



## Pate finding balance in life between designing, Nationwide Tour

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"The Volcano" isn't extinct. Nor is he dormant.



Steve Pate was tied for fifth in the Mexico Open Presented by Corona last month. (WireImage)  
Did you know?

From 1990 to 1992, Pate had five top-10 finishes in major championships. The United States won the Ryder Cup team in both years Pate was on the team (1991, 1999).

He's just quietly active, going about his business, biding his time until his 50th birthday, the milestone that isn't a millstone for accomplished professional golfers, one that will open a new -- and potentially lucrative -- avenue on the highway of life.

That's what [Steve Pate](#), a.k.a. "The Volcano" because of his sudden eruptions during competition, is doing these days, when he isn't getting an occasional start on the PGA TOUR or when he's playing the role of accidental tourist on the Nationwide Tour.

Question is, would Pate, who'll turn 47 in May, like to play more? You bet, but the only way he'd go at a full schedule with vim and vigor would be on the PGA TOUR. As for the Nationwide Tour, where the two-time Ryder Cupper and six-time winner in The Big Show played 14 events with mixed results in 2007, Pate will tell you it's the perfect place to keep him "in touch with being competitive."

The competitive bug will not bite Pate again until the Nationwide Tour swings out to his native California for Livermore Valley Wine Country Championship at Wente Vineyards from March 31-April 6. Pate will spend his time between starts wisely as he has begun a golf course design venture -- 2P Golf Course Design -- in partnership with Damian Pascuzzo, an architect who got his start in 1991 working with Robert Muir Graves.

When asked why he stuck his toe into the design waters, Pate was his typically frank and engaging self.

"Because I knew I could do better," said Pate, who turned professional in 1983 after a star-studded collegiate career at UCLA, where [Corey Pavin](#), [Duffy Waldorf](#), [Tom Pernice, Jr.](#), and [Jay Delsing](#) were among his teammates.

Pate laughed.

"The PGA TOUR needs me (as an architect)," he said. "They just don't know it yet."

Pate paused before turning serious.

"This is something I've always wanted to do," he said.

He admitted he got lucky when he became associated with Pascuzzo, a former president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

"He can build a golf course without me," Pate said.

Steve Pate

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the table. Pascuzzo now knows passion and experience are at the top of the list.

The pair's first collaboration, the 6,810-yard, par-71 Monarch Dunes Golf Course in Nipomo, Calif., in the Central Coast's highlands, was rated No. 3 in 2007 among courses you can play for under \$75. So apparently Pate brings a little something to

"I've worked with other professionals before Steve," he said. "They were interested in showing up and picking up a paycheck. Steve is different. He has focus and dedication."

Pascuzzo discovered this by testing Pate when the two first got together on Monarch Dunes, which was supposed to be a one-shot deal. Pascuzzo insisted Pate join in at "boring meetings."

"They were all about engineering," he said. "One, as I recall, was on storm water management. So I asked him a bunch of questions after the meeting. He was spot on. Steve is the only (pro) who really wanted to learn about architecture."

So the one-shot deal became a partnership, especially after Pascuzzo checked Pate's profile in the PGA TOUR's media guide. Listed among Pate's interests was "food."

"I knew we'd make a good team," said Pascuzzo, who said the two often discussing grilling recipes and techniques while walking projects.

Pate said a course that asks a player to hit a variety of chip shots when a green is missed is important to him. He doesn't want the player to immediately reach for the L wedge. And he said people building golf courses need to understand that tournament golf unrelated to the average guy.



Pate still holds past champion status on the PGA TOUR. (WireImage)

"A 6,800-yard course is plenty for the average guy," Pate said. "You go beyond 7,000 yards and suddenly the average guy is irrelevant. We need more courses where people leave happy, where they want to come back. What's the point of having a player come and couple of times and not come back because he got his butt kicked?"

Speaking of which, Pate, who has made 360 cuts and more than \$8 million on the PGA TOUR, hasn't exactly taken the Nationwide Tour by storm. He has made 18 cuts in 47 appearances and won \$80,303. But the good news is, more than \$23,000 of the total came from a tie for fifth at the 2008 Movistar Panama Classic, a personal best for Pate.

He is 26th on the money list, just one spot removed from The 25, the cutoff point -- on the season-ending money list -- for graduates to the PGA TOUR in 2009, a place where Pate, who owns conditional status on the Nationwide Tour, would like to return.

Pate just might consider playing a little more should he have more results like the one in Panama.

"The Nationwide Tour is a fun place to play," he said. "It's smaller and more casual, much more lower-key for the guys my age out there. And it's fun to watch the younger kids develop."

One indication of Pate's renewed interest in the game is he is working out regularly. That's saying a lot of a player who has been prone to injuries, some of them improbable. His back is the issue these days, and the workouts are designed to strengthen it.

"I would have loved to have been healthier throughout my career, but I hate to complain about it," said "The Volcano," who is kinder, gentler and more mellow these days. "Because, in all honesty, I've had blessed existence."