

Dissidia: Final Fantasy Garland FAQ

by Falcord

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V1.0.0

By Falcord

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~~ I) About me ~~  
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I won't spend too much time as obviously you're not interested in reading about my life. I'm using this section as a way to apologize beforehand for any mistakes in my english. I'm a native spanish speaker (I live in Madrid and I'm 18 years old) so my mastery of the english language is far below the level I'd like to have. However, I think it's good enough for what I'm willing to say.

I started playing dissidia pretty much like everyone else: When it released in Japan. I became a Kuja main and discovered Garland quite recently. He is a great character with a huge hidden potential, and since everyone seemed to be completely ignoring him and signing him at the lowest places in the tier lists, I decided to take his developement as a personal crusade. I play him most of the time and I'm always looking for new combos, techniques and creative ways to play him and improve his status, and so far he has responded accordingly to my efforts. For videos of me playing, and tips about certain stratgies, visit my youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/falcord>

I use the Dissidia gamefaqs boards a lot, under the nicknames Pabloman and Falcord. I'm considered by many an avid Garland fanboy (too obsessed maybe =P) and I'm often mocked because of my custom of giving new techniques geeky names such as Galahad Dribble or Ghost Drill, but hey, they're cool, short, and help you remember!

By the way, I'm much more interested in PVP and competitive tournament gameplay than beating the AI, you don't need tips for that and won't find strategies to beat the CPU in this guide. This is for beating your buddies.

So, that's pretty much all I can say about myself and my motivations! Now let's move on to the real protagonist of this FAQ, the big, tough guy you want to be reading about.

~~~~~  
~~ II) Why Garland? ~~  
~~~~~

Because he's a badass.

That's right. The instant, natural response to that question is because he is simply cool. He's the first bad guy to ever lead the evil forces in a Final Fantasy. He looks like General Grievous but without the downside of coughing his organs out every ten seconds, he wears a goddamned full plate and a shapeshifting mechanical sword, and on top of that, he can summon the powers of the four elements while ramming your face with the axe he just spawned out of nowhere.

What else can you ask for? Okay, his sword could turn into a Maserati, but the Square crew has a tendence to be serious and need to portrait him as a formal bad guy.

Look at him straight in the eye if you doubt it. He's freaking serious.

By the way, a fun fact: He clearly yells "F*ck" in one of his losing animations. This makes him much more of a tough guy, smacktalking in a teen rated game. Hell yeah.

Moving into more technical aspects of the character, he offers a very rewarding gameplay experience you will not find in anybody else among the cast.

First off, I would like to warn you readers he's definitely not top tier. He's been relegated to very low tier positions, but for me and many other Garland mains he's mid tier material the very least, and the latest discoveries and improvements in his metagame might push him up very fast. Since FFD is a fairly new game and it evolves continuously, he might end up being anywhere!

Having mentioned his unstable position on the provisional tier lists, I'll do a quick sketch of the reasons why he's different to everyone else in the game, and a pros and cons list so you can tell beforehand if he will suit your playstyle.

(Yes, I like to start with the cons first, I save the best part for the ending ^^).

~~ II.1) Pros and Cons ~~

~~-----(-CONS-)-----~~

I-> Slow moving speed. He wears a goddamned full plate, did you expect him to go fast?

II-> Lack of connections between his HP and BP game. His BP and HP movesets are pretty different and completely unrelated. No hard-coded BP-HP combos.

III-> Can't punish mistakes properly with HP attacks (Although his BP punishment game is very strong)

IV-> Certain attacks are awkward and hard to land properly.

V-> Hard learning curve, one of the most technical characters.

~~-----(-PROS-)-----~~

I-> Very good punishment / retaliation BP game.

II-> Flexible BP moveset which can be adapted for many situations.

III-> Able to perform custom combos for extra damage.

IV-> Decent air game with good mobility.

V-> Good HP pressure / defensive HP game.

If all this technical chat sounds too abstract for you, there's a TL;DR version:

-> He's slow and takes a lot to be mastered, but he will kick your butt for sure if you screw up, and do it in a lot of artistic and custom ways instead of being limited to premade strategies. Oh, and he wears a freaking big sword (expect to read puns about how badass he is through the whole guide).

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~ ~ III) Garland Biography ~ ~  
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Section under construction (not essential for the strategy guide).

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~ ~ IV) Moveset Analysis ~ ~  
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First off, I want to apologize for any translation mistakes on the attack names. I'm just copy-pasteing them from other FAQs as I unfortunately can't read japanese (yet). Also, forgive me about not including information such as CP costs and level achievement. You will find that information in the General Guide (credits to Yandy Kusanagi).

This section is only to give a personal valoration of the attacks and give general tips on how to use them properly.

~~ IV.1) Ratings and Valorations ~~

---- ((GROUND BP ATTACKS)) ----

-----Lance Bullet:
[Rating]-**

[Description]: Garland stops for a second and then advances quickly in a forward thrust. Once landed, pressing circle again will chain into a Bardiche hit towards the ground.

[Valoration]: Not worth it. It's slow, whiffs a lot (specially under certain camera angles), can be easily punished, deals little damage and doesn't link

into custom combos. High Bringer is better in almost every situation.

-----Death Claw:

>[Rating]-*

>[Description]: Garland performs a quick uppercut slash towards the enemy.

>[Valoration]: Essentially it's High Bringer without being able to connect with other combos. There is no reason why you should ever consider using this attack, since it's simply a gimped version of another one. Keep it in your attack list until you unlock High Bringer and then forget about it forever.

