



FLASH



MAD RIVER RADIO CLUB

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The Mad River Radio Club Championship

A Proposal

To give recognition for contest activity and success among club members, I am proposing an ongoing club championship.

1. Points awarded by your score's percentage of the continental USA winning single operator (unassisted) score. The top national score receives the maximum points for the contest, and others the pro rated number of points.
2. Multi-operator scores: The total score is divided by the number of operators, plus an extra share for the station owner (except at club stations such as W8LT). Example: K8CC does a multi/multi with 5 ops including Dave, and makes 6 million points; Dave gets credit as a 2 meg single op score, and the other ops get credit as a 1 meg score. On request of the station owner the allocation may be changed, for instance to not include an op who stops in for only an hour or two.
3. Single operator assisted counts the same as unassisted. DXpedition scores count in the same manner as stateside scores, referenced to the winning stateside score, though only the maximum contest point value may be earned.
4. Scores must be credited to the Mad River RC when there is a club aggregate competition. (This does not include NA Sp rint teams.)

CONTEST	MAXIMUM POINTS		
ARRL DX	1000	Each mode	
CQWW	1000	Each mode	
ARRL SS	1000	Each mode	
CQ WPX	750	Each mode] BEST 4 of 7
CQ 160 METER	750	Each mode	
ARRL 160 METER	750		
ARRL 10 METER	750		
IARU HF CHAMPIONSHIP	750		
NCJ NA SPRINT (Feb. & Sept.)	200	Each mode] BEST 5 of 6
NCJ NA QSO PARTY	200	Each mode	
TOTAL POSSIBLE	10,000		

In making this proposal I have borrowed from the NCJ USA Single Operator Championship run by KM9P (see NCJ, July/August 1989, p. 13) and from the Frankford Radio Club's award program.

Administering this program will require a competent computer equipped volunteer - any such person out there?

An annual award (trophy?) can be awarded to each year's winner. Late fall seems to be the obvious time to make the award. In October 1990, for example, the scores for the 1989 WPX through 1990 ARRL DX would be available. (Claimed scores for the CQ 160 contest).

FROM THE 'BIG FISH'

By Dave Pruett, K8CC

It doesn't seem like that long ago that I was sitting at my computer, typing out my first 'big fish' column for the MRRRC 'FLASH'. The year was 1982, and a lot has changed since then. My current computer and software are light-years ahead in technology, and I now have my own QTH and station. A lot has changed with the MRRRC also.

Eight years ago, AD8I and KS8S/AD8P were in high gear, and K8ND was going to VP2E at every opportunity. The stations in Circleville and Deshler now lie dormant to the contest world, and Jeff is busy with domestic duties. But in their place has risen major stations at K8CC, K8AQM, N8CXX, and WD8LLD, while KW8N has picked up the MRRRC Caribbean challenge with world-class finishes from KP2A.

Looking at the MRRRC club roster shows some changes too. Some people have moved out of our area, some have left to join other clubs, and some have gone on to other areas of the hobby. Entire areas (notably Findlay) have fallen off the MRRRC map. At the same time, we have seen significant growth in some areas, particularly from Michigan where all but two or three people are new since 1982.

Not to be ignored are the faithful core of MRRRC. Some of them are alone in their areas - contesters in the wilderness, so to speak. Some have been members since the seventies, a few even remember the infamous "asterisk year". They are the foundation upon which MRRRC is built.

But all is not perfect in MRRRC-land. It is more or less recognized that contest activity in general is on a plateau at the moment, despite the current high sunspots, and MRRRC seems to mirror that trend. And then there is the question of the NCC...

In early 1989, several active MRRRC members from Northeast Ohio/Western Pennsylvania set out to form a new contest club. Their alleged purpose:

to form a "local" contest club which would consist of "active" contesters. These people resented having to drive long distances to MRRRC meetings - also, they felt MRRRC had degenerated into a social club where members would rather talk about contesting than do anything. Out of these feelings rose the North Coast Contest Club, taking with it many of MRRRC's leaders from the northeast area.

