



First PTS Iteration for PvP Patch #3

Main Topics

A) Pure Frost Rework

B) Fire Frost Rework

C) T3 Power level increase

D) 2v2 nerfs

The main topics of our third PvP patch rotation will finally include a serious amount of buffs. We will try to build up Fire Frost and pure Frost in a way, that should make these two decks a lot more appealing in general with smoother gameplay and more small interactions, that make them more fun to play (and more fun to play against hopefully). On top of that we will increase some of the currently underwhelming T3 options to bring more creative strategies to deck building, which might allow to construct more powerful T3s outside of the established meta choices. On top of that a few 2v2 nerfs will round up this patch, but this should only address the absolute top performers.

General Procedure

The next patch rotation will hit the PTS much earlier than the previous one. This is an intended move as it allows us to work with more iterations to make sure a lot of fine tuning can be done. Many of those changes will bring some new strategies into the Forge, that require more testing compared to the previous process. On top of that this will also be an opportunity for you to test those changes a little bit longer as well to provide more playtesting feedback, that we can use to reevaluate our proposals.

Card Changes

Altar of Nihil

- Reduce HP 2190 -> 990
- Cut U3 initial cooldown upgrade and keep it at 60s
- Increase cost 80 -> 110

Increased the amount of counterplay by adding drawbacks to the altar and make it more fragile, so it can be destroyed in the first place. By increasing its cost and initial cooldown, playing the Altar should be riskier and punishable.

Backlash

- Cost decrease 130 -> 120

Currently Backlash doesn't really generate enough value to be of any use. While it's good, that building damage got heavily reduced, a small decrease in cost might be reasonable to give Fire splashes more power, if a player opts for an extended T3 with many slots. This could enable players to scale to the 700+ void T3s which enables explosive trading.

Bandit Lancer

- HP Decrease 1100 -> 1040 (still a buff compared to live)

The tested buffs from last patch went a little bit too far and turned Bandit Lancer into a single spam unit. Distributing the power onto multiple units in T3 for Bandits sounds more interesting (see Bandit Gunner) and proposed buffs to Magma Hurler could elevate a strong synergy with the ability of Bandit Lancer as the range increase works perfectly with this unit.

Bandit Gunner

- Cost decrease 110 -> 100

Bringing a little bit more extra power into the Bandit T3. Bandit Gunner struggles to find a consistent place in the meta, therefore we'd like to buff it a little bit.

Crystal Fiend

- Reduced self heal 30s -> 25s

Allowing factions without access to heavy burst damage (mostly Stonekin, pure Nature & pure Frost) to punish poor positioning of the Crystal fiend. This should make large stonekin armies a little bit less self-sufficient and therefore might lead to more interesting gameplay overall.

Drones

- Cost decreased 120 -> 100
- Damage decreased 2000 -> 1840
- Health decreased 1800 -> 1750

Drones are completely outclassed by Silverwind Lancers and even got cut out of current nature splash options, that have no access to a frost orb. This change should help giving Drones a more stable place in the current meta and also provide more consistent counter options to strong L Siege units like Tremor or supported Ashbone Pyros.

Dryad (blue)

- Damage reduction only applies to own units

Fixing the current 2v2 issues, where Nature + Shadow/Fire lead to extremely powerful unit compositions, that were almost impossible to beat in a proper T1 fight.

Frost Sorceress

- Decreased Ability Cooldown 10s -> 7s

Buffing the core unit of Fire Frost T2 setups. This change should enable one Frost Sorceress to support up to three units with iceshields. Currently this wasn't possible due to the long animation time on her ability. This change will reduce the power demand for Fire Frost unit compositions as you will be able to apply more Iceshields with less bound power into Frost Sorceress.

Global Warming

- Cost decreased 65 -> 50
- Range decreased 25m -> 15

With easier access to Frost shields we intend to bring Global Warming into a stronger position as pure Fire, which struggles in the buffed matchups already, should get a little bit more counterplay to empowered Frost Sorceress play. With this drastic energy decrease we also reduce the range by a little bit to enable counterplay by splitting properly against it.

Gladiatrix

- Ability cost reduction 75 -> 55
- New: Can cast her ability on allied units

Gladiatrix, while being a necessary pick in at least 2 decks, currently appears to be quite underwhelming in many scenarios. The card is an essential anti air tool, but doesn't really do a great job against buffed L/XL units, where the unit is supposed to shine. The cost reduction on her ability should make her more useful in that scenario and the new mechanic should also make Gladiatrix more flexible to support attacks once it transitions after a successful defense.

