

# FINAL FANTASY 零式 HD

TYPE-0



## An Unofficial Fan Magazine

### The History of Type-0

The game's development deconstructed!

### Developer Profiles

Learn all about the folk behind Class Zero!

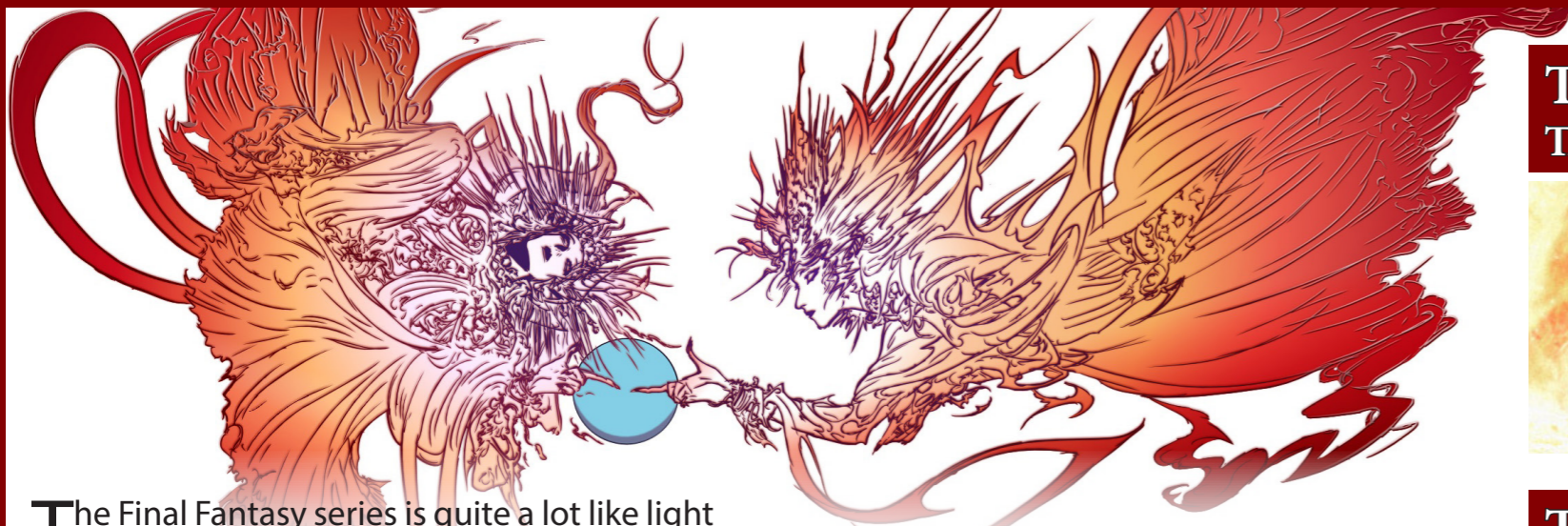
### FFXV Previewed in Detail!

An in-depth look at the incoming FFXV demo!



# Welcome!

# Contents



The Final Fantasy series is quite a lot like light shone through a crystal, a key symbol of the series. Each beam of light interprets the shape of the crystal differently and takes form with bold new definitions, cast brightly across what will soon become thirty years of history.

Much like the games we enjoy, FF fans are hues in a broad spectrum. Young and old, from all walks of life all over the globe, it's no surprise we have passionate and often disparate views on where FF is its best and where it should go in the future - but those passions are also a mark of pride for this community.

Under the banner of SeeD, representatives from several major FF and JRPG communities assemble regularly to collaborate on group projects and assist each other in bettering the wider community.

For the 25th Anniversary of FF, we produced a digital magazine casting its eye over all facets of the series. We've done that again here - this time to put a look at the newest title in the franchise and the long journey it has taken to reach many of us.

Final Fantasy Type-0 nearly never made its way to Western FF fans. Almost a decade has elapsed since its original reveal, and it has changed, grown, disappeared, reappeared, but that's over. At last: It has arrived.

Thanks to the many fans who lobbied for years through fan sites, social media and pressure campaigns for the game to be released here - and thanks to Square Enix for listening!

But just what are we getting? How good is it? And how about that development? Turn the page - and join us for a history lesson.

2 by **Tony Garsow** @TonyGarsow [Editor, *FinalFantasy.net*]

## Who Made This

This magazine is a free, joint production from several Final Fantasy, Square Enix and JRPG-focused websites & communities who band together under the moniker **SeeD** (named after **FFVIII's** Garden academies) to collectively work to provide better unofficial outlets through which to grow and serve the FF community.

Thanks to the following for their contributions to this project and SeeD at large:

- FinalFantasy.net
- NovaCrystallis.com
- UFFSite.net
- GamerEscape.com
- RPGamer.com
- UFFSite.net
- KHInsider.com
- FinalFantasyUnion.com
- FFWorld.com
- SQEX.info
- FFandMore.com
- MognetCentral.com
- RPGSite.net
- FFRing.com
- ZellFantasy.it
- TheLifestream.net



**LEGAL STUFF:**  
Final Fantasy, all associated trademarks & assets used & mentioned in this publication are © and owned by SQUARE ENIX CO. LTD. No copyright infringement is intended. This publication is not associated with, authorized by or licensed by SQUARE ENIX CO. LTD. (But we hope they like it.)

This publication is a non-profit fan creation and should always be free to download and reproduce in its full, unedited form.

## The Long Road: The Birth of Class Zero



Nine years after its first announcement, Type-0 is coming West. We analyse every twist and turn in its development and journey.

Page 4-9, 12-13

## The Nations of Orience / Meet Class Zero



Get to know the world of Type-0 with our spoiler-free primer featuring everything you need to know about Orience and Class Zero.

Page 14-15/16-17

## Head to Head: PSP vs HD Visual Face-Off



The artists and developers at Square Enix and HexaDrive have put a lot of effort into visually upgrading Type-0 - see how it compares!

Page 22-23

## The Verdicts: Type-0 HD - What We Thought



Some of the contributors to this magazine weigh in on Type-0 HD after playing through the final version of the game.

Page 26-31

## Portable Warfare: On Type-0's PSP Origins



Without the strong response and following post-launch, Type-0 may never have come West. We take a look at the response to the PSP release.

Page 10-11

## Proud Parents: The People behind Class Zero



Learn all about some of the visionary creators behind Type-0, including profiles on the Director, Lead Artist and Composer of the game.

Page 18-21

## Side Quests: Type-0 in Alternate Media



As well as the game itself, Type-0's world spans content in a variety of media including Manga, Novels and Music. Learn all about it!

Page 24-25

## At Last - Final Fantasy XV: Duscae Preview



Early purchasers of Type-0 are in for a treat in the form of a first hands-on test of FFXV's gameplay systems. Here's what to expect.

Page 32-33



# The Long Road

## The Birth of Class Zero

After almost a decade, we investigate: just how did Type-0 come to be?

To say Final Fantasy Type-0 has taken a long journey to reach this point is really something of an understatement. Originally revealed in 2006 as Final Fantasy Agito XIII, it began life a forward-thinking mobile game in a pre-iPhone world.

Eight years later and after a string of delays, several platform changes and a Japanese-only PSP release, Type-0 is finally making its way West as a high definition title for the latest generation of consoles - quite the change from its humble mobile beginnings.

It's been the best part of a decade in the making - but what are the key points of this journey, and how did it shape the game we now get to play? Join us as we take a look at the long and winding road Type-0 has taken to reach us.

by **Jérémie Kermarrec** [Owner, [FFWorld.com](#)]  
Editing: **Alex Donaldson** @APZonerunner [[RPGSite.net](#)]

“Accessible any time, anywhere, it will prove the most universal Final Fantasy to date.”

- Hajime Tabata on Agito XIII, 2006

## May 8th, 2006: A Mobile Vision

Picture the scene at E3 2006 - Square Enix is about to reveal not just one new Final Fantasy, but three. The last time they did this the end result was Final Fantasy IX, X and XI - much-loved games all released to the public within a little over two years of their joint announcement.

After the reveal of Final Fantasy XIII, director Hajime Tabata stepped up to explain his project.

“Agito - Latin for ‘to put into motion’ - is the theme of this online RPG, as well as the overall development concept,” he announced. “Agito XIII is being developed for the next generation of mobile phone handsets.”

None of this sounds familiar to what we have now of course, but those that would become the key players were in place. Tabata had been tapped to direct, while Tetsuya Nomura and Yusuke Naora were in place to handle character and artistic design respectively. Also promised to the project was composer Takeharu Ishimoto.

The E3 showing offered little - a title, some vague synopsis information and some concept art - but later showings offered us a first glimpse at Type-0's iconic red-caped uniforms and the title's cast.

In its original form, Final Fantasy Agito XIII was envisioned as a full-3D mobile RPG where the player chose from among twelve characters - the same cast we have today minus Machina and Rem - to go on an adventure in a vast, accessible world.

Its mobile basis was key - Tabata intended it to be a ‘universal’ FF that could be accessed anywhere. Wireless features would allow the player to recruit nearby strangers to join their game, and a command style battle system meant slower-paced gameplay easier for both players and always-on game servers to handle on the go.



A single CG trailer offered a glimpse at a world that at this point looks very familiar - with slight differences.

It's at this point we have to give credit to Tabata and those who developed the initial concept for Agito, as in hindsight it now seems an incredibly forward-thinking concept.



The original logo for the game that'd become Type-0

Announced a year before people would get their hands on the first iPhone, Tabata's early comments about an always-on, accessible, mobile RPG for 4G devices bear a striking resemblance to many modern mobile games, including FF creator Hironobu Sakaguchi's recent game Terra Battle.

Agito wasn't the first mobile FF, of course - Tabata's team had just finished work on the phone-based episodic prequel Before Crisis: Final Fantasy VII, and off the back of that began discussing concepts for Agito in 2005.

