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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 17, 2018

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## Timberwolf Baseball players selected for NWAC East Region All Stars

PENDLETON, Ore. – Four Blue Mountain Community College baseball players have been named to the Northwest Athletic Conference’s (NWAC) East Region All Star teams for their outstanding efforts in the 2018 season, which ended last weekend.

Sophomores Dustin Durflinger and Nate Cantonwine were named to the East Region All Star Utility 1<sup>st</sup> Team and East Region All Star Catcher 1<sup>st</sup> Team, respectively. Freshmen Alex Salsman and Nychal Gritz were named to the East Region All Star Outfielder 2<sup>nd</sup> Team and East Region All Star Starting Pitcher 2<sup>nd</sup> Team, respectively.

Durflinger, a 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman and catcher from West Richland, Wash., was the Timberwolves’ lead-off hitter in all 48 games this season. He was voted Team MVP by his teammates, and will graduate in June with his Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer (AAOT) degree. Durflinger, who serves as a peer tutor in the BMCC Student Success Center, plans to transfer to Washington State University to pursue Civil Engineering.

“Durf is very deserving of this award,” said BMCC Head Coach Brad Baker. “He is one of the hardest working student-athletes I’ve coached, both on the field and in the classroom, and was one of our team’s leaders this season.”

Cantonwine, a starting catcher from Salem, also played outfield and designated hitter for BMCC. Baker said Cantonwine produced the best hitting numbers of any catcher in the league, and was also solid defensively behind the plate. He’ll graduate in June with an Associate of Science Oregon Transfer degree in Business, and recently signed a Letter of Intent to continue his collegiate baseball career and pursue a Business degree at Corban University in Salem.

“Nate is very deserving of being selected for this award,” Baker said. “He has been a model student-athlete at BMCC, excelling in the classroom and on the baseball field. His hard work in the classroom, field, weight room, and his extra work hitting might be unmatched by any student-athlete I’ve coached.”

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Salsman, from Boise, was the everyday cleanup hitter and left fielder for the Timberwolves, and had one of the best seasons swinging the bat in school history. Salsman's 37 RBIs is the most ever since the NWAC moved to wood bats, and his 18 doubles rank near the top of the record books. Salsman also hit three homeruns for the Timberwolves this season.

"Alex was one of the most feared hitters in the conference, and it shows by how the coaches voted him for this award," Baker said. "We look forward to having Alex back for his sophomore season."

Gritz, of Hermiston, was in the starting rotation as a pitcher for the entire year for BMCC. His seven wins on the mound is the most for a Timberwolf in recorded history, and is tied of sixth in the NWAC this season. Gritz threw 81.2 innings, which is second in the NWAC only behind BMC's Cole Connolly, and his 70 strikeouts rank 9<sup>th</sup> in the NWAC. Gritz has signed a contract to pitch for the Yakima Valley Pippins of the prestigious West Coast League this summer.

"Nychal had a real impressive freshman season for us on the mound," Baker said. "He is a fierce competitor who loves to pitch and put the team on his back during his starts. Nychal has a great opportunity to possibly be one of the top pitchers in the NWAC next season."

The Timberwolves ended the season 20-28.

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