

EXPANDED COVERAGE, R4: Cundiff redeems himself with lone made kick; Protected, Griffin gets less bang from the Bucs; Pregame collision knocks out two players

24   22

GAMEDAY

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TO THE RESCUE



“They say great players want the ball in their hands when its crunch time. It’s true. You want the ball in your hands. When something has to happen, you make it happen.”

— RG3, quoting “The Replacements”

ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

Rookie quarterback Robert Griffin III maintained his poise while guiding the Redskins on the game-winning drive, starting with 1:42 left on the clock. He accounted for 56 yards with his arm and his legs to set the stage for Billy Cundiff (below right), who atoned for three missed field goal attempts by connecting on a 41-yarder with just 3 seconds left.

Cundiff finally finds uprights after RG3 leads late comeback

By **RICH CAMPBELL**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

TAMPA, FLA. | Before Robert Griffin III could seize the moment here Sunday evening, there had to be a moment for him to seize. Washington Redskins veteran quarterback Rex Grossman knew that. So when Griffin’s nerves tensed as the Tampa Bay Buccaneers lined up to kick a go-ahead field goal in the final two minutes, Grossman steered Griffin toward it.

“You want him to make this,” Griffin recalled Grossman saying, “so you can lead the team down the field and get us a win.”

Griffin proceeded to write the greatest chapter of his Redskins legend to date. He used his arm and legs to lead the Redskins 56 yards in the final 99 seconds to set up Billy Cundiff’s 41-yard field goal in an exasperating 24-22 victory.

“You try to rise to the occasion,” Griffin said. Then he quoted the movie “The Replacements” — a feel-good football comedrama based on the replacement players who won three games for the Redskins in 1987 — because his personality is as vibrant as his play.

“They say great players want the ball in their hands when its crunch time,” Griffin said. “It’s true. You want the ball

in your hands. When something has to happen, you make it happen.”

Griffin did, and the Redskins have their second victory to show for it. It’s not a stretch, either, to say it’s a season-saving win.

If there ever was a must-win game in September, this was it. The Redskins, who lost their two previous games, face a brutal schedule in the coming weeks. Home against Atlanta and Minnesota; at the Giants and Pittsburgh. The climb out of last place might have been impossible from 1-3. Losing to a rebuilding Tampa Bay team would have pushed

» see **REDSKINS** | R2



Ominous start and a fabulous finish

TAMPA, FLA.
When you’ve lost for as long as the Washington Redskins have lost, a kind of Battered Fan Syndrome sets in. A break will go against the team early in the game, and a here-we-go-again mentality will take over. It’s hard to blame folks. The wretchedness has gone on for two decades now. Over that much time, you develop defense mechanisms.

So after Brandon Meriweather

unintentionally smacked into Aldrick Robinson during warmups Sunday at Raymond James Stadium, effectively wiping out Mike Shanahan’s starting strong safety and one of his more useful receivers, the news couldn’t have been too well received in Redskinsland. Sometimes, though, a bad omen doesn’t turn out to be bad omen. Sometimes it just turns out to be an Unfortunate Thing That Happened Before the

» see **DALY** | R2

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

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Receiver Pierre Garcon recovers a fumble by quarterback Robert Griffin III in the end zone for a touchdown during the first quarter of Sunday's win against Tampa Bay.

REDSKINS

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the Redskins to the precipice.

Instead, they completed the first quarter of coach Mike Shanahan's third season at 2-2. The alternative was unthinkable afterward inside a locker room filled with ecstatic and relieved players.

"We was confident about ourselves, but you have that funk on you," receiver Santana Moss said. "When you have that funk, there's nothing you can do to get it off you but win."

The game wasn't supposed to be this close. Washington built a 15-point halftime lead by outgaining Tampa Bay 232-132 in the first half.

The secondary finally started to cover. The offense continued to hum with Griffin at the controls. Washington's winning formula played out on

the field during its best half of football this season.

In the second half, though, the secondary reverted to surrendering big plays. The offense stalled because of numerous penalties. And when the Buccaneers took a 22-21 lead on Connor Barth's 47-yard field goal with 1:42 left, the Redskins faced a familiar path lined with dread and misery.

These are not the same Redskins, though, because of No. 10. He embodies hope on the greatest scale.

Down by one, one timeout, 1:42 on the clock, first and 10 at their 20. The Redskins had a chance because of Griffin.

"The fact that we drove down there and had the opportunity, I'm so thankful because there's a lot of times where we don't get the two-minute run efficiently," said veteran Reed Doughty, who has seen more than his share of failed comeback attempts. "We go

three and out and fourth down from our own 20."

Not Sunday, though. Not with Griffin at quarterback.

He completed passes to Santana Moss, Fred Davis and Evan Royster, moving the Redskins to the Tampa Bay 41. Tampa Bay played its trademark Cover-2 defense, in which the middle linebacker plays the deep middle. That opened up shorter passes and yards after the catch.

And then Griffin hit the Buccaneers with his legs. He dropped back to pass, and the right side of the field opened up. He took off running with receiver Leonard Hankerson ahead of him to block. Tampa Bay stopped him at the 26. The yards the Redskins then lost on Kory Lichtensteiger's false start penalty, they made back on another completion to Moss.

