

STILL STINGING FROM GAME 5 LOSS, NATS MUST LOOK AHEAD, C1

EXPANDED COVERAGE, R4: Back in action, RG3 runs with vigor
Snyder: Managing Griffin a healthy dilemma; Forbath starts off on right foot

38   26

GAMEDAY

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PRESTON KERES/SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Robert Griffin III burst 76 yards for a touchdown late in the fourth quarter to seal Washington's win over Minnesota. The rookie has rushed for six touchdowns, a franchise record for quarterbacks.

BLAZE OF GLORY

Griffin's 76-yard TD run helps end eight-game slump at FedEx Field

BY RICH CAMPBELL
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The fans wearing white and burgundy jerseys jumped and hollered as Robert Griffin III tucked the ball and ignited the afterburners in those magic legs of his. They had waited almost 13 months for their beloved Washington Redskins to give them something to cheer. And as Griffin blazed past the defense 76 yards into the end zone, they finally had it.

"That," left tackle Trent Williams said, "is why he's on all the Subway commercials."

Griffin's electrifying fourth-quarter run capped the Redskins' first complete

performance of coach Mike Shanahan's third season. Washington's offense regained its edge with Griffin actively running the ball again, and safety Madieu Williams punctuated a stout defensive effort with an interception return for a touchdown in the third quarter.

And when the puzzle pieces came together, the final picture was a 38-26 victory over the Minnesota Vikings.

Washington survived the Vikings' fourth-quarter rally to end its eight-game home losing streak. The 78,476 fans who witnessed Griffin's run left FedEx Field buzzing. He's not too good to be true. This is indeed the quarterback of their team.

"It's something special that I can do personally," Griffin said. "It was fun to be able to show everybody that and to help us win the game doing it."

The win was a counterpunch by a desperate Redskins team on the brink of losing their season. With road trips to New York and Pittsburgh the next two weeks, they were staring at a worst-case scenario of 2-6.

Instead, they improved to 3-3 and moved into a tie with Philadelphia for second place in the NFC East. The winner of next week's game against the Giants would, at worst, tie for the division lead.

They did it by putting everything together,

finally. Griffin returned from last week's concussion and sparked the offense with 138 rushing yards and two touchdowns on 13 carries. The undercard was a 7-yard touchdown on a quarterback draw in the third quarter. It was everything the Redskins dreamed when they traded three first-round draft picks and a second-rounder to draft this bolt of lightning.

"That's why he's here," receiver Santana Moss said. "That's why they rant and rave about him."

The Redskins' 31-12 lead had slipped to

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Checklist just got a lot shorter

Let's face it, the Redskins were one needy ballclub when they kicked off at FedEx Field against the Minnesota Vikings. They needed their young quarterback, Robert Griffin III, to show no lingering effects from last week's concussion. They needed to convert some third downs — boy, did they ever need to convert some third downs. They needed to contain a Vikings attack that's functional but not particularly frightful. They needed their new kicker not to mess up like so many of his predecessors had. They needed to snap an almost incomprehensible eight-game home losing streak. And for good measure, they needed to beat a winning team — and



DAN DALY

the very least, allow everybody to take a deep breath.

After bending but not breaking on

Minnesota, at 4-1, was certainly that.

A pretty lengthy to-do list, you have to admit. But wonder of wonders, the Redskins accomplished everything on it in their 38-26 victory over the Vikes. It was the kind of mental housecleaning that can change the course of a season — or at

least, allow everybody to take a deep breath. three Minnesota field goal drives in the first quarter, the Redskins rode Griffin's arm (97.2 rating) and legs (138 yards rushing, including a for-the-ages 76-yard touchdown run in the closing minutes) — and their most opportunistic defense in eons — to as complete a win as we've seen in the Mike Shanahan Era, one that evened their record at 3-3.

After all, the Vikings, in knocking off San Francisco, Detroit and Tennessee in succession, had been looking a little like last year's San Francisco 49ers. That is, they'd been kicking field goals, playing defense and giving themselves a chance



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Linebacker London Fletcher was among the Redskins to put his foot down on defense.

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