



NATIONAL COLLEGIATE BASEBALL WRITERS ASSOCIATION

(June 6, 2014)

ncbwa.com

FOR RELEASE: Friday, June 6, 2014

Contact: Russ Anderson (214-774-1351), NCBWA

NCBWA ANNOUNCES DISTRICT PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

DALLAS – The National Collegiate Baseball Writers of America announced its 2014 District Players of the Year Friday, honoring 11 of the nation's budding stars and marking the 14th-straight year it has bestowed the honor.

The 2014 NCBWA District Players of the Year are District I: DH Corey Furman (Bucknell); District II: C Mike Alexander (Delaware State); District III: LHP/1B A.J. Reed (Kentucky); District IV: C Max Pentecost (Kennesaw State); District V: C Kyle Schwarber (Indiana); District VI: 1B Casey Gillaspie (Wichita State) & RP Brendan McCurry (Oklahoma State); District VII: P Aaron Nola (LSU); District VIII: OF Chase Harris (New Mexico); District IX: RHP Ben Wetzler (Oregon State) & OF Michael Conforto (Oregon State).

Some of the previous NCBWA District Players of the Year have been Howser Trophy recipients, such as Mark Teixeira of Georgia Tech, Mark Prior of USC, Khalil Greene of Clemson, Rickie Weeks of Southern, Jered Weaver of Long Beach State, Alex Gordon of Nebraska, Brad Lincoln of Houston, David Price of Vanderbilt, Buster Posey of Florida State, Stephen Strasburg of San Diego State, Taylor Jungmann of Texas, Mike Zunino of Florida and Kris Bryant of San Diego.

Furman was a first-team All-Patriot League selection and ranked in the top 10 in the Patriot League in six categories during the regular season, including leading the league in average (.388), slugging percentage (.560), on-base percentage (.422) and triples (5). Furman, who missed the final six games of the regular season, hit a robust .447 during Patriot League play. He led the Bison to their first NCAA tournament berth since 2010.

Alexander was a first-team All-MEAC selection after ranking third in the conference with a .386 average. A two-time first-team All-MEAC pick, Alexander also ranked second in the conference and 10th nationally in on-base percentage (.490), fourth in the MEAC in slugging percentage (.575) and fourth in home runs (7).

Reed, who was named a finalist for the 2014 Dick Howser Trophy on Thursday, leads Division I with 23 home runs, a .735 slugging percentage and a 1.211 OPS (on-base plus slugging), and his 73 RBI rank third in the nation. He was the *Collegiate Baseball* National Player of the Year and SEC Player of the Year, and he 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. He notched a .336 average, 60 runs, 18 doubles, a .476 on-base percentage and an SEC-best 49 walks, which ranked eighth nationally. On the mound, he leads the SEC with 12 wins, his 2.09 ERA is fifth, he ranks second in the conference with 112.0 innings pitched and 10th with 71 strikeouts.

Pentecost is a finalist for the Dick Howser Trophy and Johnny Bench Award. A first-team Louisville Slugger All-American and Atlantic Sun Player of the Year, the junior catcher led Kennesaw State to its first NCAA Regional title in school history as the Owls prepare to face Louisville in this weekend's Super Regional round as they became the first Atlantic Sun team to advance to Super Regionals. Pentecost currently holds a Division I-best 35-game hitting streak and leads the nation in hits with 110 while ranking second in batting average (.423) and total bases (164). He also is in the top 25 in five other offensive categories, standing ninth in doubles (23), 13th in slugging percentage (.631), 15th in RBI (58) and on-base percentage (.483) and 16th in runs (59). Behind the plate, Pentecost has caught 21 runners attempting to steal.

Schwarber, who earned his second-straight District Player of the Year honor, was a second-team Louisville Slugger All-American and also is a finalist for the Johnny Bench Award. A unanimous first-team All-Big Ten selection, Schwarber led the league with 14 home runs and 66 runs, ranking seventh and fourth nationally, respectively. His 153 total bases ranked fifth nationally and he posted a .358 average while driving in 48 runs. He also recorded a 1.123 OPS (on-base plus slugging) and tied for the Big Ten lead with six triples. He also was named the Big Ten Tournament Most Outstanding Player and to the NCAA Bloomington Regional All-Tournament team.

-more-

Gillaspie was a first-team Louisville Slugger All-American after earning Missouri Valley Conference Player of the Year honors. The junior first baseman stands leads the nation in walks (58), ranks second in on-base percentage (.520), fifth in slugging percentage (.682) and home runs (15), 11th in total bases (144) and is 17th in batting average (.389). He led the Valley with 82 hits and 50 RBI, and was fourth with 50 runs. He also was named to the Valley all-defense team at first base.

