University of Texas at San Antonio Football Media Conference

Thursday, October 8, 2026

San Antonio, Texas, USA

Coach Jeff Traylor

Press Conference

UTSA 31, South Florida 24

JEFF TRAYLOR: What is that movie, JJ, where -- I'll probably get in trouble for this, where they go, are we not entertained? What that movie?

Q. Gladiator.

JEFF TRAYLOR: Gladiator. Rebecca is going to kill me for opening up with that tonight. That's what I feel. Are we not entertained?

What's up?

Q. Jeff, take me through the two-minute drive. Seemed like perfect clock management, perfect execution. Your quarterback had a few big plays there.

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, kid is special. I'm glad ya'll get to see him healthy. I wish I could have seen him that way all last year. He took a lot of unnecessary flack, and I'm glad he's healthy. Wish you could've seen him like that his whole career. Saw his that way his first year, and how you're getting to see him his third year.

Kid is just special. Some of it was design, some of that was just effort, and some of that was just guts. When you got a great quarterback, man, you always got a chance.

I know that's what the question was and I answered it, but I don't want that to be the story. Will Henderson was fantastic. We had 277 yards second half. Our offensive line, who I challenged all the week, I didn't know if we could block these guys.

I'm just disappointed in me. I got conservative and tried to run the game out by handing it off. It's so not in my nature. I thought we had them on the ropes. Disappointed in myself honestly that I didn't give Owen a chance more. I took the ball out of his hand with some great backs.

It's one of those kind of things you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. I'm mad at myself. I should have ended that game sooner.

Q. Staying on the offense, what changed in the second half that you scored on all four drives, all four sustained drives, too?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, you could just tell at halftime. I keep telling ya'll this. The measure of a man or a women, I mean, it's as old as time, MLK, all over the world, right? Where you are at a time of crisis.

It's easy when you go home and there is money in the account and car's got gas and children aren't crying. Air condition is right at 72. That crap doesn't happen very much in life. Most of the time, car is out of gas, don't have enough money, children are crying, wife is mad, and you got to hang in there.

We been down a lot this year. Way too much for my liking. I think we been behind almost in every fricking game, but we are calm in the moment and our kids listen and they believe every word we tell them and they go out there and execute.

You don't get groups like that very much, man. They're just special, special humans.

Q. Along those same lines, this continues your best start since 2021. Do you see the ingredients for this to be a special season for you guys?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Are you on Navy's team or you know UTSA's team? We got to enjoy tonight, Greg, and we got to prepare for Navy. But they're for trying to walk me into that trap.

Q. Jeff, this is the second straight year where somebody calls into question the authenticity of the Alamodome and the sound and all the noises. I guess my question is: Why do teams feel comfortable doing that and what is your take after the game now?

JEFF TRAYLOR: It just so happens that this week is integrity for us, that's our culture (indiscernible) this week. I think those coaches say it -- I don't think they really believe that. I mean, the president that hired me and the AD that hired me, they would never do that. Jeff Traylor would find a way to pump noise in here. Those two won't let me, and I've been working for the same people my entire life as a head coach, as a college coach.

They won't do it.

So I take it as a challenge at my president and AD. My players take it as challenge at me. My former players take it as challenge for everything we have done here. Like it's all been bogus, it's all not been real, it's not been earned.

Because when you study it, 26-1 in conference; 36-5. That shouldn't happen San Antonio. It's almost like they're telling us we don't deserve that. That he how we take that. I'm not spinning it.

It just keeps happening. It just keeps being created. And I hope they keep doing it. And what great job our administration, our marketing team did. That was a great idea how they spun that thing. That was fantastic.

Q. When you go out of your way to avoid doing that like you did against Texas State, giving bulletin board material, how excited do you get when you do get that and you're able to sell it to your players a little bit?

JEFF TRAYLOR: I don't keep up with all that, but I do get informed by my good buddy, JJ Perez. I get killed for not being more aggressive with my mouth when it comes to talking stuff about the other opponents.

