

# 2012 ARRL September VHF Contest Results

## The Magic Band comes to life in September

By Jeff Klein, K1TEO, k1teo@arrl.net

The 2012 September VHF contest can be characterized by activity and conditions on most bands, and some unexpected 6 meter openings for much of the country on both Saturday and Sunday (Sep 8-10). The openings were modest by June contest standards but did include not only E-skip but some DX openings as well. Congratulations to Daniel, CX9AU, who had the highest DX score ever for the September contest!

One unusual aspect of this year's contest was the large turnover of stations in all categories making the Top Ten lists. 2012 saw at least half of the calls change in each Top Ten and several with six or seven new members. Set your plan now for 2013 to determine how you can add your call to the list and continue to keep the top competitors on their toes.

### Band Conditions

Contesters always hope for unusual conditions to make things as interesting as possible. September contests hold the best chance for tropo enhancement of the three major ARRL events during the year.

Tropo conditions during the week before the contest were quite good between the Midwest and East Coast. A cold front moving east late in the week ended the Midwest part of the enhancement. By Friday morning and evening there were excellent conditions up and down the East Coast ahead of the front. As the front moved east Saturday, all hope of good tropo conditions ended. In the southeast there were rain showers, the Pacific Northwest had areas of heavy fog, while in California the weather was quite nice but conditions were poor.

The real story for band conditions in this contest was E-skip across much of the eastern half of the country both days and some TEP as well. The band was open from the Southeast US to the Northeast for a part of Saturday afternoon and evening. Some in the Northeast were able to link the E-skip with TEP to work into South America. Those in the southern part of the US were able to work the TEP directly and many ended up with quite a few South Americans in the log. The events repeated themselves the following day, ending with a strong E-skip opening from Florida to the north with many Florida sta-



**Figure 1** — The 6 meter band came to life during the September VHF Contest with a mix of sporadic E and transequatorial propagation (TEP). [Map courtesy EA6VQ and DXMaps.com]

tions running stations for several hours. Figure 1 gives a general idea of what was being worked during the contest time period.

### Single Operator Results

The Single Operator, Low Power category (SOLP) remains the most popular, with entries up a small amount this year to 234. Bob, K2DRH, continues to top this category from his Illinois QTH, once again finishing ahead of Mitch, WB1GQR, who operates from Mt. Equinox in Vermont.

In the Single Operator, High Power (SOHP) category, Jeff, K1TEO, managed to hold off a hard-charging Price, W8ZN, to take the top spot. Jeff was in a better location for the Es this time, which added 50 QSOs and 25 grids to his 6 meter totals. "It was tough this time around" noted Jeff, "as my 903 station got water in the feed line from the heavy rains at the start of the contest, and 3 GHz and 10 GHz were not working very well. Fewer rovers were worked than prior years as well."

The Single Operator Portable (SOP) category saw the same number of entrants as last year, but a substantial turnover of top participants. While many-time leader Chris, W1MR, re-

turned to have the top score, the second highest scorer was a first-time contester. Nelson, W7LUD, took a logging road to the top of a mountain in CN88 to set up on 50, 144, and 432 SSB. He added 222 and 903 FM to build his score. This was his first time ever on 6 meters and he said "it was so much fun to work weak signal VHF/UHF that I am hooked." Welcome Nelson and congratulations on the fine second place finish.

### Multioperator

Twenty one logs were submitted in the Limited Multioperator (ML) category, with the W3SO team earning a clear win with 171k points. They had high grid totals on all bands although with the poor conditions on 144 MHz and up their totals were down from their typical results. The W2SZ team used their usual portable location on Mt Greylock in Western Massachusetts to dominate the Multioperator category, nearly tripling the score of the next highest team. With conditions less than favorable they recorded solid scores on the bottom four bands but really excelled with the microwaves. They worked 144 grids on 903 MHz and up, more than most of the competitors tallied on all bands.

