

No Sunspots? Try VHF: 2008 ARRL September VHF QSO Party Results

Public service, patience and perseverance.

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Mother Nature always plays a big role in the outcome of VHF contests. Participants hope for some extended tropo, an E-skip opening, or maybe a nice aurora to make some DX contacts. In June many VHFers around the country got their wish as there were excellent E-skip openings, allowing for many record breaking scores. This time around, Mother Nature also had a big human impact as Hurricane Ike came ashore in eastern Texas during the early hours of September 13, the first day of the September VHF contest. The storm was a life-threatening event for millions of Americans, especially in Texas and Louisiana. Over the course of the weekend (the contest ran until Monday the 15th), Ike continued on his path north though the Midwest and then veered northeast toward Northern New England and Canada, leaving behind major flooding and damage from wind and water. Ike was one of the costliest hurricanes in history and the effects are still being felt months after its departure.

With Ike dominating activity, patience was the theme of the contest. Poor conditions caused by the rainy and windy weather required perseverance for success. Many noted lower activity this year, no doubt caused by the dramatic weather events. On top of the weather, rovers saw the highest gas prices on record raise the cost of heading out to have their fun. "Thank goodness for the rovers," was a common refrain for many. Table 1 shows the highest total grids activated by rovers.

Log submissions were down to 482. The last few years had seen submissions in the 500-600 range. Hopefully we can return to a more normal operating environment next year and get back into that level. There were no Division Records set this year, although a handful of section records were achieved.



Single Operator, Low Power		Limited Multioperator	
K1TR	208,980	K8GP	362,670
K2DRH	158,466	W3SO	255,496
WB1GQR	121,148	W4YJ	220,985
(W1SJ, op)		AA4ZZ	152,413
AF1T	73,034	K9NS	131,712
K2K1B	46,904	KA2LIM	92,224
K4LY	39,564	W4NH	76,986
N0KP	33,215	N8ZM	64,525
W3PAW	32,500	W1QK	40,905
N4QWZ	32,482	VA7ISL	28,736
WB5ZDP	30,976		
Single Operator, High Power		Rover	
K1TEO	479,043	W1RT/R	130,810
K3TUF	255,112	(+ ON4IY)	
WA2FGK	215,208	VE3OIL/R	75,692
(K0TV, op)		(+ VE3NPB)	
K1RZ	172,040	K1DS/3	73,728
WB2RVX	114,912	VE3SMA/R	73,014
W2SJ	86,817	W1AUV/R	59,126
K4QI	82,335	K3UHF/R	40,608
K8TQK	75,198	NN3Q	39,168
KE2N/4	69,115	(+ K3WGR)	
K9EA	54,670	KB1EKZ/R	36,570
		(+ KB1ITX)	
		KE3HT/R	33,525
		W9FZ	26,025
GRP Portable		Limited Rover	
KA1LMR	77,510	K4GUN/R	21,980
K6VCR	10,994	(+ K4LIG)	
WS2E	7,074	WA0VPJ/R	20,075
N7XB	2,254	(+ AI0Z)	
N2YTF	1,885	AL1VE/R	18,031
VE7IHL	1,632	K6EU/R	10,250
W4RXR	1,196	N7EPD/R	7,955
WB2AMU	756	N6ORB/R	4,530
WA7NCL	598	KK6MC/R	2,772
N1PRW	338	KB6OLL/R	2,180
		(+ KC6UDS)	
Multioperator		K9JK/R	1,760
W2SZ	1,285,462	AI4GR/R	660
K1WHS	1,172,187	Unlimited Rover	
N3NGE	435,919	WA3PTV	50,373
K3YTL	335,986	K6MI/R	10,988
N2NK	226,752	(+ W6TE)	
W2EA	108,054	KR0VER/R	5,562
K3EOD	99,325	(+ AC0GI)	
WA3UGP	50,985		
KB0HH	37,524		
K9CVC	36,112		

contest goals is to work as many grids as possible. When conditions are not generally enhanced, experienced VHF contesters use all the tricks of the trade to find multipliers. One requirement is to "stay in the chair." You never know when there will be some kind of brief propagation enhancement. For example, on Sunday morning Doug, **K4LY** in South Carolina found **K2SMN** in New Jersey to be S9 on both 144 and 432 MHz on what was otherwise a dead band.

