

# Steelers to activate running game

By ALAN ROBINSON  
AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH — The Pittsburgh Steelers again plan to rely on an oft-neglected part of their offense, the running game, in Sunday's playoff game against the San Diego Chargers.

"We're going to run the ball, and we're going to be effective," said Terry Bradshaw. "And we're going to throw the ball."

The Steelers, 6-3, have qualified for the National Football League playoffs for the ninth time in 11 years. They used the run only infrequently after returning from the players' strike, but Coach Chuck Noll resurrected the running game in recent victories over New England and Cleveland.

Franco Harris, the third-leading rusher in NFL history, has had consecutive 100-yard games, including 120 yards and a touchdown in a 37-21 victory last Sunday over Cleveland.

Walter Abercrombie, the Steelers' top draft pick from Baylor who was bothered by a knee injury, had his best day as a pro against the Browns, running 10 times for 73 yards and a touchdown.

"Walter looked good," Noll said. "He turned some plays into big gains — things that looked like losses."

The blend of the running game and Bradshaw's passing — he threw for 269 yards against the Browns — reminds several players of the offensive scheme the Steelers used in winning four Super Bowls.

"We threw very sparingly and I think that was the key to winning," Bradshaw said. "Evidently, we've found our place by establishing the run and using the pass off that. That seems to be the best utilization of talent. It wears down the opposing team."

"It kind of reminds me of the 1970s. We've been playing ball control, passing when we have to. We're mixing it up."

"Our offensive line is blowing people out. We're getting three, four, five, sometimes eight yards at a pop. They're making things happen."

After being shut out twice in a month in losses to Seattle and Buffalo, the Steelers scored 74 points in victories over New England (37-14) and the Browns (37-21).

"We've been concentrating more on running, a more balanced offense," said tackle Ray Pinney. "I think that's taken some pressure off Terry. The defense can't load up on the pass. They have to play it straight."

Guard Ron Wolfley said the last two weeks of the

regular season were "fun" for the Steelers' line.

"This is what's fun," he said. "It's the only type thing for an offensive lineman. You don't score a touchdown, you get satisfaction from body rolling or knocking him down. When you get Franco yardage and protect Brad (Bradshaw), that's what makes the game fun. We're winning and that's the bottom line."

But the Chargers, 6-3, have also been winning. They had won five in a row until a 41-34 loss to the Los Angeles Raiders last Sunday in San Diego cost them the home field advantage in the first round of the playoffs.

"We wanted to play (San Diego) at home," said Jack Lambert. "It'd be silly to say the cold weather doesn't bother them."

Although Sunday won't be an Artie-type day at Three Rivers Stadium, the National Weather Service is calling for cloudy skies, a chance of flurries and temperatures in the 30s.

The Steelers have played nine playoff games at Three Rivers, losing only once, the 1972 American Conference title game to the Miami Dolphins.

The Steelers last played at home in the playoffs in 1979, beating Miami (34-7) and Houston (27-13) before beating the Los Angeles Rams 31-19 in the Super Bowl.

# Fouts voted as top player of the year

NEW YORK (AP) — Quarterback Dan Fouts of the San Diego Chargers, who continued his assault on the National Football League record book, was named Offensive Player of the Year yesterday by The Associated Press.

Fouts was the runaway winner in balloting by a nationwide panel of 84 sports writers and broadcasters, receiving 48 votes. Marcus Allen, the Los Angeles Raiders' running back and unanimous choice as Offensive Rookie of the Year, was second to Fouts with 18 votes.

Mark Moseley, the record-setting place-kicker for the Washington Redskins and a narrow winner over Fouts in the balloting for Most Valuable Player, was third in the Offensive Player voting with 11.

Others receiving more than one vote were San Diego wide receiver Wes Chandler and Dallas quarterback Danny White with three apiece and Chargers tight end Kellen Winslow with two.

Fouts, the pilot for Air Coryell — the awesome aerial game of Coach Don Coryell — in his 10th NFL season, passed for 2,889 yards in nine games to extend his own record to four seasons leading the league in yardage.

In five of those games he threw for at least 300 yards and now has 30 games of 300 or more yards. Going into the 1982 season, Johnny

Redskins and New England is at Miami. On Sunday in the AFC title game, New York Jets at Cincinnati and San Diego at Pittsburgh.

