



Get the ball rolling

It's uplifting to see other assistant golf course superintendents in the same predicament I'm in ("Becoming more involved," January, page 10). I'm going into my sixth season as the assistant at Framingham Country Club. During the past two years, I've been one of the finalists to be hired as a superintendent, but have failed to get the jobs. Although I'm happily employed, I feel it's time to move on. The local chapter in New England doesn't have a designated committee for assistants, so congratulations to John Ekstrom for getting the ball rolling for us who are second in command.

Jeffrey Urquhart

Assistant golf course superintendent
Framingham (Mass.) Country Club

Web-site guidance

I read Jim McLoughlin's column, "Unprepared," in the September issue (page 20) after my superintendent cut out the article and told me implementing a strategic plan for my next job opportunity is something I seriously should consider doing. The personal Web site is something I'm interested in developing to help achieve my career goals. I have many resources available to create an excellent personal site, but I want to know if McLoughlin has any samples or Web-site addresses I can visit to get ideas or a list of important points that should be included on a personal Web site.

Lance Fox

Assistant golf course superintendent
Tartan Fields Golf Club
Dublin, Ohio

McLoughlin's response:

Look at Steve Renzetti's Web site, www.stevenrenzetti.com. This is one of the best. Steve paid \$900 for his Web site development. As an assistant, you won't have the depth of credentials to match Steve's, so don't try to duplicate his site; rather, strive to match the quality of his site and the judicious use of photos.

Look at my November 2004 column to get an idea about how assistants can fill out an initial Web site.

A manager's priorities

I enjoyed Jim McLoughlin's column, "The assistant trap," in the October issue (page 16).

His comment about club managers having a bias to the hospitality industry seems to imply country club managers don't have an interest in golf, that, perhaps, we're more into "pots and pans" than sporting elements of clubs.

Golf professionals and course superintendents are closer to golf's family circle, but that doesn't mean a manager isn't part of that component. A g.m. needs to understand what's happening in various areas – the course, golf shop, tennis shop, pool, accounting, marketing, etc. – to be an accomplished leader of a club's staff.

Most managers wish they had more time to play golf. I'd love to be able to play more and be a better player. I'm aware of managers who are in a routine of playing golf well and often. Many have set tee times at their clubs with members. I take members to another club, as a guest of the manager, and enjoy a different club operation and get to know a few members better.

Managers who are regular players might be perceived by members as not paying attention to the many business aspects of clubdom. Managers need to be able to understand the conditions of their courses and assist the superintendent and golf pro with their areas of responsibility. But they don't need to play the game at every appropriate opportunity to be "in." Managers must be visible and accessible to members because they're the go-to person when issues arise. Being on the course makes this difficult.

I caution assistant managers to avoid playing at every opportunity to become part of the golf family. The golf pro and superintendent should be more skilled at the game than the manager. Our positions require us to be versed in all areas of a complex business. We're responsible for the entire club operation, and generally, there isn't enough time to accommodate both. Our goal should be to be accomplished in all disciplines mentioned and be a respectable player of this great game.

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