Amateur Radio Contesting & Radio Sport

Carl Davis, W8WZ

Agenda

What is Contesting?

Contesting Resources

Popular Contests

Contest Strategies & Goal Setting

Q&A

What is Contesting?

Contesting, also known as Radio Sport is a fun way to enjoy the Amateur Radio Hobby by competing against others (and yourself) to accomplish a shared objective (IE: make the most QSOs using common parameters).

From ARRL.ORG

The goal of Amateur Radio contesting is to contact as many stations as possible during the contest period.

Every contest has **Contest Rules**:

•Only certain bands may be used

•The contest only takes places between certain times and on certain dates. Some contests also require "off times" when you are required to take a break from operating.

•An exchange of information is necessary during each contact. You may be required to send and receive a serial number, location, name or even a person's age.

•Only certain operating configurations can be used. You may have to choose a "category" of operation such as a single operator using low power.

Some competitions, such as the ARRL Sweepstakes, draw large numbers of hams onto the airwaves. Other contests are smaller with only limited participation.
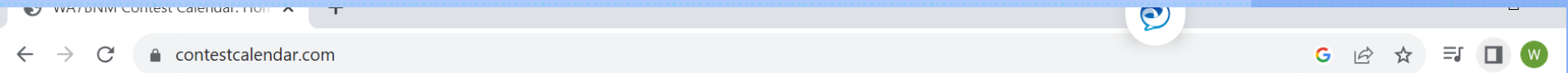
Contests take place on both the HF and VHF/UHF/microwave bands. On HF, contests take place on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10-meters. Contest sponsors have agreed to keep the 60, 30, 17 and 12-meter bands off limits from competitive events. There are also contests on the VHF, UHF and microwave bands.

Contesting Resources

1. Contest Calendar
2. Contest Journal
3. Contest University
4. YouTube
5. ARRL.ORG and QST
6. CW OPS
7. Contest Clubs (PVRC)

WA7BNM Contest Calendar

contestcalendar.com

Home

| Home | 8-Day | 5-Week | 12-Month | Perpetual | State QSO Parties | CW | QRP | Log Due Dates | Historical | Alphabetical | Customize | Cabrillo Names |

Welcome to the **WA7BNM Contest Calendar**. This site provides detailed information about amateur radio contests throughout the world, including their scheduled dates/times, rules summaries, log submission information and links to the official rules as published by the contest sponsors.

8-Day Calendar
Lists details for each contest during an 8-day period, starting with yesterday.

5-Week Calendar
Lists the names and dates for each contest for the current week (Monday thru Sunday) plus an additional four weeks. Weekly contests are listed in a separate section.

12-Month Calendar
Lists the names and dates for each contest for a 12-month period starting with the month immediately previous to the current month. Due to the difficulty obtaining accurate contest information, as much as 12 months in advance, not all contests may appear for later months.

Perpetual Calendar
Lists the names and dates for each contest during a selectable future calendar year that can be accurately predicted in advance.

State QSO Parties
Lists the names and dates for each contest focused on a single state or group of states in the current calendar year.

CW Calendar
Lists those contests from the 12-month calendar that specify use of the CW mode, entirely or as a separate class of operation.

QRP Calendar
Lists those contests from the 12-month calendar that specify a maximum power level of less than 10 watts (typically 5 watts), entirely or as a separate class of operation.

Powered by ICOM

contestcalendar.com/weeklycont.php

WA7BNM Contest Calendar

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8-Day Contest Calendar
August 6 - 13, 2023

| Home | 8-Day | 5-Week | 12-Month | Perpetual | State QSO Parties | CW | QRP | Log Due Dates | Historical | Alphabetical | Customize | Cabrillo Names |

Follow @wa7bnmcalendar

July 29 - August 5, 2023 | August 6 - 13, 2023 | August 14 - 21, 2023

	Aug 6 Sunday	Aug 7 Monday	Aug 8 Tuesday	Aug 9 Wednesday	Aug 10 Thursday	Aug 11 Friday	Aug 12 Saturday	Aug 13 Sunday
Batavia FT8 Contest								
HARC Anniversary QSO Party								
10-10 Int. Summer Contest, SSB								
North American QSO Party, CW								
ARRL 222 MHz and Up Distance Contest								
SARL HF Phone Contest								
K1USN Slow Speed Test								
ICWC Medium Speed Test								
OK1WC Memorial (MWC)								
ICWC Medium Speed Test								
ARS Spartan Sprint								
Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest								
ICWC Medium Speed Test								
ZL Sprint								
DARC FT4 Contest								
NAQCC CW Sprint								
Phone Weekly Test								
A1Club AWT								
CWops Test (CWT)								
VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest								
Mini-Test 40								
Mini-Test 80								
CWops Test (CWT)								

