



Pittsburgh Steelers' wide receiver Hines Ward leaps into the end zone past Seattle Seahawks' cornerback Marcus Trufant on a 43-yard touchdown pass from wide receiver Antwaan Randle El in the fourth quarter during Super Bowl XL Sunday in Detroit.

## Steelers 'Ward' off Seahawks

By JOE KAY  
AP Sports Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Ben Roethlisberger's pass floated right toward his hands. Hines Ward made sure he got both feet down in the end zone, then started closing his fingers around the ball.

Remarkably, he dropped it. No excuses. The Pittsburgh Steelers' top receiver flat-out dropped it.

"The great ones don't miss balls in the Super Bowl," Ward said. "And I want to be considered one of the great ones."

Before this Super Bowl ended, Ward would get more chances to prove he deserves to be counted among the greats. And, he wouldn't bumble those chances away.

Ward completed an MVP performance Sunday by catching a 43-yard touchdown pass from receiver Antwaan Randle El, a trick play that became the decisive play in the Steelers' 21-10 victory over the Seattle Seahawks.

Pittsburgh's Lynn Swann won the Super Bowl MVP in 1976 for making one big catch after another against Dallas, including a diving grab of a tipped ball that makes all of the Super Bowl highlight reels.

Ward's game wasn't nearly as memorable — that end zone drop was just his most glaring mistake — but it was good enough to win the MVP award in a ragged game that came down to two big plays.

"To be named MVP is a great honor, but I still left some plays out on the field," Ward said. "I could have had an even better day."

Same for Roethlisberger, who at age 23 became the youngest quarterback to win a Super Bowl even though he finished with the worst passer rating by any winning quarterback — 22.6. Play after play, he played down to his age.

Jerome Bettis, Detroit's favorite son, gained only 43 yards in what turned out to be his final game, a nondescript performance by one of football's most unforgettable runners.

In fact, the entire Pittsburgh offense had little to crow about, other than two plays that were enough to bring coach Bill Cowher his first championship.

The first was some old-fashioned rust-belt offense: Hand the ball off and clear a path. Pulling left guard Alan Faneca opened a huge hole for Willie Parker on the second play of the second half, setting up a 75-yard touchdown run that was the longest in

Super Bowl history.

"It was a great play when it was called," Parker said. "They called it at the right time, and Faneca just paved the way."

That play alone could have been enough — should have been enough. But Roethlisberger wasn't up to it, throwing an interception near the goal line with a chance to put it away.

The Steelers would need one more score. And Ward would get it by teaming with the Steelers' most versatile player.

Randle El was the X-factor in Super Bowl XL, the college quarterback turned receiver who can catch the ball, run with it or throw it. He had already thrown a 51-yard touchdown pass this season in a victory over Cleveland.

Offensive coordinator Ken Whisenand decided to include the same play in his Super Bowl playbook, and Pittsburgh waited for the perfect time to call it.

The Steelers had gone conservative all game, getting away from the air-it-out approach that helped them win three playoff games on the road. The last thing the Seahawks expected was a trick play with everything in the balance.

"When we called it, my eyes lit up and I had to try to not give it away," Randle El said.

Parker took a pitchout from Roethlisberger, who then turned himself into a blocker. Randle El got the ball from Parker and ran to his right, making it look like a reverse. The Seahawks fell for it.

Ward ran down the field and right past the duped safeties, who were convinced it was a run. By the time they figured out what was happening, Ward had run by them.

This one was easy.

"Certainly this is a team that uses guys like me," Randle El said. "That's what we do, use all the versatility we have on this team to get it done."

It was the first Super Bowl touchdown pass thrown by a receiver, taking its place on the list of title game trickery. Dallas closed out a 27-10 win over Denver in 1978 with Robert Newhouse's 29-yard option pass to Golden Richards.

And the guy who caught it took his place among the Super Bowl's best.

"Swann and (John) Stallworth, those are the guys that made spectacular catches in the Super Bowl," Ward said. "And I wanted to be compared to those guys. I think you can put me on the list now with those guys."

## Steelers, Stones find satisfaction

By BARRY WILNER  
AP Football Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Nearly all the Pittsburgh Steelers split the driving on this super Bus ride.

From Willie Parker's record-setting run to the Antwaan Randle El-to-Hines Ward trickery, from coach Bill Cowher's validation to Ike Taylor's key interception, everyone contributed.

His teammates did so well in Sunday's 21-10 Super Bowl victory over the Seattle Seahawks that Jerome Bettis barely was needed during his homecoming and farewell.

"That doesn't mean his celebration of an NFL championship was muted. No, Bettis got as much satisfaction as anyone at Ford Field — including Mick Jagger, who rocked to his signature song at halftime, then saw the Steelers (14-5) roll to their first title in 26 years.

"This is why I started 13 years ago, on this quest," Bettis said. "Along the way, I amassed a lot of yards and a lot of Pro Bowls, but none of that was significant because it wasn't the team goals. The team goal has always been to win a championship, and now I have a championship."

And, finally, on Cowher: The Jaw got an NFL title in his 14th season as Pittsburgh's coach, the longest tenure in the NFL. The tough guy, who lost his only previous Super Bowl 10 years ago to Dallas, teared up as he walked to midfield, Terrible Towels waving everywhere around him, and embraced Seahawks coach Mike Holmgren.

