

Scourge of Middle-earth. Morgoth's Chosen. The Dark Lord of Mordor. Slayer of the Lich King. Lord of the Rings. He has gone by many names and titles, but of them all, he is known by one name.

SAURON



What tales may be told of this conqueror?

Before he was the greatest enemy to Middle-earth, he was Mairon. A Maia created by the supreme god Eru Ilúvatar, Mairon joined in the Ainulindalë, the Great Song, in the creation of all things. Mairon was known for many things: he was the most powerful of the Maiar, a master craftsman and he held a love for order and perfection. However, his purity would not last, as Mairon would find that Morgoth, formerly known as the Ainu Melkor, had the means he needed to bring about order to everything. Morgoth took advantage of this and took Mairon under his wing as his lieutenant. From then on, his name would be cast aside. No longer would he be known as Mairon. He would claim the name “**Sauron**”.

Under Morgoth’s watchful eye, Sauron would become feared amongst the entirety of Middle-earth, leading armies to conquest over thousands of years...and yet, Sauron’s goals never once aligned with Morgoth’s. The Ainu wanted to destroy all life as a show of his power and glory...but Sauron knew that the hearts of men are easily corrupted. So when Morgoth was bested in the War of Wrath and cast into the void, Sauron lay in wait in the ash-covered wastes of the land of Mordor. For the next few centuries, Sauron would concoct a plan to dominate the wills of all life on Arda.

*Three rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,
One for the Dark Lord on his throne
In the land of Mordor where the shadows lie.
One ring to rule them all, one ring to find them,
One ring to bring them all, and in the darkness bind them
In the land of Mordor where the shadows lie.*

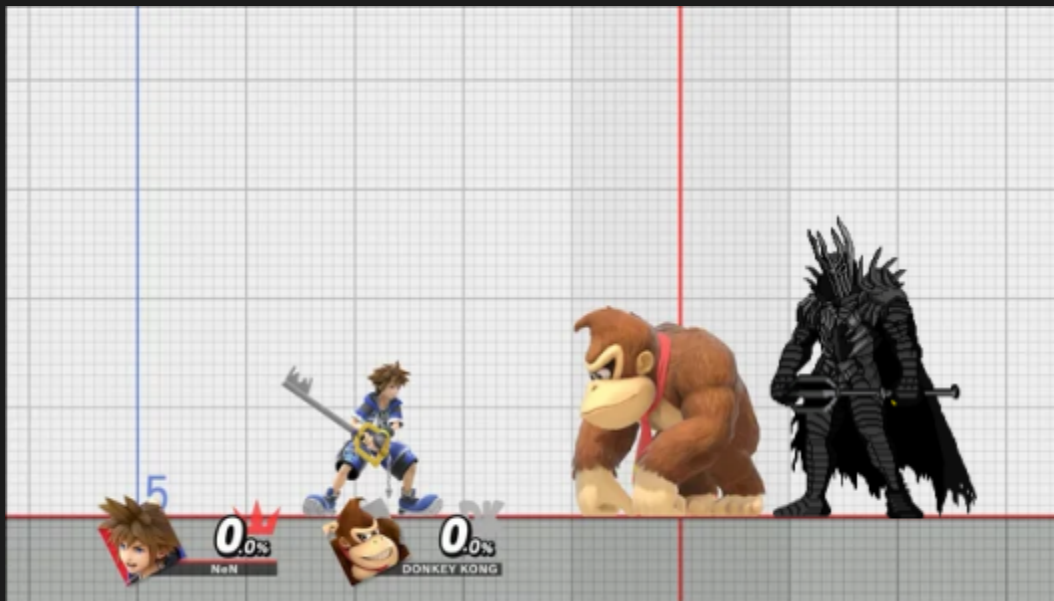
Under the guise of the charismatic Annatar, Sauron tricked the Elves into crafting nineteen Rings of Power amongst the three races of Middle-earth...and then in secret, he would use a piece of his soul to craft a twentieth, the One Ring, to control them. Sauron’s campaign to conquer Middle-earth was so great and terrible that Eru Ilúvatar himself attempted to end Sauron by sinking the island of Numenor while he was on it, an act of intervention never before seen even when Morgoth was running rampant. But despite all odds, Sauron survived Eru’s attempt and continued in his plans, up until the War of the Last Alliance, where the human prince Isildur severed the One Ring from his body and took it for his own, forcing Sauron back into hiding.

Ever since this defeat, Sauron would continue to lie in wait, searching for the Ring he had lost to Isildur. Eventually, however, his forces would capture Gollum, a former hobbit corrupted and reshaped by his Ring, and through torment and torture forced two words out of him: “Shire”. “Baggins”. Realizing his chance was ripe for the taking, the Dark Lord sent the Nine Kings, now the hideous Nazgûl, to retrieve the Ring and reclaim his long-lost power. From there, the struggle between Middle-earth and Sauron over the One Ring would begin. Ultimately, he would fail when the One Ring was destroyed by a hobbit, the most unlikely creature imaginable, thus rendering Sauron at such a pitiful level of existence that he could never physically interact with the world again.

OVERVIEW

Sauron is a super-heavyweight stage control character, manipulating the flow of the match to maintain power or turn his foes' own strength against them. He is a very adaptable fighter who uses overwhelming force to maintain advantage over his enemies or concoct strategies to lift himself out of disadvantage by combining normals strong at midrange with area denial capable of forcibly redirecting approaches and retreats. The way you adapt, however, is a double-edged sword, as Sauron has to sacrifice a part of himself, and his weaknesses are apparent enough in both forms that the opponent can turn the rules of the game on you. When playing as Sauron, you may want to be mindful of what you're doing: like in his battle with Isildur, even the smallest openings can mean turning the tables hard on you. In the role of Sauron's adversary, your job is to be on the lookout for those same small openings.

STATISTICS



- Weight: 129 (Dark Lord), 99 (Shadow) (3rd, 33rd)

- Walk: 0.66 (Dark Lord), 1.136 (Shadow) (88th [Kazuya]; 39th-40th [Rosalina/Luigi])
- Dash:
 - Dark Lord: *Initial: 1.888, Run Speed: 1.22, Dash Frames: 10, Pivot Dash Frames: 12*
 - Shadow: *Initial: 2.035, Run Speed: 1.73, Dash Frames: 12, Pivot Dash Frames: 14*
- Jump Height:
 - Dark Lord: 25.49 (Full Hop), 12.24 (Short Hop), 26 (Air Jump) (Ganondorf)
 - Shadow: 35.11 (Full Hop), 17.25 (Short Hop), 35.26 (Air Jump)
- Air Acceleration:
 - Dark Lord: *Base: 0.01, Additional: 0.03, Total: 0.04*
 - Shadow: *Base: 0.01, Additional: 0.105, Total: 0.115*
- Air Speed: 0.83 (Dark Lord), 1.0 (Shadow)
- Falling:
 - Dark Lord: *Regular Fall: 1.65, Fast Fall: 2.31, % Increase: 40% (33rd-39th)*
 - Shadow: *Regular Fall: 1.44, Fast Fall: 2.304, % Increase: 60% (66th [Sora])*
- Traction: 0.125 (Dark Lord), 0.099 (Shadow) (14th-16th, 63rd [Rosalina])
- Crawl: No
- Wall Cling: No
- Wall Jump: No

As expected from someone as imposing as him, Sauron is a *massive* figure, standing a bit over Ganondorf and a bit wider than Sephiroth. At his base state while carrying the One Ring, he's decently mobile but is pretty bad mid-air, on par with the Gerudo Demon King. But fitting for a massive figure, Sauron is *heavy*, being sandwiched between Donkey Kong and King K. Rool in weight value.

As a Shadow, however, he's a lot more mobile, and floatier to boot. Basically he goes from a lumbering armored juggernaut to a wispy mobile phantom comparable to the likes of Palutena and Rosalina. In turn, however, Sauron becomes a lot lighter, becoming middle-of-the-road in terms of weight and easier to kill.

"And just how does he become a Shadow?" you might ask. Outstanding question, we'll get to that in the mechanic section right after this legal disclaimer.

(All attack knockback is recorded using Mario's base weight value, measured in Units (The 10x10 squares found on the Training stage) kill percentages are based on Battlefield's blast line sizes, and damage output is treated as if it was in free-for-all.)

MAIN MECHANIC: THE ONE RING



*“Ash nazg durbatulûk...
ash nazg gimbatul...
ash nazg thrakatulûk...
agh burzum-ishi krimpatul...”*

To explain that separation between the “Dark Lord” and “Shadow” stats, we must discuss Sauron’s most important artifact and one of the main reasons for his Ganondorf/Sephiroth-tier power: the One Ring is an equippable item (in the style of a Franklin Badge) that Sauron starts the match with. Foes must knock it off him by dealing 50% damage to him in total. Without the Ring, Sauron’s armor falls off him as well, reducing him to a shadowy silhouette with a core of fire to determine his position like a miniature-sized Master Giant. This is his Shadow form, which results in not just a change in moveset but also the following debuffs:

- Damage gets reduced to 0.75x
 - Many of Sauron’s moves are different in Shadow form; these use their listed damage output. The damage multiplier only affects moves shared between both forms.
- Weight gets reduced from 129 -> 99
- Movement goes from [Ganondorf] to [Rosalina & Luma]
- Jump height becomes equal to Steve's, but gains 4 extra jumps.
- Intangibility frames in dodging are reduced.
- Shields decay is 20% faster.

While detached from Sauron, the One Ring can be claimed by tapping A while near it, much the same way as King K. Rool’s crown or Snake’s grenades. Now naturally, he can reclaim the Ring to cleanse himself of these debuffs, his armor reforming around him in a plume of fire as he

returns to the Dark Lord stance. Not to say he's completely useless without the Ring, however: his Shadow moveset has its own strengths to aid him until he can return to being the Dark Lord.

The foe can *also* interact with the One Ring, able to pick it up as an item. When pressing A to pick up the One Ring there's a 30-frame moment where the foe can (as indicated by a pair of icons overhead) either press B to hide the ring somewhere on their person, *or* tap A during this moment to wear the ring for themselves. In either case, the ring is treated as an equippable item like it is for Sauron, but it really doesn't do a thing if the opponent went with the safe route and just chose to tuck it into their pocket or whatever. In the *latter* case though, if they got ambitious and put the ring on, they'll turn invisible and gain the following buffs:

- Damage is increased to 1.3x
- Weight bumps up by 30 points
- Dash speed and run speed get increased by 0.4 points
- Jumping power gets increased by 0.5 points
- Attack speed gets reduced by 3 points for start-up and endlag, for a minimum of 1 frame of start-up for the former.
- Shield decay is 20% slower.
- 3 intangibility frames added to the ends of dodges.

Pretty tempting to put the thing on! If they do, your foe will already be feeling the effects of Sauron's One Ring, being extremely more difficult to attack and giving him less of a fighting chance. *However*...after their first 10 inputs, the foe will start taking recoil damage equivalent to *half* an attack's base damage on hit (not factoring in any buffs from moves like Deep Breathing, Monado Buster or the One Ring itself). This pushes foes to use the ring's power carefully at first, but get wilder once they're in recoil territory. Foes will also slowly start to become more visible with each input once they're past 10. Here's what happens when they take recoil damage from the One Ring:

- Damage is reduced by 0.01% every 1% recoil, for a minimum of 0.1%.
- Weight gets reduced by 1 point every 5% recoil, for a minimum of 50 weight.
- Dash and run speed gets .005 points shaved off for every 1% recoil, for a minimum of 1.6 Dash speed (Between Olimar & Kazuya) and 1.5 Run speed (Between Ike & Dedede).
- Jumping power gets shaven by 0.01 points for every 1% recoil, for a minimum of 20 points of Jumping power (Between Snake and Jigglypuff).
- Every 10% recoil, 1 frame of dodge intangibility is shaven off, to a minimum of 1 frame of dodge intangibility at the stalest.
- Every 10% recoil, shield decay hastens by 5% speed. Has a maximum cap in which shield decay is doubled.

Do keep in mind that Sauron cannot replenish it through SD'ing, and the foe being KOed doesn't strip them of the ring either. If a foe has taken the One Ring for themselves, Sauron can reclaim it by dealing 30% damage to them and landing a Grab on them afterwards. When an opponent claims the ring, a grayed-out ring icon will appear on their HUD. It gradually brightens

up and starts glowing orange when they've taken enough damage for Sauron to land his grab and reclaim the ring.

Once these conditions are achieved, Sauron will reclaim the One Ring, but with a bonus: in addition to returning to his more powerful Dark Lord form, Sauron will also gain a 10-second-long buff called "**Reclamation**", increasing all the stats the One Ring siphoned off the foe by however much it has drained from them, shown by his armor glowing a malevolent orange! Furthermore, the debuffs on the foe from abusing the One Ring's power will also linger for 10 seconds. So Sauron could potentially farm enough recoil off his opponent to go as fast as Sonic and hit harder than a Revenge-boosted Incineroar.

Avoiding this is the main reason opponents might want to hold onto the ring without gambling on the power boost; reclaiming the ring from a foe that picked option B when they took it up will never grant a Reclamation buff. Still, as the match winds down and the fight against the Dark Lord starts looking more dire, opponents are going to be tempted *sorely* by those short-term gains.

This is a very convoluted comeback mechanic to be sure, but the fact that fighters will be drawn by the immediate buffs to their stats means that Sauron can use their own power against them, just like he could with all of Middle-earth. Yes, it'd be more immediately good to reclaim the Ring as soon as you drop it, but there's no singular problem with playing the long game with the Ring as well.

Oh, and it's worth mentioning that when Sauron takes enough damage to drop the ring as an item... it *is* an item. Wario can eat it or it could fall off a blast zone or whatever. Characters with eating moves *never* heal by eating the One Ring. It is a terrible snack. If it gets "destroyed" by any means, no it didn't. After a five second wait, it'll simply respawn on Sauron's finger, putting him right back into Dark Lord form. This gives Sauron a psychological edge off-stage or in other situations where taking him down will put the ring out of reach, since there's no room for the opponent to put him into his debuffed form.

SPECIALS



Neutral Special | ☉ Gaze of Barad-dûr

Calls the Eye of Sauron's gaze upon the stage as an area denial tool. Press again for the Eye to unleash a powerful attack that resets to neutral.

Rapid Hit Damage: **0.2%/sec**

Finishing Hit Damage: **15%**

Damage Healed Maximum: **9.5%**

Kill Percentage: **198%**

(NOTE: Above values are as though Sauron is in his Dark Lord state, and will be weaker as a Shadow)

Knockback Angle: **61°**

First Use Frames:



Second Use Frames:



Cooldown: 16 sec

In the background, you may have noticed the tower of Barad-dûr with a singular fireball stationed at the top, right smack dab in the middle. This is where NSpec comes in: with a single press of B, Sauron will release a pulse of heat from his body with an open palm towards the tower and the fireball will expand until the Eye of Sauron properly forms. Once that happens, a reticle made of the One Ring's black speech appears that constantly wanders the stage. If someone besides Sauron possesses the Ring, it will prioritize tracking them down and locking onto them. Otherwise it's less purposeful and acts more like the Shadow Moses Island spotlights, with identical movement speed. Enemies within the reticle take rapid, non-flinching damage; more specifically, 0.2% per 6 frames.

If you press the B button while the eye is already present, its gaze will intensify, indicated by it glowing brighter and burning harder for a moment. It deals a powerful hit to everyone in its radius and then goes on a lengthy cooldown. This hit also heals Sauron for half the damage dealt. It should also be noted that as you keep your gaze on a foe, the Black Speech starts filling with fire clockwise, showing how much more damage you can heal. You can heal to a maximum of 9.5% extra damage from when you use the follow-up.

