

Best Arena Classes in World of Warcraft

Adam Appel

University of Denver

Author Note

Adam Appel, WRIT 1133 at the University of Denver. Correspondence concerning this paper should be addressed to Appel.

## Introduction

In World of Warcraft (WoW), PvP arenas have become one of the most popular and challenging parts of the game. Arenas were introduced into WoW in 2007 with the release of the first expansion, Burning Crusade. Arenas are small fights between two teams of two, three or five. Arenas are fought between any team of players, in the same faction or not and players of any class and specialization can choose to be on the same arena team. This put players to ultimate test of becoming the best PvP player and team in the game. In the world of PvP, players of various classes search for which classes and specializations will help them achieve the highest rating, which is determined by how many games you win and lose.

Arena teams will join a queue to find an arena match, based on the team's arena rating. Upon entering an arena, the team will be placed into the holding area for 60 seconds. All health and mana are set to full and special abilities with a cooldown less than 10 minutes reset. Special abilities above the 10-minute cooldown mark are not usable in arenas. The 60 seconds give players time to apply the necessary and desirable buffs for the match and to prepare accordingly. After the 60-second preparation, the doors that connect the arena to the holding area open and the two teams fight until all members of one team are killed or until one team quits. In addition, if the fight lasts for 20 minutes, the match will end and neither team will gain or lose any points.

WoW uses formulas and each team's chances of winning the match to calculate how many points each team will gain or lose, depending on the outcome.

As arena teams win more battles and gain a higher rating, they are matched up against teams with a similarly high rating, making the matches more even.

Many players on the forums express their own opinions regarding which class is best for PvP and arenas. On the forums, Badtothebow writes, "I'd roll mage. They are always good." Badtothebow believes that mages are one of the best arena classes, but many other players would disagree (Tøøeasy). There are rarely systematic studies on finding the best arena classes and combinations because the rate of changes to the game creates instability with every new patch. There is a new "best class" with every game update and each class's abilities change consistently. However, in 2012, Freeman et al. did a study, "How Specialization and Class Composition Affect an Arena Match", to determine the best arena classes and combinations. Their study analyzed data from the expansion, Cataclysm, in 2010. So what are the most popular and winningest classes in PvP arenas?

### Methods

Arenas in WoW are about seven years old and over those seven years, many classes have been deemed the "best" for arenas or the most OP, over-powered. To declare a change in the best arena classes over time, I gathered data from arenas in 2012 and 2014. The 2012 data is from PvP Season 11 and the 2014 data is from PvP Season 15. For 2012, I collected data from Arena Stats, a website that compiled a vast majority of arena results and team combinations in PvP Season 11. In addition, the user has the ability to sort the data based on team size and arena rating. Then, the data is presented showing statistics such as the class representation in arenas, team combinations by population, and the team combination's win percentage.

After filtering the data and recording it, I will take a count of the number of appearances each class makes in the top ten combinations list. There are two filters for the top ten combinations list: top combinations by population (number of teams) and top combinations by win percentage.

