

FOUNDING FATHERS Frequently Asked Questions

March 18, 2026 – Elbridge Gerry

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Setting Up the Game

Q. Where is the **Tension Track "0"** box? The Peace box.

The Issues

Q. Does a new President get to **see all 4 Issues at once** or only one at a time? One at a time

Q. When the President **delegates an Issue to the Vice President**, does the President also receive any resulting Popularity gains or losses? Yes (the buck stops at his desk)

Q. What **powers does a Vice President have when handling an issue**? The Vice President player can talk to the other players and decide how the administration will respond to the Issue, for example, which resolution option and whether to ignore it. They can also appoint up to two Offices and handle any Initiatives that the Issue may require.

Q. If the Requirements for a revealed Issue are not met and it has a **Hand of Time** icon, is the Hand of Time event triggered? Yes

Q. What if the President is **unable to convince anyone to accept a particular Office**, perhaps because of a **difficult to resolve Issue**? In this situation only, the President has two possibilities: (a) choose the Ignored option, or assign the Office to a Statesman in his own faction (even if the Statesman is of the wrong party and/or already has an Office, in violation of the usual rules if necessary).

Q. What if there are **two responsible Officers** for an Issue and one wants to solve it, but the other does not? May the first add Influence to make up the difference and solve it anyway? No, both Officers must agree to solve it

Q. What if there are **insufficient Statesmen** to assign all the offices? In that case each Statesmen other than the President is eligible to hold two offices. Once each has two, if there are still vacant offices, each may have three, and so on.

Q. In the scenarios some Statesman begin with **Popularity at the side of the card**. If such a Statesman later loses Popularity, can these starting Popularity cubes be the ones removed? Yes

Q. What if **Popularity would go below the starting amount**? Indicate using the black Unpopularity cubes.

Q. Can the President appoint one Statesman **General** and then give this Office to another Statesman in the same term? No, the President only appoints a General once per term, except when the Office is vacated during the term.

Q. If the President changes the **General** because he is not of the same party, must the new choice be of the President's party? Yes.

Q. When awarding/deducting Popularity for handing an Issue, what is the **order of results**? Does this part happen first and the rest of the instructions later or does everything happen simultaneously? Apply results sequentially, first addition/subtraction of any Popularity, then the rest of the instructions on the card.

Q. Does **repeal of a Tariff** reverse its effect on Revenue as with other taxes? Yes

Q. Does **passing an Emergency Bonds** trigger a roll on The Outrage Table or worsen it for other taxes? No

Q. Can you pass **both Emergency Bonds** on the same turn? Yes

Q. If **both Emergency Bonds** are passed, what is the modification to crisis rolls? -2

Q. Can one play **Expose a Spy** on one's own Statesman to remove an Officer and thereby avoid Popularity losses from an issue? You can play the card on yourself, but only if you have a second Statesman who also holds a Partisan Office. Note that once a Statesman has spent Influence on behalf of an Issue, or if no Influence was required, once the Congressional vote has started, he is the responsible Officer and takes any Popularity gains or losses from that Issue, not his replacement.

Q. If we resolve the End Slavery Issue, does this mean that resolution of the Extension of Slavery Issue is no longer a prerequisite for the **Maine** and **Missouri** State Admission Issues, and also that the Slaves Tax is removed from play? Yes

Q. Can I play Coalition Building to add to my votes on an Issue after I have already voted on it? You can play the card, but as you have already voted it does not count for the vote on that Issue. It applies to subsequent votes in that turn.

The Election

Q. What if **Andrew Jackson or William Henry Harrison** runs for election before his state (Tennessee, Ohio) has been admitted? Treat the Carolinas as the home state for Jackson, Virginia for Harrison.

Q. What if a party does not have **enough Statesmen to run a team for the election**? Treat the election as if Single Party Dominance were in effect, for the other party.

Q. What if **both parties lack sufficient Statesmen** to run for the election? The game ends at the start of The Election. Score points as if the game had ended in Civil War.

