

Marvel vs Capcom 2 Advanced Strategies

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Advanced Marvel vs Capcom 2 FAQ

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Feel free to print out this FAQ, but I ask that you do not alter it, put it on a site, or link to it without my permission. (Chances are I'll say yes, so just drop me a mail first)

This FAQ is not here to teach you the characters moves, or the basic mechanics of the game. If that's the kind of information you are looking for, there are many great FAQs on gamefaqs.com designed for just that purpose.

This FAQ is here to teach you how to WIN, what characters to use, and what to do with them to ensure when the match is over, your opponent is the one putting in more quarters.

First, get that notion of "cheap" out of your head right now. Marvel vs Capcom 2 is as much a strategy game as it is a fighting game, and those that play trying just to dash in for combos are in for a rude awakening when they find that they can't get in to land them because they aren't giving the game enough thought. Using your assists, and controlling space, or "zoning" is the most important skill to have in this game. When you can shut down your opponents offense, he's bound to get frustrated and play in a way he's not used to, allowing you to take control.

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Part I: Abbreviations, notion, and Introduction:

Abbreviations:

- lk: short kick
- mk: forward/medium kick
- rh: strong kick/roundhouse
- wp: jab/weak punch
- mp: medium punch
- fp: fierce punch
- qcf: quarter circle forward on the joystick/control pad

hcf: half circle forward

tiger knee: This is in reference to the old street fighter move sagat had. the motion is down, down/forward, forward, up/forward, used for doing some supers done in the air, quickly from a ground position. More on this later

c: crouch (c. rh means crouching roundhouse)

s: standing (s. rh means standing roundhouse)

sj: super jump, or moves done during a super jump (launch, sj lk means launch them, then super jump up with a short kick)

j: jump, same as above

dj: double jump, same as above

tj: triple jump, same as above

ad: air dash, same as above (ad fp means hit with fierce punch during an air dash)

pp: both punches

kk: both kicks

d: down

df: down/forward

f: forward

uf: up/forward

u: up

ub: up/back

b: back

db: down/back

OTG: off the ground, used to refer to hitting opponent off the ground to continue the combo.

For example after connecting with a psylocke anti air assist, magneto can dash forward, connect a crouching short kick to pick them up off the ground, combo into a crouching fierce

to launch, then proceed with an air combo. Keep in mind these can be tech rolled.

XX: refers to cancelling into this move.

For example ryu can throw a fireball, then cancel into a super fireball during the animation

for the fireball.

This would be writting as qcf+p XX qcf+pp

qcf+p being the motion for the fireball, qcf+pp being the motion for the super fireball

/\ : means you are jumping now

\/ : means you are landing now

Example of combo notation

With strider

c. lk, c. wp, c. fp /\ sj wp, sj wk, sj mp, sj mk, qcf+p

This means connect with a crouching light kick, comboed into a crouching weak punch, comboed into a crouching fierce punch (which launches them), now jump up and while super jumping, connect a weak punch, comboed into a weak kick, comboed into a medium punch, comboed into a medium kick, comboed into his special move qcf+p (The excalibur, multi hit dash move)

Simple enough?

First, lets talk about the most potent characters, also referred to as "top tier" characters. (In no particular order):

Storm
Cable
Magneto
Spiral
Sentinel
Blackheart
Doctor Doom
Strider
Cyclops

There are some other good characters, but these are the ones that take over a match with their presence, and, when played with the proper strategy, have the highest win ratio.

Why is that you say? Well lets move on to the individual characters, their strategies, and their combos.

Part II. The characters, their strategies, and their combos:

----- The Magneto Section -----

Magneto: Boy, if you've seen his dash, his air dash, and air combos with multiple magnetic tempests, you don't need to ask why. He has the fastest ground dash in the game, the fastest air dash in the game, he can air dash in 8 directions, builds super meter quickly, and unlike most other "pixies" (characters focused on rushing the opponent down to land combos), he even has some projectiles. He also has a safe way to tag in off of other characters supers, via the magnetic shockwave. Not only that, but of all the characters with advanced, hard hitting combos, Magnetos are one of the easiest to learn with practice. His Ground dash also covers practically the entire length of the screen.

Best assists to use with Magneto on point:

Cyclops anti air, Psylocke anti air.

Both of these assists allow easy combo follow ups, whether it be by cyclops (Dashing forward, super jumping, and manually comboing them), or psylocke (hitting them off the ground with a low short kick, comboed into a crouching fierce launch, proceed with combo). Psylocke is a slightly better choice, much easier to combo off of, but cyclops has more range on his assist, and is a better character on point as well. Its a matter of preference. I'd recommend psylocke for the beginning player.

A great tactic with magneto, because of his quick dash, both ground and air, is to dash forward, jump up, then call an assist while air dashing over their head. Because of Magneto's switch in position relative to his opponent, your opponent will be forced to press in the opposite to direction to block, which can be difficult to do on reaction, or else eat a combo follow up.

Another slightly difficult strategy to master, but definitely worth learning, and very effective, is the "triangle jump". In its simplest form it is super jumping forward, then cancelling your super jump into an air dash diagonally down and forward, towards the opponent, then quickly attacking from the air. This can be difficult to block if repeated.

(If you've ever fought the cpu when it got pissed off with rogue or storm, and watched them go beserk on you with repeated air dashes, you've seen this. That's essentially repeated triangle jumps). Once your opponent gets wise to this, you can triangle jump, do some ground hits, triangle jump again, do more ground hits...this is incredibly difficult to block, and with practice, you can combo into a launcher on reaction, making magneto

incredibly dangerous.

Magneto's ground dash is so quick that he can get to the other side of the screen to punish many things that other characters cannot. For example, after blocking Iron Man's proton cannon from the opposite side of the screen, Magneto can easily dash all the way to the other side and combo Iron Man before he recovers to block.

If you find yourself needing super meter, or just want to stall, Magneto can super jump up while throwing fierce punches, air dash, throw some more fiercees, land safely, and repeat if you prefer, this builds meter quickly.

So you've been rushing down your opponent, they haven't had a chance to breathe, and you've managed to land a hit, and are ready to do a combo exhibition =), but now what?

First, I'll mention Magneto's most basic, staple, air combo:

(Note that all of the combos I'm about to mention can also be started by first connecting with a Psylocke AAA assist, dashing forward with crouch lk, crouching fierce, then proceeding as normal, with Cyclops AAA assist, you'll have to dash forward, super jump after them manually, then go straight into the air combo chain, sans the launcher)

You can also perform all of these combos by first doing a jump in. Depending on the range that you hit them, you may need to do a ground dash after making contact and once you land, to get in range to continue the combo, it needs to be done quickly but is simple enough with a little practice. This is useful for all characters to be adept at.

c. lk, c. fp /\ sj wp, sj wk, sj mp, sj mk, hyper grav XX Magnetic Tempest.

This is an unusual combo. You'll find that if you attempt to simply do a hyper grav in this combo, it will be too slow to combo, also if you attempt to do a magnetic tempest, it will not combo either, the opponent falls too quickly. You MUST do a hyper grav, then cancel the hyper grav into the magnetic tempest.

Why is that?

When you cancel the hyper grav into the magnetic tempest, during the screen freeze that appears at the startup of all supers, the hyper grav will actually move slightly during this freeze, allowing the hyper grav now to combo with your opponent, and then, the opponent now stuck in the hyper grav, will be hit with the magnetic tempest, doing considerable damage.

This takes some practice getting down. Do it too fast, and you'll cancel the hyper grav into the tempest so quickly that the hyper grav won't even form, thus missing your combo. Do it too slow, and even with the cancel, it won't combo. You have to find the timing for it and this only comes with practice.

This does substantial damage on its own, but the combo doesn't have to stop there =).

You can actually combo more after the tempest in the air combo, making this combo possible:

c. lk, c. fp /\ sj wp, sj wk, sj mp, sj mk, hyper grav XX Magnetic Tempest, sj wk, sj mk, hyper grav XX Magnetic Tempest.

Ouch. After the Tempest ends, quickly hit weak kick, then medium kick, then do another hyper grav cancelled into a magnetic tempest. Lots of damage.

That's stylish, but just not stylish enough for magneto, you can do better than that ;), how about...

c. lk, c. fp /\ sj wp, sj wk, sj mp, sj mk, hyper grav XX Magnetic Tempest, sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, air dash diagonally up forward, ad wp, ad lk, ad mp, ad mk, hyper grav XX Magnetic Tempest.

