

# RULEBOOK



TM

THIRD EDITION



**Mayfair  
Games,  
Inc.**

# GAME PARTS

British Rails™ contains:

- 1 puzzle-cut board
- 95 load chips
- 1 sheet of load labels
- 2 decks of cards-including:
  - 136 Demand cards
  - 20 Event cards
  - 12 Locomotive (Loco) cards (2-sided)
- 6 wipe-off crayons
- 6 pawns
- 1 pack of money
- 1 British Rails rulebook (Now in your hands!)

If any of these parts are missing, please write for free replacement (identifying the missing part) to:

British Rails Parts, Mayfair Games  
8060 St. Louis Ave.  
Skokie, IL 60076

Or Email to [custserv@mayfairgames.com](mailto:custserv@mayfairgames.com)

## PLAYING BOARD

The central feature of the board is a map of the United Kingdom including England, Scotland, and Wales. The map has a grid of round and triangular dots, called mileposts in the game. The mileposts regulate rail building and train movement. In scale, they are approximately 10 kilometers apart.

The map shows 49 cities. Near each city are symbols representing the goods available for pickup in that city. The map also shows the relative location of the seacoasts and major river obstacles. The locations of some coastal cities have been moved slightly inland from the coast to ease play of the game. The seacoast is identified by the black line along the coast.

## CRAYONS

The special wipe-off crayons supplied with the game let players draw on the playing board during play and clean the board afterwards. No other marker than those supplied should be used without carefully checking for erasability on a section of the board away from the playing area. The crayons in this game are plastic based, not wax based.

## CARDS

There are three types of cards: Demand cards, Event cards, and Loco cards.

Before playing, the Loco cards should be separated from the others and kept with the money.

The remaining cards (the Demand cards and Event cards) are all shuffled together to make the draw deck. The card deck is placed face down near the board, in easy reach of all players.

**IMPORTANT: THE PLAYING BOARD IS COVERED BY A THIN PLASTIC COATING TO ALLOW FOR EASY CLEANUP BETWEEN GAMES.**

**DO NOT USE ABRASIVE CLEANERS** to clean the board—use a dry paper napkin or paper towel. Using water will not speed cleanup.

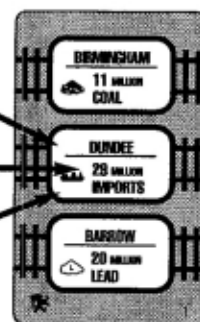
**DO NOT USE OTHER MARKERS** than those recommended—pencils, pens, regular crayons, and dry markers will permanently color the playing surface and ruin the playing board.

Whenever using any marker other than those provided, first mark the board away from the playing surface and leave it overnight. If the mark can then be wiped off without leaving a stain, the marker is usable. Each individual color has to be tested. Keep crayons away from direct heat. **ALWAYS CLEAN THE BOARD IMMEDIATELY AFTER PLAY!**

## Demand Cards

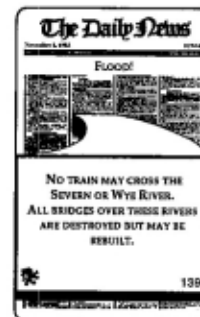
Each Demand card shows three demands for goods, and for each demand shows:

- 1) The city that needs the goods.  
(Dundee)
- 2) The money payable on delivery of the goods to that city.  
(£29 million)
- 3) The goods needed (Imports)



## Event Cards

The deck has 20 Event cards which can affect the play of the game. When drawn, Event cards are immediately placed face up and shown to all players; the drawing player then continues to draw cards until he has replaced the Demand card just delivered. Every player must always have three (3) Demand cards. (Especially before making any additional deliveries.) If a player finds he has fewer than three Demand cards, he must draw a replacement Demand card immediately, whether or not it is his turn. Any Event cards drawn become effective immediately. A new card must be drawn after the effects of the Event card(s) are resolved.



Event card effects are described in detail later in this rulebook. (see page 6.)

