

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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☆☆

The Washington Times

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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. The main event was his 76-yard sprint. 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

» see REDSKINS | R2

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



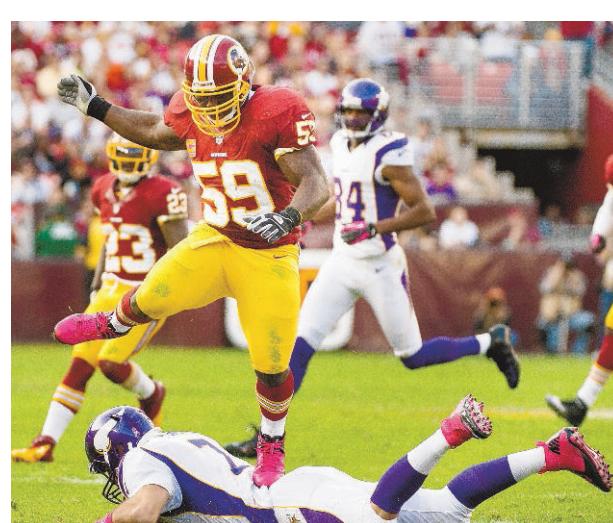
DAN DALY

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

After bending but not breaking on

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.

» see DALY | R2

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

REDSKINS 38, VIKINGS 26

By STEPHEN WHYNO

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Lorenzo Alexander is no lightweight within the Washington Redskins' locker room. The special teams ace is a captain and leader, though normally he's relied on in a niche role and to speak for the team as a whole.

Sunday, Alexander was light on his feet but heavy on impact on defense, getting a game ball for his standout performance that included a fumble recovery, 1½ sacks and five tackles.

"I understand what my role on this team is: to be a special teams demon and be a captain and fill in on defense when need be, and just take advantage of my opportunities," Alexander said. "It was a great feeling to go out there and finally contribute on defense in a win."

On a much-maligned defense desperately looking for playmakers with linebacker Brian Orakpo out for the season, Alexander fit the bill in the 38-26 victory over the Minnesota Vikings. And it wasn't by accident.

"We were scheming him up all week, and we knew that they weren't going to be ready for the stuff we were running with Lorenzo," defensive end Stephen Bowen said. "Lorenzo, he's an outstanding athlete. He just waited for his opportunity. Everybody knew he could pass rush, and he just took advantage of it."

Alexander usually gets sparse action on defense, relied on to man special teams units. But given the Redskins' struggles in getting to quarterbacks, the linebacker got the call to try his hand.

The converted defensive lineman made it a point of emphasis to trim down to gain more speed. It showed Sunday.

"He's a very explosive player. Losing weight, being down to whatever he is right now in the 240s and he still is a strong player with pass-rush ability," middle linebacker London Fletcher said. "They were able to run some games, him and the defensive linemen. He was able to get penetration, chase [Vikings quarterback Christian]



PRESTON KERES/SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Lorenzo Alexander grabs Christian Ponder's fumble out of the air in the second quarter Sunday. The turnover set up Darrel Young's 6-yard touchdown catch on the next play.

Ponder down. He's the one-man gang."

But Alexander would hardly take all the credit. Even on his fumble recovery, Alexander cited fellow linebacker Perry Riley for pressuring Ponder.

"Some of that is just being in the right place at the right time," he said. "I was just in the right place, was able to catch it. I wish I could've scored, but I had [left tackle Matt] Kalil all on my back."

Even without scoring, Alexander's short return put the Redskins in

position for a 6-yard touchdown one play later.

That fumble recovery, his own sack and one shared with Bowen made it clear that the Redskins schemed right in putting so much faith in Alexander.

"I was very impressed. Not surprised but very impressed," linebacker Rob Jackson said. "He's a hard worker. Anytime he's on the field, whether it's special teams, defense, anything, he makes it his duty to make something happen."

Teammates and coaches know full well that Alexander tries to make something happen every time he's on the field. When he was able to produce as he did Sunday, the game ball was evidence of a job well done.

"It just shows that I'm valued around here even though I've been here for six years now. It shows that people want to keep me around," Alexander said. "I'm a Redskin through and through. I don't really do it for the glory. I go out there representing my

team, playing hard. Just blue-collar, hard-nosed guy. And things happen to good people that play hard."

Against the Vikings, Alexander was rewarded for being put in important situations. But his excellent showing could just be the beginning of what he can do on defense.

"He's just one heck of a football player," coach Mike Shanahan said. "He's a guy that gives everything, and we're going to have to play him some more, obviously."

The road doesn't get easier from here on out. But these aren't the same old Redskins, that's for sure. And they don't seem nearly as needy now as they did Sunday morning.

DALY

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to win every time out. And they started the game against the Redskins the same way, jumping to a 9-0 lead.

