

Top of the Stack, May 2026

Transcript

Welcome to Pickup and Deliver, the podcast where I pick up my audio recorder as I step out for a walk and deliver an episode to you while I stroll around. I'm Brendan Riley.

[opening music]

Greetings, listeners. It's a cool day here in suburban Chicago. It's probably low sixties and slightly cloudy. It's not quite completely overcast, but it's very close. It's a mottled gray across the sky with patches of lighter and darker clouds. Given that it is the first day of May. I thought I would take a walk and tell you a little bit about what I played in April. That's right, it's time for the May top of the stack [celebration noises].

So Top of the Stack is a episode I do at the beginning of each month, in which I talk about the games I played in the last month, and a little bit about my plans for the next month. It's a chance to kind of run some stats, talk about game plays overall, and generally reflect on the state of the hobby for the last month for me. So to hit you with those sweet, sweet stats to start with. In April of 2026, I played 81 plays of 48 different games. My year total so far is 323 plays of 145 different games. This does, of course include online plays on board game arena and yucata, which is at least half, if not more, of my plays. But that's on purpose because I enjoy playing games.

I have a couple broad stats that I'm trying to keep track of. I have a shelf of opportunity. This is my shelf of games, or it's not an actual shelf. It's my list of games that I own that I haven't played since I bought them. For the most part, they're new games I've never played, but every now and again I'll get a copy of a game I've played before but I didn't own. And then I do put it on the shelf of opportunity until I get a chance to play it, because I bought it. My shelf of opportunity is currently at 98. At the beginning of April it was at 89, so I did not reduce the shelf that much. But you'll see I did a pretty good job of playing games anyway.

My collection size. The goal is to reduce it, but I haven't been doing a great job with that either. I did go from 623 to 625 games this month, so I'm two up from where I was.

My most played game on the table this month was Lord of the rings, The Fellowship of the ring, the trick taking game. I logged it as three plays, but it's an interesting challenge to think about. How do you what do you call a game of Lord of the rings fellowship of the ring trick taking game? Is it one hand? Because each hand is itself its own mission? Is it one session? I usually log that kind of game along with the crew as a session. But the thing is, we played for almost three hours, more than three hours of this game. It felt weird to just call it one session, so I called it. I said an hour of the game as a session. I logged it as three plays. So I had one very long session of it. You call that what you will?

My most common online play was pandemic. I played six times. I'm playing asynchronously with Mary, somebody from my, uh, board game club. And we have been, we got to the point where we were winning every play. I think we won three plays in a row at the regular level. So then we went up to difficult, and we've lost two already in that one. So difficult harder. But we're getting there. So that is uh, those are my plays. Each month I pick four games that I'm going to try to play that month. If I play three of them, I consider it a successful month. This is the actual top of the stack. This month.

My top of the stack games were light speed arena, lost ruins of arnak, root, and core worlds. I managed to play light speed arena and core worlds. I did not get to play Lost Ruins of arnak or Root. I was all ready to play Lost Ruins and then none of the students at my board game club wanted to play it. Womp Womp. I feel like had I set it up, I might have been able to lure a couple in, but so be it. I did not get that done. And then Root is the game I have played a number of times, but I got a copy at. I got a copy used for a good price and so I am trying to get that played. My neighbor, my two neighbors, the guys on either side of me want to play it. So we're just trying to find a time when we all can get together.

All right. First plays this month coming into the month, I had 27 new to me games tried this so far this year. In April, I played a number of new games. I'm going to just rattle them off here. Wilmot's warehouse postcards. Finspan. Istanbul the dice game, Gnome hollow, trekking the world, horrified Greek monsters, Caruma, awkward guests 2, verdant, Leviathan wilds, digging for dinos, core worlds, and Lightspeed Arena. Digging for

dinos and postcards and caruma were all games I tried on board game arena. I'm now up to 41 new to me games tried this year. If my goal is ten games a month, I am keeping that pace.

I did not try any expansions this month. Usually I log it if I try a new expansion. I did not try any new ones.

I did dust off four games this month, just four. Gizmos: Two years, four months and two days dusty. Hanabi: Three years, Eight months, Fourteen days Dusty. Fugitive: Six years, Seven months, Twenty four days Dusty. I played that one on board game arena twice with Joe. And Seasons: Six years, five months, twenty four days. Dusty. Seasons is an interesting game because it is a game I've technically played before on board game arena, but I've never played it on the table. So we'll be talking about that in a minute as we go along.

I did not play any of my top fifty games on the table this this month. I played a number of Vladimir Suchy games on yukata.de. Gabriel and I have been rocking a bunch of games of Messina 1347 and underwater cities a number of times, but I did not get to play any on the table.

