

Alan Colglazier



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Alan Colglazier was one of the first softball pitchers to be considered a gun-for-hire.

A self-taught guru in the art of fastpitch, Colglazier turned his right arm into a second career. He bounced from team to team, weighing the best offers each year.

From money to land to the promise of second homes and business opportunities, Colglazier basically could name his price.

"I had a team in Las Vegas offer me land and a guy in Springfield, Mo., offer to build me a house because he was a contractor," Colglazier said.

"When I played for the Turquoise Kings in Phoenix, I had it made. This guy was the largest turquoise wholesaler in the world and I worked for him. If I did good, I did good (financially). We got \$50 a day for meal money, which is unheard of, especially back then. We had an open charge account if we needed a new glove or equipment.

"The more successful you are, the more your value goes up. But it's a two-edged sword. You are under pressure to produce. And not just to win games, but to win big games. The more big games you won, the more in demand you were."

Colglazier played shortstop at East High School but turned his attention to softball because of his older brothers, Sid and Norm. They were members of the vaunted Pepsi-Cola team in Pueblo and Alan would fill in whenever the team needed a player.

"The pitchers were getting a little older and considering stepping down and they were trying to decide if they were going to throw me into the fire, or go out and try to find a pitcher," Colglazier said. "They decided to throw me into the fire."

He spent hours in the hot sun after work, throwing to his oldest brother, Sid, Pepsi's catcher.

"That's how I learned," he said. "I played in the junior leagues growing up. There was Old Timers in the morning and junior softball in the afternoons. That's how I spent my summers."

Colglazier had a natural drop ball, one he could throw the 46 feet between the pitcher's rubber and home plate, for a strike at almost any time. Measuring the speed of the ball was more difficult back then, but Colglazier said the fastest pitch he ever threw was 88 mph.

"I don't know how accurate that is, but that's what they said. The best pitchers, then and now, threw in the high 80s, and I was up to speed with them," he said. "Once I started to pitch competitively for other teams, I had to learn how to throw the rise ball and the change-up."

The combination of hard work and natural ability helped develop Colglazier into one of the top pitchers in the country. He contracted himself out to teams each summer, the fee varying from place to place. Most contracts included cash, expenses and a part-time job if needed.

"Even Mickey Mantle had to work a job in the offseason," he said.

In 1983, Colglazier pitched for the Pueblo Aztecs. That team finished seventh at the world championships and both the pitcher, and the team, benefitted.

"We used to pay pitchers between \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year, plus we got them jobs and hooked them up with someone for a place to live," former Aztecs manager Mike Escobado said. "And we paid all of their expenses, plus their travel from their home countries and back. If you were a good pitcher, you could make some cash.

"After we took seventh at the worlds in 1983, we had our pick - as long as we shelled out. Players knew we were good people and we were serious."

Colglazier also pitched for the Pueblo Suns and Pueblo Bandits.

A member of the International Softball Congress hall of fame (1994), Colglazier is regarded as the greatest Pueblo - and some would argue, Colorado - pitcher of all time.

"I was really lucky in that when I came up, fastpitch softball was at its peak," he said. "Slowpitch was almost non-existent. But when guys started to play slowpitch, it all but killed fastpitch because there weren't any more pitchers getting developed."

"You also have to realize the teams I played on, from Tulsa to the Pueblo Suns to the Bandits, had really good players on them. It was great to play and be a part of great teams. The most success I ever had was when I played in Decatur and Aurora (where he won world championships)."

Colglazier, 57, considers himself retired. Masters teams (with older players) still call, but his day in the circle now is limited to coaching. He looks back on his softball career with few regrets.

"I have a couple," he said. "The Japanese government called once and asked if I would be interested in coaching their national team. And I had an offer to play for the King, Eddie Feigner, and his Court. I still have the letter. It would've have been great to play a year for the famous four-man softball team."

ARM FOR RENT

Here is a partial list of the softball teams Alan Colglazier pitched for through the years:

Pepsi-Cola, Pueblo	Pueblo Aztecs
Tulsa, Oklahoma	St. Joe's, Missouri
Turquoise Kings, Phoenix	Pueblo Suns
Decatur, Illinois	Pueblo Bandits
Home Savings, Aurora, Ill.	Denver Ravens
Calgary, Alberta,	

Here are Colglazier's career highlights:

- Pitcher and pitching coach for the 1980 International Softball Congress World Champions
- Played for the United States in the 1982 Pan-Am Games
- Pitcher and Pitching Coach for the 1983 Canadian National Champions
- All-ISC World 1980, 1983, 1985 and 1986
- ASA All-American pitcher 7 times
- 1994 Inductee to the International Softball Congress Hall of Fame
- 1997 Inductee to the Colorado Softball Hall of Fame
- 2009 Inductee to Pueblo Softball Hall of Fame
- 2011 inductee to the Greater Pueblo Sports Association Hall of Fame
- Organized, conducted and directed softball clinics in Japan, Canada, New Zealand and the United States
- Division 1 pitching coach for Mississippi State
- Inventor of the patented softball retrieval tool "The Shagster"