

Results, 2004 ARRL June VHF QSO Party

What were your expectations?

Experience is a great teacher; each of us usually considers a strategy to fulfill our expectations in VHF contesting and communication based on our past experiences. Whether you are a single or multi-op, high or low power, fixed or movable, between the collective wisdom of past activities, and the plans for managing a new contest challenge, lots of thought and preparation go into station design, operating procedures, condition and band monitoring.

When the final QSO of the contest is in the log, and the rigs are starting to cool down, do each of us consider—were our expectations met? Was it catching some DX, like ZF1DC, whose Cayman Island team including W4WA and K4BI, provided a new country and grid for many on 6 meters? Beating your previous record of QSO points, grids, bands, or total score? Having all the equipment work as planned for the entire weekend? Perhaps it was some casual operating, gladly giving out “points” to the more competitive operators? Seeking a listing in the *QST* tables, or a scoring certificate?

Conditions for the most part were average for this contest on the down-slope of the solar cycle. Weather was not much of a

factor; there were scattered rains in the Ohio Valley area that seemed to move and dissipate as the weekend progressed; there were other smaller precipitation centers in the Deep South and upper Pacific Northwest.

Gene, NØDQS/R, encountered golf-ball sized hail (again!) as he moved his rover through grids in Nebraska, sustaining a cracked windshield and multiple dents on the SUV, as well as plenty of dings to the loop antennas. Passersby thought for sure he was a storm-chaser. Gary, N7IR, SO portable, found high winds on the Mogollon Rim in DM44 at 7900 feet that almost ended his on-the-air operation.

It was into the fray with the current well-known rules for over 1050 participants who submitted 763 logs for the event. The increased use of digital communications modes—*WSJT* and meteor scatter—has upped the ante for serious competitors. Despite these relatively flat conditions, grid totals continue to grow. Plenty of scatter QSOs were reported on 6 and 2 with rather short skeds, a testament to the skill and setup of the ops, and to the presence of plenty of that magic meteor dust that makes it possible.

The June contest scoring has been criticized as discriminating to the micro-

wave frequencies. Indeed, if there are no E_s 6 meter openings or unique 2 meter conditions, the total scores turned in can be limited. There were a total of 117,000 QSOs reported on bands 50 MHz through 432 MHz and another 7463 QSOs reported on bands 902 MHz and above.

Learning and Sharing Information— VHF Conferences

The regional VHF conferences have been great venues for sharing both technical and practical operating information, and learning more about how others contest. In addition, they are opportunities to buy, sell and test gear and learn from others' experiences.

For example, at this year's Eastern VHF conference in April, sponsored by the New England Weak Signal Group, talks by high scoring VHF contesters, revealed some of the operations, radios, towers, antennas and methods that they use to produce their prodigious contest results. Dick, WA2AAU, described the development of equipment for and mentoring of the W2SZ/1 rovers.

The K3EAR “South Mountain” operation in FM19, was presented in a multimedia format. K1TEO gave us insight into his VHF contesting development and



Being the ARRL First Vice President doesn't leave Joel, W5ZN, much time to operate. But for this event Joel was able to rack up enough points to lead the Delta Division in the Single Operator High Power category, just missing an overall Top Ten finish by about 10 k.



Third place overall was snared by the ops at W3SO, including (back row, left to right) W3PAW, W3YOZ, W3TEF, W3BTX, K4VV and AI3M (front row, left to right) K3IXD, WR3Z and W3SF.

