

VHF/UHF Field Day Scoring

A proposal by Colin Hutchesson VK5DK and Andrew Davis VK1DA

With the results of an online survey of VHF/UHF Field Day participants

October 2012

Executive Summary

This report summarises the findings of the survey and recommends changes to the rules for the Spring and Winter VHF/UHF Field Day events run by the WIA.

It is based on a proposal published by the authors on website vk1da.net in mid September 2012 and publicised via that website, via mailing lists vk-vhf, vk-microwave and vk1-reflect, plus via the vklogger.com forums.

The proposal outlined deficiencies in the scoring scheme identified by the authors, and recommended an alternative scoring scheme.

The survey asked respondents whether they supported the proposal for changing the scoring basis to distance, and removing the grid square focus of these events.

In summary, a majority of respondents did support the proposal, with 79 in favour of it, 24 partly in favour and 13 against. In addition there was widespread approval for the concept of a separate category for the 6/2/70 bands. We are suggesting that this category be further expanded to include the 23cm band, but still providing for a 6/2/70 subcategory. This effectively splits the event into the bottom 4 bands and the microwave bands.

The WIA is recommended to adopt the suggested changes detailed in this report. The main changes are:

- Change scoring to a distance based formula, based on 6 character maidenhead grid subsquares, providing a limited precision but requiring simple location data.
- Change the weighting of bands
- Introduce a category for the lower four bands (6/2m, 70/23cm) separate from higher frequency bands. Consider bands above 2 GHz to be the microwave category. Optionally, drop the all band grouping.
- Evaluate entries from operators limited to the three bands 6m/2m/70cm and make awards for the best performers from each licence category
- Evaluate entries on other bases such as “single radio”, F call, QRP, single antenna, and consider them for awards if they have not already qualified for an award. Ie. Don't let one operator get 5 awards. Give him the highest award he qualifies for and take him out of the running for lower rated awards.

Implementation: it is clear from the survey responses that these changes are welcomed by the majority of operators. It is feasible though for the scoring changes to be run in parallel with current rules. Therefore it is suggested that the contest manager announce that these events will be scored using both methods for the spring 2012 and summer 2013 events.

From comments it is apparent that while a majority of respondents support the proposals, a minority does not. We don't wish to lose these operators so it is suggested that their concerns be acknowledged and an undertaking given to monitor the operation of the changed rules. Further it is recommended that the rules be subjected to a major review every 3 to 5 years. The rules should respond to changes in demographics, popularity of bands and events, new modes and operator preferences.

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VHF/UHF Field Day Scoring

Results of Survey conducted in response to the Proposal for Distance Based Scoring

By Andrew Davis VK1DA and Colin Hutchesson VK5DK

The scoring scheme for the VHF/UHF Field Day contests has been a subject of discussion among contestants for some years. The authors of this report have discussed the scoring rules both in person and via email for several years, with others also joining in from time to time. We decided to formulate a concrete proposal for distance based scoring as we thought that would help give a focus to a wider discussion.

The proposal was drafted, discussed with a wider group from several states, revised and finally published for national viewing and consideration on 15 Sept 2012.

The Survey

A survey was hosted at the website vk1da.net and was run using LimeSurvey software. Users were invited to register for the survey and submit answers to 22 questions about their interest in these events. The survey address link was emailed direct to 144 individual email addresses and was advertised via vk-vhf, vk-microwave, vk1 mailing list, vklogger forum (contests and field days section) and via links on the VK1DA.NET home page, blog and via Twitter.

Participants were asked to agree to their callsign being quoted as a supporter if they do support the change, in the event of a request for changes to the event rules going to the WIA Contest manager VK4TS and VHF Contest manager VK3KM. In all other ways the comments and suggestions were to remain anonymous. See the Appendix where all comments are listed.

Summary Statistics

Number of registrations	124
Number of completed responses	116

The incomplete responses have not been included in statistical results. The answers on the major questions have not been included as it was possible these responses may have been revised if these respondents had returned to review and complete their responses. It is unclear why 8 responses were not completed. Reminder emails were sent to those respondents using the email addresses they quoted when registering for the survey.

Major Findings

The main item of interest to many readers is how many operators supported a change to distance based scoring. Question 12 was: “after reading the proposal from Andrew VK1DA and Colin VK5DK to change the scoring to a distance based system, do you support this proposal? “

Of the 116 completed responses, 79 supported the proposal, with a further 24 “partly” supporting it.

Results:

Yes	79	68%
No	13	11.2%
Partly	24	20.7%
Comments	64	

This result shows that a clear majority of the VHF/UHF operators responding to the survey supported the proposal for distance based scoring in the VHF/UHF Field Days run by the WIA.

How much impact would the rule change have on operators not supporting it?

To see whether a rule change would be unpopular with those not agreeing with it, question 13 asked: If this rule change was introduced would you still operate even though you don't like distance based scoring?

Yes - I am keen to see this change. I think it will be a step forward.	51	
Yes - I operate in these events whatever the rules are. The scoring does not bother me.	23	
Yes but only as a trial. I'll be better able to make up my mind after I've seen it run for a few field days.	11	
Yes, but I prefer the existing rules.	9	
No - I don't agree with this change. I will not operate in the event if the grid square scoring system is removed.	5	
Other	17	

This question provides some further clarification of the level of support. In these responses we see that only five operators were sufficiently opposed to the scoring change that they would prefer not to operate at all in these events. Noting that an option was given for people to state that they would operate even though they preferred current rules, this indicates that the rules are sufficiently important to some operators that if they appear to be inappropriate or difficult to understand or use, they do act as a turnoff for some operators. This emphasises the importance of having rules that are acceptable to the greatest number of operators.

These responses indicate a very low negative reaction to the proposal for distance based scoring. Reading the comments submitted (see appendix below) it is clear that this suggestion was warmly received by the majority. But note that many of the people who don't like the idea are prepared to see it used for evaluation purposes. This suggests that a rule change could be implemented with a defined evaluation period, after which the change could be either confirmed or rejected. Opinions of the contesters submitting logs should be the major factor in this decision. Their views or even votes could be sought on proposed rule changes, provided they were written in an objective way.

The Triband category

Another major item was the suggestion of a "6/2/70" category in these events, to cater for people to those bands limited by equipment or choice. (Q15). The comments are very positive about this idea. It revealed potential for increased activity (actual contacts made and interest in the event) and participation (higher number of operators taking part).

Yes, it's a good idea and it will encourage more activity from amateurs with that kind of equipment.	61	52.6%
I will enter this category as I have one of those radios but no microwave equipment. I might be competitive with other similar stations!	13	11.2%
I operate on microwave bands as well as the lower bands so I will enter the All Band category anyway	35	30%
I am not in favour of this	3	
Comments	43	
No answer	4	

Other subjects

Other subjects covered by the survey include:

- How the Dates/timing of the VHF/UHF field days suit each operator's availability and interest
- Whether additional events would be welcome
- Bands used in the past and proposed in the future
- How each respondent ranks the published aims of the VHF/UHF field days in importance and whether they believe these aims are being met
- Other suggestions to improve the events or improve participation

The detailed responses and comments are published below.

Rovers

The main group of respondents disliking the proposed change is the group of rovers. The definition of a rover is tied up in operation in a number of grid squares so this is no surprise.

With respect to rovers, some of the comments were along the lines of "this would ruin the event", "if you want distance scoring, create a new event", "I have spent a lot of time and money on my rover station and you want to ruin it all". There was alarm and even anger expressed about the prospect of a possible change, even before it had even been submitted to the WIA contest managers.

This raised the question of whether it was feasible for a new definition of rovers to be devised, or whether it was preferable for rovers to continue to work on a grid square basis, with awards and scoring determined by grid squares worked etc, while others in the event worked on a distance based score. Contacts between all stations could still be valid, while being scored differently by each station. It is highly desirable to include all groups of active enthusiastic operators, and we in no way want to spoil anyone's fun. Can we find ways to keep all groups engaged and challenged?

Limited band categories – separate band winners?

Having read about the suggested "6/2/70" category, a number of responses suggested a category catering for "6/2/70/23" which allows people equipped up to 23cm to compete only with other stations similarly equipped, thereby not competing with the microwave bands and their higher multipliers. This would neatly cater for another category of commercial equipment (IC910H, IC9100, TS2000X) which would allow an operator with that equipment to compete with others in the same situation.

This could be achieved relatively simply through software if the logs and the scores per band are processed in software.

Another suggestion was that the performance of each station type (home, portable, rover?) could be compared and a winner for each band could be identified. This would allow the specialists for each band to be recognised, without their efforts being obscured by multi band logs.

Weighting of microwave bands vs. VHF bands

Many potential operators in these events commented about a perceived emphasis, even a bias for microwave bands. The perception generated by the emphasis on microwave bands discourages VHF/UHF activity that could lay the groundwork for a later interest in the higher bands. Some comments stated that the emphasis on microwave bands creates a perception that the events are for an elite group, thereby locking out newcomers.

While the contest rules have been described as “encouraging” operation on the microwave bands, it apparently is at the expense of discouraging some from even participating in the event as they were unable or unwilling to build or acquire microwave equipment.

Contrasting with those responses are the comments from a few operators who see the microwave band “incentives” as just that, and they related their actions in adding new bands to their home and/or field station capabilities, to improve their competitiveness. This is an admirable approach but the reality of the situation for a majority of operators is that they are either not interested in microwave bands, or feel unable to build equipment for those bands. Rather than losing those operators completely, a pragmatic approach is to provide ways in which operators in all groups are encouraged to participate as fully as they can.

Examination of the contest results reveals that the winning entries always include points earned on the microwave bands. Further examination reveals that not many contacts were required on those bands to earn significant numbers of points.

For example on a microwave band the current rules allow for one contact to produce as much as 210 points. This score is equivalent to 70 contacts on 2m, or additional grid squares at 10 points each, plus contacts adding up to 70 points. For the 6m band it requires 210 contacts, or a group of additional grid squares and the contacts required to make up the 210 points. The points earned by subsequent contacts are not so extreme unless they also involve a new combination of grid squares, which is the case for the first such contact by a rover when operating from each new activated grid square.

In countries with higher population, separate events are held for microwave bands, vhf bands, uhf bands etc. Microwave operators in the UK have commented that they would be too busy on one band to have time to operate on two in a particular field event. We could only wish for similar levels of activity. Until we have it, multi-band events will certainly continue to be the best option, allowing us to use all our available bands in each of the VHF/UHF field days. However it is possible that greater participation will result from splitting the contests into VHF/UHF (lower 4 bands) and Microwave bands (above 2 GHz). This would allay the concerns of the respondents who are concerned about the unduly high emphasis given to microwave bands.

Splitting the event into two broad frequency ranges (50-1300, 2300 and up) allows the specialists in each area to focus on that part of the spectrum and excel at what they are interested in.

Outstanding issues

The following areas need further consideration and are recommended for further discussion among the VHF/UHF contesting community.

The question of limiting the maximum score possible for each contact received 42 responses agreeing with the proposal that there should be a limit, but respondents were not sure what the limit should be. Another 55 responses said no limit was necessary. The main reason given by those wanting a limit was the possible scores from a good opening on 6m. On the other hand it is not practical to award points on the basis of the propagation mechanism – the decision on what mode was used would be controversial and would only create disputes. To resolve this, several possible approaches are suggested for consideration:

- No limit to points per contact – this allows sporadic E contacts to score up to 2500-3000 points depending on conditions. Operators on higher bands were very concerned that a good band opening to JA or even east-to west Australia may provide 6m operators with an undue advantage. Other respondents said it doesn't happen often in these events so if it does, good luck to those using those bands.
- Limit the points scored to those feasible from good tropospheric conditions on each band. For SSB and CW this would be in the region of 400-500 km on 6m and closer to 900-1000 km on 2m. By limiting points to the maximum achievable in very good conditions without ionospheric propagation, the focus of the event on VHF propagation mechanisms would be reinforced.
- Limit the points for 6m to the distance available from a single hop Es contact. This distance would be debatable but specialists in this area could be consulted for their views. By allowing Es contacts to score well, the 6m operators would be included but not allowed free reign in the number of points available from HF-like conditions.

Digital modes. These modes can provide distances far greater than those possible from traditional modes such as SSB and CW. While there has been no restriction on these contacts in the past it seems only a matter of time before meteor scatter contacts are made by field stations, or stations operating in these events and submitting contacts in the meteor scatter distance ranges (approx 800 to 1200 km). Alternatives are:

- Disallow digital modes for these events
- Allow digital modes but limit the points to “best tropo distance” as per the 6m discussion above.
- Allow digital modes without limits
- Allow digital modes but only if one of the stations involved is a portable station.

EME. Some comments reveal concerns that EME contacts could readily overwhelm the points available from terrestrial contacts. With grid square based scoring the benefits from an EME contact are no different from working a new grid square a few hundred km away. But with distance based scoring there is clearly a big advantage if the terrestrial distance was counted as the contact distance, which seems to be quite impractical. Again the options seen are:

- Disallow EME contacts for these events.
- Allow EME contacts but limit the number of points available, similarly to the limits discussed above for 6m Es and F2 type contacts. A limit of whatever is seen as the best tropospheric distance would limit the value of these contacts.
- Allow any EME contacts and score them as per the terrestrial separation of the two stations.

Recommendations to the WIA Contest manager and VHF Contests Manager

Based on the survey conducted, we recommend consideration be given to the following changes to the VHF/UHF Field Days:

Implement the changes proposed in the document "Proposal for changes to scoring of VHF/UHF Field Days", as modified and extended by this report, giving consideration to retaining existing scoring for rovers.

As an extension to the suggested category for the bands 50, 144 and 432 MHz, create a category for the bands 50/144/432/1296 Mhz, thus creating categories for:

- 50/144/432/1296
- Microwave bands from 2300 MHz and up
- All bands (optionally)

Provide awards for the best score for the 50/144/432 Mhz bands for each licence class. Where the number of entries justifies it, make awards for the best scores in each call area.

