

2012 ARRL 160 Meter Contest Results

It was a great year to be in the middle of North America.

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The November 30-December 2, 2012 running of the ARRL 160 Meter Contest was, once again, a highlight of the year for many Top Band fans. This event brings together competitive contesters, casual contest operators, 160 meter specialists plus all the other hams who enjoy the adventure of operating at the low-frequency end of the spectrum. When you combine unpredictable propagation with a crowd of operators squeezed into a bit more than 100 kHz on a single band, things get interesting! Thankfully, the tradition of 160 meters as the “gentleman’s band” continues and all those stations manage to fill each other’s logs with contacts from all ARRL and RAC sections, plus many DXCC entities.

The 160 meter band is a growing part of the Amateur Radio spectrum! With new ham bands being developed (or already in place) at

even lower frequencies — 63 kHz, 136 kHz, 500 kHz — learning about medium wave behavior on 160 meters is an excellent way to prepare for these challenges. In parts of the world where these new bands are already in place, they are providing hams with interesting experiences.

What About Cycle 24?

“Not bad for a ‘down year’ on 160...” said N4UA on the 3830 reflector (you can read the archives of this post-contest score sharing reflector at lists.contesting.com/_3830). There are always complaints about poor low band propagation during the peak years of every sunspot cycle and Cycle 24 is no exception. However, as N4UA noted, during the first weekend of December 2012, things were not as bad as expected. Sure, DX openings were shorter, but there was still DX to be worked. Yes, cross-continent signals were heard with greater difficulty, but there are plenty of QSOs in the logbooks of the 1174 hams who entered the event (50+ more logs than 2011, and just 14% fewer than the record-setting 2009 contest). As Top Band fans often point out, 160 meters at the peak of the cycle is usually much better than 10 meters at the bottom!

Overall, the 2012 160 Meter Contest was a great success, with high activity and some strong competition. There was a clear continuation of the overall trend toward more 160 meter activity in recent years. Band conditions were good enough to make the event fun. Much of North America had low noise levels, which partially compensated for higher absorption

and weaker signals. Also, many stations noted that conditions were above average to the Far East, resulting in a good number of JA stations in the log.

Winners from the Heartland

In the most popular entry class — Single Operator, Low Power — nine of the Top Ten finishers did so from their far inland QTHs! In fact, the top scores in four of the five entry categories were achieved far away from the East Coast and its alleged advantage of being closer to European multipliers and 5 point QSOs. In 2012, stations that could run up high QSO numbers and maximize the number of section multipliers had the advantage — that meant being in the center of the continent.

DX Results

DX logs were down 21% compared to the best year ever (2009). This is no surprise, as weaker propagation makes it much harder to complete long distance QSOs, especially for hams without efficient transmit antennas and quiet receiving locations. Even so, there were a good number of DX multipliers available during the contest. European sunrise provided some propagation enhancement, with several ops commenting that North American sunset had a noteworthy enhancement. Between those times, there were some of the well known 160 meter short “spotlight” propagation episodes. Your author experienced some of these, as a DX station would occasionally call with a signal rivaling more “local” stations.

Affiliated Club Competition

Every year, I remind new 160 meter operators

Affiliated Club Competition

	Score	Entries
Unlimited Category		
Potomac Valley Radio Club	6,188,037	81
Yankee Clipper Contest Club	2,947,079	58
Medium Category		
Society of Midwest Contesters	3,121,646	47
Frankford Radio Club	2,983,137	42
Minnesota Wireless Assn	2,514,547	49
Contest Club Ontario	2,297,169	29
Mad River Radio Club	1,733,887	15
North Coast Contesters	1,229,412	15
Alabama Contest Group	757,141	15
Northern California Contest Club	707,837	27
Arizona Outlaws Contest Club	550,166	17
Southern California Contest Club	540,426	14
North Texas Contest Club	506,758	5
Rochester (NY) DX Assn	482,764	8
Grand Mesa Contesters of Colorado	470,194	7
Florida Contest Group	467,621	14
Contest Group Du Quebec	399,868	4
Hudson Valley Contesters and	330,744	8
Georgia Contest Group	308,663	5
Mississippi Valley DX/Contest Club	296,700	3
Utah DX Assn	288,168	6
Western New York DX Assn	259,215	7
Northern Rockies DX Association	258,936	3
South East Contest Club	253,064	7
Willamette Valley DX Club	169,827	9
Carolina DX Association	138,358	5
ORCA DX And Contest Club	118,384	3
CTRL Contest Group	110,883	4
Western Washington DX Club	102,226	10
Local Category		
Central Virginia Contest Club	968,021	8
Maritime Contest Club	830,583	10
Delara Contest Team	277,976	3
DFW Contest Group	258,711	6
Spokane DX Association	257,072	5
Bristol (TN) ARC	204,190	6
Mother Lode DX/Contest Club	158,180	5
Low Country Contest Club	99,890	3
West Park Radiops	77,228	5
Metro DX Club	57,846	4
Bergen ARA	35,785	3
South Texas DX and Contest Club	33,859	3

