



Is your DX alarm clock ringing yet? Here's a concept that dates back nearly 70 years, yet seems to be just what's needed today to get hams who have "worked 'em all" back on the air, along with newcomers to DXing who can start out on an equal level with all those old-timers. The New CQ DX Marathon is this month's component of our "Waking Up DXing" program.

Announcing:

The NEW CQ DX Marathon

BY BOB LOCHER, W9KNI, & RICH MOSESON,* W2VU

CQ magazine is proud to announce the renewal of the CQ DX Marathon, last run in 1948, which will now become an annual event. Basically, it's a year-long DX hunt, with participants competing to see who can work the greatest number of countries ("entities") and CQ zones over the course of a full year. While not a contest in the usual sense of a 48-hour sprint, it is very much a competition, and the competition starts fresh each year, so there's no carry-over to create long-term advantages or disadvantages. The format also largely eliminates geographical advantage within a country. Plus, there are two divisions within the Marathon to allow nearly any HF station a chance to realistically compete.

A Bit of History

The original DX Marathon was run in 1939, sponsored by *Radio* magazine. The developing conflicts leading to World War II halted this event after only one year. In 1948, CQ magazine, *Radio's* successor in the ham radio arena, revived the Marathon, which resulted in a spirited chase. However, the event was abandoned the following year in favor of a new contest—the now classic CQ World-Wide DX Contests. The workload for managing those contests meant that something had to give, and it turned out to be the DX Marathon (see "Contesting History" by Jan Perkins, N6AW, CQ *Contest* magazine,

October 1998, pp. 36–37). But times change. Now CQ sponsors many contests, and the work of managing these events has been largely taken over by volunteers.

Serious DXers are very concerned about an obvious decline in DX operating on the HF bands, and it is anticipated that the DX Marathon, along with two other operating achievement programs that CQ is introducing this year (see the "CQ DX Field Award" announcement last month and watch for a third program next month), will help restore the missing excitement.

Philosophy

The CQ DX Marathon is intended to be a vehicle for all DXers to have a significant and competitive new operating activity. A major intent of the rule design is to limit to the extent possible the geographic benefit of a particular location within a country or zone so that any well-operated station has a realistic chance to win. This is why, for example, band countries (meaning credit for a country the first time it's worked on each band) do not add to a score. As an example, a station on the American east coast might have considerable luck working countries on 160 meters and on 6 meters that stations in other parts of the States are unable to work at any time of year. If band countries are counted, it would be possible to win the USA only from the east coast. But with band countries and band zones *not* counting, we believe the winners can come from any part of the country. The scoring is very

simple—you get one point for each country and each CQ zone worked, period. The more you operate, and the more intelligently you operate, the better your chances of working more zones and countries.

Operating Classes

There are two operating classes in which a station may compete, "Formula" and "Unlimited." The Formula Class is open only to stations using 10 watts output or less (QRP), or to stations whose power output is 100 watts or less and whose antennas are limited to basic dipoles or verticals (see Rules for more details). The rules prohibit the use of any assistance in arranging/making a contact (except for spotting networks, such as the DX Cluster®, which is permitted for both classes). The intent of the Formula Class is to offer QRP stations and stations not normally considered to be competitive an opportunity to fully participate and to have a very real chance of winning. The Unlimited Class is for those stations normally considered competitive in contests and other competitions—no limits on antennas or power used (up to your license's legal limit).

All entries must be single-op only; no multi-op or club entries will be accepted, nor may stations help each other arrange or make contacts. Use of DX Clusters is OK, but having your buddy ask a DX station to listen for you, or relaying information that one of you can't hear, is not OK, nor are contacts made through "list" operations.

Even though there is no provision for

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club entries, we strongly encourage clubs to organize their own *internal* competitions within the structure of the CQ DX Marathon.

The DX Marathon Committee expects operators to abide by the spirit of these rules, rather than trying to figure ways to secure a rule-bending advantage. The CQ DX Marathon relies to a very considerable extent on the ethics of the operators. While every effort will be made to verify contacts using outside information, as in any contest or operating program, the integrity of the final results reflects the integrity of the participants.

Logs and Results

At this writing, the only way to submit your logs will be via a special downloadable matrix that will be made available on the CQ website at <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com>. We are currently in discussions with the ARRL regarding the ability of Logbook of the World to support non-ARRL awards. If arrangements can be made and are in place before the end of 2005 for LoTW to support the CQ DX Marathon, we will accept entries made via LoTW. Watch for announcements in CQ and/or on our website. In any event, all submissions for the Marathon must be made electronically.

Claimed scores will be posted on the CQ website as soon as possible after they are submitted. A report on final scores will be published annually in CQ. Interim results may be published in CQ from time to time as well.

Certificates and Plaques

The top-scoring station in each CQ zone and country will receive a certificate suitable for framing. In zones/countries with sufficient activity, certificates may also be issued to other high scorers. We also anticipate awarding plaques to the very highest scorers in each category, and possibly to the DX station(s) whose callsigns appear in the greatest number of submitted logs. Plaque sponsorships are solicited. The number of plaques issued will be determined in part by the number of sponsors who sign up. (These plaques generally cost \$50 to \$60 each.)

In addition, we plan to make downloadable Certificates of Participation available to anyone who has submitted a log. You would download and print these certificates yourself, so the quality would be determined primarily by the quality of the printer and paper you use.

