

New York Giants Media Conference

Monday, March 30, 2026

New York, New York, USA

Coach John Harbaugh

Press Conference



JOHN HARBAUGH: Appreciate everybody being here. Great morning. Great day for football. As my old coach Tom Reed used to say, every day is a great day for football.

So what questions do you have?

Q. What are you most happy about with what the team

--

JOHN HARBAUGH: Normally Jamison gets to start it off, but you don't get to do that anymore.

Q. What are you most happy about with what your team accomplished in free agency?

JOHN HARBAUGH: I think we started establishing I think kind of what we're going to be about as a football team. Free agency, it's about opportunity. You have to build where you can, when you can, with what opportunity presents itself. You can't decide what's going to be available. You can't determine who -- what options will be there for you.

So the options that are there that fit that make the most sense as Ozzy used to always say, the right player at this right place that fits what we're trying to do. I thought we did a really good job of it. It's still a work in progress for sure, but I'm really happy with their job.

I'm really pleased with the way we operated. I thought Joe, his group is great. Brandon was amazing. Don was great. We just got a really good working group of people in there. I thought we operated at a really high level.

Q. Were you nervous about how that was going to play out? You know, just people that haven't worked together.

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yeah, you kind of wonder. It's new. That's probably the biggest thing. It's new, for the first time. But I wasn't nervous about it at all because we have

been interacting for months, couple months, planning and talking.

I saw the operation, the way they prepared. I thought the preparation was of really, really high level. Very detailed. They were ready. You know, they knew the players and they knew the values, and that's where we have to start.

Q. What about Isaiah did you like and wanted to bring here?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yeah, Isaiah Likely is a guy, I've had him now for like four years. Have a great relationship. Have seen him in every kind of circumstance. So it's really a valuable thing to know players. It's one of the things about your own players and why it's so important to try to keep the players you have on your roster if you can.

We'll try to do that with the Giants going forward, but Isaiah is a guy that I coached personally, a lot of the coaches on our staff had coached personally, so we knew him. And not just him, but the other guys, too.

He's going bring a lot to the table. He's a talented football player. He's a playmaking football player. He's going to make plays for us.

I think Jaxson is going to really like him running the routes and being in his line of vision. He's got a big catch radius. He can make plays after he makes a catch. He can get up field. He can make people miss. He can run people over. He's a very good perimeter blocker. You'll see that. That will be good for our run game.

So all those things he brings to the table.

Q. You had him for those years, four years in Baltimore, right? Never had over 500 yards receiving. You obviously invested a lot in him here so you're expecting to him to evolve into a bigger role.

JOHN HARBAUGH: Of course.

Q. What have you seen that makes you think that that is possible and he's capable of doing that?



JOHN HARBAUGH: That's what I've seen. I've seen him every day in practice. I've seen him make plays. I know how he plays the game. So if you try to kind of create a vision for a player, what do you think they're capable of doing, one of the things we always try to do is see what players can do. Not so much concerned about what they don't do, what they haven't done, what they can't do. It's what can they do.

When you see a player do it every day you got a pretty good idea what he's capable of. So I'm certain he's going to be able to put up the numbers you're talking about, the stats. That wasn't part of the thing in Baltimore because of the supporting cast so to speak.

It's going to be big. Theo is a big part of that, too. Two tight ends out there that are pretty special, very special, talented players together. It's exciting.

Q. What's your feeling about where the offensive line stands right now?

JOHN HARBAUGH: I think the offensive line is like our team: It's a work in progress. You know, the whole team is a work in progress still. We don't play until September. We have a lot of work to do.

The offensive line and defensive line, I think we talked about it right from day one, that's where games are won and lost. That's where it starts. We have got to build the best offensive line and the best defensive line in football. That's got to be our goal.

It's probably -- maybe it's a one-year proposition; may be not. We're going to sure try to be the best in football on both sides this year, but we have work to do in there. We still have free agency available to us. We still have the draft. We also have really good players already; really good players that are going to play really well that we're going to get ready to play really well.

So very optimistic about both sides of the lines.

Q. ... one spot you really invested in.

JOHN HARBAUGH: We just haven't had an opportunity yet. Again, you got to kind of -- it's like golf. I hate -- I usually have a lot of bad shots in golf: Behind trees and in the woods and stuff. Practiced all the tough shots and really just wasn't available to us yet for what we -- the parameters that we built.

You can overpay, but you can't afford it a lot of times. You want to be smart and efficient in how we did it and still

going to continue to do that because you're also building for long-term.

