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The Return of LIBERTY

When the PGA Tour revisits Liberty National GC in Jersey City, N.J., for the 2013 Barclays on August 22-25, players will be greeted with some welcome refinements to the Tom Kite/Bob Cupp layout as well as a striking change to the downtown Manhattan skyline.

To the latter point, players and spectators alike will no doubt get goose bumps as they look out at the nearly completed Freedom Tower, with Lady Liberty keeping watch nearby. The course renovations will be less dramatic but important nonetheless, as they address some player concerns raised during the 2009 FedExCup and will give PGA Tour officials a wide range of setup options in order to provide an inarguably fair test of golf. Several fairways have been widened (most notably on the par-4 third hole) and 12 greens have had their contours softened. Likewise, some greenside swales, such as those to the right of the putting surface on the par-5 13th, were made shallower.

Another change is the trimmed-down first cut of rough, which club owner Paul Fireman said will make the course play more like Augusta National—players will be able to hit approaches that could potentially hold the green from all but the deepest cuts of rough. Still, fescue and other high grasses will remain a framing feature, especially on the dramatic finishing hole.

What hasn't changed: the prospect of a thrilling week of golf as the world's top players compete on a world-class course with world-class views.