



LINE DRIVES

THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE BASEBALL WRITERS

NEWSLETTER

(Volume 45, No. 2, Mar. 2, 2006)

The President's Message

By NCBWA President Todd Lamb

Membership:

Let me begin this month's newsletter by reporting the birth of my son, Brady Nicholas. He was born on a day when the Buckeye football team signed 20 players to National Letters of Intent on Feb. 1. Needless to say, I missed the press conference.

Because of Brady's arrival, I also decided not to travel on our baseball team's first trip of the season to Gainesville, Fla., for the Pepsi Baseball Classic with Florida, Missouri and Wake Forest, last weekend. Florida baseball SID John Hines did a great job making sure I had everything I needed to cover the games from Columbus. Of course, live Internet stats and satellite television helped too, but I wanted to single out John for his assistance. He is very talented.

I rejoin the team this week in Jacksonville, Fla. for an exhibition game with a Japanese college team followed by games with UNCG, Jacksonville and Western Michigan. Actually during the course of this month, Ohio State will be making three trips to the Sunshine State for a total of 13 games to go with the three it played last week in Gainesville. The Buckeyes do not open at home until March 29. We refer to our 17-game road trip as our own March madness. But at least the sunshine provides a remedy for Cabin Fever.

With basketball March Madness about to fully commence, college baseball will slip under the radar screen for a few weeks, but after a national champion is crowned, conference races will be underway and give fans something to truly be excited about. It won't be long after that either, that we start turning attention to our postseason awards. The preseason watch list for the NCBWA Stopper of the Year Award, was announced Feb. 2 and midseason nominations are due April 10. The midseason watch list will be announced April 17. Also, initial nominations for the Dick Howser Trophy and the Pro-Line Cap/NCBWA All-America team will be due Friday, April 14. A special thanks to Pro-Line Ca, which extended its sponsorship of the Pro-Line Cap National Players of the Week and became the sponsor of the annual postseason All-America teams.

Not to be lost in the news, the World Baseball Classic also will be in the headlines this March. The ESPN networks decided to televise 16 WBC games, highlighted by the semifinal and final games from San Diego's Petco Park. As if we didn't have enough to hold our attention this month.

Enjoy the madness.

Sincerely,
Todd Lamb
NCBWA President
The Ohio State University

Dick Howser Trophy on the Horizon

Here is a quick timeline for nominations and selections for the Dick Howser Trophy and NCBWA All-America teams. Please contact any officer of the NCBWA with questions, and we will have forms emailed to the membership as each deadline approaches. Thanks to all for your present and past help!

Timeline for Dick Howser Trophy

Fri., April 14	Deadline for Initial Set of Nominations
Wed., Apr. 19	First Ballot e-Mailed to Membership
Wed., April 26	Deadline for First Round of Voting
Thu., April 27	64 Dick Howser Trophy Watch List Announced
Tue., May 9	Second Ballot e-Mailed to Membership
Wed., May 17	Deadline for Second Round of Voting
Thu., May 18	16 Dick Howser Semifinalists Announced
Tue., May 30	Final Ballot e-Mailed to Membership
Wed., June 7	Deadline for Final Round of Voting
Thu., June 8	Eight Dick Howser Trophy Finalists Announced
Fri., June 9	Regional Players of the Year Announced
Tue., June 13	NCBWA All-American Teams Announced
Fri., June 16	Dick Howser Trophy Winner Announced in Omaha (live on CSTV)

More 2006 Preseason Polls...

Mountain West Conference

1. TCU (11)
- t-2. San Diego State
- t-2. UNLV (1)
4. BYU (1)
5. New Mexico
6. Utah
7. Air Force

Missouri Valley

1. Wichita State (6), 68
2. Southern Illinois (1), 64
3. Missouri State, 59
4. Evansville, 47
5. Creighton, 43
6. Indiana State (2), 42
7. Bradley, 37
8. Illinois State, 29
9. UNI, 16

Southland Conference

1. Northwestern State (8), 98
2. Lamar (3), 92
3. Texas State, 78
4. Texas-Arlington, 68
5. Texas-San Antonio, 58
6. Sam Houston, 54
7. UL Monroe, 50
8. McNeese State, 37
9. Southeastern Louisiana, 36
10. Nicholls State, 19
11. Stephen F. Austin, 15

Southern Conference

1. College of Charleston (5), 86
2. Georgia Southern (5), 85
3. Western Carolina, 68
4. Elon, 64
5. The Citadel, 60
6. UNC Greensboro, 55
7. Furman, 43
8. Davidson, 34
9. Appalachian State, 24
10. Wofford, 21

NCBWA Names Watch List For Second Stopper of Year Award

Thirty players have been named to the watch list for the second annual National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association Stopper of the Year Award, the association announced Wednesday. The award will be given to the top relief pitcher in Division I college baseball.