Before Crisis was published directly via Japanese service providers for 'Keitai', exclusive Japanese-only phones that had tech nerds the world over drooling. Nobody had any idea of the revolution Apple was crafting in California, but Agito's ideas were impressively on the right track, if early.

Despite this, Tabata admitted in 2006 that Square was yet to enter discussions with mobile providers. Instead of developing for a specific upcoming handset, it was instead birthed on the PC with simulated technical and network specifications based on guesswork.

This ultimately proved a grave mistake. The 4G hardware envisioned wasn't materializing, and current devices weren't going to support the team's vision. Square had taken an impressive step ahead, but then found it was a step too far.

In September 2007 - just three months after the launch of the first iPhone, which was still a 3G device and months from major Japanese success - Tabata informed Japanese gaming magazine Famitsu magazine that major news was coming in the new year.



The only footage released of the original Agito featured mobile-friendly visuals and command-based combat.



# August 2nd, 2008: The Secret PSP Port

Almost a year passed before Tabata's promised news arrived, but in August 2008 Square Enix finally revealed **Final Fantasy Agito XIII** was now in development for Sony's PlayStation Portable.

Announced at the DKΣ3713 event alongside a slew of other FF info, it was revealed that a PSP version of the mobile game had always secretly been part of the plan eventually - but it had now become the priority thanks to the 4G phones Tabata had originally targeted unavailable.

In addition to work on *Before Crisis*, Tabata and his team also had plenty of PSP experience thanks to the world of *FFVII*, and in the summer of 2007 had wrapped on **Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII**.

Using the know-how acquired during the making of the successful *Crisis Core*, the team intended to alter *Agito XIII*'s gameplay direction to transform it into an action-oriented RPG.

The team also held on to their mobile-born multiplayer hopes, confirming that the title would use both the ad-hoc and internet connectivity that the PSP allowed.

With this sort of information and the first in-game screenshots and gameplay details shared over that summer, one couldn't be faulted for assuming the project was solidified and coming in the not-so-distant future.



This period offered fans a first proper glimpse at *Agito XIII*'s cast.

The truth was much more complex, of course. Development on this new direction had only begun early in 2008, and *Agito XIII* and its team quickly returned to silence.

That silence was broken on a few occasions during Japanese events, but most often in the confines of the ill-thought-out "Closed Mega Theatre," leaving actual details of the project's status worryingly scarce. New media was so scant that even Sony featured footage of the cancelled mobile version to represent the PSP title when featuring *Agito XIII* in their sizzle reels.



Work on *Crisis Core*: *FFVII* would prove hugely influential on *Agito XIII*'s combat systems.

It wasn't until April 2009 that fans got a proper look at the PSP version of *Agito XIII* with the release of *FFXIII*'s demo - and even then Tetsuya Nomura appeared in magazines explaining that the interface had already changed from that featured in the footage.

In the video, Nomura guaranteed that the world of *Agito XIII*, named *Oriece*, would be extremely rich thanks to Tabata's hard work.

Since the project's inception Tabata had wished to tell the story of war through the experiences of young cadets, and to accomplish this the game was intended to have the feel of a historical documentary about *Agito XIII*'s war-torn world.

The PSP version's existence had helped the team to emphasize the geopolitics of the world more, he explained, but most important was fitting the title into the wider **Fabula Nova Crystallis** mythology established by Kazushige Nojima.

This was an instruction it seems Tabata hadn't paid much mind to initially, but after receiving comments from the likes of co-producer Yoshinori Kitase, he worked to weave the FNC mythology more deeply into *Agito XIII*'s story.

While Motomu Toriyama was tapping into the divine gods-and-demons side of the mythology with his work on *FFXIII*, Tabata decided to focus on the human element of the mythos, ultimately basing his game around scrutinizing the fate of ordinary mortals as they face adversity.



The mind behind *Fabula Nova Crystallis* lore, Kazushige Nojima.



While the cast look familiar in their *Agito XIII* days, one might notice that two members of the crew - Rapier-wielding Rem and Dagger-using Rem - are absent entirely. They were revealed as additions when the title officially became *Type-0*.

# September 16, 2010: Combat Revealed

Two years since the confirmation of *Agito XIII* for PSP, fans were understandably beginning to become agitated. *FFXIII* had launched the previous year in Japan, and fans were beginning to wonder what was happening with the other *Fabula Nova Crystallis* titles.

Behind the scenes, Tabata and his team had actually shifted focus again, and this time were hard at work on realizing **The 3rd Birthday**, the latest entry in the cult hit series **Parasite Eve** - another game that had made the jump from a small-scale mobile spin-off to a fully-fledged title for PSP.



Aya's comeback in *The 3rd Birthday* took focus over *Agito XIII* briefly.

Working on *The 3rd Birthday* didn't stop the team from mentioning *Agito XIII*, however - it frequently got shout-outs in media interviews with the Japanese press, and even the official Japanese Square Enix Members Twitter account would mention it and reassure fans - it still existed!



The newly-revealed action combat impressed the waiting fans.

With that knowledge in hand, fans went into Tokyo Game Show 2010 hopeful. It was the first major Japanese event where Square Enix wouldn't be focusing on *FFXIII*, after all - and that faith wasn't misplaced.

While short, the September show saw a video debuted that revealed new facets of *Final Fantasy Versus XIII* but also revealed *Agito XIII*'s new action-based combat system for the first time outside a closed 'mega theatre' setting.

As promised years prior, the gameplay looked action-packed, intense, and bloody.

As a bonus, fans were told to mark their calendars: In January 2011, a press conference centered on the *Fabula Nova Crystallis* titles would mark *Agito XIII*'s big comeback. Excitement grew.



# January 18th, 2011: Rei Shiki

Now almost a full five years from the announcement of **Final Fantasy Agito XIII**, January 18th, 2011 marked the final day of that name's use for Square Enix's upcoming PSP effort. In its place debuted **Final Fantasy Type-0**, revealed during a streamed Fabula Nova Crystallis event.

Featuring a new logo bearing the Japanese name 'rei shiki' (literally, Type Zero) drawn by art director Yusuke Naora, the game was strictly identical to what had been revealed of Agito in late 2010, but had now been separated out from the **Final Fantasy XIII** identity and been allowed to assert its own proper ambitions.

*"I really liked the title Agito XIII, but there wasn't any real relation to FFXIII,"* Tabata explained, noting that despite this the newly renamed game would still retain its Fabula Nova Crystallis lore basis. *"I included the 0 because I wanted it to represent a new direction. I'd like it if you thought of it as the departure of a new series."*

Part of what helped Type-0 to stand apart was its action-based battle system and built-in multiplayer functionality. While the latter was originally planned for both ad-hoc and online modes, it was eventually reshaped, drawing further away from the original envision for Agito XIII on mobile.

It would no longer be possible to play through the internet, only locally, and a player could only welcome a friend in their game for a short amount of time - a few minutes - to help them through difficult situations.

While the loss of this functionality disappointed some, others saw it as the title more fully returning to FF's single-player roots. Type-0's school-based setting felt reminiscent of FFXIII to many, and other aspects of the game felt engineered to appeal to more experienced FF fans who'd been disappointed in aspects of FFXIII.

As if to demonstrate the game as a 'full' FF title, Square Enix took pleasure in announcing that it would feature 14 playable characters, over 30 fully-voiced characters, and most curiously of all actually ship on two PSP UMD discs. Many wondered if that fact meant Type-0 was destined for bigger things - but first, it was to hit PSP - but not everywhere.

**"I'd like it if you thought of it as the departure of a new series."**

- Hajime Tabata on Type-0, 2011

# October 27th, 2011: Japan Only

With that, team Type-0's silence was over - instead there was an excited marketing blitz. In five months more was learned than in the previous five years, Tabata becoming a regular fixture in Japanese magazines.

He had good reason to appear often - Type-0 was different. Its battle system was designed to be brutal, making magic more central and tangible than ever. Fire actually sets enemies ablaze, ice freezes them solid - and spells can be 'mechanized' and transformed into more deadly weapons still.

Even Eidolons, a series staple, carried a difficult cost when used, wiping a character from a battlefield. Fans could try out these new gameplay systems themselves first in demos at events, then later via internet download.

Impressively, Tabata and his team then took feedback from these demos to make gameplay changes, most significantly simplifying the *Phantoma* system, improving the camera and making gameplay balance adjustments.

Even with the game almost done, Type-0 managed a few more delays - first from Summer 2011 to October, and then from October 13th to the 27th in order to add a last-minute bug fix.

On October 27th Type-0 finally arrived. It ended up being the sixth best-selling title in Japan that year - quite a hit.

An international release seemed a no-brainer - but the game was a no-show at both 2011 and 2012's *E3 Expos*, and co-producer Yoshinori Kitase admitted there were no plans in place. Sony's PSP was struggling to retain relevance in the West - and a localization was a hard sell as a result.

Hope returned briefly when shortly after the Japanese release Tabata was quoted in an official Square Enix book as saying he was working on a localization. The online rumor mill also indicated voice talent had been drafted by Square Enix's Los Angeles office - but nothing further followed.

For Western fans, Type-0 returned to what Agito XIII had offered for so long: Silence. But if those localized voice recordings existed, there would soon be another use for them...

## Lost in Translation

While **Type-0** is the highest profile in recent memory, it isn't the only FF to stumble and very nearly never head West.

While FF has generally been well-supported with localizations, some games in the series remain exclusive to their motherland.

