

CONTEST STRATEGIES

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Overview

Objective: How to develop a operating strategy along with specific tactics for two popular contests from W5.

Pre-contest goal-setting



Operating tactics



Post-contest evaluation

Domestic – ARRL Sweepstakes (K5OT)

International – CQ Worldwide DX (WØUO)

ARRL Sweepstakes

Over Eight Decades and Still Great Fun!

First step in developing a strategy:

Understand the rules!

CW: First full weekend in November

Phone: Third full weekend in November

3PM CST Saturday afternoon through
9PM CST Sunday evening



Entry Categories

- ▶ Single-operator (no spotting/skimmer)
 - QRP [Q]
 - Low Power [A]
 - High Power [B]
- ▶ Single-operator Unlimited
 - Low Power [U]
 - High Power [U]
- ▶ Multi-operator, Single transmitter
 - Low Power [M]
 - High Power [M]
- ▶ School Club [S]

SS Exchange

- ▶ CONSECUTIVE SERIAL NUMBER
- ▶ PRECEDENCE : Q – A – B – U – M – S
- ▶ YOUR CALLSIGN
- ▶ CHECK : Last 2 digits of first year licensed
- ▶ ARRL/RAC SECTION : All **83** for a 'Clean Sweep'

Only work each station **ONCE**, regardless of band.

Final Score: Total QSOs x 2 points x # Sections



Set a Goal!

- ▶ What Category?
Interests, skills, and station capabilities
- ▶ What is your time commitment?
Full 24 hours? Part-time? Casual?
- ▶ Develop an anticipated TARGET goal & write it down

Goals keep you focused when the going gets tough!

Band-by-Band Plan

- ▶ Do it before the contest!
- ▶ Consider:
 - Your operating style
 - Band movement logic
 - Off-time scheduling
 - Prior results
- ▶ Get on the air the week before SS
- ▶ Level of detail varies
- ▶ A reference tool ... not a recipe

2014 SWEEPSTAKES PHONE

BAND PLAN -- WB5XZF

VERSION 7.3

| HOUR | 160 | 80 | 40 | 20 | 15 | 10 | HOUR TOTAL | CUMUL TOTAL | OFF TIME |
|-----------|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| 2100 | | | | | 45 | | 45 | 45 | |
| 2200 | | | | 25 | 15 | | 40 | 85 | |
| 2300 | | | 15 | 30 | 5 | | 50 | 135 | |
| 0000 | | | 30 | 20 | | | 50 | 185 | |
| 0100 | | | 35 | 15 | | | 50 | 235 | |
| 0200 | | | 35 | 10 | | | 45 | 280 | |
| 0300 | | 5 | 35 | 5 | | | 45 | 325 | |
| 0400 | | 10 | 30 | 5 | | | 45 | 370 | |
| 0500 | | 10 | 25 | 5 | | | 40 | 410 | |
| 0600 | | 10 | 20 | 5 | | | 35 | 445 | |
| 0700 | | 10 | 10 | | | | 20 | 465 | |
| 0800 | | 5 | 5 | | | | 10 | 475 | 30 |
| 0900 | | | | | | | 0 | 475 | 60 |
| 1000 | | | | | | | 0 | 475 | 60 |
| 1100 | | | | | | | 0 | 475 | 60 |
| 1200 | | 5 | 15 | | | | 20 | 495 | |
| 13-2200 | | 0 | 0 | 175 | 60 | 50 | 285 | 780 | 120 |
| 2300 | | | 20 | 20 | | | 40 | 820 | |
| 0000 | | 5 | 20 | 10 | | | 35 | 855 | |
| 0100 | | 5 | 15 | | | | 20 | 875 | 30 |
| 0200 | | 10 | 15 | | | | 25 | 900 | |
| TOTAL | 0 | 75 | 325 | 325 | 125 | 50 | 900 | | 360 |
| QSO PTS | | | | | | | 1,800 | | |
| MULTs | | | | | | | 83 | | |
| RAW SCORE | | | | | | | 149,400 | | |

