

Open Rails Origins - 18AL

By Jack Neal

Players: 1-3

Playing Time: 30 Minutes for One Player, 60-90 Minutes for 2-3 Players

Object

Earn more money than your opponents at the end of the game.

Contents

- 1 Game Board (1 8x10 sheets).
- 1 Track Income Track Board (1 8 x 10 sheet).
- 5 sets of 17 Cubes (multi-colored).
- 25 Bank Share cards.
- 6 City Upgrade Tokens (translucent markers).
- 6 Company Extra Round Tokens (translucent markers).
- 8 Player Aid Cards.
- 8 Special Action Tiles.
- 3 Player Turn Cards (labeled from 1 to 3)
- Money or Poker Chips (\$1, \$5, \$10 and \$50 denominations are recommended.)
- 1 Turn Marker (An extra translucent chip)

Background

The game takes place in early 19th century Alabama. You are a wealthy industrialist looking to invest in the promising railroad industry moving lumber, cotton and coal. You start out with your personal savings and found railroad companies. The companies start slowly but gain investors. Cities are added to your network and faster trains deliver goods more quickly and cheaply. Other investors incorporate competing railways to block you off at every opportunity and dump your stock to reduce its value. Undeterred, you try to fulfill your destiny as the richest rail baron of your age.

Setup

Place the game board on the table. Place all bank shares along the right side of the board next to its matching color. Place the Special Action tiles face down next to the board. Place a translucent marker on the Turn portion of the game board. Divide \$240 evenly between each player (\$60 for one player, \$120 for two players and \$80 for three players).

For the first turn only, each player randomly draws a Player Order card and each player (in Player Order) selects the action of their choice.

Turn Summary

There are eight turns in the game which are split into three phases:

- Action Selection Phase.
- Stock Phase.
- Operation Phase.
 - Perform An Improvement
 - Build track
 - Build Station
 - Upgrade Town
 - Buy Back Discarded Cube
 - Operation Trains and Calculate Income
 - Pay Dividend or Withhold Earnings
 - Purchase Trains

Players start each turn by selecting a special action which may give them an advantage in building track, trading stocks, raising income or choosing first in the next turn. From there, players may sell and then buy stocks in the stock phase. Finally, players owning a railroad may purchase trains, stations and track. The details of each phase are explained below.

Action Selection Phase

Note: The Advanced Game uses an auction to determine player order and roles. Please refer to the Advanced Game section of the rulebook for details.

Players select an Action Tile to use during the turn. Action Tiles are selected in Player Order and each Action Tile provides a special advantage to the player that selects it. More powerful actions force a player to play later in the turn.

The Special Actions are:

1. First Move: This action guarantees picking the first Action Tile next turn. You are also usually near the top of the order for stocks and running Railroad later in the turn.
2. First Stock: This action allows you to go first in the Stock Phase.
3. First Operation: This action allows you to go first in the Operating Phase.
4. Extra Track: This action allows one Railroad owned by the player to build a maximum of four cubes of track instead of the usual three. This action can only be performed in one round of the current turn for one railroad.
5. Trade-In Train: This action allows one Railroad owned by the player to trade in an existing train for half price towards the purchase of a new train. This action occurs immediately, but a player may pass and decide not to trade in a train. The old train cube is discarded and a new one placed next in line.
6. Track Income: This action allows one Railroad to raise \$2 for each cube (track and stations) on the board. The entire sum of money is either given to the owning player or placed in the Railroad's treasury. The player must be the Railroad's President to use this action. This action

takes place immediately.

7. Swap Trains: This action allows one player to swap the order of two adjacent trains in the same row on the Train Track. The player must be the President of one of the involved railroads. This action takes place immediately.

8. Extra Round: This action allows one Railroad in the Operation Phase to run one extra round at the end of the turn. This action may be passed and each Railroad may only use this action once per game. The player must be the Railroad's President to use this action. Place a Company Special Action marker on the Company Mat to indicate that a railroad has performed this operation for the game.

When all players have selected an Action Tile, the Stock Phase begins.

