

Cannon Spike FAQ/Walkthrough

by Kain

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Guide/Walkthrough for
Cannon Spike on the
Dreamcast/Arcade by
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Version 1.0

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Some words before I begin :

I've always loved shooters. Way back since Gradius and 1942 (of the Strikes series) came out, I used to play them constantly, and I got pretty damn good too. (My faves still remain 1942 and Tengai, where I can clear the game if you give me a dollar or two.) However, another classic has to be U.N Squadron (or Area 88 in Japan) which was one of the few shooters to actually have a LIFE BAR. The extra weapons and different pilots made things cool too.

Anyway, I was justifiably excited when I got word that both companies that had made my fave shooters were working together - Psikyo and Capcom. And you would have - gasp - a LIFE BAR. Having gotten the game early due to a kind deed by my regular game supplier, I must say - I'm not disappointed. It's a bit short, the plot sucks and the music is nothing to be wowed by, but the gameplay and graphics are worth the money I paid. It's a good mix of Final Fight meets shooter - both the close-combat and ranged elements of fighting are portrayed well. (Did I mention you actually had a LIFE BAR?)

Basically, what I'm saying here is - this game kicks ass, so I'm writing a FAQ for it. ^_^
Chances are no one else is going to do so, anyway, so I won't have my spotlight stolen like my ill-fated Valkyrie Profile FAQ (which has become semi-famous for its rant, methinks) In any case, enjoy.

I'm not going to waste time explaining the controls and such - I'll just jump to what's become a staple of my guides - the basic hints and tips. Here we go, then.

Basic Hints and Tips :

1. Keep moving. The more you stay still, the easier enemies can draw a bead on you, especially in higher difficulty settings. Also, baddies LOVE to crowd you, which can be a real problem when they approach from several directions, something even area-attacks can't do anything about. Given the wide spaces you can move about in this game, circling, tracking and taking them down one by one shouldn't be a big problem. Whatever the case, don't stay still.

2. Learn when and when not to use the targetting trigger. While mastering it is definitely one of the essentials of the game, there are some times when you'll want the freedom of movement to strafe enemies in the different pattern. Also, since it takes approximately half a second to press the button and track, you can be caught off-guard in this small space of time, especially when a lot of enemies appear - don't get too reliant on it, you can still hit enemies without a mark on them. Basically, you'll be a much better player when you know just when to press the button. DON'T use it when there are a lot of enemies close to you - DO use it on bosses.

3. Re-track often. Your tracking only lasts for a few seconds, upon which you have to press the button again to get another bead on your enemies. This technique is essential to beating certain bosses, and I'll cover it in more detail later.

4. When playing two-players, have one character (preferably faster and more suited to close-combat - those marked "Forwards" in the character select screen) take the point and attract enemy fire, while the other picks a heavy-hitter who works from behind to dish out damage.

5. Know when to close and when to attack from afar. Generally speaking, when there are only one or two enemies, you should close, and when there are more, hit them with ranged attacks. A lot also depends on which character you use and what attacks they have, but I will be dealing with them later.

6. Don't waste your Specials, but don't be afraid to use them on normal enemies either. Above all, never die with a Special still unused - you'll feel like a fool. ^_^ In any case, use them either to deal extra damage or take out clumps of enemies. Also, remember to aim them properly - only Shiba's and Megaman's Specials don't really require that much aiming.

7. When a boss is going to die or has taken a lot of

damage, it starts taking very little damage from attacks. Yes, this actually happens - observe the bosses's lifebar. This is to trick you into thinking you can finish it off before it does any more damage. Well, consider all damage you deal now divided by 3, and you've got a rough estimate of how much more you'll need to dish out. Sneaky game designers, aren't they? ^_^

8. Learn the boss's pattern. Like most shooters, each boss has a set pattern which they follow rigidly, and knowing it means that you'll be able to combat them that much more effectively - in fact, I can defeat some bosses without taking a single hit. I'll be supplying you with the patterns for most of the bosses in the game, but in case my strategies don't work for you or I have gaps in my knowledge (unlikely, considering how thoroughly I play the game) you should try to work out your own.

9. Always, ALWAYS kill the bosses's flunkies before attacking them. Not only will you occasionally get power-ups, it prevents your concentration and attacks from being disrupted when you decide to make your real attack. Don't believe me? Try it and see. This is a lot more important for some bosses (like Cat Lady Beauty) than others.