Top Ten

Single Operator, Low Power

K2DRH	235,470
WB1GQR	119,714
(W1SJ, op)	
W4SHG	87,768
K9MU	77,688
KB8U	77,250
AF1T	76,032
WQ5W	71,068
NJ2F	66,048
K8MR	64,092
W6OAL	54,766

Single Operator, High Power

K1TEO	624,921
K1RZ	321,525
KM0T	255,210
WB9Z	193,802
K3DNE	175,536
K0GU	137,600
NW5E	135,790
W9GA	129,926
N3HBX	126,846
K1GX	124,800

Single Operator Portable

N7IR	17,088
N8XA	7,747
KQ6EE	3,850
WB2AMU	3,071
K7EH	2,850
W8CM	1,320
KH6WZ	1,185
VE7AAO	522
K9FOH	300
KG6TGI	88

Limited Multioperator

K8GP	740,037
K9NS	583,041
W3SO	310,464
K3YTL	309,260
W3DOG	295,868
W4IY	277,911
AA4ZZ	232,878
K5TR	205,273
K8CC	187,616
K2BAR	143,969

Multioperator

W2SZ	1,959,675
W3CCX	991,935
K3EAR	986,250
W2FU	424,888
N2PA	363,424
W4NH	267,972
W6FM	226,080
K7CW	203,451
N2NK	163,312
K1MUJ	126,300

Rover

N6NB	1,292,382
N6VI	1,156,760
N6MU	1,131,156
W3IY	318,159
N6TEB	195,132
N6DN	184,640
W0AMT	86,496
VE3NPB	75,096
K0PG	73,108
K9ILT	72,520

Single-Operator

K2DRH, Bob, continued his winning streak using 7 bands from IL in the Single Operator Low Power category, with 235 k points—up from his recent January top score of 162 k. He was able to add 2304 to his line-up after smoking two transverter receivers in the remote tower-mounted scheme just before the contest. Operating WB1GQR, Mitch, W1SJ, placed second with 119 k from VT, using only bands ABCD. Steve, W4SHG above sea level in VA set a Roanoke Division scoring record of 87,768 adding 3456 MHz gear this year as his 8th band, more than doubling the division's previous high score. Impressive, considering a QTH only 63 feet. Justin, K9MU, a self-admitted "6 meter addict" in WI, with 77,688 won 4th by a nose, while Russ, KB8U, of MI captured 5th place with 77,250.

Jeff, K1TEO, set another all-time scoring record for Single Operator High Power in CT and the NE Division by scoring 624 k. He surpassed his old record by 143 k points, despite little E_s opportunity to run up a big grid count on 6 meters. With his new 5 GHz station, available for the first time in a June contest, that band was used to advantage, adding 16 QSOs and 11 grids. Jeff credits the ability to track rovers and quickly run the bands, in addition to his QTH in the midst of the NE and Atlantic Divisions, antennas above the treetop levels, as well as the support of his family for his ongoing success. He missed the all-time national SOHP record by less than 1%, a target he's aiming at for the future. Following in second place, Dave, K1RZ, operating in MDC, put up a score of 321 k, well balanced across 10 bands, including 20 QSOs on 10 GHz—the top number for a single-op on this band. Mike, KM0T, had an 11 band total of 255 k for 3rd place, while Jerry, WB9Z, with his massive antenna farm took 4th with 193 k in a 5 band effort. Rounding out the top 5 was Ed, K3DNE, with 175 k, a VHF contest regular performer operating on 7 bands.

The Single Operator Portable category has many openings for those who have a penchant for grabbing a rig and hiking or driving up to a good high spot. Gary, N7IR, took top honors in this category with a 17 k score. Phil, N8XA, used a multiband setup from 50-2304 MHz +10 GHz in the OH section to win top honors in SOP. With this relatively new VHF contest category, there were only 10 participant logs received, and 3 of them set new scoring records in their sections.

Multioperator

Continuing in their domination of the Multi-op Unlimited class, the Mount Greylock Expeditionary Force, W2SZ/I,

Affiliated Club Competition

Club	Entries	Score
Medium Category		
Potomac Valley Radio Club	28	2,528,697
Society of Midwest Contesters	27	1,402,294
Mt Airy VHF Radio Club	5	1,135,203
North East Weak Signal Group	13	1,011,920
Northern Lights Radio Society	22	773,762
Rochester VHF Group	6	636,052
Pacific Northwest VHF Society	31	553,153
Florida Contest Group	8	530,381
Badger Contesters	11	338,556
Western States Weak Signal Society	12	266,519
Mad River Radio Club	3	260,092
Carolina DX Assn	3	242,272
Northern California Contest Club	12	178,757
Yankee Clipper Contest Club	10	103,952
Central Texas DX and Contest Club	3	94,232
Grand Mesa Contesters of Colorado	6	60,822
Contest Club Ontario	8	30,011
Tennessee Contest Group	7	11,197
South East Contest Club	7	3,908
Local Category		
CT RI Contest Group	3	113,922
Delaware Valley VHF Society	4	52,931
Domion DX Group	6	38,417
Medina 2 Meter Group	3	29,859
North Texas Microwave Society	4	16,932
Dauberville DX Assn	4	15,291

