that we're excited about being here with you guys today and moving upward and onward here in '21.

**Q. Mike, I'm curious, the extension, you have some guys that you've been with for a long time. When that extension ends they might not be around anymore. What gave you the confidence that things are going to continue on that positive trajectory after some of the guys that you've been close with for so long might not be here anymore?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, in regards to my extension, you guys that know me know I don't ponder a lot about longevity and things of that nature, man. I'm just appreciative of the opportunity to work that's in front of me today. That's largely been my attitude regarding it for 15 years now. I assure you that will remain unchanged.

In terms of some of the people who come and go, that's part of the coaching profession and the business of football. I'm excited about the collection of men, the coaching talent, the vocational talent that we have, and our ability to kind of formulate our schematics and our plan as it pertains to these guys that we're working with, and we're excited about doing it.

**Q. You talked about improving the running game for a couple of years. What is there from an immediate need standpoint in this draft, maybe not just at running back but other positions that could help you guys?**

KEVIN COLBERT: Well, when you look at the running game, obviously you've got to start up front, and then you've got to look at the runners themselves. You're never going to leave any part of the offense out, the quarterbacks, the receivers, because it's all a collective effort.

You know, we have some challenges up front because we don't have the same offensive line that we had last year, so there will be differences, and that will be up to Coach how we shift people around.

As I said, we could play a game today based on what we

have, but is that going to be our line? Who knows what we'll end up doing with those positions, be it center, guard, or tackle.

And of course the running back position, we have really four veteran guys on this roster. Could we add to it? Sure. How that all breaks down, no one will know.

Until we get in and play a game, no one will know if it's better. But as of right now, we know where we can look at help and see what help is available, but again, we could go into this thing, and we are going into it completely wide open.

MIKE TOMLIN: I'll add to that. And let's be clear, the improvements in the running game go beyond just the acquisition of additional players. We're capable of performing better than we have, players aside. Schematics, formations, the things that we do to give ourselves a strategic advantage need to be improved, and that's some of the things that we're working on.

**Q. In the regular season last year, if you didn't have Haden or Nelson, Layne was the sub package guy. In the playoffs it was Pierre. Why the change, and what's with both of those guys? How do they stand if you had to play them --**

MIKE TOMLIN: Yeah, I don't know if the breaking point was that clear, regular season Layne, playoffs, Pierre. We've followed the growth and development of young players on the practice field over the course of the season, and as the season wore on, we just got more comfortable with what we were seeing from Pierre.

Now, is it a rise in his level of play? Is it a decline in Lane's level of play? You know, I really can't speak to that. There was a feeling that he was moving in the right direction, and that's why we made the decisions that we made.

In terms of what that means for 2021, we will see. How 2020 ended does not define how 2021 is going to work out or even begin for that matter. They're both capable young players. We've got other capable young players. We intend to potentially add to that, so we'll see where the roads lead us.

**Q. I was curious, the way things are in today's league, are running backs a risky value do you feel in the first round? And are there enough centers in this draft, at least decent centers, who could come in and play available beyond the first round?**

KEVIN COLBERT: Yeah, first, I don't think you can ever underestimate the value of a quality player at any position,



and running back is no different. I understand that the game has changed. It's a more horizontal game than it is a vertical game and people don't play traditional football as really Coach and I grew up with with two-back sets and power games and so on and so forth. It has changed.

But if you have a dynamic player at any position, that player should make a difference. Running back is no different. I think if you look at the Hall of Fame runners, most of those guys were taken in high rounds.

I don't ever place that value high or low on a given position. I base it on who the player is and what that player can do to help us.

The center position, it is unusually deep this year. Usually the centers, there aren't a lot of centers in a given draft, but we feel good there's quality centers in this draft that we think are starter capable, and it's unusual for that position.

**Q. Kevin, over the summer last year, you told us that you would maybe weigh the opt-outs a little differently than you did the guys who actually played football last year. Has your thinking on that changed at all throughout this process, or is that still the case?**

KEVIN COLBERT: No, no question. As I stated in the summer, if a player chooses to opt out, for whatever reason, that's their decision, and we will respect it.

However, if a player played in 2020 and those players are of equal value, one that didn't play and one that played, we'll take the one that played because we don't know what the opt-outs will be like in their first season back in football.

