

Mike McCarthy comes home to coach the Steelers

Veteran coach returns to Western Pennsylvania to lead franchise he once admired from afar

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The tears started early for Mike McCarthy. Really early.

Considering the setting, it was hard to blame him.

There the kid who grew up rooting for the Pittsburgh Steelers from his family's home in the city's Greenfield neighborhood was on Tuesday, sitting on dais wearing a black suit with a gold tie, a Steelers pin affixed to his lapel.

The job McCarthy always wanted, but never let himself imagine he would get, his at last.

"I thought I'd at least be able to get started," the new Steelers head coach said, trying unsuccessfully to choke back his emotions while looking at a wide swath of the McCarthy family spread across the first few rows of a posh club inside Acrisure Stadium.

Nope.

McCarthy collected himself then gamely soldiered on. Yes, the feel-good vibes of his homecoming are undeniable to a man who admits "Pittsburgh is my world."

Yet the 62-year-old is only too aware of why the Steelers hired him to replace Mike Tomlin, who stepped down earlier this month after 19 seasons.

The 'obvious' choice

The trophy case inside the team's facility just a couple of miles away from where McCarthy grew up at 1137 Greenfield Avenue has remained frozen in time for nearly two decades and counting. McCarthy's handiwork is part of that drought after he led the Green Bay Packers over the Steelers in the Super Bowl 15 years ago.

Neither McCarthy nor his hometown team have been back since. The clock is ticking.

"It's time to bring another championship back to this great city,"



Gene J. Puskar — AP

Mike McCarthy meets with reporters after being introduced as the new head coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers on Tuesday.

McCarthy said.

One that grew increasingly antsy during the final years of Tomlin's tenure as solid if unremarkable regular seasons were followed by largely noncompetitive playoff losses, the last a 30-6 blowout at home to Houston two weeks ago that set the stage for Tomlin's abrupt exit.

The Steelers, conducting a head coaching search for just the third time since hiring Chuck Noll in 1969, interviewed a wide swath of candidates, many of them the kind young assistants in the vein of Noll, Tomlin and Bill Cowher, all of whom arrived in Pittsburgh as relative unknowns and left with Super Bowl rings and Hall of Fame-worthy resumes.

Ultimately Pittsburgh turned to the one candidate who understands better than most how the team is hard-wired into the city's DNA, one who also happens to have a Super Bowl ring of his own and a long track record of churning out teams capable of competing for a title.

"It wasn't an easy decision, but it was an obvious decision for us," said Steelers president Art Rooney II, who noted McCarthy's hiring became official on the 125th birthday of franchise patriarch Art Rooney Sr.

Rooney II admitted his grandfather would have loved bringing McCarthy home, though he stressed McCarthy's deep roots "had little to do" with making him just the club's fourth head coach in 57 years.

"We had an open mind about it I think and really just said, 'We found the best coach,'" Rooney II added.

Not ready to walk away

A coach who thinks he still has plenty left.

McCarthy went 185-113-2 (.608) across 18 seasons (playoffs included) with Green Bay and Dallas. His tenure in Dallas ended after an injury-marred 7-10 finish in 2024 led to a parting of ways. He took 2025 off to reconnect with his family, though

the urge to coach never left.

The circadian rhythms of an NFL season are difficult to shake. He could feel time start to speed up when teams reported for training camp last summer, and even as he leaned into his somewhat unexpected break, he knew he wasn't finished.

"I'm not ready to walk away from this," McCarthy said. "To have this opportunity, it just seemed like it was meant to be on so many different levels."

He called the 72 hours after reaching a verbal agreement with the Steelers "a whirlwind" that tugged at both the heartstrings and the daunting task ahead as he tries to assemble a coaching staff.

McCarthy figures he's received twice as many texts of support as he did when he led the Packers to a title, though he knows the honeymoon will be short if he can't find a way to return the Steelers to legitimate contention in the AFC.

While Pittsburgh's current run of 22 seasons of finishing .500 or better are an NFL record, the club also hasn't won a playoff game since beating Kansas City in the divisional round in the 2016 season, tied with Atlanta for the sixth-longest active streak in the league.