Q. (Indiscernible.) What did you see from them?

JOHN HARBAUGH: I'm excited about those two guys. You watch them really from the beginning. I mean, I remember back as far as back as the draft process those two players were guys that we felt really good about in Baltimore. We had them highly graded.

They haven't broken through yet, but why can't they? George Bernard Shaw, you know, some men see things as they -- you ready for this one? Let me make sure I get this right: Some men see things as they are and they ask why. We see things as they aren't and ask why not.

That's what I kind of say with those two guys. I could have said that better but you get the point, right? Why not. I mean, why not give them an opportunity. They're motivated. They came to the office and sat down and laid out a plan and a vision of the type of players they want to be. They showed us what they're doing to make that happen right now.

So let's give them a shot. Let's give them an opportunity. They're talented. They're tough. They want to be great. They have dreams. They have big dreams. So if they're going to dream big I would like them to do it right here in our building and try to realize those dreams with us.

We will give them a shot to do that.

Q. You have an opportunity to build your offense and what you want. We know what you have on defense. What offense do you want with this quarterback as you've talked a lot about building around Jaxson?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yeah, I want a high-powered offense. I want an offense that scores a lot of points, protects the football, is efficient, is effective, is in sync with all three phases. What does that mean?

It means you build around the players that you have for sure. So it starts with building a system that's going to be elegant and enough to handle all the complicated things that go with attacking defenses nowadays and simple enough for the players to operate in action, in battle, in the heat of battle just like that in a really effective way.

To be going to be built around the things guys do well. So one of the many great things about Jaxson Dart is he does so many things so well. I mean, he can live in a lot of different worlds. If you watch the offenses that we've had over the last many number of years, it's built around a lot of

different elements.

There is a lot of different elements that Jaxson can play in. Power run, drop back pass, quarterback driven stuff, RPOs, quick ball out type completions, throw the ball downfield, throw it off the play-action. I'm not sure what he really can't do.

So going to try to live in those different worlds and see how it fits all the other guys on the offense.

Q. You mentioned the defense today. It seems like the three linebackers on the field, a lot of the smaller guys and it's speed, it's fast. If you are putting emphasis on getting Isaiah and you are still having Theo prioritizing a run game, do you see almost the return almost of bully ball in a way where it's get big and physical and use that to beat up on the defenses that are going a little smaller?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Sure, I do think that. I think it's part of it. Not just that. You don't want to live in just that world. You want to put defenses in conflict as much as you possibly can. You want to be able to get big, and if they want to respond accordingly, then you want to be able to play fast with your big guys.

Or you want to maybe get a little lighter out there, put 11 personnel out there. But you set up schemes where they get too light, then you get bully on them and come after them. You see how the Rams play for instance.

We don't want to live in one world. We want to try to live in all the different worlds on a game-to-game, series-to-series and even play-to-play basis and try to keep people off balance as much as we can.

Q. You just listed all the things Jaxson can do. Quarterbacks make a leap year one to year two. Is there something you identified that he can do?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yeah, there is so many things. We've had those conversations, you know, obviously with Matt and Brian we've had coaches that have studied him. We've had a chance to talk to those guys. Everybody would pretty much tell you the same thing that Jaxson talks about, which is the fundamental things. Let's keep working on the basics.

The biggest growth a young athlete will make is in doing the little things well over and over again. It's one thing to do the little things well like in a drill or in practice. It's another thing to take the little things, do them well in the biggest moments. That's more of a challenging thing.

Anybody that's ever played any kind of sport understands that. The ability to take the fundamental things and pay them forward when it means the most, that's probably the next step for a quarterback especially, and fully expect him to make that leap.

Q. Is it a coincidence that your background in special teams that there is a new punter, long snapper and potentially certainly a new kicker?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Right. I would say it's no coincidence, yeah. It's important. Your special teams are more than just your kicker, punter and snapper. But they're definitely a focus. If they're not doing well then you're not going to be good on special teams.

So we've always been really good in those three areas and it's something we're going need going forward with the Giants. It's going to be important for our team. Very confident in the guys we have right now. I think they're going to do exceptionally well. Very excited about those guys.

Q. You talked about the expectation here with your program to be able to win immediately, right? What makes you think now that you have gone through free agency and you got to this point that you can do that quickly, like in year one considering where the team has been?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yeah, we have really good players. We have really good coaches. The league is a lot tighter than you might think. It's a tight margin proposition. Every game is close.

I think if you watch pretty much every game in the National Football League, not too many games that aren't really close and aren't decided at the end one way or the other.

Sometimes it's making a play; sometimes it's a sack; sometimes it's a batted ball; sometime it's a catch; sometimes it's a throw. Look at the Bears. I mean, how many late-game miracles did they pull off?

