

BLUE
Banner
BIOGRAPHIES

JIMMY GAROPPOLO



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Mitchell Lane

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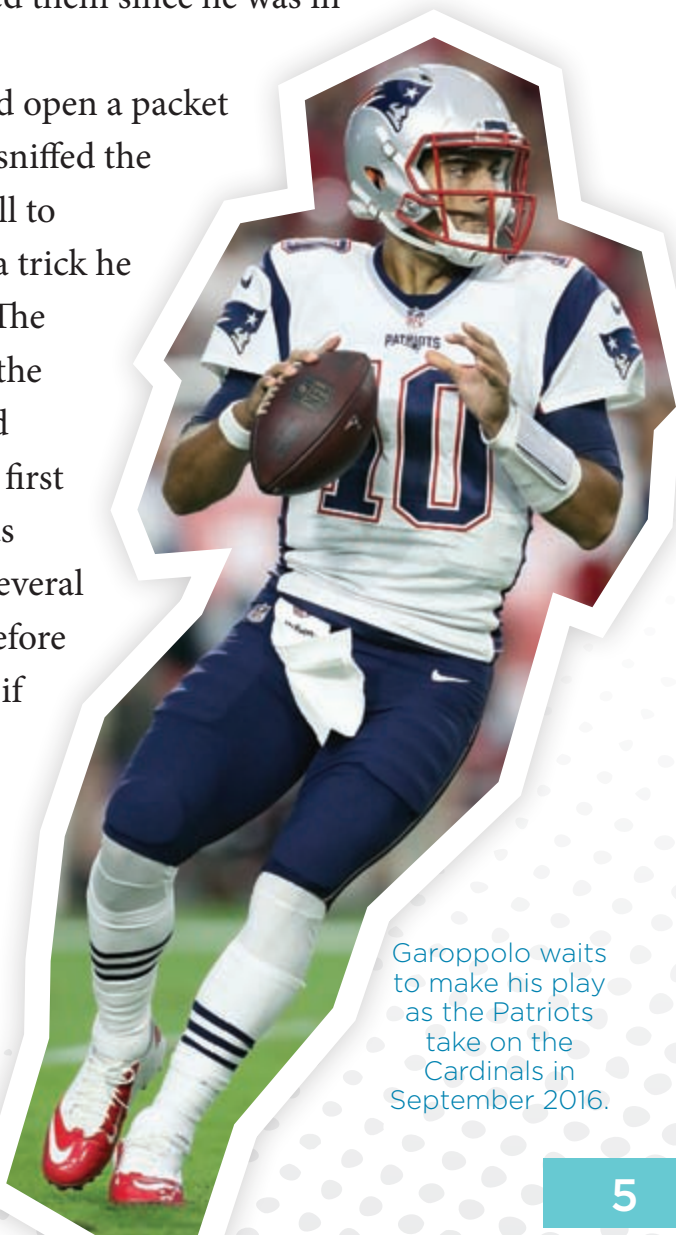
CHAPTER ONE

Against the Odds

JIMMY GAROPPOLO stood at the edge of the football field. It was a Sunday night and the stadium's bright lights were shining. More than 60,000 fans packed the stands around him. As the New England Patriots' backup quarterback, Garoppolo had waited two years for this moment. With the Patriots' legendary quarterback, Tom Brady, suspended for four games, this was Garoppolo's chance to prove himself.

Few people expected Garoppolo to lead the Patriots to a win against the Arizona Cardinals, one of the toughest teams in the National Football League (NFL). He had never started a game and three of his team's best players were sidelined with injuries. But Garoppolo knew Brady's moves. He had studied them since he was in high school.

Garoppolo cracked open a packet of smelling salts and sniffed the strong ammonia smell to sharpen his senses—a trick he learned from Brady. The Patriots trotted onto the field, huddled up, and Garoppolo called the first play. His first pass was high and missed by several feet. “I get nervous before every game, whether it's Little League, college, or here,” Garoppolo said. “I think that's a good thing though. If you don't get nervous, it doesn't mean that much to you.”



Garoppolo waits to make his play as the Patriots take on the Cardinals in September 2016.

CHAPTER ONE

It only took that one play for Garoppolo to calm his nerves. After that, he was accurate with his passes, quick with his footwork, and calm under pressure. During the next four plays, he led the Patriots down the field, then connected with his wide receiver for an impressive 37-yard touchdown pass. Garoppolo's streak continued for the rest of the game. At one point, he thrilled fans when another player batted away his pass in mid-air, and Garoppolo caught his own pass himself.

Garoppolo led the Patriots to a close 23-21 win against the Cardinals.

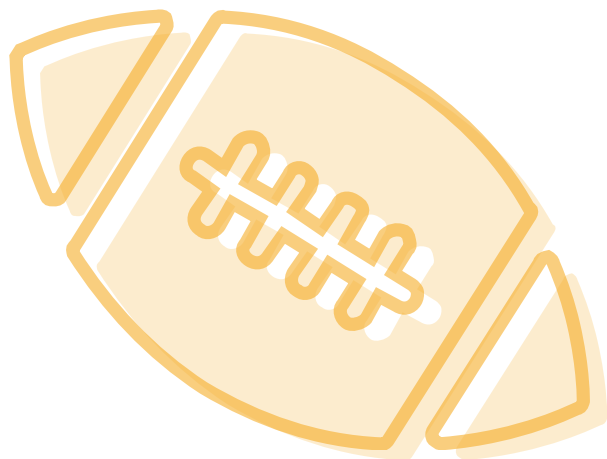


Garoppolo celebrates the Patriots' unexpected win over the Cardinals.

Against the Odds

“Jimmy’s got quiet confidence, and everybody on this team has confidence in him,” teammate Chris Long told reporters after the game. “He made some really gutsy plays to help us win.”

For two years, fans and other players had seen Garoppolo as a backup to one of the most famous quarterbacks in the NFL. He was the Patriots’ second best—the quarterback who only played when Brady suffered an injury or needed rest. As a Patriot, he was untested and inexperienced, having seen little playing time on the field. As a student, he had attended a college better known for developing teachers than NFL players. But during the game against the Cardinals, Garoppolo showed his ability to sprint, throw rapid-fire passes, and dominate the field. He proved that he could be more than just a backup. He could be a star quarterback—if given the chance.



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