

INSIDE: TERPS LOSE ANOTHER QUARTERBACK AS ROWE TEARS ACL

EXPANDED COVERAGE, R4: Defense has no answers
A trick play gone awry highlights RG3's uncharacteristic bad day

27   12

GAMEDAY

MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2012



The Washington Times

washingtontimes.com/sports/football



CRAIG BISACRE/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins receiver Leonard Hankerson drops a pass in the end zone in the first quarter of Washington's 27-12 loss at the Pittsburgh Steelers on Sunday. The miscue established an unwelcome trend, as a series of drops stalled an offense that entered the game first in the NFL in yards per play. Quarterback Robert Griffin III finished 16 of 34 for 177 yards and a touchdown.

BOBBLEHEADS

Redskins can't grip semblance of consistency



DAN DALY

PITTSBURGH

We knew there would be days like this for Robert Griffin III and the Washington Redskins. Gray days. Rainy days. Days when the opposition ran around in throw-back uniforms that made them look like bumblebees.

Even days when they were victimized by a running back named Rainey.

OK, maybe not the last two. But definitely the others.

Anyway, Sunday's game, a 27-12 stomping at the hands of the Pittsburgh Steelers at Heinz Field, was the first of those days — and it won't be the last. It's just the nature of the beast. There are so many working parts on a football team, so many parts that, on a given afternoon, might malfunction.

On this given afternoon, pretty much the entire Redskins defense



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Even veteran Redskins wide receiver Santana Moss was not immune to the rash of dropped passes, as he couldn't hang on to a fourth-down pass late in the fourth quarter of Sunday's loss at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh.

REDSKINS PHOTO GALLERY
WASHINGTONTIMES.COM/MULTIMEDIA

Unable to hold on to the ball, Washington sputters in loss

BY RICH CAMPBELL
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

PITTSBURGH | Catching the football is one of the sport's most basic elements. Winning depends on it. No offense can gain yards without doing it. And the skill is just as much mental as it is physical. See the ball in the air. Get your hands on it. Secure it before turning to run. Simple enough.

So when professional football players drop passes, it's rip-the-hair-out-of-your-head stuff. Coaches spend all week designing plays to get receivers open, only for success to turn to failure on game day because of a player's lapse in concentration.

That's why the dejection was amplified inside the Washington Redskins' locker room Sunday. Their high-powered offense sputtered in a 27-12 loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers largely because of dropped passes on a rainy, raw afternoon. Coach Mike Shanahan counted 10 drops, each a speed bump that helped keep the Redskins in first gear.

"Disappointed in a number of opportunities that we had and plays we didn't make on both sides of the football," Shanahan said. "You can't have that many drops ... and keep

drives going. We had some opportunities and had the potential for a number of big plays, and you've got to make those plays against this type of defense."

Washington (3-5) reached the midpoint of the season with its most lopsided defeat. The Redskins led in the fourth quarter in six of their first seven games, and they were tied in the other. Not Sunday, though.

Familiar breakdowns in pass defense combined with the offense's worst performance of the season, and the result was a game Pittsburgh controlled from the opening kickoff. The Steelers, with equally effective running and passing games, scored on each of their first four possessions to take a 20-6 halftime lead.

But we're used to this from the defense. Ultimately, the 27 points Washington allowed actually were a point better than its season average.

This one ended up so sour because the Redskins' offense lacked its typical potency. Their formula for competitiveness this season includes an offense that can match scores with the opponent, but that was not the case on this day.

» see DALY | R2

» see REDSKINS | R2

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

NOTEBOOK

Hall's ejection ends lackluster outing on low note

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

PITTSBURGH | The game was already out of hand when DeAngelo Hall lost his temper. The veteran Washington Redskins cornerback ripped off his helmet to yell at an official late in Sunday's loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers and was ejected from the game.

It remains to be seen what kind of supplemental discipline awaits Hall, who was flagged twice and thrown out for berating head linesman Dana McKenzie.

"I'm not going to discuss that particular play," Hall said. "I've got a meeting set up with commissioner [Roger] Goodell on Monday. Me and him will talk about it, watch the film, figure out what went down and hopefully get to the bottom of this."

NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said he did not have any knowledge of a formal hearing; Hall said he had his agent calling the league office "trying to set something up." NFL offices are closed Monday because of Hurricane Sandy.

The incident occurred with just less than four minutes remaining in the Redskins' 27-12 loss to the Steelers at Heinz Field. Hall got tangled up with wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders and went to the ground. As he got up, took his helmet off — warranting an automatic penalty — and began yelling at McKenzie.

Hall did not appear to make physical contact with McKenzie or any other official, but he had to be restrained.

When trying to pull Hall away, middle linebacker London Fletcher's message was simple.

"I just really was just telling him at that point in time he wasn't going to win that battle," Fletcher said. "They had already thrown two penalties; I think they had already decided they were going to kick him out [of] the game. So I just didn't want the situation to get any worse for him, even though he was out of the game."

It certainly could have gotten worse, seeing as how Hall did not show any restraint on his own in yelling at McKenzie.

Afterward, the 28-year-old refused to talk about the play except for his brief statement about meeting with Goodell.

"I'm not going to discuss that," he told reporters. "Next question. Any question about the actual football part of the game?"

Some defensive players who were on the field at the time said they didn't know exactly what happened.

