

# Interference – Opportunity/Forced Touching

- ◆ Consider blocking to be “dancing” – know who is leading & who is following
- ◆ When opponents are blocking each other:
  - No one is leading the dance – K & R are tied up and no one has the advantage over the other
  - “K” is leading the dance & “R” is the follower – “K” has control of the block & is moving “R” in a direction of “K’s” choice
  - “R” is leading the dance & “K” is the follower – “R” has control of the block & is moving “K” in a direction of “R’s” choice

# Simple Touching of a Punt

- ◆ If a punt touches either of the two “dancers” and no one is leading
  - The ball has been deemed to touch either one or both players & it is a live ball with first touching if it touches “K” or “R”



# Examples of Forced Touching

“R1” is blocking “K1”  
and “R1” is leading

- ◆ Ball touches “R1”
  - This is touching & a live ball

- ◆ Ball touches “K1”
  - This is **not** touching as it is considered forced touching because “K1” is considered to be blocked into the ball

# Examples of Forced Touching

“K1” is blocking “R1”  
and “K1” is leading

- ◆ Ball touches “K1”
  - Ball is considered to have touched “K1”

- ◆ Ball touches “R1”
  - Ball is not considered to have touched “R1”

# Interference – Opportunity to Catch a Kick

- ◆ “R” must be given an unimpeded opportunity to catch a kick that has crossed the line of scrimmage
- ◆ “R” must be given an unimpeded path to the ball if it has crossed the line of scrimmage
- ◆ There does not need to be contact by “K1” or “R1” for there to be interference.
- ◆ If “K1” forces “R1” to change his path to the ball, it is a foul by “K1”

# Interference – Opportunity to Catch a Kick

- ◆ If “K” is positioned anywhere on the field, he must give “R” an unimpeded path to the ball even if “K” is stationary.
- ◆ “K” is responsible for knowing where the ball is on a punt that crosses the line of scrimmage.

# Interference – Opportunity to Catch a Kick

When “dancing” opponents are involved =  
“R2” and “K1” are blocking each other &  
“K1” is leading the dance

- ◆ “R1” moves forward to get into position to catch a kick on its downward flight and
  - Contacts “R2”: no foul
  - Contacts “K1”: foul for interference with the opportunity because “K1” is leading

# Interference – Opportunity to Catch a Kick

When “dancing” opponents are involved = “R2” and “K1” are blocking each other & “R2” is leading the dance

“R1” moves forward to get into position to catch a kick on its downward flight and “R1” contacts “K1” while attempting to get into position to catch the kick

- No foul as “K1” is considered to be blocked into the receiver



# Fair Catch & its Keys

- ◆ When “R” signals for a fair catch, he communicates to everyone
  - He will not run with the ball after the kick ends
  - No one else on “R” will run with the ball after the kick ends
    - The kick ends where possessed or declared dead by rule
  - He will not block if he does not touch the ball
    - No player that give signal may block until he touches the ball prior to the kick ending

# After a Fair Catch Signal

- ◆ Can either team advance the ball after it is possessed?
  - NO: there are no exceptions & every official can focus on getting the kick to end
  - All officials can move down field more freely because there will be no runback of the kick
  - LJ is responsible for picking up any blocking by a player who signals but does not touch the ball

# After a Fair Catch Signal

- If for some reason “R1” does not touch the kick and he blocks while in the end zone: **safety**
- “R1” signals at the 5-yard line and does not touch the kick:
  - He then blocks an opponent while in the end zone to prevent opponent from keeping the ball out of the end zone: **safety**
- ◆ “R1” is protected to complete the catch even if he muffs the attempt

# Fair Catch

- “R1” signals for a fair catch & muffs the catch attempt and “K1” bats the muff
- ◆ Foul by “K1” for interference with the opportunity
  - ◆ Foul can also be for illegally batting the ball if “K1” bats it forward
    - Penalty enforcement emphasis: interference is a spot foul; illegal batting is previous spot

# Fair Catch

- “R1” does not signal for a fair catch & muffs the ball
- ◆ “K1” may legally bat the ball backward toward his own EZ
  - ◆ “K1” may not tackle the receiver as this would be a holding foul & is penalized from the previous spot

# Fair Catch

Rules only apply when the ball crosses the neutral zone

- ◆ “R1” signals beyond the neutral zone
  - Ball does not cross the neutral zone & “R2” recovers & advances: **legal**
  - Line Judge & HL are responsible for this call
- ◆ “R1” signals from behind the neutral zone
  - Catches the kick and advances: **legal play**

# Fair Catch

- “R1” signals from behind the neutral zone & is contacted by “K1” behind the neutral zone
- ◆ No foul
  - ◆ Both teams may advance the kick because it has not crossed the neutral zone

# Fair Catch

## Whistle Management

- ◆ There is no real need for a whistle if there is a fair catch signal
- ◆ The only thing that can go wrong is “R” does not catch the kick & we blow the whistle in anticipation
  - This play has to be replayed