A RACE TO REACH THE PACIFIC COAST

RAILROAD REVOLUTION

CONNECT IT WITH RAIL AND TELEGRAPH

It is clear, that railways are a real attraction for the players, with so many published games and different mechanics, often followed by expansions, new maps, variants, etc. As I am an engineer specialized in road, airport and railway constructions I always pay particular attention any new game on this topic, hoping that it will not turn out to be anther clone of 1830, Age of Steam, Ticket to Ride and so on. Hopefully *Railroad Revolution* brings something new and having been created by two Italian designers add to me a little plus to the pleasure of discovering it. Marco Cannetta and Stefania Niccolini (husband and wife in the "real" life) are not two unknown designers as they already published a few games, the most known of them being "Zhanguo".

WASHINGTON: STATION CHANGE TRAINS FOR CHARLOTTE

The board of *Railroad Revolution* shows a map of the United States with 15 big towns and a network of lines connecting them. The box also contains four personal boards, about two hundred tiles and the same number of wooden colored tokens. All the materials are of satisfactory quality and they may be used without problems.

The set-up is a little more complicated than in many other games as you must fill the board with different tiles: if you store them in separate plastic bags at the end of the game this operation will be much easier and quicker. You need first to place 13 "city" tiles on the map (with the exclusion of Washington and

Charlotte on the right part of the board); then the telegraph tiles are placed on 6 of the eight cases on the bottom part of the map. Each player takes the small wooden "houses" (stations or offices) and "sticks" (rails) of the selected color and fill with them his personal board.

As you see on the picture every player also takes an objective tile "A1", one "A2", a train tile, 600 dollars, 3 shares of the telegraph, 4 "white" workers and three square tokens to be placed at the bottom of the "progress" track on the right of the board.

EVERYBODY ON BOARD, THE TRAIN IS LEAVING

Before starting, the turn order is decided and every player selects a special "bonus" tile and the attached colored worker. There are 4 different workers (gray, blue, pink and orange) and one of each is randomly assigned to each of those special tiles at the beginning of the game. Each turn follows the same sequence:
- select one worker from your reserve (at the beginning 4 white and 1 colored)
- place the worker in one of the fours "action" areas of the personal board
- execute the related "main" action (this is a must)
- eventually execute the "secondary" action of that area.

The first area of the personal board (see again picture 2) allows the construction of a station in one of the cities of the map already connected by the rails of the owned color: the cost is printed on the city tile and should be paid in dollars. Each city tile is divided in two parts:

on the left is shown the bonus that goes to the first player that build a station there (a locomotive tile, new workers, advance on the progress tracks, etc.) while on the right there is the general bonus of the station (colored workers or advance on the progress) that will be assigned to every player (first included) that builds in that city. Using a colored worker for this action you may get the station for free, use a locomotive, extra bonus, etc.

The second area is used to build the railways: the player takes two rails (sticks) from his reserve and pay 400 dollars to have the right to place them on the map, but that each new rail must be connected to an existing rail of the same color (all the players start the game with a rail between Washington and Charlotte). If the selected path contains difficult terrain (small colored triangles to represent bridges on the rivers or tunnels under the mountains) the player must pay 100 dollars extra for each triangle. Using colored workers, you may get discounts, extra rails, locomotives, etc.

The players may invest in the Telegraph Company using the third area. They discard one worker (but remember that it is not allowed to reduce the total number of your workers under four) and place one "office" (a colored house) in one of the eight telegraph cases on the board, getting the printed bonus: 600 dollars, advance on the progress tracks, a free rail, etc. Each case also gives a certain number of shares (the first player to place an office usually gets some extra shares) that may be used later to satisfy contracts or (alternatively) to get some money from the bank. Two of the eight cases allow the players to obtain a "Contract" (as we will see soon). As usual with colored workers it is possible to get some extra: change the color of one worker, getting 100 dollars for each share tile, extra bonus, etc. Please note that having offices in adjacent cases will entitle the players to get extra Victory Points (VP) at the game's end.

The fourth and last area of the personal board is the "commerce" and is used to make some money, especially when you really need it to build a station or to pose new rails. You sell the leftmost token in your reserve (rail or house) and you get

from 400 to 1000 dollars. You may also "turn" a locomotive (see below). Also, when using colored workers here, it is possible to advance on the progress tracks, get shares, take 100 dollars for each owned locomotive, etc.

All the "locomotive" tiles have two sides Spiel: the first (active) allows the player to take the offered bonus (money, rails, shares or progress rises) while the back means that the tiles is not active When the players are allowed to "turn" a locomotive they take the bonus if the tile is active (for example the locomotive on the bottom right of the Picture 3 gives you 3 certificates if turned off) or transform an inactive tile again active. So, with two "turns", it is possible to take the bonus of a tile and then re-activate it.

One of those locomotive tiles is distributed to the players during the set-up and it is used to "promote" 1 or 2 workers and thus resolve the objective tiles, as we see below. All the locomotives on the active side at the end of the game give 8 VP to their owners.

Every time that a rail is placed on a section that contain the icon "contract" (two hands) or a player select a telegraph case with the same symbol the game stops for a while and a contract "phase" is opened. Each contract tile has two sections and each of them has a cost (in share tiles) from 1 to 4. The player that activated this phase has the opportunity to use both sections (paying both costs) while all the opponents may only select one of the two (see picture 4).

