

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Omar Khan

## Mike Tomlin

Draft Press Conference



were, we just felt really good about the players we took and where we took them.

**Q. Mike, you drafted three offensive linemen. What does that say, and also the other coaches came in and all talked about the amount of snaps that these guys can play, was that a focus, guys that had a lot of experience?**

MIKE TOMLIN: We're looking for guys with talent. Oftentimes that talent is coupled with experience. It's good to have a group that is mature as players and as people, and I think that's reflective of the collective that you're talking about. All that means is we should expect those guys to have a high floor and maybe have a good presentation of what they're capable of early on, and for that we're excited certainly.

**Q. How do you think those three impact your room, the offensive line?**

MIKE TOMLIN: That remains to be seen. Obviously we'll give them an opportunity to do that, but needless to say we're really excited about having them.

As Omar mentioned, we had some testy moments there leading up to our picks but that's a good thing from my perspective. It means we had guys on our board that we're excited about the potential of taking, and I think in all three of those instances we were really excited.

**Q. Mike, it looks like the last couple years you're pretty good on when to move up, when to not. Do you feel like you've got a beat on that, how a draft unfolds, and can you read it as it unfolds?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I think we're just making decisions moment to moment based on what's available and whether or not it's attractive to us and how much the phone is ringing.

We roll our sleeves up, we do a lot of work before we get into these scenarios, and we were just talking, when you're prepared, it makes for a good weekend.

We've been working long and hard, obviously, our scouting

OMAR KHAN: Very pleased how the weekend turned out for us. We addressed some needs but really got some high-character guys and some players that we think are going to help us not only this year but in the future and are going to be great parts of this community. With that, I'm free to take any questions.

**Q. Omar, you said on Thursday the 10 minutes waiting for the Rams to pick before you selected Troy was nerve-racking. Was there any of that going on yesterday while you were waiting to pick Zach?**

OMAR KHAN: I would say that is accurate, yeah. Those seven minutes were going pretty slow, but excited to have them. He's a Steeler -- he's another one I can't wait for you guys to really get to know. I'm not sure if you guys spoke with or met with him yet, but he's going to be a great addition to the team.

**Q. Did you try to trade up or anything like that?**

OMAR KHAN: We had conversations about moving up and the phone was ringing about moving down. Really every round we were in, we had a pick, we were having conversations about moving up, moving down. It was pretty active.

**Q. I know you've been asked a lot since you've taken the job about your mentality about being aggressive. What sort of different challenges are there to being patient and waiting in situations like that?**

OMAR KHAN: Yeah, I mean, you have no choice but to be patient on draft weekend. But it all comes down to what players are there when you're picking, and you try to make the right decisions, whether to move up, move down, or take a pick. As I've said before, for me, I know we made some moves last year, but when there's a good player there, it's hard to trade away from and we had opportunity to trade away, to trade back this year, and with where we

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department over the course of a 12-month calendar, and then he and I had an opportunity to get shoulder-to-shoulder and do a bunch of traveling, all for the purpose of preparedness so that you could feel the way we felt this weekend and just allow things to happen and make the moves necessary in an effort to round out our group.

It's been a really good process. We're doing what we have to do. But largely it's been a good process because of the work that people are willing to do leading up to the weekend.

**Q. You added in Roman Wilson. How do you feel like he complements George Pickens and some of the other pieces in that room?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Just on his merits alone, forget how he complements anyone, he's a good player, he's competitive. He creates separation at break points. He's battle tested on the interior portions of the field. He comes from a winning program. You can't say enough about the winning component in terms of how it shapes the relationships with the game and what they're willing to do and their mettle. He checks a lot of those boxes.

**Q. Is there a common thread finding these guys in terms of their mentality and maturity that will enable them to contribute right away?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I don't know that it's in every instance there's something along those lines, but obviously we value the tape, and oftentimes tape is produced by good relationships with the game and work ethic and being solid individuals. We value all of those things. We research.

I think that's kind of reflective of this group.

**Q. Roman talked about how hands on you were with him at the Senior Bowl. How did that interest begin with him, and how did it grow over time leading into this?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I'm just trying to get familiar down there with everyone at the Senior Bowl. It is a great atmosphere for getting to know the guys, for getting up close with them, to watching them compete, to maybe giving them some instruction and seeing how they take instruction and apply it to play. He's one of those instances, he and I had an opportunity to spend some time together. I think we interviewed him a couple times in Mobile. We had an opportunity to get some intimate moments in practice sessions on the field, challenging him to compete against some people.

