

# Results, 2004 ARRL UHF Contest

It was Rover Mania August 2-3. Were you in the fray?

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. It's always some of the best fun that many of us can have, when we get to work stations on the UHF and above frequency bands for 24 hours in a row. Fighting some of the worst propagation we've seen since last winter on the East Coast made the microwaves more challenging than they usually are. What is it that attracts us to the higher bands? Is it the technology? Propagation? People? Or is it like fishing, where the possibility of catching the elusive band opening or QSO keeps our interest?

I think many of us like to tackle the challenge of working someone 400 miles away on frequency bands that most microwave engineers would say is too far away. Of course we have our tricks... like big antennas, good transmit power, mountaintops, low-noise receivers...and narrow band methods like SSB and CW...and then we have the advantage not enjoyed by professional communications engineers, that we can wait for an occasional QSB peak, to snatch the information from the jaws of kTB—oblivion, to score a new QSO or a new grid.

## It's the Challenge

How could you possibly have any better fun? Sure, you can work a bunch of DX stations on 20 m...but one can do that almost anytime. It's like using the telephone, compared to the challenge of finding a new station or grid on 2304 CW. The 2004 UHF contest was an exciting time for many, and a challenging time for a few amateurs trapped in UHF-deficient areas of the country. Many of our UHF friends are often on vacation during August, which has always made this event a little more challenging than other VHF/UHF operating events. Combining lousy propagation with lots of missing operators out on vacation produces a contest where any and all QSOs are greatly treasured by those fortunate enough to capture them. Maybe the word will someday

leak out, that UHF contesting is alive and well in many areas of the USA.

One phenomenon that had a big meaning for the UHF contest this year was "Rover-mania." You won't find this word in Webster's dictionary (yet), but it's a nice concept and a good way to really increase activity in a chosen area of the country.

A stalwart group of rovers in the Midwest decided to band together and make a big effort to show support for this exciting operating event. The Northern Lights Radio Society successfully mustered 13 rovers, all getting on the road with lots of UHF and microwave equipment in the same geographic area! This was not a grid-circling attempt to blow all previous big scores out of the water, but rather a well planned effort to activate the bands and have a sort of August UHF QSO Party of previously unseen proportions.

All stations did a good job of working everything they could hear, resulting in a lot of happy contest participants. Everyone within range had a good shot at working these guys. Perhaps the possibility that this could be the last UHF Contest was also spurring folks on to make the big effort. Whatever the cause...it worked! The



Mike, KM0T, and his airborne aluminum farm at his Iowa QTH located at grid EN13VC.

Midwest is blessed with lots of flat country, and lots of roadside perches where a cunning operator can stop and stalk lots of UHF contest activity.

## Rover Mania

Perhaps the biggest benefactor of rover-mania was Mike, KM0T. Mike managed his first-ever 1st place win in the SOHP category this year. With a score of over 349k, Mike cemented his 1st place finish by more than 120k points over 2nd place finisher Don, WW8M. Having many rovers to work on lots of bands no doubt had a lot to do with this great contest effort. Mike reports that it was challenging to maximize the QSOs with the rovers, as there were so many, especially at the beginning of the contest. A great deal of respect is due to Mike and others in the NLRs group, as they did a fantastic job of

## Top Ten

Single Op Low		Multiop	
K2DRH	174,264	W2SZ	535,680
N0KP	105,252	K1WHS	139,650
KB8U	32,160	N2PA	56,115
W3KJ	24,768	N3LJK	10,302
AF1T	20,418	N2BJ	8,892
K6TSK	15,936	K5QE	7,965
N0URW	13,464	K4EJQ	7,470
K1ZE	9,900	K0SHF	5,460
K0VXM	8,580	W3SO	4,959
WB2SIH	7,821	W0IBM	4,140

Single Op High		Rover	
KM0T	349,020	W0ZQ	168,504
WW8M	227,205	W3IY	131,238
K1TEO	225,735	W0AMT	74,043
W0GHZ	214,476	KF0Q	65,520
N3EMF	65,484	K0PG	37,701
K3DNE	63,714	K9ILT	36,192
K3TUF	53,058	W3HMS	23,751
K1GX	27,387	K1DS	18,135
K4QI	24,180	WB0LJC	16,344
K3SIW	23,940	WB8BZK	15,540
		N0HJZ	13,965

assembling and loaning-out spare equipment, helping to increase the interest level and the activity on the higher bands. Mike put in a lot of hours in the basement, slaving over a hot soldering iron. It paid off, netting him QSOs through 24 GHz.

Don, WW8M, and Jeff, K1TEO, both put in a strong showing capturing the 2nd and 3rd places, respectively, nationwide, in the SOHP category, scoring only about 1500 points apart. The 4th place spot was taken by Gary, W0GHZ, with a powerful 214k effort from EN34-MN. It's great to see such a nice effort from this part of the country.

