

Seiken Densetsu 3 (Import) Team Formation Guide

by APolaris82

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*****Seiken Densetsu 3*****|
*****Team Formation FAQ*****|
*****By APolaris82*****|
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Contact info:

AIM: Anfernee82
MSN/email: Anfernee82@hotmail.com
Yahoo: the_final_task82
Webpage: <http://ic.sunysb.edu/Stu/ajperez>

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Please read the earlier segments of the FAQ before going on to the explanations of teams and classes. The information in section 3 is particularly vital to understanding the FAQ, and contains some info not found in section 4.

If you want to jump to a certain section of the file, use Ctrl + F keys to use the find function, then type in any keywords.

*****Table of Contents*****

1. Introduction - what this FAQ is about, and no, you probably don't know
2. My philosophy on team formation, and why you should care
3. Factors worth considering, or miscellaneous crap
4. Analysis of classes in context, or, why the Sage doesn't suck
5. And now for something entirely different: a fun team for every class! ^_^
6. Ranking your team - how your team should be fighting
7. The dispelling of popular myths, or, stuff you probably don't think about unless you post on the boards

1. Introduction - what this FAQ is about, and no, you probably don't know

I'm going to begin with a frank assessment: this is not like any other FAQ you have ever read on this game. If you are reading this FAQ to find out what the best class or best team is, go read someone else's. If you like "flame warz" on why "ur clas totali ownzorz!!!!111" then don't even contact me, please, for the love of God; your typing is painful to read. If, on the other hand, you want to read about how each class should be used and for what teams each is optimal, then by all means continue on!

I am assuming you have at least a basic knowledge of how Seiken Densetsu 3 is played and who the characters are. If not, consult a walkthrough, there are plenty on GameFAQs.

2. My philosophy on team formation, and why you should care

My philosophy can be summed up as thus: team formation is an art, and there is no best class for any character, or best character, because a class's usefulness depends entirely on a within-team context. To wit: there is no individual "great" class that can work at full potential on its own merits. That said, there are definitely teams that go well together and teams that don't. In my opinion, the ideal SD3 team can be described as follows: all three characters have abilities that are in and of themselves useful, but the team furthermore acts to strengthen the offensive and defensive abilities of one another as well as themselves. Three characters each simply doing their own thing doesn't constitute a team. You begin to see now why I say there is no "best class." No class is worth using of its own virtue without considering what it will do for the others, but each team should also have characters who, after helping each other out, are all still efficient in some way. Consider: a team of Death Hand, Lord, and Rogue. These are all wonderful and useful classes. in the right team. But each is acting only on his own defensive and offensive virtues, and nothing is strengthened. As a result each class is performing at its minimal efficiency. Or consider Wanderer, Dragon Master, and Bishop. Again, all useful classes with two good support characters. But after the counter magic, transhape, stat downs, and sabers are cast, what's anybody actually doing? Contrast this with a team of Star Lancer, Ninja Master and Grand Divina. All three characters already have powerful MT magic, but after MT stat ups and MT stat downs all three are essentially doubling their damage and taking half damage from enemy attacks, and each can still contribute strongly in terms of damage-dealing. An analysis of the game essentially reveals three "focus characters" (Duran, Kevin, and Angela) whose primary purpose is to deal damage, and three characters (Hawk, Carlie, Lise) whose primary purpose is to help the others perform their jobs better, then do fairly well themselves. For the above reasons I generally feel that one - and preferably only one - of the focus characters should be on nearly all teams, and at least two of Carlie, Lise and Hawk form the most efficient. However,

there are plenty of fun exceptions.

I believe the following essential rules should be followed when forming an original party:

1. Never, or very rarely, repeat the same support skills twice. Examples include combining dark Lise with dark Hawk or combining the Lord or Warrior Monk with Carlie.

Exception: if you have sabers or healing on your party, it's perfectly tolerable and even a good idea to repeat this if they are single target.

2. Avoid selecting a party without any form of stat magic, unless you want a challenge. Whether it's Lise, dark Hawk, or dark Carlie, stat magi are the key to unlocking any class's full potential. Your Duelist or Grand Divina will never deal as much damage as they are capable on their own merits, and likewise their defensive weaknesses are fully exposed without help. Ensure likewise that the stat magic you get is useful for your party: Evil Shaman's Demon Breath, which lowers enemy magic attack and defense, is less than idyllic on a physical team like Duelist and Death Hand.

3. Select one purpose to be the focus of your party and build support abilities around enhancing that purpose. I cannot emphasize how poor taste it is to take a dark class of Duran's for elemental sabers, only to place Evil Shaman and Grand Divina to deal out the same elemental magic damage. A much better setup would have the Star Lancer in Duran's place, as this would enhance Carlie's and Angela's magic damage, while bringing in a third decent magic user and providing a party in which MT mind up almost instantly brings all three characters to full potential. Or if you prefer to use sabers, form a team around their use, a team of fighters: God Hand and Fenrir Knight would work ideally in this case.

4. Take quest into account. Two classes in particular to focus on this are the Bishop, who can deal 999 damage for 1 MP against her own final boss, and the Wanderer, who can make your party virtually invincible for some of the tougher battles of Duran's or Angela's quest. If you plan to fight the black rabite, make sure you have a team with which you can win that battle.

5. Do not feel tempted to make up for one character's weakness with another character that fills that weakness, especially with focus characters. For instance, do not under any conditions throw Kevin onto a team with Angela and Carlie because you feel you need to make up for the lack of physical attack power. Likewise, do not throw Angela onto a team with Kevin and Duran. It sounds nice making up for what a party lacks, but frankly it distracts from the flow of teamwork and forces you to lack particular focus on any tactical use. Instead, form a team with a common goal in mind and use them entirely in pursuit of that goal. Take quest into account: a team focused entirely on using magic will perform pretty sadly against Duran's or Angela's final bosses.

And finally.

6. Make sure your support abilities are helping anything. You can take the supreme support team of Wanderer, Star Lancer, and Bishop. All those abilities they have aren't going to

mean jack if the team has nothing to boost. Just as a physical team is only as good as its power ups and sabers, a saber or power up spell is only as good as the character it's being cast on. Make sure your team has at least one focus class.

3. Factors worth considering, or miscellaneous crap

Here is my method for analyzing the classes and in which teams they belong:

1. List of skills and final stats
2. Analyzing strengths: this is a listing of the abilities in which each class is most noticeably useful. In essence, why you should choose this class. For most classes this will include their abilities individually as well as good stats.
3. Analyzing weaknesses: trouble you can expect with the use of this class. Why you should avoid putting it on certain teams. This will often include limited abilities as well as weak points in the stats.
4. Affiliates: with whom should you group this character? This will explain.

These will all be based on a class's unique individual abilities, how these interact with other characters, and the character's own stats. For purposes of simplicity I will only be listing the final classes.

There is one issue I will include up here rather than repeating it six times within the FAQ: the Light-Dark classes, post-class change, can obtain the dark class change items from ??? seeds, giving them an additional purpose. The classes that can do this, and what they can use the items for, are as follows: Archmage brings in DeathSpell and MT Dark Force, Sage brings in Black Curse and Anti-Magic, Lord brings in MT Diamond Saber and MT Dark Saber, Rogue brings in MT Fire Jutsu and MT Thunder Jutsu, Warrior Monk brings in Energy Ball and Moon Saber, and Star Lancer brings in MT Protect Down and MT Mind Down.

I will also give a small meter under the name of each class. I call it my compatibility analysis graph. Basically, the graphs will show support to the left and focus to the right. As I believe there are no "better" classes, but just classes that perform differently, this will be used to sum up whether the class performs primarily as a support or focus character. Those near the center aren't necessarily bad at one or the other; rather, these generally can use skills to support themselves and the other characters, then jump into the fray themselves and continue to contribute throughout a battle. A second meter will do the same with the character's physical vs. magical potential, but - read this part - this second meter is meant to reflect whether the class fits best on a physical or magical team, not necessarily what the class itself is best at. Again, being near the middle means the class does equally well with both. Finally, a third meter will indicate whether (for focus characters) the class performs best against single enemies (including bosses) or groups of enemies. For support characters this will represent a mix of the above plus whether the class boosts a party quickly

(such as Star Lancer) or one at a time (such as Wanderer). A class leaning towards groups isn't necessarily bad at fighting bosses (Grand Divina is an excellent example of a class good at both), it's just that their skill at fighting groups is much better. My advice is to try to form a team with at least one character on the focus side, at least one on the support side, and try to keep the team all towards the same end magically or physically for best results and focus on their gifts. I also recommend you have at least one class leaning towards groups of enemies or the center.

Attack power is given in terms of both single and double hit attacks. I have a reason for this; see my closing section on popular myths for details.

You will notice I place more emphasis on HP and MDF than on DEF. This is because there is not really a significant difference between characters in DEF. The characters with the weakest Vitality scores also have the strongest armor, such that Angela with a CON of 8 might have the same DEF as Kevin with a CON of 12. Furthermore, all characters and all classes are capable of eventually reaching 300 DEF, and without significant difficulty or even maxing out CON in all cases. On the other hand, differences in INT are not made up by armor, and there is no maximum score to be reached. Hence, Kevin's MDF will never match Angela's in the way her DEF will match his. This is where HP comes in as a factor, since HP and MDF follow a nearly inverse distribution in this game.

The stats' usefulness is rated as follows:

STR: used for dishing out physical damage on a per-hit basis.

DEX: in theory, helps you hit more often and be hit less often. However, it doesn't work because of a bug. It also determines how quickly or slowly the trap wheel moves when opening chests, and determines the damage for many of Hawk's skills.

CON: determines your physical defense and plays a less significant role in max HP.

INT: most spell damage is affected by this, including most elemental magics. It also determines your magic defense for all characters.

PIE: this determines how well you cast holy elemental magic, how well you cast healing magic, and how quickly you cast spells.

LUCK: this is used in four areas: 1. the number of traps on the wheel when opening chests, 2. how frequently you get better items from chests (including seeds!), and 3. how often you survive an attack that might have killed you with 1 HP remaining. (This does happen sometimes and it is in fact based on luck!)

4. Analysis of classes in context, or, why the Sage doesn't suck

Notes: STR = strength, DEX = agility, CON = vitality (contrary to unpopular belief, it is not Hawk's smooth thiefling charms), INT = intelligence, PIE = spirit (or banana creme ^_^), LUCK = luck, * after a spell name denotes MT or after a tech denotes FST, MT = multitarget, ST = single target, FST = full screen tech.

Angela

How to use her:

Angela is one of a few characters in this game who has but one purpose, and for her that is to cause massive damage with the use of (mostly elemental) magic. Her classes are designed to perform this task with varying degrees of efficiency in various teams. From the Rune Master's ability to massively damage individual targets without stat magic to the Grand Divina's ability to rock the entire screen, Angela has a class designed to fit nearly any offensive team. Just give her a try sometime. You will not regret it.

Angela's high scores for Intelligence, Spirit, and Luck make her an ideal magical combatant, as she can dish out the most magic damage of any character in the game, especially when MTing spells against normal enemies. Her magic defense is the best of any character, which makes up for her low HP. However, her attack power is pretty sad even in her best attacking class, the Grand Divina. This is hardly a fault in boss battles, but it does affect the tactics you should be using. And it forces her to use MP-conserving spells in most dungeons, lest she run out and become useless.

Leveling up Angela:

As a mage, Angela's first and foremost priority should be raising Intelligence and Spirit, but this depends on just how weak she is in other areas. Because Angela has the lowest HP of any character, she may have some difficulty surviving dungeon battles if her Vitality is not raised frequently. As her primary purpose is multitargeting magic to wipe out rooms of monsters, she will not be physically attacking frequently, so her Strength should be raised as a last resort only. Agility and Luck, while useful, are somewhat overshadowed by Angela's uses for the mental stats and her desperate need to raise Vitality.

