

# Results, 19th ARRL International EME Competition

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EME—It's not just for Big Guns anymore!

**W**here do we go next? EME contesting seems ready for the next level! Once the long-time province of experimenters (or hams with stock in aluminum-tubing suppliers), now anyone who gets the urge can operate with a minimum of fuss. Bring on the pileups!

Of course, what veteran EMEers would call "a minimum of fuss" may still intimidate a lot of folks. EME stations that start off small seldom stay that way—it doesn't take long before one starts to rationalize that new amplifier, or some more antennas. It's not that hard to get started, though. Hams are making contacts with just a Yagi or two and a brick amplifier.

"How's that," you say? "I'd never be loud enough for anyone to hear me!" Perhaps—if everyone else on the planet were using the same system. However, budding EMEers have loud friends: those ops who've built up their stations over the years to the point where they can almost hear your microwave oven beep, if you point it right. A great thing about this contest is that so many of the truly big guns turn out—with a little luck and perseverance you should be able to work a good handful of them! As Dirk, ON5OF, gladly tells us, "Big stations are really the 'beacons' of band conditions, and we can adjust our antennas on their echoes. They're really useful!" We've certainly come a long way from the days of telephone-scheduled contacts and giant racks of equipment.

How to start? Just listen for some of the perennial top-scoring stations. Hannes, OE5JFL, is one regular everyone ought to be able to find. His 11-meter dish (that's 36 feet) allowed him to work 235 stations this year (good enough for first place among the multi-band operators) and he says, "An EME contest is never boring, even when you've worked it for so many years." Hannes, as well as a lot of people, had some problems with QRM the second weekend from the European Marconi contest on VHF; he didn't let that stop him, though. Mark, N2IQU, took the time and trouble to put up a 48-foot dish, and tells us, "Even without any azimuth or elevation readouts, I had a ball."

If you're starting out on 2 meters, we had 11 different stations that made at least 100 QSOs on the band this year, led by Top Gun Dave, W5UN, with 209. The other

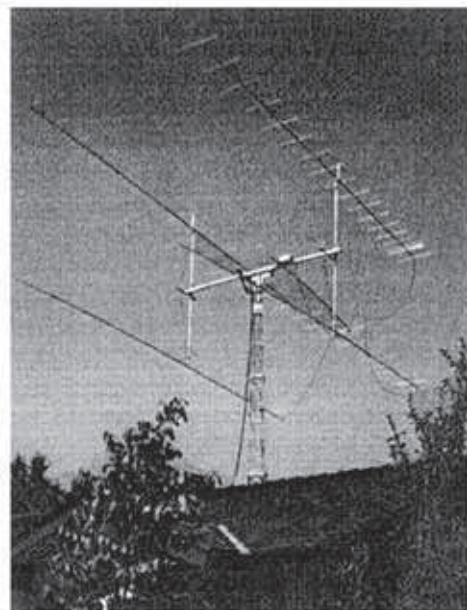


Grant, VE6TA, reports "Conditions were disturbed, but we had great activity on 1296!"

popular EME band, 432 MHz, saw its share of aficionados, too, with Lars, SM4IVE, again claiming the top spot, working 141 stations. Bet you could have been heard by one of these big guns (and vice versa)! Helmut, OE1TKW, made his first EME contest QSO on 1296, and only his third EME contact ever. That could have been you! There's nothing like the excitement of hearing and working your first signals off the Moon. It's one of the greatest achievements in Amateur Radio.

Of course, there's still plenty of room for experimentation in the EME crowd. Kudos to OE9XTW and I6PNN for making some 5.7-GHz EME contacts this year; these were the first contacts ever completed on the band during the contest. Congratulations also to all of those who were able to complete QSOs on 10 GHz—good job! Lief, SM5BSZ, used an interesting technique. His cross-polarized Yagis feed into stereo channels of his receiver, and he uses DSP to determine the optimum polarization. Smart thinking! Remember, in the history of this contest, it's been the hard work of folks like these that blazed the trail for the rest of us.

So what's the moral of this story? EME



Erik, NI6G, shows how to fit an EME array on a suburban lot.



Yoshiro, JA4BLC, wonders how effectively his beer can would work feeding the JH3EAD dish.

has always *seemed* to be an exotic mode that was out of the reach of the average, everyday ham. That isn't true, and don't let anyone tell

