TILTING, FLAMING, AND SAVING YOUR MENTAL STATE IN LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

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ABSTRACT

League of Legends is known to be a generally heated competitive experience. Almost all players deal with disappointment, frustration, and euphoria all within the span of one game. Very few players choose to focus on how to deal with those emotions. In this report, methods for dealing with one's own tilt, as well as ways to mitigate the harm done by flaming from others will be explored. A special focus will be taken on preventing the debilitating spiral of teammate against teammate harassment, starting with an introspective look at how the reader tilts, what causes them to tilt, and what might be most effective for them. Research is largely based on resources from professional gamers, as well as a survey of the League of Legends community and Riot's official suggestions for players of low and high levels of play alike. This report is not intended to function as an introduction to the game, but rather a guide for those who already play the game to have a better experience and environment in game.

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INTRODUCTION

Let's admit it: learning to manage emotions in the heat of a close match is something that most, if not all players of League of Legends struggle with. Whether you are on the winning or losing team, tilt is a seemingly unavoidable experience on Summoner's Rift. Your match goes so smoothly, you might even forget, but the next match you land in reminds you of why you wish you logged off for the night. Allies fight with each other 30 seconds into the game. They fight amongst themselves for the rest of the match. Enemies taunt you over a lost fight in /all chat. You feel humiliated, and it almost feels maddening. Does it really have to, though? It might not even feel like a huge problem once the match comes to a close, but those few maddening moments can seriously ruin the morale of your allies, leading to your win rate collapsing. This report serves to provide a guide, or at least some helpful hints when it comes to keeping a nice sense of stability for those heated moments, dealing with the emotions of others, and how to keep yourself sane on the Rift.

You might be a generally calm player when it comes to the mistakes of others, but endlessly angry with your own poor plays. Maybe seeing your allies fall behind their lane opponents is ceaselessly disappointing. Perhaps you are fine with all of that, but your mental state becomes a ticking time bomb as soon as you see someone criticizing you. How do people deal with these feelings? It may feel like tilting is just a natural part of the game. While that may be the case, tilt does not have to tank your chances at success on the Rift. The first step to a better mental state in game is to find out what tilts you, how it affects you, and the strategies you can try to overcome the intense emotions experienced in game.

One of the best ways to do this is to look back at your own gameplay and see where you felt your mental state start to spiral. Maybe a lost fight before lane phase started has you nervous, or the loss of a major objective has you angry. Keeping note of these events and remembering your feelings can be a key component to success on the Rift. This method, however, may feel too direct to some. Many players can experience a sense of detachment from games that have happened in the past, perhaps making them feel as though they did not tilt or were not upset by the events that were happening previously. Others may find that it only brings back the frustration rewatching their mistakes, which could prevent them from acknowledging where the cracks in their outlook actually are. For players that find the last couple statements true, Riot Games has a quiz for you at https://tilttypes.riotgames.com/en-gb/p/1 to find your player archetype. The focus of the quiz, as well as this report is how you react to tilt, with some solutions, scenarios, and reflections to keep in mind.

TILT TYPES AND THEIR RELIEF LANGUAGES

According to Riot Games, the ways that players react to the game and the near infinite number of scenarios that can happen during a match of Summoner's Rift. The company has provided players a quiz (https://tilttypes.riotgames.com/en-gb/p/1) to help determine what archetype they fall into. It divides players into four groups, all with their own strengths and weaknesses. Generally speaking, some players continue to work well with their allies even after an upsetting play (such as the Scarred Veteran) while others will lash out in chat to express their frustrations (like the Barbarian). These are just two characteristics of two of the four groups proposed in Riot's quiz. Just as all people experience tilt differently, all players can utilize strategies for mental recovery catered towards how they feel. Dignitas, a professional eSports team, suggests that the biggest step is knowing what tilts you (How to Stop Tilting in League of Legends). Not only that, but what is important to keep in mind is that what may work for one player, a professional, or even your best friend may not be the key to taming your mental. The best course of action is trial and error.

THE BARBARIAN – PASSIONATE BUT AGGRESSIVE

When things start going south, is your first course of action to directly challenge what has caused you to tilt? Would calling the other player out in chat bring you some relief? Do you feel as though you need a sense of immediate relief from the frustration building from one lost fight to the next? Have you ever reacted to a poor play, with actions like punching the desk, yelling, or feeling a need to insult others? If you answer yes to a majority of these questions, it is likely that you are a member of the Barbarian subtype.

