

Volume 2 - Chapter 68 - Heir Apparent

Thread Title: [(Mini) BUILD GUIDE] Mid-Tier Mobility Caster – Why Control Beats Raw Output

Posted by: MissyMoonlightMayhem

[VoidStryker_11]: Imao this guide is trash. any caster worth anything just stacks output and deletes the field. mobility builds are huge cope for people who just can't aim or stay safe

[MissyMoonlightMayhem]: Oh. Oh you're one of those? You really came in here, typed that out, read it, and still somehow decided to hit "post," huh?

Alright, then *fuck-face*, let's do this properly then.

First of all, if your entire understanding of Caster combat begins and ends with "stack output and delete the field," then congratulations—you have incurable brain damage.

Truly marvellous to see a lifeform function without a cerebral cortex. Always fascinating.

Now, I'm sure the first time you overheated your Burn and faceplanted in a mission, it felt *very* heroic.

Second: You clearly didn't even read the fucking guide. Not even a little.

You skimmed the header, saw the word *mobility*, and whatever poor excuse of a nutrient waste passes for your brain immediately shut off.

So I'll walk you through this *very slowly*, as I realize that even written words can straight up topple the three cells inside your head.

I didn't say: "*Output is bad.*"

I very clearly said: "*Unchecked output without control is a liability.*"

Here—since words seem *really* hard for you to follow—I'll be kind and use numbers.

[Graph Attached: "Mana Burn Rate vs Engagement Duration"]

See that red line? I realize that most mongrels like yourself are red-green blind, but I trust that you can still see the line, at the very least.

That's a *pure*-output build, like the one you're advocating for.

Notice how it spikes and then *falls off a cliff* at the three-minute mark? That's you. That's your ass overheating, panicking, and getting hard-countered by anyone with half a brain and any kind of control or suppression tool.

Now look at the blue line (that's the one that's higher up, for those unable to use logical reasoning).

That's the mobility-control hybrid presented here.

Lower peak, yes—but sustained pressure for *nine minutes longer* under combat stress.

Nine.

Fucking.

Minutes.

But no, of course, tell me again how “deleting the field” works so great. How it will definitely, *totally* still work, even when the field doesn't politely stand still and let you cosplay a god.

Also—since you brought up aiming—here's another one.

[Graph Attached: “Hit Confirmation Rate Under Lateral Threat”]

Notice how raw-output builds lose *over 40%* effectiveness once incoming vectors exceed two angles? That's because surprise, surprise: Being stationary turns you into a very expensive target dummy, you fucking moron.

Mobility isn't “cope” unless you're so far up your own ass that you can smell your own breath. Mobility is quite literally the main attribute that determines your ability to *stay alive long enough to even matter*.

And before you say it—yes, this data is pulled from live competitive matches in Peak-Tier ranked games, not your favorite highlight reel of cherry-picked clips from the noob-stomping streamers you likely get your fuck-ass information from.

All the sources are linked. Logs are public.

You can literally check them with your own damn eyes.

Use your eyes on something useful for once in your worthless life and inform yourself before you open your stupid mouth.

And maybe, before you ever open it again, make sure you understand *why* almost all the top-tier players don't play like brain-dead turrets that you seem to love so much.

Or don't. And keep fucking feeding everyone else.

Honestly, the competitive matches could use the free learning material.

Now get the fuck out of my thread you absolute waste of molecules.

[GhostInTheWire]: holy fuck

[GraveyardShift61]: And MMM claims yet another victim... when will they learn...?

[DataGoblin]: RIP mongrel-kun

[VoidStryker_11]: no need to be so toxic

[MissyMoonlightMayhem]: No, there *was* a need.

You walked into a technical thread, called months of testing “trash,” contributed nothing, and simply expected zero pushback.

That’s not how fucking life works outside your own little bubble of complete brain-damaged morons.

If you want vibes-only opinions, go scream into your squad chat.
If you comment here, bring data—or be ready to shut your fucking mouth.

Now, if you actually want to *understand* the guide instead of embarrassing yourself further, read section four.

Slowly. Preferably twice.

Or even thrice, because your three brain cells will have to work extra hard.

I’m done wasting bandwidth on your ass.

[VoidStryker_11 has been muted by Thread Admin]

AshesAndEchoes: this is definitely going into the hall of fame.

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[Build Guides Sub-Forum, Official “Arkion” Forum, PFC 940]

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Thea woke up the next morning feeling more refreshed than she had in... maybe ever.

