



## NATIONAL COLLEGIATE BASEBALL WRITERS ASSOCIATION

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### *Ackley, Leake, Strasburg Named Finalists For 2009 Dick Howser Trophy*

OMAHA, Neb. – North Carolina first baseman Dustin Ackley, Arizona State pitcher Mike Leake and San Diego State pitcher Stephen Strasburg have been named as finalists for the 2009 Dick Howser Trophy in balloting by the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association and in conjunction with the College Baseball Foundation, the Dick Howser Trophy committee and the St Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce.

The winner of the Howser Trophy will be announced in Lubbock, Texas, on July 2, during the inaugural College Baseball Awards Show, held at the United Spirit Arena and shown on MLB.com. The nationally broadcasted event will be followed by the College Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony on July 3 in Lubbock.

All three finalists for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Howser Trophy embody the principles 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.

Ackley, the 2009 Atlantic Coast Conference Player of the Year and a junior from Walnut Cove, N.C., is a consensus 2009 All-America performer. He leads the NCAA World Series-competing Tar Heels with a .412 average, has started all 63 games for the 47-16 squad, is 103-for-250 at the plate, has scored 73 runs, along with 17 doubles, four triples, a team-leading 22 homers, 70 RBIs, slugging percentage of .776 with 194 total bases, and an on-base percentage of .776. He has been on all-tournament teams for both the NCAA Chapel Hill Regional and Super Regional.

He scored a school-record 82 runs and stole 19 bases as a junior, while helping coach Mike Fox's team make it to the NCAA World Series for the third year in a row in '08 and was a key member of the 2007 entry, which was national runner-up to Oregon State for the second year in succession. Ackley also was on both the Howser and Brooks Wallace Award national watch lists as a sophomore.

Leake, the two-time Pacific-10 Conference Pitcher of the Year in 2008 and '09, leads the nation in pitching victories with a 16-1 mark, as well as a microscopic earned run average of 1.36 prior to his debut in the CWS this week. The junior right-hander from Fallbrook, Calif., has seven complete games in 17 starts and is one of the real "workhorses" in college baseball this year with 132.2 innings pitched. He has tossed two complete-game shutouts and was part of another blanking.

The ASU ace for coach Pat Murphy has a 7:1 strikeout-to-walk ratio with 150 whiffs and 21 walks in the 132-plus innings and an average of 10.2 strikeouts every nine innings. Leake has surrendered just 20 earned runs and 79 hits (5.4 each nine IP) and is among the Top Five in NCAA statistics in wins, strikeouts, innings pitched, and walks per nine innings. He also has batted .303 as a designated hitter in 15 contests with four doubles and four RBI in eight starts as DH. The standout righty has a career record of 40-6 in three seasons as an All-Pac 10 hurler for the Sun Devils.

Strasburg has had a true season to remember as a junior right-handed stalwart for coach Tony Gwynn's Aztecs. The San Diego, Calif., resident is the national leader in strikeouts with 195 and No. 2 in Division I with a 1.32 ERA and hits allowed per nine innings with 5.37 to compliment a 13-1 overall record. The 2008 USA Baseball Player of the Year for all divisions, Strasburg was the first selection Tuesday in the Major League Baseball free agent draft by the Washington Nationals. Ackley was a first round selection (second overall) of the Seattle Mariners while Leake was the eighth choice in the opening round by the Cincinnati Reds.

Also a finalist for the prestigious Golden Spikes Award with Ackley and Leake, the SDSU right-hander is the 2009 College Baseball Foundation Pitcher of the Year and totally dominated the Mountain West Conference in '09. In round-robin league play, he was 7-0 with 111 strikeouts and a 1.50 ERA in eight starts. Overall, Strasburg (two-time MWC Pitcher of the Year as a sophomore and junior) pitched 109 innings in 15 starts, had a pair of complete games, had a hand in four shutouts (two in personal complete games), gave up 65 hits, and walked just 19 hitters in 15 contests. Opponents batted just .172 against the Aztecs' standout.

Winners of the national awards also will be feted at the various sites of the sponsoring and voting bodies before or after the national awards' show as determined by the awards committees.

The 2009 season marks the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual presentation of the Dick Howser Trophy, which traditionally has been presented in Omaha, Neb., around the NCAA World Series and at campus sites during the autumn following spring awards. Howser Trophy recipients also have been lauded at the Governor's Baseball Dinner in St. Petersburg in conjunction with sponsoring agency - the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce.

Voting for the Dick Howser Trophy has been conducted by the NCBWA membership since 1999. The NCBWA also selects the Stopper, Coach and Freshmen Player and Pitcher of the Year.

The joint presentation on July 2 of the Howser Trophy with the Brooks Wallace Shortstop Award, Stopper, Pitcher, and Coach of the Year and other awards on MLB.com will be a first in 2009 after months of discussion among the sponsoring agencies.

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; and Buster Posey, C, Florida State, 2008.

Statistics on Three Finalists for 2009 (*Through June 12*):

Pos. Name, School, Class	Avg.	G	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBIs	BB	SO	SB/SBA
1B Dustin Ackley North Carolina Jr.	.412	63	250	73	103	17-4-22	70	50	32	13/17

Pos. Name School, Class	W-L	ERA	APP	GS	CG	SV	IP	BB	SO
SP Mike Leake, Arizona State, Jr.	16-1	1.36	17	16	7		0	132.2	21150
SP Stephen Strasburg, San Diego St., Jr.	13-1	1.32	15	15	2		0	109	19195