

# MASON GUARD EDWARDS PLAYING WAY BACK INTO SHAPE, C1



EXPANDED COVERAGE, R4: Redskins glad to receive Eagles' gifts  
Defense counts its blessings after late stop preserves sixth straight victory

27   20

# GAMEDAY

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2012



The Washington Times

washingtontimes.com/sports/football



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW HARNIK, THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins receiver Santana Moss gathers in a 22-yard touchdown pass from Robert Griffin III (below) late in the third quarter to give Washington a 27-13 lead. Griffin had a QB rating of 102.4.

# BUSINESS AS USUAL

## RG3 returns in win, and first NFC East title since 1999 close at hand

By RICH CAMPBELL  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**PHILADELPHIA** | Robert Griffin III sat at his locker, still wearing his gold game pants, and tried to piece together the NFL's complex playoff puzzle. Next to him, Rex Grossman slid a bright blue tie around his neck. Griffin and Grossman wondered aloud whether the Washington Redskins' heart-stopping 27-20 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday was enough to qualify them for the playoffs.

Grossman called a reporter over to get the news. It was, in fact, insufficient. The Minnesota Vikings denied Washington an early Christmas present by upsetting the Houston Texans halfway across the country. The two quarterbacks paused.

"We're not worried about it," Griffin said with a smile.

Why would they be? Griffin and the blue-hot Redskins need one more victory — Sunday's season finale at home against the rival Dallas Cowboys — to claim the franchise's first NFC East title in 13 years, and this team seems to be flying there on a rocket ship.

Griffin threw two touchdowns in his return from the sprained right knee that sidelined him last week, and the Redskins' defense kept Philadelphia out of the end zone from the 5-yard line on the final two plays to escape with their sixth consecutive victory.

The elation such a victory normally



**PHILADELPHIA**

**T**here's only one way an NFL team can string together six victories: By having the ability, as Robert Griffin III put it Sunday, to "win any kind of game we have to, whether it's high-scoring or low-scoring or a gut-wrencher" ... or (fill in the blank). The Washington Redskins are quickly developing that capacity — more quickly, perhaps, than anyone expected — and, as a result, are now on the cusp of an NFC East title.

This time, it was the Philadelphia Eagles who fell before them, 27-20 at Lincoln Financial Field. The outcome wasn't decided until the final snap, when Philly quarterback Nick Foles was called for intentional grounding on a play from the Washington 5 (and the required 10-second runoff killed what was left of the clock). You can't cut it much closer than that.

Especially when you consider that on two previous plays the Eagles easily could have scored the tying touchdown. On the first, Foles underthrew a wide open Jeremy Maclin in the end zone. And on the second, Evan Moore, their just-signed tight end, dropped an easy one as he neared the goal line.

But this is where the Redskins are right now. "They expect to win," Mike Shanahan said. They also know that, years from now, no one will care how they did it. All they'll care about is whether the Redskins made the playoffs.



DAN DALY

What we've seen the past two weeks, though, has been particularly impressive. In Cleveland, after all, the Redskins won big even though their backup rookie QB, Kirk Cousins, had to direct the offense because of an injury to Griffin. And in

Philadelphia, the Redskins won — by a narrower margin — even though RG3 ran a much more conventional attack because the coach didn't want to overtax the kid's still-recovering right knee.

So there were no hither-and-yon scrambles by Griffin, no quarterback draws, none of the usual derring-do. Adorned with a brace, he carried just twice for 4 yards, a Tom Brady kind of day — and concentrated instead on completing 16 of 24 passes for 198 yards and two touchdowns, with a single interception.

"We didn't do everything we would normally do," Shanahan said. But the Redskins still won — on the road, for the second straight Sunday. They won because they can "win any kind of game we have to." They can eke out a 17-16 victory over the New York Giants. They can survive

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

## REDSKINS NOTES

## Forbath, still kicking up a storm, sets NFL record

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**PHILADELPHIA** | Kai Forbath keeps making field goals for the Washington Redskins, and Sunday he broke an NFL record.

With his 17th, Forbath set a new mark for consecutive field goals made to start a career.

"It's awesome. I couldn't have asked for a better start," Forbath said. "I've been happy we've converted on all our attempts so far, and going to take it one week at a time like we've been doing."

Forbath hitting field goals has been the most automatic thing for the Redskins since they signed him in October. It's a stark departure from Billy Cundiff, who missed five of his 12 attempts during his five games with Washington.

Forbath was good from 45 and 42 yards in a 27-20 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles. He has made 12 field goals of longer than 40 yards.

He's money, and his teammates know it. "He's a kid that's very focused, does his craft very well, and they've been doing a great job," special teams captain Lorenzo Alexander said.

"I'm always confident. Every time he walks up there, I walk to the other side to get ready for kickoff knowing that he's going to make it."

