



Cover image

A losers guide to FFXIV PVP

FFXIV overhauled PvP in the 6.10 patch. The FFXIV Reddit is awash with crystalline conflict memes and people singing its praises. There are many, many guides on how to play and how to “git gud” but that's not what this is about. This guide is for those who aren't exactly sure if they want to dip their toes in, or just want more information before giving it a crack. So, what does PvP consist of, and what if I'm terrible at it?



A chance to show off silly adventure portraits

What is ffxiv PvP?

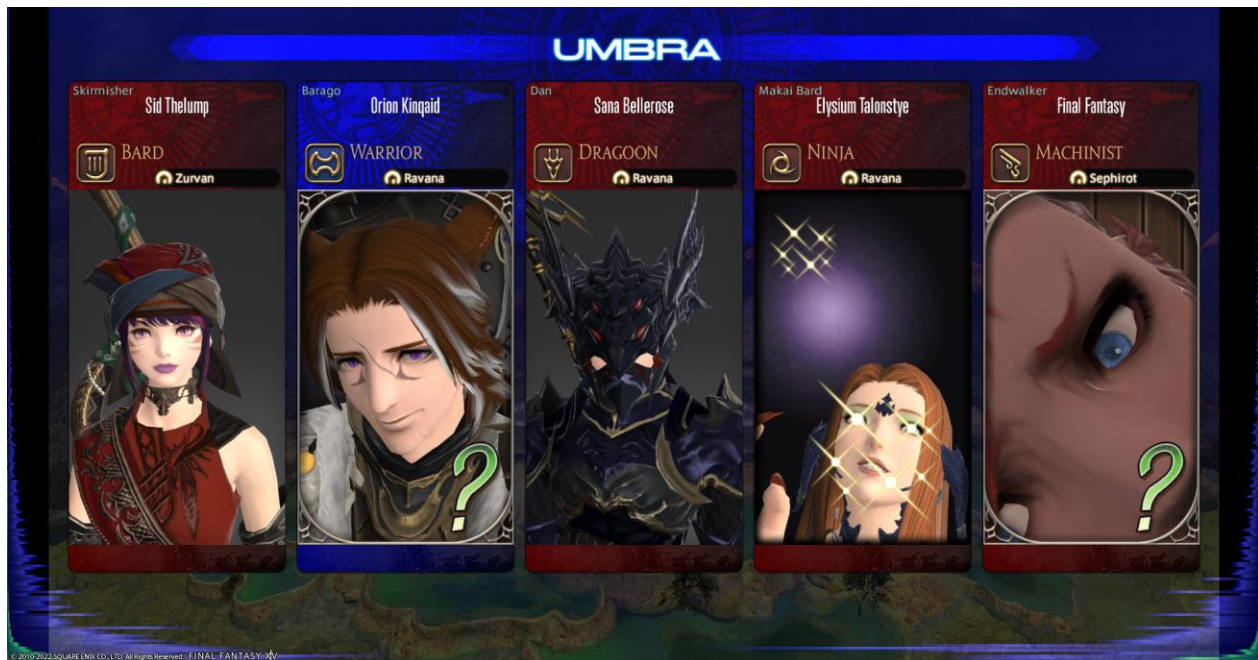
Obviously PvP means player versus player, but what does it entail? FFXIV has four PvP modes. The feast, rival wings, frontline and crystalline conflict. The feast and rival wings are currently offline and are unable to be done until their new seasons start.

The feast is two teams of two competing for medals.

Rival wings is based on MOBAs. Players need to destroy the other team's core before the other team destroys theirs.

Frontline is a 72-team based PvP match. It's three alliances. Three groups of eight make up either the Maelstrom, immortal flames or twin adder teams.

Crystalline conflict is the new addition and the one everyone is talking about. Two teams of five try to push the crystal past two checkpoints.



And mine is completely boring

Why play PvP?

A lot of people are playing PvP because of the new mode. The Dev team have completely overhauled the way in which PvP is played as well. They have massively reduced button bloat, meaning players often only have five or six attack buttons, and three or four defensive or healing buttons.

