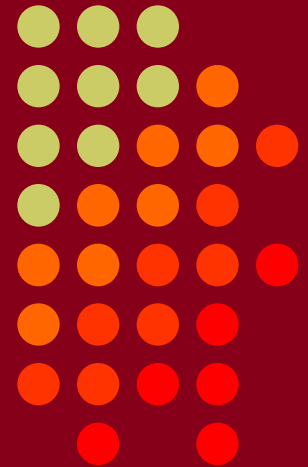


CTU Presents

Introduction to Introduction to
Contesting (Be The Elmer!)
Ward Silver, NØAX



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Overview



- The importance of being an Elmer
- Self-improvement
- Training opportunities
- Station capabilities
- Training, guiding, and rewarding
- Attracting your crowd
- Having a good time!

Goals of the Session



- **Show** how you can be a Contest Elmer
- **Convince** you to actually try it
- **Give** you some basic tips and ideas
- **Illustrate** some potential successes
- Make you **Laff** (in the right places)

Why Be a Contest Elmer?



- Ham radio is about **mutual instruction**
- Somebody did it for you – **give back**
- Competition is a great way to **build skills**
- **Skill > Success > Sustain**
- If you want to learn something – **teach it!**
- Make **friends for life**

Self-Improvement



- **Not** just for “Big Guns”
 - How do you think they got to be “Big Guns”?
- **Not** just for “Big Stations”
 - Success comes in all sizes
- “*Übung macht den meister*”
- Training makes you think about **yourself**
- You will **learn** a *ton* from hosting
- **Don’t** be afraid to make mistakes

