

Total Confusion 40 (Feb 2026) Puffing Billy® Tournament Rules

Conductor: David Mitton

--- Preliminary, subject to change ---

Please note that this convention uses the following Categories, which are different than the current Train Gamer's Association national PBT assignments:

Category 1	Ticket to Ride all board game variants
Category 2	Empire Builder - (North America, Lunar, Mars, Short)
Category 3	Empire Builder International (long) [TGA Cat 2]
Category 4	1830 & 18XX Short [TGA Cat 3] 1824, 1825, 1846, 1851, 1867, 1889, 18AL, , 18Chesapeake, 18Dixie, 18EZ, 18GA, 18LA, 18MS,18TN *
Category 5	18XX Long [TGA Cat 3] 1817, 1826, 1829, 1831, 1832, 1835, 1837, 1841, 1850, 1853, 1856, 1861, 1862, 1869, 1870, 1880, 18EU, 18NY *
Category 6	Union Pacific, Santa Fe, Freight Train, Ticket to Ride Card Game, Station Master, Hell Rails, Railways of the World Card Game, Days of Steam, First Train to Nuremberg, all train-themed card games and other light weight games, Express, Settlers of America, Rolling Freight and all other 3-hour games * [TGA Cats 4 & 7]
Category 7	Metro, Cable Car, Streetcar, Chicago Express, Ride the Rails, 20 th Century Limited, TransAmerica, TransEuropa, Transport, Railway Rivals / Dampfross, On the Underground, Circus Train, Paris Connections, Spectral Rails, Stephenson's Rocket, Trains, Mexican Train Dominos and all other 2 hour games * [TGA Cat 5]
Category 8	Silverton, Steam, Steam Barons, Age of Steam, Railways of the World all board game variants, Rails of New England, Brass / Age of Industry, * [TGA Cats 6 & 8]
Category 9	Rail Baron, Boxcars, Baltimore and Ohio and all other 4 hour or longer games. Including: 18OE and 18C2C

* For any games not specifically listed please consult with conductor

Puffing Billy® Tournament Scoring

Your score for this weekend-long Puffing Billy® Tournament is the total of scores from your best of four different categories. Your category score consists of the best individual PBT score for any one game in that category, PLUS your best final's bonus earned within that category.

Your score for the weekend-long Iron Man is the total of your best individual PBT scores in all nine categories, excluding finals bonuses. There is no prize award for Iron Man at Total Confusion.

Your PBT score for an individual game is based on where you finish. First place receives a base of 3 points, second place gets 2 base points, third place gets 1 base point, and fourth place gets 0 base points. The winner receives a bonus based on how much they beat the other players, and second through fourth place receives a bonus score based on how close they were to first place. If you play more than one game in a category, your best score(s) in that category will count for the tournament and finals.

If you place in a tournament final, you will receive a bonus of 10% of your PBT score for the final game, which is added to your best score in that category.

Tournament Rules:

Some tournament rules differ slightly from the printed rules, and some games (e.g. all Empire Builder style games) require the players at the table to agree on how they will play certain rules. Please also see definitions of Qualifying and Pick-up Games described below. If you have any questions about the overall tournament or any game rules, please ask the conductor.

Game Time Limits:

Most games are scheduled in 4-hour time slots. 18XX Long games are often scheduled in double slots, but are expected to take not more than 6 hours (except finals) with breaks. Please try to finish games within the allowed time period. This means ending the play of the game *early* enough that final scoring and clean-up can be accomplished by the actual end of the time slot.

In order to allow a wide variety of games and to fit into the overall convention schedule, many of the 18XX games are on a tight schedule. Please allow players of a previous game sufficient time to take a 15-minute break before a new game starts, even if this means delaying the start beyond the scheduled time.

Delay of Game:

Players must play their turn in a reasonable period of time (usually less than five minutes). If a player delays more than this, they will be warned. On subsequent turns, they may be penalized by a fine in the money of the game system. This rule is meant to encourage the completion of the game within the time period.

Dropout Penalties:

Players are expected to play a game to completion. If someone abandons a game in progress, they will be disqualified from that event category, forfeiting any other game score. If they drop out of two games, they will be disqualified from the tournament.

Pick-up Games:

Unscheduled games, if approved in advance by the conductor, are allowed to score in non-finals event categories, finishing by 7pm on Sunday. An official score sheet must be submitted, with the final score and all player's full names. The regular event fees (generic tickets) must also be paid by all players (Three players minimum).

