

Introduction

Hey guys, my name is Fergus, aka Fergus2k8. I'm an Asuka player from Ireland and I've competed a lot in T7 including qualifying for the Tekken World Tour Finals twice. Some of you might remember that I did a document for T7 breaking down characters in their most simplistic form for fighting game players from other games. The primer is mainly for those who are new to Tekken but have pre-existing fighting game experience and knowledge. Hopefully it will help people out to choose a character that suits them.

I am aware that the game is still in a changing state, I will update the primers if there are any balance updates that contradict what I have down as well as adding DLC characters.

If you are unsure of any terms in the primers, I have written a glossary which hopefully includes it and will explain it for you.

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Quick Info

- 1 - Left Punch (Square/X)
- 2 - Right Punch (Triangle/Y)
- 3 - Left Kick (Cross/A)
- 4 - Right Kick (Circle/B)

High - A move that can be blocked standing and whiff on crouching

Mid - A move that can be blocked standing and hit crouching

Low - A low that cannot be blocked standing and gets blocked by crouching

Fastest moves are 10f (like 3f in SF games) with exceptions

Most tekken players refer to startup frames as "Impact Frames" so 10f startup would be just called i10 in tekken jargon.

Glossary

Backdash Cancel (BDC) - is basically cancelling your backdash with db to cut the recovery period and allowing you to perform another action. This is done via (b,b db~b, b, db~b b....). This is a variant of the BDC called the Korean Backdash Cancel (KBC). BDC is good for creating space between yourself at the opponent quickly and to escape mixup situations. There are a few ways to perform a BDC but this is the preferred one as it works with backsway characters such as Bryan, Paul and Nina.

BT = Backturned, it's basically just your character putting their back towards the opponent. Some characters have a unique movelist out of BT such as Chloe, Feng, MRaven, Xiaoyu

CH = Counter Hit, hitting someone out of their attack, for some moves, there is a specific property that comes out on a CH only, ie a CH launcher, CH knockdown etc

Crush - a property of a move where it is designed to go cleanly through a move depending on high or low crush property.

Heat - a new mechanic in Tekken 8, it is an install-like. Each character has their own unique way of using heat through buffing certain moves, increasing chip damage overall, and gives them access to moves like Heat Smashes.

Heat Burst - a way to enter heat, it is a fast armored move that is generally + on block, it is a strong defensive option to deal with the opponent's pressure.

Heat Engager - each character have moves that are assigned a Heat Engager property, which means when this move connects on the opponent on hit, they will enter their heat state. If you use a heat engager move while in heat, the move will turn into a launcher or a knockdown, depending on character.

Heat Smash - it is a one button move per character, it immediately exits heat and they are character specific. Some characters have low heat smashes, some characters have + on block mid heat smashes, they're all different.

High Crush - a move that's designed to be "invincible" to high moves.

Homing move - a move that is designed to shut down sidestepping.

Hopkick - a standard low crush launcher that most characters have. Usually i15 and done by either uf3 or uf4.

Launcher - a combo starter, usually the fastest launcher is i15 for most chars.

Low Crush - like high crush moves, low crush moves just simply hops over lows.

FC - Full Crouch , a state where the character is in crouching and there is an exclusive moveset in this state.

Mishima - when people refer to Mishimas in-game, they are referring to the playstyle rather than the surname. So this includes Heihachi, Kazuya and Devil Jin (even though Jin is a Kazama by name). In TTT2, Angel was considered a Mishima under this term. This comes with shared tools such as EWGF, Hellsweep and wavedashing.

Oki/Okizeme - The mixups you force on your opponent when they are on the ground.

Rage - a state a character is in with 25% or less health remaining. It gives your character a very slight damage increase and access to Rage Art and Rage Drive. It's indicated by a red aura around the character and red glowing lifebar.

Rage Art - Basically Tekken 7's version of a super. Fully armoured but still absorbs damage so can still get KO'ed if absorbed move kills. Uses up your rage and every chars RA is different in terms of speed.

Range 0/1/2/3 etc. Range 0 is point blank, Range 1 is a single backdash away. Range 2 = 2 backdashes etc

Power Crush - an armoured move available for all chars. What the actual move is, is unique to the character.

Tornado attack - a move that causes them to spin and fly away in a juggle allowing for enders. This replaces the bound from T6/TTT2 and is usually given as t! in combo notations. You may also see screw which is the older name for it.

Seeable - means it's reactable, usually referred to with lows.

SS - sidestep notation so a SS1 move would be Sidestep + 1

SSL - Sidestep left - performed by tapping up on P1 side and down on P2 side.

SSR - Sidestep right - performed by tapping down on P1 side and up on P2 side.

SWL - Sidewalk left - basically a longer but more vulnerable step, done by tapping for SSL then holding down the button

SWR - Sidewalk right - same as SSR but tapping then holding down the button..

WS - While Standing, a state where the character transitions from crouching to standing, there is an exclusive moveset in this state.

WS Punishment - When I refer to this, it's when you block a move from crouching (lows) or blocking a move that leaves you in crouch, it's your punishment from crouching essentially.

WR - While Running, a state where the character is considered running.

Wall Carry - a combo that is designed around taking your opponent to the wall.

Wallsplat - a move designed to splat the opponent vs the wall for a followup combo.

Alisa Bosconovitch

Difficulty - Easy

Dr.B's reincarnation of his beloved daughter. Alisa was always renowned for her strong poking game and neutral. She excels at chipping the opponent down, frustrating them to make a mistake which opens them up to her gameplay. Her movement is one of the better ones in the game with a super strong sidewalk and backdash, which allows her to force whiffs easier to whiff punish, which heavily compliments her poking game. She has a chainsaw stance which can apply dangerous pressure to the opponent and force them to guess between damaging lows and + on block mids. Her approach is quite strong as well with her WR2 which is high that is heavily + on block allowing her to pressure and keeping the opponent on their toes regarding this move, new in Tekken 8 she can access her chainsaws from WR2 on block leaves her in a favorable situation. Since her poke damage is on the lower end, she often has to take risks for bigger openings.

