



ARRL November Sweepstakes - CW 2017 Results

By Kelly Taylor, VE4XT

The Sweep Survived! — thanks to heroics from the island operators

When the 2017 ARRL CW Sweepstakes started on Nov. 4, few, if any, operators were expecting a Clean Sweep (working all 83 ARRL sections). Puerto Rico (KP4) and the US Virgin Islands (KP2) were still reeling from two Category 5 hurricanes, Irma and Maria.

If the island's hams weren't working to restore infrastructure, they were manning emergency communications centers, and when they weren't doing those jobs, they were struggling with those parts of daily life we usually take for granted.

"We had to work six to seven days a week," said Eric, NP3A, who installs and repairs wireless internet service equipment and would normally be pounding out RF during SS. "Free time was spent hand-washing clothes and making sure you had enough water for the next week. So, yes, time was very limited."

Puerto Rico's 3.4 million residents all lost power immediately, with restoration not expected to finish until the summer of 2018. Eric said some residents have been told to never expect power again.

Little wonder operating Sweepstakes was a mere afterthought less than two months after Maria.

Fred, K9VV, who lives full time on St. Croix and is usually the voice — and key — of NP2X, said Irma largely spared the islands, but Maria passed within 25 miles. "Big difference," he wrote.

"The recovery was a lot longer than I expected, but then again, I had never experienced a hurricane on an island before," he wrote. "One doesn't know what to expect when going through not one, but two Category 5 hurricanes in a span of 13 days.

"Experiencing a hurricane is a very humbling experience, but nowhere near as challenging as the recovery phase."

Both operators' contest stations were destroyed. Both were exhausted from weeks of recovery work and the struggle to survive. As Fred said, "contesting was lower than Maslow's hierarchy of needs."



That's not a new antenna design, it's the aftermath of Hurricane Maria at NP2X. You can't see it here but even the tower has a broken base. Fred, K9VV, estimates wind speed at more than 200 mph. (Photo courtesy — Fred Kleber, K9VV)

Alfredo, WP3C/NP4DX, said he lost all his antennas and one tower. He's still in recovery mode.

For Eric, the arrival of his favorite contest provided an opportunity for a respite, even if for only a few moments.

At least NP3A in Puerto Rico and Fred's NP2X, as well as NP3X, manned by Ron, N4XD, were on the air. Nobody from Puerto Rico submitted logs, and Ron and Fred managed only a combined 97 QSOs from KP2, making both sections extremely rare. Only 10 stations managed a sweep of all 83 sections.

For Eric, the isolation of his contest site and lack of electricity gave him plenty of experience running solar power, something he put to use at his apartment in San Juan. He entered QRP, having a total of 50 watts of

electrical power available. His antenna was a 40 meter loop mounted on the building's rooftop.

Fred also ran QRP, using an Elecraft K3 and Yaesu FT-3000. Power wasn't his only limiting factor, either. "Operating time was limited to when it was raining and we could not be outside working on antennas. The decision to run QRP was to preserve precious generator fuel." His antenna was a "somewhat resonant" KLM KT-34 he and Ron, N4XD, managed to install temporarily.

It wasn't just the Caribbean affected by severe weather, either. School Club station K9IU, operated by Joe, K7JOE, and Jerry, NE7I, had to shut down for not one, but two tornadoes blowing through Bloomington, Ind. "Was this Sweepstakes or Field Day?" Joe wrote in his Soapbox entry.

"We had to take several hours out of the contest and were busy running our local and regional SKYWARN nets," said Joe, K7JOE, who also runs his county's Office of Emergency Services. "Public safety was the priority so the contest had to be paused while the weather fronts passed through."

Operators who missed out on the Caribbean sections are no doubt hoping Northern Territories will be on strong again this year. That section is commonly missed year in and year out. "NT was very, very prominent this year, that's great," wrote Mike, WO9B.

VY1AAA, operated remotely by Gerry, W1VE, from his home in New Hampshire, managed 840 QSOs. J, VY1JA, and John, VE8EV, added another 135.



It's not easy keeping a multi-element HF quad on the air — imagine the challenges in the Yukon! Ice fog coated every inch of the antenna systems at VY1AAA. (Photo courtesy — J Allen, VY1JA)

Record-Setting Efforts

As a result of Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands being almost silent, combined with sliding down the back of Cycle 24, scores were down considerably. No overall records were touched, but a few key regional records fell.

