

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Eddie Faulkner

Weekday Press Conference



**Q. Are you guys surprised you decided to throw the ball, two minutes left on the clock time in Seattle?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: Surprised, no. That was a calculated discussion we had, and it worked out.

**Q. How much have you guys embraced as a whole this kind of motto that Mike T. has used the last couple weeks after the games with the offensive approach?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: He's our leader, and he sets the trajectory. It's kind of his vision, our words, and we ride whatever he's saying. We're selling it. So I feel like the guys have been buying into it pretty good.

**Q. Along that point, T.J. mentioned to us that, if we could see him in meetings -- Mike Tomlin, I'm talking about -- we would understand why. What's he like? What's that message from Mike like?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: Coach T is special. That's all I can really say about it. It's just everything T.J. said, I concur with. He's a special leader of men, and I'm happy to be a part of his staff.

**Q. They put out the mic'd up video of Mike saying they wanted to throw on that play to George late. When you have a head coach who's a defensive coach who could very well be very conservative wants you to be aggressive, what does that tell you as the offensive coordinator?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: I think it's awesome when you have a head coach that's willing, like he always says, not live in your fears and just you go play and call it like you see fit.

In that particular play, we had been running in clubs and 13 personnel, and then you get out there and everybody in the stadium thinks you're about to run it. And then you throw it and G.P. gets a big gainer, those are the calculated risks that you take, and that one worked out for us.

**Q. What's allowed the offense to achieve at such a high level the last couple of weeks?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: We've been consistently running the ball pretty good, you know what I mean? When you can do that, you're kind of controlling the game, and it gives you the liberties to call what you want to at what times you want to. If we continue to do that, we'll continue to be balanced.

**Q. How much of a factor, does Mason's success throwing the ball down the field contribute to that?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: They feed off of each other, right? If you're forcing teams into one high, you get an opportunity, because you're running the ball well, you get an opportunity to take shots with our receivers. If the receivers are getting down the field and making plays and they decide they want to go to two high type of looks, now you've got an opportunity to run it.

It's kind of what you envisioned in terms of being a balanced team, having the ability to do what it is you want to do based on the looks that the defense provides.

**Q. Speaking of running the ball, the numbers really improved once you started playing Broderick Jones. What is your sense about the way that his addition has helped you guys and how he's developed throughout his rookie season?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: He's a first round pedigree guy. When you've got a guy like that, you expect him to continue to balance. What I really love about Broderick is he loves football. He goes about his business in that manner. He's got some tough guy qualities that we appreciate, and I only foresee him getting better.

**Q. Another example of keep the pedal down mentality, in the Bengals game, you guys were up 21. You stop on your 5. There's two minutes and change left, and you came out throwing and went down and got another field goal. When did that kind of kick in collectively, do you think, that, hey, it's time to get aggressive here?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: I don't know. We've always tried to at least have that mentality and have that communication with

the guys.

**Q. Would you agree it's been a little more obvious lately?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: Yeah, because success breeds a little bit more confidence, and from that breeds success. The last couple games we've had some success with what we're doing, and that makes it easier to sell and easier for the guys to buy.

**Q. Mason said he's a little concerned, but he has been willing to take those risks. How have you seen him embrace that same mentality that's been throughout the whole offense?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: Absolutely. How have I seen it? If I could quantify it maybe in one play, that unbelievable catch to G.P. down the sideline. Mason stood in the pocket there. Jaylen did a great job protecting him and ended up kind of blocking two guys. Mason kind of like pumped it and stood right in the pocket and let it go and gave 14 the chance to go make a play.

Those kinds of things might embody what you're talking about, but that was good to see.

**Q. You guys had success against Cincinnati. There was a lot of throwing. Then you came out in Seattle with a very different game plan, three tight ends in the beginning running the ball. How scary or difficult is that when you haven't had a lot of big, big offensive performances, you get one, and then the very next week, you say, okay, but we're going to do it differently this week?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: That's just NFL football. Each team you play week in and week out, they're going to have a different scheme, things to hang their hat on. In this particular group we just played, we knew, particularly playing at their place in that crowd, we knew we were going to have to be able to run the ball to control that crowd, control that environment. That was our mantra, and we were able to do it.

**Q. Why do Jaylen and Najee work well as a duo?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: Those two guys are selfless, and they just want to win. They come into work every day, and they play so well off each other because I think they're a lot different. Najee is a big body, big bruiser kind, and Jaylen gets in there. He's kind of the same type of guy, but his stature allows him to hide behind things sometimes, and it plays to his advantage.

They play well off of each other because they're both good football players, and we try to keep on playing into their skill set.

