

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to discuss unit archetypes and teambuilding based on these unit types. The focus will be on unit stats, what can you do with these stats and what skill types may complement these stats. **Skill inheritance may be briefly touched upon when discussing what a certain archetype is capable of, but it will not be the focus of this guide.**

I disagree on an individual unit tier list at all, as numerous units have similar stat distributions, can be kitted out and used interchangeably with skill inheritance, and any sufficiently determined (and rich) player can customize most archetypes to be successful. Builds come and go, as new units and skills are released, suggested builds can go out of date, the various metas for various modes (aether raids, Rokkr sieges etc) can shift, but developing ways to think about building units and teams is more foolproof. Kinda like giving a man a fish (giving him a build to copy) and teaching a man how to fish (what to consider when building unit).

There are three things units can do in FEH, hit hard, take hits, and move fast. Take any two out of three. There is no single unit that can excel in all three, though some units do come close. We'll be touching on this "take-two-trinity archetype" quite often. With the advent of boosted BST, we do have some units who do defy the old trinity, and some new skills and tricks units use to try their hand at doing all three.

My personal mantra on unit building from since playing pokemon as a kid is simple. Build upon a unit's strengths, don't bother patching an individual unit's weaknesses, that's what allies are for. A team should have units with complementary strengths and weaknesses to cover for each other. **I do not claim it is the correct or only way to play FEH**, it is but a certain mindset that may be useful for readers to adopt.

The general basics on skill slots are below. Do note **when I put skill recommendations, these are in no particular order of usefulness and the skills listed are not exhaustive**. These suggestions are a **loose guideline to help get you thinking for yourself, not the sole or absolute way to build units**.

Assist : whatever that helps your unit move around to reach enemies better.

Special : The easiest pick are the stat-based specials - Draconic Aura/Fang for Atk, Bonfire/Ignis for Def, Iceberg/Glacies for Res. Pair the special with your unit's best stat.

A Slot : These buff a unit's stats. Generally pick the A slot that complements the unit's best stat. Close/Distant Counter are overrated. There aren't a lot of units that can actually use counter effectively, and I generally find Hector to be among the best candidates naturally. RIP Takumi though. That being said, there are...a handful of worthy candidates.

B Slot : These generally alter attack turns in a round. There are skills that give you an extra hit, the skills that change attack turn order, and skills that remove extra hits.

C Slot : These either buff allies or debuff enemies.

To note, the average for each stat is in the table below. This information will be important for the discussions below.

Total Average of all Units, As of 21st April 2017

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Average	41	31	30	26	24

Total Average of all Units, As of 9th August 2018

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Average	40	32	31	26	25

Post-Ayra Units Average, As of 9th August 2018

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Average	39	34	32	26	26

Hmm, doesn't look that much different. Intsys has recognized HP to be the most popular bane to take so we're actually seeing units with lower HP in exchange for higher atk, spd, def and res. The slightly creep up in all stats asides from hp looks fairly manageable and it doesn't look like even the new boosted BST armor units skewed the old average too badly.

Added a new average table for units released from Ayra (who marked the first BST boost era) onwards, as you can see HP takes a further dip downwards while atk, spd and res go up.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Unit Archetypes](#)

[Tank Unit](#)

[Melee Tank](#)

[Fast Tank](#)

[The Great \(Tank\) Wall of China FEH aka Mixed def/res Tanks](#)

[Mage Tank](#)

[Attacker Units](#)

[Glass Cannon](#)

[Sturdy Attacker](#)

[Mage Baiters \(Fragile Speedsters?\)](#)

[Brave Users](#)

[Jack-of-All-Trades](#)

[Healers \(Work in Progress\)](#)

[How IVs can Change your Unit Archetypes](#)

[How Weapon Refines can Change Your Unit's Role](#)

[Unit Building](#)

[Choosing Your Pokemon Hero IVs](#)

[General Unit Building Q&A](#)

[What do these Skills do exactly?](#)

[Assists](#)

[A slot skills](#)

[B slot skills](#)

[C slot skills](#)

[Hone/Fortify/Goad/Ward on Horse/Flier/Armor Teams- Which do you want?](#)

[Sample Unit Builds](#)

[Michalis](#)

[Nowi](#)

[Team Building](#)

[Generic Rules](#)

[Unit Pairings](#)

[Bladetome + Buffer Pair](#)

[Melee and Range Pair](#)

[Player Phase and Enemy Phase Pair](#)

[Movement Pairings](#)

[Team Coverage](#)

[Summary of the Entire Process from Scratch](#)

[Coming up Next!](#)

Unit Archetypes

Tank Unit

Tank units, at first glance, are meant to take punishment. They are frontliners who can endure more than one round of combat and trade blows with others. That is their basic function. Now it

would be pretty boring if that is all they can do, so let's see how tanks differentiate themselves from each other.

Melee Tank

HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
HIGH	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW

The above is your standard melee tank, categorized by high HP, ATK and DEF, low SPD, and horrible RES. They hit hard, and take hard hits. And instagibbed by mages, especially the speedy types. Linde murders Cherche, Bartre, and Frederick in spite of color disadvantage, because their res is bad and they are slow as molasses.

Trinity Archetype : hit hard + take hits

They can beat : Mage Baiters, Jack-of-all-Trades, Glass Cannons

They die to : practically any mage, especially the fast ones.

Now let's look at Alfonse, as an example.

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Average	40	32	31	27	25
Type	HIGH	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW
Alfonse	43	35	25	32	22

Blue means above average, red means below average (we'll be seeing this alot). So he fits this archetype. So how do you build this guy?

We work towards giving him skills that favour his Atk and Def stats. Don't bother patching that speed or res.

Special : Draconic Aura or Fang (grants 30%/50% to Atk), as well as Bonfire/Ignis (dmg based on 50%/80% of def). Noontime and Sol may have lower CD now, but they are a trade-off between survival and the ability to nuke with a strong special. With Wo dao and/or Wrath, in the form of skill or weapon, it makes noontime/Sol options less of a meme.

A slot : What you want are skills that give a boost to atk or def. Skills that provide advantage on enemy phase and help improve survivability and tanking can be considered.

Things that could help in A Slot

1. Deathblow (Alfonse's default, if not you will be getting this from Klein or Hawkeye)
2. Fury (unit can do with additional ATK + DEF, and has the HP to deal with fury dmg)
3. Distant Counter for this archetype.
4. Bond skills (e.g. atk/def bond)
5. Steady/Warding Breath if you are infantry and armored units. This skill is stupid strong on innate distant counter users, and still fantastic source of true solo this shit runs for units who do not have distant counter in their weapons.
6. Steady stance/close def if the game won't let you have steady breath.
7. Iote's shield if you can fly. It's a seal now, and it's better that way since it leaves u with flexible options for A slot. Spring and New year Camillas have sufficient def to carry Iote's as a seal, and Spring Camilla in particular works well with Gronnraven/Triangle Adept and the seal equipped to beat Brave Lyn (just beware of Cancel Affinity) and Reinhardt.

Things that would suck in A slot

1. Life and Death (30 spd is just average, while he loses significant defense and struggles to keep "tank status").
2. Darting blow (31 spd only on initiation. The list of additional units he could double only on initiation isn't very long, so it's really not worth it).
3. Swift Sparrow. Don't waste premier fodder trying to make a slowpoke go fast unless you have...very specific plans in mind.
4. Defiant skills. They were terrible in the beginning, and now Brazen skills exist to shame them even further.
5. Spd + 3, Res +3. I don't think I have to explain in-depth. Spd is still below average with +3spd, and res just barely passes the average mark with +3 res.

(Yes, I have seen these skills on Alfonse in arena and it doesn't help him at all.)

B slot : You will want skills that gives the turn/attack advantage to hard hitting slowpokes.

Things that could help in B slot

1. Swordbreaker (as situational as it is, it stops other swords from doubling him, and lets him hit twice as long as his hp remains up)
2. Renewal 3 (hey self-healing tank, pairs nicely with Sol)
3. Vantage (you get to hit back first! Why not.)
4. Quick Riposte 2 (because 3 will cost you 20k feathers. Lets you hit twice if someone initiates on you. You do not usually stay at 70/80% hp for too long, so QR2 is ok as the difference in HP threshold is 3-5HP). Vengeful fighter is the new "boosted QR" for armored units.
5. Bold fighter for armors. Your speed ain't a factor you can hit them twice on initiation.
6. Brash Assault (honestly I'm not a fan of this skill. All it does is give you a guaranteed 2nd hit at below 50%. It does sync with Folkvangr, which gives +atk when hp is below 50% and the effect stacks, but good luck keeping anyone at that low hp range while not dying)*

7. Wrath. Boosts the strength of their specials if infantry/armored.
8. Guard. Now that quick riposte is a seal, Guard now has a place to cut off your enemy's special instead of just being that niche little skill that lost to QR for popular B slot.

*(being a seal has given it a new lease on life as the desperation/brash assault meme. While this combo has its strengths in long fights like chain challenge and tempest for the unit to have uninterrupted consecutive hits regardless of speed, it is difficult to execute in practice for arena combat.)

Things that would suck in B slot

1. Desperation by itself. With the existence of brash assault seal, desperation has a place for slow units and its uses are explained above. It still does suck in B slot for slow tanks without the brash seal.
2. Poison strike. Alfonse is a hard-hitting tank, not a damage chipper/debuffer.
3. Seal skills. The entire line of Seals are barely useful compared to other skills in B slot (Again, yes I have seen these skills in arena, I kid you not.)

C Slot : Some units in this archetype have really good HP for infantry pulse if you have a main unit who you build pulse around. Smoke skills are useful to help them tank subsequent hits after they have landed an attack.

Seal Slot : Defensive boosts such as close def, or heavy blade to get your procs off faster. Attack boosting seals are also acceptable so your tank hits back harder on the counter. Atk smoke can be useful if you throw your tank into the thick of things so the surrounding enemies will lose 7 attack and your tank can survive more hits. Quick Riposte as a seal opens up options, such as taking renewal to sustain it, or guard to cut off enemy specials, or Vantage so your tank can pretend to be original Hector.

Fast Tank

HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
HIGH	LOW	HIGH	HIGH	LOW

This is a really weird niche, the fast tank. They score well in most defensive stats, in exchange for sub par offenses, and again, crappy res. Speed doubles as an offensive stat and defensive stat, it provides doubles, and avoid doubles. That is a 50% dmg mitigation if a tank has sufficient speed to avoid a 2nd hit, making these tanks even more durable than the traditional melee tank.

We've come to the new boosted BST era where this archetype can actually have decent attack now, e.g. Ayra has 31 def at neutral and isn't quite a glass cannon while being being able to hit really hard and fast.

Trinity Archetype : take hits + move fast (avoid doubles)

They can beat : They absorb blows better than they can kill stuff

They die to : practically any mage, but they can survive 1 hit rather than get instagibbed

We all know about Subaki the Grand Hero Battle MVP, and his legendarily bad base atk at 25 (neutral). So I am going to look at Draug instead. His atk is average instead of subpar, while having above average spd within the armored class, really good HP and Def stat. Just get rid of that brave sword and watch him go. With the increase in average speed, Draug has since fell from having “relatively good” speed to average, especially with the advent of Amelia, Black Knight, Halloween Henry, Xmas Robin, Lissa taking that “speedy armored” niche from him.

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Average	40	32	31	27	25
Type	HIGH	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	GREAT	VERY LOW
Draug	50	30	32	39	18
Type	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	BELOW AVERAGE.
Amelia	47	34	34	35	23

We can work towards giving him skills that favour his Def stats and his Spd stat, especially the latter if you manage to secure a +spd Draug. 35 spd armored tank yo. With a hefty, expensive skill investment, Draug has very little weak points except for horrible res, and armored unit 1 movement.

Let see Amelia, who basically busts the old standard of fast tanks that were introduced at launch having poor to average attack. Literally all her stats are higher than average except her res, and it isn't even shit. In fact, Amelia pretty much meets the standards not just for the standard hard-hitting melee tank, but also as a fast tank. She blurs the lines between standard archetypes and has more than enough stats above the average to fit into more than one archetype. She isn't the only one, and you'll notice it with the units with boosted BST.