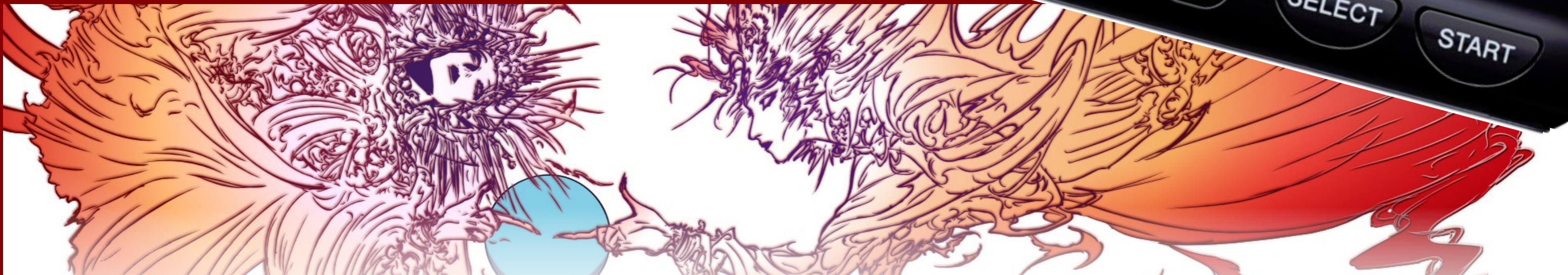
- 'International' versions of some titles featuring added content remain Japan only. Most significant of those is **FFXII's 'International Zodiac Job System'** release which adds a job system to the game.
- **Before Crisis**, a mobile game set prior to the events of **FFVII** from many of the same team as Type-0 was also never localized due to a lack of supporting hardware. Fan dreams of a DS port never materialized.
- A PC title based on the **Final Fantasy Unlimited** anime and several **Chocobo spin-offs** also remain Japan exclusive.
- Monster Hunter style 3DS spin-off **Final Fantasy Explorers** remains unannounced for the West - but we hope it's coming!
- There's never been an official Western release of any 2D version of **FFIII**.

Here's hoping some of these titles eventually make it to Western shores as Type-0 has!





# Portable Warfare: On Type-0's PSP Origins



Part of what made the wait so agonizing and difficult for Western-based gamers was how well received the original PSP release of **Final Fantasy Type-0** was.

With the fan base opinion utterly split on the matter of **FFXIII** and **FFXIV**'s original release in trouble, the release of Type-0 in Japan a year later offered the world of Fabula Nova Crystallis a new lease of life.

Many fans wanted a different interpretation of the rich lore offered up in **FFXIII**, and many more wanted a FF that was at once both more modern and more traditional.

With its action-based gameplay and traditional FF features such as a world map, Type-0 seemed to be precisely what fans wanted - making the wait all the more painful.

Type-0 managed to sell over 470,000 units in a week - an impressive feat for a PSP game. It went on to sell over 750,000 copies - and ended up as one of the most popular PSP titles of the year alongside big hitters like *Monster Hunter* and nostalgia-driven FF mash-up **Dissidia 012: Final Fantasy**.

It wasn't just in the stores that Type-0 was enjoying huge success, but also with critics. Japanese gaming tome *Famitsu* awarded the game a mere one point from a perfect score of 40/40 in their review - the same score given to the big-screen, big-budget **FFXIII**.



Type-0's action based combat and bite-sized mission structure worked well on the PSP - and it looked great.

Three of *Dengeki PlayStation*'s team of four reviewers scored it 90/100, with the final of the group scoring it 95. The game had made a splash - and more than that, it made an impression - Japanese fans were impressed, and Western fans were eager.

Critics abroad who imported the game sang similar praises, only fueling cries from FF fans pleading for a localization.

*"It might not satisfy everyone in the bi-polar FF fanbase,"* wrote PlayStation Lifestyle, *"But Type-0 is a hell of a game."*

So enraptured were some fans at the thought of Type-0 that they began to take matters into their own hands. One fan kicked off 'Operation Suzaku', an attempt to force Square Enix to recognize the fan desire for a Western release, gathering tens of thousands of signatures.

**"Western woes aside, Type-0 is by all counts even more grand and ambitious than its vanilla FFXIII cousin."**

- RPG Site Type-0 Import Review, 2012

The reasons for the praise were numerous. Many credited the game for its portable-friendly but classic FF-evocative gameplay mechanics.

Others enjoyed its varied cast of characters and lauded the story for its maturity and brutality - in Japan, it was the first FF title to be given a 'C' rating by Japan's video games rating board - a rating reserved for more violent and adult titles, equivalent to a 'Mature' in the US.

Other fans went a step further, with one group taking the legally-dubious step of attempting to localize the game themselves, making an English version playable on hacked PSPs.

Just how well the PSP version had performed - both in sales at home and in capturing the minds of fans abroad - likely took Square Enix by surprise. Type-0 was a roaring success.

As fans toiled away on pressure campaigns and questionable translation projects, Square Enix was quietly taking notice, taking stock, and making moves. Things were happening.





## The Long Road: The Birth of Class Zero Continued June 10th, 2011: Over the Pacific

After its successful Japanese release, it's only natural that Square Enix examined the possibility of releasing **Final Fantasy Type-0** overseas, as **Hajime Tabata's** earlier comments suggested.

With the PSP reaching the end of its life more quickly in the West than Japan, the team discussed the possibility of porting to another platform.

The natural candidate might seem the PlayStation Vita - but the console was newly released, and sales were as-yet rather weak.

Eyes then turned to PlayStation 3 - but because it was built for handheld, Tabata insisted that the game would need a major overhaul in order to fit expectations on the machine.

These discussions were ultimately suspended in July 2012, at which point the Type-0 team was merged into the **Final Fantasy XV** team.

The possibility of Type-0's localization or a port wasn't dead, but merely on hiatus, with FFXV the new priority as development began on the

new vision of the game for PS4 and Xbox One with Tabata as the co-director.

Without official news, Western fans and the games media started to show concern. Fan petition Operation Suzaku dedicated itself to blasting Square Enix with pleas for a localized version. Other fans tried to translate the game themselves, an enthusiastic but legally dubious method to allow non-Japanese speakers to experience the title in some capacity.

In November 2012, Tabata admitted he was "taking a clean slate", saying that the company was waiting for an opportunity for a localization to make sense. The question: What could change the situation to allow it?

The final decision to remaster Type-0 for the new generation of games consoles came shortly after Tokyo Game Show 2013.

Backed by the desires of the original game team, the influx of fan demands (some of which had even made their way directly to Tabata's inbox) and several high profile articles in the press, the project was finally greenlit: Type-0 lived again.

Originally planned for Xbox 360, PS3, PS4 and Xbox One, it was quickly decided to focus on the new generation consoles only.



**"In improving the graphics we also utilized the development from FFXV to not only improve things like the lighting effects, but we also re-rendered everything specifically for PlayStation 4 and Xbox One."**

- Hajime Tabata on Type-0 HD, 2014



This had natural advantages - the team would be able to use technologies developed for FFXV in the game, and it would prove the perfect incentive to get FF fans to invest in new consoles ahead of FFXV's launch. The later addition of a demo of FFXV would only further secure this position.

With a focus on FFXV, Tabata's team needed assistance, and they found it with Hexadrive, a studio they'd previously worked with on The 3rd Birthday. They assisted in the remastering process, with full-scale development kicking off early in 2014.

Announced at E3 2014 and fully revealed at Tokyo Game Show four months later, the game had an incredibly fast turn-around - especially after all the years fans had waited for the original.

Square Enix and Hexadrive have put in considerable and commendable effort for the HD version, particularly with the 3D models of the characters and newly-updated textures.

It has to be said, however, that the PSP origins of the title remain plain - this is quite obviously a remaster rather than a remake. The multiplayer ended up a casualty, too, removed entirely from this version - but it isn't the largest of losses, and fans can finally say Type-0 has come to the West.

The history of Final Fantasy Type-0 is one of lessons: it was a game revealed too early, and a game that was for much of its life far ahead of its time in a great many senses.

As the phone-based Agito XIII it was beyond the capabilities of the phones and the cell phone networks available at the time, eventually leading to its switch in platform.

The project changed focus but only grew in scale once it became Type-0 on PSP. While the roaming features were lost, it remains one of the largest and most ambitious titles on the platform and one of only a handful to spill onto two discs - thus its lengthy development.

For this scope and vision, Tabata and his development crew deserve huge recognition. Type-0 was always more than just another spin-off - and now Western fans can at last experience this unique vision.

It's been nine years coming, but the West can finally properly experience it - and Type-0 is finally on a platform that actually surpasses its brave early parameters.

by **J r mie Kermarrec** @jkermarrec [Owner, FFWorld.com]  
Editing: **Alex Donaldson** @APZonerunner [RPGSite.net] 3



When war is declared, battle lines and alliances are drawn between the nations that make up the rich world of Orience, the overarching setting of Final Fantasy Type-0.

Composed of four nations that had once lived together in peace, each protected and buoyed by the crystal they possess. Each crystal bestows its country with incredible magical powers at great cost for some of their citizens, the l'Cie - but such power leads to terrible greed - and ultimately a brutal war to seize the power that the crystals offer to nations and their people.

For the uninitiated, here's a basic primer about the four nations that make up the world and their unique elements.

# The Nations of Orience

## The key players in war, detailed.



### The Chinese Connection

The names Byakko, Soryu, Genbu and Suzaku - the crystals each nation in Type-0 holds - are taken from classical Chinese mythology - but it isn't their first FF appearance.

The four names were also used for the names of special, powerful boss monsters in Final Fantasy XI's first end game zone.

### Dominion of Rubrum



The Southernmost nation in Orience, Rubrum is also where the **Peristylum Suzaku Magic Academy** is located. Represented by a Phoenix, it has weather and clothes to match in the form of a warm temperament and the red-caped uniforms worn by Academy students.

Their crystal, **Suzaku**, bestows the power of magic upon those at the academy.

