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Inside the Harbaugh coaching family tree: How brothers Jim, John Harbaugh followed dad Jack's footsteps



Bill Bender

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Getty Images

"Who's got it better than us?"

That's the trademark question asked by the Harbaugh coaching family, and right now the answer truly might be: "Nobody." Jack Harbaugh's sons John and Jim have a unique opportunity to sweep the college football national championship and NFL championship this season.

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John Harbaugh will lead the top-seeded Baltimore Ravens into the AFC divisional playoffs against the Houston Texans at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday. Jim Harbaugh won the national championship with Michigan this season and might be headed back to the NFL in 2024. Jack – whose coaching career began at Perrysburg (Ohio) High School in 1962 – has a lot to be proud of.

Here is a closer look at the coaching accomplishments of Jack, Jim and John Harbaugh.

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Harbaugh coaches family tree

Jack Harbaugh

Jack Harbaugh, 84, was a three-year letterwinner at Bowling Green, where he met his wife Jackie.

Jack began his coaching career as a high school coach before reaching the college ranks. He was Michigan's defensive backs coach under Bo Schembechler from 1973-79. He took a job as Stanford's defensive

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coordinator from 1980-81 under Paul Wiggin, who was a defensive end on the Cleveland Browns' last NFL championship team in 1964.

Harbaugh took his first head coaching job with Western Michigan in 1982 – and he spent five seasons with the program. After a two-year stint as an assistant at Pitt, Harbaugh took his second head coaching job with Western Kentucky, where he spent the next 14 seasons. The Hilltoppers won the FCS national championship with a 34-14 victory against McNeese State in Harbaugh's final season.

Jack then served as an assistant for his son Jim as the running backs coach at San Diego from 2004-06 and again at Stanford in 2009. This season, Jack was an associate head coach at Michigan when Jim was on a three-game suspension to start the season.

What is Jack Harbaugh's coaching record?

Harbaugh was 25-27-3 at Western Michigan. He had a 91-68 record at Western Kentucky. He finished with a 116-95-3 record as a head coach between the two stops. He made four FCS playoff appearances with the Hilltoppers, including that national championship run in 2002.



(Getty Images)

John Harbaugh

John Harbaugh, 61, played defensive back at Miami, Ohio – and he is now part of the [school's legendary coaching tree](#).

Harbaugh started as a special teams coach at the University of Cincinnati from 1989-96 and at Indiana in 1997.

Harbaugh then was the special teams coordinator for Andy Reid in Philadelphia from 1998-2006 before a one-year stint as a defensive backs coach.

Harbaugh took over as Baltimore's head coach in 2008, and he has spent the last 16 seasons there. The Ravens have made 11 playoff appearances, three AFC championship appearances and won Super Bowl XLVII. Baltimore has won 10 or more games 10 times in that stretch. This year, the Ravens were 13-4 – which is the best single-season record under Harbaugh.

What is John Harbaugh's coaching record?

Harbaugh has a 169-99 record in the regular season with Baltimore. With Bill Belichick and Pete Carroll retired, the only active coaches with more wins are Andy Reid (258), Mike Tomlin (173) and Mike McCarthy (167).

Harbaugh also has an 11-9 record in the postseason with Baltimore.

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Jim Harbaugh

Harbaugh, 60, had the most success as a player among the Harbaugh family members. He played quarterback at Michigan from 1983-86 before a 14-year career in the NFL with the Bears, Colts, Ravens and Chargers.

Harbaugh began his coaching career as a quarterbacks coach with the Raiders from 2002-03. He then took the job with San Diego – an FCS school in the Pioneer Football League.

He spent four seasons with Stanford from 2007-10 – a run that started with a 24-23 upset against No. 2 USC in his first season. The Cardinal finished 12-1 and won the Orange Bowl in Harbaugh's fourth season before he took the job with the San Francisco 49ers.

Harbaugh led the 49ers to three NFC championship appearances in four seasons and an appearance in Super Bowl XLVII, where the 49ers lost 34-31 to the Baltimore Ravens, who were coached by his brother

John.

Harbaugh returned to his alma mater at Michigan in 2015, and despite ups-and-downs the Wolverines broke through in 2021. The Wolverines have won three straight Big Ten championships, and Harbaugh led Michigan to a 34-13 victory against Washington in this year's College Football Playoff championship game.

"That'll check the biggest box," Harbaugh said. "For me, personally, just to be part of the family. With my dad, who won a national championship with Western Kentucky in 2002, and John Harbaugh, who won the Super Bowl 2012 season, 2013 Super Bowl. I get to sit at the big person's table now. That feels really good."

Harbaugh did serve two separate suspensions during the 2023 season – the second for an in-person scouting and sign-stealing scandal. Harbaugh interviewed with the Los Angeles Chargers and Atlanta Falcons this week and could return to the NFL in 2024.

BENDER: [Why Jim Harbaugh should stay at Michigan over heading to the NFL](#)

What is Jim Harbaugh's coaching record?

Harbaugh is 142-52-1 as a college coach through the stops at San Diego, Stanford and Michigan. He was 44-19-1 in four seasons with the 49ers, which ranks among the top-five winning percentages for coaches with at least four years of experience.

If Harbaugh returns to the NFL, then he would have the

opportunity to join some elite coaching company. Barry Switzer, Jimmy Johnson and Carroll are the only three coaches who won a national championship and a Super Bowl. Harbaugh is 5-3 in the NFL playoffs as a head coach.

Harbaugh family coaching record

Add up all those coaching stops, and the Harbaughs have combined for 462 regular-season victories across college football and the NFL. John and Jim Harbaugh also have combined for 16 NFL postseason victories. A look at their respective track records:

TEAM	COACH	YEARS	W	L
Western Michigan	Jack Harbaugh	1982-86	25	27
Western Kentucky	Jack Harbaugh	1989-2002	91	68
San Diego	Jim Harbaugh	2004-06	29	6
Stanford	Jim Harbaugh	2007-10	27	21
Baltimore Ravens	John Harbaugh	2008-	160	99
San Francisco 49ers	Jim Harbaugh	2011-14	44	19
Michigan	Jim Harbaugh	2015-	86	25

Other coaches on Harbaugh family tree


Tom Crean

Crean married Joanie Harbaugh, who is Jim and John's sister. Crean compiled a 403-306 record as a Division I basketball coach through stops at Marquette, Indiana and Georgia. Crean's teams made nine NCAA tournament appearances, and he helped Marquette reach the Final Four in 2002-03 with a team led by future NBA star Dwyane Wade.

Jay Harbaugh

Harbaugh, 34, is Jim's son. He was a quality control coach for the Ravens from 2012-14. He has been an assistant coach for Michigan since 2015, and he currently serves as the team's special teams coach.

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