

Fun to flower in the Spring VHF-UHF Field Day 2015

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Spring 2015 Event Dates:

Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 November

Duration, all call areas other than VK6:

0100 UTC Saturday to 0100 UTC Sunday

Duration in VK6 only:

0400 UTC Saturday to 0400 UTC Sunday

A Spring Haiku

The blustery, cold
darkened hours of winter past
forgotten. Spring blooms.

This event will faithfully follow the pattern of the Winter 2015 event, which, while retaining the two Divisions, introduced a number of changes – in particular, the revised categorization of Sections and Sub-sections, the two-hour re-work period and the exchange of 6-character locators for all contacts. However, from experience with the Winter event, as kindly advised by some of the entrants, the rules for logging and log submissions for Digital operation have been clarified for the sake of practicality.

I note from chatter around the VK Logger, and from presentations at GippsTech 2015, that some keen operators have been busy beefing-up their portable station capabilities, to play on more bands and to improve pointing of beams and dishes. Lou Blasco VK3ALB commented on the VK Logger in June 2014 that, "Winter field day is a great time to test new ideas and equipment. Failures and mishaps hurt much less in the Winter than they do in Spring or Summer." Well, as they say in the old books, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating."

Highlights

Newly-licensed operators, or those new to the bands above 30 MHz, or those returning to the hobby after a period of absence, are encouraged to enter the **Single-band only** Sub-section. If you're in this group, but have your stuff a bit more together, consider entering the **Four-bands** Sub-section; at a minimum, you can operate on any two of the bands 6 m/2 m/70 cm/23 cm, or three, or the whole four.

A founding principle of the Field Days is to go out and have fun, so the Single-band and Four-bands Sub-sections can provide a taste of that for newbies.

If you're an 'old hand' at field days, invite an F-call or Standard to join you in the field. Or, invite an F-call or Standard to your home QTH for a few hours of the contest. The same goes for those returning to the hobby. Get them involved and mentor them through the process of making contest contacts. Pretty soon, the fun seeps into their ham bones.

When finalizing your plans for the Field Day weekend, take advantage of the facility offered by the Contest Radar website (www.contestradar.com). Enter your planned portable location (4- or 6-character locator), or your home QTH, along with other salient station details. The website will display your details on a map – along with the fleet of other stations doing the same. You can see at a glance who's where. Notably, the website is integrated with the VKCL logging software.

Sections

A: Portable station, single operator, 24 hours (A1) OR 8 hours (A2).

B: Portable station, multiple operators, 24 hours (B1) OR 8 hours (B2).

C: Home station, 24 hours (C1) OR 8 hours (C2).

D: Rover station, 24 hours (D1) OR 8 hours (D2).

Note that 8 hours means **any period up to 8 hours** (but the period must be contiguous); i.e. you can submit a log for a few contacts (even just one!). Likewise, 24 hours means any period from 8 hours up to 24 hours.

Sub-sections

- (a) **Single-band only:** any single band permitted on the operator's licence.
- (b) **Four-bands:** 6 m/2 m/70 cm/23 cm – any two, up to the four – only.
- (c) **All-bands:** all bands 50 MHz-up permitted on the operator's licence.
- (d) **Digital:** contacts using non-voice digital modes (e.g. FSK441, JT4, JT65, MAP65, PSK31, RTTY, etc) are encouraged for any Section–Sub-section, but entries *must* be submitted in a separate log, scored separately. Operators may submit a log for any other section in addition to their digital log entry. 'Digital' means those modes where the received signal is decoded by a computer.

Stations entering the all-bands sub-section cannot enter additional logs for the four-bands or single-band sub-sections.

A station operating on any number of bands cannot enter the single-band section for each band they use. *That's not in the spirit of this section!*

General Rules

There are two Divisions:

Division 1 scores contacts on the basis of Squares (4-character locator) worked; Division 2 employs distance-based scoring. Operators may enter either Division 1 or Division 2, or both. See the scoring rules below. A Square refers to the Maidenhead Locator system definition – as denoted by the 4-character locator. To facilitate scoring for Division 2, all stations are required to exchange Sub-Square locations (i.e. the 6-character locator).

Operating periods:

Stations may elect to enter either a 24-hour section or an 8-hour section, but not both. Those stations entering the 8-hour sections may operate for more than eight hours, and nominate which 8-hour period they wish to claim for scoring purposes, but **the 8-hour (or lesser) period submitted has to be contiguous**, unlike what was published in the May issue of AR magazine. Unfortunately, an analysis of the impact of non-contiguous periods revealed that it created an inordinate amount of work and time in log assessments.

Rover stations:

The Rover section is for all portable or mobile stations that operate from more than two Squares or that change Squares more than twice; ie. Square A to Square B to Square C, etc, or A-B-A-B etc. However, a station may move from Square A to Square B and return to Square A, without having to enter as a Rover.

Entering more than one section:

If a Portable or Rover station spends part of the contest period operating from their home station, they may also enter the Home station section.

Two operators:

If two operators set up a joint station with shared equipment, they may choose to enter Section A or C as separate stations under their own callsigns, or Section B under a single callsign. If they enter as separate stations, they may not claim contacts with each other.

Multi-operator stations:

Portable stations with more than two operators must enter Section B under one callsign. Operators of stations in Section B may not make contest exchanges using callsigns other

than the club or group callsign. Home stations may enter as a multi-operator station, but only one callsign can be used.

