

20 Years of Digital Radiosporting – 2008 ARRL RTTY Roundup Results

“Live each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influences of each.”

— Henry David Thoreau

Jay Townsend, WS7I
ws7i@arrrl.net

RTTY Roundup — it’s all in the name. Roundup is not a DX contest and it’s not Sweepstakes. Roundup promotes RTTY contacts with RTTY stations and it’s mostly just fun. You won’t smell teletype oil and you won’t hear the clank of the machinery as in the past, but the bands will be full of wall-to-wall “diddles.” Roundup grabs the best of the past and blends it with the future of Radiosport, and it’s a blast!

Hook up your computer and sound card with a simple interface, obtain some excellent (often free) software and start RTTY Radiosporting. This is your chance to work some states, work a little DX, have some fun and make new friends. RTTY is the fastest growing contest mode. Check out the detailed ARRLWeb version of this article at www.arrrl.org/contests for information about joining the fun yourself!

Change is inevitable; in fact it’s the only constant in our lives. As participants in the great radio game known as Radiosport we are expected to create certainty from uncertainty. The biggest uncertainty is always solar conditions for the contest. Contest

preparation begins at least one day before the contest. The wise participant studies propagation in the hours leading up to the contest.

This year the digital battle got started a day early on Friday with the start of the

next Solar Cycle; the first new sunspot appeared on January 4. Cycle 24 has started! Conditions will now rise until the peak in 2011 or 2012.

Kickoff time was 1800Z so the WWV reports for the hours prior to the event

indicated and hinted at possible strategy for some stations. My RTTY Roundup experiences of nearly two complete solar cycles teach several lessons. For stations located above latitude 42°N, solar conditions regulate Radiosporting by polar signal absorption as measured by the K and A indexes, as opposed to the MUF as determined by the Solar Flux Index (SFI). They know that this means they have to get European multipliers as quickly as possible.

The RTTY Roundup emphasizes high rate contacts but awards multiplier credit only once, *not once per each band*. Maximizing multipliers is always a very important part of contest strategy. Speed is essential, yet accuracy wins.

When the A index pops up it is very likely that the K index will rise quickly over the next few hours and ionospheric absorption will take away the European

Plaque Winners

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of numerous clubs and individuals, we are pleased to list the winners of the sponsored plaques listed below:

Category	Winner	Sponsor
Overall Winners		
W/VE Single Operator Low Power - NM7M Memorial	AA5AU	Jim Reisert, AD1C
W/VE Multi-Single High Power	K5NZ	John Lockhart, W0DC
DX Single Operator High Power	P49X (W0YK, op)	Gary Belcher, KH6GMP
DX Multi-Single High Power	CT9M	Larry L. Lindblom, W0ETC, Memorial by the Tennessee Contest Group
ARRL Division Winners		
Single Operator Low Power		
Dakota Division Single Operator Low Power	N0AT	W2JGR Memorial by Don Hill, AA5AU
Midwest Division Single Operator Low Power	NT0F	In Memoriam of Larry Lindblom, W0ETC, by Bob Ruvolo, K16DY
New England Division Single Operator Low Power	W1ECT	CTRI Contest Group
Roanoke Division Single Operator Low Power	KA4RRU	Mike Sims, K4GMH
Single Operator High Power		
Central Division Single Operator High Power	A19T	Don Hill, AA5AU
Delta Division Single Operator High Power	N4ZZ	Roland Guidry, NA5Q
Great Lakes Division Single Operator High Power	K4WW	Southwest Ohio DX Association
Pacific Division Single Operator High Power	WK6I	Northern California Contest Club
Northwestern Division Single Operator High Score	W7LD	Pat Shinnors, W7GTO

Un-sponsored plaques are available for purchase by the winners. To inquire about purchasing an un-sponsored plaque, or for information on plaque sponsorship, please contact Sean Kutzko, KX9X, ARRL Contest Branch Manager, at kx9x@arrrl.org. Plaques cost \$67, which includes shipping.

W6YX



The antenna farm at W6YX.

path. This will also limit the propagation on 15 or 10 meters. By paying close attention to the solar numbers you can help level the playing field.