And get this: The radio communication between Griffin's helmet and

offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan on the sideline went out during the final drive. Shanahan normally would communicate the play calls to Griffin via radio, but Griffin had to call half of them and run to the sideline to get the others.

The Redskins practice what to do in that unfortunate circumstance, so Griffin was ready for it.

"It was very neat how that practice situation, that practice scenario actually played out in the game," he said. Cool, just like Cundiff with the game on the line. He missed field goal attempts from 41, 57 and 31 yards earlier in the game. Four misses in one game might cost a kicker his job, so more than victory rode on the final swing of his leg.

The ball sailed high through the uprights with 3 seconds left. Cundiff pumped and re-pumped his fist while teammates congratulated Griffin on the sideline.

REDSKINS 24, BUCS 22

Washington	7	14	0	3-24
Tampa Bay	3	3	7	9-22

First Quarter

TB — FG Barth 50, 4:42.
Was — Garcon fumble recovery in end zone (Cundiff kick), :00.

Second Quarter

Was — Griffin III 5 run (Cundiff kick), 7:26.
Was — Morris 39 run (Cundiff kick), 5:15.
TB — FG Barth 57, 1:55.

Third Quarter

TB — Jackson 7 pass from Freeman (Barth kick), 1:56.

Fourth Quarter

TB — Blount 2 run (pass failed), 9:41.
TB — FG Barth 47, 1:42.
Was — FG Cundiff 41, :03.

A — 58, 191.

	Was	TB
First downs	27	16
Total Net Yards	474	373
Rushes-yards	30-160	18-80
Passing	314	293
Punt Returns	3-17	4-36
Kickoff Returns	2-42	1-2
Interceptions Ret.	1-13	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	26-35-0	24-39-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	2-9	1-6
Punts	6-46.7	6-46.2
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	8-73	10-107
Time of Possession	32:19	27:41

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Washington, Morris 21-113, Griffin III 7-43, Royster 2-4. Tampa Bay, Martin 8-33, Blount 6-17, Ware 1-17, Freeman 2-8, Benn 1-5.

PASSING — Washington, Griffin III 26-35-0-323. Tampa Bay, Freeman 24-39-1-299.

RECEIVING — Washington, Hankerson 6-100, Williams 4-115, Underwood 3-39, Benn 3-18, Clark 3-15, Martin 2-9, Ware 2-(minus 2), Stocker 1-5.

MISSED FIELD GOALS — Washington, Cundiff 41 (WR), 57 (SH), 31 (WL).

ANDY ANSWERS

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DALY

From page R1

Game, after which events transpired the way events do.

In this case, they transpired into a last-second 24-22 win over the Tampa Bay Bucs that kept hope alive for the local eleven. After back-to-back losses to St. Louis and Cincinnati, losses that also cost them the services of Brian Orakpo and Adam Carriker, the Redskins needed to stabilize and needed to do it fast. The schedule, after all, isn't going to get kinder down the road. Indeed, beginning this week against unbeaten Atlanta, it starts to look like an episode of "Survivor."

That the Redskins accomplished this in Tampa, where they haven't had too many happy memories, only made it sweeter. (The scores 14-13 and 36-35 come to mind.) Especially since the conditions were most inhospitable — hot, sticky and just not conducive to playing quality football.

"When you want to win," said Fred Davis, who had a team-high 70 receiving yards and came up big on the final drive, "you persevere and make it happen. We weren't going to leave here with a loss. Whatever we had to do, we were going to do it."

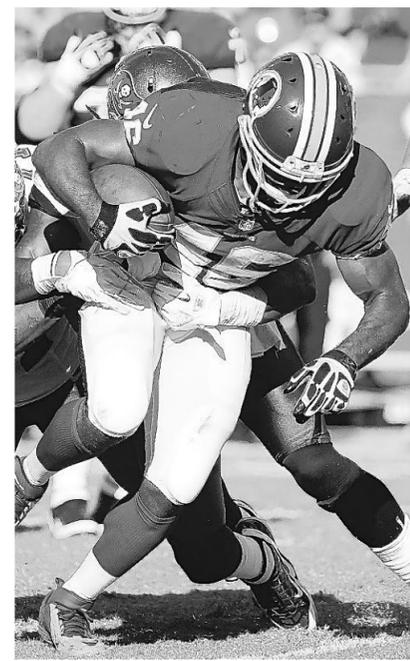
In the first half, it looked like the Redskins were going to leave Tampa with a comfortable, confidence-boosting victory. After spotting the Bucs a first quarter field goal, Robert Griffin III and Co. scored three straight touchdowns to take a seemingly secure 21-3 lead.

The first of them balanced the scales a bit for the Meriweather-Robinson mishap. Griffin, running a quarterback draw from the Tampa Bay 9, fumbled on the 1, and Pierre Garcon recovered in the end zone for a TD. Just like that, the Redskins weren't unlucky. Or at least, they weren't twice unlucky. There were merely a club that had suffered a pregame misfortune and then gone about its business.

