

Podcast Transcription

Fly by Night: Captain Nick Bolander June 2020 **Council 7 Secretary-Treasurer and Block 8 Representative**

Captain Chris Lee My guest today is Council 7 Secretary-Treasurer and Block 8 Representative Captain Nick Bolander. Welcome back, Nick.

Captain Nick Bolander Hey, thanks for having me again Chris and more importantly, thanks for having me on so we can take some time to engage with our pilots again.

Captain Chris Lee It's been about 10 months since your last podcast you did back in September. Has the coronavirus had any impact on our preparations for Contract 2021?

Captain Nick Bolander Yeah. Obviously, you know, the COVID times are crazy, but the biggest point I'd like to make to our pilots is that as an organization, we never let one item steal our focus. COVID-19 directly didn't change the timeline. We had a long-term goal to get ready for negotiations. That goal never changed. Obviously, we had to refocus some resources on COVID to be able to address those issues. A saying that we use a lot is the alligator in front of the boat. So obviously you have to address that issue and those issues as they've come up. But we've got people in the office and at ALPA National that continue to focus on Contract 2021 and they continue to do that work and we're still on target.

Captain Chris Lee Talk a little bit about the pilots' role in Section 6 negotiations.

Captain Nick Bolander First of all, don't be a bystander. You have to be engaged and what is engagement? Well, to me, that means you have to want to look at the material. So we put material out in numerous different forms. The first one that comes to mind is these podcasts. The second one that comes to mind is emails. And then also we've had videos more recently. So those come to your email and you have to want to open them, listen to them and take the information in. If you have questions, I would encourage you to not go to a social media site to get your facts, because on a social media site, one of the things you're going to find is that you have a lot of people that post things as facts, that then about 10 comments later down in a string, they're proven to be not factual. And very rarely do you get down to comment number 15 to find out that the statement made was actually not factual. So the question becomes is where do I go to get those facts? Well, number one, you can call your rep. I'm the Block 8 Rep. If you're in Block 8 call me. Even if you're not in Block 8 and you know my name, and you know how to find my number, call me. I'll steer you in the right direction. Number two is you've got the PDR system. Go to fdx.alpa.org. You've heard us kind of beating this drum lately through numerous different communication forms. But go to the [PDR system](#). It has a drop-down menu, allows you to select what committee your question would go to or pick up the phone and call the office. So those are just a few of the ways. Then the second part to that is you have to allow your union to speak for you. The common saying is, My Union Speaks for Me. So if we have 5000 people that are saying 5000 different things, it's going to be almost impossible to get a unified voice. So what you need to do is use the forms that we give you guys to give us your feedback and allow us to do the work that you trust us to do. One of the other things is as we're moving forward into negotiations, I couldn't be more excited about the team that we have. You've got some great staffers, great officers, elected reps. We're here to work, guys. We know how important Section 6 negotiations is. We got a lot of new people on property, which are the people that I represent. A lot of those folks are kind of just happy to be here. They're ecstatic they're at FedEx. They're ecstatic they're not at some of

the passenger carriers right now that are struggling. And the thing we've got to remember is the reason why you're so excited to be here is because of the collective bargaining agreement. That's why you like being here, because of all of those provisions that the collective bargaining agreement provides you, such as money, the benefits and the quality of life things that come along with it. That is not given to you out of the benevolence of the heart of those within management. Those are things that are negotiated. Those are things that are fought for. And we didn't get those without unity. So once again, let us speak for you. Let's pick up the saying, My Union Speaks for Me. Use the forms that we put in front of you to communicate with us. And let's get unified and let's get this done right.

Captain Chris Lee We hear unfortunate news throughout the industry of potential pilot furloughs and there was a recent furlough notice at Delta. Since you represent the most junior block of pilots at FedEx, are they at risk?

Captain Nick Bolander FedEx is in good shape. There's obviously demand for our product. We see very high BLGs. We see a lot of draft and other indicators that would tell us that FedEx is doing very well. I think also you have to look into the future. Where is demand going? There isn't going to be a drop in demand for things to be shipped. FedEx is not the passenger airline industry. So to make comparisons between the two when it comes to demand, I don't think is a valid point. There are areas where we are the same. But when it comes to demand, they aren't both directly linked. So when looking at it, I think we have great job security. So those guys in my block that are junior that just got hired here in the last year, I know that there can be some nerves and there can be some ups and downs in your career. But looking at it right now, those guys are secure in their job. There's going to be demand. And the great news is we got a bunch of new hires starting to come on it looks like here in the next couple months.

Captain Chris Lee In your recent communication, you write some about the recent wins for the union. Can you expand upon that some?

Captain Nick Bolander We've undoubtedly had some huge success with grievances. Just a couple of them that come to mind. We put thousands of dollars back into our pilots' pockets in regards to slot denial payments. We've reimbursed sick time back into pilots' sick banks. And I would encourage everybody that doesn't understand how much we win when it comes to grievances to go to fdx.alpa.org go up to the top, there is a grievance drop down under the committees and go look through those grievances. We've had the Travel MOU, the Medical MOU and the China Flying OIM which on the surveys was supported by our pilot group. We allowed pilots on the Travel MOU to be able to do things that they couldn't do before. Those are huge things that this pilot group wanted that we were able to get.