As 50/144/432 award is intended to encourage owners of basic VHF equipment to become familiar with VHF/UHF field days, it is suggested that awards be considered for each state, and for each licence class.

We suggest limiting the maximum points per contact to 1200, on all modes. This is a starting point for discussion, as suggested in the preceding section.

After using the revised rules for several events, review the effectiveness of the band weightings and categories. It is possible that band weightings could be removed without affecting outcomes (placings) substantially, but giving equal value to contacts on all bands in each category. This would remove any perceived bias towards or against specific bands or segments of the spectrum.

Consider the idea of a periodic review of the rules. During a period of say 3 to 5 years, keep the rules stable, and change only the rules that are proven to need urgent change during that period. During the final year, receive suggestions and get a committee to review all the suggestions. Implement the agreed changes in time for the events of the following season starting with the spring event.

For the Spring 2012 and Summer 2013 events, run both the existing scoring system and the distance based scoring. Andrew VK1DA is prepared to assist with rescoring of logs if necessary. However we understand that VKCL is capable already of recording 6 character grid locator codes, and could also be updated to include the scoring proposed here. Another

software writer is also prepared to build a version of his software to suit distance based scoring and other conditions for these events.

Software (VKCL) for logging these contests is already available and it is capable of recording 6 character grid squares. After discussion with Mike VK3AVV we know that the software can already calculate distances but that option is not enabled for the VHF field days in the current release (Oct 2012). It is recommended that participants be asked to record 6 character grid squares against each contact but not require the exchange of this information with each contact. VKCL will carry the locator code forward from the previous contact with the station being worked, but it is possible to overwrite the locator, allowing for a station to be worked as a home and portable station and also allowing for rovers to be logged in a new locator.

As is the case with the current rules, the locator is not intended to be part of the “contest exchange”, which should remain RSTnnn commencing 001. The location of each station, if not exchanged in the contact, should be legitimately obtainable from any source, including the station worked, copying it from QSOs with other operators, VKlogger Opinfo and even QRZ.com if the portable station locator is published there. It can also be obtained after the event when checking and completing logs.

Source of proposal and survey responses

Finally, we emphasise that this proposal is not from a small minority of operators. It is clearly the wish of at least 79 of the operators interested in these events. The proposal was published and we asked the VHF/UHF community at large to read it and respond, whatever their views. We have not run seminars at conferences or hamfests and we have not asked individuals to support our proposal. As a condition of the survey was that the identity and opinions of individuals will not be made generally available, we are not identifying the comments or the individual opinions or choices.

Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge two major contributors to this process:

- VHF Contests manager John Martin VK3KM has participated in discussion both public and private, and has been constructive and objective in his analysis of the proposal. This has set an excellent example to others on the lists and forums. He has retained his “cool” despite regrettably being the subject of personal criticism from one commentator. He even recommended that VHF/UHF Field day operators participate in the survey and provide their comments. We are grateful to John for his participation in the process.
- The VHF/UHF community has been constructive and objective in their comments both publicly and in private communications with the authors of the proposal. We are very encouraged by the approach displayed by the vast majority of respondents, in their responses to the survey and in their comments on mailing lists and forums.

Detailed survey responses

The callsigns of the operators indicating they support the change to distance based scoring are listed in the appendix below.

We strongly recommend this change be adopted by the WIA for its VHF/UHF Field day contests.

Andrew Davis VK1DA	Colin Hutchesson VK5DK
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Appendix A – original proposal as published for consideration

Proposal for Distance based scoring for VHF/UHF/Microwave contests

by Andrew Davis VK1DA and Colin Hutchesson VK5DK

Introduction

1. The VHF/UHF field days are run by the WIA and administered by the VHF/UHF Contest manager, John Martin VK3KM. The rules have been fairly stable throughout the history of these events, with rule changes adopted only when it was believed there was wide support for a change, or if changing operating techniques called for change, such as the introduction of the rover category and the spring and winter events. The contest manager has defended the rules effectively, ensuring stability and a steadily increasing participation level. However support and interest from some parts of Australia is still low. The WIA would like to see more activity in these contests and is looking for ways to increase participation.

2. VHF/UHF- focussed field contests have existed in VK nationally since Jan 1989, with the introduction of the Summer VHF/UHF Field Day. An additional "spring" event was introduced in 1998 and a winter event was trialled in 2008. Prior to the introduction of VHF/UHF field contests the only field event catering for portable VHF field stations was the John Moyle National Field Day. The scoring for the John Moyle event was originally the same for HF and VHF, but was modified in the 80s to introduce distance based scoring, with distances grouped into ranges for scoring purposes. A table of scores awarded to various distances was introduced in the late 80s.

3. Scoring for the VHF/UHF field contests has been based on a combination of band scores and multipliers to create incentives for operators to activate higher frequency bands. The score on each band was based on a point per contact, plus a bonus of 10 points for each grid square worked or activated. This scoring scheme is referred to in this document as "the current rules".

The objectives of the Field Day events

4. The WIA website's VHF/UHF Field days page provides the following statement of objectives:

The overriding aim is to get away for the weekend and have fun! But next after that, the aims are:

- to encourage more activity on VHF and microwave bands;
- to encourage people to work greater distances than usual by operating portable, and
- to provide opportunities for people to activate or work into new grid squares.

Do the contest format and rules meet its aims?

General aims

5. Examining each of the general aims:

Get away for the weekend: **Portable stations satisfy this aim** but home stations do not.

Having Fun: This is entirely up to each participant to assess after each event.

Encouraging more activity: The event encourages activity through a nationally coordinated event on which VHF/UHF operators will set up stations at suitable locations, providing themselves and others with opportunities for making contacts not normally possible, due to improved locations, lower noise at field sites and increased activity. **This aim is met.**

Operational aims

6. These aims are about the contacts made.

- *The event provides an opportunity for working greater distances due to suitably located portable stations.* While the rules reward the first contact into each grid square, they do not otherwise reward contacts on the basis of distance. The rules only indirectly support this aim through the next aim (grid squares) since working more grid squares generally involves making contacts at greater distances.
- *provide opportunities for people to activate or work into new grid squares:* the rules give bonus points for each additional grid square worked. The bonus points directly support this aim.

7. The score formula includes multipliers based on the band on which contacts are made. The multipliers range from 1 on 50 Mhz up to 10 on 2.3 GHz and higher. There is therefore a great incentive for higher frequency bands to be used. This part of the scoring formula apparently meets an unstated aim of encouraging activity on the higher frequency bands and indeed the multipliers have a double impact because the multiplier applies not only to the contacts made but to the bonuses given for each grid square.

8. We can conclude that the rules:

- directly support the broad or non-technical aims of the event (getting away, having fun, encouraging activity),
- include incentives for the aim of activating or working into new grid squares,
- include substantial incentives for (an unstated aim of) using higher frequency bands,
- but *do not directly support the aim of working greater distances* other than incidental bonuses for the first contact in each new grid square.

Achievements of the VHF Field Days

9. Some operators record "personal best" contacts on these Field Day weekends. These events have become a feature of the calendar for many VHF/UHF operators as they are the primary "QSO opportunity periods" where heightened activity can be expected on all VHF/UHF and microwave bands.

10. Compared with operation from home or portable locations on other weekends, Field Day weekends increase activity level greatly, creating increased interest in these activities among participants.

Problems seen in the scoring system

11. Despite the success of the events, there are a number of situations in which the scoring method does not give adequate consistent recognition to the difficulty or the rarity of each contact. Examples of these situations are:

There is a disparity in the points earned for contacts of similar difficulty or achievement. A station worked in a new grid square is awarded 1 point for the contact and 10 points for the new grid square. However subsequent contacts of equal difficulty, either with the same station or others in the same grid square, attract only 1 point each (prior to the band multiplier being applied). An example is a rare opening to say ZL from VK3, in which a field station works 5 ZL contacts. The first contact adds 11 points to the band score but subsequent contacts add only 1 point each.

There is a corresponding disparity in the points the other stations can make by working you or someone else in your grid square, ie. after making the first contact with your grid square, there is little incentive for the dx operator to seek further contacts in your grid square.

While it is generally accepted that microwave band contacts can be more difficult than those made on the lower bands, the points awarded to specific contacts can be out of proportion to the difficulty. For example the first contact on a microwave band can earn 210 points whereas subsequent contacts of equal difficulty could earn 10 points each, or 110 points for a contact into a new grid square. The effect of these bonuses and multipliers can be to distort the results when the number of contacts made on the microwave bands is relatively small.

While the "grid square" bonus scheme does encourage operators to look for contacts further afield, it is only the first contact with each grid square that is given a bonus, so there is insufficient incentive to work greater distances.

12. In summary, our fundamental concern is that the scores earned by contacts are not consistent and are not proportional to the difficulty or rarity of the contacts achieved. We think the "better contacts" (greater distances) should receive more points than "ordinary contacts" (shorter distances) and that all contacts that are equal in achievement should be given the same points.

Distance and its significance to VHF/UHF

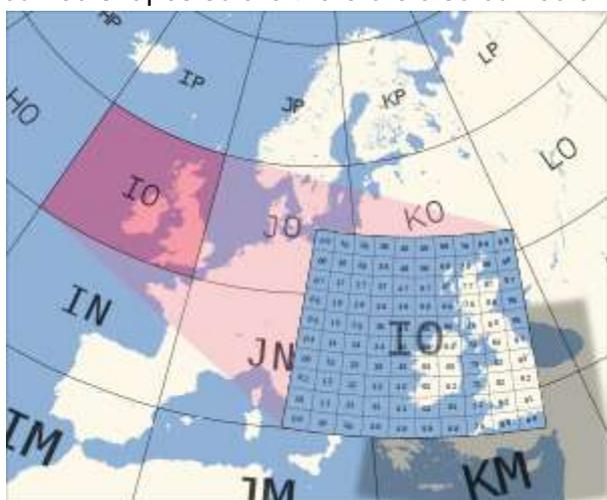
13. Distance worked is a fundamental measure of achievement on the VHF/UHF bands. Going back to the origins of our band allocations, the attitude of one government was "give them everything below 200 metres - they'll never get out of their backyards on that" and that became a challenge to amateurs to prove otherwise and of course we did. Ross Hull's major achievements were in extending the distances workable on VHF. Through careful experimentation he was able to prove that VHF propagation beyond line of sight was not only possible but was influenced by atmospheric conditions -behaviour that was not previously understood by the scientific community.

14. The WIA offers awards for distance records on VHF/UHF/Microwave bands. The Ross Hull contest also awards points on the basis of distance worked. It would be consistent to reward distance achievements appropriately in the principal VHF/UHF field contests run by the WIA. By encouraging operators to improve the performance of their stations so as to work longer distances, the WIA would be supporting and generating greater interest in the VHF/UHF awards scheme. The VHF/UHF field days are conducted at times when the chances of long distances are greatest. And as pointed out earlier, one of the aims of these events is to encourage longer distance contacts.

Are Grid Squares a good basis for a contest scoring formula?

15. Under the Maidenhead Grid Locator system, grid squares are defined as areas bounded by 1 degree of latitude (the vertical distance) and 2 degrees of longitude. 1 degree of latitude is exactly 60 nautical miles (111.12 km) but 2 degrees of longitude is a varying distance from its maximum of 1/180th of the circumference of the earth at the equator, which is 120 nautical miles (222.24 km), to its minimum of zero at the poles. The further you are from the equator, the smaller the distance between the 2 degree curves. The left and right "edges" of grid squares are thus curved lines which gradually approach each other, finally meeting at the poles.

16. Using VK1 as an example, at the latitude of the VK1 region, (35 south) the width of grid squares is about 180km. In North Qld (17 S at Cairns, 27.5 S at Brisbane) they are wider, and in Hobart (43 S) they are somewhat narrower. This effect is visible via an image included in the [Wikipedia reference](#). The "unsquare" shape and inconsistent size is clearly visible. As this is a northern hemisphere sample, it needs to be inverted to apply to Australia. The fields like JM and KM, closer to the equator are clearly wider than those further towards the pole, such as JP and KP. Grid squares (JM00 to JM99) are equal divisions of those curved shapes so are therefore also curved and unequal.



17. As grid squares are not an equal size across the country, the achievement of making a contact with someone in an adjacent grid square is different for each operator, as the distance and difficulty of the contact depends on the station's actual location relative to the grid square boundaries and on the station's latitude. A contact with a station in the next grid square due west of you could be as short as 1 km or as much as 200km. For stations north or south of you, they could again be as close as 1 km or as much as 112 km away. Thus it can be seen that making a contact into the adjacent grid squares is not a consistent achievement and depends on the location of each station.

18. Another factor is the spread of population and hence amateur activity in Australia. All coastal locations have empty/unpopulated grid squares in one direction (the ocean) and some have empty grid squares on both sides, either E/W or N/S. Clearly there are populations in places that are relatively isolated, with no likely contacts available in at least two directions, and sometimes three directions. For some areas of North Queensland there is almost no nearby grid square with activity or likely contacts on VHF bands unless there is sporadic E propagation on 6m.

19. The third problem with basing scores on worked grid squares in contests is that the borders of grid squares do not provide equal opportunity to all contestants. For city dwellers, grid square boundaries naturally do not occur in the same position relative to even the central business district. The grid square borders near Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth provide operators in those cities a wide range of different fortunes, some being able to reach other grid squares within the city borders but others needing to beam a long way east or west. The locations of these borders determine how many multipliers are within easy distances on VHF bands.

20. For stations on carefully chosen hilltops in these events, several grid squares in a large city with many potential contacts may be within easy contact distance only 50 km away, therefore making it easy to work additional grid squares on every band available. Conversely, a country station in Queensland, inland from Cairns, has very little opportunity to make contacts with grid squares in any direction but east, other than being lucky enough to have a sporadic E opening to other parts of VK or ZL that extends up to 144 as well as 50 MHz. Alternatively, to gain the requisite 3000 points typical of a high score in the contest, the northern VK4 would have to work some combination of international contacts on 6m in many grid squares to get a score of 3000, eg 2500 contacts into 50 different squares (2500 + 50*10). The dx potential of 6m is good but it has never supported that kind of success in a vhf field day. 200 contacts into 20 grid squares - perhaps yes. That's 410 points (200 for the contacts plus 200 for grids worked plus 10 for activating your own square).