Of the 30 pitchers who make up the initial 2006 watch list, 21 were ranked among the nation's Top 50 in saves at the end of the 2005 season, including Daniel Best of Southern Miss - one of five finalists for the Inaugural Stopper of the Year Award in 2005.

Nebraska's Brent Jensen returns to the Huskers after posting 16 saves and helping his squad to Omaha - he had the most saves last season of any pitcher on the watch list. Tyler Chambliss of Florida State returns with 15 from '05, while Casey Lambert (Virginia), Kevin Gunderson (Oregon State) and Paul Koss (USC) each tallied 14. A total of 14 pitchers that appear on the 2006 watch list finished last season with 10 or more saves.

The 2006 watch list represents 13 conferences, led by five players from the Atlantic Coast, and four from the Big 12. The Conference USA, Missouri Valley, Pac-10, and Southeastern each have three players represented, while the Atlantic 10 and Big West both have two players representing their leagues. The Atlantic Sun, Big Ten, Big East, Northeast, and Patriot each have one player.

2006 NCBWA STOPPER OF THE YEAR WATCH LIST

Pitcher	School	Cl.	Hometown
Daniel Best	Southern Miss	Sr.	Ruston, La.
Gerard Breslin	LaSalle	Jr.	Havertown, Pa.
Tyler Chambliss	Florida State	Jr.	Live Oak, Fla.
Bryce Cox	Rice	Sr.	Carrollton, Texas
Don Czyz	Kansas	Sr.	Overland Park, Kan.
Milan Dinga	Army	Jr.	Tampa, Fla.
Blair Erickson	UC Irvine	Jr.	Fair Oaks, Calif.
Kevin Gunderson (L)	Oregon State	Jr.	Portland, Ore.
Brian Halford	Louisville	Sr.	Louisville, Ky.
Jonathan Hovis	North Carolina	Sr.	Gastonia, N.C.
Brett Jensen	Nebraska	Sr.	Eagle Grove, Iowa
Paul Koss	USC	Jr.	Orange, Calif.
Casey Lambert-L	Virginia	Jr.	Harrisonburg, Va.
Ryan LaMotta	Baylor	Sr.	Sugar Land, Texas
Daniel Latham	Tulane	Jr.	Covington, La.
Mike McBryde	Florida Atlantic	Jr.	N. Palm Beach, Fla.
Mark Melancon	Arizona	Jr.	Golden, Colo.
Rory Meister	Ohio State	So.	Mansfield, Ohio
Mark Murray	Evansville	Jr.	Evansville, Ind.
Darren O'Day	Florida	Sr.	Jacksonville, Fla.
Vinnie Pestano	Cal State Fullerton	Jr.	Anaheim Hills, Calif.
Chris Perez	Miami (Fla.)	Jr.	Holmes Beach, Fla.
Scott Reese	Creighton	Jr.	Portland, Ore.
Steve Richard	Clemson	Jr.	Billerica, Mass.

David Robertson	Alabama	So.	Tuscaloosa, Ala.
Will Savage	Oklahoma	Sr.	West Hills, Calif.
Kevin Schneider	Monmouth	Sr.	Lawrenceville, N.J.
Damon Sublett	Wichita State	So.	Wichita, Kan.
Eric Walker	UNC Charlotte	Sr.	Clemmons, N.C.
Sean Watson	Tennessee	Jr.	Miami, Fla.

(L) indicates left-handed pitcher

"We were very pleased with the publicity and excitement this award generated in its first year of existence," said NCBWA President Todd Lamb, Assistant Athletics Communications Director at The Ohio State University. "Relief pitching is an area that is often overlooked and underappreciated in the college game, so we are looking to build upon last year's success, and continue to generate some recognition for the nation's outstanding relief pitchers."

Nominations were made by each school's baseball sports information contact. A mid-season release, including the national saves leaders, will be updated during the week of April 17. At the end the regular season, the Division I leader in saves and four other relief pitching standouts will be selected as the award's finalists. These finalists will be released on Wednesday, May 31, just prior to the beginning of NCAA regional play.