"You just don't know what really transpired through the whole conversation or whatever. Sometimes the officials, they let you get away with

some things," Fletcher said. "I don't know exactly what was said between to warrant them throwing the penalties on D-Hall."

Coach Mike Shanahan knew more but was not forthcoming about what Hall said.

"I wouldn't share it with anybody anyhow, but it was enough to draw a flag," Shanahan said.

Hall was given two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties on the play. And while it didn't have an impact on the result of the game, it could hurt the Redskins if he's unable to play next week against the Carolina Panthers.

Shanahan said he was "very disappointed" in Hall losing his cool.

"We talk about that all the time: keeping your composure regardless what happens, regardless what the situation is," he said. "You never put your team in that type of situation. Any situation, you can't do it."

Fletcher's streak alive

Fletcher's active NFL record streak of consecutive games played appeared to be in jeopardy as the linebacker dealt with head and hamstring injuries. But he practiced Friday and played against the Steelers, his 232nd straight game dating to 1998.

"I felt [hesitant] a little bit on some stuff, but overall I think I was happy that I was able to get through the game," Fletcher said. "That was the main thing. I don't feel like I set myself back any."

Fletcher, who had six tackles, noted that the hamstring was not 100 percent.

"I was well enough to play," he said. "I don't know that anybody's 100 percent at this point in time."

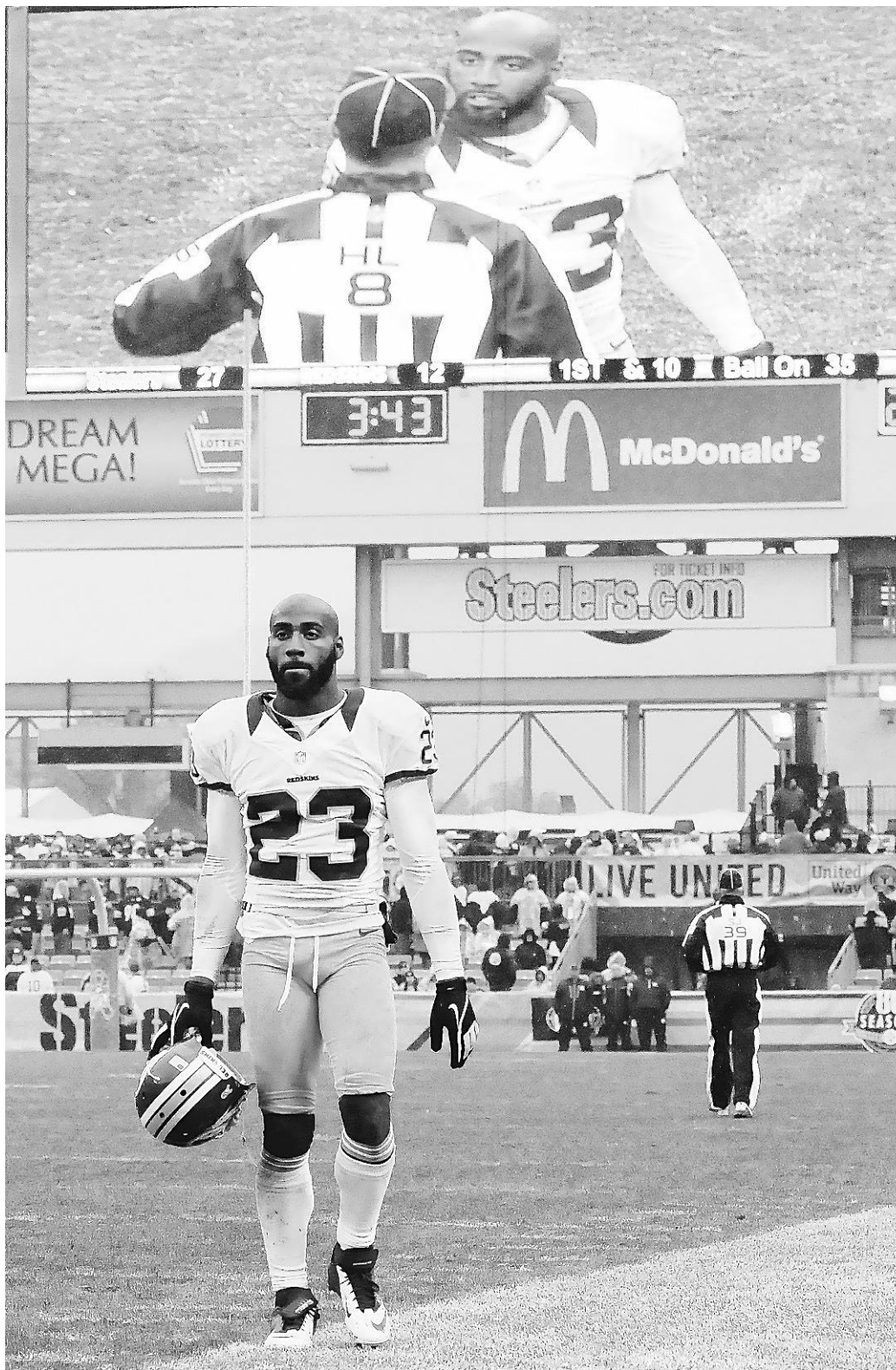
Cooley a nonfactor

Chris Cooley was a starter in his first game back with the Redskins, but he made no real impact in the loss at Pittsburgh. Playing alongside Logan Paulsen to begin the game, he was used in a very limited role. Cooley had no catches Sunday.

