

# University of Texas at San Antonio Football Media Conference

Saturday, October 19, 2024

San Antonio, Texas, USA

## Coach Jeff Traylor

Press Conference



going to make me angry today. So bring it on, baby. Let's go.

**Q. I was going to ask about between the turnovers and the injuries you had to battle through, what does it say about the team that you're able to persevere?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, those injuries are getting to me, man. It's exhausting. It's hard on the kids, their families, all the injuries. Two, it's hard to coach. It's hard to get better because you're always changing.

I don't know how many different lineups it is for us this season. I know it's why I got you two there. I know ya'll know exactly.

But, again, Devin can't go. DJ Allen is done for the year. Tore his ACL on the play last week. It's unbelievable how many guys we have that score touchdowns, they get season-ending injuries.

JT goes back out there today, catches his first pass of the game, get hit on the other knee. He is getting an MRI on the other knee right now.

Ken going down, another guy I've been with for five years. Really good football player. J Lou (phonetic) stepped up. Jamel, freshman stepped up. Willie didn't even practice this week. Willie got hurt. He was in concussion protocol after the East Carolina game. He was just doing a little half speed drill and made a cut and his opposite leg got hurt.

It's just been one of those years. We can't get healthy. Losing Joe Evans. I know this all sounds like excuses. I know. But it's just those guys don't blink. They don't blink. They keep working.

Andrew Acosta, one of my favorite kids I ever coached in my life, who now is our DFO. He never sent me anything encouraging, you know, but he sent me something this morning and he's like, coach I'm telling you, I've never seen the hotel so quiet. I've never seen everybody so well behaved. Your dudes are still ten toes down and they're going to show up today.

UTSA 38, Florida Atlantic 24

**Q. Jeff, you guys are back in the win column. How does that feel walking out of that locker room?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: Just happy for my kids. Those defensive kids and I been together a really long time. Oscar. Most of us been together five years and won a lot of ball games, so to get off to the start those guys have gone through, and what you had to face when that happens, when you don't play well, you just hate it for the kids, and especially some that have won most of their games and they're champions and they're doing the right thing and they've been doing the right thing.

I am glad to see them rewarded. Obviously it's been hard on me and I'm 56 years old. You can imagine how hard it is on 18 to 23 year old young men.

**Q. Jeff, what can you say about your defensive performance today? I think 203 total yards of production by FAU.**

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, even more than that, we turned it over there right before halftime, and we turned them over and got the ball back. From that moment on, I think they had 27 yards total. I think we had over 300 yards, maybe 320 from that moment on.

So you always hate to say there is one play in the game, but I thought that play was really, really big play. They had confused us twice. They did a really good job in the back end of giving us a look and we threw right into it. You know, he calmed back down and that was it.

Offensively we were so good we scored 55 points today. We scored 38 points for the Roadrunners and 17 for FAU. That was smart alec for you people that didn't catch that.

Look, I said no matter what, there is no way you're not



They did. I know it wasn't perfect, man, it wasn't beautiful at times, but that's another game we're going to the fourth quarter with either tied or losing, and ever triangle is up, every kid believes we're going to win the game, and they keep playing hard.

There is unbelievable lessons to be learned there, because life is hard, as it football.

**Q. Along those lines, you guys talked all week about mental toughness. How do you see them put that into action today?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: Have I said this yet? I don't want to repeat myself. I know I just talked to Andy. Did I tell you my idea about what we're going to do with the penalties yet? I told Dr. Compost I didn't want to do it because I was too afraid it would blow up in my face.

We did not say the word P-e-n-a-l-t-i-e-s the whole week. Not one time did we say the word, and we were going to give every single player a flag to start the game off. We were going to come out, and on the kickoff throw up 100 flags and get them all over with on the very first play of the game.

It's funny, we only had five today. I've never seen a team get two for running into the dang gum punt returner.

