



Getting Started in Contesting with a Moderate Station

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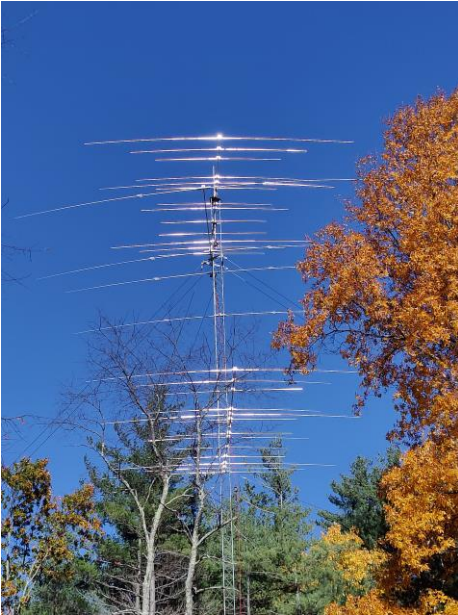
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**Which Station had the Higher Score in CQWW CW
2023?**



NN1SS: 5,840,437



K1AR: 7,102,578



Radiosport (like golf) is
played between the
ears





Agenda

Northeast
HamXposition

- Defining a Moderate Station
- Why would I do this?
- What do I do?
 - S&P
 - Pileups
 - Running
- CQ Worldwide Phone as an example
 - Choosing a category
 - Scoring points
 - Band by band propagation and strategies for moderate stations
- Setting a Goal
 - DXCC in a day
 - Classic Overlay
- Final Thoughts



What is a Modest Station?

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- An HF radio
- At least one multiband-capable antenna
- Logging Software – N1MM+, WriteLog, etc. (not absolutely necessary, but it makes things a whole lot easier)
- Automatic keyer for CW (K1EL WinKeyer for example)
- Nice-to-haves
 - Tribander at 40' or higher
 - 40m, 80m dipoles
 - Inverted L for 160m
 - Amplifier

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Why Would I do This?

- It's a learning experience
 - HF propagation
 - Improve operating technique
 - Improve CW proficiency
- Fill out needed countries for DXCC
- It's something to do with your HF radio
 - There's a contest every weekend
- Have fun



What Do I Do?

- Search & Pounce (S&P)
 - Tune the band and call
 - Or, point and shoot with the band map
 - Don't spend a lot of time in a pile up
 - Tune away, come back later
 - Busting pileups is an art form – and it can be fun
 - The best pileups are the ones you don't have to bust to work a multiplier



Suggestions for a Better Pileup Experience

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Timing is Everything

- Listen first
- Many DX stations won't come back to a caller immediately after the first "over."
- Get a feel for the DX station operator's "rhythm" - try to call when most stations aren't calling, but don't QRM the DX station.

Pile-ups tend get smaller as the contest progresses

- On Friday night, every multiplier is a new one for everybody
- By Sunday afternoon, many DX stations are begging for QSOs.

Any DX station that gets spotted can generate a pile-up

- Try waiting 15-30 minutes after the DX station is spotted.

Avoid cluster pile-ups by turning the dial (start at the top of the band?)

- Don't just chase cluster spots. "Packet is the devil." (K1DG)
- Find DX before the multitude does.

For CW, use the XIT control if you have one

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... and one more ...

Working a pileup is only fun only when you break it

So...

Don't bang your head against the wall – *It Hurts*



What Do I Do

● Running

- Find a clear frequency, call CQ, and stay there “running” callers for as long as you can (or want)
- 10 and 15 could be more productive for a modest station in a DX contest
- In CW mode, be ready for the RBN effect
- Be Proficient and Efficient
- Some contests are easier for running than others
...and some allow self-spotting
- Running is fun and energizing when it works (so keep trying)



CQ Worldwide DX SSB is Just Around the Corner

Northeast
HamXposition

October
25-26

48 hours
continuous

Starts at
0000Z
10/25

All HF
Bands 160
through 10

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What Category am I in?

