

**Contest Advisory Committee  
Semi-Annual Report**

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

**July 2009**

**Submitted by  
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## **Summary**

Since the January 2009 Board meeting, the CAC has received one task, which was to study the ARRL 160m contest. A tasking document was received on March 5, 2009 and the tasking was completed on June 24, 2009. The CAC's final report on the ARRL 160m Contest is attached.

Prior to receiving the tasking, the CAC was reviewing off-time rules for the ARRL RTTY Roundup in response to a request from a CAC representative who is no longer a member. The review was put aside while the CAC worked on the ARRL 160m Contest tasking, and will be resumed later this summer.

## **Dayton Meeting with CQ WW CC**

For the second year in a row, a contingent of CAC representatives met informally with the CW WW Contest Committee at the Dayton Hamvention. Members of the committees exchanged ideas on current issues. The CQ WW CC expressed interest in working with the ARRL on a consistent set of rules and durations for disqualifications, and mutual recognition of disqualifications imposed by either organization. This information was passed on to the Programs and Services Committee.

There was no other formal business before the CAC during the period.

## **Administrative Notes**

The following members retired from the CAC this year:

Ted Bryant, W4NZ, Delta Division  
Joe Staples, W5ASP, West Gulf Division  
David Shipman, VE7CFD, RAC

The Chair would like recognize the contributions of these members and thank them for their fine service to the CAC over the years. The Chair would especially like to acknowledge the contributions of W5ASP, who ably served us as Chair of the CAC.

The following new members have joined the CAC this year:

Jim Cassidy, KI7Y, Northwestern Division (replacing NØAX, who retired last year)  
Stan Stockton, K5GO Delta Division  
Jim George, N3BB, West Gulf Division  
Sam Ferris, VE5SF, RAC

The Chair would like to welcome these new members and congratulate them on their appointment to the CAC. As already demonstrated during the ARRL 160m Contest tasking, these new members are strong contributors to the CAC.

There have been no other changes in CAC membership since January, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,  
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**Contest Advisory Committee  
July 2009**

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**ARRL Contest Advisory Committee  
Report on ARRL 160m Contest**

**June 24, 2009**

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# **ARRL Contest Advisory Committee Report on ARRL 160m Contest**

**June 24, 2009**

## **Executive Summary**

The ARRL Contest Advisory Committee submits the following recommendations concerning the ARRL 160m Contest:

- The contest operating hours should not be changed
- The contest scoring method should not be changed
- The contest exchange should not be changed
- If the exchange must be altered for administrative purposes, add power
- Delete Rule 6.1 (window for Intercontinental QSOs)

The following detailed report provides a description of our evaluation process, a discussion of the key issues, and specific responses to questions in the tasking.

## **Evaluation Process**

On March 5, 2009, the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee received a request from the Programs & Services Committee to study the ARRL 160m Contest. The request was received in the form of a brief tasking document. The tasking was as follows:

## **Tasking**

Tasking of the CAC

Subject: ARRL 160 Meter Contest

Assignment: Evaluate the contest rules for fairness. Understanding that Geography cannot generally be equalized, please evaluate the existing rules with respect to whether or not they allow for fair competition other than geographical considerations. Areas of the rules that must be evaluated are (2) Contest Period; and (5) Scoring. Please offer recommendations, if any that would improve the contest, especially with respect to fairness in rules, so that any particular region does not enjoy an advantage that isn't simply based upon geography.

Additionally, an administrative problem with the contest involves the contest exchange, specifically with the lack of a requirement for DX stations to send anything other than the signal report. The administrative problems include logging and adjudication problems caused by files that either are missing a second piece of data (the software may or may not add something) or have strange things in the placeholder.

Please recommend what data a DX station should transmit as part of the exchange assuming that there will be a requirement for something to be sent in addition to the signal report.

Additionally, please evaluate Rule 6.1: *The segment 1.830 to 1.835 should be used for intercontinental QSOs only.* Considering that *CQ Magazine* removed protection for a “DX Window” from their 160 meter contests, should ARRL do the same? Please recommend whether or not to retain Rule 6.1.

