

Results of the 2017 CQ DX Marathon

BY JOHN SWEENEY*, K9EL

Sunspots?! Who needs sunspots?!

We were expecting fewer logs and fewer QSOs for the 2017 Marathon but just the opposite happened. Overall participation was up 13% and total QSOs were up 3%. So, although the average number of Qs per entrant was reduced due to propagation, the increased participation made for a great competition. Although entrants from Europe were down 8% and participation from North America was flat over last year, we saw significant increases in logs from Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America. The DX Marathon is truly a worldwide competition.

For sure, the reduced sunspot number was responsible for the lower average scores compared to 2016, but the introduction of the FT8 mode made a big impact on the Marathon. Overall Digital QSOs increased by a huge 50% from last year along with a 50% increase in the number of entrants submitting Digital-only logs. Digital QSOs were one third of all QSOs and significantly more than Phone QSOs. The weak-signal FT8 mode has definitely helped during this period of lower solar activity.

The maximum possible score in 2017 was 332, which is very impressive and the same as 2016. There is still plenty of DX activity on the bands. In fact, 33 DX Marathon records were broken in 2017 — quite an amazing feat. Four of the six continental digital records were broken, reflecting the shift to digital. All-time records for the 6-, 80-, and 160-meter bands were also broken. No higher HF band records were broken as the 10-, 12-, and 15-meter bands accounted for only 24% of all QSOs, compared to 34% last year. Not surprisingly, 80-meter and 160-meter QSOs jumped to 9% of the overall total.

And The Winners Are....

Reaching the number one position requires a lot of dedication and a lot of time on the air. Bill, K2TQC, once again finished with the top overall score — his second year in a row. Although Bill's claimed score was not the highest, log accuracy counts and we congratulate Bill for his position at the top of the standings with the #1 score of 328 — two points higher than his winning score from last year. He only missed four active entities in 2017. In second place, and a former Marathon first-place finisher, was Oms, PY5EG, with his top South American score of 326. Eduard, OM3EY, finished in third place with a score of 324 and the top score in Europe. Rounding out the top five were Serge, R6YY, with a score of 323 and Marvin, VE3VEE, with 322. Serge was also in the top 5 in 2015 and 2016. Marvin was also the number one finisher in the 20-meter-only category. Newcomers to the Top Ten worldwide include Dennis, K7BV, who came in 7th; Paul, K9NU; and Domenico, IZ8JAI, both tied for 8th place.

In the Limited Class category, congratulations to Aod, EA8KC, who jumped from 11th place last year to first in 2017. His score of 289 was very impressive considering the current conditions. Aod uses a Hexbeam for the higher bands and a vertical for the low bands. Second and third place posi-

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Ken, W1NG, is a first time DX Marathon plaque winner and had the top U.S. CW score. Ken was licensed in 1959 and operates all modes, but CW is his favorite. Now retired, Ken has more time to enjoy ham radio and chase DX. Ken is shown here in his shack.



Algirdas, LY7M, has won the 80-meter single band competition two years in a row and increased his score by 20 points over last year. In 2017 he set a new all-time 80-meter high score. Algirdas is shown holding his 2016 80-meter plaque.

tions went to HAØIV (281) and IK2RPE (276), respectively. In Formula Class, 100-watt option, the winner is SV1CNS, who scored 276 points — 50 points ahead of his 2016 score. Vassilis has been increasing his score each year. HA7LJ finished with 266 points and came in second, followed by N4RI in third place. Working the Marathon with wire antennas is a difficult challenge with no sunspots. Even more challenging are the brave hams who work DX using QRP power. This year we saw a decline in QRP submissions and scores were noticeably lower than in previous years. So congratulations to Bert, K4AR, for winning the QRP category with 238 points. Interestingly, the majority of Bert's QSOs were on the WARC bands. Fulvio, IV3AOL, repeated his second-place finish of last year with an impressive 234 points.

