

Concord's owater welcomes Jacoby Ellsbury for meet-and-greet

By Patrick Ball/Staff Writer

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CONCORD - Fans of [owater](#) and [Jacoby Ellsbury](#) converged in Concord earlier Monday for a meet-and-greet/photo op orchestrated by the West Concord-based beverage company.

The Red Sox centerfielder stole away from Fenway Sept. 14 — an off day after a day-night doubleheader — to chat with and sign home plates for winners of owater's "Meet Jacoby Competition."

Dozens of young, old and executive-type enthusiasts flooded the beverage company's Bradford Street offices to meet Ellsbury, an owater spokesman. Contest winners munched strawberry-topped waffles (a favorite of Ellsbury's and subject of a recently recorded radio spot) and mingled with the several distributors, sales reps and Stop & Shop execs also invited to meet the Bo-Sox star.

"They're such big fans and they love the Red Sox," Ellsbury said between minutes-long conversations with contest winners. "It's nice to come out, shake their hands and thank them for the support."

Talking with Chase Munro, a minor leaguer from Shrewsbury, Ellsbury named second baseman Dustin Pedroia as his favorite Red Sox player not named Jacoby Ellsbury, encouraged the 7-year-old athlete to continue playing multiple sports and learned his name was dropped in a sequel of ["The Sandlot."](#)

"Just stay focused and have fun. I mean that's the biggest thing," Ellsbury said before signing memorabilia and letting Chase try on his World Series ring. "Even at the level where I am just to have fun is important. When you're having fun, that's when you're playing the best."

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After meeting his favorite big leaguer, Chase said he admires Ellsbury "because he steals a lot of bases." His mother, Maria Munro respects #46 for a slightly different reason.

"I thought it was an incredible experience for someone of his caliber to come out here and spend time with the kids," Munro said, adding that Ellsbury epitomizes the right way to play the game. "And this is coming from the heart. I grew up

watching Jim Rice and Freddie Lynn. You see the league evolve and it's nice to see him do what he's doing the way he does it."

Ellsbury, who rolled up to 33 Bradford St. in a black Escalade with girlfriend Kelsey Hawkins riding shotgun, said the Sox were not practicing Monday and he was happy to make the trip to Concord.

He's been involved with owater since spring training in 2008 when he met company head Tom First and sampled the product.

"Our relationship with Jacoby is a real one," First, owater's chief executive officer, said after the meet-and-greet Monday. "It's not your typical paid spokesman. Jacoby has really become a part of the company."

Of the Meet Jacoby Contest, a promotion between the New England beverage company and supermarket giant Stop & Shop that culminated with the meet-and-greet Monday, First said it was "a big event done in a small kind of way."

And that's par for the course for First, who said he has been "a hands-on guy" since starting his other beverage line, Nantucket Nectars. "Getting feedback from and interacting with the customers is neat," he said.

First, who sat in on the meetings Monday, said interactions that stood out were Ellsbury's advice to Chase and Munro, and Polar reps asking if Ellsbury would take a nap in centerfield when Dice-K pitches for the Sox Tuesday night, "because he works so slow."