**Who is the better pilot, Kira Yamato or Athrun Zala or Shinn Asuka?**

Short Answer: Kira and Athrun are equally good while Shin can still learn some things from them.

To be clear, when we who is the better pilot, we’re not only considering the fighting skills of the individual. There are also factors such as personality, background, emotional stability, special awareness, compassion, composure, loyalty, integrity, decisiveness, and determination just to name a few and it can easily be seen that each of these factors play a role in battle and any fluctuation or change in these traits can have a great effect on the overall performance of a mobile suit pilot.

In this article we’re going to compare these three pilots regarding these traits.

Let’s go over some facts about Kira, Athrun, and Shin as mobile suit pilots.

* **BACKGROUND**
  + **Kira Yamato, Athrun Zala and Shinn Asuka,** all of them are reasonably the exceptional pilots, but let’s have a look at the difference in their backgrounds.
  + **Kira Yamato,** son of Ulen Hibiki and Via Hibiki, was born from an artificial womb to achieve the dream of his father in creating the ultimate coordinator. That is the being of Kira Yamato. He is the ultimate coordinator. Other than this, Kira is a peaceful young man who is a student at a technical college of Orb attending the Kato seminar. It is apparent that although Kira gains knowledge regarding robotics machinery from his education at Orb, he has no formal military training prior to his involvement with the Archangel.

Kira never wanted to fight in the war. He clearly states it to the captain of the Archangel that he and his friends do not want to get involved any more than they already have. However, with the situation they were facing at that time, Kira had no choice but to continue to fight and defend the Archangel in order to protect his friends who are aboard it.

