

Week 11



- Snyder: Grossman gives fans glimpse of what he's capable of. R2
- Stallworth gets new chance, breathes life into passing game. R3

# Cowboys 27, Redskins 24

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2011 ☆ ☆

The Washington Times

washingtontimes.com/sports/football SECTION R

## AGONY OF THE FEET

Gano misfires in OT; Bailey connects as Washington suffers sixth straight defeat



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins kicker Graham Gano (4) and holder Sav Rocca try to will Gano's 52-yard field goal attempt in overtime between the uprights. Moments later, Cowboys receiver Dez Bryant (below) hauled in a 26-yard reception that set up the winning kick. "We were so close," safety Oshiomogho Atogwe said. "We felt like we had the game right there, and we let it slip through our fingers."

### This time, signs of life seen in loss



DAN DALY

**D**id you notice? How could you not? At the end of regulation Sunday, when the Washington Redskins desperately needed a touchdown to send their game against the Dallas Cowboys into overtime, they

were throwing the ball in the direction of Donte Stallworth and David Anderson and handing it off to Tashard Choice.

This is what it has come to for Mike and Kyle Shanahan, the Redskins' twin offensive oracles. They're trying to break a five-game losing streak by leaning on Stallworth (waived two weeks ago and then resigned), Anderson (picked up around the same time as a street free agent) and Choice (an Oct. 31 waiver wire acquisition who was making his Washington debut).

And amazingly, the Redskins nearly *did* get back in the win column. Let's talk about that for a moment be-



fore returning to the gloom and doom of a 3-7 record and a 27-24 OT defeat. Let's talk about the Redskins, for the first time since their disastrous string of injuries started, not coming unraveled at the slightest hint of trouble and actually rallying from a 10-point deficit.

As Jabar Gaffney put it, "Usually when we [fall behind this season], it goes downhill." (And quickly, I might add.) "But not today."

No, not against the Cowboys. Against their most bitter rivals, the Redskins regained some of the professionalism they seemed to have lost in a series of less-than-stout performances, performances that appeared to be way too accepting of their unfortunate circumstances. The injured-reserve list keeps getting longer, sure, but that's no excuse for not scoring a first-half touchdown for five straight weeks, for never once leading in a

game — or for that 23-0 atrocity in Toronto, where the Buffalo Bills abused John Beck to the tune of 10 sacks.

So there the Redskins were Sunday, coming back on the Cowboys with the help of a 23-yard pass to Anderson on third-and-7 (which led to their first touchdown) and some fine work by Stallworth on the final drive

### Offense shows up, but defense lets team down

By RICH CAMPBELL  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Washington Redskins were a thirsty man within reach of water Sunday. For three weeks they crawled through the desert while their season withered and rotted without a functional offense to sustain it.

This point-starved unit, however, found an oasis against the Dallas Cowboys. Suddenly, there was hope for the hopeless.

Heartbreak, though, is always close by. The Redskins got the offensive surge they were desperate for, but they missed two field goal attempts and endured major defensive breakdowns in a 27-24 overtime loss.

"Anytime the offense puts points on the board like that, man, we got to win the game," cornerback DeAngelo Hall said. "We're [fussing] and complaining over the past couple weeks about them putting 10 points, nine points, 12, and they come out here and put 24 and we don't win the game. So it's definitely frustrating from a defensive standpoint because the plays they got were plays we just messed up on."

