

Results: North American RTTY Sprint — October 2008

There were two highlights in the October 2008 RTTY Sprint. First, the “legal dupe” rule was abandoned, so the rules were identical to the CW and SSB sprints. Second, we had the *worst* propagation I have experienced for any sprint in any mode! These factors significantly reduced QSO numbers, but the majority of participants still favored the no-dupes format. Not working the same loud stations over and over provided an opportunity to work stations that would never have been heard otherwise. That was a lot more fun.

Twenty meters lasted about a half-hour for West Coast stations, and W6YX grabbed 29 contacts — about half again as many as the next highest 20 meter total. Forty was pretty good throughout the contest, but 80 was just mediocre for most ops. While many participants groaned about conditions, NN7SS sucked it up from his QTH in the Northwest and operated QRP, making 37 percent of the highest QSO count. You may know Mork/Mark/Burt (whatever his name is this week) from prior sprints as K6UFO. Anyone operating QRP in a sprint in such conditions certainly has my respect.

Still, there were 159 different good call signs across the 64 logs received. This compares favorably with past events, especially the October ones. It would be great to receive more logs, if for no other reason than to enhance log checking. WA7BNM has made log submittal really easy via the NCJ Web site, www.ncjweb.com. The server examines logs and flags any problem areas. Logs can be corrected — typically just to fix typos — and resubmitted as many times as needed. The log server simply checks format against the Cabrillo specification and makes sure QSO date/time stamps are within the contest period.

The latter check helps people to avoid submitting last year’s log.

NN7SS took the QRP category as the *only* entry, which proves how important it is just to show up! Bill, KE5OG, took low power honors this time, getting past Jim, K0HW, and John, K6MM. Dean, N6DE, operated Stanford University club station W6YX for the high QSO total of 158 after log checking. Ed, W0YK, operating W6NL was able to get past Dean by having the high mult count of 35. Dependably top finisher Dave, K6LL, took third, while Dean, N0XR, operated the N0NI station to grab fourth. CW Sprint forefather Rusty, W6OAT, took fifth overall. After founding the CW Sprint and seeing it spread to SSB and then RTTY, Rusty is a celebrity entry in our Sprint logs.

The NCCC ops handily won the team competition. This is another testament to showing up, as their 10 operators bested the second-place SWACC team, which only got seven operators on the air. With SWACC dominating past RTTY Sprint team competitions in the past, there will surely be some serious recruiting for the next one. Thanks to all five teams for rallying their members to operate. A few operators have mentioned that it was the team formation that got them on the air. Teams are a great way to help increase participation, and that benefits everyone. It is also a wonderful means to increase local club camaraderie and activity.

Sprints are one of the best ways to hone operating skill, all modes. Accordingly, sprint log checking is very stringent, serving to heighten the learning experience: Just one wrong character in a call sign or exchange element loses the QSO. If the error is one of not being in the other person’s log, an additional QSO is charged.

This puts a premium on accuracy as well as speed, which combine to fully exercise an operator’s talent on the air. Even given the sorry conditions for this sprint, several people had golden logs — those with no QSO deductions. Congratulations to K0HW for the golden log with the most QSOs at 89.

Supporting this quest for accuracy is the importance of acknowledging each contact before moving on to the next one. A few of the NILs in this log set were due to the other operator’s not QSLing the contact after the other station has asked for a fill or confirmation. Ignored stations often *delete* such contacts from their logs. Such a scenario further illustrates the value of always working dupes. What shows as a dupe in your log may *not* be a dupe in the other’s station’s log. One reason could be

Top 10 Scores

Call Sign	Score	Bnd Chgs	QSOs Lost	00Z	01Z	02Z	03Z
W6NL	5495	90	4	62	33	45	18
W6YX	5056	51	2	57	42	37	23
K6LL	4192	6	12	38	38	29	29
N0XR	4128	60	4	37	44	28	20
W6OAT	3776	4	5	34	31	32	22
W7WW	3255	51	9	34	30	25	19
K6RB	3078	6	4	36	37	29	13
NI6T	2997	6	8	25	33	37	19
KE5OG	2673	21	6	29	28	23	21
K0HW	2492	33	0	25	27	21	16

