



DECEMBER 2023

**SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: DAN MALACHUK
-Larry Wolfe**

Dan Malachuk is flying high...in more ways than one! Now starting his third year in our program, Dan was named Most Improved Player in the Lakes Division last year, increasing his batting average from .566 to .683, good for a Top Ten spot. He also flies high as a pilot of 737 aircraft for Southwest Airlines, but let's start from the beginning.

Born in Arlington Heights, Illinois, Dan graduated from nearby Wheeling High where he played baseball and basketball for the Wildcats. He then earned a B. S. degree in Finance at Northern Illinois University, but never spent a day of his working career in finance. He had the misfortune of earning his finance degree at the height of the 1987-88 financial crisis and there were virtually no positions available in his chosen field. Instead, Dan spent sixteen years working for United

Airlines in Chicago in various Information Technology positions, including network security. In 2004, he accepted a network security position with the State of Arizona. During his later years with United, Dan had begun working on what he really wanted to do...becoming a commercial pilot. He continued working on pilot training in Arizona and became fully qualified in 2008, initially flying Cessna 172's.

He began his piloting career with Mesa Airlines and flew regional jets for that airline as well as Pinnacle, Republic and Compass Airlines. In 2019, he made it to the "big time," becoming a 737 pilot for Southwest. He's still a full-time pilot and loves what he's doing. He has enough seniority now that his schedule is flexible, so he schedules his flying airplanes around his flying around the bases at the Field of Dreams!

Dan married his wife, Susan, in 1995. They have one son, Cole, who is currently a student at ASU, majoring in software engineering. Dan and Susan like to travel, both via plane (where he gets some pretty good deals!) and on auto trips, going to places within a day's drivetime such as Vegas, northern Arizona, and California. Dan says they're still "kids at heart" and enjoy going to places like Disneyland and Universal Studios, too. They recently took a vacation trip to Hawaii to celebrate their 25th anniversary; however, their real 25th was during COVID, so they celebrated a little late. But they had a great trip anyhow!

Another passion of Dan's is going on baseball road trips with his buddies from Chicago. Over the years, Dan has seen major league baseball games in twenty-four different stadiums, many with his baseball buddies. He's also a "car enthusiast;" his pride and joy is his 2016 Corvette. He's a NASCAR fan and has attended events at ten NASCAR racetracks, as well as the Indianapolis 500. Car shows, such as Barrett-Jackson, are also on his list of favorite activities.

Dan and Susan are relative newcomers to Sun Lakes, but they're really enjoying living in a 55+ "retirement" community, even though they're not yet retired. But time flies, just like Dan!