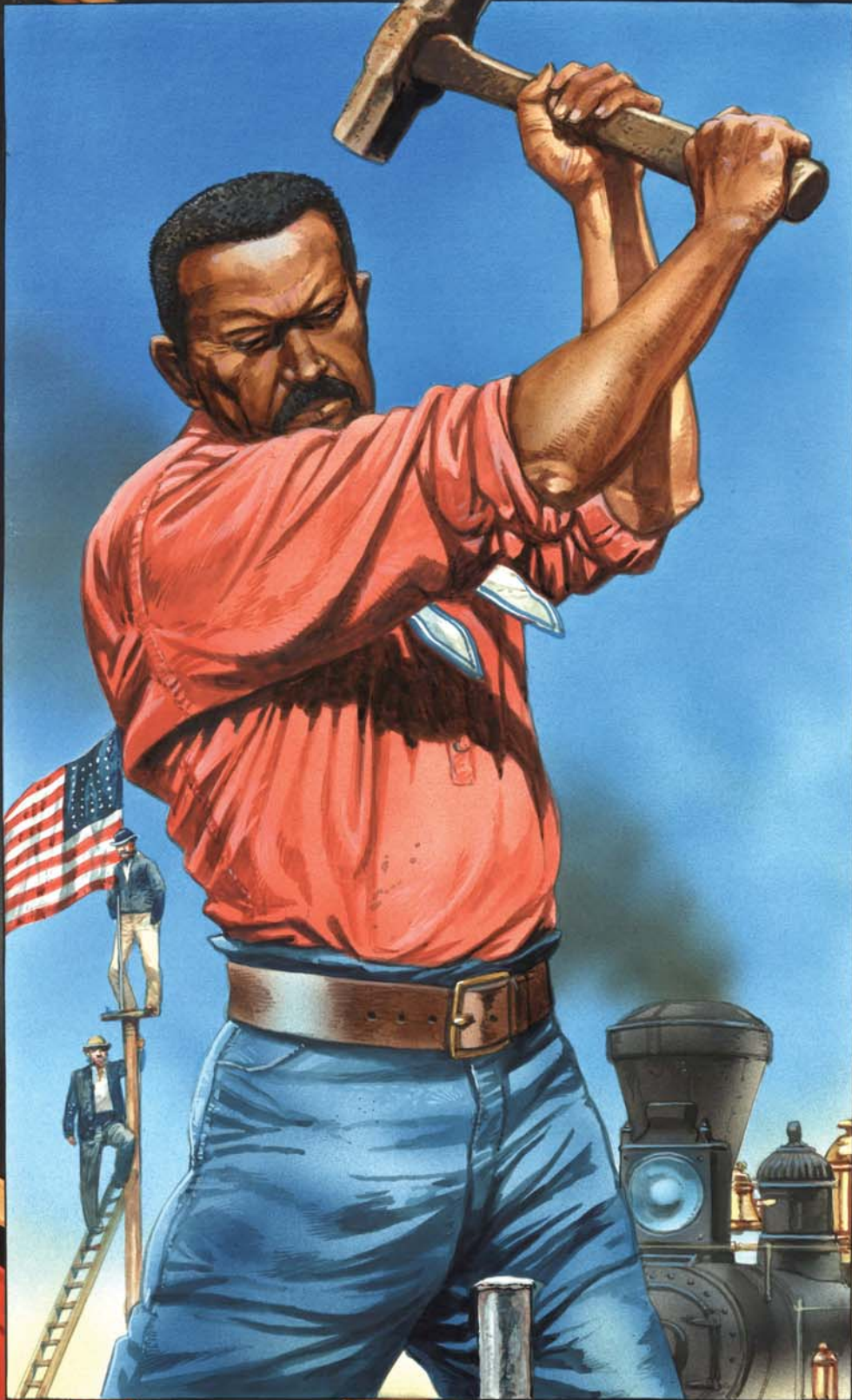


STEEL DRIVER



During the nineteenth century a web of steel was created around the world. Men, money, and vision built the railroads that made the modern world possible. Nowhere is this more evident than in the United States of America. The advent of the locomotive gave America the means to exploit her wealth of natural resources, transforming her into a world power. It is the construction of America's railroads that is reflected in 'Steel Driver', albeit in a very simple way.