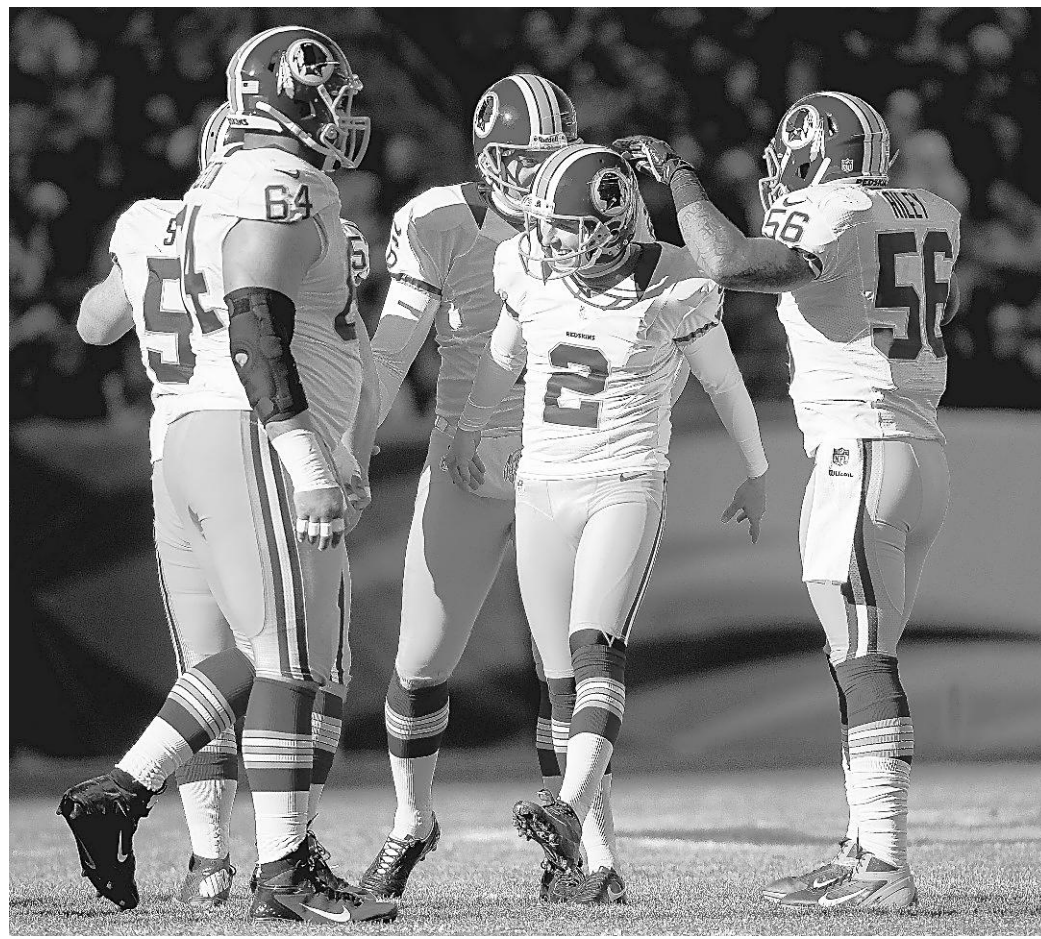
Coach Mike Shanahan said his mindset on fourth down and short is different with Forbath because he has been so reliable. There was no hesitation letting him attempt the 45-yarder in the second quarter.

But Forbath has his limits, and Shanahan has not put him in spots to test his leg strength. The Redskins went for it on fourth-and-2 at the Philadelphia 35 instead of forcing Forbath to attempt a 52-yarder.

That would have been more than just a challenge of distance given how Forbath said the wind was "unpredictable at times." He wasn't thinking about the wind when he did get on the field.

"Our team needed points, and I just go out there one kick at a time and try and keep this thing going," Forbath said.

The record, previously set by the New Orleans Saints' Garrett Hartley in 2008 and '09, was on Forbath's mind because he was asked about it this past week. It didn't deter him, but so far



Redskins kicker Kai Forbath (2) set an NFL record for consecutive field goals to start a career (17), breaking the record held by New Orleans' Garrett Hartley. Forbath was signed in October.

nothing has.

"I expect him to make every kick," nose tackle Barry Cofield said. "He's done a great job, and he's one of those guys that you hardly notice, and that's a good thing."

**Hurt steps in for Polumbus**

When right tackle Tyler Polumbus still was experiencing symptoms Sunday morning from the concussion he suffered a week earlier, that

eliminated any chance of playing. Maurice Hurt stepped in against the Eagles' Brandon Graham, and even with a couple of mistakes, did not provide much of a drop-off in his play.

"Anytime you get a guy like Tyler Polumbus that can't play, a guy like Mo Hurt comes in, starting the year out as a guard and you're down to your fourth right tackle and he comes in and plays at a very high level," Shanahan said. "I'm very impressed with him."

Graham finished with a team-high seven

tackles, including one notable one for a loss on Redskins running back Alfred Morris, but he did not register a sack.

Hurt made eight starts at left guard last season; this was his first career start at right tackle.

"[The hardest adjustment was] the space you have to deal with at tackle, the different type of athletes you have to deal with at tackle," Hurt said. "Combined with those things and having to block guys off the edge and whatnot are things you don't really have to deal with at guard. You're out there, you adjust and you try to make the best of the situation."

**Cooley makes first catch**

Tight end Chris Cooley made 428 catches during his first eight seasons with the Redskins, setting a franchise record along the way.

