

Machaboo on fundamentals for those that want to become good at GG

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NOTE! These texts requires a certain level of basic knowledge. Even if the content is important for beginners it is not the primary intended audience.

NOTE! Text is not yet fully proof read and edited.



I. Basics

:: Begin with anti-airs, It is crucial!

There are many different ways to attack from the air in GG (for example forward jump, iad, double jump, special moves, etc.). You have to know which of your anti-air options are strong versus their air-options. This differs between characters and matchups. **It is therefore a question of knowledge!**

You can turn the tides of a game by successfully anti-airing. On the other hand if you are weak at anti-airing you could easily get bullied. I.e. being good at anti-airing is crucial for mindgames to happen (otherwise they get to jump in on you for free).

As a whole there are five/six different types of anti-airs (obs. these categories have fluid borders):

Fast moves with tall hitbox - Sol 5K - Slayer 5P - ...	Upperbody inv. moves - Faust 6P - Ky 6P - Sol 6P	High/large moves - Ky 2H - Zato 2H - Elphelt cS
Inv. moves - Sol VV - Ky VT - Blitz shield	Air-to-air - I-No jP - Slayer jP - Jam jS	Airthrow - with all characters - really strong anti-air! - ...

All characters moves are different, used in different ways and to varying degrees of success against different characters in various situations. As a matter of fact it is your job to find out what works vs what (and if it is possible to do on reaction)! **Knowledge is always the first and most important step.**

There are also moves that delay the jump-in timing.
- e.g. Sols Kudakero can disrupt your anti-air timing.

This type of move loses to a waiting opponent.
- e.g. one punishes Kudakero consistently by waiting, reacting, jumping up and blocking it and then throwing or hitting the opponent (depending on character).

Another approach one should be aware of is (dashing and then FD breaking to) **crouching**. Many IAD attacks whiff on crouchers. However this is all matchup-specific so it is up to you to find out!

Before the real neutral game on the ground can be established you must master your anti-air!

:: Learn neutral game using "the three-structure"!

Here we introduce a leading concept, **the three-structure**, which is composed by three part concepts that can facilitate decision-making in the neutral game. An active neutral game can in the large scheme of things be divided into decisions regarding three different types of moves:

(1) oki-waza, (2) ate-waza and (3) sashi-kaeshi

(1) Oki-waza means that you pre-emptively make a move
- e.g. because it covers a certain space, or because it wins against certain moves.

(2) Ate-waza means doing a move that will hit waiting opponents
- e.g. to (dash in and) do a low hitting move

(3) Sashi-kaeshi means waiting for the opponent to make a move and reacting to it.
- e.g. to (dash in, fd-break and then) punish a whiffed move

Which move that is which depends on the character.

Somewhat simplified you could say that:

oki-waza beats ate-waza

(e.g. Fausts 2H stopped you trying to dash in and hit the opponent)

ate-waza beats sashi-kaeshi

(e.g. Kys dash 2S stopped you trying to dash in and forward breaking),

sashi-kaeshi beats oki-waza

(e.g. Kys fS whiffed because of your fd-break, and then you whiff-punished it with your own fS).

i.e.: (1) > (2) > (3) > (1) [...]

These interact differently depending on matchup. Anti-air also fit the three-structure (e.g. you can anti-air on reaction or with oki-waza).

Generally you could say that many players on the higher levels often go for sashi-kaeshi because they are mostly reactive. But in the grand scheme of things one approach is not enough, interactions within the three-structure will always emerge.

- E.g. Sols 6P (as oki-waza) wins as a counter hit versus Kys fS (as oki-waza) at certain ranges. This happens because Sols 6P's hitbox and upper body inv. interacts with the hit- and hurtbox on Kys fS.

-E.g. Fausts 2H works (against many characters oki-waza) because its hurtbox is behind the hitbox.

If you understand the logic behind the three-structure and therefore the mindgames that emerge from it, and do your homework on different matchups, you should be able to take important steps forward!

