Super Bowl win sees Mailata complete 'greatest story in football'

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The Philadelphia Eagles were still celebrating as Jordan Mailata headed into a media room deep inside the Superdome.As the hulking offensive lineman lumbered on to a chair, one of his compatriots draped an Australian flag around his shoulders.The Kansas City Chiefs were hoping to become the first team to win three straight Super Bowls in New Orleans.

Instead it was Mailata who made NFL history. He grew up playing rugby league and had not played a single snap when the Eagles drafted him in 2018 Now he has played in two Super Bowls and this time he became the first Australian to lift the Vince Lombardi Trophy.It was the latest chapter in what his mentor this week called "the greatest story in footballMailata grew up playing rugby league and as he was coming through the South Sydney Rabbitohs' academy, he had to take some second jobs to pay the bills.

At different times he worked in stage-building, demolition, scaffolding and at Woolworths, as well as training with the Rabbitohs.".Mailata was playing for the Rabbitohs' Under-20s, but there were concerns over his conditioning. Then he received surely the best advice he's ever had: "Why don't you play a sport that appreciates your size?"At 6ft 8in and 365lb (166kg), that sport was American football and he joined the NFL's fledgling International Player Pathway programme in 2018.

Former English rugby player Christian Scotland-Williamson was also on that year's intake for the intensive 10-week training programme.His agility and speed for a person of his size, who hadn't grown into his full frame.