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A SPECIAL SECTION

Guide to the Cup

Barclays to Move Again, This Time to Water's Edge

By JOSHUA ROBINSON

Next summer, the Barclays tournament will move to water's edge, at Liberty National in Jersey City, a links-style course reminiscent of the British Isles, in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty.

That follows the tournament's shift for one year from the wooded Westchester Country Club in Harrison, N.Y., where it resided for four decades, to the wooded Ridgewood Country Club, in Paramus, N.J., where it begins this week.

"Liberty has a lot of potential," said PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem in May 2007, when the decision to give Liberty a one-year contract was made. "With camera angles, 4,000 feet on the water and the Statue of Liberty very much a part of the landscape, it will look more like New York to the rest of the country when it's on television."

The 7,400-yard, par-70 course was built by Paul Fireman, the former chief executive of Reebok International, and his son Dan in 2006 with an eye toward playing host to a major tournament. As a result, Dan Fireman said, the changes needed to make it suitable for tour play were minor.

"The biggest modification, I would say, has been extending the driving range and moving the putting green to make it larger," he said in a telephone interview.

The Firemans also modified the original design, by Tom Kite, a former Open champion, and Bob Cupp, extending the first hole and altering the

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greens at No. 2 and No. 18. The changes to the \$129 million course have cost between \$300,000 and \$400,000, Fireman said.

"It's really dictated by what the Tour feels the event needs to be successful," he said. "I don't know what the magic is behind it. They have professionals that look at it from their vantage point — how they want players to make their shot decisions. And that's what drives their decision to add a tee here, take a tee out there or a bunker here or there."

It remains to be seen how the course will play when the world's top players are pacing the greens rather than club members, who include Giants quarterback Eli Manning. Fireman said he didn't expect the cries of "It's nasty out there" that swirl around the opening days of many high-profile tournaments.

"I don't think you're going to hear that about Liberty," he said. "It's very fair, reasonable; it's really fun and challenging."



MIKE DONER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEE WITH A VIEW The first tee at Liberty National in Jersey City, within sight of the Statue of Liberty.

Work on the course began this summer and should be completed by the end of the season, setting the stage for a tournament that will stand in stark contrast to those at tree-lined courses in Westchester and Paramus. Liberty is a bit longer than Ridgewood and 600 yards longer than Westchester, and the wind whipping off Upper New York Bay will make it play longer still.

Perhaps the views of the waterfront and passing ships will get players' adrenaline going.

"You could build this golf course in Idaho, and it would be a really fantastic golf course," Fireman said. "But why does a bottle of wine taste better when you're drinking it in a gourmet restaurant rather than some random place? Because it adds a level to your experience."