

Hero Analysis: Why You Shouldn't Play Johnson

Introduction

Johnson is objectively the most fun hero that Mobile Legends ever has, regardless of player skill or rank. Released on the 14th of March 2017, Johnson is a Tank/Support hero who has such an extremely unique Ultimate that allows him to carry one ally hero as a passenger and roam around the battlefield as a speeding car. He can be on one end of the map and rush to the other end at blazing speed, while carrying either a Burst DMG Mage or a fed Marksman, crashing into any and all unsuspecting victims. The feeling of rotating and roaming at the speed of lightning, and initiating from any angle on the enemy team will never be rivaled by any other hero. However, that's all he offers because he is useless outside of his Ultimate. He could not peel nor zone because he can't do anything outside of his Ultimate as he leaves his allies vulnerable to mobile Assassins and diving Fighters, consequently making him irrelevant from both standard play and eSports. Moonton noticed and gave Johnson some quality of life adjustments through a Revamp like his Skill 1 being able to consistently stun enemies instead of achieving some complicated condition, Skill 2 being changed from a barrage of rockets that dealt a small amount of Magic DMG on a small area to a continuous flow of Magic DMG at wherever he is facing, and his Ultimate leaving a gigantic electrified zone that continuously slows and damages enemies within. The Revamp was decent enough that it brought him back from irrelevance to being everywhere in standard play.

Johnson even briefly appeared in the eSports scene on [MPL-PH S9 W2D3 ECHO Philippines \(ECHO\) vs Blacklist International \(BLCK\) Game 2](#) seasons after his revamp. Johnson allowed ECHO a fighting chance against BLCK by using the fact that their heroes have long cooldowns on their abilities to reposition and the game-changing ultimates in BLCK's team require the hero to be stationary, leaving them vulnerable. Add along the idea that BLCK still had the habit of grouping up together, despite the absence of [OhMyV33nus](#) and [Wise](#), and ECHO was able to secure the win against BLCK 2-0. ECHO Philippines secured the win against Blacklist International and never used Johnson again, nor did any other eSports team in other professional tournaments because of the amount of counter play available to reduce Johnson's effectiveness.

Unfortunately, the Revamp also allowed Johnson to ravage lower ranked tiers as the players who used him exploited the underdeveloped macro mechanics, such as the lack of map awareness, of the low tiered players in order to win matches. Johnson's standing on the meta was so controversial on social media that it sparked one of the most heated arguments that I have ever seen to the point that it clearly defined who the players are and their current mastery of the game overall. At the time, I was on the side that claimed Johnson was a Limit Test for a player's overall skill and understanding of the game to the point that I assumed any player who claims to be high rank and thinks Johnson is overpowered does not belong in the rank that they claim to be. Regardless, Moonton nerfed Johnson numerous times due to the overwhelming demand which left him a shell of his former self. The eSports scene did not pick up Johnson when he was initially revamped, and the consecutive nerfs demanded by the playerbase from standard play will dissuade the eSports scene from picking Johnson even more.

I believe Johnson was a tragic case of the playerbase's stubbornness to learn and improve themselves, and Moonton succumbing to these demands just because they were loud enough to reach their ears. Additionally, he still retained the weaknesses he had before the revamp. He only briefly enjoyed the limelight of becoming relevant in serious standard play, but never in eSports because of these adjustments to cater to the playerbase. Hey! My name is Gerald and I will try my best to explain why Johnson is currently not meta.

Why is Johnson not Meta?

Johnson has achieved a 45.22% winrate and a 0.55% pickrate in Mythic+. Unfortunately, we currently do not have access to Mythical Glory+ stats due to how early we are in Season 30. We grabbed Johnson's Global stats which are 48.33% winrate and 1.05% pickrate to compensate. However, it is surprising to see that Johnson has a banrate of 1.07% on Mythic+ and 3.62% globally. These stats came from the [official website](#) and were taken on October 19, 2023. It is safe to assume that Johnson is underperforming regardless of the rank tier, but people find him disruptive and annoying. After a meaningful discussion with other players, I have identified several reasons on why Johnson is not viable in today's meta.

A. Horrible Pre-Level 4

- Most roamers possess the capability to offer valuable early-game utility, such as zoning and vision control. These actions provide comfort and assurance to their teammates, who appreciate having a guardian dedicated to their well-being. However, Johnson can only make limited contributions to the team during the early game, particularly before reaching Level 4. In practice, many Johnson players tend to focus on babysitting either the Jungler or the Gold Laner, inadvertently sacrificing the opportunity to establish a map-wide presence until after the first Turtle spawn. In other words, Johnson lacks the tools required to fulfill the basic role of a roamer before reaching Level 4.

B. Extremely Ult Reliant

- Even if Johnson reaches Level 4, his primary contribution remains limited to using his Ultimate. His other abilities, aside from the Ultimate, feel underwhelming and less effective. Johnson struggles to reliably peel or provide anti-dive support to his teammates. In situations where backline heroes are under threat from assassins, a Johnson player can often do little more than watch and hope for the best. In contrast, other competent roamers typically possess tools to help mitigate the chances of a successful assassin dive.

C. Easy to Counter Gameplan

- Once Johnson acquires his ultimate, players with a developed sense of macro play can significantly diminish his impact. Any skilled player understands the importance of map awareness and keeps a watchful eye on battlefield developments through their map. It's crucial to recognize that when Johnson prepares to drive across the map, he unmistakably signals his presence to the entire enemy team, notifying them of his rotation. While Johnson may prove formidable against low-elo players, the story takes a different turn in high-elo matches, where experienced players effectively neutralize his game plan, relegating it to a low-elo strategy that can easily be countered by skilled opponents.

How to Improve Johnson?

While it is essential to acknowledge the challenges that have hindered Johnson's relevance and strength in the current meta, it is equally important to explore potential avenues for his improvement. By addressing these areas of concern and implementing most of these ideas, Johnson could potentially attain the coveted status of being a formidable force to be reckoned with in Mobile Legends.

A. More Active Effects on Abilities

- Johnson's current kit is notably simple, both in terms of ability descriptions and their active effects. This simplicity limits the versatility and adaptability of his role in a match. While simplicity isn't inherently bad, it doesn't serve Johnson's current standing in the meta, as it confines him to a singular game plan. The straightforward nature of his abilities also makes him susceptible to counterplay by skilled opponents, especially when a Johnson player is solely defined by how well they can drive around the map.
- However, what if Johnson enjoys more rewards for crashing into victims instead of reducing the amount of counterplay options available? The prospect of enhancing Johnson's role by increasing the rewards for crashing into opponents is worth exploring. One potential approach could be to introduce a paralyzed effect on the electric field that Johnson deploys when he collides with victims, briefly rooting enemies entering the crash area. Additionally, considering a change to the means of stunning enemy heroes with his Skill 1 could be beneficial. In essence, this would involve adding new active effects to Johnson's abilities that emphasize utility while simultaneously providing greater rewards for adhering to his game plan.

B. Make Abilities Synergize

- If we take a step back and look at Johnson's current kit, it becomes evident that the individual abilities within his skill set lack a cohesive synergy when compared to most heroes. His abilities, while functional in their own right, don't naturally complement each other. His ultimate where he transforms into a car and initiates effectively is a core feature of his kit, but everything else are only accessories to this game plan and not major steps that will help him reap more rewards from crashing into victims. This lack of synergy can hinder his overall effectiveness in fulfilling his role on the team. Possibly

changing Johnson's Skill 1 from him throwing a wrench into a medium-sized AoE DPS that he can activate during or outside his ultimate which allows him to shoot rockets to all enemies in the zone for a long duration of time. Regardless of the idea, the main takeaway is Johnson's skills need to synergize more with his ultimate.

C. Make him a Jungler

- Johnson's current kit may not be optimized for excelling as a Roamer according to today's standards. However, the idea of transitioning him into a Jungler could hold promise. With the exception of his ultimate, Johnson possesses a kit that heavily emphasizes damage, albeit with a somewhat selfish focus. His Skill 2 not only inflicts increased damage on its target but also deals bonus damage against Jungle creeps. Additionally, Johnson's ability to swiftly traverse the map and execute rapid ganks while carrying a high damage-dealing passenger makes him a formidable threat, catching unsuspecting opponents off guard.
- While he may not conform to the conventional role of a Retribution holder during teamfights for jungle objectives, Johnson has the alternative potential to continuously apply map pressure and keep the enemy team on edge by presenting the looming threat of surprise ganks from various angles. In essence, Johnson has the capacity to become a menacing, utility-oriented Jungler. The challenge for Moonton lies in implementing significant adjustments to Johnson's kit to align him more closely with the Jungler role, converting this potential into a reality rather than merely a theoretical possibility.

Conclusion

Johnson is often celebrated for his thrilling Ultimate that transforms him into a speeding car, allowing him to carry a teammate and engage in lightning-fast, map-wide initiations. However, despite the excitement he brings, his current kit presents several challenges. Johnson's abilities lack synergy, hindering his role as a Roamer and limiting his impact even before reaching Level 4. Furthermore, skilled players can easily counterplay his strategies by leveraging map awareness. While the revamp briefly brought him back to the meta, consecutive nerfs demanded by the playerbase at the time have left him in a weakened state. The controversy surrounding his power and his performance in standard play led to spirited debates, but ultimately, these adjustments have hampered his competitive viability. To enhance Johnson's role, the possibility of providing additional active effects and further synergy on his skills could

bring him back to the limelight. Alternatively, Johnson can become a Jungler instead with his current kit, but Moonton needs to push him further in this direction in order to make this a reality. What are your thoughts on this? Do you completely agree or disagree? Leave a comment down below on how you feel about all this.