It's just a get-to-know, an opportunity for me to get to know

him, an opportunity for him to get to know me. But again, that's what I'm talking about when I talk about our process. We don't run away from the work, we run to the work, and I think it tees us up for a good weekend like we had this weekend.

**Q. You were at the Senior Bowl, right?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I was self-appointed on staff.

**Q. You just go down there and wherever you want to go, you go, and whoever you want to talk to you talk to?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Pretty much.

**Q. When you watch Zach Frazier's tape in his last game where he crawls, hops off the field after fracturing his fibula, what does that tell you about the kind of player he is and the kind of person he is?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, it probably speaks more to the person. His quality of play speaks to the player that he is. But he needs no enforcement from me. You guys are pretty familiar with him. He's a regional guy. He's a tough competitor. He was an instant contributor in Morgantown. He's got an awesome background from a read perspective, high school wrestling champ, and got a lot of respect for that combat sport. Just really comfortable with him as a player and as a person.

**Q. Were you guys surprised Payton Wilson was still there with your second and third round?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Yeah, I think you could characterize it as surprised. He is an award-winning linebacker, Butkus award winner. Had an opportunity to get really familiar with him down in Mobile, as well.

But the linebackers themselves weren't coming off the board at that juncture, so sometimes they'd make runs on positions at different times, and there hadn't been a lot of linebackers to that point. I think he was No. 5 or so.

**Q. How much more athletic are you at that inside linebacker position and what effect will that have on your defense?**

MIKE TOMLIN: We haven't had a chance to look at the collective yet. I like to reserve some of those opinions until we get our groups on the field and start the process of working, but just on paper certainly we've helped ourselves, whether it's Wilson or whether it's some of the things that we did in free agency with Queen. We're really excited about the collection of talent we've been able to

assemble.

**Q. Have you had multiple guys with those running numbers before?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I'm sure we have, yeah.

**Q. Omar, was it obvious early that the offensive line was going to be this much of a focus or was that a reflection of the strength of this class, and how much of Andy's input did you take because of his experience in that area?**

OMAR KHAN: I would say it's a little bit of everything you just said. It was a strong offensive line group. We've talked plenty of times about how we feel about the importance of the offensive line, and we got through day one -- obviously Andy used to play the position and has a lot of knowledge, not only about that position but all the positions, and it just kind of worked that way for us. Even in the fourth round when we had a chance to get Mason McCormick, he's a guy that we had rated really high up there and we had a couple players at the position who are in the last year of their contracts and felt it was important to address it if he was there, and we did.

**Q. This might be a follow-up to Mike's question previously about Roman, but his addition to your wide receiver room, does that give you enough there with some of the guys you added in the off-season, or with what you did with Alex's contract, restructured that, does that give you an ability to play with that later in the summer?**

OMAR KHAN: Yeah, we'll see. I've said it before, if there's ever an opportunity to improve the team, we're going to look at it, and if it makes sense, we're going to go after it. But we structured Alex's deal, and like you said, it puts us in a position to be flexible with some things if there's an opportunity to do something.

**Q. Mike, a couple times you always would say you temper your expectations. A couple times you said you had a good weekend. What makes you feel at this point in time that you did have a good weekend?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Just our general level of excitement when we're on the clock and the options that were available to us and the amount of research and information that we had on those options creates a really good sense of comfort in the process. That's what I mean when I describe a good weekend.

Obviously this weekend will be defined over the next four to five years with the quality of play of this collective. But in

terms of how we feel today, it's about preparedness. It's about options and feeling good about what we did through the process to provide good clean decision making.

**Q. What interests you in a guy like Ryan Watts?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Just his body of work. He's a long guy. He runs well. He's got position flexibility. He plays with an edge. So those are some of the real tangible reasons why.

**Q. Speaking of doing the extra work, did you by any chance have somebody at the St. Louis high school in Hawai'i four years ago? And do you remember Logan Lee almost running you over in a high school event?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I do not remember Logan Lee. Okay, that's interesting.

OMAR KHAN: I don't remember.

MIKE TOMLIN: I don't remember that. But no, we weren't in Hawai'i. But we were in Ann Arbor, and there were reasons to be in Ann Arbor.

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