

RAMBI

& SQUAWKS

come along for the ride!



"I just hope they've included poor old Winky and Espresso this time instead of that bone-brained rhino that always seems to get in the games." - Cranky Kong, *Donkey Kong 64*

"Squawks is the one animal that you cannot ride, but he is helpful nonetheless." - *Donkey Kong Country* instruction booklet

INTRO

Long-time allies of the Kong clan, Rambi and Squawks are the two most recurring animal buddies in the Donkey Kong series, both acting as mascots for the series in a way. They're also the only two animal buddies to survive the "purge" of older characters when the series was rebooted with *Donkey Kong Country Returns* in 2010. Both were created by Rare and debuted in the original *Donkey Kong Country* for the SNES.

Rambi is the first animal buddy new players will likely encounter, appearing in the game's first level. Next to bananas, barrels, and the Kongs themselves, he's probably one of the most iconic elements of the series. His role throughout the series is functionally similar to that of Yoshi in the *Mario* games, acting as a mount that the Kongs can hop on top of to gain some extra abilities and an additional hit point. This powerful rhinoceros is actually a pretty chill dude, but that doesn't restrict him from barreling down hordes of enemies with his giant horn. In *DKC2*, Rambi sometimes appears as a solo playable character in certain sections of levels. He was absent in *DKC3*, but when he reappeared in *DKCR*, he was given an immunity to spikes, allowing him to hop on top of pointy obstacles without fear of harm. Since then, he's been the *only* animal buddy to appear as a rideable mount.



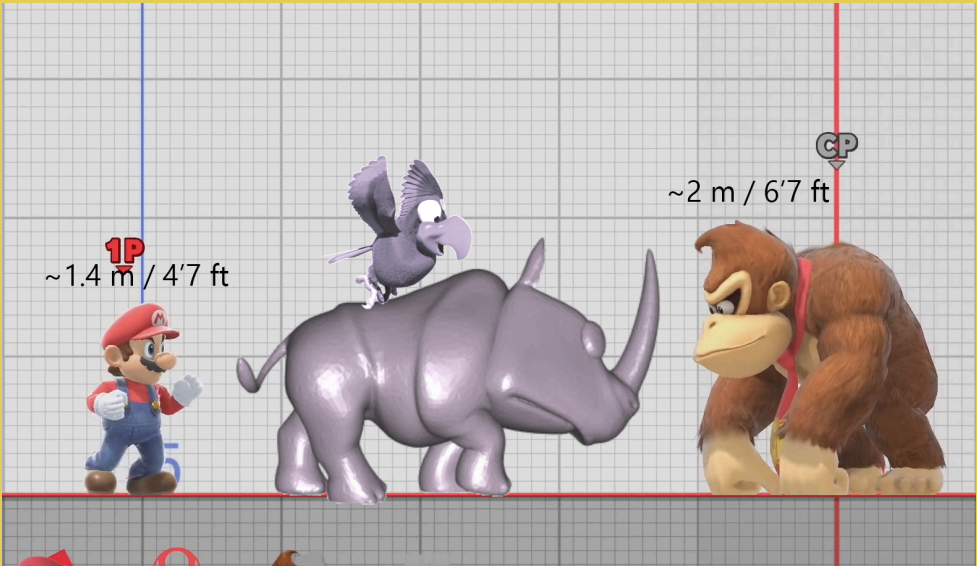
Squawks is a talkative parrot who appears just as often as Rambi, but he tends to shift roles to suit different gameplay functions. In his original appearance, he only shows up in one level, Torchlight Trouble, where he carries a lantern that partially illuminates the dark cave for the player. In *DKC2*, he gains a much more active role, appearing in several levels as a proper "mount" who can carry the Kongs through hazardous levels and shoot eggs as projectiles. Like Rambi, he also becomes fully playable in some levels, and even has his own boss fight. He plays similar roles in *DKC3*, *DK64*, and the *Donkey Kong Land* games. In *Donkey Kong Country Returns* and *Tropical Freeze*, he appears as an item, purchasable from Cranky's shop, that helps the player spot hidden collectibles.



Donkey Kong Country released in 1994, making 2024 (the writing of this moveset), the 30th anniversary of not only these characters' initial debut, but of the entire DKC series that spawned from it. Quite a **milestone**, isn't it? In addition, both Rambi and Squawks feature within the upcoming *Donkey Kong*-themed expansion to the Super Nintendo Land theme park at Universal Studios, which will mark a new **milestone** for that side of Nintendo's business. Less joyously, despite Nintendo seemingly pushing the IP in every *other* area of their business ventures, this year marks the *tenth consecutive year* without a new Donkey Kong game being released, which is a **milestone** I wished I didn't have to be living through.







No matter. In Smash, we'll double down on the DK representation by pairing these two helpers together. In battle, Squawks will perch on top of Rambi like the absentee Kongs normally would. The rhino will be the one directly







controlled by the player and do most of the heavy lifting in combat, with Squawks providing support via the repertoire of skills acquired through his more varied résumé.

STATS



In Smash, Rambi is scaled in proportion to , so he's a rather large fighter. From horn to tail, his hurtbox measures 3 Training stage squares in length. Since he stands on four legs, he's not as *tall* as other fighters his size, though Squawks, who's a little under the size of , adds a bit of height.

STAT	CLOSEST COMPARISON	PRECISE VALUE
Weight	 >	134 (2nd)
Walk Speed	 >	1.585 (1st)
Dash Speed		1.45 (89th)
Run Speed		2.09 (16th)
Traction	 <	0.072 (89th)
Full Hop		21.62 (86th)

Short Hop		10 (89th)
Air Jump		26 (79th)
Fall Speed		1.78 (19th)
Gravity		0.098 (34st)
Air Speed		1.203 (4th)
Air Acceleration		0.01 base, 0.03 additional (83rd)

Since Rambi is the animal you'll actually be controlling, the stats are mainly designed to replicate how it feels to control him in the DKC games. It should probably be no surprise that a mount who drastically improves the player's controls in some ways while restricting them in other ways would have such min-maxed stats. Rambi is really big, heavy, and slow, and his stats lean heavily into that to determine his sense of control. He outpaces even K. Rool as the second-heaviest fighter, only behind Bowser. Despite being so bulky, he's pretty light on his toes. Oddly enough, he boasts the roster's highest walk speed by a fair margin, having a walk cycle that, like in the source games, is more akin to a light gallop. His run speed, while not as drastic, is still respectable, falling into the top 16. This is, however, contrasted by his very slow initial dash, which ties with Steve for the game's worst. Just like in the DKC games, it takes a moment for him to get up to full speed, making sudden movements a bit difficult. This isn't helped by his equally bottom-tier traction, which causes the rhino to decelerate before fully coming to a stop. If you've ever played DKC, just picture how Rambi moves in that game, and you'll know exactly what I'm talking about.

As you'd probably expect then, Rambi's jumps are also pretty limiting. His full hop height is only better than a handful of characters, while his short hop is as low as it gets. His air jump is only marginally better, but proportionately little better than his ground jump. Though you won't be spending much time in the air anyway, given you're working with decently high fall speed and gravity. Your one saving grace in the air is the surprisingly exceptional base air speed, which actually lets Rambi get some good horizontal distance out of a jump. This is betrayed to some extent by very low air acceleration, however, making it just as hard to make adjustments out of a jump as it is in DKC. Be sure to know exactly where you're going to land *before* you commit to jumping!

To briefly go over how some animations work:

- Rambi's SNES walk/run cycle (pictured below on the left) is used for his walk animation, while his run cycle from the newer games (on the right) is used for his dash animation.



- Rambi uses his front limbs to press down onto ledges in order to grab them. This leaves his limbs exposed to being poked, giving him a pretty bad ledge grab state.
- Rambi holds items in his mouth. For firing weapons like guns, he has to awkwardly cock his head to the side in order to trigger them.
- Like some other sluggish heavyweights, Rambi has short-ranged dodges, both on the ground and in the air, that don't provide very much distance or intangibility.
- Don't even ask me how these guys climb ladders.

MECHANICS

LET'S TALK SQUAWKS

Considering you're mostly playing as Rambi, you can think of Squawks as Rambi's *own* animal buddy. Like any good animal buddy, having Squawks on hand really gives you a lot of utility to work with. However, also just like any good animal buddy, if you play sloppily... you can lose access to his benefits. But first, let's go over what those benefits *are*.

Rambi executes most of the duo's attacks, but when using a normal ground attack or aerial, both Rambi and Squawks **attack in unison**. Depending on the move, this has varying effects on the range, hitbox positioning, and overall properties of the attack in question. Squawks' attacks tend to be simple in nature, but they also have different hitboxes with different properties than those of Rambi's, meaning each attack essentially has **two different moves** baked directly into it, granting the pair a barrel-load of utility to each of their moves! Even when both animals attack in a similar manner, Squawk's presence has the great benefit of adding more AoE to the attack in question. When attacking, Squawks himself acts like a pseudo-disjoint - he can be challenged, but doing so has no effect on Rambi - meaning you can use him as a defensive measure when spacing your attacks in the right way, with no direct risk to Rambi himself. The endlag of all of Squawks' attacks sync up with Rambi's FAF, making the two perfectly synced, though his attacks sometimes differ in their startup and active frames.

Squawks allows Rambi to be just a little looser with his jumps. **Pressing the jump button again** after initiating an air jump - even right at the beginning - cancels Rambi's ascension, going into a unique **air-stall**. Squawks rapidly flails his wings to add as much lift to the ponderous pachyderm as possible, giving the duo a tiny, half-second delay to their descent, much like when using Diddy's jetpack while riding Rambi in the Retro Studios games. During this brief window, you can opt to hover in place, or drift forward/back at Rambi's normal air speed. You can also cancel the stall into an aerial attack at any point, giving it some utility akin to Peach's float mechanic (but with a lot less airtime and generally less safe landing options). This ability lets you squeeze a little extra horizontal distance out of a jump, mix up a landing, or extend the distance of an approach. It can be a real lifesaver when dealing with Rambi's horrid air acceleration, letting you reverse direction a bit easier, though it won't get you very *far*.

