

Thursday, June 9, 2016

Jaguars skip Thursday's OTA to visit area hospitals

By Michael DiRocco

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- The [Jacksonville Jaguars](#) got a break from organized team activities on Thursday -- but it wasn't to play paintball, ride go-karts or see a movie.

Instead, the players and staff loaded up on several buses and visited four hospitals in the Jacksonville area to spend some time with patients.

"We talked about in a team meeting if you have a chance to do good, you do good, and today's a chance to make a difference in people's lives," coach Gus Bradley said. "So many times we ask, 'What are we getting? What are we getting?' Today we decided to give back."

The team split into groups and visited Wolfson Children's Hospital, Ronald McDonald House, Brooks Rehabilitation, and Nemours Children's Specialty Care. The defensive linemen, tight ends and receivers started their visit on the pediatric oncology floor at Wolfson's.

Defensive tackle [Sen'Derrick Marks](#)

said he's glad he can help bring a moment of fun to kids battling cancer, but it can be a bit tough to handle.



The Jaguars visited with Christopher Topazi, 6, and his mother Deborah during a trip to Wolfson Children's Hospital on Thursday.

"After a while it becomes emotional," he said. "Some kids you can't even go in the room. It's hard for us to imagine, especially when we wake up where we wake up and feel the way we feel, go into the building and do the things we do. Sometimes you don't even realize what other people are going through, so when you actually come out and see it, it actually really does humble you."

The Jaguars have traditionally taken a day off during OTAs or minicamp. They attended Latitude 360 entertainment complex one year. They've also skipped a workout to see a movie. It's not uncommon around the league. The [Green Bay Packers](#), for example, went bowling earlier this week. Coach Mike McCarthy has taken the team to play paintball and go skeet shooting in the past, too.

Marks said he enjoyed the hospital visits, but he's hoping Bradley has another surprise for the players on Friday, when they're supposed to have their final OTA, or one day next week during the team's mandatory three-day minicamp.

"The majority of times we take days off and do things for us. Today we're going to take a day off and do something for others," Marks said. "Hopefully, we get to cancel another day and do something for us, but it makes a lot of sense. It's great. It's awesome."

"The people get to see you out in the community as a whole team and not just certain players doing it. A lot of payers may be uncomfortable with things like this. Hopefully, they can see things that open their eyes and humble them [with this] being something they wouldn't do."