10. Learn to combo. Like almost every other Capcom game in existence, Cannon Spike also features comboing. While this is more integral to some characters (Cammy) than others (Arthur) it still makes a difference. Each attack has different comboing potential - of course, I will illustrate each later, but learn which work best for you. As a general rule, melee attacks combo into long-range ones and almost anything can be comboed into a Special. A good basic combo to remember is a Normal Attack into a Heavy Attack into a Special.

11. Grab the life boxes. Unlike the normal life capsules, these actually lengthen your life gauge by one bar, so get them at all costs!

Specific Combat Strategies :

1. I'll now explain the secret of retracking, and it's actually quite simple - release and press the button very quickly. That's it. The trick is to make it natural and do when in the proper situations. Remember, it's a quick one-two motion, nothing fancy, but make sure you do it fast and don't mess up.

When should one retrack? When one finds a lull in the enemy action, that's when. Most bosses have

a tendency to spray fire and then stop - circle around them when they're attacking, and then retrack the moment they stop. If you time it right, you can keep up a constant stream of fire and they will go down FAST. Against normal enemies, it's okay to move and retrack at the same time, because they will typically be more than one. When you get really good, (like me ^_^) you'll be able to retrack in the middle of enemy fire as well, which will increase your attack power considerably.

That should be enough explanation. One last thing to remember - if you move too fast and out of the tracking range, you will lose the mark and have to redo things; this can get you killed fast against the later bosses, so watch it.

2. Always press the attack when using a Special. Ideally, you're playing two player. One guy uses his/her Special, and both players rush forwards to use their Heavy Attacks, then move out, firing as they do so. The beauty of this is because Specials render you invincible, you can pull off this strategy at any time, provided the player being attacked uses the Special so that he/she absorbs the hits. Avoid using two Specials at one time, since that wastes invincibility frames. When used against bosses, this can take them down FAST.

3. Snipe. You can get overwhelmed very easily in Cannon Spike, especially in stages with a lot of enemies. Learn to use the targetting system to move around and circle, and short-range attacks to pick off stragglers. By no means do you wade in and engage enemies.

4. Certain moves have knockback capabilities. By this, I mean that they force an enemy backwards and occasionally even cancel bosses's moves as they are being executed. As you can see, knocking back is an attribute which is not to be taken lightly...I've listed what moves I recall as being able to knockback, but I can't guarantee that all are right.

5. Besides the retracking technique outlined above, there is another tactic you can use - pressing the targetting button and moving while not actually tracking an enemy will cause you to keep firing in one direction while not actually changing the direction of your character. This will allow you to strafe very effectively and should be learnt, if not mastered.

Character Analysis :

There are 4 ratings I will use : Poor, Average, Good and Excellent. These apply to all attacks and whatever I am discussing, except the characters themselves, since each are good in their own way.

I will also design names for all the characters' moves (because I don't have the instruction manual) but don't worry - I won't use them to refer to the moves (well, I'll try not to) to prevent confusion.

For moves, there are five categories :

Startup - How long the move takes to begin.
Lag - How long it takes after the move until you can move again.
Damage - How much damage the move does.
Distance - How far the move travels.
Overall - Self-explanatory.

Evaluation - Analysis and summary of the move.

Nothing will be provided for Normal Shots since they are the same for all characters.

Shiba

Summary : Shiba is a close-range sniper. I.e, he engages enemies close up, and then moves away quickly. He's pretty well-rounded in that he can play a distance game as well, but his Heavy Shot changes his game to a more melee oriented one. He's also one of the more self-sufficient characters in the game - as long as you don't use his laggy melee moves, he doesn't really need a supporting character the way Cammy or Arthur do. Simone players will find him easier to use, and vice versa.

Moves :

Heavy Shot (Plasma Cannon) - Shiba fires a large blast of energy shaped like a bubble, which travels a short distance, expands slightly, then disappears.

Startup : Excellent
Lag : Average
Damage : Poor
Distance : Average
Overall : Good

Evaluation - Despite it's lack of distance and the lag after it, the Plasma Cannon's area of effect and spread-fire capabilities make it Shiba's main weapon. Get in close from the side and fire, then move away. Be careful to use it only when enemies aren't TOO near you...also, the

effectiveness of this decreases as you progress further in the game, because then enemies can take the damage dished out by the weapon and attack you. Also, if you hold down the button, the blast will travel further.

Heavy Attack (Skate Hurricane) - Shiba does an extended version of his Skate Spin which hits multiple times.

