

# **SIX MAN, TEXAS**

*A true story of shrinking Texas towns*

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

A documentary feature about life in the smallest Texas towns where high school teams still play the little known game of Six Man Football.

## **TAG LINE**

A story of the *real* Friday night lights.

## **SUMMARY**

Across Texas, small communities are struggling to keep their schools and towns alive. For one, the bell has tolled as they graduate their last class, ending generations of local pride and continuity. For another, a Cinderella football season promises to keep hope alive...

## **SYNOPSIS**

Six Man, Texas is a story of commitment and survival and the true significance of community. Set against the backdrop of shrinking rural economies, Texas' tiniest schools struggle against the pressure to consolidate with bigger schools and shut their doors. With too few students for regular 11-man football, Texas schools like Guthrie, Whitharral, Aquilla, Sanderson, Three Way and more than 100 more play a six-man version. Far from being downsized football, this fast, high-scoring game is a powerful cultural connection. In Six Man towns, the schools are vital community centers and virtually everyone attends the games, adopting the players as their own family.

Three Way School is typical of many rural Texas schools with one exception—there is no town. Three Way sits alone in a field surrounded by thousands of acres of cotton. There are no viable towns left in the Three Way district, and the school has consolidated five rural school districts since 1945. Now, Three Way School itself is slowly running out of students, struggling to keep the doors open in the face of shrinking revenues and increasing costs. After educating many hundreds of rural Texans for more than fifty years, Three Way is graduating its last senior class ever, two girls and six boys, ending generations of community pride and continuity.

In Central Texas, Aquilla has been slowly losing population for decades. Before World War II, Aquilla had banks, restaurants, department stores, a

spa, two schools and a railroad that carried people and cotton from the plains to the Texas coast. Today, only 136 people remain to support a school, a cotton gin, a post office and the tradition of Six Man Football. But at Aquilla High School, seven seniors who have played and fought together on the sidelines since kindergarten have a dream—to put their town on the map and make a name for themselves.

Early in the season, the Aquilla Cougars look undisciplined, with a pitiful passing game and a questionable practice ethic. In the wide-open game of Six Man Football, Aquilla is an anomaly, simply pounding the ball up the middle. But the Cougars never quit. In a pivotal game, they upset Jonesboro, a rival powerhouse that no one beats, and the town's hopes are ignited.

Every week the team just gets better and better, and they see the promise of the playoffs on the horizon. Despite a crucial mid-season loss, they finish second in their district and make the playoffs for only the third time in nearly 30 years. But now they face a team that embarrassed them horribly early in the season. Can they shake the ghosts of their earlier defeat and go all the way? And can they win what really counts? Can the towns of Six Man, Texas keep their schools open and continue to play the one game that unifies and defines their small communities?

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