

Soul Blade Hwang Sung Kyung Character FAQ

by Dave Connoy

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Soul Edge Ver. II: Hwang Sung Kyung FAQ v1.0

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Acknowledgments

Version History

v0.8: 19 January 1997. Posted the FAQ to Usenet and it was promptly archived at GameFAQs.

v1.0: 30 December 2000. Just on a lark I was looking at all my FAQs when I realized I had a more recent version of this FAQ on my hard drive that dated from about March 1997. No real changes except that hardcoded tabs were taken out, and the Usenet headers and sig weren't present. Figured the archived version might as well be up-to-date.

Introduction

As you probably already know, Hwang Sung Kyung was a pointless 'secret' character in Version I of Soul Edge. Little more than a shameless clone of Mitsurugi, Hwang was accessible through a needlessly complex code at the character selection screen. Now, in Version II, Hwang has more of his own personality, with flashier moves than Mitsurugi and a different fighting style.

My intent with this FAQ is pretty much the same as with any character guide; to throw out the most effective techniques I've developed playing Hwang, and hopefully to help people play against Hwang as well. There will also be extensive discussion of general game mechanics here because the general FAQ for the game is still just a move list.

In response to accusations that Hwang is 'cheap', I have developed my own playing style, which I have dubbed the 'trap' style. It involves using deceptive, quick-recovery attacks to 'bait' the opponent into a course of action which you have predicted, and then punish him. IMHO, this is a fun style to play and watch, in contrast to what I call the 'annoying' style, which is to get in the opponent's face and repeatedly use three- and four-hit combos.

One last thing: in this FAQ I liberally throw around the term "okizeme". This is rough Japanese for the concept of "attack on the rising opponent". Okizeme is a powerful technique in Soul Edge because rising opponents are very vulnerable if they make a mistake, and ranged okizeme is a great way to close the distance to a knocked-down opponent to get back into the 'safe zone' that Hwang needs to maintain.

Part I: The Moves

Contents:

- 1) Move list
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1) Move List

This is a complete list of Hwang's moves, with their attack level and recovery position. Hwang's moves while unarmed are NOT listed here; please consult the Unarmed Combat FAQ for those statistics. (If you're playing right you should never find yourself unarmed; nonetheless the UC FAQ is a good resource.)

G,A,B,K refer to the Guard, Horizontal, Vertical, and Kick buttons respectively.

f,b,u,d refer to tapping the joystick forward, back, up, down, respectively.

F,B,U,D refer to holding the joystick in that position.

Crouch by holding the joystick down. (it needed to be said:)

N refers to returning the joystick to a neutral position (usually from a crouch).

H refers to attacks that hit standing non-defenders.

M refers to attacks that hit crouching opponents.

L refers to attacks that hit standing opponents.

n refers to attacks that hit non-defending opponents.

P refers to pounces and ground attacks, which hit downed opponents.

T refers to throws, which hit standing opponents only.

Crud, that's too complex. Here's a chart.

	Standing Guarding	Crouching Guarding	Standing Vulnerable	Crouching Vulnerable
High (H)	Blocked	Missed	Hit	Missed
Mid (M)	Blocked	Hit	Hit	Hit
Low (L)	Hit	Blocked	Hit	Hit
Non (n)	Blocked	Blocked	Hit	Hit
Throw (T)	Thrown	Missed	Thrown	Missed

S refers to attacks that recover in a standing position.
C refers to attacks that recover in a crouching position.
All attacks begin from a standing position unless noted!

Move	Motion	Hit	Rec	Note
====	=====	===	===	=====

Basic Techniques

Horizontal slash	A	H	S	
Vertical slash	B	M	S	
High kick	K	H	S	
Horizontal leg slash	crouch+A	L	C	
Vertical leg slash	crouch+B	L	C	
Low kick	crouch+K	L	C	

Transition Moves (from standing to crouch & vice versa)

Splits & Slash	d+A	L	C	
Splits & Slam	d+B	n	C	
Leg Sweep	d+K	L	C	!
Long Sweep	d/b+K	L	C	!
High Cross	crouch,N+A	H	S	
Leaping Blade Uppercut	crouch,N+B	M	S	!,^
Rising Double Kick	crouch,N+K	M	S	!

Small jump moves (tap up or u/f or u/b)

Hop and downward slash	hop+A or hop+B	M	S	*
Hopping kick	hop+K	M?	S	
Hop & heel smash	hop,K	M?	S?	

Large jump moves (hold UP or U/F or U/B)

Somersault and downward slash	jump+A or B	M	S	
High jump with late slash	jump,A or B	M	S	*
Takeoff kick	jump+K	M	S	
Jumping heel smash	jump,K	M?	S?	

Turning around moves (opponent behind you)

Turn-towards high slash	A	H?	S?	
Turn-towards mid slash	B	M?	S?	
Turn-towards high kick	K	H?	S?	
Turn-towards low slash	d+A	L	C?	
Turn-towards sweep	d+K	L	C?	

Pounce (opponent down)

Hop & sword thrust	u+A or u+B	P	S	
Somersault & sword thrust	U+A or U+B	P	S	
Ground stomp	d/f+K	P	S	

Special Attacks

Tiger Sweep	b+A	H	S	
Shin Slicer	d/b+A	L	S	!
Division Slice	d/f+A	L	S	
Hook Slice	f+A	H	S	
Let It Roll	b+B	M	S	
Blade Uppercut	d/f+B	M	S	^
Wasp Stinger	f+B	M	S	
Thunder Strike	f, F+B	M	S	!, ^
Roundhouse	b+K	H	S	
Side Kick	d/f+K	M	S	
Spin Kick	f+K	H	S	
Vane Kick	b, f+K	M	S	
Rocket Launcher	f, F+K	M	S	!
Slide Tackle	Run+K	L	S	!
Steel Slicer	A+B	M	S	!
Phoenix Tail	f, F+A+B	M	S	!
Guard Impact	f+G		S	

