



# **A Home on the Field: How One Championship Team Inspires Hope for the Revival of Small Town America**

*Paul Cuadros*

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## **A Home on the Field: How One Championship Team Inspires Hope for the Revival of Small Town America** Paul Cuadros

*A Home on the Field* is about faith, loyalty, and trust. It is a parable in the tradition of *Stand and Deliver* and *Hoosiers*—a story of one team and their accidental coach who became certain heroes to the whole community.

For the past ten years, Siler City, North Carolina, has been at the front lines of immigration in the interior portion of the United States. Like a number of small Southern towns, workers come from traditional Latino enclaves across the United States, as well as from Latin American countries, to work in what is considered the home of industrial-scale poultry processing. At enormous risk, these people have come with the hope of a better life and a chance to realize their portion of the American Dream.

But it isn't always easy. Assimilation into the South is fraught with struggles, and in no place is this more poignant than in the schools. When Paul Cuadros packed his bags and moved south to study the impact of the burgeoning Latino community, he encountered a culture clash between the long-time residents and the newcomers that eventually boiled over into an anti-immigrant rally featuring former Klansman David Duke.

It became Paul's goal to show the growing numbers of Latino youth that their lives could be more than the cutting line at the poultry plants, that finishing high school and heading to college could be a reality. He needed to find something that the boys could commit to passionately, knowing that devotion to something bigger than them would be the key to helping the boys find where they fit in the world. The answer was soccer.

But Siler City, like so many other small rural communities, was a football town, and long-time residents saw soccer as a foreign sport and yet another accommodation to the newcomers. After an uphill battle, the Jets soccer team at Jordan-Matthews High School was born. Suffering setbacks and heartbreak, the majority Latino team, in only three seasons and against all odds, emerged poised to win the state championship.

## **A Home on the Field: How One Championship Team Inspires Hope for the Revival of Small Town America Details**

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## **From Reader Review A Home on the Field: How One Championship Team Inspires Hope for the Revival of Small Town America for online ebook**

### **Albert says**

#### **BOOK REPORT**

this is a really inspirering book because it could make you laugh and if you are sensitive maybe even cry. Paul was the write and character in the book. Paul came to silver city and created a soccer team called " los jets " In the second day of practice 16 players came and some were not eligible to join because they had dropped out of school. others had found it to hot to practice so they stayed home insted. work was everything for them if they had a job then they were not considered lazy and were a somebody. it didnt really matter what kind of job you had the important thing was in to earn money.After two weeks of hard practices that focused on teamwork they went to the cascarita as a reward.they got their uniforms and started playin soccer. if you want to red this book you should check it out or borrow y it from some one how has it. i advise any body to read it and give it a shot all it takes is ganas!

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### **Jeremy says**

This book snuck up on me. On the surface it's the story of a small southern town and their Mexican-American high school students coming together on the field. But it's really the study of how immigration affects America, especially Mexican-Americans and their assimilation. Do you know the difference between a Hispanic and a Latino/Latina? Did you know the contribution rates of 2nd generation Mexican-Americans? I didn't, but this book showed me shades of grades and entirely new facets in an argument that I once saw as "Send them home" or "Let them stay". The sports action is solid, but for anyone who has ever coached a high school sport there is much more resonance in the small conversations with colleagues, friends, but mostly between coach and players. It's authentic. This was recommended to me and what started as a, "Yeah, I'll read it..." turned into a, "Wow, this changes how I see things!" Cuadros does a great job, and even when his biases sneak through (which is impossible to prevent considering his heritage and devotion to these boys) the reader gives him a pass. He's earned it; this is a hell of a book on a lot of levels.

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### **Meagan says**

This book snuck up on me. I wasn't expecting this story to grab my heart the way that it did, but by the end I was completely in love with these boys. Cuadros does an amazing job of absolutely engaging you in the story of this high school football team. The team, "Los Jets" is made up of mostly Latino immigrants, and most are in the country illegally. Paul Cuadros starts a team to keep the boys in school, and it chronicles the first three years of their adventure. It was amazing to watch the evolution of the team as a whole, the boys individually, Cuadros, and he entire community. It breaks your heart to see the situations that these boys have endured and the hard lives that they have had to carve out for themselves, but it's also a redemptive stories, as you see how high these boys can climb.

### **Diane says**

It is always fun and a bit amazing to read a book set in an area with which I am very familiar. I recognized most of the towns and venues in this book and am familiar with the political issues involving hispanics that Cuadros addresses in Siler City and in rural North Carolina. I am also very sympathetic to the situation of hispanics in rural North Carolina. I think it is a story that needs to be told and I appreciated the history and discussion. However, the book was overall a disappointment.