This type of player is likely one that many will associate with the average League of Legends player, but that is simply not the case. According to Riot Games, many of these players are great at taking high-risk plays and pulling them off thanks to their confidence. While there are definite upsides to their dedication, there are still drawbacks. Personal experience has shown that games with multiple Barbarian-minded players almost always end up turning the in-game chat into a flame war, throwing insults and disappointments harshly from one player to another, even on the same team. These players tend to self-sabotage, as the use of insults often paints them in a negative light or might end up tilting some of their allies.

Riot emphasizes that the weakness of these players comes from their temper and passion. Some of these reactions may seem a bit extreme to some, but they all come down to the same need—a form of instant gratification or release from the pressure of the match. These players care deeply about performance and are very headstrong. Not every Barbarian will end up smacking their hand against the desk after a lost fight, but they might feel better after talking to a friend in the match about what is going on. The most common trend in my experience, though, has been that the tilt tends to dissipate immediately after the game ends.

THE PALADIN – LOGICAL BUT HARSHLY JUDGING

Do you believe that everything can be outplayed? Are you often described as a "try-hard" by enemies? Is holding high standards for your allies something you take pride in? Have you ever felt like a lost lane in your game is due to nothing more than a "skill issue"? Do you feel as though the report system is one of your most-used tools? Would you rather put the team on your back and carry than rely on others? If you've answered yes to a majority of these questions, you are likely a member of the Paladin subtype according to Riot Games.

These players have some incredible strength, especially regarding knowledge about the game. They could almost be considered scholarly by the amount of time they have put into League of Legends. Riot even describes these players as having almost studied the Rift. They reinforce this by saying that Paladin-type players may lack years of experience, but they view the game as a science that can be mastered. In my personal experience, they often view fights, objectives, and matches overall as black and white. Everything is either a hard win or a hard loss for these players. Winning or losing generally will boil down to a difference in skill level, players getting counterpicked, or a straight difference in mentality. Paladin-minded players are often level-headed when it comes to taking accountability for their own errors but expect all other players to meet that standard as well. Their passion for performance is key to their success and play style, but perfection may come at a price for their allies. Personal experience on my part, as well as expert opinion from Riot Games agree—these players are known for viewing their advice as sagely, much to the detriment of their teams. Many of these players tend to try to dictate to other players when the game is not looking great. Often, this is not done with malintent, but it can be seen as such by other players. While the advice you give may be correct, most players do not find their mistakes being brought to the surface helpful. Their weakness often comes from how their communications are perceived by allies and enemies.

LORD DGAF – LAID BACK BUT CHECKED OUT

Would you say that you do not generally feel angered by poor plays, lost fights, or lanes that have fallen behind? Is it a little too easy sometimes to distance yourself from a loss? Have you ever felt like you're somewhere on the fence between just being "chill" in game, and not minding at all what the outcome is once things have gone south? Is voting to surrender or leaving "lost" matches a habit? If you've answered yes to a majority of these questions, you're likely a member of the Lord DGAF subtype. Riot Games describes this player type as one of the first to jump ship when the game feels out of favor.

Players who are in this category, as per their namesake, often do not care much for what happens in the match once things start going south. Some may view this as a way that these players "stay calm", by avoiding claiming fault or just doing their own thing in their lane,

often without direct concern for their allies. Riot claims that on the outside, players in this category display incredible emotional stability, or overall come off as “emotionally grounded”, allowing allies to show preference towards them in the early parts of the game. These players display a great ability to distance themselves from another lane doing poorly, but internally tend to buckle down and focus on themselves more than others when their team falls behind. This may not seem like much of a weakness, but it can quickly turn from self-preservation to self-sabotage in my experience. Essentially, players in this subtype tend to take “my way or the highway” literally. Rather than standing and fighting for the victory, they will generally send a chat saying their team should just “go next” or start purposefully dying in order to speed up the end of the game for an opportunity to play a new match.

THE SCARRED VETERAN – DETERMINED TO A FAULT

Do you channel your frustration towards yourself instead of towards others? Would you say most of your friends say you “don’t really tilt”, or that they would never see you flaming others, but instead yourself? Are you the person who always encourages your play group to not call it a night after a loss? You might even say that some nights you ragequeue until the early hours of the morning, hoping to hit that big win. Does time feel like it’s flying by after you log in? If you agree with a majority of these statements, you are likely a member of the Scarred Veteran subtype.