Pros

- Strong poking game
- Safe launchers
- One of the best sidewalking in the game.
- Suffocating chip damage with chainsaws

Cons

- Poke game is low damage, she struggles on a life deficit.
- Bigger comeback tools are a bit on the slower side ie chainsaw lows.

Recommended to players who like

- Simple poking game
- Strong movement characters
- Well rounded playstyle



Asuka Kazama

Difficulty - Easy

Osaka's favourite schoolgirl. Asuka is notoriously infamous for her defensive and turn stealing tools. She excels at keeping her opponent at a distance with her plethora of ranged mids and make them reconsider their approach. To complement this, Asuka has one of the best whiff punishers in the game with f2 to capitalize on any whiffs that she creates. When the opponent gets in on Asuka, she has plenty of panic moves to make them reconsider their offense with huge reward, she gets openings and combo starters in situations other characters wouldn't. She frustrates the opponent with small pokes and opens them up to overextend into her panic moves or punishment. She boasts some of the best launchers the game has to offer through their safety and recovery. With all this being said, Asuka does have a hard time vs patient players who are good at exploiting her weak offense and her early punishment especially her jab punishment is the weakest, which makes some moves very exploitable on her.

Pros

- One of the best whiff punishers in the game
- Best arsenal of panic moves
- Strong keepout
- Big arsenal of safe mid launchers and CH launchers.
- Strong CH game
- One of the best 50/50 vortexes in the game

Cons

- Worst jab punish
- Weak early punishment.
- Tracking is on the weaker side

Recommended for players who like

- Read heavy playstyles.
- Strong and unique oki
- Easy and effective characters
- Good taste in characters



Azucena Milagros Ortiz Castillo

Difficulty - Medium

The Coffee Queen makes her debut in Tekken 8. She is a rushdown character that has a strong jab and df1 game which are essential to Tekken. She has various stances with strong mixup options out of them, these stances can easily be accessed by various moves and punishment which leads to guaranteed mixup attempts. One of her main stances Libertador has auto built in evasion although in my opinion it's not very useful for that purpose, it's more used for mixups as aforementioned. Her main gameplan is overwhelming her opponent with stance transitions and her deadly mixups out of them. WR32 is a notorious move of Azucena, an extremely strong approach tool with high chip damage and + frames, which puts her in a good position to pressure the opponent and force them to challenge it or get looped on, which opens them up to her other options. Her jab punish is one of the best in the game which leads to snowballing offense which can turn the tables heavily in her favour. While her early punishment is amongst the best, she does lack good punishment vs later frames.

Pros

- Suffocating offense with WR32
- Stance mixups
- Best jab punish arguably.

Weaknesses

- Bad WS punishment on later frames
- Frames can be bad on pokes

Recommended for players who likes

- Rushdown playstyle
- Freestyle offense with stances



Bryan Fury

Difficulty - Advanced

Dr. Abel's failed experiment. Bryan is a character that has some of the best CH launchers and space control the game has to offer. With his 3+4, a long ranged CH mid that forces the opponent to reconsider their approach. Bryan can easily approach himself with B1, which is also a long ranged CH mid launcher that forces + frames on the opponent so he has a very well rounded playstyle. He has some of the better jab strings in the game which is good for interrupting the opponent if they overextend or just simply applying pressure himself. New in Tekken 8, Bryan has an install called Snake Eyes which buffs the properties of some of his moves, notably 3+4 which makes it even stronger. He has access to guard breaks as well from Snake Eyes which makes passive defense vs him very scary. He can also force unblockables hits with his taunt, when his taunt connects on an opponent, he gets guaranteed hits, even a launcher with the right execution, making being passive and okizeme vs Bryan extremely dangerous.

Pros

- One of the best space control
- i14 launcher standing (standard is i15)
- Damaging and relatively safe offense
- Strong CH game
- Extremely strong oki with taunt.

Cons

- Not much going for huge + frames on hit

Recommended for players who like

- High execution curves/flashy stuff
- Strong defense oriented playstyle
- Slow methodical playstyle



Claudio Serafino

Difficulty - Easy

The leader of the Archers Of Sirius. Claudio is an install character with his Starburst. He gains starburst from specific moves and then Starburst has a one time use, buffing properties on certain moves making it a lot more powerful. He has one of the better if not the best hopkicks in the game with its range and crushing properties. WR2 is a super strong approaching high with Claudio that forces him on the opponent for big + frames, pressure and chip damage, he has a WR4 mid to compliment this as well making the opponent have this in their minds at all times. He has one of the best if not the best wall games with his ss4 which is a chunky huge + frames low and b1 a notoriously strong homing mid wallsplat and hitconfirmable fast mid strings with df31/df32. In heat, Claudio has access to a low heat smash which is a really strong tool to have in Tekken 8, as well as 3 usage of STB moves, making his mixups a lot scarier. His poking game isn't amazing as he lacks a generic mid df1 but his b3 is strong enough to make up for it.

Pros

- Strong hopkick
- Amazing wall game
- One of the best homings
- Suffocating approach
- Low heat smash

Cons

- Limited poking games
- Bad lows outside of SS4

Recommended for players who likes

- Unique install characters
- Sticky offense style



Clive Rosfield

Difficulty - Easy

Yeah you read the name right, the dude from FF16 is in Tekken 8 as a guest character. Clive boasts some of the best mids the game has to offer as well as super strong approach and mixups. Clive has access to an odin meter which builds up when he uses specific moves and he gains access to a 1+4 (zanzetsuken) which does more damage the more levels he has. He has a dash stance called PHX which has very powerful mid and low options out of it and it can be done raw or from transitions of moves. He has a move, f1+2 which is arguably the best mid in the game as it's quite fast, amazing tracking, huge range, safe and is a heat engager, making it a strong space control move. So when the opponent hesitates vs Clive because of this move, it allows him to freely do PHX mixups which can be very rewarding. He has great lows with d1, db4 and fc df2 which can be used to harass the opponent to make a mistake which opens up to his amazing whiff punishment and CH game. However his df1 is pretty weak as it's slower than an average df1 which limits his poking game a bit.

