

RSGB Contest Committee Report to Spectrum Forum, November 2015

Suggested IARU Band Plan changes

The Contest Committee would like to suggest the following changes to band plans:

1. 2m: Move all of the MGM centres of activity/calling frequencies to below 144.150 to provide more spectrum space for narrow band voice activity during band openings and contests. This change will also remove the possibility of conflict between voice and MGM users during contests.
2. All: Add a guard band around centres of activity/calling frequencies to ensure these frequencies are kept clear.

Review of the Year

2015 has been very busy! During the January CW AFS contest, a couple of groups engaged in 'not in the spirit of the contest' activities (predominately making contacts with fellow group members). One of the groups had been warned in 2014 about this practise and this year action was taken. One group protested and the scale of protest caused the Board to request the President to convene a 'President's Review of Contesting'. This review concluded in a day long workshop attended by members of the review teams and RSGB officials. A full and frank exchange of views occurred during the workshop on various topics including the action taken by the Contest Committee in CW AFS and on the scoring system for the V/U/SHF UK Activity Contests (UKAC). The minutes of the workshop is available here:

<https://thersgb.org/publications/committees/contest/reports/presidential-review-of-contesting-workshop-final-report.pdf>.

One of the recommendations of the President's Review was two members of the Contest Committee should be given specific responsibility for HF and V/U/SHF contest objectives, rules and the calendars. Nick G4FAL (HF) and Andy G4PIQ (V/U/SHF) have been appointed to the Contest Committee with these responsibilities. The other review recommendations are also being acted on and further changes to the operation of the Contest Committee will become evident over the next few months.

The White Paper contest rules consultation was repeated this year. The first white paper was issued in May and contained 41 proposals (the White Paper is available here: <http://www.rsgbcc.org/whitepaper2015.pdf>).

The existence of the White Paper and the request for responses was advertised in RadCom, on the RSGB website, on the RSGB Contest Committee website, in the Contest Committee monthly newsletter and on three yahoo.co.uk groups (uk-hf-contesting, uk-vhf-contesting and vhf&uhf).

154 responses were received before the cut-off date of 7th August. This represents approximately 14% of the number of contesters entering RSGB contests in the UK and is a 37.5% increase over 2014.

Analysis of the responses revealed a wide range of different opinions. However, the majority of the proposals received a very clear 'for' or 'against' overall response. Only three proposals had a marginal majority 'for' or 'against'.

The results of the analysis were considered at the Contest Committee meeting in late August and after a discussion on every proposal, a collection of rule changes were agreed. The full set of rule decisions are:

No.	Proposal	Result
1.1	Open logs	Yes
1.2	V/UHF contest QSOs to automatically count towards RSGB Awards programme	Yes
1.3	16h Restricted section for NFDs	Yes
1.4	7 day log submission period	Yes
2.1	6h IOTA section	No
2.2*	IOTA Rookie category	Yes
2.3*	IOTA Multi-2 category	Yes
2.4	Move RoPoCo 2 to Sunday PM	Yes
2.5	Extend 80mCC to November	No
2.6	Discontinue 80m Sprints	Yes
2.7*	Add EU Sprints to HF Contest Calendar	Yes
2.8	Add 40m to CW AFS	Yes
2.9*	Align HF NFD (CW & SSB) rules	Yes
2.10	Alter Commonwealth Contest (BERU) format to 'world works the Commonwealth'	No
3.1	Add MGM sections to V/UHF contests	Yes
3.2	2h minimum rest period in 6h section	Yes
3.3*	Recommend activity slots for 6h section	Yes
3.4	Mandate full log be submitted if activity extended beyond 6h section	Yes
3.5	Add a remote station rule to VHF rules	Yes
4.1	Introduce a Team distance rule to UKAC	No
4.2*	Introduce a 10W FM only section to UKAC	Yes
5.1	Remove most of the restrictions of the use of the Internet in V/UHF contests	Yes
6.1*	Simplify rules	Yes
6.2*	Issue more place certificates	Yes
6.3	Change definition of UK to UK & CD	Yes
6.4*	Add VHF rule concerning copying info at time of QSO to HF rules	Yes
6.5*	Make it clear that power means power output (helps non-UK entrants)	Yes
6.6	Add a HF claimed score page to the CC website	Yes
6.7*	Add new NA/JA awards to IOTA	Yes
6.8*	Clarify notification of QRP operation in CC (BERU)	Yes
6.9*	Change all references to BERU to Commonwealth Contest	Yes
6.10	Remove minimum power limit in all UKAC sections	Yes
6.11	Clarify how HF Championship scores are accumulated	Yes
6.12	Reinstate the 'rule' that all logs become the property of the RSGB on submission	Yes
6.13	Add 'centre of activity' to list of protected frequencies	Yes
6.14	Clarify VHF NFD MS section time limit rule	Yes

