

THERE'S no chance of Kiwi Lynnette Brooky sneaking up on the world's best golfers and springing a surprise attack in this week's British Open at Sunningdale. Too late, she has given the game away.

Brooky, who is in the middle of her final tuneup for the tournament she most wants to win, already has the golf world talking. If she achieves anything like her aims at Sunningdale, then they will be positively abuzz.

The 29-year-old Wellingtonian, in just her third year as a touring professional, lies 10th on the European order of merit and had her best result recently when she missed out on the German Open title on the second hole of a playoff against Australian Joanne Mills.

At present she is in the middle of the WPGA championship of Europe tournament in Gleneagles, Scotland, and, despite a weather-affected opening round and a lingering bout of flu, she remained upbeat about her Open prospects.

"I had the 'flu really bad last week and I'm just coming out of it now. It's a little bit of a hassle, but I'm still hitting it all right and thinking pretty straight," she said. She had just spent almost 5½ hours on the course before fog forced her off on the 17th, lying one over.

And Brooky doesn't mind admitting that the Open has been occupying centre stage in her thoughts as it draws ever closer.

"I keep thinking about it as much as I can to make sure I stay focused on it. The world's eyes are on you and, if you do well there, you set yourself up financially pretty good and your name gets up there that bit higher."

This will be Brooky's third British Open, having finished in the 20s in 1995 and around 30th last year when a shoulder injury bothered her in the closing stages. And she firmly believes it is her best chance yet for a high finish.

It's as well Brooky has a pretty firm temperament for a lesser person might well still be agonising over the putting woes which snatched that German title from her grasp in Hamburg.

There, after taking a two-shot lead on to the final green, Brooky three-putted to go to the playoff, then could only watch as her opponent pitched in for an eagle on the second sudden-death hole.



PHOTOSPORT

BROOKY . . . "My time will come, I know that now"

Brooky plays way into British Open contention

ponent pitched in for an eagle on the second sudden-death hole.

Crucially, she remains chirpy about the whole experience.

"If we all knew how to do the right things, we'd all be winners. My time will come, I know that now. You learn from those experiences. The weather was horrific, it was blowing a gale and I couldn't even put my hands behind the ball before the putt it was that windy."

And Brooky has played the three-putt blunder over and over and decided . . . it just wasn't meant to be. "I didn't quit on the putt, these things just happen."

In so many ways Brooky is a much more confident player as a result of how her peers now see her. "All the players came up to me last week and they were players you might normally just say hi to. They've come up and patted me on on the back. That's an awesome feeling — it's like 'wow, I've arrived'."

And as Brooky, one of three Kiwis playing in the Open (Susan Farron and Janice Arnold will join her), basks in her newfound status,

she remains determined to retain it.

"I think it's just time. Either your luck comes early or it comes in the end. I don't think I've ever really played badly — I've only missed four cuts since I've been a professional — and as long as I keep my act together and respect everyone, I think I can be one of the top players."

She is disappointed, though, that she can't fly the Kiwi flag to the extent of luring professionals to play in this country. "We surely need some tournaments in New Zealand," she said. "It's a shame because a lot of the girls would go out of their way to come. They wonder why I talk so highly of it. Why not give us one or two tournaments?"

☐ **NEW Zealand** will have a strong representation at the women's British amateur championship at Silloth on Solway starting on August 20 — Renee Fowler, Catherine Knight, Julia Kraschinski, Pam Sowden and Kylie Wilson.

— MARC HINTON