Q. In a **Single Party Dominance** election, in what order do Presidential candidates choose their Vice Presidential nominees? In reverse Popularity order, that is, lowest Popularity first (resolving ties by Age as usual).

Q. In a **Single Party Dominance** election the four candidates of the party having the most Popularity are all eligible to run. But what if one of these is the sitting President, who is not party leader and therefore not normally eligible to run? Such a President can run so long as they are one of the four most Popular.

Q. In a **Single Party Dominance before the 12th Amendment** election, what if a Vice Presidential candidate cannot place their initial cube because there is no vacancy? They place in their running mate's state if there is a vacancy there, adjacent to that state if there is not.

Q. What are the options for a **candidate from a disconnected area**, such as John C. Frémont in California, when there are no more vacancies in his starting region? He may place in any vacant state in any other region, including the original one. From there he must continue placing only in adjacent states in that region until blocked, at which point he may only place if there is a third disconnected area having a vacancy.

Q. For the **Free Soil Party** card, can you give more detail about how to resolve the Carolinas vote? The card is representing the fact that in 1848 North Carolina voted one way and South Carolina the other. Thus, after the 12th Amendment half the Carolinas votes go to the other side. Before the 12th Amendment or in the case of Single Party Dominance, choose candidates other than those present to receive half the votes.

Q. If a **candidate loses their only cube** due to an Action card such as Liberty Party, can they still participate in the Election? Yes, they can still expand out from their starting state (if a slot is available).

Q. When the **Chief Justice decides an election**, who is eligible? Only the candidates tied for the most states.

The People

Q. Is a **change to party leader immediate** or only possible in The People phase? Immediate. When resolving an Issue, award (or deduct) Popularity first and then apply the rest of the Issue instructions.

Q. Is it permitted to **show other players your held Action cards**? Yes

Q. What happens to the **Theory of Judicial Review** card after it is played? Recommend you store it with the Resolved Issues.

Q. For purposes of the **Duel** card, when is a player's turn? The player's Round during The People Phase

Q. When in the **Duel** Statesmen are removed from the game do both score their Popularity cubes in the normal way? Yes

Q. What happens if Lewis Cass or Hannibal Hamlin are drawn, but because of Issue results their **states can never come into the Union**? Remove the Statesman from play and draw a replacement.

Q. The Action Cards **Theory of Nullification Applied**, **Hartford Convention** and **Secession** have two options for play. Must the requirements to play each of these cards be satisfied to play either option or just the first one? Just the first one.

Q. What if the **Public Support marker** would go beyond the end of the track? It never goes beyond the end.

Q. If a **Newspaper cube reaches the right edge** of the bottom track, does it move up automatically during the next Publish Newspapers step or only if the Party Leader (Postmaster) chooses to move it? Automatically.

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Delete the phrase "unless Public Support is at 0, in which case he places first". Gerry does not place last overall, but last in his category. That is, if running as President, he would place before his Vice President.

Victory Conditions

Q. What if the game ends in a **tie**? For a longish game like this, a shared victory is the best way to characterize such a result. But if you really need a winner, for example in a tournament situation, apply the following priorities to the tied players: (1) most combined Ability on Statesmen; (2) youngest average age; (3) youngest individual Statesman in play.

Offices & Statesmen Expansion

Q. In **High Tension Election**, what is the order of declarations for the two optional presidential candidates? If anyone cares about the order, start with the party that does not have Public Support. If this doesn't determine an order, choose in reverse age order (that is, youngest Statesman first).

Q. In **High Tension Election**, can you say more about the cube placement order? Yes, place in order of most Popularity to least Popularity, but first all the candidates for President, then the candidates for Vice President.

Q. In the **Solitaire Variant**, when not President and the responsible officer has more than one option for an Issue, such as "Napoleon Seeks Help", which does the Opponent choose? The one that maximizes its Public Support gains, failing that, its IP gains and then the earlier option. If resolution requires multiple

officers and some are with the player and some with the Opponent, the Opponent only resolves its preferred option; if the player does not comply, the Opponent fails the Issue instead.

