

GLHF

GOOD LUCK — HAVE FUN

END OF
SUMMER
ISSUE

MLG & KESPA
TEAM UP

WHAT THIS MEANS
FOR THE FUTURE
OF ESPORTS



EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEWS
TSL POLT & HYUN

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LOOK GOOD.
PLAY BETTER.

DOMINATE
LADDER
ZERG AND TERRAN
MACRO STRATEGIES

ISS 2 VOL 1

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HEY LOOK! WE DID IT AGAIN!

Nearly 3 months and one hundred thousand views later, here we are: ready to release our second issue. Our ship, now somewhat more weathered yet still glowing from its fresh christening, continues to sail towards an uncertain horizon.

It appears, however, that the horizon is slowly clearing. From our initial poll on reddit, to the release of our first mock-up, to the development of our website and finally to the release of our first issue... I'm speechless. The community response has been absolutely staggering. We expected our first issue to make a splash but we had no idea that we would be embraced so wholeheartedly. It was truly a humbling and touching debut.

I can still remember how I felt the morning we made our big reddit announcement. Exhausted and bleary eyed from many sleepless nights, I closed my eyes and hit the submit button. I could hear my partners on the other end of the skype call, debating whether it would be a good idea to use their supply of novelty accounts to bump the post. I started to mash the F5 button with reckless abandon. I was hoping, praying, that we would be well received. Slowly, the comments began to trickle in. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, the dam burst—our post exploded. Thousands of hits on our website,

hundreds of comments, our inbox overflowing with emails and private messages—hot damn, we did it.

The next few weeks went by in a whirlwind of activity. We received applications from numerous writers, editors, and designers, all wanting to help make our vision a reality. Everything from that point on is a blur of skype messages and email conversations, all culminating to the GLHF team bringing you this issue. But unfortunately, not everything went perfectly.

Right from the get go, GLHF has been plagued with one hindrance after another, which, while somewhat annoying, is to be expected from a project such as this. What can't be excused so easily, however, is what we presented to the community on April 28th. What should ideally have been a flawless presentation was instead a compilation marred by typos, cut off paragraphs, and errors that should never have made it to publication. What we gave you was something good, but we wanted it to be something great - and we're getting there, slowly but surely we're getting there, but we have a long way to go yet.

Despite this, I think that this issue is a step in the right direction. We've tightened up our selection criteria, our editing process, and we've recruited some new designers who should really help take our magazine to the next level. We have learned a lot during the making of this issue, and most importantly we've recognized how much there is that we have yet to learn. As such, in the interest of putting out the best possible issue we can muster, we are going to take a small

pause before starting work on the next issue in order to further organize ourselves.

The thing is, in order to keep putting out the sort of top quality content that we strive for, we need your help. I think Evan put it brilliantly when he said "GLHF is a platform for the community to express itself". Because, at the end of the day, GLHF exists as a vassal of the community, with the sole purpose of serving the community. Keep sending us your amazing content, keep pointing out our errors, keep being the awesome community that you already are.

Frankly, your support thus far has been simultaneously exhilarating and overwhelming. I won't lie, I'm a bit scared. I'm scared that we'll let you down. I'm scared that we won't live up to your expectations. I'm scared that we will fade away into obscurity after the next issue. I think that the biggest thing that keeps us going is your support. Yes, there is a great need for more independent journalism in e-sports, and yes, that is our primary focus, but at the end of the day, we are nothing without the community - we are nothing without you. And for that, I don't think we can thank you enough.

So, signing off the first of hopefully many emotionally charged spiels, here's to GLHF, here's to the community, and here's to e-sports. Good Luck, Have Fun!

ALI VIRA
EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER

INTERVIEWS

- 44** TSL Polt and HyUN
TSL's Polt and Hyun give some insight into the life of an Ace.

- 56** Mary Ratliff
We get behind the scenes of "Good Game", a feature length StarCraft documentary.

- 50** Chatting with ChanmanV
This full time engineer's quest to fill a void in the StarCraft 2 community

- 52** Julia 'Ailuj' Childress
We talk to the first ever female to play on the main stage at an MLG event

COMMUNITY

- 12** Sport First, Game Second
An argument for the legitimacy of StarCraft 2 as a sport.

- 32** GLHF Player Spotlight
Meet DongRaeGu, the hero of MLG Anaheim in this issue's player spotlight.

- 35** Custom Game Spotlight:
MineralZ Evolution
Showing that playing custom games can help you succeed on the ladder as well.

- 26** The Case for MC
With so many new players coming into the scene, it's easy to forget one of our old favorites. Let us remind you why MC is someone worth cheering for.

- 34** CSL Summer Break
CSL teams flourish in the campus lifestyle, but what happens when the mothership mass recalls students home for the summer?

- 59** Message from a Female Gamer
StarCraft is truly anyone's game, that is, unless you're female.

STRATEGY

- 28** How Replays Make you a Better Gamer
We teach you how to effectively analyze your replays and take your play to the next level.

- 64** Zerg Macro Aggression
Macro is what makes the difference between an average all-in and an extremely potent timing attack.

- 62** MULE Economy
An in-depth analysis of the options a terran player has, and why dropping a mule may or may not always be the best option.

**032**

Park "DongRaeGu" Soo Ho
Player Spotlight

EXCLUSIVES

8 Phasing Foreigners out of the GSL

As the last holdouts crumble to the onslaught of Korean might, can any Foreigner take the throne for himself?

14 Creating a Healthier SC2 Community

A simple three-step plan to improve your life, your health, and your play.

16 The Next Great Rivalry

The next major rivalry between progamers might not be who you expect.

18 E Pluribus Starcraft: A United Starcraft World

Inside the infamous Kespa partnership with MLG, and what this means for the future of eSports.

59 Impressions of eSports from a No-Name

Elroy "NoName" Pinto gives us some insight into what it's like to manage an eSports team.

 thedz_ / Wellplayed.org 

018

Kespa partners up with Major League Gaming



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PHASING FOREIGNERS OUT OF THE GLOBAL STARCRAFT II LEAGUE

With the recent losses and demotions of famous foreigners Chris "Huk" Loranger and Greg "IdrA" Fields, fans of foreign Starcraft competitors have undoubtedly taken a hit.

Along with competitors' losses come placements in Code B, which is an understandably dissatisfying place for any pro-league player to be in. This trend in foreign players' performances has given rise to the frightening speculation that the GSL is perhaps destined to be exclusively conquered by Korean players.

With the whittling-down of GSL foreign contenders to Johan "NaNiwa" Lucchesi, Chia Cheng "Sen" Yang, and Stefan "MorroW" Andersson, comes the uprising of many unknown Korean players breaking through to Code A. Although struggling to make a name for themselves, these new Koreans' placements take hold of valuable rankings in Code A, which consequently edges out foreigners who are already well-known and respected by the Starcraft community. The foreign scene can only hope for a new player to rise through the ranks, or for a veteran player who's determined for gold. Otherwise, it seems that the speculation of an exclusively Korean GSL roster could become a reality.

Though, we have to ask, are our favorite EG players truly deserving of their new found Code B positions? Perhaps suffering an embarrassing 2-0 loss to Nam Joong "Avenge" Kim in the Code A round of 48 would undoubtedly make IdrA deserving of his new found Code B position, but IdrA is well known for his quality of play and understanding of the game. With a pair of losses such as these, IdrA's infamous 'nerd' nerves seem to have gotten the best of him. Not only did we lose IdrA in the Code A round of 48, but we also faced another disappointment—Huk took his series to a third game only to suffer a loss from what seemed to be an insufficient scouting pattern and an inability to hold off a (some would say cheesy) roach rush. Both players lost in a way that didn't really identify their play styles, so perhaps this time it was, more or less, their luck of the draw.

Luck or no luck, we are left with two of our top foreigners out of Code A. With only two remaining, our weighty hopes are left on the shoulders of Chia Cheng "Sen" Yang

Obtaining a victory in Code S for a foreigner is becoming almost just a dream, and it's a frightening thought to know that the Koreans may continue to hold every spot hostage.



and Stefan “MorroW” Andersson. They will be climbing an uphill battle against debuting Koreans such as IM_True, HoSeo_sculp, Prime_BBoongBBoong, TSL_Heart and ZeNEX_life, who have all somewhat snuck into the Code A scene with very strong play. Alongside these new players are also some intimidating veterans to the scene, with the likes of Losira, Virus, GanZi, and SuperNova. With names like these in Code A, it seems to reinforce the point that a position is becoming increasingly difficult for foreigners to obtain, which is happening faster than anyone could have predicted.¹ Not only is Code A becoming harder to maintain a position in, but with the new GSL format, staying in Code S is also harder than ever before. I’m sure Huk would have no problem attesting to that.

Obtaining a victory in Code S for a foreigner is becoming almost just a dream, and it's a frightening thought to know that the Koreans may continue to hold every spot hostage. Similarly, we are seeing fewer foreigners making the trip to train in Korea. Some would argue that, for the most part, Grandmasters are the same skill level on all servers, and in many ways this may be correct. However, the Korean Grandmasters ladder plays house to all of the top Koreans, and is the perfect practice for the coming GSL seasons.

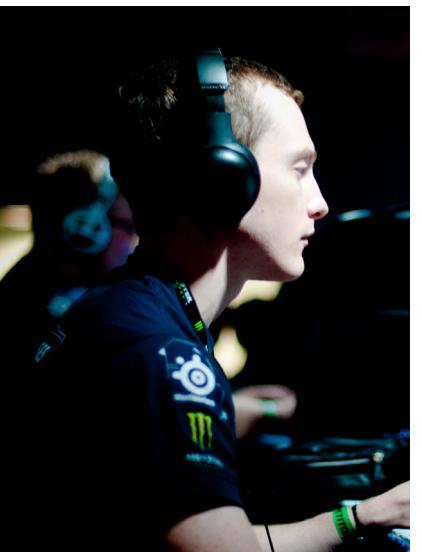
As an avid spectator of the pro-league, I would love to bring back the days when Jinro was able to make it to the semi finals, Huk had a strong grasp of his Code S position, and Code A seemed to be just an eighteen-hour flight away for most foreign pros. Alas, times are changing and the game is evolving, and with change comes the need for a stronger, faster, and more knowledgeable grasp over the metagame. So, what puts the foreign players at a disadvantage? Insight into the Korean ladder shows that the top diamond players from the North American server are perhaps better suited in Gold league. Even though Silver leaguers on the Korean server show a strong grasp of timings and decent macro, the Koreans are more competitive at every level in the game. And it's not only in Starcraft.

South Koreans have been living with a booming technological culture for the past

eight years. The days of Brood War were born there, and so were the foundations of modern e-sports culture. It isn't only the populace; the government has installed fiber optic lines throughout Seoul, South Korea's capital city. Seoul is the global capital of Starcraft as well. A walk through Toronto, Canada will show you that many Internet Cafés and other gaming docks exist, but they are rarely ever full. However, on a walk through Seoul, you will find a computer on every street corner for navigation and general help, along with many thriving Internet Cafés where students and adults alike go to play their favorite games. Seoul seems to be the current city of technological culture, and is on the forefront of the Starcraft e-sports scene.

So, you may start to understand why culture has a deep and direct impact on the foreigner-to-Korean pro-gamer ratio. A quick look into almost any other sport shows the same results when national participation is concerted. Hockey, for example, is deeply rooted in Canadian culture and it shows: close to 53% of players in the NHL are Canadian. To help put this in perspective, there are currently almost 850 players in the NHL. But in any way, this does not give proof of a future GSL completely void of foreigners. Instead, it gives the Koreans more of a “home field advantage.”

In conclusion, we are left with two hopeful questions: can our top foreigners contend at the level of today's best Koreans, or will new foreigners emerge to compete at such a high level? The current trend leads toward the answer being no to both, but with Sen and MorroW still competing in the GSL, a small flame of hope still lights the way for the foreigners, from the dark depths of Code A into the stardom and fame of the GSL champions. **GLHF**



thedz_ / Wellplayed.org



vsmak / WellPlayed.org

SPORT FIRST, GAME SECOND

Play is the only way the highest intelligence of humankind can unfold.— **Joseph Chilton Pearce**

I did not grow up, as some have, playing Blizzard Real Time Strategy games. Don't get me wrong, gaming has been a huge part of my life as far back as I can remember; I played RTS games from the tender age of 10, starting with Command and Conquer before moving on to Total Annihilation, KKND, and finally, my first true gaming love; Age of Empires: The Rise of Rome. I'm honestly not sure how I missed out on Blizzard's games, but in a way I'm thankful for it. Firstly I got to enjoy both StarCraft and WarCraft for the first time while "studying" at university, and secondly it left me with a blank slate with which to approach StarCraft 2 as more than a game I used to play as a kid, but as a legitimate sport.

Having had absolutely no interest in buying and playing StarCraft 2, I stumbled upon my first competitive game somewhat by mistake. Upon seeing an article on the front page of reddit, I stumbled into /r/starcraft, and clicked through a couple of links haphazardly — my inner gaming instincts rousing themselves in interest. After unknowingly finding myself on TeamLiquid, I happened upon a stream. I remember it remarkably well: a PvT on what I can only retrospectively guess was Metalopolis, and one of the competitors was an Empire Terran (Happy I think). It was mesmerizing. It was only a short game, but full of intense micro between marine marauder medivac and blink stalkers. The control both players used was mind-blowing compared to any previous experience I had of the RTS genre. And as I watched the first Stalker scrapping with a few marines, I knew that this was something more than just a game.

That was my introduction to e-sports. I have spent a lot of time watching regular sports, and the next step I took, after watching a considerable amount of StarCraft, was to compare this outlandish beast to the giants of the sporting world; to me StarCraft was clearly not just a computer game, but should it be considered a sport by the general public, and if not, why not?

All sports must adhere to the following criteria: a governing body, competition, physical activity, a set boundary or playing field, and a way to keep score. I'm not going to go through how StarCraft lines up with this list, as anyone can see most of it is easily ticked off by not only StarCraft but all e-sports. However the argument lies in the rather inconspicuous but all important aspect of physical activity. This is important only because the average sports fan believes it should be. I suppose this will always be the case, but I think what could very well be incredibly important for the mainstream acceptance of StarCraft is an understanding of the physicality that goes into playing computer games. We, as already converted fans, know how much work goes into improving manual dexterity, hand eye coordination and adroitness in everything about moving around a keyboard and mouse as efficiently as possible. Computer games don't require a gym membership and never will. What they do require is their own brand on physicality which, with the growing popularity of gaming, I believe will help swing the opinions of the masses around to seeing games not as e-sports, but as sports.

So far I have found StarCraft appears to correspond to most sporting stereotypes, and this combined with its already dedicated fanbase shows good promise for the future of competitive gaming. The big question is if given the choice between following a computer game or an athletic sport, why would someone with no gaming experience chose the former? Here lies the key to the potential popularity and acceptance as a mainstream or 'real' sport. And although this is only my personal opinion, I believe the key is what e-sports does differently than those already around. Watching StarCraft is so easy because the availability is almost constant: every

weekend there are several tournaments with major events held roughly every month, and many of these are free to view. On top of that there are daily tournaments, and you can even watch your favorite players practice. If there is nothing that takes your fancy at that particular time, there are countless VODs available for viewing as well. Being one of the few who came to e-sports primarily as a viewer and developed into a firm fan without any real playing experience, the sheer amount of content blew me away. The feeling of intimacy when watching Evil Genius's practice sessions or the absolute grandeur of the Iron Squid finals all available at the click of a finger. No sport played on a field can or will ever offer that kind of flexibility and ease of access.

Secondly, the newness of StarCraft is what keeps me watching. If you stick around for more than a few weeks you can see the 'meta game' changing. Different strategies coming to the foreground, which in turn leads to different counters being developed almost as quickly. This active evolution of the sport is something you don't see anywhere else. It's simple; everything else has been around too long. Sure there is innovation in every sport, but the monthly changes to StarCraft are huge. And that is exciting. Like really exciting.

