

Steelers cut veteran corner Slay and sign receiver Thielen

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Adam Thielen didn’t stay out of work long. The Pittsburgh Steelers signed the veteran wide receiver to their practice squad on Tuesday, a day after the 35-year-old was released by the Minnesota Vikings so he could pursue more playing time elsewhere. Thielen had just eight catches for 69 yards in his return to Minnesota, where he starred from 2014-22 before a two-year stint with Carolina.

It might not take Thielen long to find his way onto the field in Pittsburgh. The Steelers (6-6) have struggled to do much in the pass game of late with neither Roman Wilson nor Calvin Austin III becoming consistent contributors alongside DK Metcalf.

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fore a two-year stint with Carolina. It might not take Thielen long to find his way onto the field in Pittsburgh. The Steelers (6-6) have struggled to do much in the pass game of late with neither Roman Wilson nor Calvin Austin III becoming consistent contributors alongside DK Metcalf.

Thielen is the second experienced wideout to join Pittsburgh’s practice

squad in recent weeks. The Steelers signed Marquez Valdes-Scantling last month, though he has yet to find his way onto the 53-man roster on gamedays.

Pittsburgh also promoted Asante Samuel Jr. from the practice squad and released six-time Pro Bowler Darius Slay, who had been a healthy scratch in recent weeks.

Samuel made his first appear-

ance with the Steelers in Sunday’s loss to Buffalo, finishing with three tackles in his return to action after undergoing neck surgery last spring. Tomlin saw enough of Slay to sign him to the active roster rather than risk someone poaching Slay from the practice squad late in the season.

“We certainly wanted to have an opportunity to see him in stadi-

um before we maybe had to make a decision on him, before someone else forced our hand regarding decisions,” Tomlin said, later adding, “we liked some of the things we saw.”

Slay, signed to a one-year deal in March, had essentially been benched by Tomlin in favor of less experienced players, including James Pierre.

Knights

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Stepping into the starting point guard role is 5-5 junior Zarria Cullins, who played in 17 games last year.

“Zarria is really athletic and she gets to the rim so I want her to be aggressive,” Justice said. “I think she has a chance to be a nice point guard. She played the position a lot in junior varsity, so I feel pretty comfortable with her stepping into that spot. She got a lot of experience last year coming off the bench during the season and in the playoffs.”

Meanwhile, Justice will be looking for 5-7 senior forward Mazy Shingledecker and 5-8 senior forward Makenzi Emick to replace Curry in the post.

Shingledecker played in all 26 games last year, averaging 2.2 points and 3.7 rebounds per game.

“Mazy is a really good athlete and she has a nose for finding the basketball. She started a lot of games or was the first person off the bench for us last year. I’d like her to be a little more aggressive on offense as she has more offensive abilities than she’s shown.”

Emick only played in 12 games last year, but Justice feels she will do well with an expanded role.

“Makenzi is a big forward and a physical presence. She’s aggressive and not afraid to mix it up,” he said. “I’d like to see her more involved in the offense. She can really rebound and she has the ability to put the ball back up and finish.”

Closing out the starting lineup are a pair of returning starters in 5-6 junior guard Jadynd Blum and 5-7 senior guard/forward Hailey Hanna.

Blum was second on the team in scoring at 7.1 ppg. while she also showed off her defensive chops with 2.0 steals per contest.

“Jadynd had a nice sophomore year. She has a lot of experience and she has really shown more leadership this year. She is our most seasoned player on both ends of the floor and I would say she is one of the best defenders in District 10,” Justice said. “We are looking for her to step up a little more and be more aggressive on offense. She has the most offensive punch with her ability to create her own shots.”

Hanna was third on the team in scoring at 6.2 ppg. while she led the team in made three-pointers with 36.

“Hailey started every game last year, so she has a lot of experience.

She is a really good shooter, so we want her to keep looking for her shot. Her job is to spot up and hit the three while also getting to the foul line. She’s also improved her play on the defensive end,” Justice said.

Also likely to see playing time off the bench for the Knights this year are 5-5 junior guard/forward Azarah Sanchez, 5-8 sophomore guard Sophie Boal, 5-3 senior guard Hailey Graham, 5-9 freshman guard/forward Miah Shingledecker and 5-9 sophomore forward Jordan Irons.

Sanchez saw action in 22 games last year and is likely to be the first player off the bench.

