

= Ash Crimson =

Ash Crimson (アッシュ クリムゾン , Asshu Kurimuzon) is a video game character in The King of Fighters fighting game series developed by SNK Playmore . His first appearance was in The King of Fighters 2003 as leader of its Hero Team . Ash , a teenager , participates in the series ' fighting tournaments . He employs a personal fighting style that involves pyrokinesis with green flames . Despite being the series ' protagonist since its third story arc , Ash 's behavior is generally antagonistic and he tries to steal powers from several recurring characters , leaving them powerless . His identity and intentions are further explored in the most @-@ recent title , The King of Fighters XIII , and he has been featured in print adaptations and a drama CD based on the games .

SNK Playmore staff created Ash as an evil main character , in contrast to previous main characters . His moves have been reworked in every game in which he has appeared , gaining new techniques as a result of his actions or modified to balance the character roster . Critical response to Ash has been largely negative due to his androgynous appearance and his technique . In interviews and press releases , video game publisher UTV Ignition Entertainment noted that he was unpopular with Western gamers and his design was better suited to Japanese fans .

= = Appearances = =

Introduced in The King of Fighters 2003 , Ash leads the New Hero Team of Duo Lon and Shen Woo which participates in a new King of Fighters tournament . After the tournament , he ambushes host Chizuru Kagura and steals her powers , telling Iori Yagami he will be his next opponent . In The King of Fighters XI , the character teams up with Oswald and Shen Woo . At the game 's end Ash leaves his teammates to fight each other , after disclosing that Oswald 's price for joining him was finding a drug he can only obtain after defeating their pharmacist 's enemy : Shen Woo . He later finds a berserker , Iori , defeats him and steals his powers . When Ash 's comrade Elisabeth Blanctorche accuses him of abandoning his original mission and becoming obsessed with power , he leaves after saying that Kyo Kusanagi will be his next victim . Ash also appears as an available fighter in the KOF : Maximum Impact 2 update KOF Maximum Impact Regulation A and The King of Fighters XII , games without a storyline .

In The King of Fighters XIII Ash is the only character not part of a team , and it is learned that he works for Those From the Past (seen in 2003 and XI) . However , he has a conflict with organization leader Saiki at the end of the game . Ash is the final boss in The King of Fighters XIII as " Ash driven insane by the Spiral of Blood " (アッシュ クリムゾン 狂 , Chi no Rasen ni Kuruu Asshu) (also known as Evil Ash) with power stolen from Saiki , who is trying to possess him . He ultimately sacrifices himself to destroy Saiki .

Ash has made appearances in various other King of Fighters media as well . In the fourth chapter of the anime The King of Fighters : Another Day , he sets fire to a city to lure Kyo into a trap . He is also prominent in the manhua adaptations of The King of Fighters 2003 by Wing Yang and King Tung . In the 2003 tournament , Ash 's team is defeated in the final but later helps defeat the demon Mukai . Although he is not part of the recurring tournament in The King of Fighters XII manhua , he briefly confronts Kyo in an attempt to steal his powers . Ash also appears in the CD drama KOF : Mid Summer Struggle , which has a mock King of Fighters tournament . Outside The King of Fighters , the character appears in a dating sim part of the Days of Memories series .

= = Creation and development = =

Ash was designed as an " attractive evil character " , in contrast to previous King of Fighters heroes . The supervising designer created the character as desired , with few changes since conception . When The King of Fighters 2003 was released and Ash introduced , the staff did not want to disclose information about him , instead telling fans to look forward to his " exploits . " His canonical height is 178cm (5 ' 10 ") and he weighs 59kg (130 lbs) . According to a staff member , Falcoon , the goal was to make Ash an ambiguous protagonist who made players " feel bad " for cheering for

him . Although Falcoon did not design the character , he added details while illustrating him . Due to Ash 's late appearance in The King of Fighters 2003 , the staff joked that teammate Shen Woo seemed more like the series ' main character than Ash did . For The King of Fighters XIII , producer Kei Yamamoto wanted gamers who had played previous titles with Ash to consider the character 's motivation and whether they could relate to him . One of three reasons for the title of KOF : Maximum Impact 2 Regulation " A " was Ash 's introduction to the spin @-@ off series . Falcoon called the character " really wild " because of his role in the series and his personality . Nona (another artist in charge) said that of the original King of Fighters characters , he liked Ash and looked forward to his development .

In The King of Fighters XII Ash was the character the staff worked on the most , reworking his movements and speech to be more consistent with the rest of the cast . The King of Fighters XIII producer Kei Yamamoto jokingly called him a character players could use to " show off " . His EX version in the game makes more multiple hits than his regular form , and the " disgusting " style of his " Genie " (????) move is said to fit his character . Since his introduction , Ash has acquired new moves in accordance with his action in the series . After The King of Fighters 2003 Ash gained Chizuru Kagura 's " Germinar " (???????) , a move allowing him to steal his opponents ' special moves . After defeating Iori Yagami , the character acquired the " Fructidor " (???????) Neo Max move (his strongest attack in The King of Fighters XIII) . During the game 's development , the staff considered returning Fructidor 's animation style to an earlier version they had tested .

= = Reception = =

Ash Crimson 's character had a mixed reception in video @-@ game publications . When he was introduced , GameSpy 's Christian Nutt called him a " clone " of Guile from the Street Fighter series because of their similar movesets but Ash 's team was praised as new characters with new elements in the series . Lucas M. Thomas of IGN wrote that a major fan complaint was the character 's strength in the games , which made him one of the strongest opponents despite an apparent lack of effort . According to Thomas , Ash is " nothing if not strange " and the writer lamented his many appearances in the KOF 2003 manhua compared with more @-@ popular characters . When playable characters for the arcade version of The King of Fighters XIII were introduced , Anime News Network 's Todd Ciolek speculated about Ash 's lack of teammates and wondered if he was alone because " no one likes Ash now . " Marissa Meli of UGO Networks ranked Ash sixteenth on a list of " The Most Androgynous Video Game Characters " , with Meli jokingly attributing his androgynous appearance to a desire by Japanese designers to confuse Western gamers about their sexuality . Although he called Ash 's voice one of " Gaming 's Top 10 Deepest Voices " , Dan Howdle of Now Gamer referred to him as a female character and writers for Game Informer joked about their surprise at the discovery that Ash is a male character . After UTV Ignition Entertainment polled fans to choose an artbox for console versions of The King of Fighters XII , the company announced that Ash 's unpopularity reduced the number of potential covers to two (featuring Kyo and Iori) .

In an interview with Ignition Entertainment director of business development Shane Bettehausen , Alex Lucard of Diehard GameFan said that North American SNK fans detested Ash and complained about his inclusion in The King of Fighters XII without a storyline while popular series characters were overlooked . Bettehausen defended the character , calling him " nuanced and improved " and his moves " incredibly effective " . In June 2009 , Stephen Totilo of Kotaku interviewed Bettehausen , who asked him while Totilo was playing to guess Ash 's gender . When Totilo said the character was female , Bettehausen called KOF " progressive " in introducing a cross @-@ dressing character and said that fans were apparently " warming up to him " . On Destructoid , Jonathan Holmes praised Ash 's character as " defying traditional gender roles while kicking some ass " and called him " the perfect mascot for the KoF series as a whole . " Merchandising related to Ash 's appearance has also been released .