Pros

- Arguably the best space control in the game
- Huge range on his moves due to sword
- Strong stance mixups and pressure
- Good selection of lows

Cons

- Weak df1

Recommended for players who likes

- Final Fantasy
- Space control characters

Devil Jin

Difficulty - Advanced

Jin's devil form. In comparison to Kazuya, the late Heihachi and now Reina, DVJ is considered the most well rounded of all the Mishimas in general. As a Mishima, he has access to the standard Mishima stuff, which is EWGF (+5 on block high for pressure/punishment and space control), hellsweep (a low in which his version gives a full combo) and a strong jab game. He also has a wavedash which is a movement exclusive to Mishimas and some others, which allows him to close the gap between himself and the opponent quite quickly, forcing a reaction out of the opponent or applying a mixup on them in their hesitation, which is even stronger now with a new mid he gained in this game. New in Tekken 8 is Mourning Crow which is a flying stance like move which he can access from throwing a chain at range. In heat, this turns into a full launcher if done into Mourning Crow 2,2, so his space control becomes immensely strong when heat is active. He has some of the better heat engagers with ff2 which is a ranged mid that pushes back on block.

Pros

- Insane space control with EWGF and Heat.
- Great mobility with wavedash
- Powerful mixups
- Strong punishment
- High damage output

Cons

- Generics are a bit on the poor side.
- Has to play very risky for mixups

Recommended for players who likes

- Execution based characters
- Chars with mobility
- Edge



Eddy Gordo

Difficulty - Medium

The Brazilian Capoeirista, Eddy Gordo returns to Tekken 8 as a DLC character, he had quite the change in playstyle design from previous Tekkens going into this one. In this game, he is more 50/50 orientated and has strong ways to force this mixup in his RLX stance. He has a strong approaching low with ff3 which on hit, allows him to force a 50/50 where the opponent has to guess between a knockdown low or various mids. He has a strong selection of lows to poke with as well and it's up to the player to find moments and utilize his HSP/RLX stances well to enforce the opponent into a guessing situation. He has access to an install called Mandinga where he can increase the stocks for it after using certain moves ie combo enders or mixup tools. It enhances the properties on certain moves making his mixups even more deadly. He has very strong WS punishment with a 13f launcher from crouch and a powerful ws44 making low blocking with Eddy very rewarding. His heat system is strong as it gives him access to moves that gives him easy + frames on block into mixups. He also has access to a strong backdash. A downside of Eddy is that typically with 50/50 orientated characters, it can be a very risky playstyle so the coinflips must be in the players favour.

Pros

- Extremely strong 50/50 game
- Good selection of low pokes
- Strong WS punishment
- Strong heat system for mixups

Cons

- 50/50 can be risky
- Weak CH game

Recommended for players who likes

- 50/50 characters
- Some creativity in stance offense



Feng Wei

Difficulty - Medium

Warrior of the God Fist Scrolls. Feng has been a notorious top tier character in the later part of Tekken 7 however he has since been toned down a bit. Regardless he still has some of the best approaches with his unique snake dash. His snake dash gives him access to WS moves meaning he can extend the range of his ws1 which is an oppressive mid poke with extensions, allowing him to freely approach his opponent amongst other moves and force his gameplan. His offense is notable because of his super varied low arsenal, many of them high crushing and forcing + frames. He's very good at locking his opponent in place with his b4 which is a 12f mid that has insane tracking. He is a hard character to pressure as well due to a variety of panic moves, in b1 a 10f CH move that gives a damaging followup, uf2 which is an evasive sidestep move and back kenpo which is a stance that makes him move backwards a bit, as well as parries/sabakis. He has a powerful sidestep mixup with SS4 which is a low launcher and he has various mids he can do to compliment it. His combos off axis can be iffy so Feng players should be aware of this and adjust appropriately

Pros

- Amazing approach with snake dash
- Great selection of lows
- Hard to pressure due to evasion/sabakis.

Cons

- Struggles with off axis combos
- Lackluster CH game

Recommended for players who likes

- Well rounded playstyles
- Variety of moves to use
- Strong turn stealing tools



Heihachi Mishima

Difficulty - Advanced

Heihachi Mishima is NOT dead. Heihachi returns as a DLC character. He is one of the characters that changed a lot from previous iterations of the game. Going from a mid monster in previous games to a weaker poke character but with more canned mixups. He has a warrior instinct mode which is basically a boss mode, which occurs when he activates heat 3 times, he can activate it in a round and have it for the duration of the round making certain moves extremely strong. Heihachi is all about closing the gap and having strong space control ala Mishima with his wavedash and EWGF. He enforces + frames on his opponent and a lot of stance mixups with transitions from various moves. He also boasts some of the highest damage outputs in the game especially with execution so it's worth learning the higher dmg routes. He wants to make the opponent hesitate to duck because of his powerful mids, especially off his df1 strings which also heals him. So when they don't duck, you have access to his hellsweep which can be very rewarding if Heihachi guesses correctly.

Pros

- One of the best damage overall
- Strong canned stance mixups
- Best char in the game with warrior instinct for a round

Cons

- Weak low pokes

Recommended for players who likes

- Mixup characters
- Mishima playstyle
- Strong mids

Hwoarang

Difficulty - Advanced

Baek's student. If there was a character made for Tekken 8 and its chip system, it's certainly Hwoarang. Hwoarang is the pure fast paced rushdown character of Tekken. He forces the opponent to make fast defensive decisions during his pressure which leads to huge reward for Hwoarang if he guesses correctly through his various stances, resulting in his opponent being stuck in his pressure trying to figure a way out. Players using Hwoarang have to be creative with his pressure to apply pressure and mix the opponents up. The difficulty in playing Hwaorang is remembering all the options and stances he has and being able to adapt on the fly. While his offense and pressure is top tier, he lacks in other areas like keepout and he is prone to being counter hit on his approach.