"The Lions may not be a great team," said Richie Petitbon, Washington's defensive coordinator. "But then, they're not playing a great team either."

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# Eastern football can't match up

Highly-touted and often overrated Eastern football took it on the chin more often than not during the recent festive, let's-everyone-have-a-bowl-game holiday period.

The Sugar Bowl is slowly becoming the Super Bowl of college football, and deservedly so. Because of its excellent facilities and gala atmosphere, it was easy for football fans and politicos around the nation to see who exactly was the best college football team this year.

SMU could have controlled its own destiny on Jan. 1 if it had proven earlier in the season to the nation's sports writers and sportscasters that it was a legitimate national football power. But instead the Mustangs opted for a 17-17 tie against Arkansas and conveyed to me, and apparently others, that it was more concerned with not losing than winning, and was not ready to handle the pressures of being a bonafide Division I-A power.

In the other major bowl games, the Orange Bowl, the Rose Bowl and the Fiesta Bowl, Eastern football teams failed to make an appearance. Though in itself this does illustrate an important point, one must realize that only two open invitations were available, so that three bowls have become entangled in the automatic conference bids. By not succumbing to what seems illogical conference bowl berths, the Sugar Bowl continues to dominate the rest.

Penn State foes Maryland, Boston College and West Virginia did little this holiday season to change the minds of Eastern football skeptics as all three dropped bowl decisions.

Maryland, who fared the best among minor bowl losers from the East, lost at 21-20, last-second decision to the seventh-ranked Washington Huskies in the inaugural Aloha



Bowl in Hawaii.

Boston College, yet another team troubled by southern football, was unable to control the Auburn offense as the Eagles lost 33-26 in the high-scoring Tangerine Bowl in Orlando, Fla. Meanwhile in Jacksonville, Fla. at the Gator Bowl, the WVU Mountaineers were embarrassed by the Florida State Seminoles, 31-12.

The only other eastern winner (if you want to consider them eastern, which most don't), the North Carolina Tar Heels, did manage to notch a 26-10 victory over the Texas Longhorns in the Sun Bowl in El Paso, Texas.

Taking a quick look at the final Associated Press' rankings, one obviously finds Penn State on top but then the eyes begin to strain a bit to find another Top Ten team from the East. Not until one comes to No. 10 Pitt, does the East appear again.

Ohio State, more accurately described as a Mideastern team, gives the East a boost at No. 12, but eastern teams are left out until North Carolina, West Virginia and Maryland arrive at 18, 19 and 20. Even then the trio's records add up to 25-10, not exactly what you'd call dominating.

All of this may inevitably be saying that maybe this year was a rather weak year for college football. But one thing is for sure, the best team in the country — bar none — began slowly and peaked at the most opportune moments, while others in the East began the season playing well, perhaps over their heads, then settled down to play real Eastern football.

Bobby Dale Morgan is an 11th-term journalism major and a sports writer for The Daily Collegian.

# Redskins don't plan to take Lions lightly

By BRUCE LOWITT  
AP Sports Writer

The last time the Detroit Lions beat the Redskins on the road, the game was in Boston. Yes, the Boston Redskins. In 1955. In nine games since the 'Skins moved to Washington, the Lions have come up on the short end every time.

But they are not being taken lightly by Washington Coach Joe Gibbs as the two teams prepare for their playoff game tomorrow in the nation's

capital.

"All I know about Detroit is that they came in here last year, gained a ton of yards, lost by two points and had the ball on the 2-yard line when time expired," Gibbs said.

The 'Skins won that game 33-31 on since the 'Skins moved to Washington, the Lions have come up on the short end every time.

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offered. "If it wasn't for the year Mark has been having everyone would be talking about Ed Murray."

Like Moseley, Murray missed only one field goal during the 1982 season. Unlike Moseley, Murray hit all of his extra points.

In the other National Conference playoff opener tomorrow it's St. Louis at Green Bay. Sunday in the NFC it's Atlanta at Minnesota and Tampa Bay at Dallas. In the two American Conference playoff games tomorrow, Cleveland visits the Los Angeles

Raiders and New England is at Miami. On Sunday in the AFC title game, New York Jets at Cincinnati and San Diego at Pittsburgh.

"The Lions may not be a great team," said Richie Petitbon, Washington's defensive coordinator. "But then, they're not playing a great team either."

"They are very talented, have a great running back in Billy Sims, and their outside receivers can catch the ball."

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