Cycle of Life



Observe

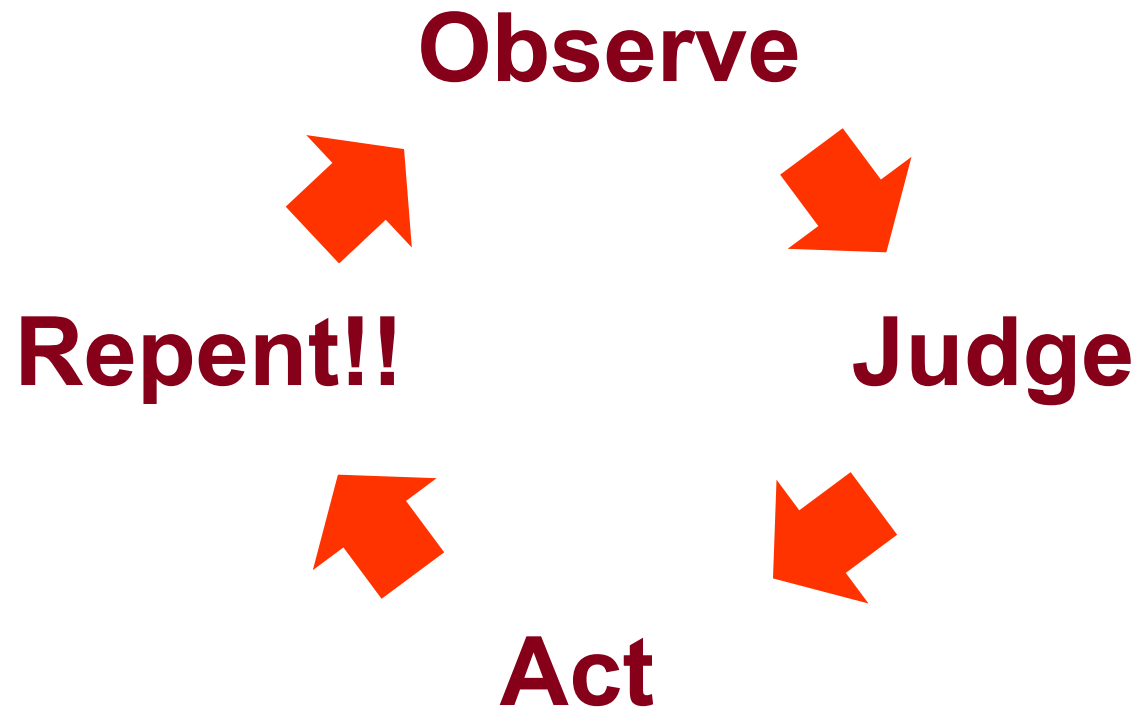


Judge



Act

Cycle of Life



Cycle of Life



**I know we all learn from mistakes...
but why do they always have to be mine?**

Training Opportunities



- Start **small** and **manageable**
 - M/M in CQ WW is probably not a good first step
 - Multi-single or Multi-two
 - Run/mult or just share a single radio as skill permits
 - M2 is less stringent on band-changes
 - Two or three ops with one or two Elmers
 - Don't invite the whole club or scout troop
 - Don't combine with open house or chili cookoff
 - Not a good idea to invite the media!

Training Opportunities



Training Opportunities



- Create **reasonable** expectations
 - Set **goals** within reach
 - Long-term vs Short-term
 - Waxing the Big MMs is not be a good first-time goal
 - Consider operating **time** and **availability**
 - How many operators?
 - How many Elmers?
 - Keep operating shifts **short** and **frequent**
 - Make sure ops can engage as much as they want

Training Opportunities



- Choosing the **right** contests
 - Big ones are fun but **overwhelming** to newbies
 - They will learn **quickly**
 - Medium-sized contests
 - State QSO Parties
 - North American QSO Parties
 - ARRL 10 Meter or June VHF / CQ WW VHF
 - Fun but not overwhelming
 - Graduate to Sweepstakes, ARRL DX, CQ WPX

Training Opportunities



- Know yours and the Elmer's **skills**
 - What modes can you teach?
 - What modes do your invitees operate?
 - Can they **operate** your equipment?
 - Can YOU operate your equipment?
 - Prepare to train (and practice, yourself)
 - One Elmer available per operator at first
 - OK for everybody to learn at once
 - But **manage expectations**

Training Opportunities



Station Capabilities



- Is there a contest in which you **do well**?
- What can your station **hardware** do?
 - Do you have an amp?
 - Is it a runner or S&P-er?
 - Computer logging – a must!
- What can your **antenna farm** do?
- What small **improvements** would make the biggest difference?

Station Capabilities



- The Most Powerful Improvements
 - **Operator First**
 - Technique Second
 - Antennas Third
 - Radios and Amplifiers Fourth
 - Optional Gadgets Last

Station Capabilities



- **Prepare, prepare, prepare**
 - No plan survives contact with the enemy
- Do a **dry run** before Friday afternoon
 - Update the logging software
 - Check all of the gear at full power needed
 - **Label, label, label**
- Elmer+trainee **support** accessories
- Have the station **ready** when first op arrives

Training, guiding, & rewarding



- **Prepare** your operators, too!
 - Have the contest **rules** available
 - **Explain** what the contest is about
 - They will probably be a little nervous
 - **Demonstrate** basic operation (checklists, labels)
 - OK to start late – this is practice!
 - Walk through band switching, antenna pointing, etc
 - If anything is off limits, now is the time to say so
 - Encourage **questions!**

Training, guiding, & rewarding



- **Hands-on assistance** at the beginning
 - One-on-one Elmering is the best
 - Let them **listen** first, if need be
 - Don't try to wow 'em – they're already wowed
- **Encourage questions**
- **Walk them through**
 - Very new ops will need a cheat-sheet
 - Be able to listen as they operate

Training, guiding, & rewarding



Training, guiding, & rewarding



- The first **solo flight**
 - You be the **judge** of when they're ready
 - Have **cues** to guide them
 - Maybe you can log while they operate?
- **Gentle** reminders are best
 - This is not driver's ed, no yelling
 - Hand signals or visual cues
- Be **kind** – make the first solo a short one

Training, guiding, & rewarding



Training, guiding, & rewarding



- **Appreciate** their successes!
- After the first shift...
 - One-on-one **review** for Q&A
 - What they did **right**
 - **Gentle** critique of what they did wrong
 - Where they have room for **improvement**
 - OK to take a **break**
- Keep some **stats** on how they did