Many stations normally start on the highest band open; at this point in the solar cycle, 15 meters. Usually the rate meter spins during the first hour. Great QSO rates can reach over a hundred per hour and may be sustained for many hours. With the K index going to 3 right at the start of this year's contest, 15 meters was practically useless on Saturday for everyone, so the action moved to 20 meters. West Coast stations were able to work Europeans right at the start of the contest. The most astute operators went not for rate, but for the multipliers they knew they might not get on Sunday if conditions didn't improve.

Change is like rate and it can be exciting, even invigorating, seducing us to wild abandon. In order to be prepared for change, we must never forget certain principles, such as that West Coast stations need to work Japan and the Pacific on Saturday — they won't be there on Sunday. Good operators improve through planning, learning about propagation and knowing how their antenna systems get out band-by-band. They also learn how to use their receivers, sound cards and software to maximize their score. They work hard during the contest and above all else they have fun.

When should you take your off time? Usually my recommendation is to just take it in one six-hour piece. This worked out well this year if you left at 0600 and returned at 1200 because the conditions took a nice upswing at that time. The East Coast got an opening to Europe at sunrise, while the West Coast had nice 80 and 40 meter runs. Some stations pushed the low-band activity and took split time this year. That worked for some and punished others by making them either miss the great 40 meter run at the end of the contest or take a nap on Sunday!

Sometimes it takes good publicity to really bring out participation. In a recent survey conducted by Don, AA5AU, the ARRL RTTY Roundup was voted the best in its contest class. As a result, the operators came out in force and set a new record for the number of logs submitted for the Roundup. A total of 1246 logs including check logs were sent in for checking for the 2008 contest. Little Pistols and new RTTY operators dominate the Roundup and have for years. Shelby, K4WW, reported more than 10% of his contacts were with stations "never before worked on RTTY." That means you can join in and be part of the fun with many others that will be new as well.

Special Performances and Records

"Dreams are the touchstones of our character." — Henry David Thoreau

From July 2008 QST © ARRL



Single Operator

W/VE—Low Power

AA5AU	201,488
N9CK	141,882
KA4RRU	134,064
N0AT	120,204
W1ECT	119,028
VE1OP	113,564
N2WK	111,360
AB4GG	105,560
KE5OG	102,300
VA2UP	101,736

W/VE—High Power

W1UE	263,017
K4GMH	247,212
K6LL	174,000
A19T	173,043
W5AP	170,208
WW4LL	170,118
W3MF	157,472
VA1CHP	151,281
K1ZZI	150,930
N4ZZ	150,675

DX—Low Power

H13T	
(H13TEJ, op)	153,468
CN8KD	130,364
F5BEG	80,560
US0MM	78,988
J39BS	75,565
KP4KE	74,205
4M5RY	
(YV5KAJ, op)	64,680
YT2RX	64,246
SP3GXH	62,496
LV5V	
(LU5VV, op)	61,904

DX—High Power

P49X	
(W0YK, op)	345,992
9A5W	176,904
G6PZ	
(M0SDX, op)	173,228
ZX2B	
(PY2MNL, op)	163,560
MI0LLL	154,940
UW8I	
(UT2IZ, op)	145,015
UX0FF	122,622
KH6ZM	119,112
SO4M	
(SP4MPG, op)	112,062
ZC4LI	110,900

Multioperator

W/VE—Low Power

N5ZM	127,012
N0NI	111,474
W2RTY	101,860
W5VZF	91,520
WD4LBR	73,817
N9LAH	73,284
WZ8P	67,860
N8LRG	65,312
K4XD	63,540
KK6T	60,268

W/VE—High Power

K5NZ	190,212
W0SD	178,314
AB0RX	173,724
W4RM	169,521
K4TD	169,012
W6YX	141,918
K4PX	140,595
W7WW	133,868
WA1PMA	116,012
ND2T	115,920

DX—Low Power

UT3HWW	79,008
LZ9R	50,640
OM3KWZ	42,282
G0MTN	39,146
RZ4HZW	35,929
MM0BQI	26,352
EA5DKU	21,318
YL1YI	18,772
UA3QJJ	14,448
RK3SWS	13,600

DX—High Power

CT9M	206,142
OL6X	134,640
UZ4E	98,490
JA6ZPR	62,500
UX4E	40,922
YT3H	39,780
AL1G	15,876
PZ5YV	14,842
UU2JQ	12,300
DL4RCK	11,466

A complete set of the ARRL RTTY Roundup records are available on the ARRL Contest Web site at www.arrl.org/contests.