Startup : Good
Lag : Poor
Damage : Good
Distance : Average
Overall : Good

Evaluation - Treat this as a weaker version of Simone's Strike Haze. While it comes out faster, it does much less damage and because of it's smaller arc, doesn't hit as many enemies as Simone's does. In most cases, you're a lot better off circling to the side and using his Plasma Cannon instead. Only use this when you're anticipating a mass attack of enemies.

Normal Attack (Skate Spin) - Shiba spins around on his skateboard, hitting enemies around him.

Startup : Good
Lag : Average
Damage : Average
Distance : Average
Overall : Average

Evaluation - As you can see, an average move. This is Shiba's bread-and-butter Normal Attack and really doesn't do much - it does come out fast, though. Simone's is again superior, but this one has it's uses.

Special (Ghost Sweeper) - Shiba pauses and then floats up, surrounded by purple energy. He then fires a bunch of homing ghosts which seek and destroy enemies.

Startup : Average
Lag : Good
Damage : Average
Distance : Excellent
Overall : Excellent

Evaluation : Since this is one of the two Specials which don't require aiming (actually, even Megaman's Blaster Roll requires some direction) I'd rate this pretty highly. It doesn't do much damage, but it does allow you to fire it off and attack/get away however you might choose. The

only problem with this Special is that it tends to go for the boss rather than the weaker enemies - sometimes this is good, sometimes it isn't.

Arthur

Summary : Arthur is the strongest character in the game, period. With the exception of Megaman's Mega Typhoon, no other attack does as much damage as he can deal. He's also as slow as hell, and many of his attacks have very bad lag. With this in mind, he is best played in the two player game. However, provided you stay out of the way and only attack when it's safe, he can be a force to be reckoned with in a single player game as well, as he is extremely powerful.

Heavy Shot (Missile Salvo) - Arthur fires a bunch of missiles from his arms - these have recoil and push him back slightly.

Startup : Average
Lag : Poor
Damage : Excellent
Distance : Good
Overall : Good

Evaluation : This is strictly a distance/backup weapon. Because of the HORRIBLE lag and bad startup, Arthur is quite vulnerable to attack while using this. On the plus side, once he starts firing, there is likely to be little left where the missiles hit. Like Bulleta's Gas Spray, you can move Arthur around while he is firing this, which gives you some mobility. In any case, try to use this at medium/long range, or you will be punished for it.

Heavy Attack (Grim Charge) - Arthur shouts and lunges forwards with his lance. *Knockback*

Startup : Good
Lag : Poor
Damage : Excellent
Distance : Good
Overall : Good

Evaluation : This can singlehandedly take out normal enemies - does almost as much damage as Simone's Strike Haze, the be-all and end-all of melee attacks. When using it, try to sideline enemies from a diagonal angle so you can hit multiple targets at once. And try not to get hemmed in - it's quite easy, since this attack takes you forwards fast and you have bad lag afterwards.

Normal Attack (Knight Thrust) - Arthur thrusts forwards with his lance.

Startup : Good
Lag : Good
Damage : Good
Distance : Good
Overall : Good

Evaluation : As you can see, this is a Good attack. ^_^ It falls short of Excellent because it just doesn't cut it - while it's all-rounded, it doesn't work that well in all situations. It can, however, take out most foes in one or two attacks. Use it to snipe (yes, Arthur can snipe) then move away before retaliation can take place.

Special (Beam Storm) - Arthur charges up and releases four emerald beams of energy.

Startup : Good
Lag : Average
Damage : Good
Distance : Good
Overall : Good

Evaluation : One of the better "beam supers". The advantages of this as opposed to the others are that it fires out in one complete attack and actually has some range! Whatever the case, the optimal range for this is medium/long, like most of his attacks. This is also excellent for taking out of bunch of enemies who are close together.

Cammy

Summary : Sorry, Street Fighter fans...I just don't think Cammy is a very good character. In fact, I think both her and the other SF character in the game, Charlie, are the two worse ones. Why? They're too average. There's nothing they really do that well and that another character cannot match...perhaps some of it stems from the fact that I can't combo very well. Well, read the moves and decide for yourself.

Heavy Shot (Dual Flare) - Cammy pauses for a split-second and releases two huge shots from her guns. *Knockback*

Startup : Good
Lag : Average
Damage : Average
Distance : Good

Overall : Average

Evaluation : Nothing really much to say about this move. It's not as good as many of the other characters, but it alright enough. Does decent damage, comes out pretty fast. It's also one of the few Heavy Shots to have knockback capability, which almost gets it a Good rating. (But not quite.)

Heavy Attack (Cannon Spike) - Cammy flips in the air and does a Cannon Spike. *Knockback*

Startup : Excellent

Lag : Average

Damage : Good

Distance : Poor

Overall : Good

Evaluation : The only reason this move gets a Good is because of the startup and combo potential. Besides that, because it doesn't do THAT much damage and has bad lag, (not to mention the sucky range) it's not very good. You've got to plan when to use this one.

Normal Attack (Hooligan Combination) - Cammy does a series of normal attacks (reminiscent of her Hooligan Combination from SF) ending in a Spiral Arrow.

Startup : Excellent

Lag : Poor (if completed) Good (if not)

Damage : Average

Distance : Good

Overall : Good

Evaluation : Again, this move falls short of Excellent status since it's far too easy to pump the button and end up with a Spiral Arrow, which takes forever to recover from. Besides that, the speed and distance covered by the move make it an great choice for fast in-close assaults. Probably Cammy's best move.

Special (Cluster Spread) - Cammy spins around, flinging out a series of grenades in a short arc around her.

Startup : Good

Lag : Average

Damage : Average

Distance : Poor

Overall : Average

Evaluation : Not too great. The bombs don't travel very far and while they do arc, it can be tough to aim them in a pitched battle. The advantage of

this move is that it can get you out of scrapes fast (since the bombs explode around you) and make following them up with a Heavy Attack very efficient. However, the move does weak damage.

Charlie

Summary : I don't really like Charlie. Although he has his good points (balanced strength and defense with more of an emphasis on power, making a pretty well-rounded character) he doesn't do anything that Megaman couldn't do better. Also, if you really want a powerhouse, Arthur far outshines Charlie in terms of damage. (Except for his Flash Kick, which is REALLY powerful.) In addition, most of his moves are really slow...well, see for yourself, I guess.

Heavy Shot (Force Arrow) - Charlie fires a triangular blast of energy from his weapon, which drills into the enemy.

Startup : Good
Lag : Average
Damage : Good
Distance : Good
Overall : Average

Evaluation : Doesn't do much for me. Is more powerful than let's say, Cammy's Dual Flare, but it's bad startup prevents it from being truly useful. It does do good damage, though, and has the rare property of allowing you to fire and then move around after it has hit.

Heavy Attack (Flash Kick) - Charlie does what is basically Guile's Flash Kick. *Knockback*

Startup : Poor
Lag : Average
Damage : Good (one hit) Excellent (two hits)
Distance : Average
Overall : Good

Evaluation : If you're using this move, BE SURE to use it up close. Why? Because it will hit twice for what is possible the most powerful move in the game (next to Megaman's Mega Typhoon)
However, it's other bad points keep it from getting a Excellent rating, though the damage is nothing to laugh at. It works very well against bosses, but you'd be better off firing Force Arrow for normal enemies.

Normal Attacks (Commando Barrage) - Charlie rushes forwards with an array of punches and kicks.

Startup : Good
Lag : Average
Damage : Good
Distance : Good
Overall : Good

Evaluation : This is a cross between Simone's Zankuusen and Megaman's Rocket Punches - hits hard and fast, but doesn't do much beyond that. Has more effect area than Megaman's attacks, but doesn't do as much damage and has less range; lags behind Simone's. Because it only hits twice, you've got to be sure you'll kill your enemy with it.

Special (Sonic Blade) - Charlie does a series of Sonic Booms.

Startup : Good
Lag : Average
Damage : Average
Distance : Good
Overall : Good

Evaluation : Wins out over Simone's Special because this has limited directional changing abilities - i.e, you can turn Charlie around slightly when using this. It also grants a long period of invincibility and fires many Sonic Booms, both of which are good.

Simone

Summary : Simone is the close-range queen of the game. Strike Haze is an incredibly potent weapon, and her Ion Lance sucks so much that it basically can't do anything...making her reliant on melee to do any real damage. If using her in one-player mode, run around a lot and snipe, making good use of her Zankuusen -if playing with someone else, she can take a more active role, running into the thick of things to do more damage.

Heavy Shot (Ion Lance) - Simone fires a blue spear of light from her gun.

Startup : Excellent
Lag : Good
Damage : Poor
Distance : Good
Overall : Poor

Evaluation : Three words - this move sucks. Sure, it comes out fast and goes through enemies, but it does crap damage! So little damage that you're better off using your Normal Shot and circling and/or attacking with melee moves. It might

be good for sniping from afar in certain occasions, and it can plow through lots of weak enemies easily, but that's about it for it's uses.

Heavy Attack (Strike Haze) - Simone leaps and spins in a circular motion, striking with her swords multiple times. *Knockback*

Startup : Average
Lag : Good
Damage : Excellent
Distance : Good
Overall : Excellent

Evaluation : Knowledge of this move is essential to mastering Simone, and knowing how and when to use it can mean the difference between victory and defeat. This thing is so powerful it allows Simone to effectively rush in and take out a whole bunch of enemies all on her own - if used correctly, that is. The two things you must remember about this move are 1) the startup is only average and 2) while it has good lag, it still has lag. Also, don't become too reliant on the move and start whipping it out with impunity - it is intended to bolster your assaults, not become them.

Normal Attack (Zankusen - Cleaving Air Flash) - Simone does a short rush forwards, slashing with her swords.

Startup : Excellent
Lag : Good
Damage : Good
Distance : Average
Overall : Good

Evaluation : Basically, treat this as Strike Haze Lite. It works in much the same way, except that the execution is faster and it does less damage. Use this to snipe often. Because of it's damage potential, it can actually be used to clear out crowds if you are fast enough.

Special (Senkouzan - Battle Light Slash) - Simone shouts "Kakugo!" ("En garde!") and sends out a beam of blue light.

Startup : Good
Lag : Average
Damage : Average
Distance : Good
Overall : Poor

Evaluation : This is basically a souped-up version

of her Ion Lance, and it still suffers from most of the same problems. This attack is probably the worst Special in the game as it is terribly difficult to aim, even more so than Charlie's Sonice Blade, which at least can has limited directional change in movement and offers longer invincibility. Use this only in close quarters against bosses to get the maximum mileage out of it.

Megaman

Summary : Megaman is cheap. That's all I can say. ^_^ If you're looking for an easier time with the game, use him. His Mega Typhoon does so much damage that it can kill virtually anything it connects with and take out some bosses in a mere two hits - if you thought that was bad, his other moves aren't exactly pushovers either.

Heavy Shot (Mega Buster) - Megaman fires a blast of blue energy reminiscent of his standard charged up attack in most of his games.

Startup : Excellent
Lag : Good
Damage : Average
Distance : Good
Overall : Good

Evaluation : I was originally going to give this move an Excellent rating, but it's low damage keeps it from being that useful. This causes knockdown to SOME enemies. Besides that, use it as you would a more powerful Normal Shot - think of each Mega Buster blast as 2 seconds of Normal Shot concentrated.

Heavy Attack (Mega Typhoon) - Megaman spins around, creating a typhoon that moves a short distance in the direction he is facing.

Startup : Poor
Lag : Average
Damage : Excellent
Distance : Poor
Overall : Excellent

Evaluation : It's the damage. That alone gets it the Excellent rating - once you've seen this thing in action, you will realize why Megaman is cheap. However, it has BAD startup, and Megaman can be hit out of it very easily. Try to aim the typhoon in the direction of the enemies you are facing so you get maximum mileage out of it. Also, because of it's extreme slowness, be careful

of using it against fast bosses/foes. Basically, though, it's damage will make it your main weapon.

Normal Attack (Rocket Punches) - Megaman does a series of punches and kicks in the direction he is facing, ending with a rushing punch.

Startup : Excellent
Lag : Good (if not completed) Poor (if completed)
Damage : Good
Distance : Good
Overall : Excellent

Evaluation : This is basically Megaman's version of Simone's Zankuusen. The main differences are that it causes somewhat less damage, moves along a more lateral path (meaning you can hit less targets) and if you complete the final hit, does significantly more damage but leaves you wide open. Use mainly as a sniping weapon because of the lack of multi-hit capability.

Special (Blaster Roll) - Megaman leaps into the air, tucking himself into a ball surrounded with purple energy and rolling around.

Startup : Average
Lag : Good
Damage : Good
Distance : Excellent
Overall : Excellent

Evaluation : Pretty good. Because Megaman is invincible for the entire duration of the roll, he can attract enemy fire in a two-player game, making it extra useful. Combo this off a Mega Typhoon for the best results. The drawback to this move is that because of the limited time, you've got to be very tight with your aiming and only hit the most important targets.

Bulleta (B.B Hood)

Summary : Hmmmm...I'd have to say that Bulleta is a cross between Shiba and Megaman. She has the close combat abilities and speed of the former while being able to pack a punch like the latter. This doesn't mean she can do everything, though - most of her moves, while doing well in some areas, suck in others. She's the hardest character in the game to classify into a rigid role, and should be played to see whether you like her first.

Heavy Shot (Gas Spray) - Buletta fires a stream of

what seems to be acidic gas at her enemies.

