

Lynnette's Learning Curve



It is now two years since Lynette Brooky left the amateur ranks, in which she had been the dominant player on the trans-Tasman scene for the previous two and a half years..

Her dominance was based as much on will power and self belief as it was on technical skill. During those last two years, she felt she could beat most of her matchplay opponents or the field because they would fold when the pressure went on.

That doesn't happen now, she said "You see one of the girls in trouble and you think she's going to make bogey or worse and the next thing the ball is a foot from the stick."

"I have to be more than mentally tough,

I have to be physically fit as well. Gail (her manager, caddie, surrogate mother and friend) and I are both into aqua-jogging and do some fitness work almost every day. While the social life can be fun and the girls mix well, it is rarely more than a bottle of wine between two or three with dinner and then bed by 9 or 9.30."

Lynnette has spent the past two years on the Women's European Professional Golf Tour (WEPGT) and is happy with the tour setup and the progress she has made. At this stage, there are no plans to take on the US Tour, although she may attempt to qualify for the US Open and try for her US tour card at the end of 1997..

"I intend to be out there for a long time," she said, "and there is no need to wish things."

"The courses in Europe are pretty good and so is the course setup. The tour organisation keeps on top of things most of the time and of course we let them know quickly if something is not up to scratch."

I asked Lynette if she had a favourite country to play in. Without naming a country, she nominated Hamburg as her favourite tour stop.

Her favourite moment? "Playing with Laura Davies. Partly because the pairings in that event were chosen by computer and I was considered to be in the best form to play with her at the time. I was a nervous as hell on the first tee, but she was so great to play with I soon forgot about it and really enjoyed myself."

"I also liked the feeling of finishing second (in the Austrian Open)," she continued "and my target for next year is three wins. I really feel I am ready for it."

I commented that I felt her swing had changed to a more upright plane since her amateur days. "A few people have said that," she replied. "But it is not a conscious thing. When you are away from your coach for almost a year and you are practising less and playing more than you do an amateur, changes can occur without you noticing. Funnily, when I was first learning, I said to Dennis (Sullivan), "If you don't change something I am giving up." He would stop and work with all the other girls and just walk past me and say "Fine." And I felt neglected."

Dennis Sullivan knew what he was doing. When I first saw Lynnette's swing it looked like it came straight out of Hogan's book.

I asked Lynnette and Gail how important the caddie/player relationship was, particularly where the contact extended beyond the course.

Said Lynnette, "the caddie is there for more than just the yardages and carrying the bag. Gearing you up or calming you down are important, so you have to be in tune. Because Gail knows me so well she can be very helpful with the psychological side. There are times when an error is purely the caddie's and they have to take the rap. But the bag is the caddie's territory."

Said Gail "I have my way of stacking the bag and I know where everything is all the time. The players ask the caddie if they want something from the bag."

Six years ago Lynnette was frustrated at her inability to make the Wellington team, regardless of results, and was ready to give the game away. Her brother Richard, who lives in Auckland, advised her to try a change of scene. Because of a mildly unconventional interest in motorbikes, Lynnette had been dubbed a "rebel" by the WLGU.

Rather than being a rebel, the 22 year old who arrived in Auckland in 1990, was merely an unusually positive young woman who relished the opportunity to play in an environment where only her skill mattered. Within a year, she was the NZ Amateur Champion, a title she won again two years later. She also won the Australian and NSW Amateur Strokeplay titles and represented NZ in the Queen Sirikit and Espiritu Santo teams events.

She has remained intensely loyal to those who helped her through that period and that loyalty extends to her sponsors of today - Canon, Wilson & Mungus. "Without them I would not be out there," she said. "It's as simple as that. But the people in the companies have become friends rather than sponsors."

Lynnette also confessed that, without the pro-ams the constant competitive schedule could become boring. She and many of the girls look forward to and enjoy the pro-ams, as a lot of the people they meet, some of whom pay up to Stg1800 to enter, become friends and keep in contact throughout the year. "It's great - where else would I get to become friends with the President of McDonalds?" she asked.

It would take a very hard heart not to want to become Lynnette Brooky's friend. It has always been difficult to reconcile the steely competitiveness with that brilliant smile.

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