We were so much cleaner there. I don't know if it had anything to do with mental toughness or what this week, but maybe we were over-coaching it. Maybe we were just punishing them too much. Maybe we were belaboring the point so much we got it in their heads too much.

We were free today. I do know coming home to the Alamodome helps for whatever reason that is. To be 26 and 3 here is crazy.

**Q. It takes a keen eye for a coach to know when and where to call a time out. You called a time out right before Jamel scored that touchdown. What did you see on the field and what made you call that time out? Always benefits the team, so I'm sure you saw something on the field that would benefit them in that moment.**

JEFF TRAYLOR: No. That was actually all Owen. There is an RPO option there. If we get the look we want on the outside, we take that. If we don't get the look we want, we have an option to run the ball inside. And if we don't get the look we like in there, Owen has an option to take the single over there.

So that was all Owen. Just a really great catch and really

good job by Jamel getting his foot down. It's really fun when you're calm and executing. It's really frustrating when we don't.

**Q. The previous two games you made a point to emphasize that you didn't want your locker room to splinter at all. What does it say about what you've seen out of your team this last month and for them to have a game like today?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: I've never had it before. You know, as Greg mentioned the week before, coach, you've never been to 2-4 before, whatever the question was. Greg spoke it into existence. I've never been 2-4. But I have been on teams where I was an assistant, and Carey can remember them and anybody that's a part of a staff, when you lose those kind of gut wrenchers, they just feel different.

The whole staff, the wives, the families, they all know. It just spreads like a dad gum disease. Our seniors are just so damn good kids -- excuse me, Dr. Compost there -- such darn good kids -- as I have my cross outside on my neck there -- that they just hold us together. They really do believe in what we teach. It's who we are.

That's where I'm most proud of those guys. We got to celebrate this one, and man, we got to go on the road and get one. I would really love to get one on the road and get one and get that monkey off our back.

I still stand by if we hadn't had four of our first six this year on offense, I would love to know where the team would be. It's just the way the schedule fell.

**Q. What's your knee-jerk reaction to how the offense played, how Owen looked out there today?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: Obviously when they're in cover one and you got two beaters on the outside, now, the first one they tilted. They literally baited him. Tilted the corner, brought the safety.

Second one they did a great job making Chris inside release and Owen stared him down. That was just disappointing.

And then on the swing pass to Robert, we turned somebody loose up front and got hit as he was trying to throw the dang ball.

What I love about the kid is as soon as does that stuff I know everybody in the building is saying, they're going to say we're going to run inside zone right now because he's a young kid and he's struggling.

Dude comes right back and rips a slant. How about the throw on third down and whatever, the vertical exceptional to Houston Thomas?

Every time you're ready to give up on the kid he shows you something. This kid has real moxie to him.

**Q. The play of your front seven, your defensive line specifically put a ton of pressure on the quarterback today and may have been the difference I think.**

JEFF TRAYLOR: Best athlete I think we chased all year. I thought the kid was a really good quarterback. Man, we got after him. Playing at home, it just does something for us.

We get some juice going at this place. It's fun to watch. It's just fun to watch.

**Q. You know anything about JT or I think you said MRI is pending.**

JEFF TRAYLOR: I would rather not comment. Doesn't look good. There is not a better kid in the world, man. That one was gut wrenching. His first catch back. Kid hit him right on the other knee. I would say best case would be hyperextension. That's best case.

**Q. Jeff, you guys seemed to be in control for long stretches of the game and then they might hit a big play or force a turnover. What has to happen to keep those moments from snowballing? How were you able to keep the momentum on your side?**

JEFF TRAYLOR: It's just called football. I mean, I just really believe in the new era of college football that it's going to be -- each week going to be a bunch of really close games.

We were pretty dominant except for the three turnovers. But it's part of the game, right? It's just part of it. I can promise you when Owen comes up here in his interview he'll regret throwing those two things. It's part of the game. You got to keep playing.