On Sunday, the veteran who was cut during the preseason and then re-signed in October made No. 429 on an 8-yard pass from Robert Griffin III.

But something was different because this was his first catch of the year.

"It was fun because everyone on the sideline was excited for me," Cooley said. "Obviously, the first down's a big deal, but there was a different excitement from all the guys around me, so it felt good."

Cooley was well aware it was his first catch since coming back. For a guy who used to be such a prolific piece of the passing game, though, waiting this long for the first was a bit of a surprise.

"It's the role that I'm in right now. It's not weird to me," Cooley said. "It's just do what I can do for the team."

**Extra points**

- Safety DeJon Gomes suffered a sprained medial collateral ligament in his left knee and was forced to leave the game. Shanahan said he did not know what degree of sprain it was and that Gomes would undergo further evaluation Monday.

- Cornerback Josh Wilson (shoulder) left briefly but returned. "It is what it is," he said. "I guess, in honor of Kellen Winslow Jr., I'm a soldier."



Rookie Alfred Morris had another good game, rushing for 91 yards on 22 carries, including this 10-yard score in the third quarter.

## REDSKINS

From page R1

elicits instead immediately yielded to a shifted focus.

"You don't have to celebrate wins at this point in the season," Griffin said. "You just know what's ahead of you, and all that is right now for us is the Cowboys."

Griffin is wise for a rookie. The Redskins (9-6) have accomplished so much since they returned from their bye Nov. 18, yet they haven't accomplished anything at all.

Christmas Eve arrived without a secured playoff berth because the Redskins did not get help from losses by Minnesota and Chicago.

Their remarkable resurgence, as it turns out, will climax on the final day of the season against their greatest rival.

If the Redskins lose to Dallas, they still could make the playoffs, but only if two teams among the group of Chicago (9-6), Minnesota (9-6) and Seattle (9-5) finish with final records of 9-7. Seattle played at home Sunday night against San Francisco.

To put it another way, Washington would be in great danger of missing the postseason.

This script is worthy of the finest playwright. In actuality, though, the Redskins have written it with an explosive offense and opportunistic defense.

That was the case Sunday against a reeling Philadelphia team experiencing the type of dysfunction that has characterized the Redskins' five-year

playoff drought.

Washington rushed for 128 yards — including 91 and a touchdown by rookie Alfred Morris — and turned the Eagles' two turnovers into 10 points.

Griffin was 16 of 24 for 198 yards, two touchdowns and an interception in his return from a mildly sprained lateral collateral ligament. He obviously wasn't fully healthy, but his 102.4 passer rating was evidence that didn't matter.

He was not the explosive runner he is when healthy, and the Redskins limited his designed runs accordingly.

"We didn't do everything that we would normally do," coach Mike Shanahan said. "I did not want to put that pressure on that LCL."

The Redskins' offense started slowly, as it did last week in Cleveland, but the defense provided the spark. Down 7-0 in the first quarter, linebacker Ryan Kerrigan sacked Eagles rookie quarterback Nick Foles and forced a fumble that reserve cornerback Richard Crawford recovered.

The Redskins scored a field goal on the ensuing drive. Soon they were operating at normal efficiency.

They took a 13-7 lead late in the second quarter on a bubble screen that Joshua Morgan ran 11 yards for a touchdown. He received a key block from receiver Pierre Garcon, typical of the types of contributions that have fueled this winning streak.

"We've been playing for each other all year," Morgan said. "We've been doing a great job feeding off each other."

Morris had only 18 rushing yards on nine carries at halftime, but the

zone running game opened in the second half.

Philadelphia's linebackers aggressively played the run in the first half, but success through the air prompted them to back off a bit, Morris said.

"You grind it out, grind it out, and eventually a couple of them will pop," left tackle Trent Williams said.

Griffin produced his moment of brilliance with 1:31 remaining in the third quarter. From a clean pocket, he lobbed a perfect 22-yard pass to Santana Moss, who dragged both his feet in bounds in the end zone. It gave the Redskins a 27-13 lead they needed every bit of.

Philadelphia trimmed its deficit to seven after Griffin's fourth-quarter interception, a high throw that Morgan deflected into the air.

The Eagles regained possession at their 15-yard line with 4:15 to play. Using short passes against a soft defense, they marched to the Redskins' 5 on 14 plays.

Tight end Evan Moore dropped a potential touchdown on first-and-goal. Then, with one second left, defensive end Stephen Bowen's pressure resulted in an intentional grounding penalty against Foles. The 10-second runoff ended the game.

Redskins players streamed onto the field. And as they did, they saw Dallas Cowboys blue.

"I was thinking about that since the clock said 0:00, when the referee threw the flag, so let's go and get the Cowboys, man," fullback Darrel Young said. "There's nothing else on my mind right now. I want to take the division."