Angela's final classes:

Light-Light: Grand Divina

Support -----x- Focus
Physical -----x- Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Holy Ball*, Diamond Missile*, Air Blast*, Evil Gate*, Ice Smash*, Fireball*, Saint Beam*, Earthquake*, Thunderstorm*, Mega Splash*, Explode*, Double Spell*
Starting and final stats: STR 14/17, DEX 14/17, CON 14/18, INT 17/21, PIE 17/19, LUCK 14/16

2. Strengths: The Grand Divina has Angela's best overall stat total, and is her only class with no significant weakness, statistically at least. She can hold her own in a fight should it come to that; her physical attack power is the highest of Angela's classes. Her ability to multitarget elemental spells combined with the (tied) second highest

INT in the game makes for the ultimate screen-clearing spellcaster, and she can dish out multitarget damage in any element, with dark being the only one below level 2! It just so happens the GD is also a capable boss fighter - in the right team. On a team with both Mind Up and Mind Down skills she can easily surpass 800 damage with one spell casting for 4 MP! Assuming you can figure out the right spell to cast. If you can't, well, you probably shouldn't be playing this game.

3. Weaknesses: The Grand Divina is an excellent class, but like most classes, her efficiency relies on that of her teammates. Without at least one form of stat magic, the GD's ability to dish out damage, particularly to bosses, noticeably diminishes. She does fall behind in terms of dishing out dark-elemental damage, and since Shade spells bypass the Magic Counter barriers cast by some enemies, this can be an issue. She is also not a character for the lazy; her Double Spell is her only non-elemental magic, and it costs 9 MP per casting. Hardly the kind of cost-efficiency you seek with Angela, unless you've got a character with Tree Saber.

4. Affiliates: I recommend putting the Grand Divina on teams with stat magic and preferably healing, to make up for Angela's generally lacking HP (ditto for all of her classes). Lise's light classes, Hawk's dark classes, and Carlie's dark classes are all good teammates for the Grand Divina. I highly recommend against putting her on a team with both Duran and Kevin (especially at the same time), as you'll find her contributions minimal and no character will be able to support her magic, so you'll more or less be using her on her own merits.

Light-Dark: Arch Mage

Support -----x- Focus
Physical -----x- Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: List of skills: Holy Ball*, Diamond Missile*, Air Blast*, Evil Gate*, Ice Smash*, Fireball*, Saint Beam*, Earthquake*, Thunderstorm*, Mega Splash*, Explode*, Rainbow*
Starting and final stats: STR 14/16, DEX 14/16, CON 14/18, INT 17/20, PIE 17/20, LUCK 14/17

2. Strengths: The Arch Mage's use of abilities is virtually similar to those of the Grand Divina; however, they are not the same class. You'll notice they have differing stats; this does in fact affect how she is used. Because of her higher spirit, the Arch Mage is ideally suited to quests in which you plan to use Saint Beam and Holy Ball frequently, and because there are so many dark elemental enemies near the end, this may well be the case, especially if Carlie or Kevin is your main character. Her highest spirit also makes her the ideal Poto Oil thrower, should you lack another method of using Heal Light. She also has Angela's highest luck score, making her the best treasure hunter.

3. Weaknesses: She has many of the same weaknesses as the Grand Divina, with a few extra. She cannot fight physically

like the GD can, as that 1 point of STR and DEX do make a difference. Her lower INT than the other characters results in less magic defense and less cost-effectiveness than the other classes (when using the same spells anyway), and since Saint Beam is the costliest of level 2 spells, that's a slight issue. She is also less capable of dishing out damage with a variety of elements outside of holy. Her ultimate spell, Rainbow, is quite expensive, so the Arch Mage is likewise not ideally suited to a team without stat magic.

4. Affiliates: I recommend putting the Arch Mage on any team in which the Grand Divina would fit, with the contention that you'll be using her holy magic more often than her other elements, or teams that lack a healer.

Dark-Light: Rune Master

Support -----x-Focus
Physical -----x---- Magical
Single -x----- Groups

1. List of skills: List of skills: Holy Ball*, Diamond Missile*, Air Blast*, Evil Gate*, Ice Smash*, Fireball*, Dark Force*, Stun Wind, Stone Cloud, Cold Blaze, Blaze Wall, DeathSpell
Starting and final stats: STR 13/15, DEX 13/15, CON 14/18, INT 18/21, PIE 16/19, LUCK 13/16

2. Strengths: You may have noticed how few stars exist in her list of spells. That is because the Rune Master excels in a unique form of combat for Angela: single-target massively damaging magic. The Rune Master is Angela's fastest damage-dealer under the right conditions. Her DeathSpell will deal 999 damage against anything at a lower level than her, making the Rune Master the ideal class for a team without stat magic, provided you know enough about RPGs to level up enough. Her ST level 3 spells cast status effects such as silence, petrification, and snowman in addition to dealing slightly more damage than level 2 spells. This comes in handy if you plan to fight the Black Rabite, as the level 99 great demons it summons are vulnerable to petrification.

3. Weaknesses: If you care about having the statistically ideal character, the Rune Master is the one class you should avoid. This is because its stats are identical to the Grand Divina's - with 2 points lower in STR and DEX! Granted, these are two less than significant stats for the class, but 2 points is a lot in this game, and she has nothing to make up for it. On a team with stat magic, level 2 spells deal out nearly as much damage as level 3 spells, and with most classes are also MT. Her cost-efficiency is perhaps the worst of any class; unless you have her on a team with a Tree Saber user, she will run out of MP in the final battles before taking off a fifth of the boss's HP no matter which spells you try to hit it with. Since her only spells that aren't level 3 or DeathSpell are level 1 spells and Dark Force, this is bad. She also suffers through long dungeons in which the Magus's ability to dish out strong damage with level 1 spells is more useful.

4. Affiliates: Because DeathSpell deals 999 damage without stat magic, the Rune Master's ideal team has none (on a team

with stat magic, her other classes approach this figure using half the MP or less), but does have Tree Saber, and plans to level up a lot. For this reason, the Warrior Monk is her ideal counterpart. This is the one class that fits on teams with physical characters, the likes of Duran or Kevin, which explains my choice on the 2nd meter. It should also be your choice if you plan to fight the Black Rabite, for reasons outlined above.

Dark-Dark: Magus

Support -----x- Focus
Physical -----x Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Holy Ball*, Diamond Missile*, Air Blast*, Evil Gate*, Ice Smash*, Fireball*, Dark Force*, Earthquake, Thunderstorm, Mega Splash, Explode, Ancient*
Starting and final stats: STR 13/16, DEX 13/16, CON 14/18, INT 18/22, PIE 16/18, LUCK 13/15

2. Strengths: This class is often derided as a class for people who want a challenge. This is only true if one has no clue how to use the Magus, as it's actually useful in many parties. As Angela's most cost-effective magic user, the Magus has the best magic defense in the game, and since bosses generally use magic over physical attacks, this is good. She also gets the same level 2 spell set as the light classes, but replacing Saint Beam with Dark Force, and her spells are only single target. This makes her superior for fighting bosses and less skilled at fighting common enemies with these spells. However, since Dark Force bypasses Counter Magic, this somewhat makes up for it. The Magus also has a very easy time getting through dungeons without wasting her MP down too quickly, as she is the most effective MT level 1 spellcaster in the game. Since these spells are the most cost-effective, this makes her strong. Ancient is also a fun spell, even if it is way too expensive, and it does approach the damage barrier even without stat ups or downs, and it makes leveling up near a gold statue very easy.

3. Weaknesses: Unfortunately, the Magus' superiority lies with her weaker spells. Ancient, though fun, is too expensive to use as your primary attack in protracted boss battles or long dungeons, leaving her to choose only level 1 or 2 spells. This is not a problem in boss battles if you have stat magic; she's actually the best boss fighter in these parties of Angela's classes. Her level 2 spells approach the damage of the Rune Master's level 3 spells in such parties, for half the MP cost. However, if you're not in such a party, you'll likely find the Magus resorting to Ancient in order to pass even the 500 damage mark, as her other spells are too weak to do so. In real-time, this is an issue. The Magus also as a tradeoff has her lowest luck and spirit scores, meaning slower spell casting, but since you should be casting mostly weak, quickly-cast spells at a strong damage rate with the Magus, this isn't as much of an issue as you might think.

4. Affiliates: I recommend the Magus as a boss fighter on the same teams as the light classes. However, if you do not plan to use her level 1 spells constantly, I strongly recommend you

put a strong stat magic-using fighter, such as Nightblade or Vanadies, on her teams. Otherwise, you may not find yourself reaching the bosses. A good tactic may be to quickly cast an MT level 1 spell in a screen to weaken the enemies, knocking the enemies back quickly, then having your fighters rush in.

Carlie (or Charlotte)

How to use her:

In terms of primary purpose, Carlie has a tendency during her first two classes to be essentially "ahead" of the others in some ways. Before anyone can heal without using an item, Carlie can use Heal Light and Tinkle Rain. Before anyone else can multitarget anything (except Angela's level 1 spells) Carlie can already multitarget her heal light and is well on the way to developing her later abilities. Her final classes however tend to rely on specific purposes that vary given class and team, rendering Carlie one of the more diverse characters in SD3. Along with Hawk she's the character for an advanced player who wants to use neat tricks a less skilled tactician wouldn't look at. Bottom line: no matter what your team is, there's a Carlie class for it, if you know how to use it.

Carlie's attack power is as low as Angela's, and her DEX and HP are nearly as low. But she has the game's strongest total mental stats, with the second highest INT (for magic defense) and LUCK and the highest PIE (her final classes all instantly cast Heal Light and the Sage has the game's strongest holy magic). All of her classes are useful, but each really depends on who's on your team.

Leveling up Carlie:

Carlie is like Angela in that she needs to raise Vitality frequently to stay alive. However, she doesn't have as desperate a need for Intelligence, as her spells are based on Spirit. So Intelligence provides only magic defense, and Carlie's base MDF for her final classes is higher than the best MDF some other characters can obtain. I recommend raising her Spirit whenever the chance arises, and raise Vitality whenever it doesn't. If her magic defense begins to lag then raise Intelligence. It's possible that she may be your luckiest character; if so, raise that sporadically too.

Carlie's final classes:

Light-Light: Bishop

Support	---x-----	Focus
Physical	-----x-----	Magical
Single	-----x-----	Groups

1. List of skills: Heal Light*, Tinkle Rain*, Flame Saber, Ice Saber, Thunder Saber, Diamond Saber, Saint Saber, Holy Ball, Magic Shield, Turn Undead
Starting and final stats: STR 13/16, DEX 14/16, CON 14/18,

2. Strengths: The highest spirit score in the game coupled with instant-cast MT Heal Light makes this class a prodigal healer. Coupled with the possession of every elemental saber except Dark Saber, this makes her an ideal support character for fighting parties. Other perks include Magic Shield, which helps to cut down the damage to characters with sad magic defense (read: Kevin and Duran) and Turn Undead. The latter has the game's best damage:MP ratio (999:1), with the condition that you be at a higher level than the target and the target is specifically undead. Fortunately, Carlie/Kevin's final boss, the Dark Lich, is. Combining this with Saint Saber sees her finest hour set on her own quest with a strong party of fighters. Add in Holy Ball for dishing out damage after her support skills are finished, and you have a well-rounded holy character useful throughout an entire protracted battle.

3. Weaknesses: Like her other classes, the Bishop cannot attack physically and expect to deal damage. Since she lacks multitarget attack spells, this puts her at somewhat of a boring role while dungeon crawling, as her only purpose is to cast ST sabers and heal the others. This is not a bad role. but it IS somewhat limiting. She also has Carlie's lowest Luck and Intelligence scores, which somewhat contrasts her status as a primarily mental character.