During set-up, every player received two "objective" tiles (named A1 and A2): each of them (and the following ones) usually necessitate of 1 or 2 colored workers (to be activated) and a certain number of rails and/or stations on the map. When this happens the players simply discards the requested workers (remember that you may never go under 4) and takes the related VP. Then he picks up another objective with the following letter (If you discarded an "A", you take a "B", etc.).

Whatever players do on the map or on the telegraph line - every action should be aimed at advancing the three markers on the "progress tracks" (picture 6): at the game's end, the value of the progress tracks is multiplied by the number of rails, stations or telegraph offices laced on the board. The first track multiplies the number of telegraph offices by a value variable between 0 and 9; the second is used for the stations placed on the main map (multiplied by 0-9); the third gives 25 VP for each of the 3 western stations on the Pacific Coast that were reached by the player's rails. The best way to rise the markers are found on the stations' bonuses on the map, on one locomotive and using the action "commerce" with the "pink" worker.

When one of the players use his last wooden marker (rail or house) the game is over after a last turn for everybody. Then the VP are verified, adding:

- the VP of the three progress tracks (calculated as stated before)
- the VP of the activated objective tiles
- 8 VP for every active locomotive tile
- 5 o 8 VP for every couple of adjacent cases on the telegraph

The player with the higher total wins the game
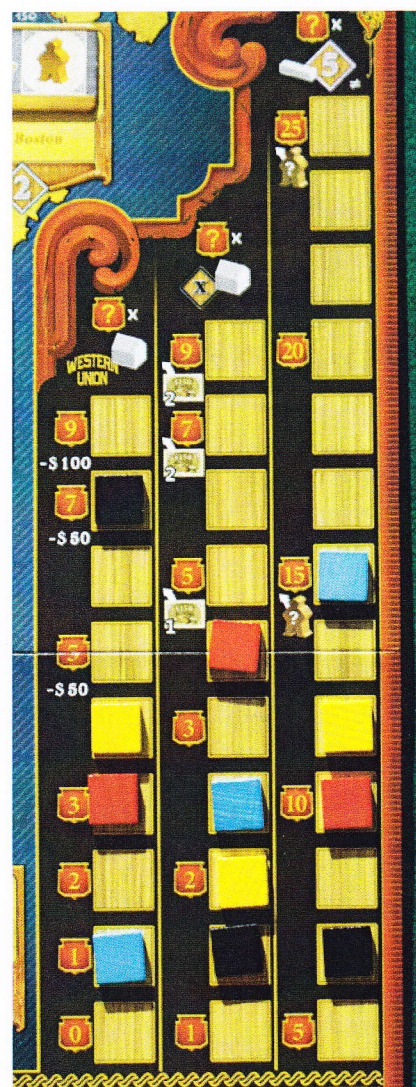
**LOS ANGELES:
THE TRAIN STOPS, PLEASE DO NOT FORGET YOUR LUGGAGE**

Railroad Revolution is not a complex game: after a few turns of the first game the rules will be clear and the icons memorized, so the players may start to consider the alternatives and try their personal strategies.

One thing should be clear since the beginning: there are NOT ENOUGH houses to place all the stations and all the telegraph offices, so the players have to select since the beginning which one of the two strategies they will prefer. An immense help may might be to look at the objectives that were assigned at the beginning of the game.

The first strategy (stations on the map) may give 72 VP from the progress track

(9 VP x 8 stations) but may grant also a sizable number of objective tiles (as they ask for rails to be placed and stations to be built). Therefore, the player must aim at the actions that grant money (to pay for the stations), orange workers (for the "discounts" on rails and stations) and rails.

Once that a strategy is selected all the actions should be aimed at reaching as soon as possible the top of the related track and to progress quickly also on the third track, the one with the 3 Pacific coast towns (that assign up to 75 VP more). Please note that this track is the longer of the three and oblige a player

Be prepared to start with a strategy and be ready to change it after a few turns if new opportunities arise (contracts or objectives, for example),

I definitely like *Railroad Revolution*: it demands 2-3 games to be deeply explored and before being able to play it very

The second (Telegraph) give the usual 72 points (9VP x 8 offices) and further max of 44 VP for the adjacencies. Therefore, the player should always search to get as many shares as he can (to pay the contracts) and a certain number of extra workers (as 6 will be discarded to build the offices).

to discard two of his workers at fixed steps, if he wishes to reach the top. This, therefore, means that you should program to build a sizable number of rails.

Pietro Cremona

Not a complex game, and yet a game that needs a few trial runs to test the strategies and explore possibilities and options.

competitively and the variable set-up of the city tiles and the telegraph tiles grants different combinations in every new game, adding extra life to it. ☑

Pietro Cremona

INFORMATION

	PLAYERS: **2-4**
Designer: M. Cannetta, S. Niccolini	
Artist: Mariano Iannelli	AGE: **14+**
Price: ca. 50 Euro	
Publisher: Pegasus Spiele 2017	TIME: **90+**
www.pegasus.de	

EVALUATION

Worker placement, railway
Users: For experts
Version: multi
Rules: de en fr it pl
In-game text: no

Comments:
Not complex, but lots of in-game depth * Variable set-up provides variation * Two basic strategies - stations or telegraph offices

Compares to:
Other worker placement games with resources management

Other editions:
Red Glove (it), What's your Game (en, fr), hobvbity. eu (pl)

My rating: ★★★★★