

'SUN MONSTER' MAKES IT A LONG AFTERNOON FOR NATIONALS, C1

EXPANDED COVERAGE, R4: Confusion reigns in final seconds; Offense adjusts to make it close in second half; Williams' injury hurts offensive line

38   31

GAMEDAY

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2012

The Washington Times

washingtontimes.com/sports/football



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins cornerback Richard Crawford lunges to no avail as Bengals wide receiver Andrew Hawkins scores on a 59-yard touchdown. The play put Cincinnati up by two touchdowns.

OUT OF REACH

RG3 can't keep pace as secondary is torched for three long touchdowns



DAN DALY

Given how the afternoon started, the Washington Redskins had no real business being in the game Sunday in the fourth quarter. They gave up a 73-yard touchdown pass on the first play from scrimmage. They trailed by 17 late in the first half — and

it would have been worse if not for a defensive score by Rob Jackson. Somewhere in between, Trent Williams, guardian of Robert Griffin III's hind flank, limped off with a knee injury. And of course, the team's most threatening receiver, Pierre Garcon, didn't even suit up because of a lingering foot ailment.

No, when the Cincinnati Bengals took a 24-7 lead in the opener at FedEx Field, it had all the makings of a disaster for the home team. Except for one thing: With a quarterback like Griffin, the Redskins are never out of it. With a quarterback like Griffin, they always have a chance ... even when the defense is burned for three TDs of 48 yards or longer and the offense doesn't get its bearings until the second half.

» see DALY | R2



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Robert Griffin III (10) goes airborne for the pylon, but the Redskins quarterback had stepped out of bounds a few yards back. Griffin carried 12 times for 85 yards and a touchdown in his FedEx Field debut.

“Some teams think if you hit the quarterback enough [he'll] stop coming after you. I just want to let everybody know that that will never happen. I've never played scared. No matter how many times they hit me, I'm going to get back up.”

BY RICH CAMPBELL
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Kedric Golston stood near his locker and stroked his goatee late Sunday afternoon as he contemplated how to answer the question that has come to define this Washington Redskins season after two straight ugly defensive performances in a pair of losses.

For most of Golston's first six seasons in Washington, the Redskins' defense has been its rock, the reliable asset that enabled the team to eke out victories when the offense floundered and the search for stability at quarterback seemed never-ending.

The Redskins, though, gave up 478 yards Sunday to the Cincinnati Bengals in a 38-31 defeat and have surrendered at least 30 points in each game.

What, then, in the name of Robert Griffin III, is wrong with Washington's defense?

“It's hard to say,” Golston said. “Defense is simple. Whether you play a 3-4 or a 4-3, you've got to play fast, you've got to be physical and you've got to tackle. No matter what scheme you play in, those are just three principles. That's just what it boils down to. If you do give up a big play, you get them on the ground and you don't let them score.”

» see REDSKINS | R2

EXPANDED REDSKINS COVERAGE THROUGHOUT THE SEASON: WASHINGTONTIMES.COM/SPORTS/FOOTBALL

BENGALS 38, REDSKINS 31

Shootouts shine a light on lackluster defense



The good news for the Washington Redskins is their newfound scoring punch, largely due to Robert Griffin III's impact as franchise quarterback and savior. Washington has scored at least 28 points in each of its three games this season.

The bad news for the Washington Redskins is their newfound leaky defense, largely due to a secondary that couldn't cover a baby in a high chair. After yielding 32 and 31 points in two games entering Sunday's home opener, Washington again let the opposition light up the scoreboard in a 38-31 loss.

As exciting as shootouts might be, they highlight a defense's weaknesses more than an offense's strength. At this rate, RG3 is going to be tucked out before the Week 10 bye. The Redskins had the ball at the end of the second consecutive game with a chance to either win or tie the game but couldn't come through.

"I thought we'd be a better unit than this and I know we will be," inside linebacker London Fletcher said. "But we haven't performed at our level, especially the last two games. The offense gave us more than enough points to win."

(Actually, the defense opened the scoring in the last two games, with linebacker Rob Jackson's interception in the end zone Sunday and defensive back Josh Wilson's fumble return against St. Louis. "Maybe we need to stop scoring first," Wilson cracked.)

Something — besides the Redskins' secondary — has to give. Bengals quarterback Andy Dalton completed 70 percent of his passes in posting 328 yards and three touchdowns. Cincinnati wide receiver Mohamed Sanu was nearly as impressive in going 1 for 1 with a 73-yard bomb to A.J. Green for a touchdown on the first play from scrimmage.

Dalton's big-play touchdown passes of 48 yards and 59 yards, to Armon Binns and Andrew Hawkins, respectively, created the sense that Washington was always one snap away from disaster when Cincinnati had the ball. The Bengals' scoring outburst overshadowed Jackson's impressive performance in replacing injured Brian Orakpo, as well as another outstanding play by Wilson, who forced and recovered a fumble late in the third quarter with the score tied at 24.

But the defense's terrible moments outweighed the great ones. Last week, the Rams' Danny Amendola found more holes in the zone than a Connect Four grid. On Sunday, the



Redskins cornerback Josh Wilson comes up empty in his attempt to bring down Bengals receiver Armon Binns. Regularly let down by the secondary, Washington has allowed more than 30 points in each of its three games to kick off this season.

Bengals' receivers put Washington's man coverage in the toaster oven.

Binns beat Wilson for a catch-and-run touchdown on a quick out while the Redskins conducted an all-out blitz. Hawkins simply blew past cornerback Richard Crawford on a fly route out of the slot. Tight end Jermaine Gresham was one of four Bengals with more than 60 yards receiving (64), led by Green's 183.

"Those guys get paid, too," Redskins cornerback DeAngelo Hall said. "It's not like we're out there playing against elementary kids. They made the plays we didn't make."

The loss of Orakpo and defensive end Adam Carriker to season-ending injuries last week didn't help. Neither did cornerback Cedric Griffin's absence once he suffered a hamstring injury

in the first quarter. But it's hard to blame the breakdowns on missing pieces.

Washington's strength entering the season was expected to be the front seven, with questions surrounding the secondary. Heading into Week 4, exclamation points have joined those question marks, with upcoming opponents undoubtedly eager to pile on. The defense that seemed so stout in containing Drew Brees and the New Orleans Saints for much of the season opener now looks like an inviting target.

Defensive coordinator Jim Haslett has called man-to-man and zone and everything in between, but the points and yardage keep on coming. He might have no choice but to gamble with more blitzes because quarterbacks are having too much success once they release the ball. Sunday

was the second consecutive game in which the opponent completed at least 70 percent of its passes (the Rams' Sam Bradford completed 74 percent).

"It doesn't matter what the approach is, we've just got to execute better," Wilson said. "They can give us any call and we've got to go out and make plays."

At least RG3 gives them a chance to win, no matter how porous they might be. That could lead to plenty of wild, exciting, high-scoring games this season. Whether it leads to many more victories than the past couple years is another matter.

"I hope so," Hall said when asked if the defensive problems can be corrected. "We've got to fix it if we want to win."

DALY

From page R1

Despite their late exertions, the Redskins lost 38-31 to old friend Marvin Lewis' club and saw their record drop to 1-2. But that's not what you should take away from Week 3 of the 2012 season. What you should take away is this: This QB they've pinned the franchise's hopes on, RG3, is capable of bringing them back from any deficit, and there's no price you can put on that. They just have to make sure they don't get him killed before they surround him with enough talent to be a serious contender.

And that's a legitimate concern, considering the six sacks and assorted other body blows the Bengals inflicted on him. Griffin was hit when he went back to pass (especially after Williams exited), he was hit when he ran (by design or otherwise) and he was hit — particularly hard, it seemed — when he merely pitched the ball on the option.

"They weren't even playing the running back," Alfred Morris said of the visitors' tactics. "They were just attacking him deliberately. I didn't like that too much."

Still, it was perfectly legal — what you open up your quarterback to if you involve him in the running game as much as Mike and Kyle Shanahan do. And that's what the Redskins have to be careful about in the months and years ahead; RG3 is going to be a target, sure, but the Shanahans don't have to make him quite as much of a chew toy as he's been these first three weeks. Or to put it another way: You don't turn a Maserati into an off-road vehicle. You treat it with more respect than that (unless you've got another Maserati in the garage, which the Redskins don't.)

This wasn't Griffin's best game by any means. Cincinnati's ability to put him on the ground — often — kept him from getting into much of a rhythm early. But in the second half, he racked up 247 yards passing and rushing and directed three long touchdown drives (80, 86, 90). And in the last 1:47 he flirted with taking the Redskins 98 yards to send the game into overtime. How did he do this? By dumping it off

underneath for gains of 11 and 12 yards, then running for gains of 10, 12 and 19 (and drawing a personal-foul penalty in the process).

This moved the ball from the Washington 2 — where the Redskins had looked hamstrung after Kevin Huber's near-perfect pooch punt — to the Cincinnati 19. It also moved the crowd of 80,060 to the precipice of delirium. But that's as far as Griffin could go ... for now, at least. He was sacked for a 15-yard loss on the next play, and two penalties against Washington (false start, unsportsmanlike conduct), left him with a third-and-50 and just six seconds left. Good luck with that.

It was in the last series, unsuccessful though it was, that RG3's true grit came through. After taking a severe pounding for the second straight Sunday, he still had enough left for one last charge.

"Some teams think if you hit the quarterback enough [he'll] stop coming after you," he said. "I just want to let everybody know that that will never happen. ... I've never played scared. No matter how many times they hit me, I'm going to get back up."

Rest assured the NFL will get the message. Lewis certainly appeared to. "Obviously," he said, "the best thing for Robert Griffin III is having him sitting on the bench." You don't often hear coaches talk like that about rookie quarterbacks. They're usually thrilled to have them on the field. But Griffin can hurt you in so many different ways.

It changes everything, doesn't it? The Redskins haven't won a game after trailing by 14 or more at the half — they were down 24-10 to the Bengals — since 1991, their last Super Bowl season. There have been so many times in the past two decades when they've been in this situation and you just knew they weren't coming back, that their quarterback didn't have it in him.

But that isn't the case anymore. RG3 had the Redskins 19 yards away from OT, with 29 seconds to play with, before his protection broke down again. The Redskins may get behind in games now, but their circumstances are never entirely hopeless. Not, at least, as long as they keep this kid upright.

BENGALS 38, REDSKINS 31

Cincinnati	14	10	0	14	38
Washington	7	3	14	7	31

First Quarter

Cin — Green 73 pass from Sanu (Nugent kick), 14:43.
Was — Jackson 0 interception return (Cundiff kick), 11:00.
Cin — Binns 48 pass from Dalton (Nugent kick), 3:28.

Second Quarter

Cin — FG Nugent 47, 4:36.
Cin — Green-Ellis 1 run (Nugent kick), 3:13.
Was — FG Cundiff 36, :31.

Third Quarter

Was — Morris 7 run (Cundiff kick), 10:23.
Was — Moss 3 pass from Griffin III (Cundiff kick), 3:29.

Fourth Quarter

Cin — Gresham 6 pass from Dalton (Nugent kick), 11:24.
Cin — Hawkins 59 pass from Dalton (Nugent kick), 7:08.
Was — Griffin III 2 run (Cundiff kick), 3:35.

A — 80,060.

	Cin	Was
First downs	22	31
Total Net Yards	478	381
Rushes-yards	28-93	34-213
Passing	385	168
Punt Returns	4-24	1(-1)
Kickoff Returns	3-63	3-100
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	1-0
Comp-Att-Int	20-28-1	21-34-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	2-16	6-53
Punts	4-41.3	7-44.3
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	3-1
Penalties-Yards	8-80	6-60
Time of Possession	27:30	32:30

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Cincinnati, Green-Ellis 17-38, Leonard 2-18, Dalton 2-16, Hawkins 2-16, Green 1-11, Huber 1(-1), Scott 3(-1), Washington, Griffin III 12-85, Morris 17-78, Banks 3-29, Royster 2-21.

PASSING — Cincinnati, Dalton 19-27-1-328, Sanu 11-0-73, Washington, Griffin III 21-34-0-221.

RECEIVING — Cincinnati, Green 9-183, Gresham 5-64, Binns 3-63, Hawkins 2-66, Charles 1-25, Washington, F.Davis 7-90, Hankerson 4-56, Helu 3-20, Morgan 2-22, Royster 2-13, A.Robinson 1-12, Banks 1-5, Moss 1-3.

MISSED FIELD GOALS — None.

REDSKINS

From page R1

The Redskins lost their home opener and dropped to 1-2 partly because they failed in that regard. Bengals quarterback Andy Dalton threw touchdown passes of 48 and 59 yards, and receiver Mohamed Sanu threw a 73-yard touchdown on the first play of the game.

In all, Cincinnati ran seven plays that gained at least 22 yards. It was too much for Griffin and the Redskins' offense to keep pace with despite a spirited third-quarter charge.

"Most offenses aren't just going to drive the ball down the field and score on you," said Golston, a defensive lineman. "They look to get yards in chunks, and that's what you can't do."

It was a problem last Sunday, too. In the Redskins' 31-28 loss to St. Louis, they gave up 452 yards and six plays of at least 20 yards, including a 34-yard touchdown pass on a double move.

Defensive coordinator Jim Haslett lamented the big plays during his Thursday news conference, saying defensive backs had to improve their technique.

How maddening, then, that in the minutes after Sunday's loss to Cincinnati, three different defensive backs explained their respective roles in the Bengals' long touchdown passes.

Cincinnati opened the game with Sanu in the shotgun and Dalton lined up as a receiver to the right. The Redskins expected a running play partly because none of the film they reviewed featured Cincinnati throwing out of this formation.

Sanu, however, faked a handoff and threw a perfect deep pass to receiver A.J. Green, who ran past safety Dejon Gomes. Gomes had come up to the line of scrimmage before the snap.

"He's definitely a fast guy, but it shouldn't have happened," Gomes said on his way out of the locker room. "I probably should have backed off a little bit, but I, I don't know. I can't really explain it. It's my fault."

The Redskins' defense answered with a big play of its own. Linebacker Rob Jackson intercepted Dalton in the Bengals' end zone for a touchdown on the next series. But the good vibes

were short-lived.

With the game tied 7-7 late in the first quarter, the Redskins lined up in Cover-0 and blitzed seven defenders on second and 20 from their 48-yard line.

Cornerback Josh Wilson slipped as receiver Armon Binns ran a speed out to the left sideline. Binns caught the pass and, with no safeties back to help Wilson, raced 39 yards to the end zone. "All-out blitz," Wilson said. "They ran a speed out. I stumbled a little bit, and it's a tough route."

For all of Washington's defensive lapses, though, Griffin led the Redskins back from a 24-10 deficit to tie the game at 24 in the third quarter. The Redskins got their zone-read running attack going by moving speedy receiver Brandon Banks into the backfield and slowing the Bengals' defensive ends.

Washington's defense, however, crumbled in the fourth quarter.

Rookie cornerback Richard Crawford became the third Redskins cornerback in as many games to give up a touchdown on a double move. This one, a 59-yard catch-and-run by Andrew Hawkins, came from out of the slot.

Crawford bowed his head and spoke softly as he recalled what turned out to be the decisive score.

"We're [Cover-]0, double-move," Crawford said, his frustration apparent in every word. "I didn't even use my strength. I didn't even look back for the ball. I can't believe that. I've got to be better."

"Dude kind of stuttered into me, so I kind of stopped, and that's when he burst to the middle of the field. I've got to take bullets sometimes. It's a learning experience. It won't happen again."

The Redskins, however, made similar vows after last Sunday's loss, and here they were explaining the same types of plays.

"It's frustrating because we lose," Golston said. "It's my seventh year here, and it's frustrating because I know the type of men we have. I know how hard we work. It's just disappointing. I can't really put it into words."

Those words have been uttered countless times inside the Redskins' locker room after games in recent seasons. The veterans on offense know how Golston feels.

NFL WEEK 3

Top performers

Chiefs RB Jamaal Charles: 233 yards, 1 TD
Bengals WR A.J. Green: 183 yards, 1 TD
Lions WR Calvin Johnson: 164 yards, 1TD

GAME OF THE WEEK

Titans hang on for wild victory in OT

Lions' late scoring surge not enough

By **TERESA M. WALKER**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NASHVILLE, TENN. | Call this one Music City Mayhem.

The Tennessee Titans are winless no more after an unforgettable overtime victory over the Detroit Lions featuring an endless stream of big plays and some suspect officiating.

Rob Bironas kicked a 26-yard field goal in overtime, and the Titans stopped backup quarterback Shaun Hill on fourth and 1 at the Tennessee 7 to finally pull out a 44-41 win Sunday.

The Titans (1-2) blew a 20-9 half-time lead in a game featuring huge scoring swings. They became the first NFL team to score five touchdowns of 60 yards or longer in a game.

Detroit scored 18 straight points, then Tennessee answered with 21 points before the Lions scored the final 14 of regulation in a span of 18 seconds — the first team to do that since at least 1983, according to STATS LLC.

The touchdown that forced overtime came on a tipped desperation pass after Detroit recovered an onside kick and got an assist from the replacement officials who did not review a possible turnover.

“Both of us looked at each other and said, ‘We’ve never been through something like this in our lives,’” Titans coach Mike Munchak said of Detroit coach Jim Schwartz, a former colleague in Nashville. “It’s hard to put in words what to say about that. We

both could’ve won in so many ways.” A total of 46 points came in the fourth period.

Then in overtime, Bironas’ third field goal put Tennessee ahead to stay after a drive that got its own boost from the officials.

They announced a replay review had overturned their ruling of a catch by Tennessee tight end Craig Stevens, with the ball hitting the ground as he rolled after being hit helmet to helmet by Lions linebacker Stephen Tulloch.

After spending several minutes discussing where to place the ball, they put it at the Lions’ 29, giving the Titans 27 yards. The penalty apparently was marched off from the Detroit 44 instead of the Tennessee 44, where the play started.

The Lions (1-2) lost their second straight when Schwartz decided not to let Jason Hanson kick his fifth field goal. Hill, in for injured Matthew Stafford, was stopped by defensive tackles Jurrell Casey and Sen’Derrick Marks on his sneak, and Tennessee escaped, celebrating wildly even as an official stood over the ball before a replay review was announced.

Players from both teams met in the middle of the field talking and shaking hands before an official finally announced the game was over.

The game featured six plays of 46 yards or longer, with the Titans having five of those — all 61 or longer. The Titans even had three of those 71 yards or longer.



Lions quarterback Matthew Stafford walks off the field Sunday after Detroit’s overtime loss at Tennessee. Stafford was knocked out of the game in the fourth quarter before Shaun Hill rallied the Lions to force the extra session.

RAVENS

Motorcycle crash claims life of Smith’s teen brother

By **DAVID GINSBURG**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BALTIMORE | Wide receiver Torrey Smith rejoined the Ravens on Sunday night, less than 24 hours after his younger brother was killed in a motorcycle accident.

Tevin Chris Jones, 19, died late Saturday night in Westmoreland County in northeast Virginia. He was riding his motorcycle on Route 672 when he ran off the right side of the roadway and struck a utility pole, according to Virginia State Police.

Jones was pronounced dead at the scene, police said.

He was wearing a helmet, and alcohol was not a factor. The accident is under investigation.

Smith was notified at the team hotel in Baltimore shortly after 1 a.m. and immediately left to be with his family.

He returned to the Ravens late Sunday afternoon, participated in warm-up drills and was expected to be in uniform for a night game against the New England Patriots.

Early Sunday, Smith posted on his Twitter account: “I can’t believe my little brother is gone...be thankful for your loved ones and tell them you love them...this is the hardest thing ever.”

Smith is the oldest of seven children of Monica Chante Jenkins. Smith grew up in Virginia before attending the University of Maryland.

He was Baltimore’s second-round pick in the 2011 draft. In his rookie season, he had 50 catches for 841 yards.

Hill’s 46-yard TD pass to Titus Young off a ball Titans linebacker Akeem Ayers tried to knock down at the end of regulation tied the game only after some more confusing officiating.

After Hill tossed a 3-yard TD pass to Calvin Johnson with 18 seconds left, Amari Spivey recovered Detroit’s onside kick. Hill threw a short pass to the sideline to Nate Burleson who took at least a step before losing the ball when hit by Titans cornerback Jason McCourty.

An official threw down his bean bag, indicating a change of possession. Titans cornerback Alterraun Verner picked up the ball and started to run

to the end zone before another official ran up and called it incomplete.

Because it was in the final 2 minutes, a review is left up to the officials and coaches cannot challenge. No replay review was done.

Officials had other issues in this game, including twice announcing the offense would replay third down when it was obvious the defense wanted to decline a penalty to force fourth down.

Shades of the most famous play in Titans history, the Music City Miracle to lift them past Buffalo in a January 2000 playoff game, Tommie Campbell caught a lateral on a punt return and ran it 65 yards for a TD in the first quarter for Tennessee.

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
N.Y. Jets	2	1	0	.667	81	75
Buffalo	2	1	0	.667	87	79
New England	1	1	0	.500	52	33
Miami	1	2	0	.333	65	66

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Houston	3	0	0	1.000	88	42
Jacksonville	1	2	0	.333	52	70
Tennessee	1	2	0	.333	67	113
Indianapolis	1	2	0	.333	61	83

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Cincinnati	2	1	0	.667	85	102
Baltimore	1	1	0	.500	67	37
Pittsburgh	1	2	0	.333	77	75
Cleveland	0	3	0	.000	57	75

WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
San Diego	2	1	0	.667	63	51
Denver	1	2	0	.333	77	77
Kansas City	1	2	0	.333	68	99
Oakland	1	2	0	.333	61	88

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Dallas	2	1	0	.667	47	54
Philadelphia	2	1	0	.667	47	66
N.Y. Giants	2	1	0	.667	94	65
Washington	1	2	0	.333	99	101

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Atlanta	3	0	0	1.000	94	48
Tampa Bay	1	2	0	.333	60	67
Carolina	1	2	0	.333	52	79
New Orleans	0	3	0	.000	83	102

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Minnesota	2	1	0	.667	70	59
Chicago	2	1	0	.667	74	50
Green Bay	1	1	0	.500	45	40
Detroit	1	2	0	.333	87	94

WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Arizona	2	0	0	1.000	40	34
San Francisco	1	0	0	1.000	30	22
St. Louis	1	1	0	.500	54	55
Seattle	1	1	0	.500	43	27

THURSDAY’S GAME

N.Y. Giants 36, Carolina 7

SUNDAY’S GAMES

Dallas 16, Tampa Bay 10
 Chicago 23, St. Louis 6
 Minnesota 24, San Francisco 13
 Tennessee 44, Detroit 41, OT
 Kansas City 27, New Orleans 24, OT
 Cincinnati 38, Washington 31
 N.Y. Jets 23, Miami 20, OT
 Buffalo 24, Cleveland 14
 Jacksonville 22, Indianapolis 17
 Arizona 27, Philadelphia 6
 Atlanta 27, San Diego 3
 Houston 31, Denver 25
 Oakland 34, Pittsburgh 31
 New England at Baltimore, late

MONDAY’S GAME

Green Bay at Seattle, 8:30 p.m.

ROUNDUP

Ponder makes Niners’ defense look human

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS | Christian Ponder didn’t flinch against that feisty, swarming San Francisco defense.

Minnesota’s flourishing young quarterback engineered a stunning victory after two of his more-decorated division peers fell well short.

Ponder threw two touchdown passes to tight end Kyle Rudolph and ran for another score to help the Vikings hand the 49ers their first defeat, 24-13 on Sunday.

“It’s big, more for people outside this organization than us. We’re already confident in what we can do,” said Ponder, who went 21 for 35 for 198 yards and, most importantly, no turnovers or sacks.

After a dominant start to their NFC North tour by decisively beating playoff teams Green Bay and Detroit, the 49ers were beaten in every way.

Cowboys 16, Bucs 10

ARLINGTON, TEXAS | DeMarco Murray had an 11-yard touchdown run, Dan Bailey kicked three field goals and Dallas beat Tampa Bay to win its home opener with a delayed ending.

A week after the Buccaneers’ big push against the New York Giants in their victory formation, Tampa Bay used a pair of timeouts in the final 40 seconds after a failed onside kick attempt.

The Cowboys scored twice in the first half when starting in Tampa Bay territory after turnovers. They overcame three turnovers by Romo — two on plays reversed by replay — with a suffocating defense, holding Tampa Bay to 166 total yards.

Dolphins 23, Jets 20 (OT)

MIAMI | Nick Folk received a reprieve when his blocked field-goal attempt was negated by a timeout, and his second try was a successful 33-yarder with 6:04 left in overtime.

Mark Sanchez hit Santonio Holmes for a 38-yard gain to set up the kick. Two plays later, Folk’s try was blocked, but the officials whistled the play dead just as the ball was snapped because the Dolphins had called timeout. Folk then made the winner.

On the previous possession, the Dolphins’ Dan Carpenter was wide left on a 48-yard field-goal attempt that would have given them the victory.

Chiefs 27, Saints 24 (OT)

NEW ORLEANS | Ryan Succop kicked six field goals, one to force overtime in the final seconds and another from 31 yards to lift Kansas City over winless New Orleans.

Succop’s 43-yard field goal with 3 seconds left completed a methodical comeback by Kansas City after the Saints had cashed in on a pair of Chiefs turnovers to go ahead 24-6 in the third quarter.

Raiders 34, Steelers 31

OAKLAND, CALIF. | Sebastian Janikowski kicked a 43-yard field goal on the last play as the Oakland Raiders scored the final 13 points after wide receiver Darius Heyward-Bey was knocked out and hospitalized.

The game turned somber early in the fourth quarter when Heyward-Bey was knocked unconscious by a helmet-to-helmet hit in the end zone by Steelers safety Ryan Mundy that was not called a penalty by the replacement officials. Heyward-Bey was taken to the hospital with a neck injury.

Texans 31, Broncos 25

DENVER | Matt Schaub outplayed Peyton Manning on Sunday, throwing four touchdown passes against a confused Denver defense to lead Houston to victory.

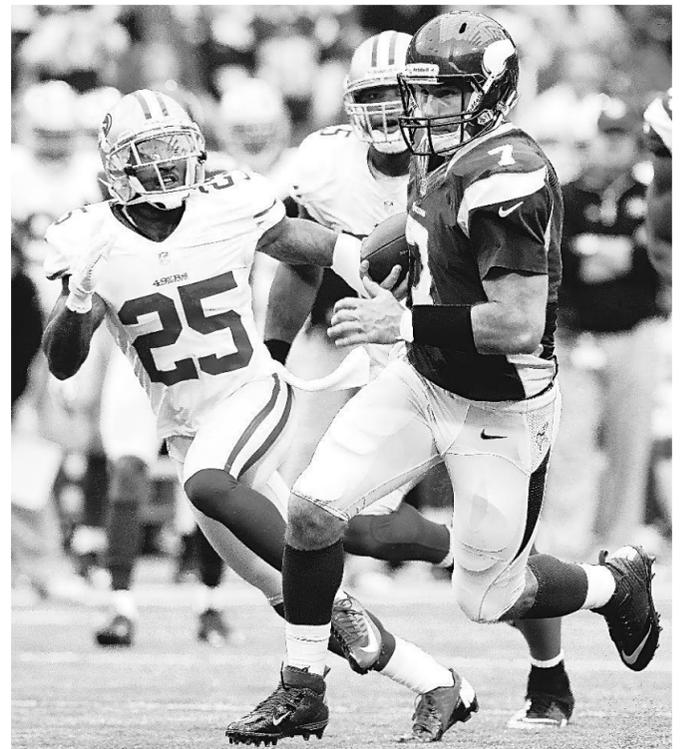
Schaub finished 17 for 30 for 290 yards to help Houston move to 3-0 for the first time in franchise history.

Six days after throwing three interceptions in the first quarter of a loss to Atlanta, Manning didn’t throw any against the Texans. But just as happened last week, the Broncos fell behind by 20 and lost by six.

Cardinals 27, Eagles 6

GLENDALE, ARIZ. | Kevin Kolb threw for 222 yards and two touchdowns and James Sanders returned one of Michael Vick’s two fumbles 93 yards for a touchdown.

Kolb was sharp, hitting 17 of 24 passes, and Arizona sacked Vick five times for its best start since 1974, more than a dozen years before the team moved to the desert. The Cardinals also have won seven consecutive home games.



Vikings quarterback Christian Ponder scrambles for a touchdown Sunday during the first half of Minnesota’s victory over San Francisco.

Falcons 27, Chargers 3

SAN DIEGO | Matt Ryan threw touchdown passes to three different receivers and safety Thomas DeCoud had two interceptions and a fumble recovery as Atlanta remained undefeated.

Ryan completed 30 of 40 passes for 275 yards, with his first interception of the season, and a passer rating of 107.8 for the Falcons, who improved to 6-0 all-time in San Diego.

Bears 23, Rams 6

CHICAGO | Major Wright returned an interception 45 yards for a touchdown as Chicago’s defense came to the rescue against the Rams, holding them to 160 yards and sacking Sam Bradford six times. That was enough on a day when Jay Cutler struggled, and the Bears came away with the win after an ugly loss to Green Bay the previous week. The Bears had just kicked a field

goal to extend their lead to 13-6 in the fourth quarter when Wright came up with the big return.

Bills 24, Browns 14

CLEVELAND | Ryan Fitzpatrick threw three touchdown passes and Buffalo overcame the loss of running back C.J. Spiller to snap an eight-game road losing streak.

Fitzpatrick finished 22 of 35 for 208 yards as the Bills turned to their passing game after Spiller, the NFL’s leading rusher, was lost in the first quarter with a shoulder injury.

Jaguars 22, Colts 17

INDIANAPOLIS | Jacksonville’s Blaine Gabbert connected with Cecil Shorts III on an 80-yard TD pass with 45 seconds left to seal a bizarre finish overshadowing Maurice Jones-Drew’s 177-yard rushing performance.

EXPANDED REDSKINS COVERAGE THROUGHOUT THE SEASON: WASHINGTONTIMES.COM/SPORTS/FOOTBALL

QUARTERS

1 For the second week in a row, the first play of the game produced a touchdown — only this one wasn't in the Redskins' favor. Cincinnati came out in a wildcat formation on the first play from scrimmage, and rookie receiver Mohamed Sanu took the direct snap and lofted a 73-yard touchdown pass to A.J. Green. That set the tone for an explosive quarter, as the Redskins answered with Rob Jackson's interception of Andy Dalton while falling into the end zone, then saw the lead evaporate again when Josh Wilson lost Armon Binns on a 48-yard TD pass for the Bengals.

2 The Bengals remained the aggressors, pulling out everything from a fake field goal (didn't work) to a Green end-around (did work) that set up a wildcat-formation touchdown by BenJarvus Green-Ellis. The latter score, which put Cincinnati up 24-7, was set up by a Carlos Dunlap sack of Robert Griffin III that resulted in a fumble, one of the many shots he took in a long first half.

PLAY OF THE GAME: The Redskins had momentum as the fourth quarter began, but Mike Shanahan risked (and lost) his final timeout on an ill-advised challenge of a punt touchdown that would've gained him only 19 yards if successful.