From the list of finalists, the NCBWA's All-America Committee will select a winner. The 2nd annual winner will be announced on Wednesday, June 7, two days prior to the beginning of NCAA super regional action.

The NCBWA, founded in 1962, presents the Dick Howser Trophy to the nation's top player. It also selects a Division I All-America Team, Division I and III Players of the Week, Division I District Players of the Year and Division III Players of the Year. For more information on the NCBWA Stopper of the Year, contact Dave Fanucchi at USA Baseball at 919-474-8721 x 210 or Russ Anderson at Conference USA at 214-774-1351.

NCBWA Signs New Agreement with Pro-Line Cap Co

The (NCBWA) and the Pro-Line Cap Company have announced an extension of their agreement to be the official sponsor of the Pro-Line Cap National Players of the Week, given to the top Player of the Week and Pitcher of the Week in Division I, as chosen by a panel of the NCBWA Board of Directors.

In addition, Pro-Line Cap will now become the sponsor of the NCBWA's annual postseason All-American team. The Pro-Line Cap/NCBWA All-American team honors first, second and third team All-America selections as voted upon by all members of the NCBWA.

"We at Pro-Line are proud to again partner with the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association to honor some of the finest college baseball players in the nation, said Joel Taylor, Pro-Line Cap Company Sales & Marketing Manager. "We relish the opportunity to give back to the game in honoring outstanding student athletes with not only the Pro-Line Cap/NCBWA National Pitcher and National Hitter of the Week awards but also, beginning this year, the Pro-Line Cap/NCBWA All American Team."

As part of the agreement, Pro-Line will continue to produce and distribute plaques for each of the weekly award winners, the only weekly awards in college baseball that include a commemorative item. Pro-Line will extend its award production to include plaques for each member of the Pro-Line/NCBWA All-American team that is announced in June.

"The NCBWA is very pleased to continue to work with a company such as Pro-Line Cap on these awards," said Bo Carter, Executive Director of NCBWA. "Pro-Line Cap takes a great deal of pride in performance and workmanship, and the weekly awards it produced last year were very well received. We are grateful to extend this partnership into our postseason awards as well."

Pro-Line Cap Company is a completely custom, cut and sew headwear manufacturer. All caps are built as ordered to their customer's satisfaction. Based in Fort Worth, Texas, Pro-Line is the official cap of 33 state high school baseball associations and the official "on the field" cap of over 100 Division I college baseball teams.

Founded in 1962, the NCBWA is dedicated to the advancement of college baseball. Membership is open to writers, broadcasters and publicists of the sport. For more information about the NCBWA, visit the association's official website, www.ncbwa.com.

Pro-Line NCBWA Players/Pitchers of the Week

Feb. 14--Rice OF Aaron Luna; Arkansas P Nick Schmidt

Feb. 21--The Citadel OF Chris Swauger; (co) Pepperdine P Barry Enright; TCU P Brad Furnish

Feb. 28--Texas OF Kyle Russell; Dallas Baptist P Rodney Brantley

2006 NCBWA Division II polls - PRESEASON POLLS - (Regular-season polls begin March 6)**Rank. School 2005 record Points 2005 rank**

1. Florida Southern (5) 51-11 172 1
2. Delta State (2) 52-10 169 5t
3. Central Missouri State 57-9 156 3
4. Cal State Chico 42-16-1 148 7
5. West Virginia State 43-14 129 5t
6. Grand Valley State 34-15 127 4
7. Francis Marion 34-16-1 122 20
8. Abilene Christian 43-16 119 15
9. Tampa 40-18 105 11t
10. Lynn 35-21 85 NR
- 11t. South Carolina-Aiken 40-19 82 17
- 11t. Central Oklahoma 47-19 82 10
13. Western Oregon 42-15 79 13
14. West Alabama 42-15 69 19
15. Franklin Pierce 32-14 68 24
16. Armstrong Atlantic State 34-16 66 RV
- 17t. Mesa State 46-16 49 14
- 17t. Wisconsin-Parkside 45-18 49 21
19. West Chester 38-14 48 22t
20. Wayne State (Neb.) 45-14 42 20t
21. Catawba 35-19 35 NR
22. Georgia College & State 33-20 33 RV
23. Tusculum 44-17 32 11t
24. Emporia State 41-20 25 RV
- 25t. Nebraska-Omaha 42-19 20 18
- 25t. North Alabama 38-20 20 RV

Others receiving votes -- Southern Connecticut State 18, Slippery Rock 17, Saint Joseph's (IN) 16, UC San Diego 13, Kutztown 12, Central Arkansas 10, Cal State Los Angeles 9, Florida Gulf Coast 9, West Florida 7, Rollins 6, Incarnate Word 5, Shippensburg 5, Columbus State 4, Mansfield 4, UMass-Lowell 4, Sonoma State 3, California (Pa. 2.