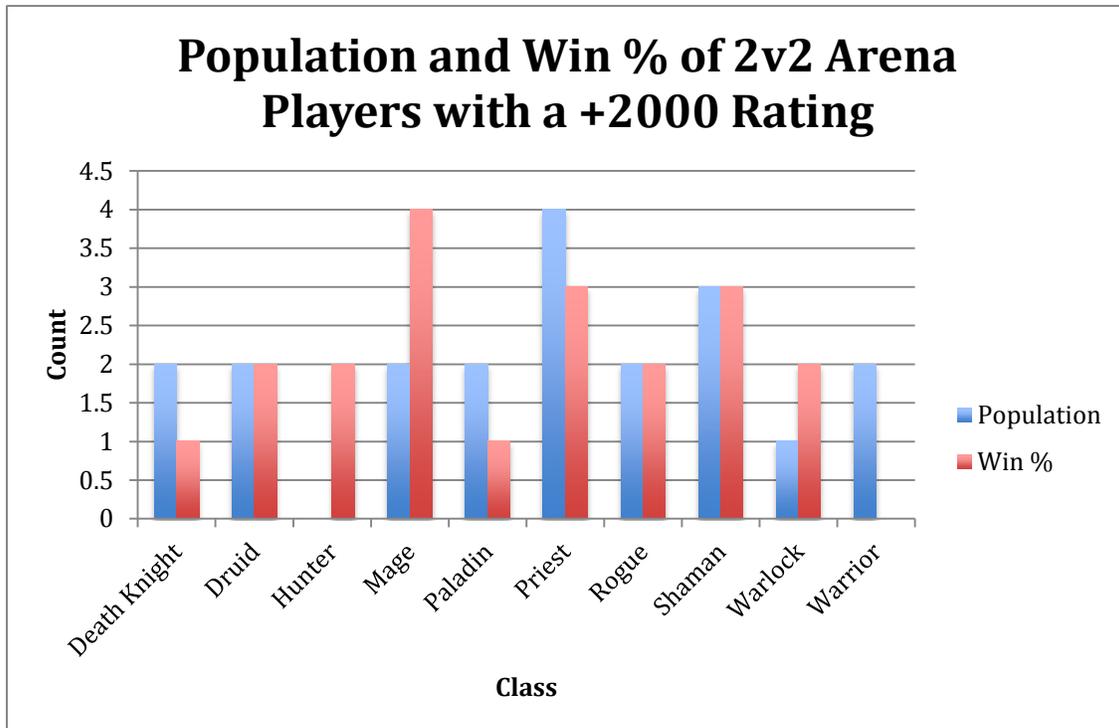
Arena Junkies is a website that ranks the current 100 best players based on their PvP rating, for 2v2, 3v3 and 5v5 arenas. I took the data from the top 100 best players in 2v2 and 3v3 arenas and inputted the two lists into excel. In the top 100 2v2 players list and the top 100 3v3 players list, I will take a count of the number of appearances each class makes and match that with each of the players' respective arena rating.

I expect there to be a shift in data from 2012 to 2014 because there is a gap of four PvP seasons between the two sets of data I am gathering. Additionally, in Patch 5.4 (2013), arena teams were removed and players were given the ability to queue for an arena by simply being in a party with one another. This is the reason why I will have team combination data from 2012 and just a list of the top players in 2014. After the removal of arena teams, players will be matched based on the average arena rating of the group. I will analyze all the data separately and then make a final conclusion based on all the data gathered to determine the best class for arenas.

## Results

*2012 Data*

The data source I visited to gather my data was Arena Stats. As I sorted through and recorded the data from the website, I was able to draw conclusions about arenas back in 2012. First, looking at 2v2 arenas, I sorted based on an arena



**Figure 1**

rating of over 2000. The “Win %” variable on the y-axis refers to the number of times that each class appears in the arena teams with the highest win percentage. I recorded the top ten team compositions with the highest winning percentage and then counted the number of times each class appeared in the top ten teams. The other variable is “Population.” Population refers to how many times each class appears in the most abundant team compositions. The population variable is shown side by side with the win percentage variable. According to Figure 1, most of the

classes have similar counts with both variables except for mages and warriors. Mages appear in less team compositions but they are the most winning class in 2v2 arenas with a +2000 rating. Warriors on the other hand, appear in two of the top ten population-based compositions but do not appear in one of the ten compositions with the highest winning percentage. Shamans and priests are the other two notable arena classes for 2v2 and a +2000 arena rating.

On Arena Stats, I also chose to record 2v2 arena data with a +2200 rating. I was determined to see if a higher rating showed different patterns or if different classes are more or less powerful against better players. As Figure 2 shows,

