

Pick Up & Deliver 841: Top of the Stack, July 2026

Transcript

Welcome to pick Up 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.

[Introduction Music]

Well, greetings listeners. It's a surprising... it's actually a little cool morning here in suburban Chicago. There was a huge rainstorm last night, which I think cooled things off a little bit, meaning it's just in the low eighties. I'd say rather than the mid nineties, which it's been most of this week. So we'll see what it's like midday. But right now it's pretty tolerable outside. It's kind of nice. So I'm taking a walk to do a couple podcasts for you and talk to you about what's been going on with me.

It is July third. I intended to go out on July first and record an episode, but I ended up having to do a couple other things, and then suddenly it was way too hot and I couldn't go out in the middle of the day would have been unbearable or more unbearable than I was willing to do. And then yesterday, I couldn't do it. So it's July third. You'll get the top of the stack episode today. Apologies. Well, I guess that's what this is.

This is the top of the stack. For those of you new to the podcast. Top of the stack is a monthly episode. I do usually at the the first episode to be released in a calendar month, in which I talk about what games I played last month and what games I'm hoping to play next month. Sort of a stats rundown. An overview of the kind of games I've been playing, and a conversation about my goals for the month. Of course, these goals are all kind of silly self-imposed goals, but whatever. Um, I may, I may end up doing a little bit of self-reflection about how the year is going to, because July represents the beginning of a new half of the year.

Ooh. Do you want to hear a house wren having a good old time. Listen up.

[House Wren chirping sound]

That's a house wren. Oh, I can see him. Up on the top of the tree over there. It's very cute. Oh, no. The bird I was looking at is not a house wren with some other bird that flew away. The house Wren is still there, making his calls.

[House Wren chirping sound]

Okay, so I start. Oh, it's been a couple months since I acknowledged this. I think the phrase top of the stack I borrowed from the podcast, the podcast of nonsensical gamers. I feel like by pronouncing the name of the podcast every couple episodes, I keep their podcast in, in mind so people can remember them and, uh, lament that they don't podcast anymore. Womp womp. I don't even know if I'm subscribed to their feed anymore. What if they still do and I don't? What if they came back and I don't know. I should check. Note to self.

Okay, so in June of 2026, I've played fifty six plays of thirty eight games. A little down from my usual. Usually I'm in the seventies or 80s plays, I think. Uh, fifty six feels a little low, but it's the beginning of summer break. Uh, I'm maybe not. I'm doing my online teaching, but I'm not on my computer in quite the same way. So I'm not doing as many board game arena games. I think that's where the slacking is coming. Uh, and I don't have my college board game club, which usually gets me three or four plays every two weeks. And I didn't get any plays from those. So in that way it's reduced a little bit. I also took a two week trip where we didn't didn't play a lot of games, so that reduced it as well. My year total is four hundred and thirty seven plays out of one hundred and eighty two games. If I'm trying to get one thousand plays in a year, I am behind. I don't know that I'm. I haven't said that as an official goal. I think that's a nice round number. I guess another round number would be twelve hundred plays a year or six hundred plays a year, like fifty or one hundred plays a month.

Well, whatever my shelf of opportunity, my goal is always to reduce it. But of course, I acquire games faster than I play new games. Hopefully I'm getting most of the games as gifts or as thrift buys. I'm hopefully not buying too many games at retail anymore. Uh. We're up to ninety seven games on the shelf of opportunity. We added three games this month. It was a birthday month, so I'll blame that, uh, as the reason for the

expansion rather than the contraction. Uh, as a result, my collection size went up. We actually added six games to the collection this month and did not get rid of any. That is that.

My most placed, most played game this month was **Qwixx**. I played five times in real life. This is a sort of go to to me when I'm playing with people who don't have a lot of experience as gamers or when we're traveling, it's just a perfect little capsule of a game. So not surprising. And **revive**. We had two plays asynchronous with Shelly, a listener, hey Shelly, and with Lance, who I think is Shelly's partner. She introduced me to him. I don't know if he's a listener or not. Hi, Lance, if you're a listener. So I've been playing a number of games online with them. Revive.

I think that July will end for July **Anachrony** will be the most played game. I have many games of that. I think I have three or four running right now on board game arena that will all finish up in July. So top of the sac. My challenge. I gave myself four games to try to play this month. **Struggle of empires**. **Glory to Rome**, tekhanu, obelisk of the sun and bury me in the rift. Three of those got played. I did not get to play **techno obelisk of the sun**, but the other three boom, boom, boom done. So I did get my three for the month. I'm not getting toward catching up. Right.

