

Week 9



- Snyder: San Francisco handles its QB better. R2
- Good isn't quite good enough for the defense. R3

49ers 19, Redskins 11



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SECTION R

“I’m not saying that John [Beck] played the perfect game – I’m not trying to go that way – but as a head coach, you know that you’ve got to have 11 pieces of the puzzle. And if you don’t, everybody looks pretty ordinary.”

— Mike Shanahan



ROD LAMKEY JR./THE WASHINGTON TIMES

ABOVE: Redskins receiver Terrence Austin fumbles as he’s tackled by 49ers linebacker Patrick Willis during the fourth quarter. **BELOW:** Redskins quarterback John Beck keeps his arm limber in the third quarter as coach Mike Shanahan patrols the sideline. Beck threw for a touchdown and was intercepted once while making his third straight start (all losses) after Shanahan decided to go with him over Rex Grossman.

SLIPPING AWAY

It seems team is ready to come apart at seams



DAN DALY

It’s all coming apart for the Washington Redskins. You can feel it with every incomplete pass, every stuffed run, every missed tackle, every senseless penalty. Mike Shanahan’s grand plan, whatever it was, is looking

more and more like the jottings of the Nutty Professor. Maybe it’s time to start calling him Sherman instead of Shanny — and calling the Redskins the Klumps.

The Klumps lost to the San Francisco 49ers 19-11 Sunday at FedEx Field and, frankly, it wasn’t that close. The week before, it was Buffalo 23, Klumps 0. Ask yourself: Have the Klumps — I mean the Redskins — ever seemed further from winning a football game? Victory is so distant, it might be beyond the reach of the Hubble telescope.

What makes it even harder to

» see DALY | R2



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Mistakes continue to plague Washington as losing streak hits four

By RICH CAMPBELL
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Terrence Austin stood in solitude at his stall inside a quiet Washington Redskins’ locker room late Sunday afternoon, stewing over his mistakes that contributed to their 19-11 loss to the San Francisco 49ers.

There was his illegal crackback block that cost the Redskins’ offense 15 yards near the end of the third quarter. He also lost a fumble in the fourth.

Coach Mike Shanahan believes young players’ miscues, plenty of which marked this ugly defeat, are the foundation for future success. But that was no consolation for the second-year wide receiver after Washington’s fourth straight loss.

Austin pulled his chain over his head, made sure the pendant — a football with a ‘T’ affixed to the middle — was facing forward and sighed.

“I think that that’s just a nice way to put it,” Austin said. “Coach believes in us, and he understands that’s going to be tough, but I’ll take it personal. We understand that we’ve got to fill in for the guys that’s been gone because of injury, but it’s part of being professionals. We’ve just got to pay a lot more attention to detail, including me.”

This is what Shanahan’s second season has come to. What began so promisingly with three wins in the first four games has devolved into an evaluative exercise by the halfway point.

» see REDSKINS | R3

UNFLAGGING SUPPORT FROM STAR-SPANGLED FANS



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Erin Thompson (aka Betskins Ross) and her husband, Tim Thompson (aka Uncle Skins), observe the national anthem before Sunday's game. **Photo gallery:** www.washingtontimes.com/multimedia

49ers' model shines a light on Shanahan's miscalculations



DERON SNYDER

In terms of quarterbacks who played college football in the state of Utah, it appears that the Washington Redskins have the wrong one. While few in the NFL thought much of either former Brigham Young star John Beck or former Utah star Alex Smith entering this season, the Redskins might squeal in joy if they employed the latter rather than the former.

Look at the San Francisco 49ers' formula for success, which has netted them a near-perfect record after Sunday's 19-11 victory at FedEx Field: Strong ground game + stout defense + solid special teams = 7-1.

The quarterback's part in the equation is simple: don't screw it up.

The Niners entered Sunday with the NFL's fewest pass attempts per game, 26.4. Smith has responded with his best season ever. He had a career passer rating of 72.1 before coach John Harbaugh took over. At kickoff, Smith's rating for the season was 95.7. He recorded a 109.7 for the game, eclipsing the century mark for the third time this year.

That's the type of performance Redskins coach Mike Shanahan envisioned for Beck. But so far there's no indication that Beck can be even a poor man's Smith. And this year's Smith is a lot better than previous models.

"I'm just playing better football," Smith said after completing 17 of 24 passes for 200 yards, one touchdown and no interceptions. "There's no magic. Coaches are putting us in great situations and guys around me are playing football at a high level. I think they deserve the credit."

Shanahan thought he could get away with Beck and/or Rex Grossman, largely because he thought the other elements would be in place. His renowned zone-blocking running game supposedly would churn out yardage like San Francisco. Niners halfback Frank Gore, the league's fifth-leading rusher entering Sunday, rushed for 107 yards against Washington, his fifth consecutive game with at least 100 yards.

