

The Last of the Independents

This is a historically based simulation game of building, engineering, and promoting automobile sales by the smaller independent American companies in the post-war era. It depicts some of the difficult challenges executives faced as they competed against each other and the “Big Three”. Each turn represents three years of production.

Goal: Have the most victory chips at the end of the final turn. There are three ways to gain victory chips, win “Car of the Year”, gain “Majority Bonus”, or fill a “Trend”.

Round Sequence:

1. Year prep
2. Models
3. Engineering
4. Promotions
5. Trend
6. Car of the Year

Set up: Each player receives a random company profile card. Each player begins with 20 disks, with each disk representing one million dollars and places 10 on the company profile sheet circles. Deal 4 cards to each player.

Turn order: First turn randomly select the first player by drawing 1 disk from a lot of 1 each of all the players disks. This player begins the main phases and the card phases. On ensuing rounds the player in the lead will become first, followed by the other players in descending order. Positions are determined by player with most victory chips, ties broken by player with most disks, and complete ties by random draw. Track player order on board with 1 disk of each player in turn order. Player remains first throughout all phases and does NOT change for each category. As players pass in any phase, move their disk up to the Passing Lane Track, and when phase is over, return disks to Turn Order Track.

Year prep: On the first round, players take all their disks and enough disks are placed on the company profile card to fill all slots. The rest of the player's disks forms their selective allotment pool. Each player is dealt four cards, and the year begins. On ensuing rounds each player takes all their money (disks) from last year's return pool, a new hand of cards is dealt out, and play resumes.

Phases for models/engineering/promotion categories turn sequence:

1. Selective disk allocation
2. Required disk allocation
3. Card play
4. Competition resolution
5. Majority Bonus check

Selective disk allocation: Starting with the Models category, play proceeds around the table in turn order, with each player selecting a section and placing disks from their selective pool into the section. Player may only place disks in one section per round. Player may place any number of disks in a section. Player may place disks in a section that already contains opponent's disks. On another round they may not select a section they've already placed disks in. As soon as a player passes, they may not re-enter, and are excluded from further disk allocation during this phase.

Required disk allocation: After a round has passed with all players passing, each player may allocate as many disks as they like from their company profile card onto the applicable sections in the active

category in turn order. After this is done, card play begins with the same player who began the turn.

Card play: In turn order, each player may select a card from their hand, and play it using its effect (the top text portion of card). If no card in the hand is applicable to the current category, the player passes (refer to the category icon at the upper-left corner of the picture box on the card, cards without an icon may be played in any category). A player may alternatively choose not to play a card by passing. After passing a player may not re-enter card play phase. Any number of cards may be played by each player during this phase on ensuing rounds, one card per player per round. Cards affecting other categories may not be played until that category is currently active. Any unused cards may be saved to be played for their “Trend” or for the following year.

Competition resolution: After all card effects have been resolved for the Model section, competition in each section is resolved. If only one player has disk(s) in a section, leave one disk in the section and place all of the rest of the disks in the return pool. If multiple players have disks in a section, all of the disks are placed in the bag, and one is drawn. The winning one is placed back on the section and all remaining disks (if any) belonging to the winning player are placed in the return pool. All disks belonging to the losers of the draw are halved (odd numbers being rounded down,) and placed in the return pool. The remaining disks are lost and set aside to the unused piles.

Courtesies: The number of cards in hand, selective disk pool, and Company Profile Sheet allocations are common knowledge to all players at all times.

Majority Bonus: After all Model sections competition has been resolved, If any player has won in a majority of sections, a bonus of one victory token is received. There are no bonuses for ties.

Repeat Phases: The same 5 phases are repeated in the same turn order first for the Engineering and again for the Promotion categories.

Trend: Each player may now reveal a card(s) which is their Trend. Each section of their Trend (bottom of card) that is filled by one of their disks, receives one extra disk. If they have all three sections covered, they receive one victory token instead.

Car of the Year: After this, all the disks in all Model sections are put in the bag, and one is drawn. This disk is placed in the Car of the Year section. All the winners remaining disks from bag (if any) are placed in Car of the Year section. All other disks from the bag go into the Return pool. This procedure is repeated for Engineering and Promotion categories. After all three categories are empty, all disks in the Car of the Year pool are placed in the bag, and one is drawn. The player it belongs to receives one victory chip. All disks from this draw are placed in the return pool. This completes one year, at which point players begin again with another Year Prep phase.

Bankruptcy: If a player has 10 or less disks at Year Prep, their company goes bankrupt. They lose a victory chip (if they have any), discard their company card, and draw a new company card and begin again with 16 disks.

Government Subsidy: If a player has 11 or 12 disks at Year Prep, they receive enough disks to have 16.

Victory: The game ends at the conclusion of the third turn, and the player with the most victory chips wins. In the case of ties, player with the most disks wins. A further resulting tie is a fact a tie.

Duration: For a longer or shorter game players may agree on any number of turns.