

Introduction

Top 30 in WAR, top 10 in HR, top 20 in exit velocity, top 3 in SLG, top 10 in OBP. This player must be a seasoned veteran, making top-talent money...right? Nope. These stats belong to Nick Kurtz in his 2025 rookie campaign. In only 489 PA, Kurtz was able to post a rookie year that is comparable to those of Aaron Judge, Mike Trout, and Ichiro. To analyze his season to the fullest, we must look at his background as a college player and his path to the league that, should, eventually end in stardom.

Background

Nick Kurtz was a three year starter at Wake Forest University, playing in a total of 164 games where he slashed .332/.510/.728 with 61 HR and 182 RBI. His accolades include: First Team All-ACC in 2023 and 2024, multiple All-American honors, and Golden Spikes finalist as a sophomore for his dominant hitting. In addition, he set the school's career and single season walk record. With such a colorful career, the Athletics drafted Kurtz 4th overall in the 2024 MLB draft. After just 12 games in A and AA to finish the 2024 season, he started 2025 in AAA. 20 games later, he was called up to the majors and it was history from there. Now that we've got the background down, let's take a deeper look at who Nick Kurtz is as a player.

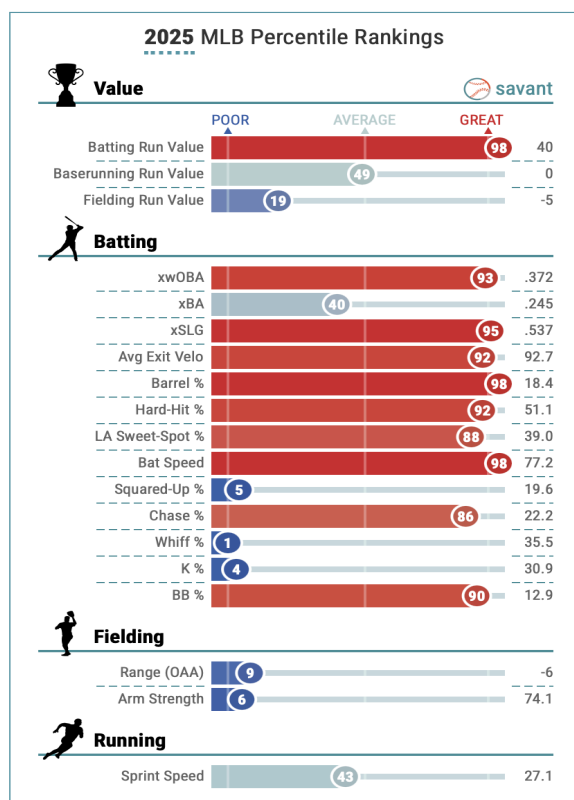
2025 Season

To take an in-depth look at the production Nick Kurtz contributed to the Athletics overall season, let's dive into his statistics from this past season.

Season	Age	Team	Lg	WAR	G	PA	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	CS	BB	SO	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS
2025	22	ATH	AL	5.4	117	489	420	90	122	26	2	36	86	2	1	63	151	.290	.383	.619	1.002

At first glance, the games played stick out with only 117 games, meaning we haven't even gotten a full season of what he can do. With that being said, he still posted 36 HR, good for 10th in the league. Impressively, of the top 10 in home runs, he has the fewest games played by over 40 games. Continuing off of his incredible college career, he had 63 walks, good for top 50 in the league. Next year, I could forecast him to join the top of the leaderboard in walks, which I will expand upon in his 2026 projections later. In one of my favorite statistics, OPS, Kurtz just hovered above the 1.000 mark. Without a minimum quantity of plate appearances, that would rank 3rd in the league. Lastly, his 5.4 WAR was good for 20th in the league (including pitchers and without a minimum quantity of PA).

As much as I love the reliable standard stats, Baseball Savant does a great job of bringing us into his advanced stats to determine if his outstanding rookie season is sustainable in the future.