While the passive hitbox does *extremely* minimal damage, the butterfly effect hits exceptionally hard here. Any form of damage while your foe has the Ring is good damage. The healing certainly helps Shadow Sauron to stay in the match longer too, even if you have to railroad the opponent into the gaze to do it. The aimlessness of Barad-dûr's gaze can certainly play against you if you're bad at improv and short-term tactics. Otherwise you basically have a moving bear trap at the ready.

While your foe has the One Ring, the pressure exerted by the gaze starts shooting upwards. Basically Samus's guided Missiles on crack, a Barad-dûr that's drawn to a Ringbearer other than Sauron will not stop until the Ring has been removed from that foe and/or Sauron has reclaimed the Ring, with the eye following at a speed more akin to Min Min's run speed. This can be taken to your advantage, as you can knock a foe into Barad-dûr's line of sight, harden the gaze and chase after them to land a grab and hopefully start smoking that Mount Doom-Grown Ultimate Malice Pack. Speaking of which, knocking your foe into Barad-dûr's gaze can be put to your advantage if your foe has accrued enough recoil from the One Ring due to them being slower and weaker.

Side Special | Shapes of Evil

Transforms into one of three different animals based on input angle, granting burst mobility and other benefits based on form.

One of Sauron's many abilities is to take the form of nearly any living creature. For this set, Sauron can transform into one of three that he's been shown to transform into across Arda's history by angling his Side Special: a mighty Werewolf, a hideous Vampire, and a black Serpent. Turns out he doesn't favor friendly animals.

Like Sauron's Neutral Special, this input is "stable" and remains generally consistent whether he's holding the Ring or not. When used in shadow form, it does suffer the standard damage nerf that he always gets without the Ring, and there are also some aesthetic differences.

Default Angle: Werewolf

Pounces as a werewolf, hitgrabbing the foe and dealing high shield damage.



With a purely cosmetic burst of flame masking his transformation, Sauron pounces forward in wolf form! Tolkien's werewolves are just massive wolves, with no humanoid characteristics to speak of. He's actually still comparably sized to his humanoid form here (which is to say immense), just more quadrupedally arranged.

Anyway, he leaps forward as a wolf here, is the point. Before we get into the real exciting stuff... this *is* a leap forward, so it can be used as a recovery! Sauron doesn't get immense distance off this (about a Battlefield platform before he's just falling again), but he can snap to the ledge during it, once he's about halfway through the leap. Combined with the way the attack reshapes

his hurtbox, it can be a good pocket option for evading the foe and covering that last little distance to the ledge.

There are two distinct hitboxes to the attack; Sauron's snapping jaws, and his forelimbs. The bite part of the attack deals 17% damage and kills very early, about 61% at the least. It's not a huge sweetspot, but it's rewarding to land. Catching an opponent with his forelimbs is a bit easier, and acts as a hitgrab! If you land the hitgrab before his bite finishes he'll actually skip the main bite hitbox to go directly into his special grab animation. Sauron can't land both on the same foe, but it's possible to land the bite on one opponent and then hitgrab a different one, in much the same sense that it's possible to win the lottery.

Latching onto the foe and overpowering them with his weight, Sauron pins them down and bites them repeatedly. This is an absolute mauling that adds up to a total of 15% before the opponent is released and Sauron shifts back into his Dark Lord or Shadow form (whatever the case may be).

The grab release puts the enemy in prone, on the stage. Sauron has a narrow frame disadvantage so he can't immediately go after them in any guaranteed way. That said, he has a lot of attacks with horrifying coverage, and that spooky area denial from Barad-dûr, so a prone situation is still something he can capitalize on.

When he grabs someone in the air, Sauron will continue to fall with them while delivering his attack. He can fall onto the stage and transition into that prone release for style points, if he catches someone low to the stage. Otherwise, if he's still in the air when the grab ends, the released foe just gets a more typical aerial grab release. In a vacuum, this denies Sauron any advantage whatsoever. It can be valuable in certain set-ups though, so it's a trick worth keeping in mind.

There's also a secret third hitbox to the attack; if Sauron's hitgrab gets shielded (the bane of hitgrabs everywhere), he'll lurch forward and bite a second time (or perhaps a first time if you landed the hitgrab early in the pounce? We're still thinking of this as the "second bite" though). This second bite deals a meaty 14%. Combined with the initial 5% from the hitgrab itself, this attack is putting a big dent in shields. Opponents need to be careful in close-quarters if they haven't kept their shield healthy, especially given how quickly this attack comes out.

Oh yeah, we haven't talked about that: it's fast! It takes a few moments to hit toward the end of its range and opponents have a chance to evade, but at point-blank range it's unreactable, making it a great panic button for Sauron when his space gets invaded by opponents trying to get inside his guard and start chipping away at him with their gross little combo moves. It's also an honest-to-Eru scary tool for breaking shields, punishing opponents that play a little too cautious.

The attack does have significant endlag on a whiff, as Sauron pauses a moment and snarls before resuming his more typical form. This can be troubling in the air, if you're trying to use it for recovery and come up short, as Sauron will fall for a while before you regain control. A whiff

or even a block can be even more troubling on stage. The big shield damage can spook foes out of trying to block you, but if you go for a shield break and don't get it, you're in trouble.

The intense punishability discourages excessive aggression: you wouldn't want to get too predictable with this one.

Oh, and as one final aesthetic note, the flames on the initial transformation become shadowy smoke-like effects when Sauron is in his shadow form. Generally Sauron's shadow form is less effective at using this attack to bully shields due to the decreased damage. That said, the shadow form's greater variety of set-up tools let a hitgrab turn into much nastier plays.

Upwards Angle: Vampire

Takes flight as a monstrous vampire that has great burst mobility and drains health from his foe.



Once again masking his transformation with a burst of flame (or shadow), Sauron transforms into a massive bat. Tolkien has dubbed giant bats “vampires”, in his second attack on the monsterfucker community in this moveset. Anyway, as a giant bat, he flies upward quickly at a shallow angle with his fangs bared. The move looks pretty functionally similar to Wolf Flash at a glance. It covers similar horizontal ground (about half of FD), but with just a touch more height gained along the way.

If Sauron doesn't hit an enemy, he'll just revert back to his more typical form as he falls back down at the end of his flight, in a slightly laggy finishing animation. He'll free up shortly after touching down on the stage, when this is used from ground level. If you used this in the air or otherwise managed to miss the ground, he won't go helpless at the end of the move, but he also won't be able to reuse this version of Side Special until he touches down on the stage again. Even if he gets hit afterward!

But that's the boilerplate and the failure cases, let's swing back to what happens when he actually lands the attack. If Giant Bat Sauron collides with a foe, he'll bite down on them with his fangs, using his claws to secure his grasp. This counts as a hitgrab, during which the foe takes rapid hits totaling to 10.6% damage before Sauron releases them (it's a normal grab release this time, folks, no prone state). As he does, he jumps back and upwards. Kinda like a less-agile looking version of Ganondorf's grab release at the end of Dark Dive. Oh, and he still doesn't get to use Side Special again without touching down. You only get one.

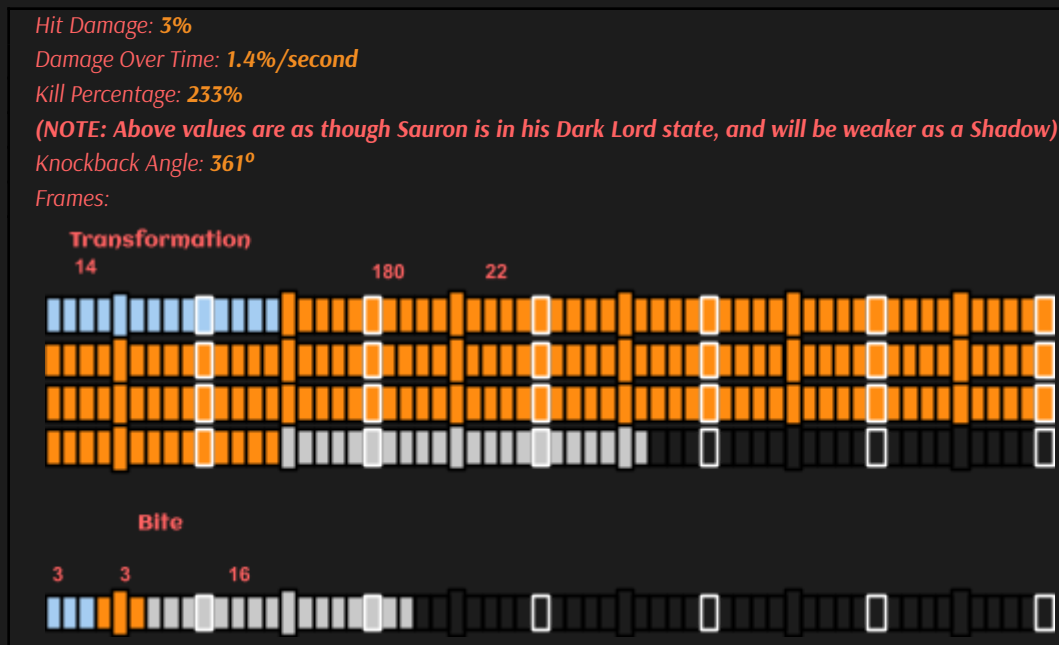
This variant of Side Special works wonders for Sauron's survivability. It doesn't have the raw burst damage of the Werewolf form or the long-term psychological pressure of the Serpent form, but besides the obvious recovery applications, Sauron also heals when he lands the attack! Specifically, he heals half what he inflicts: 5.3%. Not the kind of heal you write home about maybe, but it takes the edge off, and any amount of healing can be annoying on a superheavy. Healing does also increase the amount of damage that opponents need to deal to get the Ring off him, so even a few percent can make a big difference.

With its generally-milder rewards, this move is much less punishable than the Werewolf form, and has good-not-great speed on either end. You can potentially bust it out as an anti-air: Sauron has much juicier and more exciting options for that, but Vampire tends to come out faster than those other possibilities and doesn't require a hard read.

Sauron tends not to get much in the way of follow-ups on this attack, which is the big reason not to favor it in all situations. It might win you an interaction but it typically puts Sauron a bit far away to do much, and also leaves him slightly out of his element in the air. In either form Sauron appreciates the little boost to his recovery, but in his shadow form Sauron does have some tricks for increasing the utility of the attack and getting bigger pay-offs. His shadow form also has a hard-coded 1.33x multiplier to what he heals! This actually just offsets the damage nerf that the attack gets to keep his healing at consistent levels in either form though, letting him get equally good heals off lesser damage output.

Downwards Angle: Serpent

Coils up as a pitch-black serpent, then springs at the nearest foe with a bite that inflicts damage-over-time.



With his by-now-familiar transformation effects, Sauron takes the shape of a large black serpent, our final and most straightforwardly-named scary-looking animal. It's the form he took against the Hound of Valinor Huan, and which decorates the coat of arms of the Haradrim, Sauron's allies from the south.

As he changes into a serpent, Sauron's movement and attack will vary slightly depending on whether he's grounded or airborne. In the former case, Sauron slithers along the ground at Steve's walk speed a short distance (about half a Battlefield platform) before coiling up and raising his head, fangs bared.

The first time a foe strays within a Sora-FTilt-range of him, he lashes out lightning-fast! This is his only Side Special that isn't a hitgrab. The Side Special does go 3 for 3 on being bite-focused, though, with Sauron here delivering a horrid snake bite. The bite itself deals a pretty meager 3% with very minor knockback, but the real selling point is the lingering poison effect: the opponent gains a sickly purple aura for the next 10 seconds, during which they take 1.4% per second, totaling to 14% damage.

The passive damage is a feather in Sauron's cap that lets him sit back a bit more than he can usually get away with, and it can be particularly handy when trying to get the Ring off someone - you practically get a countdown to when you can grab it off the opponent. It's also worth noting that though the initial bite does get the usual Shadow form damage debuff, the poison effect doesn't, so it's a very viable source of damage-racking for Sauron in that form.

This attack can be very easy to land in tech chase scenarios - you need to have good advantage to bust it out, since there's considerable lag on the front end, but it carves out a wide area around Sauron where the opponent can't safely go as part of their get-up strategy. Layer that with some of Sauron's other set-up tricks and you can really give the opponent a hard time.

The attack's not exactly unbeatable, though. As mentioned, it's a little slow for Sauron to get in position, and it is possible to dodge past Sauron and avoid a bite even once he's set up. Sauron also lingers in coiled-up snake form for 3 full seconds, so he can also get hard punished with ranged options if foes keep clear of him.

That said, once he goes for the bite, there's shockingly little endlag. Even as his serpent form recoils, he's slipping back into his human form. The attack is completely safe on shield and even difficult to punish on whiff. All in all, it lends itself to situations where a stage hazard really is a lot to deal with - you'll get punished for just throwing it around in neutral, but if you're sure an opponent will stray within range and set off the bite, it's worth going for.

Anyway, that's all the grounded version of the attack. In the air, things work a little more simply. Sauron snakes downward into his coil, just slightly below and in front of where the attack was initiated, then flings himself upward in a diagonally upward strike, finishing at the same altitude he started from and a Battlefield platform ahead. As with Vampire, the attack then becomes unusable until you touch down on solid ground.

This aerial version of the snake bite deals the same damage and poison effect as the grounded version, but it plays out in a more consistent and direct fashion, since Sauron doesn't wait

around for someone to get close. If he lands the bite, he'll propel himself upward just a bit after the hit, similarly to how his Vampire hitgrab ends. In this case he's left closer to the foe and frees up more quickly, though.

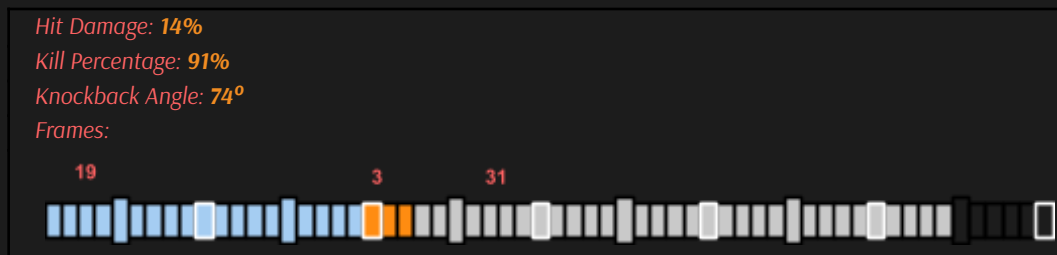
The serpentine down-and-up motion can make for a risky recovery option near the ledge. Deliberately placing yourself under the opponent off-stage is... let's just say not something you want to get predictable about. But the quick shift in his hurtbox combined with the unorthodox movement can evade attempts to intercept him more directly.

If Sauron hits the stage during his initial burst of downward movement, he'll actually coil up onto the stage, transitioning neatly into the grounded version of the attack.

Up B: Travels Of The Ring Lord

Dark Lord: Walking Amongst The Flames

Omnidirectional teleport attack that creates a damaging burst at Point B. Pushes foes when striking shields.



Our first input that's completely different in each form! Scrapbook it. In his Dark Lord form, Sauron will turn away from the direction he's facing and start walking into a wall of flame that materializes behind him. A moment later, his silhouette reforms a short distance away, flames exploding in a radius around him before his form manifests and he enters a helpless state. This fiery relocation deals 14% damage and pretty high knockback with low scaling, but to make up for it his distance is pretty short, being about $\frac{1}{4}$ the way across Final Destination.