Those are tight margin type deals, so we want to win at all these tight margins. The expectation should always be to win the game, so our expectation is always going to be every game we go into to win.

Every single game we're going to plan on going in to win that game. So, you know, our plan going forward is to win every game and I'm pretty sure if we win every game we're going to make the playoffs, right? If my math a right. That's what we're going to try to do.

You know, that's -- we're going prepare that way, meet that way, lift the right way, we are going to talk ball that way. We are going to do everything we can as a team to make that happen.

Q. John, how do you coach a team to finish?

JOHN HARBAUGH: I think that's a great question. Every single team asks that question every single day. That's what you got to find. We lived it. We have lived it for 18 years, lived it for 28 years in the National Football League, finding a way to win the game in the fourth quarter.

There is a reason that high school teams put the filler up in the fourth quarter. Maybe we should do that. I don't know. If that would make a difference we would be doing it.

But you've got to build a team that has what it takes to find a way to make plays in the fourth quarter. All those plays that we just mentioned, types of plays that make the difference. We got to find a way to do that.

We got to scheme it that way, practice that way, got to get in training camp and understand there is an opportunity at the end of practice when you're fatigued, tired; there is an opportunity there to build into your own game individually the ability to play fundamentally solid football, which is playmaking football when you're fatigued.

Because the good news is you're tired, he's tired, too. You're both tired, okay. Who is more tired? I don't know. Who is in better shape. Who is more mentally prepared for that moment. And then guys got to come through, because like Clarence Brooks, old D-line coached said many years ago, the game is, has been, and always will be about the players.

You know, it's the players' - opportunity to go make plays. We want to encourage them to believe in themselves that when those moments arise that they're prepared to go make that play so when the time comes, go for it. Go for it. Go make that play.

Don't be afraid. Don't be scared. Don't be worried. There is no time for anxiety. You worry about things tomorrow. Tomorrow has enough worries of its own. Let's try to live in this moment right now and see if we can make a play and win a game.

Q. Any thoughts on Flacco?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Amazing. Amazing. You know, he's one of a kind. Joe Flacco, that's my guy. I love him. Bengals, they got him.

Q. What makes make him tick? What makes him go?

JOHN HARBAUGH: I think the things that makes Joe go the most is Joe knows how to pace himself. He's been pacing himself nicely. He doesn't get too high, too low. He keeps it even.

Underneath there is a simmering competitor. Outward calm, underneath he has this competitive nature I think that just never -- it's going to be the type of deal when he's done he's going to have two more years and probably play for two more years.

Q. Are surprised you what he's doing?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Nah. He's playing great. We had to play him last year. He was coming into Baltimore to beat his old team. You know, he was fully capable of doing it. Didn't happen (laughter.)

Q. You talked about the free agency process. How has the draft process been now with everybody in the scout? First time with this group.

JOHN HARBAUGH: It's been excellent. You know, it's been fantastic, and we're getting ready. You know, it's going to be a big day and we're all going to be ready and try not to be too anxious so we can make the right call, the right play when it counts.

I'm very impressed. I'm very excited. The conversations are ongoing. The Zoom interviews, everything we're doing, we'll have all the information we need, and then we're just going to have to make a decision. I'm looking forward to it.

Q. Do you feel like you did enough in free agency to go into the draft not desperate? Not, we need this, we need this, that you can just do an honest appraisal and pick the right guy?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yes, absolutely. And that's probably the main thing. You don't want to be -- you don't want to go to the buffet table hungry, right? I think we're in good position. We don't have to chase any specific need.

At the same time we understand we still have needs. So that's going to be a factor. Definitely going to be a factor in what we do.

Q. How much do you balance that you've been around so long just the length of time that you have been around versus letting the people who strategize when it comes to the draft stay in their roles? You obviously have a plethora of experience and have seen a lot and there are people who are specialized in their role when



it comes to the draft.

JOHN HARBAUGH: Probably the whole key right there. Anything you do, it's a new world. I guess it's the age specialization. It's like medicine or anything else.

Football, it's simple in a lot of ways but it's complicated in many ways. There are a lot of roles, jobs, duties. You better have great people around you. We do.

We better have people that really care and work hard and know what they're doing. You got to trust them. I really believe that we have always done a good job of that, and I'm really excited about the people in New York and how well they do their jobs.

I'm looking forward to it. Can't wait to see it unfold.

Q. A player that's resurfaced back in the news is Odell Beckham. You worked with him for a year. Is that something you guys are, plan to want to explore, a potential reunion in New York with him?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yeah, well the obvious pat answer would be I look at every option, right? If Odell is an option, we'll be looking at him for sure. He and I do talk and text. We maintain a really great relationship.