"We really talked about [making] a four-quarter effort," Kory Lichtensteiger said, "but unfortunately we came out a little flat. The defense did a good job of keeping us in the game, or it could have gotten real ugly real fast."

As it turned out, Griffin, who threw his second interception of the season in the second series, was just warming up. In the second quarter, after newcomer Kai Forbath had booted a 50-yarder to make it 9-3, Robert hit four straight passes on a 90-yard drive that put the Redskins ahead. The biggest was a 30-yard toss to Santana Moss that, according to Moss, "showed his progress [as a QB]. He threw it in the second window [instead of going with his first read]. When we ran that play in the pre-season, he didn't do that."

Seconds later, Lorenzo Alexander recovered a Christian Ponder fumble at the Minnesota 6, and RG3 flipped a TD pass to Darrel Young to increase the cushion to 17-9 — and really get the crowd of 78,476 going. It was more of the same at the outset of the second half. Another long march, this one 71 yards, ended with a 7-yard Griffin run that put the home team up 24-9. (And in that series, you'll be pleased to know, the officials continued to take very good care of RG3, calling Harrison Smith for a horse-collar tackle after hitting erstwhile Maryland Terp E.J. Henderson with a roughing-the-passenger penalty in the first half.)

We haven't often seen this kind of performance since Mike Shanahan came to town. The Redskins the past three years have tended to win ugly and lose uglier. But against a Minnesota club that had been playing at a high level much of the season, they were solid in virtually every respect. They even batted .500 on third down (6 for 12).

For the first time, we got an inkling

of what the Redskins can be when all pistons are firing, when they aren't behaving too self-destructively. They can move the ball, almost at will, against an upper-tier defense, and they can create turnovers that lead to even more scoring.

Seven days after having his cranium severely rattled, Griffin once again was The Man. Not only did he throw as accurately as he ever has (17 for 22), he didn't shy from running the ball, either. In fact, he outrushed Adrian Peterson (138-79) ... and everybody else. He even avoided contact a few times by sliding or ducking out of bounds or throwing the ball away. But it was interesting to note he played in the same style he always does — as a passer first but also as a runner you can never turn your back on.

The Sunday before, when he was knocked out of the Atlanta game, "I felt like I let a lot of people down." He made sure he didn't feel that way again with his late dash down the sideline, past the screaming Washington bench. The best part about it, other than the touchdown it resulted in? "I got to prove to those guys that I still have that track speed."

But it wasn't all RG3, even though it might have seemed that way in the final moments. Alexander's recovery at the Minnesota 6 produced seven easy points, and Madieu Williams' interception and 24-yard return in the fourth quarter produced seven even easier points — he ran it in himself.

When your defense basically hands you two touchdowns, you'd better win. One of the more puzzling aspects of the Redskins' season so far, though, was that they'd lost all three games in which the D had scored. Maybe I should have added that to my List of Needs at the beginning: The Redskins needed to score on defense and actually win the game. Anyway, check that one off, too.

The road doesn't get easier from here on out. The Giants — in New York — are on tap next week. But these aren't the same old Redskins, that's for sure. And they don't seem nearly as needy now as they did Sunday morning.

REDSKINS 38, VIKINGS 26

Minnesota 9 0 3 14 - 26

Washington 0 17 7 14 - 38

First Quarter

Min — FG Walsh 20, 11:31.
Min — FG Walsh 27, 6:18.
Min — FG Walsh 27, 1:47.

Second Quarter

Was — FG Forbath 50, 10:51.
Was — Morris 1 run (Forbath kick), 2:27.
Was — Young 6 pass from Griffin III (Forbath kick), 2:14.

Third Quarter

Was — Griffin III 7 run (Forbath kick), 9:37.
Min — FG Walsh 37, 4:18.

Fourth Quarter

Was — M.Williams 24 interception return (Forbath kick), 12:40.
Min — Jenkins 9 pass from Ponder (Rudolph pass from Ponder), 8:02.
Min — Rudolph 1 pass from Ponder (pass failed), 3:36.
Was — Griffin III 76 run (Forbath kick), 2:43.

A — 78,476.

	Min	Was
First downs	27	20
Total Net Yards	421	361
Rushes-Yards	24-94	32-183
Passing	327	178
Punt Returns	1-(2)	11
Kickoff Returns	3-100	0-0
Interceptions Ret.	1-0	2-24
Comp-Att-Int	35-52-2	17-22-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	4-25	1-4
Punts	2-50.5	3-38.3
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	1-0
Penalties-Yards	5-29	7-66
Time of Possession	31:32	28:28

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Minnesota, Peterson 17-79, Ponder 4-13, Harvin 21, Gerhart 11. Washington, Griffin III 13-18, Morris 16-47, Royster 10, Banks 2-(minus 2)

PASSING — Minnesota, Ponder 35-52-2-352. Washington, Griffin III 17-22-1-182.

