

Belgian star is unhappy to hit time barrier

THE sands of time ran out for Belgium's Lana Freund in the Welsh Women's Open at St Pierre yesterday as she became the first player on the Amex European Tour to be penalised for slow play.

The 25-year-old was handed a one-stroke penalty by rules official Allan Hibbert after taking 93.9 seconds to play her third shot to the 15th hole. Under new guidelines to speed up play, the limit is 80 seconds.

That turned her three-over-par 76 into a 77, and she was less than pleased with the decision.

"I think that everyone on the course has taken more than 80 seconds over a shot and if they are going to use this ruling then there should be a referee with every group," she said.

Director of tour operations David Rollo said that a warning had been given to another player, and several others were on the borderline.

The wind that caused havoc in the opening round again took its toll, and there were six players tied for the lead on 148, two over par.

They included the overnight front-runners, Caroline Hall, Lora Fairclough and Stephanie Dallongeville, who all returned disappointing 76s.

The most significant moves came from Scotland's Julie Forbes and New Zealander Lynnette Brooky, who shot best-of-the-day 71s to join the log-jam at the top.

Forbes could have been clear of the pack but for a bogey five at the par three 18th, where she found all sorts of trouble in the bunker.

Brooky - youngest of nine children, six of them single-figure golfers - is a product of the Titahi Bay club in Wellington where Michael Campbell learned his trade.

A run of two birdies and an eagle in successive holes from the 14th was the key for 28-year-old Brooky, whose sporting talents first surfaced on the rugby field when she played full back for the local boys club.

For Welsh hope Helen Wadsworth there was a second 77 for 154, but with no-one pulling away she could still force her way into contention.

The shot of the day came from another Belgian, Valerie Van Ryckeghem, who holed in one at the 146-yard 18th with a four iron.

Leading scores (GB unless stated): 148 S Dallongeville (France) 72 76, L Hackney 73 75, L Brooky (New Zealand) 77 71, C Hall 72 76, L Fairclough 72 76, J Forbes 77 71; 149 P Meunier (France) 76 73, J Morley 74 75, C Duffy 76 73, T Loveys 76 73; 150



Lynnette Brooky heading back to Europe.

Brooky off to Europe eyeing top 10 finish

By RUSSELL GRAY

EVERYONE was impressed with the way professional golfer Lynnette Brooky handled the disappointment of being denied last year's German Open title, and a first win on the European women's tour, by a freakish pitch shot from Australian Joanne Mills.

What people didn't know was that behind the brave facade memories of that July day when Mills holed out from 70 yards on the second playoff hole haunted Brooky in the following months, and were only laid to rest by a trip to Germany last month to play in a skins match.

Next week Brooky heads for Europe again with the demons exorcised and looking for a top 10 order-of-merit placing and a first tour win. Both objectives are well within her capabilities after finishing 43rd, 34th and 13th on the rankings during her first three years on the tour.

"I only got over it [losing the playoff] last month when I got back from Germany," Brooky, 30, said. "There were times when I would suddenly sit up in bed and say 's...'. Then I wouldn't be able to get back to sleep."

"I remember thinking when Joanne hit the shot 'that's going to be pretty close', but that wasn't what I would think about in the night. It would be three-putting the last hole to put me in a playoff. Two putts and I won the German Open."

Brooky has never been one to dwell on negatives however, and sets off for a fourth European campaign in a positive frame of mind, despite switching from Wilson to Titelist irons only last week.

Some would describe such a move as brave. Others would call it foolish. Brooky puts herself in the first group.

It was, she said, necessary because her previous supplier couldn't find a another set of the type, blades, she has been using for the past 14 years.

"The new ones are made to measure and the weight feels good," she said.

"I spent two days using them while working with Alex Mercer [coach] and he said he had never seen me swing so well or hit the ball better so I have to feel confident."

Brooky, who has flirted with other coaches during her career, has unflinching faith in Mercer who will join her in England for August's women's British Open at Lytham St Annes.

"He is a fantastic motivator. One of the best in the world," Brooky said of Mercer, who also coaches 1995 USPGA champion Steve Elkington.

Not that Brooky needs anyone to motivate her after serving what she describes as her European apprenticeship over the past three years.

"The way I look at it is that I just want to keep climbing the ladder," she said. "I finished 13th last year. That means I only have 12 players to pass."

Next month Brooky will cross the Atlantic in an attempt to qualify for July's US\$1.5 million US Open. There is only one round of qualifying with between 600 and 700 golfers on six courses vying for about 15 places.