Icefang Raptor

- Add a splash radius to its attacks
- HP increase 895 -> 900
- New: Agility mechanic also triggered, when this unit is shielded

Icefang Raptor can't fulfill its purpose as an S-Counter since it has no splash radius leading to a weird scenario where you need to attack each squadmember of an S-Squad to finish it off. Fixing this would already help this unit to find its place as a proper S-Counter. On top of that we want to strengthen pure Frost and Fire Frost synergies by granting this unit extra movement speed once it's affected by an ice-shield.

Lyrish Knight

- Damage Increase 400 -> 440

Lyrish Knight struggles to find a place in the current meta as he doesn't provide too much extra value even in Frost starter decks, that already do have the perfect setup for him. Increasing the overall damage should grant decks like pure Frost and Fire Frost more low energy trading options outside of Stormsinger, while also opening up stronger paths for Frost starters in general. We need to track its overall power level though, as Lyrish Knight performs as an allround counter that can get pretty oppressive due to the high statline.

Magma Hurler

- Damage increase 1500 -> 1700 (current description is wrong)
- Increase splash radius by 3m
- Fix description: Attacks every 4 seconds -> Attacks every 5 seconds

Overall this unit underperforms in PvP. Would be useful as a potential L counter and anti air unit in Fire Nature, synergizes with bandit lancer for some fun strategies and would give Fire Frost a ranged unit to support Timeless One T3 setup. While bringing the damage ratio more into the line of T3 units, we also increase its splash radius by 3m to make sure, that their attacks can't get dodged so easily anymore. Needs to be tested properly though as the unit has quite some frontloaded damage.

Magma Spore

- Removed splash damage
- Increased single target damage from 160 to 200 per hit leading to a total damage increase from 1260 to 1400
- Fix description: Attacks every 2 seconds -> Attacks every 3 seconds

These changes make the unit more consistent as a specific counter to Air units. Charge changes will have an impact onto its usability in a spam with Motivate as well, which shouldn't be too powerful though.

Master Archers

- Various versions will appear on the Testserver to check potential implications of decreased health and increased damage ratios on Master Archers. This enables more diverse unit compositions as a raw spam will be punishable through AoE while the additional damage ratio should make Master Archers more impactful on lower unit counts already. This probably won't go live with the next patch, but we launch it early onto the testserver as they will require a lot of testing time.

Mountain Rowdy

- Ability self damage reduction reduced 75% -> 50%
- Change Counter Type M -> L
- Cost increase 55 -> 60
- HP decreased 860 -> 800
- Ability Range increased 20m -> 30m
- New Effect: Ability now applies an AoE slow

Mountain Rowdy currently lacks an identity in pure Frost and we want to give it a new meaningful role in the deck. Therefore we will first of all switch its counter type to L since pure Frost already has extremely powerful tools against M units. On top of that we want to make him synergize with the remaining T2 kit pure Frost has, therefore a slow effect onto its iceblock ability gets added. This should synergize nicely with War Eagle & White Rangers making it easier to hit the ability.

Skyelf Templar

- hp decrease 850 -> 700

While we introduce new buffed options to play pure Frost we also need to weaken one of its most oppressive ones. Skyelf Templar can easily secure Air superiority against Fire splashes effectively making War Eagle untouchable leading to extremely snowball oriented games. We want to remove Skyelf Templar from pure Frost to make more room for other options.

T3 Charges

Currently T3 Charge Breakpoints differ between many units for no particular reason. We want to make charge counts more equal in the future unless they are an important balance tool for units with extraordinary efficiency (f.e. Giantslayer, Cultist Master or Timeless One). We do think reasonable charge breakpoints would be 1200 power for ranged and 1600 power for melee units. This would lead to the following charge changes:

- Bandit Lancer 20 -> 24
- Fallen Skyelf 8 -> 12
- Fathom Lord 8 -> 12
- Magma Spore 16 -> 24
- Mutating Maniac 8 -> 12
- Sun Reaver 8 -> 12
- Swamp Drake 8 -> 10
- Twilight Creeper 12 -> 16
- Twilight Hag 12 -> 16
- Unstable Demon 12 -> 16
- Virtuoso 8 -> 12
- Vulcan 8 -> 10

Timeshifter Spirit

- Increased Healing 240/120/60/30/15 -> 320/160/80/40/20

Small QoL buff for an underperforming unit. Increasing its potential to set up super aggressive anti magic auras is dangerous, therefore it is less risky to buff other parts of its kit. The empowered healing ability might allow use cases in defense, to make the unit more versatile overall, which lets you work with transitions rather than using it purely for the antimagic aura.