On top of that, PvP has access to things players can't get elsewhere. Like the Garo event that is currently happening, which is a PvP only event. It is very daunting if players aren't PvP minded, and I know I was intimidated. The reason I keep going back however is because players are still rewarded, even for failing. It's half the amount of a win, but it still feels like progression. The rewards aren't exclusive to winners, it just requires a bit more grinding. A losing streak still sucks, but at least players feel like they are getting somewhere in spite of this.



Red team Astra starting location from crystalline conflict

But what if I suck?

Take it from a loser like me. In casual, it doesn't matter. There will be times when you feel like a great player and there will be times you will be frustrated. That's the nature of the game. In games like frontline where it's a massive number of players, one person will not make a huge difference. It matters more in crystalline conflict because there are fewer players, but that doesn't mean people are expecting one player to carry the team. Players will most likely experience more losses than wins but what matters most is trying to find the job and playstyle that suits them the most. Go in aggressive with a Melee DPS? Hold the line as a tank? Not heal as a healer? (For some odd reason, only white mage has the ability to heal in PVP at the moment.)



The wolves den pier, where a comforting gesture looks more like a slap. (That could be the size difference)

Getting started

So now that PvP looks a little more appealing, how do you start? To unlock the Wolves' Den, there's a few requirements that must be met. Player's need have upgraded their class by acquiring a job stone. They must also have a high enough rank with their Grand Company. There will be a quest "No longer a pup" available at the chosen Grand Company base. This will unlock the Wolves den pier. This is the PvP hub and it's where players can exchange wolf marks for gear, emotes and mounts. Most importantly, it is the place to set PvP hotbars. Using the PvP profile, players can place their abilities onto the hotbar. Any class with a job stone will automatically change to the PvP hotbars in wolves' den so don't panic if the hotbar is suddenly full of crosses that can't be used. The PvP profile will also give access to the series malmstones(mile stones in English). These are the rewards earned as PvP is played. The wolves' den has three NPC's that will give out more information on any of the three team-based modes.



Look Ma! No actions!

Do not enter any PvP without setting a hotbar first. While it is possible to enter PvP via the duty finder, unless a player has used that job before, they will have no available actions. It would then be a scramble to set the hotbar up before the match starts and it's not exactly conducive to thinking logically.

When setting the hotbars, there will be actions that cannot be assigned. Often this means they are conditional and can only be used after using another ability. This keeps the number of actions down, making it a lot easier to manage. Take time to read what each action does, as some will have bonuses such as bind or silence and they can be the difference between surviving or dying.

Unlike dungeons, PvP has no tank, healer or dps requirements, so players can be whatever job they want. What works in PvE, may not work in PvP. Best to try everything. One of the best things about pvp hotbars is that every job will have a sprint, guard, elixir, heal and purify ability.



It is customary to annoy friends setting up their pvp hotbars

Sprint is sprint, but for some reason, pvp has its own sprint so don't forget to add it. Once turned on, it will stay on until another action is used.

Guard reduces damage taken and ignores pulls and pushes. It also slows the movement speed of the person guarding. Using another ability turns it off. So, try not to guard and then recuperate straight after as it will cancel the guard.

Elixir replenishes HP and MP to full, but takes 4 and a half seconds to use. During that time, a player can't move or use actions. If they are hit, the cast is interrupted. There's no limit to how many Elixirs one can use. However, the long cast time offsets players using them constantly.

The heal, recuperate, is instant 15000 heal but uses MP. It has no cool down and is only limited to use when there's enough MP. This is the main heal ability for **all** classes. White mage also has access to cure II and cure III, but they are very limited.

Purify is very important. Players can be affected by status effects. Purify removes them and prevents them from affecting the player for a few seconds. Sometimes. (This ability seems to need a rework as it doesn't always provide the immunity described).

While it's not necessary to know how the game modes work before jumping in, it will give a slight advantage. At least for the first game. Or two. Possibly three.

Team based game modes

Crystalline conflict

The newest game mode is also the quickest. Matches will take around five minutes depending on the teams. Two teams of five face off to move their crystal from the middle of the arena to their enemy's side. Players are either on the blue team Umbra or the red team Astra. Like all PvP there is no job requirements. The objective is to push the crystal which requires a player on it. If an opposing player is also on the crystal, it'll stop moving until either only red or blue are on it. Typical payload type gameplay.

Unlocking crystalline conflict is as easy as doing the "a pup no longer" quest from the grand company players allied with and speaking to the crystalline conflict attendant NPC.

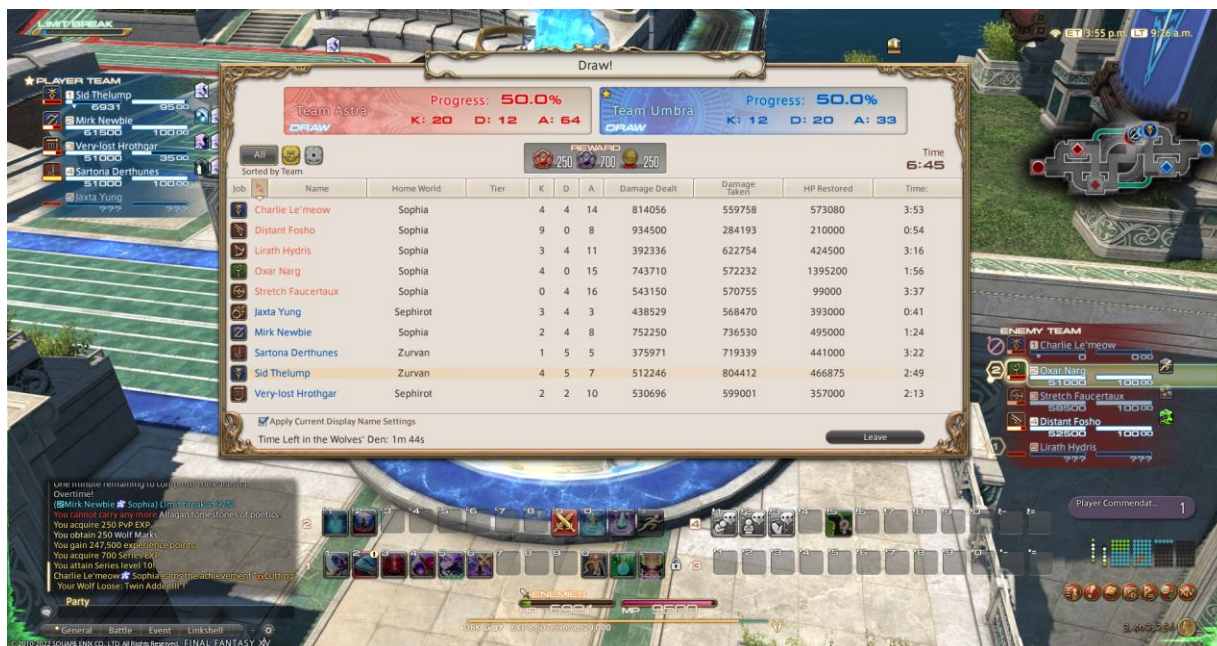


A very close match taking place on The volcanic heart.

As of writing, there are only three available arenas. A base arena, Palaistra, a wind aspected area, Cloud nine and a fire aspected arena, the Volcanic heart. Each arena is slightly different in layout. Palaistra has L shaped sprint zones, while the Volcanic heart has t shaped ones. These sprint zones allow players to run faster than normal. Often these are the long way around allowing players to move around quickly when not pushing the crystal. There will also be potions, one per side. Players only need to run over it to pick it up. It's worth picking up a potion if at full health so the enemy can't use it but if a teammate is running towards it, and will get there first, it's best to leave it for them.