Very long, very damaging, very stylish =) Also very difficult.

After the first tempest, quickly do the button taps for the 4 hits of the air chain, then air dash up and towards them, do the 4 hits again (you may switch sides with them when you air dash, so be ready to reverse your controls and do the hyper grav in the opposite direction), then do another hyper grav cancelled into a tempest.

If you can pull this off consistently, now you're getting somewhere! But...it doesnt stop there.

c. lk, c. fp /\ sj wp, sj wk, sj mp, sj mk, hyper grav XX Magnetic Tempest, sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, air dash diagonally up forward, ad wp, ad lk, ad mp, ad mk, hyper grav XX Magnetic Tempest, sj wk, sj mk, hyper grav XX magnetic tempest.

Same as above combo, but after the 2nd tempest, quickly do yet another weak kick, then a medium kick, a hyper grav cancelled into a magnetic tempest. Three supers in one air combo! Your rewards for performing that combo are going to either be a very dead character, or someone on the brink of death, depending on how the chunks from the tempest hit them.

Now if you really want ultimate style, and a real way to display to the people in the arcade that you have nothing better to do than practice combos, you can try this =).

c. lk, c. fp /\ sj rh, air dash down/forward, ad wk, ad mk \/ c. fp /\ sj wp, sj wk, sj mp, sj mk, hyper grav XX Magnetic Tempest, sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, air dash diagonally up forward, ad wp, ad lk, ad mp, ad mk, hyper grav XX Magnetic Tempest, sj wk, sj mk, hyper grav XX magnetic tempest.

Very very difficult. After you launch them, jump up and towards them with a roundhouse, then air dash down and towards them, do a weak kick, and a medium kick near the ground, land, and relaunch them with crouching fierce, then jump up and do the air combo. The actual sequence of hitting with the roundhouse, air dashing, doing the 2 hits, landing, and hitting with crouch and fierce isnt actually all that difficult, its actually getting it to combo. If you hit too fast out of your air dash, you wont be close enough to the ground to land and relaunch them before they can block...do it too slow, and they'll block the weak kick, medium kick after the air dash, so you have to find the timing again, just as you do practicing the hyper grav xx magnetic tempest combos. Really only useful for show, but it does build even more super meter than the others. Its nice being able to do an air combo that uses 3 supers, and actually building up more than a bar of super meter during your combo from all the odd hits you've done =).

Something to keep in mind about hyper grav xx magnetic tempest, it can be escaped! Though difficult to do, if your opponent quickly mashes on the buttons and wiggles the joystick when caught in the hyper grav, he can actually escape it and block the tempest.

But it needs to be timed properly and is difficult to do...none the less...on the odd

chance that you come up on someone that can break your tempest combos, what do you do for combos now?

Well, if you've practiced the sj roundhouse, dash down/forward wk, mk, land, relaunch combo above, then you still have some options!

Try this:

c. lk, c. fp /\ sj rh, air dash down/forward, ad wk, ad mk \/ c. fp, magnetic shockwave

Same as above, if you can get down the air dash part, its cake, the shockwave will combo off the launcher and allow you to do some decent damage. Unfortunately if you had them cornered when you did this, only a few hits of the shockwave will hit, in which case you can try this instead:

c. lk, c. fp, /\ sj rh, air dash down/forward, ad wk, ad mk, \/ c. fp /\ sj lp, sj wk, sj mp, sj mk, air dash up/forward, ad lp, ad wk, ad mp, ad mk, EM disruptor.

Fairly straightforward, if you can do the multi tempest combos above, you should be able to do this simple enough. Does decent damage, uses no supers and builds lots of super meter.

This concludes my Magneto section, now go scare some people =)

----- The Cable Section -----

Cable: Do I need to explain this one? He has a projectile that covers a large amount of space and pushes the opponent back, an incredible keep away move in his jumping fierce (the gunshot), a stalling tactic for controlling space while bidding time to call another assist (The grenade), a projectile super with the fastest startup in the game, and one of the characters that can reward your opponent with a dead character for something as innocent as missing a jab. (More on this later). His assists aren't bad either.

Best Assists to use with Cable on point: Many different assists work well with Cable, Depending on whether you want an anti air to set up AHVB (Air Hyper Viper Beams), Such as Cyclops or Psylocke (Cyclops is an excellent choice) or a trapping assist like Sentinel ground assist or Blackheart anti air. Captain Commando's Anti Air Assist also works well.

Its good to start Cable 2nd in line on your team. Have your first character be someone that builds super meter well, so when cable comes in, he'll have lots of meter to work with.

Cables main strategy is keeping the opponent away with his jumping fierce, his viper beam, and his grenade, while calling assists, to do chip damage and build super meter. Contrary to how your local mall scrubs might play cable, doing standing fierce punch x 4 xx viper beam and variants is NOT cables main move, its predictable, easy to jump over, and is an easy way to get killed if you abuse it. I highly recommend actually NEVER using this move while you are learning cable, then later on incorporating it into your game play PROPERLY =P.

While doing all this, you are going to be looking for opportunities to do an AHVB. Since you will be jumping backwards with cable often, you should be in position to quickly react with the super motion to punish them if they do something stupid.

Examples of things to punish with AHVB:

Opponent calling an assist unprotected.
Opponent Attempting to punish an assist that YOU'VE thrown out.
Opponent whiffing (totally missing) with a move.
Opponent in recovery from a move.

Practice doing Cables AHVB with the modified motion, this is the old sagat "tiger knee" motion you might remember from old street fighter games.

The motion is d, df, f, uf+pp

While not an "official" super, if you do this properly, what you'll see is cable instantly hop up, then do the AHVB just inches off the ground. This starts up much quicker than the ground version of the super, and also recovers practically instantly, with no fear of retaliaton.

This starts up so fast you can punish many things that your opponent might think were "safe" moves. (Hint: Almost nothing is safe against cable) =)

I'll refer to this as "tiger knee AHVB"

Example of things you can punish with the "tiger knee AHVB"

Blocking an icebeam from iceman
Blocking an EM disruptor from magneto.
Blocking a viper beam from an opposing cable (whether he did it from ground, OR air!)
Blocking a proton cannon
Blocking a ground hyper viper beam from an opposing cable.
Blocking B.B. Hoods "Cruel Hunting" Super

It starts up so quickly you can even punish pauses between move cancels!
You can punish blackheart between blocking an inferno and when he starts a heart of darkness.
You can punish Sentinel between a crouching fierce comboed into a rocket punch (if you blocked the crouching fierce of course)

And of course if you anticipate your opponent doing just about anything and do a tiger knee AHVB, if they did much of anything besides block or super jump out, they'll get hit.

Ready for the best part? It combos into itself!

That's right, the move recovers so quickly, you can actually link multiple tiger knee AHVBs and have it combo. This can be a real nightmare since one careless mistake, or sloppy assist call, can mean a dead assist, a dead point character, or if you happened to catch them both in it, dead assist and point character!

Ready for some cable combos? =)

c. lk, c. mk, s. rh, fierce viper beam

A no brainer, settle for this if you have absolutely no super meter.

Jump in rh \ / c. lk, c. mk, s. rh, fierce viper beam.

Same as the above, with a roundhouse jump in.

c. lk, c. mk, s. rh, Hyper Viper Beam (Ground)

Easy to do, does good damage, easy to DHC cancel into your partners super.

Tiger knee AHVB, Tiger knee AHVB, AHVB

This is going to take practice, do a tiger knee AHVB, aim the beam downwards, when you land, immediately do another tiger knee AHVB, this time aim upwards, when you land again, this time just jump straight up, and after about half way up, do a normal AHVB, and aim up again. You should combo all 3 together.

If you are doing this to an assist, you can do as many AHVBs as you want! On assists, you dont need to just do 2 tiger knee AHVBs and then a normal jumping one. You just keep doing the tiger knee AHVBs (Dont aim up or down, just mash punch and leave joystick neutral so he waves the beam around) until:

1. The assist dies.
2. You run out of meter.
3. You get bored =)
4. You feel like showing mercy (bah)

If you can master AHVB x 3, your cable immediately becomes something to fear. People become afraid to throw out assists at all, for fear of the assist being completely wiped out. without assists, fighting a cable player using assists properly, it can be very difficult to get in on him.

c. lk, c. mk, s. rh, AHVB x 3 (First two done with tiger knee motion, first aimed down, 2nd aimed up, 3rd done off regular jump, same as AHVB x 3 listed above)

This one's going to take some practice.

