

Fire ProWrestling D (Import) Kazushi Sakuraba Character FAQ

by B.Wood

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FIRE PROWRESTLING D CHARACTER GUIDE: KAZUSHI SAKURABA
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Version 1.1

by Bill Wood (billwood661@attbi.com)

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NOTE: This guide views and prints best with a monospace typeface.

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==VERSION HISTORY==
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1.1 - Minor corrections.

1.0 - Initial release of the guide.

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==SECTION 1: HISTORY OF KAZUSHI SAKURABA==
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The Japanese mixed martial arts promotion PRIDE is widely considered to be the premier fighting organization in the world today. Featuring a diverse roster of fighters with equally diverse backgrounds, PRIDE martial arts contests are usually anything but boring. Muay Thai vs. pro wrestling, jujitsu vs. boxing, PRIDE takes the reality fighting concept to the next level with unrivalled production and flair.

Although Rickson Gracie was successful in his early PRIDE bouts, it was soon discovered that Brazilian jujitsu was no longer the unstoppable force that it was in the early days of UFC. Amazingly enough it was Japanese pro wrestlers that now enjoyed major success in the reality fighting arena. Wrestlers such as Kazuyuki Fujita (the heir apparent of "Inoki-ism") enjoyed newfound success and popularity in PRIDE.

One major star that emerged in the early years of PRIDE was UWF International wrestler Kazushi Sakuraba. Sakuraba (or "Saku" as he's known to his fans) may very well be the most entertaining personality ever to compete in mixed martial arts. After all, how many UFC fights

have you seen where the fighter attempts a cartwheel into a submission hold, or playfully spansks his opponent while grappling on the ground? And who can forget the dreaded Mongolian chop?

But entertaining the fans doesn't mean anything in PRIDE unless you have the wins to back it up, and Saku is also one of the promotion's more successful fighters. In the PRIDE Grand Prix 2000 tournament he fought jujitsu legend Royce Gracie for an hour and a half (!) until Gracie's corner finally threw in the towel. Amazingly, Saku fought one round of the next stage of the tournament (on the same night!) against the hard punching Igor Vovchanchyn before succumbing to exhaustion.

After defeating the previously unstoppable Gracie jujitsu (not only did he defeat Royce, he also beat Royler, Renzo and Ryan Gracie), Saku earned the nickname "Gracie Hunter". Then at PRIDE 13 he suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Wanderlei "Axe Murderer" Silva, one of PRIDE's most intense and dangerous fighters. A rematch at PRIDE 17 would yield the same results, causing fans to wonder if the great Sakuraba mystique was lost forever. Meanwhile the menacing Silva went on to become the PRIDE middleweight champion.

As of this writing, Saku's big comeback is right around the corner, and PRIDE fans will once again be rooting for him to pull out another amazing and supremely entertaining match!

Here are a few websites with more Saku info if you're interested:

- <http://www.sakuraba39.com>
- <http://www.sherdog.com/fightfinder/displayfighter.cfm?fighterid=84>
- http://www.netasia.net/users/sgc_wdi/sakuraba/
- <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Guild/5750/S/sakuraba.html>
- <http://www.ufighting.com/profile/profile.php?ID=24>

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==SECTION 2: SKILL AND PARAMETER STATS==
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SKILL

Real Name.....Kazushi Sakuraba
FPD Name.....Kazuki Kashiwada
Promotion.....PRIDE FC
FPD Promotion.....Gruesome Fighters
Size.....Small
Class.....Free
Height.....180 cm
Weight.....85 kg
Country.....Japan
Birthdate.....7/14/1969
Stance.....Mix Style
Offensive Skill.....Grappler
Return Skill.....Grappler
Critical Type.....Submission
Special Skill.....Abandonment
Recovery.....Medium
Recovery (when bleeding).....Slow
Respiratory.....Above
Respiratory (when bleeding).....Medium
Awareness.....Strong
Awareness (when bleeding).....Medium

Neck Strength.....Medium
Arm Strength.....Medium
Waist Strength.....Medium
Foot Strength.....Medium
Movement Speed.....Fast
Ascend Speed.....Slow
Ascend Skill.....Cannot Ascend

