

Steelers poised for Super Bowl win

By Robert Morrison
Sports Editor

A common statement made by many coaches and football players alike is "defense wins championships."

This may also be the mindset the Pittsburgh Steelers have heading into the Super Bowl. This will be the second time in three years that the Steelers have made it to the Super Bowl and their eighth time overall. The Steelers have won six of seven trips to the Super Bowl; that's 86 percent of the time. History is on their side. Their six Super Bowl wins put them ahead of all teams.

Speaking of defense, the Steelers had the No. 1 ranked overall defense during the season. During their two playoff games leading up to the Super Bowl, the Steelers allowed just 415 yards total. Most of those yards came in the second half of the New York Jets game. With four minutes left in the first half of that game, the Jets had 12 total yards.

During the season the Steelers allowed an NFL low 162.8 yards rushing a game but fell a little short during the season in their defense against passing yards. They were not in the top five but still remained in the second spot in total yards allowed on average.

The "Steel Curtain" defense also got to the quarterback a league-leading 48 times. The Steelers have

a unique defense that has many different looks and ways to pressure a quarterback. They were also fifth in the league in interceptions and sixth in fumbles forced. They recovered 14 of those fumbles.

Linebacker LaMarr Woodley has had six straight playoff games with a sack. Reigning defensive player of the year, Linebacker James Harrison, will also have a say in the outcome by the end of the game. Probably the biggest difference in this Super Bowl game will be the effect of the Steelers' All-Professional Safety Troy Polamolu. The Steelers' defense has seen a very noticeable decrease in quality in the last few years when Polamolu isn't in the game compared to when he is.

A former University of Southern California Trojan, Polamolu has an effect on quarterbacks that makes them not want to throw the football in his direction as well as a knack for always being around the football. Proof of that would be his seven interceptions that were second among defensive backs. He also had a defensive touchdown during the season.

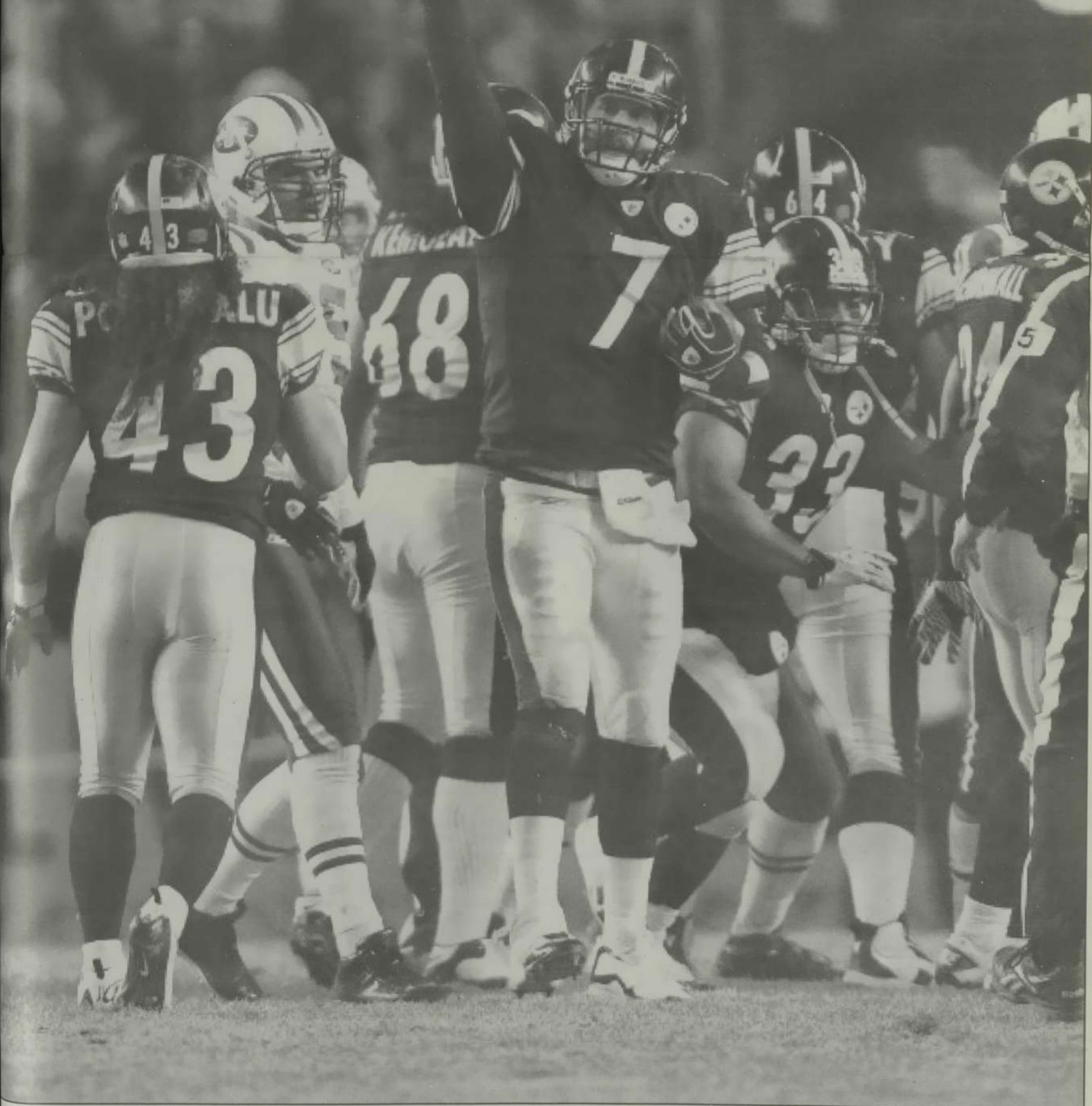
Offensively, the Steelers have a team that can hang with the best of them. Running Back Rashad Mendenhall was eighth in the league in rushing yards with 1273 for his position and was second in the league among running backs

with 13 touchdowns. The Steelers offense was third in the league in plays 20 yards or more and sixth in plays 40 yards or more. Wide receiver Mike Wallace led the league in plays of 40 yards or more. He is the Steelers' fastest offensive player and the biggest big play threat for the Green Bay Packers to guide.

Steelers' quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, who is 2-0 in his career in the Super Bowl, is arguably the toughest player to get to the ground and the highest percentage of his completions are when he gets out of the pocket. The Packers have a solid defensive that will get to "Big Ben" because of a horrible offensive line but when a quarterback does better when players are after him then these will cancel each other out.

The team also only allowed nine interceptions all year, fourth best in the NFL. The team had 17 more takeaways than they had turnovers, second to only the New England Patriots. The Steelers are more likely to take the ball away than they are to give it away.

The Steelers are one of the most complete teams in the NFL with a defensive that makes quarterbacks make bad decisions and an offense that can score fast on big plays. With history on their side and history still yet to be made, there is no question that the Steelers will win on Feb. 6 and add a seventh Super Bowl to the record books.



Pittsburgh Steelers win against the New York Jets in the AFC championship on Jan. 23 at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh, Penn. The final score was 24-19. The Steelers are now headed to the Super Bowl to butt heads against the Green Bay Packers.

NFL