***Tips for long-term development:** Try to avoid doing risk filled moves (e.g. greed severs in neutral) that wins you games online just because you win with them. You will improve in the long run if you attempt to acquire this way of thinking! There are certainly many ways to have fun with fighting games, but we urge to inspire passion and ambition! Think long-term and you will understand what's beautiful about GG :-) It becomes more enjoyable for you and the one you play against! :-)*

:: About combining the three-structure with anti-air!

To correct a relatively common misunderstanding: you can **not** do your go-to anti-air option on reaction against some moves.

- therefore, you must do oki-waza as anti-air

- or you have to find something else that you can use to anti-air this type of move on reaction.

It can be rather hard to **react versus opponents that jump!**

Remember that one of the more regular approaches is doing moves that cover certain spaces, buffered into another move in case the previous should hit. Under this sequence, you could advantageously both: (1) react if your move hit (2) observe if your opponent jumped. You can use dash into crouch in similar ways, because iad attacks often go over crouchers.

Example:

*-Sol does fS [2S] and 2S whiffed because the opponent jumped = time to anti-air!
-Zato does 2P[fS] and 2P whiffed because the opponent jumped = time to anti-air!*

i.e. it is good to "look upwards" at the same time that you are doing moves on the ground!

II. Decision-making based on risk-reward

:: Basics first!

Not only are there a lot of options in GG (that you need to know how they interact with each other), you also have to make decisions based on a 'risk-reward perspective' (hereafter only 'risk-reward') to be able to win more consistently.

What are you thinking about when you make decisions? What is the mindgame?

- E.g. what are you thinking about when you're trying to stop an air dash?

"It is important to know why you are making a certain decision!!"
- Machaboo

Let us review two case-studies to emphasize this.

Case study (1):

Sol jumps. On the way down a low air dash jS jH will win against Kys 6P (= damage for Sol).

Ky can however commit to an oki-waza 2HS to win versus low ad jS jH (= damage for Ky).

But Sol can instead choose to land and do GV or dash 2D to punish a whiffed 2HS (= damage for Sol)

But if Ky has burst and Sol doesn't have 50% meter it is a guaranteed punish against GV (= damage for Ky, used burst).

= the Ky player can now **make a conscious decision based on the situation** based on risk-reward.

Risk-reward is therefore not about avoiding all risks, instead **it's about making conscious decisions taking different factors into account** (often **positioning, damage, tension and life**).

By playing games you will find yourself in types of situations that you need to know more about often.

Doing your homework after games is important and fun; because **it gives both short term results** (you know what you're going to do against x) **and long term results** (you learn how to think and build a knowledgebase).

Case study (2):

Sol gets a knockdown after 2D bandit revolver in the corner. What can happen if Sol wants to break your defense with a mixup after his jump?

(!!!! The text is grey because you should think for yourself before you read!)

- (1) Low air dash jS (high)
- (2) Empty jump-in low 2k/2d (low)
- (3) Wild throw (throw)

You are Ky, what beats what?

- Kys VT wins versus low air dash jS, 2K and command throw.
- But Sols 2D wins over Kys VT.
- So VT with Ky beats everything a Sol-player does except empty jump-in 2D (or if Sol just blocks).

But what to do versus empty jump-in low 2D?

- IB:ing 2D is very good, because it is punishable on block, as long as the Sol-player doesn't do VV or bandit revolver directly afterwards. If the Sol-player actually does that the situation becomes terrible for him.

But what to do versus a Sol that only blocks?

- Throw or abare shortly summed up.

The Ky-player can now **make a conscious decision based on the situation** based upon risk-reward:

- VT wins versus air dash jS, 2K and command throw, but loses versus 2D
- IB:ing 2D gives Ky a very advantageous situation
- Throw or abare beats a Sol that only blocks

It isn't about finding an absolute answer, instead it is about understanding the situation and making a conscious decision based on the risks that are present. This can then be applied on specific players and thereafter changed back and forth as the game/games continues. Risk-reward is therefore absolutely not about avoiding all risks, instead **it is about making conscious decisions based on different factors** (often damage, tension and life) (!!!!)