doubled the score of their nearest competitor with 1.9 million points. They captured some of the best opportunities from this eastern QTH on 6 meters with a grid count of 92 and had a combined microwave total of 622 QSOs. Their microwave expertise also gave them 7 QSOs on the exotic frequency of 47 GHz in 7 grids.

With an intensive effort to move up in the June results, the Packrats of the Mt Airy VHF Club scored almost a million points and edged past K3EAR team to capture second place. They credit their success to improved planning, the addition of computer networking to pass contacts, rather than an intercom system, and having all bands ready to go from the opening minutes of the contest. With their large mountaintop installation, the K3EAR "South Mountain Group" gave the Packrats a run, but wound up in 3rd place. Although they compiled more QSOs and multipliers on 50, 144 and 222, the Packrats passed them by with more contacts and grids on the higher bands. W2FU captured 4th place in WNY, with a 12 band performance, they had a 4 band advantage in topping the 5th place N2PA team in the same section, with the teams scoring a substantial 363 k and 267 k, respectively.

The Limited Multi-op scores were led by K8GP, amassing 740 k from their roost in FM08. This is a hard-driving team of long-term experienced VHF ops that really enjoys maximizing its equipment's potential. K9NS in IL was second with 583 k, a tribute to all the VHF activity building up in the Central Division. W3SO, with 10 ops covering the 4 band setup, on top of Wopsonnock Mountain in the Allegheny Mountains at 2500 feet came in 3rd with 310 k. Atlantic Division teams of K3 Yellow Traffic Light (K3YTL) and W3DOG captured the next two spots. The TAPMARC team, using

efforts from his FN31 QTH in central CT.

Just Average Conditions

Although there were complaints from ops on both coastal extremes that 6 meters just never opened enough to make enormous scores this time, the ops in the middle of the country and Florida had a ball on this band. The LM crew at K5TR managed to top the 6 meter multiplier list and capture 187 6-meter grids. There were 33 other entries with over 100 grids on 6m, and another 101 entrants who racked up at least 50 grids on that band. Many stations mentioned rather short periods of enhanced propagation, with distant grids heard popping in and out sporadically during the weekend. The peak E_s started about 2100Z on Saturday, lasting about 4 hours, and again on Sunday from 1300Z-1800Z.

ZF1DC found their way into 488 logs in 120 grids across the US, adding the excitement of some exotic DX to the delight of many participants. Station 4C2X, with operators N6XQ, W6YLZ, XE2ED, XE1KK, XE2K, XE1UN, XE1NTT, XE1NK also added their call to 238 other logs across 67 grids.

Two-meter conditions were rather average, with no reported major openings. K8GP, whose "Grid Pirates" netted 75 grids on 2 meters, and 9 other multi-op teams and one single-op managed over 50 grids on this work-horse band. VE3SMA reported that his 10 W to a 6 element Yagi at 30 feet raised a response across 800 km from NG4C. Perhaps a burst of airplane scatter?

the W3DOG call, with 295 k set a new June ML scoring record for DE.

Rover

The rovers have been credited with enabling all other contest stations to increase their totals, adding some excitement to the less densely populated areas of the country, and creating a unique competition among themselves. Grid circling by rovers remains a controversial practice, but the team of N6NB/R, N6VI/R, and N6MU/R each broke the existing June rover record by compiling over a million points each in their well planned and rehearsed rove on the open plains. Although their route and schedule was set to maximize opportunities at 4 grid intersections, at each stop and while in transit, they worked as hard as they could to contact other stations, especially on the lower four bands. As a result, 2.4% of their total contacts were with others.