Special : Bonfire or Ignis. Forget Noontime/Sol for healing, that 39 def is going to murder you once he triggers the special. Slaying Edge +spd Draug with the speed to hit twice can trigger special very fast.

A slot : Draug is fairly flexible, you can boost his atk, spd or def, although I strongly prefer atk or spd, because his def is already ridiculously high.

Things that could help in A Slot

1. Death blow
2. Darting blow (the budget option now that bond skills and swift sparrow exists)
3. Fury (he can do with additional ATK + DEF + SPD, and has the HP to deal with fury dmg)
4. Steady/Warding Breath. Seriously all infantry and armored tanks who should consider this. If not, stance skills are a decent substitute for mounted tanks.
5. Distant Counter for the new Gen fast tanks who actually have a good attack stat.
6. Once again, steady stance/close def for those who can't use the aforementioned breath.
7. Swift Sparrow (beating out Life and Death) for boosting +4 atk/spd and not requiring the unit to take a hit to their decent def/res.

Things that would suck in A slot

1. Plenty of skills actually do work for these units, but fortress def/res will be a bad idea to cut into their offenses.
2. Armored/Warding blow. They have been usurped by stance skills for those going the enemy phase route. There's also the mixed blows like sturdy blow.
3. Defiant skills. They were terrible in the beginning, and now Brazen skills exist to shame them even further.

B slot : You will want skills that gives the turn/attack advantage and take advantage of his speed.

Things that could help in B slot

1. Renewal 3 (hey self-healing tank)
2. Desperation for offense builds.
3. Wings of Mercy. The infamous "arena defence troll skill". Your ally dying? Let your tank jump in and kill the offending enemy and tank the next hit.
4. Quick Riposte. We have entered an arms speed race with the increasing speeds of new units introduced. Fast units sport quick riposte to get the guaranteed two hits in, while their innate speed allows them to avoid being doubled.
5. Vengeful Fighter is the boosted QR for armors. Still goes well on these types for the above reason.
6. Bold Fighter. It is an arms race for speed, so might as well skip the rat race and hit twice automatically. Also comes with a sweet CD reduction you will love even if you already have the speed to double.
7. Wrath. Boosts the strength of their specials, esp for the ones who have lower atk and depend more on their specials to deal good damage.
8. Vantage. To help you get the jump on your enemies if they hit you while your HP is low.
9. Swordbreaker, when swords are ridiculously fast even your speedy blue tank can't quite catch up.

Things that would suck in B slot

1. Wary Fighter. He is fast enough to not require it.

2. Poison strike. Just why is it there.

3. Seal skills. Those are just terrible.

(Again, yes I have seen these skills in arena, I kid you not.)

C Slot : Much like the Melee Tank units, this archetype also has units with really good HP for panic ploy, or you can consider infantry pulse if you have a main unit who you build pulse around. Smoke skills are useful to help them tank subsequent hits after they have landed an attack.

Seal Slot : Similiar to Melee tanks, but these units can also consider the speed seal. For specific windsweep builds, phantom speed works well. This archetype runs windsweep builds well, but the skill itself is very situational and I don't usually recommend it unless you know what you are doing, and have certain objectives in mind for the unit.

The Great (Tank) Wall of China-FEH aka Mixed def/res Tanks

HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
HIGH	LOW	LOW	HIGH	HIGH

This was a really unpopular niche in the early months, the tank that can take both melee and magic hits. Most units who fit here are almost purely enemy phase units and are really bad at player phase builds, unlike the melee tank and fast tank, who do have some offensive options to go with their stats.

This archetype has actually since gained popularity, and we called this "mixed def/res tank" at times. The year 2017 and 2018 has since introduced more of units who fit this archetype and Sheena no longer stands alone as the Great Wall of FEH. With Brave Lyn and Reinhardt running rampant, having both the defense and the resistance to tank and check them has gained importance and this archetype is currently enjoying the increase in its demand.

They used to score well in all defensive stats, in exchange for sub par offenses, and crappy speed, but Xmas units like Lissa, and Love Abounds Lyn even has higher speed, and serviceable attack is. Notably, Myrrh, Grima and Hardin notably only have speed as a weakness and have above average to really good stats everywhere. Grima even has a ridiculous +4 atk superboun for a unit who already has neutral 40 atk stat without a weapon. Surtr says hi.

Trinity Archetype : take hits, and more hits and magic too.

They can beat : Things that fail to kill them. Which is alot for the newer ones.

They die to : summoners with player skill issue. You'd have to really mess up to get one of these new fangled uber tanks killed considering they can trivialize and solo certain content.

There are more new units that fit this particular subtype - they were originally Sheena, Hawkeye, and ...Faye and freaking Sophia back in the early days. New additions to this type include Halloween Jakob, Xmas Tharja, and Lissa. 2018 introduced Myrrh, Hardin and Grima.

Halloween Henry's HP and DEF is too low to qualify, but he can try his hand if he has +def IVs. LA Lyn is better than Henry at being a fast mixed tank, giving up res for higher spd and def. Winter Chrom can fill in this role, but his high atk stat fits him better as a sturdy (and slow) melee tank on the offense like Effie.

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Average	40	32	31	27	25
Sheena	45	30	25	36	33
Hawkeye	45	33	22	28	30
Faye	42	30	25	26	31
Sophia	40	33	19	28	29

Faye's Hp and Def is just average compared to the rest of the cast, but considerably higher-than-average for an archer, who typically have lower base stat total (BST) compared to Infantry and armored units. Faye has 154 BST, 6 more points compared to the average archer (and Takumi). Sophia has even lower BST as a mage type (which have the lowest BST of them all), but holy will you look at her stats. She verges into the territory of mage tank, given her atk stat is actually above average. That is the lowest base speed you are looking at. That's a dump stat right there and -spd IV does practically no harm to her.

I would like to take the opportunity to discuss Sigurd here because he's "cheating".

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Sigurd	41	35	32	34	17

He has low res like a typical melee tank! Why is he here? Divine Tyrfin and Crusader's Ward combine to make his survival against mages absurd. This is a low res sword unit who refused to die to most meta Reinhardt builds. And Reinhardt is blue. This is one of the new tricks later units have - they have skills to compensate for a dump stat such that its not a liability.

That being said, his low res is having no protection against dragonstones, so he's a "cheating" def/res tank and not statistically a true one. His advantage is that his skills let him dump his res while still fulfilling a certain role and being able to have stats elsewhere, such as attack and

speed. On one hand it does let him be flexible in roles you wish for him to fill in a team, the other hand means he is mostly forced to hold onto Divine Tyrfin and Crusader's Ward to operate, meaning his builds has less options and flexibility. He's more predictable than someone like Amelia or Halloween Henry, who aren't pegged into an uninheritable skill, as strong as those tend to be, but he is predictably a good tank who won't be hitting you back while you shoot.

Special : Bonfire/Ignis if Def is higher, Iceberg/Glacies if Res is higher. Aether for recovering health outside of arena score purposes.

A slot : Boost that attack stat for the older gen or else nothing is going to die, both the unit and the enemy. This archetype already have good defense and resistance, so if you want to boost them defensively, pick the stronger stat so you can have a stronger special. For the newer gen, you can consider bringing up the lower of def/res to make a more balanced mixed tank that is harder to kill.

Things that could help in A Slot

1. Fury, the cheap budget option almost everyone gets slapped with. In the long run, you replace it because it is a waste if your unit is tanky enough to take 0 dmg but still suffer recoil dmg from fury.
2. Distant Counter.
3. Steady/Warding Breath. Seriously all infantry and armored tanks who should consider this.
4. Once again, steady stance/close def for those who can't use the aforementioned breath.
5. Fortress def or res can be budget skill slots if you just want them to not die, and fire off strong specials based on the def or res. In the long run, fortress skills tend to be replaced by DC or Steady/ward breath.

Things that would suck in A slot

1. Life and Death. They should remain as tanks and LnD ain't patching up low speed.
2. Darting blow (The list of additional units that could be doubled only on initiation isn't very long, so it's really not worth it).

B slot : You will want skills that gives the turn/attack advantage for slowpokes.

Things that could help in B slot

1. Renewal 3 (hey self-healing tank)
2. Wings of Mercy. The infamous "arena defence troll skill". Your ally dying? Let your tank jump in and reposition the dying ally away and soak up a hit.
3. Quick Riposte. Pretty much the same reason why Melee tanks have it. Vengeful Fighter is the armored unit boosted version of QR.
4. Bold Fighter. Much like melee tanks, your speed won't matter if you can hit twice on initiation with this. It helps to get a strong special off faster.

5. Brash Assault. I'm still not a fan. I still wouldn't suggest desperation/brash assault for this type because their stats slant them towards enemy phase builds. In the case of armored unit they have much stronger options than this.
6. Breaker skills (sword/lance/axe)

Things that would suck in B slot

1. Desperation. Because they don't have the speed.

C Slot : Some members of this archetype have res stat to be Ploy users, especially atk and def ploys. For infantry units in this type with good Hp, Panic Ploy and Infantry pulse are options.

Seal Slot : These units will love distant def. It's really the best thing to give them. If your distant def seal is on another unit, you pick seals the same way you do with Melee Tanks, just avoid heavy blade for those who have lower atk stat.

Mage Tank

HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
AVERAGE/LOW	HIGH	LOW	LOW	HIGH

Instead of the melee tank, this is the mage tank. They do not have the HP of melee tanks, but still share the same characteristics of hitting hard and being slow. Instead of high def and low res, it is now low def and high res. Julia, Lilina and Sanaki fit the roles.

Trinity Archetype : hit hard + take magic hits

They can beat : Melee tanks, fast tanks, glass cannons, some (not all) Jack-of-all-Trades

They die to : Archers, especially brave bow users, and any melee that reaches them.

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Average	40	32	31	27	25
Type	AVERAGE/ LOW	HIGH	AWKWARD	VERY LOW	HIGH
Julia	38	35	26	17	32

Looks like a long list of units that the Mage Tank can beat eh? That's Julia for you. See what can beat her? "ANY melee that can reach her". As can be seen, the average res is lower than the average def, so high atk mages tend to hit stuff harder than a high atk melee. She is very strong

as an enemy phase unit against other mages, and a sitting duck to many units if you do not position her well and leave her exposed during your enemy's turn.

That being said, her speed is in that strange awkward point where +spd puts her at 30spd and cuts down the number of units who can hit her twice, and pushes her speed from subpar level...to average. On the other hand, while neutral Julia avoids double hits from the average 30spd crowd, they all hit her twice if she is -spd. It makes her especially hypersensitive to Spd IVs compared to others, because it can really swing hard in her favour (+spd), or swing badly for her (-spd).

Other units that sit at 26spd and have this issue, and really need that +spd IV to drastically change who can, and cannot double them, are Sanaki (who is pretty much a red Julia w/o dragon slaying), Laslow, Oboro...and Azama the strange tanky healer. Michalis is out of luck, GHB units are always neutral.

To add to the above, units who sit at mid 30s in speed cannot afford the -spd IV, and taking a +spd IV also swings who doubles them and what not severely because it is the mid mark where most units are on average.

Special : Iceberg/Glacies. Nuff said.

A slot : Boost that attack stat so she hits even harder. If anything...she could actually do with a speed buff if you pull a +spd Julia so you suddenly have a hard hitting mage tank who actually has some speed and her only significant weak point would be that shitty def.

Things that could help in A Slot

1. Fury, it doesn't kill you on its own, and that 6 dmg doesn't matter when your melee targets are usually unable to fight back. Avoid putting her in situations where melees can reach her and you are gold. It's a budget option compared to other skills below.
2. Distant def, take it, one of the best premier options.
3. Mirror stance now exists courtesy of MorganF, but that Blarserpent is also interesting, which makes it hard to see mirror stance outside of MorganF.
4. Bond skills (e.g. Atk/Res Bond)
5. Warding stance. If you are a monster willing to kill Halloween Sakura not even for kitty paddle. Distant def is generally the better, and more easily available option in most situations.

Things that would suck in A slot

1. Life and Death. She should stay as a mage tank.
2. The Blow skills in general. The changes in meta have not been kind to this archetype. With increased bulk across the board, distant def seal and new skills, this archetype now struggles to one-shot its old victims.