If you try to cancel the rh immediately into a tiger knee AHVB, you'll end up getting a ground HVB, which you dont want (The tiger knee AHVB isnt an actual super move motion, so you can't "cancel" into it). You have to let the s. rh almost end, then quickly do the tiger knee AHVB motion. If you do it properly, you'll hit them with an AHVB while they are still in hit stun from your standing roundhouse, then you can proceed to hit them with more AHVBs.

If you happen to have someone like storm along as your next character in line, you can DHC off the 3rd AHVB into storms hail (or whatever else might combo with it), resulting in almost guaranteed death to the victim.

That about does it for Cable, now hit the arcade and scare your opponents into forgetting the assist button exists ;).

----- The Doctor Doom Section -----

Doctor Doom: Doom has a projectile for every occasion. The photon shot (Multiple pink lasers) is great for stalling, building meter, doing block damage, and overall controlling the match. His jumping fierce (The extended laser from his gun), is one of the best normal moves in the game, controlling space on the ground, keeping the opponent pinned down, stalling while preparing to call another assist, and building meter. His Photon Array Super is great for all the same reasons as the normal shot, but does a great deal

of block damage. Has simple to do, damaging air combos, he can actually pixie a little, and he has one of the best assists in the game (Anti Air, the Molecular Shield assist) Oh, did I mention he can air dash and fly?

Best assists to use with Doom on point:

Blackheart Anti air, Captain Commando Anti Air, Sentinel Ground

Doom is a pretty simple character with a simple strategy. He wants to keep you away, and he wants to chip you to death. He's quite capable of doing both. Doom's two most important moves are his jumping fierce, and his photon shot. By Simply calling an assist with good coverage, super jumping up and shooting out a pair of photon shots, landing, and repeating, you can get a good trap game going pretty easily (more details on traps later). Also his jumping fierce, done from a standard jump backwards (hit fierce right as you jump so you give the laser time to extend all the way across the screen), is a great move for controlling space, and can be a real annoyance to taller characters. By just jumping backwards repeatedly hitting fierce, and calling some assists, you can be a real pest, controlling space, and building meter freely. An amusing side bonus of the jumping fierce is it is, in fact, an overhead attack like a jump in. This means against tall characters that try to crouch under it, but are still tall enough for the laser to hit them, if the laser touches them while they are crouching, they will take the hit =).

The super photon shot is a great chipping move. Hop on up to the top of the screen, and just fire them off. A great way to cash in some spare super meter for free chip damage.

For even better results, jump towards them and do the super right near their head. They'll block ALL the photons and take tremendous chip damage, something like 20% in block damage. Just be careful about retaliation after doing this (Cable can hit you with a tiger knee AHVB after you do so, some other quick things will hit as well) Of course if it'll only take about that much block damage to kill them off, do it whenever you get the chance. =)

Doom's launcher, the crouching fierce, has good range and reaches both sides of doom. Its slow to start up, and slow to recover however, so be prepared to cancel it into something safe like a qcf+p, or protect with an assist.

Though Doom is a keep away/chipping character at heart, he can actually dash/jump in and combo with some success, just don't go overboard doing so, but use it to supplement your game when necessary.

Some Doctor Doom combos:

c. lk, c. mk, s. rh (cancel off the first hit), electric cage super (qcf+pp)

Easy to do, doesnt really do much damage and you have better options.

c. lk, c. mk, c. fp /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, sj rh xx photon shot.

Easy, just tap the buttons out. The photon shot wont actually combo off the roundhouse, but they'll have to block it, and its safe, so throw it in there.

c. lk, c. mk, c. fp, /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, photon array super

Try to delay the super as much as you can, but still quick enough to combo, so you can hit them with as many of the lasers as possible.

c. lk, c. mk, c. fp, /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, photon array super (blocked)

Same as above, but actually wait long enough for them to block it, actually does about the same damage, since they block ALL the lasers =). Actually a better option than connected, since when your opponent takes hits, it builds super meter. Blocked moves yield no meter for the opponent. Just don't do this to iceman, since he doesn't take block damage from photon shots.

c. lk, c. mk, c. fp, /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, sj fp xx photon array super.

This one is a little tricky, you aren't intending to hit them with the sj fp, but you instead use his forward movement of doing the move, then cancel the fierce before it comes out into the super, connecting ALL the lasers and doing great damage for a simple air combo.

(In the corner) c. lk, c. mk, c. fp, /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, sj rh xx photon shot or photon array super.

Cancel the rh into photon shot/array, as soon as he makes contact.

(In the corner) c. lk, c. mk, c. fp /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, air dash down/forward, air throw, wait, photon array super (blocked)

A neat looking combo, and actually pretty easy to do. After the mk just do a quick air dash down/forward then press forward+fierce for the air throw. Now wait for them to fall back down slightly below you, and do the blocked super, yields some great damage.

I've never had anyone actually do this particular sequence to me, so I'm not positive on whether or not they can't attack you after the air throw and before you force them to block

the super, I'd assume they could, but no one ever has yet. If not I guess it's not a "combo".

Well, it's not a combo anyway since it involves blocked moves, but give it a try anyway and see how it goes, I've had success with it.

That's all for Doom's combos (Sorry, no 100% multi super combos for doom) *sniffle*

----- The Spiral Section -----

Spiral: The chip damage nightmare. By simply jumping up and down while calling and throwing knives, she can almost do traps on her own, building meter insanely quickly, and doing incredible block damage. Add in an assist like the Sentinel Ground assist (the drones), and your opponent will be hurting quickly. One of the game's best "battery" characters (A character used to build super meter). Not only that, but she has an incredibly useful teleport, great for getting out of traps, and allowing you to choose where you appear. She also has a great assist in her projectile assist (Spiral calls knives, then throws them across the screen in a tight circle), which does great chip damage, controls the ground, and is useful in traps.

Best Assists for Spiral on point:

Sentinel ground, cable projectile, storm projectile, blackheart anti air.

Spiral is both very easy, and very difficult to play. The difficulty comes in not being too mindless about just throwing knives and calling assists, and also using her teleports properly.

You'll want to learn the "proper" way to throw knives at a distance for best trapping purposes, that is as such:

Jump up/up back, call swords at apex of jump, throw 3 on the way down, land, jump back up,

throw 3 on the way up, call swords, repeat.

The higher you can get those top knives, the harder it'll be for your opponent to jump out.

If you have an assist like cable projectile, storm projectile, or best of all, sentinel ground, you can get a nasty trap going by just repeating the above hopping/throwing pattern

while calling these assists. Your opponent will almost have to super jump out, in which case you call an anti air assist when they come down towards you, teleport away, or both, then resume your trap.

Don't forget about her expanding swords (qcf+lk), this sends the knives out in an expanding arc, and is another great option for when your opponent super jumps out of your knife trap. After they super jump, call another set of knives, jump up, and do the expanding swords. they'll be landing into it and forced to block, taking even more block damage, and letting you yet again, resume your trap => This gets really frustrating, really fast.

You can cancel most any move into calling the swords. Use this technique while a projectile assist is heading towards them, as a free way to call another set of knives to toss.

Her throw with fierce punch, when mashed, does some ridiculous damage. when you grab someone in her ground fierce throw (where she hops on them and pounds their face with some of her arms) wiggle joystick back and forth quickly while mashing buttons. If you do it properly, and your opponent doesnt mash to escape, you can literally do over half life in damage. Even if they do mash, you can still snag about 1/3 life in damage, not bad at all.

Spiral is one of the few characters that can safely call out assists from the other side of the screen against cable. For one, the array of knives coming towards him constantly may make it impossible for him to get a super in, since he'll be in blockstun. The other reason is her teleport. You can throw an assist right out there for cable as bait, let him try to AHVB it, then teleport out of it on reaction, and appear above/behind him and punish him. This makes spiral a great Anti-Cable Option. In fact, she's so good against cable, if you're opponent has cable on his team, try your best to make sure she pairs up with him, it'll save you a lot of grief.

