

## Friday Night Studio Lights

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Jason Flores, supervisor, area operations in El Paso, Texas, has been with the company 19 years – 12 years as an operator, the last seven as supervisor.

“I am fortunate to be part of this outstanding team in West Texas,” said Flores, whose work is built on precision – ensuring pipelines run smoothly and safety protocols are followed. Outside of his professional life, though, he steps into a different kind of arena – one illuminated by Friday night lights.

Flores provides color commentary for post-game high school football highlight coverage on KTSM 9 News, the NBC affiliate in El Paso – specifically, on the station’s “9 Overtime” show.

A former college football player at Western New Mexico University, Flores became involved with “9 Overtime” in 2015, thanks to his best friend, Ed Stansbury – a former UCLA Bruin and former Houston Texans fullback – who was asked to be part of the “9 Overtime” panel and provide color for high school football highlights.

“I tagged along to the studio and just helped with stats, scores and small facts about players, coaches and teams,” Flores said. “In 2019, one of the commentators was out and they asked me to jump on to backfill for the night since I knew the process of the show and knew the players and stats.”

Getting in front of that camera, though, was a different game altogether.

“They said just be yourself and go with the flow,” Flores recalled. “I understood my comments couldn’t be long-winded and gave my perspective from a player’s point of view. After the show, we received high praise from the director, and I was asked to jump on a few more times throughout the year.”

In 2022, they asked him to join full time as an analyst.

“The fun part is I get to talk football!” he said. “And, I get to be part of the growth of these athletes and be able to break down an amazing play on live TV.”

It can be nerve-wracking at times. “All the homework you do on these coaches, players and teams is all good. But, once that red light goes on and the ‘on air’ sign is lit, it’s easy to freeze up and stutter or just completely forget what you have to say can happen.”

Flores is nimble. He can think quickly and communicate clearly under pressure – skills honed on his day job.

“All my input and comments are delivered in real time, on the spot,” he said. “Nothing is scripted, and I am watching the highlight for the first time. My favorite part has to be shining a light on local athletes – giving back to the community by providing a platform that could help these kids get noticed and maybe even open the door to a college opportunity.”

Turns out his two careers aren’t so different after all. Preparation was the key to success in both fields, whether he is ensuring operational efficiency in West Texas or giving young athletes the recognition they deserve on live television.

“Being prepared helps achieve goals: staying safe, following your procedures at work, and making sure you are providing the correct stats – and providing families and friends of these athletes a moment to cherish hearing their name on TV.”

Years ago, as a player for Western New Mexico, he had no idea he’d one day be breaking down plays instead of making them. But, in a way, his work at ONEOK and his role on “9 Overtime” were bound by the same thread: delivering excellence under pressure and creating something meaningful and showing up, no matter the challenge.

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PHOTOS

