

University of Texas at San Antonio Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 14, 2023

San Antonio, Texas, USA

Coach Jeff Traylor

Press Conference



UTSA - 41, UAB - 20

COACH TRAYLOR: It took us six games but we finally put together our first complete game of the entire season so that was good to see. We were really good defensively. We gave up the reverse, the double pass. Other than that we were pretty spot-on solid.

They made some great contested catches, they're a good team offensively, and I was really proud of our defense.

Offensively we were very efficient all night. We got to play on a short field most of the night because our defense was so good and our special teams was fantastic.

So the triangle, after six games, it all kind of looked bright and that's a good feeling. That's a good football team we beat tonight. They've given us trouble.

Those guys were the champs before we showed up and we have a great respect for their program. And it's a good team win.

Q. You guys are 2-0 to start AAC play after a rough September. How does it feel to be undefeated so far?

COACH TRAYLOR: October, it was a lot better than September. I don't know if there's a song about that, Earth Wind and Fire or something like that, but it's been a lot better in October.

Q. What does it mean to see the offense score 40-plus in consecutive games after the slow start during nonconference season?

COACH TRAYLOR: We just had a little bit of identity. It helps to have certain players be there all the time. And we're playing good team football right now. And that's just good to see.

We're about the midway point, and what these kids have done all four years they got a little bit better every day. And they keep getting a little bit better every day. They like each other. They like coming to work every day. They're good people.

And when you get a bunch of good people together that believe in each other and they just work every day together, usually good things happen. Occasionally it doesn't. But I'll bet on the percentages on that and good people with good culture that have great work habits. They usually get better. And we're getting better.

Q. First time that you guys have received the opening kickoff all season. Also first time you scored on your opening possession. What was that offensive spark like right out of the gate like that?

COACH TRAYLOR: I actually contemplated taking the ball first instead of deferring. I thought my defense would not feel like I have confidence in them. So I said, you know what, I'm going to let you all do it again, boys.

So actually, I think they gave us the ball. I think that's how that thing went, actually. So that made it even better because I kind of got what I wanted. But I had to tell my defense.

It was really good to score. The third-down-and-7 call was big. Hitting the slant to Tykee, that's what got that drive going. I was really glad to see Tykee and Frank hook up on that.

Q. You got three takeaways on defense. What were your thoughts on -- y'all haven't again betting turnovers for part of the year and now they seem to be coming in bunches?

COACH TRAYLOR: That first one was a biggest one to get us up 14-0 that quick. We watched it happen the last time we were home. It just went the other way. They were up 14-0 because of turnovers.

I was really glad to see that happen. And what a really good catch by Josh, who I think he became the all-time



leading receiver tonight in the history of our school. So I teased him. I said you had the all-time leading receiving record, but you also had the worst quarterback record in the history of our school as well. So I know you all are going to beat me up on that.

Josh can throw the heck out of the ball. He really can. There's nobody practices throwing the football more than Josh Cephus. I know I should have handed it off. Waiting for that question.

Q. I was going to ask if you saw this game as a sign of what your team is capable when you have a lot of your guys out there and healthy, what this bodes for the future with this group?

COACH TRAYLOR: I've been apologizing to y'all all year because I really wanted you to see this team. We're still not what I thought we were going to be. I just think if you put J.T. in the mix out there, we're as good as anybody.

But we've learned. We've maneuvered around that situation now. We can see how that's going to look and Devin McCuin has really come on as a true freshman to kind of take that spot. And Tykee has really stepped up.

And getting Frank -- he's getting closer to being healthy. He's not healthy as you can tell but he's getting closer. Getting our line more solidified. We're not far from getting Dan back. We're not far from getting Makai back. There's some pieces out there. We're chasing. We got Trey Moore back tonight.

Donyai had no knee brace on tonight. We got Brandon Matterson back tonight. It's funny how the players can make the coach look a lot smarter. We have a good football when I can get them all out there. And we have a very good opponent this week, a very good opponent.

Q. We saw the defense put a lot of pressure on the quarterback and in the backfield, lots of tackles for loss tonight. What did you attribute that to tonight?

COACH TRAYLOR: Just athletes getting off blocks. Getting Brandon Matterson back. You gotta double team him. Getting Trey Moore, gotta double team him. Booker-Brown is hard to block -- Syrus, Joe, Brandon Brown, we've got some dudes in there.

You haven't got to see us all together like I wanted you all to. But we're getting there. We're getting closer. Two down, one to go. Gotta go get the next one.

Q. What can you say about Trey Moore's efforts along those lines? He had three and a half sacks, had to

limp off. Clearly he's playing through something.

COACH TRAYLOR: Yeah, he is. He can't get healthy but he's a tough kid. Came from a great program, Smithson Valley. Kid gives me everything he can. He communicates with me, lets me know, just certain times it grabs him where he can't push through it. It's not anything that can damage his career. We wouldn't let him be out there. It's just managing pain right now.

Q. Did you think coming into the night this was a matchup where the run game might be there for you guys? Seemed like you guys had a lot of success on the ground.