RECEIVING — Minnesota, Harvin 11-133, Peterson 7-50, Jenkins 6-67, Rudolph 6-56, Gerhart 2-10, Elliston 1-16, Aromashodu 1-13, Carlson 1-7. Washington, Moss 4-46, F.Davis 3-46, Morgan 3-42, Hankerson 2-23, Banks 2-3, Morris 1-9, Royster 17, Young 1-6.

MISSSED FIELD GOALS — None

REDSKINS

From page R1

31-26 late in the fourth quarter. This was progressing toward becoming the second crushing collapse of the weekend in D.C. sports.

Washington, however, has Robert Griffin III, the 22-year-old who set national track records in high school. Granted, those were in the hurdles, and he didn't have to jump anyone on his way to the end zone. But, oh my, did he leave a trail of fire.

Griffin dropped back to pass on third and 6 from the Redskins' 24 with 2:56 remaining. As he reached the top of his drop, a hole opened on the left side of the offensive line. The Vikings blitzed up the middle, and the Redskins blocked it.

"I was thinking I'm either going to throw hot, or if they miss this blitz and don't hit it the right way, then I'm going to run for the first," Griffin said. "I saw that they missed it, took off running."

He eluded the reach of a diving defender at the line of scrimmage and then broke into the open field. He cut outside to the Redskins' sideline behind receiver Joshua Morgan's exceptional block of defensive back Chris Cook.

And then Griffin remembered the lesson he learned in suffering a concussion last Sunday. He had a decision to make.

"Thought about running out of bounds because everyone has been telling me that lately," Griffin said with a laugh. "You know in certain situations, and I felt like I had the guy outflanked. I just took off running. The rest is history."

Griffin found whatever gear is faster than turbo. Tight ends coach Sean McVay told Griffin later that he felt the gust of air as Griffin blazed past.

"Those are one of the greatest plays on the field, when you just watch from 30 yards away as your guy just blows everybody away," left tackle Kory Lichtensteiger said. "He can leave people in his dust."

Griffin jumped into the end zone stands as delirious fans savored their savior. Chants of "R-G-3!" echoed throughout the stadium.

"I got to enjoy the moment a little bit," he said. "It was pretty fun to hear the crowd and see my teammates on the sideline celebrating as I ran for the

touchdown."

Griffin's rushing complemented a defense that bent but ultimately did not break.

The Redskins limited running back Adrian Peterson to 79 yards on 17 carries, and they scored a defensive touchdown for the fourth time this season.

It was far from a sure thing early, though. Washington fell behind 9-0 before scoring 24 unanswered points.

It took the Redskins' offense until the second quarter to get going. Their first two possessions were a continuation of last week's ineptitude. They failed on their first four third downs, and Griffin threw an interception on the second possession.

However, Minnesota managed only short field goals on each of its first three possessions as the Redskins' defense strengthened inside the red zone.

"They kept us in the game," Griffin said. "We have so many weapons that if we hold teams to field goals, it's huge because we can come back."

Washington's pass rush was more effective than it was against Atlanta last week, although it wasn't dominant. Quarterback Christian Ponder's inaccuracy helped.

Unlike the handful of quarterbacks that have beaten Washington this season by completing passes into tight windows, Ponder missed open receivers at times. He finished 35 of 52 passing for 352 yards, two touchdowns and two interceptions.

The Redskins' offense came alive on the third series when they used the triple-option concepts that were so effective in the Week 3 win over Cincinnati. The misdirection got the Vikings off balance.

New kicker Kai Forbath, a rookie playing in his first regular-season game, completed the drive with a 50-yard field goal. The offense had found its rhythm.

Alfred Morris had a 1-yard touchdown run, and fullback Darrel Young scored on a 6-yard reception.

Minnesota scored two touchdowns late to conjure the emotions of the Washington Nationals' collapse Friday in the ninth inning of the decisive game in baseball's National League Division Series.

But Griffin rescued them with the same legs that put him in harm's way last week. And as the crowd chanted his name, it became fair to wonder: How could he not run?

NFL WEEK 6

Top performers

Jets RB Shonn Greene: 161 yards, 3 TDs
Bengals WR A.J. Green: 135 yards, 2 TDs
Bucs QB Josh Freeman: 328 yards, 3 TDs

GAME OF THE WEEK

Off and running, Jones' return propels Ravens

Romo, 'Boys click on offense but still can't win

By DAVID GINSBURG

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BALTIMORE | The Dallas Cowboys dominated the statistics, held the ball twice as long as Baltimore and amassed more yards rushing against the Ravens than any team — ever.

