

University of Texas at San Antonio Football Media Conference

Saturday, August 31, 2024

San Antonio, Texas, USA

Coach Jeff Traylor

Press Conference



UTSA 28, Kennesaw State 16

Q. Jeff, what was your message to your team in the locker room after this one?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Our defense was fantastic. They were pretty much dominant. We were emotional. Had three penalties that you just can't have. Offensively we started off really on fire, running the ball, throwing the ball at will. We're not good enough to overcome penalties. We're just not good enough.

Penalty got a penalty on Houston Thomas down there on our sideline. Stopped a drive. Another penalty on Oscar. Cost us a touchdown. Turned the Mike linebacker loose, running back didn't check it out before he got out of there. Turned Sam line back are loose, almost got him killed again. Then we got beat. Offensive lineman are going to get beat a couple times. That's just part of the game.

You can't be so not spot sound that you just turn a Mike loose and a Sam loose. That's very disappointing. Then we had the fumble as well. I think it spooked our quarterback to be honest with you.

Special teams-wise we were bad. We were bad on the punt team. We were bad on the field goal team. Kickoff return was good. Did a really good job on that team, and thank God. I think our Night Stalkers would've done good. That's our kickoff team. Tate did a good kicking it out. We were bad on our Green Beret team, which is our field goal team.

Always good when you can win, but we didn't play very well to be very honest with you. You got to celebrate wins. It's hard to win in college football.

Q. How do you feel about Owen's performance today?

JEFF TRAYLOR: There were some throws there late he

got a little spooked. Got out of there a little bit. But go back to, you know, you just can't turn the Mike linebacker loose, or Sam linebacker loose. We got to be better than that.

But, yeah, you give the kid time. He's a better athlete that people think he is. He can get out of there. But you can't let people run Scot free. I have to watch the video.

I don't remember many throws where I just felt like they were bad throws. I thought there was a couple times late he got off some stuff pretty quickly. I think he got spooked. I have not watched the video and need to watch that before I speak too strongly on that.

Q. You guys talked during the leadup to the year about some of the things you were ramping up through the preseason to be more ready to play closer to peak form today. As you see the product out on the field, how do you reflect on that effort?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Well, it wasn't peak form for sure. We got a lot to improve on.

So obviously defense is really good because they're mostly all returners. They're really good.

Offensively I would say we're a work in progress. Disappointed in our field goals because Chase is a returner. He was really good last year. New holder, and I didn't think we punted the ball very well. Their punter had the day of all days. He was smashing that thing. Chris is a really good returner and didn't have a good day today.

He'll be fine. We had a guy up 38 yards which is where he hits it and he was hitting 65 yarders and then he did it again and did it again, and so guess what, we backed him up. Guess what he did the next time? He shanked it and it lands and rolls.

It was literally one of those days. The more you tried the more you couldn't get out of your own way. Very frustrating day. Very frustrating. Thank God the Roadrunners won.



The turnover was the play of the game. Jimmy Wyrick, that's big time. That was big time. He's a wonderful human. Graduated from Stanford, and that was a big time play. I think stitch recovered it, who has been playing his tail off as well.

There's a couple plays back on defense, had a miscommunication that slipped out. That was unfortunate. Had a missed attack. What a great effort to by Elliott to run that thing down. Had a busted coverage there on the tight end. That's unfortunate.

But we played a ton of people and we got a lot to work on. But not peak performance, you're exactly right.

Q. Can you talk a little bit more about the play your defense gave up about 250 yards, but obviously there were some penalties that hurt as well. If you could just talk more about that.

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, we play a little differently. We gave up 50 yards rushing on a team that runs the ball that well. But they got some passes on us. I thought we played really well. The emotional penalties are disappointing. We gave up a third and 14. We were off the field. To a young man that's one of my better people and a really good player, and never seen that before out of him.

So we looked frustrated. But you got to give a lot of credit to Kennesaw, too, now. They played a really good game. They really did. They're very well coached. They do a go job defensively. Scheme wise, good players, too.

