

K2YWE Contesting Best Practices



Best Practice	Rationale
General Operating	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assume a big dog attitude. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you act like a big dog, most will believe you. If they bite back painfully, you can find other turf.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain an “friendly sense of urgency” in your QSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chattiness will slow your rate and lose you contacts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always work Dupes. Set your software accordingly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may <i>not</i> be in <i>their</i> log It usually takes more time to rebuff than work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable and use the Bandmap feature of your logging software even if you are not Assisted. The Bandmap allows you to enter stations yourself on the fly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you need to check back later, the Bandmap will have the call sign and frequency noted for you You'll waste less S&P time on waiting for station ID or on calling Dupes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, use K3ZO's "Rule of TWICE." Modify “TWICE” to suit your station capabilities and contest circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you can't get a station after calling him TWICE, move on. If the station doesn't ID after transmitting TWICE, move on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your time can be better spent increasing your rate. A multiplier can quickly become worth less than the QSOs lost trying. You can put his frequency into the Bandmap to check back later.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not waste time repeatedly calling DX stations that have moderate signals when the band is otherwise quiet from their part of the world. This is likely to happen when big guns are just “opening the band” or “keeping it open.” Try another time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many stations running high power will be heard when propagation is poor, but will not hear you despite elaborate antennas. Remember that 1.5kW vs. 100W is roughly the difference between S-7 and S-3. These are the guys that are S9 or more under better conditions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try moving frequency a bit if you don't seem to be heard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often receiver bandwidths in a crowded band are set very narrow.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send only the missing or wrong part when correcting your call or exchange (the FILL). For example, the response to K3? would be “ABC” (several times if necessary) not “K3ABC” since the K3 wasn't in question. Similarly in SS if the query is for your Check, don't send the entire exchange over. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The time you spend sending known information is wasted. You may squander a clear interval or QSB peak on resending known information. The time spent sending known information may be a missed opportunity for the Fill to be heard.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call CQ when the band is active if you are able to find a frequency and hold it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will usually beat your S&P rate. An exception is the start of the contest when everyone is “fresh meat” for you and your S&P rate can be very high.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call CQ when the bands are dead for the day or worked out near the end of the contest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That's when the stations that have been CQing will S&P for “fresh meat.”

Running	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider <i>not</i> asking if the frequency is busy before CQing. You'll find out soon enough if it is. <i>Do ask if you're uncomfortable not asking.</i> Use the widest receiver bandwidth you can stand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QRL? is an announcement to others that it's clear at your end. Someone else may jump in and CQ
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If another station calls CQ on your freq and fails to respond to your QRL-QSY message, carry on for a while to see if he leaves. But, don't do this for very long. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less chance to miss off-frequency callers, especially on CW. Even though he is not hearing you, if you are being heard by others he may not get many responses and might give up after a few minutes. No one likes to waste time.

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Best Practice	Rationale
Running - continued	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't engage in extended frequency fights. • Try "QRL" or "frequency in Use, QSY." If that fails, it almost always pays to move. • Sometimes you can move up or down a bit in order to lessen the QRM and still hang on to "your" frequency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It costs you QSO time • You may be in QRM at the other end
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't break a run to pull one station through. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your rate will suffer if you take too long • You will drive away impatient waiting stations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you can't drag a station's call through after trying TWICE, ignore him and start calling CQ again. • This is part of K3ZO's "Rule of TWICE." Modify TWICE to suit your station capabilities and contest circumstances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running has to do with how fast you can accurately pull a call and get it into the log. You don't want your rate to slow down or waiting callers to lose interest. • Equally important, on a crowded band you must transmit often to keep "your" frequency clear.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use only a quick "Thanks" or "TU" without your call sign or QRZ if you heard multiple callers. • Throw in your call every few Q's for new listeners. • Keep it up until there are no more responses, then build back to your "full" QRZ message and CQ. • If you get no response after working the first station this way, try sending just your call and TEST" before resuming to a full CQ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most waiting stations will know your call. Don't waste time on it. • Minimizing the time stations have to wait for you will help to keep the impatient ones hanging around and will increase your QSO rate. • Less experienced contesters may not realize you are waiting for them. "TEST" will alert them you are ready for another station to call.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the call sign of a responder is questionable, send a complete exchange using the questionable call. Then correct it during his exchange transmission.. • You can use SCP to help guess incomplete calls on the first round. • Make sure you have it right before you let him go. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly all contest stations will correct you on their transmission, good Ops without missing a beat. • It saves the time of an extra exchange devoted only to getting the call sign right. • You can revert to "normal" fill-in means if this practice fails.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable call sign correction in your software. This will send the corrected call as part of your good-bye message. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stations want assurance that you have logged them correctly. This will keep them from asking QSL? and possibly save you from a mistake.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed up if your run is being sustained. This is especially true in contests like SS where the exchange includes your call sign. Slow back down appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stations waiting will usually know your info. • More stations will be inclined to wait (shorter time) • Your rate will go up with speed (duhhh).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hit the Send Exchange key as soon as the call is in your head and finish typing it into the log during the automated response or while you're talking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your fingers are like mine, they slightly lag my brain and I am still typing when the other station stops sending. • This practice reduces the lag between when the other station finishes calling and when you respond. The typing and Sending overlap increases rate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move Multipliers if you have the time (slow run). • Pick frequencies in advance. Give up quickly if you don't connect very fast. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quick way to gain band-Mults. • Many Ops will go with you. • You probably won't Q if you don't connect quickly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When running, NEVER NEVER NEVER acknowledge a "jammer". NEVER. Just keep your pace, and don't change your tone of voice on phone or even synchronize your calls to his QRM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With no response, he can't be sure he is even bothering you, and it isn't any "fun" for him if he doesn't get a reaction.