Perhaps the most significant is the Pacific Division record in Single Operator Unlimited, Low Power (SOULP), held since 2012 by K7XC. Bill, K4XS/KH7XS, operating KH7B, claimed the record with 149,526, beating the 141,532 set by K7XC. Bill's 923 QSOs and 81 sections were good for a fourth-place finish in the category. Don, N4ZZ won with 1,092 QSOs and 82 sections.

"I always have a goal for the contests," Bill said. "It keeps me motivated. I was aiming for two things, the Hawaii record and, if lucky, the Pacific record.

"It takes a unique strategy from Hawaii," he said. "The distance to any QSO is at least 2,500 miles, and the Maine and VE1/VO1s are more than 5,000 miles away. We work on 15 as much as we can, then move to 20 when it's less crowded, and finally to 40," he said. "Fifteen is the key to



The view at VY1AAA is great when the skies are clear — CQ Sweepstakes! (Photo courtesy — J Allen, VY1JA)

doing well out here, as it is really tough to slug it out on 20 and 40 running 100 watts.”



(Photo courtesy — Bill Kollenbaum, K4XS/KH7XS)

The antenna farm of KH7XS shown above is situated on the east side of the “Big Island” and Bill’s station gets quite a bit of assistance from terrain. “Most guys who know me know that my abilities don’t lie with CW operation, so I really can’t take a huge amount of credit for the win,” he said. “I sit at 1,100 feet elevation and the Pacific in the direction of the U.S. is only 6,500 away.”

Combine that with a location at 20 degrees North, and Bill finds openings in marginal conditions the mainland just doesn’t get, “meaning that often, the only stations the mainland hears are KH6 stations. Result: almost no QRM and huge runs.”

The downside to operating from paradise is time-shifting. Five hours out of sync with the East Coast, Bill finds many continental stations are heading to 40 hours before 40 meters is worth even a peep on Hawaii, something that’s worse on the second day. “You’ll notice I only used 19 or so hours of operating time. No one was left on 20 and no one was listening to the west on the West Coast on 40. I gave up around 3 p.m. local and came back an hour later to make a couple more Qs.”

Bill isn’t expecting to be in the books for long. “I would imagine some Pacific guy on the mainland will bust this record next year as it’s not really all that big of a QSO total and not a Clean Sweep. We’ll see.”

Bill notes it’s worse in the CW contest than the Phone weekend. “On SSB, it’s a bit different when 20 starts to die. I can manufacture Qs by doing the ‘anybody, anywhere’ and get lots of number ones. In fact, it’s possible to have a 60 or 70 hour on SSB doing that. It is very hard to manufacture Qs on CW.”

Other records that fell (or at least wobbled):

In Multioperator, Low Power (MSLP), NR7DX and company, with 108,420, beat the previous Northwestern Division record of 67,308 set by KL4SD in 2016.

School Club (S) category runner-up W4FS set a new record in the Roanoke Division, with its 136,448 beating the 27,900 set by K4KDJ in 2014.

Ward, NØAX, and his operating partner, Dave, NN1N, came within 300 points of a new Midwest Division record in Multioperator, High Power (MSHP), with 196,472 points, just missing the mark of 196,710 set by KØWA in 2015. [Wait’ll next year! – Ed.]



Dave Patton, NN1N, moved back to Illinois after leaving ARRL HQ. He operated with Ward, NØAX, at Ward’s station in MO, placing second in the Multioperator category. (Photo courtesy — Ward Silver, NØAX)

What Makes Sweepstakes Special

Vic, K9UIY, provided some insight into what makes Sweepstakes the contest it is. “This is, and always has been, one of my most favorite radiosporting events each and every year since I was licensed in 1959,” he wrote in his Soapbox entry. “It has all the elements of strategy, endurance and a bit of luck, too. Thanks for the good times and all the Qs!”

Just behind Bill in SOULP is perhaps the poster boy for why Sweepstakes is so attractive. Kirk, NØKK, returned to his usual haunt at Ron, NØAT's station in Plymouth, MN. Why is that remarkable? Because when many contests are ruled by the biggest stations, Sweepstakes can put operators of even modest stations into the running.