Did a good job redshirting all these kids. Another year older. That quarterback is a dude and No. 1 is a dude. Those guys can play for us right now.

Q. Jeff, what do you think happened with the Roadrunners rushing game today? Were they doing some stuff up front?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah. I mean, they did do a good job scheming up some stuff we had done in the past. I'm going to have to watch it. I'm going to have to watch it.

I just -- I don't know Bubba. They did a good job. They did a good job with boundary pressure, with field pressures, with internal pressures. We were close on a lot of them; just couldn't hit them.

It'll be good for us to watch. Good thing about playing a game this close is you played the whole game. We had to play the whole game. So that will be beneficial for us to get to watch the video.

Obviously it's very frustrating. When you're a quarterback and they can't protect you well and run the ball very well down the stretch, it's hard to play good back there. I don't know what that is exactly yet.

I identified the Mike coming through and the Sam coming off the edge, but we're really good at running some of those plays inside zone and counter, and we run inside zone -- we kick it with Oscar up in there as well. We just couldn't get it going.

We were in outside zone, and we didn't do well there either. A lot of hard, honest evaluation of what happened. I thought -- if you had to over simplify this, I felt like we lost momentum and those penalties just killed us, and we're just not good enough yet when that other team gets their juices up and we get our down a little bit.

I thought that hurt us. Early we were pretty excited and they were down and we had our way with them. We have to clean that up. The two that did it, I think Houston right in front of our bench. Not sure which tight end they called it on. And then Oscar. Those are two really good players. Interesting to go back and watch those two calls.

Q. Think you'll see some good things on film? First three offensive possessions you looked pretty crisp.

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah. I mean, yeah. Can't run the (indiscernible) sweep any better than we did, and got our freshmen out there who can really run, as you can tell. Call holding on one of the best tight ends I ever coached. Leroy is pretty good, too. We'll watch the video and we'll see. They made the call. Doesn't matter. They called it.

Q. How important was it for Owen taking the reins of the quarterback job to come out and be as strong as he was and what did you see in that first few drives?

JEFF TRAYLOR: We always want guys to come out and play well, especially when you're a quarterback and everybody talks about that position. I think it was good for him. He got knocked around. Had to run some. Had to make some contests throws. Wasn't always easy, and he missed some and he made some. There will be nobody harder on him than Owen.

We got to do a better job protecting him. Our screen game was good tonight. Worked really hard at that. That's improved. Very disappointed we couldn't get the ball down the field. That just what guts me. I think ya'll been around me long enough to know that really bothers me. Couldn't protect him long enough to get him down there.

Guess what? That next team coming, they like to come after the quarterback.

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San Antonio, Texas, USA

Owen McCown

Press Conference



UTSA 28, Kennesaw State 16

Q. Owen, what was the mood in the locker room after this game today?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, I think overall we got the win and that's most important, but obviously that second half was not where we wanted it to be, so that's -- we know we're better than that and we'll fix it.

But just overall satisfied we got the win.

Q. How will you grade your start today?

OWEN McCOWN: Pretty good. I think offensively in the first half I think Coach Burke and the rest of the guys around me did a really good job and we got to execute the offense really well.

Put a lot of points up in the first half. In the second half there were some bumps in the road, so we'll get back and look at that. But overall we got the win.

Q. Did you feel any nerves or jitters coming into today? What was your mindset like?

OWEN McCOWN: No, none at all. Not with the group around us and the coaching staff that prepares us. No, not at all.

Q. How important was it to get off to a hot start with the three touchdown drives early in the game?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, that's something we talked about. Starting out fast, set the tone of the game. Like I said, Coach Burke had some really good plays dialed up. My job is get to the playmakers, and that's what I try to do, and they were awesome.