But hanging on to leads has proved challenging for these Redskins. They were up 21-6 on the Rams and couldn't close the deal, and they let the Bucs erase an 18-point deficit. "We can't keep doing that," DeAngelo Hall said. "We've gotta buckle down and finish games off."

To which Santana Moss added: "If we'd lost that game, it would have been like a dagger in the chest. Especially after we killed 'em in the first half."

Once again, it was breakdowns in the secondary — major breakdowns — that caused problems for Washington. The first was a 65-yard bomb to Mike Williams, the second a 54-yarder to octopus-like Vincent Jackson. You'd think, after getting burned for scores of 73, 48 and 59 yards by the Bengals, the Redskins would have been a little more diligent on the back end against Tampa Bay, but no. Did Meriweather's absence make a difference?



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Running back Alfred Morris churned out 113 yards, including a 39-yard touchdown, during Sunday's win against the Buccaneers.

Hard to say. I mean, we've hardly seen the guy in uniform.

The shakiness of Billy Cundiff, the club's new kicker, also nearly proved fatal. Cundiff missed two "makeables" — one from 41 yards, the other from 31 with 12:13 left — that left the door wide open for the Bucs ... and they barged through. In short order, LeGarrette Blunt bulldozed 2 yards for a touchdown, and Connor Barth booted his third long field goal, a 47-yarder, to make it 22-21, Bucs, with 1:42 to go.

But 102 seconds are simply too many for Griffin, who has been a quick study in these last-gasp situations. With calm and self-assurance, he moved the Redskins downfield with completions of 15 (Moss), 20 (Davis), 4 (Evan Royster) and 7 yards (Moss again), along with a 15-yard scramble to the Tampa Bay 26. (Or as Fred put it: "We know, if nobody's open, Robert's got legs.") This time, with his job probably on the line, Cundiff knocked through a 41-yarder to win it.

"I wanted that [one last] chance," he said. "In the fourth quarter, your team has to be able to trust you."

Thus did a day that had started ominously end with raised arms and hugs all around. The Redskins weren't cursed, not in the least. They just have to work a little harder on this Pre-game Warmup Thing — and save the casualties for the actual game.

NFL WEEK 4

Top performers

Falcons QB Matt Ryan: 369 yards, 3 TDs
Patriots QB Tom Brady: 340 yards, 3 TDs
Rams K Greg Zuerlein: 4 FGs (58, 48, 60, 24)

GAME OF THE WEEK

Ryan takes licks, still leads Falcons to comeback win

BY PAUL NEWBERRY
 ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA | Matt Ryan took an awful beating.

Another win for the Atlanta Falcons will make the pain a lot easier to take.

Shaking off a career-high seven sacks, Ryan completed a 59-yard pass to Roddy White with about a minute remaining, setting up Matt Bryant's 40-yard field goal that kept the Falcons perfect on the season with a wild 30-28 victory over the Carolina Panthers on Sunday.

After squandering a 24-14 lead in the second half, the Falcons (4-0) needed a crucial fumble by Cam Newton to even have a chance — and they still faced long odds when the Panthers downed a punt at the Atlanta 1 with 1:09 remaining.

Ryan had no timeouts and surely some doubt about how much time his beleaguered offensive line would give him. But he dropped back about as far as he could, threw it about as far as he could, and relied on White to go up and make the catch.

He did, between two defenders.

Bryant's kick won it with 5 seconds remaining.

"We made the plays when we needed to," said Ryan, who passed for 369 yards and three touchdowns. "That's what you need to do week to week in this league."

The Falcons (4-0) are off to their best start since 2004, when they reached the NFC championship game.

This was their stiffest challenge yet. "That was exciting. Whew!" said coach Mike Smith, finally able to exhale. "Every time it looked bleak, every time it looked like we didn't have a chance, we were able to overcome it."

Newton threw two touchdown passes and ran for another score. But he let the ball slip away when it looked as though he had clinched the victory for the Panthers (1-3).

