

# Unofficial TransAmerica Variants

## Card Variants

1. Open Hand - All players place their city cards face up during the game. (Note: though many have attempted to convince me that this variation increases the strategic decisions a player makes during the game, I remain unconvinced. It has been my experience that this decreases the tension in the game; I found it to be less entertaining. However this is one of the more popular variants.)

2. Card Pass I - After the city cards are dealt but before the start hub is placed, beginning with the youngest player and moving clockwise, players (in order) pass one card to the player on their left. The card passed must be of the same color as the card passed by the first player. The player receiving the card may keep the card and pass the card he was originally dealt or may pass the card to the next player. The start player must accept the card passed to him. On subsequent rounds the start player shifts one position to the left. After the cards have been passed the game continues in the normal manner.

3. Card Pass II - After the city cards have been dealt but prior to placing the start hubs, each player passes one of his cards to the player on his left. This is done simultaneously. It is possible (and probable) that players will receive duplicate colors. The game then continues in the normal fashion.

4. Mission TA - (Warning: this variant significantly changes the game including the victory conditions. It is included because I have found it to be an acceptable alternative to the actual game.)

At the beginning of the game players are not dealt any city cards. Players select a hub to start and then each is dealt one city card. The first player does not receive the top card (as he would know which color his hub should be placed). The top card of the deck is set aside, the cards are dealt and then the top card is shuffled into the remaining deck. Each time a player completes his connection to a city, he reveals the card and then draws another city destination card. Each player keeps his completed cards. The game continues until a player is unable to draw a new card (the draw deck is exhausted and one player has completed his routes.) A player may draw a new card and place track on the same turn. The winner is the player with the most completed routes (number of completed city cards). Players must subtract one point for the destination they did not complete. If there is a tie then the player that ended the game is the winner (even if that player did not have the most completed destinations.)

Note: This occasionally requires additional markers for the tracks. The strategic choices facing the player are increased in this version as the color of the next destination card will be visible and a player may decide to delay completing a route in order to draw a different color.

5. Mission TA II - All of the rules are the same as those listed above with the following addition. On his turn a player may decide to take an additional destination card even though he has not completed the card he holds. In this case he draws a card but cannot lay track. A player may not hold more than three (incomplete) destination cards at any time.

## Capitols

Certain cities and their corresponding cards are different from others in the game. These cities/cards have a dashed line around them; these are the cities that are not used in the two and three player games. For convenience these will be called capitols.

6. Capitol Start - After reviewing their cards, players must place their start hub in a capitol city.

7. Capitol Connection - In addition to connecting all of the destinations found on their cards, players must connect to a capitol city to win.

## Game Length Variants

There are a variety of methods for extending the length of the game. One method, not included here, can be found on BGG. It is a file that includes an extension for the scoring track.

8. Barrier Loss - The most common method for extending the length of the game is to simply ignore the rule concerning placement of the barrier on the scoring track (following the second round). Rounds simply continue until one player falls off the scoring track (drops below zero). The winner is the player with the most points.

9. Elimination TA - The game is played normally but when a player crosses the barrier (on the scoring track) he is eliminated from the game. The remaining players continue until there is only one surviving player. Should all players cross the barrier on the same turn then the player with the most points wins.

10. Limited Merger - (This should only be played with an even number of players.) When two rail lines merge, no other mergers with the new line are allowed. In effect, players form partial partnerships. Non-merged lines may enter the same city but must leave on a route not laid by an opposing team. Though players are partnered during the game, they score as if they played individually.

11. ELE TA - Players may only add track to the end points of an existing line. No branching at city points is allowed. This may require additional pieces for tracks.

12. Super Charger - A player may purchase an improved locomotive prior to the beginning of a round (before the city cards are dealt). The Super Charger allows a player to place three tracks per turn on single lines. A player may place only one track per turn when passing through mountains or over rivers (double lines). The purchase price is three victory points; the score marker is moved immediately.

## **Disasters**

13. Bridge Out - After the city cards have been dealt, each player places a marker (a penny) over one bridge or mountain pass (the double lined routes). These routes are unusable during the game. Placers may not place markers that would completely isolate a city; there must remain at least one open entrance (no matter how convoluted the route) to each city.

14. Quarantine - A player may not lay track to a city for which he does not hold the city card. For example: a player may not enter Chicago if he does not hold the Chicago card in his hand. If another player has entered a city (as he does hold the proper card) then any rail lines merged may continue from that city.

15. Nuclear TA - Prior to the start of each round, one city card in each color is drawn. Place a marker on each of these cities as they may not be entered during the round. On subsequent rounds the markers are moved to new cities based on the draw of the cards.

## **Hubs**

16. Permanent Hub - The city a player selects for his hub in the first round is permanent. The hub is not relocated for any of the remaining rounds.

17. Unique Color Hub - Each player must select a starting hub in a different colored area. (Obviously this cannot be used in a six player game.) In the first round, hub placement begins with the youngest player. In subsequent rounds the start player shifts to the left.

18. One Color - Prior to the start of each round, a city card is drawn at random from the deck. All players must locate their hubs in the color as determined by the selected random card. For example: if the card drawn was Los Angeles then all players must place their hubs in the green area. Note: Though this is a silly variant we have played several times at the close of a gaming session. It appears to be more enjoyable if one has indulged in the proper beverage prior to beginning.

## **Mega Variants**

19. Each round the start player selects one of the variants to be active for the entire round. If the variant has permanent effects, they remain in effect when the subsequent rounds are played. As some variants may conflict with later variants, the earlier variant (selected during play for this particular game) takes priority.

20. Combine several individual variants into one mega game. For example: include the Super Charger, Barrier Loss, Elimination and Bridge Out variants.

There are many additional variants for TransAmerica that have been used. The open nature of the game offers opportunity for gamers to continue creating and thereby increasing the play value of the game.

## **Official Variants from Winning Moves**

Translated by Pitt Crandlemire

### 1. Open Cards

The players reveal their cards by placing them face-up in front of themselves where all the other players can see them (as an aid to keeping track, mark each player's goals on the board with a token).

Play is as normal except that all goals are known. After the completion of each round, players pass their goal cards to the player on their right. Play as many rounds as there are players.

### 2. Locomotive Blockade (a new game sensation for Freaks)

At the end of his turn, a player is allowed to move his starting stone to another (unoccupied) intersection, provided that it is still connected to his own rail network and he does not jump an opponent's starting stone by doing so.

A player may only build new track immediately adjacent to his own starting stone or from track that connects to his starting stone without crossing an opponent's starting stone.

This means that you can:

- A) play offensively, to prevent other players from developing certain routes as well as forcing them to make detours and/or
- B) play defensively, in order to secure access to routes that are important to you.