Training, guiding, & rewarding



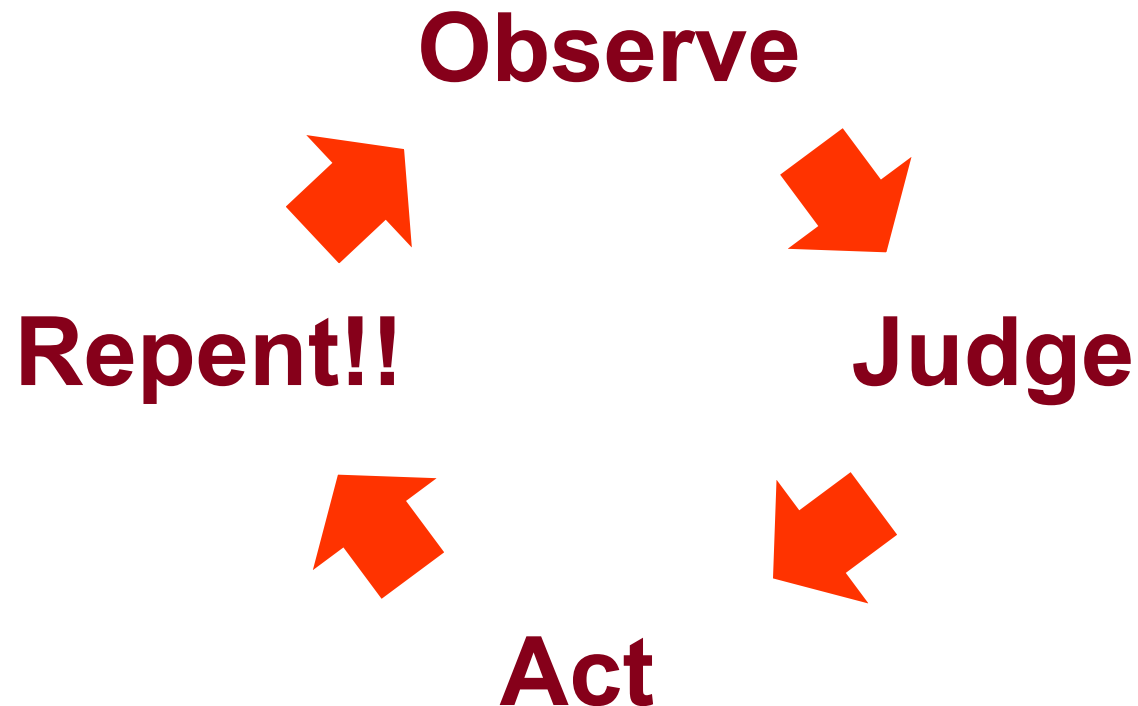
- **Submit the log** right away – *no log-washing*
- Show them how to **post a score** on 3830scores.com
- **Follow-up** after the contest
 - On-site or in the next few days
 - What worked and what didn't
 - Detailed **question and answer**
 - Certificates of appreciation or thank-you note

Training, guiding, & rewarding



- Be **proud** of the results!
 - 18th place is just fine – enjoy it!
- Keep the team **updated** as scores post
- Exchange posts with other teams
- **Distribute** all results and writeups
- Make sure everybody gets **credit** equally
- **Talk it up** at meetings and on social media
 - Better yet, have *them* talk it up

Cycle of Life



Attracting Your Crowd



- Go out and **invite** your team!
 - Remember how badly *you* wanted to “join the team”?
- **Look** for those who look like they want to play but might be holding back
- **Mine** local and regional results for new calls
- **Extend** an invitation
- **Encourage** your ops to bring more ops

Attracting Your Crowd



- The more **fun** you sound like you're having the more **fun** you probably will have
- **Encourage** others to host
 - Make up challenges
 - Club-to-club? Emcomm teams?
- Include your **contact information** when posting results

Having a Good Time!



- Don't forget this **crucial** element
- Keep it fun for you and **your family**
- As **success** builds, so will your team
 - Raise your goals
 - Build your station capabilities
 - Give your team more responsibilities
- **Encourage** your ops to try it on their own
- **Pay it forward**

Thanks!



- **Be** the amateur service we want to be
- If not us, then **who?**
- So have **fun. . .**
and go get 'em!