21. In summary, the Grid square locator system is a very useful and convenient international standard for identifying the location of a station. It can be used for calculating distances, and can be a basis for awards but as they are of different sizes and are inequitably distributed near population centres, they can unfairly discriminate between operators in different parts of the country.

22. For these reasons we suggest that the number of grid squares worked should not be used in scoring for VHF contests. Distance between stations is a much fairer and consistent way of assessing the value of each contact.

Proposed Scoring system

23. We propose a change to the scoring for each contact to one point per kilometre, based on the distance between the two stations. This is based largely on the scoring system used by European VHF/UHF contests. We also propose multiple band categories to allow for the large number of operators owning equipment capable of operation on 6m/2m/70cm. A revised band-based multiplier scheme is also proposed.

24. Details follow:

- Contacts will earn one point per km worked. Distances will be calculated from the 6 character grid subsquares of each station, eg. QF44MO to QF22AB. (This is not necessarily the precise distance between the actual stations, but is adopted as the reference for calculation purposes. Some distances will be overstated by several km, others will be understated. The net error will be low and is considered acceptable over when spread over 50 to 200 contacts.)

- The distance calculated from the 6 character grid subsquares will be rounded up to the next higher whole number. Therefore both 276.1 and 276.765 will be rounded up to 277. A contact of less than 1 km, ie. between stations in the same subsquare, will be rounded up to 1km, earning 1 point.
- The score earned on each band is multiplied by a number allocated to each band. It increases roughly with frequency and provides an incentive to operate on higher frequency bands.
- The multipliers proposed for the bands are as follows:

Band	50	144	432	1296	2.3/2.4G	3.4G	5.7G	10G	24G+
Mult	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6

- The 6m band has not been popular with field stations due to the low multiplier given to that band in the current rules. This has led to field stations not putting much effort into operating on that band. As the entry point to vhf operation, 6m is a good band for field day use and it allows operators to get some experience with directive antennas and the different conditions under which tropo contacts are made. In the event of an Es opening, longer distances will be worked, providing more interest for the operators. For these reasons it is proposed that 2m and 6m be given the same multiplier.

A further measure is proposed to deal with VHF/UHF and microwave band differences. To allow for operators who have equipment covering the 50, 144 and 432 MHz bands and to encourage them to take them into the field or use them from home in these events, it is proposed to provide categories for VHF/UHF, Microwave and All Bands. This allows for the VHF/UHF category operator to compete against others in that category without competing against microwavers who have higher band multipliers. It also allows for 6m specialists to take advantage of Es openings and enjoy the event knowing they are competitive with others in that band category.

No changes are proposed to the timing, dates and other rules already established for these events. Eg, no repeaters, no satellites, repeat contacts every 3 hours, all modes permitted.

25. It is recommended that the grid locator is not considered part of the formal contest exchange. This is the current situation - the grid square is not a required part of every contact. When making repeat contacts with the same station, either on the same band or a different band, it would be impractical to transmit and receive the grid locator on each occasion. This is consistent with common sense. Most of the higher frequency contacts made in these events are a result of "throws" from an initial contact, typically on 2m. As part of that contact, each station's locator is exchanged and confirmed. It is not plausible that the locator is unknown when those stations QSY to a higher band. Therefore it cannot be regarded sensibly as a required part of the contest "exchange".

26. Some contest logging software requires the operator to record the grid locator on each contact. It is recommended that such software be updated so as to allow this data to flow automatically from previous contacts, in the same way that the operator's name would.

27. It is acknowledged that these changes would make rover operation much less attractive. The rover concept is derived from grid square based rules, so changing it to a distance based concept would be necessary.

Summary of Proposals

28. The proposed changes are:-

Scoring is changed to a distance based formula, based on 1 point per kilometre or part kilometre. This allows the contest rules to support all of the stated aims of the event.

Minor changes to band multipliers, increasing the multiplier for 6m and retaining greater weight for higher frequencies.

Three main categories are provided: category A for the three lower bands 6m/2m/70cm, category B for the GHZ bands and category C being "all bands".

Status of proposal

29. This proposal has been developed by a group of experienced VHF/UHF field day operators who have all contributed to its development. It is now circulated more widely to enable all VHF/UHF Field day operators to discuss it and indicate their support if they wish.

30. After a month of discussion the level of support will be assessed and a decision made on whether to lodge the proposal with the WIA Contests manager for consideration.

The survey was open from 16 September 2012 to 15 October 2012

31. The survey has now closed.

Your participation is appreciated.

32. The results of the survey will be used to support a submission to the WIA Contests Manager requesting this change.

33. We are using this opportunity to gather opinions from as many active operators in the VHF/UHF field days as possible.

34. Your name and email are collected by the survey as they are required for the registration process. Your callsign is requested in survey question 1. These details will not be divulged to any other party except that your callsign may be included in a list of supporters, which will be a private communication with the contest manager Trent VK4TS and VHF contest manager John VK3KM. They need to know the extent of support for this change and a list of supporters is essential. Your email details will not be divulged to any other party except the sponsors of this survey.

Proposal authors and sponsors

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References

1. <http://www.wia.org.au/members/contests/vhfuhf/> The VHF/UHF Field day rules on the WIA website
 2. The ARRL handbook quotes this comment about how amateur band allocations were made in the early days of radio. The Radio Amateur's Handbook, ARRL, Newington Ct USA, annual publication.
 3. [An explanation of the Maidenhead QTH Locator codes](#) by Guy Fletcher VK2KU.
 4. [Wikipedia on Maidenhead Grid Locators](#)
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Appendix B- Detailed results of survey

Apart from the callsigns of people answering yes to Q12, **all identifying information has been replaced** with generic terms such as [callsign] or [club] or [city]. Also, the **order of text comments** is random in respect of the order of responses. Eg. Comment 1 from Q12 is not from the same person who made comment 1 on Q13.

Personal comments about other operators, clubs, cities, the WIA and its contest managers have also been removed as they were not the purpose of this survey. Some respondents asked that their comments not be published literally, but summarised and the general meaning only published. This has been done while retaining the intent of the comment, as accurately and truly as possible.

Major edits have been limited to those requested as above, and minor edits limited to where the meaning was clear but the spelling or punctuation was incorrect. Where considered helpful to the meaning, editorial changes have been made with the use of square brackets [] to indicate an edit was made.

Q1 callsigns

The list of callsigns who agreed to be listed here as supporting the change to distance based scoring is:

[list provided to WIA Contests Manager and WIA VHF/UHF contests manager]

Note that this list above is not included in the version of this report published, in accordance with the conditions of participation in the survey, at para 34 of the proposal.

Q2. Do you operate in the VHF/UHF Field days?

Yes: 109 No: 6

For responses of No to Q2, a following question was displayed (asking for the reasons)

Q3. Reasons for not operating in these events:

I am not interested in contesting	1
I don't operate on VHF/UHF bands	1
I don't have any portable equipment	2
No transport	1
No local club	1
Other	2

Q4 to Q11 were not displayed if the answer to Q2 was No.

Q4. Do you submit your log?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Always (A1)	53	46%
Mostly (A2)	23	20%
Sometimes (A3)	21	18%

Answer	Count	Percentage
Never (A4)	12	10%

Comments:

Always submit when I have operated portable. When restricted to operating from home by weather or limited mobility I will usually submit a log but not if I have had a very small number of contacts
Be it a competitive entry or a check log
CLUB ENTRY
Computer log using VKCL which is networked for the individual operators
don't do so well sometimes so it is not worth sending the log from vk1 area.
Dont really have time to write up all the scoring and contact information. Usually happy to provide some contacts for others.
Everyone that enters should submit a log.
have not the last couple due to other circumstances
I am a participant with the [club]
I form part of the [club] team
I have been lucky enough to have field day logs done by other operators, if a home station, I never submit.
I have now stoped submitting logs for the John Moyle as the scoring is to difficult. I always put in logs for the VHF/UHF field days.
I have participated in the past as second operator under [another station's] callsign and he submitted the log. I plan however to participate under my own callsign in the future, submitting my own log.
I no longer use Windows operating system. I use Mac and Linux, none of which have contest loggers for VK-land. So I have to submit an excel spreadsheet if the scoring isn't too difficult.
I normally operate with the [club] using the [club] Call Sign
I operate as part of [club station] when I can
I operate with four other operators under the callsign [multi op portable] P
I quit competing within the last 12 months.
I think it is important not just to participate, but to register participation.
If I don't submit a Log it's usually because I've participated but mainly to give "numbers" out to others..
If I have a reasonable number of contacts, I submit it.
Just act as a country dx qso in QF02 or QF12
Last winter in Sydney there were 4 stations in the Sydney basin that were active - no point in submitting log
Mostly with [club] these days & they may submit a log
On some occasions I am busy and only give participate as time allows. If I only have a few contacts, I sometimes do not submit a log.
Personally, operating portable and preparing to operate portable are the biggest parts of my overall amateur radio experiences - and it's not just a 'me' experience - many other enjoy this as well. To not submit my log would be rendering these experiences entirely self- focused - submitting the log contributes to the 'community' experience of active participants in each event - a valuable outcome indeed!

Planning to increase activity on the shorter wavelengths in the near future.
Sometimes as an operator as part of a club callsign.
Use VKCL3 logging software
Usually I get splattered by the club station and they sit close to my frequency most of the time causing interference.
usually i just operate in a support role, being the station on the 'other end' of a rover or long range station rather than being a mad keen number gatherer
very easy with the introduction of programs such as vkcl.

Q5. Do you usually operate as a portable, home or rover?

Answer	Count	Percentage	
Portable (one location for the event) (A1)	69	60%	
Portable (two locations) (A2)	7	6%	
Rover (more than two locations) (A3)	4	3.5%	
Home station (A4)	29	25%	

Comments:

Actually, I've been Portable (one location), Portable (two locations) and Home. And would like to do all three again! (Though not simultaneously...)
And home if unable to go into the field, even mobile.
but since having more bands in microwave have been portable
Either portable or home station depending on circumstances.
Enter as Club station [callsign]
Have also operated as a portable station 2 locations
Hoping for opportunity to go portable.
I give some contacts from home most contests. I did a rover operation in 4 grid squares once.
i have a portable station on my home site, some is portable , others use fixed antennas so i am doing a bit of both
I like to operate portable as part of a club station but not as an individual
I would like to learn from my local club's portable team, but they are very competitive and I got the impression they had no space for an extra operator. [paraphrased from longer response with request to be unidentified]
I've not operated 'rover' or multiple locations, but have considered this and would likely do a multi-location or rover in the future.
My home station is better than being portable :)
My main interest in portable operation is the improved distances I can work plus the lack of interference at portable sites.
On a few occasions I have moved between two locations, but find a single setup more fun (= less stress)
Only resort to 'Home' when WX condx prevent portable operations.
Operate either portable or home, depending on availability
'Portable at two locations' has been the same for quite a few years but, before the 'rover' rule came in, I would sometimes use three or four locations - great fun more apparent 'repeat' contacts and great for other stations as well working those extra 'squares'.

Portable preferred but always subject to weather.
See previous comment
Single, double & sometimes home in the mix.
Sometimes /p sometimes home, depending on WX etc.
The decision to go Portable is obviously VERY weather dependent.

Q 6 What is your preferred type of operation in these events, portable, home or rover?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Portable (A1)	85	73%
Rover (A2)	3	2.6%
Home (A3)	21	18%
Comments	20	17%
No answer	1	0.9%
Not displayed	6	5%

Comments:

All of my amateur radio life I've loved the experience of setting up gear outside in a remote place and operating from there. Thus my passion for VHF/UHF FD events is merely an extension of this passion!
Also interested in Rover and may also operate from Home some years.
Am a full time carer so going portable for extended time is not possible
As part of a multi operator group.
home, with some portable gear on my own place
I make it a picnic outing with my wife
I prefer a fixed location, these days with a bit of company
I try several high spots in rare grids
I usually prefer to go out with others for a shared experience.
My home station is better than being portable :) and more comfortable
One day I aim to work portable, pending gear !
only cause it is easier for me being disabled
pending on weather conditions
Portable - due to the additional challenge, but also the opportunity to develop comms over greater distances.
Portable as a part of a club station or Home as an individual
Prefer portable, however due to work commitments primarily operate as Home Station.
the 6m , 2m and 70 cm section will get more people operating in Adelaide, as the number get less every year
There are insufficient portable stations who generally can't hear each other in [adjoining states], my location mid way between these cities provides at least a 400K qso
Usually work commitments limit my available time.
Would love to go portable, as my home station has very limited antenna options. As I have young children my portable options and opportunities are also limited.

Q7 How many of the last 12 events (4 years) have you operated in these events? (Approx)

Summer: average 2.77

Spring: average 2.59

Winter: average 1.84

Q8 If you don't operate in all of the VHF/UHF field days, can you indicate whether this is because of a specific problem (such as the winter weather) or some other factor?

