



MINI & EXPRESS

Designed by Mark Gerrits

MINI EXPRESS

Introduction

Mini Express is a strategic train game for 1 to 5 players where you and other wealthy capitalists manage four railroad companies. Each turn, you must decide between 2 actions: increase your holding in a railroad company by taking a share in it, or build track for one of them, extending the reach of its network with the aim of improving the value of your own shares. The player with the highest-valued share portfolio at the end of the game will win!

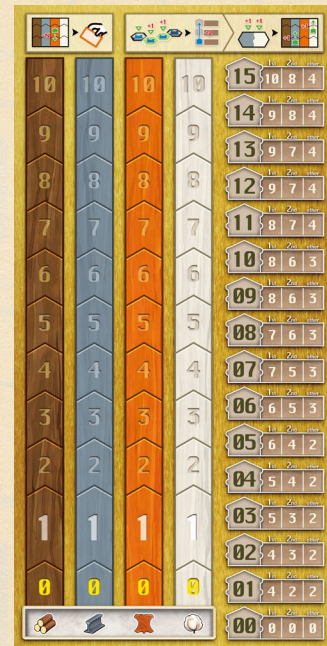
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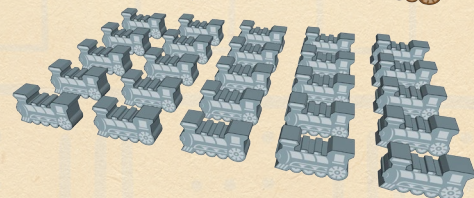
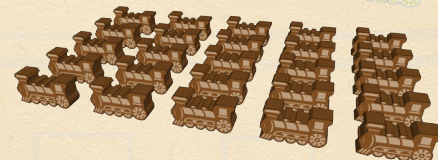
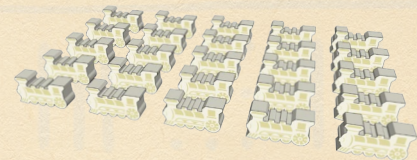
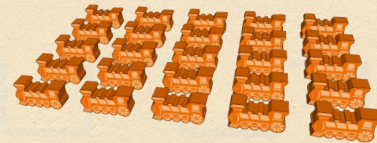
Game Components



1 x Two-sided Map board (USA and Europe)



1 x Tracking board



100 x Wooden Train tokens (25 each in 4 Company colors)

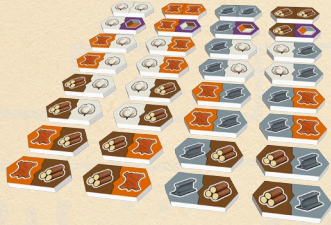


Space for AI Bot's
Chosen Company Marker

Asset Area
"Tracks" space

"Shares" space

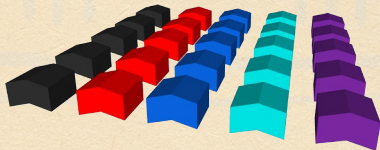
1 x Company Asset board



32 x Demand tiles



36 x Share tiles (9 each in 4 Company colors)



25 x Wooden Influence markers (5 each in 5 player colors)



1 x Velour Drawstring bag

(only used during setup and games using the AI Bot)



4 x Wooden Track Length markers (1 each in 4 Company colors)



1 x Start Player marker and 1 x Metal Start Player marker
(use whichever one you prefer)



14 x AI Bot tiles

(only used during solo or 2-player games with the AI Bot)



1 x Golden Spike tile and 1 x Wooden Golden Spike tile
(use whichever one you prefer)



1 x Rulebook

Game Setup (for 3-5 Players)

1. Choose which side of the Map board you will play with (USA or Europe), and place the chosen side face up in the center of the table, with the Tracking and Company Asset boards alongside.

Note: both USA and Europe Maps include optional modular rules specific to these Maps: see page 14 (USA) and 16 (Europe) for details.

2. Place **6 Shares** of the relevant Company color in the “**Shares**” space of each Company’s Asset Area on the Company Asset board.
3. Set the remaining **3 Shares** of each Company aside (for a 3–player game, set only **2 Shares** of each Company aside, returning the third remaining Share of each Company to the box). These will be given out as starting Shares in step 9.
4. Place 1 Train of each Company on their starting locations on the Map board, indicated by hexes depicting trains and filled with the Company colors (for the USA Map this is Orange in Erie, Brown in Baltimore, Gray in Wilmington, and White in Tallahassee).
5. Place the Track Length marker of each Company color on the “0” space of the Track Length chart on the Tracking board.
6. For each Company, place 4 Trains of the matching color in the “**Tracks**” space of each Company’s Asset Area on the Company Asset board. Place the remaining Trains (20 each) next to the board as the **general supply**.
7. Randomly place 1 Demand tile face up on each City hex (use the Drawstring bag to facilitate this). **Do not** place Demand tiles on the Company starting locations.

