

Minutes of VHFCC Rule Setting Meetings 14 November 2017 + 17 November 2017

Attendees: Andy Cook, G4PIQ (Notes + Chair); Richard Baker, GD8EXI; Ian Pawson, G0FCT; Mike Goodey, G0GJV; Pete Lindsay, G4CLA; Martin Hall, GM8IEM; Stewart Bryant, G3YSX (Board Liason)

Apologies: John Quarmby, G3XDY; Nick Totterdell, G4FAL; Richard Staples, G4HGI

This pair of meetings was held specifically to discuss the rules for 2017 and to finalise e-mail discussions on the outcome of the survey.

The final summary of the survey results as discussed are attached at Appendix A. The results used in the meeting were an early version, but with no significant movements in distributions.

We first discussed the subjects which we did not consult on :-

Decisions / Actions as follows

1. We won't split single and multi-operator entries for the Backpackers events because of concerns over the safety issues of potentially encouraging more operators to go into the hills alone and because of the relatively small advantage of multi-operators in these contests
2. We will offer some awards to youth entrants. We chose to make the age cut-off 18 and under to catch those at school rather than 21 because often those at university have access to significantly more resources. We will issue a certificate to the leading entrant in this category in all sections / contests. We will investigate the possibility of making some trophy available. This award will require registration.
3. We will clarify that stations shouldn't complete a QSO on the MGM calling frequencies.
4. We need to finalise and issue the MGM operating procedures. Martin kindly offered to take this on. **AP – GM8IEM to complete.**
5. We should re-introduce the dish size limit for the restricted and low power sections in the UKAC contests. This was dropped in error last year. The size was best set at 2m max diameter – and this aligns with the VHF NFD rules and the previous UKAC rules
6. We should continue to operate the SHF UKACs as part of our activities to encourage activity on these bands.
7. We should clarify the measurement bandwidth in our code of practice. We will use 2.5 kHz to align with common amateur practice and understanding. **AP – to be included in the re-write underway by G4BVY**



8. We considered offering placement certificates on demand – but have deferred this for the time being due to the current load on the IT development team. We will align this the HFCC.
9. We considered adding more flexibility the VHF NFD fixed sweeper section, but couldn't reach a conclusion on what to do here. Deferred for this year.
10. We need to address the gaming of the scoring system which is apparent in some of the SHF UKACs. We could do this by reducing the number of sections or by re-introducing the lower power limit for the Open sections. **AP – G4PIQ to discuss with G3XDY and bring back a proposal for further discussion**

We then moved to discuss the items which came out of the survey

11. We will increase the power level for Backpackers contests from 3W and 10W to 5W and 25W. The survey results were surprisingly clear on both these topics (84/16 and 73/27 in favour / against)
12. We will retain the current antenna definitions for the restricted and low power sections of the UKACs. (71/29)
13. We will retain the status-quo for non-UK stations entering the UKACs. They can form part of teams, but one end of each QSO must be in the UK (62/38)
14. We discussed the option of providing a separate European section in the UKACs, but in the light of the decision to retain the status quo in point #13, the rule complications produced in trying to do so are too great, so we will not do this
15. Overall there was a view that a low power FM section alongside the UKAC contests was a good idea (56/44), but as we discussed the detail of how this might work it became clear that a better option may be to run such an event slightly separately from the UKACs to allow stations to migrate to the main UKACs during the year as they gain experience, and to simplify definitions. These events will run from 1900 – 2000 on a restricted part of the FM / all-mode band on 4m, 2m and 70cm only as a trial for 2017. **AP – G4PIQ to draft rules**
16. The feedback on splitting the SHF UKACs and the 6m UKACs and moving the 6m event to the Thursday was very clear (79/21). We will do this. Need to check for clashes with 80m CC – **AP – G4PIQ to speak to G4FAL**
17. Similarly, the feedback on moving the 4m UKACs from the current 5th Tuesday slots was very clear (81/19) with the majority (68/32) favouring moving the 4m events to every 3rd Thursday and dropping the 4m Cumulatives (to keep the number of contests manageable). This also needs checking for 80m CC clashes.
18. The proposal to have a two-tier club system within the UKAC similar to the 80m CC ones was supported (58/42). We agreed to use the same ruling as the 80m CC (35km radius for local club definition), except that we will use home location as the key rather than operating location because of the large number of portable stations at VHF