The name refers to the Legend of John Henry. He was a steel driver, someone who hammered blasting holes in solid rock with sharp steel spikes. In the tale John Henry pits his strength in a race against a steam-powered hammer. He won the contest but died of exhaustion at the day's end.

'Steel Driver' is for three to six players and takes around sixty to ninety minutes to play.

Overview

In 'Steel Driver' each player represents an investment broker, handling massive capital sums that were available to be invested in the nascent American railway.

There are two forms of 'money' within the game. Large capital sums are represented by white investment cubes. Profits are paid in cash, represented by paper money. It helps to equate cash to victory points; you cannot re-invest cash as it is too small a proportion of the investment cubes to make much difference.

The game lasts for five turns. At the end of five turns a special phase is carried out, where the final company values are determined. The winner is the player with the most cash, which will be earned from investing in the best rail networks.

Each turn consists of five phases. In the first phase each player will receive investment cubes, the actual number determined by the number of players in the game. Players receive the same number of cubes each turn, and can retain unspent cubes from previous turns, so it is possible to gain an advantage in investment cubes.

In the second phase the control markers for each of the six railways companies are auctioned off. Players bid for these with investment cubes; the cubes of the winning bid go into the company's box. When a player buys the control marker of a company he also takes one of its shares. Note that control of a company goes to the player who has the control marker, not the player with the most company shares.

The third phase sees each of the six companies spending their investment cubes on building railways. The map shows the potential routes and the cost to build, (marked in cubes). The first time a company builds it must build from a hexagonal city. After that its track must always connect with track of the same colour. The order in which companies build track in the first turn is the same as the order of the

Company boxes, (from left to right). In subsequent turns it is determined by the order in which companies passed in the previous turn. Each company must build as much track as it possibly can. When a company connects with a location it adjusts its profit level by the amount indicated in the location.

If a transcontinental link, (a continuous series of track links between New York and San Francisco), is created then each participating company receives a bonus to its profit levels.

Players now receive a cash payment from each company they control. This profit is determined by the locations to which the company connected in the present turn. Once profits have been paid out the profit level for each company is reset to zero. Other players who may have shares in a company do not receive a payout.

In the final phase the new company order is marked on the Order of Play display. This order is determined by the order in which companies passed during the track building phase.

After five turns the game is almost over. There is now a special phase where the final value of each company is determined, followed by a final profit payout for each share held. Each location has a particular colour, there being five colours in all. Goods cubes matching the colour of each location are placed on the board. Final control of a company goes to the majority shareholder. In company order each company takes a goods cube from a location to which it is connected. This procedure is repeated until all possible cubes have been claimed. The final profit level of a company is determined by the sets of goods cubes it ends up collecting. A set is made up of cubes of different colours; the larger the set is, the bigger the profit. This mechanism is an incentive for a company to spread out around the country.

The winner is the player with the most cash at the end of the game.

Components



6 company control markers, one for each company



30 company share tokens, five for each company



12 company tokens, two for each company



102 track link pieces, seventeen for each company



2 game markers. One to be used as an Active Player marker and the other to be used on the Order of Play display to show which company is presently active



60 investment cubes



5 orange goods cubes



6 silver goods cubes



12 black goods cubes



3 red goods cubes



1 stack of paper money

Starting the Game

Place the company control markers and share tokens in the company boxes, making sure the colours match.



Place the track link pieces in a pool by the side of the board.



Place the investment cubes in a pool by the side of the board



Place the goods cubes in a pool by the side of the board



Sort the money into piles of the same denomination. Place at the side of the board to form a bank.



Mark the company order of play by placing company tokens on the Order of Play display. The order at the start of the game is the same as the order in which the company boxes are arranged, going from left to right. Place one of the black game markers on the first space of the middle row.



The Active Player marker should be given to the youngest player.

The Board

Starting location, marked by a hexagon

It is possible to start a railway company from here. The profit gained for building a route to this location is shown inside the hexagon.

Regular location, marked by a circle

The profit gained for building a route to this location is shown inside the circle. Locations also have a colour. This indicates which colour of goods cube will be placed in it during the final profit determination phase.

Company boxes

When you take control of a company you place the investment cubes you paid in the company box. These boxes are also used to hold share tokens and control markers.



Order of Play display

The top row is used to show the present order of play. One of the two black game markers should be moved along the middle row to indicate which company is presently active. When a company can no longer build any more routes it must pass. When it does so it moves its coloured token to the bottom row.