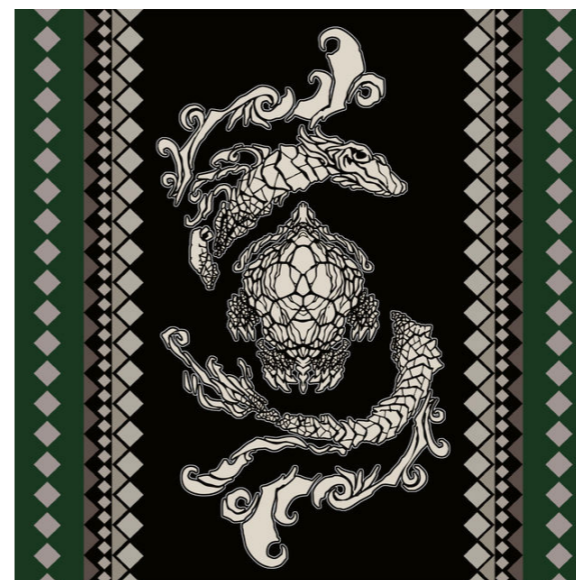
### Milites Empire



Based in the West of Orience and neighboring Rubrum, the **Milites Empire** is represented by the White Tiger. Having already engaged the **Lorican Alliance** in war, they appear to have dangerous ambitions and desires.

They possess the **Byakko** Crystal, which assists in the use and creation of machinery, including the crafting of powerful weapons and Magitek.

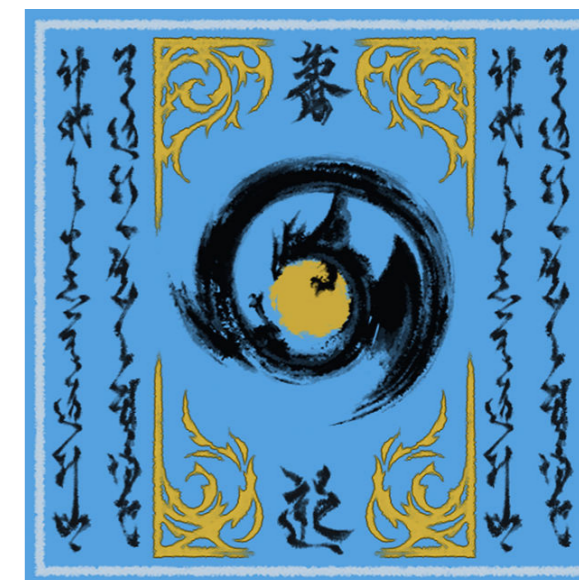
### Lorican Alliance



Warring with the Milites Empire prior to Type-0's opening, **The Lorican Alliance** controls the **Genbu** Crystal, which bestows physical strength to the faithful who serve the nation as Knights.

Placed in the North of Orience and represented by reptiles - the Tortoise and Snake, it is regarded as a strong, lasting country.

### Kingdom of Concordia



With its **Sōryū** crystal allowing communication with dragons, the Eastern **Kingdom of Concordia** is thus represented by the powerful creatures. It is the Easternmost nation, and boasts a comparatively clement environment.

With a society dominated by women since its men abused the crystal's power, it is home to several orders of elite female knights.



# Meet Class Zero

## Get to know your allies in war.

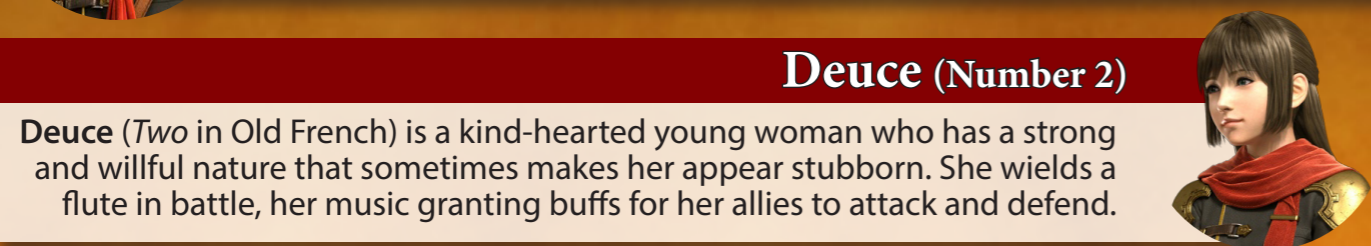
Under threat, the Magic Academy Peristylum Suzaku deploys the latest members of Class Zero, plus two new transfer students, to war. Players can take control of each member in an effort to turn the tide of the war effort.

Each takes a number from a traditional deck of cards and is named after Old French Language numbering as used in many card games. They all have unique abilities that they take into battle. Meet Class Zero, Suzaku's last hope.



### Ace (Number 1)

Appropriately for his namesake, Ace (*one* in Old French) wields a deck of cards in battle. Despite being 16, he is mature beyond his years but also fosters a risky and reckless streak. He particularly likes the company of Chocobos.



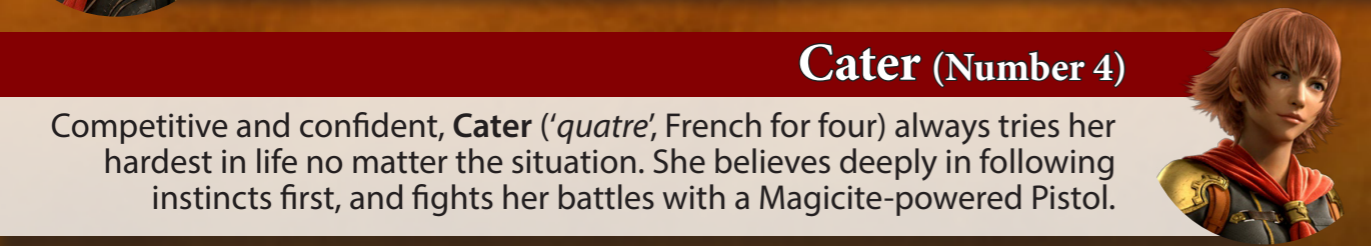
### Deuce (Number 2)

Deuce (*Two* in Old French) is a kind-hearted young woman who has a strong and willful nature that sometimes makes her appear stubborn. She wields a flute in battle, her music granting buffs for her allies to attack and defend.



### Trey (Number 3)

A little older than much of the class, Trey (*three* in Old French) is a calming, knowledgeable influence - but has a habit of ranting and lecturing from his learned standpoint. He fights at range in battles with a bow.



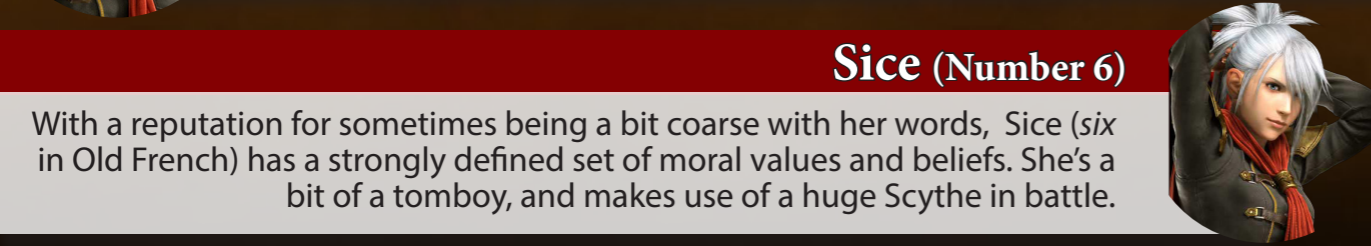
### Cater (Number 4)

Competitive and confident, Cater (*'quatre'*, French for four) always tries her hardest in life no matter the situation. She believes deeply in following instincts first, and fights her battles with a Magicite-powered Pistol.



### Cinque (Number 5)

Emotionally unpredictable, the slightly naive Cinque (*'cinq'*, French for five) might appear one of the weaker class members - but in battle is the opposite, wielding and dealing damage with a massive Mace.



### Sice (Number 6)

With a reputation for sometimes being a bit coarse with her words, Sice (*six* in Old French) has a strongly defined set of moral values and beliefs. She's a bit of a tomboy, and makes use of a huge Scythe in battle.

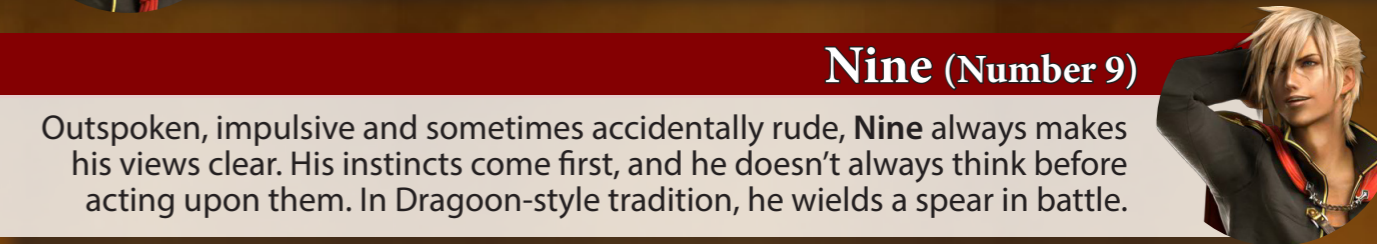
### Seven (Number 7)

While cool-headed and somewhat distant, Seven nevertheless cares deeply for her classmates and has a difficult time turning down requests for help. She skillfully wields a dangerously sharp-bladed whip on the battlefield.



### Eight (Number 8)

With a natural distaste for traditional weapons, Eight instead uses his own body when heading into combat, filling the traditional FF monk role. He handles pressure well and is a fast decision maker - but hates losing.



