The King of Fighters ' 94

The King of Fighters ' 94 (officially abbreviated KOF ' 94) is a fighting game released by SNK for the Neo Geo @-@ based arcade system in 1994 , as the inaugural game in The King of Fighters series . The game was soon also released for the Neo Geo home console systems , including a Neo @-@ Geo CD version . In 2008 , KOF ' 94 was one of sixteen games included in SNK Arcade Classics Vol . 1 for the PlayStation 2 , PlayStation Portable and Wii .

KOF ' 94 is a crossover featuring characters from SNK 's previous fighting game properties Fatal Fury and Art of Fighting . It also includes revised versions of characters from their pre @-@ Neo Geo games Ikari Warriors and Psycho Soldier , as well as original characters created specifically for the game . The plot features the creation of a new King of Fighters tournament created by the criminal Rugal Bernstein .

SNK developed KOF ' 94 with the initial idea of using several games from the company in order to attract gamers who played these games . The characters ' designs , as well as its innovative gameplay system based on using teams of three members , were both well received . The success of the game allowed SNK to produce a long collection of sequels in The King of Fighters series .

In 2004 , to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the series , SNK released a remake titled The King of Fighters ' 94 Re @-@ Bout . It features the original game and a new version with higher resolution graphics .

Gameplay

The basic gameplay system of KOF ' 94 is similar to SNK 's previous games like the Fatal Fury series , Art of Fighting and Samurai Shodown . The game uses a four attack button configuration similar to Fatal Fury 2 and Fatal Fury Special , that consists of light punch , light kick , strong punch and strong kick . Like in Fatal Fury 2 , specialized techniques are performed by pressing buttons in combination , allowing the player to dodge an opponent 's attack or to launch a character 's powerful knockdown attack . As with most other fighting games , each character has a set of basic , unique , and special moves that can be performed by the player with a specific series of joystick and button inputs .

Each player has a power gauge at the bottom of the screen which charges when the character is blocking or taking attacks . It can also be filled manually , although it leaves the character vulnerable to an attack , by pressing and holding three buttons at the same time . Once the power gauge is filled , the player 's basic attacks become stronger for a short period . When the characters are in this state , their players can also perform the character 's Super Move , which immediately consumes the entire power gauge . The players can also access their character 's Super Move when the life gauge is 75 % empty and flashing red like in Fatal Fury 2 . Use of taunt moves can reduce the opponent 's power gauge , slow down their manual charging , and stop them reaching the maximum level .

Notably , KOF ' 94 innovated the genre by replacing a traditional round @-@ based format used in preceding fighting games with a format consisting of 3 @-@ on @-@ 3 team based matches dubbed the Team Battle System . Instead of choosing a single character , the player selects from one of eight available teams , each consisting of three members . Before each match , the players choose the order in which each of their team member enters the battle . When the match begins , the members chosen to go first on their respective teams will fight . When one character is defeated , the following member of the same team will take his or her place , while the character on the other team will have a small portion of their life restored (if energy was lost during the previous round) . If a character is losing a match against the opponent , then the player can call one of the remaining teammates standing on the sidelines to jump in and perform a support attack . The match ends when all three members of either team lose .

Plot

The rich and notorious arms and drug trafficker , as well as a skilled and ruthless fighter , Rugal Bernstein has become bored with the lack of competition , so he decides to host a new King of Fighters tournament . He has his secretary travel to eight destinations around the world to invite fighters to compete in his new tournament . Unlike the previous KOF tournaments depicted in the Fatal Fury series , the new King of Fighters is a team tournament , with eight teams of three , each representing a different nationality .

= = = Characters = = =

Most characters come from other SNK games , such as Team Italy , which is composed of the three player characters from the original Fatal Fury (Terry Bogard , Andy Bogard and Joe Higashi) . The leading duo from Art of Fighting , Ryo Sakazaki and Robert Garcia , are featured with their mentor and Ryo 's father , Takuma Sakazaki , who make up Team Mexico . Team Korea includes Kim Kaphwan from Fatal Fury 2 as the leader of two convicts he is trying to reform (Chang Koehan and Choi Bounge) . Team England is a mix of female fighters from Fatal Fury 2 (Mai Shiranui) and the Art of Fighting series (Yuri Sakazaki and King) .
The two heroes from Psycho Soldier (Athena Asamiya and Sie Kensou) form Team China along with their mentor , Chin Gentsai . Team Brazil composes of Ikari Warriors characters Ralf Jones and Clark Still , as well as their commanding officer , Heidern . The game also features two teams composed entirely of original characters : Team Japan , including Kyo Kusanagi , Benimaru Nikaido and Goro Daimon ; and Team USA composed of Heavy D ! , Lucky Glauber and Brian Battler .