Spiral Combos:

c. lk, c, mk, s. fp, call assist, or snapback

This doesnt do much damage, but most any quick assist should combo after a fp, or a snapback combos easily as well. (Actually pretty useful, since you can set the incoming new character to fall right into some good block damage and start the trap off from a great position)

c. lk, c. rh, /\ sj lp, sj wk, sj mp, sj mk, air throw

This is relatively simple, just pause a bit after the mk, then grab them. If you are having trouble doing this (namely, the opponent is too far below you), you can leave out the sj mk, and that makes it quite a bit easier.

c. lk, c. rh, /\ sj lp, sj wk, sj mp, sj mk, six hand grapple (dragon punch + p)

Preferable to the air throw option above, just do the grapple after the mk, it'll get them.

Easy.

c. lk, c. rh, /\ sj lp, sj wk, sj mp, sj mk, six hand grapple (throw them upwards) six hand grapple.

Same as above, but throw them upwards with the grapple, then have another grapple waiting for them to fall into, takes some positioning after first grapple.

Have full set of knives. c. lk, c. rh, /\ sj lk, sj mk, expanding swords (qcf+lk), level 3 metamorphosis (qcb+pp), then grab with fierce.

Difficult to have set up (its not often you get to launch someone while you have a full set of knives), but it does some NASTY damage, and its pretty easy to do too if you have the presense of mind to actually remember to do it. The throw super should grab them right when they come out of hit stun from the qcf+lk. Put an ever so slight pause after the qcf+lk is done, before hitting fierce, and you'll get them. Does about 80% damage to cable on normal damage settings.

That's it for Spirals combos. She's supposed to chip people to death anyway, not hit them, be thankful for what you get ;)

----- The Storm Section -----

Storm: If you thought cable was annoying to fight, you have not fought a good storm player. With her air dash, her ability to "float" down slowly during jumps, and her lightning attack (light kick + medium punch), Storm can take to the skies, and stay there, for a LONG time. Not only that, but while up there, she can call upon her vertical typhoons, to do chip damage from out of the opponents reach repeatedly, and build meter freely. Not only that, but simply super jumping up, throwing fierce punches, air dashing, throwing some more, lightning attacking, throwing some more, then coming down safely, jump again, repeat, is a great way to build super meter, fast. But with all this, storm is still one of the best rushdown characters in the game (right behind magneto). She has an 8 way air dash, a very fast ground dash, and easy to do, damaging air combos. To top it all off, she has probably one of the best DHC combo supers in the game, the hail.

The Hail can be comboed off just about ANY other characters super, as a safe way to get storm in and do guaranteed damage. Not only that, but the hail super is great for punishing assists, and if blocked, leaves storm totally safe. But there's even more, her projectile assist (horizontal typhoon) has the distinction of not being cancelled by other projectiles. Once storm throws this out, its going to the other side of the screen, period. Probably the game's best all around character, she has practically no bad matchups.

Best assists for storm:

To support your rushdown, you can use cyclops anti air or psylocke anti air, or you can opt for more of a trapping based assist like sentinel, or blackheart anti air to cover your super jumps, its a matter of play style.

Such a versatile character, she can keep away, she can build meter fast, she can pixie, and she does all of it making that annoying "haw!" sound from swinging fierce =).

When you want to get in there and rush down, you can use similar strategies that you use with magneto. Air dashing over their head and calling an assist to try to cross them up, and utilizing triangle jumps, works well as it does with magneto.

Another important strategy is learning how to effectively use her vertical typhoon special move without overusing it so it can be easily countered. Try super jumping up, then air dashing up, throwing a pair of typhoons, lightning attack up three times (This will actually put you OFF the top of the screen, even blackheart anti air and captain commando can't reach you up there). Unfortunately when you are totally off the screen you can't throw typhoons. However as soon as the TIPS of her feet are on screen, you can =).

Throw a few more typhoons from up there, then come down safely. For most characters, its difficult or impossible for them to do anything but try to dodge these typhoons and wait for you to come down. This builds free meter, might do some chip damage, adds the frustration factor so they are liable to want to do something haphazard when you land before you jump up to do it again, and overall provides a great way to just waste some time. Storm is another good anti-cable character like spiral, if played carefully, due to this strategy, and because of her fast, effective aggressiveness as a combo character, utilizing her quick air dashes.

Keep in mind that her horizontal typhoon goes right through other projectiles. You can use it to try to break up a spiral sword trap, or any other situation where this might be useful. It does have a pretty slow startup, so you'll need to get used to its speed at coming out so you can learn when its best to use it and when to leave it alone. Also you can throw a horizontal typhoon and quickly cancel into her hail super. This does good chip damage, and if the typhoon should hit, the hail will combo.

The lightning attack is another useful move, not just for running away and for in combos. If you anticipate it connecting or have good reflexes, you can easily cancel a hit from a lightning attack into her lightning storm super. For example against a sentinel player, while you are jumping around, he may take it into his head to activate flight mode and come after you. If you save your lightning attack (you can only do it once per jump), you can hit him with this as he is coming up, then cancel to lightning storm for decent damage. If your aim is off or you miss for whatever reason, you can use another lightning attack (remember you can do it 3 times in a row), and aim yourself in a different direction getting storm to safety.

And now onto combos for storm.

Storm can easily start these combos using the cyclops or psylocke anti air assists, in the same methods magneto does.

c. lk, s. mk, s. rh /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, lightning attack xx lightning storm super.

Storms staple air combo, and really the only combo you need. If you leave the joystick in a neutral position when you lightning attack, storm will default to going forward, which is fine for the purposes of this combo. As soon as the lightning attack makes contact, quickly cancel to the lightning storm super for good damage. Also note that you can DHC to other characters very late on this super. (The hits can be totally done, and you can still cancel out of it as storm does her little spin afterwards). This allows you to do the lightning storm in combos, let your opponent fall a bit, then DHC to a character like Cyclops for a mega optic blast, or ironman for a proton cannon, and actually have it combo.

c. lk, s. mk, s. rh /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, lightning attack xx lightning attack (up/forward) xx lightning attack (up)

Neat looking and uses no supers, of course if you launch someone and somehow don't have super meter for a lightning storm combo, you can do this, but I really can't think of when this situation would actually occur =P. Another simple combo to do, just do the three lightning attacks quickly, first forward, then up forward, then up, you'll hit with all three. Note that you cannot cancel the 3rd lightning attack into lightning storm, you have to on the first, or second.

c. lk, s. mk, s. rh /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, lightning attack, lightning attack (up/forward) xx lightning storm.

Still pretty easy, same applies as the others, aim straight, then up/forward, then quickly cancel to a lightning storm.

c. lk, s. mk, s. rh /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, air dash straight forward, ad wp, ad lk, ad mp, ad mk, lightning attack(forward) xx lightning attack (up/forward) xx lightning storm.

Storm's air dash combo takes some practice, you'll want to actually slow down the standard first 4 hits in the air chain, if you don't, when you air dash and attempt to continue, they may slip under you before you can complete the combo (you'll get a few hits then they'll slip out of range).

Good for building up some extra super meter, but it really does about the same damage as the other lightning storm combos. Mostly for show.

c. lk, c. mk, pause, s. rh (OTG) lightning attack xx lightning storm

If you want some variety for storm's combos you can try this one.

Do the 2 low attacks and pause while they trip from the crouching mk, then stand up and OTG with a standing roundhouse. Because of its hit properties, it will not launch them, but instead hit them slightly upwards and slightly backwards, allowing you to connect a ground lightning attack, then cancel into a lightning storm. Pretty easy to do, and you can do two lightning attacks if you want, before cancelling to a lightning storm, the same way you do in her air combo.

That's all for storm's combos, lets move on.

----- The Sentinel Section -----

Sentinel: All of sentinel's moves do block damage, even jabs. Not only that, but he only takes 75% damage from attacks. Factor in the fact that his combos are very damaging, he can be played offensively, or defensively, has a deadly trapping game, the fastest flight mode in the game, an easy to do infinite on point characters (your opponent's active character) or assists, and you have a powerful, versatile character. His ground assist (the drones) is also incredibly effective for controlling space on the ground, doing chip damage, setting up for combos and cross up jump ins, and keeping opponents out.

Best assists to use with Sentinel:

Without question, the blackheart Anti air, this provides a great deal for both his offensive, and defensive game. Spiral projectile, and captain commando aaa are good as well, but more as secondary assists. If you are going to play Sentinel as a point character, I highly recommend having blackheart in your team somewhere.