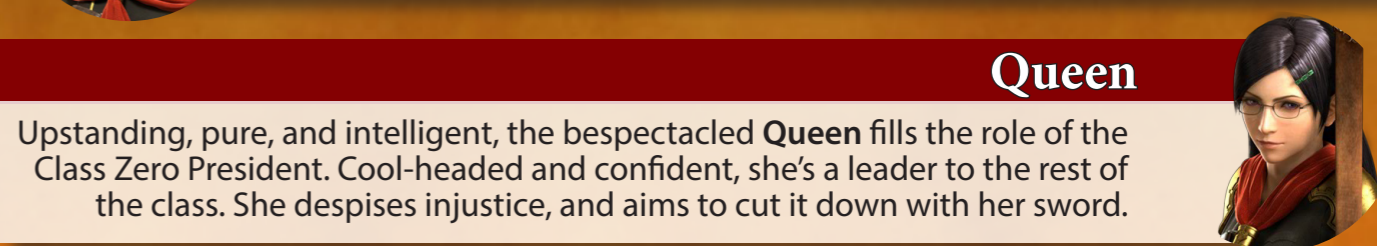
### Nine (Number 9)

Outspoken, impulsive and sometimes accidentally rude, Nine always makes his views clear. His instincts come first, and he doesn't always think before acting upon them. In Dragoon-style tradition, he wields a spear in battle.



### Jack

While his namesake is the Jack, the Joker may be more appropriate - light-hearted and cheerful, he's almost always wearing a smile. He's still a fighter at heart though, and charges forth with a katana.



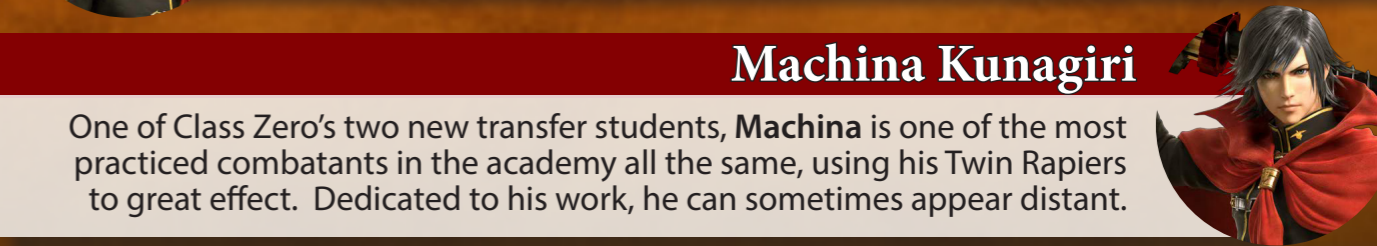
### Queen

Upstanding, pure, and intelligent, the bespectacled Queen fills the role of the Class Zero President. Cool-headed and confident, she's a leader to the rest of the class. She despises injustice, and aims to cut it down with her sword.



### King

Cool-headed and aloof-appearing, King prefers actions to words and is often reliably on hand with a plan for any situation. He dislikes wasting time and is always direct - an approach personified in his weapon, dual pistols.



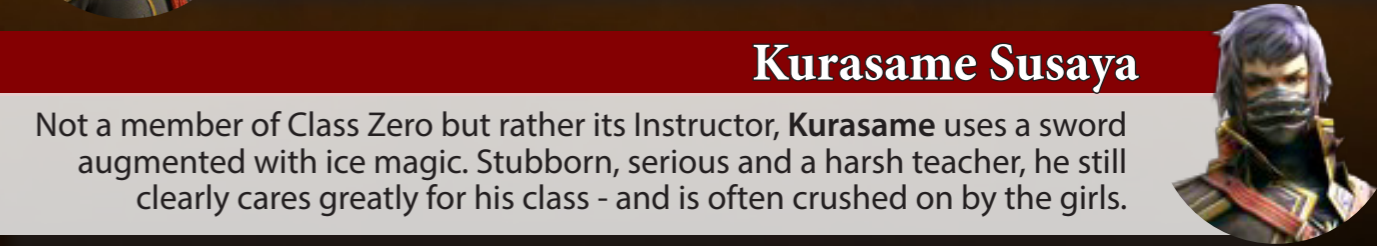
### Machina Kunagiri

One of Class Zero's two new transfer students, Machina is one of the most practiced combatants in the academy all the same, using his Twin Rapiers to great effect. Dedicated to his work, he can sometimes appear distant.



### Rem Tokimiya

Kind-hearted and morally upstanding, Rem is another transfer student and a childhood friend of Machina. She too has impressive power - but for her, this skill manifests as magic power over proficiency with her Twin Daggers.



### Kurasame Susaya

Not a member of Class Zero but rather its Instructor, Kurasame uses a sword augmented with ice magic. Stubborn, serious and a harsh teacher, he still clearly cares greatly for his class - and is often crushed on by the girls.



# Proud Parents:

## The people behind Class Zero

For the best part of a decade, Final Fantasy has been dominated by some big names with even bigger talent. Tetsuya Nomura's art has come to define the series, while the careful direction of the likes of Yoshinori Kitase and Motomu Toriyama is synonymous with its modern story and style.

While many of those big-name talents are involved in Type-0, its humble beginnings as a mobile-based spin-off mean it also acted as a proving ground for new and hungry talent at Square Enix - and now, many of these people are in major roles on Final Fantasy XV, the next big-budget, fully-fledged entry in the series. It's time we got to know them.

### Tetsuya Nomura (Creative Producer, Character Designer)

The artwork of the reclusive Tetsuya Nomura has come to define the look of the 3D years of Final Fantasy. After working as a debugger on **FFIV**, he got his big break designing characters for **FFVII** and, boosted by that title's immense success, never looked back.

After successfully launching **Kingdom Hearts**, Nomura continued to oversee FF, contributing art and concepts to **FFXIII** and **Type-0** while working on **Versus XIII**, which would go on to become **FFXV**. He left **FFXV** in 2014, and now appears to be spending most of his time on **Kingdom Hearts III**.



### Yoshinori Kitase (Producer)

Star Wars-inspired childhood dreams of making movies led a young Yoshinori Kitase to a little company called Square.

After working as an Event Planner on **FFV**, Kitase quickly rose to co-direct both **FFVI** and **Chrono Trigger** with *Hiroyuki Ito* before going on to work on **FFVII**, **FFVIII**, **FFX**, **FFXIII**, and just about every major FF spin-off along the way, including **Kingdom Hearts**.

His string of successes have made him a major player in the FF world. After wrapping up **FFXIII**, he's now working on mobile title **Mevius Final Fantasy**.

### Masayasu Nishida (Level Design Director)

Masayasu Nishida may be an unfamiliar name to Final Fantasy fans but he has helped shape many role-playing games that Square Enix and tri-Ace have collaborated on over many years. This includes **Radiata Stories**, a game with an immersive world governed by time.

Before his work on the PSP version of **Final Fantasy Type-0**, Nishida was also a prominent design planner for the **Star Ocean** series, working on franchise titles like, **The Second Story**, **Blue Sphere**, and **Til the End of Time**.

He's quickly becoming a face to watch for FF fans - he's made the jump to Director for Type-0's mobile-based spin-off **Agito** - and if the 'Type' series continues, Nishida will likely be deeply involved.

by **Tony Garsow** @TonyGarsow [Editor, *FinalFantasy.net*]

# Hajime Tabata

## Director, Final Fantasy Type-0

**Also Worked on:** Crisis Core: FFVII, Before Crisis: FFVII, The 3rd Birthday

**Now:** Director, Final Fantasy XV



Despite being a relatively recent addition to Square Enix's Final Fantasy production team, Hajime Tabata has proved to be a safe pair of hands indeed - and now finds himself close to the top of the most successful Japanese RPG franchise around.

It was Tetsuya Nomura who personally requested Tabata work on the series, tasking him with creating a mobile-based prequel to **FFVII**, **Before Crisis**. Success in this project led to him being placed in charge of **Crisis Core: FFVII** as his next project.

In many ways, **Crisis Core** is the project that finally made the man and his career. A critical and commercial success, where the other big-budget **FFVII** sequel **Dirge of Cerberus** had failed to interest fans, **Crisis Core** succeeded. Suddenly, Hajime Tabata was a name to watch.

Tabata became Square Enix's go-to handheld director, taking on duties for **Parasite Eve: The 3rd Birthday** and **Kingdom Hearts: Coded** - but his return to FF with **Final Fantasy Agito XIII**, later **Final Fantasy Type-0**, would prove a fateful appointment.

Type-0 was as successful as **Crisis Core**, and when the time came for Tetsuya Nomura to move on from his work as Director of **Final Fantasy XV**, Tabata's name only seemed natural - even if most of his experience had been mobile and handheld based.

Tabata is known to not be the greatest fan of the traditional style of FF game - he's in truth more interested in action-driven gameplay systems, and is known to be a fan of Western- and Open World games.

These tastes are represented strongly in his work. Type-0, **Crisis Core** and **The 3rd Birthday** all feature action-based combat, while **FFXV** features a semi-open world design.

He's now certainly one of Square Enix's top names, and in addition to **FFXV** has finally taken on two Producer roles - for Type-0 HD and **Agito**, its mobile-based spin-off.



# Takeharu Ishimoto

Composer, Final Fantasy Type-0

Also Worked on: FFX, Crisis Core: FFVII, Dissidia, The World Ends With You

Now: Composer, Dissidia: Final Fantasy Arcade



Takeharu Ishimoto and Hajime Tabata have become something of a team, collaborating on a number of portable Final Fantasy efforts - but Ishimoto has his own claim to fame, too.

The composer of 2007 cult hit **The World Ends With You**, that game's funky genre-hopping soundtrack - which featured a number of notable guest artists - made Ishimoto one of Square Enix's top composers almost overnight.

TWEWY's soundtrack is considered a classic, and takes up a quarter of the space on its DS cart - significant even for the standards of the often more musically-driven Square Enix.

Ishimoto's first brush with FF came in 2001 as a Synthesizer Programmer on **FFX** alongside Ryo Yamazaki and Keiji Kawamori of Nobuo Uematsu's 'Black Mages' rock band. In 2004 he first collaborated with Tabata, composing the score for **Before Crisis** and **Last Order**, pairing all-new and often guitar-driven material with arrangements of classic pieces from **FFVII**.