4. Affiliates: This class should typically have Duran or Kevin as a teammate to take maximum advantage of her sabers, especially Saint Saber. Any of Lise's or Hawk's classes also make a good teammate, as stat magic + Magic Shield can create a defensive powerhouse of a team. I recommend the Bishop more strongly on her own quest than on the others.

Light-Dark: Sage

Support ----x----- Focus
Physical -----x----- Magical
Single -----x---- Groups

1. List of skills: Heal Light*, Tinkle Rain*, Flame Saber*, Ice Saber*, Thunder Saber*, Diamond Saber*, Holy Ball, Saint Beam
Starting and final stats: STR 13/15, DEX 14/17, CON 14/18, INT 16/19, PIE 18/21, LUCK 16/19

2. Strengths: Like the Bishop, the Sage has great healing skills, but she replaces some of the Bishop's skills with others. For starters, she gets the game's strongest Saint Beam, one of the game's most useful attack spells, instead of Saint Saber, one of the game's most useful power up spells. While limiting her support, this allows her to become a better damage dealer herself. She also replaces Turn Undead and Magic Shield with MT sabers. This makes her a slightly more efficient character against the God-Beasts in a party with strong fighters than the Bishop, as it allows fighters to get into the action more quickly and conserves valuable MP. Her magic defense is also quite good, and despite being derided as the game's worst class

in many an FAQ, the Sage is actually a useful combination of support and self-sufficiency when used -properly-.

3. Weaknesses: The Sage has the dubious distinction of being the game's weakest physical attacker when maxed out. This sounds like it shouldn't be an issue for a healer. but it does somewhat cost her ability to help out when not healing. Saint Beam, while it does have a purpose, is only ST, and while it can propel your party's total damage rate higher than Saint Saber can, it does cause counterattacks from some bosses, particularly the Black Rabite. (Ditto for Angela.) The worst thing about the Sage is that she has to be in the same party she's supporting, so her MT sabers are only helping two characters attack anyway. This somewhat causes her to suffer in a party without Mind Up or Mind Down, which helps her Saint Beam gain value.

4. Affiliates: I recommend putting her in a party with Lise, particularly the Fenrir Knight or Star Lancer, and another strong attacker such as Nightblade or Dervish. This will maximize the benefits her sabers confer while assisting her in dealing damage as well. Cast Mind Up on her at the beginning of boss battles and cast whatever sabers are necessary at the same time. Like the Arch Mage, this class also makes for a good "Holy Focus" party if teamed with the Paladin, so Saint Saber is not lost. I recommend strongly against teaming this class with dark Duran, even the Duelist, since if he can already cast one saber you only need ST sabers to cast one more (Carlie herself should rarely be on the receiving end of sabers).

Dark-Light: Necromancer

Support ----x----- Focus
Physical -----x----- Magical
Single ---x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Heal Light*, Tinkle Rain*, Dark Saber, Black Curse, Unicorn Head, Machine Golem, Ghoul, Ghost
Starting and final stats: STR 13/16, DEX 14/15, CON 13/18, INT 17/19, PIE 17/21, LUCK 17/20

2. Strengths: The Necromancer is first and foremost a profound support character with one of the hardest spells in the game to duplicate: Black Curse. This neat ST spell simultaneously casts Mind Down, Power Down and Protect Down on the target for 6 MP, saving time and counterattacks. This sees a fine role against the Black Rabite, since the best tactics for fighting it consist of casting as few spells on it as possible. The only other access to this spell is through the game's rarest non-unique item, the Shadowzero's Eye. Her healing ability also approaches that of the light classes, and her summons enable her to deal adequate damage should her role come to that. It seems shallow to base praise for an entire class on one spell. but Black Curse just sees enough use on various teams to warrant selection of this class. She also carries a profound luck score combined with mostly good stats otherwise, and does get Dark Saber, which in all fairness is useful against Heath (Carlie's toughest boss).

3. Weaknesses: The Necromancer unfortunately sees little use

beyond Black Curse. While her summons see adequate use in battle, they just don't really compete with the other classes' attack magic. It's probably her weakest class if what you're looking for is to deal damage after she's done supporting, but it's her best for helping the other characters' damage and survival. Dark Saber is also a less than useful spell, unless you happen to be fighting Heath or Lightgazer with fighters in your party.

4. Affiliates: The Necromancer is a good addition to virtually any team. Combining her with Lise's light classes creates a team of complete ownage no matter who the third character is. I recommend however that you put her on a team with damage dealers such as Angela or Kevin, as she herself doesn't do so well at that.

Dark-Dark: Evil Shaman

Support -----x----- Focus
Physical -----x--- Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Heal Light*, Tinkle Rain*, Antimagic, Demon Breath, Unicorn Head, Machine Golem, Gremlin, Great Demon
Starting and final stats: STR 13/17, DEX 14/16, CON 13/18, INT 17/20, PIE 17/20, LUCK 17/19

2. Strengths: The Evil Shaman is a class of abilities, most of which are poor on their own, that happen to combine in ways that make each other excel. Demon Breath is a multitarget dark or fire magic (see note below) that also comes with MT mind down status. This sounds bad because of the dark element, which most later enemies absorb. However, she also comes with Antimagic, which cancels elemental properties as well as powerups. This spell is perhaps the game's best against the Black Rabite, since it likes to heal itself with Dark Force. Cast this spell, and it's suddenly damaging itself instead. Cast antimagic at the beginning of a boss battle, follow it with demon breath, and what do you have? The same spell but essentially non-elemental! This makes her the ultimate companion to a magic party, since demon breath is itself actually a fairly powerful MT spell. Her Great Demon summon likewise is useful after these are cast, and she has Carlie's best attack power, and every little bit helps in the parties to which the Evil Shaman should belong. Finally, she paradoxically has Carlie's best magic defense, but her weakest healing powers.

3. Weaknesses: The Evil Shaman is Carlie's weakest healer, and while it doesn't make her a weak healer, it does make her somewhat less preferable - in the healing role at least - to other classes. However, in the hands of a skilled player, her other roles are fully realized. Her best spells are also quite costly in MP, particularly those meant to deal damage. Finally, she is confusing for beginners to use without experience, and her role is limited to certain parties, however ideal she may be in those.

4. Affiliates: The Evil Shaman belongs on a team of magic users. Demon Breath can help lower an enemy's magic damage to a fighting party, but why limit its role to that when you can have a team that takes advantage of the enemy's

decreased magic defense as well? In my opinion her ideal team is all-female with an advanced player at the helm.

Note: Apparently, some members of a board have performed trials with Demon Breath and have found it to contain fire element. However, I have also seen dark enemies absorb it. This leads me to believe either one of us has a foggy memory, or the spell can be both dark and fire elemental simultaneously, much like Final Fantasy 7's Magic Breath is fire/ice/lightning.

Duran

How to use him:

Of the three focus characters, this mercenary of Forcena is the one who sees the most use as a party member rather than as an individual powerhouse. His specialty is in dealing massive physical damage, and he's so good at it that even the strongest non-Duran class (the Vanadies) doesn't compete with his weakest class (the Paladin) in terms of attack power. This makes him the strongest single-hit attacker (see my section on popular myths for a dispelling of the two most popular myths that cause people to dislike Duran). He also has the widest swing, which means that if enemies are approaching him from north, south, and west, he can hit all three with one swing if a skilled player is controlling him, while other characters lack this potential. But as strong as he is, Duran also sees use in helping the other party members, either through healing, sabers, or both. Between the two fighters who can learn to heal (Duran and Kevin) if they become a light class, Duran is the one who sacrifices less strength by choosing his. This, plus his sabers, makes him a good addition to a physical focus team like Fenrir Knight + Dervish. Duran is the opposite of Carlie: highest STR, second highest HP and CON, but low magic defense, casting speed, luck, and healing power. As a result, he performs ideally on a team that can help magic defense and attack power, as well as one with sabers (which most of his own classes have).

Leveling up Duran:

As a physical fighter with the lowest luck in the game, you most likely won't be using Duran for his luck or magical capabilities. Raise his Strength whenever possible to maximize his advantage in attacking. I advise staying away from Luck and Spirit, unless he's your Heal Light user in which event you may occasionally wish to raise Spirit. However, his magic defense does need desperate help, so whenever you can't raise Strength, raise either Vitality or Intelligence.

Duran's final classes:

Light-Light: Paladin

Support	-----x----	Focus
Physical	----x-----	Magical
Single	-----x-----	Groups

1. List of skills: Heal Light, Saint Saber
Starting and final stats: STR 17/21, DEX 15/17, CON 17/21,
INT 13/15, PIE 14/17, LUCK 14/16

2. Strengths: The Paladin is Duran's only class to learn Saint Saber. This makes him a uniquely useful character in parties focused on holy damage as well as battling the Black Rabite. It can also heal, even though the healing is single target, and learns an FST. His sacred shield is also meant to protect against all magic; unfortunately, due to a glitch in the game, it doesn't work. Since Duran's purpose is mass damage, this class allows you to fulfill that purpose without sacrificing a healer. He's a balanced class that allows you to have a party with both three strong classes and three good supporters.

3. Weaknesses: He has the game's weakest magic defense, tied with the God Hand. He sees little use beyond the healing power and the occasional use of Saint Saber that any other class of Duran's can't fulfill more efficiently. A common myth claims that he has weak attack power; in fact, his attack power is within 4 points of any other class save the Duelist, and he has the same strength as the other two. However, his shield is broken, so its magic properties don't take hold. Because he's a balanced class, he doesn't really excel in anything specific (except Black Rabite killing).

4. Affiliates: The Paladin fits well on most teams that the Bishop fits on, but he's better balanced for all three quests. He provides a good counterpart to the Sage, since he is himself a good physical attacker and he has the one (important) elemental saber the Sage lacks. He also makes a good teammate for the Ninja Master or Fenrir Knight; just try using his FST after an MT protect down or Thunder Jutsu and you'll see what I mean. If you plan to fight the Black Rabite on his own quest, he is part of perhaps the ultimate team designed expressly for this purpose (Paladin, Necromancer, Star Lancer).

Dark-Light: Lord (or Warlord)

Support -----x----- Focus
Physical -----x----- Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Heal Light*, Tinkle Rain
Starting and final stats: STR 17/21, DEX 15/18, CON 17/21,
INT 13/16, PIE 13/16, LUCK 14/17

2. Strengths: The Lord is Duran's healing class, but this doesn't mean he's incapable of fighting. His strength is every bit as high as the other classes (except Duelist), which (as with Paladin) many seem to forget. The ability to MT Heal Light is good not only for faster healing, but MP conservation. This makes him ideal for taking the role of party healer, leaving other characters to seek newly unrestricted classes. The Oath Shield empowers the Lord with immunity to most status changes!

3. Weaknesses: The Lord is the only class of Duran's that does

not have any FSTs. While this is not reason enough to shy from selecting him, it does somewhat limit his fighting credentials on the wrong team. Although his healing is multitargetable, his point less in spirit than Paladin means he'll be healing somewhat less per casting, although this is easily offset by the benefits of MT. He is the only class of Duran's which gets no sabers, which means that if you don't like using Stardust Herbs, you have to hope someone else has sabers or that the boss you're fighting doesn't use a saber on your party.

4. Affiliates: As a character whose main role is to provide MT healing without sacrificing fighting ability, the Lord fits on virtually any team. However, some teams are better set to help his performance than others. I recommend against selecting the Lord on any team with Carlie or light-classed Kevin, as these only repeat his skills and limit your team to little more than healing abilities. You might want to put him on a team with someone who has a strong FST (Vanadies, Nightblade, dark Kevin) or powerful multitarget magic (light Angela, Ninja Master, any Lise). Otherwise you may find yourself killing enemies just one at a time.