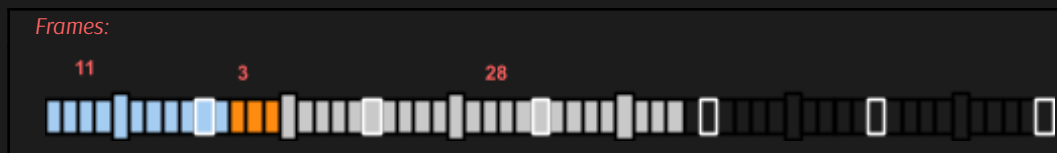
Sauron's Up Special in his Dark Lord form is generally frightening when used to knock your foe to the top blastline, though you'd have to read them pretty well if you want to send them to Eru that way. On the other hand, Dark Lord Up Special's blast radius is on par with Hero's Boom (which is to say Large), making it pretty good for spacing purposes. It can be used to scare foes away from where you're about to appear and herd them into lingering hitboxes like Sauron's gaze, effectively putting the foe between a rock and a hard place...or in this context a fireball and a hard tower.

Jumbled metaphor aside, Sauron's Dark Lord Up Special's telegraphed nature also applies to attempted recoveries. Because it takes a bit for Sauron to get from Point A to Point B, there's some ample opportunity for your foe to read where Sauron is teleporting to and catch him right as he exposes himself. It gets bad if this loses you the One Ring, and further rubs the salt in the wound if it results in you losing a stock.

But on the bright side, you *do* have extra jumps in Shadow form. And if you lose the ring off-stage, it's likely to despawn and return to you automatically. So the seemingly-worst-case scenario of your recovery getting stuffed and the ring getting knocked off you in the process can still work out for you if you're quick on the uptake about it. This slightly offsets the pretty paltry distance on the recovery. That and the fact that Sauron is extremely heavy and probably isn't getting sent that far from the stage.

Shadow: Wisps In The Dark

Omnidirectional tether recovery. Is invulnerable while casting.



As he doesn't have the splendor he does in his Dark Lord form, Sauron will have to do with this weaker (but still, y'know, quite powerful) recovery: his body will disperse into a shadowy mist and send shadowy tendrils in the direction of the joystick, reaching a distance of up to 1.5 BFPs. Oddly enough, this *doesn't* deal damage or knockback, but that's not the point. It acts as a grab (a real one and not a hitgrab), but also doesn't lock the foe down or put them in a normal grabbed state. It doesn't even interrupt the foe or apply hitstun!

The attack has transcendent priority and is disjointed, so opponents at least can't bat Sauron away easily. If he grabs onto a foe with this move, Sauron will become tethered to them for up to 1.5 seconds before releasing. While tethered, Sauron's movement becomes limited to a maximum of 1.5 BFPs away, as though he was a genie who made his foe into his lamp. The opponent's movement, by contrast, isn't limited at all.

This move is an unorthodox but powerful recovery tool, as Shadow Sauron can take advantage of his foe's ability to recover better than him and by technicality repurpose it as his own virtue of a 'possession'. This is a *waay* riskier double-edged sword than his Dark Lord Up Special, since you're forcing yourself up close with the foe and possibly even giving them a bit of a frame advantage. The way you benefit off this state is his Shadow Aerials; these don't tend to be particularly strong on their own, but they lend themselves well to mix-ups and can make Sauron pesky to defend against.

It should also be known that Sauron cannot grab or use any other attack in this state, only his aerials; even if he lands the move from the ground, he'll float just a bit up off the stage while he's grounded. As he basically amounts to being a shadowy balloon on a string in this state, Sauron doesn't have much opening to use his other attacks until the tether is released. Hitting the Special button again, regardless of analog direction, will release the tether, so Specials are right out. That being said, releasing the tether is pretty much lagless, so Sauron can just as quickly chase his foe with the Vampire transformation as soon as he's free.

There's another thing to consider, and that's that either side landing a hit will prematurely end the tether, so against a rushdown character like Little Mac it basically boils down to an Old West quickdraw duel in that it's a matter of who's quicker to use their attacks.

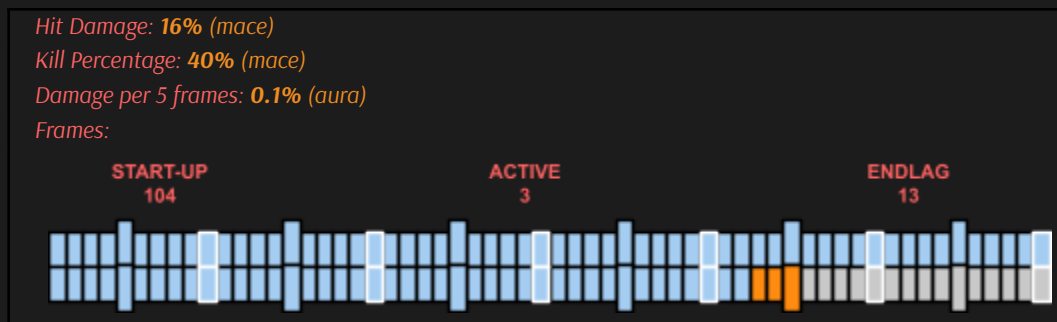
That's compounded by one small wrinkle, which is that if Sauron is the one to land a hit, the tether actually drags him along a short ways (1.5 BFPs) into the foe's knockback before it gives way. This lets Sauron follow up on his aerial hits a lot better than he normally could and even leverage beating out the foe for his recovery. It's not super easy to do since you have to both land the tether and then beat the opponent with your limited set of attacks, but it's doable!

Anyway, if you're not feeling the galaxy brain option, this can also just... snap to the ledge like a normal tether. It doesn't have a *huge* range to do that compared to some tethers in the game, but it's decent enough and it's omnidirectionally angleable. Plus you have multiple jumps to rely on in the air.

Down B: Presence of Darkness

Dark Lord: Painful Malice

Highly-telegraphed status buff Special that puts the pressure on his foes and has potential for disruption.



Placing both hands upon the mace, the head facing downwards, Sauron begins charging with power over 104 frames before he smashes the mace into the ground and bursts in a glowing-purple aura about double the size of Zelda's U-air. The will of the Dark Lord, the same force that tortured both Gollum and the hobbit Pippin, is now in effect for the next 7 seconds or until he loses the One Ring. Anybody within that same "Zelda U-air x2" radius will take 0.1% damage per 5 frames with a 5% chance to flinch.

This is generally good for defending yourself and keeping the One Ring on your finger if you don't want to lose your power and be forced into your Shadow form. Alternatively, Sauron can use it to keep his foe right where he wants them, defenseless against his next move. But ultimately, both of those strategies are all about *disruption*. It isn't as reliable as one may hope, however, because Sauron is effectively using Luigi's Negative Zone as a Special meaning whether or not your foe flinches in Sauron's presence up to chance. *Although* Reclamation increases that chance for every 1% recoil absorbed while the foe has the One Ring.

Having the aura up comes with one trade-off, which is that Sauron has an 0.8x knockback modifier while it's up. That's a significant nerf, but it can be paradoxically helpful here; Sauron can be a bit sluggish to pursue foes, and this tweak helps keep enemies closer in and taking more rapid damage while the armor is up.

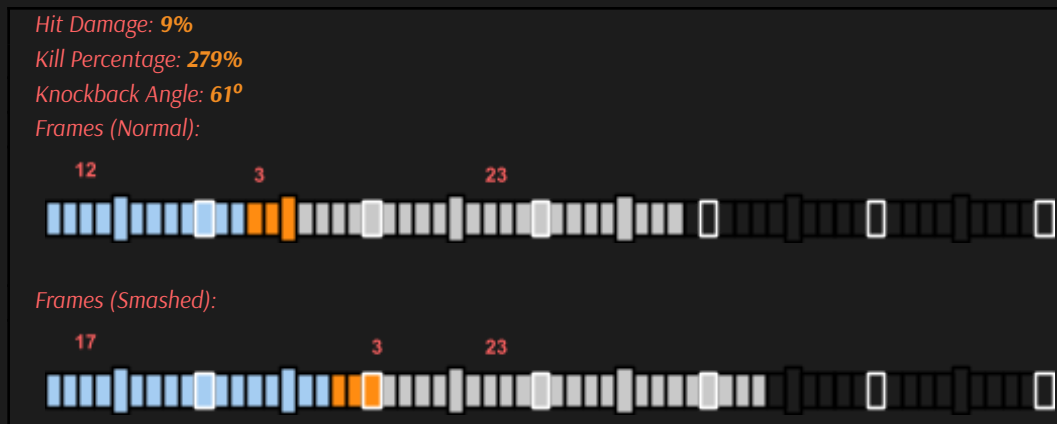
Despite the reduced kill power with the aura active, it's still good for getting that last extra boost towards kill percentages. It's basically a Piranha Plant Poison Cloud clipped onto his armor, and even if it doesn't trigger the chance to flinch places a bit of psychological damage on his foe while they're inside Sauron's radius, likely making them more prone to making mistakes or diverting attention from other entities out on the field. Do keep in mind that a second input of DSPEC will be a near-instant dispelling of the radius in the event you have them at the exact damage you want them.

Oh but that's not all: if your foe stays in your radius for 5 seconds, Barad-dûr and the Nazgûl will be attracted to their location and follow them as though they were carrying the Ring. This debuff persists until they leave that same radius, so it should be in your best interests to keep that foe inside to get Barad-dûr to heal you more and potentially give the Nazgûl the chance to use their Morgul-blade. 5 seconds *is* a long time, but you can pull it off in a grab or a tech chase situation.

Last but not least, though it's not the main function of the move, the initial downward thrust with the mace does have a hitbox here that deals 16% and is a powerful spike. It's tough to land since it directly overlaps with Sauron and is *incredibly* slow, but it's a killer off-stage.

Shadow: The Nine Nazgûl

Send the fearsome Ringwraiths to hunt down the enemies of the Dark Lord. They prioritize the one who has stolen the Ring from Sauron.





As a Shadow, Sauron will instead channel dark magics and create a large burst of power to bring forth one of his most powerful servants: the Ringwraiths, more “affectionately” known as the Nazgûl. Holding a sword in both hands with the tip pointing upwards, a Nazgûl will chase down the foe in a bid to retrieve the One Ring at the speed of Mewtwo’s walk speed. In this set, the Nazgûl are essentially glorified hitgrab projectiles that will tackle the closest enemy who would even think of resisting Sauron. However, if that foe possesses the One Ring, they get faster and will prioritize the Ringbearer, passing by other possible targets if the Ringbearer is within a couple BFPs. Oh, and they have 1 hit’s worth of HP and are about the size of Little Mac. They’re scary but easily dispatched by opponents willing to confront them directly. After being created, they’ll just walk right forward until they reach a ledge, then turn around and head back the other way.

This is an attack that Sauron has pretty fine-tuned control over; the Ringwraiths are his best servants, after all. Using the input normally sends out a Nazgûl on foot, making them move at a maximum speed equal to Myhra’s walk speed. *Smashing* the input instead sends a Nazgûl on a horse, moving at an identical speed to Bowser’s run. Either way, if a Nazgûl touches a foe, they’ll skewer that foe with a Morgul-blade. This is a hitgrab (and so can be shielded), that deals 9% damage and very low knockback if a foe can’t just get impaled by the attack. If they are impaled, the underwhelming attack gets a lot scarier; it also inflicts the foe with a temporary debuff where they take 1.2x damage and 1.1x knockback for 9 seconds. This status effect doesn’t stack but *can* be refreshed. Oh and if your foe is using the Ring, they’ll find that its recoil gets stronger by 1.2x, too.

After landing the hit, the Nazgûl will release the opponent, causing them to stumble backwards a short distance. The Nazgûl will stay on stage, but move into the background and wait 4

seconds before resuming pursuit of the foe. Mostly just to avoid gross exploits, you understand. Sauron can't command them or summon a replacement during the "cooldown".

It's worth mentioning that horsed Nazgûl have a higher hitbox than unhorsed ones; this is the main difference besides the speed. Horsed Nazgûl can be low-profiled, which can make them a bit trickier to hit with, but the trade-off is that they'll block projectiles while Nazgûl on foot will allow projectiles to pass by. Horses are good meat shields.

The Nazgûl are direct puppets of Sauron by virtue of them being the Nine Kings of Mankind fallen to the corruption of their rings, and as such they serve as Sauron's means of stage control, and the way you can control the speed in which they move also plays into some terrifying mind games. The last bit is especially the case considering Sauron can turn a Nazgûl he's sent around by tilting or smashing Down B again (to affect the corresponding type). Note that this means he can only ever have one of each out at a time, as the control for creating another one is overridden.

If you *hold* the tilted or smashed Down B while the respective Nazgûl type is out, they'll put on a short burst of speed. They'll dash forwards in a burst equal to Marth's Initial Dash, allowing them to jump off the ledge while doing so. This will, however, incur a cooldown of 9 seconds before the ghostly outline of a crown flashes above them, indicating that it can be done once more. Don't worry, they're neither living nor dead, you don't have to worry about them hitting the blastline. Anyway, holding Down B to command a Nazgûl to get a bit more aggressive amps up the pressure against your foe, allowing Sauron to forcibly divert their attention between himself and his greatest servants and leaving them guessing as to who will attack next. Also, y'know, he can set subtlety aside and just fire a hitgrab projectile off a ledge.

Where Barad-dûr has the role of stage-control in the air, the Nazgûl are basically covering ground, totalling up to *three* separate entities to worry about in a straight one-on-one. The Nazgûl summoning also gives Sauron some level of versatility, allowing him to think of more and more objectives revolving around the speed at which they move, identically to how Ryu, Ken and Terry generally do the same with their projectiles. Above all else, though, the Nazgûl cover Sauron's approaches or give him a layer of defense upon disengaging the enemy.

On-foot Nazgûl are generally better for playing the long game due to how much slower they are in comparison to the mounted counterparts; Sauron can distract them by pursuing the foe with his Side Special or railroading them into Barad-dûr's gaze, misleading them into thinking that was your plan when in actuality it was to have them caught at the end of a Morgul-blade. Conversely, horseback Nazgûl are for more short-term plans; Sauron can have a riding Nazgûl chase down his foe much quicker, especially if they hold the One Ring.

The debuff from the Morgul-blade can really help in the long run, as Sauron can enhance the attacks of his otherwise-weak Shadow form and the *already* meaty attacks of his Dark Lord form should Sauron reclaim the One Ring in a sufficient-enough period to get him back to being the Dark Lord. 1.1x isn't exactly much on the surface for knockback, but your scarier kill moves like Werewolf Side Special, Dark Lord Side Smash and Shadow D-air are even scarier. The 1.2x

damage multiplier is a lot more handy for building up the damage to reclaim the One Ring quickly.

The other particularly handy thing about the Nazgûl is that they can force reactions from invisible opponents and make them easier to read. Given the way invisibility works in the game, you'll at least have a rough idea where they are, but specifics are tough. This is true of a lot of your stage control tricks, but the Nazgûl being so proactive means they tend to get bigger reactions and attacks rather than simple evasions.