B slot : You will want skills that gives the turn/attack advantage for slowpokes.

Things that could help in B slot

1. Gtomebreaker. Get even with Nino and other Julias. Knock Cecilia off her horse. Beat Merric if you see him, because his res is just bad. Other breaker skills are fine for units you want to specifically nuke.
2. Renewal. To keep her health up when under Fury. If she isn't using fury, its barely useful since melees tend to KO her easily while mages not red barely dent her on average.
3. Quick Riposte. That being said, the only units this would kick in would be mages and Julia generally should stay away from archers. Green tomes are covered by the aforementioned Gtomebreaker, while QR is a more generalist option.
4. Vantage, bait and shoot that pesky Reinhardt/Olwen first and have your special charged and handy for the next bait to hit you.
5. Desperation for Micaiah. As the exclusive owner of Sacrifice, she can actually pull off desperation/brash assault combo more realistically than others in this type.

Things that would suck in B slot

1. Desperation would suck for the others in this type because they doesn't naturally have the speed.
2. Brash Assault. She does not have the Hp+Def combination to get to the threshold of using this and not dying.

C Slot : This archetype are really good Ploy users, especially atk and res ploys. Otherwise, the usual hones for allies.

Seal Slot : They will also like distant def. It's a tough competition for this seal. This type can also run the Ploy seals, namely atk or res Ploy, whichever ploy you did not choose in C slot.

Attacker Units

These units are straightforward, they are here to dole out the damage on player phase! Do they survive enemy phase? Let's see how they stack up.

Glass Cannon

HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
LOW/SHIT	HIGH	HIGH	AVERAGE/LOW	AVERAGE/LOW

Kill or be killed. Such is the mantra of the glass cannon, who either kills you or dies trying. Very straightforward, and arguably one of the easiest archetypes to use. This is a long-enduring archetype from the early days of gaming and it's here to stay. We are drowning in sword units

who fit this archetype and it has lost some of its luster, but it's still a useful archetype for what it does.

Trinity Archetype : hit hard + move fast

They can beat : anything you set your mind to, until they bump into the respective tank/sturdy unit that hard counters them. Nino crashes and burns into Sanaki, while Cordelia has no business with Hector and Julia laughs in the faces of blue mages like Linde.

They die to : Anyone that sneezes in their direction.

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Average	40	32	31	27	25
Type	VERY LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH	VERY LOW	AVERAGE
Nino	33	33	36	19	26

Nino is doing her best here as a shining example of the glass cannon archetype here. As you can see, She has serviceable attack, much higher speed than average, and her Hp is shit. Like Julia, she is hypersensitive to IVs, but she has it even worse. Here's why :

1. Speed. You need +spd to compete with other speedsters. -spd means she suddenly fails to double hit the 30 speed average crowd and loses to other speedsters.
2. Atk. Only Nino and Tharja can get blade tomes to cover for this problem. Otherwise, you are looking at a unit with once-good attack reduced to average.
3. Hp and Def. Most people contend these are dump stats. I'd argue that this is the difference between killing Takumi, and dying to him on counter.

You are looking at a very narrow band of acceptable IVs, which is a problem with glass cannons, where else Lukas as an example isn't bothered by a loss in Hp, Spd, Res or Def - he has a lot of hp, ridiculous def, while res and speed are dump stats. Players can roll with almost any Hector, Lukas or Effie, a lot of Ninos get trashed for -spd, -atk etc.

Support : Drawback is a good default, but you can give up movement utility for ardent sacrifice and do 75% threshold B skill shenanigans. You...just need to have a tank get hit for her first.

Special : Does she even need one? I suppose you can put Moonbow/Luna/Draconic Aura. With the lowered cooldown for Glimmer, it is now a viable option.

A slot : Boost that spd stat so she outspeeds even more things. These glass cannons also appreciate atk boosts to score KOs.

Things that could help in A Slot

1. Death blow. This is good for most glass cannons to secure more 1HKOs. Against high res DC units, mages like Nino want every bit of atk to ensure they die and don't get to kill her in 1 hit on counter.
2. Fury, it doesn't kill you on its own, and that 6 dmg doesn't matter when any little sneeze will kill her anyway. It also helps to get her in desperation range. Avoid putting her in situations where melees can reach her and you are gold. That being said, if you do get careless, it does make that marginal stat difference between surviving certain units and dying on counter (e.g. takumi) as long as Nino's hp isn't too badly depleted.
3. Darting blow. This is more budget option than optimal skill.
4. Life and Death. She is defensively paper, so losing defensive stats won't hurt that much and she will appreciate the boosts in atk and speed. Do note while it makes her stronger on player phase, sneezes become overkill and she is a sitting duck made out of paper on enemy phase.
5. Swift sparrow, the pricey boost to atk and spd that's slapped on several new releases.

Things that would suck in A slot

1. Armored/Warding blow. God no, Nino is meant to kill and not take any damage at all.
2. Close Counter. She does not have to bulk to take a hit and counter back. You can argue that a close counter/vantage nino with a consistent method of getting her to that hp threshold (e.g. ardent sacrifice) and always near her supporters can be one heck of a surprise killer on enemy phase. I have seen Kagero with such a build, and let's just say infantry will struggle to attack into, or defend against her safely.*
3. Bond Skills. It's arguably dependent on play style, but generally given that bond skills require your unit to have a buddy glued to it, while glass cannons tend to want to move up to strike the enemy, it's tricky in practice to maintain the bond while this archetype is jumping forward for the attack.*

*Not as easy as the old Fury/Desperation to execute, but a sufficiently skilled player can try their hand in aforementioned skills for this archetype.

B slot : You will want skills that gives the turn/attack advantage and leave little room for enemies to kill her on counter.

Things that could help in B slot

1. Desperation Nino is one of the most popular skillsets I see and it's very clear she is one of the best units to hold it.
2. Vantage. Mostly meh, unless you are doing the ardent sacrifice/close counter/vantage surprise enemy phase killer Nino. Most people simply prefer their Ninos wipe the floor on player phase so this is rarely seen. Kagero can actually rock this rarely-seen build too.
3. Gtomebreaker for mirror matches. It is otherwise very situational, but it does help.

Things that would suck in B slot

1. Seal skills. She is supposed to be blowing up things and scoring 1 round KOs.

2. Poison Strike. Why? Just read the above. I see Kagero with it...and I disagree.
3. Quick Riposte. No you do not even want your glass cannon to be hit at all. This does nothing for glass cannons.
4. Brash Assault. She does not have the Hp+Def combination to get to the threshold of using this and not dying. She is almost guaranteed to double hit due to her speed.

C Slot : Generic Hone for allies.

Seal Slot : Speed seal. Brash assault to combine with desperation for memes, and for ensuring they can double other faster units in the same speed bracket. Bladetomes can utilize heavy blade to trigger special faster. The bonus atk to bladetomes granted by hone atk/spd and fortify def/res all count, so a fully buffed bladetome can get heavy blade off easily. Flashing blade seal is an option for fast infantry mages too if your heavy blade seal is tied up.

Sturdy Attacker

HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
AVERAGE	HIGH	HIGH	AVERAGE/LOW	AVERAGE/LOW

Not fond of glass cannons dying easily? Sturdy attackers are your type...probably. This archetype has so far been always melee, because mages do not have the BST to do this. Otherwise, the sturdy attacker is functionally similar to a glass cannon, but made of sturdier stuff, and not likely to be a ranged unit.

This archetype is pretty close to fulfilling the “hit hard + move fast + take hits” trinity. But they usually can only take hits from either physical attacks or mage attacks, never both. They come with high atk and speed, while their defense stats tend to be mostly average with one low point.

Trinity Archetype : hit hard + move fast (bonus : take some hits)

They can beat : anything you set your mind to, until they bump into the respective tank/sturdy unit that hard counters them.

They die to : Not much can kill them in one round except for hard counters, and any unit that hits their one weakness.

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Average	40	32	31	27	25
Type	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	HIGH	HIGH	LOW
Ayra	41	33	37	31	21

We'll be using an infamous unit as an example: Ayra. Literally the only IV that is bad for her is +res. Although +atk and spd are typically favored for this archetype, Ayra has no problems taking +def to shift into a strange hybrid of Fast tank with sturdy attacker flavor, and still having the power to play like a brute melee tank but with speed. She is almost bad IV proof, and any Ayra cannot go wrong, or fall out of any one of the archetypes she can play due to one of her stats falling out of the archetype stat distribution. If anything, Regnal Astra is a really strong special even with -spd Ayra with a ridiculously low CD of just 2. I hope you enjoy 1 CD regnal astra with Slaying Edge.

Special : Draconic Aura or Fang (grants 30%/50% to Atk). Luna/Moonbow can be another option because they can reliably trigger special skills. The bonfire/ignis and the iceberg/glacies series are not good on sturdy attackers because they do not have fantastic defensive stats to use those unless their IVs sway them into enemy phase/mixed offense hybrids.

A slot : What you want are skills that give a boost to atk or spd.

Things that could help in A Slot

1. Death blow - hit harder.
2. Darting Blow - hit faster.
3. Fury (unit can do with additional Atk + Spd and bulk)
4. Distant Counter - yes really. This archetype has the ability to dish out damage, hit twice on counter (without help from Quick Riposte too!), and a little bulk to survive to counter back. Ryoma, meet Distant Counter Ayra. She does it better than you.
5. Steady/Warding Breath - yes really, they can try their hand at EP builds and can take a B slot like wrath instead of quick riposte due to their speed to charge special faster and KO in return.
6. Life and Death. This pushes sturdy attacker archetype into glass cannon. It is a double-edged sword.
7. Swift sparrow now exists to maintain a sturdy attacker's bulk and keep them capable of taking hits if necessary, so it's a premium option versus Life and Death.

Things that would suck in A slot

1. Res +3. I don't think I have to explain in-depth. Do not bother patching that weakness. (As you can see, sturdy attackers are fairly flexible so there isn't much crap here)

B slot : You will want skills that gives the turn/attack advantage to these speedy types.

Things that could help in B slot

1. Swordbreaker, or whichever necessary breaker so you bypass the speed arms race.
2. Renewal 3
3. Vantage (you get to hit back first! Why not.)

4. Quick Riposte. We are in an arms speed race, though taking this skill does transition a sturdy attacker into a fast tank of sorts, especially the ones with the boosted BST and possessing good atk stat to have some offensive presence as well as tanking bulk.
5. Desperation. Lets them hit twice while avoiding counterattacks.
6. Wrath. Boosts the strength of their specials if infantry/armored.

Things that would suck in B slot

1. Poison strike. They are finishers, not a damage chipper/debuffer.
2. Seal Skills. Much like glass cannons, sturdy attackers should be killing stuff on player phase. Sealing dead bodies is useless.

C Slot : Some may have the HP to go with Panic ploy or infantry pulse. For those that do not, simply pick a hone or drive skill to help out allies.

Seal Slot : Speed seal. Gotta go fast. Heavy Blade seal to speed up specials for those with good atk stat. Flashing blade is another option for infantries/armored if your heavy blade seal is tied up on someone else.

Mage Baiters (Fragile Speedsters?)

HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
LOW/SHIT	AVERAGE/LOW	HIGH	AVERAGE/LOW	HIGH

Please do not make any jokes about the name of this archetype please. Thank you. There are only 4 units that I know of in this archetype - Caeda, ~~blue Caeda~~ Clair, Felicia, Olwen and Fir. You can argue that they are like fast mage tanks, but they are not quite “Mage tanks” due to high speed and low atk, and not quite “Fast Tanks - Res stat version” due to low Hp. So what you have is a really strange, small niche that most people don’t care about.

Even now, the Great Wall/mixed def/res tanks exists, so this archetype still isn’t seeing a significant increase in the uptake, but they do have new options and aren’t as crap as they were in the early days, especially Caeda and Felicia with their new refines (Fir is getting one soon!)

Trinity Archetype : move fast + take some mage hits.

They can beat : Mage Tanks, a few mage-type glass cannons that they outspeed.

They die to : Any and almost all melees.

