

'Nice' sums up Bonds' induction



TIM BENZ

As layered and complex as Barry Bonds' legacy is in Pittsburgh — and throughout all of baseball — he summed up Saturday's induction to the Pirates Hall of Fame in the simplest words possible. "It's nice," Bonds said with a smile. "It's just very nice. The word ... very nice." That wasn't always the word to describe how things were during Bonds' time

in Pittsburgh. Whether it was frustration with fans, occasional dust-ups with the media, an all-too-public argument with his manager or anger with the franchise over his contract status, "nice" was rarely a word used to describe his Pirates career or the PED controversy that followed him after he left. Dynamic. Legendary. Unforgettable. Breathtaking. Those words are much more elaborative, yet far more appropriately applied to describe Bonds' seven years in black and gold. But, yeah. For what happened Saturday, "nice" will work.

BENZ • B2



CHRISTOPHER HORNER | TRIBLIVE

New Pirates Hall of Famers (from left) Jim Leyland, Manny Sanguillen and Barry Bonds pose for a photo after the induction ceremony Saturday at PNC Park.

Leyland revels in joining star pupil

Entering Pirates Hall of Fame with Bonds holds extra meaning for longtime manager

BY KEVIN GORMAN

Being inducted into the Pittsburgh Pirates Hall of Fame with Barry Bonds made it "extra special" for Jim Leyland, even if their roles were reversed Saturday at PNC Park. Where the brash Bonds was humbled by the honor, the low-key Leyland got to gloat about another accolade after the former Pirates manager

INSIDE

» Pirates stumble vs. Reds; Stratton hurt in collision **B2**
was enshrined last month into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. "I will say this — and I guess I'm bragging: I do sit at home once in a while at night and say, 'Holy (crap)! You're in the Hall of Fame,'" Leyland said. "That's unbelievable. ... I have a great appreciation for it. I never took my players for granted. I don't take this award for granted. But it's awful special to end up in Cooperstown."

PIRATES HOF • B2

COLLEGE FOOTBALL 2024



ABOVE: GETTY IMAGES; BELL: CHRISTOPHER HORNER | TRIBLIVE

POWER MOVE

Realignment, NIL drastically alter framework of college football

BY JERRY DiPAOLA

Before kickoff next Saturday when Pitt opens its 2024 season against Kent State, tradition will prevail, and players — properly dressed in shirt and tie — will follow coach Pat Narduzzi into Acrisure Stadium. Inside, more memories will be made over the course of the season, perhaps similar to M.J. Devonshire's game-winning pick-6 against West Virginia in 2022 and Ryan Lewis' end-zone interception that nailed down a victory against Penn State in 2016. There will be disappoint-

ments, too, but all of it — good and bad — is what brings fans on both sides of stadiums from all over the U.S. back for more year after year, chasing the same thrills that attracted them to college football in the first place. Yet college football doesn't look the same. For example: • The ACC used to be a tidy, little league of seven South Atlantic schools when it was founded in 1953, but it has expanded from coast to coast into a 17-team conglomeration (18 for basketball). While Florida State

REALIGNMENT • B4

The new Power 4

A look at the Power 4 college football conferences for the 2024 season. Teams in bold are new to that conference.

ACC (17 teams)

Boston College, **Cal**, Clemson, Duke, Florida State, Georgia Tech, Louisville, Miami, North Carolina, NC State, Pitt, **SMU**, Stanford, Syracuse, Virginia, Virginia Tech, Wake Forest

Big Ten (18 teams)

Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Michigan State, Minnesota, Nebraska, Northwestern, Ohio State, **Oregon**, Penn State, Purdue, Rutgers, **UCLA**, **USC**, **Washington**, Wisconsin

Big 12 (16 teams)

Arizona, **Arizona State**, Baylor, BYU, Cincinnati, **Colorado**, Houston, Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, Oklahoma State, TCU, Texas Tech, UCF, **Utah**, West Virginia

SEC (16 teams)

Alabama, Arkansas, Auburn, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, LSU, Mississippi State, Missouri, **Oklahoma**, Ole Miss, South Carolina, Tennessee, **Texas**, Texas A&M, Vanderbilt

Pitt's fortunes hinge on new offense

Panthers to rely on coordinator Bell's hurry-up, no-huddle attack

BY JERRY DiPAOLA

When Pat Narduzzi spoke to his team one day early in training camp, he made the 2024 season personal for his players. "I told the guys ... 'This is team 135. This is the 135th edition of Pitt football. The 2024 team will be one team — it's you. What are you going to do?' " Yes, Pitt

football history goes all the way back to 1890, when the school was called Western University of Pennsylvania for the next 18 years. You think college football has changed in the past five years? At the end of the 1800s, Pitt did not have a coach in four seasons, played only two games in 1894 and lined up

KADE BELL



» ACC breakdown **B4**

against East End Gymnastics, Indiana State Teachers College and the Sewickley AC. Just guessing, there probably was no Panther Pitt. No one sang "Sweet Caroline." Thanks to many factors, Narduzzi has a tougher job

PITT • B4



STEELERS QUARTERBACK RUSSELL WILSON WENT 2 OF 2 FOR 26 YARDS ON HIS ONLY DRIVE SATURDAY AGAINST THE LIONS.

LIONS 24, STEELERS 17

Steelers offense revs up

Wilson, Fields direct TD drives in 1st quarter as team wraps up preseason with loss

BY JOE RUTTER

DETROIT — Like a battery in need of some juice, the Pittsburgh Steelers offense got the recharge it had sought for much of the preseason Saturday afternoon. A trip to the Motor City cured some of the ills that had beset the first-team unit the first two weeks. No longer looking like a clunker off the used-car lot, the Steelers hummed with the efficiency of a BMW as Russell Wilson and Justin Fields directed first-quarter touchdown drives in a 24-17 loss to the Detroit Lions at Ford Field. Starting at quarterback for the second game in a row, Wilson led the Steelers on a five-play, 60-yard march that resulted in the first points by the first-team offense this preseason. His exit after that initial series all but cemented Wilson as the starter when the Steelers open the season Sept. 8 in Atlanta. Fields took over and immediately guided the Steelers to a second touchdown — the scores transpiring before nine minutes had elapsed from the clock — to provide a 14-0 lead. "They both moved the ball, they won possession downs and they were able to put the ball in the end zone," coach Mike Tomlin said, "things we hadn't done to this point sufficiently enough in the preseason." Under Wilson, the Steelers generated two first downs — and zero points — in five possessions last week against Buffalo. This time, it took only five plays — and one long completion to George Pickens — to end that drought.



UP NEXT: STEELERS at FALCONS 1 p.m. Sept. 8

STEELERS • B4

Things get ugly for Reds in loss to Reds

Stratton injured after crashing into backstop; Cincy whites Woodford

BY JUSTIN GUERRIERO

A sellout crowd of 38,137 packed PNC Park Saturday to watch the Pittsburgh Pirates take on the Cincinnati Reds after the club inducted Barry Bonds, Jim Leyland and Manny Sanguillen into their Hall of Fame.