"It did feel good for me to be back in the game, but at the same time, it was hard watching them play," he said. "I think this is our worst performance as a team. So it's frustrating for me to be back there and watch that happen."

Extra points

Linebacker Perry Riley strained a hamstring in the fourth quarter and did not return. ... Steelers safety Ryan Clark, who spent two seasons with the Redskins, suffered a concussion in the third quarter and did not return.



PRESTON KERES/SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

With an image of him arguing with an official in the background, Redskins cornerback DeAngelo Hall walks off the field after being ejected in the fourth quarter of Sunday's loss.

REDSKINS

From page R1

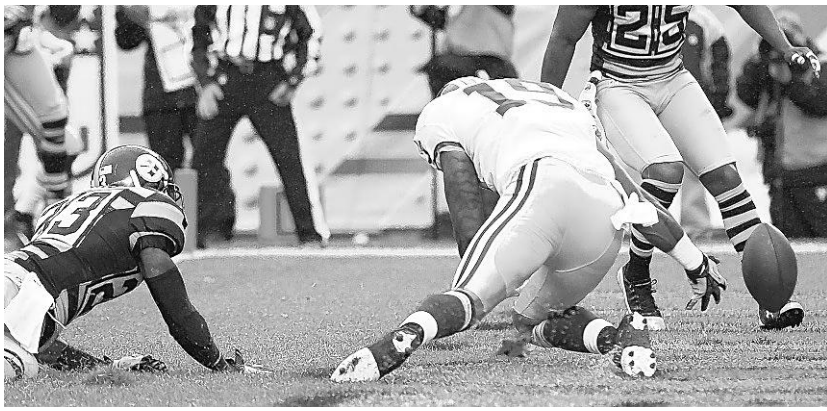
Shanahan's biggest gripe was the dropped passes. Receiver Leonard Hankerson had a sure touchdown reception in his hands at the Pittsburgh 2-yard line on Washington's second possession, but he turned to the end zone before he secured the catch and dropped it.

Although Washington went on to finish that drive with its only touchdown, that established a toxic trend.

There were many culprits. Receivers Joshua Morgan and Santana Moss dropped passes. So did fullback Darrel Young and running back Evan Royster. Quarterback Robert Griffin III still helped generate some big plays, but it kept coming back to the drops.

"If you touch the ball, you're taught to catch it," Young said. "All those drops are on us. Robert gave us a chance."

Young's moment of shame was a shallow crossing route in the second half. Sunday's final outcome didn't



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins wide receiver Dezmon Briscoe drops a pass in the end zone Sunday during the first quarter at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh.

turn on that play, but it exemplified everything that went wrong for a unit that entered the game ranked best in the NFL in yards per play.

"I didn't look it in completely," Young lamented. "I thought I had it, was trying to make a move too fast. That's usually the case when guys drop the balls."

In Shanahan's postgame analysis, the drops crept into each of the Redskins' shortcomings: the 3-for-12 third-down conversion rate; the season-low 255 total yards; the 4.5 yards-per-play average, when they entered the game averaging 6.4.

Shanahan refused to attribute the drops to the bad weather.

Many drops occurred on imperfect passes that forced the receiver to reach behind him, jump or slide, but the unanimous sentiment inside the Redskins' locker room was that Griffin's ball placement was not to blame.

"I don't care where the placement is," Shanahan said. "As long as it hits your hands, you'd better catch it or else you won't be in the National Football League for very long."

Griffin vowed to be critical of his accuracy when he reviews the game. He finished 16 of 34 for 177 yards and a touchdown, good for a passer rating of 72.8.

"I'm going to have to look at it on the film and say, 'Hey, I could have gave him a better ball here, a better ball there,'" he said. "But like I told them: We're all working in this thing together. It's not one guy's fault ever. We just have to make sure we go out and execute better."

Execute better — the Redskins keep saying that. Halfway through a season that is starting to slip through their fingers, it has yet to catch on.

STEELERS 27, REDSKINS 12

Washington	0	6	3	3-12
Pittsburgh	10	10	7	0-27

First Quarter

Pit — Pope 1 pass from Roethlisberger (Suisham kick), 7:55.
Pit — FG Suisham 48, 2:49.

Second Quarter

Was — Moss 2 pass from Griffin III (kick blocked), 11:33.
Pit — Miller 7 pass from Roethlisberger (Suisham kick), 6:17.
Pit — FG Suisham 27, 1:56.

Third Quarter

Was — FG Forbath 48, 11:52.
Pit — WJohnson 1 pass from Roethlisberger (Suisham kick), 5:13.

Fourth Quarter

Was — FG Forbath 45, 12:06.

A-62,371.

	Was	Pit
First downs	17	25
Total Net Yards	255	355
Rushes-yards	21-86	27-140
Passing	169	215
Punt Returns	2-34	3-25
Kickoff Returns	4-97	3-51
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	16-35-0	24-33-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-8	1-7
Punts	4-37.8	3-50.7
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	7-55	3-20
Time of Possession	26:47	33:13

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Washington, Morris 13-59, Young 1-10, Morgan 1-9, Griffin III 6-8. Pittsburgh, Dwyer 17-107, Rainey 4-26, Roethlisberger 2-6, B.Batch 4-1.