## Regional Leaders

### Northeast Region

(New England, Hudson and Atlantic Divisions; Maritime and Quebec Sections)

WB1GQR			
(W1SJ, op)	80,520	A	
K2KIB	78,200	A	
AF1T	69,664	A	
WB2SIH	55,120	A	
K1KG	54,692	A	
K1TEO	452,452	B	
K3TUF	255,509	B	
WA2FGK			
(K2LNS, op)	211,008	B	
WB2RVX	125,836	B	
W3PAW	106,428	B	
W1MR	31,450	Q	
WB2AMU	2,759	Q	
N1PRW	408	Q	
KC2JRQ	10	Q	
W3SO	171,310	L	
W2LV	96,200	L	
W1QK	13,924	L	
NE1B	6,996	L	
W2OW	4,272	L	
W2SZ	745,140	M	
K2LIM	152,640	M	
K3YTL	100,084	M	
W2EA	97,536	M	
K3EOD	31,948	M	
W1RT/R	99,840	R	
NN3Q	51,888	R	
W3HMS	17,110	R	
W1AUV/R	15,340	R	
N2ZBH	11,250	R	
K2QO/R	55,110	RL	
K9JK/R	33,352	RL	
N2SLN/R	8,120	RL	
KV2X	4,814	RL	
AB2YI/R	2,535	RL	
WA3PTV	52,728	RU	
KJ1K	5,254	RU	

### Southeast Region (Delta, Roanoke and Southeastern Divisions)

N3LL	41,654	A	
N4QWZ	33,696	A	
KX4R	30,738	A	
N4BP	16,320	A	
W5MRB	13,689	A	
W8ZN	361,849	B	
W3IP	55,944	B	
N2CEI	43,875	B	
W4WA	36,176	B	
KE2N	32,943	B	
W4IY	86,180	L	
W4NH	83,985	L	
K1HTV	18,407	L	
W5ELK	476	L	
W4NFR	90	L	
KD2JA	15,405	M	
K1KC	10,146	M	
W4TUN	648	M	
W4YCC	560	M	
W4GZX	120	M	
AG4V	13,311	R	
W5VY	2,240	RL	

### Central Region (Central and Great Lakes Divisions; Ontario Section)

K2DRH	103,040	A	
KC9BQA	9,060	A	
KF8QL	8,004	A	
VA3ELE	7,009	A	
VE3KZ	6,956	A	
W0UC	66,920	B	
VE3ZV	54,538	B	
K8MD	39,720	B	
VA3ST	34,668	B	
K8TQK	34,572	B	
N8XA	2,052	Q	
KC9MMM	189	Q	
K9PLS	138	Q	
K9HA	72	Q	
W1MRK	36	Q	
W1RIE	36	Q	
N8ZM	38,688	L	
KY4ARC	169	L	
N9UHF	17,680	M	
K8MM	17,510	M	
WZ8T	11,502	M	
N2BJ	10,260	M	
K9ZM	169	M	
VE3OIL/R	57,750	R	
VE3WJ	19,532	R	
VE3CRU/R	2,871	R	
AB8M/R	966	R	
W9II	833	R	
W8ISS/R	108	RL	
VE3RKS/R	24	RL	
K8DOG/R	380	RU	

### Midwest Region (Dakota, Midwest, Rocky Mountain and West Gulf Divisions; Manitoba and Saskatchewan Sections)

K0SIX	13,662	A	
N0LL	7,980	A	
WB5ZDP	7,810	A	
W6ZI	6,327	A	
W0JT	6,123	A	
K0AWU	15,890	B	
NR5M	14,018	B	
K5LLL	12,888	B	
W3XO/5	11,076	B	
W0LGQ	6,188	B	
KB0HNN	2,296	Q	
N0JK	714	Q	
K0NR	12	Q	
W0VB	10,990	L	
WD5IYF	480	L	
K5QE	252,648	M	
KB0HH	72,772	M	
KC5MVZ	1,625	M	
N0LNO/R	27,200	R	
W9FZ/R	7,310	R	
AE5P/R	5,538	R	
WK5F/R	4,255	R	
N0HZO/R	1,890	R	
WA0VPJ/R	21,376	RL	
W0ZF/R	3,105	RL	
KD5EUO	516	RL	
WB0HBJ	156	RL	
KC0P/R	6,680	RU	
KR0VER/R	1,764	RU	