8. The most recent player to ride a train is the Starting Player and takes the Start Player marker.
9. Beginning with the player with the Start Player marker and following in clockwise order, each player takes 1 starting Share of a Company of their choice, from those set aside in step 3. Then, beginning with the **last player** (the player to the right of the Starting Player) and following **in counter-clockwise order**, each player chooses another starting Share with the following restrictions:
 - a. Each player must have Shares from two different Companies.
 - b. Each player must choose a different combination of Shares from other players.
10. For each unchosen starting Share leftover after step 9, advance the corresponding Track Length marker 1 space (in a 4–player game) or 2 spaces (in a 3– or 5–player game) on the Track Length chart.
11. Each player takes the 5 Influence markers in a color of their choice and puts 1 on the “1” space on each of the 4 Company Influence tracks on the Tracking board. Each player’s remaining Influence marker is only used for scoring at the end of the game; players should keep them in front of them during the game as a reminder of their color.

You are now ready to start the game!

Company Influence track



Sequence of Play

The game is played over several rounds with players taking turns in sequence, beginning with the player who has the Start Player marker and continuing in clockwise order until the game ends.

On your turn, you **must** take **one** of the following actions:

- **Take a Share:** Choose and take a Share from **any** one Company.
- **Build Track:** Build and place track cubes for **any** one company.

You **cannot pass**; you must take an action.

After you have taken your action, check to see if the game end has been triggered (see page 9); otherwise play continues with the player to your left taking a turn.

Share Depletion

A Company's Shares are Depleted if it has **no Shares left** in its Asset Area. This can happen in two ways:

- The last Share is taken from a Company with a Take a Share action.
- If at any point there are no Trains remaining in the general supply for a Company, that Company's Shares **are immediately Depleted**: remove all remaining Shares in this Company from the game.

When this happens for the first time, play continues as normal, except the Take a Share action is no longer available for the Company with Depleted Shares (note, however, that you can still Build Track with that Company using the Trains in its Asset Area).

When there are 2 Companies with Depleted shares, the game end is triggered; see page 9.

Track Length chart

8



3



Take a Share

When taking this action, perform the following steps, in order:

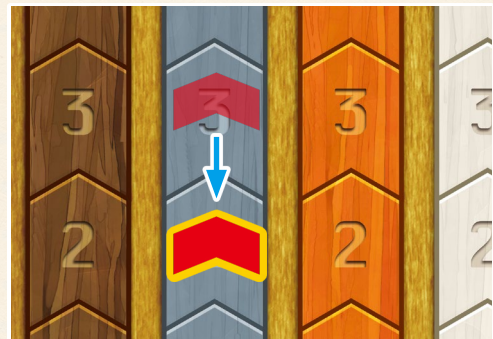
1. Choose a Company that has at least 1 Share available in its Asset Area.
2. **For each** Train token in the "Tracks" space of this Company's Asset Area, you must decrease your Influence in this Company by one (by moving your marker back one space on its Influence track). If you are unable to decrease your Influence by the amount required, you may not choose this action. If there are no Train tokens in the Company's Asset Area, do not decrease your Influence.
3. Take 1 Share from the chosen Company's Asset Area.
4. **Add 3 Trains** of the Company's color from the general supply to its "Tracks" space. There can be a **maximum of 5 Trains** in each Company's "Tracks" space; skip placement for any Trains that would exceed this limit. If there are not enough Trains in the general supply, just add as many as are available.

Remember: If there are ever no Trains remaining in the general supply for a Company, its Shares are immediately Depleted (see left).

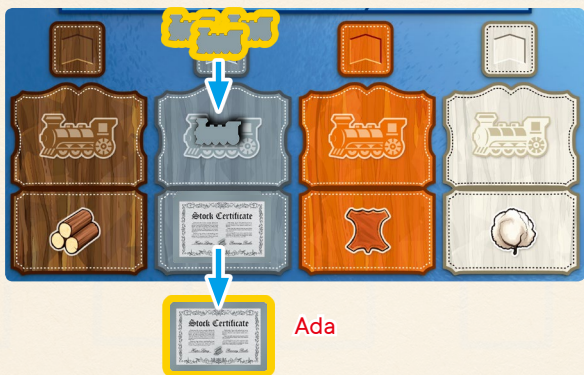
Note: Shares held by players are **open information**, and are the only source of Victory Points in this game (see Final Scoring on page 9).

Example

Ada (the red player) decides to Take a Share from the Gray Company. Since there is still 1 Train token in the "Tracks" space of the Gray Company's Asset Area, she must decrease the Influence she has in the Gray Company by 1 in order to take the Share. She moves her marker from 3 to 2 on the Gray Company's Influence track.



Ada takes one Gray Share and places it in front of herself. Then she takes 3 Gray Train tokens from the general supply, and places them in the Gray Company's Asset Area.



Build Track

The basic rules for Building Track are:

- Connect the chosen company to a **legal destination within range**.
- You must build along the **shortest route** to the City hex of your choice and only through non-City hexes.
- **Adjust Track Length** of this Company, and you **gain Influence**.

You may Build Track for **any Company**, even if you don't have any Shares in them. Track is represented on the board by the Train tokens in the hexes. Building Track means to place a Train token on a hex. Building track extends the reach of a Company, making its Shares more valuable, and also increases your Influence in 1 or 2 Companies.

When taking this action, perform the following steps, in order:

1. Choose a Company to Build Track for.
 - The chosen Company **must be able** to reach a legal destination, following the rules of steps 2-3 below.

