

Nintendo's latest brawler a *Smash*-ing good time

Super Smash Bros Brawl

Available Now
Developed by Sora
Published by Nintendo

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If pure fanboy “what ifs” were ever made into a videogame, the end result would most certainly be *Super Smash Bros Brawl*. The game pits all of your favorite Nintendo characters (and a few non-Nintendo characters) against one another to determine who is truly the greatest brawler of all. Possibly the most anticipated game to come out on the Wii to date, there have been numerous expectations set for *Brawl*—and believe it or not, it lives up to most of them.

Quite possibly the most alluring feature of *Brawl* is the sheer amount of characters and locales featured in the game. The roster ranges from the Nintendo staples like Link and Mario to the more obscure Pit or Star Wolf, and even a few non-Nintendo characters such as Solid Snake (*Metal Gear Solid*) and classic Mario rival Sonic the Hedgehog. All in all, there are 35 playable characters and 40 different locations to rumble at, each taken from one of the character's worlds. As if all this wasn't enough, Nintendo even managed squeeze even more



fanboy treats into the game with the Assist Trophies, usable items that summon characters from all across the Nintendo universe to join in your battle.

The game also supports a variety of control schemes, incorporating the Wii remote, a remote/nunchuck combination, the classic controller, or the Gamecube controller. Unfortunately, the Wii remote wasn't designed for a fighting game, and it's hard to adapt to if you've played any of the previous

games with the relative comfort of the classic Gamecube controllers.

Visually, the game's one of the most appealing Wii titles yet. While it may not have the visual flair of *Super Mario Galaxy*, the game runs at an extremely smooth 60 frames per second, even when the four-player free-for-alls get furious. However, where the game excels most is in the audio department. Nintendo has managed to gather the collective orchestral talent of the Japanese game industry to compose a

perfect score comprised of hundreds of tracks from the Nintendo-verse, all fully orchestrated and brilliantly composed.

The game comes loaded with a variety of modes, from a single player adventure to online multiplayer, but neither is nearly as perfected as the straight-up multiplayer battle. The single-player adventure is disappointing: the main problem is that the mechanics of a fighting game don't lend themselves well to platforming levels. The

online mode is slightly frustrating as well, if only for Nintendo's stance that online play is an afterthought to their games—in order to locate your friends, you must enter their complicated 16-digit friend code. What makes this even more annoying is that before you can play, both players have to enter the other's friend code.

The final great annoyance is the lack of voice chat. Nintendo seems to want to keep their games family-friendly, but it's more of an annoyance than anything. Nintendo has instead included the ability to pre-program four statements into the D-pad, which you can use with your friends. The odd thing is that this is in no way censored, and you can use almost any vulgar word imaginable. You can also be randomly matched against other people online, but this is where Nintendo's family-friendly stance becomes annoying once again. You can't communicate in any way with the person you are facing, and you can't even see their username.

But really, these are minor gripes: *Brawl* is a fighting game, and though these extra modes aren't particularly well thought out, the straight-up multiplayer is as close to perfection as a party game can get. *Brawl* is indeed the latest must-own title for the Wii, and it deserves to be the centrepiece on the Wii's mantle of killer apps.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: MIKE OTTO



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Commentary

A game like *Super Smash Bros Brawl* was designed with specific goals in mind: settling rivalries and allowing you to whoop the ever-living fluff out of your pink, marshmallowy opponents. But the true beauty of its arsenal is the diversity of its roster, catering to a vast range of play styles. From button mashers to technical experts, our team of *Smash Bros* veterans sound off on their picks for their favourite challengers.

Nick Frost

When it comes to the world's coolest professions, there aren't many that trump “badass mercenary”—except for maybe “badass mercenary in *Super Smash Bros Brawl*.” When Solid Snake, the sly, aging master of weaponry from the *Metal Gear Solid* series, was announced as a character back at E3 in 2006, my reaction was one of utter excitement to be able to trash some of those sword-wielding motherfuckers, despite all the talk about him being non-Nintendo.



