

**Contest Advisory Committee
Semi-Annual Report**

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

July 2021

**Craig Thompson, K9CT
Chairman, CAC
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Overview

- Michael Ritz, W7VO introduced himself as the chairman of the Programs and Service Committee
- Bill, AC0W introduced himself as the CAC liaison to the P&SC

Ground rules were set. We were to consider the present task list and additional tasks could be added by CAC. Recommendations were to be by consensus and that controversial or non-consensus recommendations would not be considered. An introductory meeting was held on February 10, 2021 on Zoom.

Task list:

TASK	OP/CL	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
2020.1	Closed	Multi-Operator Club Scores	Apportionment of club scores for multi-ops
2020.2	Closed	Single-Band Scores ARRL DX	Expand ARRL DX contest categories in single band to differentiate by power and assisted/unassisted categories
2020.3	Open	New Digital Contest, HF + 6 meters	"Digital Derby" creation
2020.4	Closed	ARRL MS Band Changes	Change band changes for M/S from 8 to 10 band changes per hour
2020.5	Open	Social Media During Contesting	Affects HF contests, how to regulate
2020.6	Open	Sweepstakes Operating Time	Add "Stations may start late and end early in less than the 30 minute off time" to rule
2020.7	Open	Family Rule Modification	Change Family Rule to allow multiple call signs per station
2020.8	Open	Sweepstakes Start Time	Change SS start time from 2100 UTC to 1800 UTC
2021.1	Open	Time Off Rule for RTTY Roundup	Clarification of time-off rule for RTTY Roundup
2021.2	Closed	100 Watt limit for Low Power Category	Change Low Power category for contests from 150W to 100W
2021.3	Open	Make RTTY Roundup "RTTY Only"	Make RTTY Roundup RTTY only, create new contest for other modes

This list was updated on May 18, 2021. Closed tasks have been reviewed by P&SC and left to HQ team to implement.

VHF contests had three issues that needed attention and they were added to the task list

2021.4	Open	Rover defined	Some operations are not covered in the current rules
2021.5	Open	10 GHz changes	Many issues
2021.6	Open	FT8 issues in the VHF Contests	CW and SSB operators are not happy and something needs to be done

CAC goals were to prepare recommendations for the scheduled Program and Services Committee for April 18, 2021 and July 15, 2021.

CAC Membership:

Changes in membership are in **Red**. The CAC members as of June 30, 2021 are:

- Atlantic – Charles D. Fulp, Jr, K3WW; k3ww@fast.net
- Central – Craig Thompson, K9CT; Craig@K9CT.us
- Dakota – **Jon Platt, W0ZQ; W0ZQ@AOL.com**
- Delta – Stan Stockton, K5GO; wa5rtg@gmail.com
- Great Lakes – **John Comella, N8AA; jscotella@gmail.com**
- Hudson – Zev Darack, N2WKS; zevdarack@gmail.com
- Midwest – Dr. Glenn Johnson, W0GJ; w0gj@arrl.net
- New England – **Rudy Bakalov, N2WQ; r_bakalov@yahoo.com (TBA)**
- Northwestern – Jim Cassidy, KI7Y; ki7y@arrl.net
- Pacific – **Jim Brown, K9YC; K9YC@arrl.net**
- Roanoke - Don Daso, K4ZA; k4za@juno.com
- Rocky Mountain – **Darryl Hazelgren, K7UT; darryl@hazelgren.net**
- Southeastern – Charles Wooten, NF4A; NF4A@knology.net
- Southwestern – Glenn Rattmann, K6NA; k6na@cts.com
- West Gulf – James K. George, N3BB; n3bb@mindspring.com
- Radio Amateurs of Canada – Samuel A. Ferris, VE5SF; ve5sf@sasktel.net

VHF CAC Subcommittee was formed to consider the VHF rules. They were asked to find consensus if possible and make recommendations to the CAC for adoption for recommendation to the P&SC.

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

CAC Zoom Meeting March 11, 2021

Attendance:

K3WW, K9CT, W0ZQ, K5GO, N2WKS, W0GJ, KI7Y, K4ZA, K7UT, NF4A, K6NA, VE5SF and AC0W

We prepared two items for the P&SC meeting. We had consensus on two items.