Baltimore won anyway, thanks to Jacoby Jones' lengthy run into the NFL record book.

Jones tied an NFL mark with a 108-yard kickoff return, and the Ravens beat the Cowboys 31-29 Sunday for their 14th straight regular-season home win.

"You know when you get that itch? I wanted to scratch it," Jones said. "So I took it."

Dallas ran for 227 yards and totaled 481 yards offense.

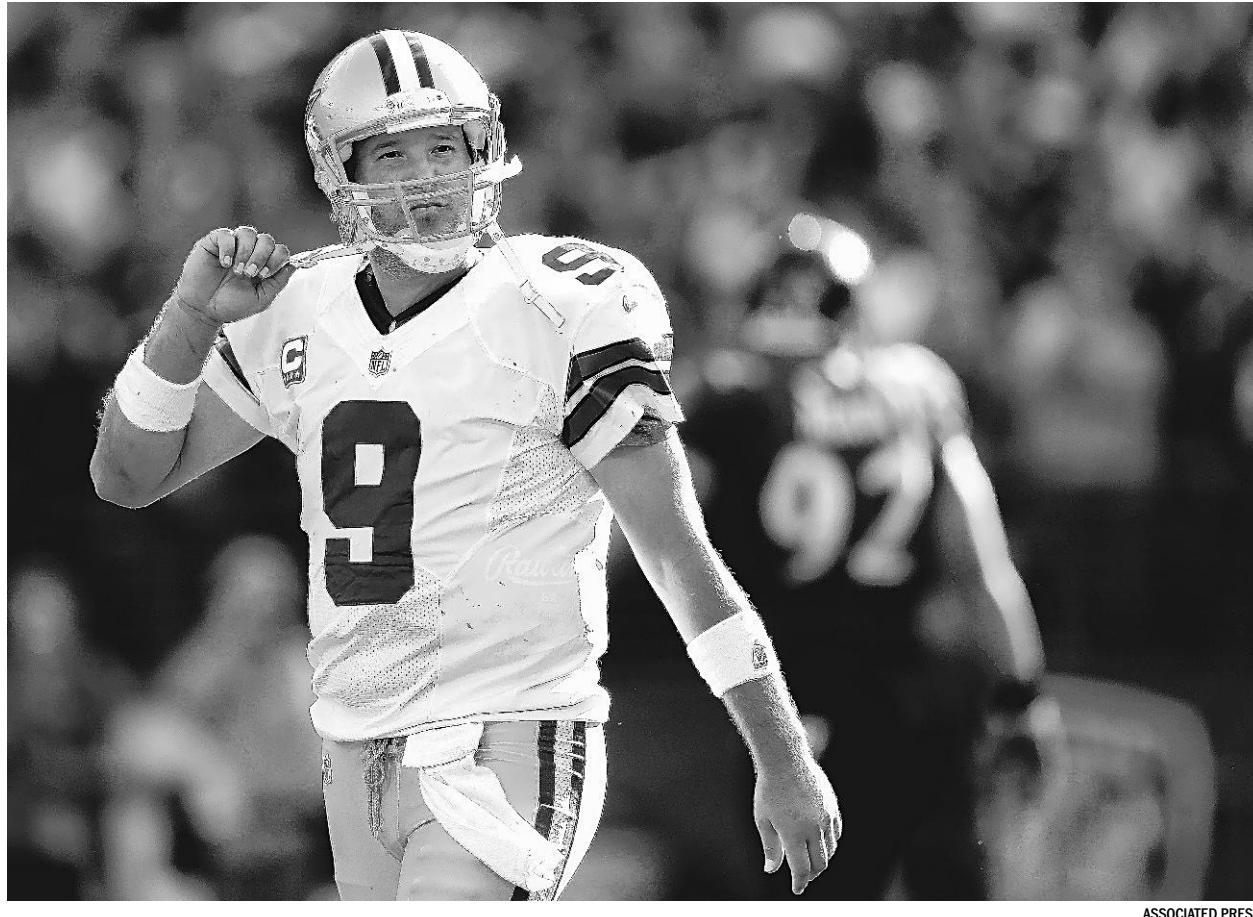
The Cowboys (2-3) also held the ball for more than 40 minutes. But it wasn't enough.

"They threw a lot of haymakers at us," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said. "Our guys stepped up at the end and found a way to win the game."

After Dez Bryant scored on a 4-yard pass from Tony Romo with 32 seconds left to make it 31-29, the two-point conversion pass zipped through the arms of the diving Bryant in the front left corner of the end zone.

Dallas recovered the onside kick, but Dan Bailey was wide left on a 51-yard field goal try with six seconds remaining.