Profit track

Each company has two tokens. One should be used on the Order of Play display, the other should be used on the Profit track to show how much profit a company has made in the present turn. When a company connects to a new location it moves its token up this track. After profits have been paid out the token is moved back to the zero space.

Potential route

Track can be laid along a potential route. The number on the route indicates how many investment cubes must be expended by the company to build track here.

Playing the Game

The game is divided into five turns. In each turn you must complete the following phases:

1. **Take investment cubes**
2. **Auction control markers**
3. **Build track**
4. **Take profits**
5. **End of turn**

At the end of the fifth turn there is an additional special phase:

6. **Final profit determination.**

Phase one: Take investment cubes

Each player takes a number of investment cubes from the pool. The number of cubes taken by each player depends on the total number of players in the game, as shown below:

3 players – ten cubes each

4 players – eight cubes each

5 players – seven cubes each

6 players – six cubes each

If there are not enough investment cubes available in the pool to give each player his allocation then use the other coloured goods cubes as investment cubes, (the colours do not matter).

Players retain investment cubes from previous turns. There is no upper limit to the number of such cubes that a player can retain.

Phase two: Auction control markers

A series of auctions will now be held to determine who will control each company. You will be bidding using the investment cubes you hold – you do not use cash to make bids. You may not conceal the number of investment cubes you have from other players. The amount of cash you have should also be public knowledge.

Make sure that every company box contains the control marker for that company.

The active player, (the player holding the Active Player marker), must choose between putting an available Company Control marker up for auction or passing the Active Player marker to the player to his left.

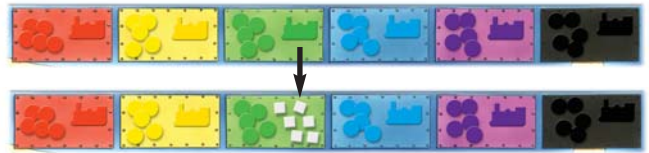
If you choose to put a control marker up for auction then you must make the first bid on it. The minimum initial bid is one, although you may start with a higher amount. This is a standard type auction where bidding continues in a clockwise manner until a final highest bid is reached. Any player who passes may not re-enter this auction in a later round.

The player who wins the auction takes the control marker for the company that was selected by the active player. He pays the amount he bid in investment cubes and places these in the matching company box. Along with the control marker the player also takes one share token in the same company. After the auction has been completed the Active Player marker should be passed to the next player clockwise from the player currently holding the marker.

Once a control marker has been purchased by a player it may not then be auctioned off in the same turn. Consequently there will be a maximum of six auctions, one for each company. This also means that at most each company will issue only one share token during each turn. Note that the Active Player marker may travel around the table several times.

If all players pass, or all six control markers have been auctioned, then the Active Player marker must end up with the player to the left of the last player who put a control marker up for auction. Any remaining control markers remain in their company boxes.

You can have control of more than one company.



EXAMPLE Don is the active player and decides to put the green company control marker up for auction. The final winning bid is made by Simon, with a bid of six investment cubes. He places six of his investment cubes in the green company box and takes the green company control marker, along with a green company share token. Don now passes the active player marker to the player to his left.

Phase three: Build track

Each company will now spend its investment cubes on track building. The player who controls the company decides where the track will be built. This phase will continue until all companies have built as much track as they can.

Make sure all company tokens are on the zero space of the Profit Level track at the start of this phase. They should be reset to zero at the end of every turn.

In company order, as shown on the Order of Play display, each company must build one piece of track or pass. Use one of the two game markers to show which company is presently the active one. Once a company has built a piece of track or passed, the marker should be moved one space along the track; this will activate the next company along. After all companies have had the opportunity to build/pass, the marker is moved back to the first company and the procedure is repeated. Play continues in this manner until all companies have passed.

When a company is active it must build one track link if possible. If it does not have sufficient investment cubes to build a track link it must pass. Although the controlling player normally decides which route to build, if there is a situation where only one route can be built then the company must build along that route.

The cost in investment cubes to build a track link is shown on the potential route. This cost must be paid with investment cubes held by the company. Players can never pay to build track with their own personal fund of investment cubes.

The very first time that a company builds a track it must connect to a hexagonal location.

In all subsequent track builds track must be placed such that it connects to a location that is already connected to track of the same company. That is, track must be contiguous – a company can never have two separate networks of track. This may lead to a situation in which a company cannot build any more track.