That work led to Ishimoto becoming the go-to guy for FF spin-off music. He composed and arranged the scores for **Crisis Core**, **Dissidia** and even provided additional work on two handheld **Kingdom Hearts** adventures.

In 2011, Ishimoto tackled **Type-0**. No longer having to conform to another composer's style as he did with FFVII and KH-based outings, Ishimoto aimed to impress - and did. His score earned praise and accolades, and many fans began to regard him as the most logical successor to Uematsu's signature FF sound.

Since Type-0's success, Ishimoto has gone on to rearrange his work there for the HD version of the game, and is currently working on the newly announced Dissidia Arcade title.

Ishimoto says he first became interested in music as a result of his country upbringing - out where he lived, there simply wasn't much to do. He's a skilled guitarist, and has played in two bands - SAWA, and The Death March, the latter of which covers some of Ishimoto's video game work in a rock style.

# Yusuke Naora

Art Director, Final Fantasy Type-0

Also Worked on: FFVI, VII Series, VIII, X, XIII Series, Chaos Rings

Now: Art Director, Final Fantasy XV



Yusuke Naora joined Squaresoft in 1993 - a time where games were developed with strict limitations on what could be expressed visually - a time when competition over limited memory and resources meant survival of the best ideas.

Starting off as field graphics planner for **FFVI**, he continued his work on the series as an art director for **FFVII** (and its Compilation), **FFVIII**, **FFX**, and **Type-0** - and that's just a sample of his major roles.

While it seems the creative wellspring from which the muted and machinated cityscapes of **FFVI** and the warm water-world of **FFX**'s Spira would be limitless, Naora admits the following:

"Not everything can be covered by one's own imagination and fantasy and thus, the importance of one's own experience."

Personal experiences have colored many of his efforts, and Type-0 is no exception. One of Naora's previous bosses forced him on a fishing trip to an island that inspired the same one that is home to the academy in Rubrum in which Class Zero trains.

In one of the game's promotional artworks, we see Machina and Rem standing over a dying Bahamut. This scene was inspired by a more poignant experience in which he saw a dying cat that had been hit by a car encircled by other cats - something he used to illustrate the bond between cadets and their idols.

In developing Type-0 HD, one thing you may have noticed in various promotional artwork (including the logo) was a shift in color from red to gold. Naora says that the change in colors helps showcase the leap in hardware capability from the original version.

As the art director of the upcoming Final Fantasy XV, you'll be able to experience a sample of his new work in the Episode Duscae demo. We're looking forward to what artistic inspirations Yusuke Naora can continue to bring to Final Fantasy.



# Head-to-Head: PSP versus New-Gen. Not a fair fight.

One of the things that **Final Fantasy Type-0 HD** undoubtedly gets right is many of the aspects of its visual upgrade. While fans are likely going to find themselves debating if the game really needed the horsepower of the *PlayStation 4* and the *Xbox One* over the previous generation of hardware, what's plain is that a lot of work has been done to the character models and even the environments to give the game a high-definition, big-screen sheen.

"We felt that our fans would be able to enjoy a deeper and prolonged experience with the game if it were on a larger medium," game director Hajime Tabata explained in an interview with Square Enix's official blog.

Describing it as a stepping stone to *FFXV*, Tabata has also said that key lessons learned during that game's development have been used to "refine" *Type-0 HD* visually.

Here, we take a look at some examples of the game's visual overhaul.



Queen takes some downtime between missions.  
**Left: PSP // Below: Type-0 HD**



**Above: Ace before (inset) and after Type-0's HD upgrade - note not only new textures, but more detailed models and all-new lighting.**

**Below: Battles rage, and while HUD elements are identical, the battle visuals clearly are not.**





# Side Quests:

## Type-0 in Alternate Media

As is often the case for Final Fantasy, Type-0 has seen its share of spin-off media - including two manga serializations and two short novels.

One manga volume, drawn by **Taketoshi Shiozawa** with scenarios by **Hiroki Chiba**, is included in translated form in the game's Western Collector's Edition.

Originally published in installments in *Shonen Gangan* magazine, the volume focuses on a mission members of Class Zero participate in as well as the introduction of Rem and Machina. Some background is provided, but the majority of the story is written assuming the player is already familiar with the world of Orience.

Given that it neither adds nor subtracts from the game's story, it's worth reading prior to playing to establish familiarity with the setting and characters. The manga was discontinued after four chapters.

Shiozawa then started a second series titled **Final Fantasy Type-0: Reaper of the Icy Blade**, also serialized in *Shonen Gangan*. This time Shiozawa wrote the stories under **Tetsuya Nomura's** supervision. The series finished early in 2014 and encompasses five volumes. An English release has not been announced.

Its story takes place nine years prior to the game and focuses on the history of Kurasame Sasaya, Class Zero's leader. In his youth, he was a talented fighter and graduated from Vermillion Peristyrum Class First. His nickname was "Reaper of the Icy Blade" and he was a member of the legendary Four Heavenly Kings.

In a world where memories of the dead are lost, Kurasame makes every effort to remember the events that have passed. His iconic mask hides those secrets - and all is revealed in this series.

Two short novels titled **Final Fantasy Type-0: Change the World** also followed the game's PSP release. Titled **The Answer** and **The Penultimate Truth**, both volumes were written by Souki Tsukishima.

The novel's story begins with a scene that occurs in game, but the events that unfold from there happen differently. The world of Orience is trapped in a time loop, leading to a dramatic alternate-history story.

Each chapter is written from a different character's perspective, with follow ups and a conclusion in the second volume. If these fascinating stories will ever be released in English remains unknown.



## Agito Lives On Via Mobile

While the original vision for Agito XIII was partially lost as the game moved off cell phones, some of its vision lives on in a new spin-off, appropriately titled **Final Fantasy Agito**.

Pitched by Square Enix as an 'alternate take' on the Type-0 universe, produced by original director **Hajime Tabata** with Star Ocean veteran **Masayasu Nishida** taking the director's chair.

The title features a turn-based combat system as the Type-0 series returns to its mobile-based roots as a free-to-play iOS and Android download with in-app payments - though a PlayStation Vita version is also now in the works.

Type-0's playable cast return in supporting roles, the story considered an alternate take on Type-0's world rather than a direct continuation. It twists the familiar from the original game in new ways.

Published in a chapter-based episodic structure, the game is obviously designed to grab players.

Choice is a key concept of the game, with decisions players make in one episode carrying over to the next. Surprisingly, this offers a sense of consequence for actions that even the original game didn't have - and also adds replay value through working to see different story outcomes.

The mobile version released its last chapter in September 2014, though a January 2015 release for the Vita version was missed - keeping Agito XIII tradition - due to development problems.

While no word has been given on a Western version of Final Fantasy Agito, Square Enix registered a European trademark for the title's name and logo way back in September 2013. Only time will tell if this version of Agito will ever make it over.

## Musical Magic

Type-0's music is arguably one of the best parts of the game - and it's proved popular with fans.

Writing for a heavy, dark sound, composer **Takeharu Ishimoto** and orchestrator **Kentaro Sato** worked with the **Sydney Symphony Orchestra** to create an iconic sound. The resulting soundtrack saw a commercially successful release, and a new CD set featuring HD's remastered tracks is to be released.

Ishimoto tapped Japanese rock band **Bump of Chicken** to write the game's main vocal theme, 'Zero', which also saw huge success, reaching #2 in the Japanese charts and remaining in the charts for an impressive 32 weeks.

Ishimoto continues to mark himself as a strong candidate for **Nobuo Uematsu's** FF successor. **Final Fantasy XVI** soundtrack, anyone?



# The Verdicts:

## Type-0 HD: What we thought.

Given that this project has been created by a group of fans from different FF communities online, a single review wouldn't necessarily represent all of our viewpoints.

Rather than hand one writer or website the duty of delivering this group effort's verdict, we asked a variety of our contributors to give their thoughts.

Some of them have finished the game, some haven't yet - but all have spent significant time with it and have formed strong opinions as a result.

We strongly recommend you click through to each contributing member site listed on Page 2 to find their full Type-0 HD reviews - but, in short, here is what some of us thought.

**“Even with its clear technical frailties, Type-0 HD still manages to show substance, and that’s primarily because of the engaging story and expansive gameplay mechanics.”**

There were plenty of false starts but it's finally here! At last, I've been able to end my spoiler blackout on FF Type-0 and play it for myself.

As a FF fan, finally being able to properly play Type-0 after all these years is fantastic. Having for the most part been able to block out spoilers has also really paid off. I've been able to go into it fresh, and I've been greatly enjoying it so far.

The story, meanwhile, is quite dark in tone for a title in the FF series. This doesn't have a negative impact, however - the story told is a strong one. I was hooked quickly and have stayed that way.

Even though there's 14 characters, they all get their time in the spotlight and develop well. They all have their own little personality quirks that still somehow fit into this dark, war-focused FF story.

**“While there’s minor issues with the HD conversion, it’s likely clear I’m thoroughly impressed so far.”**

Despite its remastering into HD, there's many places where you can still recognize this was a PSP game. I admit this bugs me a bit - the visual upgrades are impressive, but no matter how hard you squint it's hard to see why it isn't on the Vita instead. The good news however is that fact doesn't detract from combat, the game's core.