Absent and unavailable
Apathy in VK2 from other stations resulting low activity. Dont want to sit on a hill and do little.
As a shift worker, my weekends are not always free - so not always able to participate.
Availability of time
Avalability
away for work
bad conditions once in winter,
Being unavailable due to family or work commitments.
Clashes with other activities
Depends on other commitments
Didn't operate this last winter FD due to weather, work and equipment issues. I would normally operate the winter FD with as much enthusiasm as spring and summer.
Don't fancy winter operation as being practical, however, work has prevented my presence for some time.
due to location the winter field days give very poor contacts. (320 km from capital city)
Due to only having less than 20 people in the Adelaide area working, this makes it hard to get points if you work all within 30 minutes, most people would only have 6m, 2m and 70 cm. The people with this simply give up because the microwave boys have higher points
due to weather and pending on coaching Football commitments
Either my portable site is unreachable due to recent weather or inclement weather on the field day weekend.
family commitment
Family commitments
family matters
First event was summer 2011, second event winter 2012. Intend to operate in every event in future.
Generally personal issues ie Family or Business, causing me to miss the date.
have not always been available due shift work however that situation has changed and plan to participate more often.
I do not operate portable if the weather is bad
I have a young family. This and other commitments make every field day weekend participation difficult at times, but I try and participate as much as possible when I don't have time for a full effort, and with vkcl, its easy to log a handful of contacts and submit that.
I have a young family can can't sometimes
I have now moved to North Queensland and there are not a lot of stations portable or

home on the air. So it is is bit of a waste of time
I have only been re-licenced for about 2.5 years - I take part in all VHF-UHF field days with the [club]
I just got my F-license.
I only got my licence in late 2011. Went out in the COID and Roughed for the last Winter fieldday in corin forest. Other than that i have tried to do it from home due to having small kids and wife working.
I OPERATE IN ALL FIELD DAYS
i would only not operate if i wasnt here
in hospital, moving house
In the 4 year period, one specific factor was my knee injury in May 2010. Weather (and insipid propagation) is a factor against the Winter Field Day. If my knee injury hadn't happened, I would consider portable ops from further North (ie NSW) in order to escape this, though.
Lack of motivation, changed priorities, other activities that clashed.
Missed one winter FD due chemo treatment
Mostly winter weather
nothing specfic
occasionally dates conflict
Only domestic priorities
Only had my call for a year
other commitments
Other commitments, weather.
Other commitments.
personal commitments
Poor propagation from Far North Queensland to the South in the Southern winter months.
Poor propagation into my regional area. Adelaide stations more interested in local FM contacts rather than pointing a beam towards my way.
Primarily poor health in recent years, but also frustration at high power stations with "dirty" signals calling continuously blocking out weaker signals.
Rain, hail or shine.
Rules depend on grid locators that are unfair to VK6 operations
Some other factor.
something else on
Sometimes family comes first
Sometimes have other things that I need to do which limits participation.
Sometimes weather, other times work/family commitments
Summer field days missed as I was [overseas] Winter FD operation was not possible on two occasions due to poor weather, so operated Home station.
The previous question is/was difficult to answer accurately because I cannot remember specific events. My participation is usually dependent on my availability for a given date/weekend and it's mostly weather dependent.
Time
Time restrictions Equipment restrictions
Timming with QRL travels

Too cold in winter, and this year summer field day was aborted due to health problems of one member on day of departure.
Travelling in the UK at the time of the winter events in 2011 and 2012. Otherwise, it's every opportunity, rain hail or shine!
Unfortunately personal commitments do not always allow me to participate in all the field days.
Usually due to work and family commitments. Whilst WX has been a factor, it only limits portable category entry.
Usually hasnt suited due to family commitments
Weather
Weather - during winter I coach sport
Weather - high winds & rain. Cold is not necessarily an issue!
weather and activity, mid winter and spring this year was a non event
Weather conditions & radio propogations are not suitable at that time of the year to operate in the Winter Field Days
Weather does play a part in not participating.
weather on tops of snowy mtns
Weather, and other things happening at home that preclude going out for the day.
Weather, and frequency of contests. All the VHF/UHF thru the year, JMFD, RD
Winter - brrrrrrr!!!!!!
Winter conditions and family related events
Winter field day is a good time to test new ideas and equipment. The effort expended during the winter is no less that spring or summer. It's a pity there are fewer ops in the winter.
Winter field day is right in the middle of football season, Kids sport takes priority.
winter snow makes it difficult at our field site - to participate in the winter FD
winter weather
Winter weather
Winter Weather
Winter weather or other commitments
Winter weather, and lack of motivation with some of the group. I would operate if I could get two more people for a club station. I suport this field day as I am mindful of weather in the northern parts of Australia being bad in Spring and Summer
Winter weather, short days and limited operators in VK3 to work
Winter weather.
With club call signs WIE we always have trouble with numbers
Work comentments
Work Roster.
Yes qrm from club station [nearby]

Q9 What bands do you currently use in this event? Q10 – in future?

Answer	Count	Percentage	Future count	Percentage
50 Mhz	94	81%	92	80%
144 Mhz	108	93%	104	90%
432 MHz	99	85%	101	87%
1296 MHz	83	72%	86	74%
2.4 GHz	43	37%	61	53%
3.4 GHz	31	27%	46	40%
5.7 GHz	29	25%	48	41 %
10 GHz	47	40%	67	58%
24 GHz	17	14%	37	32%
47 GHz	3	3%	16	14%
higher than the 47 GHz band	1	0.9%	10	9%

Q11 Please indicate whether you are satisfied with the following aspects of the current rules.

Q11.1 Dates - do spring/summer /winter events meet your interest and availability?

Responses:

Although decreasing participation in winter would raise questions on its future.
Current calendar is fine.
Current Dates OK
Dates are fine
Dates are OK but what about having an Autumn event as well?
Dates are okay at the moment
Dates are only an issue if they clash with other commitments, no changes suggested.
Fine
From a national perspective they are OK
Generally
Good
good
It's a good spread and the introduction of microwave test days in between appropriately fill the void
JMMFD in March fills in a gap
maybe Spring a little earlier?
Most of the time
Mostly, but any date will sometimes result in a clash
Mostly.
move summer to Feb
No conflicts with EME contests
No problem

October would be better - less time between winter & spring
OK
OK
Perhaps this needs to be reviewed. While I try to participate in them all - too many events with bad weather can cause a "can't be bothered" attitude.
Satisfied
Spring & Summer not Winter
Spring and summer are ok but I can't reach the better sites in the winter, or operate from them in freezing conditions..
spring and summer are ok but winter is badly timed for southern areas
spring and summer mainly
Spring and Summer OK
Spring clashes with work commitments so unable to enter other dates ok
Spring could be 1 or 2 weeks earlier so as not to clash with the CQWW contest.
spring/summer yes.
The dates are fine and should remain unchanged
These are fine
Three per year is plenty
Times are suitable
Winter in the SE of SA is a bit on the cool side
Yes more dates wont bring out more stations
YES NOT WINTER
yes, they're fine
Yes – (plus 19 more identical responses)

Q11.2 Would you operate in more field events if they were run? Suggest what time of year you think appropriate:

3 adequate for me
Any time of year.
Autumn event
club events already take care of that
depends on other commitments
equinox time frame
Every 2 months (incl JMMFD as one of six)
every 3 months would be nice - autumn?
Extra Field Day in Feb instead of Winter F/Day
I think we dilute the enthusiasm with too many
I think what we have is satisfactory
I would operate in an Autumn event if the scoring was easy to do manually, The John Moyle is a nightmare to score on paper logs.
I would operate in more events provided the weather is ok
If they were run I'd be happy to participate
Informal activity days are great

March/April
MAYBE
Maybe in summer when we have more conditions
More events, regardless of time of year increases the likelihood I can participate in one or more.
No (5 responses)
NO. I've been participating for many years & it's becoming a bit tougher as I grow older
No. The organisation of band specific activity days in Victoria has been great in providing oportunities, and satisfies my needs to use my gear in between FD.
Not especially, given there is already 4 contests including the JMFD
not necessary - for microwave contacts need local coordination.
Perhaps, but informal test days are probaly of more interest
Possibly
Possibly not
probably not
Probably not
Probably, but this sort of thing can become 'overdone'
Probably, there is a only the JMFD in between SFD and WFD so a considerable gap - and the JMFD doesn't really apply pressure to most FDer.
See above
September to April (i.e. better weather)
specail vhf/uhf days eg:microwave day
Spring and Summer very early winter
spring, summer, autumn
the idea of sprints or band specific weekends as the US runs sound interesting, but again, a time and effort vs return systems exists, i would need to make suer i had a competent station to make such an event worthwhile
this one is a tricky one. If there are more events, then there are more chances to participate but possibly the activity will be spread amongst the events and as a result of this the on air activity would be less.
Timing is about right
Unsure. Potentially the John Moyle could be considered a pseudo Autumn VHF/UHF Field Day.
Yes (5 identical responses)
Yes - as above - Autumn please
yes - March and April.
Yes, between Oct-May
Yes, would like to see more localised events
Yes. Spring
yes. as long as it's not snowing here
Yes-the more the better.

Q11.3 Duration – do the 8 and 24 hour options meet your needs?

24
24 hours is fine - possibly adjust the start time to 0300z

24Hrs
8 h would be my preference
8 Hour
8 hours
8 hour to date but may consider 24 hr.
8 hours is easier to set aside.
Generally YES but perhaps our Contest Calender needs to be "refreshed" with something new like maybe a 1 Hour "Scramble".
I always operate 8 hours when portable.
I normally enter the 24 hour section but only operate for about 10 hours so 8 hours is not enough
I would favour starting at 6pm, ending at 11am
I would like shorter ones too.
I would prefer an earlier start
My portable operation is suited to a short duration and preferred the old 6 hour period rather than 8
Normally I operate only the 8hr section, Single Op, Portable.
OK x 2
only operate for 8 hour event on sundays
People have to go to work Mondays
Perhaps 10hrs instead of 8hrs, 24hrs is OK
prefer 24 hour only
Shorter contests allow participation when you have a family
sleep 2230 - 0700
There is a choice, we have a roster of sorts
they generally work well and fit in with the time I have, even if I can manage a short window over the bigger period, easier as a home station.
this is OK
Usually no activity between 10pm and 7am
Works well.
would like to see maybe 3hr/6hr/24hr
Yes (31 responses)
Yes and no - I choose skewed operating times!
yes depending on operator numbers
yes, although being limited to home operation and not being in great health I would like to see a 8 hr Home category
yes, they're fine
Yes. A 12 hour would be better.

Q11.4 Do you understand and are you satisfied with the current scoring system?

Absolutely satisfied
Current scoring suits me fine
Current system a disadvantage for me
Current system reasonable but room for improvement

Disagree with the current scoring system
Favours rovers, doesn't reward difficult contacts.
For the most I've no problem with it. But then my Portable/Home QTH is in an area with many Amateurs so I have many opportunities to make QSO's. To be fair though.. we need a scoring system that is equitable for ALL Amateurs regardless of geography.
Generally satisfied but willing to try something different
I do collect grid squares, however I prefer the old distance scoring system
I don't have a chance of beating the rovers
I don't like grid Square based scoring
I quit because of it
I see the inequity of low scores for repeat contacts.
I understand it, it's complex and inequitable
I understand the current system. I am not happy with it personally because portable operation is not possible for health reasons. It seems to me that if furthering VHF-Microwave is the object of the contests then where the station is located is academic. Let participants have free choice of location and let distance and frequency be the measurement of success.
I would prefer use of Grid Locators and km for scoring
In my opinion does not reward effort. The current system encourages "shooting fish in a barrel" approach, which at the end of the day does nothing to enhance the state of the art - just helps some points totals
It favours city operators
Moderately satisfied.
Needs a lot of work
Needs improvement
Needs to be distance based
No (8 responses)
No - I saw the same issues you raised when I saw the rules for the contests - I am used to the distance scoring method from UK VHF field days 30 years ago.
No - it needs to be distance based
No Most of our contacts up north here are mostly long haul here. I would prefer to work on distance here. [One of my contacts] is nearly 300klm from here. Most of my contacts are around 50 to 80 klms and up to 300 klms .
no not happy, favors the city based hams
no very discriminatory and complicated
No, as reward for effort most of our contacts are long distance and the current system doesn't reward that effort well
No, distance based would be better
No, proposed distance scoring fairer
Not particularly. Disadvantage not having any SHF (1.2 and up) gear
Not satisfied
Not satisfied
Not satisfied with the current rules as they don't reflect the effort put into some contacts
OK but does not favour less active states
Request change to distance based scoring
sort of

Splitting 6,2 and 70cm into a class would be better for newcomers
The current grid-based system is somewhat ingrained but the concept of distance-based scoring makes a lot of sense and accounts for the difficulties at the higher bands.
The proposed changes would be good
Totally satisfied
Understand and have concerns with the rules due to the dominance of grid squares on the point scores.
Understand the current but needs a change
Understand, yes. Satisfied, not entirely.
Understanding of current system is good. Distance based scoring would be better.
Understand-Yes, Not satisfied.
Very satisfied with the current scoring system
Yes (9 responses)
Yes and I am happy with current system.
Yes and I'm happy with the scoring system. Of course I try to score the most points I can, but "winning" isn't my motivation
Yes and No
yes and no to second part
Yes but prefer distance based scoring.
Yes, but open to change
Yes, it's ok, but limits my points ability when I'm [using a vertical antenna].
YES, keep the system just the way it is - everyone knows the rules. If you want to change it for black box operators then create a new FD.
Yes.
Yes.

Q12 Do you support the proposal for distance based scoring?

