



Logan Mankins plays role of good Solder

By Karen Guregian / Patriots Beat | Tuesday, May 24, 2011 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | N.E. Patriots

NORTON — During their ever so brief window to host rookie draft picks in Foxboro, the Patriots [team stats] managed to pass along Logan Mankins [stats]' phone number to first-round selection Nate Solder.

And naturally, the kid called.

Why wouldn't he? Solder didn't know anything about a franchise tag or bad blood between Mankins and ownership. He just wanted some advice on how to deal with being a rookie offensive lineman during the lockout from hell. And he sought some pointers on the Patriots system.

Solder is smart, and Mankins is the perfect guy to reach out to during these unsettling times.

Now for the two burning questions:

Did the embattled Mankins take Solder's call?

You bet. The player who last season asked for a trade and publicly called out team owner Robert Kraft absolutely picked up the phone for the rookie.

"Yeah, I have spoken to Nate," Mankins said yesterday before teeing it up in the Joe Andruzzi and Friends golf tournament at TPC Boston. "He seems like a great guy. I gave him a little advice. I tried to help him out the best I can in the situation that we're in right now.

"I'm more than willing to help any young guy that needs anything. Look, he's in a tough situation right now. He doesn't know what's going on. He has no coaches to talk to. He's just trying to make it in this league. If I can help him, I will."

Mankins, who was given the club's franchise tag prior to the lockout, may be peeved with his current situation, but he's not the type to take it out on a young prospect.

Solder, meanwhile, is in a difficult spot. He may be the starting left tackle for the Pats when the smoke clears, but he hasn't seen the playbook, hasn't been in an offensive huddle, doesn't know the line calls and hasn't even met Tom Brady [stats], whose blind side he's supposed to protect.

So, although Mankins may have contract issues with the Patriots, he won't turn away from a kid who really could use the help.

Which brings us to the second question: Why did the Pats slip Solder the number of Mankins and not the number of someone on a little more solid footing with the organization?

Is it possible that before the lockout the icy relationship between Mankins and ownership thawed a little? Were things on the mend? Might there be more money for a new long-term deal for the Pro Bowler if the Pats decided not to re-sign Matt Light [stats]? Solder, after all, makes Light expendable.

It's certainly not out of the realm of possibility.

Then again, maybe there's nothing more to be read into this other than coach Bill Belichick wanting Solder to get advice from his best and most ferocious offensive lineman, a guy he wants his first-round draft pick to emulate. Maybe it's as innocent as that, and Belichick rightly figured Mankins would be a big boy and help.

Mankins was a bit coy with his responses yesterday. When asked if it was naive to believe he and the Patriots ever could reach a long-term deal, Mankins responded by providing a great sound bite.

"Oh, I don't know," he said with a smile. "We'll see. Shoot, the NFL and the players can't even agree on anything right now. We'll worry about that once they can strike a deal."

For one day, anyway, Mankins and the Patriots did agree that taking care of a rookie was a priority, and although he didn't share any of the intimate details of the conversation, Mankins made sure Solder hung up from their call with as much wisdom as he could provide.



Photo by Nancy Lane

Mankins offers some advice to Solder

Posted by Shalise Manza Young, Globe Staff

May 23, 2011 02:57 PM

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Logan Mankins and Patriots' brass may be at odds about his contract status, but that didn't stop the veteran guard from offering some words of wisdom to the young man who could be lined up on his left shoulder when the 2011 season gets underway - first-round draft pick Nate Solder.

Speaking at the Joe Andruzzi & Friends golf tournament at the TPC Boston, Mankins said he's talked to Solder, the 17th overall pick last month and the first offensive lineman the Pats have drafted in the first round since choosing Mankins with the 32nd and final pick in the first in 2005.

"Yeah, I have spoken to Nate. He seems like a great guy. I gave him a little advice. Tried to help him out the best you can in the situation that we're in right now," Mankins said. "I'm more than willing to help any young guy who needs anything.

"Look: he's in a tough situation right now; he doesn't know what's going on. He has no coaches to talk to. He's just trying to make it in this league."

It was the Patriots who gave Mankins' number to Solder. The Pro Bowl guard certainly knows a thing or two about the Pats' system, what to expect, and the pressure that comes with blocking Tom Brady's blind side.

Mankins didn't want to divulge details of their chat, but he does deserve kudos for talking with Solder and recognizing that it isn't the rookie that he's having a problem with, but team management. It may seem like a no-brainer, but not everyone would do what Mankins did.