Its important to keep your cool with sentinel, you don't want to get rushed down, fortunately he has the tools to make it difficult, and he can do a rush down of his own.

The key ingredient to effective sentinel play is his flight mode. It is the fastest in the game, and easy to cancel off of moves, and use to apply pressure with stomps from the air, while staying in your opponents face, doing block damage, and calling assists. While all this is going on, you build meter very quickly. Jump at your grounded opponent with a roundhouse, quickly cancel that into flight, do another roundhouse while flying, and cancel out of flight off of the second roundhouse, this is effective at controlling space, building meter, and doing damage, as Sentinel's roundhouse does good damage on its own. Or, you can jump in with a roundhouse, cancel to flight, then repeatedly stomp away at them with short kick, and roundhouse, while in flight mode, continuously moving forward while calling an assist (The Blackheart assist works GREAT with Sentinel), thus keeping them pinned down and keeping control of the match with you. With that said, its a good idea to not staying flying for TOO long, as you can be push blocked out, and blocking in flight mode is not possible. After a few seconds of flying and pressure, you'll want to cancel flight (preferably cancelled off of one of your normal moves), and then continue on, perhaps starting up a new flight trap.

Sentinel's jumping fierce (affectionately known as the frying pan), is a great attack for air to air confrontations. Timed properly it should beat out whatever your opponent was trying to do, doing good damage, and pushing them back, in range for you to jump in there and cancel to flight.

With a projectile assist, (or better yet, blackheart's anti air), you can chip/apply pressure from across screen with his crouching fierce, standing fierce, cancelled into rocket punches or drone attacks. Change up what you do, and throw in jump cancels off of your crouching or standing fierces, to be unpredictable and keep the pressure going.

Remember that if at any time you are feeling the pace of the match isnt in your favor, you can burn a meter of super and do the Hyper Sentinel Force Super. This is safe to throw out any time its going to make contact with the opponent, Sentinel actually recovers BEFORE the super is over, allowing you to combo afterwards.

Speaking of combos...

s. rh /\ sj wp, sj, lk, sj mp, fierce rocket punch.

For such an elementary combo, this does good damage. You can do 4 hits instead of 3 before the rocket punch if you like, but on some characters, or without precise timing, the rocket punch will miss, so stick with 3 hits. Be careful if your roundhouse is blocked, as it has a slow recovery, so cancel into another move to be safe.

s. rh /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, Air throw.

Pretty easy as air throw combos go, after the 4 hits they'll be in perfect position, just do a slight pause so they come out of hit stun, then throw them, does good damage.

c. wp, s. mp, jab or fierce rocket punch.

simple, no explanation needed, but more importantly, you can use this to combo into...

Fierce rocket punch xx HSF, standing fierce, fierce rocket punch xx HSF...repeat.

Sentinels semi-infinite, and it hurts. A great assist killing combo, as the opponents point character will be pinned down and forced to block the repeated HSFs...and only able to watch as their assist dies. After the first 2 repetitions, damage scales way down...but after the first 2 repetitions...you've already done about 60%+ damage too...

On assists, you may actually want to slow this down enough to where it DOESNT combo, but still hits. Since assists cannot block while on screen, do it slow enough that it'll still hit, but wouldnt normally combo on a point character. Since it is no longer a "combo", damage scaling will not go into effect, and your hits will do much more damage, allowing 2-3 repetitions to easily kill an assist if done properly.

The trick to this combo is properly cancelling the fierce rocket punch into the HSF. The correct way to do it is to cancel into HSF the MOMENT that the rocket punch makes contact.

Do it too slow and it wont combo, do it too fast and you'll actually cancel the rocket punch

before it hits, which of course you don't want. Takes a little practice but not very difficult.

This combo is very intimidating, as your opponent knows that any connected rocket punches could become massive damage, whether they be in a small combo, or on their own, a must for effective Sentinel play.

(In corner) fierce rocket punch xx HSF, s. rh /\ sj lk, sj mk, fierce rocket punch.

After the HSF recovers with your opponent in the corner, sentinel recovers quick enough to connect a standing roundhouse before they can block, allowing this combo to be possible. Great damage, and a good option as opposed to the semi infinite, as it only uses one super meter. Since you are kicking them out of the air, don't get greedy and go for too many hits before the rocket punch, you'll probably miss.

(In corner) s. rh /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, fierce rocket punch, sj wk, jab rocket punch.

Ouch? Great damage on this one, and no super meter is used to boot, after the fierce rocket punch in the corner, you can connect a weak kick afterwards, allowing you to combo into a jab rocket punch (which aims downward), easy to do, just have the presence of mind to remember to do it. You can substitute his dashing air super for the jab rocket punch if you like to be fancy, but damage will be about the same.

This concludes the Sentinel combo section, go piss someone off with the semi-infinite =)

----- The Blackheart Section -----

Blackheart: By simply calling an assist with good space coverage, then super jumping and air dashing around, raining down demons (simply hit roundhouse in the air), blackheart has a trap that is difficult for many characters to even deal with. On the occasion that any of those demons should happen to hit, Blackheart can easily follow up with a Heart of Darkness Super for an easy, damaging combo. Also very quick to build super meter, and can at almost any time (as long as the opponent will be pushed back) can throw out an inferno (The ice pillar), cancelled into the Heart of Darkness Super, whenever he feels like cashing in some of his easily gotten meter for chip damage (about 10% of the lifebar) If it hits, so much the better. Has a fairly easy to do infinite as well, especially with the correct assist. Also in possession of a great space controlling assist in his anti air (Its the inferno). While slow to come out, it tracks the opponent, is wide, and reaches to the top of the screen. Useful for space coverage, a trapping game, and simply negating offense from your opponent.

Best assists to use with Blackheart:

Doom anti air, cyclops anti air, captain commando anti air.

I've practically summed up Blackheart's entire fighting strategy in the first paragraph

=P.

By calling assists, super jumping up, throwing out roundhouse demons, air dashing, then throwing fierce demons to cover your descent, you have a formidable offense and defense going, building meter freely. Whenever you feel like burning a meter (works best when they are in the corner, as its totally safe against all but cable, who can snag you with a tiger knee AHVB), you can do an inferno, cancelled into heart of darkness, doing great chip damage.

Another simple way to control the flow of the match, while continuing to build meter, is to simply jump backwards (normal jump), calling an assist with good coverage while you throw jumping fierces. This builds meter quickly, and if you're fighting an opponent with no beam super/screen filling punishing move of some sort, you can really abuse this to give them a hard time.

Blackheart has very good priority on his short kick jump in. While he has no real decent combos to do on his own off a jump in, he can call assists mid combo to set up for his infinite (which i'll explain later), or to set up Inferno xx heart of darkness.

Against people that like to super jump up high and rain things down from above, an inferno xx heart of darkness will easily bring them back down, forcing them to either take chip damage, or lose about 45% life.

On to blackhearts combos...

rh demon (air or ground), heart of darkness.

Simple...just do the heart of darkness as quickly as you can, before they can mash to escape the demons.

s. lk, s. rh, heart of darkness.

Another simple combo, but its nice to know that his standing rh combos off a standing short.

jump in lk, mk \ / call cyclops or captain commando anti air, c. lk, c. mk (assist hits), Inferno xx heart of darkness.

A staple combo if you're going to be jumping in, its good for blackheart to have either the cyclops or captain commando assist if you intend on doing so. Be sure to call the assist

as early as you can, since it takes a moment for them to actually get out there. Do it too slow and it wont combo in. Of course you can do this without a jump in as well.

Catch opponent in air with midair roundhouse, \ / \ sj rh, air dash, ad rh \ / \ sj rh, air dash, ad rh....repeat.

Blackhearts infinite. You'll find that if you connect with a roundhouse demon while your opponent is in midair, rather than fall to the ground and stay still for a moment, they'll do a strange bounce and go up and down (almost looks like a glitch to me, I'm not sure). Then you'll have time to jump back up and hit them with another demon, which will again put them in this state, then you can air dash, hit them with another demon, land, jump back up and repeat it.

This is a strange combo to look at, and even stranger to perform. It has no real set timing, you'll have to visually toss the rh demons properly for them to make contact, but this is relatively easy to do. This combo can easily be set up by connecting with a cyclops anti air assist, then jumping up and combo'ing a rh demon on reaction, making blackheart

with a cyclops aaa very dangerous.

