

Golfer Lynnette Brooky won't find her family a handicap when it comes to giving her game a much-needed lift ahead of trying to qualify for the US tour next year.

Brooky turning to brotherly love

By GARY MORLEY, Golf writer

WELLINGTON golfer Lynnette Brooky is going back to her roots as she seeks to win a place on the lucrative United States LPGA tour next year.

Brooky has had a mixture of success and frustration overseas this year, and is hoping she can call on her family to put things right.

The 30-year-old started her European campaign with a hiss and a roar, winning two of her first three tournaments, including her maiden European tour title at the Austrian Open in July.

But things started to go wrong after that and, after missing a few cuts, Brooky sacked her Australian caddy – who she refers to only as Brett – during the Swedish Open in August.

"I just couldn't concentrate any more and he was being more of a pain than a help," she says.

"After two wins I think he thought he had it made. It was a lot of work to try and control your caddy's emotions, and your own, and get on with playing, so I got rid of him."

Brooky's manager and part-time caddy Gail Allport defends the decision.

"In one tournament he told her to 'Just hit the [expletive] ball', and that behaviour is in no way acceptable on tour or anywhere," she says.

Brooky, the youngest of nine children, hopes one of her six brothers, Stephen, will be her caddy next year.

"He's keen and I'm keen to have him," she says. "I'm always keen to have Gail, but she can only be there for a limited time. I had my brother Martin caddy for me last year and that was fun."

"When he came to pick my bag up it was like I had to show my brother I could play golf. It's really good when we work together, it's more of a family, good-feeling thing."

"I found, the way it worked this year, I get on better with people I know and who know me."

Golfing talent is strong in the Brooky family. Richard Brooky, one of "four or five brothers with single handicaps", has been one of the stand-out players at the national Freyberg Masters over-40s tournament in Hastings this week.

Lynnette cut short her European campaign



NEW APPROACH – Wellington golfer Lynnette Brooky, who has turned to her family for help on the course.

in September because of a five-week gap between the final tournaments last month.

The tour schedule was hit this year by the soccer World Cup in France, which diverted many sponsors, but three tournaments are expected to be added next year.

Brooky finished 27th on this year's order of merit with earnings of almost \$NZ57,000.

She dropped 14 places from last year, but is otherwise happy with the way things went.

"I shot my lowest round ever, eight under par, won two tournaments and got two course records, so there was a lot achieved," she says.

"My goal of making the top-10 order of merit faded but the two wins compensated for it."

Her immediate aim is the \$410,000 Australian Open in Melbourne next week, then she faces a summer of practice and corporate and

charity work before the \$1.4 million Australian Masters in February.

The US tour school next September and October is her focus for 1999.

The Australian Masters is the only US tour event Brooky is exempt for, but she can qualify for the US Open.

She qualified for this year's US Open in July, which she says was an ordeal but well worth the effort.

Her flight to Milwaukee was cancelled 48 hours before she had to register at the tournament. She was flown down to Dallas, back to Chicago and then her connecting flight was postponed just before takeoff.

"We had to swap with two people on another flight. Then, as we were about to take off, the original plane started loading and ended up following us all the way. I got to the hotel about 1am and I was so stressed-out," Brooky recalls.

The players each received a car for the week, and a personal bodyguard.

"It was great. I love this life," Brooky says. "I was in the players' room thinking 'Ooh, do I look the part? I still don't feel the part.' I was wandering around wondering 'Should I be here?'"

Brooky says more spectators turned up for the women's tournament than the US men's Open this year, with former US president George Bush, a self-confessed golf nut, among the fans.

"The merchandising tent ran dry for the first time ever. People are starting to say they're getting more out of watching the women," she says.

"The men smack the ball a long way, and most times people can't even see where it finishes."

While Brooky loves the attention overseas events attract, she also relishes the relative anonymity the day-to-day privacy of touring offers.

She lives with Allport and Allport's husband Peter, in Lower Hutt, but is looking at buying her own house, complete with practice facilities.

"I find when I do come home I can't concentrate as much on the course when I practise. It doesn't bother me, because people are just asking how you're going, but I do miss the privacy you have on tour when you're trying to work on your game."