I believe strongly anything you give the other team it helps in practice. I don't know that it helps that night. I don't think tonight we played any different because of what he said. I do think it helped in practice. So I'm just not going to give the other team bullet board material during the week because it helps practice.

Now, I will tell you with AI nowadays it does concern me somebody is going to start creating stuff. That scares the heck out of me. I think my reputation precedes itself and I think if it's out there, they'd go, Jeff Traylor would hopefully never do that.

Q. Jeff, you mentioned last week the locker room was a little subdued. Take us in there this week.

JEFF TRAYLOR: It wasn't subdued. That's as wild as I've seen that locker room in a minute, you know. I'm happy for 'em, man. They worked so hard since January. I keep telling them all the time. I do it too. I talked to Terry about it before the game. She asked me how I was doing. I was like, I just hate this -- I hate to feeling, this nervousness, but I'm so addicted to it.

We did a good job with our personal triangles this year. I just really went with my triangle and I looked at what my history was, who my heroes are, what my highlights are, what my why is, what my E plus R equal O plan is, what my walk-up song.

And my identity is not winning football games. Our identity in the that. Our identity is to do the very best we can do at all times. My president says it to me every time I come out here. He always tells me to have fun, and I always say back to him, I'm going to try.

But I struggle having fun because I love my team so much. I love my coaches so much. I love the people that I work for and my university and my city. I just want everybody happy, and I know when we win everybody is just so happy.

Q. Jeff, what led to A'Marion Peterson's big night tonight?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Ubuntu. He is a total team player. Not about himself at all. He plays off of Will, plays off of Brandon. He is great human being. He has great parents. Came from a great Texas high school football program. He's just got it in his DNA and he's a joy to coach.

Q. Jeff, you lost Brandon Tucker due to a targeting call. How did your defense rally around the loss of its leading tackler?

JEFF TRAYLOR: It hurt us. We had him on third and 12 on that one. Was it a good call? Haven't seen it yet. It was frustrating, I know that. He's a great linebacker. It hurt us.

They got to us a few times with a running back out on the swing. You'll see it when you're grading the video yourselves. It hurt us. But he's a great leader. Just see him on the sideline just Ubuntu the whole time. Just encouraging his teammates, cheering everybody. He was almost spiritual.

And our kids rallied, man. They just freaking rallied. It was really a joy to coach them. They were just special.

Q. Jeff, you mentioned the identity of this group a moment ago. What does it say about this team and its identity that you've been in four close games now in the fourth quarter and you pulled through in all of

them?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, you're going to have to kill us. We say it all the time around here. The champion has the ability to play one play longer than his opponent does. You're going to have to choke us out. We're not going to go away.

Just like the University of Texas text game. We're not going away. You're going to have to choke us out. We're going to keep fighting. Just who this group of kids are. They're fun.

Q. So probably the most physical game you guys have played so far and you guys were able to come up with the win on primetime slot, ESPN. How is that pregame journal entry looking right now?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, you know, I really question myself. We didn't put shoulder pads on one time this week. We jogged all week. Didn't go full speed once. I'm old school as hell when it comes to that stuff.

So early in the game we're not tacking and we're blocking, who do you think I'm blaming? I'm literally blaming me. I just said to myself, I pray we're going to have more energy than them late in the game, because I just did not tax them this week at all.

My son coaches with the Vikings. He was adamant. He knows his father. I tried to tell him my tackles were not pass protecting worth a crap. We had to work on our drop step. Jordan was like, dad, no. Dad, no. Let it go. You got to walk them and jog them this week. Freshest team is going to win.

That came from Brian and Mike and all my people that I listen to. Everybody was adamant for me to not be me and back down. So I questioned myself. I was like, did I do the right thing? First time in my life I had a short week and we didn't hit once.

Owen all of them we're like, this is awesome. I feel like a basketball player again. We just go out here, we jog around a little bit, and we're going to play a basketball game the next day.

