



SUBJECT	CONTEST RULES/PROCEDURES		
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BACKGROUND

In the Ham Spirit, a contest is a competition between amateur radio that takes place exclusively on the bands allocated to amateur. This was implicit, and was not written in the rules of competition that have been established there are now several decades. Since then, new technologies have emerged that can easily communicate by means other than radio (within the meaning of the term ham). Suffice it to be accountable to consult the "traffic" which runs over some "chat" during competitions. The drafting of regulations competitions IARU R1 remained virtually static since their inception.

In its competition rules, the ARRL already takes into account these technological developments, and introduced in particular :

- The use of non-amateur radio means of communications (e.g. telephone or the Internet) for the purpose of soliciting a contact (or contacts) during the contest period is inconsistent with the spirit and intent of these rules
- Use of self-spotting techniques on packet or other mediums are inconsistent with the spirit and intent of these rules.
- A complete exchange must be logged for each valid QSO.

The RSGB VHF Contest Committee have revised the VHF General Rules relating to the use of the DX Cluster and other spotting/chat networks (including internet facilities for example ON4KST) in RSGB VHF and UHF contests :

4i. The active use (posting messages, arranging skeds, self spotting etc) of the DX Cluster and other spotting networks (including internet facilities for example ON4KST) to assist an entry to a contest on 6m, 4m, 2m and 70cm is banned in all RSGB contests with the exception of three IARU Region 1 co-ordinated contests (50MHz Trophy in June, 144MHz Trophy in September and 432MHz to 248GHz IARU in October) and the 144MHz Marconi contest in November where permitted by the IARU rules for these contests. You may spot a DX station as long as your operating frequency is not given.

4k. All information must be copied off air at the time of the QSO and on the band in use. Databases must not be used to fill in missing information. The DX Cluster, talkback channels etc must not be used for passing or confirming any contest related information.

To help operators understand these revised rules, a list of do's and don't are listed below:

Do spot DX you have worked or heard when tuning the band for the benefit of all.

Do use the DX cluster to help you find DX during the contest.

Don't use the DX cluster to help the DX find you.

Don't ask other stations that you work to "please spot me"

Don't spot DX you've just worked on your frequency.

Don't spot your fellow team member (if operating in team/multi band contests eg UKAC, AFS, VHF NFD etc).

PROPOSAL

To take account of technological developments and in order to stay within the spirit of amateur radio contest it would be useful to draw up general rules specifying what a competition and what are a valid QSO :

Definition of a contest

A contest is a competition between amateur radio that takes place exclusively on the bands allocated to amateur, with amateur means.

Introduce contest general rules

The active use (posting messages, arranging skeds, self spotting etc) of the DX Cluster and other spotting networks (including internet facilities like VHF and Microwave chats) to assist an entry to a contest is banned in all IARU R1, or in IARU R1 national contests.

You may spot a DX station as long as your operating frequency is not given.

For a complete and valid QSO, all information must be copied off air at the time of the QSO and on the band in use.

Databases must not be used to fill in missing information.

The DX Cluster, talkback channels etc. must not be used for passing or confirming any contest related information.

In the event of use of a talk back frequency (144 MHz if permitted, or lower UHF/microwave band), any return to this talk frequency in the course of session cancels information previously exchanged, and thus the QSO in progress.

Use of self-spotting techniques on packet or other mediums are inconsistent with the spirit and intent of these rules.

Skeds taken outside contest timeframe are not allowed.