

1996 ARRL International EME Competition Results

Don't be intimidated by the mere thought of participating in an EME contest. It's not as hard as you may think. Not everyone that enters this contest has a monster antenna array and hundreds of EME contacts behind them. In fact, there are quite a few with only one Yagi. Those monster array stations, that can hear a pin drop on the moon, will be looking for stations with signals just like yours. It only takes a little persistence and you will be making your first EME contact. One of the "first timers" in this year's contest was PE1OGF. He managed to work super station, SM5FRH, while using only two Yagis and 400 W for his very first EME contact. He didn't stop there, and went on to make a total of three EME contacts during the contest. Every year, we hear stories about folks completing their first EME contact, and who were surprised at how easy it was to work the "big stations." Give it a try. You'll probably be surprised at how easy it may be. In this year's contest alone, we had entries from 10 stations that completed only one contact, and 23 stations reported making up to three contacts off the moon.

Although don't get my message wrong, it takes a good antenna system, a sensitive receiver, and a fair amount of RF output power to make more than a few EME contacts—just ask anyone who partakes in the sport. The "big stations" already know and work just about every station that is on moon bounce. They'll be glad to see some "new

blood" trying the preferred path, and I'm sure they will go out of their way to help you complete your first EME QSO.

Who Won

Perennial winner, Hannes, OE5JFL had a few problems with his cables and 2-meter power amplifier, but was able to repair them before the next moonrise. Even with his problems, Hannes was able to secure the top spot in the single operator multiband category with an impressive 3.2 million points. Peter, SM2CEW finished second with 1.4 million points. Mark, N2IQU, was third and finished first in North America.

In the single operator, single band classes, Torbjorn, SM5FRH, using a massive 32 x 19 el horizontal and 32 x 10 el vertical antenna array, took top honors in the 144 MHz category with 1.5 million points. Leif, SM5BSZ, was close behind in second place with 1.0 million points. Leif uses an antenna array consisting of 4 x 14 cross el Yagis. Mori, KN6M, finished in third place and first in North America, scoring 974k points. Mori tells us, "The most exciting thing was working many single Yagi, 100-200 watt stations for their first EME QSO." On 432 MHz, Jan, DL9KR, feeding his antenna array consisting of 16-24 el Yagis, won first place with 629k points. Steve, K1FO, was in second place with 440k points. The race for the top spots in the 1296 MHz category was a lot closer than the others. Peter, OE9XXI, took first place, completing 73

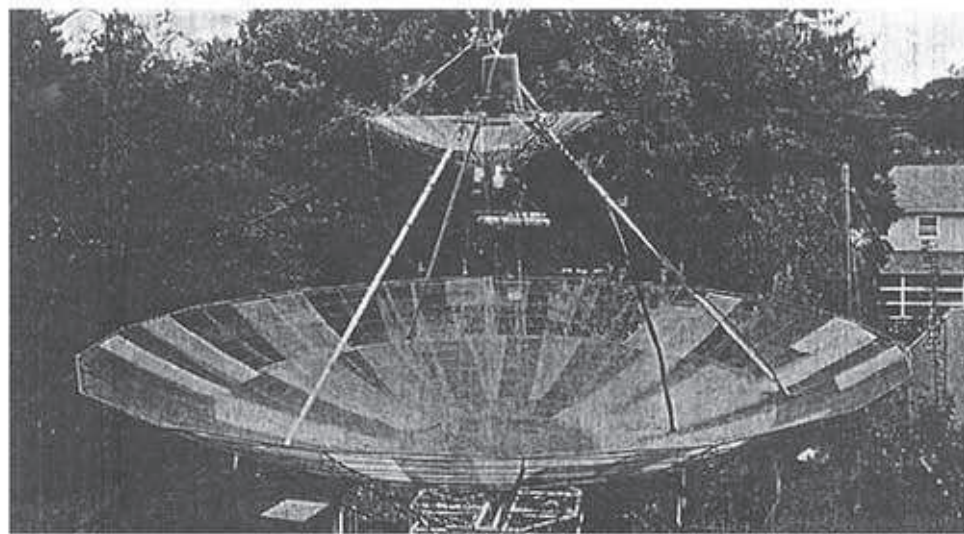
QSOs and 354 multipliers. Louis, F6CGJ and Tom, KB2AH, both worked 33 multipliers, but Louis contacted 72 stations putting him in second place. Tom completed 67 QSOs for third place and first place in North America.

