

Pick Up & Deliver 850: Top of the Stack, August 2026

Transcript

[Ed note – the first mention of each featured game will be in ALL CAPS. Thereafter it will not.]

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.

[Intro music]

Well, greetings listeners. It's a lovely day here in suburban Chicago. I'm out for a walk as the start of my Monday. I've work to do. I'm going to do some fun. My son's birthday was this weekend, so we're gonna go celebrate his birthday because I was not here.

It's one of the weird things about having a kid whose birthday happens during Gen Con every year. I miss his birthday every year. I do try to make up to him with a birthday celebration. I call him on his birthday. I also invite him to Gen Con. He hasn't yet wanted to come to that, but maybe in future we'll see more about that to come. In fact, the next episode will be about Gen Con. I actually have two more episodes in the can, so hopefully they don't get too stale because I'm not planning to release those until after these two that I'm recording today, because generally I have a rule that at the top of the at the top of the month, I do a top of the stack.

That's right. It's time for top of the stack for August 2026. "What is top of the stack?" you ask me. Maybe you do, maybe you don't. You're you're probably a regular listener, in which case you don't ask me that because you know. But in case this is your first episode or you just stumbled across us, top of the stack is an episode in which I talk about the games I played last month. It's a sort of review, a holistic view of what we've been doing in the past. It's also a good check in spot for our listeners.

There are several listeners who regularly post their monthly activity over on our forum. The Pickup and Deliver Guild, which is part of Board Game Geek. It's actually guild number 3269. So you could go to boardgamegeek.com/guild/3269/, or you can just go to the show notes at rattleboxgames.com and find the link that I put there to that forum. But anyway, so top of the stack is a conversation about what I played last month and what I thought of it. Here we go.

So in August, in July, this is the top of the stack for August. So I talk about July. Get ready for August in July. I had seventy five plays of fifty three different games, bringing my year total up to five hundred and twelve plays of two hundred and five games. We're really rocking along, getting games played, enjoying ourselves.

I do keep track of the games I own but haven't played. I call that my shelf of opportunity. Generally, my goal would be to keep that around fifty. It is currently at one hundred and three. At the beginning of the year it was at eighty six. So it's not like I have drifted up from fifty. But this month I did add more games than I removed. I suspect that I'm really hoping that I can do some good work bringing down the shelf of opportunity in the next couple of months, because I shouldn't really be acquiring any more games until. Maybe November, when the next new ship math trade happens. That would probably be the next time that I would expect to acquire new games.

We may be having a used game sale at Toggle in September. Often pick up a couple games there, but hopefully I get rid of more games than I pick up. So we'll see what happens there. Now, if I'm smart, I will get rid of a bunch of games at the used game sale in September so that my collection size goes down. The problem with doing the math trade in November is I get I get new games, but I don't change the collection size and my goal. My ideal size for collection is about five hundred and fifty games, with about fifty in the rotating pile, meaning the games. I don't know if I want to keep them or not. They're new. That would be my. I think that's sort of where my ideal size is. My most played game. Oh my collection size. Speaking of which, my collection size is up to 646 games. So I guess I could declare my collection size just fine if I decided 600 is the ideal number and I could have fifty rotating. Boom! Collection size. Ideal, huh? We'll see.

My most played game this month was really interesting. I had a very spread out month with lots of ties, so most played game DORFROMANTIK: SAKURA with three plays on the table, WINGSPAN with three plays on

the table. My wife and I are playing through a fan made campaign that someone posted, and we're sort of we're in the story now. And so we've been when we have an evening and we're like, let's play a game. We've been playing wingspan because we have this campaign to work through. It's a nice way to progress through, to get back to a game that you maybe haven't played too much in a bit, although we do still really need to explore the hummingbirds more. We only played those one time, so we'll get back to those as well.

SLAY THE SPIRE three times on the table, quicks three times on the table. And at GenCon I played a new deduction game. GOT FIVE! three times. So a bunch of different options. Great. Uh, next up we have. Oh, that was all on the table digitally. I also played castles of Burgundy and Pandemic three times each asynchronously. So three seems to be the magic number for how many games I played this month. And yeah, I mean, I played a lot more than that. But if I played a game three times, it was in the top games played for the month, The top of the stack itself.

The idea for which the segment is named is a selection of games that I'm hoping to play this month. The idea is I pick out three games that I'd like to play this month, and if I successfully play them, I pick out four games that I'd like to play this month. If I successfully play three of them, it counts as a success. So the four games that I picked out this month were Liberty Dungeon, Pets Fit to Print and the Fox Experiment. Of those four, Dungeon pets is the only one I'd played before, so this would be a bunch of new games that I got played and one of my old favorites. And I did play three of the four games I played Dungeon Pets Fit to Print and the Fox Experiment. I did not get to liberty. This is not the first time I've failed Martin Wallace in this way. I keep putting liberty on the list and keep not bringing it to the table. I'm not sure exactly why.

