

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

Sunday, December 19, 2021

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Head Coach Mike Vrabel

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Tennessee - 13, Pittsburgh - 19

### Q. (No microphone.)

MIKE VRABEL: Well, I mean, there wasn't a -- I mean, you know, when you say "mistakes," obviously, mistakes are a part of the game.

The turnovers, you know, the -- we have to hold the ball in a much more regard. You know, obviously, you can't do that and think you're going to win. That's what I appreciate about this team, is that they battle and make it so hard on ourselves.

### Q. It was kind of a tale of two heads today. What was the thing that turned it over in the second half?

MIKE VRABEL: I mean, we moved the ball on them. And we turned the ball over and stopped them when they got turnovers.

And pretty much, you know, appreciate the way the defense played. I thought they played -- they flew around. We moved the ball offensively. We were efficient on third down. Unfortunately, we just turned the football over. And had some penalties, right?

### Q. You talked a great deal about the turnovers when you had the nine in those two games. Recovered a little bit there. Is there a failure for guys to get the message or what do you think is going on?

MIKE VRABEL: I don't know.

### Q. Mike, what was your view of the last play there? Do you think initially they had --

MIKE VRABEL: Initially, the ball was spot where they spotted it. And then replay assist comes in, New York comes in, and then, you know...

### Q. Did you get a look at the replay or anything?

MIKE VRABEL: Uh-huh.

### Q. What did you think of the call?

MIKE VRABEL: The call was the call. They had a bunch of guys looking at it, a bunch of people looking at it, and they said he was short.

### Q. What do you think of the two calls on holding on that touchdown? Particularly, the personal foul?

MIKE VRABEL: I mean, it's part of the game. Penalties are part of the game. You know, Jeff got the personal foul on the quarterback. And, you know, he knows that they're protected and he just has to try to swipe at his leg if he's falling.

### Q. You touched on the defense. Do you think they kind of kept you in it?

MIKE VRABEL: Uh-huh. Of course.

### Q. They kept kicking field goals and --

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah. They're starting to figure out they're going to have play defense wherever they put the ball down at. You know, we could have been better inside the one.

You know, on the third down, they stopped them two downs. But they're starting to develop a mentality and an attitude that you'll go out there and play defense wherever they have to.

### Q. Mike, it's a tough loss. How big of a challenge is it to turn around and come in and play on Thursday?

MIKE VRABEL: I think that's -- I love our football team, the type of people they are and the character they have. And we'll just have to get home, get some rest, give them a plan and try to get their bodies back and their minds back as fast as we possibly can for Thursday.

### Q. Do you feel like this one kind of got away from you in the second, just with all the turnovers and

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**everything?**

MIKE VRABEL: No. Got away?

**Q. Sure.**

MIKE VRABEL: No, it didn't look like that to me. It looked like we came up a few inches short on fourth down. Overcame a lot. So...

**Q. Does it feel like Ryan's kind of pressing because of the turnovers amount you guys have when you snowball like that?**

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, I mean, a guy made a good play on the one over there. And we turned it over, we fumbled it. And then, you know, we got to protect him.

We got some guys open, try to hit some shots down the field and, you know, continue to have to find ways to protect.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, I mean, I think that's the story of everybody. You know, it just -- we don't have front runners. We don't have guys that are going to complain. They compete.

And I appreciate that out of them. And I've enjoyed coaching them and know that we're always going to have a shot.

You know, it may not be very pretty, but there's guys out there competing, working, and fighting for each other.

**Q. How disappointing is it to lose Julio again?**

MIKE VRABEL: It's just disappointing to lose. You know what I mean? It's just -- we worry about -- we concern ourselves with everybody's health.

You know, no different than anybody else, whether it's somebody's ankle or shoulder. You know, just disappointing to lose.

**Q. Was he open at all when he was out there? You only threw it to him one time.**

MIKE VRABEL: I don't recall. I got to watch the tape. What's that, Joe?

**Q. Yeah, to follow-up on Julio. How much does it affect things -- (no microphone.)**

MIKE VRABEL: I mean, we're ready for anything that comes up. That's our job, is to be ready to make sure that there's guys out there that are ready to go whether they had a lot of reps in practice or didn't have a whole lot of reps. Those things happen and we're used to it. And I know that we're ready for it.

**Q. You guys contained Najee's -- the Steelers' running game. Was that kind of the focus of the game? Did you try to take him away to try to force the Steelers to try to --**

MIKE VRABEL: No, we knew that they'd probably -- I mean, we didn't think they'd run the ball on us. You know, all their runs were jet sweeps, razzle dazzles on the outside. And, you know, didn't -- you know, didn't think that the run game was going to be an issue.

**Q. Mike, tell us about your defense in the red zone, that bend don't break mentality. The Steelers had multiple turnovers.**

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, well, some of them -- we didn't really have a chance to bend. They started with the ball down there, right?

So they played pretty well defensively. You know, kept us in it. And offense came down there at the end and, you know, just came up a little bit short.

But they -- you know, I thought they played together. I thought they played fast. We still got to start getting some more turnovers.