Q. In Solo/Two-player games, how does one assign a **new Office when it arrives at a different time?**. When a new Office, for example, Secretary of the Navy, appears in the middle of a turn, the player who has the fewer Offices other than Presidency and Vice President has first right to draft it, unless the player has no eligible politician without an Office and the other player has, in which case this player takes the Office. Break ties in favor of the player having more Votes,; if still tied, in favor of the President payer. Choose a replacement Office holder in the same way if one dies.

Q. **What if there are insufficient available Statesmen having Military Ability to appoint a Secretary of the Navy?** If other appointees could have taken the Office, they take it instead. Failing that, give priority to those having Military Ability. If this does not yield any candidates, open the Office to all Statesman, including those without Military Ability and treat them as having one less Ability for purposes of the Office.

Ladies & Orators Expansion

- **Rings.** When a Statesman becomes President, remove any rings. A presidential candidate takes a ring if they fail to become President, even if they become Vice President. A ring does not inhibit a Statesman from becoming president via succession.
- You cannot play a **Spouse** card to a female character.
- A Statesman who is **Tried for Sedition** loses any Office held. The President should appoint a replacement.
- If the sitting **President is not party leader**, but the leader cannot run, or declines to run, and the President has the second most popularity, the president can nevertheless run.
- When a player has a **Spouse** card in play and the corresponding character appears, do not put it into play, but into the player's hand. (If her State is not in the Union it would not be immediately playable.)
- When a female character dies, remove any corresponding **Spouse** card from play. If the Spouse card was in a player's hand, they immediately draw a replacement Action card.

Civil War & the Gilded Age expansion

The Issues

- Timing of conversion to the expansion board and rules. Convert to the sequel game when you have revealed the first Era D Issue, following the rule that the highest lettered card you've seen defines the current Era.
- If in replacing Statesmen during the outbreak of the Civil War you run out of replacements, shuffle up the next Generation deck and draw them from there.
- If using house tokens in the base game and you enter Era D from Era B, add 2 house tokens at that time.
- After the first Era D Issue appears, if an Issue does not meet its requirements and it has a **Hand of Time** icon, do not trigger the Hand of Time event.
- **Parties of the Era I Statesmen:** If Civil War breaks out, John Quincy Adams and William Henry Harrison join the Republicans; Andrew Jackson and William H. Crawford the Democrats.
- If the Civil War breaks out, do not remove **Jessie Benton** from play.

Individual Issues

- On the **New Mexico State Admission** card add: **Required: Mexican-American War resolved**
- Does resolving the **War for Louisiana** imply "Louisiana Purchase complete"? Yes.
- If the **Buy Western Lands** Issue appears during the Civil War and Texas is part of the union, the Issue's requirements are not met. If Texas is not part of the union, the Issue's requirements are met.
- **Initiating Civil War, Lee Defiant** Issues: "Set Tension to 4" should read "Set Tension to 3".

- If the President becomes ill, do they stay in the game until the retirement phase? Yes.
- Some early copies of the **A War to End All Wars** card contain the word “Construction”. This should be “Conscription”.
- **Underground Railroad.** If the Civil War starts again, execute again all the steps described in **Civil War Begins**.
- With **Variable Outcome** cards, IP expenditure to increase Ability beyond the necessary minimum occurs after agreement to resolve the Issue and after any required approval by Congress.
- With the **Congressional Filibuster** card, any IP used to buy votes does not increase the total needed to obtain a majority.

