

Rating World of Warcraft Players

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Introduction & Background

To become good at anything, one must practice. To become a top ranked player in any game or sport, one must play so often that the amount of mistakes one makes is nearly non-existent. This holds true in World of Warcraft Arena, where countless changing factors must be instantly absorbed, processed, and reacted to.

The phrase ‘practice makes perfect’ is one that nearly every person has heard from someone encouraging them to improve and do better. While much research has been conducted on this subject in other regards, little to no research has been done regarding videogame performance as it relates to play time.

In an era of rapid technical advancement in which video gaming has become increasingly widespread and popular, video games no longer focus solely on plot and storylines to immerse gamers; videogames themselves have become a sport.^[1] E-gaming, or so the phenomenon of videogames as a sport is called, has grown in popularity within modern culture and even taken roots in the public media.^[2]

The development of massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) and MMO role-playing games (MMORPGs) have been at the root of changing the way that videogames are played.^[3] World of Warcraft marks an important midway point between storyline based games and purely competitive games like CounterStrike and Halo. These types of games connect

hundreds, thousands, and even millions of people online to play together. Video-gaming has taken on a more social aspect, and with it, a competitive nature.

Combining competitive e-sports with mainstream media coverage has only boosted the popularity of competitive gaming. Teams travel around the country and around to world to appear at sponsored events where they compete for prizes. In 2007, the United States won the World Cyber Games Grand Final in Seattle, a competition which drew more than 700 players from 74 countries and awarded more than \$500,000 in cash and prizes. ^[4] Competitiveness in interactive game-play is at the heart of World of Warcraft, making it an important game to consider when discussing social video-gaming.

World of Warcraft has two main focuses, Player Versus Environment (PvE) and Player Versus Player (PvP). The game is highly goal oriented, with great emphasis placed upon obtaining better gear. To accumulate the best gear, players must either partake in high level PvE or PvP. Participation in end game PvE and high ranked PvP is highly time consuming. While PvE is competitive, the most competitive facet of the game is arena, head to head death-matches.

To beat the other team, players must out strategize, out play, and out coordinate the other team. To be able to consistently do this requires lots of practice, meaning lots of time spent playing WoW. Two good ways to measure how often top arena players spend playing WoW without requiring direct confirmation from each are to look at achievement points and PvE progression. By gauging how far top ranked arena players have progressed in PvE, how many PvE pieces they wear, how many Gladiator titles they have, and what their gearscore is, it can be proven that PvE and PvP are closely linked and share the requirement of hours of dedication.

Methods

Research

The research categories used to gather data concerning the top 84 ranked (based on 5/27/2010 standings) arena players were: Rank, Player Name, Guild, Class, Alliance/Horde, 3v3 Rating, Overall Arena Score, Achievement Points, ICC25 Progression, Kingslayer Title, Gearscore, PvE Pieces Worn, Seasons As Gladiator, and Rank 1 Titles. All research was conducted from Arenajunkies.com, Wow-heroes.com, and Wowarmory.com.

Rank, Player, Class, A/H, 3v3 Rating, Overall Arena Score, Seasons as Gladiator, and Rank 1 Titles were all obtained from Arena Junkies. Arena Junkies is a site that tracks arena team and player rankings worldwide, including all European, Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese servers. The website also provides multiple arena resources such as strategy guides, macros, talent calculators, live streams, and forums. All information on Arena Junkies is legitimate and updated regularly.

Gearscore was determined from Wow-heroes.com. The site is similar to the armory but provides gearscore, a number based on the item levels of a character's gear.

Guild, Achievement Points, ICC25 Progress, Kingslayer Title, and # of PvE Pieces Worn were all gathered from wowarmory.com. The WoW Armory is Blizzard's official site tracking player profiles and updating them every time the character logs off.

Categorization

Study A

Five categories were determined for grouping the players based on PvE involvement. The term PvE hero loosely means deeply involved in PvE, but does not hold as much significance

due to the fact that raiding in WOTLK can be fairly casual. PvE achievements relate directly to progress in ICC25.

