

# University of Texas at San Antonio Football Media Conference

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San Antonio, Texas, USA

**Jeff Traylor**

Press Conference

UTSA 58, East Carolina 24

**Q. Jeff, you guys come away with a big win here. How is it coming off the field for that one?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: This is as good as we have felt all year. That team was really good and we lost a heartbreaker to them last year up there, man. It was just a killer to start off conference play. Total team win. The triangle was here in every element today. Our defense was dominant. Credit three turnovers. Didn't allow any points except for the field goal right before halftime.

Offensively, playing without McQuin at receiver, without Rob at running back, without Dan at tight end. We lost our right guard in the game early. We lost our backup right guard in the game. After that we lost our left tackle in the game and we just have kids keep going out there and keep executing.

So our special teams was as good as we have been all year. Our Nightstalkers, which is our kickoff team, is unbelievable. Our Seals team, which is our punt team, is unbelievable. Our Rangers, which is our punt return team, we just, we just played almost spotless. On third down, I think they were 2 out of 14. We just, that's about as good as we can do it and for whatever reason, we tend to do this in November and we love to play football together and we love to practice and it's a testament to our culture and how our kids just love coming to practice every day.

Life's hard. Football's hard. You got to just keep chopping and these kids have kept chopping. We're going bowling again and that's hard to do, man, six straight years.

**Q. I was going to ask you about the bowl streak. You get the sixth win. You're eligible for every year you've been here, what does that mean to you?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: You know, I know at times I come



across as a very confusing human when you listen to me because when I win I'm usually griping. When I lose, I'm a lot happier than y'all want me to be. I just have a burning desire. I know how great this place can be. I mean, the city of San Antonio is so wonderful. The university is wonderful. I just want this thing to be the best it can be and I'm glad everybody's upset we're not playing for the championship. That's the way I want it to be, but I also want to take the success these kids have done for six straight seasons and we're going to keep pushing. We're going to keep pushing.

I'm happy for Karen Aston who has won a championship in this league. I'm happy for what Derek just did for our soccer team. It's unbelievable. Pat Hallmark in baseball. But the football team needs to go get one and we're in the hunt but we're not there yet and we're going to keep chopping away until we get there and that's what I want. I want it for the city just so bad. I want that Alamodome packed this time of year and I'm grateful for the ones that were here. I really am. They were amazing as always.

**Q. Coach I wanted to ask what is it about the blackbird uniforms that kind of bring the best out of you guys undefeated so far?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, I don't know, but we're going to be in again next week, I promise you that if my AD will sign off on it, which she's pretty good at supporting me on that kind of stuff, so I hope I don't miss up any kind of marketing ideas. I'm sure I've already done that without even speaking to her now. I don't know what that is. It's crazy. As long as I have been doing this, I know when the other team puts their black uniformed on I'm always like oh, lord, they're putting on their black uniforms.

Southern Miss used to have a deal where when you play them in their black uniforms everybody is like ugh.

Odessa Permian back in the day for you guys, Texas high school people who keep up with that, their black uniforms, everybody was terrified of them. I don't know what that is. I don't know. This building and those uniforms have been special to us through the years for sure.



**Q. Jeff it kind of ties into what you were just talking about but is there anything you can point to that led to just the level of energy and fair that you guys came out of the gates with today?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, but we'll keep it on the low. We'll give credit to the avatar tree. It gives us some kind of special powers when come here. Avatar's the only thing I can think of. I don't know what it is. It's crazy.

East Carolina plays a certain style. They do. They're the most physical team in our league and they know they are and they take great pride in it and I really challenged my guys to match it. Coach Harrell has done a fantastic job. He's a defensive head coach. Since he's taken over that program, their record has been unbelievable and we just wanted to match their intensity today. That's it.

**Q. You mentioned the bowl streak, six straight years, but compared to other seasons, how do the emotions of this compare given some of the low moments and adversity you guys went through to get here?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: I don't know. They're all so different, Greg. Today was more special to me just because of the kids that were out there. I mean, if you would have said before the game no Rob Henry, no Dan Dishman, no Devin McCuin, East Carolina at home, right guard down. Back up right guard down. Left tackle down I would have said, and I probably would have even told my wife I don't know how we're going to be able to play this week because she's the only one that really knew other than Devin, Rob, and Dan they weren't going to be able to play this week. They tried. They tried. I hope we put them as questionable on the injury report today because I didn't even check the thing out. We were honest. Thank goodness for Mike over there, I didn't even check the thing. They were going to try to go if they could go. They just couldn't go. They didn't practice all week and they just couldn't go.