Stock Phase

Railroads are created, managed and destroyed in the stock phase. Generally speaking, higher performing Railroad will see their stock rise and weaker Railroad will struggle to maintain their value.

The Stock Phase is split into two rounds. In the first round, all players sell any stock if they wish. Once all players perform these actions, all players may buy any stock. Stock is sold and purchased in Action Tile order with the player selecting the First Stock tile going first. A player is not required to buy or sell stock.

Note: The Advanced Game allows more complicated transactions for buying and selling stock. Please refer to that section for further details.

Selling Stock

Players may sell stock at the beginning of the Stock Phase. Players may sell one or more shares in the same company for which they receive the current stock price for each share. Sold shares are returned to the bank. The Railroad's stock price is moved to the left (decreased) one rung for each share sold. Money is used from the bank to pay the player.

If another player has two or more shares in a railroad, it is possible for a President to sell enough shares to pass (or dump) the President's share to that player. A President may not sell his President's share back to the bank.

Players may only sell one company's stock once per stock round.

Stocks are sold until all players pass. Players may reenter the auction after passing.

Buying Stock

A player may purchase one share of stock in any company that has shares in the bank. The player pays for the stock with money out of his treasury and receives one share. **This money is placed into the company and not into the bank.**

If a player has more shares than the President, he becomes President of the company.

Players are only allowed to hold up to a specific number of shares (11 for two player games, 7 shares for three player games and no limit for a solitaire game). Furthermore, a player may only own four or less shares in any one railroad - full ownership is not allowed.

The stock value for the Company remains unchanged.

Once all players pass, the Operation Phase begins. Players may reenter the auction after passing.

Starting a Railroad

Railroads are formed by purchasing stock. Each company has five shares of stock with one share marked as the President's Share. The President in the Railroad makes all decisions for the company - where to build track, where to place stations and when to issue dividends.

The player buying the first share of a stock becomes the President. The President sets the starting value (Par Value) for the company stock. The President's share costs double the Par Value to purchase but is otherwise worth one share.

The Par Value determines how many cubes the Railroad may have during the game. Cubes are used to mark track, trains and stations and once they are used, they are discarded from the game. Railroads without any cubes may not purchase new trains or lay track or place new stations so you want to make sure you set a price high enough to expand if necessary.

Note: Par Values range from \$7 to \$12 dollars which results in 7 to 16 cubes being available for the railroad to use. Since three shares are required to start a railroad and the first share costs double, the amount of money to float a railroad will range from \$28 to \$48. Discarded cubes cost \$10 to recover later in the game, so invest wisely!

Once three shares have been purchased, the railroad may buy trains, lay track and begin operating.

When the Railroad is started, the Par Value is marked on the Stock Market by placing one of the company's cubes on the matching space. The Railroad receives a number of matching colored cubes equal to the white number listed on this space. The remaining cubes are permanently removed from play and placed back in the box or container.

The starting player receives the President's share. Finally, one cube is placed on the top area of the Income Track and one cube is placed on the matching colored hex on the game board to indicate the first station for the company.

A train must be purchased within the first two operating rounds for a new railroad.

At any time, a President may lose control of the company if another player acquires one more share than the President. If this happens, a President's share and a regular share is traded between the players.

- On turns 2 through 4, track may also be built in a 'Y'. The track coming off the Y must be linear and cannot be next to more than one cube of the same color on any side, i.e. like a spoke.

Example: The black track is valid as it makes a 'Y' shaped track with each spur radiating cleanly from a central point. Red track could not be built after this initial build because the resulting track would not result in a clean 'Y' pattern.



- On turns 5 and 6, track may be built as long as it touches existing track.

Example: Any of the below track is valid.



Track costs are paid to the Bank and a cube is placed on the appropriate hex. If a Railroad has used all its cubes, it may not build any track.

A player who took the Extra Track Action may build up to four hexes for one railroad on one operating round.

Track cannot be removed from the board unless a railroad is out of cubes and needs to buy a train. See the "Buy Train" section above for further details.