It was a strange feeling, waking up the day after her birthday and not *just* feeling relief that it was over, but actually noticing other emotions as well.

Warmth settled in her chest as she thought back to the day before—spending the entire day with her squad, doing some of the most fun things she’d done in her entire life.

A soft, content smile crossed her face as she got out of bed and headed for the shower, wanting to start the day properly after how the last one had begun.

‘*Definitely **a lot** better than a barrel of dread in my chest,*’ she thought at the strange feelings inside her chest, unable to fully parse what they were all for.

It still felt unreal that she was looking back on a birthday so *fondly*.

It wasn't that she'd never had decent birthdays before—the Old Man had always done his best to make sure she didn't feel awful on those days—but over the past two years, stuck and mostly isolated inside the UHF station for Basic Training, that old dread had crept right back in.

So having her entire squad basically give up their day off just to make her birthday good...?

That was decidedly new.

And just thinking about it made her feel giddy.

'I really do have the best damn squad in the whole Galaxy...'

After the individual DM reviews, Corvus had pulled out his notes and made sure everyone's performance was properly reviewed as a group.

It had taken several hours to go through everything, thanks to the constant back-and-forth—plus the usual banter, mostly courtesy of Isabella—but it had all helped point out a lot of small details in everyone's actions that would definitely be useful to work on.

Even Thea had taken a lot away from it, especially when it came to leadership.

Corvus, in particular, had shown a lot of interest in giving her feedback there.

'At least nobody thinks I got my whole squad killed because of bad calls... That would've been the fucking worst.'

She'd also contributed plenty herself, doing her best to live up to her role as Alpha Squad's official Build Advisor. Everyone had gotten an updated rundown on what she thought they should focus on, Ability- and Attribute-wise—except Lucas, since she'd be spending a lot of time with him today figuring things out directly in the arcade.

There hadn't been any major changes to anyone's builds yet, but she'd made sure to stress one thing in particular: Resolve was becoming more and more important in her mind.

Not for Tier 0, but once they reached Tier 1, it would likely need to be a bigger investment going forward.

The more she experienced and learned about Psykers, the more important that Attribute seemed—even for people who had no interest in becoming Psykers themselves, just to stay safe.

'Some baseline investment should probably be standard for any Marine, if my gut's right about this. Even if Psykers are rare, even if they're limited by Focus or whatever other resource they use... the fact that some of the Powers the Rune priest showed me could wipe entire squads in seconds? That's seriously fucking problematic.'

The last thing Thea had done yesterday was spend a few more hours with Karania going over their DMs again in private, this time in much more detail.

It had mostly been Thea's DM under scrutiny, though, since there wasn't all that much feedback she could give on Karania's—most of Kara's run had been spent treating wounded Marines, after all.

Karania had been especially interested in the medical side of the whole “melting brain” incident, which Thea had reluctantly let her dig into properly. Her best friend had even pulled up the medical incident report written by Dan and Chester afterward, combing through it for extra details.

Thea still thought it was a bit over the top, but she couldn't deny that having someone care that deeply about her well-being felt reassuring in a way she wasn't used to.

They had also tried to figure out what exactly the “cooling herself down” part had been about. In the end, they agreed it had to be some kind of Psychic shenanigans that let Thea cool her own brain back to usable temperatures—but they hadn't managed to truly narrow down how or why it had worked at all.

Not that Thea didn't have her own suspicions.

Æht's words about a possible second Path—an Ice-based one—were still fresh in her mind.

‘But I should really double-check with the Rune priest first, before I start messing around with even more Psychic Powers I barely understand,’ she thought.

She'd promised Karania she'd reveal everything the Rune priest had to say about it once they had it figured out; hopefully after her next meeting with him, whenever that was going to happen.

Lately, that promise had started to feel like a growing sore point in their friendship, at least from her own perspective.

‘I can't just keep asking her to be patient... I really need to get this shit sorted, so I can stop hiding things from her.’

Despite the thoughts of having to hurry on that particular aspect, she finished up her morning routine without rushing, letting the lingering good mood carry her through it all.

After the shower, she got dressed in something comfortable but still decent enough to be seen in public: Dark blue, fitted pants with a bit of stretch to them, a soft long-sleeve top in muted white, and a lightweight, gray jacket she could shrug on or off as needed.

It wasn't flashy, but she thought it looked fairly put together—and more importantly, it *felt* comfortable to her. Not as comfortable as her favourite pullover, of course, but still good.

