

MOORE'S BIG HIT PROPELS NATIONALS TO GAME 1 VICTORY, C1

EXPANDED COVERAGE, R4: Defense bends early, then breaks late
Something amiss when Cundiff kicks; Third down a problem on both sides of ball



24   17

GAMEDAY

MONDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2012

☆☆

The Washington Times

washingtontimes.com/sports/football

TROUBLE, AHEAD



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW HARNICK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins quarterback Robert Griffin III was rendered wobbly from a third-quarter hit by Falcons linebacker Sean Weatherspoon. After being checked out by athletic trainers (above), the rookie phenom was lifted from the game. Griffin completed 10 of 15 passes for 91 yards and ran one time for 7 yards in undefeated Atlanta's 24-17 win at FedEx Field.

Washington loses Griffin, then sees game slip away



DAN DALY

Maybe it's time for a new statistic for quarterbacks: career concussions. Robert Griffin III suffered his first Sunday in his fifth NFL game, which isn't good news for the Washington Redskins. You'd rather he had his first 400-yard performance in his fifth game or his first four-touchdown day, not his first bell-ringing. After all, one concussion is almost certain to be followed by another ... and possibly another.

So file the Redskins' 24-17 loss to the Atlanta Falcons at FedEx Field under Life Flashing Before Mike Shanahan's Eyes. His prize rookie quarterback has had his first serious brush with, well, not quite disaster, but concussions are always scary moments. Griffin spent considerable time on the ground, gathering himself, before walking groggily to the bench, uncertain of either the quarter (third, 6:00 remaining) or the score (the

» see DALY | R2



By RICH CAMPBELL
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Robert Griffin III lay prone on the soggy FedEx Field playing surface on Sunday as the seconds passed. One, two, three ... still no movement.

Finally, he stood, woozy and staggering a bit. Athletic trainers arrived. Eventually, they asked him the simplest of questions.

What was the score? What quarter was it? Easy for any lucid person inside FedEx Field on Sunday. But when Griffin could not produce the correct answers, one of the Washington Redskins' greatest fears became reality.

In just his 19th quarter of professional football, Griffin, Washington's star quarterback, had experienced the one — the hit from which he could not

pop up from the turf, an impact great enough to force him out of a game.

The Redskins' face of the franchise, the lifeblood of their offense, was concussed. Griffin was just trying to make one of his typical electrifying plays. Instead, he missed the decisive moments of Washington's 24-17 loss to Atlanta, which included two interceptions by his replacement, fourth-round rookie Kirk Cousins.

And so the Redskins (2-3) not only lost another winnable game, they proceeded without immediately knowing when Griffin will return to the field.

"Thank you for all the prayers & support," Griffin tweeted at 7:04 p.m. Sunday. "I'm ok and I think after all the testing I will play next week!"

» see REDSKINS | R2

Rookie Kirk Cousins gave the Redskins a spark with a 77-yard TD pass, but he also threw two late interceptions in his first regular-season action as a pro.

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

DALY

From page R1

Redskins were about to go ahead 10-7 on 23-yard Billy Cundiff field goal).

That left the team's fate in the hands of another rookie QB, Kirk Cousins, and a defense that has been anything but reliable this season. Not a recipe for success, even though a major breakdown in the Atlanta secondary enabled Cousins, on his fourth pro pass, to throw for a 77-yard touchdown to Santana Moss.

No, this game was yet another reminder that, five games into Shanahan's third season, the Redskins still aren't good enough. Or to put it another way, on an afternoon when they scored two unlikely TDs — on Ryan Kerrigan's 28-yard interception return and the aforementioned defensive brain cramp — they still couldn't beat the Falcons, who are 5-0 but, lest we forget, still haven't won a playoff game under Mike Smith. We're not talking about a powerhouse here, just a nice NFC club.

Kerrigan's score, incidentally, was the third this season by the Washington 'D' ... and the Redskins have lost all three games. That's hard to do. Indeed, Lorenzo Alexander said, "That's probably the most glaring stat. When you score on defense, you can almost always say you're guaranteed to win. We've just gotta play better in the fourth quarter and not give 'em any breath at all."

It would certainly help. But that's hardly all that ails this team. With Brian Orakpo done for the year, for instance, offenses are able to devote more attention to Kerrigan. And against Atlanta, outside of his touchdown, "I didn't have any [QB] hits, any sacks or anything," he said. "That's very disappointing. I've gotta have a better week of practice, [do a better job of] getting off blocks and making plays."

Not that he was alone. The Redskins barely missed the hair of the Falcons' Matt Ryan, who's far from the most mobile quarterback in the league. In fact, they sacked him just once in 53 dropbacks. Granted, Kerrigan and Co. didn't give up the big plays that have been killing them, but they did let Ryan stand back there and dissect them with a lot of shorter tosses to Tony Gonzalez (13 catches, 123 yards, one TD) and Julio Jones (10-94-1). It was a different kind of poison the Redskins chose, but it was lethal nonetheless.

Which all goes back to Not Being Good Enough. As hard as it is to lose when your defense scores a touchdown, it's even harder to win when you convert only one third down (in nine attempts), allow your opponent to run 33 more plays (81-48) and, for good measure, miss a 31-yard field goal try that would have given you a 10-0 lead late in the first half.

As Shanahan put it, "We had opportunities to kind of put it away; especially early I thought we had momentum." "Put it away" might be overstating it a bit, but he was totally right that "it comes back to haunt you" when you don't get more out of the first 30 minutes than they did (seven points, courtesy of Kerrigan).

Speaking of the coach, his willingness to expose Griffin to some heavy hits these first few weeks has been questioned here and elsewhere — and rightfully so. I mean, the kid is only the future of the franchise. You don't want him getting scuffed up *too* much.

That said, what happened on RG's concussion-causing play can't be second-guessed. It was Just Football — and Robert being Robert. He bounced out of the pocket on third and 3 from the Atlanta 3, trying to figure out a way to get the ball in the end zone, and was unfortunate enough to run into 244-pound linebacker Sean Weatherspoon (specifically, Weatherspoon's right shoulder). Could have happened to any quarterback.

Griffin didn't have his best day by any means (10 of 15 for 91 yards, 82.9 rating), but it was interesting to note the difference in the Atlanta defense after he exited. With Cousins, a pocket passer, on in relief, the Falcons were "able to change their scheme and pin their ears back," Alfred Morris said. That is, they could put pressure on the QB without having to worry too much about him taking off for a long gain. They also could clamp down more on Morris (18 carries, 115 yards), because Kirk, unlike RG3, wasn't apt to run a keeper or a bootleg (never mind the option).

And of course, Cousins was making his NFL debut, which had as much to do with his two late interceptions — which effectively finished off the Redskins — as anything. "Trying to do too much," he said. At any rate, it was another game that was there for the taking if they were just a little better. Which raises the question: When, oh when, are they going to be just a little better?

NOTEBOOK

Falcons focused on Morris with RG3 out

By STEPHEN WHYNO

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Mike Shanahan has made no secret that Alfred Morris is his top running back. The sixth-round pick out of Florida Atlanta keeps showing why.

Morris quietly ran for a career-best 115 yards Sunday in the Washington Redskins' 24-17 loss to the Atlanta Falcons. It was another impressive performance, but for the second straight week, an opponent was able to adjust and hold Morris down late.

The rookie ran for 86 yards on 10 carries in the first half but was limited to 29 on eight carries after halftime. It didn't help that Robert Griffin III had only two rushing attempts, and that on the second the quarterback was knocked out of the game.

"Robert not being in there definitely changed their scheme up. I already knew it was going to be that way. So I was ready," Morris said. "The defensive backs definitely were coming a lot faster downhill, so it definitely caused some problems."

From then on, with Kirk Cousins in the game, the Falcons did not have to respect the pass too much and focused on stopping Morris. Unable to get much going outside of a 77-yard touchdown pass to Moss, the Redskins had to abandon the running game late.

Early on, Morris was impressive. His shiftiness made for a second-straight 100-yard game.

"I love blocking for that guy. He can make something out of nothing, and then when he does have a hole he'll make people miss," left guard Kory Lichtensteiger said. "He's got a bright future ahead of him. I'm happy he's on our side."

Morris was a one-man show as he finished with 18 of the Redskins' 21 carries. It didn't bother him that Griffin wasn't sharing the load running the ball.

"I can kind of be happy when he does not run the ball because that means he takes less hits, he said. "He didn't run that much. Then it happened that



PRESTON KERES/SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins running back Alfred Morris rushed for 86 yards on 10 carries in the first half, but the Falcons held him to just 29 on eight attempts after halftime. Still, it marked the rookie's second consecutive 100-yard game.

he left the game, unfortunately, but it happened."

Before the Falcons started crashing the line anticipating hand-offs to Morris, though, the scheme to keep the ball in his hands was bearing fruit.

"He's got all the things you look for in a running back: He's tough, he's hard-nosed, he's a first-, second-, third-down back. He doesn't seem to get tired," Shanahan said. "He can make the first person miss. He just keeps on getting better and better. I like what we have."

Kerrigan makes a play

Since Brian Orakpo was lost for the

season with a torn pectoral muscle, outside linebacker Ryan Kerrigan has been forced to pick up the slack. Not enough just to create pressure, Kerrigan made an impact Sunday with an interception return for a touchdown.

On third and 5 from the Atlanta 38, Kerrigan was unblocked into the backfield and was able to get his hands up to pick off Matt Ryan. From there, it was a 28-yard saunter to the end zone.

"I was just looking at his release, trying to make sure that I was in the throwing lane, not to jump too soon, not to jump too late," Kerrigan said. "Fortunately I was in the throwing lane and timed the jump well."

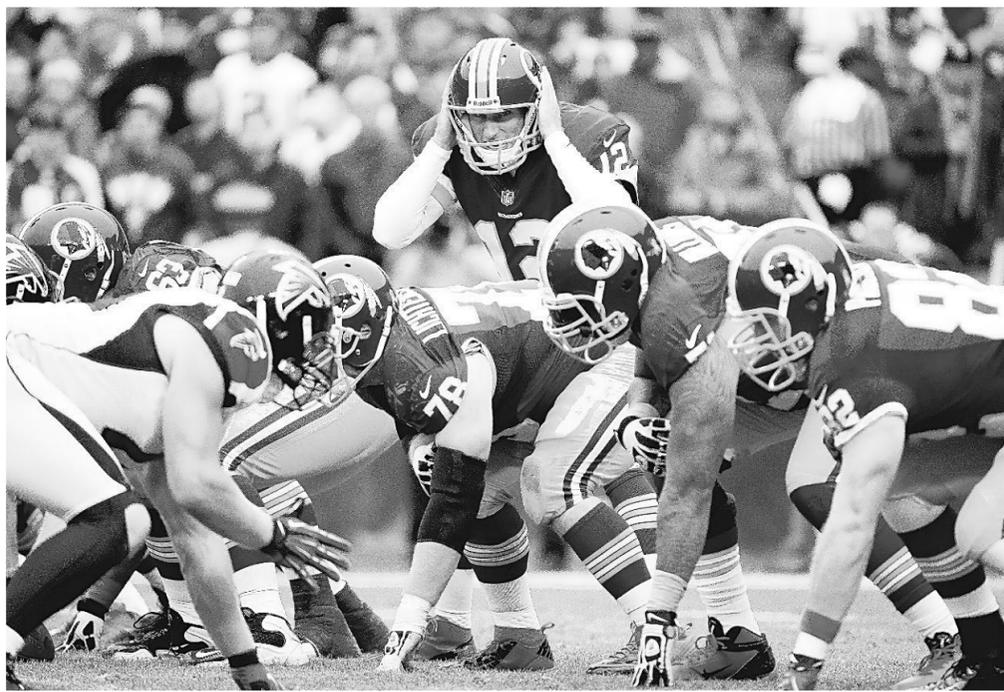
It was the third defensive touchdown

by the Redskins this season, the most since 1999 when they had four. But Washington has lost each game so far in which that happened.

"Maybe we should stop scoring on defense because all those were the losses," cornerback Josh Wilson said. "It was a great play, man. I can't say much more to make that play any better. That was a hard catch."

Extra points

Moss' 77-yard touchdown was his 500th catch with the Redskins. ... The loss was the Redskins' eighth in a row at FedEx Field, the longest active home losing streak in the NFL.



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Rookie Kirk Cousins took over after Robert Griffin III suffered a concussion. Cousins was 5 of 9 for 111 yards with a 77-yard touchdown and two interceptions.

REDSKINS

From page R1

Griffin, per NFL protocol, must pass a series of concussion tests before he can resume playing. Coach Mike Shanahan called it a "mild" concussion, so the team is optimistic he won't miss much time.

Whenever Griffin plays again, though, he will be armed with experience the Redskins hoped he would avoid but figured he would acquire at some point. In fact, the hit could very well be a seminal moment in his career.

"We talked about protecting yourself," Shanahan said. "Every game he goes in, he's going to learn, and that's why it takes you two to three years to really feel comfortable with [defenses] that can play in the NFL, to slow the game down a little bit."

Griffin did not speak to reporters following the game, which is in line with NFL protocol for a player who has suffered a concussion. Cousins after the game discussed his interceptions with reporters just a few feet from Griffin's empty locker.

Griffin's exposure to contact has been a major issue as the Redskins learn to deploy their multitalented weapon on the rest of the NFL. He had

been contacted to ground 64 times in four games entering Sunday. It seemed only a matter of time before he took the type of vicious hit he absorbed late in the third quarter Sunday.

On third and goal from the Falcons' 4, with the score 7-7, Griffin dropped back to pass. He extended the play by escaping the pocket to the right. He got past defensive end Jonathan Babineaux but slipped as he tried to plant and surge forward. Linebacker Sean Weatherspoon drilled Griffin, and his head snapped back into Babineaux.

The Redskins have preached to Griffin the importance of sliding to avoid contact. But with the goal line almost within reach, it goes against Griffin's competitive nature to give himself up on the play. Maybe, then, the hit will benefit Griffin in the long run.

"Hopefully, he's able to come back and not take any more shots like that," linebacker Lorenzo Alexander said. "We can't have a guy like him out, and any type of concussion is serious business beyond football. Hopefully, he learns from it by throwing the ball away and not taking shots like that."

The lesson was painful for the Redskins against undefeated Atlanta.

Cousins put the Redskins in front 17-14 with 59 seconds with 12:24 left by hitting Santana Moss deep down the

middle for a 77-yard touchdown.

The Falcons' defense, however, clamped down. Linebackers were more aggressive keying on running back Alfred Morris with Griffin out of the game, Morris said.

After Michael Turner's 13-yard touchdown run gave Atlanta a 24-17 lead with 2:46 to play, it was up to Cousins to summon some RG3 late-game magic.

And, as if it wasn't already obvious, Cousins proved to be irreplaceable. Cousins threw interceptions on the Redskins' final two drives.

"I wanted so badly to take us down, and I'm trying to do too much," Cousins said. "A couple of the throws got a way from me."

After the result was final, and the Redskins' home losing streak extended to eight, focus turned to Griffin's health. Washington needs him, and perhaps he'll be better off for it.

"Robert's going to keep on learning, but we've got somebody very special," Shanahan said. "We've got a guy that competes, a guy that tries to make plays every game he goes in. Just like that last play in the red zone: When do you take a dive, when do you throw the ball away? That's all part of the learning experience that he's going to gain as time goes on."

FALCONS 24, REDSKINS 17

Atlanta	0	7	0	17-24
Washington	0	7	3	7-17

Second Quarter

Was—Kerrigan 28 interception return (Cundiff kick), 10:11.
Atl—Gonzalez 1 pass from Ryan (Bryant kick), :30.

Third Quarter

Was—FG Cundiff 23, 5:56.

Fourth Quarter

Atl—Jones 18 pass from Ryan (Bryant kick), 13:23.
Was—Moss 77 pass from Cousins (Cundiff kick), 12:24.
Atl—FG Bryant 53, 7:42.
Atl—Turner 13 run (Bryant kick), 2:46

A — 75,337.

	Atl	Was
First downs	28	12
Total Net Yards	421	316
Rushes-yards	28-83	21-129
Passing	338	187
Punt Returns	2-2	3-22
Kickoff Returns	2-36	4-113
Interceptions Ret.	2-28	1-28
Comp-Att-Int	34-52-1	15-24-2
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-7	3-15
Punts	6-48.8	6-42.3
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	0-0
Penalties-Yards	2-13	4-20
Time of Possession	37:01	22:59

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Atlanta, Turner 18-67, Douglas 1-5, Ryan 4-4, Rodgers 3-4, Snelling 1-2, Jones 1-1. Washington, Morris 18-115, Griffin III 17, Grant 1-5, Hankerson 1-2.

PASSING — Atlanta, Ryan 34-52-1-34.5. Washington, Cousins 5-9-2-11.1, Griffin III 10-15-0-9.1.

RECEIVING — Atlanta, Gonzalez 13-123, Jones 10-94, White 4-68, Douglas 2-34, Turner 2-2, Snelling 1-9, Rodgers 1-8, Gallarda 1-7. Washington, F.Davis 5-54, Garcon 3-24, Moss 2-80, Morris 1-20, A.Robinson 1-10, Royster 1-7, Morgan 1-4, Hankerson 1-3.

MISSED FIELD GOALS — Washington, Cundiff 31 (WR).



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Falcons tight end Tony Gonzalez (88) hauls in a second-quarter touchdown.

NFL WEEK 5

Top performers

Colts QB Andrew Luck: 362 yards, 2 TDs
Colts WR Reggie Wayne: 212 yards, 1 TD
Giants RB Ahmad Bradshaw: 200 yards, 1 TD

RAVENS

Baltimore's win leaves K.C. Tucker-ed out

3 FGs enough with strong defense

By **DAVE SKRETTA**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

KANSAS CITY, MO. | The Baltimore Ravens had relied on their offense through the first four games of the season.

This time, their fearsome defense decided to show up.

Ray Rice ran for 101 yards, Justin Tucker made all three of his field goal attempts and the Ravens kept the Kansas City Chiefs out of the end zone late to secure a 9-6 victory Sunday.

"This game is as hard as it gets," linebacker Ray Lewis said. "We knew the kind of game we were going to get out of these guys. We knew it would be a tough sled. For us to come in and just keep fighting, keep fighting, keep fighting, that's the one thing we talked about. ... Today was a big win for us."

Joe Flacco threw for 187 yards and was picked off once, but the Ravens (4-1) still were able to muster enough points to beat the Chiefs (1-4), who turned ball over four more times.

Matt Cassel threw for just 92 yards, was intercepted twice and credited with two lost fumbles before leaving in the fourth quarter with what the Chiefs described as a head injury.

The Chiefs have committed 19 turnovers through their first five games, the most this early since the New Orleans Saints had 21 of them to start the 1997 season.

Brady Quinn entered the game in place of Cassel and led Kansas City downfield, but a pass interference penalty by Dexter McCcluster negated what would have been a go-ahead touchdown pass to Dwayne Bowe. The Chiefs had to settle for another field

goal by Ryan Succop and play defense.

The Ravens managed to convert two third downs and run out the clock.

Jamaal Charles ran 30 times for 140 yards for the Chiefs, all but 15 yards coming in the first half. Bowe caught six passes for 60 yards — but his one catch that didn't count proved critical.

Quinn, who was 3 of 3 for 32 yards passing on his only series, was greeted by applause from Kansas City fans when he entered the game. Some of them had paid for a banner to be flown behind an airplane before the game asking for Cassel to be benched — and for Chiefs ownership to fire general manager Scott Pioli, the architect of a team that can't stop beating itself.

Kansas City spent most of the first half handing off to Charles and backup running back Shaun Draughn, doing everything in their power to keep from having to make Cassel win the game.

Charles responded most of the first two quarters, routinely gashing the Ravens defense for big gains. He had 125 yards rushing at halftime, more yards than Baltimore had as an offense.

The Ravens' veteran defense, anchored by Lewis and Ed Reed, always responded with its back against the wall, though. They forced a punt, a fumble on a pitch from Cassel to Cyrus Gray and an interception the first three times Kansas City ventured into their territory.

Baltimore took advantage of the Chiefs' first turnover when Tucker connected from 28 yards out with 1:21 left in the first quarter, but Flacco and Co. couldn't get much else going on offense.

Flacco was just 7 of 17 for 64 yards and was sacked twice in the first half.



Baltimore linebacker Courtney Upshaw (91) battles with Kansas City guard Ryan Lilja to recover a fumble during the first half, one of four Chiefs turnovers in the Ravens' 9-6 win. Baltimore improved to 4-1.

Succop's 30-yard field goal late in the first half tied the game, but the Chiefs wasted an opportunity to put more points on the board. Rather than take a shot at the end zone from the Baltimore 43 with seconds left in the half, Chiefs coach Romeo Crennel elected to punt.

Kansas City had another chance to pull ahead after Baltimore fumbled the opening kickoff of the second half. Pass interference gave the Chiefs the ball at the 1-yard line, but Cassel fumbled the snap and Reed recovered it, keeping the game knotted 3-all.

Tucker added a 26-yard field goal

moments later, and after Cassel was picked off on a pass that bounced off Bowe's helmet, Tucker hit again from 39 yards to make it 9-3.

Cassel was hurt midway through the fourth quarter when he was tackled by Haloti Ngata while completing a pass to Charles out of the backfield.

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
New England	3	2	0	.600	165	113
N.Y. Jets	2	2	0	.500	81	109
Miami	2	3	0	.400	103	103
Buffalo	2	3	0	.400	118	176

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Houston	4	0	0	1.000	126	56
Indianapolis	2	2	0	.500	91	110
Jacksonville	1	4	0	.200	65	138
Tennessee	1	4	0	.200	88	181

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Baltimore	4	1	0	.800	130	89
Cincinnati	3	2	0	.600	125	129
Pittsburgh	2	2	0	.500	93	89
Cleveland	0	5	0	.000	100	139

WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
San Diego	3	1	0	.750	100	71
Denver	2	3	0	.400	135	114
Oakland	1	3	0	.250	67	125
Kansas City	1	4	0	.200	94	145

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Philadelphia	3	2	0	.600	80	99
N.Y. Giants	3	2	0	.600	152	111
Dallas	2	2	0	.500	65	88
Washington	2	3	0	.400	140	147

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Atlanta	5	0	0	1.000	148	93
Tampa Bay	1	3	0	.250	82	91
Carolina	1	4	0	.200	92	125
New Orleans	0	4	0	.000	110	130

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Minnesota	4	1	0	.800	120	79
Chicago	4	1	0	.800	149	71
Green Bay	2	3	0	.400	112	111
Detroit	1	3	0	.250	100	114

WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Arizona	4	1	0	.800	94	78
San Francisco	4	1	0	.800	149	68
St. Louis	3	2	0	.600	96	94
Seattle	3	2	0	.600	86	70

THURSDAY'S GAME

St. Louis 17, Arizona 3

SUNDAY'S GAMES

Baltimore 9, Kansas City 6
 Atlanta 24, Washington 17
 Pittsburgh 16, Philadelphia 14
 Indianapolis 30, Green Bay 27
 N.Y. Giants 41, Cleveland 27
 Miami 17, Cincinnati 13
 Seattle 16, Carolina 12
 Chicago 41, Jacksonville 3
 San Francisco 45, Buffalo 3
 Minnesota 30, Tennessee 7
 New England 31, Denver 21
 San Diego at New Orleans, late
 Open: Dallas, Detroit, Oakland, Tampa Bay

MONDAY'S GAMES

Houston at N.Y. Jets, 8:30 p.m.

ROUNDUP

Luck, Colts honor ailing coach with win

ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS | All Chuck Pagano asked the Colts to do was focus on football.

Andrew Luck and Reggie Wayne did that — and a little more to help their hospitalized coach feel at ease.

The rookie quarterback and veteran receiver connected at the most critical moments, including a 4-yard touchdown pass with 35 seconds left to complete the Colts' second-half rally and stun Green Bay 30-27 on perhaps the most emotional day in Lucas Oil Stadium history.

"I'm sure we were all lying to everybody the whole week, trying to downplay it," Luck said after throwing for a career-high 362 yards. "I think we all went out there wanting to do it for Chuck more than anything else."

It's a day nobody in Indy or around the league will soon forget.

Pagano made it perfectly clear Friday, in an emotional email to players and coaches, that he didn't want guys playing for him; he simply wanted the Colts to play for themselves and match last season's victory total.

Turns out the players wanted this one even more for Pagano than he wanted it for them.

Luck was 31 of 55 throwing with two touchdowns and one interception, and he ran for a score, too.

Wayne finished with 13 receptions for a career-high 212 yards — the second-highest total in Colts history behind Hall of Famer Raymond Berry in 1957. And he wore the orange gloves, instead of the traditional pink ones for breast cancer awareness month, because that's the color for leukemia patients.

"I just wanted to do something, you know, for Chuck," Wayne explained. "I had some equipment guys make some calls. If [NFL officials] fine me, they fine me, I really feel like that would be a terrible thing to do, but if so, so be it, I'll go ahead and take the fine and do it for Chuck."

Steelers 16, Eagles 14

PITTSBURGH | Backed up deep in their own territory, their slow start to the season in danger of turning into a legitimate freefall, the Steelers did what they always seem to do when things get tight.

They relaxed.



Andrew Luck capped his first comeback win as an NFL quarterback with a 4-yard touchdown pass to Reggie Wayne in the game's final minute. The Colts improved to 2-2 when Mason Crosby's 51-yard field goal attempt at the buzzer flew wide left.

Giants 41, Browns 27

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. | Ahmad Bradshaw got furious at himself, and took it out on the Browns.

Bradshaw fumbled on the first play from scrimmage, setting up a Cleveland touchdown. After that, he was unstoppable, surpassing his yardage on the ground for the season with a career-best 200 yards in a 41-27 victory.

"I was angry at myself for the fumble and I just used it," Bradshaw said. "I was disappointed with the fumble, but you put it out of your mind."

Bradshaw was the big story of the game, but the aerial attack was there, too. Victor Cruz made a career-best three touchdown catches. Eli Manning hit Cruz for scores of 3, 7 and 28 yards, prompting Cruz's trademark salsa in the end zone after each touchdown catch.

Bradshaw added a 4-yard run as he darted inside and outside and frequently broke feeble tackle attempts. Bradshaw's yardage on 30 carries easily beat the 132 he had heading into the game.

The Giants are 9-0 in games he has rushed for 100 yards or more.

Dolphins 17, Bengals 13

CINCINNATI | Reshad Jones intercepted Andy Dalton's overthrown pass at midfield with 1:22 left, preserving a 17-13 victory over the Bengals that ended two weeks of miserable, last-minute finishes for the Dolphins.

Miami had dropped its past two games in overtime but held on against the Bengals, who never got anything going consistently on offense and wasted a chance for a tighter finish.

Mike Nugent was wide right on a 42-yard field goal try with 3 minutes left — his first miss of the season — giving the Dolphins a chance to run down the clock behind rookie quarterback Ryan Tannehill, who was smooth in the toughest moments.

The Bengals got the ball back at their 20 following a punt with 1:45 to go, but Dalton's second interception sealed it. Dalton was 26 of 43 for 234 yards with three sacks and two interceptions.

Bears 41, Jaguars 3

JACKSONVILLE, FLA. | Charles Tillman and Lance Briggs returned interceptions for touchdowns — their second in six days — and the Bears used stifling defense to overwhelm the Jaguars 41-3.

The Bears scored 38 unanswered points, including 35 in the second half, to win their third consecutive game. The streak has everything to do with defense.

Tillman's pick-six in the third quarter marked the first time since 1950 that Chicago returned interceptions for touchdowns in three consecutive games.

The Jaguars played the final quarter amid a chorus of boos.

Seahawks 16, Panthers 12

CHARLOTTE, N.C. | Russell Wilson threw a 13-yard touchdown pass to Golden Tate with 35 seconds left in the third quarter to help the Seahawks beat the Panthers 16-12.

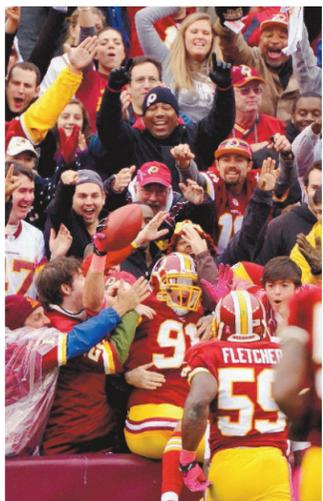
Wilson shook off two third quarter interceptions — including one that was returned for a touchdown — and outperformed Cam Newton on a struggle-filled day for the Carolina offense.

Marshawn Lynch also ran for 85 yards for the Seahawks.

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

QUARTERS

1 The Redskins' secondary got a few early breaks on a gloomy day at FedEx Field, including a deep pass that was dropped by Julio Jones at the goal line. The Redskins offense, however, was not able to capitalize, recording just nine first-quarter plays for 33 yards. Alfred Morris, who notched 27 yards on just two carries, was the lone bright spot.



PRESTON KERES/SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins linebacker Ryan Kerrigan celebrates his touchdown.

2 Ryan Kerrigan intercepted Matt Ryan and took it to the house, Perry Riley recovered a Ryan fumble and the Redskins seemed well on their way to a two-possession lead. But after Billy Cundiff missed a 31-yard field goal for the second straight week, Ryan and the Falcons marched down the field and tied the game with a 1-yard lob to Tony Gonzalez. Gonzalez had nine catches for 86 yards in the first half.

PLAY OF THE GAME: With six minutes left in the third quarter and the ball deep in Atlanta territory, RG3 took off toward the sideline and was smushed between two Falcons defenders. He left the game with concussionlike symptoms and did not return. The Skins later said he did have a concussion.

3 A Pierre Garcon fumble was overruled in Atlanta territory to keep a Redskins drive alive. Five plays later, RG3 was slow to get up after a third-down scramble near the far sideline. He left the game and was being tested for concussion symptoms when Cundiff converted a 23-yard field goal to give the Redskins a 10-7 lead.

4 Ryan found Jones from 18 yards out to give Atlanta the lead early in the fourth, but Cousins responded with a 77-yard bomb to Santana Moss. It was too little, too late for the Redskins, however, as Ryan and the Falcons twice marched downfield, resulting in 10 points. Cousins got the ball with 2:33 remaining in the game but looked skittish and threw a pair of interceptions in the final two minutes to put the game on ice.

NUMBERS

- 3:** Defensive touchdowns for the Redskins already this season, the most since 1999 (4)
- 6.1:** Yards per carry for rookie Alfred Morris, who finished with 115 yards
- 7:** Rushing yards for RG3, his lowest total of the season
- 13:** Receptions by Tony Gonzalez, who now has 99 career touchdowns and catches in 184 straight games
- 8:** Consecutive losses at FedEx Field for the Redskins

NEXT

VIKINGS AT REDSKINS
4:15 P.M. SUNDAY, FOX



game against the Titans with 332 yards rushing on 79 carries. But Minnesota is no one-man team on offense. Christian Ponder was the only QB not to have thrown an INT through the first four weeks, and WR Percy Harvin is a threat running, receiving and returning kicks.



PRESTON KERES/SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Michael Turner (above) finds a seam and scores on a 13-yard run during the fourth quarter for what proved the game-winning score. Julio Jones (below) pulled in an 18-yard TD over Josh Wilson to put Atlanta up 14-10.

FALCONS 24, REDSKINS 17

4TH-QUARTER FADE

Washington's defense can't hang with Atlanta for the full 60 minutes

By ELLIOTT SMITH

SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

On paper, Sunday's matchup between the Falcons' explosive offense and the Redskins' porous defense read like a recipe for disaster.

But a funny thing happened on the way to a shootout. For a large portion of Washington's 24-17 loss to Atlanta, the Redskins' much-maligned defense did a solid job of slowing the Falcons, even if they did not completely stop them.

"Anytime you lose, it's hard to feel good about your performance, but I guess when we look at the film, we'll see some good things we did — the takeaways, we had some pretty good coverage on first and second down — but we have to keep working and figure out a way for a full 60 minutes against a good football team like that," said linebacker London Fletcher, who finished with 20 tackles. "This may have been a good enough effort to beat other teams, but it wasn't good enough to be a team like the Falcons."

Washington got two critical defensive plays in the second quarter, the first occurring when linebacker Ryan Kerrigan intercepted a Matt Ryan pass and returned it for a 28-yard touchdown to give the Redskins a 7-0 lead. On the Falcons' next possession, linebacker Perry Riley helped thwart another Atlanta drive by recovering a fumbled snap.

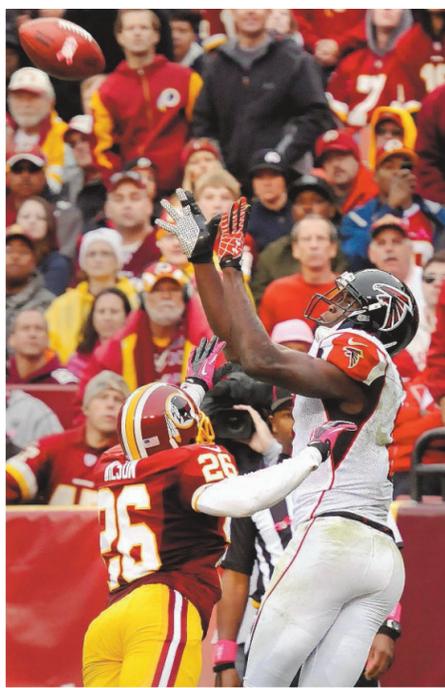
"The game plan was good, and we executed it," Riley said. "It feels good anytime you make any play, a tackle, anything in the NFL. I didn't make enough, though. That's all I'm worried about."

The Redskins have been susceptible to big plays all season, but against the Falcons, they kept receivers Julio Jones and Roddy White in check for the first half as the duo combined for 79 yards. Atlanta countered with tight end Tony Gonzalez, who had nine first-half catches, but that was a trade-off the Redskins were willing to make as the Falcons only had three plays of more than 20 yards on the day.

"I thought we did a solid job of taking away the big play and making them dink and dunk," safety Reed Doughty said. "You got a couple of incompletions, everybody's wrapping up, swarming to the football."

But the unit began to show cracks in the second half, as the Falcons started moving the ball and taking advantage of some defensive miscues.

"They did a good job of mixing their plays and we could have done a better job tackling — yards after catch were critical in the second half," safety Madiou Williams said.



Nose tackle Barry Cofield recorded his first sack of the season in the fourth quarter and followed that with a tipped pass on the next play, a big series for a defensive line that had been contained for most of the day.

"It was good to get the D-line off the schneid — D-line wise, we hadn't had any [sacks] after being pretty productive last year for a 3-4 front. Hopefully, that will open the floodgates for us," Cofield said.

Still, Atlanta finished with 421 yards, 338 through the air, as Ryan had time to find holes in the Redskins' secondary in the second half.

Corner Josh Wilson was critical of the unit's play, particularly the safety play on Atlanta's numerous double moves.

"You're asking a lot of [DeAngelo Hall] and I to go out there with these great receivers and lock them down and shut them down, you know what I mean?" Wilson said. "At a point ... we can't do everything."