I was like, we're going to get killed. They are all so relaxed and happy and so energetic and I thought, we're going to get murdered. So I questioned myself. But the next time we play on a short Thursday I can promise you we're going to walk and not put pads on.

Q. How does it feel to be 5-1?

JEFF TRAYLOR: You know, surreal. I just -- I'm really happy for my kids. If we can stay in the fight -- we're not even good yet. We got stuff to get better at. We got a lot of work left.

We're halfway through the season and I know ya'll are thinking, well when are we going to get good. My offensive line is get healthier. We barely made it tonight. We limped home with those tackles. Like they limped home.

I'm happy. We got a good break here. We're going work tomorrow and get this game knocked out.

Going to give these guys Saturday off, which is not in my nature at all. Coaches are not getting the day off. I've already -- I knew that was coming next, so I got in front of that quickly.

Navy has a team that just frustrated the heck out of us. They do a lot of weird, weird, wild stuff. Great coach. Huge fan of Brian's. I think he does a great, great job. It doesn't matter what their record is, they're going to play the same way every time they spot the freaking football. I have a ton of respect for those guys.

Q. Congratulations.

JEFF TRAYLOR: Thank you, ma'am.

Q. I spoke with Owen two weeks ago. He was really up on Ubuntu. You said it a couple times today. I wanted to get more of your take on when it means to you, how often you guys go through that phrase, and I wanted to know, I went to a restaurant call Ubuntu last week. I had to pick up some food. I am Nigerian.

JEFF TRAYLOR: Where?

Q. On Grissom Road.

JEFF TRAYLOR: Oh, my goodness.

Q. Wondering if you guys would be interested in patronizing it.

JEFF TRAYLOR: For sure I would. We got NIL right here live and in person. Yeah, I did not know that. We speak on it every day. Speak on it every day. I love the read and I think Nelson Mandela's story is one of the most amazing stories of all-time for somebody that went through so many and still loved people.

That is the only way to get this thing fixed in our own country. Got to quit finding out what's wrong with everybody and find out what's right with everybody.

Ubuntu is I am because we are. In this new world, I'm telling you it's going to give us a fighting chance. In the new rev share ear where everybody is about getting another agent, getting more money, and getting out, if you can get a group to believe -- I know it's corny as hell; I sound like Ted Lasso right now -- we got to out-culture people. We got to beat them with our culture.

Now, you got to have some help. You can't go out there with nothing. But you got to have some help. But you can out-culture people in this new world, and I think we just caught lightning in a bottle. When your best players are Will Henderson and AP who are the sweetest kids in the world and Owen McCown and David Amador and over there on defense, Big Baby at nose card, Josiah, Jeremiah, those are --Vega, Pollard, Brandon Tucker, we just got some great fricking kids, man.

I know I keep saying that, but it is what it is. I got to find that restaurant. That's too good.

Q. In game I know it's always a big step, but in game 8-14 on third downs. How big was that stat tonight?

JEFF TRAYLOR: Yeah, I haven't had a chance to look at it yet. Appreciate you pointing that out. Probably means we were pretty good on first and second down. We tried really hard tonight and win on first and second down to try to give us a fighting chance on third. We were really worried about dropping back and protecting against No. 1 and 7, and 4 and 11 and 77 and 28 and 15 -- I can go on for a minute.

That's guys are super talented. I thought our pace of play helped on third down as well, going turbos. So, yeah, thank you for noticing that. And we haven't been real good at that throughout the year. It's a little misleading because we go for it on fourth down so much.

Tonight I didn't go for it much. That one hurt me right before halftime, but I was scared. You know, 49 yard field goal, I just didn't know. Fourth and two and a half -- what I regret is not running the ball twice. I was very mad at myself.

So thank you.

Q. And then follow with you talked about the crowd earlier. On a night where you were competing against the Spurs' first preseason game, the Dallas Cowboys were in the national Thursday window, Thursday night high school football, I felt like down there on the sideline the environment was incredible. What did you think?

