

Volldampf (Full Steam)

By Martin Wallace

For 2-6 players, age 10 years and up

Original translation by Bob Scherer-Hoock. (Usual translator's disclaimer: I am not a German speaker. The following is a computer-assisted translation. I have done this many times and learned a few things and even some of the language. I'm reasonably confident of the results but I can't in all cases be certain I have translated all nuances correctly. After all, ambiguities can be found even in one's native language. This will certainly make the German edition playable but if someone more knowledgeable about the language comes along and says something should be read another way, then please believe them.)

This is version 3.0 of the unofficial rules translation with additional notes, editing and formatting added by Greg Nichols (8-31-05).

Railroads are hot!

Build a track-network in 20th century Germany. You always earn money if merchandise is transported over its proper section of track (tracks in the same color as the goods). Transfer between tracks to be able to transport more merchandise. Build so that you can use as many of your own routes as possible. But don't neglect to occasionally use other players' routes along with yours! Since investments are expensive, you need to take out bonds but consider the interest that you must pay.

Goal of the Game

Whichever player's locomotive is furthest along the income track after a pre-determined number of game turns has been completed is the winner.

Game Components

- 1 Game Board and cloth bag
- 48 Track cards: 8 each in 6 different symbols / colors
- 18 Merchandise cards, each with 3 cities
- 14 Action cards
 - 6 Sequence cards, with "Turn sequence" on the backside
 - 6 Locomotive markers
- 36 Bonds, 24 x 1, 12 x 5
- 40 Merchandise cubes: 10 each in blue, violet, red, and yellow,
- 96 Track sections: 4 colors with 15 sections; 2 colors with 18
- 100 Bills: 50 x 1, 20 x 5, 20 x 10, 10 x 20

The Game Board

The game board displays 20th century Germany. Some German cities are represented by violet and blue spaces. *Comment: "Dresden" had to be moved for game play reasons somewhat further west from its actual location.* The red and yellow spaces represent connections to cities in foreign countries. It is only a coincidence if merchandise cubes start on the same color city spaces.

Between the individual cities, there are many different track sections. Each track section is marked with a colored symbol which contains the expenses for the construction of this section. Merchandise is transported over these track sections, but only if the players have placed (built) track section pieces there.

Surrounding the game board is an income track on which the players' locomotive markers show their current incomes and thus their victory points at the end of the game.

The Playing Cards

On **merchandise cards**, three cities are named. When such a card is drawn, merchandise cubes are placed on these cities by means of a blind draw from the cloth bag.

There are **track cards** in 6 different colors. To better differentiate between these cards, a geometrical symbol is assigned to each color. Example: all green symbols are octagons and all pink symbols are

triangles. These symbols match those printed on the game board. Players use track cards to build track sections on the matching color/symbol track segment.

The **sequence cards** determine the turn sequence of the players.

The **action cards** are played in order and allow certain special actions.

Game Setup

- Each player chooses a color and gets 10 marks (1 x 5 and 5 x 1); track sections in his color of choice; and a matching locomotive marker. The group decides if players' money is visible (in a stack) or hidden.
- In a two player game, use the "blue" and "red" track section colors. The two players each use all 18 track sections. In multiplayer games, use the following distribution:
 - With 3 players, each gets 15 track sections.
 - With 4 players, each gets 12 track sections.
 - With 5 and 6 players, each gets 8 track sections.
- All locomotive markers are put on the big start space (that's the illustration of the locomotive at the bottom right of the game board).
- The eldest player gets the sequence card with the number 1 on the back and he is the start player. Then in clockwise order, the next player gets the number 2 card and so forth. The front of each card has a brief sequence of play.
- The start player administers the bank separately from his own money.
- In games with fewer than 6 players, the unused game components remain in the box.
- The track cards are shuffled and the following changes are made to the track deck:
 - With 2 players, 2 cards of each color are removed and placed in the box.
 - With 3 players, 3 cards are selected by chance and placed in the box.
 - With 5 players, 1 card of each color is removed and then from the remaining deck, 2 cards are drawn at random and all removed cards are placed in the box.
 - With 4 and 6 players, all track cards are used.
- The action cards are shuffled and placed face down beside the game board.
- The bonds are separated by their 1 and 5 values and are placed beside the game board.
- The merchandise cards are shuffled and placed face down beside the game board.
- Merchandise cubes are now distributed onto the game board. Put all merchandise cubes into the cloth bag. One by one, merchandise cubes are drawn from the bag for each blue and violet city and placed on that city space. It doesn't matter which color merchandise cube is drawn.
- Finally, a number of merchandise cards are now revealed, depending on the number of players in the game. One merchandise cube must be placed in each city that is named on each revealed card. The merchandise cubes are drawn one by one from the bag without looking inside it. The revealed and used merchandise cards are set aside in a discard pile and not reshuffled back into the deck. The number of initial merchandise cards drawn and played are as follows:
 - 2 players - 5 cards
 - 3 players - 4 cards
 - 4 players - 2 cards
 - 5 players - 1 card
 - 6 players - 1 card
- Play begins and proceeds in clockwise order starting with Player 1 until the turn order is auctioned.

