

## **A Mile in My Shoes**

By: Nick Mystrom

# **Running Game? I'll Pass.**

If you turn on a pro football game this year, I guarantee you'll hear an announcer say something like "They really have to try and establish the running game. If they can do that, they will win." Every single telecast of every single game, a comment like that will be made. When you hear something enough, most people begin to assume it's the truth. Well, I am not one of those people.

I would like to offer my version of this 'original' thought that every single analyst has every single Sunday. Here it goes: NFL teams aren't winning because of their running game, they have a running game because they are winning. That is to say that teams with good defenses and passing attacks have the luxury of running because they are usually playing from ahead. Every single comment made with regard to this by ex-jock announcers can be similarly deconstructed. Let's look at some examples:

Analyst: "When Stephen Jackson gets 25 or more carries, the Rams are 11-0". My take is "Stephen Jackson gets a lot of carries when the Rams are ahead and he is good at grinding out the clock to seal the victory. When they are playing from three touchdowns behind, no coach in their right mind is calling running plays for him."

Analyst: "Ben Rothlisberger threw 42 passes tonight. That is not the formula for success for the Steelers. The Steelers have never won when he has thrown more than 30 passes." My take is "Big Ben doesn't have to throw much against bad teams, they just run the ball and play good defense. But when they play good teams that get ahead on them early, they have no choice but to air it out. Therefore, when they are behind against good teams they throw more and usually lose."

If it were true that the Rams can't lose when Jackson carries the ball 25 or more times, why wouldn't the coach just hand it to him every play and guarantee victory or, conversely, why has Ben Rothlisberger ever even attempted a single pass if they always win when his attempts are low? The answer is simple: every single announcer every single Sunday is wrong. They've heard this simple minded propaganda for so long, they are forced into believing it. I say, don't believe the hype.