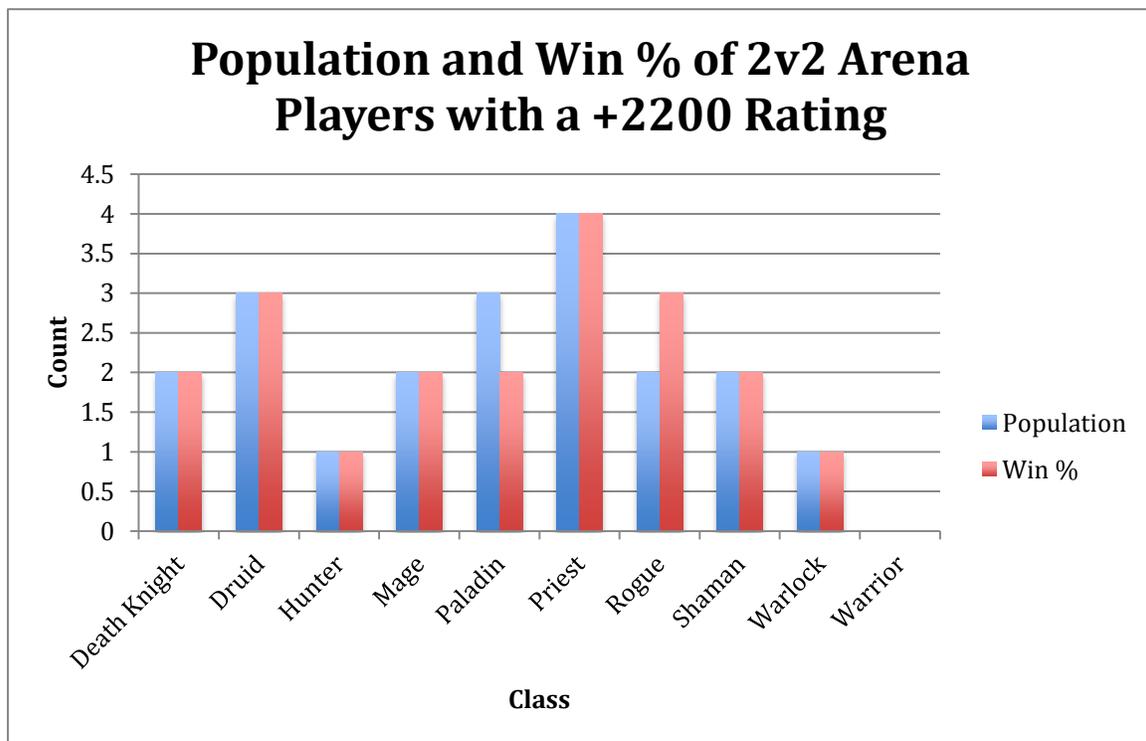


Figure 2

different classes arose as more powerful with a +2200 rating versus a +2000 rating. Mages, who appeared in four of the compositions with the best winning percentage now only appear in two. The most notable classes in 2v2 arenas with a +2200 rating

are druids, priests and rogues. In the winning percentage category, druids went from two to three appearances, priests went from three to four appearances and rogues went from two to three appearances. Notable classes that are poor 2v2 arena classes with a +2200 rating include hunters, warlocks and warriors.

After concluding my 2v2 research on Arena Stats, I switched to 3v3 arenas. Looking at 3v3 arenas with a +2000 rating and using same variables as the 2v2 reasearch, I came up with Figure 3. I was very surprised at how much the data