PASSING — Washington, Griffin III 16-34-0-177, Morgan 0-1-0-0. Pittsburgh, Roethlisberger 24-33-0-222.

RECEIVING — Washington, Morgan 5-46, Paulsen 4-43, Moss 4-21, Paul 1-37, Hankerson 1-16, Briscoe 1-14. Pittsburgh, Wallace 7-62, Miller 4-46, A.Brown 4-38, Sanders 3-56, WJohnson 2-8, B.Batch 1-8, Dwyer 1-8, Pope 1-1, Rainey 1-(minus 5).

MISSED FIELD GOALS — None

DALY

From page R1

seemed to be on the fritz. So did the hands of the Redskins' receivers. In the damp conditions, even Griffin's usual laserlike accuracy was a bit off. And so Mike Shanahan's club finishes the first half of the season with a 3-5 record — a season that, looking at the schedule, only figures to get harder.

By late October, certain patterns tend to emerge for a team. For the Redskins, the patterns are these: One, their defense can't stop anybody — not for very long, at least. And two, when they compound this felony by letting the opponent control the ball, it can get real ugly real fast. RG3 and his multiple dimensions, after all, are their biggest strength right now.

Bang he was looking for. A long throwback to Logan Paulsen, alone down the sideline, just missed connections. An end-around pass from Joshua Morgan to Griffin fell incomplete. A flea flicker — RG3 to Evan Royster to RG3 to Paulsen — produced only a 6-yard gain.

"Almost nothing worked," Griffin said.

All the drops, 10 by Mike Shanahan's unsparing count, didn't help, either. Sure it was cold and drizzly and the ball was wet, but too often, his receivers seemed more preoccupied with running — that is, with yards after catch — than with making the grab in the first place.

"You can't have that many drops," Shanny said. "You've gotta make those plays, especially against this type of defense. ... It's been a long time since I've had a game like this."

To which Chris Cooley, re-signed just a few days earlier, said, "You can't let [drops] compound like that. You have to refocus. It's a matter of guys looking at one another and saying, 'One play at a time.' You have to get over it quick."

But the Redskins never did get over it. Leonard Hankerson dropped

a touchdown pass in the first quarter (one that, fortunately for him, didn't keep his club from scoring), and Aldrick Robinson dropped one in the fourth quarter (one that, unfortunately for him, forced his club to settle for three points instead of seven).

Still, you had the feeling that, even if the Redskins' receivers had a better grip on things, Ben Roethlisberger and Co. could have scored more if they'd needed to. Frustration ran so high on the Washington side that DeAngelo Hall was ejected in the final minutes for mouthing off to an official after getting hit with a 15-yard penalty for overzealousness.

As Lorenzo Alexander put it, "Obviously, we have the talent to compete against anybody [as they showed the week before against the New York Giants, the defending Super Bowl champs]. So to come out and get your butt flat-out whipped ... it's embarrassing."

Let's face it, the last thing you want to do against an established team like the Steelers, especially on the road, is dig a 20-6 hole for yourself in the first half. This is particularly true on a day when the elements are a factor — increasingly so as the afternoon wears

on. It just makes it that much harder to come back.

With Griffin under center, the Redskins are almost never out of a game. But the Steelers contained the rookie QB as well as anyone has, keeping him in the pocket and not giving him too many chances to be creative. He managed a mere 8 rushing yards on six carries and, thanks in part to his receivers' butter fingers, only had one completion to a wideout that was longer than 16 yards (a 21-yarder to Morgan).

How exactly did the Steelers accomplish this? "They were doing everything they could to disrupt the quarterback option," guard Kory Lichtensteiger said. "A lot of pinching and stunts, stuff we hadn't seen them do the last time we played them [in the 2011 preseason]. At times it worked, and at times we did what we were supposed to do and ran the ball well."

That's kind of the story of the 2012 Redskins. At times function at a fairly high level and at times they don't. This was one of the times they didn't. And so, halfway through Mike Shanahan's third season, they remain a work in progress.

NFL WEEK 8

Top performers

Patriots RB Stevan Ridley: 127 yards, TD
Patriots TE Rob Gronkowski: 146 yards, 2 TDs
Lions QB Matthew Stafford: 352 yards, 3 TDs

GAME OF THE WEEK

Battered Cutler leads Bears to comeback win

BY ANDREW SELIGMAN
 ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO | Jay Cutler took a beating in the first half and came back to lead the Chicago Bears to a last-second victory.

Robbie Gould kicked a 41-yard field goal as time expired after Cutler rallied the Bears in the fourth quarter for a 23-22 win over the Carolina Panthers on Sunday.

The Bears trailed 19-7 in the fourth when the game turned in a big way.

Chicago (6-1) took over on the Carolina 38 after Brad Nortman shanked a 6-yard punt, and Cutler connected with Kellen Davis on a 12-yard scoring pass with just under seven minutes left.

Then on Carolina's next play from scrimmage, Steve Smith slipped on a pass pattern and Tim Jennings returned his second interception of the game 25 yards to make it 20-19.

Cam Newton then drove the Panthers to the Chicago 27, and Justin Medlock's 45-yard field goal hit the right upright and went through to put Carolina ahead 22-20 with 2:27 remaining. Medlock finished with five field goals.

Cutler moved the Bears 55 yards to the 23-yard line before Gould nailed his game-winner.

It was another tough loss for Newton and the Panthers, who fell to 1-6 and lost their fifth straight game.