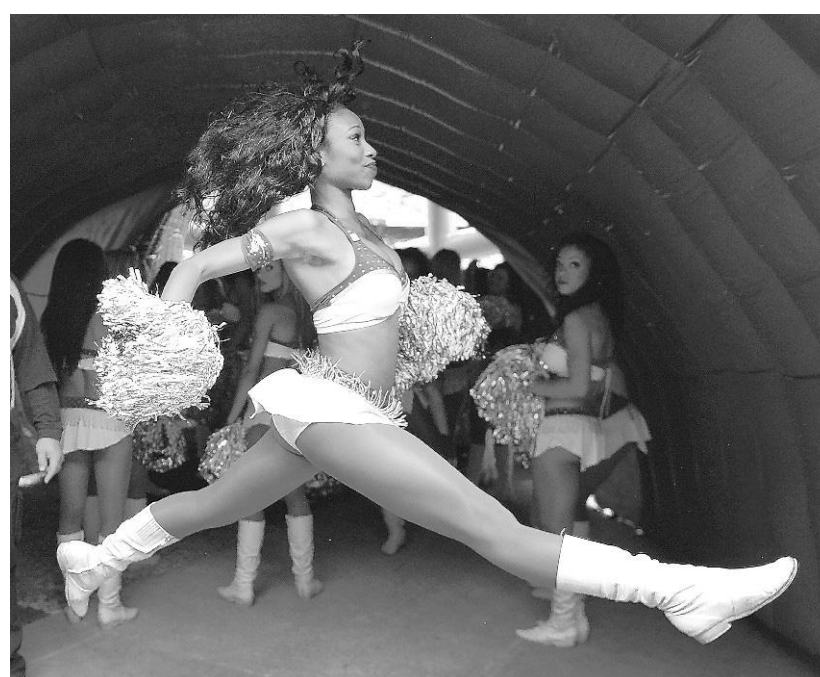
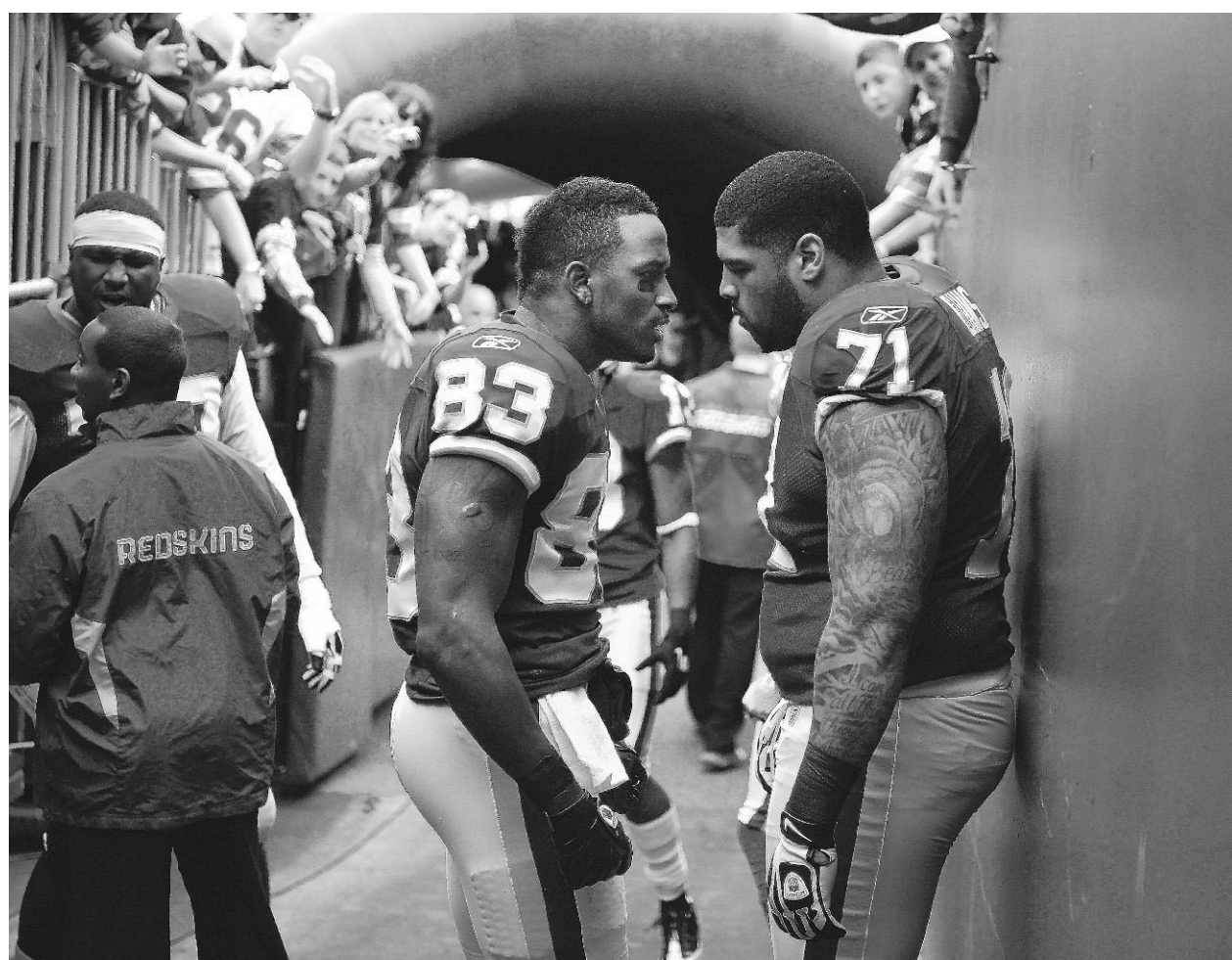
The Redskins remained unquenched after Graham Gano missed

» see DALY | R3

» see REDSKINS | R3

EXPANDED REDSKINS COVERAGE: WASHINGTONTIMES.COM/SPORTS/FOOTBALL

## GETTING THEIR GAME FACES ON



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROD LAMKEY JR./THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The rivalry between the Washington Redskins and Dallas Cowboys isn't what it used to be when home sellouts were filled with cheering Redskins fans. For Sunday's game at FedEx Field, a couple of Dallas fans flaunt how they — and thousands of other Cowboys fans — came by their tickets. Unfortunately for the home team, the Cowboys pulled out a 27-24 victory in overtime. Before the game, tight end Fred Davis (83) and offensive tackle Trent Williams get their focus before heading to the field while the cheerleaders warmed up in the tunnel. For a photo gallery from Sunday's game, go to [www.washingtontimes.com/multimedia](http://www.washingtontimes.com/multimedia)

## Fans got a glimpse of the Rex they always hoped for



DERON SNYDER

Too much praise and too much blame is a fact of life for quarterbacks, exemplified by none more than the pair that dueling Sunday at FedEx Field.

Both have been probed and poked, dissected and inspected. Both have enjoyed varying levels of success in their career, with Washington's Rex Grossman having started for a Super Bowl team and Dallas' Tony Romo being considered (by some) among the game's best at his position.