Future Rules Changes

One of the benefits of starting from scratch each year will be that fine-tun-

ing the rules will be easy. So if it appears at the end of the first year that, for instance, a mobile category is required, or that some tweaks are needed in the rules for each entry class, we can make whatever changes are required without putting any stations at a disadvantage for the prior year. Everybody starts each year at zero, so you'll have to do it all again when 2007 rolls around ... and that's the whole idea!

Next month we'll conclude our "Waking Up DXing" series of new operating events with a program designed to introduce newer hams to the joys of DXing and award-chasing.

Good Hunting!

Now, here are the rules for the New CQ DX Marathon:

Rules, 2006 CQ DX Marathon

1. Activity period: The CQ DX Marathon is a year-long activity, beginning at 0000 UTC January 1 and ending at 2359 UTC December 31. Each year's event is separate.

2. Frequencies: Any authorized amateur frequency may be used, with the exception of the 60-, 30-, 17-, and 12-meter bands. Contacts through repeaters or satellites are not allowed for credit. All contacts must be made entirely over amateur radio frequencies; i.e., Echolink-type contacts do not count.

3. Categories: All awards are for single operator only. There are two entry classes, "Formula" and "Unlimited."

a. Formula: All contacts must be made with a maximum output power of 10 watts, regardless of band or mode. Or, the operator may run a maximum of 100 watts output to a simple antenna, such as a vertical or dipole. (See the appendix for further rules on antennas used in this class.) All contacts must be made without assistance of any sort, including but not limited to lists, passes, or use of higher power or prohibited antennas to initially secure the contact. Use of spotting nets such as a DX Cluster® is allowed. An operator in Formula Class must select a choice of QRP or 100 watts and limited antennas at the beginning of the year's DX Marathon, and may not switch between entry modes during the year.

b. Unlimited: Any antenna may be used, along with any power level for which the operator is licensed. As in the Formula class, all contacts must be made without assistance of any sort, including but not limited to lists and passes. Use of spotting nets such as a DX Cluster® is allowed.

4. Scoring: Each country worked is worth one point. Each CQ zone worked

is worth one point. The total score is the sum of zones and countries worked, on any mode and any authorized band. There are no multipliers of any kind. Each country and zone count only once. If in the course of the year you work 238 countries and 37 zones, your score is 275. If you work all 40 zones and 150 countries, your score is 190. The CQ DX Countries List and the CQ Zone List constitute the official lists. In the case of ties, the operator whose last scoring contact was earlier chronologically will be judged the winner. Decisions of the Marathon Manager are final.

5. Submissions: Submissions must be made electronically, using the downloadable entry matrix form to be made available on the CQ website, <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com>. This matrix requires logging of all scoring contacts, showing date, time, frequency, mode, callsign, country, and zone. All scores must be received by January 31 following the close of each DX Marathon.

6. Verification: QSLs are not required. The operator is expected to claim contacts only from stations the operator has every reason to believe are legitimate, and only to claim contacts in which an accurate two-way exchange was clearly accomplished (see Appendix for further explanation). Scores will be adjusted by the DX Marathon committee for claimed contacts with pirates or any station not considered legitimate. Submissions may be penalized or voided in cases of fraud or poor sportsmanship.

7. Clubs: Clubs are strongly encouraged to use the framework of this contest for intramural and regional competitions.

8. Claimed Scores: Competitors will be encouraged to post claimed scores to the DX Marathon Web page on the CQ magazine site. These claims will be updated regularly, and may be published periodically in CQ magazine.

9. Results: The final listing of scores will be posted each year on the CQ website. In addition, CQ magazine will publish an annual summary of the winning scores and details.

10. Awards:

a. Certificates: Certificates will be issued to the winners from each CQ zone and each CQ country. Where there is sufficient activity, additional certificates will be issued for other high scorers. In addition, downloadable certificates of participation will be made available to each participant. Other awards may be offered at the discretion of the DX Marathon committee.

b. Plaques: The CQ DX Marathon

Committee anticipates that plaques will be given to major winners. Sponsors are solicited.

c. Special recognition: The CQ DX Marathon Committee is also examining the possibility of special prizes for DX stations that appear in the greatest number of submitted logs.

11. In all cases, the rulings of the CQ DX Marathon Committee and the CQ DX Marathon Manager are final.

Appendix:

a. Formula Class antennas: Antennas used in this category for operators choosing the 100-watt option must be either simple verticals or wire antennas lacking significant gain. No arrays are allowed, whether vertical or horizontal, nor are long wires exceeding 100 feet

in length, except on 80 and 160 meters. Vertical antennas used must not be more than 33 feet higher than the station floor at their base, while dipoles or other wire antennas must not be more than 60 feet above ground. Yagis, quads, or tower-mounted antennas (except wire antennas meeting the height limits above) may not be used in this category.

b. Operators selecting the 10-watt option are limited to antennas on a single tower whose height does not exceed 65 feet above ground elevation within 330 feet or 100 meters of the tower base. Wire antennas may also be used but must meet the criteria of the 100-watt option, and may be tower-supported at only one point.

c. Contacts: The DX Marathon Committee believes that each contact for a claimed country or zone must be a solid contact. The station claiming a contact with another station is expected to have had his or her callsign fully and accurately received and transmitted by the other station, and to have copied his/her own call being correctly sent by the other station. For example, K2MGA may not claim credit for a QSO with a DX station who had his call as K3MGA, even though in many cases the DX station would QSL the contact with the correction made (after receiving a card from K2MGA, realizing the error and correcting his/her log). For a contact to count, both stations must correctly copy all of both callsigns.