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
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Average	40	32	31	27	25
Type	LOW	VERY LOW	HIGH	AVERAGE/ LOW	STUPID HIGH
Caeda	36	25	37	24	34
Clair	37	26	36	24	33
Felicia	34	23	37	18	35
Fir	41	25	36	24	31
Olwen	34	26	34	20	30

Caeda now has Wing ~~Spear~~ Sword, with effectiveness vs Cavalry and armored, and a refine option with flashing blade built in. With the prevalence of horse teams in the lower scoring ranges, and armored in the high-end, Caeda gained a new niche to handle said meta with Wing sword, as well as remain a good pick vs mages. Since manaketes still hit at the res stat vs melee units, Caeda still does effectively wall them off but may require a special to deal significant damage since most dragons are fairly tanky.

Felicia's Plate lets her target whichever is lower between def or res like a manakete, and a refine option that she probably does not require badly, since it improves her match ups vs mages, and she already shreds most of them. What plate really changes for Felicia is the ability to engage units who have lopsided def/res e.g Hector. Mixed tanks that don't have a clearly weaker spot between def or res will give her trouble, as well as manaketes who can target her lower def, while most of them sport balanced def/res stats at neutral with a few exceptions, e.g. Adult Tiki.

Olwen is the only mage in the group, and comes with Dire thunder, though it is common to see Dire Thunder swapped out for Blarblade and Olwen to be played like a glass cannon bladetome user.

Special : Iceberg/Glacies. Some people argue for Moonbow/Luna, but I say forget it in this case. Use that massive res stat, because otherwise there's isn't any other good stat to base a special on. Even with wing sword, it's not really masking Caeda's potato attack so I disagree with flashing blade refine + galeforce. Stick with iceberg/glacies for her.

Weapon: Slaying weapons for -1CD. The faster you can trigger the special, the better. You can use Wo Dao to boost special dmg too. There are people who argue that brave weapons also charges fast, but it hurts their speed. These girls are only good for their speed and res, don't ruin it!

A slot : What you want are skills that give a boost to atk. You can also boost that res for nukey Glacies goodness. They really, really need it. If you pull a -atk version of this archetype, they can go straight home, or skill inheritance i guess.

Things that could help in A Slot

1. Deathblow.
2. Fury. I guess it helps with atk and bulk, but be wary of low Hp.
3. Swift Sparrow for player phase builds and retaining their good res unlike LnD.
4. Distant def is a good option for tanking mages.
5. MorganF brings us Mirror Stance, which gives atk/res upon enemy initiation.
6. Distant Counter. Really. If you want your melee res tank to not be a sitting duck but actually hit attacking mages on counter where their low def hurts, this is the skill to take.
7. Atk/res Bond. Really rare skill, but could be a good idea if your mage baiter is always going to have a buffing buddy at the side.

Things that would suck in A slot

1. Life and Death (Do you really want them to have no outstanding stats at all?).
2. Darting blow. They already have the speed. Yes I can hit 60 spd with +spd Caeda and flier emblem...but wtf, there's no skill that base dmg on spd *cough* available to be inherited. Yes, I got that "dmg based on spd" wish in the form of uninheritable Regnal Astra, on Ayra, who I don't have. Thanks monkey paw.
3. Iote shield for Caeda and Clair. They get wrecked by archers so hard even with it.
4. Armored blow. On one hand you can argue armored blow makes their def go from average to good (except Felicia, her def is a dump stat), on the other hand, we are in the meta of one-shotting things. It also does not save them on enemy phase.

B slot : You will want skills that gives the turn/attack advantage, and ways to avoid being hit too often to these fragile speedsters.

Things that could help in B slot

1. Desperation, because they are fast, and hitting twice w/o counter to trigger special helps.
2. Escape Route. To run away when the going gets tough.
3. Quick Riposte. Again, we are in an arms speed race, as mentioned earlier more than once.
4. Wrath. Boost the strength of their specials...if they can have wrath at all.

Things that would suck in B slot

1. Brash Assault. Again, why put this skill when this archetype can hit twice naturally?
2. Vantage. Again, these girls are not meant to take hits at all in enemy phase, but may struggle to score the 1hko that makes a bonfire Hector on vantage so deadly and instead die on counter.

C Slot: Def Ploy memes. Okay that belonged to Est. Def ploy is an option to bolster their damage output, as is atk ploy to reduce the amount of damage they take while tanking.

Seal Slot : Def ploy seal. Much like the recommended C slot, they are realistically one of the best users of this particular seal, but Felicia may hesitate when armed with her plate since she can target the lower of def or res with it. Atk ploy is also an option, just pick whichever one you didn't inherit into C slot. Flashing blade is an option for the infantries who fit in this archetype, considering Intsys let Caeda and Clair have it as a refine option in Wing Sword and Rhomphaia - it's a great refine by the way.

Brave Users

They are a somewhat unique breed that can also fit the other archetypes based on their stats, but I am putting them here and discussing why they make especially good brave users outside of their stat-type archetypes. There are mainly two types of brave users, and a few exceptions.

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Brave 1	DONT	HIGH	DUMP STAT	DONT	CARE
Brave 2	CARE	HIGH	HIGH	DONT	CARE

Brave weapons have lower damage, -5 speed penalty, and grants you two hits, which cannot be disrupted by breaker skills and wary fighter. A good brave user should have good attack stat, and not care about that -5 speed penalty. Either the unit is so slow, they get doubled by everyone and their horse anyway, or the unit is so fast, they hit x4 and do not get doubled at all on enemy phase. If a natural brave user does not fit the above simple requirements, that is likely a terrible brave user who should swap it out for another weapon, or become brave weapon fodder to a potentially fantastic brave user who does not have it naturally.

The two unit archetypes that become monsters with brave weapons are: Melee tank, and Glass Cannon, while it is something sturdy attackers can look into. Let's look at the stats for various brave users. This list is not exhaustive, there are too many to list.

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Raven	41	34	35	25	22
Cherche	46	38(!!)	25	32	16
Wchrom	51	40(!!)	19	35	29
Hana	37	35	36	23	26

Arden	60(!!)	36	16	41	16
Cordelia	40	35	35	22	25
Effie	50	40(!!)	22	33	23
Reinhardt	40	32	23	27	25
Hjakob	42	35	23	33	32
Brave Lyn	35	33	35	18	28

If there is one thing these brave users have in common, they are defensively subpar with some exceptions, examples are armored units such as Effie and Wchrom who qualify as melee tanks. Camilla might have brave axe by default, but she is a different archetype who is not a very good brave user, so you use her to inherit brave axe most of the time. Most of them have high Atk, but there are exceptions. Reinhardt's attack is average, not fantastic but the reason why he is such a monster is due to lower average res stat across the board and his insane mobility as cavalry.

Trinity Archetype : hit hard, and do it twice. Or Quad-hitting memes.

They can beat : the meta. They can brute force their way against the meta and weapon triangle.

They die to : Any competent player phase or incredibly tanky enemy phase unit.

Effie, Xmas Chrom and Cherche are just brutal with the highest atk stat among the lot. Setsuna, Cordelia and ~~RIP Hana you're still a good unit~~ Soleil have the sheer speed to do quadhitting memes, but Setsuna has fallen out of favor due to low atk stat compared to newer entrants.

Special : Draconic Aura. The ones with lower atk might prefer Luna. The fast ones can take galeforce.

A Slot : Death blow. That is all you need. For the ones who hit hard and fast, Life & death is an option, as is swift sparrow, but for units who have both high atk and spd, their survivability is usually compromised to the point they won't mind the def/res loss from LnD.

B Slot : Dragback/Hit&run or desperation (only the fast types should take desperation). Wary fighter can be considered if you are an armored unit. Klein can take whichever breaker skill if you want him to quad a certain unit type.

Chill Skills - If anything, they are quite ideal to carry the new chill res and chill def skills for added damage because they do not need crucial B slot skills as much as other units.

Breaker skills - to quad certain enemies for better match ups. Famous examples include Lancebreaker on Reinhardt due to lances having higher res on average compared to swords

and axes. Brave Axe Cherche has been spotted with axebreaker vs particularly tough axe tanks, though the alternative to refine slaying hammer is also an up-and-coming option.

Desperation/brash assault tandem - Sees less use in arena, but a really good tandem to get your brave user quadding without retaliation for multi-battle modes such as chain challenge and tempest.

Bold Fighter for armored brave users - quad while ignoring speed requirements. That's just bonkers. Halloween Jakob is the only ranged version, which makes him particularly dangerous esp when he gets to start with armored boots for 2 move.

Things that would suck in B slot

1. Quick Riposte. Remember folks, brave users are crazy good on player phase, and meh on enemy phase (unless its Effie or Lukas). Yes this isn't great on Klein by default.
2. Vantage. Again, they are supposed to KO and get out of dodge.
3. A lot of other B skills do not really do much for brave users who are generally built for 1 round KOs. If anything, most brave users do just fine with only death blow on A Slot.

C Slot : Threaten def, so you hit even harder, or any hone skill to help allies

Brave users are straightforward, go in, KO and get out. Now that wasn't so hard to build eh? What, did you say it was going to cost 20k feathers? What, you got a -atk IV? That's it, shelf that unit until +atk IV comes. Being a brave user demands that.

Seal Slot : Atk seal for increased dmg output, or heavy blade seal to trigger special really fast.

Jack-of-All-Trades

HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE

It would be boring if all these jacks really were average all across the board. These types typically have their stats spread out evenly. While they typically lack any extreme or high points, they rarely have two extreme "low" points (there are exceptions, of course. Look at Selena). Now it is argued that some of these average joes are difficult to build up due to the lack of an extreme strong point, but it also means they can be quite flexible (and hence tricky and overwhelming) to build.

You can say that the jack-of-all-trades also somewhat follow the above tank and attacker archetypes, but fall a little short because of how average their stats are or are let down by one

low point that breaks them out of the archetype. What this also means is that they are hypersensitive to IVs, and different IVs can swing them into different archetypes. With the advent of boosted BSTs, jack-of-all-trades have found a place in meta for their flexibility and all around good stats to suitably handle a variety of threats. They really needed that boost to shine compared to units with extreme stats slanted for one or only two particular niches.

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Average	40	32	31	27	25
Selena	37	25	35	32	28
Roy	44	30	31	25	28
Joshua*	40	31	35	30	28
Robin	40	29	29	29	22
Sharena	43	32	32	29	22
Palla	42	31	31	28	26
Minerva	40	31	33	32	22
Narcian	42	29	29	32	26

Wait...Minerva is in this list? Well yes she is. Her stats are surprisingly average across the board except for res. Most people probably don't realise it because Hauteclere is Killer Axe on steroids, and native Life and Death changes her archetype from an average joe into a sturdy attacker.

*Joshua has since been added, he doesn't have any low points unlike most of units in this archetype. This is the point where I mentioned jack-of-all-stats needed that extra boost to actually compete to be on your team versus the specialists. That being said, here's some examples of how they find a place in teams.

1. RobinM - colorless advantage and average defenses means he can duel with daggers and bows. Mainly bows, because Takumi pissed off alot people back then. Being blue means countering the most common color, red. How many units can counter two color types with their base kit? RobinF with skill inheritance, can be built to fill a similar role.
2. Palla - Flier emblem girl, and the only one of four sword fliers that comes easily at 3 stars. She has good base kit (Moonbow, Wings of Mercy, Goad Fliers), as a double-edged sword, also good inheritance fodder. Otherwise she can check greens and can handle both phy and mage threats. She's still the most well-rounded red flier, though

there aren't a lot of red fliers per se. It does give her the flexibility of what you want to build her for, however NY Camilla trumps her almost every stat save for hp and res.

3. Narcian handles blue units, esp lances like a champ. Outside of it, he struggles. Since blue is the "anti-red" meta, he is in a good niche. Emerald axe + his balanced defensive stats makes him deceptively tanky against even blue mages (while the rest of the wyvern series, except Camilla, would get hit very hard due to low res).
4. Minerva has her average joe base stats concealed by Hauteclere and Life and Death in her base kit. Those two make her morph into a sturdy attacker archetype, which is rather lacking in green units, who usually turn out to be low speed tanks. Certain IVs, notably +def, can switch her into a fast tank type.

