



CONTEST ORIENTATION

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GENERAL NOTICE

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, EXIT THE WAY WE CAME IN.

ADDITIONAL EXITS ARE IN THE BASEMENT, SIDE AND BACK OF MEETING HALL.

MUSTER OUTSIDE, WEST FENCE.

WASHROOMS ARE DOWNSTAIRS.

THIS IS A WORKSHOP, ASK QUESTIONS ANY TIME.

LEARN BY PARTICIPATING.

WHAT'S YOUR CONTEST EXPERIENCE?



CONTEST ORIENTATION

What is a contest and why might I want to be in one?

What goes on during a contest?

Overview of logging software.

How to operate in a contest.

Try out typical contest exchanges off-air.

What about interference?



WHAT IS A CONTEST AND WHY WOULD I BE IN ONE?

- A contest is a competition to collect points for awards, self-improvement or just fun!
- Make lots of quick contacts and see how many per hour, day or single sitting.
- Pick up continents, countries, states, provinces, sections, counties or grid squares for awards like WAS (Worked All States).
- Collect QSL cards or contact credits for operating awards like WAS , WAC, DXCC, etc.
- Test new antennas, propagation on different bands, hours of operation.
- Participate in club events – ARRL Field Day, Winter Field Day, club station contests.
- Emergency training exercises, passing short accurate messages over longer times.
- **Gain on air operating experience.**

KNOW YOUR Q CODES AND PHONETICS

- Q Codes are shortcuts for common expressions.
- Many can be either a question or a statement eg
- QSL –acknowledge
 - QSL? – do you acknowledge?
 - QSL! – I acknowledge!
- Commonly used – QRZ, QSL, QRM, QSB



WHAT HAPPENS DURING A CONTEST?

- An on-air contact between stations is called a QSO (cue-ess-oh or cue-so).
- During a contest, you can call CQ (looking for other stations) or you can reply to CQ.
- A valid QSO requires your callsign, date, time, frequency, mode, other station's callsign, signal report (RST) and contest exchange.
- A contest exchange is determined by the organizers and is usually your state or province.
- Some contest exchanges are serial numbers – your first QSO is number 1, the second is 2, etc.

RST – by convention, signal strength is always 59 for voice and 599 for CW, regardless of the actual signal strength.

HOW DO I FIND A CONTEST?

- There is nearly always a contest on-air.
- WA7BNM posts a contest calendar - <https://www.contestcalendar.com>
- The Carolinas QSO Party will be an on-air practice session, information below.

The screenshot shows the WA7BNM Contest Calendar website. The browser address bar displays `contestcalendar.com/contestcal.html`. The website header includes the WA7BNM logo, the text "Contest Calendar", and "Powered by ICOM". A navigation menu contains the following items: Home, 8-Day, 5-Week, 12-Month, Perpetual, State QSO Parties, CW, QRP, Log Due Dates, Historical, Alphabetical, Customize, and Cabrillo Names. A "Hide Weekly Contests" button is located below the navigation menu. The main content area shows the month of "January 2024" with a list of contests:

Contest Name	Time	Date
+ AGB New Year Snowball Contest	0000Z-0100Z	Jan 1
+ K1USN Slow Speed Test	0000Z-0100Z	Jan 1
+ SARTG New Year RTTY Contest	0800Z-1100Z	Jan 1
+ AGCW Happy New Year Contest	0900Z-1200Z	Jan 1

Website navigation, note Log Due Dates

Contest names and dates



WHAT IS A CONTEST EXCHANGE AND WHERE DO I FIND IT?

- Find the contest rules and look for the exchange section eg:

South Carolina QSO Party,

Exchange: SC: RS(T) + County
non-SC: RS(T) + (state/province/"DX")

- Typically signal report and some other information like serial number of contacts made, province, name, age, CQ zone, etc.
- What is your personal exchange data?
- Find your grid square, ARRL section , CQ and ITU zones. Document and display it.

CONTEST LOGGING SOFTWARE

- Historically, logs were written by hand and checked manually.
- Contest logging software records QSO information and displays analytics on the go.
- Requires a computer and cable to connect transceiver (radio) and computer.
- Software is configured for the specific contest and records date, time and frequency of the QSO when you enter the other station's callsign and exchange.
- We use N1MM+, many others are available, listed here:

<https://www.dxzone.com/catalog/Software/Contesting/>



N1MM+ OVERVIEW, AN EXAMPLE

The screenshot displays the N1MM+ software interface with several key windows:

- Manual - VFO A:** Shows a frequency display with a value of 14240.00 and various control buttons like 'DNDX' and 'Wipe'.
- Available - 0 Multis (L...):** A window for managing multi-tone signals, showing a grid for Mute, Qs, and Total Qs.
- 2024-02-09 00:48:33Z ARRL 10 Meter Contest - N1MM LOG.L310:** A call log window displaying a table of contacts.