Though he's a little on the slow side and it's a little bit tricky to get used to some of his moves within the context of the *Smash* world, Snake uses his Nintendo-friendly military-style weaponry—like short-range grenade, and a missile launcher that'll blow you the

fuck off the side of the stage—to bring the pain on all the dinosaurs, hedgehogs, and Italians you can shake a rocket launcher at. Combined with a somewhat advantageous recovery move (a helicopter that can recover him from near the bottom of your screen), his covert cardboard box as a taunt, and his trademark codec trained upon Zero Suit Samus' tits and ass, Snake comes out a winner.

Mike Kendrick

While fighting game sequels can be repetitive in some respects, one of the best parts about getting the latest edition of your favourite brawler is the new characters. *Super Smash Bros Brawl* boasts an even bigger lineup than *Melee* did, and I'm already hooked on a new favorite. Hailing from the mythical underworld of Hades, the angel Pit has made like Cupid and won my heart.



He'd seem like an odd choice, given that he's more comparable in style to Link than to my old favourite Samus, but with his quick strikes and survivability, Pit is easily one of the most fun characters that *Brawl* offers. Not only can this cherubic champion fly and swoop gracefully above the rest of his lowly earthbound—and *Earthbound*—competitors, but he brings to the table one of the most effective—and most annoying—juggle attacks that the franchise has ever seen. By skillfully twirling his bow-blade in a whirlwind of fury (read: mashing the B-button), Pit can juggle one, two, even three opponents endlessly, sending their health meters skyrocketing. Better yet, if you can manage to trap your adversaries under a low platform while executing this manoeuvre, all it takes is a quick

Smash Attack follow-up to put a swift end to the fight.

Cheap? Maybe. Effective? Certainly. Satisfying? Oh, hell yes.

Ryan Heise

Kendrick: I woke up in a cold sweat last night as Pit had me pinned against a wall with his spinning bow, screaming “HEI-EI-EI-YAH!”

When you get a controller and I see you select that weird little cherub, the gears in my brain start to lock up as I prepare for the most excruciating ten minutes of videogame-playing of my life.

My only saving grace is that your propensity for cheapness allows time for my go-to girl, Samus, to charge up her beam and send your ass flying.

Simply put, Samus is one of the most well-rounded characters in the game. From her consistent recovery move to her devastating final smash, she can handle almost any other character in the game with ease.

Her only drawback is the switch to Zero-Suit Samus after performing her final smash. While a lot faster, her moves are a lot tougher to master.

I've just realized that by writing this, I've effectively isolated myself from the entire female campus population. Oh well, I'll always have beating the shit out of an angelic little punk with a sexy outer-space bounty hunter to whittle the hours away.

Mike Otto

Brawl features a veritable cornucopia of new characters, but by far the best choice is an old standby from the original on the N64: everyone's favourite androgynous dinosaur, Yoshi. Though s/he



was nerfed somewhat in *Melee* with the removal of his game-ending aerial downward smash, s/he's still got other great air attacks and an upward smash perfect for knocking opponents into orbit.

When you're really feeling like a dick, use Yoshi's long tongue on an enemy while standing near a ledge: you'll poop them out in a small polka-dotted egg that will fall slowly into the pit. Your friends will probably call you a metrosexual, but don't dismiss this cutesy dinosaur as less than the true fighting machine s/he is.

On the topic of cheap, remember when you'd play *Perfect Dark*, and your asshole brother would camp at the end of the hallway in the Facility and snipe you with the Farsight? Well, now he's playing Samus and spends the entire game at the edge of the map chargin' his lasers and blasting anyone busy *playing the fucking game*. The only venture into the battle is when the smash ball comes up, and then he again retreats to the edge to kill everyone with his Turbo-Hadouken bullshit.

Conal Pierce

My character of choice is Pikachu. Why, you ask? Two words: fuckin' lightning.

