

= Iori Yagami =

Iori Yagami ( 伊織 伊集院 , Yagami Iori ) is a character from SNK 's The King of Fighters video game series who first appeared in The King of Fighters ' 95 as the leader of the Rivals Team . He is an iconic character in the series , and appears regularly on publicity material and merchandise . Iori is a central character to the series ' plot , and the initial enemy and eventual rival of Kyo Kusanagi . He was created specifically to become Kyo 's rival and his name and abilities were designed to relate him with the Yamata no Orochi legend . The designers ended up liking him so much that they are careful how his character is developed as the series expands .

Iori is the heir of the Yagami clan , who wield pyrokinetic powers and sealed the Orochi demon along with the Kusanagi and Yata clans . However , after betraying the Kusanagi clan , the Yagami are cursed by Orochi giving them powers that cause all their members to die young . The character harbors hatred against the other clans , but later becomes obsessed with killing their heir Kyo . As a result , Iori sometimes helps him in order to have the opportunity to have a final fight against him . Aside from the main series , Iori appears in several other media series such as spin @-@ offs and crossover video games , and comic adaptations of the series .

Video games journalists have praised the character as one of the most powerful characters in the series . Reviewers have also cited Iori as one of the best characters from the games , labeling him as a veteran character and praising his appearance as one of the best creations by SNK . A variety of collectibles based on Iori 's likeness have been created , including key chains and figurines .

= = Attributes = =

Iori is a violent and sadistic person who suffers from trauma because of his clan 's past . In ancient times , the Yagami clan was known as the Yasakani . With the help of the Yata and Kusanagi clans , they sealed the demon Orochi . As time passed , the Yasakani , tired of living in the shadow of the Kusanagi , made a blood pact with Orochi . This gave them greater powers , but in return , they and their descendants were forever cursed . They renamed their clan the Yagami and set out to destroy the Kusanagi with their new powers . In response , the Kusanagi declared war on the Yagami , which led to many clan members on both sides being killed .

As a side @-@ effect of the Orochi 's curse , the flames of the Yagami have a bluish tint . The curse also causes each heir to die young and each mother to die in childbirth . Iori suffers from an additional curse - " The Riot of the Blood " ( 乱血の呪い , Chi no B?so ) - when he becomes faster , more powerful , wilder , and tends to attack anybody near him indiscriminately . In this state Iori is commonly named " Wild Iori " or " Orochi Iori " ( 乱血の伊織 , Tsuki no Yoru Orochi no Chi ni Kuruu Iori , lit . Insane Iori with Blood of Orochi Under the Night of the Moon ) . Iori hates the Kusanagi clan because of this curse , but later becomes obsessed with killing its heir Kyo , disregarding their clans ' past . This sometimes results in Iori helping him to defeat his enemies to finish their battle . In order to find him , he sometimes enters the The King of Fighters tournaments and uses his teammates as tools in order to get to him . Iori appears in most of the series ' games , and is voiced by Kunihiro Yasui .

= = Appearances = =

= = = In video games = = =

First appearing in The King of Fighters ' 95 , Iori enters the annual tournament as the leader of the Rival Team along with Billy Kane and Eiji Kisaragi ) as he learns that the heir of the Kusanagi clan , Kyo , is expected to be there . However , the team fails to defeat Kyo 's team and Iori betrays his teammates . In the next video game , Iori teams up with two women , Vice and Mature , servants of the Orochi demon . The same team would be repeated in KOF ' 98 , KOF 2002 , and Neowave , games which do not feature a storyline . During the ' 96 competition , Iori meets Chizuru Kagura ,

heir of the Yata clan , who wants to gather Kyo and Iori on her team to seal Orochi . Together they defeat the Orochi follower Goenitz but neither Iori nor Kyo agree with the idea . When Iori leaves with his teammates , he is unable to control this surge of Orochi power , resulting in their deaths . Iori continued to suffer from multiple outbreaks and during The King of Fighters ' 97 , attacks other team members . As such , Iori appears as a sub @-@ boss character in the game depending on the characters that the player uses . He later joins Chizuru and Kyo to confront and seal Orochi .

