

Brooky rewards family's faith

By RUSSELL GRAY



WELLINGTON'S Lynette Brooky yesterday turned the national women's golf championship final into a family party, and the celebrations continued into the night after she won the New Zealand title for the second time in four years.

Brooky had 30 relatives, including father Frank on a moped, in the big crowd that followed her dramatic final against Australian Loraine Lambert and when Brooky raised her arms in triumph on the 36th green to signal a one up win the partying began.

Brooky loves playing in front of big galleries and she rewarded those who cheered her on in the best possible way by breaking the dominance overseas players have had at the ANZ event in recent times.

"I loved the crowd. They made me play. They made me smile. It was them who kept me going," Brooky said.

"If the crowd come to see you play you owe it to them to be good with them."

Brooky had them eating out of her hand as she responded to birdie putts that found their target with huge smiles and upraised arms, and laughed with them when the occasion arose.

One such moment came on the 22nd hole where Brooky topped her second shot, but she joined in the laughter as the ball scuttled up the fairway to finish on the green. To rub salt in the wound and leave Lambert shaking her head in disbelief Brooky sank the 20 foot birdie putt to take a one hole lead.

That was the moment when you felt it was going to be Brooky's day. That her dream was going to be realised at the expense of Lambert who was seeking her third successive New Zealand title.

The match had started quietly enough with little between the pair and Lambert was leading one up when a bizarre occurrence on the 12th hole changed the complexion of the match.

Lambert's tee shot on the par-three hole went over the left-hand bunker and landed in a swale pin high. When Lambert got there however the ball couldn't be found and after frantic searching by the gallery the Australian conceded the hole to go back to square and she never took the lead again.

While Lambert said the incident didn't upset her she lost the next three holes to go three down after 15 holes. She won the 16th and at the halfway stage trailed by two.

Brooky's lead was quickly cancelled out when Lambert won the 19th and 20th holes of the 36-hole final. The advantage was restored by the 29th hole but a Brooky bogey and a Lambert birdie had the pair level again two holes later.

The decisive moment came on the 34th green where Brooky sank a 12-foot birdie putt and the final two holes were shared to leave Brooky with the title.

Going into the championship Brooky made no secret of the fact that she wanted the matchplay title for a second time, 1990 was the first, after winning the strokeplay last year. She went close to defending that title, being pipped by Auckland's Pam Sowden, but achieved her ultimate goal.

"I wanted to stop Loraine's dream and realise mine," Brooky said.

"It means the title stays in New Zealand which is where it belongs."

Lambert is a class act and in beating her Brooky proved to be a worthy champion.

Wellington's Lynette Brooky raises her arms in triumph after beating Australian Loraine Lambert one up in the New Zealand matchplay final at Ngamotu links yesterday.