Cloud nine has wind portals which quickly move a character from one area to another. It also has turbulence which throws players into the air after a countdown. This can be countered by using the guard ability. The other way to counter the damage is to try to be on top of one of the Chocobo markers. Players will still be flung into the air, but will be given a black Chocobo

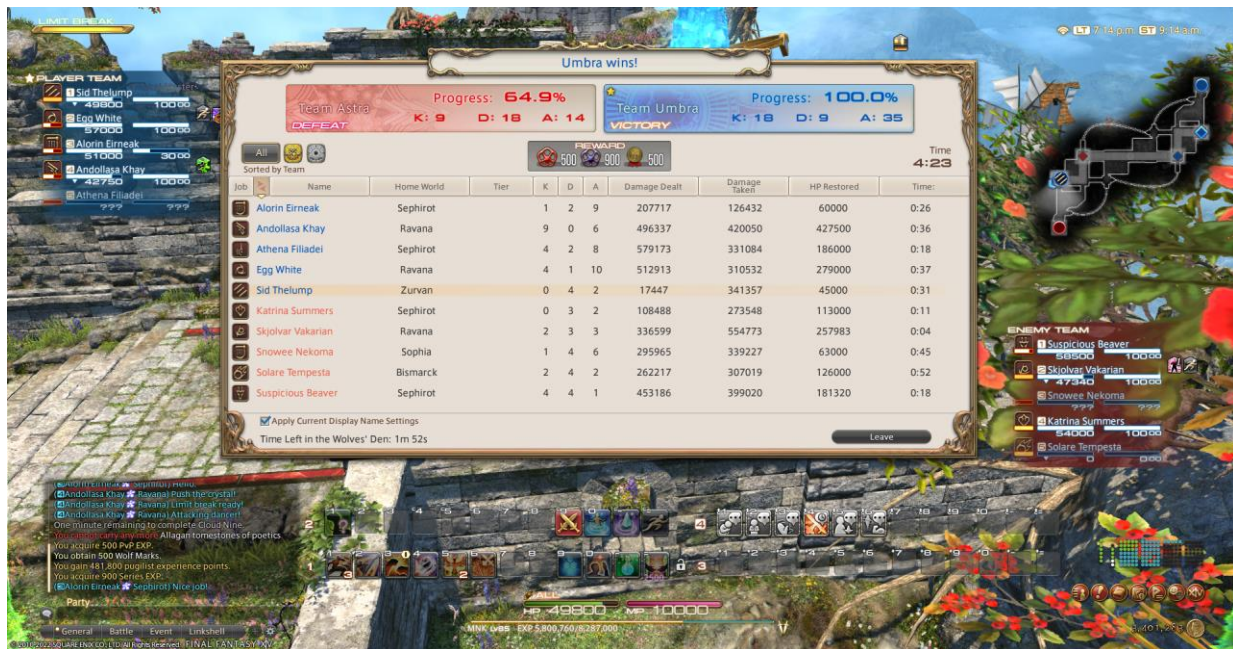
feather. This will negate the fall damage. Only one person is given the black Chocobo feather, so if two people stand on the same marker, one will still take damage.



Palastria arena. The green lines on the map are the aforementioned sprint lanes.

The volcanic heart appears to be at the base of O'ghomoro mountain. After a certain amount of time, it will give a warning of incoming igneous matter. Fire bombs will show up, cutting off two corridors in a cross. This includes the crystal's path. Often it is a choice to either take a hit to three quarters of health to keep the crystal moving, or dodging the explosion to save health and picking off those enemies who remained. A common strategy is to try and bind enemy players so they get caught in the attack. After the explosion, red spheres will be left behind. These are a stacking-based damage boost. If there are any nearby, it's best to grab them to increase damage output, so as not only to boost the damage of the player, but to deny the enemy the same boost. This is my least favourite arena by far. I hope to see one representing each of the elements eventually.

The arenas change every ninety minutes. In the duty finder, it will say which arena is currently active, how long until the arena change, and which one it will be. It will also list the last arena and how long until that one is available in the rotation as well.