He's one of my very favorite people in the world, so it's not like you don't talk to guys about things like that. Certainly we have. Just have to see where it all goes, what's best for him, best for the Giants. That's the No. 1 thing, is what's best for our team. Any player, if he helps you be a better team and can make better, then you're going to pursue that. Just have to see where that goes.

Q. You were at the top of an active coaching cycle this offseason. Does your deal push forward the entire coaching fraternity? Does your deal have an effect on the rest of the group?

JOHN HARBAUGH: I have no idea. That's a great question. I haven't even thought about that at all.

Q. (Regarding run defenses.) How do you think that's improved?

JOHN HARBAUGH: We're going to find out.

Q. How do you think it has?

JOHN HARBAUGH: I think it has, but I still think we're a work in progress. We haven't taken the field yet for a workout. So stopping the run is not the easiest thing in the world. We have had great success most of the time, but

also had moments where we didn't do very well.

And we need that. We just think it's really important. I've told a lot of our guys, like it's really a big deal. You know, our own sideline, sometimes they'll complete a pass down the sideline; sometimes you call it the redline over there on the edge and throw a ball to a Tee Higgins or Chase or somebody and they'll make a play. Sometimes you just have to -- they're covered. Sometimes you just have to shrug your shoulders and go all right, that's a 25 yard gain. We just have to lineup a play again.

We can live with that.

But they run the ball for four yards, they run the ball for five yards, that is the end of the world. That's a disaster. If it breaks out past that we can't even breathe. That's how you feel about stopping the run. We want the run stopped. You want the run stoned. You don't want it going anywhere.

We want to make them one dimensional and we want our pass rushers to dig in and go get the quarterback on second and long and on third down. That's what we want to do. So stopping the run means that we play on our terms. Running the ball means the offense plays on their terms. We want to play on defense's terms not the offense, on our terms. If you can't stop the run we can't play on our terms and that's how important it is.

Q. How has the New York experience been so far for you as of just like not football, but when you're out and about how people are greeting you? I don't know if it's ultra New York-ish or is it also something you haven't done so far that you plan on doing?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Great question. See, you know me well. The second part was the answer. We did go out to dinner at Keens Steakhouse, and they were great. We went to the Knicks game. It was amazing. The fans were awesome.

It was unbelievable to walk in there and the number of Giants fans in there and they were yelling and screaming and going crazy and coming down and high fiving. I got to meet Spike Lee. Spike Lee. I mean, so many just amazing people. Strahan was down there. He's a super mega star. I've gotten to know him.

It's a really cool environment. It's really exciting. It's fun. Maybe one day get a chance to enjoy it.

Q. Along those lines, what's been the continued dialog with ownership, the organization? Steve is transitioning his role.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

JOHN HARBAUGH: Well, it's just about football really. The ongoing dialog has been about the things that we're doing, moves we're making. John has been very involved in everything we do. Chris has been very involved in everything we do.

We have a really good I think line of communication. The way we're operating is really natural and normal. Exactly what we talked about from the beginning.

So I think it's working really well and feel great about it.

Q. John, when it comes to the draft, specifically in the first round, what's your appetite for looking at the options and possibly trading back a little bit and still getting a player... versus just getting (indiscernible).

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yeah, it's the opportunity as it presents itself. So you definitely would be interested in that. I think there is no way you could ever say oh, no, we would never do that. There might be a player you would never trade away from. That's part of the strategy. You have to work the math out and all that.

I believe Joe will do an amazing job with his staff of figuring out exactly what the details are of what it would take to trade away from each person in each scenario for our team. We'll talk about that, probably finalize that in the day or two, three before the draft, just have that ready.

You know, we'll know what we're willing to do and not willing to do and that will be our plan going forward. Then it's like -- and I've heard Eric and Steve say it all the time, Ozzy, you look at the phone as your time comes up. Sometimes it rings; sometimes it doesn't. We'll see what happens.

Q. Jeremiyah Love is obviously a tremendous player. I wonder where he's -- the Giants have been through this before with Saquon, and positional value with running back. What do you think about that? You come from a coaching side, right?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Right.

Q. You're saying this is a great player. There is also a business side. How do you make sense of that?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yeah, I think you recognize all that, but the business is football. We are a football business. That's what we do. We are trying to make our fans happy. We want to win games, successful.

We want them to come out to stadium and be happy after

the game, be celebrating. To do that we have to build the very best team we can. So you build the best team you can with the best players you can get. You put them out there and you let them play.

That's where it stars.

Q. You agree with my assessment that he's a very good player?

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yes, I do. Yes, I would probably say very, very good player. Put a couple yers in front of that. Maybe a couple more. He's very good.