PARAMETER - OFFENSE	PARAMETER - DEFENSE
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Punch.....7	Punch.....7
Kick.....7	Kick.....8
Suplex.....5	Suplex.....3
Submission.....10	Submission.....9
Stretch.....8	Stretch.....9
Power.....2	Flying.....4
Instant-P.....7	Crush.....2
Arm Power.....2	Vs Lariat.....2
Technical.....10	Technical.....9
Rough.....7	Rough.....7
Ground.....10	Ground.....10

TOTAL SKILL POINTS (on a scale from 0-300): 242

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==SECTION 3: MOVELIST==
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NOTE: This movelist is my direct translation of the Japanese Fire Pro D Player's Guide, there may be some minor errors. If I was unable to translate, I looked up the move in Edit Mode.

KEY

[S].....Specialty move
[F].....Finisher
[C].....this move can "Critical!"
[M].....results in a mount
[B].....results in a back mount

STRIKES

Standing (X).....Low Kick
Standing (A).....Middle Kick
Standing (B) + d-pad.....Combination 3
Standing (B).....Sobat
Standing (X) + (A).....Double Leg Tackle [M]
Running (X).....Low Dropkick
Running (A).....Double Leg Tackle [M]
Running Counter (X).....Back Switch
Running Counter (A).....Flying Crucifix Arm Lock [C]
Running to corner.....none

GRAPPLES

Grapple (X).....Low Kick
Grapple (X) + Up.....Shoulder Toss
Grapple (X) + Left/Right.....Double Knee Lifts
Grapple (X) + Down.....SINGLE LEG TACKLE [S] [M]
Grapple (A).....Mongolian Chop

Grapple (A) + Up.....Belly-to-Belly Suplex
 Grapple (A) + Left/Right.....Double Arm Suplex
 Grapple (A) + Down.....Machine Gun Knee Lifts
 Grapple (B).....Back Roll Neck Lock [C]
 Grapple (B) + Up.....Flying Crucifix Arm Lock [C]
 Grapple (B) + Left/Right.....Backspin Combination
 Grapple (B) + Down.....Victory Crucifix Knee Hold [C]
 Grapple (X) + (A).....Sobat Combination
 Back Grapple (X).....Leg Trip
 Back Grapple (A).....Kick to Back of Knee
 Back Grapple (B).....Rear Naked Choke [C]
 Back Grapple (B) + Up/Down.....Machine Gun Knee Lifts
 Back Grapple (B) + Left/Right.....German Suplex Whip
 Back Grapple (X) + (A).....go to Back Mount [B]
 Back Grapple Counter (X).....Arm Lock [C]
 Back Grapple Counter (A).....ROLLING ARM LOCK [F] [C]

OPPONENT DOWN MOVES

 Opponent Face Up at Head (A).....CHICKENWING ARM LOCK [S] [C]
 Opponent Face Up at Head (B).....go to Mount [M]
 Opponent Face Up at Feet (A).....Achilles Tendon Hold [C]
 Opponent Face Up at Feet (B).....Low Kick
 Opponent Face Down at Head (A).....Choke Sleeper [C]
 Opponent Face Down at Head (B).....Crucifix Arm Lock [C]
 Opponent Face Down at Feet (A).....Ankle Lock [C]
 Opponent Face Down at Feet (B).....go to Back Mount [B]
 Running at Downed Opponent (B).....Foot Stomp

MOUNT MOVES

 Mount Position (X).....Mount Mongolian Chop
 Mount Position (A).....Counter Elevated Punch
 Mount Position (B).....Heel Hold [C]
 Mount Position Counter.....ARM LOCK [S] [C]
 Front Facelock Attack (X).....Body Punches
 Front Facelock Attack (A).....Double Arm Suplex
 Front Facelock Attack (B).....go to Back Mount [B]
 Front Facelock Attack Counter.....Double Leg Tackle [M]
 Back Mount Position (X).....Back Mount Punches
 Back Mount Position (A).....Rear Naked Choke [C]
 Back Mount Position (B).....ROLLING CRUCIFIX ARM LOCK [S] [C]
 Back Mount Position Counter.....Cross Knee Hold [C]

