

DX Advisory Committee Report

July 7, 2017

to the

**American Radio Relay League
Board of Directors
And Programs and Services Committee**

Submitted by:

**Dr. Gary E. Jones, W5FI
Chairman, DX Advisory Committee**

To the Members of the PSC:

From: DXAC – Prepared and submitted by Gary E. Jones, W5FI, Chairman

Date: July 7, 2017

Subject: Report on Tasking Dealing with “DXCC Rule 11”

The following is my summary of the deliberations of the DXAC following receipt of a tasking from WY7FD from the PSC. For clarity, let me present the tasking received from Dwayne WY7FD in its entirety.

“Please consider potential ethical issues with regard to legal, remote-controlled operations, and how these operations comport with DXCC rules. Then, please consider DXCC Rule 11”

DXCC Rule 11 as currently stated: “Issues concerning remotely controlled operating and DXCC are best dealt with by each individual carefully considering the ethical limits that he/she will accept for his/her DXCC and other operating awards. As the premier operating award in Amateur Radio, DXCC draws intense scrutiny from its participants. As DX chasers climb up the Standards, there will be increased attention given to these achievements and the owner of these achievements needs to be comfortable standing behind his/her award and numbers. Peer attention has always been a part of awards chasing, or course, but in these times with so many awards and so many players, it is more important than ever to “play the game” ethically.

Additional guidance from WY7FD:

“Technical advances, while welcome, also add to the difficulty in defining rules for DXCC, but the intent of the rules is what is important. It is never OK to remotely use a station outside of the “home DXCC entity” and add to the home-entity DXCC totals – just as it is never OK for you to ask someone else at another station in another place to make QSOs for you. Remotely controlled stations must be properly licensed if they are to count for DXCC. It will continue to be up to the operator to decide what types of legal remote control operating he/she will use (if any) to contribute to an operating award.”

I received this tasking in late March 2017 and spent several weeks clarifying the tasking, the limits of the opinion that DXAC was asked to provide, and the reason that the DXAC was referring this particular issue since in many ways, the DXAC was being asked to consider an ethics statement that it had previously suggested not be accepted, and dealt with an issue (unlimited use of remote radio stations) to make contacts which would be used for DXCC credit that the DXAC had recommended against. Therefore, I talked to all three individuals who served on a “sub-committee” who decided to refer this issue to the DXAC, three or four members of the Board of Directors and ARRL officers, and two Newington Staffers who were in positions to understand the tasking and referral. I outlined my efforts to the DXAC on April 10, 2017 in a post to the DXAC mailing list, and suggested that DXAC members canvass their constituents for several weeks, and on April 27th, I asked the DXAC to begin to discuss their feedback and positions. Within 1 day, I heard from one member of the DXAC, and roughly 2 weeks later, received a second DXAC member opinion, and then there was a strange 5 week period

where there were no opinions presented by member of the DXAC. I have never seen this happen previously. Essentially, discussion went into “neutral” until a DXAC member seemed to break the log jam and in one week, triggered 7 additional contributions to the discussion. Eight members of the DXAC provided an opinion or statement dealing with the tasking, leaving 6 members who made no statement at all (the DXAC is missing 2 members at this point due to resignations and moves outside of their representative divisions) so half of the DXAC expressed an opinion and half did not.

Now, the main tasking was for the DXAC to make recommendations about potential changes to Rule 11. What can be quickly summarized is that there was no strong opinion voiced by any member of the DXAC to change Rule 11. A small number had strong concerns about Rule 11 and had expressed them when the issue was initially presented to the DXAC several years ago. Several of those who responded felt that Rule 11 was fine as it was written, and others felt that it would be difficult or impossible to stiffen Rule 11 if there was not a strong interest in enforcement of the rules by Newington (which most people who commented doubted), and the perception of most of those who responded was that there was concern that enforcement was not a priority.

The other primary reason that there was little interest expressed in changes to Rule 11 was that a majority of the DXAC members who responded felt that the fundamental problem was that many of their constituents were unhappy with the unrestricted use of confirmations made via remotes which were not personally owned by the operator and the recent decision that such QSOs and entity confirmation were appropriate for credit for individual DXCC totals. There were many concerns mentioned such as: 1.) use of remotes in entities outside of one’s actual entity, 2.) “propagation shopping” (making contacts via remotes when there is no propagation from the operator’s location, 3.) the authorization to use QSOs made via remotes not owned by the operator and used on a “pay for access basis” was a consistent concern, and quite a few others. Of those that responded and expressed an opinion, the consensus was that unrestricted use of remotes (whether privately owned or “rented”) was a problem, but that the decision has already been made and implemented, and now, there was nothing that could be done about clarifying the rules now that the “horse was out of the barn”.

In summary

- 1.) There was no strong consensus to change Rule 11
- 2.) There was a surprising lack of enthusiasm on the part of DXAC to deal with this tasking.
- 3.) There was a general unhappiness with the whole remote issue as it deals with DXCC, but the feeling that the decision had already been made and unless that decision was re-considered in its entirety, there was little that could be recommended to improve potential problems.

That was the only formal tasking that was referred to the DXAC in the past 6 months.

The DXAC remains available for any future task assignments from the PSC and I would be happy to answer specific questions from the PSC or BOD about any of this information at your convenience.

Respectfully submitted: 73

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