The Bears pulled this win out even though Carolina ran up 416 yards and sacked Cutler six times, with Greg Hardy getting to him three times.

Cutler completed 19 of 28 passes for 186 yards after having his ribs bruised by Detroit's Ndamukong Suh on Monday night.

Brandon Marshall had 98 yards receiving and Matt Forte ran for 70 yards and a touchdown for Chicago.

Newton threw for 314 yards and Steve Smith added 118 receiving for Carolina, but the Panthers suffered another stinging loss after firing their general manager.

With the worst record in the NFC, they fired longtime general manager Marty Hurney on Monday while making it clear no one except maybe Newton is safe.

Even he's come under criticism in recent weeks



Bears cornerback Tim Jennings (26) celebrates his interception return for a touchdown Sunday with Brandon Marshall (15) and Earl Bennett. Chicago came from behind to defeat Carolina 23-22 on Robbie Gould's 41-yard field goal as time expired. Chicago won despite allowing Jay Cutler to be sacked six times.

for his demeanor, and adding to the Panthers' woes was a mounting list of injuries, with three-time Pro Bowl center Ryan Kalil (foot), cornerback Chris Gamble (shoulder) and three-time Pro Bowl linebacker Jon Beason (knee and shoulder) going down for the rest of the season in recent weeks.

None of that seemed to matter for much of the day.

The way this game started, it was hard to tell which team was in first place and which one was in disarray.

Hardy only had two sacks this season and never more than one in a game in his career, but he created all kinds of havoc in the first half.

The Panthers also had 226 yards while holding the Bears to 49 through the first two quarters.

Cutler tried to hit Marshall deep in double coverage on Chicago's first possession and got picked off by Josh Norman near the goal line, an ominous start for the Bears.

Forte's 13-yard scoring run through a big hole in the line on the Bears' next possession made it 7-0.

Newton responded by hitting a wide open Brandon LaFell on a slant for a 62-yard gain, putting the ball on the Chicago 18, but the Panthers settled for a field goal by Medlock.

They had another golden opportunity late in the quarter after Cutler got sacked on consecutive

plays, with Charles Johnson stripping him and Frank Alexander recovering at the Chicago 16.

Newton fumbled the ball into the end zone after an 8-yard scramble, but Louis Murphy made the recovery to give Carolina a 10-7 lead early in the second quarter.

Medlock made it a six-point game with a 31-yard field goal with 4:36 left in the half, and the Panthers were threatening to score in the final minute of the half when Peppers wrapped up Newton as he dropped back with the ball on the 40.

A diving Jennings intercepted the wobbly pass along the sideline, but the Bears gave it right back a few plays later.

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
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New England	5	3	0	.625	262	126
Miami	4	3	0	.571	150	120
Buffalo	3	4	0	.429	171	227
N.Y. Jets	3	5	0	.375	168	200

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
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Houston	6	1	0	.857	216	128
Indianapolis	4	3	0	.571	136	171
Tennessee	3	5	0	.375	162	257
Jacksonville	1	6	0	.143	103	188

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
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Baltimore	5	2	0	.714	174	161
Pittsburgh	4	3	0	.571	167	144
Cincinnati	3	4	0	.429	166	187
Cleveland	2	6	0	.250	154	186

WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
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Denver	3	3	0	.500	170	138
San Diego	3	4	0	.429	154	144
Oakland	3	4	0	.429	139	187
Kansas City	1	6	0	.143	120	209

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
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N.Y. Giants	6	2	0	.750	234	161
Philadelphia	3	4	0	.429	120	155
Dallas	3	4	0	.429	137	162
Washington	3	5	0	.375	213	227

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
-------	---	---	---	-----	----	----

Atlanta	7	0	0	1.000	201	130
Tampa Bay	3	4	0	.429	184	153
New Orleans	2	4	0	.333	176	182
Carolina	1	6	0	.143	128	167

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
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Chicago	6	1	0	.857	185	100
Minnesota	5	3	0	.625	184	167
Green Bay	5	3	0	.625	208	170
Detroit	3	4	0	.429	161	174

WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
------	---	---	---	-----	----	----

San Francisco	5	2	0	.714	165	100
Arizona	4	3	0	.571	124	118
Seattle	4	4	0	.500	140	134
St. Louis	3	5	0	.375	137	186

THURSDAY'S GAME

Tampa Bay 36, Minnesota 17

SUNDAY'S GAMES

Green Bay 24, Jacksonville 15
 Indianapolis 19, Tennessee 13, OT
 Chicago 23, Carolina 22
 Miami 30, N.Y. Jets 9
 Cleveland 7, San Diego 6
 Atlanta 30, Philadelphia 17
 Detroit 28, Seattle 24
 Pittsburgh 27, Washington 12
 New England 45, St. Louis 7
 Oakland 26, Kansas City 16
 N.Y. Giants 29, Dallas 24
 New Orleans at Denver, late
 Open: Baltimore, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Houston

MONDAY'S GAMES

San Francisco at Arizona, 8:30 p.m.

ROUNDUP

Falcons cruise in Philly to stay undefeated

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA | Asante Samuel stared directly at his former team's sideline and started trash-talking right after the coin toss. By the fourth quarter, he was dancing on the field between plays.

Matt Ryan made it easy for his loquacious teammate to gloat.

Ryan threw touchdown passes on Atlanta's first three possessions and the Falcons remained the NFL's only unbeaten team with a convincing 30-17 win over the Eagles.