Homework Required

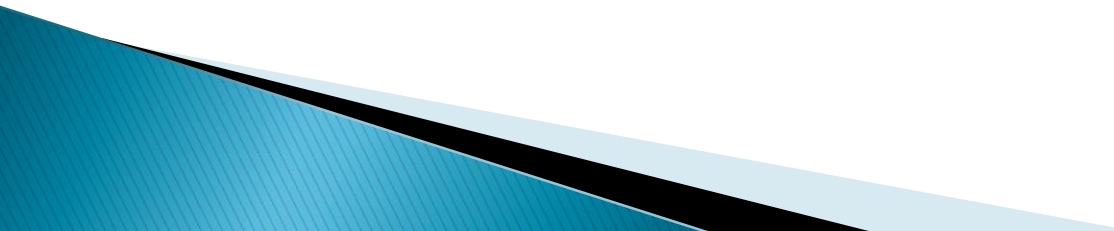
- ▶ Prior year SS results in QST
- ▶ Online ARRL SS Expanded Results!
- ▶ Review your own past SS logs
- ▶ Other web-based articles
ARRL.net / eHam.net / contest clubs
- ▶ N0AX's *ARRL Contest Update*
- ▶ Attend **Contest University** at Dayton!
- ▶ Discuss your plans with friends
- ▶ Check out current records for motivation



K5RT

Tactical Plans

Specific tips in five areas:

- ▶ Band Management
 - ▶ Nailing the Sweep
 - ▶ Off-time Strategies
 - ▶ The Lifeblood of Sweepstakes
 - ▶ Additional Suggestions
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Band Management

Sweepstakes is a RATE contest

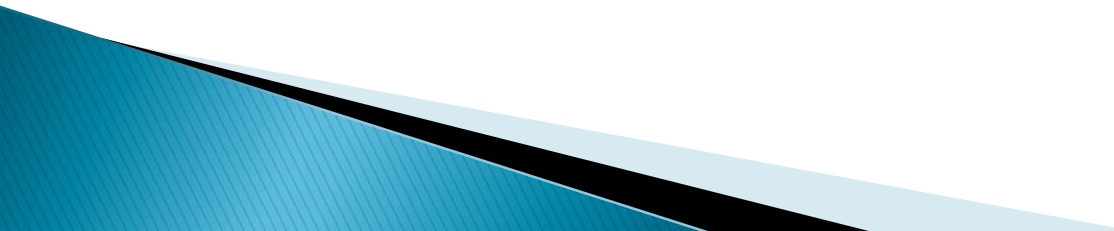
- ▶ What band should I start on?
- ▶ What bands are best from W5?
- ▶ Best frequencies within the band?
- ▶ When should I change bands?

Stay agile!



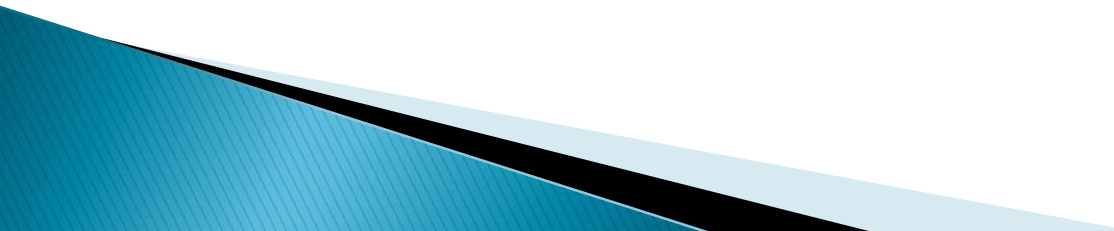
The Elusive Sweep

“If you CQ a lot, the mults will come!”

- ▶ Maximum multipliers – all 83 sections
 - ▶ Don't obsess on it – focus on RATE
 - ▶ Should I call a needed multiplier or keep running?
 - ▶ How to pick up missing mults
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Off-time Strategies

Be **ON** when rate is good and **OFF** when rate is poor.

