

Joe Zuber

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Running the Circuit

From very early on in my life, I've always been fascinated by electronics; it's been a goal for me to always try to understand how everything works. Since I was young, I've also been extremely competitive, always pushing the boundaries on what I'm able to do. In the past several years, these two traits have manifested themselves in projects that I've undertaken: projects that taught me more about the world and, especially, more about myself. These projects taught me important principles in leadership, engineering, and teamwork.

In April 2018, I founded an international esports team that would go on to change the course of my life. Over the next several years, my goal was to give teenagers and young adults throughout North America a safe place to not only share their life experiences, but also to learn about the values of teamwork, leadership, diversity, constructive criticism, and much more; little did I know that I would find myself learning about the importance of an inclusive environment, the virtues of being dependable, and the strength of being transparent. For the past two and a half years, it has been my responsibility to recruit players, schedule scrimmages, hire coaches, sign up for competitions, and settle arguments. Through this I have not only been able to become a better player, joining Iowa State University's (ISU) Overwatch Varsity team in January 2020, but also a better leader, taking over as one of ISU's Esports Managers in September 2020.



ISU Overwatch Varsity Competing at Kansas State University (March 2020)

In July 2019 I was working at a warehouse where broken MacBook Airls were being recycled when my boss suggested that I try to build one from working spare parts. This was a project I took on by myself, having had some previous computer knowledge from building my own desktop computer. Over the course of several weeks, I collected three mostly undamaged MacBook Airls, all four to five years old and mostly compatible with one another. I bought the special screwdrivers needed to take them apart and got to work analyzing the insides. Thanks to some help with some online repair guides and a bit of intuition, I was able to identify the problems from each machine and construct an entirely new machine from working parts.

Thanks to this experience, I'm proud to say that I've used this MacBook Air throughout college so far without issue. I've also been able to build and repair various other machines, including two other MacBook Airls (one I gave to my sister, and another I sold) and an iMac that I gave to my sister. I've been able to relate my experiences working in these machines to the classroom, and it's helped me to diagnose issues with other computers at work. For projects that I've undertaken since this, I've made sure that what I build is not just something that will last, but something that is easy to repair once it does break.



Interior of my MacBook Air while I was working on it (July 2019)

These projects, while they are very different in nature, have both helped me in my pursuit to become a successful engineer. Starting, managing, and playing on my own esports team taught me how to correctly lead a group of talented individuals and be a part of something larger than myself. Building and repairing a series of computers taught me the technical knowledge I needed to find success in the computing world. Together, these two endeavors transformed me into a better engineer: an engineer that is not just talented with the technology, but also one that is well versed in teamwork and passionate about improving every day.