Tracking rover stations heading to rare grid squares is another requirement for high grid totals. In recent years, digital modes such as WSJT have become increasingly important to working otherwise unworkable DX. **K1WHS** had the top total of 82 grids on 50 MHz, utilizing WSJT very effectively, including some EME QSOs as they pulled out all of the stops. Top grid totals are found at the leading Multioperator stations as they combine top-notch locations and setups, ability to stay on the bands all the time, and effective operating techniques. Given the conditions, the totals in Table 2 are impressive. The bottom line is that there are still a great deal of stations to work and many multipliers to be found, even under adverse conditions.

Results

Single Operator

Ed, **K1TR** turned the tables from 2007, coming out ahead of Bob, **K2DRH** for top honors in the Single-Operator Low-Power category. Ed operated on ten bands from his portable setup atop one of New England's better locations, Mt Wachusett in MA. Meanwhile, Bob operated from his QTH in EN41 with its excellent setup of large antenna arrays for most of the bands through 3456 MHz. Both were affected by poor weather over the

From March 2009 QST © ARRL

Congratulations to all who participated!

Even with the sub-par conditions and activity, some terrific results were still achieved during the contest. One of the

weekend. Bob still managed to work 231 total grids including an impressive 55 grids on 6 and 62 on 2 meters! He finished nearly 60 grids ahead of K1TR, but Ed's considerably higher QSO total made the difference. Other top scorers in the category included **WB1GQR** from VT in third and Dale, **AF1T** in NH in fourth. **K2KIB** braved the elements from a portable location in New Jersey for fifth followed by Doug, **K4LY** in SC.

K1TEO led the Single-Op High-Power competition. Jeff's score was down a little from his win in 2007 at 479k. Rovers made the difference in his score as there were quite a few out and about in the Northeast, allowing Jeff to add many unique grids, especially on the microwave bands. Almost 100 of his multipliers came from bands at 903 MHz and up. Moving up to second this year was Phil, **K3TUF** who increased his score significantly over 2007. A major new project to raise his microwave antennas above the trees really paid off. Likewise fellow PA contester **WA2FGK** has been working to improve his station and replicated his 2007 third-place showing.



Tim, KD5IKG, shows some of the "pileups" that Hurricane Ike generated in the town of Seabrook, Texas.

Longtime top scorer **K1RZ** continued his contesting success placing fourth, followed by two members of the Mt Airy VHF Society, **WB2RVX** and **W2SJ**. North Carolina's big gun, **K4QI**, did his usual great job to score 82k for a seventh-place finish.

Multioperator

Last year's Multioperator leader, **K8GP**, moved over to the Limited Multiop category and again took the top position by more than

100k and a contest-leading 512 contacts and 73 grids on 144 MHz. The group usually operates from Spruce Knob in WV, but this time stayed closer to home in FM19, northern VA. Last year's first, second and third place finishers, **W3SO**, **W4IY** and **AA4ZZ**, stayed in the same order as last year to take home second through fourth. **K9NS** used their well-equipped station to place fifth from the Midwest. Next in line were **KA2LIM** and **W4NH**.

The Multioperator category often sees some tough competition and this year was no exception. It was a

battle for New England with **W2SZ** on their traditional perch atop Mount Greylock locking horns with Maine station **K1WHS**. Great ops and setups led to terrific results despite the poor conditions as both groups broke one million points! As Dave, K1WHS noted, "Lots of metal up high really makes a difference when the conditions are poor." Checking out the band-by-band results shows that **W2SZ** had the lead in QSOs on all bands, except for 50 MHz. **K1WHS**

Regional Leaders

A = Single Operator, Low Power; B = Single Operator, High Power; Q = Single Operator, QRP Portable; L = Limited multioperator; M = Multioperator; R = Rover; RL = Limited Rover; RU = Unlimited Rover