**Everything means something now. In recent years, that hasn't often been the case, not by the time December rolled around. Indeed, it was like the roles were reversed Sunday. The Eagles were the Redskins, the team that usually has nothing to play for in Week 16, and the Redskins were the Eagles, the team that's usually gearing up for the postseason at the end of the year.**

## DALY

From page R1

in overtime against the Baltimore Ravens. They can win without a whole lot of muss or fuss (see the first meeting with Philadelphia or the Thanksgiving Day matchup with Dallas). And they can do what they did Sunday at the Linc: make just enough plays to keep their streak going and their destiny in their hands.

The first-year guys — Griffin, Alfred Morris (another 91 yards against the Eagles, pushing him over 1,400) and Cousins — have been so prominent, it's easy to overlook the contributions of the veterans, players such as London Fletcher and Santana Moss. Fletcher picked off Foles, his third INT in the past three games, to set up the go-ahead score (RG3's 11-yard flip to Josh Morgan). And Moss provided what turned out to be the margin of victory with an acrobatic 22-yard TD grab in the corner of the end zone.

It's one of the things that's so exhilarating about the kind of run the Redskins are on. The longer it lasts, the more players come out of the woodwork. Why, Sunday we had a Chris Cooley sighting. The fan favorite caught his first pass of the season, good for 8 yards and a first down on third-and-2.

Afterward, he said, "It's not a big deal to make a catch, but after being out some this season [following his release in training camp], this one felt good. ... I was able to get out there and make some good blocks to help the offense."

*Everything means something now.* In recent years, that hasn't often been the case, not by the time December rolled around. Indeed, it was like the roles were reversed Sunday. The Eagles were the Redskins, the team that usually has nothing to play for in Week 16, and the Redskins were the Eagles, the team that's usually gearing up for the postseason at the end of the year.

Now all that stands between the Redskins (9-6) and one of the great resurrection jobs in franchise history are the Cowboys (8-7). It's still possible, of course, for them to make the playoffs *without* beating Dallas, but who wants to do that way? Certainly no one in the Washington locker room, not after coming so far.

## REDSKINS 27, EAGLES 20

Washington	0	13	14	0-27
Philadelphia	7	3	3	7-20

**First Quarter**

**Phi** — Maclin 27 pass from Foles (Henery kick), 10:09.

**Second Quarter**

**Was** — FG Forbath 45, 11:25.

**Was** — FG Forbath 42, 7:37.

**Was** — Morgan 11 pass from Griffin III (Forbath kick), 3:30.

**Phi** — FG Henery 38, 1:18.

**Third Quarter**

**Was** — Morris 10 run (Forbath kick), 12:33.

**Phi** — FG Henery 30, 8:01.

**Was** — Moss 22 pass from Griffin III (Forbath kick), 1:31.

**Fourth Quarter**

**Phi** — Lewis 17 run (Henery kick), 8:55.

A — 69,144.

	Was	Phi
First downs	18	25
Total Net Yards	313	411
Rushes-yards	28-128	22-90
Passing	185	321
Punt Returns	1-20	1-10
Kickoff Returns	3-56	4-74
Interceptions Ret.	1-9	1-4
Comp-Att-Int	16-24-1	32-48-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-13	5-24
Punts	2-43.0	2-43.5
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	1-1
Penalties-Yards	3-24	4-30
Time of Possession	29:23	30:37

**INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS**

**RUSHING** — Washington, Morris 22-91, Royster 2-14, Moss 1-12, Morgan 1-7, Griffin III 2-4. Philadelphia, McCoy 13-45, Brown 4-18, Lewis 1-17, Foles 4-10.

**PASSING** — Washington, Griffin III 16-24-1-98. Philadelphia, Foles 32-48-1-345.

**RECEIVING** — Washington, Garcon 7-89, Moss 2-26, Morgan 2-21, Paul 1-21, Morris 1-17, Hankerson 1-10, Cooley 1-8, Paulsen 1-6. Philadelphia, McCoy 9-77, Maclin 8-116, Avant 8-70, Celek 3-39, D.Johnson 3-25, Cooper 1-18.

**MISSED FIELD GOALS** — None.

This much we know: Whatever kind of game it turns out to be, "high-scoring or low-scoring or a gut-wrencher," the Redskins will adjust, as they have each of the past six weeks. What we don't know is this: Does Dan Snyder regret removing those 10,000 seats from FedEx Field? Seems like he might be able to fill them when the Cowboys come to town.

# NFL WEEK 16

## Top performers

**Saints QB Drew Brees:** 446 yards, 3 TDs  
**Chiefs RB Jamaal Charles:** 226 yards, 1 TD  
**Cowboys WR Dez Bryant:** 224 yards, 2 TDs



Quarterback Tony Romo leaves the field after Dallas' 34-31 overtime loss to New Orleans, which takes the Cowboys' playoff fate out of their hands. Romo passed for 416 yards and four touchdowns, the last coming with 15 seconds left in regulation.

### COWBOYS

## Dallas stumbles before big game

### New Orleans pulls out victory in OT

**ARLINGTON, TEXAS** | Drew Brees and the New Orleans Saints won't go to the playoffs in their season without suspended coach Sean Payton.

The Dallas Cowboys again need help to get there.

Playing near Payton's home in a Dallas suburb, Brees threw for 446 yards and three touchdowns and led a drive to Garrett Hartley's winning 20-yard field goal in overtime, and the Saints took the Cowboys' playoff fate out of their hands with a 34-31 overtime victory Sunday.