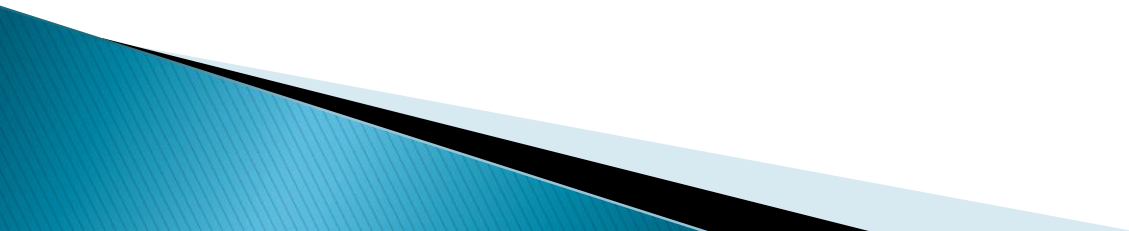
- ▶ First 10–12 hours are critical -- B.I.C.
 - ▶ Delay significant off-time until late night
 - ▶ Spread out remaining time
 - ▶ Keep an accurate off-time tally
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The Lifeblood of Sweepstakes

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The Lifeblood of Sweepstakes

CASUAL OPERATORS



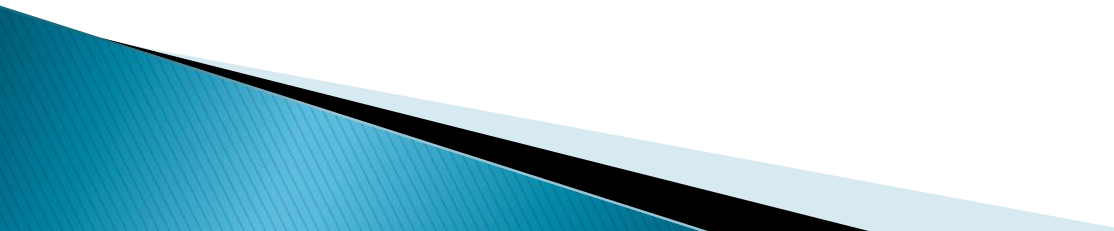
Casual Operators

- ▶ Not competing
- ▶ Just want to help
- ▶ Almost always S&P – “Sunday Drivers”
- ▶ You should CQ a lot and slow down
- ▶ Walk them through the exchange

Critical for improving your SS score!



Other Suggestions

- ▶ Keep primary CQ brief
 - ▶ Consider a longer optional CQ
 - ▶ Maintain a smooth rhythm
 - ▶ Say/send your call often
 - ▶ Don't repeat excess information
 - ▶ Practice 'one breath exchange'
 - ▶ Use standard phonetics
 - ▶ Back off the RF gain
- 

Logging Accuracy

- ▶ Do NOT rely on pre-fill data
- ▶ SS exchanges are long – don't guess!
- ▶ Ask for a repeat or to QRS
- ▶ Numbers have proven toughest
- ▶ Strive to match error rates of top achievers

2013 SS Phone

| | Avg | Top-10 |
|------|------|--------|
| SOHP | 4.1% | 1.9% |
| SOLP | 4.6% | 2.1% |

Log Checking Report “LCR”

- ▶ Your LCR is a critical improvement tool
- ▶ Available on ARRL web-site
- ▶ Study your previous reports

GO HAVE FUN IN SS!

After the contest

- ▶ Submit Cabrillo log – 15 day deadline!
- ▶ Post highlights on 3830scores.com
- ▶ Soapbox comments & images
- ▶ Keep a SS summary file
- ▶ Debrief contest with friends
- ▶ Make specific notes for next year!

Encourage someone else to operate
in Sweepstakes!

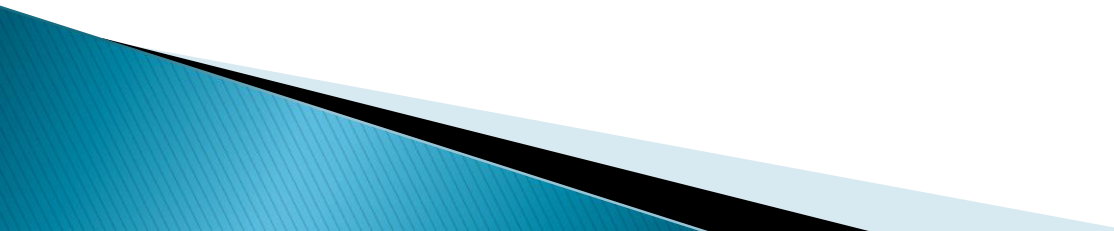




CQ World Wide

The Ultimate DX Test

CQ WW Rules

- ▶ 48 Hour Period from 00 UT Friday until 00 UT Sunday
 - ▶ QSO Points
 - 3 for QSO in different country on another continent
 - 1 for QSO in different country on same continent except in North America 2 points for different country in same continent
 - ▶ Multipliers 1 for each country on each band (DXCC & WAE countries lists WAC boundaries)
 - ▶ Multipliers 1 for each CQ Zone on each band
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Classes of Operation