Figure 1 — WB9Z ops (l-r) Jerry, KE9I; Don, K9NR; Val, NV9L; Mike, K9XZ; Carl, K9CS and station owner Jerry, WB9Z racked up a score of 408,044 points with 1617 QSOs and 118 multipliers. [Jerry Rosalius, WB9Z, photo]



Division Winners

Single Operator, High Power

Atlantic	AA1K	395,520
Central	K9CT	363,634
Dakota	W0SD (W0DB, op)	350,892
Delta	WD5R (N5ECT, op)	321,048
Great Lakes	K1LT	372,411
Hudson	NX2X	136,986
Midwest	N0TT	315,700
New England	K1DG	362,706
Northwestern	N9RV	191,282
Pacific	N6RO	98,370
Roanoke	K3ZM	468,336
Rocky Mountain	WD5COV	210,235
Southeastern	KV4FZ	227,290
Southwestern	N7GP (N5IA, op)	258,588
West Gulf	K5RX	327,348
Canada	VY2ZM	587,928

Single Operator, Low Power

Atlantic	W2TZ	143,092
Central	NE9U	169,560
Dakota	K0TI	170,694
Delta	N4ZI	86,616
Great Lakes	WB8JUI	157,035
Hudson	K2UF	64,870
Midwest	K1OI	135,830
New England	N1UR	101,166
Northwestern	K0PP	102,564
Pacific	N6RK	42,408
Roanoke	NN3W	84,480
Rocky Mountain	NN7A	52,219
Southeastern	K1DC	78,720
Southwestern	AC7A	44,968
West Gulf	W0UO	148,104
Canada	VE3XL	114,807

Single Operator, QRP

Atlantic	K2ZR	63,516
Central	N9NE	53,922
Dakota	N0UR	36,960
Delta	K5LG	51,000
Great Lakes	N8BB	83,951
Hudson	W2DPT	11,266
Midwest	W0GJ	77,000
New England	N2KW	62,208
Northwestern	N9ADG	4,896
Pacific	K9YC	9,288
Roanoke	WB4MSG	60,970
Rocky Mountain	K1OI	13,488
Southeastern	W5NZ	10,040
Southwestern	N7IR	51,680
West Gulf	W5ESE	5,643
Canada	VE3CV	23,409

Multioperator, High Power

Atlantic	K3WW	295,495
Central	WB9Z	408,044
Dakota	W0MR	94,858
Delta	N8OO	398,520
Great Lakes	K8KS	343,640
Hudson	K2TTT	170,688
Midwest	N0NI	491,631
New England	N9NC	236,250
Northwestern	N7XU	170,443
Pacific	W6DR	65,676
Roanoke	N3UA	394,208
Rocky Mountain	K7NJ	227,136
Southeastern	WJ9B	353,787
Southwestern	N6KI	99,876
West Gulf	K5KC	303,450
Canada	VE3TA	331,934

Multioperator, Low Power

Atlantic	W2CCC	62,244
Central	WE9R	56,088
Dakota	N0IM	52,185
Delta	WF7T	27,054
Great Lakes	K8BL	178,572
Hudson	K2ZC	28,826
New England	W1WBB	62,853
Northwestern	KB7Q	59,570
Pacific	K7XC	55,280
Roanoke	WU4G	36,639
Rocky Mountain	W0DLE	138,780
Southeastern	N4GG	66,975
Southwestern	W8KA	35,190
West Gulf	NS7B	19,836
Canada	VE3MGY	165,968



