

Former intern goes from Lowell Park to Fenway

By Joe Pratt | Baylor University

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The green scoreboard in left-center field at Lowell Park is far smaller than the one that lies at the base of the green monster of Fenway Park. Learning how to operate the scoreboard at Lowell Park is also a much simpler task. But one former Kettleers intern mastered both of these boards.

Aaron Kanzer started working for the Cotuit Kettleers in the summer of 2010 and worked a second season in 2011. Just a few summers later, he was inside the belly of the beast of Fenway Park — sliding in numbers to the archaic slots of the legendary Monster. Kanzer did not uncover the job opening on his own; his application was not even connected to Cotuit. A former fellow intern gave him the idea of working for the Red Sox.

“He said ‘You want to apply for this, and you actually have relevant experience, ironically,’” Kanzer recalled. “So I just applied and somehow they got back to me and during the interview, the Cape League stuff came up quite a bit.”

Kanzer joined six other scoreboard operators at Fenway and works roughly a quarter of the 81 Red Sox home games. This is compared to the smaller sample size of working nearly 20 games for Cotuit, around five or six innings per one Kett's home contest. However, during his interview with the Red Sox, they emphasized that managing the board is only one piece of the job title.

"One of the things they really liked when I went to my interview was ... when scouts come or notable people come to Lowell Park, you really want to make sure that they have a really positive experience," Kanzer said, "So there are elements of the job where before and after games, people are coming and they want to have a special experience and working there we have the information that kind of makes it special. So there's elements of working at Lowell Park like, 'Do you experience dealing with VIP guests coming to parks and stuff?' Yes. That's essentially what I was responsible for at Lowell Park, so it really translated well."

Some VIP guests that are taken through the monster include Apollo 11 astronaut Michael Collins and musical groups such as the Foo Fighters and Zac Brown Band, as well as various gold medalists and other notable athletes.

Most of those who pass through Fenway's damp, narrow corridor in left field mark their spot within the cave to etch in their names. MLB and Red Sox stars like Manny Ramirez, Johnny Damon, Carl Yastrzemski, Jim Rice, recent Hall of Fame inductee David Ortiz and countless others have left their names imprinted on both the inside and outside of the wall.

"There's thousands of signatures," he said, "The irony of it is that things like sharpie fade over time, especially in the heat."

While most of the signings from decades ago have since expired and are no longer visible, more permanent engravings remain in the nearly 90-year-old fortress.

"If someone like Mickey Mantle came back there, [his] signature would have faded. One of the things that's preserved over time is whoever the scoreboard operators were during [the] Ted Williams [era] actually etched a home run count into the concrete."

During the 2018 season, Kanzer's second year, the runs slot at the far right side of the box score — which indicates a win for Boston — was changed 58 times. The Sox ended up with a franchise record of 108 wins. Kanzer had the opportunity to work the two home games during the Red Sox' World Series matchup against the Dodgers.

"The whole experience was very surreal, the whole experience — not only just the game but just everything surrounding it [and] being a member of the staff there. Everyone that you usually see in T-shirts was in a suit ... we even had a cameraman inside the green monster with us, which was quite unique, so we ended up on national TV."

Working the scoreboard does not take up too much time throughout the entire year. When he is not operating the monster, Kanzer works for Boston biotechnology company PathAI. He also

opened up the door to new endeavors by joining the Barnstable Housing Committee in 2016 while doing his undergrad at Northeastern University.

"I joined the Housing Committee ... and then kind of realized there were some fundamental areas of the town I wanted to advocate for. Ironically one of the best ways of getting your opinion out there is actually putting your name on the ballot," Kanzer said. "It just so happened that the state rep candidate at that time decided to run for state senate and there was an open seat ... it was kind of any person's game."

Unfortunately, he came up just short with 45 percent of the votes in the Mass. State Representative for the second Barnstable district primary election.

"It was an interesting experience, [and] I think I am happy I did it. I think it changed a lot of direction about what I cared about and kind of what I want to do moving forward. But ironically, if I won, I would have never gotten a job at Fenway because I found the job soon after I lost the election."

Moving forward, he hopes to stay somewhat close to his hometown of Cotuit, but a strict roadmap is not in the works for the 27-year-old. Aaron is proof that even something that may seem as minor as operating a scoreboard for a Cape League team can influence an individual's life in various different ways. Whether someone enjoys their summer internship or not, it can still have an impact on future career paths and choices.

"The main thing I learned from the Kettleers and the Red Sox is that you never know what past experiences might apply elsewhere. Even if you have an internship with the Cape League, and you learn through that like, 'hey, I like this,' [or] 'it's not for me.' It's kind of weird how these things become relevant or in your life or the skills that you have that you never thought were [meaningful]. I hope to be at Fenway for as long as I possibly can be. I know it's not a forever job, but to be able to be there and just be in that environment, especially to come back to Lowell Park and see that ... things have improved so much down there. Overall, I'd say I don't know, but things have been very 'go with the flow' just from the serendipity of the [internship] experience."