Note: If no Company can reach a legal destination, you can only perform the Take a Share action for this turn.
2. Choose a City hex to connect to, which meets all of the following criteria:
 - **It is a new market:** You cannot build into a City that already contains Track of the Company.
 - **It has space for expansion:** Each City has a capacity limit as to how many **different** Companies may have Track there: Gold City hexes can contain up to 3 Companies; Silver City hexes up to 2 Companies; and Black City hexes up to 1 Company. These limits are also indicated by the numbers 3, 2, or 1 marked in the hexes themselves.

(For your first game, it is recommended to disregard the type of each City hex, and allow each City to contain at most 2 different Companies.)

Note: Non-City hexes do not have such a limit; each non-City hex can have 1 Track of each Company.

- **It is close enough:** You must be able to build a connection to this City using the available Trains in this Company's Asset Area, by placing them in a sequence of adjacent hexes starting with a hex adjacent to one of the Company's existing pieces of Track and ending in the chosen City hex. You will need 1 Train per hex, **including the City** you are connecting to.

Note: If there are not enough Trains in the Company's Asset Area, you cannot connect to this City

3. Place 1 Train per hex on the **shortest route** into the chosen City.
 - You **do not have to start from a City**. Branching off from existing non-City hexes is allowed.
 - You **cannot pass through other City Hexes** along the way; you can only connect to one City during your turn.
 - If there are multiple routes of the shortest distance, you may choose which of these to use.
 - You **cannot choose to take the long way around** to use extra Trains.
4. Give out "**Track Compensation**" to other Companies.
 - For each hex you build Track onto that already contains Track of another Company (including the City you connected to), that other Company adds 1 of their Trains from the general supply (if available) to their "Tracks" space. If there is Track from multiple Companies already present, each other Company does this.

Note: The limit of 5 Trains in each Company's "Tracks" space still applies; ignore any effect which would add Trains above 5.

Remember: If there are ever no Trains remaining in the general supply for a Company, its Shares are immediately Depleted (see page 5).

5. Increase the value of the Company that you just built Track for.
 - a. Count the number of new Track built on **non-City** hexes in the previous step.
 - b. Advance the Company's marker a number of spaces equal to this number on the Track Length chart. This will be zero if you are building into an adjacent City.

Note: A Company's marker cannot move beyond the end of the Track Length chart; any further Track built on non-City hexes after a Company's marker has reached the "15" has no effect on the position of its marker.
6. Increase your Influence in the Companies of the color(s) indicated by the Demand tile of the City you entered, by advancing your marker one space on the corresponding Influence track(s). If the Demand tile shows:
 - **2 different Company colors:** Increase your Influence by 1 in each of these 2 colors.
 - **2 of the same Company color:** Increase your Influence by 2 in this color.
 - **1 Company color and 1 purple:** First increase your Influence by 1 in the indicated Company color, and then increase your Influence by 1 in a **different Company** of your choice.

- Remove the Demand tile if the City has reached its capacity limit (see 2nd bullet of step 2 above). Removed tiles are placed back into the box.

Note: When playing a game with the Europe Map board, there are 5 hexes marked with a "Harbor" icon. These hexes are relevant for the Harbor variant (see page 16). If you are not playing with the Harbor variant, simply ignore the Harbor icons and treat these hexes as if they are normal non-City hexes.

Build Example 1

Claire (purple) decides to Build Track for the Orange Company. She cannot build to Fort Smith since only 2 Companies may enter Silver City hexes and the Brown and Gray Companies are already there. Tulsa and Omaha are empty, so the Orange Company may build to either of those.

If Orange extends into Tulsa, the shortest route will need 3 Track and branches from the middle of the connection between Chicago and Louisville. There are no other legal routes of the same length.



If Orange extends into Omaha, the shortest route also needs 3 Track but this time there are multiple routes of this length available. They are all legal routes, and Claire can freely choose which one to use, regardless of Track belonging to other Companies along the way.



Claire decides to extend the Orange Company into Tulsa. There are 4 Trains in the Orange Company's Asset Area, which is enough: she takes 3 of them and places them along the shortest route into Tulsa. The Demand tile in Tulsa shows Orange + Gray, so Claire gains 1 Influence each in Orange and Gray Companies, and moves her purple markers from 2 to 3.



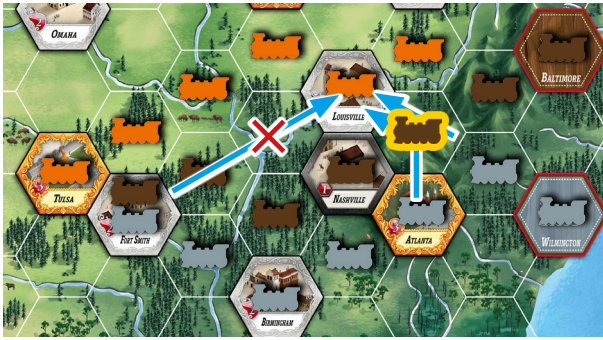
For this build action, the total Track Length of the Orange network increases by 2 (counting only the hexes between Cities), so Claire moves the Orange Track Length marker forward two spaces from 4 to 6.



