

2026 Empire Builder System (EBS) Tournament – Railcon

TGA uses a 4-Card Start and the official Tiebreaker rule which are published by Darwin's Toys as part of the official EBS tournament rules. The "Build First" rule is not yet published so it is optional for TGA play in 2026 (all players must agree). However, Build First may not be played in the Weekend-Long Semi and Final or the EB: Europe final.

Refer to the handout sheets for details on each of these rules.

Also note changes in the EBS tournament categories below.

The Empire Builder System Tournament is designed to test your ability to play a variety of the Empire Builder system games. These games have been divided into ten categories. Your best scores in five categories plus bonus points for additional categories will be combined to determine your ranking. The categories are:

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|-------------------------------|--|-------------------|----------------------|
| (1) Empire Builder Europe | (2) Empire Builder North America | (3) British Rails | (4) Australian Rails |
| (5) China Rails | (6) India Rails | | (7) Iron Dragon |
| (8) Lunar Rails/Martian Rails | (9) Russian Rails/Empire Builder Ireland | | (10) Nippon Rails |

The top sixteen ranking players, based on EBS qualifier scores for the weekend qualify for the semi-finals to be held on **Saturday at 6:00PM**. If you may have qualified and plan to participate, **please check in at HQ no later than 5:45PM**. Participating in the semi-final game is a commitment to play in the final if you advance.

If you believe you qualified but do not plan to participate, **please inform a conductor** as early as you can so an alternate can plan to show up. If a qualifying player does not check in on time, the conductor in charge will usually go down the ranking list until twelve people are participating in the semi-finals. The top twelve finishers are guaranteed to advance; however, the conductor has the discretion to adjust the tournament structure and number of semi-finalists, based on tournament participation and the number of qualifying players who are present. Game choices and seating at the semi-finals tables will be based on the weekend EBS ranking.

Player rank is determined by qualifying game results. A first-place finish is worth 3 points, second place is worth 2 points, third place 1 point, and fourth place or below 0 points. The points from the five best different categories will be added together. If you play the same game multiple times or multiple games in the same category (e.g. you play Lunar Rails and Martian Rails, or China Rails twice), the best finish in that category will count toward your tournament score. In the case of a tie after looking at five categories, the tie breaker is the points scored in a sixth different category, then (if needed) a seventh category, etc., until there are no additional categories to compare. Ties not broken this way will use the Puffing Billy score calculation to break the tie. The Puffing Billy score gives bonus points based on the actual point scores in the individual games. Finishes in fourth place or below will contribute to the Puffing Billy score tiebreaker but otherwise do not score.

All semi-final boards will play the same game. The top four ranking players choose their preferred game from among the published games above, excluding Empire Builder Europe and Empire Builder Ireland. The game is chosen at random from among those choices, weighted by the choosing player's rank in the top four. Winners will play in the final. Each finalist chooses their preferred game from among the published games above, excluding Empire Builder Europe, Empire Builder Ireland, and whichever game was played in the semi-final. The game is chosen at random from among those choices, weighted by the choosing player's weekend rank.

Updated scores will be posted throughout the weekend. You are responsible for ensuring your scores are correct. Please submit corrections as soon as possible to the TGA scoring table using the Correction Forms provided there. If you would like further clarification of these Tournament rules, please ask a conductor.