Ray Rice scored two touchdowns and Joe Flacco threw for a score to help



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo completed 25 of 36 passes for 261 yards and two touchdowns, but he also was intercepted once and couldn't complete a two-point conversion pass in the waning seconds. The Ravens won 31-29 in Baltimore.

the Ravens (5-1) secure their fourth consecutive victory and enhance their grip on first place in the AFC North. Baltimore's home winning streak is the longest current run in the NFL.

Jones' return tied the mark set by Ellis Hobbs of New England in 2007 against the Jets and tied in 2011 by Randall Cobb of Green Bay against New Orleans.

"To set the National Football League record for a kickoff return, in what was the difference in the game, is pretty special," Harbaugh said.

The score was essential to the Baltimore, which mustered only 1 yard on three offensive plays during the third quarter.

After Jones' touchdown, the Cowboys launched an 80-yard march that

ate up more than eight minutes. Romo connected with Bryant for 13 yards on a third-and-11 before throwing a 7-yard touchdown pass to Bryant to make it 24-20.

Dallas followed with two strong defensive series, and a short punt by Baltimore preceded a 21-yard drive that produced a field goal by Bailey.

Flacco then directed a 10-play,

73-yard march. A 31-yard completion to Anquan Boldin moved the ball to the Dallas 4, and Rice scored from the 1 to provide the Ravens an eight-point cushion.

It was barely enough. Romo went 25 of 36 for 261 yards and two touchdowns, a redemptive performance after he threw five interceptions in his last outing, a 34-18 loss to Chicago on Monday Night Football.

DeMarco Murray ran for 93 yards, Felix Jones had 92 on the ground and Bryant caught 13 passes for 95 yards and two TDs.

"At the end of the day, we've got to finish the game and we have to win the game," Cowboys coach Jason Garrett said. "We didn't do that."

Baltimore trailed 10-3 before scoring touchdowns on a pair of 80-yard drives to take a 17-10 halftime lead.

Murray left in the second half with a foot injury; his absence did little to deter the Cowboys' running game.

"We ran it inside, we ran it outside, we got some stuff off the run game," Garrett said. "We kept the ball for a long time and those were all good things."

Baltimore trailed 10-3 before scoring touchdowns on a pair of 80-yard drives to take a 17-10 halftime lead.

The Ravens pulled even when Rice ran in from the 1 after a hands-to-the-face penalty against Dallas lineman Kenyon Coleman on third and goal from the 2. Earlier in the march, Rice ran 43 yards with a short pass.

Cary Williams' third interception in three games gave the ball back to Baltimore, and Flacco completed two 20-yard passes to Boldin before hitting Torrey Smith for a 19-yard score with 41 seconds left in the half.

Flacco completed 17 of 26 passes for 234 yards.

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
NY. Jets	3	3	0	.500	133	141
New England	3	3	0	.500	188	137
Miami	3	3	0	.500	120	117
Buffalo	3	3	0	.500	137	192
SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Houston	5	0	0	1.000	149	73
Indianapolis	2	3	0	.400	100	145
Tennessee	2	4	0	.333	114	204
Jacksonville	1	4	0	.200	65	138
NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Baltimore	5	1	0	.833	161	118
Cincinnati	3	3	0	.500	149	163
Pittsburgh	2	3	0	.400	116	115
Cleveland	1	5	0	.167	134	163
WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
San Diego	3	2	0	.600	124	102
Denver	2	3	0	.400	135	114
Oakland	1	4	0	.200	87	148
Kansas City	1	5	0	.167	104	183

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
N.Y. Giants	4	2	0	.667	178	114
Philadelphia	3	3	0	.500	103	125
Washington	3	3	0	.500	178	173
Dallas	2	3	0	.400	94	119
SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Atlanta	6	0	0	1.000	171	113
Tampa Bay	2	3	0	.400	120	101
Carolina	1	4	0	.200	92	125
New Orleans	1	4	0	.200	141	154
NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Chicago	4	1	0	.800	149	71
Minnesota	4	2	0	.667	146	117
Green Bay	2	3	0	.400	112	111
Detroit	2	3	0	.400	126	137
WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Arizona	4	2	0	.667	110	97
San Francisco	4	2	0	.667	152	94
Seattle	4	2	0	.667	110	93
St. Louis	3	3	0	.500	110	111

THURSDAY'S GAME

Tennessee 26, Pittsburgh 23

SUNDAY'S GAMES

Washington 38, Minnesota 26
 Atlanta 23, Oakland 20
 Tampa Bay 38, Kansas City 10
 N.Y. Jets 35, Indianapolis 9
 Cleveland 34, Cincinnati 24
 Detroit 26, Philadelphia 23, OT
 Miami 17, St. Louis 14
 Baltimore 31, Dallas 29
 Buffalo 19, Arizona 16, OT
 Seattle 24, New England 23
 N.Y. Giants 26, San Francisco 3
 Green Bay at Houston, late
 Open: Carolina, Chicago, Jacksonville, New Orleans

MONDAY'S GAMES

Denver at San Diego, 8:30 p.m.