Proposal to Update ARRL Family Rule

Current rule:

Currently, Section STTN.1. reads as follows:

"A transmitter used to contact one or more stations may not be subsequently used under any other call sign during the contest period, except for family stations where more than one call has been issued, and then only if the second call sign is used by a different operator. (The intent of this rule is to accommodate family members who must share a radio and to prohibit manufactured or artificial contacts.)"

Proposed rule:

"No Operator or Station shall manufacture contacts using more than one call sign for the purpose of aiding another station or club score."

Problem:

1. When this rule was originated, there were efforts to game the contest by getting ops together and "passing around the mike". It was done selectively, so that some ops got the benefit of the 20 Qs, others didn't.

2. We should be trying to encourage contest activity, not suppress it. If I make arrangements with a buddy to use his station on Friday night in ARRL 160M contest, then he couldn't operate Saturday night using his own call.

3. Some ops have invested in remote stations. Under this rule, a remote station can only be used under one call sign for a contest.
4. Some will suggest that, if more than one op wants to use a station for a contest, that they participate as a Multi-Single. Particularly for remote stations, where logging is done on different computers and the two ops never see each other, this doesn't fit well with casual operations.
5. We need to legitimize what is already being done today.
6. Stations that have more than one op as a single op are not likely to be competing for any awards.

Proposal to change all LP categories to 100 Watts

Rationale:

1. The majority of amateur radio transceivers are 100 watt radios. In order to achieve 150 watts it would be necessary to use an amplifier which are almost all capable of at least 500 watts output. With many amplifiers it is difficult to provide low enough input to keep the power to 150 watts and there will be a temptation to push the power for difficult contact. By changing the power to 100 watts, you eliminate the need for an amplifier and therefore eliminate the temptation as any use of an amplifier would be a clear violation.
2. The 200 watt radios currently listed on manufacturer websites:
FTDX-101MP, FTDX-5000MP Limited (no longer advertised on Yaesu site), IC-7851, IC-7700 (new version announced), TS-990S

All radios from Elecraft, FlexRadio , and all other radios from ICOM, Kenwood and Yaesu are 100 Watt maximum output.

This will even the playing field for the majority of hams who are not capable of running 150 watts and it is much easier for a 200 watt radio to be turned down to 100 watts.

Tim, K3LR said in an email to CAC that "[We sell a HUGE percentage for 100 watts vs. 200 watts. Aligning ARRL low power contests entrants to 100 watts is a GREAT change. I support this possible change!](#)"

3. The origin of the 150 watt LP rule comes from the time of tube radios when the rules for power were given as input power (prior to 1982).

Program and Services adopted the 100 Watt rule change but were going to test this only on the 2022 ARRL DX contest. CAC was pleased that they considered the change but really thought that all contests should be 100 watts and not evaluated in the ARRL DX contest. We were hopeful that this rule would be in place for the Fall 2021 contest season.

P&SC rejected the “Family Rule” change and asked us to leave the “Family Rule” in place but consider other language to incorporate the remote stations.

After our meeting and following the P&SC meeting, the CAC took up several other tasks. We worked on them one at a time and reached consensus on several and no consensus on a couple others.

CAC discusses the tasks on a continuous basis on an online group. We had a formal meeting on Zoom June 8, 2021.

Attendance:

K3WW, K9CT, W0ZQ, K5GO, N2WKS, W0GJ, KI7Y, K4ZA, K7UT, NF4A, K6NA, VE5SF and AC0W.

Our recommendations for the next Program and Services Committee on July 15 follow:

2021.4 Rover Defined

Date: May 4, 2021

1. Task, or Objectives, of the Committee

For the January, June and September VHF contests, to align the definition for the Rover operating categories with the current definition that is used in the 222 MHz & Up Distance Challenge contest. This change would address the existing gap regarding how a one-grid Rover can submit a contest log.

2. References

There is no referenced Board motion. The task was established by the VHF+ subcommittee operating in support of the Contest Advisory Committee and in response to membership comments about how to submit logs for one-grid “mobile” stations (i.e., stations that are not fixed nor move to two or more grids).

3. Summary of Conclusions

Rule VCAT.5.1.1 should be changed from:

A rover is a station that moves among two or more grid squares during the course of a contest.

to

A Rover is a complete station that moves beyond the limits of a fixed location (see STTN.2) during the course of a contest.