No one would dare put Grossman in that conversation. Yet he was nearly Romo's equal for 70 minutes in the Cowboys' 27-24 overtime victory. He was nearly everything you'd want in a quarterback. He was nearly victorious.

That's a whole lot of "nearly," which is what you get with Grossman. But he avoided the catastrophic turnovers that plague him and drilled passes that his backup would never attempt, let alone complete.

We might always experience the cringe factor when Grossman drops back to pass, the involuntary reflex that causes us to hunch our shoulders and tense up as he scans the field. Sunday marked his 10th start with the Redskins, and he had thrown at least one interception in nine of them.

We have reached the point where the postgame analysis didn't center on Grossman's interceptions — those are a given. Instead, it's assessing how much blame he gets compared to his intended target(s).

True to form, Grossman was good for a pick



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Rex Grossman passed for 289 yards and two touchdowns against Dallas. He was intercepted once.

Sunday (we can debate whether Anthony Armstrong deserves some fault for his route against Dallas cornerback Orlando Scandrick). And it had the potential to be a back-breaker, too, occurring on the first play from scrimmage after Dallas took the lead, 24-17, with just under nine minutes left in the game.

What a shame. Grossman actually had outplayed Romo through the first three quarters, posting a 100.0 quarterback rating to his counterpart's 98.9. He ran for one touchdown and threw for another with 14 seconds left in the first half, giving Washington a 14-10 lead.

But, for a change, Grossman's interception wasn't the end. The defense held and gave him a chance to produce — from Washington's 11-yard

line. We cringed and tensed as Grossman dropped back 10 times on the drive, but he completed none to the Cowboys and eight to the Redskins, including a beautifully-placed fade to Donte Stallworth with 14 seconds remaining.

"It's kind of a situation where I could throw it to anybody," Grossman said.

That's usually the problem, because "anybody" means opposing players, too. But Grossman demonstrated why he gives Washington the best chance to win, completing 25 of 38 passes for 289 yards and two touchdowns.

"Bad Rex" showed up on just a handful of plays and shoulders little responsibility for the Redskins' sixth consecutive defeat.

Conversely, "Good Romo" did just enough to

prevail. For the third consecutive game — all victories — Romo threw at least two TD passes and no interceptions. He bought time in the pocket, sliding up and slipping out, extending plays and allowing his receivers to get open.

"One of the best things that Tony does is feel what's going on around him in the pocket," Dallas coach Jason Garrett said. "Over the course of his career, he has developed into a really outstanding pocket passer without losing the ability to see things and use his instincts and feel for the game."

You can't coach the "feel" that Romo demonstrated on both of his fourth-quarter TD passes. He improvised to find Laurent Robinson from seven yards out, tying the game at 17, and then Jason Witten for a 59-yard go-ahead score.

"That kind of stuff happens, bang, bang, bang," he said, trying to recall specifics "You just roll with it."

Romo has rolled with a lot in his tenure with the Cowboys, including a 1-3 playoff record. His meltdowns against the New York Jets and Detroit Lions earlier this year sparked another round of questions on whether he's truly an elite quarterback.

Grossman has rolled through his own critics and skeptics. He rolled through being benched earlier this year and the two-interception performance when he regained his job last week against Miami. On Sunday, he rolled through the Redskins' lethargic first quarter (21 yards) and his near-disastrous interception.

The 89-yard touchdown drive to force overtime didn't prove anything we don't already know: Grossman can be efficient when he doesn't kill you.

The same is true for Romo, but that's no solace at 3-7.

COWBOYS 27, REDSKINS 24 (OT)

# Stallworth breathes life into receiving game

By NATHAN FENNO  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Help for the Washington Redskins' moribund offense came from an unexpected place Sunday.

A week ago, Donte Stallworth was unemployed, another casualty of the Redskins' unending roster churn. But the nine-year veteran receiver resigned with the team Tuesday and, against the Dallas Cowboys, sparked an offense that ranked 26th in the NFL.

The numbers weren't gaudy. Four catches. Fifty-one yards. One touchdown.

