

University of Texas at San Antonio Football Media Conference

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Jeff Traylor Press Conference



UTSA 34, Rice 14

JEFF TRAYLOR: You know, first half a little frustrating. Rice is just Scrappy. Bunch of overachievers and Mike has done a really good job. We outplayed them but score didn't really show it.

Been through that a little bit this year, so we were not flustered at halftime. Just told them that execution always outlasts momentum. We just got to keep executing. We'll be fine. And we did.

I hate it for Mike. Been there before. I know what it's like when you lose your quarterback and you got to play your backup quarterback. I thought Padgett did a really good job and they had a good plan, but obviously that gave us an advantage. You always hate to see that in football with injuries and stuff, so I felt bad for Mike on that aspect.

Total team win for us though. Our defense was dominant. Offense was really good. We just didn't score in the red zone a couple times down there early. Had a turnover. We thought Rice was as good as Army on special teams, and we really challenged our kids all week about that Army game and how similar these two teams were.

Our kids met the challenge. I thought Chris Carpenter's punt return and the guys did a great job with that. Great pooch kick by Lucas, and a big time field goal by Tate. Really glad to get Tate back out because he missed that one against Houston.

Q. The Roadrunners have now won six games in a row. Is there a way you can explain this streak and how you got here after that start?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, I just told Andy the same thing. We been on an incredible run the last four years. We all need to understand how hard that is to do and not take this stuff for granted. I pray we don't get spoiled here. I can

sense a little bit of that already.

That's unfortunate, because these kids deserve people to be grateful and appreciative. And most people are. I'm not dare saying it's not.

But I've been there done that before, and it's hard to do. Really proud of our kids, especially when you go through what they did in September to be written off the way they were.

We have momentum right now. We're somewhat healthy. You know, Frank Harris is playing his last game here Friday unless something crazy happens, and I really hope everybody shows up to watch that. We got a bunch of other seniors, too, but just that kid, his competitive spirit is unlike many I've ever coached in my career.

Q. You have an update on Willie McCoy? Is he okay?

JEFF TRAYLOR: We do. That one scared me. Andy just brought it up that I was the first one on the field and something I'll probably be in trouble for that. But I could tell bite hit he was going to be down. That kid has come so far and really proud of him. Those hurt. I was really excited just being out there with him.

I am smart enough to know when I got out there and touched him I just wanted to make sure he knew I was there. He's in pain, but everything was good. I mean, like he had strength. No tingling down the legs, all the things you check for.

They were very careful, and very grateful for the medical attention he got immediately and the information we got very soon. So good kid. Praying for you, brother Willie.

Q. Jeff, you mentioned run you guys have been on the last few years and not just this season. It's the third straight year where conference season is opening with a pretty long win streak. How do you compare this experience to the previous years?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Probably the most enjoyable of all of them. The first year I would say that was pretty fun just



because nobody thought we were going to do anything. You guys, our expectations of us are so high, and they should be. We got a good football team. It's not unrealistic.

But so much negative in September, and to watch my kids never ever flinch, I mean, I told you at halftime at Tennessee, they just didn't flinch. I knew we were going to be fine and I told everybody we were going to be fine. I have a lot of proud old man in me for my kids not listening to the noise and trusting the process and winning the fricking day.

I know you get tired of hearing it, but if there was a magic pill everybody would take it. It's work. It's a grind. Our kids, they just do it. They're the best.

Q. Do you guys have a sense of closing in on a goal as you pursue another conference championship, or what's it like week to week now?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Come on, man. You know better than that. We play South Florida next week. That's the goal: South Florida. That's all we'll talk about all week.

I got you guys talking about that other stuff. That's why ya'll are out there. Ya'll are the best at that.

Q. Coach, you guys outscored them 21 to nothing in the third quarter to really break the game open. What changed in that quarter from the first two?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Well, we were dominant on defense. I am mad at myself. I was so not confident right before halftime. I wanted to stay in a rhythm, so I let Frank throw that ball with 55 seconds left. I should have milked some more of that time off, but our defense was being som dominant that I just didn't think that was smart because our offense was struggling so much.

Didn't want to go up (indiscernible) to nothing at halftime, I wanted to get to ten, so I'm beating myself up for that.

But I thought coming out the second half and three and out immediately, and offense going down immediately and scoring a touchdown, I thought that was big. Then obviously the punt return dominoed that. Our defense was dominant the whole night.