These players are some of the most laid back to play with, never lashing out towards others, always reflecting on their own plays. Despite the name implying plentiful experience, many of the players I know (me included) that fit into this subtype have not been playing all that long. Riot Games suggests these players are some of the most level-headed when it comes to the moments that feel like the game has completely fallen apart. They claim that Scarred Veteran-type players are likely to be encouraging towards their teammates, unlike most of the previous categories. A lost fight or a lost objective are not the end of the world for these players, but rather can be seen as fuel to perform better at their own tasks. They focus heavily on bigger goals in the game, and usually do not feel like small mistakes early will doom their team. Members of this group often view League of Legends as their primary hobby and are willing to dedicate hours upon hours to the game and take great pride in that. On the same token, though, these players tend to push all their frustrations from the game into themselves, often leading to a spiraling internal conflict. They feel that if they cannot carry the game on their own, that any loss is their fault. Rather than being toxic towards others, they are toxic towards themselves. While this type of teammate may be good for their allies, they are rarely good for themselves.

WHAT CAUSES TILT?

Although knowing the way that tilt affects you is important, what is most important is knowing what exactly causes you to feel so strongly from match to match. For the purpose of this report, a survey of 30 players has been conducted. The questions consisted largely of the participants reading scenarios commonly found in their matches and rating them on a scale from 1 (least tilting) to 10 (most tilting) such as “Enemies are flaming you in /all chat” or “your lane opponent wins a close fight, surviving with only a sliver of HP” and so on.

The averages are as follows:

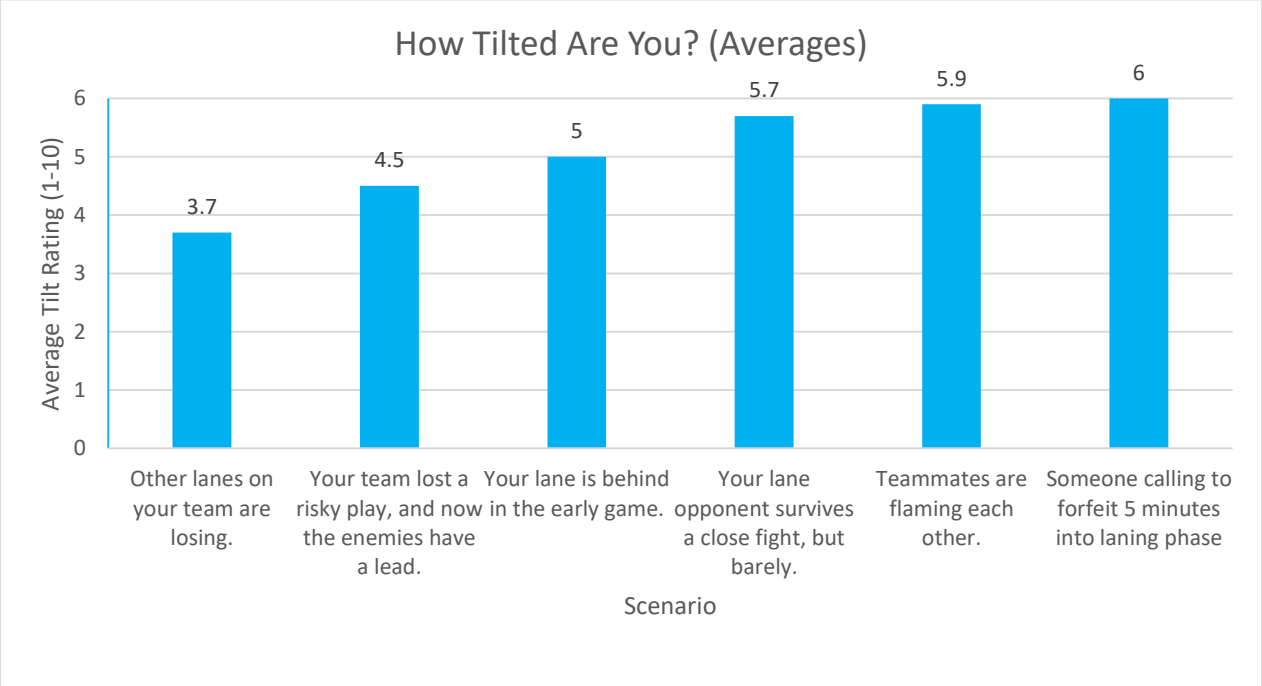


Figure 1: A chart depicting the average "tilt ratings" of various scenarios

As shown by the average ratings, most of the tilting things shown are due to things allies are doing, not even related to their performance. Players feel most affected by their allies when they have negative attitudes, such as calling for a forfeit when the game has barely started or flaming allies. A tough game can definitely be tilting, but pushing for your team to give up before even giving them a chance to prove themselves is generally will make your allies less likely to cooperate with you on big plays or those massive game-changing fights. Losing your cool might lead to losing your game before skill is even taken into account by yourself, your allies, or your enemies. A positive outlook (or even being quiet in chat) can turn a game around by allowing everyone to focus on what they need to do to make a victorious comeback.

