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Ward brothers blend football rivalry to guide Calvert Hall

By [Kyle J. Andrews](#)

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Calvert Hall football head coach Josh Ward, left, and his brother, assistant coach Mike Ward, at the school on Thursday, Sept. 10. (Brian Krista/Baltimore Sun Media Group)

Mike Ward was an established head coach in San Jose, California, but his younger brother Josh called him with what he considered the opportunity of a lifetime.

The elder Ward graduated from Loyola Blakefield in 2001 and hadn't lived in the area since. Since he'd been gone, the Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association had sent hundreds of football players to the Division I level and a number had made it to the NFL.

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“First, as a Loyola Blakefield Don, I said ‘no thank you’ because of course — Calvert Hall,” Mike Ward said. “In all seriousness, my wife and I, we looked at it, we looked at opportunities to teach and her job, being able to find employment here hopefully and the cost of living over there being so extremely difficult to manager with two little kids — it kind of all fell into place.

“To be able to come back and come coach with my little brother, find a home that we could afford and live reasonably and to be able to have a job off campus teaching is the opportunity of a lifetime.”

It became the “perfect situation” according to the Josh Ward, a 2003 Calvert Hall graduate. Prior to taking over Calvert Hall's football program in July, he led Concordia Prep's football program for three years, compiling an 18-14 record. He also served as the athletic director.

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While Mike Ward serves as the passing game coordinator at Calvert Hall, he will also teach at Dundalk High School.

The brothers envision building a nationally ranked program at Calvert Hall.

“This is my alma mater, this is the top echelon of high school football and I think getting back here and trying to build a national program is a great attraction for he and I to do it side-by-side to make this happen,” Josh Ward said.



Calvert Hall football head coach Josh Ward, right, and his brother, assistant coach Mike Ward, talk to another coach during a practice at the school on Thursday, Sept. 10. (Brian Krista/Baltimore Sun Media Group)

The Loyola Blakefield-Calvert Hall connection runs deep between the brothers every Thanksgiving. For three of the four Turkey Bowls during Mike Ward's years at Loyola Blakefield, the Dons were successful. Then came the 2000 season, where the Cardinals triumphed over the Dons, giving Josh bragging rights at home. While Loyola Blakefield holds a 49–42–8 all-time record in the Turkey Bowl, Josh asserts that his brother fully bleeds Calvert Hall's colors.

“There's always love there, even though on Thanksgiving when the Turkey Bowl would come around, it was always an interesting day with having a Don and a Cardinal in our household,” Josh Ward said. “He's ready to make this jump to be here. He's a Cardinal now and Loyola might always be where he went to high school, but now he bleeds the cardinal and gold.

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"I'm excited to get him over him with me. I made sure his daughter has a nice hoodie with a cardinal on it and gave him some cardinal gear so he's rocking that color now."



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Mike Ward has a 14-month old son and a 4-year-old daughter. His wife stayed back in California with his son, but he and his daughter are in Maryland, starting school and setting up the house.

"It's stressful — any move is to move cross country and you had COVID, and it's been an adventure the last couple of weeks for sure," Mike Ward said.

He spent five years coaching in San Jose, with his first year as an assistant coach on the defensive line at Leland High School during the 2015 season. He took over as a head coach after the team went 1-9, but turned it around and went 19-15 in the next three seasons. He spent the 2019 season at Archbishop Mitty as an assistant, guiding the program to a 6-5 campaign.

Although Calvert Hall's season hasn't begun yet because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Josh Ward has held socially distanced drills for the program's 100 players, spreading more than 50 out at workouts at a time. The team conducted their workouts on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. during the summer.

His older brother has been at the forefront of assisting quarterbacks Amir Jenkins and Noah Brannock with passing drills. Mike Ward's head coaching experience has proved valuable so far to his younger brother.

"He's a former head coach," Josh Ward said. "He's coached in Florida and in California, he's taken a program and built it into a state contender out there and having a few other former head coaches on my staff helps to bounce ideas off of them. They may see stuff that I don't see, they may have ideas that I didn't think about. So, having a guy, especially having someone like my brother that I trust, having him to say 'We did this, we did that, this worked for us', that's been extremely helpful."



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Kyle J. Andrews is a high school sports reporter. He is a 2018 University of Baltimore graduate and a Randallstown native. Before joining Baltimore Sun Media, Kyle was a Ravens and Orioles reporter for 105.7 The Fan in Baltimore. He also interned with Pressbox Media and Fox Sports 1340 AM.

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