

Arizona's All-Time Top 10 Athletes



10. Randy Johnson – Although not raised in Arizona (from Livermore, CA), nor did he attend college in Arizona (did not attend college), Randy Johnson, now in his second stint with the Diamondbacks reached the pinnacle of his successful and storied career during his first 5 year stint as a Diamondback. 4 Cy Young Awards, and a World Series ring with the Diamondbacks will solidify his place as one of the all-time great Diamondbacks for generation to come. If Johnson had a longer initial tenure with the D-Backs or been born and raised in Arizona he would have no doubt been much higher on our list. (Image courtesy of Arizona Diamondbacks)

9. Pat Tilman – On this list more for his lore than his athletic accomplishments. Graduate and favorite at A.S.U. Tilman was a hard hitting safety for the Sun Devils and then the Arizona Cardinals. But Tilman was virtually unknown on the national level until he enlisted in the U.S. Military soon after the 9/11 attacks. Much controversy has surrounded Tilman's untimely death in Afghanistan, yet he still remains a huge fan favorite and hero to many in the Valley of the Sun.



8. Danny White – Born and raised in Mesa, AZ White played Quarterback for A.S.U. in the mid-70's and went on to be the play caller for the Dallas Cowboys from 1979–1987. White was never able to escape the shadow of his predecessor in Dallas, Roger Staubach. He led Dallas to three consecutive NFC Championship Games from 1980–82 and put up very respectable career statistics but could never win the big one. Went on to coach the Arizona Rattlers of the Arena Football League from 1992–2004 winning championships in 1994 and 1997. (Photo courtesy www.DannyWhite.com)

7. Steve Nash – Two time MVP (2005 & 2006) point guard with the Phoenix Suns, Nash's gritty play, sheer determination, and on court leadership have solidified him as one of the all-time great Phoenix Suns. Drafted by the Suns out of Santa Clara University in 1996, Steve Nash was not the mega superstar player he has become in his second run with the Suns. In fact the Suns gave up on him after the 1998 season trading him to Dallas, where Don Nelson's run and gun style of play highlighted Nash's improvisational skills on the court. Traded back to the Suns after the 2004 season, Nash has staked his claim as the leader and heart and soul of the organization.





6. Curt Schilling – Raised in Phoenix, Arizona, Curt Schilling played ball at Shadow Mountain High School in Phoenix, then pitched for Yavapai Community College in Prescott, AZ where he helped his team win the 1985 Junior College World Series. Schilling is a 6 time All-Star with 3 World Series Rings, the first of which came as an Arizona Diamondback. Schilling has since won two more World Championships with the Boston Red Sox.

5. Phil Mickelson – “Lefty” attended A.S.U. on a golf scholarship, graduating in 1992 capturing 3 national championships while there. Mickelson’s professional career has been one of consistency albeit somewhat disappointing up until the last several years. Winner of the Masters in 2004 and 2006, and the PGA in 2005, many analysts wondered at times if Phil would ever win a major (finishing 2nd in the U.S. Open 4 times). Sometimes erratic, always a crowd pleaser, the Valley has taken on Phil as one of their own, even though he now resides in California.



4. Annika Sorenstam – Since we’re on the golf trip, why not throw in arguably the greatest woman’s golfer of all-time. 72 LPGA Tournament victories, 9 Majors, 8 Player of the Year Awards, and career earnings of over \$22 million. Annika attended the University of Tucson where she was co-Player of the year as a freshman in 1991. Recently Annika announced that she will be retiring at the end of 2008 to raise her family and pursue other interests.

3. Keri Strug – Yes, Keri Strug. A gold medal in any Olympic sport is worthy of placing one at the top of many lists. To win one with a severely sprained ankle, knowing that the full force of her body weight landing on said ankle was going to inflict tremendous pain and still nailing her landing puts her in the pantheon of Olympic greats. Keri was born and raised in Tuscon, Arizona and went on to help the U.S. Women’s Gymnastics team win the Gold medal in the 1996 games. (Picture courtesy of www.strug.org)



2. Reggie Jackson – The straw that stirs the drink. Mr. October attended A.S.U. in the mid-60’s on a football scholarship believe it or not. Drafted by the Kansas City A’s in 1967 Jackson went on to have one of the most storied careers in baseball history. A member of the Baseball Hall of Fame, Jackson won 5 World Series Rings (3 with Oakland, 2 with New York), was the 1973 A.L. MVP, twice voted World Series MVP (1973 & 77), and hit 563 home runs. Jackson was always outspoken, trading verbal barbs through the press with owners Charlie Finley and later George Steinbrenner. But in the month of October there was none better.

1. Barry Bonds – Love him or hate him Barry put up numbers not seen since the days of Ruth. Granted he had some help, but Barry was destined for greatness/infamy from the moment he was born. The son of Giants great Bobby Bonds and Godson of legend Willie Mays, Barry had a pedigree like no other athlete ever to grace the diamond. Barry attended A.S.U. in the early 80's and was two sport star there (baseball and basketball). Drafted in 1982 by the Giants, Bonds opted to attend college when he could not come to terms with the Giants. At A.S.U. Bonds shined, as expected, earning All-American honors in 1985. Drafted again in 1986 by the Pirates Bonds showed speed and power, but no one could have expected what was to come. Winning 2 MVPs with the Pirates, Bonds opted to try his hand at free agency in 1993 and landed with the Giants, where he won MVP his first year with the team. 7 MVP titles, 762 home runs, 514 stolen bases, and a career batting average of .298 Bond's statistics would be surefire Hall of Fame numbers, if it weren't for one small detail. The BALCO scandal. Unfortunately Bonds will go down as one of the most tarnished athletes in the history of sports, but when he was going strong, he was damn fun to watch.