For more detailed thoughts we have to go into specific matchups. We will only go through some simplified examples to show how the decision-making process can be done.

:: Think before you use your tension!

Tension(meter) is very important in GG (!!!)
because meter enables many different useful options such as:

- Roman Cancels (25% or 50%)
- Overdrives (50%)
- Faultless Defense
- Blitz Shield (25%)
- Dead Angle Attack (50%)

RCs are very strong but RCs lowers your tension gain after you use them, which means you will receive 80% less tension for **6 seconds** after using it. Therefore you should think carefully before using meter for RC.

There are many examples:

- [Kys stun edge](#) is e.g. a very strong counter-poke at certain ranges.
- [Millias S-Disc](#) can e.g. be used to kill abare.

But if they don't hit you are still receiving next to no tension for 6 seconds! These are therefore (very) risk filled **if you have small amount of tension** because you lose options for several seconds onwards. It is therefore a large difference between the value of this decision if you have 25% meter compared to 75% meter.

Worth mentioning is that FD **is also very strong** but even that lowers your tension gain by 80%, however only for 1 second.

Overdrives doesn't affect your tension gain negatively because they don't lower your tension pulse. If possible it is therefore better to use overdrives in combos rather than RC. Worth noting is that not all characters can do this because their overdrives have different uses.

:: Think before you use your burst!

"That someone is bad at bursting is not something to laugh about, I think it is a sign of serious flaws."

- Machaboo

The reasons Machaboo says this is because either:

- The player has no knowledge about when they should burst and needs to do their homework, or
- the player is too emotional and has no actual control over when and why he bursts.

Therefore, the latter is linked to the knowledge question and another point we haven't touched yet: namely that **it is always better to keep calm in fighting games.**

A whiffed blue burst means you lost your entire burst meter, as opposed to if you hit it where it will return to 20%

Find out when you can burst versus different characters, because it is matchup specific. Some choose to also focus on Gold bursts versus some characters/players. The important thing is that you know when and why!

:: Short about the importance of game philosophy to continue evolving

There are many different ways to have fun with fighting games. You are allowed to play and have fun, mash like a fool, or just do crazy specials all the time. It is however not the road to become good at fighting games. It can also be plainly boring for players that are trying to learn to play versus someone that isn't even trying. At the same time, it can also be incredibly fun to play versus an opponent that is trying to learn and does their best, even if they aren't very good yet. It is noticeable on the playstyle what they are looking for in their play. It will become more fun for you and for your opponent if you really try and **it is ok that it takes time.**

Results don't only appear in form of number of won games, it also shows in the content of the matches. It can therefore be a large difference between a 1-10 set and a 1-10 set :-)

Many people that pick-up GG have a tough time keeping up because they experience that everything happens so fast. This is essentially a knowledge question, because they don't recognize moves and therefore cannot register them in time. Give it some time and you will adjust quickly. :-)

III. Defense

:: Build a knowledgebase for decision-making

In GG offense is very strong and all characters can get knockdown from many of their combos. Doing your best to reverse the situation that follows is therefore very important!

Even **on defense knowledge is the first and the most important step!**

Even **on defense one should start from risk-reward when making decisions!**

Only from understanding what beats what will facilitate mindgames.

"What beats what" is not only about which moves you have that beat the opponents, it is broader than that. It's about **how you can make the best out of a risk filled situation.**

In 2D fighting games downback is the standard-alternative on defense, whereas overheads and throws are something that the opponent tries to break your defense with. Useful distinctions about what your opponent's moves are is if they are:

- **Mixups** (aimed to break your downback)
e.g. Millias Badmoon (overhead), Bedmans 6H (crossup) and Sols Wild Throw (throw)
- **Frametraps** (aimed to kill your abare)
e.g. Sols 6P, Chipp cS to cS or Kys 5K to 5HS
- **Pressure** (aimed to continue attacking)
e.g. Kys 6K or Venoms Carcass Raid

Different characters have different moves that they can use when attacking. They also have different moves that they can use when defending. Therefore, defense is very often about matchup-specifics because they are dependent on the interaction between the two characters and players. This is what mindgames are born from.

