



PROTOSS VERSUS ZERG



THE GUIDE

[G] PROTOSS VERSUS ZERG

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II PREFACE [top](#)

We, members of the TL and the Starcraft community, present to you the following guide that is yet unmatched in quality and depth. Although the strategy section of Teamliquid contains many great guides, there has never been an attempt to completely cover a single match-up as in-depth as what we have done here. The following is a culmination of nine months of work, nine months of writing, formatting, referencing, editing, and reviewing. The resulting product follows, a reference guide of the PvZ match-up that spans approximately 100 pages. We've written this guide with the entire community in mind, as all Starcraft enthusiasts will benefit from either a through reading, a cursory glance, or an occasional reference.

- Low level Protoss players can learn basic builds and concepts of the match-up, including how to open, how to transition, scouting, and unit counters. Each of the main builds will have detailed benchmarks so you may compare your results to optimal ones by professional players.
- Mid level Protoss players in the diamond to high masters range will benefit the most as they will be able to fill in certain strategical holes in their play.
- Professional level players can use this guide as a reference as it contains a small library of vods and replays with regards to every aspect of PvZ.
- Zerg players will see a Protoss perspective on the match-up as well as have a clean layout of all the options Protoss have against them.
- Casters will learn what to expect in this match-up and be able to make better calls and predictions while casting. I know many casters legitimately want to learn more about the game but don't have the time necessary to grind out games to learn.
- Casual observers of the game will receive insight into players' actions. After all, it's always more interesting to watch something when you know what is going on in the players' minds. In addition to the content of the guide, we have taken extreme care in its organization. Even from a cursory read, a casual observer will be able to get a much better understanding of the structure of PvZ.
- For general interest, other notable features of this guide include map analyses and a history

of the match-up.

In addition, all topics and assertions will be backed up with in-depth analysis and also evidence in the form of by recent top level 🟩 replays, 📺 vods, or both if available. All vods will be linked while all replays will be provided in a replay pack at the end of the guide (vod links that are accompanied by *(PW)* in parentheses indicate that the vod is behind a paywall, and subscription access (or equivalent) is needed to view them). The replay pack also contains replays from the vast majority of builds listed in this guide, which are not listed in the description of the build. There are over 300 vods and 150 replays included in this guide. Finally, we have additionally included a PDF version of this guide for your convenience and ease of reference, which can be found via the link above. So what are you waiting for? Have fun reading!

A Short Note on Article Navigation

With the complexity and sheer amount of information in this guide, there are two points with regards to navigation that should be briefly touched upon. To differentiate all links within this guide, internal links appear as standard url links while external ones such as vods or guides have been italicized. Also, in addition to using internal anchors to navigate this guide, using the back (or forward) button in your web browser will return you to your previous position in the article before the anchored link was clicked.

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IV INTRODUCTION TO PVZ [top](#)

Protoss versus Zerg is a very dynamic and asymmetrical match-up in which both sides have a myriad of strategies to pick from and their own unique racial advantages. At different points of the game, one race will be driving the direction of the game while the other has to react. A typical modern PvZ has the following major stages:

- Protoss opens with an expansion build, usually a FFE while the Zerg opens with a three Hatchery build.
- Protoss can either two base all-in or take a third base.
- In reaction to a Protoss third, Zerg will either pressure the third, harass, or stay passive, teching to Brood Lords. If the Zerg pressures or harasses, Protoss will respond defensively. If the Zerg techs to Brood Lords, Protoss can either choose to hit a pre-Hive timing or play passively with a Mothership.
- Both players will build up their ideal armies, usually involving Infestor/Brood Lord/Corruptor versus Mothership/Carrier/Templar/Archon or Mothership/Colossi/Stalker/Archon/Templar and the game will culminate in one big fight.

Because of the structure of this match-up, we have decided to organize our guide into four main sections:

- **Early Game: Openings**
This section will address the standard openings for Protoss, either Forge fast expand (FFE), Gateway Nexus expands, Gateway Core expands, or other one base builds. It will touch upon the advantages and disadvantages of each opening and how to survive various all-ins against any opening. The opening portion early game PvZ usually lasts from the beginning of the game to around 6 minutes.
- **Early Game: Transitions**
This section will address the various transitions Protoss has after a FFE, the most common Protoss opening. Both macro and all-in builds will be covered here. The transition portion of early game PvZ usually lasts from around 6 minutes to 10 minutes.
- **Mid Game**
This section will address how to play once you've chosen a macro route. It will identify the most common Zerg mid-game strategies and discuss how to appropriately respond to each of them. The mid game of PvZ usually starts at 10 minutes, and can end as early as 15 minutes.
- **Late Game**
Finally, this section will address the PvZ endgame, once Zerg has reached Hive tech and chosen either Brood Lords or Ultralisks. Both pre-Hive pushes and macro based play will be considered. Late game begins when Hive tech is reached, at the very earliest, 15 minutes.

1 EARLY GAME: OPENINGS

In the Protoss vs Zerg match-up, the vast majority of games start off with both sides expanding rapidly.

From the Protoss point of view, as the metagame has evolved, the various one base all-ins and timings available to Protoss have greatly diminished in their effectiveness against Zerg players because of a combination of map changes, better scouting skills, and general increase in the skill level of the players. In modern play, Protoss players open with economical builds focused on defending a fast expansion with either a Forge and cannon(s) or basic Gateway units.

Outside of aggressive early Pool openings, Zerg one base play is also weak and easily scoutable, so standard play has always involved some fast expand or, in some situations, a double expand opening. The trend in modern play is to delay gas mining for as long as possible, allowing Zerg to maximize their mineral income and thus Drone count, but Speedling openings that focus on obtaining map control early on in the game, aggressive Roach/Baneling plays, or fast tech are also viable.

The three major ways in which Protoss can take his natural expansion include with a Forge fast expansion, a Gateway Nexus Opening, or a Gateway Core Opening. Other One-Base Builds are also possible, but generally not seen in today's metagame.

Timings

Before we get into specific builds, let's look at some timings useful for early game PvZ no matter what opening you choose. The most important ones are bolded:

- 1:46 - 6 Pool finishes
- 1:56 - 7 Pool finishes
- 2:03 - 8 Pool finishes
- 2:11 - 9 Pool finishes
- 2:17 - 10 Pool finishes
- 2:28 - 11 Pool finishes
- 2:40 - 11 Overpool finishes
- **2:05 - 15 Hatch starts**
- 2:35 - Zerg reaches 300 minerals after 13 Pool for 15 Hatch
- **2:40 - Zerg reaches 300 minerals after 14 Pool for 16 Hatch**
- 3:02 - Zerg reaches 300 minerals after 14 gas, 14 Pool build
- **3:15 - Amount of time elapsed from when Zerg starts his first extractor to when Ling speed finishes**

Here are a few important notes on these timings:

- Pool timings allow a Protoss player to differentiate between very similar openings. This is important because on certain maps, the Protoss reaction to two similar openings may be completely different. For example, on Sharkuas Plateau, it's possible to Forge-Nexus-cannon against an 11 Pool, but not a 10 Pool. Identifying the exact build will allow you to properly react to build
- Hatchery timings are listed so you may block Hatcheries for no longer than you need to. For example, if a Zerg player brings a Drone to his natural, prematurely at 2:30 after a 14 Pool, you know he won't have the money to make a Hatchery until 2:40, so you don't have to waste valuable Probe shields to block it. However, keep in mind that at high levels, both players know their timings and there can be some intense mind games. DRG, for instance, has been mixing in 13 Pool/15 Hatch, which allows him to plop down a Hatchery at 2:35 if his Protoss opponent sticks too strictly to the 2:40 timing.
- Finally, the Zergling speed timing is important, because it gives you a precise timing for you to retreat Gateway units. Without Zergling speed, Stalkers, and to a lesser extent Zealots,

are able to kite Zerglings. But as soon as Zergling speed finishes, Zerg gains map control as this is no longer possible. Knowing exactly when Zergling speed finishes allows you to pressure safely for as long as possible.

1.1 FORGE FAST EXPAND [top](#)

The Forge Fast Expand (FFE from now on) opening has been a staple PvZ opening ever since Starcraft: Brood War. Because Lings are low-damage melee units, it's possible for Protoss to defend an expansion with one or two cannons together with clever building placement to prevent the Zerg's first few Lings from getting into the Protoss base. This allows you to build a very early Nexus, entering the mid-game with an extremely solid two base economy that allows for a variety of follow-ups.

Because FFE in the early game invests so much into static defense, economy, tech or production capabilities, this opening has a hard time playing aggressively until about 7:30 into the game at best, save for cannon rushing. As a result, the most common Zerg reaction is to double expand as fast as possible, going up to three bases and investing heavily in Drones while delaying tech and combat units.

1.1.1 Early Game Notes and Build Orders

The two main options to Forge Fast Expand include Nexus first builds or Forge first builds and there are a few deviations in the order in which players get their Cannon, Gateway, and second Pylon.

In general, it's safe to build a Nexus first before any other building on most modern ladder maps as long as you scout the the Zerg's Spawning Pool being built at 14 supply or later. This means that on 2 player maps or when scouting your opponent on the first try, you can reactively choose to go Nexus first and be completely safe. If you see your opponent rushing Lings to your base off of a 14 Pool or later, you may have to delay the Lings so that your initial cannon may finish. This can be done by blocking the entrance to your base with a Probe or fully walling-off the entrance with a temporary Pylon or Gateway, canceling them as your cannon finishes. While Nexus first provides the best early game economy possible while being safe against standard Pool timings, it's dangerous to do it blindly. Lastly, it's impossible to do a 3-Pylon block on a ramp with this build; cannon rushing a Hatch first however is still doable.

The more common option is to get the Forge before the Nexus. This allows for more safety and aggressive potential thanks to cannon rushes, at the price of a bit of economy. There are also key differences in the build order after the Nexus. Getting a Pylon and then a cannon after the Nexus allows for almost continuous Probe production, while also being safe should the initial set(s) of Lings run straight across the map. Conversely, it's possible to build a Gateway and cannon after the Nexus and before the second Pylon. This speeds up the timings for the Cybernetics Core and tech, but it includes a very long Probe cut the other builds don't have, which makes the opening the least popular FFE variation in competitive play.

Forge at Natural vs Forge in Main

A common adjustment and recent innovation is to have the first Pylon and the Forge in the main. There are many advantages and disadvantages to this adjustment.

Advantages of Forge in Main:

- You won't have to give up your first Pylon or Forge against a 6 pool on any map; normally this is only possible on easily walled naturals like Shakuras Plateau and Ohana.
- You can hide the progress of your upgrades, especially your +1, which leaves Zerg more in the dark about what you're doing.
- It'll be much harder to snipe the Forge if it's in the back of your main. The usual front Forge, on the other hand, is a common target for Zerg players.

Disadvantages of Forge in Main:

- You're weaker against Pools between but not including 6 Pool and 14 Pool. Against these unusual Pool timings, you won't be able to secure your natural with a cannon.
- Without the Forge at your front, you'll have a tougher time walling off, allowing for more easy early run-bys from the Zerg. This is less of an issue on maps with smaller chokes.

Also note that the Defending Early Pools section will assume you've built your forge at your natural.

FFE Build Orders

Nexus First:

- 9 Pylon (Chronoboost Nexus on 10, 12, and 15 supply)
- 17 Nexus
- 17 Forge
- 17 Pylon
- 17 Gateway
- 18 Cannon (Chronoboost Nexus after placing Cannon and resuming Probe production)
- 19 and 20 Gas(es)
- 21 Cyber Core

Forge First, Heavy Econ Alpha:

- 9 Pylon (Chronoboost Nexus on 10, 12, and 15 supply)
- 14-17 Forge
- 17 Nexus
- 18 Pylon
- 18 Cannon
- 18 Gateway
- 19 Both main Assimilators (Chronoboost Nexi continuously once Gateway is placed and 2nd Pylon is finished)
- @100% Gateway Cyber Core

Forge First, Heavy Econ Beta:

- 9 Pylon (Chronoboost Nexus on 10, 12, and 15 supply)
- 14-17 Forge
- 18 Nexus
- 18 Pylon
- 18 Cannon
- 18 Gateway
- 20 Both main Assimilators (Chronoboost Nexi continuously once Gateway is placed and 2nd Pylon is finished)
- @100% Gateway Cyber Core

Forge First, Fast Gateway:

- 9 Pylon (Chronoboost Nexus on 10, 12, and 15 supply)
- 14-17 Forge
- 17 Nexus
- 17 Gateway
- 17 Pylon
- 18 Cannon (Chronoboost Nexus after placing Cannon and resuming Probe production)
- 19 and 20 Gas(es)
- 21 Cyber Core

Here are some sample screenshots of commonly used building placement. Pylon, Gateway, Cannon and Forge placements are interchangeable:

Antiga Shipyard:



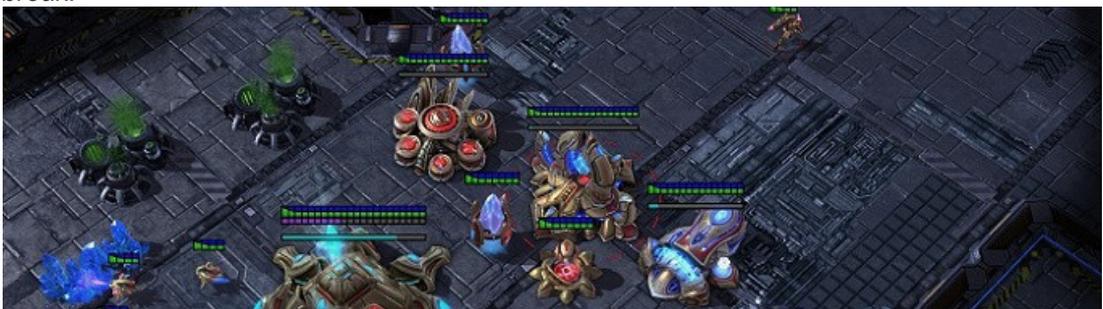
Atlantis Spaceship:



Cloud Kingdom:



Daybreak:



Entombed Valley:



Metropolis:



Ohana:



Shakuras Plateau:



Whirlwind:



1.1.2 Dealing with Early Pools

Generally speaking, you will always be scouting on 9. On 4 player maps, it is recommended that you open Forge first unless you scout your opponent first and see no early Pool. If you do not, send a second Probe (the Probe with which you place your Forge) to scout in the opposite direction. If you scout an extremely early Pool, your first step is to identify what kind of Pool it is, that is, on how many Drones was it placed down. Minute differences in the Pool timing should be responded to with vastly different reactions, and you will end up either behind or dead if you pick the wrong one. The early game timings section of this guide can greatly help in determining what type of Pool it is, but if you cannot see the timing of the Pool when it finishes, then good judgement, game sense and

experience will go a long way.

On maps that can't be walled by 3 buildings like Ohana and Shakuras Plateau you will have to abandon the low ground Forge and Pylon. When you scout the common 6 Pool, place your Forge and immediately place a Pylon in your mineral line such that you can place a cannon that guards every mineral patch as well as one of your geysers. Do your best not to hamper your mining, but placing a single cannon in your mineral line is alright. You will want to keep one Probe on the map to check for your opponent's expansion and/or gas(es). Consider this build a guideline to transition from here:

- 9 Pylon (Chronoboost Nexus on 10 and 12 supply)
- 14 Forge
- 15 Pylon (Chronoboost Nexus on 16 supply)
- 17 Cannon (In mineral line)
- 18 Gateway (In range of your cannon)
- 19 Assimilator (Soon after placing this, your opponent will kill the Pylon in your natural expansion)
- 20 Pylon (Continue Chronoboosting Nexus to further increase your worker count lead)
- 22 Cyber Core

From here, you can either add more Gates or take re-take your expansion depending on what your scouting Probe sees. If your opponent takes gas and does not expand, add at least 1 or 2 more Gates immediately. If your opponent expands, you can safely re-take your expansion with just your one Gateway or with one additional Gateway.

  (PW) [Genius vs Nestea on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 1.](#)

 (PW) [Parting vs Yugioh on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 3.](#)

 [Squirtle vs Hyun on Entombed Valley from IPL Fight Club. 3 Gate expand into 5 Gate follow-up.](#)

  [Rain vs Sen on Entombed Valley from WCS Grand Finals.](#)

Then there are Pools that are only moderately quick, such as 9 Pools, 10 Pools, or 11 Pools. Against these economic early Pools, depending on the map, it may be possible to wall the Zerglings off completely before they reach your base. The map of course, makes a huge difference on which types of Pools you can wall off. First is the rush distance as longer maps can add up to 20 seconds of travel time for Zerglings. The second map factor is how wide the natural choke is. While it can take as little as 4 buildings to wall on Cloud Kingdom, it can take as many as 6 buildings to wall on Antiga Shipyard. If you are able to complete the wall-off and secure both your main and natural, you will wind up ahead. In contrast, if you abandon your natural and attempt the generic 6 Pool response, you can be behind against these more economic early Pools.

Other openings include the in-between Pools, such as 7 Pool or 8 Pool. Many times you won't be able to tell the difference between the 6 Pool and the 7/8 Pool, because you won't see the Spawning Pool in time. In this case, it is perfectly ok to abandon your Forge in your natural and resort to the 6 Pool response; you'll wind up even with the Zerg at worst. However, there is another option. Against these intermediate Pools you generally won't be able to wall off your natural in time, but this does not mean you'll have to abandon your natural. It is possible in the scenario to pull half your Probes to your natural for a few seconds and block the Lings from entering your main as your cannon is finishing. Then, you can wait until you get the minerals to wall off and expand to your natural normally.

Finally, on maps where the natural can be walled off by only 3 buildings like Shakuras Plateau and Ohana, you don't have to abandon your natural at all against any early Pool. Instead, immediately cancel and halt the production of additional probes. You should be at 12 or 13 supply. Make 2 additional Gateways to finish your wall before you start your cannon; when your Forge finishes you won't have 150 minerals, but it is important to start the 2nd Gateway to finish the wall before placing the cannon. After you start the cannon, still do not resume building probes, because you might need to make additional Gateways behind your wall to further buy you time if Lings break through the initial wall before your cannon finishes. Then carry on with your fast expansion and play the game normally, carefully scouting with Zealots and probes still on the map for the Zerg's follow-up.

1.1.3 Other Notes

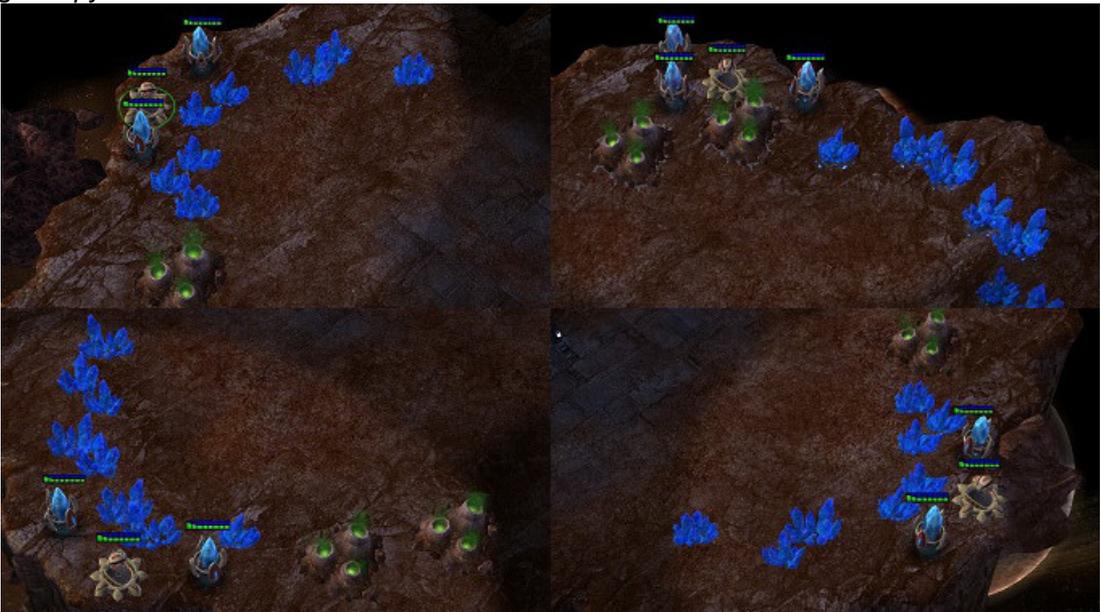
Cannon Rushing

Having a Forge in early game also allows for the offensive use of hidden cannons to try and destroy a Zerg's extra Hatcheries. A building Hatchery has a very short vision range, so if a Zerg player doesn't use his initial scouting Zerglings wisely or doesn't have Overlords in position close to his building Hatch a cannon rush can deny a Zerg's natural or third expansion for a very long time, making the Zerg's early game investment of 300 minerals completely wasted. While this does delay a Protoss' player tech it can be a very worthy investment as the opponent will be even more heavily delayed. Even if an Overlord is in position, on most maps there are places to fully wall in a cannon behind the mineral line with 2-3 pylons, which makes the cannon much harder to reach and increases the effectiveness of the rush.

Because a Hatch takes 100 seconds to build and a cannon takes 40, a well timed cannon rush will start the cannons when the Hatch is about 65% complete to make sure it finishes right as the cannons are also finishing. If the cannons were to complete before the Hatch, the Zerg player could just cancel it setting the Protoss player behind. On the other hand, if the Hatch finishes before the cannons, it will turn into completely wasted minerals since the few Lings built in the early game are not enough to defend it.

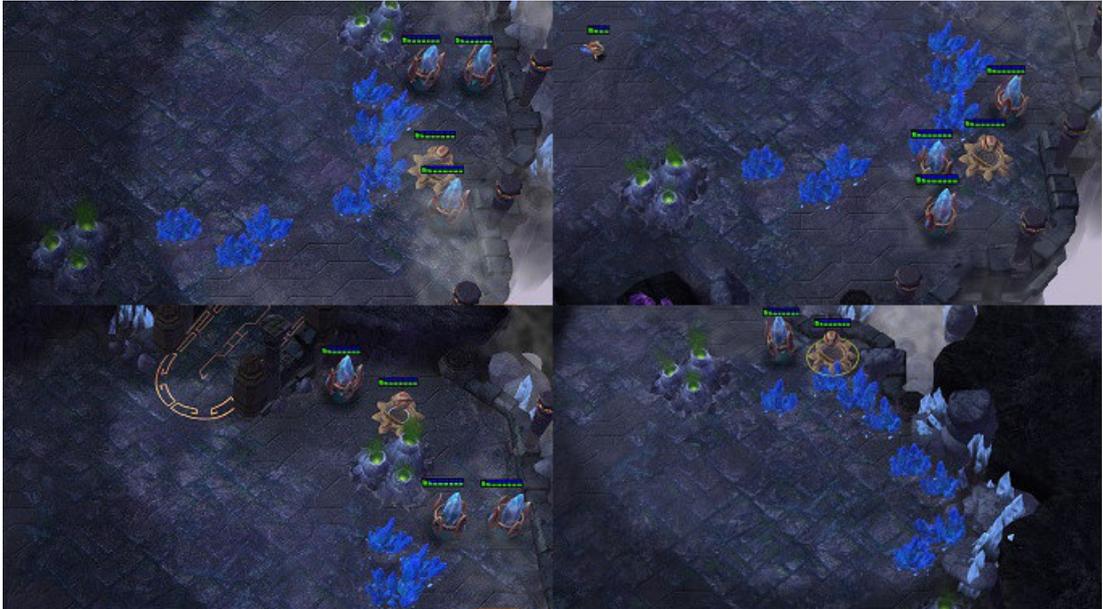
The best places and building placements on common maps are reported in the following screenshots:

Antiga Shipyard:



On Antiga Shipyard every position except top right has a spot that can be walled off with just 2 pylons. For every spawning position including top right many 3 pylon spots are possible; one is shown for top right.

Cloud Kingdom:



On Cloud Kingdom as well as Daybreak there are no spots for 2 Pylon walls, but many 3\ Pylon walls are possible. Additionally it's possible to wall in a cannon with a single Pylon at the third on Cloud Kingdom.

Entombed Valley:



On Entombed, 2 Pylon walls are possible in every position.

Metropolis:



On Metropolis there are no 2 Pylon spots, and there's only one possible placement for each natural for a 3 Pylon wall. Even though the top right/2 o'clock spot looks incomplete, it is indeed a full wall.

Ohana:



On Ohana each natural has two possible 2 Pylon walls. Additionally it's possible to wall off a cannon out of sight next to the natural ramp for a possible cannon contain.

Whirlwind:



On Whirlwind only top left and bottom right on Whirlwind have 2 Pylon block placements. Many 3 Pylon walls are possible for every position.

-  (PW) [Hero vs JookTo on Atlantis Spaceship from GSL 2012 Season 3.](#)
-  (PW) [Hero vs Symbol on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 4.](#)
-  (PW) [Tear vs Byul on Whirlwind from GSTL 2012 Season 3. Vs Hatch first.](#)
-  (PW) [Younghwa vs Miya on Whirlwind from GSTL 2012 Season 3.](#)
-  (PW) [JYP vs Curious on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 4.](#)
-  (PW) [Hero vs Curious on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 5.](#)
-  (PW) [Oz vs Leenock on Ohana from MLG Fall Championship 2012. Preemptive cannon rush at natural.](#)

Scouting

Because of the lack of units early on in the game, when Forge Fast Expanding, it's mandatory to scout well; an unscouted Zerg all-in build will kill you easily if you don't take the proper precautions.

There are two signs of a potential all-in coming your way; the Zerg takes a fast gas or the Zerg does not take his third base at a standard timing. Note that neither of these is conclusive enough to know exactly what the Zerg build will be, but you should play more carefully and defensively if you scout these than against a standard 3 Hatch no gas build.

A third that goes up between 4:15 and 5:15 off a 14 Pool or 15 Hatch opening is considered normal, and if you can also confirm the lack of an early gas (before 4 minutes) it means the Zerg is playing a standard style. Scouting the gas in particular is extremely important, as there are many busts that look absolutely identical in terms of simple Hatch timings.

A common trick Zergs use when busting a Protoss is to make a natural and/or third Hatchery at a standard timing while hiding the fact they took an earlier gas, then cancelling it as your Probe leaves, while making a round of Roaches or Lings. If unscouted it will outright kill a FFE with only one cannon for defense, so being active with your scouting Probes in the early game is key.

Other than sacrificing Probes, the other technique used for scouting is using your first Zealot or Zealot/Stalker to poke around the map, taking the xel'naga towers and, if possible, going as far as the Zerg's third or natural. If you are unsure on the Zerg's intentions, sacrifice the Zealot to scout his main. This poke should tell you whether he is teching or going for a bust; it can spot any eventual Zerg units moving towards your base, and allows you to prepare accordingly against whatever your opponent is up to.

The other kind of build you should account for when not scouting a third is Zerg two base macro play, either with fast Infestors, Mutalisks, Nydus Worms for a delayed all-in, or even a fast Ling/Baneling drop. If you scout poorly, assuming you are going to be all-ined in the early game, and overinvest in cannons or Sentries, your tech and further scouting ability with Observers or Stargate units will be even more delayed, putting you in a tough position. In general, 3 Sentries and 2-3 cannons should be enough; only make more if you are defending an attack.

Denying Scouting

The map can determine a lot about your strategy and building placements. The first thing you should be aware of when analyzing a map is whether a Zerg can safely position Overlords over your natural gas, and how many of your gas he can see with an idle Overlord. The ability to observe the timing of your natural gases is the most important piece of early game scouting information a Zerg can obtain, and greatly contributes to the uncertainty. For example, Gateway pressures never take your natural gas early while double Stargate openers require fast 4 gas. If a map allows you deny this piece of scouting information, your opponent is more likely to be caught off-guard.

The second thing to be wary about is the direction from which Overlords can come from to scout your base. Try to be wary of which paths Overlords can take to get to your main and natural. With the Overlord speed buff, about three Overlords can reasonably safely get to your base and scout you. Keep track of where these three Overlords are and deny scouting and place buildings accordingly. On some maps, including Cloud Kingdom and Ohana, there are spots where it's possible to deny all Overlord scouting with a Stalker; these spots are perfect places to hide a Stargate or perhaps some Gateways.

A third detail, relevant on a handful of maps, is whether a Zerg can easily spot your Cyber Core with an Overlord. Based on the number of chronoboosts on your Core, a Zerg can tell whether any

Gateway based aggression is coming his way or not, and react accordingly.

1.1.4 Defending All-ins

Hatchery at Natural

The best way to prevent a Hatchery block at your natural is to block it with two Probes if your scout your opponent sending a Drone across the map with your scouting Probe. But if a Hatchery does indeed get planted, you'll have to resort to the following: Build two cannons instead of one and ensure that both can defend your entrance and attack the Hatchery. Continue your build as planned, but start a Zealot as soon as your Gateway finishes. If the Hatchery finishes, check for whether or not a Queen is in production and start a Pylon at the top of your ramp in case his intention is to use the Larva and run into your main. Queen production will be evident based on the Hatchery's production animation. If he is making a Queen, it means he wants to lay Creep Tumors to further prevent your expansion. The best way to prevent this is to estimate when the Queen will pop out (Queen has 50 second build time) and surround it with Probes, so it has no space to lay a tumor.  (PW) [MC vs Leenock on Cloud Kingdom](#) from GSL 2012 Season 1 shows a great example of this.

In-Base Hatchery

You should be able to scout this based on seeing your enemy's base, or having seen a Drone enter your base. If you don't scout an expansion at his natural nor his third and see him start his Pool at around 3:00, you can be sure there is a Hatchery somewhere on the map. Scout inside your main and the area outside of your natural. You'll need to keep an eye on his gas income. If he is not mining gas, it means he is planning to use slow Lings and/or Spine Crawlers. If he is mining gas, that means he is planning to use Roaches or Speedlings. You will be able to get scouting information from his main for longer than usual because he will want to focus his production on his proxy Hatchery. Use this time to figure out what is coming your way. If the Hatchery is in your base, you want to start a Pylon for 2 cannons that are in range of the Hatchery, as well as where the Larva will spawn. Time the cannons so that they finish right after the Hatchery will finish, and cancel your cannons if he cancels the Hatchery. The reason you don't want the cannons finishing too early is that if he cancels his Hatchery after he's forced two otherwise useless cannons, you can end up behind.

In-Base Hatchery into Roaches

If he does not cancel the Hatchery and you have figured out that he is going to be using Roaches, you will initially want to tech up to Stalkers as soon as possible. Also, when his Roaches are about to pop, pull your Probes and surround the eggs. If you do not, the Roaches can waltz out of cannon range and attack your poor Probes. The most important part of holding this all-in is not letting the pressure stop you from opening as normal. Start your gas and Core as you normally would, though they will be delayed because of cannon production. You will want income from 1 gas and Stalker production out of two Gateways. His Roach production will stagnate after the Hatchery falls and you will be able to defend with good Stalker micro. That being said, if you are unable to kill the Hatchery with your cannons and he is able to continue Roach production and use his proxy Queen to inject and spread creep, you will lose.

In-Base Hatchery into Slow Lings and Spine Crawlers

You will need to make more cannons than you had to against Roaches, and your cannons will need to be positioned as to deny his Spine Crawlers from attacking your Nexus. Once again, you will want 1 gas and 2 Gateways worth of Stalker production. If you can deny his Spines from attacking your Nexus, you will win by attrition.

In-Base Hatchery into Speedlings

In this scenario, you will have a new element to contend with; the dynamic of defending your main as well as your natural. You may secure your main Nexus only to find that your opponent send his Speedlings into your natural with rallied Speedlings from his main Hatchery. In this situation, you will need to protect your main Nexus as well as secure your natural. Your cannons at the proxy Hatchery should defend against the Zerglings from your main efficiently. All you have to worry about is a possible run-by into your natural from your opponent's main Hatchery. Make sure you block that entrance off and you should come out way ahead.

Proxy Hatchery Outside of Base

Same as Spine Crawler rush (there's no reason for a Zerg to do this other than for a Spine Crawler rush) although it's easier to see coming since you should be able to tell when a Zerg is missing a Hatchery or has a really late 2nd Hatch. Scout both inside your main and right outside your base with a Probe. Respond by cannoning in front of your wall, preferably within range of the Hatchery morphing in.

Roach/Ling with Hatchery Cancel

Anytime a Zerg gets an early gas in today's metagame (i.e. he gets gas sometimes while your scouting Probe is still in his main before the first Zerglings hatch), you should always be extra diligent with your scouting and look for the possibility of all-ins. This means sending an extra Probe out to scout, trying to get back in his main to scout for a Baneling Nest/Roach Warren/gas count (or to check if he is going Lair). For example, as his initial Lings are chasing away your initial scouting Probe back to your base, send a second Probe out in a different direction. Also, when your Gateway finishes you can chrono it and scout with a couple of fast Zealots. You should be able to see the disappearance or complete lack of a natural Hatch, in which case you need to stop everything and add additional cannons asap while chronoboosting Sentries.

 (PW) [Squirtle vs Sniper on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 4. Squirtle doesn't know until last minute and still holds.](#)

Roach/Ling on Two Bases

This attack is similar to the one above, but slightly trickier as the Zerg will let his natural Hatch complete. Make sure to be active with your scouting with Probes and a Stalker, especially if you see some fast gas opening with your first Probe. In this scenario, it's important to not skip the Sentry after the first Stalker at the latest, to have forcefields ready in time to keep the Roaches and Lings from getting past your wall.

Keep speed timings in mind and if you see anything suspicious (such as 4 or more Lings on your side of the map) add a second cannon.

The attack will hit your natural at around 7:30 with a mix of Roaches and Lings. When this happens, start building cannons as a defense, chronoboost Sentries and use them together with your first Zealot to block the entrance to your base, and get ready to pull Probes when you run out of Sentry energy. Defending your natural means you will very likely win thanks to an overwhelming economic advantage.

 [Seed vs Curious on Daybreak from TSL4 Korean Qualifier 1. Shows a perfect defense of this attack, and of early game scouting in general.](#)

 (PW) [Creator vs DRG on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 5.](#)

  [Creator vs Vortex on Antiga Shipyard from WCS Grand Finals.](#)

  [Rain vs Sen on Daybreak from WCS Grand Finals.](#)

Baneling Bust

Defending a Baneling bust is similar to defending against any other 1 or 2 base (or even 3 base) Roach all-in - reinforce your wall with additional cannons, and chrono out Sentries for forcefields. If you have a Pylon as part of your wall make sure to reinforce it by making buildings and Pylons behind the wall so it's still a wall if the Pylon goes down. Don't hesitate to make a complete wall, the extra 100 or 150 minerals for a Pylon/Gateway is well worth your safety now even if you need to kill the extra building in order to move out of your base later.

The hard part of course is to see it coming. Your Probe should be able to check for regular gas timings (i.e. no gas by the time it's being chased away by Lings), and regular expansion timings (around 2:30 for the start of natural, and around 4:30-5:30 for the start of the 3rd if you are doing a standard FFE). You should follow up the Probe scout with a Zealot scout or Zealot/Stalker poke, don't hesitate to sac your Zealot into the Zerg main if you're given the chance to. Look out for suspicious things such as more than 4-6 Lings early on, Speedling tech, or low Drone counts. Always have a Sentry at the front of your base. If an Overlord flies into your base, don't fall for this obvious attempt at baiting your sentries out of position (referred to by casters as "retard magnets") and still keep at least one Sentry near the front.

 (PW) [Crank vs Line on Ohana](#) from GSL 2012 Season 3. Shows an almost perfect defense expect for missing a forcefield.

 [MC vs TLO on Metropolis](#) from HSC V. Shows a good response/defense.

 [Hero vs Stephano on Daybreak](#) from MLG Summer Arena. Extremely late all-in.

 (PW) [Creator vs Curious on Entombed Valley](#) from GSL 2012 Season 5.

  [Insur vs Lowely on Antiga Shipyard](#) from WCS Grand Finals.

Three Base Baneling Bust

Baneling busts can also come off of three bases, so don't think that just because you see a third base you're safe from any all-ins. The standard 3 base Baneling bust is outlined here in a [Guide by TangSC](#) and hits as early as 6:50. The key is to be deadly suspicious if you scout Ling speed before and always make a Sentry as your first or second unit once your Core finishes if you want to be perfectly safe. Otherwise, follow the advice outlined in the previous section.

 (PW) [MC vs Zenio on Daybreak](#) from GSL 2012 Season 3.

 (PW) [Creator vs Byul on Cloud Kingdom](#) from GSTL 2012 Season 2.

 [JYP vs Dimaga on Cloud Kingdom](#) from Dreamhack Summer.

 [Mana vs Dimaga on Cloud Kingdom](#) from Dreamhack Summer. Shows defense against a harder-hitting delayed Baneling bust.

 [Hero vs Cytoplasm on Metropolis](#) from MLG Summer Arena. Shows a very quick reaction, canceling a Robo, chornoing a Sentry, and adding cannons.

Slow Zergling All-in

Sometimes a Zerg player will send mass amounts of slow Zerglings to your natural in an attempt to run through an unprotected wall. If he succeeds into running past the wall you will have lost. This kind of attack can be done off of either two or three bases. It is viable on maps with two paths of attack into your natural, such as Cloud Kingdom. The most simple way to defend against this is to always keep a unit in the hole of the natural wall; try to be more conservative with the movement of your first gateway units. In addition, don't underestimate the power of Zerglings. If your opponent comes with 20+ Zerglings, begin to double-wall your natural as they will probably breach the first wall.

 [HerO vs TargA on Cloud Kingdom](#) from Dreamhack Valencia 2012. Shows a successful run-by.

