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## Saints added veteran tight end Daniel Graham

Posted by Mike Florio on August 12, 2012, 8:06 AM EDT



AP

Lost in a [flurry of Saturday roster moves](#) by the Saints was the announcement that the team has added veteran tight end Daniel Graham.

The 21st pick in the 2002 draft, Graham spent five seasons with the Pats, picking up a pair of Super Bowl rings. He signed a big-money deal with the Broncos in 2007. After four years in Denver, Graham spent 2011 with the Titans.

Cut earlier this year by Tennessee, Graham appeared in all 16 games last season, with seven starts.

Primarily a blocker, Graham caught only two passes last season. His career high came nine years ago, with 38.

In New Orleans, Graham provides depth and blocking expertise for a unit dominated by another player who has “Graham” on the back of his jersey.

The Saints also re-signed cornerback Nick Hixson, signed guard Paul Fenaroli, and waived linebacker Nate Busser, cornerback A.J. Davis, and guard [Andrew Tiller](#).

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1. *CKL says:* Aug 12, 2012 12:17 PM

He was an AWESOME wham blocker. Never saw the Pats use that much after him until Gronk. He left because he wanted more money and to be more used in the passing game, but all he ever got was the former.

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## Solder struggles to start

By Karen Guregian / Patriots Notebook | Sunday, August 12, 2012 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | N.E. Patriots

FOXBORO — **Nate Solder** knows he has to be much better as **Tom Brady** [stats]'s blind-side protector. The **Patriots** [team stats] left tackle said as much following Thursday night's preseason opener with the Saints.

So what made him get off to such a miserable start performing arguably the most important job on the field?

**Randy Cross**, a former Pro Bowl offensive lineman for the San Francisco 49ers who provided television commentary of the Pats/Saints game, pointed to Solder's legs. There was no bend in his knees.

"That's something that normally he does really well," Cross said Friday. "I've watched him. He's quick, he uses his hands well, bends his knees well, which is most of what he didn't do. (Saints defensive end) **Will Smith** isn't exactly an empty chair, either, but I think he'll look at it and fix his problems. It's real basic stuff."

Ultimately, Cross believes the second-year tackle will be just fine. He's got the tools; it's just a matter of putting it all together.

"I think he's going to be real good. It's obvious he's worked his tail off in the offseason lifting weights and working out," Cross said. "The real live reps, the game reps, it's something you have to get back into, and back used to. But he'll be fine."

"But the one thing that surprised me, the knees and the feet were an issue. Then you don't know. Was it fatigue? Was he a little tired? Were his legs tired? Will he be better with rest? That's kind of hard to get right now, but he should be fine."

### Downplaying tandem

Receiver **Brandon Lloyd**, who had one catch — a 17-yard rope over the middle from Brady — nullified thanks to a holding penalty, explained why he's not going to tout the budding chemistry between himself and the Pats quarterback.

"We'd be idiots to come out here and say, 'Hey, we've got it all made,'" said Lloyd, who wasn't able to hook up with Brady on a few other occasions during the opening two series of the game. "We're working. We're not underselling. We're not hiding anything. We're just working."

"We're working the best we can. We're doing everything we can. I think our fans should be optimistic and anyone who roots for us should be optimistic, because we're busting our butts out here to try and be perfect come gameday. That's where we're at."

### Speed demons

One element of the defense **Bill Belichick** has attempted to improve is its overall speed and quickness. Between the draft picks and players he brought in through free agency, it's obvious he was looking to get more aggressive and, with his linebackers in particular, have guys who were better in coverage picking up speedy backs.



Photo by Kelvin Ma

"I think it's important to play fast out there; hopefully we did," said linebacker **Bobby Carpenter**, who was signed as a free agent and has played in those sub defenses. "It's tough to tell that stuff out on the field . . . hopefully we were in the right spot, doing the right things."

Said defensive lineman **Brandon Deaderick**: "You always want to play with a high tempo and be physical. It's something we're trying to do. So we'll build on that."

Carpenter, meanwhile, was sporting a nasty gash on his throat following the preseason opener with the Saints.

"I got leg-whipped on one of the last punts I was in, making a tackle," he said. "It felt like my throat got crushed. There's no neckguard, so it's exposed there."

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