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SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: CRAIG POCHARDT
-Larry Wolfe

Sioux Falls, South Dakota native Craig “Chili” Pochardt grew up playing baseball, basketball, football, golf and tennis. If there was a ball involved, he played it! (You can ask him how he got his nickname!) Craig graduated from Washington High and then Augustana College where he earned a B. S. in Business Administration.

After college, Craig started playing slow pitch softball and continued for many years before taking a hiatus. Once his children, Jack and Traci, got old enough to play more than catch in the back yard, Craig took the time to coach them in softball, basketball and soccer throughout their childhoods.

Craig worked in the finance business for several companies in the Sioux Falls area before moving to Arizona in 2001, where he took a job with

an auto finance company. He met Angela, his wife-to-be, while watching his daughter play soccer in a local Arizona League. (Angela's daughter was on the same team.) Yes, he eventually got a "Soccer Mom" for a wife! Angela was also playing on a Co-Ed softball team when they met, and he got "reactivated" to help them out one night. That led to him getting back into softball. About twelve years ago, he started playing in senior leagues and eventually got very serious, playing on tournament teams. Craig joined our Sun Lakes league in March 2023 and has become a real asset for our organization, not only as a player in our Sun Division, but he's a volunteer umpire and helps out wherever he's needed, whether it be dragging the infield between games or helping at social events. One of Craig's biggest softball thrills was playing on his team that won the 65AAA World Championship in Las Vegas this past September, where he was also named to the All-Tournament Team.

Angela and Craig ran their own Medical Billing Business for nearly twenty years before selling it when COVID reared its ugly head in 2020. They have a blended family of five kids and seven grandkids, living in California, Oregon and South Dakota, so there are a lot of "visiting family" trips.

In addition to softball, Craig plays tennis and is an avid golfer (he has three holes-in-one!) and has a goal of playing golf in all fifty states; so far, it's 38 down and 12 to go!

Chili is very grateful for the fabulous camaraderie that exists in the Sun Lakes Senior Softball program. He says, "Where else can you play a couple softball games starting at 9 AM or Noon, two to three times per week, and then sit down with guys from both teams and laugh at each other's errors and mistakes and applaud the great plays. Good times!"