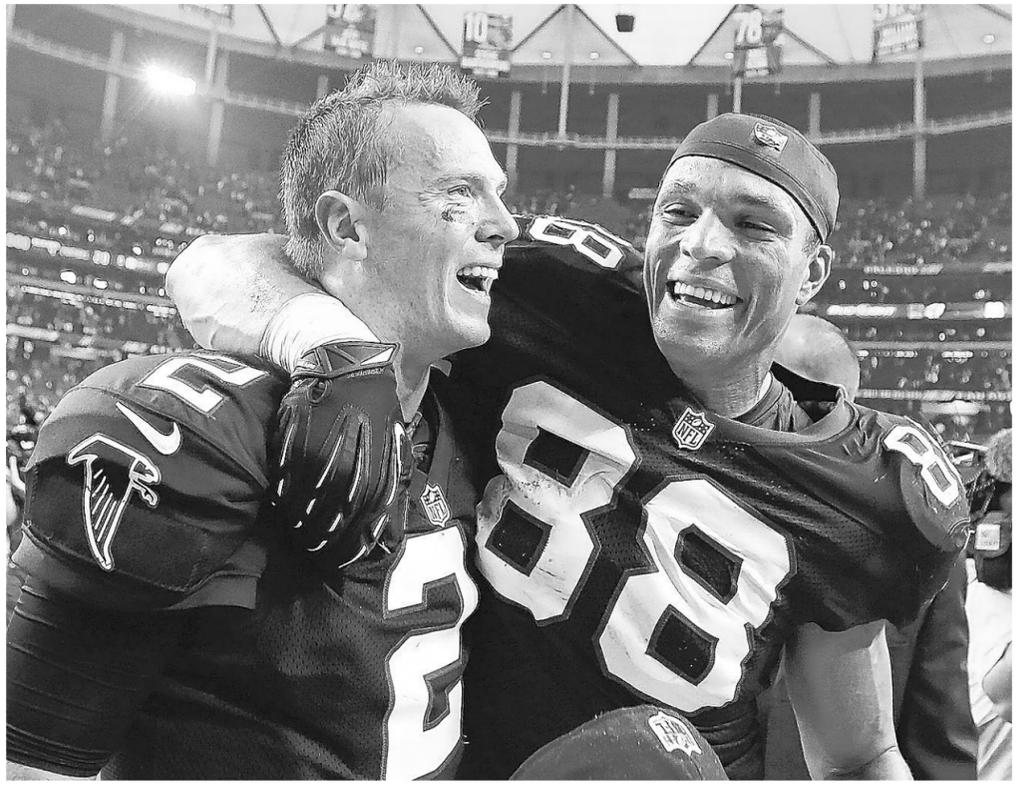
"You have to protect the football," Newton said. "That was a key focus going into this game, and I fumbled. There's a lot of guys that are trusting the ball carrier, and I was the ball carrier that particular play to get the job done. And I dropped the ball."

On third and 2 at the Atlanta 46, Newton took the snap and bulled his way over the left side, his body surging across the spot needed for the first down. On the sideline, several of the Panthers broke into a celebration.

But John Abraham knocked it loose, the ball squirting backward. Fullback Mike Tolbert covered it for Carolina at the 45 — 1 yard shy of a first down. After attempting unsuccessfully to draw the Falcons offside, the Panthers punted.

Ryan and White took advantage of another chance.

"I threw it high and far to the spot



Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan (left) and tight end Tony Gonzalez celebrate after Atlanta improved to 4-0 with a 30-28 victory over Carolina. Matt Bryant kicked a 40-yard field goal with 5 seconds left for the decisive points.

we talk about," Ryan said. "Roddy went up and made a great catch. When you're in that situation late in the game, that's what you have to do."

White was sandwiched between cornerback Josh Norman and safety Haruki Nakamura, but managed to leap over both of them to bring down the pass at the Carolina 40. A pass interference call and two short completions made things easier for Bryant, who had already connected from 41 and 33 yards to improve to 8 for 8 on the season. Make it 9 for 9.

The kick was straight down the middle.

With Julio Jones hindered by an injured right hand, White came up with a huge game for the Falcons. He had eight catches for 169 yards, including a pair of touchdowns. But his biggest catch was the final one.

"Matt told me he was going to throw it up there. Just make a play," White said.

Ryan credited his offensive line on the final drive, even though they struggled most of the day to keep him

upright against Charles Johnson and the rest of the Panthers defense.

Johnson spent so much time in the backfield he should've worn an Atlanta jersey, finishing with 3½ sacks. Ryan was hit nine times after throwing and hurried on eight other attempts.

Newton's fumble ruined what had been a stellar performance. He threw for 215 yards, including a 17-yard touchdown to Greg Olsen early in the game, then a 36-yard scoring play to Kealoha Pilares that put the Panthers ahead 28-24 with 7:55 remaining.

ROUNDUP

Brady, Patriots unstoppable in second half

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. | There's nothing wrong with Tom Brady and the New England Patriots that a game against their familiar AFC East palsies — the Buffalo Bills — can't fix.

Not even after Brady and Co. spotted them a 14-point, third-quarter lead.

Brady responded by directing six straight touchdown drives in the second half on Sunday en route to a 52-28 blowout.

It was a game in which the Patriots produced 580 total yards, forced six turnovers and avoided their first three-game losing streak in 10 years.

"Down 21-7 and on the road, backs against the wall, and I thought we showed a lot of heart," Brady said. "That's what this team is made of. And we're going to battle until the end, I know that."

Brady finished 22 of 36 for 340 yards and three touchdowns, plus one rushing. The 580 yards was the fourth-most in team history.

Cornerback Devin McCourty had two interceptions in keying a defense that forced six turnovers and had three sacks.

Running back Stevan Ridley scored twice. Wes Welker had nine catches for 129 yards, and tight end Rob Gronkowski had five for 104 yards and a touchdown as both players bounced back from first-half fumbles.

"You can't panic," Gronkowski said. "When you panic, nothing good happens from there. We just stuck to the game plan."

Packers 28, Saints 27

GREEN BAY, WIS. | Aaron Rodgers threw a go-ahead touchdown to Jordy Nelson in the fourth quarter, and the Green Bay Packers shook off a week's worth of controversy with a rally to beat New Orleans.

With Packers fans howling about what appeared to be yet another bad call — this time by the regular officials, not the replacements — Garrett Hartley missed a 48-yard field goal attempt with just under three minutes remaining, costing the Saints a shot at the lead.