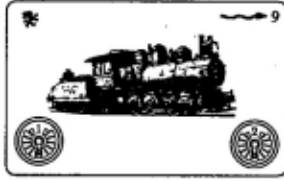
## Loco Cards

Each player has one Loco card, showing the type of train that the player is operating, its maximum speed, and its load capacity. There are four types of trains:

- A *Freight* may carry 2 loads and travel up to 9 mileposts per turn.
- A *Fast Freight* may carry 2 loads and travel up to 12 mileposts per turn.
- A *Heavy Freight* may carry 3 loads and travel up

to 9 mileposts per turn.

- A *Superfreight* may carry 3 loads and travel up to 12 mileposts per turn.



Each player starts with a Freight. During the building phase of his turn (or in place of either of the initial building turns), he may upgrade his train instead of building track. The upgrade costs £20 million for a Fast Freight or a Heavy Freight. If the player has a Fast Freight or a Heavy Freight, he may upgrade his train to a Superfreight by paying £20 million.

## LOAD CHIPS

Before playing, the printed stickers must be applied to the plastic chips, one sticker per chip. Save the blank stickers to replace missing chips.

Each load chip represents a load which can be carried on a player's train. To show that a load is being carried, place the load chip on the player's Loco card.

The unused loads remain in the tray, where players can see what loads are available for pick up. When a player delivers a load, drops a load without delivering it for payoff, or loses a load due to an Event card, the load is returned to the tray with the other available loads.

The load chips are limited to those provided in the game; additional loads should not be made except as replacements. Charts showing the loads available and the cities where the loads are available for pickup are included for player reference at the center of this book.

## PREPARATION FOR PLAY

The players sit around the playing board. One player acts as banker; he takes the money and gives each player £60 million to start the game. The banker holds the available Loco cards and Load chips.

After shuffling, deal three Demand cards face up to each player. Any Event cards dealt are discarded and replaced until each player has three Demand cards. The player with the highest payoff goes first. Event cards are discarded only at the beginning of the game; Event cards drawn later are displayed and become immediately effective.

At the beginning of the game, each player should have:

- 3 Demand cards (face up)
- One Freight Loco card
- £60 million in cash
- One pawn and one crayon of like color

A player shuffles the discarded Event cards back into the deck and places the deck near the board. Should the deck become exhausted during play, a player reshuffles the discard pile to form a new draw deck.

## HOW TO PLAY

On his turn, each player can:

- **FIRST (Operation)**, operate his train, by moving, loading, and unloading his train, paying track use fees if necessary, and collecting payoffs.
- **SECOND (Building)**, spend up to £20 million per turn either to build track or to upgrade his train.

Instead of taking his turn, a player may discard his entire hand and draw three cards, resolving and replacing any Event cards drawn. Event cards drawn take effect immediately. A player who loses his turn from an Event card may not discard his hand during the lost turn.

After the player has completed his turn, the player to his left takes his turn.

## BUILDING RAILROADS

The playing board begins without any player's track drawn on it. At the beginning of the game, players take three turns with no train movement or operation to start building their rail empires using part of their initial £60 million. Each player may use up to £20 million in each of these first three turns to either build track or upgrade his train.

During the first building round, the first player takes his turn, and play progresses clockwise around the table. After completing the first round, the player who played last (during the first round) goes first in the second round and the order of play is reversed (progressing counterclockwise) for the second building round. After the first two building rounds, the original first player (the last player to have built track during the second building round) takes his turn, and play continues clockwise around the table. (This is also known as the Switchback start.)

After looking at the nine demands listed on his Demand cards, each player finds where the loads are located on the chart and relates each of them to the

corresponding city on the board. The player then plans the route for his railroad to connect up with the cities where the loads can be delivered for payoff. Then the player begins to build track.

A player builds his railroad by drawing a line from one milepost to the next. For each section of track, the player must pay the cost for the milepost to which he is building. See the illustration for building costs in the next section.

For example, building from a clear milepost to a mountain milepost costs £2 million, building from a mountain milepost to a small city milepost costs £3 million, etc.

These rules must be followed when building track.

### Beginning Construction

A player may build track during his building turn from any major city milepost or from any milepost where he has already built track. A player may not build more than two track sections from major city mileposts during one turn. These two mileposts can be from the same, or different major cities. No track may be built within the red area of a major city. A player may build into any major city for £5 million. With proper planning, however, most players only draw out from major cities.

