

SUCCESSFUL RECRUITING

Building your crew around student interns.

by R. A. (BOB) BRAME

FEW WOULD ARGUE that successful recruiting is not critical to having a winning team in college sports. Some coaches and assistant coaches are better at recruiting than others and thus gain a distinct competitive edge. Successful recruiting principles apply to golf course maintenance as well. Most courses in an area are in competition with each other for golfers. The maintenance staff plays a huge role in quality conditioning/playability, the team/staff is anchored by career commitment, and those superintendents who invest in recruiting gain an edge.

Although we all know that the conditioning of a golf course is dependent upon a number of factors often not controllable by the superintendent, this does not change the fact that golfers cross compare. Clearly, it is important to inform golfers of the differences in course conditioning (i.e., weather, budget, play volume, design, etc.) and why these variables impact playability from location to location. Nevertheless, comparisons between both public and private courses will be made. You can communicate and educate, but cross comparing and thus competition for golfers is a reality for most facilities.

There is a direct relationship between the conditioning of a golf course and the quality of the staff and equipment. These two components are frequently discussed on Green Section visits. Without question, the operating and capital expenditure budgets directly impact staff size and quality, as well as the equipment inventory. Considering



The Country Club (Cleveland, Ohio) successfully uses a professionally produced videocassette and brochure to enhance efforts in recruiting student interns to work on the golf course.

specifically the maintenance staff, it has become increasingly difficult over the last few years to find and keep good help — a pressing issue in our industry.

A number of strategies have been and are being used to secure quality employees. The use of student interns has become one of the better methods for establishing a high quality, hard-working staff/team. Student interns are normally highly motivated and committed to golf course maintenance. These facts allow a core group of interns to develop into an excellent anchor for the quality conditioning of the golf course.

Recognizing the value of student interns and the fact that there are a limited number available for hire, recruiting is very important. Like communicating and public relations, some superintendents are better at recruiting than others. Those who invest in recruiting will get the best interns and have a superior staff core, which yields a better final product. The competitive edge goes to those who invest in and are good at recruiting.

interns and their current positions; (5) job benefits and compensation; and (6) a personalized appeal from the superintendent to join the team.

Matt secured the services of a local film company to produce the video. The cost was \$5,000 for 30 tapes, which included customized cases for the tapes. Future updates to the original tape will likely be possible at a lower rate. Considering the convenience and positive communication of information, the price seems nominal.

As you contemplate how to gain a competitive edge, consider the value of a professionally produced videocassette to recruit student interns.

Matt Shaffer, golf course superintendent at The Country Club in Cleveland, Ohio, has used a number of techniques over the years to attract student interns. Most recently, Matt has used videocassettes. A videotape, along with a brochure, is sent to prospective interns and/or their college professors. The tape includes: (1) information about The Country Club; (2) a student intern job description; (3) a pledge of commitment to the intern's education, growth, and career; (4) a listing of former

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