



## 2013 WASHINGTON REDSKINS

Record: 3-13

4th Place – NFC East (wild card playoff team)

Playoffs: 1<sup>st</sup> round loss to Seattle

Head Coach: Mike Shanahan

### 2013

Sept. 9	L	33-27	Philadelphia
Sept. 15	L	38-20	@ Green Bay
Sept. 22	L	27-20	Detroit
Sept. 29	W	24-14	@ Oakland
Oct. 13	L	31-16	@ Dallas
Oct. 20	W	45-41	Chicago
Oct. 27	L	45-21	@ Denver
Nov. 3	W	30-24 (OT)	San Diego
Nov. 7	L	34-27	@ Minnesota
Nov. 17	L	24-16	@ Philadelphia
Nov. 25	L	27-6	San Francisco
Dec. 1	L	24-17	NY Giants
Dec. 8	L	45-10	Kansas City
Dec. 15	L	27-26	@ Atlanta
Dec. 22	L	24-23	Dallas
Dec. 29	L	20-6	@ NY Giants

### 3-13

## **Once-Rising Redskins Suffer Disastrous Season; Shanahan Fired**

How could the Redskins have fallen so far, so fast?

It was a simple question but a complicated one to answer following their calamitous 3-13 season in 2013.

Consider: They won the NFC East in 2012, capturing their last seven regular-season games to finish 10-6 before losing in the first round of the playoffs. Momentum was behind them. Plus, they were returning virtually the same roster that starred their franchise quarterback, Robert Griffin III, who posted one of the most spectacular rookie seasons in NFL history in 2012.

You couldn't go wrong with predictions of 12-4, 11-5, 10-6 or 9-7. A Super Bowl run even seemed a possibility. It was easy to find someone on the Redskins' bandwagon.

Instead, the Redskins came spiraling down so fast that they posted the NFL's second-worst record. Not only did they hit "rock bottom," a common refrain from the players as the disastrous losses piled up, but they sank to unimaginable depths. Sitting at 3-5 with the playoffs in sight in a weak NFC East, they went into a freefall and lost their last eight games. They also finished 0-6 in the division and 1-7 on the road.

The euphoria from the 2012 season had long faded by the end of the maddening year. Where did things go wrong?

"I have no idea," linebacker Brian Orakpo said on Dec. 8 after a 45-10 loss to the Chiefs, one of the most embarrassing defeats in the 15 seasons under owner Dan Snyder.

"It's disappointing because we knew that last year didn't buy us anything," defensive lineman Kedric Golston said late in the season. "We knew the amount of work, the offseason program, training camp, the season, how much time and energy it was going to take to be successful. I said it before, and I'll say it again, I felt like we put the work in. But ultimately that only gives you an opportunity to win on Sundays, and we haven't done a lot of that this year."

This encapsulates the misery: 2013 was the only third season since 1961 when the Redskins won three or fewer games. The 3-13 mark matched their 3-13 finish in 1994 for the franchise's worst record of the 16-game season, which debuted in 1978. But 2013 was much more disappointing because of the lofty expectations, while 1994 was the first year under coach Norv Turner, who inherited a 4-12 squad.

When you add it up, 2013 was the worst Redskins season in more than a half century.

The implosion triggered the firing of coach Mike Shanahan, who departed a day after the last regular-season game. The two-time Super Bowl winner posted the worst record of his 20-year head coaching career. He finished 24-40 in four seasons in D.C., with his .375 winning percentage matching Snyder hires Jim Zorn and Steve Spurrier for the second-worst all-time among Redskin coaches who have coached at least 25 games. (Bill McPeak is worst at .321.)

There's no single reason to explain the collapse. Griffin, who suffered a serious knee injury in the playoff loss to Seattle in January 2013, rehabilitated himself in the ensuing months and started the first 13 games. But with no passing reps in the offseason and no preseason action, he looked at times like a shell of the dynamic player who dazzled the league in 2012, when he set rookie records and raked in honors including NFL Offensive Player of the Year.

Griffin passed for 16 touchdowns and 12 interceptions, compared with 20 and five, respectively, as a rookie. His passer rating (82.8) was far below that of 2012 (102.4), and wearing a bulky knee brace that one teammate said was slowing him down, he rushed for 489 yards, 326 less than the previous season. Also, playing more like a traditional NFL passer than he did in 2012, he often appeared timid in the pocket, allowing defenders to close in before he could release the pass. He was constantly roughed up.

Shanahan shut RGIII down for the season with three games left, claiming it was unnecessary to risk injury to him with the Redskins out of the playoff race. Backup Kirk Cousins started in Griffin's place and produced mixed results.

In addition to Griffin's woes, the Redskins had a leaky defense that allowed 5,665 yards, one of the highest totals in team history, and a special teams unit that was among the worst the league has ever seen.

Plus, the \$36 million salary cap penalty imposed by the NFL in 2012 was devastating. The Redskins, who were docked \$18 million in both 2012 and 2013, were handcuffed in pursuing free agents and retained virtually the same roster from the year before, with special teams star Lorenzo Alexander the only major departure. Thus, with no new talent and RGIII unable to mask the team's deficiencies like he did the year before, the Redskins turned into a league doormat.

With the season spinning out of control, the press painted the Redskins as a franchise in turmoil. Often citing anonymous sources, media outlets drove speculation of fractured relationships between Shanahan and Snyder, Shanahan and Griffin, and RGIII and the head coach's son, offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan. "Part of that was – let me use the right word – distasteful to hear," general manager Bruce Allen said after the season.

One of the most alarming reports surfaced a few hours before the loss to the Chiefs, the Redskins' fifth straight. ESPN.com said a wide rift had developed between Shanahan and Snyder stemming from the owner's close relationship with Griffin.

The report, citing an anonymous source, said Shanahan had cleaned out his office before the playoff loss to Seattle and expected to leave the team when the 2012 season ended.

According to the report, "The source said Shanahan had grown tired of the way Snyder empowered Griffin and openly esteemed him above all other players. Shanahan didn't blame Griffin but did blame Snyder for creating an atmosphere that Shanahan did not believe was conducive to winning. Shanahan privately told people close to him that he felt Snyder's behavior with

regard to Griffin was a `complete farce.’” The report said the Redskins, through team spokesman Tony Wyllie, called the story “ridiculous.”

After the game, Shanahan deflected a wave of questions about the ESPN.com report and whether he’d retain his job as Redskins coach, the status of which had become a hot topic.

In public comments, many players backed Shanahan and were adamant that the team should retain him. The Redskins’ defensive captain, 16<sup>th</sup>-year linebacker London Fletcher, was among his staunch supporters.

“The way I look at it, I think Coach Shanahan is a great coach,” Fletcher said with two games left. “Any player who’s played for him, most guys – probably 95 percent of the guys who’ve played for him – would love playing for him. And as I look at the current situation, I think coach Shanahan is definitely the right guy. I think Mr. Snyder would be wise to let him see this thing through.”

But Snyder axed Shanahan before he could coach the fifth year of his five-year contract. The day after the season-ending loss to the Giants, the Redskins also fired at least eight of Shanahan’s assistants, including Kyle.

Allen announced the firing, saying the decision was essentially made after a 24-23 loss to the Cowboys in the next-to-last game. Allen said he was taking full control of player personnel decisions, a role previously held by Mike Shanahan, and that a coaching search was underway.

“I know there’s been speculation throughout the last weeks and maybe even months about what is going to happen,” Allen said. “And the reason we waited until now versus all of the previous comments of if we were going to make a change during the season was because we wanted Mike to have the ability to right the ship. We wanted to end that losing streak. For every play on this team and for everybody in the organization, for every fan out there, we wanted to get a win.

“We came close in the last few weeks, but as is the frustration over the last four years, we played some good quarters, some good halves, but we didn’t play complete games.”