 (PW) [Oz vs hyvaa on Cloud Kingdom](#) from MLG Fall Championship 2012. Shows a successful defense.

Two Base Ling/Baneling Drop All-in

The best way to defend this all-in if you know it's coming is with mass Zealots and strategically placed cannons in your mineral lines. For example, you might be fortunate to somehow spot a large group of speed Overlords moving across the map at around 7:00-8:00 accompanied by a large number of Lings.

Against Banelings, it's better for the cannons to be behind the mineral lines rather than inside - that way Banelings can't blow up both cannons and Probes at the same time. Banelings do not really counter Zealots when both armies are small and the Zealots are microed properly. Optimally, you'd also want to do some sort of nice sim-city inside your main, but preemptive sim-city is not advised since usually you'll want buildings around the outskirts of your base to spot for Nydus Worms, which looks almost identical to this build.

Unfortunately, it's near impossible to scout this build out in time, and usually the best you can do is realize that he's doing some sort of 2 base Lair build. Even better, if you can see that he hasn't taken his natural gasses using a Zealot scout then you can probably rule out two-base macro builds like Muta or Infestor.

Against any two-base play (others include Nydus, Hydra, etc.) a good general strategy is to make sure Warpgate is chronoed out as fast as possible, and to have 4 Gates ready by the time it finishes. The first round of warp-ins will be Zealots - either attack/poke with them, or if you scout a large number of Zerglings on the map, warp them in at home. The 4 Warpgates should be accompanied with either a fast Robo or Stargate for scouting purposes. By 8:00 at the latest you should have an Observer, Phoenix, or Void Ray traveling across the map to see exactly what the Zerg is up to if he

hasn't attacked by then. While you do need a small number of Sentries to defend your natural choke it's not wise to spend money on more than two since they are generally not as useful against most Lair strategies, especially this one. Also, it's smart to preemptively build a cannon in each mineral line; not only is it good against this all-in but it also helps against other 2 base Lair strategies such as Nydus and Muta.

As a final note, a fast Stargate alone is not enough to defend against any sort of drop play. You can get a Void Ray out by the time the drop hits, but it won't be able to kill everything before your base is gone. This is why it's imperative to have Warpgate tech out as soon as possible so you can warp in additional Gateway units to help defend.

 [Seed vs Suhoshin on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 4.](#)

Nydus Play

Nydus play is something you should always look out for against one or two-base play. The answer to defending against it is fairly obvious - kill the Nydus Worm in your base before it finishes. Place buildings near the edges of your base to provide vision, make sure there are no dark corners. Don't forget about your natural as well. Many fast Nydus strategies can get a Nydus into your main fairly early, between 6:00-7:00. This will definitely hit before the fastest Warpgate off a FFE, so if the Nydus goes up into your base, the game is most likely over. You'll probably have to make additional Pylons that you don't need just to provide vision in time. Or you can patrol any remaining dark corners left in your base with a Probe/Gateway unit. Also, make sure to keep a constant eye out on your minimap.

Nydus play comes in two variations mainly: with Hydras and with pure Ling.

The goal of a pure Ling all-in is simply to sneak a Nydus in your main to catch you completely off-guard, and have an overwhelming amount of units attack you in a vulnerable spot before your Warpgate can be done. To hold off this all-in it's mandatory to have good minimap awareness and to spread Pylons around your main, pulling Probes to kill the worms as they spawn. If one worm manages to unload all of most of the Lings, it's almost impossible to hold without crippling losses.

The goal of a Hydra based Nydus all-in is to shorten the reinforcement route of the Hydras, and to be able to attack multiple places. Normally this attack will put pressure on your front, trying to snipe key structures such as the Cyber Core, while also attempting to complete a Nydus Worm in your main. In this case, it's important to both stall for time at your front adding cannons and Sentries as needed (much like against a Roach bust) and to keep any worm from completing in your base. Again, you will have to pull Probes to kill the worms and fight eventual units coming out. If you went Stargate tech for scouting purposes and safety, use your Void Rays to pick off Nydus Worms and keep his reinforcements as far away from your base as possible, while keeping your Stargate units alive.

 [Squirtle vs CoCa on Tal'Darim Altar from IPL Fight Club.](#)

 (PW) [Hero vs Suhosin on Cloud Kingdom from GSL 2012 Season 4. 1 base Nydus at 5:40.](#)

 (PW) [Crank vs SuHoShin on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 3. Crank lets a Nydus complete in his main and loses.](#)

 [Vampire vs SuHoShin on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 3.](#)

 [Life vs Vines on Atlantis Spaceship from GSL 2012 Season 3.](#)

Spine Crawler Rush

There are a ton of different variants of Spine Crawler rushes, as well as units that can accompany them. The fastest Spine Crawler rush will have a Zerg walk his first Queen across the map, followed by a Hatch cancel to provide the starting creep. A proxy Hatch outside your base can also be used. The most common variant however is the fast Lair Overlord creep Spine rush, which hits a bit later (still before you get your tech building or Warpgate tech finished) but is much more difficult to scout, and will be accompanied by a large number of Speedlings, Banelings, and/or additional Queens.

If you see it coming early enough, put up cannons in front of your wall that can be protected by the cannons behind your wall. This can be difficult though if the Zerg already has a large group of Lings that can force a cancel before they take too much damage from the cannons behind your wall. Either way, in the meantime you should be going mass Zealots in response. If you think you can finish your Warpgate tech before your Cyber Core (which normally is part of your wall) goes down to Spines, by

all means chrono it out. Otherwise you'll just have to use chronos on your Gateways. Since this is pretty much an all-in by the Zerg, don't Forget to stop Probe production for more resources to make additional Gateways/Zealots/cannons. I should also note commons responses that may seem more intuitive but actually don't consistently work as well.

1. Mass cannon behind your wall - it's fine to get a few additional cannons behind your wall, but you can't rely on only cannons. Without a protective wall or Zealot support, cannons die very easily to Zerglings (even more so Banelings) accompanied with the Spine push.
2. Fast tech. Not only is this rush designed to hit and kill you before you can get out things like Void Rays or Immortals, even if you do stall for long enough and get out a Void Ray or 2, it won't be enough to kill everything before your base is run over. Many Spine Crawler rushes also bring along Queens for transfuse and additional firepower, and those will also be able to counter your Void Ray.

 (PW) [Creator vs Nestea on Antiga Shipyard from GSL 2012 Season 3. Hatchery cancel with Queen.](#)

Nine Minute Roach/Ling Aggression

In the Auction OSL semifinals between DRG and MC, DRG introduced a new slow Roach/Speedling timing designed to hit Protoss as their gateways are powering up, a bit before 9 minutes. As your opponent will have Speedlings by this point, the best way to scout this aggression is with an air unit, a Void Ray, Phoenix, Observer, Warp Prism, or Hallucination. However, the best way to defend this type of aggression is having a build that gets appropriately early Gateways, and one that doesn't use early Gateway units in aggression. Builds that don't fair so well include Stargate builds with only Phoenix or builds that get their Gateways late. For example, Stargate into Four Gate builds that get a Void Ray do well. But Stargate into Robotics into Four Gate builds that only get Phoenix fair poorly.

Once you scout the aggression, start building cannons and warping in sentries. Divert all resources into defending the push. That is, retreat all your Stargate units and Warp Prisms filled with units back to your base. Then, hope for the best as it will defend mostly on the build you choose and how early you scouted the aggression.

 [MC vs DRG on Daybreak, from Auction OSL, Game 1. vod unavailable.](#)

 [MC vs DRG on Daybreak, from Auction OSL, Game 5. vod unavailable.](#)

 [Rain vs goswser on Daybreak from MLG Fall Championship 2012. Rain defends after scouting it and retreating his Warp Prism.](#)

 [Creator vs DRG on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 5. Stargate into 4 Gate into Robotics defense.](#)

1.1.5 Follow-ups to FFE

For Follow-ups to the common FFE, see [Section 2.1](#).

1.2 GATEWAY NEXUS OPENINGS [top](#)

In the early game, there's an unorthodox opening that focuses around getting an early Gateway in place of a Forge. A Forge in the early game as seen in traditional FFE openings locks the Protoss into the specific tech path of cannons. This means that the Protoss must use defensive cannons in order to secure their natural expansion, and has no mobile presence at all (except for a Probe for perhaps cannon rushing Hatcheries). The Gateway Nexus opening aims to provide a more flexible early game by allowing for many more options along with all the benefits of a Forge first build.

An early Gateway provides Zealots which can fill the role of the stationary cannon, however Zealots can also do more; they walk around. It sounds like some so simple that everyone would simply overlook this fact, Zealots can walk in the early game. This alone provides the ability to attack the

opponent in a way that cannons just cannot. For example, you can chronoboost out a few Zealots in reaction to the absence of scouting Lings or Pool, and then harass a mineral line shortly thereafter. You can also simply take a Zealot and place it into a position that would be uncomfortable for a Zerg opponent; for example, you may deny a scouting tower thus disrupting a Zerg's habitual scouting for proxy Pylons and Probes in the early game (as most Zergs would leave a single Ling on the tower, while three others scout outskirts of the map).

Lastly, an early Gateway provides the option to tech to Cyber Core at times that aren't really plausible with a Forge first option. The Cyber Core opens up early Warpgate timings, Stalker timings, and provides Sentries as well. All of these tools are accessible in ways a FFE cannot provide allowing for great diversity in potential early game choices.

1.2.1 Early Game Notes and Build Orders

Gateway/Nexus builds are very flexible, and there's many possible variations of them. In general, they are quite similar to FFE when it comes to Nexus timings, but they delay the Forge (and therefore Cannons and to a lesser extent upgrades) in exchange for a higher unit count and faster Warpgate tech. Generally, it's safe to delay the Forge as long as the Zerg player isn't taking his gas (for example if he is doing the standard 3 Hatch no gas opening as if you are FFE'ing).

Two possible build orders, utilized by MC and Naniwa in GSL respectively, are:

Skipping the Forge :

- 9 Pylon (Chronoboost Nexus on 10, 12, and 15 supply)
- 13 Gateway
- 16 Pylon*
- 17 Nexus
- 19 Zealot**
- 21 Assimilator
- 22 Cyber Core
- 22 Pylon
- 23 Zealot
- 28 Stalker
- Progress through the game as if you had done a standard FFE

With the Forge:

- 9 Pylon (Chronoboost Nexus on 10, 12, and 15 supply)
- 13 Gateway
- 16 Pylon*
- 17 Nexus
- 19 Zealot**
- 21 Assimilator
- 22 Cyber Core
- 22 Zealot
- 24 Pylon
- 25 Forge
- 28 Stalker
- 32 Cannon
- Progress through the game as if you had done a standard FFE

The first build skips the early Forge and Cannon in order to get the fastest possible Cyber Core and Warpgate off this opening, making it quite greedy but ideal for fast Gateway pressure. It is safe against modern openings such as 15 pool 16 hatch into 3 hatch no gas.

The second build is safer thanks to the Forge and Cannon, which you can build reactively upon scouting a fast gas from the Zerg, which is the standard reaction to your fast gateway. Your Cyber Core and Warpgate will still be faster than they would be with FFE, but you can still take map control, scout and pressure with the two fast Zealots.

For effective defensive building placement, take example from the screenshots in the [FFE Build Order](#) section. Note that the placing of the individual buildings will be different, but the overall simcity should be similar.

**If you are unsure of whether or not there's an early Pool, place this Pylon directly next to the first Pylon. This will make it twice as hard to unpower your Gateway with Lings.*

***If you are unsure of whether or not there's an early Pool, build a Zealot before the Nexus is placed.*

1.2.2 Dealing with Early Pools

First things first, if you place your Gateway on the low ground you must place a second Pylon directly next to the first. This is to prevent early Pools from being able to de-power your single Gateway. If in the event that you do lose power to your Gateway because you placed only one Pylon on low-ground, you will lose.

Six Pool

To defend a six Pool with Gateway first (13 Gateway) you must pull all Probes except for about 6-8 that are left mining. These Probes are *only* going to be buying time for your Zealot to finish constructing (which should be being chronoboosted). The Probes need to engage the Lings as the Lings attempt to engage your Pylons. Once the Lings engage your Probes, pull them away before you lose any. You're buying time for this Zealot to finish, and once finished you can freely engage the Lings as long as Ling reinforcements are not on the way and you keep a buffer of Probes around the Zealot so it cannot be surrounded. If the Zerg continues Ling production, you simply continue chronoboosting your Gateway and making additional Pylons as necessary. Eventually you'll have more and more Zealots, and can place some of your combat Probes back onto your mineral line; this is essentially ensuring victory, as the opponent will not be able to Drone and make many Lings at the same time.

Once you feel like your Zealot count is high enough, press the Lings away and do whatever you like. Take a Nexus, Four Gate, anything will work.

If the Lings run into your main (instead of engaging Pylons) you should be able to easily micro and surround them, without losing a single Probe. If you cannot do this, read the next paragraph; if you can do this then skip it.

Lings in the Minerals

Whenever Lings enter your mineral line in the early game, it can be quite easy to handle. Select all Probes (don't leave them at your natural defending Pylons if there's no Lings down there) and right click on a mineral patch to mineral-walk through the Lings. This is to surround them. If the opponent lets you do this, then you've won the game! As Probes lose shields, select them and mineral walk them out to the edge of your Probe ball. Doing this will ensure you take no Probe losses during the engagement. Often times, a Probe surround won't be realistic when facing a strong opponent, though engaging may still be necessary. Simply engage with a good amount of Probes, but don't chase! When a the front line of Probes lose their shields, mineral walk them back like they are Blink Stalkers. Never leave the area between the minerals and Nexus! Chasing Lings around will lose mining time, you only need to engage if the Lings engage you.

Early Pools that are not a Six Pool

Other early Pools, such as 10 Pool, are handled in the same way, except you have to pull your Probes at a later time. Against a 10 Pool you'll have to buy less time, and your first Zealot will come out much more quicklu. Simply follow the instructions of the 6 Pool section, but be more mindful of returning Probes to your mineral line as necessary; a 10 Pool is much stronger economically, and needs to be treated as such.

1.2.3 Other Notes

The entire point of Gateway Nexus Forge opening is flexibility. This section is an attempt to lift the lid on what sort of options there are out there starting with the earliest point in the game, Zealots.

Zealots off of a single Gateway can walk, as mentioned in the introduction to this opening. This provides the ability to attack the Zerg's mineral line, if the opportunity arises. With a single Zealot a Protoss can actually punish a Zerg player for only making two Lings in the early game. The Zealot can walk into the opponent's natural and attack Drones. The Drones will be forced to either engage or run away, both of which disrupt the Zerg's income. Note: this should happen before two Queens are present, and if there is a single Queen it'll likely be just finishing in the main.

The Gateway also allows for small squads of Zealots to be built in the early game, perhaps 2-4, and can disrupt a Zerg's early game greatly given poor scouting by the Zerg opponent. For example, the Protoss can go Gateway, Nexus, Forge, followed by Zealots. The Zealots can act as an escort for a Probe in which to cannon the Zerg's third base. The Gateway allows for this opportunity to exist in ways that a traditional FFE cannot. Additionally, a small Zealot squad can attack the Zerg while a Sentry is being constructed back at the natural, thus providing a defense against potential Ling counters.

Similarly, two Zealots and a Stalker are wildly efficient at escorting a Probe to place down proxy Pylons, thus allowing fast 3-4 Warpgate attacks to hit at odd times. Two Zealots and a Stalker are also great at killing off a Queen and a couple Lings and as such will force a few more Lings onto the field, whereas the Protoss will not be cutting a single Probe -- this is not possible with a traditional FFE.

A Protoss can also get a Forge after the Nexus, and the end-result will be the exact same as a traditional FFE, except the ordering of the cannons/Forge/Gateway are all slightly different. This allows for cannons to be on the field at any time a FFE would allow, in terms of defending against Roach-Ling all-ins and other cheeses. However, the ability to discern a Roach/Ling all-in is required for a Protoss to actually take advantage of such flexibility.

Due to these wide range of possibilities, it suddenly becomes much more difficult for a Zerg player to accurately predict what will happen once the first Stalker is in the Protoss base to shoo away Overlords. This means that a Zerg player will suddenly be required to start mining gas before taking a third base, in order to be able to fend off a Four Gate timing. A Zerg player will likely have to cut small amounts of mineral income in the early game when faced with a Gateway Nexus opening, than compared to a situation that arises from a FFE.

1.2.4 Dealing with All-ins

Dealing with all-ins is similar to FFE, and your reaction to them with Gateway/Nexus openings should be identical. See the [FFE section](#) for more information on specific all-ins and cheeses. Drop a reactionary Forge if you see the Zerg taking a fast gas and proceed as an FFE opening would.

An important thing to note is that the Zealots allow for much better map control early on compared to FFE, which means that you will have an easier time scouting the map for hints of what your opponent will do.

1.2.5 Follow-ups to Gateway Nexus

Fast Warpgate Pressure

The biggest advantage of a Gateway-Nexus build over a traditional FFE is the ability to hit a faster Four Gate pressure timing. While a traditional Four Gate +1 attack off of a FFE hits around the 8:00 mark, a Four Gate +1 attack off of the Gateway Nexus build can hit as early as 6:50. This either requires a Zerg to build a Roach Warren and take his gas a full minute earlier, be extra diligent about denying Pylons, or stay on two base much longer than he would like. Because of these factors this Four Gate pressure is the most common follow-up coming off of a Gateway Nexus opening.

If you can absolutely confirm that the Zerg isn't making many extra Lings and/or you are playing on a big map like Whirlwind, it's also possible to skip the Forge and cannon altogether allowing for a stronger timing attack.

 [Naniwa vs. DongRaeGu on Whirlwind from GSL 2012 Season 3.](#)

 (PW) [Naniwa vs Sniper on Antiga Shipyard from GSL 2012 Season 4. Naniwa loses, but he shows a good opening.](#)

 (PW) [MC vs Jaedong on Whirlwind from GSL 2012 Season 4. Skipping the Forge to maximize the unit count when pressuring.](#)

 [Oz vs DRG on Daybreak, from Auction OSL. vod unavailable.](#)

All Other Follow-ups: Standard Play as if Progressing from FFE

Because the economy, gas timings and Cyber Core timings are very comparable to those of FFE, Gateway/Nexus can go into every followup FFE can, with the only differences being the timings on +1 weapons and on Warpgate tech. See the midgame section for both [macro play](#) and [all-ins](#).

1.3 GATEWAY CORE OPENINGS [top](#)

Back in 2010 Gateway Core expands were all the rage and the standard for PvZ, but now they tend to sit in more of the back corner of the metagame. Today the only players who still use this build include Nony and Seed, who regularly employ this build, as well as Squirtle, Oz, and Naniwa, who dabble with it once in a while. Still, Gateway Core expands are considered extremely non-standard. But before we go in-depth about this build, let's discuss what exactly a Gateway Core expand is.

Gateway Core expands, in contrast to Gateway Nexus builds, involve getting a gas and Gateway units before planting down a Nexus. While 3 Gate expands were once the standard of PvZ it has since become completely obsolete. Contributing factors for this include the scarcity of gas first builds from Zergs, the bigger maps used today and especially a Warpgate nerf/Sentry build time buff in patch 1.3.3. Because of these changes to the game 3 Gate expands are now seen as overly safe and not at all economical.

Instead, 1 Gate expand and its variations are the only types of Gateway Core expands commonly used in today's metagame. At one time, 1 Gate 2 gas FE builds were commonly used as a directly reaction to Roach Ling all-ins. But now, 1 Gate 1 gas builds are more common in order to apply additional pressure with Stalkers and because gas first builds are now uncommon from Zergs. There are other variations of Gateway Core expansion builds, such as 2 Gate Forge, but these are not standard and will not be covered here.

Most players opt for the Gateway Core expands because they feel the FFE is too rigid and doesn't apply enough pressure on the Zerg. They note that most Zergs have much experience against FFE builds and have extremely well-mapped out reactions. In contrast, Gateway Core expand builds are able to apply more pressure and can turn into more volatile games which can potentially lead to Zergs over or under-droning in certain situations.

The biggest criticism of Gateway Core expansion builds is that are not nearly as economical as FFE builds. Keep in mind though that the Zerg will also have to altar his build to react appropriately; he cannot simply take his third without any gas. Not only does he have to deal with potential pressure from a single Gateway, he must prepare against a potential all-in off of one base. Another criticism of Gateway Core expands on modern maps is that it can be much harder to safely pressure with Gateway units than it was before in 2010.

1.3.1 Early Game Notes and Build Orders

Modern Gateway/Core expand openings such as those utilized by IM Protoss players generally employ just one Gateway to gain map control with a single fast Stalker. While this requires careful play from the Protoss against fast Gas openings, you should always know the time for when Ling Speed could finish based on when your opponent makes his first Extractor and play more defensively accordingly. With correct execution, 1 Gate FE can hold every all-in a Zerg can use. A sample build order is:

1 Gate FE Opening Order:

- 9 Pylon (Chronoboost Nexus on 10, 12, and 15 supply)
- 13 Gateway
- 15 Assimilator
- 16 Pylon
- 18 Cyber Core
- 21 Zealot
- 23/26, @100% Core: Stalker (Chrono'd); Wargate Research (Chrono twice); Pylon on bottom of ramp (2)
- 27/34: Sentry (constantly produce Sentries from Gateway until WG research finishes)
- 29/34 @400 Minerals: Nexus
- Stop Probe Production
- 29/34: 2 Gateways at Natural Expansion (2)(3)
- Resume Probe and Pylon Production
- 31/34: Assimilator

1.3.2 Dealing with Early Pools

In order to optimally defend an early Pool with any expansion build you must figure out when the opponent's Pool is laid. Again, the [early game timings section](#) can be useful for this. Against a 6 Pool, the optimal solution is to fully wall-off on top of your ramp with a Pylon, Gateway, and second Gateway. Chronoboost out your first Zealot and have it attack your own Pylon (Lings are on the other side of your wall at this time). Time it so the Pylon falls just as the second Zealot (should also be chrono'd) finishes. At the same time, pull a few Probes and mineral-walk them to your natural so that they walk through the Zerglings and surround them. You should easily fend off the Lings with 2 Zealots and these Probes.

 [MC vs. Idra on Xel'Naga Caverns from Dreamhack Stockholm 2011 Invitational](#). Shows perfect execution of the aforementioned defense.

Against later Pools, a drastic measure as destroying your own Pylon should be avoided if possible. Walling with a Pylon and destroying the Pylon shortly after with Pools as late as on 10 supply can be useful, simply because scouting info was limited the ability to chrono a Zealot may not be available. However with any Pool after 7 supply you should be able to simply chronoboost units out of your single Gateway and fend off the aggression perfectly fine.

  [Scarlett vs Parting on Ohana from WCS Grand Finals vs 10pool](#), transitions into a 2base Gateway all-in

1.3.3 Other Notes

Sim Cities on the Low Ground

There are two sim-cities used to help defend your expansion from Ling run-bys, Roach attacks and Baneling busts. You need to wall off either in front of your natural, or next to the Nexus using it as part of the wall. Examples follow:



These two sim-cities will prevent or limit Lings from running into your natural's mineral line! Remember that if you use the Nexus as part of the wall you need to keep a Sentry to be completely safe.

This sort of Gateway placement allows your Sentries early game to be in range of your ramp in the event of an attempted Ling run-by, but more importantly protects your units from a Ling surround while being in range of the ramp and Probes. Leaving a one-hex gap between your buildings allows you to move out safely as you can leave one Zealot on hold position to block counterattacks. If you are ever attacked or counterattacked by Lings this Zealot will be covering the entrance, and a low-level player a-moving their Lings at your natural will be frustrated as all their Lings dance in front of the two Gateways. A single well-placed forcefield will also do the trick in stopping all Ling movements around the Nexus through the mineral fields. These Gateway placements are also extremely useful to constrict the movement of other Zerg units such as Roaches or Banelings, allowing you to defend all-ins much more easily.

Zealot/Stalker Poke

As you're poking with your first Zealot and Stalker, you'll need to know when to return to your natural expansion and Speedlings are the real danger. A Zerg opponent can have Zergling speed finished, at fastest, 3 minutes and 15 seconds after their first extractor is placed. Knowing this, you can know when your opponent cannot have Ling speed. You need to be back before this time hits! If you lose your first Stalker (the Zealot is probably okay to lose, but you really shouldn't unless you get into their natural), the game can instantly end.

Most of the time you will be facing opponents who will open with a 15 Pool 16 Hatch opening, taking his gas reactively to your opening at around 3 minutes, depending on the map and scouting patterns. If this is the case speed will then be done around 6 minutes 30 seconds, so you can use this as a general guideline if you Probe leaves your opponent's base without seeing a gas. Of course, you must begin retreating a bit before then. If you are somehow able to spot that your opponent has no extractors at a later time you can choose to chronoboost out more Stalkers from your first Gateway instead of Sentries and keep up the Stalker aggression.

1.3.4 Defending All-ins

Roach/Ling All-in

At one time, Losira showed a deadly [Roach/Ling all-in](#) that devastated Alicia's Gateway Core expansion builds. At this time, there were those who decried the end of Gateway Core expansion, but since then Protoss have learned to adapt and maps have changed drastically. Most modern maps have rather long rush distances, so Roaches will take longer to reach your base, and narrow chokes, so fewer forcefields and buildings in a sim-city need to be used. Anyways, there are three good ways to defend a Roach Ling all-in off of a 1 Gate expand:

- Stargate build: 1 Gate expand into Stargate into 3 Gate with a fast Void Ray. One Void Ray will shut this down easily.
- Dark Templar build: 1 Gate expand into Twilight into 3 Gates into Dark Shrine: Even one Dark Templar will be able to shut this type of push down, but you probably won't survive the

earliest, most all-in versions. However, as long as you survive long enough, you should be able to do a ton of damage to your opponent, because he won't have an Evolution Chamber or Lair for detection.

- Constant production of Stalker and Sentries off of a fast 3-5 Gateways. In addition, the following tips will be especially helpful:

Helpful tips against Roach/Ling all-in:

- Sim city: Use your buildings as previously described to protect so that you have as few paths to your army as possible.
- Do not overly rely on cannons. Cannons are good, but the problem is timing. Roach/Ling attacks can hit anywhere between 7:00 and 7:50, depending on the version. But even if hits at 7:50, the latest time possible, your cannon might not finish in time.
- Focus on planting forcefields: Don't overlap forcefields and don't waste precious forcefields. The more forcefields you save, the more you'll be able to use for the next wave.
- Constant unit production. Do not skimp on units. Keep pumping Stalker/Sentry as much as you can. This is probably the biggest problem with the Roach/Ling attack. Before it became popular, you could transition to Stargate or get a quick Robo safely. While you still somewhat can, it leaves you very open to Roach/Ling all-ins.
- Reinforce with Stalkers. Once you see the attack coming, making nothing but Stalkers. Sentries don't do enough dps and they come with only one forcefield. Zealots are also a poor choice; they might be great versus Lings but you want to rely on sim-city and forcefields versus Lings instead of Zealots. Of course, if you have only few minerals and tons of gas, a Sentry or 2 doesn't hurt in the mix.
- Do not cut Probes if you don't have to. That is, you want to focus on making units, but with extra minerals keep pumping Probes. You can judge exactly how all-in an Roach/Ling attack is by the timing. The later attacks are simply pressure while the early attacks are more all-in. Even if you defend a 7:50 Roach/Ling attack, you can still fall behind, because you've cut so many Probes during the attack.
- Chornoboost Gateways during your defense.

Ling/Baneling All-in

In contrast to defending Roach/Ling, Ling/Baneling attacks are a piece of cake. You simply need a good number of cannons, Zealots and Sentries along with a proper sim-city and good forcefield usage, with emphasis on the forcefield usage. Strong forcefields will secure your victory. It is most dangerous to play against a 2 base Ling/Baneling all-in if you opt for very fast tech as Stargate or Robotics tech help very little in the event of many cheap Lings and Banelings.

1.3.5 Follow-ups to Gateway Core Expand

Robo Twilight Macro Play

Using a Robo for Immortals and a Twilight Council for both good upgrades and Blink is the safest and most standard ways to take a third base in PvZ, and it's a perfectly viable transition off a Gateway Core expand. The tradeoff of going into a macro game off Gateway Core expand as opposed to Forge expand is that you can delay the Zerg's third for a bit, force him to get Ling speed earlier, but your economy and upgrades are also slower than with FFE. For more info on this style, read the [Immortal expand](#) section and [Gateway/Twilight/Robo](#) section.

 [Genius vs Zenio on Antiga Shipyard from IPL TAC3. 1 Gate FE into Robo Twilight macro game.](#)
 (PW) [Seed vs Symbol on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 4. 1 Gate FE into Robo Twilight macro game.](#)

Gateway All-in

Gateway pushes off a Gateway Core expand used to be extremely popular and they remain a strong all-in. The strength of this follow-up comes from the fact that you will have a high Sentry count, with a lot of Sentry energy saved up from the early game, combined with the ability to hit either a really fast attack off 5 Gates, a slower one with 7, or a middle ground between the two. In comparison, Stalker/Sentry/Zealot all-ins off FFE tend to all be delayed. For more information on this kind of all-in

and how to execute it, see the [corresponding section](#) in the FFE portion of the guide.

Typical Build:

One Gate fast expand into 3 Gates into 5-7 Gates

  [Seed vs Hyun on Cloud Kingdom from TSL4 qualifiers. 1 Gate fe into 7 Gate Sentry based push.](#)

 (PW) [Squirtle vs Sniper on Whirlwind from GSL 2012 Season 4. 1 Gate FE into 5 Gate Sentry based push.](#)

Stargate

One of the most popular transitions after a Gateway Core expand opening is to go Stargate. Going for a fast Void Ray allows you to be safe against any Roach/Ling all-in that Zergs sometimes use to punish Gateway Core expands, and gives good scouting and map control. Just like of FFE, it's possible to transition into both [Stargate/Robo macro play](#), [Stargate Gateway all-in builds](#) and [Stargate into Colossus all-ins](#).

Typical Build:

One Gate fast expand into Stargate into 3 Gates

Dark Templar

Some DT builds much like Stargate builds, can stop a Roach/Ling all-in dead in its tracks because the Zerg will not have mobile detection, but as usual a Dark Shrine is a huge investment for the early game, so you are relying heavily on doing damage to the Zerg. If you don't, a Roach/Ling counter attack can easily kill you as shown by Nестea when he beat Inca 4-0 in the GSL May 2011 finals.

Typical Build:

One Gate fast expand into Twilight Council into 3 Gates into Dark Shrine

Other Follow-ups

Most of the common all-ins done off of FFE are also easily doable off of a Gateway Core expand, the only notable exception being the pure Stalker/Zealot 7 Gate attack. For more info, see the [all-in follow-up section](#) to FFE. Note that with a Gateway Core expand you will be delaying tech and upgrades in favour for more early game pressure on the Zerg, so timing attacks will usually come one to two minutes later than their FFE counterparts.

Like with FFE, many gimmicky, non standard follow ups are also possible. A few examples are shown in these vods:

 [Oz vs Stephano on Cloud Kingdom from MLG Summer Arena. 1 Gate FE/1 gas 4 Gate.](#)

 (PW) [Seed vs Curious on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 3. 1 Gate FE into 3 Gate into Twilight into third.](#)

 (PW) [Seed vs Curious on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 3. 1 Gate FE into double Stargate into 3 Gate.](#)

1.4 OTHER ONE BASE BUILDS [top](#)

Four Gate

One-base Four Gate all-ins are outdated against Zerg players; while it is possible to catch a greedy Zerg off-guard it's considered a very gimmicky and unreliable build.

In general, there are two kinds of Four Gate all-ins that can be used: the standard 20 Probe, 1-gas Zealot/Stalker 4Gate, and a 2 gas, 4-5 Gate Zealot/Sentry all-in. The first build resembles the one base version of a [7 Gate Zealot/Stalker all-in](#) and was extremely popular when the game was first released. However, due to bigger maps, maps with wider chokes, and the Warpgate nerf, this build has all but disappeared.

 [Genius vs hyvaa on Whirlwind from GSL 2012 Season 5.](#)

The second version with 2-gas depends on having a high number of forcefields available to trap Zerglings and potential Roaches, making Zealots as cost effective as possible. To increase the chance of your 2-gas Four Gate succeeding you may throw down a Nexus at your natural expansion, then cancel it and go all-in with your first few rounds of Gateway units, hoping that Zerg will not scout you fully and assume you are doing a Gateway Core expand opening, and proceed to mass Drones. This was most famously executed by MC in a GSL finals against JulyZerg.

Three Gate Stalker Aggression

Three Gate Stalker aggression can be seen as the modern Four Gate. This particular build abuses the fact that some Zergs blindly assume a FFE or a passive Gateway Core expand and thus delay speed for as long as possible. As Stalkers can easily kite slow Roaches and slow Zerglings, the only two viable ways to defend this push are a fast Zergling speed upgrade and a Spine Crawler wall in a choke. The single mistake of delaying speed for too long can cause the Zerg to instantly lose the game. Because a large Spine Crawler wall can also impede the progress of this attack, this build is most effective on maps with wide naturals such as Antiga Shipyard or Dual Sight where Spine Crawlers are not as effective because they cannot fully cover the full extent of the natural.

Unlike a Four Gate whose attack is front loaded and aims to kill an opponent quickly with Four Gateways that cannot be fully supported, the three Gate Stalker build aims to gradually kill an opponent. Three Gates is just enough to support constant Stalker production, and although you might not kill your opponent instantly, with good kiting and keeping your Stalkers alive you will eventually overrun your opponent with your Stalker count, sometimes even with a flawless victory.

 (PW) [MC vs Nestea on Dual Sight from GSL 2012 Season 2.](#)

 [MC vs Stephano on Antiga Shipyard from IPL Challenge.](#)

One Base Robo All-in

Robotics play is far the least used tech tree off one base in the match-up. There are very rare builds that focus on harassing with a Warp Prism before hitting a one-base Immortal timing attack (See [\[G\]1 Base Robo PvZ by Lobber](#)), but they are very unexplored and similar builds have never been widely used in competitive play. Hasuobs however has notably used this build to defeat some prominent Koreans.

Two Gate Stargate Expand

When one base openings were common this was one of the safest and most popular options. A Stargate expand aims to defend your natural Nexus from early Roach/Ling all-ins thanks to a fast Void Ray and it has great map control and harassment potential thanks to a combination of Void Rays and Phoenixes.

Blink Stalker All-in

This all-in, similar to a PvP all-in, used to be extremely popular when the game was first released. It was mostly notably used by Liquid'Nazgul to defeat Idras at one of the first MLGs and was especially powerful on maps with abuse-able terrain such as xel'naga caverns. But as time went on, Zerg players have learned how to deal with it much more efficiently. While well-microed Blink Stalkers can be extremely strong against Roach/Ling armies, this all-in hits quite slowly. A good Blink Stalker all-in

can hit as fast as 7 minutes, and since many Gateway Core expands take their natural before the 6 minute mark it's very hard to fool the Zerg long enough for him to over-Drone and remain exposed to your attack. This combined with evolutions in competitive maps make this all-in extremely unreliable in modern play.

Dark Templar Expand

Like many other non-standard one base builds, rushing for Dark Templar while expanding relies on catching the Zerg completely off-guard, thinking you are going for a more conventional Gateway Core expand. Because you are investing a ton of gas in early game tech you will have a lower Sentry count than normal (one or two maximum), a Zerg player should know something is up just by poking at your natural expansion with his early Lings. In the example game, the Dark Templar strategy only works because Bbongbbong responds incorrectly.

 (PW) *Parting vs Bbongbbong on Crossfire from GSTL 2012 Season 1 Finals.*

2 EARLY GAME : TRANSITIONS

2.1 COMMON FOLLOW-UPS TO FFE [top](#)

Protoss should begin to transition into their desired tech between 6 minutes and 10 minutes. During this time period, it is Protoss who controls the pace of the game with his tech choice as well his decision to all-in or play a macro game. For newer players, we recommend the following passive builds that are able to both scout and adapt to any style a Zerg may choose. Each of these builds has their individual advantages and disadvantages, which will be discussed in their individual sections.

- [Stargate Robotics Gateway Expand](#)
- [Robotics Gateway Expand](#), also known as an Immortal Expand
- [Gateway Twilight Robo Expand](#)

For all-in options, the most common, easy to execute, and successful all-ins a Protoss player has include:

- [Zealot/Stalker Gateway All-in](#)
- [Immortal/Sentry All-in](#)
- [Blink Stalker All-in](#)

2.1.1 Stargate and its Follow-ups

Stargate follow-ups to any opening are one of the most common in PvZ, because they offer you the ability to both scout and pressure/harass your opponent. Observers or fast hallucination might allow you to scout, but neither can put much pressure on a Zerg who quickly takes 3 bases. Meanwhile, if you rely on Gateway pressure to scout, you might not be able to get into the Zerg's base to see everything. The initial Void Ray you can opt to get can also be a lifesaver when defending against 2 base all-ins such as Roach busts.

Your goal when opening Stargate is pretty simple - see what the Zerg is doing, and kill off any Queens/Overlords/Drones you can safely pick off. The most important thing when opening Stargate for harass is to not be too greedy. Your air units must survive - the longer they live, the more damage and scouting you can do, and the more the Zerg has to worry about finding a way to dispose of your air, which can result in him spending more money on Queens/Spores and less on Drones. Even if you can't kill anything, simply by flying around his base and letting him see you do so will be advantageous for you.

The most common units to come out of a Stargate is an initial Void Ray followed by 4 to 5 Phoenix, which are all rallied to the Zerg's 3rd. While a Queen will beat a Void Ray 1 on 1, by the time your first Void Ray gets to the Zerg's base your 1st Phoenix should almost be there as well (make sure to chrono everything), allowing it to pick up the Queen so that the Void Ray can finish it off. 4 Phoenix is a "magic" number since it'll allow you to pick up and kill a Queen using only 1 Graviton Beam.

