

Discussion Document – Possible IARU Region 1 ATV Contest Rule Changes

Introduction

I have participated in the IARU Region 1 ATV Contest for many years, and compiled the final scores for the last 5 years.

I see the objectives of the contest to be to:

- To promote ATV activity, especially across international borders.
- To promote technical innovation within the ATV field.
- To encourage newcomers to participate in ATV activity.

The rules and scoring system need to support these objectives. I think that the current rules need to be amended to continue to meet these objectives. Here are some proposals for discussion.

Technical Advances

When the existing rules were last amended, building ATV equipment for 23cm and above was difficult and was rewarded by band multipliers to encourage technical innovation. With the current availability of surplus mobile telephone base stations, microwave link equipment and Satellite TV equipment, it is much easier to build an ATV station for the 23cm, 13cm, 9cm, 6cm and 3cm bands. Additionally, commercially produced ATV equipment (the Icom IC-905) is soon to be available for these bands.

Building equipment for the 1.2cm band is still reasonably difficult. The bands above this (0.6cm, 0.4cm and 0.2cm) are ripe for amateur technical innovation and band multipliers remain appropriate.

My first proposal is that all bands 3cm and below should use the simple band multiplier of 2 points per km for 2-way and one point per km for one-way. 1.2cm should use 4 points per km and bands above that should use 10 points per km (both halved for one-way).

Too Many Bands at Once?

With the recent addition of 50 MHz as an IARU Region 1 band, and the use of 0.2cm, the IARU Region 1 ATV Contest covers 11 Bands. The level of complexity required to operate on more than 2 or 3 bands is well out of reach of beginners, and the transportation and set-up requirements for portable operation are unreasonable.

Splitting the contest into a low-band and a high -band contest is one possible solution, with the possible dates being the second weekend in June and the second weekend in September. The low band contest could be in June, with the high band contest in September.

The band split could be 6m, 70cm and 23cm for low, and 13cm and above for high, or 13cm could be included in the “low bands”.

My second proposal is that the contest be split into 2 weekends, a low band weekend in June, and a high band weekend in September, with the split between bands to be decided based on the feedback that I receive.

Roving Stations

In the current rules, roving (moving) to a new location allows you to contact new stations and also stations that you have previously contacted and claim points for them (again). Whilst in a 2-day contest it seems reasonable to use a different location on each day, some stations have been gaining an advantage by “roving” to up to 6 locations during the contest. This disadvantages fixed stations and beginners.

There is a case to be made for allowing multiple roving locations on the higher microwave bands where it is difficult to establish line-of-sight paths with multiple other stations from a single location.

My third proposal is that entrants should be limited to 2 roving locations during the contest, except for the bands 1.2cm and higher, where multiple roving locations would be acceptable.

Video Codes for Contacts with Roving Stations

The current rules require that a station contacting a roving station for the second (or subsequent) time changes his transmitted video 4-number code. This has proved difficult to achieve and even more difficult to check during scoring. Given the low risk of (and low reward for) cheating, I do not think that this rule is sensible.

My fourth proposal is that the requirement to change transmitted video code for second and subsequent contacts with roving stations be dropped.

Shared Equipment

The current rules do not include any statements about the use of shared equipment by different stations (callsigns/entries) at the same site. Taken to the limit, this could allow a queue of operators using the same equipment to give multiple contacts (points) to a single remote station.

My fifth proposal is that each station operating at one site must use a unique set of equipment and that equipment must not be shared with any other station operating from the same site.

I would welcome comments on these proposed changes; nothing is decided yet, but I do feel that some changes would benefit the hobby.

Please provide comment to me at atv@iaru-r1.org before 30 October.

Dave, G8GKQ. IARU Region 1 ATV Contest Coordinator.

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