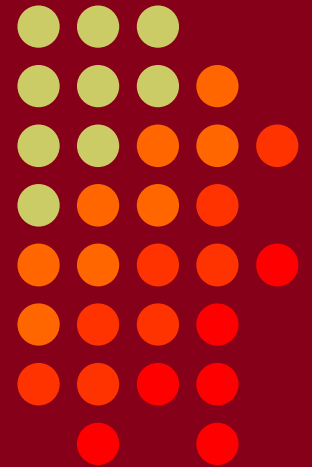


Contesting 101

Operating

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The reason for this talk

- Many talks about station building/improving
- Operating skills seem to be declining
- Some in the audience are new here
- Many in the audience can carry the message
- You are welcome to re-use this talk at your local radio club(s)

The Object of the Game



- Contact as many other stations as possible...
- ...in as many other states/countries/zones...
- ...in a given time period (anywhere from 30 minutes to 48 hours)
- Contacts only count if they are accurately executed (callsign and “exchange” logged correctly)

During the contest - A Contest QSO



- “CQ Contest, Kilo One Delta Golf”
 - *K1DG, using standard phonetics is soliciting contacts*
- “*Whiskey One Alfa Whiskey*”
 - *W1AW is calling K1DG*
- “W1AW, 59 1234 New Hampshire”
 - *K1DG is giving W1AW a signal report, serial number, and his state*
- “*Thanks - 59 001 Connecticut*”
 - *W1AW confirms he copied K1DG’s exchange, then gives his exchange*
- “Thanks...K 1 Delta Golf, Contest”
 - *K1DG confirms he has received W1AW’s exchange, announces he is ready for the next caller*



A More Realistic Contest QSO

- “CQ Contest, Kilo One Delta Golf”
 - *K1DG, using standard phonetics, is soliciting contacts*
- “*Whiskey One GLB#FY%ST%KQ@WX&ZSK*”
 - *A W1 and a bunch of other guys are calling K1DG*
- “W1something, 59 1234 New Hampshire”
 - *K1DG only heard the W1 part of the callsign, and is giving that station a signal report, serial number, and his state*
- “*K1DG, my call is W1 Alfa Whiskey...QSL, 59 001 Connecticut*”
 - *W1AW repeats his call, confirms he has copied K1DG’s exchange, then gives his exchange*
- “W1AW...thanks...K 1 Delta Golf, Contest”
 - *K1DG confirms he has the callsign correct now, has received W1AW’s exchange, announces he is ready for the next caller*

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A Very Bad Contest QSO

- “CQ Contest, Kilo One Delta Golf”
 - *K1DG, using standard phonetics is soliciting contacts*
- “*Whiskey One PQMN&XW%PR\$YO@WI#LJDHFKSLJ*”
 - *A W1 and some other stations are calling K1DG*
- “W1something, 59 1234 New Hampshire”
 - *K1DG only heard the W1 part of the callsign, and is giving that station a report, serial number, and his state*
- “*K1DG, this is KC4XYZ - Kentucky Cocacola 4 X-Xray Y-Yellerbelly Z-Zinjanthropus - KC4XYZ - did you come back to me?*”

What part of this is wrong?

How do you make more QSOs?



- Call CQ if you are loud enough and conditions permit it
- Search and pounce if you cannot CQ
- Say as little as possible, but not less
- Keep moving

Two basic operating modes



- “Search and pounce” (or: “Click and call”)
 - You find a station that is calling CQ or has a pileup
 - You call him
 - He answers you, you exchange reports
 - You log it
 - Rinse, repeat
- “Running” (or: “Park and Bark”)
 - You call CQ
 - Other stations answer you

How to Search and Pounce



- You tune in a station
 - (maybe on a "partial kHz"...that is OK!)
 - If you click a spot, you may have to adjust tuning a bit
 - Make sure it is not a duplicate
- Call once, **with phonetics**
- Possible outcomes:
 1. He answers you and gives a report
 2. He answers someone else
 3. He answers with a partial call (not yours)
 4. He answers with a partial call (yours)
 5. he just calls CQ again

S&P Case 1



- He answers you with your call correct and gives a report
- You respond with your report – no more, no less
 - DO NOT SAY “PLEASE COPY”!
 - Would you want to hear that a few thousand times on a weekend?
- Do not repeat his call or report back to him unless you did not copy it (he already knows what he said)
- Make sure he got your report
- Log the QSO, move on to the next station

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S&P Case 2



- He clearly answers someone else
 - Unlike FT8, if you transmit, you will interfere with the station he is working, so stand by!
- Wait until he finishes the QSO, then call again (once, with phonetics)
 - If many stations are calling, figure out his timing
- Repeat until logged...or move on
 - “Know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em”
 - If he is answering stations in another region, move on...