Report back to the PSC: NLT June 15, 2009

## **Discussion**

Shortly after receiving the tasking, the Chair asked CAC members to respond to the following specific questions distilled from the tasking:

1. Are the operating hours of the contest fair to all participants? Should they be changed, and if so to what hours?
2. Is the scoring fair? Should it be changed, and if so how?
3. Should the exchange be changed? If so, what should it be?
4. Should rule 6.1 be retained, changed or deleted?

A general discussion via the CAC reflector ensued.

### Contest Hours

The discussion revealed no support whatsoever for changing the operating hours of the contest. It was felt that the hours of the contest provide similar band openings and opportunities for all participants, regardless of location, not unlike other HF contests.

### Contest Scoring

The subject of scoring received moderate attention. Some members favored equalizing the points for DX and domestic QSOs, and allowing DX multipliers to continue to provide an advantage to those who can work them. Others favored a reduction in the points awarded for DX QSOs. For example, 2 points for domestic QSOs and 3 points for DX QSOs, with no change to the multiplier rules. Still other members felt that the location advantage was not definitive and that the scoring should not be changed.

To assist the discussion, the Chair asked member Dave Pruett, K8CC, who heads up the log checking team for the contest, to compute the standings for the 2008 ARRL 160m contest under the two proposed scoring changes. The result was that the proposed scoring changes had much less impact on standings than expected. There was, however, one case where a W1 station dropped from #1 to #2, replaced by a W5.

### Contest Exchange

From the discussion and input from HQ, it was learned that the lack of information from DX stations other than signal report was not an issue for the log checkers or the checking software,

but was an issue of time and resources spent by HQ assisting participants to cope with logging programs that don't properly support blank exchange fields.

Nevertheless, a majority felt that the exchange should not be altered. (See "Voting" for more information.)

### Rule 6.1

There was considerable discussion on Rule 6.1.

Several members pointed out that the wording of the existing rule was not clear on whether domestic stations could call CQ in the restricted segment in order to solicit intercontinental QSOs, or were being asked not to CQ in that segment (i.e., only answer CQs from DX stations.) Members also pointed out that the term *intercontinental QSOs* was not necessarily consistent with the intention of the rule.

Some members felt that rule has been ineffective, and that domestic stations frequently call CQ in the window. It was mostly conceded, however, that it would be difficult to enforce the rule if it were to be changed from a recommendation to a requirement.

There seemed to be a little more sentiment among Midwest members for keeping the rule, with the justification that it's difficult to make contacts with Europe and Asia from the middle of the USA, and keeping a segment of the band clear of domestic stations calling CQ would be desirable.

There was some feeling that strict enforcement of a DX-only segment could lead to DX stations working split, which is undesirable on 160m.

### **Voting**

After discussion, CAC members were asked to vote on the following questions (results shown in parentheses):

1. Should the contest hours be changed?

- A. Yes (0)
- B. No. (16)

2. Vote: Change scoring as follows:

- A. Two (2) points for all QSOs, domestic and DX (3)
- B. Two (2) points for domestic QSOs and three (3) points for DX QSOs (2)
- C. No change (11)

3. Vote: Alter the exchange

- A. DX stations add power (5)
- B. DX stations add serial number (1)
- C. No change (10)

4. Vote: Rule 6.1
- A. Delete (9)
  - B. Make it a requirement (0)
  - C. Leave it as a recommendation (7)

Once the nature of the administrative problem with the exchange was understood, and upon re-reading the tasking, it became clear to the Chair that HQ would like guidance on what should be added to the exchange if it must be altered. An additional question was added:

3a. If ARRL decides to add a second field to the exchange, what should it be?

- A. Add power (same as ARRL DX) (9)
- B. Add serial number (like SS, WPX, etc.) (3)

### **Comments on Voting**

Sentiment on questions #1 and #2, hours and scoring, was strong and definitive. Although the sentiment was also strong for not altering the exchange, if HQ chooses to change it, a strong majority of those responding favored adding power, same as ARRL DX.

As is evident, voting on Rule 6.1 was close, though a majority of the CAC favors deleting the rule. Nearly half the CAC was in favor of keeping the rule as a recommendation. There was no sentiment for making the rule a requirement.