We believe it's hard to sit this game out. Sometimes it happens because of injury, but this time it was pandemic related for the most part. But we will take the players -- again, if they're close. It's not to say we're not going to draft somebody that opted out. I couldn't say that.

But if I have a choice and we have a choice, we'll take the one that played if their value is close.

Part of the problem, the two conferences that got hurt the worst were the Big Ten and the Pac-12 because their seasons were canceled basically, and then some of their players decided they were going to move on and they would put themselves in preparation for the draft, and then when their conferences reinstated football, some of them were too far down the road, be it with an agent or be it with training, that they couldn't get back.

So we did run into that a lot where players wanted to come back but they were too far down the road. Each case will

be weighed individually, but again, if they're close, we're going to take the player that played.

**Q. Kevin, you mentioned about potentially not wanting to trade up. I've got a couple questions about trading back. Are you interested, number one? Does it make it more difficult to trade back because the seven picks, I believe three of them are not within the division behind you? And is there any organizational philosophy of wanting to stay in the first round if you do trade back?**

KEVIN COLBERT: Again, we're always going to value quality over quantity, but if we're not comfortable with what we're looking at at the 24th pick, we'll trade back. Do we want to do it with a division team? That wouldn't be our preference, but we won't discount that completely because we have to weigh what the potential trade-back will do for us and not worry about where those picks may go.

It wouldn't be our preference, but it won't disqualify us from trading back with a division team.

**Q. Do you want to stay in the first round or --**

KEVIN COLBERT: I mean, again, what are we getting? How many picks? We've got to look at what we're walking away from. I never like to walk away from a pick without having -- say if we're trading back five spots, I want five players that we would be comfortable in taking so we can't lose. That's the way we've always approached that.

We never would trade up unless the player we want is available and we know on that pick that he is available. But trading back, I want to make sure that we can't lose if we do it.

**Q. With Steve Nelson not coming back and even the Justin Layne arrest, Hilton, has corner moved up your board a little bit more, and what is the value of depth of this position this year?**

KEVIN COLBERT: The corners are deep. Again, we talk about this every year, and every year it seems to be continuing, the trend in college football, again, becoming more horizontal. There's more corners.

We always say we have 12 starters on defense and 12 starters on offense because of a slot receiver or a slot corner, and that goes all the way back to the college game. So there's a lot of depth at the wide receiver and the cornerback position.

As Coach mentioned, James Pierre came on and did a nice job for us last year. Justin Layne had done some

good things on the field. They're both young, ascending players. Can we add to that spot? Absolutely.

Again, we talked about -- in Steve Nelson's case, Steve was a valuable player for us. However, we had to make some tough salary cap related decisions that I mentioned earlier. Steve Nelson is a starter-capable NFL corner. We just couldn't keep him under the current setup that we had or the current setup that we're dealing with from a salary cap standpoint, and we had to make some tough choices.

**Q. You guys talked a lot about the pro days and getting out on the road and not having a combine. Do you feel like in this circumstance the relationships that you have with college coaches and those staffs are going to be more important having not had that sort of apples-to-apples comparison being able to talk to guys and getting feedback from coaches and not just that one snapshot that you see in a pro day?**

KEVIN COLBERT: It goes beyond the pro day because scouts couldn't get to the colleges except for a game setting, and even at the game settings we couldn't go on the field in the pregame. We had to sit in the stands or the press box if it was allowable.

So a lot of times in those situations when you're doing games, hey, you'll see a coach sitting on a bench before a game, you may have a conversation. None of that was available to us. We couldn't visit the schools and have the day-to-day interaction that our scouts have when we do a school visit and spend a day watching film, talking to folks. We didn't have that this year.

But that's not to say it wasn't -- it was totally negative. As Coach mentioned, Coach and myself, we got to nine pro days. We think we got to the -- what we feel had the most quality players so that we could both see them up live and in person.

Our interaction with them was limited, though. We could not take them out to dinner the night before. We couldn't say hi to their parents. We couldn't have a meeting with them during that pro day setting.

So we had to do all of that via Zoom. Coach and I did over 100 Zoom calls, and quite honestly, we're comfortable with the results because we actually got to spend a little more time with them and we feel good about that information.

But just like we mentioned, just seeing you folks in person, it's different. You can read my eyes, you can read Coach's eyes when I'm answering the question. It's not the same when you're doing it via Zoom.