= = Development = =

According to an interview with veteran designers of The King of Fighters series , the prototype version of the game was a side @-@ scrolling beat ' em up , titled Survivor . It would only use core characters from the Art of Fighting and Fatal Fury series , specifically allowing players to play Robert Garcia and Terry Bogard for location testing . However , the idea was eventually abandoned . Since SNK were attached to the idea of the two @-@ series crossover , they eventually agreed to make their idea into a fighting game . Characters from Ikari Warriors and Psycho Soldier were also added to the roster . The concept of a three @-@ man team was one of the ideas kept from the side @-@ scrolling version . The title " The King of Fighters " was re @-@ used from the subtitle of the first Fatal Fury game , Fatal Fury : King of Fighters .
The King of Fighters series director Toyohisa Tanabe asserted that the Art of Fighting and Fatal Fury fighters were added specifically for adults , and the newer KOF characters were aimed to appeal to younger and newer audiences . Characters such as Benimaru Nikaido and Chang Koehan were added to have an off @-@ beat variety to the cast , which he has previously deemed to be too serious . SNK artist C.A.C Yamasaki commented that although the lead programmer thought the game would not sell well , he believed it would eventually become popular . Ten people arrived at the first location test , but larger numbers came to subsequent tests . The SNK staff also had troubles with advertising the game due to a lack of money and some of their ads were noted to be of a poor quality .
Designers wanted a new , " snazzy " lead character who would easily fight Fatal Fury and Art of Fighting characters . He was named Kyo Kusanagi in order to relate him with the Yamata no Orochi legend . The boss character , Rugal Bernstein , was developed to be " the mightiest (most violent) and most evil boss character ever " . The game was developed to have a " Fugitive Team " composed of Chang , Choi , and an unknown criminal , but Kim Kaphwan was placed in their team . The English Team was composed of King from Art of Fighting along with Billy Kane and Big Bear from the first and second Fatal Fury games . Designers had several problems with Big Bear concerning capacity and the Art of Fighting staff insisted on adding Yuri Sakazaki to KOF . Yuri replaced Billy Kane , and later Mai Shiranui took Big Bear 's place to form the England Team (later known as Women Fighters in the following games) .
Most of the characters from other games were meant to have some of their moves changed or

removed in order to balance them with KOF 's new characters . However , designers focused in adjusting the imbalance of certain characters without removing any move . In the end , creators of the series noted that the Art of Fighting characters were the strongest ones in the game . Nevertheless , other characters such as Terry and Andy Bogard became the ones who got the designers ' utmost attention and were given new moves .

= = Release = =

= = = Neo Geo systems = = =

The King of Fighters ' 94 was released in Japanese arcades on August 25 , 1994 . Home versions of the game were released later that same year for the Neo Geo ROM cartridge based system on October 1 and for the Neo Geo CD on November 2 . In 2012 , KOF ' 94 was announced to be included in the set of twenty pre @-@ loaded games being shipped with SNK Playmore 's new handheld game console Neo @-@ Geo X , but it was ultimately replaced by The King of Fighters ' 95 .

= = = Emulations = = =

On November 6 , 2007 , the Neo Geo version was made available for download on the Wii 's Virtual Console download service , for a price of 900 Wii Points . The North American and European versions followed on November 23 , 2007 and January 7 , 2008 , respectively . In 2008 , an emulation of the game is included in the compilations SNK Arcade Classics Vol . 1 and The King of Fighters Collection : The Orochi Saga , both released for the PlayStation 2 , PlayStation Portable and Wii . It was also released by Sony Computer Entertainment for the PlayStation 3 and PlayStation Portable on December 21 , 2010 , as one of the first games in the NEOGEO Station line @-@ up .

= = = Remake = = =

A remake , titled The King of Fighters ' 94 Re @-@ Bout , was released for the PlayStation 2 in Japan only on December 28 , 2004 , commemorating the tenth anniversary of the franchise . Re @-@ Bout features the original 1994 game and an enhanced version featuring higher resolution graphics , a Team Edit option feature similar to the later KOF games , the ability to play as Saisyu Kusanagi and Rugal Bernstein , arranged music , new stages and an online versus mode . SNK Playmore commented that they received negative fan feedback regarding the game 's simple upscaling and smoothing of character sprites , so they decided to create brand new high resolution sprites for the following games in the series .
A North American version was meant to released for the Xbox . It was actually completed and was even reviewed by some publications , but was then canceled on March 23 , 2006 for an undisclosed reason .