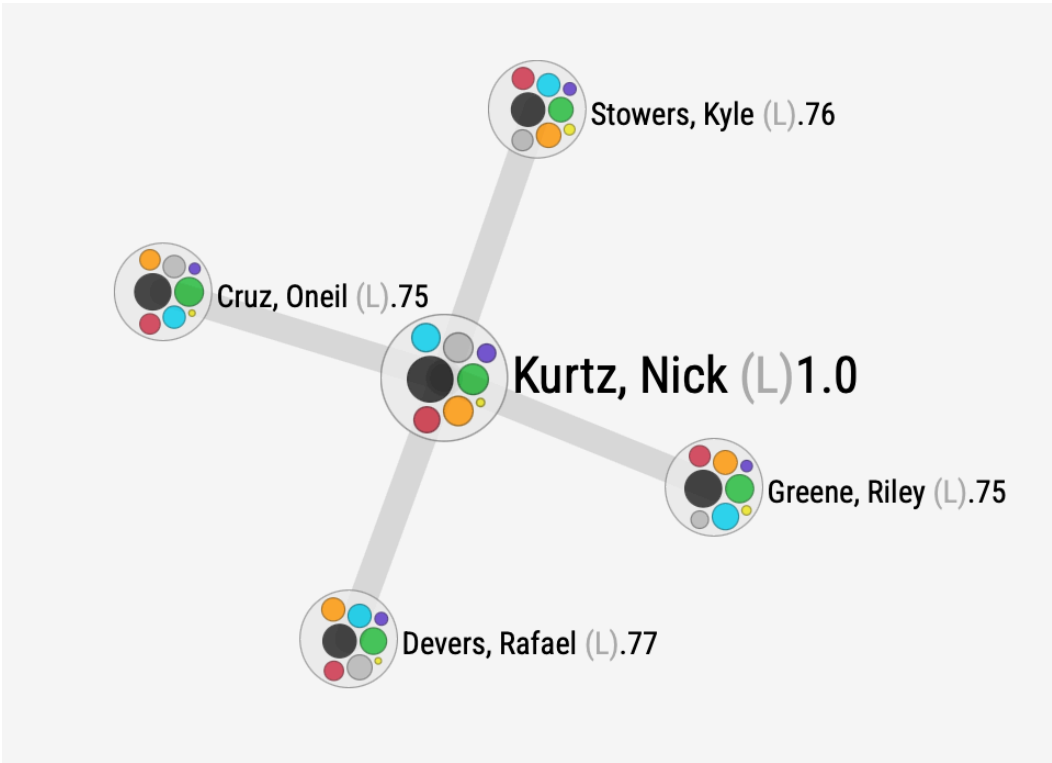
Short answer, they're sustainable. On savant, red means good, and as you can see, there is a lot of red. A lot of these statistics are correlated with each other, but I will focus on some of the stats I find most important. This starts with his xwOBA, which combines average with exit velocity, launch angle, and on some types of batted balls, sprint speed. He's in the 93rd percentile for xwOBA for the obvious reasons that he hits the ball hard and far. So why is his expected batting average lower than the 50th percentile? xBA measures the likelihood that a batted ball will become a hit, removing defense from the equation. So Kurtz must benefit from a bit of luck, which would counter my claim about his sustainability, but then we go to xSLG, which is calculated the same way as xBA. Kurtz excels and is in the 95th percentile, proving, once again, that his power is sustainable. This goes along with his percentiles in exit velo,

barrel%, hard-hit%, LA sweet spot%, and bat speed, all of which are in a great percentile, supporting my claim. One interesting stat to dive deeper into is the squared-up%. The stat compares how much exit velocity was attained to how much potential exit velocity was possible based on bat speed and pitch speed. Because Kurtz's bat speed is so fast, he will almost never hit a ball as fast as he mathematically could, hence his low squared-up%. Every player will benefit from a bit of luck, although the amount can vary from season to season. Kurtz's stats prove his quality as a hitter, so in the long run, his xBA shouldn't punish him too much.

The last stats to point out on his main savant page are his chase, whiff, K, and walk percentages. With any hitter that swings as hard as Kurtz does, you're going to find an issue with his whiffs. What sets him apart from other sluggers is his high walk rate. Carrying his collegiate records into the big leagues, Kurtz has a great eye, so although he whiffs a lot, he doesn't chase. He creates scoring opportunities in more ways than just smacking it out of the park.

Comparisons

As discussed, Kurtz had a very impressive rookie season that is in the likes of some of the greatest players of all time. Using Baseball Savant, I can quickly find players in 2025 who compared to Kurtz and his 2025 results.





Rafael Devers
DH | San Francisco Giants
Bats/Throws: L/R | 6' 0" 235 lbs | Age: 29

	PA	AB	R	H	HR	SB	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS
2023	656	580	90	157	33	5	.271	.351	.500	.851
2024	601	525	87	143	28	3	.272	.354	.516	.870
2025	729	607	99	153	35	1	.252	.372	.479	.851
9 Seasons	4,944	4,409	715	1,215	235	33	.276	.349	.506	.855

Player Apps

Illustrator

Pitch Highlighter

Infield Defense

Player Comparison

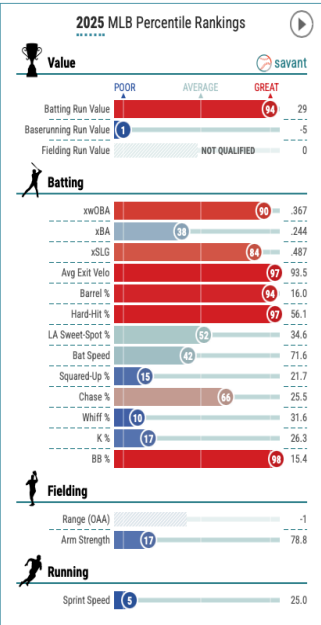
Player Similarity

Random Video

Shifts

Swing Take Profile

Zone Swing Profile





Kyle Stowers
LF | Miami Marlins
Bats/Throws: L/L | 6' 2" 215 lbs | Age: 28
Draft: 2019 | Rd. CB-8, No. 71, Baltimore Orioles | Stanford

	PA	AB	R	H	HR	SB	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS
2023	33	30	1	2	0	0	.067	.152	.067	.219
2024	209	192	15	40	3	0	.208	.268	.333	.601
2025	457	399	61	115	25	5	.288	.368	.544	.912
4 Seasons	797	712	88	180	31	5	.253	.325	.451	.776

Player Apps

Illustrator

Pitch Highlighter

Player Comparison

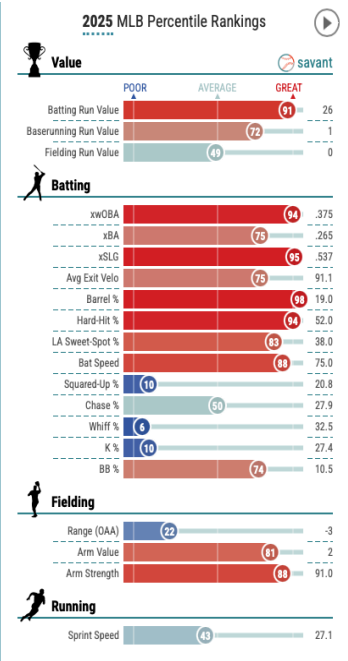
Player Similarity

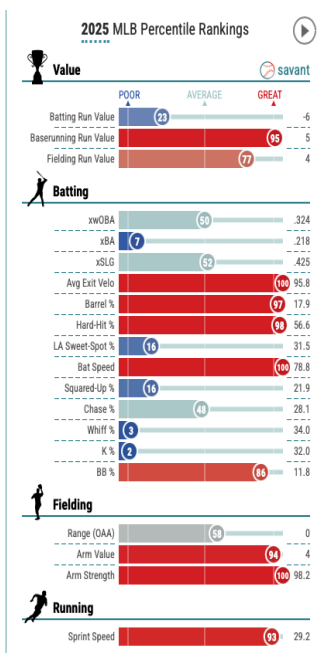
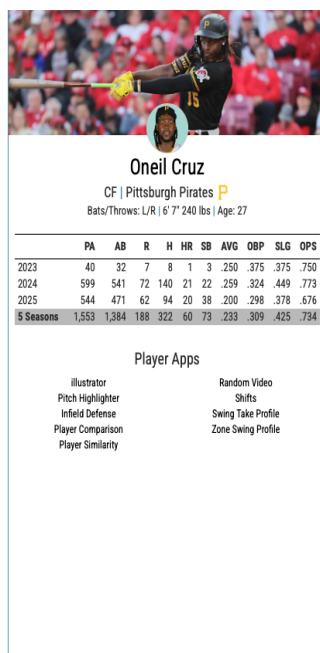
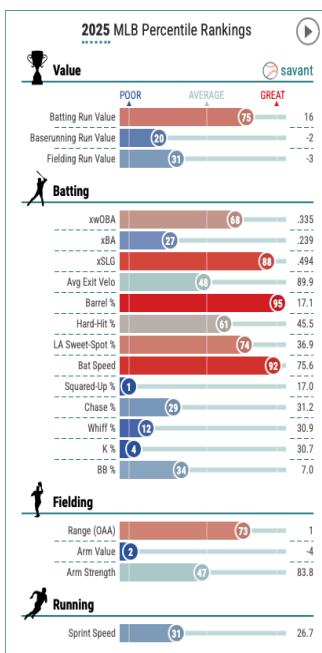
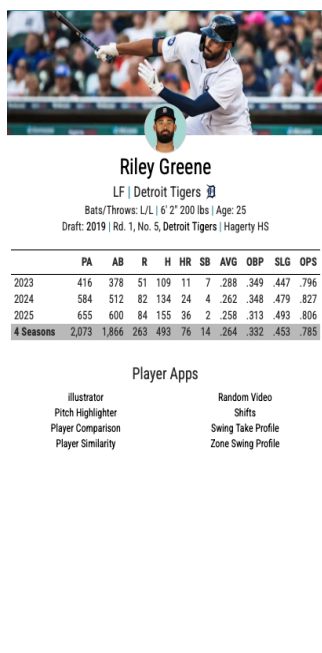
Random Video

Shifts

Swing Take Profile

Zone Swing Profile





These 4 players matched Kurtz's player profile the most from this year. The main thing to notice is the black dot in each circle. That corresponds to the players' strikeout rate which for all of these players, is very high. Let's look at all 4 of these players a little deeper.