Only one track link can be built along a potential route. Once a track link has been placed it cannot be moved or removed.

When a track link is placed the value in the location to which it just connected is added to the active company's profit level.

Once a location is connected to a company's network its value cannot be added to the company's profit level if it is connected to a second time, i.e. you can never profit from a location more than once. If a

Phase four: Take profits

Players now receive cash payments equal to the profit levels of the companies they control. These cash payments should be taken in the form of paper money from the bank.

You do not take cash for shares that you gained in previous turns. You only take cash for the companies that you control at this moment in time.

It is best to think of cash as being victory points; it has no other use. If you control more than one company then you will receive cash from each company you control.

Phase five: End of turn

Move the company tokens from the Pass row to the Order of Play row, keeping the same relative positions.

Move all of the company tokens on the Profit track back to the zero space.

You retain any unspent investment cubes.

Companies retain any unspent investment cubes.

Return all Company Control markers to their respective company boxes, (except after the fifth turn – see phase six, below).

You are now ready to start a new turn. The game will be close to ending after the fifth turn. There is no Turn Track. You can keep track of the turns by the number of shares left in each company. Once one or more companies have no more shares left then you know the fifth turn has just been completed.

Phase six: Final profit determination

This is a special phase that only occurs after the fifth turn. The purpose of this phase is to determine the final values of each company's shares. Once values have been determined players receive cash for all the shares they hold.

Remove any unspent investment cubes from all company boxes. Investment cubes will now be used as goods cubes.

Place one goods cube in each location that is connected to track. The colour of the cube must match the colour of the location.

Determine who controls each company. The player with the most shares in a company will take the corresponding Company Control marker. In the case of a tie for share tokens the player closest clockwise to the player to control that company, (starting with that player), takes the control marker.

EXAMPLE Andy has three red share tokens, which means he will take the red control marker. Don and Simon both have two green share tokens, while Richard has one green token. Richard was the last player to control the green company. Don is sitting to the left of Richard, so he will take control of the green company. If Simon had been the last player to control the green company then he would have retained the control marker.

In company order of play, determined during the fifth turn, each company will claim one goods cube. A company can claim a goods cube from a location to which it is connected by a track link. The goods cube should be placed in its company box. The controlling player decides which goods cube a company will take.

When a company cannot claim any more goods cubes its token should be moved to the Pass row. Companies continue collecting cubes in this way until no more goods cubes can be claimed.

The final profit level for each company is determined by the goods cubes it claimed.

The value of the goods cubes depends on the number and size of sets that can be made with them.

A set of cubes consists of between one to five cubes of different colours. A set cannot contain cubes of the same colour. Each company's final profit level is equal to the sum of the values of all its sets. The value of each set is:

One cube set: \$10

Two cube set: \$30

Three cube set: \$60

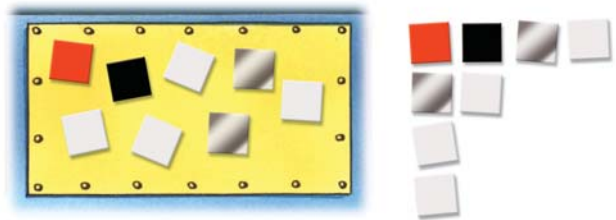
Four cube set: \$100

Five cube set: \$150

Mark the final profit level of each company on the Profit Level track. It is possible for a company's final profit to exceed \$200, the limit on the track. In this situation use the company's second game token to mark its total final profit.

Players now receive a cash payment for each share token they hold. The cash they receive for each share is equal to the final profit level of the company that issued the share.

The game is now at an end. The player with the most cash is the winner. Investment cubes have no residual value. In the case of a tie the tied player who controls the company or companies with the most goods cubes is the winner



EXAMPLE The yellow company ends up with the goods cubes shown above. These can be arranged into four sets, as shown. The final profit level of the company will be $\$100 + \$30 + \$10 + \10 , for a total of $\$150$. Each player who holds a yellow share token will receive $\$150$ in cash for each token they hold.

Note that this final profit is not paid out for Company Control markers, only for share tokens.

Credits

Game designed by Martin Wallace

Artwork by Peter Dennis

Graphics by Solid Colour

Playtested by Andy Ogden, Simon Bracegirdle, Richard Spilsbury, Geoff Brown, Don Oddy, Jerry Elsmore, Mary Dimercurio Prasad, Ravindra Prasad, Steve Coultman, and many other helpful souls at Baycon and Beer and Pretzels.

