

SEDCO 2009



Contesting 101

Maximize Your Scores And Fun

Kirk Pickering K4RO

Why Operate Contests?



- Contesting is FUN
- “Can you hear me now? Yes I can!”
- Learn capabilities
- Operating awards - DXCC / Triple Play



Why Operate Contests?



- Serious competition
- Multi operator teams
- Mobile operations
- Station construction
- No shortage of challenges



Learn by Operating



- There are really no “secrets” in contesting
- Knowledge is gained through experience
- There are no shortcuts to gaining experience; time in the operating chair is how to get it
- What were once baffling questions become second nature after time in the chair
- Main theme - it's always you against the clock
- ALWAYS play by the rules – no matter what

Search and Pounce



- Someone has to solicit by calling CQ – Running
- Someone has to answer – Search & Pounce
- Most operators begin with S&P
- IDENTIFYING CALL SIGNS – #1 skill
- Identifying exchange information
- Random vs. edge-to-edge tuning
- Band mapping software tools

Search and Pounce



- Learn to identify stations quickly
- Distinguish between CQ'er and S&P'er
- Must concentrate on weak signals
- Listen to CN2R and K5ZD recordings
- No guessing!
- Penalties and error rates

Running Stations



- Why we must call CQ
- Getting up the nerve
- When and where
- Think LOUD
- Short gaps between
- Accuracy is #1!



Dealing with QRM



- The bands are very crowded these days
- Does might make right?
- It's also a LISTENING contest
- Know when to hold 'em
- Save your ears



The Contest Station



- The contest station is *never* completed
- ANTENNAS are #1
- Efficiency
- Flexibility
- Reliability
- Ergonomics



Staying on the air



- Contesting is a good reason to stay QRV
- Build stuff to last
- Weatherproofing
- Operator maintenance
- Synergy & motivation



Competition



- The joy of competition
- Location, location, location
- You've got to play to win
- Is contesting fair?
- Playing by the rules
- It really only matters to you



Contesting Clubs



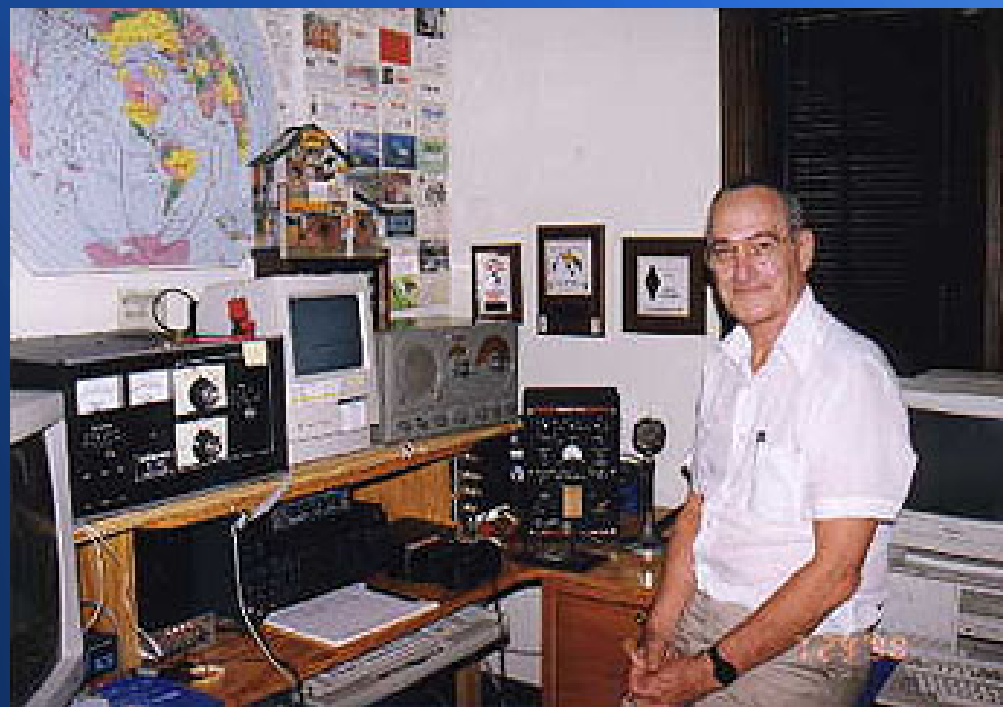
- There is a thriving contesting community
- Share our joy and struggles
- Club and Team competition



Contesting Community



- Contesting history
- Rules changes
- Current competitors and Silent Keys
- Archives resources
- Giving back to contesting



Thank You



Try not to take it too seriously

Don't forget to have fun!

73, Kirk K4RO