Cloud 9 arena with its special wind based jump arrows

Rival wings

This is a MOBA based pvp mode. It's currently off season so I haven't played it but going by my experience in the gold saucers Verminion, I would be terrible at this too. It might be changed, it's unknown for now what's happening with it until it opens up for its season.

It only requires the "a pup no longer" quest and speaking to the Rival wings attendant in the wolves den to unlock.

The general play is that two teams compete to break the other's core. The core is protected by two towers that must be destroyed first otherwise the core will be protected by a shield. It's fairly standard MOBA gameplay.

Frontline

Frontline is the large-scale war games between the Twin Adder, the Maelstrom and the immortal flames. They are a series of capture the flag type battles, but each one takes place in a different location, with different rules. The team that reaches the point limit first, wins.

Unlocking frontline requires the quest "like civilized men and women" from the grand company as well as speaking to the frontline NPC at the wolves den.



The starting point of Danshig Nadaam for the Maelstrom

Kills will contribute to the points and deaths will remove them. These don't matter in comparison to the main goal of each game. Staying with the group and trying to achieve the objective is the most important factor. Next would be trying not to die and then getting kills. It's very easy to tunnel vision, and then over extend, allowing the other alliance to pick people off. Always keep the map open as being able to see where the enemies are is incredibly helpful. Mounts can be used in frontline which allows for faster travel in the bigger arena. With that general advice out of the way, what are the rules of each game mode?



That yellow thing in the distance is worth a lot of points. Twin Adder and Immortal flames were fighting over it for at least 7 minutes, possibly longer.

Secure

Secure takes place on the borderland ruins. It requires the teams to occupy locations on the round island. There's also a large tower in the middle of the battleground. Occasionally, enemies will spawn in the centre and must be killed. The bulk of the match will be trying to hold at least two of the six locations, but don't forget about the enemies in the centre as they will give 25 bonus points for small ones and 300 for large. Players only need to stand in the location for the flags to be removed and then changed.

Shatter

Shatter takes place on The fields of glory. Each grand company will have a base. Avoiding other companies from taking this base is imperative. Iceliths will activate randomly on the map. It will either be several small ones or a big one with a few small ones. Big ones are worth more points. Players need to break these iceliths and will be allocated points depending on how much damage they do.



Baham-butt. Baham-butt everywhere.

Seize

Seize takes place on Seal rock. Allagan transfer tomeliths will show up on the map. Players need to activate them to transfer the data to their grand company. Similar to Secure, other grand companies can come in and change it to theirs. This will mean a reduction in points for the original company that had it. Tomeliths will either be triangular, diamond or pentagon shaped with the latter being worth the most points. The pentagon ones are often hotly contested and will require defending.

Danshig Nadaam

Danshig Nadaam takes place on Onsal Hakir. Ovoo's will appear on the map randomly. They will be symbolized by a triangle, diamond or pentagon, slowly filling along the outer lines. They're also coloured coded. Blue is common, yellow is uncommon and gold is worth the most. When the shape is completely filled, the Ovoo can be claimed by one of the free companies. Like Shatter, once claimed they cannot be taken. This makes this mode very aggressive.



When the blue triangle fills up, it's time to lay claim to that Ovoo!

In frontline it is very easy to get lost and not know what to do. Follow the group, play the objective and try not to get pincered.

Modes change every 24 hours at the daily reset. It's worth getting acquainted with each type of game as it'll be a while before it changes to another one.



PVP via the duty finder

The feast

Like Rival wings, it's currently on its off season, so it can't be accessed as of patch 6.11. Unsure if that is because changes are inbound or not. We won't know until it opens. The feast is two teams of two collecting medals.



Teacher takes babies on a school excursion to a volcano. With knives.

So, at the end of all that, does PvP seem like an option? Has this alleviated, or added to, your fears? I think it's worth at least giving it a go as the rewards can be pretty sweet. Plus, if a loser like me can do it, anyone can. See you on the pier!