With Squawks present, you have the option to perform either a normal grab with Rambi himself, or **extend your range** with a grab that utilizes your feathered friend. Simply tap the grab input to get a normal grab, or **long-press** it for a **ranged grab**. More on this in the "Grab Game" section.

Squawks functions a little bit like Rosalina's Luma, in that he has **his own hurtbox**, and his own separate **damage meter**, which is displayed on the player's HUD. If Squawks takes enough damage (50% to be exact), he'll bow out of the fight and fly away into the Z-axis. Given enough time, Squawks will eventually return to the battle, **shouting "Hello!"** to make his recovery known, but it takes a lot longer for him to regenerate than Luma. In a 1v1 match, every time you lose Squawks, it takes 20 seconds to get him back - twice as long as it would take with Luma. When three players are present, it takes 15 seconds. With four or more players, it takes 12 seconds. Squawks will also automatically regenerate on every fresh stock.



When **Squawks is gone**, you **lose all of his usual benefits**. No extra hitboxes on your attacks, no buff to your air jump, and no option to perform a ranged grab. On top of that, Squawks directly provides the means by which most of the pair's special moves are performed - including their main recovery move - and these moves become completely unavailable when he's out of the fight! There's a lot you can *only* do when you have Squawks, so don't take the good old parrot for granted! Finally, losing Squawks also comes with a minor **nerf to your weight** - losing the bird lowers Rambi's weight by a single unit, bumping him down to the same weight as K. Rool. That's still extremely heavy, so it's only a very minor slap on the wrist compared to everything else, but it *does* have an effect on Rambi's survivability, greatly compounded by losing the ability to air stall or use your Up Special.

JUST THE TIP

A much less pronounced mechanic than everything Squawks brings to the table, but still integral to the character's playstyle, even when Squawks isn't in the picture. This is simply a **tipper mechanic** inherent to all of Rambi's horn-based attacks. Being his natural weapon, the rhino's horn features in many of his moves. Like Marth's sword, **Rambi's horn is a disjointed hitbox** whenever it's used in an attack, and it inherently has a **tipper** that amplifies the effects of every single one of the attacks that uses it. How drastically this affects things is dependent on the move in question, but as a general rule, differing somewhat from Marth, the tipper hitbox on Rambi's attacks tends to have a 15% *reduction* in knockback. However, tippers also come with a 1.15x increase to both damage value *and* hitstun. Linking tippers, therefore, is the most efficient way to deal damage quickly, thanks to their higher damage output and the increased hitstun making it easier to combo off each hit. When considering Rambi's primary hitboxes, Squawks' add-on hitboxes, and Rambi's tipper hitboxes, most of the duo's attacks essentially have *three* different ways to hit an opponent!



SPECIAL MOVES

SIDE SPECIAL: Supercharge



Whether it's to bash rows of baddies or break open a secret bonus room, Rambi's main function in every game has always been plowing into stuff really hard!

This works just like in the SNES DK games. Hold down the Side Special input to have Rambi rev up, scraping his foot against the ground. When released, he goes charging forward like a rocket, with Squawks hanging on tight, as he kicks up dust. This move takes some cues from Ike's Quick Draw, taking about the same amount of time to fully charge. Unlike that move though, you'll *have* to fully charge it. Letting go early will just cancel out of the

animation with some minor lag. Looks like it's all or nothing with this dashing attack. It's not all bad, though. Unlike Ike, you can store your charge by shielding. Heck, just being able to cancel the charge into a shield at all is kind of a leg-up on Quick Draw if you ask me! You can resume the charge at any point, or store a full charge to instantly blast forward without a moment's notice whenever you feel like! The charge can only be removed by using the move or getting KO'd, so hold onto it as long as you need. Similar to DK and his Giant Punch, when you've got a fully charged Supercharge on deck, Rambi's horn emits some faint steam to indicate the attack's ready to fire.

Executing a Supercharge has Rambi blast forward at about the same speed as Banjo's Wonderwing. Other than the charge period itself though, there's hardly any startup to this, making it less reactable than the bear's attack. Of

course, it's not quite as strong, but it still packs a punch. Dealing 30% damage, it hits just as hard as Little Mac's fully charged Straight Lunge, though with less drastic knockback scaling than that move. From mid-stage, it'll KO at about 150%. It's not as outright deadly as many similar attacks in the game, but with that much damage, getting hit by it is no less scary. There's practically no actual limit to the distance Rambi can charge before stopping - only an obstacle, a platform's ledge, or a stage's blast zone can stop him. This means you can plow through a foe, knocking them forward, and continue on without slowing down to pursue them for a follow-up. This also makes the move pretty much impossible to punish on whiff, since Rambi doesn't really experience any endlag to worry about. In fact, if you want to avoid running off-stage entirely, you'll have to tap the B button to cause Rambi to grind to a halt, which cancels the attack on the spot and comes with 24 endlag frames. The best way for opponents to contest the attack is to shield it, though this is risky due to the move's sheer power dealing about 1/3 of a shield's max HP in shield damage. Nonetheless, if Rambi hits a shield, he'll be bounced backward slightly, ending the move with 42 frames of endlag. Even so, the opponent also undergoes strong shield pushback, making it impractical to punish the move even in the *best* circumstances. In the end though, shielding the attack at least forces Rambi to fully charge the move if he wants to use it again. An opponent's other option is to grab or hit Rambi out of the attack, the latter being difficult due to how hard it is to out-prioritize the move, but it's possible, especially by jumping and hitting Rambi from above with something like a Down Air. Doing this will likely also hit Squawks in the process, so it's a rewarding two-for-one for anyone who makes use of the opportunity.

Back to the move's pros, though. The Supercharge attack has some other utility beyond being a simple charge forward. For one, you can jump out of it at any point after the first 10 frames. Doing this actually has a lot of benefit, as Rambi will retain all of the momentum the sudden burst of speed grants him. Since his horizontal jump distance is already pretty good, this makes his ability to jump great distances even stronger. If you make it a habit to keep a stored Supercharge on hand, you can use it to gain an instant burst of speed to add a major improvement to an approach or recovery.



By jumping out of a Supercharge, you can get a lot of horizontal distance, similar to that seen in the gif on the left. If you shorthop, you'll travel at an even narrower angle, which is phenomenal for approaching quickly and relatively safely. Jumping *cancels* the Supercharge attack though, so keep in mind you're easier to contest this way.

Speaking of jumping, this move can also be started in the air...but *only* if Squawks is in play. Charging the move in midair will have Squawks beat his wings for dear life to slightly stall Rambi's descent while the rhino somehow revs up. Unlike the grounded version, you can't store your charge, though you can still cancel it with an air dodge at least. Executing the attack itself from the air has some further limitations compared to the grounded version. For one, you'll travel at a decline as you charge forward, rather than going straight. Rambi can also only travel about the horizontal distance of a Warlock Kick before ending the move, and if he jumps out of it (only possible if he has a jump remaining), he gets less distance than on the ground. This all limits how much distance he can get from the

move when used off-stage, but even with this in mind, it's still a major boon to his recovery, and something you'll sorely miss having access to when Squawks isn't around. As a saving grace, if you've got a full charge on deck from using the move on the ground, you can still activate the attack in midair, even if Squawks isn't available.

Note that although Rambi's horn technically comes into the equation if it makes contact with someone he barges into, this move *doesn't* have a tipper. Rambi's entire body during the ram is a single large and consistent hitbox, being the same power regardless of exactly where it connects.

NEUTRAL SPECIAL: Egg Shoot



Moving on to a move that you can't use at all without Squawks: the Egg Shoot. This move is entirely the parrot's own, with Rambi not factoring in at all.

It might not be a *rare* occurrence for me to draw comparisons to more of Banjo and Kazooie's moves. The concept obviously has some similarities to their Egg Firing neutral special, which only makes sense considering you can draw a direct line between the gameplay ideas Rare developed in *DKC* and later went on to use in *Banjo-Kazooie*. Anyway, I digress.

Press B to shoot an egg. Simple enough, right? Squawks coughs up an egg from their mouth. See the gif? It looks exactly like that. Basically the same projectile, with the same travel speed, travel arc, and fire rate as in the original game, transplanted to Smash. It's not the fastest projectile, but it ain't slow either, and it can travel pretty dang far before it finally despawns. If it hits the ground, it disappears. If it hits an enemy fighter, the egg deflects off of them, becoming inert. The same happens if it's blocked, only it refracts back in the direction it came instead before disappearing. The only differences are visual, simply to call back to the original games.

For things that actually *matter*, if an egg hits someone, it deals 7% and very mild knockback. It's a pretty weak projectile all around. On its own, it's not all too threatening. It might disrupt recoveries just enough to, on occasion, snipe off-stage foes to their doom. You kind of have to align yourself above the foe at just the right angle for it to land, though, and more than likely, this move won't be taking any stocks. It *is* a bit stronger than Kazooie's eggs, for what it's worth, so it can be a little dangerous against enemies near the blast zone. But honestly, good luck getting Rambi's heavy ass that far off-stage without risking your *own* stock. I guess you could Supercharge-jump to get some quick distance before shooting your shot, but if you miss, you probably can't shoot again quickly enough to try again.

It's not the longest-ranged projectile, but it has its uses. It has enough range to do some moderate zoning at mid-range, whether to apply some pressure to foes just outside of the range of your other attacks or simply to play keepaway as you try and lumber around the stage. Like Pikachu's T-Jolt or Mario's fireball, this is generally the type of projectile you'll get more use out of by shorthopping into it, landing without any lag to apply as much pressure with its rate of fire as possible. Its low knockback, coupled with some respectable hitstun, makes it decent for

getting conversions. A landing-canceled egg shot will typically link directly into a stored Supercharge at the right range, for example. At closer ranges, most of Rambi's other attacks will connect off of an egg, and if those don't work, generally speaking, Squawk's disjointed equivalents usually *will*. Handy to keep in mind, since if you're using this move in the first place, you obviously have Squawks's extra hitboxes available.

UP SPECIAL: Squawks Airlift

The duo's recovery move. Note the name "Squawks Airlift". If you don't have Squawks, you can't use *this* move either. Rambi's starting to look a little pathetic on his own, ain't he?

