

BALANCING LEAGUE OF LEGENDS FOR EVERY PLAYER FROM BRONZE TO BENGI

Greg Street
Riot Games

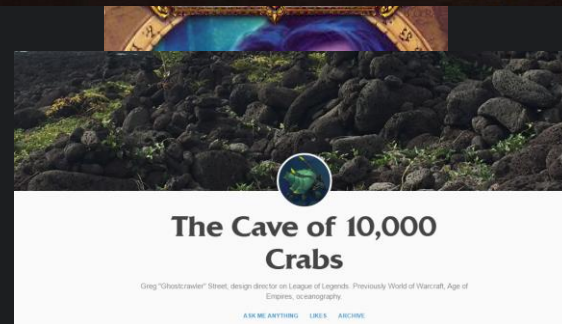
THIS IS BRONZE



THIS IS BENGI



THIS IS GREG STREET



THIS IS LEAGUE OF LEGENDS



THIS IS A CHAMPION



Leona

the Radiant Dawn



E - Zenith Blade



R - Solar Flare

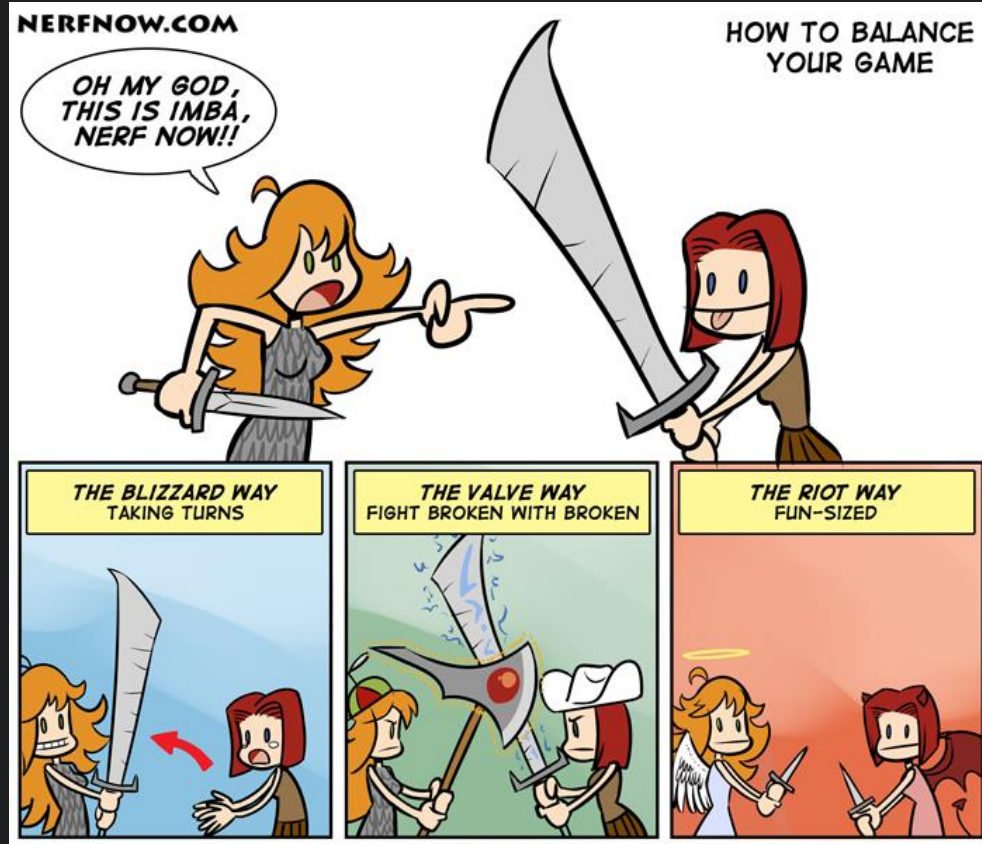
TOPIC OUTLINE

1. WHY IS BALANCE IMPORTANT?
2. BALANCE FOR DIFFERENT SKILL LEVELS
3. BALANCE FOR A MASSIVE AUDIENCE
4. HOW RIOT BALANCES LEAGUE

WHY IS BALANCE IMPORTANT?