Example: Jack has built the Blue Railroad with two '3' trains from Nashville to Decatur to Birmingham. Justin owns the Green Railroad and recently completed a spur to Decatur. On the next turn, Justin places a station in Decatur. The Blue RR's income is drastically reduced because his trains cannot pass the Decatur station and he is out of cubes.

Towns such as West Point are worth \$1 in income. A company may place a station in such a town if they choose to. Like towns, they may be upgraded once and still cost \$2 to build track to.

Small towns (dots) on the map are worth \$1 in income. Stations may not be built in a small town.

Note: Regarding First Track Build for a Railroad:

The very first build for a railroad that does not have the 'Extra Track' action will usually have cubes placed in three hexes - two cubes for the starting station and first track and then one cube in each hex that is build for track from there. This does not mean that a railroad that needs to go four hexes to reach its first city will earn less income because trains are purchased after routes are built. In the second route, the remaining track to the city would be in place and assuming a train is purchased in the first round, income would still be generated.

Build a Station

A President may place a station. Stations prevent other railroads from advancing past their city unless they have placed a competing station in the same city. In the Advanced Game, stations are also places where your trains start their journey for earning income.

Each white square the map represents a potential location for a station. A cube is placed next to an existing track cube and either paired or stacked to show that a station has been placed, preferably not obscuring the dollar amount printed on the board. A railroad can only build one station per city.

Stations are purchased with Company funds. The first station for the railroad costs \$10, the second station (if allowed) costs \$20 and the third station (if allowed) costs \$30.

Different railroads have different numbers of stations that they can place: The number of stations a railroad may place is printed on the matching company color on the board. This number does not include the company's starting station.

A station may not be built if the railroad has no remaining cubes.

Upgrade Town

A President may elect to increase a city's or town's income by \$2. Using Company money, \$10 is payed to the bank. A Town Upgrade marker is drawn from the bank and placed on the town's hex. Once all 6 Town Upgrade markers are used, this action cannot be performed. Towns and cities may only be upgraded once.

You can only upgrade towns or cities that are connected by track. Red hexes on the edge of the map represent connections outside the map and may not be upgraded.

Buy Back Cube

A President may buy back any discarded matching cubes for \$10. One cube per round may be recovered. Money is paid to the bank from Company funds. Cubes that were discarded while determining a company's par value cannot be bought back.

No Action

A railroad may elect to do nothing on an Operating Round.

Collecting Income

Once one or none of the above actions is performed, the railroad can now collect income.

Note: The Advanced Game calculates income by tracing routes from stations. Please refer to the Advanced Game section for details.

To calculate your income, add up the value of all your trains. This number is your Total Train Value (TTV) and represents the total number of cities you may visit. Starting with your home city, add the income for each city you want to use for income. If you have a higher Total Train Value than the number of cities, you may reuse each city **once**. Mark your train income on the Income Track.

"D" Trains allow double revenue for their run.

Example #1: Betsy has one '2' train between Montgomery (\$1) and Selma (\$2). She has a Total Train Value of 2 and there are two connections. She earns \$3 income and places the matching marker on the \$3 on the Income Track.

Example #2: Jeremiah has two '2' trains and is connected starting from Atlanta (\$4) to Gasden (\$2) and Birmingham (\$2). He is connected to three cities and has a Total Train Value of 4. He earns \$12 income ($\$4 + \$2 + \2) + ($\$4$ for starting at the top of the list again).

Example #3: Justin has two '2' trains and he is connected to Tupelo (\$3), Birmingham (\$2), the Oxmoor (\$3) and three towns (\$1 each). He has a Total Train Value of 4 and earns \$9 income ($\$3 + \$3 + \$2 + \1) for the three cities and one town.

Example #4: Duane has four '2' trains for a Total Train Value of 8. He is connected only to Oxmoor (\$3) and Atlanta (\$4). He earns \$14 (not \$28) because he can only use each city twice to determine income.

Example #5: Duane has two '3D' trains for a Total Train Value of 6. He is connected only to Oxmoor (\$3), Atlanta (\$4) and Birmingham (\$1). He earns $\$16 \times 2 = \32 since each city may be visited twice and each value is doubled because "D" trains were used.