3 The home team looked much steadier coming out of the locker room, putting the ball back on the ground (in a good way) with RG3, Alfred Morris and, of all people, Brandon Banks to get right back in the game. A nifty spin move from Morris highlighted a first-drive TD, and RG3 tied it up with a short pass to Santana Moss after a drive contested mostly on the ground.

4 It didn't take the Bengals long to regain the momentum, as they needed only nine plays on their first two possessions of the quarter for Dalton to put the ball in the end zone twice. The Redskins responded with a 13-play drive consisting entirely of Griffin passes or runs, but they botched the ensuing outside kick and got the ball back on their own 2 with 1:47 to go and no timeouts — too long, too late.

NUMBERS

213: Rushing yards for the Redskins, giving them three straight games with at least 150 yards on the ground for the first time since 2008

590: Career NFL touches for BenJarvus Green-Ellis before his first regular-season fumble, which came in the third quarter Sunday

5: Consecutive games in which the Redskins have allowed at least 30 points

132.9: Passer rating for Bengals QB Andy Dalton, a career best for the second-year player

47-31-3: Redskins' all-time record in home openers

NEXT

REDSKINS AT BUCCANEERS
4:25 P.M. SUNDAY, FOX



on 21 touches. On the other hand, the defense rebounded from giving up 510 yards passing to Eli Manning in Week 2 by holding Cowboys QB Tony Romo without a TD.

BENGALS 38, REDSKINS 31

A bad situation made worse

Confusion reigned in game's final seconds

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Mike Shanahan watched the Cincinnati Bengals' sideline empty onto the field, but he knew the game wasn't over. With seven seconds left after Robert Griffin III spiked the ball, a false-start penalty on Fred Davis was all it took for havoc to erupt. At least one official incorrectly called the game over because that call often leads to a 10-second runoff. Not the case with the clock stopped, and the Washington Redskins' sideline protested. Offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan could be seen yelling before one official threw a flag.

The unsportsmanlike conduct penalty backed the Redskins up another 15 yards, forcing Griffin into an unsuccessful Hail Mary attempt that concluded the 38-31 loss.

"They threw the flag at us, and there was half of their football team on the field," Mike Shanahan said. "So I was disappointed in that."

Kyle Shanahan chased the replacement referees off the field, irate about the penalty. No one in the Redskins' locker room conceded the call was on the offensive coordinator — the officials never announced the culprit — but it was an unsettling ending.

"I don't really know what was going on there," offensive lineman Jordan Black said. "It was just a big mess, a lot of confusion. I don't know what that was."

What it wound up being was a comedy of errors, starting with Davis' false start penalty and continuing with the officials mishandling the situation.

It was arguable whether the Redskins deserved the unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, but this call came a week after players lamented that the replacement officials couldn't control



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan walks off the field as a referee throws his flag for unsportsmanlike conduct late in the fourth quarter. The penalty came after tight end Fred Davis was flagged for a false start in Washington's loss to Cincinnati at FedEx Field.

extracurricular activities in their game against the St. Louis Rams.

This was the opposite.

"I don't think he should've called it, but obviously he called it," linebacker Lorenzo Alexander said. "He was trying to control the sideline, and I think we complain about last week them not having control and this week he was trying to [take control]. I think a more mature ref probably wouldn't have called it."

The regular officials, locked out by the NFL without a collective bargaining agreement, probably would not have gotten the penalty yardage wrong, either. Instead of penalizing the Redskins a total of

20 yards for the false start plus the unsportsmanlike conduct, they pushed them back 25 yards.

At that point, Washington was at its 41 instead of its 46, and Griffin's throw was batted down at about the Cincinnati 10.

Many mistakes contributed to the Redskins being in that spot, but the final moments proved frustrating.

"The false start was just a mental lapse on our part. We weren't sure what was going on, whether the game was over or whether it was just a penalty. It was a dead ball, so there's no 10-second runoff on that," Griffin said. "It's unfortunate. We can't have those kind of things in those situations."

Slow to start, offense found higher gear

By **NATHAN FENNO**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The problem came down to belief.

That's what Alfred Morris insisted next to empty chairs and full equipment bags in a quiet corner of the Washington Redskins' locker room Sunday. The running back sounded like a motivational speaker, not a rookie, as he explained the adjustment that transformed his team's offense in the second half of the 38-31 loss to the Cincinnati Bengals at FedEx Field.

An offense built around a shaky line, inexperienced running backs and a rookie quarterback, even the thrill-a-minute Robert Griffin III, is an uncertain proposition. So, afternoons when the Redskins scuffle to 68 yards in the first half — less than the Bengals rolled up on their first play — then become a blur of yards and unusual formations are to be expected.

"Knowing that we're an explosive offense, that we're capable of doing what we were in the second half," Morris said. "They weren't stopping us. We were stopping ourselves."

The seven longest plays by the Redskins came in the second half, as they shook off the fumble-and-punt offense of the first half to amass 313 yards after the break.

They needed no dramatic personnel shift or emotional halftime speech. Instead, the Redskins ran on 15 of their first 19 plays in the second half and, as a result, scored touchdowns on their first two possessions. The idea was to force the Bengals to bring their safeties up to play the run, stop playing the zone defense that was effective in the first half and, by default, open passing lanes.



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Receiver Brandon Banks carried three times for 29 yards for the Redskins, who ran on 15 of their first 19 plays in the second half. Washington amassed 313 yards after the break.

Finally, they discovered a rhythm.

Sure, tackle Trent Williams dragged his right leg after a knee injury. But the Redskins deployed the option-heavy offense installed to fit Griffin's scrambling and added a wrinkle that looked like something conjured up by Navy's ground-friendly team, not the NFL.

Speedy return man and receiver Brandon Banks, all of 5-foot-7, repeatedly lined up at tailback. Morris and Evan Royster joined him in the backfield at the same time. That provided Griffin a threat to pitch to on the various incarnations of

the option. The backfield posed a question the Bengals couldn't answer: With three talented runners stuffed in the backfield, who do you key on?

Banks took his first pitch 21 yards and finished with 29 yards on three carries to match the rushing attempts for his career. His shifty running style makes would-be tacklers miss, one of the reasons coach Mike Shanahan kept him on the 53-man roster, and is gleeful to get his hands on the ball any way he can.

"Brandon is a playmaker," said Griffin, who ran 12 times for 85 yards and focused on playing more aggressive football in the second half. "He's a guy that gives you mismatches."

Added Morris: "You never know who's going to get the ball. It threw a curveball at the defense because they didn't know what to expect."

The option-heavy approach left Griffin's No. 10 jersey and gold pants covered in green as he peeled them off in the locker room after the game. He had no idea how many hits he absorbed. That was the price, as the Bengals focused on slowing Griffin and contacted him to the ground 21 times. Several of the shots left Griffin slow to get up. Most of these hits weren't glancing blows or half-hearted tackles. They were vicious introductions to FedEx Field's turf.

The stream of licks aren't new, as Griffin has been hit at least 46 times in his first three games. Yes, some of those came after designed draws and options. But the frequency and severity of Sunday's hits left teammates vacillating between concern and cliches that hits, even 21, are part of the game.

"They were trying to attack Robert," Morris said. "I was definitely upset with that."

NOTEBOOK

Offensive line was strained by injured Williams' absence

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

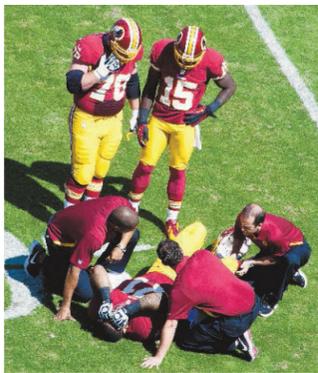
Trent Williams tried. After leaving Sunday's loss to the Cincinnati Bengals on the Washington Redskins' second offensive play from scrimmage with a right knee injury, the left tackle attempted to come back.

He couldn't stay on the field. A few plays in the second quarter and a handful in the third, and Williams had to spend the rest of the game watching as Robert Griffin III faced relentless pressure.

"That's my guy. I've only been here a little bit, but I don't want any of my guys to get hurt," Griffin said. "You can't replace Trent Williams."

Williams quickly said "no" when asked if he was concerned that this was a major injury. He sported a big brace on the right knee after the game and was in obvious pain as he tried to play through it.

"I could go left, just had trouble



CRAIG BISACRE/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Trent Williams is tended to after suffering a right knee injury in the first quarter.

going right," Williams said. "Didn't really want to risk giving up a big quarterback hit, so just precautionary reasons."

Williams was hurt early in the game as he was blocking the Bengals'

Michael Johnson for running back Alfred Morris.

"I don't know what it is as of now. I haven't even looked at the replay," Williams said. "I just felt it give out on me."

Backup Jordan Black replaced Williams throughout the game, his first NFL regular-season action since Jan. 2, 2011. He did not take too much positivity from his performance in the loss, but right guard Chris Chester expressed confidence in Black if Williams is out for any period of time.

"[Williams is] a talented guy and has a great deal of ability. When you lose a player of that caliber, it does hurt you," Chester said. "But at the same time, Jordan's ready to go. Jordan's played a lot of ball, and he knows how to step up and play."

Special teams mixed bag

Special teams coordinator Danny Smith and his units took plenty of criticism over the first two weeks for a

couple of blocked punts. Sunday, none of that happened on a mixed day for the Redskins' special teams.

On one hand, they handled a fake field goal by the Bengals well, turning the ball over on downs. But late, they were unable to down a punt at the Cincinnati 1 and couldn't recover an inside kick.

"Overall, special teams, we definitely stepped up. Obviously no blocked punts; I think we did well on the kickoff coverage, had the ball inside the 20 as well as inside the 10, we had some good punt coverages," linebacker Lorenzo Alexander said. "So overall I think we did well and gave our team a chance to win with [Brandon] Banks having a good return. But you've got to have a complete game, and obviously there's always plays you look back and wish you had."

Jackson steps up

Brian Orakpo's absence was sure to

affect the Redskins' defense, as his pass-rushing talent is taken away. But Rob Jackson, who started in place of Orakpo, made some plays early Sunday to show he was worthy of the promotion.

"That's what guys got to do. Everybody gets hurt in the National Football League," coach Mike Shanahan said. "People have to step up and make plays, and I thought that Rob took advantage of some opportunities out there and looked pretty good at times."

Jackson's biggest play came four minutes in when he took advantage of Ryan Kerrigan's pressure on Bengals quarterback Andy Dalton to pick the ball off in the end zone.

Extra points

Cornerbacks Cedric Griffin and Crezdon Butler suffered hamstring injuries Sunday. Shanahan had no further updates on either injury.

• Receiver Leonard Hankerson, who left on the game's final drive, was OK.