WHAT IS GAME BALANCE?



A CONTRACT WITH THE PLAYER



A CONTRACT WITH THE PLAYER



**BALANCE =
PLAYER TRUST**

TRAGICALLY, BALANCE CAN BE HARD

- Balance is important to players and your game
- But the development cost is high



BALANCE FOR DIFFERENT SKILL LEVELS





SKILL CHECKS



COST OF EXECUTION



EXPLOITING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES



THE “CAVALRY ARCHER PROBLEM”



GROUP COORDINATION VS SOLO QUEUE



POWER FUNNELING



AI-DEPENDENT POWER: TURRETS TURRETS TURRETS



STRONG WINDOWED POWER



LEVERAGING EARLY GAME ADVANTAGE



LATENCY



STRATEGY OVER TACTICS



BALANCE FOR A MASSIVE AUDIENCE



LEAGUE IS A BIG GAME

IN-GAME STATS

TEEMO DEATH UPDATE:



6.5 MILLION = 75

DEATHS A DAY

DEATHS A
SECOND

AT RIOT, WE MAKE OUR LIVES HARD...



BECAUSE EVERYONE PLAYS BY THE SAME RULES



PLAYING BY THE SAME RULES



PLAYING BY THE SAME RULES



BUT, YOU KNOW...

- While messy, multiple rule sets has some benefits
 - We sometimes jump through hoops to solve over-constrained problems with one rule set
 - Anyway...

HOW RIOT BALANCES LEAGUE



HAVE A PHILOSOPHY !



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LOL DESIGN VALUES

- Mastery
- Meaningful Choices
- Counterplay
- Teamplay
- Clarity
- Evolution



THEN... FOLLOW THAT PHILOSOPHY !



BUT, HAVE RISK MITIGATION

- You need a plan
- KPIs
- So you can agree if you missed your goals
- If you did, then enact the plan