In The King of Fighters ' 99 Iori is a secret character in most versions of the game . Iori can be faced as a bonus fight in the end of the game if the player manages to get a high score . In the story , Iori discovers the creation of Kyo clones and enters the annual tournament where he finds those responsible , an organization named NEST . Iori follows the battles in secret and fights against the Nests ' agents to continue his fight against Kyo . An assistant version of his character , named Striker , also appears for Iori in The King of Fighters 2000 but with an outfit based on his illustrations from artbooks . In The King of Fighters 2001 , an agent named Seth invites Iori to join his team for the next King of Fighters tournament , presuming that he would get his shot against Kyo . While his regular form appears in KOF 2002 , his Orochi form is also featured in the PlayStation 2 port from the game as well as the remake of KOF ' 98 . In The King of Fighters 2003 , Chizuru appears to both Kyo and Iori , requesting that they form a team and investigate suspicious activities concerning the Orochi seal . During the investigation , the team is ambushed by the fighter Ash Crimson , who plans to get the power from the descendants of the clans who sealed Orochi and steals the ones from Chizuru . In the following video game , Iori and Kyo form a team once again with Kyo 's student Shingo Yabuki to fill Chizuru 's spot to stop Ash . At the end of the tournament , the strengthening presence of Orochi causes Iori to enter the Riot of Blood state , in which he attacks his comrades . Ash appears afterward and defeats Iori , stealing his powers . Iori is a playable character in The King of Fighters XII . Iori is featured with a different outfit , and with a new moveset , that does not use purple flames . Like each character , he does not have a team . Iori 's appearance in The King of Fighters XIII sees him teamed with his former team members from the 1996 tournament , Mature and Vice , who return as spirits . He recovers his flames in his ending and appears as downloadable content in this form . He is set to return in the upcoming The King of Fighters XIV .

In The King of Fighters : Kyo , a role @-@ playing video game situated before KOF ' 97 , Iori appears as Kyo 's antagonist in his journey around the world . Iori appears in the spin @-@ off video games Maximum Impact series . In the North American editions of Maximum Impact , Iori is voiced by Eric Summerer . Iori also appears as a sub @-@ boss during The King of Fighters Ex : Neo Blood , which is situated after his fight against Orochi . Although Iori enters the tournament to fight Kyo , Geese Howard , the organizer of the tournament , tries to make him awake his Riot of the Blood to absorb his powers , but fails . In The King of Fighters EX2 : Howling Blood , Iori enters another tournament , and is joined by two women who want to find a man controlled by the Orochi power . The shooter game KOF : Sky Stage also features him as a boss .

Iori also appears in SNK 's hand @-@ held game , SNK Gals ' Fighters , as a comical interpretation called Miss X ( ?? X , Misu Ekusu ) . The character insists he is a female in order to participate in the game 's Queen of Fighters tournament , though several female fighters easily see through his disguise . In the crossover video games NeoGeo Battle Coliseum and SNK vs. Capcom series , Iori appears as a playable character ; the latter includes his Riot of the Blood state . His character is also a boss character ( along with Geese ) in the Game Boy version from Real Bout Fatal Fury Special .

== In other media ==

Aside from the King of Fighters series , the character is featured on his own drama CD and character image album . In the anime The King of Fighters : Another Day , Iori is seen searching for Ash to regain his powers . Iori appears in the spin @-@ off manga story based on his adventure prior to The King of Fighters ' 96 entitled , The King of Fighters : Kyo . The character appears in the manhua adaptation of The King of Fighters : Zillion created by Andy Seto . The manhua retells Iori 's story from his fight against Orochi until he attacks NESTS to destroy Kyo 's clones . He also stars in further manhua for the games , starting with The King of Fighters 2001 through 2003 along with the

Maximum Impact series . In the The King of Fighters movie , Iori is played by Will Yun Lee .

= = Conception and creation = =

A main objective planned for The King of Fighters ' 95 was to introduce Iori properly as Kyo 's rival . Creators have stated Iori 's personality , and other aspects of his character such as his phrases and unique moves , " broke the mold for characters in fighting games at that time " Like Kyo , several aspects of Iori , including his surname and abilities , were designed to relate him to the Yamata no Orochi legend , which was the inspiration for the plot . After observing fan reactions at initial location testing for King of Fighters ' 95 , several staff members predicted that Iori would be popular on his release . One of them was happy that at an event for The King of Fighters XIII on March 25 , 2010 , several fans reminded him that it was Iori 's birthday according to his official profile . Iori is a berserker due to the Orochi demon blood within him . This version of him , officially named " Orochi Iori " , is hinted to have existed before his debut in The King of Fighters ' 97 as one of the game 's mid bosses . This form of Iori was designed specifically to overpower other characters easily . Series ' flagship director , Toyohisa Tanabe , states that the staff was initially reluctant to add this version of Iori to the series ' roster ? worried about fans ' reactions ? but did so to add more impact to the Orochi saga 's climax . He was particularly pleased to see surprised reactions from female fans to this form during KOF ' 97 's location testing . Another minor development of his character was his change of " most valued possession / valued treasure " information . A girlfriend was also listed more than once , specifically in The King of Fighters ' 95 , The King of Fighters ' 99 , and The King of Fighters 2000 . However , starting with The King of Fighters 2001 and every entry after , the space is listed as " None " . The SNK staff commented that it is curious that he does not have a girlfriend anymore .