A lack of willpower, I guess one of these days we will try it. I did, however, get to try a lot of new games this month. It shouldn't be surprising since this was the Gen con month. Two of the four days of Gen Con happened in July, so you're going to hear more about that in August as well. At least in my top of the stack at the beginning of September. But I'm also planning to do. My next episode is specifically just about Gen Con, so I'll talk about it more there. But here are the games that I played this month for the first time. The Fox Experiment diplomacy, the Golden Blade Collide starts with a K fit to print. Everdell Ammerland Hexe effects. Darwin's journey. Tranquility. Destinies. Trichuris Heihei relay. In a nutshell, the trial of the forest magical athlete and got five.

That's sixty nine new games I've tried this year so far. Pretty good pace, if you ask me. I don't know pace for what? But lots of fun. New, new things to try there. I did not try any expansions this month, so that's one simple. I did dust off a couple games. I dusted off Thunder Road, vendetta. Ticket to Ride Europe and Carcassonne. These are all games that were dusty and now they are not. The only. The Dustiest one was Ticket to Ride Europe, which it turns out I hadn't played in six years in more than six years, so it's fun to return that to the table, I forgot. It's better. It's good. I always play a regular ticket to ride because frankly, the most often times that I play it are with my mother, and she likes the simplicity of that one versus the complexity of some of the other branches of the Ticket to Ride tree.

Now, as you know, I try to get all top all of my top fifty games played between when I declare a top fifty and when I reevaluate and declare my next top fifty. During this. This time I am. I'm roughly eighteen months into that process, so I have about six months left to get the remaining games played. And of course, these are all the hardest ones to get to the table that are left. A lot of them are just big beefy games, so they take a lot of time. Some of them are games that is very hard to play without. Lots of prep like vampire The Eternal Struggle. But one of them that I got played this month was Dungeon Pets. So that's very fun.

As you know, I'm also doing a ten for ten. Of course, it's not really a ten for ten. It's it's one hundred. It's one hundred games in in a variety of categories. That's probably what I should call it. That's not quite as snappy as a name as ten for ten. But I did manage to get two more games, three more games played in the category, putting me up to sixty three out of one hundred. So now we're getting really down to it. I have thirty six left and I have five more months. It's time to get busy. If I want to get that done, I gotta do seven a month.

It's not looking good, folks, but we'll see. Of the ones I did manage to play. I played the Fox experiment, which takes place in Siberia, which is in Asia. So I marked off one of the Asia plays. I played Destinies and Magical Athlete, both of which are in the top five hundred on board game geek. And I had never played before, and that's one of the categories. So that one's almost done just one more game to play in that category.

And I've got that complete my painting challenge. I did not paint any this month, although being at GenCon really did get me excited at the idea of painting again. So hopefully I will take that up back up in the fall. August is going to be very busy so I don't see that likely happening. But starting in September maybe.

And then the last thing to share here are collections, uh, new things that I collected. Uh, my expansion shelf went from seventy nine to eighty seven because I collected eight collect. Eight collect I added eight. My expansion shelf went from seventy nine to eighty seven because I added eight expansions to my collection. I got the thing of velour expansion to Nidavellir. I got the sidereal confluence proliferation expansion. I got night at the zoo and the night at the zoo. Unicorn expansion. So the night at the zoo, I got this, um. The latecomers. Night of the zoo. Latecomers and night at the zoo. Unicorn. And then I got wandering towers. Magic tower. And they had four little magic card promo things. So. Or three of those. So that's four wandering tower expansions. My collection size itself did go up about ten games this month.

I acquired the game fantastic factories and bird spotting opoly at, uh, goodwill. So those were what you'd expect from goodwill. I my collection went down one by. Selling a copy of nineteen oh two Méliès. If you look back at the archive, I'll try to find a link and put it there. I have played this game once and I posted a board game espresso review of it. The long, short, long short of it was it's pretty good. It's a small box package. It looks really nice. Yeah. I didn't, uh, didn't think that much of it otherwise. Like it wasn't amazing. It was just, you know, kind of is what it was. It was what it was. So it wasn't getting a lot of play. And I had tried to trade it during the math trade, but I think it was a little too precious with what I would take, or no one had heard of it because it didn't go, but I had marked it trade because anything I put in the trade I marked for trade. And I got a board game geek message from somebody saying, hey, I see you have this for trade. If, uh, I don't think I have anything you want for trade, but I'd be happy to just pay money. What do you think would be a fair price?