Tightly gripping into Rambi's back with his talons, Squawks exerts every bit of effort, flapping his wings like his life depends on it... because it kinda does depend on it, at least if you're off-stage. This move's animation, that of a small bird frantically attempting to keep a rhinoceros airborne, is as ridiculous as it sounds. Look, he's doing his best here. You can basically picture an even less realistic take on Duck Hunt's Up Special to get the gist of the concept.

Assuming all you do is tap the input, all you'll get is a pathetic little vertical boost, akin to a solo Ice Climber's Up Special. This *can* be used as a micro-spacing manner to get just a tiny bit of recovery, if that's all you need. If you want anything more than that, though, you'll need to mash! You can't jump out of this move, but by tapping the jump button, you can have Squawks flap faster and gain slightly more air. It's a bit like how Villager's balloons work, but this move isn't nearly as mobile. Squawks can only fly so fast with Rambi in his grip, at max moving at about the same speed as Olimar's Up Special (with 2 Pikmin), but with Rambi's usual poor air acceleration. You can cancel the flight early by tapping the A button, or else fly up to 3.5 seconds before Squawks tires out. Either way, the duo enters special fall afterward.

You get a decent amount of flight time, but since you don't move very fast, you're not very mobile while flying, and between the sluggishness of control, lack of hitbox, and Rambi's huge frame, you're pretty likely to get attacked while trying to recover. This move *does* refresh if you're hit out of it, though the flight timer doesn't reset until you land again, so it's definitely possible to be bullied into an early KO.

There *is* a way to defend yourself while flying, luckily. Squawks is able to use his neutral special, Egg Shoot, while flying with Rambi, giving him access to a ranged, albeit somewhat finicky option to try and keep pressure at bay, or at least buy enough time to get back to the stage. While this inherently places some restriction on the flight paths you can take if you want to actually *land* any shots, it also limits the angles from which an opponent can attempt to pressure you. For this reason, as well as a lack of a hitbox on the move itself, you'll usually want to recover high.

DOWN SPECIAL: Torchlight



The duo's final special is, once again, a move performed by Squawks. Yep. Without Squawks, the only special move the dumb old rhino has is a head charge. By now, it should be obvious who the brains of this operation is.

This is a self-buffing move of sorts. Using Down Special will have Squawks holler and hop up off his perch, floating above his usual spot while holding a lantern in his talons. How's a lantern supposed to be of any help in a fight, you ask? Well, you may have heard that rhinos have poor eyesight. Poor Rambi's usually in the dark, but with this lantern, a roughly 90-degree conical area in front of him becomes completely illuminated.

This move applies a buff to Rambi's tipper mechanic, the idea being that the illumination increases the accuracy of his attacks. Rhinos actually have pretty poor eyesight, so this little boost of visibility is a big help. With the lantern active, so long as Rambi's attack is within the field of light, **the tipper hitbox on his horn becomes 20% larger**, making the sweetspot easier to connect. Rambi has a multitude of combos that are reliant on landing his tipper, but the small point isn't always consistent. With help from Squawks' lantern, though, such conversions become a little easier and more reliable, which is a pretty scary prospect that can really kick his damage output into overdrive.

While moving around, Squawks will do his best to track Rambi's location and stay in roughly the same position directly above the rhino. His tracking is a little delayed, however, just like in the original game, so the visibility buff isn't entirely consistent if you're moving around too erratically or quickly. Squawks has trouble keeping up with Rambi if you Supercharge jump, for instance. Taking knockback can *really* throw Squawks' tracking out of whack, so one of the best ways for enemies to contest this buff is to simply apply consistent pressure.

Enemies can either attack Rambi to force Squawks to reroute, which comes with some delay, or they can attack Squawks to stall him from following Rambi, also inducing a delay. Either way, desyncing the two undermines much of this move's effectiveness. Of course, you'll probably *want* your foes to be right up in your face to make the most of this move's effect, so there's some risk-reward at play.



No self-buffs can last forever, though. After 8 seconds, the lantern's bulb begins to flicker, and after 2 more seconds, the light dies, ending the move and causing Squawks to zip back to his perch. The parrot has a flickering recharge effect on his model while the move recharges. After 9 seconds of recharge time, the move can be used again.

For its decent longevity and beneficial effect, this move has some tangible tradeoffs. While Squawks is holding his lantern, he's unable to do basically anything else. This includes not just his Egg Shoot, but all of his other attacks attached to Rambi's normal inputs, his ranged grab, and his air stall. In fact, he can't even use *Up Special* to recover, so if you're knocked off-stage, you'd best hope you've got a Supercharge saved up! Putting the parrot on lantern duty essentially removes him from the equation, as if he'd been KO'd. Not only that, but Squawks is also left much more exposed than usual, floating around in the air with no way to defend himself, and since he's unable to attack, you can't control or shift his position, so he may very well *get* KO'd as well. His position relative to Rambi becomes largely predictable, which enemies can take advantage of to wail on the poor guy. Rambi can use his own attacks to try and protect Squawks, especially aided by his enlarged tipper hitboxes, but as a double-edged sword, he loses the sheer coverage that Squawks' complementary attacks usually offer while the lantern is in effect. Use this move for situations where you feel more confident you can go ham with Rambi on his own, since you offer up a lot of Squawks' other utilities if you commit to this move. Nonetheless, skilled players who can work around this move's drawbacks should get a lot out of the buff it provides.

GROUND ATTACKS

JAB: Snort

Startup:	5 frames / 5 frames
Active on:	5, 6-20 / 5-7
Endlag:	14 frames

Rhinos are pretty big snorters, which is something which cartoons - and apparently now moveset makers - are quick to exaggerate. Rambi exhales through his nostrils with an audible huff, expelling a small cloud of dust/steam/whatever-you-want-to-interpret-it-as. This little cloud of vapor slowly moves forward a short distance before fading into the ether. It's classed as a projectile, so it can actually be reflected, Pocketed, or even absorbed by moves

like PSI Magnet.

Even as far as Jabs go, this singular action doesn't make for the strongest attack. Being a literal breath weapon, it deals just 1.4% damage and no real knockback, only lightly flinching opponents it contacts. The snort projectile is short-lived, going from Point A to Point B in the blink of an eye, covering a distance of only two Training stage squares. Despite its limited reach, it's still got a range advantage over most Jabs in the game, and while it's weak, its nature as a projectile at least gives the attack a degree of safety. Since it can't be clanked with, even if an opponent tries to challenge it or block it, Rambi isn't really putting himself at any risk. Once the snort comes out and its brief endlag is complete, Rambi doesn't have to commit to the projectile. You can choose to send the projectile out and simply walk away to leave the opponent to deal with it, or you can just as simply move forward and go into basically any other attack in an effort to convert off of it thanks to Rambi's great walk speed. The projectile is incredibly weak and doesn't boast much in the way of hitstun, but since it'll only hit at close-range by default, it's not exactly difficult to combo it into another attack. If your opponent blocks it, you can simply walk up and go for a shield grab, though some characters with fast OoS options can react to this baited approach.

Squawks has his own baked-in attack for this input, of course. The parrot simply cranes his neck forward and bites with his thick beak for a single hit. It has little range to it, not even reaching past Rambi's own hurtbox from Squawk's point of perch, so it usually won't connect on opponents standing in front of you, but it can take short-hoppers by surprise and can be quickly thrown out as a way to catch enemies falling in on you or slot in mid-combo against airborne foes. Depending on the terrain, it can even hit foes on platforms above you. It also packs a little more of a traditional punch, akin to a "normal" Jab. It deals 4.4% and knockback best compared to Greninja's Jab 3, sending foes forward with some mild setup potential but little utility otherwise. This is most effective at low to mid percents, where the attack basically knocks foes right in front of the tip of Rambi's horn, making Squawk's Jab a bread-and-butter method for setting up into horn tipplers for early-stock combos. Squawks' Jab animates very quickly, allowing it to sync up with Rambi's own brisk attack.

There are **two important things** to note about Squawks' attacks that I'll mention right now. **Firstly**, when Squawks is attacking (including startup and endlag), while his hitboxes *are* disjointed, his own hurtbox can still take damage from opponents. His attacks can be interrupted early (having no effect on Rambi's attack), which is something to keep in mind. Generally, while Squawks' attacks patch up some of the blind spots in Rambi's own hitboxes, they also leave the parrot more exposed to being attacked himself. If you're careless with your attacks, savvy foes can exploit this and take out Squawks much more quickly and easily.

Secondly, you have the ability to input a neutral special during the endlag of any of Squawk's ground attacks or aerals. Squawks will shoot out an egg before returning to his idle position. This naturally increases the "endlag" of the previous attack in a sense, but it's a very nice option to make use of as a way to mix up your combat. If you leave Squawks exposed at the end of an attack for instance, you can try and shoot an egg to fight back an aggressive approach, potentially protecting your bird buddy (or Rambi himself) from getting punished. Of course, this does lock you down in place longer, and the Egg Shoot itself has its own share of endlag that can be exploited if opponents see it coming, so it's something you'll simply want to mix in when optimal instead of using 100% of the time. Because Squawks' various attacks position him in different ways, using this technique allows him to shoot eggs from angles that he normally wouldn't be able to. To imagine how this works, think of it a bit like the optional lasers at the end of Min Min's Fsmash.

In the particular case of this move, it's pretty easy to combo Rambi's breath projectile into an egg shot for a quick 1-2.

FORWARD TILT: Horn Scythe

Startup:	9 frames / 5 frames
Active on:	9-11 / 5-12
Endlag:	22 frames

Rambi swings his head from one shoulder to the other, attacking with his horn in a horizontal slicing motion that arcs upward slightly, producing a crescent-like visual effect through the Z-axis. It's similar in range and motion to Marth's Ftilt, and offers a similar function, what with the tipper effect and everything. However, it's a frame slower to start and a frame less active, making it slightly less spammable overall.

It's a pretty simple attack in essence. A nice, disjointed attack that's fast enough to be a decent spacing tool in neutral, but with a good bit of combo utility when taking into account the tipper. It has a bit less range than Marth's Ftilt, but trades in for some differing use cases, killing earlier with the non-tipper hitbox and retaining combo utility longer with the tipper. Its base damage of 9.5% is also a little higher. The attack can't be angled, so it just barely misses out on hitting ledge-hangers, but it will usually still connect on low-profiling hurtboxes and proned opponents. The tipper hit in particular can chain into itself multiple times, particularly at lower percents, by walking forward slightly and properly spacing each attack. On top of solid damage, it's a great way to bully foes across the stage and toward the ledge.