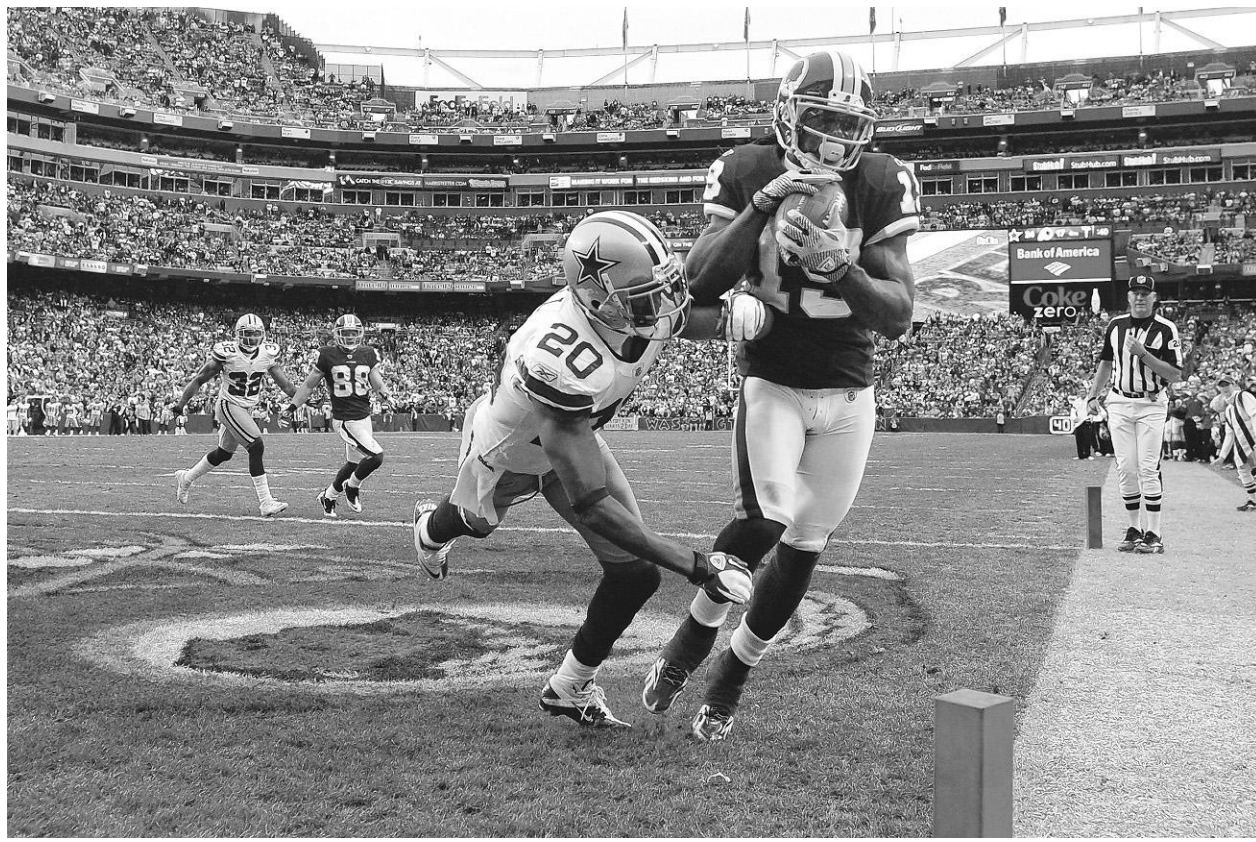
But for an offense beset by season-ending injuries, quarterback shuffles, protection problems and a host of other issues, any spark, no matter the size, is welcomed.

"Guys got to step up," coach Mike Shanahan said. "[Stallworth was] very physical, snatched a couple balls, made a couple big plays. It was really a credit to him taking advantage of an opportunity."

Stallworth's hands pulled in the football that sent the game to overtime and, for a few minutes, lifted the gloom lingering over FedEx Field and the team that has dropped six straight games. The 24 points the Redskins rolled up Sunday were more than they scored in the previous three games combined.

Though his absence from Redskins Park was brief, Stallworth spent extra time relearning terminology that became rusty and watching film.

"It's obviously a lot better than the last few weeks," Stallworth said. "But



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Donte Stallworth brought the Redskins even when he gathered in a 4-yard touchdown pass over Cowboys cornerback Alan Ball with 14 seconds left. The recently re-signed receiver had four catches for 51 yards.

we didn't do enough to win. . . . I'm very hard on myself. I felt like I should've gotten more yards. I'm always hard on myself. I didn't do enough, and we lost the game."

Stallworth didn't expect quarterback Rex Grossman to look his way. Not after the Redskins had first-and-goal at the 2-yard line and the drive,

like so many others, seemed to evaporate. Running Tashard Choice, making his Redskins debut, was gang-tackled for a 2-yard loss. Then the big right arm of Marcus Spears slapped down Grossman's pass.

This felt like so many drives over the past three weeks: a tease of progress, but no payoff.

But on 3rd-and-goal, Stallworth ran a fade to the left corner of the end zone. Grossman lofted the ball — one more solid throw in an afternoon where he went 25-for-38 for 289 yards — and Stallworth got in front of cornerback Alan Bell. As Stallworth hauled in the ball, he planted his left foot and dragged his right in bounds

— then looked back for the referee's arms to shoot up.

The arms raised. The game was tied at 24. Fourteen seconds remained. With Redskins supporters jumping up and down, you couldn't see FedEx Field's empty seats.

"It's kind of a situation where I could throw it to anybody," Grossman said. "I liked the leverage Donte had, and I tried to put it in the back of the end zone where only he could get it. He made a great catch."

But Stallworth's hands couldn't pull in a win, too. There were bits of encouragement for the rest of the offense, such as Jabar Gaffney's 115 yards receiving or Grossman not letting a fourth-quarter interception spiral into a festival of turnovers, like last month's four-interception start against the Philadelphia Eagles.

"We have the capability to score and we showed it," fullback Darrel Young said.

Still, the Redskins managed only 2.5 yards per carry while rotating three running backs, tight end Fred Davis lost a fumble and gimmicks like two end-arounds to start the game didn't work.

