



## My husband, the TOUR pro: Hale and Sally Irwin



Photos courtesy Sally Irwin

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By Sally Irwin, Special to PGATOUR.COM

*Who knows the PGA TOUR pros better than their significant others? No, we're not talking about their caddies, but the PGA TOUR wives, who play such an important support role as their husbands grind out a living each week. PGATOUR.COM is asking TOUR wives to give us 18 things we should know about their husbands. (For more information about the PGA TOUR wives and their charities, [please click here.](#))*

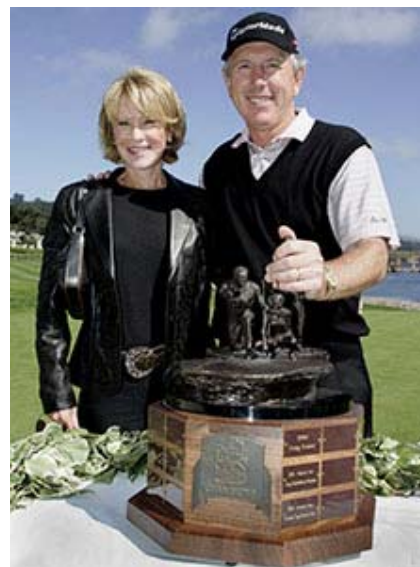
**Editor's note:** Playing his 18th season on the Champions Tour, [Hale Irwin](#) has racked up a senior-circuit record 45 victories and won the Charles Schwab Cup twice, in 2002 and 2004. He also won 20 times on the PGA TOUR, including wins at the 1974, 1979 and 1990 U.S. Opens. Irwin was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 1992.

Irwin participated in a charity golf tournament in St. Louis for 25 years to benefit the St. Louis Children's Hospital and Hale Irwin Center for Pediatric Hematology/Oncology. He and his wife Sally have two children (Steve and Becky) and three grandchildren. The Irwins reside in Arizona.

*Writes Sally:*

*Hale and I met the spring of our junior year at the University of Colorado in Boulder. My sorority, Pi Phi, and another sorority, Kappa, were having a party and we had to ask the guys. Since I had just broken up with my boyfriend, I did not want to go but my pledge mom insisted. So she said she had someone in mind for me -- however, he had already been asked by a Kappa.*

*I ended up going to the party with someone else who was a real dud. At dinner Hale and I sat across the table from one another. When I got up to go to the ladies' room he followed me and asked me out for the next night to a Phi Gam party. That was it -- end of story. We celebrated our 44th wedding anniversary on Sept. 14.*



Stan Badz/PGA TOUR

For more photos, [click here](#)

Sally Irwin's 18 things about her husband, Hale

- 1** Hale uses a TaylorMade golf ball with the number 45 on it for four reasons. He's had 45 wins on the Champions Tour, he was 45 years old when he won his third U.S. Open, he was born in 1945 and there were 45 years between the time he and our son Steve both qualified for the U.S. Open as amateurs.
- 2** Hale has won more tournaments (nine) in Hawaii than any other state.
- 3** His favorite past times are playing with our three grandchildren and hunting and fishing.

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- 4** He's had more fun visiting South Africa than any other country. He particularly enjoyed the safaris we took in 1979, when he won the South African PGA, and '94, when he played in Sun City.
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- 5** Hale's biggest phobia? He's afraid of heights.
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- 6** His parents, especially his dad, were Hale's heroes as he was growing up.
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- 7** Hale played lots of team sports. His best? Baseball. He pitched and played shortstop. He's ambidextrous so he could bat right- or left-handed, too.
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- 8** Even so, Hale received a scholarship to play football in college where he was a two-time All-Big Eight defensive back, as well as an academic All-American. He's a member of the Colorado Athletic Hall of Fame and All-Century Team, too.
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- 9** As talented an athlete as Hale was, though, swimming is not his forte.
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- 10** Hale used to practice bunker shots out of snow drifts during the Colorado winters.
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- 11** He learned to play golf on sand greens in Baxter Springs, Kan.
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- 12** Hale's father got him started playing golf when he was 4 years old. He broke 70 for the first time at the age of 14.
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- 13** When we were much younger Hale drove a bright blue 1966 Camaro 396 Supersport. But he had to trade it in for a "family" car in 1968 that was more suited to traveling the PGA TOUR.
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- 14** Other than family, Hale's proudest moments are representing the U.S. in the Ryder Cup five times and the World Cup twice, as well as being a playing captain for the 1994 Presidents Cup.
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- 15** His favorite charities are the St. Louis Children's Hospital, which named a wing in his honor, and The First Tee of Phoenix. For 25 years he worked tirelessly on a tournament to benefit the hospital. In fact, the Sunday night before one of those pro-ams, Hale was in a playoff at the Memorial and as he walked down the fairway on the first playoff hole, he looked at the TV cameras and said, "I'll be there as soon as I can." Guess what -- he lost the playoff!
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- 16** Some people think Hale is serious all the time but he's not. He's actually just a big kid who loves telling our grandchildren make-believe stories.
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- 17** He had to borrow money from his sponsors so he could play the TOUR as a rookie. The \$20,000 he received had to cover our expenses for the entire year.
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- 18** Hale gave the commencement address at Colorado in 2007.

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