There is also a more modern option to skip the Void Ray, going directly for 4-5 Phoenix, only moving out when you have 3 to 4. This can be especially useful when you know the Zerg is not going to do a 2 base all-in (so you don't need the Void Ray for defense), and on large maps where it might take a long time for the Void Ray to traverse the map. The most obvious advantage of hiding Phoenix is that you may catch your opponent off-guard. Upon seeing a slow Void Ray moving across the map, a Zerg player will have plenty of time to react and build Spores. But if your opponent is suddenly surprised by four Phoenix, he can lose all his Queens, which cripples his macro, weakening both his economy and any forthcoming attacks. The best maps to do this build on include Cloud Kingdom and

Ohana, maps where it's possible to deny Overlord scouting of a certain location completely with a Stalker. Also, make sure you start your +1 upgrade in a reasonable amount of time. If your opponent spots a lack of +1, he may correctly assume that you're using some sort of Stargate play, thus reacting with Spores. Also, while most prefer to wait for 4 Phoenix to try to catch the Zerg off-guard, it also might also not a bad idea to use your initial Phoenix to kill the Overlords around your base first, especially if your Stargate gets scouted.

Stargate into Variations of Robo, 4 Gate

Stargate macro builds are some of the most common types of builds ever used in the history of PvZ, and for good reason. Stargate builds are extremely versatile and have adapted well with the times. Stargate into Robotics macro builds come in two major flavors: The first is Stargate into 4 Gates into Robotics Facility, which debuted by MC late in 2010 and was his main build for the majority of 2010 and 2011. It is also the first ever fully refined PvZ build that had a laid out plan 10 minutes into the game, and the most popular PvZ build of 2011. The second, more modern build, is Stargate into Robotics Facility into 4 Gates, debuted by Hero in the summer of 2012. Since its debut, its popularity has gradually eclipsed that of MC's original version. Very few casual observers or players can identify the differences between the two builds, and even fewer know of advantages and disadvantages between the builds or the history behind the builds. But that's why we're here!

The simple answer is that both builds are metagame adaptations to the builds that were common during the time period they were invented. MC's build reigned at a time when maps were relatively small and Roach/Hydra play was common. Thus, it got earlier Sentries for more Sentry energy and a later Robotics Facility, which was primarily used for fast Colossi. Although it was safe against Zerglings to take a fast third around the 9 minute mark, the normally short rush distance of the maps at the time made this expansion timing difficult to defend Hydralisk pushes. As a result, the average third timing with this build used to be around 12 minutes, coinciding with the first Colossi. In today's metagame, it is usually perfectly safe to take your third around 9 minutes, because Hydralisks are usually not a threat. However, Roach attacks are a different story, which brings us to Hero's version of the build.

In contrast to MC's build, Hero's build with the fast Robotics was adapted during a time when the infamous Roach max style ran rampant. The big difference between the two builds besides the order of buildings is that while MC's Robotics is primarily used for Colossi, Hero's version is mostly used for Immortals, which are much better against the common Roach threat. Because of the much faster Robotics, Hero's version will be able to build, on average, two more Immortals than MC's can. These two extra Immortals are essential to holding the hardest hitting Roach attacks, including the Stephano style max out. However, as a trade-off, your Gateways are delayed, so you'll have less Sentry energy, and your third base can only be safely taken after 10 minutes, when your first round of warp-ins kick in. Keep in mind though that Colossi can also be made from a Hero-style build, but usually only as a reaction to scouting information.

Strengths and Weaknesses of all Stargate Macro Styles

- + Strength: This build offers arguably more reliable scouting than any other opening. Phoenixes are extremely fast and cannot be as easily denied in their scouting as Observers.
- + Strength: This build puts on more pressure than most other macro builds.
- + Strength: Stargate units can deny Overlords throughout the game, diminishing Zerg map presence and scouting potential.
- + Strength: Stargate units allow for some map presence throughout the game.
- + Strength: Stargate units can put a timer on Roach base attacks, although these attacks will still be extremely strong.
- Weakness: When opening Stargate, you are usually forced to eventually transition into Colossi and not Templar.
- Weakness: Stargate openings tend to have later twilight councils than other macro builds, so their upgrades will be significantly slower. +3 three-base timing attacks tend to be weaker and later from Stargate openings.
- Weakness: Stargate units generally won't contribute as much in straight-up fights as gateway or robotics units per cost.

Advantages of MC's build (Stargate -> 4 Gates -> Robotics) over Hero's build

- Faster Sentries with more energy.
- Potentially faster third base, as your gateway units will be faster to clear out Zerglings.
- Usually faster Colossi. The typical MC style build skips Immortals in favor of Colossi.
- Stronger against the more uncommon Hydralisk builds with generally faster Colossi.
- Stronger against Zergling-based builds for the same reason.
- Much better against the 9-minute Roach/Ling aggression from Zerg.

Advantages of Hero's build (Stargate -> Robotics -> 4 Gates) over MC's build

- Faster and more Immortals, which are essential against the omnipresent Roach pressure builds.
- Potential for faster Colossi, which allows you to take a third faster in certain circumstances.
- More heavy hitting Robotics units in your final army.

Although MC's build seems to have more things going for it, the fact is that it generally cannot hold a Roach max. This fact alone makes it the less preferred option of the two by Protoss players in today's day and age. However, MC's original build can still be used once in a while, especially if you suspect your opponent won't be using a Roach-based style.

MC Standard Build(Stargate into 4 Gate into Robo)

Recommended Build Order:

- From the first Gateway-Stalker, Sentry, Sentry.
- 5:00: +1 Weapons with your first 100 gas.
- 6:00: Stargate.
- 6:20 3rd and 4th gas.
- Stargate units: 1 Void Ray, 5 Phoenixes, optional 2nd Void Ray.
- 7:50: 3 extra Gates.
- 8:35: Robo.
- Robo units: Observer, Immortals as necessary.
- 10:00: +1 Armor.
- 10:10: 3rd Nexus.
- 10:40 2 extra Gates.

Benchmarks:

- 5:00: 24 supply
- 6:00: 34 supply
- 7:00: 44 supply
- 8:00: 57 supply
- 9:00: 73 supply
- 10:00: 86 supply
- 11:00: 106 supply, 2 Zealots, 1 Observer, 5 Stalkers, 6 Sentries, 1 Void Ray, 6 Phoenixes
- 12:00: 129 supply, 2 Zealots, 1 Observer, 2 Immortals, 10 Stalkers, 6 Sentries, 1 Void Ray, 6 Phoenixes, Colossus tech started

MC Build Vods:

 [MC vs Stephano on Daybreak from NASL 3 finals. 10:15 Expand, vs Roach pressure into Roach drop.](#)

 [MC vs Stephano on Entombed Valley from IPL Fight Club. Expand at 9:40, vs Mutalisks.](#)

  [Creator vs Sniper on Daybreak from TSL4 Qualifiers. 9:35 Expand, into macro play.](#)

 [Brown vs Zenio on Cloud Kingdom from IPTL Season 1. No Void Ray, Expand at 10:25, into 3 base push vs fast Hive.](#)

 [Rain vs DRG on Entombed Valley, from Auction OSL. vod unavailable.](#)

 [Creator vs Miya on Cloud Kingdom from WCS Asia. 8:45 Nexus, into 3 base push vs Infestor/Ling/Corruptor.](#)

 (PW) [Hero vs Soulkey on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 5. 10:30 Nexus into 3 base push vs](#)

Roach/Infestor.

-  (PW) Rain vs Sheth on Cloud Kingdom from MLG Fall Championship 2012. Stargate into 4 Gate into Twilight into Robo into 9:20 Expand, into planned 3-0 Immortal/Stalker all-in vs fast Hive.
-  (PW) Rain vs Soo on Cloud Kingdom from MLG Fall Championship 2012. Stargate into 4 Gate into Twilight into Robo into 9:25 Expand, into planned 3-0 Immortal/Stalker all-in vs fast Hive.
-  (PW) Creator vs JKS on Abyssal City from GSTL 2012 Season 3. Phoenix Only, Delayed Expand at 11:05, vs 2 base infestor, into 3-base 4-gas Colossi push with Chargelots vs fast Hive.
-  Squirtle vs Miya on Antiga Shipyard from GSL 2012 Season 5. No Void Ray, Expand at 10:30, into 3 base Colossi/Zealot/Archon push vs Infestor/Zergling.
-  (PW) Creator vs Hyun on Bel'shir Vestige from GSL 2012 Season 5. Expand at 11:15, into 3 base Colossi push vs fast Hive.
-   Hero vs Stephano on Daybreak from WCS Grand Finals. Phoenix int reactionary Void Ray, Expand at 11:00, into 3 base delayed push vs Roach/Ling aggression into Hive
-   Rain vs Killer on Entombed Valley from WCS Grand Finals, third before robo, vs delayed Hive.
-   Creator vs Vortex on Cloud Kingdom from WCS Grand Finals, 8.30 expansion vs fast Hive.
-   Rain vs Sen on Ohana from WCS Grand Finals, Stargate into 4Gate into Robo into 6Gate/Twilight expand at 10.40 vs delayed Hive.

Hero standard build(Stargate into Robo into 4 Gate)

Recommended Build Order:

- From the first Gateway-Zealot, Stalker, Zealot, Sentry.
- 5:30: Stargate with your first 150 gas.
- 6:45: 3rd gas.
- Stargate units: 1 Void Ray, 5 Phoenixes, optional 2nd Void Ray.
- 7:10: Robo.
- 7:50: +1 Weapons.
- 7:50: 4th gas.
- 8:25: 3 extra Gates.
- Robo units: Observer, Immortals as necessary .
- 10:20 (ideally): 3rd Nexus; because of the initially low unit count it might be delayed .
- 10:50: 2 extra Gates.

Benchmarks:

- 5:00: 28 supply.
- 6:00: 36 supply.
- 7:00: 51 supply.
- 8:00: 61 supply.
- 9:00: 77 supply.
- 10:00: 85 supply.
- 11:00: 103 supply, 5 Zealots, 1 Observer, 2 Immortals, 1 Stalker, 3 Sentries, 1 Void Ray, 6 Phoenixes.
- 12:00: 118 supply, 5 Zealots, 1 Observer, 2 Immortals, 6 Stalkers, 3 Sentries, 1 Void Ray, 6 Phoenixes, Colossus tech started.

Hero Builds Vods:

-  Hero vs Stephano on Metropolis from EGMC. Expand at 11:25, vs Mutalisks.
-  Hero vs Stephano on Entombed Valley from EGMC. Expand at 12:30, vs Roach/Ling Drop.
-  Tear vs Curious on Ohana from GSTL 2012 Season 2. Fast Phoenix into Colossi, Expand at 10:55, vs Roach Hydra Corruptor.
-  Hero vs Cytoplasm on Daybreak from MLG Summer Arena. Expand at 9:50, vs light Roach/Ling pressure into Roach/Ling/Infestor play.
-  Puzzle vs Ret on Daybreak from NASL 3 finals. Expand at 11:05, macro play vs Roach/Hydra/Corruptor.
-  Hero vs Stephano on Daybreak from NASL 3 finals. Expand late at 11:35 due to pressure, into 3 base push vs fast Hive.
-  Alicia vs Ret on Daybreak from NASL 3 finals. Expand at 10:20, into macro play vs fast Hive.

 [Hero vs Soulkey on Cloud Kingdom](#) from WCS Korea. Expand at 10:15, into macro play vs fast Hive.

 [Rain vs horror on Ohana](#) from WCS Korea. No Void Ray, Delayed Expand at 11:45, into 3 base push vs fast Hive.

 (PW) [Seed vs Symbol on Daybreak](#) from GSL 2012 Season 4, Set 1. No Void Ray, Expand at 10:45, into 4 Colossi push vs fast Hive.

 (PW) [Younghwa vs Miya on Whirlwind](#) from GSTL 2012 Season 3. From a cannon rush, No Void Ray, into Colossi push vs fast Hive.

 [MC vs Curious on Whirlwind](#) from IPTL Season 1. Uses just one Phoenix to scout, into delayed Expand at 10:45, into push vs Mutalisk transition.

 (PW) [Rain vs goswser on Cloud Kingdom](#) from MLG Fall Championship 2012. Delayed Expand at 12:00, vs 2 base Infestors.

 (PW) [Rain vs Sheth on Daybreak](#) from MLG Fall Championship 2012. Stargate into Robotics into 6 Gate into delayed Expand at 11:40, into 4 colossi push vs fast Hive.

Stargate into +1 Four Gate

The Stargate +1 Four Gate follow up to FFE is a safe and robust transition that can also put a lot of pressure on a Zerg who responds with a quick third, and thus is one of the more popular PvZ openings out there. In its "purest" form, this build will have a Void Ray and 4 +1 upgraded Zealots at the Zerg's 3rd by around the 8:00 mark. +1 Zealots will shred through Lings and help the Void Ray take out the Queen. Meanwhile the Void Ray provides a lot of DPS and can help fight against Roaches in small numbers that try to kite the Zealots. In the best case scenario, you kill the 3rd which pretty much leads to a gg. In the worst case scenario, the Zerg is prepared with Roaches before you even get there, and although you deal no damage you've forced a lot of units out from the Zerg that aren't Drones. Most of the time though, you should be able to kill a Queen, pick off a few Drones, and trade your Zealots for some Roaches/Lings. You should be feeling good if you didn't lose your Void Ray (Zealots are expendable), and now you can continue to harass with it while you have a lot of gas to make Sentries and tech back at home.

When executing this build, use your initial Zealot to scout and to clear watchtowers/a path for your Probe to make a proxy Pylon near his 3rd (or you can hide your initial scouting Probe somewhere on the map). If you prefer (like in some cases if the Zerg makes more than 4 initial Lings), you can get a second Zealot or a Stalker out your Gateway to help scout and protect your Probe, but if you do so you'll either have to cut a Probe or 2 or slightly delay your attack. The proxy Pylon is crucial for the timing of this build to hit at or before 8:00 - if you are unable to get a proxy Pylon up, you should still warp in your first round of Zealots as soon as you can back at home and just march to his base, but keep in mind that your attack will probably not be as effective. On maps like Ohana you can also place a proxy Pylon below his main to allow warp-ins into his main using your Void Ray for vision, setting yourself up to do a dual-pronged attack. Reinforce with additional Zealot warp-ins and Stargate units (both Phoenix or more Void Rays are ok, your preference). Try to micro your Zealots so that they're attacking something - if they are chasing/being kited, manually target Drones with them, or even his Hatchery if he sends all his Drones back to his main. Don't Forget to keep teching/macroing back at your base. When the Zerg has stabilized, you should immediately get a round of Sentries back at home.

There are other variations of Stargate +1 Four Gate out there. One of the biggest downsides to this build is that while it's no where near an all-in, it is decently sized investment that will put you behind if the Zerg responds optimally. One common alteration to this build is to delay the +1 upgrade - the +1 upgrade really only helps against Lings, and if the Zerg responds to the Warpgate pressure with mostly Roaches then your +1 upgrade will not be useful. Another alteration you can do is to delay the Gateways. If you're playing Zergs at a level that are ready for your Warpgate pressure and your only goal with this build is to force out units instead of Drones from the Zerg, then a Warpgate timing that's 15-30 seconds slower will still force the Zerg to get units, but you can squeeze more Probes in in the meantime. Also, if a scouting Overlord can see your Cyber Core researching, then simply continuously chronoing it will probably cause the Zerg to make Roaches before 8:00 to be safe, and you don't even have to warp in offensive Zealots!

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Style

+ Strength: This build is the hardest-hitting, non-all-in PvZ pressure possible.

+ Strength: Very hard for Zerg to tell the difference between this opening and a passive Stargate/4

Gate/Robo build.

+ Strength: Zealot pressure forces the Zerg into Roach compositions, delaying your opponent's tech and making his play more predictable.

+ Strength: Adding a Void Ray to Zealot pressure allows for high ground warp ins and multi pronged aggression.

- Weakness: While not an all-in, this attack is a big investment, and it needs to do at least some damage to not fall behind

- Weakness: Delaying Sentries and Robotics tech while cutting a few Probes makes you vulnerable to a Roach counter attack if your pressure doesn't do enough damage.

- Weakness: This build will include fewer Robotics units when maxed out.

Recommended Build Order

- From the first Gateway: Zealot, Stalker, Zealot.
- 5:05: +1 Weapons with your first 100 gas
- 6:10: Stargate.
- 6:50: Add 3 Gates.
- 7:10: Void ray.
- Stargate units: 2 Void Rays, rally the second at the Zerg's third.
- 8:00: warp in your first round of Zealots and attack the Zerg's third base.
- 8:25: Natural gasses, start teching up.

 (PW) [Brown vs Losira on Dual Sight](#) from GSL 2011 November.

 [Younghwa vs Sheth on Daybreak](#) from HSC V.

 [MC vs Stephano on Ohana](#) from NASL 3 finals. Into a Warp Prism all-in.

 [Jangbi vs Shine on Abyssal City](#) from GSL 2012 Season 5. Stargate into 7 gate attack with warpins on high ground

  [Titan vs Curious on Daybreak](#) from WCS Grand Finals. Phoenix Only. Zealot pressure throws Curious off the Phoenix, which do substantial damage.

Stargate into Seven Gate All-in

See the corresponding [all-in section](#)

Stargate into Colossus All-in

See the corresponding [all-in section](#)

Stargate into Templar

The Stargate into Templar build was heavily used by Hero and he used it exclusively in every game on Tal'Darim Altar. His previous teammate, MC, also employed it heavily on many maps. This build had previously only worked on extremely large maps where it's hard to pressure with Roaches or Hydra. However, with innovations like the Stephano Roach max, this style is no longer viable on any map.

 [MC vs DRG on Cloud Kingdom](#) from MLG Spring Arena.

2.1.2 Robotics Bay and its Follow-ups

Robotics play after FFE is extremely common, and quite flexible. Having access to fast Observers allows you to easily get a full scout of a Zerg's bases and react accordingly, and Immortals are one of the strongest units in the mid-game against standard Roach armies. While Warp Prisms are also available and can be an effective unit for harassment and pressure, they are usually not as threatening as Stargate play or Gateway pressure. This makes a Robo based mid-game more passive compared to other builds.

Robo Expand (Immortal Expand)

The combination of scouting capability through Observers, and defensive capabilities against Roach armies thanks to Immortals with a good Sentry count, means a Robo opening is well-suited for taking a fairly fast third base between 9 and 10 minutes on many maps. In fact, this build was one of the first to be developed to combat Roach max attacks, and it's widely considered the safest way to

defend a third base from them.

One of the major strengths of Robo follow-ups is that macro play and all-ins looks deceptively close to each other, and faking a third base is common when attempting a 2 base all-in. This means that just by showing Robotics units, Immortals in particular, the Zerg might be forced into a more defensive stance than optimal, allowing the you to take a third base more easily.

The biggest weakness of Robotics-centered play is Mutalisks. The fast Robotics itself isn't particularly useful against the initial batch of Mutas, and over-investing into Immortals and Sentries to defend your bases from frontal attacks can heavily delay tech and leave you with a suboptimal unit composition, making the Zerg's harassment very effective. Because of this, an Immortal Expand will rarely get more than 6-7 Sentries, and will include a Twilight Council to research Blink.

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Style

- + Strength: This build is arguably the safest build against Roach attacks thanks to a high Immortal count and two Observers.
- + Strength: This build gives fast scouting information and allows a Protoss player to react to the Zerg's build easily.
- + Strength: This is a hard build to read for Zerg as it can be mistaken for an all-in attack.
- + Strength: You end up with a very solid Immortal-based backbone for your army against any type of Roach play.
- + Strength: Both Templar and Colossi transitions are viable from this build.
- Weakness: This is a very passive build and there are hardly any ways to put pressure on in the early-mid game
- Weakness: This build can be caught off-guard by very greedy Mutalisk builds, as Blink is delayed in favor of a high Immortal count. Options against this include a relatively fast Twilight Council or a double Stargate follow-up.
- Weakness: The safest variations delay upgrades, getting +1 armor before +2 and +3 attack, making pre-Hive timings slower and weaker than with other builds.
- Weakness: Early on, your Gateway unit count will be low. This means that it will be harder to secure a third as fast as with some other builds.
- Weakness: Even though early Observers can be great for scouting, key scouting information can be denied in the mid game with a combination of Overseers, Queens, and Spores. Players such as Sase have attempted to circumvent this problem by also researching hallucination along with this build.

Recommended Build Order

- From the first Gateway: Zealot, Stalker, Sentry, Sentry.
- 5:50: Robo with the next 100 gas after Warpgate and Stalker.
- 6:35: +1 Weapons with the next 100 gas.
- 6:25: 3rd gas.
- 7:10: 4th gas.
- Robo units: Observer, Immortals as necessary.
- 7:00: 3 extra Gates.
- 8:00: Twilight Council, start Blink and +2 when it completes.
- 10:00: 3rd Nexus.
- 10:50: 3 extra Gates to simcity.

Benchmarks

- 5 Minutes: 30 supply.
- 6 Minutes: 38 supply.
- 7 Minutes: 48 supply.
- 8 Minutes: 62 supply.
- 9 Minutes: 78 supply.
- 10 Minutes: 92 supply.
- 11 Minutes: 111 supply, 2 Immortals, 6 Sentries, 2 Zealots, 2 Observer, 10 Stalkers, 63 Probes.
- 12 Minutes: 123 supply, 3 Immortals, 6 Sentries, 2 Zealots, 14 Stalkers, 69 Probes. You can have 1-2 more Immortals if you delay +2 and Blink.

-  [Puzzle vs True on Cloud Kingdom](#) from *GSL 2012 Season 2. Robotics into 6 Gate into expand at 9:25 into Twilight, vs Roach pressure.*
-  (PW) [Seed vs Zenio on Atlantis Spaceship](#) from *GSL 2012 Season 3. Robotics into 4 Gate into Twilight into Expand at 10:10, vs Roach/Ling/Infestor into delayed Brood Lords.*
-  (PW) [Puzzle vs Seal on Whirlwind](#) from *GSTL 2012 Season 2. Robotics into 6 Gate into Expand at 9:10 into Twilight, vs Roach max.*
-  [JYP vs Dimaga on Daybreak](#) from *Dreamhack Summer 2012. Robotics into 6 Gate into Delayed Expand at 9:45 into Twilight, vs Ling/Baneling play into Infestor/Brood Lord.*
-  [Sase vs Sleep on Cloud Kingdom](#) from *MLG Spring Championship 2012, Set 1. Robotics into 3 Gate into Expand at 8:15 into Twilight with Hallucination, vs Mutalisk.*
-  [Sase vs Sleep on Metropolis](#) from *MLG Spring Championship 2012, Set 3. Robotics into 3 Gate into Twilight into Expand at 8:45, into Immortal/Zealot/Templar push vs fast Hive.*
-  [Sase vs Dimaga on Metropolis](#) from *HSC V. Robotics into 7 Gate into Twilight into Expand at 8:45 with Warp Prism harass follow-up, into Immortal/Zealot/Templar push versus fast Hive.*
-  [Sase vs Dimaga on Ohana](#) from *HSC V. Robotics into 3 Gate into Expand at 8:30 into Twilight with Hallucination, vs Ling/Baneling.*
-  [MC vs DRG on Ohana](#) from *GSL 2012 Season 3. Robotics in 4 Gate into Twilight into Expand at 10:05, vs Roach/Ling, into 3 base push.*
-  [Hero vs Effort on Daybreak](#) from *WCS Korea. Robo into 4 Gate into Expand at 9:15 into Twilight vs Roach/Ling/Infestor.*
-  (PW) [Parting vs Leenock on Cloud Kingdom](#) from *GSL 2012 Season 4. Robo Twilight into 4 Gate into Expand at 9:15, into macro play vs Infestor/Brood Lord turtle.*
-  (PW) [Hero vs Soulkey on Daybreak](#) from *GSL 2012 Season 5, Robo into 4 Gate into Expand at 9:20 into Twilight, vs Roach/Ling aggression into Mutalisk.*
-  (PW) [Rain vs Soo on Daybreak](#) from *MLG Fall Championship 2012. Robotics into 4 Gate into Twilight into Expand at 9:45, into Immortal/Stalker push vs Roach/Ling/Infestor into Hive.*
-   [State vs MaFia on Daybreak](#) from *WCS Grand Finals. Robotics into 4 Gate into Twilight into Expand at 9:30, into Immortal/Stalker push vs Roach/Ling/Infestor into Hive.*
-   [HerO vs Roro on Daybreak](#) from *WCS Grand Finals. Robotics into 4 Gate into Twilight into Expand at 10:15, into macro play versus Roach/Ling/Infestor*
-   [HerO vs Roro on Cloud Kingdom](#) from *WCS Grand Finals. Robotics into 4 Gate into Twilight into 10:20 Nexus vs delayed Hive*
-   [PartinG vs Scarlett on Daybreak](#) from *WCS Grand Finals vs delayed Hive.*
-   [HerO vs Sen on Cloud Kingdom](#) from *WCS Grand Finals vs Ling/Infestor into Hive.*

Warp Prism Play

Getting a fast Warp Prism from a Robotics Facility is a good way to put pressure on the Zerg while setting up for your follow-up expansion or attack. A Warp Prism allows to attack from awkward angles and at unexpected timings, allowing a small unscouted group of Gateway units to be much deadlier than they would be had they been warped in from a Pylon.

The initial units carried inside the Warp Prism generally determine the goal of the pressure, and how it will be executed. Using four Sentries allows for Sentry drops behind mineral lines to trap workers and Queens. It also allows the potential to block the main ramp with a forcefield, punish a Zerg for sloppy positioning, Overlord spotting and map awareness. Dropping four Zealots is a cheap way to kill Drones or force them off mining. You may also attempt Queen surrounds via cute micro with your Warp Prism. Finally, a tactic mostly only used by Seed involves dropping four Stalkers. Not only are four Stalkers good for killing Overlords and Creep Tumors, in combination with an Observer, they can one shot Drones, which cannot run away from Stalkers like they can with Zealots. However, a combination of Gateway units may be used to get the best of multiple worlds. Should the opportunity present itself, you can always warp in more units if you see the Zerg is out of position, but be wary that you will probably have to commit them. Zealots, in particular, are a good choice to warp in as they are fairly cheap and expendable, but are able to kill workers and Queens quite efficiently.

Much like with Stargate harassment, your goal is to get a bit of damage done, but not to be overly greedy. In particular, it's important to keep valuable Sentries (and to a lesser extent Stalkers) alive.

Just being active with your early units can delay a Zerg's economy by forcing units to be made instead of Drones, and thanks to the mobility and durability of the Warp Prism and low anti-air damage output of Queens it should always be possible to rescue four units.

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Style

- + Strength: A Warp Prism allows to put more pressure on in the early-mid game.
- + Strength: The resources committed to harassment are "reactive", as units are only warped in if the Protoss sees an opening to do damage.
- Weakness: There is no reliable way to keep the Zerg from spotting your Warp Prism with Overlords.
- Weakness: This build delays Immortal and Observer production slightly.
- Weakness: Against some earlier Roach pressure builds, such as the 9-minute Roach/Ling aggression, there are some timings at which a lack of 4-5 units can cause you to be run over.

Warp Prism Harass into Third Base:

-  [Hero vs Violet on Metropolis](#) from MLG Summer Arena. Standard light Warp Prism harassment.
-  (PW) [Seed vs Life on Antiga Shipyard](#) from GSL 2012 Season 4. Warp Prism harass into Robo Twilight play.
-  (PW) [Hero vs Leenock on Cloud Kingdom](#) from GSL 2012 Season 4. Vs Roach/Ling/Muta.
-  [CJherO vs Ian on Daybreak](#) from WCS Asia. Speed Prism Immortal harass into 3rd base.
-  (PW) [Seed vs Sirius on Daybreak](#) from GSL Season 5, Up/Downs. 4 Stalker Warp Prism harass into third base off of 1 Gateway.
-  [Seed vs Stephano on Antiga Shipyard](#) from ITPL. 4 Stalker Warp Prism harass,, Robotics into Twilight into 3 Gate into 6 Gate into eventual macro game
-   [Rain vs Mafia on Daybreak](#) from WCS Grand Finals. Zealot/Sentry Warp Prism harass into Twilight into 6 Gate into Expand at 11:20, Into Immortal/Stalker push vs fast Hive.
-   [Rain vs Mafia on Daybreak](#) from WCS Grand Finals. Zealot/Sentry Warp Prism harass into Twilight into 6 Gate into Expand at 10:40, Into Immortal/Stalker push vs fast Hive.
-   [State vs Mafia on Ohana Part 1, Part 2](#) from WCS Grand Finals. 4 Stalker Warp Prism harass, Robo into 4 Gate into Twilight Expand at 10:30, Into Immortal/Stalker push vs Roach/Ling into delayed Hive.
-   [Hero vs Stephano on Antiga Shipyard](#) from WCS Grand Finals. Robotics into 5 Gate into Twilight into 6 Gate, into push with Hallucinated Colossi vs Roach/Ling pressure into Hive
-   [Rain vs Idra on Daybreak](#) from WCS Grand Finals, warp prism Zealot/Sentry pressure into twilight into 6gates into 11.50 third.
-   [Parting vs Suppy on Entombed Valley](#) from WCS Grand Finals, warp prism Zealot/Sentry pressure into 9.20 third.
-   [Parting vs Suppy on Cloud Kingdom](#) from WCS Grand Finals, warp prism Zealot/Sentry pressure into Twilight into 6Gates into 10:40 third vs delayed Hive.
-   [Rain vs Killer on Daybreak](#) from WCS Grand Finals, Sentry drop into Twilight into 6Gates into 10:50 third vs fast Hive.
-   [Rain vs Killer on Daybreak](#) from WCS Grand Finals, Sentry drop into Twilight into 6Gates into 10:50 third vs fast Hive.
-  [Creator vs Nerchio on Antiga Shipyard](#) from WCS Grand Finals, warp prism Zealot/Sentry pressure into Twilight into 6 Gate into 11:20 expand, vs Roach Ling pressure

Warp Prism Harass into Other:

-  (PW) [San vs Life on Ohana](#) from GSTL 2012 Season 2.
-  (PW) [San vs Line on Atlantis Spaceship](#) from GSTL 2012 Season 2.
-  [Parting vs Symbol on Entombed Valley](#) from GSL 2012 Season 3.
-  (PW) [Crank vs Sniper on Metropolis](#) from GSTL 2012 Season 2. Warp Prism Cannon Rush. Gets a lead from the opening, but then bungles up the following attack.

Colossi Macro Play

Because of builds like fast Mutalisks and especially the Stephano Style Roach Max, Colossi expands are no longer viable. The game included shows an attempt at such a build against a Roach max in which the third Nexus does not even get a chance to be put down. The exactly to this rule is on a

map like Entombed Valley, where Roach max builds are generally not viable.

-  [*Huk vs Stephano on Antiga Shipyard from Dreamhack Summer 2012.*](#)
-  [*Creator vs Sen on Entombed Valley from WCS Asia.*](#)

Immortal/Sentry All-in

See the corresponding [all-in section](#)

Colossi All-in

See the corresponding [all-in section](#)

2.1.3 Gateway Twilight Robo Expand

The Gateway Twilight Robo expand is another one of those safe and common ways to take a third base. It is also sometimes referred to as the CreatorPrime PvZ, as Creator was the player who first employed it heavily. In many ways, it looks similar to a Robotics expand, and it plays out very similarly as well, with a few important differences. First off, having earlier Gateways allows you to secure a faster third base thanks to your first round of units. Because you will only make Sentries as your first units, you also have more Sentry energy available in the early/mid-game.

Just like a Robo expand can look like an Immortal attack, this build can fool the Zerg into thinking a Blink attack is coming, forcing him to play defensively.

The most notable difference is about the Twilight Council and Robotics timings however. Because these are essentially inverted compared to a Robo expand, with a Gateway Twilight Robo expand you will have faster upgrades as well as Blink, but slower Observers and most importantly Robotics units, Immortals in particular. This means that while your army will be weaker in a fight against a Roach max (which this build can't hold on maps such as Antiga), upgrades are much faster (allowing for a faster pre Hive timing) and it's easier to defend against Mutas thanks to Blink, upgrades and a lower Immortal count. Also, you will have less Robo units when eventually maxed out. Lastly, while a Robo expand may be able to put on at least a bit of aggression thanks to a fast Warp Prism, this Gateway Twilight Robo is passive for a longer time.

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Style

- + Strength: This build takes a faster third base compared to other styles thanks to a higher unit count early on.
- + Strength: This build supplies you with slightly more Sentry energy compared to other expand builds.
- + Strength: This build has the fastest upgrades of any macro build, and can hit an earlier pre-Hive timing.
- + Strength: This build fakes a 2 base Blink Stalker all-in, potentially forcing the Zerg into being more defensive than optimal.
- + Strength: This build is generally more prepared for Mutalisks than a Robotics expand
- Weakness: This build is not as strong against Roach maxes as Robotics expands because of the delayed Robo.
- Weakness: Because this build does not include as early Observers as a Robotics expand, making scouting more difficult.
- Weakness: This build will include fewer Robotics units when maxed out.

Recommended Build Order

- From the first Gateway: Zealot, Sentry, Sentry, Sentry
- 5:35: +1 Weapons with the next 100 gas after the Sentry and Warpgate.
- 6:00: 3rd and 4th gas.
- 6:40: 3 extra Gates.
- 7:10: Twilight Council, start Blink and +2 when it completes.
- 7:45: Robo.
- Robo units: Observer, Immortals as necessary.

- 9:10: 3rd Nexus.
- 10:10: 3 extra Gates to simcity.

Benchmarks

- 5 Minutes: 24 supply.
- 6 Minutes: 37 supply.
- 7 Minutes: 46 supply.
- 8 Minutes: 54 supply.
- 9 Minutes: 70 supply.
- 10 Minutes: 85 supply.
- 11 Minutes: 99 supply, 1 Immortal, 7 Sentries, 1 Zealot, 1 Observer, 8 Stalkers, 63 Probes.
- 12 Minutes: 124 supply, 2 Immortals, 7 Sentries, 2 Zealots, 15 Stalkers, 68 Probes.

 [Creator vs Moon on Metropolis](#) from GSTL 2012 Season 2. 4 Gate into Twilight into 6 Gate into Robo into Expand at 9:00, vs Mutalisks.

 [Parting vs Symbol on Daybreak](#) from GSL 2012 Season 3. Twilight into 3 Gate into Robotics into 6 Gate into Expand at 9:10, fake Blink All-in, vs Roach/Ling drop into Ultralisk/Baneling-loss.

 [Oz vs JKS on Metropolis](#) from GSL 2012 Season 3. 4 Gate into Twilight into Robo into Expand at 9:20, into push vs Ling/Infestor.

 [Oz vs JKS on Entombed Valley](#) from GSL 2012 Season 3. 4 Gate into Twilight into Robo into Expand at 9:05, into pre-Brood Lord push.

 [Oz vs Violet on Cloud Kingdom](#) from MLG Summer Arena. 4 Gate into Twilight into Robo into Expand at 9:05, vs Roach/Ling heavy pressure into Infestors.

 [Oz vs Stephano on Entombed Valley](#) from MLG Summer Arena. 4 Gate into Twilight into Robo into Expand at 9:05, into macro game.

 [Creator vs Idra on Ohana](#) from IPL TAC. 4 Gate into Twilight into Robo into Expand at 9:30, into Stalker/Immortal/DT push.

 [Squirtle vs Hyun on Metropolis](#) from IPL Fight Club. 4 Gate into Twilight into Robo into Expand at 9:10, vs Roach/Ling drop.

 [Creator vs Miya on Ohana](#) from WCS Asia. 4 Gate, Twilight, Robo, expand at 8:45, into Stalker/Immortal/DT push vs Infestor/Ling.

  [HerO vs Sen on Ohana](#) from WCS Grand Finals. 4 Gate, Twilight, Robo, 6Gate, expand at 10:55 while faking blink all-in, into Stalker/Colossus push vs delayed Hive.

  [Creator vs Nerchio on Antiga Shipyard](#) from WCS Grand Finals, 4Gate, Twilight, Robo, expand at 9:40 vs Roach/Ling aggression.

  [Creator vs Scarlett on Ohana](#) from WCS Grand Finals. 4Gate, Twilight, Robo, expand at 9:20 vs fast Hive

2.1.4 Fast Third Base and its Follow-ups

In response to a Zerg who goes into 3 base total macro mode after seeing your FFE, it's quite possible to take a fast 3rd of your own off of only 1 Gateway, usually between 6:20 and 7:20. Zerg has two main transitions from a three base build, which is explained here(link). By far the two most popular transitions, the two gas opening and three gas opening, build no units until around 7:30-8:30. Thus, against such builds, a Protoss is able set up the third with a sim-city defense before the Zerg either scouts it or is able to make units to punish it.

Generally, a fast third build also involves chronoing out several units out of your Gateway which allows you to pressure the Zerg's 3rd in addition to establishing some initial map control, which helps to secure your own third. Another reason you want to put on Gateway pressure is to threaten a Gateway timing. When you take a third base off of one Gateway, you will generally not take gas at your natural. If your Zerg opponent scouts this, he can narrow down your possible builds to a Gateway pressure or a fast third. If you don't pressure, he'll be able to definitively know you're taking a fast third, which allows him to play even more greedily.

