

Former Michigan Head Coach Jim Harbaugh Proclaims Innocence After NCAA NOA Draft Revealed



Former Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh is listed as one of seven members of Michigan’s 2023 coaching staff accused of violating NCAA rules in the NCAA’s notice of allegations draft released Sunday, but despite these allegations, the former Wolverines leader continues to proclaim his innocence.

When asked to offer a comment on the NCAA’s NOA draft on Monday during an NFL training camp press conference, the current Los Angeles Chargers head coach said that breaking the rules goes against the morals and ethics that were instilled in him by his family at a young age, and that he had no knowledge of any sort of wrongdoing regarding Michigan’s football program while he was head coach.

“Never lie. Never cheat. Never steal. I was raised with that lesson. I have raised my family on that lesson. I have preached that lesson to the teams that I’ve coached,” Harbaugh told the media. “No one’s perfect. If you stumble, you apologize and make it right. Today, I do not apologize. I did not participate. I was not aware nor complicit in those said allegations. So for me, it’s back to work and attacking with an enthusiasm unknown to mankind.”

Jim Harbaugh on Michigan’s notice of allegations:

“No one’s perfect. If you stumble, you apologize and make it right. Today, I do not apologize.”

(via @chargers) pic.twitter.com/IIT35We3so

— Shehan Jeyarajah (@ShehanJeyarajah) August 5, 2024

Harbaugh, who left Michigan to become head coach of the NFL’s Chargers in January after leading the

Wolverines to a national title and perfect 13-0 season, is accused in the NOA draft of not cooperating with the NCAA's investigation into Michigan's elaborate sign-stealing scandal because he denied their request to view relevant messages and phone records from his personal cell phone.

According to the draft, Harbaugh could face a "show-cause" restriction if he ever opts to return to college sports, which seems unlikely — at least in the near future — given the Chargers signed him to a five-year, \$16 million deal, making him the third-highest-paid head coach in the NFL behind the Kansas City Chiefs' Andy Reid (\$25 million) and Denver Broncos' Sean Payton (\$18 million).

The draft does not state, however, that Harbaugh was directly involved with the sign-stealing operation or knew about the scheme. But it does say that the former Wolverines coach failed to actively look for "red flags" regarding former Michigan staffer Connor Stalions — who led the sign-stealing operation and resigned from his role last October — or any other members of the program who were involved with the scandal.

As a result, Harbaugh — along with now-fired staffers Chris Partridge, Denard Robinson and Stalions along with the university of Michigan itself — are accused of committing Level 1 violations related to the Stalions case, the most serious category in the NCAA's enforcement process.

Current Michigan head coach Sherrone Moore is accused of committing a Level 2 violation for allegedly deleting a thread of 52 text messages with Stalions in October 2023 on the same day that media outlets revealed the former staffer as the leader of the Wolverines' sign-stealing scandal, a penalty that could result in a show-cause punishment and potentially a suspension.

While Harbaugh, Moore and several former staffers are accused of serious Level 1 and 2 violations, ESPN's Pete Thamel — who first reported on the NCAA's NOA draft alongside colleague Brett Murphy — said on Monday that he expects Moore to face a "short suspension" and does not think Michigan's accomplishments could be in jeopardy of being taken away.

"If you look at the history of this stuff at the maximum, to go through the matrix of what could happen to Michigan in this, I don't think they're going to have any postseason ban," Thamel told Mike Greenberg on ESPN's Get Up. "I don't think, looking at history and looking at past precedent in this, there's going to be any type of retroactive anything to what they've already won and accomplished. Their accomplishments are safe."