1. Uninterested in other aspects of the game. < 3000 Achievement points. No notable PvE achievements. No Kingslayer title.
2. Definite involvement in other aspects. 3000 to 6000 achievement points. PvE Hero. Notable PvE achievements. Kingslayer title.
3. Definite involvement in other aspects. 3000 to 6000 achievement points. Few or no notable PvE achievements. No Kingslayer title.
4. High involvement in other aspects. >6000 achievement points. Few notable PvE achievements. No Kingslayer title.
5. High involvement in other aspects. >6000 achievement points. PvE Hero. Prominent PvE achievements. Kingslayer title.

This study was intended to set out a basis of game participation among high ranked arena players.

Study B

The next item looked at was Gearscore in comparison to Kingslayer title. The categories are as follows.

1. $GS < 2800$
2. $2800 \leq GS \leq 2900$
3. $2900 < GS \leq 3000$

4. GS > 3000

This study sought to determine whether or not PvE progress affects the level of gear which players choose to wear in arena.

Study C

Next, number of PvE pieces worn in arena was compared to the average number of bosses downed in ICC25. Values ranged from 1 through 7+ pieces worn. Number of bosses downed ranged from 0 to 24; heroic ICC25 kills were simply added on top of normal boss kills. Similar to Study B but using different variables, this study sought to relate PvE progression to amount of PvE gear worn in arena.

Study D

The number of seasons a player has been Gladiator was compared to average achievement points to determine length of playtime and its relation to involvement in other aspects of the game. Seasons as a Gladiator ranged from 0 to 7.

Results

General

Of the 84 players which information was gathered about, it was mandatory to exclude a few from categories in which no information could be found. The two categories this affected the most were Gearscore, Achievement Points, ICC25 Progression, and Kingslayer Title. Gearscore was incomplete for 11 players; each of the other three categories was incomplete for five players.

The average and standard deviation of each category pertinent to the research was determined prior to any of the studies. The average achievement points (n=79) were 5062 (stdev=1723). About 78.5% of players (n=62) did not have the Kingslayer title, while about 21.5% (n=17) did. On average, each player had killed 9.6 bosses in ICC25 (stdev=7.17). Average gearscore was 2891 (stdev=90.94). The number of PvE pieces worn in arena per player averaged to 3.85 (stdev=2.18, n=75) pieces. Lastly, each player averaged 2.48 (stdev=2.02) seasons as a Gladiator.

Study A

Study A found that of the 17 players with Kingslayer titles, 58.8% (n=10) had definite involvement in World of Warcraft aspects other than arena and 41.2% (n=7) were highly involved outside of arena. For reference to the categories, see the Methods section. No players with the Kingslayer title had fewer than 3000 achievement points. Of those without the Kingslayer title, 70.9% (n=43) had definite PvE involvement but not to an extreme amount. 8% (n=5) were fairly uninterested in other aspects of the game, while 22.5% (n=14) demonstrated high involvement outside of arena. Figure 1 is located in the Appendix.

Study B

Study B found that of the population of 73 sampled, more Kingslayers had higher gearscores than those who did not have the title. 11 players had a GS < 2800; none held the title. 32 players had a GS between 2800 and 2900; 4 held the title. 18 players had a GS between 2900 and 3000; 2 held the title. 12 players had a GS over 3000; 8 held the title. Figure 2 is located in the Appendix.

Study C

Study C found that of 77 players, not a single one was not wearing at least one piece of PvE gear. Players with 1 piece (14.3%, n=11) averaged 4 boss kills in ICC25. Players with 2 pieces (20.8%, n=16) averaged 4.75 boss kills. Players with 3 pieces (10.4%, n=8) averaged 8.13 boss kills. Players with 4 pieces (15.6%, n=12) averaged 9.33 boss kills. Players with 5 pieces (16.9%, n=13) averaged 16.54 boss kills. Players with 6 pieces (11.7%, n=9) averaged 10.44 boss kills. Players with 7 or more pieces (10.4%, n=8) averaged 15.35 boss kills. Figure 3 is located in the Appendix.