### West Coast Region (Pacific, Northwestern and Southwestern Divisions; Alberta, British Columbia and NWT Sections)

AF6RR	8,640	A	
K6TSK	6,960	A	
VE7FYC	3,762	A	
N6LB	3,150	A	
KG7P	2,834	A	
N7EPD	16,402	B	
KC6ZWT	12,250	B	
K7ND	8,880	B	
W7FI	7,040	B	
W7GLF	4,092	B	
W7LUD	5,110	Q	
KD8IPE	272	Q	
KF6CVA	24	Q	
WB6W	9,240	L	
K6ZGI	1,224	L	
N7CKJ	518	L	
K6MI	41,820	M	
VE7JH	18,270	M	
W6TV	15,860	M	
KD7UO	2,552	M	
K7BWH	126	M	
K6EU/R	3,906	R	
KB5WIA	1,394	R	
N6GP/R	768	R	
K16QEL/R	3,105	RL	
N6ZE/R	2,000	RL	
WW7D/R	16,072	RU	

The K5QE team continues to turn in top notch scores, placing second with 252k. They used E-skip to great effect, tallying the highest grid total of any station on 6 meters with 117. They also used moonbounce well, working over 100 grids on 2 meters in the contest! Sixty of those grids were worked off of the Moon.

### Rovers

Rover entries were down a bit this year to 46. Most of the drop was in the Classic Rover category, which had a total of 25 entries. Rovers have a large impact on scores and many non-rover participants noticed the drop in number of entries. Some of the poor weather in key parts of the country may have had an impact on participation this year. Let's hope 2013 sees a return to higher levels of activity!

Returning to take the top spot in the Classic Rover category was John, W1RT, along with his partner Andy, K1RA. The two debated a number of different routes this year, deciding at the last moment to head east to Cape Cod in the hope of catching some tropo before the massive cold front moved through and eliminated any hope of good tropo conditions. Their plan went awry when



Bruce, W9FZ, must have had a hard time concentrating on the bands during this beautiful sunset in DM84XX. [Bruce Richardson, W9FZ, photo]

## Top Ten by Category

### Single Operator, Low Power

K2DRH	103,040
WB1GQR (W1SJ, op)	80,520
K2KIB	78,200
AF1T	69,664
WB2SIH	55,120
K1KG	54,692
N3LL	41,654
N4QWZ	33,696
WA3EOQ	32,344
KX4R	30,738

### Multioperator

W2SZ	745,140
K5QE	252,648
K2LIM	152,640
K3YTL	100,084
W2EA	97,536
KB0HH	72,772
K6MI	41,820
K3EOD	31,948
VE7JH	18,270
N9UHF	17,680

### Single Operator, High Power

K1TEO	452,452
W8ZN	361,849
K3TUF	255,509
WA2FGK (K2LNS, op)	211,008
WB2RVX	125,836
W3PAW	106,428
W0UC	66,920
W3IP	55,944
VE3ZV	54,538
N3HBX	50,715

### Rover

W1RT/R	99,840
VE3OIL/R	57,750
NN3Q	51,888
N0LNO/R	27,200
VE3VJ	19,532
W3HMS	17,110
W1AUV/R	15,340
AG4V	13,311
N2ZBH	11,250
W9FZ/R	7,310

### Limited Rover

K2QO/R	55,110
K9JK/R	33,352
WA0VPJ/R	21,376
N2SLN/R	8,120
KV2X	4,814
K16QEL/R	3,105
W0ZF/R	3,105
AB2VI/R	2,535
W5VY	2,240
N6ZE/R	2,000

### Unlimited Rover

WA3PTV	52,728
WW7D/R	16,072
KC0P/R	6,680
KJ1K	5,254
KR0VER/R	1,764
K8DOG/R	380

### Single Portable

W1MR	31,450
W7LUD	5,110
WB2AMU	2,759
KB0HNN	2,296
N8XA	2,052
N0JK	714
N1PRW	408
KD8IPE	272
KC9MMM	189
K9PLS	138

### Limited Multioperator

W3SO	171,310
W2LV	96,200
W4IY	86,180
W4NH	83,985
N8ZM	38,688
K1HTV	18,407
W1QK	13,924
W0VB	10,990
WB6W	9,240
NE1B	6,996



Joel Christiansen, W9II, activated three grids in the Chicagoland area during his first-ever venture as a Rover. [Joel Christiansen, W9II photo]

## Affiliated Club Competition

Club Name	Logs	Score
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### Medium Club