Q. John, the Maxx Crosby situation, just curious your reaction to that. Secondly, just your thoughts on kind of how that process works and if you think it's effective.

JOHN HARBAUGH: You know, I'll just give you the answer you're going to expect, which is I have given that very little thought. I think it's part of football. You know, trades, and sometimes they work out and sometimes they don't.

That's how it goes.

Q. Has the draft process that you have been so involved in for so long in one place, is it different with the Giants? Is there certain things that you like different or you want to implement or you said that's pretty good? You know what I'm saying? Everything doesn't run the exact same way.

JOHN HARBAUGH: No, of course not. Yeah, there is a way of doing things and I'm really interested in the things what are the same and the things that are different. That's what I'm learning as we go.

It's not like we've sat down and laid out the whole draft process and had this big conversation. Should we do to this way or that. We just talked about, hey, this is how -- what if we operate this way. This is how the meetings will look. I might be like, yeah, okay, we'll talk about that and this makes sense and I like that. But really it's just living through it more than anything.

I think the Giants, what I've seen, they have a great process. I love the way we're operating and looking forward to playing it through.

Q. John, analytics team just recognized by its peers. Wondering why there is...

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yeah, just love those guys. Those



guys are great guys to work with every single day. Kind of throughout the organization it's kind of divided up in different areas. They did everything they could to help us on the football side. They were great on the draft side, on the cap side. Just good bunch of people.

And, yeah, I think they deserve it. That's awesome.

Q. What's your thoughts on -- you have West Virginia for training camp.

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yeah.

Q. What are your thoughts on getting away from the facility and plans for joint practices or anything like that?

JOHN HARBAUGH: We're talking about that. In fact, had a conversation just walking in here about joint practices with one of the coaches. Probably have at least one for sure. We may have two joint practices each one day apiece.

First and second games is what we will be shooting for. That would be a plus for us.

We'll probably play our guys in the preseason a little bit. Most of the guys, not everybody. Pretty young team so probably play those guys to some degree and try to get ready for the start of the regular season.

As far as Greenbrier, looking forward to it. It was a predetermined thing when I was in the process of interviewing that that was a real possibility, almost really going to happen. That's kind of what I understood. They asked me what I thought and I'm like, yeah, let's do it. I was excited about it.

They got the different things going on in the area there around Met-Life Stadium with the World Cup, a facility rebuild and just made a lot of sense.

So also I'm thinking, wow, this is an opportunity for a young team with a new staff to spend 10, 12 days together in West Virginia in the hills, you know, and just be about football for 10, 12 days together and eat dinner together and have an off day together.

All the things that you kind of do to just bond and get to know each other. So if it can help our team become closer, I think that's a good thing, too.

Q. A lot of teams have gotten away from that. Obviously financial reasons for it, logistical reasons. Do you think teams miss that?

JOHN HARBAUGH: I think there is a part of that you miss, yeah. I see all the reasons for getting away from it. Makes a lot of sense.

But it's also -- there is something about it that's really a helpful part of it, too. So that's kind of probably why I'm excited about seeing how it goes. You know, trying to.

Q. John, how important was it for you to get more guys...(indiscernible).

JOHN HARBAUGH: I mean, just really happy with those guys. I think those guys are great guys and there were specific players, really just like all the different players, the free agents, and we knew about all the guys we would have an opportunity for and turned out we had an opportunity for those guys. You can clearly see how they're going to fit in what we trying to do because we knew them so well.

I was really also bolstered by the fact that these are guys -- we didn't come in here and say we want this guys, that guy, we got to have him. It's a conversations with the Giants' personnel people and where do you rank all these players. These guys were ranked in the wheelhouse for us and ended up being in the right spot financially for us, so they fit us.

Plus we knew them really well.

So, yeah, it's important. Every signing we had, I think we had 16 players we brought in, to me they're all critically important. I'm excited about every one of those guys we brought in, including the guys we resigned that were on our team before. That's probably the most important part. Yeah, all really important.

Q. How much is it an added bonus that those guys can help build your culture? They know what you want, they know what to expect.

JOHN HARBAUGH: Yeah, I think it's part of it. I'm sure the guys -- I mean, a lot Giants players, pretty much ever Giants player I talked to said, yeah, I've been asking around about you. Talked to so and so and so and so and so and so. So far been 100% positive. (Laughter.) Everything they told me has been 100% positive.

You know, they'll be able to say, hey, what's he saying, what's the plan, where is this going, how does this end up? Those guys will be able to share this is what he's talking about here, and that's got to be a good thing.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports



