

Quantitative Analysis of Honor Gains in Cataclysm Battlegrounds

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Abstract:

Battlegrounds in World of Warcraft are a large part of the Player vs. Player (PvP) aspect of the game. With 8 different Battlegrounds and 10 different classes, this study aims to quantitatively search for patterns in Honor gains relative to each different Battleground and class. 30 Battlegrounds were observed as a participant and the resulting Honor gains, Killing Blows, and Honorable Kills were recorded by class and then analyzed. A slight preference toward Mages and Warlocks in the top 20% of Honor gained for the recorded Battlegrounds is seen, although the average Honor gained for each class is similar. Alterac Valley emerged as a clear winner in average Honor awarded relative to other Battlegrounds, while all other Battlegrounds were generally equal.

Introduction:

There are 8 different battlegrounds (BGs) in the World of Warcraft, which are Player vs. Player (PvP) battles where factions are teamed up against each other in teams of 10, 15, or 40, depending on the BG. Players are grouped from level 10-19, 20-29, 30-39, etc., and finally BGs reserved for players at the level cap (Blizzard Entertainment, 2010). Previous research on BGs has been oriented toward winning strategies, group and individual avatar movement, and the controversy of twinkling, which is keeping a character at the highest level for a given group that is not at the level cap, e.g. 29 or 39, in order to clearly dominate the Battleground; however, a main reason for playing BGs is to gain honor, the currency awarded for playing BGs, and there is a lack of research pertaining to patterns of honor gained by class, level, and specific BG (Blizzard Entertainment, 2010). While this study is aimed at observing patterns of honor gained at the level cap, 85, some BG data from characters of lower levels may serve to show similarity or contrast with patterns observed in level 85 BGs. This research is not in any way meant to be a guide on how to gain honor in the fastest method, but rather seeks to find

previously unobserved patterns pertaining to Honor gains in WoW BGs.

Honor is gained in BGs from acquiring Honorable Kills (HKs) by being in the general vicinity of the death of an opponent player, killed by a member of your party or raid group. While HKs only improve an individual's Honor, the team as a whole gains Honor when any player in the group completes Battleground objectives, such as carrying a flag, capturing a base, etc (Blizzard Entertainment, 2010). There are two ways to queue for a BG, either choosing a Random Battleground or queuing for a specific BG. Winning the first random BG of a day grants the player an additional 270 Honor, and losing a random BG grants the player an additional 45 Honor, whereas winning or losing a specific BG does not result in any additional Honor (Blizzard Entertainment, 2010). Any additional random BG win after the first grants the player an additional 130 Honor (Blizzard Entertainment, 2010).

According to an article, “Which Battleground Gives the Most WoW Honor Points?” written from Apadwe's personal experience, Alterac Valley yields the most Honor per time because the losing team receives a large amount of Honor relative to losing any other BG (Apadwe, 2007). Although this article was written well before the release of Cataclysm, forum posts from current WoW players agree with this statement, such as from Forlin and quickbeam in a thread on DSLreports.com, who state that even the losing team gains a lot of Honor, but that turtle matches (discussed in Background) can detract from Honor gains per hour. WoW Realms are categorized into battlegrounds, and according to forum posts, there is speculation that if one's faction shows a consistent pattern in winning specific BGs against the other faction in a particular battleground, this BG may yield more honor (Realms List; “Which bg gives most honor?” 2007). No consistent majority stance is taken regarding which class gains more Honor than other classes, and similarly, there is no majority stance on which class consistently gains the most HKs or Killing Blows (Kbs) (“Which class gets the most killing blows in BGs?” 2007).