The formation of the NCC, and the way it was started, has left bad feelings with many people. There was little effort by any of the NCC principals (all of whom were MRRRC members) to contribute toward changes to rectify what they felt was wrong with MRRRC. They felt no loyalty, but chose instead to jump ship immediately prior to 1989 ARRL DX. These people did a great disservice to the other MRRRC members. The NCC'ers knew they were being traitors, as evidenced by a quote attributed to K5ZD saying that "K3CC took it well", that is to say, after Dave heard the news about the desertion of MRRRC'ers to NCC. Let me clarify that point right now - K8CC did NOT take it well!

In the aftermath of the NCC desertion, there were questions asked whether MRRRC would survive. NCC had taken much of our leadership, and many of the "big gun" stations which generated interest and activity within the club. There was even discussion of splitting off and forming a Michigan contest club. It is interesting to me that nobody I talked to really wanted to pursue this option, but instead, recognized the value of MRRRC and preferred to stay on board.

Not long after this, MRRRC found itself at the 1989 Dayton Hamvention, to elect a new slate of officers to lead the club. K8MR took on the task, but said privately that he hoped "he wasn't the captain of a sinking ship". Jim did an outstanding job leading MRRRC for the past year, binding the club's wounds, while exercising a

BIG FISH (continued)

polite disdain for the NCC and declining the opportunity for an intra-club challenge. I see no reason to change this policy under K8CC.

By now, you may be wondering why I chose to bring up this subject, over a year later. It is not my intent to offend, nor spark animosity toward the NCC. However, a great deal of resentment toward the NCC remains within the MRRRC membership. I felt that after a year of re-building, it was time to bring the issue out in the open so that we can deal with it as a club, and move on.

It is an understandable reaction to feel betrayed by the actions of those in the NCC. These people were our friends, and whether they admit it or not, each one gained a great deal from their association with us, and their actions hurt the club deeply. The long-time MRRRC member probably feels taken advantage of, while the new member wonders whether he has boarded a sinking ship. These feelings are the direct result of the actions of the NCC - each of us must accept and deal with them in our own way.

MRRRC is in no way a sinking ship, but it is also not the same club as it was prior to the NCC. It is true that we have fewer members now, but I would like to point out that most of the high points in the recent history of the MRRRC were accomplished not by those who have left, but by those that are still with us: the Dayton Suite, the K8MR Christmas Party, the N8ET Findlay Party, the Michigan meetings. These people are the core of the MRRRC, and they are still with us.

At the same time, it would be unhealthy for us to dismiss the complaints of the ex-MRRRC'ers without first examining ourselves. As in most things, the NCC allegations contain an element of truth shrouded by layers of misconception. As a club, we should acknowledge the truths, discard the misconceptions, and use them as lessons to make MRRRC better.

The first NCC complaint of the MRRRC was the long distances to meetings, yet it should be noted that few, if any of the ex-MRRRC'ers ever traveled to these meetings. MRRRC has always consisted of small geographic groups of contesters brought together under the club umbrella. These groups usually had their own character due to the local ham scene, and were often involved with local DX clubs. These separate local groups bring variety to our club, and cause MRRRC to have a broader scope than would be possible with just a local group. Geographic realities are part of it - here in the midwest we will never have a large, local contest club like the FRC or PVRC. The distances to meetings are a fact of life - a small price to pay for the fellowship of such a broad group of contesters, which should be seen as an asset, not a disadvantage.

The second NCC complaint, that of lower activity levels within our club, contains within it a shred of truth. MRRRC club scores have stagnated or declined in the past few years, despite the rising sunspots, but our club is not alone. My personal opinion is that we have allowed ourselves to focus only on "winning" scores, which robs us of the challenge and satisfaction which can come from smaller efforts. We contest less, and enjoy it less. Interestingly, I believe this attitude pervades the entire NCC...