I'd rather not try and upsell what's really meant to be a simple, bread-and-butter melee attack, so let's move on to Squawks.

Squawks' attack is a little less by-the-books. As if reversing the roles of their Jab, Squawks takes the opportunity to provide a weak projectile of his own, swinging one of his wings and shooting out a feather. The small, narrow projectile travels straight forward a short distance that's only a little longer than the cloud in Rambi's Jab. It's enough to reach a smidge past the hitbox of Rambi's horn, lending some deceptive range to the input that can take foes by surprise. The feather deals a mere 1.8% and hits about as hard as a wet noodle, much like Rambi's Jab. It packs slightly more hitstun than that move, however, making it a bit more reliable for converting off of, though the move's higher endlag limits conversions to the duo's quicker attacks. It should be noted that the feather reaches its apex just after Rambi's hitbox ends, and with perfect timing, a tipper hit can combo directly into the feather, whose low knockback values will simply tack on extra damage and hitstun without overriding the knockback of Rambi's horn. It can be a little tricky to line up, but it feels so slick when it all comes together.

UP TILT: Rising Horn

Startup:	6 frames / 6 frames	Another basic horn attack which has Rambi rear up slightly on his back legs, swinging his head upward and essentially uppercutting with his horn, as he typically does when attacking enemies in the source games. While Rambi doesn't lift his body very far off the ground, his sheer size and the length of his horn grant the attack some impressive range that's similar to that of K. Rool's up tilt. Being disjointed, the long horn makes for a remarkable anti-air, especially given the fairly quick startup. Rambi does leave his belly exposed while he's attacking though, and there's some noticeable endlag, making this attack pretty punishable from the direct front on block or whiff.
Active on:	6-7 (lower hitbox) 7-12 (everything else) / 7-11	
Endlag:	22 frames	

While not a particularly strong move, at the start of the active window, the move packs a decent punch at the base of the horn, which is the move's strongest hitbox, dealing 11% and mostly horizontal knockback that can KO near the ledge at higher percents. Power notably dips at the horn's midsection, knockback scaling tapering off greatly at the tip. The tip, as usual, offers more damage and much higher hitstun, and also launches at a much steeper angle, while also remaining active longer. Together with the tipper's reduced knockback growth, it makes for a potent juggling tool. With Rambi's fast walk speed, it's actually possible to combo this move into itself, similarly to the

Ftilt, by landing a tipper, walking slightly forward, and then using the move again to continuously juggle the foe. This works well into the 50% range with good timing, though is mitigated by good DI, and is less reliable against fast fallers. The subpar endlag also makes this more easily escapable the higher the foe's damage is.

Squawks' attack has him hop up an inch or two off Rambi's back while the rhino does his thing, covering the area directly above Rambi's midsection while he nips overhead foes with his beak, dealing 5.8%. This just about aligns with Rambi's attack, so it can catch foes who try to DI inward to avoid being juggled by the horn, or who try to cross up the rhino. It can also serve as a mild anti-air to protect Rambi from above, such as against platform drop-throughs, albeit at risk to Squawks himself. It's a mild attack all-in-all, comparable in power to Pac-Man's Up Tilt, acting as a quick but modest "get-off-me" tool. Its range is narrow and only hits around Squawks and directly above him, so it doesn't offer especially wide coverage, but it can at least juggle into itself a few times at low percents, and can knock foes onto platforms for some potential follow-ups.

DOWN TILT: Grass Grazer

Startup:	6 frames / 6 frames	Rhinos are big animals, and Rambi needs to keep himself fueled on the battlefield. The attack bears some minor resemblance to Villager's Dtilt in concept, but is otherwise a pretty distinct action. For this move, a small patch of grass appears on the ground in front of Rambi (regardless of how much sense that makes for the platform's terrain), and the ravenous rhino doesn't hesitate as he juts his neck at a downward-forward angle to nip at it with his large mouth and grippy rhino-y lips. He jerks his head back to tear the foliage from its roots in a fell swoop, chomping down and swallowing in one big gulp.
Active on:	6-9, 9-10 / 6-9	
Endlag:	19 frames	

The action of Rambi nipping at the grass provides the first part of the attack. During this motion, his entire head acts as a hitbox, which is fairly modest in strength. It deals 7% damage and occupies most of the space directly in front of Rambi. It has a hurried sort of knockback that thwacks foes away, but without much rhyme or reason, having subaverage knockback growth but also not sending at a particularly good angle for comboing. After all, Rambi's not really trying to attack the foe so much as he's just going about his dietary business. He doesn't really care if anyone's in the way.

Rather than having a hitbox on the horn, this move has a secondary hitbox centered around Rambi's mouth while he's performing the chomp, which takes the form of a bite-style hitbox similar to Pac-Man's Dtilt. It's smaller and takes more precision to connect with than the larger hitbox on the rest of the head, and it only hits low to the ground. Therefore, it's easier to land this hitbox if the foe is crouching or on the ground. This is the hit you'll typically want to be aiming for, as its boasts higher hitstun (though not as much as a typical horn tipper), as well as a higher 9.2% in damage. Despite technically being the move's sweetspot, it has lower base knockback, merely shunting foes forward along the ground slightly that's conducive to floor knock-downs. This lets it combo into moves such as Ftilt, and sets up well into a stored Supercharge if the opponent doesn't tech the landing.

This move also has *another* hitbox, which comes out for the quick 2 frames where Rambi jerks his head back to rip out the grass. This tugging motion is enough to pull foes inward toward him. It's a weak hit with minimal scaling, only dealing 2.2%, but has the useful utility of putting foes directly behind Rambi. You typically wouldn't want your opponent to be *behind* you, but this can be a blessing in disguise, given you've got a helper on your back who may be able to take advantage of this "pass off" of sorts with a hitbox of their own. Surely that will come into play somewhere down the line, right? Surely there'll be a new DK game somewhere down the line, right? **Sigh.** Trust the process... Trust the process...

Oh, and let's not forget Squawks, who offers *his* own hitbox as well. Sadly, this attack doesn't combo directly off of Rambi's tug-and-shrug like you might think, which would be nice and all, but probably a bit too easy. Instead, Squawks' attack has him zip forward, stopping in midair just above the patch of grass, and excitedly squawk while gesturing down at the vegetation. Maybe he's found a hidden puzzle piece in the grass? During this motion, his body is a singular hitbox dealing 5% and active for 4 frames, though he lingers in place for some time before zipping back to Rambi's back, which unfortunately leaves him highly exposed. Squawks' hitbox is on the mild side of strength, but it covers Rambi's face and thus can "overrule" Rambi's suboptimal head hitbox if the parrot connects instead. Rather than sending outward, Squawk's downward gesture somehow sends the foe downward. It's not a spike, and really acts more like a weak downward nudge, but this can combo straight into Rambi's bite with perfect timing.

Because of how exposed it leaves him, Squawks' involvement is often more risky than it's worth, but it can pay off from time to time. If you successfully connect Squawk's hitbox directly into Rambi's, the parrot will crow with pleasant surprise, and the patch of grass will actually leave behind a single, DKC-style banana where it previously stood. It's not a puzzle piece, but this most minor of collectibles can be eaten by any player to regain 1% HP. That's not a whole lot, but every bit of sustain is helpful for a character whose recovery is as volatile as Rambi's, and occasional healing only serves to make him even tankier. Use your fast walk speed to slide up and nab that nanner before your foe has a chance to retaliate. For more incentive, if you have Torchlight active and overlapping with the patch of grass when Rambi's move connects, that one banana will instead be revealed to be a whole banana bunch, which heals a much more appreciable 5%. All without needing Squawks' participation, either, making it a lot easier to meet the requirements needed to get that little boost of potassium.

DASH ATTACK: Horn Joust

Startup:	9 frames
Active on:	9-10, 11-16
Endlag:	35 frames

You were expecting some kind of ram attack? Nah, that's the side special, silly! This move's pretty much the exact opposite concept. Despite being a dash attack, rather than bursting forward with some sort of, well, *dash* attack, Rambi comes to a sudden stop out of his run, planting his heels in the ground and grinding to a halt. He does slide a very short distance to make this abrupt stop, but otherwise, this move cuts off all his momentum.

While coming to a stop, Rambi holds his horn pointed straight forward like a spear, and continues to hold it out for some time afterward. All this time, the horn acts as a passive hitbox. The idea here is rather than putting any force

into the attack itself, Rambi simply puts a lengthy, disjointed spike in front of himself and waits for the opponent to run into it and gore themselves. Obviously, a conscious opponent wouldn't *deliberately* do such a thing, but who's to say you can't force their hand now and again?

The majority of Rambi's horn is actually just modest in power if it connects, dealing 13.4% but only KOing from mid-stage around 200%. In a sole subversion of the usual system, the tipper on this move actually deals *more* knockback, KOing from the same range at ~160%. It's still not an especially strong kill move, but it's a major jump in power, which also comes alongside the usual increase in both damage and hitstun from the horn's tip. Both parts of the horn are stronger on the first two frames, and weaken into lingering hitboxes afterward, which buys you some time to clip hasty opponents who try and rush in on you too carelessly. Perhaps, for instance, in cases where a foe tries to burst-punish old Squawks if you leave the bird exposed after an attack...

To get to the *point*, the tipper is really the main star of the show for this move, featuring all the interesting utility. The sharp, spear-like point of the horn is where all the power is congregated, and it's actually bolstered by how fast the opponent is traveling when making contact with it. Basically, the harder the collision, the more it hurts. The power of the hitboxes outlined previously is the baseline *minimum*, but the power is increased if the opponent walks or runs into the horn while it's active. Walking increases the knockback and damage by 1.15x, and running applies another 1.15 boost. Accounting for the 1.15x tipper boost and a 1.3x boost from running into the horn, that's a nearly 1.5x boost that dishes out a nasty 20% damage, in addition to KOing a *lot* earlier. Who knew the path of least resistance could hurt so bad? Compounding this mechanic even further, if an opponent uses a boost movement option to collide with your horn, such as any dash attack of their own that increases their momentum, *another* 1.15x damage multiplier is added, and rather than dealing knockback at all, the collision induces a *crumple* state on the opponent. Yeah...