As you're taking your third, you must somehow wall off a cannon in order to secure yourself against Speedlings. Either wall off a choke on a map like Entombed Valley or surrounded the cannon completely with your Nexus, Pylons, and Gateways. Even so, as we alluded to before, a one gas

opening with blind Speedlings is able to punish a fast third during a small one-minute timing window. From the moment your Probe leaves your natural to plant the Nexus to the moment the cannon at the third finishes with a full wall-off, you will be vulnerable to these Speedlings. Even if the Speedlings only manage to cancel your Nexus, you will be severely behind, as you won't have any tech and your opponent will know this, so he is free to Drone to his heart's content. Fast Speedlings are the number one reason fast thirds haven't caught on very much.

One of the most popular variants of this build was popularized by JangBi, and the rough build order is as follows:

- Standard FFE
- Only 1 gas after Gateway
- Chrono Probes until Gateway finishes
- Zealot and Cyber Core when Gateway finishes, chrono out 2 Zealots
- When Cyber Core finishes, start WG tech (but no need to chrono), and chrono out Stalkers
- 2nd gas after you start your first Stalker
- Continuously chrono out additional Stalkers until WG tech finishes, rally to Zerg's 3rd
- Nexus when you have 400 minerals
- Additional Gateways, Robo, take natural gases, possibly additional cannons at 3rd depending on Zerg's response.

Execution - use your initial 2 Zealots to take watchtowers, and when they are joined by your first Stalker, start harassing the Zerg's 3rd. Try to snipe Queens/Drones if possible, but don't be greedy - you must keep your Stalkers alive. Fall back at around 8:30-9:00, which is when Speedling tech typically finishes. Make a round of Sentries and transition to whatever you want now that you have 3 bases.

As far as variations of this build, how many units you produce out of your initial Gateway is up to you. You may opt to only make 1 initial Zealot instead of 2 (and chrono more Probes out instead), and also you do not necessarily have to keep chronoing out additional Stalkers and instead use the chrono and resources on Probes, finishing WG tech, and/or starting +1 upgrade earlier.

Transitions from Fast Third Base: Robo Twilight Play

Robotics Twilight macro play should be your standard follow-up after fast third build off of one Gateway. However, it is still a relatively unexplored option as much as fast thirds are. After putting down your Nexus and securing it with a walled-off cannon, begin adding additional tech structures. The buildings you should begin adding after walling off your initial cannon are, of course, the Robotics and the Twilight Council. A Robotics Facility provides scouting in the form of Observers, key defensive Immortals against Roaches, and strong tech units (Immortals/Colossi) for any potential 3 base pushes. A Twilight Council provides upgrades in a timely manner, and potential Blink against Mutalisks. With these two tech structures, you will essentially be playing a Robotics expand or a Gateway Twilight Robotics expand, except with better economy. Keep in mind while transitioning that even though you will have more economy, you generally won't have as fast upgrades or as many Immortals as a normal build.

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Style

- + Strength: This build takes a much faster third than any other standard macro build by about 2-3 minutes.
- + Strength: After initially securing your third with a protected cannon, this build has no glaring weaknesses against any Zerg styles.
- + Strength: Fast thirds open up a host of new and improved three base timings that are stronger than if the Protoss had taken a later third.
- + Strength: A fast third allows you to use all your Gateways in a sim-city should you choose.
- Weakness: A Zerg who techs quickly to Speedlings can shut down a fast third and put the Protoss extremely behind on tech.
- Weakness: Not the absolute best build against a Roach max, as you won't have as many Immortals or as much Sentry energy as some other builds.
- Weakness: Protoss generally loses the threat of mid-game pressure if the Zerg scouts this build.
- Weakness: Scouting will be delayed from the Protoss compared to most other macro builds.

-  [JYP vs Miya on Atlantis Spaceship from GSL 2012 Season 3. 6:35 third, into 6 Gate into Twilight into 10 Gate into Robotics vs Roach/Ling/Infestor.](#)
-  (PW) [Vampire vs Hyun on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 4. 6:20 third into 4 Gate into Robotics into Twilight, vs Mutalisks.](#)
-  (PW) [Creator vs Lucky on Daybreak from GSTL 2012 Season 3. 7:10 third into Twilight into 3 Gate into Robo into 7 Gate, vs Roach pressure into Mutalisks.](#)
-  (PW) [Younghwa vs Monster on Entombed Valley from GSTL 2012 Season 3. 6:45 third into 3 Gate into Twilight into Robotics, into Colossi timing vs Mutalisks into Infestor/Brood Lord.](#)
-   [Grubby vs Killer on Daybreak from WCS Grand Finals. 6:40 third into 5 Gate into Twilight into Hallucination into Robotics into 8 Gate, into 3 base Colossi push.](#)

Transitions from Fast Third Base: Gateway All-in

A Gateway all-in follow-up is possible from a fast third base opening. This is similar to Parting's fast third build in PvT where a fast third base catches an opponent off-guard and causes him to play too greedily, assuming the Protoss will continue to tech and reap the full benefits of a fast third base. However, there's a huge caveat to this build: out of the current map pool, this strategy is only really viable on Entombed Valley for two reasons:

- It's extremely hard to scout a Protoss on Entombed Valley, because all scouting paths into the main must pass through either the natural or third.
- More importantly, heavy Roach pressures are not viable on this map, so it's highly improbable that you will be blind countered by a huge Roach force in the middle of the map.

-  [Hero vs Effort on Entombed Valley from WCS Korea. Into 7 Gate all-in, hits at 10:00.](#)
-   [Rain vs Idra on Entombed Valley from WCS Grand Finals. Into 8 Gate all-in, hits at 9:50.](#)

Transitions from Fast Third Base: Blink Stalker All-in

See above Gateway all-in section. The concepts of this build are similar, if not exactly the same to the above.

-   [Seed vs Ret on Entombed Valley from IPL TAC. Into 8 Gate Blink Stalker +2 timing-hits at 11:00.](#)
-  (PW) [Seed vs Symbol on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 4. Into 8 Gate Blink Stalker +2 timing at 11:30.](#)
-  (PW) [Younghwa vs Dark on Entombed Valley from GSTL 2012 Season 3. Into 8 Gate Blink Stalker +2 timing at 10:30.](#)
-  [JangBi vs Sacsri on Cloud Kingdom from SK Planet Proleague. Into 7 Gate Blink Stalker, no Sentry timing +2 timing at 11:30.](#)
-  [Brown vs TLO on Entombed Valley from IPTL Season 1. Into 9 Gate Blink Stalker, no Sentry +2 timing at 11:50.](#)
-  [Seed vs Suppy on Entombed Valley from IPTL Season 1. Into 8 Gate Blink Stalker, +2 timing at 10:30.](#)
-   [HerO vs Sen on Entombed Valley from WCS Grand Finals. 10 Gate Blink Stalker +2 timing at 11.30.](#)

Transitions from Fast Third Base: Stargate

The particular follow-up was used by Oz at an MLG but it has since seen little use. It is far from a tested or stable opening, as any macro build that does not include a Robotics Facility for Observers and Immortals leaves you open to Roach based builds.

-  [Oz vs Violet on Daybreak from MLG Summer Arena. Into fast Stargate vs Roach/Ling/Infestor.](#)
-  [Oz vs Stephano on Daybreak from MLG Summer Arena. Into fast Stargate, shows excellent defense versus fast Speedlings.](#)

2.1.5 +1 Four Gate Pressure and its Follow-ups

Wargate-based fast pressure off Four Gates is a powerful follow-up to a FFE or Gateway/Nexus

opening that can allow you player to delay a Zerg opponent from droning heavily, while still having a massive number of available transitions into the mid-game. It peaked in popularity at the end of 2011, and while Zerg players have gotten better at dealing with similar pressure timings, it is still a very widely used and flexible build that allows for both aggression and scouting.

Because the +1 upgrade allows Zealots to kill Zerglings in two shots rather than three, 4Gate pressure off of FFE can strongly punish a Zerg for delaying or skipping an early Roach Warren, and force the Zerg to delay Drone production in favor for faster Roaches, while you are only sacrificing Zealots, which will be less useful in the later part of the game. The most common versions of a Four Gate pressure warp in 6-8 Zealots, which can force the Zerg to trade quite cost inefficiently. Any additional investment of units should be warped in only if you determine you can do more damage and you should stop attacking with extra Zealots when you see Roaches being produced. Instead, immediately retreat as you will no longer be able to trade cost efficiently, and move on to the next phase of your build.

The most common variation is to use Stalkers instead of Zealots to pressure. The idea of Stalker pressure is that a standard Zerg opening will take gas at around 6 minutes, which means that until around 8:50 minutes when speed generally completes Stalkers can kite any Zerg unit, forcing more Lings and Roaches to be made, and potentially sniping Drones, Queens and Overlords. Because your army will have much less dps than a Zealot-based pressure it's harder to punish a Zerg misreading your build by sniping his third (which is extremely rare in modern play in general), but you should be able to put on good pressure and save every unit used to do so if you retreat in a timely manner.

An important point to make is that you should try to hide as much scouting info as you can. It will be hard to keep an Overlord from spotting your Gates as your Stalker will already be out on the map, and it's impossible on most maps to deny the Zerg from knowing that you are delaying the gas at your natural, but you can and should make sure he can not see how much chronoboost is going into your Cyber Core, and careful building placement is necessary for it on some maps (Tal'Darim Altar and Cloud Kingdom in particular). Hiding your extra Gateways in a corner of the map is also a good idea.

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Style

+ Strength: Puts non all-in pressure with expendable units early on can punish greedy play (especially a late Roach Warren timings and overdroning), force mistakes and give good scouting information.

+ Strength: Massive number of possible follow-ups which can look very similar to your opponent. The distraction caused by the Four Gate pressure can also distract him from scouting and preemptively responding to all possible threats.

- Weakness: Investing in four early Gates and 6-8 Zealots delays your tech, delaying the timing for the follow-up as well as reducing Sentry count and energy available.

- Weakness: a Zerg who reacts perfectly to the pressure will take no damage wind up ahead.

Success of this build requires your opponent to react inappropriately and is less in your own hands than some other builds.

Recommended Build Order

- From the first Gateway: Zealot, Stalker, Stalker
- +1 Weapons with the first 100 gas
- Move out with Zealot/Stalker/Probe to secure proxy Pylon locations.
- 6:35, 38/44 food: 3 extra Gates.
- 7:00: 3rd and 4th gas.
- start your tech, expansion or production follow-up when you can afford to
- 40/44: add a Pylon at home and at least one proxy Pylon
- 7:40: transform Gates and warp in 4 Zealots

Chronoboost Usage

- 3 on Probes before your Nexus
- 2 on Nexus after adding your first two gasses
- 1 on pre-wg Gateway units
- 4 on Warpgate Research

+1 Four Gate Pressure into Four Gas, Eight Gate All-in

One of the riskiest transitions after a Four Gate, the theory behind this build is that Zergs don't often suspect a fast all-in follow-up, as teching or expanding behind the pressure is far more common. If the Zerg neglects to scout after he reaches Lair, he might go back to droning instead of preparing for the all-in. This all-in, while very slow compared to other 7 Gate all-ins, is still very strong because of its high gas income, which allows you to have a high Sentry count available for forcefields. Because of the high Sentry count, the success or failure of the attack hinges heavily on your forcefield usage. It's also important to consider the map when doing a similar build; for instance, it's easier to forcefield effectively and with less Sentry energy required on Daybreak and Cloud Kingdom than it is on Shakuras Plateau, for instance:

Build Order

- Four Gate opening from above.
- 7:00: 3rd and 4th gas.
- 8:30: 3 extra Gates, +1 armor. Go to full two base saturation (44 Probes and 1-2 for proxy Pylons)
- Go up to 10 Sentries; this build relies heavily on forcefield usage as opposed to some faster 7Gate all-ins
- 9:30: push when your extra 3 Gates are done. Reinforce with Stalkers. Go straight for the Zerg's third.

 (PW) MC vs Leenock on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 1. Pressure is denied, all-in hits at 10:05.

+1 Four Gate Pressure into Blink Stalker All-in

Two base all-in follow-ups to Four Gate pressure such as a Blink Stalker timings are extremely potent and common. The idea of such a build is that you are pressuring the Zerg and forcing him to invest into Roach production early on, while disrupting his economy. This means that if you succeed in doing enough damage with your Zealots, the amount of units available to the Zerg to defend your follow-up all-in will be reduced, increasing the likelihood your attack will win you the game. Your army composition will be extremely strong, as well microed 2/0 Blink Stalkers with eventual Sentry support can absolutely decimate the Roach-based army you will face during the second attack.

For more information on Blink Stalker attacks in general, see [this paragraph](#) in the all-in section.

Recommended Build Order

- Four Gate opening from above.
- 7:00: 3rd and 4th gas, Twilight Council immediately after when you can afford it.
- +2 Weapons and Blink when the council is done.
- 8:45: 3 extra Gates.
- 9:00: Robo. This allows you to have an Observer ready for when you push.
- Go up to full 2 base saturation and get your Sentry count up between 4 and 6 if you want to add any.
- 10:00: push with Blink, +2 and your Observer.

 MC vs TLO on Daybreak from HSC V. Pressure hits at 8:15, Blink Stalker attack hits at 10:00.

+1 Four Gate Pressure into Seven Gate with Immortals

The other common all-in follow-up to Four Gate pressure is the popular Immortal timing. The theory behind the build is very similar to the Blink Stalker timing: you delay your opponent's economy from kicking in, keeping him from droning freely, and force him to invest in a Roach based army which your second timing attack with Immortals will be very cost efficient against.

The biggest advantages compared to a straight up fast Immortal timing is that you will inevitably force Roaches to be made. This makes it impossible for the Zerg to try and counter your Immortal timing with a fast Mutalisk rush while skipping Roaches entirely. The other advantage is that your pressure is designed to slow the Zerg down; limiting the early game economy, and thus reducing the unit count available to your opponent when you attack, makes an already deadly attack even more dangerous.

The main drawback of this variation is that, if your pressure is held perfectly by the Zerg, your timing attack will be slower than normal and with fewer units and less Sentry energy available, making it a potentially easier hold for your opponent.

Refer to the [all-in section](#) for more info on this timing attack.

Recommended Build Order

- Four Gate opening from above.
- 7:00: 3rd and 4th gas, Robo immediately after when you can afford it.
- +1 Armor when +1 attack completes.
- 8:45: 3 extra Gates.
- Robo units: Immortal, Immortal, Warp Prism, Observer.
- Go up to full 2 base saturation and get your Sentry count up between 8 and 12.
- 10:30: push when the second Immortal is ready.



[Parting vs Leenock on Atlantis Spaceship from IPL4.](#)



[Mana vs Stephano on Daybreak from Dreamhack Summer 2012.](#)



[Rain vs Killer on Ohana \[from WCS Grand Finals, delayed push with blink and +2](#)

+1 Four Gate Pressure into Dark Templar

The last tech based follow-up to a Four Gate pressure build is dark Templar tech. While extremely risky, this build can also reap huge rewards. If your Zealot pressure is successful in damaging the third Hatchery, a few DTs can bring it down easily, resetting the game to a 2base vs 2base stage, one that is very advantageous for you. It's also common for a Zerg to delay his Evolution Chamber and Lair against aggressive builds that delay the natural gasses, giving your DT's more chances to do damage. Lastly, if there are Spore Crawlers already present at the Zerg's third it's possible to focus them down with Zealots to open the way for your DT's. In the worst case scenario, you can use a couple of Templar to secure map control and threaten counter attacks if the Zerg moves out to counter attack, especially if he tries to do so before his Lair is done.

On the other hand, note that when executing this build, your tech will be quite well-developed regardless of the success of your aggression, as the fast Twilight Council gives you easy access to +2 weapons and Blink, which are key upgrades against Zerg and especially the Roach play your pressure will most likely force.

The two most common transitions after the DT phase of the game are a delayed Blink Stalker all-in or a simple expand; see the section on [Blink Stalker attacks](#) or [4 Gate/Twilight/Robo](#) for more details.

Recommended Build Order

- Four Gate opening from above.
- 7:00: 3rd and 4th gas, Twilight Council immediately after when you can afford it.
- 8:00: Dark Shrine when the council is done.
- +2 Weapons when you can afford it.
- 4 Sentries when you stop pressuring.
- 8:40: Robo.
- 9:00: 2 extra Gates.
- 9:15: warp in 3-4 DT's, start Blink.
- Follow up with a third base or delayed all-in.



[\(PW\) MC vs Leenock on Daybreak from GSL 2011 Blizzard Cup. Pressure hits at 9:00, Dark Shrine scouted, so goes into macro game.](#)



[MC vs Dimaga on Cloud Kingdom from HSC V. Pressure is denied, Dark Shrine completes at 9:15.](#)



[MC vs Ret on Cloud Kingdom from HSC V. Pressure hits at 8:20, Dark Shrine completes at 9:40.](#)



[MC vs Stephano on Belshir Beach from NASL 3 finals. Shows how much damage you have to do. Pressure hits at 8:30, Dark Shrine completes at 9:35.](#)

+1 Four Gate Pressure into Robotics Based Macro Play

The least risky and most standard follow-up to Four Gate aggression, adding a Robo and going for an Immortal defense of a third base, is a very solid build that allows for strong macro play. The combination of pressure delaying the Zerg economy, potentially high Immortal count, and map vision granted by Observers is a good way to defend a third base from Roach aggression.

Other than the potential for pressure and safety of the follow-up, the strength of this build is that it can be very hard for a Zerg to tell the difference between an Immortal timing attack and an expansion build, so just by showing your Robo units (and potentially even a Warp Prism) you can scare the Zerg into playing defensively for too long, allowing you to set up a strong defense at your natural and third bases.

The downsides of such a build compared to a more passive Robo opening are two-fold. First, a perfect defense of your initial aggression can put the Zerg ahead, forcing you to delay your third for longer than desirable. Secondly, you will have a lower count of the two units your defense relies on: Sentries and Immortals. Production of both is started later than with a passive build, giving you less energy and fewer Immortals available. This means that a Zerg player holding off pressure cost effectively can more easily punish and delay or deny your third. On the other hand, putting on early game aggression allows you to punish greedy Zerg builds, in particular greedy 3 base Mutalisk openings.

Recommended Build Order

- Four Gate opening from above.
- 7:00: 3rd and 4th gas, Robo immediately after when you can afford it.
- +1 Armor when +1 attack completes.
- Go up to 6-8 Sentries when your pressure winds down.
- Robo units: Observer, Immortals as necessary.
- 8:45: Twilight Council. Start Blink when it completes.
- 10:20: third base.
- 10:50: 2 extra Gates.

 [Younghwa vs Sheth on Cloud Kingdom from HSC V. With Warp Prism and Twilight. Pressure hits at 8:30.](#)

 [First vs Zenio on Entombed Valley from IPL TAC3 finals. Stalkers as first warp-in at 7:38.](#)

 [Babyknight vs Ret on Ohana from WCS Europe. Pressure is denied, first warp-in available at 7:25.](#)

 [Babyknight vs Vortex on Cloud Kingdom from WCS Europe. First warp-in at 7:35.](#)

 [Oz vs DRG on Antiga Shipyard, from Auction-OSL. vod unavailable.](#)

 [Creator vs Scarlett on Entombed Valley from WCS Grand Finals. First warp-in available at 7:50.](#)

2.2 COMMON ALL-IN FOLLOW-UPS TO FFE [top](#)

2.2.1 Zealot/Stalker Gateway All-in

Wargate-based all-ins have always been extremely popular and common in the PvZ match-up. The more modern versions of these timing attacks focus on speed as opposed to strength, sacrificing Sentries and sometimes even the +1 weapons upgrade to hit at the 8:30 mark at the latest.

Because the goal of this timing is to attack as fast as possible with overwhelming production capability of basic units, this build cuts Sentries out entirely. The fact that Sentries wouldn't have the time to accumulate high amounts of energy makes them a very weak choice for your army. Instead, the army composition will be made entirely of Zealots, which provide fodder and is your unit of choice against Zerglings, and Stalkers, which with good kiting micro and focus firing are effective against slow Roaches and Lings (the only units Zerg can have at the time of your attack) extremely effectively.

When executing the build, you should focus on securing proxy Pylons close to the Zerg's bases with your early units, protecting your Probe as well as you can while also trying to kill the scouting Lings. It's important to be aware of the most convenient proxy Pylon spots on the map you are playing on, as the speed with which you reinforce your units compared to the Zerg can tilt the scales in your favor.

One common variation of the Stalker/Zealot all-in is to skip the second gas and +1 upgrade entirely. By doing this you will mine more minerals, which speeds up the timing of your Gateways considerably and allows you to hit as fast as Four Gate pressure, while having a more Zealot-heavy composition. The obvious downside of this adjustment is that without +1 your Zealots will not 2shot Lings anymore. Also, a higher Zealot count is more countered by mass Roach production.

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Style

+ Strength: This timing hits before even Ling speed is usually done, making very deadly when the first 1-2 rounds of warp ins occur.

+ Strength: This is an extremely fast-hitting attack, can easily catch an opponent off-guard if he thinks the attack will only consist of Four Gate pressure and under-reacts.

- Weakness: Not having Sentries and forcefields makes it really hard to engage if the Zerg has the time to build a big enough force.

- Weakness: Not mining from your natural gasses and only using 3-4 Probes in your main makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to transition if you don't win the game with your first push.

Recommended Build Order with +1

- From the first Gateway: Zealot, Stalker, Stalker
- +1 Weapons with the first 100 gas.
- Move out with Zealot/Stalker/Probe to secure proxy Pylon locations.
- Pull 3 Probes off gas after starting +1, a Stalker and Warpgate research.
- 6:35, 38/44 food: 6 extra Gates .
- Add Pylons as necessary up to 76 supply.
- Cut Probes at 33. You want one on the map for Pylons, 4 on gas, 28 on minerals
- 7:40: start warping units in. Engage after 1-2 rounds of units.

Recommended Build Order without +1

- FFE opening, take only one Assimilator.
- Warpgate with the first 50 gas, Stalker with the next 50 after a Zealot.
- Move out with Zealot/Stalker/Probe to secure proxy Pylon locations.
- 6:35, 38/44 food: 6-7 extra Gates.
- @100% Stalker, add a third Gateway unit, either a Stalker or Zealot.
- Add Pylons as necessary up to 76 supply.
- Cut Probes at 33. You want one on the map for Pylons, 4 on gas, 28 on minerals.
- 7;40: start warping units in. Engage after 1-2 rounds of units.

Chronoboost Usage for Both Builds

- 3 on Probes before your Nexus
- 1 on Nexus after adding your first two gasses
- 2 on pre-wg Gateway units
- 3 on Warpgate Research

With +1

 (PW) [Vines vs Lucky on Antiga Shipyard from GSL 2012 Season 2. Hits at 8:05.](#)

 (PW) [Puzzle vs Seal on Atlantis Spaceship from GSL 2012 Season 3. Hits at 8:25.](#)

 [Grubby vs Nerchio on Ohana from WCS Europe, 8 Gate with +1/+1. Hits at 8:50.](#)

 [Tails vs Ret on Atlantis Spaceship from IPTL Season 1, 8 gate, Hits at 8:00.](#)

Without +1

  [MC vs Stephano on Ohana from Red Bull Battlegrounds. Hits at 7:50.](#)

 [MC vs Golden on Atlantis Spaceship from HSC V. Gets slowed down and hits at 8:20.](#)

2.2.2 Zealot/Stalker/Sentry Gateway All-in

An older version of the Warpgate-based all-in, this build focuses on Sentry count for forcefields as opposed to the speed of the attack. Because of this, the strength of this build varies from map to map; it's stronger on a map like Cloud Kingdom or Daybreak and weaker on Shakuras Plateau and Condemned Ridge.

As usual, there are advantages and disadvantages to this style. While good forcefields are always extremely strong and can be game breaking if used correctly, a slower attack gives time for the Zerg to get key upgrades done. In particular, while the Stalker/Zealot attack hits slightly before Ling speed can complete, this variation hits after it does, and it's possible for the Zerg to also research Roach speed and burrow while defending; all these upgrades can tip the balance of the battles significantly. The other advantage of this build is that because it uses four gasses, it can be easier to transition out of it if you do damage but can't immediately finish the game.

The last thing to note is that delaying the push can give you time to also complete the +1 armor upgrade, making Lings in particular less effective against your army.

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Style

+ Strength: Having a high Sentry count allows you to take extremely favourable engagements as long as you have Sentry energy.

+ Strength: Mining from four gasses can be misleading for the Zerg and fool him into thinking you are teching instead of delaying a Gateway push.

- Weakness: Investing in Sentries puts you on a clock. You have to kill the Zerg before your Sentry energy runs out.

- Weakness: The Zerg has time to complete key upgrades like Roach speed, Ling speed and burrow. Burrow especially can spot this type of push cold.

- Weakness: Immortal all-ins or Blink Stalker all-ins are generally thought of as more effective.

Recommended Build Order

- From the first Gateway: Zealot, Stalker, Sentry, Sentry.
- +1 Weapons with the first 100 gas.
- 6:40: 3rd gas.
- 7:45: 4th gas.
- 7:25, 45/60 food: 6 extra Gates.
- Add Pylons as necessary up to 84 supply.
- Cut Probes at 45. You want one on the map for Pylons, 6 on gas, 32 on minerals
- 8:20: Warp in a round of Sentries at, move out as you warp in one of Zealots at 9:00. Attack the Zerg third at 10:00, reinforce with Stalkers.

 (PW) [Vines vs Lucky on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 2](#). Hits at 10:00. VOD can only be viewed in LQ.

 (PW) [Classic vs Revival on Entombed Valley from GSTL 2012 Season 3](#). Fake third into 7 Gate all-in, hits at 9:50.

 (PW) [Squirtle vs Miya on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 5](#). Hides units, Hits at 9:50.

2.2.3 Blink Stalker All-in

Blink Stalker all-ins are extremely common and strong in PvZ, relying on blink micro to reach a critical mass of Stalkers that is virtually unkillable by Hatchery tech units.

There are many variations to this kind of all-in: with or without a Robo and with or without Sentries. They each have their strengths and weaknesses. Similarly to Immortal timing attacks, Blink Stalker all-ins can also look deceptively similar to expansion builds, particularly the Gateway/Twilight/Robo builds, so making a third Nexus and then cancelling it can fool the Zerg, sometimes making the attack more likely to succeed.

Skipping Sentries gives you a more "brute force" army with an extremely high Stalker count, which

can overwhelm Roach heavy forces quite easily. Switching into a high Ling count can give this type of attack a few problems, and adding a few Zealots in this situation is highly advisable. Early Sentries, on the other hand, can be stronger when just a few forcefields are necessary to cut off a high number of units thanks to map layout, for instance on Daybreak and Cloud Kingdom. On the other hand, the overall dps and Stalker count of the your army will be lower.

Skipping the Robo means you will have the maximum possible unit count when you attack, but you will lack detection, which can be heavily punished if the Zerg researches burrow and burrow movement for his Roaches. In such a scenario, you can keep engaging the Zerg while building a Robo for an Observer in your base and sending it straight across the map. However, pay attention not to move your units over burrowed Roaches, and retreat momentarily if you see tunneling claws complete.

Adding a Robo allows you to have an Observer with your army both to counter potential burrow play, and to have good knowledge of where the Zerg army is, giving you the possibility of engaging with stronger positioning. Adding a Warp Prism for faster reinforcements can also be helpful; keep in mind however that the more you invest into other units, the weaker your actual army will be. The Warp Prism can also be used simply for reinforcements and to save Sentries from death, similarly to the execution of an Immortal timing.

Since the goal is to keep microing the hurt Stalkers back while keeping constant damage on the Zerg's army, a well executed timing will win when it reaches a "point of no return": there are just too many Blink Stalkers that aren't killed fast enough. Because of this, good mechanics and multitasking are required to succeed with this all-in. You need to have well placed forcefields and crisp blink micro, while also keeping up macro off your Warpgates to make sure you reach the critical mass of Stalkers needed to close the game out.

As a final note, Blink Stalker all-ins are especially effective in punishing a greedy Mutalisk build that tries to get the Mutas before you take a third, as Blink Stalkers are one of the better units available to fight off Mutalisks in low numbers and you can hit as the Zerg has invested in useless Spire tech.

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Style

- + Strength: This attack can be misread by the Zerg, thinking you are going for a 4Gate/Twilight/Robo build instead.
- + Strength: Very good for punishing Mutalisks transitions.
- Weakness: Quite hard to execute perfectly, as it relies on having good micro while keeping up macro.
- Weakness: Having to wait for +2 weapons makes this one of the slower timing attacks in the matchup, giving your opponent a good amount of time to prepare and complete key upgrades.

Recommended Build Order with Robo and Sentries

- From the first Gateway: Zealot, Stalker, Sentry, Sentry
- +1 Weapons with your first 100 gas
- 6:20: 3rd and 4th gas.
- 7:20: 3 extra Gates and a Twilight Council.
- 7:50: Robo.
- +2 Weapons when +1 completes; Blink after +2 is started. Chronoboost +2 more than Blink to line up their completion.
- 8:30: 3-4 extra Gates.
- Go up to 6-7 Sentries before switching to Stalkers, make an Observer and move out when all your Gates are ready.
- 10:00: attack the Zerg third when both upgrades complete.

Recommended Build Order without Sentries or Robo

- From the first Gateway: Zealot, Stalker, Stalker
- Start a Stalker and Warpgate research with your first 100 gas, then +1 Weapons with your next 100.
- 6:30: 3rd and 4th gas.
- 7:00: 3 extra Gates and a Twilight Council.
- Cut Probes at 44

- +2 Weapons when +1 completes; Blink after +2 is started. Chronoboost +2 more than Blink to line up their completion.
- 8:00: 3-4 extra Gates.
- Make extra Stalkers if you can afford to without slowing down your infrastructure set up.
- 10:00: attack the Zerg third when both upgrades complete.

 (PW) Squirtle vs Symbol on Daybreak from *GSL 2012 Season 3*. Delayed push with Nexus cancel and Sentries. Because of the delay, Squirtle ends up having +3 Weapons for the final push at 12:30.

 Oz vs Stephano vs Metropolis from *MLG Summer Arena*. With Sentries, abuses map. Hits at 11:10.

 Squirtle vs Symbol on Atlantis Spaceship from *IPL TAC*. Without Sentries. Hits at 10:00.

 CJHero vs Effort on Ohana from *WCS Korea*. Without Sentries. Starts attacking at 8.30 before Blink is even done, +2 and Blink finish at 9:20 and 9:50 respectively.

 (PW) Parting vs Leenock on Daybreak from *GSL 2012 Season 4*. With 6 Sentries, with Nexus cancel. Nexus goes down at 9:10, all-in hits at 11:30.

 (PW) Genius vs DRG on Cloud Kingdom from *GSL 2012 Season 1*. Without Sentries, Robo or +2, really deceiving build that relies on faking out an opponent. Hits at 10:30 .

2.2.4 Immortal/Sentry All-in

The Immortal/Sentry timing attack is one of the most powerful builds Protoss has in its arsenal in PvZ, and it can be next to impossible to stop for the Zerg without near-perfect execution and engagements.

The build is meant to counter the standard Roach based openings with an extremely powerful attack before the Zerg has the ability to tech up or truly benefit from his three-base economy, using an Immortal/Sentry/Stalker/Zealot army which, when microed well, can easily clear very high Roach counts incredibly cost-efficiently. Other than army composition, the strength of this timing attack comes from the fact that it can be very deceiving and hard to scout. The opening build and army composition is extremely similar to that of a passive Robo into third build, and it can be difficult for the Zerg to identify your plan without seeing your full Gateway count with Overlords or Overseers. Denying scouting and giving out false information, such as faking a third base, can go a long way in making this push successful.

This build relies very heavily on forcefields, so Sentry count for this type of build is a lot higher (up to double digits in some cases) than with other all-ins. It's absolutely mandatory to engage well, close to chokes and ramps as far away as possible from the open field, and land forcefields correctly, as failure to do so will result a very one-sided loss for you. Because of the sheer strength of your army when engaged in straight up fright, good Zerg players always try to engage from at least two directions and in the open areas of the map, forcing the you to burn as many forcefields as possible; this makes good Observer movement and spotting key for the success of your timing attack. If the Zerg player can successfully burn all the Sentry energy before having received major damage to his army or production capabilities, it can become difficult to win with this timing.

The other important point to make when it comes to execution is that this build almost always utilizes a Warp Prism for reinforcements instead of a proxy Pylon. This allows you to position yourself more freely (you don't have to fight as close as possible to a Pylon), and it opens up the possibility of using Warp Prism micro to save your important units such as Immortals and Sentries from being focused down by the Zerg units. Note that forcefield micro still takes precedence over Warp Prism micro; if you aren't confident you should not focus on this technique.

Because of how powerful an Immortal-based army is when first attacking the Zerg third, many players will try to basetrade with their army instead of engaging you in a head on fight they are not confident in taking. To prepare for this you should always fully wall off your natural expansion and potentially add a cannon as you move out. If you spot his units moving for a base trade, or get to his third expansion and see little to no units, you should warp in a couple of Sentries defensively; if he does commit to a base race, your options are to either try to hold your front with a handful of Sentries

and cannons, or to sac your natural and retreat with all your Probes and Sentries up your main ramp, making cannons there instead.

Another excellent option is to wall off your main ramp with your Gateways preemptively and try to hold this much smaller choke, immediately giving up your natural and massing cannon at your main ramp should any counterattack occur. Either way, you should be able to easily kill the Zerg's third and natural at least (he will hardly have any forces there), so as long as you hold on to one or two base successfully you will be in good shape.

Sometimes Zerg players trying to base-race against this attack will try to skip Roaches entirely and go straight for Mutalisks, sacrificing their third and even natural while taking hidden bases and getting Spine Crawlers to defend. Should this happen, the best reaction is to keep calm, sacrifice your natural and get cannons in your main base to hold on until you can warp in one or two round of Stalkers defensively. Also, don't take too much time killing each base. The faster you can kill one base and move on, the less time your opponent has to finish Spine Crawlers at another base. Remember that your main army out on the map should still be much stronger than the Zerg's in a straight up fight, so as long as you can find and destroy the hidden bases while retaking your natural and teching up to Blink you should be in good shape.

There are a couple of different timings you can hit. The most common attack will hit at around 10:30 with 2-3 Immortals and both +1 weapons and +1 armor. It is also possible to speed up the build by delaying +1 in favour of a faster Robo, and attacking about 40 seconds earlier with the same Immortal count, but without +1 armor. This version of the build is favoured particularly by Startale players. While attacking faster allows you to punish greedy tech builds, slightly delaying the push in favour of army size is stronger against Roach-heavy compositions.

One popular variation on this is getting a fast Warp Prism from the Robo, before any Immortals or Observers are produced. The fast Warp Prism allows you player to both harass at awkward timings, forcing early units instead of Drones, and to snipe Queens, both of which can delay a Zerg's player production and making your final attack even stronger.

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Style

- + Strength: Extremely easy to execute thanks to strong army composition. It's very hard for the Zerg player to engage correctly.
- + Strength: Extremely hard for the Zerg to defend, even if he knows it's coming.
- + Strength: This attack is relatively hard to read and predict for the Zerg, as it looks very similar to a standard macro build.
- Weakness: The attack and army compositions aren't very flexible, it can struggle against non-standard unit compositions like Ling/Baneling
- Weakness: Relying on forcefields means you are on a timer: you need to kill the Zerg while you have Sentry energy available.

Recommended Build Order

- From the first Gateway: Zealot, Sentry, Sentry, Sentry.
- 5:50: +1 Weapons with the next 100 gas after the Sentry and Warpgate.
- 6:15: 3rd and 4th gas.
- 6:30: Robo with the next 100 gas.
- Robo units: Immortal, Immortal, eventual Immortal, Warp Prism, Observer.
- 7:20: 3 extra Gates.
- 8:15: 3 extra Gates. Separate the two sets of Gates to make scouting harder.
- +1 Armor when +1 Attack is done.
- Cut Probes at 46.
- 9:10: move out at with 2 Immortals, 1 Zealot, 10 Sentries. Rally the Warp Prism and Observer to the Zerg third, reinforce with Stalkers as gas permits.