Now since this is a Shadow form attack, Sauron can't actively create new Nazgûl in his Dark Lord form. However, if he reclaims the Ring, the ones on the stage don't go away. In fact, when this happens, Nazgûl on the stage will form an elaborate, ghostly white crown over their hoods to indicate that they too have been invigorated by their Master finally getting his Ring back. Not just visually either! Mechanically, they also upgrade to having 3 hits worth of HP while the crown rests above their head. This makes them a lot more annoying to get rid of and more minion-like than projectile-like. Opponents are incentivized to go after Ringwraiths while Sauron's in Shadow form for this reason, making them effective distractions.

THROWS

Grab/Pummel: |◉| **The Dark Lord's Touch**

Grasp your foe with a singular hand and let them burn in your grasp. An incremental move in reclaiming the One Ring.



Here's a set of attacks that aren't affected by possession of the One Ring: Sauron's throws.

But first: the grab. Sauron reaches out with his (hopefully) ringed hand and lifts the foe by where the neck usually would be. He'll choke the opponent with a fiery hand (a disturbingly brutal animation) for a slow, 2% damage-per-input pummel.

Grab is extremely important in reclaiming the One Ring, as mentioned before. It's a little on the slow side for a grab, but only barely. The range is also middling despite Sauron's size. One of its better attributes is that it has pretty high activity for a grab at 5 frames, making the timing just a little fuzzy when opponents are trying to slip away.

While you've got an opponent grabbed, the gaze of Barad-dûr will not track them and Nazgûl will not attack them. In a 1v1 situation, Nazgûl will actually step aside and maintain their positions while a foe is grabbed, as though they were on cooldown. Barad-dûr may contribute a little chip damage, but its slow damage output doesn't pile on *too* much.



F-throw: |☉| Cast Into The Fire



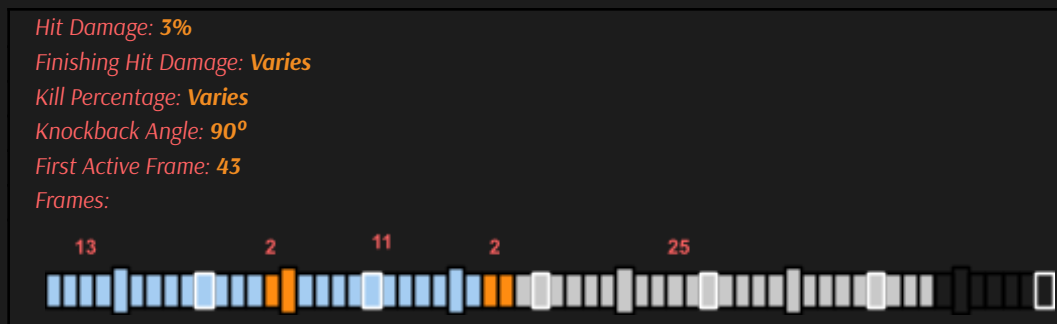
Sauron's armor glows intensely orange as the stage underneath him cracks and ruptures, opening a pool of lava in the stage at his feet. With an almost casual gesture, Sauron tosses the foe lightly forward, directly into the lava. Legally Sauron cannot murder people in this set, so this acts like normal Smash lava and just bounces the foe back up for 6% and low knockback.

The knockback here is in combo-starter territory, popping the foe lightly up in front of him, but Sauron doesn't have *quite* as much advantage as you'd normally want for a combo throw. His fastest options work, like Jab, but he's probably not getting anything too meaty off it. That said, despite not having a big frame advantage, he does have a colossal positioning advantage: the lava remains in place for 2 seconds as a stage hazard after being created, about a time and a half as wide as Kirby.

Sauron can walk on the lava freely, but if the opponent lands in it again then they take the damage and knockback from the throw again, getting bounced right back up. Not only do they have to defend against Sauron's follow-up option, but they also have to play the Floor is Lava for real. If Sauron uses this at the ledge... well first of all, he'll always back up a bit so that there's space for the lava. If you're playing on stages with platforms that are too small, maybe that's your problem buddy. Anyway, when he uses it at the ledge (or maybe when he's got a Ringwraith positioned on the far side of the foe), things can get particularly tricky for the opponent, as they can't just casually air dodge away to guarantee their safety.

The right set-up can give Sauron a lot of latitude to go for something risky. He has a lot of wild, rangy hard-read options in his toolkit, after all. May as well flex those muscles. Back the foe into the corner and get Reclamation going and something incredibly violent like FSmash can look like a very attractive option: difficult to challenge and all but certain to kill.

D-throw: |◉| **Domination**



Whether or not he has the One Ring, Sauron is known for twisting even the most iron of wills to his advantage...save for Tom Bombadil. Either way. Sauron will drop the foe, then grasp a hand onto the side of their head, dealing a measly 3% damage by itself. Then, he channels magic of a disturbing red color into their head, dominating them. As soon as he lets go, the foe is forced to attack...*themselves*, dealing ½ their Jab's normal damage and knocking the foe a medium distance upwards.

Because your throw is entirely reliant on your foe's Jab damage it can either be kind of awful for you (Isabelle) or pretty good for you (Ganondorf). Speaking of the following should be noted when using D-throw:

- This throw uses the total damage of all multi-stage jabs
- For Fighting Game characters:
 - The move will prioritize the higher-damage jabs for Ryu and Ken.
 - D-throw on Kazuya will default to his Flash Punch Combo (A, A, Pause, A), but with Reclamation, it will switch to his 10-Hit Combo, potentially making this one of the scariest throws in the game.
- Jabs with infinites will default to the lowest-possible time it can be active.
- Outside mechanics such as Deep Breathing, Ink and Luma will not be factored into D-throw.
- Simon/Richter's Held Jab will not be factored.

behind and in front of him, all slowly advancing on the foe. Ethereal and transparent to various degrees, these fade in and out of sight quickly enough to make it hard to track Sauron's specific position. But it's clear that he's advancing, slowly and inexorably, on the opponent.

The opponent, for their part, is trapped in the wind and taking rapid hits of 0.4%. They also still count as grabbed in this state, and outside damage can bust them out of it. They can also mash out of the grab normally (at half the normal difficulty!) and retain escape progress from when they were grabbed, so you need a fair bit of damage racked up to really count on the foe staying locked into the throw.

Anyway, if they don't mash out or get hit out, Sauron will continue to advance on them, pushing them backwards, until one of three things happens: you stop holding the analog in the throw direction, you reach a ledge, or you bully the foe backwards the maximum distance (the length of 2 Battlefield platforms).

In any of those other three situations, the wind abruptly kicks up, unleashing a final finishing hit of 4% that launches the foe somewhat-to-very powerfully. This hit is stronger the further you managed to push the foe! At the minimum distance, it'll only kill at sudden death percentages. Bully the foe along to the maximum distance and it'll start killing around 140%. Good-not-great number, but remember that you're also getting a ton of backwards distance and a little chip damage in that situation.

Of course, getting the maximum distance requires the foe to be heavily-damaged to begin with, and also specific positioning for landing the grab. So the extra backwards movement generally doesn't let you cheat for early kills too much. Because the throw power is actually contingent on the distance moved, it tends to reward Sauron for being somewhere in the middle of the stage rather than fighting with his back to the ledge. A killer BThrow, but not a reversal: it's a reward for commanding the stage.

Given some of Sauron's set-up tricks, this can be an exceptionally annoying way to frog-march the opponent through your stage control. Just keep in mind that the opponent will get hit out of the grab if they take 10% damage from outside sources, as in any other grab. Gaze of Barad-dur is mildly profitable here - it'll get you free damage (layering on with what this throw already deals), but then just a grab release when and if its damage totals to 10%. That grab release can still be pretty good if you weren't set up for a kill and repositioning is in your favor, though. Sauron *does* have the tools to be scary up close in neutral.

Both flavors of Down Special also set up well for this attack, for similar reasons: get passive damage, push opponents into bad places.

Another fun trick to pull with this attack is that, as we skimmed over, Sauron only continues to push the opponent back as long as you hold the analog. You *can* stop early to launch the foe less powerfully and trick them into buffering something as they get launched, as they were trying to mash out. This will sometimes scare foes into not escaping, but not all of them will be spooked (especially ones with fast moves that aren't necessarily over-committing). Generally

summit as a vantage point for short-hop attacks and cross-up attacks. Alternatively, being situated atop the mountain can give Sauron the means to maintain more distance from his foe while the Nazgûl and Barad-dûr handle it for you.

As far as using U-throw from atop the mountain goes, it becomes an unconventional air set-up allowing Sauron to push the aerial offensive with any of his aerals, or to use either airdodges or Up Special to move away from your foe depending on if they take advantage of their newly-airborne position...provided, of course, they don't end up in Barad-dûr's line of sight.

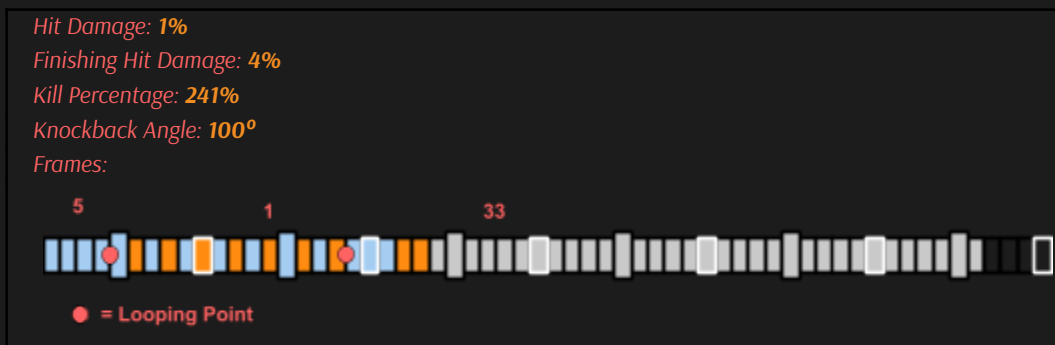
With Reclamation active, Sauron's U-throw becomes a lot scarier: while the mountain is completely unaffected by the return of the One Ring's power, the throw's damage and knockback gets bigger. transforming this into a kill throw on its own where Sauron can quickly knock his foe to the blastline, especially after a Nazgûl debuffs that same foe with a Morgul-blade. The power of a Reclamation U-throw is not to be trifled with, especially if done on the summit of the mountain.

Terraforming is powerful and Sauron has a few ways to leverage it, but the fact that it's gated behind his grab and comes at the expense of other powerful throw options means he can't do it freely. Heck of a way to flex on an opponent you've got in your clutches, though.

NORMALS

Jab | ◉

Dark Lord: A Taste Of Power



Sauron raises a clenched fist and unleashes a burst of force from the One Ring, dealing a flurry of 1% rapid hits before capping off with a final wave of fire that deals 4% damage and medium-low knockback. Mechanically, this is comparable to Meta Knight's Jab: all rapid jab and finisher.

Dark Lord Jab shares generally the same uses as Meta Knight's Jab except it's got better range at first, on par with the max charge of Samus's Neutral Special, but the longer you use it, the smaller it gets, shrinking to about the size of Olimar's White Pikmin Up Smash. At max size it

almost touches the ground, giving Sauron some frightening edgeguarding potential and by extension it reaches pretty high for defense against aerial approaches. It's quite middling in terms of speed in comparison to more than a few Jabs in other kits, but the range more than makes up for it. Sauron can space pretty well if positioned correctly.

Because this is an unusual Jab, Sauron doesn't get any jab locking tactics out of this, though much like some of Meta Knight's attacks, this attack has transcendent priority and can beat a lot of other options. Sauron can also abuse the Nazgûl to damage rack to kill percentages (which are a low bar with Reclamation up), slamming the foe with a two-hit combo of Reclamation and the Morgul-blade. That sounds like a pretty cool metal band name, honestly. Anyway, if you have a Nazgûl on the loose with Reclamation active, Sauron can lock the opponent in place with this Jab until that Nazgûl touches them and inflicts that dreaded Morgul-blade skewering. And then you could potentially go right back into Jab, gross. A nice little reward for keeping your Nazgûl alive until you could get hold of the ring.

Shadow: Body Of The Void



As opposed to when he has the Ring, Sauron instead opts for a singular, omnidirectional burst of force at his position, dealing 8% damage and medium-high knockback.

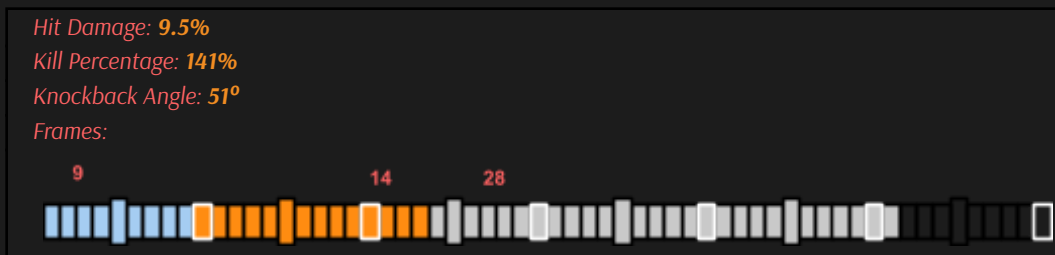
In comparison to his stronger form, Shadow Jab is more of a get-off-me tool which is actually stronger thanks to it being a radial hitbox from his center, allowing Sauron a good way to counter any cross-ups/dodge rolls in close-range engagements. Now of course, Sauron isn't that good at close-range in either form so this Jab is a bit of an exception for these reasons alone.

Although it *is* slower than his Dark Lord Jab, it makes up for it by having better burst damage in comparison to the other move's better sustained damage. It also pushes on shield, allowing Sauron some space against any foe who doesn't reach as far as people like Byleth, the Belmonts, and Sephiroth. Another advantage he has is it's marginally safer on whiff, though considering what this move is, it seems more like a sidegrade.

It's relatively safe on block when used on his foe's shield, at about -1, and can be used to nudge the foe towards a Nazgûl that's out on the stage, especially if they're after a Ringbearer. On the other hand, you can knock somebody into Barad-dûr's gaze and use the follow-up to give himself a quick burst of healing to keep himself below kill percentages as much as possible.

Dash Attack | ◉ |

Dark Lord: Necromancer's Reveal



For this attack, Sauron exerts his power and morphs his body into a comet of fire that deals 9.5% damage and medium-high knockback with minor scaling.

Marginally stronger than the total damage Shadow Dash Attack can optimally perform, Sauron's Dark Lord Dash Attack is generally much better when it comes to killing near the ledge. It should be noted that it *is* slow going from running to being an active hitbox, but to Sauron mains' credit, the active hitbox lasts pretty long...though don't get too cocky about using this because you're still going to get mixed if they perfect-shield.

With Painful Malice activated, you'll find it likelier to hit someone with Sauron's Dark Lord Dash Attack thanks to its chance to flinch, and that's not getting into its constant damage per tick slowly bringing your foe's damage to the proper kill percentages. Even without it though, you'll find that the hitbox lasts pretty long, which is on par with the likes of Cloud's Dash attack and lasting a bit longer, to the point where you can safely edgeguard with it in such a scary approach.

With Reclamation active, this becomes an even stronger kill option that he can use to take advantage of the constant searching of Barad-dûr's eye, and it's made even stronger indirectly by how bolstered Sauron's movement speed is. Generally, you'll want to use this at the end of a combo, because increased mobility or no, the frame data doesn't change at all.

What makes this even scarier is that Sauron can cross up on shield, granting him some scary pressure when your foe is on the defensive and you're trying to approach: after going past the foe, you can quickly follow up with a Jab as a reward for hard-reading their dodge roll direction, or chase them with Werewolf Side Special in a bid to continue the pressure. It should also be noted that Dark Lord Dash Attack can fly off the ledge in an identical manner to Melee Kirby's Dash Attack, allowing you some unique off-stage approach options or even kill confirms. What's even better is that Sauron can use this little part of Dash attack rather deviously when paired with U-throw's mountain. You can attack off the summit by making his Dash attack an overhead when coming from above, and it gets even better if Barad-dûr is nearby.