What this means is that while they provide flexibility and can fill a lot of archetype roles your team may be missing, they may not be the best at any niche they try to fill in your team vs a specialist. The examples above are not exhaustive.

Daggers and Debuffers/Dmg Chippers

(new work-in-progress)

This role has multiple stat archetypes that fit into it, e.g. Felicia is a Mage Baiter, while Saizo is a Fast Tank, but given what daggers bring into the field, they have a category on their own.

Inheritable daggers all have the new refined ability to deal -7 def/res after combat

Meanwhile Felicia has a new niche all to herself among daggers with Felicia's Plate, letting her deal adaptive damage and target the lower of def or res like a Manakete's dragonstone.

Regular

Smoke Dagger

Rogue Dagger

Seasonals

Seashell - Grants +2 atk/spd/def/res when unit's HP is 100%, and lose 2 HP after that.

Kitty Paddle - it lacks a refine, and outside of Halloween Sakura, the other notable user was Felicia, who now has her plate which is better.

Mochi - slaying dagger, with -1 CD like the slaying/killer line of weapons. This is a good weapon to get those specials out fast.

Lethal Carrot - essentially a wo dao weapon. In theory, this is a really good weapon, but it's also attached to the best dagger user at the point of release, and a seasonal to boot. If you are willing to make the sacrifice for your favourite knife nut, this is a premier choice dagger for an offensive slant to fire off fast, boosted specials.

Other not-dagger debuffs

Dark Breath/Clarisse's Bow - Both are inheritable, and combine atk and spd smoke into one weapon.

Valflame/War God's Tome - Atk/Res Ploy 2 built into a tome. With Spd Ploy in C slot, and Def Ploy in seal, either Arvis or Saias can become quad ploy boy, just Saias has it cheaper at the expense of not possessing Recover Ring to fill in as ardent sacrifice healer.

Weirding Tome - Spd Ploy 3 is built into the tome, and a little bonus +3spd makes Lute deceptively fast, while still having good res to triple ploy.

Wind Brand - Soren has Chill Atk built in, meaning he can run another Chill skill in his B slot, as well as attempt to run Ploys in C slot and seal for debuffs.

A slot : What you want are skills that boost speed and/or attack for the fast ones. Boosting def/res if you plan to have a debuff-and-tank strategy in mind though atk/spd is usually more useful.

- Life and Death 3
- Swift Sparrow
- Fury 3 (some may want the added bulk)

B slot : You may wish to have skills that let them safely debuff, prevent counterattacks or to further wear down an opponent.

- Poison Strike (stacks with Jaffar's deathly daggers)
- Desperation
- Wind/Watersweep (e.g. debuff safely and tank the hits from weakened enemies, you pick between wind or water sweep based on the unit's weak point e.g. Saizo or Matthew would not want a mage to hit back due to low res)
- Chill skills
- Guard (to prevent enemies from getting their specials off)

C Slot: Savage blow and the smoke skills are common C slots seen on these types.

Seal Slot : Savage Blow is a bread-and-butter for that splash damage stacking, but atk smoke is a good option depending on the build too.

Healers

There are some skills exclusive to healers, as well as plenty of skills that healers can't inherit, so this warrants a section dedicated to them. Staff users can be used interchangeable; there is nothing they can't inherit among themselves. Generally, people pick Elise/Priscilla/Clarine/Nanna because they're on a horse, pick Maria/Bride Lyn who are tied for fastest infantry healers at 34spd neutral, Pick Lissa/Azama for tanking, and old man Wrys has the highest res stat. Or just play with your favourites.

Everyone wants that sexy Wrathful/Dazzling combination aka Razzle Dazzle. Nothing beats being able to deal normal damage without staff handicap and being uncounterable.

If you can't have both (one as refine and one as B slot) due to lack of fodder (Bride Lyn and Genny are 5* exclusives), refining for dazzle lets you get off the strong debuffs and you're more likely to pull a Genny than a Bridal Lyn (Candlelight from Lyn herself is desirable as SI too).

Lacking a wrathful/dazzling staff skill in the B slot, Live to Serve 2 from Wrys is the best generic budget option if you're not running an offensive wrathful Absorb build for support. Staff users can't use most of the offensive abilities, only bond (e.g. Atk/spd bond), brazen skills, or base stat +3 are the A slots they can have.

For heals, all the heals now work fine. Probably Recover+ and Physic+ (the latter for 2 range heals) are the best but some people like Martyr for a bit of self healing and Rehabilitate+ can be nice if you want to heal units to not-quite-full health for some reason (e.g. cavalry Chrom, so he keeps his +5 to all stats). All the balms are nowhere near useful since they are visible buffs that don't stack with hone/fortify etc, miracle is situational, so Imbue is probably the easy generic option. Just use whatever you like.

The staff attack options at 5* are as below:

Absorb - For when you want the staff user to be a combat unit. This works with Wrathful on the high attack staff users to increase the amount of incoming damage/healing and is the only one to pick refined Wrathful over Dazzling if you can't have both. The amount of incoming healing can be high enough, it's possible (though not recommended) to run close counter and QR so your staff user is focused on combat if that's your thing. Not the best idea for arena, but may be useful in endurance content like tempest and chain challenge.

The 7hp splash heal stacks with breath of life C slot and seal for the 21 HP side heals.

Slow/Fear - If (for some reason) you want to use a staff user to debuff (why would you when atk and spd smoke exists) or you want to deal absolutely the most damage with wrathful since these have the highest Mt. You can't use the smoke abilities and seals on staff users so dreams

of uncounterable debuff masters remain dreams.

Panic - Inflicts the Panic debuff on enemy and foes within 2 tiles of target. Rather useless in story mode as the AI rarely utilize buffing skills well, but can defuse arena defenses that rely a lot on buffs..This means that Panic is generally an arena tool and subpar outside of it. Pick it if you want to hard counter Hone Cav reinhardt and bowlyns.

Pain - For when you want the staff user to weaken / completely wipe out enemy teams. These abilities are combined with Savage Blow and the Savage Blow seal for up to 14 after combat AoE damage (and 24 on the target). It's nasty in arena defense teams that field a staff unit. It's a really popular choice among wrathful/dazzling staff users.

Gravity - Reduces the movement of target and adjacent enemies to only 1. Most annoying in the hands of cavalry healers and allies with movement assists to pull them back. In conjunction with buffs and dazzling effect, one healer can cheese entire squads of enemies with impunity. Very strong and popular choice in the arena like Pain+.

Candlelight dinner - Inflicts a unique debuff on enemy and all other enemies within 2 tiles of target that prevents them from counterattacking through their next actions on your turn. Really strong in arena and also in pve because this stops even DC/CC and allows the rest of team to maul enemies without fear, when your offensive teammates just can't afford to take a hit. It is seasonal (locked to bride lyn), so it has very low availability, but it's otherwise a strong option for arena too.

Trilemma - It casts Triangle Adept on your enemies (Intsys you made it a refine option on Titania and Alfonse, then turn around and let it be cast like a debuff? really?). It has niche uses, but interesting ones nonetheless. You could strengthen your own units versus opponents they have an advantage on without actually equipping TA3 on A slot (so you have A slot available for preferred skills), or equip Cancel Affinity and suddenly nullify triangle advantage enemies have on you (e.g. Alm with cancel affinity can hit Nowi for neutral after Maribelle cats trilemma on Nowi). Combining a well-timed Trilemma and a Cancel affinity unit from the red/blue/green triangle can make said unit fight without any disadvantages.

How IVs can Change your Unit Archetypes

I think it would be a good time to discuss how IVs may change your unit type since jack-of-all-trades swing quite easily more so than other units in the previously mentioned archetypes, and can swing into various other archetypes due to their hypersensitivity to IVs. As the archetypes change, the same unit with different IVs might excel with different skillsets, and as a result, a different playing style may be required.

An easy example would be +atk-def Lukas likely going on the offensive as a brave user, while a -atk+def Lukas will likely go into full melee tank mode and be more dependent on baiting melees into hitting him and triggering special. It changes the way you play Lukas.

Let's start with Selena.

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Average	40	32	31	27	25
Selena (base)	37	25	35	32	28
+hp-res	41	25	35	32	25
-spd+res	37	25	32	32	31

Do you see this? With a **+hp -res** IV, Selena effectively has turned into a fast tank type with the speed and def stat to do it, and the shitty atk stat. She has average Hp, but compensates by being able to take mage hits better (but she does NOT excel at it).

Now let's look at **-spd+res**, typically a boon/bane combination that is dreaded and looked upon with horror. Now Selena looks like a miniature Great Tank Wall with both Def and Res above 30, while actually having the speed to avoid some doubles unlike the other units in the archetype. To compensate, she has lower Hp in exchange for not being doubled as easily. As shitty this particular IV distribution is on many units (e.g. this IV sinks Nino), it actually does okay on Selena! Surprised eh? Just note her normal damage output will be terrible and she will become highly dependent on a good special to deal any meaningful damage.

As you can see, even without **+atk -def/res** (typically deemed the best IV for Selena, because it turns her into a sturdy attacker of sorts with lower hp and attack) IV, Selena still can fit into other roles with IVs people typically hate to get.

	HP	ATK	SPD	DEF	RES
Average	41	31	30	26	24
Minerva	40	31	33	32	22
-atk+spd	40	28	36	32	22
+def-res	40	31	33	35	19

There's no doubt about it, everyone argues for Minerva to pick up +spd-res as her best IV. It's also my personal favourite if I got to pick Minerva. But we all don't get to choose our IVs. I will use **-atk+spd** and **+def-res** as examples of how that changes her archetypes. General consensus is that the first set is considered bad, while the second set is considered somewhat neutral.

With a **-atk +spd** IV, Minerva effectively has turned into a fast tank type with the speed and almost the def stat to do it, and the sub par atk stat (partially masked by Hauteclere). Her def isn't as impressive as the more famous users of the archetype, while having somewhat better res.

Now let's look at **+def-res**, a fairly neutral boon/bane set that does not affect her offensive capabilities. This particular IV set gives her practically the same def/res distribution statline as her brother, exchanging 3hp and 3atk for 7spd. That 7spd is major, and what you have is a fast/melee tank hybrid who still can dish out some damage. It makes her both an offensive presence, while having the def level to really be a melee tank. In this scenario, it may be a better idea to swap out Life and Death for Fury so you have a fast/melee AND hard hitting tank going for you. This also makes her a good candidate to hold onto Bonfire/Ignis special for some serious hurt. You could also say this distribution is a particularly good candidate to pick up Iote's Shield seal (I would not make the aforementioned recommendations if this was a +spd-res Minerva, for example).

How Weapon Refines can Change Your Unit's Role

Inheritable Refines

Berkut's Lance - especially if you give it the +4 res refine for a total of +11 res on enemy initiation, you can turn low res lancers into a mixed tank with serviceable res

Safeguard - The +def version of Berkut's lance. It can give up to +11 def so even somewhat low def units can now take a few hits with safeguard equipped.

Legendary Refines

Ephraim - Enemy phase blue tank and premier buff bot to having a player phase with Siegmund refine)

Alm - poor falchion healbot to 16 Mt Brave user and one-time delete button)

Caeda - improved player phase vs armors, doesn't drastically change her ability to tank mages

Felicia - gives her much improved player phase if one desired vs units with imbalanced def/res where one defensive stat is much lower than the other

George - now has serviceable enemy phase vs ranged units, but still hurt by his naturally low def/res

Lucina/Masked Marth - With spectrum bond refine, switches from sturdy attacker to a fast tank with good atk. Meanwhile Chrom is still very much a melee tank type

The Buffers

Hinoka/Sanaki - does not change their combat roles as glass cannon, and mage tank, but adds movement and buffing utility respectively. Compared to Sanaki, Lilina's role as a nuker doesn't change, but her refine is a strong nuking option.

Eirika - still a premier buff bot, but now has improved enemy phase utilizing the buffs on her allies

Original Marth - with drive spectrum refine, can compete with Brave Lucina for Drive bot while having an additional purpose as a dragon slayer and healbot with Falchion's renewal effect coupled with recip aid, and optionally boosted with renewal in B slot.

CorrinM - the single best single target buffer for whoever he has ally support with.

