REVERSE RUNNING

commentary

LANCE MINDHEIM

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This piece was just too good to pass up as a Reverse Running, so we're breaking tradition to present this special ***two spread*** Reverse Running by Lance Mindheim. *–The MRH Staff*

THE CASE FOR ONLY ONE PENINSULA

THE VAST MAJORITY OF A RAILROAD'S RIGHT OF WAY is linear. Capturing that look in our limited space is a challenge, to say the least!

The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Of more importance, from a railroad's point of view, it's generally the cheapest. As modelers, we have a disconnect between how the real world looks and the harsh reality that our railroads are located in rooms that dictate all too frequently we hit the proverbial wall and must make a turn.

STEPPING OUTSIDE THE BOX WITH A CONTRARY VIEW

We can't eliminate the problem, but there are design approaches that address the challenge more effectively than others.

The benchwork footprint, and its overlaid mainline route, is one of the most important design decisions. That being the case, I want to delve a little deeper into different benchwork footprint options.

The more a design footprint maximizes linear runs and minimizes curves, the more it lends itself to inserting the features we desire the most, such as yards, sidings, towns, and long bridges.

Long, straight runs are prime. The more the better. The longer the better. Ninety or 180 degree curves are very limiting. The fewer the better.

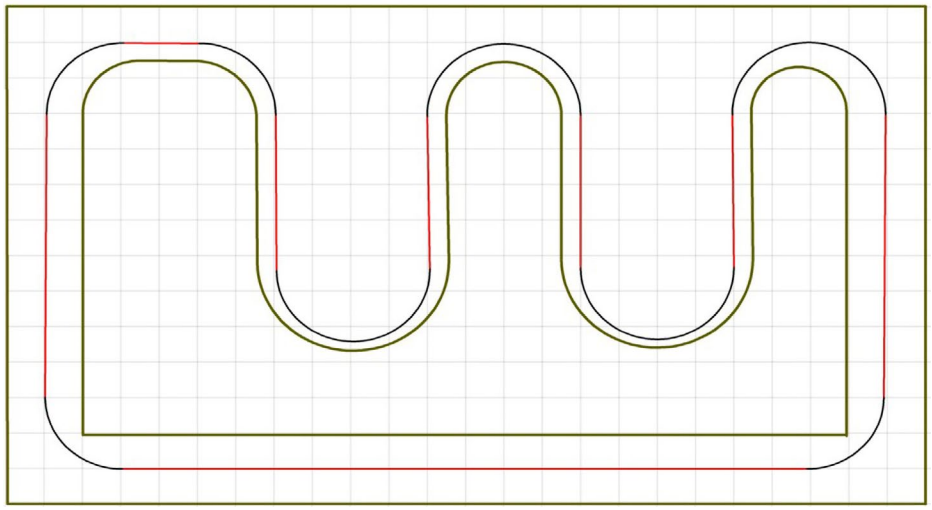
Many years ago Einstein (or maybe it was the Batavia club in Illinois. I can't remember) determined that the most efficient use of a given space is an around the walls design with only ONE serpentine peninsula. Not three, not two, *just one.*

For our purposes, we'll define efficiency as a design that not only creates the longest main line run, but the run with most straight sections. This assumes a plan where the main only passes through a scene once.

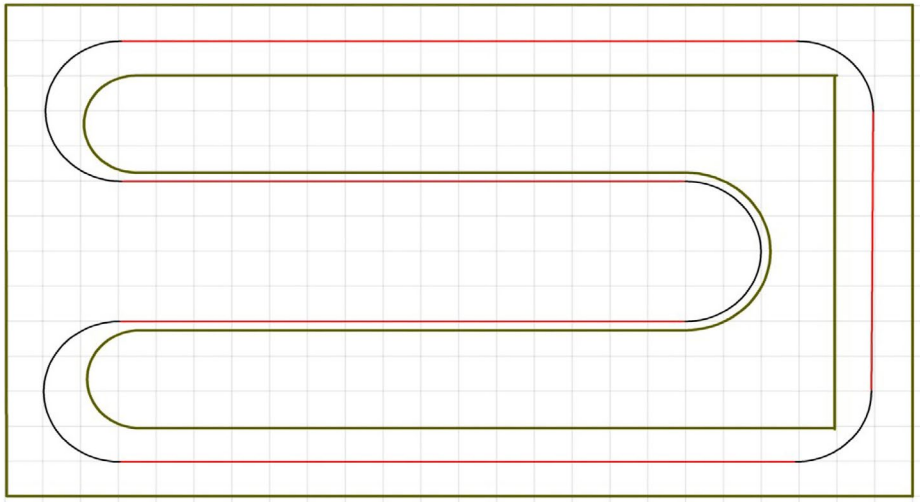
If you take the same space, and go to a format with multiple peninsulas, the quantity and quality of your straight sections drops precipitously because so much of the run is spent getting into and out of curves.

Let's take a look at an example to see why things shake out this way. For illustration purposes, let's assume a room 24 feet long by 14 feet wide.

Shown on the next page is an approach that shows multiple peninsulas. Linear track is shown in red, curves in black.



By contrast, below is a second diagram showing the footprint where only ONE serpentine peninsula was used. Note the much longer linear runs that we so desperately need.



The next table shows how the numbers work out. Note that in addition to having a 10 percent longer main line run, the one peninsula plan has a whopping 50 percent more linear track.

	Total Run Length (feet)	Amount of Linear Track	Amount of Track on Curves
One Peninsula Layout	99	**74**	25
Multiple Peninsula Layout	91	**53**	38

That's only part of the story though.

Breakdown of Linear Track Segments

(Number of linear segments and their respective lengths in feet)

	Single Peninsula	Multiple Peninsulas
	18 ft.	18 ft.
	18 ft.	8 ft.
	15 ft.	8 ft.
	15 ft.	4.5 ft.
	8 ft.	4.5 ft.
		4.5 ft.
		4.5 ft.
		2 ft.
Total	**74** ft.	**54** ft.

It's not just that the single peninsula has a longer linear run. The quality of those runs is higher. Looking at the multiple peninsula plan, although it has 54 feet of linear run, that's misleading because the number is comprised of a lot of short runs. Of the 54 feet, 20 of that is made up of less than useful stretches of less than five feet. In comparison, the single peninsula plan is comprised of a high percentage of relatively long linear runs.

Wrapping things up, modeling the most common rail scenes is much easier the more long, linear runs of track we have. The around the walls with ONE center peninsula configuration provides that in heavier doses than other options. ☑

Originally from Lance's Blog at: shelflayouts.com/2016/09/the-case-for-only-one-peninsula