A Rodgers reunion?

McCarthy is inheriting a team with a talented — if expensive — defense and an offense filled with question marks, most notably at quarterback. Rookie Will Howard and veteran backup Mason Rudolph are currently the only two players at the game's most important position under contract for next season.

Aaron Rodgers, who spent 13 seasons alongside McCarthy in Green Bay, will become a free

agent in March after helping the Steelers win the AFC North at age 42. McCarthy certainly seems open to a reunion.

"Definitely," McCarthy said. "I don't see why you wouldn't."

Rodgers said near the end of his 21st season that he would take some time to decompress and meet with his inner circle before deciding whether to try and return in 2026. The four-time MVP believes he'll have options if he wants and pointed out it would be easier to play in an offense he already knows. McCarthy's hire assures that would be the case in Pittsburgh.

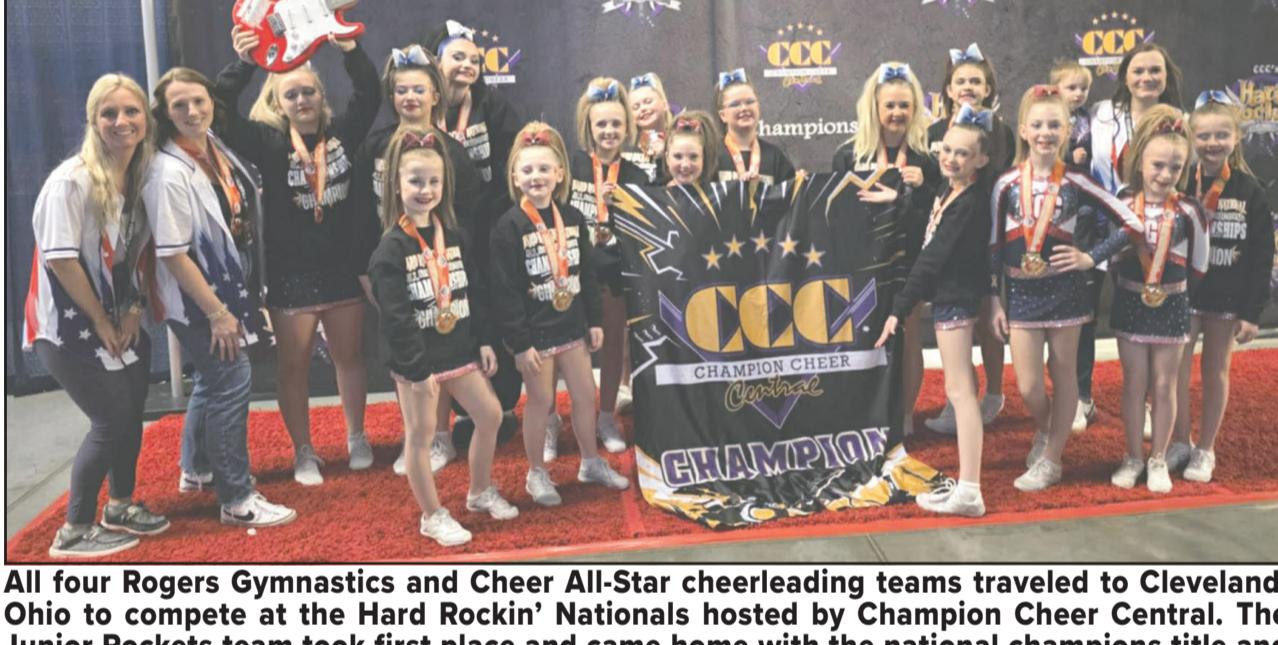
McCarthy plans to call the plays as he has throughout his coaching career and wants to keep the same 3-4 defensive scheme the Steelers have been using for decades, noting he's just had one defense ranked in the top five during his head coaching career. It also happened to be the same season the Packers won the Super Bowl.

There's a long way to go before that happens in Pittsburgh. There are plenty of questions that need to be answered in the coming weeks and months, including whether this offseason is the one the Steelers try to find the franchise quarterback they've lacked since Ben Roethlisberger's prime in the 2010s.

