

An Initial Characterization of the Size and Activity Levels of the Canadian Radio Sport Community

From time to time, questions like “How many 2x1 callsigns might be needed?”, “How are contesters distributed across Canada?” and “How active is this community?” will arise. A quick analysis of submitted contest logs has been done to characterize at least the size of the Canadian Radio Sport Community (CRSC) to begin to provide some insight into these types of questions. Only North American contest results were examined and it is felt that the inclusion of European and Asian contests would not materially affect the outcome of this brief study. In each case, the Canadian participants were extracted by various means and combined to form a list of unique contest participants. The results follow.

First, just the ARRL contests were analyzed and the 15 contests spread over 2004 and 2005 yielded 412 unique participants who collectively submitted 872 logs. The ARRL analysis indicates that if nothing else, Canadian participation is more or less consistent and further, that while FD is not really a contest, it does attract significant participation from CRSC.

CONTEST	TOTAL LOGS	VE LOGS	VE % of TOTAL
ARRLDCW-2004	2681	76	2.8%
ARRLDCW-2005	2570	71	2.8%
ARRLDXPH-2004	2267	73	3.2%
ARRLDXPH-2005	2057	71	3.4%
ARRLSSPH-2004	1558	58	3.7%
ARRLSSCW-2004	1230	56	4.6%
ARRL10M-22004	1861	71	3.8%
IARU-2004	2107	58	2.8%
ARRLRTTY-2004	891	36	4.0%
ARRLRTTY-2005	923	38	4.1%
ARRLFD-2004	2250	137	6.1%
ARRL160-2004	953	61	6.4%
ARRLJUNEVHF-2004	766	29	3.8%
ARRLJUNEVHF-2005	841	32	3.8%
ARRLSEPVHF-2004	558	19	3.4%

Table 1
VE Participation in ARRL Events

Next, the two CQ fall contests (WWSSB and WWCW) from 2004 were analyzed and these contributed an additional 18 Canadian participants who didn't appear in the ARRL analysis. To summarize thus far, 17 major North American contests received logs from 430 different Canadian stations during 2004 and 2005.

Finally, the RAC CDC and CWC contests from 2004 were added and (surprisingly) an additional 131 callsigns emerged. That is to say, there are 131 Canadian participants who submitted a log to RAC but did not submit a log to the major ARRL or CQ contests during 2004/2005.

In total, these 19 contests received logs from 533 different Canadian stations. The stations were spread among all regions of the country but clearly, Ontario appears to lead the way in contester activity. The distribution of callsigns by region follows.

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V*0	1	V*5	24
V*1	41	V*6	44
V*2	62	V*7	92
V*3	254	V*8	1
V*4	17	V*9	17

Table 2
Distribution of Participants Across Canada
e.g. V*2 = VA2, VB2, VC2, VX2, VY2, etc

The analysis simply looks at logs submitted and in no way should this be taken to represent the totality of CRSC activity during a contest season. A look at K5ZD's SCP database would certainly reveal additional "known contesters" from Canada, however casual their activity might be and this brings up another element of characterization of the CRSC – activity level.

As we know, contester activity ranges over a broad spectrum from the diehard fanatic to the "hardly-ever" participant. Despite the broad spectrum, most participants fall into one of two main groups, the Active Contester and the Casual Contester. The Active type is in it for the thrill of competition, hits as many weekend contests as his lifestyle will permit and usually submits a log to the contest sponsor. The Casual type participates for a variety of reasons ranging from a sense of duty to simple diversion from the pressures of family or business, puts in only a few minutes or an hour per outing, makes relatively few QSOs and rarely (but sometimes) submits a log. The 533 Canadian stations identified in the log submission analysis generally qualify as Active Contesters, although there are bound to be some borderline Casuals on that list, as detailed examination of the scores would reveal. Many logs submitted contained fewer than 20 QSOs.

Nonetheless, we might conclude that there are at least 500 Active Contesters in Canada who will create the majority of the demand for 2x1 callsigns. Certainly not all 500 will be in the market for a 2x1 but given the right circumstances, all could be accommodated in the extreme, as we shall see.

Table 1 in RIC-9 Issue 2 (Provisional) shows at least 3,276 possible 2x1 callsign constructions, ignoring the current allocation policies and without using the missing prefixes like XJ, XN and others. Pulling 500 out of this pool, *even permanently*, would still leave more than enough for legitimate Special Event observations in every region. This is not to suggest a solution, but simply indicates that there are more 2x1 callsign constructions available than the worst case demand could consume.

Is it worthwhile to attempt to quantify the level of Casual Contester activity? Would more than a handful of Casuals be in the market for a 2x1 callsign? Not likely. But this large group is important to the CRSC since without them and their peers in other countries, pileups would be depressingly short-lived. Whatever transpires with respect to 2x1 callsigns, care must be taken to prevent alienation of the Casual Contester group.

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