It is what it is. We think we're in good shape. I feel comfortable with the information we got. It's all we can do at this point. We'll try to make the best decisions possible.

MIKE TOMLIN: And from a coach's perspective, no question the environment pushed us towards leaning on some coaching relationships and the gathering of information among our peers at the college level that we've known in the past.

But by no means do I feel like that's an advantage. I think that that was a global tool used by all of us within the coaching ranks. I think everybody understanding the circumstances being what they were we're more open to that, and so I think it was more of a global thing.

And I appreciate our coaching peers at the collegiate ranks for sharing and providing necessary information for all of us.

**Q. I want to know, with a couple days left, how much do you change your draft board? Is it set right now? And do you have any idea -- how good of an idea do you have what the teams in front of you are going to do in the first round?**

KEVIN COLBERT: You know, we finished our formal meetings on Saturday, and then today, tomorrow, Wednesday, we'll look -- really tomorrow and Tuesday, or today and tomorrow -- we'll go through it and maybe brush up some things, maybe just look at what we concluded after our meetings and maybe make some minor adjustments just to make sure we got things in what we believe is the best order possible.

We don't care -- we've never worried about what the folks in front of us will do. As we've told you guys, we don't -- we used to do the mock drafts and it was a complete waste of time. What we've done now is -- and we've done this, what, for the last 12 years or so, we just mock ourselves, and we're picking first and we're going to pick a player. Okay, he's gone, we're picking second. Okay, he's gone, we're picking third.

And when we're done with this process, and it'll take the good part of the day on Wednesday, when we're done with that, we'll have 24 guys in an order that we would take them, and it's not necessarily the order that you have on your board.

So the order of the picks is set and you just wait and watch, and the only decision you have to make is whether you're going to trade up or trade back. It doesn't matter what happens in front of you because you've already made that decision.

**Q. How surprised were you you were able to get Vince Williams back? Did you think originally that was going to happen? And with losing Bud, how comfortable are you with your linebacker depth? And Kevin, I can't remember, you went through the positions of strength in this draft so much. What kind of a draft is it for linebackers both inside and out?**

KEVIN COLBERT: Yeah, just to answer that, the inside and outside depth is very good. The outside depth, when we're looking at outside linebackers, we're looking at most of the time college defensive ends because most teams are 4-3 and we have to convert them up. But that's a deep, deep group.

The inside backers is a deeper group than it has been, much like the centers. We've looked and we just say, wow, this is a pretty good group.

The one that's not is at defensive line. It's very lean.

But in Vince's case, I'll let Coach speak to that. Vince wanted to end his career with the Pittsburgh Steelers for however long he has left. Again, we had to make tough decisions, and that was extremely tough, because Vince has been a starting player and helped us win a lot of games and he's a big part of the fabric of our team, and we value that tremendously.

And for him to want to come back, it's very important and very much appreciated by us. I'll let Coach address that, as well.

MIKE TOMLIN: Yeah, Vince Williams is a Pittsburgh Steeler. Vince Williams bleeds black and gold, and really his decision to come back is really just an example of an opportunity for him to display that.

I can't say that I'm surprised by that, knowing what I've known about Vince and his level of commitment, not only to the game of football but to us and how we go about our business.

You know, in regards to the loss of Bud and the expectations and the depth and things at that position, the linchpin of that entire discussion is the natural maturation of Alex Highsmith from year one to year two.

You know the standard of expectations that we have for our young players, moving from one to two. He could be the poster boy for that. We need a significant rise in terms of all areas of play from him, but I also think it's reasonable to expect it given what he's been exposed to, given the quality young man that he is and his work ethic and the

environment that we intend to put him in.

I think it's reasonable to expect him to rise up and meet the challenges that you mentioned.

**Q. I have a question about the excitement about the draft. I know that generally speaking you two don't get caught up in the excitement, but you also don't live in a vacuum. Maybe it's the pandemic, maybe it's your team's needs, maybe it's the players that are available in the draft, but there seems to be a buzz around this year's draft that perhaps is a little greater than past drafts. Can you sense that? Does that kind of build your excitement, as well, for what's ahead?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I'll let Kevin speak to that. I probably could be described as someone who lives in a vacuum, but by choice.

KEVIN COLBERT: Yeah, and honestly, yeah, we really -- I don't watch any draft shows. I really don't read any of that information because I hope that we have more information that's being portrayed on the outside, and honestly most times they're talking about 20 players and the same 20 in different orders and so on and so forth.

