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CONTACT: Rick Cerrone / rcerrone@baseballdigest.com

Angels' Shohei Ohtani Wins 2021 Baseball Digest/eBay MLB Player of the Year Award **Max Scherzer Selected as MLB Pitcher of the Year; Brewers' Josh Hader Voted MLB Relief Pitcher of the Year**

Thursday, October 7, 2021 – Shohei Ohtani of the Los Angeles Angels has been selected as the 2021 *Baseball Digest/eBay* MLB Player of the Year. Max Scherzer, who split the season between the Washington Nationals and Los Angeles Dodgers, has been voted MLB Pitcher of the Year while Josh Hader of the Milwaukee Brewers has been named MLB Relief Pitcher of the Year.

Ohtani received 16 first-place votes from a the independently-submitted ballots of a 19-member “blue-ribbon” panel of longtime baseball observers, which included writers, broadcasters, former players, managers and executives. Guerrero Jr. received two first-place votes while Salvador Perez of the Kansas City Royals received one.

This is *Baseball Digest's* 53rd “MLB Player of the Year” award (1969-2021) and its 28th “MLB Pitcher of the Year” (1994-2021). The “MLB Relief Pitcher of the Year” was first awarded in 2012 and annually since 2014.

Shohei Ohtani provided a two-way performance not seen in more than a century. He hit a career-high 46 homers—third-most in the majors—and stroked 14 in a red-hot 17-game stretch through July 4. Ohtani, who scored 103 runs and drove in 100, is the only player in MLB history with a season of at least 45 home runs, eight triples, 25 doubles and 25 stolen bases. On the mound, he made 23 starts and went 9-2 with a 3.18 ERA. In eight of his 23 starts, the right-hander worked at least six innings and held his opponent scoreless or to a single run. At the All-Star Game in Denver, he batted leadoff for the American League, started the game on the mound, and earned the win—something that had never been done in any major-league game. The 27-year-old Ohtani, *Baseball Digest's* 2018 American League Rookie of the Year, is the third Angels player to be named MLB Player of the Year by *Baseball Digest* in the award's 53-year history (1969-2021), joining Vladimir Guerrero (2004) and Mike Trout (2014, 2019).

Max Scherzer, acquired by the Los Angeles Dodgers from the Washington Nationals on July 30, went 15-4 with a 2.46 ERA that ranked second among ERA qualifiers. He was at his best over his final 11 starts of the season with Los Angeles, going 7-0 with a 1.98 ERA and 89 strikeouts in 68.1 innings. The 37-year-old right-hander was stingy as ever in 2021, posting a 0.86 WHIP that was the lowest in the majors. He also topped all ERA qualifiers by limiting opponents to a .185 batting average. On September 12, Scherzer became the 19th pitcher in MLB history to reach 3,000 strikeouts in a start against San Diego in which he threw an immaculate inning (nine pitches, three strikeouts) and took a perfect game into the eighth inning. His immaculate inning was the third of his career. Scherzer was also named MLB Pitcher of the Year by *Baseball Digest* as a member of the Detroit Tigers in 2013.

Josh Hader saved 34 games for the Brewers. Four closers recorded more saves, but the 6-foot-3 lefty was nearly perfect in 2021. He blew only one save opportunity all season for a 97-percent success rate that was highest among all relievers with more than five saves. Hader, who began his fifth big-league season with a stellar 2.54 ERA, posted a 1.23 ERA that was twice as good as his career mark. Only one reliever (minimum 50IP) turned in a lower ERA, though the eight runs allowed all season by Hader was the lowest among all MLB pitchers who worked 50 innings. Hader didn't allow a run in his final 21 appearances after July 28, fanning 37 batters in 20.1 innings and converting all 13 of his save chances. For the season, the 27-year-old left-hander fanned 102 batters in 58.2 innings, reaching triple-digit strikeouts for the third time in four years, falling short only in the pandemic-shortened 2020 campaign. Hader is the second Brewers pitcher to be named MLB Relief Pitcher of the Year, joining Devin Williams (2020).