RESULTS (WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT TILT?)

Riot games suggest in their quiz about tilting that different players benefit from different methods of cooling off, as seen in the Tilt Types section. Tips from the developer may be useful, but tips from the community are also abundant. The survey relating to tilting scenarios also asked players what they tend to do when they´re feeling their emotions getting the best of them. This question was presented as multiple choice, but also offered a separate "other" short answer option. As such, answers that are written in but are essentially the same were put under the same category (for example, "ignore the messages sent in /all chat" written under "other" will be marked under the same category as "mute /all chat") for conciseness.

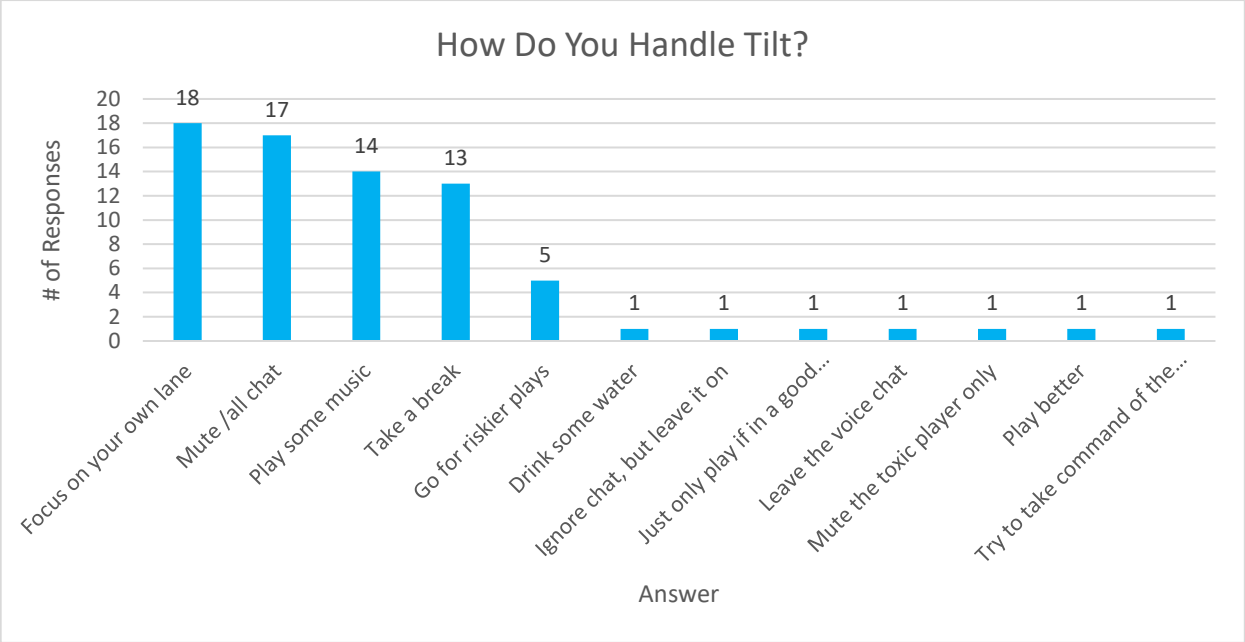


Figure 2: A chart depicting responses to the question "What do you do when you tilt?"

Players in the survey were also asked to provide advice for players that are often riddled with tilts, and responses were greatly varied. One of the most popular themes was remembering that the game is simply that, and most of the time (outside of ranked matches) the only stakes on the line are whether you get a "win" or a "loss" screen afterwards. Being aware of how you tilt and what you tilt at was considered the most valuable tip by one respondent. Participants also mentioned that taking breaks is important between games, but especially when it comes to loss streaks. Multiple responses say to never continue for the day (or at least multiple hours) if you have lost two games in a row to prevent burnout. For tips like these, it is important to remember that one method alone will likely not solve all of the problems related to tilting, but a mixture of them will be the most effective.

