

The GOLFChicago Interview

Patrick Mannelly toiled 16 seasons with the Chicago Bears, albeit rather quietly, as a pure specialist – a long snapper. He stayed under the radar which was a good thing, meaning he made very few mistakes. In fact, he holds the storied organization’s record for games played at 245.

During his tenure in the NFL he fell in love with our little four-letter word. Yes, we are talking about the game of golf. After he retired in 2014, he’s gone full bore on what he likes to call “a golf problem.” He’s teed it up with a wide array of people, including a number of former Bears. Among those are his good friend Robbie Gould, for whom he was the snapper for Gould’s entire Chicago career. He plays out of Ivanhoe Golf Club near Mundelein to a salty index of 2.5.

Earlier this year it was announced that the Patrick Mannelly Award will be given out in college football for long snappers. It was a bit overdue for these specialists to get proper recognition. The long snapper is a pivotal part of the game, and those individuals who excel at this craft should be awarded. Thus, the Patrick Mannelly Award will now be spoken in the same breath as the Dick Butkus Award for the nation’s best collegiate linebacker and the Davey O’Brien Award for the best quarterback.

Mannelly has stayed relevant in football by delivering insightful contributions on WSCR Radio during Bears season. He is also the host of the award-winning Golf360 TV show on NBC Sports Chicago – the season premiere is June 9 after the Cubs-Cardinals game. Recently our Dave Lockhart, who produces Golf360, caught up to this professed golf junkie to ask him 10 questions.

Patrick Mannelly

by Dave Lockhart



1. How long have you been playing golf?

I picked up a club as a youngster with my grandfather and he would get me lessons when I would go visit him. From then on I played about once or twice a year. I really picked up the game once I got to Chicago and played with guys on the Bears.

2. What former Bears do you play golf with?

I play with Olin Kreutz the most during the golf season. I will get a few rounds in with Robbie Gould. The last few years he has been away during the golf season with whatever team he is on. I will also play one or two rounds with former Bears tight end Jim Thornton and current cornerback Kyle Fuller. I took a golf trip with my former special-teamer in punter Brad Maynard this winter. Also, I play in a few charity outings with some of the old Bears.

3. Did you play during the NFL season?

Heck yes, I played during the season. Being a long snapper you do not take the punishment guys take on Sunday so I would head out to Sunset Ridge and play with the caddie master, Greg Kunkel. I would also try to sneak out on Fridays and play a few holes after our shorter practice day. During training camp I would make a few of my teammates mad and play a round in between two-a-day practices at Kankakee Country Club.

4. Are you just as competitive about golf as you were about football?

One-hundred percent. I just love to compete. I hate losing but get over

continued on page 30

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Patrick Mannelly

continued from page 23

it quickly knowing I can get back out there and play again soon. It also helps to go to the 19th hole for a large craft brew after a round!

5. Tell us about this new long snapper award that's going to be given out in your name. How proud are of this new honor?

It is always nice to be recognized, but the Mannelly Award is truly about the young snappers. When I started playing with the Bears in 1998 not all 32 teams had a position designated to the long snapping position. A back up tight end, linebacker, or O-lineman did the job. Now all 32 teams have a long snapper and that is all he does. Back in college in 2004 about one percent of colleges gave out scholarships to a long snapper; now it is close to 80 percent. I love that the position is getting recognition, and college snappers have something to compete for and to get the

appreciation they deserve.

6. Do you take lessons?

I do work with an instructor his name is Kiel Alderink (he's recognized as a Top Teacher Under 40 in America by *Golf Digest*). The past two years are the first time I have stuck with a teacher. I have also done some work with the great Dr. Jim Suttie.

7. What are the strengths of your game?

Hmm, depends on the day. Ha ha! But I think my consistency is the one. I can keep the ball in the ballpark and make a lot of pars. I usually sprinkle in a birdie or two.

8. Does being a former professional athlete help you in any way on the course?

Yes it has helped me in pressure situations: money games, club tournaments. I always look back at some situations I have been in on the field and just tell myself this is just a recreational game, not the real thing. I love playing Scotch games!

9. What are your favorite golf destinations?

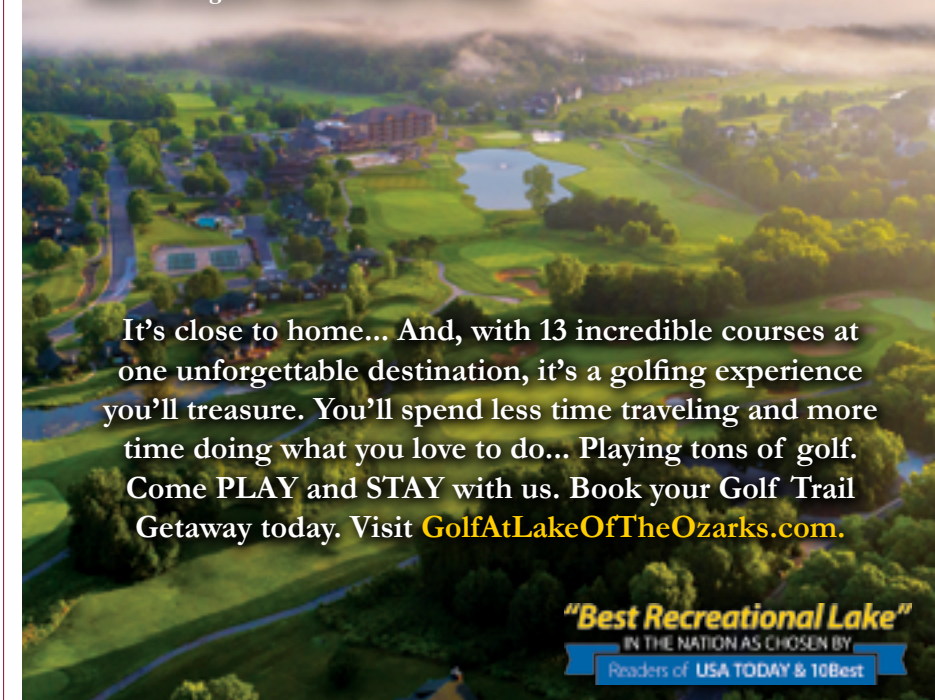
My No. 1 is Bakers Bay in the Bahamas. And I was fortunate to take a trip to Southern Ireland with seven other buddies and play that circuit of courses. Old Head, Waterville, Doonbeg, Ballybunion, Lahinch, and Dukes. Bandon Dunes is right up there too! Bucket list? I think Augusta and Pine Valley are probably No. 1 and 2 on everyone's list. I want to play the Pebble Beach circuit as well. I am headed to Cabot Links later this summer and can't wait to see that course.

10. Why do you like hosting Golf360 TV on NBC Sports Chicago?

I enjoy golf so much – I love talking about it, being around it, and learning more about it. It's also fun to see different courses, check out the latest equipment, and meet all of the interesting people involved in this great game!

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