**Q. Jeff, you mentioned the injuries that happened in the game. Do you have any idea what those look like coming out of here?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: I don't. I don't. None of them look good. None of them look promising. I would expect the guys that were out there at the end of this game will probably be the ones we're up with first and that's not great because Army's got to win to get in a bowl game now and we've only lost here four times. Coach Monken and his rascals have given us two of those. He probably gave us the most painful loss we've ever had here and we've had some painful... any time you lose it's painful. That game they put on us in 2023 maybe where they were perfect on fourth down. That was an absolute heartbreaker. I know his

guys will be ready to go. He does a fantastic job. Every year those guys are good.

**Q. Jeff, when you watch the film, what do you think you're going to see out of your quarterback? I think he had a career high five touchdowns today.**

JEFF TRAYLOR: I told him I'm going to start running his tail again. He's healthy finally. He looked like dadgum Michael Vick running around out there. You can just tell his legs are back. You can tell the groin and the hip and the shoulder which I have been kind of not talking about all year, he looked right and I'm happy for him. When we can add that element of run -- you haven't seen him run the ball this year and yet last year y'all saw him run for long touchdowns so I'm sure y'all have figured that out yourselves but he just looked different today. I hope he calm through pretty healthy. I haven't checked him yet but he'll tell you he's healthy no matter what you ask him, so don't even ask him, Greg.

**Q. Coach, at this time of the year when the injuries start to pile up, how important is it to have the running back room that you have, no Robert Henry Jr. today but Will Henderson stepped up. Talk about that running back room a little bit and Henderson himself.**

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, he's from Gilmer, man. What do you expect? We only make them tough in Gilmer, Texas now. Y'all can keep battling on us, we're going to keep bringing it, I can promise you. That's what Will did. Will just kept bringing it. It's unbelievable.

I said this to y'all before. I think, I didn't want to take him out of high school when he was so young because he was so frail, but, man, those coaches at Gilmer, mainly Randal Kennedy, just kept telling me this guy's a dude and we were open that year. They didn't close down the state championship game, so I got to be at the state championship game that Gilmer was in and Will was the strongest, most tough player on the field, even though his body is very slight. I said, man, I'm taking this kid back to UTSA with me right now and I'm glad we got him. He's very special. He's a neat, neat kid. Everybody needs to get a chance to speak to Will and I'm excited y'all are going to get to today. I know his mom and dad are proud. All of Gilmer, Texas is happy for that kid.

**Q. Jeff, when you think about the quality of the opponent today, the injuries you overcame and the margin of victory, where does this rank among your most impressive performances from your team since you've been here?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: I think you already know the answer.

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That's what's so great about you and JJ. Y'all are going to sum it up and tell it. I don't have to. In this present moment, I feel really good for my kids to get to the bowl, to beat a really good team soundly, correctly. We never retaliated. We never got one personal foul. It was incredible how our kids kept walking away today. If you remember, they had us pinned up in the red zone. They had a 15-yard penalty on our sideline. We did not retaliate. There were so many of those moments today that we just kept walking away and I was really proud of my kids' emotional discipline today.

**Q. You guys hit the early gadget. You had a lot of success on screen plays. You even got the touchdown on the draw. It seemed like everything you drew up kind of went to form. What can you say about the plan your staff put together?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: I got great players. I just don't want to go there just because I know the ire you create. It's a players' game. Obviously I have defended Justin Burke and Jess Loepp and Zach Brown as long as I've been here so I'm personally happy for them and their families because I know what they've gone through. At the end of the day, it's players making plays and we had a lot of them making plays today.

**Q. Jeff, I know you have had a rough few weeks even though you won last week. How did your team get through that challenge of this part of the season and come out with a big win today?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: It's corny but they just get along really well. They like each other. In a time when it's really hard to hold things together, they stayed together. There's not a greater testament. It's easy when you're 9-0, 9-1, 8-2. Nobody really gets upset but, man, when you're struggling and holding everybody together. That's the secret sauce to life. Life's pretty hard and great football is a great analogy you can teach on and my kids showed up today. I'm really happy for them. Really am.

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