Yes, the ex-MRRRC'ers had some valid points, yet it does not justify their actions toward the MRRRC which leaves us in an awkward position. NCC'ers come to the K8MR Christmas Party, call us to swap scores, and exchange antenna advice. Some NCC'ers still maintain their MRRRC membership, as if to soothe their consciences. I would not propose to deny an NCC'er attendance at the Christmas Party, or membership in MRRRC, and I will continue to interact with them as part of our hobby. However, they seem to be all too willing to participate in the benefits MRRRC has to offer, while

BIG FISH (continued)

ignoring the effects that their actions have had on others. It amazes me that these people act as if nothing is different. Speaking as a MRRRC member, I have been deeply offended by the NCC, and this will continue to affect my opinions of those involved. Its members should recognize this fact, and that K8CC is not the only one who shares this resentment.

Now on to more important things...

MRRRC GOALS FOR 1990/91

My objective for MRRRC in 1990/91 is simple - to lead the club in such a way that the members derive more enjoyment from contesting. To do this falls into four areas:

FELLOWSHIP: The club plans to have four to six meetings in the next year:

Michigan @ K8CC - June 1990
Findlay @ N8ET - September 1990
Christmas @ K8MR - January 1991
Dayton Hamfest - April 1991

In planning (dates TBD):

Cleveland @ WD8LLD (Aug/Oct 1990?)
Michigan2 @ ??? (Early Feb 1991?)

The MRRRC meetings are always fun, a chance to get together and swap stories and experiences. If you don't make it to a few, you are missing the essence of the club.

Along the lines of fellowship, I would like everyone to make an effort to make the Monday Night MRRRC Net (3825 KHz at 8:30 PM Eastern time). When you don't show up, you ARE missed. The first fifteen minutes or so will be devoted to general club stuff and to hear from the members. We will try to refrain from general discussions during this time, so if people must leave early we can still get business covered. After that will be time for general scuttlebutt and questions. The Monday Night net is an important part of MRRRC.

OPERATING GOALS: These fall into the categories of individual and group goals. We are going to make an effort to help members target individual goals to shoot for, dependent on their station, skills and available time.

Club competition is an important part of MRRRC as it serves to focus us on a group goal. In the past year, K8MR has endeavored to submit a club roster for all events, and we will continue this practice. Score rumors will be published in the 'Flash', and MRRRC will attempt to be active in all.

I would like to propose that MRRRC try to win the Unlimited Category in SS for the first time. At first glance, this goal might appear to be foolish, but there are three reasons to propose this. First, the only club in this category for the past couple of years has been the Society of Midwest Contesters, who we have competed with in the past. Second, though W8 is a hard place to win SS from, a "middle gun" station can do well and generate lots of points. Thirdly, Unlimited Class means EVERYBODY can contribute, no matter how little the score, or even if you try a single op/ multi station effort like K8MR.

For the ARRL DX Test, I propose that our goal be to win the Medium Club Category. Looking back in a 1983 'Flash', I found we were second that year with 14.8 Meg to NTCC's 15.9 Meg. For 1991 ARRL DX, K8CC plans to be S/O A/B on CW, and multi-multi on SSB. With a good effort from everyone (particularly our multi-op stations), I believe we could again generate a big score and possibly WIN.

IMPROVE PERFORMANCE: We need to help our members improve their scores. We will do this by "how-to" articles in the 'FLASH', organizing antenna parties and the like. Along these lines, everyone should make it a point to submit an article for the club newsletter. No matter how little or much - why not share your expertise?

BIG FISH (continued)

RECOGNIZE RESULTS: We are going to improve our recognition of our members efforts, whether big or small, local or national. As part of this, K8MR has proposed the MRRRC Championship, based upon a member's scores in certain contests throughout the year. Details are still being worked out, and NZ4K has agreed to administer the program.

Personally, I enjoy MRRRC and the people in it very much. I am involved in many other amateur radio pursuits, but the club is still on top of my list. We have survived a difficult year, and we have some work to do to get our activity rolling again, but we have a great membership and I'm confident we can make it happen. Are you with me?

73, Dave, K8CC @ WA800H

* * * * DAYTON SUITE 1991 * * * *

LATE BREAKING NEWS! As of May 30, 1990, K8CC was informed by Stouffer's Hotel that we now have a suite reserved for the 1991 Dayton Hamvention! This will be one of the large "parlor" suites, like we had in 1989. Plan now to be part of the MRRRC action at Dayton 1991!

