



DICK HOWSER TROPHY COMMITTEE

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Bukauskas, McKay, Rooker, Thompson *Tabbed as Finalists For 2017 Dick Howser Trophy*

OMAHA, Neb. – Four collegiate stars, including three from 2017 NCAA Super Regional contenders, are the finalists for the 31st annual Dick Howser Trophy presented by The Game Headwear. Balloting was conducted by the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association in conjunction with the Dick Howser Trophy committee and the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce.

Pitcher **J.B. Bukauskas** of North Carolina, Louisville P/1B **Brendan McKay**, Mississippi State 1B **Brent Rooker** and Oregon State pitcher **Jake Thompson** are the four finalists for the prestigious 31st annual awarding of the Dick Howser Trophy.

This outstanding group of players hails from four schools in three different conferences and covers ground from coast to coast. All four players are juniors and are from schools that have not had a previous winner of the Dick Howser trophy.

The winner will be announced on Saturday, June 17, at a 10 a.m. (CDT) national news conference at TD Ameritrade Park – home of the 71st annual NCAA World Series.

Each finalist embodies the major 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. He also is the namesake for Dick Howser Stadium at FSU.

Bukauskas, a junior righthanded starter from Ashburn, Va., was the go-to weekend hurler for the Tar Heels of coach Mike Fox, and racked up a 9-1 overall record with a 2.53 in 15 starts for the NCAA-bound UNC nine. He recorded well over one strikeout per inning pitched with 116 whiffs in 92-plus innings pitched.

The All-America and 2017 All-Atlantic Coast Conference choice has been part of the North Carolina rotation for three consecutive years and limited opponents to a .188 batting mark. His clutch conference pitching work kept the Tar Heels in contention all season for the ACC championship.

McKay, a junior from Darlington, Pa., is 9-3 as a pitcher with a 2.31 ERA and 131 strikeouts in 97.1 innings in '17. He has tied the Louisville career mark for strikeouts with 376 in just three campaigns with Kyle Funkhouser (who played at U of L from 2013-16) and is among the top hitters nationally in the cleanup position with a .356 average, 17 home runs and 56 RBI.

The 2017 Atlantic Coast Conference Player of the Year and first team All-American also tied a school record with four home runs in one game against Eastern Kentucky. The Cardinals of Coach Dan McDonnell are 50-10 entering the weekend NCAA Super Regional matchup with cross-state rival Kentucky. McKay also is a two-time recipient of the prestigious Jon Olerud Award for best multi-position player in NCAA Division I in 2015 and '16.

First baseman Rooker of Germantown, Tenn., was the 2017 Southeastern Conference Player of the Year with a .395 batting average, 23 home runs, 82 RBI, and NCAA-DI-most 30 doubles. The first team All-America choice is bidding to become the conference's first Triple Crown (average, homers, RBI) winner since Rafael Palmeiro of MSU in 1984.

Rooker also has committed just one error in 419 total fielding chances at first base and is among SEC leaders in stolen bases with 18 in 23 attempts. His .827 slugging percentage tops the conference for the 40-25 Bulldogs of coach Andy Cannizaro as they travel to LSU for the 2017 NCAA Baton Rouge Super Regional.

Thompson, a junior righty from Florence, Ore., is the pitching victories' leader for the most successful DI team nationally with that 52-4 overall mark before taking on Vanderbilt. His 13-0 record helped OSU roll to a 29-1 home mark in '17 while he added 106 strikeouts in 110-plus innings of work and a microscopic 1.30 ERA.

The Oregon State co-ace with Luke Heimlich earned All-Pac-12 laurels as well as All-America recognition while he assisted the Beavers in rolling through the NCAA Corvallis Regional with a 3-0 mark. Thompson also played a leading role in OSU's final 27-3 worksheet in Pac-12 games – a conference team season record.

Recent finalists for the Dick Howser Trophy have included the likes of 2016 standouts Clemson OF Seth Beer (winner, first freshman to receive Dick Howser Trophy), Wake Forest 3B Will Craig, Louisville UTIL Brendan McKay, Kent State P Eric Lauer, and Texas A&M 3B Boomer White; and 2015 aces Arkansas OF Andrew Benintendi (winner), UCLA RP David Berg, Vanderbilt SP Carson Fulmer, Vanderbilt SS Dansby Swanson, and Miami (Fla.) 3B David Thompson.

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, Baylor, 1999; Mark Teixeira, Georgia Tech, 2000; Mark Prior, P, USC, 2001, Khalil Greene, SS, Clemson, 2002; Rickie Weeks, 2B, Southern U., 2003; Jered Weaver, P, Long Beach State, 2004; Alex Gordon, 3B, Nebraska, 2005; Brad Lincoln, P/DH, 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; A.J. Reed, Kentucky, 2014; Andrew Benintendi, Arkansas, 2015; Seth Beer, Clemson, 2016.

Statistics on Three Finalists for 2017 (Through June 8)

Pos. Name, School, Class	Avg.	G	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB-SBA
1B Brendan McKay, Louisville, Jr.	.356	59	202	54	72	13-1-1	56	45	35	2-2
1B Brent Rooker, Mississippi State, Jr.	.395	65	243	57	96	30-3-23	82	45	54	18-23

Pos. Name School, Class	W-L	ERA	APP	GS	CG	SV	IP	BB	SO
SP J.B. Bukauskas, North Carolina, Jr.	9-1	2.53	15	15	0	0	92.2	37	116
SP Brendan McKay, Louisville, Jr.	9-3	2.31	15	15	0	0	97.1	33	131
SP Jake Thompson, Oregon State, Jr.	13-0	1.30	17	16	1	0	110.2	34	106