



PRESS RELEASE

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## **Maikel Azcuy and Dan Weigel scoop Most Valuable Player honours for 2015 National Baseball League season**

Maikel Azcuy and Dan Weigel have been awarded the 2015 Most Valuable Batter and Most Valuable Pitcher awards for the 2015 National Baseball League season, following the triple crowns they claimed in their respective disciplines. Azcuy won the batting title with a .467 average, led the league in runs batted in with 28, and tied Herts Falcons team-mate Edwin Alcantara for the home-run title with six round-trippers. Weigel led the league in wins, with a 7-0 record, as well as strike-outs (54) and earned-run average (2.25).

For Azcuy, a Cuban native who now holds a British passport, it was the fourth straight year in which he had tied for home-run champion or won the title outright and his third RBI title in four seasons (his three career titles in this category move him past Simon Pole's tally of two for the all-time lead). However, the batting title was a career first, coming in his 10th season in the NBL. He just pipped Essex's Jamie Gregory for the title, going 28-for-60 (.467) to Gregory's 28-for-61 (.459). Callum Vinall, of the Bracknell Blazers, deserves mention here too. Including cup games, which the BBF counted in official season tallies for NBL players, he batted .533 for the year, but without the cup games he did not amass enough plate appearances to be eligible for the title.

Turning to career batting figures, Azcuy's six home runs took his NBL career tally to 39, which pushed him past Simon Pole (35) for the all-time lead. Next among active players is Grant Delzoppo, with 26 long-balls. Azcuy also moved past 200 career RBI; his current tally of 201 is just 36 short of Brad Thompson's all-time record. Meanwhile, Ryan Bird's cameo role during the season improved his all-time record batting average (.508), on-base average (.577), and slugging average (.822). Finally, Luke Foley became the all-time stolen base leader, with his tally of 121 eight higher than that of the next player (Robbie Unsell).

Weigel's pitching triple crown reflected an impressive season on the mound. His 7-0 win-loss record represented the most wins amassed by a pitcher without a single loss since Roberto Almanzar went 9-0 in his own triple-crown effort of 2012. Weigel's WHIP of 0.84 was the sixth-best all-time figure among qualifying seasons and the best outright since 2003.

In terms of career pitching figures, the most significant development was Matt Gilbert becoming all-time strike-out leader, with a career tally of 418. This moved him past Cody Cain (409), but Cain retains the all-time highest career strike-out rate with 12.7 per 9 innings. The next highest strike-out tally among active players is Michael Osborn's total of 398.

The best single-game batting performance during the season was that of Samuel Morris for the London Mets, in a game against the Southampton Mustangs on 2 August. He had a pair of home runs, one a grand slam, as well as a single and a double. This was the first time a player had amassed at least 10 total bases in an NBL game since 2012. In the same game, his team-mate Jamie Dix also hit a pair of homers, including a grand slam. Dix would go on to accumulate four hits in game 2 of the national final – including another home run – against the same opposition.

The Mets' victory in the best-of-three final gained them their third national championship, a feat matched or bettered by only 10 teams in British baseball history.

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#### **About Project COBB**

The Project for the Chronicling of British Baseball (Project COBB) is an online collaboration aimed at restoring the record of British baseball's past and preserving its present. Its website is located at:

<http://www.projectcobb.org.uk/>.