

## QB Garrard: Running a new Route on Life

By **Barbara Pinson of Media Versed**

Durham, NC – Some 350 young football players and cheerleaders, ages seven to seventeen, spent their Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup> learning from the pros at the David Garrard second annual “Air It Out Football and Cheer Camp.”

“This is awesome. We’ve got a bunch of kids out here and everybody seems to be having a great time, and we’re working them pretty hard,” said Jacksonville Jaguars Quarterback David Garrard.

While most of the young athletes rotated positions on the field, the quarterbacks of tomorrow got some one-on-one coaching from Garrard, who taught them everything from keeping their eyes downfield, to keeping enough distance between their feet for a quick and grounded release of the football.

The NFL quarterback was joined by teammates Mike Sims-Walker, Jarrett Dillard, Zach Miller, Jeremy Mincey and Jaguars Running Back Coach Earnest Byner. Also on hand helping with football fundamentals was East Carolina University wide receiver Dwayne Harris.

While the men were training on the field, Jacksonville ROAR cheerleading coach Christy Zynda, and cheerleaders Cherise Edwards and Kristyann Mestemacher helped the young ladies with their form and style.

But this wasn’t just about physical skill and conditioning. Garrard says the camp also focuses on teaching young men and women life skills.

“What we’re trying to teach them is to focus, focus on what we’re saying, concentrate on our voices because you have to do that in school, you have to do that when you go out into the workforce.”

The camp is one of many events sponsored by the David Garrard Foundation, a 501 c(3) non-profit organization with three main goals. First, it teaches youth how to make healthy food choices and lead physically active lives.

Second, it raises money for breast cancer research and education. Garrard’s mother lost her battle to breast cancer when he was 14-years old. Through his foundation, Garrard hopes to help financially disadvantaged children who have mothers battling breast cancer.

The third mission of the David Garrard Foundation is to raise awareness about a devastating illness called Crohn’s disease, a chronic disorder that causes inflammation of the digestive or gastrointestinal tract. The Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation of America says the disorder affects some 1.4- million people in the U.S.

Garrard was diagnosed in 2003, shortly after joining the NFL. He underwent surgery in the 2004 off-season and battled back to lead the Jaguars to a series of successful seasons.

“I was a grown man when I was diagnosed but there are kids out there who are born with it... there are kids who are diagnosed at seven, eight, nine, you know, six years old and that really saddens me. But I want to let them know that there’s a brighter day, there’s a brighter future out there for them. They can still do anything and everything they want to do,” said Garrard.