Startup : Good
Lag : Excellent
Damage : Average
Distance : Average
Overall : Good

Evaluation : This move only gets a Good if you know how to use it - if not, downgrade it to an Average. Basically, the key to utilizing the Gas Spray is to move; unlike every other Heavy Shot in the game, Bulleta can actually move while firing this weapon. This allows her to semi-strafe from the side and exercise some degree of control over her angle of fire, offsetting the low damage. The fact that it's other aspects are pretty good just makes it better.

Heavy Attack (Hyper Apple for You) - Bulleta says "Hai, kore ageru!" ("Here, I'll give you this!") and tosses a Molotov cocktail at her enemy.

Startup : Excellent
Lag : Excellent
Damage : Poor
Distance : Poor
Overall : Good

Evaluation : Again, this move takes some getting used to (which is why I recommend you pick Bulleta only if you're comfortable with her) It has the best startup and lag of any move in the game (it comes out near instaneously and you can even move while throwing it) but it does pitiful damage and has horrible range. Therefore, you have to use it like some modified grenade - rushing in to chuck a few, then getting back out again. Basically, the key to Bulleta is movement; moving while firing your weapons. This move can actually be used to snipe, but you must be careful not to get entangled in large fights or rely on it to battle bosses.

Normal Attack (Skate Sweep) - Bulleta does a quick side sweep with her skater.

Startup : Excellent
Lag : Excellent
Damage : Poor
Distance : Average
Overall : Good

Evaluation : Same thing as her Heavy Attack - quick, but it sucks in the damage department. Use it much the same way you would the Hyper Apple for you. Because it has next to no combo potential, do not sit there and pump the button hoping for more damage.

Game Walkthrough :

Not all the stages are in order (as you'll realize as you play through the game) so I'll just be listing them randomly.

1. Occupied Town

Not too difficult. Use Normal Shot to clear out the irritating security robots, then circle around and snipe with close-combat attacks to kill the rest of the opposition. The second wave will then appear - repeat the process and they should all die.

Sub-Boss (Buggy Hayabusa)

Easy as pie. It only has a puny little machinegun to hit you with, so simply circle, firing your Normal Shot and closing it to snipe when needed.

Boss (Rick Blue, Ken Brown and Bob Green)

As I've said, KEEP MOVING. The bosses will try to use their combined patterns to pin you down, so be careful. Try to stay out of their way until you have killed at least one of their number. (you can attempt to snipe if your character is fast enough, but I don't recommend it) Retracking works quite well here. The bosses's patterns are as follows :

Ken Brown - will try to fire homing missiles at you. Due to the long delay he takes in stopping then firing the missiles, this is the safest of the three to attack normally, though don't do it when the other two are crowding you. Simply keep moving and the missiles will miss.

Rick Blue - stay AWAY from the front of this guy, and he will rush at you with multiple punches - these can hurt bad if they all connect. He also moves pretty fast, so don't get caught unawares. Besides that, simply sticking to his tail and firing will bring him down easily.

Bob Green - fights much like Rick Blue, but uses less damaging but wider arcing swipes of his sword instead. Fight him like you would his comrade.

2. Unholy Dwelling

One of the easiest stages in the game. Normal Shot should kill the gargolyes, and the zombies are so slow they pose no threat. When the large zombies appear, stay out of their range and hit them with Heavy Shots from afar (unless they're only a few, in which case you can go right in and kill them) The only problem here is the Dobermen and the rest of the enemies that appear later - as long as you keep

circling, you should be okay, but the enemies will try and crowd you, so when they first appear, try to use some Heavy Attacks to take out as many as you can.

Sub-Boss (Bio Gorilla Bloody)

Very easy if you know his patterns, which is as follows : when he sends out insects, blast through them with a Heavy Shot, rush in and whack a few times, then escape. He will then attempt to pursue you - you can avoid him easily, just don't get close or he will do a damaging charge. Rinse, cycle, repeat.

Boss (Bio-Monster Giant-BB)

There are several steps to beating this guy. At the start of the battle, hit him with a Heavy Shot or two, then get out of the way of his shots. Then deal with the enemy zombies, avoiding shots all the while. Then you can begin your attack in earnest. You can basically attack this guy any way you want, but keep in mind that if you get too close, he'll use a fast claw swipe that does good damage and is hard to avoid.

3. The Slope

This is one of the tougher stages. Deal with the sentry robots using Normal Shots, then when the other white-suited men appear, switch your strategy to the other moves. Just keep a good distance away, sniping when necessary, and you should be fine. The trouble is when the flamethrower guys appear. These guys will crowd you as well as make sniping difficult with their weapons, so make staying away a priority.