Type here to search

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6:44 PM
07-Aug-2023

NCJ National Contest Journal
Published by the ARRL for the Contesting Community

HOME | WELCOME | CONTACT | CONTESTS | BONUS CONTENT | CALENDAR | SUBSCRIBE | LINKS

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Welcome

National Contest Journal is published six times per year (Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep and Nov.) NCJ is dedicated to covering the competitive contesting aspects of amateur radio. Each issue is loaded with information of interest to contesters (and DXers, too!)

50 NATIONAL CONTEST JOURNAL July/August 2023
FIRST PUBLISHED 1973 www.ncjweb.com Volume 51 Number 4

Ping-Pong QSO Technique at TK0C, Contest Results

- California QSO Party from Trinity County
- Staying Ahead of Murphy on Contest Computers
- *NCJ Profiles:* John Huffman, K1ESE
- *Results:* NAQP RTTY, February 2023
- *Results:* CW Sprint, February 2023
- *Results:* RTTY Sprint, March 2023

Top: John Huffman, K1ESE, operates contests from his home station and remotely while sitting at his cloistered roll top desk in Waterford, Maine. [Courtesy of Charlotte Huffman]
Bottom: Vic Denisov, N6EMS, finished first in the New Contesters Category of the 2022 California QSO Party, operating expedition-style from Trinity County [Courtesy of Elena Samsonova, N6ESA]

CLICK FOR NAQP Rules Teams Logs Scores Records

CLICK FOR Rules

Contest University

Home   2023 Course Outline   2023 Professor Bios   Files   Videos   Contact Us

Reservations for rooms at the Hope Hotel will open July 18th, 2023 at 9:00 am eastern. Please note this date has changed from what the hotel had posted during checkout due to a scheduling conflict.

Do not call them before that time. You can get room reservations by phone only. If you try to book online, you will see that there are no rooms for those dates. Every room in the Hope Hotel has been blocked for Contesters and DXers for Hamvention week. Starting Tuesday, July 18th, 2023, at 9 AM EDT, you can call 937-879-2696 and ask for a reservation in the Contest University 2024 room block. There is no minimum night commitment. The room rate is $152 per night plus tax and that includes a hot buffet breakfast each day of your stay. The room rate is the same for a single queen, two queens or a single king with a pull out.

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday night, May 15, 2024 for the first night of the 2024 Contest Super Suite at the Hope Hotel.

https://www.hopehotel.com/

Contest University will be held on Thursday May 16, 2024, from 7:00am to 5:00pm, at the Hope Hotel in Dayton, Ohio. This is the day before the Dayton Hamvention officially opens. Don't miss this rare opportunity to gain knowledge that may take you years of practice, trial and error or lost time to learn otherwise. Get the edge to improve your scores and put your station in the winners circle today!

https://www.hopehotel.com

Premier Sponsors

Additional Sponsors

2023 Dayton Contest University "CTU" – COURSE OUTLINE – 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM

7:00 ALL ROOMS – Student Registration and Contest Buffet Breakfast – ALL – 60 minutes
8:00 ALL ROOMS – Welcome to CTU 2023 – K3LR, W8CI and N9JA – ALL – 10 minutes
8:10 ALL ROOMS – Radiosport – Read the Rules Follow the Rules & Have Fun – K1DG – ALL – 40 minutes

9:00 CONTEST TOPIC SESSION #1 – attend ONE of 4 sessions – 60 minutes

ROOM 1 – Basic Station Automation Techniques & Recommendations – N6TV
ROOM 2 – Optimizing Low Band Receiving Antenna Performance – W3LPL
ROOM 3 – Understanding Remote Contesting – W1VE
ROOM 4 – RTTY – FT4/FT8 Digital Contesting – W0YK

