

Results, 12th Annual ARRL 160-Meter Contest

By Mark J. Wilson,* AA2Z

1981 will be remembered as the year that the FCC "opened up" the top band. To some, that will mean the removal of power and frequency restrictions, allowing amateurs to run a kilowatt and restoring the full band to amateur use. To others, however, that will mean the band has been opened up to poor operating practices not in keeping with the longstanding tradition of the "gentlemen's band."

On the positive side, although the number of official entries is about the same as in the past few years (386 this year vs. 393 in 1980), the number of stations actively participating is way up. This year's top single operator worked 101 more stations than last year's, and the average score in the single-op Top Ten is up a whopping 14 percent to 126,893 points; the top four single ops all beat last year's top score. On the multiop front, scores among the top five were also up 14 percent. Thanks, casual participants, for helping to make this year a success!

There was plenty of DX to work this time around. West Coast stations had their hands full of JAs at dawn, and East Coast stations grabbed a fair number of European multipliers. And, there were several Caribbean and South American stations such as V3MS, W4BPD/C6A, HK0BKX and VP2MFZ for all.

On the negative side, several problems unique to this contest were even more apparent this year. Eric, KX4V, sums up the feelings of some participants with these words: "By the way, the contest rule prohibiting transmitting by W/VE between 1825-1830 kHz was a joke; no one told the DX not to accept calls there. So, W/VE stations were caught in a 'Catch-22': Either answer the calls on the DX station's frequency or go without. Obviously, many opted for the former, thus incurring the wrath of the omnipresent 'DX Window Police' who told them to QSY. Of course, there were also the usual pack of lids who just didn't know any better and started calling CQ in the window because it seemed like a nice clear spot. Also, stations calling DX on the low end QRMed others."

Eric addresses two problems: improper use of the DX Window and general contest QRM. Contest QRM is by no means indigenous to the 160-Meter contest. However, the limited size of

Top Ten

Single Operator		Multioperator	
W8LRL	178,882	W8LT	130,393
N4AR	146,832	W8JI	122,848
K0ZZ	133,431	KK5I	115,920
K3LR	131,556	W9EYY	106,029
AB0I (WA0TKJ)	125,440	K0FVF/9	104,052
W1ZM (K1ZM)	122,080	W9AZ	100,584
K1ZZ	109,060	K0DD	95,711
N4SU	108,813	W8MNL	90,596
W0EJ	106,726	K9ZUH	80,884
WB0CMM	106,116	W4CN	79,520

Division Leaders

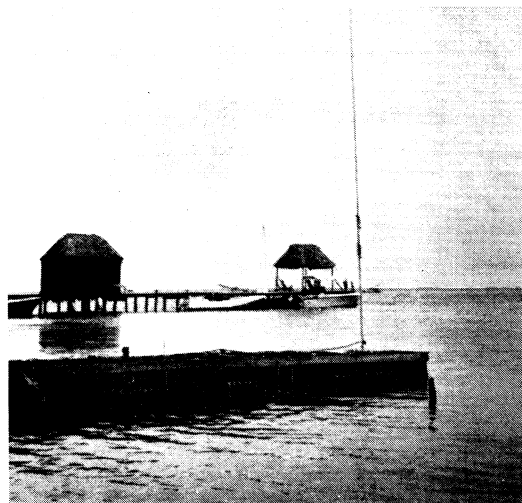
Single Op	Division	Multiop
K3LR	Atlantic	N3ND
A19J	Central	W9EYY
K0ZZ	Dakota	K0DD
N5AN	Delta	—
N4AR	Great Lakes	W8LT
W2IB	Hudson	K2GBH
AB0I	Midwest	W0YBV
W1ZM	New England	K1TZQ
K0PPI/7	Northwestern	—
N8RO	Pacific	W6EUZ
W8LRL	Roanoke	—
WB0CMM	Rocky Mountain	—
N4IN	Southeastern	—
WB7FDQ	Southwestern	—
N5JB	West Gulf	KK5I
VE3BVD	Canadian	VE3BXI
V3MS	DX	JA2YKA

the band severely aggravates the problem as hundreds of stations try to squeeze into the available 45 kHz. There just isn't enough room for everyone to have an exclusive frequency. Not that protecting "your frequency" for the duration of the contest is the key to success; the winning contestants do a lot of CQing, but they also spend lots of time tuning around to pick up more contacts and multipliers.