Satanael

- Cost Decrease 220 -> 210
- Ability Cost decrease 100 -> 65
- Ability Cooldown decrease 60s -> 40s
- Snapjaw counts reduced 3 -> 2

While Satanael doesn't seem to be that weak as a ranged XL unit, it requires a lot of deck slots to be supported efficiently (Unholy Power, Bloodhealing etc.) and the resource demand stacks up rather quickly. By lowering the power requirements Satanael might see a little bit more play again and also makes the options in the pure Shadow T3 path more interesting. Ability cooldown got adjusted to make sure you can get similar Snapjaw counts over time for PvE use cases.

Shrine of Greed

Discussing nerf options

- A) Only works for the player, that uses the effect
- B) Can't be self destructed during activation stage
- C) Reworked towards T3 with different effect (PvE oriented)

Skyelf Sage

- Damage increased 1320 -> 1440
- HP increased 975 -> 1040
- Counter Type changed L -> XL

Providing a potential compensation for Skyelf Templar nerfs to keep an anti XL Air tool for Frost splashes.

Sunreaver

- Damage increase 1000 -> 1100

Sunreaver currently isn't in the best position as its passive ability makes it too unreliable to be an allround counter unit and only keeps it relevant in extended Siege situations or in combination with hard cc, that enables the Sunreaver to apply its passive burn. While buffing the passive could quickly go out of hand as we know from the past, adding a little bit base damage shouldn't hurt.

Swamp Drake

- Ability cost decreased 30 -> 20
- Damage increase 1500 -> 1650

With buffs to Magma Hurler and the removal of critical cliffing positions on 1v1 maps we intend to buff up some Air units for a higher diversity in T3. This could also help some factions at countering long range Air units like Spitfire in 2v2.

Unstable Demon

- New Ability: Consumes 500hp to get additional movement & unit turnspeed for 5 seconds

Making unstable Demon more versatile by allowing players to manually reduce their hp and also increase their chase potential in defensive scenarios. Might be extremely powerful and needs to be tested properly

Voidstorm

- Cooldown increased 30s -> 60s

Increasing the cooldown of this card should lower its efficiency to stabilize from heavy tempo deficits. Opening up proper timewindows to punish a poorly timed Voidstorm should be desired as its global mapclear function has extreme implications in 1v1, but especially 2v2.

Wintertide

- Allow melee units to walk at slow movespeed

Wintertide's new mechanic doesn't work out as we had hoped. The new bonus damage on melee units leads to rather one dimensional and mostly inefficient use cases as you have to use the card proactively against knockback. Therefore we would like to enable melee unit to walk with slow movespeed during the Wintertide, making this new mechanic a little bit more appealing.

Cards, that won't go live with the next iteration, but might be reviewed soon.

Scorched Earth

We do think, that Scorched Earth has a pretty unhealthy mechanic, where it can delay the construction of an orb twice. Granting buildings an immunity after being affected from Scorched Earth once was our initial goal, but this didn't seem to be technically feasible (for now). We might introduce a cooldown increase at some point to reduce its dominance on small maps.

Tempest

Potential target to be moved from T4 to T3 in order to rebalance it for PvP while Northland Drake will move up from T3 to T4 and receive PvE oriented changes. Still needs to be discussed in the future.

Timeless One

The Timeless One T3s generally performs very well on high void T3s. With adding more power to potentially triple Frost and Fire Frost in T3 we might need to consider a nerf to our current top performing control T3 option. Will be reviewed after the first iteration.

Juggernaut

Stampede doesn't have enough counterplay, which leads to critical snowball performances in several 1v1 matchups and especially 2v2s. We are aware, that pure Fire needs a strong T3 finisher mechanic to keep the triple Fire path interesting. Juggernaut has to be a strong tool and pure Fire also will be affected a lot by other changes, therefore we won't do anything for now, but we keep an eye onto the Juggernaut.