

2008 ARRL CW Sweepstakes

Record submissions and record scores made 2008 the best SS ever!

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If there's one thing about Sweepstakes that keeps people coming back and continues to attract new entrants, it's that anyone, anywhere — with the right spirit, technique and old-fashioned perseverance — can be competitive and have fun. That's no more apparent than in the geographic distribution of winners for the 2008 running of CW Sweepstakes: two from California and one each from New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas and Tennessee; or, in that the 2008 running, at the depths of the sunspot doldrums, attracted record participation.

"SS is one of the contests that I can actually win from Tennessee and therefore it gets my full attention each year," writes three-time QRP (<5 W) champion Kirk, K4RO, who has returned to the top of the podium once again. "It's a lot more level playing field compared to a DX contest," writes Ken, N6RO, who surprised even himself with the Unlimited crown.

With sunspots rarer than Yukon QSOs, scores must have been dismal, right?

Wrong — an amazing 57 new Section records and 19 Division records were swept away. Even more amazing, two all-time records were set: Steve, N2IC, pumped the high-water mark in Single-Op, High-Power to 244,640 points, and Bob, KØHC, hoisted the School category flag into the rafters at 190,720. N2IC's score is the highest ever made in CW Sweepstakes in any category! Not bad for a "dying" mode on dead bands, eh? (The Web version of the write-up contains a complete list of all new records, and the complete list of records is available at www.arrl.org/contests/.)

Category Champs

Steve, N2IC, has taken the Single-Op High-Power crown again from New Mexico, edging out Puerto Rican powerhouse WP3R. In 2008, WP3R was piloted by Alex, LZ4AX. Randy, KØEU, has ridden his Colorado station to the top of Single-Op Low-Power for the third time running.

From California, Ken, N6RO, is on top of the Unlimited category while the crew at W6YI walked away with the Multioperator title. Rounding out the North American odyssey is Bob, WØBH, who again won the School Club category from KØHC in Kansas.



Single Operator, High Power

If there was any doubt that WP3R would return to the Top 10, consider that WP3R operator Alex, LZ4AX, lost to N2IC by only six QSOs — so close that log checking could have easily reversed the title. Not far behind was Gator, N5RZ, operating at K5TR, who took third place by the narrowest of margins — one QSO — over NØNI, operated by Mark, AG9A. Talk about a photo finish!

Steve, N2IC, isn't ready to declare the Puerto Rico advantage dead despite having won two in a row. "Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands will always have an advantage. It's hard to compete with a rare multiplier that has simultaneous propagation to the entire mainland all day Sunday," Steve writes in an e-mail. Even so, he warns that his New Mexico location may only get better as the sunspots return and 15 and 10 meters become productive again.

For his part, Alex isn't making any excuses, but admits that taking time off from defending a university dissertation to walk in the shoes of an operator with eight consecutive SS CW wins wasn't easy. Especially considering he couldn't get into one of those shoes given his foot was in a cast after suffering a serious ankle injury playing volleyball the Tuesday before the contest.

He has little to excuse. As Alex notes in his posting on the 3830 Contest Claimed Score e-mail reflector, he found he was almost 200 QSOs behind Steve on Sunday

morning." Here I realized that if I don't do something I'm going to get beaten *really* badly," he writes.

This is where an oft-repeated tidbit of contesting advice returns. Just as Steve noted last year, perseverance pays off. "There was nothing else to do except concentrate on the radios and forget everything else," Alex wrote. Ending with a six QSO difference shows the strategy almost worked. Here's hoping your ankle feels better, Alex.

Single Operator, Low Power

Randy, KØEU, has the change in dates for daylight saving time to thank, in part, for his victory. For years, SS in Colorado started at 2 PM local time. So when 2 PM rolled around and he couldn't get his logging software to work right, he thought he was off to a really bad start.

"I tried everything I could think of to fix it and was in major panic mode. In desperation, I installed an earlier version of the software and the problem went away," Randy writes in an e-mail, eventually tracing the issue to his computer, not the software.