Shadow: Necromancer's Shroud

Hit Damage: 1%*6
Finishing Hit Damage: 3%

should be noted that Sauron's Dark Lord F-tilt can tag foes as though they were carrying the One Ring, or increase the homing properties of both his Neutral Special and his Ringwraiths. This unstackable, non-refreshable debuff lasts for about 5 seconds, and tagging a foe with this cannot be done until 9 seconds after this debuff wears off.

Sauron's Dark Lord F-tilt does have the benefit of juggling if you get the timing right, but like with Melkor during the Ainulindalë, any disruption will cause imperfections that can be exploited. That being said, it can be used sparingly as a combo extender where Sauron can give them a brief taste of having Barad-dûr and/or the Nazgûl constantly on your tail. But do keep in mind that you don't wanna use it for the damage and knockback it has by itself.

No, this is an extremely unconventional set-up attack by virtue of having Sauron sic anything normally attracted to the Ring and increase the pressure by surrounding your foe Barad-dûr, a Nazgûl and yourself and make it easier to recover your damage and debuff your foe with a Morgul-blade. On top of that, it also doubles the tracking ability of Barad-dûr as well as the speed of the Nazgûl for the duration of that brief moment you have after your foe picks up the One Ring. It would certainly help Sauron have an easier time getting hit by either if you have Painful Malice active, allowing the Nazgûl to take advantage of the flinching to close in.

It certainly helps that Sauron's Dark Lord F-tilt can also inflict the debuff *while shields are up*, to further amp up Sauron's already rather oppressive shield pressure by possibly baiting Barad-dûr or a Nazgûl over to his foe's location for a possible shield break...though that generally depends on how far either one is from your foe, but the mere *prospect* can send somebody praying to Eru for a miracle.

Shadow: Devouring Void



Sauron half-turns to face the screen as he thrusts one arm forward, a sphere of darkness (about the size of a soccer ball) forming in his palm. He holds it for just a moment, then returns to his usual idle, darkness fading away once his hand leaves it.

There are two hitboxes here: an early hit on the initial palm thrust and then the main hit on the sphere itself. The initial hitbox is ungenerous and only does 1.7%, but it neatly true combos into the main hit. This is actually a better boxing move than Shadow Sauron's Jab, coming out a little quicker in exchange for the much more specific coverage.

The sphere itself has respectable disjoint and deals 5.7% alongside middling knockback that typical just earns you a neutral reset, which Sauron particularly appreciates in this form. This is

a lot easier to land than the early hit not just due to the range, but because it's got a noticeable vacuum effect that can reel foes in from an area about a time and a half the size of Kirby.

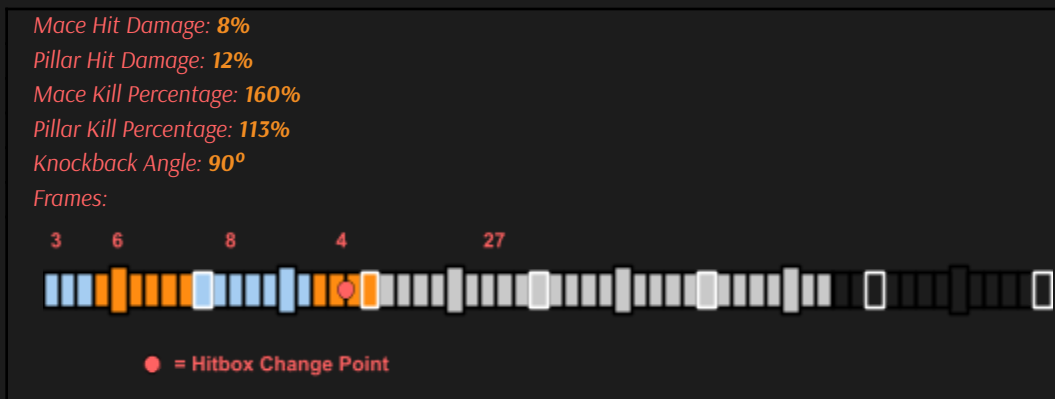
The attack is short-lived enough and the knockback significant enough that you don't have to worry about repeatedly hauling foes in and smacking them again, but the fuzziness of the hitbox, thanks to the vacuum effect, does let you go into it pretty easily in a lot of situations or use it as a poke that's safe on shield when spaced.

The other neat little advantage of the attack (or at least the sphere part of it) is that it *always* beats projectiles, destroying them instantly. It doesn't have unbeatable coverage and you can't hold it out, so don't think of it as an end-all-be-all answer to projectile shenanigans. But with the right timing, you absolutely can say no to a projectile *and* hit a bozo approaching behind it in one fell swoop.

Shadow Sauron tends to rely on range and disjoints for safety. Maybe the occasional all-around hit like Jab. It's worth keeping in mind that if the opponent has claimed the ring, they may well be invisible, in which case it's hard to gauge whether some of your riskier options are good ideas. Nice then that you have a safe little poking game to fall back on.

U-tilt | ◉

Dark Lord: Essence of Demise



Sauron leans to the side slightly, away from the screen, as he readies a blow. After a moment of lag, he flings his mace upward, with just a slight forward angle. As he does so, a pillar of flame erupts from the stage in front of him. The tall fire hitbox (about 0.75x a Palutena Up Smash in height and comparably wide) provides exceptional vertical coverage, but gutters out quickly.

This is a little on the slow side and doesn't have a ton of activity, with the mace hitbox on frames 11-12 and then the fire on 14-16 (taking until frame 15 to actually hit the upper half of its range). The mace hit on 11 ain't so bad, but it has a pretty specific hitbox here; Sauron's not really going for his full reach so much as he's wielding it like a conductor's baton. The fire hitbox is the main draw for the move and that's more-so the part that tends to feel a little slow. The attack is still usable as an anti-air, but opponents may be able to bum rush Sauron during the start-up if he tries to catch a jump-in a little too late.

Anyway, the mace deals just 8% and low knockback at a high angle - at low percentages it'll pop foes right into the fire (which hits for 12% and middling vertical knockback), but that stops being guaranteed to work, once it's launching foes further and faster. Note that the fire acts like a disjoint and not a projectile, and it'll be delayed slightly if Sauron ends up in hitlag from the 'mace' part of the attack (which has slightly reduced hitlag to make the 1-2 look a little smoother when that happens).

Still, early on it's a big damage reward for catching a foe with the more precise mace hitbox. The mace eventually scales to kill, but not until 160% or so. Late by Sauron-in-his-powered-up-form standards. There's a big chunk of the middle of the stock where landing it means a successful anti-air but not much more than that.

Mostly this is fearsome for the height of the hitbox. It can catch vertical recoveries at the ledge, but the fire doesn't stay out long so you need precise timing for that. You can also use it to shark platforms - not your most potent tool for the job, but it's quicker than some of your other ones and it gets a juggle going nicely.

Something that makes the attack particularly annoying as a defensive move is that there's actually an early hitbox right at the stage level - a tiny mote of flame at Sauron's feet, whence the pillar erupts. It's very small and only active on frames 4-9 (seeming to wink out briefly as Sauron initiates his swing), but if an opponent collides with it they'll be popped lightly upward for 2%, confirming into the fire hitbox.

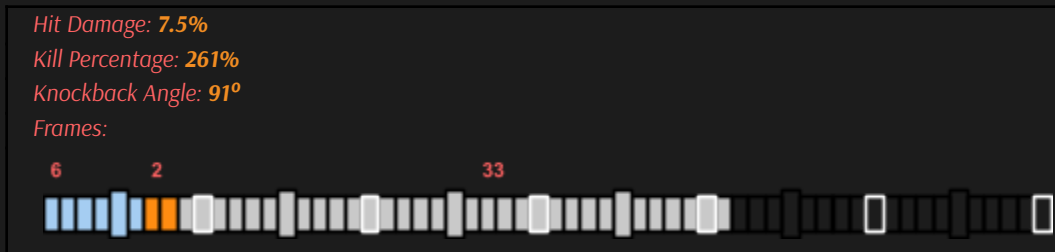
The fire mote can catch grounded approaches, though it's not super reliable for the purpose; the hitbox is right in front of Sauron and it'll lose to most any attack with range. It *is* low enough to 2-frame though, enhancing the attack's ledgetrapping capabilities. It's still a pretty committal attack overall and you need to be somewhat careful about how you time it, but hitting the ledge and then immediately hitting high is nice.

Another handy property of the early hitbox is that it's low enough to poke under shields - Sauron's DTilt tends to not do that very well due to the height of the hitbox (spoiler), so it's nice to have a slightly unorthodox tool for the job.

It's no Marth DTilt, but it's a way to poke shields. It's got short range, it's not spammable or really usable as a check, and even when you do poke shields you're locked into getting the fire hitbox vs going into whatever. The fire *does* deal good damage, and that shouldn't be overlooked. But Sauron's really gotta capitalize on his Dark Lord time while he's at peak performance and it's one of his less-rewarding hits in this form.

The fire launcher never kills - it does convert to his air game, but Sauron's Dark Lord Aerials tend to be slow, splashy, and heavily read-reliant. He has moves like that on the stage too, but also a good variety of disgusting pressure tools that he can't quite match in the air. Still, if you think you've got your opponent downloaded, launch away and try to bring some extreme violence.

Shadow: Supernatural Disaster



Sauron casually raises a singular hand and forms a tornado in front of him that rises upwards to the top of his head, deals 7.5% damage with weak knockback. It also has an upwards windbox that lingers for 2 seconds, just enough for him to take advantage of it for extra height. Sauron cannot make another windbox with this input for 6 seconds after the last one dispels.

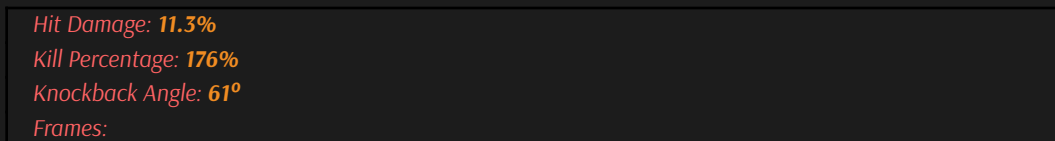
Now of course, Sauron's Shadow U-tilt is an anti-air that reaches fairly high up, but that's not all: Sauron's Shadow U-tilt can also make for some terrifying scare tactics, allowing him to send Nazgûl into the air without jumping or disorienting aerial approaches with the upwards windbox, stopping many stall-and-falls in their tracks (including Steve's) and leaving them open to attack for long enough for Sauron to exploit. For Sauron's direct use, the windbox can grant Sauron some extra airtime, allowing him to top the tornado with his D-air to hit foes from above or poke a good distance with his F-air. When he's tethered to a foe with his Up Special, Sauron can also take that windbox to his advantage for unique approaches.

As for the hitbox that initially appears when the tornado rises, Shadow U-tilt has considerable pushback on shields and its low start-up is enough to deny shorthop approaches and encourage foes to make a full jump to go over it, although they can still roll around it so you need to know when to use it. Encouraging the opponent to roll around is something you can call out and punish if you're savvy, particularly with a Shadow DTilt. Maybe a DSmash if you've got a hard read and you're feeling violent.

While it's limited in terms of combo potential due to its high endlag and its upward windbox, it gives Sauron all he needs to make a retreat or even go in for the grab just as the windbox dispels if his foe possesses the One Ring. Using it near the ledge is especially evil, as the lingering windbox can catch foes as they're recovering and leave them helpless...though it's probably not recommended if they have the One Ring on them.

D-tilt | ◉ |

Dark Lord: The Earth Trembles



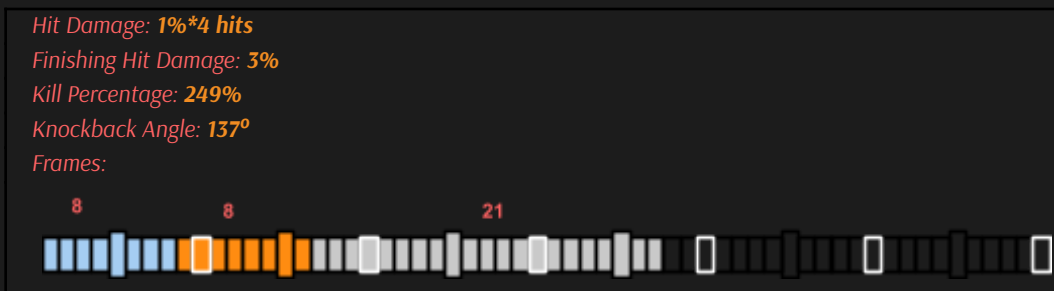


While in his Dark Lord state, Sauron will point a fist towards the ground and cause the One Ring to flash with power for a brief moment. Near-instantly, the ground 0.9 Grids in front of him *shatters*, shooting rubble upwards to knee level that deals 11.3% damage and some decent knockback.

Because this is an attack that's lower-hitting, you need a full-powered jump to avoid it...but because it's so disjointed, Sauron can use it to tech chase because of the generally minimal start-up frames of this attack. I mean, he's just channeling the Ring's power for an attack, were you thinking this was gonna be slow? Now I said before that you can jump over it, but that's for full jumps. Shorthopping towards Dark Lord D-tilt is pretty much ill-advised since Sauron's knee level is pretty tall.

The knockback angle of Dark Lord D-tilt is enough for Sauron to follow through with his Dash attack, which surprisingly he can combo into due to D-tilt's low FAF. You can also combo into his Neutral Special as well, requiring careful planning and good insight to pull off well but pretty decent reward in the end. The fire also continues off-stage so you have yourself a terrifying edgeguard that blocks off all safer options on use. That's not all the edgeguarding evil you can do: with Reclamation active, D-tilt becomes an absolutely *terrifying* kill move that Sauron can use to poke from a distance.

Shadow: The Shadows Beckon



From his "crouched" stance, Sauron doesn't seem to move, retaining his stock-still lean. His upper body flickers momentarily (a cosmetic effect) on frames 1-6, which is the only sign that an attack is coming. Then, on frames 9-16, a shadowy tendril trailing clutching fingers of smoke rises up from the ground underneath him and swipes along the stage at his feet, from front to back. This acts as a multi-hit that catches the foe up to 5 times and deals 7% before launching them weakly behind Sauron, at a low angle.

The attack hits a bit too high to be great at shield-poking, but it does have decent activity and hits on both sides of Sauron (reaching 0.8 Units to either side). Given the absurd violence of Sauron's DSmash in Shadow form, this attack fills the niche a traditional Down Smash would. It catches rolls and otherwise provides fuzzy coverage when you need that. It's a simple tool, but greatly boosts Sauron's ability to play defensive and stall for time in shadow form. It plays

Sauron holds his mace lightly in an underhand grip as the attack charges, appearing almost casual. The understated nature of the charge animation belies just how fearsome the attack really is: on release, Sauron performs a strong upwards swing similar to what he did to many in the Last Alliance that fought him. And then he performs it again. And then finally, a third time. The attack is extremely slow, but packs horrifying power and range. Each individual hit deals 22% damage at minimum charge, and knockback strong enough to kill somewhere around... let's say 19%. Getting tagged with the fully-charged version of the move is practically an OHKO.