 *Alicia vs Ret on Bel'Shir Beach from NASL 3 finals. Hits at 10:30.*

 *Squirtle vs Coca on Metropolis from IPL Fight Club. Hits at 10:30.*

 *(PW) Hero vs Symbol on Antiga Shipyard from GSL 2012 Season 4. Goes into long macro game. Hits at 10:30 with 3 Immortals but later +1 armor.*

-  (PW) Vampire vs Yugioh on Antiga Shipyard from GSL 2012 Season 4. Vs Ling/Infestor. Hits at 10:45 with 3 Immortals.
-  finale vs Jaedong on Abyssal City from GSL 2012 Season 4. Hits at 11:50 after being delayed by a counter attack.
-  (PW) finale vs Jaedong on Ohana from GSL. Hits at 11:30.
-  (PW) Creator vs Hyun on Ohana from GSTL 2012 Season 3. Misread from Hyun. Hits at 10:10.
-  (PW) Parting vs Sniper on Ohana from GSTL 2012 Season 3. Hits at 10:00 with 3 Immortals.
-  (PW) Parting vs DRG on Abyssal City from GSTL 2012 Season 3. Hits at 9:30 with 2 Immortals.
-  Parting vs Roro on Ohana from WCS Asia. Vs base trade. Hits at 9:40 with 3 Immortals.
-  Parting vs Roro on Daybreak from WCS Asia. Vs Spine/Infestor. Hits at 10:10 with 3 Immortals. Goes into macro game.
-  Creator vs Sen on Ohana from WCS Asia. Hits at 10:20 with 2 Immortals, vs Ling/Hydra defense.
-  CJherO vs Ian on Ohana from WCS Asia. With initial Warp Prism Sentry harass. Hits at 9:40 with 2 Immortals, vs Ling/Hydra defense.
-  CJherO vs Sen on Ohana from WCS Asia. With initial Warp Prism Sentry harass. Hits at 9:40 with 2 Immortals, vs Roach defense.
-  CJherO vs Roro on Ohana from WCS Asia. With initial Warp Prism Sentry harass. Hits at 10:05, vs Ling/Infestor/Spine defense.
-  (PW) Parting vs Shine on Antiga Shipyard from GSL 2012 Season 5. Vs Ling heavy standard Roach/Ling defense. Engages at 9:40 with 3 Immortals.
-  (PW) Parting vs Losira on Entombed Valley from GSTL 2012 Season 3.
-  (PW) Seed vs Sniper on Abyssal City from GSL 2012 Season 5. Hits at 10:15 with 3 Immortals, shows extremely patient play.
-  (PW) Daisy vs Soo on Ohana from MLG Fall Championship 2012. Hits at 12:10 with 3 Immortals after some delays.
-  (PW) Daisy vs Soo on Cloud Kingdom from MLG Fall Championship 2012. Hits at 12:30 after some delays, vs Roach/Ling/Mutalisk defense, includes second push.
-  (PW) Genius vs Hyvaa on Bel'shir Vestige from GSL 2012 Season 5. Hits at 11:20 with 3 Immortals after some delays.
-   Hero vs Roro on Cloud Kingdom from WCS Grand Finals. Hits at 10:55 with 3 Immortals, goes into macro game vs mutalisks.
-   CJherO vs Curious on Daybreak from WCS Grand Finals. With initial Warp Prism Sentry harass. Hits at 10:10 with 2 Immortals, goes into long macro game versus mutalisks.
-   Parting vs Scarlett on Antiga Shipyard from WCS Grand Finals. Hits at 9:50 with 3 Immortals.
-   Parting vs Suppy on Ohana from WCS Grand Finals. Hits at 9:40 with 3 Immortals, goes into a macro game vs mutas.
-   Parting vs Sen on Cloud Kingdom from WCS Grand Finals. Hits at 9:50 with 3 Immortals, goes into a macro game.
-   Parting vs Sen on Ohana from WCS Grand Finals. Hits at 9:40 with 3 Immortals.
-   Parting vs Sen on Cloud Kingdom from WCS Grand Finals. Hits at 10:20 with 3 Immortals.

2.2.5 Stargate into Seven Gate All-in

A Gateway all-in is a strong follow-up to a Stargate opening. This is because when using Stargate units, it's extremely easy to deny Overlord scouting, deny the vision granted by xel'naga towers, and in general keep the Zerg in the dark about your intentions, which means that when executing correctly your opponent shouldn't know of your attack until the last possible second. Also killing Overlords and/or Queens and forcing Spore Crawlers will also reduce the Zerg's production capabilities by the time the all-in hits, and Zerg players may tend to play greedier against Stargate openers thinking you will always go into macro play.

While not as strong as a Gateway/Immortal or Blink Stalker army, a Gateway/Void Ray army is still quite efficient at fighting Roaches, and when executed correctly this is a very deadly push, because of how hard it is to scout it in time and the high forcefield count of the Protoss army. As this is yet another forcefield-based attack, you are on a timer to kill the Zerg or do crippling damage before your Sentries run out of energy.

Like with many other PvZ all-ins, it is also possible to fake a macro build with a 3rd Nexus cancel and then go for a delayed push. If you do this, you will hit slightly later, possibly with 1/1, but with a higher Void Ray count. To ensure the success of this build it is mandatory to keep the extra Void Rays hidden. If you want to fake a three base build, it is also recommended to make 1-2 Phoenixes before switching back into Void Ray production, fooling the Zerg into thinking you are doing a more standard Stargate/4 Gate/Robo build.

One more modern variation of this push is to open with 4-5 Phoenixes and no Void Ray, and to attack with Blink and +2 instead. The Phoenix opener will generally do more damage than getting a single fast Void Ray, so while this attack comes later it is stronger thanks to Blink and the Zerg's economy and production will be reduced if your harassment is successful.

The biggest downside of this build is that because it always skips a Robo, it is very vulnerable to burrowed Roaches, as Observer tech is always quite far away.

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Style

+ Strength: This attack is very hard to scout thanks to the initial Void Ray clearing off scouting Overlords and Lings.

+ Strength: Forcing Spore Crawler production and sniping Overlords and potentially Queens means the Zerg's army will be smaller than against other all-ins.

- Weakness: Void ray/Gateway armies aren't as strong in straight up combat as Immortal/Gateway or Blink Stalker armies.

- Weakness: Completely skipping Robo tech makes you vulnerable to Roaches with burrow.

- Weakness: Slightly harder to fake a macro build than with other two base timings.

Recommended Build Order

- From the first Gateway: Zealot, Stalker, Sentry, Sentry, Sentry.
- 6:15: Stargate after Stalker/Warpgate.
- 6:30: 3rd gas.
- 7:15: Void ray, used to clear Overlords and scouting Lings.
- 7:45: +1 Weapons.
- 7:50: Being adding Gates as you can afford them; go up to 7 in total.
- Go up to 6-7 Sentries before switching to Stalkers, move out when all your Gates are ready.
- 8:40: 2nd Void Ray, 4th gas.
- Cut Probes at 45; you want full two base saturation plus one Probe for proxy Pylons.
- 9:50: attack the Zerg third when both upgrades complete.

 *Creator vs Coca on Metropolis from TSL4. Excellent fake of Creator's macro Stargate build, hits a delayed timing at 11:55 with 1/1 after faking a Nexus at 9.50 and hiding 3 extra Void Rays.*

 *Squirtle vs Ret on Cloud Kingdom from Red Bull Battlegrounds. Squirtle doesn't kill Ret with the all-in, but gets in a decent position and wins in the eventual macro game. Hits at 9:50.*

 (PW) *Parting vs Yugioh on Metropolis from GSL 2012 Season 3. Straight forward push that wins the game. Hits at 10:50.*

 (PW) *Parting vs Yugioh on Ohana from GSL 2012 Season 3. Parting gets a huge advantage from the first push and it turns into a drawn-out game, but Parting gets overconfident and eventually loses, because he refuses to tech. Hits at 9:50.*

 *Squirtle vs Coca on Daybreak from IPL Fight Club. Hits at 9:50.*

 *Alicia vs Ret on Dual Sight from NASL 3 finals. Hits at 10:00.*

 *Creator vs Curious on Antiga Shipyard from WCS Asia. With fake 3rd base and hidden Void Rays, hits at 10:55. Against 2 base Infestor.*

 *Parting vs Curious on Cloud Kingdom from WCS Asia. Hits at 9:50, doesn't kill his opponent, but gets into a decent position heading into the macro game.*

 *Creator vs Vortex on Entombed Valley from WCS Grand Finals. Fakes a third and hits at 10.45 with 1/1 and 3 Void Rays.*

 *Rain vs Curious on Shakuras Plateau from WCS Korea. Phoenix opening into Blink All-in*

 *Rain vs Idra on Antiga Shipyard from WCS Grand Finals. Phoenix opening into Blink All-in*

2.2.6 Stargate into Colossus All-in

A Stargate into Colossus all-in attempts to fake a MC style [Stargate into Robotics expand](#) and punishes a Zerg who overdrones in reaction. If the Zerg falls for the trap, he may be caught with up to 80 drones, either without corruptors to kill your colossi or without enough ground units to take down your gateway force. In addition, because you will be forcing a fight at your opponents' base, any reinforcements from the Zerg will trickle into your main force and instantly die.

 [\(PW\) Seed vs Curious on Whirlwind from GSL 2012 Season 3. Hits at 11:50 without thermal lance and two Colossi.](#)

 [Squirtle vs Symbol on Whirlwind from GSL 2012 Season 3. Hits at 11:55 with thermal lance and two Colossi.](#)

2.2.7 Colossus All-in

Colossi all-ins are generally not seen at all in modern PvZ. The reason is that by the time a Protoss can amass two Colossi, Zerg will have been able to max out. Then he will be able to trade his first maxed out army for Sentry energy and half of the Protoss army. With more reinforcements, Zerg will eventually be able to overwhelm the Protoss army and push into his base.

However, there is a potential solution to this standard response from Zerg. See [this thread](#) for more information on the 2 base turtle variant of the 2 base Colossi all-in. Unlike a traditional all-in versus Zerg that pushes as soon as possible with optimal saturation, this style is meant to blind counter the Stephano style of maxing Roaches to defend all-ins. Stephano usually beats all-ins by engaging them as they move out, trading his Roaches for army, then crushing the all-in with a re-max at the Zerg base. Usually with a 2 base all-in, you will move out around the 10 minute mark at the latest, maybe a bit later if you're doing a normal delayed Colossi all-in. However, this build vigorously tries to deny Overlord scouting and tries to really turtle and move out much later, only when you can trade extremely efficiently versus a Zerg who's maxed on only Roach Ling. Then, you'll be able to defeat the re-max as well, being that the Zerg only stayed on 65 Drones and 4 gas.

As this build is a blind all-in, your opponent easily beat it by scouting or not going for the Stephano Style Roach defense. Either blind or reactionary mass early Mutalisk or Roach Corruptor can defeat this easily.

 [Alicia vs Ret on Shakuras Plateau from NASL Season 3 Finals. Warp Prism harass into Colossi all-in, Alicia only wins because he's able to get himself on top of Ret's natural ramp.](#)

 [TT1 vs Stephano on Odyssey from NASL Season 3. Shows how typical Colossi all-ins can fail.](#)

2.3 LESS COMMON FOLLOW-UPS [top](#)

Dark Templar

Dark Templar builds are extremely risky and rely on your opponent not being prepared. If your opponent is prepared, you will almost certain lose instantly from the ensuing Roach pressure. And even if your opponent is not prepared and loses many Drones or a Hatchery, he can still overwhelm you with Roaches, seeing that a Protoss who rushes for dark Templar often will not have enough Sentries with high energy or Immortals to hold off Roaches while taking a fast third base.

 [SaSe vs SortOf on Daybreak from WCS Swede. Shows a good example of this as SortOf loses his Lair, but still manages to kill his opponent with pure Roaches.](#)

 [\(PW\) Tear vs Hyun on Entombed Valley from GSTL 2012 Season 2. Shows a good DT opening versus an opponent who doesn't prepare well. He also shows a very solid follow-up and doesn't lose most of his initial DTs, choosing to save them rather than going for more potential damage.](#)

 [Jangbi vs Jaedong on Entombed Valley from SK Planet Proleague. Shows a good build that tricks Jaedong into thinking Gateway pressure is coming, but surprisingly hits with DTs.](#)

 [Parting vs Curious on Daybreak from WCS Asia, Set 2. DT warps in at 8:25, transitions into 3](#)

base push.

 [MC vs Ret on Shakuras Plateau from IPL3.](#)

Double Stargate

Double Stargate openings are rather non-standard, but can easily throw off the Zerg and can occasionally be used. Obviously there are many variations of this and there isn't one correct way to do it, but here are some common transistions. When you open double Stargate, your goal is to either force the Zerg invest too much into anti-air, and then attack with something that counters that anti-air, or if the Zerg doesn't realize you have two Stargates and you make it look like you're doing standard Stargate harass, you can surprise the Zerg with a large number of air units, causing potentially game-ending damage.

A Gateway all-in is a good follow-up to opening double Stargate. Start with double Stargate Phoenix and build up to 44 Probes on 2 bases, followed by additional Gateways, anywhere from 7-9. Make a few Sentries early on to start collecting energy, and as soon as your Gateways are finished, you should stop Phoenix production, warp in a round of Zealots/Stalkers depending on the Zerg's composition, and move out with a Probe to plant a proxy Pylon to begin attacking.

Another possibility, which is great against Zergs who tech to Infestors to counter your air, is to tech to Templar Archives, and all-in with Changelot/Archon. This hits a bit later but is much stronger. While you can ignore a Robotics Facility with these builds, make sure you don't ignore either Forge or air upgrades.

While Phoenix may be preferred due to their mobility, and the fact that in large numbers they do quite well against ground units as well, mass Void Rays can also have their advantages. If you choose to make mass voids off of 2 Stargates, try to hide the Void Rays off of 1 of the Stargates until you get to around 5 Void Rays, and then attack with all of them. This can be effective against Zergs who do not react against air with fast Infestor/Hydra/Spire, and instead just rely on minimal Queens and Spores for defense as they continue with their Roach game-plan.

Double Stargate does not have to lead to an all-in. You can transition out of double Stargate into double Robo Colossus to fend off their expected Hydra or Infestor response, and then carry on into a macro game. Teching to HT/storm is also an option - storm counters Hydra and Infestor as well, with the added bonus of not being weak against a mass Corruptor response to Void Ray/Colossus. However, both of these macro options are generally only viable if you do significant damage to a Zerg or if he is unfamiliar with punishing a double Stargate build.

Finally, there exists a small faction of people who will swear by double Stargate mass air macro builds. We included it in the guide, because it has been used successfully in professional play before, but the wins were mostly from map abuse or an opponent not knowing a proper response. Mass air macro play is far from well tested or accepted at high levels.

 [Genius vs Symbol on Calm Before the Storm in GSL 2011 November. Only possible because of this particular map.](#)

 [Stardust/Sson vs Roro on Ohana from SK Planet Proleague.](#)

 [Parting vs DRG on Antiga Shipyard from MLG Winter Arena.](#)

 [Hero vs DRG on Metropolis from IPL Hot Import Nights.](#)

 [MC vs Dimaga on Ohana from HSC V. Shows good defense by Dimaga but then a bad follow-up.](#)

 [Hero vs Soulkey on Antiga Shipyard from GSL 2012 Season 5.](#)

Gateway Pressure into Third

Although it has been used recently, this is not a common build for good reason. The Gateway pressure is meant to force an overreaction from your opponent, but by the time you're pressuring, a Zerg will want to be switching from Drones to units anyways. In addition, in contrast to a [Robotics expand](#) or a [Gateway Twilight Robo expand](#), you're mostly likely going to be delaying your third Nexus or tech for two or three minutes with a Gateway pressure build.

 (PW) [Parting vs DRG on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 1. Shows defense with mass gateways, fails.](#)

 [Parting vs DRG on Daybreak from MLG Winter 2012. Shows 2nd attempt at defense with mass gateways, fails.](#)

-  [Puzzle vs Lucky on Daybreak from GSTL 2012 Season 1. With Immortals.](#)
-  [Squirtle vs Nestea on Daybreak from IPL4.](#)
-  [MC vs Stephano on Cloud Kingdom from IPL Fight Club.](#)

Sentry Ramp Blocking from Robo, Stargate into Robo, or as an Elevator

Popularized by Hero, this strategy involves getting a Warp Prism inside your opponent's base and force fielding his ramp so reinforcements cannot get up the ramp. If you get the forcefield off, your opponent will probably lose his main Hatch, catapulting you into an extremely favorable situation. With this build, the goal of the Stargate opener is to not to scout and pick off any Zerg unit out of position as usual, but to clear any scouting Overlords to make sure the Warp Prism is able to reach the Zerg's ramp without being spotted. Additional Void Rays are also very useful both to strengthen the attack in the main and to defend potential Zerg counter attacks at your natural expansion.

-  (PW) [Hero vs Leenock on Metropolis from GSL 2012 Season 2. Prism Drop.](#)
-   [Hero vs Idra on Shakuras Plateau from Dreamhack Valencia. Stargate into Prism Drop.](#)
-  [Genius vs Sheth on Metropolis from IPL TAC3. Prism Drop into macro game.](#)
-  [Brown vs Sheth on Metropolis from IPTL Season 1. Stargate into Prism Drop.](#)
-  [MC vs DRG on Metropolis from MLG Spring Arena, Set 1. Elevator.](#)
-  [Creator vs Curious on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 5. Does an average amount of damage and goes into macro game.](#)

Blink Stalker/Warp Prism/Sentry Block All-in

A variation of Blink Stalker all-ins with a Robo, this build is only viable on a handful of maps (notably Ohana, Metropolis, and Antiga Shipyard) where the Zerg's main base is easily accessible. The idea is to add a Warp Prism to the all-in instead of an Observer, load four Sentries in it, and blink your whole Stalker army into the Zerg's main, using forcefields to block the ramp.

When executing this build, make sure to focus on always keeping the main ramp forcefielded (cast one forcefield every 15 in-game seconds), keeping the Warp Prism safe from Queens and Spore Crawlers and making sure the Sentries are safe. The main difference between this attack and a normal Blink Stalker all-in is that you are relying on a single blink and chain forcefields to win you the game outright, rather than focusing on good blink micro with a standard timing.

If you can seal the Zerg army out of his main this will often end the game outright, and even if he does scout the attack in time and prevents your force from blocking him outside his main base with Queens and a Spore Crawler in position next to his main ramp, you can still execute a more standard Blink Stalker attack. For a sample build, refer to the Blink Stalker all-in section; the only difference is making a Warp Prism instead of an Observer and making 4 Sentries instead of 6.

-  (PW) [JYP vs Miya on Metropolis from GSL 2012 Season 3.](#)
-  [Ace vs DRG from GSL 2012 Season 2.](#)

Proxy Robo Dark Templar Drop

A very gimmicky and risky build, the goal of this attack is to surprise the Zerg by dropping four DT's and warping in four more to take out the Zerg's Lair, Drones and tech before he can react in time. Four DTs can kill a Lair before an Overseer is done morphing, and eight, if unscouted, will then be able to quickly kill any Spore Crawler in the main, allowing you to take out any tech buildings present, as well as a few Drones and Queens.

-  [Sage vs Lucky on Termius from GSL 2011 October.](#)

Double Robo All-in

The double Robo all-in can do fairly well versus any type of Roach defenses, but it's uncommon, extremely gimmicky, and assume your opponent will employ a Roach defense. Be wary of flanks, as you don't have many forcefields. Also, fast Mutalisks can be autowin versus this.

-  [Cruncher vs Idra on Antiga Shipyard from NASL Season 3. Shows a successful attempt.](#)
-  [Cruncher vs Idra on Daybreak from NASL Season 3. Shows a failed attempt](#)
-  [Cruncher vs Idra on Shakruas Plateau from NASL Season 3. Shows a failed attempt](#)

  [Sase vs Sheth on Daybreak from Red Bull Battlegrounds.](#)

Zealot/Archon All-in

This build was primarily used by Mana in order to blind counter an opponent who always opened Ling/Baneling.

 [Mana vs Dimaga on Ohana from Dreamhack Summer 2012.](#)

 [Mana vs Dimaga on Antiga Shipyard from Dreamhack Summer 2012.](#)

3 MID GAME

The mid-game section of the guide represents the period of time after Protoss has decided on macro play. This stage usually lasts from 10 minutes to whenever Hive is reached. At this time, Protoss is on even bases with the Zerg, either two against two or three against three. Thus, it is the Zerg's job to dictate the pace of the game and choose a choice of action. It is the Protoss's job to scout and then react to the Zerg's choice of strategy and bear any pressure Zerg might put on the Protoss player.

This section will first focus on identifying Zerg strategies as well as learning the Zerg thought processes behind these strategies. Then, we move onto the mentalities Protoss and Zerg players should adopt in the mid-game. Only then can we delve into how we can properly react to all the possible Zerg tactics in the mid-game. A special case, two base play from Zerg, will also be addressed here.

3.1 MID GAME CONSIDERATIONS [top](#)

3.1.1 Scouting

Sometime during mid-game, you will be able to scout your opponent's base with either Stargate units, an Observer, a hallucination, a poke, or a stray unit. But once you see what he has how do you respond? Let this section be your guide.

There are three distinct ways to play the early-mid game for Zerg from a 3 Hatch opening versus a FFE. They are characterized by the number of gasses they take and the timing at which they take them:

One gas @ 4:30, Most notable user: Nestea

Most different from the other two options

Relies on quick Ling speed instead of Roaches to deny Pylons in order to defend against Gateway timings

Can punish most fast third builds

Usually means fast Lair tech, either for fast Mutalisks or Infestors

Two gas @ 6:00, third gas @7ish, Most notable user: Stephano

Usually faster Ling speed than a three gas style

Usually faster first attack or armor upgrade than three gas style, finishes on time for 10-11 timings

Relies on Roaches to defend against Gateway pressure

Three gas @ 6:45, Most notable user: DRG

More economy focused than the two gas build

Usually rather slow Ling speed, which starts after Lair

Usually faster first attack or armor upgrade than two gas style, does not finish on time for 10-11 timings

Relies on Roaches to defend against Gateway pressure

In the mid game, the most important aspect of the Zerg's base to scout is the number of gasses he has. Four or fewer gas means heavy Roach aggression while more indicates a tech build. The following is a list of reads you can make based on what you see:

- Four gas: Roach aggression
- Four gas, but your opponent has not attacked you by 12 minutes: Roach/Ling drop
- Four gas + Overlord speed: Roach/Ling drop
- Anything + Overlord speed: Potential drops
- Six gas: Tech build

- Spire: Mutalisks
- Infestation Pit + fast fourth base: Fast Brood Lords
- Infestation Pit + many Roaches: Possible Roach/Ling/Infestor pressure
- Double Evolution Chamber: No initial aggression

3.1.2 Two Base Play from Zerg

After you've confirmed two base play from Zerg, you'll have to aptly prepare for all the possibilities. And after you haven't been all-ined by the 7 minute mark, you should start to prepare for possible macro play as well as late all-ins. Many two-base plays all-ins are discussed in the [all-in defense section](#) of FFE, but the specific ones to worry about include Hydralisk-based play, like Hydralisk Nydus, and Zergling/Baneling drop. This is in addition to the much more common Mutalisk and Infestor-based macro strategies that Zergs have in their arsenal. Against the all-ins, early Gateways are essential as any tech will not have kicked in by this time. This rules out any builds that obtain two tech structures before any Gateways. Against macro builds, you will need some way to deal with both Mutalisks(Blink Stalker or phoenix) and Infestors(the ability to reach Colossi or Templar quickly). Keep in mind that many Zergs build both an Infestation Pit and a Spire upon reaching Lair, only committing to one tech or the other at the last minute, so both threats must be addressed until you can absolutely confirm it's one of the other. Finally, some form of scouting must be included in your build, as reacting to the correct type of macro build will put you steps ahead of your opponent while being caught off-guard by Mutalisks or an Infested Terran attack can immediately lose you the game. Despite all these restrictions, it is possible to account for all these possibilities with a macro build. The build used by [Creator vs Life on Ohana](#) in game 1 of the TSL4 finals shows a very good reaction to two base macro play from the Zerg.

Mutalisk

Like any 2 base Zerg strategy, the most difficult part about playing against it is scouting it and identifying exactly what tech they're going for. In general, you use Probe scouts to identify 2 base play by a lack of a 3rd base, then you use your first few Gateway units (Zealot, Zealot/Stalker, or 2 Zealots) to differentiate 2 base Lair versus 2 base all-in play, and finally you use your Cyber Core tech (Phoenix from Stargate, Observer from Robo, or 7:30-8:00 Zealot warp in from Warpgate tech) to figure out exactly what the Lair tech is. See the earlier section on playing against 2 base play for more info on scouting.

As soon as you confirm that 2 base Mutas are coming, defending against them is no different than defending against 3 base Muta or any other Muta play. Simply get a cannon or 2 in each mineral line and tech to Blink asap. If you opened Stargate then keep getting Phoenix to help shut down the Mutas, but do not try to reactively make Phoenix if you don't already have a Stargate. The majority of 2 base Muta openers are geared towards setting up for a macro game, so expect the Zerg to expand behind it. You should also plan accordingly, and take your own 3rd as early as possible. The later you wait to take your 3rd, the more difficult it will be due to the increasing size of the Muta ball. See the section on [playing against Mutas](#) for more info on fighting Mutas as the game goes on.

[Seed vs Life on Entombed Valley](#) from IPTL Season 1. Shows excellent defense into a late game transition against two base Mutalisks

[Rain vs F91 on Antiga Shipyard](#) from WCS Asia. Shows typical macro play against 2 base Mutalisk

Infestors

There are two ways this Zerg opener can go - it can either lead to a timing with an Infestor/Ling attack, or it can lead to a 3rd and standard macro play. The best response against Infestor/Ling is to get Colossus asap with mass Zealot support. Keep your Sentry and Stalker counts low since they are not very effective against Infestor/Ling. Upgrades will also help immensely against this composition. Eventually you'll also want Blink Stalkers but don't let your progress towards this tech path delay your Colossus. Keep an eye out on the Zerg - if you see him transitioning towards a standard game by getting a 3rd, you should follow suit as soon as you get Colossi out on the field.

Note that as an alternative to Colossus, Zealot/Archon also works extremely well against Infestor/Ling. The only caution I have against Zealot/Archon is that if the Zerg doesn't attack and

instead gets a 3rd, turtles up, and transitions to Roach/Infestor, your Zealot/Archon composition will get countered hard by the Roaches and it's much more difficult for you to switch out of that comp. You can consider going Zealot/Archon and going for a 2 base Zealot/Archon attack if you already have a council by the time you scouted the Infestors (for example if you did a Stargate into Blink opener, or a DT opener), but if you had the choice between Archons or Colossus, Colossus is definitely the safer choice.

 [Rain vs Toodming on Ohana from WCS Asia](#). Stargate into 4 Gate into Robotics against 2 base play which turns out to be Infestor play.

 [CJherO vs Roro on Cloud Kingdom from WCS Asia](#). Robotics into 4 Gate into Twilight, then Robo Bay once Infestors are scouted.

 (PW) [Seed vs Suhosin on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 4](#). Shows a safe reaction versus 2 base play, which turns out to be Infestors.

 (PW) [Rain vs goswser on Cloud Kingdom from MLG Fall Championship 2012](#). Stargate into Robotics into 4 Gate.

 (PW) [Creator vs JKS on Abyssal City from GSTL 2012 Season 3](#). MC style expand.

Delayed Third from Zerg/Other Two Base into Macro Play

Besides Mutas or Infestors, there's really not much else a Zerg can do on 2 bases that transitions well into a macro game. Hydras or just plain Lair-upgraded Roaches can be done, but there's no reason for a Zerg to do it on 2 bases versus 3 unless they are planning an all-in. Against Hydras, the obvious response is to tech to Colossus while using Stalker/Sentry to hold in the meantime. Against Roaches, use Immortal/Sentry/Stalker, don't try to tech to Colossus too fast, and make sure you have plenty of Observer to help against burrow play.

3.1.3 Taking a Third

One of the most complained about aspects in PvZ is the difficulty with which it takes to take a third base. The build with which you take your third must account for a multitude of builds from Zerg, and to do that, Protoss must do very specific things. Of course, you must prepare for all of the styles mentioned in this guide, but the two most important styles to watch for when taking a third are as follows:

Stephano Style Roaches

This strategy revolves around denying the Protoss third. In much of early 2012, Protoss macro play had to be revolutionized to account for this build. Any build must specifically prepare for this style to have a chance against it. Because of this, many modern macro PvZ builds have begun to include Immortals. See the [Stephano style Roach](#) section for more information.

Mutalisks

Mutas are special, because they warrant a much different response than every other build. Your build must either apply pressure to delay Mutas or have an easily accessible counter to Mutas, such as a fast Twilight or Phoenix already on the field. See the [Mutalisk Section](#) for more information. For reference, the standard third base expansion timing in PvZ is between 9:00 and 10:30. Anything earlier is considered slightly risky, depending on the build, and anything later is considered late and will fall behind the Zerg.

3.1.4 Colossus versus High Templar

In most macro games, you will eventually have to choose your area-of-effect tech to combat the masses of Zerg. In some builds Here are some pluses and minuses of both options.

Colossus

- Does not hit air (Mutalisks), so you either have to combine them with Phoenix, or make sure your opponent isn't going to go for a Mutalisk transition.
- Better initially for defense: one Colossus without thermal lance goes a long way in defending heavy Ling, Roach, or Hydra based pushes, while your first few Templar in addition to the

long time it takes to research storm don't help as much.

- Because of the previous fact, you can generally transition to Colossi earlier than you can transition to Templar.
- Better for offensive pushes. The range of Colossi allows you to siege Infestor/Spine lines.
- Sometimes uses two Robotics facilities, which also allows for double Observer/Warp Prism/Immortal production.
- Can be "countered" with Corruptors if your opponent has overwhelming economy, while Templars can only be hard countered with Brood Lords.

Templar

- Weak versus Roaches, so you have to combine them with a high number of Immortals if your opponent is indeed going Roaches.
- Has more harass potential with Warp Prisms (storm drops, Archon drops).
- Generally a safer choice if you're not sure if Mutalisks are an option.
- Uses a higher ratio of gas to minerals, so you have to find additional places to spend your minerals, such as Zealots, cannons, and expansions.

3.1.5 Tempo

An often ignored aspect of PvZ is keeping the tech tempo in your favor. That is, you always want to have the appropriate tech counter or response to your opponents' tech. Otherwise, your opponent can keep switching tech and you'll never be able to be aggressive or threaten aggression, because you don't hold the appropriate counter.

For example, if your opponent is getting a Spire, prepare for potential Mutalisks. Eventually, Mutas will show up at your base, and you're not close to a counter, you have lost the tempo and will be forced to wait begrudgingly in your base until you reach that counter. Meanwhile, your opponent can get free econ and tech up to something like mass Brood Lords. Again, you will not be able to attack at all until you reach the appropriate counter, the Mothership, which takes forever to build.

For this reason, you should almost never aim for both Templar and Colossi in the mid-game as Protoss. These two units fulfill similar roles in your army as both can deal with low tier Zerg ground units fairly well. However, if you attempt to get both while your opponent goes for Brood Lords, you will not have enough resources to successfully get a Mothership in time. Only when you somehow know your opponent will be sticking to Lair tech should you delay the inevitable Mothership for the other AoE tech.

The key to keeping tempo is scouting and anticipating what your opponent is going to make. As you play more games and gain more experience, you will be able to learn the flow of the game and choose a tech path that accounts for all of your opponents' tech possibilities.

3.2 ZERG STRATEGIES [top](#)

3.2.1 Introduction/Zerg Mentality

All ZvP macro strategies can be classified into three types with three distinct goals:

Efficient Army Trading

The Zerg army, supply for supply, is weaker than yours until Brood Lords come out. Thus, if Zerg chooses this type of strategy, which includes the majority of all Zerg strategies, he will be trying to throw his economy at you, trying to hit you while they are maxed or close to maxed and you are still hovering between 120 and 150 supply. They hope to trade at least somewhat efficiently so that you can never max out with a deathball that can 1a over them. This style wins by either overwhelming you with hordes of units, or doing enough damage so that it's not viable for you to push out and kill them while they're investing money into Hive tech, usually Brood Lords.

Examples of this strategy include:

- Stephano Style Roaches, or any type of Roach Aggression
- Roach/Hydra/Corruptor
- Roach/Ling/Infestor
- Roach/Baneling
- Ling/Baneling

Your goal versus these types of strategies should be to hunker down and take the brunt of their attacks. Do not feel pressured to commit to an attack until you are close to maxed as it is your opponents' job to trade armies with you, not vice versa. Your priority should be to trade as efficiently as possible versus the Zerg when he inevitably tries to attack. One way to do this is to take defensive positions such as forming a concave in the location your Zerg opponent is poised to attack from. Especially attempt to save your key units (Sentries, Immortals, Colossi, Templar) so that when you rebuild whatever your opponent has killed, your army will be even stronger.

If you indeed get to a maxed army with a good composition (Sentries, Immortals, Colossi, Templar heavy) and decent upgrades, and your opponent does not high level tech in the form of a large amount of Infestor/Brood Lords, go for the push, and it should be an easy win. This will happen when the Zerg doesn't manage to do with enough damage with his pushes or if he's overly passive, trying for a misguided late tech to Brood Lords.

Harass

With this strategy, the Zerg tries to pin you down in your base, threatening base trades. This is usually done with Muta, but can also be accomplished with multi-prong attack and drops. The Zerg usually tries to out multi-task you and do enough damage to your infrastructure until you give up and are forced to base trade or they delay enough to get higher tech. Your goal should be to turtle while focusing on not taking damage from the harass. As with Terran drops, the most important thing you can do versus this harass is vision. If you know where the harass is most likely coming from, you'll be able to position your army accordingly to intercept the harass. However, unlike with Terran, spotter Pylons and taking xelnaga towers don't work so well and you'll most likely have to rely on Observer for most of your spotting purposes.

Fast Infestor Brood Lord

This strategy attempts to get the ultimate Zerg composition asap. Don't expect much if any pressure early on and prepare for the late game. More on this [later](#).

3.2.2 Roach-Based Pressure Openings

Stephano Style Roach Max

The Stephano Style Roach Max is an extremely specific build. Since early 2012, Stephano's 11-12 minute Roach max has been the central focus of PvZ and every Protoss build has to be built around how to deal with this style. Two of the best Zergs in the world, Stephano and DRG, almost exclusively employ one form or another of this build and it is largely because of this standardized build that they hold much more ZvP success than any other Zerg in the world. The build consists of 2 parts:

1. Have a solid 3 base macro build that can react to and defend any Protoss all-in and come ahead. Every player's macro build is slightly different, but they're all similar and achieve the same infrastructure. This is not "Stephano Style". It is just standard 3 base macro ZvP.
2. Max on Roach heavy/Ling light between 11 and 12 minutes with 4 Hatches and 4 gas. Proceed to overrun any attempts by the Protoss to take a 3rd. The timing of the max largely depends on pressure, but for reference, a lower level masters player can max by 12:00 without much pressure while Stephano's record is a 10:50 max. This part is the true "Stephano Style Roach Max", not any build that gets 5 or 6 gas or a Spire in the middle of maxing.

  [Squirtle vs Stephano on Antiga Shipyard](#) from Red Bull Battlegrounds is an excellent example of this style for anyone who's not familiar with it. In it, the Protoss player does a build that is designed

to counter the Stephano Style Roach Max, and does pretty much everything correctly, but still manages to lose.

As the Stephano Style of Roach Max is the earliest hitting and hardest hitting style of Roach “Pressure”, it is the hardest to defend. Thus, all the tips provided to defend against the Stephano Style can be effectively applied to any other type of Roach pressure. The key problem you will have to deal with against any Roach aggression is securing a third base. The average Protoss third base goes down between 8 and 11 minutes, while the Roach attack can start hitting around 11 minutes. Thus, your third base won’t have kicked in much in time, and you’ll have to rely on essentially a two base economy to withstand the initial blow. The following are some things to focus on against the Stephano Roach style.

Scouting: Refer to the mid game scouting section for more information on this. The faster you can identify that mass Roaches will be coming, the faster you can gear your build towards specifically dealing with them.

Sim City: When you can put Gateways in sim city, you should; they work just as well, if not better than depots as blockers. In many cases, you can make Gateways just to sim city even if you don’t need them for protection as they can be more useful in defense than cannons or Stalkers for the same price. Over the past few months, sim cities have become much more standardized. For example, on Cloud Kingdom, it’s become common to wall off the ramp at your natural. On Daybreak, you’ll generally find walls connecting your third Nexus to the edge near your fourth.

Here are some screenshots of commonly used sim cities for modern maps:

Antiga Shipyard:



Atlantis Spaceship:



Cloud Kingdom:



Daybreak



Entombed Valley:



Metropolis:



Ohana:



Shakuras Plateau:



Whirlwind



Cannons: Especially behind sim city, Roaches cannot focus fire cannons well. Cannon and Sentry combos are generally a more efficient use of minerals/gas for defense than pure Stalkers. This, of course, does not mean you can mass cannons. Cannons, after all, cannot bounce back a forth between bases and

Sentries/Forcefields: Good forcefield usage is one of the, if not the most important aspects of Roach defense. This is just something most Protoss have to work on. Sim city also lessens the amount of forcefields you have to use. It's also generally more efficient to use forcefields to trap and kill Roaches instead of just delaying and blocking Roaches out of your base. One innovation seen mostly in PvT, but also PvZ, is getting faster but fewer Sentries. Because Sentries hardly do damage, getting 6 Sentries early on can equate to the same number of forcefields as 10 Sentries later on.

Macro: Your opponent has an efficient macro build, that with decent macro, maxes between 11 and 12 minutes; you should have good macro build as well, backed by sufficient macro. A good macro build gets your 3rd as fast as possible so that when the Roaches do hit, you have the economy to back up your defense. It should also end up with the correct types of units with which you can defend a potential Roach attack. Some good builds have been suggested in the previous section. Finally, spending all your money, especially under Roach pressure, is just mechanics.

Unit Composition: Sentries are the most important units by far. Voidrays can work, especially when backed up by sim city/forcefields to allow them to charge; modern Protosses who rely on Void Rays to hold off attacks usually get 2. Immortals also obviously work and are the best unit you can make vs Roaches. Blink Stalkers, on the other hand, aren't as helpful if you're relying on primarily sim city/forcefields/cannons to defend. This doesn't mean they're bad, as you usually need them to defend possible Mutalisks if you didn't open Stargate. Colossi are generally a terrible choice, as they cost a lot, their tech costs a lot, and they build very slowly.

Army Splitting: As you're defending 2 positions, you will need to split your army into 2 parts. There are a few things you can do to more efficiently and correctly place your troops. First is scouting. An Observer/Void Ray/Phoenix/hallucination in the area outside your base between your natural and third allows you to devote the proper number of units to each of your two vulnerable bases. Your sim-city also allows you to delay the Roaches, allowing you to reposition your army.

Transitioning: The first sign that your opponent is backing off is when you see him taking additional gas. As soon as you see your opponent taking additional gas(5th and 6th), his mindset has switched from relentless attacking into teching. You will know the pressure has subsided for now, so you can begin to opt for your next transition, either Templar Archives, Robo Bay, or more Gateways for a big push.

