

Honey Nut Chourio

Unbiased Team Analysis

June 09, 2026

Overall Grade: **B**

□ Honey Nut Chourio — Unbiased Analysis

The Mendoza Line League

1. Overall Team Summary (Brutal Honesty Edition)

Quick Verdict: Contender with a Limp

This is a team built like a luxury sports car that somebody forgot to fill with gas. The core is genuinely impressive — Bobby Witt, Kyle Tucker, Cristopher Sanchez, Hunter Brown — but the margins are thin, the bench is nonexistent, and the manager appears to have allocated \$432 in salary across 16 players like a drunk guy splitting a dinner check: heavy on the steaks, light on the sides, and someone's definitely getting stiffed.

One-liner roast: You named your team after a 21-year-old and then built the rest of the roster like you're already planning for his retirement party.

One-liner compliment: The Chourio (\$16), Merrill (\$17), and Brown (\$15) keeper contracts are the kind of value that makes other managers throw their laptops across the room.

2. Roster Construction & Strategy

What the manager prioritized: Premium bats and young upside. This roster screams "I want to win with hitting and figure out pitching later." Seven of the nine batters are 29 or younger (or were when acquired), and the outfield is absolutely stacked with five-category contributors. The pitching staff leans heavily on breakout arms from 2025.

What they ignored:

- **Roster depth.** Sixteen players. That's it. In a league with 27 keepers, you're running a 16-man squad into a season that will feature injuries, slumps, and at

least three existential crises. There is no 2B on this roster unless you count Polanco's eligibility. There is no backup catcher, no fifth starter safety net, and no bench bat. You're one hamstring tweak from a catastrophe.

- **Saves.** Bryan Abreu "could open the year as closer" per reports, but he had only 7 saves in 2025 with 25 holds. Estrada had 3 saves and 30 holds. You have two elite setup men and zero reliable closers. In a category league, this is malpractice.
- **Second base.** Jorge Polanco is your only 2B-eligible player, and he's a 32-year-old DH on the Mets who "won't see game action right away." Cool. Cool cool cool.

Where the roster is fragile:

- Schwellenbach just had an elbow procedure. His 2026 projection is **144.2 points** — that's not a pitcher, that's a paperweight with a pulse.
- Contreras is day-to-day with a finger issue. At \$34, you need him healthy and productive, and his 2025 was already a notable step back (.260/.355/.399, just 17 HR).
- Merrill played only 115 games in 2025 and posted 377.4 FPTS. The projection says 614.2, which is a massive bounce-back bet. If that doesn't hit, you're cooked in the outfield depth department.

3. Strengths

- **Bobby Witt Jr. is the #1 ranked player on CBS for a reason.** 742.8 projected points, five-category monster, 25 years old, \$44 salary. This is the kind of cornerstone that makes a franchise. He's your best player and it's not particularly close.
- **The young outfield trio is filthy.** Chourio (21, \$16), Merrill (22, \$17), and Tucker (29, \$38) give you elite upside at bargain-to-fair prices. If Chourio takes the expected Year 3 leap and Merrill bounces back to his 2024 form, this outfield could be the best in the league.
- **Cristopher Sanchez and Hunter Brown are aces at mid-rotation prices.** Sanchez posted an 8.0 WAR, 2.50 ERA, and 212 K in 202 innings in 2025 — for \$20. Brown went 2.43 ERA with 206 K for \$15. These are SP1/SP2 caliber arms at SP4 prices. That's how you win leagues.
- **Pete Alonso's 2025 bounceback was real.** .272/.347/.524 with 38 HR and 126 RBI in Baltimore. At \$33, that's fair value for a guy who just reminded everyone he's one of the best power bats in baseball.