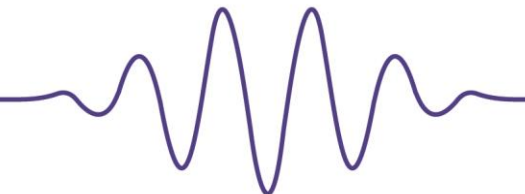
19. The option to add 2300 MHz as a separate band to 2320 MHz to the SHF UKACs did not have a clear outcome. **G4PIQ to discuss with G3XDY**
20. The survey produced an extremely clear outcome to allow stations in the mix-and-match section of VHF NFD to operate on 5 bands and select the best 4 to count. We discussed and felt that this rule should also be applied to the Restricted section. We felt that we should not apply it to the low power section
21. There was clear support for a separate club competition for weekend events with unlimited stations able to participate from an individual club. We decided the best way to facilitate this was include it within the VHF Championship.
22. The UKAC scoring systems were a difficult topic. The survey result is very clear that respondents favour a change from the existing M7 system (58/42). This position has not changed significantly since around day 3 of the survey. The survey is currently still open, but responses are only coming in at the rate of 1/2/3 per day and there is no significant movement in the mix. There has been very vocal opposition, particularly on the Facebook group and from IO91 in particular to this proposed change – but when the results are broken down square by square – even IO91 only comes out 40/60 against the change so the anti-position is by no means consistent with geography. The Facebook group, while apparently having a large number of members, has only a portion of those active in discussions. They have also run a poll on the group with around 70 respondents compared to c. 400 for the VHFCC survey.

While we would like it to be more clear cut, nevertheless the size of this majority in the VHFCC survey for change feels too large to ignore and after 16 months of debate it feels like we should try the new scoring system.

The survey is much less clear about the preferred option between M8 and B2. M8 is marginally ahead (52/48), but this is too close to call.

On this basis we discussed both M8 and B2 and chose to implement B2 because it is the fairer of the two options.

AP - G4PIQ to agree the approach for closure of the survey and release of the UKAC scoring proposals with board / HQ.



RSGB VHFCC Rules Consultation 2017

1. With the now common use of the FT817, should we increase the lower power limit for the Backpackers 3B section from 3 to 5 Watts?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Yes	63.3%	272	84%
No	11.9%	51	16%
I don't have an opinion	24.9%	107	
Comments		74	
<i>answered question</i>			430
<i>skipped question</i>			17

2. If we increase the lower power limit of the Backpackers contest to 5 Watts, should we increase the power limit of the 10H section from 10 to 25 Watts to make the contest more attractive for stations operating from more remote parts of the UK?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Yes	51.2%	219	73%
No	18.9%	81	27%
I don't have an opinion	29.9%	128	
Comments		67	
<i>answered question</i>			428
<i>skipped question</i>			19

3. For the UKAC contests, do you support the move to the new scoring systems described in the UKAC Contest Scoring paper?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Yes	49.1%	198	58%
No	35.7%	144	42%
No Opinion	15.1%	61	
Comments		126	
<i>answered question</i>			403
<i>skipped question</i>			44

4. Which of the UKAC scoring systems do you prefer?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
B2 - Bonus based	34.6%	115	52%
M8 - Multiplier based	32.2%	107	48%
I have no opinion	33.1%	110	
Comments		101	
<i>answered question</i>			332
<i>skipped question</i>			115

5. Our current rules for the Restricted and Low Power sections of the UKAC contests states "Only one antenna may be used. Stacked or bayed antennas are not allowed". This rule exists for simplicity and because a single antenna is mechanically straightforward. Some stations have told us that they would prefer to have the option of stacking or baying multiple antennas but with a limit to the total boom length or number of elements. Should we allow this? If you wish to provide comments on what the restriction should be, please do so in the comments section.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Yes - allow more than one antenna in the Restricted / Low Power sections	27.0%	101	29%
No - keep the single antenna limit in the Restricted / Low Power sections	65.5%	245	71%
I have no opinion	7.5%	28	
Comments		125	
<i>answered question</i>			374
<i>skipped question</i>			73

6. We currently allow non-UK stations to form part of the club teams for the UKAC contests with the restriction that all QSOs must have a UK station at one end. We recognise that it is a highlight for many entrants to regularly work these overseas stations as good DX, and so having them active and forming part of club teams encourages interesting activity. We have had feedback however that some groups feel this is unfair. Should we continue to allow non UK stations to form part of club teams?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Yes - continue to allow non UK stations in teams	55.2%	207	62%
No - restrict teams to UK stations only	34.4%	129	38%
I have no opinion	10.4%	39	
Comments		94	
<i>answered question</i>			375
<i>skipped question</i>			72

7. Separately from question 6 above, in order to encourage more European activity, should we introduce a separate (high power only) section for overseas entrants in the UKAC contests without any restriction on requiring a UK station at one end of all QSOs other than needing at least a single UK QSO in the log? These entries would not count to the club tables.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Yes - we should introduce a non-UK station section	48.7%	183	55%
No - we should not introduce a non-UK section	40.4%	152	45%
I have no opinion	10.9%	41	
Comments		80	
<i>answered question</i>			376
<i>skipped question</i>			71