TS	Call	Freq	Snt	Rcv	Exch	HL	Pfx	Pts
2023-12-10 18:26	N2BJ	28667.01	59	59	IL	✓	K	2
2023-12-10 18:29	CQ2XN	28612.34	59	59	1726	✓	CM	2
2023-12-10 18:30	HBAT	28587.14	59	59	MN	✓	K	2
2023-12-10 18:33	VE6AO	28484.00	59	59	AB	✓	VE	2
2023-12-10 18:35	WB0YYE	28479.00	59	59	NE	✓	K	2
2023-12-10 18:44	K4KI	28511.00	59	59	AL	✓	K	2
2023-12-10 18:46	N1AH/9	28512.96	59	59	IL	✓	K	2
2023-12-10 18:47	K6MD	28560.82	59	59	MN	✓	K	2
2023-12-10 18:50	H4EXA	28373.16	59	59	FL	✓	K	2
2023-12-10 18:53	T117	28396.32	59	59	2782	✓	TI	2
2023-12-10 18:54	K2DRH	28415.00	59	59	IL	✓	K	2
2023-12-10 18:57	VE3LJL	28650.00	59	59	ON	✓	VE	2
2023-12-10 19:04	AC0M	28315.68	59	59	MN	✓	K	2
- Gray Line Setup:** A window showing a world map with a yellow dot indicating the current location.
- Score - 1,064 Points:** A summary window showing contest statistics:

Contact	ARRL10M
Band	QSOs
20	28
Total	28
Score	1,064
1 Mult	= 1.5 Q's
- 14240.00 USB Manual - VFO A:** A control window for the VFO, featuring a frequency display, a 'Run' button, and a table for various control functions:

F1 G&P CQ	F2 Exch	F3 Spare	F4 VE6NRQ	F5 Via Call	F6 Spare
F7 Rpt Each	F8 Age?	F9 Zone	F10 Score	F11 Spare	F12 Wipe
- Info - VE6NRQ - Exch: 59 AB:** A window showing a bar chart and a grid for tracking QSOs, with a 'Next QSO' indicator.

Day/Night MAP & Gray Line

The screenshot displays a software interface with several overlapping windows. A central window shows a table of data with columns for date, time, and various numerical values. To the right, a 'Gray Line' window features a world map with a highlighted line across the globe. Below the map, there is a 'Setup' window with a grid of data. At the bottom, a 'VESNRO' window shows a graph and a '>24hrs' indicator. The interface also includes a taskbar at the bottom with icons for 'Start', 'Internet Explorer', and 'MSN'.

Date	Time	Value 1	Value 2	Value 3	Value 4	Value 5	Value 6	Value 7	Value 8
2003-12-18	18:24	1023	2862.91	58	55	TL	VP	K	L
2003-12-18	18:28	11045	2852.71	55	55	TL	VP	K	L
2003-12-18	18:30	1001	2852.74	58	55	HL	VP	K	L
2003-12-18	18:33	95395	2854.89	55	55	HL	VP	K	L
2003-12-18	18:35	98799	28479.89	58	55	HL	VP	K	L
2003-12-18	18:38	8961	2852.89	55	55	HL	VP	K	L
2003-12-18	18:40	111009	2852.59	58	55	TL	VP	K	L
2003-12-18	18:42	1096	2852.52	55	55	HL	VP	K	L
2003-12-18	18:58	84224	28175.10	58	55	TL	VP	K	L
2003-12-18	19:01	7331	28196.12	55	55	HL	VP	K	L
2003-12-18	19:04	81094	28415.89	58	55	TL	VP	K	L
2003-12-18	19:07	8332	28199.89	55	55	HL	VP	K	L
2003-12-18	19:10	8026	28115.49	58	55	HL	VP	K	L

FREQUENCY/BAND MAP OF RADIO; DISPLAYS CURRENT FREQUENCY; CLICKING ON A FREQUENCY HERE WILL QSY TO THAT FREQUENCY ON THE RADIO

QSY – change frequency/move to xxx MHz

The screenshot displays a radio software interface with several key components:

- Frequency Band Map (Left):** A vertical bar showing a frequency range from 14100 to 14350 kHz. A black arrow indicates the current frequency is set to 14240.00 kHz. The interface also shows 'Mental - VFO A', '14240.00', and 'BNDX'.
- Frequency List (Center):** A table of frequencies with columns for Call, Power, S/N, and other parameters. The list includes:

