



Minutes of VHF Contest Committee Meeting held via Skype

31st January 2019

Attendees:

Andy Cook, G4PIQ (Chair)
Ian Pawson G0FCT
Pete Lindsay G4CLA
Richard Staples, G4HGI
John Quarmby, G3XDY
Richard Baker, GD8EXI
Mike Tubby, G8TIC
Mike Goodey, G0GJV
Stewart Bryant, G3YSX (Board Liaison)

Apologies:

Martin Hall, GM8IEM

1. Entry levels

The final 2018 contest entry levels were reviewed. The data is attached at Appendix A. Overall levels of activity are broadly flat. UKAC activity appears to have reached saturation levels, but with some churn of clubs and entrants each year. Club based activity events such as AFS events continue to grow slightly. VHF NFD is the key exception to this and is remaining stubbornly flat at around 60 entrants. We considered whether we should add VHF NFD to the Club Championship, but concluded that this would have little impact on the sorts of clubs that we need to encourage to increase activity.

No specific actions were obviously needing to be taken from this data other than to continue to encourage weekend operation.

We agreed to enhance the data to include the following items and keep under review

- Band by band numbers in the SHF UKAC events
- Numbers of operators in VHF NFD and multi operator events
- Sweepers for VHF NFD (51 in 2017, 53 in 2018)
- Club numbers for the UKAC events (data below subsequently received from GD8EXI and included in Appendix A)

Action: G4PIQ to update the data further

2. MGM contest progress

We recognised that that December 2018 MGM contest results were still outstanding, but that these are being progressed as quickly as possible.

We have now run the first weekday evening MGM events prior to the UKACs. Feedback has been positive, but there has been some confusion over how best to operate, with the use of contest mode to WSJT-X causing particular confusion.

There were quite a number of stations active who did not enter these first contests. We thought that this might have been due to confusion on how to create an entry file from the what WSJT produces. We felt that some additional guidance was essential. We will continue to monitor the position around stations active and non-entering and will consider approaching some to investigate why.



We set the rules and simple exchanges with the old FT8 exchange structure in mind (not using contest mode) in part to keep compatibility with casual FT8 operation. We discussed this position at some length and agreed to hold with the current guidance. We fully expect the world of MGM modes to move very quickly, and recognise that it might be challenging for us to always keep the rules well aligned with reality, but we will continue to monitor closely, and will consider making changes to the rules during the year if essential.

We will review the position around contest mode exchanges in FT8 for these MGM contests for 2020.

We will publish a set of operational guidance for the UKAC MGM contests.

Action – G4HGI

3. UKAC Station Sharing

G4PIQ has received further complaints (provided to the committee members) from multiple independent sources about club stations being shared by many individual entrants in the UKACs and building up much larger club score contributions than a normally operated station could create. This was echoed from additional sources by other committee members. As a result of this feedback and considering the potential impact on results, we felt that we needed to review the position we had taken when setting the 2019 rules and provide some guidance on what constituted acceptable use of the station sharing rule.

We agreed that no more than 3 entrants sharing a single physical station would count towards their club score, however any additional entrants would still be accepted as individuals.

We considered how best to communicate this. In order to be equitable and to demonstrate that we are listening to our entrants, we felt that the right approach was to publish this guidance in a Newsletter update, along with the Facebook Group and groups.io reflector. Wording will be agreed off-line and the Newsletter published on or before Saturday 2nd Feb, so as to be in place before the February UKACs. The MGM guidance should also be available for this Newsletter.

[Post meeting note: A new rule (3f) was added to the VHF General Rules (<https://www.rsgbcc.org/vhf/rules/19rules/General.shtml>) to cover this behaviour. The new rule comes into force on 01/03/2019.]

4. Publicity

We briefly discussed the situation with publicity and agreed to continue to engage a possible volunteer.

Action: G4PIQ / G8TIC to make contact.

G8TIC told us that the Facebook group now has over 1000 (almost all UK) members and is therefore a great way to disseminate information.

5. C5 Contest Working Group (C5CWG)

G0FCT gave us an update on the work inside the IARU C5 contest working group. The IARU rules are expected to remain stable for the next 3 to 5 years, including their position on MGM. There have been some changes in the leadership of the committee. Ian will continue to take part.

6. Any Other Business

G8TIC raised the issue of whether it would be a useful action to create an open source database of callsigns / locators so that everyone is working to a common playing field and anyone can contribute updates.