* * * MICHIGAN MEETING 1990 * * *

The Michigan MRRRC meeting was held June 9, 1990 at the K8CC QTH with nine people present. Delays publishing the 'FLASH' no doubt effected the turnout, but a good time (and food) was had by all. We welcome long time contester Walt Amos, K8CV who joined MRRRC as a new member at the meeting.

TRAVELS IN TEXAS

Late May saw K8CC on a road trip for his employer through the wilds of southern Texas. An overnight stop in Houston provided the opportunity to visit with several of the gang from the Texas DX Society, including K5LZO, WB5RUS, K5GN, KE5IV, K5WA and KG5U. K5LZO was kind enough to pick me up at my hotel and ferry me out to see the his station in Magnolia, TX, north of Houston. The current K5LZO antenna farm consists of:

Tower 1 (90'): KLM 6L 10m, KLM 11L 6m, Cushcraft Boomers for 2m SSB/CW
Tower 2 (50'): KLM 6L 15m
Tower 3 (70'): KLM 4L 40m
Tower 4 (115'): KLM 6L 20m
Tower 5 (140'): KLM 6L 15m, KLM 11L 6m, Modified KLM rotary dipole for 80m
Tower 6 (50'): Telrex 4L 20m

Inside the main shack, Chuck (LZO) has a TS930S, Alpha 77DX, and a Alpha 76PA. Wife Barbara is WB5RUS, and has her own station adjacent to the kitchen which consists of a TS940S for HF, and a ICOM IC551D driving a Henry 6N2 for a KW on 6m. It is interesting to note that Barbara has a Technician license, and has 270 countries worked in the Novice/Tech bands! Son Chuck Jr. is also a ham, N5IVF.

You may not be hearing K5LZO quite so much in the future. After 22 years in the air conditioning contracting business, Chuck has decided to make a career change and go to sea as a Merchant Marine radio operator, shipping out the end of June 1990. Not to be non-radioactive, Chuck plans to take a Kenwood TS680 along on the ship and pass out rare maritime grid squares on 50 MHz!

Many thanks for Chuck and Barbara Coleman, as well as the rest of the TDXS gang, for their hospitality.

NEW PACKETCLUSTER RELEASE

Arriving too late for the April issue of the Flash is word of release of Version 4.01 of the popular packetcluster software. The new features of this version are two new commands, SHOW/FREQUENCY (SH/FR) and SET/FREQUENCY (SET/FR).

The SH/FR provides information from digitally interfaced radios (such as the TS-940/950, IC-765, etc.) when they are connected into the cluster via programs such as CT, NA, etc. The "SH/FR call" will tell you what frequency the other guy's radio is tuned to. For example, "SH/FR K8CC" will generate a reply such as "K8CC is on 14016.22". If there are multiple radios and computers, such as in a multi-multi operation, all the frequencies for connected radios will be displayed. If the other station is not connected or does not have his radio interfaced, the response will be "K8CC frequency not available".

It can be seen that this feature will be quite handy in the contests. It can take the guessing out of where and what the big guys are doing. You won't have to be wasting time scratching out South Americans on 80 when your competition has found the big European morning opening on 20 meters.

The SET/FR command provides the ability to tune the other guy's radio. For example, should K8CC unknowingly start CQing on 3Y5X's transmit frequency of 14022, a "SET/FR K8CC 14030" will get Dave off of there before a policeman can even send a "QSY U LID". This command will not accept frequencies outside the band the radio is tuned to (you can't blow up his amp by sending him to 15 meters), nor outside of the amateur bands (you can't send someone off to 13998.5 to work the FCC).

As the country becomes more connected on packet, the possibilities become very interesting. Tired of fighting it out for a frequency? Type "SET/FR N5AU 21415", wait a few seconds, and 21200 is all yours, while some maritime mobile net gets very upset at a loud Texan who suddenly showed up on the frequency they had been using for the last 14 years!

Here's a tip of the hat to the geniuses who write all this good stuff. Have fun with it in the contests!