Study D

Study D found that of the 78 players surveyed, a greater majority have not been gladiators for many seasons. 19% (n=15) had never been Gladiators before and averaged 4474 achievement points. 19% (n=15) have been Gladiator once and averaged 4225 points. 11.5% (n=9) have been Gladiator twice and averaged 5185 points. 19% (n=15) have been Gladiator for three seasons and averaged 5515 points. 11.5% (n=9) have been Gladiator four times and averaged 5932 points. 10% (n=8) have been Gladiator five times and averaged 4843 points. 3.8% (n=3) have been Gladiators for 6 seasons and averaged 5816 points. 5% (n=4) of players have been Gladiators for all 7 seasons, and averaged 6821 points. Figure 4 is located in the Appendix.

Discussion

It is important to first note that the high standard deviations associated with number of ICC bosses cleared, PvE pieces worn, and Seasons as Gladiator detract from the statistics significance.

The study was conclusive in determining that PvE and PvP are closely intertwined with a few exceptions. More players had the Kingslayer title with a GS of over 3000 than any other gearscore. Similarly, players wearing more PvE pieces were further along in ICC25 than their more PvP geared counterparts. A general upward trend of achievement points existed in relation to number of seasons a player obtained the Gladiator title.

It certainly would have been helpful to have had the full data of all 84 test subjects. Some characters were in PvE gear sets often, likely indicating a high rate of pve, and a number must have transferred because they could not be found.

The recent changes to resilience certainly made a huge difference on how much PvE gear different classes are able to use. Paladins, for example, used to be able to wear nearly complete PvE sets and excel at healing and survivability in arena. The changes implemented by Blizzard have successfully created less of an opportunity for hardcore raiders to take advantage PvE gear.

A survey conducted on Arena Junkies in February 2010 asked members “Are you a PvE hero?” Despite the fact that no definition was given, between dedicated arena players the definitions for the word are not too varied. 61.65% (209 total rolls) said no and 38.35% (130) said yes. This is certainly interesting, especially due to the fact that there was not one player without a single piece of PvE gear incorporated into their arena sets.

Further studies in this field would benefit from classifying the exact characteristics of an avid PvE player and defining the term PvE hero. It is generally when a person wears a large quantity of high end raid gear. However, in Wrath of the Lich King raiding has become so easy that much of ICC25 can be PuG'd.