One ray of light against this build is that if your opponent commits a lot and you defend it well, you will almost always be able to go for a push shortly after to take the game with a Stalker/Immortal based push. Your opponent will not have the gas count to transition to enough Infestor/Brood Lord to hold off your push. Nor will he have any upgrades past +2 ranged, so his Lings will not do well either. The following games demonstrate such successful counter-pushes after holding off a Stephano Style-like Roach Max:

 [*Squirtle vs Nestea on Daybreak from IPL4.*](#)

 [Puzzle vs True on Cloud Kingdom from GSL 2012 Season 2.](#)

Burrow/TunneLing Claws Roach Max

This is similar to the Stephano Roach Max, except it maxes slightly slower in favor of burrow and tunneling claws. Prepare in the same way. TunneLing claws and burrow is a huge investment, so you know your opponent will be committing to Roach play for a very long time; prepare accordingly by committing a similar amount of resources into Roach defense and countermeasures.

Roach Pressure into Roach/Zergling/Mutalisk

Roach pressure builds are very common and can transition into a variety of tech paths. The key to doing well against Roach pressure into tech is diverting resources from holding off the Roach pressure to teching alongside the Zerg and keeping the tech tempo in your favor. For example, if you scout a Spire and anticipate Mutas incoming, cut a round of Stalker production in favor of getting cannons and Templar Archives up. If you are unsure of your opponent's tech switch (generally Mutalisks or Infestors), Templar is a more catchall safer tech switch. If your opponent commits to Mutalisks, refer to the [Mutalisk Section](#), with the knowledge that strong Roach/Zergling/Mutalisk attacks can also come at any time.

 [Puzzle vs Lucky on Daybreak from GSTL 2012 Season 1.](#)

Roach Pressure into Roach/Zergling/Infestor

This attempts to do heavy Roach pressure and then transition into Ling/Infestor with a few Roaches to counter the Immortal heavy composition you will inevitably be forced to make. Unlike standard Roach/Ling Infestor this Roach pressure into Roach/Ling/Infestor style is usually defensive in nature, only used so the Zerg can survive until he can get Brood Lords out. Refer to the [Roach/Ling/Infestor](#) section or the [Brood Lord](#) section for more information on how to deal with this style. Especially pay attention to the [timing pushes](#) subsection in the Brood Lord section, as if you defended the Roach pressure well, your push should have a very high chance of succeeding.

 [MC vs Stephano on Daybreak from HSC IV.](#)

 (PW) [MC vs DRG on Ohana from GSL 2012 Season 3.](#) Shows defense into a standard push.

3.2.3 Roach/Zergling Drop Aggression

Drop play, especially only Roach/Ling drop play, can be hard to spot. Often times, when you don't see any additional tech besides Roach Warren Your first clue is speed Overlords, as most Zergs will not opt for the Overlord speed upgrade without also researching drops at the same time. If you spot Overlord speed, it can't hurt to make one or two cannons at each base just in case. Another hint is the lack of Zerg units compared to what they should have at the time, accounting for the 300/300 resources it takes to research speed/drop. However, at anything below top masters, this isn't a very good hint as more likely than not, poor macro is to blame for missing resources.

Make sure you have good vision of the map, especially the areas surrounding your bases, with either Observers, hallucination, or air units. If you suspect drops, think about where they could possibly come from. For example, on Daybreak, the only possible drop position is from the side of your main base. Place a few cannons in drop locations and leave Blink Stalkers there if you can. Try your best to stop the drops landing in the first place, as otherwise the resulting attack will be extremely hard to hold off. You probably won't be able to fight with your entire army, and forcefields will be far less useful than in a straight up fight, making the Roach/Ling army much more cost effective.

As shown by Symbol, a common transition from Roach/Ling drops, if it doesn't kill the Protoss, is Roach/Baneling drops, as you already have the tech for drops.

 [Parting vs Symbol on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 3.](#)

 (PW) [Parting vs Symbol on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 3.](#)

 [Squirtle vs Hyun on Metropolis from IPL Fight Club.](#)

3.2.4 Roach/Hydralisk/Corruptor

Shows some successful Roach Hydra play: Even though the Protoss traded somewhat “efficiently”, he was still caught out of position and lost all his important units(Colossi), thus partly contributing to his loss

This composition was once the standard, but it has gradually been phased out bit by bit, so much so that there is only perhaps only a small handful games of this strategy employed this year. This is because of map size increases, map configurations that don't allow for successful frontal attacks, Protoss having gotten very adapt at defending against Hydralisks.

The first thing to note about this composition is that it will not trade well with an equal supply of Protoss army. Maxed Roach/Hydra/Corruptor will lose brutally to both maxed Colossi compositions and maxed Templar compositions. Thus, if your opponent is playing this strategy, his goal will be to throw hoards and hoards of Zerg units at you until you eventually collapse. Usually, he will re-max with a different composition each time, depending on what units you have. An example of Zerg tactic when using this composition is to attack with an overabundance of Corruptors so that he can trade Roach/Corruptor for Colossi. Then, you won't be able to pressure or attack for a very long time against a re-max that is more Ling-Hydra heavy.

In addition, because of the high gas requirement of both Hydralisks and Corruptors, transitioning into any type of late-game with a Roach-Hydra army is extremely difficult. Infestor/Brood Lord requires a lot of additional tech/gas and anything involving Ultralisks is not viable for a myriad of reasons(lack of upgrades/synergy/tech requirement/gas requirement). Because of this, a Roach/Hydra/Corruptor tech choice by the Zerg is a rather large commitment, and your opponent must do significant damage with this composition in order to progress with the game.

As this type of play is an example of an Efficient Army Trading Style of Zerg play, refer to that [section](#) for more general information and how to generally play against this type of style.

Be wary of drop play, especially if you see speed Overlords and no Spire, as this tactic is fairly common with Roach/Hydra.

The most common transition from Roach/Hydra play is by far Infestor/Brood Lord. Another choice is adding Baneling drops into the composition. Finally, a Mutalisk transition is always on the table, if the player has not committed too much into Corruptors.

 (PW) [Puzzle vs True on Atlantis Spaceship from GSTL 2012 Season 2.](#)

 (PW) [Tassadar vs Hyun on Ohana from GSTL 2012 Season 2.](#)

 (PW) [Tear vs Curious on Ohana from GSTL 2012 Season 2. Fast Phoenix into Colossi.](#)

3.2.5 Roach/Zergling/Infestor

There exist a number of ways to play a Roach/Ling/Infestor style, all of them characterized by the level of aggression. As a Zerg, you can choose to lean towards ultra aggressive, pushing with swarms of units when you initially max, or you can play more passively, similar to a fast Infestor/Brood Lord rush, but slower and with more potential aggression. The best way to distinguish between the two paths is the Hive timing and the existence of a Spire. If neither of these exist, look forward to an a huge attack in the near future.

The best and most easy way to deal with this composition if your opponent opens with Roach/Ling/Infestor, especially of the aggressive type, is with Colossi, as they are:

- Easy to get
- Only one matters a lot
- They do well against all three types of units in this composition
- Because of the high gas requirement of Infestors, Corruptors in addition to Infestors are hard to fit in, in the early stages of the game.

As this type of play is an example of an Efficient Army Trading Style of Zerg play, refer to that [section](#) for more general information and how to generally play against this type of style.

Brood Lord/Infestor is the most common and natural transition. Mutalisks are also viable, especially if your opponent feels you've made too strong a commitment to Colossi.

 [MC vs Sheth on Daybreak](#) from NASL. An example of a passive rendition of this style.

 [Hero vs Effort on Daybreak](#) from WCS Korea. Defend into pre-Hive push.

 [Rain vs Jaedong on Ohana](#) from WCS Korea. Shows a double Robo reaction.

 [Creator vs Life on Antiga Shipyard](#) from TSL4.

 [Creator vs Life on Cloud Kingdom](#) from TSL4.

 (PW) [Seed vs Life on Antiga Shipyard](#) from GSL 2012 Season 4. Shows how saving key units and getting both Colossi and storm can wreck Lair tech Zerg.

3.2.6 Roach/Baneling Drop

If your opponent chooses this composition, he will be looking to open with Roaches but also incorporate Baneling drops, which can ignore forcefields and potentially devastate almost any Protoss army. Although harass and multi-pronged drops are definitely worry-some, the main threat of this composition is a frontal attack

Any composition involving Banelings has the potential to be very volatile; that is, depending on how both players engage, either player could come out of the battle with an overwhelming advantage. The entire Protoss army could be obliterated or Protoss could lose 10 supply while Zerg loses his entire initial army.

Use forcefields to block off Roaches. Then, your entire army will be able fight the Overlords and Banelings dropping from the Overlords, instead of also having to deal with Roaches.

Immortals are especially useful against this composition, as they obviously do well versus Roaches, but can also take 19 hits from +2 Banelings.

The most important concept against this strategy is to spread your units to minimize Baneling splash damage. blink your Stalkers into a concave.

Sometimes, Zerg will add Infestors into the mix to pin down your units so that Baneling splash damage will be even more effective. Against this, it's even more important to pre-split your army.

As this type of play is an example of an Efficient Army Trading Style of Zerg play, refer to that [section](#) for more general information and how to generally play against this type of style.

From Roach/Baneling, Infestors are the most common transition in order to keep Protoss units still. Both Brood Lord and Ultralisk transitions are viable in the late game, as unlike most other styles, you'll have melee upgrades already done in the mid-game. In addition, speedbanes have great synergy extremely well with Ultralisks.

 (PW) [Oz vs Coca on Antiga Shipyard](#) from GSTL 2012 Season 1.

 [Parting vs Symbol on Entombed Valley](#) from GSL 2012 Season 3.

 [First vs Losira on Daybreak](#) from MLG Summer Arena. Shows good splitting versus Baneling drops in the last battle.

3.2.7 Zergling/Baneling Play

A midgame style that's completely different from Roach focused play, this army composition aims at using Baneling drops for most to do most of the damage, while surrounding and clearing up whatever is left with pure Ling.

Gateway units are not enough to fight this compositions, as Sentries and Zealots die extremely easily to Banelings while Stalkers don't kill Lings fast enough, so you need to head for some sort of aoe after scouting this style. As usual you can choose between Colossi and Templar; they each have their strengths and weaknesses. Colossi are better initially in smaller numbers for engagements, but Templar allow for some better harass ability, and Archons are very useful both for tanking Banelings and to kill Lings. This is one of the only mid-games for Zerg for which you should be heading towards both Templar and Colossi: once you secure three bases and one of these tech paths, immediately begin gunning for the other, especially if your opponent is sticking to mainly Lair tech. Blink is also extremely useful as it allows your Stalkers to dodge Overlords, and it makes it easier to defend from Baneling bombs over your mineral lines which are extremely common with this style.

Baneling drops in mineral lines can be devastating, and you have to defend them well to be successful against this style; have cannons ready in common drop paths, and potentially leave Stalkers so Banelings go after them instead of Probes. Good reaction times and minimap awareness are especially important.

Like against many other aoe abilities, spreading your army and splitting it during fights goes a long way. This means both pre-split before a fight, and using Blink to spread out even more during the engagement. Banelings can trade very cost effectively against any clumped up unit, but they are less and less effective if the number of units they can hit goes down. Because of this, adding Infestors is really common as fungal growth synergises extremely well with Banelings. Against this, pre-fight splitting is even more important.

This composition can transition into any between Infestors, Ultralisks and Brood Lords. Make sure to stay on top of your scouting, and react accordingly: Colossi/Templar for Ling/Baneling/Infestor, a huge Archon/Templar/Immortal/Colossi deathball versus Ling/Baneling/Ultralisk, and a Mothership versus Brood Lords. Refer to the appropriate [late game sections](#) for more information.

As this type of play is an example of an Efficient Army Trading Style of Zerg play, refer to that [section](#) for more general information and how to generally play against this type of style.

 [JYP vs Dimaga on Daybreak from Dreamhack Summer 2012](#). Shows a Templar response.

 (PW) [Tear vs Hyun on Entombed Valley from GSTL 2012 Season 2](#). Shows how effectively Ling/Baneling Infestor can trade with a Stalker/Colossi army. Tear eventually does win however, because of his effective opening, effective harass, and effective splitting in the last fight.

 [Sase vs Dimaga on Entombed Valley from HSC V](#). Shows a typical Colossi based macro response.

 [Sase vs Dimaga on Ohana from HSC V](#). Shows a Templar based response.

3.2.8 Mutalisks

Precursor to Mutalisks

If you want to play a macro build, first you have to make sure your build can handle Mutas in some way. Many losses to Mutas are actually lost before any Mutas even pop out. Any build that can potentially hold Mutas should include either some type of aggression, a 3rd base already up, or the means with which to take a relatively fast 3rd base after the Mutas come out.

Aggression or perceived aggression forces units that are not Mutas and will delay the Mutas. For example, if you have Colossi already out and suspect a Muta switch, but are unsure if your opponent is making Mutas or Corruptors, push out a bit. This will force your opponent to make other units, better at fighting, delaying his Mutas. Or it will force him to make Corruptors instead; then you can retreat.

A 3rd base already up saves you the trouble of taking the 3rd, which is one of the biggest complaints when dealing with Mutas. The means to take a 3rd, such as Blink already finished, accomplishes something similar. Examples of bad builds include sitting on 10 Sentries or a blind commitment to Colossi versus fast Mutas.

Establishing your Third Against Mutalisk Openings

The following is a common frustration:

- I can't seem to secure my 3rd base with Mutas and Lings harassing everywhere! The seemingly contradictory answer to this is to try to set up that 3rd earlier.
- When Zergs first get their Mutas out, they're usually spending their minerals on Drones and additional bases. If you try to take an expo at this timing, you'll only have to deal with a small handful of Mutas. However, if you delay for a little longer, you'll have both Mutas and Zerglings to deal with.
- Also, the later you try to expand to your 3rd, the bigger the Muta ball is, and the harder it will be for you to safely get your 3rd up. When there's only 12 Mutas in the Muta ball, it takes a while for the Mutas to actually kill a Nexus warping in, and thus you have some time to get your Stalkers there to defend. But when the Muta ball gets to 20 or 30 Mutas, they can do an insane amount of damage in the seconds it may take your Stalkers to get into position to defend.

Against Delayed Mutalisks/Transitions to Mutalisk

If you suspect a possible mid-game transition to Mutalisks, consider pressuring your opponent when you think the Mutalisks are about to pop out. This situation occurs most often when you're opening Colossi. If you allow your opponent to pin you down with 10ish Mutas when your tech solely consists of Colossi and Blink Stalkers, it will be a long time before you can successfully secure your bases and move out. By that time, Zerg will have all the bases and tech he needs to crush you. Instead, move out as you scout the Spire to give yourself more options. Often, your opponent will be forced to make actual fighting units instead of really fast greedy Mutalisks. If your opponent makes Corruptors, safely retreat home. But if he too greedily makes Mutalisks, you have the option to go for the kill. 🐛 [San vs Line on Atlantis Spaceship](#) from GSTL 2012 Season 2 is an example of a successful execution of this concept.

Tech Paths Against Fast Mutalisk: Blink Stalker into Templar

There are 2 tech paths that can deal with Mutas. The first is a Blink Stalker into Templar with mass cannon defense, which should be your response to Mutas in a vast majority of games. Blink Stalkers allow you to zone the Mutas out and delay for your eventual Templar. The Templar allow you to leave your base as you can defend bases from mass Muta with just 1-2 Templar at each base and a bunch of cannons. They also provide the AoE to effectively combat Mutas out in the open as well as the means to deal with Banelings and Infestors. With most builds, this is the tech path you will be choosing.

Defending Multiple Bases Against Harass

You'll need a few cannons in each mineral line early on, which will mainly serve to buy you time for your Stalkers to get there. I usually get 2 cannons per mineral line, but anywhere from 1-3 should be fine. As the Muta ball gets bigger, you will need to start leaving at least a HT in each mining base. Add additional cannons as your excess minerals allow and as you see the Muta flock increase in size. Especially leave units that aren't Stalkers in your 3rd, as it is usually the only base that is susceptible to attacks and Nexus snipes from a Zerg ground force.

Cannon placement is very important against Mutas, especially the first few cannons. You want your cannons to do the most work as possible for each 150 minerals you spend. Keep cannons close to each other so that Mutas cannot pick them off 1 at a time. Also, build them on the side of your minerals that face the direction Mutas will likely come from. For example, if you are at 9 o'clock on Antiga Shipyard and the Zerg is at 6, you should place the cannons near the bottom of the mineral patches below your Nexus. Use these examples from pro games as a guide:

Antiga Shipyard: 2 o'clock spawning position, cannons in the main:



Antiga Shipyard: 2 o'clock spawning position, cannons at the third:



As with against Terran drops, the most important thing versus Muta harass is vision and awareness of where the Mutas are and where they can hit. A good piece of advice is to make lots of Observers against Muta if you already have a Robotics to spot where the Mutas will be coming from. Spread the Observers around the map so that you can detect where the Muta ball is at all times and then you'll have a lot of advance warning where the Mutas will strike next, giving you time to move your Stalkers in position to defend. It can also be helpful to split your Stalkers into 2 separate groups and keep them in separate bases. However, if you get your Observer network set up, this isn't even really necessary. Yes, Observers cost quite a bit of gas, but it's well worth it. You will be utilizing valuable Robotics time, which you wouldn't be using anyways, so that is a non-issue.

When to Make Archons

When you transition to Templar, Archons will also be available to you. However, because gas is so invaluable against Muta/Ling, you will usually want to invest it into Templar and more Stalkers instead. This is because Archons, in comparison to Templar, are generally worse in small numbers against both Mutalisks and Zerglings: Archon splash radius is relatively small and can be combated via magic box. As the size of the Mutalisks grows, Archons can be picked off while getting in only 2-3 shots. On the other hand, storm has much larger radius and much longer range. Finally, Templar are much more useful in base defense against counter attacks, as they're not as big and clumsy as Archons, and their range is much better for zoning the Mutalisks out of your expansions.

This is not to say that Archons are necessarily terrible. They are, in fact, essential in a straight-up fight against mutalisks and you want a healthy amount when you move out. Here are some other situations when you do want to make Archons:

- After you've stormed. Mutas usually target HT as their first priority so it's rare for a HT to live long enough to gather energy for another storm.
- You have 2 or more HT near each other, Mutas have spotted them, but you don't have

energy to storm. Spam that c key to gain enough HP as an Archon to survive.

- You already have enough Templar and have excess gas. After you have around 1-2 Templar guarding each base supported by cannons and around 4 Templar in your main army, you can begin to use your excess gas for Archons. 10+ Templar in your army is overkill for storm and Archons will be extremely supply efficient in a big army if you have the available resources.

Protoss Harassment Against Zerg

The strength of Muta play is the ability for the Zerg to expand everywhere and keep the Protoss in his base. The Zerg will have map control and he can possibly have Overlords spotting every bit of the map in addition to uncontested creep spread if he wants to. As such, harass against Mutas can be extremely difficult.

Most of the time you'll have to rely on harass via DTs and/or Zealots to try to kill expansions since if you move out with your main army, Mutas will just counter into your base as soon as you leave. DTs are also a bit of a gamble since they are a huge gas investment, but can be really effective at taking out expansions. If you get lucky, Zerg won't spot your hidden Pylons, but you usually have to sneak a Probe out for Pylons before the Mutas come out. If you use Warp Prisms, try to make sure the Zerg doesn't see it by knowing where the Mutas are, scouting a clear path with Observers, and avoiding watch towers.

Attacking/Moving Out

One of your main goals against Muta is securing your bases well enough so that you can move out. This means a huge number of cannons with spread out Templar support at each base. In addition, you will want a large number of Gateways to support your push and some Templar in your main army for actual combat. I want to emphasise that storm is the key to both attacking and defending as it will provide large amounts of damage and be effective against most Zerg units for little supply. In most cases, you will be close to maxed at this point, but it's fine to attack earlier if you secured your bases early, you look little to no damage with the initial Muta harass, and you don't see lots of low tech units on the map such as Banelings or Roaches. Don't feel pressured to move out too early as it will be risky and you may lose in a base trade. It's perfectly ok if the Zerg takes the entire map and a billion expansions if he can't kill you with your invincible army.

Transitioning after Blink Stalker/Templar: Mothership

The next step with this tech path is usually Mothership. The Mothership transition accounts for all possible transitions from Mutas and a Stalker/Templar/Archon/Mothership ball is unbeatable except by a large well-spread group of Brood Lords covered by Infestors. The Mothership can either be gotten on 3 base if your opponent is really putting on the pressure with tons of Mutas and low tech units or 4+ base if you don't feel as much pressure. Do not start heading for Mothership until you have secured all your bases well and until you have secured a 4th if at all possible versus what your opponent is doing. Also keep in mind that you don't always have to transition into a Mothership. Sometimes, it's better to stay on Gateway/Templar/Immortal and kill your opponent off. More on this transition can be found in the Muta transitions section and the [dealing with Brood Lords](#) section.

Replays and Vods of this Execution

 [Seed vs Suhoshin on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 4. Shows perfect defense into a push versus Mutalisks.](#)

 [Hero vs Dimaga on Tal'Darim Altar from IEM S6 Kiev.](#)

 (PW) [Seed vs Curious on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 3. Shows an extremely standard pvz involving Mutas into Hive play in addition to Observer usage to defend against Mutas.](#)

  [Puzzle vs Leenock on Entombed Valley from TSL4 Qualifiers. Shows perfect reactions and play versus Mutas into Banelings into Brood Lords.](#)

 [Rain vs F91 on Ohana from WCS Asia. Shows play against a transition from Hydralisks to Mutalisks.](#)

 [Rain vs F91 on Antiga Shipyard from WCS Asia. Shows almost ideal macro play against 2 base Mutalisk.](#)

Tech Paths Against Fast Mutalisk: Phoenix with Range

The second option you have versus Mutas is a Phoenix tech path. Using Phoenix to deal with Muta can only be done if you have a substantial amount of Phoenix already on the field when the Mutas pop. Thus, this response to Muta can only be done when you have opened Stargate and made a few Phoenix to harass. Do not try to make reactive Stargates and Phoenix to counter Mutas. It will not work as the Muta ball will get too big before you can get substantial Phoenix numbers and you'll take too much damage before your range upgrade is online.

As soon as you spot the Spire for potential Muta, throw down a Fleet Beacon and get the anion pulse crystals(Phoenix range upgrade) while going to around 7-8 Phoenix, as well as getting +1 weapons for them. This allows you enough to deter any Mutalisk harass. The Phoenix range upgrade in this situation is critically important as it makes kiting and microing against the Mutas much easier, because you will have a 3 range advantage instead of 1 without the upgrade.

Plant a few cannons at each base, but much fewer than you would with a Templar response, as these cannons are just to buy some time for your Phoenix to get to whatever base is being attacked by the Mutas. Do not be too offensive with the Phoenix and do not over invest in them by going above 8 or so. Making anymore than that makes you very vulnerable to an Infestor switch as you will not have any other tech ready in time, and if your Phoenix get fungal-ed and killed you will very likely lose the game.

As soon as you have the gas, you'll want to be shooting for Colossi. This may seem counter-intuitive, but Colossi are required to deal with any ground force your opponent can muster while your Phoenix take care of the Mutas. Phoenix + Gateway units just aren't strong enough to deal with Lings, Banelings, Roaches, Infestors or Hydras. Templar would not be a good complement to Phoenix as Colossi are. Their strength against Mutas is already covered by your Phoenix, they take too much gas, and don't do well versus Roaches.

A game with Phoenix/Colossi versus Mutas plays much differently than with Blink Stalker/Templar. Play as if you're using a Stalker/Colossi ball while using the Phoenix as a separate entity to chase down the Mutas. This allows you to move out and be more active on the map, while not being as afraid of a base trade as you can use your Stargate units to prevent Muta counter attacks.

 [*\(PW\) Hero vs Curious on Metropolis from GSL 2012 Season 2.*](#)

 [*MC vs Stephano on Entombed Valley from IPL Fight Club.*](#)

 [*Hero vs Stephano on Entombed Valley from EGMC.*](#)

Tech Paths Against Fast Mutalisk: Double/Triple Stargate

A rather uncommon way to fight Mutas is to throw down 2-3 Stargates as soon as you see the Spire being thrown down. This only works when you have 3 base economy and if you scout the Spire extremely quickly, or against 2 base Muta.

 [*Puzzle vs Targa on Daybreak from NASL.*](#)

 [*Sase vs Leenock on Entombed Valley from MLG Spring Championship.*](#)

Zerg Transitions

The most common transitions from Mutalisks in relative order is as follows:

- **Banelings:** One of the most important things versus Banelings is to keep your initial Sentries alive. Banelings become way more effective when there is no Sentry support. You should differentiate between a commitment to Banelings and the use of Banelings as a temporary defense with either Brood Lords or Ultralisks as a eventual transition in mind. With the former, turtle a bit more on 3 base and try to take the brunt of the attacks without losing too much. Always position your army in chokes so that Banelings can't flank you and you won't have much space to forcefield if they do try to engage you. If your opponent is trying to transition into late game tech, push out and try to end the game if you have a big enough army. Refer to the [Baneling sections](#) for more tips.
- **Infestor/Spine/Brood Lord:** Mothership is your friend here. If your opponent goes for this transition, he probably won't have as big a Muta flock, so you can afford to be more greedy.

Take a 4th much faster than you normally would and begin preparing for the transition. See the late game [Brood Lord](#) section for more information.

- **Roach:** As with Banelings, this transition usually aims to kill you if the Mutas do a lot of damage. Thus, stay on 3 bases for a longer time until you are sure you can definitely crush his army. If you beat his army once, you should be able to push to his main and win the game, because your opponent won't be able to remax on an army to challenge you.. Add Immortals to your army. as they cost little gas, make use of your Robo, and are very effective against Roaches.
- **More Mutalisks:** Add an almost exorbitant amount of cannons and make sure you have enough Templar to cover every base. A Mothership can be helpful for recall, but you can also just rely on a Gateway/Templar army with lots and lots of cannons.
- **Ultralisks:** This is usually a pretty bad transition and will only work as a finisher if the Muta harass harass put the Protoss player in an un-winable situation.

Other Tips

- Upgrades are extremely important against Muta Ling, including armor and shields. They're also very important versus a potential Brood Lord transition. Keep your Forge spinning and consider getting a 2nd Forge.
- Keep expanding! There's no reason to be satisfied with 3 bases. When your 3rd base is secure, start looking to expand to your 4th. Then your 5th. Don't stop expanding, expanding doesn't cost gas.
- When engaging Mutas with Blink Stalkers, don't blink into them. Walk up to them as far as you can, and only blink to chase as they start to run away.
- Spend your minerals: Gas is what you really need to deter Mutas, so often times, you may find yourself with a mineral excess. Spend it! Add Gateways to a minimum of 12 and to an average of 16 on 3 base Blink/Templar play. Add Pylons so you'll never get supply blocked and all your buildings don't get unpowered from one Artosis Pylon. And most importantly, add cheap cannons so you don't lose needless Probes.
- Keep important tech buildings away from the edges of your base. There's no need to put Pylons around the edges of your base against Mutas.
- Never base race against Mutas. Sometimes the Mutas may get into a mineral line and cause some damage, and you may be tempted to just say screw it and go all-in, but resist the urge. You will lose if you do. Stay calm and focus on defending.
- A note on storming: make sure you're targeting underneath the Mutas(their shadow). Turn flyer helper on in settings.

3.2.9 Zergling/Infestor, Turtle to Brood Lords (Fast Hive)

Fast Hive play is becoming one of the most popular strategies Scout this asap by seeing an Infestation Pit and a fast morphing Hive. The first Brood Lords will generally pop out at 15:00, so plan everything around that timing. You should be gearing towards either dedicated aggression, more passive play into heavy tech, or a combination of the two..

Versus any other strategy, you will have to choose to dedicate into either Colossi or Templar as your area of effect(AoE) damage before Brood Lords come out. One interesting aspect about playing versus fast Brood Lords is you have free choice over your AoE tech. Colossi allow for a better initial army to fight off Brood Lords, while Templar and storm allow for a more harass based response. Both are viable and there's no current consensus on which is better. The following two games show examples of both Templar and Colossi based responses to macro play. Refer to the late game [section on Brood Lords](#) for more information on macro play versus Brood Lords.

 (PW) [Ace vs Bbongbbong on Cloud Kingdom](#) from GSL 2012 Season 3. Shows an example of a standard Templar-based response.

 (PW) [Crank vs Freaky on Entombed Valley](#) from GSTL 2012 Season 2. Shows an example of a standard Colossi-based response.

An equally, if not more popular strategy is to hit a timing between 13:30 and 15:00 that can punish a Zerg who goes for greedy fast Hive play. These pushes are usually highly refined to hit these

timings, and generally cut at 66 probes. Refer to the timing pushes subsection in the Brood Lord section for more information on these pushes. Specifically check the VODs labeled vs fast Hive play.

4 LATE GAME

Late game, as defined by this guide, occurs when Hive tech is unlocked by the Zerg. This has no definitive time frame, because all PvZ games will be slightly different, but generally the earliest Brood Lords are reached at around 15 minutes and the earliest Ultralisks timings generally occur much later. At Hive, Zerg has their entire tech tree open and they may use any units they choose. That being said, there are certain compositions that are heavily favored over others. While Ultralisks are available to the Zerg, they generally aren't very popular in PvZ. Instead, the dreaded Infestor/Brood Lord/Corruptor/Spine/Spore strategy remains predominant in late game PvZ, as it can very stable when played properly and doesn't have a real Protoss counter as of the writing of this guide. That being said, Zerg also has many other options in addition to their Hive units in the late game, such as drops, Nydus Worms, Ling or Roach run-bys, or Baneling tactics. However, for organizational purposes, the late game section will be divided into two sections, distinguished by the type of Hive unit they predominately use, Ultralisks or Brood Lords.

4.1 ULTRALISK-BASED ARMIES [top](#)

By far the lesser used of the two late game Zerg options in PvZ, Ultralisks still remain a threat and you must account for them. The biggest criticism about Ultralisks is that every Protoss unit can potentially do well versus them. But perhaps the biggest problem is that they cannot break a wall of Zealots and thus give Protoss an effective mineral dump whereas usually, minerals are relatively useless for Protoss. That is why when used, Ultralisks are most often coupled with Banelings. Banelings and Ultralisks cover each others' weaknesses very well. Ultralisks stomp on forcefields, clearing the path for Banelings and Banelings kill Zealots fast, letting the Ultralisks reach the meat of the Protoss army. If Banelings didn't exist, Ultralisks would be completely useless and this guide would simply tell you to make Zealots. However, this is not the case, so the rest of this section will talk about how to deal with the combination of Ultralisks and Banelings.

The money units you want are Archons, Templar, Immortals, and Colossi. Thus, try to keep your Stalker count to a minimum. Yes, a mostly Archon/Templar/Immortal/Colossi composition is very gas intensive, but an Ultralisk/Baneling based army is one of the most expensive armies in the game. Like with certain mid-game compositions, this composition attempts to throw army after army on you, hoping to crush you with economy. Your job is to be extremely cost efficient in your trades and play defensively to that aim. If you can somehow turtle while slowly maxing out on this composition, your army will be invincible. To do this, try to position your army in defensive positions, such as in chokes or in a concave. Spread out your army as much as possible to reduce Baneling and Ultralisk splash damage.

Other Tips

- As you scout a Hive, you should have a Mothership up anyways to deal with a potential Brood Lord switch. The Mothership is useful for vortex, but do not throw all your units into a vortex. Ultralisks and Banelings will out-damage Archons coming out of the vortex and you will lose your entire army instantly.
- After all the Banelings blow up, feel free to warp in rounds of Zealots to tank Ultralisk shots.
- If you have Sentries left in your army, research hallucination. Hallucinated Archons can make great tanks against Ultralisks when you can't forcefield.

 [Symbol vs Seed on Ohana from GSL 2012 Season 2](#). Shows somewhat effective Ultralisk usage in PvZ.

 (PW) [Seed vs Monster on Entombed Valley from GSL 2012 Season 1](#). Shows how Ultralisks can get bungled in a choke.

 (PW) [Parting vs Symbol on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 3](#). Shows how being overly aggressive versus Baneling Ultralisk can easily result in a loss. Passive play while building up an Archon/Templar/Immortal based death ball would have won the game.

 (PW) [Parting vs Symbol on Cloud Kingdom from GSL 2012 Season 3](#). Ends in just one second

and shows just how powerful this composition can be.

4.2 DEALING WITH BROODLORDS [top](#)

4.2.1 Prerequisites for Macro

Before you can reasonably go into a long macro game versus Brood Lords, there are some prerequisites you must have:

- **Blink Stalkers**
You will need a way to actually attack the Brood Lords. Stalkers with Blink are usually the initial answer. If you don't have Blink by the time Brood Lords come out, you're probably doing something very wrong.
- **Some form of consistent AoE**
Templar are usually great at area of effect damage, but you will need something more consistent to deal with the respawning Broodlings. Either Archons or Colossi are required.
- **Upgrades**
Against any ground based composition armor/shield upgrades are not very important because you can rely on good forcefields and defensive blinks to increase the longevity of your army. Versus a Brood Lord based army, these tools are close to useless. You must offensively blink versus Brood Lords and forcefields often hurt more than they help. Armor/shield upgrades are especially important, because Ling and Broodling damage is greatly reduced by these upgrades.

Before Brood Lords were really figured out by either Zergs or Protosses, Huk famously used a heavily upgraded double Forge ground army versus Brood Lords to decent effect. [Huk vs Morrow on Metalopolis from WCG 2011](#) demonstrates how effective upgrades can be versus Brood Lords. But even though upgrades are important, they shouldn't be your first priority. Rather than recommending double Forge every game(although this is a viable strategy), this guide stresses continuously upgrading and consistently chronoboosting your Forge. Do not stop at 3 attack /1 armor!

4.2.2 Timing Pushes

Timing pushes are one good option to deal with Brood Lords. Use timing pushes when you believe the Zerg has been too greedy in getting his Brood Lords. Here are a few guidelines for doing timing pushes against a Zerg going Brood Lords.

Judging Whether a Push Can Work

It's easy to judge whether a push against 15 minute Brood Lords can work, because the game will be very controlled. It is much harder if the game is a 25 minute slug-fest with many army trades where Hive only starts at the 25th minute. To judge whether your push will work, first consider the Hive or Greater Spire timing. Especially if you see when the Hive begins to start morphing, you can start an internal timer in your head, counting down to when Brood Lords pop out. For reference:

- Infestation Pit build time: 50 seconds, Time till Brood Lords: 4 minutes 44 seconds
- Hive build time: 100 seconds, Time till Brood Lords: 3 minutes 54 seconds
- Greater Spire build time: 100 seconds, Time till Brood Lords: 2 minutes 14 seconds
- Brood Lord morph time: 34 seconds

Next, imagine your potential army you will have about a minute before Brood Lords will pop out. Is this army strong enough to beat anything your opponent can muster minutes the Brood Lords? If the

answer is yes, then go for the push.

As soon as you confirm Hive tech, make a snap judgment whether you want to go for an all-in timing push, whether you want to play an extremely passive macro game, or something in between. If you decide on the timing push, begin adding Gateways in preparation for the push and begin to cut Robotics units in favor of a Warp Prism. For a completely all-in push, especially a planned one versus fast Hive, around 67 probes and 10-14 gateways are optimal, depending on the type of push.

Keep in mind that if your opponent get Brood Lords out, it's still not over. The holy trifacta is Brood Lords, Spines, and Infestors. As long as there's not a substantial number of all three up, there's still hope for your push.

Concaves

Always form a concave around your opponent's Spines when sieging. In contrast to versus Roach/Hydra where you prefer a ball when attacking, you want to attack in a concave against Spines supported by Infestor. Protosses should move in deathball formation only to prevent getting surrounded and to most efficiently use forcefields. It is highly unlikely that you will get caught off-guard and flanked by a strong army if your opponent is massing Spines and try to tech to Infestor/Brood Lord. Also, Infestors will absolutely destroy units attacking in a ball if they are clumped up. If you attack in a concave, your units will cover each other better and fungals will hit fewer units. See  [Puzzle vs True on Cloud Kingdom](#) from GSL for a game demonstrating the importance of attacking with a concave against Spine/Infestor. One of the many reasons Metropolis is such a good map for Brood Lords is that it's extremely hard to attack in a concave against a Spine wall on Metropolis' narrow corridors.

Specific Timing Pushes: Colossi-based

Colossi-based timings are by far the most common type of three-base timing. Colossi can be a natural transition from almost all Protoss openings and fare well against all pre-hive Zerg tech. These pushes are among the slowest at Protoss' players disposal, often hitting right as the Greater Spire completes rather than before it is done, but they are also extremely efficient at breaking a spine crawler/ling/infestor defense thanks to the range and damage of the Colossus.

Besides the timing at which you attack, the number of Colossi in your push can be the biggest indicator of whether your push fails or not. In professional games, all pushes contain between 3 and 4 Colossi. 3 Colossi pushes succeed about half the time while 4 Colossi pushes almost always succeed. The difficulty, however, is getting 4 Colossi for your push, as this requires either very fast tech after setting up a third base or a delayed Hive (later than 12 minutes) from the Zerg player.

Against Zergling-heavy mid-game compositions, the Protoss may choose a Changelot-Archon Gateway army core instead of a Blink Stalker army core. This makes the Protoss army stronger before Brood Lords complete, but also puts you on a clock to kill the Zerg before Brood Lords can complete as you won't have enough anti-air to fight them.

