

NFL | Washington 27, Dallas 6



AP photo

Washington's London Fletcher celebrates with the crowd after beating Dallas to earn the final spot in the NFC playoffs Sunday.

Playoff bound

Gibbs soaks up Redskins' victory

The Washington Post

All around FedEx Field, most of the crowd of 90,910 stayed, cheering despite the chilly drizzle, waving to the Washington Redskins as they slowly left the field. Usually, Joe Gibbs trots off quickly, but not this time. Oh, no. Maybe that big sloppy kiss on the cheek from assistant coach Joe Dugel let him know how special this was and how many people wanted to share the moment with him.

Gibbs stopped near the same end zone where

Todd Collins's 42-yard touchdown bomb to Santana Moss had given the Redskins a 27-3 fourth-quarter lead over Dallas and removed the last sliver of doubt that the Redskins, against all same odds, were going to the playoffs.



Gibbs turned slowly to all four corners, giving a double thumbs-up to the crowd. That wasn't enough. Next, he pointed both index fingers in dual "No. 1s." Finally, he just waved his arms to the throng, as if he wished he could hug them all. Then, and this is the part that is so different, Gibbs did not leave. Twice more the great coach, long ago inducted into the Hall of

Fame, did the entire pirouette again — two thumbs up, two No. 1s and finally those warm waves of affection.

Who can compare the parades down Pennsylvania Avenue long ago after three Super Bowl wins and, on this dreary day, the seemingly far more modest accomplishment of the '07 Redskins who, since the funeral of teammate Sean Taylor, have not lost, winning four games behind the barely-known Collins to capture the last NFC wild-card spot on the final day of the regular season. Sometimes, comparisons truly are invidious. Remarkable deeds must stand on their feet.

Please see **REDSKINS**, Page C4

UVa Football

Seniors have last hurrah at practice

Two fifth-year linemen look back before their final game as Wahoos

By Andy Bitter
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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Ian Yates Cunningham, ever the joker, made the same comment during every drill he and his fellow offensive lineman did at Virginia's final practice Sunday in preparation for the Gator Bowl.

"This is the last time we're going to do this," he'd say with mock sadness, before making the same remark at the next station.

Then it dawned on him. For him and center Jordy Lipsey, it was.

"You realize that for all these seniors, this is our last practice," Cunningham said. "It's very sad."

Branden Albert and Eugene Monroe get most of the attention, but Cunningham and Lipsey are big reasons for UVA's resurgent offensive line this season.

A pair of fifth-year seniors with contrasting personalities — the gregarious Cunningham has an opinion on everything unlike the more soft-spoken Lipsey — the two have blossomed in their final year despite taking radically different paths to get here.

After a standout career at Hebron High in Plano, Texas, Cunningham was ready for primetime in Charlottesville early, starting five games at left guard his freshman year in 2003 and looking as though he'd be a fixture there.

"He's always been a mature kid for whatever level he's been on," UVA coach Al Groh said.

But surgery to repair a ruptured disk in his back forced him out of action in 2004 and slowed him once he got back on the field in 2005.

"It's very humbling," he said. "You have something unfortunate like an injury happen to make you realize that hey, you're not the Golden Boy. ... You're going to have to work hard every day."

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Virginia vs. Texas Tech



Tomorrow 1 p.m., WDBJ



Cunningham



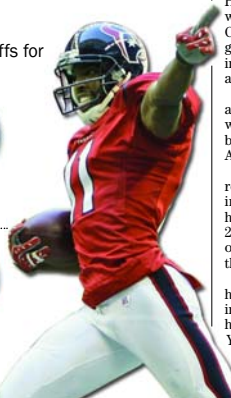
Lipsey

NFL Week 17

Former Virginia Tech and current Houston Texans wide receiver **Andre Davis** returned two kickoffs for touchdowns, setting a franchise record for most in a game. **Week 17 Roundup, Page C5**

ATL 44 SEA 41	GB 34 DET 13	CIN 38 MIA 25	CHI 33 NO 25	PHI 17 BUF 9	CAR 31 TB 23	HOU 42 JAX 28
CLE 20 SF 7	BAL 27 PIT 21	SD 30 OAK 17	DEN 22 MIN 19	ARI 48 STL 19	NYJ 13 KC 10	TEN 16 IND 10

AP photo



Men's College Basketball

Bad stretch costs Flames

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FAIRFAX — Ritchie McKay's frustration set in about halfway through the second half Sunday at the Patriot Center as he slowly watched his team unravel from the sideline.

Twenty-one minutes of solid basketball was undone by one bad stretch, a recurring theme that repeated itself during George Mason's 72-64 victory. This particular stint, a nine-minute swoon in which Liberty was outscored 14-0 and allowed George Mason to score on seven of eight possessions, wasn't much different than similar ones in previous road



64

72

games.

George Mason took advantage of Liberty's missed defensive assignments, shot the Flames out of their zone and beat them inside when Liberty tried to play man-to-man.

"I called timeout after timeout, and I was yelling at guys," McKay said. "I understand, it takes time. I'm competitive"

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AP photo

UVa's Jeff Jones is fouled by Jaret Von Rosenberg.

Diane, Joseph have big days

Media General News Service

CHARLOTTESVILLE — Virginia ended a six-game home-stand yesterday with a 78-70 victory over Hartford.

With 34 seconds to play, Virginia led by seven. Hartford guard Jaret Von Rosenberg missed his second free throw. Teammate Morgan Sabia got the rebound but missed the layup under pressure from Cavaliers forward Adrian Joseph.

In the scrum for the rebound, Virginia point guard Sean Singletary came out with the ball. He fumbled it back to Von



70

78

Rosenburg.

Hawks guard Joe Zeglinski, brother of injured Virginia guard Sammy Zeglinski, took a shot from behind the arc and missed.

The rest of the game had gone the same way as the final seconds. Hartford (5-9) tossed up 39 3-point attempts and connected

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Independence Bowl



Alabama jumps on Colorado early to finish the season on a high note
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Women's College Basketball

No. 4 North Carolina beats Liberty in Chapel Hill
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Today's **TOP TV games**



Chick-fil-A Bowl
Clemson vs. Auburn
7:30 p.m., ESPN
NBA: Magic @ Bulls
2 p.m., WGN