COACH TRAYLOR: I told my closest people, I thought we were going to have a really good night offensively. I felt good about that. I didn't know we were going to be able to stop them. I thought red-zone defense was going to be really huge, and could we get some turnovers. And both those things showed up.

One of the few times I've been right on anything I really thought this season. And I know my closest, my family and my friends that I talked to for real, not you and J.J., they always want to know how I don't know. Sometimes you just don't know. But we played better defensively, honestly, than I thought we were even capable of tonight. I thought we played at a really high level tonight.

Zeno was really good. I kept saying -- my defensive coaches kept getting tired of me saying. I kept saying 19 is really good. Dang, 17 is really good. Dang, 2 is really good. Dang, 1 is really good. Dang, 4 is really good. And my defensive coach is, like, we've got good players, too. And we do. We do have good players as you can see tonight.

But that's a good offense. And Coach Dilfer has done a fantastic job as has coach Mortensen. Those guys are really good offensively.

Q. I know earlier in the week you said you didn't believe in springboard games. But do you think you guys could build some momentum off of this?

COACH TRAYLOR: Anytime you win and there's stuff to coach off and you come out relatively healthy, those are good weeks, man. Those are good weeks. So that's kind of how you springboard -- health -- and I understand mood of the locker room.

But what I was trying to say I remember being 4-0 in Memphis and I can look back at (indiscernible). It's one of the worst practices we've had all week. And sometimes

we're a desperate football team right now. We don't feel good. We don't want you all to be nice about us. We want you all to say bad things about us. We just want to be treated bad because we're desperate right now.

We've got a lot to prove right now. One of your opening questions, one of your, earlier September but we've got a good October. How about we just got a good October? No keep saying it -- bad September. We like the jabs, and it makes us better.

I like being desperate. I don't like feeling good. I like being grappy. I don't like smiling. I really don't. I enjoy this look right here. I just like misery. It's something about coaching.

But my team, we have a good time in there. I'm messing with y'all a little bit. But we've got a lot to work on still, too. I mean, our four-minute offense was garbage. We were terrible in the middle eight tonight. We didn't score before halftime. Terrible call by the head coach. We've got a lot to work on.

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Frank Harris

Press Conference



UTSA - 41, UAB - 20

Q. Frank, you guys are 2-0 in conference play. How does it feel?

FRANK HARRIS: It's just a blessing, just a credit to the offense, defense, special teams. We all went out there and handled all our business like we were supposed to and came out victorious.

Q. How did you think the offense played today overall?

FRANK HARRIS: I think the offense did a great job going out there executing. Couple things we have to work on. The O line did a great job creating holes for the running backs, protecting me as well.

Q. Do you feel like you're building some momentum after this one?

FRANK HARRIS: We just have to keep on going. Can't start feeling ourselves too much. Still playing with a chip on our shoulder, going out and executing.

Q. What does it mean to see the offense crack 40 points in consecutive games after the slow start of the season?

FRANK HARRIS: Means a lot. But we have to go out and keep on working. We could've had more points on the board. Still points out there. Still plays out there that should have been made. Tomorrow we watch the film and get it corrected, get ready for next week.

Q. Do you think this game is a sign of what this team is capable of when you have all the guys out there and all healthy, yourself back in the fold, what does it mean to the future?

FRANK HARRIS: Means a lot to us. Coach Burke does a great job just letting us play, causing great plays. And O line and receivers everybody going out, doing 1 through 11. Executing on the offensive end.

Q. The defense got three takeaways tonight. What does that do for you guys on the offense, when they're able to get the ball back to you all?

FRANK HARRIS: Just gives us momentum, for sure. Having a short field, helps out with the offense a ton. So we hope we get those every game, means a lot to us. Makes it a lot easier for the play calls and for the offense as a whole.

Q. What was it like coming out on that opening drive, getting the ball first and just going down field for the first time this season and ending up 7-0?

FRANK HARRIS: Just the momentum. I think we did a great job calling the plays. O line did a great job protecting, creating some holes for the running backs as well, and we went out executed and the team sparked us to start the game off.

Q. Do you feel like you're getting better and more comfortable individually after you get some more reps under your belt this season?

FRANK HARRIS: I just go out there, play football. As long as you go out victorious, that's all that matters.

Q. I know it was a tough offseason a lot. Talked about a lot. Turf toe couldn't help things. Is there a process for you of kind of knocking off the rust, feeling like you're getting back into it?

FRANK HARRIS: It was a long offseason. Turf toe, what are the odds, mess my toe up? Just going back out there, blessing to go back out there, play with my teammates. They have the utmost respect for me. Definitely appreciate it. Means a lot to me. I just try to go out, play football like I know how. And credit the coaching staff as well for believing in me.

Q. Do you believe you're the best version of yourself, working back towards that?

FRANK HARRIS: I leave that up to you all to decide. I don't really know.

Q. I saw at the end of the game, you went and thanked the fans that were hanging around towards the end. You cherish this one a little more than others, or are you just kind of -- anything special about this one?

FRANK HARRIS: I feel like I do that kind of after every game. Just thanking those guys, that's what it's all about: The fans, just make their day, saying hi to them or shaking their hand or taking a picture, something so small like that can make their whole day, their whole night.