"We're 7-0 over here baby," Samuel said. "If I was over there now, they have to go to work."

The Falcons are 7-0 for the first time in the franchise's 47-year history while the Eagles lost after a bye for the first time in 14 games under coach Andy Reid since 1999.

"That was an embarrassing performance," Reid said. "I'm stating the obvious. We need to get better. I need to do a better job. This is fixable. We have the talent."

Ryan finished 22 of 29 for 262 yards and three TDs for his first win against his hometown team in three tries.

Michael Vick didn't turn the ball over for once, but he wasn't spectacular either. Reid said he's going to evaluate whether he makes a quarterback change.

Patriots 45, Rams 7

LONDON | Tom Brady and the Patriots certainly seemed right at home on their second trip to London.

Brady led touchdown drives on the Patriots' first five drives and New England ran over St. Louis in the NFL's annual regular-season game at Wembley Stadium.

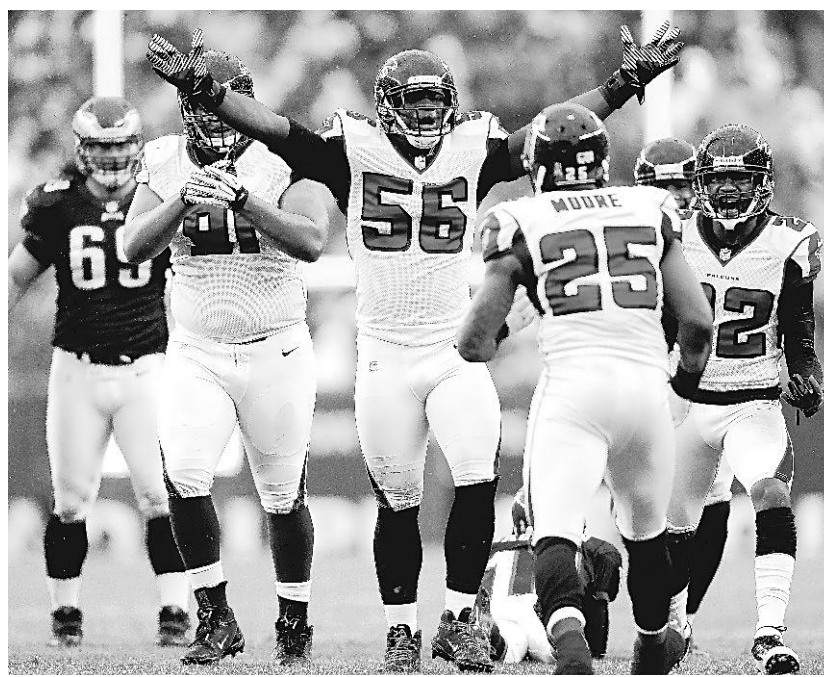
The Rams had looked ready to put up a fight when Sam Bradford hit Chris Givens with a 50-yard touchdown pass on the first drive of the game.

But St. Louis, which arrived in London on Tuesday three days before the Patriots to get better adjusted to the time difference, was the team that looked jetlagged the rest of the way.

Brady passed for 304 yards with four touchdowns.

Giants 29, Cowboys 24

ARLINGTON, TEXAS | Lawrence Tynes



Sean Weatherspoon (56) and the Falcons jumped out to an early lead at Philadelphia and upended the Eagles 30-17. Atlanta is the only undefeated team remaining in the NFL, a perfect 7-0 for the first time in franchise history.

kicked two of his five field goals in the fourth quarter as Eli Manning and the New York Giants remained undefeated at Cowboys Stadium with a 29-24 win Sunday after blowing a 23-point lead.

The Giants overcame a fourth-quarter deficit to win for the 20th time in Manning's career.

Lions 28, Seahawks 24

DETROIT | Titus Young made the most of his opportunity to replace Nate Burleson.

Young caught his second touchdown pass from Matthew Stafford on a 1-yard slant with 20 seconds left, lifting the Lions to a much-needed win.

The second-year pro set career highs with nine receptions and 100 yards receiving while filling in for Burleson, who broke his right leg in Monday night's loss at Chicago.

The Seahawks went ahead when Wilson lobbed a pass into the end zone that a leaping Miller tipped to himself with his right hand and hauled in with both hands for the go-ahead TD.

In the end, however, it was Seattle that failed to hold onto the lead.

Stafford was cool under pressure on

the Lions' final drive and finished with 352 yards passing and three touchdowns in the game.

Browns 7, Chargers 6

CLEVELAND | Trent Richardson's sore ribs didn't slow him down, and neither did the nasty weather.

Cleveland's rookie running back rushed for 122 yards and scored a touchdown, leading the Browns to a soggy, wind-whipped win.

Richardson, pulled last week at Indianapolis when he was ineffective because of a rib injury, scored on a 26-yard run in the first quarter as the Browns sloped their way to a second straight home win — and first for new owner Jimmy Haslam.

The Chargers had a final chance, but quarterback Philip Rivers' pass was batted away by Browns cornerback Buster Skrine with 1:24 left.

Packers 24, Jaguars 15

GREEN BAY, WIS. | Aaron Rodgers went back to an old favorite, connecting with Donald Driver on a 4-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter to seal Green Bay's victory.

Rodgers threw two touchdowns, passing Bart Starr for second place on Green Bay's all-time list, and Dezman Moses gave the Packers their first touchdown on a blocked punt in almost 22 years.