6M is a neglected band no one takes it seriously they scamper off to higher bands all the time and often don't come back to 6M
A distance based Scoring system is a much fairer way to score QSO's. meaningful
Additional incentives to operate in a more remote location than the current system
Agree with principle however points loading for microwave bands needs more work
although I would like to see some sort of bonus for operating "away" from the main capital cities - to help balance the scoring for those in the country areas
Although the intent is good, any scoring system is not going to meet all requirements. More emphasis needs to be placed on the score relative to last years, and like stations by all.
As the moon is not considered to be a satellite under the wia rules, as it's a celestial body, I think a distance based scoring system is good for me as I operate 23cm moonbounce a lot
Better for isolated stations
Depends how complex exchange will be specially with marginal stations

<p>Depends on how complex the exchange is going to be. ie maiden head down to 1KM?</p>
<p>Distance based is a more accurate reward, since 6 digit maidenheads are already commonly exchanged this will be an easy change for contesters.</p>
<p>For field days, it's easier to deploy gain antennas for 2m than 6m, and for 70cm than 6m or 2m. If the same Tx power is available, 6m distance contacts are "more difficult" than 2m . . . and so on. Band multipliers could be "better" balanced.</p>
<p>Hmmm - the hard ones at #12... Personally I have no problem with the use of Grid Locators. I don't see all that much difference with distance; working more distant grids could be considered a coarse measure of distance. The issue comes when, say, a station in QF22 works two stations in, say, PF87. The grid system minimises the value of the second contact - the distance system maximises it. Personally, I like the idea of stations really going portable, and spreading themselves out - activating inactive grid locators. If people were as perverse as me, and up to the challenge, the locator system could be seen to reward this more than the simple distance system.</p>
<p>I also like the idea of phone including SSB and FM (and digital phone too for that matter). It would be a great way of getting people started. No repeaters of course.</p>
<p>I am happy with a grid square based scoring method. It takes too much time to get distances otherwise. 6 digit codes perhaps could be introduced for more accurate distances.</p>
<p>I am keen for this change to be investigated. I hope there would be some way of limiting prearranged contacts between club stations and their members.</p>
<p>I am keen to continue participation in the rover category. I came second in the first FD rover category in winter 2010 (as [callsign] and helped [callsign] come first. This was the best fun I have ever had in a contest [...]</p>
<p>I believe nothing will be achieved by changing the scoring system.</p>
<p>I don't like having any band multipliers.</p>
<p>I feel distance-based scoring just favours another group of people - e.g. those at a distance, but just within radio reach, of a large city.</p>
<p>I go out to make contacts, not for the scoring. It is satisfying to know something that I constructed works, and makes contacts. Long distance contacts would be a bonus.</p>
<p>I have no objections in to a distance based scoring scheme, the problem is with the logging. The band multipliers are due for a change, I would support the proposed multiplier scheme if it was applied to the current rules. I definitely agree that there is a disincentive on 6m and that 70 and 23 are overweighted.</p>
<p>I have previously suggested a trial with both current and distance based scoring operating (VK Logger Forum). It would be interesting to compare the results.</p>
<p>I support a change to Distance Based scoring to make scoring better for all operators</p>
<p>I think distance scoring would be fairer and encourage more country stations</p>
<p>I think that the removal of grid squares is timely and while some loading for microwaves is good, it ought not result in a handful of contact determining a win.</p>
<p>I think the proposed method would be an improvement on the current grid square based system.</p>
<p>I would like to see a qrp section as well. Otherwise I go along with your suggestions.</p>
<p>I'd be concerned about the possible dominance of 6m scoring and feel the current grid based scoring rules are a good contrast with the distance based ones for John Moyle and Ross Hull.</p>
<p>It is a fair way to determine an overall score.</p>

It will equalise the efforts at the higher bands for points. It typically takes a lot longer to align antennas etc at microwave to accomplish a valid contact over a considerable distance.
It would be a fairer system
Make rules with same effect on all operators. No hoki poki or trickery.
Many casual stations I contact (20% of all contacts) don't know their locator but I can usually work it out for them. Going to the next sub level will make this probably impossible. There will be lots of guessing involved.
More challenging for [remote northern] stations. We do not have the luxury of having a multitude of stations nearby
Much better system for stated reasons. I would be much more inclined to participate under these proposed rules
Only that there could be a separate section for VHF only - grid square scoring is fine as it is.
Perhaps a Foundation licence points bonus be included
Probably need to consider further. Distance based scoring is interesting.
Providing a specific VHF plus event focused on distance will drive the advancement of operator and station capability.
Run a different event, get results. Then you may have a valid case for change.
Setup a new contest for distance based. This may run on the same day but I would like to see them separate as different aerial / power supply / amplifier configuration and location would be used.
Solely distance based scoring does not encourage people to activate rare grid squares during the field days. I prefer a mixture distance - gridsquare. May be gridsquares as multipliers?
Sounds good to me
The advancement to distance based VHF/UHF exclusive contest provides increased incentive for CBD based stations to 'look' for remote/portable stations. It also supports the notion of improving the station capabilities through point incentives for longer contacts.
The Current Ross Hull Contest is based on distance. Summer FD contacts can be used as Ross hull contacts as well, but only 1 contact per UTC day per station worked. John Moyle is also distance based. I see no reason to change the Field Day system. It would be better for operators to encourage others in their region to get out and play Field Day, even if only for 8 hours, and to help the newer operators to find location/s in reachable grid squares. i.e. you can change the results across areas by thinking about the rules and working out how you can maximize your score within the rules.
The Field Day is SUPPOSED TO BE a Fun event - not a Blood & Guts Free for All. I don't go in to win at all costs - I go for a day out and to make contacts with as many as I can, in as many squares as I can, in the time available.
The idea of distances with 1km (or better) resolution is one that I have supported for a long time, and believe it should be adopted for RH Contest as well. The 100 km resolution used there is fine if we had a large and uniformly distributed population of VHF stations - but the reality is that we don't. The sparse distribution disadvantages some paths.
The multipliers need to be different for each band
The proposal effectively kills rovers. Also it advantages areas with sufficient high sites to enable long distances. It seems to just change who can now score well...
The proposed changes make the event more FT-817 (or equivalent) operator friendly.

The topography between cities is too varied to have a one size fits all
There should be a minimum distance before bonus points accrue - say 100km on VHF/UHF, 20km on uWave.
There are anomalies
There should be a limit to the score for one contact. EME and digital modes should be excluded.
They have made a good case for improving the rules.
Uncomplicated and fair
Under the proposed system, a 6m contact to Perth would be worth more points than a 100km 1.25cm contact which is FAR MORE DIFFICULT. There are two other contests which have distance based scoring. Why make all contests the same? I like to travel all over [state] activating grids, and other field stations follow me around - why would I bother with a FD if changed to your proposals?
Use a combination of both systems.
Very happy about the changes. I've long believed the JMFD scoring to be better than the other VHF/UHF Field days.
We don't have a over populus of operators out of the city areas.
Whether it's a locator square or distance based system of scoring, I think that we'll never find a "level playing field" that presents all participants with equal challenges and encouragement. I'd certainly like to give the proposed change a try....
While I enjoy the contest, not having Microwave equipment is a big problem with the current rules. Hope that your proposal get off the ground. It will make it more enjoyable for 6m 2m and 70cm. This will also get more people into the contest because of an equal playing ground.
Whilst I see the need to make repeat contacts worth as much as the first contact I'm not sure the proposed scoring system will fix all the problems or attract new participants and I would be disappointed to see grid square based scoring go. In my mind, grid squares and microwave operation goes hand in hand. A bonus per new grid square encourages people to work more squares. Perhaps a bonus per distance zone could be an alternative? I know I've never worked over 400km and working out to 100km is "relatively" easy. Perhaps there are natural distance zones that could attract a multiplier?
Will give me a more even chance if I elect to stay on the lower bands using only my own equipment, if I borrow high band equipment from other club members it will also be fairer.
Would like to see 23cm multiplier slightly higher than 70cm.
Yes I do support this proposal with one small change - I would actually ban Rover stations as I believe they are "cheating" - however I will accept it if they are kept within their own section of the contest and not be allowed to be declared "overall winners".
Yes, however instead of a point per km which requires people giving their precise location, maybe a point for every 10km or 50km or part thereof with different scores for different bands (separate from multipliers).
Yes, it does make sense, although it might be somewhat more difficult to implement with accuracy of locators, and rounding up (even, say 40.4km to 41km) on the higher bands could influence the score quite a bit.

Q13. Would you still support these events if the rules were changed?

A trial may not give a good indication of whether the rule changes cause increased participation as the mere fact that there would be increased publicity due to the rule changes there would probably increased participation. I really think there would need to be a clear indication prior that increased participation would result before even trialling radical new rules.
I don't mind either way. I would not participate in a contest with the objective to win, just have some fun.
I see this question as having an unfair weighting in question type toward the YES case.
I would continue to operate as a group. I currently take on the scoring and would not be willing to manually score a paper log. I have tried to drive VKCL whilst operating the radio and find it difficult. I tend to make many mistakes and it turns the fun of operating into hard work.
Keep it simple
No, but we would still participate if the scoring was changed
The key would be an increase in participation.
Yes - I operate in these events whatever the rules are. The scoring system would not deter me from participating.
Yes, I think the rule changes proposed are most likely a positive step, however I would participate anyway, the contest aspect is not necessarily the reason I get involved, I see it as a chance to have a greater amount of V/UHF activity available and especially microwave station operations.
Yes it all depends on my availability and ability to reach the other stations

Q14 Do you think changes to scoring or other rules would improve:

Your enjoyment of the events	49
Overall participation	63
Activity levels during the events	59
Other:	26

Comments:

Again this question has a bias. It would have been better presented as a Yes or No choice. I would answer No to all, but I was unable to. [Quite true – an oversight - A No vote for all options is recorded here]
as mentioned previously I think the end result should be solely based on frequency and distance and I think that modifying the rules along these lines will increase involvement
Building and operating microwave gear takes a lot of initiative and enthusiasm. I'm not sure how scoring changes will of itself increase participation.
Do not think it would make much difference.
encourage more participants
fairer to remote operators
fairness of scoring
Fairness of scoring across Australia
greater fairness
I don't think any of the above will significantly alter
I don't think it will change anything
I think that changing the rules will have minimal effect. Other factors will be dominant

if any change in participation rate occurs.
Increased field station activation
It makes the points system more fair
Maybe yes, maybe no!
Most likely overall participation however I think this is largely a 'competition' issue rather than an activity issue. I view FD's as a chance to participate in greater V-UHF and microwave activity.
need to test run a trial
No change
no I don't see any improvement
no.
Only if it was easy to log.
P would like to see a microwave only contest
provide incentives for new vhf ops to join in
[providing] that its a very simple set of rules, participation will increase, if that is the impediment.
Too complex
Unsure - depends on how the loss of grid square fanatics balances out the inclusion of distance fanatics??!

15 Triband category "6/2/70"

The rules change proposal includes the separation of the bands 50, 144 and 432 MHz into a separate category, to cater for operators who are limited to those bands by their available equipment, such as the Icom 706/7000 series, Kenwood TS2000, Yaesu FT100 and the FT8x7 series. Do you agree with this part of the proposal?

Response option:	count
Yes, it's a good idea and it will encourage more activity from amateurs with that kind of equipment. (A1)	61
I will enter this category as I have one of those radios but no microwave equipment. I might be competitive with other similar stations! (A2)	13
I operate on microwave bands as well as the lower bands so I will enter the All Band category anyway (A3)	34
I am not in favour of this. (give extra info if possible) (A4)	3
Comments	43
No answer	5

The comments on this question were:

Comments on Question 15 re a separate category for "6/2/70"
706's etc are out there by the thousands. Anything to get 10% of them up on air in the field would be wonderful. I have only recently regained activity on 1296 and realize I need at least 2 other microwave bands to be competitive in the "open" section.
a great idea!

Comments on Question 15 re a separate category for "6/2/70"
An excellent suggestion I strongly support as an owner of an FT-817 and rookie on the shorter wavelengths.
Create a new field day for black box operators, don't wreck what we have.
Crikey, I'd be pleased just to see more stations with 70 cm capability participating!
Definitely support this
Excellent idea and there could even be a section for F calls
Good one
I believe having this as a separate category will help those not currently in the microwave bands compete. I hope that it would encourage more to participate and go portable.
I don't totally agree with the above list, if it is intended to cater for readily available commercial equipment, 23cm should be included. But if it is intended just for the many operators with that class of rig then it does make sense.
I might choose to go out by myself rather than necessarily wait for [my club], it would also result in more activity.
I only use a 2m hand held.
It still won't stop the annoying habit of microwave operators using the 2m and 70cm qso channels for microwave liason. This is my biggest gripe and the main reason why I quit.
I thing the top 2 are the main points i agree with
I think 1296 should be included as well as more radios are available with 1296 and everything above this requires more technical knowledge
I'm quite happy to tally up the number of contacts I make on each of the bands I operate without "Beating my Chest" over how great I am!
Incentivising 'new' participants is great - this provides a relevant entry point.
Microwave is a specialist area that is not in my finance or technology zone. It shuts out 95% of amateur operators
Should also include 23cm in this group. If I operate on 23cm I get forced to the microwave category and have no hope at all of getting a competitive score. Many would argue that 23cm is not uWave.
Since we have some equipment for 23cm we will likely operate in all-band when we have this available, but it is a good idea to have a separate category for people without exotic equipment as it is impossible to compete with GHz+ rover stations at the moment.
still disadvantages F calls but still better than what we have
Support the 50/144/432 proposal to encourage activity
that's like saying have an FM section for those with no sideband gear. Not everyone has 6 mtrs either
The 50/144/432 operators are our main stay, our bread and butter operators in all VHF contests, and their needs need to catered with an additional low band category. This is an excellent idea and needs to be encouraged. Many amateurs, clubs etc., do not have microwave equipment and so can be at a disadvantage to begin with and may not bother participating at all. So the proposal of a 50/144/432 category has my approval.
The current rules encourage people to increase the number of bands they operate on, although it is not a stated aim. I would support a listing of "Highest on band" and a section like the microwave challenge, perhaps longest distance on each band.
The new categories are a good idea. Distance-based scoring, I'm not so sure.
The operators who wish to participate in these bands only should be put into a category of their own for scoring but to keep the level of amateurs using these bands all should be able to use 6 meter to 47Ghz and above.

Comments on Question 15 re a separate category for "6/2/70"
The separation of microwave removes the bias towards station near major metro area where there is more microwave activity which is virtually no existent in regional areas
There are MANY Amateurs who through a lack of knowledge or interest or \$\$ will NEVER build/acquire gear for the Microwave Bands. These participants should NOT be disadvantaged in their Scores by their choice or circumstances.
These bands allow participation by new F-call operators.
This is a good idea but I think a highest score involving vhf/uhf and microwave bands should carry more weight than VHF/UHF only section highest score. Perhaps an 'overall winner' might be appropriate but Rovers and Club stations could complicate things.
This is a reasonable suggestion.
This is a valid recognition that some folk will only ever use what they readily have on hand, but that is a good move, as we need more stations to work, even with those four bands.
This is likely to encourage competitive participation on the lower bands in particular and is probably a good idea in terms of increasing overall participation.
This sort of scoring allows for single band operation - but could have multi-band operators "noted" for how well they go as well
When I first started doing Field Days and just had my IC-706 I thought such a section would be a good idea and still hold that view despite not having added other bands
When single op I would probably enter this category,
Where is the motivation to get on the higher microwave bands? In my 1st field day I had 2 & 70cm, by my second I had 23cm, by my 3rd I had a better 23cm setup. See the trend? I wanted to be more competitive so I had to add bands and improve.
Why will this not accept "no Answer" which I have highlighted) as an answer. My check list on the RH side, shows this question in Red.
Would like to see 23cm included with the lower bands to reflect the increasing avaiability of "off the shelf" radio equipment with this band.
Yes - BUT,
Yes, it does look like a good embellishment - I would still use those bands as an all-band entrant.
Yes, it rewards activity over having only high value contacts on the microwave bands.