The Cowboys face the Washington Redskins at FedEx Field in the regular-season, and the NFC East title is at stake.

The Saints, who started 0-4 after being stunned by the yearlong ban for Payton in the team's bounty scandal, lost their faint playoff hopes when Minnesota beat Houston, and had to hold off a two-touchdown rally in the final 3:35 from the Cowboys.

Tony Romo had 416 yards passing and four touchdowns, including a 19-yarder to Miles Austin with 15 seconds left in regulation to send the game to overtime.

"We're never going to let anyone tell us we're not playing for something," Brees said. "We knew there were a lot of things that had to happen. We wanted to worry about the things we could control. What would have been worse is if Minnesota had lost and we had lost."

After New Orleans forced a punt

on the first possession of overtime, Brees moved the Saints to the Cowboys 33.

He completed a pass to Marques Colston, who took a couple of steps before Morris Claiborne stripped the ball, sending it rolling about 20 yards to the Dallas 2.

Jimmy Graham, who said he dislocated a finger on a 26-yard catch to start the drive, won a scrum with Dallas' Eric Frampton, and the completion that started the bizarre play was held up on review, clearing the way for Hartley's kick.

"I looked at the replay, and I knew there was a fumble," Claiborne said. "I was looking at it saying, 'Please, let the pass be incomplete.'"

The Cowboys, whose third straight game was decided on the last play, had retaken control of their playoff hopes with a three-game winning streak.

Romo had a pair of 58-yard scoring passes to Dez Bryant, who had a career-high 224 yards receiving. Romo was 26 of 43 and broke his franchise record for passing yards in a season. He has 4,685.

Brees was 37 of 53 in the ninth 400-yard game of his career.

"I don't know how many more accolades I have to say about him," Saints interim coach Joe Vitt said.

Dallas tight end Jason Witten had two catches in OT, breaking Tony Gonzalez's NFL season record of 102 catches for a tight end set in 2004. Witten has 103.

### NFL STANDINGS

#### AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
y-New England	11	4	0	.733	529	331
Miami	7	8	0	.467	288	289
N.Y. Jets	6	9	0	.400	272	347
Buffalo	5	10	0	.333	316	426

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
y-Houston	12	3	0	.800	400	303
x-Indianapolis	10	5	0	.667	329	371
Tennessee	5	10	0	.333	292	451
Jacksonville	2	13	0	.133	235	406

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
y-Baltimore	10	5	0	.667	381	321
x-Cincinnati	9	6	0	.600	368	303
Pittsburgh	7	8	0	.467	312	304
Cleveland	5	10	0	.333	292	344

WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
y-Denver	12	3	0	.800	443	286
San Diego	6	9	0	.400	326	329
Oakland	4	11	0	.267	269	419
Kansas City	2	13	0	.133	208	387

#### NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Washington	9	6	0	.600	408	370
Dallas	8	7	0	.533	358	372
N.Y. Giants	8	7	0	.533	387	337
Philadelphia	4	11	0	.267	273	402

SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
y-Atlanta	13	2	0	.867	402	277
New Orleans	7	8	0	.467	423	410
Tampa Bay	6	9	0	.400	367	377
Carolina	6	9	0	.400	313	325

NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
y-Green Bay	11	4	0	.733	399	299
Minnesota	9	6	0	.600	342	314
Chicago	9	6	0	.600	349	253
Detroit	4	11	0	.267	348	411

WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
x-San Francisco	10	3	1	.750	357	218
Seattle	9	5	0	.643	350	219
St. Louis	7	7	1	.500	286	328
Arizona	5	10	0	.333	237	330

#### SATURDAY'S GAME

Atlanta 31, Detroit 18

#### SUNDAY'S GAMES

Green Bay 55, Tennessee 7  
 Indianapolis 20, Kansas City 13  
 New Orleans 34, Dallas 31, OT  
 Minnesota 23, Houston 6  
 Carolina 17, Oakland 6  
 Miami 24, Buffalo 10  
 Cincinnati 13, Pittsburgh 10  
 New England 23, Jacksonville 16  
 Washington 27, Philadelphia 20  
 St. Louis 28, Tampa Bay 13  
 San Diego 27, N.Y. Jets 17  
 Denver 34, Cleveland 12  
 Chicago 28, Arizona 13  
 Baltimore 33, N.Y. Giants 14  
 San Francisco at Seattle, late

### ROUNDUP

## Ravens find offense in drubbing of Giants

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**BALTIMORE** | Joe Flacco threw for 309 yards and two touchdowns, and the Baltimore Ravens defeated the New York Giants 33-14 Sunday to capture the AFC North title.

The Ravens led 24-7 at halftime and cruised to the finish behind a short-handed defense that harassed quarterback Eli Manning and limited New York to 186 yards.

Playing its second game with Jim Caldwell as offensive coordinator, Baltimore scored touchdowns on its first two possessions and amassed a season-high 533 yards — including 289 in the first half alone.

The victory ended a three-game skid for the Ravens and assured them of a home playoff game.