Pros

- Obscene rushdown
- High damage output
- One of the best whiff punishers

Cons

- Poor crushing
- Poor keepout

Recommended for players who likes

- Pure rushdown characters
- Flexible and creative offense



Jack-8

Difficulty - Easy

The latest model in the Jack series. In this iteration, Jack is quite different compared to his previous versions. His lows and general gameplan got heavily changed, now he has a stance with canned mixups in it. His keepout game is still intact with his ranged tools such as his standing jab and df1. So he's able to maintain a strong space control game as before whilst choosing his moments to go in with his stance pressure, especially from ff1 which is a key move for Jack being a ranged mid which is important for his space control. From his stance, he has access to a guard break which forces his opponent to make a fast defensive decision. However since he is a big character, he is prone to bigger combos and his sidestep is awful.

Pros

- Huge range
- Good throw game
- Canned mixups
- Good space control
- Fastest heat smash in the game

Cons

- Poor CH game
- Bad sidestep

Recommended for players who likes

- Ranged characters
- Rushdown characters



Jin Kazama

Difficulty - Advanced

The protagonist of Tekken 8. Just like in Tekken 7, Jin excels in a lot of areas, especially his space control and poking game. His main space control will be from f4, which is a ranged CH mid launcher which can be cancelled to be safe on block. His mobility is strong due to him having a wavedash which allows him to close the gap on his opponent with ease. He is a very versatile character with tons of options to play around with, he can be played offensively with his strong poking game and wavedash offense or he can be played defensively utilizing the f4 as keepout with strong block/whiff punishment. He also has access to the best parry in the game, it can parry anything, so a Jin player with good reads can get openings in situations where other characters cannot. He has strong homing moves in standing 4 which is good to keep the opponent from stepping and deal with his poking game. He also has access to one of the best heat engagers in ff2 which is a ranged mid and difficult to step, forcing the opponent to be on their toes and looking out for this move. His punishment can be lacking though if the opponent's moves have pushback.

Pros

- Very well rounded playstyle
- Great mobility due to wavedash
- Strong keepout game
- Strong CH game
- Strong poking game
- Best parry in the game

Cons

- Punishment can be limited in range

Recommended for players who likes

- Versatile/flexible characters
- Poking characters



Jun Kazama

Difficulty - Medium

Jin's mom has got it going on. Jun makes a glorious return to the franchise after being canonically missing since Tekken 2. She also excels tremendously in her poking game, her pressure game with SS4 and ff1+2, both + on block mids, amazing selection of lows and arguably the best punishment overall in the game. She's all about frustrating the opponent with her top tier poking game, forcing them to overextend into her CHs or defensive tools. She deals some self-damage when she uses specific move. Her heat smash is rated amongst the best in the game due to it's speed and range, and it also recovers her grey life meaning Jun excels above the rest at restoring grey life which is extremely important in Tekken 8. Similar but not to the same extent as Asuka, she has really strong panic moves and parries/sabakis meaning Jun can force the opponent to second guess their offense. Since Jun is more poking and + frames oriented, it can be a bit hard to make a comeback vs patient opponents.

Pros

- Strong poking game
- Amazing pressure game
- Best punishment overall
- Strong panic moves, 2nd to Asuka
- One of the best whiff punishers
- Extremely high damage output

Cons

- Can struggle to make a comeback a bit

Recommended for players who likes

- Strong poking game
- Well rounded characters
- Punishing opponents mistakes hard



Kazuya Mishima

Difficulty - Advanced

Tekken 8's Villain. Kazuya hasn't changed too much from his previous iterations, meaning he still boasts the typical Mishima playstyle, much like Devil Jin and Reina. He has access to amazing mobility with his wavedash which allows him to close the gap on the opponent with ease, enforcing pressure. His space control is strong as always with EWGF. Of all the Mishima style characters, he is probably the vortex one of them, meaning his mixups are very coinflippy, with his hellsweep (low knockdown with strong oki) from wavedash and various mids. These same mixups becomes a lot stronger in heat due to having extensions off the hellsweep in heat as well as having a low heat smash, and his heat engagers turns into full launchers making the mid options a lot scarier. His space control got better in this game due to having FF2 and CD1+2 which are strong mids with range. Like always, Kazuya has some of the better punishment in the game as well as being able to launch at 13f from crouching which only he has, allowing him to launch certain lows that everyone else can't. However unlike the other Mishimas, his poke game is pretty weak meaning his gameplan is a bit more committal than the others.

Pros

- Strong space control with EWGF
- Great mobility with wavedash
- Amazing coinflip mixups
- Amazing punishment
- Some of the best oki in the game

Cons

- Poor poking game

Recommended for players who likes

- Execution based characters
- Mixup intensive playstyle



King

Difficulty - Advanced

King Of The Ring. If there was a character that can be considered a grappler in Tekken, King is this character. He has the best throw game of anyone on the roster, and with the changes to Tekken's throw game in T8 i.e. being stronger, this hugely benefits King. He is centered around landing his grabs on the opponent, his giant swing is a 1+2 break animation but is actually a 1 break, and a King player that can utilize this along with his other grabs, can make it really frustrating for the opponent to deal with. You can pretty much treat his throws as lows, as his lows aren't the best. So it's encouraged to use throws with King to force the opponent to duck into his mids and rack up damage from that. He also has access to chaingrabs which is a sequence of throws with built in mixups in them, forcing the opponent to hard guess the break or eat massive damage. In heat, he has access to canned mixups with unbreakable grabs, mid or a low slide forcing the opponent to guess even more. He also has super strong oki off his grabs which leads to potentially more damage. Due to his throws being so strong, his lows aren't quite there so if the opponent is strong at breaking grabs or guessing, King can struggle a bit to stack on damage.

