

# CTU Presents

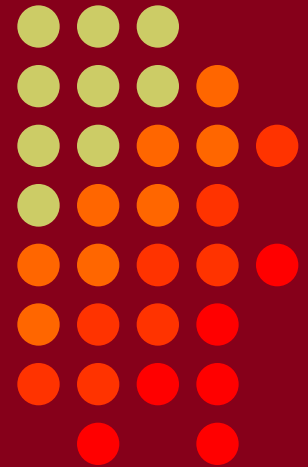
## Engaging Youth in Contesting

Strategies for Recruiting, Mentoring, and  
Retaining Young Ops

Violetta KN2P

• CTU •  
CONTEST  
UNIVERSITY

ICOM®



# Retention is the real issue



- **Awareness alone is not enough**
- **Recruiting is only the first step**
- **A license does not guarantee activity**

# Why we lose young operators



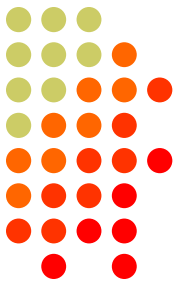
- **Intimidation**
- **Lack of access**
- **No clear next steps**

# Youth – where we fit in



- **We are not just ‘the future of contesting’**
- **We are a part of it now**

# Opportunities start with asking



- Take the initiative – don't be afraid to ask

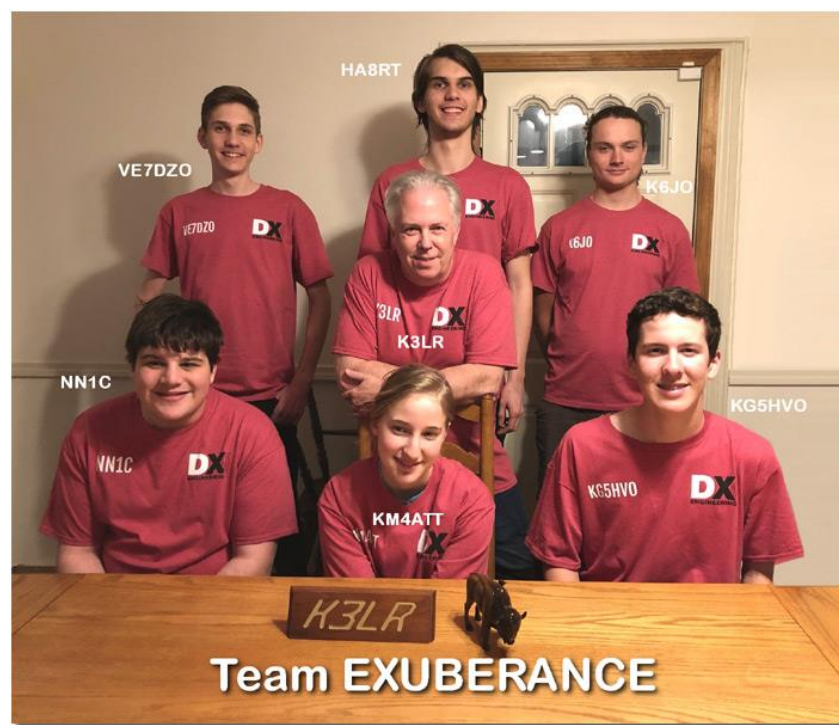


**CQ WW SSB 2018 – W3LPL**



# Opportunities start with asking

- Take the initiative – don't be afraid to ask



CQ WPX SSB 2019 – W3LPL

# Progress over perfection



- **Perfectionism delays growth**
- **Start before you feel ready**
- **Say yes to invitations**

# From invitation to involvement



- **Listen first, then S&P**
- **Set realistic goals**
- **Give them a run frequency during prime hours, not graveyard shift**
- **Make it safe to make mistakes**

# Ownership builds commitment



- **Teach decision making**
- **Plan strategies for band changes**
- **Discuss results and review logs**
- **Ask for their feedback to improve**

# J62K youth operator model



- Two spots each year reserved for youth
- Application + essay submission
- Youth are trained in every step of the operation

# Lower the barrier



- **Portable contests**
- **Remote access**
  - **RHR Youth Program**
  - **YCP Youth Contesting Program**

# What keeps them coming back



- **Youth stay where they feel needed, known, and recognized**
- **Celebrate their successes**
- **Train them to mentor other youth**

# Before CTU 2027...



- **Intentionally train and mentor a new  
contester**
- **Invite a youth to operate at your station**
- **Multi-op teams – reserve a seat for youth**