

SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILES: A LOOK BACK

-by Larry Wolfe

What does someone from New York City (population: 19 million or so) have in common with someone from Trona, California (population: 19 hundred or so)?

What does someone who worked for IBM have in common with someone who worked for Holh Seed & Feed?

What does an OB/GYN have in common with an aerospace engineer?

Why does someone interested in gardening or stamp collecting get along so well with someone who loves mountain climbing?

The answers are: softball, softball, softball and softball, specifically Sun Lakes Senior Softball.

After featuring over fifty Sun Lakes softball players over the past five years, I decided to take a look back. The differences in the players' home towns, levels of education, types of professions, hobbies and other interests and general lifestyles are remarkable. They are natives of over twenty different states and two provinces in Canada. Their levels of formal education ranged from not graduating from high school to those with college degrees, including some MBA's and three doctoral degrees. Their occupations included teachers, principals, coaches and athletic directors; all types of engineers; computer programmers, insurance salesmen, firemen, butchers, barbers, technicians, Army officers and entrepreneurs who owned their own businesses. About the only missing occupation was candlestick maker!

And talk about a diversity of interests and hobbies: classic cars, music, genealogy, mah-jongg, cruising and other travel, amateur piloting, landscaping, semi-professional gambling, coin, stamp and map collecting, wine (collecting and drinking!), amateur acting and singing and on and on. Most also participate in sports other than softball, including basketball, bowling, fishing, golf, hiking, hunting, marathon running, mountain climbing, racquetball, scuba diving, skiing (snow and water), soccer, swimming and tennis. They are also members of various community, civic, charitable, fraternal and religious organizations.

In addition, the baseball and softball skill and experience levels vary widely. Many played high school baseball; some played in college and even a few made it to the professional minor leagues. Others didn't really get into the game until they joined our program.

Most are grandpas (when a visiting grandkid hollers, "Hey, grandpa," many heads turn!). Almost all are married, many to the "loves of their lives" whom they've been

lucky to be with for forty years or more. And many chose to become Sun Lakes residents because of, or a least partly because of, the softball field and program.

Almost everyone interviewed rated the camaraderie among the players as the most enjoyable aspect of Sun Lakes softball. The game itself, the chance to be involved in a competitive sport and the exercise involved also ranked high on the list.

When a player sets foot on the Field of Dreams, none of the differences noted above matter at all. Nobody cares where someone came from, whether or not they have a degree of any type or what they did for a living (although you'll hear jokes about all of these things.) The only thing that does matter is that you love the game!

The Field of Dreams really does foster dreams of our youth. Where else can someone 60 or 70+ years old get to act like they're 12 all over again?! Why grow up when you can live the best days of your youth over and over....every week?!