So what goes on outside, I really can't address because I don't get caught up in it because, as Coach mentioned, we're so busy trying to make sure that we get our business handled, I can't really get caught up in the outside persona.

If it's exciting for our fans, great. I mean, we hope to create that excitement. And like Coach mentioned, this is the real start of the off-season, both our players that are currently here and the new players that we add.

So if there's excitement, great. Our job is to build on that excitement and to make it a productive process.

**Q. If there are needs that you have and there are players that are exciting that can address those needs, does that make it more interesting for you then?**

KEVIN COLBERT: Again, we can get excited about a player, but you don't know if that player will be there. So I'm excited about the depth of this draft because I think we can get eight players for sure that I know can make us a better team. They're there. We just have to pick the right ones.

**Q. Coach, you had some highly publicized failures on fourth and short last year. Being part of schematics and also part of personnel, would you think about drafting offensive linemen that may be more geared toward run blocking as opposed to pass blocking and**

## vice versa?

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, like I mentioned, the personnel, the players themselves are just a component of our successes and failures, particularly in the situations that you mentioned.

So we're looking at players, but we're also looking at what it is that we do and how we do it and how we set up ourselves for those instances.

It's not just a personnel discussion for us, and definitely not weighted in the ways that you mentioned. Most of the time the good players are good players because the good players in all areas, the elite ones, they're good in run situations, they're good in passing situations, and things of that nature.

And we're not there yet. Being in late April, we're not into the minutiae of what our short yardage, our goal line personnel is going to be per se, but rest assured that personnel is just a component of it.

### **Q. At what point would you consider drafting a quarterback? And if so, why would you draft a quarterback?**

KEVIN COLBERT: Again, wide open to all of it. If you look at our current depth, obviously we have four NFL veteran quarterbacks on our roster, which I feel great about.

We also have really three of those four that are in the last year of their so-called deals when you look at it realistically. It's an unusual group in that we do have four. Can you add a young one? Absolutely.

We always have to be on the look for that next guy and try to predict the value of taking that player at that position, because most likely a young quarterback won't play for the Pittsburgh Steelers in 2021.

Again, we've got four veteran guys that we're going to try to sort through. Could you add someone that could be more guaranteed to be here for the future? Absolutely. And that's our job, to try to value that.

It goes all the way back to Ben. Ben wasn't a sure pick when we were sitting there at 11 because we had more pressing issues than a quarterback because Tommy Maddox had done some good things for us. It wasn't like we couldn't have started the season with Tommy. When Ben was there for us, it would have been a huge mistake not to take him.

So we'll always be open to adding what we believe is the

most critical position, but again, we feel good about having four vets to work with at this point.

MIKE TOMLIN: And it's exciting from a coaching perspective with one of those guys being a 22 year old guy like Dwayne Haskins who was viewed globally as having first-round talent just a short time ago.

We're excited about working with him and seeing what his skill set and hoping him improve is, as well.

### **Q. I want to ask you about the inside linebacker position. You mentioned that it's deep in this draft. At the same time, we've seen the position change a lot over the years, more Devin Bush, less Vince Williams, if you will. How much does that influence how much you look at this class, and what do you consider to be your needs or your wants in that regard?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, in terms of the physical makeup of the linebacker position, I think it's been widespread in college ball prior to evolving and becoming more widespread in our game. I believe it's probably less of an issue now, to be quite honest with you. I think it was a significant discussion when we drafted Ryan Shazier, when we drafted him years ago and he was kind of an outlier or precursor to who is a common discussion now, a guy that's capable of running with anyone and covering and playing in all circumstances. I think that's more the norm now than it was then.

So I think there's less significant discussions about the makeup or the look of them, and that's just what they look like.

In terms of the draft pool, I think there's a lot of guys, and guys that we're excited about, and I'll let Kevin kind of speak to that if he wants to.

KEVIN COLBERT: Yeah, I agree with what Coach said. The game has changed, as I mentioned. It's more horizontal, and Ryan was ahead of the curve when we took him. You've got to keep pace with what's going on and what we have to defend in this league.

