

MLB Players - Finalists for 2006 Player Choice Awards

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MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS ANNOUNCE FINALISTS FOR 2006 PLAYERS CHOICE AWARDS

Sluggers Howard, Ortiz & Pujols are Player of the Year finalists

Pujols, Smoltz & Thome vie for Marvin Miller Man of the Year honor

New York, NY, Wednesday, September 27, 2006 - Major League baseball players on all 30 teams have cast their votes to recognize their peers with the highest of honors – the esteemed Players Choice Awards, recognizing excellence both on and off the field. The Major League Baseball Players Association today announced the finalists in each of 10 award categories, including the coveted Marvin Miller Man of the Year award, given annually to the one player in either league whose performance both on and off the field most inspires his fellow players to higher levels of achievement.

The finalists for the Player of the Year award are Ryan Howard (Phillies), David Ortiz (Red Sox) and Albert Pujols (Cardinals). Howard has paced the Phillies pursuit of the National League Wild Card while batting .316 with a Major League leading 58 home runs and 146 runs batted in. Ortiz, the anchor of the Boston 's offense is hitting .287 with American League leading 54 home runs and 137 runs batted in, while Pujols, who is hitting .330 with 46 homers and 130 RBI, has shouldered the offensive load for the first place Cardinals.

Leading the voting for the Marvin Miller Man of the Year award are Albert Pujols (Cardinals), John Smoltz (Braves) and Jim Thome (White Sox). Pujols established the Pujols Family Foundation which is dedicated to the love, care and development of people with Down Syndrome. In Atlanta , Smoltz created the "Strike Out Hunger" program to help eliminate hunger in the Atlanta region. In addition to being a spokesman with the Prostate Cancer Foundation Thome has worked with the Chicago branch of Habitat for Humanity.

The balloting for the Players Choice Awards was conducted on September 12 and 13, under the supervision of accounting firm KPMG. Players Choice Awards are given annually to the top pitcher, player, rookie and comeback player in each league as well as an overall player of the year and man of the year. The winners will be announced at a later date.

Each of the 2006 Players Choice Award winners will designate the charity of his choice to

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receive a grant from the Major League Baseball Players Trust. To date, the Players Trust has distributed over \$2.75 million to 155 charities through the Players Choice Awards program.

The 2006 Players Choice Awards finalists are listed below

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The 2006 Players Choice Awards Finalists:

AMERICAN LEAGUE:

Outstanding Player: David Ortiz (Boston), Derek Jeter (NY Yankees), Jermaine Dye (Chicago White Sox)

Outstanding Pitcher: Roy Halladay (Toronto), Johan Santana (Minnesota), Justin Verlander (Detroit)

Outstanding Rookie: Francisco Liriano (Minnesota), Jonathan Papelbon (Boston), Justin Verlander (Detroit)

Comeback Player of the Year: Magglio Ordonez (Detroit), Frank Thomas (Oakland), Jim Thome (Chicago White Sox)

NATIONAL LEAGUE:

Outstanding Player: Miguel Cabrera (Florida), Ryan Howard (Philadelphia), Albert Pujols (St. Louis)

Outstanding Pitcher: Chris Carpenter (St. Louis), Brandon Webb (Arizona), Carlos Zambrano (Chicago Cubs)

Outstanding Rookie: Prince Fielder (Milwaukee), Dan Uggla (Florida), Ryan Zimmerman (Washington)

Comeback Player of the Year: Joe Borowski (Florida), Nomar Garciaparra (Los Angeles Dodgers), Scott Rolen (St. Louis)

EITHER LEAGUE:

Player of the Year: Ryan Howard (Philadelphia), David Ortiz (Boston), Albert Pujols (St. Louis)

Marvin Miller Man of the Year: Albert Pujols (St. Louis), John Smoltz (Atlanta), Jim Thome

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(Chicago White Sox)

The **Major League Baseball Players Association** (www.MLBPLAYERS.com) is the collective bargaining representative for all professional baseball players of the thirty Major League Baseball teams and serves as the exclusive group licensing agent for commercial and licensing activities involving active Major League baseball players. On behalf of its members, it operates the Players Choice licensing program and Players Choice Awards, which benefit the needy through the Major League Baseball Players Trust, a charitable foundation established and run entirely by Major League baseball players.