ILLNIOIS CENTRAL GULF RR

Operator's Primer

Background

The Illinois Central Railroad chartered in 1851, was the first land grant railroad in the U.S. The I.C. merged with the Gulf Mobile & Ohio Railroad in 1972 becoming Illinois Central Gulf. The core "spine" of the railroad ran north to south from Chicago to New Orleans. After being spun off by its parent company, the ICG became the Illinois Central again in 1988.

My model railroad depiction of the ICG focuses on traffic from Chicago to Gilman, Il in the "late 70's". Some liberties have been taken in terms of geography and other details with the focus being on an enjoyable operations oriented layout vs. prototype fidelity. One example is that there were 6 main line tracks in most of the Chicago Division, Richton District in this era while I model just two.

Trains & Crews

Modeled trains are largely based on prototype trains, with some adjustments and liberties taken. These trains fall into one of five categories:

Manifest Freight – Mixed freight trains that primarily originate from Chicago (either North Staging or Markham Yard) and terminate at points south such as St. Louis, New Orleans, Paducah (depicted by South Staging) and vice versa. These trains typically pickup and drop off cars at yards and towns along their route.

Locals and Turns – switch jobs that work local industries. There are some 'local switcher' type jobs in addition to more typical Turns.

Transfers – mixed freight trains which depict interchange traffic that came into Markham Yard from various Chicago railroads. Modeled trains primarily shuffle cars from North Staging and Markham Yard.

Unit Trains – coal and TOFC trains that traverse the layout from end to end but do no work.

Passenger Trains – Amtrak trains that originate and terminate in staging with stops as scheduled

A typical op session will have 5 manifest freight trains, 10 locals/turns, 4 transfers, 2 unit trains, and 1 passenger train.

Trains during an op session typically follow a sequence as opposed to a set schedule.

Besides crews to man the scheduled trains, Kankakee Yard will have a dedicated yard master, and Markham Yard will have at least one Yardmaster, preferably two, and there will be a Dispatcher to manage traffic and assignments.

Digitrax DCC / WiThrottle

The layout is controlled via Digitrax DCC with Wireless (simplex and duplex) available. Most of my throttles are UT4R's / simplex.

Most locos are programmed with 4 digit addresses. If a locomotive number has three digits, the DCC address will typically add a 0 to the end. E.g. loco 533 address will be 5330.

To acquire consisted locos you must select the 'Top' loco. (If you acquire a loco in a consist and it does not respond, try the other loco #.)

Remember – you must be plugged into a panel to acquire a loco when using a UT4r.

WiFi is enabled for WiThrottle use on smart phones.

If you are unfamiliar with the Digitrax throttles there are small cheat sheets around the layout.

Basic Instructions for Acquiring a loco or consist:

1. Dial the 4 digit loco or consist address using the dials

- for a consist, the address will be the lead loco

- for a 3 digit loco number, use '0' for the fourth digit

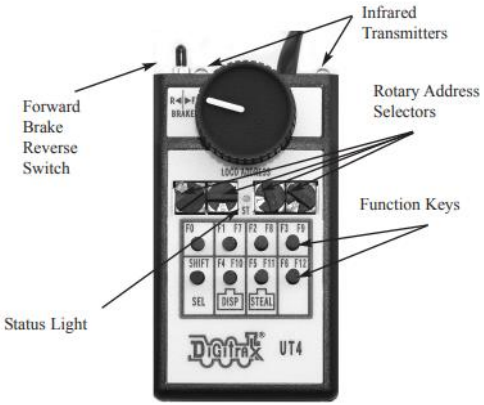
2. Plug the UT4 into a LocoNet port & Auto selection occurs

3. A Green light confirms selection

4. A Red light means the loco is already selected by another throttle (see Stealing on the cheat sheet).

When you are done running a train:

- Turn off any lights.
- Turn off sound (if applicable); use function key 8.
- Dispatch the loco off of your throttle; there are two ways to do this:
    - Dial 0000 on the address dials, then plug the throttle in to a Loconet port, or:
    - Hold down the DSP key while you plug the throttle in to a Loconet port



Communications

Communications with the Dispatcher will be via wireless phone. Instructions on how to use those phones will be provided prior to the op session.

Train Manifest / Switch List

Each train will have a Manifest (switch list) that gives instructions for the crew. The Manifest will indicate what cars are in the train, and work to be done along the way. Setouts indicated by 'SO' and pick-ups indicated by 'PU'.

Dispatching

The prototype mainline in this era operated primarily under CTC and ABS. Signals are implemented on part of the layout.

