

Living the dream

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Gothenburg graduate spends summer at internship with minor league baseball team.

Baseball is more than a bat-and-ball game played by nine guys on a field called a diamond.

It's also more than a multi-million dollar sports entertainment industry billed as America's favorite pastime.

Baseball is much more ... at least for Gothenburg native Becky Jacobsen.

As the granddaughter of Gothenburg's most notable baseball fanatic, Tot Holmes, Jacobsen said she can't remember a time when baseball wasn't a part of her life.

"I learned at a very early age that cutting in front of the TV set when the Dodgers were on would generally prompt a pillow, shoe or newspaper to be thrown in my general direction,"

Jacobsen said in an e-mail interview from Lincoln. "I got pegged with a pillow once, then I figured out that commercials were a much less dangerous time to make my trek across the room."

All kidding aside, the 1999 Gothenburg High School graduate learned nearly everything she knows about baseball from Holmes.

"He has a deeper love of the game than anyone I have ever met," she said.

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And it was Holmes who helped in a round-about way to connect Jacobsen to a summer internship with the Fort Worth Cats, an independent minor league baseball team in Texas.



After graduating from high school, Jacobsen left the home of her parents, Noel and Joni, to move to Lincoln and attend the University of Nebraska.

Three semesters later, Jacobsen realized that the UNL path wasn't where she needed to be.

Jacobsen transferred to Hamilton College in Lincoln where she graduated with a degree in business administration.

"I worked for a year and then I realized that I wanted to do more so I went back to school," Jacobsen said.

She entered Nebraska Wesleyan's sports management program, knowing that degree could offer her more and different opportunities than she had with a business degree.

"I chose to study sports management because I knew I wanted to work in sports, specifically in baseball," she said. "That has always been where my heart is and this degree will help me to get closer to that dream."

In May, Jacobsen got a taste of her dream when she moved to Fort Worth, TX, to work for the Cats.

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“My primary responsibilities were with the ticket office,” Jacobsen said of her four months there. “And my duties crossed over to merchandising and promotions.”

She even got to do some on-field personality work like trivia questions, birthday announcements and frozen T-shirt contests.

“One of my favorite memories is when we were approached by Lin Estell, a sergeant in the Air Force who was desperate to do the trivia question on the field,” Jacobsen said.

Estell had insisted that he be in charge of the question and when Jacobsen introduced Estell and his girlfriend, she told the audience she was trying a new type of couples trivia.

Unfortunately, the microphone went out and the crowd started to yell that they couldn't hear him but they figured out what his question was when he dropped to his knee and pulled out a ring and proposed.

“The crowd went nuts, she said yes, and the players lined up to congratulate them. It was so fun to be a part of that,” Jacobsen said.

With her baseball background, Jacobsen said she fared a little better than a couple of others who had internships in the ticket office.

“There were two girls who worked with me. I think they woke up one day and said, ‘I want to work for a baseball team,’” Jacobsen said.

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They didn't know much about sports at all but had plenty to say about the men who played, she said.

One day, Jacobsen and others in the office decided to send them on a scavenger hunt.

"The first item on the list was the keys to the batter's box," Jacobsen said. "We also asked them to look for the padlock to the bullpen and the bucket of split-finger fastballs. They did their best in looking, even asking several players and a coach for help. I think that was a great learning experience for them."



Jacobsen got a different kind of learning experience, something college students don't get in a classroom.

"Classrooms can't teach you how to interact with people or how to calm a parent angry because the Fourth of July game went into 13 innings and her 2-year-old can't stay up long enough to see the fireworks."

Jacobsen will graduate from Wesleyan in May. She sees all sorts of opportunities that may land her a job in the world of sports.

Baseball is where she wants to be.

"Baseball is something that has remained in place during some pretty intense changes and difficult times in my life," Jacobsen said. "Baseball is the place where my family comes back together. When things are stressful, it is a place that I can find a peaceful minute to clear my head. It is as much a part of me as the air that I breathe."

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Working for the Cats meant that she got to be at a baseball park every day.

“I got to live my dream for four and a half months,” she said. “Not everyone is fortunate enough to be able to work in the profession in which they are passionate.”

degenberger@gothenburgtimes.com 308-537-3636