- Reading the rules before any contest starts is mandatory – even if you think you know the rules
- Single op? Multi op?
- Assisted (use of cluster network spotting) or unassisted
- High power (>100w), Low power (5w – 100w), QRP (5 w or less)
- Overlay Categories
 - Classic – 24 hrs., one radio, no assistance
 - Rookie – First licensed less than three years before contest date
 - Youth – 25 years old or younger
 - Explorer – (look it up on the CQ WW website)

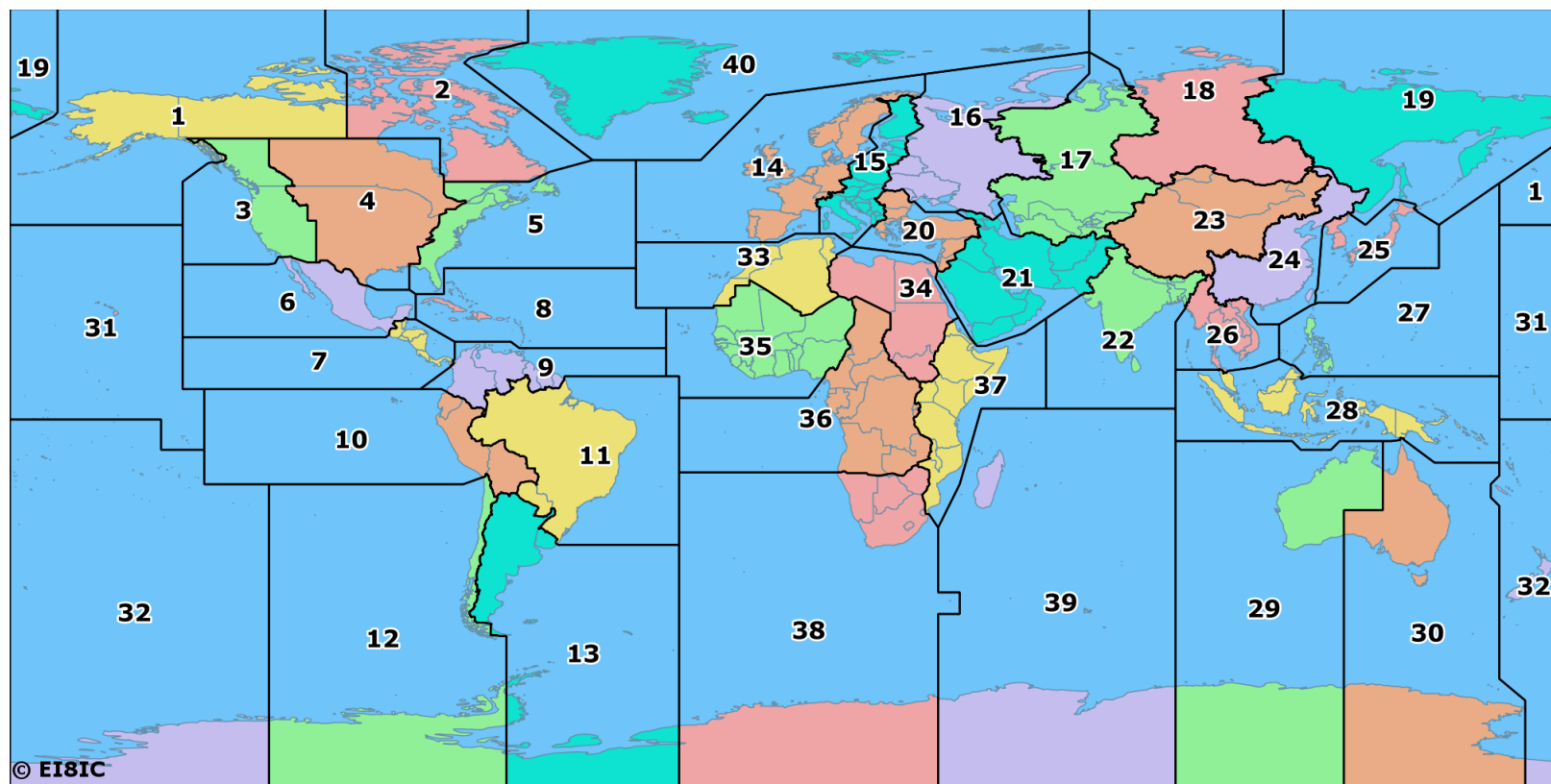


How do I Score Points?

- Work stations once per band
- Non NA stations count 3 QSO points
 - 2 points for different countries within NA
- Multipliers per band
 - 40 CQ Zones
 - DXCC countries
- Log each QSO with signal report and CQ zone

Score = total QSO points all bands x total multipliers all bands

CQ WW Zone Map





Band by Band Propagation for CQWW SSB

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- 10m – Could be the go-to band for a modest station
 - Lots of “room”
 - Lower antennas (30’ – 50’) will play
- 15m – Early morning to late evening with “around the world” propagation
- 20m – Could be open around the clock (so always check)
 - Not as much “room” as 10 and 15
 - DX will become easier to work the further into the contest you go
- Low Bands – 40, 80, 160
 - Saturday night could be more productive than Friday night
 - Check for split operation on 40 – EU transmitting 7,040 – 7,080 but listening in the US phone band
- Use your favorite HF propagation tool during the contest



Set Yourself a Goal

Be Realistic

- Analyze past scores for the category you intend to enter
- How many QSOs, how many multipliers and on which bands get you to your goal

Use your goal for motivation as the contest progresses

- If you use N1MM, check the Info and Score Summary Windows

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Goal Setting Example 1: Work DXCC in a Weekend