ROUNDUP

Falcons stay perfect with last-second FG

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA | Matt Ryan and the Falcons have plenty of mistakes to work on during their bye week.

Of course, it's sure easier to fix the problems when you're still unbeaten.

Asante Samuel returned an interception 79 yards for a touchdown in the closing minutes and Matt Bryant connected on a 55-yard field goal with 1 second remaining, allowing the Falcons to escape with a sloppy 23-20 victory over the Raiders.

Overcoming three Ryan interceptions, the Falcons extended the best start in franchise history.

It wasn't easy against the pesky Raiders, who bounced back from Samuel's pick to tie the game with less than a minute to go, but left a little too much time on the clock for Atlanta's final possession.

"We've been in these situations before," Ryan said. "We know what we need to do."

Ryan completed four short passes on Atlanta's final drive, the last of them a 13-yarder to Tony Gonzalez that got Bryant in range for his longest field goal since joining the Falcons in 2009.

Earlier in the game, Bryant pulled a 43-yard wide left to break a streak of 23 consecutive field goals going back to last season. But he bounced back to make the one that really mattered.

"He knows how to get himself prepared, how to calm himself down, how to get it through those pipes," Ryan said. "He's made a lot of clutch kicks for us through the years."

Lions 26, Eagles 23

PHILADELPHIA | Jason Hanson kicked a 45-yard field goal in overtime, and Detroit rallied from a 10-point fourth-quarter deficit to beat Philadelphia.

Held in check most of the game, Matthew Stafford led the Lions to 17 points in the fourth quarter. He threw a TD pass and ran for a score.

The Lions had two shots from the Eagles 1 after a pass interference penalty on Colt Anderson with 13 seconds left in regulation. But Stafford misfired on both passes and Hanson kicked a 19-yard field goal to send it to overtime.

Then after an Eagles punt in overtime, Stafford hit Calvin Johnson for a 17-yard gain to the Eagles 27 on first-and-20. A few plays later, Hanson nailed the game-winner.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Falcons kicker Matt Bryant converted his longest field goal since 2009, a 55-yard field goal with 1 second on the clock, to help Atlanta beat the Raiders 23-20.

Giants 26, 49ers 3

SAN FRANCISCO | Antrel Rolle intercepted two passes by Alex Smith, Prince Amukamara picked off another and New York shut down San Francisco in a rematch of last season's NFC championship game.

After outscoring the Bills and Jets by a combined 79-3 the last two weeks, the 49ers met their match again with Eli Manning and New York's top team.

No overtime needed this time, and not much of Manning either. Manning threw for just 193 yards and one touchdown, while Ahmad Bradshaw ran for 116 yards and a score and the Giants rode a dominant defense and four field goals by Lawrence Tynes.

Seahawks 24, Patriots 23

SEATTLE | Russell Wilson found Sidney Rice behind the secondary for a 46-yard touchdown with 1:18 remaining, and Seattle rallied for 14 points in the final 7:31 to stun New England.

The matchup between the Patriots' No. 1 ranked offense and the Seahawks' No. 1 defense instead turned in to a starring performance for Wilson — and a shocking rally.

Wilson hit Braylon Edwards on fourth down for a 10-yard TD to get the Seahawks' to 23-17. After a pair of holds by Seattle's defense, Wilson

found Rice open on a double move. Steven Hauschka's extra point gave Seattle the lead.

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

QUARTERS

1 The Redskins notched 45 yards in the first quarter and quickly fell into a 9-0 hole after three Blair Walsh field goals. Robert Griffin III, in his first action since being knocked out of last week's loss to Atlanta with a concussion, was the victim of a great play by Antoine Winfield, who intercepted a pass on the right sideline.

2 New kicker Kai Forbath got the Redskins on the board with his first NFL field goal, a 50-yarder. Washington then drove 91 yards on its next possession and capped the drive with a 1-yard run from Alfred Morris. The maligned Redskins defense continued to keep pace, as Lorenzo Alexander recovered a Christian Ponder fumble deep in Vikings territory. RG3 threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to fullback Darrel Young on the next play.

PLAY OF THE GAME: With 2:56 remaining in the game and Washington's lead down to five, RG3 took a designed quarterback draw 76 yards to the house. It was the longest rushing touchdown by any quarterback since Kordell Stewart in 1996.

3 RG3 slipped through the Vikings' red-zone defense at the 9:37 mark to extend Washington's lead to 24-9. The Vikings answered with a solid drive of their own but stalled in the red zone and settled for Walsh's fourth field goal.

