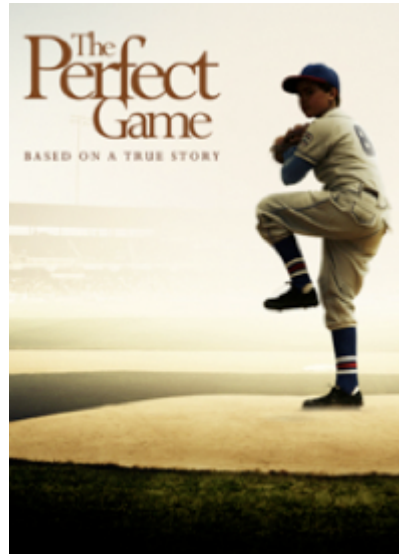




Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on April 19, 2010

The Perfect Game Tells of a Small Miracle

The Perfect Game is based on the real-life story of “Monterrey Industrial,” a Mexican Little League team that was willing to walk 12 miles by foot from the border of Mexico to McAllen, Texas, for their first game in the 1957 Little League World Series South Regional. The film is truly inspirational, awe-inspiring, and depicts one of the greatest underdog stories ever told.



Cesar (Clifton Collins, Jr.) was an ex-clubhouse attendant for the St. Louis Cardinals who held high aspirations for a more respectable position with the team. Unfortunately, his Mexican heritage proved to be a determining factor in his permanent position as a glorified “bat boy.” Once he realized this, he returned to his hometown of Monterrey, Mexico, for factory employment, where he met the 9 boys who would change his life.

In the meantime, local Monterrey priest Padre Estaban (Cheech Marin of Cheech and Chong) prayed for God to provide the young boys in his town with something for which to strive. God’s hand came in the form of a found Spalding baseball, discovered by Angel Macias (Jake T. Austin). Angel and his friends perceived this to be a Divine sign, and with the help of Padre Estaban, sought the leadership of Cesar to coach their novice Little League baseball team.

The Monterrey Industrials shocked the world when they won 13 games in a row and became the first non-U.S. team to win the Little League World Series. In an unprecedented and unrepeated victory, Angel Macias pitched a perfect Championship game in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, beating his own hero, Brooklyn Dodgers’ pitcher Sandy Koufax, to the punch by eight years. Angel Macias would later be called to play for the Los Angeles Angels, where he had a brief stint in the minor leagues before finishing his career in the Mexican League.

The Perfect Game is an exploration of what champions can accomplish in the face of adversity. Discriminated against as Mexicans, scoffed at as “wetbacks,” and roughly six inches shorter and 35-40 pounds lighter than their competitors, the Monterrey Industrials were undeterred. Finding allies in local black Americans who sympathized with the treatment of the Mexican team, the boys were empowered by the generosity of the locals and by their faith. Unwilling to play a single game without God’s blessing, bestowed on them by Padre Estaban, and later, black minister Clarence (John Cothran, Jr.), the boys believed every victory to be a miracle.

Once American Little League baseball fans witnessed the boys’ determination, courage, faith, and innocent reverence towards the American way of life, the boys found supporters in some of the most unlikely people. These moments were truly some of the most touching in the film.



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In both the film and reality, the Championship team was invited to meet their heroes, the Brooklyn Dodgers, where they shook hands with pitcher Sandy Koufax, outfielder Duke Snyder, and catcher Roy Campanella. After, they visited the White House and were graciously greeted by El Presidente Dwight Eisenhower. Not depicted in the film, the boys were also provided with \$40 each for a shopping spree, provided by Macy's. When the boys returned to their hometown, they rejoiced in the experience and were treated as champions and heroes within their community.

The Monterrey Industrials were rightfully nicknamed "Los Pequeños gigantes," the Little Giants. They embodied all the elements of the true underdog as poor children from an industrial city who first learned to play baseball barefooted with a homemade baseball and gloves. They would gather around their radio regularly to listen to the games of the Brooklyn Dodgers, but never dreamed that they would make it as far as the Championship game.

Jose "Pepe" Maiz, pitcher and outfielder for the Monterrey team, recalls, "We didn't even know Williamsport existed. We were just supposed to play a game in McAllen." But they didn't just play a game in McAllen. After their 9-2 victory against a team from Mexican City in McAllen, they surprised themselves and the world with victory after victory taking them to Williamsport, where they made history.

Surprisingly, the film seems to downplay at times the difficulties the team faced regularly. In reality, the boys were homesick, and suffered from lack of funding, often having to settle for two meals a day. The generosity of locals and "Good Samaritans" came in the form of free meals and charitable donations.

The Perfect Game is a heartwarming film about inspiration and faith. God's power is revealed in this story, and each boy on the Monterrey Industrials experienced a reaffirmation of faith through this experience, a small miracle of miracles, wonderfully depicted in this film.



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