Figure 1 — According to Milt, N5IA (operating at N7GP), nothing is better than running JAs on 160 meters while viewing a beautiful sunrise over Arizona's Whitlock Mountains. [Milt Jensen, N5IA, photo]

to check the Club Competition listing! These local and regional clubs have experienced operators who are happy to help you build a better station and hone your skills. In the 2012 160 Meter Contest, the Potomac Valley Radio Club fielded 81 stations, amassing well over 6 million points to earn the Unlimited Club gavel, besting the Yankee Clipper Contest Club. The Society of Midwest Contesters had fewer entries than in recent years, with their 47 logs placing them in the Medium Club category, where they came out on top. Their 3+ million points was the second-highest total score of any club regardless of category. In the Local Club category, the eight entries from the Central Virginia Contest Club totaled just shy of 1 million points, earning the number one position among their smaller club colleagues.

Final Thoughts

Take a look at that great antenna photo from Milt, N5IA (at N7GP). Figure 1 was taken Saturday morning shortly before sunup in Arizona. "I was slow-running JAs when I noticed a red glow through the slots between the shades in my operating bus. I stepped to the door and was greeted by this view. My TX antenna is visible. The mountain range in the distance is the Whitlock Mountains, about 25 miles away. It doesn't get much better than this; running JAs on 160 meters and viewing a southwest US sunrise!"

Every year, many hams use the ARRL

Top Ten

W/VE	DX
Single Operator, QRP	Single Operator, High Power
N8BB 83,951	PJ2T
W8VK 79,380	(K8ND, op) 131,664
W0GJ 77,000	FM5CD 104,566
K2ZR 63,516	CE1/K7CA 104,438
N2KW 62,208	ZF2AH 75,312
WB4MSG 60,970	TM6M
W3TS 58,140	(F1AKK, op) 56,760
K4CNW 57,821	OM2VL 42,600
W4UX 54,404	M5O
N9NE 53,922	(G3LET, op) 35,148
	DF2PY 7,954
	UY0ZG 6,882
	JA1XMS 5,760
Single Operator, Low Power	Single Operator, Low Power
K0TI 170,694	VP5CW
NE9U 169,560	(WB0OAJ, op) 52,480
WB8JUI 157,035	CO6YAC 16,632
K8NVR 154,392	XE2YWH 2,322
W0UO 148,104	DL4UNY 1,850
W2TZ 143,092	CO6LP 1,258
N0AT 137,600	JH7IMX 1,134
K9MMS 137,060	JA4CUU 1,008
K1OI 135,830	JA1BJI 714
K9IG 133,861	OL0A
	(OK1CZ, op) 570
Single Operator, High Power	IK0XBX 560
VY2ZM 587,928	
K3ZM 468,336	
VE3EJ 406,692	
AA1K 395,520	Single Operator, QRP
K1LT 372,411	JH7UJU 8
K9CT 363,634	JH4UYB 8
K1DG 362,706	CO8ZZ 8
W0SD (W0DB, op) 350,892	OK1CZ 2
NO3M 342,760	
VA2EW 331,430	Multioperator, High Power
	C6AUM 181,600
Multioperator, High Power	OL7M 30,894
N0NI 491,631	JH2FXK 10,764
WB9Z 408,044	LY5W 7,128
N8OO 398,520	MD0CCE 6,586
N3UA 394,208	PA0O 4,270
N1LN 387,321	JE1ZWT 3,776
WJ9B 353,787	DK2OY 3,410
K8KS 343,640	JH3PRR 3,392
VE3TA 331,934	ON4WW 3,072
K5KC 303,450	
NX5M 301,875	Multioperator, Low Power
	XE1GRR 1,550
Multioperator, Low Power	JA1SVP 828
K8BL 178,572	GM4WZG 416
VE3MGY 165,968	US8ICM 224
K4FT 157,140	UY5VA 160
W0DLE 138,780	ES1WST 8
N4GG 66,975	SM5EPO 2
W4UAL 64,320	IT9SFT 2
W1WBB 62,853	
W2CCC 62,244	
K8UO 61,124	
KB7Q 59,570	

160 Meter Contest as their reason to start learning about the unique propagation and antenna challenges of this band. Make your own plans for the 2013 contest. Talk to your friends and get on 160 meters in other contests (and between contests). Use the warm weather of summer and fall to work on antenna projects. December 6, 2013 will be here faster than you think!

More Info Online

K9AY provides a great deal more reporting and an interesting comparison of Top Ten stations in the online version of this article at www.arrl.org/contest-results-articles.