Dark-Light: Swordmaster

Support -----x----- Focus
Physical x----- Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Fire Saber*, Ice Saber*, Thunder Saber*, Diamond Saber*, Moon Saber, Tree Saber
Starting and final stats: STR 18/21, DEX 16/18, CON 17/21, INT 14/16, PIE 13/16, LUCK 13/16

2. Strengths: The Swordmaster combines power with the ability to support a good fighting party. On top of having the game's second highest attack power per strike, the Swordmaster can also multitarget every elemental saber, much like the Sage. However, while he cannot heal, he can use Moon Saber and Tree Saber, which restore HP and MP respectively per hit, and is the only class in the game to combine these spells into the same class, and the only one to have either in addition to elemental sabers. His FST is more than adequate for battling, and his ability to MT sabers means the Swordmaster will get into battle action quicker than the Duelist will and conserve MP through long dungeons.

3. Weaknesses: The Swordmaster has Duran's most useless stats, making him a less efficient character than the Duelist individually, particularly for a single character challenge. He sacrifices points in Strength, Dexterity, and Intelligence for Spirit and Luck, neither of which he uses much. If you plan to make Duran the focus of your party, the Duelist outshines him. It is when finding a balance that allows Duran to fight well while also helping the other party members that makes the Swordmaster worth choosing.

4. Affiliates: Since his main benefits are multitargeting sabers and using Tree Saber, the Duelist ideally belongs on a team that can fight and also use magic, but needs MP

restoration frequently. For this reason he makes an excellent teammate for Hawk's dark classes, particularly the Nightblade, as well as Lise (particularly Star Lancer) or light Kevin. I recommend on the other hand against putting him on a team with Angela, because while Tree Saber would help her, it comes at the expense of the efficiency his MT sabers grant. Give her the Warrior Monk instead.

Dark-Dark: Duelist

Support -----x-Focus
Physical -x----- Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Fire Saber, Ice Saber, Thunder Saber, Diamond Saber, Dark Saber

Starting and final stats: STR 18/22, DEX 16/19, CON 17/21, INT 14/17, PIE 13/15, LUCK 13/15

2. Strengths: Many people look at the Duelist and see Eruption Sword. This is a completely valid perspective, but there is much MUCH more to the Duelist than the game's strongest FST. He also has the game's highest single-hit attack power (to give you an idea of where he stands, if an enemy somehow had 340 Defense he'd be the only class capable of dealing damage in the double digits), and he still has the capability of lending saber support to himself and other fighters in his party. He does learn Dark Saber, which, while useless in most dungeons, is strong against Lightgazer (one of the tougher God-Beasts) and Heath (the toughest boss on Kevin/Carlie's quest). He also has Duran's highest magic defense, which for Duran is big, because this means his best damage-dealing class is also the one best capable of surviving enemy spells. At heart the Duelist is a quintessential "focus character."

3. Weaknesses: The Duelist does fall short of being a fully contributing member of a flowing team. His casting of ST sabers is fairly stagnant, and on a team of fighters, somewhat slows down how quickly he can get into the action. Outside of mass strength and the battles in which he has the appropriate elemental saber, the Duelist has literally no purpose, so he relies on a team of characters with purpose to make up for that. If you want any form of healing for your team, this class forces you to take Carlie or light classed Kevin as a teammate. Oh well, you could always take the God Hand and spam Aura Wave..

4. Affiliates: The Duelist should have good support characters by his side. Good companions include Lise, Hawk (the Wanderer proves a great ally, particularly for Duran's own quest), or Carlie. Aura Wave is a good companion ability to the Duelist, so try pairing him with God Hand (if you don't have the Wanderer) and a stat mage (Lise, dark Hawk). Speaking of which, MT stat downs are great for the Duelist (Ninja Master anyone?), as is Power Up. Likewise, he makes a very poor teammate for dark classed Kevin, as it forces your third character to be Carlie if you want a healer and you must sacrifice that possibility. Saber users, especially the Sage, are also somewhat redundant, as Duelist himself can cast most sabers anyway.

Hawk (or Hawkeye)

How to use him:

Hawk, venerate of the Navarre Thieves' Guild, is, along with Carlie, the character least suited to being a "focus character." Every character that does less damage than him physically is capable of learning some kind of spell that does more damage than his do. However, Hawk is the game's most diverse character in terms of support abilities, making him the best contributor to good parties. Depending on his selection of class, Hawk can do anything except heal. From the essential combination of Fenrir Knight and Sorceress that forms the Ninja Master to the jack-of-all-trades Wanderer, Hawk is capable of filling nearly any hole your other two party members might have left open.

Along with Lise, Hawk has the game's best overall stats. Unlike Lise, however, he has defined strengths and weaknesses. Hawk tends to have the highest Luck and Agility in a party (he is the only character to begin with two stats set to 6; on the flip side, he's also the only one to start with four scores of 3 or less). Depending on the selected class, Hawk can also make up for disadvantages in magic defense or physical strength. Keep your team's abilities well in mind when selecting a class for Hawk.

Leveling up Hawk:

Paradoxically, having the best stats, Hawk needs to raise the most as well. To learn many abilities, and to raise his trap damage, Hawk will need to raise his Agility often. As his HP, magic defense, and physical defense are on the weak side, he will also need to raise Vitality and Intelligence (the latter is also required for some classes' skills). The Wanderer requires a raise in Spirit to learn some skills, and as Hawk is most likely going to be your chest opener, you'll need to raise Luck too. As much as he could use it, therefore, his Strength tends to be best neglected until other stats are raised, unless you want him to double as a fighter (i.e. as Nightblade).

Hawk's final classes:

Light-Light: Wanderer

Support x----- Focus
Physical -----x----- Magical
Single ---x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Change Form*, Sleep Flower*, Arrow, Spike, Aura Wave, Transhape, Counter Magic, Energy Ball, Lunatic, Half Vanish, Life Booster, Poison Bubble
Starting and final stats: STR 14/16, DEX 17/20, CON 15/19, INT 14/16, PIE 15/18, LUCK 18/21
2. Strengths: The Wanderer is the most diverse character in the game in terms of abilities, and hence uses. He can put all enemies to sleep with MT sleep flower, use Aura Wave to

help your fighters unleash FSTs, use attack magic and replenish his own MP with Poison Bubble, cut an enemy's remaining HP in half, and even raise a party member's max HP by 1/5 with Life Booster or lower a boss's by 1/5 with Lunatic. (That means 10,000 instant non-restorable damage to the final bosses!) But his most significant use in most teams is also his most overlooked: he can make the party nearly invincible against 80% of the game's attacks, by using Transhape (a spell that makes the target clear; he cannot be hit by physical attacks unless they are techs of at least level 2) and Counter Magic (the character reflects any non-Shade attack spell that can be single-targeted back at the caster; think Reflect from the Final Fantasy series minus the reflection of beneficial magics). These two spells see particular use respectively when battling the Darkshine Knight and Koren, as they actually DO make you invincible during these fights (unless Koren casts Ancient, and provided you don't use magic or techs on the DSK.)

3. Weaknesses: Remember how I said Duelist is almost entirely a focus character? Well, Wanderer IS entirely a support character. He literally has no capacity to do anything that doesn't involve disabling the enemies or helping other members and himself to perform better. His attack power is weaker per hit than most of Angela's and Carlie's classes, and his only tenable attack spell (Poison Bubble), while useful for MP restoration, doesn't remotely compete with the attack spells of Angela or the Rogue in terms of damage or elemental uses. Arrow and Spike barely count as attacks, since by the end of the game you'll be doing more with physical hits than these spells. He also has poor stats for a Hawk class, leaving him with many weaknesses that must be helped by another support character. The Rogue is equal or better in every single stat except for Spirit, the least useful for Hawk.

4. Affiliates: The Wanderer can fit on any team. I'm not even kidding. But I do advise putting him on a team with at least one heavily focus character such as Death Hand or Magus, and the multiple stat mage/healer combination that is Carlie as a Necromancer would round out such a party quite well. Aura Wave places him slightly better on a physical than magical team. Because of the abovementioned advantages against Duran's and Angela's bosses, the Wanderer performs exceptionally well during the later phases of their quest.

Light-Dark: Rogue

Support -----x-Focus
Physical -----x---- Magical
Single -x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Change Shape*, Sleep Flower*, Rock Fall, Cutter Missile, Land Mine, Crescent, Rocket Launcher, Land Mine, Axe Bomber, Silver Dart, Grenade Bomb
Starting and final stats: STR 14/17, DEX 17/21, CON 15/19, INT 14/17, PIE 15/17, LUCK 18/22

2. Strengths: The Rogue defies convention by making Hawk into a focus character - and quite the focus character he is,

too. The most balanced focus class, the Rogue can serve multiple purposes simultaneously. Its primary use is with magic, but don't make any mistakes. the Rogue is *not* Angela with better stats, as many make him out to be. For starters, where Angela's focus is on the ability to take advantage of elemental weaknesses, the Rogue focuses on a more general type of damage-dealing: he specializes in single-target magic use with mostly non-elemental magic spells. At first, this sounds bad because he can't take advantage of elemental weaknesses, but consider: many bosses, such as Koren or Dark Lich, like to change their weaknesses around. This means any given elemental spell you cast may heal them, while a non-elemental spell is guaranteed to deal damage. The Rogue's Grenade Bomb enables him virtually infinite MP, given that you have more than 7 remaining to cast it. And he gets the game's most useful Holy elemental spell, Silver Dart, which is essentially ST Saint Beam for 2 MP and a shorter casting time. He also gets spells in fire, dark, and tree elements. He has the highest luck in the game, and can fight better than any of Angela's classes, due to his double-hit. Finally, he can multitarget Sleep Flower and Change Shape like the Wanderer. While the Rogue will never reach the mass damage-dealing of Angela, he does sacrifice only a little in exchange for being the most multi-dimensional of focus classes.

3. Weaknesses: The biggest problem with a multi-dimensional character is that they are rarely exceptional in any field. The Rogue is the textbook example of this. He can fight, put enemies to sleep, deal non-elemental damage, and deal some elemental damage, but doesn't really stand out in any one area. His attack spells are only single-target, which somewhat restricts his activity to bosses or single enemies. Finally, you also have to be careful using Grenade Bomb (ditto for Wanderer's Poison Bubble): if you use it on the wrong enemy. well, let's just say you won't like the results.

4. Affiliates: The Rogue will fit in on most parties. When forming the party, try to keep a particular goal in mind. I recommend using him as the basis for a strong magic party, joining with one of Angela's light classes (for MT magic capabilities) and the Evil Shaman or Necromancer. This does somewhat abandon the party's capacity to fight physically, but it doesn't much matter when this isn't what your team is meant to do. If you want to attack physically all game, why are you selecting a magic-using class for your team?