I believe it would be really difficult to argue against StarCraft being a legitimate sport. We have the crowds, the financial backing, the skill, and the competitiveness that you see from every professional sport. All StarCraft needs is to be taken seriously, and any sports fan who doesn't become as addicted as I did upon giving StarCraft a chance is almost definitely a liar. **GLHF**

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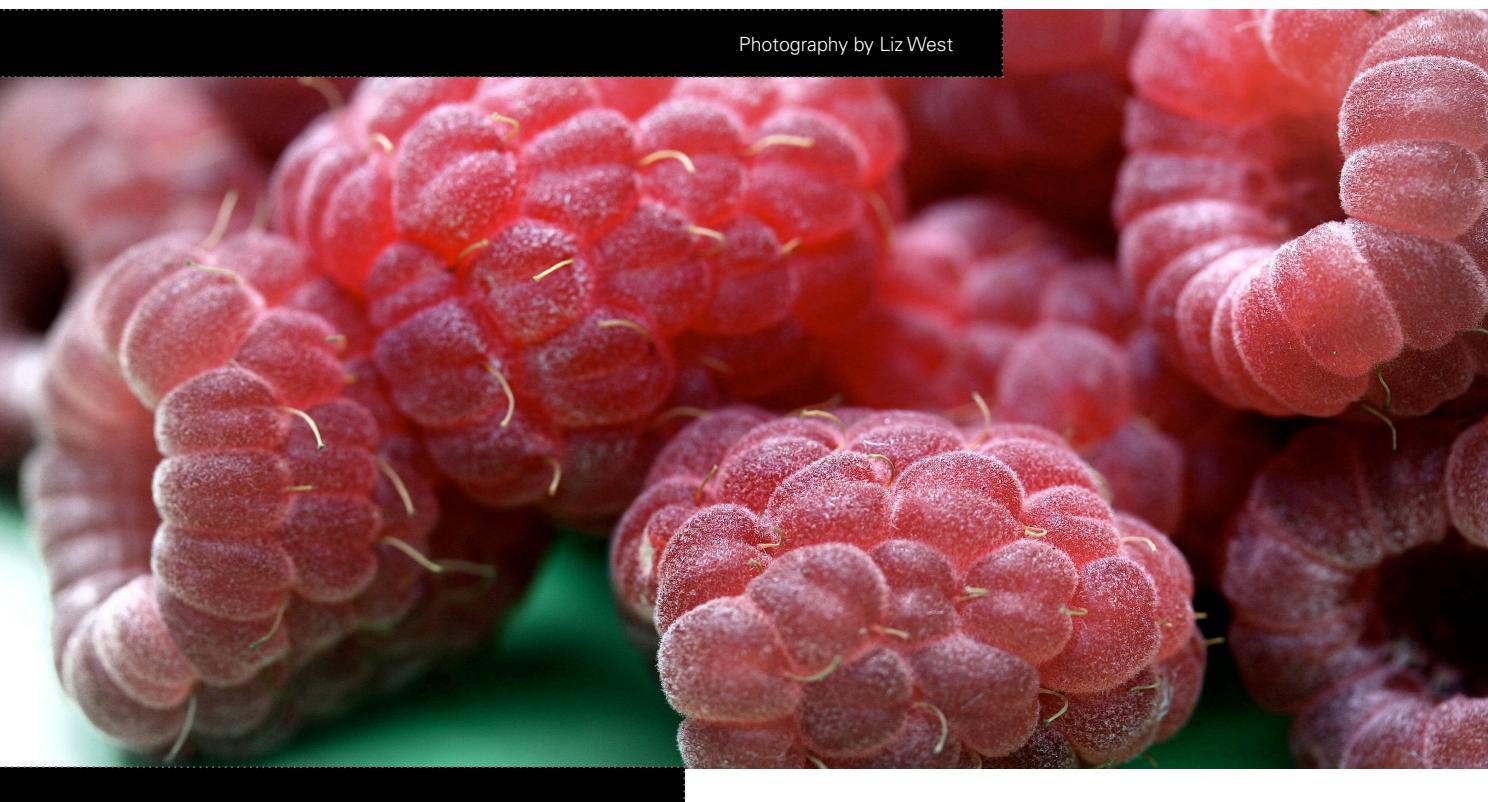


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CREATING A HEALTHIER STARCRAFT II COMMUNITY

As a gamer, the last thing you need is to feel tired because of low blood sugar.

Photography by Liz West



I WAS SHOCKED TODAY—when I watched four hours of the “Weight of the Nation” documentaries, which analyze the social, cultural and political causes of obesity. It was surprising to find that obesity has become a leading contributor to cancer, diabetes and many chronic illnesses—approximately 2/3 of the population in the United States is overweight or obese! Whether or not we fall into this percentile, we cannot deny the significance of the problem. Many will argue that obesity is an individual problem, that it is an individual’s responsibility to look after their own health. To an extent this is true, but at the same time communities can and should come together to offer support and motivation.

We’ve seen time and time again how a small number of individuals can make a big impact because they care and because they have confidence that they can make a difference. I’m enormously proud to be a member of the StarCraft 2 community, and while we may not be the largest or most influential community in the world, we do have some of the most intelligent and innovative minds the world has to offer. If we can inspire positive action within our own community,

I APPEAL TO MY FELLOW GAMERS: CONSIDER PERSONAL HEALTH AS A PRIORITY.

then we can inspire positive action elsewhere too. The most important behavior to change this epidemic is participation, which is why I urge each and every one of you to participate in the following three-step plan as a bare-minimum:

STEP 1: LIMIT SUGAR-FILLED BEVERAGES (0-2 DAILY) STAY AWAY!

It might seem like common sense—and perhaps it is! This is one of the simplest fixes out there: eat your calories rather than drink them. Some gamers consume their recommended daily calories in beverages alone! Energy drinks, pop/soda, and juice can contain 30-60 grams of sugar and can equate to 150-300 calories per bottle. These are empty calories that provide minimal nutrition and don’t even contribute to feelings of fullness or satisfaction.

As a gamer, the last thing you need is to feel tired because of low blood sugar. Drinking an energy drink or a can of coke may give you a noticeable burst of energy, but it’s not sustained energy. Sure, you might be focused and in the zone for a game or two, but when the sugar wears off, so too does the boost. Eliminate these swings in your energy levels by limiting the consumption of these unhealthy beverages.

STEP 2: TAKE A 15 MINUTE EXERCISE BREAK, BRING THE GYM TO YOU!

Yes, we all know that every doctor in the world recommends daily exercise and we all know that it’s crucial in maintaining overall health and wellbeing, but in a world of convenience and media, it’s easy to overlook the importance of exercise. Gamers are at an even greater risk of living a sedentary lifestyle, as we can spend hours and hours in front of the computer. But to fix this, we don’t all need to get gym memberships and start powerlifting.

In fact, the change we need might simply be keeping some lightweight dumbbells in reach. There are countless exercises you can do with only your own bodyweight and a couple weights, many of which can be performed from the chair at your desk! At the very least, take 15 minutes away from laddering to perform some form of exercise—even if it’s something very light such as a 15 minute walk or moving around some 5-pound weights. My personal preference is to do short 3-5 minute workouts after every game lost in SC2: a set of

pushups, a few overhead dumbbell presses, sit-ups, and a stretch. Not only does this small adjustment to my gaming ritual keep me fit and healthy, but it helps alleviate the stress of a particularly frustrating game. Besides, after losing three games in a row to a 6pool and doing a workout after each one, I’m motivated to learn how to damn well defend it!

STEP 3: EAT AT LEAST ONE FRUIT AND ONE VEGETABLE DAILY, EAT WHAT YOU ENJOY!

How many times have you heard the phrase “You are what you eat”? It’s a timeless truth: the foods you consume have a major impact on the way you feel, the way you think, and consequently, the way you game! Now if you’re training in SC2, the last thing you want to do is spend hours of practice time in the kitchen. This is why it’s so crucial for everyone to find easily accessible, nutrient-filled foods that they enjoy. It shouldn’t be a chore to eat healthy; I guarantee there’s something out there for everyone.

Increasing the numbers of fruits and vegetables you eat is a sure-fire way to improve overall health, but you don’t have to eat these foods plain. For example, here are a few small changes I’ve made to my diet: Mix peppers into tacos, fajitas, or omelettes. Have a small salad with sandwiches and burgers, and put berries or banana in cereal and yogurt. **GLHF**

**Adapted for GLHF from Tang’s Team Liquid post:
<http://www.teamliquid.net/blogs/viewblog.php?id=340952>**

THE NEXT GREAT RIVALRY

A great part of the beauty of StarCraft is the people involved. I don't just mean the pundits, writers, viewers or casters.

I mean the people at the centre of the nerd-maelstrom: the players. In the final moments of Dreamhack Winter 2012, I doubt any of us weren't moved by the sight of ThorZaiN's slim frame against the blackened foreground of cheering Swedes. It's moments like this which are truly gratifying—where the person comes through the game, and we can empathise with them unabashedly.

But it isn't always sweetness and light with players. Those moments of glory are countered by moments of frustration and anger. Tension between players is an accepted part of the sport. Sometimes it can be pointlessly disheartening, as in the case of Deezer's antics. Sometimes however, it can be exciting. When it came out that Cruncher would play IdrA in NASL Season 3, the community leapt on the opportunity to see an old rivalry in action. In Brood War the rivalry between Jaedong and Flash is both well-enjoyed and well-documented. More recently, DongRaeGu and MarineKing have taken the spotlight as arguably the two best players in the world, and meeting at four consecutive finals has proven it.

Right: Lee "MarineKing" Jung Hoon playing at MLG Anaheim 2012.

In March 2011, Silviu "NightEnD" Lazar of team Fnatic claimed he could be the best player in Europe. A frequenter of online tournaments, NightEnD has been a quiet player since that point (although I guarantee many will recall his casting at HomeStory Cup IV), but that's not to say he hasn't been around. As part of team Fnatic he has moved over to Korea to compete in the prestigious GSTL alongside players such as aLive and Moon. Last year he won the Dreamhack Balkan qualifier and was a semifinalist in Dreamhack Winter 2011, losing only to the mighty PuMa. Further-



Right: Lee "MarineKing" Jung Hoon playing at MLG Anaheim 2012.

DongRaeGu and MarineKing have taken the spotlight as arguably the two best players in the world, and meeting at four consecutive finals has proven it.

more his stream is becoming increasingly popular, with the Romanian Protoss pulling in over a thousand viewers on a regular basis. He's been hitting the Korean server hard, getting well up into the top 50 of Grandmaster league in the time he's been there. In the NASL this year he's been pulling out wins against players like Zenio, HayprO and Brat_OK. Even in the light of all that, there is a distinct feeling with NightEnD that he's only just getting started. He's shown himself to be confident, able and willing to get to start a journey to the top of the scene. So who is his rival—his Gary Oak? The Scar to his Mufasa? The PC to his Mac?

The answer, at least in my opinion, is Jens "Snute" Aasgaard. The 21-year-old Norwegian is, for me, the only other comparable player rising above the considerable battleground of new European talent at the moment. As a part of the Norwegian team GamersLeague, Snute has been tearing up online tournaments for some time now, taking out players like BlinG and viOlet. He was featured as TeamLiquid's one-to-watch for Zerg in 2012, but his greatest achievement so far is his victory in the ONOG i2. In this tournament Snute fought through not only Kas, TitaN, Sheth and Dignitas' Killer twice for the win, but also—in the round of 16—NightEnD. It is these games, above all the parallels that can be drawn between these two players, that make me want to see them play again.

For those of you who missed the series, it went something like this: In a best of three, the first map was Antiga Shipyard. The two players spawned, but before even a few minutes passed the game ended. NightEnD noticed that the gold bases were present and shouldn't have been. There was a slight tension in the air since Snute's gold-base banelling bust Vs FFE was famous in the European scene, and NightEnD didn't take issue with the gold bases until Snute took one of them, initiating his famous build—would NightEnD have played that version of Antiga if Snute hadn't been known for that strategy? The game went ahead on a second form of Antiga, and Snute took the win by exploiting a weakness in the Protoss wall-off. It is worth noting, for the sake of balance, that NightEnD was in the right where map selection was concerned, since the Antiga in the map pool was supposed to



Team Fnatic / fnatic.com

Above: Silviu "NightEnD" Lazar is a Protoss player from Romania player for Fnatic. He also played Warcraft 3 professionally.



Team Gamers League

Above: Jens "Snute" Aasgaard is a Norwegian Zerg player who is currently a member of Team GamersLeague who regularly reaches the finals of community 1v1 tournaments.

have no gold bases.

In any case, the second game of the series showed things getting even stranger. The map was Daybreak and, with no problems found, both players settled in for a long game. NightEnD opened with phoenix, but could not crack Snute and did not do enough damage to make the strategy cost-efficient. At the twelve minute mark, Snute was able to bust NightEnD's wall-off with roaches and zerglings. Following the attack, NightEnD, on two bases, had taken nearly forty probe kills and the supply stood at a difference of eighty in favour of Snute, who was on four bases. The game was for all intents and purposes over, the voice of TumbaSC even saying "...you've gotta expect an impending GG here."

But the game goes on past the thirty minute mark. Snute refuses to attack. He denies NightEnD's third again and again, but will not move in for the kill. The casters begin muttering something about a "history," that perhaps Snute is "showboating." It might just be my soft spot for drama (yes, I am a Redditor), but it seems to me that tension is rising. Eventually, when it looks like NightEnD might actually make a comeback, Snute ends the game with Broodlord-Infester. NightEnD, gracious in defeat, bows out with a "gg."

Since then the two players haven't met in any large tournaments, but the memory of this series remains. Both of them are on their way up in the scene now, and though it might just be that this was a momentary flash between two players who will soon fall off the scene, or won't rise any higher, it may not be. If both of these players match up to what they could be, what they believe they can be, we might just have another rivalry for the history books shaping up. Keep an ear to the ground folks. **GLHF**



STARCRAFT

E PLURIBUS

A UNITED STARCRAFT WORLD.

Our very own Jonathan Lee reports on the front lines of the MLG and Kespa Partnership. In this time of eSports turmoil, will one group come to reign supreme?

COMPETITION IS GOOD

It is the credo that all sports live by, but the e-sports industry embraces this adage more fervently than any traditional sport.

In e-sports, it's not just players and teams competing against one another, but also tournament organizers. In any given month, there are half a dozen tournaments going on and it's impossible for a competitor to attend every single one. There is no governing body, meaning none of these tournaments follow the same set of rules, regulations, and methods of operation. Sure, there are some unspoken guidelines and courtesies that all tournaments silently agree to follow, but there is no binding piece of legislation or authority to create accountability and to enforce it. There is a small StarCraft 2 players association in Korea but its focus is on ensuring its younger players pursue higher education and charity rather than negotiating contracts and forming a union.

E-sports is often chaotic, filled with drama, disputes, and controversies, but it seems people like it that way. If they don't like it, then they at least tolerate it or haven't considered the implications. There are both merits and shortcomings to things being completely privatized and decentralized, but this is the current e-sports world we live in and the world that both fans and players demand. Rivalry between teams, leagues, and sponsors should be upheld at all costs. E-sports is the Wild West, and even individual games like StarCraft have yet to be unified under a single banner in the foreigner scene. KeSPA's monopoly in Korea is what every western tournament secretly dreams to achieve but can never publically voice for fear of public backlash.

So when MLG and KeSPA announced an exclusive multi-year partnership this past May, it was no surprise that responses from both fans and players were chilly. There were a good number who welcomed the partnership because it finally meant that KeSPA pros would finally be competing in foreign events eventually transitioning into StarCraft 2, but for most people, the knife that cut deepest was that dreaded word exclusive. It was a big step towards the aspiration of every StarCraft tournament and the fear of the average consumer: a single, monolithic league that governs and controls every StarCraft player, team, and event.

In the aftermath of MLG Anaheim's KeSPA Invitational, much of the negative press that KeSPA and MLG received faded away after the dazzling debuts of the KeSPA Eight. Their performance led much to be desired but they're still new to the game and what mattered was that their celebrity status transitioned easily over to

ANY OTHER IMPLICATIONS THIS CONTRACT HOLDS REMAIN NEBULOUS AT BEST AND COMPLETELY HIDDEN AT WORST.

foreigner fans, many of whom have never viewed a full KeSPA game in their lives. Now that the high of the event has passed and Sundance has elaborated further on what the exclusive partnership actually entails, the issue of a single, dominant league is back on the table.