10:00 ALL – *CONTEST SNACK* – 15 minutes

10:15 CONTEST TOPIC SESSION #2 – attend ONE of 4 sessions – 60 minutes

ROOM 1 – Small Stations – Getting to the Next Level – N0AX
ROOM 2 – Competitive Transmitting Antennas for Solar Maximum – W3LPL
ROOM 3 – Year Long Contest! State QSO Party Challenge & CQ DX Marathon – K8ZT
ROOM 4 – How to Maximize Your Digital Contest Station & Operation – W0YK

11:20 CONTEST TOPIC SESSION #3 – attend ONE of 4 sessions – 55 minutes

ROOM 1 – How You Can Become Involved With Youth on the Air – DK6SP
ROOM 2 – How the Strongest Solar Maximum in 20 Years Affects Contest Planning and Execution – W3LPL
ROOM 3 – Simple & Effective Low Band Antennas for Contesting – W5ZN
ROOM 4 – QRP & Low Power Contesting – Tips & Strategies – K8ZT

12:15 ALL ROOMS – *CONTEST LUNCH* – ALL – 35 minutes

12:50 ALL ROOMS – 2023 Eye Ball Sprint Contest "LIVE" – ALL – 10 minutes – K1DG
1:00-1:35 ALL ROOMS – Contesting for Ionospheric Science During the 2023 & 2024 North American Solar Eclipse – W2NAF

*1:45 CONTEST TOPIC SESSION by REQUEST to RERUN – 50 minutes

ROOM 1 –   As determined by *vote 1
ROOM 2 –   As determined by *vote 2
ROOM 3 –   As determined by *vote 3
ROOM 4 –   As determined by *vote 4

Contest University

Hope Hotel
Thurs, May 16, 2024
Wright Patterson AFB, OH USA

Home	2023 Course Outline	2023 Professor Bios	Files	Videos	Contact Us

Contest University Videos

Click Here For Contest University Textbooks:

CTU 2023 Livestream:

Here is the YouTube link to all presentations: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dm3LtGdvbZg

CTU 2022 Livestream:

Here is the YouTube link to all presentations: https://youtu.be/drZCwoVzUqE

CTU 2021 via Zoom:

Here is the YouTube link to all presentations: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-esob7BPtc

Hamvention 2021 Forums:

Here is the YouTube link to all presentations: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZhL979mgas

Propagation Summit 2021:

Here is the YouTube link to all presentations (see below for individual presentations): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpBpU_dcMbc

11 AM – "Update on the Personal Space Weather Station Project & HamSCI activities for 2021" – Dr. Nathaniel Frissell, W2NAF
Noon – "Solar Cycle 25 Predictions & Progress" – Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA
1 PM – "Maximizing Performance of HF Antennas with Irregular Terrain" – Dr. James Breakall, WA3FET
2 PM – "HF Propagation: what to expect during the rising years of solar cycle 25" – Frank Donovan, W3LPL

CTU 2020 via Zoom:

Premier Sponsors

Additional Sponsors

The Following Slides are created by
Gary Schmidt W5ZL

Gale Zeiler WB0YEA

Susan King K5DU

**And the Central TX DX Contest Club and shared
with their permission**

Big Gun or Little Pistol

AB5K

WBøY

No matter the caliber, nothing compares to the thrill of tickling somebody's radio on the other side of the world!

Why enter a contest?

Types of Contesters – Who Does Ham Radio Contesting and Why

- ## The Casual Contester
  A desire to just have some fun, improve operating skills, and work new countries, states, counties, etc. from the

  smorgasbord of participating stations

- ## The Feisty Contester

  A desire to compete

Ken WM5R in action

- ## The Committed Contester

  Able to leap tall buildings with a single bound

  Able to master the art of sleep deprivation

Benefits of Contesting

- It's just FUN
  - Gets the competitive juices flowing
- Improves operating skills
  - Excellent preparation for emergency operations
- An excellent use of our allocated spectrum
  Remember: "Use it or lose it."

Do I Have to Have a "Contest Station"?

- Plenty of Big Gun contest stations
  - Multiple radios
  - Multiple towers
  - Serious station automation
- Also plenty of "normal" stations

You don't have to be a Big Gun to have Big Fun contesting!

How to Win a Contest

- Work a lot of stations
- Work as many "multipliers" as possible
- Work smart
  - Make good band change decisions
  - Use efficient operating techniques
    - Don't waste time or words (similar to emergency operations)
    - Know when to "Run" and when to "Search & Pounce"
    - Know when to take a break
    - Know when to change bands

Many different types – beginner to expert

- SSB, CW, RTTY

- DX

  ARRL, CQWW, IARU, WPX, foreign hosted, etc.