Call	Power	S/N	Other
2023-12-18 18:24	1023	28667.91	58 55 TL
2023-12-18 18:24	11047	28557.71	55 55 TL
2023-12-18 18:24	1047	28547.24	58 55 66
2023-12-18 18:27	91395	28554.89	55 55 66
2023-12-18 18:25	104706	28479.69	58 55 66
2023-12-18 18:28	8461	28553.89	55 55 66
2023-12-18 18:40	1110079	28552.59	58 55 TL
2023-12-18 18:47	1096	28553.73	55 55 66
2023-12-18 18:58	84233	28375.10	58 55 TL
2023-12-18 18:53	73317	28396.17	55 55 66
2023-12-18 18:24	81204	28415.89	58 55 TL
2023-12-18 18:37	10337	28559.89	55 55 66
2023-12-18 18:44	8026	28315.49	58 55 66
- Call Log (Bottom Center):** A window titled 'Mental - VFO A' showing a list of call logs with columns for 'Call', 'Power', 'S/N', and 'Other'. It includes a search bar and a 'Refresh' button.
- Map (Top Right):** A world map showing the location of the radio station.
- VEGPRO (Bottom Right):** A window showing a bar chart and a table of data, with a 'VEGPRO' logo and '>24hrs' text.

Running score, showing raw points, and any bonuses or multipliers (mults) applied

The screenshot displays a software interface with several windows. A large green callout box points to a table of data. In the bottom right, a 'Score - 1064 Points' window shows a breakdown of scores. The desktop background features a world map and various icons.

Call	Freq	Dir	Mode	Mult
1402-12-18-18-24	14023		TL	1
1402-12-18-18-24	11047		TL	1
1402-12-18-18-24	14041		TL	1
1402-12-18-18-24	14095		TL	1
1402-12-18-18-24	14099		TL	1
1402-12-18-18-24	11100-9		TL	1
1402-12-18-18-24	14096		TL	1
1402-12-18-18-24	14224		TL	1
1402-12-18-18-24	14337		TL	1
1402-12-18-18-24	14394		TL	1
1402-12-18-18-24	14337		TL	1
1402-12-18-18-24	14336		TL	1

Contest	Band	QSOs	Pts	S-P	Cty	Pt/Q
ARRL10M	20	28	38	19	4	2.0
	Total	28	38	19	4	2.0

Score: 1,064
1 Pt/It = 1.5 Q's

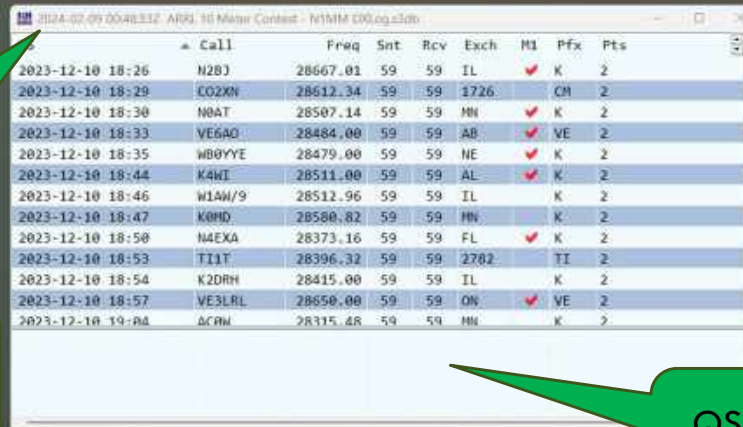


Operator callsign and contest exchange

Number and rate of QSOs



Contest name, frequency, database (file) name



Date	Time	Call	Freq	Snt	Rcv	Exch	M1	Pfx	Pts
2023-12-10	18:26	N2BJ	28667.01	59	59	IL	✓	K	2
2023-12-10	18:29	CO2XN	28612.34	59	59	1726		CH	2
2023-12-10	18:30	NOAT	28507.14	59	59	MN	✓	K	2
2023-12-10	18:33	VE6AO	28484.00	59	59	AB	✓	VE	2
2023-12-10	18:35	WB0YYE	28479.00	59	59	NE	✓	K	2
2023-12-10	18:44	K4HT	28511.00	59	59	AL	✓	K	2
2023-12-10	18:46	W1AM/9	28512.96	59	59	IL		K	2
2023-12-10	18:47	K0HD	28500.82	59	59	HN		K	2
2023-12-10	18:50	N4EXA	28373.16	59	59	FL	✓	K	2
2023-12-10	18:53	TI1T	28396.32	59	59	2702		TI	2
2023-12-10	18:54	K2DRH	28415.00	59	59	IL		K	2
2023-12-10	18:57	VE3LRL	28650.00	59	59	ON	✓	VE	2
2023-12-10	19:04	ACRM	28315.48	59	59	MN		K	2

Type other station callsign RST and exchange in these boxes

QSOs entered; Red checks indicate Multipliers applied

Function keys can be programmed to carry out specific actions



AFTER THE CONTEST

- You do **NOT** have to submit your contest logs to the organizer . If you do:
- Check the contest rules for submission dates and file formats.
- Ensure the proper format. Files submitted are usually Cabrillo format, sometimes ADI (Amateur Data Interchange); most programs generate both.
- File are either uploaded on contest website or sent by email.