It turns out that at least one fear is validated. According to this contract, any other tournament that wants to request KeSPA players must first get the approval of Major League Gaming. Any other implications this contract holds remain nebulous at best and completely hidden at worst. However, this is also something that

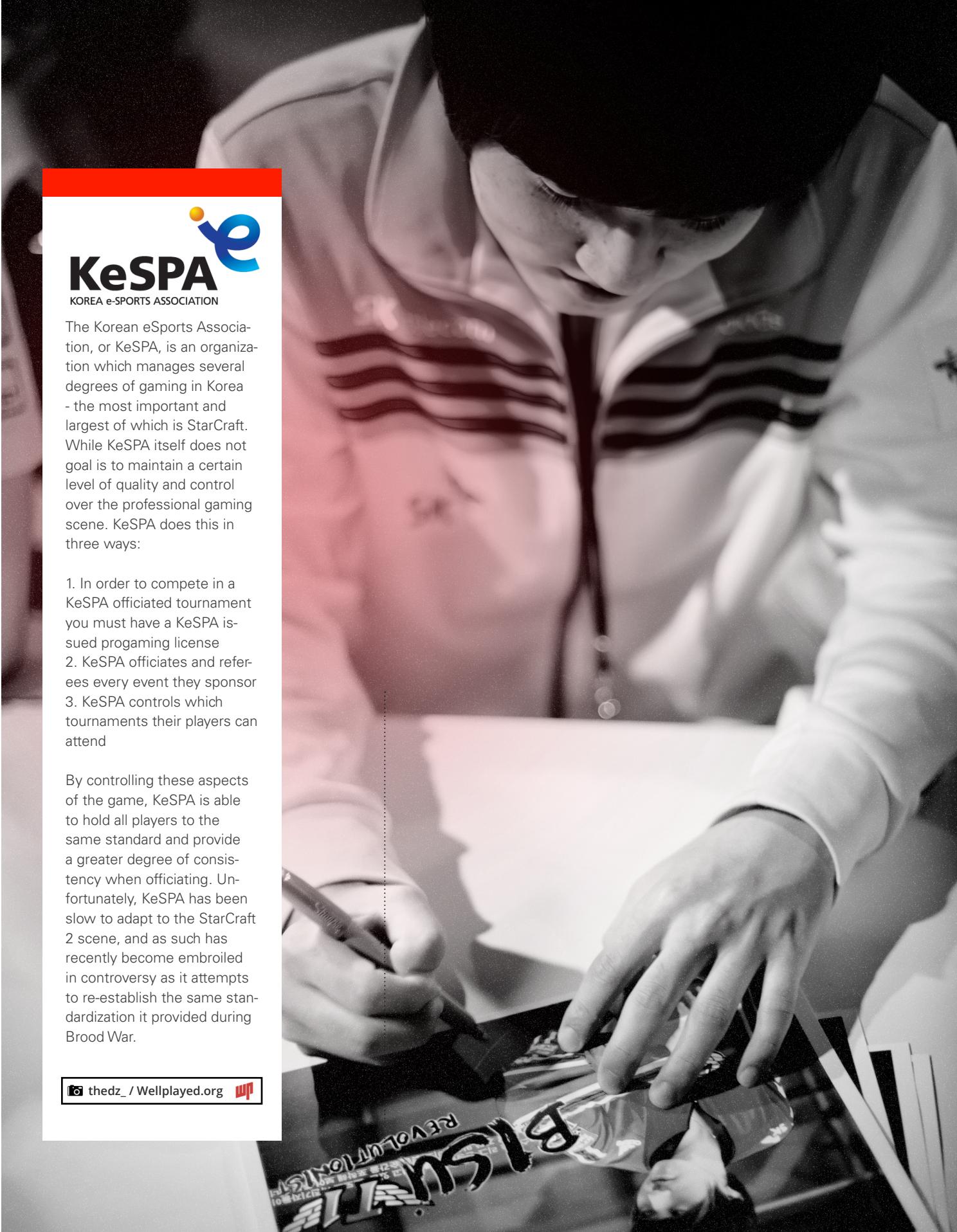


The Korean eSports Association, or KeSPA, is an organization which manages several degrees of gaming in Korea - the most important and largest of which is StarCraft. While KeSPA itself does not goal is to maintain a certain level of quality and control over the professional gaming scene. KeSPA does this in three ways:

1. In order to compete in a KeSPA officiated tournament you must have a KeSPA issued progaming license
2. KeSPA officiates and referees every event they sponsor
3. KeSPA controls which tournaments their players can attend

By controlling these aspects of the game, KeSPA is able to hold all players to the same standard and provide a greater degree of consistency when officiating. Unfortunately, KeSPA has been slow to adapt to the StarCraft 2 scene, and as such has recently become embroiled in controversy as it attempts to re-establish the same standardization it provided during Brood War.

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should come as no surprise to us. Whether all of e-sports will swear fealty to a single organization is unknown, but it's obvious that all of StarCraft will be ruled by one company that comes out on top, whether it's through conquering or good will. But let me pose to you a contrarian view: Why is this a bad thing?

Assimilation can certainly happen in better ways, but when you have a consumer base that demands constant competition in a market that's still relatively small, power moves are going to be the norm. A single corporation format is inevitable. StarCraft fans can't have their cake and eat it too. You demand tournaments to do their best at one-upping each other and not try to enforce their dominance by using exclusivity contracts. In a recent ESFI interview, Sundance said that when investors are looking at e-sports organizations, they're not comparing the organizers to one another. They're comparing them as a whole to franchises like the UFC and the NFL. If you want a strong, marketable scene, then you need a single, recognizable brand.

It's the natural progression of any major sport. The NFL absorbed the American Football League in 1970. The Basketball Association of America and National Basketball League merged in 1949 to create the National Basketball Association. Association football (or soccer) remains diverse in its league offerings simply

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IF YOU WANT EXPOSURE AND HOUSEHOLD RECOGNITION, THIS IS THE PRICE. IT'S UNREALISTIC TO BELIEVE A FRACTURED STARCRAFT SCENE CAN STILL HAVE A GLOBAL OR EVEN NATIONAL REACH.

because of its massive popularity but all leagues still answer to the ultimate authority of FIFA which was established in 1904. If you want exposure and household recognition, this is the price. It's unrealistic to believe a fractured StarCraft scene can still have a global or even national reach.

So if the question of monopolization is a matter of when rather than if, how do we come to terms with it? Actually, many of the cases people make against centralization would be solved through centralization. For example, player's rights. What will keep a single, dominant tournament organization from abusing and stomping all over players? Well, the fact that it's a giant, dominant tournament organization in the first place. An organization that large must have a constitution of sorts regarding rules, regulations, stipulations, and yes, player's rights. The natural development that would follow this is a players association, a real players association, that lobbies for the interests of competitors. It means that if the conditions are deemed too stringent or exploitative, players can organize themselves and go on strike.

And what of the quality of the tournament? Wouldn't a sole, premier league for

the western StarCraft world become complacent? Not if the fans won't stand for it. Think about it. Without fans, basketball would just be ten guys shuffling around a court. Without fans, StarCraft would just be two guys playing a computer game. The reason why any of this is possible is because fans are the beginning and end of any competitive sports industry. Your money is what pays for the salaries, the venues, and the cameras. It's how people who don't even play StarCraft competitively can sustain a living through discussing or promoting it. Leagues like the NFL, NBA, and MLB are all acutely aware of this. Whatever giant that inherits the western domain of the StarCraft empire will be aware of it too, as long as the fans reward innovation.

Most people would claim that MLG is the favorite to inherit this mantle but consider the sleeping giant, CBSi. It's no secret that CBSi has direct ad inventory partnerships with MLG, NASL, TwitchTV, and Own3d. Each of those companies brings a different asset to the table. MLG brand name carries a long history of legitimacy and respect while TwitchTV is a much more open outlet that brings in more unique views than what MLG can muster. CBSi also owns



Major League Gaming, or MLG, was founded by Sundance DiGiovanni and Mike Sepso in 2002. With its headquarters in New York City, MLG is a North American professional competitive video gaming organization. Often holding large video game tournaments throughout North America, the company has more recently become involved in broadcasting events to a television audience.

MLG aims to elevate and legitimize video games as mainstream competitive spectator events. MLG initially focused on FPS (First Person Shooter games) and fighting games. With the eventual adoption of StarCraft 2 and League of Legends around 2010, MLG has since expanded its focus to include RTS (Real Time Strategy games) and MOBA (Multiplayer Online Battle Arena games).

On April 17, 2012, MLG announced a partnership agreement with CBS Interactive. As a result, CBS Interactive is now the exclusive online broadcaster for MLG's Pro Circuit competitions.

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Maintaining tournament independence is a doomed cause when you want legitimacy, standardization, stability, and exposure.

GameSpot, Giant Bomb, and GameFAQs among some other non-gaming holdings, it's in a good position to control the StarCraft circuit if it decided to and is patient enough.

It would be a profound stroke of irony if Sundance's dream of seeing e-sports unified under one governing authority was fulfilled by a rival competitor. The rumor, though unsubstantiated, is that MLG is bleeding out after their massive staff layoffs last December. Switching from their pay-per-view model to freemium may be an indication of this. Dreamhack seems to be faring better with back-to-back world-record setting unique viewers from DHW11 to DHS12, but they also lost roughly 5,000 live audience members while offering a 1,765,000 SEK total prize pool, 7,000 more than DHW11's prize pool.

Maintaining tournament independence is a doomed cause when you want legitimacy, standardization, stability, and exposure. I'm sure these are things that virtually everyone in the StarCraft scene wants more than the chaotic offerings we have now. It's a young industry, but one that has to come to terms with an environment that fosters fierce competition, which in turn will reward tactics like exclusivity contracts, because controlling the players is the ultimate trump card that will gain the allegiance of fans. That means a march towards a single league. Regardless of pros and cons, the outcome is audience. Eventually, people will simply not care. The English Premier League and La Liga essentially hold exclusivity contracts on players simply because the teams themselves are beholden to one league or the other despite both being under FIFA's jurisdiction, but no one is up in arms about it. Ultimately, it's not that big of a deal.

The real concern is how will we as fans prepare for and mold this inevitable future? What sort of conditions and protocol should we demand and expect from this

monolithic StarCraft organization that is yet to come? When will StarCraft players band together for a common purpose to ensure that they are not being exploited in their contracts? There is very little in place to cement accountability because there is not a single constitution that everyone goes by.

Though from many we will become one, and we must accept that e-sports will eventually become a monarchy rather than a democracy, we must also be sure to only give our consent to those who would become benevolent kings.

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THE CASE FOR MC

Apart from the occasional flaming pitchfork imbued witch-hunt, there is very little prejudice in the StarCraft 2 community. Indeed, despite a consistently present faction looking to prove otherwise, I like to think we're very mature. Take, for example, Scarlett's famous run at IPL4. I feel proud whenever I think about how the community roused itself in support of the talented, transgendered player who overcame top pros and gender roles. Another obvious example is the lack of animosity between foreigners and Koreans—despite the fact that Koreans continue to dominate most notable tournaments (and less notable tournaments, for that matter!), there is little ill-will between countries.

Now that's not to say that spectators are totally without preference. As a Brit, I find myself hoping that DeMusliM or Bling can really turn it up to eleven in 2012 and pull out some amazing wins. Even stronger is the quiet excitement I feel every day (fanboy that I undoubtedly am) when I wake up and realise a certain French Zerg player might be competing in GSL Code S some day. Similarly, many of us are seduced by the cult of the underdog—the people hoping EG's IdrA won't get back on form are increasingly few and far between.

Overall, however, I think that every player has a fairly equal chance of receiving community support regardless of their situation outside the game. For the sake of posterity I'd like to say that it should stay that way and I'm here to propose that your player to watch for the rest of this year and beyond—with all the love and adoration you can give—shouldn't be the titan Stephano, the up-and-comers BlinG and DeMusliM or the aged Gracken, the underdog, IdrA. It should be Min Chul Jang, or MC to you chobos.

Few players in StarCraft 2 can boast a record as consistently phenomenal as MC. Since the game was released in July 2010, the BossToss has been tearing up the greatest

players out there. Now a household name for Protoss, MC is known for the pinpoint precision of his two-base plays and memorable ceremonies. He is a DreamHack champion, an IEM champion, a GSL champion. When MC isn't winning, he's generally coming second (read: MLG Orlando, NASL Season 1, IEM Cologne). And to top it all, he's one of the most accomplished Code S players in the history of the GSL.

Now I know what you're thinking: "This is all very well, and certainly makes him a player of note, but it doesn't really separate him from the rest of the very top-level players, does it?" I can't deny that there are players out who boast impressive records: NesTea and MVP both have more GSL wins. Furthermore, it's not as though MC is unbeatable. HuK has taken him out twice in big tournaments, and just recently he lost to Stephano and Symbol in the MLG Spring Arena 2.

So what sets MC above these other players? Well one thing is his personality. Naturally game skill comes first, but in some special situations a player's personality can influence our reasons for supporting them. HuK's heart-shaped rally points and MarineKing's Reddit shirt are prime examples of players entertaining viewers, but there doesn't even need to be such an active attempt on the part of the player. TLO and Sheth are known for their positivity and good manners. Even without the added factor of their awesome play or the cool things they do to interact with the community, these players have huge fan followings simply because of the way they are.

MC embodies all the likable traits and eccentricity you could ask for in your fellow nerd, and colors it in a way no other player does. He is, alongside MKP and DRG, among the few Koreans who have taken the language barrier, which has been so problematic in building relationships between Korean players and foreign fans, and thrown

it right out of the window in a way the other great figures of the Korean scene like NesTea never have (notwithstanding the support NesTea has received from Tastosis!).

Recall, if you will, the grace of MC's 'Sex on the Beach' dance in Homestory Cup IV. Perhaps the "I Kill You" of his series versus HuK at MLG Columbus was more flamboyant. Even more recently, Reddit went wild for his "I will ***** kill zergs!!..." tweet at MLG Spring Arena 2. He's a man not afraid to be loud and proud and announce his presence. He has shown again and again that he doesn't take himself too seriously. The baneling hat of IPL4 and the Murloc suit show us that. The man reels and crackles like a catherine wheel from one event to the next, crushing nerds and righting wrongs wherever he goes. He has even fought crime!

The nature of MC is becoming apparent now, is it not my fellow nerds? What we have in MC is what experts here at GLHF call a "scientifically perfect nerd-baller." MC has a vibrant personality and isn't afraid to show his colours. To top that, he's one of the biggest nerd-crushers we've had the privilege to stay well out of the way of in recent years: a player who stands among the players with the highest total tournament winnings in StarCraft II. Sure, he hasn't won as many GSL's as NesTea or MVP, and perhaps he hasn't always seemed the most mature person out there, but in a community so eager to take itself seriously and professionally, he's a welcome blast of irreverent eccentricity. Someone to follow. A role model.

So when you're watching the next big tournament and the crowd begins to chant, "MC! MC!"; I hope that you'll add your own voices to the thundering chorus. I know I will. **GLHF**

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IF YOU CAN'T EFFECTIVELY IDENTIFY YOUR MISTAKES, YOU WILL NEVER CORRECT THEM. STUDYING AND ANALYZING REPLAYS IS ONE OF THE TOOLS THAT SEPARATES GOOD PLAYERS FROM GREAT PLAYERS

BY JOHNATHAN BALDWIN

HOW YOUR REPLAYS CAN MAKE YOU A BETTER GAMER

One of the biggest mistakes people make when trying to climb the ranks of Starcraft 2 is mindlessly grinding games.

While this style of practice will improve your mechanics, it will not improve your understanding of the game. The best StarCraft 2 players tend to not only grind out many ladder matches at a time, but also look back and reflect on their games. It is pointless to continually lose to certain builds or play styles if you're not learning what you need to work on. If you can't effectively identify your mistakes, you will never correct them. Studying and analyzing replays is one of the tools that separates good players from great players, which is why in this article I'll be discussing the importance of replay analysis.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT REPLAY

Another mistake people often make is trying to analyze the wrong type of replay. Whenever I'm doing a big run on ladder, I make a note to save the replay of any game over 20 minutes, any game I didn't completely understand while I was playing it, and any game that I felt was very close. My reason for this is because these are the types of games that will give you the best information on what you need to improve on. Even though some games are frustrating to play, and it seems like nothing can be learned from that cheater who only won because of a stroke of luck, those are the replays that can sometimes be the most beneficial.

