



MAY 2026

**SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: JOE SCHAPPERT
-Larry Wolfe**

Joe Schappert may be new to Sun Lakes Senior Softball, but he’s certainly not new to softball in general. He started playing softball when he joined the Air Force after graduating from Coughlin High School, where he played baseball and “some basketball” for the Crusaders. (As an interesting side note, Coughlin High was known as the oldest high school in Pennsylvania, founded in 1890, before closing and merging with some other schools in 2021 to form Wilkes-Barre Area High School.)

While serving his country for four years, Joe was stationed at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. That base is a critical global strike command installation, hosting B-52 bombers and Minutemen ICBMs and is considered a prime component of US national security and defense. Most of his service was in the Security Department, focusing on protecting the vital missile fields.

Joe's Air Force job experience served him very well in his civilian career as he worked in security for Pennsylvania Power & Light (PPL), primarily in their Nuclear Power Plant Division. He spent his entire thirty-seven-year career with PPL (which in 2015 became a part of Talen energy), retiring in 2018. Joe said that as soon as he turned in his security badge on his final day of work, he jumped in his car and headed for Arizona! His wife, Marita, was already in AZ, scouting things out. Their first AZ home would be in the Sun City Festival development north of Buckeye.

Now for the "Marita and Joe Story." They first met as classmates back in Wilkes-Barre at the age of 14 and soon became a thing. That "thing" has now turned into a forty-seven-year marriage. The Schapperts have three "kids," daughter Julie in Gilbert, son Kevin in Phoenix and daughter Jill back in Wilkes-Barre. They also have two grandkids, Nico and Layla. Tiring of the long drive from Sun City Festival to visit family, they recently decided to move to Sun Lakes.

Back to softball: Joe not only plays in our league, where he's a hard-hitting second baseman for the Camp Hilby squad, but he's played on travel teams for the past seven years and is currently a member of the 65+ Sidewinders team. As previously noted, his softball career goes all the way back to his Air Force days where he played in an industrial league and for a base squadron team. And he hasn't put his bat down since!

Marita accompanies Joe to many of his travel team tournaments. They like to add a few days onto those trips to explore the area near wherever the tournament is played. They also enjoy annual trips to the South Carolina beaches to visit friends.

As Joe and Marita become "seasoned" Sun Lakers, they hope to expand their retirement activities and add to their circle of friends. Being a part of Sun Lakes softball is a good start!