

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Aaron Rodgers

Weekday Press Conference



Darren Perry, Derrick McAdoo, Frank Cignetti, Luke Getsy.
I don't want to forget anybody, but a lot of Yensers in my life.

Q. What was the first day like out here with the guys?

AARON RODGERS: It feels good. Good to be out here with the guys. Still learning the offense, but good to be in a jersey and cleats again.

Q. How long do you think it will take you to acclimate to the offense and the team?

AARON RODGERS: Those are two different things. The offense -- it's a lot of similar terms from the Shanahan offense, so I've got a lot of stuff already booked. There's a couple new words and different things formationally, but I'll have it figured it out in a couple weeks probably.

Q. You were sent here 70 days ago; what made now the right time --

AARON RODGERS: 70?

Q. Yeah, it's been a little bit. What made now the right time to sign a deal and to be here?

AARON RODGERS: I was dealing with a lot of things in my personal life and some things improved a little bit where I felt like I could fully be all in here with the guys. I had great conversation with Mike throughout the entire process and Omar. It was good to get that done and get it behind us.

Q. Why was the Steelers the right fit for you?

AARON RODGERS: I think it starts with Mike Tomlin. I've been a fan of his for a long time. There's a few iconic franchises in the NFL. I played for one of them for 18 years. This is another one of those. There's something special about obviously this area. So many great quarterbacks are from Pittsburgh. I feel like Pittsburgh has been a part of my career from the beginning, playing for Mike McCarthy for 13 years, having Tom Clements, or Tommy Clements, depending how old you are, as my quarterback coach forever, Don Capers, Kevin Greene,

Q. You had said the weekend of the draft you had a lot of options, including retiring. What was in your mind as you went through the process to go and play here?

AARON RODGERS: I wouldn't say it was super clear-cut. I didn't want to short change the guys and be -- sign and be elsewhere mentally or physically. Until I could be here and be all in, I needed to take care of my business.

Q. What was your message to the team?

AARON RODGERS: I'm going to keep that between me and the guys.

Q. Ken Hayward was talking on the podcast this morning --

AARON RODGERS: This morning?

Q. Yeah, this morning. He talked about the leadership you can bring to the offensive side of the ball and how that will be very important. How much of that conversation did you talk about what you can be as a leader?

AARON RODGERS: I think I just want to be a servant leader here and just pass on the knowledge that I have for 20 years, the experience, and just try and fit in with the guys, get to know them, let them get to know me, and just enjoy the process.

Everything's new. It's like the first day of school. I don't know a lot of guys' names. They don't have names on the back of the jerseys here. They don't have names on the doors in the meeting room, so I literally walk out of the locker room lost, try and grab somebody, hey, where am I going?

But I'll get the feel of it, and I'm excited about making this home.

Q. At this point in your life, why do you still want to

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play?

AARON RODGERS: I think that's what it is. I don't need it. For my ego, I don't need it, to keep playing. A lot of decisions that I've made over my career and life from strictly the ego, even if they turn out well, they're always unfulfilling. But the decisions made from the soul are usually pretty fulfilling.

This was a decision that was best for my soul, and I felt like being here with Coach T and the guys they got here and the opportunity here was the best for me. I'm excited to be here.

Q. Is it different physically being almost two years out from the achilles as it was opposed to one?

AARON RODGERS: Yeah, I'm 41. The body feels different than it did at 25. I feel better. I felt good last year. I worked really hard. It was a tough couple years, getting hurt and rehabbing to get back, but I feel good.

Q. Kind of along those lines, after the way things unfolded last year, what do you think is different about this organization, about you physically and mentally that will lead to more success here?

AARON RODGERS: I'm not going to take any shots at my previous organization, if that's what you're trying to get me to do. I'm just going to talk about these guys. I like the opportunity here. I like the feel with the guys. I like how Mike T has been in the meetings.

Tom Arthur and I have known each other since 2006. He was in my quarterback room our first off-season together. He still has the prettiest drop I've ever seen. So it was good to see him. Arthur I've known for a number of years. Obviously everybody in the Shanahan tree is close.

Enjoyed our conversations over the last few months and the one-on-one times we've had in the meeting rooms and looking at the offense.

Q. What do you appreciate about the city of Pittsburgh, and what are you looking forward to experiencing more now that you're living here?

AARON RODGERS: I love the Greenfield Avenue area. Mike told me to say that.

No, this is a blue-collar town. The history of this great area is building the structure of the country. A lot of great people here, great fan base. We played here over the years. They even got their own song they play late in the third or in the fourth quarter.

But it's a special, special place to play sports, just great blue-collar people. I'm excited to meet some of the fans along the way.

Q. What would winning big, winning a championship mean to you with all that you've accomplished at this point in your career?

AARON RODGERS: It would mean a seventh championship for the city, right? That would be great.

Q. Internally, though, is there a drive for you, motivation in terms of pursuing that?

AARON RODGERS: I have a lot that motivates me, but this is about the love of the game. The game has given me so much over the years. And making peace with a nice long career.

Q. You mentioned the Shanahan offense a couple of times. Is the familiarity already with this system and Arthur what made this an attractive destination?

AARON RODGERS: I mean, that was part of it. I liked Arthur. Obviously I've known Tom forever. A big attraction was Mike Tomlin. I've gone against him over the years. The way that the conversations went between him and I, between whatever it was in March or April and the last Sunday when I called him was some of the coolest conversations I've had in the game, definitely with a head coach.

