

# ARRL 10m Discussion

Some tips and tricks for the ARRL 10m  
Contest from FL

# Brief Overview

- ARRL 10m contest – SSB or CW (or both)
- Second weekend of December (THIS WEEKEND)
- Starts at 0000z (7pm Eastern), goes 48 hours
- All entrants (Multi-Op and Single-Op alike) limited to 36 of 48 hours
- Offtimes must be 30 minutes or longer

# The Secret Ingredient

- The reason that this contest is so much fun from FL is Sporadic-E
- Florida and Texas are the primary recipients of this benefit...often the rest of the country will hear only stations in FL while we have sporadic-e propagation to multiple areas of the country at the same time
- Sporadic-E is sporadic...hence the name. There's no predicting it and it can happen at the sunspot peak or trough

# Timeline

0000-0400z

- You're hyped to work lots of stations, and the band often sounds really good until 2345z when it takes a dive
- Don't sweat it...you'll work a bunch of FL stations on ground wave and maybe a handful of Carib and SA. No need to stay up much beyond 0400z; you'll work these guys tomorrow
- Exception – if we get a Sporadic E opening (i.e., you're hearing loud stations from a relatively small geographic area) stay to milk it until everyone in that state goes to bed

# Timeline

1100z-1400z

- In a single band contest, you can't afford to sleep in. Turn the beam SE and E; you may catch an African opening the band in addition to more plain vanilla South Americans
- When the flux is above ~120, this can be a good time for long path Asia as well. VR2XAN almost always seems to find this opening, as does 9V1YC. Beam SE.
- The band will gradually open to EU as the sun rises. In CQWW CW it was open shortly before 1200z for Europeans with big antennas and power, and runnable for us by 1230z.
- Find a run frequency and hang on...rates should be > 100/hr while the band is open to EU

# Timeline

1400-1800z

- You'll gradually start working more US and VE stations mixed in with EU. Resist the urge to turn your beam away from EU as long as you can...multipliers are very important and the US guys will be there after EU is gone
- Before EU dies out entirely, consider a few quick S&P passes to work the big guns who don't S&P

# Timeline

1800-2300z

- Most stations you can hear will be NA, SA, and a few big guns in the Pacific.
- Africans will often hang in there longer than EU, and they can be loud during these hours. If conditions are good, southern EU will still be audible (EA, I, CT, S5, etc.)
- At the top of the cycle, it's possible to simultaneously run EU and JA during these hours

# Timeline

2300z-0100z

- The guys in the midwest and the northeast are not hearing much new now, and they're going to eat dinner and watch TV
- Any openings will be USA and VE. Don't forget to CQ west for VK and ZL. If conditions are good, you can beam 330 and work JA/HL/BY and other Asians still

# Timeline

## 0100z and forward

- Check the WWV numbers online...if the A index is  $< 10$ , more often than not we will get a Sporadic E opening in the evening
- Keep pushing...this is where we can win the contest. The serious guys in the midwest and W1/2/3 have gone to watch TV and relax because they're only hearing duplicate stations in Florida, Texas, Central America, the Caribbean, and SA

# Characteristics of Sporadic E

- We've been talking about Sporadic E...what is it?
- You'll hear stations in defined geographic areas
  - Can be large, like an entire call area, or smaller, like a state or part of a state
  - Signals are loud and noise is very low
  - Moves around...for a while you'll hear only MI, then IL, then OH will dominate
- Push through...stations in FL and TX are the primary beneficiaries of sporadic E, but you have to be there to take advantage!

## More Sporadic E

- I don't have a great grasp of the technical explanation, but I believe there is what's called a Sporadic E cloud over both ends of the QSO
- This may be an illustration only...I don't know that real clouds are involved
- Clouds are more common the closer you are to the Equator, hence the advantage of FL and TX
- Oftentimes the cloud further south will be somewhat stationary and the northerly clouds move around

# Tactical Considerations

- ARRL added Mexican states to the multiplier list maybe 10 years ago
  - I've never worked a lot of XE's in this contest before or after Mexican states were added as mults
  - Copy their exchanges carefully, or get a decent prefill file for your logger
- DC is a separate mult
  - 4U1WB, W3DQ, KE3X, NN3RP, N8HM, K2ACX represent the bulk of the ham stations in DC
  - If they call you on one mode, try moving them to the other!

# Tactics, Cont'd

- Be welcoming, particularly on SSB. There are lots of new licensees who have made lots of QSOs on FT8 and never spent much time on SSB. They will be excited to work someone, but you'll have to talk them through the exchange (and be loud, and sound inviting).
- Multipliers count per mode, so if you're mixed mode be aggressive about moving multipliers who call you
- Remember...offtimes must be 30 minutes long. That means the time of your first QSO after the offtime, minus the time of the last QSO before the offtime must be 31 or greater

# Wrapup

- The FCG can and has won this contest in either the Unlimited or Medium Club category for at least 3 of the last 5 years, maybe more
- It's a contest where propagation favors us as the southernmost state in the US. We can enjoy the sort of advantage that W1 has in a low band DX contest for one weekend a year
- It can be a blast to run big rate and work some cool DX...I hope you'll consider spending some time on the radio this weekend