

How to Destroy Ice Climbers

By Worms

So first I'll get out the 2 main points of the matchup, but let me get this out of the way. Nana appears as the primary ice climber for half of the skins but we always refer to ice climber #1 as Popo and ice climber #2 as nana, regardless of the skin just to make it less confusing.

Separation:

Separating the Ice Climbers is really really important if you want to win and not lose. Your tools for separating the Climbers differ for each and every character, but to start a separation usually anything disjointed with decent base knockback is good at low percents, and anything disjointed and safe is good at other percents. Also, projectiles are very effective in neutral because all of our defensive options come out 6 frames later for Nana. That means she has a 9 frame jump squat, 6 frame shield, 9 frame airdodge and 9 frame spot dodge. Yikes! Since it's a 6 frame disconnect, they also end 6 frames later meaning there's 12 frames in any given option where only one of us is vulnerable, making separating us easier. This is one of the reasons we struggle with zoners so much. Many people get a grab on nana, back throw and then die to my F-Smash and go "Oh so you can't grab vs the Ice

Climbers.” FALSE! If your throw has a hitbox, it will be very effective vs us as the throw hitbox and throw will send in different places which splits us up very nicely and Nana will not defend vs this at all (she goes into a panic animation when Popo is grabbed). Wolf is a character that is very good at this but many characters can utilize this aspect of the matchup.

Now once you have them separated it's time to kill us! But how? This is VERY IMPORTANT. In like 99% of cases, unless you ABSOLUTELY KNOW you can kill popo off a separation, go for nana always. It's seriously insane the number of people who don't do this but I guess it isn't that intuitive. I hear a lot of people say “Yea I just gotta separate them” and then they go for Popo. This is why I win vs those people. Nana is a robot that does not attack or tech on her own, she is programmed specifically just to run back to Popo. Don't let this happen! She can be soooooo easily edgeguarded as she literally does not have a recovery when separated, she can only airdodge. She can't even side B, it's not in her code so even if you have her far horizontally she's toast. Be aware, Nana breaks the rules of the game and can run through opponents. On multiple occasions I've seen someone charge an F-Smash towards Nana and then she runs through them. Don't let it be you. Nana will only jump if popo is in the air close to her, other than that she will just run towards popo. Any move that you can throw out to cover a large area is

good vs nana, she will not break from combos unless close to Popo or offstage, so you can just nair train her, or whatever your character does best. Ice climbers have a very bad move speed which makes targeting Nana even more favorable. If you ever see nana on stage while Popo is recovering, this is your opportunity for the most free kill of your life. Whack nana towards centre stage, or keep her in a grab for disrespect ;). Remember: The more you focus Nana, the easier it is to separate them off a stray hit as her percent will be much higher than Popo's. There's also a half/separation where the Ice Climbers are still close but not synced, this is still a very tough spot for us yet one most people don't exploit. If nana is just not close enough (which has to be very close), she will not receive inputs and so we can't make her jump or tech or do any defensive options. This is when projectiles become very useful. If Nana can't airdodge or tech or jump because she's half/separated, you can get a free projectile hit on them to further extend your advantage and push for a full separation. Projectiles work well for this but really any attack can be useful. It's so important to recognize when this situation is happening since it's very subtle, but it's so rewarding to capitalize off of it. Being comfortable in separating and killing Nana is a crucial aspect of fighting against Ice Climbers.

Now for the other thing that makes us suffer,

Edgeguarding:

Ice Climbers *seem* to have a pretty decent recovery. They have mixups with side B and up B, and they're floaty enough where they can hit you for getting too close and then still recover. However, if you know what you're doing and have good execution, it's realistic to kill them every time they go offstage. Up B has an invisible bubble that will teleport Nana to Popo when using it, if she's inside the bubble. The bubble is pretty huge, but it's still limited (Side B also has a "bubble" but it's decently smaller than up B's). If you hit them in the air, depending on how different their percents are or if you hit them with different parts of a move, Nana could be outside the bubble which will gimp the Ice Climbers if they attempt to recover. Separating them in the air is so deadly yet it's an option I almost never see properly executed. But that's not even the most important part. Our up b is actually a very stinky move that sucks and doesn't work. Nana will shoot up first and be invincible with a hitbox, then popo will follow shortly after. The problem is that Popo has neither invincibility nor a damaging hitbox, so if you hit him with any move, you will kill them at any percent if they lack a jump, and you'll most likely kill them even if they do have one. Nana is not a very good AI, once she grabs ledge she will not drop ledge so if up B is interrupted, Popo is completely screwed. Interrupting our up B can seem pretty difficult at times, but some characters have

cheater options. One of the most obnoxious is Joker's down guns. It's so painful because it works so effortlessly and consistently. Incineroar's Neutral B is also rather good as it's intangible so it will ignore Nana and just hit Popo, and since it lasts so long it isn't that difficult to pull off. Kirby down air is another, it will kill us at 0% and lasts so long. Even if your character doesn't have a cheater move for our up B, any lingering or multi-hit move will usually do the trick. Also, if their Up-B hits you and they're not too close to ledge, the Up-B will cancel and they will both go into freefall. This is similar to what happens with Ness but in my opinion it's a lot worse for icies than Ness. Something to note also is that Nana cannot be 2-framed, however Popo can. If Nana regrabbs ledge you have a good amount of time to hit her before popo comes to ledge, and if you hit her during this time the up B will be canceled leaving popo without a recovery far below the stage. Sometimes up B will only put Popo on the ledge if they're too far down. If the ice climber decides to save nana, they will have to regrab ledge and you can get a free punish, most likely killing them.