I am not knowledgeable about soccer and there are long 2-3 page passages of specific soccer plays that I wanted to skip but felt I had to plow through. He also seems to place himself squarely in the role of hero and takes a lot of credit for the success of his students and team - perhaps rightly, but since he is telling the story, it came across as suspect. I also found his agenda a bit heavy handed - his constant iteration of how this student was not able to realize his dream because of his immigrant status grew stale and did not incite me to action. A good effort, but needed a good editor.

HOWEVER, my husband who worked extensively with Hispanics in ESL absolutely loved this book. He would like it to be required reading.

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### **Irene says**

This is a great story of Latino teens overcoming racism and poverty in rural North Carolina. In the book, Paul Cuadros describes his first three years coaching the fledgling soccer program at Jordan Matthews High School in Siler City, a small town facing a huge influx of Hispanic immigrants. It wasn't a very difficult or profound novel, but it was a fun read. I actually learned a lot about the Latino way of life--family comes before everything, including school; Latinos are often targets of muggings because they tend to carry lots of cash; and so on and so forth--that I don't think I would have learned otherwise. However, if you don't like soccer, some parts of the book might be kind of boring to you. The descriptions of the soccer matches are kept pretty short and to the point, and there aren't soccer terms being tossed around everywhere, but soccer does figure into a large part of the plot. However, I personally am not a sports fan, and it didn't bother me all that much, so don't let the fact that it's about soccer turn you away from such a great book.

What I especially liked was the photos in the middle of the book and the descriptions of what has happened to all the kids since then at the very end. I like putting faces to these kids, and it makes it so much more real.

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### **Mckinley says**

I liked the parts that weren't about the sport and games.

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### **Cesar says**

This has probably been the best book that I have read because there were so many things that I could relate too in this book which also made it a lot more enjoyable to read. This book is about a guy named Paul who is

an investigative reporter from Chicago and decides to move to North Carolina to write about the impacts of Latinos moving to many rural areas in the south and how they try to earn a living from what they have and how hard they try to find jobs. Paul then sees some kids playing soccer on some dirt fields and he then realizes that he wants to get involved in the community and tries to get a soccer team started at the local high school. He gets rejected multiple times because they always told him that football and all the other sports were more important than soccer and that they were “real sports” and that no one wanted to allow the soccer team to use their field for practices or games. This book even talks about the team playing Elkin which is a soccer team in our conference so that was also cool. There was a player called Enrique in the book who I related the most too because we played the same position and it seemed like he was pretty good leading the team with goals and that's how I was.

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### **Mr. Holt says**

While the story within the novel "A Home on the Field" is a critical and timely one that all global citizens need to be aware of, the writing is very flat and forced. If the author wrote it more like a story and less like a newspaper article it would have flowed more freely and been easier to get into. The book tells the story of a small town in North Carolina grappling with an influx of Hispanic community members. The story paints the picture of turbulence and great difficulty the outsiders were forced to endure in order to live in the community despite being brought there by the major companies in the area as hired workers. Within the story is woven another layer about the author organizing a soccer team at the local high school and the issues surrounding that whole situation. The story is bittersweet and has a positive ending. I would recommend this book to those looking for a fact-filled story about middle America and the ever changing cultural landscape; however, be aware that the writing is difficult to get through at times because of the way the author went about crafting the story.

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### **C.I. DeMann says**

This gets 5 stars for story, and 3 stars for writing. I loved the story he was telling and the way it was laid out. I even liked the way he \*tried\* to tell it. But he desperately needed an editor to smooth out the writing, to tighten things up, and to fix small errors. Hard to believe that there wasn't an editor, since I believe this is from a reputable publishing house, so I'll have to assume the editor just sucks at their job. Either way, the story really is outstanding.

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### **Trey Parker says**

This book's plot is about a small town, Siler City North Carolina. As Paul is prompted with many chicken processing work offers he declines. More and more Latino families are moving into this city with their children. He came to find about the slow immigration to this country. When he got hear he pleaded to the principle to let the latino kids go to school here, he did not like the idea but he agreed. Then Paul asked if they could make a soccer team for them but he thinking it was to much to ask, after he let them have education he declined. Then a new principle came and agreed to the idea. Paul helped them learn loyalty and discipline, besides kicking some butt. They have three great seasons. They come together as a team and totally new and better people.

I like how he describes the community of the Latinos, how they struggle in America. He describes how hard

it is move into a totally new country, how to fit in with new people. I really liked this book I don't have anything bad to say about it. I think he did a great job writing it and describing it. I do recommend this book for a good read. Mostly for people who like soccer or just a good story. This book taught me so much in every way it taught me that first impressions are not everything there is more to a person then what comes off that you have to learn who they are to judge them.

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### **Molly says**

Everyone in North Carolina should read this book. It's a true story about a soccer team that won a state championship. It takes place right down the road in Siler City, and it answered several of my questions about immigration. One of my former teachers is in it.