- **Bryan Abreu at \$9 is a cheat code if he closes.** A 2.28 ERA, 13.3 K/9, and potential closer role? That's elite RP production at a price that wouldn't buy you a decent streaming option.
 - **Joe Ryan's K-to-walk ratio is absurd.** 4.97 K/BB in 2025 with a sub-1.04 WHIP. At \$25 he's a reliable SP2/SP3 who won't kill your ratios.
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4. Weaknesses / Red Flags

- **Spencer Schwellenbach just had elbow surgery.** His 2026 projection is 144.2 FPTS. That's not a roster spot — that's a \$12 prayer candle. You're essentially running with four starters and hoping the elbow gods are merciful. Spoiler: they usually aren't.
- **The saves situation is a dumpster fire.** Estrada (17% owned, 3 saves) and Abreu (41% owned, 7 saves) are both primarily holds guys. If neither locks down a closer role, you're punting an entire category. In roto, that's a death sentence. In H2H, it's a weekly coin flip you'll lose more often than not.
- **William Contreras is trending the wrong direction.** From .289/.367/.457 in 2023 to .281/.365/.466 in 2024 to .260/.355/.399 in 2025. That's a three-year decline in every slash line category. His ISO dropped to .140. At \$34, you're paying for 2023 Contreras and getting 2025 Contreras, who is a league-average bat masquerading as a premium keeper.
- **No second baseman.** Polanco has 2B eligibility, but he's a DH on the Mets who's already being held out of spring games. If he gets hurt or loses playing time, you literally have no one to fill that position. Zero contingency plan.
- **Manny Machado at \$53 is your most expensive player and he's 33.** He's still good — .275/.335/.460 with 27 HR and 14 SB — but that's not \$53 good. That's the kind of contract that looks fine now and horrifying in 18 months. His projected 614 points at that salary is a negative value proposition compared to what Chourio or Merrill could give you at a third of the cost.
- **George Kirby had a rough 2025.** 4.21 ERA, only 126 innings in 23 starts. That's a far cry from his 2023-2024 form. His elite command (4.72 K/BB) keeps him interesting, but the projection of 551.4 is banking on a full healthy season that he hasn't delivered since 2023. At \$17, the price is fine, but the risk is real.
- **Jackson Merrill's stolen base disappearance is alarming.** He went from 16 SB in 2024 to *1 stolen base* in 2025. ONE. In 115 games. Either San Diego told him to stop running or something physical changed. If that speed is gone, his fantasy profile drops a full tier.
- **This is a 16-player roster in a league with 27 keepers.** You have 11 fewer players than the keeper limit. That means you're either entering the draft with

massive holes to fill or you're intentionally running lean. Either way, one injury to a key player and you're scrambling with no safety net.

5. Player-by-Player Takes

BATTERS

Bobby Witt Jr. (SS) — KC — \$44

Role/Status: Franchise cornerstone. CBS #1 overall rank. The best player in fantasy baseball.

Value Assessment: ELITE. 742.8 projected FPTS. Five-category stud. 25 years old. There is nothing bad to say here.

Risk Factors: His 2025 was a "down year" compared to his historic 2024 (.332/.389/.588), which tells you everything. The only risk is if the Royals somehow trade him to a league where they don't keep stats.

□ If Bobby Witt is your fourth-highest paid player, you're doing something right. This man is a fantasy cheat code and he's not even in his prime yet. Disgusting.

Kyle Tucker (RF) — LAD — \$38

Role/Status: Top-6 CBS rank. Now a Dodger, which means he'll hit in one of the best lineups in baseball.

Value Assessment: ELITE. 685 projected FPTS. Five-category contributor with an elite walk rate (near 1:1 BB/K) and 25 SB upside.

Risk Factors: Played only 78 games in 2024 and 136 in 2025. The talent is undeniable but he's missed significant time two of the last three years. Currently left camp for personal reasons (expecting wife), which is fine and normal but adds to the "will he play 150+ games?" question.

Tucker in Dodger Stadium with that lineup protection is the stuff of fantasy dreams. If he plays 155 games, he's a top-5 overall player. If he plays 120, you'll be cursing at your phone in August. Again.

Pete Alonso (1B) — BAL — \$33

Role/Status: Moved to Baltimore, where he promptly went yard in his spring debut because of course he did.

Value Assessment: SOLID. 38 HR and 126 RBI in 2025 is monstrous. But the projection drops to 515.2 FPTS, suggesting some regression is expected.

Risk Factors: He's a one-trick pony — the trick is just really, really good. .272 average is actually elite for Alonso. But he'll kill you in OBP some weeks, and he offers zero speed (1 SB in 2025). At \$33, you're paying for the dingers and the RBI. That's it.

Pete Alonso is the human embodiment of "grip it and rip it." He'll either hit 35+ homers or make you question every life decision that led you to this point. There is no in-between.