 [MC vs Stephano on Daybreak](#) from HSC IV. Shows an extremely close call. MC does a push when Brood Lords are already out, but because there are few Infestors and no Spines, MC still breaks through.

 [MC vs DRG on Metropolis](#) from MLG Spring Arena II. Tricky build/timing push with hidden Colossi that punishes fast Hive, Hits at 13:30.

 [Naniwa vs Slivko on Metropolis](#) from Dreamhack Summer 2012. Reactive 4 Colossi timing push vs fast Hive, Hits at 13:30

 [Tear vs Symbol on Entombed Valley](#) from IPL TAC Season 3. 4 Colossi push vs fast Hive, Hits at 14:55.

 [Alicia vs DRG on Cloud Kingdom](#) from MLG Spring Championship 2012. Vs slower Hive, shows exploiting the map and bypassing Spines.

 [Brown vs Zenio on Cloud Kingdom](#) from IPTL Season 1. 4 Colossi push vs slower Hive.

 [Rain vs DRG on Entombed Valley](#), from Auction-OSL. vod unavailable.

 [Creator vs Miya on Cloud Kingdom](#) from WCS Asia. Into 3 Colossi push vs Infestor/Ling/Corruptor.

 (PW) [Hero vs Soulkey on Daybreak](#) from GSL 2012 Season 5. 2 Colossi push vs Roach/Infestor.

-  Hero vs Stephano on Daybreak from NASL 3 finals. 3 Colossi push vs later Hive, Hits at 16:00.
-  Rain vs horror on Ohana from WCS Korea. 3 Colossi push vs slower Hive, Hits at 15:30.
-  (PW) Seed vs Symbol on Daybreak from GSL 2012 Season 4, Set 1. 4 Colossi timing against later Hive.
-  Creator vs Sen on Entombed Valley from WCS Asia. Maxed 4 Colossi push vs fast Hive, Hits at 14:30.
-  (PW) Younghwa vs Miya on Whirlwind from GSTL 2012 Season 3. From a cannon rush.
-  (PW) Rain vs Sheth on Daybreak from MLG Fall Championship 2012. 4 Colossi push vs fast Hive, Hits at 15:30.
-  (PW) Creator vs JKS on Abyssal City from GSTL 2012 Season 3. 4-gas 3 Colossi push with Chargelots, Hits at 14:50.
-  (PW) Younghwa vs Monster on Entombed Valley from GSTL 2012 Season 3. Fast third, into Colossi timing vs Mutalisks into Infestor/Brood Lord.
-  Squirtle vs Miya on Antiga Shipyard from GSL 2012 Season 5. 4 Colossi push with Chargelot/Archon vs slightly delayed Hive, Hits at 15:40
-  (PW) Creator vs Hyun on Bel'shir Vestige from GSL 2012 Season 5. 1 Colossi push vs fast Hive, Hits at 13:30. Hyun overmakes corruptors.

Specific Timing Pushes: Immortal/Stalker

Pushes involving mainly Immortals and Stalkers are great if your opponent has made a significant number of Roaches. This can usually be done by either faking an Immortal/Sentry all-in off of two bases or successfully defending heavy Roach pressure. Otherwise, Zergling/Infestor armies can rip you apart.

-  Rain vs DRG, from Auction OSL. vod unavailable.
-  (PW) Rain vs Sheth on Cloud Kingdom from MLG Fall Championship 2012. From Stargate into 4 Gate into Twilight into Robo into 9:20 Expand, Hits at 13:55 vs fast Hive.
-  (PW) Rain vs Soo on Daybreak from MLG Fall Championship 2012. Robotics Expand, Hits at 13:30 vs fast Hive.
-  (PW) Rain vs Soo on Cloud Kingdom from MLG Fall Championship 2012. Stargate into 4 Gate into Twilight into Robo, Hits at 13:30 vs fast Hive.
-   Rain vs Mafia on Daybreak from WCS Grand Finals. Warp Prism harass into push, Hits at 13:45 vs fast Hive.
-   Rain vs Mafia on Daybreak from WCS Grand Finals. Warp Prism harass into push, Hits at 14:00 vs fast Hive.
-   State vs Mafia on Ohana Part 1, Part 2 from WCS Grand Finals. Warp Prism harass into push, Hits at 13:55 vs Roach/Ling into delayed Hive.
-   State vs MaFia on Daybreak Part 1, Part 2 from WCS Grand Finals. Robotics expand in push, Hits at 13:50 vs Roach/Ling/Infestor into Hive.

CreatorPrime uses a version that involves adding Dark Templar into this push. Dark Templar can be devastating if you catch an opponent off-guard without detection in either his main army or auxiliary bases. Even if your opponent is fully prepared, Dark Templar will force the Zerg to defend all his side bases with Spore/Spine combos, which diverts valuable resources needed to defend the main push.

-  Creator vs Idra on Ohana from IPL TAC. Hits at 15:00.
-  Creator vs Miya on Ohana from WCS Asia. Meets army at 13:35.

Specific Timing Pushes: Immortal/Chargelot/Templar

First used by Sase in competitive games, this style of pushing has been gradually gaining popularity, though not among the top tier Korean Protosses. Immortals, Chargelots, and Templar provide a unit composition that covers each others' weaknesses and can be effective against any type of Zerg ground-based army. Zealots are effective against Zerglings, Immortals are effective against Roaches and Spine Crawlers, and Templar are generally effective against all Zerg ground units, especially Infestors, Zerglings, Banelings and Infested Terrans.

The biggest difficulty in getting this type of push is transitioning into this unit composition safely. Since it's not as versatile as one centered around Stalkers, excellent scouting and carefully planned

build orders and responses are critical. First of all, Stargate openings do not transition well into Templar openings, as Stargate units work with Colossi much better than they do with Templar. Secondly, Zealot-focused armies are vulnerable to Roach aggression, so build orders must be designed to ensure early and constant Immortal production and adequate Forcefields to prevent kiting. Lastly, Zealots and Immortals don't hit air units, so it's very easy to die to fast Mutalisks unless you have excellent scouting information. If you're able to account for these challenges, a Zealot/Immortal/Templar army can provide for a very powerful Protoss mid-game.

When using a Zealot/Immortal/Templar composition, it's important to understand when you can push effectively. A standard ground-based Zerg composition has three primary gas expenses: Roaches, Infestors, and teching toward Brood Lords. If Zerg focuses on Infestor production and fast Brood Lord tech (11 minute hive), he won't have enough gas for a large Roach count, and instead, he'll be heavy on Zerglings and Spine Crawlers. This is the perfect scenario for a large, dedicated Zealot/Immortal/Templar push just before the Greater Spire completes. Zealots and Immortals are powerful against Zerglings and Spines, and Zealots take reduced damage from Fungal Growth since they are light and they tend to spread automatically as Charge casts. If Zerg instead produces large numbers of Roaches in the mid-game, Protoss should play more defensively, delaying his push, and focusing on Warp Prism harassment until Zerg begins to switch into Brood Lord production. Roaches on creep deal well with Changelots and Immortals, but Zerg's gas expenditure in Roaches will reduce his Infestor count and delay his Brood Lords.

With Zealot-heavy compositions, armor upgrades can be extremely useful, and using two Forges for both armor and weapons upgrades can provide powerful synergy with this style. It's still important to stay one attack upgrade ahead of Zerg armor upgrades to still be able to two-shot Zerglings, and armor upgrades allow much more survivability against Zerglings, Infested Terrans, and later, Broodlings. Zealots with armor upgrades are one of Protoss's best weapons against Infested Terrans along with Colossi and Storm.

Unlike Colossi-based timings that include large Stalker counts, anti-air is not built into a Zealot/Immortal/Templar composition (aside from Storm and a low Archon count). For this reason, you should preemptively research Blink before or as you attack so that you'll have it ready in the event that Brood Lords do arrive during your push. If you've been able to thin out the Infestors and the ground army, it's possible to continue pushing against a small number of Brood Lords by warping in reinforcing Stalkers to Blink under the unprotected Brood Lords. If Zerg is able to produce Brood Lords without first losing his ground support, the push is halted, and Protoss should instead focus on Warp Prism harass and Mothership play. Storm, armor-upgraded Zealots, Archons, and Blink Stalkers can defend against early Brood Lord pushes with just 5-8 Brood Lords, but larger pushes cannot be effectively defended without a Mothership.

If you accomplish significant economic damage with your push before Brood Lords halt the attack, your army will usually not be able to fight your opponents' head on before you have a Mothership, but you retain important mobility advantages which allow you to continue to play aggressively. With heavily upgraded Changelots and Templar, Warp Prism harass can be stronger than normal. Additionally, you will often have an economic advantage at this point, which allows you to trade away inexpensive Zealot-focused armies (Blinking Stalkers under Brood Lords if you catch them away from Spine Crawlers and/or Infestors) in exchange for picking off forward Hatcheries while you drop Zerg's rearward bases and tech structures.

 *Sase vs Sleep on Metropolis from MLG Spring Championship 2012, Set 3. Robotics Expand, into Immortal/Zeelot/Templar push, Hits at 15:00.*

 *Sase vs Dimaga on Metropolis from HSC V. Robotics Expand into Immortal/Zeelot/Templar push, Hits at 15:00 with hallucinated Colossi.*

Specific Timing Pushes: Blink Stalker

Pure Blink Stalker timings are only really fully viable on maps where it's possible to defend Roach maxes without Immortals. This, unfortunately, narrows the maps down to only Entombed Valley. On Entombed Valley, mass Blink Stalkers can be extremely strong, as they easily form huge concaves that are hard to defend with only Spine Crawlers. Only precise scouting and heavily-upgraded Zerglings with Infestor support can spot this push.

 (PW) [Seed vs Violet on Entombed Valley from GSL Season 3 2012](#). Hits at 14:25 with maxed Stalkers.

4.2.3 Warp Prism Play

Warp Prism harass is almost an essential part of late game PvZ, so much so that some players such as Hero, Ace, and Squirtle build the Robotics Support Bay just for the purpose of researching Warp Prism speed without building a single Colossus. Unlike the other portions of the Brood Lord section, consistent Warp Prism harass should not be a phase, but rather a tactic that should be consistently kept up throughout late game phase. The Warp Prism is so effective because the bulk of the Zerg army in late game, Brood Lords, are so slow and immobile. Thus, defending Warp Prism harass relies heavily on static defense and low numbers of Roach/Ling. As the Zerg army grows higher in Brood Lord count, the Roach/Ling count will diminish even more, making the Zerg player even more vulnerable to prism harass.

Effective Warp Prism harass, just like effective drop harass in TvP, pulls your opponent back and forth between multiple threats. If you present only one threat, your opponent can focus all his attention to that one threat and fend it off easily. With that in mind, always either be harassing with at least two prisms or at the very least posturing with your main army in addition to your one prism harass.

If you can, clear your opponent's Overlord spread and creep spread as much as possible before dropping, lowering his map vision and giving him less time to react to your drops. This is similar to Terrans scanning and killing your Observers.

Load up your prism before dropping. Sentries, Zealots, and Immortals begin to become useless in the late game, so use this chance to get rid of them. Sentries can be used to forcefield your opponent's main ramp and keep his army outside, letting you ravage his main. Immortals are great for sniping key structures, such as the Greater Spire, and can be sacrificed once Roaches become a non-factor. Templar drops are especially effective as they cannot be prevented by Spines, unlike Zealot harass. Zealots are, of course, should be the main warp-in unit and are a good mineral dump. You should get Charge as soon as you feel you can afford the gas. This makes your harassing Zealots twice as effective. Dt harass can be good, but it's risky to invest so much money into both a Dark Shrine and DTs if you're not sure it's definitively going to do damage.

 [Hero vs Dimaga on Shattered Temple from IEM S6 Kiev](#). Shows classic multi-pronged Hero harass that involves Templar, Changelots, and Archons.

 (PW) [Ace vs Bbongbbong on Cloud Kingdom from GSL 2012 Season 3](#). Shows great Warp Prism harass with Sentries, Templar, Zealots, and DTs.

  [Squirtle vs Ret on Metropolis from Red Bull Battlegrounds](#). Shows Warp Prism harass bringing Squirtle back into the game from an unfavorable position.

 [Squirtle vs Stephano on Entombed Valley from Red Bull Battlegrounds](#). Shows more great Sentry drops which allows Squirtle to snipe a Spire and threw Stephano off enough that Squirtle was able to beat Stephano's Brood Lord head on, because Stephano forgot Spines with 7k minerals.

4.2.4 Map Considerations

A big mistake that is often made, even at the professional level is taking the wrong bases against Brood Lords. For example, if you plan to play a more defensive macro style versus Brood Lords, it's usually better to take a side base as your 4th instead of a center base. Spread out Brood Lords camped in the center can be impossible to deal with. On the other hand, if you catch Brood Lords trying to move towards your natural and hovering over your central base, it will be a much easier fight.

Another thing is that taking the center does is that it pins your army down. Base trading versus Brood Lords is a very valid strategy, as Brood Lords are very slow in reacting to base trades. Going back to the example on Daybreak, if you take the central base and your opponent attacks, you have to

defend it, because if you try to base trade, he will easily be able to go back quickly and defend. In contrast, if you take a side base and your opponent tries to attack a base, you can theoretically try for a base trade. Threatening base trades is especially effective on maps that have many paths and are open such as Cloud Kingdom and Tal'Darim Altar. More on this later.

 [Hero vs Ret on Daybreak](#) from *Dreamhack Summer*. One of the best games to learn how to deal with Brood Lords in general. It showcases many topics discussed in this portion of this guide including dealing with 15 minute Brood Lords, correct tech paths, multitasking, Warp Prism harass, pulling the Zerg army in different directions, and taking the correct bases.

4.2.5 Mothership/Archon Stage

If you, in any way, plan to play a macro game versus Brood Lords, you must head for the Mothership as soon as you smell Brood Lords. A big misconception is that the Mothership is only good for Archon toilets. Besides instant killing a Zerg army, vortex is also useful for taking large portions of Zerg armies out of the game. The real story is that the biggest advantage the Mothership gives you is that just the fear of a potential vortex forces your opponent to spread his Brood Lords.

Even against the splash damage of Colossi and Templar, Zerg always wants to keep his Brood Lord army clumped together if at all possible. When the Zerg army is clumped, all their units cover each other, so you cannot pick off individual Brood Lords. Normally, an army consisting of ten Brood Lords, a handful of Infestors, and ground support will easily beat an army of Colossi, Stalkers, and Archons. But as soon as you add in the Mothership, the whole dynamic of engagements changes. Zerg is forced to split his army so that one vortex cannot single-handedly take out half his army. Ideally, he will want to split his Brood Lords in clumps of 2 or 3 so that any one vortex doesn't take out a majority of his most important units. Because your opponent is forced to split his Brood Lords, this gives you more opportunities to pick off stray Brood Lords. It also prevents each Brood Lord from doing their maximum potential damage, as or fear of the vortex, Brood Lords are usually on the hold position command, so not all the Brood Lords will be attacking all the time. The following is a demonstration of a game where the Zerg loses because he over-splits his Brood Lords in fear of a possible vortex from the Mothership.

 [Hero vs Stephano on Metropolis](#) from *EGMC*.

  [Squirtle vs Ret on Cloud Kingdom](#) from *Red Bull Battlegrounds*.

In addition, the threat of vortex forces your Zerg opponent to be much more careful when moving across the map. He must control each small group of Brood Lords individually, which requires a lot of apm. You can abuse this by darting back and forth between Zerg's bases on certain maps. In order to move his army to defend these bases, it will take much more effort and strain for your opponent to move his army than it does for you. If your opponent makes a mistake, you can capitalize by vortexing his army and winning the game. Or you can take advantage by harassing somewhere else at the same time, further diverting his attention.

Archon Toilet

The Archon Toilet should be mentioned, but there's not much strategical to say about it. Get a good vortex, put a few Archons in it, and kill off your opponent's whole army instantly. There are a few things the Zerg can do after the vortex hits his Brood Lords.

The first is putting lots of Banelings in the vortex along with the Archons to instantly kill Archons as they pop out. For this, don't put all your eggs in one basket as in don't put all your Archons in one vortex. Throw in just a few Archons so your opponent will think twice about throwing all his Banelings in. Then, rely on Templar to damage the Brood Lords. Another option you have is saving enough energy for two vortexes so your opponent will need even more Banelings to prevent the Archon toilet.

The other option Zerg has is to throw Infested Terrans in and around the vortex so that they push the Archons away from the Brood Lords, making sure they cannot splash the Brood Lords for maximum damage. Storm the Infested Terrans around the vortex and storm the units as they come out of the vortex to kill both the Brood Lords and Broodlings.

Don't lose your Mothership! If you carelessly lose your Mothership or get it nerual in late game PvZ, the game is as good as over as your opponent won't be force to spread and can easily 1a to victory. Such is PvZ. The following games should provide some cautionary tales.

 (PW) [Hero vs Leenock on Antiga Shipyard from GSL 2012 Season 4.](#)

 (PW) [Squirtle vs Leenock on Cloud Kingdom from GSL 2012 Season 4.](#)

 (PW) [Hero vs Soulkey on Whirlwind from GSL 2012 Season 5.](#)

Judging Your Opponents' Army

If you can, try to get a good idea of how many Brood Lords your opponent has. 6 Brood Lords play a lot differently from 10 Brood Lords. And 20 Brood Lords means that if you don't get an insane vortex off, you have no chance of winning. The Zerg's supporting army can tell you a lot as well. Any ground units that aren't Infestors are only meant to discourage blinks under the Brood Lords and Lings are generally better for this than Roaches just based off of the dps they do. A Brood Lord army supported by a ton of Roaches is usually weaker than one supported by Lings and much weaker than one with more Brood Lords and just a handful of Lings.

Engagements

Always try to engage Brood Lords in open ground if at all possible. This will allow you to more easily pick off stray Brood Lords out of position.. It will also prevent Brood Lords from hiding above impassable ground, thus making them hard to target with Stalkers. Try to spread out before you engage so you don't get your entire army trapped in some chain fungals.

Base Trade-ish Style

One style that can be effective against Brood Lords and Infestors is a multi-pronged harass and base trade style, one that aims to delay the Zerg maxing on complete Brood Lords, and tries to dodge the Zerg army as much as possible. This strategy is fairly good on open maps with many paths such as Cloud Kingdom or Tal'Darim Altar. It is bad on maps that don't have many multiple paths of attack such as Daybreak. Use Warp Prisms in combination with your main army to pull the immobile Zerg army in all directions. Use your Mothership's recall ability to get out of sticky fungal situations. All Protosses should use this tactic somewhat in PvZ, but  [Ace vs Bbongbbong on Cloud Kingdom](#) from GSL 2012 Season 3 shows an extreme version of this style.

Prevent your opponent from pinning you down with his Brood Lords. If he does this, you lose your ability to base trade as your are either forced to engage his army or your opponent will get a huge head start on the base trade. Try to keep track of where your opponent's Brood Lords are at all time with Observers and general good vision of the map and move your army into position accordingly.

In addition, try not to engage in a full base trade. Zerg can always uproot his Spores and Spines and move them with his army. Then you will still have to eventually be forced to fight his army, a battle you usually will not be able to win.

Recall

Recall is that other spell on the Mothership. With recall, you may venture deep into enemy territory to snipe some buildings without fear, even from Fungal Growth. Be wary that you may only use Recall when you're close to 200 energy on your Mothership, as if your opponent counterattacks after the Recall and you are left without enough energy for a Vortex, the game can end right there.  [Creator vs Coca on Daybreak from GSTL 2012 Season 2.](#) Shows a game where Creator gets ahead but loses for this very reason.

4.2.6 Carrier Stage

The truth is that at a certain point in late game in certain circumstances, PvZ requires Carriers. There are some games that can simply not be won without Carriers. One such game is  [JYP vs Dimaga on Dual Sight](#) from HSC IV.

When Zerg turtles on only Infestor/Brood Lord supported by creep spread and mass Spines, Carriers are required to break this turtle style. In addition, on certain maps, Spines can be used to slowly walk up and siege your bases. If you somehow get yourself into this scenario, Carriers are also a

requirement.

Transitioning to Carriers

Carriers should not be a unit you aim for right away. Generally, they're not particularly effective against anything besides Brood Lords. Before Carriers, you should amass a standard Protoss ground army in addition to a Mothership. A Mothership with a healthy amount of energy will discourage a Zerg player from attacking until he has at least around 16 Brood Lords supported by an equally large amount of Infestors. This gives you time to take bases, gather resources, and prepare for your transitions. Gradually start your air upgrades and begin adding Stargates, at least four. During this time, you should be aggressively poking the Zerg with your main army and employing Warp Prism harass as discussed before. When you feel you have the economy to support Carrier production off of all your Stargates, begin sacrificing supply in favor for Carriers. Always sacrifice supply in order to do some damage or kill your own army. If you just blindly send units into your opponent's army, you will make it too obvious to your opponent that you're transitioning to Carriers. This can cause him to unleash a devastating timing while you're in the middle of your transition. In contrast, if you catch him by surprise, you make cause him to have an inefficient army, with too much supply invested into Brood Lords.

Engaging with Carriers

Unless you have an exorbitant amount of Carriers, you still cannot engage an Infestor/Brood Lord army directly, even without Spine support. Use the Carrier's range to siege your opponent's Brood Lords while your ground army covers them from Corruptors. Which brings me to a very important point, do not *just* mass Carriers. A pure Carrier army is very vulnerable to Corruptors, but one supported with a few Archons, Templar, and perhaps some Stalkers while you're transitioning, is much more solid.

As with all late game battles, your first priority should be to not get your Mothership neueraled. Then, try to fight on open ground as fighting in a tight space prevents your Archons and Templar from being as effective, and completely removes Stalker reinforcements as a threat. Fight away from Spines and Spores as much as possible, as they still represent a serious threat to any Protoss army. Cannons, on the other hand, do not hinder Zerg as much and can actually hinder Protoss ground mobility.

Remember that your Protoss army is also still more mobile than his Brood Lord army, so you should keep trying to poke and prod in positions that would make your opponent uncomfortable. By forcing your opponent to move his position and fight on your own terms, he will be more likely to clump his Brood Lords against a vortex.

And although Carriers have much more potential to take down the extreme late-game Zerg army than a standard Protoss ground army, they are by far not an auto-win against Infestor Brood Lord. Corruptors, Spores, Infested Terrans, and especially fungals can be extremely cost effective against Carriers and their Interceptors. For these reasons, the final big engagement is key and could go to any player.

You may be wondering why we very rarely see Carriers. First, not that many people are really familiar enough or comfortable enough with Carriers to use them. As can be easily seen in the JYP vs Dimaga game, JYP would have easily won that game if he had built Carriers. The reason people are so unfamiliar with this unit is that very few games get to the stage where Carriers are useful. Zergs often try to aim for a Brood Lord/Infestor attack before Carriers can come into play.

Demonstration of Carrier Play in PvZ

 [Hero vs Dimaga on Shattered Temple from IEM S6 Kiev.](#)

 [Naniwa vs Ret on Daybreak from Red Bull Lan.](#)

 (PW) [Crank vs Freaky on Entombed Valley from GSTL 2012 Season 2.](#)

 [JYP vs Dimaga on Daybreak from Dreamhack Summer.](#)

  [Creator vs Sniper on Daybreak from TSL4 Qualifiers. Another example of an ideal switch to Carriers.](#)

 [Squirtle vs Coca on Entombed Valley from IPL Fight Club. Shows extremely fast Carriers, made possible by the metagame on Entombed Valley.](#)

5 APPENDIX

5.1 MAP CONSIDERATIONS [top](#)

This map consideration section aims at identifying notable points about each map. Each list is not meant to be an exhaustive detailed analysis, but simply a reference to gain familiarity with how each map feels in the match-up. This information can be quite helpful with choosing what builds to use on specific map.

In general, the following factors are what determine the balance of a map in the PvZ matchup:

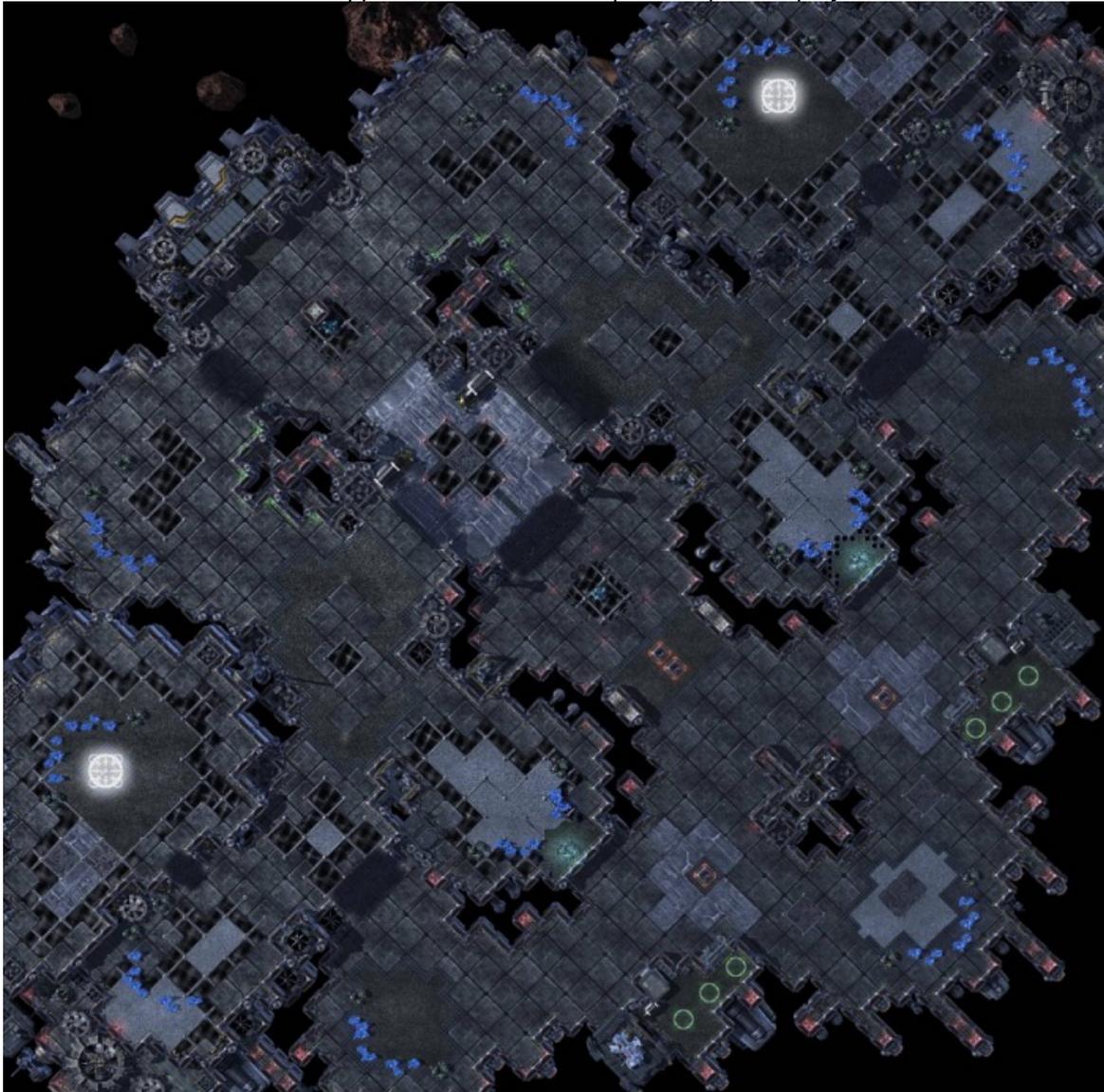
1. Zerg prefers maps where it's easy to take a third, ie no rocks Ex: not Tal'Darim Altar, Xel'naga Caverns, etc.
2. Zerg prefers maps with easy Overlord placements to scout Toss's natural gas. Ex: Daybreak.
3. Zerg prefers maps where it's easy to cover and defend 4+ bases with Spines. Ex: Metropolis, not Cloud Kingdom.
4. Zerg prefers maps where it's easy to split in late game. This allows slow bls to defend easier. Ex: Daybreak.
5. Protoss prefers maps where it's easy to FFE Ex: Cloud Kingdom, Ohana, not Xel'naga Caverns.
6. Protoss prefers maps with little air space behind bases, where Mutas can hide. Ex: Entombed Valley, not Tal'Darim Altar.
7. Protoss prefers maps where it's easy to take a 3rd against Roaches. For example, short distance between natural and third(Cloud Kingdom, Entombed Valley, not Korhal Compound), not much space to wall and cover with FFs (Entombed Valley, not Antiga Shipyard, Dual Sight), ramps to bases(Entombed Valley).
8. Protoss prefers maps where there's a choke to the third, which helps with Sentry based all-ins. Ex: Daybreak.
9. Protoss prefers maps where you can bounce back between 3 bases easily, against Mutas and drops. Ex: Cloud Kingdom and Entombed Valley, not Tal'Darim Altar, not Antiga Shipyard.

Each map considered will be judged in the following categories:

- 10.Ease of taking a third base against Roaches (out of 10)
- 11.Ease of defending against Mutalisks (out of 10)
- 12.Notes on 2 base all-ins for Protoss
- 13.Notes on Pre-Brood Lord pushes
- 14.Other notes

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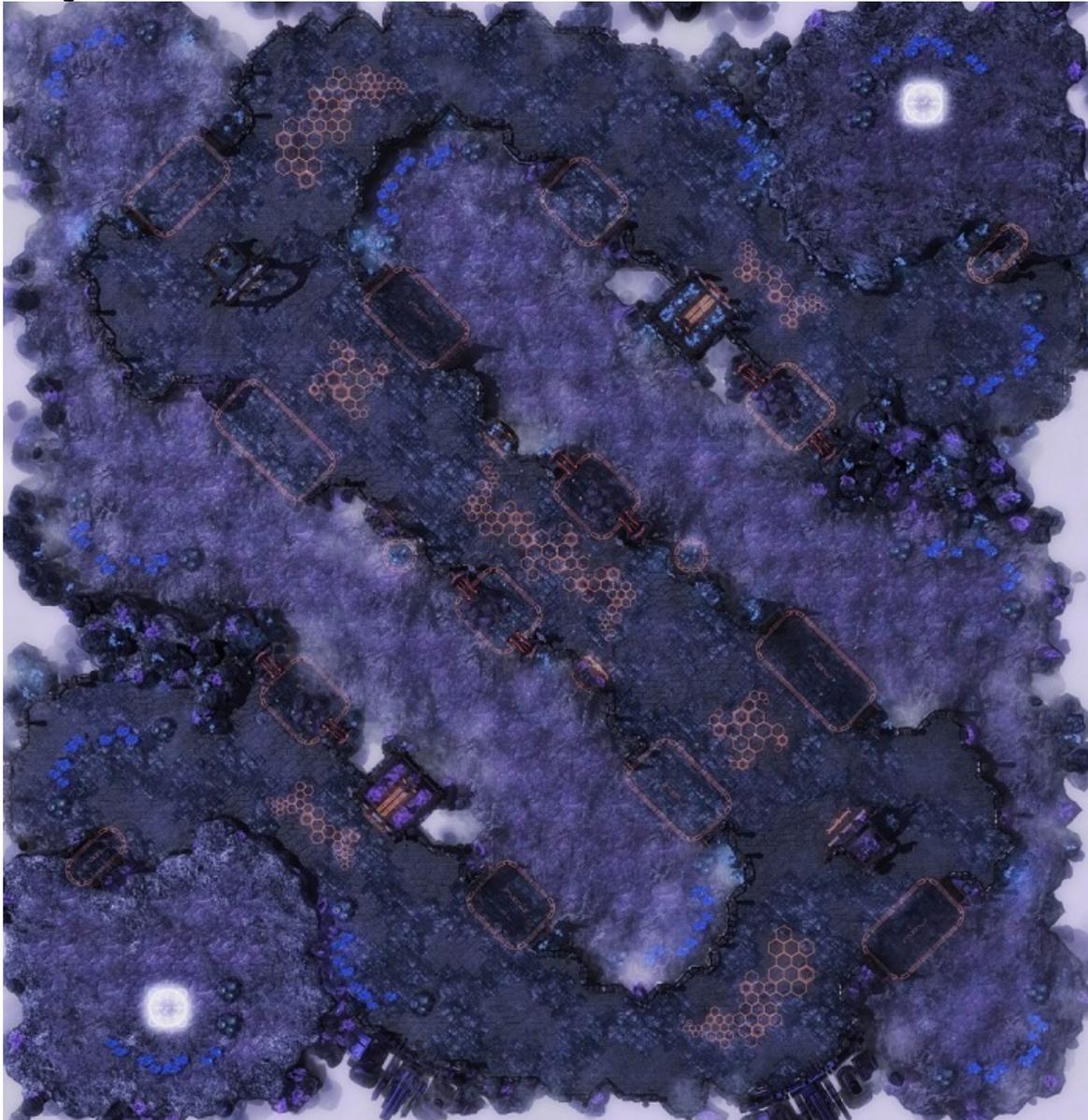
*Note: Included dates indicate first appearances of each map in competitive play or on ladder



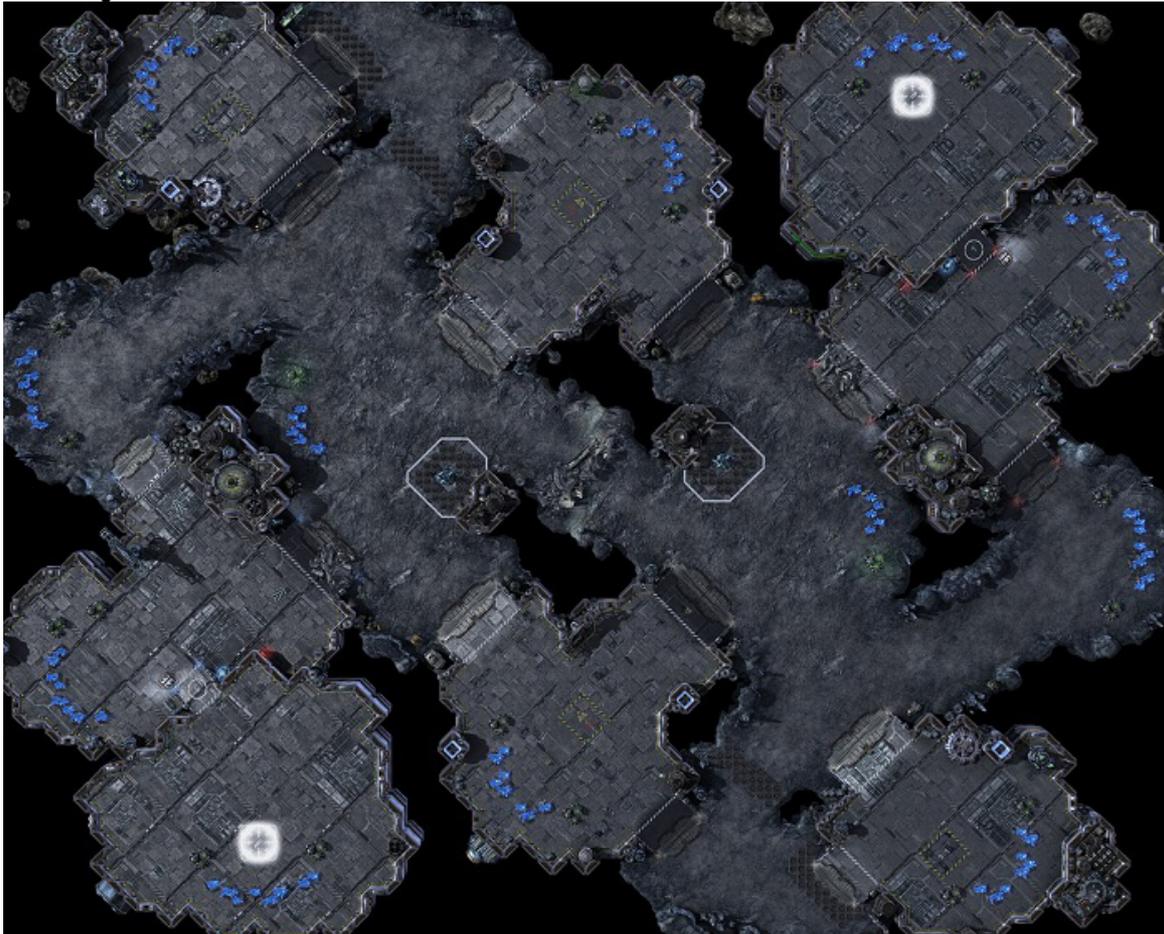
- Ease against Roaches: 7/10. Taking the high yield gas third base and walling off the ramp leading to the other base leaves Roaches with only one avenue to attack and no opportunity to bounce between bases, which combined with the long rush distances make Roach aggression easily held on this map
- Ease against Mutalisks: 4/10. While the map is extremely big and there's plenty of air space for the Mutas to harass, the presence of the high yield gas at the Protoss third means the Templar count will be much higher than normal, somewhat limiting the effectiveness of Mutas on this map.
- All-ins: The lack of chokes for forcefields makes many all-ins weaker than usual on this map, and macro play is generally preferred.
- 3-base pushes: Pre-Brood Lord timings are commonly used because the rush distance between the Protoss' third and the Zerg fourth (commonly the high yield base) is very short. However, like with Roach pressure, there's only one avenue to attack and it's impossible to threaten both the 3rd and 4th bases.
- Other notes: the size of the map lends itself to both greedy play, super lategame transitions into Stargate play, and Warp Prism harassment.