“Azarah gained a lot of experience last year in our playoff run,” Justice said. “She is a good defensive player and she worked on her offensive game in the offseason.”

Sophie Boal is the younger sister of Katie and played in only six games last year, but Justice has been impressed with her all-around game.

“Sophie is tough and she plays hard,” he said. “She’s not afraid to get out there and scrap, play defense and rebound. She can also shoot the ball, too. She’s like a spark plug off the bench.”

Graham is also dealing with an injury, but she is expected to be able to help the team when she returns.

“Hailey has come a long way. She can shoot the ball while she also hustles and plays solid defense,” Justice said.

Miah Shingledecker is the younger sister of Mazy and showed off her athletic ability with a second-team all-region selection on the girls soccer squad in the fall.

“Miah is a different kind of athlete. She’s only a freshman, but when you put her out there on the floor with four varsity starters, she looks like she belongs,” Justice said. “She has a knack for the game and she wants to be a really good player. She rebounds and is a good defender, so I’m excited to see what she can do this year.”

Irons has been away from the game for awhile, but she played well on the volleyball team this past fall.

“Jordan hasn’t played basketball for awhile, but she is really coming along,” Justice said. “She has really worked hard and is a good athlete. She is very coachable and works hard to get better.”

The lack of size may hurt in some areas, but Justice feels it allows the team to play at a much faster pace this year.

“I feel like we can play even more up tempo than we have in the past when we would slow it down and

pound the ball inside,” Justice said. “This year, I feel like we can get out and run up and down the floor. I prefer to coach that way and the girls really like to play that way.

“Defensively, we are pretty athletic. I’m going to be able to put a lineup out there that will be able to press and get after other teams,” Justice continued. “We’ve been working hard on that. We want to wear other teams down by pressing them the whole game.”

After accomplishing so much last year, Justice feels his team is hungry to repeat it again this season.

“The girls got a taste of how much fun it is to win in the playoffs, so now they want to do it again,” he said. “We don’t want what we did last season to be a one-year thing, we want this to be an annual thing. Getting that playoff experience and having all these girls out on the floor and feeling that energy was huge. Even the girls that didn’t play have said how exciting it was to be on the bench for those games.”

Franklin will open the season by hosting the Franklin Elks tournament on Friday and Saturday. The Knights will face Erie High on opeinnng night at 8:30 p.m. with Redbank Valley and Wilmington squaring off at 7 p.m.

Hoops

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Scott and Young dropped in eight points apiece in the opening frame as the Panthers raced out to a 19-8

lead. The duo struck again in the second period as Young netted nine points and Scott six as the visitors increased their lead to 40-24. A 24-7 run in the third period provided the final dagger for the Panthers.

Scott led all scorers with 26 points while Young was close behind with

23 points. Holland Fratus led the Rockets (0-2) with 12 points while Aaron Vogus drilled a pair of three-pointers to add eight points.

Fairview 60, Grove City 42

FAIRVIEW — Ben Iszkula and

Tyler DiVecchio poured in 15 points apiece as Fairview recorded a 60-42 win over visiting Grove City in non-region play.

The Tigers led 14-8 after one quarter, 26-19 at halftime and 43-28 after three frames en route to the double-digit decision.

Mason Stafford also scored in double figures for the Tigers with 10 points.

Nick Earman buried a trio of long-range shots to top the Eagles (1-2) with 14 points, Ben Fischer bucketed 10 points while Max Knouse and Austin Gothe each had six points.

NFL STANDINGS						
AMERICAN CONFERENCE						
East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	11	2	0	.846	351	241
Buffalo	8	4	0	.667	337	259
Miami	5	7	0	.417	247	286
N.Y. Jets	3	9	0	.250	246	315
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Jacksonville	8	4	0	.667	292	253
Indianapolis	8	4	0	.667	357	249
Houston	7	5	0	.583	263	198
e-Tennessee	1	11	0	.083	170	328
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	6	6	0	.500	289	293
Pittsburgh	6	6	0	.500	281	289
Cincinnati	4	8	0	.333	280	374
Cleveland	3	9	0	.250	194	270
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Denver	10	2	0	.833	284	218
L.A. Chargers	8	4	0	.667	277	252
Kansas City	6	6	0	.500	305	232
e-Las Vegas	2	10	0	.167	179	308
NATIONAL CONFERENCE						
East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Phila.	8	4	0	.667	270	249
Dallas	6	5	1	.542	351	342
Washington	3	9	0	.250	262	323
e-N.Y. Giants	2	11	0	.154	279	367
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	7	5	0	.583	279	301
Carolina	7	6	0	.538	247	297
Atlanta	4	8	0	.333	243	276
e-New Orleans	2	10	0	.167	182	295
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Chicago	9	3	0	.750	313	307
Green Bay	8	3	1	.708	294	226
Detroit	7	5	0	.583	350	274
Minnesota	4	8	0	.333	224	281
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
L.A. Rams	9	3	0	.750	334	210
Seattle	9	3	0	.750	350	217
San Francisco	9	4	0	.692	307	269
e-Arizona	3	9	0	.250	265	303