WATCHING THE REPLAY

When I have an appropriate replay selected, the first thing I like to do is watch it through completely from my point of view at x4 speed. During this run-through I'm looking for the fundamental, major advances in the game such as expansion times, significant tech-choices and game-changing battles. I try to understand the impact these events have had on the game, and think of anything I could have done differently for better results. I start keeping a mental checklist of things to keep in mind during the game. For some people, writing these things down and going over them before a ladder session can be very helpful.

After my initial run through, I like to observe the game from my opponent's point of view. Understanding your opponent's decisions can be just as important as understanding yours, and watching through his gameplay will help you learn how to identify a build or a playstyle early in the game. Paying attention to his build will teach you the strong and weak points in the build, so that when you play it in the future you can choose the correct times to play safe or to be aggressive. Watching him play will also show you how opponents will react to your build, which is valuable information when planning your next move.

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This is that you want to do. Two rows of harvesters provides the most efficient mineral mining.



This is that you want to avoid. Any more than two rows of harvesters leads to inefficiency, as harvesters search around for a spot.

Another important thing to do when running through a replay is to observe the resources tab. One of the most common mistakes players make is floating a high amount of minerals or gas, and not spending it quickly. If you watch your replays and notice this is a trend in your play, remember during a game that if you're floating more than 400 minerals for more than a minute it's a good time to place an additional hatchery, command center, or nexus. If you've just expanded and you're still floating minerals, throw down more unit producing facilities (macro hatcheries, gateways, barracks, etc). These minerals are doing nothing for you being stockpiled. Even if you don't need these structures until a few minutes it is better to build them now, so that when you need them you have them immediately.

Maintaining correct harvester saturation is also an essential skill when trying to improve. When watching through a replay I check every few minutes for my worker saturation to see if it's appropriate. Optimal saturation is having 2 harvesters on each mineral patch and 3 on each gas for a total of 22 harvesters per base. An easy way to check for this is highlighting how many workers you have mining minerals at a certain base. Optimally you will have exactly two rows of workers on minerals. This is important information to know so you can keep your worker count at the appropriate level for each of your bases. It is counter-productive to have 40 workers mining at one base and 4 mining at another. Understanding how to maintain an efficient economy will improve your game significantly.

Another tool I use when watching replays is to stop playback and just look around the map. Whenever I'm watching a replay, I might pause it 3-4 times every 10 minutes and just take note of the current state of the game. I'll compare how far ahead/behind I am to how far ahead/behind I thought I was in the game, and see how accurate I was. I'll think of any weak points in his play, such as an unguarded expansion that I could of harassed. I'll look for any weaknesses in my own play, like that I haven't scouted him awhile and I'm playing in the dark, or maybe his army is a counter to mine and I need to

Maintaining correct harvester saturation is also an essential skill when trying to improve. When watching through a replay I check every few minutes for my worker saturation to see if it's appropriate.

get a better composition out. I write all of these things down, because these are the things that are important to remember during actual play time.

USE YOUR FRIENDS!

There will be times when no matter how much you analyze a replay, you won't completely understand it. These are the times where I like to ask my friends or practice partners for advice. Using websites like drop.sc and SC2Replayed.com, you can send your friends replays for them to critique and offer advice. Sometimes the best help will come from someone who wasn't involved in the game at all, who can step back and see the game with an impartial eye.

IN CONCLUSION

StarCraft 2 is a very deep game that is just as much intellectual as it is mechanical. Taking a break from playing and spending time analyzing your replays will improve your intellectual understanding of the game. So the next time you feel as if you've hit a wall with your gameplay, give your fingers a break, load up a replay and learn. **GLHF**

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DONG RAE GU



Park “DongRaeGu” Soo Ho, is a professional StarCraft 2 Zerg player from South Korea. Currently a member of team MVP, he received recognition in the first half of 2011 and was credited with being the first player to reach 4,000 ladder points on the Korean server. Described as one of the best Zerg players in the world, DongRaeGu (DRG) won IEM New York, placed third at MLG Providence 2011, and was runner-up at Blizzard Cup.

Despite a series of disappointing performances in the Korean league, in early 2012 DRG won GSL Season 1. This victory in addition to his two second place finishes at the MLG Winter Arena and Championship further solidified his status at the best Zerg player in the world.

Though still recovering from a downturn in his performance, DRG is currently ranked among the top ten pro gamers who have earned the most prize money, with more than \$165,000 to his name.



CSL SUMMER BREAK

The Collegiate StarLeague (CSL) is the premier *StarCraft 2* organization at the university level. This season it brought together more than 140 teams from universities across North America. Each team had a unique way of operating but they all hinged on one aspect: the college experience. Some teams hounded top recruits and held weekly practices. Others allowed a more social and organic structure to command. But all gathered beneath the banner of their respective alma maters and competed for glory this last season.

CSL teams flourish in the campus lifestyle because teams can practice in the computer lab, theorycraft in the dorm, and break down build orders at the bar. But what happens to teams when the mothership mass recalls students home for the summer?

"It's been a tough question for us since we've started," said Kevin Zhou, coordinator for the CSL team at New York University. "Last year, when we had our first summer break, a lot of people decided to stop playing."

Zhou is a senior economics major at NYU. He said the CSL focused his team members and incentivized improvement in SC2 play. They held dedicated practices each Friday in a space they had set up especially for the team.

"Officially practices were four hours long, but we would usually stay longer," Zhou said. The team would often eat dinner together after practice but now he is worried his team will not improve during the summer. "Without the CSL there, people kind of lose interest because they don't have something to play for," Zhou said. His team is mostly spread out across the country and it's difficult to meet in person during the summer. Last year, the NYU team held in-house tournaments at the end of summer to try to determine its lineup. Zhou said the

turnout for the tournaments was surprising and this summer he wants to hold tournaments more frequently in order to keep interest piqued.

Neil Shah is a senior Computer Sciences major at North Carolina State University and is the team coordinator for its CSL team. He said his team doesn't hold set meetings or practice sessions. The team mostly relies on in-house games and tournaments and its Facebook page to stay connected. Shah is not worried about the summer itself affecting his team's dynamic. There are some alternatives to practicing that have been distracting his teammates and could become problems during the summer.

"For some time, my entire friends list was people playing *Diablo 3*," Shah said. Fortunately, he said his teammates are slowly beginning to return to *StarCraft 2*.

Many graduating seniors recently ended their final season with their CSL teams. Faith Villanueva was the coordinator for Duke University's team and recently graduated with a double major in chemistry and biology. She was selected by the previous coordinator and fulfilled a mainly administrative role. While she didn't play for the team, Villanueva said her managerial position allowed her to see a positive side of the community that was both encouraging and accommodating.

"This is a community that is very positive," Villanueva said, "Bad mannerisms are kept to a minimum, which is really helpful. A lot of players are just in it for the fun of it—they don't take it too seriously." She



said her team is nearly set for next year, and her successor has been narrowed to two returning members of the team. The team doesn't need to recruit very much because the SC2 community at Duke is easy to find. "Duke is actually a small place," Villanueva said, "There's not that many undergrads. So, to know the SC2 community and to get yourself known is easy to do." People often sign up for the CSL team without ever meeting her in person. Villanueva is currently applying to medical schools and will follow her old team closely next season.

As the class of 2012 departs the CSL, the class of 2016 stands poised to enter. Thomas Byun is a senior at Montgomery Blair high school in Maryland. His team made it to the finals in the first High School StarLeague season.

"There's definitely a lot of talent in HSL," Byun said, "There are a lot of grandmasters and high masters players." Next year, Byun said he plans to attend the University of Pittsburgh. He said he researched its team and hopes to play for them in the future and for a few reunions. "One of my friends on my HSL team said he plans to join his CSL team, and I look forward to playing with him," Byun said, "Well, playing against him... but it will still be fun."

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CUSTOM GAME SPOTLIGHT

**MINERALZ
EVOLUTION**

Mineralz Evolution is a tower-defense style game where players create a jointly defended base and defending it from waves of periodically spawned monsters. Each player has their own role within the base, and is responsible for upgrading their respective buildings to aid the team.



HOW TO PLAY

MineralZ—a game I recently started playing on the advice of my cousin—is some of the best fun I've had in a custom game in a long time. MineralZ is a game about macro, and can really help you learn the fundamentals of managing your resources.

There are 10 buildings that players create using the various mineral types: Crystals, Shrines, Obelisks, Cannons, Robos, Generators, Healers, Time Warper, Refineries, and Base. Walls can be formed with Crystals, Obelisks, or Shrines. Crystals are basic walls, but due to their lack of durability they are not commonly used. Shrines are arguably the best building to use for walls, while Obelisks double as short-range cannons with a wide splash radius. Cannons are fairly basic, but have the longest range, while Robos are cannons that do double the amount of damage versus bosses. Generators are necessary to power your cannons and healers. The Healers repair buildings and, more importantly, keep your walls alive. Time Warperts are support structures that will improve the fire rate of all nearby cannons, but do not affect healers. Then there are the Refineries and Base structures, used to gather resources to fuel your economy, and to upgrade your other buildings.

Before the game starts, the lobby host selects the difficulty. This determines enemy strength, whether or not there is a final boss, and how the mining upgrades work. Once the game begins everyone gets to build with their probe. You unlock abilities, perks, avatars, and colors through levels and achievement points. These abilities do give higher level players a considerable advantage, ultimately amounting to 2 mining speed upgrades and a super mule. During the early stages of

FIVE TYPES OF MINERALZ:

- Crystals** – for walls
- Vespene** – for mining upgrades and support structures
- Plasma** – for cannons
- Ruby** – for generators
- Topaz** – currently unimplemented; for versus mode

GAMETYPE SHORTHAND

- Red** – ruby
- Purple** or “**plas**” – plasma
- Green** or “**gas**” – vespene
- Blue** or “**min**” – crystals
- T** – tier
- N** – night
- Mining speed** – turbine upgrade
- Mining amount** – piercing spark (Easy mode), reactors

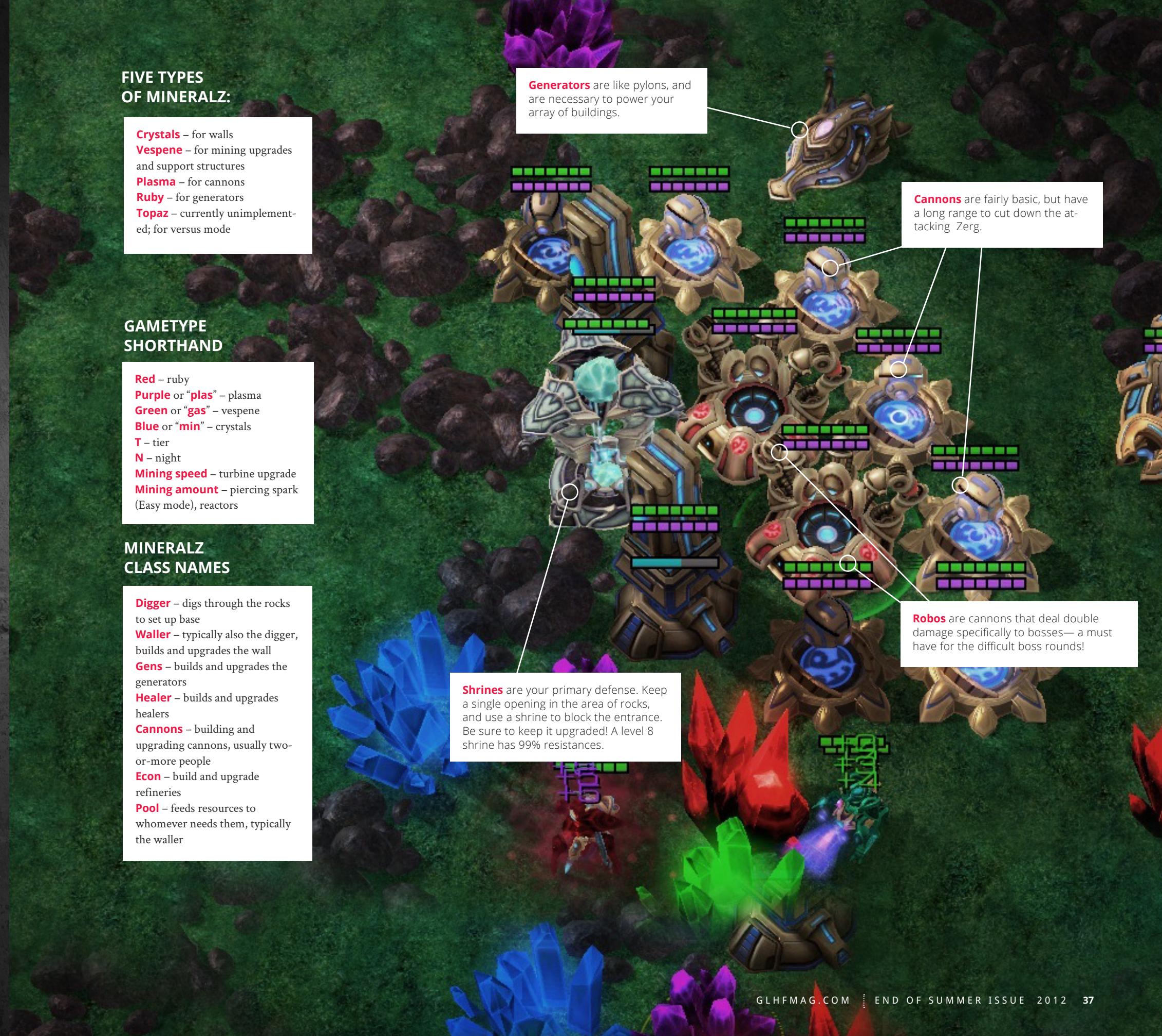
MINERALZ CLASS NAMES

- Digger** – digs through the rocks to set up base
- Waller** – typically also the digger, builds and upgrades the wall
- Gens** – builds and upgrades the generators
- Healer** – builds and upgrades healers
- Cannons** – building and upgrading cannons, usually two-or-more people
- Econ** – build and upgrade refineries
- Pool** – feeds resources to whomever needs them, typically the waller

Generators are like pylons, and are necessary to power your array of buildings.

Cannons are fairly basic, but have a long range to cut down the attacking Zerg.

Robos are cannons that deal double damage specifically to bosses—a must have for the difficult boss rounds!





Left: Each color mineral is a different resource. Players collect the ones most important to their role.

the game, people will claim different roles. These roles include: digger, waller, gens, healer, cannons, econ, or pool. Later on, someone will build the Time Warper, but that usually doesn't happen until night 7 or 8.

The game starts in the middle of a map that is split into quadrants. Each quadrant is full of rocks and mineral patches. The object is to dig your way through the rocks and make a base. Generally this job should be left to someone with experience, since a poor base layout will guarantee an early loss. You want the entrance to your base to be a 1x1 space on the build grid because this will maximize damage from the cannons. Once the wall is complete it is impossible to break the rocks on the border of the base in order to prevent trolling. After this, the rule is upgrade everything. The timings for upgrades depend on the difficulty setting and how many people are playing.

The most important upgrades are the mining upgrades. On Easy, this means gathering gas to upgrade the turbine to improve mining speed, and the reactor, which increases the amount of minerals mined per tick. On Normal, each reactor is upgraded separately using the resource it affects. On Hard and Insane difficulties the reactors and turbines are upgraded separately for each resource.