While crews can use the signals to indicated authority in CTC territory, crews are still expected to contact Dispatch requesting authority to occupy a given block as well as to notify Dispatch of train progress. Dispatcher will verbally authorize occupancy for specified block(s) to the crew, and where applicable provide signal indication.

Track 1 is considered Northbound Main; Track 2 is considered Southbound Main (right hand running). Dispatch will grant authority to run left hand when needed.

Mainline Crossovers (Control Points)

Crews should not throw any mainline crossover turnouts unless given explicit permission by Dispatcher. There are three manual crossovers in ABS territory (Lawndale, Harvey, and Olympia). If Dispatch gives autority to cross over mains at one of these locations, Crews must manually throw turnouts and set them back to normal when move is complete.

Gen'l Operating Guidelines

Cabooses

All trains should have a caboose or lighted EOT device per manifest. If neither are available, trains must have end of train flag.

Turnouts

Crews must set all manual turnouts back to 'Normal' / 'Closed' once through or clear of a crossing/turnout.

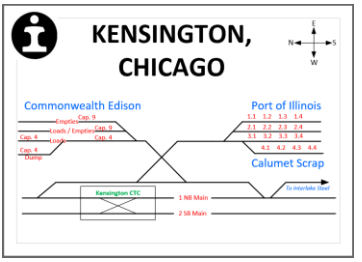
Dispatch will line up turnouts in and out of Staging.

Elements on Facia

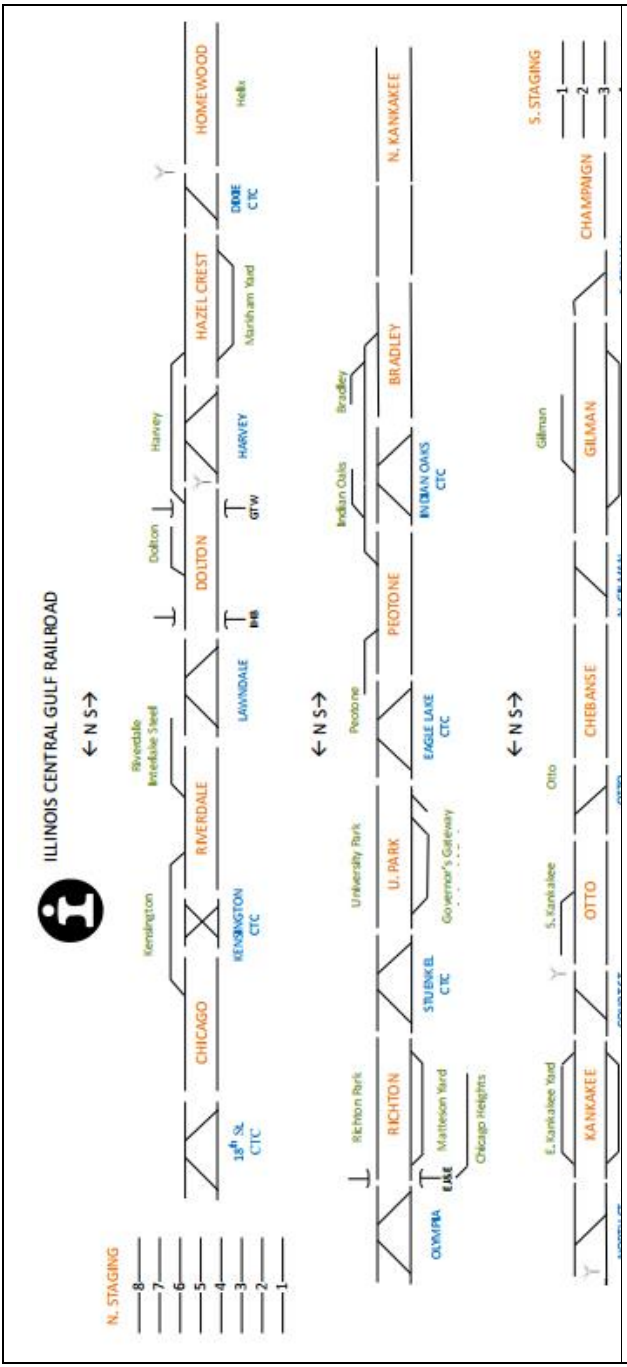
Dispatch will refer to block and crossover names when providing authority. Names are on the facia.

Block boundary names are in **Orange**.
ABS / manual crossover names are in **Blue**.
CTC Control Points will have a local panel on the facia.

Each switching area will have a diagram on the facia identifying all industries and car spots.



Layout Line Diagram



BLOCKS are in Orange
CROSSOVERS are in Blue
INDUSTRIAL/SWITCHING areas in Green

ICG System Map 1978