

Baltimore takes OSU's Rutschman at No. 1

By Jesse Sowa
Corvallis Gazette-Times

It was about third grade when Adley Rutschman was watching Major League Baseball and thinking he'd like to play in the big leagues someday.

"Moving throughout my life you get a little older and you see how many people try to play professional baseball and you see the numbers, and it's rare," he said. "Then I got to Oregon State and it was one of those things that got reborn for me."

The OSU junior's aspirations became reality Monday, when he was selected as the No. 1 overall pick by the Baltimore Orioles in the MLB draft.

Rutschman, a switch-hitting catcher from Sherwood, was surrounded by family, friends, teammates and coaches in a private gathering at Goss Stadium when he heard his name called, becoming the first Beaver ever to be taken first overall and only the third to be taken in the top 10.

"What a moment for an unbelievable kid and an unbelievable player," former Oregon State coach Pat Casey, serving as an analyst on the MLB Network, said soon after the announcement. "This kid is the complete package. He really has all the tools."

It's been two seasons filled with big numbers, awards and accomplishments for Rutschman.

Rutschman hit just .234 as a freshman and regular in the batting order but exploded last season, batting .408 with nine home runs and 83 RBIs. He shined under the spotlight and was named the College World Series most outstanding player while leading the Beavers to the program's third national championship.

He broke a CWS record with 17 hits.

This season, Rutschman batted .411 with 17 home runs, 58 RBIs, 76 walks, 57 runs scored and four sacrifice flies while starting all 57 games.

Last week, he was named



Chris Pietsch/AP File photo

Adley Rutschman catches for Oregon State during an April game against Washington State in Corvallis. Rutschman was the No. 1 overall pick of the Baltimore Orioles Monday.

the Collegiate Baseball national player of the year and Pac-12 Conference player of the year and co-defensive player of the year.

Monday, Rutschman was selected one of three finalists for the Buster Posey Award, given to the nation's top collegiate catcher. He had a .989 fielding percentage and threw out 13 of 27 runners trying to steal a base on him. He had four passed balls and six errors.

The award will be handed out June 27.

He set an Oregon State single-season record for walks with 76 this spring and in hits (102) and RBIs (83) in 2018. He has OSU's career marks with 156 walks, is second in RBIs (174) and third in runs (151).

Rutschman, 21, played football his freshman year at OSU. He was the primary kicker on kickoffs. He kicked a 63-yard field goal as a high school senior.

So many years ago as a youngster playing baseball, Rutschman said he wouldn't have believed where he is now.

"Just to look back on how I was as a kid, seeing what my expectations were and how far I've come from there ... it's special and it's a dream come true. It truly is," he said.

No one on Oregon State's 2019 roster knows Rutschman better than senior Zak Taylor, also from

Sherwood. The two have been playing baseball together for about a decade.

Taylor said after Saturday's season-ending loss to Creighton that he considers Rutschman one of his best friends and someone of high character.

"He's an honest person, keeps his word and you know at the end of the day he's got my back and I've got his back," Taylor said. "I know I can go to him at any point in life, whether it's a phone call or he's across the country he'll pick up and he would be there for me in an instant. You can't miss friends like that."

Rutschman was asked to evaluate himself as a player and what the Orioles are getting.

He said he takes pride in how he carries himself.

"My grandpa likes to say 'control the controllables.' I think that's exactly what you need to do as a baseball player," Rutschman said. "There's so many things that are out of your control. For me, I play hard every day and I'm going to give my best effort, and maybe I'm not doing it offensively one day but that doesn't mean I can't still help the team win defensively."

While talking to media less than an hour after his selection, Rutschman didn't know much about his immediate future while still trying to enjoy the moment.

He'll finish up spring term classes with finals next week. He's about 30 credits from his finance degree and hopes to finish what's left when he can, but his schedule just got a little busier. He had yet to talk with the Orioles about where they were sending him.

Rutschman says his biggest growth since becoming a college player has come in the mental part of the game.

"Our coaches do a great job physically improving your swing, physically improving the catching aspects," he said. "But we talk a lot about the game within the game, attitude, stuff like that, things that you can control and you can really get better at on a big scale."

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