

Michael Franco

Between The White Lines: Baseball in South Texas

**[Michael Franco]:** When talking about South Texas, do you really know where South Texas is located. From San Antonio, Texas to the furthest south you can go to is Brownsville, Texas. From Victoria, Texas to as far as west to Eagle Pass, Texas. The southern and western parts of the region, there is a river that separates South Texas and Mexico. On the east it is shielded by the Gulf of Mexico.

South Texas has a very strong Hispanic cultural influence in all of its regions. To understand how rich and influential the Hispanic culture is you must understand what culture is. It is the collective beliefs, traditions, languages, and religions.

Baseball has a little bit of those traits and characteristics for the athletes, coaches and the community in South Texas. The game of baseball is practiced day in and day out almost like a religion because of the traditions that it has to South Texas. With all the winnings, of state championships and notoriety that the game has offered and opportunities given. One thing I know is that many young athletes don't go as far without the work ethic, dedication, perseverance, and motivation.

There have been coaches and mentors that have also pushed young athletes to become the best versions of them to continue the dreams as well as their education to play on at the next level. One of the most well-respected coaches not only in Texas, but in all of country, Coach Corky Gallegos has been inside the white lines of a baseball field coaching and mentoring some of the best teams and players to come out of South Texas.

**[Corky Gallegos]:** "My dad did spend a lot of quality time with us, and he raised us around baseball. My grandfather, who just passed away last year around this time, he died at 100 years old but he played baseball till he was 56 around 56, 57 around 60 years old baseball and so they would play in a Collegiate league out of San Antonio and so he played up until he was 56 then he played softball until he was like 80 something so when I was a kid growing up I grew up every weekend it was ball."

**[Michael Franco]:** The passion starts from such a young age. It becomes something that you just want to do, day in and day out, you have the love for the game inside and out. Especially in South Texas where there are tournaments to get better at your craft and at the game every weekend.

**[Corky Gallegos]:** “It changes things to more of a serious setting and why I really took to it, the game and love it today as much as I do. It had to be because the way my grandfather and my dad raised us around the game. They kept it fun they weren’t overly criticizing our performance. They taught us to be humble when we succeeded. And when we had bad games he really would like hey this is part of the game. You’re going to learn from your mistakes. I had a good upbringing in the game other than the side I was telling you about, so I feel very privileged to have been raised that way”.

**[Michael Franco]:** Its not by luck the reason why Coach Gallegos has led the Moody Trojans the team that he coached and led to the playoffs for over a decade, with six appearances to the state tournament and bringing two state championships back to South Texas. It was how Coach Gallegos would teach and coach his teams to be relentless and feared between the white lines it was fun and entertaining. That’s the reason when teams that he coached were making a run for the state playoffs the community would rally and show support, come out and be in attendance to support South Texas baseball.

**[Corky Gallegos]:** “Trying to always eat it sleep it let me live it my mind never turns off you know from this game this is the way I do this I don't know a lot about a lot of things but I know a lot about baseball I know a lot about young men and athletes you know and how to make them better like the people around you better so I was doing all that living the dream or had a lot of success one not one state championship but you know two and had in the in the 10 years of being a head coach there half the time we were at the state tournament competing for a championship and not only that a national championship.”

**[Michael Franco]:** Coach Gallegos had mentors and people that he looked up to, that not only taught him the game but made him fall in love with the game and kept him wanting to learn more to become the best player and coach he could be.

**[Corky Gallegos]:** “I found a Pete Rose book my dad bought me that book and when I read that book I was Charlie also is the man God that's where all that that I'm telling you that real aggressive work ethic type you know that's Pete Rose he's a blue collar you know grinder in Major League Baseball and you know I wanted to kind of I mean really I was inspired.”

**[Michael Franco]:** Pete Rose was a major league baseball player, a good size body, built like an NFL running back had some tree trunks for legs, could run like the wind fast with great agility movements, black shaggy hair and uniform was always dirty from sliding and playing hard on the infield dirt which is why his teammates and others gave him the nickname “Charlie hustle”. He played the game for 23 years.

Pete Rose work ethic and dedication showed when he stepped on the field to compete, and his career reflects that. He was a 17X all-star, 3X World Series champion, National League Most Valuable Player, World Series Most Valuable Player, National League Rookie of the Year, 2X Gold Glove Award, Silver Slugger Award, Roberto Clemente Award, 3X National League batting champion. These awards that he earned are not easy to win, these are only handed out to the best baseball player in the game every year. That means that every day out of a 162-game schedule you must come out and compete to the best of your ability.

In 2009 when coach Gallegos led the Moody Trojans back to the playoffs it was the regional semi-finals the round to clinch a spot in the state championship. Whataburger field, which is a minor league baseball stadium, an affiliate of the Houston Astros one of their farm teams. This stadium where professional athletes play was going to host one of the biggest games in Texas for a winner take all series. At the time many didn't know it would be one of the biggest high school baseball games to sell out all they knew that it was going to be a good game between 2 of the best teams in South Texas.

**[Corky Gallegos]:** "This was sold out minor League Baseball Whataburger field three games in a series against a giant Calallen whose prospects we had no business with these people on the field people said right the people that knew baseball you know the they were saying that that we were going to lose this series and we were gonna you know so and it was quite the opposite but what it was and in hindsight."

"I just know that there is a fire code that has a Max amount of fans that they will allow into that place and it was cut off those only one game that gave it a a run in numbers and that was Roger Clemens rehab game that he threw here with the hooks when he was at the Astros organization so imagine that amateurs could bring a community of people from all over there from coming from San Antonio you know Laredo all over Texas to come see this game see you know these young amateurs perform on a stage that was a professional stage ."

**[Michael Franco]:** People will often always have their own perception on many things whether it's good or bad, but one thing that has made a splash in the baseball world. Is that in South Texas the talent and teams that come out of this area know how to play the game hard and right. No matter how far or how close the games will be played they will always have a fan base of community members that will travel well to watch them perform and watch the teams leave it all between the white lines.

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