Kibitzing:

Players may only communicate with other players over the board if allowed to do so under the rules of the game. Under no circumstances may any player literally play another player's position or delay the game by attempting to persuade a player to take a specific action. Secret agreements are not allowed.

Secrecy & Disclosure:

Players should play with the disclosure rules as written. Some game rules are not clear (such as 1830), in which case the players should agree how they will play at the beginning of the game. This writer prefers secret player cash, and open corporate cash or all open cash.

Finals:

To play in a final you must first qualify. Qualification is by the following methods and varies from game to game.

Should there be insufficient qualifying round winners willing to play in the final in any game; second place finishers may be added to make even game(s) of 3, 4 or 5 people at the discretion of the Conductor. Second place finishers who advance to the final in this manner will be advanced in order of their PB points that they scored in the qualifying round(s) of that game. If there are insufficient players willing to attend, the conductor may make the award to the top PBT score in the category.

Ticket to Ride: Is run as part of the TC's NER Tournament, with credit to your PBT score. You must win a TTR game to advance to the semifinals. Qualifying games must be played during scheduled rounds. Contact the general Board Game desk for any questions, and the details of schedules for the semifinals and finals games. Pickup TTR games may be played for PBT score credit, but will not be considered part of the NER.

1830: You must win an 18XX Short Category game in a preceding regular round. The 18XX Short finals game is scheduled for **1 PM Saturday**. There may be more than one final board with high PBT score winning. All finals boards get full finals bonus points.

Empire Builder: You must win an Empire Builder game in a preceding regular round. The Empire Builder finals game is scheduled for **7 PM Saturday**. There may be more than one final board of Empire Builder. All final boards get full finals bonus points, highest PBT score wins.

Empire Builder International (EBI): Your three best place finishes in different games during the qualifying rounds of Categories 2 & 3, *not including Empire Builder itself*, are added together and ranked. The top five players get first option to play. Should a qualified player pass on the opportunity to play in this final, the next person in the rankings becomes qualified. Any game from Categories 2 & 3 (except for EB) is eligible to be played in the EBI final the exact game to be chosen as described below under *Which Game*. The EBI Final is formally scheduled for **10 PM Saturday but may be run immediately after the Empire Builder Final finishes.**

18XX Long: Your three best place finishes in different games during the qualifying rounds in both 18XX Categories 4 & 5, *excluding 1830*, are added together and ranked. The top four players get first option to play. If there are an insufficient number of unique and willing players, the final may be awarded to the top PBT score in the 18XX Long category. Should a qualified player pass on the opportunity to play in this final, the next person in the rankings becomes qualified. Any game in Categories 4 & 5 (except for 1830) is eligible to be played in the 18XX final, the exact game to be chosen as described below under *Which Game*. There is only one final board for 18XX. The 18XX final is scheduled for **8 AM Sunday** (*if held, recently the players have declined*)

Which Game? Where more than one game is possible for use in the final, such as in 18XX or EBI, each player makes a choice of the game they wish to play. Each player's choice is weighted, by the number of players in the game, less the player's entering position, and then randomized to select the game. For example, assume a four-player final; The first place player puts three chits in a cup for the game he prefers, the second place player two, the third player one, and the fourth player is thankful to have made it in! One chit is then drawn and that game will be the game used in the final. Every player in the final must have played the selected game at least once and a game choice may be vetoed by the conductor.

Prizes:

Awards are typically presented as follows, along with some additional prize credits. Changes may be made depending on the number of players present at the convention, and the whims and fortunes of the convention Board Game staff, which we are part of.

Please note the scores posted on the wall during the convention. Prizes are typically awarded Sunday afternoon.

Major Trophy or Plaque:

- Puffing Billy Tournament Overall – The player with the best score total from 4 categories
 - First – Plaque + Cash
 - Second – Cash only
 - Third – Cash only

Trophy or Plaque:

- Ticket to Ride Finals winner
- 1830 Finals winner
- Empire Builder Finals winner
- Empire Builder International Finals winner
- 18XX Finals winner

Minor prizes, highest PBT score in categories without finals: (See detailed category listings on first page)

- Cat 6 – Card based games, 3-hour games
- Cat 7 – Café, Euro style, 2-hour games
- Cat 8 – Silverton, Steam, AoS, Railways of the World
- Cat 9 – Rail Baron, Long Rail Games, 4hours+

Bragging Rights:

- Ironman score – Total PBT score across all categories