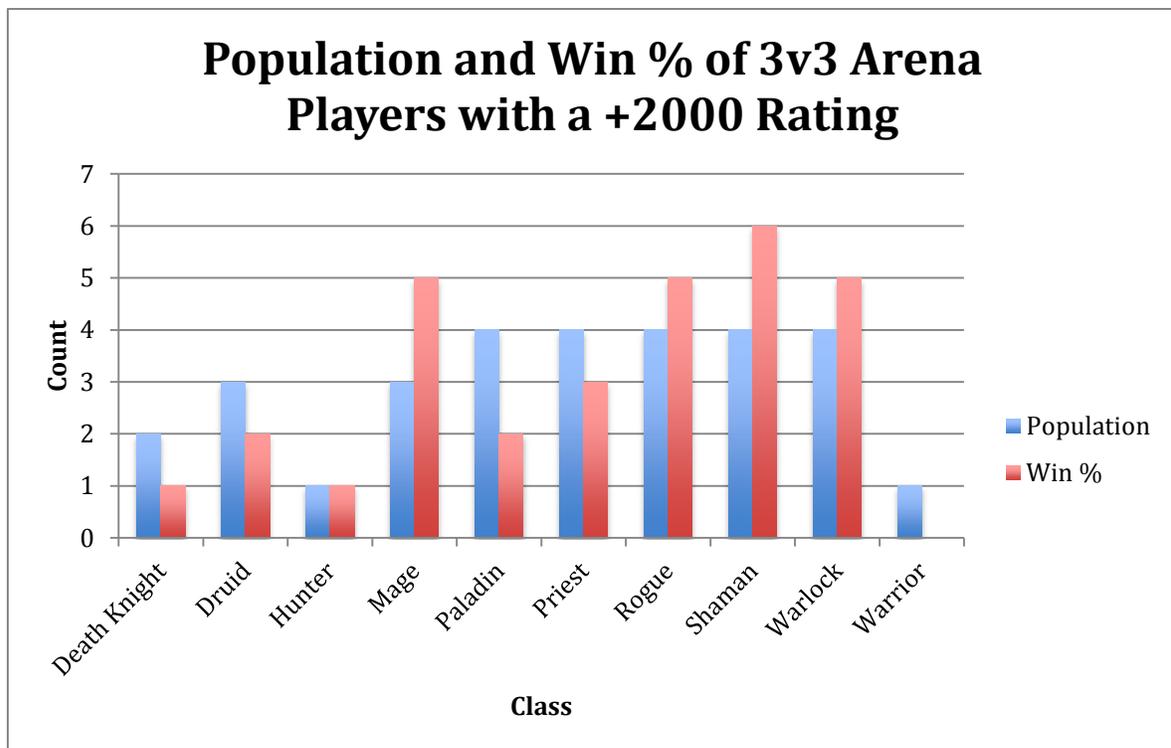


Figure 3

changed from the 2v2 arenas to the 3v3 arenas. Druids and priests are very strong 2v2 classes, however, they cannot keep up with the top classes in the 3v3 arenas. Mages, rogues, shamans and warlocks are the most powerful 3v3 arena classes with a +2000 rating, appearing in the compositions with the top winning percentage five, five, six and five times, respectively. All four of those classes can also be considered

very good 3v3 arena classes because their number of appearances in the top ten for winning percentage are all higher than the number of times they appear in the top ten in terms of population. These classes appear on teams as much as paladins and priests, but they win arenas many more times than paladins and priests. As shown in the 2v2 arenas, death knights, hunters and warriors are still the weakest arena classes, a count of one, one and zero appearances in terms of winning percentage, respectively.

Shifting to 3v3 arenas with a +2200 rating, the results changed quite a bit, shown in Figure 4. The most prevalent classes in terms of population are paladins,

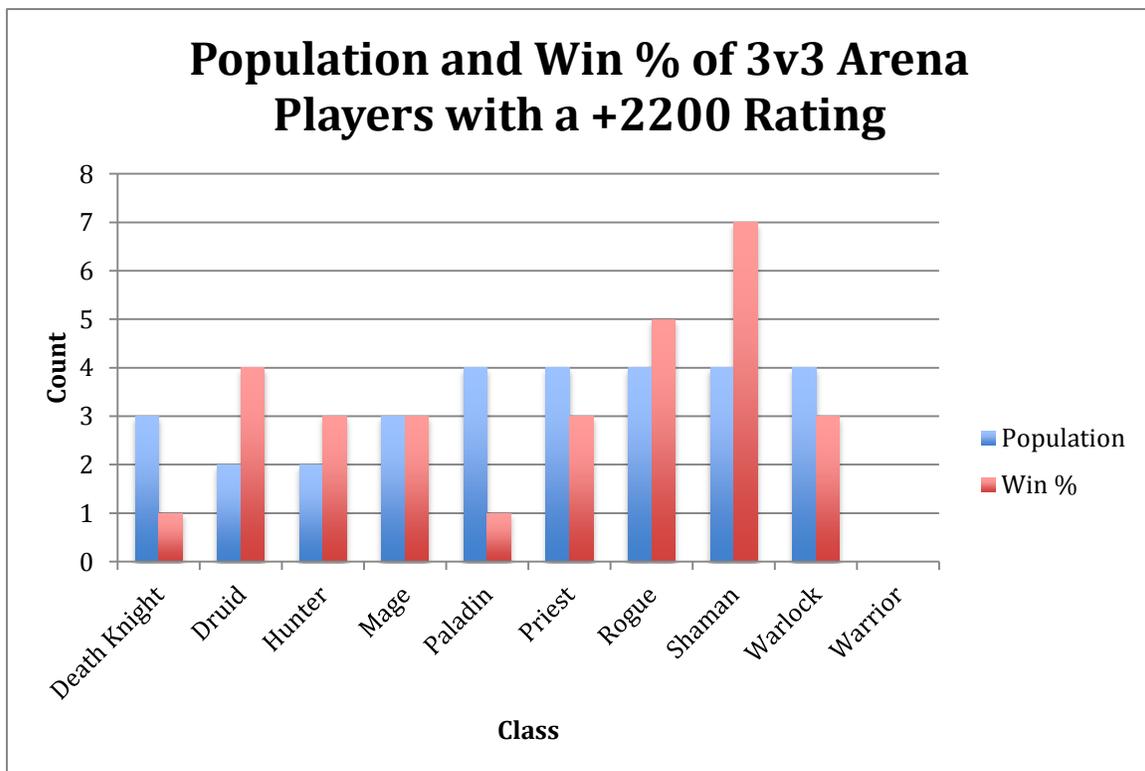


Figure 4

priests, rogues, shamans and warlocks. However, the classes with the most appearances in the top winning percentage compositions are druids, rogues and shamans. From going from a +2000 rating to +2200 rating, druids went from two