But playing without top receivers Greg Jennings and Jordy Nelson, Green Bay had a surprisingly tough time with the NFL's worst team.

Jacksonville, meanwhile, looked unfazed by the absence of Maurice Jones-Drew. Backup Rashad Jennings finished with 115 yards of offense and Cecil Shorts had 116 yards receiving.

Dolphins 30, Jets 9

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. | Matt Moore stepped in for an injured Ryan Tannehill and the Dolphins didn't miss a beat, rolling past the Jets for their third straight victory.

Moore threw a touchdown pass to Anthony Fasano, Olivier Vernon recovered a blocked punt in the end zone for a touchdown and blocked a field goal, and the Dolphins smothered Mark Sanchez and the Jets' offense.

Tannehill injured his left knee and quadriceps muscle on a sack on the Dolphins' second possession of the game. Moore finished with 131 yards.

Colts 19, Titans 13

NASHVILLE, TENN. | Andrew Luck threw a 16-yard touchdown pass to Vick Ballard at 4:49 of overtime and the surprising Colts beat the Titans.

Indianapolis did it with Luck leading a pair of 80-yard touchdown drives. The top pick overall in April's draft set up Delone Carter's 1-yard TD run that tied it up at 13 with 3:24 left in the fourth quarter.

Raiders 26, Chiefs 16

KANSAS CITY, MO. | The Raiders stuffed the struggling Chiefs for their sixth straight win at Arrowhead Stadium.

Carson Palmer threw for 209 yards and two touchdowns for Oakland, which has won two straight after losing four of its first five.

The Chiefs have lost four straight and still have not led in regulation this season.

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

ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

With Redskins linebackers Keenan Robinson (52) and Ryan Kerrigan trailing, Steelers tight end Leonard Pope falls into the end zone for the first score of the game. The touchdown catch on fourth-and-goal from the 1 capped a 12-play, 76-yard drive during the first quarter.

QUARTERS

1 The Redskins defense has been a shell of its 2011 self so far this season, and that trend continued in the first quarter in Pittsburgh. The Steelers were in complete control on their opening drive, going 76 yards on 12 plays and finishing with a fourth-and-goal touchdown pass to Leonard Pope. They added a field goal five minutes later to make it 10-0, and it wasn't until the closing minute of the quarter that Robert Griffin III and the Redskins offense showed life and engineered a drive into Pittsburgh territory.

2 After watching the Steelers convert on fourth-and-goal in the first quarter, the Redskins decided to convert one of their own. Griffin found Santana Moss on a quick slant at the 12:12 mark, but that was where Washington's luck ended. Kai Forbath's extra point was blocked. The ensuing Steelers drive resulted in another touchdown pass, this time to Heath Miller. And the most exciting moment of the half, a trick play pass from Josh Morgan to Griffin, ended in an offensive pass interference call on the Redskins' QB.

PLAY OF THE GAME: In a game filled with missed opportunities and mental mistakes, it was only fitting that the Redskins would end on a sour note. Veteran cornerback DeAngelo Hall was ejected in the game's closing minutes after removing his helmet and jawing at an official.

3 Griffin found Niles Paul for a 37-yard run-and-catch on the first play of the half, but the Redskins could only manage a field goal on the drive. Pittsburgh, on the other hand, continued to march up and down the field seemingly at will. Roethlisberger completed his third touchdown pass of the day and third-string running back Jonathan Dwyer approached 100 yards on the ground.

4 Forbath's second field goal of the day brought the Redskins to within two scores, and a Pittsburgh three-and-out gave them hope. But with a combination of drops and penalties, the Redskins unraveled. After converting a fourth down and moving into the red zone, Washington's screen play was blown up for a 7-yard loss. Then, on a 4th-and-17 two plays later, Griffin could not do what he has done so frequently this season and make a miracle happen. His pass to Moss fell incomplete. The Redskins offense left the field empty-handed. And then, just for good measure, DeAngelo Hall got ejected for taking off his helmet and yelling at an official.

NUMBERS

9: Drops by Redskins receivers, the most by any team in a single game this season.

72.8: RG3's quarterback rating, his lowest of the season.

3 for 12: Redskins' third-down conversions. Washington entered the game ranked 30th in that department.

232: Consecutive starts for London Fletcher, who recorded six tackles despite being questionable all week with a hamstring injury.

0: Interceptions for the Redskins' defense, snapping an eight-game interception streak.

NEXT

PANTHERS AT REDSKINS
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Pittsburgh, while Newton played his best game in a while but watched his defense give up a game-winning field goal drive that resulted in a one-point loss to Chicago. Newton reached 300 yards for the fifth time in his career, but he also threw two interceptions, one of which was returned for a score in the fourth quarter.

STEELERS 27, REDSKINS 12

MISGUIDED MISDIRECTION

Trick play gone awry a setback in worst game of Griffin's NFL tenure

By NATHAN FENNO
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

PITTSBURGH | There is little Robert Griffin III hasn't done in his first two months in the NFL, from compiling the league's top completion percentage to leading quarterbacks in rushing. The rookie spawned a new meme, Griffining, and returned from a concussion to deliver the longest run by a quarterback in 16 years.

Then he ran a pass route Sunday at Heinz Field. No, that's not a misprint.