Note: Proposals marked '*' will be considered further as part of the Contest Rules rewrite / Contest Calendar Review

Two of the recommendations from the President's Review caused a second white paper (Supplemental White Paper) to be issued in late August with a cut-off date for responses of 25th September (the Supplemental White Paper is available here: http://www.rsgbcc.org/supp_whitepaper2015.pdf).

This white paper presented the details the proposed alternative bonus scoring scheme for the UKAC and also proposed a change to the MGM proposal in the first White Paper. The second white paper was publicised in the Contest Committee monthly newsletter, on three yahoo.co.uk groups (uk-hf-contesting, uk-vhf-contesting and vhf&uhf) and an email was sent to all 626 entrants to the 2015 UKAC. 84 valid responses were received. The proposed alternative bonus scoring system was rejected by the majority of the respondents (39 vs 29) so the M7 scoring system will be continued in 2016. The MGM proposal was accepted by the majority of respondents (43 vs 24). Respondents to the Supplemental White Paper were asked to provide their 4 character locator so that some geographical analysis could be undertaken. The breakdown of the responses is given below.

Locator	Total in Locator	Total UKAC	UKAC B1	UKAC M7	UKAC-No Comment	Total MGM	MGM Yes	MGM No	MGM-No Comment
IN89	1	1			1	1	1		
IN99	1	1	1			1	1		
IO74	2	1		1		2	1	1	
IO75	1	1	1			1			1
IO78	2	2	2			2	2		
IO80	2	2	1		1	2	2		
IO81	3	3		1	2	3	1	1	1
IO82	8	7	1	6		7	1	5	1
IO83	11	11	7	4		11	8	3	
IO84	1	1	1			1	1		
IO85	4	4	3	1		4		3	1
IO86	2	1			1	2		2	
IO90	1	1		1		1	1		
IO91	16	14	3	11		16	9	4	3
IO92	7	6	1	5		7	5	1	1
IO93	4	4	3		1	4	1	1	2
IO94	2	2	1	1		2	1		1
IO95	1	1		1		1		1	
JO00	1	1		1		1	1		
JO01	7	6	1	5		7	3	2	2
JO02	6	5	3	1	1	6	3		3
JO03	1	0				1	1		
Totals	84	75	29	39	7	83	43	24	16

The Contest Forum was run again at the RSGB Convention this year. The results of the two white papers were presented and discussed. A detailed analysis of the participation in RSGB HF contests between 1997 and 2015 was also presented by the CC HF Representative Nick G4FAL. The overall conclusion of this analysis is that in most contests, participation is on the increase. There are notable exceptions (80m Club 'Sprints', CW AFS, NFD and RoPoCo) –

action is being planned to try to reverse these trends. The three presentations and answering the questions that arose from them left no time for any additional questions – which somewhat annoyed the VHF operators in the audience. However, they did have an opportunity to raise any issues after the White Paper presentations – which no one used.

The Contest Committee continues to assist Ofcom with the issuing of Special Contest Calls (SCC). So far, 148 applications have been processed resulting in the issuing of new Notices of Variation (NoV) for 138 SCC. All current SCC NoV expire on 31st December 2016.

Ian Pawson, GOFCT
Chairman, RSGB Contest Committee