If you are unsure of what helps you, it may be beneficial to take a week or two of playing and test out some varying strategies when you feel the tilt starting to get the best of you. Remember, many players do not fit cleanly into one category specifically, but rather fit into different categories in different scenarios.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BARBARIAN-TYPE PLAYERS

One of the best solutions for Barbarian-type players is to prevent the easiest method of lashing out from being accessible. Instead of telling someone else on your team how to play their role better, it may be easier on everyone if you have chat muted from the beginning of the game. Riot endorses this, suggesting that players susceptible to this kind of tilt start their games (especially those in ranked formats) with /muteall. This would remove the chance for you to type at them and lowers your risk of being tilted by remarks from others. In my experience, these players tend to recover quickly from a loss, but the time they spend in the game they are losing is grueling.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PALADIN-TYPE PLAYERS

One of the most important things for Paladin-minded players is to learn to move forward from poor plays. Seeing your jungler lose dragon to the enemy ADC may be tilting, but that does not mean there will not be another one in a few minutes. Riot's suggestion is to try to focus internally on what you can do to turn things around. Remember that one lost battle does not lose the war, and that comebacks are possible. Keeping your allies and their mentals in mind is important to keeping the team calm and cohesive. Bickering or jeering at others will not ultimately help your allies rebound from a fight that went south. Much like what is suggested for Barbarian-type players, it may be best to avoid typing in chat to begin with or restricting your ability to do so from the start of the game.

SUGGESTIONS FOR LORD DGAF-TYPE PLAYERS

Members of this subtype can benefit most from playing with people they are familiar with, like friends, family, or other loved ones. Riot games suggests practicing emotional control by playing with friends/family you are familiar with in game mods with lower stakes, such as normal unranked matches or for-fun modes such as ARAM. Playing with those that you are close to might make the game feel less like a chore and more of a shared experience, encouraging you to focus and pull forward instead of giving in to the tilt. If you find that you often get upset and want to ragequit off of comments from others, start your games with a nice and simple /muteall to avoid seeing other's comments. Remember that the game does not need to have control over you, and that you have the power to change how you let it affect you. On the same token, it is key to remember that not letting it affect you does not mean to give up.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SCARRED VETERAN-TYPE PLAYERS

While these players are amazing at keeping neutral for their teams' sake, they can end up fixating on their own errors that are more than a small problem. Rather than venting their frustrations, they can end up trying to fix it through risky plays or locking in on their own role. This sometimes will help their team pull through with a win but can often lead to tunnel vision. In these scenarios, Riot Games suggests setting a small goal for ways to come back. Small steps are significantly better than planning out the rest of the match in your head. These players might end up playing game after game, ending up in a major loss streak. In my experience, as a member of this subtype, I know for a fact that I am guilty of rage queueing. The best thing for these players to remember is that wins and losses carry momentum, as shown by Riot Games. If you've only played a game or two, and you've won, it is usually beneficial to queue up again. If you've been losing, taking a break is better for you as well as your allies.

CONCLUSION

Players in all ranks, from all countries, and in all roles are likely to experience emotions that throw them off of their top game. Of the sample size of the survey done for the purposes of this report, the general conclusion can be drawn that players feel most affected by the morale of the players on the same side. As such, one of the best ways to work on your win rate is to work on your mental fortitude and resilience when it comes to bad plays. This focus on self-improvement is also prevalent in how the participants chose to deter tilt from affecting their gameplay, as the top response to tilt was players trying to focus on their mistakes and work on correcting them in the same game that they made them. Working towards bouncing back rather than sitting back and watching your lane lose slowly was a priority for over half of the respondents. The thing most important to keep in mind though, is what works most for others may not work best for you. All that you need to do is find what affects you most in order to bring yourself back into the game.

Focusing on your "Tilt Type" (as provided by the quiz from Riot Games), or rather, the combination of subtypes you fit into most often is likely the best way to find ways to circumvent the strong emotions you feel during a match of League of Legends, or any other competitive game. Taking bits and pieces from each category, noting what you experience most intensely or most frequently will allow you to come up with a solution most effective for yourself.

RECOMMENDATION

The best thing you can do for yourself is to first admit that tilt is a problem. Many people often fail to notice that they tilt as hard as they do, avoiding the fact that it is obviously affecting their gameplay. A player might lose a fight and suddenly start playing incredibly aggressively, leading to more deaths and a worse mental state. To them, they might just be trying to make a comeback, but to others, that is obvious tilt. Telling others what to do after a lost fight as a team might seem like some sagely advice to the player themselves, but it might cause others to feel inadequate and frustrated. Seeing these behaviors in yourself and acknowledging they can be problematic is a wonderful first step. After that, though, it is important to take some advice from your friends, articles online, the professional players, or even this report and start working towards applying them in your games. Surely, tilt will not be preventable 100% of the time, but working towards channeling your frustrations elsewhere or subduing them will make the game more fun for you as well as your allies.

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