During the early development stages of The King of Fighters ' 99 , SNK planned to exclude Iori and Kyo from the game , as the story 's focus was meant to center on the new protagonist , K ' . However , they reversed this decision because of the characters ' popularity . Iori 's , Kyo 's , and other SNK regulars repeated appearances in the series is at the insistence of the marketers and main planners , making it a challenge to decide the story for each title . Because of his popularity among fans , some of the series ' main designers have stated that he is " difficult to draw for " . Illustrator Shinkiro thought Iori was one of the series ' wildest characters because of his hairstyle ; similar sentiments were expressed by Last Blade illustrator , Tonko . In addition , KOF : Maximum Impact producer Falcoon stated that attempting to change an " untouchable " design such as Iori 's put him under severe pressure . He stated that creating Iori 's alternate design that appears in the Maximum Impact series almost felt " unforgivable " , as he felt unsure of fans ' reaction to the change .

In The King of Fighters XIII , Iori 's gameplay mechanics were modified to be a close range fighter . Despite losing his flaming techniques , he was given brutal moves using his nails to emphasize his character 's ferociousness . His strongest technique in the game , " Forbidden 1218 Shiki : Yatagarasu " ( ??????? ? ??? ) , is a new move that focuses on violent combos and serves as a reference to the character 's ending from The King of Fighters ' 96 in which he brutally murders his teammates . Iori 's 10th color scheme in the game matches his classic outfit 's scheme , and during development of the game , details were added to increase the similarities . The ending of the character at the end of the game was also pointed by developers as something to look forward to . His version , featuring his classic techniques , was designed with the intention of not surpassing the current Iori so that players would choose the fighting style they prefer in the game . This was further emphasized in the console version of The King of Fighters XIII where Iori had his moveset adjusted for better balancing by not using flaming techniques .

= = Reception = =

Iori 's character was mostly well received by several video game publications and other media . IGN 's A. E. Sparrow considered him one of the most useful of the games ' characters and one of the

best ones for the "veteran players". In another review from the same site, writer Jeremy Dunham praised Iori's appearance in KOF: Maximum Impact as one of the best designs from the game. However, Dunham complained about his lack of bloody scenes considering his actions in previous 2D games. The character's ending in The King of Fighters '97 has been considered by 1UP.com as one of the strangest parts of the story. However, they considered his winning quotations and appearance as one of the best creations of SNK, commenting that the company had been unable to make such an appealing character until Kyo's introduction. Lucke M. Albiges from Eurogamer praised Iori, along with Kyo, as having one of the most unpredictable appearances in the series, and considered him a veteran character. In the top ten fighting games from GameTrailers, Iori has been called one of the main innovative figures from the series, from his introduction in The King of Fighters '95 through his development in the following games. Some commentators found his recurring interactions with Kyo Kusanagi during fights to be appealing, adding depth to the games, despite the fact English gamers are not able to understand them, and some lack a storyline. The character's new design from The King of Fighters XII has been well received by GameSpot writer Andrew Park who found such moves interesting. On the other hand, 1UP.com writer Richard Li; Li complained about the lack of Iori's signature moves such as his fireballs, and while some of them remained, Li noted that they now require a different input from the ones they normally require.

In an interview with Iori's Japanese voice actor, Kunihiro Yasui comments that he feels responsible as a voice actor for his performances as Iori, taking care to sound different in each installment as a means of developing and "protecting" his character's humanity. Iori has been highly popular with video gamers. In Gamest's 1996 Heroes Collection, Iori was no. 2 in the poll Best Character from 1996. In an issue from 1997, Iori was voted as the staff's favorite character, claiming first place over fifty other characters. He also received the same rank on Neo Geo Freak's website with a total of 3,792 votes. In a 2005 poll made by SNK Playmore USA, he was voted the eighth fan favorite character with 145 votes. Merchandising based on Iori has also been released including figurines, keychains and puzzles.