Rambi does a lot of ramming, naturally. It's in his name after all. This move subverts the opponent's usual expectation by having him stop on a dime, despite the initial startup looking more or less like any other ramming attack. If the opponent reads this attack as a Supercharge, you're probably in luck. Since two of the best ways to contest that move are to either shield it or attempt to grab Rambi, your enemy will be in for a rude awakening if they make either such choice in response to this attack. Unlike the Supercharge of course, this move *does* have a horn hitbox, and grabbing Rambi through that long disjoint is a total no-go. Enemies who shield are a bit better off, since this move's high endlag will leave them safe on block, but they won't be in a particularly advantageous position either, so long as you space the attack safely. Of course, whiff it in any way, and you're subject to K. Rool-levels of dash attack endlag, and are basically guaranteed to get punished.

Alongside reversing the usual role of its tipper hitbox, this move is also unique among Rambi's kit in that Squawks doesn't participate in it. Wouldn't want to put him in needless danger for a move that's *already* riskier than usual. On the matter of Squawks though, his Torchlight is a great boon for this attack when it's in effect. Rambi's insta-stop during the attack makes it easy for your birdy buddy to stay aligned with you, nearly always ensuring that if this move hits, it's got a great chance of landing the tipper.

SMASH ATTACKS

DOWN SMASH: Rampage

Startup:	13 frames
Active on:	13-14
Endlag:	22 frames



This is the stomping attack that Rambo can use when DK's riding him, which mirrors the ape's own signature Hand Slap attack. Given DK has his Hand Slap in Smash as well, it makes sense that Rambo's version of the move would have some thematic similarities.

Rambo's stomp attack more closely resembles how it works in the DKC games, actually functioning a bit more like the slower version of the move DK used in the original Smash Bros. Smash the input once to have Rambo rear back on his hind legs and stomp the ground forcefully with his front hooves. Unlike DK's, a single input will always produce a single strike, rather than multiple. Like DK though, and uniquely for a smash attack, you can keep repeatedly tapping the input to have Rambo stomp over and over again, only undergoing endlag on the final stomp. Being a slower-paced series of attacks, though, Rambo isn't exactly hard to interrupt between stomps. Rambo's maximum rate of attack is only half that of DK's Hand Slap. The lateral range is also a little less.

Like DK, Rambo's Rampage produces ground tremors, so the attack's hitboxes are localized at ground-level, and won't hit airborne foes. *Unlike* the Kong, his move will only hit directly in front of and below Rambo, lacking a hitbox behind him. You can't punish rolls with this move the same way DK can, but for what it's worth, you get some more utility when you *do* connect the attack. Foes directly in front of Rambo are popped upward, taking 8.3-11.62%, which is on the low end for a smash attack. Knockback scaling is even lower than DK's Hand Slap, and is highly consistent, so this move serves as a good old "set up into combos" ground attack that's especially potent for punishing missed techs - or crumples induced by your Dash Attack. Since the foe is knocked upward right in front of you, this also conveniently sets up perfectly well into horn-based attacks, through which you can attempt to fish for tippers pretty easily.

Since there's a notable gap between repeated stomps, you're usually better off simply using single stomps for combo purposes. That said, mashing has its uses as well. If Rambo hits someone directly below him, such as an

opponent he lands right on top of or someone jumping onto a platform from below, rather than dealing knockback, the stomp smashes the foe into the ground, automatically proning them with no chance to tech the landing. This part of the move deals 9.4-13.2%. Using a singular stomp in this situation works as a nice setup into floor combos, and can be used to bait an enemy's get-up in conjunction with something like your air-stall hover. Another option, though, is to rapidly mash the attack once you've proned the foe. This will link the attack into itself up to two more times - the first hit prones, the second pseudo-jablocks (which has its own combo routes if you end the move here), and the third finally deals vertical knockback that allows the foe to escape, albeit under similar setup conditions to the frontal part of the attack. You'll usually get less optimal combo routes out of this simply because the opponent is typically left out of range of Rambi's horn tipper unless you've got Torchlight in effect, compared to the frontal hitbox popping foes right into the perfect position to get speared. Making up for that though, those three stomps can deal plenty of damage on their own, and the extra combo potential afterward is still plenty decent. Do note however that charging the attack only powers up the *initial* stomp in a sequence.

This attack doesn't only hit along the ground, but it reaches a short ways *into* the ground as well, letting Rambi smash foes overlapping with a thin platform he may be standing on. Additionally, the attack can connect through thin ledges. In the rare case where the move connects on an airborne opponent or someone hanging on a ledge, it will *spike* them. It's only a moderately strong spike, so it's easily survivable until around 60%, but it's *definitely* something opponents will want to be privy to.

UP SMASH: Hump Hurdle

Startup:	15 frames	While charging the attack, Rambi squats down on all fours, building up power. When released, he shirks his whole body upward, slamming his back into anyone unfortunate enough to be above him. Probably the most unusual of Rambi's smash attacks; not for its animation, but for its simultaneous utility while also utilizing Squawks, which is something his other smashes don't do. You might say this smash attack <i>bucks</i> the trend to some extent.
Active on:	15-21, 32-34	
Endlag:	14 frames	

Rambi's overall mass, and the size of his hump in particular, grant this move a generous AoE which covers his entire body above the legs. This allows the move to hit anyone either directly above him, as well as anyone overlapping him, though it won't hit to the sides or at ground-level.

The hitbox pattern for this move behaves close to Bowser's Up Smash, consisting of a strong, armored hitbox as Rambi rises up, and a secondary, weaker hitbox as he returns to a neutral stance. Unlike Bowser, his feet never quite leave the ground, and while the startup has some armor on it, it's notably a bit weaker. Still, the sheer AoE of the attack, especially its width, makes it great for covering Rambi from above, as well as serving as a respectable anti-air. It can even cover most of a Battlefield platform from below, making it an excellent follow-up if you can knock someone onto one, as it practically covers all their get-up options.

The initial hitbox deals 16.5-23.1% damage, which isn't quite as meaty of a hit as some other heavyweight smash attacks, but its vertical launch power is hardly compromised, with even an uncharged Up Smash killing off the top

of FD around 130% with a clean hit. The secondary hitbox, dealing 9.7-13.6%, is short-lived and lacks any armor, but can grant some minor protection against careless punish attempts, and unlike the initial hitbox, it can actually hit grounded foes. In doing so, it sends foes outward at a horizontal angle close to the ground, which can often reset a missed floor tech and lead into a stored Supercharge for a big, trampling punish, or else you can simply cover a get-up from a distance with some of Squawks' eggs.

That brings us to Squawks, who, if available, contributes to this attack in his own way - unique among Rambi's smash attacks. The sudden thrust from Rambi sends the macaw into a panic, causing him to yell out in surprise, stretching his neck straight upward in a very cartoon bird-like manner. Shouting straight into the air above him, beak agape, a sound wave blast covers a circular area above Squawks' mouth. This produces an additional hitbox that syncs up in active frames with Rambi's own initial hitbox, though this one has a much more narrow AoE and hits a whole Training stage block higher than Rambi's, with the space in between being a blindspot. Despite lacking the same sheer width of range, Squawks' attack reaches incredibly far in a vertical sense, especially considering Rambi's attack isn't exactly a slouch on that front either. A major consideration to take into account is just how much this exposes Squawks' hurtbox, though, leaving him very susceptible to being challenged, interrupted, clanked with, or otherwise damaged, especially if it whiffs. Use the parrot wisely though, and it's one of the strongest anti-airs in the game, dealing a weaker-than-Rambi-but-still-solid 12-16.8% and vertical knockback that can KO off the top as early as 130% uncharged.

Uniquely, this move has a lot of versatility, and has certain benefits whether or not Squawks is involved. If he's out of commission, you won't have to worry about any hitbox clashing and can rely on the full brunt of Rambi's powerful, armored attack. With Squawks, however, you gain an absurd amount of vertical range that, while it risks the bird's safety to some degree, makes this attack practically unrivaled as an anti-air, even allowing it to act as a follow-up and potential kill confirm off of vertical launchers such as Up Tilt and Up Throw. The later, grounded hit on Rambi's attack complements Squawks' vertical reach, as the latter covers jump-ins and the former catches rolls, making it very difficult to cross-up the duo during this attack - especially great for compromising a foe's options on the ledge.

FORWARD SMASH: Head Bash

Startup:	24 frames
Active on:	24-26
Endlag:	17 frames

The simplest of Rambi's smashes is a rather generic headbutt. It's a bit like Bowser's old Fsmash from Melee and Brawl, where he rears back a little, then slams the front of his face forward into anyone unlucky enough to be standing in front of him. The hitbox is smaller than you might think. With Rambi's horn taking up so much real estate on his face, only the very front of his face and the *base* of the horn really leave any room for the hitbox to occupy.

The concept is nothing fancy, which to some extent punctuates the unexceptional knockback of the move. Dealing 16.3-22.8% damage, it's certainly not a weak blow, but its savageness is let down by its knockback growth. The base knockback is fairly high, easily knocking foes to the ledge from mid-stage even as low as 20%, but it scales rather slowly, not KOing from the same position until past 200% (closer to 180% at the ledge). This is all without

charging the move, but even so, that's really not the kind of oddly restricted power you'd expect from a superheavy's Fsmash.

Being too strong for combos and too weak for killing, the main advantage of this attack is its speed. The startup is deceptively fast for an animation that seems to imply a lot of build-up, and Rambi recovers from the blow with less follow-through than you might anticipate. Much like Meta Knight's Fsmash, it can actually be thrown out rather safely in neutral situations. If you whiff, simply throwing up a shield is usually all that's needed to avoid retaliation, and even if you're not quick enough to do so, there's only about a 50/50 chance you'll get punished based on how quick the foe can react to it. In advantage, even if you whiff, you'll likely be completely safe. Indeed, the main strength of this move isn't so much in landing it directly. Instead, it's the simple threat of its high damage and disruptive knockback, in addition to some solid shield damage on block, that makes it inconvenient to get hit by. Its true role comes via its ability to scare foes into backing off in 50/50 close-range situations where you can threaten with this attack, serving as a boon for your general spacing game and helping keep pressure off your big body. The mere fact that Rambi can toss in a wildcard Fsmash at any point during an interaction serves to keep foes on their toes, discouraging their intuition to extend on pressure more than they can safely afford to. Just by passively existing as an option, it inherently baits exploitable shields and rolls that open foes up to Rambi's microspacing horn attacks and more specialized combo/kill tools - like his other two, much slower smash attacks. As a nice bonus, the quick startup, high priority, and sufficient knockback strength are perfect for relieving Squawks of pressure if enemies are concentrating on him.