Q. Was there anything you can point to that the

offense slowed down a little bit from there and through the second half? What changed for you guys?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, I think some self-inflicted wounds obviously, starting with the penalties, just holding penalties. Can't have those. Just kills drives. Some of the sacks, we'll have to get back and look at whether that was me getting the ball out of my hands or just protection-wise where we can fix that and be better next time.

Q. You guys talked through fall camp about the importance of starting out strong this year and having a better non-conference season that we've seen here in the years past. How did you feel like the effort was reflected in the performance today?

OWEN McCOWN: Good. Like you said, the first three drives we executed really well. Obviously we had some bumps in the road in the second half, but overall got the win and that's part of starting fast. It's a team game. Defense played a heck a game. Like I said, we're glad we got the win.

Q. When you watch the film today what do you think you're going to see?

OWEN McCOWN: I think like probably ya'll saw the first half was really well. We executed really well. The second half was self-inflicted wounds, whether that was penalties, sacks, just not executing up to our standards. Just little things like that that we'll fix.

Q. What was Kennesaw doing to shut down the run? Were they stacking the box? What happened there?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, just different stunts up front. They've got a good defense. They executed and adjusted really well in the second half. We have to look at how we can counter that better. They have a good defense, so...

Q. What did you think about the crowd today?

OWEN McCOWN: Awesome. Very electric. Nothing better than playing in front of the Alamodome.



Q. Some thoughts on next week. That's a rivalry game around here.

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, first of all we got to look where we went wrong here and how to clean that up. Obviously Texas State is a really good team, so we will just figure out how we can attack those guys and yeah, should be a fun one.

Q. You seemed to look to Devin McCuin a lot today. I know you guys go back quite a bit. How important was that connection or what led you guys to link up so often?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, I think that starts with play calling, and Coach Burke knows what kind of player Devyn is and how dynamic he is. My job is to get to him the ball, so great job by Coach Burke dialing up those plays, and, yeah, he's a great player.

Q. When did you find out you would be starting today. Was that a decision made this week or did that go back a little longer?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, it was this week. Yeah, Coach Traylor told me this week.

Q. What was your reaction when that happened, when you heard the news?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, I was excited. Obviously like any competitor is. But my job is to do my role as best I can, so that was part of it.

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Ken Robinson

Press Conference



when it comes to -- I know defense all comes down to assignments and everybody having their guy -- did you feel like you guys were locked in on that?

KEN ROBINSON: Yeah, I feel like we were. There is always some type of mistake when you're facing an offense like that during a game. For the most part, I feel like we did a good job.

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Q. Ken what was the mood like in the locker room after this one?

KEN ROBINSON: You know, everybody is happy to get a win, but we all know that we're better than that, better than what we put on today. Really just comes down to a lot of the pre-snap and post-snap issues and penalties and things like that.

So we go into next week and clean those up and we should be fine.

Q. Seemed like it was a tale of two halves. Can you point to anything specific that happened in the second half?

KEN ROBINSON: I can't point to anything specifically. Like I said, a lot of pre-snap and post-snap penalties carrying over from the end of the first half to the second half.

Like I said, just clean those up during the week and we should be fine.

Q. What were the challenges of all the different options and misdirection stuff?

KEN ROBINSON: Definitely, there is a lot of moving parts, a lot of options. A lot of, yeah, just a lot of options for the quarterback to choose from. You can be right 99% of the time, but that 1% where you get it wrong could definitely hurt you.

Credit to Kennesaw for exploiting that at times. I feel like our defense still held our own and put on a pretty good show outside of, like I said, the pre-snap, post-snap.

Q. From your perspective how sharp were you guys

Q. You guys talked through the preseason about the way you ramped things up to want to be sharper at this time of the year. Did you feel like we saw that today or something was missing?

KEN ROBINSON: I feel like we saw that physically for sure, both on the offensive end and on the defensive end. People just flying around, hitting people, making plays. Mentally we just, like I said, that all comes down to the pre-snap and post-snap penalties. Mentally we got to tighten up a little bit, and I feel like we can get that done this week.

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