# Intro

The Most Valuable Player award (MVP) is one of the most hotly debated awards in any sports league and the same holds true for the NA League Championship Series (LCS). During the 2021 Summer Split, unlike the 2021 LCS Spring Split where it was practically a two-way race between C9 Blaber and TL Alphari (with both of them combing to 92% of first place MVP votes), there are no clear-cut leaders leading the 2021 LCS Summer Split MVP race. It's a wide-open race and it's anyone's trophy to win.

# Intro

Before diving in, it's important to define the parameters for determining the MVP since different viewpoints can shift the MVP discussions. First, the MVP award is a regular season award, meaning results and performances in the playoffs are not factored in. The MVP can also be based on many different definitions such as who was the best player in the league, who was the most outstanding player, or who was the best player on the best team. For this MVP analysis, the MVP will be measured on how valuable that player is to their team. In order words, how difficult would it be to replace that player with an average player, and how much worse off the team would be. The following MVP candidates are ordered in alphabetical order. I can see all of these players getting an MVP vote, whether it’s a First, Second, or Third choice vote.

# Abbedagge

First up is Abbedagge, 100 Thieves' new acquisition for Summer 2021. Previously Abbedagge was in the LEC as part of Schalke 04, and while they had decent performances, they've never excelled. Since coming to 100T however, he has been a huge upgrade compared to the likes of Ryoma or Damonte as evident from their spring split record (11-7, 4th place finish) compared to their summer split (18-9, 2nd place finish). Individually, Abbedagge had the 2nd highest KDA of 4.5 among midlaners with more than 15 games. He also had the highest First Blood % rate with 31%, which is the percent of games where the player earned a First Blood participation (kill or assist).

Similarly, he had the Kill participation % (which measures the percentage of a team's kills in which a player earns a kill or assist) of 68%, good enough for 2nd among mid laners. Even with his high participation %'s around kills and assists and playing with his teammates, he posted really good laning numbers. To measure how well he was during the laning phase, we look at GXD10, which compares a player's gold and XP difference at 10 minutes to their opponents. Turns out, Abbedagge had the 3rd highest GXD10 among midlaners, so he was doing his part in generating leads in lane and helping his teammates get ahead.

# Closer

Next up is 100T's jungler, Closer. His 2021 Summer Split was arguably one of the strongest in his career. His KDA of 5.2 was the highest among junglers, and was the 3rd highest among all players. His kill share % (28.2%) was the 2nd highest among junglers, and was 6th among all players. Considering that the Summer 2021 jungle meta revolved around high damage high carry champions such as Diana, Rumble, and Xin, and that Closer has 2 of the top 5 highest kill counts in a game this split, his high kill share % shouldn’t be a surprise.

Despite the high kill count and kill participation numbers, Closer also did a great job at keeping up in CS, being one of the best farming junglers. In fact, he averaged 6.4 CS/PM which was the 2nd highest. With his high KS % and CS/PM, it’s expected that he would also have the highest EGPM (which is the average earned gold/minute and excludes starting gold and inherent gold generation) of all junglers.

# FBI

FBI rounds out the trio of MVP candidates on 100 Thieves. Not to be outdone by his teammates Abbedagge and Closer, FBI had a great split himself. He had a KDA of 4.6 which was the 2nd highest among ADCs, and the 3rd best first blood rate of 31%. His 39 GXD10 rating was best for 3rd as well, and he served as a reliable force for an exciting 100 Thieves team.   
  
Of course, an ADC's main role is to be a main source of damage and FBI did just that. His Damage Per Minute (DPM) of 534 was the 3rd highest among all active players, and his Damage Share % (DMG%) was also the 3rd highest among players. With his highlight plays and his amazing scorelines such as 8/2/15 on Vayne versus TL and 6/1/10 on Kaisa versus EG, it shouldn't be a surprise that his kill share % of 69.8% was also the 3rd highest among ADCs. Notice a theme forming? FBI was persistently one of the top ADCs across all statistical categories, and a simple eye test would tell you the same thing. He’s the solid anchor that 100 Thieves can rely on, proving that he’s always a force to be reckoned with.

# Fudge

If you had told someone at the start of 2021 that Fudge would be an MVP candidate, no one would believe you. His rookie campaign started off with a rocky Lock-In Tournament with many questioning C9’s decision to have the rookie top laner start. However, during 2021 MSI, he "clicked" and went arguably from being the weakest C9 member to the strongest, and performing stunning plays like his Lee Sin insec on GALA during the C9 vs RNG game.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9evbfcA0F1M&ab\_channel=Shorts-GankerLoL

His high-level performance carried over from MSI, ending the summer split with the 2nd highest KDA (5.5) among all players and the best KDA among top laners. His kill participation % of 63.1% and kill share % (24.7%) were also good for 3rd and 1st among top laners, respectively. Fudge has had a plethora of carry performances such as his 14/6/4 on Akali versus Flyquest and his 10/1/7 versus GG on Gwen, but what makes him a valuable player is his versatility.

Over the summer split, Fudge played 11 different champions with varying playstyles. If C9 wanted to play around a strong-side top, Fudge has been put on hard carry champs like Akali, Jayce, and Renekton. If C9 needed Fudge to play weak-side top, he's been relegated to beefier champs like Malphite, Gnar, and Tahm Kench. Which this isn't extremely solid reason to vote him MVP, the unparalleled versatility that Fudge provides gives C9 the flexibility surrounding their team composition to best match the opposing team.

One interesting statistic is Fudge's Counter-Pick % (CTR%), which represents the % of games in which the player/champion was picked after their corresponding lane opponent. Fudge had the lowest CTR% of all players at only 26%, meaning he was given a counter pick opportunity only 26% of the time, and opponents were able to counter Fudge nearly 75% of the time during pick/ban phase. Its these small intangibles which don't show up on the stat sheet but really show the importance and value that Fudge brings to C9.

# Impact

Staying in the top lane we have Impact, the most decorated player on this list with a few of his accolades being a 2013 World Championship, a 4x LCS Champion, 2x LCK Champion, and a 2x LCS All-Pro 1st Team selection. While not the up-and-comer like Fudge is, Impact remains one of the best top laners in the LCS, posting a 3.3 KDA (2nd among top laners) and having the 3rd best first blood rate of 30%.

Impact has been one of the best weak-side tops for the past few years, but in the past few splits he's really improved on his strong-side play and many times this split EG was able to play around him. This is shown clearly by EG's Rift Herald control rate (HLD%), which was highest in the league at 61% (the Rift Herald is located near the top lane, so a high HLD% would suggest the team tends to make more top map focused plays). His GXD10 (456) equally reflects this trend as he had the 2nd best GXD10 among all players, so he was exceptional at generating leads and transition those leads into the mid and lategame.

# Jiizuke

Moving towards the penultimate player on this list - Jiizuke. His summer split KDA was a 3.6, he had the highest DPM of 58 among midlaners, and also had the 2nd highest DMG % (25.8%). He was the best mid laner in the summer split posting the highest GXD10 of 271, and the 5th highest among all laners. For a second split in a row, Jiizuke has had the highest GXD10 among midlaners (271), but the way he amassed this lead was quite different from the spring split. The difference between his playstyles during the spring and summer split can be best seen when separating GXD10 into their separate components: GD10 and XPD10 (where GD10 is the average gold difference at 10 minutes and XPD10 is the average XP difference at 10 minutes).

During the spring split, Jiizuke’s playstyle was more lane orientated as his XPD10 (226) is much higher than his GD10 (126). When looking at his summer split, however, we see the complete turn; he actually had a negative XPD10 (-33) which having a massive GD10 (304), nearly double compared to 2nd place. This flip is the product of Jiizuke playing more of a roaming style, leaving his lane and amassing kills and assists on other areas of the map, and snowballing leads in other lanes. He’s transformed that aggressive spontaneity, which in the past has resulted into many boneheaded plays, into more of a controlled aggression that EG can capitalize and feed off of. Coupled with his numerous highlight reel plays, Jiizuke has all the boxes check for what makes him an MVP candidate.

# Spica

Rounding out the list, and shifting over to the jungle is Spica. After a disappointing Worlds 2020, TSM blew up their roster and decided to rebuild the roster, with the Spica as the lone remaining member from that square the focal point moving forward. Fast forward to the summer split and Spica is focal point on the team and everything TSM wants.

During the summer split, Spica had the 2nd highest KDA among junglers (4.5), and a lot of TSM's opportunities flowed through him. He had the 2nd highest first blood rate at 48%, showing extremely high pressure ganking during the early game which helped snowball laners like Huni. This helped open up possibilities for plays later on such as diving bot lane with a Huni TP, setting up for dragon fights, or allowing Huni to take the other top laner out of the game. Spica also had the highest kill share % (28.4%), going to show just how central he was to TSM's success.

He often carried and is illustrated by his DPM of 355 which was 4th highest among junglers. When compared to his lower-than-average CSPM of 6.0, it shows just how effective and efficiently Spica was able to output damage while not needing enormous amounts of resources to do so. Using Closer for comparison, Closer had less DPM (319), but had the 2nd highest CSPM (6.4), which goes to show just how well Spica was able maximize his advantages and carry TSM to many winning situations.

# Main -> Conclusion (So who’s the MVP?)

So, with all of the MVP hopefuls, who's winning it all? To be clear I believe all the players listed could and should receive an MVP vote, whether it'll be a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd choice. That being said, I'll start from my longshots: Impact and Fudge. I think Impact had an excellent split, and remains one of the best fundamental players in the league (think of him as LCS’s Tim Duncan). Because he's not a super flashy player, a lot of his accomplishments might fall under the radar and Impact will likely not get enough MVP votes to take home the prize. Fudge on the other hand had those highlight reel plays, but on a stacked team with Perkz, Blaber, and Zven, it'll be difficult to justify choosing him over other candidates on the list. (Edit: At the time of writing, Fudge was just rewarded the LCS Most Improved Player of the Year, so it's probably safe to rule him out for MVP).   
  
Next up are the contenders, both a part of 100T: Abbedagge and Closer. While there's merit for both of these players winning MVP, especially with Abbedagge and how after he arrived 100T looked like one of the best teams in the LCS, it's difficult to pinpoint who should get votes over the other. If there were in the MVP race during different splits, I could see either of them winning MVP. However, with them being on the same team, voters will have a hard time choosing between the two and votes will most likely end up splitting MVP votes.   
  
I believe one of the remaining 3 (FBI, Jiizuke, and Spica) will be the MVP for the summer split. Starting with FBI, it's the difficult decision to predict him to win because his other 2 teammates are also MVP candidates and you could attribute 100 Thieves’ success to the contributions of all three players and more of team play, rather than single one player out. With Jiizuke, although he also had an MVP candidate (Impact) on his team, he played a much more central role on EG. Without his performance this summer, I doubt EG would've made playoffs, and it's his turnaround that made EG look like one of the hottest teams in the league. As much as a focal point Jiizuke played on EG, Spica arguably played an even more pivotal role as part of TSM. Compared to the other players which had well balanced teams that could pick up slack for poor performances, Spica was the heart and soul of TSM. Without him, much of TSM's playmaking and carry potential is gone, and there's no doubt in my mind that TSM would not have been the team they were this summer. With that being said, I believe the MVP of the 2021 LCS Summer Split starts with Spica, followed by Jiizuke and then FBI.