- ▶ Multi Multi
- ▶ Multi 2
- ▶ Multi Single
- ▶ Single OP All Band or Single Band
 - Hi power, Lo power QRP
- ▶ Single Op Assisted All Band or Single Band
 - Hi Power, Lo Power, QRP
- ▶ Classic
 - No assistance, 24 hours max, 60 minutes off times
- ▶ Rookie
 - Licensed less than 3 years

Top Scores to Emulate

▶ 2013 CQWW CW

- ▶ N5AW Single Op All Band 1930Q 173Z 522C 3,786,360 CTDXCC 41.67 Hrs
- ▶ 160 80 40 20 15 10
- ▶ 50/16/33 150/23/75 408/33/101 277/33/95 433/35/111 612/33/107

- ▶ NM5M Single Op All Band (A) 1703Q 162Z 497C 3,117,070 DFWCG 42 Hrs
- ▶ 160 80 40 20 15 10
- ▶ 14/8/11 67/20/48 359/33/100 337/35/109 455/35/116 471/31/113

Goals for 2014

▶ My Minimum QSO Goals for 2014

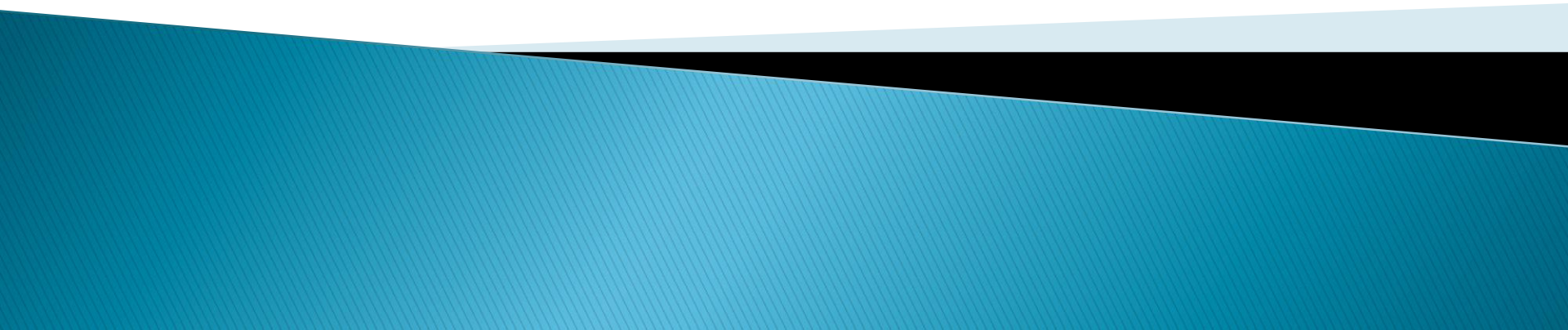
- | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| ▶ 160 M | 80 M | 40 M | 20 M | 15 M | 10 M |
| ▶ 50 | 150 | 400 | 325 | 450 | 550 |
| ▶ For a total of 1925 Q in 42 hours of effort | | | | | |

▶ Zone and Country Goals for 2014

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| ▶ 160 M | 80 M | 40 M | 20 M | 15 M | 10 M |
| ▶ 18/33 | 23/75 | 33/100 | 35/100 | 35/110 | 35/110 |
| ▶ For total of 707 multipliers | | | | | |