4. Committee's Formal Report

The current January, June, and September VHF contest rules requires that a Rover must move to two or more grids. There is a gap in the current rules for those stations that are “mobile” and that move outside of the 500-meter circle that defines the fixed categories, but do not travel to two or more grids that currently defines a Rover. These stations may be pedestrian mobile or mobile stations who may not be seriously contesting but are providing additional contacts to other contest participants. Such a rule change would allow these stations to submit a log. The subcommittee has reviewed the proposed change and has determine that there would be very little impact to the current overall rover operations and results, but that it would potentially increase the number of logs submitted and allow for more casual operators to compete with their clubs.

Jon Platt	W0ZQ (Subcommittee Chair)
Craig Thompson	K9CT
Jeff Ach	W2FU
Rus Healy	K2UA
Steve Kostro	N2CEI
Bob Striegl	K2DRH

The CAC reviewed the recommendation and without any objections or corrections recommends these changes be presented to PSC for consideration.

2021.5 10 GHz Changes

Report of the ARRL CAC VHF+ Subcommittee

Date: May 19,2021

1. Task, or Objectives, of the Committee

To refresh the current ARRL 10 GHz & Up contest rules to reflect current technologies, remove possible confusion for new testers, and to eliminate burdensome rules all without impacting the operating categories or scoring methods.

2. References

There is no referenced Board motion. The task was established by the VHF+ subcommittee operating in support of the Contest Advisory Committee and in response to membership input.

3. Summary of Conclusions:

The following three changes are recommended:

- A. Remove the requirement that operations are limited to 24 hours along with the need to log both ON and OFF times. No change to the contest dates or time period.
- B. Remove rule 7 and 7.1 dealing with scheduling.
- C. Modify rule 5.7 to indicate that in addition to aeronautical mobiles, contest contacts are not allowed by satellite nor by EME. Contest contacts must be by terrestrial propagation only.

4. Committee's Formal Report

There is no known basis for the current 24-hour time limit rule and the rule is burdensome for most operators to log and to compute total time. In addition, it is not clear that the rule is being enforced as it currently exists. Its elimination would lift the requirement from the contest operators and ease compliance checking for the League.

Rule 7 on scheduling is antiquated and does not reflect current scheduling methods. Also, 75m is not available to the Technician class of license who make up some of the 10G contesting groups. Left as is the current rule may lead to confusion for those new to this contest and its more modern approach to scheduling. In short, the rule is not used nor followed. Rule 5.2 on the use of assistance is adequate.

Last, advancing digital mode technologies has made 10 GHz (and up) EME stations smaller lending themselves to portable operations. Because of this we recommended that we clarify that only terrestrial propagation modes are to be used during this contest. There are other ARRL and non-ARRL contests where operators can enjoy 10G EME.

Jon Platt	W0ZQ (Subcommittee Chair)
Craig Thompson	K9CT
Jeff Ach	W2FU
Rus Healy	K2UA
Steve Kostro	N2CEI
Bob Striegl	K2DRH

The CAC reviewed the recommendation and without any objections or corrections recommends these changes be presented to PSC for consideration.

Jon also noted that there were still some unresolved 10 GHz issues but that no consensus had been reached at this time.

2021.1 RTTY Roundup off time

Reading the last RTTY Roundup explanation for Off Time Requirements <http://www.arrl.org/rty-roundup>

The late start does not count for any break. This has been satisfactorily explained in the rules. No action is needed.

2021.3 RTTY Roundup

As is:

Bands and Modes: Use only the 3.5, 7, 14, 21, and 28 MHz bands. Use any digital mode, attended operation only. Log RTTY QSOs with the RY mode abbreviation and Digital QSOs with DG.

Recommendation

Bands and Modes: Use only the 3.5, 7, 14, 21, and 28 MHz bands. Mode is RTTY only, operator attended operation.

All other Digital modes will be welcomed in a new ARRL Digital Contest.

2020.6 SS operating time

As is:

1. Operating Period: 2100 UTC Saturday through 0259 UTC Monday.
 - 1.1 All stations may operate no more than 24 of the 30 hours, including listening and transmitting. Off times must be at least 30 minutes long.
 - 1.2 Contacts logged after 24 hours of operation will not be counted toward the final score, there is no penalty for including those contacts in a submitted log, and the station contacted is eligible to receive credit for the contact.
1. Operating Period: 2100 UTC Saturday through 0259 UTC Monday.
 - 1.1 All stations may operate no more than 24 of the 30 hours, including listening and transmitting. Off times must be at least 30 minutes long. **The operating period begins with the first contact, after which each off time must be at least 30 minutes long until 24 hours have been completed.**
 - 1.2 Contacts logged after 24 hours of operation will not be counted toward the final score, there is no penalty for including those contacts in a submitted log, and the station contacted is eligible to receive credit for the contact.