Pros

- Best throw game
- One of the best okizeme
- Strong canned mixups in heat

Cons

- Poor lows
- Poor keepout

Recommended for players who likes

- Grappler
- Unorthodox characters



Kuma/Panda

Difficulty - Easy

They are unbearable. Despite having separate slots, Kuma + Panda are more or less identical, apart from in heat, where Kuma gains Heihachi's EWGF and Panda gains Xiaoyu's shooting star, as well as having different heat smashes.. Due to being large characters, their range is quite strong, particularly off their arms, these gives them a strong keepout game, combine this with one of the best whiff punishers with df21, they can effectively keep their opponents in check. Their main stance is HBS (Hunting Bear Stance) where they have access to a plethora of chargeable mids for + frames to apply chip damage to the opponent.. They have another stance ROL which forces a mixup on the opponent, including a guard break in heat if they're passively blocking. Conditioning and reading the opponents well is going to be important with the Bears. Their punishment is also pretty note worthy and they are the only characters with a 10f CH launcher with 111. Bears have stubby legs which works in and against their favour. It's difficult for the opponent to hit their legs due to the hurtbox being reeled back a bit, however the range on their leg attacks is pretty limited as a result. Due to their size, they are prone to Bear exclusive combos and starters and they have a pretty poor backdash and sidestep so they're also really vulnerable to pressure.

Pros

- Good range and keepout
- Good mixups in stances
- One of the best whiff punishers
- Chip heavy playstyle
- Strong punishment
- Extremely high chip damage (Kuma)
- Extremely high damage output (best wall combo in the game)

Cons

- Big hitbox means bigger combos and unique starters on them and dealing with more pressure
- Worst backdash and sidestep

Recommended for players who likes

- Characters with good range



Lars Alexandersson

Difficulty - Easy

Jin's sidekick. Lars had some drastic changes to his playstyle over the games, he went from being a very defensive CH orientated character to a rushdown stance based character, which is further amplified in Tekken 8. Lars main gameplan is to overwhelm his opponent with his various stance options and mixups, and especially in heat, he gains access to strong options to start his stance pressure with. His playstyle is designed to frustrate the opponent, opening them up to be prone to eating even further damage from his mixups. While he has this offense going for him, his generics are also pretty good as his df1 and jabs are notoriously good with their hitboxes, meaning he is able to play a basic poke game pretty well, especially when his jab has strong CH followups. He has a good selection of lows for every situation, including power lows and low pokes. He has strong block/whiff punishment due to fb21 being a 14f launcher if the Lars player is on point with it. However his CH tools are on the poorer side meaning he requires good timing and mixup game to rack up damage on his opponents.

Pros

- Strong stance mixups
- Good generic tools
- Decent selection of lows
- Strong punishment due to 14f launcher

Cons

- Poor CH game
- Risky to make a comeback with.

Recommended for players who likes

- Rushdown stance characters



Lee Chaolan

Difficulty - Advanced

The Silver Haired Demon. Lee has always been known for stylish combos and just frames, and in Tekken 8 they doubled down on that. Doing successful just frames with Lee extends his heat timer so it's encouraged to have them down. Lee is notorious for his strong keepout game with tools like b4, b4 is a CH mid launcher that has very low whiff recovery so it's difficult to whiff punish, this move is cornerstone to Lee's CH keepout gameplan. Upclose Lee has some quick pokes to harass the opponent with, including one of the best df1s in the game, to force them to overextend into his deadly counterhits, especially his d3 which is a fast low CH launcher.. Lee also has access to a FC mixup with his slide and various mids to apply a more heavier mixup on the opponent. Hitman Stance (HMS) is a stance that Lee can go into from various moves, notably b4 to make it harder to punish, he can play a mindgame on block utilizing his fast counterhit tools, HMS stance and his movement to make the opponent hesitate on their pressure. He's also notable for his carry with b2 loops, meaning he can reach the wall more than most characters in the game. Due to his offense being CH orientated, it can be difficult to make a comeback with Lee.

Pros

- Strong CH game
- Amazing wall carry
- One of the best keepout tools in B4
- Low heat smash

Cons

- Can be hard to make comebacks with
- Slow homing moves
- Stubby offense
- Poor usage of heat system

Recommended for players who likes

- CH heavy playstyles
- Execution and flashy combos



Leo Kliesen

Difficulty - Medium

The Seeker Of Truth. Leo is generally a very well rounded character, she has strong basic tools to work with. One of her lows is df2+3 which sets up a dangerous situation for her on hit. She has access to some power mixup lows as well such as a hellsweep with db41, a FC df3 that gives a guaranteed followup for chunky damage and she has a plethora of mids to mix this up with. With good execution, Leo's wall carry is quite strong which leads to her extremely strong wall game, with the aforementioned mixups, including safe mid splats. Leo is quite a stance based character as she has a few to work with, her BOK and KNK stance are vital to her pressure game. She has one of the best whiff punishers in the game with her df2, a ranged fast mid launcher which can be spaced out as keepout to be awkward to punish by quite a few characters. Leo has decent mobility due to her qcf motion, where she has access to her WS moves out of it to approach the opponent with. Her punishment is quite strong as she has a 11f WS heat engager meaning using low pokes on Leo is extremely risky. However her CH game is a bit on the weaker side as well as having subpar lows for poking with outside of the power mixups.

Pros

- Amazing whiff punishment with df2
- Strong power 50/50 mixups
- Strong basic tools, amazing jab
- Good mobility with qcf dash
- One of the highest damaging wall combos

Cons

- Subpar low pokes
- Takes risks to make comebacks

Recommended for players who likes

- Strong punishment on block/whiff
- Basic stance characters



Leroy Smith

Difficulty - Easy

New York's Finest. Leroy had an infamous debut in Tekken 7 but nowadays he's a lot more toned down. The character's strength still shines in his turn stealing ability, he has arguably the best parry along with Jin. This parry along with his other tools forces the opponent to second guess their offense and how they take their + frames. Utilizing this hesitation, Leroy has many mixup options, including a d32 which is a low starter that leads into big + frame stance mixups. Leroy is also fairly unique in the fact that he has a 12f mid CH launcher, which is very unheard of, especially in Tekken game where a lot of faster CH launchers are nerfed. So him having this is definitely an outlier strength. He is also one of the few characters that has a low enhanced in heat which is a luxury to have in this game. However he does struggle to make a comeback if the opponent is patient, forcing him to take risks

Pros

- One of the best CH launchers in the game with b1+2
- Strong stance mixups
- Amazing at turn stealing and making them second guess their pressure

Cons

- Weak tracking
- Often has to commit to make a comeback without CHs.