The W3IY/R (+ON4IY) team of Bill and Christophe managed their coastal Atlantic route well, finishing on the high spots in FM08 and turned in a fabulous 4th place score of 318 k. Other teams out in the sparsely populated states helped keep the airways hopping; K1ØSK and NØBAF teamed up to rove 12 grids in the middle of the country while N6ZE/R with a Yaesu FT-817 transceiver and minimal antennas activated seven grids on the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts, flying coast-to-coast and operating several grids at each stop.

Club Competition

This is the second year that the June contest has had the opportunity for club entries. This year's top score list is similar to last year's. Although some of the top scores were lower this time, largely due to the change in 6 m conditions. In the Medium category, the Potomac Valley Radio Club held first place again with 28 logs and 2.5 million points, followed by the Society of Midwest Contesters sporting 27 logs and 1.4 million points. The Packrats of the Mt Airy VHF Radio Club edged into 3rd place, followed by the Northeast Weak Signal Group, a few points back. In the local category there were 6 entries, topped by the CT-RI Contest Group. Most importantly, club entries are often the stimulus for regional activity, with lots of peer encouragement to be active in the VHF contests.

Regional Highlights

There were logs from 47 states plus PR, 5 Canadian Provinces and 4 DX stations (missing HI, AK and WY). The 4C2X multi-op team of 2 Californians and 6 XE ops found another nice spot in Baja, pointed their antennas northward and operated on ABCDEI, providing a new country for some on 1296, and

submitted the top DX score with 86 k. Dave, ZF1DC, along with operators Charles, W4WA, and Jim, K4BI, kept 6 meters hopping from Grand Cayman, with 800 W to a Yagi at 70 feet and caused huge pileups for the East Coast stations. The T49C contest team in Cuba also had a nice 6 meter operation, with a third place DX score of 21 k. Detailed listings of all scores can be found on the Web report at www.arrl.org/contests/results as well as extended soapbox comments from participants.

Northeast

Activity was high in this portion of the country, owing to the number of large multi-ops, and the great density of VHF operators, combined with a relatively pleasant and warm weekend. Dale, AF1T got a bunch of bands on the air from NH for 6th place in SOLP. K1GX scored 124 k in CT, to round out 10th place in SOHP. There were also more than 25 rovers across the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast. QRM can be fierce when several portable and rover ops arrive simultaneously on the same popular mountaintop. Not only are there station proximities and the same popular band activities, but also QRM due to the common use of 144 MHz as the IF for most of the microwave bands.

It was nice to see RI active on some microwave frequencies, with Chris, WB2VVV, relocating there from NJ, and putting bands ABCD9EF on the air. I'm sorry I missed him as we operated for a few hours from Watch Hill as we roved through RI. Mike, N1JEZ, lit up the microwaves with gear through 47 GHz on Mt Washington in FN44, but missed the log submission deadline. Mark, K2AXX, got his station on the air after being released from the hospital to continue treatment at the home QTH. Hanging his IV meds on a 6 foot high radio rack, he managed to operate 10 bands for 14 hours of air time. Speedy recovery!

Southeast

With the ongoing participation of several well established home stations and club groups, activity continues to grow. Mainstay group W4IY, operating from Flag Pole Knob, VA at 4300 feet scaled back their operation a bit in terms of preamps and power and placed 6th overall. AA4ZZ landed in 7th place in the LM category, and the 4-landers VHF-UHF Contest team, W4NH came in 6th in the MU category. Florida was enjoying a nice 6 meter E_s session, as Jeff, NJ2F, in SFL placed 8th in SOLP, while Gary, NW5E, in NFL managed to catch the 7th spot in SOHP. KE8FD single-handedly found 107 grid mults on 6 meters from SC in his 7-band quest. Frank, W4FAL, with his

FT-847 and dreams of getting that tower up, did manage to capture the two island stations on 6 meters with just a dipole, and added several grids on 2 and 432 with low mounted verticals. Hal, N4GG/4, on vacation in FL put up a 6 meter dipole from scrap, 6 feet off the ground on the condo railing and managed 55 contacts in 34 grids. Just goes to show you that you can do a lot with a little on VHF. KØXXX in Arkansas scrambled to get his 6 and 2 meter antennas set up for the contest on a temporary fence-post. To his surprise found out his daughter ran over the coax with the lawnmower, then a fast moving thunderstorm had the array at a 45° tilt. Despite all of this, he caught the 6 m E_s and filled his log.

