



### Case Study Highlights

**Product** Custom sports seating and restored wooden seating

**Quantity** 36,500 total seats

**Location** Fenway Park, Boston, MA

### Two American Teams

On April 20, 1912, Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox and one of the most iconic ballparks in the world, opened its doors to the public. This signature landmark has since become an intrinsic part of the American identity. To many, Fenway Park is more than just a stadium, it's a shrine and homage to the Great American Pastime. Throughout the years, fans have watched baseball greats like Ted Williams and David Ortiz hit home runs and break records from the very same seats.

Tradition is what makes this stadium so beloved. Despite two fires and several renovations, the ballpark still holds the same unique look and feel as it did when it was first built nearly 100 years ago. Part of that look and feel can be attributed to the park's thousands of seats, nearly all of which were manufactured by another iconic American brand, American Seating.

Founded in 1886, American Seating has been a part of the Fenway fan experience since the ballpark first opened. In 2002, American Seating was asked to "step up to the plate" again in a uniquely challenging way. Red Sox management made the decision to begin making improvements to the entire ballpark in an effort to preserve and protect it, allowing fans to enjoy Fenway Park for generations to come. Since then, improvement work has feverishly been taking place at the ballpark from the last day of each season until Opening Day in early spring. Renovation is expected to be complete Spring 2012.

### A Tough Pitch

Among the many renovation projects American Seating has completed at Fenway to date, the most challenging –and rewarding – was the renovation of the park's 1934 wooden Grandstand seats.

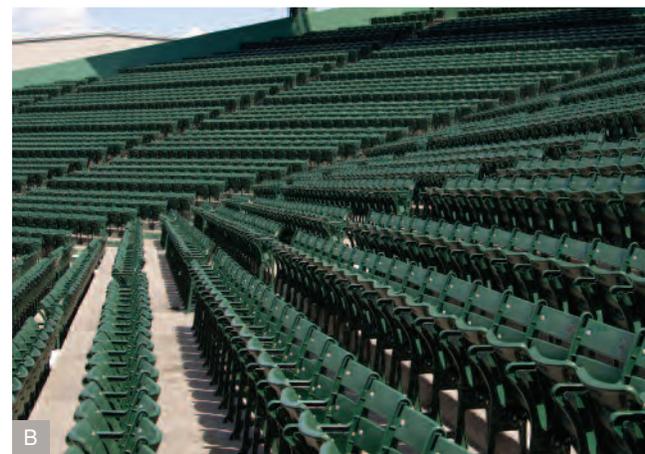
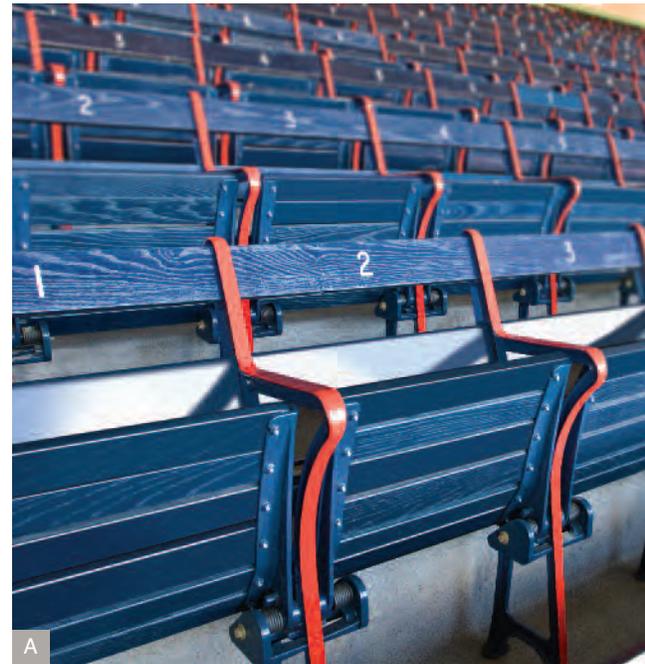
Located in the lower seating bowl area, which extends roughly from the left field foul pole to the visitor's bullpen in right field, these venerable seats are among the last remaining wooden seats left in any U.S. sports facility.