-----High Bringer:

>[Rating]-*****

>[Description]: Garland performs a quick uppercut slash towards the enemy. If circle has been pressed only lightly, he will stay at the ground, and another circle press will chain into a lance attack and chase mode. However, if the initial circle press was held, Garland will leap, and another circle press will chain into a Twin Sword aerial combo.

>[Valoration]: Core skill of Garland's ground game. It's fast, it hurts, it chains into preset combos and custom combos. You should use it to reflex-cut your opponent's slow-loading attacks, and to punish whiffs and dodged attacks. This is good as a basic ground attack as well, since it's very hard to be evaded and strong enough to build up good BP damage. On top of all that, the leap version has some anti-aerial reach. Be sure not to use it when you're too close though, it tends to whiff at point blank range.

NOTE: I'll refer to the ground version as Low-High Bringer, and the jump version as High-High Bringer.

-----Round Blade:

>[Rating]-*****

>[Description]: Garland spins on his feet and performs a whirlwind-ish move that is fully directional during the whole animation (you can direct where you go). Pressing circle again during the spins after landing an initial strike will link into a Bardiche attack, while waiting to the end of the spinning animation and the consequent sword slam, and then pressing circle, will lead into a Twin Sword ground combo.

>[Valoration]: If I could give this attack six stars, I would. This is, along with HB, the other half that completes Garland's awesome ground game. It's a slow, awkward attack, but once you get used to it you will learn to love it. First, it links to the most damaging combos in your arsenal (both preset and custom) so this is your guard-counterattack move of choice. If you manage to block your enemy in the ground, use Round Blade!.

Besides, the directional qualities of the whirlwind move give a lot of freedom, not only about the direction itself but about factors such as the delay you want to give to the initial hit (you can decide whether to hit sooner or later depending on the direction you glide towards). It can be twisted in a way that completely avoids guards (See Galahad Dribble in the

AT section) and on top of that it easily links into wrecking custom combos.
This attack is a jewel. Learn to love it.

---- ((AIR BP ATTACKS)) ----

-----Twin Sword:

>[Rating]-***

>[Description]: Garland divides his sword in two and performs a triple slash in the air, pushing the enemy away with the last hit.

>[Valoration]: It comes out relatively fast, hits for okay damage and has good pushback. However, its long animation will make it an easily punishable attack on whiff, to the point of making it useful only as a counterattack move, a job that Bardiche does much better. I've seen people use this move with good results, but for me it's significantly worse than Bardiche and thus I leave it out of my move set.

-----Bardiche:

>[Rating]-****

>[Description]: Garland modifies his blade to become some sort of axe and slams the enemy downwards, usually hitting the ground for extra damage.

>[Valoration]: Comes out exactly as fast as Twin Sword, however, it doesn't suffer from blind points as TS does, the animation is shorter, deals more damage, works well with custom combos and all in all looks badass. You should use this as a retaliation move in the air. If you block/dodge your enemy in the air and there are either at your altitude or lower, use this.

And they just eat the floor, dammit.

-----Twist Drill:

>[Rating]-****

>[Description]: Garland turns his sword into an improvised drill and thrusts forward-up in a diagonal line (45 degrees approximately). Pressing circle again will lead into an extra hit and chase mode.

>[Valoration]: Situational, but still useful and necessary for Garland's air game. You could skip it in certain matches in which it wouldn't make much sense to have it, but since in these matches there's not much for it to be switched for I usually keep it anyway.

It helps dealing with the magic users, does good at reflex-countering slow aerial attacks, and has a deceptively long reach and good damage. On top of all that, it's the lucky protagonist of ghost drill, a nice tech you can read about in the AT section.

Row row fight the powah!

-----Chain Bump:

>[Rating]-*****

>[Description]: Garland extends the handle of the sword to the point it resembles a long whip, and slashes the enemy down and up from a long distance, while radically adjusting Garland's body position to match the enemy location (which leads to fast travel sometimes). If both attacks hit, it leads into chase mode.

>[Valoration]: The star of Garland's air game. If it only did a bit more damage, it would simply be perfect. Even though it's low on the damage side, it comes out very fast, has a gorgeous range (unusual for Garland), and works GREAT for punishing magical whiffs or simply interrupting spellcasting. What it makes it really shine though is it's position readjusting properties. You don't really need to aim it right, if your altitude is wrong it will raise / lower you immediately. This is great to avoid lineal ranged attacks, and will completely destroy Ultimecia and many other lineal spell based strategies.

It also works well for harassing short ranged characters and for dealing with the delicate after-break/after-HP situations in which a single 22 damage hit might be crucial.

---- ((GROUND HP ATTACKS)) ----

-----Earthquake:

>[Rating]-***

>[Description]: Garland takes two steps forward and slams the ground with the sword in bardiche mode, shattering the ground and hitting many times for BP damage, and finishes dealing HP damage.

>[Valoration]: It's not bad, but it's not to be used as a direct way to deal HP damage. It's braindead easy to avoid, it's slow and doesn't reach too far. However, it's the best choice to deal HP damage after guarding, and becomes quite useful when in EX mode (as a reminder, when Garland is in EX mode he can't be knocked back while doing an attack animation), so the Earthquake becomes an unstoppable, brutal attack. Wait until they start doing something and instead of dodging go for their throat with this, and you will literally break through their attack.

What makes it essential in Garland's move set, instead of just another awkward attack to land, it's that it is possible (and relatively easy) to add crash HP damage to the hit by making the enemy impact the walls, which is VERY important (will be explained further in the HP-BP management section).