Sidestep Attacks

Sidestep foreground	d, d		S	
Sidestep background	d, u		S	
Sidestep foreground with horizontal slash	d, d, A	M	S	!
Sidestep background with horizontal slash	d, u, A	M	S	!
Sidestep foreground with vertical slash	d, d, B	M	S	
Sidestep background with vertical slash	d, u, B	M	S	
Sidestep foreground with low kick	d, d, K	L	C	
Sidestep background with low kick	d, u, K	L	C	

Crouch Dashing Attacks

Crouch Dash	d, d/f, f		C	
Crouch Dash & High Cross	d, d/f, f, A	H	S	
Crouch Dash & Cross Attack	d, d/f, f, A, B	HM	S	!
Crouch Dash & Leaping Blade	d, d/f, f, B	M	S	!, ^
Crouch Dash & Rising Kick	d, d/f, f, K	M	S	!

Combination Attacks

Samurai Slashes	A, A	HH	S	
No Escape	A, A, A	HHH	S	
Slice & Dice	A, A, d+A	HHL	S	!
Wind Storm	A, A, B	HHM	S	!
Double Crossup	d/f+A, A	LH	S	
Triple Crossup	d/f+A, A, B	LHM	S	!
Cross Attack	crouch, N+A, B	HM	S	!
V-Cutter	B, B	MM	S	
Triangle Cutter	B, B, A	MMH	S	
Sudden Wind	B, B, A, d+A	MMHL	S	!
Wipe Out	B, B, A, B	MMHM	S	!
Twin Harpoon	K, K	HM	S	!

Falling Leaf	d+K, B	LM	S	!
Moon Crusher	f, F+K, K	MM	S	!
Earth Crusher	f, F+K, K, K	MMM	S	!

Throws

Sea Of Madness	A+G	T	S	!
Bitch Kick	B+G	T	S	!
Flat Tire (behind opponent)	A+G or B+G	T	S	!

Unblockable Attack

Splits & Smite	b+B+K	All	?	!
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Critical Edge	A+B+K	M	S	
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Cross The Styx (Ver. I)	hcf+A+B		S	!
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Rising Uppercut (Ver. II)	hcf+B+K		S	!
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Notes

! = If this hits, the opponent will always go down.

^ = A solid hit will send the opponent high into the air, possibly allowing a 'float' combo.

* = This can also hit a knocked-down opponent.

2) Move analysis

Here I'll go into a somewhat detailed explanation of each move and its uses.

a) Basic moves

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This includes everything from the most basic single moves to the pounces listed above. Begin by learning the most basic techniques here and then moving on, as Hwang's special moves are notably more useful than these.

Horizontal slash (A)

Hwang swings his sword horizontally at the opponent's head. Since this strike hits high, it can be ducked under and countered by a low move. The advantage, however, is the wide horizontal path this slash follows, making it the easiest way to hit a sidestepping opponent.

Vertical slash (B)

This slash hits mid-level, so it will strike a crouching opponent neatly in the face. Being a vertical strike, however, it is easily sidestepped. Not useful except to hit someone who persistently crouches at close range.

High Kick (K)

A kick to the opponent's head. This kick is useless at best. It hits high, so it can be ducked, and since it only covers half an arc, the opponent has a 50% chance of sidestepping it as well. I make it a point not to rely too much on high- and mid-level kicks anyway, because they don't cause sword damage on an armed opponent and don't cause block damage to an unarmed opponent.

Low slashes & kick (crouch+A,B,or K)

Repeated use of these techniques can force the opponent to crouch; however, knockdowns are not possible with these moves. Use these to chip away at the lifebar of an opponent who tries to throw you, but don't overuse these techniques or your opponent will back up and crush you with a mid-level power move.

Hopping attacks (refer to the move list for stick motion)

The most obvious use of these moves is to jump over an opponent's low attack. They work passably in that respect because of Soul Edge's quick jumping motions. I've also had paltry success using these to break out of 'guesswork' combos used by Mitsurugi.

Large jumping moves (refer to the move list for stick motion)

Though stigmatized by advanced players because they are all too often the refuge of 'scrubby' players, large jumping moves can have their uses. The execution of the takeoff kick is *fast*, and a forward takeoff kick can get you out of trouble faster than a sidestep if you feel threatened by Ring Out.

A quick note: I've messed around with the takeoff kick a little more and it seems to have *uncanny* priority. I've had my moves interrupted really late in the animation by presumably well-placed takeoff kicks.

Turntowards attacks (refer to the move list for stick motion)

Not often will you find yourself with your back to your opponent. Most often, it happens if you start a combo and continue after your opponent has sidestepped the first hit. Otherwise, a particularly psycho opponent (or Taki) might jump over you.

At any rate, there's really nothing to worry about as the turntowards d+K (hell, any turntowards attack) comes out REALLY fast. It will definitely put down someone that's rushing in for the back throw, and will probably duck under to interrupt any combo that trespasses in the high region. When in doubt, throw it out.

Pounce (u+A or B and d/f+K)

Get used to dashing in and doing the d/f+K stomp when your opponent is knocked down because it's the surest ground attack and leaves you in a decent position for okizeme. Missing either of the air pounces leaves you in an exceptionally poor position on recovery, and the air pounces have an ugly habit of not aligning with an opponent that's downed in a weird position.

b) Special moves

Here are the slightly more complex special moves. Similar moves are analyzed together; moves used primarily to start hardwired combos are moved to the Combination Attack analysis section.

Tiger Sweep (b+A) and Let It Roll (b+B)

Both of these techniques involve Hwang spinning his body to execute a wide horizontal slash. Let It Roll (gah, what a stupid name) hits a crouching opponent and is a bit slower. Being wide horizontal strikes, sidestepping these is difficult, but the relatively slow execution keeps these from being a useful way to hit a sidestepper.