Q16. The distance based scoring proposal suggests 1 point per km. Do you think there should be a limit to the number of points per contact?

Responses:

Points should be limited to the distance achievable by extremely good conditions for a direct contact.	13
I agree there should be a limit but I am not sure what that limit should be.	42
No limit on the number of points.	55
	11

The comments under each of these options were:

Response 1: Points should be limited to the distance achievable by extremely good conditions for a direct contact. Count: 13

Max points to be defined by tropo propagation and not ionospheric such as Es
--

or F layer reflection
Too hard

Q16 response 2: I agree there should be a limit but I am not sure what that limit should be.
 Count: 42

6m is a real problem as it is possible to work thousands of kms if the conditions are right.
6M long-haul (Es) might get disproportionate rewards
6m should be limited so that a single (or even multiple) contact to the US, whilst stil being rewarded should not skew the whole scoring result
A series of contacts with JA on 6m Es would overshadow any points achieved over a long path even at 10GHz. It would make sense to cap 6m contacts outside VK/ZL (by callsign) to maybe 1000pts.
a trial would sort this out, maybe
As I said earlier I'm concerned about 6m under this scoring system and something to equalise tropo and Es contacts should be factored in
back to question 12, I see today clubs that pre organise and ONLY work their own, I don't want to have this continue to be extended. Create a minimum worked calls for ALL to qualify.
Difficult to answer, because if there are ionospheric effects, then large 6m and 2m scores are possible from relatively modest stations, which can't be directly compared to the relative difficulty of making microwave contacts
eg 6m VK-JA
Good luck coming up with the magic number.
Good luck on this one,
I am thinking of 6m and the possibility of a great opening overshadowing the higher bands and the effort required to use them.
It's interesting that the JMMFD rules were altered after I won my section by simply going to a portable location that was more than 300 Km from [city], but still had many QSOs back to the [city] area. I wondered why other fellows don't try such a strategy - too much of a challenge perhaps...?!
Maybe a maximum of 250 points per contact
Perhaps a 5000 point limit for all bands? This is about the max possible within VK/ZL. Without a limit, one EME or 6m contact could be worth >18000 points, skewing the results.
some "smoothing" to take into things like sporadic E and tropo which are outside the operators control would make the "playing field" a little flatter
Why a limit? Distance is distance?
Would appreciate the views of other to help determine best approach.

Q16 response 3: No limit on the number of points. Count: 55

EME contacts, maybe meteor scatter may have to be limited
good luck if E _s present
Good luck to those who achieve it.
Great question.. while rare openings could make it impossible to compete for other stations, it would be unfair on those who got lucky to

clip their wings. There is an element of "lottery" to allowing unlimited points but I think E _s contacts should be rewarded by extra points.
how to support digital modes etc ?
However may give uneven advantage with some propagation conditions
I think the low probability of an E _s opening is enough to make it interesting
if a 6metre E contact from VK2 to ZL2 let the point show
If one area gains from good conditions and another doesn't - so be it - that's radio!
if someone goes to the effort to be operational on moonbounce then the points vs distance should be appropriate
If you want a distance based system, then distance has no limit, so how can you limit the score. That makes no sense.
Perhaps: It may be a good idea to limit points scored per contact for 6 m contacts only, in a manner similar to that used in the John Moyle.
Regardless of the way points are awarded/allocated.. it's going to be the same for ALL participants. The variability in Results comes about by the finicky nature of Propagation.
Some stations might come up one only and would not be disadvantaged. what about ai [AE] contacts?
There have been many silly rules relating to 6 m and E _s yet those in coastal areas are not penalised for being able to get into a duct. Keep it simple.
Why should there be a limit? What would the point be of a limit?

Q16 response 4: Other count: 11

Arrange a simply calculable asymptote
I would like to see power levels included in the calculation.
If there was a limit it would affect both stations in the contact. I'm not sure of what conditions would require a limit to be placed or what it might be. Others may have views on this which I would be interested in hearing.
logarithm of distance in km

Note: regarding the use of logarithms, we note that adding logarithms is mathematically equivalent to multiplying the original numbers.

Q17. Aims from the WIA VHF Contests page

“The overriding aim is to get away for the weekend and have fun. Next after that, the aims are to encourage more activity on vhf and microwave bands to encourage people to work greater distances than usual by operating portable to provide opportunities for people to activate or work into new grid squares”

Do you believe the aims are met by the current rules and do you believe the proposed changes would meet the aims more fully?

Aim	Current rules	Proposed rules
-----	---------------	----------------

	Yes	No	Yes	No (and other responses, see comments)
Get out for the weekend and have fun	107	5	99	No: 3 Uncertain: 7
Encourage activity	74	33 + comments below	89	See comments below
Work greater distances	47	50 See comments	98	
Contact new grid squares	92	22	72	29

Comments:

On Getting out for the weekend and having fun: responses other than Yes or No (or equivalents)

No, I won't participate. If I wanted a distance based contest, then I'll participate in the JMFD or the RH.
Not Valid In My Situation
Possibly
Unsure

On encouraging activity (current rules):

A little
Dont care about microwave
For the most part YES but there will always be those who are disadvantaged by a Scoring system that has NOT been reviewed for considerable time.
I doubt it
Maybe
more activity - yes - because of the increased opportunity for DX contacts

Comments on encouraging activity (revised rules):

no more than the current rules
Scrap microwave
Separate 6/2/70 section would encourage a lot more.
VHF maybe but not microwavers
We can only hope. Any changes need to benefit all participants. However, there will no doubt be opportunites for those who will look for ways to exploit any weaknesses.. As is happening now with the Current Scoring system

Comments on working more grid squares: Existing rules

For Grid Square Scoring is merely working with the current set of Scoring Rules. I have NO interest in Grid Squres.
I would always try and work a new grid square
Not interested
Not Really
not really
only once per grid square
Should
Somewhat
yes this is why i participate
Yes, but they are sometimes hard to come by.

Yes, extra points

Comments on working new grid squares: New rules

No, grids don't matter
No. But this is offset by a greater encouragement for working long distance.
No: The proposed rules are likely to kill off Rover operations not as much but who cares
Not if you remove the grid square requirement
Not interested
not necessarily
not really - but of course distances equals gridsquares
Not specifically
perhaps
probably not closer ones
These new rules are meant for high powered VHF home stations
Those who wish to work Grid Squares can do so if they wish..but the absolute Distance of a QSO is more meaningful.
Yes - indirectly - grid squares aren't something I collect anyway
yes and even within the grid square.
Yes Even More
Yes, by way of distance
Yes, with scoring based off KM

Q18.Importance of aims

Of the aims stated on the WIA VHF Contests web page, how important do you think each aim is? If you believe an aim is highly important, please rate it as a 5. if you think it is least important, rate it as a 1. Numbers in between allow you to show one as slightly more or less important than others

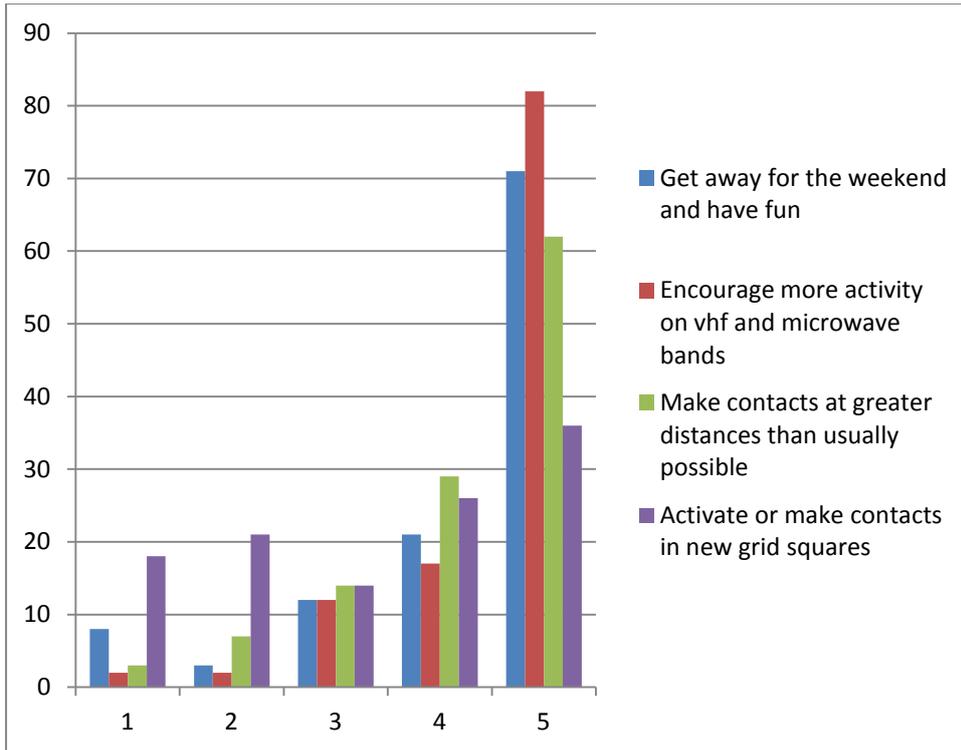
Aim	Importance level and response counts				
	1	2	3	4	5
Get away for the weekend and have fun	8	3	12	21	71
Encourage more activity on vhf and microwave bands	2	2	12	17	82
Make contacts at greater distances than usually possible	3	7	14	29	62
Activate or make contacts in new grid squares	18	21	14	26	36

These results are shown graphically below. The most consistently high rating aim is to encourage more activity on VHF and microwave bands with 82 votes for it being highly important and only 2 votes for it being least important.

The views on getting away for the weekend and having fun also supported this aim strongly.

Working greater distances received the next strongest vote as highly important.

Activating or making contacts in new grid squares received a relatively even level of votes across all importance ratings indicating that views varied across the respondents.



Q19.Best contact

Answer	Count	Percentage
Distance worked (A1)	87	70.16%
New country (A2)	2	1.61%
New grid square (A3)	7	5.65%
Other (A4)	13	10.48%

Comments:

430Km's on 200mW on 2.4Ghz
900KM on 23cm
A good contact may not be any of the choices, eg QRP, or just a difficult but satisfying QSO
A great buzz to work Rockhampton Qld, from Adelaide SA
a vk7 maritime mobile on 6m
Adelaide to Whyalla on 23cm
Adelaide to Whyalla on 2m :)
All 3 factors can make for a highly valued contact! Given our geography, new countries are rare & thus highly valued. A long haul contact is always valued. A new grid square is always valued, but some operators seem to be more focussed on distance worked than accumulating grid squares - both are valid goals.
Any of greatest distance, new country or new grid square would be exciting. Also, both greatest distances and numbers of 'squares' are considered in different parts of the amateur radio world. These considerations wouldn't affect whether I participate in a VHF/UHF FD event.
As with all amateur radio contacts, DX is the ultimate aim. Of course new grid squares, countries etc are all important in their own way.
Because equipment at both ends was home-brewed and the resulting contact reflected the fact that good technical and operational practices were necessary to make it happen.
been trying to get squares I missed in previous years
Being able to "try out" a new Line-of-sight location
Being predominantly interested in microwave operation ie above 1296Mhz, the opportunity to work greater distances with opportunity of more microwave station available, is very attractive.
Best contact was a single 23cm contact using equipment that had been in storage for 20 years (new band worked). After that, the distance worked is the next most valuable.
but it's easy from home with a well set up station, I am sure this applies to every band
definitely best was a low power contact on 23cm over a pretty good distance, especially considering the tiny antenna used
difficulty of making the contact is what I value the most. going to the effort to set up large amounts of gear for that special weak signal contact is what I like
Distance and signal strength

distance contact with minimal equipment.
Distance is always my major consideration, but gathering new grids on each band is also a significant aspect of my operation.
distance work with microwaves.
Distance worked on 10GHz.
E's on 6 metre but no incentive in score system
Especially on the microwave bands, grid squares are significant
Given VHF and up is usually seen to be line of sight, being able to make contacts in these bands at distances far in excess of that is always a buzz for me.
Helping a newbie to get his gear sorted (even to point of supplying loaner gear) and then pestering him to get out there and play.
I only use 5W FM and like to see if I can get as many grid squares as possible. This is distance related, of course.
I suppose distance does matter when it comes to all aspects of amateur radio.
I think distance worked and frequency are the major indicators of success. Climbing hills is more a measure of vehicles ability rather than the radio operator
I value the longer distance contacts even though there are plenty of grid squares at shorter distances that I have not worked. Grid squares simply don't excite me at all.
in my experience, VK's don't really care about collecting grid squares. I go for distance - my best distances have been in JM FD because I could rework for in the grid for additional points.
Just the achievement of making a 10GHz contact over a path that the text books say is not possible.
My first 10GHz contact - it was not over a great distance, although into a different grid square, but it was just so satisfying to have built such microwave gear and eventually made a two way contact.
New country or GS a bonus
not sure, maybe some hard managed uhf contact, but i had verticles, so I really was not in the same class..
Our time spent on difficult contacts was not related to any specific aim but to have a difficult contact, it probably deserved to be part of distance and microwave scoring, not overall VHF
Rarity. VK4's on E's outside of the usual season because of low angle takeoff, extended troppo to small stations not usually heard.
Really, this is hard to answer truthfully with a single answer. Personally, the distance worked and the new grid square go hand-in-hand; pretty much every new square I work these days involves a significant distance, regardless of band.
Setting records...
Spent the weekend working VK1 and VK2 but suddenly VK6 opened up.
The challenge of achieving greater distance from a portable field station is highly motivating.
The fact that I made it on gear that I had built.