It looks brutal by the way, one of the most violent attacks in the game.

-----Tsunami:

>[Rating]-****

>[Description]: Garland jumps, floats in the air for a second and throws his sword to the ground in front of him. Then the sword starts to zig-zag around

like a snake seeking the enemy. If the enemy is caught by it, it hits several times for BP damage and finishes with a water explosion of HP damage, then the sword flies back to Garland's hands. (All this time Garland is floating there defenseless).

>[Valoration]: Situational, but good. It's easy to avoid when you see it coming (they can just jump and it won't reach them), but on certain situations is almost a guaranteed hit. First, it's good to notice it travels through walls, so in maps with a lot of solid obstacles you will use this for surprise attacks.

It's good as a punishment when your enemy has just missed a ground attack at a medium-short distance. Very often they'll be able to dodge it in time, but the sword will follow them during the dodge and hit them in the end.

What makes it good as well, is that it's a valid ending for custom combos, and being a HP attack this is specially useful.

-----Blaze:

>[Rating]-***

>[Description]: Garland splits the sword in two, and starts magically spinning the blades. They generate many red lance-like projectiles that travel to the enemy in a ballistic trajectory.

>[Valoration]: It never hits at short range (too high in the beginning) and it can be avoided dodging towards Garland, so when you cast it you've got to make sure the enemy has no effective way of moving in your direction. This is best done by standing behind fragile obstacles, that will prevent their forward-dodge and will simply break when the projectiles try to go through. If you don't have any obstacles to protect that angle, casting a Tornado and then a Blaze will limit their movement options and make it harder to dodge.

This is one of Garland's core HP attacks and you should use it combined with Tornado to get that last hit, and to apply pressure when it's needed. Don't abuse it or it will become predictable. Do not try to use it as a long range punishment, it's too slow for that.

Would have 4 stars, but the ground version is less useful, so the 4 star rating goes for the aerial blaze.

---- ((Air HP ATTACKS)) ----

-----Tornado:

>[Rating]-*****

>[Description]: Garland casts two tornadoes that start slowly moving forward. They stay for some seconds and act as a magic barrier, deflecting many kinds of projectiles. They deal HP damage upon hit, and they don't disappear after hitting so they might hit the enemy twice in some situations.

>[Valoration]: This attack is great. works well as a pressure mechanism and magical barrier (try to learn by heart which projectiles you can and cannot

deflect with this, for your own good). Helps concealing other attacks and landing Blazes, and it's virtually unavoidable if your enemy is cornered.

Oh, and also it comes out at a decent speed.

-----Blaze:

>[Rating]-****

>[Description]: Same as Blaze (ground)

>[Valoration]: It's exactly the same as the other Blaze, but from the air. Much more versatile this way, you should be using this one.

~~ IV.2) My Movelist ~~

The move list is something very personal and you should build your own based on the attacks you feel comfortable with. My previous move analysis are merely orientative, if you feel one of the attacks I ditched works well for you, feel free to make space for it. However this is the (recommended) movelist I think you should use if you're a Garland beginner, as it's very intuitive and works well with the directional qualities of certain attacks, and prevents unnecessary whiffing.

I've tested many other configurations and I keep coming back to the following one.

A ">" means forward, and "<" backwards. (NOTE: Even though ground attacks in this game seem to be assigned to "right" and "left", in fact they also get assigned to "forward" and "backwards", just think of right as forward and it will be okay.

```
-----  
----Ground BP----  
- O> Round Edge-  
- O High Bringer-  
- -  
----Air BP-----  
- O> Twist Drill-  
- O Bardiche -  
- <O Chain Bump -  
- -  
----Ground HP----  
- O> Earthquake -  
- O Tsunami -  
- -  
----Air HP-----  
- O> Tornado -  
- O Blaze -
```

~~ IV.3) Comparative Damage Data ~~

This section features a list of all the premade combos Garland can perform with their BP damage output.

VERY IMPORTANT: Note that this damage data was collected under certain fight circumstances, which can't be reproduced easily. It means all this information is there only to establish a comparision between Garland's attacks, and NOT to compare his damage output with other character's.

The first number refers to the raw damage of the full version of the combo (except High Bringer to Twin Sword, which has two damage numbers because the full combo is very, very difficult to land).

A number between brackets means the (if possible) damage from impacting a surface.

Last, "(Chase Mode)" means the attack's last hit will give you the chance to engage in the chase minigame.

```

-----
---Ground BP attacks---
> (rare) Full High Bringer to Twin Sword ----- 515 (+56)      --
> Round Edge to Twin Sword ----- 463 (+118)      --
> High Bringer to Twin Sword ----- 412 (+56)      --
> Round Edge to Bardiche ----- 360 (+141)      --
> Lance bullet to Bardiche ----- 278 (+141)      --
> High Bringer to Chain ----- 206 (Chase Mode) --
> Death Claw ----- 103                          --
-----
---Air BP attacks---
> Twin Sword ----- 309 (+56)      --
> Bardiche ----- 258 (+151)      --
> Twist Drill ----- 205 (Chase Mode) --
> Chain Bump ----- 102 (Chase Mode) --
-----
---Chase attacks---
> Chase BP attack ----- 341 (+187)  --
-----
---HP attacks with BP hits---
> Tsunami BP hits ----- 40-80      --
> Earthquake BP hits ----- 96      --
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~~~~~  
~~ V) Strategy ~~  
~~~~~

~~ V.1) Generic fight tips ~~

Dissidia is a game of lightning reflexes and memory. You have to be able to react pretty fast, and to remember every single move in the game and how it can affect you. All that information could fill entire pages of this guide but it's better to learn it all through practice. Since we can't particularize the strategies to follow for each character here (the matchup section, coming soon, will be just for that) these tips are only orientative and general.