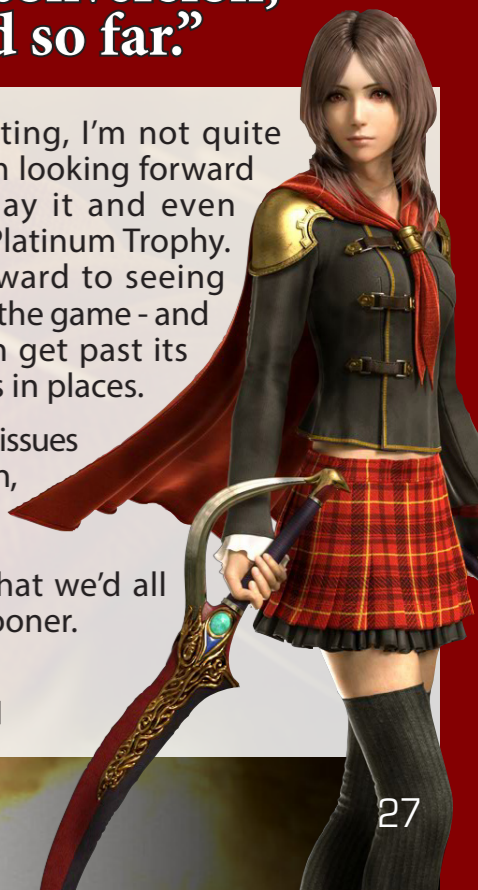
Type-0's Combat takes a little while to get used to, even with the tutorials available. It's during that learning period that the fact that this was originally a PSP title fully dawns - but once you get used to it, combat feels absolutely fantastic and pretty fluid.

I'll admit to some points where I felt a little cheated by the game, and ranged characters do feel a little over-powered - but still! It's fun, satisfying, and mostly challenging in a fair way.

At the time of writing, I'm not quite done with Type-0. I'm looking forward to continuing to play it and even eventually grab the Platinum Trophy. I'm also looking forward to seeing how other fans enjoy the game - and how well people can get past its still PSP-esque visuals in places.

While there's minor issues with the HD conversion, it's likely clear I'm thoroughly impressed thus far. I only wish that we'd all been able to play it sooner.

by **Erin Jenison** @rinimt  
[Owner, FFandMore.com]







After a nearly forty hour play through of **Final Fantasy Type-0 HD**, I find it telling that my first instinct is to jump right into new game plus.

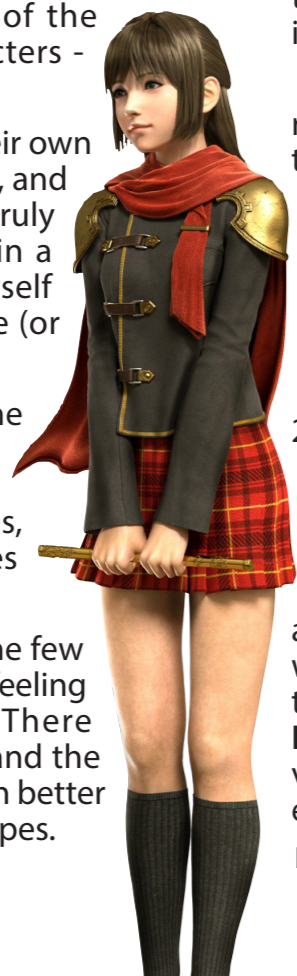
The fact that it can successfully combine all the classic, old-school elements of the Final Fantasy series – a world map, airships, summons, and magic - with an action based battle system where every move can mean life or death, makes me confident in the series' future.

Boy does that battle system hold up well, thanks primarily to the introduction of the title's fourteen playable characters - each members of Class Zero.

Each character comes with their own unique skill trees and play styles, and it's because of this that there is truly something for everyone. Within a few hours you'll likely find yourself latching on to your favorite one (or two, or three...) cadets, as I did.

With that said, I do oppose the suggestion that this a 'more mature' Final Fantasy. Yes, this is a story of four warring kingdoms, but a few bloody Chocobos does not make a game mature.

In fact, this has been one of the few FF titles where I've found myself feeling disengaged from the story. There simply isn't much depth there, and the characterization never gets much better than your typical anime stereotypes.



Some of the **Fabula Nova Crystallis** lore the game is ultimately shouldered with doesn't really help matters either. Type-0 does a better job of handling these thematic links, but I still feel that the entire concept of gods having an active role in the story diminishes the importance of decisions made by the major mortal players in this world – relegating it all to fate or the will of these beings.

While its satisfying and challenging combat means I'll be happy to see further installments in the 'Type' series, I will be truly happy if this mythos is cast aside in future installments.

Concepts unique to Type-0's story don't quite reach their potential either - particularly in how the reality of death is handled in a game that is all about war - but these are matters perhaps best discussed by the fans once everybody has had a chance to see the game's story for themselves.

Type-0 HD is a thoughtful experimentation in what a FF title can be. Square Enix and Hexadrive have done an impressive job bringing what was a 2011 portable game to new console hardware. The visual upgrades arguably don't go far enough, however, with the title's PSP roots still plainly apparent in both presentation and gameplay.

If you have specific expectations about what a current generation Final Fantasy should be, I would be much more comfortable recommending the always online but single player friendly **Final Fantasy XIV** - but Type-0 is also an admirable vision of what a modern, high quality FF gameplay experience can and should be.

by **Sharjeel Hanif** @jeelybeans [Contributor, *FinalFantasy.net*]

Back in the days of **Final Fantasy Agito XIII**, I had little interest in the mobile *Fabula Nova Crystallis* title. When the team shifted development to the PSP and renamed it **Final Fantasy Type-0**, suddenly the game had my attention.

I followed the title's 2011 Japanese release with hope that we'd get to play it soon in North America, but when it never appeared I was afraid I would have to settle for the fan translation.

Though I had to wait four years for a PlayStation 4 release, and was even accidentally teased with a Vita version that didn't happen, I'm happy to say it was worth the wait.

With fourteen playable characters, each with their own skills, weapons, and personalities, Type-0's cast is one of my favorite parts of the game. Be it Ace with his cards or Seven with her whip blade, there is a lot of variety to how you play. The game's action combat system is simple in practice, but fairly deep once you get into it.

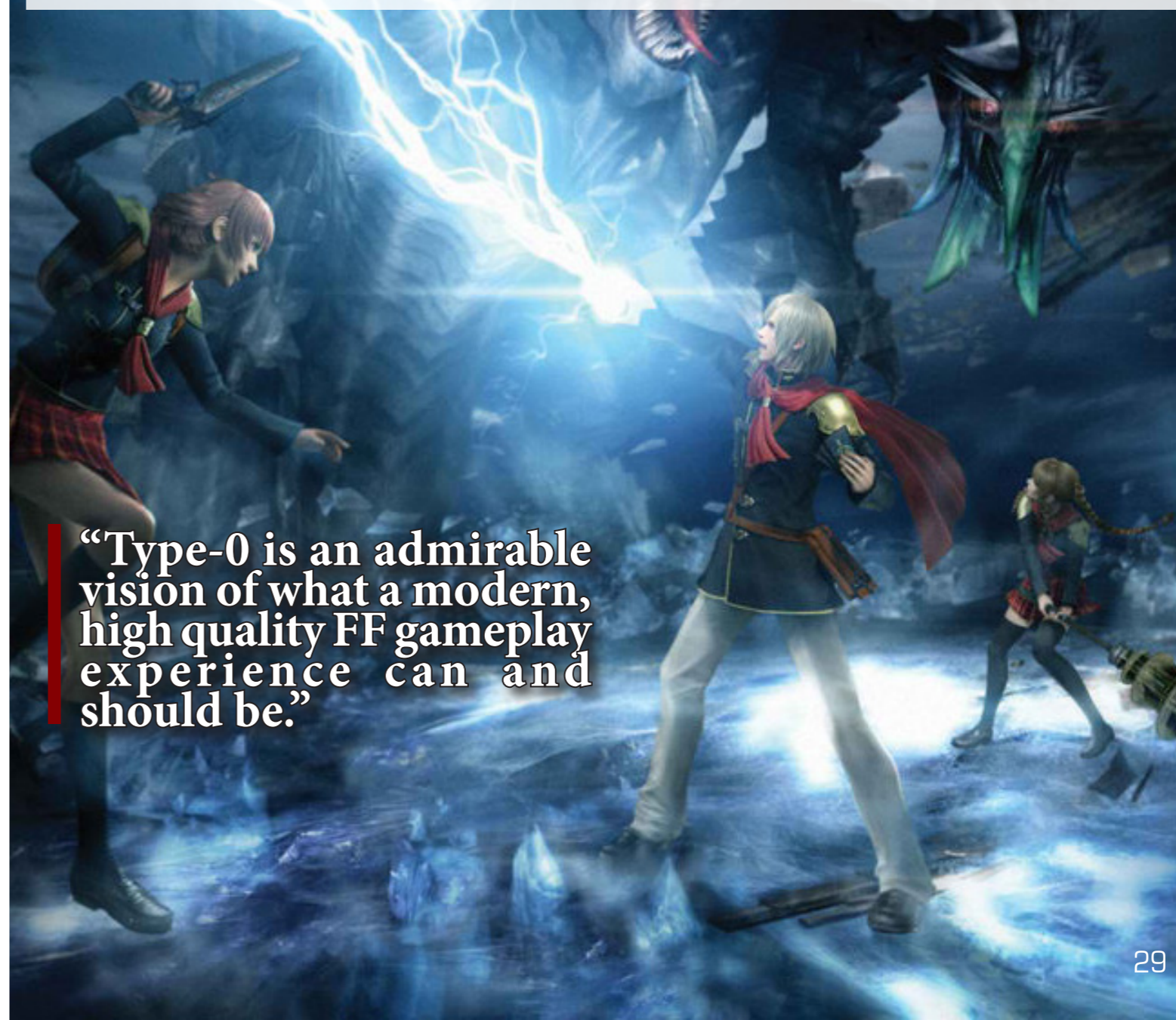
While I don't want to talk too much about the story, I will say that I've grown to care for Class Zero more than I ever did for Lightning and her crew.

No mention of **Final Fantasy Type-0** is complete without praising the game's composer, Takeharu Ishimoto. Having been a fan of Ishimoto's work on the game since 2011, the new remastered version of the soundtrack is a breath of fresh air.