But even here there are some fundamental principles and techniques that can be learned and then later applied **to matchups and opponents.**

If you apply risk-reward to decision-making on defense you should ask yourself:

- What does the most damage in which situations?
- How does this change if the opponent has e.g. more or less tension?
- What alternatives do you have versus this and how do they change depending on the situation?

Once again it becomes a **question of meter** (life, tension, burst) and a **question of positioning** (midscreen, you in the corner, the opponent in the corner).

The answer to these questions **becomes your decision base for your decision-making regarding risk-reward.**

With that said, **let us begin explaining by going back to Casestudy (2) because it is a classic high/low/throw-scenario:**

- We stated that Sol's empty jump-in 2D is a low mixup that also wins versus Ky's reversal VT

- Now we imagine that Sol has above 50% tension.

- All of a sudden Sol can do 2D>Tyrant Rave>Combo for over 60% damage (and gets 25% tension back).

- If Ky did VT Sol still gets a strong punish (and even more tension).

- But IB 2D is still a response from Ky, since he either gets a punish or forces Sol to commit to options that require him to burn tension (and therefore also tension gain).

- Sol could have taken notice to this behavior and instead gone for a high or throw!

***Tips for the overwhelmed:** The idea of learning what converts all characters receive from a whole slew of setups can feel overwhelming. You can begin by simply playing versus people and trying to register what happened during the games and what starters were used.*

:: General defensive options

> FD (Faultless Defense)

- Gives you extra pushback (the opponent is pushed further away from you)
- Gives you extra blockstun (2f on the ground, up to 4f in the air)
- You take no chip damage
- Your guardbar does not increase
- Costs tension (and gives you 1 second cooldown to tension pulse)

The extra pushback (and blockstun) gives you **more time to react to tick-throws** (because they have to dash in and wait longer to be able to throw you). It can also make the opponents **moves whiff in their gatlings** (which sometimes enable punishes).

It differs between matchups, but in general it is good to FD an opponent's first attacks.

> IB (Instant Block)

- Barely any pushback (the opponent remains close to you)
- You receive less blockstun(2-4f on the ground, 6-8f in the air)
- You receive a bit of tension and your tension pulse increases
- Your guard bar goes up

IBs useful areas differ depending on matchups, but it is good in general to go for IB on specific moves, e.g. Sols Bandit Revolver.

> General options

Learning how to use both FD and IB is important for those who want to become good players. You can use FD more universally, as long as you are aware that you are using it in exchange for your tension. You should only use IB if you know exactly why you are using it (because you have to return to neutral to IB and can therefore be hit by moves). Generally, one could say that you want to FD the first attacks, and IB the last one in a string. This however changes depending on matchups.

Outside of different types of blocking there are the following general options on defense:

<p>Throw Throw (4HS or throw option-selects) are good in GG because throws have instant startup and can e.g. grab meaties on wake-up as long as the opponent is within throw range (and are not using anything that is throw invul.</p> <p>If your opponent is outside of throw range a move will always come out, this can be used in different ways (often for counterhit starters).</p>	<p>Abare Abare, or trying to do fast moves during your opponent's offense is very important in GG.</p> <p>Different characters have differently strong abare moves, both when it comes to startup (3-5f), hitboxes and gatling routes (e.g. large difference between 2p2p and 5p2p) Abare can be baited and often leads to counterhit starters.</p>	<p>Jump A good way of escaping from many situations (especially if you have a lot of tension for FD). Though many characters have very few options after jumping (some have more). For some characters' jumps are simply an option associated with less risk than e.g. abare, especially in combination with FD</p> <p>In general it is easier for your opponent to figure out what you are trying to do after your jump, because it has less options compared to if you were to stay grounded.</p>	<p>Inv. moves DPs (e.g. Sols VV) and backdashes can be registered as moves with inv. They win versus a lot of moves, but can usually be punished in a lot of different ways (often with counterhit or crouching state starters).</p> <p>Even blitz shield works in a similar way, even if a type of mindgame manifests itself on hit, whiff and when charging blitz attack.</p>
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:: The strongest defensive options: fuzzy abare/jump/block/throw!