First, as I said before, Dissidia is a reaction game. You won't succeed by randomly unleashing all your attacks just because you can, hoping one of them to land. Mistakes are heavily punished by game mechanics, and you have to make sure every single hit you land is precise and hits where it hurts. Good players tend to win fights with four or five well-thought hits, while bad players shake their swords all around the battlefield with no success.

This is basically due to the fact that basic game mechanics, and certain abilities and gear pieces, heavily improve your damage when you're hitting an enemy that has been blocked (criticals are almost guaranteed after a successful block) or an enemy that is performing an attack at the same time (and not hitting you of course).

Also, Dissidia is unique in the sense that the same attack is very different depending on how and when it's used. In other games, a punch is a punch and deals a set amount of damage. In Dissidia, a big-ass hammer blow to the face in the wrong situation will mean much less than a subtle stab in the back when the target is recovering from a landed HP attack or staggering after a blocked hit.

All this means you have to put your mind into it. For both fighting and learning. Read your opponent, understand his psychology and act accordingly. React, do not simply act. Garland is a very strategic character, and one of the most (if not THE most) rewarded character for successfully blocking. Garland's BP punishment game is wicked, so you'll have to pay close attention to your opponent moves to intercept via guard (or dodge if necessary) anything that is thrown at you and counterattack swiftly.

Against magic characters, being defensive doesn't rely that much on guards and dodges but on a general defensive pressure, which involves casting a lot of tornadoes to deflect and push the enemy back, and punishing mistakes with chain bumps, as well as engaging a lot in chase modes, and using the terrain as both protection and a weapon.

While Garland isn't typically a fast character, he has some solid means of dealing quick damage such as High Bringer on the ground, Twist Drill and Chain Bump in the air. However, while definitely solid, they are not varied and therefore they will become predictable when abused. This means you should only become offensive when your enemy is either too defensive himself or the specific tactic against his character forces you to stay on the attack. However, even while playing strictly defensive, throwing a High Bringer in from time to time, specially if you have the upper hand, doesn't hurt (you).

Leaving these exceptions apart, you should play Garland smart and defensive, and rely heavily on retaliation and fast comebacks. It's better to keep your sword in the sheath if you're not sure, than swinging it and potentially losing a big amount of BP during the enemy counterattack.

Be patient, think, and most important, be creative. The reason why I main Garland is because he is a very flexible character, who leaves a lot of space for customization in his playstyle. He's the opposite to Jecht and Exdeath for example. These two characters dictate a very clear way to follow, and are limited to a single strategy. Garland, on the other hand, has too little hard-coded restrictions and therefore leaves a lot of space for improvisation. Surprise your enemies with new strategies everyday!

~~ V.2) "Do"s and "Don't"s ~~

-----"Do"s-----

--1) Do: Punish, punish, punish. Remember this, Garland is a punisher. Every mistake of the enemy has to be taken care of, and wasting these golden opportunities must be avoided. Remember, during the enemy attack, or after the enemy has been blocked, your critical chance grows a lot! Remember: Round Edge for ground block punishment, Bardiche for air block punishment (or Twist Drill when the situation arises). High Bringer for ground dodge/reflex punishment, and chain bump for air dodge/reflex punishment. Also remember that when your enemy is too high on BP you want to throw him to the void for the percentual decrease.

--2) Do: Manage your BP properly. There is an entire section devoted to this, as the incorrect use of BP is a poison that affects even the most skilled players. Don't waste your BP, use HP attacks only in the correct situations and keep a track of your opponent BP and HP to know what to expect. Have these numbers in mind continuously.

--3) Do: Switch your strategy if the current one doesn't work. Everything gets predictable after a while. You can do the same things over and over to the CPU, but when there is a human mind at the other side of the board you better expect them to learn. Regardless of how lightning-fast your reflexes are, if you limit yourself to blocking everything you'll get your ass handed to you in a silver plate, soon. Thankfully Garland is flexible, and therefore sticking to a single strategy is unnecessary and dull. Learn to adapt.

--4) Do: Exploit the custom combos to whatever point is legal in your tournament scene or friendly community. Garland is the Falco of Dissidia, he can chain custom combos forever and virtually win in a single hit. However, it's obvious these tactics will get somehow limited by either the tournament organizers if you're playing a tournament, or the friend that will punch your face if you don't stop comboing him. Usually these combos are limited to a number of iterations. In my friends group, our rule is "More than two attacks of the same kind during an inescapable combo is forbidden". This means every time we land a combo we do exactly two hits, no less. But we do them every time, don't waste your chance.

-----"Don't"s-----

--1) Don't: Panic. This is very important, when your BP is low you have two options. One is kicking back and reverting to Tornado pressure and Blaze bombing to regain BP through the natural regen, or either get extremely cautious and measure your hits with care. What definitely is NOT an option is panicking out and jumping to their face hoping to land a hit and level the counters again. This will get you blocked, broken and usually killed.

--2) Don't: Engage in the chase mode if you know your opponent is better at it. It's simple, you just have to be sincere to yourself and think beforehand if you want to engage in chase mode or not. Some friends are worse at it than me, some are better. I definitely want to take advantage of those that are worse, but I won't chase the ones who are better a single time. This is like playing tennis with Garry Kasparov and getting kindly asked between sets if you want the next point to be decided in a game of chess. You decline.

