String Railway
Playing manual

Game overview

String Railway is a railroad game using strings.

Not just the railroads, but the game board, mountain range and river are also represented by strings. Your table becomes the game board.

The players are railroad company owners. They place the station tiles on the field, and tie them together by placing their railroad strings. The goal is to create the best type of railroad network.

Contents

25 Railroad strings: 5 each of 5 colours: Red, Blue, Yellow, Green and Purple

These are the strings representing the players' companies' railroads. Each colour has four short strings (30cm) and one long (60 cm).

1 Field string: Black

Connected. The area the field string encapsulates is called the field, everything else is out of bounds. The white marks on the string are to help create the game field for 2-4 players; the red marks a for 5-player games.

1 River string: Light blue

1 Mountain range string: Gray

Connected. The area it surrounds is mountains, the area outside of it is a field.

5 Base station tiles: Red, Blue, Yellow, Green, and Purple

These are the cards representing each players' main station.

35 Station tiles

The cards that you draw first each turn.

20 Owner chips: 4 each of Red, Blue, Yellow, Green, and Purple.

These show which stations you own.

5 score markers: Red, Blue, Yellow, Green, and Purple (octagonal)

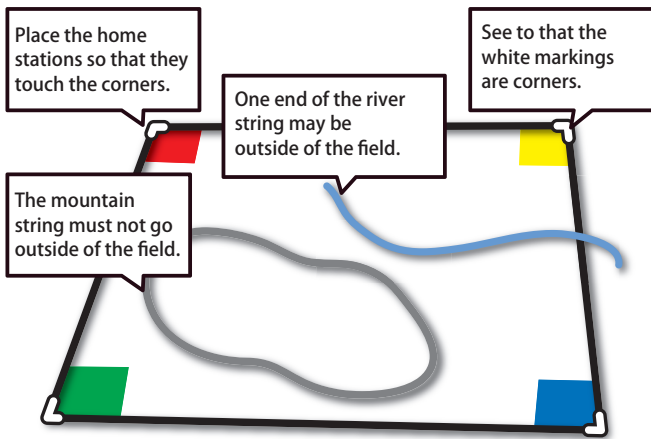The markers you place on the scoreboard.

1 Scoreboard

List of tile markings

Score		The score that you will receive when you newly enter a station.
	2 (black star)	(number in a black star) The score that companies other than the owning one will get.
	3 (white star)	(number in a white star) The score that the owning company will get.
	3 (black-white star)	(number in a black-white star) The score that any company will get.
	1 / 3 (mountain icon)	(double[number in a black-white star], latter has mountain icon) The scores that any company will get. If you place the station tile inside the Mountain range string, the score is 3 points. If field, 1 point.
Company limit	**2**	The maximum number of companies who can be part of this station. If it says ALL, it means there is no limit.
The following marks are symbols for the special effects.		
Ownage		The first company to enter a station with this mark, will become the owner of the station. Place an owner chip on the station.
Other company effect		Your score will be affected if another company enters the station.
Terminal		You must place the end of the string here.
Extra		You may draw an extra station tile. This may only happen once per turn.
Every	**every**	You get points for every time you connect a string to this station tile.

Preparation

(4 player game example; see the end of the rules for 2, 3 and 5 player game preparation)

(1) Place the scoreboard on the table.

(2) Each player chooses a colour and takes the railroad strings, owner chips, home station tile and score marker of that colour, and places the score marker on '3' on the scoreboard (the number of points for the home station).

(3) Determine starting player and playing order in any suitable fashion.

* The starting player shuffles the station tiles and places them face down in a deck.

* The second player places the field string on the table, by making a square with the white marks on the string as corners. This forms the play field. (See end of rules for how to create the play field for 3 or 5 players).

* The third player places the river string. The river string must be placed inside the playing field and must not cross itself. One end of the river string may go slightly outside of the field, but both ends may not.

* The fourth player places the mountain range string, inside the playing field, so that it does not cross itself.

(4) Starting with the first player, the players choose in turn a corner to start in, and place their home station tiles in the field so that they touch the white corner markers on the field string.

Place the home stations so that they touch the corners.

One end of the river string may be outside of the field.

See to that the white markings are corners.

The mountain string must not go outside of the field.

No penalty for crossing a string on top of a card (=inside the station)

One minus point for each other railroad string (own or others), river string and mountain string crossed.

−1

−1

−1

Other company's string

Mountain string

River string

Both ends must be on a station, and at least a part of the string must be on either your home station or a station you are already "in".

How to play

Game starts with the starting player and continues in any order you deem fit.

On your turn

A turn is done in this order:
1. Draw a station tile
2. Place the station tile(s)
3. Place a railroad string.
4. Calculate score.

1. Draw a station tile.
 * Draw the top card from the deck (the very first turn the start player draws an extra card, total of 2)
 * If the card was a Countryside station, draw another card from the deck.

2. Place the station tile(s)
 * Place all the stations you drew onto the field, while observing these rules:
   - It must be placed inside the game field, and may not be placed on top of or beneath the field string.

   - It must not touch any other station tile in any way.
   - It must not be placed on top of or beneath a railroad string, river string, or mountain range string.

