

**Contest Advisory Committee  
Semi-Annual Report**

**For the American Radio Relay League  
Board of Director's Meeting**

**January 2023**

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## Overview

In the last six months, the CAC has met online to review changes to rules. We have considered several ideas and made progress on task list items.

Most of our discussions take place online in our discussion group. A 90-minute Zoom meeting was held December 7, 2022 that prepared us for our presentation to the PSC. Our CAC members report our activities to their respective board members. Our liaison to the PSC is Bill, AC0W and he is kept updated, monitors our discussions and updates CAC on PSC actions.

Many of the following tasks were presented and moved forward by the PSC.

### Task List Overview

#### **2020.5 Social Media During Contesting – added to unlimited definition**

- **Completed and approved by CAC and PSC**
- **CAC discussed online**
- **Clarification of rules were announced online and on the ARRL contest website**

#### **2021.5 10 GHz and Up Changes**

- **Completed and approved by CAC and PSC**
- **Not announced**

#### **2021.6 FT8 Issues in VHF Contests**

- **CAC VHF Subcommittee**
- **Recommended Analog Mode subcategory for the SOHP, SOLP, SO3B and SOP categories – adopted and implemented**
- **Further study on going as the VHF subcommittee meets.**

#### **2022.5 Limited Antenna Proposal**

- **CAC discussed in our group chat and Zoom meeting.**
- **CAC weighed several definitions and prepared a recommendation to PSC**
- **Form 5.1 Limited Antennas Overlay proposal is presented to the PSC for their next meeting**

## **CAC Membership:**

No change in our CAC membership has taken place since the last report. The CAC members as of December 31, 2022 are:

- Atlantic – Charles D. Fulp, Jr, K3WW; [k3ww@fast.net](mailto:k3ww@fast.net)
- Central – Craig Thompson, K9CT; [Craig@k9ct.us](mailto:Craig@k9ct.us) (Chairman)
- Dakota – Jon Platt, W0ZQ; [W0ZQ@AOL.com](mailto:W0ZQ@AOL.com)
- Delta – Stan Stockton, K5GO; [wa5rtg@gmail.com](mailto:wa5rtg@gmail.com)
- Great Lakes – Dan Kovatch, W8CAR; [w8car@bex.net](mailto:w8car@bex.net)
- Hudson – Zev Darack, N2WKS; [zevdarack@gmail.com](mailto:zevdarack@gmail.com)
- Midwest – Dr. Glenn Johnson, W0GJ; [w0gj@arrl.net](mailto:w0gj@arrl.net)
- New England – Rudy Bakalov, N2WQ; [r\\_bakalov@yahoo.com](mailto:r_bakalov@yahoo.com)
- Northwestern – Jim Cassidy, KI7Y; [ki7y@arrl.net](mailto:ki7y@arrl.net)
- Pacific – Jim Brown, K9YC; [K9YC@arrl.net](mailto:K9YC@arrl.net)
- Roanoke - Don Daso, K4ZA; [k4za@juno.com](mailto:k4za@juno.com)
- Rocky Mountain – Darryl Hazelgren, K7UT; [darryl@hazelgren.net](mailto:darryl@hazelgren.net)
- Southeastern – Charles Wooten, NF4A; [NF4A@knology.net](mailto:NF4A@knology.net)
- Southwestern – Glenn Rattmann, K6NA; [k6na59@gmail.com](mailto:k6na59@gmail.com)
- West Gulf – James K. George, N3BB; [n3bb@mindspring.com](mailto:n3bb@mindspring.com)
- Radio Amateurs of Canada – Samuel A. Ferris, VE5SF; [ve5sf@sasktel.net](mailto:ve5sf@sasktel.net)

## **VHF CAC Subcommittee**

The VHF subcommittee has added one new member since our June 30 report. Eric Olson, N7EPD was added to strengthen our west coast representation.

Committee members:

Jon Platt W0ZQ (Subcommittee Chair)  
Craig Thompson K9CT  
Jeff Ach W2FU  
Rus Healy K2UA  
Steve Kostro N2CEI  
Bob Striegl K2DRH  
John Kalenowsky K9JK  
Jim Duffey KK6MC  
Eric Olson, N7EPD

## Recent Considerations:

### CAC:

The CAC spent most of the last few months discussing the Limited Antenna proposal. All members seemed to be in favor of this “overlay” until we got to the definition of these antennas. Many iterations of the definitions were hashed about but as we concluded, we united behind a simple definition. We decided that this overlay should apply to all ARRL contests and the IARU if possible.