Note: It's worth mentioning that you make more money in the Basic Game by making straight connections to larger areas as quickly as possible. The Advanced Game uses a different method for determining income which encourages building your track differently.

Determine Dividends

Finally, the income from each delivery is either given to your shareholders or withheld for company use.

Pay Dividends

Money is paid from the bank for each share held by a player. **Each share receives a fifth of the income from the delivery with any partial amount rounded up.** The Presidents Share is treated no differently than regular shares for receiving dividend income.

The railroad does not receive money for any unowned shares nor any money from the dividend. The Company's Stock Value is moved to the right (increased) one space when dividends are paid.

Example #1: A railroad earns \$10 income. Breanna has 2 shares (including the President's share) and Jackie has 1 share. Each player receives 20% of \$10 per share, so Breanna receives \$4 and Jackie receives \$2. The remaining \$4 stays in the bank.

Example #2: A railroad earns \$13 income. Jackie has 4 shares and Mike has 1 share. Each share is worth \$3 ($\$13 / 5 = \2.6 , rounding up). Jackie receives \$12 and Mike receives \$4.

Example #3: A railroad earns \$1 income. Delores has 3 shares. Each share earns \$1 ($\$1 / 5 = 0.2$, rounded up). She receives \$3.

Note: Due to rounding, dividends can easily increase a player's cash reserves quickly. Since a player's assets at the end of the game determine the winner, you will want to pay dividends often.

Withhold Dividends

Companies also have the option of holding their profits. Track building is expensive and after shares are initially sold, train revenue is a good way to earn cash.

When selecting this option, the company receives the full income amount of the delivery, however, the Stock Value for the Railroad is moved to the left (decreased) one rung.

No Income

If your railroad does not generate income from running a train, the Stock Value for the Railroad is moved to the left (decreased) two rungs. The only exception to this rule is if a train is purchased on a railroad's first turn, in which the Stock Value for a railroad is moved to the left (decreased) only one rung.

Purchase a Train

After dividends have been paid or withheld, a Railroad may buy one or more trains as outlined below:

A railroad needs a train to generate income. A train is purchased by placing a cube on the Train Area at the top right corner of the game board. Trains are purchased with Company money at the price listed for that train row.

TRAINS		
\$10	2	2 2
\$20	3	3 3
\$30	4	4
\$40	5	5
\$60	3D	3D
\$80	4D	4D

6 IN SERVICE AT ANY TIME

Once a train is purchased, a cube is placed just right of the last cube in the row. If there are no more spaces in the row, more expensive (but profitable) trains are available. Trains must be purchased in order based on the last cube placed, thereby filling in rows from left to right. Spaces for trains that have been removed by the 'Trade-In Train' action are left empty.

Only six trains are in use by all the railroads in the game at any one time. Once the 7th train is purchased, the 1st train cube is removed from the Train track and placed in the Discard Area. Blank spaces on the lower end of the track are left empty and cannot be used for purchasing new trains.

One or more trains may be purchased by a company in a round.

The President cannot purchase a train in whole or in part for a company unless it is unable to buy a train on its own.

If a railroad has been started, has no trains operating and cannot pay for another train, the President of the railroad **must** help purchase a train for the troubled railroad using his own assets, starting with his personal cash.

If the President does not have enough cash, he must immediately sell stock from other railroads to help pay for the locomotive. If the President still does not have enough money to cover the transaction, the player may sell stock in the troubled railroad as long as it does not cause him to lose ownership. If there is still not enough money after this, the player is bankrupt and the game is at the end of the current turn after all operating rounds have played out.

Example: Bob is the owner of the Purple Railroad which has just lost it's only 2-Train. The Purple has no money in the treasury. Bob has \$15 in cash, one Green share worth \$4 and two Purple shares worth \$4. A 3-Train is available for \$20. The Purple does not have any money to pay for it, so Bob has to contribute his cash, one share of Green and one share of Purple (\$15 + \$4 + 4) to pay for the locomotive. If the only available locomotive was a 4-Train, Bob would have been bankrupted!

