



2017 Big West Baseball



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Big West All-Conference - May 31, 2017

Big West Announces Baseball Honors

Irvine, Calif. — The 2017 Big West Conference Champion, Long Beach State, collected three of the six top awards as Darren McCaughan earned Big West Pitcher of the Year honors, David Banuelos was named Big West Defensive Player of the Year accolades and Troy Buckley walked away with the Big West Coach of the Year title. UC Irvine's Keston Hiura grabbed Big West Player of the Year honors, while Cal State Fullerton's Sahid Valenzula picked up the Big West Freshman Player of the Year award and Hawai'i's Dylan Thomas received Big West Freshman Pitcher of the Year accolades.

Hiura concluded the regular season as the nation's top hitter (.442) and on-base percentage leader with a .567 mark. His explosive batting average qualified as the highest in a single season in UC Irvine history as he joins Tom Spence, .403 in 1971, and Mike Nagle, .402 in 1981, as the only Anteaters to hit .400 in a season. He finished 2017 with a league-high 24 doubles, tying him for first with Taylor Holiday on the UCI single-season list. His 24 doubles also ranks seventh in the country, while his 88 hits lands him in the 11th slot. In all, the designated hitter from Valencia, Calif., paced the conference in six categories, include base on balls where he earned a free pass 50 times this season. Hiura, who received Big West Player of the Week accolades to close out the 2017 season, becomes the third Anteater to earn player of the year distinction and the first since 2013 when Taylor Sparks shared the title with Cal State Fullerton's Carlos Lopez.

McCaughan becomes the first player to earn back-to-back Big West Pitcher of the Year honors since UC Irvine's Daniel Bibona did so in both 2009 and 2010. It also marks the 10th pitcher of the year award for Long Beach State. During the regular season McCaughan (8-2), who leads the nation's eighth-best pitching staff, recorded a 2.66 earned run average in 108.1 innings pitched while striking out 94. The Downey, Calif., native pitched four complete games, two of which were shutouts, to boost his team's shutout total to 10 to rank third in the country. He has held his opponents to a .193 batting average to pace the league and ranks 23rd in the country with a 5.88 strikeout-to-walk ratio. The 6-1 junior also earned Big West Pitcher of the Week accolades back on April 24 after hurling a complete-game shutout in a road victory over UC Irvine. It was McCaughan's second consecutive complete game — and third of the season — and the first shutout for a Dirtbag since McCaughan blanked San Jose State on May 14, 2016.

Long Beach State collected its second straight Big West Defensive Player of the Year award after Banuelos earned the distinction. In 398 chances, he recorded 356 putouts and 39 assists while committing just three errors for a .992 fielding percentage at catcher. The junior from Ontario, Calif., headlines a defense that ranks 13th in the nation with a team fielding percentage of .980. Banuelos also makes his presences felt on offense as he ranks third on the team with a .303 batting average and second in home runs with seven.

For the first time since 2011 a Cal State Fullerton player has been named Big West Freshman Player of the Year with the selection of Valenzula. The Yuma, Ariz., native, paces the Titans and ranks tied for fourth in the Big West with a .339 batting average. He played in 47 of 55 contests during his first season with the Titans and tallied 65 hits during the regular season to rank sixth in the league. The second baseman is the lone freshman to make the 2017 All-Big West First Team and just the second Titan to earn freshman player of the year honors.

In his first season at the University of Hawai'i, Thomas already proved to be an asset for his team as he registered nine saves during his freshman campaign to rank fifth in the league. In 17 appearances, he tossed 22.1 innings and allowed just five earned runs for a 2.01 ERA. The Castaic, Calif., native is a member of the 24th-best pitching staff in the nation that sports a team ERA of 3.58. Thomas becomes the first Rainbow Warrior to receive the Big West Freshman Pitcher of the Year award.

Buckley is the first Long Beach State coach to earn Big West Conference Coach of the Year honors since Mike Weathers did so in 2008. The Dirtbags skipper earned the honor after guiding Long Beach State to its first conference title since 2008 with a 20-4 mark. It marks the first time the Dirtbags have won 20 conference games in a season since 1998, and the Dirtbags won the conference title by an impressive four games over Cal Poly. With the conference's automatic qualifier, the Dirtbags are making their 22nd postseason trip in which they will be hosting their first NCAA Regional since 2008. Long Beach State, ranked as high as No. 8 in the country, enters the postseason having won 10 consecutive weekend series. Long Beach State has now earned seven coach of the year accolades.

Cal State Fullerton leads the conference with five All-Big West First Team selections, while Big West Champion Long Beach State received four selections. Cal Poly nabbed three first team honors, while UC Irvine, UC Santa Barbara and UC Riverside each garnered one award.

The complete 2017 All-Big West selections are on the following page.

2017 Big West All-Conference Team

2017 BIG WEST PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Keston Hiura, UC Irvine

2017 BIG WEST FRESHMAN FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Sahid Valenzuela, Cal State Fullerton

2017 BIG WEST PITCHER OF THE YEAR

Darren McCaughan, Long Beach State

2017 BIG WEST FRESHMAN PITCHER OF THE YEAR

Dylan Thomas, Hawai'i

2017 BIG WEST DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

David Banuelos, Long Beach State

2017 BIG WEST COACH OF THE YEAR

Troy Buckley, Long Beach State

FIRST TEAM

Player	School	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Pos.	Hometown
David Banuelos	Long Beach State	6-0	205	Jr.	C	Ontario, Calif.
Austin Bush	UC Santa Barbara	6-6	265	Jr.	1B	Turlock, Calif.
Sahid Valenzuela	Cal State Fullerton	5-9	155	Fr.	2B	Yuma, Ariz.
Ramsey Romano	Long Beach State	6-2	200	Jr.	3B	San Diego, Calif.
Kyle Marinconz	Cal Poly	5-10	185	So.	SS	San Jose, Calif.
Alex McKenna	Cal Poly	6-2	200	So.	OF	Canyon Country, Calif.
Scott Hurst	Cal State Fullerton	5-10	190	Jr.	OF	Glendora, Calif.
Mark Contreras	UC Riverside	6-0	185	Sr.	OF	Moreno Valley, Calif.
Keston Hiura	UC Irvine	5-11	190	Jr.	DH	Valencia, Calif.
Dillon Persinger	Cal State Fullerton	5-11	195	Jr.	UTL	Fountain Valley, Calif.
Spencer Howard	Cal Poly	6-3	205	So.	SP	Templeton, Calif.
Connor Seabold	Cal State Fullerton	6-3	190	Jr.	SP	Newport Beach, Calif.
Darren McCaughan	Long Beach State	6-1	200	Jr.	SP	Downey, Calif.
Josh Advocate	Long Beach State	6-1	195	Sr.	RP	Mohave Valley, Ariz.
Brett Conine	Cal State Fullerton	6-4	215	So.	CP	Orange, Calif.

SECOND TEAM

Player	School	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Pos.	Hometown
Nick Meyer	Cal Poly	6-0	195	So.	C	Mission Viejo, Calif.
Michael Sanderson	Cal Poly	6-0	190	Sr.	1B	Chico, Calif.
Alvaro Rubalcaba	CSUN	5-8	165	Jr.	2B	San Mateo, Calif.
Jarren Duran	Long Beach State	6-2	200	So.	2B	Buena Park, Calif.
Josh Rojas	Hawai'i	6-1	185	Sr.	3B	Litchfield Park, Ariz.
Colby Schultz	UC Riverside	6-0	180	Jr.	SS	San Juan Capistrano, Calif.
Brock Lundquist	Long Beach State	6-0	210	Jr.	OF	Fountain Valley, Calif.
Lucas Tancas	Long Beach State	6-2	220	Jr.	OF	San Juan Capistrano, Calif.
Ryan Hooper	UC Davis	6-0	180	Jr.	OF	Moraga, Calif.
Albee Weiss	CSUN	6-1	225	Jr.	DH	Oak Park, Calif.
Bradlee Beesley	Cal Poly	5-10	170	Fr.	UTL	San Leandro, Calif.
Erich Uelmen	Cal Poly	6-3	210	Jr.	SP	Las Vegas, Nev.
Dave Smith	Long Beach State	6-4	210	Sr.	SP	Elk Grove, Calif.
Louis Raymond	UC Irvine	6-2	195	Jr.	SP	Laguna Niguel, Calif.
Brendan Hornung	Hawai'i	6-3	195	Sr.	SP	Corona, Calif.
Michael Clark	Cal Poly	6-1	185	So.	RP	Rohnert Park, Calif.
Blake Workman	Cal State Fullerton	6-3	195	So.	RP	Ramona, Calif.
Chris Rivera	Long Beach State	5-10	170	So.	CP	Watsonville, Calif.

HONORABLE MENTION

Player	School	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Pos.	Hometown
Dylan Alexander	CSUN	6-0	190	Sr.	C	Simi Valley, Calif.
Daniel Jackson	Long Beach State	6-3	215	Sr.	1B	Pleasanton, Calif.
Colton Burns	UC Santa Barbara	6-2	195	Jr.	2B	Valencia, Calif.
Nolan Bumstead	CSUN	6-2	195	Jr.	3B	Alberta, Canada
Timmy Richards	Cal State Fullerton	6-0	205	Sr.	SS	Long Beach, Calif.
Laine Huffman	Long Beach State	5-11	170	Jr.	SS	Anaheim, Calif.
Mikey Duarte	UC Irvine	5-11	195	Sr.	SS	Redondo Beach, Calif.
Adam Fogel	Hawai'i	6-5	200	Fr.	OF	Palos Verdes, Calif.
Dylan Vchulek	Hawai'i	6-0	180	Jr.	OF	Bainbridge Island, Wash.
Sam Cohen	UC Santa Barbara	6-1	185	So.	DH	Coto de Caza, Calif.
JJ Muno	UC Santa Barbara	6-0	175	Jr.	UTL	Hermosa Beach, Calif.
Orlando Razo	UC Davis	5-11	185	Jr.	SP	San Mateo, Calif.
Justin Mullins	UC Davis	6-4	200	Sr.	SP	Napa, Calif.
Casey Ryan	Hawai'i	6-4	230	Sr.	RP	Westlake Village, Calif.
Conner O'Neil	CSUN	6-2	190	Sr.	CP	Kennewick, Wash.
Dylan Thomas	Hawai'i	6-4	195	Fr.	CP	Castaic, Calif.