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C-USA ANNOUNCES MARCH 24 BASEBALL PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

IRVING, Texas – A pair of pitchers that turned in dominating performances to lead their teams to conference series-opening victories have been named Conference USA co-Pitchers of the Week. Rice junior RHP **Zech Lemond** and Southern Miss junior RHP **Christian Talley** share the honor after both struck out a career-best 12 batters in series-opening wins last Friday night. The C-USA Hitter of the Week award went to Old Dominion senior 1B **Josiah Burney**, who had three homers and 10 RBI on the road in the Monarchs first conference series win.

Lemond won his Friday night start against Florida Atlantic with another solid outing in his only mound appearance of the week. The Houston native, who began the season as a closer before being moved into the rotation following an injury, posted a career-high 12 strikeouts in a career-best 8.1 innings vs. the Owls. He scattered six singles in and three walks without allowing any runs. Lemond held all opposing hitters to a composite .207 batting average to improve his overall record to 3-0 and lower his ERA to 1.86.

Talley threw the Golden Eagles' first complete game of the season, giving up just two runs on five hits with no walks and a season-best 12 strikeouts vs. UTSA. The Diamondhead, Miss., native did not allow a hit after the fifth inning, retiring 14 of the last 15 batters he faced – the only one reaching on a USM fielding error. Talley's double-digit strikeout total is the third time this season the Golden Eagles have had a pitcher fan at least 10 in a contest. He fanned the first three UTSA hitters and six of the first eight batters he faced. Along with the 12 strikeouts, he had eight fly outs as the team collected just five assists in the contest. In two C-USA starts, Talley has fanned 21 in 14 innings of work.

Burney led the Monarchs to their first C-USA series victory, batting .500 with all but one of his hits going for extra-bases at Louisiana Tech. The Gloucester, Va., native totaled 15 bases with a double and three home runs, while driving in 10 runs in the series. Burney added three walks to give him a .615 on-base percentage and recorded a 1.500 slugging percentage. He hit a three-run homer as part of a five-RBI effort on Saturday and then hit another three-run blast in Sunday's series-clinching victory.

2014 WINNERS:

Hitter of the Week – Feb. 17 – Skyler Ewing, 1B, Rice; Feb. 24 – Garrett Deschamp, 2B, Tulane; March 3 – Jesse Baker, OF, UTSA; March 10 – Aramis Garcia, C, FIU; March 17 – John Clay Reeves, C, Rice; March 24 – Josiah Burney, 1B, Old Dominion.

Pitcher of the Week – Feb. 17 – Chase Mallard, RHP, UAB; Feb. 24 – Chase Mallard, RHP, UAB; March 3 – Jeff Hoffman, RHP, East Carolina & Conor Fisk, RHP, Southern Miss; March 10 – Matt Margaritonda, RHP, Marshall; March 17 – Phil Maton, RHP, Louisiana Tech; March 24 – Zech Lemond, RHP, Rice & Christian Talley, RHP, Southern Miss.

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