Overall CW activity was down slightly from 2016, although we had the same number of entrants competing in the CW-only category. In spite of the poor conditions, CW scores remain very high compared to earlier years. Lada, OK2PAY, once again finished in the number one position with a score of 318 — this is his third year in a row at the top of the CW pile. Very impressive! Ken, W1NG, was the top North American CW finisher with a score of 311. Ken will soon be

the holder of a DX Marathon plaque to decorate his shack along with Lada. In third place was Norm, W4QN, at 306 points. 2017 saw a 50% increase in the number of Phone-only submissions and the battle for the top position took place in Europe. Tony, IKØOZD, a multiple DX Marathon plaque winner, set his sights on the Phone category this year and came out on top with a score of 308. Tony will add a Phone plaque to his collection of DX Marathon trophies. Gert, PA2LO, who took top honors in the Phone category in 2016 and 2014, came in second with 302 points. The most significant change in 2017 from 2016 was the amount of digital activity. As mentioned earlier, we saw a 50% increase in the number of digital QSOs and a 50% increase in Digital-only submissions. Jan, OM5XX, has always had a high score in the Marathon, including Limited Class winner in 2015, but this year he focused on the Digital category and will earn a plaque for his top score of 290. Juan, EC1DBO, is a newcomer to the Marathon and finished in second place with a score of 277. Carlo, IK2RPE, was just one point behind in third place at 276.

Plaques are also awarded to the top score on each of the 10- through 80-meter bands plus the top score on each con-

TOP SCORES

BOLD = Plaque Winners
* = Certificate Winners
Callsign is followed by Score

Unlimited Class	
K2TQC	328
PY5EG.....	326
OM3EY.....	324
R6YY.....	323
VE3VEE.....	322

Limited Class	
EA8KC	289
HAØIV.....	281
IK2RPE.....	276
PY2RJ.....	256
YV5OIE.....	253

Formula Class - 100w	
SV1CNS	276
HA7LJ.....	266
N4RI.....	246
PP2RON.....	236
IN3FHE.....	228

Formula Class - 5w	
K4AR	238
IV3AOL.....	234
OK5WF.....	210
W8QZA.....	195
IZ3NVR.....	157

CW	
OK2PAY	318
W1NG.....	311
W4QN.....	306
W4JS.....	288
EA7TG.....	287

Phone	
IKØOZD	308
PA2LO.....	302
ZR6GR.....	252
EA5HRV.....	247
KL7KK.....	243

Digital	
OM5XX	290
EC1DBO.....	277

IK2RPE.....	276
IK5FKF.....	270
PY2RJ.....	256

Africa	
EA8AXT	308
EA8KC.....	289
ZR6GR.....	252
CT3HF.....	220
ZS6AI.....	215

Asia	
A65CA	297
JAØDAI.....	288
A92GE.....	285
9K2NO.....	270
R9AB.....	258

Europe	
OM3EY	324
R6YY.....	323
EA1DR.....	321
IZ8JAI.....	319
OK2PAY.....	318

North America	
K2TQC.....	326
VE3VEE.....	322
WN4N.....	321
W9KNI.....	320
K3RA.....	319

Oceania	
VK3GA	310
ZL2IFB.....	292
YB1AR.....	259
VK3SIM.....	257
YB5QZ.....	241

South America	
PY5EG	326
PY5DK.....	304
PY2COY.....	286
PY4HO.....	281
PY4OY.....	269

6 Meters	
I4EAT*.....	138

IW2CAM.....	100
LU5FF.....	37

10 Meters	
PU2PSP	114
PU5SKW.....	73
PU5BOY.....	72
PU2TNT.....	58
PY2TMV.....	52

12 Meters	
WK3N	155

15 Meters	
PU2WSQ	245
PU2NOE.....	193
PY2KJ.....	178
PU8YPL.....	176
PY2UD.....	172

17 Meters	
LY5M	234
K3FGO.....	217
VU2IBI.....	133

20 Meters	
VE3VEE	322
PY5JAP.....	126
PP5DZ.....	119
PJ2/PT2IC.....	32
PX2U.....	28

40 Meters	
W9KNI	305
9A2EU.....	292
KB0EO.....	281
K5BG.....	278
K9CJ.....	229

80 Meters	
LY7M	265
N4IS.....	235
PY7DJ.....	221
N3QE.....	180
AA9A.....	175

CW-Europe	
OK2PAY.....	318

EA7TG.....	287
DL6DH.....	267
OK5WF.....	210
EA1AER.....	135

CW-North America	
W1NG	311
W4QN.....	306
W4JS.....	288
K5DC.....	264
NU8Z.....	264