--3) Don't: Use HP attacks when you shouldn't. Abusing HP attacks screws your BP management, very often landing an HP attack is much worse than doing nothing and keeping the points for yourself. More in the BP-HP management section.

--4) Don't: Waste your EX burst. However orgasmic performing an EX burst might feel, don't waste it. It's a "get-out-of-jail" card for when you get block-counteracted, combo'd or generally for whenever you are in a bad situation. Also, Garland's EX mode has certain special properties we'll talk about later in the guide, which need you to be specially careful about when to burst.

~~ V.3) BP-HP management ~~

This section is probably going to be the most problematic of the guide, because my stance on how BP should be managed is pretty polemic at the boards. I have certain theories that I defend with zeal and not everybody agrees with them. However, I'm pretty sure following the guidelines I'm writing here is positive specifically for Garland, given the nature of his playstyle. Since my experience with other characters is comparatively little, I can only guess these advices will benefit them as well.

So, if you want to take my advice, be sure it will benefit your efficiency at Garland, but take it with a big pinch of salt if you want to apply it to other characters, specially the mage types.

First off I would like to clarify all this section assumes summons and other BP affecting gear is NOT enabled. Summons are illegal in most tournament rulesets and they affect BP in so many varied, different ways there is no point in considering them in a general guide.

The kernel of my reasoning is that you generally should NOT use HP attacks during the fight unless they're supposed to kill. Periodically depleting your HP pool leaves you vulnerable, makes you waste opportunities to retaliate (you should land ANOTHER BP attack instead of that HP strike) and contributes to buff the opponent if he has the "in pain" derived skills, which given the high CP budget of many characters is pretty common. The only trade off from

doing this is a little, risky BP regeneration and a negligent boost to your stats through the "Exp to" abilities, that you will get anyway probably during the last stages of the fight.

I know the temptation to use HP attacks is huge, and our fight-gamers psychology can't completely get rid of the necessity to see the enemy HP bar going down, but believe me, once you get rid of these customs you won't regret. Using HP attacks at the right time is an art, and seriously, landing an HP attack is some times worse for you than for your enemy. In fact, many of the most advanced players I've played will actually consider (and sometimes apply) the strategy of eating in purpose certain HP attacks to obtain benefits.

So in conclusion the rule of thumb you'll have to remember is "In doubt, DON'T use an HP attack". However, there are some exceptions in which casting an HP attack is correct and will do you good. I'm listing them in a descending order of priority:

.....
--PRIORITY 5 (Max).
-If your BP exceeds your opponent's HP.

This one is pretty logical. If your BP are sufficient to kill, your whole strategy should immediatly be focused in landing a killing blow. Don't become too obvious though or you'll be predicted, try to land a custom HP combo or apply pressure with tornado and blaze, but spacing your assaults if the enemy is expecting and avoiding them all.

.....
--PRIORITY 4 (High)
-If you're in EX mode.

The whole point of EX mode is landing an HP hit for the enormous benefits the Burst reports. Once you get flashy flashy you should be doing your best to land a square attack fast. I did not make this top priority because sometimes you "might" want to stay longer in EX mode for the extra critical strikes and get a good BP increase before getting to business, or even landing some square attacks and NOT popping the burst yet for more overall effect.

However, all those strategies are risky and you should only do them if you're very confident about your fighting skills. Doing that kind of stuff ruins the surprise effect and can be an easy way to waste your best trick against an experienced enemy.

.....
--PRIORITY 3 (Mid)
-If you're sure an HP attack will slam your opponent against a surface.

This is one of the reasons why mindlessly throwing around HP attacks just because you can is a MISTAKE. Did you know what happens when you do an HP attack with crash damage? (which means the opponent impacts a surface after being hit). Okay, you deal around 60-70% extra damage, which equals to having your BP instantly increased by that percentage. Do you know how badass that is? It's stronger than summoning Ifrit, and tournaments ban summons for a reason.

This is why I die inside every time I see a good Garland player online throw

a 4000 point blaze at someone and instants later chase-smash them to the wall for a minuscule 500+300. Had him waited for the right time and the other guy would probably be flashing red with 1 HP.

Slamming people against the walls is one of the few situations in which doing an HP attack mid-fight is a good idea. Your weapons to do this are Earthquake and the chase HP strike. About Earthquake, if you ever manage to block your enemy with his back close to a wall, use it. How to deal with the chase mode, well, there is an entire section for it so keep on reading :)

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--PRIORITY 2 (Low)

-If your BP are lower than base value.

Sometimes landing a Tornado comes handy to climb back from 12 BP to your natural 800-ish status. This is justified and as long as it doesn't involve extra risk, it's fine. Just be careful and make sure you won't get hit again because of it. If the situation calls for a defensive ranged approach, make use of the weapons Garland has and pop out some Tornadoes and Blazes until you're ready to go toe to toe again.

But remember, by no means it should imply an EXTRA risk, you're already in a bad situation so don't make it worse.

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--PRIORITY 1 (Situational)

-If you want to apply pressure without really hitting.

Using the Tornado for pressure, pushback and missile defense is a very valid strategy and should be used often specially against the magic users, and melee fighters who can't go through it. However, you must understand the implications of actually casting an HP attack. Even though you use it as crowd control and don't expect the enemy to be hit, they CAN be hit, and if that affects your game negatively you must not cast it. For example, if your BP are high but not high enough for a kill, better not risk hitting with the Tornado and save these points for a chase HP hit.

