

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

Sunday, November 16, 2025

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Coach Mike Tomlin

Postgame Press Conference



Steelers 34, Bengals 12

MIKE TOMLIN: Appreciative of the efforts. I thought we certainly fought hard. We played hard. In some instances we could have played smarter, so there's individual and collective learning that needs to happen in some of those instances, but that's life. It's good to learn with the win. It was a big AFC North win for us. Aaron is obviously out with a wrist injury. It'll be evaluated in the morning. I'll give you guys more information there.

Ke'Shawn Williams had a concussion. He's in the protocol. Jaylen Warren had an ankle. I think he was able to return. The rest is bumps and bruises associated with play.

I can't say enough about the collective effort. It certainly wasn't ideal. We got challenged in a lot of ways, but you're going to get challenged in the National Football League on weekends. It's just good to get a win and get back on the right side of things coming off of a poor performance and obviously a loss the last time we saw these guys.

It's doubly satisfying from that perspective.

Questions?

Q. Was it Aaron's right wrist, and what can you say about Mason and Kenny Gainwell making a big play?

MIKE TOMLIN: It was his left wrist, and Mason has proven in the past what he showed today. That's why we value him as a member of this collective. Appreciative of his play. Certainly Kenny Gainwell made play after play for us, winning in the flat and so forth.

But a lot of guys did. I thought our tight end run after with Muth and Darnell in particular was really good. You've got to be able to throw short and run long sometimes, win conversions in that fashion, flip fields in that fashion. So there was a lot of guys that contributed to that.

Q. Has James Pierre grown throughout the year, not

just what we saw with our own eyes today?

MIKE TOMLIN: He's grown throughout the years, yes. He's gotten better with each and every year he's been here with his roles and his ability to respond to opportunity and so forth. There's a veteran high level of consistency that we're seeing right now. That's why I talked about him the way I talked about him, I think, on Tuesday.

Q. What led to the better defensive performance against Cincinnati this time?

MIKE TOMLIN: We got stability at the safety position. Other than Jaylen not finishing the game, we've got stability at the safety position.

Q. Any explanation of what happened with Jalen Ramsey, what led to him popping off against Ja'Marr Chase?

MIKE TOMLIN: I didn't need any. It doesn't matter. We've got to be smarter. We've got to stay in football games as individuals.

Q. As a follow-up to the safeties, Kyle Dugger, can you talk about the defense, the interception that he made, could be the changing point of the game?

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, he's a veteran player that's been there, done that guy. That's why we covered him at the trade deadline. He's been an asset to us certainly, and increasingly so. I'm excited about moving forward with him as he continues to get solid in assignments, communication and understanding.

Q. Was he ejected or did you take him out?

MIKE TOMLIN: He was ejected. Yes.

Q. Aaron's injury designation was questionable. Could he have returned in the second half?

MIKE TOMLIN: I don't have the answer to that, to be honest with you. I'll have more information next time we talk.



Q. How did you feel like Mason Rudolph did?

MIKE TOMLIN: As I mentioned, he's always delivered when called upon in the past. That's why we value him. His performance was consistent with what he's done in the past for us. Not that we take it for granted; we don't. We appreciate it.

Q. Did he return to the sideline or did he just stay in the locker room after his injury?

MIKE TOMLIN: Again, I don't know. My attention was on the field and those that were on the field.

Q. Did you do anything in the second half to kind of account for the fact that Mason hasn't played? Do you make things a little bit more cautious or careful?

MIKE TOMLIN: No, Mason has played a lot of football in this league. We might lean to things that are more in his wheelhouse, but it wasn't because of lack of play.

Q. Ja'Marr Chase had a big dig at you guys last time around. 10 targets, three catches, 30 yards. He talked about how they knew what you guys were going to do last time around. What did you change up this time that might have gotten in the way of him having a good day?

MIKE TOMLIN: I don't know that we changed anything of any significance. I just thought we were more solid today, to be honest with you.

Q. Your thoughts on Gainwell, not just rushing but also receiving?

MIKE TOMLIN: I think he also made a tackle on kickoff. I value him as a football player first. We saw a lot of that, man, on his Philadelphia tape. He's good in a lot of areas, including special teams. So we just respect what he brings to the table.

Q. Did you see exactly how Aaron got hurt or what happened?

MIKE TOMLIN: I did not.

Q. You talked a lot about Mason thus far, and this is not to compare him to Aaron, but when you have a guy that's familiar with your system, has experience as a Steeler, as a coach, is there a little bit of calming effect when you see No. 2 going in with his background here?

MIKE TOMLIN: There's no doubt. There's no doubt.

Q. What do you say for the offense in general? You talked about having faith in the individual players, but having your starting quarterback and your starting running back on the sideline could cause a lot of other issues that didn't seem to crop up for you.

MIKE TOMLIN: That's life in the big dance. You're going to be challenged in a lot of ways as individuals, as collectives or collectives within the larger collective. It's our job to adapt and improvise and do what's required to win.

Q. Would you say your defensive front was more effective against Flacco in terms of pressuring him against Cincinnati?

MIKE TOMLIN: I just thought as a collective, whether it's front, secondary, linebackers, I just think we were more solid. I think we were more connected. I thought we communicated well. It's not necessarily about what it is that they do, it's about the quality of what we do, and I thought we were just above the line in so many of the intangible areas today that allowed us to play.

Q. What can be said about Darnell Washington's performance today, especially that big run that he had?

MIKE TOMLIN: It's been highly consistent. We're appreciative of him. We're appreciative of Spencer Anderson. That's why we introduced him with the starting lineup, to show respect to that.

Q. Were you able to talk with Aaron after his injury, either off the field or at halftime?

MIKE TOMLIN: I was.

Q. Did he disclose anything?

MIKE TOMLIN: He was excited about the win. I just talked to him. But that's all we talked about. We didn't talk about his injury, we talked about the significance of the win.

Q. How significant can you say this win is, considering where you guys are in the division?

MIKE TOMLIN: It's perspective. It feels good right now, but it's about what happens moving forward, and it always is. That's just the nature of this thing. It's sweet today. Tomorrow we go back to work because there's big business waiting on us next week.

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