

**Contest Advisory Committee
Semi-Annual Report**

**For the American Radio Relay League
Board of Directors Meeting**

January 2013

**Submitted by
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1. Executive Summary

During the last six months, the CAC received two taskings from the Program and Services Committee. These taskings are included in Appendix A of this report.

The first tasking asked for recommendations related to adding Single Operator Unlimited categories to four ARRL Contests which currently do not have this category as well as making Single Operator Unlimited the default Single Operator category in all ARRL contests. In its final report, the CAC made the following recommendation concerning this tasking:

- 1) A Single Operator Unlimited Category should be added to the ARRL 10 Meter Contest, the ARRL 160 Meter Contest, the ARRL RTTY Round Up, and the IARU Contest.
- 2) The same sub-categories currently defined for the Single Operator class should be used for listing results and issuing awards for the new Single Operator Unlimited categories.
- 3) The Single Operator Unlimited Category should NOT be made the default Single Operator Category.
- 4) Additional recommendations were made related to minimizing the cost of additional awards related the new recommended categories.

The second tasking asked for recommendations related to the off-time rule and Multi-Single band change rule for the ARRL RTTY Round Up. In its final report, the CAC made the following recommendations concerning this tasking:

- 1) That the existing off time rules (i.e. Rules 2.1 and 2.2) remain unchanged but the wording of Rule 2.2 be improved. Recommendations for wording are given elsewhere in this report.
- 2) That no changes be made to the existing ARRL RTTU RU Multi-Single rules 3.3.4, 3.3.5, and 3.3.6 assuming that the Single Operator Unlimited category is added to the event as recommended by the first tasking.

David Richie, W6DR replaced Michael Gibson, KH6ND as the Pacific Area CAC representative. The CAC is currently at full strength.

2. Analysis of Single Operator Unlimited Tasking

The CAC quickly reached nearly unanimous consensus that the addition of a Single Operator Unlimited category made sense in ARRL Contests where the only other option for the Single Operator using assistance was to enter the Multi-Operator category in that event. The biggest concern that the CAC had is the resulting proliferation of new categories and subcategories that will result by this change. This does two things. It “waters down” the competition somewhat and greatly increases the administrative costs of issuing awards for all subcategory winners. In the ARRL 10 Meter Contest, for example, the addition of the new Single Operator Unlimited Category could result in well over 1000 new “winners” by the time all section, country, mode, and power winners are considered.

Having said this, the CAC did not feel it made sense to treat the new Single Operator Unlimited Category differently than the existing Single Operator category in terms of winners and award structure. A number of proposals were put forth by the CAC members to reduce the number of certificates mailed out to winners. These suggestions included:

- 1) Require that a minimum number of entries be in a category to declare a winner for that category.
- 2) Provide On-Line printable certificates for some sub-categories.
- 3) Provide a means to opt out of a certificate – perhaps by some flag in the participants Cabrillo file.

The CAC quickly concluded that requiring a minimum number of entries in a category did not make sense and agreed that requiring a minimum number of QSOs before a winning sub-category entry should be mailed a certificate would be a fairer alternative.

While it is recognized that contest certificates are often not valued by long time contesters who already have a drawer full of them, the CAC also believes that receiving a contest certificate for a winning effort (even in a minor subcategory) can be a major incentive to a new contester and is a great way to promote contest activity. It is felt that providing a simple means for a participant to opt out of a certificate would be one way to avoid sending out certificates that may not be valued.

Should the issuing of certificates for the new sub-categories become too costly for the league to administer, the CAC recommends that a two – tier certificate program be implemented in which paper certificates are awarded for “major” category winners and e-certificates are sent to “minor” category winners. The CAC does not, at this point, have specific recommendations as how to define the two tiers at this point. However, the majority of the CAC does NOT feel that the second tier should merely be a participation award – even if e-certificates are used.

The majority of the CAC strongly oppose the idea of making the Single Operator Unlimited category the “default” Single Operator category. The CAC certainly recognizes that increased use (and popularity) of technology such as CW Skimmer, etc. by contesters today and has no problem with its use as long as it is claimed correctly. However, the CAC feels that the Single Operator (unassisted) category is still the gold standard for Single Operator contest competition and should remain the default Single Operator category. It is also recognized that the WRTC Qualification Committee applies a .8 factor to contest scores from Single Operators who are using assistance. There was one dissenting opinion within the CAC on this issue, however.