Recommended for players who likes

- Stance pressure and mixups
- Turn stealing moves and reads



Lidia Sobieska

Difficulty - Medium

The Prime Minister Of Poland! Lidia makes her return as a DLC Character. She has a lot of stances which can be difficult to keep track of but with experience, will become natural. She has an stock mechanic where the more stocks she has, the more powerful and lengthier her heat mixups are, as well as doing more damage on certain moves. She can increase this stock by transitioning between her stances into a specific stance in heat called Heaven And Earth which is where her strongest mixup is. She boasts one of the best heat systems in the game, however it is a double edged sword as she is very reliant on this more than other characters, so placing your mixups well with Lidia is extremely important. Her punishment is notably strong with various options at all frames and she has strong approach tools with moves like WR1 (+ on block high) and ff2 a ranged mid which on CH gives her strong mixup opportunities. The gameplay with Lidia is to keep the opponent guessing on her stance mixups and especially her suffocating heat barrage. She has a lot of blue sparks on her moves which increases damage in combos, so getting them down will go a long way. However she can be quite risky and committal from these same mixups and her poking game is fairly weak.

Pros

- One of the best heat systems in the game
- Boasts one of the best punishment
- High damage output especially with blue sparks

Cons

- Poor lows
- Poor poking
- Poor tracking
- Mixups are quite committal, really needs to make heat work



Lili Rochefort

Difficulty - Easy

Asuka's very good friend and roommate! Lili's most notorious feature is probably her sidestep. She has the best one in the game which allows her to escape a lot of situations that other characters cannot. Lili's generics are always really solid, her jab, df1 and low pokes have always been her strength. Lili also excels in big + frame pressure with moves like df3, which is a mid + on block CH launcher and qcf3+4 which is a hugely + on block high. Lili's whole gameplan is generally to make the opponent afraid to attack her because of her step and evasiveness, she then uses this hesitation to apply pressures and mindgames. In Tekken 8 Lili received one of the best oki moves in the game with qcf3, which is a move that hits grounded and is a mid. This makes her oki game immensely strong, and along with this, her heat state allows her feisty rabbit low to become unseeable and knockdown the opponent for a free qcf3 and oki afterwards. She has a low heat smash from BT, which is super strong in comparison to the rest. While Lili is really strong at stepping herself, she is actually prone to being stepped as her homings are on the slower side, meaning she needs to have good timing to realign with the opponent.

Pros

- Best sidestep in the game
- Strong generic tools
- Excellent + frames pressure
- One of if not the best oki tool with qcf3
- Arguably the best low heat smash in the game
- One of the best heat mixups in the game

Cons

- Her stronger moves are a bit slow, prone to CH
- Weak tracking

Recommended for players who likes

- Strong stepping characters
- Applying + frames pressure
- Customization mode



Ling Xiaoyu

Difficulty - Advanced

The Rising Phoenix. Xiaoyu is a very stance heavy character which she most certainly uses to her strengths, even more so in Tekken 8. Her Art Of Phoenix (AOP) stance allows her to evade a lot of moves, especially mids reducing the opponent's toolset by a lot depending on the character. AOP is not only strong for evasion, but it has a bunch of mixups and pressure tools from it as well making it one of the best stances in the game if not the best. Xiaoyu is also quite famous in the franchise for her insane okizeme, if the Xiaoyu player guesses correctly on the opponents wakeups with her plethora of tools for oki, she can relaunch opponents and also get guaranteed hits with good awareness. She is also quite small hitbox wise so certain combos are weaker on her which is a benefit. She has a wide variety of moves to use for poking regarding mids and lows as well as strong CH launchers including WS2. Xiaoyu is designed to frustrate the opponent by limiting their movelists with AOP, making them hesitate overextending on their pressure, and also using her other stances for bigger mixups ie her Rain Dance Stance (RDS) and her Hypnotist (HYP) stance, especially in heat which she excels at. Xiaoyu has some of the highest damage output in the game as long as the player is aware with good execution. Since her poke damage is on the lower side, it can be a bit difficult for Xiaoyu to make comebacks without heat.

Pros

- Some of the highest damage output
- Amazing okizeme
- AOP allows her to nullify a lot of pressure/situations
- Amazing mixups with HYP stances
- Arguably the best usage of Heat in the game

Cons

- Range is a bit limited

Recommended for players who likes

- Stance based characters
- Labbing and creativity with oki
- Strong poke characters



Marshall Law

Difficulty - Medium

The Bruce Lee Of Tekken. Law can be defined as a in your face poke heavy character. He is more centered at pressuring upclose as his ranged game is pretty weak. His entire gameplan is based around using quick pokes and strings upclose to frustrate the opponent and force them into an opening. He has a stance called Dragon Sign Stance (DSS) which he is able to enter into from a plethora of moves. His pressure is centered around delayed strings and utilizing his b4 which is a fast homing mid that shuts down sidestep, so he forces the opponent to sit still and take his pressure, especially moves cancelled from DSS to apply extra pressure. Whilst his gameplan is focused around poke pressure, he does have some heavier mixups in his slide game, which is a low he can do from crouch, he has various mids to compliment this mixup. His slide is notably strong in Tekken 8 due to a guaranteed followup which leaves strong oki afterwards. As his ranged game is weak, it's encouraged for Law players to stay in the opponent's face.

Pros

- Strong standing/crouching punishment
- Insane stagger pressure
- One of the better crouch mixups in the game
- High wall damage output

Cons

- Can be hard to make a comeback with
- Poor keepout tools
- Limited range

Recommended for players who likes

- CH focused playstyles
- Rushdown playstyle
- Bruce Lee



Nina Williams

Difficulty - Advanced

The Irish Assassin. Nina has always been a pure rushdown character as long as she has existed. She excels at “sticky” offense as in she’s always on top of her opponent with her extended cancels from quite a few of her moves, notably df12 and ss1. Her SS1 cancel in particular has huge plus frames which is deadly at the wall, especially with the chip damage in Tekken 8, it can be looped to make the opponent freeze up which plays into Nina’s mid/low poke mixups. Nina is renowned for being an execution heavy character with her butterfly loops for wall carry, however in this iteration of Tekken, they are less important. However it is important to have proper backdash with Nina as she is a backsway character, as well as utilizing her hayashida step which is an evasive backsway technique, allowing her to escape some pressure other characters have to hold and force whiffs. Nina has a strong throw game, and an unique property on one of them which depletes the opponent’s grey life, which is extremely strong to have in Tekken 8. While Nina’s upclose game is overwhelming, her ranged game is on the weaker side so it’s encouraged to remain vigilant in the opponent’s face with Nina.