* + **Shinn Asuka,** just like Kira, is also a coordinator who lived in Orb. Not much can be seen from Shinn’s life before he becomes a soldier of ZAFT. However we can see traces of his life from the past from the he gets while reminiscing those times.
  + Based on those flashbacks we can see that Shinn is a cheerful and happy teenager and a caring big brother but after witnessing the death of his family before his very eyes, after seeing their mutilated corpses lying on the ground before him, something in him changes, as would any person if they experienced the same fate. Shinn becomes arrogant, impulsive, cocky, and hot-tempered.
  + **Athrun Zala,** son of Patrik Zala and Leonore Zala, on the other hand, is a coordinator and a soldier of ZAFT. Military training in combat and leadership between Kira and Athrun differ greatly because of this. Athrun is also Kira’s close friend which makes it hard for them to fight each other, especially for Athrun as he has been instructed to destroy the strike.
* **LOYALTY**
  + **KIRA**
    - Loyalty for a soldier is the upmost importance. Wars cannot be won without loyalty. When we compare Kira and Athrun’s loyalty we can see that Kira is more loyal than Athrun. Since the start of GS and even in GSD, Kira has always fought for what he believes in. He fights to protect those he cares about and later fights to stop the war.
    - His loyalty in the beginning of GS was with not with the Earth forces but with the Archangel, and then later on with the Clyne faction.
  + **SHINN**
    - Shinn’s loyalty compared to three is greatest. Although his faith in ZAFT wavers a few times as he hears Athrun’s words, he does not leave ZAFT. Shinn firmly believes in ZAFT and he firmly believes that he is doing the right thing by fighting for ZAFT.
    - It can also be said that Shinn’s loyalty to ZAFT stems from his inability to see the war from another perspective. Athrun tries multiple times to change Shinn’s view of the war, but to no avail. However at the end of the war, Shinn meets Kira and he as he starts crying while gripping Kira’s hand, we see that he finally understands Athrun and Kira’s words and view about peace and war.
  + **ATHRUN**
    - Athrun’s loyalty for ZAFT on the other hand grew less and less with each of his encounters with Kira and Lacus. He is even shown to go against his father who is the PLANT supreme chairman. He grew to question what is it he was fighting for? What is it that ZAFT was fighting for and is it really the right choice to fight for ZAFT? Later on he decides to leave ZAFT and join the Clyne faction along with Kira and Lacus.
* **BATTLES WITH EACH OTHER**
  + **GAT-X105 STRIKE VS GAT-X303 AEGIS** 
    - In this battle Kira and Athrun are fighting with Gundams of relatively equal capabilities. Both pilots were determined to kill each other and both had activated their seed. Both pilots were also fighting driven with revenge as Kira had killed Nicol Amalfi, a member of team Le Creuset, piloted the mobile suit GAT-X207 Blitz and a personal friend of Athrun, and Athrun killed Tolle Koenig who piloted FX-550 Skygrasper. He is also one of Kira’s friends.
    - As the battle came to a close, the Aegis shifted to its Mobile armor attack mode and managed to grabbed the strike with its four limbs while charging its main energy cannon before running out of power and then self-destructing. It can be said that if Athrun did not run out of power during the fight, he would have won and it would be clear that he is a better pilot than Kira but then again maybe the reason why Kira still had power was because Kira managed to budget his power outputs better compared to Athrun.
  + **ZGMF-X10A FREEDOM VS SAVIOUR** 
    - In this fight, there isn’t much to say. Kira was more determined here while Athrun was once again indecisive of what to believe in. There isn’t much to say here other than the fact that Kira mobile suit was far superior to Athrun’s.
  + **ZGMF-X10A FREEDOM VS IMPULSE**
    - While many would argue that Shinn is better than Kira because he managed to defeat Kira in this battle, it should be noted that Kira wasn’t fighting at his best. Kira was fighting with no intention of killing Shinn while at the same time trying to defend the Archangel. Shinn on the other hand studied Kira’s moves before their fight, so he knew exactly where to defend and strike.
    - It should also be noted that in this fight Shinn activated his seed while for some reason Kira did not. So we can conclude, even though Kira had the superior mobile suit, the fight wasn’t really fair because Kira was not even trying to fight Shinn and he was distracted by protecting the Archangel.
  + **ZGMF-X42S DESTINY VS ZGMF X19A INFINITE JUSTICE**
    - Although this battle is short, it shows us the difference in fighting experience between the Shinn and Athrun and it also shows us how the Justice is more suited for melee combat compared to the destiny. Many would say, that with that big sword of the destiny together with its speed, makes it the best melee mobile suit, slicing through all in its way, but compared to the justice in melee combat, it is outclassed.
    - Both legs of the Justice has its own beam blade and it has two additional beam boomerangs, all that while it holds two beamsabers combined into one, and a shield on the other hand. In close quarters combat, the Destiny is no match.
* **PERSONALITY**
  + This trait is one of the biggest influencers in the overall battle performance of a mobile suit pilot as this trait can make the other traits or characteristics permanent. In other words, if you are peaceful by nature, then it will follow that you are also compassionate, loyal, and you do the right thing, but if you are ill tempered by nature then it follows that you might not be as loyal, you might not do that right thing, and you might not be as compassionate.
  + Although both Kira and Athrun are exceptional pilots, they do differ in their personalities. Athrun can be seen as more composed and determined in the battle field. This is greatly due to the fact that compared to Kira, Athrun is a red uniform mobile suit pilot of ZAFT. This gives Athrun a huge edge over Kira when it comes to military combat training and leadership skills.
  + Athrun also shows some determination by repeatedly disobeying orders to destroy the strike as he believes that Kira is not an enemy and he is determined to capture the strike rather than destroy it. Kira on the other hand is more emotionally unstable and more reserved with regards to the war. It cannot be stressed enough that Kira wants nothing to do with the war. “**We don’t want anything to do with your war. That’s why we chose to live in neutral territory**.” – Kira to Marue Ramius. Kira’s emotional instability can be seen during battle as he gets more and more traumatized by the death that surrounds him, especially those that he has killed and let’s not forget he just lost his homeland, Heliopolis.
  + This emotional instability drives kira to fight with the intent of not killing, giving a disadvantage in the battlefield. When it comes to a reason for fighting, Athrun’s reason for fighting is mainly for the death of his mother which happened on the event known as the bloody valentine. He also has a strong sense for fighting for his people, the coordinators and his homeland. Kira fights alongside the Archangel for the sole reason of protecting his friends, and later on the whole crew, who are onboard the ship. Later on, both characters seem to develop a new reason for fighting and that is fighting to stop the war.
  + Shinn however is in contrast with the two other pilots. He is impulsive and arrogant. He even talks balk to his superiors like Athrun when he feels that the superior is making a mistake or is not making any sense. Shinn can also be seen as a fighter who is emotionally unstable; he lets his emotions take control of him when he fights.
  + One key difference between Shinn and the other two pilots is that he is focused on getting better as a pilot, unlike Kira and Athrun who, although were exceptional, had a lot of other things to think and worry about. Shinn’s main drive for getting better is so that he can take revenge for his family’s death, especially his sister’s.

In conclusion we can say that Kira and Athrun are on par with each other while Shinn can still grow.

I hope this information helps, if you have questions and clarifications – leave a comment below!