Top 10 QSOs

W6YX	158
W6NL	157
K6LL	131
N0XR	129
W6OAT	118
K6RB	114
NI6T	111
W7WW	105
KE5OG	99
K6MM	90

Top Golden Log

K0HW	89
N4ZZ	58
K8UT	55
WA9AFM	35
VA7ST	31
W0LM	31
WA7BME	10
W9ILY	5
CK3MCF	2

Top 10 Mults

W6NL	35
K6LL	32
N0XR	32
W6OAT	32
W6YX	32
W7WW	31
K0HW	28
K4GMH	28
K6RB	27
KE5OG	27

Top 10 Band Changes

W6NL	90
N0XR	60
W6YX	51
W7WW	51
K4GMH	43
K0HW	33
KE5OG	21
W7WHY	21
NN7SS	20
N0KK	14

Top 10 Low Power

KE5OG	2673
K0HW	2492
K6MM	2250
K4GMH	1904
W7MRC	1679
AB4GG	1239
K0XU	1144
AC7JW	1121
VE3JI	1092
KW7N	1064

Top 10 QRP

NN7SS	1062
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that the other op deleted the contact after considering it incomplete. Working dupes could save a NIL penalty if you're not already in the other station's log.

Eight ops busted Gary's call sign, K7OX, entering the numeral zero for the letter O. Using Super Check Partial is a good way to alert the operator to double-check a call sign, since K70X would not be in the database. The numeral zero and the letter O are problematic because they're adjacent to each other on the keyboard.

In a number of instances four QSOs in a row were on a single frequency in several logs. It is unlikely any of these instances were ignoring the QSY rule, though. Most likely they were due to tuning away after the first QSO, roaming around the band looking for the next contact and inadvertently ending up back at the prior frequency for another two QSOs. Inadvertent or not, this is still a rule infraction, and operators should take measures to avoid these situations.

One technique is to use the two VFOs available in most all radios today. When the second QSO is completed on a frequency (and a *clear* QSL given!), simply swap VFOs. Now as you tune around for your next QSO, the prior QSO frequency is sitting in the other VFO's display right in front of you. It is a scratchpad memory to enable you to meet the 1 kHz or 5 kHz QSY rule. Moreover, when you deplete the new frequency in VFO A and swap again, the old VFO B frequency may have a QSO finishing up that you can pounce on.

I look forward to working everyone in the March 2009 RTTY Sprint. Tell your friends, and use the team format to get more of them on the air.

SOAPBOX

Wrong audience for a special prefix. Few thought it was correct and just gave up. — CK3MCF

First timer. Less hectic than the other sprints but still confusing. — K1GU

Started out to just put in an hour at most. Too much fun and put in the last two hours. Not as much activity — or so it seemed — but that may have been due to the once-per-band rule. Just couldn't get several West Coast stations to hear me with low power, although they had nice signals. — K4GMH

I like not having the dupe rule, but now the problem is activity. Tough spot on the calendar with all the football, baseball and NASCAR on TV. — K5ZD

Starting to enjoy this RTTY stuff! You'll see more of me as time goes on — N0KK
Ouch! Was that painful! No sunspots, high A index, poor propagation and QRP. I was digging and trying for stations at which I was clearly too weak to hear, but I tried and tried. Eventually, I had to CQ and CQ — hoping someone would hear me. — NN7SS @ K6UFO

Missed any 20 meter action, if there was any. Looks like we could have worked dupes

Top Single Radio

Call Sign	Score	Bnd Chgs	QSOs Lost	00Z	01Z	02Z	03Z
K6LL	4192	6	12	38	38	29	29
W6OAT	3776	4	5	34	31	32	22
K6RB	3078	6	4	36	37	29	13
NI6T	2997	6	8	25	33	37	19
K6MM	2250	4	6	29	27	22	14
VA3XH	1950	10	3	16	21	19	19
N6PE	1872	7	10	20	15	23	19
W7MRC	1679	5	2	22	23	22	6
K6CTA	1495	4	3	15	29	12	9
WK6I	1296	1	2	19	21	15	0

Team Scores

1. NCCC	
W6NL	5495
W6YX	5056
W6OAT	3776
K6RB	3078
NI6T	2997
K6MM	2250
K6CTA	1495
K6WC	1144
W6SX	931
N6EE	840
Total	27,062