Thursday's Games
Dallas at Detroit, 8:15 p.m.

Sunday's Games
Cincinnati at Buffalo, 1 p.m.
Indianapolis at Jacksonville, 1 p.m.
Miami at N.Y. Jets, 1 p.m.
New Orleans at Tampa Bay, 1 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Baltimore, 1 p.m.
Seattle at Atlanta, 1 p.m.
Tennessee at Cleveland, 1 p.m.
Washington at Minnesota, 1 p.m.
Denver at Las Vegas, 4:05 p.m.
Chicago at Green Bay, 4:25 p.m.
L.A. Rams at Arizona, 4:25 p.m.
Houston at Kansas City, 8:20 p.m.
Open: New England, Carolina, N.Y. Giants, San Francisco

Monday's Games
Phila. at L.A. Chargers, 8:15 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 11
Atlanta at Tampa Bay, 8:15 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 14
Arizona at Houston, 1 p.m.
Baltimore at Cincinnati, 1 p.m.
Buffalo at New England, 1 p.m.
Cleveland at Chicago, 1 p.m.
L.A. Chargers at Kansas City, 1 p.m.
Las Vegas at Phila., 1 p.m.
N.Y. Jets at Jacksonville, 1 p.m.
Washington at N.Y. Giants, 1 p.m.
Carolina at New Orleans, 4:25 p.m.
Detroit at L.A. Rams, 4:25 p.m.
Green Bay at Denver, 4:25 p.m.
Indianapolis at Seattle, 4:25 p.m.
Tennessee at San Francisco, 4:25 p.m.
Minnesota at Dallas, 8:20 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 15
Miami at Pittsburgh, 8:15 p.m.

NHL STANDINGS								
EASTERN CONFERENCE								
Atlantic	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Tampa Bay	26	16	8	2	34	85	67	
Ottawa	26	13	9	4	30	84	86	
Detroit	27	14	11	2	30	82	93	
Boston	28	15	13	0	30	87	91	
Montreal	25	13	9	3	29	84	92	
Toronto	26	12	11	3	27	89	90	
Buffalo	27	11	12	4	26	83	92	
Florida	25	12	12	1	25	76	81	
Metropolitan	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Carolina	25	16	7	2	34	86	70	
Washington	27	16	9	2	34	91	70	
Philadelphia	26	15	8	3	33	79	74	
New Jersey	27	16	10	1	33	83	82	
Pittsburgh	25	13	7	5	31	79	71	
N.Y. Islanders	27	14	10	3	31	78	78	
N.Y. Rangers	28	14	12	2	30	75	73	
Columbus	26	12	9	5	29	78	85	
WESTERN CONFERENCE								
Central	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Colorado	26	19	1	6	44	106	56	
Dallas	28	18	5	5	41	98	74	
Minnesota	27	15	7	5	35	78	72	
Chicago	26	11	9	6	28	83	77	
Utah	27	12	12	3	27	80	83	
Winnipeg	25	13	12	0	26	77	75	
St. Louis	27	9	11	7	25	69	95	
Nashville	26	9	13	4	22	69	93	
Pacific	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Anaheim	26	16	9	1	33	96	84	
Vegas	26	12	6	8	32	80	79	
Los Angeles	26	12	7	7	31	69	73	
San Jose	27	13	11	3	29	80	87	
Seattle	24	11	7	6	28	59	66	
Edmonton	27	11	11	5	27	81	96	
Vancouver	27	10	14	3	23	80	98	
Calgary	28	9	15	4	22	66	87	
NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division, and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.								
Tuesday's Games								