

May 5, 2016

## Patriots: Jimmy Garoppolo embraces attention during another offseason

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Patriots quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo, second from right, poses with participants in a football skills clinic for high school students with disabilities, put on by the Patriots Charitable Foundation and **AccessSportsAmerica** at Harvard Stadium. Photo/Mark Daniels

- BOSTON — The Patriots' potential starting quarterback dropped back slightly and tossed the ball in the air. It was a little off the mark as it bounced off the turf at the receiver's feet.  
“Bad throw. That was my fault,” Jimmy Garoppolo said patting himself on the chest.  
The third-year quarterback was the main attraction on Wednesday at Harvard Stadium. Garoppolo, along with center Bryan Stork, led a football skills clinic for 150 high school students with disabilities. The event was put on by the Patriots Charitable Foundation and **AccessSportAmerica**.  
Garoppolo played catch, posed for pictures and cheered his teammates for the day around him. The kids were excited to see the quarterback.  
And it looks like he'll be in the spotlight again when the Patriots open their season on Sept. 11 in Arizona.  
At the moment, Garoppolo is scheduled to start the first four games of 2016 with Tom Brady serving his four-game Deflategate suspension. With Brady and his legal team potentially fighting the discipline, it may not be known for some time whether Garoppolo will get the first start of his career.  
If Wednesday was an indication, Garoppolo continues to mature and embrace the attention. It was similar last year at the same Harvard football clinic, when Garoppolo told the Providence Journal he was looking forward to the 2015 season and felt more at ease after a nerve-wracking rookie campaign.  
“This time last year, I was freaking out a little bit,” Garoppolo said back in May 2015. “It's nice to have a year under the belt, and I'm looking forward to the season coming up.”  
That, of course, was before the Wells Report and Brady's punishment.

The focus on Wednesday was all positive, with no talk of the Patriots drafting another quarterback (Jacoby Brissett) or Brady's suspension. Garoppolo and Stork spent nearly two hours smiling and talking with the kids as they helped students throw and catch at different stations.

"It's nice because we're definitely very fortunate people to do what we do. It's nice to get out there and help everybody to and bring smiles to their faces," Stork said. "Saw some good cannons out there. Gunslingers. Jimmy better be worried. It was fun. Saw a lot of talent."

When asked about Garoppolo potentially starting, Stork focused on the event.

"I'm here for the charity event not to talk about things like that," he said. "I'm just trying to do my job and get ready."

Although the Patriots wouldn't allow Garoppolo to talk to the media on Wednesday, the quarterback spoke to the kids as the event came to a close.

"Thanks for having us out again. It's my second time here. I came (last time) with Malcolm (Butler). We had a great time," Garoppolo said. "Some impressive throwing out there today ... We had a great time, felt welcomed, and it was a really cool atmosphere. ... It was a fun day. Hope you guys had fun, too."

Much like last year in training camp, Garoppolo didn't flinch with the spotlight on him. Patriots fans hope that pays dividends later this year.