

RSGB Contest Committee Report to Spectrum Forum, November 2010

Log submission for all RSGB contests is now carried out via the web upload and input facilities, which have led to a dramatic increase in turnaround of results for most events. The Committee is continuing to develop its web site, so that there is a more seamless connection between the HF and VHF/UHF sides. Most contesters have access to the internet, and this has now become the main way of communicating with all those interested.

Nonetheless, the Committee produced a leaflet publicising RSGB contests and encouraging greater participation, in conjunction with HQ. This has been distributed at Dayton and Friedrichshafen, as well as more local events, and seems to have increased participation in our contests. Despite the disappointing HF propagation recently, there have been larger entries in virtually all events, with the IOTA and Commonwealth contests going from strength to strength.

Of course, the Committee recognises that contesting is not for everyone, and there have been calls for a reduction in the amount of space allocated to contests rules and results in RadCom. Starting this year, contests results will be produced in a "Contest Review", available in early 2011 as a booklet or CD, but only on demand. Articles describing specific contests and field days will continue to appear in RadCom.

The Committee has been in discussion with Ofcom, through HQ and the Spectrum Forum, about Special Contest Calls (SCCs) and some changes to the system. Unsurprisingly, this has not always led to agreement. However, the scheme has now been extended to individuals as well as clubs. A recent development means that SCCs currently allocated will be renewed automatically until the next renewal date in three years' time, thus saving the Committee (and Ofcom) a good deal of repetitive administration work.

The Committee is conscious of the fact that contests are not universally liked, and takes care to frame rules so as to fit in with usage patterns and band plans, as well as current custom and practice. However, other users have to recognise that contesting and DXing are probably the two most popular activities on bands above and below 30MHz, and that nobody has the right to a given frequency. We all have to share and work around others as necessary – contesters must show respect, but must also be respected by others, even if a contester is occupying part of the band that someone else wants to use.

The bias in RSGB HF contests towards CW, rather than SSB and data, is being addressed. Rather than creating new RSGB contests, the Committee will bring some external events into the HF Championship, including two of the BARTG contests. In addition, the traditional 30MHz divide is being crossed by a new "Super League", bringing together existing club events on 70cm, 2m and 80m. More may be added if this initiative proves successful.

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