On my ten for ten. I'm making good progress there. I did manage to get a few plays in. I added another one to my player color list. I played the color gold. When I played fin Span, I played a game of Werewords with nine people and a game of monikers with ten. I believe that is all of the player counts, although I'm not sure I logged the eight, so I need to go look and see if I played an eight person game, I think I did. You can check the show notes for the link to my shelf of opportunity, which will list whether I did that or not. No progress on the continent's list. My list of games that were on my shelf before my shelf of opportunity before twenty twenty five. I made a success there with Core Worlds no Vladimir Suchy or Martin Wallace games played this month. And then here I put new board game geek top five hundred game seasons. Seasons was number three hundred and forty nine. So I guess technically it's not new. I have played seasons before, but it was six years ago. It was on board game arena and frankly, I didn't really understand it. Uh, having now played it on the table, it's a totally different experience. I felt like it was a new, a new game. I didn't really remember it at all. And so I'm counting it as a new game in the top five hundred. That's maybe deceptive, but whatever.

And then finally, I have my update to my collection. It started at six hundred and twenty three and it's been a wild month. I'm going to read to you some big lists, so get ready. First I got rid of sixteen games. I got rid of Rolling realms, Android infiltration, bees, Sky team, A Game of Thrones, Cathedral furnace leaf, Great Western Trail, It's a wonderful World. La patisserie Rococo Tenpenny parks scapegoat, the final tier. Lord of the rings the Duel and Clue conspiracy. I think that I've already talked about that a little bit on the podcast, but I wanted to recap now in response to that, I got I picked up fifteen games in the math trade and in the post math trade auction, I got horrified. Greek monsters bury me in the rift. Horseless carriage, Istanbul the dice game mystery mystery. Rummy. Jack the Ripper, Fayum. Tranquility. Gnome hollow. Teotihuacan. City of the gods. Seasons. Warhammer. Quest. The. Adventure. Card. Game. Reign of darkness. Reign of dragons. Excuse me. Her story. Starship captains and Volca. So those are the games I picked up at the math trade. After that, I got rid of codenames, Harry Potter and Light Speed Arena, and I picked up the Fox experiment. Ahoy! Survive! And a game called Arcana. I also added Frost Haven to my collection because somehow I had never marked that I owned it. So whenever. Every now and again, when you're managing a collection as big as I am and you're human, you make mistakes. Sometimes you'll find a game that you got rid of, that you never marked gone or you, um, or a game that you. Bought but never marked owned and so on. And somehow Frost Haven either. I marked it well, it wasn't marked pre owned. It was marked. It wasn't marked at all. So somehow I never marked that I owned Frost Haven. So I did mark that. Uh, and that brings my collection to six hundred and twenty five games at the end of the month.

Finally, I have to decide what games I want to play in May. Once again, I pick out four games. If I play three of them in the month, that counts as a successful month. So far I have only achieved that in one month this year and that was January. I played all four. Since then it's been. It was two in February, one in March, two in April. So I'm not doing great on getting those numbers done. So this month my goal is to play Ahoy Lost Ruins of Karnak, Teotihuacan and level seven escape. Those are the four games that I want to play this month.

Well, now that I've told you what games I played in April, I would love to hear what games you've been playing. The best place to share that is over on BoardGameGeek we have a guild for the podcast Guild three, two, six, nine, and there's a link in the show notes, or you can just find it by going to boardgamegeek dot com slash slash three two six nine. Or just Google pick up and deliver podcast Guild board game geek and you'll find it generally most months. There is a thread started there by one of the podcast listeners to talk about the

games they played this month. Already. At the end of April, podcast listener John posted a thread called top of the stack in which he talked about the games he played in April. It seemed like he had a pretty good month, and he said because he went to a couple, um, in house cons or game, um, home cons, which is a delight. That's a fun way to get a bunch of games played.

So if you'd like to share what you've been playing, head over to that thread on board Game Geek Guild on board Game Geek. If you'd like to share other news with me or conversation, you can send me a message on board Game Geek. My username there is wombat929. You could also send me a message by email Brendan at rattlebox games dot com. Here's my email address Or you could send me a mail. No, I'm not going to tell you my mailing address. Those are really the the ideal ways. If you like the podcast. You can tell other people about it. You can post a review in the place wherever you get your review, from wherever you get the podcast from, and you can send me messages to let me know you're listening. Well, that's about it for me today. I want to say thank you for listening, and I hope your next walk is as pleasant as mine was. Bye bye.

[closing music]

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