

Covering all the Bases

A conversation with Red Sox director of special projects
Fred Olsen '97

Thursday, June 19, 2014

- [See the video on YouTube](#)
-



When the Boston Red Sox front office lined up at Fenway Park to receive their championship rings on May 19, Fred Olsen '97 was there to claim his—right along with David “Big Papi” Ortiz, Jon Lester, and his favorite player, Dustin Pedroia, who had

received theirs on Opening Day. No, Olsen didn't get a single hit or throw a single strike. But when one of your chief responsibilities is to manage postseason operations—and 2013 marked one of the greatest postseasons in Red Sox history—you get a ring.

Do you have good seats at Fenway?

What many people don't know about working at Fenway is that the business offices are close to the field and stands. On game days, there's a lot of excitement and energy in the building. And, yes, employees are lucky enough to get good seats for games.

Were you always interested in baseball?

I loved playing sports as a kid, especially basketball and soccer. T-ball was as far as I pursued baseball, although I came to love the sport and became a lifelong Red Sox fan growing up in Durham.

How did you land your job with the Sox?

In 2005, my wife and I had just moved to Boston from Washington, D.C. where I earned a master's degree in international commerce at George Mason University while working at the European Institute, a public policy forum that focuses on transatlantic relations. I managed to get a job in the Red Sox ticket office just before the 2006 season began. In one way, I felt lucky to land anything at this kind of organization. On the other hand, it was a bit of a risky move after establishing careers in Washington and on Wall Street. Fortunately, I had a plan.

And that was?

Relentless networking and taking on extra assignments with the goal of advancement. And that's exactly what I did. My break came in 2009 when the organization needed a project director for the NHL's Winter Classic hockey contest at Fenway Park. There had already been two classics in other U.S. venues, but we decided to expand the event to include two college hockey games. We dubbed the series "Frozen Fenway." You may recall it featured a dramatic come-from-behind win by the UNH women's hockey team over Northeastern?

Anyhow, the event was so successful I soon found myself managing all large non-baseball events at Fenway, including movie nights, international soccer friendlies, and postseason operations.

You were recently back on campus?

Majoring in business administration and international affairs at UNH, I was very active in international education—I'm a dual citizen of the U.S. and France. To this day, I count my internship in Greece and study abroad in France as highlights of my undergraduate years. This spring, I was invited to deliver a series of lectures about my UNH experience and subsequent career by the Center for International Education.

How were you received?

Well, I'd be lying if I said the Red Sox connection wasn't the main draw! Students wanted to know if I'd ever met David Ortiz or other players. There were several thoughtful questions about finding work-life balance and what kinds of skills employers are seeking. I really enjoyed being in the classroom again.

What did you tell the students?

As far as work-life balance it can be challenging to find. When you're making a run at a World Series, you miss a lot of time at home. As for career development, I've always believed that my greatest skill comes from taking calculated risks.

Would you explain that a bit?

I've always had a sense of adventure and a willingness to jump into new experiences. So much of what we mistake for luck—for "being at the right place at the right time"—comes from wanting to be a part of things and stepping up when the opportunity is presented.

Speaking of championships, how's the team looking this year?

Nothing will ever compare to last year. Coming out of nowhere and having a lot to prove after the 2011 collapse and 2012 last place finish, we really did feel as though we were part of something bigger than baseball. Boston Strong was on everyone's minds all the way through the World Series Parade.

I think the team will have another good season. Sure, the other teams will be trying to unseat us, but witnessing the competition firsthand is what makes working here so much fun.

Originally published by:

UNH Magazine, [Spring 2014 Issue](#)

Editor's Note: This is an updated version of the story that ran in the Spring/Summer issue of UNH Magazine.

- **WRITTEN BY:**
[Dave Moore](#) | UNH Cooperative Extension

PHOTOGRAPHER:

[Alyssa Almeida Duncan Photography](#) | Freelance Photographer

UNH MAGAZINE SPRING 2014



University of New Hampshire

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.

The stories are written by the staff of [UNH Communications and Public Affairs](#).

Email us: unhtoday.editor@unh.edu.

[MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION](#) [CONTACT US](#)

Like us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter

Follow us on YouTube

Follow us on Instagram

Find us on LinkIn

UNH Today RSS feeds

UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234

Copyright © 2021 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)

[UNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)