S&P Case 3



- He responds to a partial call (not matching anything in your call)
- Refer to Case 2 – Stand by!
- If you call again, you will slow everybody down

S&P Case 4



- He answers a partial call matching yours
 - If he also gives a report, he thinks he will copy your next transmission OK
 - Give your full call and report
 - If he only says the partial call, he is not sure he will get it
 - Give your call again with phonetics
 - Repeat until he copies your call and gives your report
 - Once he has your call, don't repeat it – he will think you are correcting him!

S&P Case 5



- He just calls CQ again
 - Try a few times – he may have QRM or QRN that will go away
 - If other stations are also calling and not getting through, the problem is on his end – move on
 - Check your wattmeter, antenna, “Split”, etc.
- After a few unsuccessful tries, move on

Efficient S&P Operating



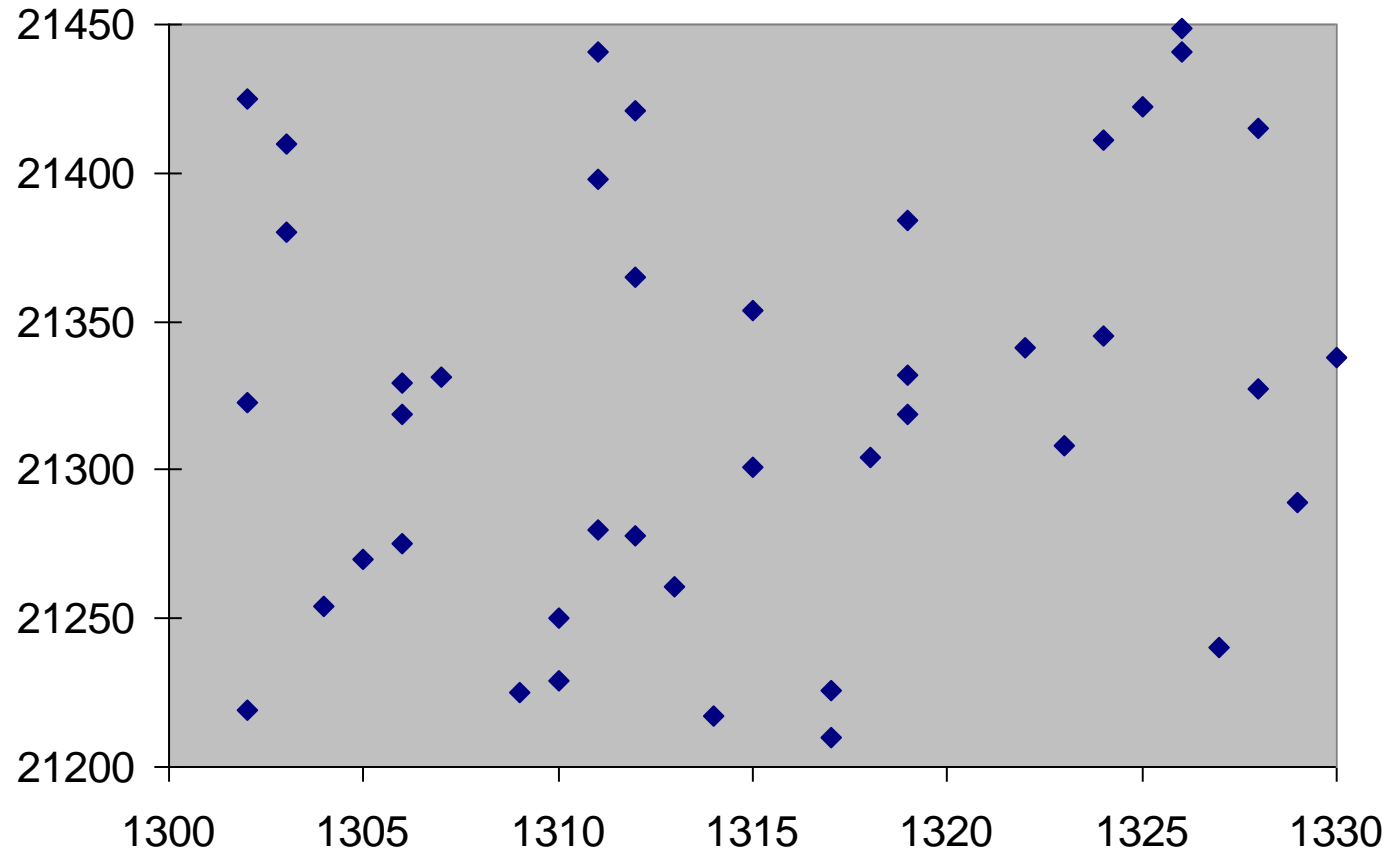
- Don't get stuck on one station
 - Exception: ATNO for you
- Keep moving
- Make sure you have the call correct
 - Many bad spots, especially late in the contest
 - Logging a bad callsign makes your score go down