After an unrelenting early-season string of big hits, the Washington Redskins preached protection to Griffin. Run out of bounds instead of going for the extra yard. Slide, don't dive. Throw the ball away. Avoid contact. Play smart.

But in the second quarter of the 27-12 loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers, Griffin found himself alone, exposed and, eventually, belted during an unusual trick play.

"I've run that play a lot of times," coach Mike Shanahan said, "and quarterbacks have walked in."

The Redskins use an imaginative series of formations, from the pistol to a four-man backfield, to take advantage of Griffin's transformational ability to run and throw. The offense, though, is short on speed with receiver Pierre Garcon and tight end Fred Davis, the top two playmakers who don't wear a Roman numeral on the back of their jerseys, sidelined by injury.

Still, the play represented a departure from efforts in recent weeks to shield Griffin from needless contact.

Facing 3rd-and-4 on their 43-yard line, usually a short pass, Griffin scamper or an option run would gobble up the yardage. None of those calls came. Griffin flipped the ball to Joshua Morgan as he rolled right. The quarterback, meanwhile, sprinted downfield in front of the Steelers' bench.



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins quarterback Robert Griffin III stands frustrated on the sideline at the end of Sunday's loss. Griffin's sensational rookie year hit a speed bump, as he finished 16 of 34 for 177 yards and one touchdown.

Shanahan expected the Steelers to be in man-to-man on the play. They were in zone. That was a problem.

Morgan, who spent time at quarterback at H.D. Woodson High School in the District, lofted the ball across the field and through the raindrops toward Griffin. After the game, Shanahan expressed surprise the receiver could throw that far.

The coach, the quarterback and the receiver noted the play's success in practice. Left unsaid, of course, was the "success" came against the Redskins' defense ranked 32nd in the league against the pass.



CRAIG BISACRE/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Steelers wide receiver Antonio Brown celebrates an 18-yard reception for a first down Sunday during the second quarter of Pittsburgh's win over Washington.

Defense miffed by Steelers' diverse offense

By STEPHEN WHYNO
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

PITTSBURGH | The Washington Redskins' defense knew exactly what to expect from the Pittsburgh Steelers' offense. No longer a run-it-down-your-throat team, the Steelers feature a heavy dose of Ben Roethlisberger throwing to a variety of weapons.

The Redskins' problem Sunday was that they knew what was coming and couldn't stop it. On the ground and in the air, the Steelers gashed Washington's defense to the tune of 355 yards in a 27-12 rout.

"It was a little frustrating because they seemed to have an answer for what we wanted to do a lot of the time," linebacker Ryan Kerrigan said. "That's a feather in their cap they were able to do that today. We just didn't make the plays we needed to make, and they were able to make them."

Having no answers started early as Roethlisberger marched his team 76 yards down the field for a touchdown on the opening drive of the game. By the time the first quarter was over, it was 10-0 and Robert Griffin III and Co. on offense had plenty of ground to make up.

"They went down on us, we didn't respond, and I think that happened the whole game," linebacker Lorenzo Alexander said. "We were kind of lackluster in all three phases today, and when that happens you're going to get your butt whooped

"It was a little frustrating because they seemed to have an answer for what we wanted to do a lot of the time. ... We just didn't make the plays we needed to make, and they were able to make them."

—Ryan Kerrigan

by a good team."

For most of this season, the Steelers haven't been that good in the running game. Without Rashard Mendenhall and Isaac Redman, it was all Jonathan Dwyer against the Redskins. He managed to put up 107 yards, just the second time Pittsburgh broke the century mark this season.

It was also the first time Washington allowed a 100-yard rusher this season. But part of that had to do with the Steelers building a substantial lead and eating up clock on the ground.

Middle linebacker London Fletcher pointed to big runs, such as a 34-yarder by Dwyer, as a bigger problem than the total yardage. Coach Mike Shanahan attributed that to missed tackles.

"That's a big worry. We can't have those," Kerrigan said. "Those obviously lead to big plays and

"Usually he's wide open," Morgan said. "I gave him a chance to go up and get it. He was right up under it."

Morgan seemed mystified as to why the play didn't work.

Griffin slowed, then jumped for the ball around the 20-yard line. Cornerback Ike Taylor swatted it away. An instant later, free safety Ryan Clark, running full speed, hammered Griffin around the shoulder pads. The opportunity for a free shot at an unprotected quarterback is a defensive fantasy.

A yellow flag joined the tangle of players: Griffin had pushed off. The Steelers declined the penalty.

"I got hit in the face. He ran into me. We were all pass-interfering everybody, so it doesn't matter," Griffin said.

The gimmick play faded into the raw afternoon of dropped passes and plodding offense for the Redskins, among the raindrops and yellow ponchos and cold wind blowing through the stadium toward the confluence of the Allegheny and Ohio rivers.

"I don't think," Griffin said, "that was the turning point in the game by any stretch."

Clark's hit on Griffin remained, shot around the Internet in video clips that drew wincing and questions. The Steelers knocked Griffin to the ground 10 times, the same number of hits he's taken in each of the previous two weeks. It's a vast improvement over the 28-hit battering the Cincinnati Bengals delivered last month.

Why put Griffin in position to risk another hit? Practice success of the play was the repeated answer.

"It just gives you an idea of what type of athlete he is," Shanahan said. "If it was man coverage, no one would have been anywhere by him."

Instead, the trickery amounted to one more shot for Griffin in a season filled with them.