Leading the pack of QSO-hungry roving hunters was Jon, W0ZQ/R. Jon won the nationwide rover category this year, which is a major accomplishment from Iowa and the surrounding territory. Scoring 374 QSOs in 68 grids Jon capitalized on great rover turnout, and a good availability of reliable base stations to win the category from the Midwest. Being president of the NLRS club, Jon deserves much credit for inspiring and helping to plan rover-mania in the upper Midwest this year. He makes a point of indicating how other clubs around the nation can do similar services for the VHF and UHF frequency bands. Other strong rover efforts were turned in from this area by Jon, W0AMT/R; Clare, K0NY/R; James, KB0THN/R; Andy, K0SM/R, and Larry, KF0Q/R. It's great to have a group like this on multiple bands, hitting multiple grids in your operating area. It's enough to make you want to add some new bands and antennas!

Winning the popular SOLP category again this year from EN41 was Bob, K2DRH. Using his experience and big antennas, Bob managed over 174k from his QTH near the Mississippi River. Dave, N0KP, took 2nd place in SOLP from his QTH in EN34.

The top multioperator spot was again captured by the Mount Greylock Expeditionary Force station, W2SZ. From FN32, these guys cranked out the top score of the UHF contest at over 535k. A little over half of the W2SZ QSOs were with rovers, in case there is any doubt about the rover-significance factor. It's fun to be one, and it's fun to work one (or many!) rover. The



**Matt, KF0Q, and Tim, K0PG, meeting out on the rover-range during "rover-mania."**



**Jim, KB0THN, checking the skyhooks while setting up at one of his rover sites in rural Minnesota.**

2nd place MU effort was turned in by K1WHS in FN43. Dave's group effort of nearly 140k is a bigger accomplishment than it seems from the northern hinterlands of New England, and with no enhancement. 3rd place MU was won by the N2PA group operating from WNY. Their 56k showing represented much sought-after activity on bands through 5.7 GHz.

One interesting aspect of the 2004 UHF contest was that 12 logs showed QSOs on 24 GHz. This band is becoming more popular, and is usually capable of supporting QSOs out to 100 km or more. As equipment becomes more avail-


able, stations are encouraged to capitalize on the additional grid multipliers possible using these frequencies. The availability of surplus equipment is making 24 GHz operation affordable.

### 10 GHz—Great Rover Band

There were 169 entrants for the 2004 UHF contest, up over 20% from 2003. As expected, 432 was, again, the most popular band with 3659 QSOs reported. 222 MHz ranks next with 2734 QSOs, followed by 1296, 903, 2304, 3456, 10,368 and 5760. This is probably a good guide for the desired order to add bands to one's station. Many stations seem to favor 10 GHz after 2304, however, as the point values are high and there is often random activity with the occasional mini-DXpeditions taking place. (10 GHz is a great rover band, as a good station nicely fits in your trunk.)

Wherever you were, or whatever bands you were on there is no doubting the fact that UHF enthusiasts across the country enjoyed the chance to see who they could work, without first having to make contact on the lower frequencies. Even with flat conditions on the East Coast, we had a fantastic time trying to extend the limits of nature by sneaking some microwave energy into distant antennas feeding hungry ears. Conditions are always changing from hour to hour, and it is great fun to keep trying for QSOs on paths that don't always cooperate with us.

The joy of passing out a few grids and working a few new initial QSOs on a new band is hard to describe. Helping a fellow ham to work a new grid on a new band is great fun. Every contest is different, and the UHF contest has given us many fond memories over the years. It's a special treat to have an event, which concentrates on our favorite bands for a whole contest, giving us the chance to persevere a little farther than before on the UHF, SHF and EHF bands, where each QSO is a sense of accomplishment and joy. Listen for the weak ones...

Be sure to visit [www.arrl.org/contests/results](http://www.arrl.org/contests/results), where you will find an expanded write-up, the member-usable database, additional tables and Soapbox comments. 

Scores

Each line score lists call sign, score, stations worked, multipliers, entry category (A = Single Operator Low Power, B = Single Operator High Power, M = Multioperator, R = Rover), ARRL/RAC section, and bands (C = 222 MHz, D = 432 MHz, 9 = 902 MHz, E = 1296 MHz, F = 2304 MHz, G = 3456 MHz, H = 5760 MHz, I = 10 GHz, J = 24 GHz, K = 47 GHz, L = 75 GHz, M = 119 GHz, N = 142 GHz, O = 241 GHz, P = 300+ GHz). Band winner is in bold.

Table with columns for region (Atlantic, Great Lakes, Hudson, Midwest, New England, Northwestern, Pacific, Roanoke, Southeastern, Southwestern, West Gulf, Canada, Delta), call sign, score, stations worked, multipliers, entry category, ARRL/RAC section, and bands. Includes sub-sections like Atlantic, Great Lakes, Hudson, Midwest, New England, Northwestern, Pacific, Roanoke, Southeastern, Southwestern, West Gulf, Canada, and Delta.