In the multioperator category, K5GW (+K5PW) topped the list with 1.7 million points. DL3KW (+DL4EBY) finished in second place with 704k points. KB8RQ (+N8DFN) out score the rest of the 2 meter multiops with 974k points. F3VS (+F5JTA) finished second, scoring 897k points. The crew at NC11 finished first among a field of three in the multiop 432 MHz category.

Right Dates for the Moon; Wrong Dates for Band Conditions.

We put a lot of effort in trying to pick the best possible dates for the 1996 EME contest: letters were sent to all of last year's entrants soliciting their choice of dates, we sifted through all the responses, and databased the information, and came up with what the participants thought would be the best dates for the contest. We think a great job was accomplished in picking the right dates. We had a good moon, good perigee, reasonable noise, but conditions didn't cooperate. Quite a few people were complaining about conditions this year. Band conditions between Europe and North America were definitely not the best.

If we could only control the weather, things would be better! Darrell, VE1ALQ



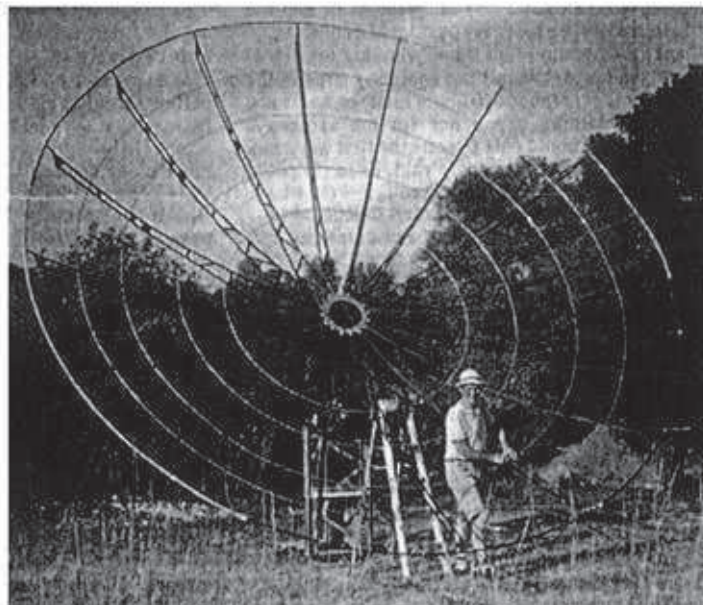
Tom, KB2AH, reports, "One dish was not enough. As I have a very limited window with my 10.3 meter dish, I just had to build a second one—a 6 meter dish built out of stainless steel for moonrise European window. I guess it's time to start a dish for the JA-VK window."



Jimmy, VE2JWH, tuning for the moon in their portable shack, tells us, "About 25 people (including hams) came by to visit, even the city police stopped by. Most of the people heard CW coming from the moon, but when we made our first contact, about 10 of our local club members were there and this sure made their day."



Torbjorn, SM5FRH, worked 281 stations off the moon, with this impressive array, for his first-place single-operator 144-MHz win.



G3LTF works on his new dish at his very windy hilltop location.

complained about being off the air the second night of the first half, because of the weather. Tom, W5AGO, says, "I had fun until last night when the wind and ice tore up my Yagis and dish." Wolfgang, DL5MAE, had similar problems. He says, "I had very bad luck with the weather. Because of snow and ice on my array, I didn't work during the second part of the contest."

Possible Changes

A few people are calling for some minor changes to the contest. Moving the dates to a different part of the year seemed to be the most popular suggestion. In addressing this, HQ mailed a letter soliciting personal choices of dates for the contest to every participant who sent an entry in last year's ARRL International EME Competition. After we sift through and compile all the data from the responses to our letters, we will announce the 1997 dates.

On another thought, Tom, KB2AH, suggests changing the multipliers for W/V/E to

ARRL/RAC Sections, instead of call areas as it is presently. He suggests this would address the "European Advantage" (having so many DXCC countries in Europe), and would level the playing field, making the contest fairer to all. What are your thoughts on this? Let us know. If we have enough interest in changing things, we will have the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee take a look at it.