Before we carry on it must be mentioned that fuzzies only are additional defensive options. You must first accept that **mindgames will emerge because even these have weaknesses!** However if you want to become really good at GG you need to know these.

"Fuzzy abare/jump/block/throw".

Are all terms for a **type of option-selects** where you perform a **series of inputs that begin with block** that in GG primarily exploits how startup frames, hitstop, blockstun and throw inv frames work.

The areas of use are often specific, and are **often used on wake up and specific situations in specific matchups.**

They are however the strongest defensive options in GG because they reduce the risk involved in different decisionmaking situations.

> Fuzzy abare

= *very strong in safejump-situations;
should preferably be done with a fast move that hits upwards*

Shortly summarized **fuzzy abare** means doing:

Block - Hit - Block

where the timing of the hit is during blockstun of the first move the opponent would have a done.

This is done to **(1) block and then (2) hit the opponent before certain moves/mixups have finished startup.**

Example Ky (safejump okizeme from stundipper knockdown) vs Sol:

Dash-jump jS is a safejump setup after stundipper knockdown

- This means that doing VV is a bad option because it will be blocked (, but if they have tension Sol could ofcourse do VV RC).

- Ky can also do a classic high/low/throw from this jump-in.

Ky does stundipper, dashjump to:

(a)jS meaty, or (b) ad jS jH, or (c) empty jump-in 5K cS, or

(d) empty jump-in throw after throw invul. on wake-up has ended.

Sol answers with fuzzy abare!

- i.e. Sol blocks the timing of the meaty jump attack and presses 5K immediately after
- if he does this correctly the following happens

(a) Sol blocks, (b) Sol does 5K before jS comes out, (c) Sol does 5K before Kys 5K,

(d) Sol does 5K before Ky is able to throw

In this example, fuzzy abare wins versus Kys entire (so called) mixup. If the Ky player doesn't answer with something that wins versus fuzzy abare **this never becomes a mixup!**

Somewhat simplified you could say that you during fuzzy abare want **a fast move that preferably hits upwards**. (Sols is perfect because his 5K does just that and starts up in 3-5 frames).

For the invested: what Ky can do in this scenario is do stundipper dash-jump to air stun edge (to confirm, rc airdash combo). But if Sol would have done VV Sol would instead have gotten a counterhit and meterless pickup!

> Fuzzy jump

= block low and jump throws;
extra strong versus characters with command throws!

Shortly summarised **fuzzy jump** means doing:

FD block - Jump - FD block

where the timing for the jump is exactly before throw-inv ends after blockstun on the first move that the opponent does.

This is done to **(1) block and then (2) jump away from the opponents throw before it has finished startup.**

For example Potemkin (safejump setup from 2D)

After 2D Potemkin can do a safejump setup by doing forward high-jump jH.

- This means that it is a bad option to do a reversal srk because it will be blocked (, but if you have tension you can do VV RC)

- Potemkin can however do *low* or *throw* from this

Potemkin does 2D highjump to:

(a) jH meaty to 2K2D, (b) jH meaty to Potemkin Buster (c) empty jump-in 2K2D

Sin answers with fuzzy jump!

- i.e. Sin blocks at the timing of the jump meaty, does low FD, does up-back jump, to low FD immediately after, if he does this correctly the following happens:

(a) Sin blocks, (b) Sin jumps (*and confirms to punish combo from the jump*), (c) Sin blocks

In this example, fuzzy jump wins versus this Potemkins mixup. Yet again if the Potemkin-player doesn't add something to this string that wins versus fuzzy abare **this never becomes a mixup!**

Potemkin can e.g. do raw heat knuckle or delayed low, but if they start doing this it becomes riskier or alternatively gives them lower reward.