winning percentage appearances up to four and hunters went from one to three. On the other hand, mages fell from five to three and warlocks fell from five to three. Rogues and shamans remained on top with rogues falling just from six to five and shamans rose from six to seven. Rogues and shamans are the obvious best classes for 3v3 arenas with a rating above 2200.

### 2014 Data

The arena data on Arena Junkies is current (2014). A major difference in the data is after the release of the most recent expansion, Mist of Pandaria, a new class was introduced, the monk. As a result, the data from Arena Junkies has monks as one of the classes in 2v2 and 3v3 arenas. First, looking at 2v2 arena players, I calculated the number of times each class appeared in the top 100 player list, shown in Figure 5. Druids and priests are clearly the most prevalent classes in the top 100 2v2 arena players. Shamans and warriors both made more than ten appearances in

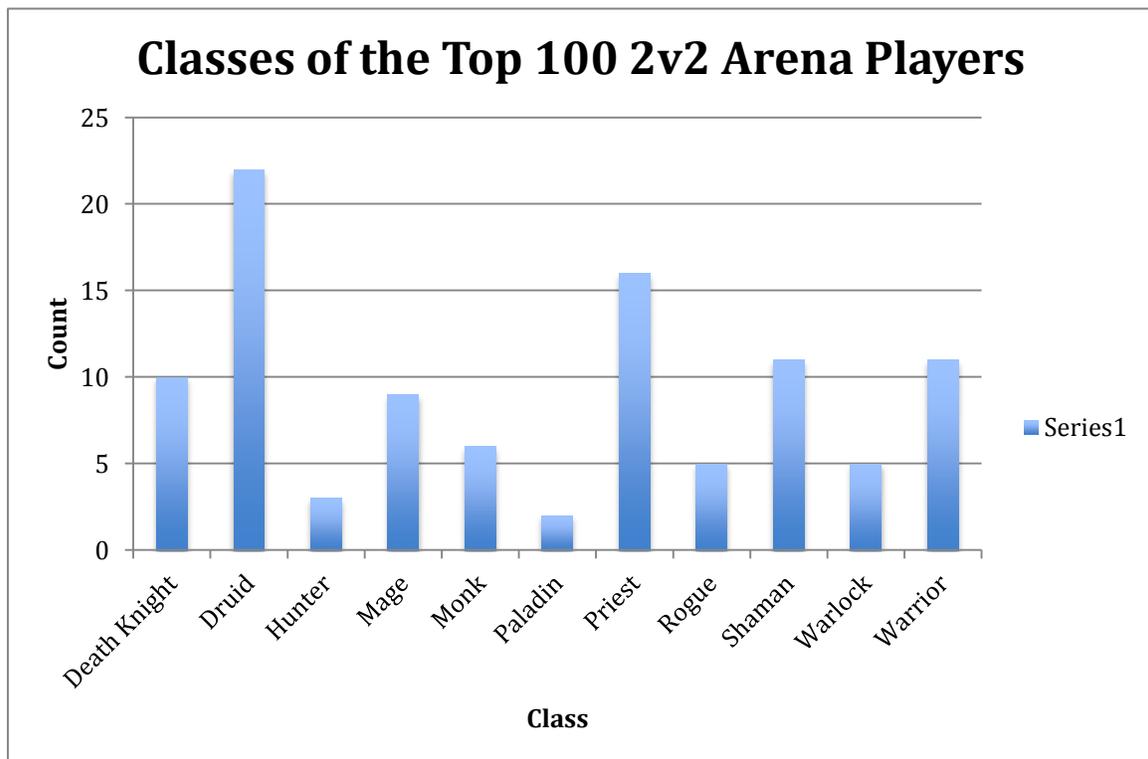


Figure 5

the top 100 and death knights had 10 appearances. The most surprising classes are death knights and warriors. Back in 2012 and the data gathered from Arena Stats, death knights made two appearances in the top combinations for winning percentage and warriors made zero for a +2200 rating. Now, in 2014, they are among the top five classes in 2v2 arenas. After gathering this data and creating Figure 5, I decided to take it a step further and calculated the number of appearances in the top 20, shown in Figure 6. Druids and priests are still the top classes, however, shamans fell