Thanks to Julia Bryan for being so supportive, Mary Dimercurio Prasad for the name, and a special thanks to Harry Wu for spurring me on.

You can check out the latest Warfrog games at: www.warfroggames.com

You can contact Warfrog at: martin@warfroggames.com

The rules and artwork to 'Steel Driver' are © Warfrog 2008.



Quick Reference Guide

Turn Sequence is:

1. Take investment cubes

3 players – ten cubes each
4 players – eight cubes each
5 players – seven cubes each
6 players – six cubes each

Players retain unused cubes from previous turn.

2. Auction Company Control markers

Each control marker should be placed up for auction. Player with Active Player marker chooses first company to be auctioned. Bids paid with investment cubes. When you take a control marker you also take one share in the same company. Investment cubes must be placed in company box. Pass Active Player marker on to next player.

3. Build track

Companies take it in turns, according to the Order of Play display, to build one piece of track. Repeat this procedure until all companies have passed. The player who holds the control marker for a company decides where it will build. The cost of building a route is paid for with investment cubes from the company box, as indicated on the potential route. Increase profit level of company by the value in the location linked to. First build must be from a hexagonal city; you do not add the value of this city to the company's profit level. All track must be contiguous. A company must build if it has enough investment cubes to do so. If a company cannot build then it must pass.

A transcontinental link is created when there is a continuous series of track links between New York and San Francisco. Company that completes link gains \$50 profit level bonus, all other companies that are part of the transcontinental link gain \$30 profit level bonus. Link must use fewest possible companies, and in the case of multiple viable companies, the fewest number of track links.

4. Take profits

You take cash equal to the profit level of the company you control. If you control more than one company then you receive cash for each company you control. You do not receive cash for shares gained in previous turns.

5. End of turn

All company profit level tokens must be moved back to the zero box. Move the company order of play tokens up to the top row to show the new order of play.

Game is close to ending after the fifth turn. After five turns complete the following phase:

6. Final profit determination

Remove all investment cubes from all company boxes. Investment cubes now become goods cubes.

Place one goods cube in each location. The colour of the cube must match the location.

Give the control marker of each company to the player who holds the most shares in it. In the case of a tie the player closest in clockwise order to the last player to control the company takes the control marker.

In company order of play each company, as decided by the controlling player, claims one goods cube from a location to which it is connected. Place the goods cube in the company box. Repeat this procedure until all cubes that can be claimed have been claimed.

For each company arrange the goods cubes in its box into sets. Each set must be made up of cubes of different colours. The value of each set is:

One cube set: \$10
Two cube set: \$30
Three cube set: \$60
Four cube set: \$100
Five cube set: \$150

The total value of the sets for each company must be marked on the profit level track.

Players now collect cash for each share they hold. The amount of money they take for each share is equal to the final profit level of the company.

Player with the most cash wins. In the case of a tie the player who controls the company or companies with the most goods cubes is the winner.

Designer Notes

'Steel Driver' has been added to the Treefrog Line as a last minute decision. I could go into details about what prompted me to do so but that would take too long. Suffice to say that I've had it in mind to develop and update the system used in Prairie Railroads to fix some of the rougher elements. As I like to attempt some form of consistency I have decided to release one new railway game each year for the next five years as part of the Treefrog Line.

As to the best way to play the game, well, it's a stocks and shares game; make sure you have the best stocks at the end of the game!

I'm sure some of you out there will see the potential for expansions. I do not have any plans to publish any at the moment. I'm happy for people to put together their own and self-publish them in small quantities as long as they contact me first.

If you are wondering about the odd selection of colours for the goods cubes then it may interest you to know that they were selected to

reduce costs. Specifically I piggy-backed this game with After the Flood, which meant using the same colours from the earlier game. The black cubes were selected as I had a lot left over from another production run.

I'm sure some of you will note the inclusion of paper money and wonder what happened to the 'wood only' policy. Well, apart from the fact that paper is made out of wood, (but then why not use cardboard!), the main reason is the lack of an alternative. Wooden markers could have been used for money but would have made the game too expensive. What I intend to do at some point in the future is produce a set of wooden money tokens that can be used with any Treefrog Line game that requires money, (which is why the values in this game are multiples of ten, to fit with another game that is in development).

Martin Wallace