Retro Rearview: STREET FIGHTER

Written by DarkTetsuya
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My apologies for not having a new one of these up for 2011, what with the holidays and whatnot I just never had the time to put one together. But I'm back with the first one of the new year, and I thought I'd take a look at one of the most popular fighting game series of all time: STREET FIGHTER!

So hit the jump to take a trip back to when times were simpler, men were men, and fights took place.... IN THE STREET!

The year was 1987. Arcades at the time were usually filled with scrolling action games, puzzle clones of tetris, or space-themed shootemups. But other than Konami's 'Yie-Ar Kung Fu' or Data East's 'Karate Champ' there really wasn't much for fans looking to live out their 'Bloodsport' fantasies of being the world champion martial artist.

Enter Capcom's *Street Fighter*. Released in arcades at the time, Street Fighter did share a few things with its spritual predecessors, you had a protagonist (Ryu, a martial artist who trained in Japan) who went around the world fighting in the streets against other opponents.

What made Street Fighter stand out is Ryu actually had several special moves he could perform, but considering they did quite a bit of damage, they were much more difficult to pull off than they were in later installments. Also interesting is while most cabinets for Street Fighter were the traditional six-button layout later made more popular by its sequel, the original design was vastly different:

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Instead of traditional buttons, Street Fighter featured two large 'punch pads' for its punch and kick buttons. While they were pressure sensitive (a lighter hit produces a Jab punch or a Short kick, whereas harder hits produce heavier attacks) they were also notorious for breaking too easily. Which eventually prompted Capcom to abandon the 'Punch Pads' idea in favor of the more infamous six button layout.

Two years later, Capcom released the beat-em-up Final Fight. The reason I mention this is early in development the game was known as *Street Fighter '89*. But Capcom would later change the name to Final Fight, but this wouldn't be the end of the game's Street Fighter connection (more on that later) Two years after that, Capcom released the first actual sequel: Street Fighter II. Little did Capcom know that this game would set the bar for all future fighting games released after that point.

SF2 was *way* better than the original Street Fighter. The cast of characters was bumped up

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from just two (Ryu and Ken) up to eight, adding such fighters as the Japanese Sumo wrestler, E. Honda (*and I guarantee you his fights aren't fixed!*) or the Armed Special forces veteran Guile, whose brute force and military skill are unmatched by any of the other competitors.

Also new to Street Fighter II were four boss characters, two of which return from Street Fighter: Mike Bison, a professional Boxer; Balrog, a vain spanish warrior who wears a mask and wields a set of sharp claws, whose agility and speed are unmatched. Sagat, fresh from his defeat at the hands of Ryu and his 'Dragon Punch', and Vega, the evil Dictator and head of the Shadaloo empire.

Of course when the game came to the US, Capcom feared legal action from Mike Tyson (as M. Bison bears more than a passing resemblance to the real-life pugilist.) So Capcom switched around the names for the game's US release:

M. Bison-> Balrog
Balrog-> Vega
Vega-> M. Bison

But with all the depth the game featured, there were several infamous bugs/glitches discovered in the original SF2, how many of these did *you* manage to pull off in the arcade?

- Dhalsim's Invisiblity: To activate this glitch, do the motion as you would for a normal 'Yoga Fire' (down, down-toward,toward) but before you hit Fierce punch, hit the 'Forward Kick' button. Dhalsim will disappear into thin air! But be careful, if you let time run out while he's invisible the game's just going to hang so watch out.

- Guile's 'Statue': while standing next to your opponent, charge back for a Sonic Boom. when you get a certain distance away, if you hit Roundhouse kick, Guile will do an upside-down flip kick.if you time the towards+fierce to do the Sonic Boom *just* right, Guile will start to go back to his standing animation, but get stuck halfway. The only way out before time runs out and the game hangs is the Flash Kick (charge down, then up+any kick button)

-Handcuffs: Possibly the most legendary of all the glitches, but also the most difficult to get out of, crouch next to your opponent (holding down+away), move the joystick to back+Strong Punch, then before the throw animation completes move up+Roundhouse. Guile will start to throw the opponent but he'll wind up getting 'stuck' to Guile.

- "Magic" Throw: Sadly the only one I can't get to work, it involves throwing a Sonic Boom but with both Fierce and Roundhouse. You can pretty much perform this at any time, and the game will still register it as a throw. **This is the only way out of the 'Handcuffs' otherwise the machine will get stuck.**

- Guile 'Shutdown': I'd imagine this one pissing off a LOT of people: Charge like you would for the handcuffs, but instead use Guile's 'Fierce' suplex in this instance instead. the machine will reboot back to the 'ROM test' when it first powers up and you'll most likely have a very pissed off opponent.

Capcom would later release several upgrades and spinoffs/sequels, which I'll go into detail below:

- Street Fighter II' / Street Fighter II': Championship Edition - The first official update to the classic SF2, this one fixes all the aforementioned 'Glitches' from the original game. It also grants players both control of the final four bosses, as well as allowing players to select the same character.