The defeat eliminated the Giants from contention in the NFC East and severely damaged their chances of qualifying for a playoff berth.

### Vikings 23, Texans 6

**HOUSTON** | Adrian Peterson rushed for 86 yards, falling far short of the 2,000-yard mark, yet helping the Minnesota Vikings keep their playoff hopes alive with an upset of Houston.

Christian Ponder threw a touchdown pass, Toby Gerhart added a score and Blair Walsh kicked three field goals.

The loss kept the Texans from clinching home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs.

Peterson had his lowest rushing total since getting 79 yards on Oct. 14 in a loss at Washington. He has 1,898 this season and needs 208 yards to break the NFL single-season rushing record held by Eric Dickerson.

### Bengals 13, Steelers 10

**PITTSBURGH** | Josh Brown kicked a 43-yard field goal with four seconds remaining to lift Cincinnati into the playoffs for a second straight season.

Brown missed a 56-yarder earlier in the quarter but earned a second chance when Reggie Nelson picked off Ben Roethlisberger and returned it to the Pittsburgh 46 with 14 seconds remaining. Andy Dalton hit A.J. Green for 21 yards on the next play, setting up Brown's game-winner.

Dalton completed 24 of 41 for 278 yards and two interceptions for the Bengals.



Ravens running back Ray Rice breaks away for a 27-yard touchdown reception during the second quarter of Sunday's game against the Giants.

### Colts 20, Chiefs 13

**KANSAS CITY, MO.** | Andrew Luck threw for 205 yards to break the single-season rookie record, and his touchdown pass to Reggie Wayne late in the fourth quarter Sunday gave Indianapolis a berth in the playoffs.

Luck surpassed Cam Newton's year-old record of 4,051 yards passing by a rookie in the second quarter, and then came through in the closing minutes. He marched Indy to the Chiefs 7, and then found Wayne in the back of the end zone on third-and-goal for the go-ahead score.

### Patriots 23, Jaguars 16

**JACKSONVILLE, FLA.** | Tom Brady overcame a rough start by throwing two touchdown passes, and playoff-bound New England held on to beat woeful Jacksonville.

Brady threw two interceptions in the first quarter, the second one helping the Jaguars build a 10-0 lead.

But the Jaguars faded in the third quarter for the fourth consecutive week, lost for the 11th time in the last 12 games and set a franchise record for losses in a season with 13.

### Bears 28, Cardinals 13

**GLENDALE, ARIZ.** | Chicago's defense scored two touchdowns and the Bears

beat Arizona to keep their playoff hopes alive.

Charles Tillman returned an interception 10 yards for a score, the third pick he's brought back for a touchdown this season and the eighth overall by Chicago, one shy of the NFL record. Zack Bowman returned a fumble 1 yard for another Bears score.

Brandon Marshall caught six passes for 68 yards and a TD, breaking the Bears franchise record for yards receiving in a season in the process.

### Packers 55, Titans 7

**GREEN BAY, WIS.** | Aaron Rodgers threw for three touchdowns and ran for another, Ryan Grant scored twice and Randall Cobb set a single-season franchise record for net yardage.

The victory ensured the Packers will at least be the NFC's No. 3 seed. They still had a shot at the No. 2 — and the first-round bye that goes with it — if Seattle beat San Francisco on Sunday night.

It was the first time the Packers have scored more than 50 points since 2005.

### Chargers 27, Jets 17

**EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J.** | San Diego sacked Greg McElroy 11 times, ruining the New York Jets quarterback's first NFL start, and Philip Rivers threw two touchdown passes.

McElroy, the third-stringer who was starting for the benched Mark Sanchez, moved the offense for the Jets early but faced pressure all game.

### Broncos 34, Browns 12

**DENVER** | Denver won its 10th straight game Sunday, pulling into a tie for first place as Peyton Manning threw three touchdown passes for the 72nd time in his career.

Manning finished with 339 yards on 30-for-43 passing. Von Miller was in on two sacks for the Broncos, the second of which knocked Browns quarterback Brandon Weeden out of the game with a right shoulder injury.

### Panthers 17, Raiders 6

**CHARLOTTE, N.C.** | Cam Newton threw for 171 yards and a touchdown and ran for 60 yards and another score.

The Panthers held the Raiders to 189 total yards and 12 first downs in a game featuring several shoving matches, plenty of heated exchanges and six unnecessary roughness penalties — including one that sidelined Oakland quarterback Carson Palmer for the day.

Even Newton drew a flag after bumping an official with his chest for what he perceived as the latest in a series of late hits by Raiders defenders. Newton was not ejected.

### Rams 28, Bucs 13

**TAMPA, FLA.** | Sam Bradford tossed a pair of touchdown passes and rookie cornerback Janoris Jenkins scored his fourth TD of the season Sunday, helping St. Louis keep its hopes for a winning record.

Bradford connected with Lance Kendricks on an 80-yard scoring play on the first play of the third quarter. The Rams intercepted Josh Freeman four times, turning three of the turnovers into TDs.

### Dolphins 24, Bills 10

**MIAMI** | Reggie Bush caught two touchdown passes and scored on a short run to help Miami beat Buffalo.

Six minutes after they won, the Dolphins were eliminated from playoff contention when Cincinnati beat Pittsburgh. The Bills came into the game assured of missing the playoffs for the 13th consecutive year.