One can make the very valid argument that an entrant should have to specifically indicate that they are NOT using assistance when they submit their entry. This could be viewed as actually giving the Single Operator Category more importance because a contester would have to specifically indicate that they are operating unassisted. Also, it’s possible a new contester may not even fully understand that difference. Such a participant could use assistance during a contest and then submit his log as unassisted if unassisted remains the default category.

Included with this report (in Appendix B) are the results of a straw poll that was taken of individual members of the CAC during the discussion. Note that all members of the CAC weighed in on during these discussions.

3.0 Analysis of RTTY Off-Time and Multi-Operator Band Change Rules

The existing off-time rule for the ARRL RTTY ROUNDUP reads as follows:

- 2.1. No entrant may operate more than 24 hours out of the 30-hour contest period.
- 2.2. The six hours of off time must be taken in no more than two blocks.
- 2.3. All entrants are allowed only one transmitted signal at any given time.

In discussing this RTTY RU off time rule, a number of suggestions were initially made by CAC members with no clear consensus. The suggestions put forth by the CAC generally fell into the following three categories:

- 1) Keep the rule the same (including suggestions for better wording)
- 2) Increase the minimum off time to two hours or more
- 3) Change off time rule to match SS

Initially, the suggestion to change the Off Time rule to match that of ARRL Sweepstakes had the support of approximately half the CAC. This seemed like an easy change that would be well understood by the participants. However, after further discussion with active RTTY contesters in committee members’ divisions, the rationale behind the existing rule became clearer. Because the ARRL RTTY Round Up is a worldwide contest (unlike ARRL Sweepstakes) the designers of the event wanted off time strategy to be a major factor in the event. What was not desired was a

situation in which participants could “cherry pick” propagation by taking numerous 30 minute off time breaks.

One approach put forth to the CAC was to simply increase the minimum off time blocks to something like two hours. This came close to meeting the original intent. It would essentially mean that a maximum of three blocks of off time would be possible rather than the two. In the end, the CAC did not feel that this was a significant enough difference to warrant the change.

In the end, the CAC agreed that the current off-time rule has served the contest well and that there was no compelling need to change it other than improving the wording. One of the problems with the way the existing off time rule is written is that it depends on the reader being familiar with the “General HF Rules for All ARRL Contests” to know the minimum off time. In contrast, the ARRL Sweepstakes rules specifically state the 30 minute minimum in the ARRL SS Rules. Another problem is that it is not clear how the time by participants starting late or finishing early is handled. Finally, it is not clear how the existing rule applies to participants not operating the full 24 hours.

After a number of iterations, the majority of the CAC agreed on at the following revised wording for the ARRL RTTY Round Up Off-Time Rule:

2.1 No entrant may operate more than 24 hours out of the 30-hour contest period.

2.2 Operating Time will be calculated using the elapsed time between the first QSO and the last QSO logged minus the longest two breaks during this elapsed time where such breaks are a minimum of 30 minutes each.

2.3 QSOs made after 24 hours of operating time have been accumulated will not count towards the entrant's score.

2.4 All entrants are allowed only one transmitted signal at any given time.

The second part of this tasking asks that the CAC evaluate the rules related to band changes for Multi-Single Operation in the ARRL Round Up. The main problem with the existing rules is that they unduly restrict Single Operators using Single Operator Two Radio (SO2R) operation as well as spotting assistance to only 6 band changes per hour (i.e. since such single ops are considered Multi-Ops in this contest). With the CAC’s recommendation to add a Single Operator Unlimited category to the ARRL RTTY Roundup as part of its additional tasking, this problem essentially goes away for Single Operators using SO2R and spotting assistance at the same time. Therefore, assuming the recommendation to add a Single Operator Unlimited category to the RTTY RU is accepted, the CAC sees no need to change the band change rules related to Multi-Single operation.

4.0 Additional Topics

As is often the case, the RTTY Off-Time rule discussion spawned some discussions related to things like how log checking deals with logs that have more operating time than allowed by the rules, how not operating during listening time can be enforced, consistency of off time rules among ARRL Contests, etc.. It was felt that these topics , while relevant, went considerably beyond the scope of the original tasking. The CAC will continue to discuss these topics and, if necessary, make recommendations to the PSC for additional study.