No consensus was obtained on changing the start time of SS.

2020.7 Remote Station Use

Report of the [ARRL Contest Advisory Committee](#)

Date: [May 11, 2021](#)

1. Task, or Objectives, of the Committee

ARRL General Rules

3.5.A transmitter used to contact one or more stations may not be subsequently used under any other call during the contest period, except for family stations where more than one call has been issued, and then only if the second call sign is used by a different operator. (The intent of this rule is to accommodate family members who must share a rig and to prohibit manufactured or artificial contacts.)

Remote stations have become popular for use by those that have little to no access to their own station. CAC will provide a recommendation to PSC for allowing these operations during a contest.

2. References

CAC Task 2020-7 Allowing multiple individuals to use a remote station during one contest, each individual with a different call.

3. Summary of Conclusions

Change General Rules

3.5.A transmitter used to contact one or more stations may not be subsequently used under any other call during the contest period, except

- a) for family stations where more than one call has been issued, and then only if the second call sign is used by a different operator.

- b) for remote stations operated by individual amateurs

This rule does not permit any operator to use multiple calls at the same station to manufacture contacts to another station in the contest.

4. Committee's Formal Report

There is a lot of interest in operating remote. It is in the best interest of attracting hams to contesting that this rule be modified. Many new hams, or hams who have moved to restricted neighborhoods, or have moved to retirement housing have little to no access to operating during a contest. Most of these part time operators are not in the contest to win it but will provide activity to the other contestants that enrich the contesting experience for all participants. We want their scores to be allowed to encourage their participation.

2020.5 Social Media while contesting

Report of the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee

Date: May 11, 2021

1.Task, or Objectives, of the Committee

New technology available to everyone has moved to ham radio contesting. Social media is popular with many amateurs and has been used by testers as they are contesting. Some uses are live streaming of the operation including video, audio of the operator and callers and comments by those observing this operation. Concerns raised are the possible attraction to the tester that it becomes a competitive advantage, frequency of operation that attracts callers to the tester, and other possible shared competitive information. This also falls into the “assisted category” for both the tester and their social media followers.

CAC recognizes that this attracts more operators into contesting and that is a good thing. Today’s ham considers social media a normal part of their life and contesting should not be any different in their eyes.

2. References

CAC Task 2020-5 Social Meeting during contesting

Rules impacted

3.10. The use of non-Amateur Radio means of communication (for example, Internet or telephone) to solicit a contact (or contacts) during the contest period is not permitted.

3.14. In contests where spotting nets are permissible, spotting your own station or requesting another station to spot you is not permitted.

3.7.2.2. Multioperator and Single Operator Unlimited (Assisted) stations may use spotting nets.

3. Summary of Conclusions

Define “Unlimited” in general Rules as follows

1. Use of spotting assistance is permitted. Exception: spotting information obtained from any source outside the station circle via a closed or dedicated communication link may not be used.
2. Self spotting is permitted on SSB as CW and digital modes are self spotting from skimmers.
3. Live streaming of contesting operations on social media is permitted.

- a. Stations that communicate with the social media contesting station and gathered that information from social media are also Unlimited

4. Committee's Formal Report

Recommendation:

- 1) **ENCOURAGE social media and streaming technology.** Any station that does is automatically considered to be in the **Unlimited category** because of any potential feedback to/from that station.
- 2) **ELIMINATE SELF-SPOTTING restrictions in Unlimited category**
- 3) Making a NEW classification for streaming and social media would only add to complexity of the rules and probably never cover all scenarios and yet future technologies.

Background

Ham radio contesting was never envisioned to be a spectator sport any more than the Friday night poker game but, that was then, and this is now. In a world dominated with Twitter, Facebook Live and selfies it was only a matter of time before these technologies found their way into the ham shack. Station operators are streaming their activities over the internet and/or reporting contest scores in real time. All of this adds another level of enjoyment and excitement to ham radio and DOES attract new players to the game.