Manny Machado (3B) — SD — \$53

Role/Status: Still the Padres' franchise player. Enjoying a nice spring. CBS #27 rank.

Value Assessment: SOLID but OVERPRICED. 614 projected FPTS is very good. But at \$53, he's your most expensive player by \$9, and he's 33 years old. That salary is anchored to 2019 Machado, not 2026 Machado.

Risk Factors: Age-related decline is the obvious one. His SLG has dropped from .462 (2023) to .472 (2024) to .460 (2025) — essentially flatlined, but the batting average and OBP aren't improving either. The 14 SB in 2025 was a nice surprise, but banking on a 33-year-old maintaining stolen base production is a bold strategy.

\$53 for Manny Machado is like paying resort prices for a Holiday Inn Express. It's still a decent hotel! You'll sleep fine! But you'll know you overpaid every time you look at the bill.

Jackson Chourio (LF/CF/RF) — MIL — \$16

Role/Status: The team's namesake. 21-year-old five-tool outfielder. CBS #13 rank.

Value Assessment: ELITE VALUE. 581 projected FPTS at \$16 is absurd. He's the kind of keeper that makes league-mates physically ill.

Risk Factors: His plate discipline is concerning — .248 BB/K ratio in 2025, only 30 walks in 589 PA. If pitchers figure out he'll chase, the average could dip. But he's 21. TWENTY-ONE. He has time to figure it out.

You named your whole damn team after this kid, so he better deliver. At \$16, even his 2025 line (21 HR, 21 SB, .270) is a steal. If he takes the leap everyone expects, this might be the best value on any roster in the league.

Jackson Merrill (CF) — SD — \$17

Role/Status: 22-year-old center fielder. CBS #23 rank. Projected for a massive bounceback.

Value Assessment: HIGH UPSIDE / HIGH RISK. The projection (614.2 FPTS) is banking on a return to his 2024 form (604.6 FPTS), but his 2025 was a disaster: only 115 games, 377.4 FPTS, and *one stolen base*.

Risk Factors: What happened to the speed? 16 SB in 2024, 1 SB in 2025. That's not a slump, that's an extinction event. If the speed doesn't come back, he's a .264 hitter with moderate power — useful, but not the guy you're projecting as a top-25 asset. At \$17, the price is still great even if he's just "good," but the gap between his floor and ceiling is the Grand Canyon.

Jackson Merrill went from stealing bases to apparently stealing only our hearts. And you can't trade hearts for fantasy points, pal.

William Contreras (C) — MIL — \$34

Role/Status: Starting catcher, day-to-day with a finger injury. CBS #25 rank.

Value Assessment: DECLINING ASSET. His 2025 was a clear step back: .260/.355/.399 with just 17 HR. The projection for 2026 (412.8 FPTS) would be his worst full-season output. At \$34, you're paying for the catcher premium, but the production isn't justifying it anymore.

Risk Factors: Three straight years of declining slash lines. ISO dropped from .189 to .185 to .140. The power is evaporating. He's only 28, so there's hope, but the trend is your enemy. And he's currently hurt. At this price, he needs to be a top-3 catcher, and he's drifting toward top-8 territory.

\$34 for a catcher hitting .260 with 17 homers is the kind of contract that haunts you in the shower. Yes, catcher is a wasteland. No, that doesn't make this okay.

Matt Chapman (3B) — SF — \$11

Role/Status: Solid everyday third baseman. CBS #74 rank (yikes). Provides power, walks, and surprisingly some speed.

Value Assessment: SOLID VALUE. At \$11, you're getting a guy who hit 21 HR with 9 SB and a .340 OBP. The batting average (.231) is painful, but the price is right.

Risk Factors: He's 32, plays for the Giants (lol), and his 2025 was a step back from his excellent 2024 (7.13 WAR). The CBS rank of #74 suggests the market doesn't love him. He's also your second 3B behind Machado, which means he's either a bench bat or a utility play — but wait, you don't really have a bench.

Matt Chapman at \$11 is the responsible sedan in a garage full of sports cars. Nobody's excited about it, but when the Lamborghini breaks down, you'll be glad it's there.