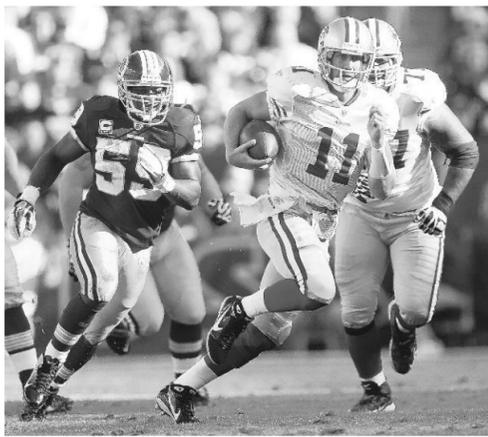
The Redskins rushed for less than half of Gore's total, netting just 52 yards.

Shanahan has caught plenty of heat for gambling on these quarterbacks, and rightfully so. But he compounded that miscalculation by failing to build a stronger offensive line. Beck and/or Grossman were going to need a reliable ground attack to enjoy any success, and it hasn't materialized.

Shanahan either thought too highly of his scheme, overestimated the O-line talent, missed out on better alternatives or all of the above. The lack of a running game plays right into a defense's hands, which are eager to swat or swipe the uninspiring passes that follow.

"Balance with the run and the pass game, using the run to set up the play-action — that's what we go for when we head into a game," said Beck, who completed 14 passes to halfback Roy Helu and a combined 16 to everyone else. "But I think some of it might be skewed because of the situation at the end of the game where you're trying to come back and put points on the board fast. You have to throw the ball more and try to get it in chunks."

Ask Smith how that used to work out for him. He threw for nearly 2,900 yards in 2006 ... when the Niners fin-



PRATIK SHAH/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

San Francisco quarterback Alex Smith provides the type of production the Redskins wish they could get out of John Beck.

ished 7-9. Unless you're Aaron Rodgers, Tom Brady, Peyton Manning, Drew Brees and the like, the ratio of wins often decreases as passing yards increase.

Case in point: Beck threw for 116 of his 254 yards in the fourth quarter.

That's one reason Smith doesn't mind the talk that he's a caretaker and Harbaugh doesn't trust him to throw much.

"When we were losing and behind in the third and fourth quarters, I threw for a lot of yards in years past," Smith said. "When you're ahead and up by multiple scores in the third and fourth quarters, you're going to run the ball. People can say whatever they want about yardage, numbers and things like that, but we're winning games."

The Redskins' defense has played well enough to win games and cover up for the shortcomings at quarterback. Ditto for the special teams, especially Sav Rocca, whose booming punts help overcome less-than-spectacular returns by Brandon Banks and fingers-crossed field goal attempts by Graham Gano.

Gano came through with a franchise-record 59-yard field goal. The defense, saddled with short fields on four of the Niners' five scoring drives, yielded but one touchdown.

But the Redskins' quarterbacks aren't good enough to succeed with the stool that's missing one of three legs — a running game. They might not be good enough, anyway, but we'll never know at this rate.

At least the Niners have found out what Smith can do with proper support.

"Alex has been easy to coach," Harbaugh said. "He's just so smart, talented, and he's very tough. He does everything you'd want a team guy to do in that position. I only judge him by one thing — like a pitcher in baseball — wins and losses. He's the guy out there doing it."

Much like Beck (and Grossman), Smith has been dissed throughout his career. But he'd look real good in burgundy and gold right now.

Especially if he brought the Niners running game with him.

DALY

From page R1

stomach is that the 49ers were in the same place the Redskins were a year ago — 6-10 and searching for answers. In fact, they were worse off than the Redskins, hypothetically, because they fired their coach and, because of the lockout, weren't able to spend the offseason at the Jim Harbaugh Football Academy.

It doesn't appear to have hurt the 49ers. They're 7-1 and probably the biggest surprise in the league. The Redskins, meanwhile, are 3-5, losers of four straight, and beginning to raise eyebrows of a different sort — for the sheer ineptitude of their offense as much as anything.

Seven days after suffering the first shutout of Shanahan's head coaching career, they managed only a franchise-record 59-yard Graham Gano field goal for the first 58 minutes and didn't get inside the San Francisco 30 until their final drive, when the Niners were merely backpedaling. The 2011 Redskins haven't drowned yet, not officially, but as Trent Williams put it, "It's up to our neck."

It was hard to tell, watching John Beck and Co., whether they were trying to score or merely trying to keep the quarterback from being sacked 10 times again (as he was against the Bills). Beck rarely held the ball for long, being content to dump it off to receivers for short gains that generally led to punts. A byproduct of this Small Ball was that rookie Roy Helu, a *running back*, set a club mark by catching 14 passes (for 105 yards) — and bumped Art Monk (13 on two occasions) to No. 2. Swell, just swell.

Of course, offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan, thanks to a wave of injuries, is functioning with less than a full deck. Indeed, three rookies got their first NFL starts Sunday — Helu, wide receiver Leonard Hankerson and left guard Maurice Hurt, who began the season on the practice squad. By afternoon's end, right tackle Jammal Brown (groin) was out and Sean Locklear, who had filled in on the left side the previous two weeks, was in. In such situations, simplicity is the key. There's

never any excuse, though, for being simply awful, which the offense has been for the past month.

With the Redskins forced to "go young" — younger than Mike Shanahan ever imagined — the coach's mantra has changed. He's no longer talking about this season very much. Instead, he's talking about "young guys" who are "gaining valuable experience" so they can become important contributors "down the road." That's a big change from early October, when the Redskins were 3-1 and leading the NFC East.

Shanahan is right when he says that nobody expected a Redskins renaissance "to happen overnight." But folks did expect that, by the middle of Year 2, the offense wouldn't look so "ragtag" (Shanny's word for Sunday's performance). He is, after all, one of the great X's-and-O's men of his time (and is paid handsomely for it). Is this really the best he can do midway through his second season — dink, dunk, punt?

It's reasonable to ask, too, how a seventh-round pick (Hurt) who wasn't even good enough to make the final roster could end up starting at left guard in Week 9. It suggests the Redskins aren't just the victims of bad luck (in the form of injuries); it suggests they're also the victims of atrocious planning. Let's not forget, they've lost only one guard this year: Kory Lichtensteiger. How do you lose one guard and end up starting a practice squadder in Week 9? Answer: By (a) not carrying any backup guards on your 53-man squad and (b) misjudging the ability of center Will Montgomery to help out at the position in a pinch.

So the Redskins' losing streak is at four. They have a worse record at this stage (3-5) than they did last season (4-4). And their next opponents, the 1-7 Miami Dolphins, suddenly don't look so beatable after bludgeoning the Kansas City Chiefs 31-3 on Sunday.

Yes, it's all coming apart for the Redskins. They seem destined, in these remaining weeks, to be reminded of all the things they're still missing — a quarterback, a stable offensive line, a go-to receiver ... you can go right down the list. For the Redskins, it's already Next Year.

So the Redskins' losing streak is at four. They have a worse record at this stage (3-5) than they did last season (4-4). And their next opponents, the 1-7 Miami Dolphins, suddenly don't look so beatable after bludgeoning the Kansas City Chiefs 31-3 on Sunday.

49ERS 19, REDSKINS 11

Helu a one-man show, but offense still lagging

Rookie RB finished with 14 receptions

By AMANDA COMAK
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The numbers that defined the Washington Redskins' offense last week were ugly.

That offensive ineptitude, the kind that reached a contemptible level after three straight losses and more than 65 scoreless minutes of football, brought them to the opening kickoff at FedEx Field on Sunday with the understanding that they needed to do something different.

Different turned out to be calling on Roy Helu. The rookie running back who woke up Sunday with 27 carries and 12 career catches was to be their main target — their only target, really.

The Redskins turned to him and said, at least figuratively, "You're our only hope."

Helu knew about 24 hours in advance that he'd be making his first career start. But he certainly didn't expect to be the man on the other end of a franchise-record 14 receptions or talking about breaking a mark shared by Hall of Famer Art Monk. When asked if he knew the game plan was to target him like that, Helu was blunt. "It wasn't," he said.

Helu was in possession of the ball on nearly 40 percent of the Redskins' plays. Quarterback John Beck was shocked at the total when informed of it, and veteran Jabar Gaffney's frustrations were thinly veiled at the seemingly one-note offense Washington ran in a 19-11 loss to the San Francisco 49ers.

"I felt a couple times that I got behind the defense and wanted the play, wanted the ball," Gaffney said. "I don't

want to be like a selfish guy going 'Hey, I'm open, I'm open, I'm open,' but there's certain times that I'll look at [Beck] and be like, 'Hey, just throw it to me. Give me a chance.'"

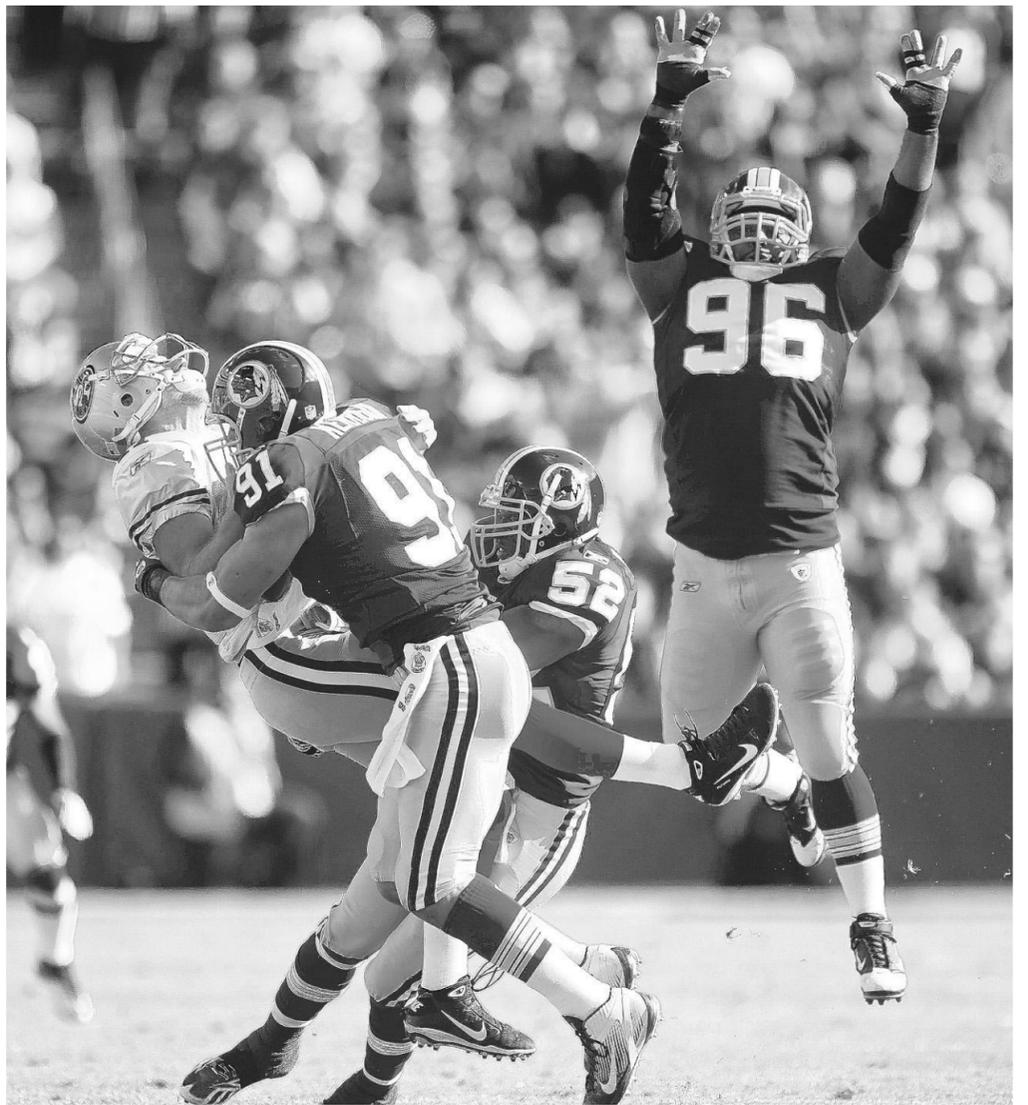
The only one who got much of a chance to generate anything was Helu, who is no stranger to carrying a team. At Nebraska, Helu found the end zone with regularity and routinely posted 100-yard games. He was the man then, too, but mostly for his ground game. His rushing game was stunted Sunday after a nine-carry, 40-yard first half, with Helu adding just one yard in the game's final 30 minutes and throwing in a costly fumble.

Helu accounted for more than half of the team's yardage, racking up 105 yards receiving, most via quick, short-field screen passes, and the 41 on the ground. His mind, however, was set squarely on the fumble — a 9-yard carry that ended with linebacker Patrick Willis stripping the ball — which led to the 49ers' only touchdown.

"To be honest," Helu said, "I don't care [about the record 14 catches]. There were other plays like the fumble I had that take away from that. ... The stats look good, but I had the fumble, and that was the biggest difference in the game score-wise. Just can't have that stuff."

His eyes rarely left the floor or the ceiling as he spoke, his frustration over what he termed "mental mistakes," close to bubbling over. But the Redskins' reliance on him left him little choice. The rookie performed well under circumstances that appeared to make him the team's only option in an offense that continued to sputter.

"Helu has got the speed to make big plays," coach Mike Shanahan said. "We have to get better offense. That's obvious. For an offense to work, you need 11 guys going in the same direction."



ROD LAMKEY JR./THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Linebacker Ryan Kerrigan (91) and the defense played well, but not well enough to offset a sputtering offense.

49ERS 19, REDSKINS 11

Again, no margin for error

Defense 'should be the focal point,' Cofield says of loss

By NATHAN FENNO
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The defenders searched for answers among shreds of training tape, piled maroon sweat pants, bags leaking shoulder pads and the debris of another loss.

Their words were calm. Measured. Polite. No fingers pointed toward the sparsely populated half of the Washington Redskins' locker room at FedEx Field where the offense resides.

"They need to rely on us," defensive tackle Barry Cofield said. "We've got a lot of free agents in here, we've got high draft picks. ... We should be the focal point. We should be the reason we win games."

Frustration seeped through each defender's voice after the San Francisco 49ers' 19-11 victory Sunday. They limited the 49ers to 326 yards. Three-for-12 on third-downs. Sacked quarterback Alex Smith twice and hit him seven times. Looked more composed and effective than the unit that surrendered 390 yards to the Buffalo Bills in the previous game.

None of it was enough. After the defense tied for 31st in the

NFL last season and ranked near the bottom in every category, it has become team's foundation. But it couldn't do what the Redskins needed most Sunday: score points. Lots of them.

Everything was lost in a swirl of 49ers fans in bright red jerseys waving bottles of beer in celebration and unending choruses of "Party Rock Anthem" telling everybody at FedEx Field to have a good time and, of course, series after series of offensive misery.

"It's tough, it's tough when you're in a situation like this," Cofield said. "At a certain point, you have to throw out the larger goals and start winning. ... You've got to take the onus on yourself to make the big plays."

The season has come to the earnest words of rookie linebacker Ryan Kerrigan, the weight the offense's troubles heaved on their defensive counterparts.

"We scored 11 points today, so we've got to hold San Francisco to 10," Kerrigan said. "We didn't do that today, so we lost."

They don't just need to make plays. They need to approach perfection.

Plays, plenty of them, came from second-year coordinator Jim Haslett's

group. Kerrigan flew across the field to belt Smith for a 7-yard loss. LaRon Landry scooped up the fumble DeAngelo Hall jarred loose from tight end Vernon Davis near midfield in the fourth quarter.

Six plays later, quarterback John Beck's incomplete pass handed back the ball on downs.

Oh, the defense made mistakes. Look no further than the nonexistent coverage when 49ers fullback Bruce Miller ran past Rocky McIntosh as if he were frozen in place. Cornerback Josh Wilson's speed wasn't enough to catch up as the wide-open Miller hauled in Smith's 30-yard pass for an easy second-quarter touchdown.

But the highlights seemed almost secondary, as the offense moved the ball with the effectiveness, beauty and good humor of the Beltway at rush hour.

"We made too many mistakes on offense," linebacker Lorenzo Alexander said. "At some point, we'll play 60 minutes."

Added Wilson: "You control what you can control. We need to get some points, to put it in the end zone. That's what we need to do."



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Rookie running back Roy Helu's 14 receptions eclipsed the Redskins record shared by Hall of Famer Art Monk. His catches totaled 105 yards.

REDSKINS

From page R1

The Redskins (3-5) started rookies in place of their injured first-string running back, left guard and No. 1 receiver. They surrounded a starting quarterback who still is searching for his first NFL win.

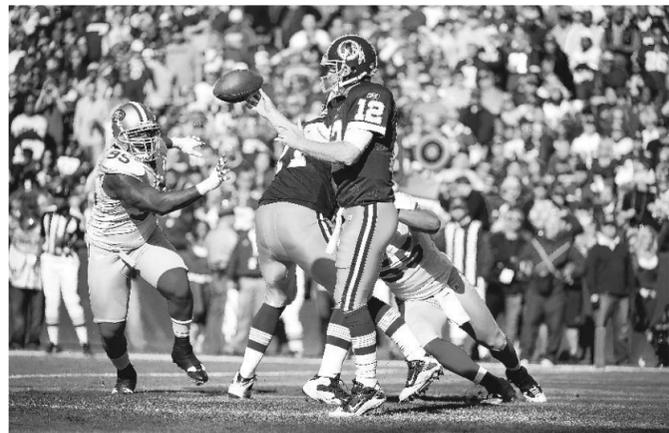
The final product was about as ugly as it gets. The Redskins did score 11 points, an 11-point improvement over the previous week, but they turned the ball over three times and gained only 303 yards.

"You could see that inconsistency [Sunday], but these guys are gaining valuable experience," Shanahan said. "Not only the quarterback, but also the wide receivers, the running backs — eventually it's going to pay dividends when some of these young guys get some playing time."

"When you have that many new pieces ... it does look a little ragtag, and that's the reason why we were so inconsistent."

If those words sound to you like a coach acknowledging that his team is not equipped to contend for the postseason, you're not alone. Not that Shanahan would come out and say that, but the last two losses, if nothing else, were a reality check.

Perhaps the coldest reality is at quarterback, where John Beck for the second straight game did not consistently show the potential Shanahan believes he pos-



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins quarterback John Beck dumps off a pass from the end zone during the first quarter. Beck completed 30 of 47 passes for 254 yards and a touchdown.

sesses inside his mind and right arm.

Shanahan, however, said Beck will start against Miami next week after completing 30 of 47 passes for 254 yards, a touchdown and an interception.

"Everybody looks at the quarterback position saying, 'That's the guy.' You take a look at one of the best pass rushes in the league, best rushing defense, No. 1 in fewest points given up, and it's not always going to be the quarterback," Shanahan said.

"I'm not saying that John played the perfect game — I'm not trying to go that

way — but as a head coach, you know that you've got to have 11 pieces of the puzzle. And if you don't, everybody looks pretty ordinary."

Beck repeated some of the same mistakes that crippled the Redskins' offense in the 23-0 loss to Buffalo. He held onto the ball too long at times and missed some open receivers.

On fourth-and-2 early in the fourth quarter, for example, Beck threw incomplete to tight end Fred Davis on a quick out route. Davis was well-covered, but receiver Jabar Gaffney was open on

a similar route near the left sideline.

"[I was] kind of open out there today," Gaffney said. "For whatever reason, John goes through his reads and a lot of times he didn't come to me. That's for coach to talk to John about."

Beck threw an interception at the end of the first quarter when San Francisco safety Dashon Goldson fooled him by covering Davis' cut to the sideline when Beck did not expect him to. Beck also said he missed some opportunities to hit plays down field.

"We came back and looked at the photos that they give us on the sideline, and there was a few where I could have waited a second longer and had a shot at something," he said.

The problems extended beyond Beck, though. Rookie running back Roy Helu had a franchise single-game record 14 receptions, but he fumbled after one of them. The 49ers turned that into a touchdown before halftime.

Austin's mistakes exacerbated the offense's plight. He was so disappointed in himself because they resulted from mental lapses.

Take the illegal block. "I was supposed to bypass the linebacker anyway and not even block the linebacker," he said. "I was supposed to block the safety. Shoot, I just didn't do it. I busted my assignment."

And the fumble? "Ball in the wrong hand," he said. "I was trying to make a play. I didn't pay attention to fundamentals, and that's what happens."

49ERS 19, REDSKINS 11

San Francisco	0	13	3	3-19
Washington	0	3	0	8-11

Second Quarter

SF-FG Akers 52, 12:43.
SF-FG Akers 34, 1:50.
SF-Miller 30 pass from Ale.Smith (Akers kick), 1:03.
Was-FG Gano 59, :00.

Third Quarter

SF-FG Akers 45, 4:23.

Fourth Quarter

SF-FG Akers 20, 7:41.
Was-Gaffney 9 pass from Beck (Hankerson pass from Beck), 1:10.

A-78,032.

	SF	Was
First downs	15	17
Total Net Yards	326	303
Rushes-yards	32-138	15-52
Passing	188	251
Punt Returns	5-47	2-0
Kickoff Returns	1-20	5-108
Interceptions Ret.	1-0	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	17-24-0	30-47-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	2-12	1-3
Punts	5-44.6	5-48.8
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	4-2
Penalties-Yards	9-55	3-35
Time of Possession	32:19	27:41

Leaders

RUSHING—San Francisco, Gore 19-107, Hunter 8-25, Ale.Smith 4-9, Walker 1- (minus 3). Washington, Helu 10-41, Beck 4-9, Torain 1-2.

PASSING—San Francisco, Ale.Smith 17-24-0-200. Washington, Beck 30-47-1-254.

RECEIVING—San Francisco, Crabtree 5-51, V.Davis 4-41, Edwards 2-30, Walker 2-15, Miller 1-30, Ginn Jr. 1-14, K.Williams 1-12, Gore 1-7. Washington, Helu 14-105, Davis 4-42, Gaffney 4-40, Hankerson 4-34, Austin 2-14, Young 1-12, Torain 1-7.

MISSED FIELD GOALS—None.

REDSKINS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1



vs. Giants
W, 28-14

WEEK 2



vs. Cardinals
W, 22-21

WEEK 3



at Cowboys
L, 18-16

WEEK 4



at Rams
W, 17-10

WEEK 6



vs. Eagles
L, 20-13

WEEK 7



at Panthers
L, 33-20

WEEK 8



at Bills (Toronto)
L, 23-0

WEEK 9



vs. 49ers
L, 19-11

WEEK 10



at Dolphins
Sun., Nov. 13

WEEK 11



vs. Cowboys
Sun., Nov. 20

WEEK 12



at Seahawks
Sun., Nov. 27

WEEK 13



vs. Jets
Sun., Dec. 4

WEEK 14



vs. Patriots
Sun., Dec. 11

WEEK 15



at Giants
Sun., Dec. 18

WEEK 16



vs. Vikings
Sat., Dec. 24

WEEK 17



at Eagles
Sun., Jan. 1

49ERS 19, REDSKINS 11: QUARTER-BY-QUARTER



ROD LAMKEY JR./THE WASHINGTON TIMES

FIRST QUARTER: 49ers safety Dashon Goldson (28) celebrates with former Redskin Carlos Rogers after intercepting a John Beck pass.



