

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

Thursday, December 4, 2025

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Arthur Smith

Weekday Press Conference



**Q. Art, what's a reasonable expectation for Adam Thielen. Way too early?**

ARTHUR SMITH: I think acquire a guy like Adam, try to get all these guys ready and see how it looks at the end of the week. I think you get to this point, it's crunch time, December, big game for us.

I think all options are on the table, so we'll see how the week goes.

**Q. Arthur, what do you think he could add?**

ARTHUR SMITH: There is a lot. I mean, Adam is a guy that's got a lot of experience. He can add a lot of things to the room in in terms of guys watching his habits, the way he runs routes.

So we'll see where it goes.

**Q. Aaron's mentioned before there have been issues in getting receivers open. That there is just not a lot of separation sometimes. Is there something you guys can do at this point in the season to free up some receivers and get some of that separation that seems to be missing?**

ARTHUR SMITH: There is a lot ways to find it. It's very subjective. You're talking about man, picks and rubs. I mean, always pause the tape and say, oh, man guy is open. It's just not the reality. There is a lot that goes into every play.

The simplest way is of course there is always stuff you can do. You're never helpless. I loathe when I hear people think they're some kind of victim. There is always more you can do, and that's our charge, it's our job. So lose two in a row. Plenty of different stories, like every game, but we got to get a win.

But say to there is nothing you can do, I don't subscribe to that.

**Q. MVS, is he still in consideration?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Everybody is. All options.

**Q. I'm curious, in the offseason how much were you involved in the process of bringing Jonnu Smith? Do you feel like with him in the fold you have two of the top 10 players at that position? Do you feel like you used them in way to justify that...**

ARTHUR SMITH: I mean, to answer your question, everybody is different how they do it. My job is to coach the players, so no different than free agent, draft; somebody asks your opinion, you give it and then your job is to make things work.

So with every piece you have, I mean, there is context, everything. So we got guys with different skillsets, so look at the results, sitting at 6-6. Again, more you can do. There is always things you got to do better.

If you look at the flipside of it, the context is that the tight end room. You mash up Pat, Darnell and Jonnu, they're all not the -- don't have anybody who would sit there with 65, 70 receptions, but the emergence of Darnell and Kenny, there is give and take, and that's kind of what's gone on this certain ways.

There is other things you look at that sometimes where guys are in a little bit of a lull. You're trying to get guys open and sometimes things happen, break down our play coverage, ball goes somewhere else.

We got a lot of good guys and we got still a quarter of a season left, five games that are critical, so we'll just -- it's our charge, like I said. You don't die on the same hill every week. Things we can improve on, things we can change up and things get back to that were working earlier. All that stuff is in consideration.

That's what you're working on.

**Q. Does DK use his size and strength --**

ARTHUR SMITH: Who?



**Q. DK.**

ARTHUR SMITH: DK.

**Q. Does he use his size and strength the way you want to see him use it early in routes getting off the line of scrimmage?**

ARTHUR SMITH: DK, again, made some big plays for us this year. Like I said, last week, you lose a game like that, get off the mat and you go back, and you got Baltimore coming this week. Got to get back to things we were doing well earlier in the year. There are some things we need to change up with all of our guys.

So don't get the results you want, I mean, you got to keep working and you got to problem solve. You got to be solution based. But all these guys made big plays at different moments. We just need more of them consistently. We need to string them together.

**Q. Are seeing defenses kind of sell out to stop the run, whether that be bringing safeties closer down the line of scrimmage or linebackers not really...**

ARTHUR SMITH: Just depends. Every scheme is different. Flow of the game. Depending how it's going. Obviously in Chicago we ran the ball well early. Some of the things they were doing, there were some things that opened up, some opportunities. Some we hit. Like the one to Skowronek early.

And then other ones that didn't. Some weeks when teams were playing really loose shell, weren't stepping in. A lot of it is scheme based, and then obviously how they adapt to what's going on in the game.

So it's week to week. You have a pretty good idea schematically. If you're not running the ball well, why would they step up. You got change it up. Get a little more drop-back mode depending how many possessions you have left.

**Q. To go back to the tight ends for a second, not dying on that hill, like you had. Jonnu has outsnapped Pat pretty consistently; a little more without taking Darnell off the field. Is there something Jonnu gives you? Is there a comfort level there? Do you take Aaron into account?**

ARTHUR SMITH: It's different packages. Those guys are -- talk about a few plays here and there. Darnell's numbers really skyrocketed probably about week four, so he played the most. The rest of those guys it's been different

personnel, circumstances, and sometimes talking about job descriptions, and again, sometimes flow of the game because of that package.

