



NATIONAL COLLEGIATE BASEBALL WRITERS ASSOCIATION

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NCBWA ANNOUNCES 2017 STOPPER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (NCBWA) -- Two juniors, a sophomore and a pair of freshmen are among the five finalists for the 13th annual National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association Stopper of the Year Award, members of the association announced Wednesday.

Juniors Lincoln Henzman of Louisville and Colton Hock of Stanford each have 16 saves and led their respective teams to top 8 National seeds in the NCAA 2017 Tournament. Henzman's 1.30 ERA is tops among the finalists and he led the ACC in saves. He also owns a 3-0 record in 24 appearances for the seventh-seeded Cardinals, who advanced to the Super Regionals this past weekend.

Hock is the only one among the quintet of finalists that appeared on the award's preseason watch list. He wrapped up his season with a 6-1 record and 2.08 ERA, while leading the Pac-12 in saves.

Florida's Michael Byrne crashed the list of finalists after not appearing on the preseason or mid-year watch lists. His late-season efforts propelled the Gators to a top 8 National Seed. The sophomore went 1-0 with eight saves and allowed only one earned run in 17 1/3 innings after the mid-year watch list was announced. He enters Super Regional play with an SEC-leading 16 saves and owns a 1.69 ERA.

Two freshmen round out the finalists after excelling during their first collegiate seasons. North Carolina's Josh Hiatt and Oregon's Kenyon Yovan both posted double-digit saves and sub-2.00 ERA's. Hiatt was a workhorse for the Tar Heels, who garnered the No. 2 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament. He threw 52 innings out of the bullpen, while punching out 64 batters. Hiatt finished his rookie season with a 4-2 record and 13 saves.

Yovan was also stellar as a rookie, posting a 1.97 ERA, while saving half of the Ducks' 30 wins this season. He went 1-1 with 36 strikeouts in 32 innings of relief work.

The NCBWA's All-America Committee will select the winner, with this year's recipient to be announced Saturday morning, June 17, 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 Czyn of Kansas claiming the honor in 2006 and Luke Prihoda 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.

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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