

Tellico Lake ARC



Loudon, TN – October 7, 2020

Contesting 101

Maximize Your Scores And Your Fun

Juan Lopez – AC6ZM

Why Operate Contests?



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



Why Operate Contests?



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



K4RO & K0DXC @ K3LR

Why Operate Contests?



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

The image shows the cover of the National Contest Journal (NCJ) magazine. The title 'NCJ NATIONAL CONTEST JOURNAL' is prominently displayed at the top. Below the title, the issue information 'January/February 2013' and 'Volume 41 Number 1' is provided. A gold seal on the cover reads '40th Anniversary Issue!' and '40 YEARS'. The cover features two photographs: one of a man in a light blue shirt operating a radio station in a well-equipped shack, and another of three men standing together. A list of articles is provided on the left side of the cover.

4

January/February 2013

www.ncjweb.com Volume 41 Number 1

40th Anniversary Issue!

■ Results: Winter CW and SSB NAQPs

■ Results: Winter CW, SSB and RTTY Sprints

■ Game Design for Contesters —Part 4

■ The ARRL 10 Meter Contest from KP2A

■ Excellent, Easy and Cheap Common-Mode Chokes

Top: VE2EJ tunes for multipliers in his well-equipped shack. Read his profile inside!

Bottom: Past NCJ editors (l-r): K7DV, K9LA, and K8TO join other NCJ pioneers in recalling how it was "back in the day" inside.

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
- IDENTIFYING 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!



9A1AA at WRTC 2014

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
- 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 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



7/13/2014

Thank You



Try not to take it too seriously
Don't forget to have fun!
73, Juan AC6ZM