4 When Redskins safety Madieu Williams returned an interception for a touchdown with 12:40 left, the Redskins were up by 19 and the game appeared to be in hand. But two Christian Ponder touchdown passes later had the Vikings suddenly within five. But then RG3 took over. On a third and 6 with less than three minutes remaining, he sprinted 76 yards down the left sideline for a touchdown. The ensuing Minnesota drive sputtered at the goal line with a DeAngelo Hall interception, and the Redskins improved to 3-3 on the season.

NUMBERS

138: Rushing yards for RG3, as many as every other player in the game combined

391: Days between Redskins home wins, the third-longest streak in franchise history

11: Rushing touchdowns between rookies RG3 and Alfred Morris in the season's first six weeks

4: Defensive touchdowns so far this season, the most since 1999 (four)

NEXT

REDSKINS AT GIANTS
1 P.M. SUNDAY, FOX

In an otherwise lost 2011 season, the Redskins managed to hang their hat on two victories over the Giants, who went on to win their second Super Bowl in five seasons. Washington can get another boost when it travels to New York for the first division game of the year to face a Giants team that dismantled what had been a surging 49ers team on the road Sunday 26-3.

NOTEBOOK

Just for kicks, Forbath's field goal put fans at FedEx in a frenzy

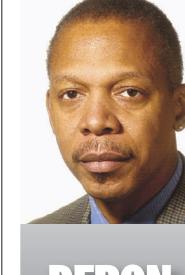
By STEPHEN WHYNO

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

When Billy Cundiff missed a 31-yard field goal attempt last week, an error that ultimately cost the kicker his job, the course of the Washington Redskins' game against the Atlanta Falcons changed. The momentum went the other way, and as special teams captain Lorenzo Alexander pointed out, the Redskins are not a good enough team to withstand those kinds of blunders.

Enter new kicker Kai Forbath who, in his NFL debut, did his job to a tee. He got just one field goal attempt Sunday, but by making that 50-yarder, he sparked the Redskins' 38-26 comeback victory over the Minnesota Vikings.

"If our offense puts us in a position where we can get field goals, we've got to put points on the board," Alexander



DERON SNYDER

The Washington Redskins and their star quarterback face a dilemma that's unlikely to fade as the season progresses. It's not a choice between equally undesirable alternatives because clearly there's an advantage in using Robert Griffin III to his fullest.

But utilizing him to that significant and magnificent extent leads to a perplexing problem for RG3 and his coaches alike: How much is excessive and how much is enough?

Unfortunately, that's a question best answered in hindsight. When RG3 didn't get out of bounds before suffering a concussion-inducing hit against Atlanta a week ago, that was a bad decision. When he took off for 13 carries — several by design — in Sunday's 38-26 victory against Minnesota, that was brilliant strategy.

Coach Mike Shanahan actually heeded the masses and scaled back

Griffin's runs against Atlanta. The fact that he got hurt anyway merely proves that the game's inherent perils are unavoidable — in or out of the pocket. But there's a heightened sense of danger whenever RG3 tucks the ball and essentially becomes a half-back, a position that doesn't enjoy the protection designed for quarterbacks.

The cringe factor is involuntary on RG3's rushing attempts but the payoff can be exhilarating, as we saw on the quarterback draw in the fourth quarter. He scampered 76 yards down the left sideline for a touchdown, creating the final margin with 2:43 remaining.

However, it was surprising to see Shanahan revert to the early-season game plan of calling Griffin's number so often. Not counting the knee-down plays at the end of each half, Griffin rushed 11 times for 136 yards. Some were scrambles after he couldn't find an open receiver.

But about half appeared to be pre-planned and/or option-reads, the type of plays that brought heavy criticism upon Shanahan.

"Sometimes designed runs help the quarterback," Shanahan explained afterward. "If he had gotten into a dropback passing game against that

defense, without those designed runs, there would've been a number of sacks. Doing what he does keeps the defense off-balance and gives him a chance to stay healthier."

The Redskins face dueling health concerns in that regard, like what the Washington Nationals dealt with recently. In the short-term — as in for 60 minutes on any given Sunday — the team's won-loss record has a much-rosier outlook with a full measure of RG3. Conversely, the overall future looks dark and grim if overdoing on Griffin leaves him sidelined.

Finding the proper balance will be a seasonlong process for Shanahan, just as Griffin must find the proper proportion of staying upright or getting down. He seemed to do a good job Sunday, running out of bounds several times, though not on his long TD run.

"I got to the sidelines and thought about running out of bounds," he said, "because everyone has been telling me that lately. But I know when I have a guy outflanked and I took off running. The rest is history."