Background:

Battlegrounds

Alterac Valley (AV)

Total Objectives that Grant Bonus Honor: 6

With 40 players and 600 reinforcements on a side, the objective of this BG is to run the opposing team out of reinforcements or to kill the enemy General, who is an NPC (Non-Player Character) located at the opposite side of the map from which each team starts. There are also 4 towers per team that can be captured by the opposing team via clicking a flag in the tower, and once the tower has been captured for 3 minutes without being retaken, it is burned resulting in the loss of 75 reinforcements and the death of one Warmasters (Horde) or Marshal (Alliance). There are 4 Warmasters or Marshals, one for each tower, that fight alongside the General and grant him 25% damage and health increase, so burning towers makes the General easier to kill. Each team also possesses one Captain, not protected by Warmasters or Marshals, that are worth a 20% health and size increase and 100 reinforcements to one's team. Two mines exist in AV, and when captured by killing its boss, the team gains 1 reinforcement per 45 seconds. By speaking to any and all of 3 Wing Commanders, captured in enemy territory, the Commander is sent them home, thus unlocking a quest and granting the team bonus Honor upon his arrival. There are different strategies for winning AV; one is to zerg, meaning that all members of a team rush to the General in order to down him; another is to win by protecting one's Towers and General while running the opposing team out of reinforcements; an extremely long game results when players are stuck in a Turtle, when both teams are stuck fighting in extremely large groups, not allowing anyone to pass, and the game ends slowly when a team loses reinforcements through team members' deaths that cost a small loss in reinforcements(WoW-Battlegrounds, 2010).

Arathi Basin (AB)

Total Objectives that Grant Bonus Honor: 1

This is a 15 vs. 15 battle, in which the winning team acquires 1600 resources first.. Resources are

gained by holding a base, of which there are 5, and the more bases one holds, the faster resources are gained. To capture a base, one must assault the base's flag by clicking it, and the base is captured once it has not been assaulted by the opposing team for one minute(WoW-Battlegrounds, 2010).

Battle for Gilneas

Total Objectives that Grant Bonus Honor: 1

A 10 vs. 10 battle to 2000 resources, in which 3 bases can be captured in the same fashion as AB(WoW-Battlegrounds, 2010).

Eye of the Storm (EotS)

Total Objectives that Grant Bonus Honor: 2

A 15 vs. 15 battle is won by acquiring 1600 resources before the opposing team. There are 4 nodes that can be captured, and in the middle lies one flag. The flag can be carried to a team's captured node, and 75, 85, 100, or 500 resources are gained based on how many nodes are in current possession by the team. The flag re-spawns in the middle after being carried to a base(WoW-Battlegrounds, 2010).

Isle of Conquest (IoC)

Total Objectives that Grant Bonus Honor: 2

In this 40 vs. 40 BG, each team starts in their respective base, in which lies a General, and the base is surrounded by large walls. There are 5 nodes that can be captured, including the Docks, Hangar, Workshop, Refinery, and Quarry. The aim of the BG is to run the opposing team out of resources or to kill the opponent General. The two main nodes, the Docks and the Hangar, provide means of infiltrating the enemy base by being propelled over the gates, from where the players can break down the walls of the base. Once inside the base, players use bombs to break down the door to the room where the General awaits. The Workshop provides Siege Engines, Demolishers, and bombs to help break down the enemy walls. The Refinery and Quarry grant 15% increased siege damage and additional resources and Honor(WoW-Battlegrounds, 2010).

Strand of the Ancients (SotA)

Total Objectives that Grant Bonus Honor: 2

Consisting of two rounds, a maximum of 10 minutes each, each team of 25 players plays one round on offense and one on defense. There are 3 barriers, and the first two barriers have one gate on each end of the gate, while the last barrier has one gate. Once inside the last gate, the team must break down the door to the Chamber of Ancient Relics where clicking the Titan Relic inside results in the end of the round. Barriers are broken by being rammed and shot at by Demolishers, therefore the tactic of each team is to run alongside the Demolishers, assisting their run to the Titan Relic. There are a maximum of 4 Demolishers present on the map that respawn at the starting point of the offensive team, and the team to finish the round in the shorter amount of time wins the BG(WoW-Battlegrounds, 2010).

Twin Peaks

Total Objectives that Grant Bonus Honor: 1

With two bases containing a flag each, this is a 10 vs. 10 battle of Capture the Flag. In the middle runs a river, and there are cliffs surrounding the Alliance base and water surrounding the Horde base. With three entrances to each base, a player must carry the flag from the opponent's base back to his or her own base, and in order to capture the flag, the team's own flag must be safe at its base. The first team to 3 flags or the team with more flags at the end of 25 minutes wins the BG(WoW-Battlegrounds, 2010).