I wish I had a better answer for you, but I've done it a long time. It's football. There is a lot of revisionist history that goes on around this place. We didn't monkey stomp many people since we been here together. Almost every game we're in the fourth quarter. It's hard to win college football games.

I can count a handful how many times we came out here and beat the heck out of somebody. It's hard to win. Tate

Sandell was big, too. Three field goals. That's huge.

God bless. Birds up.

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## Owen McCown

Press Conference



UTSA 38, Florida Atlantic 24

**Q. Owen, how was that locker room today's compared to the last few games?**

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah it was electric. Guys were dancing. I personally wasn't dancing, but a bunch of guys were dancing. It was great to get a win. Great feeling.

**Q. Did it feel like a monkey is off your back after this one?**

OWEN McCOWN: For sure. For sure. I think it says a lot about our program. To lose back-to-back conference game and turn around and still have great days of practice and respond like this says a lot about our program.

**Q. What was your, I guess, takeaway from the way the Roadrunner defense played today? Looks like they had a monster game.**

OWEN McCOWN: Man, they were awesome. I got to play better. I can't turn the ball over. But when I did -- there was one drive I believe I threw the pick and they came around and forced the fumble and they didn't score on that. On a short field, that's big time. They played a heck of a game.

**Q. What does it say about your team to be able to overcome the turnovers and injuries that you guys battled through today?**

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, in general, like I said, to lose back-to-back weeks and come back and respond, I think that was one of our keys words, was response, good or bad, like I said. To come back off two losses, and like it was today with two picks, for them to still step up like that says a lot.

**Q. Coach just mentioned to us that even after**

**throwing an interception you came right back out there and hit a slant pattern. What does it mean to have the confidence within yourself and know your coordinator has that confidence in you as well?**

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, starts with Coach Burke. Knowing he has confidence in me says a lot. Personally for me and what they've taught me is pick or touchdown, you come back and respond no matter what happens.

**Q. What it like for you working through so many injuries at wide receiver? How does that impact your process?**

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, really doesn't. That room is deep no matter who is out there. Just next-man-up mentality. Doesn't affect any process too much.

**Q. What do you think the biggest factor was for you today? Was it technique or attitude going into the game?**

OWEN McCOWN: A little bit of both. You know, coming in I know we had a lot of penalties and that was one of the forbidden words this week by Coach Traylor. To shut that down or not have as many penalties offensively was big time for us.

But I think also mentally, like I said, to respond off back-to-back weeks like that, back-to-back losses, says a lot about our program.

**Q. Can you just run us through those two interception?**

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, so first one it looked like a middle safety, so you have your two outside routes. Then at the snap they went to two safety and already had let the ball go, so they got me on that one.

On the second one, kind of the same play. It was one safety. Once again, go outside lanes, but Chris has to go outside release on that and I can't stare the pattern down. I have to look up the safety a little bit. Those are things we'll get cleaned up.

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**Q. What happened on that -- I guess the backward pass? Was that a trick play?**

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, yeah, it was supposed to be a trick play. We had some leakage early and so it was a backwards pass. Can't turn the ball over, so we'll try to clean that up. I know they will.

**Q. What did you see on the 42-yard touchdown on Patrick Overmyer?**

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, yeah, for sure. Great play call by Coach Burke. That's a play we been working for a while and thought we had a chance to hit it and we did.

Great call by him.

**Q. You guys also hit one to Jamel Hardy. What has he brought to the offense this year?**

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, young guy. Stepped up to the plate, especially with the injuries. Ya'll saw the one-handed catch a couple weeks ago that he had. The ability is there for him. He's still learning the offense. Heck of a catch today as well.

**Q. Seemed like you worked the middle of the field a little bit more today, especially deep down the middle there.**

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah.

**Q. Is that something you saw in the matchup? What led to that?**

OWEN McCOWN: No, really how the safeties play. Those two deep safeties, most of the time there is nobody in the middle. Like I said, it was a great job by Coach Burke anticipate that two deep look so we can attack the middle.