### Right to Enter Major City

Every player has the right to build at least one section of track from every major city. No track may be built which would block any other player from connecting the major cities on the board.

### Limited Entry into

#### Medium and Small Cities

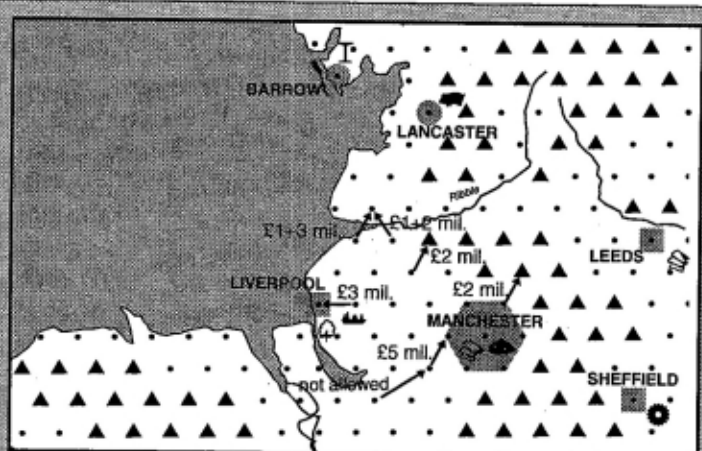
Only three players may build track into a medium city (square), and only two players may build track into a small city (circle). No player may build more than three track sections to a medium or small city. No track may be built to or from a medium city which would block a second or third player from having one section of track to that medium city; and no track may be built to or from a small city which would block a second player from having one section of track to that small city.

### Right of Way

Only one section of track may be built between any two mileposts.

### No Credit/No Loans

A player may not build more track than he can immediately pay for. Track drawn which cannot be paid for is immediately erased. A player must also be able to pay for the rental of other player's tracks prior to using them.



The cost for building to each milepost is:

Clear	£1 million
Mountain	£2 million
Small City	£3 million
Medium City	£3 million
Major City	£5 million
River(Bridge)	£2 million additional
Ocean Inlet	£3 million additional

The cost for building across a river or ocean inlet is in addition to the regular cost for building to a milepost. Building across a river to a mountain milepost thus costs £4 million. See the illustration for more examples.

## HAULING FREIGHT

A player earns money by carrying a load on his train from a city where the load is available to the city where there is a demand for the load.

### Starting the Train

Each player may start his train (represented by his pawn) at any city on the map. Please note that players must start building track from a major city but may start their train from any city on the board.

### Running the Train

A player moves his train by traveling on track built on the board and counting the mileposts reached, up to the maximum movement of the player's train. Freights and Heavy Freights may move up to 9 mileposts each turn, and Fast Freights and Superfreights may move up to 12 mileposts each turn. The type of milepost does not matter, each milepost costs one point to move to regardless of terrain.

There is no limit to the number of trains that may end a turn on the same milepost or use the same track. One train may not block another train's movement; two trains may pass each other on the same track. A train may reverse direction only at a city (including all major city mileposts).

All players' tracks are connected across the major cities by the red area (which represents the local belt or terminal rail system). Trains may travel across the city (including rivers) using the red area as their own track connecting all major city mileposts. Loads may be picked up or delivered at any major city milepost. The center milepost in a major city is a milepost for movement.

A player pays nothing to run his train on his own track. A player may run on his opponent's track, but must pay £4 million per turn to each opponent on whose track he has run during his turn. A player may not use an opponent's track unless he has the cash to pay for its use before using it. These fees do not count toward the £20 million building limit in the second part of his turn.

### **Picking Up Loads**

A load may be picked up by a train passing through a city where the load is available. No more loads can be picked up than there are load chips representing that type of load.

Freight and Fast Freight trains may carry up to two loads at a time. Heavy Freight and Superfreight trains may carry up to three. Trains may carry different types of loads. Trains may carry loads whether or not they have a demand for that load. Players may drop a load without payoff at any city.

A player picking up or unloading a load incurs no movement penalty and may travel his full movement. During his turn, a player may load, unload, and move his train any number of times in any order; movement is limited only by the type of train he has and by any Event cards in play. A train may not move more than its maximum movement (9 for Freight or Heavy Freight, 12 for Fast freight or Superfreight) during his turn, regardless of the number of starts and stops.