Titania - Draconic Poleax gives her Res Tactic, so with proper setup she can provide triple tactics and be a valuable addition to a tactics team while leaving the rest to pick other skills for their C slots and seal slots.

The Debuffers

Soren - has a new job as a debuffer with Chill atk built in. His Owltome effect refine is optional, though it does change his playstyle to sticking around to his friends (and Ike).

Katarina - new "Reese' Tome" turns her into the premium version of Arvis, but she has access to IVs and merges while also being able to quad ploy if you felt like it. She just lacks recover ring but it isn't a problem.

Unit Building

Now, with all that info above, it's time to start picking out your units and building your teams, isn't it? Let's get started with unit building first. So first things first, let's say you pick out your

favourite 5* unit you want to work with, and you realise you have extra copies of it. The first instinct is to ask : which IVs is best? Shall we start...

Choosing Your Pokémon Hero IVs

First, let's go by archetypes. We've previously been through that each archetype has certain stats which are HIGH, and other stats which are LOW. I've also shared my take that I prefer to boost strengths and leave weaknesses to be covered by allies instead of trying to patch it.

Notes : **Blue** means really desirable at base or +0, **black** means it can be worked with, **red** is just...forget it unless you like the unit. Notably, some units have superboons that grant +4 instead of the usual +3, and while some are in useless stats, some really improve their match ups. You will notice Atk is universally desirable, and units can accept more than one IV type.

Unit Type/Role	Good Boon you want	Bane you want	My RNG Sucks
Melee Tank	+atk, +def	-spd, -hp, -res	-atk, -def
Fast Tank	+atk, +spd, +def	-hp, -res	-spd, -atk
Mixed Tank	+atk, +def, +res	-spd, -hp	-atk, -def/res (whichever one is superbane e.g. Myrrh's -4 def)
Mage Tank	+atk, +res	-def, -spd, -hp	-atk, -res
Glass Cannon (physical)	+atk, +spd	-res, -hp	-spd, -atk
Glass Cannon (mage)	+atk, +spd	-def, -hp	-spd, -atk
Sturdy Attacker	+atk, +spd, +def	-res, -hp	-spd, -atk
Mage Baiters	+atk, +res	-def, -hp	-atk, -spd
Brave Users	+atk (+spd for fast ones)	Whichever is a dump stat. They always have one, or two.	-atk. You may weep tears of blood alongside these 8 -atk Cordelias I have.

This is not an absolute, just my opinion and as you can see there is more than one desirable boon/bane combination for most units. E.g. most people will agree balanced units and dragons can take multiple boon/bane combinations. Not getting that sexy +atk isn't the end of a unit's

life. Some units are so strong they can remain useful regardless of boon/bane combination e.g. Grima, Hardin, both Hectors. You build them the same even with the dreaded -atk +spd IV. See the trend? They're all armors.

You will notice HP is mostly neutral, nobody really wants it, nobody minds losing it, and it's not a "fatal boon" to have (e.g. whatever will I do with +spd Sophia?).

I don't have to state what is a suboptimal boon or bane: just take the opposite of what is desirable. Or just look at what is under "My RNG sucks".

Opinions may vary, but here's a priority/acceptable list on what boon/bane combinations to take

Boon/Bane Combination (Nino as example)	Is it acceptable?
Good Boon & Bane (+spd-def)	Why do you ask? TAKE IT. Stop asking if your +spd-res Ayra is good. YES SHE IS.
Good Boon, Neutral Bane (+spd-hp)	Sure TAKE IT.
Good Boon, Shitty Bane (+spd -atk)	Can consider. Hopefully the bane isn't an "almost fatal bane".#
Neutral Boon & Good Bane (e.g. +res-def)*	Will get things done, build it.
Neutral Boon & Neutral Bane (e.g. +res-hp)*	Will get things done, build it.
Neutral Boon & Shitty Bane (e.g +hp-spd)	Discard. Unless its your only copy and/or waifu, I suppose you'll do anything to make it work.
Good Bane & Shitty Boon (-def+hp)	Can consider.
Shitty Boon & whatever Bane (+def-spd)	Trash. Unless its your only copy and/or waifu, I suppose you'll do anything to make it work.

*Note : +res is above average and not quite entirely neutral boon for nino, it's a superboon at +4 res, and +res nino actually has some potential as a speedy mage tank, though her res is not as good as units who can naturally achieve over 30 res at neutral.

#Note : between +spd -atk, and +atk-spd, I generally consider the former easier to patch for bladetome mages. Some will argue +atk-spd is easier to patch for melees since refinery offers +3spd but only +2Mt. Considering +spd units can still get +spd refines if they wished, I would say avoiding and delivering doubles is more crucial than -3atk loss, but it also depends on the

unit itself e.g. CYL Roy will find it harder to get heavy blade off with -atk, but some will find it's harder to score the doubles necessary for galeforce to work for him with -spd.

Another example is Ayra. +def doesn't quite boost her offenses like +atk or +spd does, but it does push 31 def into 34 def, at which point Ayra can actually try her hand at defensive EP builds. It's somewhat neutral in that it doesn't bolster her utility in her usual, most common role(s), but it provides options and isn't useless.

General Unit Building Q&A

1. What is PP and EP?
 - a. **PP** = Player phase, where **your unit initiates** on its enemy for favourable matchups. They value skills that grant additional stats on unit initiation. **EP** = Enemy phase, where your unit primarily sits in enemy range and **let enemy initiate/suicide** into it for favourable matchups. They value skills that grant additional stats/CD etc on enemy initiation.
2. How do I know if my unit can be PP unit or EP unit or mixed phase?
 - a. By looking at their stats, weapons & skills they have/can potentially inherit. Generally tank archetypes are EP and Attacker archetypes are PP but some have options to take mixed phase builds to be a threat both ways and difficult to punish/bait. Some can be swayed into a different role by their IVs, especially the jack-of-all stats. If you feel brave, you can try your hand to build a unit to buck the trend and its usual role.
3. I didn't get XXX optimal IVs? Can I fix this? Will I have to build the unit differently?
 - a. Most of the time, you **build the unit the same way**, unless the IVs change a unit's archetype, or it's one of those "my RNG sucks" tier bad. +spd-res and +def-res Summer Corrin both will take the same build, the difference being the former can double some things more easily with that boon.
 - b. It isn't entirely a bad idea to build a unit with suboptimal IVs first. After all, everything but SP transfers over when merging into another one with better IVs: all skills, both learnt and unlearnt, any summoner/ally support will transfer, as do blessings.
4. Building this unit requires so much resources! What do I do first?
 - a. I usually advocate picking up B skill, assist and special first.
 - b. Complete the unit's build by filling up A slot, then finally C slot
 - c. You merge a unit after the build is complete, generally because a unit sees much more improvement with a better build than gaining the additional +1 to 2 stats.

What do these Skills do exactly?

I've seen a lot of questions surrounding these skills frequently, so let's tackle them so you can make better informed skill and build choices for your chosen ones.

Most newbies are scared of inheriting and making mistakes that cannot be reversed. Given the great skills the new heroes usually get, just grabbing an assist like reposition, swap and drawback are really safe choices to inherit first and it's pretty hard to go wrong. Having assists is universally useful and it really changes up how one can play in virtually all maps.

Usually C slot skills are left for last and more flexible (or whatever) since they do not directly impact the unit's combat prowess as C slots are directed at allies or enemies.

I do think specials are mostly self-explanatory, and I've run through them in the unit archetypes.

TL:DR : Pick atk/def/res based specials based on the unit's strongest stat. Pick moonbow or Luna if you have any doubts. Pick Aether for arena scoring and self-sustain on a tank, pick galeforce for scoring and extra movement for attacker. If your attacker is a ranged unit who cannot learn galeforce, pick Aether. And remember, noontime is a joke special without wo dao and/or wrath to boost it.

Assists

1. What movement assists do I put on this team of 4?
 - a. Reposition is the generic option, but it's especially good on fliers because they can ignore terrain and repo over mountains/rivers/lavas etc. But not boxes.
 - b. Swap is mostly for armors, or tank units, who do not necessarily have to be armored units.
 - c. Drawback is generally for ranged units and squishy types who do not wish to be in front after carrying out assist.
 - d. Pivot is usually inherited only on armored units to jump ahead to protect a weaker unit or to gain ground (net movement +2 with pivoting over an ally)
 - e. Smite and Shove are probably the least used movement assists, but Smite does come in handy the few times you need to smack an ally across certain terrain or to reach a far away target.
2. I ran out of repositions! I sent Barst/Selena home/foddered for other reasons!
 - a. Swap can stand in for reposition at times and vice versa.
3. What about these rally skills? Can I use them?

- a. Hone atk exists, why waste a turn to use rally atk? You see dual rally atk/spd, def/res up there in top rankings? That is arena score padding. Movement assists are almost always more useful than rally assists.

A slot skills

1. How does cooldown (CD) of Steady/Warding Breath work?
 - a. As long as the **enemy initiates combat** (being attacked on enemy phase), your unit will enjoy -2 CD per hit from BOTH sides, unit and enemy.
 - b. Units who will utilize this well are generally tank types, although some Sturdy Attackers can take this skill and play a fast tank with serviceable bulk and good speed to avoid doubles.
 - c. **Breath skills can only be inherited by melee infantry and armored units.**
2. How does CD of Heavy/Flashing Blade work?
 - a. As long as **your unit attacks**, you will enjoy -2 CD, regardless of player or enemy phase. You will see -1 CD per enemy attack, in other words, enemy attacks do not trigger heavy/flashing blade.
 - b. Both player phase and enemy phase units can utilize it, but for enemy phase units, breath skills are the better option. Heavy blade on an enemy phase unit is usually because it isn't an infantry/armored, therefore it cannot take breath skills.
3. Can I stack Breath A slot and heavy blade seal?
 - a. **Usually redundant.** If enemy initiates combat, heavy blade does nothing, its breath taking effect. If you initiate combat, only heavy blade takes effect. Mixed phase unit builds do exist, but this is not one of them.
4. Do the stats from deathblow/steady stance various skills etc calculate into my special?
 - a. Yes they do. Draconic Aura enjoys the +6 atk from deathblow, and Ignis enjoys the +6 def from steady stance.
 - b. Heavy Blade's Atk calculation takes into account deathblow, just as flashing blade takes into account +4spd from +3spd seal (or phantom spd of course).
 - c. Heavy Blade's Atk calculation takes bladetome buff into full account, meaning a fully buffed bladetome user with heavy blade will always get that effect off.
 - d. Regnal Astra from Ayra will be boosted by +3spd seal and +4spd from swift sparrow, but phantom speed has no effect on Regnal Astra's dmg.
5. How do I use Sturdy or Mirror Impact?
 - a. It is less about the unit's archetype than what the unit is capable of. Generally you want a unit who can double, and wants the impact skill to avoid enemy follow-ups and/or survive the 1st encounter to deliver the 2nd hit. It does not have

to be a natural double from speed, but can stem from a unit's prf weapon (Tibarn himself is a good example).

B slot skills

1. I put desperation on my unit, I'm supposed to be seeing 2 consecutive hits right?
 - a. Your unit must have the speed to naturally hit twice for your unit to make that 2nd hit consecutive on unit initiation.
 - b. Attack sequence = you -> you -> enemy (if enemy is still alive)
2. Brash assault, what do you mean guarantees a follow-up on initiation?
 - a. At 50% HP or below, it does exactly just that - grants you a 2nd hit. If your unit can already hit twice, brash assault does a big fat nothing.
 - b. It has a 2nd condition, that the enemy must be able to counter. If your melee unit below 50% Hp hits a ranged unit without close counter, you only get one hit.
 - c. It does not change the attack sequence unlike desperation.
 - d. Attack sequence = you -> enemy -> you -> enemy (if enemy is +5spd over your unit).
3. How does Quick Riposte get me two hits?
 - a. It applies only if the **enemy initiates** on you, and you are capable of countering back. If you cannot counter back, nothing happens.
4. Can I use Vengeful Fighter with Steady/warding Breath?
 - a. I suppose u can, but the CD reduction is redundant, as breath skills cover what Vengeful does in terms of CD reduction. VF will then act as quick riposte but with a better HP threshold. Otherwise, by itself, VF will apply the CD reduction when you strike back after **enemy initiates**.
5. How does Bold Fighter work?
 - a. If **you initiate**, it grants CD reduction when **your unit attacks**.
 - b. It is popular to combine with Breath skills in A slot, and quick riposte as a seal, so your unit is always hitting twice and enjoying additional CD reduction regardless of phase. Only one chosen armored unit can enjoy this setup, and it isn't cheap (requiring two 5* exclusive units) but quite worth it.
6. Who can use Special Fighter?
 - a. No, it does not have to be solely fast armored units, it can be useful on slow armor units too, and great on most armored units regardless of their stat distribution.
 - b. To maximize the special charging effect of special fighter, you do want to double (naturally or thru prf wpn or QR3 seal), though the more valuable part is how it

slows down the specials of an enemy who hits at your armor unit. Its other unique advantage over Vengeful and Bold fighter is the fact that it isn't tied to a single phase (enemy for VF and player phase for BF) but works both ways.

