

SPORT

Long wait pays off, Brooky stars

NEW ZEALAND golfers made their mark on opposite sides of the world yesterday — Michael Long winning on the second tier tour in the United States, and Wellington's Lynnette Brooky making the top six in her first start of the new European women's season.

Long won the US\$450,000 (NZ\$791,000) Virginia Beach Open after a closing round two-under-par 70 left him on 11-under 277, two strokes ahead of his nearest rival, American Vaughan Taylor, in the Nationwide Tour event.

It was Long's fourth career title, and a huge boost to his fortunes following a lean patch which had seen him pick up just US\$13,433 from six tournaments to sit 68th on the tour's money list.

The winner's cheque of US\$81,000 was enough to propel him into the top 10 on tour. He needs to finish in the top 20 at the end of the season to earn his



In the swing: Lynnette Brooky finished sixth in Tuscany.

US PGA Tour card back.

Long began the final round sharing the lead with Tripp Isenhour after earlier rounds of 72, 65 and 70.

Isenhour slipped off the pace with 74 and Long moved into the

outright lead when Isenhour bogeyed the 13th and 14th holes and the New Zealander birdied the par-five 12th.

Long, 34, endured a tough rookie season on the PGA Tour last year, when he made just

nine of 27 cuts to finish 183rd on the money list and lose his card.

Two other New Zealanders, Grant Waite and reigning New Zealand Open champion Mahal Pearce, missed the Virginia Beach Open second-round cut.

But in Europe, Brooky finished in a tie for sixth in the Italian Open at Tuscany, the Evian Tour's second event of the season.

Now in her ninth year on the tour, Brooky had a tournament score of six-under 286 but saved her worst for last with a one-over 74 yesterday.

She was four shots behind the winner, Ludivine Kreutz, of France, who won her maiden tour title after closing with 70.

Brooky, 35, finished in a tie for 18th in the season's opening event, the Tenerife Open, and sits 15th on the tour's order of merit, two places behind compatriot Gina Scott, who finished 23rd equal yesterday. — NZPA

WOMEN'S GOLF

Brooky's just reward

LAURA DAVIES and Trish Johnson love to play on home territory and, if the Austrian Open at Murhof, near Graz, was hardly their backyard, they still relished the chance to return to European soil, writes **Claire Middleton.**

The prize fund was peanuts compared with what they play for in the United States, but England's finest can have few complaints as they were only just edged out for the £12,000 winner's cheque by New Zealand's Lynnette Brooky.

Brooky's triumph was a just reward as she was robbed last year of a maiden Tour title at the German Open. Then, at the first play-off hole, Joanne Mills chipped in from 70 yards to steal the prize.

As Johnson said after Saturday's last round: "Lynnette deserved a victory. It's just a shame it happened this week, at my expense." Brooky shot a final round of 69 to finish 13 under par, a stroke better than Johnson and two ahead of Davies.

Details below