

## From the Editor

Contesting is really an exercise in optimization and efficiency. Optimizing skills, station, and tactics to make the most efficient use of fixed resources: time, propagation, activity, and AICness (Awake in Chair). In the HVAC world, dividing the cooling output of the system by the energy it uses produces a Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER). In contesting, the output is simple (points), but measuring the inputs is more complex.

Compare these scores from the ARRL DX CW contest roughly 2 solar peaks apart:

- 2002 K5ZD (W4PA op.)  
4454 QSOs, 462 mults — 6.1M points (1st place)
- 2024 K5ZD (K5ZD op.)  
5973 QSOs, 479 mults — 8.5M points (2nd place)
- 2024 N5DX  
6568 QSOs, 506 mults — 9.9M points (1st place)

The K5ZD station increased its 2002 winning score in 2024 by 39% but lost out to N5DX (@N2QV in ENY, not far from Randy in WMA).

Comparing the pre-log-checking 2024 line scores from 3830scores.com, it looks like N5DX won it mostly on the low bands, along with a strong effort on 15 meters (see table).

Obviously, a lot changed (including the op at K5ZD) between 2002 and 2024 — skimmers and the Reverse Beacon Network didn't yet exist, for example. W4PA's winning score in 2002 would not have made the 2024 top ten. Advancements in technology and techniques like SO2R/2BSIQ continue to enable

Call	Edition	Class	Power	Score	Totals		160		80		40		20		15		10	
					QSOs	Mults	Q	Mlt	Q	Mlt	Q	Mlt	Q	Mlt	Q	Mlt	Q	Mlt
N5DX(@N2QV/WU2X)	2024-Feb 17	SOAB	HP	10,292,310	6727	510	212	62	662	77	1396	88	1552	94	1630	97	1275	92
K5ZD	2024-Feb 17	SOAB	HP	8,736,684	6018	484	172	50	442	68	1240	80	1526	94	1369	102	1269	90

Table. Pre-log-checked scores of N5DX and K5ZD in the 2024 ARRL DX CW contest. (Source: 3830scores.com)

skilled ops to raise the bar.

Another change that may or may not impact actual scores but will definitely improve how quickly log-checked scores are available is the use of real-time online contest scoreboards. This has grown rapidly and there has been recent experimentation in adding real-time log cross-checking to those sites. To opt into the testing, in the N1MM Logger+ software, go to Config > Configure ports, modes... > Score Reporting and check the box next to "Include Real Time QSO Data for Real Time Scoring." This option is described in the N1MM help pages as "this will send QSO data to the real-time scoring website (experimental: performs log cross-checking in real time)."

It will take time, but real-time scoring could increase how quickly adjudicated scores come out, especially for smaller contests that don't have the people and/or software resources for fast log-checking turnaround. There are many issues to iron out, like how much in-contest feedback is provided. For example, real-time NIL feedback might tell me I really did NOT work BY4RB as a double mult and need to get back in the pileup. But should that feedback even be allowed?

All of this is just a long-winded

opening to discuss **two areas** of change in *NCJ*:

The first is that after seven years of service as the NA Sprint CW Manager, Ward Silver, NØAX, has decided to take a break. Ward has done a lot of the heavy lifting behind the scenes (along with Tree, N6TR, and Bruce, WA7BNM) to improve the efficiency, timeliness, and quality of Sprint reporting via *NCJ* and *NCJweb*, and making it much easier for the results article writers. Luckily, veteran Sprinter Phil Koch, K3UA, has volunteered to take over Ward's role. QDOs to Ward for all those years of hard work.

Another change is that in July there will be a standalone issue of *NCJ* focused on remote contesting. Regular bi-monthly *NCJ* publication will resume on a new schedule of Aug/Sept, Oct/Nov, Dec/Jan, Feb/Mar, Apr/May, and June/July. This will allow ARRL to spread the editing, printing, publishing, and distribution load more efficiently across *NCJ*, *QEX*, and other League publications. If you are an *NCJ* print subscriber, essentially your subscription will be extended by one month.

Note: Sprint CW Top 10 Classic box was cut for space. It is on the *NCJweb* version of the report.