**Q. Could one have the success without the other?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: Well, Najee's had some success before Jaylen showed up. I would say the answer to that is true, but I definitely think they play well together, and I'm glad they're both on our team.

**Q. When Pickens got a block on the end of Warren's touchdown run, did you notice that?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: Heck, yeah.

**Q. What kind of impression did that make on you?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: I thought that was an awesome impression. I'll give you an even better one than that. On the play that got called back on Diontae's turnover, whatever, that they ended up overturning, G.P. form tackles a safety right there in the middle of the field and makes a play, and Diontae is running out from out of bounds to the sideline, and he would have made the tackle.

So when you want to talk about the stuff those guys have kind of taken throughout all this, if you want to pull up a clip and look at how that's changed, that's the clip to look at.

**Q. What changed it?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: A lot of times you guys would ask us if they're buying in, and we'd tell you yes, and you'd kind of look at us like we're crazy. I think that's what they were doing, buying in.

**Q. Did Aaron Curry ask if you could spare George for a few snaps a game after seeing that tackle or what?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: No, we're going to leave G.P. on offense.

**Q. I think we all envision performances like that from Najee when he was drafted in the first round, but how did 32 teams miss on what Jaylen's been able to do these two seasons? Is there something about him that teams didn't think he'd be able to do this at this level?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: I'm glad they did, I'll say that. I don't know. I can't answer that question. I've said it before in this setting, Jaylen wasn't -- for me in our ratings, in my ratings of backs, Jaylen wasn't a guy who was not a worthy of being drafted type running back. I can't speak on what

other people said. I can tell you what I saw on tape.

He's even better than that because the pass protection element, which you didn't see a lot of him at Oklahoma State, might be his strongest suit, and that's saying a lot because he does a lot of things well.

**Q. How different is the challenge with Baltimore than what you've seen the last couple of weeks? And also not knowing exactly who's going to be dressed on defense?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: I'll answer the latter part of that first. You've got to prepare as if they're all playing. That's the only way to do it. If they don't show up in stadium, they don't show up.

How differently? We know them. They know us. You hear Mike T. say that all the time. I would say that they schematically are more of a complicated group, they always have been, with things they can do with bringing pressure and different personnels, particularly on possession downs.

So we've got to be prepared for it, and we will be. Whatever happens in the stadium, we'll execute based on what they're giving us.

**Q. This is the first week in a year and a half that Kenny has a different role in terms of being healthy. How has he embraced it?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: Kenny's been awesome, nothing but a professional.

**Q. We asked you a lot of questions about the run game. Last year you guys were in a situation end of the season against the Ravens, that was one of your best performances and they're one of the best rushing defenses. Where do you feel like the success came from, and is that something you can use as a blueprint here in this matchup?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: I think the guys can use that to reference in their mind, like us having success in kind of the same venue we're going in against a lot of the same people. But I think more it's about game to game, like us tweaking where we're at currently and what we need to do to have success this week.

So I think more the emphasis is on the present time than what's happened in the past although that serves as a good backdrop to coach off of with the guys.

**Q. How much fun are you having right now, you and**

**Sully as offensive coordinators, with the way the offense is going and the momentum you guys are building?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: It's a lot more fun coming to these press conferences right now after the last two performances than it had been prior, to be honest with you.

But I'll be honest with you, even when we were going through our sticky times recently after the change happened, guys were -- I'm saying the staff wasn't acting funny. Guys were coming into work. We still laughed in the staff room and still enjoyed being around each other.

It's hard for me to believe that that's not a contributing factor to us being able to turn things around here lately.

**Q. Is the locker room pretty loose right now from the way they bounced back after those three losses?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: Yeah, I feel like the guys are engaged. They're locked in. They want to win.

You guys asked me before, was the locker room buying in? Do we feel like the locker room is getting splintered? I said no then, and I feel the same way now. They're bought in, and they're a pleasure to coach right now.

**Q. What have these last two games done for you and Sully and the way you feel about how things are going?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: I'll just be honest with you. You get done with a game, like we found out on the airplane we were playing at 4:30 on Saturday, so like I wasn't sitting there going, oh, man, we're playing good. I said, okay, what do we got to do to get ready for the Ravens because time is of the essence right now.

We're trying to make a playoff push, and that's honest to goodness the only place my thought process has been. I haven't sat down and thought anything about the past what's going to happen on Saturday.

**Q. Does Mason's size make you guys a little more willing to run the QB sneak or the push play, whatever you want to call it?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: That's kind of what we do and have done all year. It doesn't matter what quarterback is in there. That's how we go about our business.

**Q. When you make a game plan for the opponent and you don't know who's going to play, do you plan for it? Or press the veterans because of where they're at?**

EDDIE FAULKNER: We plan as if every stud they've got on their team is going to be out there on the grass.

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