The Steelers rank No. 1 in the NFL in total defense and have registered 27 sacks for 182 lost yards.

The Browns take on Ben Roethlisberger, Rashard Mendenhall, James Harrison and the Pittsburgh Steelers under the bright lights of Thursday Night Football on NFL Network.

The wait has come to an end.

After more than 11 months, the Cleveland Browns and Pittsburgh Steelers will renew their long-standing rivalry Thursday night at Heinz Field. The Browns (4-8) are 56-60-0 all-time against the Steelers (9-3) in the regular season and 21-37-0 in road games.

Quarterback Ben Roethlisberger leads the Steelers offense into the game. This season, Roethlisberger has completed 260 of 408 attempts for 3,246 yards and 19 touchdowns against 10 interceptions. He has, however, been sacked 34 times for 217 lost yards.

“He can make plays, no matter how pretty it’s supposed to look,” Browns coach Pat Shurmur said. “He finds a way -- with guys hanging all over him -- to get the ball out. It may be a five-yard pass that turns into a 20-yard gain. He’s also done that by throwing the ball down the field. Like all quarterbacks, you need to find a way to get pressure on him and I think that’s the best way to try and disrupt him. We’ve got to get pressure on him and then, see if we can knock him off his mark.”

Although Roethlisberger has been sacked 34 times, getting the eight-year veteran to the ground is not an easy feat. Roethlisberger checks in at 6-foot-5 and 241 pounds.

“Depending on how you’re coming at him, you’ve got to get the arm, get the throwing arm and a good piece of it because at least that makes him stop,” defensive coordinator Dick Jauron said. “He is so big, not bigger than the defensive linemen, but he’s certainly bigger than most quarterbacks. He’s thick and very athletic. He’s got great balance and is hard to get down. He’s got an uncanny knack of holding onto the ball somehow, even when you get him from the blindside. He’s playing at a very high level.”

When he has been able to stay upright and mobile, Roethlisberger has delivered touchdown passes to nine different receivers. Wide receiver Mike Wallace has been his favorite target and has accounted for eight touchdowns and 977 yards on 58 receptions. Wallace, who leads the Steelers in all major receiving categories, caught touchdowns of 29 and 56 yards against the Browns last year.

Wallace has developed his skills as a route-runner and added it to his speed. He could be defended by second-year Browns cornerback Joe Haden, who has 17 pass breakups on the season and is tied for the NFL lead in that category. Haden ranks second in the NFL with 35 pass breakups since the start of the 2010 season.

“He’s very fast,” Jauron said of Wallace. “They have a group of receivers that run extremely well and perform at a high level, but really stretch you coming off the ball. They come off the ball fast

and they push it at you down the field. With a quarterback that's got the arm strength that he has and the accuracy he's playing with, it makes it difficult. He's definitely more than a speedster, but he's extremely fast and he's quick."

While Haden, linebacker D'Qwell Jackson and the Browns defense deal with the Steelers' fast receiving corps and tough quarterback, the offense must find a way to stop the aggressive pass rush brought about by Pittsburgh's linebackers.

LaMarr Woodley, who is doubtful for Thursday's game with a hamstring injury, leads the team with nine sacks for 68.5 yards. Kent State product James Harrison has eight sacks, despite missing a month of the season with a fractured orbital bone. Harrison registered all three of Pittsburgh
's sacks in a 35-7 win over the Cincinnati Bengals last Sunday.

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"They're tough, physical guys that fly around," quarterback Colt McCoy said. "They're a veteran group and we're young. They know the twists; they know the blitzes; they know what gaps they're going to go in. We've just got to trust each other, trust the guys up front and I thought they did a really nice job last week, especially in the first half, of handling some of the things that Baltimore was bringing. We've just got to go out there and execute."