

SKITING TIME

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approach he was taking have been vindicated. And, let me assure anybody who has never played the New South Wales golf course, only a very, very good golfer can win there when the wind is blowing.

Steven Alker had already won on the informal Pacific Tour, but his victory in the Queensland Open was his first on one of the ranking tours. He is a great advertisement for the theory that, if you drive straight and can chip and putt, you don't have to beat them, they have to beat you. He is also one of the genuine nice guys of New Zealand golf.

Tiger Woods has been the sporting phenomenon of the year. More words have been written about him in 1996 than about Michael Jordan and Evander Holyfield combined. He has already proved that the apparently hyperbolic predictions regarding his potential may be fulfilled. He has also shown, at the Australian Open, that he is human, while at the same time impressing everybody with the way he handled both the media and his game after his disastrous first round.

Frank Nobilo has had a simply stupendous year. His bearded face is as familiar to golf viewers world wide as any of the superstars with whom he is now entitled to rank. The beard, along with commentators references to apocryphal pirate ancestors, have helped to capture the public's imagination. Apart from his continued strong showings in the Majors, which placed him fourth in the averages for these events, he won again in Europe and successfully defended his title at the Gene Sarazen World Open. But, the defining performances for Frank were his victories over Tom Lehman in the President's Cup and Greg Norman at the Dunhill. Definitely New Zealand's golfer of the year.

Tom Lehman's year is discussed elsewhere in this issue - refer "Nice Guys Do Finish First".

Among golfers whom we didn't cover first, but who have had significant achievements, **Julia Kraschinski's** win at the Word Age Group championship must rank at the very top.

Lynette Brooky also looks as if she has finished her apprenticeship on the European tour and is ready to capitalise on her greatest strength - her mental toughness on the course.

Then, of course, there was that Dunhill Cup result, with the team of **Nobilo, Greg Turner** and **Grant Waite**, exceeding all expectations by finishing second.

The Eisenhower amateur team performance also needs to be put in perspective. To New Zealanders accustomed to seeing nothing less than first place as success, 5th might seem to be evidence of a lack of ability. In reality our 1990 and 1992 results were stunning achievements and those who were stunned have responded by adopting the same approach but throwing considerably more money at the problem. Whereas 5th place is no reason for complacency, it should be appreciated for what it was - a very good result.

One to watch in 1997. **Dominic Barson** is a young club professional (Grange & Pukekohe) who has recently completed his apprenticeship and is now dedicating himself to a tilt at touring life. Because he turned pro very young and has had no amateur career he is almost unknown outside the local pro-am circuit, but, in my humble opinion, he is as good as any of the top amateurs who have progressed to the professional ranks in the last few years. Dominic was running 6th in the first 1995 Open at the Grange, only to slip back



■ Lynette Brooky - 2nd in Danish Open.

on the last day. He has the right temperament for the tour and anyone who can whip it around Pukekohe in 65, twice in one week has got to be good. Potential sponsors please note.

Golf Update picks them first.

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