Build Example 2

Leon (blue) decides to Build Track for the Gray Company, and evaluates his options:

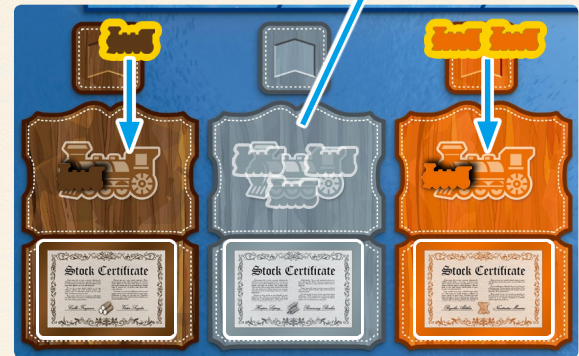
To reach Louisville, the shortest available addition to the existing Gray network is building 2 Tracks out from Atlanta.



To reach Detroit, the shortest addition to the existing Gray network is 3 Tracks from Atlanta, or 3 Tracks from a branching point between Atlanta and Wilmington. Both are legal and Leon is free to choose either route.



Leon decides to take the route from Atlanta to Detroit. He takes 3 Trains from the Gray Company's Asset Area, and builds along his chosen path. Since this passes through 1 hex occupied by the Brown Company and 2 hexes (including Detroit) occupied by the Orange Company, 1 Train token is added from the general supply to Brown's Asset Area and 2 Train tokens to Orange's Asset Area. The Demand tile in Detroit shows White + Orange, so Leon gains 1 Influence in each of those 2 Companies. The Gray Company's Track Length increases by 2.



Since there are now 2 Companies in Detroit, its limit has been reached and no more Companies may build in this hex. Detroit's Demand tile is removed from the game.

Game End

The game end is triggered when the following condition is met at the end of any player's turn:

- **There are 2 Companies with Depleted Shares.** A Company's Shares are Depleted if it has **no Shares left** in its Asset Area.

Once the game end has been triggered, continue playing until each player has taken an equal number of turns (so the last player to take a turn will be the player to the right of the Start Player. If that player was the one to trigger the end of the game, the game ends immediately). After that, the game is over and Final Scoring begins.

Final Scoring

Players calculate their scores by totaling the Victory Point (VP) values of the Shares they own. Note that the **value of each Share is different** for each player.

A Share's VP value is determined by two things: the position of the **Company's marker on the Track Length chart**, and the owning player's **Influence ranking** in the relevant Company.

First, rank players' Influence in each Company based on the relative positions of Influence markers on the Influence tracks. Then match the columns indicated by these Influence rankings to the rows containing the Company Track Length markers to find a given Share's value for each player, as summarized in the following table:

| Influence Ranking | Share Value (VP per Share) | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| | Influence ≥ 1 | Influence = 0 |
| 1st | "1st" column | Zero VP |
| 2nd | "2nd" column | |
| 3rd~5th | "Other" column | |

In case of a tie for 1st place, all tied players are awarded 1st place but there are no 2nd place players. If there is only one player in 1st place and there is a tie for 2nd place, then all tied players are awarded 2nd place. All remaining players still get the "Other" column reward.

Note: If a player has 0 Influence in a Company, then each Share in that Company will be worth 0 VP to that player, regardless of the positions of the other players on that Company's Influence track or the Company's marker on the Track Length chart.

A player's final score is the total of the VP values for all Shares they hold and the player with the most VP wins the game. In case of a tie, the tied player with the fewest Shares wins. If still tied, the player closest to the Starting Player in turn order wins.

Final Scoring Example

It is the end of the game. First, look at the Influence rankings for Claire, the purple player. Claire is in 4th place for Influence in the Brown Company, 3rd in Gray, 2nd in Orange, and 1st in White. The Track Lengths of the Companies are 12 for Brown, 5 for Gray, 7 for Orange, and 9 for White. So for Claire, each Share of Brown she holds is worth 4VP, each Gray 2 VP, each Orange 5 VP, and each White 8 VP. Claire has 2 White Shares and 1 of each other color, making her total score $4 + 2 + 5 + (8 + 8) = 27 VP$.



$$4 + 2 + 5 + (8 + 8) = 27VP$$

Solo Game

The Solo game uses an AI Bot opponent with a focus on building all over the Map. You will be in direct competition with the Bot.

Setup

Set up as for a standard game, with the following changes to the steps:

- Place **5 Shares** of the relevant Company color in the “Shares” space of each Company’s Asset Area.
- Set **2 Shares** of each Company aside, returning the remaining 2 Shares of each Company to the box.
- You will be the Starting Player, and take the Start Player marker.
- You take 2 different-colored Shares of your choice from those set aside in step 3. The Bot does not take any at this stage.
- Do not advance** any Track Length markers for leftover Shares (i.e. skip this step).

In addition, perform the following **Bot setup**:

- Choose a color for the Bot player, and place 4 of their Influence markers on the “1” spaces on the Influence tracks as per normal rules (step 11 of setup for the standard game).
- Choose another unused color, and take 2 of the Influence markers in that color. Place 1 next to the uppermost City on the far right-hand column of the Map (marked with the City Index Number 1, being Augusta in the USA Map and Kiev in the Europe Map); this is the Bot’s **Target City marker**. Place the other at the top of the Brown Company’s Asset Area; this is the Bot’s **Chosen Company marker**.



- Set the 2 AI Bot tiles showing the “Refresh” icon aside and place the remaining 12 tiles into the Drawstring bag, and shake the bag to mix them up.

IV. Determine starting Shares for the Bot as follows:

- Draw 1 Bot tile from the bag, and advance the Bot’s Chosen Company marker along the Company Asset Areas a number of times according to the number on the tile, in the same way as described in “The Bot’s Turn”, below. The Bot receives 1 Share of this color from unused components (**not from the Company’s Asset Area**).