7. How does Vantage work and why was it popular with quick riposte seal in 2017?
 - a. Vantage lets your unit go first when HP dips below 75%. Combined with QR3 seal, you have this strange combination at 70% to 75% HP (its a narrow margin) where your unit will go first AND hit twice when enemy initiates on you.
 - b. There was a time where vantage hector was a real danger with QR2 built into armads, he will hit twice if you are foolish enough to initiate on him, and failure to finish him off may leave you with a hector that has special charged and ready to go first regardless.

C slot skills

Yes, you probably heard it a thousand times, it is flexible, it depends on your team, it is the last thing to fill out after special, A slot and B slot skills. When in doubt, slap Hone atk. Everyone likes to have more attack.

1. **Tanks carry hone** to buff attackers, and **attackers carry fortify** to buff tanks.
2. The unit who uses a stat the least should carry the buff for others.

It still applies even if you aren't running emblem teams. But you love infantry! You want mixed teams! Alright, we're going in.

1. Among Hones, Drives, Spurs and Tactics, do they stack?
 - a. Visible buffs appear in blue are Hone, Fortify and Tactics. They do not stack.
 - b. Invisible buffs that do not show up on your units, but will apply in combat are Drives and Spurs. They stack with everything, hones, tactics, fortify and themselves (much like goad and ward for emblem teams).
2. How do Atk/def/res Tactics work? (Speed Tactics when?). I have it on Azura, why isn't Ike and Fjorm being buffed?
 - a. Tactics encourage mixed team building, it checks **your team** to see if **unit movement type (horse/flier/armor/infantry) does not exceed 2** for the **entire map at the start of turn**, then applies the buff to units 2 spaces away like a 2-ranged hone.
 - b. If you had 3 units with 2 mov (e.g. all 3 are infantry), the skill will not work at all. That being said, if one of your infantries died, on the next turn, Tactics will check that you only have 2 infantries alive at the start of turn and activate normally.
3. What is a buff bot and how do I pick one?

- a. Any unit dedicated to buffing his/her teammates with their skills, it can be their assists, C slots and seal slot.
 - b. There are a few units who have buffs built into their weapons, so they are more effective than grabbing a random unit and chucking it into the role of buff bots.
 - c. Notable ones are original **Ephraim/Eirika**, **Delthea**, Linde if she is given Dark Aura, **Brave Lucina** (aka Lancina) with Geirskogul, **Marth** if you refined his Falchion, and Light breath users, though the last one is rather tricky to use in practice.
 - d. Dual rallies on buffbots are not just score padding in this case but is a slot-effective way of having as many buffs as you can on the buff bot.
4. Alright, I want Delthea to buff my Ryoma with atk buff! How do I pick? Do I keep her Drive atk, or use hone/drive/spur/tactics? (example)
- a. You decide based on how you position your units when attacking or defending. This is something you must discover on your own and observe while you are playing.
 - b. Generally drives work within 2 spaces regardless, while hone have higher buff but require that the target unit stay next to the buffer at each start of turn.
5. What about other C slots that aren't buffs?
- a. With Ploys, smokes and the new chill skills (chills are B slots), debuffing is no longer some seal atk joke. Seal slots include Atk smoke, Def Ploy, Atk Ploy and Res Ploy as seals, so units can have 2 debuffs in C slot and seal slot.
 - b. So far, the units who come with unique weapons for debuffs are ranged units : Arvis' Valflame (atk/res ploy2), Lute's Weiriding Tome (spd ploy), Gunnthra's B slot (chilling seal -atk/spd), Soren's Wind Brand (chill atk), Fallen Takumi (Panic + 10 dmg on 3rd turn). They are especially good users to stack debuffs or "slot-save" since it is built into their weapons, or in Gunnthra's case, it is a B slot skill unique to her and complements her blizzard tome.

Hone/Fortify/Goad/Ward on Horse/Flier/Armor Teams- Which do you want?

It's a really common question when people form teams : who gets hone/fort/goad/ward among emblem teams? Who gets what C slot in emblem teams? For a quick summary again :

1. **Tanks carry hone** to buff attackers, and **attackers carry fortify** to buff tanks.
2. The unit who uses a stat the least should carry the buff for others.

Example : Xander carries Hone, he would like to have a boost to attack, but he is a tank who can barely use the speed as effectively as Brave Lyn. She will carry fortify for him since he does want a boost in def and res to handle tanking. On the flipside, while she has decent res to work with, her def is rather crappy and it doesn't benefit her as much.

Sounds simple enough? Yet there are scenarios where it feels less clear cut.

Question 1 : I run full offensive fliers, I have Caeda/Cordelia/Elincia/Cherche, who should take Hone Fliers? Caeda has wing sword, the other 3 are brave users.

Answer : Cherche. She's the only one who doesn't use speed, while all the other 3 girls will utilize both attack and speed from the buff.

Question 1.2 : Okay, I put Hone fliers on Cherche, do I keep fortify fliers on Caeda? Do I need other buffs?

Answer : There are only two kinds of fliers that want fortify buffs- tank fliers and bladetome fliers. In this case, there isn't one, so the other fliers can simply inherit goad fliers. Fliers do not really utilize ward often, and it is on Minerva, Ny Camilla and Shigure, the guy being the 4* option for Ward Fliers.

Question 1.3 : What if I don't have hone fliers?

Answer : Goad stacking bitches. The power of 4 atk/spd x3 on a single unit is still good. Hone fliers is a nice luxury. Goad fliers is your bread and butter unless you're really lucky.

Additional note : the same applies to cavalry units, except they have more options and mages, so you are more likely to see 2 hone 2 fort users, while goad is only on Camus and Reinhardt, one is limited GHB unit, and the other is much better as a unit than as inheritance. Again, ward isn't that good for cavalry teams unless you field at least two tanky horses.

Question 2 : How about my armored units? I want armored march to move around, who should hold it? How many copies of march do I need?

Answer : You generally need only 1, or at most, 2 armor marches. Any more than that is redundant, and unnecessarily giving up C slot for buffing skills.

Question 2.2 : So I hear armored units like ward stacking right? Do I get to use hone or fortify armor? Is there any use for goad?

Answer : Depends on your team. Armors have the highest BST, and most armors have above average def/res combination, even the squishiest ones with low HP like Henry and Lyn. It's due to their naturally low movement and high def/res that ward stacking is a thing aka the Cube Formation. Hone/fortify comes into play if you have player phase armor (either with armored boots, or armor march in play) unit and strategy in mind, or if you are running bladetome on a mage armored unit. Otherwise, Owltomes are a good option for the cube armor formation, and it's a matter of swapping to face the suitable match ups in your favor.

Sample Unit Builds

A lot of people ask “how to build XXX unit”, and to hear “Aether/steady breath on your Nowi/Fae/Tiki” or “Bold fighter on your armor unit” must be intimidating to newbies or people just starting to get into skill inheritance. Just being given a build doesn’t always help a person understand why or how. Here, I’ll show you how to get started on simple budget builds, and evolving the unit build as you gain the appropriate fodder. Then we’ll progress to having multiple builds, and choosing them for the right situation/maps.

I would also like to recommend this guide here on generic builds for your reading:

https://www.reddit.com/r/FireEmblemHeroes/comments/6l5cco/list_of_generic_builds/

I’ll be using Michalis as an example, since he’s one of the few units I still use after almost a year, and I still have screenshots from when he was +0, +2, +4 and currently +5 so I can actually track the evolution. *means there were changes made.

Michalis

1st Build

- Hauteclere
- Swap*
- Ignis*
- Iote’s Shield
- Quick Riposte 2*
- Threaten Def 3

First thing I did was inherit Swap/QR2 from Subaki, and took Ignis from Henry. That’s it. Both units are available at 3. Now that wasn’t so hard, was it? You can already drop him into Arena Assault and watch blue and green units suicide into him. The rationale is simple : Put QR on a slow unit and pick a special based on his higher defensive stat. Swap was conveniently taken as an assist to swap allies to the back while he stays in front to tank melee hits.

2nd Build

- Hauteclere
- Reposition*
- Ignis
- Iote’s Shield

- Quick Riposte 2
- Goad Fliers/Hone Fliers*

*In this case, I **swapped** out for reposition, and put him in a flier team, so he took goad fliers from 4* Palla. Doesn't look that much different. I later managed to pull -atk Hinoka so he picked up hone fliers to buff the girls he was accompanying.

3rd Build

- Hauteclere
- Reposition
- Ignis
- Close Def*
- Quick Riposte 3*
- Hone Fliers
- Close Def 3 seal*

Took me a few months before this happened. Namely, I made two changes to his skillset : Inheriting Close def from Joshua (tempest reward), and promoted 5 subaki for QR3. Also started to craft seals seriously and aim for tier 3 immediately. Double close def was pretty ridiculous, especially if I sat him on a defense tile.

4th Build (Current)

- Hauteclere
- Reposition
- Aether*
- Distant Counter*
- Quick Riposte 3
- Drive Spd 2*
- Distant Def 3 or Iote seal*

*Finally managed to grab Distant Counter from Love Abounds banner here. Also used Chrom (and 20k feathers) to feed Aether right here. This feels like an "end-point" so far, at least until more new skills are introduced and if they interest me. Drive spd came from Tailtiu, I switched over to a mixed arena team and Drive spd is 240 SP, so there.

Additional Notes

Question : What about close def? Isn't that a waste of Joshua since you use Distant counter now?

Answer: It isn't. There are times where I actually swap out distant counter for close def, notably maps where melees are more prevalent. There is exactly one arena season I favored close def - when Grima, Hardin and Nowi were bonus units. Dragons and armors were everywhere for that season so I used double close def to effectively tank them.

I will say the same for Hone fliers and Drive spd. One is for flier emblem in pve, the latter is for the mixed arena team.

Next example is a really common unit you see merged in arena: Nowi. Lets track her evolution, from countering red swords while hitting their low res, to becoming a counter to archers.

Nowi

1st build

- Lightning Breath+
- Swap*
- Bonfire*
- Def +3
- Quick Riposte 2*
- Threaten Res 3

*See the pattern? Offensive special and quick riposte 2. Yet another Subaki died. This was generally good to park in front of red swords back then while hitting at their generally low res. Functionally this plays similarly to Michalis, but different targets. Park in front of a unit and let them suicide into you.

2nd build

- Lightning Breath+ (refined)
- Swap
- Bonfire
- Def +3
- Bowbreaker 3*

- Threaten Res 3
- Quick Riposte 3 seal*

*Yeah, I was that desperate for a brave lyn counter. I left Nowi alone for a long time until refinery patch hit.

3rd build

- Lightning Breath+ (refined)
- Swap
- Aether*
- Steady Breath*
- Quick Riposte 3*
- Threaten Res 3
- Panic Ploy seal*

When grabbing aether and steady breath, it does not have to cost 1 Bike and 1 unit with Aether at 5. It is entirely possible to grab steady stance 1 & 2 from 4* Black Knight, then take Luna/Sol from another 4* unit so you can take Aether and steady breath from Bike. It does save you a potential 20k feathers if you don't have another 5* source of aether at hand. Note : Black Knights are limited, so you can't keep doing this trick.

