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Patriots rookie OL Nate Solder enters the “bizarro world...”

Last night against the Giants, rookie offensive lineman [Nate Solder](#) [was the starting right tackle](#), while **Sebastian Vollmer** sat out. It was, as coach **Bill Belichick** said, a necessity if he's going to be the swing tackle.

“That’s what he’s going to have to do,” Belichick said.

How was it for Solder? Not bad. He just made a few adjustments and was ready to roll.

“It’s like bizarro world,” Solder told me yesterday. “Everything’s opposite. But you pick it up kinda quick, it’s the same kinda thing. I just have to think, ‘Left, right.’ Get the stickers on my helmet.”



Solder did fine. He described his play like he always does, noting, “I’ve come a long ways, but I have a long ways to go more than I’ve come. So, it’s just a building process.”

But one thing is clear. Whatever the Pats want to do with him, he’s cool with it. That’s how it’s got to be.

“I play where they need me,” Solder said. “They need me at right tackle, I’ll be there. They want me at left tackle, I’ll be there. Whatever it takes. I think the first day, they said the more you can do. So, I think that’s the phrase, right?”

Belichick loves him, though.

“I thought he did some good things,” Belichick said. “I thought his run blocking was good. I thought his pass blocking was good. He had a couple plays that, like everybody, could have been a little better. But the kid’s learned a lot. I think he’s had a lot thrown at him in the last month. I think overall he’s handled it very well, very maturely. His techniques improved. He’s worked hard. He’s a tough kid. This is part of the experience, playing on the other side [of the line] and then actually coming back to the left side in the second half. He got good work on both sides of the ball. I think all those snaps in the long run are just going to help.”

This entry was posted on Friday, September 2nd, 2011 at 8:32 pm and is filed under [Training Camp](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.

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1. Hope that the Pats reclaim LeVoi as back-up tackle (if the Ravens cut him), perhaps giving Solder a chance to start at right guard. Want to stop the pressure on Brady? Try a road grading offense on the right side of the OL with human trees Solder and Vollmer making bodies fly while Woodhead sprints out from behind their ankles....

Comment by **OldEngland Guy** - September 3, 2011 @ [8:22 am](#)

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Friday, September 2, 2011

Side doesn't matter for this good Solder

By Chris Forsberg

*Kim Klement/US Presswire*Rookie

Nate Solder on the sideline.

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. -- On the night the [New England Patriots](#) drafted [Nate Solder](#) in April, coach Bill Belichick said with some certainty that the first-round pick would stay and develop at his familiar left tackle position. But we all know how much the Patriots coach likes versatility.

So while Belichick and the team still envision Solder as the future successor to [Matt Light](#) in protecting the blind side of quarterback [Tom Brady](#), it's always possible that, in his rookie season, Solder could be thrust into the offensive line at another spot due to injury. With that in mind, Solder started Thursday's exhibition finale against the [New York Giants](#) at the more unfamiliar right tackle spot before flipping back to the left side with the second unit later in the game.

"I just keep saying it, wherever they need me, I'm going to be there," said Solder. "It's not a matter of where I'm most comfortable, it's a matter of what the team needs."

On Thursday night, the Patriots needed reps from Solder (starting right tackle Sebastian Vollmer wasn't dressed) and he was more than happy to oblige. The 6-foot-8, 320-pound behemoth enjoyed extensive playing time and said a heavy preseason workload was exactly what he needed.

"I got a lot of reps this whole preseason and I'm sure glad of it, because I needed them," said Solder, the 17th overall pick out of Colorado. "A rookie guy coming in, I have a lot to learn -- and I still have a lot to learn. I'm thankful for all the reps."

He's not quite as thankful for the buzz cut he's sporting these days. As is tradition, veteran players busted out their clippers Tuesday afternoon and administered less-than-flattering hairstyles to the team's rookies before the annual charity Kickoff Gala.

Poor Solder, sporting a baseball cap for much of the evening to hide his new 'do as he interacted with fans, got dragged up on stage to reveal a cut with all the hair missing on top (but still some on the sides). Like most of the first-year players, Solder buzzed the rest of his locks to limit the embarrassment after the event.

It's safe to say he's a lot more comfortable on the right side of the line than walking around with a bad haircut.

Update: During Friday's conference call with the media, Belichick said, "If [Solder] is our third tackle, our swing tackle with [Matt] Light and [Sebastian] Vollmer, then [playing both sides is] what he's going to have to do. But I thought he did some good things [vs. the Giants]. I thought his run blocking was good. I thought his pass blocking was good. He had a couple plays that, like everybody, could have been a little better. But the kid's learned a lot. I think he's had a lot thrown at him in the last month. I think overall he's handled it very well, very maturely. His techniques improved. He's worked hard. He's a tough kid. This is part of the experience, playing on the other side [of the line] and then actually coming back to the left side in the second half. He got good work on both sides of the ball. I think all those snaps in the long run are just going to help."

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Nate Solder Enjoys Trying Out Three Positions on Patriots' Offensive Line

by [Jeff Howe](#) on Fri, Sep 2, 2011 at 5:00PM

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FOXBORO, Mass -- The Patriots' first-round pick has been a good soldier about his position flexibility.

Shortly after the Patriots drafted **Nate Solder** in April, head coach **Bill Belichick** said firmly that he'd be a left tackle. Now, five weeks after the start of training camp, Solder has played left tackle and right tackle in games and right guard in practice. He started at right tackle while playing with the first-team offense Thursday against the Giants before shifting to the left side in the second half.

"I play where they need me," Solder said. "If they need me at right tackle, I'll be there. If they want me at left tackle, I'll be there. Whatever it takes.

"Any way that I can contribute to the team, I'm going to try to do it. I'm fighting for a role to this team, and that's what I'm going to try to do."

Solder has performed well at both tackle positions, but the media has only seen him take a few snaps at guard. More than likely, he's only worked out on the interior of the line to be ready in an emergency situation.

He discussed the challenge of changing positions after spending so much time at left tackle at Colorado.

"There's a lot of things in your brain that you've programmed for so long to be on the left that you've got to kind of flip to be on the right," Solder said. "I kind of feel like it's a left-handed lay-up in basketball. You do it a few times, you kind of get the hang of it. It kind of came to me over time."

Sure, leave it to the 6-foot-8 professional athlete to shrug off the challenge of a left-handed lay-up. But at the very least, he's been open to the idea of playing anywhere on the offensive line, and he has taken the challenges in stride.

"Every position comes with its difficulties," Solder said. "When you try a new position, you kind of learn those. That kind of was the case [Thursday against the Giants], and I've got a lot to learn."

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About the Author

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