Pins Next Year

If you've ever been intrigued by moon bounce, now's the time to start planning. Starting with the 1997 ARRL International EME Competition, we are offering a participation pin for those who complete at least one EME contact during the 1997 contest. This will be your chance to get in on the very first offering of the EME participation pins. These handsome pins will be marked with the year, and will no doubt become collectors items. Don't miss the very first offering! Watch QST for the dates to be announced for the next ARRL International EME Competition. See you then.

Soapbox

I lost my 2 Meter pre-amp just moments before the second weekend was to start...with plans to spend a lot of time on 2. The first contest weekend was cut short on the last day when my elevation hydraulic pump motor burned up (N21QU). Hopefully, next year will get the time to upgrade my system (OZ4MM). I feel we did a great job for the "SETI" movement. A lot of calling with no answers (SM3AKW). They were good weekends for the contest. Conditions, especially on 432, were considerably better (VE1ZJ). I had a great time in this contest. The weather forced me off the air on the second night of the first half. The second night of the last half was taken over by sleep (VE1ALQ). I had fun until last night when the wind and ice tore up the yagis and the dish (W5AGO). Conditions were normal for European boys and excellent in some moments; very good conditions to Japan and USA (EA3DXU). Extreme weather conditions before and during the November weekend (a foot and a half of snow and -35 degree temperatures) made keeping the antennas working a real challenge (VE6TA). In a lot of cases, people who only operate these bands don't do much operating because they

are not sure when to be on because they know that most folks are on 1296 and lower so they give up and go on to something else. Not a good situation. We need to improve these by supporting activity on these bands. A lot of people go on and make a contact and then go on to something else. A contest dedicated to microwave EME may help change this around (WB5LUA). I would like to dedicate my participation on the 1996 ARRL EME contest to the memory of Tiago, CT1WW. Thanks (CT1DMK). I've been very impressed by the 70 cm with the new stripline cavity pre-amp. It's quite a new band for me, and as I'm qrt on 144, I'll concentrate my efforts on this band for the future. In general, I found very good conditions apart from the last night when I had iced antennas and I could not hear any new stations (HB9SUL). Pleased to make my first random QSOs on 2 Meter EME and to submit the log for the first time from Romania. This was my seventh participation in a row in the ARRL EME contest. I'm proud to show some of the EME contest awards to my visitors (YO2IS). I only operated for 45 minutes, first year; look out next year (WA8WZG). Thank you for a very fine EME contest 144 MHz in 1996. It is over, and I'm exhausted. A lot of hot coffee kept me awake during the last leg. It is hard to be an EME operator. This year, for the first time, my new antenna system consisting of 32 x 19 el H and 32 x 10 el V. A new construction with the vertical short antenna mounted on the same boom as the horizontal. I was surprised so many new W stations showed up. The biggest change from last year: nothing broke (KN6M). This was my lowest score in many years, as conditions tended to favor more northerly latitude stations. Low North American activity gave European stations an edge (W5UN). I don't think we had one rotation of faraday during the whole contest (K7CA). Bad conditions at my latitude; polarization lockout for long periods both weekends. Next year, I hope to do better by adding variable RX polarizations capability to my antennas other than horizontal ones, like now. Thanks to everyone (I3DLI). Bad conditions and loud echoes at times but not partners answering my CQ; faraday always present (EA3ADW). Besides extremely poor conditions, I had very bad luck with WX. Lots of snow and ice on my array which did not work in Part II of the contest. Every year, I have the same problem. How about making the contest earlier in the year (DL5MAE). With conditions declining for several years, along with my scores, I decided to upgrade the station. Still at four yagis but more power and a new DSP resulted in a new personal high score (K8BHZ). Very poor conditions between Europe and America for all the time (K5UBM). While I did not make a huge number of QSOs, this year's score did represent my best ever in an EME contest. Polarity lockout was a problem for me over both weekends. I seemed to be able to hear northern Europe pretty well, but the rest of Europe was quite spotty (N0AKC). Kevin/VE3KDH



The crew at 9A5Y used this 16x5 el loop Yagi completing 45 EME QSOs on 2 meters.