"Everyone knows that the first few hours are critical in SS and I figured I was toast when I finally got things ready at about 2:20 PM local time." The quiet bands were, well, disquieting, but when someone answered his CQ SS with a "40 min early," it finally dawned on him. Murphy wasn't done with Randy yet, but he did hold off until after the contest to break the boom on his combined 6 element 20 meter and 3 element 40 meter Yagi.

He hit his sweep in good time. VY1EI popped up on the second radio about 3.5 hours in and when he took his first break at 13.5 hours, he needed just North Dakota and Newfoundland-Labrador, both of which he nailed in his first hour back, snagging VO1HP and KEØA. "What a relief. That meant that I didn't have to worry about multipliers and could concentrate totally on rate for the remainder of the contest. I'm not sure how much longer my streak will hold. I truly believe there's an element of luck in winning SS and I've been blessed to win 3 years in a row."

Randy's sweep certainly paid off. It held off Tor, N4OGW's strong showing. Tor



2008 ARRL Sweepstakes, CW

Single Operator, QRP

	Score	QSOs	Mults	Hrs
K4RO	124,960	781	80	24
W7YAQ	106,176	672	79	23
K8MM	106,018	671	79	22
W2RU	104,754	663	79	22
N0UR	104,320	652	80	23
K0AV	99,792	648	77	24
N7IR	94,010	595	79	24
KR2Q	93,478	607	77	22
W6JTI	89,744	568	79	24
K9ZO	87,164	592	77	25

Single Operator, Low Power

K0EU	188,160	1,176	80	24
N4OGW	186,440	1,180	79	24
K7BG	183,768	1,179	78	24
N5AW	179,200	1,127	80	24
VA7RR	173,760	1,086	80	24
N7OU	173,326	1,097	79	24
K6LA	171,746	1,087	79	24
N0AT	164,640	1,030	80	24
(N0KK, op)				
N5DO	164,320	1,040	79	23
N9CK	163,840	1,024	80	24

Single Operator, High Power

N2IC	244,640	1,529	80	24
WP3R	243,680	1,523	80	24
(LZ4AX, op)				
K5TR	241,600	1,510	80	24
(N5RZ, op)				
N0NI	241,440	1,509	80	24
(AG9A, op)				
K5GO	231,680	1,448	80	24
WX0B	230,880	1,447	80	24
(K5GA, op)				
W7RM	227,040	1,419	80	24
(N6TR, op)				
K5NA	222,080	1,388	80	24
W9RE	218,240	1,372	80	24
VY2ZM	217,760	1,361	80	24
(K1ZM, op)				

Single Operator, Unlimited

N6RO	207,200	1,295	80	24
W6YX	203,520	1,272	80	24
(N7MH, op)				
N4BP	201,760	1,261	80	24
K3MM	197,342	1,249	79	24
K6LL	196,868	1,246	79	24
KH6LC	194,400	1,215	80	24
(SM0DRD)				
N4ZZ	193,920	1,212	80	24
W8MJ	193,760	1,214	80	24
K6YT	192,960	1,208	80	24
(W0YK, op)				
K6TA	190,720	1,192	80	24
(N6BV, op)				
Multipoperator				
W6YI	235,840	1,474	80	24
NR5M	234,720	1,467	80	24
N6VR	228,480	1,428	80	24
K1RX	220,960	1,381	80	24
K4TD	214,560	1,341	80	24
W7RN	214,080	1,338	80	22
KP2M	208,960	1,306	80	24
KT1D	199,040	1,244	80	24
K2NNY	198,880	1,243	80	24
W4RM	196,800	1,230	80	24

School Club

K0HC	190,720	1,192	80	24
(W0BH, op)				
W1MX	106,080	663	80	19
(KB0VVT, op)				
N9UC	50,880	318	80	8
K5LSU	45,600	304	75	19
N5XU	19,200	160	60	4
(AA5BT, op)				
W8SH	14,616	126	58	7
N9GTC	6,600	75	44	3

scored more QSOs than Randy but missed a sweep by one section, costing him the title. Third place Matt, K7BG, also scored more QSOs than Randy and only one fewer than Tor, but missed the sweep by two sections.