- National

  Field Day, Sweepstakes, NAQP, VHF/UHF, State QSO Parties, etc.

- Specialty

  Sprints, FOC Marathon, SOC, SKN, etc.

A Contest for All Seasons/Tastes

Beginner to Expert →

Jan

ARRL SKN

ARRL VHF

ARRL RTTY

ARRL DX

CQ WPX

Sprint

NAQP

ARRL Field Day

State QSO Parties (Many)

ARRL VHF

ARRL VHF

CQ WW DX

IARU HF World Championships

NAQP

Sprint

TQP

ARRL 160

ARRL Sweepstakes

Dec

Click on contest for more info

Some Contest Adjacent Operating Events:

-   POTA

-   SOTA

-   Museum Ships Weekend

-   13 Colonies on the Air

-   Lighthouses on the Air

-   These are not technically contests, but they share many traits with contests and use similar operating skills. They are a good way to start and fun.

Multiple categories

. . . designed to let you compete on a level playing field

- Single operator
  - Assisted/unassisted
- Power
  - QRP, low, high
- Single band and/or mode (some contests)
- Multi-op, single transmitter
- Multi-op, multi-transmitter

When are contests run?

- Usually on weekends
- Starting/ending times vary by contest
  - Durations as short as 1 hour
  - As long as 48 hours
  - Max operating hours also vary
- Good on-line contest calendar: www.hornucopia.com/contestc

Online Contesting Resources

- ARRL
  www.arrl.org
  - *ARRL Rate Sheet newsletter http://www.arrl.org/contests/rate-sheet/*
- Contesting.com
  www.contesting.com
- National Contest Journal
  www.ncjweb.com

Best contests to get your feet wet

- [Field Day](#)

- [Straight Key Night](#)

- SST, MST, CWT

- State QSO Parties

    - Many to choose from
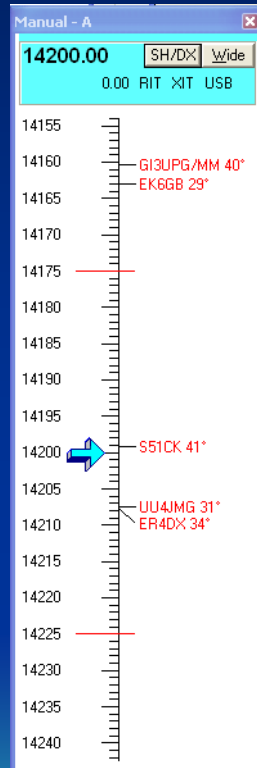
    - *Our own NCQP in FEB*

What's Req'd to Get Started?

- A radio and antennas

- A logging system
  - Pencil & paper
    - Tried and true, but hard to keep track of dupes
  - Computer based logging software
    - Many options from freeware to networked
      - DOS-based: TR Log ($60-75) www.trlog.com
      - Windows-based
        - N1MM (free) *www.n1mm.com*
        - Writelog (~$75) www.writelog.com
        - N3FJP ($39-49) www.n3fjp.com
    - Can even trigger pre-recorded voice, CW, or RTTY exchanges

Advanced Operation: Interfacing Your Radio

- Serial, USB and Parallel Options
- Why do it?
  - Logging automation: less work for you = higher QSO rates
    - Date/time
    - Freq/mode
    - Contest exchange
  - Integrated "point-and-shoot" DX cluster operation
  - Trigger transmitted exchanges

How do I report my results?

- Officially
  - Snail mail
  - Email
    - Cabrillo file generated by most computerized logging programs (may be req'd to be declared a winner)
- Unofficially
  - 3830
    - On the air
    - http://www.hornucopia.com/3830score/
  - At club meetings, on nets, at Hamfests

What Can I Win?

