Nashville ARC June 2023



What Is This Thing Called Contesting? Why Would I Ever Want To Try It? Kirk Pickering K4RO

Why Operate Contests?



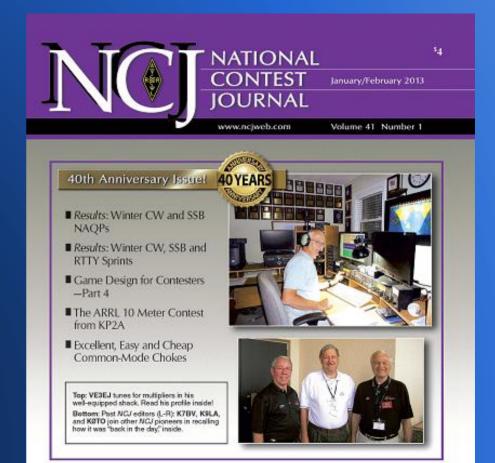
- Contesting is FUN
- "Can you hear me now? Yes I can!"
- Learn capabilities
- Operating awards DXCC, Triple Play, Worked All States



Why Operate Contests?



- Serious competition
- Multi operator teams
- Mobile operations
- Station construction
- No shortage of challenges



Learn by Operating



- There are really no "secrets" in contesting
- Knowledge is gained through experience
- There are no shortcuts to gaining experience; time in the operating chair is how to get it
- What were once baffling questions become second nature after time in the chair
- Main theme it's always you against the clock
- ALWAYS play by the rules no matter what

Search and Pounce



- Someone has to solicit by calling CQ Running
- Someone has to answer Search & Pounce
- Most operators begin with S&P
- INDENTIFYING CALL SIGNS #1 skill
- Identifying exchange information
- Random vs. edge-to-edge tuning
- Band mapping software tools

Search and Pounce



- Learn to identify stations quickly
- Distinguish between CQ'er and S&P'er
- Must concentrate on weak signals
- Listen to CN2R and K5ZD recordings
- No guessing!
- Penalties and error rates

Running Stations



- Why we must call CQ
- Getting up the nerve
- Study the masters
- Think LOUD
- Short gaps between
- Accuracy is #1!



Dealing with QRM



- The bands are very crowded these days
- Does might make right?
- It's also a LISTENING contest
- Know when to hold 'em
- Save your ears



The Contest Station



- The contest station is *never* completed
 ANTENNAS are #1
 Efficiency
- Flexibility
- Reliability
- Ergonomics



Staying on the air



- Contesting is a good reason to stay QRV
- Build stuff to last
- Weatherproofing
- Operator maintenance
- Synergy & motivation



Top Ten Rookie Mistakes



- Not Listening
- Sending extra stuff
- Not understanding the courtesy of rhythm
- Calling off frequency
- Not signing properly

- Information sent out of sequence
- Improper phonetics
- . Sending wrong call
- Handling repeats
- . Correcting call signs
- Poor audio

The Contest Meta View



- Moving beyond simply copying call signs
- Higher level view of the contest operation
- What is happening in the overall contest?
- Band conditions, and how they affect you
- Station monitoring
- The contest postmortem

Competition



- The joy of competition
- You've got to play to win
- Playing by the rules
- Winning really only matters to you - Few will remember
- Exceptional efforts are recognized by your peers



Gaining Perspective



- The Art of the Possible
- One BIG playing field
- Understanding geographic limitations
- Respecting your competition

- Discover strengths by operating
- Domestic vs. DX
- Strive for constant improvement
- Everyone is NOT cheating

Contesting Clubs



- There is a thriving contesting community
- Share our joy and struggles
- Club and Team competition



Contesting Community



- Contesting history
- Rules changes
- Current competitors and Silent Keys
- Archives resources
- Giving back to contesting



Thank You



Don't forget to have fun! K4TCG.ORG TNQP.ORG CWOPS.ORG