Start with Europe

- It's easy and they're on all bands
- 60 countries possible and most will be on - **50**

Caribbean

- Many home station and DX-pedition-type operations – at least **10**

Central and South America

- Most SA countries should be on – at least **10**

Asia

- Asiatic Russia, Near East, Far East – Harder but doable – **5**

Pacific

- VK, ZL, KH6, KL7 plus a few more – **5**

Announced DX-peditions for CQWW SSB

- See NG3X page – **20 (?)** workable with a modest station



Goal Setting Example 2: Classic Overlay, 700K Points

- K8ZM Classic Overlay, Low Power Score 2024

- Cushcraft X7 @ 54' plus 40m add-on
- W2AU dipole for 80m @12 ft
- ICOM 7610

695 QSOs, 87 zones, 258 countries, 670,335 points

- Can I do:

- 200 QSOs on 10 and 15 each, plus 100 QSOs on 20, plus 200 QSOs on the low bands? (700 QSOs or 30/hr.)?
- 20 zones each on the high bands (60) plus 30 more on the low bands (90 zones)?
- 70 countries each on the high bands (210) plus 50 more on the low bands? (260 countries)?

If so, you're there



Final Thoughts

- Practice, Practice, Practice
 - Don't wait for the major contests
 - Check the WA7BNM Contest Calendar for weekly contests
 - QSO parties (NEQP, NAQP), country-specific contests
 - CW training tools (Morse Runner example)
- Your past may not be prologue
- Challenge yourself
- We want you back, so have fun (that's an order)



Resources

- Contest University (<https://www.contestuniversity.com/files/>)
- Amateur Radio Contesting for Beginners by Doug Grant, K1DG
- WA7BNM Contest Calendar
(<https://www.contestcalendar.com/>)
- NG3X Contest/DX-pedition page
(<https://www.ng3k.com/misc/cqs2024.html>)
- Yankee Clipper Contest Club (yccc.org)
- K5ZD contest reports (k5zd.com/contest-reports)



Questions?

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“Easy Peasy, Lemon Squeezy”

