

University of Texas at San Antonio Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 13, 2025

San Antonio, Texas, USA

Jeff Traylor

Press Conference



Happy that we got that stink off of us. It's just a long time. When you're a basketball coach, you get to play in two or three more days. Baseball, football, you listen to the firing squad for seven straight days.

Q. What did you see from your defense? I think three turnovers in the first four possessions of the game.

JEFF TRAYLOR: I thought our plan was good, and our guys were just aggressive in going to the ball and flying to the football. We had identified some opportunities we thought we might have, and those opportunities showed up. Our guys took advantage of it.

We were on a short field most of the night. So we were really efficient. Our stats don't look like they're crazily overwhelming, but we were playing on a short field the entire night. So I'll take that all the time.

Q. With how you guys were feeling a week ago, how important was it to put together a game like this? How much different are the emotions in the locker room right now?

JEFF TRAYLOR: They're better. We don't ever get into all that nonsense, honestly. I told you a million times, we just try to ignore the noise, man. You got to protect your mind, protect your soul. When you're in the game that we're in, that's what we spend most of our time doing, protecting our mind and protecting our souls.

That means getting off that telephone and keeping that garbage out of your life and listening to the people that love you and want what's best for you and not maybe so much a media person that's trying to write a good story.

Q. What is it about Robert Henry and these big plays to start second halves?

JEFF TRAYLOR: I've told you all, for the first drive of the second half, I wouldn't ignore his first carry, I'd be looking. It's pretty amazing now. I think it's five games in a row the kid's got over 100 yards.

Had a rough week too. Had a rough week. He had some

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Q. Jeff, you guys pick up the first win of the season. What was your message to the guys in the locker room?

JEFF TRAYLOR: The video is still the video, and it doesn't matter what the score is. It just feels a whole lot better when you've got more than the other team does.

The things we went to work on defensively, we really stressed turnovers this week, and we really thought we had some real opportunities, and our guys were really flying to the ball today. That showed up. We really stressed our defensive backs in the backfield, just that magic moment being able to high point the thing, showed up. We still had two busts again, which gave up two easy touchdowns.

Offensively, just our pad level. We didn't like the way we strained last week. We didn't think we did a great job at times. Our receivers had great strain on the perimeter. Our tight ends had great strain. Our O-line had great strain. I think that's five game in a row for Robert over 100 yards. We didn't allow a sack again, no turnovers.

I really talked to Owen McCown about getting through his progressions. Quick picking something and staying on it. He did a great job getting through his reads. Played almost as efficient as I've seen him play.

And our special teams, we were really disappointed. Our night started with our kickoff team, and we really worked hard this week at that. That showed up, and we worked very hard on our punt return team. We didn't really get a chance to, but our fundamentals were so much better.

We always talk about, when you've got great culture, your teams always give you what you emphasize, and those were what we emphasized this week, and that showed up.

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things personally that were a huge distraction for him, and he did a really good job of refocusing. I was proud of him. We gave him some good perspective. I told him to look at that phone of his, and if Dante's healthy, it's all good. All that other stuff, we can replace.

I'm really proud of his mental toughness and how he showed up for the team. I talked to his mom and his sisters about it last night, how proud I was of Robert.

Q. You mentioned a little bit ago all the different areas you feel like you guys focused on and were able to clean up this week. What does that do for your feelings going forward on the trajectory of this team?

JEFF TRAYLOR: It's not just this team, it's all of our teams. We've always taken that to heart, man. They're good kids. They don't want to disappoint us, and we don't want to disappoint them.

We got a lot of stuff this week. I know it feels better, and you all are going to say some things are better. I don't know, y'all are so spoiled, you might still be upset, I don't know. Whatever it is, we're not going to listen to. We've got to look at that video, and what that video tells us, we've got to go to work on it.

Right off the top of my head, I don't have my list yet, but after I watch the game tonight, me and Care Bear going to go out and do some recruiting tonight and see if we can get this corner to stay committed to us. After that, I'm going to listen to her tell me about all the things I didn't do very well tonight, and then I won't be able to sleep. So I'll get my laptop and watch the game.

