



Redskins Legacy: Redskins Nip Giants In 2012

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Redskins center Will Montgomery said it best after Washington clashed with the Giants under the lights nearly two years ago:

"It's a fun time to be a Redskin right now."

In a Monday night game at FedExField on Dec. 3, 2012, the Redskins posted their third-straight win by beating the Giants, 17-16. They improved to 6-6 to position themselves in the thick of the playoff race and stood tied with Dallas one game behind the 7-5 Giants in the NFC East.



Just a few weeks prior, the Redskins' postseason hopes were fading. Three consecutive losses had left them 3-6 and eyeing three straight non-playoff years under coach Mike Shanahan.

But they gained momentum after the Bye Week, beating the Eagles, 31-6, and the Cowboys, 38-31. Rookie quarterback **Robert Griffin III** looked superhuman during that two-game stretch, completing 79 percent of his passes (34 of 43) and throwing for 511 yards, with an average passer rating of 145.1. He tossed four touchdown passes in each game, becoming the first Redskins player to ever do so.

Still, not everyone was taking the Redskins seriously. A few days before the Giants game, receiver Victor Cruz provided chalkboard material by telling reporters that the Redskins were a "few pieces away" from being "legitimate" playoff contenders.

That night, Griffin posted pedestrian numbers: 13 of 21 for 163 yards with a scoring pass. He also fumbled on a run in the first quarter. But receiver Josh Morgan caught the loose ball and ran 13 yards for a score, proving that a little luck is needed at times.

With the Redskins up 7-3 in the second quarter, Giants quarterback Eli Manning threw a 4-yard touchdown pass to tight end Martellus Bennett to cap a 13-play, 85-yard drive. Two more field goals by the Giants' Lawrence Tynes and one by the Redskins' **Kai Forbath** left New York with a 16-10 edge.

Late in the third quarter, the Redskins began their game-winning drive. They moved 86 yards in methodical fashion, with rookie running back **Alfred Morris** rushing for 41 yards and Griffin hitting on 3-of-4 passes. On 1st and Goal from the 8, Griffin connected with receiver **Pierre Garçon** in the end zone. Forbath's conversion created a 17-16 game with 11:31 left.

In all, Morris rushed for a then-career high 124 yards to exceed the 1,000-yard mark. His 6-yard run on a 3rd and 3 from the Giants' 35 with about a minute remaining sealed the win and marked the first time since 2005 that the Redskins had beaten their division rivals – the Eagles, Cowboys and Giants – in three straight games.

Washington's locker room was wall to wall with smiles. Players who'd once been on the short end of so many close games had reason to feel good. The 6-6 squad was one of the league's hottest teams.

"We just had to learn how to win games," Montgomery said. "They say you have to go through some tough times to get to good times. Just trying to play loose, we've got some confidence brewing. This was definitely one of the biggest wins that we've had around here in a while. We're playing December football."

Linebacker London Fletcher agreed.

"It was a huge win," he said. "If you think about it, if we lose this game, we go down three games to the Giants with four games left. It would've been highly unlikely for us to have a realistic chance of winning our division. Now, a game back, it just made it very interesting for next weekend and the remaining ballgames."

Fletcher also spoke about the growing fan excitement.

"This is the loudest I've seen (FedExField) since the Dallas game the last winning season in '07," he said referring to a 27-6 Redskins win over the Cowboys that clinched a playoff spot. "That place was just rocking. We're going to need (the fans) to be just as loud or louder next week against a really good Baltimore team."

After beating the eventual-Super Bowl-champion Ravens in overtime, 31-28, the Redskins knocked off the Browns, Eagles and Cowboys in succession to complete a seven-game win streak and capture their first NFC East title since 1999. Their memorable season ended with a 24-14 loss to the Seahawks at FedExField in the opening round of the playoffs.

*Mike Richman is the author of The Redskins Encyclopedia and the Washington Redskins Football Vault. He hosts a podcast called "Burgundy & Gold Flashback." His web site is redskinshistorian.com. Check out his Facebook **Friend** and **Fan** pages and follow him on **Twitter**.*



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