5. Administrative Notes

Since the July, 2012 report to the Board David Richie, W6DR replaced Michael Gibson, KH6ND as the Pacific Area CAC representative. The CAC is currently at full strength. All members of the CAC weighed in during the two taskings covered in this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Dewey, KØAD
Dakota Division Representative
CAC Chair

Appendix A

Copy of Taskings

CAC Tasking #1

Title: Additional Single Operator, Unlimited Categories in All ARRL Sponsored Contests

Task: For the ARRL-sponsored HF contests that do not have a Single-Operator, Unlimited category, please recommend whether or not such categories should be added, and additionally, whether or not Unlimited categories should be extended to sub-categories in each of those contests, such as Single-op Unlimited, Low Power, etc.

Specific Questions:

- 1) Should additional Single Operator, Unlimited Categories be added to **ARRL 10 Meter Contest?** (Currently assistance places Single Operators into Multi-Single Category. Separate high and low power Multi-Single Categories.)
- 2) Should additional Single Operator Unlimited Categories be added to **ARRL 160 Meter Contest?** (Currently, same as 10 Meter Contest.)
- 3) Should additional Single Operator Unlimited Categories be added to **ARRL RTTY Contest?** (Currently, assistance places Single Operators in Multi-Single Category. Separate high and low Power Multi-Single Categories. MS limited to 6 band changes per hour.)
- 4) Should additional Single Operator Unlimited Categories be added to **IARU Contest?** (Currently, assistance places Single Operators in Multi-Single Category. No separate high and low Power Multi-Single Categories. MS limited to 6 band changes per hour.)
- 5) Perhaps it is time to consider the Single Operator category to be the default, Unlimited/Assisted category for all entries. If a single operator desires to compete without any form of assistance, should there then be a category such as Single Operator Limited (or Classic), in which there are explicitly defined rules that include no use of assistance and other well-defined limits? If the CAC recommends that such an idea should be implemented, the above issues relating to the lack of Unlimited single op categories would go away and be replaced with how to implement Single-Op Limited (or Classic) categories.

Due Date: Provide final recommendations by 31 December, 2012.

CAC Tasking #2

Title: Evaluate RTTY Roundup Off Time and Multi-Single Rules

Task: Review and make recommendations related to Off Time Rules and Multi-Single Operation for the ARRL RTTY Roundup.

Specific Questions:

- 1) Evaluate the following rules regarding RTTY RU operating time and off-times, and evaluate the effect of these rules on the contest. If change is desirable, please recommend change(s.)

Rule 2.1: Operate no more than 24 hours.

Rule 2.2: The six hours of off time must be taken in no more than two blocks.

- 2) Evaluate the following rules for Multi-Single operation in the ARRL RU. If necessary, recommend changes.

Rule 3.3.4 Multi-operator stations are limited to 6 band changes (maximum) in any clock hour.

Rule 3.3.5 The clock hour is from zero through 59 minutes.

Rule 3.3.6 Band changes are defined so that, for example, a change from 20 meters 15 meters and then back to 20 meters constitutes two band changes.

Special Note: Since CAC will deal with adding an unlimited category to the RTTY RU in the other tasking, it shouldn't be brought up again in this tasking.

Due Date: Provide final recommendations by 31 December, 2012.

Appendix B

CAC Straw Pole – Task 1 – Adding SO Unlimited

	1A	1B	1C	1D	2A	2B	2C	3A	3B	3C	3D	4
K3WW	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	N
K9IG	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	N
K0AD	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	N
K5GO	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y		Y	Y	N
K8CC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	N
K2ONP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y		N
K0RH	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	N
W1UE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	N
KI7Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	N
W6DR	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	N
K4ZA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	N
K0KR	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	N
NF4A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	N
K6NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	N
N3BB	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	Y
VE5SF	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	N

1A - Add SOU to ARRL 10 M

1B - Add SOU to ARRL 160 M

1C - Add SOU to ARRL RTTY RU

1D - Add SOU to IARU

2A - New SOU Award Structure same as SO

2B - New SOU Award Structure same as Multi-Op

3A - Issue award to all sub-categories with at least one participant

3B - Minimum number of participants required to issue category award

3C - On-Line printable certificates

3D - Provide means to opt out of a certificate

4 - Make SOU the default Single Operator Category

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