

A Comparison of the Combo Systems in Capcom Vs. SNK2, Guilty Gear XX, and Dead or Alive 4

This essay will present how the combo and general mechanics of Capcom Vs. SNK2, Guilty Gear XX, and Dead or Alive 4 (DOA) make each game deep and engaging in a different way and greatly change the strategies that may be employed in each game. Even though there have been many fighting games throughout the life of video gaming, there have been many surviving series and the only reason that this continues is because each game employs unique and sometimes very subtle touches that allow players to have a different kind of gameplay experience in each game even though the stories are hardly ever any more than some kind of tournament fighting to defeat an ill-defined villain.

In Capcom Vs. SNK2 players can use characters from games made by both Capcom and SNK. Players choose up to 3 characters each and can assign a greater amount of life to their characters depending on how many they have chosen. For example if you choose only one character, that character will have as much life as 3 characters combined, if you choose 2 they will each have an equal amount of health, and so on up to 3 characters where you are allotted a small amount of extra health to add to one character. The strategy is furthered when you can choose which order to put your characters out in. You are further allowed to choose a "style" of fighting which mostly concerns which kind of "tech" moves your character can do and how your power bar is arranged. For example if you choose C-groove your character gets a 3 tiered special bar and may use a dodge attack while if you choose the K-groove your character's special bar will only increase if you use it's included tech move where you block at the very moment that an attack hits you and it

causes no damage. This game is very much like the older Street Fighter games in the way that the moves are performed. Most character's moves are either performed by a quarter circle maneuver on the joystick followed by an attack button press or holding in one direction and then moving the joystick in the opposite direction while pressing an attack button. The combo system comes into play heavily in the fight where you have a light, medium, and heavy type of either punch or kick. These moves are meticulously balanced so that, while using the heavy attacks will cause more damage, it will also push you away from your opponent so that you will rarely be able to get in more than one heavy attack at a time. This alters the flow of gameplay in a way that forces you to adapt to situations in appropriate ways in order to inflict the maximum amount of damage on your enemy, forcing you to learn to take advantage of a situation where you get in close to your enemy and are able to put in a few light hits before finishing with a special or heavy attack. Achieving higher combos is rewarded by greater increases to your special bar which when full will allow you to unleash more powerful attacks. While Capcom Vs. SNK2 encourages combos on the ground it makes aerial combos almost impossible by causing characters to be knocked to the ground when they attack each other in midair unlike in Guilty Gear where aerial combos are encouraged by character's abilities to double jump and attack multiple times in midair.

While Guilty Gear XX is very similar to Capcom Vs. SNK2 in its special move system (quarter circles and holding) it is very different in gameplay mechanics and general feel of the game because of the setup of the combo system. The combo system in Guilty Gear XX is built to encourage bigger combos by causing them to push the characters away less allowing for larger combos and more close quarters engagement. This gives Guilty Gear XX a much more fast paced and manic feel to it when compared to the more slow and deliberate pace of Capcom Vs. SNK2.

Guilty Gear also employs a very different system of technical moves than Capcom Vs. SNK2 which allows for an almost infinite amount of variation of the combo system. Guilty Gear uses a series of moves called "cancels" to allow for variation on combo's. For example one character may have an attack that will shoot flames across the stage, if you enter a button combination at a precise time you may skip the ending part of the attack animation allowing you to follow your deployed attack and begin attacking your enemy just after he is hit by your projectile, allowing you to get in multiple extra hits while he is stunned from your first attack. The cancel system also allows a player who is under attack to quickly recover from a stunned state and counter attack, often while in mid-air which can allow for some high flying fights.

While Capcom Vs. SNK2 and Guilty Gear XX share many similar elements while still distinguishing themselves from each other Dead or Alive 4 takes it to a completely different level by being 3D while the others are entirely two dimensional sprite based fighters. DOA4 allows players to not only advance back and forth towards each other but also out and into the plane of the screen. While Capcom Vs. SNK2 and Guilty Gear XX each have combo systems which require you to create them on the fly and include special moves DOA is based on combos that rely on sequential button presses and timing. For example in DOA, certain moves are set to flow naturally into each other and using certain attacks after certain other attacks you can transform the following attacks into present combos while in the other two examples no such thing as this exists outside of the special move system which allows you to input a button combo and have your character perform a single move. Another example is to demonstrate that in either Guilty Gear or Capcom Vs. SNK if you press the punch button three times your character will simply perform the same punch animation 3 times while in DOA if you press the punch button 3 times with the correct

timing your character will perform three different punches in quick succession usually with a more powerful final punch at the end of the combo. The example only shows the simplest of combos as there are many different combos for each character each with your own characteristics. The combo system in DOA4 is also highly reliant on the counter system which will allow the player being attacked to stop an attacker during their combo with a grab and inflict damage. Combos are performed by entering either forward and block or backwards and block depending on whether the attack to be countered is a punch or a kick. The counter system forces you to strategically plan your combos since weaker combos are faster and harder to counter and stronger combos are slower and easier to counter.

In conclusion, while all the games presented are fighting games they differ in very fundamental ways that create drastically different gameplay experiences. While Capcom Vs. SNK2 employs a robust and varied system of techniques available and strategies for combos it makes for a somewhat slow and deliberate fighting game which is a stark contrast to Guilty Gear XX with its double digit hit combos and aerial fights. And while Dead or Alive 4 is still very much a fighting game it employs a whole extra literal dimension of movement and uses a very different combo system of linked attacks than the other two examples.