The Game Turn (or Round)

The game proceeds in a pre-determined number of rounds depending on the number of players. Each round consists of the following 7 actions that are always taken in the same order:

1. Uncover merchandise cards and place merchandise cubes
2. Uncover track cards
3. Purchase Bonds
4. Auction for turn order and choose track cards
5. Place track sections
6. Transport merchandise cubes
7. Gain income and pay interest

1. Uncover merchandise cards and place merchandise cubes

A number of merchandise cards are drawn according to the number of players:

- 2 players - 1 card
- 3 players - 2 cards
- 4 players - 2 cards
- 5 players - 3 cards
- 6 players - 4 cards

For each city named on a card, 1 merchandise cube is drawn from the cloth bag and placed on the board.

2. Uncover track cards

Track cards are drawn for the auction and laid out in groups. In 2, 3, and 4 player games, a group consists of 3 cards. In 5 and 6 player games, each group is just 2 cards.

The start player draws 3 cards from the face down deck and places them next to each other - as the first group – face up beside the game board.

Then draw as many groups as there are players participating. Example: in a 4-player game, 3 cards are drawn 4 times to form 4 groups. The first 3 cards form the first group. The next 3 cards the second group and so on.

3. Purchase bonds

The starting capital of 10 marks doesn't go very far. Players must offer money (auction) for track rights and pay for the construction of track sections. Therefore in each round, players have the opportunity to acquire bonds. Bonds are only paid back at the end of the game (subtracted from the player's income) and players must pay interest for bonds held each round. So players should carefully consider how much money they require to run their operations.

- Beginning with the player 1, each player in turn decides how many bonds he wants to take out. *Play tip: 2 to 4 bonds are usually necessary to get operations started.*
- Players get the corresponding bond chips and receive six times the amount of money printed on them. *Play example: A player decides to take out 3 bonds. He gets 3 bond chips with the value 1 printed on each. From the bank, he gets 18 marks (6 marks x 3 bonds).*
- Players place their bond chips in front of them and they are always kept visible.

4. Auction for turn order and choose track cards

The players auction for their place in the turn order. Players will select track card groups in this order. Also, turn order is important because in the next action phase, track sections are placed and merchandise cubes are transported in this player order.

- The current player 1 begins by bidding any amount of money and lays the corresponding sum in front of him.
- The other players in clockwise order from player 1) bid a sum of money or pass. The bid must be higher than that offered by the previous bidding player. In each case, players place the money bid in front of them.
- Unlimited bidding rounds are conducted until a highest bidder is determined (all other players have passed).
- The first player who can not or does not want to out bid the previous offer must pass and take the sequence card with the highest number. Example: in a 4 player game, this would be the 4 card.
- In 4 to 6 player games, the first player who passes and drops out and pays nothing. This player takes back all the money he offered. The next player who passes must pay only half their bid, *rounded up*, to the bank. This player gets the sequence card with the next lowest number and the remainder of their offer is returned to them. The players who come in first and second must pay their entire bid.
- In 3 player games, the player who passes first must pay to the bank half their bid, *rounded up*, and the first and second players pay their entire bids.
- Remember, bid money that must be paid goes to the bank.
- Special bidding rules for two player games are highlighted after the "End of the Game" section.

In this new player order, as denoted by the sequence cards (i.e. cards 1 through 4 with four players), each player selects a group of track cards and places it in front of them face up.

5. Place track sections

Using the current turn order, track sections are now placed on the game board.

- The acting player selects one of his track cards to play.
- He is then allowed to place one of his track sections on a free space that matches the color/symbol shown on the chosen card. Important: only one track section can be placed on each space.
- The player must discard the track card after using it.
- The player must now pay the expenses for the construction of this route. He pays the amount shown in the symbol on the game board to the bank.

Play example: The red player hands over a track card with a purple circle and places a track section between Hamburg and Hanover. The cost of construction is 5 marks and it's paid to the bank.

- The players with sequence cards 2, 3, etc. take their turns. Each player may place one track section.
- After all players have played or passed once, player 1 begins a second round by placing another track section.
- A third track section placement round follows for 2 to 4 player games. In 5 and 6 player games, there are only two track section placement rounds.
- If a player does not want to place a track section, he must discard a track card. All track cards, whether used or not, are placed in the discard pile.

6. Transport merchandise cubes

Merchandise cubes can now be transported. Player 1 begins the first transportation round and the other players follow in the turn order. After all players have played or passed, a second transportation round follows.

- The acting player selects any merchandise cube. He takes the merchandise cube and transports it over the route chosen by him to a city space that has the same color as the merchandise cube.
- The player counts each track section that he uses on the way to the destination space. A merchandise cube can be transported at most 6 track sections unless play of an action card changes this.
- Merchandise cubes can only be transported between locations where track sections have been placed.
- A merchandise cube cannot be moved over the same track section twice nor can it pass through the same location twice. And the cube must stop at the first legal city destination it reaches.
- Once the cube has arrived at its city destination, it's put back into the cloth bag and income is scored.
- Scoring works as follows: for each track section over which a merchandise cube is moved, the owner of the track section has their income increased by 1. The locomotive marker belonging to the player is moved forward on the income track the appropriate amount.
- Important: a player receives an action card if he gives up the opportunity to transport a merchandise cube on his turn of the action phase (whether voluntarily or not). **Exception: does not apply to the first round (see "Action Cards" section).** Therefore, a player can refrain from transporting merchandise cubes in both rounds and receive 2 action cards. Each action card is rewarded at the moment of declining to transport.

Play example: the yellow player is transporting a violet merchandise cube over 5 track sections. In the process of delivering the merchandise cube, he uses 3 yellow track sections and 2 red track sections. The yellow locomotive marker is moved forward 3 spaces, the red marker 2 spaces along the income track.

Optional rule: Red merchandise cubes only can move through red cities and then end in other red cities.

7. Income gained and interest paid

In turn order, players receive income and then pay bond interest.

- The amount of income gained corresponds to the position of the player's locomotive marker on the income track. Example: if the yellow locomotive marker sits on the 14 space, the yellow player gets 14 marks.

- After receiving income, players must immediately pay interest on their bonds. The printed value on the bond chips indicates the amount to be paid. Example: a player has 6 bonds with the number 1 printed on each. He must pay to the bank 6 marks in interest.
- If a player does not have sufficient money to pay interest owed, he must move his locomotive back as many spaces on the income track for each mark he is short but never going past the start space.

Play example: a player has an income of 4 marks and he must pay 6 marks of interest, however, he has only 1 mark remaining so he is 1 mark short. He pays the 1 mark to the bank and must now move his locomotive marker back 1 space on the income track.

To conclude the round, action cards are distributed to one or more players depending upon their position on the scoring track (see Action Cards section). The next round begins at action phase 1 (Uncover merchandise cards and place merchandise cubes).

Action Cards

- The player who is farthest behind on the scoring track gets an action card at the end of the round. If there is a tie for lowest score, all players involved in the tie get an action card.
- A player may also receive an action card if he gives up the chance to transport a cube during a transport merchandise cube phase (whether voluntary or not). Therefore, a player may refrain from transporting in both merchandise cube transport phases in a round and get 2 action cards. An action card is rewarded at the moment of declining to transport. **Exception: in the first round only, players do not receive action cards for not transporting merchandise cubes. You get an action card for not transporting a cube beginning with the second round (Game Designer's rule that was not in published edition).**
- There is no limit to the number of action cards a player may hold and they may play as many cards in a round as they want. A card must always be played in the appropriate action phase.