Since she is used as brave lyn counter, Panic ploy is there to foil Hone Cavalry. Also, I'm still too lazy to do anything about Threaten Res 3 since I don't main Nowi, but for those who are more serious about investing in Nowi than me, I can recommend a fort/hone/ward dragons buff if run in a dragon time, or a Drive skill in a mixed team. Unless -HP, Nowi can be a candidate for infantry pulse.

TL:DR - Insert B slot, assist and special first as the starting steps to a budget build. A completed build doesn't have to be done in one go, and units can still get things done without hefty costs.

Team Building

Alright, with all the above, you should hopefully know how to build units. Now it's time to select which units to go together! I have pulled "XX" units from over time...how do I decide what to use? There's so much team synergy (or none at all)...

Generic Rules

My personal take on team building is that I like to have **mixed coverage** where each unit does something different - it doesn't sit well with me to run full offensive or full tanks. Fliers can potentially go full offensive with their mobility options, and it's definitely viable, but there could be times where all the repositions in the world isn't going to enable the whole team to escape unscathed and someone has to take a hit.

So here's the generic, basic steps to team building :

1. Generally, if you are new to the game, I will suggest first building a balanced team in terms of combat (movement type/emblem teams be damned, those are for later when you have the resources) to clear as much pve content as you can comfortably. The free Fjorm + Legendary Ike are both enemy phase tanks, so preferably your first few 5* pulls should have a player phase unit, or green/colorless for coverage.
2. After that team can grab story mode rewards, maybe clear Special Maps content on at least hard mode, you can move on to building back ups and alternate options for more coverage, and situations to clear Lunatic, and moving on, Infernal maps. **I would prioritize grabbing Olivia or Sylvia as the only dancers who aren't 5* exclusive or locked behind grails. 1* and 2* Olivias are free on special maps.**
3. Then you move on to emblem teams for the respective infantry/horse/flier/armor quests as your barracks grow and you have the depth to build more than 1 competent team. It helps to be able to clear those emblem quests for their rewards. If it interests you, then you can move on to building an arena core team.
4. You will need multiple teams for Squad Assault (but not everyone has to be a 5* fully SI-ed unit), and don't be shy to need more than 1 team to clear Tempest and Chain challenges.
5. From there, once you can comfortably clear content and grab at least 3 orbs from arena, you could juggle between further building the arena core team to climb tiers, and building arena assault backups if it interests you.
6. Building the Askar trio is optional, but it helps to clear the quests that require them easier, as well as a constant arena bonus.

The first step is **picking your "team main/lead"**. The chosen one you really like, and will be the core of the team. You will be building the team around this unit. The rest of the team will be chosen based on how they complement and can work with your chosen one, who may be the one with the summoner support.

Then you pick the **chosen one's partner**. This unit will cover for the weaknesses of the chosen one. Example, if you pick Nino, you would not pick Rhajat as partner. They are both green mages with good speed and subpar defenses. They fill in for the same archetype, and have the same problems. You will want a partner who can beat red units that will kill nino.

Then you pick the **3rd unit to round out the team**. Example, If Nino was the chosen one, and her partner is Ephraim, you will have 1 glass cannon, and 1 melee tank, 1 green and 1 blue respectively. So the 3rd unit you could possibly pick can be a red unit who is neither a glass cannon nor a melee tank to provide a niche that those two don't already cover.

As most people will tell you, the 4th unit is bonus/quest/required unit to complete said content. Or this leaves you room to slot in a dancer or healer to support the rest of the party. What you'll find is that you will generally have 1 unit in the tank archetype, 1 unit in the attacker archetype, 1 flexible slot to fill a different niche, and 1 support unit to take care of the rest. This is not absolute, full tank or attacker teams can be run, a balanced team is simply easier as a start.

Unit Pairings

I have my chosen one, how do I pick a partner? We'll discuss Tank/Attacker Pairing Types, as well as color and unit type (melee/mage) Combinations together, as well as positioning skill combinations on various unit types

- **Bladetome + Buffer Pair**

- Mages are Tharja and Nino. With SI there are a good number of blue units who can take Blarblade from Odin and run it better than he does.
- The two famous best buffers are the Renais Twins, Eirika and Ephraim. As the only two units who carry Hone atk 2 in their weapons, they can carry up to 3 buffs (Hone atk 3 after refine). Sharena is a budget option who naturally comes with 2 buffs, but cannot compete.
- With the advent of upgradable hone atk/spd/def/res seals, everyone can try their hand at being a buffer but Ephraim and Eirika are still the best for it. Eirika now comes with the additional option of benefitting from the buffs she hands out herself.

Who to Pair with Whom?

- **Nino** is green, which means her weaknesses are red units. Between pairing her with **Eirika**, or **Ephraim**, **Ephraim** is probably the better candidate because he naturally counters reds as a blue unit.
- With **Tharja**, having a 2nd red in **Eirika** may feel redundant and possibly hurt your coverage because there are fewer greens than anything else. In this case, you might actually want **Ephraim** instead for better coverage.
- With a **blue** Blarblade user, **Eirika** is the better partner to counter greens who will hurt your blarblade user.
- With the exception of **Tharja** (and **Spring Camilla** if you choose to do so), most bladetome users have high res and are more likely to be endangered by melees so **Ephraim** makes for a good tank. If mages are a bigger threat to you, **Eirika** can cover with good speed and decent res.

- Even if your team does not have bladetome users, the choice of color coverage is still important, at least until you can build your units to laugh at WTA, then it is more about building against common counters than just color coverage.
-
- **Melee and Range Pair**
 - Most common pairings are a melee tank + ranged damage (the bladetome pairings fall under this category). **Linde** + **Hector** is an example of a good pairing. Besides from Hector tanking things for **Linde**, **Linde** is also capable of taking the reds that would threaten **Hector**.
 - Also note that while **Hector** may not be able to kill units with high def, **Linde** usually can demolish those due to their low res (unless it's a Great Wall).
 - Much like what is said of bladetome pairings, it is good to have complementary colors to cover for each others' weapon disadvantage. While **Linde** is weak to green, and **Hector** isn't a red unit, he is sufficiently strong to duel most greens who can possibly kill **Linde**.
 - Positioning skills on the tanks are typically swap and reposition. This is so if your ranged damage unit steps out to hit somebody, the tank can take their position and eat damage on behalf of your squishy. pivot is for important for armored to have more movement, but it is less flexible than what swap and reposition can do for a tank's squishy friend. Swap is generally better in tight spaces (2 wall arena map pls), while reposition has its advantages due to its net movement, and is crazy good on fliers due to ability to ignore terrain.
 - Melee tank + archer feels a bit worse off than melee tank + magic ranged because both target Def in their attacks. If another def tank approaches, it will take longer time to get that opposing tank down.
 - On the converse, Dragons, and armored mages with close counter can pair with archers for a tank that deals in res dmg and a physical dmg ranged unit.
- **Player Phase and Enemy Phase Pair**
 - Another way to ensure a certain unit pair covers for each other is that they cover opposite phases.
 - One way to look at it is that after a player phase unit has made its move killing an enemy, the enemy phase unit can pull it back to safety and take hits from nearby enemies in range.
 - Another way to look at it is if an enemy with distant counter is too tanky to die to your player phaser (who may be killed on counter), and you may want a tank to take it head-on instead (because having DC means not having A slot to boost stats) so if your tank had a def/res boosting A slot it can viably out-tank the enemy and win.
 - In the reverse situation, some quad brave user can potentially kill your tank, but it has really poor enemy phase so your player phase unit can kill it before it strikes your tank.

● Movement Pairings

- Easy, its just cav/flier/armor emblem right? Actually, IS has tried to push to make mixed emblem teams viable so let's see how this works
- Guidance - Flier + infantry/armored pairing to transport them around. Its particularly potent with NYazura with as a flying dancer and skills that could complement said pairing include: bond skills (since the footlocked unit will move in tandem to the guidance flier), Drive C slots, Owltome user (since you will be adjacent). As mentioned previously, Hinoka and Sanaki are new best pals due to how both their refinements work and benefit each other.
- Armor march + guidance + a dancer actually stack, aka your armor can move, be danced, and still retain the 2 mov until end of your turn.
- Just flier + units who can't cross mountains is already a benefit if the map(s) you are approaching has typically impassable terrain you wish to get over with so your flier can reposition units across.
- Tactics skills encourage a mixed team with no unit movement type (armor, horse, flier, infantry) exceeding 2. Of course, as mentioned, since guidance is a seal, the aforementioned flier/infantry/armored team can have a tactics user as the flier as well.
- Smite + Ranged Cavalry for the highest extended range of attack. Do beware of overextending though.

● Team Coverage

- When a player is just starting out and does not have the resources to commit heavily to skill inheritance, it's pretty important to cover your bases with 1 red, green and blue. Colorless is optional but can be handy.
- If you have invested in your units well, they can start to fight outside WTA, e.g. a blue unit fighting other blues, and being able to tank some greens in addition to countering most reds effectively. When that happens, you should consider **coverage in terms of what the individual units in the team can counter**, and not so much their exact colors. Color imbalance (2 red, 2 blue) is viable for as long as they can counter the common threats in arena, or tackle most pve content. Feel free to look through the unit archetypes for a refresher on what types can counter what units when building a team.
- Do note that melee/magic, player/enemy phase pairings are more flexible than they look. It is entirely possible for your close range unit to deal res-dmg as a manakete, while your long range unit to deal phy-dmg as an archer. Just such a pairing alone would cover both melee/magic as well as player/enemy phase pairing. **There's no hard and fast rule as long as you have melee, ranged, magic, player phasing and enemy phasing all effectively covered.** A full team of melees (trust me, I ran full melee fliers in the past) or mages can be

utilized to clear content, it is likely more challenging, and possibly higher risks to run into hard counter(s) but can be done.

- You will want to avoid units that cover for the same thing and everyone should fight and counter different things. The last thing you want is a team that can be easily swept by a single unit.
- With sufficient inheritance ~~and tender loving care~~, most units can be tweaked to fight against WTA, e.g. green vs red, or blue vs greens. This is more a long term pet project than something to aim for early on.
- And lastly remember, team synergy ultimately is more important than just dumping whatever meta units you happen to pull in your team. Play with what works for you. It's something only you can discover for yourself.

Summary of the Entire Process from Scratch

1. Look at archetypes and pick a unit you want to work with.
2. Check if you have duplicates of the unit for the best IV you can work with.
3. Rinse and repeat for 2nd unit to complement the first one. Also for the 3rd one. Maybe a 4th too. Form that 1st team and get fighting and getting SP.
4. Learn the base skills first. Get your units fighting to get a feel for what you need and want out of them.
5. Start looking out for fodder and inheriting accordingly. Start with budget builds if you currently lack the premium fodder.
6. Look out for what archetypes and coverage, as well as foddors, you are missing and plan your summons and pulls around those.
7. Move on to the next team/units for further coverage and expansion of your barracks. Go back to step 1 for team 2 and so on.

Coming up Next!

Thanks for the feedback so far! This guide is only at its first release stage, and will undergo further revision to be up to date! Stay tuned for the changes below.

1. Keep revising archetypes to be closer to meta. Some unit descriptions and examples may change.
2. Section for building daggers/debuffers/dmg chipping
3. Update skills section
4. Record a video discussing the archetypes (I have no idea how long this will take, I haven't made any recordings after I left school and started work). Over 80% of you responded to the poll that you want to see one, so I do my best~!

Latest Changes

- Edited Intro
- Edited What do these skills do exactly section
- Edited section below on myself.

Who is this “Locky” person?

I am a Day 1 f2p player (didn't even buy the BK value meal), was in Tier 19.5 in arena since July 2017, and held Tier 20 since Love Abounds Banner in February 2018. I did secure a dozen arena crowns, but it became a chore to fight for Tier 21 so I didn't go beyond that. Tier 21 Aether Raids, but too lazy to climb beyond maintaining there.

Please feel free to provide feedback by dropping me a PM at **u/tregonial** in **reddit** or **@Locky** aka **Memechalis** in **discord** if you like this format, or if I missed out anything, or I made any mistakes, or if you have a differing point of view, or have a particular unit in a archetype/subtype that you will like me to cover as an example. Or if you just have more questions you'd like me to answer.

Last Updated : 12th Sept 2019.