Pros

- Some of the best wall carry in the game
- Insane poke pressure and cancels
- Strong wall game
- Fastest heat engagers with a 11f db1+2

Cons

- Range is limited
- Takes risks to make comebacks

Recommended for players who likes

- Pure rushdown characters
- Execution based characters



Paul Phoenix

Difficulty - Medium

The Strongest In The World. Paul is pretty much considered the powerhouse 50/50 of the game. Paul excels at being in his opponents face enforcing his deadly 50/50 mixup. His mixups becomes even more powerful in heat where he is in his opponent's face directly after landing a successful heat engager, especially considering he has access to a low heat smash as well, so the heat mechanic works really well for Paul. The mixup mentioned is QCF2 (deathfist) which is a really damaging mid that can be awkward for characters to punish, and demoman (d4,2,1+2) which is a damaging low that can wallsplat from distance for a followup. Paul also excels in punishment with above average standing and crouching punishment, notably a 14f launcher. However his low pokes are on the weaker side so Paul can feel very committal to play, so its wise to carefully choose moments to place his mixups.

Pros

- Damaging 50/50s
- High damage output
- Strong heat mixups
- One of the best punishment

Cons

- Lows are on the weaker side
- Poke game is a bit weak with a slower df1 than norm

Recommended for players who likes

- Powerhouse 50/50 characters
- High damage output characters



Raven

Difficulty - Medium

The OG Raven. As always, he's an unorthodox character compared to a lot of the cast. Raven has access to strong mobility with his snake dash cancels, which once gotten down, can make his movement really threatening since he has access to many options out of it, such as a counter hit launcher, a strong crouching 50/50 mixup and just generally closing the gap with it. His toolset is varied enough to allow him to play a variety of playstyles, whether it's 50/50 with his crouch game and backturn mixups, poke heavy playstyle with his db2 which is a very strong mid poke to use in neutral and CH fishing with moves like ws2. Raven has a unique backturn with a whole moveset in it, allowing players to get creative with Raven's transitions into BT from various moves to apply pressure and mixups with it. Parries are also a thing that Raven excels in since they allow him to escape certain situations with it that other characters have to respect. He gained a new stance in Tekken 8 called Soul Zone, which adds to his mixup and oki opportunities after certain situations and punishers. Vs patient players, due to his subpar low pokes, he often has to take risks to open the opponent up.

Pros

- Strong approach with snake dash
- Strong FC mixup with amazing oki afterwards
- High damage and wall carry output

Cons

- Low pokes are a bit on the weaker side
- No 15f launcher
- Has to take risks vs patient players

Recommended for players who likes

- Characters with good mobility
- 50/50 characters
- Unique options for pressure



Reina

Difficulty - Advanced

The Purple Lightning. Reina makes her shocking debut in Tekken 8. She has a Mishima playstyle meaning she has access to a hellsweep, wavedash, EWGF and a strong jab game. Having a wavedash means that Reina can close the gap between herself and the opponent with ease and apply various mixups from the wavedash, including the aforementioned hellsweep low, various mids and EWGF (+5 on block high). Reina has the most stances of any character in the game so making good use of them is a must to complement Reina's Mishima side of her playstyle. Reina can really snowball using her stance mixups, especially off her Sentai mixup where she has an unbreakable high grab and various mids to mix it with. Like Heihachi, Reina has access to a strong df1 which is always a good mid check to have, with decent followups, the mid followup being a heat engager, allowing her to extend pressure off small pokes. However Reina is very prone to being stepped and her homing moves aren't rewarding enough to deter that.

Pros

- Great mobility with wavedash
- Strong poking game
- Strong stance mixups

Cons

- Struggles to stop stepping, poor homing moves
- Subpar lows

Recommended for players who likes

- Execution based characters
- Stance based characters



Sergei Dragunov

Difficulty - Easy

White Angel Of Death. Dragunov is centered around plus frames due to his WR2 which is a heavily + on block CH launcher, insane for approaching opponents with, FF3 which is a high that wallstuns for extra + frames and B1+2 which is a knockdown heavily + mid. He's all about enforcing these + frames on the opponent, forcing them to challenge Dragunov eventually which opens themselves up to his poking game, especially his d2 which is one of the better low pokes in the game, which goes hand to hand with his aforementioned pressure. So Dragunov can be really overwhelming and relentless in his pressure, always in his opponent's face forcing them to deal with his poking game while chipping away at your health. He also has some of the best WS punishment available in the game due to high damage and fast wallsplat punishers. New in Tekken 8, Dragunov got some new lows which really completes his pressure game, that he never had before, so he's able to extend his pressure more than ever. He also has access to a strong throw game with various breaks, which adds another layer of pressure/mindgames to his + frames.

Pros

- Super strong approach with WR2
- Relentless + frames pressure
- Solid poking game
- Strong throw game

Cons

- Can struggle to make a comeback vs patient players

Recommended for players who likes

- Strong pokes
- Rushdown characters
- Relentless + frames



Shaheen

Difficulty - Easy

The Desert Falcon. Shaheen has a pretty straight forward playstyle, his playstyle is centered around poking the opponent down to force a mistake and whiff, where he can capitalize on that with his amazing whiff punishment. Shaheen also boasts a really slide FC game with his slide that he gets a guaranteed flipover afterwards into strong oki, he has many mids including a safe launcher to mix this up with. He looks to force a reaction out of the opponent which will play into Shaheen's CH game ie his WS1 and 4 strings. Shaheen gained some new tools in Tekken 8 to force his slide/mid mixup game a lot more efficiently which certainly helped the character. Shaheen also has access to the "x-ray" property on his B2, which means he is able to remove the opponent's grey life which is a huge deal in this game.