Let's be honest, our threes or fours gave up a touchdown against their ones and we gave up a 35 second drive -- seemed like 35 seconds; probably was less -- right before halftime. Other than that, they were dominant.

Again, I feel bad for Mike. Just nothing against the backup

quarterback. It's just that's unfortunate with football. The quarterbacks are so -- that is something I wish college would look into, is protecting quarterbacks like we do in the National Football League. It just makes such a difference when those kids go down.

I think that's something that should be looked at and studied, about what can we do to keep quarterbacks healthy.

Q. Jeff, how did you feel about the offense in the first half? You guys are 250 yards and only came away with 10 points.

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, just like that, you're frustrated. We had played so well, and I have done this so long and there is nothing worse when you play game and play really well and there is no results. It's a strange game like that. It's strange.

So I also have a lot of faith in my team, and we've been here so many times together that we don't panic. We just, like I said earlier when we started this press conference, I just really believe that execution outlasts emotion and momentum. They had the momentum. They had the emotion.

I thought we would out-execute them the second half, and our kids did.

Q. Chris Carpenter had the punt return touchdown. He had fumbled one before that and fumbled one last week. Did you ever think of going away from him, and what did it mean to see him deliver the way he did?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Well, the guy you're going to go away from him with is in the hospital, so that would've been tough to do.

So I wouldn't have pulled him anyway. No. Never thought about it. I don't roll that way. Never have rolled that way. It's the hardest thing in sports other than hitting a golf ball or curve ball. It's hard. Chris is really good at it, so never thought about pulling him.

Q. Did it make it more rewarding to see him score?

JEFF TRAYLOR: It does, I agree with that. Just because all I ever tell those kids is make the next play. You think -- Oscar didn't fumble on purpose; Chris didn't drop it on purpose. You know, it's just it is what it is, man. Make the next play. I wouldn't put him back there if I didn't believe in him.

Q. What do you think has been the key to the defense



playing so well during this winning streak? Seems like they've been able to maybe turn the page in some early-season struggles.

JEFF TRAYLOR: Getting some kids back health-wise. That always makes us better. We're somewhat healthy. You know, we've lost a few kids, but not a ton. Tonight was a big night. Short turnaround and we got some kids out of the game pretty quick, so tomorrow is Monday -- even though it's Sunday for ya'll. The rest of the week is just that way.

So we'll bring those kids in and we won't watch the video with them because we got to get on to South Florida as a staff. So early in the morning. There won't be anything -- like I talk to my staff, like I got to sleep in Friday morning a little bit at home. No more of that. It's going to be a straight burn for the next two weeks.

Q. What's the status of Kevorian Barnes going forward?

JEFF TRAYLOR: He could have played today. We just wanted to be smart with him. So we have two other backs. Kind of like we do with Rocko. When he wasn't quite right. Just gave him the week off. That's the beautiful thing about having three backs. I thought Kaedric ran well tonight, as did B High.

Did a good job keeping a lot of our freshman from playing a lot and so we have four games to play with them. That's exciting, because we got a lot of redshirt guys healthy and we're getting deeper at a time of year where some people are getting thinner.

As long as we can stay healthy, we got a shot.

Q. What was working for you to lean more on the run than the pass in this game?

JEFF TRAYLOR: I would say just the success of how we were doing it, you know, just tended to make us go back to it. It's not like we didn't throw it. I think halftime we threw it 20 times. Times two that's 40. That's too many throws for me personally. It was just working.

Q. Coach, 14 sacks on the season for Trey Moore. Tell me about how much of an asset that is, especially as you get to the end of stretch playing Tulane, SMU maybe.

JEFF TRAYLOR: First, let's make sure all of our NIL contributors look 210inspired.org, 210 city fans, hunters rising, let's make sure our own San Antonio kids don't get picked.

It's fixing to be open season on our roster. That is first.

Second, if he goes to the National Football League, more power to him. Get him a good grade on that.

Third in the moment we've got him, right? So he's a blessing, man. What an amazing kid. Couldn't happen to a better human. So proud. Who couldn't be? Kid is just different and wears that single digit with pride. Loves San Antonio like Frank, and we're very fortunate he chose to stay with us.

Everybody on this roster that's really good stayed for a quarter on the dollar. They love their city. That he do love the money that our collectives do for them and our NIL packages, but they're staying for pennies on the dollar.

That's just the way of college football. Everybody cringes when the head coach talks about it, but somebody has to tell ya'll. If not, have a whole new roster next year. If that's what it is, that's what we'll do, but I know this city and that won't happen. We'll find a way to get it done.

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