Lets move on to the next character.

----- The Strider Section -----

Strider: A rushdown and a trapping game rolled all into one. Strider's teleport, and ability to attack while coming out of it, allows him to be wherever he needs to be, and on the offense, almost whenever he wants. The ouroboros super (Where orbs circle around strider), is simply unmatched for doing chip damage and getting on the offense. Strider is really only at his best when paired with the Doctor Doom Anti air assist. By dropping doom on one side, teleporting to the other, starting ouroboros, and swinging away (This is greatly simplified, I'll explain more indepth later), he can start a nasty trap doing incredible chip damage, with almost no escape if executed properly. As a bonus if strider should actually land an unblocked hit while in ouroboros mode, all subsequent hits will combo until the mode runs out, you can even tag in another character quickly and have it combo, allowing an easy way to tag in, and to do even more damage. He even has a double jump.

Best assists for Strider on point:

Doom anti air (Best by far), Captain commando anti air, Sentinel ground, Blackheart anti air. But really, if you aren't going to pair doom with strider, dont even bother picking strider.

First off get used to using the teleport, and be comfortable with the locations that you appear at. Strider can attack while coming out of a teleport, making him great for keeping up the pressure. While strider needs meter to be effective (so he can use ouroboros often), he's able to build meter quickly due to his ability to constantly be in his opponents face connecting combo chains.

Stay away from using his other 2 supers (legion, and ragnarok), as they have very slow start up, and a long recovery time.

A useful tactic for going into ouroboros mode, is to cancel into it off throwing either one of striders dogs, or birds. This helps pin them down so you can get in their face, else they can see the super start up and just super jump away, wasting much of the supers duration.

Use his teleport often while in ouroboros mode, changing up attacking low, then quickly teleporting and attacking from above, while calling assists, will often cause your opponent to block improperly, setting up for a combo. I HIGHLY recommend using doctor doom for strider, as he is really only above average at best without him. However combining ouroboros, and doctor doom anti air assist chip damage, along with the confusion from constant teleports behind them, can easily overwhelm the opponent.

Strider is a good character for using snapbacks with. Due to the speed and length of his ground chains, it can be useful to end connected ground chains with a snapback, start up ouroboros and apply pressure on the new character as they come in.

The recovery on using the strider dog "projectile" (qcf+lk) is actually very good, use it for keeping up the pressure when you get out of range, then teleport back in to resume your offense.

Strider combos:

c. lk, c. mk, c. fp /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, qcf+p (excalibur dash)

Simple enough, doesn't do much damage but builds decent meter.

c. lk, c. mk, c. fp /\ sj wp, sj lk, sj mp, sj mk, double jump, dj wp, dj lk, dj mp, dj mk, qcf+p

The timing on strider's double jump combos can be frustrating. Unlike air dash combos, where you simply dash and continue as fast as possible, you need to sneak a small delay in there between your last hit, and your attempt to double jump, or you'll often find that the jump wont come out. On the other hand, wait too long, and of course you'll miss your combo opportunity. Like many other combos, you'll have to find the right speed with practice.

Ouroboros (connected), tag out.

This one is nice to have around, during any sequence where the opponent is being hit by the ouroboros orbs, you can keep on swinging at them with something like wp, mp, repeat, then near the end of the duration of the ouroboros, tag to a new character, it'll combo in with the rest, then you can do a follow up with the char you just tagged in.

(On Sentinel) Jump towards him...slowly lk, mk, fp, fk as you land, jump towards again and repeat (infinite).

One of the easier to do infinities, of course it only works on Sentinel.

You want to start right next to sentinel, jump towards him and immediately connect with a lk,

then space them out so you are hitting with fk near your landing.

lk...mk...fp...fk...

An easy way to set this up is to jump in with fp, fk. If you connect this, and do the fk right before you hit the ground, you can then go right into this infinite. You can also time yourself to start this up right as you are finishing up a connected ouroboros combo on Sentinel.

This concludes Striders section, on to the last character, then we can get into the good stuff...traps =).

----- The Cyclops Section -----

Cyclops: Used mainly for his anti air assist (The gene splice), Cyclops can hold his own as a point character as well. By simply super jumping and repeatedly hitting roundhouse,

then double jumping (Yes, he has one), doing some more roundhouses, then landing, jumping and repeating, cyclops can build super meter fast. He also has a great chipping super with good space coverage (The Mega Optic Blast), and a quick super for punishing mistakes from anywhere if you aim it properly (the super optic blast). He can even combo a super optic blast from a connected standard optic blast from the other side of the screen.

Most of the time when Cyclops is in, it'll be from him being third on your team, being used for his assist, then something goes wrong and you are forced to play him.

Fortunately,

being "forced" to play him isn't necessarily a bad thing. His optic blasts are very quick to come out, useful for controlling pathways on the screen, and can be easily combo'd off of with the mega optic blast. Jumping roundhouse builds meter quickly, and while he doesn't have the fastest dash in the world, he can get in there decent enough with

his double jump. Best of all, his supers are easy to DHC into, and out of, with most other supers.

If you're left all alone with cyclops and want to burn some of that meter you've burned up with all those super jumping roundhouses, feel free to chip with a mega optic blast, as its chip is very good, and it leaves you safe from most forms of retaliation. (Cable of course, can AHVB you)

Don't be afraid to throw optic blasts out while you are jumping, they often catch people snoozing due to their very fast start up. Stay away from using the up/forward optic blast on the ground, unless you're really sure they're going to be jumping in at that angle...as it can leave you open to something nasty if you predict wrong. Do this from the other side of the screen and a cable player just might have an orgasm...but I guarantee even in his fit of sexual pleasure, he'll still hit you with 3 AHVBs =P.

Like Cable, Cyclops has a great jumping roundhouse with high priority, and great for crossing up with due to its large hit box. When you need to jump in, this is the move you want to be using to do so.

Lets take a look at some Cyclops combos:

Don't forget that Cyclop's supers are very DHC friendly, just about any super can cancel well off of cyclops supers, so don't pass up that extra damage.

jab optic blast xx super optic blast.

This is simple enough to do, just be aware that it exists. You can punish mistakes from across the screen using the fast jab optic blast start up, then combo into a super optic blast for some good damage.

c. lk, s. rh, jab optic blast, xx super optic blast.

An extension of above, a staple ground combo you should get familiar with.

c. lk, s. rh x 2, cyclone kick xx super optic blast.

This one does good damage and is easy to do. For best results, you'll want to hit with the crouching lk as close to them as you can, else the cyclone kick might miss on its first hit, negating the combo.

c. lk, s. rh x 2, cyclone kick (cancel on first hit while still in air), Mega optic blast.

Just another one for variety, unlike the one above where you hit with both hits of the cyclone kick before cancelling to the super, for this one you'll want to cancel the move on the first kick, so cable will still be in the air when he performs the mega optic blast. I would probably stick with the super optic blast one above, as it is more reliable.

Gene splice (cancel on last hit), super optic blast.

Simple, just do a gene splice, then at the very end, cancel out of it into a super optic blast, and aim straight up. You can actually try this as a bait tactic once in a while just to get some variety in there. Do a random gene splice, and if it hits, by all means combo to the super. If its blocked, go ahead and cancel into the super anyway, with varying timing, you might catch them as they prepare to hit you on your landing. Not something to be overused of course.

I would recommend staying away from air combos as his ground combos are much more

effective,
damaging, and all are easy to do.

That wraps up the Cyclops section, and the individual character strategies in general. Now lets move on to what characters can do with the proper assists.

III. Popular Traps

Marvel vs Capcom 2 is well known for its sequences done by both point character and assist, that are effective at killing time, doing block damage, building meter, and controlling the match. Some can be very difficult to escape as well. Lets take a look at some of the more effective ones.

Doom on point, with Blackheart assist.

A great all purpose trap in this one. Doom jumps back with jumping fierce, maybe multiple, calls the blackheart assist, then super jumps up and fires off a pair of photon shots, lands and repeats.

Another variation is to call the blackheart assist, then do a quick jumping fierce to try to negate their attempt to jump out, if you can hit them/make them block it, Jump up and fire off some photons, then land and do it again.

These traps are easy to do, generally safe if done from the proper position (namely, you and your opponent on opposite sides of the screen), do some decent block damage, build meter quickly, and control a large amount of space on the screen.

