RTTY Contesting

Contesting—the very word conjures up thoughts of preparation. One spends hours, days, weeks—and sometimes months and years—preparing for a contest.

You might spend considerable time planning a DXpedition to coincide with



K7WM

a particular contest or purchasing, assembling and installing a new antenna. There are coax fittings to be soldered on and feedline runs to be made. Radios and amplifiers must be tested and computers and software checked for glitches. Time must be budgeted for checking all the DX Web sites to see who is going where and what strange call signs will be showing up. A final look at the propagation forecasts for the best paths and times to point all of those antennas in the proper directions—and the CONTEST begins.

That contest can last for 4, 8, 12, 24, 30, 36 or 48 hours, depending on the particular event and the class that you are entering in. And then it's all over...

The adrenaline flow slows down, rigor mortis sets in, your eyes become kind of vacant. If you are a single operator, you pat yourself on the back and sit wishing you had just one more radio/amp/tower/ antenna. If you are part of a multi team at a big multi station, everybody begins trying to figure out how the team did. Everyone pats everyone else on the back. At about this point in time, somebody brings up log submittal and who is going to do it.

Sooooo, it's not really over yet. Someone has got to do the logs and send them in. If you're a single op, pat yourself on the back *because you have been elected*. If you are part of a multi team, there may be room for negotiation.

There are a myriad of contests and numerous logging software programs that generate logs in various submittal formats. The various contests have different log submittal requirements. There are even some very popular contests that are *just now* starting to accept email log submissions.

Some of the more popular contests are in the process of switching over to the *Cabrillo* format. Most are in a "grace period" right now accepting plain ASCII text files and paper logs. Those grace periods will be ending very shortly and the contester will soon be faced with only being able to submit their log in *Cabrillo* format.

Foreseeing the problems, Bruce, WT4I, has written a program called *Cabrillo Converter*. It takes just about any ASCII text log in column format and converts it into *Cabrillo* format. The converter already covers most contests and more are being added. The program has been under beta testing for several months and is almost ready for release.

Bruce has written two other programs: CabrilloLogChecker and MasterCall. CabrilloLogChecker checks Cabrillo logs and automatically scores them. MasterCall generates and maintains a Master.cal file that the Cabrillo*LogChecker* uses to compare the log being checked against.

Using the *MasterCall* program, one can quickly load all call signs from the received logs into the program, filter the list of calls to include only those worked by multiple stations, and then create a new Master.cal file. This way a real time Master.cal file consisting of calls actually in the contest can be used to check logs instead of using a huge database of known operators to compare calls against.

CabrilloLogChecker and *MasterCall* were written primarily for contest managers and their assistant log checkers. But an individual contester will have an interest in the *CabrilloLogChecker* program to help them quickly validate their log and find obvious typos. All the beta testers of the programs are extremely impressed. One beta tester put it this way; "This is the best thing for contesters and contest managers since pockets on a shirt," Keep an eye out for their release.

Our guest columnist this month needs no introduction. Ron, K5DJ, is a wellknown contester and contest manager for several of the more popular RTTY contests. One of these is the RTTY *NCJ* NAQP Contest. The 2000 contest suffered from some of the most horrific propagation experienced in a long time. Ron consented to write a short article in spite of the problems and to provide the results.

That's all for this issue. Hope to see you in the frays.

73, Wayne, K7WM

Results, July 2000 NAQP RTTY Contest

This was the fifth running of the North American RTTY QSO Party. Conditions were very much like the second running back in 1997—almost as horrible as they can get. Very few records were broken. Most ops worked very hard just to keep going with conditions as they were.

The good news is that the team competition category gained one team this year over last year, with only one team not sending in any logs. Naturally it was a DX team and conditions were as horrible for them as it was for us in North America.

I still feel the RTTY NAQP Contest is growing, however this year was the first year we received fewer logs than the last few years. With the amount of contacts that were made many didn't send in their logs. Only 114 logs were submitted. Only six DX logs were received.

