

# University of Texas at San Antonio Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 9, 2023

San Antonio, Texas, USA

## Jeff Traylor

Press Conference



UTSA - 20, Texas State - 13.

JEFF TRAYLOR: He's real good at callbacks. If you're a teacher and you understand a callback, he's going to have some command, and you're going to say something back to him. Really it's a way to keep your kids from falling asleep in class.

Whenever he says, can I get a witness, we're supposed to turn to our partner and go shhh. And one of the three points he made was your grit, your grit will put your greatness on display.

I kept telling our team, I just felt like it was going to be one of those kind of games, rivalry game. We got injured out there a little bit, lost some momentum. Man, how our kids fought back. Our grit put our greatness on display.

I also told them I could just tell we were going to have -- it's the highest attendance at our game we've ever had since I've been the head coach, and I said that part about shhh, we're going to have to do that quite a bit because it was loud. It was deafening in there.

I've heard we're right at 50,000. Unbelievable job, our marketing, our ticket people. We lost. We lost a tough, heartbreaking game last week, and you come back. Most places, they don't show back up when you do that, and I was just -- it was grit by a lot of people today. By a lot of people.

**Q. So it was the second largest crowd in program history today. What does that mean for you to have that accomplished?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: I'm on record as saying I'm just falling in love with this place. And my new people that we've hired, like we stayed at the Embassy Suites, it's really like our family there. Everybody there, we are their team. Everybody treats us that way.

A few of my coaches were coming over, and they stopped at Valero and got gas, another one got -- just new people, new guys on our staff. They're like, everywhere I go, people are like Birds Up. I've said it before at the parade, I can remember the Battle of Flowers. I don't know, people say half a million people at that parade, I don't know. But I know 85 percent of them are Birds Up, man. This town got a fever.

I know everybody says they love a winner. I do think they appreciate the way our kids play the game too. There's a certain way they play the game. You can just sense.

I told J.T. as I'm getting him in the low red, throw him two fades, and it never happened. On the end we were going to run go-go dancer is what we call it. We just run goes, right? And I look out, and he done snuck himself on the field out there. I said, J.T., we weren't in the low red. He said, I just wanted to be on the field. You got to let me know, man.

Anyway, our team is just that way. The catch that Willie McCoy made, that kid, what a play. There's a lot of stories today, a lot of stories.

**Q. What happened with Frank there in the second quarter injury-wise, and what was the process of managing that and getting him back in the game?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: I'd really not like to get too specific on the injury, just for the opponents, protection of him. But it was X-rayed, and he's good. He had to play through a lot of pain, and he did that.

I really didn't want to put him back out there, and he just -- you know, I talked to my medical staff. He was fine as far as future -- any further injury. The kid is just unbelievable.

Now there's another injury later on that had nothing to do with that injury. That was a different injury. It was kind of one of those kind of boys down in huddle kind of play, if you know what I mean. I raised three boys. That happened quite a bit in the bedroom.



I imagine refereeing Jordan, Jake -- I had two boys and a girl. She was like a girl. She was that tough. Jordan, Jake, and Jaci. She was probably the one instigating it.

**Q. Defensively you didn't give up but 31 yards on 29 carries. You only had one penalty for five yards and 37:23 to 22:37 seconds a possession. That makes a winning combination all the way around.**

JEFF TRAYLOR: I don't like to play that way. You know me, that was boring. I like to be exciting and go fast. That's just not where we are right now. That's not the best way for us to play football right now. The best way to play football right now is to let our defense carry us until we get our offense just right.

We're getting better. We've got three great running backs. It was unfortunate we lost Makai. That's going to be a hurt for us. We have to get some guys back. But Deandre Marshall stepped up, redshirt freshman, one of our very own, Central Catholic. That triangle was on full display tonight.

We played great defense. We ran the ball well enough, especially in the fourth quarter, man. I hate it for Kevorian getting stripped. It's always a guy you don't see. When in trouble, double. I try to make my stuff -- what is that? I don't think I'm a rapper there, but rhyme so they can remember it. When in trouble, double man. He played his tail off. The kid had 26 carries for 115 yards.

We knew there was going to be a lot of negatives. They do so much stuff up front. We had a lot of negatives, but we knew when we popped it, we were going to pop them.