The goal is to get three a month, but I've had several months where I only got two or even one. And so getting caught up is a thing I'd like to do. And I haven't talked about bury Me in the rift yet on the pod, but it will be coming soon. First place this month. I came into the month having played forty eight new games so far this year I leave having played fifty four new games. So six new or um, yeah, six new games to me this month. Those were **Bury Me in the Rift**, **Velonimo**, **Dune**, the nineteen eighty four movie tie in game **Struggle of Empires**, **Disney: The Haunted Mansion**, and **Nestlings**. That puts me at fifty four new to me games tried this year.

I did try two expansions, although this did not reduce my, uh, expand your shelf shelf of opportunity because the two expansions I tried were **Trickerion Arcane Arts** and **Trickerion the Secret Workshop**. These are both new expansions that came out with the most recent collectors, or tenth anniversary edition of Trickerion, and as part of that, I did not. I just played those when they arrived, so they. I added them to my collection and I played them. I have thirty three games dusted off at the start of the month. I'm now up to forty two, so it's been a productive month in terms of revisiting old games, which is great that ideally that would be my highest category of things, not new games tried. Although you know how much I love trying new games, but revisiting games I've played before is really good.

I also have a streaks list that I've been thinking about reporting on. I'm not. I'm not sure if you're curious about that, what the streaks list is. It's the opposite of dusted off. So the streaks list is a a list I keep on board game geek of games that I have kept from getting dusty, and how long it's been since they were since, like how long that streak has been running. I don't know. Is that a thing that's interesting to you? Games I've updated on my streaks. Um, games that have been added to the streaks list. Let me know in the, uh, in the guild boardgamegeek dot com slash guild slash three two six nine or, uh, go to the show notes and there's a link. Let me know what you think. Do you want me to add, uh, changes to the streak list to my monthly reporting? Uh, if I don't hear that you want to hear it, I'm not going to add it. So genuinely, if you're curious, let me know. Uh, okay, so here's the games that I brought out of the dust. Trickerion had been four years, four months, two days since I played that **camel up** six years, four months, thirteen days, **bunny, bunny, moose, moose**, four years, two months, nineteen days. **Chicken** one year, eleven months, twenty five days. **Glory to Rome!** One year, five month. Six days. **Skull**. Two years. Ten months. Twenty days. Dusty. **Sentinels of the multiverse**. Twenty six years. Twenty eight days. Dusty. **Cribbage**. Six years. Ten months. Twenty one days. Dusty and **gin rummy**. Three years. Eleven months. Twenty seven days. Dusty. Lots of good games there. I'm especially excited to talk to you about or quick impressions. I'll do more of these later. Carry on. Amazing playing with all the expansions. Amazing. Really fun. Camel up still great. Bunny bunny Moose Moose. This game is a hoot and I wish that I played it more often. Chicken fine. Glory to Rome. Pretty good actually. I think I talked about chicken on the Bogan con episode Glory to Rome. Amazing. Uh, skull. It's fine. Sentinels of the multiverse. As finicky as I remembered. I don't know that I need to put it in my nah I'm good list, but it's never going to be my top choice when tables are opening up. All right. Yeah, that's a quick summary. We'll talk about it more when they come up and we'll see if I'm consistent. Maybe when I go to talk about it, I'll be like, oh, Sentinels of the multiverse. It was amazing. I doubt it, but possible. All right.

So my one of my goals every two years is to play my top fifty games, all fifty of them over the course of two years. I'm now at thirty five. I have fifteen games left to play, which if you're doing your math. So if I was doing if I was being consistent and careful, I would, uh, be playing two a month. That's forty eight over the course of two years and easy to do. Of course, I'm a little sloppy on that, but I'm not doing too bad, actually. Uh, at that pace, I would be at two times eighteen, which is thirty six. I'm at thirty five, so I'm actually pretty close to that. Not bad. But the fifteen I have left to play are like the hardest to play. I've got terraforming Mars. I've got through the ages. I've got vampire, the eternal struggle. I've got Star Wars, Rebellion. Pandemic. Legacy. Agricola. Mutiny. Cerebra. Anachronism. Mosaic. Mosaic. Twilight. Imperium. Dungeon. Pets. Messina thirteen forty seven. Anno eighteen hundred. And evacuation. Now, if you're doing your math, they're. None of those games, with the exception, perhaps, of vampire. The eternal Struggle is a game that takes less than two hours. I guess pandemic legacy, but I don't even know how I'm going to do that one unless we start a new pandemic legacy. Like getting all those done is gonna be hard because they're all big games. But I think it's worth trying.