Give you an example. In Chicago, out of that package, they all have to know it. Sometimes you lean heavy, especially if something is working. That can change it up every week to try to enhance guy's strengths with the receiver room, tight end room, backs, as big as they are, their role in the pass game.

Same question when you're asking about Kenny ask Jaylen. Kind of the same thing. There is obviously recency bias at that goes into it, the flow of a season. We got to get -- all of us, we got to put the best plan we can together and get the win Sunday. That's the biggest thing that matters.

**Q. You were talking about how guys have different skillsets. Do Pat and Jonnu have too much of a...**

ARTHUR SMITH: No, I don't subscribe to that. I mean, we got to just, again, get more possessions and get off the losing track we've been on the last two weeks.

Usually when you get into the flow of it and get more possessions and you're converting third downs, there is going to be more opportunities for everybody. That's the way it goes.

**Q. We asked Aaron about the lack of deep ball success, just kind of 20 yards or further since week nine, he talked about the guys running the right route and making the right throw. What can you pinpoint as far as the reason why you guys haven't been able to get some of those bigger plays to click?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Again, like I said, some of it, you know, talk about third down opportunities, one on ones. I think the Chicago game for example we got a lot more single high. We took our shots. We didn't hit some of those go routes. The coverages and some of the stuff and the man when people trying to pack the paint, hit a big one to Roman. We had the one in the early third down that we didn't hit.

So you got to problem solve, find ways. As we're attacking things, got to win one-on-ones if you get them and things got to play off each other. If you want to hit the big shots off the play-action, you need to be rolling in the run game. You need to have a good spacing.

Then force them to sell out, or if you do it in the passing game you got to hold up. Those are your options, and then depending on what you're attacking coverage-wise or

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

matchup one on ones.

**Q. What have you heard about this receiving group as far as how they respond to the plan that you put together in terms of using different concepts to get them open and what suits them best?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Well, there is a lot. Again, depending on what you're packaging plays, right? So you can have two, almost three plays depending on what you built in. The way we built in on a pass, so there is a lot on you mentally. That's something you look at sometimes, are you putting too much on them.

So, you know, to answer the question about grouping them together and trying to -- it's our job to put them in the best situation. You look at everything. All right, are we doing too much? If there is a breakdown in communication, why is that happening?

I go back and look at myself. The easiest thing I think in life, and people always look at things a different way, blame somebody else. I mean, that's the poorest form of leadership ever.

When things break down I look at things, like in the third quarter the other day we had a break down. Easily say blame the end result on a guy here or there, or I look back at the week and got to cover ever look. Sometimes you got cover it one more time and what the climate you're building and to make sure we're ready to go, because things happen fast.

There is a lot of options on different plays depending on the coverage, pressures, protection, everything being in sync. That's what you look at. That's your charge. That's your job. You get into a week like this and it's new challenges. We got to make sure we put a great plan together and got to execute.

**Q. This weekend with the way the game went, you were there and you heard the way the crowd reacted. For you as an assistant coach, how do you put that on yourself, and when you hear those chants of fire Tomlin, does that have an effect on you?**

ARTHUR SMITH: You know, I will say I've been in situations personally myself, you know, and like I said, this isn't business for the meek, especially mentally. I mean, like I said, I roll my eyes when people act like a victim.

I mean, a lot of ways to look at it, but no, I mean, our job is to win. You step in this arena, that's the part of job whether you like it or not. Like I said, you better check your mentality. We're in the sports entertainment business. It's

a high pressure, high performance business. It's competitive, and your job is to win and produce.

If anything, those experiences in life and having perspective and humility, you don't get caught up into that. Again, it's like everything, you become a playcaller, head coach, quarterback in this league, it's easy to stand there when things are going good, but you are going to find out about yourself when things aren't, and that's the true test of leadership for this position.

A lot of what I found out over here is it's kind of freeing in terms of you're trying to do the best job you can. You know what the expectations are. We got to produce.

**Q. Aaron not being able to go under center last week hurt you at all and will that change?**

ARTHUR SMITH: Look, you just have contingency plans. If a guy is playing, you got adapt. Certainly see how it goes this week, next week, just the evolution, make sure we're putting him in the best and protecting him.

But again goes back to the job of problem solving and adapting. Got to look at it, you know, something we tried last week. There is things we can do better in that formation stuff.

We'll see.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports