

# KEEPING PACE NOT ENOUGH AS TIE ENDS UNITED'S SEASON, C1

EXPANDED COVERAGE, R4: RG3 enjoys a perfect day  
Finally seeing the field in 2012, Meriweather makes immediate impact

31   6

# GAMEDAY

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ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Staunch defense was displayed throughout as Redskins strong safety DeJon Gomes (24) and inside linebacker London Fletcher break up a pass intended for Eagles wide receiver Jeremy Maclin (above) in the fourth quarter. Defensive end Jarvis Jenkins (99) and cornerback Josh Wilson put the squeeze on QB Nick Foles (below) in the second half, forcing a fumble.

# POUND & GROUND

## Eagles look like they're on verge of extinction



DAN DALY

The festivities at FedEx Field on Sunday had the feel of a dual ceremony — a funeral and a birth. You had the once-proud Philadelphia Eagles, laid low by injury, age and misjudgment, getting rolled by

the Washington Redskins 31-6. And you had Robert Griffin III leading the way for the home team with a near-flawless performance (one incompletion, four touchdown passes, a game-high 84 yards rushing).

Let's face it, Andy Reid's Eagles are officially in ruins. It's not just that they've lost six straight and have been forced to start a rookie, third-round pick Nick Foles, at quarterback. It's that they're Lost in America, Lost in

» see DALY | R2



CRAIG BISACRE/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

## Redskins' decisive victory over Philly verdict for defense

By RICH CAMPBELL  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Perry Riley jumped up from the turf, fresh off a quarterback sack, and went right into a B-boy stance. The Washington Redskins' 31-6 rout of the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday featured rare occasions for the defense to celebrate, so players seized the opportunity whenever they could.

The win keeps the Redskins' faint postseason pulse beating ahead of their Thanksgiving Day game against the Cowboys in Dallas. They ended their three-game losing streak and improved to 4-6. They are now two games behind the NFC-East-leading New York Giants, who were idle, with six games to play.

Riley mugged for the cameras in the third quarter by folding his arms and nodding his head with a swagger Washington's defense had not previously earned the privilege of flaunting in any game this season.

Such flashes of showtime were the payoff for the Redskins' best game of the season. The defense forced three first-half turnovers, slowed the Eagles' cadre of speedy skill-position players and harassed rookie quarterback Nick Foles. Its complete performance injected a bit of hope into a season that two weeks ago seemed lost.

"We always thought we were a pretty good defense," Riley said, "but just going out there and

» see REDSKINS | R2





EXPANDED REDSKINS COVERAGE THROUGHOUT THE SEASON: [WASHINGTONTIMES.COM/SPORTS/FOOTBALL](http://WASHINGTONTIMES.COM/SPORTS/FOOTBALL)

## QUARTERS

**1** The Redskins went into the game winless in their past eight against rookie quarterbacks, but they got off to a good start against the Eagles' Nick Foles. DeAngelo Hall intercepted Foles' second pass and put the Skins in business on the Philadelphia 9. Robert Griffin III hit Darrel Young with a scoring pass on the second play. Washington also intercepted Foles on the next drive. Foles was 9-of-15 for 109 yards, but those two picks hurt. Philadelphia was down 7-0 and driving at quarter's end.

**2** Foles' interception total stayed at two throughout the quarter, but the Skins still tacked on 10 points and took a 17-3 lead into the break. Early in the quarter, Philadelphia basically left Aldrick Robinson uncovered, and Griffin hit him for an easy 49-yard touchdown. As the half wound down, Ryan Kerrigan recovered an Eagles fumble with 27 seconds left, and the Redskins closed the half with a 25-yard field goal from Kai Forbath.

**PLAY OF THE GAME:** Five plays and 1:47 in, Washington led 7-0 despite not having the ball first. That's because London Fletcher tipped rookie Nick Foles' second pass. DeAngelo Hall corralled the ball and returned it 22 yards to the Eagles' 9. That set the tone early. Robert Griffin III found Darrel Young with a 6-yard scoring pass on second down.

**3** Philadelphia isn't having a good season. It does have an interesting streak going. It has scored on its first possession of the second half in nine straight games after Alex Henery kicked a 42-yard field goal (his 16th straight make) in the third quarter. That was the Eagles' only scoring of the period, though. Washington's offense didn't do too much, but RG3 found Santana Moss for a 61-yard touchdown that gave Washington a 24-6 lead.

**4** Redskins fans probably would be happy with one touchdown pass out of RG3 for every quarter he plays. And that's what they got Sunday as Griffin added a 17-yarder to Logan Paulsen to close out the day's scoring. The four TD passes are a career high. It was a good day for the Skins' rookie QB. He went 14-of-15 for 200 yards and rushed 12 times for 84 yards.

## NUMBERS

**169:** Rushing yards for the Redskins, their eighth game with at least 150. That leads the NFL.

**6:** Consecutive losses for the Eagles, the longest streak under coach Andy Reid.

**186:** Completions this season for rookie QB Robert Griffin III, a team record. He had been tied at 172 with Norm Snead. He's 135 behind Snead for the team's rookie yardage record.

**169 (again):** Career victories for Redskins coach Mike Shanahan, moving him into 14th place all-time.

## NEXT

REDSKINS AT COWBOYS  
4:15 P.M. THURSDAY, FOX



• The Redskins getting back on track couldn't have come at a better time. Sunday's big win not only ended a three-game losing streak, but it set up what could prove to be an important NFC East showdown against the rival Cowboys on Thanksgiving Day at Cowboys Stadium. Home had not been kind to Dallas this season, especially



QB Tony Romo, who entered Sunday's game having thrown 2 TDs vs. 10 interceptions there this year. The Cowboys offense didn't exactly get untracked against the Browns, but Romo was interception-free while throwing for 313 yards and a TD to Dez Bryant as Dallas edged Cleveland 23-20 in overtime. Romo led the game-winning drive in the extra period to set up Dan Bailey's 38-yard game-winning field goal. Bryant finished with 12 catches for 145 yards. This will be the first Turkey Day game for the Redskins since 2002. The Cowboys won that game 27-20, just as they won the previous five holiday meetings. That's right, in the storied rivalry between the teams, Washington has never won this marquee matchup. Perhaps this year they'll make history.



Cowboys wide receiver Dez Bryant hauls in a 28-yard touchdown from Tony Romo on Sunday during the fourth quarter in Dallas.

## REDSKINS 31, EAGLES 6

## TOTALLY FEARLESS



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins rookie quarterback Robert Griffin completed 14 of 15 passes, a 93.3 completion percentage, for 200 yards and four touchdowns. His quarterback rating was a perfect 158.3. Griffin, enjoying a light moment during the fourth quarter (below) also rushed 12 times for 84 yards.

## Griffin's performance in dominant victory is his finest yet

By STEPHEN WHYNO  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

When Robert Griffin III reared back and let the ball fly down the field in Santana Moss' direction, he was reminded of a lesson his college coach at Baylor, Art Briles, imparted.

"He always told me as a freshman that [there's a] difference between playing fearless and being stupid," Griffin said. "You just have to be able to tiptoe that line."

Griffin tiptoes that line all the time. More apt to take risks with his body in the open field than with the football, Griffin knew that if his pass to Moss was intercepted, it would've been a stupid play.

"But because it was a touchdown," he said, "it was fearless."

That was his game Sunday: fearless without being reckless. Every risk was worth the gamble, and every decision was a smart one. Everything was coming up Griffin as the Washington Redskins rookie quarterback's all-around game came into even sharper focus.

"I didn't second-guess what my instincts were telling me as far as just being out there: When to throw, when not to throw, when to run, when not to run, when to get down, when to get out of bounds," Griffin said. "You thank God to be able to have those moments and feel things out the right way, and it all works out for you."

By the numbers, Griffin was almost perfect. He finished 14-of-15 passing for 200 yards and four touchdowns; his completion percentage of 93.3 was the second-best in the NFL this season.

The miss was late in the second quarter,



when Philadelphia Eagles cornerback Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie batted down a pass intended for Joshua Morgan.

"Except for that one incompletion, I thought he was OK," coach Mike Shanahan said jokingly.

Griffin was in control, even when decisions to take off for the sideline or pass up an open receiver could have been second-guessed. There will be time for questioning Griffin moving forward, but Sunday there was just awe of a special game.

"He's shown us so much this season. I think he's just kind of building on what he's already shown us," tight end Logan Paulsen said. "Obviously, he had a fantastic game today, but we knew that he was capable of stuff like this from

pretty much training camp. ... He showed us some great things, but we were fully expecting him to do that."

Redskins players are so used to Griffin's abilities that Moss joked "I'm tired of talking about Robert." But each new week brings a different level of appreciation.

When the Redskins faltered in losses to the Pittsburgh Steelers and Carolina Panthers, Griffin wasn't to blame, but when he wasn't at his best it was worth wondering what could have gone differently if he was. In the Redskins' 31-6 win Sunday, it was evident what he means not only to the franchise's long-term future but this team on a week-by-week basis.

"He really ignites our fire," Moss said. "And when he's going well and doing his thing and he's in a groove, he's on fire, then he just rubs off on everybody else. I'm glad to have a guy like that."

Griffin is glad to be able to lift teammates up. This was his first of what should be many games as a Redskins captain, and his confident leadership preceded even that honor.

"He said all week he wanted to dominate, and that's what he did today," wide receiver Aldrick Robinson said. "He said he wanted to dominate. He dominated."

Fullback Darrel Young said that's nothing new. Griffin says that every week.

But to hear that message and see him make all the right moves had Redskins players dreaming about what will be with Griffin.

"It's just him. I'm not surprised," Young said. "The sky's the limit where he's going to go. He's just starting out, man. You're going to see this for another 15, 16, 17 years."

## Meriweather makes immediate impact

By NATHAN FENNO  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Every word from Brandon Meriweather sounded like a celebration.

"What's up, family?" Meriweather said, between haranguing teammates for a T-shirt and lotion.

He grinned at the bright television lights and recorders thrust toward his locker. He walked without a limp, ice packs, a brace or concern.

Eleven weeks into the season, the free safety signed to a two-year, \$6 million contract to shore up the Washington Redskins' defensive backfield finally made his debut. The bothersome strained ligaments in his left knee couldn't keep him from the field any longer. And Meriweather's contribution to a reeling defense was immediate in Sunday's 31-6 win over the Philadelphia Eagles at FedEx Field.

"He gives us a lot of energy back there, and you can see what type of football player he is," coach Mike Shanahan said.

Wide receiver Pierre Garcon, hobbled by a plantar tear in his right foot since early in the season, returned, too, as the Redskins started to get recover from an injury-ravaged stretch.

While Garcon's impact was minimal — three catches and a quick trip to the training room when the locker



PRESTON KERES/SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Playing in his first game this year, Redskins free safety Brandon Meriweather (left) celebrates his second-quarter interception with cornerback DeAngelo Hall.

room opened to media postgame — Meriweather didn't look like a typical Redskins defensive back. Instead, he intercepted hapless Eagles quarterback Nick Foles to kill a drive in Redskins territory in the first quarter to continue and build his reputation as a player regularly in position to make plays on the football. The play remained a pleasant blur to Meriweather, unable to recall the defense or his read. He just reacted. Seven tackles came along, too, before a right knee sprain forced Meriweather to depart in the second half. He didn't return.

Meriweather downplayed the

injury. After all, he could run and cut without problems on his problematic left knee, reinjured during a freak pregame collision with teammate Aldrick Robinson in September in Tampa, Fla. Meriweather's jovial tone extended to his other, previously healthy knee.

"I ain't hurt," he said. "[Leaving] was more me thinking about the future rather than me going back in there."

Shanahan offered a more sedate assessment, expecting to know more Monday or Tuesday: "We're keeping our fingers crossed it's nothing serious."

Meriweather's sort of play hasn't

been typical of Redskins' defensive backs this season, on a defense that entered Sunday allowing its most points per game since 1963. Crooked numbers pop up anywhere you look, from ranking 30th in the NFL against the pass to surrendering 32 plays of 30 yards or more.

Enter Meriweather to prey on the Eagles' beat-up offensive line and rookie quarterback as the Redskins held them to 257 yards and, of course, no touchdowns. This is the closest the Redskins will get to the defensive backfield envisioned during the offseason, with safety Tanard Jackson suspended for the season.

"He brought a lot of energy," cornerback DeAngelo Hall said of Meriweather. "He brought a lot of intensity, seeing things a little differently than somebody else might have. I loved it."

Added Meriweather: "We realized that everything falls on us, so we played like it."

Garcon, in his first game since Oct. 7, didn't play the same role. Signed to a five-year, \$42.5 million contract during the offseason to provide a deep threat, he hasn't been his speedy self since an 88-yard touchdown catch in the opener against the New Orleans Saints. He isn't close to full health, but caught each of the three passes intended for him.