Drew Brees threw for 446 yards with three touchdowns for the winless Saints. Brees has thrown at least one touchdown in 47 straight regular-season games, tying the NFL's all-time



Patriots quarterback Tom Brady runs for a 4-yard touchdown Sunday during the second half of New England's 52-28 win in Buffalo, N.Y.

mark set by Johnny Unitas.

Cardinals 24, Dolphins 21 (OT)

GLENDALE, ARIZ. | Jay Feely kicked a 46-yard field goal 6:31 into overtime to keep Arizona unbeaten.

The Cardinals forced overtime when Kevin Kolb threw a 15-yard touchdown pass on fourth down to Andre Roberts with 22 seconds to play in regulation.

Two big defensive plays set up the final two Arizona scores. First, Daryl Washington sacked rookie Ryan Tannehill, whose fumble was recovered by Vonnie Holliday at the Arizona 49 and the Cardinals moved downfield to score.

Vikings 20, Lions 13

DETROIT | Percy Harvin returned the opening kickoff 105 yards for a touchdown and Marcus Sherels scored on a punt return early in the third.

NFC North-leading Minnesota (3-1) matched the number of wins it had last season. The Vikings also snapped an 11-game losing streak within the division.

The Lions have lost three straight, surpassing the longest skid by last year's playoff team.

Broncos 37, Raiders 6

DENVER | Peyton Manning finished with 338 yards and three touchdown passes Sunday to lift the Denver Broncos to a big victory over the Oakland Raiders.

Manning opened the game by leading the Broncos on an 80-yard touchdown drive — their first opening-quarter touchdown of the season — and Denver never trailed.

The Broncos beat the Raiders at home for the first time since 2007.

Willis McGahee ran for 112 yards for his 32nd-career 100-yard game.

Bengals 27, Jaguars 10

JACKSONVILLE, FLA. | Andy Dalton threw two touchdowns passes and ran for a score, and the Cincinnati Bengals beat the Jacksonville Jaguars on Sunday for their third consecutive win.

Dalton and A.J. Green burned Jacksonville numerous times, including once to set up a second-quarter touchdown and again for a fourth-quarter score.

The Bengals finished with six sacks, putting constant pressure on Blaine Gabbert and overcoming all those defensive injuries.

Chargers 37, Chiefs 20

KANSAS CITY, MO. | Philip Rivers threw for 209 yards and two touchdowns, and the San Diego Chargers capitalized on six Kansas City turnovers.

Five of the Chiefs' turnovers came in the first half, when San Diego raced to a 27-6 lead. The Chargers coasted the rest of the way to sole possession of first place in the AFC West.

Matt Cassel threw for 251 yards and two touchdowns for Kansas City, but he also had three first-half interceptions. Jamaal Charles, who followed his big game last week at New Orleans with touchdowns rushing and receiving, fumbled twice.

Texans 38, Titans 14

HOUSTON | Danieal Manning and Kareem Jackson returned interceptions for touchdowns and Matt Schaub threw two TD passes. Arian Foster had a touchdown run for the Texans, who continued the best start in club history.

Titans quarterback Jake Locker left in the first quarter and did not return after hurting his left shoulder on a hit by Glover Quin. Locker hurt the same shoulder in the season opener against New England.

Rams 19, Seahawks 13

ST. LOUIS | Greg Zuerlein kicked four field goals, including a 58-yarder and a club record 60-yarder as special teams led the way for the Rams.

A fake field goal produced a 2-yard touchdown pass from punter Johnny Hekker to Danny Amendola to put St. Louis ahead 10-7 late in the first half.

Marshawn Lynch led Seattle with 118 yards on 20 carries, including an 18-yard score to cap the game's first possession.

49ers 34, Jets 0

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. | Carlos Rogers returned a fumble 51 yards for a touchdown, and the San Francisco 49ers ran for more than 200 yards.

Frank Gore, Kendall Hunter and backup quarterback Colin Kaepernick — on a wildcat-style option — all ran for scores as the 49ers bounced back from a loss at Minnesota.

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
N.Y. Jets	2	2	0	.500	81	109
New England	2	2	0	.500	134	92
Buffalo	2	2	0	.500	115	131
Miami	1	3	0	.250	86	90

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Houston	4	0	0	1.000	126	56
Indianapolis	1	2	0	.333	61	83
Jacksonville	1	3	0	.250	62	97
Tennessee	1	3	0	.250	81	151

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Baltimore	3	1	0	.750	121	83
Cincinnati	3	1	0	.750	112	112
Pittsburgh	1	2	0	.333	77	75
Cleveland	0	4	0	.000	73	98

WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
San Diego	3	1	0	.750	100	71
Denver	2	2	0	.500	114	83
Kansas City	1	3	0	.250	88	136
Oakland	1	3	0	.250	67	125

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	2	2	0	.500	123	123

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Atlanta	4	0	0	1.000	124	76
Tampa Bay	1	3	0	.250	82	91
Carolina	1	3	0	.250	80	109
New Orleans	0	4	0	.000	110	130