This isn't a *true* multi-hit; each individual attack is its own kill move that has no chance at all of linking into later ones. Even if Sauron hits a shield, the attack actually deals such high pushback that the opponent will be shunted out of range of later hits (unless their shield breaks - not outlandish given the high damage of the attack). The long duration does mean it's basically impossible to spot dodge, but trying that in response to an attack with such a long wind-up seems kind of insane anyway.

This is too slow for Sauron to truly combo into and it is *desperately* unsafe to just toss around, but it's one hell of a hard read option for foes that toss out panicked, too-committal defensive responses when they're afraid of his faster options. It's also his go-to move in situations where a foe is incapacitated. Opponents that get shield broken will have to watch this one play out, more likely than not.

It has a couple other little tricks besides just being a big scary kill move, too. Sauron is armored during the start-up, and can tank attacks that deal 10% or less, meaning he's immune to quick interruptions. During Reclamation, that armor is increased by $\frac{1}{2}$ the recoil damage as well, and this attack can get *extremely* difficult to challenge with a large enough Reclamation buff. Counter your opponent's unsafe-on-block kill move with this even bigger kill move! Still, it's slow enough that even the most absent-minded opponents can very easily react to it. Opponents that hit Sauron with something quick during his start-up might conceivably free up and evade before he attacks.

The other thing you can look forward to about this move is that on hit (even on hitting a shield), there's a Bowser-sized flash of light around the point of impact. This flash of light won't affect the fighter that got hit (or Sauron himself), but it will affect anything else in the blast radius, hitting them with the exact same strength as the mace blow itself. In 1v1 this tends not to matter too much, except for the purposes of absolutely annihilating Pikmin or other similar pests. Granted, in situations where there are a lot of little bozos running around, it can be difficult to find a big opening for this attack. But if you get one, this move has a way of clearing a crowd.

This is the only attack you will use in FFA.

Shadow: Arms Of The Dark Lord

Hit Damage: 5%,5%

Finishing Hit Damage: 6%

Kill Percentage: 149%

Knockback Angle: 53°

Frames:



Dispersing his body and summoning several shadow tendrils, Sauron proceeds to lash out at his foe with them, landing 3 hits that chain into one another for a total of 16% (5%,5%,6%) damage and not *quite* enough knockback to actually kill, but just enough to send out a Nazgûl or prime Barad-dûr to be on the lookout for the Ringbearer.

The claim to fame of Sauron's Shadow Side Smash (ohhh, nice alliteration here) is its disjointed range, which is $\frac{3}{4}$ the general reach of the Belmonts' Side Smash. Effectively, Sauron gets a pretty mean poking option that's hard to perfect shield due to how little space there is between strikes. It's generally hard to counter Sauron's Shadow Side Smash at mid-range, which is generally where Sauron is at his best.

Another advantage this Side Smash has over his other SSmash is its speed: before, he had armor and a big mace to slow him down. Here he has none of that; this is about 40% faster, making it a speedier out-of-shield option he can use to catch foes who get too confident in themselves. The tendrils also vanish nearly as quickly as it comes out, allowing Sauron to chase down his foes and start a juggle from this attack's knockback angle.

Sauron can angle this Smash attack upwards or downwards for slight changes to damage output and knockback, turning it into a long-distance gap extender from ledges or countering many D-tilts or an anti-air that rewards Sauron for properly reading the foe's next course of action. It also helps with attempting pincer maneuvers with your Nazgûl, blocking off most of their approach options by charging this Smash attack and leaving them open to a "healthy" Morgul vaccination.

Up Smash | ◉

Dark Lord: Ashes To Ashes

Hit Damage: **3%,3%**

Finishing Hit Damage: **14%-18.2%**

Ash Damage: **4%/second**

Volcanic Eruption Damage: **33%**

Kill Percentage (Default): **98%**

Kill Percentage (Volcano): **0%**

Knockback Angle: **92°**

Frames:



Sauron levels his palm towards the earth, his focused power made clear through the glow of the ring, which intensifies as the Smash charges. On release, Sauron snaps his hand downward and opens it wide as light flares up around it. Cracks form in the earth beneath his feet and then a plume of volcanic ash billows out of the stage. It escapes from the stage and rises rapidly, as if released from intense pressure. As the ashy cloud rises, it's suddenly illuminated by lightning. At first there's only the flash of lightning internal to the cloud, but then a group of bolts strike down all around Sauron.

So... the animation's a bit involved, but the hitboxes here aren't too wild. Mostly. There are a couple early hits in the plume of ash as it rises, tied to the flashes of lightning inside the cloud. This gives the cloud an "early" anti-air hitbox above and in front of Sauron. The two early hits deal 3% damage, and they easily link together and into the main hit. Let's put a pin in that and just talk about the cloud for a quick second.

The cloud starts out in front of Sauron and about as wide as he is, streaming upward until it's twice his height, at which point the ash rising out of the stage tapers off and the cloud takes on a wider shape (let's say... one Mario tall and one Battlefield platform wide), just about one Sauron height over his head. Just for ease of visualization, good to know these things!

Anyway, that main hitbox we were talking about: the lightning bolts. These come down all at the same time and hit for 14% uncharged, with high upward knockback: a more "normal" killer than the absurdly violent Dark Lord FSsmash. There's one bolt just in front of Sauron, one behind him, and one that starts out directly overhead, but then arcs into the background as it gets near him (essentially limiting it to catching opponents *directly* over Sauron's head).

The overall hitbox for Sauron's Up Smash is one of the largest hitboxes in the game, having pretty substantial width on top of height that competes with the game's most ridiculous options. It's an absurd option for catching high recoveries or sharking platforms, and the early hitboxes even let it work as an anti-air, with a really good read. Again, we're grading "early" on a curve here, this is still a dummy slow attack on an absolute scale.

Up Smash unfortunately doesn't have FSsmash's armor to help Sauron's odds of getting the attack out, but it's at least not *quite* as slow. The hitbox also actually goes off independently of Sauron once the ash plume starts rising. Normally he's trapped in lag during the attack anyway, but if he gets interrupted it still goes off.

The cloud also lingers after the attack ends. It'll slowly drift down to the stage over the course of six seconds, at which point it settles onto the ground as a patina of grime. It despawns a moment after that and the sooty stage is just cosmetic. While it's a cloud, though, foes standing

in it will take rapid damage (with no hitstun or knockback at all) adding up to 4% a second. It's pretty minor in the grand scheme of things, but this little slice of chemical warfare provides *even more* passive damage for a character that already has several ways to get that. Sauron trades on stage control and fear, and every little bit helps.

But maybe all that's just not *violent* enough for you. Be not afraid! This move can situationally be absolutely catastrophic. Specifically, this attack has a hard interaction with the mountain created by Up Throw. Use it from atop the mountain and the charge animation plays out much as before. But once the ground cracks, the whole mountain shakes. And instead of a plume of ash, you get a full-on volcanic eruption! The geyser of lava you get here is roughly the size of the blast at the end of Pyra's Up Special, deals 33% damage uncharged, and is an OHKO for all intents and purposes.

Now keep in mind: this is inherently niche. Opponents are often not going to be hanging out high above Sauron when he's on his elevated platform. And the move is slow in close quarters, if you're both up there playing King of the Hill. The volcanic eruption happens a bit faster than the main hitbox of the normal version of the attack, but it's definitely still not fast.

Still, the eruption can be a *huge* pay-off on vertical launchers with the mountain in play and just the threat of it will inspire a lot of caution. And even if the eruption hitbox isn't in the cards, the normal version of the attack can be a pretty great tool for messing with an opponent that tries to use the mountain to get out of your stage control and platform-camp.

Shadow: Dust To Dust



Sauron's form begins rippling with some sort of turbulence, wisps of shadow starting to swirl around him. Upon release, he raises his arm upwards, willing it to morph into a tornado of darkness that rises upwards to deal 3 hits of 4%, 4% & 7% damage uncharged and medium-low knockback with middling scaling.

It's got decent range, to start off. Not on par with the likes of the Belmonts or Palutena, but those are high bars. It's more along the lines of the tornado's upper half going through the first platform layer of Battlefield. But to make up for its lack of vertical range in comparison to its compatriots or even its Dark Lord counterpart, it makes up for with its speed and its horizontal

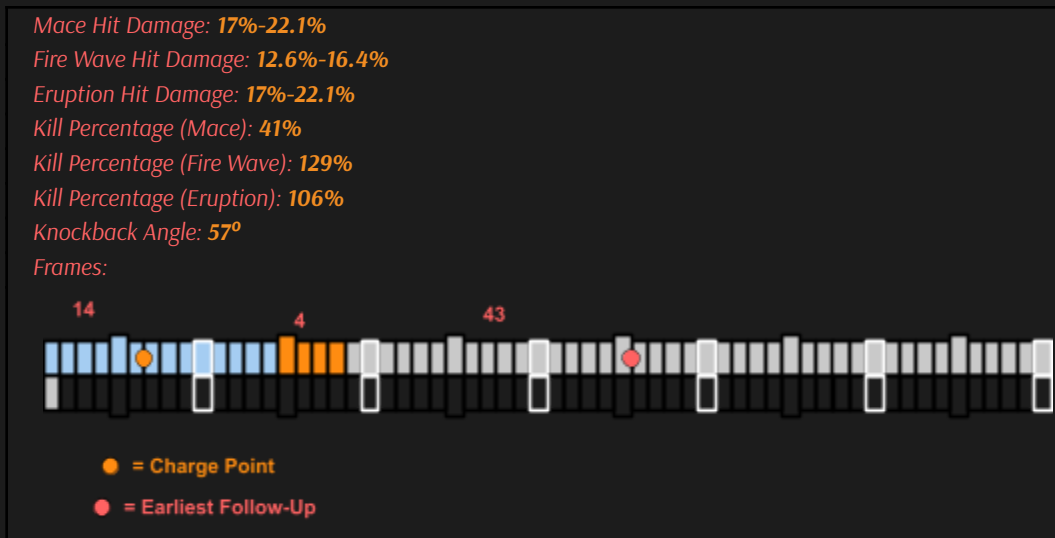
range at the top, being about as wide as a Purple Pikmin under the effects of a Super Mushroom.

Compared to its Dark Lord version, Shadow Up Special isn't meant for killing and has no special interaction with Up Throw's mountain. Despite this, Shadow Up Smash makes up for it by having a strong windbox that pushes away if they manage to whiff their attack. There are some narrow hitboxes off the sides of Sauron, so you need to be in a range where he's most at risk to land these hits. No, this is basically the worst nightmare for those who prefer shorthop attacking or trying to cross their foe up. If they try either then they're going to get caught in the figurative, and in this case literal, storm.

If used next to a Nazgûl, then they will be propelled upwards for some unique shenanigans, effectively creating a counter-shorthop that punishes Sauron's foe for trying to use one of their aerials on you. It can also help bring an on-stage Nazgûl back onstage if they accidentally fall off-stage, too. Additionally, you can stun somebody in place with Barad-dûr's gaze, then hit them with Shadow Up Smash to capitalize on their disadvantageous state.

Down Smash | ◉ |

Dark Lord: Mount Doom's Fury



Sauron will raise his mace skyward, generating a ball of fire above its head as he charges this attack. When releasing, Sauron will slam the fireball into the ground, creating two waves of fire on both sides that travel until they reach the edges or hit a fighter. A second input will cause the waves to stop and create eruptions at their respective positions similar to Pyra's Prominence Revolt.

The first stage of this attack has two hitboxes: the mace as it goes downwards, and the bursts of fire traveling along the ground.

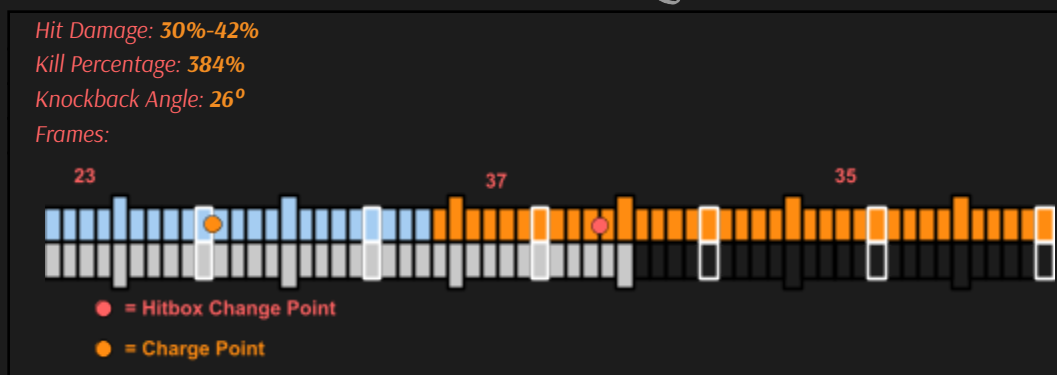
The mace itself can be considered a sweet spot for Sauron's Down Smash: it deals a pretty hefty 17% uncharged, kills notably early and is practically guaranteed to shield-break, though this part of the attack is the riskiest as you have to be *right up in the opponent's face* to actually land it. Generally, you'll want to try to land this hitbox when, ironically enough, their shield is already broken.

The more common of the two that you may be able to land is the waves that travel along the ground: these are about the size of a Power Wave and are identical in function to Terry's NSpec, but a wave will continue until it reaches a ledge or Sauron initiates the follow-up. These deal generally weaker damage at about 12.6%, and generally weaker knockback as well, but they're also on the faster end. Oh, and also, this also has a unique application with Up-throw's mountain: it goes *up and down* the slopes of the mountain, making this a very unconventional anti-air without accounting for this attack's follow-up.

Because this is effectively a projectile Down Smash at this stage, Sauron is at much of a risk of getting a disadvantage against foes like Ness, Rosalina and (List Reflector Character Here) due to the long endlag you have on this Smash attack. There *is* the off-chance that Barad-dûr will serve as defense while you take a moment to wind down, but Barad-dûr generally has a mind of its own so that's a very niche application.

But it's not all (Mount) doom and gloom for people stuck using this attack: Sauron's follow-up is where the real neeps and tatties lie: the follow-up deals the same damage as the mace (17%) but without the shield damage of the mace (though it does retain that property with Reclamation active). That being said, it has its own advantages to really stick out as well: the moment the waves explode they are no longer projectiles, but medium-sized disjointed hitboxes. On completely flat ground, the projectile before had good tech-chasing potential but now it gets even better by having good vertical reach just shy of Sauron's height. When paired with the U-throw mountain, this is a scary read tool that rewards Sauron for correctly predicting which direction they go from the summit and encouraging them to jump.

Shadow: Void's Beckoning





Sauron leans back slightly, his arms hanging heavy at his sides, as the attack charges. On release, he lurches forward, reaching out one arm in a slow grasp at the opponent. His arm distends slightly here to give the attack a little extra reach. He's not quite doing a Dhalsim routine; you might not even notice how unnatural it looks at first glance. His arm is also intangible during this animation, making it a surprising disjoint.

This attack is a straight-up command grab (and not a hitgrab either). Sauron will by default go for a grab after reaching forward 1.1 Training Stage Squares, but if his hand bumps into a fighter early, he'll make the grab early. You don't need to worry *too* much about spacing it.

On snagging a foe, Sauron holds them aloft by the neck (or reasonable equivalent) for a moment to let the gravity of the situation sink in. As he does, wisps of black shadow appear around him and the opponent. Once everyone's had some time to take it in, the wisps kick up into a whipping wind of shadows that engulf Sauron and the foe alike, obscuring them from view.