Zones	
1.....	KL7KK.....243
3.....	W9KNI.....305
4.....	VE3VEE.....322
5.....	K2TQC.....328
6.....	XE2AU.....122
8.....	CO2AJ.....189
9.....	YV5OIE.....253
10.....	OA4DX.....69
11.....	PY5EG.....326
12.....	CE3DNP.....182
13.....	LU7DD.....192
14.....	EA1DR.....321
15.....	OM3EY.....324
16.....	R6YY.....323
17.....	R9AB.....258
20.....	YO9HP.....316
21.....	A65CA.....297
22.....	VU2WJ.....234
24.....	BV1EK.....203
25.....	JAØDAI.....288
27.....	4F3BZ.....116
28.....	YB1AR.....259
29.....	VK6DW*.....171
30.....	VK3GA.....310
32.....	ZL2IFB.....292
33.....	EA8AXT.....308
34.....	SU9JG.....211
38.....	ZR6GR.....252
40.....	TF3JB.....180

Note: Top scorers in some zones received Plaques or Country Certificates.

continent. In the single-band competitions, starting with 10 meters, all 20 entries were from Brazil with PU2PSP at the top with a score of 114. WK3N once again took top honors on 12 meters with a score of 155. On 15 meters, PU2WSQ came out on top with a score of 245. LY5M was able to repeat his win last year with a score of 234 on 17 meters and VE3VEE once again was the king of 20 meters with an impressive score of 322. We had no single-band entrants on 30 meters but W9KNI crushed the competition on 40 meters with an amazing score of 305. Bob actually finished 27th worldwide in the standings even though he only operated 40 meters. LY7M once again took top honors on 80 meters with an amazing score of 265 — almost 20 points more than his 2016 winning score. Congratulations to all the band plaque winners.



Bert, K4AR, is a first time DX Marathon plaque winner and is shown here in his shack. Bert has been active for 40+ years and started operating QRP in 2016. He motivates fellow club members by saying “ignore the propagation and get on the air!” Great words for all of us.



Ed, EA8AXT, is a repeat plaque winner, having the highest score from Africa the last two years. He also set a new African record in 2017. Ed is shown here holding his 2016 plaque.

The 160-meter category scores were excellent as well, with NO3M repeating his first place position with a score of 198 — 22 points more than 2016! K7ZV was second on 160 meters with a score of 164. I4EAT took top honors on 6 meters with a score of 138.

Many of the continental battles were also very close with A65CA repeating his top Asia position with a score of 297. JAØDAI was second at 288. The Europe plaque goes to Eduard, OM3EY, with his score of 324. Eduard has won many DX Marathon titles over the past few years. The European race was very close with R6YY finishing second to Eduard by one point at 323 and EA1DR finishing third at 321. EA8AXT once again achieved the top spot in Africa with his score of 308, breaking his old record he set last year! In Oceania, VK3GA came out on top with a score of 310. ZL2IFB, previous Oceania winner, was second at 292. Oms, PY5EG, one of the top overall winners in the Marathon over the past few years, took home top South America honors with a score of 326. No North America plaque will be awarded because Bill, K2TQC, already took overall honors with the highest worldwide score.

Certificates and More

Well over 100 DX Marathon certificates are awarded each year in various categories, including the top continental score for each of the three modes, top score in each country, top score in each CQ zone, top score in each Canadian call district plus the top score in each U.S. call area for each of the four DX Marathon classes. Many new records were set this year, including 10 new country records, five new zone records, eight new continental records, three new U.S. call

TOP SCORES: CONTINENTAL MODE, USA & CANADA CALL

Phone	USA Limited
Africa.....ZR6GR252	W2W2NK*229
Asia.....OD5ZZ.....211	W3WA3WZR*175
Europe.....IKØOZD.....308	W4AE4WG*133
NA.....KL7KK243	W5K7ZYV*90
Oceania...YB4NY*72	W7N7RD*229
SA.....PY1SX*227	W8WT8E*222
	WØ.....AD1C*230
CW	USA Formula 100W
Asia.....VU2CPL*196	W1N1AM*192
Europe.....OK2PAY318	W2K2JL*98
NA.....W1NG311	W3KB3LIX*165
Oceania...YB1UUN*110	W4N4RI*246
SA.....PY4HO*281	W5AC7P*194
	W6K6LE*103
Digital	W7K7EMI*25
Africa.....ZS6CR*93	W9KW9U*171
Asia.....VU2WJ234	
Europe.....OM5XX290	USA Formula 5W
NA.....NN6NN*169	W4K4AR238
Oceania...YC6JRT*174	W6W8QZA*195
SA.....PY2RJ*256	W8K8ZT*154
USA Unlimited	Canada
W1W1NG311	VE1VE1OP*249
W2K2TQC328	VE2VE2BR*278
W3K3RA*316	VE3VE3VEE322
W4K7BV*320	VE6VE5UA*297
W5W5IF*304	VE7VA7CRZ*195
W6N6RV*303	VO1.....VO1HP*133
W7W9KNI305	
W8K8AJ*282	
W9K9NU*319	
WØ.....KBØEO*281	

* Certificate Winners

CLUB SCORES

Club	Score
CDR Group	12608
RIO DX Group	6710
Araucaria DX Group	6691
Northern Illinois DX Association	5338
Mother Lode DX/Contest Club	2254
YB Land DX Club	2149
Carolina DX Association	2139
Willamette Valley DX Club	1777
VU Contest Group	1512
Vytautas Magnus University Radio Club	1216
Metro DX Club	1193
East Tennessee DX Association	1090
Radio Club Venezolano	1008
Yankee Clipper Contest Club	994
Salt City DX Association	888
Southern California DX Club	871
Society of Midwest Contesters	841
Bahia Dx Group	762
Florida Contest Group	707
Regionalis Radios Sportklub Puspokladany	699
ARI	696
Cabreuva DX	659
GPDX-Portuguese DX Group	591
Cantareira DX Group	585
INDIOS DX TEAM	570
Bavarian Contest Club	565
ARRL	551
Lone Star DX Association	542
CMDX Group	541
Belarus Contest Club	524
Potomac Valley Radio Club	496
LU Contest Group	486
NERG	480
Arizona Outlaws Contest Club	447
EA Contest Club	446
Rhein Ruhr DX Association	431
URE	422
SP DX Club	380
North Coast Contesters	352
CW Operator's Club	318
Southern California Contest Club	312
Clipperton DX Club	311
Russian CW Club	297
Chiltern DX Club	292
Croatian Contest Club	292
CCO	290
JAØ-DX-Gang	288
Minnesota Wireless Association	281
Redwood Empire DX Association	277
HA DX Club	274
CADXA	273
AGDX-Arabian Gulf DX Group	270
Maritime Contest Club	249
Cape Fear Am Radio Soc.	231
Mile High DX Association	230
Single Fighter DX Group	229
West Valley ARC	229
WNYDXA	229
Ashe County Amateur Radio Club	223
TCSWAT	223
Sunday Creek Amateur Radio Federation	222
OK QRP Klub	210
Amateur Radio Victoria	207
VKCC	204
Nixa Amateur Radio Club	195
Guara DX Group	188
Southwest OH DX Assoiation	187
RZS Amateur Radio Club	185
YV Contest Group	184
Ham Society of the Philippines	181
Waterland	180
YO DX Club	179
West Rand ARC	178
Northeast Wisconsin DX Association	175
WACOM	175
Dupage Aamateur Radio Club	170
The NN6NN Digital Team	169
Kentucky Contest Group (KCG)	167
Allegheny Valley Radio Club	165
Oklahoma DX Association	164
Chilean Pacific DX Group	162
FRC	161
Lincoln Amateur Radio Club	158
Red Mule DX Club	154
Southeastern DX Club	144
ECCCC	133
South Carolina DX Association	130
DARC	129
Mutum DX Group	127
Radio Club Valencia A.C.	127
ACG	123
DXXE	122
CRASMO	119
CCS	117
Secunda Amateur Radio Club	93
Tracizmir	87
Philippine Amateur Radio League Inc.	82

district records, and two new Canadian call district records, plus new records on the 6-, 80-, and 160-meter bands. Check out the record high scores page on the DX Marathon website. For 2018, pick a category, work hard and you may be able to get in the record book as well.

Once again, Brazil took the top three spots in the Club competition, plus the CDR Group set a new all-time club record of 12,608 points. The top U.S. club was the Northern Illinois DX Association, sponsor of the top three DX Marathon plaques. Don't forget to include your club name on your 2018 DX Marathon submission.

Each year, the DX Marathon website publishes a large amount of information to help participants minimize errors in their submissions. The Helpful Hints page can be accessed from the DX Marathon home page. In 2017, we published almost 2,000 callsign exceptions and notes to help every participant reduce the number of errors in their submissions. We also recommend that you regularly update your logging program callsign database. Unusual callsign prefixes seem to multiply every year, so updating your program's database is critical to properly determining the DX location and/or zone.

