**Steelers Stories**

1. One of the more comical stories in the recent history of the Pittsburgh Steelers is the infamous "hea-tails" call made by former Steelers running back and NFL Hall of Famer, Jerome Bettis. During a game on Thanksgiving Day (so there was a lot of media attention) against the Detroit Lions, Bettis made a "unique" coin flip call going into overtime. Bettis kind of mumbled during the call, and then the referee said, "The Steelers called heads; it's tails." Bettis tried to say that he had called tails. He and the Steelers tried to get the referee to give them the ball to start overtime. The officials declined, and the Steelers would eventually lose the game to a Detroit field goal. On video review, when asked to make the call Bettis clearly says "hea-tails."
2. The best stories about the Pittsburgh Steelers are those which continue into the present day. A perfect example of this is the amazing streak the team is currently enjoying of only employing three separate head coaches in the last 51 years. When compared to franchises like the Cleveland Browns and Buffalo Bills, this streak is impressive not only for its longevity, but also for what these coaches were able to accomplish during their time with the black and gold. Chuck Noll won four Super Bowls as the coach of the team and is in the NFL Hall of Fame. Bill Cowher not only won a Super Bowl but was also helped the Steelers to become a perennial playoff team. Current head coach, Mike Tomlin, has continued these winning ways and has even won his own Lombardi trophy with the team. Tomlin's job seems safe for now, so it will be interesting to see how long this streak can last.
3. The Pittsburgh Steelers of the 1970s provide a good case study of how NFL dynasties end. While the Patriots have been able to maintain their success for far longer than anyone predicted, many fans are hoping for the kind of abrupt downfall that the Steelers experienced following the 1981 season. In the four short years after this season, no less than seven future Hall of Famers retired from the Steelers. Immediately after 1981 season Joe Green and L.C. Greenwood retired, followed by Lynn Swann and Jack Ham after 1982, Terry Bradshaw and Mel Blount after 1983, and Jack Lambert and Franco Harris after 1984. The loss of so much immense talent in such a short period of time caused the Steelers franchise to be devastated for much of the 1980s.
4. One of the reasons why the Steelers’ enormous success is such a great story is the fact of how terrible the franchise was in its first three decades. In the period from 1940-1970 the team had only a handful of winning seasons, and the initial history of the franchise is marred in questionable decisions. One aspect of these embarrassing years of the franchise is an amusing epithet about the team's original owner, Art Rooney. During WWII, the lack of available players (due to the draft) caused the Steelers to combine rosters with their cross-state rivals, the Eagles. This combination roster (referred to as the "Steagles") only existed for one short season, but that didn't stop old Art from receiving the media's ire for their lack of play. When asked what he thought about the team’s losing season, Rooney replied, "they look like the Steelers to me - in green jerseys."
5. If you asked any Pittsburgher, they would proudly tell you that the Steelers franchise has been handed down from father to son since Art Rooney Sr. bought the club in the 1940s. While this is a great family story, it is not 100% accurate. The truth is that Art Rooney sold the team to Alexis Thompson for a brief period in the 1940s. Rooney was fed up with the team's failings, and sought use the money gained from its sale to purchase a stake in the Philadelphia Eagles (who were owned by one of his good friends). However, when Thompson hinted that he might move the Steelers to another city, Rooney quickly repurchased the franchise, thus ensuring his hometown city kept their NFL team.
6. Most people know that the Steelers were actually named the Pirates at their inception (in order to mimic the city's uber-popular baseball team), however, they received their current name as a result of a contest which was held by the local newspaper, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Random citizens were allowed to submit name proposals, and a board of reviewers was created to choose from these submissions. The board quickly fell in love with the name the Steelers, a play of the city's major population of steel workers. The Steelers have kept their name ever since.
7. Due largely to the success of the Steeler's "Steel Curtain" defense in the 1970s, the Steelers franchise will forever be viewed as a team which is driven by its defense (when Bill Cowher's "Blitzburgh" defenses started dominating teams in the 1990s, it only heightened this perception). Due to this, it is an interesting anecdote that the first points the team ever scored in an official game was on a safety. A safety occurs when the opposing offense is tackled in their own end zone and the defending team is awarded 2 points. Not only was this how the Steelers scored their first regular season points, but their first points in the Super Bowl also came from a defensive safety.
8. If you are a sports fan, you have probably noticed that all three major Pittsburgh sports teams share a basic color scheme. You may be asking yourself how black, white and gold came to symbolize Pittsburgh sports. The short answer is that these are the three colors which are featured on the Pittsburgh city flag. The Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team was the first city sports team to come into existence, and they decided to copy the color pattern of its city flag to build local support for the club. When the Steelers and Penguins were created years later, they decided to copy this practice. Since all three of these clubs have managed to stay in Pittsburgh, these colors have become synonymous with the "City of Champions."

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