

## The Future of VHF/UHF/Microwave Contesting

### An open discussion.

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The purpose of this session is to discuss the future of VHF/UHF/Microwave contesting:

- Given the advances in technology.
- Given the current level of participation.
- Given changes in operating practices.

Within the framework of the current contest rules.

Objective: Gather inputs from contesters and *non-contesters* alike from as many geographical areas as possible.

Challenges:

- Attract newcomers to VHF+ Contesting.
- Maintain participation by long-time contesters.
- Increase participation on the higher bands – 902 MHz & above.
- With the increase in use of digital modes what is the impact on Rovers?
- With the increase in the use of digital modes what is the impact on the microwave bands?
- Is scoring balanced? i.e.: QSOs vs. bands vs. grids vs. modes vs. propagation

Ground rules:

- Facilitators will balance air time.
- Listen to the other side's point of view. It's ok to have different views!
- Notes/Minutes will be charted / published.

Outcome: An attempt will be made to summarize learnings & conclusions and chart next steps.

Things to consider:

- Each participant has his/her own reason for operating in a contest.
  - Recognition: score is very important for some.
  - For others it is a matter of self-improvement.
  - Reconnect with friends.
  - Increase DX awards, grids, states, etc.
  - Of course – Just have fun.
- VHF+ Contesting is inherently unfair - unless we all operate from the same location with the same equipment at the same time.
  - High population density areas.
  - Geographic differences.
  - Propagation differences.
- Advances in technology will have an impact on the direction of VHF+ contesting. The 800 pound gorilla in the room are the digital modes.
  - Are the technology changes just part of the natural evolution of amateur radio?
  - As part of that natural evolution it is to be expected that users of the “old technology” will either adapt or die?
  - Will advances in technology have a net positive impact on contesting bringing more newcomers than old timers who may fade away?

Is VHF+ contest participation declining, relatively constant or growing?

- Depends on who you ask.
- Depends on where you live.
- Depends on what bands you operate.
- Depends on what mode(s) you operate.

Are VHF contests “fair?”

- Depends on who you ask.
- Depends on where you live.
- Depends on what bands you operate.
- Depends on what mode(s) you operate.

What steps, if any, can be taken to increase contest participation? Who and what groups are doing a good job in prompting VHF+ Contesting?