

Weekend-Long Tournaments Railcon 2026

The overall Puffing Billy® Tournament awards the Puffing Billy and Challenger Class Champion plaques, based on your best five category scores plus all finals bonuses. The Iron Man tournament score is your best nine category scores, NOT including finals bonuses. You are not required to play in five or nine categories to qualify for these tournaments, but your score will improve if you do so. See the category list for more info.

There are three other weekend-long tournaments designed to test players' abilities in the specific game systems of Ticket to Ride, Empire Builder System, and 18XX. See separate published rules for each tournament listed:

Weekend Long Tournament Schedule

Ticket to Ride (TTR)	Quarter, Semi & Finals	Saturday 9 pm	Top 12 Players* +4 from play-in*
Empire Builder System	Semi & Finals	Saturday 6 pm	Top 16 Players*
18XX	NO Final game	None	Best weekend score

Individual Game Tournaments Railcon 2026

Individual game tournaments consist of two rounds. All winners of the game during an official qualifying round advance to the final round, and some second-place finishers may be accepted as well. The final round will consist of one or more games to determine the winner. Qualifying players must check in for semi-finals or finals at least 15 minutes in advance. If you qualify but do not intend to play, **please** inform the tournament conductor at the earliest opportunity. Second-place finishers who would be interested in participating if space becomes available should also check in 15 minutes prior to scheduled start of the final.

Individual Game Tournament Schedule

Great Western Trail	Finals	Friday 8:45 am
Settlers of America	Finals	Friday Noon
Union Pacific	Finals – TWO GAMES	Friday 3 pm
Boxcars	Finals	Friday 6 pm
On the Underground	Finals	Friday 10 pm
Railways of the World	Finals	Saturday 8:45 am
Rolling Freight	Finals	Saturday noon
Express	Finals	Saturday 3 pm
Russian Railroads	Finals	Saturday 6 pm
Empire Builder: Europe	Finals	Sunday 8:45 am

A finals game is always played to conclusion, even if the game exceeds the scheduled time. Shortened game rules are not used in a final unless specifically announced. The start of a semi or finals game may be delayed waiting for a player who is completing a semi or finals in another game which has run longer than anticipated.

If multiple final boards are played simultaneously, the winner of the game tournament will be the player who wins by the largest percentage margin (i.e., you want to blow out your competition in the final).

*The Conductor has discretion to adjust the number of players or rounds in a final or semi-final, or to issue byes to top ranked players, based on the number of qualifying players who are present.

Number of Semi-Finals and Finals Participants

Typically, semi-finals and finals boards will consist of four players, with some exceptions. Some games are good tests of strategic play with three players, some prefer five. The Head Conductor has the final authority to determine the best alternative, considering the number of winners and second-place finishers available to play, and the game's ideal and acceptable number of final table participants.

Unless otherwise directed by the Conductor, when the number of qualifying finals participants is a number other than an even multiple of the target number, sufficient second-place finishers will be advanced to fill the tables. Second-place finishers will be advanced at random, under the following conditions:

If you have finished second multiple times during the game's qualifiers, you will have a number of chances in the random drawing equal to the number of qualifying second place finishes. Participants who TIED for second place during the qualifier will only have half the chance of advancing as someone who finished alone in second. If you have already been advanced as a second-place finisher to a final that weekend, you will not advance to another final unless there are not sufficient other second place finishers to fill the tables without you.

Seating and Play Order for Qualifiers, Semi-Finals, and Finals

In qualifiers and games without finals, any player may request seating to be randomized, however by default each player may sit at the table where desired. Seats must be chosen prior to selecting the first player if seating position determines play order or matters in any other way. Call a conductor to assist if needed.

In semi-finals and finals, seating will usually be specified by the conductor. If first player is determined randomly in the game (e.g., TTR) then seating randomization may also determine play order. If the game has its own way to determine first player (e.g., EBS) then seating order is determined first, then first player is determined by the game's mechanism.

In semi-finals and finals where applicable, finish order in the previous round and/or weekend long results ***IN THAT GAME OR GAME SYSTEM ONLY*** may be used to determine the seating order for each round. With multiple finals tables, Puffing Billy position and/or historical performance will typically be used to determine who plays at which table, but PB score is ***NEVER*** used to determine seating order at any table.

Tiebreakers

During qualifying rounds, we use TGA tiebreakers for Union Pacific and On the Underground, plus the published tiebreakers for Ticket to Ride, Rolling Freight, Railways of the World, and all Empire Builder Series games. See specific tournament rules for details.

In the event of a tie during a qualifier for which there is no tie breaker, the game will be scored as a tie. All tied first place winners will qualify for the next round. Players who tie for second place may still have a chance to advance, but they will only have half the chance as someone who finished second place outright on another board. For a tie during a semi-final, all tied players will advance, but players who advance on a tie will be placed in a less advantageous position in the next round than equivalent outright finishers where applicable.

A tie (after all other tiebreakers are used) in the final of a weekend-long TTR tournament will be broken by the weekend-long score of the tournament. If a tie for first occurs in a single round tournament final, all tied players will be declared winners and duplicate plaques will be awarded if applicable.