Warsong Gulch

Total Objectives that Grant Bonus Honor: 1

A 10 vs. 10 Capture the Flag battle with the same rules as Twin Peaks, but on a symmetrical map. (WoW-Battlegrounds, 2010).

Method:

By personally running at least 2 occurrences of each BG at level 85, I recorded the time spent as well as the Honor Gained, Class, Honorable Kills, and Killing Blows of each character in the BG into

spreadsheets in order to analyze the data. The average honor per class will combine with a distribution of class for the top 20% Honor gained in each BG to find patterns of Honor gained and class. Because a player on the winning team will gain either 130 or 270 bonus Honor depending on whether or not it is their first BG of the day and there is no way to tell who has gained which bonus Honor, statistics on Honor for each class will only be taken from the losing side, as each player is equally assigned the same amount of bonus Honor. I will calculate the Honor gained per KB and per HK in order to search for any resulting patterns. I will also run a small amount of BGs at a level lower than 85 in order to compare results and patterns, although not all BGs are available to lower level players.

Results:

Honor Gained by Class

After analyzing patterns of Honor gained for 519 players over 30 Battlegrounds, 7 at a level under 46 and 23 at level 85, it is apparent that similar patterns exist for characters at the level cap and those at low levels. Figures 1 and 2 show a similar pattern in the percent of each class that is in the top 20% of Honor gained in all BGs run. For those at a low level, the pattern is much more exaggerated; notice that approximately 50% of Mages and Warlocks are in the top 20% at low levels while at level 85, this is approximately 30%. In both cases, Mages and Warlocks are well above the rest, while Priests are at the bottom. In between, rogues seem to be the next highest and the rest are mixed about. As seen in Figures 6 and 7, there is an even distribution of all classes at level 85, while at lower levels there is a large percentage of Druids; however Mages(n=4) and Warlocks(n=2) are poorly represented, comprising a mere 6% of total players(N=102). With such a small sample of Mages and Warlocks, it only takes 2 or 1 players respectively to be in the top 20% of Honor gained in order to result in 50% of the players being in the top 20%. That being said, the results seen of these classes in lower level BGs may be skewed due to a small sample, but the fact that the overall distribution closely matches that of level 85 BGs, in which all classes are represented relatively equally, shows that it is very probable that given a larger sample of low level BGs, the same patterns would be prevalent. Looking at Figures 3 and

4 comparing the average Honor gained by Class, the pattern of Mages and Warlocks seems to carry over. The rest of the classes, on the other hand, do not show a significant amount of similarity to Figures 1 and 2. Although a larger percentage of Mages and Warlocks are seen in the top 20% of Honor gained in BGs, there is no proof that these classes, nor any other, consistently gain more Honor than other classes in Battlegrounds. Although Figures 3 and 4 suggest that some classes gain a lower amount of honor than others, it is not significant because all classes are within 20 Honor points to each other on average, and this can be attributed to chance due to the relatively small number of BGs observed.

Average Honor Gained Per BG

Patterns of average Honor gained per BG are shown in Figures 5 and 6, and it is clear that Alterac Valley grants the largest amount of Honor due to the noteworthy amount that players gain when losing the BG compared to others. Tables 1 and 2 show the average Honor per time spent, but because there was a small sample of each BG in some cases being only 2 samples, it is unfair to assume that the average time spent in these samples is representative of the average time spent given a much larger sample. Focusing only on BG wins, Figures 5 and 6 show that there is no BG that grants a significant amount of Honor relative to the others. If we look at losses, on the other hand, Alterac Valley shows a relatively large advantage compared to other BGs in terms of Honor gained. If the question is whether or not a specific BG grants more Honor than others, the answer is clearly AV, being that the average Honor gained between wins and losses is significantly higher than any other BG.