Stallworth hoped some bit of progress lurked in the 51 yards he delivered amid the debris of another loss.

"With everything that's gone on the last few weeks and us coming out and putting points on the board and driving the ball against a really good team, you have to take some good things from this," Stallworth said, "and see what we can do to build on this."

COWBOYS 27, REDSKINS 24 (OT)

# Banks seeks payoff from long runs

## Yards are nice; TDs are better

By NICK EILERSON  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Washington Redskins churned out several big individual performances Sunday in their 27-24 overtime loss to the Cowboys, but perhaps no one made the Dallas sideline hold its collective breath as much as Brandon Banks.

In addition to four kickoff returns of 20 yards or more, the diminutive second-year veteran piled up 97 yards on three punt returns. That included a 55-yard return, which likely would have turned into a touchdown had it not been for Cowboys punter Mat McBriar's desperate shove out of bounds.

Nobody in the locker room, however, was taking much solace in the solid special teams performance. That includes Banks, who felt he could have done more damage.

"It felt good, but at the end of the day I need to score," Banks said. "I don't think we would have been in the position that we was in at the end of the game if I had scored. So I'm not really that excited about it. I didn't make good

cuts at the end of my runs."

Ironically, the play that irked him the most was the 55-yard return, which stands as the longest of his career in that category. After reeling in a booming 60-yard punt at the Redskins' 11-yard line, Banks hit a seam and appeared headed for the end zone as he galloped toward the right sideline. McBriar, however, was just fast enough to cut off the angle and push Banks out of bounds at the Dallas 34.

After the game, Banks felt he might have been better off cutting inside to avoid McBriar's reach.

"I should have broke that," he said.

The play was particularly painful in light of what the Redskins' offense did with the stellar field position. Quarterback Rex Grossman and company were only able to advance the ball three yards, setting up a 49-yard field goal attempt by Graham Gano that sailed wide right to keep Washington's third quarter lead at 17-10.

Indeed, Banks put the Redskins in excellent field position. His returns of 24, 32 and 55 yards put the offense at its 42-yard line or beyond each time. Yet Washington capitalized on only one of those returns, capping Banks' 32-yard return with a 16-yard touchdown strike to Jabar Gaffney just before halftime.

Regardless of the outcome, Banks'

production against the Cowboys — which also featured four kickoff returns that averaged 23 yards — represented a step forward after a rough start to the season. Entering the game, Banks averaged 9.0 yards per punt return, down from his 11.3 clip last season. He had yet to really break loose, as his longest runback to that point went for 35 yards.

Banks' success Sunday did not come without help. Blockers consistently opened up gaping holes, something tight end Logan Paulsen attributed to the preparation led by special teams coach Danny Smith heading into the game.

"Danny just had a great scheme for this team," Paulsen said. "[The Cowboys] play a little bit unconventional in their punt front. He did a great job doing his homework and getting us in some good situations. Brandon obviously has a lot of natural ability, but the guys in front of him were working really hard today, and you saw the result."

Banks' big returns were encouraging, but he made it clear he aims for the end zone, not more yards.

"I feel like any time I touch the ball I can go the distance," Banks said. "Time is ticking. I'm getting frustrated, but I'm just going to stay relaxed, and when it comes, it comes."

# REDSKINS

From page R1

wide right on a 52-yard field goal try in overtime. Dan Bailey's 39-yard field goal on the ensuing drive sealed their sixth straight loss. They fell to 3-7, and considering that two NFC teams with six losses missed the playoffs last year, any hope for a miraculous turnaround expired.

Washington, then, is left to play out the string with a new source of angst. The Redskins' offense actually showed a pulse with Rex Grossman under center for the second straight game, but their defense and special teams betrayed them.

After totaling 20 points in the previous three games, the Redskins' 24 were the most their offense has scored this season. They scored early touchdowns on drives that started at the Cowboys' 32- and 43-yard lines.

Their 14-10 halftime lead was their first lead since Oct. 2. The announced crowd of 80,122 roared with life. Fans finally had something to cheer.

Several breakdowns, however, sent them home with a familiar feeling.

"We were so close," safety Oshiomogho Atogwe said. "We felt like we had the game right there, and we let it slip through our fingers."

Washington cooled off Dallas rookie running DeMarco Murray by limiting him to 73 yards on 25 carries, well below his 6.7-yards per carry average.

Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo, however, showed the Redskins exactly how valuable a play-making quarterback is. He was 23-of-37 for 292 yards, three touchdowns and no interceptions, good for a 113.8 passer rating.

Several of his biggest throws occurred after he escaped the pocket and improvised.

"He's like a snake, man," linebacker Brian Orakpo said. "He's slippery. He's all over the place. It don't matter if you beat your guy, you've got to worry about him. That's the frustrating part."

Romo opened the scoring by connecting with Dez Bryant in the end zone near the right sideline on third-and-8 from the Redskins' 22. He found the soft spot in Washington's cover-2 zone. Hall and Atogwe trailed the play.

Romo struck another blow with the score 17-17 and less than nine minutes remaining in regulation. On third-and-8 from Dallas' 41, he spun to his left, turning his back to the line of scrimmage, to escape Orakpo's pass rush.