"It's a very humbling experience right now," Cowher said. "It's surreal. I'm going to tell you, this is a special group of coaches, a special group of players. I was one small part of this."

Ward, the MVP and everyone else had a big hand in earning the Steelers' record-tying fifth Super Bowl crown, matching San Francisco and Dallas. The other four were won in the Steel Curtain era, led by the likes of Mean Joe Greene, Terry Bradshaw and Franco Harris.

These Steelers don't have Hall of Famers like that — outside of owner Dan Rooney and, in another five years, Bettis, the league's No. 5 all-time rusher. Indeed, they didn't have a player in the lineup Sunday who'd ever appeared in a Super Bowl.

But they had Parker, the second-year runner who brought much-needed speed to the backfield. Moments after the Rolling Stones' rollicking halftime show,



Pittsburgh Steelers' Casey Hampton sacks Seattle Seahawks' quarterback Matt Hasselbeck in the fourth quarter of Super Bowl XL Sunday in Detroit.

Parker broke a record 75-yard touchdown run for a 14-3 lead.

"To be able to make those quick strikes and zap them a bit gave us a boost," said guard Alan Faneca, whose block cleared Parker's way.

Taylor's interception and 24-yard runback of Matt Hasselbeck's poor pass early in the fourth quarter set up the most dynamic play.

Versatile wideout Randle El, a quarterback in college, took a handoff from Parker, sprinted right and threw perfectly to Ward for a 43-yard TD with 9:04 remaining. It was the first Super Bowl touchdown pass by a receiver.

With the way the Seahawks (15-4) were self-destructing, that was more than enough for Pittsburgh's eighth straight victory. The first sixth seed to win a Super Bowl, the Steelers beat the NFL's top four teams: Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Denver and Seattle, all away from home.

The Steelers were the home team Sunday, but chose to wear white because, Cowher said, "It was an away game. We didn't play at Heinz Field."

Perhaps at Hines' field, though, Ward had five receptions for 123 yards and the clinching touchdown.

It could have been better, Ward admitted, citing some dropped passes — including what would have been Pittsburgh's first touchdown — and

failing to stop Michael Boulware's interception.

"Yeah, because the great ones don't miss balls in the Super Bowl," he said, "and I want to be considered one of the greats. To be MVP is a great honor, but I left some plays on the field."

So did Ben Roethlisberger, at 23 the youngest quarterback to win a Super Bowl. Yet he did not notch as many plays as Seattle did.

While NFL MVP Shaun Alexander did his part by running for 95 yards, the Seahawks looked nothing like a team that rampaged through the NFC. They had four penalties for 40 yards in the opening half, one that nullified a touchdown pass.

The second half wasn't much better, the only highlight a record 76-yard interception return by Kelly Herndon that set up Hasselbeck's 16-yard TD pass to Jerome Stevens.

"I told them, they've played better before than they played today," said Holmgren, who failed to become the first coach to win Super Bowls with two franchises. "We did some things that were uncharacteristic of us."

So did the Steelers, but they were resourceful enough to overcome the errors.

Roethlisberger scored on a 1-yard dive late in the first half, needing instant replay to make the touchdown stand. And it was the second-year QB and not Bettis who made the key runs late in

the game.

Bettis wound up with 43 yards on 14 carries in his final game.

"I decided to come back to win a championship and mission accomplished," he said. "So with that, I have to bid farewell. We brought the championship back home."

### Super Bowl XL

At Detroit		
Seattle	3 0 7 0 — 10	
Pittsburgh	0 7 7 7 — 21	
First Quarter		
SEA—FG Brown 47, 22		
Second Quarter		
P1—Roethlisberger 1 run (Hood kick), 1:55		
Third Quarter		
P1—Parker 75 run (Hood kick), 14:38		
SEA—Stevens 16 pass from Hasselbeck (Brown kick), 6:45		
Fourth Quarter		
P1—Ward 43 pass from Randle El (Hood kick), 8:50		
A—68,206		
Sea	Pit	
First downs	20	14
Total Net Yards	395	339
Rushes-yards	25-137	33-181
Passing	259	158
Punt Returns	4-27	2-32
Kickoff Returns	4-71	7-43
Interceptions Ret.	2-75	1-24
Comp-Att-Int	26-49-1	10-22-2
Sacked-Yards Lost	3-14	1-8
Fumbles	6-50-2	5-48-7
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	7-70	3-20
Time of Possession	32:02	28:58
INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS		
RUSHING—Seattle: Alexander 20-95, Hasselbeck 3-35, Strong 2-7, Pittsburgh: Parker 10-93, Bettis 14-43, Roethlisberger 7-25, Ward 1-18, Hayes 1-2.		
PASSING—Seattle: Hasselbeck 26-49-1-273, Pittsburgh: Roethlisberger 9-21-2-123, Randle El 1-1-0-43.		
RECEIVING—Seattle: Ingram 6-70, Juniorius 5-93, Jackson 5-50, Stevens 3-25, Strong 2-15, Hanson 2-12, Alexander 2-2, Morris 1-6 Pittsburgh: Ward 5-123, Randle El 3-22, Wilson 1-20, Parker 1-1.		
MISSED FIELD GOALS—Seattle: Brown 54 (WR), 50 (WR).		



Pittsburgh Steelers' Jerome Bettis and Hines Ward celebrate after the Steelers' 21-10 win over the Seattle Seahawks in Super Bowl XL Sunday in Detroit. Ward was named most valuable player of the game.