

## EDUCATION RECAP

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*



# Assistants Workshop

*I attended this year's Class C, Assistants Winter Workshop held at the Golf House, in Lemont. I came away from the day long education very impressed. It was well organized and had pertinent information that any Assistant Golf Course Superintendent (or any Golf Course Superintendent) could use for pursuing their career. The whole day was planned, organized and conducted by the Members of the Class C Association. I must say it was very professional and informative, great job guys.*

Luke Cella started the day out with a very entertaining, interactive video presentation titled "Congratulations, You got the Interview, Don't Blow It". Luke used a staged video to show some of the dos and don'ts of how to conduct yourself during an interview. Luke (Oscar material) acted as the interviewee and Scott Witte (don't quit your day job) acted as the Interviewer. Luke stopped and started the video to answer questions and make key points. It was humorous and informative.

Some of Luke's major points included:

- The purpose of the interview is the last piece of the puzzle to see if you are the right fit for the Club.
- Preparation is very important. Do you have what it takes? Do your homework.
- Find out everything you can about the Club.
- Who else can you speak with to get information? (value of networking)
- First impressions are critical. Present yourself well: neat, courteous.
- Be prepared to talk about yourself. What have you done? What can you do?
- What is unique about you? Why do you want this job?
- During the interview stay focused.
- Know why you are there, if you don't want the job, you shouldn't be there.
- Stay positive, don't speak poorly of others.
- Choose words carefully, avoid trite sayings.
- Be honest and sincere.
- Use good posture; sit up straight, use eye contact.
- Stay calm.
- Why should we hire you?
- What would your present boss say about you?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses? Use concrete examples of how they mesh with Club. They want to know what is wrong with you. Don't offer any large character flaws. Turn negatives around into positives.

(continued on next page)



- Can you take criticism and directions? Can you answer specific questions?
- This is your time to sell yourself, know it, practice it, and sell it.

In closing:

- Ask what is the next step in the selection process?
- Leave them with a solid impression of you.
- Thank them for their time and opportunity.
- Be enthusiastic, not aggressive.

Luke cited "10 Mistakes of Interviewees".

- Don't prepare properly
- Don't dress appropriately
- Don't ask pertinent questions
- Not being polite to everyone
- Showing arrogance
- Don't speak enough, too quiet
- Don't know your own facts on resume
- Being disinterested
- Badmouthing past employees
- Don't follow up on interview

The next part of the education featured a "lively" panel discussion of recent Assistant Superintendents who have made the jump to Superintendent Positions. This format always provides some of the best information. The panel was moderated by Nick Walters of Park Ridge Country Club and featured Michael Huestis, Chicago Highlands, James Canning, White Eagle Golf Club, Scott Vincent, Onwentsia Club and Kyle Jacobsen of Twin Orchard Country Club.

The panelists all had several things in common: (1) They were all in their early 30's (2) Were willing to relocate around the country to work at top Clubs (3) Had a range of diverse experiences (4) Had mentors of whom they were grateful to have helped developed their career paths.

These guys were great! They were very candid and enthusiastic about sharing their past experiences and were willing to answer all questions. They all had something positive to say about their long road to the top. The Assistants who were fortunate enough to be able to attend the session got a great dose of what it takes to "make it to the next level". These guys have clearly "paid their dues".

Their advice was:

- Your current boss needs to know your intentions for the future. Look for a future boss who will be supportive of these goals and be willing to make calls on your behalf.
- Work at different Clubs, for different Superintendents.
- Focus on the endpoint. Have a specific time frame and goals for current position.
- Think like a Superintendent, separate yourself from other workers.
- Networking is HUGE. This is instrumental for future contacts.
- Staying at one Club too long and getting too comfortable can be a mistake.
- Be proactive, keep an ear out for new jobs, and build relationships.
- Competition for jobs is FIERCE. Not for the shy or timid.

- You must love politics. They are a large part of a job.
- Use technology. Have a home page. Document projects.
- You never who may be your future employer. Many members have multiple memberships.
- Be determined to "win" the job.
- Tour the prospective course, request USGA Reports and past budgets.
- During the interview process, be prepared, be a "politician".
- Go slow in a starting a new job. Be sensitive to existing crew and techniques.

The panel spent a lot of time taking questions from the attendees. For Assistant Superintendents, this really was a "must be there" presentation. It was hard not to be impressed with this Class C Group. There was a lot of energy in the room. There were over 50 attendees and at least 35 of them being Assistant Superintendents. They really had their act together. The entire day was very professional. These "young lions" will be great future leaders of the industry. They are hungry and they eat meat. To reuse the PGA Tour catch phrase, "these guys are good".

The rest of the afternoon was spent in networking and playing "getting to know you" games. It was a fun and informative day. **-OC**



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