

Top women's Open tipped to tee

By JOHN FREER
Sports editor

A number of the world's top professional female golfers could play in a New Zealand Open early next year.

The tournament, the first of its kind to be staged in New Zealand, would follow the Australian Open and Australian Masters.

Executive director of the Ladies Professional Golf Association of Australia, Don Johnson, last night confirmed from Sydney that steps were being taken to bring professional women's golf to New Zealand.

Whether Johnson is successful depends on a sponsorship deal he is trying to stitch together across the Tasman.

"I am hanging by the skin of my teeth at the moment," Johnson said.

His aim is to increase the Australian tournaments to four a year while also establishing an event in New Zealand.

And he is not ruling out the possibility of the New Zealand-based tournament being played

at Paraparaumu Beach.

Johnson said he had already exchanged correspondence with the

Maunganui Golf Club.

However, there is another option in the equation which at this stage he is not prepared to reveal.

"There has also been another



Lynnette Brooky - dream concept.

approach [other than, Mount Maunganui] from someone in New Zealand.

"I can not talk about that until we have some possible dates," said Johnson.

What the LPGA is hoping to achieve is to move the Holden Australian Open and the Alpine Australian Masters from November to January or February.

This would remove current clashes with both European and US Tour events.

Johnson said 10 of the top women golfers in the world



USLPGA tour card hopeful Lynnette Brooky. Picture: PHIL REID

proach to the game. She has eased almost to the point of elimination the emphasis on the technical side of her play.

Instead Brooky is focusing on making cuts, which includes hitting fairways and then making greens in regulation.

"I just look at what I want to achieve and then try and achieve it."

It is a very confident Brooky who will be flying out to the US next week. She believes she has just as much of a chance as any other starter in the field to secure a card.

"Everyone is in the same boat," she said.

If successful Brooky will return to the US in February to start the tour.

Before that she will play both the Australian Open and the Australian Masters.

Brooky in select 66

Lynnette Brooky will start in tomorrow's prestigious Evian Masters golf tournament in France.

The Wellingtonian, who is playing the professional European circuit, has secured one of the 66 sought-after berths in the event, which carries almost \$1 million in prizemoney.

Gaining a start at the Royal Evian Golf Club was one of Brooky's major aims while playing this year's tour. Some of the world's top women golfers, including Laura Davies and Kerry Webb, are in the field.

In Europe this year Brooky has made three cuts from four events. Her best finish was 15th in the Danish Open two weeks ago. Last week she made the cut in the Swiss Open but was let down by her putting, an aspect of her game she has spent this week working on. The Evian Open is played over 72 holes with no cut. - By JOHN FREER

played the Australian Open last year, an expanded programme he believed would increase these numbers.

"With more tournaments to play in, it would be more economical for players coming [from Europe and the USA] to Australia and New Zealand.

Chairwoman of the New Zealand Ladies Golf Union, Flora Catto, today welcomed the news and said it would get her association's support.

"We would assist and put our name to something. But we would want to be sure it was going to work," said Catto.

The backing of the LPGA was imperative if an event was to be successful, Catto maintained.

Maunie McGuire and Lynnette Brooky belong to the LPGA of Australia.

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