But heading to a public place like the arcade had felt like a good chance to keep refining her real-life transmog skills.

With that in mind, she hesitated for a moment before pulling out the make-up kit she'd surprisingly received as part of her gifts just yesterday.

The anonymous present had definitely freaked her out at first—no way around that, really—but she couldn't honestly say that she disliked it.

Sitting down in front of the mirror, she followed the beginner guide that had been attached, step by careful step.

Make-up as a whole had turned out to be harder than she'd hoped for when she had gotten started on it, but the provided guide was luckily very clear and the kit itself was *seriously* well stocked.

It made the whole thing oddly enjoyable, Thea had to admit.

She stuck to a light, natural look—just a touch of eye shadow and a few subtle adjustments.

Heavy make-up still wasn't her thing—

'Probably will never be...'

—but a little polish had never hurt anyone's evaluations at a transmog contest.

Once she was finally ready, she took a last look in the mirror, nodded to herself, and grabbed her things.

Then she stepped out of her room into Alpha Squad's common room, a small smile tugging at her lips. Lucas was already at the kitchen table, clearly waiting for her while working his way through a plate of breakfast pancakes.

She headed over to join him with a quick morning greeting, aiming for a proper serving of fluffy breakfast pancakes herself—and from there, it would be straight to the arcade together for an exciting day of build theory...

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PoV: Evelynne Midra Sen

'Today, today, today...!' was the only thought ringing through Evelynne's head as she paced back and forth in front of the agreed upon arcade on the Sovereign's entertainment deck.

She had almost died on the spot when she'd gotten the message from Callahan asking whether she was available for their scheduled "exchange of knowledge regarding Rachel Masters," as the himbo of a man had put it in his text.

But the only thing she had really read in the entire message had been four simple words: "Thea will be there."

Eve hadn't slept a wink since then, which was starting to become a dangerous precedent when it came to her dealings with MMM's alter ego.

'Or real persona, I guess...? Yeah. Probably real persona.'

But how could she have slept, when there had been so much to prepare? When her whole life had been building up to this very day? How was she supposed to just close her eyes and rest?

No. That was clearly impossible.

Instead, she had spent the time strategizing, as was only natural for a Sen.

She needed the perfect plan—not only to prove herself utterly indispensable to her Thea going forward, thus binding herself irrevocably to MMM's future, but also to throw out every hook she could manage at once and see which ones might catch in Thea's wake.

The last three hours had been spent cycling through over a hundred different outfit combinations to find the perfect one. Another full hour had gone into her make-up alone.

Everything had *had* to be perfect.

The only thing that wasn't perfect, no matter how much she tried to fix it, was the one thing she had been trained to control since the moment she'd been born—*herself*.

'*You are embarrassing everyone in the Sen family, Evelyne. Get yourself under control!*' She scolded herself over and over. But the giddy excitement and nervous anxiety tangled up in her chest simply refused to listen.

'*Your parents would be utterly ashamed of you, Evelyne. Dear Emperor...*'

But then again... how was she *supposed* to stay in control?

She was about to not only meet MMM *in person*, but actually interact with her for an extended period of time. *Private* conversations. Build theory. *Anything* that came to her mind, as long as she proved herself worthy.

How could *anyone* expect her to stay calm in a situation like this?!

One more time she went over her preparations, checking herself over in the darkened glass facade of the arcade for the twenty-seventh time—she had instinctively counted.

The black and dark blue summer dress sat perfectly on her frame, the fabric light and flowing while still clinging *just* enough in the right places. It was sleeveless, with thin straps and a softly cut neckline that merely hinted at what lay below, the dark tone playing beautifully against her pale-white skin.

The dress fell to just above her knees, the hem moving subtly every time she shifted her weight, giving her that carefully balanced look she'd been aiming for—mysterious and cute, yet simultaneously quietly alluring.

Her raven-black hair was braided with meticulous care into the usual clean, elegant braid running down and ending in a single tail resting over her left shoulder. Loose bangs framed her face in a near-perfect box, softening her features while drawing attention to her eyes and lips.

The light-violet eyeshadow and soft-crimson lipstick she'd chosen matched the mood of the outfit perfectly, adding just enough color contrast to the incandescent white of her skin to make anyone's gaze linger.

Her eyes flicked downward, taking in the finer details as well; as that was what this was all about.

The dark-crimson lace of her bra—colour-matched with her lipstick, of course—was just barely visible beneath the top of the dress' neckline, peeking out in a way that looked entirely accidental—but *very much* wasn't.