Play example: the "favorable opportunity" card is played in action phase 5 (Place track sections) and only on the turn of the player using the card. A more detailed explanation of the action cards is found in the appendix.

- After playing an action card, it is placed on the discard pile. If the action card deck is depleted, the discard pile is shuffled and a new deck formed.
- If a player should receive an action card according to the rules of the game and there are no more cards in the deck, and none in the discard pile, then he may draw one at random from any other player.

End of the game

The game ends at the finish of the round in which the last track cards are auctioned which is:

- 6 rounds for 2 player games
- 5 rounds for 3 player games
- 4 rounds for 4, 5, and 6 player games

Now the players determine their victory points. Each player must subtract the printed value of their bonds from their current income on the income track to pay back bonds held.

Whoever stands farthest ahead on the income track after payment of bonds is the winner. Money is counted only in case of a tie and then the person with the most money wins. Otherwise, money counts as nothing.

Rule changes for two-player games

- ✓ To purchase bonds: players must secretly and simultaneously decide how many bonds they want to acquire. Both players take a number of bond chips and secretly put some of them in one hand. Simultaneously reveal them and the players take their bond chips and the corresponding money. The extra bond chips that players decided not to take are put back in the reserve.
- ✓ To decide turn order: bids are made secretly and simultaneously. Each player secretly places a number of marks on the table (cover with hands or paper). Then both players simultaneously reveal their bids. Offered money must be paid to the bank. In the case of equal bids, both players must repeat the offering. This can happen several times until a highest bidder is determined.

Explanation of the Action Cards

There are seven different action cards (2 of each) in the game for a total of 14 action cards. The following are more detailed explanations of the individual action cards.

Schnelle Lok (Fast Locomotive)

Move a merchandise cube up to 7 track sections instead of up to 6. Play in phase 6 (Transport merchandise cubes) when the player holding the card is next in turn to transport merchandise. A player who holds both "Fast Locomotive" cards may not play both at once in order to transport merchandise 14 track sections.

Subvention (Subsidy)

If you are currently in last place, you are allowed to make three (!) transportation trips instead of two. Play in phase 6 (Transport merchandise cubes) after all other players have made their second merchandise transportation trip. The player using the card can now perform another transportation trip. If another player also wants to use the same card, they make their transports in the order of their sequence cards. Important: players may not play this card in order to forfeit a trip and draw a new action card.

Günstige Gelegenheit (Favorable Opportunity)

Pay 5 marks and you can place a track section after playing a track card in any playable location (i.e. ANY color track segment on the board not just what was on the played track card). Must be played in phase 5 (Place track sections). If the player whose turn it is to place track sections has this card, they ignore the track section's printed value on the board and pay only 5 marks. **Note: This is not a bonus card. It substitutes for a track card. You must discard a track card when you play it. It does not let you lay more track sections than you have track cards (Game Designer's clarification).**

Sabotage (Sabotage)

Prevent a player from moving a merchandise cube. The affected player can transport a different merchandise cube. Play in phase 6 (Transport merchandise cubes). Play this at the moment another player wants to move a merchandise cube.

Zusatzfracht (More Freight)

If you are the next player to move, blindly draw a merchandise cube from the bag and put it on a city of your choice. Play in phase 6 (Transport merchandise cubes) if the person holding the card will be the next player to transport merchandise.

Alles neu (Everything New)

You can sort the display of the track cards before the auction. Play in phase 3 (Purchase Bonds) after payment is made for the bonds and before phase 4 (Purchase turn order) has commenced. This card can be played only once in a round. If a second player also wants to play this card, the sequence cards are used to resolve who's card is played. The player with the higher number card doesn't use this action card in this round but he is allowed to keep it.

Neue Planung (New Planning)

You are allowed to move a merchandise cube into another city of your choice. The player playing this card can use it at any time but it must be his turn.

About the Game Designer:

Englishman Martin Wallace lives in Manchester and prefers complex, selective games. He has already developed a whole line of games and has published some of them in his own small publishing house. After "Der Weisse Lotus" (The White Lotus), this is his second TM-Spiele game. Other Wallace designs include: Age of Steam, Way Out West, Liberte, and Lancashire Railways.