



**For Immediate Release**

## **2018 Players Choice Awards Outstanding Rookie Finalists** ***AL players select Miguel Andújar, Shohei Ohtani and Gleyber Torres; NL players choose Ronald Acuña Jr., Jack Flaherty and Juan Soto***

**NEW YORK, Oct. 19** – Players selected Miguel Andújar, Shohei Ohtani and Gleyber Torres in the American League and Ronald Acuña Jr., Jack Flaherty and Juan Soto in the National League as the finalists for Outstanding Rookies honors in the 2018 Players Choice Awards.

Winners of the AL and NL Outstanding Rookie awards receive grants of \$20,000 each from the Major League Baseball Players Trust to direct to a charity or their choice, while the second-place finishers receive \$10,000 grants and third-place finishers \$5,000.

All told, the 2018 Players Choice Award winners will designate charities to receive grants totaling \$320,000 from the Major League Baseball Players Trust. Since 1992, the Players Trust has recognized the outstanding on- and off-field performances of Players Choice Awards winners by contributing more than \$4 million to charities around the world.

Additionally, the 2018 Player of the Year and Marvin Miller will receive a \$50,000 grant and the eight league-wide Players Choice Award winners will receive grants of \$20,000 each. Runners-up in all categories receive \$10,000 and third-place finishers \$5,000.

Through their collective charity, players pool resources to support efforts that provide hope, sustainability and lasting change around the world. Players direct grants to the wide range of causes they support – from disaster relief to health and human services to growing baseball in the United States and abroad.

Players Choice Awards voting among all players was conducted in mid-September by the accounting firm KPMG. Winners will be announced on the evening of Nov. 27.

### **American League Finalists**

**Miguel Andújar**, from San Cristóbal in the Dominican Republic, took over at third base early in the season for the Yankees and never looked back, becoming a productive force in the middle of an already-powerful lineup. The solidly built 23-year-old slashed .297/.328/.527 with 27 home runs and 92 RBIs while hitting 47 doubles to break Joe DiMaggio's 1936 Yankees rookie record (44).

**Shohei Ohtani**, who just turned 24 in July, made his way to the United States from Japan in 2018 and joined Babe Ruth as the only players to pitch at least 50 innings and hit 15 home runs in the same MLB season. Ohtani had a 3.31 ERA with 63 strikeouts over 10 starts 51 2/3 innings before an ulnar collateral ligament ended his pitching season. As a left-handed hitter, he batted .285 with a .925 OPS, 22 home runs, 61 RBIs and 10 stolen bases in 367 plate appearances.

One of baseball top prospects entering 2018, 21-year-old **Gleyber Torres** lived up to his advance billing, slashing .271/.340/.480 to help the 100-win Yankees reach the postseason. The native of Caracas, Venezuela, was brought to the majors in the third week of April and took over at second base, where he played 109 of his 123 games, and hit 24 home runs with 77 RBIs.

### **National League Finalists**

Twenty-year-old left fielder **Ronald Acuña Jr.** didn't join Atlanta until April 25 and missed time due to a knee injury, but he still put up a season full of star-level stats (3.7 fWAR). Possessing a rare combination of power, speed and defensive ability, the Venezuelan left fielder batted .293 with a .366 on-base percentage and hit 26 home runs, including a stretch in which he hit one in five consecutive games. He also stole 16 bases.

A former first-round pick (34<sup>th</sup> overall) from Southern California, 23-year-old **Jack Flaherty** led all rookie pitchers with 182 strikeouts (11<sup>th</sup> in the NL) and just 59 walks over 151 innings in 28 starts for the Cardinals in 2018. Offsetting a four-seam fastball with a slider and sinker, the 6-foot-4 right-hander held opposing batters to a .199 average and 1.11 WHIP as he solidified St. Louis' rotation and helped the Cardinals remain in the NL Central race until the final weekend.

Only 19, **Juan Soto** joined the Nats on May 20 to fill a gap in an injury-depleted outfield and his production kept him in the lineup the rest of the season. The left fielder from Santo Domingo posted the highest on-base percentage (.406) and OPS (.923) ever by a teenager in the majors and his 22 homers tied him with teammate Bryce Harper as the second-highest total for a teenager behind Tony Conigliaro's 24 in 1964. Soto hit .292 and had 70 RBIs.

### **About the Major League Baseball Players Trust**

*Through the Players Trust, Major Leaguers contribute their time, money and celebrity to call attention to important causes. Each year the Players Trust distributes more than \$1.5 million in annual grants and programs. For additional information, please visit [www.PlayersTrust.org](http://www.PlayersTrust.org), [@MLBPlayersTrust](https://twitter.com/MLBPlayersTrust).*

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