JEFF TRAYLOR: The noise was great. I wouldn't be honest if my kids weren't disappointed they saw so many seats. They were disappointed. I tried to warn them. Tried to explain to them that Thursday night Spurs, Cowboys, the very thing said. I tried to warn them. I had some kids that were pretty upset.

Not mad at anybody. They like to play in front of big crowds. The people what were here, I'm so thankful for the 16,000, whatever the number was. But I told them, win tonight and watch the city get hopping at 7:00 next Saturday. My job as the head coach is to win football games and help marketing to help tickets, to help that -- that's what my job is.

My job is not to worry about all that stuff. But I do have to worry about may kids. Again, I don't want to paint a picture they were mad. They were just disappointed. They thought because of their start it was going to be 40,000. That's the Lord telling me to shut up.

Q. What about that student section, some of those guys showed up three hours...

JEFF TRAYLOR: That was incredible. There wasn't any seats there, and they were fricking loud and they were awesome. I know we made a real effort as a university to go -- get to those kids. They showed up and showed out and they were loud.

I thought them, and then the other 16,000 were great. Great. And I even noticed the video up there kind of poking a little fun and that got everybody riled up. Whoever did that it was on pointe. It was on pointe.

That ya'll. God bless.

Birds Up.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

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San Antonio, Texas, USA

Owen McCown

Press Conference

UTSA 31, South Florida 24

Q. Owen, what was it like in the locker room?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, it was awesome. You know, soon as -- once again, another late drive like that, something we worked on all offseason. Coach Traylor hit his little dance like he normally does after our win, so super fun, super electric in the locker room.

Q. Was it a different dance or the same one?

OWEN McCOWN: No, he's got a little go-to. I won't spill the beans too much. It's Coach Traylor's dance, we all do it, so that's our thing for sure.

Q. Owen, take me through that last drive. What did you see from South Florida and just what was going through your head?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, you know, we knew they were going to mix up a bunch of different coverages, so wasn't so much about what they were doing. It's just executing the plays that were called. I thought Coach Bowie did a great job really timing when to run the ball, because they were such light boxes. You know, those safeties and DBs are out of there thinking it's a bunch of pass.

But Coach Bowie did a great job calling that and kind of giving me a heads up on if this run, maybe we can get to this run, and we did that throughout the whole week.

Really just trusting our backs and our line up front and that really got the job done.

Q. (No microphone.)

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, it was a play we hit David kind of before halftime, that little option with David over the middle. They covered it well and matched it well. Protection was great, but at that point I was -- just didn't see anything there. Was ready to go make a play and did.

Q. Against Texas State Traylor told us he told you on the last drive, go win it. Was there a similar message on the sideline in this one?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, I keep telling people there wasn't too much that was said. We all knew the scenario. Went South Florida went up, took the lead, there was just a bunch of looking at each other and a bunch of nods. Like we knew what the scenario was. Let's go do it, and that's what we did.

Q. What does it do for your confidence to keep stacking these late-game comeback wins?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, it's huge. That's what this team is made up. Our Ubuntu mindset is we really grasp onto that and it's huge. Last week defense had our back. This week the offense scored late to win the game.

So just kind of piggybacking off one another like that that is huge for a team and leads to a ton of success.

Q. Coach Traylor said he was so happy that we finally get to see you healthy and moving around. Just talk about your health a little bit and how much that played into your performance tonight.

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, I'm very happy, too. I feel super great, super healthy. Obviously had the surgery and then came back from that. All credit to the trainers.

But to be able to be myself like I know I can be, and athlete that I am, is super comforting just moving around. Once again, my job is to distribute the ball to those guys tonight. They're the real playmakers.

Q. You talked after the Texas State game about how important it was for you to deliver a comeback drive in the closing minutes and get that monkey off your back a little bit. Did it feel different today being in that scenario again today now that you've done it?

OWEN McCOWN: Not really. I think we worked on it so much this offseason. Like I said, the second South Florida went up we all knew what the scenario was, knew what we worked on all offseason in practice.