AERIALS

NEUTRAL AERIAL: Big Twist

Startup:	7 frames / 7 frames
Active on:	7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23 / 7-23
Endlag:	12 frames
Landing lag:	15 frames

Tucking in his legs close to his torso, Rambi twirls his whole body around in midair, about as gracefully as a 2,000-pound land mammal can manage. The closest comparison animation-wise would probably be Ivysaur's Brawl Nair. He rotates a few times, dealing multihit damage through a long-lasting attack. It's rather weak, dealing minimal knockback with alright potential for creating follow-ups, but doesn't have as much hitstun as any of his horn-based attacks offer, so it's more of a combo filler than a combo *starter*. Still, it's active for long enough that it's great at catching cross-ups, and it's one of the few moves Rambi can throw out in neutral without much fear of punishment on a whiff. It's largely unsafe on shield, however, and the landing lag is quite poor, so because of Rambi's

low jumps and high fall speed, it can be difficult to slot into your combo game unless you're very particular about when and where you use it. It gets a lot of mileage used instantly out of a full hop to create a rising AoE that catches airdodges and enemies on platforms, but sees less use as a landing option. It deals several hits that add up to 10% in total.

Squawks' attack has the bird fly around Rambi in a vertical motion, covering the perimeter of the rhino's whole body in a circular pattern, his whole body serving as a moving hitbox that deals radial knockback. He makes two full revolutions around Rambi in the time it takes the rhino to spin four and a half times, both animals starting and ending their attacks at the same time. Rather than dealing multihit damage, Squawks' slower rotation results in his hitbox only hitting once at a time, though at low percents or against foes who don't DI out, he can connect twice. Each hit deals just 4% damage, producing a low-impact attack that mostly just taps opponents, lightly nudging them in the direction Squawks is traveling. If you can manage to hit up-close with Rambi's attack first, it has a good chance of linking into Squawks' for additional damage.

It's a weak hit with practically no kill potential and offers no more combo potential than Rambi's own, but the sheer radius that Squawks covers grants the move an oppressive AoE that can be very difficult to escape from for any foe that's within range. This lends itself quite well to catching air dodges and platform landings, as well as acting as a hard-to-avoid approach option. Imagine trying to dodge a Supercharging Rambi leaping at you with a spinning hitbox that encircles his entire large hurtbox... Yeah. Squawks covers quite the area, but it's not a foolproof defense. For one, each rotation is a bit slow, so there are definite pokable blindspots throughout the move that let foes get right at Rambi, whose own attack isn't exactly hard to beat out. On top of that, Squawks himself moves slowly enough that his weak hitbox leaves him well-exposed to simply being challenged. The attack leaves him vulnerable for a long window, so while it does have some nice usage in neutral if the foe isn't expecting it, the attack is a lot safer to throw out in advantage situations, which can be used to tack on some extra damage mid-combo or control space to bait responses from a compromised opponent.

Do note that Squawks will pass through soft platforms from below, but will end his attack early if he runs into one from above. This doesn't affect Rambi's own attack. Both buddies' attacks are perfectly synced in terms of when they begin, how long they last, and when they end, resulting in a fluid cooldown animation where Rambi returns to his normal posture and Squawks slickly lands right back on his perch point.

FORWARD AERIAL: **Horn Slice**

Startup:	8 frames / 9 frames
Active on:	8-11 / 9-10
Endlag:	30 frames
Landing lag:	14 frames

Rambi attacks somewhat awkwardly by tilting his neck sideways and swinging his head inward, using his horn like a blade to slice horizontally in front of him. Don't worry, it won't cause any more neck pain that carrying DK around hasn't already caused.

For what it lacks in elegance, the maneuver makes up for in strength, being a fairly strong attack all things considered. The "main" hitbox of the horn deals a solid 13%, to say nothing of the tipper. Rambi's head and neck also contain a

separate hitbox that acts as a sourspot, dealing 6% and unimpressive knockback, though while very suboptimal, it can still KO at high percents off-stage, especially with high rage, making this one of those moves that's highly rewarding when spaced correctly, but which you can still use to fish for kills if the opponent is at 200% and *just won't die*.

This move combines the utilities of your typical Fair and Bair into one move, being a strong KO option but also having uses in general spacing, neutral play, and aerial combos. The tipper hitbox has sufficient enough hitstun, similar to Marth's Fair, that it can link into itself at lower percents, as well as convert into many other moves more generally, such as by fast-falling on-hit and using either an Up Tilt or one of Squawks' ancillary hitboxes, or by immediately shorthopping into another aerial. Via some curated knockback scaling, at higher percents, the tipper can also KO decently well, despite the reduction in knockback compared to the main hitbox. That said, the tipper is quite hard to land due to how narrow the horn is when being swung horizontally, making it pretty difficult to connect with, so it's definitely more reliable in combos at lower percents than it is as a kill confirm at higher percents.

For Squawks' attack, the parrot shoots forward with a flying kick, holding one leg out in front of him. His stubby, taloned limb doesn't make for much of a hitbox though, so his entire body actually serves as a single, consistent hitbox instead, even if the attack makes a "kick" sound effect on contact. Even with this in mind, Squawks isn't very big, so the attack still takes some spacing if you want to connect with Squawks specifically. The benefits of doing so are more subtle than with Rambi's attack, but they're there. Squawks provides a reliable hitbox without any sweetspot/sourspot shenanigans, dealing a respectable 8% that's both more consistent and less narrow than Rambi's horn but also less rewarding overall. It lacks Rambi's kill power, being a pretty modest attack that only KOs at high percents off-stage, but it sends at a very dependable horizontal trajectory, and its restrained knockback growth makes it a fantastic poking tool. Squawks reaches about an arm's length past Rambi's horn, but hits at a higher point on the Y-axis, covering the rhino from a higher angle and granting the attack a wide bit of coverage in unison. Even if you whiff the more narrow horn, you've got a good chance of hitting with the bird as a sort of consolation.

Squawks' attack doesn't have nearly as much hitstun, so its combo utility is limited, but as long as you connect with it, it's enough to keep Rambi safe during the move's endlag, which can't be said if you whiff the move entirely. His attack comes out shortly after Rambi's starts, so neither hit will combo into the other, but it makes for some deceptive timing for opponents to contend with, and adds some complexity to shield interaction. Both attacks working in unison make for a genuinely good tool for general pressure and for poking in neutral, also acting as a fairly safe approach option, especially out of a Supercharge jump. Just note that Squawks isn't going to be out-prioritizing much, so if you get predictable with this move, you're liable to put him at risk to a lot of cumulative damage from opponents who know how to counterplay. Also, the landing lag is quite punishable during most of the active frames. It autocancels on the last three frames, at least, so precision landing can make this move more spammable than it'd otherwise be.

BACK AERIAL: Hoofin' It

Startup:	10 frames / 10 frames
Active on:	10-11, 12-15 / 10-15
Endlag:	27 frames
Landing lag:	24 frames

Turning his head halfway to try and look over his shoulder (he doesn't really manage to get that far), Rambi does a horse-kick behind himself by sticking one leg out. Hooray for the generic backward kick aerial? It's not a flashy concept, but it makes sense when you consider that rhinos are some of the closest living relatives of horses.



Also, like, there's a limit to what this kind of body type can do. Anyway, the attack is different from most of Rambi's other moves in that it doesn't have a disjoint or

very much range, since it uses one of his stubby legs and not his horn. Those hooves are made for stompin', though, so for what it lacks in range, Rambi's kick makes up for in power, packing quite a decent amount of force behind it. While it isn't the fastest Bair in the world, it's also not slow for what it offers. Dealing 12.8% and horizontal knockback which can KO at 100% from the ledge, it's a move enemies should respect. The best counterplay, naturally, is to stay out of its range, and admittedly, there isn't a whole lot Rambi can do to prevent that. Turning around is sluggish for the rhino, and with his poor air acceleration, he struggles to pull off effective RAR and slingshot maneuvers that would help make his Bair more threatening. He also can't Supercharge backward to bolster his effective threat range or augment the hitbox's size with Squawks' Torchlight like he can with his horn attacks.

At least you won't have to worry about sweetspots and all that. The hitbox on Rambi's leg is consistent throughout its range, small as it may be. That said, it does hit harder at the start, dealing 12.8% only on the early hit but degrading to 10.2% on the latter hit, which won't KO until 130% or so. It could be compared to Wolf's Bair in that sense, being a bit hard to connect in general, especially with the strong hit. On top of that, the endlag and landing lag aren't great.

There's a lot of downsides to this move, but it's not all bad. It's still a major threat that'll force enemies to play cautiously whenever your back is turned to them, for one thing. You've also got some ways to combo into this move, most notably the late hit of Down Tilt. Remember that? Rambi tugs opponents right behind him, which sets up very nicely into an instant shorthop Bair if you're prepared for it. It takes some specific hitbox setup and anticipation on your part to make it happen, but it's a fairly reliable combo that works quite reliably up until early kill percents, and even some ways afterward if the opponent DIs poorly.

There's also Squawks' attack to take into account. For *his* move, he kicks behind him as well, using both clawed feet in unison to slash foes with his talons and deal 6.7%. It mirrors Rambi's in execution very closely, active for the same amount of time, and simply grants the rhino a bit more coverage from behind. It's a far weaker attack, however, with knockback and hitstun similar to Toon Link's Bair. This makes it one of the few of Squawks' attacks that can combo into itself, though, giving it similar utility to a horn tipper that this input otherwise lacks. Much like Rambi's kick though, the hitbox is quite small - even smaller, to be precise, so you'll need to be really good at spacing to land it deliberately even once, let alone multiple times in a row. Luckily, Rambi's rigid air movement makes lining

up such a hit a little easier, as you won't be drifting around much. It's one of the few ways in which the pair can fight effectively from behind, so long as you've got the execution mastered.

