

Professional golfer Lynnette Brooky is back in Wellington after a season in Europe disrupted by injury, but she sees pros as well as cons in the adversity she went through, as Jamie Troughton reports.

Warmth in welcome for positive Brooky

AS Lynnette Brooky passes by the members at the Hutt Golf Club, faces flash firstly with recognition and then with pleasure.

Smiles break out: "Hi there, welcome back, nice to see you..."

She returns the greetings with equal affection and a friendly grin - she loves coming back here and everyone is genuinely glad to see the top women's professional golfer.

Brooky returned from the European Tour two weeks ago, after a tough season in which a wrist injury threatened to end her career.

But she speaks of it now with quiet determination and as she sheds a positive light on it, the qualities are obvious that make her such a popular figure at home and on the tour.

Brooky tore a tendon in her right wrist on hard ground at an English public course in July, while enjoying a casual round with friends.

"I've never had a broken arm in my body, but it was like a broken arm," Brooky recalls.

"It was scary. I don't think I shed a tear but I was in so much pain. The only thing I thought about was not playing golf any more, and that just made it worse."

The injury came near the beginning of the tour, and Brooky says things were just building up nicely.

"I was in between tournaments, and playing awesome golf, so I thought I'd just keep practising hard."

"I was sixth on the order of merit



HIT AT HOME - Lynnette Brooky, practising at the Hutt Golf Club yesterday, says she's hitting the ball further since recovering from a wrist injury.

Picture: JOHN NICHOLSON

at the time, and I felt good - I felt like this could be a great year."

A specialist in Scotland told her the only cure was to put the wrist in plaster for three months, but that wasn't going to happen.

"I could have given up and just gone home and put it in a plaster, but that's not me. I just told him I needed a second opinion. Anyone who wanted to put my hand in plaster for three

months was going to have to tie me down to do it."

So the 31-year-old went to London with caddy and manager Gail Allport and found hand specialist Don Gath-erer, who put Brooky on a strict strength-building exercise programme and told her not to practise golf at all until her next tournament, the lucrative British Open.

That tournament was the only one

she missed the cut in all season, and Brooky, who ended 18th on the European order of merit with £38,000 (NZ\$114,000) found a new lease of life.

"I'm actually hitting the ball further. That's a good buzz - I feel stronger."

The injury dared me, and now I'm going to dare my golf. I'm going to