Note: This is only for choosing starting Shares; the Target City marker is not moved in this step.

- Repeat step IV.a to choose the second starting Share for the Bot. Note that when the Chosen Company marker is by the White Company, its next movement will be back to the Brown Company.
 - Leave both tiles to one side, out of the bag. They will be returned to the bag during the game, when a “Refresh” tile is drawn on the Bot’s turn (see page 11).
- V. Add the 2 “Refresh” AI Bot tiles set aside in step III to the Drawstring bag and shake the bag to mix them up with the rest of the tiles.

Sequence of Play

Beginning with you, as the Starting Player, you and the Bot take turns alternately, performing one action per turn. Your actions are performed according to the standard game rules. The Bot’s actions are slightly different, as listed below.

The Bot’s Turn

The Bot uses the AI Bot tiles, drawn one at a time at random from the Drawstring bag, to determine which actions it takes during the game. Drawing a tile will determine which Company the Bot will use and/or which City it will try to target that turn, by indicating the number of times the Chosen Company marker or Target City marker respectively will move before the Bot takes its action.

The **Chosen Company marker moves between Company Asset Areas** in the order in which they are printed on the board (i.e. Brown -> Gray -> Orange -> White -> Brown -> etc.). The **Target City marker moves between Cities** from top to bottom in columns working across the Map from East to West, **passing over Cities that no longer have a Demand tile**; there is a small City Index Number on each City hex as a reminder of the order in which the marker moves between Cities.

On the Bot’s turn, follow the steps below:

- Draw one Bot tile from the bag, and:
 - Advance the Bot’s Chosen Company marker along the Company Asset Areas a number of times according to the number on the tile (moving as described above). The Company it lands on will be the Company “Chosen by the Bot” to perform an action.
 - Advance the Bot’s Target City marker a number of Cities according to the number on the tile (moving as described above, remembering to **pass over Cities that don’t have a Demand tile**). Once the marker has moved to the final City on the Map, it will stay there; skip this step for the rest of the game.

Note: Since the marker starts off the board, the first move it will make is to the top right City, marked with City Index Number 1 (Augusta in the USA Map; Kiev in the Europe Map).

2. Then the Bot will take an action according to the number of Train tokens in the Chosen Company's Asset Area:

A. **0-2 Trains in the Asset Area:** The Bot will Take a Share in the Chosen Company.

- i. The Bot gains one Share from this Company's Asset Area for free; **it does not pay Influence.**
- ii. If there are no available Shares in the Asset Area and the Bot cannot perform this action, select another Company by drawing another Bot tile and following the same process as step 1.a above, and then restart from the beginning of step 2. with the new Chosen Company.

Note: Do not advance the Target City marker again in this case.

- iii. **Add 3 Trains** of the Company's color to its "Tracks" space, taking them from the general supply. There can be a **maximum of 5 Trains** in each Company's "Tracks" space; skip placement for any Trains that would exceed this limit. If there are not enough Trains in the general supply, just add as many as are available.

Remember: If there are ever no Trains remaining in the general supply for a Company, its Shares are immediately Depleted (see page 5).

B. **3-5 Trains in the Asset Area:** The Bot will Build Track for the Chosen Company.

- i. The Bot always tries to **build to a new City as close as possible to the Target City marker** (counting distance via non-City hexes where Track could be built), that is reachable and legal by this Company under normal rules.
 - a. In case of a tie, the Bot will choose the tied City that uses the fewest Tracks to reach.
 - b. If there is still a tie, the Bot will choose the tied City that is occupied by more Companies.
 - c. If there is still a tie, the Bot will choose the City with the highest City Index Number.
- ii. When multiple routes of the same shortest length to the chosen City exist, the route is decided as follows:
 - a. Compare all valid (legal and shortest) routes for the Chosen Company to reach the chosen City, and consider in particular which hex each of these routes starts from. The Bot will start building from the possible start hex which is **earliest** in the Target City marker's ordering of hexes (i.e. farthest east and north). Note: It does not matter whether this is a City or non-City hex.
 - b. If there is only 1 valid route from that start hex, then that's what the Bot uses. Otherwise, use the "Clockwise Rule" (see right) to determine where it places Track; that is, use the valid route that most closely matches the clockwise portion, from the start hex to the chosen City, of an imaginary perimeter line drawn around the hexes containing all valid routes.

Note: Remember to give out Track Compensation for entering occupied hexes.

Remember: If there are ever no Trains remaining in the general supply for a Company, its Shares are immediately Depleted (see page 5).

iii. The Track Length of the Chosen Company is increased for new Track built on non-City hexes as per the normal rules.

iv. The Bot **gains Influence** as per the normal rules, **unless** it builds into a City with a **Purple Demand tile, in which case the Bot gains 1 Influence in all four Companies instead.**

v. If there are no legal destinations and the Bot cannot perform this action, select another Company by drawing another Bot tile and following the same process as step 1.a above, and then restart from the beginning of step 2 with the new Chosen Company.

Note: Do not advance the Target City marker again in this case.

Note: If a tile showing the "Refresh" icon is drawn from the bag, **return it to the bag along with all previously drawn Bot tiles** (including those used in setup if applicable), and draw a new tile to use instead.