EXPANDED REDSKINS COVERAGE THROUGHOUT THE SEASON: [WASHINGTONTIMES.COM/SPORTS/FOOTBALL](http://WASHINGTONTIMES.COM/SPORTS/FOOTBALL)

## QUARTERS

1 Robert Griffin III's return to action didn't provide an immediate jolt to the Redskins, who struggled through the first quarter with little to show for it on offense. Alfred Morris managed just 4 yards on three carries as Washington spent a good chunk of the quarter watching Nick Foles and the Eagles move the ball. Philly converted on a pair of why-not fourth-and-1s on its opening drive, which Foles capped with a 27-yard TD pass to Jeremy Maclin. It wasn't until Ryan Kerrigan forced Foles to fumble on the final play of the quarter that Washington had any momentum.

2 The Redskins looked a bit more like themselves as they got warmed up. That was thanks in large part to the defense coming up with some more big plays, led by big man Barry Cofield in the middle. Aside from showing some serious agility for a nose tackle to defend a pair of screen passes, he also tipped a Foles pass to set up a London Fletcher interception. That led to the lone Redskins TD of the half, with RG3 hitting Joshua Morgan for an 11-yard score that put Washington ahead after two earlier field goals from the unstoppable Kai Forbath.

**PLAY OF THE GAME:** The touchdown that gave the Redskins their final margin of victory was a thing of beauty, with RG3 showing flawless timing to wait out Santana Moss as he broke toward the left corner of the end zone, then dropping the ball right in the receiver's arms as Moss dragged his left toe to stay inbounds.

3 And the offense finally got on track in the third, as Griffin opened the half by moving the Redskins down the field before Morris slashed to a 10-yard TD. The Eagles saw a promising drive that included a nice layout catch by Maclin stall and end in a field goal, and another cut short when Foles tripped behind the line on fourth and 2. Those failures to put more on the scoreboard made Griffin's gorgeous pass to Moss in the front corner of the end zone a killer for the home team.

4 It was survive and advance for the Redskins in the final 15 minutes, with the defense shouldering most of the load. The Eagles made things interesting when RG3 was intercepted on a ball that went off Morgan's hands and Philadelphia quickly turned it into a TD. Washington couldn't score again and left Foles needing to go 85 yards in 4:15 to tie the game or try to win on a two-point conversion. He came agonizingly close, but an illegal forward pass penalty on the 5-yard line ended the game.

## NUMBERS

**1,413:** Rushing yards for Alfred Morris, 103 yards short of Clinton Portis' Redskins single-season record set in 2005

**23:** Career interceptions for London Fletcher, the second-most among active linebackers behind Ray Lewis (31)

**4:** Receivers with at least 500 yards for the Redskins after Pierre Garcon (587) and Joshua Morgan (510) joined Santana Moss (551) and Leonard Hankerson (531) Sunday.

## NEXT

**COWBOYS AT REDSKINS**  
1 P.M. \* SUNDAY, FOX (OR NBC)



● Not only can the Redskins close out the regular season with a seven-game winning streak and clinch their first division title since 1999, they can do it by beating their biggest rivals. Fortunately for the Cowboys, who lost 34-31 at home to the Saints in overtime Sunday, the Giants continued to fall apart in Baltimore, losing 33-14 to the Ravens. That means the

winner of the Week 17 matchup at FedEx Field is the NFC East champion. It also means that six straight wins might not mean much for the Redskins if they can't secure a seventh.

\*Game subject to being moved to Sunday night



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Redskins defensive end Stephen Bowen senses victory after Eagles quarterback Nick Foles was called for intentional grounding in the closing seconds. The mandatory 10-second runoff on the game clock assured Washington's 27-20 win at Philadelphia.

REDSKINS 27, EAGLES 20

## THE LATE SHOW

By NATHAN FENNO  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**PHILADELPHIA** | The footballs fluttered toward the end zone, one after the other, as the final seconds slipped away.

Nerves shot through defensive end Stephen Bowen in the fourth quarter's final minute Sunday. The labyrinthine playoff scenarios and once-absurd hope of a division title for the Washington Redskins were, for the moment, far away.

A stop against the Philadelphia Eagles and rookie quarterback Nick Foles in the last drive was all that mattered.

"You count your blessings," nose tackle Barry Cofield said, "but at the same time, the work you put in Wednesday through Friday makes you feel like you deserve to have the ball bounce your way every once in a while."

Closer and closer the Eagles crept, an 8-yard dump-off pass here and a 5-yard scramble there by a quarterback with a sore throwing hand. They raced the clock in a season long since torn apart by problems on the field and off.

The Redskins lived this before, crushed by early-season defensive letdowns late in games: Eli Manning's 77-yard touchdown pass and Michael Turner's game-winning run and Andy Dalton's pair of fourth-quarter touchdown passes.

"These games," outside linebacker Ryan Kerrigan said, "are so stressful."