I'll let you know next week what the points of emphasis are, brother Greg. I'm sure you and J.J. on your nice little podcast will have it all broken down. I'll get my coaches to watch it, and we don't have to grade the video.

Q. AJ Wilson had a nice game. Is that something you wanted to do going into this game or just natural with Amador not playing tonight?

JEFF TRAYLOR: No, that's just AJ working his tail off. He just keeps doing it. We've been down Jamel Hardy all year. That's a guy who was going to be a starter. We went without David tonight, who's obviously a starter.

They didn't have 6 either. I told my guys before the game we're trading Amador and Hardy for 6. That's kind of a wash because 6 is a really good player for Clint as well. That's just for AJ's work, had nothing to do with David. Had David been there or not, been there or not, AJ would still go out there and run that post route tonight. David

didn't run any post routes.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the second half. It looked like that backup quarterback had a little juice today.

JEFF TRAYLOR: He's good. He's a good football player. I wish Clint would have let us know he was going to play both of them so we could have prepared for both of them. That's two different kinds of players.

Man, he played his tail off, with his feet, with his arm. I told my guys all week, I thought he was -- and Richard too. Richard is a good football player. UIW has done a fantastic job. They've been good for a while now. They're a very good opponent and much respect for Clint and the job they've done.

And the president and the AD, that's three straight coaches now. Started with Eric, gone to GJ and Clint, that's impressive when a university can roll off that consistency with the turnovers those guys have had. A lot of respect to the president, AD, and the university as well.

Q. Shad Banks had another big game, an interception, a fumble recovery. He keeps delivering week after week. What have you seen out of him?

JEFF TRAYLOR: There's a reason I put him in the 4 spot on the hands team. Whenever you're the guy catching the ball for Coach Traylor on the hands team, that usually means that's Izzy, the White House, that's everything I'm putting that kid on. When you put somebody in that 4 spot, the one who has to decide whether to go block or make a catch, guess who that was? Shad Banks.

This game, the hands team, it all sounds fun because we got the return. If we don't make the play, things get a little crazy. He also -- to your point, interception, fumble, and recovery on an onsides kick for the hands team. What a joy that kid is. You see why he got voted in that zero. He's an absolute blast to coach every day, and he dropped one of the easiest interceptions of his whole life tonight.

Q. You had three sacks in this game, and we saw Nnanna get some slaps for the first time in a while. How do you feel about the pass rush on this one?

JEFF TRAYLOR: We're getting better. You might have hit a point of emphasis for this week. That's one of the ones we have for this week. We got after him. We did. Whenever I have time, we have three sacks. He got away from us too. He made some heck of a plays with his feet in the second half. Yeah, Vic and Nnanna and Don out there on that wheel, they'll get better. We're working.



We changed all 11 of those guys, so there's all new heads over there, new faces over there, and they're getting better.

My first great athlete ever is here, Natalie, state champion tennis player. You need to talk to her about what a great tennis coach I was back in the day. She never beat me. She never has beaten me. That's a true story. If you don't believe me, just ask me. God bless. Birds up.

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Owen McCown

Press Conference



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Q. Owen, a little bit different locker room, I guess, this week as opposed to last week?

OWEN McCOWN: For sure, a hundred percent. Very excited to get the win for sure.

Q. What did you see -- what do you think you're going to see on film once you watch this game?

OWEN McCOWN: A lot of execution. Big thing for me that Coach Traylor wanted to see is basically just me getting to my reads and progression-wise. I think the completion percentage is a reflection of that. Obviously that comes with RPO decisions, making drop-back decisions, you name it. Definitely proud of myself in that part of the game.

Q. How big of a role did AJ Wilson play today?

OWEN McCOWN: Huge role. AJ is one of those transfers we're super excited to get. His big play ability, I believe you saw it. I believe he finished with 99 yards. Looking at the stats, I wish he got 100. AJ is a helluva player, and my job is to get him the ball. Super excited for AJ.

Q. The way you guys were feeling a week ago, how important was it to have a game like today?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, we responded great as a group. Obviously when you lose a rival game, it kind of stings a lot. We put it past us pretty quick. Guys did a great job of sticking together. Had a great week of practice and obviously got the win.