Meanwhile, the Redskins blew coverage of tight end Jason Witten. Romo exploited it by hitting Witten in stride out in front of rookie safety DeJon Gomez for a touchdown.

"It was cover-2 zone, and somebody dropped him," Hall said. "Somebody should have been running with him through the whole course of the play."

Romo delivered his final dagger in overtime after Gano missed a chance to win it. On third-and-15 from Washington's 49, the Redskins showed an all-out blitz, just as they did on the decisive

COWBOYS 27, REDSKINS 24 (OT)

Dallas	7	3	0	14	3-27
Washington	0	14	3	7	0-24

### First Quarter

Dal-Bryant 22 pass from Romo (Bailey kick), 7:44.

### Second Quarter

Dal-FG Bailey 37, 10:23.  
Was-Grossman 4 run (Gano kick), 3:59.  
Was-Gaffney 16 pass from Grossman (Gano kick), :14.

### Third Quarter

Was-FG Gano 40, 11:40.

### Fourth Quarter

Dal-Robinson 7 pass from Romo (Bailey kick), 14:43.  
Dal-Witten 59 pass from Romo (Bailey kick), 8:48.  
Was-Stallworth 4 pass from Grossman (Gano kick), :14.

### Overtime

Dal-FG Bailey 39, 5:39.  
A-80,122.

	Dal	Was
First downs	20	18
Total Net Yards	353	336
Rushes-yards	32-89	24-60
Passing	264	276
Punt Returns	3-22	3-97
Kickoff Returns	3-56	4-93
Interceptions Ret.	1-0	0-0
Comp-Att-Int.	23-37-0	25-38-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	4-28	3-13
Punts	7-40.9	5-48.6
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	2-1
Penalties-Yards	9-48	6-59
Time of Possession	36:01	33:20

### Leaders

**RUSHING**—Dallas, Murray 25-73, Jones 5-18, Romo 2-(minus 2). Washington, Helu 8-35, Grossman 3-10, Choice 6-7, Armstrong 1-5, Torain 5-4, Stallworth 1-(minus 1).

**PASSING**—Dallas, Romo 23-37-0-292. Washington, Grossman 25-38-1-289.

**RECEIVING**—Dallas, Murray 6-32, Robinson 4-34, Witten 3-85, Bryant 3-68, Bennett 3-31, Holley 1-17, Ogletree 1-12, Phillips 1-9, Jones 1-4. Washington, Gaffney 7-115, Davis 6-49, Stallworth 4-51, Paulsen 2-17, Helu 2-3, Young 1-27, Anderson 1-23, Choice 1-2, Torain 1-2.

**MISSED FIELD GOALS**—Washington, Gano 49 (WR), 52 (WR).

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

# DALY

From page R1

of regulation (three catches for 33 yards, including a 4-yarder for the tying TD). Two plays before Stallworth's score, moreover, it was Choice — not Ryan Torain or Roy Helu — who got the call over right tackle from the Dallas 2 (where, alas, he was way-laid by two Cowboys for a 2-yard loss.) And two plays before that, in the face of a blitz, Anderson was Rex Grossman's intended receiver.

Donte Stallworth, David Anderson and Tashard Choice. How's that for resourcefulness, folks? And by the way, have you fellows met?

"You make plays, they put you on the field," Anderson said. "I'm excited to be on the field at that time in the game. I just wish I'd been able to do more. On that last one, I got bumped [off his route], and it threw our timing off."

Excited. That's what has been missing from the Redskins the past several weeks — excitement. Instead, they've looked dazed and confused as they attempted to fashion an offense with so many missing parts. (And Sunday, incidentally, they lost another: Trent Williams, their promising left tackle, who suffered what Mike Shanahan called an "MCL" injury

while blocking on Graham Gano's missed 52-yard field goal try in overtime.) But maybe, if they play with the enthusiasm they did Sunday, the Redskins can find a way to win one (or more) of their final six games — and avoid the ignominy of 12 consecutive defeats.

That's kind of where they are: *finding a way*, whether it's beginning the game with two end-arounds (as they did against Dallas), running a quarterback draw on the goal line with one of the slowest QBs in the NFL (as they also did against Dallas) or driving down the field in the late going with Stallworth, Anderson and Choice — three players who, not so long ago, *didn't even belong to them* — in the lineup.

"Honestly," Stallworth said, "I didn't know who was in and who wasn't." And even if he did know who was in, he might not have known who was in — if you know what I mean. Not in any personal sense, at least.

"You go with the guys you've got," Gaffney said. "Donte, Tashard, David — those guys were just ready to play."

And thanks to two short fields resulting from a shanked Cowboys punt and a 32-yard punt return by Brandon Banks, the Redskins finally were able to put some points on the board and make a game of it — to the surprise, no doubt, of many in the FedEx gathering

of 80,122. Indeed, victory was so close, they could reach out and touch it.

The first time they touched it came midway through the fourth quarter, when an underthrown pass by Tony Romo was deflected by Ryan Kerrigan and wound up in the hands of tight end Martellus Bennett for a 13-yard gain. The score was 17-17 at the time. Were Kerrigan a touch taller — or had the throw been a touch shorter — the Redskins likely would have gotten the ball inside the Dallas 20. Three plays later, Romo avoided the rush and hit Jason Witten, another of his tight ends, for a 59-yard touchdown. So close.