"Yes, I have a one-tower station," Ron writes. "It's a 70-foot Hy-Gain crank-up." While his verticals do well for DXing on the low bands, for SS, Kirk makes do with a dipole at 50 feet, as well as some cloud-warming loops or dipoles at 20 feet. Ron and Kirk install specifically for Sweepstakes. It pans out for Kirk, whose 847 QSOs and 81 sections in 2017 were good for fifth place.



Kirk, NØKK, operating at the station of Ron, NØAT. (Photo courtesy — Kirk Pengelly, Jr., NØKK)

Sweepstakes Squeakers

One of the tightest overall races was for No.1 in SOLP between Willie, WJ9B, and Kirk, K4RO. They were separated by a mere seven QSOs, though Willie managed 82 sections to Kirk's 81.

In Single Operator, High Power (SOHP), Jeff, K1ZM, (@VY2ZM), lost fourth place to Dave, K5GN, by just two QSOs, 1,236 for Dave to 1,234 for Jeff. Both stations scored the elusive sweep. Among Top 10 in SOHP, Steve, N2IC, who won, was the only other station to sweep.

And the Winners Are...

Congrats to the winners: Steve, N2IC; Willie, WJ9B; Tor, N4OGW; Randy, KØEU; Don, N4ZZ; Bob, WØBH (@KØHC), and the multiop crews at W6YI and W2FU.

Category Winners

Single-Op, High Power (SOHP, B)	
N2IC	225,760
Single-Op, Low Power (SOLP, A)	
WJ9B	171,052
Single-Op, QRP (SOQRP, Q)	
N4OGW	130,380
Single-Op Unlimited, High Power (SOUHP, U)	
KØEU	203,524
Single-Op Unlimited, Low Power (SOULP, U)	
N4ZZ	179,088
Multiop, High Power (MSHP, M)	
W6YI	215,136
Multiop, Low Power (MSLP, M)	
W2FU	167,360
School Club	
KØHC	139,356

Single Operator, High Power

N2IC	225,760
W7RN (N6TV, op)	214,020
N9RV	210,600
K5GN	205,176
VY2ZM	204,844
KRØP (N5RZ, op)	200,900
NR5M (K5GA, op)	200,232
K7JR (KL9A, op)	198,604
K5ZD	196,472
WXØB (AD5Q, op)	195,816

Single Operator, Low Power

WJ9B	171,052
K4RO	167,832
N4KM	157,950
N9CK	152,480
W1NN	148,554
NAØN	148,362
KI6RRN	145,440
KØAD	145,152
K5KU	144,180
K3UA	143,424

Single Operator, QRP

N4OGW	130,380
VE6EX	104,960
W1QK	103,194
K1VUT	100,160
N7IR	88,320
WA7LNW	86,670
W7YAQ	83,680
W6JTI	81,844
W1XX	76,650
K4QPL	69,608

Single Operator Unlimited, High Power

KØEU	203,524
K3MM	198,276
N8OO	195,160
K9CT	191,552
N4GG	190,512
K6LL	189,074
NØXR	187,124
N1LN	175,122
N5FO	172,692
N4BP	172,308

Single Operator Unlimited, Low Power

N4ZZ	179,088
KB7Q	164,754
W4AAA (KK9A, op)	157,626
KH7B (K4XS, op)	149,526
NØAT (NØKK, op)	137,214
N9CO	132,840
W6OAT	128,628
N1QD	128,084
K9WX	123,360
WØZA	123,360

Multioperator, Single Transmitter, High Power

W6YI	215,136
NØAX	196,472
N6RO	187,920
W4RM	182,932
KY7M	179,280
ABØS	176,628
K7RI	149,440
NN5K	124,312
N6NU	119,132
K6MMM	99,040

Multioperator, Single Transmitter, Low Power

W2FU	167,360
K5CM	160,064
W6YX	154,980
WØDLE	142,722
W8TK	137,280
NR7DX	108,420
VE7KW	91,040
VA7KH	82,080
W1FM	63,680
KA9VVQ	48,384

School Club

KØHC	139,356
W4FS	136,448
W4UAL	51,332
K9IU	39,712
N5XU	28,616
WØEEE	13,356
K3GU	8,428
K5LSU	5,762
W9GRS	2,340
W1AF	390

Get Ready for Next Time

Spend the summer getting those low-band antennas ready: the next CW Sweepstakes is Nov. 3 to 5. Hope to see everyone back. Except Irma and Maria, that is!