UP AERIAL: Horn Arc

Startup:	5 frames / 6 frames
Active on:	5-11 / 6-12
Endlag:	28 frames
Landing lag:	9 frames

Rambi orients himself as vertically as possible, swinging his head wildly from front to back, with his horn aimed upward to slice in an arcing motion. It's a wide, arcing slash akin to Marth's Uair. To draw yet another comparison to that fellow tipper user, this move boasts a lot of the same expected utility. The tipper is a high-hitstun juggler that knocks foes upward and chains into itself with prompt fast-falling and jump timing, aided by having the lowest landing lag of all Rambi's aerials, which couples extra well with a Squawks-powered air stall to trip up attempts to air dodge out of the pressure. Even at mid-high percents, it can juggle

into itself or other aerials with some good mixups, delays, and anticipation of enemy DI, making this one of your best ways to pain-train a foe. If you're not consistent with the tipper, though, its combo utility is far less drastic, being one of Rambi's weaker moves when it comes to the larger horn hitbox, reflected in its "low" damage output of 8.5%. The main hitbox sends at a more diagonal angle and simply lacks much in the way of kill power, though it packs a decent enough punch that it can at least takes stocks near the ceiling in certain high-percent cases. The best utility for a non-tipper hit is via platform sharking, as the lowish knockback and reduced hitstun can actually lead to enemies simply dropping onto the platform with little delay, allowing the move to combo into moves such as Rambi's Up Tilt or Squawks' Jab, or even an Up Smash in cases where an opponent's reaction is delayed or they try to hastily airdodge downward in anticipation of the tipper hitbox.

Squawks' attack has him shoot upward a short distance above Rambi while wearing a mining helmet, headbutting anyone directly above. The helmet is a reference to the same item that showed up in several prerelease concept images for the original *DKC*. The mining helmet originally served the function of lighting up dark areas, which Squawks inherited in the final game with his Torchlight.



Roundabout references aside, the helmet actually grants Squawks some limited armor - a rarity for his moves - letting him power through moves that deal 10% or less, which is quite handy considering that's the exact amount of damage this attack does, letting it win trades that would normally clank with it. This makes Up Air one of the safest moves to throw out in general, without fear of sacrificing Squawks' HP. There's a decent amount of power to the headbutt as well, as it can KO from about mid-height of most stages around the 140% mark. The sheer vertical range Squawks offers, while not as drastic as that of Up Smash, also makes it pretty good at sharking foes near the top blast zones for even earlier kills, which is especially handy since it compensates a bit for Rambi's poor jump height. Squawks' attack comes out a little bit later than Rambi's, and also stays active for a little longer, so by landing the tipper right at the start, you can often combo directly into the end of Squawk's hitbox for even more damage but a bit less combo potential.

DOWN AERIAL: Rhino Crash

Startup:	6 frames / 7 frames
Active on:	6-30, 32-35 / 7-37
Endlag:	13 frames
Landing lag:	20 frames

Orienting his body so that he's facing downward with his body at an angle, Rambi performs a stall-then-fall with his two front legs held out in front of him, essentially using them to perform a downward dive kick. Upon touching the ground, he lands on those same two front limbs first, before his hind legs catch up, causing a small tremor with a screen shake as a visual effect.

Compared to most stall-then-falls, there isn't actually much of a stall to speak of. Rambi snaps into position and instantly begins falling after the move's brief startup, at which point the hitbox, centered around Rambi's entire front half, also

becomes active. It doesn't take much delay at all for him to start descending, so it's not as telegraphed or interruptible as most moves of this type. Rambi doesn't fall very quickly though, only moving a smidge faster than his normal fast-fall speed, so anyone quick enough to react to it should have enough time to avoid the hit or throw up a shield. Luckily, it's strong enough that most attempts to challenge it are unwise. Regardless, given Rambi's top-15 fall speed, he still plummets pretty quickly all things considered, so it's not as sluggish of a move as it might sound like.

The move hits harder on the small area around Rambi's outstretched front limbs, dealing a grand 18% with semispikes knockback at a steep diagonal angle, but also deals a respectable 16.6% on the rest of the body, though this latter hitbox sends diagonally outward (or backward in the situational case where Rambi's inner body makes contact, knocking the foe backward instead of forward). It's still good for clearing space, and even has some combo potential at lower percents if you land near the move's end, letting Rambi chase with follow-ups like a jumping Fair or Uair. The sweetspot knocks opponents to the floor instead. This can be teched, but should the opponent fail to do so, it combos into Down Smash, Down Tilt, and Jab at most percents.

Rambi doesn't fall very far before the move ends, which is good since he often won't be attacking from very high up anyway. The move carries him about the same distance as Terry's Power Dunk, just at a steeper angle. When used from max jump height, the move can be autocanceled upon landing, opening up its follow-up utility and bypassing the otherwise sluggish landing lag. It may seem like just a big, brutish dive attack, but with a little bit of proficiency, it's actually a pretty safe movement tool that can help Rambi approach, get him to safety from aerial pressure, break through anti-air attempts, and even help him get back to the stage when recovering. It's a scary approach tool out of a jump-canceled Supercharge, and coupled with that move, offers Rambi some solid horizontal recovery when off-stage. It's particularly great at helping you land on-stage safely, which you'll largely prefer to do to over targeting the ledge or recovering low. If you end the move while still in midair, you're free to use your double jump if it's still remaining, which can be paired with an air stall to *really* mix up your landing. This also allows you to follow up off of a late sourspot hit by jumping into another aerial, such as a long-lasting Nair you can drift into to cover most DI options. Hitting with a late hit from the inner part of the sourspot hitbox, which sends diagonally backward, has some limited conversion into Squawks' Bair at lower percents, turning what would otherwise be a mundane call-out against crossups into a decently damaging combo.

This move also has a mild landing hitbox on Rambi's feet when they crash into the ground, dealing 7.9% and mild outward knockback that doesn't offer much utility other than offering some safety during the recovery frames.

Squawks' attack has him perform a divebomb, beak-fist, toward the ground, very much like Rambi's own. His dive starts up after a short delay, but he otherwise travels the same distance, speed, and angle that Rambi does, reaching the end of his dive just a few frames after the heavier of the two, and just before the move's FAF. This naturally extends the AoE of the attack, granting a bit more coverage both vertically and horizontally as Squawks' position parallels Rambi's. It naturally leads the sourspot of Rambi's hit to connect perfectly into Squawks' for a fluid 1-2 of back-to-back hitboxes, extending the foe's hitstun just long enough for Rambi to act out of the move's FAF and position himself for a combo. The limited knockback growth of Squawks' attack makes it combo-capable at almost any percent, generously allowing conversions into almost any of the duo's hitboxes, depending on how the enemy DI's, and so long as you're quick to act. DI'ing outward puts the opponent into range for tippers from Ftilt, Utilt, and Fair; DI'ing inward leads into Squawks' Jab and Dtilt, and DI'ing downward to try and avoid these follow-ups still leaves them open to Rambi's Jab and Dtilt. You're also able to input an Egg Shoot on the FAF, which is easier to escape from than if you'd simply just attached, but it can make for a nice mixup on occasion to mess with a foe's reaction timing to your combo setups.

GRAB GAME

GRAB

Startup:	8 frames / 14 frames
Active on:	8-10 / 14-16
Endlag:	27 frames / 29 frames

Tapping the input results in a normal grab, performed by Rambi. The rhino extends his neck forward a short distance, biting down on anyone immediately in front of him to get a grapple on them. It's a relatively short-ranged grab that reaches less than half the length of a Training stage square and isn't particularly fast to start or end, but in terms of raw frame data, it could definitely be worse. Not so much for his simple bite of a pummel, which is rather lackluster, dealing about 1.8% per hit at a max rate of one hit per 36 frames. Not very fast or strong, unfortunately. Because of Rambi's slow turnaround, his pivot grab is particularly sluggish, and not especially worth going for. Rambi at least gets the usual heavyweight perk of having a long-lasting grabbox, active for 3 frames.

As mentioned before, with Squawks present, long-pressing the input results in a ranged grab, where Squawks dashes straight forward through the air with his talons spread, digging his claws into any foe he makes contact with. Squawks reaches 1.9 Training stage squares in front of Rambi, which, while beaten out by some other ranged grabs, is much farther-reaching than Rambi's own grab. Like most ranged grabs, however, it's a bit slower both to execute and recover from, leaving the duo more vulnerable when whiffed, though it's only 2 frames slower to recover from than Rambi's. Regardless, to add insult to injury, Squawks is still completely vulnerable to being attacked while trying to grab, which will cancel the grab attempt in addition to damaging him. This lets him act as a meat shield for Rambi, so it's not quite as directly devastating to *the player* if they whiff this grab, and if the

opponent is left in enough hitlag from whatever move they chose to override the grab with, Rambi *can* attempt to dash in to get a punish of his own, but it's rarely worth risking your bird buddy's HP. Still, in sudden-death situations, sacrificing Squawks in this way can give you just the opening you need to land a stored Supercharge or even a Dash Attack that might net you the finishing blow you need.

... This risk can certainly be worth it, especially since if Squawks *does* land his grab, you're left in a very strong position overall, as Rambi becomes freely controllable as soon as the grab connects. Squawks will continue to hold the opponent in place, allowing you to go ham with whatever you want. Charge up a smash attack for a kill? Build up a Supercharge? *Unleash* a Supercharge you'd already been holding onto? Maybe, below kill percent windows, you'd rather microspace your horn tipper to start a combo. You have basically any and every option at your disposal. Of course, Squawks' grab is still a grab like any other, and enemies can mash out of it with no more effort than with any other character's, so your window of opportunity is more restricted the lower the foe's percentage (and the better they are at mashing). Even in cases where the foe mashes out, though, you can actually punish their grab release state with an anticipatory Supercharge or Supercharge jump into an aerial attack (Nair being the easiest to connect). Even if you whiff a Supercharge, remember that you can just keep running until you're out of retaliation range, so there's little risk in going for such a play, even if you guess wrong or don't time it correctly.