North Atlantic Region

1. West Virginia State (5) 43-14
2. West Chester 38-14
3. Kutztown 39-18
4. Slippery Rock 31-15
5. Shippensburg 32-25
6. California, Pa. 31-20
7. Mansfield 29-18
8. Davis & Elkins 33-22
9. Pitt-Johnstown 26-16
10. West Virginia Wesleyan 23-13

Northeast Region

1. Franklin Pierce (5) 32-14
2. Southern Connecticut State (1) 31-14
3. UMass-Lowell 28-20
4. Stonehill 27-20
5. Dowling 19-16
6. Adelphi 22-15
7. Pace 27-16
8. Dominican 27-19

9. Concordia 27-19
10. Bryant 22-21

North Central Region

1. Grand Valley State 36-17
2. Wisconsin-Parkside 45-18
3. Saint Joseph's (IN) 42-19
4. Ashland 32-16
- 5t. Wayne State (Mich.) 32-19
- 5t. Northern Kentucky 31-26
7. Quincy 30-26
8. Saginaw Valley State 31-17
9. SIU-Edwardsville 28-27
10. Bellarmine 29-31

Central Region

1. Central Missouri State (2) 57-9
2. Wayne State (Neb.) 45-14
3. Nebraska-Omaha 42-19
4. Emporia State 41-20
5. Minnesota State 36-17
6. Concordia-St. Paul 29-12
7. Missouri Western 33-22
8. Northwest Missouri State 34-24
9. Minnesota-Duluth 27-24
10. North Dakota 28-23

West Region

1. Cal State Chico 42-16-1
2. Western Oregon 42-15
3. Mesa State 46-16
4. Cal San Diego 37-20
5. Colorado State-Pueblo 32-27
6. Cal Poly Pomona 30-23
7. New Mexico Highlands 38-18
- 8t. Fort Hays State 30-22
- 8t. Sonoma State 25-30
10. Cal State San Bernardino 25-23

South Region

1. Florida Southern 51-11
2. Lynn 35-21
3. Tampa 40-18
4. Catawba 35-19
5. Rollins 37-18
6. Tusculum 44-17
7. Nova Southeastern 32-21
8. Florida Gulf Coast 37-10
9. Barry 34-21
10. Carson-Newman 31-24

South Atlantic Region

1. Francis Marion 34-16
2. Armstrong Atlantic 34-16
3. USC-Aiken 40-19
4. Georgia College & State U. 33-20
5. Mount Olive 26-27
6. North Georgia 57-15
7. Erskine 38-17
8. Columbus State 22-30
9. St. Andrews 32-22
10. USC-Upstate 33-21

South Central Region

1. Delta State (4) 52-10
2. Abilene Christian 42-17
3. West Alabama 45-19
- 4t. Central Oklahoma 44-15
- 4t. Incarnate Word 35-19
6. North Alabama 39-19
7. West Florida 33-21
8. St. Edwards (TX) 35-18
9. Southern Arkansas 34-25
10. Texas A&M-Kingsville 34-20