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### **Anna says**

A Home On The Field: How One Championship Soccer Team Inspires Hope for the Revival of Small Town America by Paul Cuadros is an engaging nonfiction book about the journey a high school team makes to win the soccer State Championships. The high school is called Jordan-Matthews High School, or JM for short. It's located in Siler City, North Carolina, only about forty minutes from Chapel Hill. Siler City, a poultry processing town, is a magnet for Latina immigrants who want to escape the violence of large cities. Many Latina immigrant children are gifted soccer players, but most can't afford to play for club soccer teams. The author, Paul Cuadros, notices the terrible conditions that these children endure just to play a cascarita, a backyard soccer game. He decides to start a soccer team at the local high school, JM. This book describes the conflict involved with Latina mass immigration, and the struggle it took to start a soccer team. You don't have to like soccer to like this book. It also deals with political and economic struggle, and friendship, willpower, and hope.

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### **Lupi\_19 says**

A home on the Field is a really good nonfiction book. I believe the purpose of this book is to inform people and let people become aware of how Hispanic immigration is shaping this state and the country, and the the type of difficulties they have to go through because of discrimination. The author does a really good job of achieving this purpose by the story he tells in the book. Overall the book has no weaknesses because although it was nonfiction, it was very entertaining. The strength was it achieved its purpose really well and sent a strong message of encouragement through the towns soccer team. The quote a liked was "Duke had spent two hours bashing the very workers who had brought him his fried chicken. He didn't even realize the full extent of his hypocrisy. ... If they were sincere about recuding illegal immigration, they could take a stand and refuse to buy these products. They could stop eating fried chicken, bacon, hamburgers, steaks, lettuce, turkey, hot dogs, tomatoes, grapes, wine; and stop purchasing other products like furniture and textiles; and deny themselves services like landscaping and construction. But I suspect that, like Duke, most would simply help themselves to a nice plate of chicken (Cuadros, 55-56)". I recommend this book to others because it was recommended to me and I really enjoyed it. I feel it's a really good book that helps people open thier eyes and see reality.

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## **Marten Wennik says**

This book, the required summer reading book for Cardigan Mountain School grades 7-9 for 2013, was a interesting read. The first 7 chapters are a bit bland, but they do outline and introduce the writer, the town, the challenges and the reason Cuadros got involved. After these chapters, however, the book begins to pick up the pace and locked me in as a reader.

I was amazed, despite what I expected for roadblocks thrown up, at how the community dragged it's feet, enlisted the help of national organizations & celebrity (David Duke!!!), but then seemed to change it's mind. The story of the three seasons, too, becomes more engaging and exciting after the first season. Most of all I enjoyed the stories of the kids and the author's work with them on the field and off. Their commitment and efforts seem to mirror so many other stories out there. Perhaps this is the humbling message; despite their Mexican (et. al.) background, these kids are...kids and just want to play, be a part of a team, and be recognized for their efforts.

A touching story I recommend for all readers.

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## **Seth Gray says**

This summer, I read the book, A Home on the Field, by Paul Cuadros. This book became increasingly more interesting. Initially, I expected this book to be long and boring, but it turned out to be a fascinating and fun book to read. The book is a true story about a Latino man named Paul Cuadros. Life, as a journalist, was good for Paul, but he felt something was missing. He remembered how great it was when he played on a soccer team when he was young and Paul wanted others to feel the same way he did. Life in Siler City, NC was hard for some Mexican immigrants. Most of them worked at the local chicken processing plants because it was the only job that employed them. So, Paul decided to start a soccer team at the Jordan-Matthews High School because it did not have a team. At first, the Principal told Paul that he could not have a soccer team because there were no fields to play on and there were not enough players. After more than three meetings with the Principal, he finally allowed Paul to start a soccer team. Paul worked hard to get kids to sign up. He hung up flyers at school and finally got some people to sign up. Despite some unlucky losses and player injuries over the first few seasons, the team persevered. For example Enrique is one player who suffered from an injury. The injury was in his knee. He was lucky because he was born in the United States, so he qualified for Medicaid. Other Immigrants on his team could not get this sort of care because they were not US citizens. The first season, they won most of their games and leading up to the finals they lost. The second season they made it to the championship match, but lost again. In the third season the Jets (Jordan-Matthews team name) got a new field that had new nets with new lines. The old field was slanted and narrow which was hard for the players. Paul worked the team hard in the third season. After their hard work and tough games, they made it to the finals and took the gold.

This book's weakness was the beginning. I like books that have a story that really pops out at you and makes you want to keep reading. I thought this book lacked that. A Home on the Field had many strengths. One of these strengths was the climax. I was on the edge of my seat just waiting for the results of the games. Another strength was that this book had a joyful ending. I recommend this book to anyone who cares about soccer or who wants to learn more about Mexican immigration, or anyone who just wants to read an exciting story.

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