- Street Fighter II' TURBO / Street Fighter II' HYPER FIGHTING - Interestingly this update came about as Capcom was trying to combat the various bootlegs that came out after SF2:CE's release, which granted the players insanely powerful abilities (throwing multiple fireballs in mid-air, switching characters mid-match) this update featured new alternate colors for all the characters, as well as new special moves like Chun-Li's Fireball.

- Super Street Fighter II: The New Challengers: As the name implies, this game featured four all-new characters to the roster: T. Hawk, a powerful Native American who uses wrestling moves similar to SF2 mainstay Zangief; Dee Jay, a Jamaican Kickboxer (Who was actually

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created by someone from Capcom's US branch); Fei Long, a Bruce-Lee inspired fighter who's very agile; and Cammy, a blonde pig-tailed bombshell from Brtain, with a skin-tight leotard, a beret, and easily the most smoking hot backside in all of fighting game history! um, ahem... yeah.

- Super Street Fighter II TURBO/Super Street Fighter II X: Grand Master's Challenge: The biggest addition to ST/X was the addition of a 'SUPER' meter, which when full allowed you to unleash a 'Super Combo' move which did significantly more damage than your normal special moves, but you still run the risk of missing your opponent entirely so be careful! Also new in ST/X was a secret character, Akuma (or Gouki in Japan) When the game was first released, Akuma was only just available as a secret end-boss if you fufilled certain conditions (similar to a certain legendary April Fools' joke printed in a certain back-from-the-dead magazine back in 1992)

Eventually someone would stumble onto a secret code which allowed regular players to play as Akuma!:

After selecting your speed, leave the cursor on Ryu for three seconds, then highlight T. Hawk for a second, then left to Guile for 1 second, Cammy, and then back to Ryu for another three seconds. Lastly press Jab+Strong+Fierce and then the Start button, Ryu's picture will be replaced by Akuma's sillouette. He doesn't have a Super meter, but he can throw fireballs in mid-air.

- Street Fighter Alpha/Zero series: in 1995, Capcom released Street Fighter Zero in Japanese arcades. As the name kind of impiles, this is actually a prequel to Street Fighter II, at least it started off that way. Featuring an all-new art style and several new characters (with granted a slightly smaller roster of fighters than its predecessor, SSF2X/T) SFZ also introduced two of the characters from Capcom's own Final Fight to the roster: Sodom, the katana wielding samurai (who actually uses a different weapon in SFA) as well as Guy, the ninjitsu master.

- Street Fighter EX series: Around the time Tekken and Virtua Fighter were burning up arcades in the mid 90s, Capcom decided to try their hand at a 3D polygonal fighter, and this was the end result. Imagine a 2D Street Fighter but with 3D polygon graphics, that's pretty much what SFEX was. Unfortunately it didn't fare so well in arcades, so Capcom would go back to 2D fighting for the time being.

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- Street Fighter III series: It took them six years, but Capcom *finally* released the third official installment in their long-running series ten years after the orignal was released in arcades! Featuring almost a completely new roster aside from SF mainstays Ryu and Ken, SF3 featured an all-new cast of characters. Also new to the series were both selectable 'Super Arts' (most characters had three different ones) as well as a new defensive maneuver known as parrying.

(Yeah I had to post this example of parrying)

- Street Fighter 2010: The Final Fight: While not officially part of the Street Fighter canon, this game was released on the NES in the late 80s. Starring Ken (which ironically enough was 'Kevin' in the Japanese version) you fight your way through the galaxy against various space aliens. But I will say the game had some kickass music! It wasn't a bad game, just incredibly hard!!

- Vs. series of games: While I may go more in-depth into these games in a future article, I will say Capcom had several 'Vs.' titles featuring various comic/manga licenses such as 'Tatsunoko vs. Capcom' and 'Marvel vs. Capcom'

- Street Fighter: The Movie: The Game: There were actually three of these, the arcade version featured digitzed actors similar to Midway's Mortal Kombat games, the PSX/Saturn versions (which reportedly weren't that bad, supposedly they played alot like SSF2T/X.) as well as an interesting FMV-based game inspired by the anime 'Street Fighter II: The Motion Picture' (which is a bonus on the PS2 'SF Anniversary collection' if you ever want to check it out.)

- Street Fighter IV series: The last game I'll be talking about here are the most recent update to Capcom's long running series. Back before it was announced Capcom had teased that they had a major announcement for a game nobody saw coming... I honestly didn't think Capcom was actually going to do a Street Fighter IV so it took me completely by surprise! Featuring updated 3D graphics (way better than the ones in their last attempt, Street Fighter EX) as well as several new enhancements to the gameplay system, SF4 is pretty awesome.

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So in conclusion SF has had a long history in the videogame industry, from its humble beginnings as an arcade game with a quirky control scheme, all the way up to today where tournaments for the older games are still held to this day!