Killing Blows and Honorable Kills

Because Honorable Kills directly relate to Honor Gained, it is not surprising that the general trends seen in Figures 9 and 10 are similar to those seen in Figures 3 and 4. In both cases, Mages are at the highest at low levels, and Priests are at the bottom. In between is a seemingly random assortment with not much correlation between HKs and Honor Gained. In looking at Figures 11, 13, and 15, which represent the Honorable Kills for each character in order of Honor gained, where each different color is a different occurrence of the BG, there is a general downward trend. This shows that typically the

characters at the top of Honor Gained are also near the top of Honorable Kills, and similarly those at the very bottom of Honor Gained are also at the bottom of Honorable Kills. It is noteworthy that this downward trend is less prevalent in the 40 man BG, Alterac Valley, due to the fact that a majority of AV's honor gains are attributed to BG objectives rather than battle with the opposing faction.

Killing Blows do not grant bonus Honor; however, the Killing Blows in order of Honor gained are graphed in Figures 12, 14, and 16 in order to see if players with a play-style more suited toward gaining Kbs relates to a larger amount of Honor. Similar to the graphs of HKs in order of Honor Gained, it seems that those at the very top and the very bottom of the BGs in Honor Gained are also at the top or bottom of Killing Blows. For Killing Blows, however, there is not enough evidence to claim that there is a direct correlation between Kbs and Honor Gained. This can be seen in that often times, there are players at all levels of Honor Gained with little to no Killing Blows.

Discussion:

Results show that the forums' opinion that AV grants the most Honor is correct in the sense that it grants a relatively large amount of Honor more than other BGs to the losing team. For the winning team, all BGs seem to grant similar Honor on average, but due to the superior Honor granted to the losing team, AV is the most efficient in terms of average Honor per BG. The fact that all BGs show such comparable Honor gains to the winning team is testament to the time Blizzard has spent to ensure that BGs are balanced. The relatively large difference in Honor gained by the losing team in AV can be seen as compensation for the fact that AV has the potential to be the longest lasting BG than any other, as in a turtle match, and in this case, both teams are granted even more Honor due to the immense amount of HKs that would be present in such a match. Because this BG is the most PvE oriented BG, where in some matches fighting players of the other faction can be virtually non-existent, it also has the largest amount of ways to gain bonus Honor through BG objectives.

As for Mages and Warlocks appearing most often in the top 20% of Honor gained in the BGs recorded for this study, we can speculate why this is true; however, it may simply be due to a sampling

error in the relatively small sample taken in the study. The study is limited in terms of the time allowed for data collection, and with a much larger sample, this trend may disappear altogether. Looking at the average Honor gains for each class, Mages and Warlocks are near the top, but clearly not by as much of a margin as seen in the distribution of characters in the top 20% of Honor gained. This implies that the classes in WoW are well balanced, as no specific class is clearly dominant in Honor gained. For further research, it would be greatly beneficial to conduct the same analysis with a much larger sample of BGs, and possibly on different battlegrounds.