8. In order to encourage more newcomers to contesting and foundation / intermediate licensees to take part, should we introduce a low power FM section to the UKACs. We recognise the need for rules to ensure that the contests would not monopolise the whole FM segment. Only stations in the low power FM section would be allowed to call CQ on FM. Stations in the main contest sections would however be allowed to work the FM stations. For this year at least, stations operating the FM section will not count towards the main club scores, but will instead be listed in a separate table.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Yes - a low power FM section is a good idea	47.4%	176	56%
No - a low power FM section is a bad idea	36.7%	136	44%
I have no opinion	15.9%	59	
Comments		103	
<i>answered question</i>			371
<i>skipped question</i>			76

9. Currently the SHF UKACs and the 6m UKACs take place on the same evening. We've received feedback that this is not ideal. Should we move the 6m event to the second Thursday in every month to align with activity in the rest of Europe? If you think there is a more suitable option than moving 6m to the second Thursday please write that in the comments field.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Yes - we should separate the SHF and 6m UKACs	66.3%	248	79%
No - we should not separate the SHF and 6m UKACs	17.4%	65	21%
I have no opinion	16.3%	61	
Comments		105	
<i>answered question</i>			374
<i>skipped question</i>			73

10. The rules for the UKAC club contests are intentionally open with teams allowed to be as large as any club can manage to make them. This helps to encourage maximum activity, and the current remarkable activity levels tell us that is successful. We have had suggestions that we should create a two tier club system as operates in the HF Club Championship contests. Local clubs would require all entrants home locations to be within a 35km radius of a defined virtual meeting point (unless a member has no closer affiliated society), and clubs with a more dispersed membership would be placed in an Open club section.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Yes - a two tier club system is a good idea	48.0%	177	58%
No - a two tier club system is not a good idea	34.4%	127	42%
I have no opinion	17.6%	65	
Comments		107	
<i>answered question</i>			369
<i>skipped question</i>			78

11. Activity is increasing quickly on 4m and we receive requests for more UKAC events on this band. Should we:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Leave things as they are and have 4 events each year, with contests occurring when there is a 5th Tuesday in the month	14.2%	52	19%
Move 4m UKACs to every 3rd Thursday in every month to align with European activity and remove the 4m Cumulatives from the calendar giving a total of 12 events	40.6%	149	53%
Keep the fifth Tuesday 4m UKACs but add the five 4m Cumulative dates on Sunday mornings and afternoons to the 4m UKAC series to give a total of 9 events in the year	21.3%	78	28%
I have no opinion	24.0%	88	
Comments		97	
<i>answered question</i>			367
<i>skipped question</i>			80

12. For the SHF UKACs, should we add 2300 MHz as an additional band to 2320 MHz to encourage activity there? We recognise that currently only G, GW, GM and GI have permission for 2300 MHz activity in the UK/CD and that 2300 MHz would not need to be subject to same time of operation constraints as 2320 MHz. Please consider these points in forming your answer.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Add 2300 MHz as an additional band which scores in the overall SHF table	15.1%	57	48%
Add 2300 MHz as an additional band which does not score in the overall SHF table	2.1%	8	7%
Do not add 2300 MHz to the SHF UKAC	14.6%	55	46%
I have no opinion	68.2%	257	
Comments		51	
<i>answered question</i>			377
<i>skipped question</i>			70

13. Currently the Mix and Match section of VHF NFD allows 4 bands to be chosen with different bands in different sections (Open, Restricted, Low Power). With the increasing availability of low cost equipment for 4m and 23cm and their increasing popularity in the UKAC events, should we extend this section allow operation in all 5 bands (6m, 4m, 2m, 70cm, 23cm) with the best 4 bands to count to the score as currently happens in the Open Section?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Yes - we should expand the Mix and Match section to allow operation in 5 bands	63.8%	233	86%
No - we should keep the Mix and Match section at 4 bands	10.4%	38	14%
I have no opinion	25.8%	94	
Comments		38	
<i>answered question</i>			365
<i>skipped question</i>			82

14. There is tremendous activity within the UK Activity contests, but most of our weekend contests are only growing slowly. The point at which the UKACs began to grow most quickly was when the club competition was introduced. We are considering adding a club competition along similar lines to a small number of weekend events (perhaps the trophy events on 6m, 4m, 2m, 70cm and 23cm). Most of these contests contain 6 hour sections or are only 6 or 8 hour events so entrants don't have to be active for the full 24 hour period. Should we do this by:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Corrected for No Opinion
Adding these events to the existing UKAC	16.2%	59	19%
Creating a new club competition for these events	58.4%	213	70%
We shouldn't add a club competition to these events	8.8%	32	11%
I have no opinion	16.7%	61	
Comments		68	
		<i>answered question</i>	365
		<i>skipped question</i>	82