

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

Sunday, September 26, 2021

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Head Coach Mike Tomlin

Postgame Press Conference



Pittsburgh Steelers 10, Cincinnati Bengals 24

**Q. Any particular reason or anything you can put your finger on why the offense continues to start so slow?**

MIKE TOMLIN: We're not playing well enough. You know, we're not making enough plays. Some of those one-on-one type plays. And, obviously, you know, the initial part of this game you saw the penalties. Man, every time we possessed the ball -- man, you get a holding penalty, it's a drive killer, you know. And so the penalty aspect of play did not give us a chance to establish any rhythm, particularly at the early portions of the game. I think every possession we had in the first quarter or so was penalty laden.

**Q. Right before the half, you go 15 plays, score a touchdown, they take 27 seconds. How big of a flip was that in your eyes?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, like I mentioned in the opening, you can't give up deep balls or big plays, particularly in situational. You know, I think that's two weeks in a row, third down and 10. We gave up a deep ball in a significant moment. We're in 2 minute ball and we gave up another one. Like I mentioned, we didn't play well enough today. You can identify components of it, but it's a collective. And so I own that, particularly as the leader of the group.

**Q. You guys weren't able to get a sack today. How much was that because you're missing two outside linebackers and how much of it was what the Bengals were doing to keep you guys from getting?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Man, they were in control of the game. I mean, what are we talking about? It was 24 to 7 for a significant portion of the game. And so when you're in that position, you're not going to expose yourself to negativity. It's situational. Yes, we had people missing, but how the game was unfolding was an element of play in that as well.

**Q. A response. Stay the course? Stay with it? Or do**

**you think about shaking it up somehow?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, I'm not interested in making any plans as I sit here right now. Man, I'm just summarizing what transpired in the stadium. We have, you know, the upcoming days and hours to plot a course for how we move forward.

**Q. How would you assess Ben's play?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, none of us played well enough, him included. None of us coached well enough, me included.

**Q. You talked last week how you were concerned Ben was getting hit too much. A couple of times today, he had plenty of time and held on and ended up taking a sack. Is that a guy trying to force something?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, I don't know what specific instance you're referring to, so I'd be guessing. I know we didn't make enough plays.

**Q. Do you think Ingram warranted a personal foul?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I didn't have eyes on it. I was down the field.

**Q. How much of what you were able to accomplish in the fourth quarter was a result of the score and how they were playing and how much was maybe you guys playing better?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I'm sure that they sat in some softer defensive structure with the game being the way it was. I was mentioning it was 24 to 7. So you're going to get yards, but it doesn't necessarily mean points. They played a complete football game today. It's not like I'm looking for comfort relative to how we finished. Huh-uh.

**Q. You expressed optimism earlier about the offensive line coming together and getting better after today. Do you still see that?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Certainly. You know, not reflected in today's performance. But if you're asking me my level of

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optimism, sure, I believe in these guys.

**Q. The attention to detail is something you mentioned. What do you think is contributing to that? Is that inexperience or is that just --**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, whether it's inexperience or what have you, you know, we have to own it. And so I haven't spent a lot of time trying to analyze it or frame it. I know we got to clean up our penalties. I know we got to make routine plays routinely. And those are two things we're not doing right now. And you're an easy team to beat when you play like that.

**Q. Fourth down call coming out of the timeout. It's a dump-off to Najee. Is that the main play call there?**

MIKE TOMLIN: We had fired all of our bullets at that juncture in terms of some of our play selection, man. It just wasn't a good enough play to get in there. They had obviously a picket fence, if you will, because of situations just like the conversation we were having over here. They're going to allow you to probably throw and catch the ball in front of them, but you've got to do some things after that. They had a bunch of guys running along the goal line like happens whenever it's fourth and goal from the 8 or 9 or whatever it was.

**Q. The timeout right before the final touchdown, was that something situational that you needed a timeout for or you just trying to give the offense more time to score there?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I don't remember the specific instance you're talking about. I apologize.

**Q. How much of this is maybe Matt Canada trying to adjust to coaching at this level --**

MIKE TOMLIN: Man, we're just not playing well enough or coaching well enough. You can frame it however the hell you want to frame it.

**Q. What's your message to a lot of the young guys on the team, kind of learning from this at the same time keeping their confidence up?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Like I just told them, absorb the negativity that comes with our positioning and how we perform and keep your mouth shut and resolve to do better. And that's not only for them, but that's for all of us, players and coaches.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, don't ask me whether I'm happy about anything. You know, we just played poorly and got beat.

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