

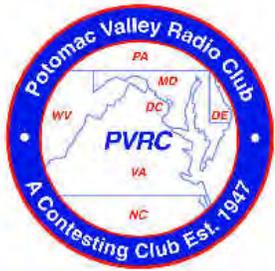


Sweepstakes 2015

OLD Competition = NEW competition!!

By Ty Stewart, K3MM and Jim Nitzberg, WX3B

October 29, 2015



PVRC Presidential Challenge Set the Club Record

- SMC BEAT us in NCCC's designed NAQP Challenge, and they did it with a turnout of RTTY operators!!
- If they beat us once, they (think they) can do it again...if we let them...of course we're NOT going to let them!!
- PVRC club goal is to submit 400 logs and set the 'All Time Unlimited Club' records in points and logs submitted
- Based on NAQP participation during 2015, we can achieve 400 logs; we need traditional 'Phone Only' ops to get on for CW, and vice versa
- We will also need to arrange Guest Ops to take advantage of all capable stations with the biggest antennas, in cases where station owners are traveling
- **PVRC Chapter Leaders are they Key to this successful mission**

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Sweepstakes Scores Historical Perspective

- 2015 winning formula: Operate BOTH modes and maintain our MASSIVE SSB turnout
 - SSB is our traditional strength...however...this year:
 - We need SSB operators to operate CW
 - We also need CW operators to operate SSB!
- Last FOUR years: we won “by default”
- SMC re-charged and MOTIVATED this year
- A “sneak attack” could be just what NCCC is planning....
- Competitors from both the mid-west group SMC and NCCC have distinct propagation ADVANTAGES over PVRC!

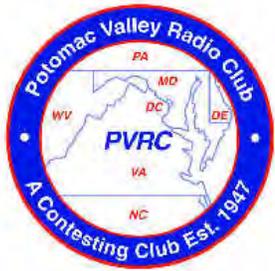
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The Tactical Plan

- PVRC Club Strategy Outlined
- Individual Operating Strategies
- Station Strategies

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PVRC: Club Strategy

- Encourage Individuals to set High Goals for themselves
- Promote Single-Op High Power Operations
- Discourage Multi/Single operations unless there is no other way for folks to operate.
- Individual operators contribute far more to the score than multi-ops, per operator.
- Parallel single-ops at a super-station are the exception.



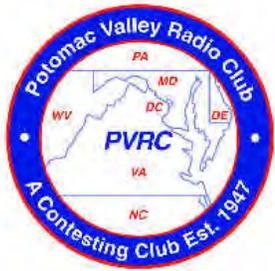
PVRC: Club Strategy

- If you run (U)nlimited or Multi – SPOT EVERYONE, especially other PVRC members.
- Make **SURE** you turn your log in by the deadline.



Individual Operating Strategies

- Get Started at the BEGINNING of the contest – Saturday afternoon
- Listen to the bands for 30 – 60 minutes BEFORE the contest starts to get an idea of the way propagation is running on each band.
- Plan to operate until 2:00 – 3:00am Sunday morning on the first day – don't give up too early!
- Save your off time(s) for Sunday afternoon
- Limited time? Low Power? Show UP on Sunday for a good time running stations.



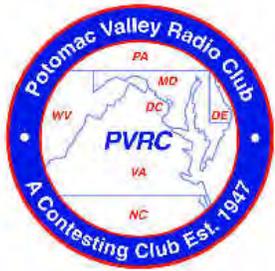
Individual Operating Strategies

- Make SURE all your equipment works BEFORE the contest: Yes, ALL your equipment.
- Double-check voice keyer, antennas, computers
- SS is all about RATE! Keep your rate up and keep your eye on that rate-meter.
- DO NOT CHASE MULTIPLIERS. They will come to you.
- Always call CQ on At Least 1 radio while S&Ping on your second (SO2R operators) on SSB;
- if you are assisted in CW, GRAB and pounce (G&P) with both radios can be very productive.
- Be Accurate – do NOT bust the **call sign!** Don't be afraid to ask for repeats to get everything correct.



Individual Operating Strategies

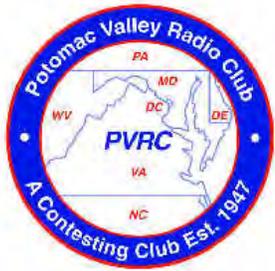
- Do NOT answer weak stations when rates are good.
- Get to the next HOT (lower) band FAST, mark your spot for 75m SSB!
- Watch 40m: It may be a BIG band this year.
- Play to your Station's Strengths. You only get to contact each station once. If you have a good 75m antenna – spend lots of time on 75 meters!
- Do NOT get psyched out by others with high numbers. They will be seeking YOU out by the end of the contest
- Work the shortest skip band that supports high rate. This is normally the lowest band, and it keeps the QSO potential in densely populated areas.
- If you use packet, do not waste time in pileups; call later if you can't get right through.