Jorge Polanco (2B/DH) — NYM — \$7

Role/Status: Your only 2B-eligible player. DH on the Mets. Not seeing game action right away in spring. CBS unranked (not in their top players).

Value Assessment: STREAMER-TIER STARTER. His 2025 was actually decent (.265/.327/.495, 26 HR) but the projection drops to 458.2 FPTS. He's 32, switch-hitting, and has had health issues (only 80 games in 2023, 118 in 2024).

Risk Factors: He's your ONLY second baseman. If he gets hurt — and he has a history — you have no replacement. The "won't see game action right away" spring news is a yellow flag. At \$7, the price is fine, but the positional dependency is terrifying.

Jorge Polanco is the duct tape holding your middle infield together. It's \$7 duct tape, sure, but it's still duct tape. And duct tape eventually peels off.

PITCHERS

Cristopher Sanchez (SP) — PHI — \$20

Role/Status: Ace. CBS #5 rank. Dominant in spring. Coming off a career year.

Value Assessment: ELITE VALUE. 820.3 FPTS in 2025 — that's a legitimate Cy Young campaign. 2.50 ERA, 212 K, 22 quality starts in 32 starts. At \$20, this is highway robbery.

Risk Factors: Regression. His 2025 was so good that the projection (617.0) represents a 25% drop and that would STILL make him an ace. The K-rate jumped from 7.6 to 9.4 K/9 — sustainable? Maybe. But even if he gives back some, \$20 for a top-5 pitcher is absurd.

Cristopher Sanchez at \$20 is the best value on this roster and it's not close. This man threw 202 innings of filth for the price of a mid-rotation innings eater. Chef's kiss. ☐

Hunter Brown (SP) — HOU — \$15

Role/Status: Ace-caliber arm. CBS #8 rank. Coming off a breakout 2025.

Value Assessment: ELITE VALUE. 2.43 ERA, 206 K, 21 quality starts. He went from a 5.09 ERA in 2023 to THIS. At \$15, you're essentially getting a top-10 pitcher for free.

Risk Factors: The walks (57 in 185.1 IP) are the one blemish. His 3.61 K/BB is the lowest among your starters. The projection (582.3) implies significant regression from 766.3, which is fair — but even the regressed version is a stud at this price.

Hunter Brown's development arc from "who is this guy" to "oh shit, this guy" is the reason you play keeper leagues. \$15. Fifteen goddamn dollars. Other managers are in shambles.

Joe Ryan (SP) — MIN — \$25

Role/Status: Reliable mid-rotation arm. CBS #16 rank. Ready to face hitters in spring.

Value Assessment: SOLID. 3.42 ERA, 194 K, near-5.0 K/BB ratio. He's not flashy, but he's consistent and he won't blow up your ratios.

Risk Factors: The homer problem persists — 26 HR allowed in 171 IP. That's 1.37 HR/9, which is above-average bad. One wrong start at Yankee Stadium and your ERA for the week is toast. Also, he only made 23 starts in 2024, so durability is a mild concern.

Joe Ryan is the pitching equivalent of a Toyota Camry. You'll never brag about owning one, but it'll get you to work every day without drama. \$25 is fair. Not exciting, but fair.

George Kirby (SP) — SEA — \$17

Role/Status: Bounce-back candidate. CBS #18 rank. Shaky start to spring (concerning).

Value Assessment: BUY-LOW GAMBLE. His 2025 was rough: 4.21 ERA, only 126 IP in 23 starts. But his 2023-2024 track record (3.35 and 3.53 ERA) and elite command suggest the talent is still there.

Risk Factors: What happened in 2025? Only 126 innings suggests he either got hurt or got pulled from the rotation at some point. The projection (551.4) is banking on a return to form, but "shaky to start spring" isn't exactly inspiring confidence. At \$17, the price is great IF he bounces back. If 2025 was the new normal, you've got a \$17 backend starter.

George Kirby's 2025 was the pitching equivalent of showing up to a job interview in sweatpants. Everyone knows you're talented, George. We just need you to act like it.

Spencer Schwellenbach (SP) — ATL — \$12

Role/Status: Injured. Had an elbow procedure. Day-to-day status but projected for only 144.2 FPTS in 2026. 56% owned, only 18% started.

Value Assessment: LANDMINE. When healthy, he was excellent — 3.09 ERA, 0.97 WHIP, 6.0 K/BB in 2025. But "when healthy" is doing a LOT of heavy lifting

here. That 144.2 projection screams "he's going to miss significant time."

Risk Factors: ELBOW. PROCEDURE. FOR A PITCHER. Those three words together are the fantasy equivalent of a tornado siren. He's 25, which is good for recovery, but you're essentially carrying a dead roster spot until he returns — and you only have 16 players.

Spencer Schwellenbach had an elbow procedure and you're keeping him at \$12 on a 16-man roster. That's not optimism, that's a hostage situation. Your roster is being held captive by the hope that a 25-year-old's elbow cooperates. Good luck with that.

Jeremiah Estrada (RP) — SD — \$4

Role/Status: Elite setup man. 13.3 K/9. Only 17% owned, which is criminal for his talent but reflective of his role (holds guy, not closer).

Value Assessment: SOLID but ROLE-LIMITED. 388.1 FPTS in 2025 with 30 holds and only 3 saves. He's dominant — 108 K in 73 IP — but in most formats, holds don't carry the same weight as saves.

Risk Factors: If your league counts holds, he's a steal. If it doesn't, he's a \$4 strikeout machine with limited counting stats. The 12 HR allowed in 73 IP is a bit alarming for a reliever. Also, 17% ownership means he could be sniped off waivers if you ever drop him — but also means nobody else wants him.

Estrada at \$4 is either a sneaky genius play or the fantasy equivalent of collecting stamps — technically a hobby, but nobody's impressed at parties.

Bryan Abreu (RP) — HOU — \$9

Role/Status: Could open the year as Houston's closer. CBS #12 rank. Elite ratios.

Value Assessment: POTENTIAL ELITE. If he closes, 525.5 projected FPTS at \$9 is absurd value. 2.28 ERA, 13.3 K/9, and the stuff to dominate. This is the kind of late-round reliever pick that wins leagues.

Risk Factors: "Could open year as closer" is not "IS the closer." Houston has historically been a closer committee nightmare. If he reverts to a setup role, you're looking at another holds guy — and you already have Estrada for that. The walk rate (31 BB in 71 IP) is the one flaw in an otherwise dominant profile.

Bryan Abreu at \$9 with closer upside is the one pick on this roster that could single-handedly swing a category. If Houston gives him the ball in the ninth, every other manager in your league should be furious they let this happen.

6. Best Picks / Steals

- **☐ Christopher Sanchez — \$20:** A top-5 CBS-ranked pitcher, coming off an 820-point season, for \$20. This is the kind of value that should be illegal. Even with expected regression, he's an ace at a mid-rotation price. The best keeper on this roster, full stop.
 - **☐ Hunter Brown — \$15:** Went from unrosterable (5.09 ERA in 2023) to unhittable (2.43 ERA in 2025). At \$15, he's a top-10 pitcher at a streaming price. The breakout looks real, and the Astros' pitching development track record supports sustainability.
 - **☐ Jackson Chourio — \$16:** A 21-year-old with 20/20 upside, multi-position OF eligibility, and CBS #13 rank — for sixteen bucks. This is the keeper that makes your league-mates hate you at the bar.
 - **4. Bobby Witt Jr. — \$44:** Yes, \$44 is a lot. But for the CBS #1 overall player who's 25 and getting better? That's a bargain. He could be worth \$60+ in a year.
 - **5. Bryan Abreu — \$9:** If the closer role materializes, this is a league-winning value play. Even as a setup man, 13.3 K/9 and a 2.28 ERA at \$9 is excellent.
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7. Worst Picks / "What Were You Thinking?"

- **☐ Manny Machado — \$53:** He's your most expensive player. He's 33. He's projected for 614 FPTS — the same as Jackson Merrill, who costs \$17. You're paying a \$36 premium for the privilege of watching a guy slowly decline. This contract is an anchor around your salary cap's neck. Should've traded this keeper value a year ago.
- **☐ William Contreras — \$34:** Three straight years of declining production. A .140 ISO in 2025. Day-to-day with a finger injury. At \$34, you need top-3 catcher production, and he's trending toward top-10. This is the kind of keeper you hold onto for one year too long because "catcher is thin" — and then you're stuck paying \$34 for a .260 hitter with warning-track power.
- **☐ Spencer Schwellenbach — \$12 (while injured):** Keeping an injured pitcher with a 144-point projection on a 16-man roster is a choice. A bad choice. That roster spot could be a productive player RIGHT NOW instead of a prayer that an elbow heals correctly. The talent is real, but the timing is atrocious.
- **☐ Jeremiah Estrada — \$4:** Look, \$4 is nothing. But on a 16-man roster where you desperately need saves and roster flexibility, carrying a setup man who's only 17% owned is questionable resource allocation. He's the definition of "replaceable production at a replaceable price." You could find this on waivers.