Central

Jim, K8MR, scored 64 k for top honors in OH and 9th place nationwide in SOLP and Ken, W9GA, topped the previous WI record by scoring 129 k in 8th place, SOHP. The K8CC team was in the 9th LM spot, riding the 6 m openings, but was somewhat shorthanded for ops the first day, limiting the time spent on 144, 222 and 432. Rovers seemed to be very active and contact productive in this part of the country with John, WØAMT/R, in 7th place, Murray, VE3NPB/R, in 8th, and the family team of Tim, KØPG/R, 9th and Patricia, K9ILT/R, 10th, lauded by other base stations for their ability to make "clean sweeps" with contacts on all their rover bands.

Midwest

With the pack-rovers previously mentioned, W6OAL was this region's top SOLP scorer with 54 k, in 10th place overall nationally for this category. KØGU was the top SOHP entry, in 6th place overall. LaVonne, KCØRAD, is a relative newcomer to hamming, VHF and contesting. She took over the family station as the OM, NØTTW, was away, and with a few antennas on the apartment roof, an FT-100D transceiver and brick amps had some great contest operating enjoyment from IA. Stations operating in AZ, TX, NM, CO and OK caught the best of the 6 meter E_s openings. K5TR with 205 k was 8th overall in LM, and top LM in STX. Charles, W5PR, using only 6 meters, worked 687/178 for a 122 k score and top SOHP in STX. The multi-op team at WØLSD gets the "high" (altitude) award for their 3 band operation at 9000 feet atop Mt Princeton, DM68 in CO.

West Coast

The popular entry class seemed to be Single Op Portable in CA, with Hon,

Northeast Region (New England, Hudson and Atlantic Divisions; Maritime and Quebec Sections)			Southeast Region (Delta, Roanoke and Southeastern Divisions)			Central Region (Central and Great Lakes Divisions; Ontario Section)			Midwest Region (Dakota, Midwest, Rocky Mountain and West Gulf Divisions; Manitoba and Saskatchewan Sections)			West Coast Region (Pacific, Northwestern and Southwestern Divisions; Alberta, British Columbia and NWT Sections)		
WB1GQR (W1SJ, op)	119,714	A	W4SHG	87,768	A	K2DRH	235,470	A	WQ5W	71,068	A	NU6S	37,184	A
AF1T	76,032	A	NJ2F	66,048	A	K9MU	77,688	A	W6OAL	54,766	A	VE7XF	37,149	A
AI3Z	38,493	A	W4BP	51,528	A	KB8U	77,250	A	N0LL	53,301	A	WB6AAG	32,100	A
K1TEO	624,921	B	NW5E	135,790	B	WB9Z	193,802	B	KM0T	255,210	B	AF6O	95,976	B
K1RZ	321,525	B	N4IS	123,546	B	W9GA	129,926	B	K0GU	137,600	B	K7RAT (N6TR, op)	71,040	B
K3DNE	175,536	B	W5ZN	114,289	B	K8MD	105,984	B	W5PR	122,286	B	AA7A	59,094	B
WB2AMU	3,071	Q				N8XA	7,747	Q	W8CM	1,320	Q	N7IR	17,088	Q
						K9FOH	300	Q				KQ6EE	3,850	Q
												K7EH	2,850	Q
W3SO	310,464	L	K8GP	740,037	L	K9NS	583,041	L	K5TR	205,273	L	AD6IJ	43,092	L
K3YTL	309,260	L	W4IY	277,911	L	K8CC	187,616	L	W5KFT	81,672	L	W6DTA	22,542	L
W3DOG	295,868	L	AA4ZZ	232,878	L	N8ZM	32,100	L	W0LSD	18,905	L	K7MWD	16,362	L
W2SZ	1,959,675	M	W4NH	267,972	M	W9RVG	58,575	M	K5QE	117,192	M	W6FM	226,080	M
W3CCX	991,935	M	N4HB	105,099	M				W0EEA	91,168	M	K7CW	203,451	M
K3EAR	986,250	M	AG4V	35,088	M				KF0Q	51,972	M	WA7JTM	34,524	M
K2QO	43,127	R	W3IY	318,159	R	VE3NPB	75,096	R	N6NB	1,292,382	R	N6TEB	195,132	R
WA2IID	36,801	R	N5KDA (+K5MQ)	36,360	R	K0PG	73,108	R	N6VI	1,156,760	R	N6DN	184,640	R
N1XKT	35,003	R	N4OFA	34,768	R	K9ILT	72,520	R	N6MU	1,131,156	R	K3UHF	57,772	R

