

Intro to HF Contesting

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Contests

The Marmite of Amateur Radio

Why Contest?

- 1) Self Training in Radio Communication
- 2) Learn about Propagation
- 3) See how you and your station performs vs others
- 4) Opportunity to have contacts with countries that are rarely On-Air
- 5) IT IS FUN! 😊

What Type of Contest?

- Single Band Contests - eg RSGB 160m or 80m Contests
- Multi - Band Contests - RSGB Low Power or AFS series
- All Band Contests – 160m to 10m (excluding WARC and 60m bands!) eg CQWW, ARRL DX Contest etc.
- Single Mode Contests – CW, Phone (usually SSB), RTTY, Data modes such as FT4, FT8, PSK, SSTV
- Mixed Mode Contests – Usually Phone/CW, PSK31/63 or FT4/FT8

What Type of Exchange?

- Fixed Exchange – CQ zone (CQWW) ITU Zone (IARU)
AGE (JADX – All Asian DX) or Year Licenced
Locator 4/6 Digit (UK/EI contests & Stew Perry)
State(USA&Canada) vs Power (Rest of World)
- Serial Number – Both send Serial Number (many contests)
- Serial Number – One sends Serial other sends Serial plus extra data
eg IOTA where Island Stations send serial plus IOTA reference (EU005 for UK
Mainland)
- Unusual Contests such as Worked All Europe
Both Stations exchange serials and then non-EU station can send data of 10
previous contacts if required!

Scoring

- QSO Scores
- Fixed points per QSO
- Incentivised Points per QSO
 - eg 1 pt Own Country
 - 3 pts Own Continent
 - 10 pts Other Continent
- Bonus Points for first X contacts with Country/Region
- Bonus Points for QSO distance (eg Stew Perry)

Scoring

- MULTIPLIERS
- DXCC Countries
- DXCC Countries and CQ Zones
- DXCC Countries and Sponsor Country Regions
- IOTA Islands
- Callsign Prefixes
- Locator Squares (4 digit)

The above can be once per band or just once per contest

Power Categories

- QRP - almost always 5 Watts Output (some exceptions)
- LOW Power – Less than 100 Watts Output
- HIGH Power – Usually Max Power in your Country
Often Limited to 1500 Watts Maximum

- Some Countries count Power at Antenna, others at Radio.
- LOW and QRP are usually defined as power at the radio!

Operator Categories

- Single Operator (can be Unassisted or Assisted)
 - Single Band (160, 80, 40, 20, 15 10)
 - All Band
- Multi-Operator
 - Multi Single One Transmitter, many operators
 - Multi Two Two Transmitters, many operators
 - Multi Multi Many Transmitters and Operators usually one station per band

Selecting your Category

- Pick a power level, mode of operation and bands that suit you best.
- Often in your first contest go for something simple, for example single band phone in a short contest such as some of the RSGB evening contests.
- Mixed Mode contests can be fun and often the mode experts stay with their preferred mode (It means I can occasionally be first G!)

Selecting your Category

- Try to start with a simple contest such as a Fixed Exchange where you send the same thing to everyone and what you receive is simple and often predictable (eg zone)
- Enter a short contest or a shorter time in a longer contest
Many RSGB contests have 12 hour operation in 24 options

CQWW and CQWPX contests have CLASSIC options where only 24 hours max is allowed in the 48 hour contest

- Try to pick a band or bands that suit your preferred operating periods eg LF (160,80,40) mainly night-time, HF (20,15,10) mainly daylight hours

Sample Contact

CQ Test G3XYZ

G4ABC

G4ABC 59(9) 132

59(9) 035 TU

TU QRZ G3XYZ

Useful Resources

FREE Contest Loggers

SD

ei5di.com

N1MM+

n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/downloads/n1mm-full-install/

DXLog

dxlog.net

CONTRIBUTION Required

Writelog writelog.com

Win-test www.win-test.com

Useful Resources

WA7BNM	Contest Calendar	contestcalendar.com
RSGB	Contests	rsgbcc.org
ARRL	Contests	contests.arrl.org
CQWW	Contests	cqww.com
CQWPX	Contests	cqwp.com