3. Place a railroad string
 * Choose one of your railroad strings to place.
 * Place it inside the playing field, observing the following rules:
   - No part of the railroad string may be outside the playing field or on top of the field string.
   - It must not cross itself.
   - Both ends of the string must be placed on top of a station tile.
   - One part of the string must lie on top of either your home station or a station in which you have a track. In other words, your first railroad string must be on top of your home station. (A station in which you have a track is a station tile that another of your strings is already lying on.)
   - It must never be placed beneath any existing station tiles, railroad strings, river string, mountain string or field string.
   - When newly entering a station, please observe the station maximum company limit. You may not place a string so that this limit is exceeded. (Newly entering a station = placing your string on top of a station tile on which you previously had no railroad string).
   - You may not let the same string enter the same station twice.
 * If you newly entered any unowned stations, place one of your owner chips onto the station tile. This means you now own that station.

4. Calculate score
 * You score points for the railroad string you placed this turn according to the following rules. Adjust your score marker on the scoreboard.
   - For each station you newly entered: The points on the station tile.
   - For each railroad string, river string or mountain string crossed: −1 point. (No penalty for crossing strings on top of a station tile.)
   - For each ownable station owned by another company you newly entered: The owning player gets or loses points (noted on the station tile)
   - For each "junction station" this string touches: 1 point.
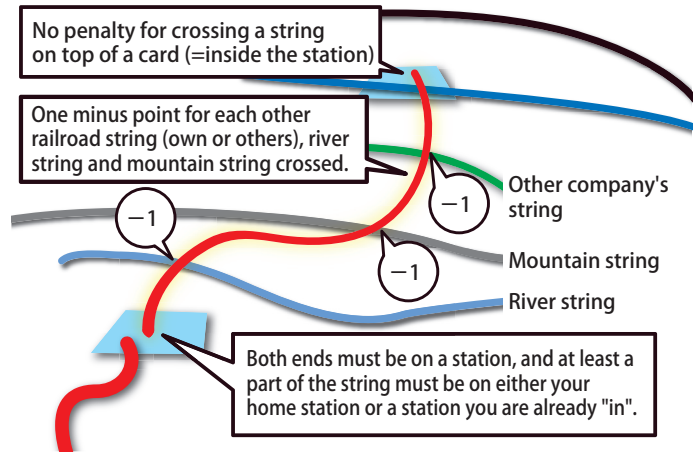
Turn end

When you're done, it's the next player's turn.

End game and victory conditions

 * The game ends when all players have placed all their strings (5 turns).
 * The player with the most points wins.
 * In the case of a tie, it's a tie.

The station tiles

Base stations (5)

Points: You 3, others 2
Company limit: None
Special effect:
 This is the player's own station. Each time another company newly enters this station, you lose 1 point.

Central stations (4)

Points: 3
Company limit: None
Special effect:
 None

Local stations (6)

Points: 2
Company limit: 3
Special effect:
 None

Suburban stations (6)

Points: 2
Company limit: 2
Special effect:
 None

Countryside stations (8)

Points: 1
Company limit: 1
Special effect:
 Special effect: When you draw this, you may draw one extra station tile (use this effect maximum once per turn.)

Town stations (2)

Points: You 3, others 1
Company limit: None
Special effect:
 Ownable station. For each other company that newly enters this station, you lose 1 point.

Transfer stations (2)

Points: You 0, others 2
Company limit: None
Special effect:
 Ownable station. For each other company that newly enters this station, you gain 1 point.

Junction stations (3)

Points: 1 each time
Company limit: 3
Special effect:
 One point for each time you place your string on this station.

Terminal (2)

Points: 3
Company limit: None
Special effect:
 The string must end here.

Landmark stations (2)

Points: Field 1, Mountain 3
Company limit: 2
Special effect:
 If it's in a field, 1 point, if in the mountain range, 3 points.

Rule adjustments for 5-player games

* The players only use 3 short strings (30cm) and the one long string (60 cm). The last 30cm string is not used.

* The second player to start shuffles the station tiles.

* The third player to start places the field string. There are 5 red marks on it. Create a pentagon by using these marks as corners.

* The fourth player to start places the river string, and the fifth player places the mountain range string.

* The rest is according to the 4-player rules; the first player draws an extra station tile for the very first round.

* The game ends after 4 turns (as the players only have 4 railroad strings each).

Rule adjustments for 3-player games

* The first player shuffles the stations AND places the field string.

* Two neighbouring white marks on the field string are put together, so that the field forms a triangle.

* Second player places the river string, third places the mountain string according to normal rules.

* The rest is according to 4-player rules; the first player draws an extra station tile for the very first round.

Rule adjustments for 2-player games

* Played like a 4-player game, but each player uses two colours. One player is first and third player, and the other is second and fourth player.

* Players must use opposing corners for their two home stations.

* The rest is according to 4-player rules; the first player draws an extra station tile for the very first round.

* Score is calculated per colour. After score has been calculated, the player who owns the company with the least points loses, and the other player wins. In case of a tie, compare the other two companies score; the highest wins. If that is tied too, then it's a tie.

Variation rule

* You may create any size and shape of the field like circle, oval or looks like your province, instead of a square. Please note that if the total play field is too small, the game may collapse.

* Advanced players may choose to give a −2 points penalty for crossing any company's railroad string only instead of just −1.