

**Contest Advisory Committee
Semi-Annual Report**

**For the American Radio Relay League
Board of Directors Meeting**

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Submitted by

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Summary

The CAC has no outstanding projects or assignments in work at this time. Reports on the tasks assigned in January have been submitted (see summaries below).

Affiliated Club Score Calculation

Recommendation – no change to the Affiliated Club Scoring Rules

The unlimited and medium category Affiliated Club competition is hotly contested, especially in major contests such as Sweepstakes. This leads clubs to devise strategies that maximize total score in novel ways. This has led to some interesting techniques for maximizing club score such as using alternate call signs, rotating operators, and creating large multi-op stations. These are all perfectly legal, although they tend to be more productive for the larger clubs. It has been observed by Southwestern Director Richard Norton, N6AA, that this distortion has the potential of discouraging participation by individual stations.

The CAC was tasked with determining if Affiliated Clubs felt:

- (a) that the existing method of scoring (simple addition of scores without other considerations) was adequate, and
- (b) the specific techniques described in background material provided by N6AA should be proscribed.

Each representative polled the contest clubs in their divisions and found no substantial sentiment for change. Several did ask what prompted the question and the background material was shared in summarized form.

Following up on the specific techniques, it was generally agreed that the techniques described were legal and had the effect of increasing participation on the air. Prohibiting them would be unreasonable and would probably create undesired effects. The suggestion is that other clubs need to adopt these techniques to compete.

Logging Accuracy Penalties

Recommendation – leave log checking penalties for invalid QSOs (not duplicates) as is; removing the invalid QSO plus additional QSO points equivalent to those of the removed QSO.

Originally, detection of a “busted” QSO (erroneous call, band, time or exchange) in ARRL contests resulted in the removal of the invalid QSO plus an additional penalty of three times the number of QSO points claimed for the invalid QSO. (This does not include penalties for claiming duplicate QSOs in paper logs.) This policy was changed to the existing policy (removing only one times the number of claimed QSO points) without

discussion by then-Membership Services Chairman Bill Kennamer, K5NX, shortly before he left the department.

The CAC was asked to consider returning the penalty to three QSOs. This is the policy of the CQ WW contest, a contest that has a leading reputation for encouraging logging accuracy, and the Russian DX Contest, one of the fastest growing DX contests. It was suggested that the higher penalty would encourage accuracy more than the existing penalty. It is worth noting that CQ WW log checking has driven the current standards for logging accuracy. ARRL contests benefit from this elevated awareness of accuracy without assessing the higher penalty.

The discussion of this issue was primarily internal, although some representatives did send the question out to constituent clubs. In a rare display of unanimity, the CAC rejected a return to the three-QSO penalty and many felt that no penalty at all should be assessed beyond removing the invalid QSO. A narrow majority preferred retaining the status quo. It was generally felt that increasing the penalty for inaccuracy would be seen as punitive and possibly discouraging to participation—even though it has not been demonstrated to have had that effect on participation in CQ WW or Russian DX.

Administrative Notes

- Based on interests raised during the discussion of logging penalties, I have requested that the CAC be assigned to make recommendations regarding non-penalty methods of encouraging accuracy and log checking standards.
- Atlantic Division representative Rus Healy K2UA has resigned from the committee. He has recommended a replacement, but no appointment has yet been made.

Ward Silver NØAX
CAC Chairman