KQ6EE, in LAX, Wayne, KH6WZ, and Val, KG6TI, in ORG in 2nd, 6th and 9th places, respectively. Hon hiked up to Mt Baden Powell (9399 feet) in 3 hours, the second highest peak in Los Angeles area, with a backpack full of radio gear. The Sierra Nevada range seems to attract folks to pack their gear and head for the hills. W6FM multiop team posted a nice score of 226 k from SB. The K7CW group in EWA topped their last year's scoring record to set a new high-water mark of 203 k for that section. At 6300 feet in the Cascades, they had a height advantage and found openings on 6 m intermittently, which complemented their microwave QSOs to achieve their success. Mother Nature got them again this year with snow, sleet, rain and gusting winds. They persevered, and survived, thanks to KE7V's warm RV. Notable rovers Dave, N6TEB/R, operating with Glenn, KE6HPZ, scored 5th nationally in this category, and Paul, N6DN/R, captured the 6th spot, while being first and second respectively in their region. Ron, AF6O, turned in an impressive 95 k effort from ORG across bands ABCD9E, including 100 grids on 6 meters.

The "Bread and Butter" of the Contest

Let's focus for a while on those stations and operators that supply the "bread and butter" in this contest—those with more limited stations, perhaps a newer multi-band rig with VHF added bands, low power and a small antenna. The airways would be a lot quieter without their participation, and although geography may limit their capabilities, or other obligations limit their operating time, they add the excitement for all involved as they respond to the endless CQing of the big guns, and are sought after by those prowling the bands when they send out a CQ of their own. Chuck, KE4OAR, and his buddy Mike operated for a few hours from Chuck's truck with an IC-706MK2 and some loops for bands ABD. As a casual team with 18 QSOs and 11 band/grid multipliers for this contest, they managed to work everyone they could hear, and are already planning improved antenna mounts and a potential rove for the future. Dan, N8IE, was a June VHF newbie and admits that he had fun dabbling on 6 and 2 meters, while George, W1EBI, with just a few contacts on 6 meters sent this newsflash, "HF contester enters first VHF

contest...and survives!" Ed, K0RPT, made his debut in VHF contesting, after ~~six~~ ^{seven} years devoted to local communication and repeater operation.

As indicated in many Web postings, VHF contesting is more fun when there are more participants. Perhaps it's time to reconsider my suggestion that a bonus score be added for contacts with VHF contest first-time ops, or that newcomers take a "getting started" score multiplier? There are plenty of opportunities to get on the VHF bands to talk around town, find an E_s opening, try a digital mode, or operate a VHF contest this coming year. There is a lot of new and used VHF equipment available and information from the VHF and microwave columns in *QST* and *QEX* in addition to support from VHF clubs. If you haven't already, try it—you may find yourself enjoying a new phase of Amateur Radio.

You have about six months to plot your strategy for the 2005 ARRL June VHF QSO Party, which is scheduled for the weekend of June 11-13. Set your expectations high, and then reach them. You will enjoy the fun!

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