



For Immediate Release

2018 Players Choice Awards Outstanding Pitcher Finalists *AL players select Chris Sale, Blake Snell and Justin Verlander; NL players choose Jacob deGrom, Aaron Nola and Max Scherzer*

NEW YORK, Oct. 23 – Players selected Chris Sale, Blake Snell and Justin Verlander in the American League and Jacob deGrom, Aaron Nola and Max Scherzer in the National League as finalists for Outstanding Pitcher honors in the 2018 Players Choice Awards.

Winners of the AL and NL Outstanding Pitcher awards receive grants of \$20,000 each from the Major League Baseball Players Trust to direct to a charity of 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

Chris Sale was more dominant than ever in his ninth big-league season, striking out a career-high 13.5 batters per nine innings at the top of the Red Sox rotation. Sale's 2.11 ERA and 0.86 WHIP were also career bests as the lanky, 29-year-old left-hander earned his seventh straight all-star game appearance and first as the AL's starter.

Blake Snell, a 25-year-old left-hander, improved on a strong second half in 2017 and emerged as one of the game's elite starters in his just his third season, leading the AL in victories (21), earned run average (1.89) and fewest hits allowed (5.58) per nine innings for the Rays. Gaining in command and confidence, Snell also kept hitters off balance with his pitch selection.

Veteran **Justin Verlander** continued to build a Hall of Fame-caliber resume in 2018, leading the AL in strikeouts (290) and WHIP (0.902). The hard-throwing 35-year-old right-hander also tied teammate Dallas Keuchel for the league lead with 34 starts and finished second to teammate Gerrit Cole with 12.2 strikeouts per nine innings in his first full season with the Astros.

National League Finalists

In his fifth season with the Mets, **Jacob deGrom** led all MLB pitchers with 9.1 fWAR and a 1.70 ERA and his 0.4 home runs allowed per nine innings was an MLB low. The 30-year-old right-hander from Florida established career highs with 32 starts and 217 innings pitched, made the NL all-star team for the second time and allowed three or fewer runs in all but one of his starts.

Aaron Nola emerged as the staff ace the Phillies envisioned when they drafted him seventh overall in 2014, placing second in the majors with 10.0 bWAR while posting a 17-6 record and second-in-the-NL 2.37 ERA over 212 1/3 innings. The 25-year-old right-hander also earned his first All-Star Game appearance and was third in the NL with a .975 WHIP and fifth in the league with 224 strikeouts.

Max Scherzer, who has previously won Players Choice Awards as AL Outstanding Pitcher (2013) and NL Outstanding Pitcher (2017), keeps getting better with age. This season he became just the sixth pitcher since 1990 to record 300 strikeouts and at 34 the oldest ever to accomplish the feat. He led the NL in wins (18), complete games (2), innings pitched (220 2/3) WHIP (0.911) and strikeout-to-walk ratio (5.88).

Players Choice Awards finalists for Comeback Player and Outstanding Rookie in each league were announced last week. The finalists for each league's Outstanding Player will be announced on Tuesday (Oct. 30), and the announcements of three finalists for Player of the Year and Marvin Miller Man of the Year will follow.

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, [@MLBPlayersTrust](https://twitter.com/MLBPlayersTrust).

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