Because of their history and significance – Fenway worked with several historical organizations to ensure proper restoration – the Red Sox wanted to keep as many of these seats as possible, but these 75-year old seats needed significant restoration. Additionally, each seat needed to be enhanced with an automatic self-rising mechanism. The spring-activated self-rising mechanism would create a more fan-friendly experience (fans had to manually lift the old seats), and would create aisles that were safer and wider. This enhancement would also enable the park to become compliant with current fire and safety codes.

"These are one-of-a-kind seats, so it was incredibly important that we were able to reuse them," said Paul Hanlon, Senior Manager of Ballpark Planning and Development for the Boston Red Sox. "Obviously, not being able to put them back wasn't an option."

### Leading Off

This improvement project began the day after the last pitch of the 2008 season. "We were really racing against the clock to see how long this removal, refurbishing and reinstallation would take," said Hanlon. "The Northeast winter is the worst time of the year for construction. However, we were able to set up a series of tarps eight feet high and enclose the entire area. We pumped in heat and kept it at a constant 65 degrees, so in the middle of winter you had people working in short sleeves at Fenway. It was essential."



### Project Partner List

- Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) Since 1912
- McNamara/Salvia, structural engineer
- NER Construction

A: Refurbished wooden grand stand seats which are among the last remaining left in any US sports facility.

B: Custom sports seating to replicate the original slat back.

In just ten days, American Seating painstakingly removed the delicate, historic seats that stretched from dugout to dugout. A team from American Seating measured and cataloged every seat and every row to make sure each seat would be placed back in the exact same spot from which it was removed. This work also ensured die-hard fans would not experience a reduction in seat size, especially important if they had been sitting in the same seats for years.

**Rounding Second**

Once removed, all seats were carefully packaged and shipped to American Seating's headquarters in Grand Rapids, Mich. There, engineers and other skilled workers began the detailed and meticulous process of reviewing each chair for refurbishing. American Seating had to count and sort every single piece of wood and every single piece of iron because of the historic significance of the chairs. The company gently cleaned the wood and iron surfaces. The cast iron standards (chair supports) were refurbished and repainted, while the wooden back slats and seats were cleaned of any splinters or paint flakes. Additionally, any dead or rotted wood parts were returned to the Red Sox and new pieces were integrated.

"The most amazing thing was to see if American Seating would be able to incorporate the self-rising mechanism without jeopardizing the old seats," said Hanlon. Working around the clock, American Seating was able to machine a hole on the side of the original standard to insert the self-rising mechanism. "We were absolutely amazed by their work," added Hanlon. "We really questioned whether or not it could be done, and the fact that they were able to make it work and not change anything in these historic seats is the most amazing part." After all of the refurbishing work was completed, all seats were shipped back to Fenway for reinstallation. "It was like putting a delicate puzzle back together," said Hanlon.

All told, American Seating refurbished and enhanced 5,500 Grandstand seats, the oldest and most historic seats in Major League Baseball.



C



D

C: Custom sports seating in Red Sox custom colors D: Fenway Park 2009

**A Home Run**

"Our goal was to enhance these chairs while keeping as much of the original seating as possible. It was essential to maintain the historic look of each seat. American Seating completely succeeded in reaching that goal. The refurbished seats and new pieces blend in so well that there is no feeling of a new seating area versus an old seating area," said Hanlon.

"This project was a huge challenge for us and pretty risky," said Chuck Bailey, American Seating National Sales Manager for Sports. "But when you have a client that is passionate about what they're doing, it makes it easier. I also think it shows the lengths we'll go to finding innovative solutions for our clients. This is a true custom job; you won't see any other seats that look like the ones we've done at Fenway Park. We've essentially designed a brand new seat to mimic the original chairs."

With this project complete, American Seating has worked on approximately 23,600 seats since the Fenway Park improvements began in 2002. By the time all the improvements are completed, this symbol of Americana, which has a capacity of 37,373, will feature approximately 36,500 chairs from American Seating.

"Their ability to work during a New England winter at a rapid pace and still complete the job in a seamless manner is a great achievement. They also demonstrated great ingenuity in refurbishing the Grandstand seats," added Hanlon. "It's definitely a partnership. It's always been like that since the original construction and remains that way today."



E



F



G

- E: Private Suite Seating equipped with custom padding
- F: All seating now has self rising mechanisms
- G: Bleacher Seating with Custom Slat backs