Ishimoto's work on *Crisis Core* was outstanding, but he's truly outdone himself on Type-0. Machina and Rem's individual themes are some of the most emotional and powerful pieces of music he's done so far and it just fits perfectly with other more action-themed tracks like *Servant of the Crystal*.

**Final Fantasy Type-0 HD** might not be without flaws, but it's fun in a way that I've been craving out of a single-player Final Fantasy game for nearly a decade. I really hope all those people picking this up simply to get the **Final Fantasy XV** demo really give it a shot, but the game is a blast.

by **Michael A. Cunningham** @FinalMacstorm [Editor, *RPGamer.com*]



**"Type-0 is an admirable vision of what a modern, high quality FF gameplay experience can and should be."**



Despite many hurdles along the way, it's pleasing to see that **Final Fantasy Type-0** has now arrived on Western shores in the form of Final Fantasy Type-0 HD - and arrives fully intact.

Sure, it may not be arriving as many envisioned, but that should not detract from what ends up being another solid game developed under the direction of **Hajime Tabata**.



Even with its clear technical frailties, Type-0 HD still manages to show substance, and that's primarily because of the engaging story and expansive gameplay mechanics.

The cast of characters, despite often taking a back seat to the wider theatre of war, have plenty of time to showcase their unique characteristics. And on the battlefield their uniqueness shines through in spades.

Each of them brandishes a modernised homage to the classic and more recent Final Fantasy job



classes, and it's a move that doesn't just tickle a nostalgic itch - it also provides plenty of choice when it comes to play styles.

As an Action RPG, it also succeeds in providing the right level of challenge. Due to the killsight gameplay mechanic and pretty tight controls, there is always the chance that you can progress through the game based on skill alone.

With that said, if you're a more traditional RPG fan, it's a perfectly viable tactic to grind those levels out in order to make the sailing smoother.

Let's be clear though - Final Fantasy Type-0 is very much a game that sits in the spin-off category. Due to its humble mobile-based beginnings, it just doesn't have the same level of depth and quality of a main series title.

However, what this does represent is a firm foot in the door and should Square Enix wish to continue with the 'Type' series as a sub-franchise of its very own, they have created a good base.

by **Darryl Kaye** @DarrylGU [Owner, *FinalFantasyUnion.com*]

**“When I thought I'd fully settled into playing as a particular character, I'd bring another into the fray and end up liking them even more!”**

It's been a very long time - perhaps forever - since I've seen so much diversity in a Final Fantasy title with the way its cast of characters can be played during combat.

In Type-0, you get to choose a three member party from the entire list of Class Zero cadets, and you can then switch between them at will, being able to directly control whichever character you want at any moment.

What's impressive is that every single character in Class Zero has a different set of skills that sets them apart from their classmates.



Do you like ranged attacks with an element of chance? If so, Ace can attack at a distance with a deck of cards, drawing from the deck to create several types of effects.

Maybe you like to get up close and personal with your enemy? For that, Eight uses his fists as his weapon like a classic FF monk, using different types of stances to perform combos. If you would rather support the party, Deuce can simply play her flute in battle to enhance the abilities of her allies.

In addition to already having large differences between them, each one of the Class Zero cadets can unlock new abilities as you progress through the game's lengthy series of missions. Each choice you make further tailors the Class to how you want to play, and it's important to balance out who you use to level the class relatively evenly.

As cliched as it sounds, this means that there's truly something for everybody in combat. Just when I thought I'd fully settled into playing as a particular character, I'd bring another into the fray and end up liking them even more!

This diversity is, without doubt, Type-0's greatest asset - and it's keeping me well engaged.

by **Andrew Copeland** @rofldr [Editor, *GamerEscape.com*]



# New Frontiers: Onward to FFXV

There's no doubt **Final Fantasy XV** is important to Square Enix. For the past six months or so even the slightest whisper of Type-0 HD has been accompanied by parading out the latest bit of information on the next flagship game in the series.

Birthered as **Final Fantasy Versus XIII** before being bumped to numbered in 2012, fans worldwide will finally be getting their hands on a playable chunk of the game after 9 years.

Titled **Episode Duscae** after the region where it's set, the demo is packed in with first copies of Type-0 HD and will be available for a limited time after launch. Once you've got your hands on it, though, you can keep that download on your console and play it indefinitely.

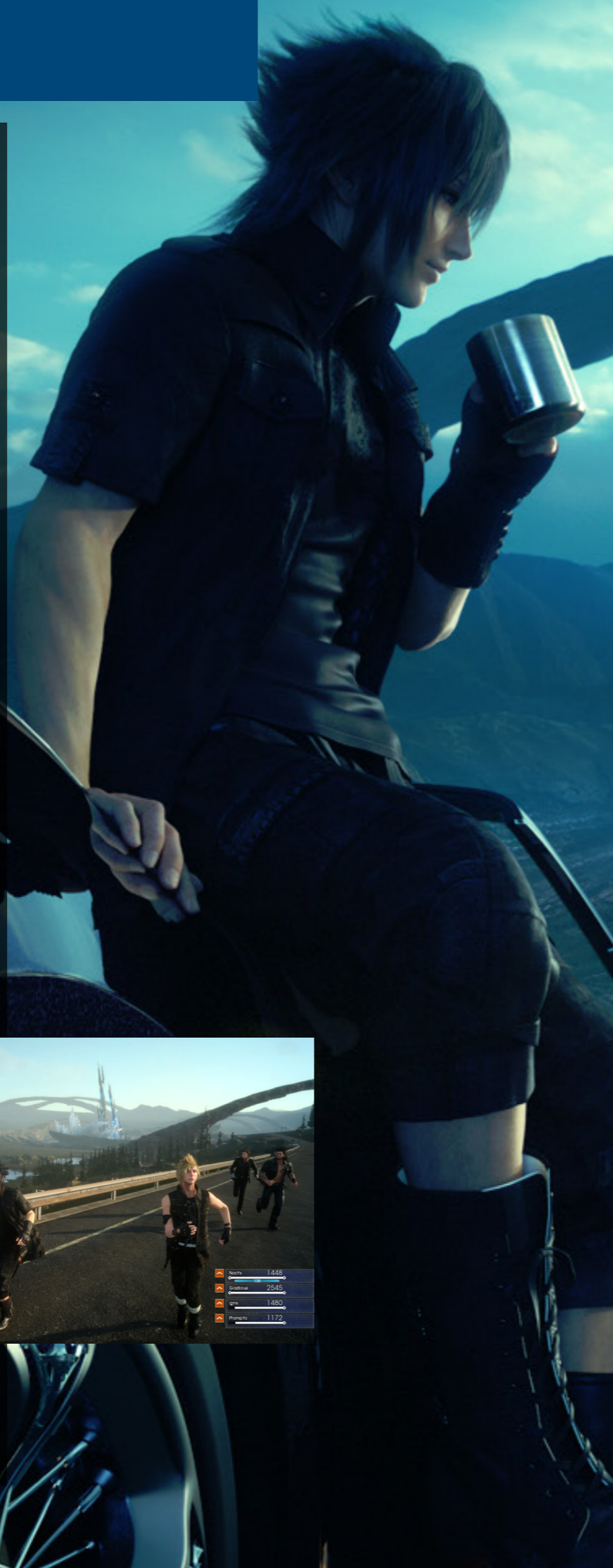
As the first playable portion available to the public, Episode Duscae runs on Square Enix's still in-development **Luminous Engine**.

Crafted by Luminous Studio, this latest technology is able to render an enormous sense of realism and detail, with even greater quality promised for the final version.

Players will be able to venture about the region of Duscae, taking control of princely protagonist Noctis as he and his pals explore the plains, woods, caves and other points of interest available in the demo region.

The main theme here is exploration, giving a taste of the more open world structure the final game will take. You'll be on foot for the entire duration, with the snazzy car the crew drive out of action thanks to a certain blonde-haired member of the gang damaging it.

In order to pay off the cost of the repairs, the gang take on quests and other adventures in a limited but still large expanse of land.



Combat is where this FF outing is arguably most different to its predecessors, with FFXV sporting an entirely real-time action based system for the first time in the main-line numbered series.

Players assume control of Noctis only, with other party members controlled by AI. While the demo won't let you customize the other characters just yet, the ability to enable assignments evocative of FFXII's Gambits will be present in the final version.

For now, Episode Duscae will let you dabble a bit with Noctis' various weapon types, all of which he summons out of thin air – be they lighter, more agile types or the slower but heavier hitting great swords.

Aside from combat, a look at open-world exploration and a tease at story events and quests, FFXV's demo also offers an early look at the game's summoning system.

A secret but familiar Eidolon is available in the demo - but that's top secret. Trust us and stay spoiler-free - you'll want to see this one the first time for yourself!

Also available for the first time in the demo is FFXV's full day/night cycle and camping - an expansion on FF's traditional tent mechanic.

Players level up with their accumulated experience when they camp, while one member of the crew cooks food to bestow buffs on the squad for the following day, while others sit around gossiping and conversing.

To hear Square Enix tell it, playing through Episode Duscae's story should take around 2-3 hours. Players can of course extend that time by collecting secret items and taking the time to explore the map - and the dedicated can level up to a max cap of 99.

For a demo, Episode Duscae is pretty meaty and surpasses its contemporaries in a lot of ways. Its inclusion with another game is similar to how demos for titles like FFXIII, FFX and FFXIII were released.

With the full version of Final Fantasy XV still in development, it's likely the only thing we'll have to play of it until an eventual launch next year - but this is quite the appetiser.

by **Erren Van Duine** @ErrenVanDuine  
[Owner, NovaCrystallis.com]

**“My goal is to have people play FFXV, and for them to think this is the best FF they've ever played.”**

- Hajime Tabata on FFXV, 2014 [Eurogamer]







**“It’s been a long time. Too Long.  
Not much longer.”**

See you next time.