Blackheart on point, with the Doom assist.

The flip side of the above trap if you get blackheart in on point, this one is also pretty simple, and pretty obvious as well. Simply call the doom assist, super jump up, throw down a roundhouse demon, air dash back, then toss out some fierce demons to cover you on the way down (or another roundhouse demon if you like, depending on their position), then land, call assist again, jump up and repeat. This builds meter quickly and pins the opponent down very well. With all this meter being built, and the opponent caught in the corner, Blackheart can opt to blow some of that meter on an Inferno xx heart of darkness cancel, doing some chip damage, then resume the trap.

Spiral on point, with the Sentinel drone assist

A staple feature of Spiral play, she performs best with the Sentinel assist backing her up. What you'll want to do is call the sentinel assist and jump back, calling swords at the apex of your jump. Throw 3 on the way down, land, jump back up and throw 3 on the way up, call more swords, use your assist again as you are able, and repeat. This does a very large

amount of block damage, builds meter incredibly quickly, and forces your opponent to act fast. Their only real option is to super jump up. If they try to jump up, then come down

on you, teleport to the other side of the screen and repeat. If you have an anti air assist

around like cable or cyclops, call that out as well before teleporting to safety, then resume.

The idea in jumping up and down while calling/throwing knives is to make it difficult to super

jump out of. The higher you can get the top knives, the more difficult the trap will be to escape.

Cable on point, with the Sentinel drone assist, storm projectile assist, or virtually any assist that controls space, Blackheart anti air works very well also.

If there's only one trap you've seen on this list, this cable one will be it.

Call your space controlling assist, jump back with fierces, cancelling into viper beams or grenades to stall while you wait for the next assist, repeat.

Doesn't need much explanation, as its pretty stereotypical of how most any cable player is going to fight. Builds meter well and does good block damage. While the opponent tries to figure out a way to get in on you, look for openings to land an AHVB. Assists are almost totally taken out of play here, as your opponent can't afford to call assists from across screen, for fear of AHVB retaliation.

Sentinel on point, with the Blackheart assist.

One of the most effective traps, as it can go on for a very long time. Sentinel is very good at taking over a match, and keeping control, when paired with blackheart.

What you'll want to do is jump at your opponent, do a roundhouse stomp, then cancel that into flight while calling the blackheart assist. (Remember, assists can be called while flying), then proceed to pressure them with short and roundhouse stomps from above, continuing to move forward. After a brief bit, you'll want to land from flight, as you don't want to leave yourself open to retaliation, as you cannot block while in flight mode, then repeat as necessary.

Since sentinel does block damage with all of his moves, and combined with the fact that this trap builds up meter quickly, pressuring with the flight mode should be a staple to any good Sentinel play.

Blackheart on point, with the Cyclops or Captain Commando Anti air.

This trap is actually a combination of aggressive rushdown, and zoning.

The way it goes is, jump in at your opponent with a lk, mk combination.

When you land, call cyclops or captain commando and continue with lk, mk.

If it connects, combo off of the assist into an Inferno xx Heart of Darkness

for good damage. In the case of cyclops, if it connects, you may wish to attempt

to go for the blackheart infinite. If the assist is blocked, super jump up, rain down some demons, air dash to the opposite side of the opponent, toss down some more demons, then come down on them with lk, mk again. At this point you will be ready to call an assist again, and you can repeat this sequence.

One of the more dangerous traps, as your opponent taking a hit in any situation from this, will lead to big damage for you.

Strider on point, with the Doom anti air assist.

Perhaps the most effective of the listed traps, and also the most difficult to execute. The general idea of it is this: Drop the doom assist, then teleport to the opposite side of your opponent and come down with an air chain, pushing them into the doom assist. Then either throw a dog, or do a small ground chain into the dog projectile, then cancel the dog into the ouroboros super (qcf+pp). Continue pressuring with ground chains cancelled

into teleports on the other side of the opponent, coming down from above them, and when the ouroboros is about to run out, drop the doom assist on them again, teleport to the other side again, and begin another ground chain, the length of the doom assist should be long enough for the orbs from ouroboros to take their time getting off the screen, allowing you to throw another dog and cancel into ouroboros again, and repeating the sequence.

There are many different ways to do this trap, as it is not really just a concrete trap, but a style of play in general designed to quickly build meter and chip to death, earning meter for more ouroboros via pressuring. The idea of dropping doom and teleporting behind is a constant, beyond that, you can either use the method above, or come up with your own to keep pressure. By keeping your assist on one side of the opponent, and you on the other, you negate the possibility of pushblocking, making it difficult to escape.

IV. Team Dynamics

Its no good to have good strategies if you can't use the team that best incorporates them into play, here I'll list some of the more tried and true teams used in major tournaments, and why they are effective.

When creating your team, you'll need to think of how they work together, what each person brings to the team, and why they are in the order they are.

A general strategy for forming teams would be for the first character to be a battery, someone that uses more super meter than the use, and the 2nd to be someone that uses it, one that tends to use more than they build up. The 3rd should be your primary assist, someone that is not meant to be played except in emergency. There are exceptions to this, cases where your first 2 characters happen to have assists that the 3rd can actually find useful, but in general, its the front 2 characters in your team that should be getting the play, and 3rd shouldnt pop up unless you are losing.

I really don't think you have a team with full potential unless you have someone in it that can put the super meter to good use. For example, a team of spiral, magneto, and sentinel would not be very effective, simply because, while both could put the sentinel assist to good use, neither of them really have much use for a big load of super meter, so you'd have untapped potential in your team.

The great thing about the top tier characters is that all of them, except cable, are good batteries, and can be started first if you prefer, for whatever you have in mind. However there's bound to be advantages to having one person first over another, so lets look at some team dynamics.

Spiral: Projectile
Cable: Anti-Air
Sentinel: Ground

This team is potent for several reasons. One, it allows Spiral to perform the Spiral/Sentinel sword trap, allowing spiral to call on the cable anti air, and teleport to safety when the enemy gets close. Two, Spiral is incredible at building meter, of which she uses practically none. When Cable comes in, he'll have a large stock of meter ready to use for AHVB opportunities.

Its important to note that spiral and cable also share one more feature that pairs them well together.

By calling swords with spiral, quickly throwing 4 of them at the opponent, Then tagging in cable, cable will arrive on screen as swords are still flying towards the opponent, do his taunt while the enemy is still in block stun, and recover in time to block, allowing a fully loaded cable with full life to make his appearance. If those thrown swords by spiral should have happened to hit, cables tag in will combo with them as well, allowing for AHVB followups.

Cable can also put the Spiral projectile assist to good use via this sequence.

Call spiral assist, tiger knee AHVB, repeat until out of meter.

Each round of this should do about 10% life in block damage, so if you find cable with a full stock of meter and the opponent hanging around the 40-50% life mark, you can opt to blow your meter by doing 5 sets of ahvb, while calling the spiral assist, to get an easy kill. There is no way to escape this that i know of, as alpha countering out isnt an option, since the incoming character would come right into AHVB, and jumping/pushblocking out will not work. Once the previous character dies to chip damage, you can opt to tag the meterless cable out between their death, and the incoming new characters entrance, back to spiral to resume the spiral/sentinel trap, and rebuild meter for cable to put to use again later, if necessary.

Spiral: Projectile
Cable: Projectile
Cyclops: Anti-Air

This team is a variant of the one above, giving you a slightly weaker spiral, but a slightly stronger Cable. Spiral has no sentinel assist here, and must make due with the cable projectile assist in its place while throwing knives. As before Spiral will build up a large stock of super meter for cable before he makes his appearance.

As before, cable will have access to the call spiral assist, AHVB, repeat x 5 for chip damage as well. Cable can also call upon the cyclops anti air assist, which on contact allow for easy ahvb opportunities.

Magneto: Projectile or Capture
Storm: Projectile
Psylocke or Cyclops: Anti Air.

The epitome of aggression. Magneto starts on point, armed with the storm projectile assist to clear a path to the opponent, and either the psylocke or cyclops anti air assists to allow for easy combo setups. With these 2 assists, combined

with his quick dashes, he'll be difficult to deal with. Magneto also does a good job at building super meter, allowing him to either build meter for storm, or put it to use in long multiple tempest combos, DHC'd into hail for major damage. When storm gets in, she can continue to use the same strategies as magneto, using any spare meter Magneto might have built up for assist punishing with hail, and in lightning storm combos while continuing to rush the opponent down with her ground and air dash, being helped out by the psylocke/cyclops anti air assist. This team can really give trapping based teams fits, including cable, as their offense is just too quick and non stop to be able to keep out easily.

