

**B.J. Soto was one of four Tigers named to the Texas H.S. Baseball Coaches Association's all-state team in 1999 after the 26-6 Tigers finished the year ranked #4 in Texas. B.J. was named Belton H.S. Top Athlete as a senior in 1999 after he led the football team in rushing and made all-state in baseball. He played one year of baseball at Temple College and remained in Belton in 2009.**

**B.J. (Bobby Joe) Soto was born on May 25, 1980, in Temple TX to Tina Louise Soto and was raised in Belton by his grandparents, Charlie and Mildred Vasquez, with Tina's other children, Jesse Ramirez (a senior DB at BHS in 2001), Michael Ramirez (a soph at BHS in 2001), and Angelita Ramirez (a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at Tarver Intermediate School in 2001). B.J. attended Southwest Elementary School, Belton Jr. H.S., and Belton H.S. graduating in 1999. His baseball career started at the age of 4 with T-ball and continued thru Little League. His Pop Warner youth football team ("Little Red") was sponsored by Ricky Sanders of the Washington Redskins (and BHS). B.J. was on the freshman track team (400 meter relay) and freshman basketball team (as a 5'5" point guard) but concentrated on football and baseball in his last three years of high school.**

**Soto played on the Tiger JV football team as a soph WR in 1996 and as a 5'6" 155 lb. junior RB in 1997. The 1997 Tiger JV was 9-1 (4-1) on the year and finished second in its 5A District to Copperas Cove. The team defeated Killeen 21-18, Temple 14-12 and Killeen Ellison 21-12 and was led by soph QB Cody Fredenburg and junior Soto who rushed for over 200 yards four times and averaged an incredible 156 yards per game over the 10 game season. B.J. was a 5'7" 165 lb. senior in 1998 and played on the 8-5 Tiger team that won district and beat Travis and Hays Consolidated in the playoffs before losing 14-12 to Alice in the state quarterfinals.**

**Early in the year B.J. alternated at RB with Derrell Bivins and Dawoin Rose but, by the beginning of district play, he was the full-time starter and at the end of the season was the Tiger's top rusher with 809 yards (5.4 yards per carry) and 13 TDs. He had a 54 yard "broken-field" TD run against Round Rock and a "career game" in Belton's 16-12 victory over Austin Lake Travis in the first playoff game. Though the game was played in a steady rain on a muddy field, Soto rushed for 207 yards (becoming the first Tiger since Mario Bronson in 1995 to rush for 200 yards) on 19 carries and scored two TDs, the first on a 65-yard run and the second (with only 6:52 left) on a 63-yard run that sealed the victory. One newspaper noted that the "smallest man on the field made the biggest plays for the Tigers." In the 28-21 playoff victory over Hays Consolidated Soto scored Belton's last three TDs with the last, a 10-yard run, coming with only 1:59 left to win the game.**

**At the end of the season Soto was voted the Tiger's top offensive back and was named 2<sup>nd</sup> team all-district.**

**In baseball Soto played on the Tiger sophomore team in 1997 and as a junior moved up to the varsity to play on the 1998 Tigers who were 21-12 on the year. He hit .323 with 9 RBIs and 1 HR on the year as a utility player (i.e., OF, 3B, 2B, pitcher). He had a "break-out" year as a senior OF for the 1999 Tigers**

who were 26-6 on the year, won district with an undefeated (15-0) record, drew a bye in bi-district, beat Fredericksburg in the Area, lost to Hays Consolidated in the regional semi-finals and finished the year ranked #4 in Texas. B.J. was the Tigers lead-off hitter and hit .394 on the year with 39 hits (2<sup>nd</sup> to Thomas Melvin's 48) including 11 doubles, 2 triples and 2 HRs. He also had 22 RBIs, scored 41 runs (to lead the team), stole 13 bases (leading the team), walked 26 times (leading the team). He also struck out only 6 times (leading the team) in 99 at bats and made no errors in the OF. During district play he hit .450 with 9 RBIs, 4 doubles, 2 triples, and 26 runs.

Soto was one of six Tigers named 1<sup>st</sup> team all-district. He and Melvin, Kory Douglas, and Josh Harris were named to the Texas H.S. Baseball Coaches Association's all-state team. Coach David Tidwell presented B.J. the "Coaches Award" at the annual banquet which meant a great deal to him since he often said he appreciated the fact that Coach Tidwell treated him like a son. B.J. was named Belton's Top Male Athlete for 1998-1999.

B.J. played fall baseball at Temple College in 1999 before leaving school to work for H.E.B. He married Becki Kindred of San Antonio in 1999 and in 2009 B.J. Soto, 29, and Becki Soto and their daughter, Ciara Avory, 9, lived in Belton. B.J. is a vendor for Mission Foods of Austin.