2021 MLB PLAYER OF THE YEAR, VOTE TOTALS	1st	2nd	3rd	Total
Shohei Ohtani, Los Angeles Angels	16 (48)	1 (2)	0 (0)	50
Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Toronto Blue Jays	2 (6)	14 (28)	2 (2)	36
Juan Soto, Washington Nationals	0 (0)	2 (4)	9 (9)	13
Salvador Perez, Kansas City Royals	1 (3)	1 (2)	3 (3)	6
Trea Turner, Los Angeles Dodgers	0 (0)	1 (2)	0 (0)	2
Bryce Harper, Philadelphia Phillies	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2)	2
Fernando Tatis Jr., San Diego Padres	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2)	2
Aaron Judge, New York Yankees	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1

2021 MLB PITCHER OF THE YEAR, VOTE TOTALS	1st	2nd	3rd	Total
Max Scherzer, Los Angeles Dodgers	8 (24)	5 (10)	4 (4)	38
Corbin Burnes, Milwaukee Brewers	4 (12)	7 (14)	1 (1)	27
Zack Wheeler, Philadelphia Phillies	4 (12)	2 (4)	1 (1)	17
Walker Buehler, Los Angeles Dodgers	1 (3)	3 (6)	3 (3)	12
Julio Urias, Los Angeles Dodgers	2 (3)	0 (0)	1 (1)	7
Robbie Ray, Toronto Blue Jays	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (4)	4
Gerrit Cole, New York Yankees	0 (0)	1 (2)	1 (1)	3
Adam Wainwright, St. Louis Cardinals	0 (0)	1 (2)	1 (1)	3
Jacob deGrom, New York Mets	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1
Charlie Morton, Atlanta Braves	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1
Logan Webb, San Francisco Giants	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1

2021 MLB RELIEF PITCHER OF THE YEAR, VOTE TOTALS	1st	2nd	3rd	Total
Josh Hader, Milwaukee Brewers	16 (48)	3 (6)	0 (0)	54
Liam Hendriks, Chicago White Sox	2 (6)	9 (18)	2 (2)	26
Emmanuel Clase, Cleveland Indians	1 (3)	2 (4)	3 (3)	10
Mark Melancon, San Diego Padres	0 (0)	1 (2)	4 (3)	6
Ryan Pressly, Houston Astros	0 (0)	1 (2)	3 (3)	5
Raisel Iglesias, Los Angeles Angels	0 (0)	1 (2)	2 (2)	4
Jonathan Loaisiga, New York Yankees	0 (0)	1 (2)	1 (1)	3
Trevor Rogers, Miami Marlins	0 (0)	1 (2)	0 (0)	2
Kenley Jansen, Los Angeles Dodgers	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2)	2
Andrew Kittredge, Tampa Bay Rays	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1
Casey Sadler, Seattle Mariners	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1

Votes were tabulated on a three-points-for-first-place, two-points-for-second-place and one-point-for-third-place basis.

Baseball Digest's 2021 Voting Panel

Greg Amsinger, MLB Network Host; **Matt Baker**, MLB Network Researcher; **Bob Costas**, MLB Network Host and Play-by-Play Announcer; **Jim Duquette**, SiriusXM Host and former MLB general manager; **Mike Fitzpatrick**, Associated Press, BBWAA; **Cliff Floyd**, MLB Network analyst and former MLB player; **Alyson Footer**, MLB.com, BBWAA; **Brian Kenny**, MLB Network Host; **Bill Madden**, New York Daily News, BBWAA; **Sean McAdam**, Boston Sports Journal, BBWAA; **Scott Miller**, *Bleacher Report*, BBWAA; **LaVelle Neal**, Minneapolis Star-Tribune, BBWAA; **Eduardo Perez**, SiriusXM Host and former MLB player; **Steve Phillips**, SiriusXM Host and former MLB general manager; **Tracy Ringolsby**, BBWAA; **Alanna Rizzo**, MLB Network Host; **Christopher Russo**, SiriusXM and MLB Network Host; **Buck Showalter**, MLB Network Analyst and former MLB manager; **Matt Vasgersian**, ESPN Sunday Night Baseball and MLB Network Host.