POST AND APRON MOVES

 Post (X).....none
 Post (A).....none
 Post (B).....none
 Post (X) + (A).....none
 Run-Up Post vs Standing (X).....none
 Run-Up Post vs Downed (A).....none
 Corner Grapple (B) + Up.....Corner Punch Rush
 Corner Grapple (B) + Left/Right.....Corner Body Blows
 Corner Grapple (B) + Down.....Corner Knee Lift
 Front Avalanche Counter.....Shouda
 Back Avalanche Counter.....Backhand Elbow
 Apron Grapple from inside.....Hook
 Apron Grapple from outside.....Hook
 Running to out of bounds.....none

Slingshot to outside.....none
Slingshot to inside.....none

DOUBLE AND TRIPLE TEAM MOVES

Two Platon Front Grapple.....W.Dropkick
Two Platon Back Grapple.....W.Backdrop
Two Platon Corner.....Highjack Piledriver
Three Platon Front Grapple.....Triple Beatdown
Three Platon Back Grapple.....Triple Beatdown
Three Platon Corner.....Triple Beatdown

PERFORMANCE

Analog Stick Left.....Bows respectfully
Analog Stick Right....."Bring it!" motion
Analog Stick Up.....Raises both fists
Analog Stick Down.....Jumping Splits

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==SECTION 4: SHOOT FIGHTING IN FIRE PRO D==
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Because shoot fighters are such a unique class of fighter in Fire Pro D, I will outline the pros and cons of using them in what is primarily a pro wrestling game before we discuss Sakuraba's strategy:

PROS OF SHOOT FIGHTING IN FIRE PRO D:

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- * Knowing the Fire Pro D shoot grapple system puts you at an advantage versus opponents that don't
 - * Because shooters usually can "Critical!" opponents with a variety of submission holds or strikes, they can end a match quicker than most professional wrestlers
 - * Shooters work well from the mount position, most professional wrestlers don't
 - * High defensive stats vs. Submission and Stretch means shooters won't easily submit to holds

CONS OF SHOOT FIGHTING IN FIRE PRO D:

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- * Higher learning curve as you will need to perfect the timing of shoot grapples and mounts
 - * On average, you will need to win more grapples to have success in a shoot match
 - * Shooters are poorly-equipped defensively versus both heavy and junior pro wrestlers (generally low defensive stats vs. Flying, Crush and Lariat)
 - * Shooters can't perform high-flying moves or other moves that take advantage of the wrestling ring

Basically, if you're up to the challenge of mastering the learning

curve of shoot fighting in Fire Pro D, you will be rewarded with a whole new aspect of gameplay.

SHOOT FIGHTING BASICS

There are three main shoot positions in Fire Pro D: mount, back mount and front facelock. Here is a brief description of these positions, along with their grapple timing:

MOUNT - The opponent is on the ground face up. The attacker mounts him, straddling his torso. The timing for the mount grapple is just after the attacker leans his torso back and is preparing his attack.

BACK MOUNT - The opponent is on the ground face down. The attacker mounts him, straddling his lower back. The timing for the back mount grapple is just after the attacker raises his fists and is preparing his attack.

FRONT FACELOCK - This is the rarest of shoot positions, and the easiest to master as far as timing goes. The front facelock is basically a counter to a mount attempt. The mount is countered by grabbing the attacker's torso when he is coming in for the shoot. The timing for the front facelock grapple is when the fighter that is countering slams his opponent to the mat. (NOTE: In MMA fighting, the front facelock position is commonly known as a "sprawl".)

You'll need to learn timing of each of these instances to master shoot fighting. Play against another shooter on Level 1 CPU difficulty and practice your timing over and over until it becomes as instinctive as regular Fire Pro grappling.

LEARNING THE MOUNT SYSTEM WITH KAZUSHI SAKURABA

If you're using Sakuraba to learn the mount system, here's a helpful hint; go to Victory Road and start a new game (Jr. or Heavy). Choose the New Japan (View Japan) roster first. Now try to win each match using these three moves as your main offense:

From a standing position: (X) + (A)

From a grapple: (X) + Down

From a back grapple: (X) + (A)

Each will result in a mount attempt. Once you have the mount, use any followup you want. If the opponent sprawls on you, practice that button timing as well. Since Victory Road opponents start at Level 1 difficulty and gradually increase, your timing will be forced to improve with subsequent matches. I've found this to be the best way to learn the Fire Pro D mount system.

