

Operating a CWC Callsign: FAQs

Who can operate?

All Full Licence holders who are Members of the RSGB are eligible to apply to operate one or more of the 31 special calls (see RSGB website for details). Intermediate and Foundation Licensees can also operate but only under the supervision of a full licence holder.

How do I apply?

1. To operate or to supervise others, you must be a member of the RSGB Contest Club.

This is necessary to comply with the terms of the NoV issued by Ofcom.

If you wish to join the Contest Club in advance then please send an email with your callsign, RSGB Membership number and your RSGB region number to ContestClub@rsqbcc.org. The membership list is shared between all the callsign coordinators.

2. Choose when and where you would like to operate.

Each special callsign has its own entry on QRZ.com, which includes an Activation Schedule calendar. Each callsign may be used (activated) by any Contest Club member, to operate in the country for which it has been issued.

A CWC Bookings Summary, showing all the callsigns and when they are booked to be activated, can be found at <https://bitly.com/cwcbookings>.

To request which of the available slots you would like to reserve simply send an email to the callsign coordinator – using the address shown as *Email*: on the QRZ.com page. Please include in your email, the address from which you will operate or else confirm that your address on QRZ.com is correct. If you intend to operate from a portable location, a postcode or maidenhead locator will suffice. This information is required by Ofcom and will only be shared with Ofcom staff. It will not be published.

Callsign coordinators will check if you are on the Contest Club membership list and can add you if you are not already listed.

What if we want to use one of the callsigns with a group or a local radio club? In this case we need one RSGB member with a Full Licence who will supervise the operation of the station. We encourage participation by Foundation and Intermediate Licensees and this is the appropriate way to allow this.

When can I operate? You will receive a confirmatory email from the coordinator who will put your callsign onto the calendar table on the QRZ.com entry.

Please don't operate if you are not in the table - unless you have discussed this directly with the coordinator.

Which bands and modes can I use? You may operate on any (or all!) of the HF bands (1.8-29.7MHz), excluding 5MHz, using any mode permitted by your licence. You do not need to decide in advance; you may wish to take account of propagation on the day. CW, SSB and FT8 will be the most popular modes. For FT8 we suggest that operation is within the normal allocation of frequencies on each band, as previous experience has shown that the level of marathon traffic can be accommodated in the available bandwidth; operating elsewhere would exclude any spontaneous QSOs.

How do I operate with one of the special callsigns?

The mode of operation is to call CQ looking for replies from marathon participants – this is the same for all modes and all bands.

How to I identify the station? Wherever you operate, whether it is from the address on your licence, an Alternative Address, Temporary Location, Mobile location or a Maritime Mobile location, please use the GB19 callsign without any additional suffix; so no /P, /A, /M or /MM. This is so that each callsign is used in only one format for the whole marathon.

What do I say?

- For initial calls, or if activity dries up a bit then use “CQ CWC” on CW or “CQ Cricket World Cup” on Phone; if activity is busy then it is enough to simply give the callsign.
- Unless you have very few callers, you should restrict each QSOs to exchanging signal reports; these should be “CALL 5NN” in CW or “CALL 59” in SSB. Remember, other stations are waiting to get into your log. Whilst this may not be a “true” report, it is almost impossible to judge an accurate signal strength of one signal in a pile up. In an HF pile-up, the stations calling you are *only* interested in knowing that you have received and logged their callsign correctly. Any other information, from them or from you, is slowing everything down. This is a Marathon, not a contest, but your two underlying aims are (a) to make as many QSOs as possible and (b) to log these QSOs accurately.
- At the end of a QSO send “TU GB19**” on CW or “thanks GB19**” on Phone.
- Use “QRZ” only if you need a caller to repeat their callsign. In most cases, the more succinct you can be, the more opportunity there is for those participating in the marathon, to get their callsign in your log.
- On FT8, use the standard exchanges.

Do I need to operate for the whole period? No: just operate for as long as you are comfortable. The only constraints are that you do not begin before the allotted start time, and that you finish before the next person takes over the callsign. However, the intention is to air the callsigns for as long as possible throughout the period of the Cricket World Cup, so please try and use as much of your allotted time as possible.

Supposing my plans change? No problem: just let the coordinator know before your session is due to start. The more notice you can give the better, however, since this may allow the slot to be reallocated.

What software should I use for logging?

In preparation for your activation, make sure that you have suitable computer logging software installed. Contest logging packages such as N1MM+ (free download), SD (free download), or Wintest have a “DXpedition mode” which not only allows QSOs to be recorded but will easily generate the required ADIF file at the end.

HRD will work but you will have to change the default settings for ADIF output as they do not include BAND. Apple users can use SkookumLogger.

What about FT8 Operating?

We will be using the standard default frequency allocations in WSJT-X on each band. Set the callsign to the GB19 call and your location using File/Settings. Select AutoSeq and Start with TX6 calling CQ. Remain calling CQ and responding to callers.