But it's not different from what's going on at the college level, so a lot of those guys -- it used to be in the old days who could take on that fullback. Well, there's no fullbacks for the most part. Who could take on a guard. Well, most of the time they're running past the guard instead of taking them on. So we value that. But they also have to have a certain amount of innate intellect, of football intellect, if you will, because inside linebackers, there's not a lot of time to make decisions. They have to react.

So the instinctive part of being able to play that position we think is a natural act. There's things they can be taught. The lateral ability of those players is very important. The ability to not get -- to be able to cover and not get caught in situations where they can't cover just physically, that's important.

What we remind ourselves really and will continue to remind ourselves is we'll have Devin Bush back this year, and that person that's going to be paired with him will have the advantage of having him there because he's still a significant player that was taking real positive steps prior to his injury, so we're excited about that, as well.

**Q. Draft night or the three days of the draft, how exclusive is the decision making from you two or Mr. Rooney, and if you go outside that exclusivity in terms of bringing in a coordinator or anyone else to get a little bit more advice on a guy that you might take?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Mr. Rooney is the boss.

**Q. That's the final decision, though, between you guys? How does that process work? Just say player A comes up on the Thursday night, you guys are going to select. How is that process?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Seriously, Kevin and I have worked so long and so well together that we can kind of communicate nonverbally in those moments. But at the end of the day, Art Rooney is the boss.

KEVIN COLBERT: And to Coach's point, we always say this: Whenever we make a pick, it's a Pittsburgh Steelers pick. We just finished three weeks of intense meetings where scouts us, assistant coaches, coordinators, head coaches, GMs, we all had our chance to have our input. But when we put a grade on a player, it's not Coach's grade, it's not my grade, it's our grade. When we select that player, it will be done as what's best for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

And of course Art will be involved because he is the owner and he knows every step of the process. He sits in on meetings when he can. He gives us input when he can and when he wants to.

Of course we're going to follow those leads, but I think he trusts us, as well, to present the information that, again, we've spent not only the last 11 months but these last three weeks of really trying to tie it all together and formulate an evaluation and formulate a pick that's for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

**Q. Recognizing you have a right to change your mind**

**in a week, who today is your left tackle and right cornerback?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, depth charts this time of year are funny. They don't mean anything. They're not worth the paper they're written on. Chuks will be the guy that's probably penciled in in late April at left tackle, Cam Sutton will get first opportunity at right corner, but it means absolutely nothing.

And quote me on that.

**Q. Mike, you used the phrase global challenges that have gone on during this draft process. Kevin, is one of those challenges the gathering of medical information on the prospective candidates, and how have you gone about circumventing those problems? And Mike, do you get more scared off potentially from a guy because it's not as easy to get the medical information perhaps?**

KEVIN COLBERT: I'm glad you asked about the medical process. As I mentioned, John Norwig and his staff did a good job in doing this, but I forgot to mention Jeff Foster, who's the director of the National Invitational Combine.

It was a tremendous amount of work. First off, we didn't know if we would have the combine in the format that it was presented this year. We wanted more. We weren't able to do it. Again, trying to follow the protocols and make it a safe adventure.

So we did basically remote physicals for the entire 328 players. Beyond that, we were able to bring 100 to Indianapolis based on our ratings based upon how we all voted for those players as 32 teams.

Then we went beyond that even further and we brought in 42 additional players to the combine that we felt were the next group that had some medical issues that needed to be looked at. We only got our hands on really roughly 142. I think they may have gotten to 150, where our doctors -- again, a smaller group of doctors were actually able to give them physicals.

The remainder of it, it's all remote, and it was done in different parts of the country. We have our fingers crossed that we will have as good of information as we can, but it was a huge process for Jeff Foster and his folks at the National Invitational Combine to formulate.

Again, our doctors, our trainers had to work within all those different restrictions and do the best we can, so our fingers are crossed that we will have the proper medical information.





**Q. Mike, do you feel any less confident in the process**

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MIKE TOMLIN: You know, much like in the coaching ranks, and we had to use our relationships to gather information and have a certain level of trust in those relationships, it's the same from a medical standpoint.

Our training staff and medical professionals have relationships around the country and had to lean on those relationships like I'm sure medical professionals in other organizations did, and we trust them. We trust them. We trust their expertise. We trust their relationships and the people that they trust.

I think that's one of the things that the circumstances force you to do is rely on the expertise and the connections and the relationship of those around you. It's just a component of dealing with what we've continued to deal with throughout this.

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