Mastering these 2 techniques will make it so much easier to win, but there's still more info to be covered.

Sopo (Solo ice climber) is a very different fight than when both climbers are present. They have virtually no combos/kill confirms without Nana. They have The worst recovery in the game since side B doesn't send you upward with only 1 climber and Solo up B gives you less distance than a directional airdodge up. Their damage output is also cut in half, and their moves are all less safe and last a shorter amount of time (since Nana is delayed). That being said, they can still land kills, F-Smash will still kill only about 11% later, which is still very early considering how powerful our F-Smash is. Side B will send into tech scenarios with Sopo instead of sending up, which could lead to a kill if you're in a bad spot. Sopo is still dangerous, so don't stop thinking when fighting him. If you're up a stock or even and fighting Sopo, you can camp HARD. In brawl people used to time out Sopo until they were forced to SD, you can definitely still do this in Ultimate. Overall just remember to play it slow and use all your zoning options to your advantage.

Here I'll go over some miscellaneous tips for the matchup:

If you spike us at low to low-mid percents and we buffer up B, it will make us both do the solo up B and die. I don't know exactly why this happens since I thought that up B could cancel Nana's hitstun but the game is weird.

Since we have the 6-Frame delay, our air attacks are ridiculously safe. Fair is +3 and nair is +2 which is stupid, so be aware of that.

Remember not to shield after whiffing too often, this is the option I try to condition people to do during the entire game since I can kill you off one grab. This is why I will constantly try to read jumps.

Some attacks might be less safe if it hits Popo's shield and then Nana's, so keep that in mind. We can also desync off of shield stun because of this.

I haven't tested this so I'm not sure how consistent this is, but I've seen people buffer phantom footstool from them breaking out of ice, and it worked a good percent of the time. This may not work for every character, like I said I haven't tested this and know little about it.

Try to mix up whether you mash or not when you're stuck in ice, if we guess wrong and do a smash attack too early you won't be sent flying.

Blizzard requires many hits of the ice to freeze you, if you approach from the air you can usually take a few hits and still punish if they do a synced blizzard.

Here I'm going to ramble about some matchup specific stuff.

Matchup Specific Interactions:

-Pac-Man's Trampoline will sometimes make Nana jump and Cancel up B, killing us at 0% :) :) :) :)

-Bowser and Kazuya have a mechanic that lets them tank very weak hits. This acts very weird with blizzard, it will freeze them for like a quarter of the usual time, so blizz F smash is not nearly as lethal of a confirm as it is in any other matchup.

-Nana will not be able to act after she footstools characters past a certain percent. This percent is different for every character and usually lies around 90% or 120%, but some characters have it so low it actually changes what confirms and combos are optimal. Puff, Rob, Bowser Jr, Plant and DDD are immune at basically any percent, but Kazuya, K. Rool, Squirtle, Ivy, Charizard, Meta Knight, Diddy, Ridley

and Sephiroth have immunity low enough to where you won't be able to get as many confirms at later percents. Here's the doc with all the info about that

📄 Ice Climbers What Works on Who (WWW) for Smash Ultimate

-Captain Falcon and Ganon will both be grab broken if Nana disappears when being up B'd if Popo died earlier. This information is very unimportant, but you never think it'll happen to you until it does.

-Ganondorf should never ever use side-B when both ice climbers are together, no matter which one you grab you can get F-Smashed very easily.

-Hero gains DOUBLE mp because he's hitting 2 characters. Fun game!

-Incin's side-B super armor (when successfully used on one of the Icies) lasts so long that it's very difficult to punish. Nana will be unactionable and usually also gets hit by the hitbox of the Side-B attack, which is nice.

-Inkling's neutral B completely shuts down any desyncs we do in neutral. If you see an Ice Climber do Blizzwall or Blizzblock, start blasting.

-Puff can use rest when breaking out of ice if we up-tilt the ice, but we can also infinite you so it's fair.

-DDD can spit one ice climber at the other, pretty good for separating since they send at different angles. K. Rool can do this sort of too, and it looks so sick when it happens.

-Link's shield stops ice block and blizzard if you're far enough from it.

-Little Mac wins this matchup so you're not allowed to complain.

-Lucas has 3 very effective tools at destroying us offstage. Neutral B, Down Smash and Up B are lethal, especially Up B.

-Mario is one of the few characters who has a difficult time dealing with us camping with Blizzblock/Blizzwall in neutral. Oh wait, just use F.L.U.D.D. Now it's not a problem.

-Marth's tippers are amazing at separating us!

-Hey Lucas and Ness mains! If you absorb blizzard it can heal you like 50%, it's nuts.

-Pac-Man's camping abilities are so effective vs us, play how you want if you're just having fun, however in a tourney playing like a dick is so optimal it's insane. Fruit beats everything we have, hydrant makes us so bad at approaching and not able to combo across stage, seriously Pac can camp us so well if you just don't have a soul.

-Plants, your neutral B is even better since it can still hit Nana if we grab you, so there's like... no counterplay.

-R.O.B Mains! Nana is stupid and doesn't jump over gyro. Also laser shuts down any attempt at camping we do.

-Sephiroths, Nana is immune to side B but it's still good vs us.

-Snake, we can't combo you since grenade will hit nana if I'm throwing you and Cheer Canceling (a very important throw tech) requires a pummel so if you're holding a nade we can't do it. Also trading with nades is much more favorable since it separates us, that's when you start camping even harder.

-Steve can Minecart and send Nana to hell, also Nana doesn't jump over blocks.

-Wolf's laser.