Northeast Region (New England, Hudson and Atlantic Divisions; Maritime and Quebec Sections)			Southeast Region (Delta, Roanoke and Southeastern Divisions)			Central Region (Central and Great Lakes Divisions; Ontario Section)			Midwest Region (Dakota, Midwest, Rocky Mountain and West Gulf Divisions; Manitoba and Saskatchewan Sections)			West Coast Region (Pacific, Northwestern and Southwestern Divisions; Alberta, British Columbia and NWT Sections)		
K1TR	208,980	A	K4LY	39,564	A	K2DRH	158,466	A	N0KP	33,215	A	K1YQP	15,560	A
WB1GQR	121,148	A	N4QWZ	32,482	A	K8MR	25,792	A	WB5ZDP	30,976	A	K6XN	12,516	A
(W1SJ, op)			W4SHG	23,290	A	VA3KA	19,264	A	K0MHC	28,314	A	W6OMF	8,820	A
AF1T	73,034	A	K4EQH	13,300	A	KC9BQA	14,184	A	W6ZI	11,324	A	K6TSK	7,611	A
K2KIB	46,904	A	K4FJW	10,584	A	VE3KZ	13,578	A	NG0R	9,063	A	K6YK	5,202	A
W3PAW	32,500	A												
K1TEO	479,043	B	K4QI	82,335	B	K8TQK	75,198	B	K5LLL	23,306	B	KC6ZWT	23,256	B
K3TUF	255,112	B	KE2N	69,115	B	K9EA	54,670	B	W0ZQ	21,912	B	K7ND	6,120	B
WA2FGK	215,208	B	W4ZRZ	53,317	B	K8EB	51,876	B	K0AWU	12,740	B	KC6SEH	5,796	B
(K0TV, op)			W3IP	29,750	B	VE3ZV	49,343	B	W3XO	6,627	B	K7CW	4,352	B
K1RZ	172,040	B	W4DEX	17,415	B	K8MD	48,512	B	W6OAL	5,478	B	N6KW	3,105	B
WB2RVX	114,912	B												
KA1LMR	77,510	Q	K8GP	362,670	L	W9SZ	322	Q	N0KIS	247	Q	K6VCR	10,994	Q
WS2E	7,074	Q	W4IY	220,985	L	K9NS	131,712	L	N7QF	112	Q	N7XB	2,254	Q
N2YTF	1,885	Q	AA4ZZ	152,413	L	N8ZM	64,525	L	K0NR	24	Q	VE7IHL	1,632	Q
WB2AMU	756	Q	W4NH	76,986	L	N9TF	10,659	L				WA7NCL	598	Q
N1PRW	338	Q	WK4P	20,304	L	W8UM	592	L	N0LD	2,312	L	VA7ISL	28,736	L
W3SO	255,496	L	AG4V	14,256	M	K9CVC	36,112	M	KB0HH	37,524	M	AD6JY	7,755	L
KA2LIM	92,224	L	W4YCC	3,360	M	K8BO	23,104	M	W0EEA	33,264	M	WA6ZTY	3,050	L
W1QK	40,905	L	K3KO	630	M	K8XX	5,936	M	K5QE	16,833	M	WE7X	2,475	L
NE1B	11,421	L							W0VB	5,876	M	K17EL	1,740	L
KB1DFB	6,820	L	N1GC	255	R	VE3OIL/R	75,692	R	KC0IYT/R	17,056	R	W6YX	10,360	M
						VE3SMA/R	73,014	R	N5AC	13,420	R	K3UHF/R	40,608	R
W2SZ	1,285,462	M	K4GUN/R	21,980	RL	W9FZ	26,025	R	WD0ACD/R	9,374	R	K6LMN	1,752	R
K1WHS	1,172,187	M	AI4GR/R	660	RL	KF8QL/R	20,064	R	W0ZQ/R	3,886	R	W7WWA	192	R
N3NGE	435,919	M	WA4JA/R	348	RL	K8DOG/R	6,048	R	KR5J/R	2,948	R			
K3YTL	335,986	M												
N2NK	226,752	M				K9JK/R	1,760	RL	WA0VPJ/R	20,075	RL	AL1VE/R	18,031	RL
									KK6MC/R	2,772	RL	K6EU/R	10,250	RL
W1RT/R	130,810	R							KR0VER/R	5,562	RU	N7EPD/R	7,955	RL
K1DS	73,728	R										N6ORB/R	4,530	RL
W1AUV/R	59,126	R										KB6OLL/R	2,180	RL
NN3Q	39,168	R												
KB1EKZ/R	36,570	R										K6MI/R	5,562	RU
WA3PTV	50,373	RU												

Top Totals of Grids Worked

50 MHz Totals	Grids	144 MHz Totals	Grids	432 MHz Totals	Grids
K1WHS	82	K8GP	73	W3SO	52
K9NS	67	W3SO	69	K8GP	49
K8GP	65	W2SZ	68	K1WHS	46
W4IY	64	K9NS	68	W2SZ	44
		K1WHS	66	K3YTL	41
		K2DRH	62	K1TEO	41

was able to do quite well on grid total, however, almost making up for the lower QSO counts. In the end, W2SZ came out on top despite K1WHS's phenomenal 417 grids — not bad for a wet weekend and poor conditions! N3NGE's team was third in the category, followed by fellow PA multi-op K3YTL. Next were N2NK, W2EA, K3EOD and WA3UGP. The midsection of the country was represented in the standings by KB0HH (check out the photo of their impressive setup) and K9CVC.