I know it's frustrating for you all. It's frustrating for us too. But when it hit, you were like, man, they figured it out now. When it didn't hit, you're like me, you're going, man, what are we doing?

**Q. How serious is Makai's injury, and what is his prognosis moving forward?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: It's not good. It's not good, I would say, just guessing. I hate to do that. I hate to speculate, but I would guess six to eight weeks. You're talking about a young man that missed his entire season last year, potential to play in the National Football League, two kids, a wife.

Tough day for Makai, and the whole time he's just bawling, telling us he was sorry the entire time. He's as tough a kid as I've ever coached. He's a very good football player. He's already got his degree. That hurt. That hurt.

**Q. Coach, you said it took a lot of grit to pull that one out. Talk about Frank's grit to come back from injury and throw that nice touchdown in the back corner of the end zone there.**

JEFF TRAYLOR: How about the play he made when it was his last play, we thought. The way I looked at it, I thought it was the last play of his career, and he executes third down. That kid is just magic.

I know -- I think you all could probably tell this by our play calls, we had to call the game a different way in the second half just to make sure he was okay.

He did an unbelievable job being a pocket quarterback. That's just who he is. I really challenged our team. He's not going to be able to run around the second half and make those miraculous plays now. He's going to be a different quarterback. Someone is going to have to make a catch. Someone is going to have to make a tackle.

All our kids did that, from Tykee, I already talked about, Willie McCoy, Devin McCuin. I know I already said all those names. Frank is the one putting all those balls out there, and because our game is so RPO driven and he has such control of our offense, no matter what the defense is doing, Frank can calm it all down and put the ball where it's supposed to be. That's what it gives you, the beauty of playing four years.

Eddie Lee will get there, and Owen McCown will get there. I've got to get 30 games, 20 games into those guys to get them there. It was good for Eddie to get out there. He had a great attitude, and Owen McCown had a great attitude as well.

**Q. How much did this weigh on you, the tough loss to Houston and facing G.J., kind of a gritty game here. What are your feelings and emotions after this one?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: J.J. is trying to get me to cry. He knows me well. It's been tough because I know we've got a really good football team, and it hasn't played out the way we thought it was going to. I thought we were going to be really, really good on offense, and we're just a couple injuries away -- our young guys are coming on. You can't make excuses. You just can't do it.

Kilgore -- I've said that so many times now. I lost a tough game to Kilgore in 2013 the exact same way, and I've called Houston Kilgore four times now this week.

It's so frustrating because we're playing better than it looks like. I know we were only scoring 20 and whatever it was last week, but we're executing drives and getting first

downs against really good people. Did Baylor beat Utah today, or did Utah beat Baylor?

**Q. 20-13 Utah.**

JEFF TRAYLOR: They came back and beat them. Again, it's a top ten team that Baylor went out there and played their tail off against, and Texas State whupped them last week. What a job G.J.'s done.

**Q. Looking back to 2006 when G.J. was a Gilmer quarterback, did you ever in your wildest expectations think the two of you would be FBS coaches and he would be your opponent on the other side of the field?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: I'm ready because somebody else asked me that, believe it or not. I would have thought he was going to be. He's as handsome as Joe Namath. He played in the National Football League five years. I'm a simpleton high school football coach. I'm the one I didn't think would be here.

Praise the Lord, President Eighmy and Dr. Campos saw something in me and gave me my chance. For the two of us to do this, I'd like for somebody to find this out. I promise you Greg's the one. How many times in Division I football has a high school football coach gone against his high school quarterback as two head coaches? That has to be a pretty low number.

Hey, always let your dreams so large you pray life has to match it so, when your dreams come true, no one can take credit for it but the Lord.

**Q. What were the biggest keys to the defensive performance overall today, particularly the pressure you guys were able to generate?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: Stopping the run with not adding an extra. Coach Loepp -- this is awesome. Kelly's going to kill me when I tell this story. I went up to Brooks, his son, I said, Your daddy did a helluva job coaching football tonight. And Brooks looked me right in the eye and said, My daddy's a helluva coach. I can't wait till Kelly sees Brooks.