Obviously there is a lot to look at in these four profiles, so to make it super simple, let's look at colors. With every player here, the bulk of the red is in categories that correspond to quality contact. This is barrel% and hard-hit% which for all these players, is at least above average. The larger comparison is the aforementioned strikeout rate. The highest player, Devers, is in the 17th percentile for K% which is subpar at best. Their whiff% is right next to Kurtz's towards the bottom of the league. What makes a power hitter special is their walk% and in this case, Devers, Stowers, and Cruz all have very good walk rates. Kurtz falls just below Devers, which, by using my knowledge in the sport, seems very reasonable for the type of praise they receive.

No player will match Kurtz's player profile completely, but these sluggers give us a chance to put his talent into a league wide perspective while also setting a market for any contracts he may receive in the near future. Kurtz's age and years of control will only inflate his value to other franchises, especially when compared to a guy like Rafeal Devers.

Field Impact

Formally known as the Oakland Athletics, the team is in the midst of their move to Las Vegas. The stadium isn't ready yet so they played the 2025 season in Sacramento's Sutter Health Park. A minor league park, Sutter Health ranked 6th in

home runs hit last season. The dimensions aren't much different than most parks but in the heat, balls fly out. One very interesting section that Baseball Savant has, is the expected home runs by park. This statistic shows how many of the hitters' batted balls would have gone out in each stadium. In the A's stadium, all 36 of Kurtz's home runs would have stayed home runs. In addition, 4 batted balls in other stadiums would have gone out to total 40. That is the highest out of every stadium, shortly followed by 38 in Citizen's Bank and 37 in Dodger Stadium. The totals go as low as 24 in Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City. What can we infer from the results?

Playing in Sacramento for a majority of the season boosted his stats for sure, but not by much. The average of all stadiums is 31.37 expected home runs, only about 5 less than his actual number. The more xHR that a player hits, the more transferable his power is into different stadiums across the league. High numbers prove sustainable power because home vs away splits can make or break a statline in a 162 game season. With Kurtz's statistical results only improving with his age, I predict his power to wreck through the league in years to come.

Fielding

To get a full player profile on Nick Kurtz, we must dive into his fielding as well. First base generally isn't known as a very important position defensively. If you can mash, teams are usually open to just "sticking" you at first base. With that being said, when you have a plus fielder at first base, he can save a lot of outs in the infield.

Generally, Kurtz is a poor fielder. Outs Above Average (OAA) measures the effect of all plays a fielder has been credited or debited with. His OAA is a -6. It utilizes the difficulty of the play to quantify the amount added to, or subtracted from, the players' overall OAA. Kurtz is tied for 209th in the league and 35th for first baseman. Safe to say, it's not pretty, not yet at least. In college, his teammates called him Spider-man because every ball thrown his way seemed to stick to his glove like it was tied to a web. Shortly after drafting him, A's scouting director Eric Kubota said Kurtz "reminds us of Matt Olson in a lot of ways" (MLB.com). The A's see the makings of a good defender in Kurtz and after a little bit of work, we might be able to see his work pay off.

Expected 2026 Season

Projections are never 100% correct but they can give us a good analytical perspective on a player's future statline. I decided to take a look at FanGraphs' composite projection (they call it FDGC) because they are a trusted MLB data source. Some important projections they have include: .261 AVG, .352 OBP, .520 SLG, 36 HR, 172 SO, and 73 BB.

They are projecting a slight decrease in all categories of his slash line, while matching his home run total from this past season. His strikeouts would increase by 20 and his walks would increase by 10. They project him to play in 143 games which would be a 26 game increase. Although I'm a major believer in Kurtz, I can also foresee a "sophomore slump" of sorts. Don't get me wrong, the stats are amazing, but compared to his historic rookie season, the numbers do fall off. With how young he is, Kurtz has the chance to be in Cooperstown when his career is over if he continues to prove his impressive power numbers. I would not be surprised if he comes out of the gate and picks up right where he left off in his limited number of games. I'm excited to follow along with his future, he'll always have a fan out of me.