Dark-Light: Ninja Master

Support	-----x-----	Focus
Physical	-----x-----	Magical
Single	-----x-----	Groups

1. List of skills: Shuriken*, Water Jutsu*, Thunder Jutsu*, Fire Jutsu*, Earth Jutsu*
Starting and final stats: STR 15/17, AGI 18/22, CON 15/19, INT 15/18, PIE 14/16, LUCK 17/21

2. Strengths: The Ninja Master is the game's finest example of

what happens when you combine party support with individual power, and what's more, he does it without sacrificing anything significant. Imagine taking the Fenrir Knight (Lise's dark-dark class) and adding Sorceress-level elemental damage to her spells, and you begin to have an idea of how this works. The Ninja Master's jutsus cover not only every major stat down spell, but also the four "common" elements, and since they can be multitargeted, this noticeably decimates the class's need for an FST. His physical and magical capabilities are somewhat balanced, although his skills tend to overshadow his power. People often complain about the lacking FST, but his double hit enables him to reach his level 1 tech after just two swings, like Hawk's other classes, and the level 1 tech is stronger than any of his others anyway. It also enables him to take advantage of any sabers cast on him, which is big. I cannot overstate the ability to reduce every enemy on the screen's physical and magical damage and defense to nearly nil; this is one of the few classes that performs equally well on a physical or magical team. His magic defense is the highest, and his strengthened jutsus dish out the second highest base magical damage (after Rogue), of Hawk's classes. Finally, if you put Lise on the same team (as I highly recommend), this class will enable you to select her light classes and have both MT stat ups and downs on the same team, doubling every character's damage from all sources while cutting damage to your team to 1 in most cases! Finally, he also has one of the game's more cost-efficient spells: MT Shuriken. For 1 MP, this spell will dish out damage in the 200s without stat modifications and lower the enemy's hit rate. Because of its extremely fast casting time, a good tactic is to use this immediately upon entering a room and while enemies are being knocked back, follow it with a jutsu that would be useful in the fight.

3. Weaknesses: Despite the fact that the lack of an FST is more than made up for by the presence of MT magic and MT stat downs, it's still there. Also, while MT jutsus are practically all he needs, he doesn't learn any new skills. As a result, he is the least diverse (and most focused) of Hawk's classes. His skills pretty much extend only to MT damage and MT stat downs, as useful as those are. On a team that already has stat downs (such as Fenrir Knight) he's forced to act as team mage, a field in which Angela easily takes him. Finally, being elemental attacks, his jutsus are absorbed by some foes (such as Darkshine Knight), which forces him to use a specter's eye before casting it or risk facing some dangerous situations (Darkshine Knight without power down), and they are countered by others (Black Rabite), making them barely worth using.

4. Affiliates: The Ninja Master belongs on any team unless it already has stat down spells. He can help Duran or Kevin with their FST damage, help Angela with her MT and ST magic damage, or help light-classed Carlie to beef up another fighter's damage. Perhaps the best teammate for the Ninja Master is Lise as a Star Lancer, because this gives you MT stat ups, MT stat downs, two characters with multitarget magic, two decent fighters, and MT silence - all with the third character yet to be determined. You literally can't go wrong with this class unless you're a complete imbecile.

Dark-Dark: Nightblade

Support -----x----- Focus
Physical -----x----- Magical
Single ---x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Shuriken, Water Jutsu, Thunder Jutsu, Fire Jutsu, Earth Jutsu, Fire Breath, Poison Breath, Black Rain, Deadly Weapon, Blow Needles
Starting and final stats: STR 15/18, AGI 18/21, CON 15/19, INT 15/17, PIE 14/17, LUCK 17/20

2. Strengths: Like the Ninja Master, the Nightblade is a combination of support and focus, but used differently. For starters, his physical strength and FST enables him to act as Hawk's best fighter, as well as having the strongest double hit level 1 tech of Hawk's. His jutsus provide ample support for himself and other party members, as well as magical attack power. He has no noticeably weak stats (his lowest are 17s), which means there's not much he can't do. On top of this, he has several new spells you can't access anywhere else in the game. Blow Needles makes him one of three characters in the game capable of inflicting silence (generally accepted as the most universally useful status) on enemies, while Deadly Weapon is like Lunatic (see Wanderer, above) with the added plus of dealing damage. Combined with the jutsus and his raw power, these skills make the Nightblade an ideal character, both as a teammate and an attacker, for any boss battle.

3. Weaknesses: The Nightblade is useful almost entirely in boss battles. In terms of attacking groups of monsters, his FST mostly loses out to the Ninja Master's MT jutsus unless you have Aura Wave in your party, his ST jutsus aren't the best support for MT magicians or FST fighters, and his unique skills aren't much better. The ones you'll ever use pretty much extend only to Deadly Weapon and Blow Needles. Fire Breath isn't even fire elemental (and Shuriken is more effective in every way), Poison Breath is pretty much the same plus poison status, Black Rain is a dark spell that can't even be single-targeted optionally, and while Deadly Weapon is useful, the damage it does is more or less wiped out by the decrease in max HP anyway. His ST jutsus can create MP problems if used frequently, so while going through dungeons he is more or less forced to be a physical fighter, and is less than helpful for the other characters. Finally, he is the victim of a nasty bug that occasionally reduces his physical damage to 1, somewhat negating even his power advantage.

4. Affiliates: The Nightblade belongs in the same parties as the Ninja Master but with a focus on fighting bosses. Good teammates include the Magus, Lord, and Vanadies. Teaming him up with light-classed Lise or a character with elemental sabers (light Carlie or dark Duran) isn't a bad idea either. Avoid putting him on the same team as dark Lise or dark Carlie.

How to use him:

Kevin, half-beastman, prince of the Beast Kingdom, is the game's quintessential focus character, and being a pure physical focus character, he is the antithesis to Angela. No matter which class of his you choose, his primary purpose individually remains the same: to turn into a wolf and beat the crap out of whatever comes your way, hitting twice per attack, and ideally dishing out extreme damage with the assistance of the other two characters' abilities. That said, what he does for your team can vary greatly depending on class and context. Because he almost entirely lacks support abilities, no class of Kevin's really stands out from the others, although the light classes are worlds apart from one another. It really shouldn't be a factor in determining his efficiency, but because it exists and cannot be reversed, it must be taken into account: On most teams, Kevin is a "broken" character (in more ways than one) because of many glitches. Most significantly, in wolf form, anything that hits Kevin physically automatically affects him as if he'd been hit with a power up or pressure point spell. This means that in addition to the 1/7 of his attack power he gets upon transformation, he's boosted by an additional 1/3, in many cases making him every bit as strong as Duran (without stat magic) on the individual hit! He also has the most HP of any character, often matching Duran's while two or three levels lower.

Unfortunately, Kevin also has to deal with the worst overall stats in the game: if one considers that the average level 1 stat (rounded off) is 4, Kevin has only one above-average stat: Vitality, which doesn't in any way benefit him because of weak armor. His magic defense, healing capabilities, and luck are overall the saddest in the game, and his untransformed attack power isn't much better. But his sheer damage-dealing potential makes up for all of that, and on the right team, these weaknesses can be filled in.

Leveling up Kevin:

As his uses are so few but focused, Kevin is the easiest character to level up. You can spend 10 levels in a row leveling up only STR (to help his sole constant purpose, attack power) and INT (so that he doesn't take 300-400 damage from a spell that should be dealing 200 by the end) and he would in no way fall behind in terms of what he does need. Nonetheless, his light classes should raise PIE occasionally, especially the Warrior Monk, and CON should be raised occasionally as well with all classes so that his physical defense doesn't fall too far behind. With his HP though it's not as much of an issue as it is for, say, Angela.

Light-Light: God Hand

Support -----x----- Focus
Physical ---x----- Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Heal Light, Aura Wave, Pressure Point
Starting and final stats: STR 15/18, AGI 14/17, CON 18/22,
INT 13/15, PIE 14/17, LUCK 14/16

2. Strengths: The God Hand is a strong fighter that doesn't sacrifice contributions to the other party members. His fighting power is only a few points below the Death Hand or Dervish, and he has an FST like them (two, in fact). In addition, he can use Pressure Point on himself to increase his power if Lise didn't already cast Power Up. He also has two more useful spells: Heal Light and Aura Wave. Like the Paladin vs. the Lord, he has a stronger Heal Light than the Warrior Monk, but it's only single-targeted. Aura Wave is great in a fighter party with an FST, as it allows you to fill anyone's gauge to maximum level instantly. (If all else fails, have him use it on himself.) And again, he gets all of this without sacrificing significant amounts of power.

3. Weaknesses: The God Hand has the dubious honor of the game's most pitiful magic defense. His maximum is maybe half of Angela's, and since magic defense can't be compensated like physical defense can, this is a very real issue. His ST heal light is not enough to serve as sole healer for a newbie's party, and he loses in nearly all ways to the Warrior Monk on a team of mages.

4. Affiliates: The God Hand is good on a fighting party. His ideal teammate is the Paladin, who provides a second ST Heal Light and has an FST. Other good teammates include Vanadies, Nightblade, Swordmaster, and Duelist. Avoid putting him on a team with mages; it diminishes the uses of Aura Wave and he in no way benefits them with his presence.

Light-Dark: Warrior Monk

Support -----x----- Focus
Physical -----x----- Magical
Single ---x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Heal Light*, Tree Saber, Pressure Point
Starting and final stats: STR 15/17, DEX 14/16, CON 18/22, INT 13/16, PIE 14/16, LUCK 14/17

2. Strengths: Many lovers of Kevin have a tendency to hate this class. Judging by the reasons given in many FAQs and on the boards, this is because they don't know how to use it properly. The Warrior Monk is something of a black sheep among the final classes, in that it's more focused on helping its party than on being the main focus of it, and is a weak contribution to a physical team while nearly the supreme contribution to a magical team. He is one of those rare cases in which a class can fill in a team's weakness while still contributing to said team's skills. He fills the role of healer with MT Heal Light, and - more importantly - MP healer with Tree Saber. You can't afford to underestimate this spell. It enables Lise to actually serve as a summoner in boss battles, Hawk to use attack spells constantly, and Charlie to use hers as well. Even the Rune Master is an extremely good teammate for him because of just this spell. Even as he provides these backups to a magically attacking party, he also provides some physical power, thanks to his Pressure Point spell, double attack,

and oft-overlooked Level 2 FST.

3. Weaknesses: The Warrior Monk is an extremely limited class in terms of team diversity. Its performance is in nearly all ways inferior to the other classes on any non-magically focused team. It has Kevin's weakest attack power, which means that if you chose a team meaning to boost him up and then have him dish out mass damage, you can prepare to be disappointed. One of my early teams was Star Lancer-Warrior Monk-Nightblade, and I was using Star Lancer to do physical damage more often than I was using the Warrior Monk. It also holds the dubious distinction of having the game's worst overall stats of any class.

4. Affiliates: As stated above, this class should be teamed with Angela, Carlie, Lise, or Hawk and the team should focus on its magical attacking capabilities. Avoid teaming this class with Duran, as well as weaker magi like the Wanderer and Vanadies, at all costs.

Dark-Light: Death Hand

Support -----x Focus
Physical ---x----- Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Energy Ball

Starting and final stats: STR 16/19, DEX 15/18, CON 18/22, INT 14/16, PIE 13/15, LUCK 13/15

2. Strengths: Because of a glitch, this is the game's purest focus class. There is absolutely nothing this class can do that helps other party members perform better, and there is no better class at being helped by other party members. It's the game's most one-dimensional class, capable only of fighting physically, but it's paradoxically capable of dishing out more damage than any other class when used this way! With Power Up, Protect Down, wolf form with a correct saber thrown on him, this class can approach 1000 damage per double-hit, and can dish out nearly 2000 with his level 1 tech, which he builds quite fast I might add. That's all without using any MP. He was intended originally to have one support spell: Energy Ball, familiar to Secret of Mana players as the supremely useful spell that drives your critical hit rate to outrageous levels. Unfortunately, critical hits barely exist in this game because of a glitch - I've never seen one in over 250 hours of gameplay - so even this measure is denied.

3. Weaknesses: Being a fighter and only a fighter, the Death Hand has absolutely no variety whatsoever. It's attack or do nothing. This means the rest of your party virtually needs to be characters who are good at supporting a fighter, because otherwise his attack power will never reach its potential. His mental stats are on the weak side as well, making it tough for him to survive spells unsupported. However, his other stats balance out fairly well, as the two stats for which he's the game's worst (spirit and luck) are nearly useless to him.