Then, in OT, a potential game-winning field goal from 52 yards was on Gano's foot . . . only to drift right. That was the second time the Redskins touched victory. The Cowboys didn't allow them a third, moving to the Washington 21 behind completions of 14 yards to Bennett and 26 to Dez Bryant to set up Dan Bailey's 39-yard clincher.

Another Redskins loss was in the books. But it wasn't like the others we've seen since bye week. This time the opponent punched, and the Redskins counterpunched. This time the Redskins exhibited a pulse. Hey, it's something. In moments like these, a team — and its fans — cling to anything they can.

REDSKINS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1



vs. Giants  
W, 28-14

WEEK 2



vs. Cardinals  
W, 22-21

WEEK 3



at Cowboys  
L, 18-16

WEEK 4



at Rams  
W, 17-10

WEEK 6



vs. Eagles  
L, 20-13

WEEK 7



at Panthers  
L, 33-20

WEEK 8



at Bills (Toronto)  
L, 23-0

WEEK 9



vs. 49ers  
L, 19-11

WEEK 10



at Dolphins  
L, 20-9

WEEK 11



vs. Cowboys  
L, 27-24 (OT)

WEEK 12



at Seahawks  
Sun., Nov. 27

WEEK 13



vs. Jets  
Sun., Dec. 4

WEEK 14



vs. Patriots  
Sun., Dec. 11

WEEK 15



at Giants  
Sun., Dec. 18

WEEK 16



vs. Vikings  
Sat., Dec. 24

WEEK 17



at Eagles  
Sun., Jan. 1

COWBOYS 27, REDSKINS 24 (OT): QUARTER-BY-QUARTER



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**FIRST QUARTER:** Redskins tight end Fred Davis watches the ball bounce away after he fumbled. Cowboys safety Gerald Sensabaugh (43) recovered the ball.



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**SECOND QUARTER:** Redskins receiver Jabar Gaffney and injured receiver Santana Moss engage in a sideline celebration after Gaffney's 16-yard, go-ahead touchdown catch.



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**THIRD QUARTER:** Brandon Banks is forced out of bounds by Cowboys punter Mat McBriar after a 55-yard return, but the Redskins failed to take advantage of the field position.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**FOURTH QUARTER:** Redskins receiver Donte Stallworth celebrates his late touchdown catch with teammates as Cowboys linebacker Keith Brooking walks off the field.

**1** When you are a struggling team, a quick start can be pretty important. That's exactly what the Redskins didn't get. During their first drive, quarterback Rex Grossman found Fred Davis on third down. Stretching the ball in hopes of getting the first down, Davis instead lost the ball when it hit the knee of a Dallas defender. The Cowboys recovered. Three plays later, Tony Romo hit Dez Bryant with a 22-yard touchdown pass and the Redskins were in an early hole in their bid to stop a five-game losing streak. It was the fourth time this season Washington has turned the ball over on its first possession, a trend the Redskins were certainly hoping wouldn't continue. By the time the quarter ended, the Redskins could count just one touchdown in their previous 38 possessions. The Redskins finished the quarter with just one first down and only 14 yards. But they were only down seven.

**2** The Redskins went into halftime with the...uh, what's that word again? Oh, yeah, *the lead*. After one of their best quarters of the season, the Redskins went up 14-10 at halftime. It marked the first time they'd led in a game in more than 329 football minutes. Or since Oct. 2, which was the date of their last victory. Grossman was easily the star of the quarter. Starting a drive on the Dallas 32 after a bad punt, Grossman hit David Anderson for 22 yards to set up a 4-yard scoring run by, yes indeed, Grossman. On the next possession, Grossman hit Jabar Gaffney for a 16-yard score. The team that had scored just one touchdown during its previous three games now had touchdowns on two straight possessions, and the... what's that word again? ... the lead. The Redskins' five first downs and 89 yards in the quarter seemed like a gold mine. The production was a good sign, but there was still a long way to go.

KEY PLAY

Facing third-down-and-15 from Washington's 49 in overtime, Dallas quarterback Tony Romo rolled and found Dez Bryant for a 26-yard gain. It was the first reception for Bryant since the first quarter. Romo finished the game with 292 passing yards and those were a pretty crucial 26. Two plays after the completion, Dallas lined up for a 39-yard field goal try by rookie Dan Bailey. It was good and the Redskins, despite playing their best game in a while, saw their losing streak grow to six.

**3** Could the Redskins, who had seemingly gone eons without any kind of scoring, be turning into a point-scoring machine? On the team's first possession of the second half, Washington got in position for a 40-yard field goal from Graham Gano. It was the Redskins' third straight possession with points and it gave them a 17-10 lead. Then, on Dallas' first drive, London Fletcher sacked Tony Romo to force a punt and Brandon Banks returned that kick 55 yards to start Washington off in Cowboys' territory for the third time in four possessions. But the Redskins' run of points ended as Gano missed a field goal try from 49 yards. Would that totally kill Washington's momentum? The Redskins were still ahead by seven when the quarter ended, but Dallas tied things up with a 14-play drive that concluded when Romo hit Laurent Robinson for a touchdown just 17 seconds into the fourth quarter.