PLAY REVIEW:

MineralZ is extremely fun with a group of friends, especially with voice chat, but public matches are hit and miss. There are a lot of good players who are willing to play with new people but, as with any community, there are trolls. The best way to avoid making people angry as



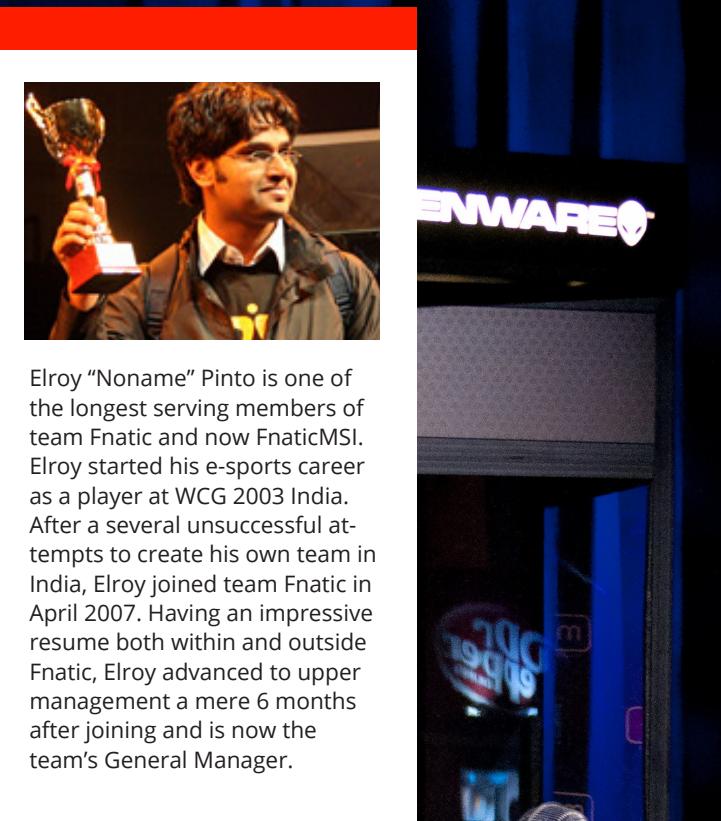
Left: Players upgrade the level of their main building to unlock further research tiers for the other buildings

SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

MineralZ does not allow for as much development of skills used in standard play as other custom maps, but there are still some skills to practice. The general principle is to keep your resources low except when saving up for something expensive. The mining upgrades take the place of workers, since you want to get as many as you can while still setting up an adequate defense. **GLHF**



IMPRESSIONS OF ESPORTS FROM A NONAME



Elroy "Noname" Pinto is one of the longest serving members of team Fnatic and now FnaticMSI. Elroy started his e-sports career as a player at WCG 2003 India. After several unsuccessful attempts to create his own team in India, Elroy joined team Fnatic in April 2007. Having an impressive resume both within and outside Fnatic, Elroy advanced to upper management a mere 6 months after joining and is now the team's General Manager.



It has been a little less than 2 years since the release of StarCraft 2 and for many it was the starting point: the birth of eSports.

Many team legacies (barring Team Liquid) are now a few years old at best. Before all of this, WarCraft 3 was as famous as Brood War, if not more. There was definitely a phase when WC3 was considered to be the only e-sport that could bring in real money and a high level of prosperity for an e-sports professional. But for a moment I would not like to think of WarCraft as a discipline in e-sports that came to an abrupt end. I would like to reminisce about the high points, especially the way organisations ran in those days. In 2005 there were quite a few teams around, notably MYM, SK, Fnatic and 64AMD among others. There was no streaming present, but what we did have was WTV, which helped people 'view' games. Players went to tournaments, mostly in Europe as America by this time was a dead zone for WarCraft 3. One of the leagues that really shone for team leagues was ESL's WarCraft 3 Champions League (WC3L). It was the only team league that had a LAN final, and the number of seasons it ran created a really different atmosphere. WC3 was admittedly a lot smaller as well, as was its community (fairly large for an e-sport community at that time) in comparison to the current one built around SC2.

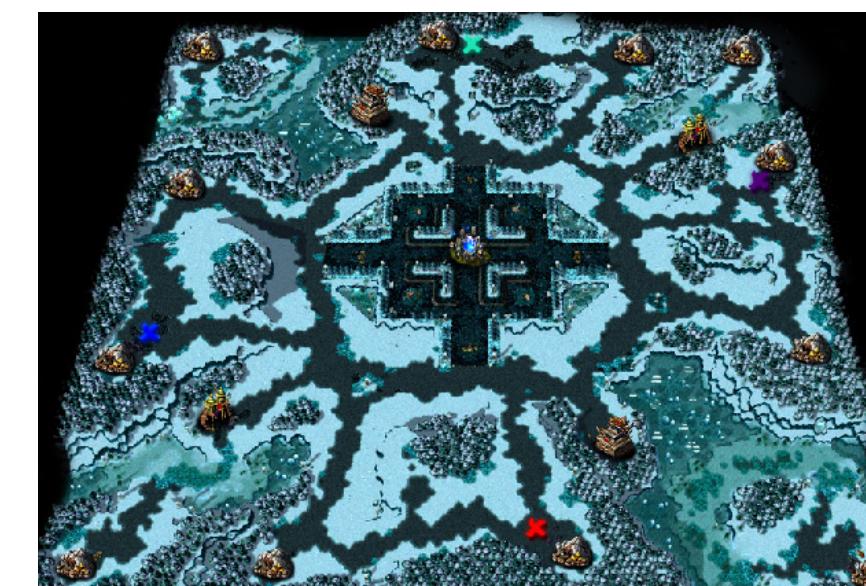
I don't want to turn this into a rant of WC3 versus SC2; I just want to reminisce about the kind of managers and players that were around during those times. Teams in general were run completely differently during the days of WC3. By the time 2007 came along, I found myself in Fnatic. I spent 2005-2007 in MYM as WarCraft 3 manager (among other roles), overseeing RotterdaM, Satiini, ElakeDuck, elfitajja, Abver,

DieSeL, XyLigan, Rob, and even NaNiwa at one point. We had a great team, amazing team spirit and we fought hard in team leagues. We never managed to come close to playoffs and we eventually finished a disappointing top 8 (out of 12 teams) before the old team disbanded. Communication, for one, was much different. We were all on IRC at that point; the immediacy that Skype brings was not there at that point, even though I reckon it would not have made much of a difference. Scheduling with other managers was about the same; nothing has changed since. The biggest change to me, however, had to be the way maps were drawn. I don't hail from a strong BW background so I don't know how map seeding and clan wars were executed, but in WC3 there were definitely maps that favored the Orc players (fountain maps like Secret Valley, Gnoll Wood and of course Lost Temple) and so on for the other races. Some say that the death of WC3 happened due to Blizzard's disregard of the pro-scene and secondly due to new maps not being created. By the time the community had started looking at new maps, a big chunk of the teams and players had moved on. Maps were incredibly important in a lineup; I remember staying up till late discussing the maps with my players or team captain and thinking about whom to use effectively. Different managers also had different styles in lineups: some preferred to use unconventional maps for players (for instance, put-

ting an Undead on a Human favored map in a bid to surprise the opponent team) while others preferred to play a conservative style (sticking to race favored maps for their players). Of course, there's also the mind games one has against different managers.

I wasn't a part of the WC3L for very long, about 4-5 seasons at the most, but what I did learn was that managers and players were now a whole lot more gutsy than before. The current trend of SC2 in team leagues (from a Fnatic perspective) was pretty simple. I decided to try it as this year's EG Master Cup League was my first season as a solo manager (I used to oversee Xeris in my previous team) and I spent a lot of sleepless nights thinking on how we were going to use lineups. Eventually, after much contemplation I concluded that it was probably best to just ask players what maps they wanted to play on. We went 8-3 in the season, and I even tried a Zerg only lineup (failed against Millenium but we went down barely 2-3 and 1-2 in the ACE match) while giving a lot of playtime to all my players. Going into the playoffs, I was convinced we would do well unless we got SlayerS in round one.

To help explain things a bit more, there's a lot of ways to formulate a lineup. One way is you pick the players yourself, discuss it with the guys and set the field based on a mix of player and manager input. The second way is to study statistics. This is just



Some say that the death of WC3 happened due to Blizzard's disregard of the pro-scene and secondly due to new maps not being created.

Left: Lost Temple was one of the WC3 maps notoriously favoring Orc Players due to the strategically placed fountain in the middle of the map.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, TRY AND KEEP THE OPPONENT GUESSING WHAT PLAYERS CAN BE FIELDED.

based purely on percentage; you pick the most favored maps simply based on the opponents race and which player they might use. This method normally works if you have a good relationship with your team captain and if you trust him completely. Lastly there's the boss version, where you just tell your players what maps they are playing. This one is a purely manager entitled call and probably the most ill advised to use. This particular strategy becomes problematic because it presupposes that the manager know the game at a higher level than the players, which no manager does.

What method do I choose? I use a mix of the first and second method along with a secret approach—one which I feel most managers would agree with—the gut instinct. There have been so many times where my gut has been spot on and other times where I have used only statistics to come up with a lineup. Either works, but a lot of it depends on your opponent and the team you're facing as well. Ultimately it is still down to your players to win or lose it for the team, so why not give them the best conditions possible? From my point of view this is important to note.

Whatever the case, I have noticed that most managers these days are just struggling

to get players to finish their lineups since there's so many cups out there. There's so many team leagues as well. I am thankfully now in a position where I can prioritize our players and tournaments we compete in, but to those who feel they don't, you should pick 2 leagues that you want your players to compete in and pick one of those leagues as the one you want to win. Focus in on the situation: don't try to set lineups based on availability but base it on gut instinct and advice from your team captain and senior players. Most importantly, try and keep the opponent guessing what players can be fielded. It's not just the players who have to come up with a style in game, it is for the manager as well to work a style that suits their team. Keeping these ideas in mind, a manager can create a strong lineup that will bring their team to victory. **GLHF**

Photography by thedz_ 



GLHF**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**BY EVAN CROTHERS,
TRANSLATION BY: YUNA**TEAM SCV LIFE
“POLT”****TEAM SCV LIFE
“HYUN”**

GLHF had the chance to bring your questions to two of TSL's powerhouses, the rising Ko “HyuN” Seok Hyun and renowned GSL Champion Choi “Polt” Sung Hoon.



TEAM SCV LIFE IS HOME TO SOME OF THE TOP PERFORMING STARCRAFT PLAYERS ON THE PLANET.

In pool play, they're sharks in the duck pond; in a round-robin, they're hawks among fledglings; on the ladder, they're a rung wrapped in barbed wire, slick with the blood of every nerd who dared attempt to climb over them.

TSL's players are among the brightest and baddest sons of StarCraft to ever stomp across the scene—and they're also some of the most polite, friendly and positive guys you'll ever meet. When they aren't battling for money and glory in front of thousands of awestruck onlookers, they're training in TSL's team house in Kimpo, South Korea, where they rest between collecting gold-plated souvenirs from around the world.

HyuN, you went to your first foreign tournaments lately, and Polt, you've been destroying the international competition for a while now. How does it compare to playing in Korea? What are your favorite parts of going to a foreign tournament? Your least favorite parts?

HYUN: I think the biggest difference is that the amount of cheering in foreign tournaments. I think I can enjoy games more in foreign tournaments but the hardest part is taking the airplane.

POLT: The difference is that in Korean tournaments, fans only come to the finals whereas in foreign tournaments, fans come to watch every match. Also, Korean matches are longer than foreign matches. Playing outside of Korea makes it possible to meet many fans but the matches are packed so closely together that maintaining good condition is difficult.

What qualities about you, or the way you train, make you the top player that you are today?

HYUN: I don't think I practice too much. I think about my build a lot more.

POLT: I'm not sure about compared to other players, but I try to practice efficiently and image training helps a lot.

What does a normal day look like for you?

HYUN: Neither the team nor practice schedule is rigid. To put it easily, it feels like the weekend.

POLT: I'm not sure about this question. Most days, I just wake up, eat, practice, and sleep.

With whom do you practice the most?

Do you ever off-race against each other?

HYUN: I don't practice particularly with a team member. I play on the ladder a lot more. I do not off-race since playing Zerg is hard enough for me!!

POLT: I practice the most with TSLShine. I never play off-race games.

How do you come up with a new build or strategy? Where does the inspiration for a new build come from?

HYUN: New builds naturally form after discussing builds with zerg players on the team. I really like it when that happens. I rest during weekends.

POLT: I try to come up with new builds by thinking about how I can magnify the strengths of an existing build while minimizing its weaknesses.

What originally drew you to SC2 and what drives you to keep practicing?

HYUN: I started StarCraft 2 since the team I was on for StarCraft 1 disbanded and I wasn't picked for any other teams. I think it was a good decision in the end. I don't think I have long practice hours!

POLT: At first, I thought about only playing the campaign but continued to play since it was so fun. The reason I practice the most is because I want to win often.

WHAT IS TEAM SCV LIFE?

Team SCV Life (TSL) is a top Korean StarCraft 2 team. It was founded by former MBC Heroes coach WoonJae. In 2011, TSL became the first professional StarCraft 2 team to have salaries for its players. With an annual salary of roughly 30,000 USD, FruitDealer was the highest paid player at this time.

On August 4th 2011 TSL became embroiled in controversy when the team was expelled from SC2Con following accusations that Coach Lee had stopped paying wages without any warning. The accusations were overturned a few days later after being proven false and based on misinformation and misunderstanding.

There's been a lot of excitement lately surrounding Brood War pros moving over to SC2. It's possible that before long you'll be competing against well established Brood War legends. Does the arrival of such talented pro-gamers make you nervous?

HYUN: I'm not nervous because I don't think it's given that good StarCraft 1 players will be good StarCraft 2 players. One needs to practice a lot to see results.

POLT: I am looking forward to the expansion of the StarCraft 2 stage. I hope that StarCraft 1 pros practice a lot so that we can have good matches.

Are there any Brood War players that you're particularly in awe of?

HYUN: I don't think there is anyone.

POLT: He's not a Brood War pro anymore but NaDa.

Who do you think are the strongest Protoss, Zerg, and Terran players are right now?

HYUN: Protoss, MC; Zerg, Symbol; Terran, Marineking.

POLT: For Zerg, DRG; Terran would be MVP; and Protoss would be Squirtle.

Are there any foreign players you look out for?

HYUN: I think Stephano is doing the best.

POLT: I think Stephano is the best player in the foreign scene.

With the arrival of KeSPA's new tournaments, will you still be able to go to as many foreign tournaments?

HYUN: I'm not sure, but I really want to!

POLT: I wish I could compete more in foreign tournaments but I'm not sure exactly as of now how that will work out.

Recently TSL announced a partnership with Team Millenium. Are there any players from Millenium that you're looking forward to practicing with?

POLT: I want to practice with Stephano.

HYUN: I want to learn about Stephano's plays.

Getting to your level of skill is a lot of work, and it doesn't always show results right away. How did your family react when you first started training as a pro-gamer, and how do they feel now?

HYUN: I didn't face any negative reaction from my family. My parents are more "do

what you want" type of parents so they supported my decision. They always cheer me on and it's great to have them cheer for me.

POLT: My family didn't like my decision since I wanted to stop my studies to pursue a career in pro-gaming. The opposition has died down a bit but the overall reaction is still the same.

In April, we saw both of you competing in Dreamhack and delivering some pretty incredible games. How do you feel about how you did at Dreamhack?

HYUN: I got knocked out in the round of 16, so I wasn't satisfied. I was happy with the way I played before RO16, but I had some regrets during that round.

POLT: I didn't like losing in the finals, but overall I'm happy with the results.

Are there any lessons that you learned from Dreamhack and you will bring to your next big foreign tournament?

HYUN: I learned a lot about how to play the games in a foreign environment since it was my first foreign tournament. I think I can be more confident in my plays next time.

POLT: Matches during Dreamhack trained me on how to deal with the pressure of big matches on stage, and I will show better games for everyone next time.

What do you plan to do after you've had your fill of dominating StarCraft 2 tournaments? Will you remain involved in the e-sports industry, or will you find a different job?

POLT: I'm not sure yet but I would really like to work with something related to e-sports.

HYUN: I don't think I'll pick up studies again. I wish to work with e-sports even after I retire from pro-gaming.

What is the most challenging part of being a pro-gamer?

HYUN: The hardest thing is to maintain a healthy lifestyle since I don't have much time to exercise when I practice.

POLT: The hardest part is maintaining good health since I spend a lot of time in front of the computer.

...the most rewarding part?

HYUN: I'm glad to be known around the world while collecting lots of experiences and memories.

POLT: I love it when I can interact with fans and hear their cheering.

What are your goals for the rest of the year?

