

Brooky Takes NZI Title

by Jim Wallace

She was certainly the underdog....true, she knew the Paraparaumu Beach layout well, having been a member there for some time before moving to Auckland last year.

But despite understanding the moods of what is New Zealand's top championship course, few gave 22-year-old Lynette Brooky any chance of toppling in-form Canadian international Terrill Samuel in the NZI national match-play championship in early October.

The easy-going Canadian had raced away with the Mellsop Cup stroke-play title a few days earlier and, such was her approach and attitude, that it was only a reckless gambler who would have been prepared to bet on a New Zealand victory in bleak conditions when the day dawned for the match-play encounter over 36 holes.

Heavy rain overnight had left Paraparaumu wet at tee-off and as the day progressed, conditions became worse.

Remarkd one woman spectator as she huddled under an umbrella, "The professionals (men that is) would have called for a stoppage in such conditions."

The women didn't and in heavy rain, Brooky - with support from her fiancée Ray Lazarus and brother Martin, who caddied for her throughout the week long event - seemed to revel in the conditions, reaching the halfway stage of 18 holes three up and full of confidence.

After a change of clothes and a quick lunch, the finalists resumed their match in rain which had eased slightly. Brooky took only four holes to show that she meant business, going to a lead of four-up with 16 to play.

With such a lead it was understandable that only real enthusiasts for the game would remain out on the course, as the weather again closed in and the winds which had battered the course for nearly a week decided they still had some "puff".

Samuel, who admitted to a dislike of the winds and cold temperatures, was in no mood for a white-wash and as the afternoon progressed

she methodically chipped away at the New Zealander's lead, eventually drawing level at the 33rd hole and putting her nose in front at the 34th (par three 16th).

Brooky must surely have sensed that her grip on the game had deserted her. But no, there was still something inside which saw her win the 35th (17th - a par four described by such famous professionals as Kel Nagle and Peter Thomson as one of the toughest in the game).

The 36th was halved and Samuel, Brooky, their caddies and the ever-growing, albeit damp gallery, went to the 37th. Brooky was long and accurate from the tee and when her second, a five wood, to the green saw her well-positioned for a birdie, the title was hers - and deserved, too.

Brooky was certainly a popular winner, at least at Paraparaumu, but there were said to be a few embarrassed women behind the scenes, it being claimed that the one-time Paraparaumu member had packed her bags and headed to Grange in Auckland because the Wellington selectors were not prepared to give her a fair go.

Brooky was not making the move an issue. She had returned to Paraparaumu to do her best. She did more than that and can now look back on her wet and windy week as a timely return to a course she found a rapport with.

On her way to taking out the match-play championship of New Zealand, she beat New Zealand NZI squad members Lisa Aldridge and Kerrin Starr, promising Manawatu junior Susan Farron and, of course, Samuel, the stroke-play champion.

For a golfer who early on in the championship had declared her dislike for the wind, Samuel played some grand stuff when Paraparaumu's famous nor-wester blew at its hardest on days two and three of the championship. Her final stroke-play round of 72, two under par, was golf of a real champion, while the 72 hole aggregate of 300 (74,77,77 and 72) was only four over par.

Samuel was seven shots ahead of Aldridge, the local idol, while Auckland Annette Stott had to be

content with third place, the young Muriwai player losing any chance of top honours when she returned a second round 82, including a disastrous five-over nine on the 17th hole. To her credit, she did not allow that one nightmare to haunt her in later rounds.

Scores:

New Zealand Foursomes (36 holes)

143 Lisa Aldridge (Paraparaumu) and Jan Oliver (Lochiel) 71,72

151 Liz Douglas and Kerrin Starr (Christchurch) 74,77

158 Judy Columb (Feilding) and Christine Pritt (Castlecliff) 74,84

158 Jan Scandrett (Otago) and Michelle Morton (Otaki) 78,80

Mellsop Cup (72 hole Stroke-Play)

300 Terrill Samuel (Canada) 74,77,77,72

307 Lisa Aldridge (Paraparaumu) 77,76,77,77

309 Annette Stott (Muriwai) 74,82,76,77

313 Mary-Ann Lapointe (Canada) 76,78,77,82

316 Susan Farron (Manawatu) 77,83,75,81

316 Tracey McCarten (Levin) 79,76,81,80

Match-Play Championship

Semi-finals: Terrill Samuel (Canada) beat Eve-Lyne Biron (Canada) 6 and 5

Liz Brooky (Grange) beat Susan Farron (Manawatu) 6 and 4

Final: Brooky beat Samuel the 37th.