4. Affiliates: This class belongs on a strong fighting team with support magic, and preferably including sabers. The Swordmaster makes a good teammate, as do the Duelist,

Paladin, and any of Carlie's classes. Lise is also a good teammate. Avoid throwing him in on any team with Angela, especially light-classed, unless you want a challenge; the lack of compatibility is frankly terrifying and neither will perform well as a result.

Dark-Dark: Dervish

Support -----x---- Focus
Physical ----x----- Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Moon Saber
Starting and final stats: STR 16/18, DEX 15/17, CON 18/22,
INT 14/17, PIE 13/16, LUCK 13/16

2. Strengths: Next to the Archmage, the Dervish is unquestionably the most overlooked focus character in the game. Contrary to popular belief, he is not significantly weaker than the Death Hand; he is lower in strength by one point, and a stronger final weapon makes up for 2 of those attack points. The end result is that that the base damage difference between the two is in the single digits. On top of this, Dervish has Kevin's strongest magic defense, and since this is a supremely important area for Kevin, this never-mentioned fact is easily the most misunderstood on this entire site. Finally, with Moon Saber, the Dervish can act as a limited sort of healer-as-you-go, preventing the need to heal. well, as frequently as usual.

3. Weaknesses: Like his cousin the Death Hand, the Dervish relies on boosts like sabers, Aura Wave, and stat magic to help his attack power reach its full potential. Some enemies absorb Moon Saber, so you have to be careful around these. He also makes a poor contribution to a magically focused team, but if you've chosen dark Kevin I'm assuming you don't plan on forming one. His is nothing to scream about either.

4. Affiliates: As cousin to the Death Hand, the Dervish is what you choose for the same teams as Death Hand if you want to sacrifice some attack power for magic defense and Moon Saber. In other words, if you want to survive longer, pick Dervish and a team with sabers and other support magic, and preferably at least one of these belonging to some kind of strong physical fighter. I like the thought of a Bishop-Dervish-Nightblade team on Kevin's quest.

Lise/Riesz

How to use her:

Princess Lise of Rolante is the game's most balanced character. This is reflected by the fact that, in addition to having the highest base stat total, she also is the only character to begin with only one below-average stat (Luck, and it's a 3), as well as the only one to begin with no stats at 6. She has all of the basic stat magics for support, can inflict status effects on multiple foes, and can use summons and brute strength to continue dealing damage after these have worn out their uses. As long as it doesn't involve healing, Lise can do it.

Lise is the one character in the game to have literally no weakness, as her physical and magical attack and virtually equally powerful. She is also the only character in the game to be above average in HP, Vitality, and Intelligence, making her the ultimate defensive character. It's hard to say much more about a character with stats as consistently good as Lise.

Leveling up Lise:

Lise is a well balanced character even from the start with no inherent weaknesses. What's more, her abilities are learned by reaching a certain Spirit score, and she happens to automatically reach that score after each class change. Therefore, Lise is always available to raise however you wish. Her main use is in support, but stats are pretty irrelevant to her support skills, and she needs to be able to contribute after buffing/debuffing. So I recommend raising STR (if you want a fighter, particularly recommended for Vanadies) or PIE (if you want a summoner, particularly recommended for Dragon Master), CON and INT periodically. DEX and LUCK are always useful, they just don't have many specific applications to Lise.

Light-Light: Vanadies

Support -----x----- Focus
Physical -----x----- Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Mind Up, Power Up, Protect Up, Speed Up, Freya
Starting and final stats: STR 17/20, DEX 16/19, CON 16/20, INT 15/17, PIE 16/19, LUCK 14/16

2. Strengths: Often derided by foolish FAQ writers that for some reason view Lise's role as first and foremost a summoner, then building an analysis of the classes around how useful the summons are, the Vanadies is actually the class that, particularly statwise, best befits Lise, and is meant to be used entirely differently. The role of the Vanadies is to take some time beefing up the party members, then charge in doing massive physical damage. She is the only class in the game to approach Duran in terms of single hit power (not counting Kevin after transforming), and with two FSTs no less. Take the Paladin, remove saint saber and heal light, add stat magic and a summon, and subtract miniscule amounts of attack power while adding a lot to every other important stat, and you have an idea of just what this class can actually be like. The single targeted stat ups are ample support, particularly for a team in which you want to cast the stat ups one by one anyway (such as a team with single-targeted sabers). Finally, two oft-overlooked facts: firstly, she has Lise's highest spirit, which means she casts the fastest spells, and her summon has the best base damage-to-MP ratio. Secondly, like her dark-light cousin the Dragon Master, the Vanadies learns her summon immediately upon gaining her first level after class changing, four levels before the Star Lancer or Fenrir Knight learn theirs.

3. Weaknesses: The Vanadies' biggest weakness is that it

takes her a while to get into the action on faster moving teams; as a result, she makes a poor teammate for MT stat down or MT saber types like the Swordmaster or Ninja Master that are quicker to jump in. Not that she's a bad teammate for these. it's just that she's better paired with someone who uses those skills single-targeted. She also has Lise's poorest magic defense (although it's still quite good), and her summon costs you any experience you would gain if you use it on normal enemies. Throw it all over bosses though, or to get out of situations where you may die.

4. Affiliates: Since the Vanadies wants to beef up the other characters and then get into the fray, preferably physically attacking, team her with other physical team members like the Bishop or Duelist. She makes a good teammate for the Nightblade as well. Avoid teaming her with the Sage or Swordmaster, as these classes are designed around getting into the action quickly; team her instead with Bishop or Duelist, respectively.

Light-Dark: Star Lancer

Support ----x----- Focus
Physical -----x----- Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Mind Up*, Power Up*, Protect Up*, Speed Up*, Marduke

Starting and final stats: STR 17/19, DEX 16/18, CON 16/20, INT 15/18, PIE 16/18, LUCK 14/17

2. Strengths: The Star Lancer is almost universally the most loved class in the game, and for good reason. It is the one class in the game with the most irreplaceable skills, and the one that fits on literally any team. (Yes, I'm well aware that the Rogue's skills among others cannot be duplicated either. But I'm also aware that there are plenty of other items and/or abilities that duplicate the role of dealing damage, while no other class or item in the game multitargets stat ups or silence.) You literally cannot go wrong with her no matter what team you form. The Star Lancer can multitarget stat up spells, which has more uses than you can possibly imagine. You can beef up your entire party's physical attack power, physical defense power, and magical attack and defense power in 3 spell castings for a mere 6 MP! In addition, the Star Lancer is a more balanced attacker than the Vanadies, lacking 13 of the Vanadies' points of physical strength (which does actually matter against stronger defenses) but having a useful summon: Marduke, which multitargets both high damage and silence, widely accepted as the most useful status a summon can dish out. It disables foes from using any magic (including healing), level 2 techs, and level 3 techs! She keeps her level 2 FST, as do all of Lise's classes, and deals out strong damage (800s-900s) with her ST level 3 tech. Finally, her stats are well balanced in that none of her stats is the lowest of her classes (except Agility), and all but luck are 18 or higher.

3. Weaknesses: There really aren't any that will cause problems you'll run into with this class on any given team. That said, there are teams on which she is not the best choice - not so much due to shortcomings as because another

class is better at something than she is. She also has Lise's lowest stat total, and because of her balanced stats, she has Lise's highest score in absolutely none of them. This means if you're (for some reason that's probably beyond me) using her as a focus character, there is always another class that can do the same thing better: Vanadies for fighting, Dragon Master for summoning, Fenrir Knight for agility and magic defense. As a result, the Star Lancer is the ultimate in providing a great party setup, but weaker than the others in performing -after- this is done. Still, she is a neutrally well-balanced attacker (rather than a focused one) as well as a great support class, and shouldn't be discounted for that reason.

4. Affiliates: Literally anybody. The Star Lancer can make any team efficient. There is no team you can form, even if you try, on which it would be a useless class. To form a legendary team and experience a Paradise on Earth, pair her with the Ninja Master. This gives you MT stat ups, MT stat downs together, essentially doubling all damage while decreasing virtually all damage to you to 1, and keeping two good fighters, each of whom can basically use MT level 2 magic, one elemental and one non-elemental. This is all with the third character yet to be chosen, around which you can build a great fighting team (Duran/Kevin/light Carlie) or the game's best magic teams (dark Carlie/Angela). Other good teams include an all-female team, ideally Star Lancer, Evil Shaman, Magus for an advanced player, and Star Lancer, Sage, Death Hand/Dervish.

Dark-Light: Dragon Master

Support -----x----- Focus
Physical -----x----- Magical
Single ---x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Mind Down, Power Down, Protect Down, Speed Down, Iormungand

Starting and final stats: STR 16/18, DEX 17/19, CON 16/20, INT 16/18, PIE 15/18, LUCK 15/18

2. Strengths: Ah, yes, the infamous Dragon Master. Long derided as one of the game's "useless" classes, the Dragon Master actually plays a uniquely balancing role, depicted allegorically by having the game's most balanced stats. Her lowest stat is an 18 (highest in the game) and in fact four of her stats match that. The only ones that don't are Agility (19) and Vitality (20, and in case you've failed to notice, each character's classes all share the same final Vitality anyway). She also does the most damage as a magic-user with her summon, which in addition to dealing the most base damage, deals additional damage through poison. Since summons are better for clearing areas of minor foes than at boss battles, this is a good thing. She also learns her summon at level 39, whereas Fenrir Knight and Star Lancer have to wait until level 43. She is Lise's weakest class physically, but still quite strong, and does still have a level 2 FST. She can use all the basic stat down spells (single-targeted), and unlike Hawk's jutsus these can get through a counter magic barrier. The single-targeting seems inferior at first glance, but multitargeting for stat downs

isn't nearly as desperately needed as it is for stat ups, since most bosses and tough enemies appear only in one part. Also consider that in most dungeons, physical attackers are paired with magical attackers. Which makes, say, MT Mind Down or MT Power Down less than useful in these scenarios anyway.

3. Weaknesses: Being balanced, the Dragon Master unfortunately fails to really excel in any area beyond summoning. She is Lise's weakest physical attacker, her other stats, while well balanced, aren't really exceptional in any areas, and her abilities (ST stat downs) don't necessarily make up for this. They're not much less useful than MT stat downs. but it is still a matter of balancing benefits. Finally, beyond Iormungand she's almost entirely replaceable by dark Carlie or dark Hawk, but Iormungand shouldn't be underestimated.

4. Affiliates: The Dragon Master should not be on any teams with dark Hawk and rarely with dark Carlie. She does work quite well with Kevin and with saber users, but unless you make a fighter team like DM, God Hand, and Duelist I recommend continuing the magic focus with the likes of Rogue, Wanderer, or Archmage.

Dark-Dark: Fenrir Knight

Support -----x----- Focus
Physical -----x----- Magical
Single -----x----- Groups

1. List of skills: Mind Down*, Power Down*, Protect Down*, Speed Down*, Lamia Naga
Starting and final stats: STR 16/19, DEX 17/20, CON 16/20, INT 16/19, PIE 15/17, LUCK 15/17

2. Strengths: The Fenrir Knight is the physically stronger of Lise's dark classes, which is helped greatly by having the strongest of weapons. Her attack power approaches that of the Vanadies, and she maintains a level 2 FST as well as Lise's strongest magic magic defense. She is also slightly more useful for her main role (downing stats) than the Dragon Master is, since in the rare situation that you actually do need MT stat downs (for instance, you're about to unleash an FST or MT spell) they're there to use. As before, the stat downs still get through counter magic barriers. Her summon, Lamia Naga, is supposed to be the strongest on the official cart, adding about half the original power instead of a status effect, but in the ROM it just does normal damage.