In what ended as a 10-2 beat-down by the Reds, the pregame Hall of Fame festivities undoubtedly proved to be the highlight of the day for the Pirates and their fans.

With things well out of reach, first baseman Rowdy Tellez was inserted on the mound to pitch the top of the ninth.

There were also scarier scenes, namely reliever Hunter Stratton getting carted off the field in the fourth inning after a violent collision into an unpadded, stone section of the backstop.

After the game, the Pirates (61-68) announced Stratton suffered a left knee patella tendon rupture and was being examined by team doctors.

“He’s getting an MRI right now, but it did not look good,” manager Derek Shelton said after the loss. “I would say this is going to be significant time (out).”

Jake Woodford started for the Pirates and for the fourth straight game took a loss, allowing eight runs (seven earned) on seven hits, walking and striking out three before Stratton replaced him with an out in the top of the fourth.

Woodford (0-6, 8.01 ERA) walked Elly De La Cruz and Tyler Stephenson, both of whom came around to score, as the Reds put up four runs in the first inning.

Tellez produced the only offense on the night for the Pirates, hitting his 11th homer of the year, a two-run shot in the second that made the score 4-2.

Tellez’s homer bounced into the Allegheny River, the 80th such occurrence in PNC Park history.

Stratton’s injury came with runners on second and third, on the fourth pitch against Stephenson, the first batter he faced.

After a wild pitch, Jonathan India broke for home and slid in safely, beating a throw from

REDS 10, PIRATES 2												
Cincinnati	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg.					
India 2b	5	2	2	0	0	0	.250					
E.De La Cruz ss	4	3	3	2	1	0	.264					
Stephenson c	3	1	1	1	1	0	.254					
Maile c	1	0	0	0	0	0	.157					
Friedl cf	5	1	2	1	0	0	.228					
Steer lf	3	1	1	2	1	0	.235					
Fairchild lf	0	0	0	0	0	0	.215					
France 1b	3	0	0	1	0	2	.239					
Smith dh	4	1	1	0	0	2	.143					
Espinal 3b	4	0	1	0	0	0	.262					
Benson rf	4	1	1	1	0	3	.192					
Totals	36	10	12	8	3	7						
Pirates	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg.					
Kiner-Falefa 2b	3	0	1	0	0	0	.222					
Williams 2b	1	0	0	0	0	1	.209					
Reynolds dh	4	0	0	0	0	1	.279					
Joe lb	0	0	0	0	0	0	.230					
O.Cruz ss	4	0	1	0	0	0	.263					
Bart c	3	1	0	0	1	0	.273					
Tellez 1b-p	4	1	1	2	0	1	.249					
B.De La Cruz rf	3	0	0	0	0	1	.230					
McKinney lf	3	0	0	0	0	2	.231					
Triolo 3b	3	0	0	0	0	0	.197					
Bae cf	2	0	0	0	1	1	.186					
Totals	30	2	3	2	2	6						

Cincinnati 400 402 000 - 10 12 1
Pirates 020 000 000 - 2 3 2

E—India (3), Stratton (2), B.De La Cruz (3).
LOB—Cincinnati 3, Pirates 3. 2B—Steer (30), Friedl (4), Smith (1), E.De La Cruz (29), O.Cruz (35).
HR—Tellez (11), off Aquilar. RBIs—Steer (35).
Steer 2 (81), France (7), Benson (38), E.De La Cruz 2 (58), Stephenson (52), Tellez 2 (44). SB—E.De La Cruz (61), Steer (22), SF—France. Runners left in scoring position—Cincinnati 1 (France); Pirates 1 (Tellez). RISP—Cincinnati 6 for 8; Pirates 0 for 3. Runners moved up—Espinal, Bart. GDP—India, Maile, O.Cruz. DP—Cincinnati 1 (E.De La Cruz, France); Pirates 2 (O.Cruz, Williams, Tellez; O.Cruz, Joe).

Cincinnati IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA
Aquilar, W, 1-0 6 3 2 2 2 4 91 3.60
Kelly, S, 1-1 3 0 0 0 0 2 38 0.00
Pirates IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA
Woodford, L, 0-4 3 1/3 7 8 7 3 74 6.95
Stratton 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 4 3.58
Beeks 1 1/3 0 0 0 0 2 20 0.96
Heller 2 3 2 2 0 1 28 10.32
Nicolas 1 1 0 0 0 1 14 2.72
Tellez 1 1 0 0 0 0 9 0.00

Stratton pitched to 0 batters in the 4th Inherited runners—scored—Stratton 2-2. WP—Stratton. Umpires—Home, Nate Tomlinson; First, David Rackley; Second, Jonathan Pahr; Third, Chris Segal. T—2:28. A—38,137 (38,753).

catcher Joey Bart to Stratton. Stratton did not catch the toss, however, with the ball instead rolling all the way into the dirt section of the backstop.

Reading the play, De La Cruz, who began on second base, accelerated for home, at which point Stratton awkwardly fell into the wall while trying to retrieve the ball.

He immediately went down in visible pain and remained on the ground, attended to by Pirates medical officials before a cart arrived to take him off the field. Jalen Beeks finished the frame.

The Reds added a pair of runs in the sixth off Ben Heller, partially thanks to a fielding error by Bryan De La Cruz in right field.

Bryan De La Cruz committed a miscue on an India single and made several other ill-advised throws back into the infield that allowed Reds runners to advance.

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Bonds, Leyland get emotional

PIRATES HOF · FROM B1

From the back of the press conference room at PNC Park, Bonds interrupted by shouting for Leyland to gloat about being one of 23 managers in the Hall of Fame. Ironically, it’s a museum from which Bonds, baseball’s all-time home runs leader, has been excluded.

So Leyland reveled in being reunited with and inducted alongside Bonds, whom he called “the best baseball player I ever managed.” While Leyland became legendary for berating Bonds at spring training in 1991, the two talked about how their relationship has transcended time.

“We’re back together again,” Leyland said. “I’ve often said sometimes, 38 years of friendship gets disrupted by a two-minute argument.”

Where the third member of their Hall of Fame class, catcher Manny Sanguillen, accepted his honor with enthusiasm, Bonds’ and Leyland’s voices cracked as they extended their thanks to the Pirates, the City of Pittsburgh and its fans.

Bonds talked about baseball’s Black icons dying, from his father, Bobby, and godfather, Willie Mays, to Willie McCovey, Joe Morgan and Hank Aaron, whose career home runs record he

broke. Leyland expressed his gratitude for the Pirates “believing in a no-name minor-league manager” and quipped that his hiring in 1986 inspired headlines of “Jim Who?”

“We didn’t know anything about Jim Leyland, and he didn’t know anything about us,” said Bonds, who made his major-league debut in ’86. “When he first came in, he simplified everything. His expectations weren’t high. Just demanded respect and for us to do our job.”

Leyland inherited a 104-loss team and won 85 games two years later, then three consecutive NL East Division titles from 1990-92 as Bonds matured into a superstar who won two NL MVP awards and three Gold Gloves with the Pirates before leaving for the San Francisco Giants.