There are some who believe competitors could gain an advantage if we don't set some guidelines for this activity. There is no limit to the number of rules or restrictions that could be imposed on streaming stations such as:

- Cannot display operating band or frequency.
- Cannot announce the listening frequency when calling CQ split. This would involve some sort of muting of the audio stream when announcing this information on the air.
- May display total score without showing number QSOs, multipliers, or band breakdown.
- May display QSO rate if it does not show which band is active.
- Chat windows must be muted because the streaming station cannot control what viewers post. This could possibly be allowed if technology is used to censor post before they are displayed.
- This list could go on and on.....

If just one of these restrictions were violated, there would be grounds for disqualification.

There has been concern raised that stations participating in real-time on social media (streaming) could possibly provide a "window" to competing stations to their advantage.

- Any station making the effort to watch another station on social media would automatically be considered an unlimited operation. This would be the same as using Telnet or Skimmer type information that fits the definition of assisted/unlimited operation.
- Any seriously competitive station would not be "wasting time" watching social media, hence voiding the concept of the "winning edge" to a top tier contesting station.
- Real-time scoreboards provide even more information to competitors.

Overall goal: Stimulate and encourage contesting activity, particularly to younger and newer contesters.

Question: How can we better mentor and assimilate this group?

Answer: 1) invite them to our stations for "show & tell" AND participation (in person or remotely)
2) Streaming: "participating" over social media to "show how it's done."

Supporting evidence:

Live streaming is a huge impact not only to the hobby but for contesting as well. It will only continue to exponentially increase on different platforms, some yet future.

Today, any CQ with CW, RTTY or other Digital mode is picked up by skimmers and transmitted all over the internet. When an unassisted (unlimited) station sends a first CQ, for all practical purposes it is "self-spotted" by today's technology. Why should SSB be limited when other modes are instantly spotted, regardless of operating classification? We want to ENCOURAGE activity.

From Ray W2RE, who is just one example:

"The past two years I have been live streaming my daily operations on HF. In 2020 we had 11 million views watching between 185 streams but most are not hams. Many are young kids on Twitch TV, YT and FB. These young

kids follow my operations, and many have become hams and on the RHR Youth program. We are BIG believers in promoting the hobby to get young people involved and this is working in a big way. The impact of live streaming in contesting hasn't been felt yet because there isn't a clear understanding how the rules work. We did one stream in 2020 in ARRL DX and there was a bit of backlash from some in the contest community. I think it's because they don't fully understand it, there is no advantage to streaming LIVE. For a matter of fact since I mostly operate Remote, it just adds latency to my operation. We are teaching others how to operate HF. It's a huge success. I receive 100's of emails a month from SWL, Hams and YL's about our live streaming and the impact it has on them. I would be more than happy to share with you if needed.

Below are statistics from the company called Restream. Its #1 multicasting stream platform in the world and they provide accurate statistics that we use to gauge the success of our streams. These are huge numbers for just a single guy streaming every other day or sometimes two times a day. If you notice the longest stream I had was March 2020 - ARRL DX SSB. Over 100,000 SWL, hams, YL's, kids and ordinary people around the world watched. My streams on this most popular platform has me as top 5% streamers in the WORLD! That's a huge impact to ham radio by one individual. A few of the RHR youths are following my lead and are starting to gain traction. Imagine if others were hitting it as well. Instead of making 4000 Q's as a S/O we could be making 8K or 10K Q's in a contest because it will become contagious. Streaming is the best way to reach people and its FREE!

There is a huge difference between LIVE streaming compared to YouTube videos. The impact is now vs later. Getting the audience engaged is what keeps them coming back for more. Young people today don't want to watch something produced a year ago - they want to watch it LIVE. Contesting could become a spectator sport if implemented properly.

Another productive thing we do is get YOUTH on the air. We have the best youth program in Amateur Radio, any youth today involved in contesting is most likely on the RHR youth program. Additionally, its contagious - we just had 22 youth in Turkey take their FCC exam online to gain access to the RHR youth program. Yes, we have young people becoming FCC licensed to become hams. We don't get any notoriety for this but that's ok. We do it because we can and it will pay dividends later.

I reached 11 million viewers in 221 hours of streaming. “

Two additional tasks are being considered at this time.

FT8 in VHF Contests are being considered in the VHF Committee. We have received much input and lots of ideas from the VHF contest community.

The new ARRL Digital Contest is being reviewed in CAC with input from Bart, W9JJ. We will work through this and should have a recommendation before the fall P&SC meeting.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee

Craig Thompson, CAC Chairman