He had a great plan. He's got a great staff. Nick Graham in the back. Brad Sherrod at linebackers. Siddiq Haynes at D-line, those kids believe in him, and he had a great plan for them.

We don't turbo as much as they do, but they get to go against us a lot because we turbo a third of the game. What a great job Mack Leftwich did as a coordinator, though. He did a really fantastic job. That's their second

game to be together with 53 transfers. That's incredible.

And it's the ability -- what it's done is just you have an ability to flip an entire university with one hire and the new system. I'm not going to get up here and start deciding if that's what's best for kids and graduating and all that stuff, but I know he's given an entire city, an entire university belief, and you could feel that tonight.

**Q. What was that embrace like with G.J. at the end of the game, and what did you tell him?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: Mixed. Mixed. J.J. is trying to get me to cry today, he really is. I told him I loved him, and I meant it. I know it's not me, but I feel like a part of me is there.

The way we coached him when he was in high school and the way we've always treated him with unconditional love, you can do things right in this business. He's going to do it right. Those kids believe in him, and I'm proud of him. That's what I told him. I'm always going to love him.

He's just as great of a coach last week as he was this week. I also told him to enjoy the journey, enjoy the ride. It was nice sitting in front of you all, and you all are just glad we won. You all didn't used to ask me mean questions, and now you're spoiled, and you all ask me mean questions even when we win. On the way up, you don't get those questions. You just get to be the hero all the time because you're flipping the place.

But when you get there and trying to stay there, it can be tough on a ball coach. I told him to enjoy the journey. I wish I would have enjoyed the journey more. I made my mind up as a college coach I was going to, and I have. I have enjoyed this ride up way better than I did in Gilmer, Texas, back in the day.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

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## Trey Moore

Press Conference



UTSA - 20, Texas State - 13

**Q. How important was it for you guys to get this game and have a rebound performance after this week?**

TREY MOORE: It's huge. Obviously starting off the season, we didn't get the job done. This game, building some momentum, took over the rest of the year. It was big.

**Q. What were the main keys in the defense that you guys had to key in on and be ready for this group?**

TREY MOORE: Just the way they pass the ball and try to spread the field. A lot of it was getting ready for the quarterback. That's huge for any defense, and we did good doing that tonight.

**Q. Were there specific things you guys had to do to generate as much pressure as you were able to?**

TREY MOORE: We were in our rush package, so basically that's just we know we got to get pressure and get the quarterback. So we're seeing a lot of pressures, a lot of blitzes.

**Q. How about you individually coming up with three sacks? What was clicking for you?**

TREY MOORE: Really just continuing to be relentless. I had a lot of looks earlier in the half, in the first half, but the quarterback gets the ball out or they scramble or something happens. They throw the ball before I can get there.

So it's really just continuing to fight and get the quarterback.

**Q. I'm curious from the defensive perspective, when Frank Harris goes down with the injury, what's it like**

**on the sideline, or what's going through your head?**

TREY MOORE: We're good. One man goes down, it's next man up, no matter who it is. It could be Frank. It could be me. It's always next man up mentality.

He's a great player, don't get me wrong, but we've got to focus on winning the game. So next man up.

**Q. What was the mood like in the locker room? Are you guys glad to get this one after last week?**

TREY MOORE: Like I said earlier, we came off a loss, and there was a lot of hype around this game. So it was good to take care of the job and get it done.

**Q. This was the second largest crowd in program history. What was the atmosphere like for you guys, and what does that mean to have played in front of such a large crowd?**

TREY MOORE: We love getting as many fans out as we can. We love doing that consistently from game to game. No matter how much hype there is around a game, we want fans there consistently.

From my point of view, and I think from a lot of the team, we've had games like this with the championship games at the Dome, but we're a pretty veteran team at this point. We were good. We were locked in.

**Q. I think the last couple years people have thought offense first with this team. This is two games in a row where your defensive unit has really shined. What does it mean to you to have the level of success you guys are having early on?**

TREY MOORE: It's great. We talk about the triangle all the time, and the first part of that triangle is being physical on defense. Defense comes first. We've got to stop them before we can do anything else. If we don't stop their offense, it makes it very hard for our offense to try to carry the game on their back.

No one's carrying anybody. We're all part of this together.