“I was so happy because, hey, we grew up together,” Leyland said. “He was a rookie player, I was a rookie manager. So we suffered some time to learn the game up here at this level, to learn what it took to play at this level. I needed to find out what it took to manage at this level. But we were always together.”

“Pittsburgh is a funny place. They supported us so much. I’m so grateful for (the fans). I can remember our

first year here, it was corny, actually. If we ran a ball out, we got a standing ovation because things had not been very good here for a while. I took to this place and, hopefully, some of the people took to me.

“They got to watch one of the greatest players to ever play this game. I don’t get into who’s the greatest. I don’t want to get into any controversy. But you can make an argument that they got to watch one of the top three, five players of all time play. That’s pretty special.”

So entering the Pirates Hall of Fame together was extra special, even if the fact that Leyland is enshrined in Cooperstown and Bonds isn’t doesn’t sit well with either of them.

In his acceptance speech, Bonds alluded to his exclusion. After falling short of the necessary 75% vote by the Baseball Writers Association of America, he’s eligible for consideration at the December 2025 meeting of the Hall’s Contemporary Baseball Player Committee.

“I just hope my mom is still around if anything else comes along in my life,” Bonds said. “Big ‘if’ — I hope my mom is alive to see it.”

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Honor washes away bad times for 1 night

BENZ · FROM B1

It’s nice that the organization’s best player of the last 45 years came back to be enshrined. It’s nice that, for the first time in a decade, the two-time MVP was applauded by the fans and acknowledged as the franchise icon that he is. It’s nice that his face is on a plaque in the outfield at PNC Park as a permanent memory of his days dominating the National League as a Pirate instead of the angst associated with the memories of his departure.

It would’ve been even nicer if Bonds had never left. Fantasies usually are ... nice.

“No question he was a great player here. With the accomplishments, celebrating that portion of his career committed to Pittsburgh seemed appropriate,” Pirates chairman Bob Nutting told TribLive. “He’s a fantastic Pirate and becoming a great ambassador for the game.”

Listening to Bonds talk Saturday, it’s almost like there were never any bad times to remember at all.

He gushed about his connection to the city and the Pirates for drafting him. His first apartment on Mt. Washington. His neighbors. The fact that his kids were born at Magee-Women’s Hospital. His Pirates teammates and manager Jim Leyland, who was also inducted Saturday.

He even waxed poetic about Pittsburgh fans when they did get on him.



CHRISTOPHER HORNER | TRIBLIVE

Barry Bonds gives his Pirates Hall of Fame induction speech on Saturday.

“They booed us when we needed it. We were always grateful for that,” Bonds said. “And you cheered us when we needed your help. And we always appreciated that, too. We respected that. And I will always remember that about Pittsburgh fans.”

Of course, there were more complexities to Bonds’ stint here than just those fond memories.

On Saturday, though, those things were forgotten for Bonds. Well, maybe not forgotten, but not

important. Not close to as important as knowing that his Pirates career was being immortalized in the same way as Roberto Clemente’s, Willie Stargell’s and Dave Parker’s.

Now, 32 years removed from the last time Bonds patrolled left field at Three Rivers Stadium, those memories need a little help to stay alive. Bonds’ enshrinement should help in that regard.

“They got to see one of the greatest players to ever play this game,” Leyland said of Pirates fans who were around when Bonds was in Pittsburgh. “It was an honor to sit back after 33 years managing and think I got to manage one of the greatest to play this game. That’s something awfully special.”

As was getting to see Bonds and Pittsburgh reconnect.

Though Leyland and two-time World Series champion Manny Sanguillen also were inducted, Saturday was about Bonds and his fans who once cheered for him before he headed off to San Francisco, where so many of his personal records were written.

Bonds left after the 1992 NLCS heartbreak. He often came back to boos as a Giant.

Saturday, it was all cheers. It was nice.

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BASEBALL

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	74	54	.578	—
Atlanta	69	59	.539	5
New York	67	62	.519	7.5
Washington	58	71	.450	16.5
Miami	46	83	.357	28.5

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	75	54	.581	—
Chicago	66	65	.500	10.5
St. Louis	65	65	.496	11
Cincinnati	63	67	.485	12.5
Pirates	61	68	.473	14

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	77	52	.597	—
Arizona	74	56	.569	3.5
San Diego	73	57	.562	4.5
San Francisco	66	65	.504	12
Colorado	48	82	.369	29.5

American League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	76	54	.585	—
Baltimore	76	55	.580	.5
Boston	67	61	.523	8
Tampa Bay	64	64	.500	14
Toronto	62	68	.477	11

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	73	55	.570	—
Kansas City	72	56	.563	1
Minnesota	72	57	.558	1.5
Detroit	63	66	.488	10.5
Chicago	31	98	.240	42.5

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	69	60	.535	—
Seattle	65	65	.500	4.5
Texas	60	69	.465	9
Oakland	55	75	.423	14.5
Los Angeles	54	76	.415	15.5

RESULTS/SCHEDULE

Saturday's games

Cincinnati 10, Pirates 2
Chicago Cubs 14, Miami 2
Washington at Atlanta (n)
N.Y. Mets at San Diego (n)

American League

Toronto 3, L.A. Angels 1
Baltimore 3, Houston 2
Detroit at Chicago White Sox (n)
Texas at Cleveland (n)

Interleague

Colorado 9, N.Y. Yankees 2
Milwaukee 9, Oakland 5
Arizona 4, Boston 1
San Francisco 4, Seattle 3
Minnesota 6, St. Louis 0
Philadelphia at Kansas City (n)
Tampa Bay at L.A. Dodgers (n)

Today's games

National League
Washington (Herz 2-6) at Atlanta (López 7-4), 12:05 p.m.

• Cincinnati (Spies 4-5) at Pirates (Ortiz 5-4), 1:35 p.m.

• Chicago Cubs (Assad 6-3) at Miami (Oller 0-1), 1:40 p.m.

• N.Y. Mets (Quintana 6-9) at San Diego (Pérez 3-5), 4:10 p.m.

Interleague

• L.A. Angels (Anderson 10-11) at Toronto (Gausman 11-9), 1:37 p.m.

• Texas (Bradford 4-1) at Cleveland (Boyd 0-0), 1:40 p.m.

• Detroit (TBD) at Chicago White Sox (Cannon 2-7), 2:10 p.m.

• Houston (Kikuchi 6-9) at Baltimore (Kremer 6-9), 7:10 p.m.

Interleague

• Arizona (Kelly 3-0) at Boston (Houck 8-8), 1:35 p.m.

• Colorado (Gomber 4-8) at N.Y. Yankees (Stronman 8-6), 1:35 p.m.

• Philadelphia (TBD) at Kansas City (Lugo 14-7), 2:10 p.m.

• St. Louis (Feddle 1-1), 2:10 p.m.

• Milwaukee (Montas 6-8) at Oakland (Estes 5-6), 4:07 p.m.

• San Francisco (Ray 3-2) at Seattle (Woo 5-2), 4:10 p.m.

• Tampa Bay (Baz 1-2) at L.A. Dodgers (Stone 11-5), 4:10 p.m.

