

# STEPPING ALONG THE CAREER PATH

by *Blake Garrett*

Growing up and graduating from high school in the small town of Hartselle, Alabama, I was never introduced to the game of golf. I was looking for a job to earn a little money before I left for college and was told that the local golf course needed help laying sod around the clubhouse. I agreed to help and the course owner/operator, Matt Nail, noticed my work ethic. He asked me to stay on for the summer to help the superintendent with some renovation work. The longer I worked at the course the more interested I became in pursuing a career in turf. After the summer was over it was clear what career path I would choose.

I went to Auburn University to pursue a quality education in Turf Grass Management. To gain experience along the way I worked part time at Grand National or Moore's Mill. To further my education and experience I was fortunate to do internships at various courses such as The Country Club of Birmingham, Limestone Springs, and Walt Disney World's Magnolia Golf Course. All of the internships proved to be beneficial in helping gain the knowledge necessary for a future assistant position.

When I graduated with a degree in Agronomy, there were many positions available. The Country Club of Birmingham offered me an assistant in training position which I gladly accepted. The Golf Course Superintendent, Lee McLemore, had been an important contributor to my growth and experience as an intern. I knew this position would be the best step in transitioning into a good assistant position. This proved to be true. When a job at Mountain Brook Club became open I was offered the assistant position working under Matt Bryan. Mountain Brook provided me with the experience I was looking for in allowing me to take a lot of the responsibilities of supervising the crew. Matt was great to work for and was very patient with me. This contributed to my growth as a manager.

After working at Mountain Brook Club for a year I spoke with John Tidwell about coming to FarmLinks. John was currently in the tail-end of the construction at Farm Links and needed help for the grand



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opening in June, 2003. Shortly after the opening of the course Mark Langner took the position as Director of Agronomy and Research. Both Mark and John helped me in so many ways. From day one they instilled in me a vision of success by consistently setting the highest standards and displaying an incredible work ethic. In Spring of 2004, John was offered the superintendent position at Old Overton. Fortunately being at the right place at the right time I was promoted to the superintendent position.

This past year has been very educational in a wide array of topics concerning our golf course operation. It has been great to work for such a tremendous company and to be a part of the FarmLinks team. I hope to make a significant contribution towards the program outlined by the Pursell family, Pursell Technologies, Inc., (PTI) and its corporate partners. To be a part of the inspiration and vision of FarmLinks, working everyday with industry professionals, has and will continue to be an incredible opportunity for me to continue to grow and develop my career.

*Blake's dog, Hunter, is the best-dressed dog on the course.*



**Hunter**