However, usually everyone has some sort of natural danger sense that will keep them away from your pressure sources and hopefully force them to do what you want to do. Good players are less predictable and you should expect them some times eating your tornados ON PURPOSE if you don't cast them under the correct circumstances, so be careful.

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~~ V.4) The Chase Mode ~~

Like it or not, this apparently simple minigame has a great importance, and a good understanding of it's purpose and mechanics will give you the upper hand very often. Garland is a chase-heavy character (three of his most used attacks link into chase mode), good reason to practice a lot.

Many people understand the concept of Chase Mode fast but just stop at the basics and assume it's only a reflexes test, whose only purpose is measuring how fast you can react to a binary scheme of "fast" and "slow" attacks. Dissidia is more complex than what it looks like and this minigame is no exception. It's very strategic and depends on some sort of psychological warfare.

What you should do first, even before starting the battle, is having a clear idea of who you're playing against, and if you plan on consciously engaging in chase mode or not. Some people will be better than you, against those you don't want to engage in chase mode at all. You have the CPU for that sort of training, this guide is here to help you win, and being sincere to yourself and saying "this guy is too much for me... today" will help your results.

Human skill is not the only factor you should worry about when deciding to chase or not to chase. If you play with items and attributes enabled, you must be aware that there are entire builds based on chase damage, and you must also remember that chasing continuously generates EX bubbles that EX absorption based builds will benefit from. Against these guys, chase as little as possible. To prevent chase mode from happening, keep Auto Chase out of your ability list and, if necessary, "freeze" your opponent chase attempts by doing nothing during your turn, forcing the game to end.

If you decide to engage in chase mode, there are a few things you have to keep in mind. Obviously, I won't discuss the basics for long. You know the drill, wait for your opponent to do a move, and dodge at the right time. If you have problems identifying which attacks are fast or slow, try to notice the brightness going down if the attack is slow. You'll eventually get the hang of it and just "feel".

Then, the real point of the chase mode, which many people seem to be missing, is the final crash. Please don't just randomly throw the opponent up or down because you feel like it: consciously deciding the relocation of the enemy is important.

-If you're better than him, you want to fling him around for long staying away from walls.

-If he's better or at least an equal, you want to finish fast and slam him against a wall.

-If his BP are high, you want to throw him to the void.

-Regardless of the case, HP slamming against a wall is always good so don't waste your chances.

Following these four guidelines and with some common sense you will get much more out of your chase games. Remember that you can also delay the hits to surprise people (this tends to catch off-guard nervous players).

Garland's EX mode is very good. It has the special property of making you immune to knockback effects while doing any attack, which means nothing short of an HP hit to the face will stop you while you're animating. Beware though, because you're still perfectly able to be blocked / sword clashed, which makes this effect not much of a big deal for BP attacks. However, for HP attacks it rocks, since it eliminates one of the two existant ways of avoiding an HP strike, which are dodging and stopping the animation with another attack.

This extra effect makes managing Garland's EX mode a great responsibility, even more because Garland's HP game, while good, is not by far the best of the cast, and therefore you must do your best to compensate with intelligent EX modes and bursts.

Obviously most of you know every character in the game has the ability to instantly interrupt any combo they're being hit with by entering EX mode, which causes an immediate knockback effect in the enemy as if he/she had been blocked (with the consequent critical chance increase). This effect is so awesome you should usually ALWAYS enter EX mode doing this. It doesn't matter taking a long time to pop your already full EX bar, be patient. If more cores appear, catch them to avoid your enemy getting them, but keep your bar for cancelling combos. In fact, I sometimes keep it through whole combos, waiting so I can escape CRITICAL combos, which are the ugliest thing that can happen to you in Dissidia.

Once your enemy is bouncing back after your successful combo cancel, you've got to act fast and make use of the element of surprise. If you're on the ground, immediately Earthquake their face or Round Edge into a custom combo (either BP or HP). If you're on the air, don't be an idiot and forget Tornado/Blaze, they'll avoid it. Just bardiche-smash to the ground, fly like a rocket towards them and cast a Tornado at point blank range.

If you landed one of those initial HP attacks, you should not get into Burst so soon. You want to enjoy the regeneration and build up some BP before, so let the timer run out and keep on harassing them (unless, obviously, you're sure entering Burst would Break them).

Remember to abuse the anti-knockback ability and repeatedly fly to their face with air dash and cast tornadoes at point blank range, followed by blazes, which together, and at said distance, are a **** to avoid. Be careful though, being immune to knockback doesn't mean you're invulnerable, and your BP might drop too much!

~~ V.6) Gear and Ability Builds ~~

This section is only to give some general guidelines and ideas about to how you could build your Garland to specialize in different techniques. Since this is often incompatible with tournament rules, I must admit most of these ideas haven't been seriously tested and are only experimental. To look for items with the specific stats you want, I suggest using the Dissidia Wiki (http://dissidia.wikia.com/wiki/Dissidia_Wiki_-_Dissipedia).

So far I've tried four builds which focus in different strategies. They four have in common the move set, and certain basic abilities you should never miss

(the jump/mobility skills such as the jump enhancers and speed up ++, the air dash skill, and then the retaliation skills, counter attack and guard-counter attack). The rest of the abilities are up to you, choose whichever you feel comfortable with.