Operating Plan for 2014

Day 1



Day 1

Work the highest band that is open

Keep your rate up

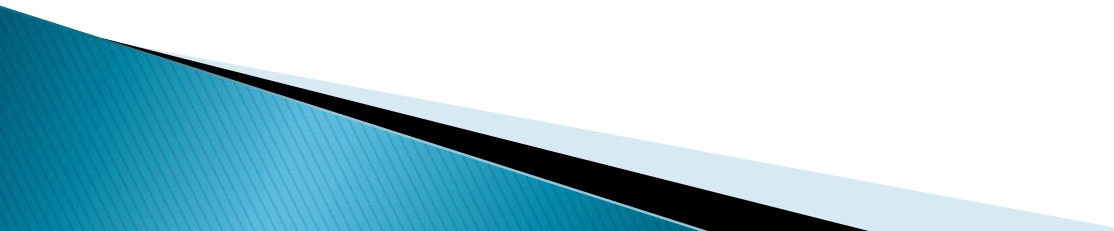
Spend sufficient time on 160/80/40/20
JA Runs on 80 and 40 are important

Emphasize 15 and 10
JA runs on Saturday are important

Best opportunities for rest are 0100–0300 CST and
1330 – 1530 CST when bands are slow

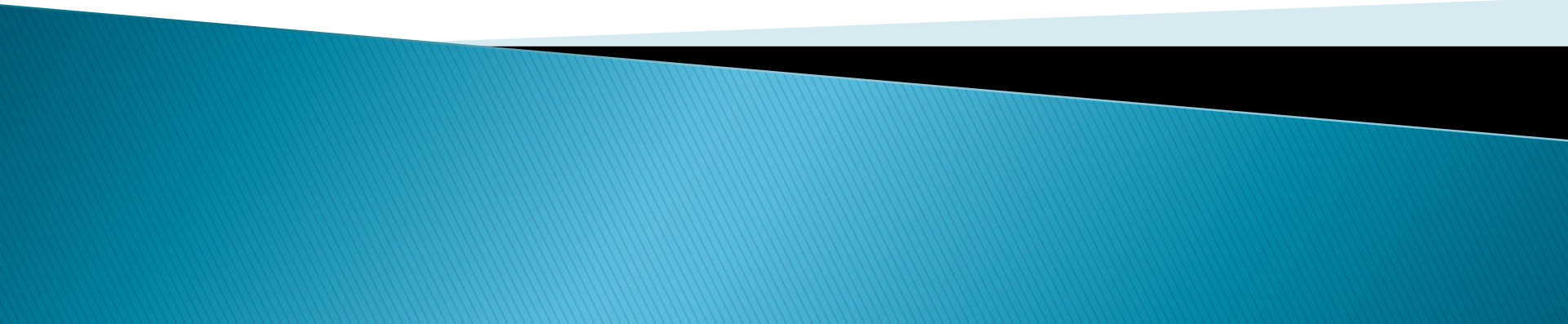


Day 1 – Things to Avoid

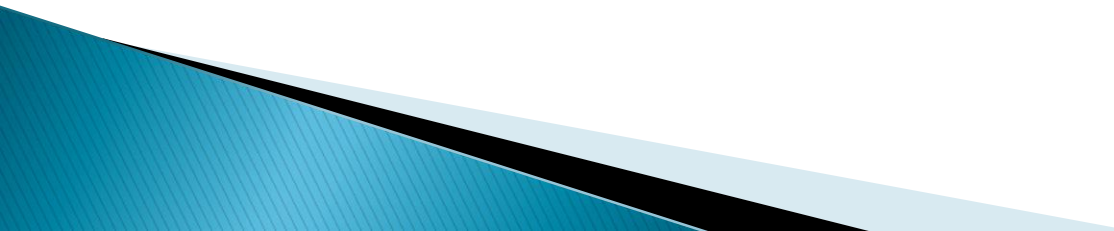
- Don't Go Dxing
 - Don't relax into search and pounce mode
 - Don't tire of establishing a run
 - Don't stay on 40 and 20 after QSO goal is reached
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Operating Plan for 2014

Day 2



Day 2

- ▶ Maximize Runs to Europe especially on 10 and 15
 - ▶ Do everything you can to maintain rate, changing bands often
 - ▶ Make quick sweeps looking for missed multipliers
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Evaluating Results

It Ain't Over yet

Resources for Evaluation

- ▶ 3830.com
 - Claimed scores
 - Soap Box
 - ▶ Published results
 - Log Checking Reports
 - Other participants logs if available
 - ▶ Your own adherence to plan
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