

# Contesting in Amateur Radio

Unveiling the Competitive Spirit and Community of Ham Radio

# Introduction to Contesting in Amateur Radio

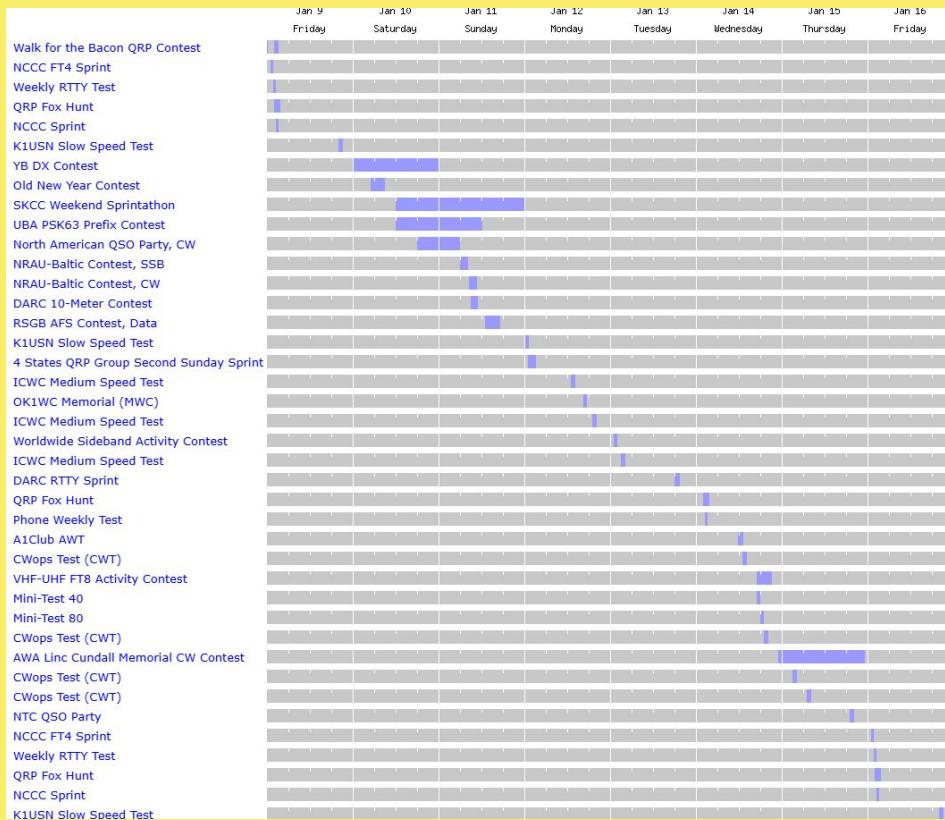
- Contesting in amateur radio, often referred to as radiosport, is a competitive activity where operators strive to contact as many stations as possible over specific frequencies within a set period.
- It serves not only as a fun and engaging way to practice operating skills but also plays a crucial role in emergency preparedness.
- Contests vary in their objectives, but the core aim is to enhance participants' proficiency and readiness for communication under diverse and challenging conditions.

# Types of Contests

- State QSO parties
- DX
  - ARRL DX
  - CQ World Wide DX
- Intercountry
  - ARRL Sweepstakes
  - VHF
- Specific bands
  - 10m
  - 160m
  - VHF
- Each contest has different categories
  - Assisted
  - Non-Assisted
  - Power level
  - Location
    - Home
    - Mobile
    - Park
- Some are all modes some are for a specific mode

# Finding a Contest

- [contestcalendar.com/](http://contestcalendar.com/)
  - Has a full calendar with links to each contest and quick information



## North American QSO Party, CW: 1800Z, Jan 10 to 0559Z, Jan 11

Geographic Focus:	North America
Participation:	Worldwide
Awards:	North America
Mode:	CW
Bands:	160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m
Classes:	Single Op (QRP/Low) Single Op Assisted (QRP/Low) Single Op Overlay: Youth Multi-Two (Low)
Max operating hours:	Single Op: 10 hours Multi-Two: 12 hours
Max power:	LP: 100 watts QRP: 5 watts
Exchange:	NA: Name + (state/DC/province/country) non-NA: Name
Work stations:	Once per band
QSO Points:	NA station: 1 point per QSO non-NA station: 1 point per QSO with an NA station
Multipliers:	Each US state and DC (including KH6/KL7) once per band Each VE province/territory once per band Each North American country (except W/VE) once per band
Score Calculation:	Total score = total QSO points x total mults
Submit logs by:	0559Z January 18, 2026
E-mail logs to:	(none)
Upload log at:	<a href="https://www.ncjweb.com/naqplogsubmit/">https://www.ncjweb.com/naqplogsubmit/</a>
Mail logs to:	(none)
Find rules at:	<a href="https://www.ncjweb.com/NAQP-Rules.pdf">https://www.ncjweb.com/NAQP-Rules.pdf</a>

# QSO Parties

- There are 48 recognized QSO Parties in the US and Canada
  - Most states have their own QSO party, with some smaller states partnering with a neighboring state or region.
- Objective of QSO Parties
  - In-State Participants: Contact as many stations anywhere during the QSO Party.
  - Out-of-State Participants: Contact as many stations within the state that is having the QSO Party.
- **General QSO Party Rules (Some QSO Parties have variations)**
  - **Usually**, only CW and SSB. Some states have added digital modes.
  - Different categories for different types of stations (high power, low power, QRP, mobile, rover, etc)
- Each QSO party posts their rules on a website (or refer to the online contest calendar.)

