

# Joushi Esports LJL Roster

The other day, I posted a question on Twitter. If you were trying to win worlds with an LJL roster, who would it be?

While we consider this question, gotta lay down a couple ground rules.

1. The roster has to follow the rules of including no more than 2 imports
2. Only players who played in LJL 2020 are eligible to be considered
3. This is not a popularity contest, we're focused on trying to find results, not who we like best

Before I give my answer to the question of who would be on Joushi Esports, I want to posit a couple of theories and use it as a lens through which we can examine some teams.

The first theory is simple. There is a finite amount of resources in experience and gold on the map, and you have to allocate it in the most effective way. Players can be loosely plotted along a spectrum of resource intensiveness, and a team with five resource intensive players will struggle to actually support all of them. While not exactly identical, players can also be thought of as 'carries' and 'supports' regardless of the position that they play. Carries tend to require a lot of gold and experience to function well, while supports tend to thrive with much less, and giving them more gold and experience doesn't increase their effectiveness nearly as much.

The second theory is also simple to explain, but hard to execute. In order to build the most effective possible roster, you need to pick a solo laner and a jungler, determine how they want to play the game, and then build the rest of the roster around them. Ideally, this solo laner is a strong carry player who gets better the more resources they are given. The jungler can be a carry or a support, but they have to play in the same way that the solo laner wants to.

Why a solo laner and not bot lane? Simply because by virtue of playing in a solo lane, you get equal gold and greater experience than an ADC because you're not sharing it with another player.

With this in mind, let's examine a few teams briefly.

We'll start with what has been one of the most successful examples in League of Legends history: Huni and Reignover's Fnatic.

Before joining Fnatic, Huni was a virtual unknown. After joining in 2015, the team got 2nd in Spring, 1st in Spring Playoffs, 3rd at MSI, went undefeated in Summer, won Summer Playoffs, and got 3rd at Worlds 2015.

Since then, Huni and Reignover performed well in NA, but failed to replicate the same level of success. After leaving Immortals, Reignover's career was unimpressive, and Huni only recreated similar results when he was on SKT with some of the greatest players League of Legends has ever seen.

To put it simply, Febiven, Rekkles, and Yellowstar are all good players, but pale in comparison to Peanut, Faker, Bang, and Wolf. Pobelter, WildTurtle, and Adrian are probably comparable to the Fnatic roster on an individual level.

I propose that the difference in play styles that the teams went with. Huni was allowed to be the primary carry of Fnatic, with Febiven and Rekkles being very self-sufficient, without a lot of jungle attention paid to their lanes.

In contrast, the team of Elements in EU LCS 2015 Spring, which had recently rebranded from Alliance, added Rekkles to their team. A move that almost everyone believed was a stronger player than Tabzz, went from winning EU LCS 2014 Summer Playoffs and Summer Season, to getting 7th. If they upgraded their players, why was the result so much worse?

Because player skill is not the primary determining factor!

We can even see this in the LJL Summer 2020. On paper, DFM and Sengoku Gaming have the best players. But they both lost to V3. Individual player skill can't be the only determining factor.

Briefly, DFM as a roster has been built around the core of Ceros and Yutapon for longer than the LJL has existed. If we accept that the team is built around Ceros, and Steal as the jungler supports the way that Ceros wants to play, we see that the team functions pretty darn well. Both the top lane and the bottom lane are incredibly self-sufficient and are the primary carries, as well as the primary recipients of gold and experience. The team has been domestically dominant for years, with this being their first loss in playoffs finals since 2018. The model clearly works. However, they are clearly not very competitive on the world stage, and I posit that a major reason is not their player skill.

Additionally, Sengoku Gaming is a team that spent a huge amount of money to import Blank and Pirean, as well as grab some of the best domestic talent that isn't on DFM. This team did take a Bo5 off of DFM last split, but they lost 3-1 to V3 and 3-0 to DFM. A major problem is this team doesn't really have an identity. All of their players demand a lot of resources. They are very talented individually, but this problem means that against teams that are even vaguely coordinated and not individually outmatched they fail.

V3 has a very clear identity. The team is built around Bugi and Archer, who are very resource intensive, and strong carries. Ace, Paz, and Raina give up a lot to empower these players. While individually, I would argue that the team is weaker than either DFM or SG, they still manage to pull through because their players function well together to have a basic game plan.

So the question becomes, with all of this in mind, we are looking to build an LJL team around a carry midlaner with a supporting jungler, and one of the side lanes serving as a mid-to-high resource intensity with carry potential.

To build the core of the team, we obviously need to start with the mid we are building around. There are really only two options, and I will fight anyone who says otherwise: Aria and Dasher. They have very similar laning stats across 2020 and 2019, and I would argue that Aria has had a stronger team around him throughout 2020 and also

benefited from not playing top lane for a split. Head to head, Dasher also beat Aria in Summer Playoffs.

I'm a big fan of Dasher, and he has shown himself to be more well rounded in his champion pools, so I'm gonna pick him.

Next criteria: a supportive jungler that supports mid lane in 2v2s and will give resources to empower this player.

There is no option here other than Steal. Bugi and Blank are way too greedy, and would force us to pick supportive side laners in ways that would weaken the team as a whole.

After that, we have to decide if we want to play towards the top side or the bottom side of the map, and with both of our import slots already used, we have the following options:

Top: Evi, Paz, apaMEN

Bot: Yutapon, Yutorimoyashi

I will argue that Evi is a better top laner than either Paz or apaMEN, but can't be paired with Yutapon because that leaves us with top, mid, and bot all competing for limited resources. apaMEN also doesn't play weakside very well, where Paz does.

So we can take Evi + Yutori or Paz + Yutapon, and again, I would argue that the difference between Evi and Paz is a greater difference than Yutorimoyasi and Yutapon, so I'm going to go with the Evi + Yutori pair.

That leaves us with support, and again with no imports available, our options are realistically Enty, Raina, and viviD.

Yutorimoyasi hasn't really played with Raina, and statistically he has performed better with viviD, so honestly that's really the deciding factor for me here. I don't think there's a large enough difference otherwise to make an overwhelming argument in one of their favor, so I could honestly be convinced of any of them.

So what does that look like overall? I present to you: Joushi Esports

Top: Evi

Jungle: Steal

Mid: Dasher

AD: Yutorimoyasi

Support: viviD

It's important to note here that this is NOT who I think is the best individual in every role. They aren't individually dominant, while all very good. Instead, this is a team that can consistently play towards their strength in the top half, while bottom lane is able to withstand pressure pretty well while still being relevant with relatively little gold.

I reject the idea that Japan doesn't have enough talent, just that it's locked up in DFM who has reached their cap with their current roster.

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