Captain Chris Lee And the success of these agreements, they're a testament of how well the MEC and the Negotiating Committee are working together.

Captain Nick Bolander Oh, undoubtedly, you've got communication throughout the entire organization to get stuff like this done.

Captain Chris Lee What do you say to a pilot who has reached out with a contract issue only to find out that in their particular instance, the contract's actually being followed?

Captain Nick Bolander Yeah, you know, those are tough ones to handle. We all look at the contract. We read it a certain way. However, what we've got to remember is that you

have to look at the contract in totality on a lot of those issues. A lot of times there might be verbiage on a certain item in one section, but then it has supporting verbiage in another. And the other thing I think about is, is that a lot of times what we have is we have bargaining notes and history. There may have even been a previous grievance that was grieved on that particular item. And we grieved it the way that that pilot thought that it should have read. However, we lost that grievance. And so the one thing I encourage people to do is don't get frustrated by the process. We have to look at it from a bigger viewpoint of, hey, I understand that I'm frustrated about this and it didn't go the way that I wanted it to but, holistically, we are much better having a CBA in place, having the ability to grieve or to try to grieve what we perceive is a grievance than having nothing at all.

Captain Chris Lee We have an online survey coming in the fall. Talk to the pilots a little bit about that process.

Captain Nick Bolander Yeah. You know, the online survey is just another form that we communicate with you. It's a way that we come and get your input. We just had the phone survey, which was about 600 pilots. Those that were called got to give their input. But the computer-based survey will go out to every pilot. It'll be a more deep-dive survey and it will be more specific to negotiations. And so every pilot, even a probationary pilot in Block 8 is going to get that survey. So we want to hear everybody's voice. Once again that goes back to participation. We can send it out to you. But you have to click on it. You have to answer it. And you have to take the time to do it. Don't let others speak for you. So, for example, don't use social media to build your perspective on an issue. Use the sources that put in the time to get real data, real information and give it to you. If you got questions about the data or you don't agree with the data, reach out to the source that put it together and get real information. In addition, the other thing is, is with this survey is we need to have a good participation rate. Indirectly, the numbers that participate in these things send a message to management. If we have 30 percent participation, management, they're going to think these guys won't even take the time to fill out a survey. I can tell how engaged they're going to be with negotiations. So, once again, this is a way to show unity. It's a way to do the saying of, My Union Speaks for Me. So let's get good participation in all of these things. I would like to see personally, Chris, I'd like to see 95% percent or greater participation. There's no reason why our pilot group can't open up a survey and answer it.

Captain Chris Lee Why might a pilot contact a rep and how would they do that?

Captain Nick Bolander Well, I've talked with hundreds of you guys now since I've been a block rep oh let's see here for about the last 12 months. The easiest way to contact me is go to fdx.alpa.org. You can find my phone number there and my email. The other way is through the [PDR system](#). The system defaults to e-mail your block rep with that PDR and I'm the Block 8 Representative. And so anybody in Block 8 that fills out one of those PDRs and leaves that box checked I see it. You know, the bigger point I'd like to make, Chris, is that it's an honor to serve the group. It's a lot of work. You know that going into it. That's part of the job. But I enjoy being part of the solution, talking to our pilots, taking the issue in, finding resolutions for them and moving forward. At the end of the day, I represent you guys. There's obviously ways that I feel on certain things, but I represent the group. So with saying that, let your voice be heard and speak with unity by bringing the information in through the sources that we give you. And let us have one voice and let the union speak for you.

Captain Chris Lee We'll Nick, thanks again for taking the time to come in. Any final thoughts?

Captain Nick Bolander Yeah, a couple of final thoughts. As you've heard me kind of make this point in this podcast earlier a couple times, but unity and resolve. We've got to get our group together. We've got to get one voice and be ready to go at this thing with one voice and the saying, My Union Speaks for Me. We hear a lot of stuff about previous contracts. I was not here for those. It's always good to be able to learn from things that happened in the past. However, we've got to move on from those things and start looking towards the future. We can't dwell on the past. We will continue to lead. That's what you've elected us to do. We've got office staff here that are full time. You've got your three great officers up there ready to go. They're carrying out the plan to be ready for negotiations. And we've got to remember, our career depends on it. Our career depends on getting this contract right in 2021. And that will only happen if our entire pilot group is engaged. Now, keep in mind, we're kind of in some uncertain times. There may be some different forms of communication. Usually with negotiations we kind of open them up and lead them off with some gatherings. Well, obviously, that type of stuff may not be able to be done, but we will use all of our resources and all of our expertise that we have in the office and also with our pilots to engage with you. And we're going to do things such as these podcasts. We're going to do things such as you've seen with the retirement education series where we're going to do videos. And then hopefully if we can turn over to a newer normal and get back to some normalcy, hopefully maybe in the future we can start doing some of those gatherings again.

Captain Chris Lee Well, thanks, Nick. And thanks for listening. If you have any questions or comments, topic ideas, please send me an email to fdxpodcast@alpa.org and as always, be safe out there and we'll see you next time.