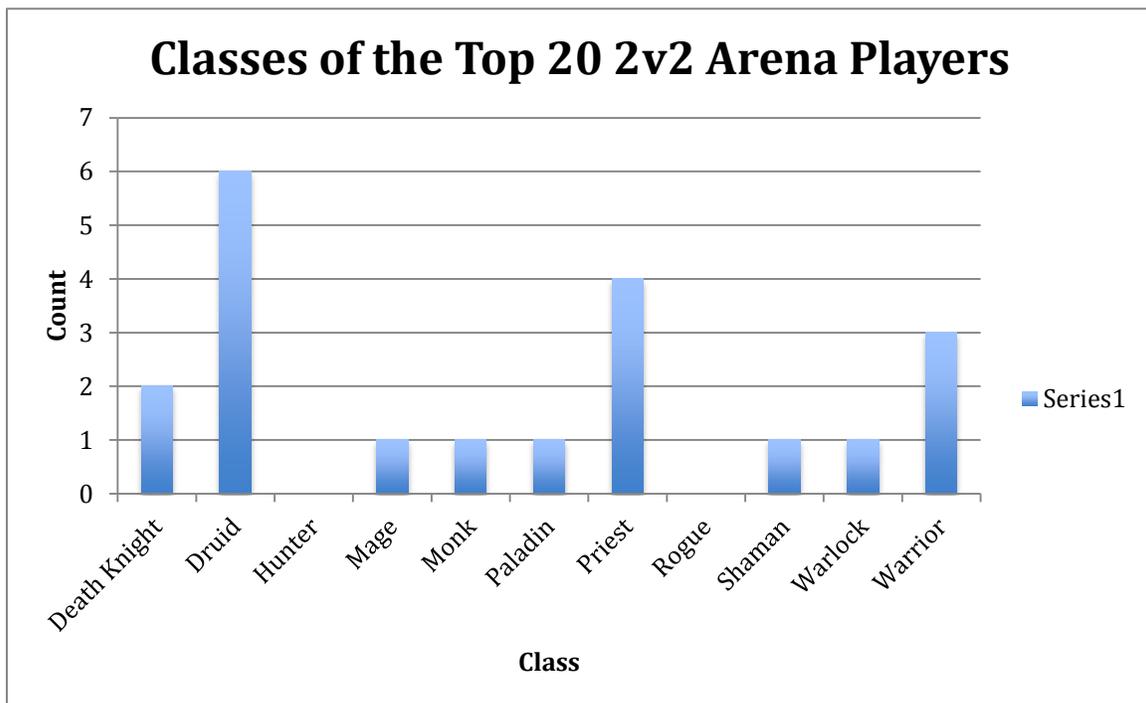


Figure 6

way down. This allows me to draw the conclusion that shamans are prevalent in the top 100 2v2 arena classes; however, there is only one shaman with a rating above 2400 and shamans are not one of the absolute best 2v2 arena classes. All of the other classes stayed relatively where they were, as shown in Figure 5.

After observing and analyzing the top 100 2v2 arena players on Arena Junkies, I looked at the top 100 3v3 players. As I did with the top 100 2v2 players, I calculated the number of appearances each class made in the top 100 3v3 arena players list, shown in Figure 7. Druids, as seen in the top 100 2v2 players, are the