Single Operator, QRP

A common misconception among those who have never tried it or those who have

never won is that you can't CQ when QRP. How can you generate any traffic with power that wouldn't even warm up a light bulb? Antennas help, but in the main, finding clear frequencies to CQ and being persistent pays off. And if anyone knows that, it's Kirk, K4RO, who won QRP in 2008.

"I basically never stop CQing somewhere on one radio and I never stop tuning the second radio looking for QSOs. I keep both radios fully active for the entire contest, even when it's exhausting," Kirk writes in an e-mail. "Having effective antennas (two for each of the "important" bands, 40 meters and 80 meters) also helps a lot. The real secret to my success is to keep plugging away year after year. Eventually my number comes up."

Kirk was pleased to learn his sweep stood up through the log-checking process. He's lost a sweep in the past when the only QSO with a section was busted. But a sweep with 5 W is far from easy. "The truth is that a QRP sweep takes a lot of work and also a little bit of luck," he writes. "Breaking a pileup on VY1 during SS with 5 W takes every trick in the book, plus a very good operator on the other end as well. The QRP operator also has to know when something is hopeless. If the needed station is very weak and only answering the biggest guns, it's time to move on and come back later for another try."

Single Operator, Unlimited

No one is perhaps more surprised by his victory than Ken, N6RO, himself. "It's a first for me in 55 years of SS CW in any category, though I had a couple of second and third place finishes in the 1970s," Ken writes in an e-mail. "In the past few years I've been edged out by K6LL in the Unlimited category, so I'm pleased to get by Dave for once."

Ken says he's surprised largely because conditions were so poor and that California lost the advantage it normally has on the productive high bands. "Fortunately, 40 and 80 had good activity during most of the wee hours." But that had its drawbacks, too. "I operated in short spurts nearly all night. That made it tough to concentrate on Sunday and get the 24 hours in."

A note to all contesters: The category name "Unlimited" will replace "Assisted" in all ARRL contests. It is felt that "Single-Operator, Unlimited" was a more accurate and meaningful description of the category. — Ed.

Multipoperator

Here is another category won on very small margins. W6YI beat out the crew at NR5M by a mere seven QSOs. It shows once again that to win, BIC time is what counts. BIC is, of course, an acronym for Butt In Chair. Considering W6YI's total amounted to an average of just more than one Q per minute, screw this up by more



Jason Hissong, N8XE, of Hilliard, Ohio was so happy to get his first-ever Clean Sweep, he gave thanks to the propagation gods by tying a broom to his tower after working Nevada for his last one.

than 6 minutes over the contest and it could cost you the title.

The 3830 e-mail reflector posting for W6YI, entered by John, K6AM, offers some clue to both W6YI's and N6RO's victories. "Bands were in pretty good shape all weekend here on the Left Coast. The station played real well thanks to the fine maintenance from Jim, W6YI."

School Club

Kansas may be best known for launching Dorothy into Oz, but it seems there's no place like home for Bob, W0BH, who again took K0HC at Hesston College in Hesston, Kansas to the top of the School Club category.

Rebecca, KB0VVT, returns to Top 10, this time from W1MX, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in the no. 2 spot in School Club. Despite the equalizer effect of SS, it is still very hard to win from the East Coast.

Tight Races

Often overlooked but often more interesting than the overall winners, are those tight races in SS for awards of less prominence but just as important to the winners. If there was an award for the closest victory for a section, it would go to Joe, W0DB, who chaired Ed's, W0SD, South Dakota station to a three-QSO victory over Todd, WD0T, in high-power. Both earned sweeps.

Not far behind was Arnie, N6HotelCalifornia, beating Kurt, W6PH, by five QSOs, also in high-power, for the Orange section title. Again, both earned sweeps.

Table 2

2008 November CW Sweepstakes Plaque Winners

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of numerous clubs, individuals and ICOM America — the principal awards sponsor for the 2008 ARRL November Sweepstakes — we are pleased to announce that the Overall and Division leaders in each category receives a Sweepstakes plaque. The ARRL wishes to thank the plaque sponsors for their continued commitment to the ARRL Plaque Program. Without their support and dedication, the Plaque Program would not be possible.

