= Rugal Bernstein =

Rugal Bernstein (???? ? ???????? , Rug?ru B?nshutain) is a video game character created by SNK . First introduced in The King of Fighters ' 94 , he is a recurring boss in the The King of Fighters fighting game series . As the host of the tournaments from The King of Fighters ' 94 and ' 95 , Rugal plans to turn all the competitors from the tournament into stone statues as part of his collection . Despite his death in ' 95 , Rugal is still featured in following The King of Fighters titles which do not contain a storyline (nicknamed " Dream Matches ") . He has also been featured in the SNK Vs . Capcom as a boss character .

His character has also appeared in other media related to The King of Fighters franchise , including comic adaptations and The King of Fighters live @-@ action film , and portrayed by British martial arts actor Ray Park . As the first boss character from The King of Fighters , the SNK staff created him to be one of the most difficult characters to defeat . His Omega Rugal form from ' 95 has been noted by the staff to be their favorite boss to the point they added him in the Dream Match titles . Publications for video games and other media have provided praise and criticism for Rugal 's character .

= = Conception and design = =

The concept for making Rugal in The King of Fighters ' 94 was to make " the mightiest (most violent) and most evil boss character ever " . Despite the difficulties in defeating him , Rugal has become the boss character with the biggest number of appearances in The King of Fighters series as he has been liked by players and developers . Due to his multiple " deaths " in the series , developers have joked with him , adding to his official profile that his hobby is resurrection . Flagship director , Toyohisa Tanabe , states that his fighting style was created to emphasize Rugal 's strength as the series ' first boss character . He also comments " going a bit overboard " with his Genocide Cutter technique damage ratio in The King of Fighters ' 94 . His Dead @-@ End Screamer special move was originally a technique in which Rugal breaks the neck of his opponent and crushes it . However , it was seen as lacking drama , so it evolved into a move in which he breaks his victim 's neck , crushes the victim , and then further spins the victim around to do more damage , striking a pose at the end of the move . In The King of Fighters ' 95 , Rugal appears as an enhanced version named Omega Rugal ; developers liked him so much that they added him as the boss character in dream matches (KOF games with no storyline) , commenting " He 's the only character who truly represents the ultimate KOF boss " . His The King of Fighters ' 98 move set was noted to be strongest of all his appearances , becoming the developers ' favorite boss character .

Rugal is 1 @.@ 97 m (6 ft 6 in) tall , and weighs 103 kilograms (227 lb) . In his first appearance in King of Fighters ' 94 , Rugal is shown wearing red formal clothes and with his right eye covered , having lost it in a previous confrontation . After his initial defeat , Rugal appears in a battle outfit composed of a sleeveless green shirt , but still keep his red pants . In King of Fighters ' 95 Rugal keeps his formal clothes but when he becomes Omega Rugal , they are destroyed . His body is much bigger in this form , his skin becomes darker while his hair appears gray . From his right eye it appears a red light , and is shown using a prosthetic in his right hand 's place . In following games from the series , Rugal 's Omega form appears wearing his battle suit from King of Fighters ' 94 . In the SNK Vs . Capcom video games , he is featured in his formal clothes in both his common and god form . Original drafts from Rugal showed his character using black glasses and having several wires connected from his chest to his hands . His Omega form appearance had chains along his trousers and tattoos on his chest , one of which being a tiger .

= = Appearances = =

= = = In video games = = =

Voiced by Toshimitsu Arai in most titles , Rugal makes his first appearance as the boss character from King of Fighters ' 94 . The plot from the game introduces Rugal as an incredibly rich arms and drugs trafficker who organizes a King of Fighters tournament to reunite the strongest fighters from all the world . Once the player meets Rugal , he will reveal that he wants to turn his victims into stone statues to add them to his collection of fighters . Once defeated by Kyo Kusanagi and his teammates , Rugal self @-@ destructs his ship to kill his opponents , but fails . In The King of Fighters ' 95 , Rugal organizes a new King of Fighters tournament to take revenge on Kyo . To this end , Rugal brainwashes Kyo 's father , Saisyu , to kill him . After Saisyu is knocked unconscious , Rugal proceeds to fight as the boss character , in an enhanced form named Omega Rugal (??? ? ???? , Omega Rug?ru) . However , once defeated , he is unable to control his new powers and his body is destroyed . Although Rugal is not featured in The King of Fighters ' 96 , the new tournament organizer mentions that the man responsible for taking Rugal 's right eye and giving him greater power is the game 's antagonist , Goenitz .

Since appearing in King of Fighters ' 95 , Omega Rugal has appeared in later SNK @-@ produced titles , serving as the final boss for both The King of Fighters ' 98 and The King of Fighters 2002 , destroying his ship in the former and disintegrating in the latter when defeated . Omega Rugal also appears as a boss character in several other King of Fighters titles , including The King of Fighters 2002 : Unlimited Match and The King of Fighters : Neowave , with different criteria for the character to appear in each . In The King of Fighters 2000 , Rugal appears as a non @-@ playable assistant character (dubbed a " striker ") to Kula Diamond . Arai reprises his role as the character 's voice actor in each appearance , with the exception of the original King of Fighters 2002 in which the character is voiced by Norio Wakamoto , who voices Igniz from King of Fighters 2001 .

In Capcom vs. SNK 2 , in addition to his normal form Rugal appears as a new , enhanced version of himself named God Rugal (??? ? ???? , Goddo Rug?ru) , serving as an optional final boss . Renamed " Ultimate Rugal " in English localizations , the character is the result of Rugal defeating Street Fighter character Akuma and absorbing his powers . This version of Rugal later appears as a card in SNK vs. Capcom : Card Fighters 2 Expand Edition .

= = = In other media = = =

Aside from the main series , Rugal has also appeared in other media from the King of Fighters series . Rugal appears in the first chapter from the spin @-@ off manga The King of Fighters : Kyo , showing his fight against Kyo Kusanagi from King of Fighters ' 95 . In 1995 , the character was voiced by Banj? Ginga in the Dengeki Bunko @-@ produced CD drama The King of Fighters - King of Fighters ' 94 , a retelling of the story from the video games . In the manhua The King of Fighters : Zillion , one of the stories is based on King of Fighters 2002 , in which Rugal confronts another lead character from the series , K ' .

In the 2010 live @-@ action film adaptation of The King of Fighters , Rugal is played by veteran actor Ray Park .

= = Reception = =

Japanese magazine Gamest ranked Rugal 48th on their list of the top 50 video game characters introduced in 1994 , sharing the spot with Chang Koehan . Video games publications have commented on Rugal 's character , adding praise and criticism . Retro Gamer praised the character , stating he " rocks hard ... harder than Street Fighter 's M. Bison " . GameAxis Unwired compared Rugal with Street Fighter 's Akuma in regards to their significacies to their respective developers , with Rugal called the " cheapest [boss] in SNK 's games . " 1UP.com praised the introduction of Omega Rugal in KOF ' 95 , noting him to be " one of the most stylish boss designs in fighting history " , although players could hate him due to how difficult it is to defeat him . However , they mentioned that one of the good points from KOF ' 96 was the absence of Rugal . Eurogamer reviewer Matt Edwards also commented that Rugal was very hard to defeat and that he started " a trend in the KOF series of notoriously overpowered bosses who are hard to take down " . IGN 's Jeremy Dunhan

praised Rugal , describing how his character developed the new rules for the King of Fighters tournament , and noted the difficulty in defeating Rugal himself . Listing him as one of the " 12 unfair fighting game bosses that (almost) made us rage quit " , GamesRadar claimed that Rugal 's difficult as a boss led gamers to coin the term " SNK Boss syndrome . "