

# Pittsburgh Steelers

## Media Conference

Monday, January 12, 2026  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Coach Mike Tomlin

### Postgame Press Conference



Texans 30, Steelers 6

MIKE TOMLIN: Man, certainly a disappointing end to our season. We've certainly got to give Houston a lot of credit, in particular their defensive unit. I thought they ruled the day. They certainly had a reputation for that coming in, and they confirmed it with their performance. That's just how it goes.

We didn't capitalize off of turnovers in the first half. We were plus 2 and still down by a point at the half, and that's just not a good sign.

I was talking to Lisa post-halftime and I was talking about our inability to perform on 3rd down, which I thought was significant, and that continued to be into the second half, but you've certainly got to give those guys credit. We didn't do enough in possession down ball to get things going, any sort of rhythm or real points and so forth, and I thought that they did a real good job on 3rd down, and we didn't get off enough on defense, and particularly as the game wore on, it became an attrition component of it.

It's disappointing, but I'm certainly thankful for this group and their efforts. But it's a disappointing night tonight.

Questions?

#### **Q. What was your message to the guys in there?**

MIKE TOMLIN: It's not time for talk. We agreed that we'll meet tomorrow and go from there. But when you're in just a single elimination tournament, there's not a whole lot to talk about. You win or you go home.

#### **Q. There's plenty of reason to believe with it being a home game, coming off the division championship last week, that this playoff game would end differently than the previous three where we've had to go on the road. Why didn't it? Why didn't it manifest that way?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I outlined it in pretty good detail in my

opening statement.

#### **Q. What about your side of the ball when it came to trying to stop them running the football and also guarding -- beyond Nico?**

MIKE TOMLIN: And again, I outlined it in great detail in my opening statement. We didn't get off enough on 3rd down. There became an attrition component to it in the second half.

#### **Q. What do you think led to the issues you guys had converting 3rd downs?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, we didn't put our guys in enough position. We didn't make enough plays. And certainly the Houston Texans did.

#### **Q. What's gone into the lack of use of Pat Freiermuth? He didn't get a target until late in the third quarter and maybe even the fourth quarter, especially with the missing of Darnell Washington, when you guys need playmakers he hasn't been involved?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Yeah, we're not converting on 3rd down. You can pick anyone or any specific component of your offensive unit and talk about there not being enough exposure. When you're not winning 3rd downs you don't get enough snaps to establish the things you desire to, whether it's the featuring of people or the running of the football or any of those things and certainly points.

#### **Q. Did they do anything different to D.K. Metcalf from a coverage standpoint? He had two catches in the first quarter, then he wasn't targeted again until the fourth quarter.**

MIKE TOMLIN: I think certainly he was targeted prior to then. Had a drop on a significant play there.

Again, I'm not going to make excuses. This is not an excuse business. We didn't make enough plays, and they certainly did.

#### **Q. It seemed like Aaron was pressured a lot. Your offensive line had played well down the stretch. Do**



**you feel like this was a step back for them, or is that line just that good?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, it certainly was a step back. I respect, obviously, their front and their capabilities and so forth, but we certainly didn't play to our desires today. It wasn't like they were pressuring a lot. They weren't. That's not the style of their four-man rush group. But it certainly was significant.

**Q. What do you make of their defense? They held the Texans in check and kept giving you guys chance after chance but ultimately giving up big plays in the end there?**

MIKE TOMLIN: It speaks for itself. Again, particularly when you're in this tournament, talk is cheap. It's about what you do or don't do, and certainly as a collective, we didn't do it tonight.

**Q. You mentioned the missed opportunities. Is that something that weighs on a team as you go mentally especially?**

MIKE TOMLIN: No, I didn't believe that it eroded us in any way, but certainly there comes a point in time where you've got to make plays, and we just didn't do that. But I didn't think it was any collective mental attrition to it. It's just we didn't make plays.

**Q. Do these moments get any more difficult for you as the years go on?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You know, I don't necessarily compare it to any other moment. It's the here and now, and certainly it's difficult.

But that's what we sign up for. That's the life we live.

**Q. How do you approach a decision about your future?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I'm not even in that mindset as I sit here tonight. I'm more in the mindset of what transpired in this stadium and certainly what we did and didn't do. Not a big-picture mentality as I sit here tonight.

**Q. You've walked off the field with Cam and Aaron together all season this year. Tonight you walked off pretty quickly with them behind you. Kind of what happened there?**

MIKE TOMLIN: What do you mean?

**Q. You've walked off with the two of them --**

MIKE TOMLIN: I only walk off the field with those guys on road victories. If you've been paying attention, that's what it is. I walk off the field with those guys on road wins. So certainly tonight didn't fall into that category.

**Q. The last time you had an offense that scored a touchdown that either tied a game or took the lead in a playoff game was the Dolphins here back in 2017. What is it that you guys haven't been able to do for years now offensively?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Again, as I mentioned earlier, I'm not in the big-picture perspective. I'm just not in that mindset. I don't think about the totality of it. You pour everything that you have into these performances and what goes on tonight. Maybe I'll have a different perspective the next time we get together. But as I sit here tonight, it's just about what transpired in there. I probably couldn't articulate an appropriate answer relative to big-picture things.

**Q. This is the first home playoff game with fans since the '17 season. Could you feel that energy early on, and what's the message to the fan base afterwards?**

MIKE TOMLIN: You certainly could, man. It was an awesome environment. I just wish we could have performed better.

**Q. What's the message to the fan base after another disappointing loss?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Again, when you don't get it done, words are cheap. It's about what you do or you don't do. I appreciate the question, but people talk too much in our business. You either do or you don't.

**Q. Is it too big picture to ask if you think you have enough of a foundation to make progress for next year?**

MIKE TOMLIN: I always feel optimistic about what we're capable of doing in terms of putting together a group, certainly.

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