*“Limited Antennas Overlay: Operation is limited to the use of single element antennas having no more intentional directivity than a single vertical, an end-fed wire, or a single dipole. The antenna(s) may cover multiple bands, as in the case of multiband verticals and dipoles with fan or trap construction. All antennas shall be no more than 50 feet above ground at their highest point. [The intent of this overlay is to recognize and encourage participation from stations where more capable antennas are restricted by their location.]”*

A Form 5.1 for this proposal has been submitted via our liaison Bill, AC0W for the next PSC meeting in January.

The 10 GHz and Up contest rules have not yet been announced on the contest website. These rules were approved by PSC in April, 2022.

<https://contests.arrl.org/ContestRules/10-GHz-Rules.pdf>

The idea of distributed multi multi was proposed as an extension of its use during the pandemic. There was a discussion by the CAC members online but no consensus would be reached to this.

The VHF subcommittee proposed the Enhanced Gavel program to encourage the club’s participation in the January, June and September VHF contests. The CAC supported this proposal and forwarded it to PSC in October. This has yet to be announced by the HQ staff and should be done as soon as possible for 2023.

We were asked to discuss the gavel program in general and we have not done so to date but will take up this issue in the next quarter.

One great discussion occurred regarding letting DX work each other in the ARRL 160 Meter Contest similar to the 10 Meter Contest. This will probably resurface again when we start to discuss these issues again. The opinion was that allowing DX to work each other in the contest would lead to more activity for everyone in the contest. There was some discussion about the geographic advantages that east coast has over the west coast but no idea was forthcoming to solve that problem.

Another idea proposed was to shorten the 160m contest because the recent contest had so much activity in the first 24 hours and how it slowed so much in the last 24 hours. We discussed this as it relates to SS also. No consensus could be derived from this discussion at this time.

We revisited the new Unlimited category that included social media and self-spotting. The ARRL HQ team has reviewed all the rules and removed any language about self-spotting. The ARRL SS Phone contest was the first real test of this new rule and there was no negative feedback in any of the forums. Bob, W5OV has since publicly stated the ARRL position on this subject in the public forums.

The VHF subcommittee presented a recommendation to the CAC for VHF Contest Rule improvements and the CAC has forwarded these to the PSC for their approval.

*A. Single Operator, FM-Only. The current VHF contest rules allow the use of only the four lowest bands; 50, 144, 222, and 432 MHz. While this operating category accounts for only about one or two percent of all VHF contest logs, it is a viable operating category particularly for Technician operators who themselves account for nearly half of all licensed operators. Use of FM on 903 and 1296 MHz is regionally popular as are operating activities that often employ FM such as Summits On The Air. Finally, new products and emerging technologies has increased the ability to access UHF and microwave bands. Based on this it is recommended that the 902 and 1296 bands be added to the SOFM Only operating category so that this operating category covers 50 through 1296 MHz.*

*B. Rovers and club scores: VHF contest rule VCAT.5.3.5 requires that a rover that operates outside of their club's territory submit a secondary summary sheet indicating the portion of their score that counts for the club score if any of the QSOs submitted take place outside of their club's territory. Not only is this rule burdensome for all parties it also limits rover activity for local clubs given their smaller club territory. It is recommended that this rule be changed to state that for a rover's score to be included in a club's score that the rover must have made contacts from somewhere within the club's territory during the course of the contest (i.e., with no secondary summary sheet required). This would include rover scores submitted for Large, Medium and Local size clubs.*

*C. Minimum Distance: While continuing to allow fixed stations that operate close to each other to make contest contacts (for example city based "neighbors"), contest contacts should take place over at least a minimum distance that is respective of the technology, improves operating skills, and that is reflective of the intent of weak signal VHF+ contesting. Currently, general rule STTN.6 states: "While no minimum distance is specified for contacts, equipment should be capable of communications at a range of at least 1 km". It is recommended that general rule STTN.6 be modified to read as follows:*

*All equipment must be capable of communications at a range of at least 5 km. Contacts made between non-fixed stations, for example portable and/or rover stations, must be made over a distance of at least 5 km.*

This completed our work through December, 2022

### **VHF Subcommittee/CAC:**

The VHF Subcommittee is a very active committee and meets at least once a month via Zoom. In the last 6 months they have forwarded proposals to the CAC for their recommendation to the PSC. Both proposals were approved by the CAC for advancement.

There was considerable time spent discussing Rovers, Distance Scoring, Hybrid Scoring, and June VHF. Consensus was built around some of the ideas and they became the proposals to the CAC. Recently we have turned to discussing the ideas around a new VHF contest that may replace or combine existing contests. The outcome is to increase participation and fun for the VHF contester. We are early in the process and no conclusions can be drawn.

Jon, W0ZQ has led this committee and kept them focused on the process. The VHF committee reports their work to the CAC on a regular basis.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee

Craig Thompson, CAC Chairman