Shin Slicer (d/b+A)

Hwang spins as in the Tiger Sweep, but keeps his body near the ground to slice the opponent's leg. This is a low, knockdown attack with some forward range. It works *great* to dodge high attacks, and even some mid-level attacks sail overhead because of Hwang's low profile during the execution. This, as well as the long sweep (d/b+K) should be the core of your offensive strategy against opponents that don't let you in close enough to connect the sweep that starts the Falling Leaf. The forward range also works well to hit opponents that keep it close and then dash back, hoping to avoid your attack.

Splits & Slash (d+A) and Splits & Slam (d+B)

Hwang shows off his flexibility by doing the splits as he either slashes the opponent's legs or slams his sword on the ground. These attacks bring Hwang to an instant crouch and come out *fast*. I like the d+A and use it exclusively because it hits low; d+B only hits a non-blocker and can be dodged with a sidestep. d+A also works like a dream as a 'bait' attack because it has very quick recovery and looks like a muffed Shin Slicer.

Blade Uppercut (d/f+B)

A move universal to all characters in SE Version II. Hwang's uppercut only staggers a crouching, guarding opponent, but a hit on a non-guarding opponent sends them high into the air. Since Hwang recovers before the enemy hits the ground in this case, it's possible to tag a 'float' move or combo onto the opponent. The best followup if the uppercut floats is A,A,A. If the uppercut hit as an interrupt, the opponent will float higher; B,B,A and f,F+B are the best followups in this case.

Wasp Stinger (f+B)

Hwang quickly stabs his sword toward the opponent's neck. This move comes out lightning quick, but this advantage is balanced by its paltry damage. This stab is useful to interrupt an opponent's combo with minimum fuss if it's started out of range. If you connect in that circumstance, quickly follow up with another attack (Falling Leaf or Shin Slicer depending on range) before the opponent figures out what's going on.

Thunder Strike (f,F+B) and Phoenix Tail (f,F+A+B)

These are both excellent moves to use at long range. The Thunder Strike comes out *fast* and can float your opponent just like the Uppercut; however, attacks on the floated opponent are limited by the longer recovery. With the f,F+B, I generally don't attack the falling opponent unless I scored an interrupt, and even then I limit myself to A,A,A. The Thunder Strike is also useful *in* a float; it can connect after an interrupt by a regular uppercut.

The Phoenix Tail is one of my favorite attacks and is one of Hwang's most powerful single strikes. Delaying the execution of the Phoenix Tail will often reward you with an interrupt against antsy opponents, and make them more defensive (losing half your lifebar does that to ya.)

What do I mean by 'delaying execution'? Well... as you can see, the notation for these moves is written f,F+X. Since the second F is capitalized, you can tap f, then hold F and wait as long as you want to hit the buttons, but you must keep the second F held. Since the motion of f,F causes you to run full tilt at your opponent, you can hold the second F to get as close as you like to your opponent before finally executing the move by pressing the appropriate button(s). This makes for powerful ranged okizeme, as it adds these mid-level strikes to the sliding tackle for more attacks possible while

running.

One more caveat: Both of these are vertical attacks. Don't use these as an attack if your opponent is skilled at sidestepping.

Leaping Blade Uppercut (crouch,N+B or d,d/f,f,B)

Hwang leaps into the air, swinging his sword upward in a vast vertical circular arc. This move is fast, deals big damage, and can set up a float if it hits as an interrupt. The bad news is that if your opponent blocks this, he can probably land a throw; also, if you use this as an attack, you could eat serious punishment from a well-placed sidestep. Because of those weaknesses, this is something that you want to 'bait' opponents into being hit by. (If you're not one yourself, ask a veteran Virtua Fighter 2 player about Jacky's flipkick.) I like to 'mask' this under low kicks and the d+A so that it comes out as soon as the crouching move is over.

Spin Kicks (b+K and f+K)

These two spin kicks are about as useful as the high kick. (In other words, they are not useful.) They hit high and have either slow execution (in the case of b+K) or horrendous recovery (f+K).

Long Sweep Kick (d/b+K)

This sweep, borrowed from Rock, works much like the d/b+A Shin Slicer mentioned above with one important difference: it has a crouching, rather than standing, recovery. This may seem unimportant now, but keep it in mind when you read the Recovery Position section in Part II. It also has a slightly longer range than the Shin Slicer and, similarly, is near impossible to sidestep. Another vital move for Hwang.

Leg Sweep (d+K)

This is quite possibly the move you'll use most often. It hits low, knocks down, and comes out *quick*. Unless you follow with the B button to form the Falling Leaf combo, this will leave you in a crouch. One of your goals should be to force your opponent to crouch all the time, this is the best way to do it. The only disadvantage of this sweep is the very short range. Generally this should only be done at very close (throw) range; rely on the Shin Slicer and Long Sweep at any distance farther than this.

Side Kick (d/f+K)

One Usenet personality mentioned that sidekicks for characters in Soul Edge are "slower than VF2 Wolf on Quaaludes." Though this may be the case, the side kick is important for Hwang to hit a crouched opponent at close range without telegraphing his intentions to do so. "What about the uppercut?" you ask. Remember that the uppercut only staggers a crouching defender, giving no substantial damage. A side kick will knock down, allowing a pounce, which lets you start okizeme.

Vane Kick (b,f+K)

Another weird kick. This one would be a lot better if it hit mid-level instead of high. Just another thing to wow scrubs with, I guess.

Rising Double Kick (crouch,N+K or d,d/f,f,K)

This kick is cannibalized from Siegfried's arsenal. Besides using it against Siegfried players to annoy them :), I can't think of any real use for

this one. It executes too slow to make a useful attack initiator or to function as a 'bait' attack like the leaping uppercut.

Slide Tackle (Run+K)

The slide tackle is initiated by first running toward your opponent, and executed by pressing K when you get in range. This is a popular move; some characters even have to rely on it as a primary low attack. Hwang needs not, and should not, for various reasons, rely on this as an attack unless the opponent is already on the ground (i.e. okizeme).

The tackle makes a poor attack for several reasons:

- a) The f,F+K Rocket Launcher has the same motion; whether your movement results in a Rocket Launcher or Slide Tackle depends on how far you run before K is pressed. (See above notes about f,F motions.) This 'double move' situation constrains Hwang to run a certain distance before he can tackle.
- b) If your opponent crouches and blocks the tackle, he can throw you because of its standing recovery and short block stun.
- c) The tackle is *easily* sidestepped. A sidestepped tackle at close range could result in Hwang being back-thrown (ouch).

That said, the slide tackle *does* make an excellent long-range okizeme attack because the opponent does not have the option of sidestepping it as he is rising.

Steel Slicer (A+B)

Hwang swings his sword upward in two successive vertical circles. This move is vertical and very slow to execute; however, if the first upward slash connects, the second is guaranteed to hit for a grand total of a lot of damage.

Against opponents that are super-aggressive risers (you know the type - they *always* roll directly towards you and sweep after being knocked down), predictive use of this can devastate the offending riser. Note that I said 'predictive' and not 'reactive' - be sure you know he's going to do it, and hit A+B just before he begins his roll.

Sidestep attacks (d,d or d,u, then A, B, or K)

The sidestep maneuvers (d,d and d,u) form the basis of Namco's claim that Soul Edge is the first truly 3D fighting game. The truth or untruth of that claim notwithstanding, sidestep maneuvers are the core of good technique in Soul Edge. They're so important that I'm giving them their own section in Part II, so see that section.

c) Combination attacks

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Hwang may seem to have a lot of combos, but most of them I'm going to lump together under the below heading.

3 & 4 Hit Combos

-
- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| Slice & Dice | (A,A,d+A) |
| Wind Storm | (A,A,B) |
| Sudden Wind | (B,B,A,d+A) |
| Wipe Out | (B,B,A,B) |

These combos are the trap that many fall into when picking up Hwang. Overuse of these combos will definitely win you matches, but not win you friends. In case you couldn't tell, the point of these combos is that they can end with either a low (d+A) or mid-level (B) strike. The unfortunate

victim can only try to guess where to block the last strike and gets knocked over if he guesses wrong. I can't emphasize enough that a Hwang that uses these over and over is **not** fun to play against; I try to keep my usage of these to a minimum. I may fire one of these off if my opponent is pressuring me in close, just to remind the poor sap that close combat with Hwang is not something to pursue further.

Triple Crossup (d/f+A,A,B) and Cross Attack (crouch,N+A,B or d,d/f,f,A,B)

Aesthetically pleasing as well as powerful, Triple Crossup hits at all three attack levels, which is neat, but not too stunning because a standing blocker can still block the H and M strikes after the L slash hits.

Nearly undodgeable, this is also **the** weapon of choice to hit sidestepping opponents, as the first two slashes go wide to the side. Since it's undodgeable, it's nifty for dealing out sword or block damage.

One sure-fire use is to splatter those damn aggressive risers: if the fellow you're fighting tends to always roll directly towards you and rise with an attack, then stand just far enough away to 'bait' him into rolling towards you. As soon as you see him start to roll, use Triple Crossup to wipe the floor with him. Works like a charm.

A Cross Attack executed from crouch is probably the best counter to a blocked low attack. It comes out quick and will probably catch an over-aggressive opponent off guard.

Twin Harpoon (K,K)

Like Li Long, Hwang can follow his high kick with an axe kick by hitting K a second time. Not a powerful or useful technique; you might get a paranoid croucher with this once in a blue moon.

Falling Leaf (d+K,B)

The Falling Leaf (I've so named it because of its similarities to Paul's combo of the same name in Tekken 2) is possibly Hwang's most powerful technique and definitely one of the most useful moves in the whole game. The sweep comes out **quick** and the golf-style slash that follows is guaranteed to hit if the sweep knocks down. The only drawback of this is its awfully short range; use the d/b+A Shin Slicer or d/b+K Long Sweep if you're unsure that you're close enough.

Pressure your opponent into and out of crouch with this, but don't overuse it. Remember, you have two other excellent low attacks.

Earth Crusher (f,F+K,K,K)

Plucked from Seung Mina's repertoire, this is an effective okizeme technique and a decent attack in general. Use the range to your advantage, and delay execution a bit if you like (but not too much or you'll get a slide tackle). The first kick doesn't have quite the range of the Phoenix Tail, but it comes out a bit faster, making this a useful way to retaliate a quick-recovery attack that misses in front of you.

As an attack, I generally throw out all three kicks in hopes that I can catch an aggressive opponent off guard; a moderate margin of success can be gained by sometimes using all three kicks and other times stopping after two and executing a low attack. Also note that being kicks, these are an alternative to the f,F+A+B Phoenix Tail as a long range attack that cannot be Guard Impacted.

d) Throws

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Throws are, in my opinion, not a useful weapon for Hwang; his low attacks are fast, powerful, and have better range, and are much more effective to hit a standing opponent. Falling Leaf is a better attack than a throw at throw range. Throws can be useful to interrupt a string of standing attacks at close range (newbie button mashing for instance) because of their quick execution.

Sea Of Madness (A+G)

The "human blender" throw. This is possibly the fastest executing throw in the game and is near impossible to escape on reflex. Though the B+G is cooler looking, don't forget about this throw - especially if your opponent seems to be adept at escapes. Also, this throw keeps your opponent in front of you - definitely something to keep in mind if the edge of the ring is at your opponent's back and you want to pressure Ring Out.

Bitch Kick (B+G)

What can I say? When Hwang throws, it's almost exclusively this one, simply because it looks so darn cool. Don't fall too much in love with this puppy - predictability will lead to an escape by your opponent. This throw switches places with your opponent, so it can be used to change the tide if Ring Out seems to be in your opponent's favor.

In the case of either throw, a stomp (d/f+K) can connect if the opponent rolls directly towards or away, or gets up in place after the throw.

e) Unblockable and Critical Edge

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Unblockable Attack (b+B+K)

Hwang raises his sword into the air, and it is struck by lightning. He then executes the Splits & Slam with his charged sword. True to its name, this attack cannot be blocked, but it is easily sidestepped. Hwang has one of the best unblockables in the game. It's easy to do and comes out very quickly, but it's weak as unblockables go because it only takes off half the lifebar (aww, shucks:). Once started, it can be cancelled by pressing G. Possible uses include:

- Shattering the realities of newbies who have just figured out how to use the G button
- Against an opponent that commits to a combo out of range: just dash back, past where the last hit will be, and fire it up. The Critical Edge, however is better for this if you can get the extension every time.
- If timed perfectly, as okizeme: time the unblockable to hit as the opponent gets up so as to interrupt a roll or rising attack
- G-cancel it to make your weapon glow so you can look cool (again, messing with newbies)

Incidentally, since Hwang swings his sword along his front foot, the unblockable has a tiny bit more range in open stance. I've seen it tag Taki's foot when she thought she was out of range. <shrug>

Critical Edge (A+B+K,hcf+B+K)

I originally passed this off as a not-so-useful weapon for Hwang because

of the difficult extensions; however it seems that Soul Edge is actually pretty forgiving when looking for a Critical Edge extension. During the round, you can have Hwang use his Ver. I extension (Mitsurugi's extension) or his Ver. II extension; however, if the CE kills the opponent and the computer automatically extends it, there is no way AFAIK to 'force' Hwang into the Ver. I extension.

I definitely recommend at least a little practice at extending the Critical Edge once you have the basic attacks down. If you can master the extension, it's a humiliating and powerful way to counter an attack that misses in front of you.

3)Rising attacks

When you are knocked down, there are several methods of getting up. By simply waiting, Hwang will rise in place (and take his sweet time about doing it, I might add). This is NOT a recommended way of rising unless you want to take precious seconds off the clock, because it's easy to eat a pounce. You can speed up Hwang's rise in place by tapping G rapidly, but this isn't much of a help either because a pounce can hit a player standing up. It is a better option to twist (hold D or U and tap G repeatedly) or roll (hold B or F and tap G); the best option is probably to twist *then* roll by twisting, then starting the roll motion as soon as you see the twist begin. The twist will evade pounces and ground attacks, then the roll will set up whatever distance you'd like to keep from your opponent.

After you have rolled, you have the option to execute a rising attack by tapping A, B, or K. Tapping K will result in a sweep that hits low and knocks down; A or B executes a weapon strike with better reach than the sweep (*much* better in the case of characters with long weapons), but this attack does not knock down except as an interrupt.

As far as I can tell, rising attacks are not too useful at high levels of gameplay. A missed rising attack spells certain doom if your opponent has a long range move (Critical Edge, for instance) ready, and rolling towards the opponent to ensure a hit is not a smart option as all characters have a means of hitting a rolling opponent.

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| Part II: Putting it together |  
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Contents:

- 1) Stuff you need to know
 - a) Escape from throws
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 - Interrupts
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 - Guard Impact
 - Reversals
 - c) Crouching dash
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- 1) Stuff you need to know

In this section, I want to describe some Hwang-specific and non-Hwang specific tricks of the Soul Edge operation you need to know in order to play even better.

Escape from throws

Any throw, except a back throw, can be escaped in Soul Edge. This includes complex throws and Rock's ground throw. All that is required is that you press the buttons corresponding to the throw being done (i.e. A+G or B+G) during the initial animation of the throw. Some throws (like Hwang's B+G) seem to have longer setup animation than others. This might mean there is more leeway for the victim to escape, but I may be mistaken.

Counterattacking techniques

As I hope you already know, you can 'block' moves of various levels by holding G while standing or crouching. Easy enough, but if you use blocking too much you'll quickly find yourself without a sword. That's why it's vital to learn other techniques to negate your opponent's advances.

An interrupt is when you strike an opponent during the execution phase of his attack. Any attack (even a throw!) can be used as an interrupt. This kind of hit deals extra damage, stops the opponent's attack cold, stuns him, and, in the case of the uppercuts, floats him extra high.

Quick-executing attacks are the best use for this purpose, but since quick attacks don't often knock down, it's good practice to follow up with another attack to take advantage of the opponent's stun time. Example: Many Mitsurugis, and a few Hwangs, will start a combo out of range and count on the forward motion of the moves to carry him into range. Against this little trick, use a f+B Wasp Stinger to interrupt his combo and quickly follow up with a Falling Leaf or throw while he sits there confused as to just what the hell is going on.

Using an uppercut to interrupt is risky business because of its slower execution; an uppercut launched a bit too late might result in an interrupt on you. The rewards are obvious, though: an interrupt uppercut sets up a meaty float and demoralizes the opponent. So if you feel up to it, go for it.

The most useful way to get the drop on your opponent is by dodging, rather than blocking, his attacks. Dodging techniques involve ducking, hopping, backpedaling, and sidestepping, and with expert use of all of them the Guard button might not be necessary at all... ;)

Ducking is the easiest dodge; simply crouch as your opponent does a high move and the attack will sail over your head. Ducking by itself won't do much for you though, unless you take advantage of the dodge. So rather than simply ducking, duck with an attack. For Hwang, d+A, d+B, d+K, d/b+K, and, to some extent, d/b+A, are all moves with a crouch built in. So use one of these moves to dodge, and not only will the attack go overhead, you'll get a hit.

Hopping is analogous to ducking as an evasion for low attacks. Against attacks that hit low and follow a horizontal arc, such as d/b+A attacks, execute a small hop forward with a sword attack (u/f+A or u/f+B). You'll hop over the low attack and strike the opponent. This is a dubious technique, however, as you are very vulnerable in the air and the opponent is sure to hit you if he's faked you out or your timing is off. The best (and probably only) attacks to dodge with this are Rock's d/b+A and the last hit of his f+A,A,A, or perhaps Cervantes' d/b+A. Since these attacks push you far away when blocked, hopping is sometimes the only option if you don't want to give your opponent an advantage.

Backpedaling is another useful dodge. By repeatedly tapping b,b on the

joystick, you can dash backwards in hopes that the opponent's attack will lack the range to hit you. If it does miss, muster your best attack (Critical Edge time!) to hit him, or maybe dash in and throw for style points.

Finally, there is sidestepping, and once again, I have to postpone it - you'll find a whole section on sidestepping later in the FAQ.

Guard Impact is a maneuver unique to Soul Edge; by hitting f+G as your opponent's attack is about to make contact, you can deflect it, stunning your opponent. Guard Impact can be used to stop any incoming sword attacks, but cannot be used against or kicks (or headbutts). You can even Guard Impact an opponent's Critical Edge.

It is important to note that there is no guaranteed followup to a successful Guard Impact for any character. If you're close enough after the parry, then an immediate Falling Leaf is extremely difficult (but not impossible) for the opponent to escape, anything else can be blocked as normal.

Guard Impact is most effective when you make your opponent forget that you have it, so use it when your opponent is getting comfortable with constant weapon strikes and is forgetting to mix in kicks once in a while. A good Guard Impact can scare the crap out of your opponent and make him super-defensive for a second or so; you might want to take that opportunity to dash in and throw, or to fire up an unblockable if you've got real cojones. <grin>

The final defensive technique is the reversal. A step up from Guard Impact, reversals grab an opponent's attack and use the attacker's momentum against him. These are not to be confused with counters; a counter occurs after an opponent's attack is blocked or dodged, while a reversal affects the attack itself. Hwang is not capable of any reversals, but this is not a big problem as the Guard Impact + followup acts as a sort of 'reversal' for every character.

In the above paragraph I mentioned 'counters'. Countering is hitting your opponent when his attack is recovering. Opportunities to counter can result from blocking or dodging a move, though the latter is more common in Soul Edge.

In the case of a blocked attack, countering is not always a possibility. Your block stun must be shorter than the opponent's recovery time to successfully execute a counter; this is rarely the case in Soul Edge. Not only that, but many blocked attacks still push you too far away for a reasonable counter-attack to be in range. I surmise that Namco intended for Soul Edge to work this way - after the proliferation of defensive play that occurred in games such as Virtua Fighter 2, the developers probably figured that giving the attacker the advantage would lead to new styles of gameplay and keep Soul Edge from being a rehash of other 3D fighting games. (A smart move, though poorly executed in Ver. I; Ver. II fixes a *lot* of the problems that arose from this philosophy.)

The best opportunity for a counter rises when the opponent's attack misses you completely. Hopefully this was a result of you backpedaling or sidestepping; if so, launch your counterattack - any move will do. Don't give up the momentum once you have it.

Crouching dash

Hwang is one of the few characters that possesses a crouch dash. Executed by rolling the joystick d,d/f,f in a classic 'fireball' motion, the crouch dash enables Hwang to move quickly forward while staying low, and provides fast access to his arsenal of strong crouch,N attacks. The crouch dash attacks (Cross Attack, Leaping Uppercut, and Rising Double Kick) can be done by pressing the appropriate button(s) during the crouch dash and can even be delayed - by pressing the button(s) slightly after the animation, you

can make a crouch dash attack seemingly come out of nowhere to catch your opponent unaware.

This technique has important implications for Hwang, both in starting attack patterns and in pressuring the opponent with okizeme; more on that in the appropriate sections.

Okizeme

Okizeme, the art of keeping downed opponents on the ground by pressuring them as they rise, is a vital technique to know in Soul Edge. The main way to connect an okizeme attack is to hit during the recovery of a missed rising attack, as rising attacks are uncounterable if blocked. It is also possible to hit an opponent as they roll, but this is tough to do unless the opponent rolls toward you.

Get used to the distance that each character can strike with their weapon when rising. The perfect distance from a rising opponent is far enough away that the downed opponent cannot hit you by rolling toward you and using a weapon attack. From this distance, you have a multitude of options depending on what the opponent does.

If he still insists on rolling towards you, just let the attack miss (you're at that perfect range anyway) and Critical Edge, throw, or whatever tickles your fancy.

Against an opponent that rises in place or rolls to the side, f,F+A+B or f,F+K are good options. It's unlikely that you'll have room to slide tackle.

If he rolls away, then most probably use the slide tackle. You could also 'fake' a slide tackle by sprinting towards him, causing him to duck, and then tap B instead for an instant Thunder Strike, popping him into the air.

If a successful attack leaves you too close to the downed opponent to back up to the preferred distance, you may want to try 'luring' your opponent into rolling towards you. Dash back slightly so that the opponent has to roll at you to connect a rising attack. If he takes the bait, hit him as he rolls with Triple Crossup (d/f+A,A,B). A couple wipes across the floor like this and he won't try that lame tactic again.

Recovery position

Most moves in Soul Edge execute from a standing position and leave you in a standing position after they've recovered. However, there are some moves that, though they are executed from standing, leave your character in a crouch when finished. Granted, if the joystick is left at neutral after one of these, your character will return to a standing position; but, if you hold the joystick down after one of these, you will see that there is *no* crouching animation.

So what? Good question. Moves that recover crouching are a vital weapon for Hwang because they provide access to his powerful crouch,N moves. By executing a move that recovers crouching, releasing the joystick, and tapping a button just as the crouch attack recovers, you can create a crouch,N attack without actually crouching.

So what? Why not just crouch and then execute the move? Well, when the heat is on and you're in close combat with an opponent, you're not going to have the frames (read: time) to crouch and then execute an attack - you'll get interrupted for sure. Crouching per se also reduces your mobility drastically - though Hwang has a crouch dash forward, you lose the ability to backpedal quickly and also the ability to sidestep instantly.

Hwang has the added advantage that his crouching-recovery moves recover quickly, making them essential tools in 'rolling your own combos'. To avoid confusion with 'hardwired' combos, (such as d/f+A,A,B), I call self-made combinations 'patterns' or 'sequences'. I have had good success with the use of crouching-recovery moves as a power attack to lure my opponent into being hit by.

Sidestepping attacks

Sidestepping is a vital part of gameplay in Soul Edge. If, instead of sidestepping incoming attacks, you choose to block them, you'll lose sword power; this will keep you from being able to use your Critical Edge and eventually cause you to lose your sword. The sidestep cannot evade all attacks; to truly benefit from it you must mix it with the other dodging techniques I mentioned above, or your opponent will exploit your weaknesses.

Okay, so you know that you need to sidestep. There are three important questions associated with sidestepping:

- a) Which side should I sidestep into (foreground or background)?
- b) Should I use an attack in my sidestep?
- c) If so, which one?

Question a) is a very tough one. Since it's impossible to tell exactly which move your opponent is using, the best choice you can make is to sidestep into the arc that the opponent has the fewest moves in. Add to this the fact that characters retain their 'handedness' regardless of what side of the screen they are on (i.e. a move that needs to be sidestepped foreground when you are facing to the right needs to be sidestepped background if you're facing left) and you come up with a decision with so many variables that you can't possibly make it in the split-second you're allowed in combat. (Add that sentence to the Run-On Hall of Fame.)

So what to do? Don't worry about it. If you have to base your decision on *something*, then sidestep in the direction that puts you closer to the center of the ring. Perhaps when more information is available about Soul Edge's mechanics, we'll all become better sidesteppers.

Question b) is much easier: yes. If you don't directly link an A, B, or K attack to a sidestep, your opponent will probably recover from the dodged move and turn to face you before you can launch a standard attack from your new facing. The only significant exception to this is a Mitsurugi or Hwang that overuses the B,B,A,x combos; if you sidestep without an attack as the combo begins and the opponent executes the whole thing, you'll have enough time to close in for a back throw - so please decapitate him and make life easier for the rest of us.

Finally, to answer question c): The A and K attacks are the most useful attacks to sidestep with, as the A hits mid-level and knocks down, and the K recovers quickly and crouching.

If you want to keep things no-nonsense, use the A attack. It'll knock the opponent over if successful; run up and do a ground stomp if you think you have time, but *don't pounce*. Even though you may think you're properly aligned with the downed opponent, the sidestepping A strike knocks them far to the side and your pounce will end up stabbing a large divot in the ground just next to the opponent's head.

The B strike is the least useful of the three. It hits mid-level, but doesn't knock down and the recovery is such that a follow-up isn't guaranteed.

If you want to do things with finesse, use the low kick (K) with your sidestep. It won't knock down, but it recovers quickly and in a crouch, leading to a host of follow-ups - see the section below.

My general strategy is to use the A strike when dodging an opponent's attack because it assures good damage if it's successful. When throwing a sidestep into an attack pattern, I use K because it allows for more options whether or not it hits.

One last thing I should mention - it is possible to sidestep while crouching by 'hiding' the sidestep in a crouching attack; i.e. do a low kick and enter the sidestep during the animation. This is a neat tool for keeping

a low profile and freaking out your opponent.

2) Multiple attacks

Low-level Soul Edge gameplay (trust me, I've seen a lot of it) may seem like a block-and-counter fest. One person fires off a combo, the opponent blocks it, then executes one of his own. Player one blocks this combo (or maybe is hit by it) and the cycle repeats.

One of the key elements of my little 'trap' strategy is to use quick-recovery single attacks to harass the opponent or make him think I made a mistake, then follow with a fast power move for the interrupt. Granted, it may not be a sure-win strategy, but it gets lots of style points. :)

I've found that the best setups for a trap are the crouching-recovery moves, such as d+A,B, or K and the sidestepping K. These allow you to follow with an 'instant' crouch,N move (see the Recovery Position section.) Crouch,N+B is a fast power attack and is probably the best one to use because of the high damage possibility.

You can also set up traps by entering a sidestep after a fast attack. Seemingly useless moves like f+A can work like a charm to hide an impending sidestep. Also see above about sidestepping in a crouch.

3) Strategy

One way to start off is to use low attacks relentlessly. These are actually all you need against an opponent that doesn't know how to do a crouch,N attack because he'll be unable to counter. A smarter opponent will use crouch,N attacks to stop the onslaught or just stay crouching; this is when you start a 'phase two' of sorts by linking those low attacks into crouch,N power moves. Do things like d+A (opponent thinks this is a missed Shin Slicer, tries to retaliate) into N+B (ouch, interrupt). Obviously you can't play mind games like this on someone who's seen you play before, so mix up your traps by sometimes following with sidesteps, sometimes with power moves, or perhaps wait for an opportunity to Guard Impact.

Remember though, no matter how terrific your low attacks are, if you hit thin air, you are wide open. So stay in close and use the Long Sweep if your opponent seems to like to backdash or sidestep away from the Falling Leaf.

Now, many opponents will try to stay outside your 'comfortable zone,' trying to make you miss attacks and counter. So the key is to close the distance, but he'll be looking for you to move in. So close the distance with an attack, like the Phoenix Tail or Rocket Launcher. Don't telegraph these moves because they're easy to sidestep. Crouch dash also works here because you *look* vulnerable but can lash out with an attack at any time during the crouch dash. You cannot, however, block during the crouch dash, so you must think aggressively when using it. If you really feel confident, dash or crouch dash in to draw out his attack and sidestep it.

That's pretty much how it works - keep it close, then back off when there's a knockdown and close back in with an attack. Use mobility to your advantage by sidestepping lots and restrict your opponent's with constant low attacks. Once you have them rattled (or even before then) try to 'sucker' them into eating a leaping uppercut or even an unblockable. *Don't* ever be passive; follow an attack with another attack (a sidestep if nothing else) and don't just sit there blocking. (Well, be passive once in a while to make him wonder what you're gearing up for or to set up an unexpected Guard Impact.) Don't play into your opponent's strengths. Keep it close and don't let characters with longer weapons use them as an advantage against you.

I guess the best summary would be the phrase "stick and move". Use low attacks and crouch,N bait attacks in close, then back off and close back in with a ranged attack or crouch dash attack, repeat.

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| Part III: How to fight this guy/gal? |
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1) General strategy

See above. Soul Edge is different from other fighting games because each character has *very* different capabilities; knowing your opponent is just as important as knowing yourself. So don't play into your opponent's strengths; if there's a particular place he likes to keep the fight (i.e. long range), don't let him get there. Whether this means sticking to him like glue or backpedaling like a madman depends on your opponent, but don't watch him so closely that you forget about what *you* are doing.

What you might even want to do is spend a little time playing each of the other characters so you know what they're capable of; at the very least watch fights that you're not involved in to see other characters at work or get a pal to show you some of the things he does when he plays. What follows is strategy specific a particular opposing character; the stuff I discuss here doesn't always apply and it's no substitute for reading your opponent.

Vs. Rock

Rock is a very difficult opponent when played correctly; i.e. like a moron. I've seen button-mashers have far more success playing Rock like the big stupid lug he is than I ever did trying to play him with finesse. That axe is just too damn long and it'll push you too far away if you let it hit you, so if he's just swinging away, keep your distance until you have an opening and then rush in and stick to him like glue. Guard Impact is also a possibility if he's started swinging out of range. Stay low; sidestepping is unfortunately not the way to go because his A strikes go way the hell out to the side. Hop over the ground-level axe swings. Don't try anything clever, just stick to the basics (Falling Leaf, Phoenix Tail, crouch dash attacks). One last thing - Rock's sidestep is really crummy so use B attacks lots more against him, even the unblockable if he tends to start stuff out of range.

Vs. Taki

The d/b+A Reaping Hook is going to be a primary weapon of a good Taki. Similar to your strategy, she may use it liberally to force you to crouch, so crouch dash is a recommended way to close with her without getting your legs slashed. More so than other opponents, don't commit yourself to a combo unless the first hit connects, because a miss, combined with her speed, will be fatal.

Vs. Sophitia

Sophitia is really underpowered. Her low spin kick is her only knockdown low move, so feel free to stay standing and run around the place; anytime you block a combo ending in a vertical slash, she's throwable or Falling Leafable. She has poor crouch,N attacks, so forcing her to crouch is double-good for you. Sophitias are usually pretty combo-happy, so sidestep a lot if she likes to start with vertical strikes and duck under with a Shin Slicer or long sweep when she wises up and starts using horizontals. Add all these things up and you should be able to dominate any match against the little slut.

Vs. Mitsurugi

Mitsurugi is the ultimate cheeseball. But don't hold it against him, it's all he knows how to do. He'll want to get in your face; don't let him. Use a Falling Leaf if he tries to close the distance by dashing in; if he uses the forward momentum of a combo to carry him in, backpedal to just out of range of the last hit and do an unblockable or dash in and throw when the last hit misses. This is a great place to use the Critical Edge if you can extend it. Once you have him on the ground, keep him there with okizeme. Use the 3 and 4-hit combos to get you out of a tight spot if you have to, but *don't* trade licks with him because he'll win every time. Instead, sidestep, jump over, even let him hit you if you have to so that you can maneuver into a better position while on the ground - just don't let him do what he's good at and watch how he falls apart. Easier said than done, I know, but there's no better feeling than beating Mitsurugi without using any of his own dirty tricks against him.

Vs. Siegfried

Poor Ziggy. Despite having the biggest sword on the planet, he doesn't stand a chance. Stick and move, as always, but use Falling Leaf a little more often to keep him away from that dreaded crouch,N+A,A. Sidestep a *lot* because he has very few A strikes. That's about it - Ziggy fights pretty poorly when he can't use the size of that Zweihander to his advantage.

Vs. Seung Mina

A lot like Siegfried - stick and move and don't let the size of the glaive intimidate you. Mina's tougher, though, because she can lash out with a Baton Twirl at any time and has a few close-range moves. She also has the unique ability to deal huge amounts of damage without knocking you down, so be ready to back up and start a new attack pattern if an exchange isn't going your way.

Vs. Li Long

Li Long is a very tough customer. He can set up traps very similar to yours with his flipkick and he has a great variety of basic attacks to boot. Fortunately, his combination attacks are pretty easy to read, so you should Guard Impact the last strike if you see him go for the A,A,d+A or A,A,d+K,B. I don't have much else to say right now. :(

Vs. Voldo

I have no idea. Nobody plays Voldo because he's a dork.
Only thing I know about Voldo is that he's the only character with a horizontal unblockable. So though your natural reaction should be a sidestep when you see someone charging an unblockable, with Voldo you need to duck instead.

Vs. Cervantes

Cervantes is versatile. He has loads of ranged attacks and is not too shabby in close combat either. The Torpedo Edge (the zooming attack that uses sword energy) is throw-counterable if blocked if you enter the throw quickly, so hold down G and get your other finger ready to punch it in when you see him lean backwards. That silly dashing dropkick is throw-counterable too. A properly timed Guard Impact can neutralize the last slash of his close-range combinations; practice doing this to CPU Cervantes when he decides to get up close and personal so you're prepared when human players bring out the cheese.

Vs. Hwang

This is a tough one to say. I'm not about to write down how to defeat my own techniques, sorry. Lots of times it will be like playing Mitsurugi if the other guy hasn't seen this tome of wisdom :), so use anti-Mitsu tricks in that case.

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|Acknowledgments|
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