Single Operator Category

Only entrants from WØ, W3, W4, W5 and W7 made the Top Ten. At the end of the contest, it came down to K5DJ, AA5AU and WT4I turning in the highest scores. The race for first and second place was—as usual—very close.

Ron, K5DJ, narrowly came out on top over last year's champ Don, AA5AU. K5DJ finished with 436 QSOs and 149 multipliers for a score of 64,964. AA5AU finished with 427 QSOs and 50 mults, scoring 64,050. This was the closest finish between first and second place in the five-year history of the RTTY NAQP Contest. Bruce, WT4I, finished third with 391 QSOs and 142 mults for a score of 55,552. We better keep an eye on Bruce, he seems to be making a move toward the spotlight after his second place finish in the Roundup and now third in NAQP RTTY Contest.

Again this year 40, 20 and 15 meters were the bands of choice during the RTTY NAQP 'test. K5DJ posted the highest point total on 10 meters with only 15 QSOs and 9 mults. Next was K3MM with 15 QSOs and 8 mults followed by AA5AU with 11 QSO and 5 mults. Several operators that finished in the Top Ten didn't have any QSOs on 10 meters. Ten meters wasn't exactly a hot bed of activity this time around, to say the least...

On 15 meters WT4I managed to collect the most QSOs and multipliers with 97 and 41. AA5AU picked up 78 QSOs and 34 mults and K5DJ had 75 QSOs with 36 mults.

On 20 meters K5DJ had the most QSOs

Ron Stailey, K5DJ k5dj@contesting.com

and mults with 199 and 47. AF4Z gathered up 180 QSOs and 43 mults. Next was AA5AU with 175 QSOs and 45 mults.

On 40 meters WT4I scooped up the highest amount of QSOs and multipliers with 119 and 42. K5DJ had 116 QSOs and 37 mults and AA5AU had 110 QSOs with 40 mults.

On 80 meters N5ZM lead the pack with 61 QSOs and 30 mults while AA5AU was next with 53 QSOs and 26 mults. K3MM was third highest with 46 QSOs and 28 mults.

Multi/Two Category

The Multi/Two category saw slim participation with just five logs received. The top dog was W6YX with 305 QSOs and 114 multipliers for a score of 34,770.

Team Competition

Team competition was up a little this year. It's nice to see something going up with conditions as they were. The Big

Dogs took the team category and set a	
new record for team competition. This	
was the only record broken this year in	
any category.	

The above pretty well describes the horrible conditions the participants encountered in this year's NAQP RTTY Contest. As the old saying goes "Oh well, there's always next year."

73, Ron, K5DJ

Soapbox

Team Scores

The Big Dogs

My first RTTY 'test, didn't spend much time in the contest because I was learning new software.—N5RM Glad it wasn't a 48-hour contest.—AF4Z No problem with the 'MP running at 75 W, Guess I could have run 100 W but I decided to play it safe.—N5ZM Oh well, there's always next year.—WN1E Many thanks to the contest sponsors.-WB2UEF The Digital Porch Dogs never intended to run with the Big Dogs, but we never thought Ol'

The Flo Bo's

Sol would chain us to the damn porch .--KI6DY Between thunderstorms, lighting strikes, ponies getting into the neighbors yard—I thinking it best for some Big Dogs to stay on the porch!-K3MM I'd hate to see us lose anyone because of this rule. I will include a comment on my summary sheet asking the powers to be to remove the "no external amplifier" rule for next year's contest.-AA5AU The bands were very poor never seen them that bad.-VA6MM I have read that some ops will not operate future NAQP RTTY contests because they are concerned about burning up their radio running 100 W in RTTY mode.-AE9D My first big effort in RTTY NAQP 'test-a nightmare. I never heard such fluttery signals.-N4VHK We thought we would surround North America with RF. Mother Nature had other plans.-W1ZT Early in the contest I knew this was going to be tough.-NØIDT Tough going at times, but the points were there if one had the perseverance to hang tough.-KR6E