What about FT8 Logging?

WSJT-X saves your log as an ADIF file as you are operating, unlike normal logging programmes, so you will have to do some housekeeping.

An ADIF file is written to as you make QSOs; this is called **wsjtx_log.adi**.

Before you start using the GB19 callsign you need to get rid of your existing wsjtx_log.adi file; for this we suggest that you rename it. You can access the file to change the name from inside the WSJT-X programme using **File>Open log directory**.

You could rename wsjtx_log.adi to wsjtx_log_yourcallsign.adi, for instance, by right-mouse clicking on the file name and selecting rename from the list.

Now, when you start operating with the GB19 callsign, WSJT-X will create a new wsjtx_log.adi file and will write all your completed QSOs into it.

When you have finished the GB19 operating session, please rename the wsjtx_log.adi file which has only your GB19 QSOs, using the naming convention described below, and then move it to the **Desktop**. It will be easy to find it there to attach it to an email and to send it to your coordinator. The WSJT-X programme will be ready to start a new empty ADIF file the next time it is used.

What about logging for SSB and CW?

It is essential that you log all the QSOs you make using logging software, on a PC or Mac. This logging software must be capable of generating an ADIF logfile at the end of each logging session. Set the callsign in your software to be the GB19*** call that you will using. Logging must be in UTC not BST. Your coordinator will upload your QSOs to the Hamlogs website which is being used to provide award chasers with information on their and other's progress. (All QSOs will also be uploaded to LoTW at the end of the event.)

Please send your log, in .ADIF format to the coordinator as soon as possible after your slot has finished. If you are operating on more than one occasion, please submit your log after each activation. If you experience any problem with compiling your log in the correct format, please contact the coordinator for advice.

What should I do with the ADIF file?

Ideally, please save the ADIF file with a file name in the format **20190630 1200 GB19ABC@MYCALL.ADI** – this is the date (YYYYMMDD) and time in UTC that you started, the callsign you were using @your callsign. This filename format gives us a fighting chance of keeping the ADIF files sorted in chronological order.

Whatever logging software you use, your ADIF file output must include the following minimum fields for Hamlogs. Please check that these are all selected.

- CALL
- QSO_DATE
- TIME_ON (QSO start time)
- BAND
- MODE
- RST_RCVD
- RST_SENT

Next please email the ADIF file, with minimum delay, as an email attachment, to the coordinator for the special callsign, who will upload it to the Hamlogs server.

Will I have to send QSL cards? No. Paper QSLs will not be available for this event and at the end of the marathon we will upload all the complete logs to LoTW. There will be certificates available for participants to download when they have achieved enough QSOs.

I have a modest station – will this be good enough? Experience of activating similar stations during the FIFA World Cup marathon last year showed that those operating the most basic of stations (100w to a dipole or similar antenna) enjoyed operating, and their signals attracted many callers. The only drawback maybe that your choice of band will be limited. If you have access to a club or colleague's station, this may increase your options during your activation.

I've not operated a callsign that is likely to attract a lot of callers before. How should I approach it? One of the objectives of the event is to give people like you the experience of being at the "business end" of a pile-up so you will not be alone! If this is your first time, keep it simple is probably the best advice i.e.

- limit your operating to a mode or modes that you feel comfortable with and on band(s) that you are familiar with.
- try and find a frequency that is clear of nearby QRM before starting to call CQ.
- once you have established yourself on a frequency, stay put unless you have to move (due to QRM or QRN).
- only operate at a pace that you feel comfortable with. Make sure that you have logged the caller's details before moving onto the next and don't be afraid to ask for a repeat of callsigns if you are not sure of what you have copied.
- The only information that you need to exchange is a signal report and conventionally this is 59 (599). This will allow you to work through the list of callers as efficiently as possible. Obviously, if the queue of callers dries up, QSOs can be more leisurely. If you find that you are not attracting many callers, occasional self-spotting on a DX cluster like DXwatch.com will help callers to find you.
- If, during your session, you are called by someone who is already in your log, making this a duplicate QSO (dupe), please work them and log the QSO again. It could be that they felt that they did not complete the previous QSO with you.
- If there are a high number of callers making it difficult for you to copy individual call signs, it can be more effective to operate split-frequency – typically listening 1 kHz or more up on CW and 5 kHz or more up on SSB. The main advantage of split-frequency operation is that your callers can hear your replies as your signal is not buried under all the stations who are calling you.
- Don't worry about it if you struggle! Try and keep calm and keep control of the pile up. If all else fails, say "QRX" and take a break before resuming.

Where can I get more help? When you sign up to use one of the special callsigns you will be sent an invitation to join an email discussion group. The group exists to exchange advice and experiences between those who are activating the callsigns. You are not obliged to join the group but this is an excellent place to find help and share advice.