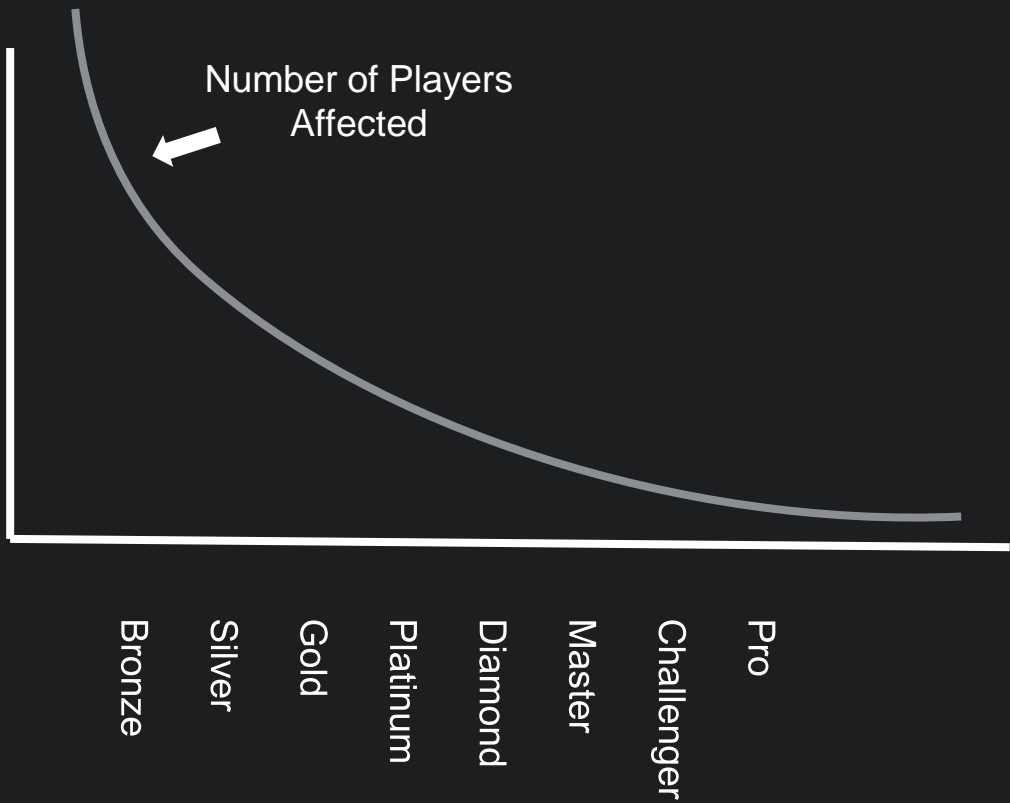


FOCUS ON A TARGET

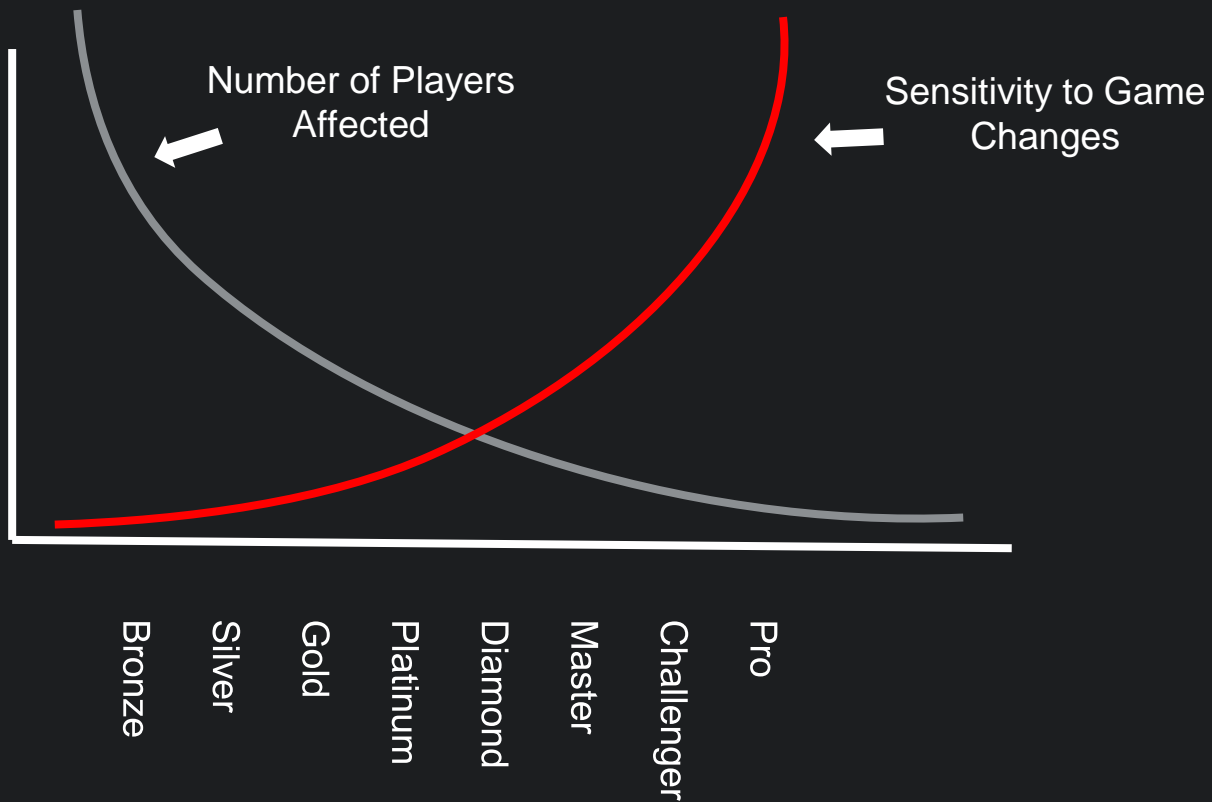
- We aspire to balance for all players
- But being able to focus helps avoid insanity
- Still look at outliers at all levels