HYUN: Individual tournament, or team league: I want to win it all.

POLT: I want to win a big tournament at the end of the year.

Is there anything you'd like to say to your foreign fans?

HYUN: I will continue to work hard so please cheer me on!

POLT: Thank you for cheering me on. I will show you better games in the future. **GLHF**

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CHATTING WITH CHANMANV

The StarCraft 2 community was built by players who found something lacking within the community and decide to fill it in themselves.



Most casters, players, and show hosts have started from scratch using streaming technology to make a name for themselves, and ChanmanV is no exception to this. Even though he only started Pro Corner (his first show) last December, he is already attracting some big names in e-sports and has recently created a second show, Climbing The Ladder.

GLHF **Thank you for letting me interview you for GLHF magazine! First of all, what do you do outside of your shows? Who are you when you're not ChanmanV?**

ChanmanV I am happily married with three wonderful kids, so I spend a lot of time with them and all the craziness it can entail. I also have a full-time job as a senior architect/engineer at a mobile software company.

GLHF **What was your motivation for starting your shows?**

ChanmanV The main reason I started Pro Corner was to give back to the community the enjoyment and education I got from Day[9] Daily and MrBitter's 12 Weeks with the Pros over a year ago. Even though it's become huge and a business for some today, I still look at it as an act of generosity from the creators.

I always wanted an opportunity to reciprocate that and finally had the time to do so late last year when I started Pro Corner. The genesis of Climbing The Ladder was a little different. I felt like there were a lot of issues amongst players, managers, event organizers, etc. that were not being discussed in the community and needed to be. So I created CTL to assist with this discussion as well as encourage idea generation for helping to solve some of these issues.

GLHF **How much of a commitment is it for you to do this? Is it a full-time job?**

ChanmanV I'd be lying if I didn't say it takes quite a bit of time, but I still wouldn't say it's full time. It's a labor of love, so honestly I've never really quantified it in my head until now. But just like anything in e-sports or other industries, it takes time to build a product, market and network properly.

GLHF **You have two separate shows that you host, so I'd like to discuss each in turn. First, could you tell me briefly about what you are trying to do with the various formats of Pro Corner?**

ChanmanV Sure. All the formats have the same goal, which is helping viewers learn more about game strategies directly from pro-gamers. I feel it's necessary to have different formats because it helps create more varieties of situations, which results in a broader range of strategies explained by the pro-gamers. For instance, a one-on-one coaching format is geared more towards the low to mid tier players. It's focused a lot on basics and fundamental strategies of a particular matchup, while a Best of 7 Walkthrough or Best of 5 Analysis is more focused on advanced strategies that are only set up when playing a series of games against the same player.

GLHF **Which of the six formats that you have is your favorite?**

ChanmanV My favorite format is probably the panel format where I have multiple guests that play the same race on the show to compare strategies. I really enjoy the collaboration that occurs between the guests. It's a really cool feeling when the guests learn a thing or two from each other because that means everybody watching and participating in the show are learning together.

GLHF **You started Climbing The Ladder more recently than you did Pro Corner. What is your format for Climbing The Ladder and what are your goals with this show?**

ChanmanV The format of Climbing The Ladder is very simple and pretty free-form. We typically have two guests on the show. We start out by clearing up any misconceptions the guests think are prevalent in the community. We then go through a list of topics pertaining to the industry segments the guests work in. Once the topic starts it's a very free-form discussion between everyone on the show.

My goals for the show are really to give an outlet for people in the industry to talk about the issues and challenges they are facing, which will hopefully result in the community being more aware and taking steps to help solve these issues. We really want to "get our hands dirty" and get down to the facts and truths about certain issues. It's the only way we can help to improve things as a community.

GLHF **Do you see what you are doing with these shows as something unique to the community? How do you differentiate what you do with more longstanding shows such as the Day[9] Daily or State of the Game?**

ChanmanV Yes, I feel like Pro Corner and Climbing The Ladder are both unique in their own right. Pro Corner has six different formats that I feel create a unique offering as a whole. There are other education-based shows out there but I feel we're all doing it in our

Trying to follow the example set by other StarCraft 2 teachers such as Day9 and Mr. Bitter, Chris "ChanmanV" is the host of the two shows "ChanmanV's Procorner" and "Climbing the Ladder".

ChanmanV's Pro Corner is a bi-weekly SC2 show where Chris brings on very popular and up-and-coming programmers to create a collaborative atmosphere of learning how to become a better SC2 player. At the end of each show, there is a viewer Q&A session with the guests via skype call ins.

Climbing The Ladder is a weekly e-sports show that discusses the ins and outs of all the various segments of professional gaming (player, team, tournament organizing, sponsors, casting, etc.). The focus of the show is about clearing up misconceptions in each segment and to hopefully create a problem solving and idea generating environment to help the e-Sports community/industry progress.

Chatting with ChanmanV cont...

own unique way. And Climbing The Ladder is more about analyzing particular issues in the community and going in-depth into what can be learned and how it can possibly be solved, in a very open and raw format. Shows like State of the Game focus more on current news in the industry/community while we focus more on the different segments (players, teams, event organizers, sponsors) and their challenges.

GLHF How have you managed to get such big names to join you and sponsorship for what you do?

ChanmanV It's taken a lot of networking with players and organizations. Also, in particular with players, I'd like to think that it helped that I actually care about the players and want to see them succeed regardless of if they're on my shows or not. I try my best to keep up with as many of them as possible and congratulate them on great wins or help them with issues they are having.

GLHF Of all the episodes you have done so far, which is your favorite?

ChanmanV That's probably the toughest question you've asked! I think maybe the Climbing The Ladder episode with the Rosen brothers and Spades was one of my favorites so far. It was great walking through and learning from Spade's Team ReIGN experience and having the Rosen brothers go in-depth with the details of the Lone Star Clash and why it was so successful. So many great lessons came out of that episode and I really appreciated the guests for being so open and honest.

GLHF Where would you like it to go from here? What are your long-term goals for the shows?

ChanmanV I'd love to continue with both Pro Corner and Climbing The Ladder. I think there are still more players I'd like to have on Pro Corner and endless topics to cover on Climbing The ladder. I've also been thinking about expanding Pro Corner's breadth to cover an additional game. Beyond these two shows, I have a good number of project ideas I'd like to bring to fruition in the near future. So hopefully a lot of incoming goodness!

GLHF Where and when can people watch your shows?

ChanmanV Pro Corner is every Monday and Thursday regularly at 11pm EST (sometimes 4pm EST for EU shows). Climbing The Ladder is every Tuesday at 3:30pm EST. Both shows are streamed on my TwitchTV channel with past episodes found on my YouTube channel. **GLHF**

Stream: twitch.tv/chanmanv

VODs: youtube.com/chanmanv

Twitter: twitter.com/chanmanv

Facebook: facebook.com/chanmantv



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAJOR LEAGUE GAMING

SHE IS BEST KNOWN FOR BEING THE FIRST FEMALE STARCRAFT 2 PLAYER TO PLAY ON THE MLG MAIN STAGE AGAINST GSL CODE S PLAYER LOSIRA AND A REGULAR STREAMER WHO FREQUENTLY INTERACTS WITH HER VIEWERS.

Julia 'Ailuj' Childress is a Canadian Protoss player for CheckSix Gaming. After discovering Brood War when she was 14 through a friend in high school, she mostly played UMS (custom games). She started playing StarCraft 2 in September 2010 but didn't really get into ladder play until later in October.

Her claim to fame occurred during her first MLG in November when she walked over the Protoss player Flamingcrow. This round pushed her through to the 2nd round where she became the first female to play on the main stage at an MLG event.

INTERVIEW WITH JULIA "AILUJ" CHILDRESS

She started playing StarCraft: Brood War in 8th grade (mostly custom games) so it was only natural for her to play StarCraft 2 when it came out. We interviewed Ailuj to find out what she's been up to lately, her long-term goals, and her opinion on the future of StarCraft 2.

AC: Hi Julia, thank you for agreeing to do this interview! Let's start off by telling us about your gaming history. You started playing Brood War in 8th grade, but who got you into the game?

JC: I grew up loving DOS games such as Commander Keen, Jazz Jackrabbit, and Crystal Caves, and eventually progressed to some First Person Shooters like Unreal Tournament and Counter Strike as well as some Xbox games like the Guitar Hero series and some Halo. None of that compared to the love I found in Brood War though. I would play that for hours on end and that continued for years. When they announced SC2, it was (for many people I'm sure) like a dream.

As to how I started playing, a friend in 8th grade talked about BW all the time and at first I wanted to look cool (I knew nothing about Real Time Strategy games) so I went and bought the StarCraft 1 set with the BW expansion.

AC: Did you try all the races before picking Protoss?

JC: In BW I rarely played melee and didn't even understand how ladder worked (although I always looked at people's stats and figured it mattered, never mind that that included games vs. computers haha). I focused mainly on UMS (now known as custom) games, specifically SCV Football. I had friends who were great at melee, or at least from my perspective they looked like they knew what they were doing, but the closest I ever got was really just playing Phantom or team Fastest maps. I think I just had more friends who played Protoss and was more familiar with all the units.

Even when StarCraft 2 came out I wasn't 100% sure which I would like the most, but I did play around with each race and Protoss still definitely felt most comfortable. It might have had to do with the slight resemblance between stalkers and dragoons: I always massed those. I soon learned that that was really the only similarity, though. Even now when I off-race, I'm always looking for my sentries when banelings break my bunker line, or a nice cloaked observer when my overseer gets sniped. I just can't imagine myself as any other race.

AC: In your previous interviews, you mentioned a few of your long-term and short-term goals, such as streaming more and trying to get promoted to

Master's league. Have your goals for gaming changed?

JC: Not changed, but they have expanded slightly. I still hope to get promoted to Master's league soon, which I believe will also help with my streaming numbers and even my credibility in the SC2 community. Other opportunities in casting and hosting have also arisen and over the summer I hope to further my knowledge of the game itself and all aspects so that if I were to start casting games or anything related, I would be able to express my ideas intelligently and comfortably in front of an audience.

AC: Do you see yourself being a full-time pro-gamer in the future?

JC: Honestly, it depends how things turn out over the summer and the next few months afterwards. I will be finishing school within the next year so until then I won't be getting a serious full-time job, which leaves the possibilities for gaming very open. I know it's unrealistic to think I'll spend the rest of my life rolling in dough that I've won from SC tournaments, etc. but I don't want to give up on this until I've really explored all aspects of eSports and given a fair chance to all the opportunities that come up. It seems to be forever changing and growing so who knows what I might find myself doing in a few months, a few weeks, or even tomorrow!

AC: We wish you the best of luck in your academic endeavors! What are you currently studying?

JC: I'm currently in a Business & Commerce program at Douglas College near home here in BC, Canada. Over the summer I'm just taking one course because I knew I'd be traveling a decent amount for MLG and other reasons, so I didn't want to be missing too many classes.

I really just don't know what my dream career would be, so I've just exploring this program and the various courses you have to take to get through it (accounting, economics, business and entrepreneurial courses, psychology, English, math/calculus, law courses, etc.) to see if anything specific interested me. and a good stepping stone for whatever I do decide to do in the business world!

AC: You've been with CheckSix gaming for a while now; how did they approach you and what was your response?

JC: When I first started streaming a lot and getting a decent amount of exposure, but prior to MLG Providence I actually had

a couple teams show interest in me. I was advised from friends to wait and see what types of offers I might get and to see how it went at Providence. Just before the event though, CheckSix approached me with a pretty good offer and I already had some good friends on the team so it just seemed like the perfect fit to go with them. I was very happy and relieved that such a well known team wanted to pick me up!

AC: Expanding on the previous question, which player(s) or notable members of the community inspire you?

JC: Some people who inspire me in this industry are Day[9], iNcontroL, and Anna Prosser. All three of them are incredibly positive and just all-around helpful people and have gained success from hard work and dedication, and at the same time acting as such inspirational role-models in a community where it can definitely be needed at times. I love their attitudes and I hope one day I also have the chance to help and inspire people like they do; to help this community grow.

AC: Which of the events that you attended has been your favorite so far? Which events are you planning on going to in 2012?

JC: I'd have to say my favorite event so far would have to be MLG Providence from November 2011. Playing up on the main

If, at the end, I
really didn't love
any particular field
more than the oth-
ers, at least I would
have a broad
understanding of
business

stage would be hard to beat (although, at the time it was definitely frightening, looking back now it was such an amazing opportunity that I was very lucky to have). As far as events in 2012, I was able to go to MLG Columbus already which was also great, and MLG Anaheim happening next week which I am so excited for. I expect to be at the last two MLGs as well, and hopefully NASL which is being held in Toronto in July as well!

AC: Good luck in the open bracket, and maybe we'll see you on the main stage again! Lastly, where do you think the future of Starcraft 2 is going to go, and where do you see eSports in the next 10 years?

JC: As for the future of StarCraft 2, it's still growing. With the BW players coming over and as younger people start playing at earlier ages, never mind as women join the scene as well, there is nowhere for SC2 to go except up. With tournaments like MLG and IPL, which not only get better with each event but also push each other to be bigger and better, the quality is just going to skyrocket. I think an obstacle that eSports will face that may be starting to disappear a bit already is getting big companies to buy in. We need sponsorships for tournaments, travel, teams, and individual players.

There is a lot of money to be made in this industry and people are willing to pay for what they support--just look at how much money NFL makes in a given season. Are classic, typical sports that much different from eSports? If so, why should they be? It's exciting to watch these games being played live no matter where you live, and the national leagues aren't nearly as exclusive like how NBA, MLB, and/or NHL are (isn't Heart of the Swarm integrating a global server?). Anyone can play, you don't NEED a team since you can represent yourself, and all you need is a computer and an account. The worldwide availability of this game (and of any online game) leaves us with no end of possibilities for the future.

AC: Thank you for your time, Julia! Any last words or shout outs you'd care to share?

JC: I'd like to thank my team, sponsors, fans, and family and friends. I've been with CheckSix since November 2011 and it's been great getting to know everyone on



Major League Gaming

ARE CLASSIC,
TYPICAL SPORTS
THAT MUCH
DIFFERENT FROM
ESPORTS? IF SO,
WHY SHOULD THEY
BE? IT'S EXCITING
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PLAYED LIVE NO
MATTER WHERE
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INTERVIEW WITH MARY RATLIFF

As an undergraduate, Mary Ratliff produced a variety of short films and documentaries. Ratliff has played StarCraft since 2000, and after the release of StarCraft 2 she attended the October 2010 MLG in Washington, D.C.



Ratliff's passion for making films came into the spotlight when she got in contact with team Evil Geniuses at the event. We talked with Ratliff about her life as a filmmaker, a Starcraft fan, and her work on the EG documentary from start to finish.

CH: Let's start out with Nine Hour Films. When and how did you get started with the company?

MR: Nine Hour Films is my production company, and I started using the name back in 1998 or 1999 when I first started making short films in undergrad. So it was the name I used when I made my last documentary, *Watashi Wa*, which was about cosplayers. It's really become more of a formal production entity in the last three years, being an incorporated company and all of that fun stuff.

CH: You started out on films that you wrote, correct?

MR: Yup, so far that's been what we've really concentrated on, though I do a lot of work for other people it's not under the Nine Hour Films label. So far,

I'm looking into branching out in the next year and I'm talking to a few directors about producing their projects.

CH: I see. How did StarCraft come into play?

MR: I've been a gamer my whole life, and I started playing StarCraft back in 2000. So when StarCraft 2 came out I was extremely excited. I got into watching the competitive play through my husband. He comes home everyday after work and watches some StarCraft and I just started watching over his shoulder and getting more and more into it as time went on. Tasteless, Artosis, and Day[9] were constant voices in our house. So when Major League Gaming came through Washington DC we went to the event and I realized there was a movie there, and I really wanted to make it.

CH: Which MLG DC was this? As in, the date?

MR: It was October of 2010, I can't remember the exact dates, but I probably have it written down somewhere.

CH: Oh okay. The website says the 15-17. Sound right?

MR: Yup, that's it. It was actually the same weekend that I was in a screenwriting competition so I didn't get to go to the whole event, and I was sitting in the audience at the competition checking results on my phone.

