



NATIONAL COLLEGIATE BASEBALL WRITERS ASSOCIATION

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NCBWA ANNOUNCES 2019 STOPPER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

GREENVILLE, N.C. (NCBWA) – A pair of seniors, two juniors and a pair of sophomores are among the six finalists for the 15th annual National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association Stopper of the Year Award, members of the association announced Thursday afternoon.

The six finalists, five of whom participated in the 2019 NCAA Tournament, stand among Division I's finest out of the bullpen. Illinois junior RHP **Garrett Acton**, the nation's saves leader with 19, is joined by Baylor senior RHP **Kyle Hill**, Connecticut junior RHP **Jake Wallace**, Eastern Kentucky senior RHP **Aaron Ochsenein**, UCLA sophomore RHP **Holden Powell** and Vanderbilt sophomore RHP **Tyler Brown** to comprise the finalists group.

Acton has set new Illinois and Big Ten records with his nation-leading 19 saves, currently two more than any Division I pitcher. He posted a 2.18 ERA and .121 batting average against in 33 innings this season. Acton posted multiple strikeouts in 12 outings and fanned a total of 34 batters. The Lemont, Illinois, native earned All-Big Ten First Team honors and Second Team All-American recognition.

Hill, Baylor's lights-out closer in 2019, was a unanimous First Team All-Big 12 selection and was also the Bears' first First Team All-American selection since 2012. He finished the season with an impressive 0.00 ERA through 29.1 innings of work. The Corpus Christi, Texas, native tallied a team-leading seven saves and was 6-0 on the year. He boasts the longest scoreless streak in school history (32.2 innings dating back to 2018) over 24 outings.

Wallace had a historic season on the mound for the Huskies by recording a 0.64 ERA in 42.0 innings. The 0.64 ERA ranks fifth-lowest in single-season history at UConn and the Methuen, Mass native tied a single-season record with 16 saves. Wallace has been named a First Team All-New England and All-Conference member, is one of five pitchers up for National Pitcher of the Year and earned Second Team All-American status from Collegiate Baseball last week.

Ochsenein was selected First Team All-Ohio Valley Conference this season. He had a 5-2 record with a program-best 0.83 ERA and 10 saves. The 6-foot-3, 225-pound Ochsenein struck out 90 batters in 54 and one-third innings, allowing just five runs on only 24 hits, and 16 walks. Opponents had a .133 batting average against the senior right-hander. Ochsenein is one of only 11 players in OVC history with a sub-1.00 ERA with at least 50 innings pitched in a season. He ranked second in the OVC in appearances, sixth in strikeouts and second in saves.

Powell is having a historic season for the Bruins, as he's locked down 17 saves this year to place second on UCLA's single-season and career (22) saves lists. He ranks third in the nation in saves, and was ranked No. 4 in D1Baseball's power rankings of NCAA relief pitchers. The Visalia, Calif. native had a 20-inning streak without allowing an earned run from Mar. 22 to May 5 and has been scored upon just twice in his last 22 outings dating back to Mar. 18. He's lowered his ERA from 4.76 to 1.84 in that span, and has 60 strikeouts in just 44 innings for a team-high 12.3 strikeouts per nine innings ratio.

Brown has posted 14 saves in 26 appearances for the SEC Champion Commodores, earning first team all-league honors. In 40.2 innings pitched, he has struck out 56 batters and walked just eight, holding opposing batters to a .206 batting average. He has not allowed a run in 22 of his 26 appearances and has registered multiple strikeouts in 14 outings. With 14 saves, the

Ashland, Ohio, native is just two away from tying the Vanderbilt single-season record of 16.

The NCBWA's All-America Committee will select the winner, with this year's recipient to be announced Saturday, June 15, at a news conference at TD Ameritrade Park Omaha at 10 a.m. (CT).

Texas hurler J. Brent Cox won the inaugural Stopper of the Year Award in 2005, with Don Cxyz of Kansas claiming the honor in 2006 and Luke Pihoda of Sam Houston State winning it in 2007. Georgia's Joshua Fields topped the field in 2008, San Diego State's Addison Reed grabbed the honor in 2009 and Texas' Chance Ruffin earned the honor in 2010. The Longhorns' Corey Knebel won in 2011, with Southeastern Louisiana's Stefan Lopez picking up the honor in 2012. UCLA's David Berg was crowned the winner in 2013, Louisville's Nick Burdi took home the 2014 honor and Berg became the award's first two-time winner in 2015. Miami (Fla.)'s Bryan Garcia was honored as the 2016 recipient followed by Louisville's Lincoln Henzman in 2017 and Florida's Michael Byrne last year.

The NCBWA, founded in 1962, presents the Dick Howser Trophy to the nation's top player. It also selects All-America Teams for all Divisions, a Division I Freshman All-American team, Division I, II and III Players of the Week and Division I, II and III Players of the Year.

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