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==SECTION 5: STRATEGY==
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NOTE: Please review Section 4 before continuing to this section!

GENERAL STRATEGY

Just by checking Saku's stats, you can see he's up there with the FPD elite with 242 skill points. He's without a doubt the most effective shootfighter in FPD, so if you want to master this aspect of the game, Kazushi Sakuraba makes a great fighter to begin with.

Saku can take an incredible amount of punishment, unless that

punishment comes in the form of a power-based pro wrestler such as Vader or Jumbo Tsuruta. Only here is Sakuraba ill-equipped, as his Crush and Lariat defenses are pretty low. If you're up against one of these guys, take 'em down for the mount to turn the tide in your favor!

As mentioned above, a big part of Sakuraba's strategy involves ground fighting and submissions, so you'll definitely want to brush up on your mount game in Fire Pro D while mastering him. Always keep in mind that a submission hold can yield a very early "Critical!", so a quick mount into a Heel Hold can end a match in seconds.

Also, emphasis should be put on entertainment. Although Saku is serious about winning, he also wants to make sure the fans get a good show. Pull out all the stops and use his flashier moves, especially if you know the match is in your hands!

One thing you should know; don't use Saku if you like climbing the turnbuckle and pulling off high-flying moves. He has no top rope moves in his arsenal, so don't even try it! =P

Perhaps the best thing about Kazushi Sakuraba is that he is equally at home in both the wrestling ring and the MMA ring (or the Octagon if you prefer). This easily makes him Fire Pro D's most complete fighter.

STRIKES

With offensive Punch and Kick stats at 7, you know Saku is more than ready to play the stand-up game if need be. The timing of the Middle Kick is easy and should be used often. Also, use the Combination 3 [(B) + d-pad] when your opponent is walking in for the grapple.

Your main strike, however, is not a strike at all. The (X) + (A) strike move is the Double Leg Tackle (or shoot, if you prefer). Opponents can get frustrated if you use this move a lot, and if you've been practicing your mount timing, you are immediately in a favorable position. Combo the shoot into a Heel Hold (B) when're you're serious about winning the match, or the Mongolian chop (X) or Elevated Punches (A) if you want to entertain the fans.

GRAPPLES

From the start, your number one grapple move with Saku is the (X) + Down Single Leg Tackle. Again, your experience with the mount will give you the upper hand here. See the "Strikes" section for combo information.

Other than the Single Leg Tackle, Saku is rather thin on effective grapples until he reaches his (B) moveset. Here he has a few submission holds that can really put the hurt on an opponent, namely the Back Roll Neck Lock, the Flying Crucifix Arm Lock and the Victory Crucifix Knee Hold. Personally I prefer the latter just because I've seen Sakuraba make opponents tap out to leg submissions in real life.

From a back grapple, you have two really good choices; the Rear Naked Choke, which can "Critical!" (and which Saku has actually used to submit opponents), and the Back Mount. If you're playing against another player that doesn't know the ground game, the Back Mount can frustrate them as the timing for a reversal can be tricky.

ON THE MAT

To put it bluntly, if your opponent is lying down on the mat, he is in

trouble. With five submissions to choose from in this position, Saku works extremely well here. If you're having trouble with the mount in the match, switch up your strategy to putting your opponent down on the mat and using Sakuraba's awesome arsenal of submission holds.

FINISHER

Sakuraba's finisher is done from a back grapple counter, which is great if you happen to be playing the CPU. You see, the CPU AI is often fond of picking your dazed body up off the mat to attempt a back grapple. If your opponent happens to be human (assuming he knows Saku's finisher), he may not be so eager to do this. In that case, forget about seeing it happen!

It's also worth noting that nearly all of Saku's finisher/specialty moves are arm locks. If you've ever seen him nearly tear Royler Gracie's shoulder from its socket or grotesquely dislocate Renzo Gracie's elbow, you'll know why. =)

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==SECTION 6: CLOSING==
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In closing, I would like to thank:

- * ViperMask, who borrowed my formatting for his great Tiger Mask FAQ. In return I borrowed some of his! =) He also posted the official Saku website (www.sakuraba39.com) on the FPD message board.
- * www.pridefc.com for historical reference.
- * www.gswf.org for Skill and Parameter stats.
- * CJayC and GameFAQs for hosting this guide.

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