

Pittsburgh Steelers



Season Finish: 12-4, Div. Champ. 2nd Seed in Playoffs

OFFENSE

These days when you think of the Steelers offense you think of Roethlisberger given he's the biggest offensive name they have. Early in his career the Steelers wanted to limit his throws and he was basically a one read QB, then he would scramble and make plays if that read wasn't open. They did like to throw the ball early on with Big Ben, then run the clock out in the second half.

Willie Parker's not a great between-the-tackles runner, but he is better than most given a guy with his speed. He's also a capable blitz pickup and receiver out of the backfield. Now that they have a Mr. Inside (Rashard) and a Mr. Outside (Fast Willie), their running game is the best it's been in over a decade.

Hines Ward gets more name recognition, but Santonio Holmes is the better receiver. Ward finished 33rd in DPAR last year to Holmes' 11th. Holmes is a rare receiver because he's great at getting the YAC and can burn defenders deep.

The O-Line was a mess as they really missed center, Jeff Hastings, and couldn't find a suitable replacement in undersized Sean Mahan. Marvel Smith has been a solid left tackle over the years, although was lost last year to a serious back injury which often signals the end of a career. Willie Colon was able to beat out Max Starks at right tackle and appears to once again have the inside track for the job this year.

DEFENSE

The Pittsburgh Steelers believe in playing defense the old-fashioned way, they don't mind giving up yardage between the 20-yard lines as long as they hunker down near the goal line.

The Steelers gave up fewer yards per game (237.2) during the regular season than the legendary 1985 Chicago Bears and led the NFL in total defense, pass defense and scoring defense. Pittsburgh was second in run defense.

In the NFL's highest-scoring season since 1965, the Steelers held op-



Pittsburgh's Parker reaches for the touchdown.

ponents to 13.9 points per game and 3.9 yards per play, best in the league since 1979.

They did it against one of the league's most difficult schedules, facing 11 teams that finished .500 or better. The Steelers haven't allowed a 100-yard rusher or a 300-yard passer all season.

Three Pittsburgh defenders were chosen to the Pro Bowl -- strong safety Troy Polamalu, outside linebacker James Harrison, and inside linebacker James Farrior.

Harrison had 16 sacks and was named NFL defensive player of the year. Farrior tied for sixth in the league in tackles with 133.

RECORD	TEAM STATISTICS (REG. SEASON)	STEELERS	OPPONENTS
1. W 38-17 against Houston	Total First Downs	290	240
2. W 10-6 against Cleveland	First Downs (Rushing-Passing Penalty)	93-179-18	73-149-18
3. L 6-15 to Philadelphia	Third Down Conversions	92/224	71/226
4. W 23-20 against Baltimore	Fourth Down Conversions	3/12	10/21
5. W 26-21 against Jacksonville	Total Offensive Yards	4991	3795
6. W 38-10 against Cincinnati	Offense (Play-Average Yards)	1015-4.9	974-3.9
7. L 14-21 to New York Giants	Total Rushing Yards	1690	1284
8. W 23-6 against Washington	Rushing (Plays-Average Yards)	460-3.7	390-3.3
9. L 20-24 to Indianapolis	Total Passing Yards	3301	2511
10. W 11-10 against San Diego	Passing (Comp-Att-Int-Avg)	303-506-15-7.1	301-533-20-5.4
11. W 27-10 against Cincinnati	Sacks	51	49
12. W 33-10 against New England	Field Goals	27/31	24/27
13. W 20-13 against Dallas	Touchdowns	38	21
14. W 13-9 against Baltimore	(Rushing-Passing>Returns-Defense)	16-19-0-3	7-12-0-2
15. L 31-14 to Tennessee	Time of Possession	31:41	28:41
16. W 31-0 against Cleveland	Turnover Ratio	+4	-