3. Weaknesses: The FK has Lise's weakest Spirit score. If you want to use her as a summoner, this isn't good, because Spirit determines the strength of a summoned spell. There isn't much else in the way of weaknesses for the FK. but she is almost entirely replaceable by a plethora of other classes that do her job with additional benefits (Ninja Master, Evil Shaman, Necromancer, Nightblade), and unlike the DM (above), she doesn't really have anything to offer that these classes don't. DM at least has the benefit of

Poison. Still, the FK is a good mix of summon, stat down, and attack power.

4. Affiliates: Again, avoid teaming this class with dark Hawk or dark Carlie. This team works better for fighting teams than the Dragon Master does, though like Lise's other classes it's quite balanced for all forms of power. I like to pair this class with the Swordmaster (sabers provide a small power up on their own so stat downs are less redundant than stat ups on such teams). FST users and MT magic users make good teammates after MT Protect Down and MT Mind Down, respectively.

5. And now for something entirely different: a fun team for every class! ^_^

This section will consist of a fun team for every class. I will disclaim that this does not necessarily mean the "best" team for every class, or the most efficient. but in general, one that is fun to use and takes advantage fairly well of the class's strengths. As much of an art as team formation is, there is more to this fabulous game than simply having an efficient team and trouncing everything.

ANGELA:

Ninja Master, Star Lancer, Grand Divina

You know what that means? No healer - and the ultimate in magical abilities! The Grand Divina as it is can dish out well over 500 MT damage with her spells, against a target with the right weakness. Add in Star Lancer's virtually instant MT Mind Up, and Ninja Master's virtually instant MT Fire Jutsu, and that goes up to the 800s - against everything on the screen. This also makes her into a boss fighter on at least the level of Rune Master. The NM can complement this with jutsus dealing in the 500-600 range and ditto for the SL with Marduke. Dishing out about 2000 damage magically at a time, most with elements attached... you get the picture. You also have MT silencing, three bearable fighters should it come to that, Double Spell, and MT Shuriken. No healer, but if I could deal with that when I was inexperienced (this having been my first party) then you can too.

Arch Mage, Wanderer, Evil Shaman

This team has Angela with MT every element except dark, Carlie with MT dark/fire, Antimagic and MT Mind Down, and Hawk with Transhape, Counter Magic, and Poison Bubble. All in all you have 3 magic attackers, the ultimate in defensive techniques, MT healing, and infinite MP for Hawk. The biggest trip on this team is that should you for some reason ever use physical attacks (for instance, against DSK) after the final class change, you'll see the girls doing more damage than Hawk!

Warrior Monk, Rune Master, Bishop

The Rune Master takes full advantage of Warrior Monk's Tree Saber in this party, which enables both Angela and Carlie to deal 999 damage repeatedly with DeathSpell and Turn Undead against Dark Lich. All without casting one stat up/down spell! You also have two MT Heal Lights and sabers to cast on Kevin, meaning you virtually can't die. You might want to bring along some drake's scales to increase Angela and Carlie's damage, so that they can restore more MP per hit.

Star Lancer, Necromancer, Magus

You have Marduke, Ancient, MT Heal Light, and the game's strongest MT level 1 spells, making this team ideal for getting through tough dungeons. For boss battles, MT Mind Up and Black Curse means your Magus is practically reaching 999 with level 2 spells against a cripple that can barely deal damage anymore. The Star Lance's ample power and MT Power Up make this team capable of handling itself in physical combat situations, even though with Marduke and Magus this need should be virtually nonexistent.

CARLIE:

Bishop, Death Hand, Swordmaster

Two of the three strongest attackers in the game with MT healing and every saber except for dark, many of them MT. Turn Undead is a powerful ally on Carlie's quest, and having both Death Hand and Swordmaster powered up with sabers makes up for the lack of powerups or downs. Most importantly, Magic Shield will help the two fighters' magic defense, dealing with the only real disadvantage this party has to begin with.

Vanadies, Paladin, Sage

I came up with this team as a variant on the classic "Holy Focus" party. You get ST Saint Saber and four MT sabers for two very strong fighters, stat ups, and on top of that the game's strongest Saint Beam. Ideal for dishing out holy elemental damage, and also quite versatile for physically fighting opponents of various elements.

Paladin, Necromancer, Star Lancer

The team for fighting the Black Rabite. Duran contributes ST Heal Light, Saint Saber for when it casts Dark Saber on your team, and strong fighting. Star Lancer contributes MT Power Up, MT Mind Up and an additional fighter that gets into the fray immediately after casting those. Carlie contributes MT Heal Light and more importantly Black Curse, the only tenable method of lowering the Black Rabite's attack and defense powers.

Nightblade, Evil Shaman, Duelist

One of those rare teams you can put dark Carlie and dark Hawk on

and have a use for both. Nightblade provides Deadly Weapon to lower boss HP, then jutsus and physical attack power for a perfectly balanced damage dealer. Evil Shaman's antimagic enables the Nightblade's jutsus to work on anything. And the Duelist is very strong and can provide sabers for himself and the other two. Well balanced team that fits just right.

DURAN:

Arch Mage, Vanadies, Paladin

The much-flaunted Holy Focus party of the board, for good reason. I initially didn't expect this team to work when challenged with it. Hoo boy, was I wrong. Vanadies can boost Arch Mage's magic damage plus her own and Duran's physical damage to obscene levels, while Duran can cast Saint Saber on himself and Lise and Angela can cast her strongest Saint Beam, as well as many other spells. Very good for fighting God-Beasts and Dragon Emperor alike, but sees its finest hour against Zable-Fahr. So if you hate that fight, try this party and laugh at it.

Lord, Wanderer, Dervish

Nothing affects you. You have Kevin with his 2nd highest attack power and highest magic defense, Duran with immunity to all status effects, MT Heal Light, and Tinkle Rain to help the other party members once they get hit with one, and Wanderer providing immunity to everything except level 2 or 3 techs and Shade spells. This team can even deal damage, with Poison Bubble restoring Wanderer's MP and Aura Wave for the Dervish or Lord.

Swordmaster, Star Lancer, Ninja Master

Contributed by: Duath

Everyone here helps everyone do everything. The Swordmaster provides MT sabers so he, Lise, and Hawk all do more damage to almost any foe, as well as Moon and Tree Sabers to enable Lise and Hawk to act as mages. Star Lancer ups everyone's attack power and her own and Hawk's magic damage. Ninja Master helps Duran's FST, his own damage and Lise's. well, everything. The only thing this team lacks is a healer, and you really shouldn't need one with them.

Duelist, Nightblade, God Hand

The ultimate in physical combat. Sabers, stat downs, Deadly Weapon, three of the most powerful fighters (two with double hit!), a healer, Aura Wave, and the strongest FST in the game. Did somebody say WMDs?

HAWK:

Wanderer, Star Lancer, Necromancer

Contributed by TheDarkshineKnight

"For boss battles, all you essentially do is Black Curse, MTSUs, and Counter Magic and then just bash away, since you're not likely to die during the fight. Against enemies, well, you hit stuff and have Carlie heal. In all honesty, that's all I've ever needed to do against enemies with ANY party."

My input: Agreed. One of the few teams without a focus character that can do anything. It doesn't quite suffer damage-wise either, as Poison Bubble, Marduke, and Ghost are moderately powerful magics, and Star Lancer can physically attack if necessary. With Power Up the Wanderer's double hit should also be decent. MT Sleep Flower, Transhape, Life Booster, and Lunatic should also not be underestimated.

Rogue, Magus, Evil Shaman

Just try it sometime. Don't attack physically at all after your final CC. Instead, use your MT Sleep Flower, Demon Breath and MT level 1's to decimate any foes, then Antimagical/Demon Breath bosses. Follow this with the Rogue's spells and the Magus's level 2 spells with INT 22. I dare you to say these are their characters' "worst classes."

Ninja Master, Star Lancer, God Hand

In succession, you can use Aura Wave, Thunder Jutsu, Byakko Shockwave = 1500 or so fullscreen damage virtually instantly for only a few MP. Against bosses, do this after Mind Up then Power Up. You also have MT Mind Up and Marduke to protect the less than optimal magic defense of this team.

Nightblade, Sage, Death Hand

Sage again contributes MT sabers to two ultra-powerful double-hitters. In turn, Nightblade lowers bosses' max HP, then uses jutsus to lower defense (and attack) which boosts Carlie's Saint Beam, and Kevin hits hard helped by both of them. You even have a powerful MT healer. What's missing? Nothing really.

KEVIN:

God Hand, Duelist, Bishop

All of the important sabers. Two healers, one with the game's strongest instant-cast MTHL. Turn Undead for Dark Lich. Aura Wave. Two of the strongest FSTs in the game. Magic Shield for the fighters. What's not to like?

Dragon Master, Rune Master, Warrior Monk

An ideal party for the Warrior Monk's Tree Saber. It enables Rune Master to actually last boss battles without running out of MP, Dragon Master to behave as a summoner, and grants Warrior Monk

essentially limitless healing. Lise's debuffs should be enough to help Iormungand reach high damage figures, and DeathSpell doesn't need stat magic to deal the damage cap. You also have a character with high MDF, a character with high HP, and one above average in both. Coupled with debuffs you should never die.

Death Hand, Fenrir Knight, Swordmaster

Darn near the ultimate in physical teams. Get some Drake's Scales and Poto Oils, and you're set. Three strong physical attackers, with MT debuffs, MT sabers, and two FSTs. In this party with Protect Down, Drake's Scale and the right saber you might see Kevin passing 900 damage per strike when using his level 1 tech.

Dervish, Wanderer, Lord

A decent all-male party. Your magic defense shouldn't be bad enough to die in one casting of Ancient, especially with Life Booster + MTHL, and the Wanderer's Counter Magic can take care of any lesser spells. Lunatic and two strong attackers provide ample firepower against bosses, and between Moon Saber and MTHL you should be hard to kill. Lord is even immune to status effects and can use Tinkle Rain should the others be affected by one.

LISE:

Vanadies, Death Hand, Duelist

A supremely physical team without a healer. All three of these are the best attackers for their characters, Vanadies' buffs help them deal damage and take a hit, and Duelist's sabers help against some bosses. If played right you shouldn't really need to heal all that much.

Star Lancer, Ninja Master, God Hand

A classic and one of my personally favorite teams. There is literally nothing this team can't do. It has MT stat ups + MT stat downs so casting just two spells can tip battles so far in your favor it's scary. Marduke and powerful Jutsus are good MT magic use when boosted, and MT Thunder Jutsu is God's gift to Kevin's FST as well. Kevin can heal and even use Aura Wave, and his attack power should be really high after buffs and debuffs. You've even got two characters with double-hitting level 1 techs. What else? Elemental damage? Jutsus. No matter how you play the game, you cannot get bored with this team.

Dragon Master, Evil Shaman, Rogue

Probably the game's most powerful magic team that doesn't have Angela. Iormungand is Lise's strongest summon, Demon Breath and Great Demon deal the most damage of Carlie's classes (excepting Turn Undead), and Rogue has a lot of useful and powerful magics. ST debuffs are enough support to help them, especially since the most important one for this team, Mind Down, is covered by Demon

Breath, which is MT. MT Sleep Flower shouldn't be overlooked either.

Swordmaster, Fenrir Knight, Warrior Monk

Sabers and stat downs make a better combination than sabers and stat ups, since sabers provide a mini-power up themselves. All three of these characters can deal very good damage with that combination, even Warrior Monk. If you need magic damage, Fenrir Knight can deal it. Warrior Monk also takes care of healing. Best of all, all of these abilities are MT!

6. Ranking your team - how your team should be fighting

If you decide to create your own team, I've created here a rubric for roughly analyzing what your team should be focused on, magical or physical attacks. This rubric does not claim to show how efficient your team is, just which way it should focus. Lower scores indicate a team that should focus on physical combat, while higher scores indicate a team more fit for magical combat. Pattern not only your attack forms around this but also your use of support spells (tree saber vs. diamond saber, or power up vs. mind up, for instance).