This is relatively brief before the shadows blast outward to either side of Sauron and the foe is launched vertically with 30-42% damage. The knockback is never enough to kill at reasonable percentages. It can get a juggle going, but the endlag is high and Sauron isn't necessarily gonna have an easy time pursuing. He might be better off going for one of his relatively-quick set-up tools. More so than providing some great opportunity to pile on damage, Down Smash's appeal is in its own raw damage and ability to pierce shields.

Its appeal also definitely *isn't* in its speed. The thing is ungodly-slow. If you don't charge it and the grab box happens early because Sauron is at point-blank with the foe, it grabs on frame 24. At its maximum range, the grab happens on frame 33. It's situationally faster than a Doriyah! Very usable. You want a pretty good read on when the opponent is gonna be right in front of you.

The attack also takes a long, long time to play out. If he grabs a foe, Sauron doesn't free up until frame 95! In a 1v1 context this isn't typically a concern, but the long animation can put a target on his back in FFA. Sauron is at least invincible during the "throw" so he doesn't have to worry about getting picked on immediately. His opponent isn't invincible, but the usual restriction around getting hit out of a grab after taking 10% damage applies (allowing someone to intervene and smack a victim out of Sauron's clutches if they're so inclined). Also, the Ringwraiths' usual grab behavior is enforced here; they won't go after a grabbed opponent and in a 1v1, will stop moving entirely while waiting on their master to deal with things personally.

If he whiffs the attack, Sauron *still* doesn't free up until frame 95. Yikes. It's a little less bad than it sounds, though. When he whiffs his grab, Sauron pulls his arm back in and then, fists clenched, arches his back and roars/screeches at the sky. A rare display of emotion. During this animation, the wisps of shadow still form around him and still kick up into their big vortex of shadow, and they still explode outward at the same point in the attack where they normally would have.

So a thing I neglected to mention earlier is that there is a hitbox on that blast, to each side of Sauron (reaching about 1.5 Training Stage Squares outward), that can hit outside opponents that didn't get caught in the grab. It deals 13-18.2% and Okay knockback. It clears about the same amount of space as the main hit so in that sense it's a decent consolation prize. Obviously the damage is less exciting. The threat of getting tagged with the collateral consolation hitbox in FFA sometimes inspires foes to try to knock a victim out of Sauron's grab and interrupt the attack.

The good news is there's still a big hitbox even on whiff! The bad news is that that hitbox is out on frames 55-60. Not exactly a quick roll punish. In the whiffed version of the attack, Sauron isn't invincible during the gathering storm like he would be if he'd grabbed a foe, but he is heavily armored, and the attack only gets interrupted if he takes 20% damage or more. Players not familiar with Sauron may try to hit him right after a whiffed grab, only to get no-sold countered with the frame 55 hitbox. More knowledgeable players will either wait until his real endlag, or punish with a grab of their own.

The attack's endlag isn't actually that bad, but the insane duration of the attack means that foes have all the time in the world to react to it. The late all-around hitbox gives Sauron some measure of protection, as it at least means opponents can't be standing directly next to him charging up an FSmash when he whiffs the attack. They *can* just shield it and then retaliate, though. If they've got some form of ranged punish, Sauron is in trouble after whiffing this; expect to eat a Charge Shot or whatever.

Sauron's gameplan in his shadow form leans defensive, focused on chip damage and keeping the opponent off his back long enough to be able to reclaim the ring. In lieu of the staple roll punish DSmash that would help him with that, he'll just have to rely on attacks like his Jab and DTilt instead. They cover both sides, after all, and they're quick and safe.

What this attack mainly does for you is just provide a bonkers big threat move. Sauron can hard-punish mistakes in a way that makes the opponent regret being born. It's difficult to land

even when the opponent has to keep an eye on Ringwraiths and whatnot, but the idea that you *might* go for it means the opponent has to keep their head on a swivel at all times. It's worth mentioning that the Nazgûl do have some tension with DSmash; since their attack is a hitgrab, unexpected success with them can bring the regrab timer into play and make this attack whiff.

There are a couple other things that make the attack spooky. One is that Sauron's disjointed arm is about as disjointed as it gets here: he can straight up grab through walls and terrain. The opponent will get yoinked over to him regardless. More of a novelty feature than a cornerstone of the attack (because walls are rightfully a bit niche in the first place), but it's a funny trick to play on someone who thinks they're safe.

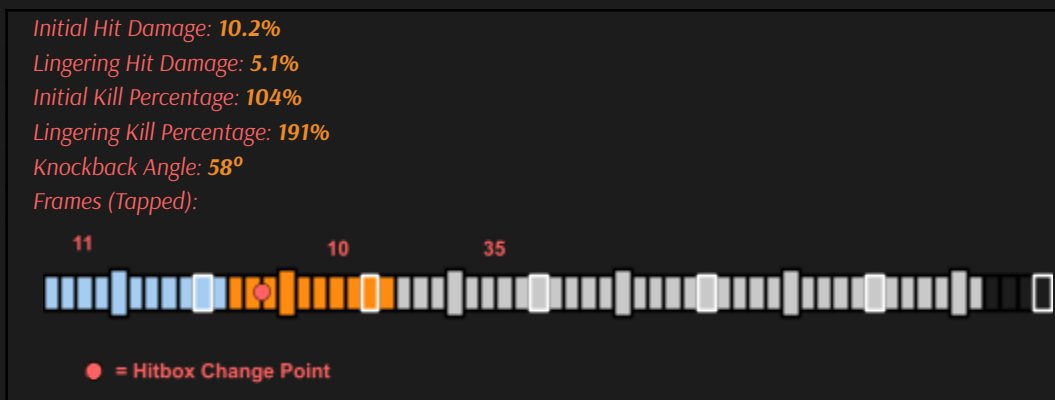
The real splashy thing about this attack is that, like Sauron's normal grab, it can be used to reclaim the One Ring! If Sauron pulls that off, you don't see him retake the ring. But once he and the foe are engulfed by shadows, you see flames lick around the edges of the storm, and a fiery image of Sauron's helmet appears in the storm.

When the foe is launched and the storm clears, Sauron stands tall in his Dark Lord form! This actually also powers up the attack itself. Sauron's Dark Lord damage modifier kicks in (or arguably his Shadow damage modifier wears off) for the launching hit as well as the collateral hitboxes, making this Shadow Sauron's only attack that can get the higher damage output of the Dark Lord. This raises the throw's damage output to 40-56%, and it's now very capable of killing!

AERIALS

N-air | ◉ |

Dark Lord: Heat Of Malice



Sauron flares up his body just enough for fire to shoot out from the gaps between his armor. This deals a hefty 10.2% damage and mighty strong knockback. It also has a hitbox afterwards that deals 5.1% damage and weaker knockback, but persists for as long as a Sauron player holds the button.

There's also a unique effect in Dark Lord N-air that he can exploit: if Barad-dûr is active and/or there's a Nazgûl out on the field, Sauron can use it to attract them both to his position for as long as this N-air is active. And if he *hits* somebody, the focus shifts to them: they'll be inflicted with the same debuff as FTilt and Down Special, attracting both to that player's position as though they have the One Ring.

The initial hitbox is obviously the strongest part of the attack, dealing enough damage and knockback to be considered a good distance maker. Because the start-up for this move is fairly quick, you'll find that this is good for out-of-shield options, and because Sauron is so huge that means his hitbox is also huge, allowing him to win out trades with most low-hitting attacks and allowing him to protect himself from would-be thieves for the One Ring.

The lingering hitbox from holding the A button is a bit weaker, but that offensive potential is sacrificed in favor of versatility: though it doesn't do much in terms of killing or burst damage, you'll find that this has good use in many situations that the initial hitbox could never be good at. It also retains the frightening hitbox size of the attack as well, allowing Sauron to make for some frightening air control. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the size of this hitbox can play to his advantage to punish a wrong decision to dodge, which considering everything he does, your foe might be pressured to dodge every last one.

The fact that it attracts Nazgûl and Barad-dûr to his location also gives him some good area denial and pressure that allows Sauron to goad his foe into making the wrong choice whether or not he manages. Out of the two, however, Barad-dûr has to be the scariest to bring to your position due to its gaze not being limited to the ground and its movement being temporarily bolstered while the attack is active. Not to say the Nazgûl aren't terrifying to attract either: this can force a Nazgûl to jump towards Sauron's position and make it likelier for them to inflict their signature Morgul-blade debuff. It also makes for Sauron's only means of properly repositioning the Nazgûl to a higher position, whether it be a higher platform already on the stage or the mountain created by U-throw.

Overall, N-air has a good many ways to mix up the match and arguably does a much scarier job at a variety of applications than the likes of Palutena's. Rather poetic that the only thing more devious than the actions of a goddess of light is the actions of a lord of darkness.

Shadow: Storm Of Shadows



Sauron turns toward the screen as his body dissolves into ethereal wisps of darkness. These weave through the air, curling around each other and spreading outward into an undulating mass: roughly circular with a diameter equal to Sauron's height.

This is quick and long-lasting in addition to its wide coverage; the hitbox covers Sauron's entire... body?... is first active on frame 6, and stays out until frame 23. It acts as a multi-hit that can deal up to 10% to opponents caught in the entire thing. There are 4 trapping hits that deal 1%, followed by a final hit of 2% that launches opponents.

The final hit largely serves to clear space, and it can even kill at high percentages. It probably won't do the job from center stage or anything, but you can reasonably get kills at 120% or so from the ledge. Not the kind of thing Sauron would attach much weight to at the height of his power, but he's gotta take what he can get in shadow form.

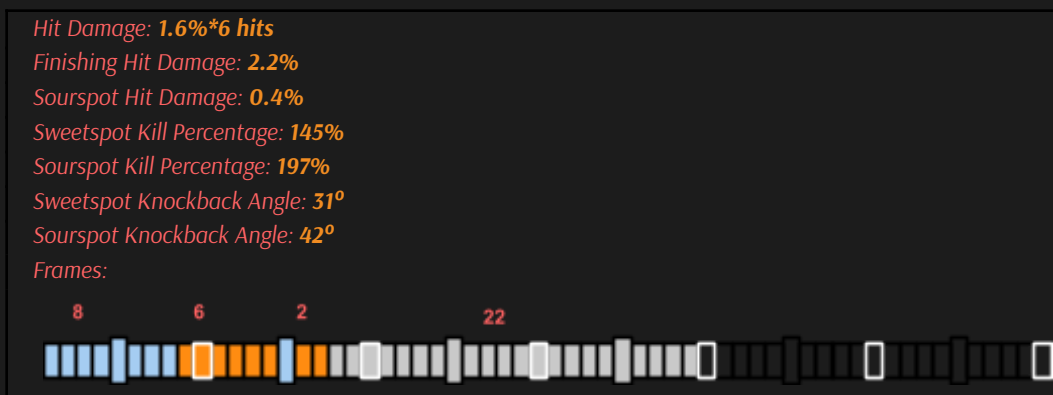
This serves a lot of the same purpose as many other multi-hit attacks of its stripe, and is an important multi-functional tool in the air. Its landing lag isn't too bad, so Sauron can use it for cross-ups and drag-downs. It's pretty easy to combo off early into a stock, although as it scales up Sauron loses that kind of option quickly.

The attack's big weakness is that Sauron's hurtbox is dramatically extended during it, to occupy the whole hitbox of the attack. He also takes a moment to collect himself and coalesce into humanoid form on landing, so there's still a vulnerable moment there (even if it's not too long).

When tethered to the opponent, this is one of your better coverage options. Disjointed attacks can beat it out pretty hard, but it's good for fending off an opponent that jumps into your space a little too rashly, especially if you have a jump in pocket and you can meet them more quickly than they're expecting. The properties of tether knockback also let you combo off it much later into a stock.

F-air | ◉ |

Dark Lord: Gale of Fire



Sauron extends his free arm forward, as the plates on its armor start to peel back. The motion is just a bit uneven and jerky, and accompanied by clanking sound effects that indicate some

mechanical force. You only have so much time to think about the sound design, though. After a moment, the armor plates are “opened” as if to vent forward, and flame blasts out of them. A vortex of fire extends from Sauron’s arm, reaching outward a distance of 1.5 Units. It deals a total of 11.8% damage over 7 hits at the end of its reach, but there’s a sourspot directly in front of Sauron’s arm that’ll only net you 10% - the rapid hits are just the same, but the finisher is considerably weaker.

The sweetspot knockback isn’t exactly *bad per se*. It tends to reset to neutral. Sauron can use this to create some distance between himself and his foe, but it’ll only kill very late in a stock even when you’re off-stage. That might be fine for some characters, but it doesn’t really bear thinking about in the context of Sauron’s Dark Lord form. The main exciting things about it are the reach and the damage.

The sourspot is pretty rough to land early in a stock, not actually being entirely safe on hit and just popping the foe lightly at an angle notably higher than its sweetspot counterpart. That said, the sourspot finisher actually scales to be a decent combo tool later on in a stock, which gives this attack some spooky hidden utility and lets Sauron start going for it more aggressively when the foe is on their last legs.

Heavily disjointed and alluding to the Flammenwerfers of WWI, Sauron’s F-air is meant to burn away defenses and draw the foe out of safety, encouraging the opponent to close to a distance where the attack isn’t safe (or is at least still slow, at high percentages). Like a flamethrower it provides extreme pressure, granting the aspiring Sauron main that is you a psychological advantage. It takes a bit of time to get going, but the relatively low endlag and generous range make it a *nasty* poking tool that Sauron can use to space foes out. It’s not as over-the-top flashy as some of his other aerial options, but it makes him hard to beat at mid-range.

Sauron can actually angle this attack up or down as well, which lets him use it to menace full hops, edgeguard, or just torch the stage from the air. When angled, he fires at a 30° angle off from the horizontal. The knockback on the down-angled variant is adjusted to be at a higher angle than normal - this takes some of the sting out of getting hit with it at the ledge, but also means it creates a little less space between Sauron and his victim. Potentially the sort of thing you could use Sauron’s juggling tools to follow up on.

One thing to be wary of here is that Sauron does have pretty gross landing lag prior to an auto-cancel window right at the end of the attack, and the attack doesn’t lend itself well to drag-down strategies.

As a last note, the launching hit is hard-coded to get even more benefit from Reclamation than it usually would and can become a much more powerful finisher in that context. The exact power level is variable given the nature of Reclamation, but it’s a finisher you can go for at percents opponents might survive to; with the weakest possible Reclamation it’ll still take stocks around 200% from center stage. Not putting your other options out of business, but it gets very viable nearer the blast zone or with larger Reclamation buffs.

Shadow: Impalement



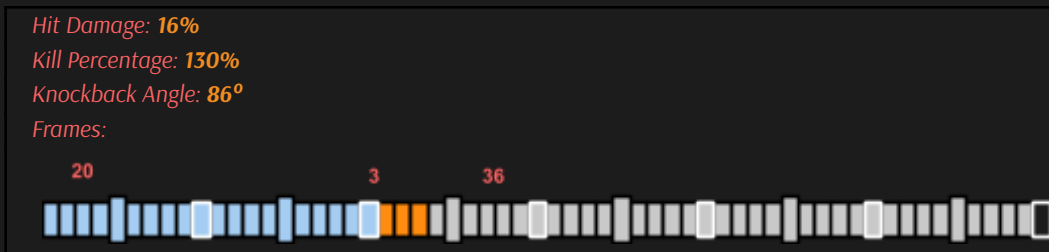
Leveling his arm with the earth, Sauron forms it to be like a large skewer identical to Corrin's Side Smash, dealing 6% damage and medium knockback. It also has a sweet spot at the tip of the skewer that deals 12% damage and *ridiculously* high knockback.