Q. Coach was telling us that a lot of the points of emphasis you guys set during the week you were able to hit today. How does that change your outlook going forward? Where do you think this team stands now and what you can accomplish?

OWEN McCOWN: We did a great job responding. Coach had a couple of key points for us as an offense, and we executed at a high level. Want to give a shout out to O-line, obviously rushed for over 200 yards and no sacks. Any time we do that, we're in good hands for sure.

Q. You talked about the rushing game. Can you talk about Robert Henry?

OWEN McCOWN: First and foremost, and Rob will tell you this, it starts with the guys up front. They did a helluva job to go over 200 yards rushing and no sacks. Shout out to those guys.

Rob's a Sunday player. You all see it. For him to be over 100 yards rushing once again, he's always in the game no matter what. Rob, and then obviously you had to point out coming out in the second half, big emphasis for us in the middle eight to get that first touchdown coming out of the half, once again, Robert breaking another long run was huge for us.

Q. It seemed like you guys leaned on the underneath passing game pretty heavily. Was that something you saw in the matchup, or what led to that approach?

OWEN McCOWN: RPOs, D-line, kept twisting and taking away the run lanes for Robert, and it opened up the run game on the outside, which is receiver, bubble screens, whatever that is, so yeah.

Q. Were you pleased with the offensive output overall? What was your general overview of how you guys played as a unit?

OWEN McCOWN: I thought we played really strong. You look at the numbers, it's a completion of the pass game. I'm very pleased with that. And the run game, over 230 yards rushing. So definitely pleased.

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Shad Banks Jr.

Press Conference



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Q. Shad, a little bit different mood in the locker room after this week?

SHAD BANKS JR.: Yeah, man, it's always fun after a win. First one, just an amazing feeling to get a W.

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

SHAD BANKS JR.: I mean, we gave up a few plays. Still a lot of things we've got to correct, a lot of miscommunication and stuff like that, but I think we played a lot better. We came out, forced turnovers, got them behind the sticks, and I think the boys were flying around, and we made plays.

Q. How important was it to have a performance like that given how everybody was feeling a week ago?

SHAD BANKS JR.: Yeah, each week we always worry about ourselves. We come out and try to be the best UTSA we can possibly be. It's never about the opponent, it's about us.

So we just came out there. Coach told us it was a big emphasis on getting to the ball, forcing turnovers, and getting to the QB. So I think we did a great job doing that today.

Q. I was just about to ask about that. Coach said the points you guys targeted in practice, most of them showed up on the field today. Is that kind of meaningful when you're able to put that into action?

SHAD BANKS JR.: Yeah, for sure. Like I said, no game is ever going to be perfect. It's hard to have perfect plays. But when you're coming out there and you're flying around and you're doing -- you're putting in a perfect effort,

everything else is going to handle itself.

So I think everybody just try to come in and do our assignment, and D-line trying to get to the QB. Everybody else trying to force turnovers, trying to get the ball out.

Q. There was a lot of emotion on the field tonight. Did that have anything to do with the start to the season or just the tenacity you all were playing with tonight?

SHAD BANKS JR.: Yeah, we were just out there flying around. It had nothing to do with the start of the season. It had nothing to do with any of that. Really I just think it's the battle of San Antonio. So I think it got a little chippy.

Yeah, it was a fun game. I think we played okay, pretty decent.

Q. You touched on the pass rush. How did you feel about the way you got after the quarterback today? What was your overall impression?

SHAD BANKS JR.: Man, I just want to give a big shout out to the D-line, man. Coaches are just pushing them all week about getting to the quarterback and how we haven't done that. I think we took that as a challenge, and they came out with their head on fire. They came out to rush the QB, and that's what they did.

Q. When you see those different areas of improvement that you guys were able to hit this week, how does that sort of change your outlook going forward? What are your feelings on the rest of the season and what lies ahead?

SHAD BANKS JR.: My outlook is still the same. I know what the guys are capable of. I know what our coaches are capable of. I think, when we put everything together, it's still not all the way together, but when we do, this team is going to be -- the sky's the limit.

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