RUN VS. SEARCH & POUNCE (S&P)

- Run – find a clear frequency, call CQ and start logging QSOs!
 - Advantage – can work many more stations, much faster since more stations S&P vs. Run.
- S&P - turn the dial, looking for stations calling CQ and reply.
 - Advantage – can fill in other station's callsign and exchange while waiting.
 - If you cannot hold a frequency or maintain a good run, can still work stations.
- Most contesters prefer Run and use S&P to find special callsigns and multipliers.

CALLING CQ – “SEEK YOU”, LOOKING FOR QSOS, ANY TIME, NOT JUST IN A CONTEST



CONTEST QSO PRACTICE

Your turn!

Remember to log your QSO – other station's callsign, signal report and exchange.

Use phonetics.

Don't be rushed, it's more important to get the information than to be fast.

Speed will develop.

MULTIPLE SIMULTANEOUS REPLIES AKA PILEUPS

- Multiple replies to your CQ? No problem.
- If you couldn't make anything out, just say QRZ?
- If you heard part of a callsign, say that eg "ending in Bravo Charlie?"
- Keep the run going, manage the pileups and try to maintain your spot.

CHALLENGES

- Remember, amateur radio frequencies are for everyone to use, no one “owns” a spot, be courteous but expect courtesy as well.
- Someone may ask you to move or they may simply work over top.
- Not everyone follows the same phonetic alphabet, be flexible.
- Sometimes best to acknowledge a super loud station in a pileup so you can move on.
- Definitely ask for space if they’re interfering with a QSO eg
 - You have a pileup and hear a quiet station N7something but others keep calling over top:
 - “November Seven only please”
- The number of courteous operators (usually) exceeds the LIDS.

REGISTER ON THE CARA PAGE UNDER EVENTS CALENDAR TO OPERATE AT VE6AO FOR THE CQ WPX SSB CONTEST, MARCH 29, 30, 31

Contest exchange:
RS + consecutive serial
number

Eg N7AB 59 057

The screenshot shows the 'Contest Details' page for the 'CQ WW WPX Contest, SSB'. The page is powered by ICOM and features a navigation bar with options like Home, 9-Day, 3-Week, 12-Month, Perpetual, State QSO Parties, CW, QRP, Log Due Dates, Historical, Alphabetical, Customize, and Call Sign Names. The main content area lists various contest parameters:

- Score:** Active
- Contest Dates:** Worldwide
- Contest Location:** Worldwide
- Band(s):** Worldwide
- Mode(s):** SSB
- Band(s):** 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m
- Classes:** Single Op All Band (QRP/Low/High), Single Op Single Band (QRP/Low/High), Single Op Overlays: (TB-Wras/Rookie/Classic/Youth), Multi-Single (Low/High), Multi-Two, Multi-Many
- Max operating hours:** Single Op: 36 hours with offtimes of at least 60 minutes, Multi-Op: 48 hours
- Max power:** HF: 1500 watts, LP: 100 watts, QRP: 5 watts
- Exchange:** RS + Serial No.
- Work schedule:** Once per band
- QSO Points:** All: 6 points per 160/80/40m QSO with different continent, All: 3 points per 20/15/10m QSO with different continent, Non-NA: 2 points per 160/80/40m QSO with same continent different country, Non-NA: 1 point per 20/15/10m QSO with same continent different country, NA: 4 points per 160/80/40m QSO with same continent different country, NA: 2 points per 20/15/10m QSO with same continent different country, All: 1 point per QSO with same country
- Multipoints:** Prefixes once
- Score Calculation:** Total score = total QSO points x total mults
- Q mail log to:** (None)
- Q mail log of:** <https://www.cqwp.com/logcheck/>
- Q mail log to:** (None)
- Q mail rules at:** <https://www.cqwp.com/rules.htm>
- Call Sign:** CQ-WPX-SSB

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

- Questions?
- This presentation will be uploaded to the CARA web page
- Register for the VE6AO Station Orientation and Practice Contest Feb 24/25.
- Register for the VE6AO CQ WPX SSB Contest March 29/30/31.
- Get on the air contest weekends and have fun!