2. SWACC	
K6LL	4192
N0XR	4128
W7WW	3255
KE5OG	2673
K0HW	2492
K7OX	720
W0RAA	468
Total	17,928

3. Corner Pocket	
W7MRC	1679
N7TK	1092
NN7SS	1062
W7NNN	980
Total	4813

4. Minnesota Wireless A	
K0JJR	920
K0MPH	756
K0AD	675
WG0M	608
N0KK	560
KC0MKS	528
W0LM	434
Total	4481

5. NCCC 2	
1840	(WK6I, N6RO)

in this one to drum up some activity. Kept tuning past the same stations over and over. — W7WHY

Rough night. Twenty closed quickly around 0030. Heavy QRM and QRN on both 40 and 80. Not a big turnout overall. Look forward to better conditions soon. — K6MM

I understand why they kept dupe rule until now. It is very boring with no one to QSO. It was *ugly!* I heard signals on 20 when the contest started, but apparently they could not hear me. Only contacts were on 40 and 80. I think this is the lowest score I have had in a RTTY Sprint. — K0HW

Sprint? This was not even a crawl, maybe a slow-motion car wreck. Painful in any event. I can't remember a contest in which I had a lower score and less fun in, and that's going back over 45 years of ham radio. — K6CTA

Worst conditions I can ever recall on all bands. Almost no participation. No dupe rule = no one to work. Not fun, so I went QRT after first two hours. — Ron N6EE

I like the removal of the dupe rule, especially in these band conditions. Otherwise it would have been one big dupe-fest. I worked 101 unique call signs. This contest will become more fun as conditions improve and as other clubs field teams. — N6DE

After a frustrating eight hours in Makrothen RTTY, the Sprint didn't hold much attraction. Got on at 0209 and was in and out several times over the final two hours. West Coast was workable, but participation was so thin I didn't get a good feel for points beyond. I think dropping the dupe rule was a bit premature. — VA7ST

RTTY experts in the NCCC warned me against contesting without a computer/software. I tried it anyway, but never again. This was my first attempt at RTTY contesting, and at times it seemed to work, using the K3 memories, logging QSOs in *TRLog* watching the K3 VFO B window for the received exchange. But sending with my left foot produced garbage for those trying to copy my exchange. I could decode all stations heard, but they could not copy me. Never did log NI6T, who said I was inverted. How did he know I was hanging from the rafters? — N6RO

One might think that removing the legal dupe rule was a mistake, but I think just the opposite. I would never have worked some of the mults I did, nor would I have worked many of the stations, under the old rules. We just need to keep getting more people involved and hang on for improved conditions. This is my worst showing by a wide margin — and from a superior station than my own. — W0YK

First contest using a pair of K3s. I think the new Sprint rules are just as much fun as the old ones, even if the QSO rate is lower. — K6LL

Having recently spent five weeks in the hospital, I still don't have my strength back. Only spent about 2 hours in this one. Looking forward to the next one in hopes my health is better. It was fun nonetheless. — W0RAA

Boy, was that *painful!* Having no 40 meter antenna available really hurt, 20 was a dud and within 30 minutes I had to move to 80 while still daylight and high noise levels. — Gary K7OX

That was a grind. Conditions weren't good here but there just weren't many stations to work. Still a sprint and still fun. — KE5OG

I am glad this was a "for fun" outing. Not my most memorable outing, but any contest is better than no contest. My apologies to those to whose confusion I added. I hope the dupe rule is well understood next time. — NI6T

My first real stab at the RTTY Sprint and I really enjoyed it. I'm looking forward to the next one. — WF4W