Pick Of the Soapbox

Here are some entries from Soapbox comments included with the submitted logs:

“After being licensed for 62 years, I entered my first SS CW contest” — Carl, AA4MI

“The absence of KP2 and KP4 was evident” — Tom, K3TW

“My 41st consecutive year with more than 1,000 QSOs in SS CW. My best start ever, then ran out of stations” — Randy, K5ZD

“One radio, all low, wire antennas. This effort is dedicated to my lifelong friend and mentor Carl, N4AA, now SK” — Mike, KH6ND, operator at KH7X

“I sure wish more participants understood the name of each data field in the SS exchange so when a fill is requested, they answer with the correct data” — Dave, K8CC

“In this contest, it would be great if it was required to use in your call sign the call area you are in, since call signs are all over the board these days,” Jerome, KD6WKY, who actually is in California

Division Winners

Single Operator, High Power

Atlantic	AA3B	185,652
Central	W9RE	170,640
Dakota	N7IV	159,246
Delta	KØEJ	158,880
Great Lakes	W5MX	180,608
Hudson	N2NT (N2NC, op)	193,590
Midwest	KRØP (N5RZ, op)	200,900
New England	K5ZD	196,472
Northwestern	N9RV	210,600
Pacific	W7RN (N6TV, op)	214,020
Roanoke	N4AF	176,464
Rocky Mountain	N2IC	225,760
Southeastern	NX4N	191,066
Southwestern	K6LA	195,548
West Gulf	K5GN	205,176
Canada	VY2ZM	204,844

Single Operator, Low Power

Atlantic	K3UA	143,424
Central	N9CK	152,480
Dakota	NAØN	148,362
Delta	K4RO	167,832
Great Lakes	W1NN	148,554
Hudson	W2ID	85,470
Midwest	NØAC	104,438
New England	K1XM	141,102
Northwestern	WJ9B	171,052
Pacific	KH6/KB7G	108,216
Roanoke	N8II	96,854

Rocky Mountain	NN7A	55,440
Southeastern	N4KM	157,950
Southwestern	KI6RRN	145,440
West Gulf	WØUO	138,024
Canada	VE5SF	110,160

Single Operator, QRP

Atlantic	WR3R	58,776
Central	WI9WI	61,200
Dakota	KEØTT	26,112
Delta	N4OGW	130,380
Great Lakes	N8BB	40,502
Hudson	K2YGM	44,020
Midwest	NØLY	57,900
New England	W1QK	103,194
Northwestern	W7YAQ	83,680
Pacific	W6JTI	81,844
Roanoke	K4QPL	69,608
Rocky Mountain	WA7LNW	86,670
Southeastern	K3TW	60,676
Southwestern	N7IR	88,320
West Gulf	N5DO	16,402
Canada	VE6EX	104,960

Single Operator Unlimited, High Power

Atlantic	K3MM	198,276
Central	K9CT	191,552
Dakota	KTØA	140,620
Delta	N8OO	195,160
Great Lakes	N4QS	102,664
Hudson	W2VQ	89,910
Midwest	NØXR	187,124
New England	W1SJ	163,782
Northwestern	K7QA	133,120
Pacific	W1SRD	162,688
Roanoke	N1LN	175,122
Rocky Mountain	KØEU	203,524
Southeastern	N4GG	190,512
Southwestern	K6LL	189,074
West Gulf	N5NA	159,732
Canada	VE7CC	165,240

Single Operator Unlimited, Low Power

Atlantic	N3HEE	121,824
Central	N9CO	132,840
Dakota	NØAT (NØKK, op)	137,214
Delta	N4ZZ	179,088
Great Lakes	K8BKM	122,400
Hudson	K2DFC	71,520
Midwest	KØVBU	119,556
New England	N1QD	128,084
Northwestern	KB7Q	164,754
Pacific	KH7B (K4XS, op)	149,526
Roanoke	W4AAA (KK9A, op)	157,626
Rocky Mountain	WØZA	123,360
Southeastern	KY4F	81,370
Southwestern	K6PO	100,800
West Gulf	K5KJ	102,880
Canada	VA3DF	112,752