Sub-Boss (Flying Fortress Kabuki)

This guy can be really easy if you keep a sharp eye out on what he's doing, if not, he can be quite troublesome. Basically, you want to keep in close to do damage, but be able to get out of the way fast enough to deal with his barrage of shots. When you see him about to fire, zoom out and try to duck in between the lines of fire. Because it's a bit hard to maneuver, it's imperative that you take out the enemies surrounding him. Alternatively, you can rush in and simply barrage the boss with Heavy Attacks and Specials - he'll go down quite quick. Don't bother with the helpers in this stage, because they will simply reappear if you kill them.

Boss (Snowboard ROBO Rusher)

This is the easiest boss in the game. Don't think so? Let me explain it's pattern. It will alternate between firing and staying still. It's more than

simple; just attack when it's not doing so, and retrack your fire while it is. The trick here is not to get distracted by the funny attack patterns and amount of shots the boss has. Whatever you do, once you beat this guy, you've got to contend with...

Second form of Boss (Snowboard ROBO Rusher)

If anything, this form is even easier. Just move vertically to avoid the bombs and shots (the shots are kinda quick, so be careful) When he's moving from side to side, you can get in a free Heavy Attack, but do NOT stay close to him for too long or he will hit you with his arms.

4. The Perished Town

Sub-Boss (Fallen Balrog)

Easy. He'll only throw knives (which can be avoided by staying in a straight line) and rush you. You can avoid both by simply staying away and firing. Rinse, cycle, repeat.

Boss (Big Wheel Dragon)

Keep away from this thing while it's firing bullets, but the moment it stops and starts to move around, you can close. Because its helpers are quite weak, you can focus on hitting it instead of clearing them out. It should go down easily.

5. The Abandoned Bridge

Not too tough. The gunmen can be quite dangerous if you let them crowd you, so don't - hit them with Heavy Attacks and Shots from afar. Circle at length if you need to, and keep a good distance away so that when they spray fire, you don't get hit. A second wave will arrive, which you can treat the same way as the first.

Sub-Boss (Gunship Delfin)

The helper robots surrounding this boss are quite tough, so you may or may not want to kill them. In any case, this guy can be beaten much the same way of most of the sub-bosses - staying away most of the time and closing in to hit with Heavy Attacks when the opportunity presents itself. Just be sure you don't get caught in its streams of fire.

Boss (UFO ROBO Vader)

This one is quite tough, mainly because of the fact that it's dangerous to approach it at any time - it will change attack pattern VERY fast. So close in only when you can, because it can zoom around and attack very rapidly. As long as you have a sharp eye and good reflexes, you should be able to avoid

whatever it throws at you - for the bullet spread, find a safe area and for the four shot pattern, move around a lot.

6. The King of the Jungle

This is actually a quite tough stage. The normal robots are easy enough, but once those are destroyed, powerful spearmen will appear. Depending on your character and playing style, you should either rush them and take them out fast or stay away and fire from afar. When the first three are destroyed, a powerful robot spewing bullets will appear - combined with the spearmen that will appear, you might want to use a Special here to make things easier for yourself. Whatever your decision, be sure to fight cautiously and not lose your cool.

Sub-Boss (Crazy Machine Jet Tiger)

This guy is tougher than most sub-bosses...in fact, I'll go so far as to say that he might be the toughest one in the game. Because of his fast movement and erratic attack pattern, it's tough to guess what he'll do next, so for the most part, you should endeavour to stay away and not get too close - the only exception is when he stops moving, then you should nail him with melee attacks. Slow characters are at a disadvantage when fighting this guy - try not to use attacks that will leave you too open.

Boss (Jungle Master Sasuke)

Another boss in which knowledge of his pattern is essential to success. When the fight starts, he will begin firing a rapid-fire blast at you - dodge this quick and track him. During the fight, he will alternate this with a rushing spear attack - if you have a Heavy Attack with knockback, simply use it as he approaches. Remember to keep moving to avoid the shots. If you don't have the requisite Heavy Attack, simply circling and retracking will do the trick as well.

7. Uninhabited Station

Middling difficulty. Don't bother with the robots on the rails - instead, concentrate on the other two types of enemies that appear. One of them has the capability to really spray fire at you (it's the lighter colored one) so you should make taking them out your priority. Besides looking out for that, the rest of the stage should be a cinch.

Sub-Boss (Dual Mech Savage Bros)

See the life bar of this sub-boss? Well, you're in luck - it really is at short as it seems. Just rush this guy and hammer at him; no fancy tactics required.

