



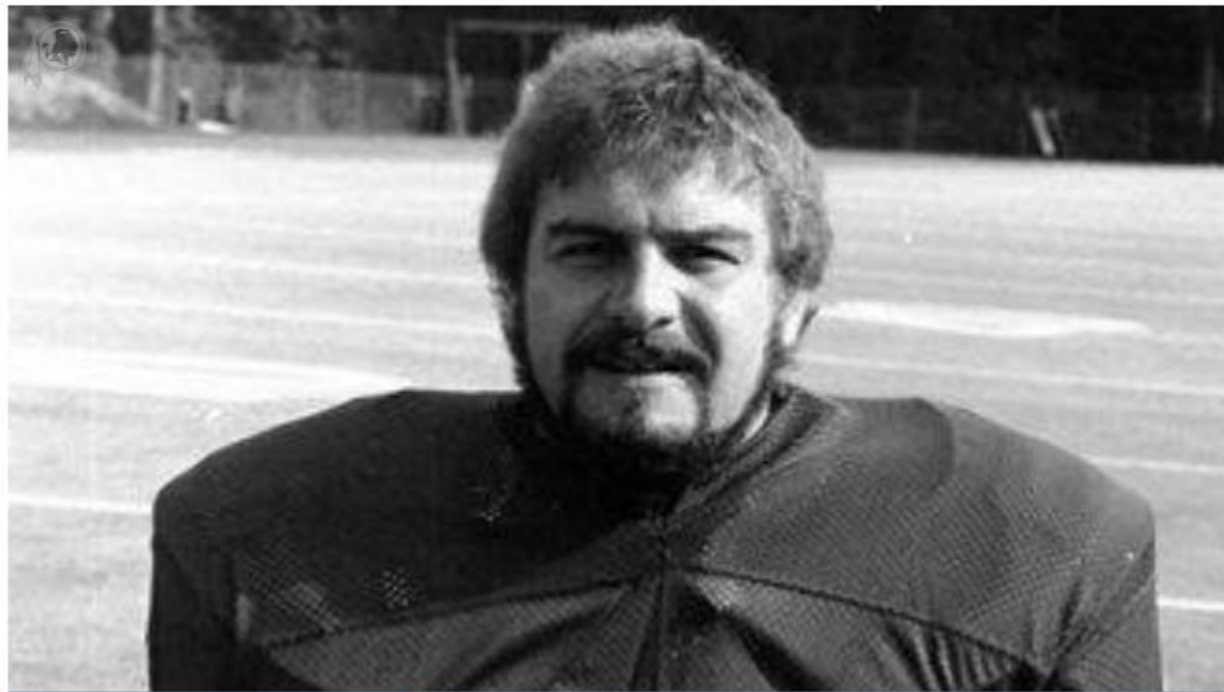
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Redskins Legacy: Toppling The 10-0 Vikings

Posted Oct 31, 2014



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The Redskins took on the image of a cardiac squad in 1975. They played in three overtime games, a record for a 14-game season, and competed in five that came down to the final play.

Such was the case when the 10-0 Vikings visited RFK Stadium on Nov. 30, 1975. The Redskins handed Minnesota its first loss, as defensive end Ron McDole blocked a field goal on the last play in regulation to preserve a 31-30 win.



Entering the game, the Redskins were coming off back-to-back overtime losses to the St. Louis Cardinals and Oakland Raiders, respectively. The 6-4 squad sat behind the Cardinals (8-2) and Cowboys (7-3) in the NFC East and needed to capture its last four games to make the playoffs. Winning the division was mathematically possible but a long shot.

The Redskins understood the urgency, jumping out to a 21-0 lead over Minnesota before 54,498 at RFK. Running backs Larry Brown and Mike Thomas rushed for scores, and quarterback Billy Kilmer threw a 27-yard touchdown pass to receiver Frank Grant.

The Vikings battled back, with running back Chuck Foreman scoring touchdowns in the second and third quarters to cut the margin to seven. Mark Moseley's 32-yard field goal extended the Redskins' lead to 24-14. But Minnesota scored 16 consecutive points to go up, 30-24, in the fourth period.

Minnesota had a chance to put the game out of reach. But a missed field goal gave the Redskins the ball on their 23 with 1:51 to play and one timeout.

That's when Kilmer gave one of his typically clutch and gutsy performances.

With a throbbing pain in his right shoulder and an aggravating injury to the metatarsal bone in his left foot, he completed two passes to Grant and another to receiver Charley Taylor for a total of 57 yards to move the ball to the Vikings' 15.

Kilmer then hit Grant, who once played on the Redskins' taxi squad, on a square-in pattern in the end zone to tie the game at 30. Moseley's conversion put the Redskins up by one.

It wasn't over. The Vikings, who gained 508 yards that day, crafted a desperation 56-yard drive to put Fred Cox in position to try a game-winning 45-yard field goal.

But McDole, the burly lineman who was prolific at blocking kicks, had other ideas.

Prior to the snap, he switched places on the line with teammate Bill Brundige, then found an opening and reached his right hand high enough to deflect Cox's kick. Cox, who like Moseley was one of the NFL's last straight-on kickers, had earlier missed an extra point.

It was yet another heart-throbbing finish for the burgundy and gold.

Washington Star columnist David Israel captured the drama of the moment – and the Redskins' season.

"The Washington Redskins should be chronicled by a theologian," Israel wrote. "This year, they're more than a football team, more than a National Football League franchise, more than a multi-million-dollar business. This year, the Washington Redskins are a religious experience. Each week, it seems, their faith is tested under the severest of circumstances."

The Redskins beat Atlanta, 30-27, the following week. But a 31-10 loss to the Cowboys in Dallas ended a streak of four straight playoff seasons under coach George Allen. They finished the year 8-6.

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