Sentinel: Ground

Blackheart: Anti-Air

Cyclops or Captain Commando: Anti Air

Traps abound in this team. Sentinel starts off on point, and builds meter via the Sentinel/Blackheart trap, which he can either save to pass on to blackheart, or put to use himself in damaging combos, or chip damage sequences. When Blackheart arrives on point, he can use the Sentinel assist for a variation of the Blackheart/Doom trap, or perform the Blackheart/Cyclops or Captain commando trap as listed in the trap section. Very potent, but has a distinct weakness to cable.

Spiral: Projectile

Sentinel: Ground

Blackheart: Anti Air

Another trap based team, and very capable of beating you on chip damage. As usual, Spiral starts as point to battery for the team via the Spiral/Sentinel Trap, but now has the option of Calling Blackheart to bring them down if they try to jump out. With Sentinel in, its business as usual as he uses his offense via flight, supported by Blackheart. Sentinel also has a special chip damage option here:

Crouching fierce, Call spiral projectile assist, HSF, repeat.

When out of super meter, finish up with crouching fierce, call blackheart assist, short drones.

Should do 50%+ in chip damage if 5 repetitions are done.

If this kills, as before in the spiral/cable example, Sentinel can opt to tag spiral back in to build meter again, for him to use again later.

Another option also exists:

Crouching fierce, HSF, crouching fierce, call blackheart, short drones, repeat.

Does even more block damage than the one listed above, but it is escapable, though difficult to do.

A versatile team, and unlike the Sent/BH/cyc example above, is not as weak to cable due to spiral's presence, try to pair her up against him if you can.

Strider: Projectile

Doom: Anti-Air

Captain Commando anti air, Blackheart Anti air, Sentinel Ground.

Very formidable. Strider starts off as point, uses his beginning meter to get on the offense with the strider/doom trap, and hopefully building it up from the subsequence offense thereafter. Using the Capcom or BH assists, he can keep the opponent from super jumping too much, keeping them in the range for doom's rocks to chip. Using the Sentinel Ground assist, he has another option to control the space on the ground, keeping the opponent at a disadvantage while strider builds meter and gets in position to trap with ouroboros. Once Doom makes an appearance on point, he can use above assists to do his Doom/BH trap and variants using Capcom or Sentinel, continuing the block damage and match control.

Strider: Projectile
Storm: Projectile
Doom: Anti-air.

This team order can be varied, switching the order of strider and storm if you prefer to start Storm to build meter. With strider on point, he can use the storm assist to clear a path for offense, getting in position for ouroboros, With storm on point, she can use the doom assist to pressure while in on offense, and also supports runaway storm strategy, of calling doom assists, then super jumping up to build meter via jumping fierces, and vertical typhoons.

Storm: Projectile
Cable: Projectile
Cyclops: Anti Air

This team order can be varied also, depending on your goals. Storm can start, using the cyclops anti air to pressure on offense, and to set up combos, and the cable projectile to help control the ground, either clearing her a path to get inside, or allowing her to pressure then super jump for meter building/chip damage. If storm starts first and is light on blowing supers, she can effectively build meter for cable when he makes his appearance. With cable in, he can use his storm projectile assist to control the ground while he throws jumping fierces, viper beams, and grenades, while as usual using the cyclops assist to set up AHVB opportunities.

A slightly more amusing team dynamic is starting Cable first instead of Storm. While it goes against the general idea that cable belongs best 2nd in a team, allowing someone to build meter for him first, you can look to build meter with him on your own until you land an AHVB, then DHC'ing to storm via hail for major damage, then taking a defensive role for the rest of the match via runaway with storm, which she does very well. Watch your opponent panic as time runs out and they attempt to chase storm down ;).

Doom: Anti Air
Cable: Anti Air
Blackheart: Anti Air

This team starts with Doom on point, ready to begin building meter via the doom/blackheart trap, and using Cable AAA for an immediate anti air defense option. Once cable comes in, he can use the blackheart assist from a distance to supplement his keep away game, and the doom assist up close if they get in, to do extra chip and hopefully give him the room to get away to resume trapping again. Note that if you do happen to play

blackheart on point at some portion of this match, if Cable is still alive, you can combo Inferno xx Heart of Darkness off of a connected Cable anti air assist.

Blackheart: Anti air

Cable: Projectile

Cyclops: Anti air

Here, Blackheart starts off on point, and begins the Blackheart/Cyclops trap, which is great for taking over the match early, and building meter quickly. He can also use the Cable projectile assist if he finds himself on the opposite side of the screen, then jump up for some more demons. When cable gets in there, he'll have great assists to work with in both the blackheart anti air for trapping, and the cyclops assist for negating rushdown, and setting up AHVBs. With Blackheart preceding him in the team order, unless Blackheart really went wild with Inferno xx Heart of Darkness, he'll have a large stock of meter ready, and with both of those assists behind him, a very difficult opponent to deal with. Its useful to note that a DHC to a HVB is actually possible off of a connected Heart of Darkness, and it will combo, but the DHC will need to be done early enough in the Heart of Darkness super that they will fall into the beam before they can block. (Cancel off the 3rd-5th hit and that should suffice)

V. Miscellaneous strategies.

When you are looking to make a tag when low on health, don't just blindly tag in for the opponent to punish you afterwards, instead, wait for the opponent to throw out a low damage move such as doom photon shots or spiral's swords, then tag your character in so you are hit with these on tag. You'll take very little damage and otherwise be in safely, far preferable to tagging in and getting hit with a combo that takes 2/3 life.

Do not neglect DHC combos from your gameplay, they can greatly increase the damage of combos, and are a safe way to change characters. You can also burn 2 levels of super meter if you are desperate to change chars, and throw out a super, DHC'd into a super that is safe for you when blocked, to get the character you wanted out, out of the fight.

If you use any teams I listed above with Captain Commando, and find that you have to play him on point, be aware that his roundhouse throw can be mashed for lots of damage, just like Spirals fierce throw.

During a normal jump, you are not allowed to cancel special moves into super moves, only during super jumps is this possible. Not only that, but during a normal jump, if you are put in blockstun by blocking a move, once you come out of blockstun, you are unable to block again before hitting the ground. Characters tagging in after the previous character dies, or are hit with a snapback, are considered to be doing "normal" jumps. The technique of forcing opponents to block attacks, then attack them again once their blockstun has ended in a normal jump, forcing them to take the hit, is called "guard breaking", and is most prevalently used to attack incoming characters after death/snapback.

Lets take a look at some things characters can do to "guard break" an incoming character.

Cable: Jumping fierce(blocked) land, AHVB

Sentinel: short drones, aim them upward (blocked), rocket punch or HSF with followups.

Doom: Jumping jab(blocked), land, df+roundhouse launcher

Magneto: Jumping roundhouse(blocked), air dash df, pause, lk, mk(this hits), land, launch

Storm: Jumping fierce(blocked), land, pause, roundhouse launcher.

Blackheart: Call assist(blocked), pause, launch, or inferno xx Heart of Darkness if timed right.

Strider: Throw bird(blocked), pause, launch

Cyclops: Jumping roundhouse(blocked), land, pause, Gene splice xx Mega Optic Blast

Spiral: With set of knives, jump, throw one knife(blocked), land, pause, launch

These are far from inescapable. For most, simply pushblocking as you come in(especially in the case of ones that involve them hitting you with a physical attack, like a kick, then landing to try to launch you), will ruin their opportunity. But in the cases where this does not ensure safety, there is always the last resort option of taking the hit they intend you to block, this will usually foil attempts at more dangerous follow ups.

VI: Credits

This will be a short list, but in particular, one that definitely deserves mention...

www.shoryuken.com

I've gotten a great deal of strategies and combos from discussion on their forums, and from watching their tournament videos, major props here.

My local arcade, Cyberstation, Louisville, KY.

Who's participants have been willing test subjects to see what devious new trap, combo, or infinite I was going to do today, without whining (much...)

You

For reading this, of course, you're the one that should thank me...so far, you havent taught ME much of anything! =P

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