The 7 Full

The Porch Dogs

					K5DJ 6	<i>ogs</i> 64,964	AF4Z	<i>Bo's</i> 33,(063	The Porc KI6DT	n Dogs 34,270	The 7 F K7WM	ull 33,588
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MD	K3MM) N7U /A WS7										63,083
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FL	WT4I	IN		PALS	10. The TCG-#2: W7WW, W9WI, W4AUI, N4JN								
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AR	W4JLS N5ZM	N	IO KSØ E NØII		AA5AU	64,050	427	150	11/5	78/34	175/45	110/40	53/26
LA	AA5AU	H			WT4I K5NZ	55,552 40,192	391 315	142 128	4/2 9/5	97/41 51/26	153/44 121/39	119/42 89/36	18/13 43/22
MS	KK5OQ				K3MM	37,873	313	120	15/8	43/18	104/30	105/37	46/28
					KI6DY/Ø	34,270	298	115	0/0	37/18	117/36	97/33	48/28
Canadian Province Winners K7WM 33,558 282 119 4/2 52/31 124/40 91/39 11/7													
AB	VE6RAJ				AF4Z	33,063	309	107	2/1	30/18	180/43	84/34	13/11
BC SK	VA7SW VE5CPU				KK5OQ N5ZM	31,993 29,267	299 259	107 113	3/1 0/0	27/15 26/16	166/42 94/33	72/33 78/34	31/16 61/30
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K3GP 108 W7TI 129 N7UVH 122 W2UP 119	<i>s Mults</i> 66 55 57 52	<i>Score</i> 7,128 7,095 6,954 6,188 5,940	State OH CA ID PA	Team Big Dogs	<i>Call</i> W4/KL7Q KC4HW K4WW K4PX W4WS	<i>QSOs</i> 228 247 205 211 175	<i>Mults</i> 89 82 87 81 85	<i>Score</i> 20,292 20,254 17,835 17,091 14,875	<i>State</i> AL FL KY FL NC	7 Full Flo Bo's TGC #3
K4BEV 119 8P6SH 94 AJ3M 111 NØIDT 103 K5PI 95 WØDET 100 W5LA 95	50 59 49 51 55 51 49	5,940 5,546 5,439 5,356 5,225 5,100 4,655	TN MD NE TX CO LA	TČG #1 Radio Ticks	(op N4V WB4EQS W4LC WA4HDS W4EYJ AF4OX	HK) 167 158	79 84 69 67 60	13,193 11,534 11,178 9,380 8,220	FL KY FL TN SC	Flo Bo's 7 Full Flo Bo's
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N4PQV 73 K7ON 67 N4CW 75 WA8RPK 71 KØXU 67	40 42 37 36 38	2,920 2,814 2,775 2,556 2,546	TN AZ NC OH NE		K5DJ AA5AU K5NZ KK5OQ	436 427 315 299	149 150 128 107	64,964 64,050 40,192 31,993	TX LA TX MS	Big Dogs Big Dogs TGC
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CX7BF 48 KI7NW 42 N4JN 44 NØIBT 39	24 26 24 25	1,152 1,092 1,056 975	AZ TN CO	TCG #2	K7WM N7UVH WS7I	282 122 72 67	119 57 52	33,558 6,954 3,744	AZ ID WA	7 Full 7 Full
K4BX 35 N3NZ 38 W3ZF 31 K6XT 31 AH6OZ 22	22 19 21 16 17	770 722 651 496 374	TN PA PA CA HI	Radio Ticks	K7ON W7WW AD7U N7GC KI7NW	67 74 59 52 42	42 32 33 31 26	2,814 2,368 1,947 1,612 1,092	AZ WA WA WA AZ	7 Full
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WT4I 391 AF4Z 309 W4OX 255 W4GKM 252	142 107 105 94	55,552 33,063 26,775 26,688	FL FL FL TN	Big Dogs Flo Bo TGC #1	SP5ZCC: N/A Check Logs AF4RK, W6/GØAZT, W4TDB, DJ7AA, W4JLS, AA5RF, N5LUQ, AA1SU, WØETC					