

Field Day Operating Tips

Maximize your score

About the presenter

- Learned contesting at FWRC Field Day in 1970s.
- Coached by top contester Lamar Ray, WA7LT (then W9LT)
- W9LW successes (in entered categories)
 - Indiana QSO Party 2011 – 1st place Allen County
 - ARRL International DX Phone 2011 – 1st place Indiana
 - ARRL International DX CW 2011 – 1st place Indiana
 - ARRL 10 Meter 2010 – 1st place Indiana
 - RAC Canada Winter 2020 – 1st place 9th call area
 - All with 100 watts and a G5RV

Two contesting laws

1. Number of contacts is directly proportional to time spent **transmitting**
2. Number of contacts is *indirectly* proportional to average **contact length**

To put it another way...

- Keep butts in chairs as much as possible
 - Avoid leaving transmitters unstaffed
- Transmit often
 - “Running” or “searching & pouncing”
- Keep each contact as short as possible
 - Don’t spend time on pleasantries
 - Don’t repeat unnecessarily

Two contest modes

- Running
 - Call CQ, wait for others to call you
 - Attempt to build a “run” of contacts, one after another
- Searching and Pouncing (S&P)
 - Tune from one end of band to other
 - Listen for others calling CQ
 - Call those we haven't worked
 - Move quickly to next

Running: One way to call

“CQ Field Day, CQ Field Day, CQ Field Day,
CQ Field Day, CQ Field Day, CQ Field Day,
whiskey nine tango echo, whiskey nine tango
echo, calling CQ Field Day, CQ Field Day, CQ
Field Day, CQ Field Day, hello CQ, CQ Field
Day, CQ Field Day, whiskey nine tango echo,
W9TE with the Fort Wayne Radio Club
calling CQ, CQ ...”

Issues

- Contesters are in a hurry!
- There's another station for them to call a short distance down the dial
- Call CQ too long and they'll move on

A better way to CQ

“Field Day, whiskey nine tango echo, Field Day.”
(pause 3 seconds, repeat)

- 3 seconds plenty of time for someone to answer
- If no answer, you’re transmitting every 5.5 seconds
- If someone misses your call sign, they’ll hear it again in less than 5 seconds
- “CQ” implied – omitting it saves time
- On CW: FD W9TE FD

One way to complete a QSO

You: Field Day, whiskey nine tango echo, Field Day.

Caller: Whiskey one alpha whiskey

You: Whiskey one alpha whiskey, this is W9TE, whiskey nine tango echo, thanks for the call. We are six alpha, Indiana. That's six-A, Indiana. W1AW, this is W9TE, how copy?

Caller: W9TE this is W1AW. Thanks. I roger your six alpha, Indiana. We are 12 alpha, charlie tango. Good luck in the contest. W9TE this is W1AW, over.

You: W1AW, this is W9TE. Thanks for the 12 alpha Connecticut. Good luck in the contest. Have a great weekend. Hope the weather is good up there, it's pretty hot here. W1AW this is W9TE, Fort Wayne, Indiana, saying 73 and QRZ?

Issues

- Nice, friendly QSO, but:
 - How much time did it take?
 - 42 seconds
 - What's the highest possible number of contacts per hour at that length?
 - 85

A better way to QSO



Runner: Field Day, whiskey nine tango echo, Field Day.

S&P: Whiskey one alpha whiskey

Runner: W₁AW, six alpha, **India November.**

S&P: Thanks. 12 alpha, charlie tango, **W₁AW.**

Runner: Thanks. Whiskey nine tango echo, Field Day.

- Only **13 seconds**, allows **276** contacts per hour – **more than 3X as many!**
- “Thanks” = “Thanks, roger, good luck in the contest, have a great day, enjoy the weather, etc. etc.”
- “Thanks” is all you need!

“India November?”

Runner: W1AW, six alpha, **India November**.

- We log section *abbreviations*
- “Indiana” = a few extra nanoseconds of brain time remembering that IN is the abbreviation
- “India November,” provides exact info to type in log
- San Joaquin (Wahkeen) Valley = SJV
- New York City – Long Island = NLI

Note S&P's legal ID

S&P: Thanks. 12 alpha, charlie tango, **W1AW**

- Many operators omit the call sign here but ...
- 95.119 requires call sign at the **end** of each “communication”
- Protect the club license by complying ... put W9TE after the contest exchange when in S&P
 - Phonetics unnecessary here

The CW Version

Runner: FD W₉TE FD

S&P: W₁AW

Runner: W₁AW 6A IN

S&P: TU 12A CT W₁AW

Runner: TU W₉TE FD

Some additional tips

Running: Keep your frequency

- Always **get the last word**
- Stick to the “script,” even if caller doesn’t
- Always give your exchange in the same transmission with which you answer his call
- Example: Caller gives his exchange with his initial call, don’t thank him until after he acknowledges yours. Then, “Thanks, whiskey nine tango echo, Field Day.”

Running: Handling Pile-ups

- Try to get at least one partial call sign, then transmit it:
 - **Runner:** Lima Alpha?
 - **S&P:** Whisky six bravo lima alpha
 - **Runner:** W6BLA, 12 alpha India November
- If others might still waiting, end with just your call sign (no “Field Day”):
 - **Runner:** Thanks. Whiskey nine tango echo.
- Better: If you remember another partial from the previous pile-up, end by calling it:
 - **Runner:** Thanks. Whiskey nine tango echo. Alpha whiskey?

Running: Calls from dupes

- He probably didn't get our previous contact logged and ...
- Contest software automatically keeps the **last** of duplicate contacts, so ...
- Save time: Just work him again like he's new!

S&P: He flubs your call

- Never give your exchange until he has your call correct!

S&P: He flubs your call

- Never give your exchange until he has your call correct!

Runner: Field Day, whiskey one alpha whiskey, Field Day.

S&P (You): Whiskey nine tango echo.

Runner: N9TE, 12 alpha, charlie tango.

S&P: Whiskey nine tango echo.

Runner: K9TE, 12 alpha, charlie tango.

S&P: Whiskey nine tango echo.

Runner: W9TE, 12 alpha, charlie tango.

S&P: Thanks. Six alpha, India November, W9TE.

Runner: Thanks. Whiskey one alpha whiskey.

S&P: Transmit lots by moving fast

- After you send your exchange, reach for tuning knob.
- Start tuning **the moment he acknowledges your exchange** (“thanks,” “roger,” “QSL,” etc.).
- Don’t wait for him to finish his transmission. You’re done, move on immediately!
- Tune in the next station ASAP and call him (if he’s not a dupe).
- Don’t spend much time in a pile-up unless you need the multiplier.

Remember:

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Questions?

Jay Farlow, W9LW

w9lw@arrl.net

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