Limits to S&P operating

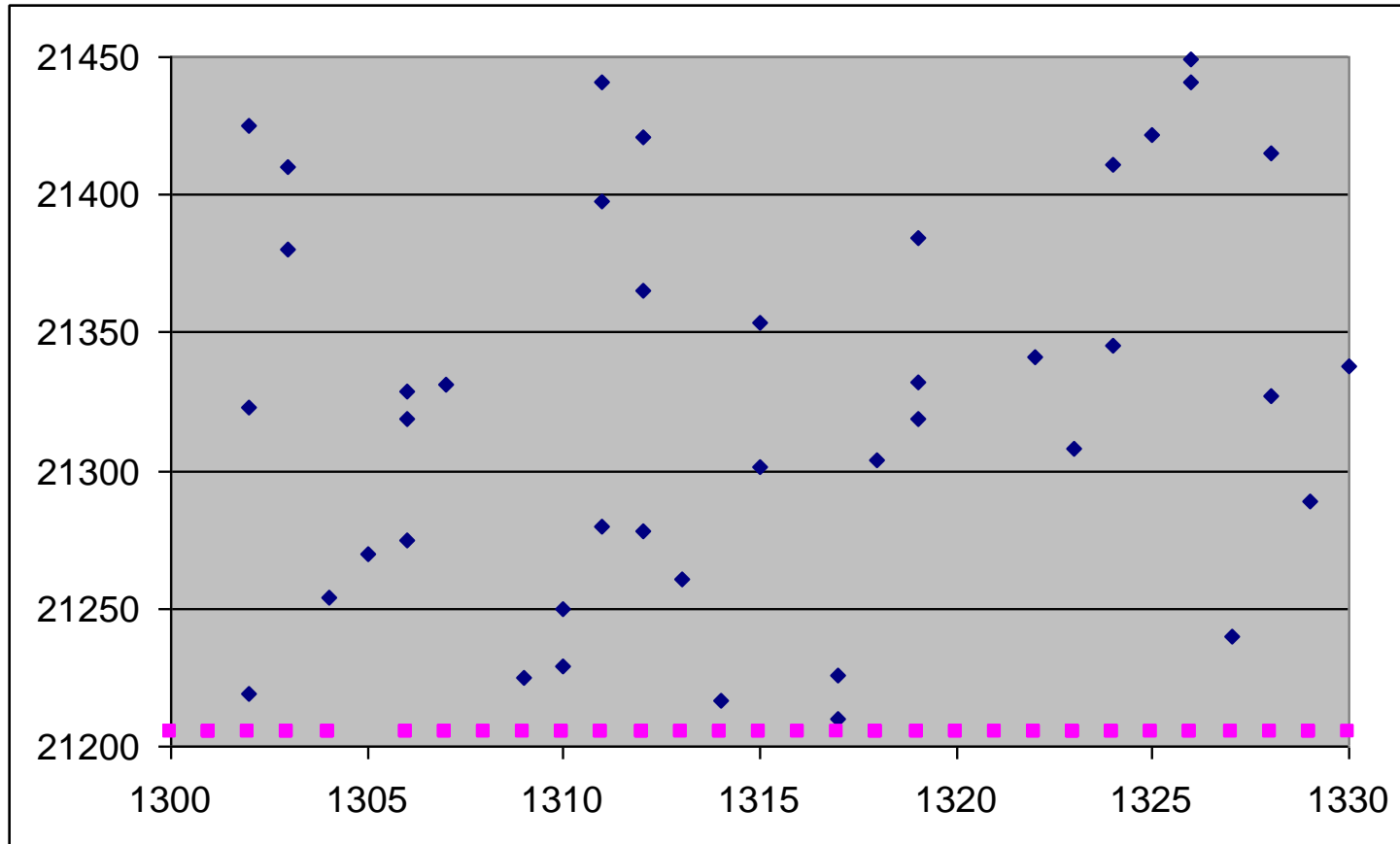


- 15M SSB example
 - Stations spaced 2 kHz apart
 - 21200 – 21450: 250 kHz; 125 stations
 - There are always more stations S&Ping than CQing
- If you are loud enough, that is about 1-2 hours
- Then what?