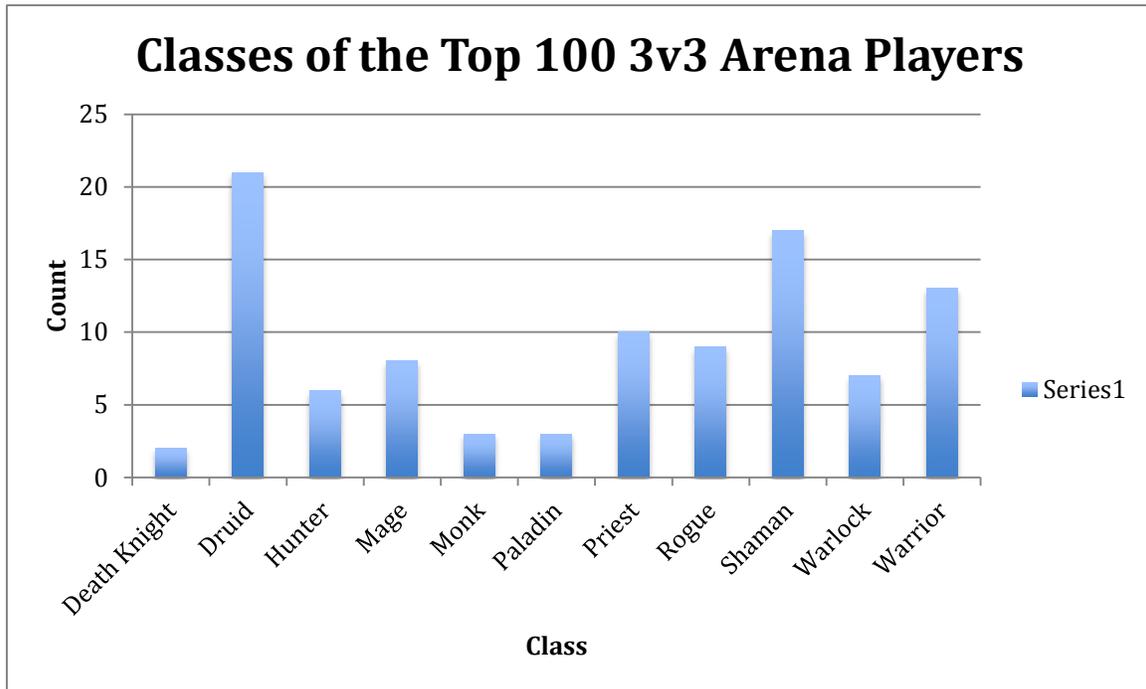


Figure 7

most prevalent. Shamans and warriors were seen more than ten times and priests were counted exactly ten times out of the top 100. These top four are the exact same as seen in the top 100 2v2 players, just in a different order. From viewing Figure 7, druids, shamans, warriors and priests can be considered the best 3v3 arena classes. But, as I did with the 2v2 arena players, I did a count of the top 20 3v3 players as well. Figure 8 shows the count of the count of the top 20 3v3 arena