Appendix

Figure 1, Study A

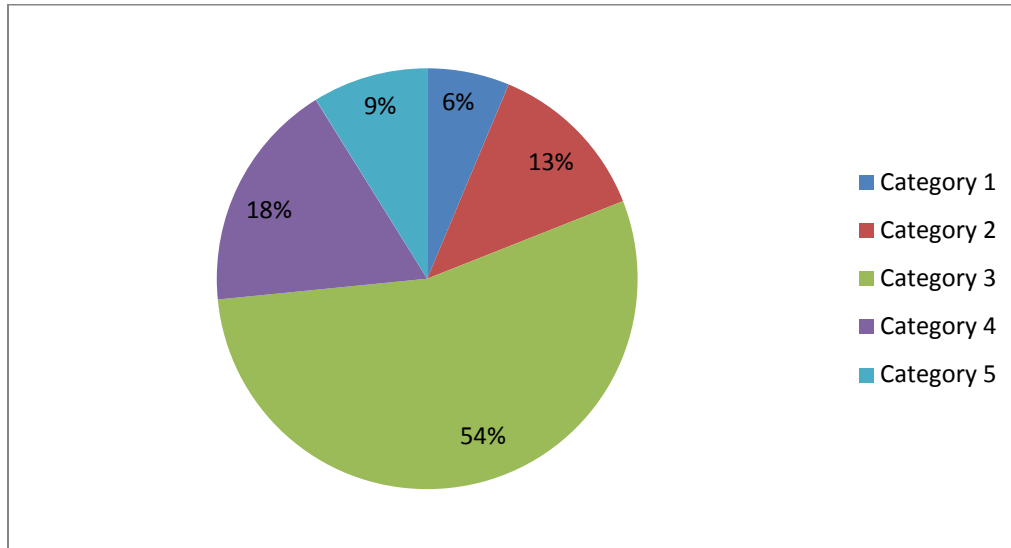


Figure 2, Study B

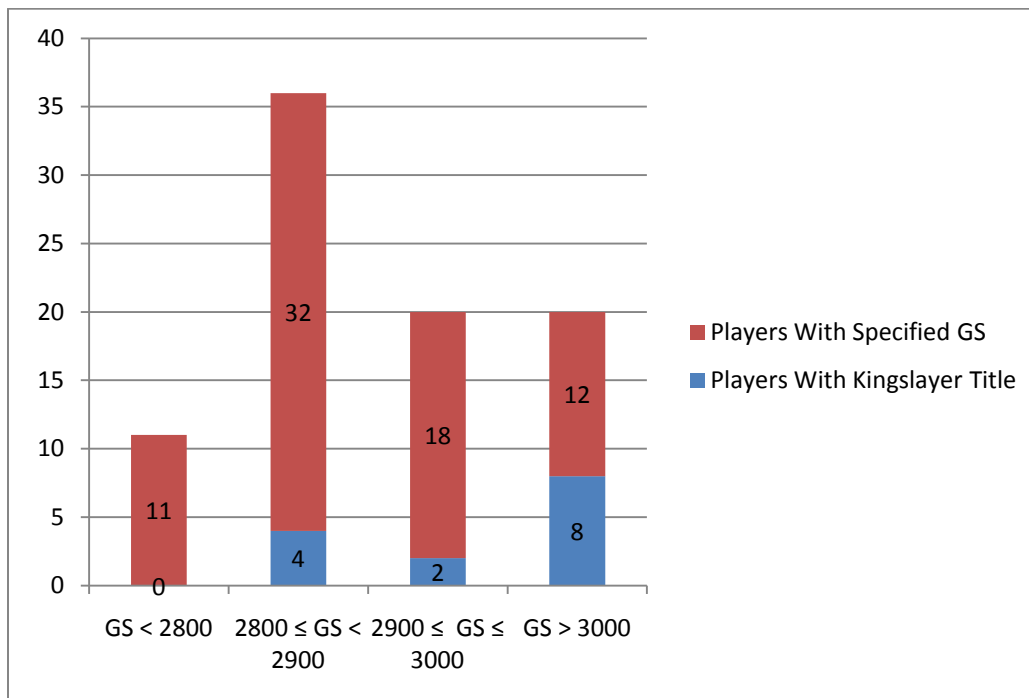


Figure 3, Study C