**Q. You mentioned the direction not to say "penalties" this week. What was the story around that or how did that help you guys?**

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, obviously it was a problem last week for us and the following weeks, or previous weeks. So like I said, it was a forbidden word this week. It started with our scout team. They gave us a great look on those move calls that FAU would do and our O-line held strong. I thought we were great from that standpoint.

**Q. What does it say about this team that after two rough losses before this game the locker room hasn't splintered and you guys seem to be together?**

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, that says a lot about our culture. I know the old guys, seniors, it's their last year. They want to end it right. For them to respond the way they do -- because obviously starts with the seniors and trickles down. For them to respond, especially like after the two losses and then like today, responding from the two interceptions, then the defense is still playing great.

Obviously still coming back and scoring like that just says a lot about our program.

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## Brandon Brown Press Conference



UTSA 38, Florida Atlantic 24

**Q. Brandon, what was the mood like in the locker room after this one as compared to the previous two games?**

BRANDON BROWN: Just guys being pretty juiced up in the locker room. Everybody excited. We had a rough past couple weeks. Just it's hard to win in college football, so we are just excited for that.

**Q. What can you say about the play of the defense? Looked like you guys were pretty dominant out there for most of the game.**

BRANDON BROWN: Yeah, this game I feel like we played it as a whole more than anything. I feel like we played more buttoned up as we needed to, cleaning up flags and pre- and post-snap penalties. Then the guys covering the back end for us, we were able to get penetration up front.

**Q. Jeff and Owen were telling us that the word "penalty" was banned from the facility this week.**

BRANDON BROWN: Yeah. He liked to spell it out.

**Q. Yeah. What's that mental part of just trying to get over that hump?**

BRANDON BROWN: Just guys locking in. I feel like the flag and all that stuff, it's really a mental thing, so just getting guys -- getting in guy's heads that, don't panic in certain situations to where you are going to get a flag and stuff like that. Or a mental error. Like post-snap penalties and getting like unnecessary and stuff like that. You know, we could be better cleaning up that.

**Q. What does it say about this team to have the ability to battle through the amount of injuries and turnovers and things like that that popped up today?**

BRANDON BROWN: Oh, you know, healthy teams don't win championships, tough ones do. I feel like everybody know we have a lot of people going down. We are pretty light on both sides of the ball.

Doesn't matter. We still have to stack days and get better.

**Q. How do you compare this defensive effort to previous games this season? Feel like this was one of your best shows?**

BRANDON BROWN: Definitely one of our best shows, but still can be better. There were still errors and MAs we can fix with guys doing their job even more and guys doing their 1/11th so we can dominate more.

**Q. Seems like you guys would have a lot of really successful plays and then they might break one or two big ones here or there. Is there some frustration that comes with that or how do you react in a game like that?**

BRANDON BROWN: Just next-play mentality. You know, you don't want to turn the one bad play into two. We are just on to the next play. Short-term memory.

**Q. What can you say about the play of the front seven, the defensive line specifically? Looked like you guys were getting after it.**

BRANDON BROWN: We got a great back end. This is one of our best back ends. I've been here for four years. This is one of our best classes in the back end.

You know, like I said before, it was the flags that were killing us with that, so with them being cleaner back there it was just the penetration up front was just -- we were ready to eat. Us playing more buttoned up and not having as many flags, we're going to show up.

**Q. Was there something specifically with this matchup? That was a super athletic quarterback you guys went up against and still got home against them.**

BRANDON BROWN: It was emphasized that he liked to use his legs, so we tried to do our best of putting him in situations to get him to scramble and stuff like that to what we wanted to. Then when we got him to a spot we wanted to get him, make the play.

**Q. With so many offensive injuries, was there any sort of pressure on you guys this week from the defense to hold up their end of the bargain?**

BRANDON BROWN: No pressure. We just got to do our job. We know those guys are needing us anyway. Those guys are tough. Like I said before, tough teams win championships. We have guys that's ready to step up any time.

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