

# The Basics of Radio Contesting

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# Overview

What is contesting?

What is the purpose?

Types of contests

Practical elements of contest operations

A practical contest

How to get started (on a budget)

How to become a winner

What have we achieved?



# What is a Contest?

Typically a limited period (e.g. 3 hours, 24 hours, 48 hours)

Fixed exchange

Sequence number, zone, age

Maximise score

Allows direct comparison



# What is the Purpose of Contesting?

Fun!

Technical improvements

Operating efficiency

ITU justification for amateur radio

Chase countries, prefixes etc. for operating awards

Win

Certificates, medals, trophies





CN2AA



# Contest Types

Local contests

DX contests

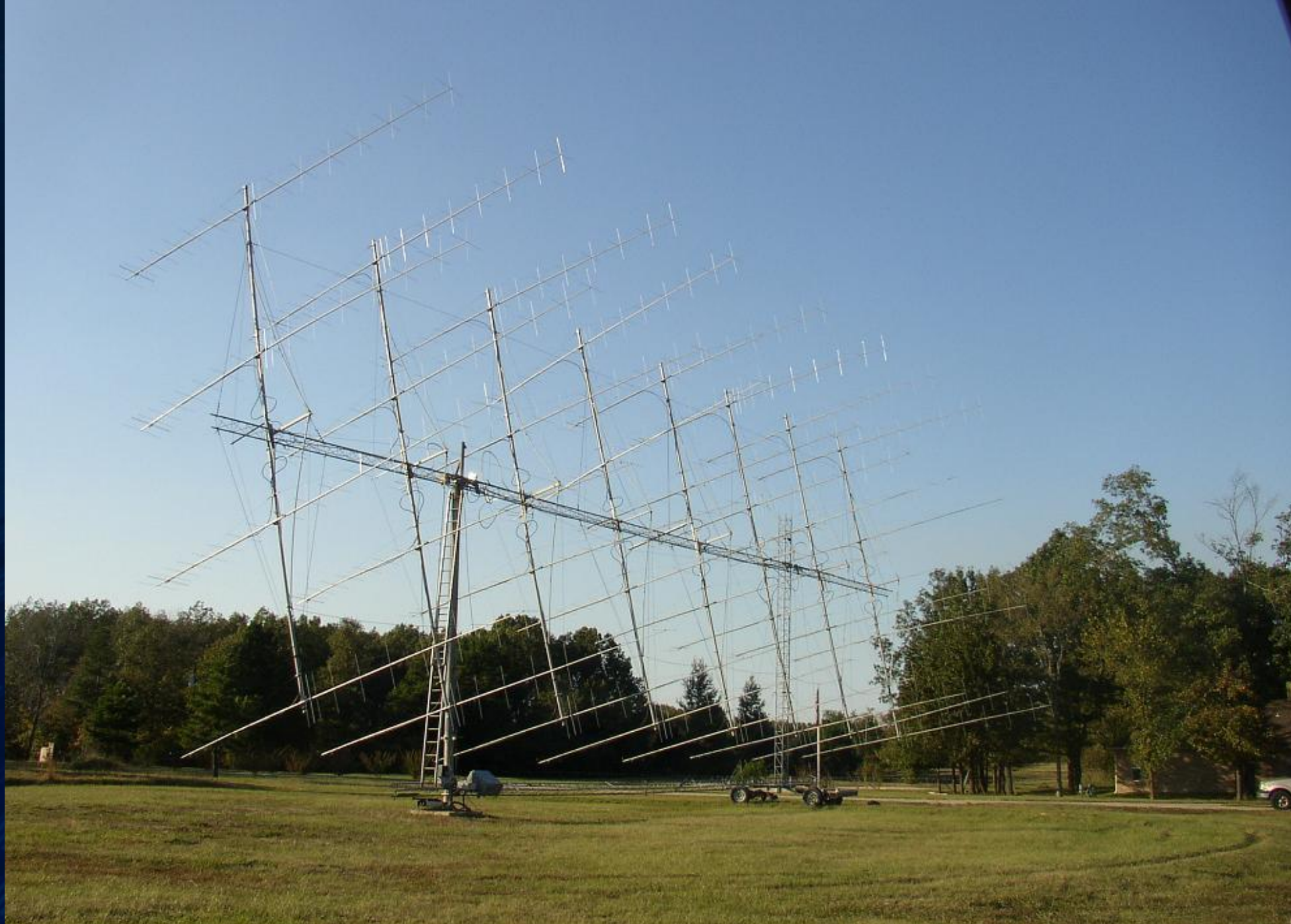
VHF+ contests

Field Day

Speciality contests

EME, Digital, RTTY, clubs





**W5UN EME Array with 32 2M5WL horizontal antennas, and 32 front mounted ten element vertical antennas**





# Entry Categories

## Single-Operator

All band, Single band, Rookie, Tribander/Wires

## Multi-Operator

Multi-1, Multi-2, Multi-Multi

## Power

High (1,5 kW PEP output)

Low (100 W PEP output)

QRP (5 W PEP output)



# Practical Elements and Scoring

## Exchange

Normally RS(T) and number

5938, 59957, 59953, 599KG44, 599001

Other: name, previous callsign, year licenced, DOK etc.

## QSO Points

## Multipliers

Countries, zones, prefixes,

## Bonus

Full house, QTC

## Relative weight

Final score = QSO points x Multipliers



# A Practical Contest

In a single room

Exchange:

What is your callsign?

At what age were you first licenced?

Lessons learned

Stand on a chair

Use hands to make mouth and ears directional

Change tone of voice

Shout louder



# How to get Started

Basic antenna and radio

Gather some experience—Jump in!

CQ World Wide

WPX

Worked All Europe

DXpeditions

Read the rules

Adjust your expectations

DK3GI's effect on southern African contesting

Stay calm



# Practical Operating Hints

Use standard phonetics

Developed to accommodate all accents, phonemes, tones

You can't predict the effect of your "cute" phonetics on foreign ears

Full callsigns

Legal implications, time wasting

Languages

Broken English is the standard

Learn to live with QRM



# Practical Operating Hints (cont'd)

Stay put (“ABC”)

Shun unnecessary talking

“Roger”, “QSL”, readback

Know callsigns

Identify multipliers

Accuracy

WRTC 2014 bronze medal

Emphasise important stuff (Callsign!)

Track multipliers and duplicates



# How to Win

Practice

Read and listen

Find mentors

Contest clubs

Develop station hardware

Good logging software

Location

Near your audience, but good points value



# What have we achieved? SSB

## Single operators

Over 5000 QSOs in 48 hours

Over 100 per hour; one QSO every 35 seconds

## Single Band

4937 QSOs; All 40 zones; Over 150 countries

African records, World #2

## Multi-Operator

Close to 5 Band DXCC in a weekend

Over 6500 QSOs





# What have we achieved? CW

## Single operators

Over 5000 QSOs in 48 hours

Over 100 per hour; one QSO every 35 seconds

## Single Band

4249 QSOs; All 40 zones; 149 countries

World wins, World records (ZS4TX holds current world 28 MHz record)

## Multi-Operator

Over 6800 QSOs



# What have we achieved? RTTY

## Single Band

1339 QSOs

30 zones

88 countries

World wins, world records, world single-band record (28 MHz)





# Go forth and Conquer!

Let me know how it goes

Questions welcome!

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