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Minnesota	3	1	0	.750	90	72
Chicago	2	1	0	.667	74	50
Green Bay	2	2	0	.500	85	81
Detroit	1	3	0	.250	100	114

WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Arizona	4	0	0	1.000	91	61
San Francisco	3	1	0	.750	104	65
St. Louis	2	2	0	.500	79	91
Seattle	2	2	0	.500	70	58

THURSDAY'S GAME

Baltimore 23, Cleveland 16

SUNDAY'S GAMES

Houston 38, Tennessee 14
 San Diego 37, Kansas City 20
 St. Louis 19, Seattle 13
 New England 52, Buffalo 28
 Minnesota 20, Detroit 13
 Atlanta 30, Carolina 28
 San Francisco 34, N.Y. Jets 0
 Arizona 24, Miami 21, OT
 Denver 37, Oakland 6
 Cincinnati 27, Jacksonville 10
 Green Bay 28, New Orleans 27
 Washington 24, Tampa Bay 22
 N.Y. Giants at Philadelphia, late
 Open: Indianapolis, Pittsburgh

MONDAY'S GAMES

Chicago at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.

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

QUARTERS

1 The Buccaneers controlled possession in the early going but had only a 50-yard field goal by Connor Barth to show for it. Washington responded with a 75-yard drive that culminated in a wacky touchdown at the end of the quarter. RG3 kept the ball up the middle, was clobbered at the goal line and fumbled the ball into the end zone. Pierre Garcon recovered it to give Washington a 7-3 lead.

2 After Billy Cundiff shanked a 41-yard field goal, the heavily criticized Redskins secondary came up huge with a DeAngelo Hall interception. RG3 turned the pick into points with his fourth rushing touchdown of the season and Alfred Morris broke off a 39-yard scoring run two minutes later to increase the Redskins' lead to 21-3. Barth hit another field goal, this one from 57 yards, to make it 21-6 at half.

PLAY OF THE GAME: Redskins kicker Billy Cundiff missed field goals of 57, 41 and 31 yards during the game, but none of it mattered after his fourth attempt sailed through the uprights. Cundiff's 41-yarder with 3 seconds left sealed the Redskins' comeback victory.

3 The Redskins failed to reach the red zone in the third quarter and Tampa Bay took advantage. Josh Freeman found Mike Williams for a 65-yard catch-and-run down the right sideline and capped the drive with a touchdown pass to Vincent Jackson.

4 The Redskins' offense stalled and Freeman continued to gash their secondary, this time with a 54-yard bomb to Jackson. The Buccaneers then scored on a short run but missed a two-point conversion attempt that would have tied the game. They took the lead two possessions later, however, with a third Barth field goal. Fortunately for Washington, RG3 calmly led the team into field goal range and Cundiff was able to overcome his early jitters and win it from 41 yards out with 3 seconds remaining.

NUMBERS

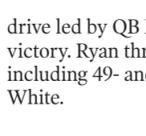
159: Regular season wins for Mike Shanahan as an NFL head coach, good for 13th all-time
3: Missed field goals by Billy Cundiff (57, 41, 31) before his 41-yarder won the game
74.3: RG3's completion percentage, the second time this season he's eclipsed 70 percent
113: Rushing yards for rookie Alfred Morris, his first career 100-yard rushing game
8: RG3's age when Tampa Bay safety Ronde Barber, 37, made his NFL debut

NEXT

FALCONS AT REDSKINS
1 P.M. SUNDAY, FOX



• The good news is that the Redskins are playing at home in Week 5. The bad news is that one of the NFL's three undefeated teams is coming to town. After three dominant wins to open the season, the Falcons were tested Sunday against NFC South rival Carolina, but a fortuitous fumble by Cam Newton and a subsequent last-minute drive led by QB Matt Ryan resulted in a 30-28 victory. Ryan threw for 369 yards and 3 TDs, including 49- and 14-yard scores to WR Roddy White.



Atlanta's Michael Turner had a 60-yard TD catch and ran for 103 yards in Sunday's win.



REDSKINS 24, BUCS 22

Cundiff was able to shake a leg

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
 THE WASHINGTON TIMES

TAMPA, FLA. | Billy Cundiff talked to himself and tried to stay on message. Three field goal attempts already Sunday and the Washington Redskins' kicker missed every one.

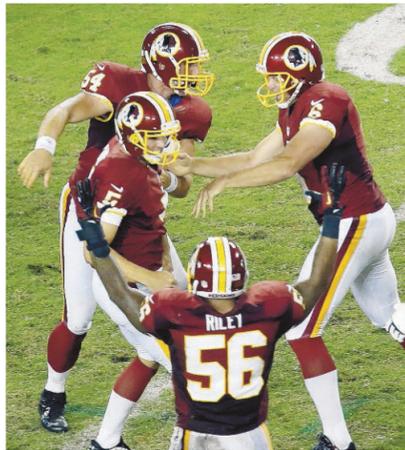
It's easy in that spot to dwell on the negative, but Cundiff wouldn't allow that to creep in. Instead, he told himself: "If everybody is doing their job, then why don't I just step up and do mine?"