The work has already started, though McCarthy did take a brief moment on the first official day of what could be his final head coaching stop to take it all in. He posed for pictures surrounded by the family that still calls him "Michael," the one dutifully moved their NFL allegiances in lock-step with his career, the one that will be there for him in Greenfield no matter how this goes.

"We can finally, hopefully, wear our Steelers swag, so let's get it," McCarthy said. "My heart is full."

THE DAILY SCOREBOARD



All four Rogers Gymnastics and Cheer All-Star cheerleading teams traveled to Cleveland, Ohio to compete at the Hard Rockin' Nationals hosted by Champion Cheer Central. The Junior Rockets team took first place and came home with the national champions title and an electric guitar trophy which will be displayed at Rogers Gymnastics. The Senior TNT placed second, the Mini Comets finished fourth and hit zero and the Tiny Sparklers also performed well and hit zero. Members of the Junior Rockets team were (front): Mallory Welms, Havyn Pennewell, Caroline Knox, Braelynn Fink, Kamryn Murray, Lily Muczynski, Harper Green and Lainey Masterson; back, coach Merissa, coach Chelsea, Lylie Weber, Brooklyn Dunkle, Avry Gerwick, Layla Muczynski, Alayna Rivera, coach Alesha and Rylan Culp. Missing from the photo was Kerrin Hesson and Karen Zaccaria.

SCHOLASTIC BASKETBALL BOXSCORES

VARSITY BOYS

CORRY (54)

Banchieri 1 2-2 4, Frisina 5 1-2 11, Moon 2 0-0 6, Scouten 2 0-0 6, Deane 6 2-2 17, Baker 0 0-0 6, Trask 3 1-2 7, Atha 1 0-0 3. Totals: 20 6-8 54.

OIL CITY (58)

Fink 5 8-18, Heise 3 0-0 6, Stinson 3 1-2 7, Singleton 2 0-2 4, Jones 1 0-1 2, Thompson 4 0-0 9, Liederbach 4 3-4 11, VanWormer 1 0-0 2, Fulmer 0 0-0 0. Totals: 22 13-19 58.

Score by Quarters

Corry 9 14 19 12 — 54 Oil City 15 17 13 13 — 58

3-point goals — Corry (Deane 3, Moon 2, Scouten 2, Atha), Oil City (Thompson).

FORT LEBOEUF (48)

Caccione 6 2-2 15, Buerk 2 0-2 4, G. Matkovich 6 2-2 14, Milner 0 2-2 2, B. Matkovich 0 2-4 2, Friedman 5 3-6 13. Totals: 17 13-20 48.

FRANKLIN (40)

Ni. Fezell 0 0-0 0, Rodriguez 0 2-2 2, Higley 1 4-6 7, Purich 0 0-0 0, Na. Fezell 1 0 0-3, Umberhau 1 0-0 3, Cassano 2 0-2 2, Wofford 6 1-2 16, McNulty 1 0-0 2, Parry 2 1-2 5, Martin 0 0-0 0. Totals: 12 11-13 40.

Score by Quarters

Fort LeBoeuf 17 9 8 6 40

3-point goals — FL (Caccione), FHS (Wofford 3, Higley, Na. Fezell).

ROCKY GROVE (69)

Focht 0 0-0 0, Carter 5 2-7 14, Ritechey 6 4-4 19, LeGoullon 0 0-0 0, Ritechey 6 6-6 21, Bevier 1 0-0 2, Jones 5 0-0 13. Totals: 23 12-17 69.

SAEGERTOWN (74)

Gjovik 0 3-3 3, Young 11 1-4 23, Bailey 0 0-0 2, Leslie 1 2-6 5, Shaffer 3 0-0 6, Gardner 3 0-0 6, Scott 11 7-10 31. Totals: 29 13-25 74.

Score by Quarters

Fort LeBoeuf 17 9 8 6 40

3-point goals — FL (Caccione), FHS (Wofford 3, Higley, Na. Fezell).