North East Weak Signal Group	19	799,790
Potomac Valley Radio Club	24	790,011
Mt Airy VHF Radio Club	13	705,816
Nacogdoches ARC	3	262,441
Contest Club Ontario	12	184,001
Northern Lights Radio Society	12	145,281
Society of Midwest Contesters	7	116,009
Florida Contest Group	5	99,336
Florida Weak Signal Society	6	67,151
Badger Contesters	9	59,159
Pacific Northwest VHF Society	12	48,404
South East Contest Club	3	37,580
Tennessee Contest Group	3	33,789
Roadrunners Microwave Group	4	25,284
Frankford Radio Club	5	23,084
Mad River Radio Club	3	18,461
Northern California Contest Club	6	15,772
Yankee Clipper Contest Club	8	15,201
Rochester VHF Group	5	10,975
Western New York DX Assn	3	1,359
Contest Group Du Quebec	3	399
Grand Mesa Contesters of Colorado	3	300

### Local Club

Murgas ARC	3	312,604
Stoned Monkey VHF ARC	6	18,151
Bristol (TN) ARC	6	11,475
Bergen ARA	3	1,615

in the Local category. About 40 percent of all entrants were part of a club score.

In perhaps the closest competition in years, the top two clubs were less than 10,000 points apart. The North East Weak Signal Group (NEWS) edged out the Potomac Valley Radio Club (PVRC) 799,790 to 790,011. The NEWS Group moved up from second a year ago while the PVRC also moved up one position. Last year's champs, the Mt Airy VHF Club (Packrats), had an excellent score this time around as they were also over 700k points. They submitted fewer logs this year while the PVRC showed a nice increase in participation.

Among the four entries in the Local Club category, the Murgas ARC took the top spot. They returned to the lead position after a one-year absence in 2011. Last year's number two and three clubs repeated with the Stoned Monkey VHF ARC and Bristol ARC both doubling the number of entries to help their scores.

### Summary

Having personally participated in this contest for over 35 years, I always hope that something interesting will happen so it won't be the "same old same old." There had been good tropo conditions from my QTH for the weeks leading up to the contest, something that makes a contest a lot of fun for me. Knowing the radical weather change was coming and the WWV reports not showing any signs of an aurora over the weekend, I was a bit disappointed starting out the contest. Therefore, what a nice surprise it was to have E-skip on 6 meters and to make it even better have it happen both days! Moral of the story — with all the stations on the air during a VHF contest, something is bound to happen and it is not always the expected. I hope those who participated had fun making contacts, trying out new rigs, greeting old friends and just getting on the air. I hope to be on once again next fall and as always will be rooting

significant rig problems curtailed their early efforts.

The Limited Rover (RL) category saw a slight downturn in submitted logs with a total of 16. K2QO roved once again from New England out toward Western New York to rack up 55k points with over 400 QSOs. They had very high grid totals on 6 and 2 meters for a rove that helped rack up the score.

The Unlimited Rover (RU) category continues to have a small group of competitors as once again there were five entrants. Joe, WA3PTV, came out on top after a high finish in the Rover category last year. He made an impressive 110 QSOs on the microwave bands to score over 50k points. Second place Darryl, WW7D, made a lot of folks in the Pacific Northwest very happy, handing out almost 300 Qs on the bottom four bands. While some of his plans to fly to various airports around the region were delayed or cancelled because of weather, he still made it to nine Oregon and Washington grids.

### Club Competition

Club submissions were up slightly this year with a total of 26 competitors. Twenty two were in the Medium category while four were

for something unusual to happen. As they say, "You gotta be in it to enjoy it!" Hope to see you this September 14-16!

A special thanks to several operators who made contributions to help out with the content of this contest summary: N3LL and K5QE who were kind enough to send their logs and provide insights on the 6 meter openings from their QTHs; W3PAW, W9FZ, K6MI, KX4R, W7LUD, VE7JH and W0UC who provided input on their operation; K1RA for his help with creating maps summarizing the 6 meter openings; K9AKS who continues to keep the records list for the contest so we know when new ones are set; and finally to my good friend Stan, KA1ZE, who helped me find some data for the article. Thanks, guys!

## Rove to the Extended Article

Even though 6 meters took center seat for this contest, there were many interesting other aspects. Take a look online ([www.arri.org/contest-results-articles](http://www.arri.org/contest-results-articles)) as Bruce, W9FZ, recounts his Panhandle Mania of One — another unique rove effort, activating low activity grids. He has a lot of fun and makes it for others at the same time. There's much more to be found in the extended writeup!