<i>Division/Plaque Category</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Plaque Sponsor</i>	<i>Division/Plaque Category</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Plaque Sponsor</i>
Overall					
Single Operator High Power CW	N2IC	Trey Garlough, N5KO	Single Operator High Power CW	W7RM (N6TR, op)	ICOM America
Single Operator Low Power CW	K0EU	Sean Kutzko, KX9X	Single Operator Low Power CW	K7BG	ICOM America
Single Operator QRP CW	K4RO	QRP Amateur Radio Club International	Single Operator QRP CW	W7YAQ	ICOM America
Single Operator Unlimited CW	N6RO	Hal Kennedy, N4GG	Single Operator Unlimited CW	KB7Q	ICOM America
Multioperator CW	W6YI	ICOM America	Multioperator CW	KL2R	ICOM America
School Club College Division	K0HC (W0BH, op)	ICOM America	Pacific		
Atlantic					
Single Operator High Power CW	AA3B	North Coast Contesters	Single Operator High Power CW	KH7X (KH6ND, op)	ICOM America
Single Operator Low Power CW	WY3A	Potomac Valley Radio Club	Single Operator Low Power CW	N6NF	Robert A. Wilson, N6TV
Single Operator QRP CW	W2RU	ICOM America	Single Operator QRP CW	W6JTI	ICOM America
Single Operator Unlimited CW	K3MM	ICOM America	Single Operator Unlimited CW	N6RO	ICOM America
Multioperator CW	K2NNY	North Coast Contesters	Multioperator CW	W7RN	ICOM America
Central					
Single Operator High Power CW	W9RE	Society Of Midwest Contesters	Single Operator High Power CW	N4AF	Potomac Valley Radio Club
Single Operator Low Power CW	N9CK	Society Of Midwest Contesters	Single Operator Low Power CW	K8AC	Raleigh Amateur Radio Society - W4DW
Single Operator QRP CW	K9ZO	Sean Kutzko, KX9X	Single Operator QRP CW	K3AN	Bill Harding, K4AHK
Single Operator Unlimited CW	K9NW	ICOM America	Single Operator Unlimited CW	W4MR (AA4NC, op)	ICOM America
Multioperator CW	K9MOT	ICOM America	Multioperator CW	W4RM	ICOM America
School Club CW	N9UC	ICOM America	Roanoke		
Dakota					
Single Operator High Power CW	W0SD (W0DB, op)	Minnesota Wireless Association	Single Operator High Power CW	N2IC	ICOM America
Single Operator Low Power CW	N0AT (N0KK, op)	Minnesota Wireless Association	Single Operator Low Power CW	K0EU	Grand Mesa Contesters of Colorado
Single Operator QRP CW	N0UR	Tod Olson, K0TO	Single Operator QRP CW	K0AV	Colorado QRP Club
Single Operator Unlimited CW	KT0R (K0OB, op)	Minnesota Wireless Association	Single Operator Unlimited CW	W0ZP	ICOM America
Multioperator CW	K0HB	Minnesota Wireless Association	Multioperator CW	K5TA	ICOM America
Delta					
Single Operator High Power CW	K5GO	ICOM America	Southeastern		
Single Operator Low Power CW	N4OGW	ICOM America	Single Operator High Power CW	WP3R (LZ4AX, op)	ICOM America
Single Operator QRP CW	K4RO	ICOM America	Single Operator Low Power CW	N4PN	ICOM America
Single Operator Unlimited CW	N4ZZ	ICOM America	Single Operator QRP CW	W5JBI	ICOM America
Multioperator CW	W5RU	ICOM America	Single Operator Unlimited CW	N4BP	ICOM America
School Club CW	K5LSU	ICOM America	Multioperator CW	K4TD	ICOM America
Great Lakes					
Single Operator High Power CW	W5MX	North Coast Contesters	Southwestern		
Single Operator Low Power CW	N8SS	Mad River Radio Club	Single Operator High Power CW	K6NA	ICOM America
Single Operator QRP CW	K8MM	Mad River Radio Club	Single Operator Low Power CW	K6LA	Larry Serra, N6NC
Single Operator Unlimited CW	W8MJ	ICOM America	Single Operator QRP CW	N7IR	N6HE and W6DLD
Multioperator CW	K8CC	ICOM America	Single Operator Unlimited CW	K6LL	ICOM America
School Club CW	W8SH	ICOM America	Multioperator CW	W6YI	ICOM America
Hudson					
Single Operator High Power CW	N2NT (N2NC, op)	ICOM America	West Gulf		
Single Operator Low Power CW	K2UF	ICOM America	Single Operator High Power CW	K5TR (N5RZ, op)	Ken Adams, K5KA
Single Operator QRP CW	KR2Q	ICOM America	Single Operator Low Power CW	N5AW	ICOM America
Single Operator Unlimited CW	N2ED	ICOM America	Single Operator QRP CW	N5WLA	ICOM America
Multioperator CW	WW2DX	Stuart Silverstein, K3UEI, Memorial	Single Operator Unlimited CW	N5NA	ICOM America
Midwest					
Single Operator High Power CW	N0NI (AG9A, op)	ICOM America	Multioperator CW	NR5M	ICOM America
Single Operator Low Power CW	KX9X (@ KE0RC)	Society Of Midwest Contesters	School Club CW	N5XU (AA5BT, op)	ICOM America
Single Operator QRP CW	N0SS	ICOM America	Canada		
Single Operator Unlimited CW	K0OU	ICOM America	Single Operator High Power CW	VY2ZM (K1ZM, op)	ICOM America
Multioperator CW	AB0S	ICOM America	Single Operator Low Power CW	VA7RR	ICOM America
School Club CW	K0HC (W0BH, op)	ICOM America	Single Operator QRP CW	VA3NR	QRP Amateur Radio Club International
New England					
Single Operator High Power CW	N1LI (K1DG, op)	ICOM America	Single Operator Unlimited CW	VE7XF	ICOM America
Single Operator Low Power CW	K1BX	ICOM America	Multioperator CW	VE6EX	ICOM America
Single Operator QRP CW	AA1CA	QRP Club of New England			
Single Operator Unlimited CW	W1SJ	ICOM America			
Multioperator CW	K1RX	ICOM America			
School Club CW	W1MX (KB0VVT, op)	ICOM America			