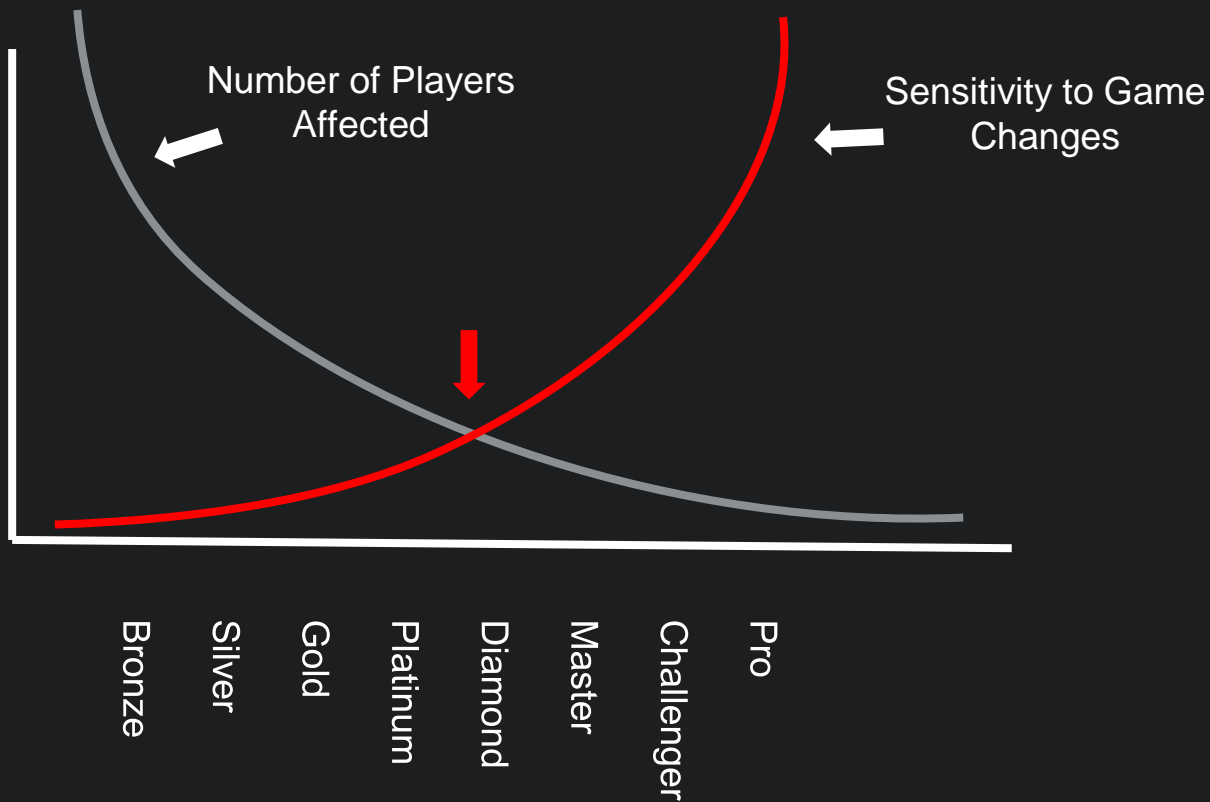
FOCUS ON A TARGET



FOCUS ON A TARGET



FOCUS ON A TARGET



PLAYERS KNOW YOU'RE DOING IT WRONG



PRO BALANCE IS OFTEN ABOUT VIEWERS



**THIS STUFF IS HARD
IT TAKES A LOT OF DEV SKILL
AND BANDWIDTH**



TEAM STRUCTURE

■ Dedicated Live Team



TEAM STRUCTURE

- Also **Playtest Team** of very skilled players



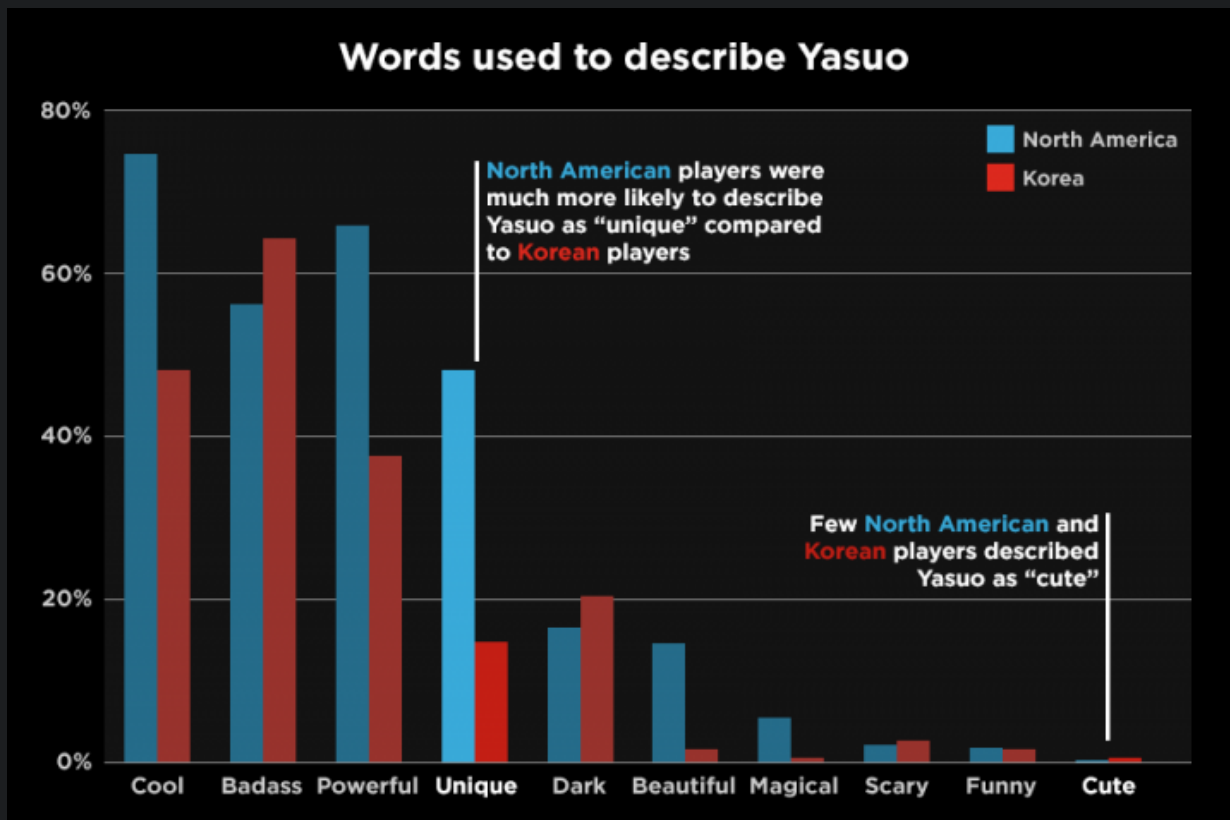
WE TREAT LEAGUE AS A SEASON



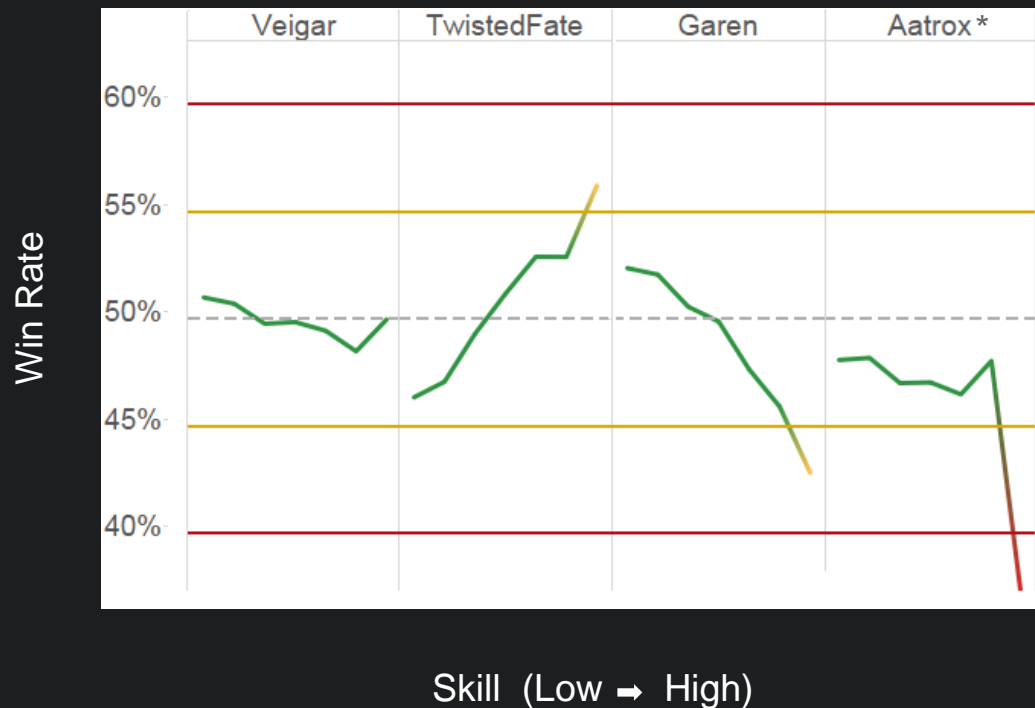