Allowing more than 400 yards doesn't sound like the beginning of a turnaround, but the Redskins' defense will take solace in that they gave their offense a chance to stay in a game that could have easily gotten away from them.

"You have to start somewhere — baby steps," linebacker Rob Jackson said. "We made a step up from our first four games, and we just have to keep going. I feel like we can only get better."

Something quite amiss for Cundiff

By STEPHEN WHYNO

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Thanks to the NFL's breast cancer awareness initiative, there was plenty of pink on the field and sidelines at FedEx Field on Sunday. After another rough outing, kicker Billy Cundiff could be seeing more of it in the way of a pink slip Monday.

Cundiff, already on thin ice after going 1 for 4 last week, missed a 31-yard attempt in the Washington Redskins' 24-17 loss to the Atlanta Falcons. He's 3 for 8 since the season opener but said he wasn't worried about job security.

"It's not my job to worry, to be perfectly honest with you," Cundiff said. "It's my job to focus on what I do and make kicks."

Cundiff made a kick in the third quarter, a 23-yard chip shot. But on the season he's 7 for 12, which could lead to his dismissal, possibly Monday.

Coach Mike Shanahan, who stood by Cundiff and did not work out other kickers last week following a game-winner in the final minute, was not forthcoming about plans.

"I'm not sure what we'll do. I never say anything right after a game," he said. "We'll let 24 hours go by, collect our thoughts, make decisions you think gives you the best chance to win."

Missing routine field goal attempts is not conducive to beating the Falcons. The Redskins had fourth and 4 from the Atlanta 13 with a chance to go up 10-0 late in the second quarter. That's when Cundiff's kick sailed just wide right.

"I missed it. That's about it. Let's be honest, guys. That's a very makable kick, and I should've made it, he said. "We'll just keep it simple. Let's be serious. I just messed up. It's my responsibility to make those kicks, and it just didn't happen."

Shanahan was disappointed given that it wasn't a long kick.

"That's always disappointing when you've got a chance to get a little momentum going, especially at that time of the game," he said.

It especially was disheartening because of what the Falcons did next. Matt Ryan guided them on an eight-play, 79-yard touchdown drive to tie the score.

"It's huge. Obviously, you take points off the board for us, and they were able to drive down and get a touchdown in a two-minute situation, so it's a big momentum swing," linebacker Lorenzo Alexander said. "It obviously gave them a little bit of life, and they were able to come out and sustain it and eventually won the game."

Last week, after he missed his first three attempts, Cundiff was relieved to get a chance at redemption. Asked about wanting to be able to do that again Sunday, he was quick to give reporters a math lesson.

"You look at the final score, and obviously even if I would've made that field goal, we still would've needed four more points," Cundiff said. "So it's one of those things that you obviously would've needed two more field goal attempts beyond that."



CRAIG BISACRE/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins kicker Billy Cundiff mulls his situation after missing a 31-yard field goal attempt Sunday.

Third-down struggles hurt offense, defense

By ELLIOTT SMITH

SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The first words out of Washington Redskins coach Mike Shanahan's mouth, even before he addressed the health of his franchise quarterback, were about the one stat that killed his team in Sunday's 24-17 loss to Atlanta.

"I thought in the first half we had some opportunities to get some momentum going and couldn't make those third downs," he said. "That's been pretty consistent for us to be the football team we need to be, and be able to keep someone a little bit more off-balance than we did, we've got to convert on those third downs. We were close, had a couple of hands that were very close to making those third downs, but you've got to make them."

The Redskins were 0 for 4 in the first half on third down, and finished the game 1 for 9 in keeping drives alive. On the flip side, their defense could not get the Falcons off the field as Atlanta converted 9 of 17 third-down opportunities to wear down a game unit that played well for most of the contest.

"You have to get off the field on third down to stem



CRAIG BISACRE/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Receiver Santana Moss' 77-yard TD was a rare bright spot regarding the Redskins' third-down conversions.

the tide," nose tackle Barry Cofield said. "You have to make a big play, whether it be in the pass rush or secondary coverage. Sometimes big plays can erase a lot of sins."

On offense, the Redskins' only third-down conversion came in the fourth quarter, on Kirk Cousins'

lightning-strike 79-yard touchdown pass to Santana Moss on third and 9.

"We kind of had one third down that I'd like to have back," Atlanta coach Mike Smith said.

Otherwise, the Redskins labored to find a rhythm on third down. Quarterback Robert Griffin was 1 for 3 for 5 yards on third down, and Alfred Morris registered minus-1 yard on two third-down carries.

And, it was on third down when Griffin was knocked out of the game, sacked on third and 3, resulting in a 2-yard loss and his exit from the game with a concussion.

"I thought we were moving the ball well enough, but you've got to make a few third downs to get the points on the scoreboard," Shanahan said.

The situation was equally as frustrating on defense, where Atlanta repeatedly kept a tiring Redskins unit on the field by picking up clutch conversions.

"They've done a great job. When you look at the statistics coming into the game, they did a great job all year executing on third down," safety Madiou Williams said. "They are a very good offense. You have to give credit where credit is due. They did a great job executing."