

Lively luncheon sets the pace for 59th BoSox Club season

By: Rob Brogna

The BoSox Club kicked off its 59th season and luncheon series by welcoming Red Sox lefty reliever Jovani Moran and alumni player and 2013 World Series champion Jonny Gomes to a large crowd at the Dedham Hilton on April 21. MLB.com Red Sox reporter Ian Browne served as emcee and everyone's favorite green monster, Wally, greeted members prior to the luncheon.

Jovani Moran, the current lefty out of the bullpen, brought a quiet intensity and a lot of perspective. Still working his way back after Tommy John surgery when he joined the club last season, Moran spoke candidly about what it meant that the organization believed in him enough to hand him a key relief role out of spring training.

When the conversation turned to representing Puerto Rico in the World Baseball Classic, you could hear the pride come through. Pitching in San Juan versus pitching at Fenway? Different settings, same electricity. As Moran put it, it's all about that adrenaline, that surge you feel when an entire crowd is locked in on every pitch. The fact that his dad grew up a Red Sox fan only adds another layer to the story. Around here, those details matter.

Then there was Jonny Gomes, who doesn't so much tell stories as he relives them in real time. Gomes had the room from the start, flashing back to his first BoSox Club luncheon appearance, not as a Red Sox hero, but as a visiting Tampa Bay player in 2012, alongside the legendary Don Zimmer. Even then, he could feel it: the difference in Boston. The edge. The expectation. The connection between team and fans that turns a long season into something bigger.

"We're lucky to have that here," Gomes said, and you didn't need to look around the room to know everyone agreed.

Of course, Gomes being Gomes, the conversation inevitably circled back to 2013. That team doesn't just live in memory, it lives in personality. According to Gomes, the chemistry wasn't accidental. It was built. A mix of young talent and veterans with something to prove. And yes, it was sealed, at least in part, by those now-famous beards that started with a spring training confidence and ended as a symbol of belief. It was early in that season when Gomes coined his now famous mantra:

One day closer to the parade.

It's the kind of line that sticks with you, especially in April, when the standings don't quite tell the whole story yet.

And that's where Gomes brought it back to the present. The 2026 Red Sox might not be lighting up the scoreboard with tape-measure home runs, and the early record might not turn heads. But that doesn't concern him. If anything, he sees something intriguing taking shape with a team built less on power and more on athleticism, pitching, defense, and smart baserunning.

In other words, a team that might just grind its way into relevance.

"These guys won't win with power," Gomes said, "but their athleticism will win them a lot of games."