I feel like I'm a position to where I don't have to but I love doing those kind of things and definitely means a lot to me to see somebody, put a smile on their face.

Q. How much better can this offense be?

FRANK HARRIS: A lot better, for sure. We went down there, didn't execute it down in the red zone. A couple times we missed our D, some things up front, and just some things we got to work on, get better at.

Q. Anything you point to that was key getting the run game? Seemed you got a lot of success on the ground.

FRANK HARRIS: They just played a lot of man coverage. I think our O line did a great job just going out there, digging those guys out. Running backs did a great job hitting holes. And we did everything, they took away the run, we throw the ball, they took away the pass. Whatever they did, we tried to do the opposite. I think coach did a great job just going out there, calling plays.

Q. How much are you looking for your own run game at this point? Is that less than at previous points in your career? How do you size that up?

FRANK HARRIS: I could care less about anything about myself, as long as we're winning. That's all that matters.

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Trey Moore

Press Conference

UTSA - 41, UAB - 20

Q. You guys start 2-0 in conference play. What does that mean to you guys?

TREY MOORE: It means everything. We had a pretty rough nonconference schedule. Didn't end up the way we wanted it to be. But I believe in who we are at this point and we're rolling because of that effort I feel like.

Q. What was your takeaways on defense, how you guys played overall as a defensive unit?

TREY MOORE: I think everyone -- it was a complete game, as well as offense and special teams. But defense for sure, we were in the backfield a lot. Coach allowed us to play free for a lot of the game and let us do our thing, trusted in us. So it was good.

Q. What was the difference that you guys are able to come up with some takeaways today? I know it's been a talking point this season.

TREY MOORE: It's just, like, finishing the plays. We always get in there. We're emphasizing getting the ball away and flying around to the ball and D line getting up to the bag. Everyone just getting up to the ball. When you have defensive players to the ball, just more chance to get turnovers.

Q. Does it get easier when it starts to go your way those things tends to go in bunches.

TREY MOORE: When you start seeing it happen, people get the confidence and they feel it could be them. So everyone is trying to get to the ball. I do think so.

Q. You guys put a lot of pressure on the quarterback today. What was the key to getting the pass rush going at such a high level?



TREY MOORE: Just executing really, and people were winning their one-on-ones. It's really that simple. A lot was of it four-down rush. We weren't running too many blitzes; we did run some blitzes but it wasn't a lot. Coaches let us play free and we won one-on-ones.

Q. How about you coming up with three and a half sacks. What did you think of your game?

TREY MOORE: I think I did all right. Missed one sack. That was unfortunate. I'll get better there. It was good. I was playing free. Coaches let me do my thing. They trusted in me and I got some wins on the O line.

Q. How were you feeling physically at this point. I know you're playing through something.

TREY MOORE: Feeling good. Banged up. It's football it's going to be like that.

Q. How do you manage that through the week or through the season? What's your plan to make sure you can still produce at a high level?

TREY MOORE: It's really the training staff each day is great, the people I work with. They take care of me really well, making me sure I'm doing the right things. Rehab room, pretty much every day taking care of me. It's doing what I can. Pushing through it. It's football. It's pain. I'm going to be out there for my guys.

Q. I know it seemed like at least in the last couple weeks it slowed you down a little bit at times. Was it gratifying to you to have the production you had today?

TREY MOORE: We figured some things out to make it better for me, to really be able to have a little bit more mobility and less pain. So it did feel good to be able to be out there and complete a game, not be down as much as I was the past couple weeks.

Q. Not just the sacks and the quarterback pressure but you guys created a lot of tackles for loss in this



game. I think it was a season high. Was there something that was key disrupting the other players, on the screens or against the run?

TREY MOORE: No, like I said, I think our players, we had a different attitude today. Like I said, we had a rough nonconference schedule. That win last week really just gave us more confidence. I think now we're at the point where we really believe in us. Not that we didn't before. But we're really rolling right now, really trusting in what we've got going on. It's representing that when we play football.

Q. Did the defense play with a chip on their shoulder today? Obviously the last few games haven't been the best from the defensive standpoint

TREY MOORE: I definitely would say so. You don't have to get caught up on the scores and stats and wins and losses, just want to play our brand of football. But we know we haven't been giving it our best effort.

We know we can be great, and at times we haven't been there this season. At times we have. We've just got to get back to what we've been doing and trusting in what the coaches have for us and flying around, doing it for each other, the plays will come.

Q. Can you build some momentum off this game, maybe even getting better?

TREY MOORE: I definitely think so. Football is a game of momentum. For offense, for defense it's all about stacking games, stacking plays. So I think it is a big momentum lifter. And I think that will carry us throughout the season.

Q. Between yourself and Frank and some of the other guys who are getting healthy, do you see this game and this performance today as sort of a sign what you guys can do when you're clicking at the highest level?

TREY MOORE: I think so. Like I said, all three phases of the ball we're rolling. Chase had some great kicks, hit a 53-yarder. Great to see. Everyone rolling. We didn't play perfect, for sure. We did not play perfect. We've got some things we can clean up, but we did play strong most of the time for the game, and I think you can see where we can be when we do that.

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