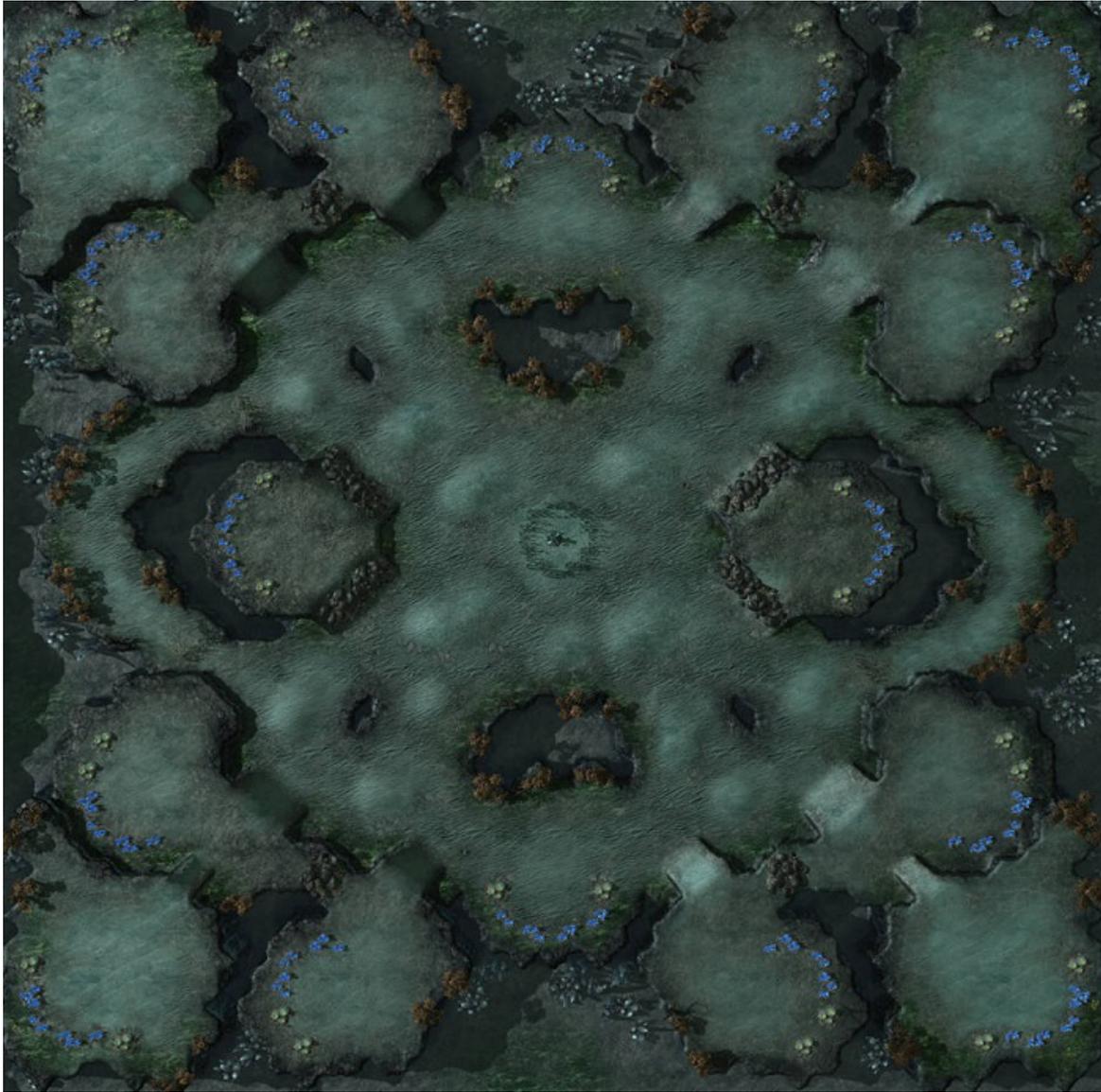
- Ease against Roaches: 3/10. There's a incredible amount of space you need to forcefield in order to block off Roaches entirely. Sim cities will not be as effective here as on other maps. Also, the rush distance is incredibly small, more so than any other map.
- Ease against Mutalisks: 4/10. There's not much air space behind any of your bases, but it's also very hard to bounce back and forth between your main and your other bases. Drops are extremely difficult to deal with on this map for the same reason. But not only do you need cannons and Blink Stalker to deal with drops, you'll also need your less mobile units, such as Zealots, Sentries, Stalkers, and Immortals.
- All-ins: While macro play is relatively hard on this map, 2-base Protoss all-ins are relatively strong here, which explains why this map has such a high occurrence of them. Not only are the rush distances extremely short, but it's almost impossible to destroy an army with forcefields if it positions itself past the destructible rocks in Zerg's third.
- 3-base pushes: Usually this is what you'll be going for, because it's very difficult to secure a fourth base. If you let your opponent get Brood Lords out, you usually lose, because he will be able to siege every base easily from the middle plateaue.



- Ease against Roaches: 6/10. It's very easy and standard to wall the secondary ramp at the natural, and it's very easy to bounce between your natural and third. The biggest problem against these types of attacks is that your third has two possible routes of attack. It's very hard to sim city there, and you can be easily flanked.
- Ease against Mutalisks: 8/10. There's no extra air space in your main, and it's very easy to bounce back between all three bases. Mutalisks are not a good choice here.
- All-ins: The rush distance between your natural and your opponent's third is relatively short. Sentry based all-ins are effective on this map, as there exist two separate chokes at Zerg's third base. Swinging around the side of the Zerg's third is especially effective, as the Zerg's third Hatchery acts as a natural wall, letting you use fewer forcefields when you attack.
- 3-base pushes: 3-base pushes are very effective against Zerg on this map. A Spine wall at the most common fourth base can be attacked from multiple sides. The mineral line at the fourth can be harassed with impunity if there are no Brood Lords. In addition, Protoss can just swing around to the Zerg's third and attack from there if the Zerg is not sufficiently prepared.



- Ease against Roaches: 5/10. It's possible to effectively sim city at both the large secondary ramp at the naturalland at the third base. It's moderately difficult to bounce back between the natural and third as Protoss. At the same time, it's relatively easy for the Zerg to bounce back and forth between his two potential attack paths.
- Ease against Mutalisks: 5/10. There exists a moderate amount of space behind the main, natural, and third mineral lines. Also, it's moderately easy to bounce back and forth between all three bases with Blink. Overall, a rather balanced map that neither favors nor prohibits Mutalisks.
- All-ins: Sentry based all-ins are especially effective on this map, because the choke at the third base can easily be cut off with a few forcefields. Other all-ins may not be as good as on other maps, because of the long rush distance and the fact that the Zerg natural isn't as vulnerable as on other maps.
- 3-base pushes: Spines and Infestors at the central fourth base can defend against pushes quite well, but often times, the corner base of the Zerg if left vulnerable.
- Late game on this map favors Zerg, as it's extremely easy for him to cut the map in half and guard all his bases with a single Brood Lord army positioned over the central fourth base.



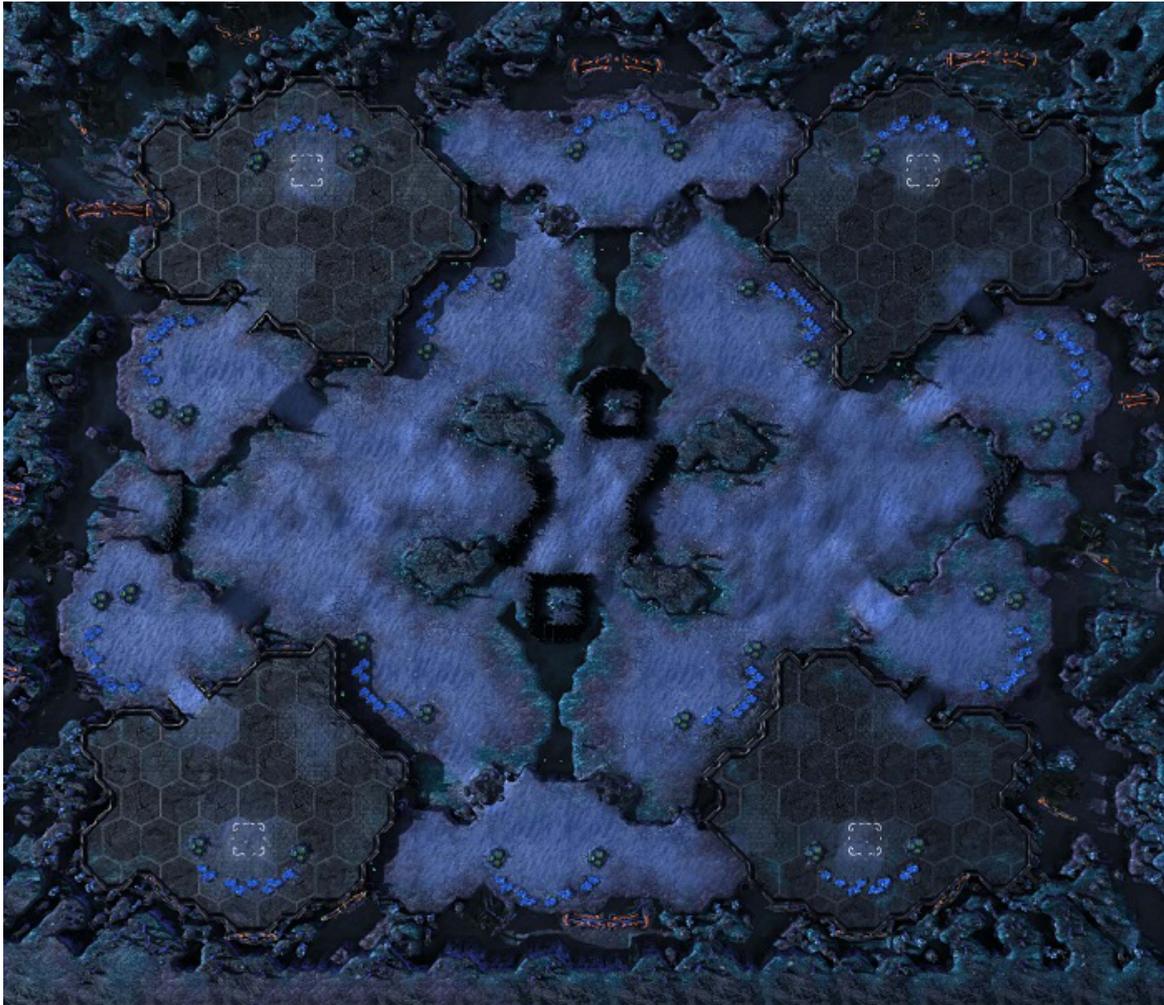
- A fast third Nexus is extremely safe on this map and is becoming standard. It's also extremely hard for Zerg to scout the main, as he must traverse through either the natural or third, so neuxs cancels or all-in follow-ups are also common on this map.
- The only viable macro plays from Zerg on this map involve drops, Mutalisks, or fast tech to Brood Lords, as any types of frontal pushes are easily held off.
- Ease against Roaches: 9/10. Because of the short distance between the natural and third and the narrow ramps to both bases, defending against Roach pressure is extremely easy on this map.
- Ease again Mutalisks: 7/10. No air space behind bases plus the ease with which to bounce back between the bases means a relatively easy time for Mutalisks.
- All-ins: All-ins can be strong on this map, especially on versions with close positions, but they're so uncommon, because Protoss macro play is generally superior here.
- 3 base pushes: Zerg has a lot of space to cover with Spines against 3 base pushes.



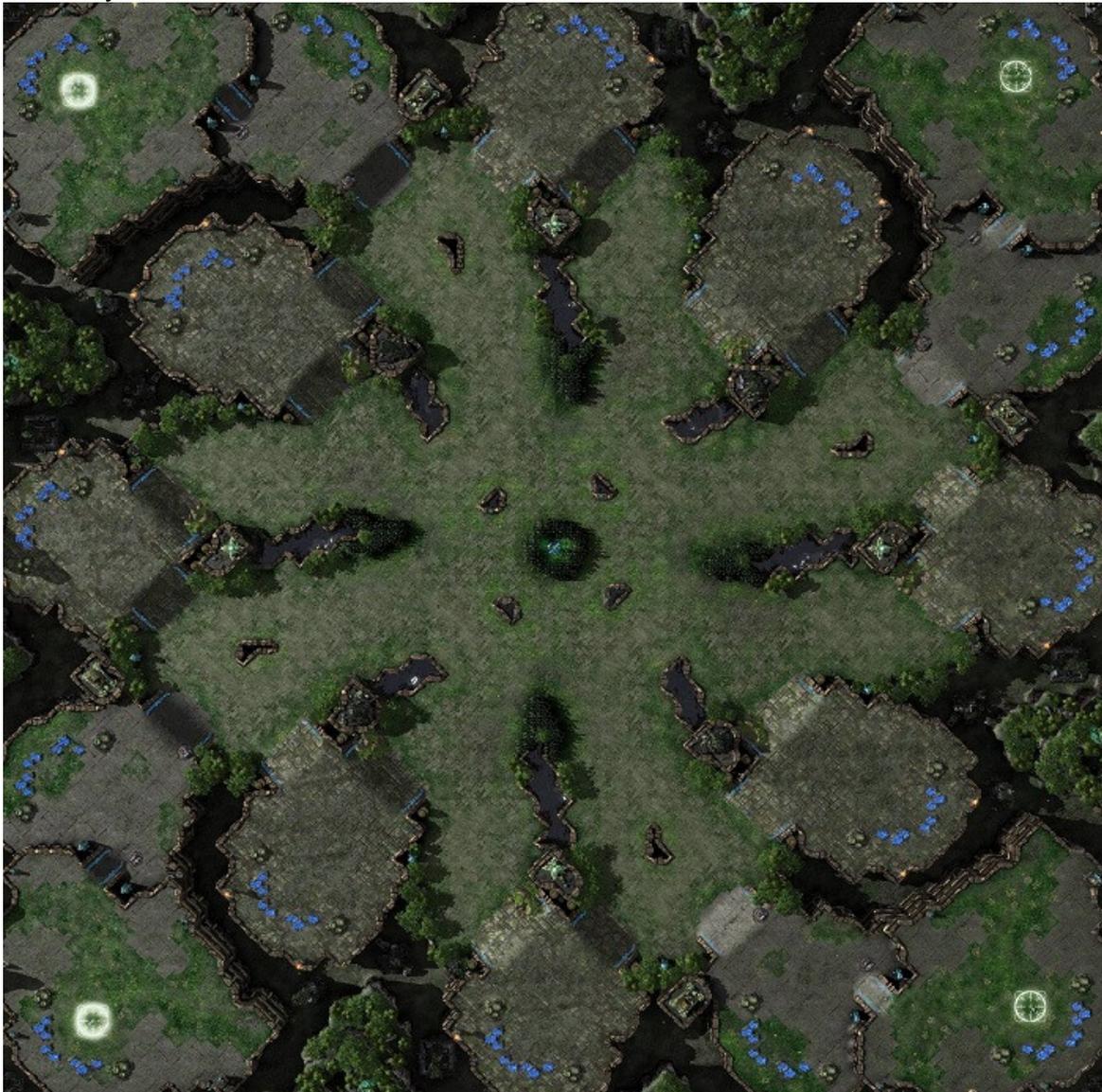
- Ease against Roaches: 6/10. Your biggest advantage against a Roach max will be the long rush distance. Otherwise, your third is not particularly optimal for defending as it's so big and has lots of surface area to cover.
- Ease against Mutalisks: 4/10. Mutalisks can easily bounce back and forth between bases on this map, and with such long distances between opposing bases, counterattacks are difficult.
- All-ins: Abusing the two sets of destructible rocks on the sides of the third is key for a Protoss who wishes to all-in, either doing a standard timing and relying on the fact that the Zerg most likely will not have taken down the rocks, or breaking the rocks opposite those between the Zerg's natural and third. This provides a choke where Zergs units will have to stream in single-file and flanking is cumbersome.
- 3 base pushes: 3 base pushes from Protoss are not particularly effective on this map, as Zerg has two easily defensible chokes to defend.
- Warp prism openings are extremely popular on this map. In close positions, a Warp Prism can enter your opponents' main without being detected, which allows for the common Sentry drop into walling off your opponents' main with Sentries.
- Games will often enter split map scenarios on this map. 3 base all-ins are not particularly effective on this map and, because of the shape of the map, counterattacks are impossible. Zerg will easily be able to easily obtain five bases, which often forces you to play the long macro game with mass broods and Carriers.



- Very easy to wall-off natural expansion. Only three 3x3 buildings required for full wall-off.
- Ease against Roaches: 6/10. The third base is connected to the natural by a secondary ramp and both bases are fairly easy to simcity and defend, making 3base builds very popular on this map
- Ease again Mutalisks: 4/10. There's a minimal amount of airspace at main and natural, but a lot behind the mineral lines at the third.
- All-ins: The rocks near the fourth place of the Zerg acts as a great staging point for all-ins. Zerg will not be able to attack or punish an army stationed there or any Pylons positioned there.
- 3 base pushes: Zerg has two separate locations to cover against 3base attacks, making it possible for the Protoss to at least delay the 4th. Counter attacks by the Zerg are very common on this map.



- Very easy to wall off the natural expansion, which requires only three 3x3 buildings. As the natural also contains a ramp, this is one of the worst maps for Zerg to all-in on.
- Ease against Roaches: 3/10 Both potential thirds for Protoss are extremely difficult to obtain. The opposite natural doesn't allow for units to bounce back between your natural and third. You'll mostly be relying on Sentries and cannons to defend your bases. The one tucked in has a ton of space to forcefield off between the natural and third.
- Ease against Mutalisks: 4/10 Because of the difficulties in securing a third, defending Mutalisks is harder than average.
- All-ins: Various options for 2 base all-ins are possible on this map. If a Protoss is able to enter the Zerg's third with Sentries, that base is as good as dead. Warp prism Sentry drops are also common to block off an opponent's ramp. Also note that Blink Stalkers and Colossi can walk from your main directly into either your opponents' third or main.
- 3 base pushes: Zerg can defend four bases with a single set of Infestors and Spines.
- Because your main is actually two levels above your third, Colossi must go through the natural to bounce back between bases.
- Another map that leads to many split map scenarios involving Brood Lords and Infestors.



- Ease against Roaches: 5/10. While the rush distances are extremely long on this map, the potential third bases are quite open and the wide ramps leading up to them are hard to wall off. Variations of Roach/Ling pressure are quite common; usually it's defended by positioning your army near your third bases and relying on cannons, 1-2 Sentries and rallied Immortals to defend the natural.
- Ease against Mutalisks: 3/10. The size of the map and expansion layout make this a very good Muta map. Bouncing between the third and the main is particularly problematic as it's impossible to blink between them
- All-ins: The long rush distances make Immortal or Stargate based attacks problematic, and the lack of strong positions for forcefields make Sentry based attacks not very popular. Generally macro play is preferred on this map.
- 3 base pushes: Muta play is very strong and common, which makes it hard to have an opportunity for a 3base timing. Against Infestor midgames, 3 base attacks are quite powerful as there is a huge zone that the Zerg needs to defend, and it's very hard to get enough Spine Crawlers up in time to cover both the area in between natural and third, the fourth base, and the secondary entrance to the third.
- Extra notes: the size of the map means that in the lategame it's very easy to avoid the Zerg's Infestor/Brood Lord army while taking out fringe expansions and buying time for an air switch. Combined with the size of the main, this makes Warp Prism harass particularly effective.

5.2 HISTORY OF PVZ [top](#)

- ***July 27, 2010:**
Starcraft 2-Wings of Liberty is Released
- **All of 2010: One Base All-ins**
For most of 2010, one base all-ins comprised of much of PvZ play. For one thing, all the maps used in early WoL were ones that had hard to defend naturals. Protoss all-ins were also stronger than they were now with both longer warp Gate research time and long Blink research time. Also, Zerg defense against these all-ins would not become standardized and optimized for a while.
- ***October 14, 2010: Patch 1.1.2**
Fungal Growth now prevents Blink.
Roach Range increased from 3 to 4.
The fungal change didn't affect the metagame so much as builds were rather unrefined at the time and mass Blink Stalkers was uncommon. The Roach buff was once hailed as the end of FFE, but as we all now know, this was wrong.
- **2010-Early 2011: Roach Hydra as the First Standardized Composition**
In the earliest stages of PvZ, Roaches, Hydras, and eventually Corruptors against Colossi was the norm for Zergs. As maps were relatively small, the slow speed of Hydras was less of a problem. Another thing to note is that Infestors were much weaker, and as a result late game transitioning to Hive was considered much weaker.
- **Late 2010: 3 Gate Expand**
Around the second GSL, 3 Gate expand emerged as the standard build for PvZ. It was perceived as an extremely safe build that got a large number of valuable Sentries up rather early to start building up energy.
- **Late 2010: Gateway Pushes**
Gateway pushes or even all-ins off of two bases were fairly standard and strong before players figured out how to defend them. A great example was during a showmatch between Nony and Idra where Nony won solely on the back of Gateway pushes. Huk was also known for almost exclusively employing variations of Gateway all-ins and pressures in his PvZ play.
- **Late 2011-Early 2012: Forge Fast Expand Gradually Gains Popularity**
Although players like Ace and TT1 were known to FFE on every single map, by the end of 2011, FFE would not become popular among the masses for a long time. Slowly, it began infiltrating the metagame, partly due to new maps that were better for FFE, and by mid 2011, FFE was practically seen in 100% of all PvZ matches. It would remain so for a full year...
- ***January 10, 2011: Patch 1.2.0**
Phoenix build time decreased from 45 to 35.
Stargate builds were becoming popular at the time, especially with Guineapig showing a notable Stargate game. This Phoenix buff simply encouraged Protoss to use Phoenix even more and allowed Phoenix harass to become much more effective.
- **Early 2011: Stargate Play Becomes a Standard**
Throughout 2010 and early 2011, Stargate builds were becoming very popular among top players. It was known for its security, harass potential, and ability to force certain units from opponents. In fact, the first widely employed standardized macro build in PvZ was a Stargate build heavily used MC that brought him many wins and even a GSL championship. This build, and slight variations of it, are still used to this date.

- Early 2011-Mid 2012: Two Base All-ins**
 For the longest time, FFE into a two base all-in was the norm in PvZ. A prominent example is that HongunPrime, one of the best players of this time, was known for always Blink Stalker all-ining every chance he got. PvZ had evolved beyond the one base stage, but it would be a while before three base macro play would become common for Protoss.
- *March 23, 2011: Patch 1.3.0**
 Infestor Fungal Growth Stun duration decreased from 8 to 4 seconds and Damage increased by +30% vs. armored units.
 The dreaded Infestor patch was one of darkest days for Protoss. The Infestor suddenly instantaneously from an oft used unit into an omnipresent one, seeing as Infestors were now able to effectively counter any Protoss unit with a combination of its three deadly spells. Two base Infestor builds became popular for a time period as a direct result of this build. New timings with Infested Terrans were also commonly used and experimented with, most notably by Monster and DRG.
- April 28, 2011: Losiria Roach Ling All-ins against Gateway expands**
 [Losiria vs Alicia on Termius SE from GSL 2011 May.](#)
 [Losiria vs Alicia on Metalopolis from GSL 2011 May.](#)
 Losiria successfully took 2 games off of Alicia in the GSL using a Roach/Ling all-in versus 3 Gate expand. Afterwards, for a period of about 3 months, this all-in became extremely popular both on ladder and in tournament play. As a result of this all-in, Gateway expansion builds were forced to become much more rigid and conform to certain standards. For example, skipping warp-in cycles for tech became a no-no, good sim city was imperative, and forcefielding in this situation was refined. More importantly perhaps, this all-in was one of the reasons 3 Gate expand began to fall out of favor.
- May 2011: One Gate Expand**
 As a direct response to the dreaded Roach Ling All-in versus 3 Gate expands, the 1 Gate expand was developed. First used and popularized by MC, Protoss would follow-up an expansion with a Stargate or Dark Shrine, so he could meet any all-ins with either a Void Ray or DTs.
- *May 10, 2011: Patch 1.3.3**
 Cybernetics Core Research Warp Gate time increased from 140 to 160.
 Gateway Sentry train time decreased from 42 to 37.
 This change, intended to mainly affect PvP, had little result on PvZ. However, it did mark the death of 3 Gate expands entirely, as 1 Gate or 2 Gate expands seemed to be much more efficient, while the threat of a 4Gate with a fake Nexus presented by 3Gate expand was greatly diminished.
- Summer 2011: FFE vs 3 Hatch Zerg as a Standard**
 By the summer of 2011, the traditional FFE vs 3 Hatch openings in PvZ were finally becoming solidified into what we know today and we would enter refinement stages of PvZ.
- Fall 2011: Mutalisk popularity**
 Mutalisk play, which includes both two base Mutalisk and three base Mutalisk play, became extremely popular at this time. There are a few explanations for this trend including favorable maps and general Protoss inexperience against Mutalisks at this time.
- November 20, 2011: Leenock's Roach/Ling All-ins**
 [Leenock vs Naniwa from MLG Providence, Grand Finals.](#)
 At the MLG Championships of 2011, the biggest gathering of professional players there had been at that time, Leenock took out Naniwa in the grand finals with six straight Roach/Ling All-ins against Naniwa's FFE. Although there were no lasting metagame effects, These types of all-ins would become extremely popular in the coming few months.
- *September 20, 2011: Patch 1.4.0**
 Stalker Blink research time increased from 110 to 140.
 Warp Prism Shields increased from 40 to 100.
 Fungal Growth damage changed from 36 (+30% armored) to 30 (40 vs Armored).
 Neural Parasite range decreased from 9 to 7.

The Blink Stalker hardly changed PvZ, as the increase only really affected one base Blink builds, which were obsolete by this time. The Warp Prism shield buff encouraged Protoss players to use Warp Prisms much more, whereas only Hero and JYP had used them previously. The Infestor nerfs stopped Infestors from being an all-powerful unit, able to counter anything Protoss made. As a result, 2 base Infestor builds all but disappeared from mainstay play, except perhaps from the likes of Yugioh, Life, and Suhoshin.

- **Late 2011: Brood Lords Gain Increasing Popularity**

As the mid stages of the game began to be figured out, Zergs were quickly realizing how to survive until late game and also the immense power of the Brood Lord against Protoss ground armies. Brood Lord based late game armies became so popular that eventually they became the standard and many players even started rushing for them, with the fastest Brood Lord coming at about 15 minutes.

- **Late 2011: +1 Four Gate Becomes a Popular Follow-up to FFE**

During this time, the +1 Four Gate pressure became popular due to Zerg's inexperience with this relatively new build. It would usually damage Zergs and often confused them because of the seemingly infinite number of possible follow-ups. Hero popularized it, using it in the majority of his games during this period. MC perhaps used it to the greatest success, employing all its possible variations. Eventually though, Zergs began to figure out this timing, usually getting a 7 minute Roach Warren or fast Speedlings to prevent the attack. Today it is used much more sparingly.

- **Early 2012: Mothership becomes a standard versus Brood Lords**

Although Motherships were used before this time by innovators such as Kiwikaki, players continued to try to fight Brood Lords with Stalker Colossi balls until this time period. By now, players had figured out that the only way to combat large Infestor/Brood Lord balls was with vortex and Archon toilets, so they began getting Motherships earlier and earlier with each passing month.

- ***February 21, 2012: Patch 1.4.3**

Phoenix -A new upgrade has been added to the Fleet Beacon: Anion Pulse-Crystals. This upgrade increases Phoenix weapon range by +2.

As Protoss were having problems with Mutalisks a few months prior(see Fall 2011), Blizzard decided that they needed more options to combat the dreaded Mutalisks. The Phoenix upgrade allowed Phoenix to kite Mutalisks indefinitely without affecting their ability against any other types of units. This allowed Stargate openings to deal with Mutalisks much more effectively and eventually lead to a severe decrease in those kinds of openings from Zerg.

- **Early 2012: Stephano Roach Max Out**

Stephano introduces a revolutionary build that is simply an optimization of a Roach max. The goal? To max out on as many upgraded Roaches as possible, his record being 10:50 on his stream. This build is perhaps the most metagame-influencing build of our modern time as it forced Protoss to severely optimize their builds against this possibility. As a result, many Protoss builds were made obsolete and ineffectual, and the remaining builds became the much more standardized builds we know today that are introduced in this guide.

- **Summer 2012-Present: Immortal/Sentry All-in**

The classic Immortal/Sentry all-in began invading the metagame around the time and as turned into a Protoss version of 1-1-1. One complaint is that the build takes much less skill to execute than it takes to defend it. Another is that even if your opponent knows it's coming, he has to play perfectly in order to beat it. Even now, this all-in has very high win rates and shows no sign of slowing down.

- **Summer 2012: Carriers in Late Game Play**

Around this time, players really began to understand that Carriers are the best option to battle against the intimidating maxed Infestor/Brood Lord army. Liquid'HerO seemed to be ahead of the curve on this one, as he was the first to employ this unit regularly.

- Summer 2012: New Openings**
 As a result of the perceived staleness and predictability of the FFE, new builds began popping out at this time. First is the callback to the old 1 Gate FE, which players such as Seed, Younghwa, Naniwa, and Oz mixed in their builds. Second is the Gate Nexus expand which can hit faster Warpgate timings, which was used by players like Socke, Naniwa, and Titan. Still, the vast majority of Protoss players still stuck to the tried and true FFE. Finally, there have begun to be FFE into 1 Gate 3rd Nexus builds that are commonly used nowadays, especially on Entombed Valley. These builds open up an entirely new dynamic to the game and are still not yet heavily explored.
- May 10, 2012: Patch 1.4.3 Balance Update**
 Observer build time decreased from 40 to 30 seconds
 Overlord movement speed increased from 0.4687 to 0.586, that is 25% faster
 Queen anti-ground weapon attack range increased from 3 to 5
 No really big changes here for PvZ. It became easier for Zerg to Overlord scout in the early game, so that they may have a maximum of three overlords near the Protoss base instead of two. Probe scouting became harder, as it became easier for Queens to deny probes. The observer change allowed Robotics-based macro builds to be come ever so slightly more efficient.
- Fall 2012-Present: Fast Hive Play as a Standard**
 By this time, Protoss got better at defending mid-game pressures and Zerg got better at dealing with managing late game scenarios. For these reasons, most Zergs have determined that teching as fast as possible to Hive was the best strategy.
- Late Fall 2012-Present: Three Base All-ins**
 Because of the perceived difficulty of playing against Brood Lords, Protoss have mostly opting for Three Base All-ins instead of macro play in this time period.
- The Future of the Match-up: Fast Thirds off of One Gateway**
 Fast third bases and transitions off of third bases still have to be widely figured out by both Protoss and Zergs, as it is a rather new tactic. From Protoss, you still have crazy transitions like fast third into Stargate that Oz uses. From Zergs, they will have to learn to punish especially greedy fast thirds as well as adapt to the early boom in economy Protoss can get from employing this build. Finally, Zergs will have to learn how to hold off some early 3 base timing attacks that have been catching them off-guard while they get too greedy after seeing the early third.
- The Future of the Match-up: Carrier Refinement**
 While most players now agree that Carriers are the correct late game solution for Protoss, the timing of the Carrier transition has yet to be refined. Carrier transitions differ widely from player to player and even from game to game. For example, in the span of one series, Seed both turtled for 40 minutes before getting Carriers in one game, while getting them asap, before a Mothership in the next. Carrier engagements are also far from optimal, as even professional players make mistakes with Carrier battles these days, from not getting enough Templar to support, to fighting with 4+ Carriers still building in Stargates, to picking fights in bad positions.
- The Future of the Match-up: HotS**
 Of course, much of what we wrote will all change once the HotS expansion comes out.

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 [Replay Pack](#)

A FUN STATS

- **Fun Stats: Number of Games Listed With this Protoss**

Liquid'HerO: 43

Creator: 38

Rain: 36

MC: 34

Parting: 33

Seed: 24

Squirtle: 23

Oz: 13

Sase: 11

Puzzle: 11

JYP: 9

Younghwa: 8

Alicia: 7

Genius: 7

hero[join]: 7

Tear: 6

Brown: 6

Naniwa: 5

San: 5

Ace: 4

Huk: 4

Mana: 4

State: 4

Crank: 3

Cruncher: 3

Vampire: 3

Jangbi: 3

Babyknight: 2

Finale: 2

First: 2

Grubby: 2

Insur: 1

Tails: 1

Sage: 1

Tassadar: 1

Titan: 1

TT1: 1

Maps: Times the following maps are played on in this guide

Daybreak: 94

Entombed Valley: 64

Cloud Kingdom: 57

Ohana: 49

Antiga Shipyards: 35

Metropolis: 29

Whirlwind: 14

Atlantis Spaceship: 12

Abyssal City: 7

Shakruas Plateau: 6

Dual Sight: 4

Bel'Shir Vestige: 3

Tal'Darim Altar: 3

Terminus RE: 2

Bel'Shir Beach: 1

Metalopolis 1

Xel'Naga Caverns: 1

Tournaments: Times games tournaments are mentioned in this guide

GSL: 104
WCS: 80
MLG: 37
GSTL: 36
IPL/IPTL: 32
HSC: 17
NASL: 16
Dreamhack: 14
TSL4: 10
OSL: 7
EGMC: 4
IEM: 3

Zerg Units: Times Zerg units are mentioned in the guide

Zergling/Ling: 313
Roach: 301
Muta/Mutalisk: 211
Brood Lord: 162
Infestor: 124
Baneling: 83
Overlord: 48
Hydra/Hydralisk: 39
Queen: 36
Drong: 35
Ultra/Ultralisk: 31
Corruptor: 28
Infested Terran: 3
Overseer: 3

Protoss Units: Times Protoss units are mentioned in the guide

Stalker: 227
Zealot/Chargelot: 201
Immortal: 149
Colossus/Colossi: 130
Probe: 109
Sentry: 103
Warp Prism: 95
Templar: 81
Phoenix: 66
Observer/Obs: 66
Void Ray: 66
Archon: 55
Mothership: 40
Carrier: 39
Dark Templar/DT: 39

Spells: Times spells are mentioned in the guide

Blink: 116
Forcefield: 63
Chrono: 49
Charge: 17
Charge: 16
Fungal: 12
Neural: 2

Buildings: Times buildings are mentioned in the guide

Gateway: 236
Robotics/Robo: 186
Cannon: 152

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Pylon: 103
Nexus: 98
Twilight: 89
Hive: 86
Pool: 81
Hatchery: 72
Forge: 67
Cyber Core: 62
Spine: 51
Lair: 22
Spire: 19
Spore: 16
Dark shrine: 10
Infestation Pit: 5
Templar Archives: 3

Miscellaneous: Times miscellaneous terms are mentioned in the guide

Zerg: 456
All-in: 236
Third: 184
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Timing: 140
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Greedy: 18
Metagame: 13

B CREDITS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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rsvp: *FFE, Stargate builds, Fast Third builds, 2 base Zerg builds.*

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Teoita

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- [*PvZ: 1 Assim 1 Gate FE*](#) by CecilSunkure
- [*Protoss FAQs*](#) by monk
- [*PvZ: Macro PvZ and How to Take a Third*](#) by monk
- [*PvZ: Dealing with Mutalisks*](#) by rsvp

The following works by other writers were also referenced in this guide:

- [*PvZ: One Base Robo*](#) by Lobber
- [*PvZ: Robo Turtle*](#) by EmpireMista

For more content from the main contributors of this guide see the following links:

content by monk., 10

- [*PvP: An Overview/Spectating PvP*](#)
- [*PvP: MC defensive 3 Gate*](#)
- [*PvP: Rain vs Parting OSL Analysis*](#)
- [*PvP: Robo Twilight Style*](#)
- [*PvT: CreatorPrime PvT*](#)
- [*PvT: Creator vs Sting TSL4 Analysis*](#)
- [*PvT: MC's 1 Gate expand*](#)
- [*PvZ: Creator vs Life TSL4 Analysis*](#)
- [*PvZ: Lessons learned from Brown vs Losira*](#)
- [*PvZ: Macro PvZ and How to Take a Third*](#)

content by Alejandrisha, 14

- [*PvP: \[GSL\]Group H Analysis*](#)
- [*PvP: 1 Gate expand*](#)
- [*PvP: 4 Gate is dead: 1 gate and 2 gate builds that don't lose to 4gate*](#)
- [*PvP: 4 Gate, why you should never lose to it...*](#)

- [PvP: 11 Gate: The Tin Man](#)
- [PvT: 3 Gate Stalker Sentry Press](#)
- [PvT: 16 Nexus: A Second Look](#)
- [PvT: Got Balls? 15 Nexus into Speed Prism Colossus](#)
- [PvT: HuK! 20 food 1 Gate FE](#)
- [PvT: Learning from a Bad Game #1](#)
- [PvT: Warp Prism 4 Gate](#)
- [PvZ: 3 Base 3 Colossus](#)
- [PvZ: HerOic FFE](#)
- [PvZ: Small Timing Attack Thread](#)
- [Screen Hotkeys: An Easy Way to Improve](#)

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- [PvP: 2 Warpgate Rush \(Fake 4Gate\)](#)
- [PvP: 3 Stalker Robo](#)
- [PvP: Adel's No Gas PvP](#)
- [PvP: DT FE \(Chargelot Archon\)](#)
- [PvP: DT -> Chargelot/Archon](#)
- [PvP: Modern 3 Stalker](#)
- [PvP: Twilight Council PvP](#)
- [PvT: 2 Gate Fast Obs](#)
- [PvT: 3 Gate Aggressive Expo](#)
- [PvZ: 1 Assimilator 1 Gate FE](#)
- [PvZ: CvZ: Immortal/Stalker/Templar](#)
- [30 Minutes of Micro!](#)
- [BW Music → SC2 Replacement](#)
- [How to Improve Efficiently at SC2](#)
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2012.11.22 `document.write("Hello World!");`

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