Score by Quarters

Rocky Grove 19 11 16 23 — 69 Saegertown 13 11 24 23 — 74

3-point goals — RG (Ritechey 3, Baughman 3, Jones 3, Carter 2), Saegertown (Scott 2, Leslie).

JAMESTOWN (17)

J. Cole 2 0-0 4, Gravie 2 1-4 7, L. Cole 2 2-5 6, Dell 0 0-0, Saitar 0 0-0 0. Totals: 9 13-17 17.

COCHRANTON (61)

King 2 0-0 5, Rodax 0 0-0 0, Wright 4 1-2 10, W. Carroll 1 3-4 5, Shorts 2 0-2 4, R. Haskins 0 0-0 0, P. Haskins 0 0-0 5, Rynd 7 0-0 14, Walker 5 0-2 10, N. Carroll 2 1-2 6, Sliker 0 0-2 0. Totals: 26 5-12 61.

Score by Quarters

Jamestown 3 10 2 2 — 17 Cochranon 16 21 19 5 — 61

3-point goals — JT (J. Gravie 2), Cochranon (King, Wright, P. Haskins, N. Carroll).

VARSITY GIRLS

COCHRANTON (24)

Custead 0 1-2 1, McCartney 4 1-4 10, Shorts 0 2-4 2, Lyons 1 1-4 3, Frayer 0 0-2 0, Rees 1 2-2 4, Irwin 2 0-0 4. Totals: 8 7-18 24.

MAPLEWOOD (47)

Means 7 6 12 21, Holova 5 1-2 11, Kennedy 0 1-2 1, Stevenson 1 0-0 2, Mattocks 1 3-6 5, Snyder 3 1-2 7. Totals: 17 12-24 47.

Score by Quarters

Cochranon 5 7 3 3 — 24 Maplewood 16 5 13 13 — 47

3-point goals — Cochranon (Frayer), Maplewood (Means).

JUNIOR VARSITY BOYS

ROCKY GROVE (52)

LeGoullon 8 8-11 24, Green 1 0-0 2, Grigsby 1 4-6 6, Hughes 3 2-5 9, Anderson 1 2-3 4, Griffin 1 0-0 3, Manning 1 0-0 2, Gordon 1 0-0 2, Totals: 17 16-25 52.

SAEGERTOWN (44)

Gjovik 7 3-3 20, Zimmerman 2 1-2 7, Burchill 1 2-2 4, Wilkinson 2 1-2 5, Baker 4 0-2 8. Totals: 16 7-15 44.

Score by Quarters

Rocky Grove 11 15 8 18 — 52 Saegertown 7 16 16 — 44

3-point goals — RG (Hughes, Griffin), S (Gjovik 3, Zimmerman 2).

CORRY (25)

Lothrop 1 0-0 2, Cannon 3 2-3 8, Mumau 2 1-4 5, Grader 3 3-4 10, Mosier 0 0-0 0. Totals: 9 6-13 25.

OIL CITY (56)

Dasher 0 0-0 0, Thompson 2 0-0 4, Taylor 1 0-0 2, Sabi 2 0-0 4, VanWormer 2 0-0 11, Proano 1 0-0 2, Hummel 3 1-1 7, Kiskadden 1 0-0 3, Price 2 0-0 4, Fulmer 1 0-0 2, Jones 4 0-0 11, Stevens 3 0-0 6. Totals: 25 1-1 56.

Score by Quarters

Corry 7 1 13 4 — 25 Oil City 20 12 13 11 — 56

3-point goals — Corry (Grader), OC (Jones 3, VanWormer, Kiskadden).

THIRTH GRADE BOYS

TITUSVILLE (40)

Rose 1 4-4 7, Guera 4 4-6 12, Martin 2 0-0 4, Pasiaski 5 3-3 15, Burt 1 0-0 2. Totals: 13 11-13 40.

FRANKLIN (56)

Sires 6 0-0 12, Stevens 2 2-7 6, Doty 4 7-8 15, Dick 2 0-0 4, McAfioso 1 5-8 7, Sybert 2 6-7 10, Brundage 1 0-0 2. Totals: 18 20-25 56.