



## NATIONAL COLLEGIATE BASEBALL WRITERS ASSOCIATION

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Contact: Bo Carter, NCBWA, bcarter@footballfoundation.com, 214-418-6132

### FIVE FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR 2014 DICK HOWSER TROPHY

DALLAS – Standouts who took their teams into postseason play and are piling up All-America honors have been named as the five finalists for the 2014 Dick Howser Trophy presented by Easton Foundations.

Oregon State outfielder Michael Conforto, LSU pitcher Aaron Nola, Kennesaw State catcher Max Pentecost, Kentucky 1B-DH-P A.J. Reed and Oregon State pitcher Ben Wetzler are the top vote recipients from two ballots for the 28th annual Howser Trophy laurels, with the winner announced on opening day of the 68th annual NCAA World Series Saturday, June 14, at Omaha, Neb.

Balloting was conducted by members of the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association, in conjunction with the Dick Howser Trophy committee and the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce.

Each finalist also represents the ideals of character, leadership, desire, and competitive spirit exhibited by Dick Howser, the All-America shortstop and later head coach at Florida State, before managing the Kansas City Royals to the world championship in 1985. He also is the namesake for Dick Howser Stadium at FSU.

Conforto, a senior from Woodinville, Calif., paced the Beavers in virtually every offensive category in 2014. The two-time first team All-America choice and 2013 and '14 Pac-12 Conference Player of the Year also topped the conference in numerous stats. He started all 59 games for a team ranked No. 1 nationally and the No. 1 seed in the 2014 NCAA Division I Championship and roped 70 hits in 203 at-bats for a .345 average, seven home runs and 45 RBI for the '14 Pac-12 champs, who were 23-7 in intra-circuit games.

Nola, a junior right-handed pitcher from Baton Rouge, La., was 2014 Southeastern Conference Pitcher of the Year (his second such honor since 2013) and won 11 of his 12 mound decisions. He had a 1.47 earned run average – one of the Top 10 nationally for pitchers with 100-plus innings, and allowed just 19 earned runs for the SEC champions over 116-plus innings. Nola also raised his career record to 30-6 over three seasons, while averaging 10.4 strikeouts every nine frames.

Pentecost, a junior catcher from Winder, Ga., entered the 2014 NCAA Super Regionals with a Division I-high 35-game hitting streak, was Atlantic Sun Conference Player of the Year, and helped KSU become the first Atlantic Sun Conference team to advance to the NCAA Super Regionals. He also led the Owls to the ASC team title and helped them pull a major upset over host and No. 7 seed Florida State and SEC power Alabama to win the NCAA Tallahassee Regional. He also is a finalist for the '14 Johnny Bench Catcher of the Year Award.

Reed, a versatile junior 1B-DH-left-handed pitcher from basketball-rich Terre Haute, Ind., missed by 27 batting average points in an effort to become just the second SEC player besides OF Rafael Palmeiro of Mississippi State in 1984 to win the coveted conference hitting triple crown. Reed's 2014 individual stats were nationally impressive, nonetheless. He paced DI with 23 home runs and 73 RBI while leading all

SEC pitchers in victories with a 12-2 overall record 2.09 ERA. The SEC Player and Pitcher of the Year paced the Wildcats to runner-up in the NCAA Louisville Regional.

Wetzler, a senior left-handed pitcher from Clackamas, Ore., and two-time All-America selection, dominated hitters as the 2014 Pac-12 Pitcher of the Year. He led all starters from that league with a 12-1 record and 0.78 ERA over 14 starts and 104 innings. Wetzler joined Conforto, another pre- and postseason All-America choice in helping the Beavers rule the nation's polls for several weeks during the campaign for the No. 1 seed in NCAA DI and Corvallis Regional host.

The five finalists were chosen from a solid list of '14 semifinalists including: Caleb Adams, OF, Louisiana-Lafayette; Will Allen, C, Ole Miss; Austin Anderson, 3B, Ole Miss; Casey Bloomquist, SP, Cal Poly; Dylan Bosheers, SS, Tennessee Tech; Aaron Brown, UTL, Pepperdine; Walker Buehler, SP, Vanderbilt; Michael Cederoth, RP, San Diego State; Conforto; Jace Conrad, IF, Louisiana-Lafayette; Andrew Daniel, 2B, San Diego; Ty Davis, SP, Washington; Paul DeJong, 2B, Illinois State; Brandon Finnegan, SP, TCU; Blake Fox, SP, Rice; Derek Gibson, DH, Southeast Missouri State; Casey Gillaspie, 1B, Wichita State; Mackenzie Handel, DH, Stephen F. Austin; Matt Imhoff, SP, Cal Poly; Michael Katz, 1B, William & Mary; Nathan Kirby, SP, Virginia; Mark Mathias, 2B, Cal Poly; Daniel Miles, 3B, Tennessee Tech; Sam Moore, RP, UC Irvine; Andrew Morales, SP, UC Irvine; Nola; Pentecost; Reed; Michael Russell, SS, North Carolina; Joe Seddon, RP, South Carolina; Kyle Schwarber, C, Indiana; Ryan Seiz, 2B, Liberty; D.J. Stewart, OF, Florida State; Cole Sturgeon, UTL, Louisville; and Wetzler,

The Howser Trophy was created in 1987, shortly after Howser's death. Previous winners of the Howser Trophy are Mike Fiore, Miami, 1987; Robin Ventura, Oklahoma State, 1988; Scott Bryant, Texas, 1989; Alex Fernandez, Miami-Dade Community College South, 1990; Frank Rodriguez, Howard College (Texas), 1991; Brooks Kieschnick, Texas, 1992 and 1993; Jason Varitek, Georgia Tech, 1994; Todd Helton, Tennessee, 1995; Kris Benson, Clemson, 1996; J. D. Drew, Florida State, 1997; Eddy Furniss, LSU, 1998; Jason Jennings, P, Baylor, 1999; Mark Teixeira, 1B, Georgia Tech, 2000; Mark Prior, P, USC, 2001; Khalil Greene, SS, Clemson, 2002; Rickey Weeks, 2B, Southern U., 2003; Jered Weaver, P, Long Beach State, 2004; Alex Gordon, 3B, Nebraska, 2005; Brad Lincoln, P, Houston, 2006; David Price, P, Vanderbilt, 2007; Buster Posey, C, Florida State, 2008; Stephen Strasburg, P, San Diego State, 2009; Anthony Rendon, 3B, Rice, 2010; Taylor Jungmann, P, Texas, 2011; Mike Zunino, C, Florida, 2012; Kris Bryant, 3B, San Diego, 2013.

Statistics for Five Finalists (through June 5, 2014)

Pos.	Name, School, Class	Avg.	G	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB-SBA
OF	Michael Conforto, Ore. State, Sr.	.345	59	203	52	70	16-2-7	56	55	28	4-8
C	Max Pentecost, Kennesaw St., Jr.	.423	62	260	59	110	23-2-9	68	29	25	17-19
1B	A.J. Reed, Kentucky, Jr.	.336	49	223	60	75	18-1-23	73	49	48	0-1

**Pitchers**

Name, School, Class	W-L	ERA	APP	CG	SHO	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Aaron Nola, LSU, Jr.	11-1	1.47	16	2	0	0	116.1	69	19	19	27	134
A.J. Reed, Kentucky, Jr.	12-2	2.09	16	1	1	0	112	98	39	26	29	71
Ben Wetzler, Oregon State, Sr.	12-1	0.78	14	4	0	0	104	49	12	9	31	83