Dennis, W1UE, operating at W1KM set a new Single Operator High Power all-time record for W/VE this year. Dennis also set a new high QSO total for SOHP W/VE of 2101.

For the Low Power Single Operator crowd it was business as usual with Don, AA5AU, notching his 14th straight World victory. Will it ever end? Pulling off a three-peat were Earl, N5ZM, and his partner Glenn, N5RN. They are the Low Power Multioperator champs.

There were also 12 new Division records set in 2008, including three of the four categories in the Southwestern Division. We had 50 new section records (16% of all section records) set during the 2008 RTTY Roundup.

Five new continental records were set for DX stations this year. Mohamed, CN8KD, set a new African record in the Single Operator Low Power category.

Also setting a new Africa record was the Madeira Group, CT9M, in Multi-Single High Power. Steve, ZC4LI, set the new Asian All-time Single Operator High Power record and Nikola, 9A5W, set the new European All-time Single Operator High Power Record. A new Multi-Single Low Power record for Europe All-time was set by station UT3HWW. P49X piloted by Ed, W0YK, won for the 3rd straight year but he had 10% less than last year's record score. Ed did set a new record for QSO total by SOHP DX of 2877. (For a list of operators at all stations, refer to the online results.)

RTTY Wrap-up

This year we single out Sue, AI6YL, for a special salute. Sue joined in on the Roundup for the first time and it sounded like it was a fun first contesting experience. Anyone who can poke fun at themselves about getting on the "no ears" list on the spotting network must be welcomed to the RTTY group. Everyone talks to their screen, laughs at their own mistakes, and plays fast and loose with their own goals. As K0EU stated, "So many contests, so little time!" The Web version of this article includes interesting personal looks at the contest by GU0SUP, K4GMH, KK5OQ, W6YX, ND2T and WA1PMA, as well!

We all have to start RTTY contesting somewhere; some will learn how to play to their best advantage and others will not. Some will fall by the wayside, and some will go on to become serious RTTY contesters. The key is to start and each year more and more will join in on the excitement. In every loss there is a gain, as in every gain there is loss. You can join us for the next ARRL RTTY Roundup on January 3 and 4, 2009.



Affiliated Club Competition

Club	Entries	Score
Medium		
Potomac Valley Radio Club	35	1,440,226
Minnesota Wireless Assn	29	923,641
Yankee Clipper Contest Club	16	887,626
Tennessee Contest Group	23	869,991
Society of Midwest Contesters	20	859,038
Northern California Contest Club	19	849,817
Florida Contest Group	15	695,128
Frankford Radio Club	9	424,751
Contest Club Ontario	17	368,814
Alabama Contest Group	10	933,604
Grand Mesa Contesters of Colorado	12	378,326
Central Texas DX and Contest Club	6	293,509
Western Washington DX Club	8	286,830
Southern California Contest Club	9	284,035
Order of Boiled Owls of New York	3	179,763
Rochester (NY) DX Assn	5	178,108
Contest Club Du Quebec	3	170,756
Kentucky Contest Group	4	153,977
Willamette Valley DX Club	4	126,304
Mad River Radio Club	3	87,043
Carolina DX Assn	3	59,179
Hudson Valley Contesters and DXers	3	25,110
Local		
Maritime Contest Club	4	297,018
Spokane DX Association	4	284,446
Boeing Employees ARS - St. Louis	5	186,068
Dominion DX Group	7	160,631
Midland ARC	4	102,776
Redmont Top Key Contest Club	4	93,039
Dauberville DX Assn	3	66,865
Low Country Contest Club	3	59,094
Colony Mountain Contest Club	3	56,388
Bergen ARA	3	42,499