ROD LAMKEY JR./THE WASHINGTON TIMES

SECOND QUARTER: Graham Gano leaps into the arms of holder Sav Rocca after kicking a franchise-record 59-yard field goal to end the first half.



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

THIRD QUARTER: 49ers linebacker Ahmad Brooks (55) and defensive tackle Isaac Sopoaga smother Redskins quarterback John Beck on a sack.



ROD LAMKEY JR./THE WASHINGTON TIMES

FOURTH QUARTER: Jabar Gaffney (right) is greeted by fellow receivers Leonard Hankerson (85) and Terrence Austin after scoring the Redskins' only touchdown.

1 The Redskins came out of the gate with some fresh blood in the offensive lineup, and new starter Roy Helu was the focus in the opening quarter. The rookie rushed seven times for 29 yards, the only running back to carry the ball in the first, but he also dropped a pass on third down to kill a drive. Another Redskins possession ended when John Beck, who had appeared to be in something resembling a rhythm with completions to Leonard Hankerson and Darrel Young, made an ill-advised throw toward Fred Davis and saw it picked off as safety Dashon Goldson jumped the route. The good news for the home team was that the Redskins' special teams and defense kept the 49ers in check. Ted Ginn was bottled up quickly on his return attempts, while Ryan Kerrigan led the way on defense with a pressure on Alex Smith that forced an incompleting and stuff of Frank Gore in the backfield for a 4-yard loss.

2 The good news: Washington's scoreless streak finally ended at 95 minutes, 2 seconds with Graham Gano's franchise-record 59-yard field goal to end the half. The bad news: pretty much everything else. Of particular concern was the sequence late in the half that saw the Redskins go from a 3-0 deficit at the two-minute warning to a 13-0 hole 57 seconds later. Helu played the key role in the turnaround, coughing up the ball with 1:09 to play on a Patrick Willis strip. Smith then hit Bruce Miller for a 30-yard score on the first play after the turnover, with the fullback running unchecked by Rocky McIntosh for an easy score. Safety Reed Dougherty, meanwhile, could only look on from the defensive backfield; earlier in the quarter, his missed tackle of Gore at the line of scrimmage led to a 27-yard gain. Add in a drive-killing personal foul by Trent Williams earlier in the period and the news was not good for the Redskins.

KEY PLAY

Down 6-0 late in the second quarter, the Redskins faced a 2nd-and-12 thanks in part to Trent Williams' latest penalty (a false start) when John Beck dumped the ball to Roy Helu out of the backfield. As the rookie fought to set up a third-and-short, Patrick Willis stripped the ball from him and it fell to Donte Whitner to set the 49ers up at the Washington 30 with 1:09 remaining in the half. On the next play, Alex Smith hit Bruce Miller for San Francisco's lone TD of the day.

3 Washington at least kept the 49ers off the board on the opening drive of the half, but the Redskins' first play from scrimmage after the halftime pep talk saw fill-in tackle Sean Locklear beaten and Beck sacked as he held onto the ball for too long. Here they go again. Near the end of the quarter, the Redskins caught a break. Beck tried to go over the middle on third-and-3, but his pass was tipped at the line and plucked from the air by Helu, who then picked up 17 yards for Washington's longest gain of the game. The next play saw Ryan Torain stuffed for a 4-yard loss, with 15 more yards subtracted on an illegal crackback block by Terrence Austin. As was the case all game, even the faintest hint of positive momentum was always followed with some serious backpedaling. For most teams, a 13-point margin heading into the fourth wouldn't be a huge issue. For the Redskins, forget about it.

4 On paper, the Redskins made a game of it in the final minutes. But don't let the final margin fool you. San Francisco went to the prevent defense halfway through the final period, allowing Beck to spit-shine his final stat line as he led Washington down the field with minimal resistance. That drive ended with the Redskins' first touchdown in eight quarters, with Beck hitting Jabar Gaffney in the end zone, but when they failed to recover the onside kick the 49ers ran out the clock. Washington, obviously, is a mess, and it's not going to get better anytime soon. Beck's playbook has been trimmed to handoffs and dumpoffs — darn near all of them, on this day, going to Helu — and his attempts to go downfield generally show why the Shanahans believe that's a good idea. The defense, at least, can hold its own, but that's not going to be enough to salvage this season with eight games still to play.