Operating Rules

One callsign per station. Operation may be from any location. A station is portable only if all of its equipment is transported to a place that is not the normal location of any amateur station.

You may work stations within your own locator Square.

Portable stations may change location during the Field Day, provided that the station is dismantled and reassembled at each move.

Repeater, satellite, EME or crossband contacts are not permitted.

Except for CW, no contest operation is allowed below 50.150 MHz. Recognised DX calling frequencies must not be used for contest activity. Suggested procedure for SSB stations is to call on .150 or higher on each band, and QSY up to make the contest exchange.

Stations may enter either Division 1 or Division 2, or both.

About Contest Exchanges

RS or RST reports, a serial number, and your **6-character** Maidenhead locator (the Sub-Square). The Maidenhead locator is optional if it has already been exchanged in a previous contact during the Field Day and neither station has moved since then.

Note that Squares must be used for Division 1 scoring calculations.

For digital contacts, as RS or RST reports plus serial number make for a cumbersome exchange, it is sufficient to exchange callsigns and 6-character locators, plus two further digits that can not be predicted by the other station. This is similar to the practice used in the annual Ross Hull contest. However, when compiling your log to enter the contest, include a unique serial number for each successful contact.

Repeat Contacts – Re-work Period

Stations may be worked again on each band after **two** hours have elapsed.

If either station moves to a new location in a different Square, repeat contacts may be made immediately. If the station moves back into the previous locator Square, the re-work period limit of two hours still applies to stations worked from that Square previously.

Your Log

Your log should cover the entire operating period and include the following information for each contact: UTC time, Frequency, Station worked, Serial numbers and locators exchanged.

- All-band stations cannot submit a separate log for a single-band or four-band entry.
- Logs for a single-band operation must not include any contacts on other bands.
- Logs for a digital operation must not include any contacts using non-digital modes.
- Logs for a four-band operation must not include any contacts on other bands.

Division 1 Scoring

For each band, score 10 points for each **Square** (4-char. locator; i.e. the first 4 characters of your 6-char. locator) in which your station operates, plus 10 points for each Square worked, plus 1 point per contact. Multiply the total by the band multiplier, as follows:

6 m	2 m	70 cm	23 cm	Higher
x 1	x 3	x 5	x 8	x 10

then total the scores for the bands used. Thus, the score is based on totalling the number of locator Squares worked and the number of contacts made.

Division 2 Scoring

All contacts are scored on the basis of one point per kilometre, multiplied by the scoring Multiplier for each band in Table 1, with points/100 km applied after 700 km for 6 m, 2 m and 70 cm, to 'flatten' scores for DX experienced under enhanced propagation conditions on these bands. A 200 km contact on 432 MHz would be $200 \times 2.7 = 540$ points. A 1000 km contact on 50 MHz would be $703 \times 1.7 = 1195.1$ points¹.

The distance error of using Sub-Square (6-character) locators is small and accuracy is sufficient for the purposes of this event. Distance is calculated from the Sub-Square centre.

Band	Multiplier	Distance Scoring
50 MHz	1.7	1 point / km to 700 km; thereafter 1 point / 100 km or part thereof
144 MHz	1	1 point / km to 700 km; thereafter 1 point / 100 km or part thereof
432 MHz	2.7	1 point / km to 700 km; thereafter 1 point / 100 km or part thereof
1296 MHz	3.7	1 point / km.
2.3/2.4 GHz	4.4	1 point / km.
3.4 GHz	5.4	1 point / km.
5.7 GHz	6.4	1 point / km.
10 GHz	7.4	1 point / km.
24 GHz & up	10	1 point / km.

Total the scores for the band or bands used.

Submitting Your Logs

Only electronic logs in ASCII text (.txt) format are being accepted now. **Note:** If any operator participating in the contest has a genuine disability or other impediment preventing submission of a digital log, a paper log will be accepted, provided it reaches the WIA National Office by post or fax by the deadline time and date.

The free VK Contest Log (VKCL) software, from Mike VK3AVV, caters for the VHF-UHF Field Days (including Division 1 and Division 2 scoring) as well as a host of other contests. You can download it from: www.mnds.com.au/vkcl/

A **Cover Sheet** must be included with your log, which clearly states: –

- the Contest event (i.e. Winter 2015 VHF-UHF Field Day) and its date;
- Division 1 / Division 2 (as appropriate);
- the relevant Section–Sub-section and the Period (24 hr or 8 hr);
- Name and Callsign of operator submitting the entry; Names and Callsigns of other operators for Multi-operator stations;
- contact email address; mailing address, and
- a declaration that the operator/s have abided by the rules.

Upload your logs via the WIA website Field Day Log File Uploader, at: www.wia.org.au/members/contests/upload/

Logs must be received by **midnight, Monday 30 November 2015**. Early logs would be appreciated.

Certificates

Each top-scoring station in every Section–Sub-section will receive a colour certificate in .pdf format, sent to the contact email address on their log cover sheet.

In addition, colour certificates will also be sent to all second and third place-getters and top-scoring Foundation stations.

Check for Updates

Check for any updates or advisories on the VHF-UHF Field Days website at:

www.wia.org.au/members/contests/vhfuhf/

The Next Event

The Summer 2016 event will be over Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 January.

References

1. Roger Harrison VK2ZRH, *The basis of distance-based scoring for the VHF-UHF Field Days*, *Amateur Radio*, June 2014, pp 11-13.