One word: *Yuck!* — NG7Z @ W7MRC

Scoring Summary

Call Sign	Name	QTH	20	40	80	QSO	Mult	Score	Team	Call Sign	Name	QTH	20	40	80	QSO	Mult	Score	Team
K5ZD	RANDY	MA	0	38	2	40	17	680		K8UT	LARRY	MI	11	31	13	55	21	1155	
N4CW	BERT	ME	0	0	15	15	11	165		K8SM	SCOTT	OH	0	16	22	38	15	570	
K4GMH	*MIKE	VA	0	32	36	68	28	1904		KC8UR	*TONY	OH	5	0	0	5	2	10	
WF4W	TAD	GA	12	31	18	61	21	1281		W9JLY	*JOHN	IL	0	3	2	5	3	15	
AB4GG	*KENNY	TN	4	18	37	59	21	1239		N0XR	DEAN	IA	9	51	69	129	32	4128	SWACC
N4ZZ	DON	TN	5	23	30	58	21	1218		K0HW	*JIM	SD	0	43	46	89	28	2492	SWACC
K1GU	*NED	TN	6	13	17	36	15	540		K0XU	*JIM	NE	0	30	22	52	22	1144	
N4LF	*LEX	FL	0	18	0	18	13	234		K0JJR	JOE	MN	0	30	16	46	20	920	Minnesota
KE5OG	*BILL	TX	13	60	26	99	27	2673	SWACC	K0MPH	*ROGER	MN	0	19	23	42	18	756	Wireless A
AE5PW	*PAT	AR	9	19	20	48	19	912		K0AD	AL	MN	0	25	21	46	15	675	Minnesota
KD5J	*CORD	AR	0	17	17	34	20	680		K0YR	*TOM	MN	0	15	22	37	17	629	Wireless A
WA9AFM	*TOM	OK	4	24	7	35	11	385		WG0M	*MIKE	MN	0	27	11	38	16	608	Minnesota
W6NL	DAVE	CA	21	84	52	157	35	5495	NCCC	N0KK	*KIRK	MN	0	11	29	40	14	560	Wireless A
W6YX	MIKE	CA	29	85	44	158	32	5056	NCCC	KC0MKS	*JEFF	MN	2	23	8	33	16	528	Minnesota
W6OAT	RUSTY	CA	18	63	37	118	32	3776	NCCC	W0RAA	*DICK	CO	0	29	7	36	13	468	Wireless A
K6RB	ROB	CA	15	57	42	114	27	3078	NCCC	W0LM	MARK	MN	0	17	14	31	14	434	Wireless A
N16T	GARRY	CA	15	50	46	111	27	2997	NCCC	KE0L	*JIM	MN	0	13	14	27	13	351	Minnesota
K6MM	*JOHN	CA	11	53	26	90	25	2250	NCCC	VA3XH	PETER	VE3	0	29	46	75	26	1950	Wireless A
N6PE	RICK	CA	7	41	24	72	26	1872	NCCC	VE3JI	*IAN	VE3	10	24	18	52	21	1092	Wireless A
K6CTA	ED	CA	10	42	13	65	23	1495	NCCC	VA7ST	*BUD	VE7	0	10	21	31	11	341	Wireless A
WK6I	JEFF	CA	6	48	0	54	24	1296	NCCC 2	VE3JM	*VLAD	VE3	0	17	4	21	13	273	Wireless A
K6WC	TIGER	CA	0	26	26	52	22	1144	NCCC	VE3RCN	*KEVIN	VE3	0	0	8	8	6	48	Wireless A
N6QQ	JOHN	CA	0	40	8	48	22	1056	NCCC	CK3MCF	*DOUG	VE3	0	2	0	2	2	4	Wireless A
W6SX	HANK	CA	4	34	11	49	19	931	NCCC										
N6EE	*RON	CA	10	28	2	40	21	840	NCCC										
N6RO	KEN	CA	1	18	13	32	17	544	NCCC 2										
W6TQG	*PHIL	CA	4	0	0	4	2	8											
K6LL	DAVE	AZ	21	78	32	131	32	4192	SWACC										
W7WW	RED	AZ	14	61	30	105	31	3255	SWACC										
W7MRC	*PAUL	WA	1	46	26	73	23	1679	Corner Pocket										
AC7JW	*JASON	UT	0	36	23	59	19	1121											
N7TK	JOHN	WA	-1	28	25	52	21	1092	Corner Pocket										
KW7N	*STEVE	WA	1	33	22	56	19	1064											
NN7SS	**BURT	WA	2	38	19	59	18	1062	Corner Pocket										
W7NNN	*ERIC	WA	0	32	17	49	20	980	Corner Pocket										
W7WHY	TOM	OR	0	26	31	57	17	969											
K7OX	GARY	WA	10	0	30	40	18	720	SWACC										
W7VXS	*DON	WA	2	20	23	45	14	630											
WS7I	*JAY	WA	0	28	0	28	15	420											
AD7OG	*STEVE	OR	16	0	0	16	7	112											
WA7BME	*RON	UT	0	8	2	10	5	50											

NCJ