A good rate in S&P mode ~40 QSOs in 30 minutes



A better rate running (83 Qs)



Run vs. S&P

15M, 2005-ish, Two W1 Ops



Hour	Runner QSOs	S&P QSOs
D1-1300Z	166	83
D1-1400Z	132	81
D1-1500Z	120	49
D1-1600Z	124	42
D1-1700Z	136	17



A pretty good run

05-Mar-22	1350	348	21200	HA5PP	59 KW		3
05-Mar-22	1350	349	21200	F1GRH	59 K		3
05-Mar-22	1350	350	21200	OZ4MU	59 100	OZ	3
05-Mar-22	1351	351	21200	PA1H	59 400		3
05-Mar-22	1351	352	21200	PF1SCT	59 100		3
05-Mar-22	1351	353	21200	DL9MDI	59 100		3
05-Mar-22	1351	354	21200	G3ZAY	59 400		3
05-Mar-22	1351	355	21200	DL1ATZ	59 500		3
05-Mar-22	1351	356	21200	EA5N	59 500		3
05-Mar-22	1351	357	21200	IT9SSI	59 500		3
05-Mar-22	1352	358	21200	HB9CVE	59 K		3
05-Mar-22	1352	359	21200	PA3ETM	59 400		3
05-Mar-22	1352	360	21200	5Z4VJ	59 400	5Z	3





A pretty ridiculous run

- V47T first burst of Ws on 15M
 - “Where everybody knows your call”
- Two ops listening to two receivers on different antennas pulling out calls using WinTest partner mode
- Sorry about the audio quality...



10 QSOs in one minute

2015 V47T	59 8	NJ2F	59 05
2015 V47T	59 8	N1CC	59 04
2015 V47T	59 8	K0MZN	59 04
2016 V47T	59 8	N4RA	59 05
2016 V47T	59 8	W1GD	59 05
2016 V47T	59 8	W3MF	59 05
2016 V47T	59 8	AB0RX	59 04
2016 V47T	59 8	K1JB	59 05
2016 V47T	59 8	K3OQ	59 05
2016 V47T	59 8	W3GM	59 05
2016 V47T	59 8	K3PH	59 05
2016 V47T	59 8	WD8S	59 04
2016 V47T	59 8	N7YK	59 03
2017 V47T	59 8	WM7D	59 03
2017 V47T	59 8	VA3OB	59 04



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How to Run stations

- Find a clear frequency
 - Listen a little to make sure there is not a loud guy in your skip zone (you don't want QRM on the other side)
- Ask if frequency is in use
- Keep CQs short, use phonetics

If you get a caller...



- Three possibilities:
 - You get the whole call and it is in the “Check Partial” window
 - You get a partial call due to QRM from the side
 - You get a partial call due to QRM from too many callers

You get the whole call and it is in the “Check Partial” window



- Answer him with the same phonetics he used, give exchange once
 - If really loud and native/fluent English speaker, skip the phonetics
- When you get his exchange, just say "thanks" and sign your call (maybe with “QRZ?”)
- DO NOT repeat his call or exchange back to him (why?)
- If you don't get the exchange ask for a repeat. If you're not sure about something, ask for that part again.
 - Your score will go down if you get it wrong

You get a partial call due to QRM from the side



- Decide if you think you'll get it next time
 - Loud caller, mostly-clear frequency, respond with the partial call and report
 - Weaker caller, not-so-clear frequency, just respond to the partial call; only give the exchange when you know you have the call OK
- If the caller is strong and you need a lot of repeats, it takes too long, you should QSY
- Repeats are rate killers.
- If you get the missing part of the call on the second (or third) try, you only need to repeat the corrected part

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You get a partial call due to QRM from too many callers



- Come back to the partial and stick with it until you complete it or it becomes hopeless
- End the QSO with just "thanks" - the other caller(s) already know who you are and you don't want more callers!
- Pileups are rate killers!
- ***If you have a big pileup, you are talking too slow or saying too much***



If you don't get a caller



- Try, try again. And again.
- After a few unsuccessful tries, either you are on the wrong band or a bad frequency.
- Move. Or go back to S&P.
- Rate!

Field Day



- Not really a contest, but the higher scores are listed first
- “Gateway drug” of radiosport
- Best way to teach new ops the right way to operate



Don't say more than necessary, and NEVER EVER say...



- “Please copy”
- “QSL the 59 1234 New Hampshire, my report to you is...”
- “Who is your QSL manager?”
- “Do you know my friend Charlie up there in New Hampshire?”

***Imagine you are the guy on the other end, listening to
“Please Copy” 5000 times in a weekend!***