Clockwise Rule

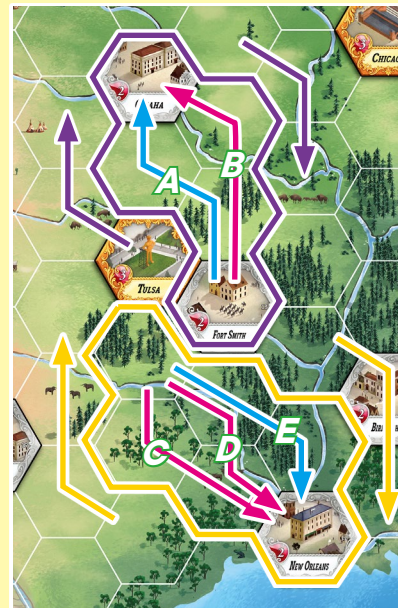
When there are multiple legal routes for the Bot to build from point A to point B, the route the Bot uses will be selected by the Clockwise Rule.

Purple Region

Consider if the Bot needs to build from Fort Smith to Omaha. The shortest building distance needs 3 Tracks, and since Tulsa is another City and so cannot be entered in this build action, there are only 2 legal routes, A and B, left. The region that contains all legal routes is enclosed by the Purple Line. Follow the Purple Line clockwise from Fort Smith to Omaha, and the closest matching route is A. Thus the Bot will build using route A.

Yellow Region

Consider if the Bot needs to build from the hex immediately south of Tulsa to New Orleans. The shortest building distance needs 3 Tracks, and there are 3 legal routes: C, D, and E. The region that contains all legal routes is enclosed by the Yellow Line. Follow the Yellow Line clockwise from the starting hex to New Orleans, and the closest matching route is E. Thus the Bot will build using route E.



AI Bot Take a Share Example

On the Bot's turn, the Bot tile indicates that the Chosen Company marker moves twice, in this case from the Brown to the Orange Company. The Target City marker is advanced 2 Cities.

The Bot will perform an action for its Chosen Company, Orange, and since there is only 1 Train in its Asset Area, the Bot will Take a Share in it.



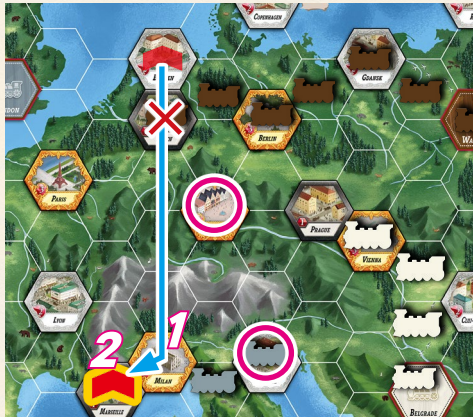
The Bot gains one Orange Share from the Company Asset board for free, without decreasing its Influence. Then 3 Orange Trains are added to the Orange Company's "Tracks" space from the general supply.



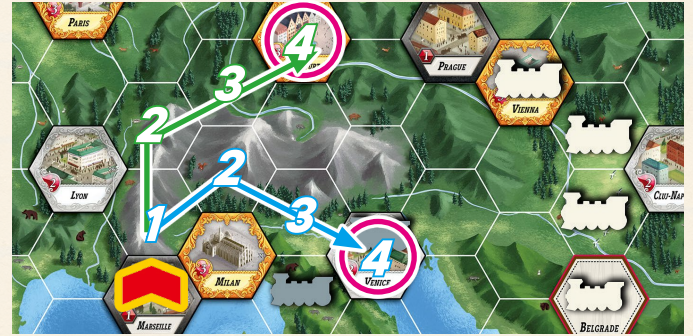
AI Bot Build Track Example

On the Bot's turn, the Bot tile indicates that the Chosen Company marker moves once, in this case from the Orange to the White Company. The Target City marker is advanced 2 Cities, from Bremen to Milan (skipping over Essen as it has reached its capacity limit and has no Demand tile) and then to Marseille, which is now the Bot's Target City.

The Bot will perform an action for its Chosen company, White, and since there are 3 Trains in its Asset Area, the Bot will Build Track for it.



First we determine the destination the Bot will build to. The Cities closest to Marseille which are reachable by the White Company with its 3 available Trains are Frankfurt and Venice, which are both tied at 4 spaces from Marseille, and tied again with 3 Trains required for the White Company to reach either of them. Next we compare which potential destination has more Companies currently occupying it; Frankfurt has 0 while Venice has 1, so the Bot will build into Venice.



There are multiple legal and shortest routes for the White Company to build into Venice with 3 Trains, from 4 different possible start hexes. First we determine the start hex, which is the highest hex in the rightmost column, 2 hexes north of Belgrade. There is only 1 legal route from this start hex, so the Bot will build along the pink marked route.

The White Company's Track Length increases by 2, and the Bot's Influence increases by 1 in each of the Gray and White Companies due to the Demand tile in Venice.

Since there is already a Gray Train in Venice, the Gray Company receives a Train in its Asset Area from the general supply as Track Compensation. Furthermore, Venice has now reached its capacity limit of 2 Trains, and so its Demand tile is removed and returned to the box.