Disclaimer: You will probably notice a disparity between the numbers for each class and my ranking in the above sections. This is because the number for each class represents what they can do individually and how they're helped by other members within a party, while the above sections rank how well they contribute to each type of party (including helping others' skills). The bottom segment of this section will correct for classes in certain parties (Sage with Duran & Kevin, for instance). Please no spam about how, for instance, Rogue leans more magical than Wanderer. I'm well aware he's stronger, I'm also well aware though that he's got a lot more attack spells suited for a team with magical support, while Wanderer has support spells roughly balanced between both types of team.

For this class	Base value
Magus	50
Grand Divina	45
Arch Mage	45
Evil Shaman	40
Ninja Master	40
Rogue	40
Wanderer	35
Rune Master	35
Dragon Master	35
Sage	35
Bishop	30
Necromancer	30
Star Lancer	30
Nightblade	25
Fenrir Knight	25
Warrior Monk	20
Vanadies	15

God Hand		10
Paladin		10
Lord		10
Swordmaster		5
Duelist		5
Dervish	5	
Death Hand		0

Add up your totals for the 3 classes in your party first.

Next, modify this base score as follows:

If the class's score is over 25, make the following modifications if your team has any of the following:

- *Stat Ups: Multiply your score by 1.25
- *Stat Downs or Jutsus or Demon Breath: Multiply your score by 1.2
- *Tree Saber: add 10 (add 20 if this is going to Rogue or Rune Master)
- *Any saber other than moon or tree: Take 3/4 of your score
- *Finally: if you have Evil Shaman in the same party with Ninja Master, Nightblade, or Angela, add another 10.

If your total is below 25:

- *Stat Ups: Take 3/4 of your score
- *Stat Downs or Jutsus: Take 3/4 of your score
- *ST elemental sabers and/or ST saint saber: Take 2/3 of your score
- OR MT elemental sabers: Take 1/2 of your score
- *Aura Wave: Subtract 10 (5 for Hawk or Kevin).

6. The Dispelling of Popular Myths, or, stuff you probably don't think about unless you post on the boards

This is merely a section I compiled of popular myths about this game that I felt compelled to dispel, mostly because many are popular and actually believed by many who read the game's boards or other FAQs.

Myth: Agility raises hit and evade rates, as do Duran's shields.

On paper, it does, and in my opinion any debate about who is theoretically the "best" character for a scenario should take this into account. However, in practice, the game contains a bug much like that of Final Fantasy VI that prevents hit and evade rates from working properly. Agility does have some uses, but as a result of this bug it doesn't help your hit or evade rates. Ditto for Duran's shields.

Myth: Duran's shields protect against elemental attacks.

Another victim of glitches once again, Duran's light classes' elemental shields and the paladin's sacred shield do not in fact reduce magic damage by 1/3 like they were meant to. The game was

originally meant to work this way, along with some accessories, but elemental protection doesn't work right because of a bug. The only accessories or shields that do anything are those which are meant to defend against status effects.

Myth: Kevin and even Hawk are better fighters than Duran because of their double-hit, with every class.

I felt particularly compelled to address this myth, as it seems to be the most popular. The reasoning generally used here is that Kevin or even Hawk, because they hit twice, have an effective attack power double that in their screens, and as a result deal damage more quickly than Duran or Lise. I believed this until I played a game with Swordmaster, Fenrir Knight, and God Hand. As their second classes, I saw Lise dealing more damage with one hit against some demons than Kevin was dealing with his double hit (while not transformed). Damage on a per hit basis in this game is calculated by subtracting the enemy's defense from your attack power, and adding a random insignificant number; thus, whether double or single hit fighters are better depends entirely on one factor: the opponent's defense.

For instance, suppose the Ninja Master (ATK 277) and Duelist (ATK 351) are both attacking the same opponent with a DEF of 140. The NM will deal 137 per hit for a total of 274; Duelist will deal 211. However, throw the same two theoretically against an enemy with DEF 280, and NM only deals 1 damage per shot while Duelist is dealing 71! And I'm well aware already that enemies generally don't have 280 defense, but then you're not dealing with maximum attack power for 95% of the game either.

Okay, but what if Kevin transforms? That adds 1/7 to his attack power. Significant. but not enough to make up for the difference in power from Duran against the toughest foes, unless you're comparing, say, Paladin to Death Hand. And although abusing glitches is hardly something to be used cleanly in a civilized debate, I'll consider that too: the much vaunted "Kevin glitch" is made up for by a simple Drake's scale or Power Up spell that Kevin post-glitch can no longer take advantage of, and if you're planning to use sabers on him? I hope you do it before transforming. Conclusion: against the enemies with strong physical defense, Kevin will not have more damage potential than Duran, simply a more convenient method of reaching it.

Myth: (insert class name here) is like totally the best/worst class!

If you're even contemplating contacting me with a statement along these lines, forget it. You'll only be demonstrating your lack of basic reading skills. I addressed this already in the first paragraphs of the entire FAQ. There is no "best" class, because every class serves a different purpose, and teams exist on which any class can provide the best accompaniment. Think Bishop is always "better" than Sage? Try putting each on a team with Fenrir Knight and Death Hand and think again. Grand Divina is always better than Rune Master? Even though GD is my personal preference over RM, even I will concede that the RM is much better on a team without proper support (mind up/down or demon breath).

Of course, there ARE some classes that fit various teams more universally than others. For instance, I used the Star Lancer on 9 of my first 12 SD3 files, with teammates ranging from Angela to Kevin to an all-female team, and it never failed to work well.

But that doesn't mean it's the "best" class, because there are teams on which it doesn't belong as well as other classes do. (Can you picture taking Star Lancer over Vanadies on a physically focused team with every saber in the game? I didn't think so.)

Myth: HURR HURR I beat the game without leveling up to level x/playing through x challenge, I'm better than you at SD3!!!!111 or if you're the same level as your enemies, you're leveling up too much.

This one pisses me off to no end. This is a common statement made, like in so many other RPGs (see FF7 FAQs) by people who seem somehow deluded into thinking SD3 (among other Squaresoft titles) is some kind of action game from the Mario series, or a fighting game like Tekken. The idea is that it somehow takes more skill at playing SD3 to reach and beat the Dragon Emperor with a level 30 party than a level 50 party. Being a twelve-year veteran of pencil & paper RPGs (not to mention video game console RPGs), I happen to take extreme offense on behalf of the name of RPGs everywhere whenever someone behaves like this. Of course, it does take quicker fingers and better strategizing (not to mention a well chosen team), and a strong penchant for dodging every single non-boss fight in the game, or the ability to keep your other two characters dead. Not to mention a hell of a lot of patience doing these exceedingly boring activities. (Speaking as someone who's played through a large part of this game with the no class change challenge, I know what I'm talking about. And I'm not particularly impressed that you have too.) No, this game is not an action game, and "skill" at this game isn't measured by how quickly you can beat the Black Rabite with one character with initial equipment or at what level. This game is an RPG, and I happen to know what one is. It stands for ROLE-PLAYING-GAME, not beat-em-up-game. Since you obviously can't actually take on the persona of a character in a video game, however, you have to approximate: to use a character appropriate to his or her own skills, in a manner that would constitute how they'd conduct themselves in reality, and forming a team that works together with a certain flow, is how you comprise skill at playing an RPG. And if it means leveling up enough to use your character at optimal efficiency with all skills learned. well, I'd say that's doing much better role-playing than any "challenge." And for the record, the same goes for other RPGs like Final Fantasy 7. So you can beat Emerald Weapon with Tifa at level 7? Big deal. With Final Attack, Knights of the Round, Revive/Phoenix, HP <->MP, Magic Plus and Mime in the right combinations, WHO COULDN'T?! Then why this FAQ, you ask? Isn't it about who can best be used together to beat up bosses or enemies? Yes and no. To me, forming a team is about a lot more than the bottom line, and how efficiently they can win. To me, team formation is an art. A team that truly works together efficiently, with a certain flow that can only be found by pairing certain members, all of whom will contribute in some way to form a beautiful concerted effort beyond simply being 3 characters doing their own thing. well, there's a lot more to that than simply increasing numbers. It's the one thing that's really great about this entire game.

Myth: A diversified team should be better than one focused around one goal!

To flip around my argument from above, this is true in most RPGs,

but in SD3, a "diversified" team often loses its aesthetic flow. SD3 does not in any way require any particular skill - you don't need a thief, or a fighter, or a mage, to get past certain areas of the game, or even to get certain stuff for your team; they're just nice to have. However, putting together a team with a fighter and a mage together (unless they have a special flow, like the Holy Focus team, or WM + RM) is practically resigning your team to being just three individuals and that's it. Most sabers become useless as soon as you decide your party's going to be using magic a lot, and by taking an otherwise physical team without any magic support you're practically resigning Angela to be at minimal efficiency.

Suppose you want a diversified team anyway, because you're an old-school-RPG purist? Or say you want to pair Angela with Duran for storyline purposes? Then here's my recommendation: take Lise, preferably as either Star Lancer or Fenrir Knight. Her skills can equally help both physical and magical combatants, and all of her classes are very much capable of continuing to assist later in a battle, whether magically or physically. Vanadies and Dragon Master will work just fine, but you'll probably get tired of having to cast so many spells, as a diversified team needs more than a focused team does.

Myth: Kevin has the best defense because he has the highest Vitality.

Again, incorrect. Defense is patterned around a graduated scale based on armor that differs between characters. As a result, something of an anomaly happens with Defense that doesn't happen with Attack or Magic Defense: no character has a real advantage in it. Immediately after the first and second class changes, this will become evident even if you haven't been raising Angela's or Carlie's Vitality (and why not?). Angela or Carlie, the two weak characters in terms of CON, will have an equal or higher DEF than Kevin, the highest CON. Furthermore, every character can top out at 300 DEF. In the end, if you want to select a character for survival rather than attack, choose based on HP and Magic Defense. Lise has by far the best combination of both, which is why I consider her the best character defensively.

Myth: All stat spells are created equal.

This is not to say any are better than others, but rather that they are not necessarily interchangeable. As is the general rule with video RPGs, SD3 characters generally have significantly better stats than their enemies, while the enemies have higher HP. This is more evident towards the end than the beginning, when you can actually use stat magic. Since the bonus or penalty given to a character/enemy is based on the original score, it logically follows that a character will gain more points than a monster will lose. Stat up spells also stay around the entire battle, until "Victory!" flashes across the screen, whereas stat down spells, even MT, are only around as long as the enemy you cast them on. Stat down spells can also be found in a variety of classes, including dark Carlie, Hawk or Lise, while comprehensive stat up spells can only be found with light Lise. (In particular, MT stat ups are completely irreplaceable.)

So what are some benefits of stat downs? For one, they can be paired with stat ups. For another, they can't be bought from Byzel, although they're much easier to find throughout the game

than stat up items are. They pair with sabers (which provide a small power up) better than stat ups do. And finally, during the second classes, an ST stat down spell is nicer to have around, to cast on a boss, than three times as many to cast on characters would be.

What are the differences then, between stat down spells? I'll explain the benefits in brief:

- Dark Hawk's stat down spells also double as elemental damage spells, but likewise can be absorbed by certain enemies (notably Darkshine Knight) unless you've paired him with Antimagic or Specter's Eyes. They also can't get through Counter Magic barriers.
- Dark Lise's stat down spells can get through Counter Magic barriers, but deal no damage and hence serve no purpose after the first casting.
- Necromancer's Black Curse spell lowers stats more quickly with less MP than the others, but can never be MTed. It is also the only feasible method of lowering the Black Rabite's stats, as, only having to cast it once, you only have to face one counter.

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