

Conrail Bulletin – #070125

The following changes will go into effect on 1/25/2007 at 12:01am EST.

Any car that has dual pins and one of the pins has a number instead of a dot or stripe will be moved as follows:

It will be left up to the discretion of the Yard Operators (Phillipston – Falls Creek - DuBois) as to the movement of said cars. The WHITE numbered pins (even though it may have another colored pin on it) can be set up to run the car to one of the interchanges (Kiski – Driftwood – Emporium).

The numbered WHITE pins go from 1 to 20. The method of doing this is by using the current date. If the date is the 25th of the month then all cars in the affected yard with the digits of 2 or 5 in the number can be put into the thru train.

This would include all these numbers – 2 – 5 – 12 – 15 – 20.

If the date is the first then all of the numbered pins would be eligible for movement in thru trains.

Once the train has been made up and has left the yard they will not be switched as they should be on a thru train only.

When these WHITE numbered cars are brought back out of staging then they will be switched as any other car using the regular colored pins with dots or stripes.

The WHITE numbered pins are to be ignored by all operators except the Yardmen.

The Yard Operators are the only ones that need to be concerned with the WHITE numbered pins.

Conrail Bulletin – #070405

The following changes as of 4/5/2007 at 12:01am EDT.

The curved turnout at Redbank has been installed – Brady siding is again operational.

The turnout at the north end of Brady siding has been moved north towards Brady Tower to allow additional length on Brady siding.

A ground throw has been installed at RESCAR engine track.

All of the hand throws in the Dubois/Lawsonham/St Charles/Climax/Nube areas have had the proper color position indicators (colored beads) installed.

The remote turnout control wires in the Falls Creek area have had the wires covered with the half-round plastic covers.

The sawmill turnout on the P&S south of Brookville has been installed. A slow order is in effect for this area until further notice.

The old Crescent Brick loading dock wall at the West End Falls Creek yard has been stabilized. It was falling down due to soil erosion.

A new driveway and parking lot at Jackson China has been put in on the office side of the building.

Land reclamation at New Crescent Brick has begun again. Work will continue for most of the summer. The new road to access the brick warehouse has been relocated and paved. Work continues on the conveyor system.

Landscaping at Lawsonham and Summerville has been started and will continue thru the summer.

Operators – PLEASE read and initial!

Conrail Bulletin - #070419

The following changes as of 4/19/2007 at 12:01am EDT.

Work continues at New Crescent Brick - may have the new double tank clay loader in and the associated conveyor.

Brady Tower is in and finished as far as the building goes. Scenery will commence soon.

I have in my hands a single burner electric Hot-Plate (borrowed from Jason S) which will be used in the coming days to begin the long awaited scenery blocks.

More Italian scrap piles have been finished as have several gondola loads. This was helped along in doing the Clinic at the recent Div 11 Jamboree.

I have also acquired the 2 much needed cranes for the 2 scrap dealers so I can finally get those area worked on!

Conrail Bulletin – 070816

As of 8:21 pm on August 16, 2007 all turnouts presently in operation have had the colored indicators installed on the ground throws.

P&S has relaid the old Scale Track and a new turnout connected into the mainline just south of the Interchange track.

Two new turnouts were installed between the Engine house and the south end of the yard. They connect to the (P&S Paint Track).

The new tracks are for the MW & Repair Shop.

The Matson Lumber track has had a new retaining wall installed and the area graded.

A new Ground Throw has finally been installed at the P&W Lumber track. The saw mill siding is still awaiting a new remote turnout controller.

Work has also progressed on moving the rest of the ground throws to the outside of the tracks in the Kittanning and Ford City area.

I have also found that numerous cars are getting mis-routed on the layout.

REMEMBER –

We have dot and stripe colors to help keep the colors easily recognized for all of the industries.

There are only 3 stripe colors GOLD – SILVER – ORANGE

These have a stripe across the tack on each car and on the associated FLAG.

The regular colors just have a dot and the ends of the flags are painted.

On another note:

As I continue to add cars to the layout you will find that there may be too many cars for an industry as the cars are cycled through the system.

FIRST – Check to see if any of the cars in any multiple car capacity siding need to be pulled (a color dot not for that industry) and spot the new car in the same spot (position) as the car being removed from the industry.

SECOND – If all of the cars needing pulled from the industry, have already been pulled and there are no spots left then...

DO NOT try and put all anymore of the cars into a siding or leave them setting on the main, passing or industry lead.

If they do not fit into the siding just take them on to the destination yard and let the yard master there deal with them!

BOB H

Conrail Bulletin – 070906

A **MAJOR** upgrade to the Monopoly Cards (Industry Spotting Lists) that are on the Fascia of the layout is complete!

I had started this project during the last Thursday night OPs session (8/23/07). At that time I had only 2 areas done (Brookville – TEAL and LEF&C – YELLOW).

Very few operators even noticed this change (just the P&S and LEF operators!) as it only affected the placement of cars at the proper industries.

As the cars cycle through the system there may be a few misrouted cars (and this will only be due to some cars left over from previous sessions that did not get repined). These cars will be corrected in the normal repining process before each OPs session.

Why did I do this?

As I added several new sidings in Brookville yard I became painfully aware that I needed to add some more colors/flags to that area. The colors I had left were not matching up with the DOT colors used elsewhere (YELLOW – MOW & TAN - P&W Lumber). So I began realigning color groups to match the industry/car type.

YELLOW – MOW track

GREEN – TAN – Wood Products

PINK – Tanks

RED & ORANGE – Engine house/Car Shops

BLACK – Interchange

GRAY – Glass/Scrap

SILVER – Sand/Clay

Now these are not locked to a specific group such as (BLUE – Reffer or Tank products). I will not have both types of industries in each town (BLUE – will either be a Reffer car OR a tank but not both in any one town.

This color recoding was mainly for the person doing any repining before or during a session.

I have also added a little more information to some of the Monopoly cards. This will help those new operators as some of the places (COLORS) have their switching in multiple towns. I have added the actual town or place to the card and grouped the associated industries together. Fr Bob was having trouble with cars going to Summerville and Clarion. I saw a problem and respond by putting more info on the cards. I hope this works!

Brookville [TEAL] – Brook Industrial [BLUE] – Lawsonham [PINK] – New Bethlehem [GREEN] & Summerville [YELLOW] are done this way.

As I slowly get more buildings built I will begin adding loading & unloading details. This will require Operators to be more precise in spotting the cars. While some will have no problems doing this, OTHERS WILL! as they have never paid a lot of attention to the industries and the type of cars being spotted.

When switching some towns, cars already in the siding will have to be pulled out and the last car in the siding replaced with one in the train. Now this is not going to be at every siding but there will be a few places this will need to be done.

This is going to slow down the trains moving between towns, which is what I feel that needs to be done. If it takes all night to go from Phillipston to Falls Creek great! This is what the majority of the Operators seem to want to do SWITCH.

While I still need the thru runners (and this is going to get much more important as time moves on) (and I was doing some coal runs last time, myself) switching is the major project on this layout.

I have tried to ease the regular operators into this procedure (precise spotting of cars) slowly (only because I have not gotten a lot of buildings scratch built yet).

So this (lack of buildings) has gotten a lot of the regulars into the habit of just dumping the car into the siding and moving on. I have found some cars on the layout that have not moved for over 6 months due to this procedure. This is why I try and move operators around the layout doing different jobs. Brookville is one area that I have been really slow in making any progress on the buildings.

While I did have to add some track (which is now finally in) I can begin working on this area. If you have not had a chance to look over the P&S yard then you may want to.

REMEMBER –

DO NOT try and put all of the cars into a siding or leave them setting on the main, passing or industry lead if it is full.

If they do not fit into the siding just take them on to the destination yard and let the yard master there deal with them!

LAYOUT PINS -

We have dot and stripe colors to help keep the colors easily recognized for all of the industries.

GOLD – SILVER – ORANGE are the only ones used and the Pins/Flags will have a real stripe on them.

***** NOTE *****

As of Sept 4, 2007 I will be working again! YES I know all of you are so relieved!

Anyway I will now be working until 5:00pm everyday. So PLEASE do not come much before 6:00 as I will probably not have the layout up and running yet!

Thanks!

BOB H

CONRAIL Bulletin #070920

During the last OPs session a number of things, that I took for granted, came to light that I need to explain to the newer operators and as a review to my regulars.

The first item: The max train length:

I have set the max number of cars in most trains to 12. WHY?

The first is that the passing sidings are that length and this is figured for 12 cars an engine and caboose. It is not figured for two engines or three or what ever.

I did this after actually measuring the space I had and comparing that to what the Lowgrade used in real life. I had to compromise in a lot of places as I do NOT want a train in 2 towns at a time.

For those operators that just can't stand running one engine build your own layout and find out the compromises that have to be made. It soon becomes a roundy-round design which I DO NOT want! **Again your layout your way!**

I have begun to extend a number of sidings to accommodate 2 SHORT engines but this still presents problems in certain areas. (Summerville & Rose Siding). Greg and Scott run 2 **SHORT** engines and they work just fine!

While I have not enforced the above rules **IT** is coming!

Now for the 12 cars thing.

When you leave the yard you will NOT have more than 12 cars in a **LOCAL** train. Unit trains (Coal, Ore, Lumber, STEEL) may have more but not always. As you reach your first town to switch, you have the option of blocking your train during your switching. This is your call. Most of the time you will find that it was not blocked when it left the yard (Why do all of your work for you – That is why you get paid the big bucks!)

If you have less than 12 cars you have the option of adding on more cars to the train up to the 12 car limit. You do not have to (that's the option) but most elect to do so.

Now you usually would take cars that need switched further down the line or would be for your destination yard. This is what the 12" to the foot guys do!

The main thing is you have the option to leave each town with a max of 12 cars as this leaves cars for the next operator to switch.

Be considerate of others that might arrive late and want to run a local!

The second item:

We have to remember that this layout has 6 independent active railroads on it plus the modeled Conrail Lowgrade line.

While most layouts struggle to just do one line justice, with the room I have I was able to represent the Lowgrade line quite well and still add the extra OPs of the independent lines.

To refresh everyone's memory they are:

Pittsburgh & Shawmut – Interchanges with

CR line at Brookville

B&P line at Brockway (thru the wall at the right of Brookville yard)

CR line at Mosgrove/Freeport (Staging under Brookville)

Buffalo & Pittsburgh – Interchanges with

CR line at Falls Creek Yard – Has it's own track in the yard

P&S line at Brockway - the wall at the left end of Dubois

CR line at Driftwood – Has trackage rights on CR line from Subula Tunnel to Driftwood

Falls Creek RR – Interchanges with

CR line at Falls Creek Yard – Has its own tracks in the yard

CR line at Emporium yard – Has rights on all tracks in Emporium yard

Lake Erie, Franklin & Clarion RR – Interchanges with

CR line at Summerville – CR has limited trackage rights on the LEF&C.

Sligo & Rimersburg RR – Interchanges with

CR line at Lawsonham

Bessemer & Lake Erie RR – Interchanges with

CR line at Phillipston yard – Runs Unit coal to Driftwood

The independent lines run under their own rules (which will eventually be spelled out and a rule book made) and they stay on their own track! While there are several places on the layout that it looks like the track connects, it is really CR and some other RR's siding. Remember I used the CR ZTS maps from 1984 to layout the trackwork initially. So this is the way it was done. Example, BPB Tie plant siding (CR & B&P) both service them independently. Redoing the pins now shows this!

But for the **time being** they (Short Lines) still run on their own. The 12 car rule is in effect and the engine limit is NO 6 axle equipment except for the B&LE coal and SPECIAL UNIT trains.

Falls Creek RR could run as many as 4 trains a night by staying with the 12 car rule and the number of RUNNER engineers we have. Two locals and 2 coal runs (the coal depends on the RUNNERS). This will change once the Blue Jay Southern addition is built in the office area.

Same goes for the LEF&C but 3 trains (2 locals and 1 coal) is more like it. BUT this too is going to change once the new room is added on. Plans include the Stahlman Tipple area and a LOT of unit coal coming out of there. So I will need a lot more RUNNERS.

The Third Item: Pins with the Black Dots (Interchanges)

Now that the Pins have been redone (which worked out very well last time!) a question about what to do with the pins with the BLACK dots on them.

That's a good question – I really don't know what to do with them YET!

But for the time being I have FLAGS showing the interchange point. That is all they are. The cars with these pins just need to be set out at the proper place and the Short Line operator will have to deal with them. They just need to let them sit in the yard for now.

At this time it is just busy work (moving cars). Remember I keep stating that the layout can handle 1000 cars. While it will take another year or two to get the rest of them (840 so far) on the layout the Interchange pins (BLACK Dots) are going to give everyone busy work.

We came here to move and switch cars. Until I get the required number of cars on the layout I need placement pins (something to keep cars in motion). Soon we will need more RUNNERS (there's that word again) and they will be moving THRU freight.

The more I read on line and get to operate other layouts, it seems that they always have THRU freights that move from Staging to ONLINE then Staging and just drop a cut of cars and then pick up a cut of cars at the yard and then are gone for the rest of the night.

This is what the Interchange pins will do, once I figure how to do it. BUT you have to remember that most layouts only model ONE railroad not SEVEN! This is why I am having such a time figuring out how to do this with 7 railroads.

This is also why, whenever I get a chance, to operate on other model railroads I do so. So far I don't think that any of us have our layouts designed for the USUAL way others run their layouts or the real RRs run theirs. That is WHY I keep on wanting to go run other layouts to see how they do it.

About the only one that even comes close to the way I think I should be running my layout would be Ken McCorry in the eastern end of the state!

CONRAIL Bulletin #071018

Back to the Pins with the Black Dots (Interchanges) and the WHITE pins with NUMBERS.