On my ten for ten list, I've made a little bit of progress. Not a ton, but a little bit worth talking about. Anyway, I played one game that takes place in Africa that's camel up. I played one game that I had on my shelf since before twenty twenty five. That is struggle of empires, and if push comes to shove, I'm counting it for this category. However, I've also put in a sort of asterisk, and this game could also count for Martin Wallace. Game played. It is both a game that was on my shelf before twenty twenty five and a Martin Wallace game. The reality is, I think the before twenty twenty five category is harder to fulfill. So I'm prioritizing that as the thing. But that means I have to play another Martin Wallace game. And I generally said, you can't count one play for two spots on this one hundred list, but. So I'm up to sixty two plays. So if you're keeping track there, that means I have thirty eight left to go in six months, which is a lot. It's like five more than five a month, six a month. On the other hand, it also means I'm more than halfway and I'm halfway through the year. So I'm on pace. But it's, it's a challenge anyway, Because again, it's often the easy ones that you resolve first.

Now, one of my things that I like to do is paint the miniatures that come in my games. I haven't been doing that. I haven't really done that all this year. I don't have any progress this year, but I would like to. So I keep it on here in part just because I do, but in part to remember Chris Graves, our friend who regularly listened to the podcast and participated in the guild, corresponded with me a lot and we played a lot of online games. He passed away a couple years ago and we have been. There is a thread. I actually haven't posted on there in a while because I haven't been painting, but there's a geek list. It's the painting challenge thread started kept going in his memory. So we'll miss you Chris.

Okay, I talked about my expansion. My expansion shelf did not change. I added two games and took two games off. And finally my collection size update. I did mention the collection got a little bigger this month. I did not get rid of any. I thought I was going to get rid of one game in a giveaway, but then it turned out we can't really do a play to win giveaway in a with a co-op game, because who wins it? Thus, here's the games that I acquired. I acquired two games from thrift store this month or in June. I got the three M bookshelf game **stocks and bonds**. This one firmly falls into the category of collector game. I imagine I'll play it once, try it out. After that. I don't see myself playing it again, but it is a three M bookshelf game. So like the collector in me wants to have that. And then I also got **Giants moving Tiny Furniture**, which is another game from the Exploding Kittens Company. It looks cute and fun and easy to play, so I'm interested in trying it. You. Yeah, it is what it. You can kind of get the picture for it in your head. It is a dexterity game. I got four games from my birthday. Um. Let's see. Two of them were given to me, and two of them were. I got money for my birthday and I spent it on these games. Those would be. I got **Slay the Spire** and **fit to print** and I bought always and recall. So those are the four games that I acquired due to my birthday. And on our trip I did pick up one game as a souvenir. This was **nestlings**. So that brings us to six hundred and thirty six games on my shelf of opportunity at the end of the month.

As I think toward next month, I think about like what's going on next month, what are the stakes, etc.. And I think about two things. There is the fact that July is generally the month in which we celebrate the birth of the United States. And so I was but, you know, there are other countries that also celebrate things in July, including, as I recall, Bastille Day. So I thought it might be interesting to try to play the Martin Wallace game **Liberté** this month. So I put Liberté on my list. Uh. This is a early asynchronous game or early game, which you're manipulating the landscape to get yourself ahead in the conflict of war. Like so you something like Pax

Pamir or Imperial. These are games that followed on this idea. This is a nineteen ninety eight game from Martin Wallace. I think it's pretty firmly in the wargame camp.

Then we have **fit to print**, which I said I got this month. I haven't had a chance to crack it open yet. It is a. I believe it's a real time tile placement game from the designer of **Tiny Towns**, so I'm excited about that. I put **Dungeon Petz** on here. This is in my top fifty. This is maybe its third or fourth appearance on the shelf of opportunity list, but I am going to really try to get it played because I like it a lot. So I might maybe I'll pop it on the hey, I want to play this this week thing for toggle. Yeah. Dungeon pets.

[Interjection intro music]

Future Brendan here. I discovered when I was editing this episode that I only told you three of the four games I was planning to play in July. The fourth game is the Fox Experiment, which is an Elizabeth Hargrave design focused on the Moscow or Novosibirsk experiment, in which they tried to domesticate foxes.

[Interjection exit music]

So that brings me to the end of my list of the games I played this month. I would love to hear from you, friends. What games have you been playing? What did you play in June? What were your top games? What were the most enjoyable games? What were the games that were just stinkers? Were there any one and dones? Let me know over on BoardGameGeek in Guild three, three two six nine. Um, let me also know whether you're interested in hearing about a streak list. Update the streak list update post your your thoughts about either of those things. I could add an update for the streak list into my monthly report. Okay. Well thanks for joining me on walk today. I hope your next walk is as pleasant as mine was. Bye bye.

[Exit music]

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