**DO YOUR HOMEWORK**

It's no secret the economy is in tough shape, and golf is a want, not a need. As you prepare to take the next step in your career, understand the context in which your future employers are operating. Finding ways you can bring value to an operation and help cut unnecessary costs or generate revenue from unexpected sources can help you go a long way in your career.

Whether you're a student, an assistant superintendent, or somewhere in between, what you're getting into. Superintendents who take an active role mentoring their staff, involving them in the decisions they'll make one day, will become employers of choice. It's also important to understand a superintendent plays an important role in all areas of an operation's success, including player development, marketing, finance, membership communication, etc.

As you prepare to interview, look for resources such as Interviewstream.com, a site that allows you to practice your interview skills in front of your computer (you'll need a webcam and microphone). The site provides a comprehensive list of interview questions to choose from. Once the questions are selected, you're given two minutes to respond to each question. Your responses are saved and promptly e-mailed to you. You can go back and watch your responses and improve your answers. The site is a great tool that allows you to practice real-life interview questions and improve your communication skills and body language.

**Whether you're a student, an assistant superintendent, or somewhere in between, each of us can benefit from understanding the financial performance of an operation in 2008.**

I've had the opportunity to climb Mount Rainier in Washington and complete the Des Moines Marathon. Both took many hours of training and preparation, but they are memories that will last a lifetime.

The importance of a mentor can't be overstated. Mentors are those who've been through good times and bad, who've made mistakes, and are willing to share their expertise and experiences with you. Mentors know you and your situation and many times what's best for you. Often, their message supersedes whether you agree with what they say or not. Seek them out as you prepare to take the next and biggest step in your career.

You may have to work harder than your peers who came into the business a few years ago. It may take patience to get the job you're seeking. Keep in mind, there will always be a job for the candidate who has the skills and willingness to work hard and produce results.

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