She wasn't exactly well endowed, and she knew it better than anyone, but even just an average bust like hers could be made unfathomably captivating with the right setup.

The rest of her underwear matched, of course, the same lace hidden beneath the fabric of her dress, chosen less out of expectation and more out of preparedness.

Just in case.

Her ears heated at the inevitable thought that followed—of real, *personal* time with her MMM—and she immediately shut it down, schooling her expression and straightening her posture.

Seduction wasn't the point. If it happened, it happened.

She'd try, of course.

But that wasn't why she was here.

Making herself indispensable came first and was the primary objective.

Even if she could almost feel her Thea's unfathomably skillful fingers tracing over her soft skin, the warmth suffusing her and—

She cut the thought off hard, jaw tightening as she scolded herself internally.

'Get it the-fuck together, Evelyne!'

It was embarrassing for a Sen to be *this* flustered. Or anywhere near it.

*'Seriously. You **have** to get it together, Evelyne or you're going to blow everything.'*

After all, she didn't even know if her Thea was into women to begin with. And the Sovereign had been infuriatingly tight-lipped on the subject, despite her best attempts at offering... incentives.

She winced at the thought of just how much she already owed the Sovereign. The initial round of investments to get closer to MMM had been staggering, to say the least.

'Mother would throw me into the panic room for a week if they knew how sloppily I've been conducting this whole endeavour...'

She shivered at the thought alone, an unpleasant sensation like countless crawling legs running over her entire skin.

The panic room was a sick word-joke of the Sen.

It wasn't meant to protect you—it was meant to break you into controlling your panic.

Your worst nightmares assaulted you for weeks without pause, and the moment you slipped—opened your mouth too wide, let your heartbeat spike or any other indicator that the gracious host metered out—swarms of insects, as they were Eve's own nightmare, would invade them without mercy.

Still... it would all be worth it in the end.

If she managed to draw MMM into the Sen circle, her parents would be beyond proud. It would be an accomplishment nobody else but her could have pulled off.

She was the only one with the know-how and the perfect time and position to do so.

Putting on her game face, she carefully adjusted her kind smile into something more nervous, but still determined—just the right balance to tug at her Thea's heartstrings.

She nodded once at her reflection in the dark glass.

"You got this, Eve. Just don't forget the pla—"

"Hi, Evelyne," Lucas Callahan's voice cut in, making her nearly jump out of her skin.

She almost triggered her signature Ability on instinct and had already started turning into a parry-or-takedown move before she caught herself.

She froze for half a heartbeat, then forced her own movement into a surprised gasping breath and turned to face him properly.

The embarrassment hit her all at once—she'd been so wrapped up in her own spiraling thoughts that she'd violated the first and most important lesson a Sen was ever taught: Perfect spatial awareness.

The realization was humbling, downright *mortifying*.

She straightened, re-centered herself with a fake blush rising up her face, and slipped back into her controlled mask before her lapse showed too badly.

"C—Callahan. Good morning," she greeted him with an easy, polite tone, offering a small nod. Her eyes immediately drifted past him, scanning the arcade entrance, the walkways, the crowd—searching.

She didn't even try to hide it.

Lucas noticed right away and huffed a quiet laugh.

“She’s a few minutes late,” he said casually. “We came together, but she got distracted by some holo-ad. Something about a new game she’s interested in...? Had to grab a pamphlet or something.”

Eve felt her blood simmer at the sheer audacity of it. “Something about...?” “or something?”

Thea’s words were precious, *sacred* even—and this walking hunk of meat couldn’t even relay the all-important information with any sort of accuracy, much less proper reverence!

She swallowed it down, kept her smile steady, and let out a light chuckle, carefully tuned with just the right edge of nervousness. “Ah... of course. That sounds like her... I think?”

Callahan picked up on it immediately.

“Hey, relax,” he added, lowering his voice a touch. “You really don’t need to be nervous around her. She’s a total softy. Honestly pretty bad with people, too. You’ll be fine, trust me. And we both appreciate your offer to help us out quite a lot.”

Eve nodded quickly and pretended to take a few slow, steady breaths, hands coming up to rest against her chest in what looked like a self-soothing motion. She made sure to breathe in *just* right, posture shifting a fraction as if she were grounding herself, the movement subtly pushing her bust up before settling again.

Her eyes stayed closed, lashes lowered, with only the faintest slit left open—enough to see without being seen, one of the first tricks “*gently taught*” to every Sen as a child.

