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Framingham blimp pilot to fly over more playoff baseball

Posted October 14, 2009 09:01 AM

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Former Framingham resident Nathan Brooks at the controls of the Goodyear blimp looks down on the Sox-Angels action below during game 2 of American League Divisional Series on Oct. 9. (Courtesy: Nathan Brooks)

By **Matt Rocheleau**, *Globe Correspondent*

After a three-run, 9th-inning rally by the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, the Boston Red Sox's season came to an abrupt halt on Sunday afternoon, and it's likely to be a long winter for much of the Fenway faithful.

But for 29-year-old Nathan Brooks, who grew up in Framingham, Major League Baseball's postseason will continue.

Brooks, a Framingham High School and Framingham State College graduate, is the **newest pilot** of the Goodyear blimp based in Carson, California. He soared above game two of the Sox-Angels divisional series on Friday. (See photos from Friday's game below.)

And he is scheduled to fly over Thursday's National League Championship Series (NLCS) opener when the reigning World Series-champion Philadelphia Phillies visit the Los Angeles Dodgers.

He said he may fly over other NLCS games as well, and has not yet heard whether he will also be piloting above the American League Championship Series (ALCS) when the New York Yankees visit Anaheim.

As a lifelong Sox fan, Brooks was disappointed to see his hometown team ousted from the playoffs.

Now, however, he is hoping to spend as much time onboard the blimp as he can and wants to see the Dodgers and Angels advance to the World Series in what would be a west-coast version of New York's Subway Series.

"That would be great. It would be a lot of flying time for us," he said. "After the

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Red Sox were eliminated, I've just been looking to get as much flying time as I can."

As an added bonus for Brooks, a Dodgers-Angels World Series would mean Boston's most-hated rival, the Yankees, would be knocked out of championship contention.

Brooks is one of 146 people nationwide with the lighter-than-air aircraft certification needed to pilot a blimp, according to registration data provided by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) spokesman Roland Herwig.

Here's what Brooks told us about watching game two of the Sox-Angels series on Friday night onboard an extreme version of the nosebleed section, Goodyear's "Spirit of America" – one of 72 blimps in the country registered with the FAA:

"Before flying the Goodyear blimp I would watch the Sox play at with my friends: Aaron, Alan, and Tony's place on their couch in front of a 60" TV, sitting in the bleachers in section 42 because my Tony would get a deal on season tickets, or along the first base line when a friend's father would give us his tickets when he couldn't make the game. Now I was cheering on my home team from above in one of the most recognizable advertising icons in America. The only thing better would be cheering on the Sox while flying the Goodyear Blimp high above Fenway Park!"

"As I checked the weather forecast when I woke up in the morning I was nervous that we wouldn't be able to get the game in because of low clouds. I was pleased when I got to work and checked the weather again and saw that the forecasted marine layer was pushing out. I started making the necessary calculations for our fuel burn for covering the game and how much ballast I should take to compensate for the blimp's change in weight. After getting the final thumbs up from our Crew Chief the ground crew helped launch us, and we were off to cover the game."

"We were watching the game from a monitor we have in the aircraft that shows what ever the camera is viewing. I was cheering for Boston and our TV Tech working the camera in the blimp, Lou Navarro (Big Lou) a native to Los Angeles, was cheering for the Angels to win. When I first started covering games with Lou I was shocked to find out that he had never heard the song 'Dirty Water' by the Standells. Much to Luis' dismay I would sing 'Dirty Water' once in a while to pass the time while we cover sporting events together."



Former Framingham resident Nathan Brooks at the controls of the Goodyear blimp while flying above game 2 of the Sox-Angels divisional series on Oct. 9. (Courtesy: Nathan Brooks)

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3 COMMENTS SO FAR...

1. It's great that Nathan Brooks is such a great fan of the Red Sox, and it's especially gratifying to hear that Nathan loves to sing the song we made famous "Dirty Water". In addition to being a Red Sox fan, I am also a life-long Dodgers fan. Ironically, we have been invited to attend Game 1 of the NLDS at the Dodgers Stadium by our friend Dr. Charles Steinberg who used to be with the Red Sox, but is now with the Dodgers organization.

Posted by [Larry Tamblyn](#) October 14, 09 12:17 PM

2. That is quite the view you have from up there Nate. We heard your name on tv the other night for both the Red Sox game and one of the Dodgers games. It's pretty impressive you've been on the bachelor, prototype this, Lakers playoff games and now they are mentioning you during MLB playoff games. Congrats, you have earned it!!

Posted by [Tony W](#) October 14, 09 01:36 PM

3. Nice job Nate. You worked hard to get to this point so enjoy it. You deserve it!!

Posted by [Aaron S.](#) October 14, 09 10:37 PM

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