Then Cundiff's teammates talked to him. He was walking down the sideline in the final minute as Robert Griffin III led the offense on a memorable drive trailing the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 22-21 and heard one thing.

"Everybody's looking at me, maybe they were lying to themselves, but at least they did a good job outwardly saying, 'We trust you; we know you're going to make this one,'" he said.

Trust was validated as Cundiff connected from 41 yards on the game-winner, putting a stamp of redemption on a rough day.

"Dude, it's awesome. I think being a kicker is so difficult because it's so easy to quantify how you're playing during the course of a game, during the course of a season and during the course of a career," tight end Logan Paulsen said. "The fact that he was able to kind of leave that once he missed it, move and make it when he had to make it, it was really special he was able to do that."



Billy Cundiff brushed off field goal misses of 41, 57 and 31 yards to connect for the game-winner, a 41-yarder with 3 seconds left.

Cundiff, signed by the Redskins in late August after his release by the Baltimore Ravens, was headed toward goat status had the Buccaneers won. Three missed, including two within his range, had him cursing blown opportunities. On the first, wide right from 41 yards out,

Cundiff cited timing being off with long snapper Justin Snow and holder Sav Rocca. On the second, short from 57 yards, Cundiff didn't kick himself for almost having the leg. On the third, a chip-shot 31-yarder, he called it a "complete mental error."

"It was just one of those kicks that at the end of the season I'm going to look back on and be really disappointed I let that one slip by," he said. "That's not the stuff you want your teammates to look at, knowing that in the fourth quarter they've got to be able to trust you."

Players insisted their trust in Cundiff never waned. But three misses in three tries can be the end of the world for a kicker. Coach Mike Shanahan acknowledged that "obviously if you miss too many, your employment's not very long."

That was the pressure he was facing with 7 seconds on the clock: the game, and more than likely his job, on the line.

"It's one of those things that in order to really find out a lot about yourself, I really feel like you have to be tested. These are the kind of situations where you really find out, mentally, how you talk to yourself," he said. "Because a lot of guys, especially young kickers, it's a problem: you miss a couple kicks, you get throw in for a game-winning situation and you fail. ... So I made sure I kept going through and saying, when it comes down to game-winners, I know I'm going to make it."

Griffin gets less bang from the Bucs

By **NATHAN FENNO**
 THE WASHINGTON TIMES

TAMPA, FLA. | On an otherwise innocuous third down, Robert Griffin III slipped the football into running back Evan Royster's arms and backed away. The rookie quarterback thrust his arms in the air as he stood alone on the chewed-up turf at Raymond James Stadium in an exaggerated gesture to remind any defenders in the neighborhood he didn't have the football.

The "not me" arms became as familiar during the Washington Redskins' 24-22 win over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sunday as Griffin's braids and easy grin. When Griffin neglected to lift his arms after handing off the football on a zone read play, one official reminded him not to make the same mistake.

"I said, 'Yes, sir, I'll do it next time,'" said Griffin, who finished with 323 yards passing and another 43 on the ground. "I did it next time."

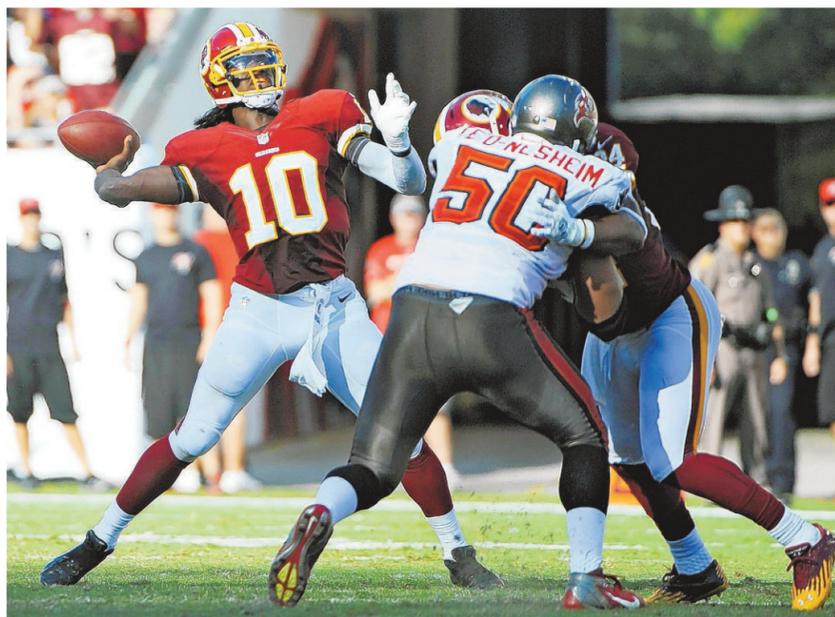
Battered and bashed in the season's first three games, Griffin showed he can operate the Redskins' offense without absorbing a dizzying succession of hits. The Buccaneers knocked down Griffin 10 times, but he avoided the string of cringe-inducing hits that stalked his first three weeks in the NFL's regular season.

Last week, the Cincinnati Bengals put Griffin on the ground 28 times, including a handful of savage hits that left the quarterback slow to pull himself up. Thanks in part to the Redskins' option-heavy offense, opponents contacted Griffin to the ground 53 times in those first three games. In exchange for the quarterback's discomfort, the Redskins got 91 points.