Twenty-three seconds remained and, suddenly, the Eagles were at the Redskins' 17-yard line, trailing 27-20. Three-quarters-full Lincoln Financial

## After earlier losses, Washington finally pulls out close one

Field roared to life.

Then Foles lofted a pass for receiver Jeremy Maclin in the right corner of the end zone. The coverage was busted, cornerback Richard Crawford late and Maclin alone. The football fluttered short. Maclin tumbled and couldn't pull in the pass.

Nerves fluttered through Crawford. That was too close.

Two plays later, Foles zipped the football off the chest of tight end Evan Moore at the goal line. Signed earlier this week, Moore inexplicably couldn't corral the pass and it bounced through the arms of safety Madiou Williams and fell harmlessly to the turf.

Eight seconds remained. Hold and the Redskins would need only to defeat the Dallas Cowboys in next week's regular-season finale to capture the NFC East title. Falter and the postseason chances wouldn't disappear, but the Redskins would no longer control their destiny.

Foles dropped back, then rolled to his left to buy time. No one was open. The seconds moved in slow motion.

All Crawford could think about was sticking to his man, evasive receiver Riley Cooper, and do

anything to prevent him from catching the ball.

Cofield dropped back into coverage, per the play call, then spied the quarterback once his man drifted away. Bowen bounced inside to rush Foles. A torn left biceps limited Bowen in the game, thwarting his range of motion at a position where that is crucial. But he plowed through a narrow opening in the Eagles' line as Foles clung to the football, as he had all game long, seemingly unable to decide what to do. As the football left the quarterback's right hand, Bowen hoped time expired.

Bowen pushed Foles, then saw the throw fizzle to the turf a few yards away. No Eagles were in the vicinity. The referees huddled. One second clung to the clock.

A self-described pessimist, Cofield expected the Eagles to get another chance. That wasn't true of his teammates.

"Even though they got that hometown clock work that left one second on there," cornerback Josh Wilson said, "as soon as he threw the ball, I knew the game was over."

A yellow flag for intentional grounding emerged. The 10-second runoff included with the penalty meant the game was over. The 16-play final drive sputtered out at the 5-yard line.

Bowen, eavesdropping on the referees' discussion, ripped off his helmet and screamed. There wouldn't be another late-game collapse. Now one game separates the Redskins from the postseason.

"You got no choice but to look forward to the next week," Cofield said. "The greatness of this feeling will wear off very quickly if we don't get it done next week."

## Thanks to the defense, Philadelphia was in a giving mood

By STEPHEN WHYNO  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**PHILADELPHIA** | Barry Cofield wasn't heaping praise on himself or teammates along the Washington Redskins' defensive line Sunday after the 27-20 win over the Philadelphia Eagles. The Redskins allowed 411 yards, and the veteran nose tackle said he'll spend the week reminding guys of what needs to be better.

There's some tightening up the Redskins' defense could do, but by forcing two turnovers against the Eagles, the unit continued to establish its identity and ability to change games.

"That's the most important thing that we do as a defense. A lot of times we give up yards. We don't have, a lot of times, the horses to really shut a team down for 60 minutes sometimes," Cofield said. "But the big plays we make down the stretch, the turnovers we create, the offense capitalizes, that's what helps us get by."

**"A lot of times we give up yards. We don't have ... the horses to really shut a team down for 60 minutes sometimes. But the big plays we make down the stretch, the turnovers we create ... that's what helps us get by."**

— Barry Cofield

What helped the Redskins get by Sunday was a monster game by Ryan Kerrigan and some opportunistic playmaking by Cofield, London Fletcher and rookie Richard Crawford.

Kerrigan chose the right time to come up with his first sack in more than a month, stripping Eagles quarterback Nick Foles of the ball on the final play of the first quarter. Philadelphia led 7-0 at the time and was driving, but when Crawford scooped up the ball along the sideline, momentum shifted.

"That's what we've been doing the past couple games, that's why we've been winning," Kerrigan said. "Especially today we got a couple turnovers,

especially at key points."

Fletcher's interception, his third in as many games, came after Cofield tipped Foles' pass at the line.

It was the ninth interception by a linebacker this season, the most for the franchise since 1991, when the Redskins won the Super Bowl.

There may not be a Pro Bowl-caliber player on this defense, but the sum of its parts has been more than good enough to frustrate opponents.

"For Ryan to get those sacks, that had to be good coverage. And for London to get that interception, Barry had to tip the ball. It goes hand-in-hand," defensive lineman Kedric Golston said.

"That's what it's all about. It doesn't really matter who makes the plays as long as the play is made. That's kind of the motto we've had all year, understanding that, you know what, as long as you win, everybody's doing good."

On a day that quarterback Robert Griffin III threw an interception that went off receiver Joshua Morgan's hands, it was crucial that the Redskins' defense force two turnovers. The offense turned them directly into 10 points.

Couple that with the fact that the Eagles had more first downs and a time-of-possession edge, and the importance of the turnovers was magnified.

"You've got to get turnovers to win in this league. They came up big when they had to. We had a few sacks, we had a few key turnovers and it's always the difference in winning and losing a game," coach Mike Shanahan said. "They did a good job of controlling the tempo of the game, but we took advantage of the turnovers."