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Garrett and the Green Monster

A Mizzou turf management major spent the summer at Boston's Fenway Park.

Story by Marcus Wilkins

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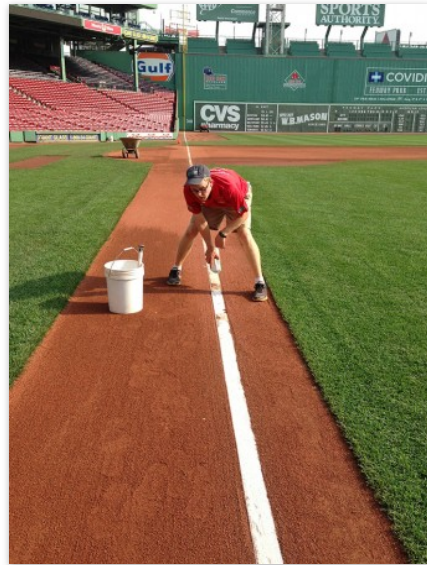
Just as an aspiring set designer might dream of working in a Broadway theatre, turf grass management major Garrett Maxey longed to tend the verdant expanse of Boston's Fenway Park. On an optimistic whim, he contacted the Red Sox to see if they had available internships for summer 2013.

"I have a pretty good résumé working for MU athletics' grounds crews — maintaining the baseball, soccer, softball and practice football fields, and some stuff at Faurot Field," says Maxey who hails from Lee's Summit, Mo. "What I do at Mizzou is right up the alley of what I wanted to do at Fenway Park."

Maxey transferred to MU from Central Methodist University in Fayette, Mo., where he played baseball as a freshman. He moved to Bean Town in May while the Red Sox were in second place, rented a bed from the Pi Lambda Phi house at the Massachusetts

Institute of Technology overlooking the Charles River and walked to the ballpark daily.

His game-day chores included removing the tarpaulin before the sun hit the surface (a hot tarp can encourage fungus), grooming the batter's box and mound, and raking seed shells from the warning track. The hours were weather-dependent and sometimes erratic, but perks included witnessing Paul McCartney's July 9 performance.



Turf grass management major Garrett Maxey from Lee's Summit, Mo., spent this summer as an intern at Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox. Photo courtesy of Garrett Maxey.

“In a lot of ways, it was like working inside a museum, and I would eavesdrop on the daily tours,” Maxey says. “It was cool when the lights would come on, or when they were playing the [archrival New York] Yankees and there was a walk-off home run [by Red Sox first baseman Mike Napoli July 21].”

An avid Kansas City Royals fan, Maxey adopted the Sox as his second-favorite team. His devotion was rewarded as Boston finished 97–65 — tied with the St. Louis Cardinals for Major League Baseball's best record as both clubs host playoff games this week.

Although he appreciated the park as a “glamorous, shining pearl of a stadium,” it wasn't all peanuts and Cracker Jack. Fenway Park's famously antiquated accommodations mean scant space for grounds crews and ballgame viewing. Not to mention the fraternity house's rodent problem.

“I lived in a four-person room, and all the beds were lofted because of the mice,” says Maxey, laughing. “Since all the houses are connected, the mice run from house to house. I’m not used to that kind of thing — vermin.”

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