The sour spot isn't exactly what you'd wanna go for here considering how little damage it does, but it *does* have some things going for it: its knockback is enough for you to summon a Nazgûl real quick (or send the opponent flying toward the stage and hitch a ride), and that's not even getting into the fact that it's equal to Sephiroth's F-air in terms of range, making this a pretty decent poke only hampered by the fact that this is still a part of Sauron's body, and as such a part of his hurtbox. On the other hand, it's got some low landing lag on use and *mildly* worse endlag so if you whiff it's not exactly the end of the world in some close engagements.

The sweet spot rewards good spacing just like characters like Byleth and Marth, but unlike any of the Fire Emblem characters Sauron's definitely going to want to be tethered to his foe with Up Special to properly land it. It's also the hitbox that can help snap him to ledges, almost like a semi-tether like Piranha Plant's DSpec. It certainly helps that it's pretty quick on start-up, giving him a good out-of-shield option in mid-range engagements. As a short-hop attack, Sauron can get quite oppressive to the point where Sauron can herd his foe towards a Nazgûl himself.

D-air | ◉ |

Dark Lord: Melkor's Fall



Sauron raises his mace above his head and a Kirby-sized meteor, wreathed in flame, falls from the top blast zone. It rockets downward, plummeting past Sauron (without hitting him) and smiting enemies below. It'll keep going until it hits a platform or the bottom blast zone. If Sauron is underneath a platform when he uses this, the meteor will spawn from there instead of from all

the way at the top blast zone. This gives the attack a distinct speed advantage when you're... under the stage for some reason? Or just on one of those silly big stages that's rough for Sauron to navigate.

The result of the unique spawn location is that the projectile hits below Sauron more quickly when he's closer to where it spawns. As a result, the move can be pretty sluggish off-stage, but it's spooky when he's high up. Busting out DAir can be a *hard* rejection for opponents that try to juggle Sauron: the meteor deals 16% and high vertical knockback on hit. It's pretty close to Zelda's UAir in power, for perspective, capable of closing stocks around 130% or so if it hits an enemy on the stage.

And of course, you can also use it as a finisher after using one of your vertical launch tools, leveraging the high hitbox to catch someone far overhead. This can help secure late kills if you're somehow struggling, compensating for moves like Up Tilt and Up Throw being a little lackluster in killpower.

The endlag is high, unfortunately, and the projectile is fast enough that the hitbox doesn't stay out long. This is a high-precision nuke and not something you use for neutral. This gives it a very distinct niche from (spoiler for the next two attacks) Sauron's other two projectile aerials in Dark Lord form.

Oh, it's also maybe safe on shield, depending on how high you are when you use it? It deals a big chunk of damage to shields and doesn't have reduced shield damage like a lot of other projectiles; this is the opponent's punishment for letting a big rock fall on their head. Or just not noticing Sauron fucking around way underneath them while they're on top of Gaur Plain. No one gets to have a good time on Gaur Plain.

Shadow: The Shadows Descend



Sauron pauses for the briefest moment in the air before rocketing downward as a seething mass of shadow. On hitting the stage, he reforms quickly into his humanoid shape. That's right, it's a stall-then-fall! And one with precious little "stall" too, letting Sauron spring it on people as a surprise. On hit, it'll only pop foes upward weakly for 5% damage as Sauron keeps on trucking downwards. Sauron may be able to combo off it if he lands the hit right before landing, but typically it just makes a little space for him as he gets down to the stage.

Oh, and I guess it's worth mentioning that his hurtbox stays basically the same size here, which matches the attack's hitbox size. That's probably what you'd guess anyhow, but NAir did futz with his size, so we may as well state the default.

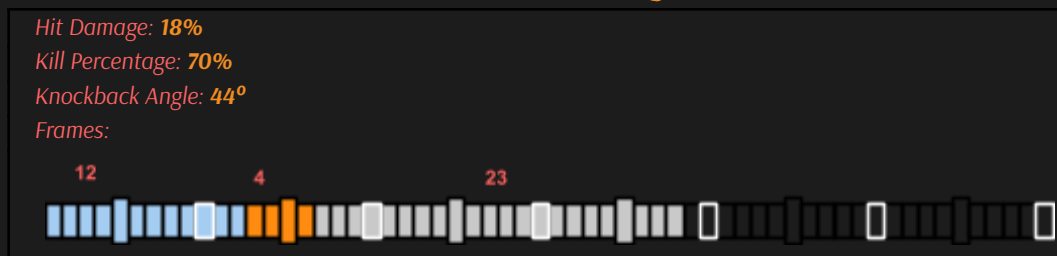
Despite the low landing lag, the attack has very high (and not auto-cancelable) ending lag if Sauron finishes in the air after falling the maximum distance of 4 Ganondorf-heights. DAir is a great downward recovery and lets Sauron escape juggles and combos, but you won't want to use it on high after getting launched. Also it's not the *best* idea to use it off-stage.

Unless... you're tethered to the opponent via your Up Special, in which case it becomes a slightly funky evasion technique that pushes the opponent to recover rather than deal with you. When he uses this tethered, Sauron shoots down to the maximum distance between himself and his foe and just "falls" in place at that distance. But if the opponent gives him any slack by moving downwards, he'll automatically keep falling to his new maximum distance. Thus, for the duration of the attack, Sauron is unreachable!

Remember, the attack has catastrophic endlag in the air, so if the opponent is willing to hang out off-stage long enough for the attack to end, they *will* be able to punish you. You're not moving that far away from them, that's kinda the point. But if you think they're not brave enough, maybe dare 'em to wait you out.

B-air | ◉ |

Dark Lord: Heart of Magma



Forming a ball of magma in his gauntlet, Sauron throws this projectile behind himself casually, not even turning to look. It's the size of a soccerball and moves at a moderate speed, initially traveling along a straight line until it gradually arcs downward. It disappears on hitting an opponent, colliding with solid terrain, or reaching its terminus point: the position 3.5 Units behind and 4 below Sauron.

On hit, it deals 13% and moderate upward knockback, making it a pretty meaty projectile. The start-up is a bit telegraphed as projectiles tend to be, but more-so, coming out at a very late frame 19. On the bright side, it doesn't have a ton of endlag and Sauron can even toss it out during a short hop. It's the kind of projectile you can approach behind, but it tends to have limited horizontal range close to the stage due to the arcing trajectory, so you may want to full hop it when used on-stage.

It's great to toss off platforms or ledges, menacing foes from on high. Sending upward means it's not a hopelessly cruel edgeguarding tool, but opponents still won't like getting hit with it. Given that Sauron frees up quickly, if he's waiting above, he can potentially combo off the upward knockback.

There's also a sweetspot on the early frames of the attack, right as Sauron thrusts the magma ball behind him. It's short lived and the high start-up makes it tough to land, but it'll hit for 18% and high diagonal knockback, potentially killing as low as 70%. And if you want to *really* see it get nuts, get Reclamation going.

The immense power of the attack means that sweetspotting it is just about always safe on shield. You can get punished for coming up a little short and firing a projectile into the foe's shield at close range, but as long as you get the sweetspot off you're probably in the clear.

Shadow: Tempest of the Void



Sauron swings one arm out behind himself. As he does, it seems to momentarily distend, and a tornado of blackened mist spirals off from it. The storm forms behind Sauron, about as wide as Bowser at its top but tapering off quickly as it tapers down to a point at its bottom, one Ganondorf below. The storm will linger for 30 frames, whirling furiously, before it vanishes and the attack ends.

The storm is a huge disjoint, but it's not a projectile and Sauron isn't free to act while it's out. It does create a decently powerful suction windbox that foes will have to be careful to avoid. If an opponent closes in on Sauron to punish him for using this in the air, they run a strong risk of getting pulled in. Touching the storm acts like a hitgrab; foes will be pulled into it and spun around for rapid damage. The storm deals 9% damage over the course of 6 hits, with the finishing hit sporting medium-low vertical knockback with high scaling. (You've seen the tornadoes on Hyrule Castle, right? The effect looks a bit like that)

The main thing that makes the attack annoying is how crazy-long the hitbox stays out. It's a menace in neutral. Sauron pays the price with quite a bit of lag on both ends, but the attack doesn't actually end if he lands during it, so he can use it close to the stage without much affecting the speed.

The foe can unfortunately get out of the whole thing by just shielding the initial hit (in which case their shield takes a paltry 4% damage), and then have plenty of time to punish Sauron. So this attack looms large, but it also encourages shields in a way Sauron can exploit. You can condition the foe to expect this in neutral and then mix up into something else, like a Side Special; a serpent is particularly well-suited to catch out a lot of defensive responses (short of a jump), whereas you may be able to call out specific evasive actions with your other forms.

fireball, but they have to get out of its flight path to avoid being re-hit, which *probably* means reacting quickly and air dodging. Sauron can exploit that pretty easily.

The fireball rises at a leisurely pace, not reaching its apex (two Ganondorf-heights above the point where it was created) until two seconds after its creation. At that point, the explosion happens, dealing 18% and high vertical knockback. This kills absurdly early, around the 50% mark. It's essentially not possible to land directly though; the only way to get a kill off it is either hope for the enemy to mess up Real Bad, or confirm into it at the last second. That's not particularly easy to do, so mainly the explosion is good for the threat rather than something you're landing a lot.

Using UAir forces Sauron into fastfall, right after the initial hit comes out. It also has low endlag in the air, but very high landing lag, meaning Sauron needs a certain amount of height to pull it off cleanly. Or he can just deal with the landing lag if he really wants to use it close to the stage, where the lingering threat to airspace is more relevant.

Alternatively, he could use it directly above a ledge to cancel the endlag with a ledge grab. This is also a good way to position the fireball to wall off high recoveries, so a good trick for that reason. Even if that doesn't work out and Sauron is forced to swallow the landing lag, the projectile stays out so long that it can still create openings he has time to capitalize on. So it can, contextually, be worth it.

Shadow: One Crack, A Thousand Lashes



Sauron reels his arm downwards, then thrashes it upwards to create a radius of damage above himself using several whip-cracks, dealing 3 hits of 2% and a final hit of 5% that also deals medium-low knockback with middling scaling.

Because this is a whip-crack identical to the Belmonts, Sauron's Shadow U-air has some pretty quick frame data. The radius is decently-sized, about the size of Mewtwo's Shadow Ball, and is overall static. With a sizable hitbox like that, Shadow U-air can cover a pretty good area above Sauron for some decent area denial, even if it's not the frighteningly dangerous Dark Lord version. It's pretty safe on shield as well, with the duration of the hitbox being enough for Sauron to lay on some ridiculous shield pressure if beneath a platform or Sauron's own U-throw mountain. With a Morgul-blade debuff, Sauron has an easier time either capping off some kill combos or building up damage to get the One Ring back.

This is also a pretty good moving wall to ensure that you guide your foe towards Barad-dûr's gaze and charge up enough power to give Sauron good burst healing. You can also take advantage of successful tech chases out of Serpent Side Special by following up with U-air. Although the landing lag and endlag is pretty long that can be mitigated by using it close to or landing near a Nazgûl, which can be used as an effective meat shield-I mean *body double*, to help you recover.

Oh, and U-air is particularly devious when tethered to your foe through your Up Special as they're taking to the air or recovering, as your newly-designated anchor is practically in striking range of most of your aerials should you decide to get a little more evil than usual.

FINAL SMASH: MOUNT DOOM

Meteor Hit Damage: **39%**

Lava Hit Damage: **13%**

Ash Wave Hit Damage: **50%**

Meteor Kill Percentage: **78%**

Lava Kill Percentage: **141%**

Ash Wave Kill Percentage: **47%**

Meteor Knockback Angle: **67°**

Lava Knockback Angle: **83°**

Ash Wave Knockback Angle: **55°**



Channeling the power of the Smash Ball *directly* into the One Ring (or towards the background in his Shadow form), Sauron will cause an utterly *massive* explosion of fire in the background that pierces through much of the stage surrounding it. Mount Doom has erupted. This means between the 9 seconds from the point of eruption to a screenwide wave of fiery ash sweeping across the stage, PK Starstorm-tier projectiles will fall from the top of the screen, covering parts

of the stage with patches of lava that function identically to Rathalos's fire patches. And Sauron himself is free to act as he pleases while this occurs.

ANIMATIONS AND FLAVORS

Voice Actors: Steve Blum (English), Joji Nakata (Japanese)

Entrance: Shadows begin erupting from the earth before coalescing into the armored form of Sauron, who readies himself for battle.

Idle Stance: Sauron stands upright, looking down at his foe, a tight grip on his mace at his side. When he crouches in either form, instead of physically crouching, Sauron will morph his upper body to be completely invulnerable to attack: in Dark Lord form black mist emanates from his armor, while in Shadow form his upper body becomes more ethereal and shapeless for the entire time he's crouching.

Taunt #1: Sauron raises a fist and causes the One Ring to flash with orange light. Each time this taunt is used, dark whispers reciting the lines on the One Ring at a time will be heard.

(*Ash nazg durbatulûk... -> ash nazg gimbatul... -> ash nazg thrakatulûk -> ...agh burzum-ishi krimpatul...*)

Taunt #2: Sauron tears off his helmet and temporarily unleashes a torrent of fire from his neck before placing it back on, partially replicating the final shot from the *Guardians of Middle-earth* opening.

Taunt #3: A vision of Manwë, King of the Valar, appears above Sauron in an attempt to strike him, yet the lightning that *would* strike him completely bends around the Dark Lord's body.

Victory Theme: A flourish of Minas Morgul's theme from the Peter Jackson movies (0:14-0:20)

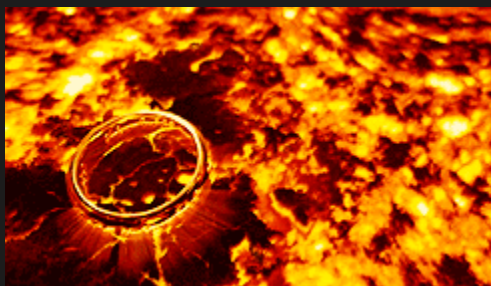
Victory Gimmick: Sauron's victory animations take place in Mordor and not on the victory platform like others.



Victory Animation #1: The defeated fighters are pinned to a wall by an unseen force before the camera pans to a figure made of fire. The figure's flames then die out before it erupts again, the silhouette serving as the pupil of the Eye of Sauron. The camera then zooms into the pupil, which transitions to another Eye of Sauron on repeat.

Victory Animation #2: Sauron clenches his ringed hand into a fist, staring down at the One Ring as he says, "There is no life in the void. Only..." During this brief pause, he causes Mount Doom to erupt behind him before he finishes his sentence with "...death."

Victory Animation #3: Sauron is shown raising an open palm imbued with fire magic for a bit. The camera then zooms in on Sauron's hand until the One Ring is shown, which forms the Black Speech along its metal.



Applause Animation: The One Ring is seen temporarily floating on the lava in Mount Doom before it sinks and melts away, ending Sauron's physical existence.

Boxing Ring Title: "The Lord of the Rings"

Kirby Hat: Kirby gains Sauron's helmet as well as access to his own Barad-dûr. To distinguish it from Sauron, the Eye of Kirby will more resemble O^2 .

Alternate Costumes:

- Default (Peter Jackson)
- Stark White (Saruman)
- Middle-earth: Shadow of War
- Brown and Silver (Talion)

- Guardians of Middle-earth
- Ghostly green (Witch-King)
- Lord of the Rings Online
- Annatar