Multioperator, Single Transmitter, High Power

Atlantic	KØOO	79,056
Hudson	WA2JQK	17,688
Midwest	NØAX	196,472
Northwestern	K7RI	149,440
Pacific	N6RO	187,920
Roanoke	W4RM	182,932
Rocky Mountain	NN5K	124,312
Southwestern	W6YI	215,136

Multioperator, Single Transmitter, Low Power

Atlantic	W2FU	167,360
Central	KA9VVQ	48,384
Great Lakes	K4FT	39,680
New England	W1FM	63,680
Northwestern	NR7DX	108,420
Pacific	W6YX	154,980
Roanoke	W4TG	32,072
Rocky Mountain	WØDLE	142,722
Southwestern	W8TK	137,280
West Gulf	K5CM	160,064
Canada	VE7KW	91,040

School Club

Atlantic	K3GU	8,428
Central	K9IU	39,712
Delta	K5LSU	5,762
Midwest	KØHC	139,356
New England	W1AF	390
Roanoke	W4FS	136,448
Southeastern	W4UAL	51,332
West Gulf	N5XU	28,616

Regional Leaders

MSHP = Multioperator, Single Transmitter, High Power

MSLP = Multioperator, Single Transmitter, Low Power

S = School Club

SOHP = Single Operator, High Power

SOLP = Single Operator, Low Power

SOQRP = Single Operator, QRP

SOUHP = Single Operator Unlimited, High Power

SOULP = Single Operator Unlimited, Low Power

West Coast Region

(Pacific, Northwestern and Southwestern Divisions; Alberta, British Columbia and NT Sections)

W7RN (N6TV, op)	214,020	SOHP
N9RV	210,600	SOHP
K7JR (KL9A, op)	198,604	SOHP
K6LA	195,548	SOHP
WC6H	185,484	SOHP
WJ9B	171,052	SOLP
KI6RRN	145,440	SOLP
K2PO	136,776	SOLP
KØSN	135,520	SOLP
KC7V	130,560	SOLP
VE6EX	104,960	SOQRP
N7IR	88,320	SOQRP
W7YAQ	83,680	SOQRP
W6JTI	81,844	SOQRP
W7ZRC	69,264	SOQRP

K6LL	189,074	SOUHP
VE7CC	165,240	SOUHP
W7WW (W6RW, op)	163,672	SOUHP
W1SRD	162,688	SOUHP
N6XG (WA6O, op)	161,352	SOUHP
KB7Q	164,754	SOULP
KH7B (K4XS, op)	149,526	SOULP
W6OAT	128,628	SOULP
K6PO	100,800	SOULP
K6WSC	89,052	SOULP
W6YI	215,136	MSHP
N6RO	187,920	MSHP
KY7M	179,280	MSHP
K7RI	149,440	MSHP
N6NU	119,132	MSHP
W6YX	154,980	MSLP
W8TK	137,280	MSLP
NR7DX	108,420	MSLP
VE7KW	91,040	MSLP
VA7KH	82,080	MSLP

Midwest Region

(Dakota, Midwest, Rocky Mountain and West Gulf Divisions; Manitoba and Saskatchewan Sections)

N2IC	225,760	SOHP
K5GN	205,176	SOHP
KRØP (N5RZ, op)	200,900	SOHP
NR5M (K5GA, op)	200,232	SOHP
WXØB (AD5Q, op)	195,816	SOHP
NAØN	148,362	SOLP
KØAD	145,152	SOLP
WØUO	138,024	SOLP
N9NB	135,520	SOLP
W8FN	121,212	SOLP
WA7LNW	86,670	SOQRP
NØLY	57,900	SOQRP
NØSSM	26,910	SOQRP
KEØTT	26,112	SOQRP
KØAV	24,924	SOQRP
KØEU	203,524	SOUHP
NØXR	187,124	SOUHP
N5FO	172,692	SOUHP
N5NA	159,732	SOUHP
N5XZ	148,072	SOUHP
NØAT (NØKK, op)	137,214	SOULP
WØZA	123,360	SOULP
KØVBU	119,556	SOULP
K5KJ	102,880	SOULP
W5TM	102,664	SOULP
NØAX	196,472	MSHP
ABØS	176,628	MSHP
NN5K	124,312	MSHP
K5CM	160,064	MSLP
WØDLE	142,722	MSLP
WDØGTY	32,032	MSLP
KK5OV	13,132	MSLP