You can say it's a little different pressure in the game because the lights are on and it's a game scenario, but it all starts with the guys up front. We ride their backs 100 percent so take us where we want to go.

Q. You have played four games now in the season that were within one score in the fourth quarter and pulled them all out. What does that say about this team?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, huge. Once again, that's Coach Traylor's message. He said nowadays it's always going to be like this. They're just a bunch of good teams. So it's just going to be able to -- who can play one play longer. That's a saying he says a lot, so really we're just trying to execute that, and like I said something we worked on all offseason.

Q. Frank Harris is known as a pretty legendary scrambler in this program. Felt like you were challenging him for the title tonight. What is it about your scrambling ability that you know or feel or can see when a play comes to an ad lib?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, I appreciate that. Frank is a legend, so to even be compared to that is honoring.

Man, just trying to be the athlete I am. Once again, being healthy helps a ton. So just if it calls for me to go scramble and make a play, then that's what I've been coached to do and that's what I will go do.

Q. How does it feel to be 5-1?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, feels great. You know, once again, the same message as last week. We kind of have to have the 12-hour, 24-hour rule. I know we are on an earlier Thursday game, but we still have to celebrate this one tonight and a little bit tomorrow, learn from it, and then get ready for another really good conference opponent next week in Navy. So that's what we'll do.

Q. Talk to Owen Pewee earlier. He said that Brian Hartline's comments energized the team throughout practice on a short week.

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah.

Q. What did those comments do for you?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, not too much. You know, some guys are motivated that way. I think our motivation is through or motto, like I said Ubuntu, having each other's backs. That's mainly where our motivation comes from.

Sure, a little external noise like that doesn't hurt, but, man, it was just purely out of the love for one another that we have for each other in the locker room. That's really what we're motivated on.

Q. Second straight year a coach has come in here and said that same type of sentiment. Why do you think they feel comfortable saying something like that, and does it make it sweeter when you're able to defend your fans and pick up the win?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, I guess because of our ridiculous home record, so I guess they find some type of thing. Once again, we're not worried about that too much. Just worried about playing our game, our style of football, and continuing to win at home.

Q. Was there something you saw in that first direct snap that you thought you could have success later in the game?

OWEN McCOWN: Which one?

Q. The one where AP gets the 53-yard touchdown.

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah. Yeah, that's a short yardage play we been working on all year. AP, a big back, one of the three really elite backs that we have. So any time he's in we trust him 100 percent to get that one or two yards.

And in that scenario with all the guys hunched down with it being short yardage situation there, a gap could pop like that and that's happened. We're proud of AP, but ultimately the guys up front also.

Q. Did that final drive feel like Texas State where a field goal will do it, but was the whole mission just a touchdown the entire time?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, I think it's just go win the game, whether it's a field goal or a touchdown. Sure enough, we were popping those runs enough to where Will gets the edge and he's gone. So I'm down on the one yard line and then that same direction that play won the game for us.

Obviously we were in field goal range also, but that scenario if it you can score a touchdown, yeah, go do it.

Q. Being in these constant late-game situations, how much confidence have you gained in yourself and your teammates to just go out there and execute?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, you have to have confidence in your teammates, and it starts with our offseason program, learning about one another, learning ourselves first and foremost, and then continuing to pour into one another.

But I've always been confident in myself in these late-game scenarios. I just think it hasn't gone our way the past couple years. But this year it happening twice, because of all the work we put in in the offseason through getting to know one another and also executing in these situations in practice.

Q. Is this the most confident you felt in this team the whole time you've been here at this program?

OWEN McCOWN: Yeah, for sure. I think every time I step out there, especially step on the field this year, I'm super confident. Confident just because of the mindset I know the guys have with one another.

Yeah, I think winning definitely helps. Just continue to gain our swagger and our confidence.

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Owen Pewee

Press Conference

UTSA 31, South Florida 24

Q. Owen, Coach was just telling us that was -- the celebration in the locker room was off the -- like more than what we've seen this -- take us in there. What was that like?