REDSKINS NOTES

Gano's 59-yard field goal sets team record

BY NATHAN FENNO AND AMANDA COMAK
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BY THE NUMBERS

16: Yards for Roy Helu on the Redskins' first play from scrimmage, making him the first back to gain more than 15 yards on one play against the 49ers this season.

95:02: Game time that the Redskins were held scoreless over 3 games before Graham Gano's field goal to close the first half.

59: Yards on that drought-breaking field goal, a franchise record. Steve Cox had held the mark of 57, set Sept. 28, 1986, against Seattle.

14: Receptions for Helu, which broke the Redskins single-game record of 13 held by Art Monk (twice) and Kelvin Bryant.

200: Career starts for Redskins linebacker London Fletcher, and that includes a streak of 171 games in a row — tops among active LBs.

Graham Gano hopped around the turf at FedEx Field on Sunday afternoon as if he was celebrating a Super Bowl victory.

In reality, the Washington Redskins kicker drilled a 59-yard field goal as time expired in the first half. The kick was the longest in team history, besting Steve Cox's 57-yarder in 1986.

High-fives, chest-bumps and general revelry from Gano followed, even with the San Francisco 49ers leading 13-3.

By game's end, Gano's demeanor was subdued.

"It feels good being in the record books, but any time you lose the game, it's meaningless, really," he said. "Yeah, I always feel like I've got it in me."

Gano hit a 65-yarder during high school in Pensacola, Fla., but hadn't hit a kick longer than 50 yards in parts of three NFL seasons.

Gano credited long-snapper Nick Sundberg and holder Sav Rocca for setting the stage for the blast.

"We were hitting the ball pretty well in warm-ups," Gano said. "I was pretty confident. The wind kind of died down then so I felt good."

Penalties follow Williams

Tackle Trent Williams returned

Sunday after missing two games since he suffered a high ankle sprain against the Philadelphia Eagles on Oct. 16.

But two penalties — including a critical personal foul in the second quarter — overshadowed the second-year player's afternoon.

After John Beck connected with Jabar Gaffney for a 10-yard gain on third-and-8 at midfield, Williams was penalized. That wiped out Gaffney's catch and put the Redskins in a third-and-23 hole.

"If they're playing through the whistle, we're going through the whistle," said Williams, who maintained he didn't hear the whistle ending the play. "I defended and they called a penalty."

That earned him an in-game reminder from coach Mike Shanahan to keep his poise.

"I've got to tone it down a little," Williams said. "I ain't doing nothing dirty. I ain't trying to take nobody out. I'm just playing football."

Williams was also called for a false start.

Against the Eagles, Williams was also whistled for a personal foul and afterward spoke of the need to maintain his composure.

Hurt starts on offensive line

Rookie Maurice Hurt started at left guard as part of a reimagined

Redskins offensive line.

After the unit allowed 10 sacks against the Buffalo Bills, Will Montgomery shifted back to his natural center position, Hurt replaced him at left guard and Erik Cook returned to his backup role at center and guard.

"It was amazing, man," said Hurt, a seventh-round pick elevated from the practice squad after Kory Lichtensteiger's season-ending knee injury. "Obviously, I wished there was a better outcome. But it was a great feeling."

The group allowed just one sack and six hits on Beck.

Hurt admitted to pregame nervousness.

"But they were good nerves," he said. "I was excited. I feel like I was prepared."

Trio of Redskins banged up

Tackle Jammal Brown (groin), defensive end Kedric Golston and receiver Niles Paul (toe) all left the game because of injury.

Golston and Paul both said they were fine.

Brown, who missed the 2009 season after left hip surgery, said the injury was on the same side.

"The hip is going to be sore off and on," Brown said. "With the groin, it makes it kind of tough."

Sean Locklear replaced Brown. ● Rich Campbell contributed to this report.

**WEEK 10
REDSKINS VS. DOLPHINS**



Kickoff: 1:05 p.m. **TV:** Fox

Radio: AM-980, FM-92.7, FM-94.3

What to watch: The offensively challenged Redskins should like what they see next week. Then again, they couldn't score against Philadelphia's or Buffalo's low-ranked defenses.

● Quarterback John Beck returns to play the franchise that drafted him 40th overall in 2007. He'll face a defense that entered Week 9 allowing 5.84 yards per play, 24th in the NFL.

● The Dolphins turned to Matt Moore at quarterback after Chad Henne suffered a season-ending injury. Moore through his first four games had one touchdown pass and four interceptions. But in a 31-3 win Sunday against the Chiefs, he threw for 244 yards and 3 TDs.

Matt Moore

