

Back in 1995 the various RTTY reflectors carried a great deal of discussion about the advantages/disadvantages of 2-radio operation vs 1-radio operation and of how the Internet could be used for contesting, etc. Of course, many of the comments were delivered tongue in cheek and civilized—one proposed an Internet RTTY Sprint.



K7WM

The fallout from this thread was a full-blown Internet RTTY Sprint (by radio) that was the brainchild of Barry, W2UP. Barry patterned the Internet Sprint rules after the existing *NCJ* CW/SSB Sprints with some slight modifications, ie: 80- and 40-meter bands only, 2 hours duration, once a year, and multiple contacts on the same band. It was held five years in a row.

In 1999, Barry became tired of being chief cook and bottle washer, and wanted to pass the reins on to someone else. A discussion ensued about approaching the *NCJ* to see if they might be interested in incorporating the RTTY Sprint into their CW/SSB Sprint package. It was felt that most of the CW/SSB rules that existed could be used with just slight modifications for RTTY operations. This was done and the *NCJ* enthusiastically endorsed the idea.

As a result, the *NCJ* RTTY Sprint came into being...

The March 2000 *NCJ* RTTY Sprint

On March 12th, 2000, at 0000Z, (Saturday evening for North America), the first diddle-diddle-diddle of the inaugural *NCJ* RTTY Sprint was heard. Four hours of dial spinning, antenna twirling, switch flipping and band changing was underway. At the conclusion, you sat and looked at the log with blisters on your fingers wondering if everybody had as much fun as you did. Over 80 participants showed up. Even some surprising DX stations—CT1AOZ, S58T, OH2LU, RK6BZ—joined the fray to make the first event a great success.

It was evident at the start of the contest that some of the competitors were having problems with the unique QSY rule. One could tell they were diehard contesters because they weren't about to give up *their* run frequency. After about 30 minutes on the air and with some gentle reminders to QSY after CQing, everything was running smoothly. (*I personally had fun just searching out the Big Guns and answering their CQs—*

just to see them have to move.—K7WM)

The QSY rule mentioned above can be described in a nutshell as follows:

If you solicit and receive a contact either by a CQ or QRZ, you must move (1) a minimum of 1 kHz before answering a CQ or (2) a minimum of 5 kHz before you call CQ (up, down, another band—it makes no difference, you must move).

Forget about coming back to the frequency you just left because you know someone there. Another rule unique to the RTTY Sprint is the *multiple contact privilege*. You are allowed to work the same station multiple times provided three contacts separate the contacts in both logs, regardless of band. Fortunately, two of the major software packages, *RTTY* by WF1B and *Writelog*, will tell you if three contacts separate QSO attempts. Unfortunately, the software can't tell you what is in the other station's log. This fact proved not to be a big problem. Only a small number of QSO deductions occurred during log checking.

The contest also scores band multipliers. That rule combined with the multiple contact capability, ensured that action was hot and furious on all three bands during all four hours. 20 meters never died out completely and plenty of ops were moving back and forth between the bands at an astonishing rate during the March running of this FB new contest. 40 meters got hot and heavy about two hours into the contest but 80 meters was tough—100 W is kind of puny for this band—but still the rate held up for many.

With a contest exchange that includes

a serial number, one gains added incentive to go faster. When you find a competitor with a couple more contacts than you—who 15 minutes earlier was three contacts *behind*—you got a kick in the driveshaft real quick! Things were moving so fast that sometimes you would have to stop and think, "Did I CQ or did I answer a CQ?" What a ball! Like the ol' saying goes, "Try it, you'll like it."

The next *NCJ* RTTY Sprint is scheduled for October 15th, 2000, 0000Z to 0400Z. Get your fingers loosened up, develop a super fast winning stratagem, and come join the fun. Complete rules can be found at the *NCJ* Web site: <http://www.ncjweb.com> and at N1RCT's Web site: <http://www.megalink.net/~n1rct>.

March *NCJ* RTTY Sprint Comments

Very few "soapbox" comments were included with the logs submitted for the first running of the contest. Here's a sample of what was received.

Soapbox

Went head-to-head with AA5AU, one radio against two, and was doing pretty well in the first part of the event. Once 40 meters opened up for Don, he steadily pulled ahead for the rest of the contest. There is still not enough activity but under the *NCJ* format this event will get much larger and more fun. I'm looking forward to the October Sprint.—Jay, WS7I. The *NCJ* RTTY Sprint was a very fun contest for me. It is a very different format, but a lot of fun. Fast paced, it really keeps you

Results, March 2000 *NCJ* RTTY Sprint

Scores

Call	QSOs	Points	Mults	Score
AA5AU**	225	220	30	6600
WS7I*	178	177	35	6195
AE5P*	163	162	37	5994
W6/G0AZT*	139	139	36	5004
K7WM	137	136	37	4896
W7WW	144	137	30	4110
W4LC*	116	114	30	3420
CT1AOZ*	118	117	26	3042
S58T*	80	76	31	2356
W0ETC*	80	75	24	1800
N8YYS*	75	74	22	1628
WA0SXV	72	72	16	1152
W9ILY*	62	62	18	1116
W6IWO	60	57	18	1026
K9MRQ*	54	54	14	756
KS0M	23	23	14	322
WB6BIG	19	19	11	209
W4JLS	14	14	10	140
OH2LU*	11	11	6	66
RK6BZ*	6	6	5	30

** Denotes trophy winner

* Denotes certificate winner

on your toes. Very strange, though, working one of the “Big Gun” stations, and then legally “stealing” their frequency. Would be nice to have more stations to work. Give it a try, I really think you’ll like it.—
Army, AE5P.

Eddie, W6/G0AZT Says...

If anyone really wants to have some fun in a contest, may I suggest that they seriously contemplate entering the *NCJ* sponsored RTTY Sprints. They are held twice a year and unlike many RTTY contests, the Sprint—as its name suggests—is not a marathon but four hours of enjoyment and tactics on 20, 40 and 80 meters only.

There was even some DX participation and I believe that if the sponsors give this contest wider publicity, there will be more activity in future events of this nature. You do not have to be a dyed-in-the-wool teletype contester to participate but you must read the rules thoroughly and preferably have some contesting software that supports the unique Sprint format.

Up until this year, I have always steered clear of what was once called the “Internet Sprint” and run by Barry, W2UP. I found the rules rather confusing, but once they were properly digested and with the aid of specific software, I decided to have a go in the inaugural *NCJ*-sponsored version in March 2000.

The first thing that struck my weird sense of humor was the fact that you can work the same station on the same band, over and over again. (Check the rules.) Another interesting occurrence is that if you CQ and make a contact, after the required exchange, you must QSY immediately. To sit and watch the “vultures” grab “your” frequency and work the station you just worked is hilarious and totally alien to normal contesting. I think I spent far too long watching these tactics when I should have been trying to steal someone else’s frequency and getting more points.

Output power is limited to low power, so even the little pistols can participate without fear of being blown off the bands by the California Kilowatters. Both *RTTY* by WF1B and *Writelog* for *Windows* software packages cover this contest and produce all the required files for submission to the Contest Manager, Wayne, K7WM.

Please come and join us in the next one.

73 de Eddie, W6/G0AZT (ZF1RY, P40RY, TY1RY, 8R1TT, 3V8BB '96, GU0AZT et al)

Good luck on the bands and see you in the 'tests too.

73, Wayne, K7WM ■