players and this data surprised me. The most prevalent class in the top 20 3v3

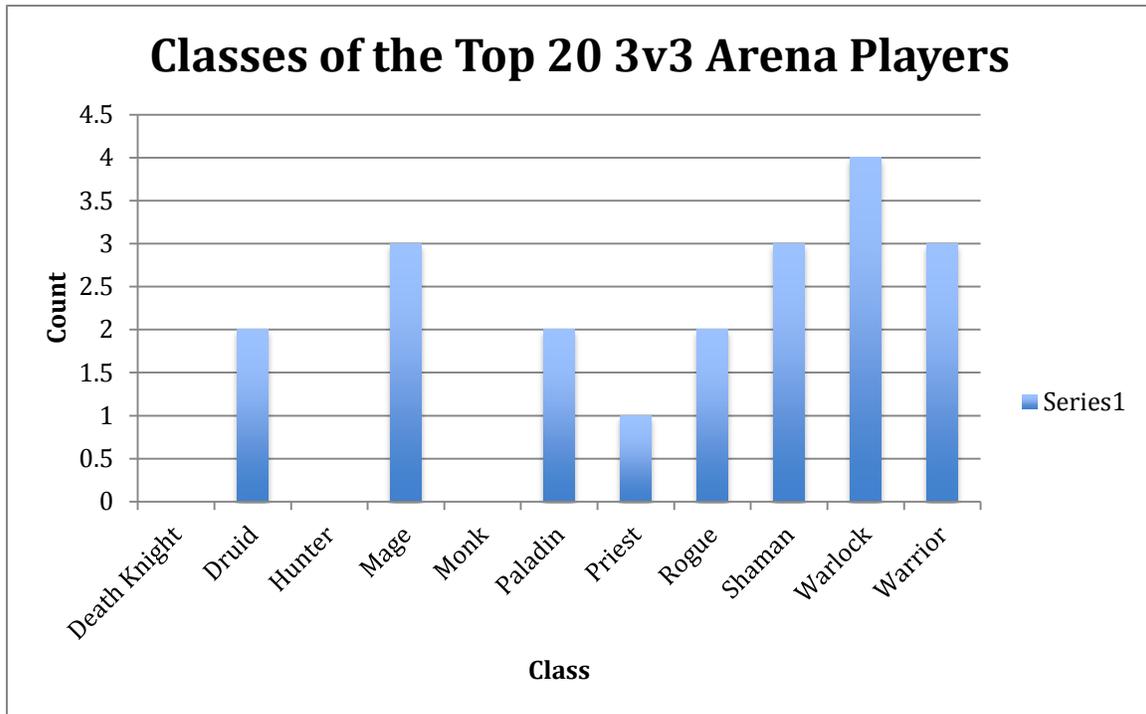


Figure 8

arena players is warlock. Tied for second is mage, shaman and warrior. Druids, who had a total count of 21 out of the top 100, have a mere two out of the top 20. In addition, warlocks, who had a total of 7 out of the top 100, have four out of the top 20. Lastly, mages, who had a total of eight out of the top 100 have three out of the top 20. Figure 8 provides a much different analysis than that of Figure 7 because it focuses on the absolute best.

After completing research analysis on the best arena classes in 2012 and 2014, many conclusions can be made. In 2012 2v2 arenas, mages seemed to be the best after looking at the +2000 rating data. However, after then looking at the +2200 data, it can be concluded that priests were the best and most winning arena class. Rogues and druids tied for second in appearances in teams with best winning percentage, but rogues take the number two spot because they were less prevalent

in terms of how many times they appeared on teams. Druids take the third spot as the best 2v2 arena player in 2012. Looking now at 3v3 arenas in 2012, shamans are the clear best arena class. In both categories, +2000 rating and +2200 rating, shamans had the most appearances on teams with best winning percentage and shamans also had fewer appearances in the number of times they appeared on teams. Rogues were the second best 3v3 arena class and that decision was finalized when looking at Figure 4. As Figure 4 shows, druids are the third best 3v3 arena class, having the third most appearances in the top ten combinations with best winning percentage.

Then looking at data from 2014, Arena Junkies helped me gather the data necessary and draw conclusions that give me the ability to name the best 2v2 arena classes currently. After counting the number of appearances each class made in the top 100 and the top 20, my conclusion was very easy. In both Figures 5 and 6, druids ranked first, priests ranked second and warriors ranked third. Although, in Figure 5, warriors and shamans made the same amount of appearances in the top 100 list, warriors made three in the top 20 and shamans only made one. The 3v3 conclusion was very tricky, on the other hand. After considering Figures 7 and 8, warlocks first, mages in second and warriors in third. Although Figure 7 shows druids, shamans and warriors as the best, Figure 8 has warlocks, mages and warriors. I concluded this because although warlocks, mages and warriors only have a count of seven, eight and thirteen, respectively, in the top 100 list, they make up ten out of the top twenty classes.

### Discussion

In the history of World of Warcraft, there have been four expansions released. In every expansion and patch update, each class and their abilities have been modified and have been given new abilities. In PvP arenas, these modifications and new abilities can be the decision maker. Through my research, I have been able to rank the best classes for 2v2 and 3v3 arenas, shown in Table 1.

Rank	2012 2v2	2012 3v3	2014 2v2	2014 3v3
#1	Priest	Shaman	Druid	Warlock
#2	Rogue	Rogue	Priest	Mage
#3	Druid	Druid	Warrior	Warrior

Table 1

In 2012, druids and rogues were the dominant PvP classes, both ranking in the top three in both 2v2 and 3v3 arenas. Priests, shown in 2012 and 2014, have always been a dominant class in 2v2 arenas. Warriors, after undergoing expansions between 2012 and 2014, have arose as a very powerful PvP class, ranking 3rd in 2v2 and 3v3 arenas. After comparing my results with the research done by Freeman et al., I noticed that their analysis and conclusions are very similar to my conclusions from the 2012 data. As a result, I can conclude that there was no major change in PvP or classes' abilities between 2010 and 2012.

As new patches, expansions, and PvP seasons are released, the data will change and there will be classes that move up or move down in the ranking for best arena class. Future studies on this topic should observe the current leaders in arenas and comparing that data to the data from the previous PvP season(s). This

will provide the ability to detect patterns and see whether classes get better, worse, or less played over time.

Although I have ranked classes in 2v2 and 3v3 arenas, the outcome is dependent on the combination of the team and how well they play together. Every class and specialization complements another class and specialization and when you have players who know how to play and what to do, you can form an unstoppable arena team.

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