

# Puffing Billy<sup>®</sup> Major Tournament Categories for 2026

Category 1	<b>Ticket to Ride</b> - all full-length board games ( <b>TTR System</b> tournament)
Category 2	<b>Empire Builder System</b> – all games (separate <b>Empire Builder System</b> and <b>EB:Europe</b> (Eurorails) tournaments)
Category 3	18xx - all variants, <b>Boxcars</b> - all variants, and Silverton
Category 4	First Class, Railroad Revolution, <b>Rolling Freight</b> , and <b>Russian Railroads</b>
Category 5	<b>Free Ride</b> , Metro, The Last Spike, Trans America / Europa, GM&O (and similar “cube” games), Hell Rails, and unlisted games with expected play time of 75 minutes or shorter*
Category 6	<b>On the Underground</b> , Freight Train, <b>Union Pacific</b> , Santa Fe, Spike, Switching Tracks, Transport, and unlisted games with expected play time of 76 to 120 minutes*
Category 7	<b>Express</b> , Maglev Metro, <b>Lightning Train</b> and unlisted games with expected play time of 121 to 210 minutes*
Category 8	Age of Steam, <b>Railways of the World</b> - all variants, <b>Settlers of America</b> , Steam, and Whistle Stop
Category 9	<b>Brass</b> - all variants, <b>Great Western Trail</b> , Rails of New England, and unlisted games with expected play time of 211 minutes or longer*

\* All games not listed require conductor approval. Confirm the category of any unlisted game before playing. **Bolded games indicate finals. See posted rules. Brass: Birmingham is the only Brass variant with a final.**

## Puffing Billy<sup>®</sup> and Iron Man Tournament Scoring

The highest Puffing Billy<sup>®</sup> Tournament (PBT) score for the weekend among all participants will win the “Puffing Billy<sup>®</sup> Champion” award for that convention. The Puffing Billy<sup>®</sup> Champion at Railcon is designated as the official National Champion for the year. The “Challengers Class Champion” is the highest weekend PBT score among those who have never won a PBT or Challenger Class at Origins, Gen Con, or Railcon.

Your score for the weekend-long Puffing Billy<sup>®</sup> Tournament is the total of scores from your best four different categories (five at Railcon) plus bonuses received from participation in tournament finals. Your weekend-long Iron Man tournament score is your best eight category scores (nine at Railcon), NOT including finals bonuses.

**Category Scores:** Your best PBT score for any one game in a category is your score for that category. Your PBT score for an individual game is based on your finishing position. First place gets a base of 3 points, second place gets 2 points, third place gets 1 point, and fourth through sixth place get 0. In addition, the winner gets a bonus based on the margin of victory, and second through sixth place get a bonus based on how close they were to first place. If you win, your bonus will be larger if you win by a large amount. If you do not win, then your bonus will be larger the closer you finish to first. If you play more than one game in a category, only your best score in that category will count toward the PBT score. The maximum bonus is 0.05.

**Finals Bonus Scores:** For each tournament final you participate in, bonus points are awarded (for PBT, not for Iron Man). The award is 10% of your PBT score for the final game (so finishing in first place would award you 0.3xx bonus points.) At Origins and Gen Con, your four best finals bonuses, regardless of category, will be added to your PBT score (you can have more than one final bonus from a single PBT category). For example, Express and Lightning Train are both Category 7, but if you earn a finals bonus for both games, both bonuses will be added to the PBT score. At Railcon only, all finals bonuses across all categories will be counted toward the final PBT score.

Updated scores will be posted throughout the weekend. Each player is responsible for ensuring your scores are correct. Questions or corrections requests must be submitted at the earliest opportunity to the TGA scoring inbox. Please submit the Correction Forms provided and speak to a conductor if the issue is not resolved soon.

# TGA Tournament Rules and Definitions 2026

***\*BEFORE ANY GAME IS STARTED\* PLEASE MAKE SURE EACH PLAYER AGREES TO THE SCHEDULED LENGTH OF THE GAME AND UNDERSTANDS ALL RELEVANT RULES.***

Some tournament rules differ from the printed rules, and some games have TGA rules clarifications which can evolve from year to year. Please see Time Commitment and definitions of Qualifying and Pick-Up Games below. If you have any questions, please ask a conductor before you begin the game.

## ***TIME COMMITMENT OF PLAYERS***

Once you begin a game, you are committed to finishing that game until the end of the scheduled time slot. Please make sure you know the game length before the game begins. A game cannot be ended short of completion to play in another game that begins before the scheduled end of a game to which you committed. Generally other games (even finals) will NOT be delayed waiting for a player who assumed a game would finish sooner than its scheduled end time.

## ***QUALIFYING GAMES***

Qualifying rounds for each tournament are scheduled at specific starting times. Only the specific scheduled games played at those designated times count towards advancement to the semi-finals and/or final, and only one qualifying game (the first one played) can be counted from each time slot.

## ***ALLOWED SUBSTITUTION OR TIME SHIFTS***

The conductor may allow a different qualifying game to be played instead of the scheduled game, or allow a qualifying game to begin earlier or start later than scheduled. In general, the conductor will ***only*** allow such schedule deviations when doing so facilitates the effective running of the tournament. Under no circumstances can this result in more than one game played in the same slot qualifying for any multi-round tournaments.

## ***PICK-UP GAMES***

Unless an exception is granted as outlined above, any game other than the designated qualifying game played at its scheduled time is a pick-up game. A pick-up game is a separate event, and requires a new score sheet with payment (ticket, generic, or valid Puffing Billy ribbon). Such games must be approved by a conductor and clearly designated as a pick-up game on the score sheet. If any game or game system is played more than once in its scheduled slot, the first game played is the qualifier, and all subsequent games are pick-up games. A pick-up game does not count as a qualifier for any game or game system with a semi-final or final. However, a pick-up game does count toward the overall Puffing Billy® and Iron Man Tournaments, providing the game is played to completion in a single session without break. Time limits do not apply to a pick-up game.

## ***RULES QUESTIONS, GAME PLAY ISSUES, OR PROTESTS***

The TGA Structure is designed to manage all facets of its tournament operations. The Rules Committee is responsible for all rulings within its tournaments. Please see the posted organizational structure for more details.

If you have any concern about a game or the tournament, please bring it to the attention of a TGA Tournament Conductor as soon as it happens or you become aware of it. You may suspend a game in progress for this purpose without penalty. Any TGA volunteer can help you find a Conductor when needed. If a TGA Conductor is involved in the game or tournament, rulings will be made by an independent Conductor.

Please get any issues addressed immediately, or as soon as you feasibly can. If you feel something was unfair, or there was inappropriate behavior by any player or volunteer, or you wish to protest any game result or conductor ruling, please ask to speak with the Head Conductor or a TGA Senior Tournament Director.