It's three sides to it -- it's teams, it's offense, and it's defense. For the defense to come out and put together a performance like this, it's going to help us in every game we have.

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## Frank Harris

### Press Conference



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#### **Q. Frank, first of all, how are you feeling right now?**

FRANK HARRIS: I'm good. Ready to move on from it, watch the film and get ready for next week.

#### **Q. What was the process like for you at halftime figuring out whether you'd be good to go and get back out there?**

FRANK HARRIS: I went to get an X ray. They said everything was good. Got my toe injected with a shot, then I actually got shot in my right cheek as well to try to get back out there. That was not fun.

But credit the guys to stand in and give me a chance, and we went out there and won.

#### **Q. What happened in those plays late in the second quarter that you ended up going down?**

FRANK HARRIS: I honestly couldn't tell you. I cut back on third down and stood up, and my toe was hurting pretty bad.

#### **Q. What did it mean to the guys to be able to kind of grind this one out? It wasn't a pretty win, but it's still a win for you guys.**

FRANK HARRIS: For sure. These are the wins that you live and die by. The grit that we showed, the toughness that we showed throughout the whole game, the four man offense that we performed, we didn't give the ball back to those guys. It's a credit to the defense getting the ball to us and the offense just killing the clock.

#### **Q. This was the second largest crowd in program history. What are your thoughts on having that and just the atmosphere today?**

FRANK HARRIS: Yeah, that means a lot to us. That just shows that we could have that crowd each and every week, and they definitely were a factor. They had a couple of false starts, which is credit to the crowd.

We love the love and support. We feed off of them. Hopefully they come next week when we play Army as well.

#### **Q. How did you guys adjust the offense in the second half for maybe having a little bit less mobility on your end?**

FRANK HARRIS: Coach did a great job of just keeping me in the pocket, not calling too much stuff, calling more RPOs. I just couldn't really move as much. O-line did a great job protecting me, and I went through my reads a lot more.

#### **Q. How important is it overall for this team to get this game and rebound from last week?**

FRANK HARRIS: I think it meant a lot to us just to show we're capable of going out and playing great opponents. Like Texas State, they're a great team. If we won last week, I don't know if we would have come out with a victory this week.

We learned from that mistake versus Houston, and it just showed today.

#### **Q. We talked to Coach Traylor and a few of your teammates this week, and it sounds like you were pretty down on yourself for stretches coming away from that one? What were the emotions like coming away from week one and through this week?**

FRANK HARRIS: Just frustrated with yourself. You start questioning yourself if you can keep on doing this, if you can come out the same, all the injuries I've been through.

You did stuff in the past, but it's the future now. Kind of have self doubt. But my teammates, credit to those guys, to show love and support the whole time throughout the



whole week, even during the game. Teammates and my coaching staff as well, they just got me through that hump.

Credit to those guys. It meant a lot to me. I wore it on my sleeve and tried to perform better today.

**Q. Did you have some of those moments during this game today at all? When you go down, do you worry, is this it? Could this be a serious injury? Do you shake it off pretty quickly?**

FRANK HARRIS: I don't go out thinking I'm going to get injured. When my toe started bothering me, it's my toe. I'm not going to not play because of my toe. That sounds terrible me even saying that. I probably will get made fun of once it hits social media that my toe was bothering me.

I've got to tough it out, go to treatment tomorrow, and I'll be ready for next week.

**Q. Frank, did you have any doubt this week that you guys would -- that you personally would be able to bounce back from a rough game?**

FRANK HARRIS: No, just adversity makes you a better person, makes you a better man. I battled adversity my whole life, so when my back's against the wall, somehow I'm going to figure out a way. I felt like my back was against the wall.

All the critics, believe it or not, I see everything. Coach told me don't get on social media. I'm looking at everything on social media. I see all the stuff about me, all the negative things about me, but I also had a lot of great people reach out to me and kept me positive. It meant a lot to me as well.

**Q. I saw after the game last week you had a social media post. You going to put one out this week, and do you have any idea what that message will be?**

FRANK HARRIS: Pastor Pete talked to us yesterday, and he said, Can I get a witness? Everybody said shhh. I'm going to fly low, and I won't say nothing.

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