Monday's games

National League
Chicago Cubs at Pirates, 6:40 p.m.
San Diego at St. Louis, 7:45 p.m.
Miami at Colorado, 8:40 p.m.

American League

Kansas City at Cleveland, 1:10 p.m., 1st game
Toronto at Boston, 2:05 p.m., 1st game
Kansas City at Cleveland, 6:40 p.m., 2nd game
Toronto at Boston, 7:10 p.m., 2nd game
Detroit at Chicago White Sox, 8:10 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Seattle, 9:40 p.m.

Interleague

Houston at Philadelphia, 6:40 p.m.
N.Y. Yankees at Washington, 6:45 p.m.
Atlanta at Minnesota, 7:40 p.m.

BASKETBALL

WNBA

RESULTS/SCHEDULE

Saturday's games
Connecticut 72, New York 64
Minnesota 90, Indiana 80

Today's games

Las Vegas at Chicago, 12 p.m.
Los Angeles at Dallas, 4 p.m.

GOLF

SATURDAY'S SCORES

PGA TOUR
BMW Championship — Third round
Keegan Bradley..... 66-68-70-204 -12
Adam Scott..... 68-63-74-205 -11
Ludvig Aberg..... 72-63-71-206 -10
Alex Noren..... 68-68-70-206 -10

Wyndham Clark..... 72-68-69-209 -7
Xander Schauffele..... 69-73-67-209 -7
Si Woo Kim..... 69-70-71-210 -6
Taylor Pendrith..... 72-65-73-210 -6
Patrick Cantlay..... 71-68-72-211 -5
Corey Connors..... 68-70-73-211 -5
Nick Dunlap..... 69-72-70-211 -5
Tommy Fleetwood..... 72-69-70-211 -5
Russell Henley..... 70-71-70-211 -5
Tom Hoge..... 72-68-71-211 -5
Sungjae Im..... 68-70-73-211 -5
Rory McIlroy..... 70-71-70-211 -5
Sepp Straka..... 72-70-69-211 -5
Byeong Hun An..... 72-69-71-212 -4
Sam Burns..... 73-68-71-212 -4
Brian Harman..... 72-69-71-212 -4
Chris Kirk..... 73-68-71-212 -4
Shane Lowry..... 75-67-70-212 -4
Will Zalatoris..... 71-69-72-212 -4
Billy Horschel..... 71-74-68-213 -3
Viktor Hovland..... 71-71-71-213 -3
Collin Morikawa..... 70-70-73-213 -3
Cameron Davis

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL NOTEBOOK

Greensburg Central Catholic's Crosby accounts for 6 TDs

by BILL BECKNER JR.

Samir Crosby had an impressive performance in a wild opener for Greensburg Central Catholic at Shady Side Academy. The Centurions rallied to win 46-40 as the junior quarterback accounted for six touchdowns. GCC trailed 32-10 in the second quarter before Crosby took command and led a comeback. He scored four rushing touchdowns, one on a 60-yard dash, and threw for two more, both to Landon Honick.

Crosby rushed for 341 yards on 21 carries and completed 7 of 12 passes for 136 yards. He ran for 262 yards in the second half. Serra Catholic transfer Jerry Davis kicked a 22-yard field goal for the Centurions.

400 game

Norwin became just the sixth Westmoreland County football program to reach 400 wins when the Knights knocked off Penn-Trafford, 26-14, on Friday night in North Huntingdon. They join five teams that also

won their season openers in Jeannette (778), Greensburg Salem (712), Monessen (686), Latrobe (476) and Ligonier Valley (466). The Knights are 400-604-36 all time. They hadn't won their season opener since 2018.

For kicks

Southmoreland kicker Jake Kaylor etched his name into the program record book Friday when he kicked a 50-yard field goal in the Scotties' 52-20 win over Valley at Russ Grimm Field.

According to Scotties historian Paul Brittain, the kick broke the 50-year-old mark of 48 yards set by Dave Trout in 1974 against Mt. Pleasant.

Defense strong

Latrobe could be one of the top defensive teams in 5A this season, and the Wildcats are off to a rousing start. They forced six turnovers in Friday's 41-0 win over Connellsville. Four of them were interceptions to go with a fumble and a muffed punt. Safety John Wetzell, a

Marshall commit, picked off a pass and took it in for a 25-yard touchdown to open the scoring. Alex Tatsch, the Wildcats' coveted Penn State commit, scored on a 51-yard fake punt.

Release the Hounds

Monessen whipped Charleroi, 59-12, for its first season-opening win since 2018. TyVaughn Kershaw scored five touchdowns — three rushing and two on kick returns.

Start me up

Ligonier Valley is used to

winning its first game of the season. The Rams, who beat Derry, 20-7, are 16-5 in season-opening games under veteran coach Roger Beitel. That includes a 9-1 mark over the last 10 years.

Hard pass

It's rare for Jeannette to pass for more yards than it runs for, but the Jayhawks threw for 290 in a win over Mt. Pleasant and rushed for 80.

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WPIAL football rankings

CLASS 6A

Team	Rec	Prv
1. North Allegheny	1-0	1
2. Central Catholic	0-1	2
3. Norwin	1-0	5
4. Canon-McMillan	0-1	4
5. Seneca Valley	0-1	5

Out: none

CLASS 5A

Team	Rec	Prv
1. Peters Township	1-0	1
2. Pine-Richland	1-0	2
3. Upper St. Clair	1-0	5
4. Woodland Hills	0-1	3
5. Penn Hills	0-1	4

Out: none

CLASS 4A

Team	Rec	Prv
1. Aliquippa	0-0	1
2. Montour	1-0	2
3. Mars	1-0	3
4. McKeesport	0-1	4
5. Thomas Jefferson	1-0	5

Out: none

CLASS 3A

Team	Rec	Prv
1. Central Valley	0-1	1
2. Imani Christian	1-0	2
3. Avonworth	1-0	3
4. Elizabeth Forward	0-1	4
5. North Catholic	0-1	5

Out: none

CLASS 2A

Team	Rec	Prv
1. Washington	1-0	2
2. Steel Valley	0-1	1
3. South Park	1-0	3
4. Ellwood City	1-0	4
5. Seton LaSalle	1-0	5

Out: none

CLASS A

Team	Rec	Prv
1. Fort Cherry	1-0	1
2. Clairton	1-0	2
3. South Side	1-0	3
4. Neshannock	1-0	4
5. Bishop Canevin	0-0	5

Out: none



CHAZ PALLA | TRIBLIVE

Norwin's Tristyn Tavares

KICK SIX IN WEEK ZERO

by CHRIS HARLAN

The spread offense. The no-huddle. The Gatorade shower. High school football has borrowed plenty of trends from the college and pro ranks, but the NFL's new kickoff format is one that traditionalists hope never makes its way to Friday nights. They say a long kickoff return nowadays is a rare thing of beauty.

"I think it's one of the most exciting things in the game," Kiski Area coach Sam Albert said. "Because they're so hard to get, and when you do, it's just excitement."

Albert would know. Kiski Area junior Aven Shirley returned the opening kickoff 80 yards for a touchdown Friday, sparking the team to a 42-7 win over Knoch. Shirley's kick-return touchdown, which the

junior predicted before the game, was one of six scored by WPIAL players in Week Zero.

The longest was a 99-yard kickoff return by Woodland Hills' Scoop Smith, who flashed the speed as a reigning WPIAL 100-meter dash champion.

Southmoreland's Cameron Phillips returned a kickoff 84 yards for a touchdown, New Brighton's Michael Veon scored on a 59-yarder, Waynesburg's Teagan Crouse had an 89-yarder and Hopewell's Brody Rock took one back 85 yards to the end zone.

"For us, it totally changed the momentum of the whole game," Southmoreland coach Tim Bukowski said. "When he ran that kick back, it sparked us and we took control of the whole game."

The NFL this season unveiled a new system called the Dynamic Kickoff Rule meant to reduce the number of touchbacks while maintaining player safety. It looks little like the kickoffs seen on high school fields.

"I get why they did it," Bukowski said, "but I'm still a football traditionalist. I'd prefer it stay the same at the high school level."

Kiski Area had started slow in its scrimmage a week earlier, so Albert was encouraging his team to start fast Friday. That was when Shirley spoke up.

"He said, 'I'm going to run the kickoff back,'" Albert said. "I was like, 'All right, I'll take that.' Sure enough, he took it to the house. We were going crazy. What a way to start the season."

New Brighton snaps streak

As they'd done many times in the past two seasons, the New Brighton players arrived at the school Saturday still recovering from a hard-fought game the



LOUIS B. RUEDIGER | TRIBLIVE

Kiski Area's Aven Shirley (left) returned the opening kick for a touchdown Friday, one of six kick-return scores in Week Zero.

night before. But first-year coach John Macuga said they saw this week how much better it feels after a win than a loss.

"There were a lot of guys sore in the locker room today, but they came in on a high note," Macuga said after New Brighton won its first game in more than two years.

The Lions defeated Shenango, 9-7, in their Week Zero opener to snap a streak of 21 straight losses. The win was the team's first triumph since a 21-20 playoff victory over Washington on Nov. 5, 2021. The Lions lost in the next round of the playoffs that year before going 0-10 in 2022 and '23.

New Brighton scored all nine of its points in the first quarter Friday — on a safety and a kickoff return — and then held on defensively.

"It was pure excitement from the time the clock said zero," Macuga said. "They were hooting and hollering. It was a really good feeling for them."

Running a 300-yard dash

California's Lee Qualk was best known as a standout track athlete and WPIAL long jump champion, but he safely can be called a multi-sport star. The senior running back carried the ball 37 times for 372 yards and six touchdowns Friday in a win over Serra Catholic.

His yardage was the most by a WPIAL rusher in Week Zero.

"He's one of those kids you hopefully get every couple of years," California coach Ed Woods said. "He's just a standout athlete, has a really good work ethic, is very strong for his size and, obviously, he can fly."

Qualk won the long jump title at the WPIAL 2A track championships last spring with a leap of

22 feet, 2½ inches. He also placed seventh in the 100 meters at 11.24 seconds. As a junior on the football field, Qualk rushed for 560 yards on 44 carries and scored 14 touchdowns.

Dashing debut for some

Sixteen first-year head coaches in the WPIAL and City League made their debut this weekend with close to half of them having a victorious night.

The group combined went 7-9 with wins by Allderdice's Mark Matson, Blackhawk's Jack Wickline, Hopewell's Matt Mottes, New Brighton's John Macuga, New Castle's Fred Mozzocio, Neshannock's Mike Bongiveno and South Fayette's Marty Spieler.

Two more coaches could join the list next week. Aliquippa's Vashawn Patrick and Springdale's Chad Walsh didn't have games in Week Zero.

Points on the board

Count the scoreboard operators among those who got tested in Week Zero.

There were seven games where the teams combined for 75 points or more. That was up from last year when there were only three. The highest-scoring game was New Castle's 49-47 victory over General McLane for 96 combined points.

The others were California over Serra Catholic, 62-26; Greensburg Central Catholic over Shady Side Academy, 46-40; Mars over Boone (Fla.), 47-35; Neshannock over Mohawk, 42-37; Armstrong over Highlands, 38-37; and Thomas Jefferson over Baldwin, 63-12.

Chris Harlan is a TribLive staff writer. He can be reached at charlan@triblive.com.

Week Zero football leaders

PASSING

310, Cedric Mack, East Allegheny (18 of 28)
305, Bobby Fadden, Mohawk (20 of 40)
289, Nolan DiLucia, Peters Township (16 of 21)
278, Ryan Cortes, South Allegheny (15 of 25)
273, Jaydon Oliver, Armstrong (18 of 25)
262, Jackson Keranko, Charleroi (15 of 29)
248, Drew Wehorsky, South Fayette (18 of 22)
246, Jake Fleischer, Deer Lakes (9 of 12)
244, Tanner Pfeuffer, Bethel Park (13 of 20)
239, Menage Lucas, Highlands (8 of 21)
231, Trey Hopper, Montour (12 of 21)
230, Colt Sprankle, Knoch (29 of 43)
205, Steven Rutherford, Central Valley (7 of 19)
201, Houston Guseman, Jeff.-Morgan (10 of 16)
194, Elvis Koutsakis, Gateway (15 of 25)
189, Chase Lemke, Franklin Regional (6 of 15)
188, Devonte Dean, Carlynton (9 of 16)
183, Antonio Perkins, Valley (16 of 26)
181, Ty Jansma, Canon-McMillan (23 of 36)
176, Denis Hawkins, Monessen (10 of 11)
176, Stephen Knally, Blackhawk (10 of 12)
169, Alec Teff, Butler (20 of 40)
165, Raidon Kuroda, Yough (9 of 15)
164, Alexander Clawson, Apollo-Ridge (10 of 15)
162, Pat Smith, Mt. Lebanon (18 of 25)
151, Kymone Brown, Jeannette (7 of 8)

RUSHING

372, Lee Qualk, California
341, Samir Crosby, Greensburg CC
214, John Sciuilli, Carlynton
207, Cam Epps, South Allegheny
192, Menage Lucas, Highlands
182, Landon Kucic, Kiski Area
174, Drew Wehorsky, South Fayette
174, Tasso Whipple, Penn-Trafford
171, Eric Doerue, South Park
171, Kyle Dupill, Franklin Regional
169, Tyvaughn Kershaw, Monessen
157, Amos Glenn, Freeport
144, Charlie Nigut, Elizabeth Forward
141, Ben Hays, Bentworth
139, Elijah Palmer-McCane, Ellwood City
132, Brayden McCarthy, Blackhawk
132, John Woodward, Jefferson-Morgan
131, Nasir Scott, Allderdice
128, John Jablunovsky, Ligonier Valley

RECEIVING

195, Drew Cook, South Allegheny (7 rec.)
190, Jayce Powell, Jeannette (6 rec.)
174, Nick McCullough, Peters Township (5 rec.)
163, Zack Grant, Deer Lakes (6 rec.)
163, Blake Logan, Mohawk (5 rec.)
158, De'reon Washington, Serra Catholic (8 rec.)
130, Kyan Kline, Armstrong (7 rec.)
109, Caleb Patton, Washington (3 rec.)
108, Rodney Johnson, Monessen (4 rec.)
107, Kacy Carter, Gateway (3 rec.)
106, Jahmar Wright, Highlands (3 rec.)
103, Deakyn Dehoet, Jefferson-Morgan (4 rec.)
103, Dan Nusida, Charleroi (8 rec.)
101, Preston Simko, Butler (10 rec.)

NORWIN 2, FRANKLIN REGIONAL 0

Knights show energy in opening win

Defending WPIAL soccer champion shuts out FR

by BILL BECKNER JR.

Norwin continues to row in the right direction.

After senior forward Daniel Maddock scored the boys soccer team's first goal of the season, several Knights plopped their backsides on the ground along the sideline, lined up like they were sitting in a boat, and began to row in unison for a few seconds.

"We did it in practice just joking around within the team," Maddock said. "We said it would be funny to do it in a game. When I scored, we just kind of did it."

Maddock added a second impromptu celebration with a backflip after his second goal as Norwin blanked Franklin Regional, 2-0, on Saturday afternoon at Norwin Knights Stadium.

"Adrenaline kind of took over," Maddock said. "I don't know what I would have done (for a third goal)."

Both goals for defending WPIAL 4A champion Norwin (1-0) came in the second half of the season opener after Class 3A Franklin Regional (0-1) tilted the field in the first 40 minutes.

Norwin is ranked No. 1 in 4A, Franklin Regional is No. 2 in 3A.

Norwin coach Scott Schuchert is all for the goal celebrations, as long as they are not derogatory toward opponents.

"That's from the English Premier League," Schuchert said. "I loved it. Every goal we score is like a World Cup goal to us."

Franklin Regional outshot Norwin, 9-5, with Knights' first-year senior goalkeeper Ryan Dooen making seven saves.

"I hope I can fill half the shoes of Anthony (Scalise)," Dooen said of last year's standout goalie who graduated. "Today showed that we have a strong defensive core, from Daniel to the back four."

After limited opportunities in the first half, Norwin finally found some spacing, with Maddock pulling ahead on a breakaway for a goal in the 55th minute.

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Steele sparks Jayhawks boys soccer team to victory

McAlister Steele had a goal and an assist to lead Jeannette to a 3-1 season-opening victory over the hosts at the Charters-Houston boys soccer tournament Saturday. Stone Markham and Zion Harper also scored for the Vikings.

Penn-Trafford 9, Hempfield 1 — J.J. Porter had three goals as Penn-Trafford (1-0) beat Hempfield (0-1) in non-section play.

Southmoreland 4, South Allegheny 0 — Liam Smith, Ethan Kenney, Landon Delara and Hunter Ryan scored to lift Southmoreland (1-0) past South Allegheny in the tournament hosted by the Gladiators.

Girls soccer

Latrobe 2, Avonworth 2 — Annalyse Bauer and Emerson Shine scored

as Mt. Pleasant (1-0) beat Connellsville (0-1). Tyler Kurtz, Landon Stuart and Aydan Gross also scored for the Vikings.

Penn-Trafford 9, Hempfield 1 — J.J. Porter had three goals as Penn-Trafford (1-0) beat Hempfield (0-1) in non-section play.

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Girls soccer

Latrobe 2, Avonworth 2 — Annalyse Bauer and Emerson Shine scored

for Latrobe (0-0-1) at the Moe Rosensteel Memorial Classic at Ringgold. Fiona Mahan scored twice for Avonworth (0-0-1).

Mt. Pleasant 6, Knoch 0 — Morgan Gesinski and Rylin Bugosh scored two goals apiece to power Mt. Pleasant (2-0) past Knoch (0-2) at the Mars tournament. Maddie Barick and Carly Kapr also scored for the Vikings.

Thomas Jefferson 3, Franklin Regional 1 — Olivia Della Lucia, Sami Maglicco and Cece Wessel scored for Thomas Jefferson (1-0) in its win over Franklin Regional (0-1) at the Moe Rosensteel Memorial Tournament at Ringgold.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL 2024

Panthers working to master new system

PITT · FROM B1

this year than Anson F. Harrold, Pitt's first coach, had in 1893 when his team was 1-4 and scored a total of 14 points. Like Harrold, who coached only one season, Narduzzi needs to improve matters on the offensive side of the ball.

To that end, he fired 58-year-old offensive coordinator Frank Cignetti Jr. the day after the 2023 season ended, hired 31-year-old Kade Bell to replace him with a hurry-up, no-huddle offense and hit the transfer portal hard. A total of 15 Pitt players attended classes at another institution of higher learning last year, including wide receivers Censere Lee and Poppi Williams and running back Desmond Reid, all of whom thrived in Bell's offense at Western Carolina against FCS opposition.

The first test will be at noon Saturday when Pitt meets Kent State of the Mid-American Conference at Acrisure Stadium.

After a slow start in the first scrimmage two weeks ago, reports from practice have been nothing but glowing on how the fast pace is designed to catch the defense napping, how the football is snapped 15 seconds or so after the end of the previous play and how Bell has a knack for scheming his playmakers open.

"Are people ready for this here?" longtime ACC play-by-play man Wes Durham said when the ACC Network visited camp.

Durham knows Bell's dad, Kerwin Bell, a former NFL quar-

terback and currently the head coach at Western Carolina.

"I knew what Kerwin had done at Valdosta State (where he won a Division II national championship with his son calling plays in 2018)," Durham said. "Kerwin played in those Florida days where they were breaking ground with the way they threw the ball. Kade has taken all of that and now expanded it. You can tell by the lineups and the formations that there is some NFL influence on this. Bell likes toys, and he has toys here."

But Bell needs to make the toys work. Aside from the three transfers, Bell can design plays for veterans at running back (Rodney Hammond), wide receiver (Konata Mumpfield and Daejon Reynolds) and tight end (Gavin Bartholomew). If the offensive line remains healthy, Bell has a better chance to succeed.

One positive: Delay of game penalties have been eliminated. Offensive left tackle Branson



Pitt running back Rodney Hammond Jr. ran for 547 yards last season.

Taylor said he would be "super surprised" to see any.

"Now, we can just go. We're getting up to the ball, set, hut, and we're going off the ball," he said.

Narduzzi has two quarterbacks he claims can win for him — holdover Nate Yarnell and red-shirt freshman transfer Eli Holstein, formerly of Alabama.

The coach hasn't named a starter, but there's a chance both will receive significant playing time. Narduzzi promised he won't make the same mistake two years in a row after allowing quarterback Phil Jurkovec to play through a 1-4 start.

"Last year, we assumed too much and the offense assumed. Bad job, I put that on me," Narduzzi said.

The defense has nine new starters after five left through the transfer portal. The veteran presence at safety may be offset by the inexperience at cornerback. Pitt lost its pass-rush ferocity last season, but Narduzzi is counting on senior defensive end Nate Matlack, another transfer, to help get it back.

Now that the offense has been modernized, there's hope the defense will benefit when confronted with tempo systems on the other side of the ball.

"Going into the season, we're much more prepared for these spread offenses and all the gun runs and all that stuff," Narduzzi said.

Although there are questions on the field, Narduzzi likes the way his players have approached their work.

"They got a business-like attitude right now. You watch them, and it's like they're going to work. I just don't see as much clowning around. These dudes are a little bit more serious. Reason why, I don't have any idea. Even walking off the field. They seem to be more locked in."

While there are high expectations in the locker room, Pitt is not getting much recognition nationally or even within the ACC. In The Athletic's weekly ranking of all 134 FBS teams, Pitt was 83rd, ahead of only two ACC schools — No. 84 Virginia and No. 87 Stanford. The ACC preseason poll ranked Pitt 13th of 17 schools.

That's where the players' attitude can help.

"We feel we're disrespected right now, and we have a lot to prove," safety Donovan McMillon said. "So obviously, it's going to be really serious."

Jerry DiPaola is a TribLive staff writer. He can be reached at jdiapaola@triblive.com.



SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
8.31	vs. Kent State	Noon
9.7	@ Cincinnati	Noon
9.14	vs. West Virginia	3:30 p.m.
9.21	vs. Young State	3:30 p.m.
10.5	@ North Carolina	TBD
10.12	vs. Syracuse	TBD
10.24	vs. Syracuse	7:30 p.m.
11.2	@ SMU	TBD
11.9	vs. Virginia	TBD
11.16	vs. Clemson	TBD
11.23	@ Louisville	TBD
11.30	@ Boston College	TBD



PREDICTED FINISH

1. Florida State	10. Cal
2. Clemson	11. Duke
3. Miami	12. Syracuse
4. N.C. State	13. Pitt
5. Louisville	14. Boston Coll.
6. Virginia Tech	15. Wake Forest
7. SMU	16. Virginia
8. N. Carolina	17. Stanford
9. Georgia Tech	

PLAYERS TO WATCH

D.J. Uiagalelei Florida State QB

Redshirt senior transfer from Oregon State who also spent three seasons at Clemson. Threw for 2,638 yards and 21 TDs last year. Holds 30-10 record as starter.



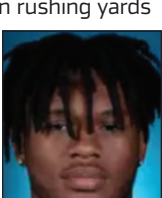
Cam Ward Miami QB

Washington State transfer is preseason ACC Player of the Year after totaling 6,963 yards and 48 touchdowns over two years with the Cougars.



Omarion Hampton North Carolina RB

Junior led ACC in rushing yards (1,504), touchdowns (15) and yards from scrimmage (1,726) last season. Named second-team All-American.



—AP

No surprise, money is factor in NCAA's shakeup

REALIGNMENT · FROM B1

was preparing to play Georgia Tech in Dublin, Ireland, on Saturday to start the season, the ACC's footprint now includes Stanford, Cal-Berkeley and SMU and covers 24% of the 50 states.

- Overall, 12 power conference schools, plus SMU, have moved, with Southern Cal, UCLA, Oregon and Washington joining the Big Ten; Oklahoma and Texas finding new homes in the SEC; and Arizona State, Arizona, Utah and Colorado bumping the Big 12 up to 16 schools. Penn State plays Southern Cal on the West Coast on Oct. 12 for only the third time during the regular season and the first since 1991.
- Players receive payouts through their name, image and likeness that occasionally reach \$1 million. Recruits play one school against another to see who is willing to ante up the most money.
- Unhappy players or perhaps those just looking to get rich through NIL can transfer and play

immediately at their new school.

There are many people who believe giving players such leverage and money is long overdue.

"I think in the long term, it gets us closer to a real business model that, frankly, needed to occur," ESPN.com college football insider David Hale, who has been writing about the sport for 20 years, told TribLive. "You can't have a sport generating billions upon billions of dollars every year, and none of that is directly flowing to actual employees of the sport. This was inevitable, but there are going to be a lot of growing pains along the way."

Nonetheless, Hale said, the games played out over 60 minutes on 100 yards of grass or turf remain largely the same.

"You can make a good case that the portal has allowed players you might not have even known about or watched on a Saturday to transfer from the Kent States and Miami (Ohio) of the world to move up and play at a higher level. That's good for the game."

"But there has to be a framework for it. ... You have to be careful not to risk the things that make college football great on Saturdays by chasing all the dollars that may be out there."

Chasing dollars is precisely what those 13 schools are doing, some in the name of survival.

ACC commissioner Jim Phillips was looking for strength in numbers when he recruited Stanford, Cal and SMU in the wake of Florida State and Clemson threatening to leave. Meanwhile, Stanford and Cal were looking to join a major conference and escape the sinking ship that is the Pac-12 after it lost all but two schools to the ACC, Big Ten and Big 12.

On the field, SMU will add a quality team to the ACC. Quarterback Preston Stone threw for 3,197 yards and 28 touchdowns last season before suffering a broken fibula against Navy on Nov. 25. He missed the AAC title game victory against Tulane — the last of a nine-game winning streak that gave SMU its first

conference championship since 1984.

Cal's Jaydn Ott may be one of the best running backs in the ACC after rushing for 1,375 yards and 12 touchdowns last season. But Cal has logistical issues with four games on the East Coast against Auburn, Florida State, Pitt and Wake Forest.

"Leave a day early," coach Justin Wilcox said, "make sure you have plenty of food and water and Gatorade for the plane, and we got the biggest plane Delta makes, with lay-down suites. A lot of the players will have really comfortable seats, more comfortable than the chairs they sit in at home."

Stanford will play at Syracuse and Clemson on consecutive weeks, Sept. 20 and 28, but it won't be spending the week on the East Coast.

"We will turn back (after the Syracuse game) so our students can go to class," Stanford coach Troy Taylor said. "There are harder things to overcome."

Jerry DiPaola is a TribLive staff writer.

Tomlin sees enough at QB

STEELERS · FROM B1

When Cordarrelle Patterson burst up the middle on a 31-yard touchdown run, Tomlin pulled the plug on Wilson.

"I was ready to play however long coach wanted me to," Wilson said. "Whenever I came to the sideline, he gave me (the sign) that you're done."

Wilson was 2 of 2 passing for 26 yards. He joined Najee Harris, Pat Freiermuth and Pickens on the bench for the second series.

"We just needed results that were indicative of how we worked," Tomlin said. "They were able to put together a scoring drive, and it provided an opportunity to get Justin in sooner."

Tomlin still hasn't named his starting quarterback for the opener, and he doesn't plan to do so until the end of practice next week. The Steelers will work Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday before players get an NFL-mandated four-day break.

Wilson doesn't mind waiting a few more days.

"Coach Tomlin is one of the best coaches to ever coach the game," Wilson said. "I don't ever question him. He knows what he's doing."

Fields played three series before ceding to No. 3 quarterback Kyle Allen when 9:37 left in the second quarter. Fields completed 3 of 4 passes for 42 yards and, like Wilson, directed a touchdown drive the first time he touched the ball.

"You never want to play games and struggle," Fields said. "I think that endgame

DETROIT 24, STEELERS 17

Steelers	14	0	3	0	- 17
Detroit	0	14	0	10	- 24

First quarter

Pit—Patterson 31 run (Boswell kick), 12:47.

Pit—Perine 1 run (Boswell kick), 6:05.

Second quarter

Det—Funk 2 pass from Hooker (Bates kick), 2:38.

Det—J.Jefferson 1 run (Bates kick), :25.

Third quarter

Pit—FG M.Wright 26, 3:20.

Det—J.Jefferson 7 run (Bates kick), 12:39.

Det—FG Bates 46, 5:22.

A—51,976.

TEAM STATISTICS

	Pit	Det
First downs	11	28
Total Net Yards	215	361
Rushes-yards	24-78	41-187
Passing	137	174
Punt Returns	2-16	3-30
Kickoff Returns	2-60	4-120
Interceptions Ret.	1-1	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	11-15-0	18-28-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	4-29	5-29
Fumbles	6-45-533	3-50-40
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	2-1
Penalties-Yards	7-54	10-45
Time of Possession	24:29	35:31

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Steelers, Patterson 3-31, Perine 6-16, Shamklin 7-13, Harris 1-5, Plumlee 1-4, Fields 2-4, Ward 1-3, Edwards 2-3, Allen 1-(minus 1), Detroit, Hooker 10-93, Funk 10-40, Jefferson 9-29, Knight 10-27, Fromm 2-(minus 2).

PASSING—Steelers, Allen 3-5-68, Fields 3-4-0-40, Plumlee 3-4-0-32, Ru.Wilson 2-2-0-26, Detroit, Hooker 12-20-1-114, Fromm 6-8-0-89.

RECEIVING—Steelers, D.Fitzpatrick 2-64, Pickens 2-26, Jefferson 2-18, Miller 2-9, Pruitt 1-22, Jenkins 1-17, Watkins 1-10, Detroit, Alexander 4-60, Zylstra 4-29, Calhoun 2-37, K.Davis 2-27, Kennedy 2-9, I.Williams 1-17, McKeon 1-14, Knight 1-8, Funk 1-2.

MISSED FIELD GOALS—Detroit, Bates 30.

plays that the first-team offense had lacked in the first two preseason games, although it looked like more of the same when a screen to Pickens lost 6 yards, bringing up a third-and-11 predicament.

But Wilson bought time in the pocket long enough to find Pickens for a 32-yard gain down the left sideline. Two plays later, Patterson ran virtually untouched up the middle for the first points produced by the first-team offense in three games.

Fields' first possession began at the Detroit 35 after the second Nick Herbig sack on the Lions' opening drive forced a fumble that Dean Lowry recovered. Fields gained 4 yards on a designed run around right tackle for a first down, then threaded a 22-yard pass to tight end MyCole Pruitt to the 2.

La'Mical Perine's 1-yard run hiked the Steelers lead to 14-0.

Fields also was involved in a miscommunication with rookie center Zach Frazier on the next series. With Fields lined up in the shotgun and his head turned, he didn't see Frazier snap the ball early. The ball landed at Fields' feet, and he recovered for a 4-yard loss. It was the fourth fumbled snap of the preseason while Fields was in the game.

"We're just going to look at the mistakes that we had and what plays we could be better on and get better," Fields said.

Joe Rutter is a TribLive staff writer. He can be reached at jrutter@triblive.com.

Patterson provides highlight

BY JOE RUTTER

DETROIT — The way he hit the hole and ran virtually untouched to the end zone, high-stepping on the way in, it looked like Cordarrelle Patterson might have been returning a kickoff Saturday for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Instead, one of the NFL's most decorated returners made his impact on a rushing attempt that provided the Steelers with an early lead in a 24-17 loss to the Detroit Lions.

Patterson burst through a seam in the middle of the field and scored on a 31-yard run that gave the Steelers' first-team offense its first points in three preseason games.

It showed the value of a running back who had 1,166 scrimmage yards in 2021 and a career-high 695 rushing yards in 2022 with the Atlanta Falcons.

"I've seen that a lot over the last decade or so," coach Mike Tomlin said. "It just hadn't been in a uniform I've been associated with, so it was pretty cool."

Patterson has scored an NFL-record nine touchdowns on kickoff returns, but he has yet to be used in that role with the Steelers, who signed him in free agency with the new dynamic kickoff rules in mind.

"I know what he's capable of in that area," Tomlin said. "The National Football League knows what he's capable of in that area. I wanted to get a look at some others."

Injury report

After missing a few days of practice, second-year cornerback Joey Porter Jr. didn't dress against the Lions because of an undisclosed injury.

Tomlin called it a "minor" setback for Porter but did not go into specifics and said he wanted



Cordarrelle Patterson rushes for a 31-yard touchdown in the first half Saturday.

ed to "exercise a little caution."

Tomlin used the same rationale to withhold rookie inside linebacker Payton Wilson from the game. Wilson suffered a concussion against Buffalo but was medically cleared to suit up Saturday.

Joining Porter on the sideline were fellow defensive starters Cameron Heyward, T.J. Watt and Alex Highsmith. Heyward and Watt were rested. Highsmith is recovering from a groin injury.

Cory Trice Jr. replaced Porter in the starting lineup and had two tackles, including one for a loss, before he exited with a groin injury. Rookie outside linebacker Julius Welschof had two sacks before he injured his knee. Rookie safety Ryan Watts was on the field for several moments with what Tomlin described as a stinger. Watts left the field under his own power but was taken immediately to the medical area.

Other players who didn't see action because of injury were Roman Wilson, Jaylen Warren, Tyler Matakevich, Jeremiah Moon, Dylan Cook, Logan Lee and Troy Fautanu.

Stepping up (again)

With Watt resting and

Highsmith resting his injured groin, Nick Herbig had another chance to shine in a starting role at outside linebacker.

Herbig had two sacks in a three-play span on the Lions' opening drive, the second forcing a fumble that Dean Lowry recovered, which led to a touchdown.

Keeanu Benton and DeMarvin Leal split another as the Steelers dropped Hendon Hooker on three consecutive plays.

Herbig had 3½ sacks in the preseason.

"He's behaving like a guy who has had a lap around the track," Tomlin said. "We want to see significant growth in all those second-year players. He's an example of that, but he's not alone. ... He's making a jump. He's been there before. He's finding his footing. He wants to be impactful, and we'll find a role for a guy like that whether he's a 'starter' or not."

Playing the slots

One undecided starting position on defense remains at slot corner.

Thomas Graham Jr. got the first-team reps for the second game in a row. Undrafted free agent Beanie Bishop started the opener before missing the second game with an injury and sitting the entire week of practice.

Bishop remained on the bench against the Lions until the second half.

"You've got to earn opportunity," Tomlin said. "I'm glad he's healthy. We were going to give him opportunity, but when you go in a game is often reflective of the work you do leading up to the performance. To be quite honest, he's had limited availability."

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