



CARTER HIGH
CHRONICLES



THE RIGHT *Kind of Win*



SADDLEBACK
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Chapter 1

It was Friday. School was over for the day.

And it was almost time for the big baseball game to start.

Carter High was going to play Maxwell High. The winner would go to the state finals.

Al played in right field. He could hardly wait for the game to start.

Al's real name was Alberto. But all of his friends called him Al.

Rey was his best friend. Rey played in center field.

Rey's real name was Reynardo. But all of his friends called him Rey.

Al said, "I still can not believe it. Win today. And we will go to the state finals."

"But first we must beat Maxwell," Rey said.

Al said, "I know, Rey. But we beat Maxwell twice. And by a lot of runs. Zack was the pitcher both times. And he will pitch today. So we should win."

Rey said, "Do not count on it, Al. We should win. But they could beat us. So we must keep our minds on this game. And not on the state finals."

It was time for the game to start. Carter High was the home team. So they went on the field first.

Al ran to right field. Rey ran to center field.

Troy ran with them. He played left field.

Maxwell didn't score in the first three innings. And Carter didn't score in the first two.

Zack led off the bottom of the third inning. He struck out. Zack was a good pitcher. But he was not a good hitter.

It was Al's turn to bat.

"Get a hit, Al," Rey yelled to him.

Al swung at the first two balls. And he missed. But then he got a hit to right field.

Troy was the next batter. Troy was a good hitter. But this time he struck out.

Rey was the next batter.

Al yelled to him. He said, "Hit a homerun, Rey. Hit a homerun."

Rey was a good hitter too. He had hit a homerun in all of the games.

Rey swung at the first ball and missed. He swung at the second ball and missed. But then he hit a homerun.

“Way to go, Rey,” Al yelled to him.

All of the Carter guys yelled too.

The score was 2-0.

Carter scored three more runs in the fourth inning. But Maxwell scored four runs in the fifth inning.

It was the top of the last inning. Carter High was leading 5-4. As long as Maxwell didn’t score one more run, Carter High would be in the state finals.

The first Maxwell player tried to bunt. But he got out.

“Out 1,” the umpire said.

The next batter hit a grounder to third base. And he got out.

“Out 2,” the umpire said.

Al was very excited. He said, “Just one more out, Rey. And we are on our way to the state finals.”

The third batter hit a ball to right

field. Al did not get to the ball in time. But Al should have. He had been thinking about going to the finals. And not about the batter.

The ball hit a few feet in front of Al. Al got the ball. He quickly threw the ball to first base. But the batter got there before the ball did.

“I should have made that catch,” Al said.

Rey said, “Don’t worry about it, Al. Just think about the next batter.”

The next batter walked. There were runners on first and second.

Al was glad there were two outs. But they should be out of the inning. And the game should be over.

The next batter hit the ball to right field. Al was back too far.

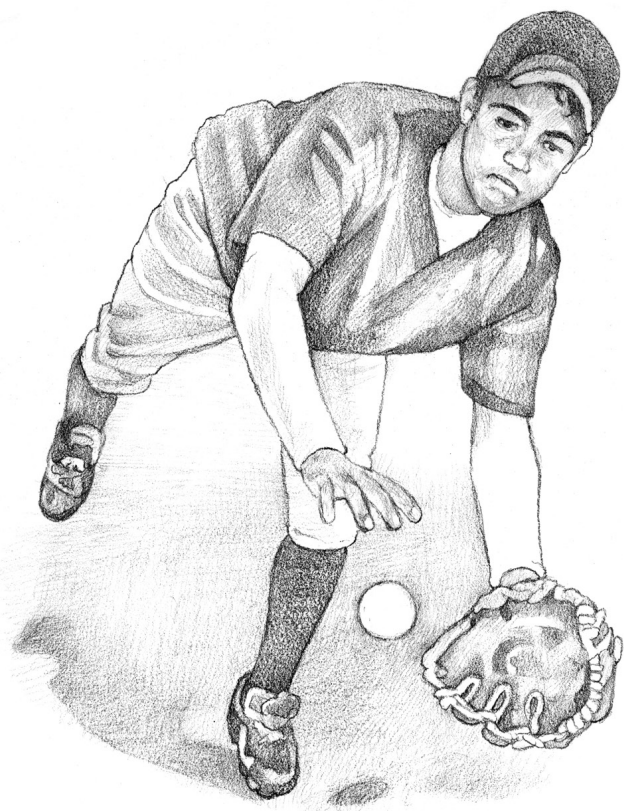
Could he get to the ball in time?

Rey yelled to Al. He said, “You can catch it, Al. Just keep your eyes on the ball.”

Al ran as fast as he could. He got to the ball just before it hit the ground.

The game was over.

Carter High had won. The team was going to the state finals.





Chapter 2

The weekend went by slowly for Al. And so did the next week. All Al could think about was the state finals.

He could not keep his mind on his school work. So he was glad he didn't have to study for any tests.

Al was glad when Friday came. And school was over for the week.

He hurried to baseball practice. Rey was with him. It was the last practice before the state finals.

Al said, "I still cannot believe it. We are in the final four."

That was what Al had worked for

all season. And why he had practiced so hard.

All four teams were going to play the next day. Two in the morning. Two in the afternoon. Then the two winners would play to be the No. 1 team.

Al said, "Just think. This time next week we might be No. 1."

"We may be in the final four. But we still must win two games. We have to beat Hillman High in the first game. And they will not be easy to beat," Rey said.

They had played Hillman two times. And they had lost both games. Zack had been the pitcher.

Al said, "I know they beat us two times. And by a lot of runs. But Matt is going to pitch this time. So I think we can beat them."

Rey said, "I think we might too. Zack is a good pitcher. But I think Matt is

better. I think he can beat Hillman.”

Matt pitched OK at the start of the season. But he had gotten better. And now he pitched better than Zack.

Coach Karr blew his whistle. Then he said, “Team 1, you are the home team. Be ready to take the field in five minutes.”

Al and Rey got their gloves. Then Al ran out to right field. Rey ran out to center field. And Troy ran out to left field.

The first batter for Team 2 struck out.

“Out 1,” Coach Karr said.

The next batter hit a ball to the shortstop. He got out.

“Out 2,” Coach Karr said.

Cruz was the third batter for Team 2. He was the back-up player for first base. He did not work hard at practice. So he was not on the first team. He didn’t get to play much. But he did hit well when he played.