CH: How did you get the ball rolling with EG?

MR: I spent a few months researching the idea after I decided to do a documentary about SC2, and I kept going back to Evil Geniuses because they had the most interesting team when it came to looking at longevity, personalities, and business sense. So I just contacted Scott Smith, and told him what I wanted to do and it all just fell into place from there. He put me in contact with Alex and the rest of the management team.

CH: After speaking with EG management, how long did it take until you got started on the film?

MR: I did my first bit of filming a PAX East in March of 2011, which was of course just Geoff "iNcontroL" Robinson and Anna "uNcontroLable" Prosser. Then we went with a full crew to MLG Columbus last June to get started in earnest. After that we were traveling to an average of two events per month for the rest of the year. Basically there was a bit of a lag in there so that I could graduate from grad school with my MFA.

CH: When did you graduate? And from where?

MR: I graduated in May 2011 from American University, in D.C.

CH: What was your schedule like during an event weekend?

MR: For events that were Friday-Sunday, we would arrive on Thursday so we could unpack, get our gear in order, and make sure we got enough sleep before it all got started. We usually would also go to the venue to look around and get a feel for the place. Then Friday we would always arrive early, pretty much from the second that we would be able to get our press badges, and would film the crowds and the lines waiting to get in. Friday was always a bit more relaxed, we would film the event in general, and I would always have a couple guys in particular I was looking for footage from. Saturdays we would usually spend in the press room running interviews with different players or other community members, and running down to the event floor whenever something noteworthy was happening. Saturday was always the worst because we would rarely find times to take breaks and would usually be running for 12-14 hours on only about 4-5 hours of sleep the night before. Then on Sundays we would go back to covering the event and trying to make sure we stayed on top of each EG member that was still in the competition. Then we would all travel off our separate ways on Monday.

CH: These events are MLGs and an IGN Pro League?

MR: Plus two North American Star Leagues. I also went to Miss USA, and to the Global StarCraft League in January. Plus a few trips to Phoenix.

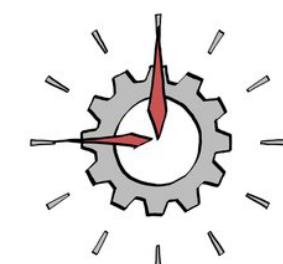
CH: Wow, that's amazing. How are these trips funded?

MR: In 2011, half of the funding came from our Kickstarter campaign. The other half came from my own pocket, I basically invested every penny I earned on other jobs back into the film. In 2012, it's been a mix of my own money and credit cards.

CH: That's some dedication! What was it like going to Korea?

MR: Korea was a roller coaster. I absolutely loved the country, Seoul was a wonderful place, and the GSL is amazing to see in person. I love travel, and I like to encourage people to just get out of their home country for a while so it was amazing on that front.

WHEN MAJOR LEAGUE GAMING CAME THROUGH WASHINGTON DC WE WENT TO THE EVENT AND I REALIZED THERE WAS A MOVIE THERE, AND I REALLY WANTED TO MAKE IT.



Above: The logo for Ratliff's film company, Nine Hour Films. Check them out at <http://www.ninehourfilms.com/>

CH: Did you travel with the players/management? The players were HuK and IdrA at the time, right?

MR: We travelled on our own, and because of timing (HuK was in Code A and those matches were later in the month) we mostly shot footage of IdrA. HuK was on vacation during those two weeks, which is part of the down part of the roller coaster that we didn't get to talk with him while we were there.

CH: So you and your film crew traveled with IdrA to Korea?

MR: We took a two person crew to Korea, and my good friend Ken Ikeda was my cinematographer who actually came in from Tokyo, which is where he lives. We were there for two weeks in January of this year.

CH: Was anyone, other than IdrA, there as well?

MR: From EG, not really. But we were able to talk with Mr. Chae, Tasteless, and Artosis while we were there as well.

CH: Did you film those conversations?

MR: Yes, those were sit down interviews that we did on camera.

CH: When did you end filming for the documentary?

MR: In Korea or in general?

CH: In general.

MR: We filmed for almost exactly a year, from March 2011 to March 2012. Our last event was the showmatch at South By Southwest in Austin, Texas. We might do some "pick-ups" but it was in March that I declared us officially in post-production.

CH: When you got the idea to make this documentary did you have an idea of what you wanted to film? Was there anything in particular you wanted to definitely wanted to capture?

MR: The main thing that I wanted to do was show the ways that gamers break the stereotypes that they're always faced with. I wanted to show the way that the fans are social, and intelligent. And that the players themselves aren't losers who can't get a real job, but they're athletic, smart, hard working, etc.

CH: What was it like working with EG as a whole? Was there anyone who helped you with the film involved with EG?

MR: Anna has been a dream to work with, I really can't say enough nice things about her. Cody is always a pleasure too, and Alex and Scott of course. With the players,

they're all very nice and were great to talk to. iNcontroL was often a big help, and LzGaMeR was also extremely nice and helpful and very open with us. But I could honestly go down the line of EG's players and talk for ten minutes about how great they all were.

CH: In the course of the year that you were filming 3 players joined EG: PuMa, HuK, and JYP. Did these additions to the team change anything?

MR: PuMa and HuK definitely caused some changes for us, because they happened midway through the process, and we were able to capture parts of the story that came before and after (for example, we were at the infamous NASL when PuMa was recruited). JYP came so late in the process that we haven't really strongly incorporated that into our story because we're focused on a year in the life of the team.

CH: In the time that you were filming, EG opened a team house. Were you able to visit the house?

MR: Yes, we visited twice over the course of the year. Once when the entire team roster was there, and another time when it was a smaller group.

CH: From the start to the end of the film, how much change have you seen within the EG team on the player's side and the management side?

MR: The player roster has changed a lot, first they added PuMa and HuK and then Axslav and StrifeCro left and JYP came on. On the management side of things, nobody has left but they've brought on Anna and Cody since we started filming. I think that might be it, I'd have to go through my notes to be sure. In general, I've seen the management really organize, they've had their roles more defined as time goes on and each person has a specific part of the business that they take care of, which made my job easier as time went on.

CH: Besides the player roster changing how have the players' attitudes changed since the start of the film?

MR: We saw them go through a lots of ups and downs, but one of the things I've liked is seeing them really get more into the mental side of competition as time has gone on. If you follow iNcontroL for example, he went through a really rough year in 2011 but he has had a lot of great things to say about the

mental aspects of the game and how things have affected him throughout the year. But for the most part, they all started as really great guys who want to do their best, and that's how they finished out the year.

CH: When is the documentary set to release?

MR: We have a schedule, but we're not announcing any firm dates because our absolute top priority is to make sure that it's the best film it could be before we release it. We take the Blizzard way of things, "it's done when it's done."

CH: Thank you! GLHF

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY FNATIC GAMING

A MESSAGE FROM A FEMALE GAMER

In the past few months, I have watched and cheered on as foreigners have eliminated Koreans in various tournaments.

This is not because I am against Koreans winning (I was rooting for Leenock in the finals of MLG Providence), but because it shows that StarCraft is truly anyone's game. Well, not quite. As long as you're male, it is.

As a female following the scene, one of the biggest things that disappoints me is how dominant males are in playing, casting, and participating in the StarCraft Universe. When the Major League Gaming streams pan to the audience, the numbers of women spectating seem to be few, and they all appear to have a guy's arm around them. Are girls only there because it's what their boyfriends like? Was I the only female in the audience at MLG Providence turning up to a tournament on my own? I certainly hope the answer to both of these questions is no.

I find I ask myself why there aren't more females into StarCraft 2, and my answer goes back about a year ago to how I was introduced to the game in the first place. I was talking to my then-boyfriend, and asked him what he was up to. He told me he was watching a tournament. I asked him what it was and he said StarCraft 2. I asked if there was a link so I could watch it too, and finally he obliged. What I saw was commentators almost exploding as units were marching across the screen and engaging in intricate battles. I had no idea what was going on but I was hooked, much to my boyfriend's surprise. Yes, my boyfriend, someone who met me at a video game convention, was afraid to share StarCraft with me in the fear that I would judge him. Well, I did judge him.

My boyfriend... was afraid to share StarCraft with me in the fear that I would judge him. Well, I did judge him. I thought he was a moron for not sharing it with me sooner.

I thought he was a moron for not sharing it with me sooner.

Obviously, not every woman is going to be like me. I have been playing video games since I was five and I currently run a gaming club at the school where I teach. I grew up with the mentality that boys had all the fun stuff and they were keeping it from girls just so my brother didn't have to invite me when he was hanging out with his friends. But even if I am not a typical female, when I look at the SC2 community I find it attracts people from many social backgrounds. If this game interests a range of men I am willing to bet it would also interest a range of women, and I feel the only thing that is keeping more women from getting into the scene is a lack of exposure to the game. So, to the males reading this right now, I have a question for you. I'm sure you have women



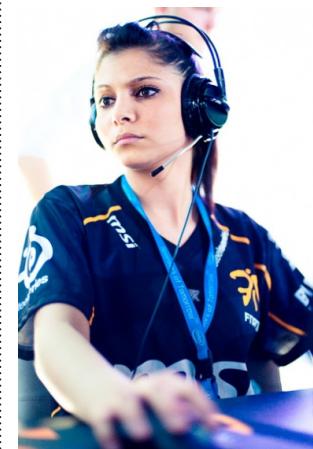
PHOTOGRAPH BY FNATIC GAMING

in your lives, whether they're your friends, girlfriends, sisters, or wives. If you think StarCraft is cool, have you in some way introduced them to the SC2 community? If no, well, why not? I understand that e-sports is probably a hard thing to explain, but if you let them see it for themselves, you may find more of them interested than you'd expect.

How do we introduce more females to SC2 is a different question, and I have no simple answer as to how it should happen. You know your friends and family better than I do, and you can probably find a way to share what you enjoy with them. However, if you're still not sure where to start then I would say to go with the Day[9] Daily. Those who watch the show can probably agree that he creates a connection with his viewers through his storytelling and witty comments, and I think this makes the game more accessible to those who are not hardcore gamers. Even showing matches that Day[9] casts can be a good starting point: I pulled up a match from his site between Happy and ToD to show my club at school because of the ridiculous nature of the match and the comments from both casters. I did not attempt to explain what was going on, and still I found that girls and guys alike thought it was hilarious and had no trouble following the action. Another suggestion would be if you have a barcraft in your area, invite women out with you even if they have never heard of StarCraft. I have never been to one and can only imagine the energy is infectious and would cause anyone to wonder what all the excitement is about.

Getting girls to try playing for the first time is a more difficult challenge than getting them to become spectators. A lot of the women I have met who play SC2 are women who have grown up playing video games because they had dads, uncles, or brothers who introduced them to gaming at some point early in their lives. These women agree with me that they would like to see enough female players in the scene to render competitions such as Iron Lady tournaments that encourage female players to compete as obsolete. While there are definitely more examples of female pro-gamers than there were a year ago, even now I can only expect for there to be at the most one or two female players in any given tournament that is not all-female. I am optimistic that the number of women who

Getting girls to try playing for the first time is a more difficult challenge than getting them to become spectators. A lot of the women I have met who play SC2 are women who have grown up playing video games



PHOTOGRAPH BY FNATIC GAMING

Left/Above: Zainab "zAAz" Turkie was one of the best female Counter-Strike 1.6 players around. She played for Pink Zinic before moving to Fnatic.



compete and get signed to teams will continue to increase, but I feel that the community could do more to encourage females to play. I also realize it is going to be much easier to get younger females into playing the game than it is women my age (and I am only in my mid twenties). The good news is that ratio of girls to boys that play video games growing up is evening out in the upcoming generation, but I still doubt that young girls are encouraged to try the more competitive games. If we are going to get more girls into playing SC2 seriously, then the game will need to be marketed to girls as well as boys, and girls will need successful female role models in the gaming community.

Of course, StarCraft is not just a competitive game. As someone who started playing it at 24, I realize my chances of becoming a pro are pretty slim if not negligible, but this doesn't stop me from playing the game in my free time. I consider SC2 to be fun and challenging in a way that other games aren't, so I would never discourage a woman my age or older from giving it a try. Personally my weekends would not be complete if I could not come home and relax a little by playing team games with friends. And I would not still be playing this game if I had not found a part of the community that coached me and helped me learn new strategies and builds. I am the only woman in this group of a hundred or so guys because the number of males to females who

play this game is so disproportionate, but the only way we're going to get more women to play is if you guys do what these guys did for me: welcome them in, help them get better, and never compare their gender to their gameplay.

StarCraft 2 is challenging, but nowhere does it say that challenging games are just for guys. And they're not just for tomboys like me either, as evidenced by players like Julia "Ailuj" Childress who showed up to MLG Providence in skinny jeans and ballet flats with a cute purse over her shoulder. In the end, it's supposed to be about good games, right? So if potentially-good players are being steered away from playing due to their gender, I think everyone in the community is missing out.

Maybe the women you know will decide they don't like it, maybe the only thing they get interested in is how attractive the players are, or maybe they only watch it while you're around. If that's what they decide, then fine. But maybe you'll end up with another practice partner or someone else to play team games with. For now, StarCraft will likely remain dominated by males. But someday my hope is that I will be talking with girls at the high school where I work and tell them that they could absolutely be a professional gamer if they wanted to, and I will be able to point to women who win tournaments and say, "Why not you too?" That would be pretty cool. **GLHF**

vsmak / WellPlayed.org

SO PLEASE GUYS, IF YOU LIKE THIS GAME AND YOU THINK IT'S WORTH SHARING WITH PEOPLE, THEN SHARE IT WITH THEM REGARDLESS OF THEIR GENDER.

MULE ECONOMICS

Everyone knows the mule is an amazing mechanic of the Terran war machine.



Only spamming mules is an easy way to utilize the orbital command as the mule gives the Terran player an advantage in gathering minerals that either puts the Terran ahead or allows them to catch up with its Zerg or Protoss opponents. In this article I will expand on the two other options of the orbital command as compared to the mule, when to use them, and understanding the state of the game depending on how many orbital commands are out for a Terran.

The mule mines as fast as approximately 4.5 SCVs. Generally speaking, a Zerg or a Protoss player would want to be about five workers ahead per base to stay ahead economically of a Terran. This works out as the larvae inject allows Zerg players to get ahead in jumps, while the chrono boost allows a Protoss player to make two probes per SCV. There isn't much control involved with the mule, but players can pull the mule away from its last trip as the mule can die before returning its last deposit. This can be remedied, however, by targeting the mule on a further patch.

MULE VS SUPPLY DROP

There are almost no standard scenarios where supply dropping is better than dropping mules before the first base is optimally saturated at sixteen SCVs, so I will skip that part of the game. Assuming the Terran is on one base with sixteen SCVs, the difference between mules and supply drop is as follows:

ON THE SURFACE, MINING OVER 90 SECONDS

MULE WITH 16 SCVS	16 SCVS WITH SUPPLY DROP
MINERALS MINED 1295.1	MINERALS MINED 1025.1
SUPPLY COST 100	SUPPLY COST 0

Obviously, the mule brings in 240-270 minerals, while the supply drop gives only +100, so the difference in literal minerals is 270, while the difference if you include the supply depot is 170. In comparison, here are the numbers when the muling player is supply blocked as compared to the supply dropping player.

OPPORTUNITY COSTS OF MULE VS SUPPLY DROP (DURING A SUPPLY BLOCK)

MULE WITH 16 SCVS	16 SCVS WITH SUPPLY DROP
COST OF DEPOT DEPOT 100	COST OF DEPOT DEPOT 0
TIME EXPENSE 33S	TIME EXPENSE 0
SCV MINING LOST DURING BLOCK 9.24	SCV MINING LOST DURING BLOCK 0
EXTRA MINING GAINED OVER 1 MINUTE 19.32	EXTRA MINING GAINED OVER 1 MINUTE 54.6
TOTAL MINERALS MINED 1204.58	TOTAL MINERALS MINED 1079.7

As it is shown above, the total difference between a mule and supply drop during a block is 124.88 over 90 seconds.