Rosters for World Baseball Classic Loaded With College Baseball Alumni

30-Man Roster	Pos.	MLB Team	College
Clemens, Roger	RHP	TBD	Texas
Cordero, Chad	RHP	Washington Nationals	Cal State Fullerton
Fuentes, Brian	LHP	Colorado Rockies	Merced
Jones, Todd	RHP	Detroit Tigers	Jacksonville State
Lidge, Brad	RHP	Houston Astros	Notre Dame
Nathan, Joe	RHP	Minnesota Twins	Stony Brook
Peavy, Jake	RHP	San Diego Padres	None
Sabathia, C.C.	LHP	Cleveland Indians	None
Shields, Scot	RHP	Los Angeles Angels	Lincoln Memorial
Street, Huston	RHP	Oakland Athletics	Texas
Timlin, Mike	RHP	Boston Red Sox	Southwestern (Texas)
Wagner, Billy	LHP	New York Mets	Ferrum
Wheeler, Dan	RHP	Houston Astros	Central Arizona
Willis, Dontrelle	LHP	Florida Marlins	None
Barrett, Michael	C	Chicago Cubs	Nome
Schneider, Brian	C	Washington Nationals	None
Varitek, Jason	C	Boston Red Sox	Georgia Tech
Jeter, Derek	IF	New York Yankees	None
Jones, Chipper	IF	Atlanta Braves	None
Lee, Derrek	IF	Chicago Cubs	None
Rodriguez, Alex	IF	New York Yankees	None
Teixeira, Mark	IF	Texas Rangers	Georgia Tech
Utley, Chase	IF	Philadelphia Phillies	UCLA
Young, Michael	IF	Texas Rangers	UC Irvine
Damon, Johnny	OF	New York Yankees	None
Francoeur, Jeff	OF	Atlanta Braves	None
Griffey Jr., Ken	OF	Cincinnati Reds	None
Holliday, Matt	OF	Colorado Rockies	None (Signed with Oklahoma State football)
Wells, Vernon	OF	Toronto Blue Jays	None
Winn, Randy	OF	San Francisco Giants	Santa Clara

The status of all players is subject to change. The official United States 30-man roster will not be submitted to WBC Tournament organizers until March 2. The following 22 players remain on USA Baseball's provisional roster as reserve players:

Jeremy Bonderman	RHP	Detroit Tigers	None
Roy Halladay	RHP	Toronto Blue Jays	None
Dan Haren	RHP	Oakland A's	Pepperdine
Tim Hudson	RHP	Atlanta Braves	Auburn
Brett Myers	RHP	Philadelphia Phillies	None
Andy Pettitte	LHP	Houston Astros	None
Ben Sheets	RHP	Milwaukee Brewers	UL Monroe
Al Leiter	LHP	New York Yankees	None
Gary Majewski	RHP	Washington Nationals	None
Paul LoDuca	C	New York Mets	Arizona State
Joe Mauer	C	Minnesota Twins	None

Chad Moeller	C	Milwaukee Brewers	Southern California
Eric Chavez	IF	Oakland A's	None
Craig Counsell	IF	Arizona Diamondbacks	Notre Dame
Morgan Ensberg	IF	Houston Astros	Southern California
Bill Hall	IF	Milwaukee Brewers	None
Jimmy Rollins	IF	Philadelphia Phillies	None
David Wright	IF	New York Mets	None
Lance Berkman	OF	Houston Astros	Rice
Barry Bonds	OF	San Francisco Giants	Arizona State
Carl Crawford	OF	Tampa Bay Devil Rays	None
Luis Gonzalez	OF	Arizona Diamondbacks	South Alabama

Team USA will hold their first workout on **March 3 at Chase Field in Phoenix, Arizona**, beginning at 9:00 am. WBC credentialed media members are welcome to attend the workout. Team USA opens play in the World Baseball Classic on Tuesday, March 7 at 2 p.m. local time vs. Mexico. There are 16 players with college baseball backgrounds among the initial 30 selections and 10 with college playing experience among the provisional standouts.

NOTE: TWO COACHES ADDED - USA Baseball also announced that **John McLaren** (Devil Rays) will be Team USA's Third Base Coach, while **Rick Eckstein** (Nationals) will serve as Bullpen Coach.

THE WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC - The World Baseball Classic, a 16-team tournament sanctioned by the International Baseball Federation (IBAF), will feature many of the best players in the world competing for their home countries and territories for the first time ever in March 2006. The 16 teams invited to participate in the event have been divided into four pools of four teams for the first round of play. The four Round 1 pools will be played at venues in Japan (Tokyo Dome - Tokyo), Puerto Rico (Hiram Bithorn Stadium - San Juan) and the United States (Chase Field - Phoenix, Arizona; Scottsdale Stadium - Scottsdale, Arizona; Disney's Wide World of Sports Complex - Orlando, Florida). Round 2 will feature two pools of four teams each and will be played in Puerto Rico (Hiram Bithorn Stadium) and the United States (Angel Stadium - Anaheim, California). The Semi-finals and final game will be played at PETCO Park in San Diego, Calif. The WBC will feature a bracket-style format with the 16 teams competing in four groups: Pool A - China, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea; Pool B - Canada, Mexico, South Africa, United States; Pool C - Cuba, Netherlands, Panama, Puerto Rico; Pool D - Australia, Dominican Republic, Italy, Venezuela.

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