Somewhat simplified one could say that fuzzy jump **is a strong option versus characters that need throws** and it becomes **extra strong for characters that can convert to combos with high damage**

(Sin could e.g. get +200 damage when potemkin went for a potemkin buster)

> Fuzzy block

= *blocking specific high-low mixups;*

Shortly summarized **fuzzy block** means doing:

Low block - High block - Low block or

High block - Low block - High block

Where the timing between the shift depends on which mixup hits first.

This is done to **(1) block and then (2) block the opponents initial move and then the following options**

For example Ky's (grinder charge stun-edge meaty okizeme):

- Ky does a charged stun-edge okizeme from a grinder-setup.
- Ky can do a classic high/low from this.

Ky does charged stun-edge yrc, grinder charge stun edge, dash forwardjump to:
(low) 5K cS, (high) airdash jS jH (jump-in) jS 5K

The player responds with fuzzy block!

- i.e. Player (1) blocks the timing of the jump meaty, (2) blocks low (that happens before the high mixup), (3) blocks high (at the timing that a jS would have hit), to (4) low/high block depending on what happened.

If done correctly the following happens:

(low) blocked, (high) blocked, (jump-in) blocked

To clarify you can look at this

[rough frame-sketch that illustrates the events:](#)

(low)		5K	————	cS	————	(Ky)
(high)		AD	————	jS	————	(Ky)
(jump-in)		jS	————	5K	————	(Ky)
(your input)		H	— L ————	H ————		(Your block)
(mixup)		H	— L ————	M/H ————		(Kys mixup)

For Ky to defeat this fuzzy block he must do another sequence that hits low (or high) when the opponent switches guard.

Somewhat simplified one could say that **fuzzy block is a good option versus specific high/low-mixups.**

> Fuzzy throw

= block low and throw a dashing throw;
you should preferably have a fast 5HS

Shortly summarised **fuzzy throw** means doing:

FD block - Throw - FD block

where the timing of the throw is exactly before throw-inv frames end after blockstun on the first move that the opponent does.

It is similar to fuzzy jump in other words, though not as strong versus command throws and it means greater risk (because you will always get 5HS if the throw whiffs). But if you are Sin with over 50% tension and think that Ky will go for throw after his safe jump it can be a good idea because sin gets a lot of damage from his throw in the corner.

> Summary

It is worth to emphasize once again that **these are only additional defensive options**. You must still accept that they have weaknesses and mindgames will emerge!

<p>Fuzzy Abare Block - Hit - Block</p> <p>= Very strong in safejump-situations!</p> <p>= Preferably a fast move with a good hitbox!</p> <p>= Strong in specific situations in certain matchups</p>	<p>Fuzzy Jump FD block - Jump - FD block</p> <p>= Block lows and jump throws!</p> <p>= Good against characters with command throws!</p> <p>= You get punish on whiffed throws!</p> <p>= Costs tension!</p>	<p>Fuzzy Block Low - High -Low or High - Low -High</p> <p>= Very strong versus the classic mixup from jump-ins (i.e. air-dash to an attack with high mixup and land to a low attack as a low mixup)</p> <p>= Very strong versus certain specific high-low mixups!</p>	<p>Fuzzy Throw FD block - Throw - FD block</p> <p>= Block low and throw dash throw!</p> <p>= Should preferably have a fast 5HS!</p> <p>= Higher risk (due to 5HS on whiff)!</p> <p>= Costs tension!</p>
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Henceforth it isn't that top-players have insanely good reaction dprff that they stop all your efforts, it is mostly because they have done their homework and learnt different types of fuzzies.

:: Fast and situational decisions

GG can be very fast sometimes. Sometimes you have to e.g. adlib combos that don't give you that perfect meaty. Or maybe you just failed a timing so it came out late. Being able to separate "good meaties" from "bad meaties" is important because you can exploit this in different ways!

E.g. Ky has to jump immediately after recovery from stun dipper to achieve the safejump meaty.

If he is too late and you notice it you could

(1) athrow, or (2) do a fast abare, before his planned deep airattack comes out.

Here is where OGs usually stick out, because a small and unusual gap can be enough for them to smell blood in the water.

IV. Mindgames

:: Disclaimer: about mindgames

Mindgames emerge only when both opponents have a firm grasp on the options.

