ABAC Outfielder Named to National Gold Glove Team

TIFTON—Nick Higginbotham from Lake Park has been selected to receive a Rawlings Gold Glove Award for his stellar play in center field for the Stallions of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. The award is presented on the national level each year to one player from each position on the field in conjunction with the American Baseball Coaches Association.

One of three outfielders in Division I of the National Junior College Athletic Association to receive the national award, Higginbotham collected 131 put outs, five assists and participated
in two double plays during the 2015 season. The former Lowndes High School standout did not have an error on the year.

“It’s a real honor,” Higginbotham said. “For me, it’s really a blessing from the Lord because I didn’t know it was coming. I just go out there every day and compete.”

Higginbotham was the captain of the Stallions’ defense, which led the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association in fielding percentage. ABAC committed the fewest errors in the league. ABAC Coach Brandon Reeder said Higginbotham’s nickname was “The No Fly Zone.”

“It was apparent from the moment Nick took the field for the first time that he would have an immediate impact on our program offensively and defensively,” Reeder said. “He is our motor. He brings the energy every day, and he is an exciting player to watch.”

Batting in the lead off position for the Stallions, Higginbotham hit .260 with six doubles and one triple on the year. He had six stolen bases, scored 36 runs, knocked in 20 runs, and rapped out 50 hits. Higginbotham played in all 57 games and had an on base percentage of .385.

“I knew that he would be recognized for his defensive play but I had no idea it would be at the national level,” Reeder said. “To get to work with this kid every day is special. I’ll walk out on the field, and he will be hitting the ball up to himself, putting a glove on, and chasing the ball down. He is a remarkable competitor and itches to get better every day.”

ABAC finished fourth in the league tournament this year after bolting out to a 12-2 start in conference play. Reeder is counting on Higginbotham to be a key to success for the 2016 version of Stallion baseball.
“He is going to be a center piece for next year’s team,” Reeder said. “There are only a handful of players in this league who can impact the game on offense, defense, and running the bases. ‘Higgy’ is one of them. He’s the kind of kid you root for, and he never disappoints you with his effort.”

Higginbotham said he is trying to stay in shape this summer by working on his hitting.

“Offense is a puzzle,” Higginbotham said. “You have to continually piece it together.”

Other members of the Gold Glove Team were Braxton Shetley, a pitcher for Guilford (N.C.) Tech; Trevor Denton, a catcher for Pitt (N.C.); Tanner Foerschler, a first baseman for Kansas City (Kans.); Cole Freeman, a second baseman for Delgado (La.); John Mastrangelo, a third baseman for Harford (Md.); Riley Delgado, a shortstop for Columbia (Tenn.) State; Johnny Balsamo, an outfielder for Dodge City (Kans.); and Chet Niehaus, an outfielder for Alabama Southern.

###