McCurry, who was named a finalist for the NCBWA Stopper of the Year Award on Thursday, was a second-team Louisville Slugger All-American and first-team All-Big 12 selection. In helping Oklahoma State advance to the NCAA Super Regional round, the senior right-hander has 19 saves in 34 appearances in 2014 while boasting a record of 5-0 with a 0.39 ERA. McCurry has allowed just two earned runs and eight walks in 46.0 innings of work this year. He ranks second on the team with 53 strikeouts and has held opponents to a .182 batting average.

Nola, who is the only player to ever win consecutive SEC Pitcher of the Year honors, also is a finalist for the Dick Howser Trophy. A two-time Louisville Slugger first-team All-American, Nola was 11-1 with a 1.47 ERA and LSU was 15-1 in games he started in 2014. He ranks second nationally with 134 strikeouts and led the SEC with 116 1/3 innings pitched and a .172 opponent batting average. He allowed only 19 runs on 69 hits and 27 walks, tossed two complete games and combined on six shutouts.

Harris was a first-team All-Mountain West Conference selection after ranking second in the conference in batting average (.377) and leading the league in hits (93) and RBI (63). He also ranked eighth nationally in hits and stood eighth in RBI per game (1.09). He ranked fourth in home runs (8) and tied for second in triples (5), while tying for the league lead in total bases (138). His total bases also ranked 15th nationally.

Conforto and Wetzler, the linchpins of the Oregon State lineup, both are finalists for the Howser Trophy and both were Louisville Slugger first-team All-Americans. Conforto, a three-time All-American and two-time Pac-12 Player of the Year, led the Pac-12 and ranks fifth nationally in on-base percentage (.504), and also led the conference in slugging percentage (.547) and runs (52). He ranks second nationally in walks with a school-record 55, is tied for third in the Pac-12 in doubles (16) and total bases (111), and was fifth in average (.345) and hits (70). He was the first three-time All-American in OSU history and the first player in more than a decade to earn three consecutive All-Pac-12 honors. Wetzler leads the nation with a 0.78 ERA and is 12-1, with his 12 victories ranking fourth in the country. He also leads the nation in hits per nine innings (4.24) and is third in WHIP at 0.77, allowing just 49 hits and 31 walks in 104 innings pitched. He struck out 83 and allowed opponents to hit a meager .143 while posting four complete games and two shutouts. Wetzler allowed two earned runs in a game only twice in 2014 and shut out opponents through at least seven innings six times.

The group, divided into areas as follows, District I: Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania; District II: Connecticut, West Virginia, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, District of Columbia; III: Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida; IV: Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Maryland; V: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin; VI: Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota; VII: Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana; VIII: Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, New Mexico, Colorado, Nevada, Montana; District IX: California, Oregon, Washington, Hawai'i, Arizona, Alaska.

Stats through games of June 5, 2014:

Pos.	Name, School	Class	Avg.	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
DH	Corey Furman, Bucknell	Sr.	.388	33	116	18	45	4	5	2	24	7	13	2-2
C	Mike Alexander, Delaware State	Sr.	.386	43	153	41	59	8	0	7	33	27	8	16-20
1B/P	A.J. Reed, Kentucky	Jr.	.336	62	223	60	75	18	1	23	73	49	48	0-1
<i>(Reed's pitching stats: 12-2, 2.09 ERA, 16 APP, 16 GS, 112.0 IP, 98 H, 39 R, 26 ER, 29 BB, 71 K)</i>														
C	Max Pentecost, Kennesaw State	Jr.	.423	62	260	59	110	23	2	9	58	29	25	17-19
C	Kyle Schwarber, Indiana	Jr.	.358	59	232	66	83	16	6	14	48	44	30	10-13
1B	Casey Gillaspie, Wichita State	Jr.	.389	59	211	50	82	15	1	15	50	58	28	8-8
OF	Michael Conforto, Oregon State	Jr.	.345	59	203	52	70	16	2	7	56	55	38	4-8

Pos.	Name, School	Class	ERA	W-L	APP	GS	CG	SHO	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
RP	Brendan McCurry, Oklahoma State	Sr.	0.39	5-0	34	0	0	0	46.0	29	2	2	8	53
SP	Aaron Nola, LSU	Jr.	1.47	11-1	16	16	2	1	116.1	69	19	19	27	134
SP	Ben Wetzler, Oregon State	Sr.	0.78	12-1	14	13	4	2	104.0	49	12	9	31	83