He's a big reason I'm here. I believe in him, and I'm excited to play for him.

Q. What about him makes you feel that way? What has he kind of showed you or rubbed off on you?

AARON RODGERS: We've had some great conversations. I just appreciated the way that he treated me throughout the process.

Q. What do you know of DK Metcalf and Pat Freiermuth's game that you're excited to work with them?

AARON RODGERS: DK's been blowing me up for a while. We got to get together out west.

I've gone against him a number of times. He's big, athletic, fast, got great hands, ball skills.

The thing that really excites me the most is his character. I think he's a high-character guy. I was teasing him the first



conversation we had, he said yes, sir like 10 times. I said, is that because I'm 41? He said, no, that's just how I talk. I like his whole personality and his approach and the way he is on the field, his professionalism.

Pat has been blowing me up mostly on DMs and on the 'Gram, but I've had respect for his game for a while too. He was just teasing me about two-minute starters there at the end.

I like the opportunity to work with all the guys in the tight end room, but there's a lot of guys with different skill sets. I told Darnell today I haven't had a tight end like him since Mercedes. And Mercedes, all-time great. Darnell is like a young Mercedes. Able to do things in the passing game, dominate the line of scrimmage. Connor had a really nice day today making plays. There's a lot of guys in that room with great skill sets.

Q. Do you anticipate having another workout with any of the guys between now and training camp?

AARON RODGERS: I do. I've just got to try to convince them to come out to Malibu, California. It's going to be a tough sell, I think, a tough sell.

Q. Did you reply to Pat's DMs?

AARON RODGERS: I did.

Q. Your meeting here earlier in the year, did you leave with any materials to study what they do or anything like that?

AARON RODGERS: No, I just got in my Malibu and took off.

Q. When you were going through the process this off-season, how much did you consider other organizations when weighing all your options? Or when you decided to return to the season, was Pittsburgh really the choice?

AARON RODGERS: I think there was conversations with other organizations for sure, but again, the rapport that fell in between me and Mike made it to where, as I was going through my personal stuff, there wasn't any other option for me. It was here or not play.

Q. I think your in your documentary said you're at the point in your career you don't play to prove anything to anyone but yourself. What do you want to prove to yourself this year?

AARON RODGERS: I said that in my documentary? I just

want to have fun. I want to enjoy the game. The game's given me a ton. It's hard to think of anything in my life that's positive that wasn't impacted, directly or indirectly, by playing this game.

Just want to give love back to the game, enjoy it, pass on my knowledge to my teammates, and try and find ways to help lead the team.

Q. I don't think you took any team reps today. Is that the plan the next couple of days? And how much learning takes place on the field versus watching?

AARON RODGERS: I can't stand the helmet. I've worn it shut for 20 years. Somehow it finally didn't pass the safety standards. No, I'm just going through the script. Like Tom's given me a script so I can follow along, trying to like listen to the plays in my helmet, then say them back, and then read it.

For me, the more times that I write it or read it or hear it, the more it kind of sticks in. Again, a lot of this stuff is stuff I've done before, but there's new terms and new types of motion words and different stuff. I'm learning. I'm going to go through the individual stuff. I think that's what Mike wants me to do.

I told Mike, if he wants me to practice, I'll practice, but I think he said he just wants me to stick to the individual until I've got the offense down.

Q. Are you going to get a brand new helmet?

AARON RODGERS: I hope so.

Q. It's been a lot of years since this fan base have had a playoff win. Do you think you're the person to get the team over the hump?

AARON RODGERS: We're day one of mini camp for me. I'm just taking it one day at a time.

Q. A lot has been made about the ring. Is that an Oura ring or a wedding ring?

AARON RODGERS: Yeah, it's a wedding ring.

Q. Congratulations.

AARON RODGERS: Thank you.

Q. How long?

AARON RODGERS: It's been a couple months.



Q. You talked about getting acclimated. Is there any trepidation over missing OTAs or not being here for OTAs?

AARON RODGERS: No.

Q. You talked in your documentary --

AARON RODGERS: Sweet, two documentary questions.

Q. About mentoring Jordan Love. Are you looking forward to doing the same thing with Will Howard here?

AARON RODGERS: I am, I am. Will's a good kid. We got to talk a little bit. I thought he did really well today. He seems pretty bright, not too big for him. Going through the progressions really well.

Yeah, I'm going to be with him every single day and every single meeting. Found my seat next to him today in the offensive meeting, whether or not that sticks. Right next to Will Howard. I'm going to help him out as much as I can.

Q. Has he told you he was three years old when you got drafted?

AARON RODGERS: Not yet, but I'm sure he will.

Q. Do you anticipate calling an audible and using your experience to take over as you see fit?

AARON RODGERS: I don't understand that last term, take over when I see fit. I've called some two minutes over the years. But the idea that somehow I need to or have spent most of my career playing outside of an offensive system is just not correct. I'm going to learn the offense, and Arthur and I are going to talk a bunch this summer. If there's things that I like that I'd like to see in the offense, Arthur I'm sure is going to put it in.

He knows how to call a game. I know how to get us in the right spot based on what's called. There's two or three plays called in the huddle sometimes. My job is to get us in the right play.

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