**4** Down seven, having thrown an interception earlier in the quarter, things certainly didn't look good for Grossman and the Redskins late in the final quarter. They were starting on their own 11, a very long way from the end zone. Earlier in the quarter, the Redskins' defense had allowed a 59-yard touchown pass from Romo to Jason Witten, who covered the last 30 on the ground. Grossman's pick came on the Skins' first play afterward. Hopeless? Not hardly, as it turned out. Washington responded with what was probably its best drive of the season, covering the 89 yards as Grossman completed eight of 10 passes. The final one went for four yards to Donte Stallworth, who deftly dragged his right foot in the grass for the touchdown that, after Gano's conversion kick, tied the score with 14 seconds left. Washington and Dallas were playing for the 102nd time and headed to overtime for the third time.

REDSKINS NOTES

Gano offers no excuses for missed kick in OT

By NATHAN FENNO  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BY THE NUMBERS

**329:** Football minutes the Redskins had gone without being in the lead until late in the second half Sunday.

**47:** Days the Redskins had gone without having the lead in a game until Sunday.

**13:** Years since the last time the Redskins lost six straight.

**3:** The number of made field goals from 50-plus yards this season for the Redskins' Graham Gano. He missed from 52 yards in overtime, and that set up the Cowboys' game-winning drive.

**115:** Receiving yards for Washington's Jabar Gaffney, making him the fourth player with a 100-yard receiving game this season. It's the first time that's happened since 1998.

Graham Gano craves the pressure of late-game kicks.

But with an opportunity to end the Washington Redskins' five-game losing streak Sunday, the kicker slipped a 52-yard field goal wide right in overtime.

The kick was one of two Gano missed against the Dallas Cowboys and upped his misses to 19 field goals over the past two seasons.

"I love those opportunities," Gano said. "Not to pull through is very disappointing. ... There are no excuses. I just missed it."

Two weeks ago, Gano sank a franchise-record 59-yard field goal against the San Francisco 49ers. On Sunday, Gano made a 40-yarder but missed a 49-yard kick he believed he couldn't hit any better.

But the kick that lingered in his mind was the errant 52-yarder. The snap felt good. So did the kick. Everything seemed to work. The ball just didn't go through the uprights.

"It is very frustrating," Gano said. "I don't feel any pressure out there whatsoever. ... I just missed a kick. There's no better way to explain it."

Williams injures knee

The Redskins' banged-up offensive line took another shot when left tackle Trent Williams injured his

**"It is very frustrating. I don't feel any pressure out there whatsoever. ... I just missed a kick. There's no better way to explain it."**

—Graham Gano

left knee in overtime. Blocking for Gano's missed 52-yard field goal attempt, Williams lay on the ground in pain long after the ball sailed wide right.

During the play, a Cowboys defender appeared to fall into Williams' left knee while his leg was planted. Williams eventually walked off the field, but he limped heavily on the left leg.

Coach Mike Shanahan said Williams' medial collateral ligament "didn't look very good."

"I'm not sure what that means right now," Shanahan said, "but he did look quite sore." Williams didn't feel a pop when the player fell into his leg but confirmed his MCL was injured. He won't know the severity until undergoing an MRI.

The line is already without left guard Kory Lichtensteiger, who tore his right anterior cruciate ligament

last month against the Philadelphia Eagles. Williams also missed two games because of a high ankle sprain and right tackle Jamaal Brown battled a hip injury.

Polumbus, Choice debut

Eleven days after Tyler Polumbus signed with the Redskins, he became the latest part of the team's ever-shuffling offensive line. Normally a tackle, Polumbus started at left guard in place of rookie Maurice Hurt.

Polumbus played 51 games since 2008 with the Denver Broncos and Seattle Seahawks, including 15 starts, all at tackle. His outing Sunday wasn't memorable, including being beaten by the Cowboys' Jason Hatcher to sack Rex Grossman in the second quarter and being called for a hold on the next series.

Running back Tashard Choice, claimed off waivers from the Cowboys last month, also made his first Redskins appearance.

Choice ran six times for seven yards, as he shared time in the backfield with Ryan Torain and Roy Helu.

"I'll do whatever they ask me to," Choice said. "They see me in practice, but it's always different in the game. ... With the opportunities you get, you've got to make the most of them."

• Rich Campbell contributed to this report.

WEEK 12 REDSKINS AT SEAHAWKS



**Kickoff:** 4:05 p.m. **TV:** Fox **Radio:** AM-980, FM-92.7, FM-94.3

**What to watch:** The scoreboard operator shouldn't have trouble keeping up with this one. While the Redskins' offense is miserable, the Seahawks' is on the same level. No surprise, Seattle doesn't have a good quarterback situation, either. Tavaris Jackson entered Week 11 with 6 touchdowns and 9 interceptions. The Seahawks average 4.84 yards per play, 28th in the NFL.

• The two teams' defenses are also similar. The Seahawks entered Week 11 allowing 5.22 yards per play, 11th in the league. Former Redskins linebacker/defensive end Chris Clemons had a team-leading 5.0 sacks, while second-year safety Kam Chancellor, a Virginia Tech product, had three interceptions and 55 tackles.

