

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

Sunday, December 19, 2021  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Coach Mike Tomlin

### Postgame Press Conference



Steelers - 19, Titans - 13

COACH TOMLIN: Exciting victory for us. A very necessary one. Didn't get the type of fluid stuff out we needed. I think we're 0-for on possession downs offensively in the first half. The punting component created short fields and so forth. They won the battle of field position. Their special teams was better than ours.

But in spite of all those things I thought the guys continued to fight. The turnovers leveled the playing field in the second half and provided the short fields for us. And that was the catalyst for us to go ahead and secure victory.

Appreciative of all the efforts. I like the way the guys collectively smiled in the face of adversity. We'll be thankful for this win. That's a really good football team we played and were able to beat today. Hopefully there's some growth associated with conquering challenges like that.

We're going to need it, obviously, as we go on the road next week. But we're appreciative of this win today. We're going to savor it. We don't take any of it for granted. It is the National Football League. We'll be ready next week.

From an injury standpoint, Wormley had a groin, wasn't able to continue. Pat was in the concussion protocol. We'll see where that leads us.

**Q. The turnovers, you took the ball away four times. Even though no touchdowns but you at least scored four times off those. How significant was it to take advantage of those when you got them?**

COACH TOMLIN: Field positioning in a game like that is real. They won the battle of field position in the first half, primarily because of our punt team, the ineffectiveness of our punt team. We won it in the second half because of the turnover game and really it's probably the difference in the game. So the turnover game was significant.

**Q. It looked like after one of those late hits on Ben that you talked with officials. Were you unhappy with the way they were officiating? Looks like you he took some extra contact after the whistle.**

COACH TOMLIN: I was.

**Q. Could you talk about some of the contributions you got from Tuszka and Taco today?**

COACH TOMLIN: I'm appreciative of the efforts. We had some guys available to us that were working their way back from injury -- T.J. and Alex, Joe Haden, Robert Spillane -- but none of those guys were going to be able to play a 60-minute game. So we rotated a lot of people.

We got efforts from guys like the guys you mentioned and Witherspoon and some others were able to bridge the gap for us and it was very necessary.

**Q. What did you see from your run defense relative to what you saw in Minnesota, and what's the expectation or the reality to get better at this point of the year?**

COACH TOMLIN: I still think we had some lapses in gap control, but the lapses in gap control were six- and seven-yard runs as opposed to some of those in Minnesota. So I don't know that we were any better, to be honest with you, from a gap-control standpoint. We just minimized some of the explosion plays when they did break.

And you've got to tip your cap to Minkah. I don't know how many tackles he had but as a middle-of-the-field player there were several times where I thought his tackling was big and covered up some lack of gap integrity.

**Q. In addition to your run defense, your pass defense was able to take away a lot of different parts of the fields from Ryan Tannehill. You talked about his arm being a factor in this game. How did you think about your secondary's performance to try to neutralize what the Titans try to do?**

COACH TOMLIN: I was appreciative of our performance. They were working short in some of their perimeter

weapons with the 11 and 2 going down in game.

To be honest with you, that was expected and needed. We had to dominate that component of the game given the people that were available for both sides.

**Q. [Question about the first half not calling a timeout, and basically running out of time for Boswell].**

COACH TOMLIN: I was more concerned with stopping them than I was with creating a drive opportunity for us. I wanted them to make decisions on going from second down to third down on time unless they burn one of their timeouts. They chose not to, so the clock ran.

We can get excited about subsequent drives but you've got to get the stop first. And I didn't take that for granted.

**Q. How frustrating is it to only be able to come away with field goals when you get the sudden-change opportunities? Where did you feel your offense was struggling in those chances?**

COACH TOMLIN: I thought our struggles, particularly in the first half, were on possession downs. But that struggle was teed up by penalties, pre-snap penalties, false starts and so forth. We weren't able to gain any type of cohesion because we were losing possession. I think we were 0-for-6.

Not overly frustrated with settling for field goals in the turnover game because largely, globally we had the momentum. My issues were with the possession-down football in the first half, particularly teed up by pre-snap penalties that put us behind chains.

**Q. I know it was not singularly just Joe Haden but what can you say about what his presence meant today and obviously coming up with probably one of the biggest plays of the game?**

COACH TOMLIN: It's not just his play making. It's the presence that he brings. He's got leadership skills. He's got great experience. He smiles in the face of adversity. That's contagious. There were some tangible and intangible qualities to his presence today.

**Q. You talked about the pre-snap stuff. We're in week 14 here. Why does this stuff keep happening?**

COACH TOMLIN: Because we've got issues.

**Q. How do you fix them?**

COACH TOMLIN: We come to work on tomorrow, we will.

**Q. Obviously there's still a path, you guys still have three games left. But taking a look what can a win like this do? I know Keith Butler mentioned on Thursday just about the runs maybe a win like this can help set the path forward for?**

COACH TOMLIN: We won this one. We're getting singularly focused for the next one. We're not diagnosing big pictures. No need to. We take care of business in stadium, we don't need to look around. We have three AFC games left, two of which are AFC North games, so all we have to do is focus on the stadiums that we're in. That's the message.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