The most memorable contacts are the ones you work hard for, Helping a VK7 make his first contact across the "Creek" on 23cm with 1W, Chasing a 10 GHz signal over 50 KHx during a First Contact with a newcomer on that band, Making suggestions and working him again the next day with his drift down to one tune per over. Encouraging someone to "Give it a go" and rearing the excitement when they discover they can work several hundred km. My first 24 GHz contact was during a field day. I always look forward to trying to work 2FABV. Although distance is the aim, many aspects make contacts memorable. Not the fact that you "Churn Through the list" every three hours. In my opinion this detracts from the fun, and discourages/distracts you from looking for new contacts. The current rules encourage you to find a new station, rather than recontact the same "Middle distance stations" time and time again.
The most valued contact was for distanced worked as a portable station with minimal equipment.
The thrill from pulling a weak signal out of the noise or using an unusual propagation mode is something I enjoy about the field days.
Unusual mode: FSK441.
[microwave contacts between two distant portables] on all bands
Working 400+km on 2m SSB while portable is a buzz... If more stations further away were active, what would that distance limit be?
working the distant stations that can be bothered with SSB and directional antennas. 1296 to Adelaide and beyond from PF86 is a buzz.

Q20. Can you suggest changes the WIA could make to the VHF/UHF Field Days to improve them in some way, making them more enjoyable or productive for you?

Changes the WIA could make to improve the VHF/UHF Field days...
1 Minimise the number of rules. 2 Have as much uniformity of rules as possible for all contests above 50 MHz. 3 Change the rules in increments and only when really necessary. 4 Have at least one section to encourage the individual to "have a go"
Accept proposed changes to a distance based contest.
Acknowledgement of the degree of difficulty. e.g. 6m versus 3cm operation etc. Recognition of foundation licence participation bonus points etc
Add a QRP category.
Added incentives for F calls to participate,
Adopt a distance based scoring system. Possibly reserve a category for F-Call operators working with 10W or less.
Adopt this proposal.
Already very enjoyable days - the points are definitely a distant second place compared with getting out and enjoying VHF/UHF. However the current points give little incentive to use 6m and the points aren't really ideal - it's possible to have quite a busy day with lots of contacts but if they are all within a couple of grid squares the points score is disappointing. I think going distance-based will be more fair and more exciting.
As a member of one of the regular winning teams I need to be careful. I suport changes that perhaps shift the importance away from the overall winner. Perhaps there could be a "Best DX" category that would favour those at the ends of the path. This would help with the problem that those with their backs to the water, and out on their own have a hard time with the scoring as it stands. I am mindful that around "Our Hill" would have to be one of the best positions in the country for making a high score. This situation is mainly due to the concentration of microwave activities on either side of us. It is good to see that the other states are now starting to catch up.
As has been said many times before - If it aint broke, why stuff around with it

Changes the WIA could make to improve the VHF/UHF Field days...
As mentioned earlier, I preferred the 6 hour short section rather than 8 hour, particularly for the Winter Field Day as you either have to finish before the end of the section or pack up in the dark!
as proposed, distance based
As stated before, a VHF only section be included
As this survey proposes the WIA should seriously consider a change to Distance Based scoring
Attract many more modest stations into the field.
Because we live out in the country we have highgain gear and look for long hauls dx on vhf uhf and above so it help us and support distance but we will enter contest when ever we can .
Better communication/promotion to the VHF-up amateur fraternity; "Sectoring" the contest - the 6m/2m/70cm sector is a good/obvious one, having sector/s based on eirp rating/s might be another.
better results system. I was left off the last two 8 hour Cat for the winter and summer field days in 2012.
By adopting the proposed new rules
Change rules as per your proposal
Change rules to move away from grid based scoring to distance as outlined in the 1da/5dk paper
Change the rules to enable a more level playing field. Metro entrants can rack up big scores with little effort due to operator density etc. thus skewing the results in their favour.
change the rules to include distance
changes to distance scoring but relate points to probablility of contacts. eg 50 MHz have contacts a 500 Km greater than 1200 Km and then 2000+ greater than 1200. See old scoring tables. uwav give max points for current record distances and then scale down
Country is disadvantaged with People in the city
Distance based proposal provides these for me
Distance based scoring Have categories for different setups (similar to the US field days and potentially with bonus points?) i.e: * QRP * Backpack stations - where all equipment is carried into the operating site * Stations running renewable power (solar or self generated power).
Distance based scoring is a much better choice in my view, more stations would be looking for longer distance contacts.
Distance based scoring would be an improvement, otherwise I am quite satisfied with the current rules.
distance scoring will make it more enjoyable because there will be less pressure on getting the grid to build points, the work rate at my station is extreamly high with the current system and a distance based system gives me the choice to work the better distance and scoring stations and reduce the work load. typicly my log has 300 + enterys and 50% are microwave contacts that take an extended time to compleat. this is not easy for a single op station.
Find a way to lift the rate of contacts.
For me personally, the rules are of secondary importance as I enjoy portable operation.
For me, the excitement and anticipation of preparing for an event like this is part of the attraction. Our group sets a number of goals before we start (mostly around station or operational improvements) and we work towards achieving those goals. Looking back over our time in the FD our greatest memories are the amazing or difficult contacts and

Changes the WIA could make to improve the VHF/UHF Field days...
the fun we had on the day. Our scores whilst high and in recent times placing us in the top three in our category does not figure highly in our recollections of past events. Many of us spend more time, money and effort on field days than could ever be rewarded by a certificate or a name on a web page. In my personal opinion the greatest incentive in these activities is a personal motivation to do something out of the ordinary. I can't imagine that a change like this will make a huge difference to the level of participation however I would be happy to be proven wrong.
Getting more club stations or WIA official stations on air would help.
I 100% agree with the suggested distance based scoring.
I believe that the contest manager John Martin should have the final say in any rule changes.
I enjoy them anyway, changes to rules in my opinion are more important for others, however I do appreciate why changes are being proposed.
I greatly value Andrew's and Colin's efforts to 'untangle' these issues. As the question is asking about 'me' and the chief enjoyable component of FDs is the number of stations active on the different bands, the only thing that I see the WIA could do is to encourage participation amongst the group of VHF/UHF amateurs whose enthusiasm level ranges from 'cool' to 'hot' - quite some challenges in there! It never ceases to amaze me that some active amateurs declare that they are not interested in contests and just won't come on the air during them. Heady personal stuff, it seems.....
I think not - the current rules do all that they aim to do. Some individuals simply have different goals and have perhaps not considered how they and others within their local region can work together to maximize their scores within the rules that are in effect. regardless of the scoring basis used, each operator needs to consider how he/she can maximize their own score within the rules.
I think winning is a secondary consideration and therefore that the rules are not a significant issue.
I think you are on the right track
If one of the aims is for stations to "get away for the weekend" and operate portable, maybe more points or bonuses should be given to contacts with portable stations, ie stations who make a greater effort for the contest, and less points or no bonuses to home stations?
if you have gone portable then condition have turned to the worst you should be able to use portable and home scores combined
I'm happy with current field day.
In a previous Answer I stated the existing Contest Format is perhaps getting a bit "stale". Maybe we think about introducing a short duration State (City) based "scramble". Sure there will be Amateurs who will be disadvantaged by either Geography or poor Timing or low density of Amateurs but it's something NEW albeit with its limitations.
In Melbourne to work from [Melb suburb] to anywhere in Sydney from mountains only work QF56 -almost all Sydney pop of millions same grid square. Therefore distance only NO Grid squares
In the end it's up to the individuals, must admit last few have been lack lustre, the field day stations hard to find and sound bored.
Include a qrp section.
Introduce a 50/144/432 low band category.
Investigate ways for providing an assistant to the Contest manager, so he (a) doesn't buckle under the weight of all the new categories/classes of contestant that may be required to keep all of the people happy all the time; and (b) [can] share the blame if not

Changes the WIA could make to improve the VHF/UHF Field days...
all of the people can be kept happy all of the time.
It's a contest. I spend time, money and effort on building up my gear, researching sites, and getting new users on the air. How can it be more productive? I plan my contest weekend based on the rules of the contest, to maximise my point.
just keep the exchange simple other people wont want to do it with the new system
Make a more enjoyable Web site with stories and pictures from portable locations. May be each story and pictures could be posted by user. Also a maps and graphs could be used to show what happened during the contest (possibly with plots on Google map etc)
Make longer distance contacts more valuable (more points), and making "local" contacts less valuable. This would encourage everyone to "listen for the weak ones".
make the proposed changes
Maybe a State by State award as well as the current awards
Maybe also include a photo-graphic aspect - showing the best of the portable stations sort of thing. To be published on the website and in AR. I personally think this should be done for all contests that encourage field portable operation
Maybe having a 'sprint' for 1 hour on all bands sometime during the weekend. Then maybe everyone would be listening at the same time.
Maybe the Teams scenario like the RD contest.
Minimise the rules, just a broad mission statement, work as many stations, as far away as possible on as many bands as possible, rather than rate higher bands as more valuable, include a multiplier effect for managing contacts on all bands in a section, ie if you managed to work 6, 2,70 and 23 have double points for all, so 6 metres thus becomes valuable?
Move to implement rules that strive to advance the skills and capabilities of VHF plus operators, and provide incentive for new participants to trial and then join the ranks.
My views have probably dealt with above
No mention of a QRP class to get the F calls excited? However this is just fiddling around the edges!
No, I'll come anyway!
No, quite content with how they currently are.
No. I am happy with the rules as they are. I do not believe changing the rules would make any difference.
Nothing significant at this time
perhaps a mixture of g/sqare and distance scoring
Permit microwave liason only on channels designated specifically for that purpose.
Scoring to distance Based
Segregate Microwave freqs and to encourage operators who do not have this equipment or licences to operate such. Still enabling them to be competitive on the lower freqs and also in remote areas.
Separation of VHF/UHF and Microwave is a good idea. They require different operating techniques.
Some way to get more participation
split RD contest into 2 parts - ie below 50 MHz and 50Mhz and above.
Stability, simple relevant objectives, simple rules that support the objectives, no more, no less.
standardise on VKCL as the logging software , but allow me to write on paper being up on a hilltop with no mains power, then add in all the details into vkcl after i return from

Changes the WIA could make to improve the VHF/UHF Field days...
the mountaintop. pens and paper dont use batteries
Start earlier, eg. 10am local Eastern Time, that way, for an 8hr stint I can can up and be on my way home for tea at a more reasonable hour.
Suggest that FM simplex calling frequencies 146.500 and 439.900 not be used in contest. Specify some other frequencies. There are city stations that just sit on there and call continuously and even get upset if you try and make a non contest call.
The proposed rule changes would improve the contest and make it much more likley that I would take part
they could adopt the new rules
they could offer a book voucher or some other form of "sponsorship?" free full call class for the winner of an F call section? send me my certificate in PDF, I really don't need to have a paper ink jet printed certificate, make better use of the money :D
They should adopt the changes you are proposing, plus add an Autumn VHF/UHF field day contest.
This won't be popular but some recognition of CW contacts and encouragement to try CW for difficult contacts would be nice. (I am aware that this is year 2012).
Use a distance model. The current system is too biased towards near city operators.
use the 5x9 but use the number of years licenced rather than progress up from 001
Winter FD starting time review : Most operating time should be in daylight hours even if setup is in half-light.
You've got me Andrew free beer maybe ;-)

Q21. Changes the WIA could make that would increase activity in the VHF/UHF Field days

Q21. Changes the WIA could make that would increase the activity in the VHF/UHF Field Days...
A general simplification of the rules would help. A QRP category may help too, if it doesn't already exist. There are many 817's out there! Have a "band of the year", announced a year in advance, that will earn the operator extra points. This could motivate people in preparing for a band they otherwise wouldn't use. FM/vertical polarisation is also a possibility, why not have an FM-only category too!
a home station award for each state
A suggestion would be to remove the Winter Field day & have a Field day in either December or February, as most operators operated from home this last Winter Field Day because of cold weather or lack of propogation at that time of the year
Accept proposed changes
Acknowledge the performance of stations in both the 'rookie' and microwave 'sections'.
Added incentives for clubs to operate as club stations, perhaps some type of material benefit to both participating and winning club stations.
Adopt the banding changes that you have put forward. There are allot more people with the all in one rigs that get discouraged by people with the microwave gear.
Adopt this proposal.
Advertise
An FM only category may possibly increase activity by operators without all mode radios.
as above
as above

Q21. Changes the WIA could make that would increase the activity in the VHF/UHF Field Days...
Better communication/promotion to the VHF-up amateur fraternity, particularly via the affiliated clubs.
Better publicity around the clubs, and even other magazines. The Practical Wireless QRP contest is very popular in the UK, and is only the one band! 2m!
Better publicity of the events, suggest more club stations participating.
change rules as per your proposal
Changes along the proposals suggested
Continue to give the same emphasis to home station operators.
Coordinate microwave enthusiast groups in each state perhaps?
Distance based scoring Have categories for different setups (similar to the US field days and potentially with bonus points?) i.e: * QRP * Backpack stations - where all equipment is carried into the operating site * Stations running renewable power (solar or self generated power).
Distance based scoring. Include all modes but under headings of Phone and Digital (includes CW and whistles)
Distance only NO grid square multiplier Microwave is prearranged contacts between organised teams. To get more 6-2-70 operator on the air should be the main goal of the contest rule changes
distance scoring. Awards for single bands
Don't screw around with the rules
dunno
Encourage F call participation with an additional bonus or section.
F call category. As mentioned 6, 2, 70cm category.
Foundation operators should be encouraged to operate in these events. The participation certificate was a good start but my idea would be to identify the highest scoring Foundation operator in each state and category - portable 8 hours, portable 24 hours and home station 24. Here would be the perfect opportunity to encourage more activity and expose foundation operators to new possibilities. Foundation operators would be able to compete with each other and mix it up with more experienced operators. Maybe, some of them might like what they see and take steps towards an upgrade.
General encouragement to use or lose the frequencies. WIA to fund clubs for projects specific to Field Day use. Encouragement of merging [sic] of Parks awards, SOTA and VHF/UHF Field days
Get rid of the Whingers
Go with the distance based scoring
Have some sort of prize for first place like a WIA gift voucher or something
Have the WIA change their ideas on Amateur bands, which has ALWAYS seemed to be on HF. The WIA is always accepting more bits of HF spectrum, but never trying to protect even the 'Narrow Band ' calling frequencies on the UHF/Microwave bands! The WIA has to show a bit of eagerness to support 'Microwavers'... a lot of us are WIA members too!
I believe it's a more fundamental problem than what's being suggested, in terms of increasing activity. If this is to improve 'competition' then I think we're wrong in our approach, I don't consider the V-UHF Field Days as 'DX Contests' however they attract operators in different ways...
I don't know what can be done to increase participation in all areas, which is the core complaint from those dissatisfied. I think they are always pretty well publicised and not sure what more can be done in that regard. Perhaps it's up to use existing Field Day operators to do more word of mouth promotion if we want participants.