Rovers

This event marked the first year for the new Rover categories in the September contest. In the traditional Rover category, the team of John, W1RT and Christophe, ON4IY came out on top with over 130k. They tried a new route this time, starting in Virginia and heading back toward John's home QTH in Connecticut throughout the weekend. The next three places were very tight competition, as only 2500 points separated second through fourth places. VE3OIL with partner VE3NPB came out on top, with KIDS and VE3SMA right behind. W1AUV took fifth. K3UHF had the top West Coast score making 40k from the Pacific Northwest. The top Midwest Rover was W9FZ who rounded out the Top Ten. With gas prices near all-time highs and the rough weather across much of the country, the rovers deserve extra thanks.

The new Limited Rover category saw



Some of the Bunkhouse antennas at Gary, KB0HH's QTH in EM06.

Top Grids Activated

Call	Grids Operated
K3UHF/R	13
N2LBT/R	11
W1RT/R	10
K4GUN/R	10
KK6MC/R	10
WA0VPJ/R	9
N5AC/R	9
W9FZ/R	8
KB1EKZ/R	8

some great competition for the top spots. Steve, K4GUN and partner K4LIG hit ten grids while WA0VPJ with his second op, AI0Z, made it to nine. When the dust settled, K4GUN was on top, 21k to 20k. ALIVE, roving in the Pacific Northwest, was right behind with 18k. Also from the West Coast were the next several finishers with K6EU, N7EPD and N6ORB in fourth through sixth place. New Mexico Rover KK6MC was next in seventh position. The third rover category is Unlimited Rover, which saw three entries. Joe, WA3PTV took first with a score over 50k while K6MI assisted by W6TE was second with 10k.

Club Competition

Beyond the individual station and team competitions in each of the various categories, the September VHF QSO Party also includes a Club Competition. In the Local competition, the Murgas ARC from PA repeated as the winners with over 600k points. Finishing second were the Raritan Bay Radio Amateurs, while the Meriden ARC took third.

The Medium Club category has seen a back-and-forth battle between the North East Weak Signal Group and the Potomac Valley Radio Club (PVRC) for the last several years. After finishing second in 2007, the North East Weak Signal Group was able to take the top spot this time with an overall score of over two million points. Slipping into second this time were the Pack Rats from the Mt Airy VHF club. The PVRC gang had the most entrants this time around with 23, but slipped to third place. Three great clubs in competition is very good for VHF+ contesting.

A couple of other well known

Affiliated Club Competition

Club Name	Score	Logs
Medium Club		
North East Weak Signal Group	2,061,075	20
Mt Airy VHF Radio Club	1,165,126	20
Potomac Valley Radio Club	890,521	23
Yankee Clipper Contest Club	321,205	13
Contest Club Ontario	238,380	10
Society of Midwest Contesters	214,339	20
Carolina DX Assn	199,382	4
Badger Contesters	172,442	10
Northern Lights Radio Society	167,946	14
Mt Frank Contesters	133,562	3
Pacific Northwest VHF Society	96,505	16
North Texas Microwave Society	45,479	3
Roadrunners Microwave Group	39,307	3
Grand Mesa Contesters of Colorado	36,255	3
Northern California Contest Club	26,578	5
Florida Contest Group	19,836	3
Bergen ARA	14,987	3
Florida Weak Signal Society	8,690	3
Local Club		
Murgas ARC	606,456	4
Raritan Bay Radio Amateurs	12,824	4
Meriden ARC	4,898	3
Burlington County Radio Club	3,190	3
Portage County Amateur Radio Service	2,089	3

But Wait — There's More!

Expanded statistical analysis and complete scores of the September VHF QSO Party are on the Web. Visit www.arrrl.org/contests/results.

HF and VHF+ contest groups continued their strong showings in the September contest as the Yankee Clipper Contest Club finished fourth this time and the Society of Midwest Contesters finished sixth. In between in fifth place was the Contest Club of Ontario with another great job in the September contest. Other significant efforts came from two upper Midwest clubs, the Badger Contesters and the Northern Lights Radio Society who mustered 10 and 14 entrants in the club effort. The Pacific Northwest VHF Society continued to submit a top score from the West Coast upping their number of member entries to 16 this year.

In Summary

Sometimes things do not go the way you would like in life or in contesting. This year millions of Americans were dealt a difficult set of circumstances during the second week of September as Hurricane Ivan struck the Gulf Coast. Contesting took a bit of a back seat as the focus was on emergency response to Ivan's impact. While the contest continued for some, the main champs were those ham radio volunteers who gave selflessly to assist during this difficult time. We congratulate them and thank them for their efforts.