So I looked around. I decided on twenty dollars is a fair price. Then I did my shipping calculations and it said it would be like ten dollars to ship. But then I also had to pay a fee on PayPal or whatever because of merchant thing. And then I had to pay a three percent fee to board game geek. So I said, let's say thirty five shipping included. Uh, and he said, that sounded good. So then I packed it up and shipped it out. This all happened in one day. So I got his message when I woke up in the morning, and by four that afternoon I had mailed him the game. That reminds me, I need to go back and register positive feedback to him in the board game geek forums. So that's, that's how come I had a minus one on my collection.

And then I acquired a number of games. I got Dragon Fire and Chronicles of Crime from a friend who was getting rid of them. I bought Nidavellir is A nidavellir from a friend. And then I also acquired Destiny's Seventh Continent, uh, from that same friend. Those were free. He was just giving them away or giving them to me. Anyway. I found a copy of danger danger, or rather, my son did at goodwill, which is a sort of light, silly card game. Then finally, I did acquire two more games during July at GenCon. This was night at the zoo, the night, the night at the zoo and wandering towers, bringing my collection size up to six hundred and forty six plays by the end of the month. All in all, July was a really fun gaming month. The new games that I got to try were all pretty interesting, and I'm looking forward to talking to you about them more thoroughly in some board game espresso episodes coming up.

Just generally, I'm surprised I got as many plays in, I guess at the beginning of GenCon skewed that, but because I traveled a little bit anyway, and generally it wasn't super gaming heavy, but still had a very nice time. So the last thing to do is talk about what I'm going to play in August. And frankly, I completely forgot to prep for this. So I'm winging it off the top of my head.

Well, to start with, I always like to play the new stuff I got at GenCon as soon as I can. So I think it's pretty inevitable that two of my three games that I'll want to play this month are going to be night at the Zoo and Wandering Towers. Those are the two games I bought for myself at GenCon and will really wander a night at the zoo I bought for my wife. But you know, a game for her is a game for me. So I'm looking forward to playing both of those, and I'm going to put those on the top of my stack. And then I think for an older game or for my top fifty, I'm going to say. Messina thirteen forty seven. I would like to play that. Haven't played it in a little while on the table anyway, and I think it would be a good one to try to get to the table at toggle this month. So that's going to be mRNA thirteen forty seven. And then for the fourth game on my top of the stack, let's pick something old that has been on my shelf of opportunity for a while and just hasn't made it to the table. Why don't we put it back there? I keep putting it there. I keep hoping it'll make it. It hasn't yet, but any day it might. Let's do to Ken. Who? Obelisk of the sun. There we go. So we've got Messina, thirteen forty seven. New

obelisk of the sun. Night at the zoo. And the Wandering towers are my four games that I'm going to try to play in August.

Well, that's about it for me today. I would love to hear from you, dear listener, what games you played in July. What games did you get to the table? What games were you really excited about? What games disappointed you? Did you go to GenCon and if so, did you see me? I didn't, I don't recall any listeners saying, hey, I listened to the podcast, but you maybe saw me from afar and you're too starstruck. Perhaps that's it. What does your summer gaming look like? What is your August gaming look like? All of these questions and more you can answer for me and the other members of the Pick Up and Deliver community. Chris me, I don't. Do we have a nickname for you listeners? I think the pinkies doesn't sound good. Deliverers doesn't sound great. Puedes doesn't sound good. That's the abbreviation. Pick up and deliver. HMM. Think about it. Let me know. Over on the guild where I'm encouraging everyone to go to talk about your July gameplay.

So head over to BoardGameGeek Guild dot three, BoardGameGeek Guild three two six nine, which you can find by googling that phrase or googling pick up and Delivery Guild or going to Rattlebox games dot com and looking at the show notes for this episode where you'll find a link, actually, a show notes for literally any episode would take you to our guild. This is a good opportunity to remind you of why I like to do this podcast, because I like to talk with you. I like to talk with you, dear listener, and with all the listeners. So the only way I can do that is if you reach out to me. I mean, I'm doing it one way right now. You and I have a parasocial relationship, and if you haven't reached out to me, that parasocial parasocial is one way. Let's make it two way. Head over to BoardGameGeek Guild three, two, six, nine and post in the comments there. You can send me a message. Brendan at rattlebox games dot com is my email address. You can send me a message on BoardGameGeek. Wombat nine two nine is my username there. You can join me on board Game Arena for some asynchronous digital board game fun.

My username there is also wombat nine two nine, and I'd love to play some games with you there. Well, that's just about it for me today. I hope that the rest of your day is pleasant. I want to say thank you for taking a walk with me, and I hope your next walk is as pleasant as mine was. Bye bye. All right. If you talk to me now, you're on my podcast. Just kidding. I'm editing all this out. Sure you don't want to say anything to my listeners? Hi, listeners. Hi, listeners. I'm gonna put that in a blooper at the end. It's gonna go beep and I'll say, sure, you want to say something, you'll be like, hi, listeners.

[exit music]

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