# **Michigan QSO Party**

## **Saturday 18 April 2026 – 1200L to 2359L**

- Objective: For Michigan hams to contact as many stations anywhere as possible, for out-of-state hams to contact any stations within Michigan
- Exchange: RST and County (or state/province/DX)
- CW and SSB – 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters. Stations can be worked once per band per mode
- Categories: Single-Op, Multi-Op, Mobile, Rover, EOC.
- Scoring: QSO points x Multiplier
- Full rules at <http://www.miqp.org>

# MIQP Club Competition

- Individual scores can be attributed to individual clubs for the Club Competition
- In 2025, SLAARC placed 10<sup>th</sup> in the MIQP Club Competition with K8ERS, W8MSC, KB8JIU, and W8KNX attributing their scores to SLAARC

## POTA Operations

- MIQP does not have a dedicated POTA category
- Consider running MIQP concurrently with your POTA activation, Make sure to submit a log for the contest.
- Consider activating a park within a rare county.

# What is a Rare County?

# Map shows 2025 MIQP Results

- Activated in 2025 MIQP
- Not Activated in 2025 MIQP
- Activated by a SLAARC Member in 2025 MIQP



# State QSO Party Challenge

- There are four programs they offer
  1. State QSO Party Challenge
    - Level Minimum Points
    - Diamond 100,000 | Platinum 25,000 | Gold 10,000 | Silver 5,000 | Bronze 500
    - Total Points = (Sum of Individual state QSO party contest QSOs) x (Number of state QSO party contest 3830scores.com form submission) **MUST make 2 QSO's per QSO Party**
  2. State QSO Party "Worked All QSO Parties"
    - Make at least TWO valid contacts in at least 50% of the State QSO Party Challenge approved QSO party contests
    - "Ultimate" - 100% participation "Elite" - 90% thru 99% participation "Expert" - 75% thru 89% participation "Aficionado" - 50% thru 74% participation
  3. State QSO Party Club Challenge
  4. State QSO Party Mobile/Portable Challenge

# State QSO Party Challenge

- There are four programs they offer
  1. State QSO Party Challenge
  2. State QSO Party “Worked All QSO Parties”
  3. State QSO Party Club Challenge
    - To provide a means of recognizing a club's performance in the State QSO Party Challenge which consists of the aggregate total SQP Challenge activity of individual amateur radio operators who are affiliated with a club or multiple clubs
  4. State QSO Party Mobile/Portable Challenge
    - The State QSO Party Mobile/Portable Challenge is an overlay program of the State QSO Party Challenge program
    - The purpose of the SQP Mobile/Portable Challenge is to encourage Mobile and Portable (POTA) operation and recognize the operators for their participation

# Assisted vs Non-Assisted

- Are you blindly turning the dial trying to find stations? Then you are non-Assisted
- Using a DX cluster can help you find more/rarer stations, but makes you assisted
- What is the right way that is up to you and your wants and needs



# DX Clusters

- Most logging software has the ability to connect to a DX cluster
- DX clusters are packets of information about spotted stations.
  - POTA
  - [DXsummit.fi](http://DXsummit.fi)
- Before the internet these were on packet radio BBS's.
- There are 100's of dx clusters that you can connect to. Some have CW skimmers others focus on FT8 and some are general use, carrying all messages. The more nodes connected the more information you will get
  - WA9PIE
  - VE7CC
  - WD4IX

# Logging

- To enhance your contesting skills, focus on accurate and fast logging to avoid losing time and ensure correct submissions.
- Contesters use a variety of methods for logging contacts during contests.
  - The methods range from traditional paper logbooks to sophisticated computer logging software.
  - The software can provide additional features such as dupe checking, rate monitoring, multi-operator support, and real-time score estimations.
  - Some software also integrates with radio hardware for automatic control and logging.
- Some top logging software
  - N1MM - Free
  - N3FJP - Paid
  - World Radio League - Free ish
  - RUMlogNG - Free

# Submitting a Log

- Most contest have an online portal to upload your information.
  - The most common format for a contest is a Cabrillo file
  - This file contains all the category information and your log more information about Cabrillo file can be found [here](#) from the ARRL
- There is a time limit after the contest end to submit a log usually about a week but it does vary.
- If the contest has spot for a club you can enter [South Lyon Area Amateur Radio Club](#)
- Other place to submit your log
  - QRZ
  - LOTW
  - Your own personal log
  - <https://www.3830scores.com/>

START-OF-LOG: 3.0  
LOCATION: CT  
CONTEST: ARRL-DX-SSB  
CALLSIGN: W1AW  
CATEGORY-OPERATOR: SINGLE-OP  
CATEGORY-TRANSMITTER: ONE  
CATEGORY-POWER: HIGH  
CATEGORY-ASSISTED: NON-ASSISTED  
CATEGORY-BAND: ALL  
CLAIMED-SCORE: 1000000  
OPERATORS: KX9X  
CLUB:  
NAME: Sean Kutzko  
ADDRESS: 225 Main Street  
ADDRESS: Newington, CT 06111  
SOAPBOX: I had a lot of fun at W1AW!

# Should you submit a log

- Yes
  1. Your call won't show up as NIL (NOT IN LOG)
  2. You never know how you will do
    - a. Rory got 1st place in the out of state POTA station with 97 qso's

# 2026 Club Contest

- We will have a few different end of year awards
  1. Most contests enter in
  2. Top club op's in these contest
    - ARRL Digital
    - ARRL DX (Phone,CW)
    - ARRL SS (Phone,CW)
    - ARRL 10m
    - CQ WW (Phone, CW,RTTY)
    - MI QSO Party
    - State QSO Party Challenge



# Stay Up To Date!

Join our Discord