### **Delivering Loads**

When a player delivers a load to a city with a Demand for that load on one of his Demand cards, the player:

1. Discards the Demand card. Only one load can be delivered for payoff with each Demand card.
2. Receives the amount stated on the Demand card from the bank.
3. Returns the load chip to the pile of available loads.
4. Draws a new Demand card.
5. Continues his turn, including, if he can, delivering another load for payoff, dropping a load, picking up a load, and moving. The player may continue

until his movement allowance is used up. When making multiple deliveries to the same city each load must be treated separately. You must complete each of the above steps for each load delivered.

After finishing his movement, the player may then spend up to £20 million to build additional track or to upgrade his train.

## **EVENT CARD EFFECTS**

An Event card takes effect immediately upon being drawn. Generally, the Event card continues in effect until the end of the drawing player's next turn, when it is discarded. However, the Excess Profits Tax card acts once and is then discarded. The players must obey the directions on the Event card while it is in effect. The following descriptions explain the effects of the Event cards:

### **Counting Mileposts**

Mileposts are counted in the same way as train movement is counted. To count mileposts from a major city, count from the city center and not from the outer mileposts. To count mileposts from the seacoast, count from the milepost nearest the seacoast.

### **Half Rate**

When trains move at half rate, Freights and Heavy Freights move 5 mileposts per turn and Fast Freights and Superfreights move 6 mileposts per turn. When an Event card causes the drawing player's train (which had already moved) to move at half rate, or a player's train moves into an area of bad weather, the train's remaining movement is halved, rounding all fractions up.

### **Floods**

When track is flooded out, all track of all players bridging the river indicated is immediately erased. Track across the river may be rebuilt. The track crossing the river may be built during the player's regular turn and only after the Flood Event card has been discarded at the end of the drawing player's next turn. Rebuilt bridges cost the same as the original track building, i.e. £2 million plus the cost of the milepost.

### **Derailments**

When a derailment occurs, the only trains affected are those within the areas (three mileposts from the center of the city, which is also affected though not counted) at the time the card is drawn. Trains may enter the areas immediately afterwards without penalty.

## Lost Loads

When a train loses a load, the player operating the train chooses which load is lost from those the train is carrying. The Event card does not affect any loads picked up after the card is drawn.

## Rail Strikes

When a Rail Strike event occurs, all mileposts touching the border of the area are also affected.

# HOW TO WIN

The winner of the game will be the first player to complete these two requirements:

- Connect all four of the major cities with one continuous line of track. This track can have any number of loops and branches, but must be unbroken.
- Have at least £250 million in cash at the end of their turn. Only cash is counted; the money spent on building railroads or upgrading locomotives does not count toward winning.

## Courtesy in Play

A player's Demand cards and Loco cards (together with the load chips on the Loco cards) must be face up in front of the player for all to see. A player need not show his money until the Rail Tax Event card appears, after which the amount of the player's money is also public information.

# VARIATIONS

Since it first appeared, **EMPIRE BUILDER®** has been enjoyed by thousands of players. Many have created house rules to enhance their enjoyment of the game. The following play variations represent some of the best that have been suggested to us; the best—the Heavy Freight and the Rail Tax—were added to the regular rules. If you would like to share your rules with us and other Empire Builder fans, send it to: *Empire Builder Variations*, Mayfair Games Inc., 8060 St. Louis Ave., Skokie, IL 60076. You may also e-mail to [variants@mayfairgames.com](mailto:variants@mayfairgames.com). Any submissions become the property of Mayfair Games Inc. and may be posted on our website ([www.mayfairgames.com](http://www.mayfairgames.com)) or published in future products.

**Be Alert:** Some rules radically alter the play of the game. In every case, the use of any variation must be agreed to by all players before the beginning of the game.

## Tournament Rules

In addition to strict adherence to all stated rules, the tournament director should enforce these rules:

## Time Limit

Play continues until a stated time limit, after which the play continues for one last round. The player whose continuous line of track connects all four of the major cities and who has the most cash wins; if no player's track connects four major cities, the player with the most cash wins.