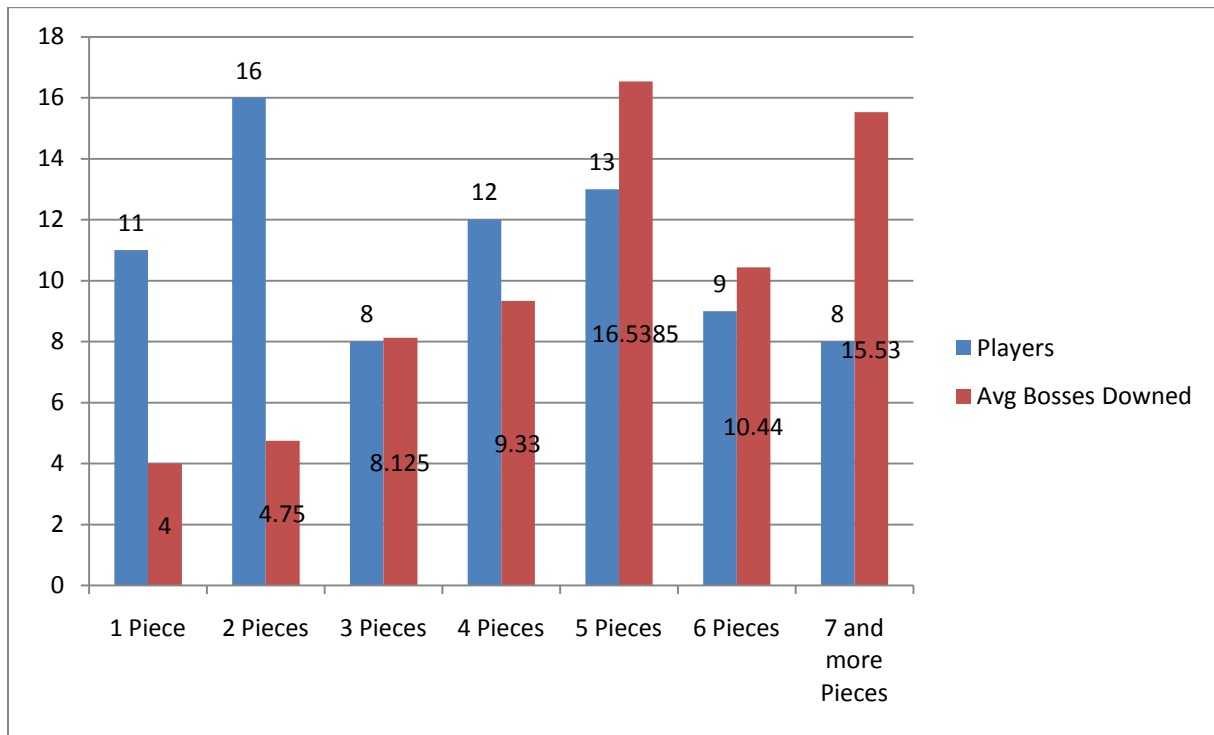
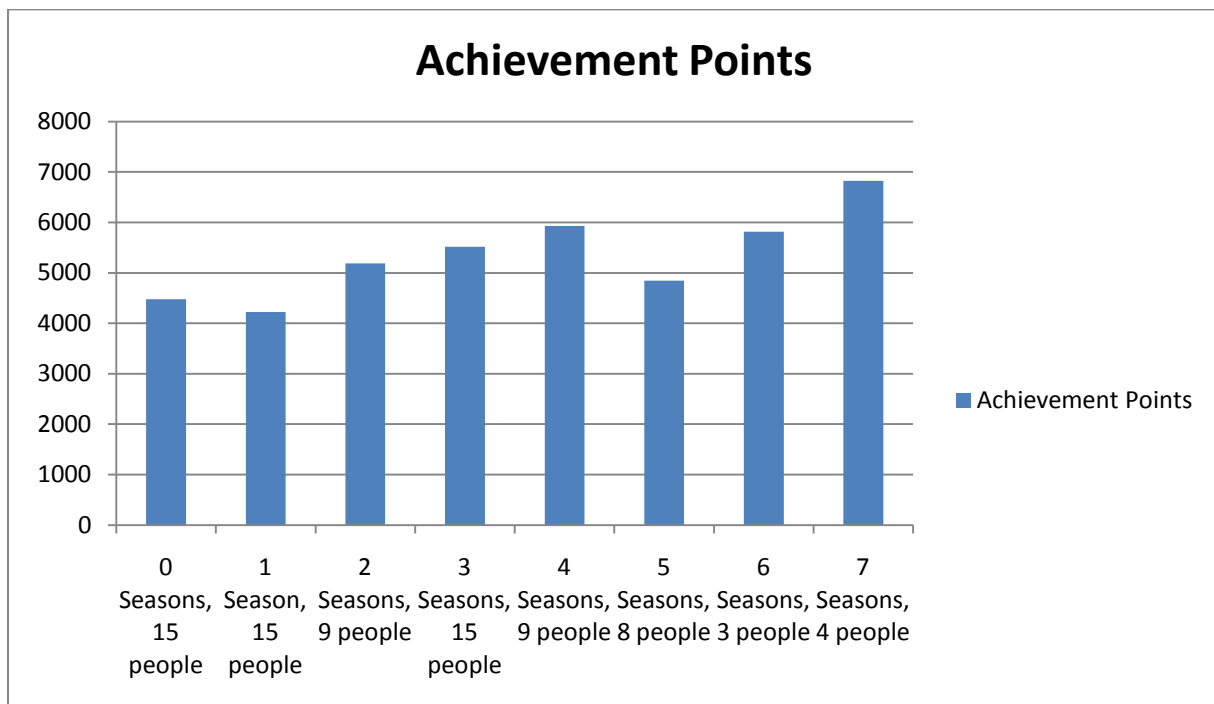


Figure 4, Study D



References

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