Note that Squawks is only able to grab, and cannot perform throws. Throws can only be performed after connecting a grab with Rambi.

Despite his gimmicky optional grab, Rambi's throws are all on the basic side, simply serving as a means to get his combo game going. The *real* devastating aspect of his grab game comes from the simple fact that he can act freely to use any attack he wants if Squawks is able to connect a grab *for* him. Beyond that though, the duo aren't particularly specialized in the grappling department.

FORWARD THROW: Side Barge

Startup:	20 frames
Endlag:	31 frames

Quickly, Rambi releases his grip on the foe, turns halfway toward the camera, and then slams the side of his torso into them, bashing them forward. It deals a solid 13% and moderate base knockback, but it has slow knockback growth and doesn't become a kill move until around 180% at the ledge - a little earlier with

high rage. Even at such high ranges, its fairly standard horizontal launch angle and readable animation makes this throw easily DI'd. During Rambi's attack, his whole body becomes a hitbox with a fair bit of priority, which can clip other fighters who don't respect your space while throwing.

More or less Rambi's go-to throw for getting foes off-stage. While his off-stage game isn't anything exceptional, its utility in simply creating good space is appreciated, setting up for the duo's mild zoning game to tack on some safe chip damage with moves like Egg Shoot and Squawks' Ftilt. Simply getting the foe out of your hair and resetting neutral situations is beneficial at times, whether to allow a defeated Squawks time to recover or to simply play the animal buddies' general bait-and-punish game. There aren't many follow-ups for this throw, but at low percents, it has the ability to knock foes to the floor if they don't tech, which you can sometimes link into a Supercharge for

some easy early damage, a bit like the infamous K. Rool Fthrow -> Dash Attack combo. The cooldown is too meh, and the knockback too high, to really get much more off of it.

BACK THROW: Double Hoof Kick

Startup:	11 frames
Endlag:	26 frames

Rambi jerks his head back to toss the foe over his shoulder, then horse-kicks behind himself with both hind legs in unison, sending the foe flying diagonally backward like a rodeo clown on a bad work day. This produces a somewhat stubby hitbox akin to his Bair that, like the Fthrow, can also hit other players besides the one being thrown. It does 13.8% in damage - a little stronger than the Fthrow.

The damage increase over that of the Fthrow is mirrored by the knockback also being only slightly stronger. It has some kill potential around 145% at the ledge, but that's a bit weaker than the average Bthrow. It's still a solid KO option if you can land a grab at the right place and right time, but it's unlikely to be your *primary* kill move. The base knockback actually starts out quite low before scaling more exponentially starting around 80%. Before this, it's built for starting platform combos on stages like Battlefield, utilizing its Sakurai angle-esque knockback to toss foes onto platforms above you, which you can happily shark with Squawks' Jab, Up Smash, Up Tilt, Up Air, and so on, using Squawks' air stall to mix up your timing to beat out enemy reactions. On the right stages, this throw is a situationally strong combo set-up tool off of a grab which can take the place of your more evergreen but difficult-to-connect options, like your horn tippers and the front hit of Down Smash.

DOWN THROW: Trample

Startup:	22 frames
Endlag:	28 frames

Rambi spits the opponent to the ground, then jumps up and down on top of them four times in rapid succession, putting all his weight into his four feet and dealing 4.2% per stomp. The hopping would be pretty uncharacteristic for a real rhino, but certainly not for a cartoon rhino that jumps around in platforming games. Amounting to 16.8%, this is Rambi's most damaging throw, and as such, the one you should be going for in situations where pure damage is what you'd prefer, such as when there aren't any platforms to take advantage of Bthrow.



The opponent is left prone, rather than taking any knockback. You can't really take direct advantage of this, unfortunately, since the endlag is a bit high and most of Rambi's low-hitting moves are too slow to combo into. A bit of a tradeoff for the already high damage output, I suppose. At least the lengthy animation and neutralizing prone state buys some time for Squawks to recover if he's been put out of commission. You can also use your fast walk animation to create some quick distance to lead into a micro-spaced horn attack to cover the opponent's get-up, or use an air stall to pressure their get-up with a well-timed aerial.

UP THROW: Horn Launcher

Startup:	24 frames
Endlag:	24 frames

Rambi lets go of the foe, pitches his horn below their feet, and then jerks his head back to vault them up into the air like a catapult, dealing 6.9%. Under normal circumstances, the knockback is very similar to that of the Bthrow, sending diagonally at a slightly lower angle that makes this move even more consistent

for platform set-ups. This gives it the same kind of combo utility that the Bthrow offers, but launches forward rather than behind Rambi. Simply grab a sucker, chuck them up onto a platform, and go to town on them from there. Its base knockback and scaling are even lower, making it even better at this role in most situations, trading out any sort of direct kill power.



Rocksteady was not having any of Bebop's BS that day.

Uniquely among Rambi's throws, though, since it utilizes his horn, this move has a "tipper" mechanic essentially baked into it. If Squawks' Torchlight is in effect as the throw is being input, Rambi manages to get a more precise hook with the very tip of his horn, which alters the launch angle of the throw. In this case, the angle is almost purely vertical, sending straight up, which sends the enemy higher, in addition to dealing the usual extra damage and hitstun afforded by other tipper hitboxes. This lessens its platform setup capability compared to a more standard Uthrow, but grants new follow-ups into Up Smash (at low percents), and jumping Uair, and generally works better on platformless stages like FD thanks to the increased hitstun. If you time it so that Torchlight wears off before the throw completes, you can combo directly into Squawks' Up Smash as well. Additionally, at higher percents, it sends just high enough to toss foes onto the *higher* platform of Battlefield when used from ground-level, which sets up into a platform-sharking followup with full-hop Uair, or even Squawks' Up Air if he becomes available at just the right moment.

PLAYSTYLE



Ah, obtaining an animal buddy. Whether it's Enguarde, Yoshi, a Chicken-Leg, or Rambi himself, it inherently feels great to gain a power-up in the form of a mount. You move faster, you hit harder, and you can go places you couldn't go before. But the sting of *losing* your rideable ally is always just as strong a feeling. Suddenly, you feel so much more exposed. So much more helpless. So much more *limited*.

As a two-in-one fighter, Rambi & Squawks embody the concept of a power-up mount. As far as gameplay is concerned, Squawks is, essentially, *Rambi's* animal buddy. His presence provides so much to the duo's kit that Rambi feels almost stunted without him. Bugged down by rigid movement, losing access to three of his four specials and even his recovery... Left to himself, Rambi feels a lot more restricted, left to fight as a fairly standard heavyweight with a strong, albeit predictable combo game and fairly specific hitboxes that don't fare too well in covering for his massive hurtbox.

When together, though, they make for a powerful pair. Generally, their playstyle is built around a combination of hit-and-run and bait-and-punish. Rambi's got strength, but unlike other heavies, he's more specialized toward damage than knockback. His combo-centric horn tipper lets him opt for protracted attack strings over simple knockback, though deliberately landing "sourspots" also gives him access to kill moves when needed. Going for kill moves tends to come with risk, however, by requiring him to get in closer. Subtle microspacing to make the best of his tipper, meanwhile, rewards him with protracted combos that are surprisingly fluid and freeform in nature, causing the bulky rhinoceros to fight more like a graceful swordsman than an unga-bunga heavyweight. Well, until it's time to go for the KO, anyway, but even then, he's typically better at setting up into kill confirms than mindlessly mashing kill moves until something connects.

Squawks' utility knows no bounds. Rambi's reliance on his horn limits most of his attacks to strict or narrow hitbox positions. Squawks compensates for this by providing additional AoE to most attacks, which tend to cover Rambi's exposed points and blind spots to keep the combo-bait heavyweight protected from being completely overwhelmed. Beyond simply augmenting the coverage of attacks, the parrot's hitboxes all come with their own separate uses that benefit players who make deliberate use of one of the animals' attacks over the other. Even Egg Shot alone, while a tad too slow to be a powerful zoning option, contributes a great deal to the duo's keepaway game, having near-universal compatibility with their combo starters and acting as an all-around spacing tool that

tacks on damage, covers endlag, restricts enemy pressure, and offers a little much-needed protection while recovering. This is in conjunction with the double-edged sword of Squawk's ability to be attacked and sent packing; the more he's relied upon for his protective coverage, the more *he* becomes vulnerable. What a pal.

In general, these two play a patient game largely consisting of quick burst combos followed by retreats back to neutral. Once the foe is at kill percent, it's all about finding the right situational set-up into a kill confirm or a hail-mary burst attack. That's not especially uncommon all things considered, but the push-and-pull of their back-and-forth fighting style, unique sense of control, and mixture of finely-spaced finesse with visceral brutality should give them a distinct gamefeel nonetheless.

EXTRA

PALETTES



Palette origins

- **Palette 1:** Default, using the modern designs of the characters.
- **Palette 2:** Rambi has a darker coloration, similar to the first *DKC* game. Squawks is colored like his brother Quawks from *DKC2*.
- **Palette 3:** Rambi takes on a browner hue, similar to his sprite in *DKC2*.
- **Palette 4:** Rambi's reddish hue resembles a Sumatran rhinoceros. Squawks references his rival Screech from *DKC2*'s penultimate level.
- **Palette 5:** Rambi resembles his bluish sprite from *Donkey Kong Land*, when played via the Super Game Boy. Squawks resembles his *Donkey Kong Land 3* sprite.
- **Palette 6:** Rambi resembles another, greenish *DKL* sprite.
- **Palette 7:** Yellow
- **Palette 8:** Rambi resembles the RamRam enemies from *Mario vs Donkey Kong*.

STAGE ENTRANCE

Rambi bursts out of an animal crate from the DKC games. Squawks then lands on top of him.

TAUNTS

- **Up Taunt:** Rambi's tongue lolls out of his mouth and he pants like a dog. Assuming Squawks isn't dead, he'll let out a parrot whistle.
- **Side Taunt:** Rambi shakes his head vigorously. If Squawks is on his back, he'll appear startled and try to keep his balance.
- **Down Taunt:** Rambi sits back on his haunches for a short rest. If Squawks is around, he'll nip behind the rhino's ear, like an oxpecker bird.