Apparently, 2017 was a difficult year for prefixes as the overall error rate edged up to 2.1% from 1.9% last year. However, 23% of entrants had no errors in their submissions, which is a slight drop from 2016, but still a big improvement from 2015. The database that is used for scoring the DX Marathon includes start and end dates for all major expeditions, so please ensure that dates and times are properly logged along with the callsign, country, and zone for each QSO.

The highest error category in 2017 was wrong zone, which accounted for 26% of all score reductions. Confusion with USA zones is one of the biggest sources of zone errors. It is



Marvin, VE3VEE, is a three-time winner of the 20-meter plaque and is shown here with his 2015 and 2016 plaques next to his very capable remote station. Marvin has no station at his home.

very important to note that U.S. callsign numbers are no longer required to match their QTH. A W6 could be in New York, or a KL7 could be in Puerto Rico. In addition to the U.S., there are many special callsigns in Russia that do not follow the traditional callsign mapping, thus creating many errors in Zones 16, 17, 18, and 19. Zone 2 also continues to be a problem. Very few VE2 stations are actually located in Zone 2 —

most are in Zone 5. The DX Marathon website does list the most active Zone 2 stations.

The next highest number of subtractions were due to wrong country. There were a lot of new and unique prefixes in 2017, but if your logging program utilizes a country database, please keep it up to date. Invalid callsigns and busted calls were the next highest categories. Unfortunately, the number of bad and incorrect DX spots seems to be increasing. When logging a QSO from a DX spot, listen carefully to the DX station to ensure the callsign is logged correctly because 44% of all subtractions were due to busted or incorrect callsigns. Some invalid callsigns may have been busted calls that were so bad that we could not determine the real callsign. Once again, there were many mix-ups between “0” (Zero) and “O” (Oh). The computer is not forgiving, so check your log carefully. We applaud everyone who frequently updates their logging program databases. Pirates were not a big problem in 2017, but not-in-log reductions jumped to almost 6% of all score reductions. With more logs being posted online, it is easy to check if you are in the log before entering that QSO in the DX Marathon. We do publish a lot of helpful information on the DX Marathon website, but there is nothing we can do to make sure you are in the log.

As part of this issue you will find a complete listing of all scores plus a listing of the top scores in all available categories. The DX Marathon website will include additional information and details on the 2017 results plus photos of plaque winners as they become available. For any questions or comments about the DX Marathon, please contact the author. Thank you for your participation in 2017 and best of luck in 2018!



Stasys, LY5M, has been participating in the Marathon for many years and has been high score on 17 meters for the last two years. Stasys is shown here with his 2016 17-meter plaque.

COUNTRY WINNERS

Callsign is followed by score
* = Certificate Winners

4F3BZ*	116	LY5W*	267
6YØD*	114	OA4DX*	69
7Z1SJ*	257	OD5ZZ*	211
9A2EU*	292	OH2BLD*	293
9K2NO*	270	OK2PAY	318
A65CA	297	OM3EY	324
A92GE*	285	ON2AD*	146
BA4TB*	56	PA2LO*	302
BV1EK*	203	PJ2/PP2BT*	76
CE3DNP*	182	PYØFW*	113
CN2HZ*	85	PY5EG	326
CO2AJ*	189	R6YY*	323
CT1IUA*	298	R9AB*	258
CT3HF*	220	SMØMPV*	298
DL5AN*	311	SQ8N*	306
DP1POL*	120	SU9JG*	211
EA1DR*	321	SV1CNS	276
EA8AXT	308	SV9COL*	254
EI7CC*	260	TA1CM*	178
EV1R*	301	TA4LYL*	230
F5CQ*	311	TF3JB*	180
G4AYU*	206	V51/TA1HZ*	138
G14DOH*	251	VE3VEE	322
GUØSUP*	174	VK3GA	310
GW4EVX*	124	VU2WJ*	234
HAØIV*	281	XE2AU*	122
HK3W*	249	YB1AR*	259
IZ8JAI*	319	YO9HP*	316
JAØDAI*	288	YU1WAT*	117
K2TQC	328	YV5OIE*	253
KL7KK*	243	ZL2IFB*	292
LU7DD*	192	ZP6ARO*	185
LX1NO*	221	ZR6GR*	252

Note: Top scorers in some countries received plaques.