E.g. If you only do a specific high-low mixup against somebody that can fuzzy block it you could easily think that the opponent is simply "godlike" and "can block everything on reaction". In reality the opponent is not a god and there was no mindgame because those two options that you alternated between simply doesn't become a mixup **unless you show that you can do a third option** that kills fuzzy block.

There are many examples of this relatively common phenomenon where then inexperienced players think that they lost mindgames when in reality there wasn't any. If someone just waits patiently and you do something punishable on reaction doesn't mean you lost a mindgame per se, instead it shows that you did something in a situation where it wasn't a mindgame. But if you know what you should do to avoid this, and show it, it can become the first option to a mindgame.

This is what Machaboo wants to emphasize. Even for mindgames **knowledge is the first and most important step! Only from understanding what beats what mindgames can emerge.**

He also recommends the following if you want to become skilled at fighting games:

"Take no shortcuts by relying on a playstyle that emanates from options that work just because the opponent doesn't know how to handle them."

- Machaboo

If you do you could easily get stuck in improvement and therefore not be able to win versus players at the higher levels.

One last note:

Even players at higher levels are also **humans** and **cannot be right in all decisions where mindgames emerge.**

= It is **solely about knowledge and execution (both decisionmaking and inputs).**

:: Initiator and receiver in mindgames - who has the advantage?

The answer is that the "**Initiator**" has the advantage. Who is the initiator though? And why does the initiator have the advantage over the receiver?

"**Initiator**" is the one who is in a favorable position and can initiate moves that the receiver has to adjust to.

Usually this relationship isn't very obvious but Axl versus Sol (fullscreen) can work as an example.

Axl is the initiator and Sol is the receiver. **Why?**

Axl has **reach** and **Rensengeki wins versus everything on the ground, this forces Sol to maneuver around it.**

Who has the advantage?

Axl has the advantage because he can choose not to do Rensengeki. Sol however must get in and must use IAD or Bandit Bringer to win versus Rensengeki.

It is therefore not a RPS mindgame, even if it is a RPS mindgame.

- Sol can do IAD to win versus Rensengeki.

- Axl can do anti-air to win versus IAD.

- Sol can dash in to "win" versus anti air (= get closer)

But it is still not a RPS mindgame

because **Axl has the advantage as the initiator due to reach and how moves interact.**

Axl doesn't need to do rensengeki! He can do anything, but Sol cannot. Sol has to think about several options.

Primarily: "What shall i do versus rensengeki?" In other words Axl has the projectile and Sol is the one who has to maneuver around it.

To make the situation even harder Axl also has the up-followup from Rensengeki. Even if Sol avoids Rensengeki he has to think about the followup.

Thus Axl as the initiator has the advantage of reach that forces Sol as the receiver to respond.

This is the base of the "initiator has the advantage in mindgames" -philosophy:
Initiator (that is in a **advantageous** position)
forces the receiver to make a decision based on the circumstances.

The Axl vs Sol-example is very clear. You can also apply the three-structure on this relation. The distribution between who has the advantage and the disadvantage entirely depends on matchup.

:: It is only about the opponent

*"It is only about the opponent[...]
How careful is the opponent? How risky is the opponent?"
- Kazunoko*

Mindgames emerge between players. Different players have different tendencies in different situations. What cements the framework for this is matchups.

Some elementary principles on what you should look for are the following:

- How is the opponent maneuvering?
- Does the opponent tend to take greater risks?
- Does the opponent tend to minimize risks?
- What moves, and how much, does this opponent rely on them?

It is all about the opponent and the opponent at higher levels will be thinking the same thing.

Therefore, **mindgames** emerge in a constant interaction between **two players**:
- Level of knowledge
- Decisionmaking from a risk-reward viewpoint
- Execution

Henceforth mindgames must always keep to a predetermined interaction between **two characters**:
- Anti-air options
- Moves within the three-structure
- Offensive/defensive options

This is one of the most fantastic things about fighting games :-)

- [Shinjin @shinjinbaiken](#)

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