## Equal Turns

When a player declares victory (connecting the four major cities and having £250 million), play continues until the current round ends. If two or more players all declare victory in the same round, the one with the most cash wins. In the event of a tie, the victory limit becomes £300 million and play continues, with all players still eligible to win.

## Fast Game

To speed up the play of game, use any or all of these rule changes:

- Players start with £80 million and four building turns with no movement.
- Discard the Event cards dealt during the initial deal; do not re-shuffle them into the deck.
- Freights and Heavy Freights move 12 mileposts per turn, and Fast Freights and Superfreights move 16 mileposts per turn. Half rate movement is 6 and 8 mileposts per turn respectively.
- The Rail Tax Event card has no effect and is removed prior to play.
- Deal 5 cards to each player at the beginning of the game, replacing Event cards normally. After completing the first 2 building turns, each player discards 2 Demand cards, and play continues normally thereafter.

The Fast Game rules are recommended for use by beginning and younger players. Fast trains are also recommended when playing with 5 or 6 players.

## Mercy

During play by beginners (but also by old hands), it occasionally happens that a player becomes trapped and unable to build or to move to get out of their predicament. Sometimes, the solution comes from merely discarding the player's hand and getting new cards; more often the position is untenable. To let the player continue enjoying the game, try one of these rules:

## Loans

The player may borrow up to £20 million from the bank and immediately spend it on building or hold it to pay other players' track use fee. The player must repay the bank double the amount borrowed from all payoffs until the doubled amount is completely repaid. (If all players agree, require that a player attempt to

discard their cards three times before proving that they are truly stuck. At that time borrowing is then allowed.)

### **Late Payment of Use Fee**

The player may use another player's track and pay the track usage fee from delivery payoffs obtained by delivering loads while on the other player's track. Once leaving the track all fees must be paid in full.

### **Backtracking**

A player may reverse his train's direction on any milepost (not just a city milepost) at the cost of losing one full turn. A train which backtracks can move in any direction in its next turn. A train may not backtrack when the player has discarded his cards during the same turn; a train may backtrack if it cannot move for any other reason (e.g. Derailment, Flood and Rail Strike). A player whose train backtracks while on an opponent's track is assessed the use fee for that turn.

### **Starting Over**

The player may choose to start over. All money, loads on his trains, and track in his color are removed. Three new Demand cards are drawn (any Event cards take effect immediately). The player once again starts with £60 million and a Freight train, and starts by building £20 million worth of track on the restart turn. Normal start rules apply.

If a player's removal of track will prove to be a hardship on any other player, because they were planning on renting the track on an upcoming turn, this track then remains on the board until that run has been made, and is then removed. The £4 million for renting the track is given to the bank instead of the player. By the player declaring this, the track's owner may become able to continue his game. Under this circumstance, the player may choose not to restart and the other player is now committed to using the track as declared. Play would continue as normal, while awaiting for the player to actually rent the track.

### **Crossgrading**

A player may crossgrade from a Fast Freight to a Heavy Freight, or vice versa, for £5 million. When a player crossgrades, he may also spend up to £15 million to build track in the same turn. There is no limit to the number of times a player may crossgrade. Money spent on crossgrading does not count towards the upgrade to a Superfreight.

### **Honeymoon Game**

This is an optional two player version of the game.

The following adjustments are made:

- Reduce the commodities available by one for every type of load.
- Only two players may build track into a medium city (square), and only one player may build track into a small city (circle). No player may

build more than three track sections to a medium or small city.

- A player who intends to build to a small city must have a Demand card for that city or for a commodity available at that city. Once the player builds the track, the delivery or pickup must be performed.
- Any loads may be dropped at any city. If the load is available in the city, it is returned to the tray. If the load is not available there, then it remains in that city. If there is already a load chip at the city, the first load chip is then returned to the tray and the newly dropped load remains. This load is now available to be picked up by either player at a later point.

### **Challenge Game**

To create a more challenging game for experienced players, use any or all of the following rule changes:

#### **Field Warehousing**

Loads dropped off in a city without a payoff remain at that city for 4 turns. During that time, any player may pick up that load by passing through the city and picking it up normally. At the end of the dropping player's fourth subsequent turn, the load is returned to the tray.