- Trophies, plaques, certificates
- Goodies
  - Example: WA State QSO Party "Salmon Run" category winners receive smoked salmon
  - NC and SC QP used to give BBQ to the winner
- QSOs toward non-contest awards
- *The awe and respect of your fellow competitors (aka "bragging rights")*

Next Big Contest:
NAQP SSB
1800 Z on 18 August to 0559 Z on 19 August

- ▪ *North American QSO Party SSB*

- North American QSO Party

- The North American QSO Parties are favorites of beginners and seasoned operators alike. The NAQPs are low-power only (no amplifiers allowed) which makes for a lot more breathing room on the bands. Small stations can generate very effective "runs" in the NAQP contests. Multipliers count once per-band, which makes for an exciting format, as multipliers can be "moved" from band to band. The NAQPs allow stations from all parts of North America to be in the running for the top spots. The 12 hour format allows participants to do some great contesting, yet still have time for other activities during the weekend. Participants can enter in the single op or multi-op categories

- Exchange is simply your first name and your state : Bob NC

Sample Exchange

RUNNING STATION IS N4TL – he stays on same Freq.
Search & Pounce Station 1 is W8WZ

Search & Pounce Station 2 is K4RGN
Search & Pounce Station 3 is N8ZU

N4TL :   CQ NAQP N4TL

W8WZ: W8WZ

N4TL: W8WZ TOM NC

W8WZ: CARL LA

N4TL: TU N4TL

K4RGN: K4RGN

N4TL: K4RGN TOM NC

K4RGN: CHUCK NC

N4TL: TU N4TL

N8ZU: N8ZU

File Edit View Tools Config Window Help

01:12:59Z

CW

Name

State

160

80

40

20

15

10

⬤ ⬤ ○ Run ⦿ S&P 24 ▲▼

F1 Qrl?	F2 Exch	F3 Tu	F4 W8WZ	F5 His Call	F6 Repeat
F7 Spare	F8 Agn?	F9 Nr?	F10 Call?	F11 Spare	F12 Wipe
Esc: Stop	Wipe	Log It	Edit	Mark	Store	Spot It	QRZ

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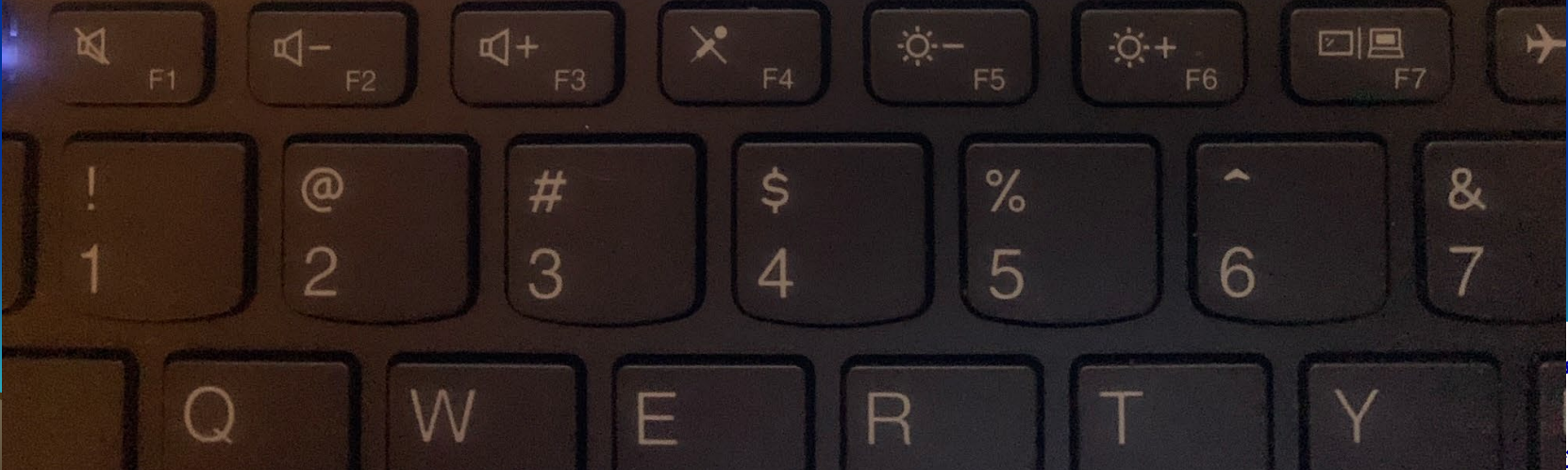Call history, 1 files, 15049 callsigns imported. Defrag done.   No Score   0

More Resources:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcwkt6qXS-Y

https://www.amazon.com/Amateur-Radio-Contesting-Beginners-ARRL/dp/1625951248

https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=x-Rbt7TJU6c

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contest_logging_software

http://www.n2rj.com/2018/08/contesting-and-dxing-no-shame-here.html

K3LR Contest Station