References

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Appendix

Figure 1

Percent of Level <46 Players in Top 20% Honor Gained

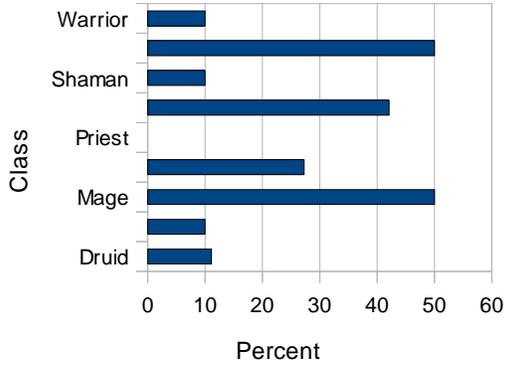


Figure 2

Percent of Level 85 Players in Top 20% Honor Gained

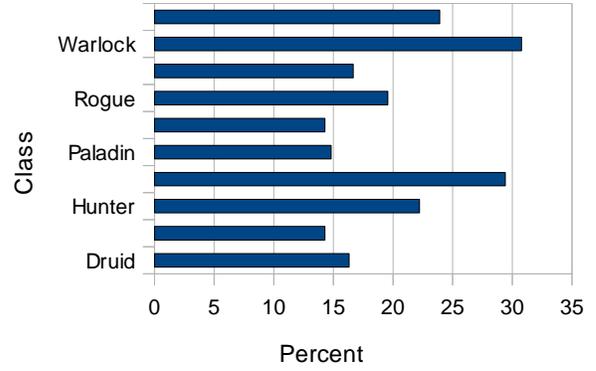


Figure 3

Average Honor Gain by Class: Level <46

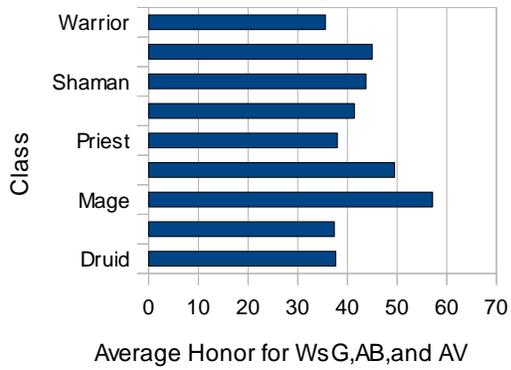


Figure 4

Average Honor Gain by Class: Level 85

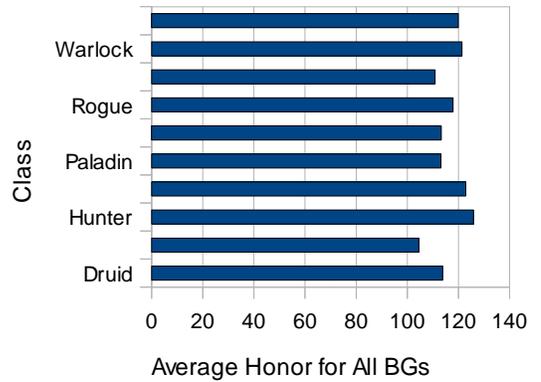


Figure 5

Average Honor Gained: Level 85

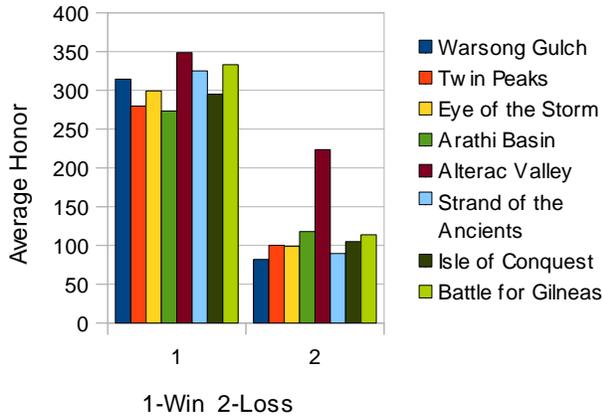


Figure 6

Average Honor Gained: Level <47

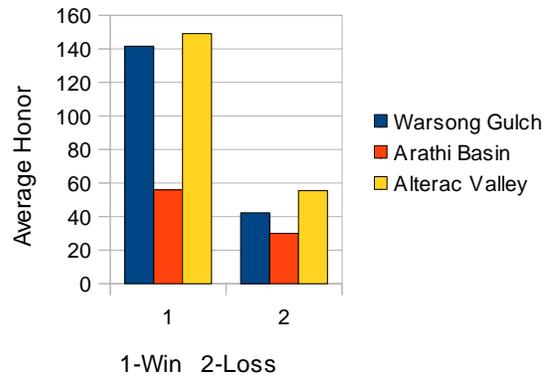


Figure 7

Player Distribution Level <47

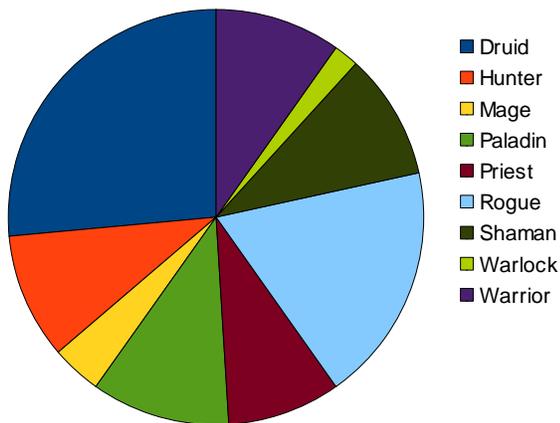


