The Tennessee Titans clubbed the Carolina Panthers Sunday.

It was impressive, 30 to 3 impressive.

Chris Johnson ran for 130 yards, caught four passes for 44 yards and showed signs of the Chris Johnson Titans fans have been searching for.

Wide receiver Damian Williams continued to earn the starting role he was given Oct. 2. Williams caught five passes for 107 yards with a 41-yard touchdown reception being the highlight.

From the local media coverage Monday, one would surmise the Titans are Super Bowl shoo-ins. Will they ever lose another game?

One publication promoted its columnist's opinion on Page 1-A and he didn't even cover the game. It must have been a slow news day.

Hey, it was the Carolina Panthers. Can we chill a little? It's a team that has two wins this season. It's a team that came out flat and paid the price. It has happened to the Titans this year. It happens to all but the elite NFL teams. Neither the Titans, nor the Panthers are in that conversation.

But I need more proof that this is a Titans team that has truly seen the light. We will see if that is indeed the case when they play the Falcons in Atlanta Sunday.

Atlanta Coach Mike Smith's team has taken on his persona. They will bloody your nose. The next move is all yours.

Smitty was a defensive coordinator at Tennessee Tech before Brian Billick saw something in him he liked and took him to the NFL. Smitty was a blue- collar linebacker at East Tennessee State, never played a down in the NFL and doesn't begin to compare resumes with Titans Hall

of Fame player and current coach Mike Munchak.

Smith gives his team chances to win games. Although they lost a tough 26-23 game in overtime Sunday to New Orleans, Smith went for it in overtime on a fourth-and-one from his own 29. It came up short, but too often Smith has punted in those situations against the Saints, only to never see the football again.

“I stand behind our coach, behind our players,’’ Falcons linebacker Curtis Lofton said. “I would have done the same thing. If we convert, our offense drives down the field and we score to win the game.’’

You can bet the Titans will get the Falcons’ best shot Sunday. Two 5-4 teams stand at a crossroads in the season. The winner fights to have a respectable season.

The loser, well, 5-5 is just what it appears to be.

If the Titans come up short in Atlanta, it erases all the positive vibes they earned in Carolina. They cannot afford to stay around the .500 mark and hope to catch AFC South leader Houston.

And the playoffs are out of the question unless they win a division that is as bad as it has been ever since Peyton Manning got past his rocky rookie year in Indianapolis.

The Titans last seven games will tell the story of this season. Four of them are on the road. Four of the opponents have winning records. The only punching bag is 0-10 Indianapolis.

They finish up head-to-head with Jacksonville and Houston, two division opponents they lost to earlier.

They can write their own script. They know one game does not a season make.

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