The Election

- **Party Leader and the Two-Time Loser rule.** When using the Two-Time Loser rule in Era D and later, if a Party Leader has no party rivals within 2 Popularity they are the nominee, unless they have 2 black rings (exception: if they use Third Time's a Charm they are the nominee) or have 1 ring and choose not to run or they are prevented from running on their card (for example, Schurz). If they are not running, exclude them for purposes of determining the candidate. They are not in the smoke-filled room and do not use their Popularity in determining who is. Treat the one with the most Popularity who could run as the Party Leader for Election purposes only. Anyone who has a ring can refuse to run, not just the Party Leader. However, if every possible candidate for the party has a ring and none want to run, the most popular of them must run (if tied, the oldest tied one runs).
- **Relinquishing the Smoke-filled Room.** Before convening the smoke-filled room, a player can announce that their candidate who has at least one ring will not attend it and have no power in the choice of the nominee. Statesmen who could be in the room decide whether to attend or not in Popularity order (if tied, the older decides earlier). The first Statesman who will attend becomes a temporary virtual party leader and their Popularity determines who else could be in the room (that is, those who have up to two Popularity less than them). If no one eligible wants to be in the room, consider the most popular Statesman who has not yet refused as the temporary virtual party leader (breaking ties as above). If everyone but the last refuses, the last is in the room automatically and must decide the nominee. The smoke-filled room cannot name as the candidate anyone who has refused to attend the room.
- **Smoke-filled Rooms examples:** The examples show the way a “dark horse” candidate can become the nominee. The Garfield candidate is initially out of consideration because his Popularity is too low, but the rule should state that this is temporary. He comes back into consideration after all the leading candidates tie and thus cancel one another out.
- **Automatic nominees.** A sitting President is the nominee if elected to the presidency, but not if reaching the office via succession.
- **High Tension Election.** An election held when Tension is at Civil War is a High Tension Election.
- If the **President dies** and is succeeded by a member of the other party, reset the Election Table.
- If **Civil War** begins in the midst of a base game election, continue resolving the election under the base game rules and only transition to the expansion rules after the election is complete.
- You can play the **Bull Moose Party** card only on behalf of your own politician.
- An ex-president using the **Take World Tour** Action card can only sit out one term and then must run – they cannot defer it until later. They also cannot refuse to run except to agree in the Smoke-filled Room to support a different candidate.

Scenarios

- **Scenario F:** George B. McClellan (III) is available for this scenario.

ADVICE

Running out of **small Popularity cubes.**

This probably means that a lot of Statesmen are holding exactly four Popularity. If this is the case, another way to represent four small white cubes is to take one large white cube (worth 5) and one black cube (worth -1). This should free up a supply of smaller cubes.

Handling the **Action card drafting order.**

With five or six players it can be difficult to remember the order, so each player should add their victory points to the popularity cube total on their Statesmen. Then record this amount by placing one of their disks to the side of the number on the Victory Points track (on the side to avoid confusing it with the Victory Points disk). These disks now give the drafting order, from lowest to highest. In the case of ties, break by examining the Votes in Congress track and stack the disks so that the player choosing earlier is on top. Take back the disks after card drafting is complete to avoid confusing them with the Victory Points disks.

Convenient way to **tabulate the Electoral Vote.**

As each side's votes are counted, use its cubes to temporarily record its vote total on the Revenue track.

CORRECTIONS (only needed if game purchased before 1/25/15 and not using the upgrade kit)

- The responsible Officer for **state admissions** is now the Secretary of State rather than the President.
- In **Scenario C**, change all mentions of William H. Crawford to William Seward. Crawford is not available for this scenario.
- The **Alabama** state admission Issue requires the Indian Removal Act.
- The **Minnesota** and **Wisconsin** state admission Issues **do not** require the Indian Removal Act.
- The **Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin** and **Minnesota** state Admission Issues require "NW Indian War resolved".
- The Requirement portion of the **Financial Panic** Issue should read "Required: National Bank inactive and Specie Circular".
- Add to the "Failed/Ignored" portion of the **Create National Bank** and **De-funding Bank of the USA** issues the instruction "Place in next deck."

Upgrade kit link: <https://www.thegamecrafter.com/games/founding-fathers-upgrade-kit>