Figure 8

Player Distribution Level 85

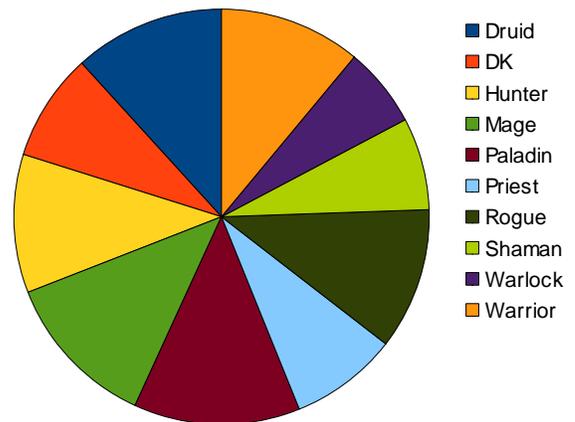


Figure 9

Average HK per Class: Level 85

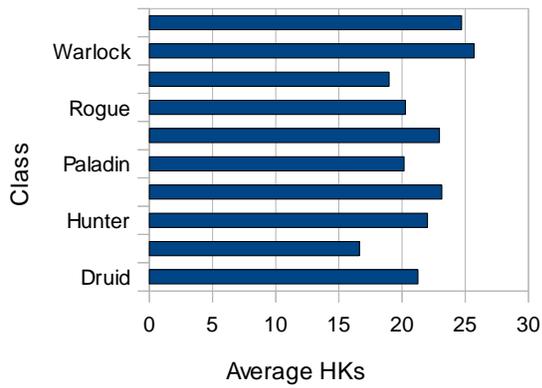


Figure 10

Average HK per Class: Level <47

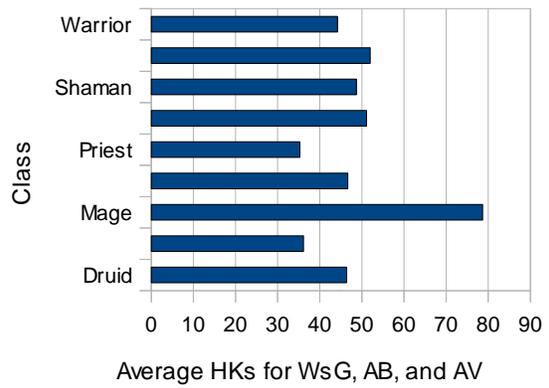


Figure 11

10 Man BG (WsG) Level <47

Honorable Kills

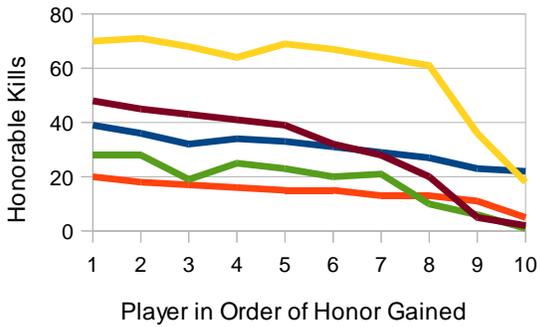


Figure 12

10 Man BG (WsG) Level <47

Killing Blows

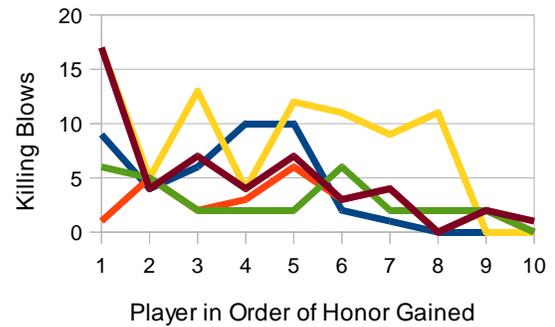


Figure 13

10 Man BG (Twin Peaks) Level 85

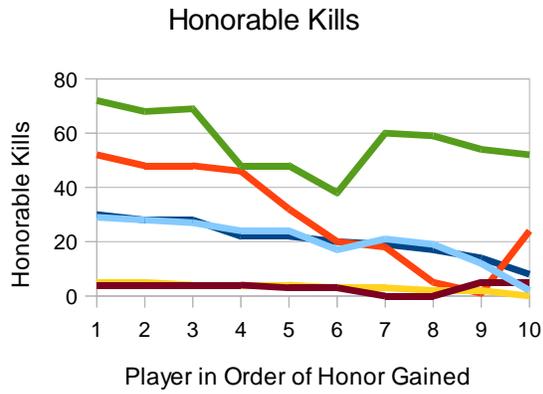


Figure 14

10 Man BG (Twin Peaks) Level 85

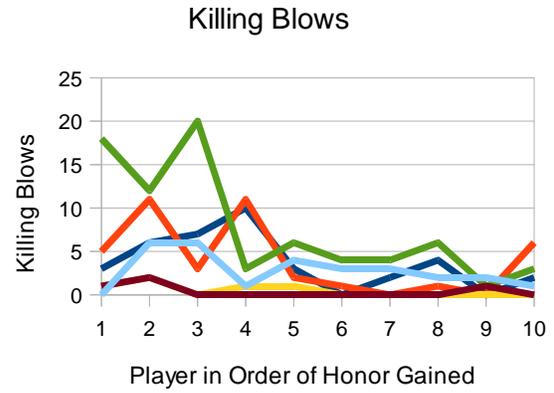


Figure 15

40 Man BG (AV) Level 85

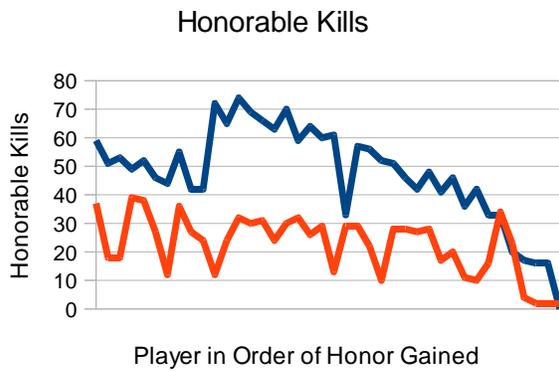