Pros

- Strong slide/mid mixup game
- Ability to remove recoverable life easily
- Decent whiff punishment

Cons

- Struggles a bit vs patient opponents

Recommended for players who likes

- Slide mixup characters
- Simple poking game



Steve Fox

Difficulty - Advanced

Fists Of A Champion. Steve is fairly unique in the fact that he doesn't have many kick attacks due to him being a boxer, he's mainly focused around his fists. When people talk about CH game in Tekken, this is Steve personified as he has some of the best CH tools in the game, especially in a game where faster CH launchers are nerfed, he still retained his. His whiff recovery is also quite quick so it can be pretty difficult to whiff punish him, so his keepout game is extremely strong. He relies on scoring CHs moreso than landing mid/low mixups so good timing is required with Steve. He comes with a few stances that can flow into each other through transitions via string cancels, to keep his offense varied. Peekaboo, Flicker and Duck are his main stances to be utilized in his frame trap game. Steve's ws1,2 as his i11 ws punisher is arguably one of the best for that category, making doing low pokes on a defensive Steve extremely risky. Just because his main gameplan is centered around CH fishing doesn't mean that he is lacking in lows. Steve's lows are good enough to chip away at your opponent and frustrate them into retaliating, playing into Steve's game. In Tekken 8, he gained a new stance which has a guard break high which is something the opponent needs to look out for and stay on their toes defensively. Steve doesn't have a launcher at the frames other characters have, meaning some characters can exploit certain moves on him without being punished too heavily.

Pros

- Best CH game all around
- Strong early punishment
- High damage output

Cons

- Certain moves can be exploited on him due to weaker later punishment
- Unrewarding whiff punishes

Recommended for players who likes

- CH oriented characters
- Stance based characters
- Creativity with offense



Victor Chevalier

Difficulty - Medium

Founder of the Raven Unit, the distinguished gentleman himself Victor Chevalier joins the fray. One of Victor's main strengths is his strong CH game, one move that demonstrates this is his 1+2, a quick mid CH launcher with a significant amount of pushback on block that is capable of dealing decent amounts of damage whilst also forcing the opponent to reconsider their offensive timing. Evasion is also another significant strength, trying to jab check Victor is quite difficult when he is capable of going under them with moves such as db3 and db4. In the neutral, Victor is able to check his opponent with his poke game and string mixups that can really overwhelm the opponent, forcing them to make a mistake. Along with the string mixups, he is also able to use his stances (Perfumer and lai) to get in, start offense and play a less committal game. Speaking of committal, in neutral some of Victor's moves are high risk medium reward. One part of Victor's gameplan that illustrates this point is his lack of strong lows. Although annoying, they are either really minus or put you in a bad frame situation. To offset this, his heat mode makes some of his tools yield considerable amounts of reward while reducing the risk which is very strong. Tracking on his main quick poking tools such as his df1 and db1 seems to be quite lacking and underwhelming too. When trying to stop the opponent from moving, his tracking moves are slow and committal, you are susceptible to getting CH'ed yourself so be mindful of this.

Pros

- Strong CH game
- Evasiveness
- Scary Strings/Stance mixups, especially in heat
- Strong wall oki

Cons

- Lows are on the weaker end
- High commitment in neutral, lacking in reward
- Quick pokes can be easily SWR'ed

Recommended for players who likes

- CH orientated gameplay
- John Wick :)

(Thanks to Gosain for writing this up since I have no clue about Victor)



Yoshimitsu

Difficulty - Advanced

The latest Yoshimitsu title holder. Yoshi plays quite different to pretty much everyone else in the fact that he relies on creativity and strong oki awareness to get an opening on his opponents. He doesn't have many solid tools to work with in terms of poking and such, so he relies on situational moves to create pressure and mindgames. He has a plethora of unblockables and stances in his arsenal so it's up to the player's creativity to go far with this character. He has a move called Flash (1+4) which is a 6f interrupt so the opponent must be very wary about using their + frames against Yoshi, it also means that certain moves that are normally safe, becomes unsafe vs him. Yoshimitsu can also use his spin to evade opponent's pressure so it can be quite risky to pursue your offense vs him. He has an interesting mechanic where if he uses specific moves in either heat or NSS (No Sword Stance), he lifesteals from the opponent, restoring his own HP. A steep learning curve in terms of knowledge is required with Yoshimitsu to make the most of his tools as his basic tools aren't up to snuff with most other "normal" characters in the game. His combo damage is quite low so it's encouraged to get creative with his unblockables and setups to make up for that.

Pros

- The best sets of unblockables in the game
- One of the best okizeme
- Strong turn-stealing tools
- High damage output and healing

Cons

- Poor basics
- Combo damage on the lower end

Recommended for players who likes

- Unorthodox characters
- Creative oki characters
- Freestyling offense



Zafina

Difficulty - Medium

Azazel's vessel. Zafina may seem quite complicated at first with her multiple stances, but in reality she can actually be played very minimalistic. She has the best movement in the game with a top tier SS and backdash, meaning she could create space very fast and force whiffs/escape pressure easier than most characters. Zafina has extremely good pokes with her df1, d3, ff4, SCR df4. Great oki with SCR (one of her stances), + frames pressure tools with moves such as ff3, WS3, SCR 1+2, and she is unique in that her WR3 is actually + on block. Her mixups become a lot deadlier in heat as she gains a low launcher in SCR, making her SCR stance extremely scary in heat. Be prepared to use movement and crushing a lot to cover for Zafina's frames. She has really poor WS punishment meaning that certain moves becomes really exploitable on her.

Pros

- Suffocating stance pressure, especially SCR
- Excellent poke game
- Scary heat mixups

Cons

- Weak punishment
- No standing 15f launcher

Recommended for players who likes

- Stance heavy pressure
- Strong poke game