The other problem, violation of the DX window, is indigenous to the 160 contest. Think for a moment. Why is there a narrow slice of the 160-meter band designated as the DX Window? Most of you know that local signals on 160 are loud, but DX signals are weak. Because the band is so small and crowded, it's difficult to pick out DX signals through the mass of wall-to-wall stateside stations. So there is a small "window" in that wall of locals for stations to look through and "see" DX.

Because the DX window is so small, only DX

160-meter beam at Dayton this spring (WD8JCR). Operating in this contest is quite a feat considering that I live in New York City in an apartment house. Shouldn't we apartment dwellers get a special award for bravery or at least insanity? (N2KA). I was sitting in my shack sending CQ TEST when a neighbor came over. He said that sparks were shooting off of my antenna and the lawn was on fire! I lost some operating time in correcting this problem. At least now I know where the high-voltage points are on the antenna (KK9A). I live about 1.5 miles from an a-m broadcast station and as I use a vertically polarized antenna, there was a constant S9 hash across the band. I spent the whole contest with my receiver's 20 dB pad in. This may explain why I missed some multipliers. It will be nice when we here in Canada can run some reasonable power on 160. . . (VE2ZP).



The 160 antennas at V3MS. Northerners, eat your hearts out!

stations are supposed to transmit in the window. They then announce a listening frequency somewhere outside the window and accept calls there from W/VE amateurs, usually at the low end of the band or adjacent to the window.

During the 1981 ARRL 160 contest, operators noted two types of stations not respecting the window. One type is the operator who is either new to the band and doesn't understand the purpose of the window or doesn't have the antenna to hear DX and doesn't care that some ops want to work it. The other type is the DX operator who doesn't understand why he is expected to transmit in the window and listen outside the window. While this type of operator is not personally violating the concept of the window, he or she is encouraging others to do so. Given that the only way to work a new country is to call on the DX station's frequency inside the window, many stateside ops will violate the window in the heat of the contest.

What to do about this problem? Some sort of educational program is certainly in order. The more experienced 160 hands can *politely* tell newcomers about the purpose of the window. If DX stations get no answers on their own frequencies, they will probably get the message and listen elsewhere. What if the DX station doesn't have an external VFO or separates? Most modern rigs have an RIT control of some type. There is no reason why a DX op can't transmit just inside the window and take calls 1 or 2 kHz lower.

The window concept is a good one, for it allows stateside stations to work DX that they otherwise wouldn't hear. But the concept won't work without the voluntary cooperation of everyone. Let's work together to keep the contests fun events, rather than blood-pressure-raising battles.

FEEDBACK

Please refer to April 1981 QST, page 88, for the following corrections to the 1980 contest results.

Several logs were mistakenly filed in with the 10-Meter contest entries. Apologies to all. W2MTA's 42,771 points place him second in Western New York. WVZZOW made 672 points, good for seventh in Northern New Jersey. W4TMR should have been listed as top scorer in North Carolina with 76,368 points. W6YKM made 1584 points for fifth in San Joaquin Valley. And finally, K0DD should have been credited with 88,616 points and first place in the Minnesota section and the Dakota Division.

One DX log arrived too late to make the listings; JH0CZQ operated JA7YCQ to 60 points and third place in Japan.

SOAPBOX

Our 50% score increase has the crew so high that I don't think they will ever come down. Conditions were outstanding here both nights. We had zero noise. . . Had mixed feelings about the use of high power and only 50 kHz of band. The number of big signals was not as great as expected so it worked out okay, I guess (KK5I). It was the very first ARRL 160 Meter Contest for the new "unrestricted" band, and my score slipped more than 10k points from last year's score. Somehow, I managed to sneak four JA stations into the log while the west coast artillery barrage wasn't looking (W7XZ). I wonder if I could buy a

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