--- V.6.1 STRONGLAND ---

-[What does he wear?]- He is the standard physical attack Garland. He wears items that enhance physical damage and optionally other stats multipliers.

-[How should I play him?]- Normally. He's the standard Garland build, the one you should use when you don't have anything special in mind. He's versatile and can switch from defensive to offensive, from anti-mage to anti-melee. Follow the strategy guide and you'll do fine with this build.

--- V.6.2 CHASELAND ---

-[What does he wear?]- Chase damage enhancers. Cross-dress to wear the Premium Heart and other chase damage improving gear.

-[How should I play him?]- First, not telling your opponent you're using this build (they will freeze every chase) and second, chasing a lot. Chaseland is a good anti-mage and destroys Ultimecia, Kefka and Tina easily with wrecking hits during the chase mode. Harass with Chain Bump, use Twist Drill as often as you can, and don't forget the low High Bringer combo when you're on the ground.

--- V.6.3 CRASHLAND ---

-[What does he wear?]- Crash damage enhancers. Bring the Gungnir and other crash damage improving gear.

-[How should I play him?]- Bardiche is the key word. Bardiche, Round Edge to Round edge to [...] to Bringers to Bardiche, Low-High Bringer to High-High Bringer DC to Bardiche... Everything you do should end in bardiche, and the painful noise of a body slamming the ground. This build makes for a very good aerial punisher, use it if you have good reflexes and love one-hit breaking. Oh, and remember chase crashes also get benefits from this :)

--- V.6.4 EXLAND ---

-[What does he wear?]- Generic EX enhancers. Cross-dress for the Nirvana, Kitchen Knife or Kusanagi and get some more EX gear.

-[How should I play him?]- Normally, with extra care in managing your EX modes and bursts. This build is very good at pissing off and killing Exdeath, just fly around catching cores and completely ignoring him, blast him in the face with EX mode, rinse and repeat. And they are in no right to complain because... Who is more lame than Exdeath? (Ironic name now that I think of it). Also, remember to equip the passive abilities that give benefits while in EX mode.

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~~ VI) Advanced Techniques ~~  
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Dissidia doesn't feature as much tactic depth as other competitive fighters suchs as Smash Bros series uses to. It's centered on one hand in raw reflexes and coordination, and on the other in tactic, memory and strategy. However, there are no complex techniques, keypresses are simple and most combos are premade and lineal.

Garland, while originally coded in a way that would fit with the rest of the cast, resulted to be Dissidia's bold child. He's got a lot of holes in his coding, "blank spaces" between his natural combo strikes you can exploit to build complex custom combos, which deal insane amounts of damage. These custom combos are the hardest techniques in Garland's repertory, and mastering them is what will make your Garland perfect.

This, however, is not the only source of Advanced Techniques. Many of Garland's moves can be used in creative ways to bypass natural defenses and enforce an offensive game which ressembles a "rogue-ish" character. Yes, this guy in full plate is the closest we have to play like an assasin in dissidia.

From the very beginning I've been working hard in discovering and creating advanced techs for Garland. Most of them were invented by me, and they're by far my favourite aspect of Garland's metagame. They're a load of fun :)

They will usually come with a Youtube link for you to visualize them and understand the explanations.

Oh, and by the way, forgive me for the cheesy names, I love giving names to techs, specially when they would be too long otherwise.

~~ VI.1) Storming, Fishing and Tornado Pressure ~~

--DIFFICULTY--**

I wasn't sure wether to include these in the strategy guide or the AT section, because they aren't real techniques but rather "fighting stances", tactics you can adopt. But since they have a fancy name I decided to include them all together with a low difficulty rating.

They all involve using Tornadoes to conceal other attacks. Storming is based on casting a Tornado followed by a Blaze, air dodge somewhere, rinse and repeat. The point is pressing the enemy back, until he/she is cornered at a wall or at least close to physical objects. This is a really safe way of landing HP attacks (as long as you know your spacing) and should protagonize your killing blows.

Fishing involves keeping a rather spaced tornado pressure (not fulltime spam, just once in a while) and a lot of attention to "catch" the enemy with Chain Bump when he/she tries to dodge your Tornadoes or starts casting some magic him/herself. The Tornado will conceal you and will make the "fishing rod" harder to avoid, specially if they are busy dodging the tornado itself.

Tornado Pressure refers to full time tornado spamming to force the opponent to move in a certain direction, with the objective of cornering him/her. Be careful and avoid the attacks that go through the Tornado. Doing this at closer ranges will be more effective but more risky as well, find your desired balance of risk/reward and go for it. Also remember that, at extremely short ranges, after casting a Tornado you can charge at them without fearing guards, because if they happen to block you, the tornado will reach them, so it's a nice backup defensive measure.

Master these three techniques and your performance against the magic users and some melee fighters will improve a lot.

~~ VI.2) Galahad Dribble ~~

--DIFFICULTY-- *****

--YOUTUBE-- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0AyWPo88Bo&fmt=18>

This was one of my first inventions and probably the one I'm most proud of. It's the result of a deep research on how the Round Edge hitbox works and its possibilities. As you all know by now if you have read the moveset analysis, Round Edge animation is directional. This means you can spin around, Diablo 2 style, for as long as the attack lasts (not much).

Since the spin starts from right to left, depending on the direction you glide towards the first hit will come faster or slower. This doesn't sound that exciting itself, but the great deal is that you can twist the sword in a way that will hit the enemy from behind, completely bypassing their guard. This technique is, therefore, unblockable when used correctly. It's slow and hard to perform, but since it chains into all sorts of custom combos it's really worth it.

To do it, you just have to glide slightly diagonally to the right when doing Round Edge. Watch the video, practice and it will become natural.

~~ VI.3) Ghost Drill ~~

--DIFFICULTY-- ***

--YOUTUBE-- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1-pFvzHzT4&fmt=18>

This is one of the "rogue-ish" techs I was talking about before. It consists in luring the enemy attack and suddenly dropping out of the surface you both are in, and while he's whiffing come back up with a Twist Drill. Variations of this tech include directly assaulting the surface your enemy is standing at from the sides or directly from below with Twist Drill, without him attacking first.

Why? Because it can hardly be punished. It travels under their clash hitbox so sword clashes are unusual, and even if they block it, the different altitude plus the solid obstacle make for a very good defense. Besides, it is very, very hard to see coming.

Practice a lot with it because it has a deceptive long range, and it works in many situations.

~~ VI.4) Custom Combos ~~

--DIFFICULTY-- ****

--YOUTUBE-- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pL1GWAKnnk>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3HFhyakheQ>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6Mgp9EJDAE>

Ahh, the custom combos! There's nothing as satisfying as pulling a critical one. They all evolve from a video released by a guy called SuperWave (RoboDestroyer youtube acc) in which he chained an unlimited number of Round Edges against the cloud AI. SuperWave, however, was not sure of the combo being truly infinite, and after certain tests he concluded it was not.

After certain tests of my own, however, I demonstrated it IS. It's fully inescapable as long as you do it right. Intrigued by the way the combo worked, I kept on experimenting, and testing possible combinations with other attacks, and got to the next conclusions:

To perform the "premade" combos, Garland (and many other characters) must land one first blow (or number of blows) and after that part of the animation ends, the player must press circle again to "continue" the natural combo. Certain combos are bifurcate, and depend on the way/timing you press circle. For example, you all know RT can chain into Twin Sword or a ground version of Bardiche, home run style.

The interesting part is that, when you're supposed to hit circle the second time to continue the combo, the opponent stays there stunned for a second, "waiting" for you to keep on whacking him. This was a (pretty logical) measure by the developers to give players enough time to chain their premade combos naturally without having to spam much.

However, in Garland's case at least they overdid it. The stun time in certain attacks is long and gives you enough time to do a Dodge Cancel (simply dodging backwards or neutrally in the air) and continue the improvised combo with another attack of your choice.

Thanks to Sleath41 videos and some research of my own I made a list of the useful links you can do between attacks and construct custom combos with.

-
- Round Edge - DC - Round Edge (glide to the left) -
 - Round Edge - DC - High Bringer (Low/High) -
 - Round Edge - DC - Tsunami (hard to escape but avoidable sometimes) -
 - Low-High Bringer - DC - Low High Bringer (risky) -
 - Low-High Bringer - DC - High-High Bringer -
 - High-High Bringer - DC - Bardiche -
 - Bardiche - DC - Chain Bump (avoidable) -
-

These are the pieces you can build custom combos with. Improvise, mix and

match to your heart's content and find your best combo.

My own favourite combo is the single technique I decided to give my name, because I simply LOVE it and I use it all the time. It's a variation of Sleath's original combo, which uses Galahad Dribble as an approach, my SuperWave modified combo and finishes in the air very strongly. It's also legal in my tournament scene =P.

So here comes the Falcord Combo! (Every "-" is a dodge cancel)

Galahad Dribble - Round Edge - Low-High Bringer - High-High Bringer - Bardiche - Chain Bump

That string of hits is deadly (and really capable of one hit-breaking), and it's only escapable on the last step (bardiche - chain bump). Give it a try!

~~ VI.5) Glitches to Exploit and Avoid ~~

There isn't much to fill this section with, but there are a couple bugs I noticed about Garland, one that benefits his gameplay if you exploit it, and one that can really hurt you unless you are very careful.

1- Earthquake Bombing: If you do Earthquake over the edge of a surface and hit the air, the closest surface below the head of your axe will burst like if you had impacted it. This might come in handy to hit someone below you, but it's very very situational.

2- Double EX breaks: Remember Garland's special EX ability right? Okay, if you're casting a Tornado in your opponent's face and he's hitting you at the same time, eventually you'll hit him, depleting your BP; and the big square will appear. Then you hit square to start the Burst, and between your BP depletion and the burst itself a hit from the enemy will get in, breaking you! (funnily enough however, sometimes you don't get into break state, but instead also gain the neutral points so it's some sort of "double break". These points do not deal real damage and vanish after the Burst so be careful).

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~~ VII) Matchup Guide ~~  
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Under construction. Need more friends or a ps3 :)

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~~ VIII) Contact and Legal ~~  
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This guide is not to be published anywhere outside Gamefaqs.com without my permission. For any inquiries, legal-related or dissidia-related questions, as well as any suggestions for the improvement of the guide, contact me at pablomans6@hotmail.com or my youtube channel, Falcord.

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~~ IX) Updates and Thanks ~~  
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Version History:
v.1.0.0 - 2/15/2009, Release date.

Update History:

Special thanks to the great Dissidia Gamefaqs community, which has proven to be nice and mature. Thanks to Gamefaqs itself for hosting my guide and thanks of course to the Square Enix team for making all this possible.

Thanks to my friends for letting me ram them with my axe for nights without complaining.

And very special thanks to my girl, for laughing at my addiction to the PSP lately :)

Of course, thank you for reading, and go enjoy Dissidia and Garland!!

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