- **□ Having no 2B plan beyond Jorge Polanco:** This isn't a specific pick — it's the absence of one. You have ONE player eligible at second base, and he's a 32-year-old DH who can't stay healthy. This is roster construction negligence.
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8. Draft-Day Advice / Next Moves

1. **DRAFT A CLOSER. IMMEDIATELY.** Your saves situation is a five-alarm fire. Target established closers early in your draft — Clase, Díaz, Helsley, whoever's available. You cannot enter the season with Abreu's "maybe" and Estrada's "probably not" as your closer plan.
2. **Draft a second baseman.** Polanco as your only 2B option is terrifying. Grab someone with upside — Edman, Arraez, McMahon, whoever — as insurance. This is a critical positional hole.
3. **Consider trading Machado's keeper rights.** At \$53, he's negative surplus value compared to what you could get. If someone in your league is a Machado truther, flip him for a cheaper asset with more upside. Reallocate that \$53 into two productive players.
4. **Explore trading Contreras.** His name still carries weight even if his production doesn't justify \$34. A catcher-needy team might overpay. Downgrade to a cheaper catcher option and use the savings elsewhere.
5. **Draft a backup outfielder.** You have five OF-eligible players, but Merrill's health (115 games in 2025) and Tucker's history of missed time make a sixth outfielder essential. Don't enter the season without one.
6. **Stash Schwellenbach on your IL if possible.** If your league has IL spots, put him there and use the roster spot for someone productive. If there's no IL, seriously consider cutting him and re-acquiring later. A dead roster spot on a 16-man team is suicide.
7. **Target high-SB players in the draft.** Your stolen base production relies heavily on Witt (38 SB), Tucker (25 SB), and Chourio (21 SB). If any of them miss time, you're thin. Merrill's SB disappearance makes this worse. Grab a speed specialist late.
8. **Draft at least one more starting pitcher.** With Schwellenbach likely missing significant time and Kirby's shaky 2025, you need a fifth reliable starter. Don't enter the season with three and a half arms.
9. **Monitor Abreu's spring closely.** If he's NOT named closer by Opening Day, pivot your draft strategy to grab a proven closer earlier than planned. Don't leave the draft without at least one guy who will get 25+ saves.
10. **Consider dropping Estrada pre-draft.** At 17% ownership, he's waiver wire fodder. Use that roster spot and \$4 on someone who fills an actual need. You can

always pick him back up if he gets the closer job (he won't).

9. Final Grade

Grade: B

This is a roster with a genuinely elite core — Witt, Tucker, Sanchez, Brown, Chourio — surrounded by some questionable salary commitments, critical positional holes, and the structural integrity of a Jenga tower in an earthquake. The top-end talent is real and the young keeper values are league-best caliber. But the lack of saves, the Schwellenbach dead weight, the Contreras decline, the Machado overpay, and the complete absence of roster depth drag this down from "contender" to "contender if literally nothing goes wrong."

Spoiler: something always goes wrong.

"If this team wins, it'll be because..." Bobby Witt plays like the MVP he is, Tucker stays healthy for 150+ games, Sanchez and Brown repeat as aces, Chourio takes the Year 3 leap, Abreu locks down the closer role, and the manager nails the draft to fill every hole. That's a lot of "ands," but if they all hit, this team is terrifying.

"If this team loses, it'll be because..." Schwellenbach's elbow costs them a roster spot all year, Contreras continues declining at \$34, Machado's age catches up at \$53, Merrill's speed never returns, Kirby's 2025 was the new normal, nobody on this roster actually closes games, and the manager entered the season with 16 players and a dream. Dreams don't win championships. Depth does.