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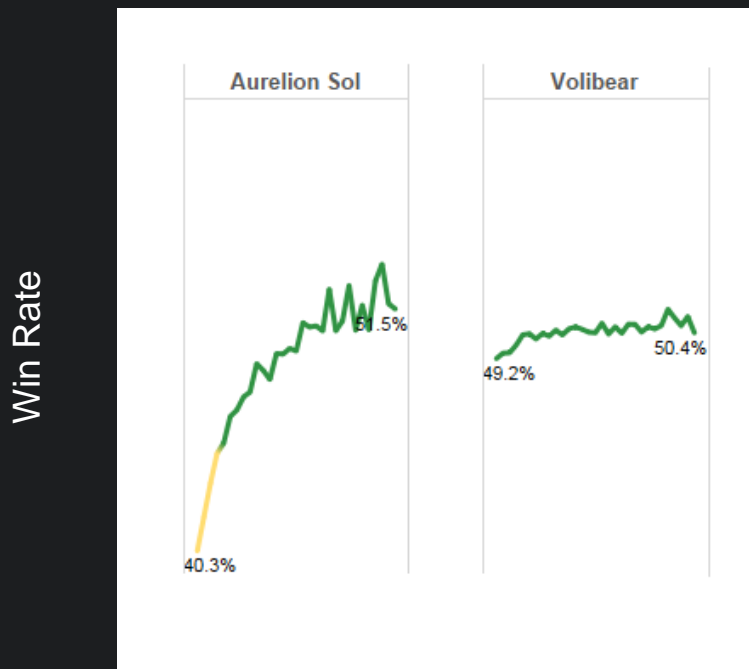
HOW WE USE DATA



WIN RATE BY PLAYER SKILL



SKILL FLOORS AND CEILINGS



INTERPRET YOUR DATA

U MAD BRO?



INTERPRET YOUR DATA



FROGGEN'S ANIVIA

BUT KNOW WHEN TO IGNORE YOUR DATA

AM I OP?



SHHH! SECRET DATA



SHHH! SECRET DATA



BUT WHAT DO YOU CHANGE?



+



Courage of the Colossus

Poppy

PLAYTEST YOUR OWN DAMN GAME ... BUT NOT TOO MUCH!



LEVERAGE PLAYER FEEDBACK



LEVERAGE PLAYER FEEDBACK



WE ALSO JUST ASK PLAYERS

- Player labs
- Surveys
- Cross-reference with analytics data

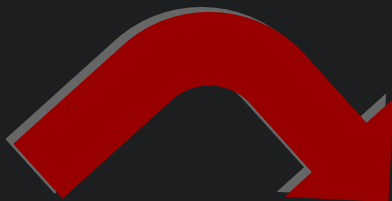
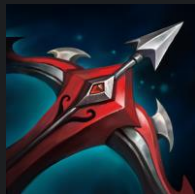


ITERATE

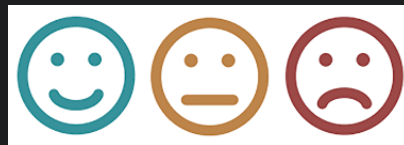
ITERATE

ITERATE

Make Change



Gather
Data



Gather
Feedback



ITERATE



Patch 6.6 notes

BY SCARIZARD



Nidalee

Hunting monsters no longer roots them. W's damage increased, but basic attack reset removed.