And sure enough, her efforts were rewarded as Callahan’s gaze flickered lower for just a moment before snapping back up.

‘*Got you,*’ she thought, ruthlessly tamping down the smug grin that tried to surface.

It didn’t matter who you were or what you were into—movement, colour, contrast, light, and proper shape caught the eye.

That was just how people worked.

After another breath, she let her hands drop and opened her eyes fully, putting on a sheepish smile as if she really had calmed herself down.

In truth however, her nerves were still buzzing under her skin, refusing to settle despite her best efforts.

“S—Sorry for that,” she said softly, brushing her bangs back into place. “I just... I don’t want to mess this up, you know?” She hesitated, then tilted her head slightly, looking up at him from the side. “You know Thea a lot better than I do... Since you live with her and all.”

She let out a small, awkward laugh. “D—Do you have any more advice? On how to talk to her, I mean... I—I don’t want her to hate me, you know?”

Lucas scratched the back of his head, thinking hard as he leaned a bit against the arcade wall.

“Uh... honestly?” he started, sounding almost apologetic. “There’s not really a trick to it. Just... be yourself. Thea’s not difficult to be around, and she’s *definitely* not someone you need to impress in any way.”

He shrugged. “There’s nothing you really have to do to please her. As long as you’re not being a jerk to her friends and you’re straight with her, she won’t hate you. Even if things get awkward sometimes. She’s not the type to read too deep into people’s intentions, socially speaking. Most of the time, she probably doesn’t even notice there *are* intentions, honestly.”

After a beat, he added, “The only thing I’ve ever seen *really* piss her off is Rachel Masters. That one’s... special... And probably my fault.”

He grimaced faintly. “But yeah. Otherwise? She’s an honest-to-the-gods sweetheart. Just... still figuring people out, I guess.”

Lucas glanced off to the side, then back at Eve. “I don’t know much about her life before the UHF, but I’m pretty sure she didn’t have many friends growing up. Maybe none at all. So she’s been trying to play catch-up with everyone since day one.”

A small, proud smile tugged at his lips. “She’s making progress fast—faster than probably any other person would—but she’s still very naive when it comes to all kinds of social stuff.”

He gave her an encouraging nod. “So yeah. Just be yourself. You’ll be fine, I promise.”

Eve’s breath had hitched, and she had to wrestle herself hard to keep the glee off her face.

This was an absolute fucking treasure trove of information the himbo had just handed her—completely free of charge, no less!

Forcing her emotions back into the corner where they belonged, she nodded several times.

“Yes... yes, that sounds doable... I think. I—I’ll try my best.”

The towering meatloaf gave her an encouraging thumbs-up. “Don’t worry. If things start going the wrong way, I’ll jump in and help you out. Just relax, alright?”

It wasn’t hard to let a smile spread across her face, because Eve genuinely couldn’t imagine a more perfect start to this mission.

“Thank you so much.”

She heard the steps first in that moment—dangerously quiet, barely there, like a predator stalking up on its prey.

A shiver ran through her as the realization of who those footsteps belonged to hit, and she did her best to keep Lucas in her field of vision.

The Evelyn Thea knew so far wasn’t exactly great with spatial awareness.

The walk-up felt like it took an eternity before the crystal chime—like voice slid in from her side, warm and bright in all the right ways. “Got one!”

Eve pretended to be startled, jumping slightly and letting out an undignified squeak.

Then her eyes landed on the single most important person in the entire galaxy, and her heart shattered into a trillion pieces all at once. The rush of excitement of what she saw was so strong she *physically* staggered back a few steps, reaching out to the hulking meatloaf beside her to steady herself as her breathing went uneven.

‘S—S—S—*She’s wearing my make-up...!*’ was the only thought that broke through the chaos. ‘*Paying the Sovereign for all that intel was worth it. So very fucking worth it...!*’

Her body was losing control fast, bile creeping up her throat.

She had to drag every last scrap of her training into her muscles, her bones, her thoughts—anything to keep from simply throwing up from the emotions coursing through her and to get a grip on herself.

Callahan, kind-hearted himbo that he was, stepped in immediately, moving between her and Thea the moment he realized what was happening. He partially blocked Thea’s view, shielding Evelyne’s moment of pure and utter shame from her MMM.

‘*I will repay you for this grand service, Callahan,*’ she swore silently, down to her very soul.

‘*You have my word on this as the heir apparent of the Sen...*’