Boss (Insect ROBO Overlord)

When it first appears, hit it with some close-range attacks, then get away to avoid the bullet spray it will shoot. Repeat the cycle (be careful, it's pattern and movement will change) until it dies.

Second form of Boss (Attacker Antonio)

Again, when it first forms, hit with some close-range attacks (two Normal or one Heavy) then get away. Its bullet spreads are harmless enough (stay low at the bottom of the screen) but the railgun blasts can be very deadly - it fires after shooting two spreads, so it should be easy to avoid after reading this. Repeat the cycle until it dies.

8. Geofront Entrance

I recommend you use a Special the INSTANT you start the stage, because if you don't, the enemies here can pose a serious problem. Whether or not you choose to, circle and fire - don't attempt to get close unless you know you can, because these guys can react fast. When they're dead, it's on to...

Sub-Boss (Revenger Balrog)

Again, you might want to use a Special here since his henchmen are quite hardy...once they're done with, though, the sub-boss himself is a piece of cake. Just avoid his wall-spring attacks (keep moving and you should have no trouble) and maintain a steady stream of Normal Shot fire.

Boss (Revenger Kabuki)

Again, depending on your approach, this guy's difficulty can vary. Be sure to take out his soldiers, then you can concentrate on him. He's got two main attacks - a four-bullet shot and a wider spread. Both can be avoided by sticking to his back (he turns slowly) but if you have to face him head-on (as you will when his back is to the wall and you can't get behind) you can deal with both attacks but staying directly in front and jockeying around a bit. Despite the speed of his shots, you can actually take no damage if you follow this advice...lastly, you can attack this guy with melee attacks, but choose your opportunities carefully.

9. Deep Shrine

Sub-Boss (Cat Lady Beauty)

She's actually a lot easier than she looks, but in order to kill her effectively you must get rid of her two wolves - actually, you should do so anyway because they give you two life capsules each.

Anyway, once you've done so, use the tried-and-true circling and retracking technique and her sniper shots should all miss - if you want advance warning, she lifts her rifle to attack before actually shooting, so there's a hint right there.

Second Form of Sub-Boss (Cat Lady Beauty...actually, more like Winged Demon)

This one's tough. Despite intense analysis of her patterns, I can't come up with a foolproof strategy to deal with her...well, the first bit of advice I can give you is - never stand in front of her. Doing so is courting death. When she flies forwards and sends out a bullet spray, immediately dive to the left or right, firing as you do so. She'll then swing her blade arms in wide arcs, so continue to stay away. Only when she starts firing the red beams of energy can you get to her back and attack with one or two Normal Attacks. Basically, against this boss, don't try anything too risky as she is FAST.

10. Extreme Sphere

Boss (Psychiccer Sting)

First, use a Special to take out the four soldiers that the boss has - like most other battles of this nature, you'll find it much harder if you don't. After that, hmmm...what to say about the second-last boss? Well, his damage potential is dangerously high, but if you stay sharp you should be able to avoid the bulk of his attacks. The trick is to stay directly in front of him so his lightning balls miss you and you only need to shift position a bit to deal with his other attacks. Because he's quite fast, avoid using Heavy Attacks and Shots unless your character happens to have quick ones. Besides what I've written, the only real advice I can give you here is to be quick on your feet and use what you've learnt up to this point. When the illusions appear, hang back and use the lateral Normal Shot tactic to spot the real one.

Final Boss (Metal Blade Nightmare)

He's dead easy. Just use the circle and retrack technique and he will go down in no time. The only real problem is the fact that his homing attack is well-nigh impossible to avoid...you can attempt to close in when he fires it, but you'll probably get hit anyway. Whatever the case, you shouldn't really lose too much life here - a good thing, as you'll need to save some for the last boss.

Second form of Final Boss (Flame Robo Nightmare)

Which is this guy here. Like Cat Lady Beauty's second form, there is no one easy way to beat the final boss. Staying away is once again a good

strategy, but given it's array of attacks and speed, taking at least some damage is guaranteed. Getting too close, on the other hand, will make it use it's sword swipes, which do some major damage. Your best bet is again to see when he's off guard and act accordingly. Alternating backing off and closing in works well, I find, because it gives you some leeway to avoid it's massive bullet spread.

Well, that's it, folks. The final piece of information I can give you (which should be damn obvious) is that completing the game on any difficult setting will give you access to the Gallery function in the main menu. If I find any other secrets, hints or tips, rest assured that I will inform you.

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