= = = Related media = = =

The game received a variety of licensed media released in Japan in 1994 ? 1995 :
The original soundtrack The King of Fighters ' 94 (PCCB @-@ 00162) and the arranged soundtrack The King of Fighters ' 94 Arrange Sound Trax (PCCB @-@ 00165) , both released by Pony Canyon .
The art book The King of Fighters ' 94 (GMC @-@ 2) published as part of the Gamest Mook series by Shinseisha .
The Laser Disc audio and video release The King of Fighters ' 94 (PCLP @-@ 00539) by Pony Canyon LD .

Several manga published in the Gamest Comics collection by Shinseisha :

A yonkoma manga by various artists , titled The King of Fighters ' 94 4 @-@ Koma Ketteiban (ISBN 4 @-@ 88199 @-@ 150 @-@ 7) .

A selection of illustrations and short strips by various artists , titled The King of Fighters ' 94 Comic Anthology (ISBN 4 @-@ 88199 @-@ 196 @-@ 5) .

Ryo Takamisaki 's six @-@ volume adaptation series titled The King of Fighters ' 94 Gaiden (beginning with ISBN 4 @-@ 88199 @-@ 168 @-@ X) .

= = Reception = =

The game was well received , with reviews generally praising the deep combat system and the matching up of fighters from different SNK franchises , though the inability to choose team lineups in Team Battle Mode was a near @-@ universal complaint among critics .

A reviewer for Next Generation argued that King of Fighters ' 94 was a particularly worthwhile arcade game , since the three @-@ character teams meant the player would effectively get three lives for each credit , providing a high value per quarter at a time when most arcade games were much more expensive than they had been in the past . Reviewing the Neo Geo home version , GamePro remarked that the character selection is massive , but very unbalanced , and that most of the new characters are " goofy looking " and underpowered compared to the other fighters . They nonetheless concluded that " The King of Fighters is the very best non @-@ Shodown game available for the Neo Geo , and it 's one of the most playable fighting games ever " , citing enjoyable gameplay additions such as the dodge move and juggle combos .

In a review of the Virtual Console release , Lucas M. Thomas of IGN praised KOF ' 94 for its graphics , including fluid animation and vibrant colors , but concluded that buyers might be better off waiting for the improved sequels to arrive on the Virtual Console . According to IGN 's Jeremy Dunham , the game " was essentially a cross between Fatal Fury and Art of Fighting , " with a faster control response . He added commented that the creation of three @-@ on @-@ three battles was an advanced feature for a game from 1994 and the idea of ' borrowing ' characters from other games from the company was also innovative . Reviewing the Virtual Console release , Dan Whitehead of Eurogamer identified the use of characters from multiple franchises and the Team Battle Mode as the most distinctive points . He concluded the game to be " a solid , technical fighting game that , like most SNK outings , skews more towards the hardcore player than the casual punching aficionado . " According to Kyle Knight of Allgame , the graphics and sounds , while better than most games of the time , were subpar by SNK standards . He concluded The King of Fighters ' 94 is " a very good fighting game , but it lacks some refinements that would have made it great . "

Electronic Gaming Monthly gave KOF ' 94 its Game of the Year awards in the categories " Best Fighting Game " and " Best Neo @-@ Geo Game " of 1994 ; additionally , Mai Shiranui was awarded the title of " Hottest Game Babe " of the year . In Japan , the game was awarded the title of " Best Game of 1994 " in the Eighth Annual Grand Prize by the arcade magazine Gamest , also placing first in the categories of " Best Competitive Fighting Game " and " Best Direction " , fifth in " Best Graphics " , and third in " Best VGM " (several characters from the game were also featured in their list of 1994 's top 50 , including Athena at # 3 , Kyo at # 4 , Yuri at # 7 , King at # 8 and Mai at # 10) .

The game was acclaimed in a number of retrospective articles and top lists by several publications . G4 noted that The King of Fighters ' 94 was regarded by some fans as the " Street Fighter beater " and was unique due to its team system . Maximum similarly called it " the first beat @-@ em @-@ up to offer more than the Street Fighter series " and said that the game " helped spearhead the SNK renaissance " . 1UP.com lauded the game for its large and well @-@ balanced cast of characters , calling it " a hell of a cast in 1994 " . In 2010 , UGO.com listed it among the Top 25 Fighting Games of All Time , while GamePlayBook ranked it as the seventh best 2D fighting game ever made . Complex writers ranked it as the eighth best fighting game of all time in 2011 , as well as the eleventh all @-@ time best SNK fighting game in 2012 , commenting that " the unique team selection and elimination style matches of the series made their origin in this great ' 90s fighter . "