Game End

As in the standard game, the game end is triggered when there are **2 Companies with Depleted Shares**. Continue playing until you and the Bot have had an equal number of turns, i.e. if you trigger the end of the game the Bot will get one more turn, but if the Bot triggers the end of the game, the game ends immediately.

Final Scoring

Scoring works in the same way as the standard game, except that the “1st” scoring column in the Track Length chart is ignored; when ranking Influence in Companies, the player/Bot with the higher Influence scores from the “2nd” column and the player/Bot with the lower Influence scores from the “Other” column. If tied, then both score using the “2nd” column.

Note: As in the standard game, if you have **0 Influence** in a Company, then **each Share in that Company will be worth 0 VP** to you.

The higher total VP wins the game. However, in the case of a tie, the Bot wins.

Difficulty Settings

For a greater challenge you can increase the difficulty of the AI Bot. The rules set out above are the standard “Easy” setting. For each higher difficulty level, amend the rules as described below:

Easy — Rules as set out above.

Normal — Easy rules plus the following:

- When the Bot takes a Share, **replenish Assets to 3** Trains instead of adding 3.
- When the Bot Builds Track into an occupied hex in which an occupying Company already has 2 or more Trains in their Asset Area, **do not give Track Compensation** to that Company.

Hard — Normal rules plus the following:

- During setup, the Bot receives **2 Shares for each color** chosen in step IV of Bot setup instead of 1.

Expert — Hard rules plus the following:

- When the Bot takes a Share, it **also receives 1 Influence in the relevant Company**.

Nightmare — Expert rules plus the following:

- During setup, the Bot starts with **2 Influence in each color** instead of 1 (step I of Bot setup).

Game for 2 Players (with AI Bot)

This 2-player variant uses the AI Bot to act as an additional opponent.

Setup

Set up as for a standard game, with the following changes to the steps:

3. Set **2 Shares** of each Company aside, returning the remaining 2 Shares of each Company to the box.
10. Give the unchosen starting Shares to the Bot. **Do not advance** these Companies' Track Length markers for these Shares.

In addition, **perform steps I-III of the Bot setup** on page 10 to prepare the Influence, Target City, and Chosen Company markers for the Bot.

Sequence of Play

The game is played over several rounds with players and the Bot taking turns in sequence, beginning with the player who has the Start Player marker, followed by the second player, and then the Bot, which always goes last in turn order.

On a player's turn, the active player takes **one** action according to the normal rules.

On its turn, the Bot takes **one** action, following the steps in “The Bot's Turn” section on page 10.

Game End

As in the standard game, the game end is triggered when there are **2 Companies with Depleted Shares**. Continue playing until both players and the Bot have had an equal number of turns, i.e. if a player triggers the end of the game, play continues until the Bot has taken one more turn, but if the Bot triggers the end of the game, the game ends immediately.

Final Scoring

Score as per the standard game rules, as if the Bot's Influence markers belonged to a 3rd player.

Expert Game for 2 Players (without AI Bot)

This is a very intense 2-player variant, and is recommended for experienced players only.

Setup

Set up as for a standard game, with the following changes to the steps:

- Place **5 Shares** of the relevant Company color in the “Shares” space of each Company’s Asset Area.
- Set **2 Shares** of each Company aside, returning the remaining 2 Shares of each Company to the box.
- The Starting Player first chooses a Company and takes the 2 matching Shares set aside during step 3, and chooses another Company for which both players each take 1 Share. Then the Second Player chooses one of the remaining two Companies and takes its 2 Shares, with both players each taking 1 Share in the final remaining Company.
- Since all 8 starting Shares are given out in step 9, step 10 is skipped.

Sequence of Play

The Starting Player takes 1 action on their first turn, with both players taking 2 actions per turn thereafter. Player actions are as per the standard game, subject to the following restrictions:

- Players must choose a **different Company for each of their 2 actions** in the same turn. You may choose to take the same action twice or each action once, in either order.
- Players **cannot end the game** on the **second action** of their turn (see the next section for the end game trigger).

Game End

The game ends immediately when there is **one** Company with Depleted Shares. No further actions may be taken by either player.

Remember: a player cannot end the game with the second action of their turn.

Final Scoring

Scoring works in the same way as the standard game, except that the “1st” scoring column in the Track Length chart is ignored; when ranking player Influence in Companies, the player with the higher Influence scores from the “2nd” column and the player with the lower Influence scores from the “Other” column. If both players are tied, then they both score using the “2nd” column.

Note: As in the standard game, if a player has **0 Influence** in a Company, then each Share in that Company will be worth **0 VP** to that player.

Optional Modular Rules

The following variants provide more variety to the game, and are compatible with all game modes.

USA Map: Golden Spike Variant

Setup

Set up as normal for a game with the USA Map, with the following addition:

- Place the Golden Spike tile on the empty hex to the southwest of “Omaha”. This does not affect the hex it is placed on, but serves as a reminder for the event in Omaha which is described below.

Gameplay Changes

When the **first Company builds into “Omaha”**, America is committed to completing the transcontinental railroad! Perform the following steps:

- Move the Golden Spike tile off the board, placing it next to the Company Asset board.
- Take 1 Train of the Company which has just built Track into “Omaha” from the general supply and place it on the Golden Spike tile. This color is now the “East Side” Company.
- Take **1 Train each** of the other 3 Companies from the general supply, and **place them on “San Francisco”**. **Remove San Francisco’s Demand tile**; no player will gain Influence from this hex in this game.
- Treat “San Francisco” as a new starting location for those Companies. Now players may Build Tracks for them directly on the West Coast!

