



SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: JAY YOAKUM  
-Larry Wolfe

Jay Yoakum's adult life can be divided into three very distinct phases: Soldier, Rancher and Trucking Company Owner. The New Mexico native joined the Army as a 17-year-old, serving our country from 1972-83 as a member of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. Jay says that he was looking for a "little excitement" and he certainly got it. During his service time Jay was a member of the Special Forces, a U. S. Army Ranger, a Jumpmaster and a member of the elite Golden Knights Parachute Team. In the Special Forces, Jay was an instructor specializing in guerilla warfare and parachuting. He was stationed at Ft. Bragg (NC), Ft. Wainwright (AK), Ft. Lewis (WA) and Ft. Carson (CO). During his time in Alaska, Jay's assignments included weapons training of the local Inuits above the Arctic Circle. He also had temporary duty training assignments in Germany, Panama (3X), Canada, England and Africa. Jay's three children were all born while he was in the military: one at Ft. Bragg and the other two in Alaska.

From 1983-2001 Jay "played cowboy" as a cattle rancher near Cortez, Colorado. He owned his own ranch with over 130 mother cows. His three kids helped as cowhands, but after they all grew up and left home, Jay decided to go in another direction, sold the ranch and started a trucking company back in his hometown of Aztec, NM. The company focused upon hauling heavy equipment, mostly related to the oil fields industry. Over the next 20+ years, Jay grew the business to include over 20 trucks and drivers and over 30 trailers. He sold that business in 2022 and retired to Arizona.

Jay and his wife, Brandy, have a large, blended family consisting of Jay's three kids, seven grandkids and one great grandchild and Brandy's five children and four grandchildren. Add'em up and that's a lot of Christmas and birthday presents!!

When I asked Jay why they decided to move to Arizona, his one-word answer was "Softball!" Jay has played softball continuously since his Army days. He's played in senior leagues for over 25 years and has been a member of the ScrapIron Travel Team out of Denver for over 15 years. That team plays in tournaments all over the nation and even in the Dominican Republic. They usually play in around eight tournaments every year. Jay joined our league for the Winter 2023 Session and has been a key player ever since. Unfortunately, Jay was hit by a line drive this past Spring while pitching batting practice for a tournament and lost the sight in his left eye. But, fortunately, you'd never know it now, as his hitting, fielding and pitching seem unaffected.

The Yoakums do have other interests: Brandy is into gardening and canning while Jay loves to tinker on trucks and trailers in his shop and is a shooting enthusiast, both harkening back to his earlier careers. The only things missing are a few mother cows in the back yard!