

Jaguars QB David Garrard now demanding a winning attitude

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By **Jim Corbett**, USA TODAY



By Kim Klement, US Presswire

David Garrard and the Jaguars are looking to rebound after two straight losing seasons.

With some outside consulting, longer workdays — and a few tennis balls and his credit card — Jacksonville Jaguars quarterback David Garrard is answering coach **Jack Del Rio's** challenge to instill a "more relentless" mindset in a young team mired in the AFC South basement each of the past two seasons.

Garrard, 32, even tore a page from the self-improvement manual of New Orleans Saints **Super Bowl** MVP Drew Brees.

Now entering his ninth season, Garrard is working with a San Diego sports performance specialist, former NBA guard Jim Brogan, who helped Brees as well as other professional athletes.

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Besides throwing after practice to burnish timing with his young receivers, Garrard leads other drills with his teammates to enhance focus and camaraderie.

"We're being more relentless as Jaguars. We want to get after people," Garrard says. "Why not for six months do everything you can possibly do to get that ring on your finger?"

"I'm just trying to change the culture, change the mindset so we're all chasing the same thing — a championship."

After his quarterback's 15-touchdown, 10-interception output for last season's 7-9 team, Del Rio prodded Garrard to be better than average in a pivotal year for coach and quarterback.

"I'm stepping up as a leader, demanding more," Garrard says.

"Jim Brogan is a real interesting sports psychologist who helps projecting your leadership skills. He's worked with Drew and lots of CEOs. A quarterback has to be that CEO."

Brogan's blindfolded throwing drills helped Brees sharpen trust with his receivers during his 2004 Pro Bowl emergence as a member of the Chargers.

"David wants it, he just doesn't know how to do it yet," says Brogan, who traveled to Jacksonville to

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assist the Jaguars.

Visualization — which Garrard has honed by catching tennis balls with his teammates — helps.

"Receivers are catching tennis balls off the wall, over their shoulder, one foot off the ground, one eye open, so when the football comes, it's so much easier," he says.

Jaguars offensive coordinator Dirk Koetter wants more explosive passing plays to open lanes for Pro Bowl running back Maurice Jones-Drew. Second-year receivers Mike Thomas, Jarrett Dillard, Tiquan Underwood and tight end Zach Miller must emerge as viable options alongside Drew and Mike Sims-Walker, who had a team-best 63 catches in 2009.

"They're hungry, working hard to be great," Garrard says.

Garrard has also taken charge by charging the plastic. He takes his offensive linemen to dinner every other week despite enduring 42 sacks each of the past two seasons.

"It's getting to the point where it's toward the end of my career," he says. "I want my legacy in the NFL to be 'David Garrard: A hard-working, great quarterback who gave his team a chance every time they stepped on the field.'"

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