If a railroad loses all of its trains and it is out of cubes, a cube must be purchased from the discard pile to place on the Train Area. If there are no cubes in the discard pile for that Company, one station (not the home city's station) must be removed from the Company's network. If a cube still isn't available, then one section of track must be removed to accommodate the train. The track layout must still be legal with all track connecting back to the Company's home city.

Trains may never be sold or traded to other railroads. Trains may not be traded in for cash unless a player uses a Trade-In Train Action Tile on behalf of that railroad to do so. The old train is worth half the original purchase amount toward the purchase of a new train. When using this action, the cube for the old train is placed in the Discard pile and a new cube is used for the new train.

Example: If the example above, if Bob has selected the Trade-In action, Bob would trade his 2-Train for \$5. The remaining \$15 is paid for by remaining president's cash only with no shares sold.

Cleanup

If all railroads have had the option to build and earn income, the round is over. Turns 1 and 2 have one round and turns 3 through 6 have two rounds. If there are multiple rounds in the turn, simply move the Round Marker down one space in the Turn Area of the board.

Once the Round Marker matches the maximum allowed for the turn and all railroads have operated, the turn is almost over. If a player has selected the Extra Round Action, he may do this now.

Finally, from turn 3 onward, a railroad's Company Value is moved to the right (increased) one rung if ALL of the following conditions are met:

- The Railroad earns income each round in the turn.
- The Railroad has no shares left in the bank.
- The Railroad did full improvements each round (i.e. built at least three cubes, bought a train, improved a town or built a station) in the turn.

This bonus is not used in the solitaire game.

End of the Game

The game ends at the end of a turn when any of the following conditions are met:

- The sixth turn is complete.
- The last 4D-Train is purchased.
- All cubes in all operating companies have been played.
- One player goes bankrupt.

All shares held by each player receive money out of the bank for their Stock Value. The player with the most money wins. Ties are possible, but unlikely.

Solitaire Game

The solitaire version of Open Rails Origins differs from the base game in that shares are available only at certain points during the turn.

You start with \$60 in your personal treasury. Shuffle all of the Share Cards and shuffle all of the Action Tiles.

Action Tiles

At the beginning of each turn you may turn over two Action Tiles. You may perform one of the actions on one of these tiles. First Stock, First Operation and First Move cards have no effect. At the end of each turn, both tiles are placed in a discard pile. At the end of the fourth turn, shuffle the Action tiles and proceed as before.

Shares and Companies

On the first turn, draw 6 shares. If there are two shares drawn for at least one company, you may start that company. You may start as many companies as you want provided there are at least two shares available. Single shares may also be purchased for any company you have started. Once you have purchased any shares to your liking, place the remaining shares face down in a discard pile. For turns 2 through 6, draw 5 share cards. Once all cards have been drawn, shuffle and reuse the discard pile.

Shares may be sold but they are placed in the discard pile.

Only three companies may be formed. Companies can be formed with only two shares. There are no special actions for President's shares since there is only one player. A player must still pay double for the first share of a company purchased.

End of Turn Devaluation

At the end of every turn, one share is drawn. If the drawn share belongs to a company that has been started on the map, move the Company Value to the right (decreased) one rung. Shares that have drawn for devaluation are left face up next to the board. These shares may not be bought or sold and are out of play for the remainder of the game.

Game End

The game ends at the end of 6 turns. The total value of cash and stocks is your final score.

Advanced Game

Once you have mastered the Basic Game, you may want to try some of these advanced rules. The Advanced Game can be played with either of the options below.

Stock Phase

In the Advanced Game, stocks manipulation is more open and player driven. Once a player sells a particular company's stock, he may no longer buy any of that company's stock for the remainder of the turn. However, he is free to buy and/or sell other stocks and all players do not need to complete a buying or selling round.

Once all players have passed, the Stock Phase is over.

Action Selection Phase (3 Players only)

Actions are selected by an auction using player money in lieu of using the numbers printed on the Special Action Tiles.