Station Strategies For expected 2015 Conditions

- Use Low, Efficient antennas. Dipoles and Inverted Vees at 35 – 50 feet make EXCELLENT SS antennas.
- 10 & 15 *might* be interesting bands, however one should use the LOWEST possible band for CA coverage (usually 20).
- Watch 10 & 15 in the late afternoon for loud east coast signals while beaming west. 10 & 15 are good “second radio” bands...
- Use a EWE, Beverage or other RX antenna for 75/80 meters. NE/SW/NW are all important directions
- Be comfortable. Have snacks, drinks at easy reach. Keep aspirin handy.

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Now is the time to have fun on 10 and 15, right?

- Answer #1: If you are competitive, and have only one radio: Probably not!
- Answer #2: If you are SO2R, by all means pounce on 10 & 15 meters
- NCCC and SMC will running like crazy on these bands
- PVRCers can run, and yes it is fun, however 20m usually supports better skip in more places....than 10 & 15.



Go Low EARLY Old Man/Young Lady

- With falling Solar flux, it is important to get on low bands ASAP this year.
- 80m should sparkle with short skip. 80m keeps signals in the most dense ham population: the EAST coast.
- This has a favorable effect on YOUR RATE.



How Skimmers and the Reverse Beacon Network Change the CW Game

- SO2R operators can achieve a higher rate than running!
- It is more fun than CQing up 60 QSOs an hour
- Allows pouncers to do almost as well as runners, even with one radio.
- Cure for the Sunday blues
- Relatively high quality of spots compared to packet



Using Skimmer for Sweepstakes CW

- Add RBN to your packet nodes
 - VE7CC is an excellent 'retail' node
- Consider adding some filters
 - Limit skimmers to USA reports only
- Time out your packet spots for 10 minutes or sooner
- EVERYBODY gets skimmed when they call CQ



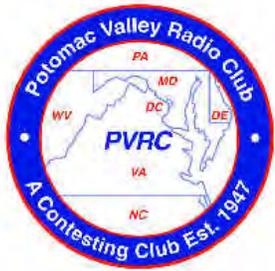
Station Strategies

- Consider operating S02R for more fun on Sunday!
- 75 meters is important for SSB!
- An inverted Vee at 50 feet with 500 watts will generate hundreds of QSOs on 75m SSB.
- 40 may be more important for CW than SSB



What is a an HMO?

- Highly Motivated Operator, out to improve PVRC's club score by operating from two locations, with two call signs, during the contest.
- Advantage: You have good runs both days!
Drawback: You sacrifice your own individual score, since you use two call signs.
- PVRC Club Advantage: You generate a larger score for PVRC.
- Interested? Contact Jim Nitzberg, WX3B for details. Only one call sign can be used for a "transmitter" in SS.
- Example: WX3B operates as KF3P Saturday from N3HBX and makes 1,000 QSOs x 75 sections. Sunday, WX3B goes back to his own house, makes another 1,000 QSOs by 75 sections. More fun, more activity, and more PVRC Points – all by CQing and running stations. No hunting for stations Sunday!



What is a PARALLEL Operation?

- Multiple, simultaneous operator efforts with multiple call signs from ONE station.
- W3LPL is a great example – HUGE club benefit, fun, multi-operator environment keeps things fresh.
- 2 or more competitive scores come out of ONE station
- If your station can run M/2, you can support a parallel effort



PVRC's historical ramblings

- The raw number of SSB logs and SSB effort have propelled our club to victory in the past.
- This means the casual operator has a MAJOR influence on our team result.
- BIG GUNS are important (2009 - 2014 lesson) and we need repeat performances from them.



Sweepstakes History File

- Can help / Can also hurt
- Does NOT replace listening!
- Can make your QSOs easier
- Use as a cross check / double check tool
- PVRC NC – excellent work packaging the revised file(s)
- If you like the idea: TEST IT OUT, not immediately before the contest.
- {Place new web link here if we have a file}



Getting the word out

- (VERY) Short notice this year!
- PVRC Reflector and regional meetings.
- Chapter leaders getting the word out to their members
- All hands on deck approach/attitude



Not Operating? You can STILL HELP!

- How about lending out your station to a guest operator?
- Assist other PVRicers with antenna and equipment "parties"
- Be a dedicated spotter and...get on the air and SPOT EVERYONE. This makes the game better for all of us.
- A surprising number of folks do NOT use skimmer yet! Spotting still matters.