OWEN PEWEE: Coach Traylor was doing some dance move I ain't never seen him do before. But I love it. He said if we get the dub he was going to do it, so we was all ready for him to do that dance.

Q. What did it mean to come out here with the win tonight?

OWEN PEWEE: It means a lot to us. This game was very important to us. We worked very hard at practice because we know Florida is a good team. So just us coming out, winning this game means a lot and means to the whole San Antonio.

Q. Your defense lost its leading tackler, Brandon Tucker, due to a targeting call. How did that change the game for you personally and for y9ourn defense as a whole?

OWEN PEWEE: Me personally, it just put an extra edge on myself knowing I got to go out there and just try to get the job done. Just try to trust in my guys and trust in the next guy coming up to just get the job done.

As a defense, I feel like to just next man up, next man mentality. Whoever is up there just got to go out there and just show out.

Q. You guys have played four games this year that were tight coming down the stretch and you've managed to pull through in all of them. What does that say about this team?

OWEN PEWEE: We a good team. We trust in each other. Everybody embrace the role that they in, and we just trust each other and just play for the man in front you, play for the next man. We don't play for ourself. We play for each other. That's the most important thing.

Q. You've been around here for a while now. Do you see something special to this team that has lead to the 5-1 start? Is there something different about this year's group that you can point to?

OWEN PEWEE: Yes, this -- we ain't never did this before so I feel like this team is a real good team. I've been saying it since fall camp. This team is like the 2022 defense, this defense that we been doing. I feel like we got a good defense and we back on track.

Q. USF really imposed their physicality on you guys in the first half, but coming into the second half you guys stopped them; holding them to zero points in that third quarter. What shifted in your mentality going into the second half?

OWEN PEWEE: We just had to get back to the basics. In our mind score is 0-0, so we going out there, stick to the basics, get our reads right, get our eyes right, and we going to be good.

Q. Owen, what was the action in the offense on the final drive and watching A'Marion and Will kind of just tear up the defense and get that done?

OWEN PEWEE: The reaction was crazy. We all had trust in them and faith in them so we knew they was going to go out there and get the job done. We just had to just be loud, just get up and just cheer for our guys, watch them put on a show.

Q. As a defensive player, what's your reaction when the opposing coach takes a jab at your crowd? Does that energize you in a certain type of way? How did you view that throughout the week?

OWEN PEWEE: I feel like that just got us going, give us way more energy and confidence into this game.

Especially at practice. We had way more energy at practice. They had us going for the whole practice, so we just ready to play them, show them our crowd is not pumping noise. They love us and cheer for us.

Q. Pass rushers especially disruptive tonight. Jeremiah Bailey especially was in the backfield a lot. What have you seen from him, his development as a pass rusher?

OWEN PEWEE: Every week he just develop into a good player. Every week he's getting way better and way better. Comes to film, he's watching a lot of film. Like I say, he's going back to the basics, trusting his keys, his eyes, and just playing his technique.

Q. This was the first time you guys have had a short week to prepare for a game. How did you handle practice differently, and what impact did you feel like that had on you guys tonight?

OWEN PEWEE: Just the coach, USF coach had us pumped up about the crowd noise, so that give us a lot of energy. Playing on Thursday, I feel like we just made for this. I feel like this is a different team this year, so I feel like we was going to be good. We had a lot of confidence going into this game. We practiced real good, so I just feel we was going to play good.

Q. Down 7 points at halftime, what was the message like in the locker room from the coaches?

OWEN PEWEE: Everybody was up. Everybody was hype. Everybody was cheering for each other. Everybody was talking to each other, making sure we encourage each other to keep going. The score is 0-0 coming out of halftime. That's our mentality, so we just got to go out there and just prove it.

Q. I know it's disappointing to not end the game on a defensive drive, but how much faith do you have in your offense to come right back and just score and end the game?

OWEN PEWEE: I had a lot of the faith. We all had a lot of faith in our offense. They practice this every week. They practice this real hard, so I just knew they was going to go out there and execute.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports