

Super Smash Bros Melee Ness Character FAQ

by Dabid

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Super Smash Brothers: Melee
Ness Character FAQ
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@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@ I. Intro @@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

To paraphrase Dickens-"To begin, Ness was a dominating force in the original Super Smash Bros. There was no doubt about that." His moves were incomparable; his power was unquestionable. With his Yo-Yos, Ness could bludgeon the opponent to death and edge-guard like no one else. His throws took precedence over EVERYTHING (hammers, fire flowers, smash attacks) and were Ness' most powerful killing weapon. His Step Kick was among the cheapest moves in the game, an easy way to One-Hit-KO opponents at any damage. And his PK Cannonball attack was hard to learn, but once mastered was an exceptionally damaging weapon and possibly the greatest recovery move in the game. Though initially most people were clueless as to precisely who Ness was, his power was the stuff of legends and his legions of fans quickly grew.

Enter Melee. Beyond any shadow of a doubt, Ness was depowered more than any other character. His Yo-Yos do a pathetic amount of damage, and no longer knock the opponent away for edge-guarding. His throws are insanely weak and slow to pull off. The Step Kick is delayed to the point where it's near-impossible to hit on someone off the platform, and even when it does it doesn't kill automatically anymore. The PK Cannonball does less damage, doesn't go nearly as far, and rarely kills anyone. Comparing Ness with his former omnipotent self will lead to only one undeniable conclusion: Ness sucks now. Really, really bad.

But Ness' former self just *may* have been TOO powerful, and extensive

playing has shown that "the new and improved" Ness has a few tricks up his sleeve that make him equal to-not better than-the rest of the Melee cast. Ness had so many great moves in the original game that some of his less-powerful moves like the PK Fire, Homerun Bat, Backwards Dropkick, and Midair Headbutt were overlooked. Well-no longer! These moves are much-improved, and combined with his powerful new PK Flash, are essential to mastering and destroying your opponents with Ness.

Where once stood an all-around Powerhouse/God, now stands an Aerialist/Specialist like no other. And which is it really more impressive to hammer your opponents with? A character on par with all the others-or a God...?

Costumes: Ness is one of the few unlucky characters to receive NO new costumes in Melee. It was rumored at Cube Club that Ness would receive a Black/White outfit, but sadly, that never happened. Ness still comes in Default Red/Blue (Classic Ness), or you can switch to Yellow/Black (Bumblebee Ness), Orange/Green (Surfer Ness), or Blue/Purple (Dweeby Ness).

Trophy Info: "Ness is a young boy who's mastered the psychic power known as PSI. Ness was living a normal life in the suburbs of Onett until a meteor crashed into a nearby mountain and sent him on a wild adventure. Believing in the ultimate powers of wisdom, courage, and friendship, Ness proves that some heroes come in small packages."

First Appearance: Earthbound--June 1995

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@ II. Moves @@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

Basic Attacks:

A: Punch 3%

Up+A: Up-Push 7%

Forward+A: Spinning Karate Kick 10%

Down+A: Leg Jab 3%

Since Ness' Smash Attacks are all extremely fast, these moves are highly unimpressive. Of them all, the only one that I would ever really use is the Up-Push because it knocks enemies straight into the air, setting them up for any number of Ness' killer combos.

Smash Attacks:

Smash Attacks--Not Charged:

Forward+A: 18-22% Bat

Down+A: 6-7% Walk-the-Dog Yo-Yo

Up+A: 3-7% Around-the-World Yo-Yo

Smash Attacks--Fully Charged:

Hold Forward+A: 24-30% Bat

Hold Down+A: 3-14% Walk-the-Dog Yo-Yo

Hold Up+A: 7-13% Around-the-World Yo-Yo

In the original, the Yo-Yo's were powerful long-range moves for Ness that were used often. Meanwhile, the Bat was never used simply because it was totally inferior to Ness' throw. My, how things have changed.

The Bat is now unquestionably Ness' best move, and one of the very best Smash Attacks in the game. While every move did a set damage just for

hitting in the original, the Smash Attacks are very temperamental based on positioning now. To get the full force and damage of the Bat, you need to hit your opponent with the very tip of the bat-if you hit them with the middle of the Bat the attack will be much weaker. Hitting your opponent with the tip of the bat is a powerful blow that does major damage and is Ness' number one killing attack. The Bat is one of the quicker smash attacks in the game, and one of the best ones to charge up. Charging will require you stun your opponent for a second or two so you can combo them into the charged shot-but more on that later.

The Walk-The-Dog Yo-Yo is nowhere NEAR how strong it was in the original game. While in the original this attack was perfect for edge-guarding and knocked your opponent far away from you, now it hardly moves them at all. Rather than charging the Yo-Yo, you "Walk-The-Dog" by holding the Yo-Yo behind you for a second before sending it forward. While doing this doesn't make the Yo-Yo stronger, it makes it possible to hit multiple times with the Yo-Yo. Unfortunately, even with multiple hits this is a weak throw-away attack this time around.

The Around-The-World Yo-Yo is even weaker than the Walk-The-Dog Yo-Yo, but it's somewhat more useful. The attack won't do much damage, but it's quick and a vital part of setting up large combos as it's another move that will knock your opponent straight up into the air. More on this in the Combos section.

B Attacks:

B: PK Flash 11-36%
Up+B: PK Thunder 8%
Foward+B: PK Fire 15%
Down+B: PK Magnet 0%

Ness has bar none *the* coolest special attacks. Ness uses his PK (Psychic-Kinetic) powers to blast the opponent with various energy attacks. The exception to this is the PK Magnet. When Ness uses the PK Magnet, a PK sphere materializes around Ness. This sphere pulls in any energy attacks that are shot towards Ness and converts them to life energy, removing % damage from Ness. For example, if Mario shoots a fireball at Ness that would normally do 7% damage, and Ness has the PK Magnet up, the Magnet will pull in the fireball and remove 7% damage from Ness' total. Ness can never go below 0% damage, but while you have 0% damage if someone shoots an energy projectile at you, you might as well absorb it rather than taking the hit. The PK Magnet can absorb almost all energy attacks-Fireballs, Ray Gun shots, Super Scope Shots, Samus Charge Shots, Mewtwo Shadowballs, Samus' Flamethrower, Fire Flower attacks, Charizard/Ho-Oh/Entei Flamethrower attacks, Raikou and Zapdos Electric Attacks, Pichu and Pikachu Thunder attacks, and so on. Ness is light, so restoring health to him is of vital importance. This move required precise timing and should be learned and mastered, and used as often as possible. However, you must be sure you ONLY try to absorb energy attacks. You can *NOT* use the PK Magnet to absorb non-energy attacks such as mines, missiles, darts, Bob-Ombs, bombs, arrows, boomerangs, Smash attacks, Screws, Unowns, Blastoisies, Snorlaxes, or Porygon-2's. Don't even try it.

The PK Fire is much improved from the original Smash Bros. It does more damage now, comes out faster now, and does a better job of trapping the opponent than it ever did before. This move is particularly useful for stunning an opponent that runs at you, or stunning multiple people

standing together and fighting. Your opponent are stunned for 1-2 seconds, meaning that you can shoot them with the PK Fire again to juggle and rack up massive damage, or move in for the kill with the Bat. In one-on-one battles you can do this indefinitely and it will quickly become the cheapest and most annoying thing you've ever seen. Like the PK Magnet, this requires precise timing so learn it well and master it before using it in the field.

The PK Thunder has a dual usage-I'll talk about the ground use here, and the aerial use in the Aerial Attacks section. While you're on the ground, you can use the PK Thunder to make a small PK Ball form above your head that you can control and move around the field like a missile. While this move has become more powerful since the original SSB, and can now kill people with HEAVY damage, it should almost never be used while on the ground. The sad fact is that the tiny 8% damage this move does is so miniscule that it just doesn't matter. Worse, it takes a long time to pull off and leaves Ness open to smash attacks and all other sorts of damage while he's doing it. With the sheer speed of the game and lack of hiding places, I advise Ness beginners to NEVER use this move on the ground.

Among the strongest and most lethal moves in the game is the PK Flash. When you use the PK Flash, a small green firework will appear above Ness that can be maneuvered slightly with the analog stick and will grow larger as you hold down the B Button. After 3-4 seconds, it will be fully-charged and will explode. If you hit an opponent with it, it will do an INSANE amount of damage and shoot them into the air with such force that it kills opponents with a total 60-80% on them. The power of this move comes at a price. It's incredibly slow, Ness is totally defenseless while using it, and if he's hit while charging the move it disappears and does NOT explode. What this adds up to is an extremely difficult move to hit, and a technique that will require much time to master. One strategy I have for using this is to shoot it into the air and allow it to come back down and explode-opponents that run at you to attack you while you're charging the move will be blown up if you detonate it before they can hit you. Another strategy is to learn the layout of every level to find out how to use the PK Flash most effectively there (Shameless Plug: or look at my "Strategies for Every Stage" section). One more clever if not GENIUS way to use this move is to jump up and fire the PK Flash while in the air, then fall to the ground and detonate it far above you. This keeps you away from being hit by opponents *and* allows you to blast opponents fighting on high-up platforms. Use this on levels like the Classic Yoshi's Island stage for best results. While this move is among the most difficult in the game to execute, you'll win friends and influence people by mastering this move and blowing your friends away with it. :D

Running Attack: #####
Run+A: Psychic Shock 7%

Ness runs at the opponent and shocks them, stunning them but also knocking them away. This attack is particularly weak and somewhat slow, especially considering Ness' poor speed, so I would avoid using it. If you're going to run at the opponent, you might as well grab them and use your Backward Throw to kill them or the Up Throw to Combo them. This move doesn't really set up anything else, and I haven't found much use for it yet.

Throws: #####
Z+A: Big Headbutt 3%
Z+Forward: 11%
Z+Back: 11%
Z+Up: 10%
Z+Down: 4%

Ness' once all-powerful throws have been bastardized more than any other moves from the original. In the original, Ness would only have to be near his opponent to latch onto them mentally and throw them around. This grab took precedence over almost EVERYTHING (with a few exceptions like the Falcon Punch) and was nearly impossible to break up. Now, Ness lunges forward with his stubby little arms to grab at the opponent and you're more likely to snag the air than an enemy. The best strategy I have for grabbing at someone is to just run at them when they have their back turned and grab them. As quickly as you possibly can throw them. Don't even try to do the incredibly lame Big Headbutts, just throw them. Ness' throws are slower than they used to be, and all your opponent has to do is tap you now to break you out of the grab. If you want to be efficient in this category, you'll need to grab and throw as fast as you possibly can.

While his Forward Throw used to kill opponents at 70-80%, you'll be hard-pressed to kill them with it now at all. I've had a little success killing lighter opponents with 99% damage on small stages in the training mode, but I've NEVER killed an opponent with a forward throw in a real battle. That right there should tell you how much this move blows. For all the effort it takes to grab an enemy with Ness, you're much better off using ANY other throw than this horrible attack.

The Backward Throw is far and away THE BEST killing throw that Ness has. Get an opponent like Kirby to 85% damage or Bowser to 120% and send them flying with this throw for an easy kill. While this is no longer Ness' best killing move and you can kill people with his Bat or air attacks just as quickly, this is his most efficient way of killing opponents who keep blocking-and nothing gives more satisfaction to veteran SSB Ness players than killing opponents with throws.

The Up Throw is an awesome maneuver-it will rarely kill people, but it will set them up for massive combos that are nearly impossible for your opponent to escape. More on this in the Combos section.

The Down Throw is exceedingly weak as a move, and I consider it to be simply NOT worth the effort. It's possible to do the Down Throw and follow up with the Bat or Yo-Yos-but if you're close enough to grab your opponent for the Down Throw, you might as well just hit them with the Smash Attack to begin with. This throw is so weak that it just isn't useful.

Aerial Attacks: #####
A: Body Twirl 11%
Up+A: Midair Headbutt 13%
Down+A: Step Kick 12%
Forward+A: Midair Psychic Shock 5-15%
Back+A: Backward Dropkick 16%
Up+B (Shot into Ness): PK Cannonball 20-25%

Ness' Aerial Attacks were quite strong in the old game, and they still are pretty strong here, though some of them have been weakened. The

Body Twirl is a totally new move that replaces the Aerial Split Kick from the original game. It has poor range, does little damage, and is hard to hit. If you can hit this move, you can hit any other aerial attack so you might as well be using the others. This one's just not interesting.

The Midair Headbutt does less damage than it did in the old game, but due to the reduced size of the stages it's actually even easier to kill people with than it was before. This move knocks your opponent STRAIGHT back up into the air. What does that mean...? You guessed it-you can jump up and hit your opponent with this move again! Ness jumps high and fast, so you can juggle your opponents almost indefinitely once you've hit this move now. Plus, it's incredibly easy to combo into this move now, making it Ness' most effective Aerial Attack for killing opponents. See the Combos section for ways to set this up.

The Step Kick used to be the single MOST outrageously cheap move in the entire game. Toss your opponents off the side, then hit them with the Step Kick's "Smackdown" effect for Instant Death. The Step Kick came out instantly, and with Ness' tremendous jumping and recovery abilities, you could literally do nothing but throw your opponent off the edge and kill them with the Step Kick. Thankfully for other players but unfortunately for Ness fans, this is yet another move that has been butchered to a huge degree. There's now a half-second delay on this move before it occurs, so it's near impossible to hit it without double-jumping, and your opponents are given MORE than enough time to get out of the way or use an air evade. Even worse, since Ness almost definitely needs to use both jumps to hit the Step Kick, there's also a slight delay following it where Ness falls a little further. With the reduced distance of the PK Cannonball, it's very easy for Ness to plummet to his own death after pulling off the Step Kick. Think things couldn't get worse? Believe it or not, you're WRONG. The Step Kick has also lost its "Smackdown Effect"-opponents that aren't heavily damaged can easily be hit with it and continue moving through the air back to the platform. The worse thing that's ever happened to me as Ness in Melee is that I hit an 80% damaged Kirby with a perfectly-executed Step Kick-Kirby recovered almost instantly and used his 4th or 5th jump to return to the platform. Meanwhile, Ness fell too quickly too fast to be saved, and fell to his death. As you can see, any thoughts you may have of screwing your opponents with the Step Kick are nothing but hopeless dreams. Surprisingly, this move STILL manages to be somewhat useful. See the Combos section for more on this.

The aerial Psychic Shock is among the weakest and lamest aerial attacks in the game. It hits multiple times for minor damage, and knocks your opponent slightly away from you so you can't combo, but without enough force to kill your opponent. If it's possible, I find this move to be even more useless than the running Psychic Shock. I don't know why you'd WANT to hit this move, but if you feel like using it for diversity and novelty value feel free-it's easy to execute and simple to hit on your opponent. It just won't do that much to them.

Somewhere between the original and Melee, Ness' Backward Dropkick became insanely powerful. Doing as much damage as uncharged smash attacks and hitting opponents with powerful force, this move is simple to execute and is among Ness' strongest moves. If an opponent is idiotic enough to attack you from behind while you're in the air they'll be on the receiving end of a powerful Dropkick that can be lethal when your opponent has 80% damage and up. This move is strong, fast, and takes advantage of Ness' fantastic jumping ability. Few

players have realized the power of this move, so they won't guard against it until it's too late. Among Ness' best moves, master the timing of this Dropkick so you can surprise opponents expecting the PK Cannonball or Midair headbutt.

The PK Cannonball (nicknamed the "Anal Rapage Attack" but some of Ness' adoring fans) is the single MOST important move that *MUST* be mastered to be successful as a Ness player. This is both Ness' third jump for recovering and his third most powerful move (after the fully-charged Bat and PK Flash). To perform the PK Cannonball, perform the PK Thunder move while in the air. Using a semi-circular movement, maneuver the PK Thunder behind Ness and smack him in the butt with it to send him flying at the angle the PK Thunder hit him at. This move is extremely difficult for beginning Ness players to pull off, and is among the hardest moves in the game to perfectly execute. If you blast Ness at such an angle that he hits an opponent with the PK Cannonball, it will do major damage and be an almost instant kill on anyone with heavy damage. This move does not go quite as far as it did in the first game, it doesn't do as much damage, and it doesn't hit with the lethal force that it used to. Because of this, it's even more important that you perfectly master it. Useful for returning to platforms, keeping Ness hovering, blasting opponents in the air, or ambushing opponents on the ground in groups, this is Ness' most useful and vital move. Even so, there are levels like Ice Mountain where even attempting this move will get you killed. I advise that you go into training mode and take the time to master how to effectively use this move on EVERY level. If you don't, other players'll destroy you.

Taunts:

D-Pad: Ness looks towards the camera and says "O-Kay!" in retarded fashion. His voice is beyond horrible now, and this taunt has become extremely idiotic since the original game. Luckily, it's not quite as unbearable as the revamped Captain Falcon "Show me-your moves!" This move should be used sparingly because aside from being annoying as Hell, it'll also make you look like a total dumbass for using it.

III. Combos and Advanced Strategies

While Ness is slow and may have a hard time catching opponents, once they're caught, they're CAUGHT. Among the best comboists in the game, Ness can link together chains of moves for massive damage and many kills. These are to be his best combos.

Combo Starters

Ness has four main moves that he can take advantage of to start a combo. These moves are the following...

1. The Around-The-World Yo-Yo: Doing little damage while sending your opponent into the air, this is the easiest way to start a combo while on the ground. Charge the Yo-Yo in front of you to hurt your opponent, then let it go Around-The-World to send your opponent straight up into the air, and into the next part of the combo.

2. Up-Throw: Grab an opponent and throw them up. While this is the best combo starter in my opinion, it's also the hardest to start with. I find that for best results, you should use one of these other Combo Starters *first* to send your opponent slightly into the air and stun

them temporarily, then grab them on their way down and send them WAY up into the air with the Up-Throw. This is the easiest set-up for the lethal Midair Headbutt and Backward Dropkick.

3. Step Kick: The Step Kick may be the easiest way to start a combo. While your opponent is on the ground, hit them with the Step Kick to send them slightly into the air. Then, follow up by using one of these other Combo Starters (preferably the Up-Throw). You can also hit your opponent with the Step Kick while they're in the air, but that will send them plummeting to the ground and you'll have to restart the whole combo.

4. PK Fire: This move works unlike any of the other Combo Starters. Instead of knocking Ness' opponents straight up, it stuns them where they stand. While the other moves enable you to switch to Aerial Attacks, using the PK Fire you can follow up with ANOTHER Combo Starter like the Up Throw or Around-The-World Yo-Yo. *Or* you can skip straight to the good stuff and knock out your opponent with the Backward Throw or the Bat.

Building a Chain

1. The Around-The-World Yo-Yo: This will always knock your opponent back into the air. It will do little damage, so don't use it often.

2. Up-Throw: As your opponent comes down, snatch them in Midair and send them straight back up. You can also use this throw after you've stunned your opponent with the PK Fire.

3. PK Fire: The best way to use the PK Fire in the middle of a chain is to simply START the chain with the PK Fire, and repeatedly shoot your opponent with it before they can recover. This is among the most annoying and cheapest moves in the game, so use it sparingly if you want to keep your friendships.

4. Midair Headbutt: The one new addition to the list, the Midair Headbutt is a great killing move for while you're in the air. Even if this move fails to kill your opponent it will knock them STRAIGHT back into the air, so you can juggle them with any of these moves or just hit them with the Midair Headbutt until they die.

The Icing On The Cake

There are three main moves that Ness can use during a combo that are strong enough to kill the opponents, but if they don't you knock the opponent far away and the combo is over. Use these wisely.

1. Backward Throw: Ness' strongest throw, this should be used when your back is to edge of the level and you're near it. To do this move, either stun your opponent with the PK Fire and run up and grab them, or wait until they come down from the air and grab them in mid-air.

2. Bat: The Bat should be used to kill your opponent when they're closer to the edge of the level than you are. Like the Backward Throw, you can set your opponent up for the Bat by stunning them with the PK Fire or waiting for them to come down from the air. For best results, charge your bat for a second or so before releasing, and be sure to position yourself so that you hit your opponent with the TIP of the bat

and not the inside.

3. Backward Dropkick: This move must be executed in Midair, so use one of the moves that sends your opponent straight up and then jump up and meet them in the air with this powerful move. If you hit it right, it should send your opponent flying to their doom.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@ IV. Stock Battle Strategy @@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

Ness is the heaviest of the light-weight characters, but is exceedingly slow and can take damage quickly. This means that if you jump directly into the middle of the fray, you might get a lot of kills but you'll also rack up damage and die REALLY fast. While Ness is poor on the ground, he can jump higher than any other character and is nearly unmatched in the air. Keep Ness alive by keeping him near the top platforms and ALWAYS have him in the air. Ness' powerful air attacks will thwart opponents who come after him, enabling Ness to last a LOT longer than he would if he just came straight-out fighting. Once it's down to you and one other opponent, use the Time Battle Strategy and Strategies for Every Stage to determine the quickest and easiest way to win the match. Some people will complain this is downright quality-I call it efficient.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@ V. Time Battle Strategy @@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

As you could probably guess, the Stock Battle Strategy will not work here. This time, you're going to have to go out and kill people if you want to win. Ness has eight good moves that are powerful and can kill opponents: the Bat, the PK Cannonball, the PK Fire, the PK Flash, the Step Kick, the Backward Dropkick, the Midair Headbutt, and the Backward Throw. Use these moves, along with the Strategies for Every Stage, to master Ness and destroy your friends.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@ V. Strategies for Every Stage @@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

Icicle Mountain: Our first level, the first scrolling level, and the first level Ness really sucks on. Due to the extreme number of platforms in this one and the constantly up-scrolling nature, it's almost impossible to hit the PK Flash and PK Cannonball. If you attempt either, the stage is likely to scroll up and kill you before you can complete the move. With the many walls and walkways to hit off of, Ness' throws are unlikely to kill anything here and it's difficult to hit aerial attacks-especially the Step Kick. Try to jump around and stay away from your opponents-when they come to attack you blast them with the bat as often as possible, and alternate with the PK Fire to keep the Bat's power from going down.

Princess Peach's Castle: I'm somewhat jaded against this level because, well, I don't like it. The level seems to be set up in such a way that Ness *should* be able to get in a corner and use the PK Flash effectively, and the PK Cannonball should be a cinch. But...well...they're not. I can't really explain WHY they're not, but they're not. Either there are platforms popping up out of nowhere and getting in your way, Bullet Bills coming from the sky and making you flee, a giant pillar in the middle that makes it impossible to hit opponents on the other side, or the fact that either side of the pillar is small so your opponents can quickly kill you before you can pull off a big move. There's just

always SOMETHING to screw you up in this level. On the bright side, there's walls in this level. That means you can repeatedly use the Bat to smash your opponent into the wall indefinitely. It's cheap and repetitive, but doing anything else in this level is dangerous and hard to execute. This level itself is just annoying, so I would avoid it if possible.

Rainbow Cruise: Quite possibly his best level, because of his super-high jump Ness absolutely RULES on the Rainbow Cruise. Everything is constantly moving up, air attacks are exceedingly easy to hit, and there's tons of wide-open space to use the PK Cannonball and PK Flash. The icing on the cake...? Because there's no clear-defined edge of the level, Ness can get near the edge of the screen and throw his opponents backward to kill them with little to no damage. It's cheap, but it's effective. Try to stay ahead of the pack and always be at the freshest platforms to avoid Ness accidentally getting trapped without a way to PK Cannonball to a necessary platform. You want to be on the offensive as much as possible-Ness can rack up kills on this stage like no other.

Kongo Jungle: One of the coolest looking new stages, this is the only DK Stage that takes place during the daytime. There's a main platform (raft) and 3 mini-platforms on both the left and right-hand sides. There's also a rock south-east of the main raft platform. What does all this add up? You guessed it-PK Flash goodness! If your opponents are fighting on the rock, stand on the main platform and hit them with the PK Flash. If your opponents are on the main platform, stand on the rock and hit them with the PK Flash. If your opponents are above you, jump up and detonate a PK Flash while you fall toward the main platform. If your opponents are trying to get back to the main platform, edge-guard with the PK Flash. This is a somewhat small level, but because of the way it's set up it's excellent for using the PK Flash. Don't like the PK Flash? Fine-use the Bat. It's excellent here, the same as it is everywhere else. Since there are so many platforms, it's also cake to jump up and start juggling your opponents with the Midair Headbutt and other Aerial Attacks-including the PK Cannonball. An aerialist at heart, this stage belongs to Ness.

Jungle Japes: This horrible, godforsaken level isn't my least favorite in the game-but it's right up there. Here's the deal: there are three platforms. Then there's water below them. If you TOUCH the water, you're dead. No jumping out, no recovery, nada. You're dead and that's the end of it. As you can probably guess, jumping into the air and attempting aerial attacks or (God have mercy on poor Ness' soul) the PK Cannonball will most likely lead to Ness being smacked into the water and killed instantly. Don't do it. Surprisingly, Ness' greatest asset here is...his throws. Stand on the middle platform, and throw your opponents either forward or backward in such a way that they hit off the leftmost or rightmost platform. If you throw them into the platform just right, they'll hit it and ricochet off into the water and enjoy instant death. It's cheap, and it's pointless-but it's also effective. Somewhat less effective is just standing on the leftmost and rightmost platforms, then grabbing opponents when they attack you and hurl them off the edge with the backward throw. The stage is small, so you can get some cheap kills with little damage this way. Ness is slow and it's hard for him to grab people-but when he can kill them in one throw, a little damage is a small price to pay.

Great Bay: One of the simplest stages in the game, this stage consists of three platforms above water, a small floating balloon platform that can be popped, and a turtle platform that crashes into the water from

time-to-time. While on the platforms to the left or right of the main platform, hitting the PK Flash is a snap. However, this can be risky because the level is somewhat small and while Ness is in these areas he's VERY easy to knock off the stage. Even worse, if Ness gets knocked under the main platform he's 100% dead. There's no room to do the PK Cannonball or maneuver, so he'll simply fall into the water and die. It's dangerous to attempt the PK Flash from the turtle, as the turtle periodically dunks into the water-taking Ness with him if he tries to use the PK Flash. There's no high platforms or places to jump at your opponents, so aerial attacks won't do you much good here. The strategy that seems to work best here is the simple stuff. Stand on the main platform and use the PK Fire to stun your opponent. Hurl your opponent off the level to their death with the Backward Throw. Smash them into pieces with the Bat. If your opponents are standing on the left or right platforms, send down the PK Flash to greet them. Keep Ness on the ground, and use your attacks to keep opponents away from him. Keep knocking your opponents away and eventually they'll either die or just leave you alone. Either way, same result: Ness wins.

Hyrule Temple: This stage is huge and has lots of space to do just about anything Ness wants to do-too bad Ness still blows here. Ness is the heaviest of the light-weight characters, so he should be able to last a while on this stage. Unfortunately, that's not really the case. Most of the characters lighter than Ness can easily hide and evade opponents on this stage. Most of the characters heavier than Ness can hold their own in a battle anywhere, and can take a lot of damage before dying. Ness can do neither. Worse, since Ness is exceedingly slow he can't even TOUCH faster opponents because of how much space there is in this level to run and hide. There's room to do the PK Flash, but it's laughable to believe you can catch someone with it when there's space for them to move to in any direction you can think of. Hitting someone with the PK Cannonball is almost equally unlikely. And just chasing after them to smash them just ain't gonna cut it, since there's little to nothing that Ness can outrun.

Yoshi's Story: It's the generic stage set-up of a main level with three platforms floating in the air above it. While it is generic, this level is a bit more spread out than the Battlefield or The Fountain of Dreams. The extra space is just what's necessary to make this level perfect for Ness. Characters on floating platforms are characters that are getting nailed with Aerial Attacks and the PK Cannonball. Characters on the main ground are characters that are getting hit with the PK Fire and Bat attacks and sent flying to their deaths. Characters that avoid you and try to stay across the board from you are getting blown into oblivion with the PK Flash. It's a generic stage and all that's needed is a generic strategy-attack. If you get knocked off, come back. There's really no trick to this level-there's just not that much you can do besides attack.

Yoshi's Island: This isn't a bad level. It's just a bad level for Ness. This level is set up in such a way that there are two platforms in the air made of blocks that move when hit, and two pipes on either side. Everything is extremely compact, and the layout makes it nearly impossible to use the PK Flash and PK Cannonball due to the blocks and pipes. It gets worse. The pipes move up at a diagonal incline that the PK Fire cannot move up, so there's no stunning your opponents with it. The blocks in the middle get in the way so you can't just dive at opponents with air attacks. The best way for most characters to kill people here is to lead their opponents away from the block platforms and knock them UP into the air with a smash attack to kill them. With

the incredibly weak Around-the-World Yo-Yo as Ness' Up-Smash, that ain't gonna happen. The Bat and Backward Throw are nearly powerless here as well-opponents hit on the ground will fly into the sides of the pipes and stop instead of flying out and dying. The Walk-The-Dog Yo-Yo, as always, just sucks. I really have no strategy for killing opponents in this level. My advice is to RUN AWAY!!! Keep Ness in the air or on top of the block platforms, or on the right-hand or left-hand sides. Your opponents won't want to chase Ness, so they'll fight amongst themselves. When a good item like a Hammer or Homerun Bat falls from the sky, snatch it up and ring up some kills. Without items, this level makes for an almost hopeless battle for Ness.

Fountain of Dreams: The prettiest level in the game, The Fountain of Dreams is compact and uncluttered. There aren't any real level hazards here, and the only thing that could really get in your way is the platforms that rise from the ground and could absorb your PK Flash. Still, since this whole level and all its platforms are flat, Ness can all-out attack stunning with the PK Fire and killing with the Bat and Backward Throw. Because the platforms all float above the main part of the level, hitting aerial attacks like the Midair Headbutt and Backward Dropkick to kill your opponents is a snap. Also, if you jump off the sides and charge up the PK Cannonball unless your opponent has projectiles they have no way to hit you. Use the PK Cannonball off the left-hand and right-hand sides often to score kills. Never attempt to KILL anyone by jumping off the side and using the Step Kick-it's almost impossible for Ness to hit the Step Kick and recover fast enough to get back to the level without dying. Overall, this is a simple level and a good level for Ness.

Green Greens: Considering that this level doesn't move and the layout is mostly flat, you'd think Ness would be good here. He's not. The blocks are high and annoying and there are platforms in the middle of the screen. This makes it difficult to hit the PK Flash and the PK Cannonball, which should both be avoided due to their risk (although the PK Cannonball is obviously necessary for recoveries). Because the level is extremely small, Ness' weight is a liability here and it's easy for him to die. Try to avoid your opponents as best you can here-if Ness racks up a lot of damage very early he'll also die extremely early-there's not second chances on this level. Your best bet is to stick to the side platforms and hit people with the bat and Ness' throws. This is one of the few stages where Ness' throws can kill people with a low percentage.

Corneria: I hate this level. Not because it's bad or there's anything wrong with it, but well... It reminds me of the Great Fox level in the original game. Except the Great Fox level was MUCH bigger and MUCH cooler looking. This level flies through the airs of Corneria...but it's just not all that interesting. Worse, lots of areas of this level are slightly inclined so that the PK Fire won't work. And because the level is so long, it's hard to kill opponents horizontally-they need to be knocked UP, which Ness has severe problems doing. The best strategy I have here is this-run at opponents with heavy damage, throw them UP and then kill them with the Midair Headbutt. You should be able to score a few points to secure your win this way. Then, do the SINGLE cheapest thing you can do on any level in the game: Run the far left and jump OFF the Ship, then use your second jump to float over on top of the guns. Position yourself at the front of them and turn on the PK Magnet and you can restore ALL your life when the lasers shoot!!!! Then back up so that you don't accidentally get shot and killed. Unless your opponents risk life and limb to come down here and come after you,

you're UNTOUCHABLE for the rest of the match.

Venom: A decent level for Ness, and one of the most unique levels in the game. You fight on the four wings of the Great Fox. If you stay near the far-edges of the wings, it's possible but difficult to hit the PK Flash. However, since the wings are all on an incline it's nearly impossible to do the PK Fire and PK Cannonball without messing up. It's possible to jump up from the bottom wings and hit opponents on the upper wings with aerial attacks, but this can be a challenge to aim due to the incline. What I've found to work best on this level is to just smash opponents with the Bat and toss them away from the ship with the Backward Throw (followed up with edge-guarding with the Bat). It'll get repetitive after a little while, but the set-up of the level and Ness' lack of good smash attacks limits what can be done here. The Bat and Backward Throw may be boring, but no one can say they're not effective.

Flatzone: Far and away my least favorite stage in the game, and a bad one for Ness as well. Ness is light, platforms magically materialize in the air eliminating the potential of the PK Flash and PK Cannonball, wrenches fall from the air that can kill Ness at a fairly low percentage, and pretty much anything that hits Ness here will send him flying. The wrenches that fall from the sky neutralize Ness' ability to jump around to keep alive, and there's really nowhere Ness can hide here. An all-around poor place for Ness, about the best you can do is get towards the edges of the level and hope to throw your opponents to their deaths. It's easy to kill people with throws here, and if Ness is going to survive you're going to have to.

Brinstar: ::GASP!:: Its...a level with a main platform and three floating platforms spread out above it!!! Yes, the generic stage design returns. What's different here is that the floating platforms are REALLY spread out, and acid will periodically rise from the ground to send you flying into the air. Ness is fairly light, so you REALLY don't want that to happen. What works best for me here is to stick the leftmost or rightmost floating platforms and just kill opponents from there. Shoot the PK Flash at the other platforms, or catch opponents that jump at me and kill them with a Backward throw. You can also blast yourself at the middle floating platform with the PK Cannonball for a quick kill. It's possible to stay on the main platform and jump up to attack with the Midair Headbutt, but there's always the danger of the acid rising and hurting Ness as well. The leftmost and rightmost platforms look to be the clear key to victory on this level.

Brinstar Depths: This isn't a horrible level for Ness. This is just a horrible level. The ground below you constantly moves and turns, and if you're unlucky you'll fall to your death. The safe areas of the arena are few at all times, and Ness is horribly slow. Add in 3 other expert players and no room for Ness to work his magic, and it sucks to be you. It's possible to use the combos, the throws, the Bat, the air attacks, the PK Cannonball, and even the PK Flash here-but you won't want to. Playing here is ALL about positioning. Hide in the bottom platforms near the lava and if your opponent tries to come down after you knock them in the lava. This is really all there is to it. While this level may be amusing to play on once or twice, after more than that you'll be so annoyed by it you'll be BEGGING for Ice Mountain back.

Onett: This is Ness' hometown, so he must be good here, right? Right...? Wrong. This is surprisingly among the worst levels for Ness, due to the sheer number of platforms all over the stage. It's hard to use both the PK Cannonball and PK Flash here. Get near the edges of the level and

try to hit people with the bat and the throws. Your best bet is to pick them off and screw them at a low percentage by doing this. It'll keep them away from Ness and keep him alive, plus he'll score some much-needed kills. Items are extremely helpful on this level-as long as they're not Mr. Saturns.

Fourside: The other of the Earthbound levels in the game, Fourside couldn't be any more different from Onett. Second only to the Rainbow Cruise level, this is a fantastic stage for Ness! Every single move Ness has can be used to its full potential here. There are several pits all over the stage, so this is undoubtedly the best level to make use of Ness' Step Kick. There's TONS of air space, and you know what that means-The PK Cannonball is easy to pull off and highly effective on this stage. All of Ness' aerial attacks can be done easily here, and hitting people with the PK Fire and the Bat are a snap. Because you can stand almost to the very edges of this level, you can even throw people to their deaths fairly simply. And the best part of the level...? There are walls and platforms all over the place, meaning that there are more opportunities for setting up the PK Flash on this level than on almost any other. If you're a good Ness player, he's nearly unbeatable on this level. Use any or all of Ness' skills to rip the opposition to shreds-pretty much everything he has works perfectly here.

Mute City: A fast-paced level where the platform constantly moves around, Ness' slow speed is a big problem here. If you get knocked off the platform and it flies away before you can PK Cannonball back, you're screwed. This happens a lot more often than you'd think, and cause this level to have a heavy death count for Ness. Because all of the action takes place on a really small platform, using the PK Flash here is suicide-don't do it. The PK Cannonball is strong and easy to hit here, and makes for a good finishing move-as long as you stay aware of when the platform is about the move so you don't accidentally kill yourself. The PK Fire, Bat, and Throws are all great moves here and can kill people often. The backward throw is the best way to kill an enemy at over 100% and make sure they don't come back.

Big Blue: The most dangerous of all the scrolling levels, while on this level you fight atop a series of racing F-Zero cars. If you fall off and hit the road, it's almost certain death. Luckily, Ness has the aerial finesse to take command on this level and stay ahead of the pack. Stay as high as you can at all times, and sic the PK Flash on anyone that tries to get near you. The backward throw and bat are both extremely effective here, and can lead to some quick and cheap kills. Stay on top of ANY non-car platforms at every opportunity. While you're on the cars it's easy to knock you on the road and kill you, and the PK Flash is far too risky to attempt. While your opponents will have to spend most of their concentration just staying alive, Ness doesn't have to worry and should make short work of his enemies if you're prepared.

Pokemon Stadium: My second favorite stage ever, the Pokemon Stadium is *COOL*. The long flat main platform has two floating platforms spread out above it, but periodically the entire landscape will pick up and CHANGE totally altering the entire stage. This is incredibly cool, but also extremely unfortunate for Ness. As soon as the level changes, it becomes INCREDIBLY cluttered and it's near impossible for Ness to use his PK Flash, PK Cannonball, Air Attacks, or PK Fire. My best strategy for while the stage is transformed is to HIDE!!! This is a large stage, so you should be able to get to a safe spot and let your opponents kill each other while the stage is like this. Once the stage reverts to normal, you have your pick of how you want to kill your opponents. The

PK Fire, PK Flash, PK Cannonball, Aerial Attacks, Yo-Yos, and Bat are all feasible ways of quickly destroying your opponents while on the normal phase of this level. If you play careful and smart, you'll see that this is a fairly easy level to win on.

PokeFloats: The last of the scrolling levels, the action takes place in the air for this one and it's another great stage for Ness. Because Ness jumps super-high and this level rarely moves vertically, it's easy for Ness to maneuver into any of his great aerial attacks or the PK Cannonball. There are tons of hidey-holes and secure places for setting up a powerful PK Flash, and Ness can take full advantage of his throws here since you can play right next to the edge of the level at all times. The best strategy here is to use Ness' jumping ability to stay AHEAD of the pack: keep going to each new float the moment it pops up, then smash your opponents into dust when they try to get onto the float. With the ultra-powerful PK Flash to edge-guard, your opponents will have to choose between falling to their deaths or jumping to the next float and being blown to bits.

Mushroom Kingdom: If the programmers were trying to create the best place to torture Ness players, they succeeded. This air of this level is FILLED with blocks and platforms, making it nearly impossible to take advantage of any of Ness' aerial attacks, Up Throw, PK Flash, or PK Cannonball. The ground has narrow gaps where Ness can be knocked down and killed instantly because it's too narrow for the PK Cannonball. This level unquestionably sucks for Ness players, and you'll have to be extremely crafty to win here. It's possible to stand on the far-left or far-right of the stage and grab your opponent and kill them with the Backward Throw for a cheap and easy kill. Another of my favorite strategies is to hang out on TOP of the blocks and continuously jump into the air. At this height if other players come after you they either won't be able to reach you or they'll be quickly destroyed with an Aerial Attack. This is one of the most difficult levels for using Ness effectively, but he CAN be good here-so practice a lot.

Mushroom Kingdom II: This classic Super Mario Bros. 2 stage is among the most annoying levels in the game. If you want to win here, you'll have to be cheap. If you get knocked down either of the holes next to the main platform, you'll get stuck in a narrow corridor and fall to your death with no way to PK Cannonball back. You'll most likely wish to avoid this-and the main platform-all together. So what's a good boy to do? Why, stand near the edges of the level and be cheap as hell, of course! If your opponents stay on the main platform, send down the PK Flash to blow them up. If they're dumb enough to jump to the leftmost or rightmost platform to chase you, stun them with the PK Fire and kill them with any damage with the Backward Throw. The sad fact is that Aerial Attacks and the PK Cannonball are near-impossible to kill people with because there are no floating platforms, so if you want the win you'll probably need to be cheap. However, when Ness is near the edge of the level it won't take much for him to go flying either: this will make for some interesting-if not short-matches.

Battlefield: As simple as can be-this level consists of a main level and 3 floating platforms. The level is set up in such a way that you can use pretty much whatever you want to win here. The Bat, Aerial Attacks, PK Flash, PK Cannonball, and Backward Throw will all be somewhat simple to pull off here (assuming they're simple for you to pull off anywhere). While everything here works pretty much as well as you'd expect it to anywhere else, I've found that the PK Cannonball and

Midair Headbutt are particularly useful here. You can jump off the sides of the level and blast yourself with the PK Cannonball to inflict lethal damage to opponents, or just jump up from underneath them and juggle with the Midair Headbutt. These are my suggestions, but do whatever you're most comfortable with on this level. Like our next stage, there's no gimmick to this level-its simplicity is what makes it unique. If you want to win here, you'll have to depend on skill rather than cheap tricks.

Final Destination: Did I say the Battlefield was as simple as can be? Well, I suppose I was mistaken. Final Destination consists of one large platform. That's it. Really. No level hazards, no floating platforms, nothing. And while it makes for an amazingly simple and pure brawl, it also limits Ness. Attempting the PK Flash on ONE platform with three other people that can run at you in less than a second is suicide. I rarely ever use the PK Flash on this level, and even more rarely do I hit people with it. It's just a bad level for that sort of thing. However, since the whole level is totally flat that means that it's a GREAT level for the PK Fire. It's really easy to just run at an opponent and stun them with the PK Fire, then hit them with the Bat or Backward Throw. Since there's no platforms, you won't get many chances to use your aerial attacks-with a few exceptions. The Step Kick works well here since there's no where for you to fall to your death, and no platforms for your opponents to escape to. As chronicled in the Combos section, the Step Kick is a great asset in setting up combos. The other aerial attack that works here is surprisingly the PK Cannonball. In order to make good use of the move here, you need to shoot the PK Thunder at a 45-degree angle away from Ness, then send it STRAIGHT forward so it hits him straight when Ness is level with his opponents. This will send Ness flying at groups and he'll be able to hit multiple opponents for major damage and kills. Ness' tricks will do him no good here--This stage is pure combat, and only the best of the best will be able to win here. You'll need to master Ness if you hope to dominate your opponents on this level.

Classic Dreamland: My favorite level ever, this is a great place for Ness. It's a medium-sized level with a few platforms, but plenty of space for the PK Cannonball and PK Flash. Jump off the side of the level, and blast your opponents with the PK Cannonball for major damage. You can hit opponents almost anywhere on the level with it, and with no ground off the side for them to jump to, they almost certainly won't dare to attack you while in the air. Because of the platforms and extra room this level has, hitting Aerial Attacks in a snap and you can cheaply juggle your opponents in the air fairly easily. It's also pretty simple to stun your opponents with the PK Fire while in the air and then kill them with The Bat and Backward Throw. These are effective killing moves here, and round out Ness' offense perfectly. With great music, design, and compatibility for Ness, this is among the best levels ever made-especially for Ness.

Classic Yoshi's Island: In the original, this was probably Ness' worst level. While Ness has gotten even worse here, there are at least other levels Ness sucks more on now. The PK Cannonball does not go as far as it used to, so if you screw up your shot by even the slightest bit when you're out on the clouds, you're liable to fall to your death. Even veteran Ness players are totally screwed if an opponent evaporates the cloud platform on the right-hand side while Ness is jumping towards it. On the left-hand side, if Ness gets knocked off even the slightest bit and needs to use the PK Cannonball to come back, it's extremely likely that the PK Thunder will hit the cloud and disappear, causing Ness to

die an early death. This is a big level, and Ness is so horribly slow that he's in a lot of trouble if he faces something faster here. Much like Hyrule Temple, opponents can elude Ness indefinitely, and if Ness tries to chase them he's liable to fall prey to the right-hand cloud evaporation trick. The platforms get in the way of using Ness' aerial attacks on the main part of the level, and it's too dangerous to send Ness out towards the clouds. The best thing you can really do here is to stay on the main part of the level and try to jump up and hit people with the Midair Headbutt or use the Bat on the ground. It's also possible to jump up below a platform and release a PK Flash above the platform and detonate it, but it's risky, as is this whole level. When playing as Ness here, use extreme caution. There's no room for error here.

Classic Kongo Jungle: The last of the Classic levels to return and almost certainly the most unpopular, the Classic Kongo Jungle is poorly lit and has bad camera angles. Due to the horrible camerawork, it's impossible to see the Barrel floating under the level that can save you until Ness has already fallen past it and died. That said-NEVER depend upon the barrel. This level is fairly big and there's no easy way to win, so you'll need to play cautiously. The main floor is slightly inclined, so the PK Fire won't be able to help you there. There's also rotating platforms in the middle of the level that get in the way of the PK Flash, so you'll want to avoid that as well. The edges of this stage are all air, so that will help Ness out in two ways. First, he can jump off the edges and blast back with the PK Cannonball, and his opponents will be hard-pressed to follow him. Second, it's easy to throw your opponents off the edges with the Backward Throw or smash them off with the Bat. The Midair Headbutt is a great finishing move for opponents on high platforms. Ness is no better or worse than any other character on this level, so practice up if you want to win.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@ VII. Target Test Guide @@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

Coming soon.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@ VIII. 15-Minute Melee @@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

The 15-Minute Melee is EXTREMELY difficult and hard for Ness. I had an exceptionally hard time doing this one, and even now I still haven't finished. Because Ness is exceedingly slow and fairly light, if you let the WireFrameTeam Members surround you even ONCE they'll do a ton of damage and kill you. With the constant problem of Bombs, Party Balls, and Mines falling from the sky you need to be on your guard for EVERYTHING that could go wrong. The best strategy I can give you is: Don't get careless. If you stop paying attention for even a moment you'll be annihilated. If you want to even have a chance of surviving this, you'll need to use the PK Cannonball Strategy (See the 100-Man Melee) and you'll need to get and use the Screw Item to keep you alive for at least 10 minutes. This is a rough and difficult mode, but with practice and dedication I'm sure it is beatable.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@ IX. 100-Man Melee @@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

The 100-Man Melee is fun with Ness. At the beginning when only a few easy WireFrameTeam Members come after Ness, they're very slow and can be quickly taken care of using the Yo-Yos, Bat, or even the Backward

Throw if you're good with it. However, as this contest goes on there will be more WFT Members coming after you, they'll be faster, and they'll be tougher. If they get around Ness, they'll quickly do 100+% damage to Ness and kill him. The best way to win this Melee, while not the fastest, is to jump off the left-hand side of the platform, then blast back with the PK Cannonball and kill all the WFT Members in your path. This is quite simple because the WFT Members will all run over to the leftmost floating platform and stand there in a crowd, waiting to die. Using this strategy, you should have an easy time making short work of this mode. One caution, though: When you jump off the left-hand side to do the PK Cannonball, make sure you jump ALL the way away from the platforms-if you're too close, the WFT Team Members can attack you. Worse, they're equipped with the Captain Falcon Step Kick, so if you make this huge mistake you'll have to start all over after you're quickly smacked down.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@ X. Homerun Contest @@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

Ness has one of the easiest of all the Homerun Contests. Okay, here's what you do. Use the PK Fire on the Bag to send it into the air. Then, when it comes down do it again. Then, do it again. Then, hit the bag with the Homerun Bat. You should get around 1,000 feet this way. It's simple and it's easy-which is lucky, since few things with Ness are.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@ XI. The Legal Stuff @@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

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