Kudos to NCCC for doing this since 2006!! Thanks Jerry
K6III



Send In Your Log

- You laugh, but individuals forget to do this!
- Make SURE you mark your log for Potomac Valley Radio Club.
 - You laugh, but people submit for the WRONG club, too!!
- Send it in by the deadline
- Save a copy of the ARRL's robot receipt
- Make sure your LOG was received **CORRECTLY!**



Fall, 2015 Propagation What we can expect

- Do NOT waste too much time on 10 & 15 – Your density of callers is likely to SUFFER!
 - This is STILL true in 2015! Any time you spend on 15 may be better spent somewhere else unless you are at a parallel single-ops operation (W3LPL, Etc.)
- 20m & 40m to be your daylight money bands
- 40m & 80m to be your evening/late night money bands: remember 40 has new life: no broadcast stations below 7.200.
- Be aware that 80m has a history of going long at times, however it usually shortens up after midnight.



Operating Schedule Full Timers

- Start on 20, move to 40, or just move right to 80 when the rate drops (SSB)
- CW: could start on 10 & 15, but don't expect to stay there long
- Stay on 80 (or 40) until you have over 1,000 QSOs!
- If the rate drops, take a break at about 3:00am, but be ready to resume by 6:00am – 7:00am Sunday



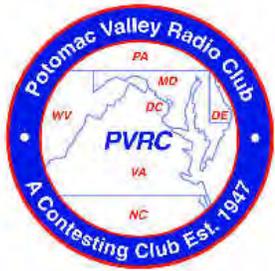
Operating Schedule for part time operators

- Sunday is likely to be your most interesting day. People will flock to YOU for QSOs
- 40m & 75m will be great evening bands.
- Any time you get on is better than NOT getting on
- Low dipoles and 500+ watts = BIG SCORES!



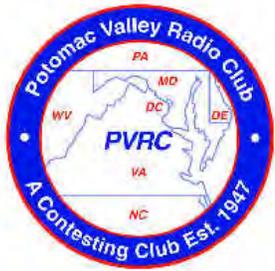
Tips for low power/limited antenna operations

- Late Saturday, all day Sunday is your most productive times.
- The “second” hottest band may actually be easier to make QSOs on
- Make sure your SSB audio is optimized – have someone else check it out with you
- Avoid large pileups – move on if you can’t work someone in several calls
- Pouncing? Listen and pre-fill the parts of the exchange so you copy the entire exchange before you call...



2015 Sweepstakes Dates

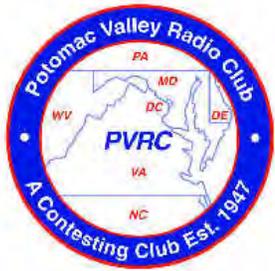
- CW: 2100Z, Nov 7 to 0259Z, Nov 9
- SSB: 2100Z, Nov 21 to 0259Z, Nov 23
- Operate no more than 24 of the 30 hours
- Off periods may not be less than 30 minutes in length.
- Listening time counts as operating time.
- 15 day log submission DEADLINE!!
- Email entries for CW must be sent to SSCW@arri.org and Phone to SSPhone@arri.org



Log Submission: FASTER

- New rules: 2 weeks after each contest
- Your effort ONLY counts if you SUBMIT your log on time
- Don't NOT submit your log.
- DO submit your log!!
- Email entries for CW must be sent to SSCW@arri.org and Phone to SSPhone@arri.org

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Go PVRC!



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Elecraft K3 TX Audio Settings

- TX EQ (SSB)
- 0.05 -10
- 0.10 -10
- 0.20 -10
- 0.40 -11
- 0.80 -9
- 1.60 -6
- 2.40 +2
- 3.20 -3
-
- MIC Gain: 45
- CMP: 28
-
- ** Microphone: Heil HC-5 Element

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Yaesu FT-1000mp TX Audio Settings

- Transmit bandwidth 6khz
- EDSP ON
- NO EDSP equalization
- Menu 8-9 Proc/LSB, Proc USB between 0.050 and 0.100
- Liberal use of speech processor and Heil HC4 Microphone
- DSP settings at 100-3100



Yaesu FTDX-5000 TX Audio Settings

- Heil HC5 Microphone (HC4 works too) Mic gain and Processor at about 12 o'clock.
- Note that these numbers may be off by one due to firmware updates....however the menu descriptions are correct
- 101 A3J (SSB) High Cutoff = 4000
- 104 A3J (SSB) TX BPF = 50 - 3000
- 160 PE1 FRQ: 100
- 161 PE1 LVL: 0
- 162 PE1 BW: 1
- 163 PE2 FRQ: 800
- 164 PE2 LVL: 0
- 165 PE2 BW: 1
- 166 PE3 FREQ 3200
- 167 PE3 LVL 10
- 168 PE3 BW 1