Figure 16

40 Man BG (AV) Level 85

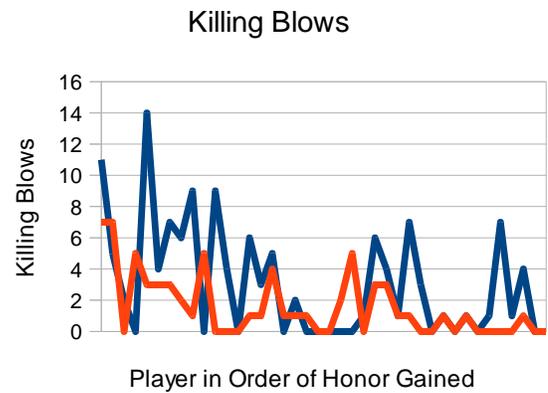


Table 1
Level 85

BG	Avg Honor Win	Avg Honor Loss	Avg Time	Avg H/T Win	Avg H/T Loss
Warsong Gulch	314.45	81.95	13.5	23.29	6.07
Twin Peaks	279.78	100.02	20.17	13.87	4.96
Eye of the Storm	299.23	98.87	16	18.7	6.18
Arathi Basin	273.33	117.93	20.25	13.5	5.82
Alterac Valley	348.73	223.59	20	17.44	11.18
Strand of the Ancients	325.27	89.57	9	36.14	9.95
Isle of Conquest	294.87	104.88	12	24.57	8.74
Battle for Gilneas	333.15	113.7	17	19.6	6.69

Table 2

BG	Avg Honor Win	Avg Honor Lose	Avg Time	Avg H/T Win	Avg H/T Loss
Warsong Gulch	141.62	42.32	21.6	6.56	1.96
Arathi Basin	55.93	29.93	22	2.54	1.36
Alterac Valley	149.1	55.51	26	5.73	2.14