



DANTE’S RETURN INFERNO

He captivated NFL country for the first half of last season. **DANTE HALL** and his darting touchdown returns made everyone in stadiums and watching on TV stop to see what he would do next.

Hall ended up tying the single-season record for most kick-punt return TDs (four) and doing it in the fewest number of games (four). He has averaged 79.8 yards on his 11 career touchdowns, the most of any player in history with at least 10 TDs. How does he do it?

His thoughts on his talent:

DANTE’S VIEW

- “The main thing I try to do is just follow the scheme and follow the blockers. You follow the structure and then let your natural instincts take over.”
- “It’s nothing special that I’m doing. It’s just a total team effort. They guys up front give me tremendous effort and I’m just a by-product of their hard effort.”
- “This is the first time ever that I’ve been involved returning kicks that all 10 guys blocking really get hyped up to go return a kick. You can just see it in their faces. The guys get pumped up and excited.”
- “”I play for a coach (Dick Vermeil) that lets me take more chances. I think it helps me to play for a guy that allows me to just go out there and create.”
- “I think it’s all God-given instincts, really. Since college, I have never worked on practicing instincts. It just naturally happens out there on the field.”

FEW FAIR CATCHES

San Diego Chargers punt returner **ERIC PARKER** just does not like to raise his arm. In 2003, Parker had the fewest fair catches – a grand total of two – among the top 10 punt returners.

For Parker, the commitment to avoiding fair catches boils down to a simple game of numbers.

“The fewer fair catches you attempt, the more touchdowns you can score and the bigger returns you can have,” says Parker, who averaged 9.0 yards per return last season. “Anytime you fair catch, you always see on film that you could have run for some yardage or made a touchdown. You always see that you could have gotten by at least one defender.”

Though he only opted to fair catch twice last season, Parker knows it still has to be a possibility. If it isn’t, players will start gunning for the big hit even more.

“You have to mix it up from time to time,” he says. “You don’t want anybody to outthink you and start realizing that you aren’t going to fair catch and then they really get down and around you. You have to mix it up. You also know that each day you just don’t want to fair catch, because there is always a big play.”

What’s Parker’s best advice when it comes to receiving punts? “Just get the ball and go.”

The top 10 NFL punt returners of 2003 ranked by fair catches:

PLAYER	RETURNS	FAIR CATCHES
<i>Eric Parker, SD</i>	23	2
Peter Warrick, CIN	25	8
Deltha O’Neal, DEN	33	10
Antwaan Randle El, PIT	45	12
Troy Brown, NE	29	13
Dante Hall, KC	29	14
Phillip Buchanon, OAK	36	14
David Allen, JAX	27	15
Justin McCareins, TEN	29	17
Santana Moss, NYJ	30	18

NFL NICKNAMES

From “**SLINGIN’ SAMMY**” **BAUGH** to **WALTER “SWEETNESS” PAYTON**, NFL players have always had Hall of Fame nicknames.

Today’s players are no different. A sampling of some NFL nicknames:

PLAYER	NICKNAME	MONIKER DERIVATION
49ers DT Anthony Adams	Double ‘A’	Teammates say he keeps moving like the energizer battery.
Packers LB Nick Barnett	Nick Beats	His hip-hop mixing and DJ ability.
Jets WR Wayne Chrebet	Nails	His style of play.
Bucs DT DeVone Claybrooks	Headquarters	The size of his head.
Chiefs DT Lional Dalton	Jelly Roll	His eating habits and massive size.
Texans CB Demarcus Faggins	Petey	Grandmother thought he looked like the dog from Little Rascals.
Rams WR Torry Holt	Big Play	Makes big plays in big games.
Ravens LB Ray Lewis	Sugar Ray	His ability to deliver the knockout hit.
Browns T Quasim Mitchell	Big Cakes	Is big and likes cake.
Eagles LB Mark Simoneau	Frenchy	The French origin of his name.
Vikings LB Dontarrious Thomas	Reindeer	Running form has a gallop.
Bears CB Charles Tillman	Peanut	Aunt thought he looked like a peanut as a baby.
Titans S Clevan Williams	Tank	Family thought he should have a tank of milk instead of a bottle.