"You can't just talk tough and then play soft," Griffin said after the Bengals game.

That toughness also puts quarterbacks in position to crack ribs or sustain a concussion. After one of last week's licks, Griffin underwent a concussion test that was negative but hinted at the risk his scampers present.

A simple formula protected Griffin's 217 pounds Sunday. Since the Redskins jumped to an early advantage against the NFL's worst pass defense, they didn't need to rely on option plays. That kept with offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan's pledge not to "major" in the option. Even with tackle Trent Williams hobbled by a bone bruise on his right knee, protected by a bulky brace, the inconsistent offensive line provided Griffin ample time in the pocket. And Griffin reciprocated with quick, accurate throws



Redskins quarterback Robert Griffin III (10) throws as he is pressured by Buccaneers defensive tackle Daniel Te'o-Nesheim during the second quarter.

to complement fellow rookie Alfred Morris' effective runs.

The plays were designed to get the ball out of Griffin's hands (he rushed seven times compared to 12 attempts against the Bengals) and, when he kept the ball, to use deeper drops.

"I was thankful he didn't take that many hits because I was pretty upset," Morris said. "I don't like seeing my quarterback on the ground."

The option kept Griffin upright and exposed him to the unusual level of punishment. It also helped the Redskins keep pace in three shootouts. But with three early touchdowns Sunday, the Redskins used the option just once in the first half. Even the triple-threat backfield of Griffin, Morris and receiver Brandon Banks that befuddled the Bengals didn't appear until the second half.

Of Griffin's four first-half knock-downs, two followed passes, another came after safety Mark Barron crunched him on an 8-yard designed run to force a fumble a yard short of the goal line. Receiver Pierre Garcon corralled the ball for a touchdown.

"He's growing in the offense," Williams said. "I'm always in his ear about those hits, man. ... It definitely feels better to see him not go through so much."

Barron added another lick, driving Griffin into the air and slamming him to the ground like a professional wrestler. That earned a 15-yard penalty.

"It's illegal," Griffin said as he smiled. "That's not my fault."

Another penalty for roughing the passer came in the third quarter when Mason Foster drilled Griffin well outside of the end zone after he released the football. The call delighted Griffin.

Two more hits came on sacks, one on a botched screen pass.

In the game-winning drive that started with 1:42 remaining, the Buccaneers knocked down Griffin twice. But, as usual, he bounced back up as he led the Redskins into field goal range.

All of this created a 60 minutes of football that didn't exact a similar toll on Griffin's body to weeks past. The creative formations — pistol, no-back shotgun — remained. And Griffin survived.

NOTEBOOK

Washington on a collision course before opening kick

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
 THE WASHINGTON TIMES

TAMPA, FLA. | It wasn't bad enough for the Washington Redskins that they had suffered numerous injuries in games and practices. Sunday brought a unique, scary scene about two hours before they kicked off against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Brandon Meriweather collided with an unsuspecting Aldrick Robinson during pregame warmups, an accident that knocked the safety and the wide receiver out of the game well before it started.

"Both of them were ready to go. They were just warming up," coach Mike Shanahan said. "I've never had that in my coaching career to have two guys go out in pregame."

Meriweather, who was running toward the end zone, went down awkwardly.



Robinson



Meriweather

He was writhing in pain and grabbing his left knee, the same one that had sprained ligaments. Sunday's game would have been his Redskins debut, but now he's set to have an MRI.

"Serious enough not to play. Quite sore. You could tell he was sore. But I don't want to say anything until we take a look at the MRI," Shanahan said. "He was ready to play. He had a good week of practice. He was fired up, and it was a tough setback for him because he was ready to go."

Robinson, who has stepped up in the absence of receiver Pierre Garcon, suffered a concussion and was unconscious on the field for about a minute, according to Shanahan.

Garcon returns

With Robinson out, Garcon's return from a two-game absence with a bruised right foot was essential. Garcon knew all week he was going to play.

He finished with one catch for 20 yards but recovered a fumble by Robert Griffin III in the end zone for a touchdown. He also had a costly 15-yard personal foul that he didn't want to talk about.

"It feels good to get back out there and help the team out as much as I can," Garcon said.

Williams guts it out

For much of the week, it appeared as if Jordan Black would start at left tackle in place of Trent Williams, who suffered a bone bruise in his right knee last week. Black got most of the starting reps

in practice, but Williams took every snap Sunday.

"To just have a few reps during the week and to come out and play at the level that he played, get it out throughout the whole game, I don't think I've seen a guy do that since I've been coaching," Shanahan said. "To miss as much time as he did, to watch the way he walked around the locker room, the facility, and to come out and play the way he did really says a lot about him."

Extra points

With no sellout, Sunday's game was blacked out in the Tampa area. It was easy to see why, given the swaths of empty seats in the upper bowl at Raymond James Stadium.

• Running back Ryan Grant, signed this past week to replace Roy Helu Jr., was inactive. That left Alfred Morris, Evan Royster and Darrel Young as the only running backs.