If you wish to order a duplicate plaque, contact ARRL Contest Branch Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X, at 860-594-0232 or by e-mail at kx9x@arrl.org. The cost for duplicate plaques is \$75 (includes shipping).

And for all those Minnesota Wireless Association (MWA) members who are passionate about contesting but rarely earn ink in SS write-ups, here are two MWA members who fought tooth-and-nail and earned the no. 3 spot on the tight race chart: Kirk, N0KK, operating at N0AT, edged Al, K0AD, by a mere 10 QSOs in low-power.

Good job to all for providing dramatic finishes to the fight for their sections. The Web version of this article at www.arrl.org/contests/results includes a table detailing all of the section-leading races that were decided by fewer than 5000 points. There were quite a few!

Also of note is the continued tribute to Dave, KT0R, who passed away in Septem-

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ber of 2007. With the support of his wife Adrienne, members of the MWA have kept his call sign on the air. Dave was a tireless supporter of multioperator contests, hosting many fine events at his station on a relatively small city lot. Greg, K0OB, did the call sign proud, operating KT0R to a 39 QSO Min-

nesota victory over W0PI in the Unlimited category.

Wrap-up

In next month's *QST*, you'll find the write-up for the Phone weekend of Sweepstakes and discover which hardworking clubs will be taking home the gavels. The 2008 contest featured Clean Sweep brooms and we understand quite a few were ordered! The tradition of Sweepstakes — the oldest domestic contest in Radiosport — is as strong as it has ever been with the 1419 submitted logs representing participation at historic levels. The competition is strong, the finishes close and the victories sweet! We'll look for you once again on the first weekend in November.