However, the player who dropped the supply also gets two additional SCVs and is one production cycle ahead. The thirty seconds of supply block is the same build time as the basic Terran units: the marine, marauder, and hellion. Overall, the choice to mule instead of using supply drop is generally the correct one, however, the supply drop is probably better when being supply blocked. It may not even be a bad choice to just use only supply depot drops as Terran if the player is going mech as gas is more important and it lets a terran player stick to three base as minerals don't run out as fast. Additionally it has the benefit of not mining out your main bases faster which can be extremely helpful on maps that tend to mine out, such as Ohana. There are detriments to this strategy. Even though you drop down supply, the depot you drop doesn't gain any extra hit points. Currently Terrans need supply depots for defensive purposes against both Zerg, Protoss, and occasionally other Terrans.

MULE ECONOMY, GOING INTO MID AND LATE GAME

Once a Terran is at three orbitals, the Terran can now call down three mules at a time. This means that at any given time, a Terran will have the equivalent of one optimally saturated mineral base once three orbitals are established. This is also why Terran can lose huge amounts of SCVs to an aggressive move in the beginning and not be as far behind economically.

Marines are good as a mineral dump unit, so mules keep their strength in TvZ and TvT (marine tank or bio, not as much in mech). They will lose their strength against Protoss as the game goes on, since the marines lose staying power against both colossi and high templars. The backbone of the terran army is its medivacs, vikings, and ghosts. Those are the units that keep your main bio army alive and cost effective. Because of the importance of gas in this matchup, each time a nuke is launched, a Terran will lose approximately eight supply in the future. The exact calculation is 100 gas, the equivalent of four marauders or one specialty unit (viking/medivac/ghost).

Another thing to keep in mind is as the Terran goes into late game, the scan becomes more important and is constantly used. This is why Terrans have for the most part ignored the use of ravens in the TvZ matchup since it will get to a point where a Terran must use scan to learn the position of the Zerg army. Though the mule is essential if the Terran is behind in economy, not much can be changed to increase mule production as scanning at the correct times is an esoteric skill that is extremely important in all of the Terran matchups.

Terran players should keep supply drop and late game in mind with regards to muling. Terrans shouldn't be hesitant to drop supply during a block as the mineral loss is less than might be expected and the continued production makes up for it. Mules are always a critical part of Terran strategy even if they lose value as some matchups heads toward the late game. Knowing this, the Terran player will be equipped to keep a strong economy throughout their game and use their orbital commands as efficiently as possible. **GLHF**

ZERG MACRO AGGRESSION



YOU NEED MONEY TO MAKE UNITS.

Simply put, how you get the units you want to attack with is just as important as what you do with them.

You might know me as a very aggressive (some would argue "cheesy") Zerg player, but I did make it to Grand Master twice on the North American server and I'm writing this guide to emphasize the supreme importance of Macro, even if you're a balls-to-the-wall aggressive player. My goal is to help you to pay extremely close attention to the precise details of your aggressive build order, because it's really your planning/macro that makes the difference between an average all-in and an extremely potent timing attack.

I WILL USE THE FOLLOWING ZvT ROACH/LING TIMING ATTACK TO EMPHASIZE MY POINT:

8 ROACHES / 32 SPEEDLINGS ARRIVE AT TERRAN NATURAL RAMP AT 7:15

We'll go over all the build order/timing basics in steps one and two to show you how to execute this powerful early game attack, but the main focus of this guide will be step three—where I break down the build into a detailed analysis to show you how you can maximize your early-game economy, perfect your build order and timings, and execute an 8 roach/32+ zergling attack while taking a 3rd base at 7:15. This will allow you to put on early pressure, hold off any mid-game counterattacks, and max out infestor/crackling/ultralisk with +3/+3 on the way by the 15:30 mark.

It's important to note that although we'll be looking at a Zerg build that I use against Terran, the key concepts in this guide can be applied to the all-around game play of all the races. The reason this is such a relevant concept for all players is simple: I'm going to explain the macro-structure of the build—how all the pieces come together. This concept is not often studied in great detail but is, in my experience, incredibly important to success on the StarCraft 2 battlefield.

I'll be going over the build I described in the ZvT Roach/Ling "All-In" (Or is it?) thread I recently wrote: http://www.teamliquid.net/forum/viewmessage.php?topic_id=300818.

THE CONCEPT:

Many times when a player learns a build, they'll quickly look at the food timings and focus primarily on controlling their units. In reality, there is much more to a build than just food-relative timings. Though you might think that it would make a lot more sense to start with the little pieces, to start with the micro, unit control, hotkeys, and build up and build up and then talk about the macro-structure. But that's actually the opposite of what we need to do. And the reason is the large-scale structure of the build is way more important than any of the little things—the little things will come when the structure is there. How you organize your play is going to determine to a large degree whether your play is effective.

So, I'm going to remind you of that annoying advice that you probably got from your 5th or 6th grade English teacher when you first started essay writing—and that's "first you have to have an outline, then you have to have a rough draft, then you have to have a final draft, then you have to polish it." And you know, this advice is pretty much right in SC2 as well.

However, most people don't work this way, most of my students do not sit down and first sketch an outline of a build, and then practice, and then make some alterations, and then practice, and then make a final build order. What they do is open a game and start playing, and it's what I used to do also. However, if you're dedicated to learning and perfecting a build, this isn't the optimal way to proceed. Instead, you have to have structure and the following steps should be utilized when trying to learn a new build:

14 HATCH ROACH/LING TIMING ATTACK

STEP ONE: LEARN THE BASIC STRUCTURE (BRONZE-GOLD)

Now when you're trying to do something really difficult—and I'll be honest, learning a build is difficult—it puts very strong cognitive demands on your brain. So if you start with something too complex, the first things to fall apart are the details. This is why I recommend first learning the basics of a build order before getting too concerned with the subtle details.

When you start to do something that's a little bit beyond what you can easily handle, all your technique starts to fall apart, all the little things start to go—and this is what happens learning/practicing a build! You're trying to work out a very complex build, and you're thinking "I need help with my micro; I need help with my control. Look at all these mistakes I'm making, etc". The problem isn't with the micro or your control. The problem is that your brain is trying to process the complicated ideas that you're working on. And while all that mental energy is going into those ideas, the little things—the micro, the control, the build order timings—are starting to fall apart. So what we're trying to do when learning a build is to get our brains to help us rather than to get in our way. The best way that I know how to do this is through structure—if you figure out what the large-scale structure of your build is supposed to be, then you can slot in all the other little pieces and it'll work much more effectively than you might believe.

Look at the top pro MorroW: for the longest time, he was well known for opening 14gas/14pool nearly every single game he played as Zerg. As a result, his responses to his opponents are always so crisply executed that he's rarely thrown off by things like early aggression and harassment. Clearly, a structured build is important to success and once you're comfortable with the opening, you'll be ready to proceed to the strategy. Here are the basics of the 15hatch lинг/roach timing attack:

These basic details, without any other information, should be practiced repetitively so that the order becomes memorized/second-nature. If you're frequently forgetting to build overlords at the appropriate times, you're not ready to focus on anything more complicated than that. When the order in which you execute a build is flawless and you know every move before you make it, you're ready to move onto step two:

- 9 OVERLORD
- 15 HATCH
- 15 GAS
- 15 POOL
- 17 OVERLORD
- 17 QUEEN X2
- 21 LINGS X2/4 (1-2 SETS)
- DRONES TO 28**
- 28 WARREN (REPLACE DRONE)
- START ZERGLING SPEED**
- 28 OVERLORDS X2
- 28-44 ROACHES
- 44 OVERLORDS X2
- 44-60 LINGS
- 60/60 3RD BASE/OVERLOAD

STEP 2: THINK EARLY GAME STRATEGY (GOLD - PLAT)

Now that you have your timings down, it's time to look at the specifics of when your buildings, units and upgrades finish. Once you have this information, you're ready to focus on the strategy—what you're going to do with your units. In the case of the 14hatch roach/ling opening, your main concerns are holding any kind of early pressure as cheaply as possible so that you can hit your opponent with the strongest timing attack. What Zerg players commonly do is drone scout after they start the hatchery (14 supply) to determine if their opponent is cheeseing. In the event of cheese, you would build spines/additional zerglings but for the sake of this guide, we'll be assuming standard "light" marine pressure or quick hellions. I almost always recommend exactly 4 zerglings if your opponent isn't opening 2barracks.

SPECIFIC TIMINGS TO CONSIDER WITH THE 14 HATCH ROACH/LING:

- 4:15** 2-4 lings spawn - you should kill your opponent's scouting worker and take the Xel'Naga. This will give you the information you need to determine whether you should make more lings, because if you see 6 marines coming you might NOT want to drone all the way to 28. You should only really feel safe from pressure in the early game once you have killed their scouting worker and have the Xel'Naga vision between your base and theirs, with one lинг patrolling the front of their base. Generally speaking, you will not experience heavy marine pressure so you only need 1 zergling to scout the front of your opponent's base and 1-2 zergling(s) to take the Xel'Naga(s). If you have all 4 lings out front of the Terran's base, you'll lose them to 1 hellion.
- 4:40** Both queens pop - you can spit with both these queens, but you should bring your main queen to your expansion use after the first inject (to defend hellions and spread one tumor). No hellions can hit you before your queens will finish, and usually only 1-2 hellions will be there before you get roaches on the field.
- 4:45** You start your warren. Typically you want to build this in your main, as it's less likely to be scouted by his hellions (remember, hellions never get up your ramp because you have 2 queens)
- 4:50** Start zergling speed. This may seem late to many players, but you don't end up needing early speed with your first hundred gas. It's much better to delay it, get your roach warren started, and then start the speed.
- 5:10** 2x overlords. It's very important not to forget these, as any seconds late will delay your roaches which could potentially mean drone losses if the Terran is aggressive with hellions.
- 5:15 /5:30** If they do decide to pressure with their 2 hellions at around 5:15/5:30 before your roaches are out, do NOT make zerglings. Instead, run your expansion drones up the ramp into your main and just hold your queens on the ramp until roaches spawn.
- 5:40** You should have the 200 gas you need to build your 8 roaches, so you can take guys out of gas and move them to mining your expansion.
- 5:45** Roach warren finishes and you can start 8 roaches right away.
- 6:00** 2x overlords. Again, don't forget these overlords! They're needed to produce lings as soon as the roaches are out, and they're crucial to the effectiveness of your timing attack.
- 6:20** 8x roaches spawn (just in time to deal with that scary 4-6 hellion count). You can lead with 3 roaches and then the other roaches a bit later to "meta-game" a bit, or you can just move right out with all 8 roaches and rally the hatcheries onto the roaches to reinforce with lings.
- 6:25** Lings building, your roaches are moving towards the Terran.
- 6:40** Ling speed finishes JUST as your lings pop, allowing them to get to your roaches very quickly. Earlier speed would have been wasted, so it times out just right.
- 7:15** Your army reaches the Terran expansion/ramp while you start your third base.



Above: With the fast roach warren in this build, you are able to hold early pressure and swing back at your opponent for a strong timing attack

STEP 3: PERFECTING THE DETAILS (PLAT+)

Once you have practiced the basic build order, are able to maintain consistent timings on your units/buildings/upgrades from game to game, and are comfortable utilizing the basic scouting/anti-scouting techniques I mentioned above, you're well on your way to optimally executing this build. Still, there is a LOT you can do to improve the efficiency of your opening, and it's time to fill in as many gaps as possible. The following is a very precise and detailed explanation of the 14hatch roach/ling timing and transition into mid/late game macro:

Here is the lesson replay:
<http://drop.sc/88288>

- 1 Drone splitting: For general purposes, take all 6 drones and right click either patch 3 or 6. Then select 3 while they're on their way and right click the other patch.
- 2 Next, rally additional drones to mineral patches that aren't being mined yet. If you forgot and rallied to the bottom patch, for example, your drone would first go to that patch, then "bounce" off and go to one of the top two patches. Earn a few extra mining seconds by rallying to patches that aren't being mined.
- 3 One patch left that isn't mined, rally to that one.
- 4 Now that you have 1 drone on each mineral patch, it's time to double-mine the closer patches. Make sure your drones "stick" to the patches you want them to go to. What often happens is the drone you rally will get there at the same time as the drone that is already mining, causing one of them to "bounce". You can avoid this by repetitively right clicking the patch with both drones (or the one that wants to bounce).
- 5 Again, we're rallying to those closer patches.
- 6 Uh oh, one drone wants to bounce, continuously right click until it sticks.
- 7 When constructing a building, you want to avoid pulling drones off mining when possible. For example, with a 14 hatch you can rally your 14th drone to build the hatchery.
- 8 Same thing with your pool, try to rally one of your drone eggs to do this instead of using a drone that's currently mining.
- 9 When gas is finishing, choose drones that are closer to the extractor but NOT those that are double-mining the close patches. Notice the drones pulled are either just popping out of eggs or just returning minerals. (This helps avoid wasted mining time/mining gas with a mouth full of minerals.)
- 10 Drone selection.
- 11 Drones all in gas, notice those 4 close patches still have 2 mining per patch.
- 12 16 overlord, try to get in the habit of rallying those eggs.
- 13 Your pool and hatchery should finish at about the same time, produce 2 queens and a set or 2 of lings right away. Don't transfer to expansion unless you need drones to defend, remember we want those drones mining 2 per patch.
- 14 After those lings, go right back into droning.
- 15 Rally drones to get 2 mining per patch, remember to make them stick.
- 16 ATTENTION: Now we have 2 mining per patch (total: 16 drones). We can now rally hatchery to expansion minerals. These 16 drones are NEVER touched for any reason, unless you're forced to defend with them.
- 17 Even when building a warren in your main at 28, you don't pull a drone off of mining – you use a rallied drone instead.
- 18 Replace the drone that built the warren and start speed at 28/28.
- 19 28/28 – Make 2 overlords and rally them right away.
- 20 Once you've mined 200 gas (not including ling speed) take drones out of gas and mine at expansion.
- 21 When warren is done, start 8 roaches immediately. Should put you at 44/44 with NO RESOURCES left over.
- 22 Rally your lings onto your roaches, make lings until 60 supply (44-60).
- 23 Once you're at 60, move a drone from your expansion to start your third.
- 24 8 roaches, 32 lings, and a third on the way at 7:15. Not bad!
- 25 While we're pressuring with roaches, we can be making overlords, a third queen, and drones.
- 26 When it's time to add gas or refill the geyser, use rallied drones AGAIN. You don't want to ever pull drones off your main 16 drone 2-per patch formation.
- 27 Even when building additional structures like your second gas, don't pull drones off of mining.
- 28 By 9 minutes, we have 2 fully mineral-saturated bases (2 per patch at 2 bases, 32 drones mining minerals).
- 29 Main still has those 16 drones mining.
- 30 At 10 minutes, our macro is in overdrive. Upgrades, lair and drones. (Unless your opponent is counter-attacking.)
- 31 Wow... by 10:10, even though we made all those units, we're at 52 drones with a third base and 4 queens, lair almost done and +1+1 on the way.
- 32 By 11:00, we can start our fourth and be up to 60 drones.
- 33 By 12:00, our infestation pit is almost done and we can be at 80+ drones, with hive on the way.
- 34 13:15 we have +2+2, lots of infestors and lings on the way.
- 35 By 14:00, we've got an incredible economy with all the tech we need on the way.
- 36 By 15:30, we're maxed out with excellent upgrades and ultralisks on the way.

EXECUTION

For those who want to adopt this style of ZvT, I have numerous stream episodes of roach/ling tutorials and coaching lessons to help you improve timings, mechanics, execution and transitions:

Stream Episodes:

<http://www.twitch.tv/tangsc/b/304624979>
<http://www.twitch.tv/tangsc/b/299761662>
<http://www.twitch.tv/tangsc/b/300152278>

SUMMARY:

Again, thank you everyone for taking the time to read my article. In short, focus first on learning the basic food timings of the build. Next, think about the strategy/scouting techniques as well as exact in-game timings, and finally, you'll be ready to really focus on the subtle details of the 14hatch roach/speedling opening. Use these tips and you'll quickly turn what is often deemed a cheesy, all-in build into an incredibly aggressive opening with lots of room for improvement and variations. And believe me, if you practice learning a build with these steps your overall gameplay will improve. And remember that once the large-scale macro aspects of your build are perfected, you'll naturally spend more time focused on improving the smaller details.



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