#### **Field Warehousing (Wordelmann Variant)**

Loads dropped off in a city without a payoff remain at that city indefinitely. During that time, any player may pick up that load by passing through the city and picking it up normally. There are three exceptions to how long the load may stay in the city:

- If the load is produced by the city normally, then the load is just returned to the tray becoming available normally.
- If a player arrives in a city which normally provides the commodity, but the tray is empty, the player may choose any commodity of this type from any field warehouse on the board. The player must stay in the city for his complete next turn as the load is retrieved.
- When a disaster occurs which affects a city with stored loads all of these loads are returned to the tray. The disasters in effect destroy all field warehouses in the area named.

#### **Private Warehousing**

A player may build one private warehouse on the board at any clear milepost. This costs £10 million, and is considered part of the building turn. Only one warehouse may occupy any one milepost. To signify its location, the player draws a square around that milepost. To all other players this milepost is still treated as a clear milepost.

The player owning this warehouse may drop off up to two loads at this location. They remain there under his control until one of the following occurs:

- The player picks up the load at a later time. (Possibly replacing it with a new load.)
- A player arrives in a city which normally provides the commodity, but the tray is empty, the player may choose to take the commodity from any private warehouse on the board. The player must stay in the city for the complete next turn as the load is retrieved.
- The player may exchange the commodity with any other player passing through for no additional cost.
- The player may sell the commodity to another passing train for £5 million.
- When a disaster occurs which affects a warehouse with stored loads all of these loads are returned to the tray. The disasters in effect destroy loads in private warehouses in the area named. The warehouse remains for future use by the player.

### Open Contracts

Whenever a player discards his hand, the discarded Demand cards are not placed on the discard pile, but are placed on the board.

These cards are open contracts available to all players. The first player to deliver a load on an open contract picks the card from the table, discards it, and receives the payoff for the delivery in the usual way.

Only four open contracts may be face up on the table at any time; any additional cards are discarded.

### Reshuffle

Use a blank card (or one of the manufacturing source cards) and write Reshuffle on it. Add the card to the deck. When it is drawn, reshuffle the deck.

### Cost to Move

Each player must pay £1 million per turn that his train moves on its own track. The £4 million cost for moving on the other players' track remains the same.

### Cost to Load

Each player uses one milepost of movement to pick up or drop off one load. For example, if a player both picks up 1 load and drops off 1 load or if a player picks up 2 loads, the player has used 2 mileposts of movement.

### Additional Trains

Each player starts with two trains, a Freight and a Fast Freight, which may be upgraded in the usual way. Each player may move both of his trains every turn. Players may (by mutual agreement) have four Demand cards instead of three.

### Branching

Players may build track from mileposts connected to other player's track. No junction charge is paid. User fees are charged in the usual manner.

### Selling and Trading Track

Instead of building track, a player may purchase track from another player for whatever price both players agree to. The purchase may take place only in the purchasing player's turn. Players can agree to trade track for track, with no money involved. In both trading and selling, the selling player replaces his colored lines with lines of the new owner's color.

### Slow Start

Each player starts with £40 million and a Slow Freight. A Slow Freight travels at 6 mileposts per turn and carries two loads. The normal £20 million upgrade is charged to move up to the normal Freight train. Upgrades are handled normally afterwards.

### New Loads & Demands

A multitude of new loads have been proposed. To create new loads, mark them on the map (using a new color of crayon) and use the blank stickers to make new load chips. Demand cards may be made, and issued a card number. When that card number is drawn, the new card is used in replacement. Try your hand at it. Our favorite one is:

### The Circus

At the start of the game, put the two Circus load chips in London, where they will remain until picked up (like field warehousing).

Each Demand card with a number divisible by 10 (e.g., 20, 30, . . . ,110, 120, 130) is modified by changing the lowest-payoff demand(s); that demand becomes 20 million to deliver the Circus to that city.

The Demand card then works normally, but when the Circus is delivered to a city, it remains there until picked up and delivered again. A player may not pick up the Circus unless he has a demand card for the Circus; however it may be dropped without payoff at any city, and if it is lost from a Derailment Event card, it is placed at the nearest city.