Griffin realizes his value and promised his teammates that he "won't leave them hanging" by taking

unnecessary risks to gain extra yards. But the game situation still comes into play, like when he ran up the middle and dove across the goal line for a 7-yard touchdown in the third quarter. He took a hit for his troubles but put Washington ahead, 24-9.

Though if Shanahan reduced Griffin's exposure against the Falcons, Sunday's game plan against the Vikings indicates the usage will vary from week to week. The coach said he can't treat his quarterback any differently just because he suffered a concussion in his fifth NFL game.

"The quarterback has to play," Shanahan said. "I think common sense prevails and he learns every game when to slide, throw the ball away and when to get out of bounds earlier. We saw that today in a number of situations. As time goes on, he'll keep getting better and better."

That's certainly the goal. RG3's playmaking ability isn't much of a question, but his decision-making — particularly when he runs — is crucial to the Redskins' success. The coaching staff has made its decision: RG3 is going to get the ball.

What he does with it — and how often — are the only questions.

REDSKINS 38, VIKINGS 26

NO HOLDING BACK

BY NATHAN FENNO

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A week after Robert Griffin III sustained a concussion so "mild" he forgot the quarter and score, the Washington Redskins' rookie quarterback resumed his scrambling, swashbuckling ways Sunday.

Little evidence remained of the hit to Griffin's head. No revamped offense. No changes in protection. And little hesitation from Griffin to embark on his trademark scrambles in the Redskins' 38-26 win over the Minnesota Vikings.

Instead of last week's "RG-3! RG-3!" chants as the woozy Griffin headed for the locker room, FedEx Field supporters showered the quarterback with the chant Sunday after he zipped up the middle on a 7-yard touchdown run in the third quarter. The chant oozed relief that concussion protocols and independent neurologists and breathless questions about the goings-on inside Griffin's braided head didn't alter the one-of-a-kind quarterback.

"I think he's learned a lot from that," left guard Kory Lichtensteiger said. "It's something he had to learn. Too bad he had to learn it the hard way. ... I don't think it made him timid at all."

The lone remainder of Griffin's concussion came on his fourth play from scrimmage, easy to miss as the crowd settled into its seats. Out of a single-back formation, Griffin bootlegged to the left, sent a nervous hum through the stadium and, 7 uneventful yards later, stepped out of bounds.

The old Griffin, much as that word can be used for a quarterback six games into his NFL career, may have traded contact for an extra yard or two on the play. After all, the Cincinnati Bengals knocked him to the ground 28 times during last month's parade of big hits.

As Griffin entered the white sideline's sanctuary, a mock cheer replaced the nervous hum.

"You stay aggressive, but you just try to be smart," Griffin said. "I told the team I wasn't going to leave them hanging."

The early step-out aside, Griffin maintained his aggressive, uninhibited brand of football. The Vikings knocked him to the ground 10 times. Six hits came after designed runs or improvised scrambles. Two



Redskins quarterback Robert Griffin III picks up some of his 138 yards rushing on this first-quarter carry.

drew penalties.

Excepting moments such as Jared Allen's unblocked lick on the Redskins' goal line early in the second quarter, Griffin didn't absorb the same sort of punishment as the previous five wince-inducing weeks. He slid after runs, threw the ball away and stepped out bounds earlier. Avoiding big hits was hammered into him in the same way opposing defenses, well, hammered him. Last week, Griffin apologized to the team for not running out of bounds on the hit that concussed him.

The Redskins didn't overhaul their creative offensive attack, either. At least four times in the first half, they ran the triple-option with Brandon Banks, Alfred Morris and Griffin forming the triple-threat backfield. They even trotted out a wishbonelike formation with two men flanking Griffin in the backfield and a third behind him.

Griffin, whose fifth rushing touchdown of the season set the team's single-season record for quarterbacks before he added a sixth, didn't hesitate to take off running. On the second series of the third quarter, for example, he ran three straight times and finished

with 138 yards on 13 carries. These weren't the jaunts of a man worried about another concussion.

All the while, Griffin showed he understands how to lobby referees with the same precision he guided the Redskins' offense.

When Erin Henderson belted Griffin after he threw the ball out of bounds, no flag emerged. So, the quarterback waved his arms in the air in exaggerated exasperation. As if by magic, a yellow square fluttered to the turf.

Griffin sauntered away from Henderson, nodding.

"It wasn't like a basketball flop. I definitely sold it pretty well," Griffin said. "It was a good job of me and the ref being on the same page."

That hinted at what was to come. After the Vikings sliced the Redskins' lead to 31-26 late in the fourth quarter, Griffin faced a third-and-6 deep in his territory. So, he dropped back to pass and, in an instant, changed directions, sprinted off left guard and down the Redskins' sideline. Seventy-six yards later, he reclined in the stands and caught his breath as fans slapped his back after his second rushing touchdown. The concussion seemed forgotten.

Forbath