Action: G4PIQ to put on agenda for next meeting

Appendix A – VHF Contest Entry Levels

Contest	Year																				2017	2018
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016				
144 UKAC	20	22	26	36	32	55	73	147	190	257	316	368	495	442	499	574	603	644	655	661		
432 UKAC	19	12	20	22	22	19	23	34	53	66	166	218	300	293	369	420	417	469	453	465		
1.3 UKAC	13	14	11	13	11	12	15	12	15	16	47	85	90	136	140	186	201	229	216	214		
50 UKAC								25	43	59	169	238	237	258	348	437	454	496	435	424		
70 UKAC								12		20	55	94	108	131	151	207	200	269	309	299		
SHF UKAC													33	33	27	50	38	65	83	87		
50 FMAC																				39		
70 FMAC																			67	57		
144 FMAC																			175	135		
432 FMAC																			118	103		
432 AFS	34	35	30	33	30	26	35	38		28	35	63	76	72	82	98	114	102	109	133		
432 AFS Clubs	15	13	14	15	12	11	14	14		12	14	26	34	29	29	44	49	46	50	56		
March 2/70	27	35	25		24	25	32	35	23	36	60	59	91	59	72	59	84	63	85	98		
70 MHz Cums	24	24	20	20	18	20	19	22	29	28	38	50	74	73	76	81	87	88	102	89		
1st 70 MHz	22	13	12	18	22	22	18	19	21	23	32	35	47	46	40	41	49	58	56	44		
1st 50 MHz									36	48	39	35	48	42	53	48	49	53	61	41		
1st MGM																				35		
May UHF	30	24	15	17	26		34		29	18	16	20	26	33	39	23	33	53	41	45		
432 Trophy		21	15	17	20	22	28	23	28	25	28	33	35	37	48	54	37	51	57	52		
10G Trophy	14	10		5	9	11	10	10	8	11	8	5	12	8	6	8	6	9	7	14		
70 MHz CW												17	23	19	29	25	25	21	28	33		
May 144	42	24		33	34	34	41	38	31	48	65	68	65	68	70	74	77	80	93	101		
Backpackers	54	45		39	55	59	69	50	52	58	52	60	53	35	50	53	60	42	51	55		
50 MHz Trophy	28	33	25	33	32	28	32	36	42	47	58	56	65	59	63	81	81	93	128	109		
50 MHz CW														48	38	26	21	21	26	31		
VHF NFD	68	73		56	59	52	53	58	49	63	76	61	69	54	80	62	58	59	61	58		
70 MHz Trophy	31	32	16	40	31	32	27	25	27	32	35	30	45	41	49	55	59	59	65	70		
144 Low Power	32	32	13	23	25	33	34	35	27	28	46	48	36	33	32	35	47	58	60	58		
432 Low Power	28	23	10	17	19	23	34	18	28	28	33	38	38	31	27	39	51	42	53	47		
144 Trophy	35	30	34	27	35	37	42	46	55	54	78	75	68	56	66	71	82	85	101	101		
2nd 70 MHz	22	21	16	18	27	19	16	18	15	20	28	32	28	34	25	33	39	49	35	24		
1.3 Trophy	15	11	7	13	10	10	10	12	9	9	11	17	20	22	17	18	32	25	30	31		
2.3 Trophy	12	10	6	8	8	8	6	7	4	4	4	8	11	10	7	8	11	9	11	17		
Oct UHF	19	15	12	16	15	15	12	21	22	20	23	18	25	25	29	22	40	27	35	28		
50 MHz AFS		14	17	19	17	21	16	13	11	24	33	32	78	77	84	84	96	111	87	95		
50 AFS Clubs													31	34	38	40	41	49	39	42		
Marconi	17	14		13	14	13	11	12	17	9	25	22	25	23	27	28	42	32	44	32		
144 AFS	68	77	74	76	81	60	66	45	48	77	93	125	113	107	115	138	125	156	133	150		
144 AFS Clubs	18	20	19	21	21	16	17	9	12	18	25	41	40	43	49	58	56	61	61	59		
2nd MGM																						
Xmas Cums	25	22	24	20	17	22	28	22	28	49	56	56	61	73	62	84	105	110	80	121		
TOTAL																			4300	4353		
Championship	268	265	156	219	252	268	298	294	295	333	438	438	491	427	469	506	575	576	695	695		