The first player (chosen randomly) may start bidding at \$1 or pass. Players may raise their bid or pass. Players continue bidding until the highest bid has been determined. Action Tiles are selected in the order that the players dropped out of the auction.

In games with three players, the winner selects the Action Tile of their choice and pays the full bid amount to the Bank. The next player who won selects the Action Tile of their choice and pays the full bid amount to the Bank as well. The player who dropped out first pays nothing.

In games with only two players, the winner still pays their full bid, but the loser pays the bank half the bid amount, rounding up.

Finally, if a player has the 'First Move' Action Tile, he may pass one extra time during the auction. This may allow such a player to select a better action for less money.

Collecting Income

In the Advanced Game, each train starts from a station and goes along track to a number of cities equal to or less than its Train Value. Each hex can only be used once per train. Trains cannot pass through other company's stations, but multiple trains can start from the same station. Trains must run to different sets of destinations.

Short Game

Any of the following rules can be used to play a shorter game.

Easier End Game Conditions.

The game can be shortened by introducing easier end of game conditions. A combination of the below can be used instead of those already mentioned:

- The game ends at the end of a turn when the last 4-Train is purchased.
- The game ends at the end of a turn when 60 minutes (or some other mutually agreed length of time) has elapsed from the start of the game.

Additional Company Startup Funds

Each company receives an additional \$10 immediately from the bank when the first share is issued.

Variants

Easier Discarded Cube Purchasing

Players may opt to allow any leftover cubes to be purchased for \$10. In addition, the price to recover a discarded cube is lowered to \$5.

Volatile Company Dumping

A company may be dumped onto **any** player who has one share in a company if the President decides to sell all his shares. If more than one player has an equal amount of the highest remaining shares, the former Company President chooses a successor to lead the company.

Harder Stock Increases

Dividends may only be paid if a company pays dividends AND builds an improvement (track, train, station and/or city upgrade).

Forced '2' Train Obsolescence

For more train purchases, remove all '2' trains from play at the end of the fifth turn.

Version History

0.1 (12/10/2009)- Original Release

0.2 (12/11/2009)- Clarified cube count, clarified Cleanup section.

0.3 (12/18/2009)- Further cleanup of rules, credits changes.

0.4 (12/22/2009)- Clarified turn order, reordered sections, removed references from original OR, clarified station language, clarified towns with stations, clarified one rung increase for company growth.

0.5 (1/7/2010)- Clarified home station building, clarified collecting income, added variant, added a 'No Action' action.

0.5.1 (1/7/2010) - Corrected cube count at top of rules from 16 to 17.

0.5.2 (1/14/2010) - Corrected Buying Stock stock amounts.

0.5.3 (2/2/2010) - Added further explanation to advanced stock buying, cleaned up bankruptcy language and conditions, minor cleanup of route building, cleaned up auction language in advanced game, clarified solitaire action tile rules.

Credits

Game Design

Jack Neal

Playtesters and Feedback

Tim Harrison
Ed Mittelstedt
Shelby Mittelstedt
Betsy Neal
Breanna Neal
Jackie Neal
Justin Neal
Erin O'Malley
Mike Sleko
John Taggart
Paul Taggart

Special Thanks

Francis Tresham - Originator of 18XX
Martin Wallace - Designer for Steam and Age of Steam
John Bohrer - Publisher of Age of Steam and other railroad titles
Mark Derrick and John David Gault - Designer for 18AL

Graphics

Images are public domain courtesy of WikiCommons and the Library of Congress.

Programs Used

Open Office, Nandek, Paint.NET and Inkscape

Licensing

This game is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial United States License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/us/>). In short, you may distribute and modify freely for non-commercial purposes in any medium. All copyright must be respected and attributed to the author.

All rules, mats, aids and game materials Copyright 2009, Jack Neal - All Rights Reserved.

Help and Purchasing

Website: <http://www.jkntech.com>

Email: openrails@jkntech.com

Postal Address: 520 W. Parkway Drive, Madison OH, 44057