The question about what to do with the WHITE pins with numbers on them, which is like pins with the BLACK dots was brought up recently.

I think I have figured out how I will run them! Again for the time being nothing BUT as the car count gets closer to the magic number of 1000 (850 now) they will be used by the yards to move out cars to staging via the THRU trains.

But for the time being I have FLAGS showing the interchange point (BLACK Dots). Cars with these Black Dots just need to be set out at the proper place and the Short Line operator will let them sit in the yard! This is busy work.

Now the cars with WHITE base pins and numbers can be used to fill up a block of cars for the Thru Freights. The Thru trains can also have the BLACK dot cars too.

The Yard crew will not have to worry about the numbers when making up a train to leave the yard. The train will be sent to any one of the many staging yards around the layout (Valley Yard – Venango Yard – Emporium – Kiski).

Once the Thru Freights begin to make regular runs on the layout is where the numbers on the WHITE pins will become important!

What I initially tried to do was use the Number system for out bound cars and found that very seldom did we have enough to make up a complete train (12 cars). What we will now do is use any or all of the numbered cars (Remember that they will also have a regular colored pin on them also) in a given yard (Phillipston or Falls Creek) and they may be put into a Thru Freight only.

Once this train has started to cycle through the system it will make ONE run each OPs session. It will come from staging, run through the layout, stop at a yard, drop some WHITE pin cars, pickup cars for outbound and then end up in staging at the other end of the layout.

The yards (Phillipston or Falls Creek) will determine which cars to pull off the train using that evenings date. (This is where I went wrong before – I was trying to put the current date cars – those with numbers corresponding to the OP session date into a train instead of pulling them out of the train.)

By doing this the Thru train will have the 12 cars to make it a train and each sessions date will be different so then each time different cars will be removed.

The yard master would then fill the train with WHITE pin cars not having the current date or the BLACK dot cars (See how I am finally finding a use for the Black Dot cars!) up to the 12 car limit.

If there are not enough cars at one yard then the train would then stop at the other yard and pick up the remainder of the cars needed to bring it up to the 12 limit. It would go on to staging.

This should not be a problem once I get to the magic 1000 car count as there will be so many extra cars on the layout the Yard operators will be wanting to make up special Thru trains just to get rid of cars to make room in the yards.

Now the cars that you have pulled from the Thru trains would then be classified into the Local trains and be sent to the various industries according to the other colored dots on the car.

BOB H

Conrail Bulletin – 071101

As time moves on I am going to limit the motive power being used on the layout .

I know this may cause some problems but I DO NOT take engines to other layouts when I go to their OPs sessions!

Notice I said OPs sessions, not I am building my layout and running for the fun of it. I figure that they should have enough power there to run a session. Besides they will have equipment that is not in the era that I have anyway.

I have been to quite a number of places to do OPs – Johnstown – Harrisburg – Erie & Jamestown, NY to name a few and NOT one of them ran Conrail in the 80's!

Now there is a way around this and some have already done it – and that is bring an engine to keep on the layout.

It does not go home with you after each OPs session. It is put into the engine house in Phillipston or Reynoldsville or where ever.

Also other Operators WILL get assigned to run this engine at times. So the owner has to be OK with this.

If the unit gets damaged then I will be responsible for its repair just as I would with my own equipment.

The equipment is going to have to match the era and type of power that would/could have been on the Conrail Lowgrade in the 1975 to 1985 time period.

I have been adding equipment that is a little newer than 1985 (especially B&P – I really like the Orange, Yellow& Black) and I may at some time in the future move the time frame up.

You **DO** what you want on your home layout, I **DO** what I want on mine!

What I am really trying to get away from is when I am back down on the layout after a Thursday OPs, I find all sorts of trains setting around the layout with no ENGINE.

I don't mind a complete train in a siding; but one with NO power is beginning to get me down.

Now I have to send out an engine to pick up this train at the beginning of each session, as I don't (first of all) know who left the train there last session and I don't know when they will arrive if at all.

This makes it hard on others trying to run the layout properly.

And as for leaving an engine here, I KNOW that every modeler has more than one engine setting around that they do not need to complete the their layout roster!

So if YOU just HAVE TO HAVE your own power on my layout then just leave one here.

But expect to have the DCC CVs adjusted to match the majority of my roster. I may have to slow the top speed down or in the case of a sound engine change the volume!

As I get more sound engines on the layout the sound levels will continually get lower because too many sound units with the volumes set too high is not only distracting, it is adding to the overall layout sound that we really don't need.

If you have a problem with this, apparently your hearing is failing and medical attention might be an option!

I am not trying to mean here but remember just WHO is paying for this layout!

NOW! IF you want to make a nice (Large) monetary donation to the cause I am willing to work with you on this ;-)

BOB H