Note: If there are not enough Trains in the general supply to make all placements in the above steps, then skip placement for any colors which are not available. If this applies to the “East Side” Company, there is no “East Side” Company in the current game, but the Golden Spike tile is still placed next to the Company Asset board.

Note: Since the Demand tile is removed from San Francisco after Omaha is first built into, the “East Side” Company is not eligible to Build Track into San Francisco, even if that hex is not at full capacity.

Note: If any Company builds Track into San Francisco before any Company has built Track into Omaha, remove the Golden Spike tile from the game. This event will not be triggered in this game.

Each time Track is built, **check if there is a continuous route in any combination of color(s)** from “Omaha” to “San Francisco”. If there is, then the last spike has just been driven into building the transcontinental railroad! Perform the following steps:

1. The player who just built Track chooses one of the Companies present in the the hex where the connection between Omaha and San Francisco has been completed that is **not the “East Side” Company**, takes one of that Company’s Trains from the general supply, and places it on the Golden Spike tile. This color is now the “West Side” Company. If there is more than one hex just built which completes the connection, you may choose any non-“East Side” Company in any of those hexes.

Note: If you are playing with the AI Bot and the Bot has completed the connection between Omaha and San Francisco, the Bot will choose the “West Side” Company to be the color from those available that it has the most Shares of. If there is a tie, it will choose the tied color which has the least Shares held by the player(s), with further ties broken by choosing the tied color the Bot’s Chosen Company marker is currently on, or would move onto soonest in its direction of movement.

2. Move the Golden Spike tile and any Trains on it next to the Track Length chart.
3. Immediately advance the Track Length markers for both “East Side” and “West Side” Companies **2 bonus steps** on the Track Length chart.

Note: If there are no Trains of the “West Side” Company in the general supply to be placed on the Golden Spike tile, then placement is skipped and there is no “West Side” Company in the current game.

Remember: If there are ever no Trains remaining in the general supply for a Company, its Shares are immediately Depleted (see page 5).

Note: At the end of the game, if the first Golden Spike event has been triggered and there is an “East Side” Company, but the connection between Omaha and San Francisco has **not** been completed, **do not advance the “East Side” Company’s Track Length marker** for any bonus steps on the Track Length chart.

All other rules are unchanged.

Golden Spike Event Example

The Golden Spike event has been triggered previously, with the Brown Company being the first to build Track in Omaha. Thus there is a Brown Train on the Golden Spike tile, indicating that it has become the “East Side” Company.

It now Jill’s turn, and she decides to Build Track for the Orange Company, extending its network out from Omaha to Denver. When the Orange Company reaches Denver from the East, it connects with the Gray company, which has built from San Francisco on the West Coast, thereby completing the last link in a transcontinental line from East to West Coasts.



There are now 2 Companies (Orange and Gray) present in Denver, where the transcontinental line was completed. Jill must now choose one of these Companies to be the “West Side” Company and receive the bonus increase to its Track Length. She chooses Orange, and places an Orange Train from the general supply on the Golden Spike tile.

Jill then advances the Track Length markers for the “East Side” Brown and “West Side” Orange Companies by 2 steps each, and moves the Golden Spike tile (and the Trains on it) next to the Track Length chart as a reminder that these Companies have received this bonus.




| | | | |
|----|-----|-----|-------|
| 12 | 9 | 7 | 4 |
| | 1st | 2nd | other |
| 8 | 7 | 4 | |
| | 1st | 2nd | other |
| 10 | 8 | 6 | 3 |
| | 1st | 2nd | other |
| 8 | 6 | 3 | |
| | 1st | 2nd | other |
| 7 | 6 | 3 | |
| | 1st | 2nd | other |
| 17 | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| | 1st | 2nd | other |
| 6 | 5 | 3 | |

Europe Map: Harbor Variant

Setup

Set up as normal for a game with the Europe Map.

Gameplay Changes

There are 5 hexes on the Europe Map marked with a “Harbor” icon . You **cannot** Build Track into these locations directly. Instead, **the first time** each of the 4 Cities with a Purple Demand tile is built in, a Harbor event occurs as an **additional effect** of the Purple Demand tile.

When a Harbor event occurs, the active player performs the following steps:

1. Take a Train of the color on the non-purple half of the Purple Demand tile from the general supply.

Note: If there are no Trains of this color left in the general supply, then this Harbor event is skipped.

Remember: If there are ever no Trains remaining in the general supply for a Company, its Shares are immediately Depleted (see page 5).

2. Choose an **unoccupied “Harbor” hex**, and place the Train token there. This hex is now an additional starting location for this Company.

Note: If you are playing with the AI Bot and the AI Bot has triggered the Harbor event, the Bot chooses the Harbor location according to step 2.B.i of the Bot’s Turn on page 11.

Note: Since there are only 4 Purple Demand tiles, with 1 of each color on the non-purple half, each Company can build in at most one Harbor hex, and there will always be at least 1 Harbor hex which does not get used in a game.

Note: Like Cities, Harbor hexes do not count towards the Track Length of the Company, so do not adjust the Track Length marker when placing a Train token in one.

All other rules are unchanged.



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