“ Speaking of champions with lots of strengths and few weaknesses, we come to Nidalee. Nid's potency in professional leagues around the world is warping diversity to the point that she's a must-pick or must-ban in most situations, thanks to her incredible versatility and objective control (what scuttle crab?). We're lowering Nidalee's ability to run circles around the competition with a lead in pro play without significantly impacting her performance in normal play. ”



Passive - Prowl

REMOVED HUNTING SEASON : Hunting monsters no longer roots them



W - Pounce

REMOVED FURY SWIPES : No longer resets Nidalee's basic attack

BASE DAMAGE : 50/100/150/200 ⇒ 65/110/155/200

ITERATE



Patch 6.7 notes

BY SCARIZARD



Nidalee

W damage down early, up later.

“ We changed Nidalee last patch with the goal of reducing her dominance in the jungle for high-level players, but introduced a compensatory boost to Pounce's damage in the event that we went too hard. In reality, the opposite occurred - Nidalee actually improved as people adapted to the changes. While we're happy to hear she's able to succeed, we're slightly dialing back on Nid's clear speed to give other junglers a chance to shine. ”



W - Pounce

DAMAGE : 65/110/155/200 ⇒ 60/110/160/210

ITERATE



Patch 6.9 notes

BY SCARIZARD, AETHER, & GENTLEMAN GUSTAF



Nidalee

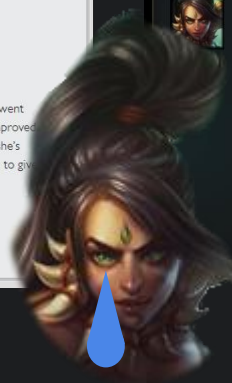
Takedown's execute now scales with ult rank.

“ While we're on the subject, you can't mention powerful early game junglers without mentioning the Bestial Huntress herself. Another outlier, we're taking a crack at Nidalee's early kill pressure while ensuring she has the bite she needs for her risky late-game assassination plays. ”



Q - Takedown

EXECUTE BONUS DAMAGE : +5% per 1% of the target's missing health ⇒
1/1.25/1.5/1.75% per 1% of the target's missing health (based on rank of R - Aspect of the Cougar)



BAND-AID VS LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS



EXAMPLE:

DO I NEED SURGERY?



REMEMBER: BALANCE ISN'T EVERYTHING

- Champs can be balanced but still frustrating




REMEMBER: PLAYERS PICK CHAMPS FOR A LOT OF REASONS

■ Not just balance!



BEING ON A BALANCE TEAM IS HARD

I don't know what's going on with riot balance team lately self.leagueoflegends
submitted 11 months ago by [Mood_in_Blue](#) 

Why is the balance team so terrible?



Sm0k3McCl0ud (NA) submitted about a year ago in [Gameplay](#)

Is LoL gonna suffer the same fate as WoW? (ghostcrawler balancing design) self.leagueoflegends
submitted 1 year ago by [oiimn](#)

So everyone remembers when Ghostcrawler was employed by riot and everyone was complaining he ruined WOW making ice mages incredibly overpowered. And then some people said he only took the blame for it?

Riot You Need a New Balance Team



Keevalroy (NA) submitted 2 years ago in [Gameplay](#)

CONCLUSION

- Balance matters for longevity and engagement
- Understand why certain factors affect balance at different skill levels
- Have a philosophy - not just changes based on data but checking against your goals
- Iteration and follow-through

YOU'RE GOING TO SCREW UP A LOT !
I SCREW UP A LOT !
RIOT SCREWS UP A LOT !



- Follow up when it does
- Good relationship with your community will help
- Good luck!



QUESTIONS?



@OccupyGStreet
AskGhostcrawler.Tumblr.com