Q21. Changes the WIA could make that would increase the activity in the VHF/UHF Field Days...
I think a separate section for lower bands as proposed may be useful
I think the present system has encouraged increased activity and I caution about changes that might have a negative impact
I think the proposed rule changes could increase activity.
I think the WIA is a very HF orientated organization and when VHF is mentioned it's all about repeaters and D-Star etc. The technical aspects of HF / VHF and UHF are not promoted sufficiently. This is what amateur radio is about, not talking dribble on a repeater or 80m.
include points for distance
Introduce a "single rig" category for 50/144/432 to entice owners of this type of radio to participate on a more level playing field.
Introduce distance based scoring
It is pretty good - trying to level out the playing field is important. Also having enough suitable categories to enter - so that people with licence restrictions or equipment restrictions can be up against similar entries
keep the rovers interested. killing the rovers off will reduce activity
Look for sponsors of the Field day events and offer prizes for higher placed finishers or perhaps gift vouchers to spend at the sponsors stores.
make a certificate for distances or foundation participation
make it a distance based event thus enabling a fair go for all participants.
Make the scoring more fair for people in the country
Maybe aim for 6 events per year, try and make them around 2 months apart. Jan Summer Mar JMFD Jun Winter Aug New Event Mid Aug Oct New Event Early in Oct Nov Spring
Maybe include SOTA somehow.
maybe some sub categories (overlaid) to win.
Money. What, cynical answers less valid than non-cynical? A category for F-calls specifically. And one for people with wonky knees...
More DX activity would mean non-contest types might come out of the wood-work.
More incentive for people starting out, and encouragement by rewarding good operating and equipment. It should be stressed that people should concentrate more on how they compared on each band, rather than how many points the station with 10 bands, that has improved, or at least aimed to improve its station for the last 15 years.
More PR in magazines, may be sponsored plaques
More promotion of Field Day activities and the results. Perhaps a feature article in A.R. Encourage experienced FD operators to invite guests as observers/helpers - they may be bitten by the bug.
no, I think activity is increasing, anyway.
No. I am happy with the current rules.
not sure, it's no longer a young man's hobby and the people who participate are falling off the tree (I'm one of the younger ones)
Once again, get the Club Stations to make the effort as they did in the past.
perhaps extra points for QRP operation
Prizes are not the answer.
Prizes.....try and get sponsors, difficult I know.....

Q21. Changes the WIA could make that would increase the activity in the VHF/UHF Field Days...

Proposed changes are good - increasing multiplier for 6m and awarding points on distance not grid squares.

provide a set of beacons for each 10m and above band to check out equipment prior to use. I do not have access to special test gear for 2m and above.

Re think the 6 metre band width issue to get more contacts

See answers to last question. Simplicity and minimal restrictions plus some good publicity will help.

See Q20.

Some of my comments to the previous question may well have been more appropriately entered here.....

That's a hard one. Often it's just the OPs that cannot be bothered participating...

The distance based scoring should provide this

The task of creating increased activity is not one only for the WIA. All existing VHF/UHF & microwave operators and all clubs should be encouraging all operators to participate in the Field Days, even if only for a limited time.

They should adopt the changes you are proposing, plus add an Autumn VHF/UHF field day contest.

Try to get sponsors to offer a prize. you must remember it costs money to drive, country fuel prices are very high and people go to work Mondays they are not all self funded retirees who sit on the VK logger

We must involve our foundation calls in whatever capacity they are able to participate, to engender the ongoing progressive growth of participants. Activity begets activity.

When ever there is a contest we try to enter if i can work pending. We encourage other operators to join when we are on. A lot don't put logs in for some reason because maybe of the big scores from the larger populated areas. Distance scoring may help this.

WIA should run a childminding service for toddlers. :-)

Q22. Any other comments

Q22. Any other comments

A few opinions. I know the discussion about the change in scoring has been going on for some time and I would definitely like to explore a distance based method. Having said that, while operating in the contests I personally don't keep an eye on the score, I look to make a new contact that I can work, whether it's a new grid square or not at the time it doesn't really matter. It's only after the contest is over and the logs are assembled are the scores considered. It is noted when a long distance contact is made and much enjoyment is gained from working the exotic of difficult contact. I would be disappointed to think that anyone would not participate in the VHF/UHF Field day simply because the scoring system was change or not changed as the case may be. For me the VHF/UHF field day is an opportunity to join in activity on the bands, test & tune equipment and improve the operating skills. As a club activity it also exposes others to one of the many aspects of the Amateur Radio hobby. In the new scoring system I would suggest that Home Stations be encouraged to participate to help increase activity on the bands, the scoring may need to account for home stations differently or as a separate category, Similarly Foundation Licence holders may also need a category.

Q22. Any other comments

Above all, be liberal and all encompassing, think along the lines of what a fantastic problem it would be to have too much participation. Simple rules, simple scoring, separate the DC bands of 6, 2, 70 and 23cm from the microwave bands, some folk are happy to go out and spend an hour on a contact, but this would allow those people to compete with like minded microwave people. Get the bulk of activity happening. Three sections, the IC7000 category, the bands to 23cm (ie, readily available bands IC910 etc) and microwave, 3cm and above and still award the best best combination of all three? That way there is still motivation for the microwave fellows to chase the foundation ops!

Activity from my station may reduce because I would have a different method of obtaining the required numbers if the distance system is adopted. I think a trial would determine if the activity would drop or not. Thanks for the survey..

allow SA to have the extra half hour as the times for finishing is based on eastern standard time (not withstanding that GMT is advertised) WA get the extra time due to their location.

Andrew & Colin, I really do not see any benefit for changing the scoring system. I accept your arguments, but think that you have not really thought them through thoroughly. Regardless of the scoring system, regions which traditionally have high levels of activity will tend to produce higher levels of activity and higher scores, regardless of scoring system. Look at the 2012 Winter FD results - the winners, IIRC, came from VK4. Why? A good number of operators active in a region with reasonable weather on the weekend, combined with absolutely foul weather in the south east of the continent, which meant that there was very limited levels of activity in Victoria and nearby regions. Would the results have changed if the scoring was distance based? I think not. Foul weather (either cold/wet/wind or extreme heat) in a region, regardless of the time of year or season, will decrease the level of participation. As I have said earlier, groups of operators can look at any set of rules and work out how they can collectively cooperate so that they can maximize each others scores. If this occurs, it should then come to the other usual factors that will determine who ends up with the highest score: operator skill, station capability, who else is operating and where they are located, and of course the big unknown: the actual band conditions throughout the contest period. Changing to distance based scoring could produce new distortions, especially for multi-operator stations. Unless the new rules banned EME contacts, a multiop station now has incentive to set up EME stations on each band and make as many contacts as possible via EME. Scores would become massive for such stations. A multiop could in theory run concurrently on terrestrial and EME. There are lots of other possible scoring schemes that could be used. I think it was San Diego Microwave Group had a contest scheme based on grid squares. Contacts in your own square count for 1 point each. Each contact in the next ring of squares may be worth say 3 points. Contacts in the next ring out may be worth 5 points, and so on - just devise a scheme. Whatever the scoring system, any operator needs to read & understand the rules and work out how he/she can maximize his/her own score within the rules!

Andrew and Colin, you're doing a great job. As someone famous once said: "keep calm and carry on".

Contest Rules should be determined by the Membership.

As much as some (many?) complain that the existing rules don't encourage participation or DX contacts, I wonder what influence the rules would have on these aspects. Reasonable evidence that significant on-going benefits will result is surely required before radical changes are made.

As suggested run a separate field day testing your scoring ideas. I will give it 'best endeavors' to participate. Other commitments limit my availability to participate.

Beacons - Beacons - Beacons for each of the higher bands to provide a stable signal source for experimenters and constructors of field day and home equipment. No More abandoned Repeaters unless 1296 and above. Switch Ginini 2m repeater into a continuous horizontal antenna CW beacon mode when not keyed with an input carrier, to assist with field day antenna construction and tuning.

Being in South East Qld, grid squares are less relevant, perhaps have a rover section that incorporates grids to appease the change resistant participants? I believe this will help with getting more logs submitted, and eventually getting more stations on hill tops.

Q22. Any other comments

Considering that the rover category was introduced almost exclusively to stop [rovers] competing against portable stations I am naturally wary of rule changes as in my experience they target some group under the guise of progress. A distance system will hurt [an area outside metro and without access to large activity centres] as we do not have many high altitude sites or operators to go there anyway. The guys that are within range of [centres of activity] so they may benefit (and by coincidence largely support the changes!). What effect will 6M openings that seem more common in the eastern states have on the scores? Will we end up with high power EA stations operating in the eastern states where there lots of convenient air corridors and air traffic....way more than VK5. I guess we in VK5 might score a path across the bight to WA but there won't be anyone at the other end!! I'll still compete if things change.

fix the scoring program to 24 hour time suggested this a while ago, will make post entry a lot easier as this the way I like to operate and have friends who do the same

Foundation operators should be encouraged to operate in these events. I did speak to [contest manager] about an F-call challenge but I think my intent was misunderstood. The participation certificate was a good start but my idea was to identify the highest scoring Foundation operator in each state and category - portable 8 hours, portable 24 hours and home station 24. Here would be the perfect opportunity to encourage more activity and expose foundation operators to new possibilities. The excitement and anticipation of preparing for an event like this is part of the attraction. Our group sets a number of goals before we start (mostly around station or operational improvements) and we work towards achieving those goals. Looking back over our time in the FD our greatest memories are the amazing or difficult contacts and the fun we had on the day. Our scores whilst high and in recent times placing us in the top three in our category does not figure highly in our recollections of past events. Many of us spend more time, money and effort on field days than could ever be rewarded by a certificate or a name on a web page. In my personal opinion the greatest incentive in these activities is a personal motivation to do something out of the ordinary. I can't imagine that a change like this will make a huge difference to the level of participation however I would be happy to be proven wrong.

From an e-mail I recently sent to Andrew: "I have been fascinated for a long time that I have often achieved higher scores in the 24 hour VHF/UHF FD sections than other participants - and that has always been with my operating times only ever commencing after sunset on the Saturday evening through until "stumps" on Sunday morning. It's only been recently that certain fellows have been achieving higher scores than I have achieved - and that's through their operating the full 24 hours. "And I'm not someone who has a 'driven' desire to compete - my feelings, like my late father used to always say, are like: "If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing well." For this reason I've never bothered to also put in a log for the 8-hour sections. Rather, I like perusing the results pages and to marvel at all the interest there now is in microwave bands in different parts of the country - this is a far cry from the early years of my portable operating when I would have 2.4 and 10.3 GHz gear available and there were no takers for contacts within cooee! "Those comments also go for my usually-best-in-category results for the JMMFD (which, as you know, is distance based scoring on VHF and above). I sometimes wonder what the other fellows are doing when I can score so many more points than they do in such a shorter length of time! And in the JMMFD, I only ever use bands up to and including 23 centimetres..... "Another general comment I would make here (and I don't know if there will be the opportunity in the survey to explore this) is that my impression/intuition is that in these recent years there are not so many folk operating on the 'bread and butter' bands - 6M, 2M and 70 cM - than there used to be, say, ten (or fewer) years ago. "Thanks for your efforts to 'unravel' all this for us all!"

Good luck with getting the changes implemented and thanks to both of you for getting this survey and proposed changes together.

Good to know that someone is proposing this change. It is something i am looking forward to hearing about and then if it is popular doing the contest under the new rules. Keep it up!

Q22. Any other comments

Hi Andrew, Not sure what what to make of this, but here goes... So now ALL VHF/UHF/SHF field days will use pretty much the same scoring system? All the effort of making my station fast to set up/pack away to adhere to the strict timing required to fit into the rover/portable category is now wasted because some people are upset with the rules? Once I have tried to activate as many gridsquares as I can I usually settle in the last one at a high point and try to maximise distance. Essentially, what is proposed is all the microwave gear I have built into a portable station is now less important in winning, and I should just pack the Yaesu FT857 as trees cause big problems trying for distance on the east coast. It appears these changes are being done to appease VHF (6m & 2M) home stations. If some don't like the gridsquare scoring system as now used, then that is OK - stick to the JMFD and the Ross Hull. Distance based scoring also favors those with deep pockets who are able to afford serious power on the higher bands, or better transverters such as built-up Khune. Another thing it favours is areas with hilly/accessible and clear sites for microwave contacts. You could assume two high power portable stations, setting up 200km on two hills, contest after contest just contacting each other. At least with gridsquares there is incentive to try and contact someone outside yours. Yes, I have a lot of fun, enjoy the chase and PLAY TO WIN - this is a sport of sorts, and wouldn't sport be boring if no-one wanted to win? After VK2's good showing last field day, I have a feeling that VK3 & VK5 are aiming to knock us out and I for one, enjoy this challenge! If that is the case, then do it by playing to the rules, not changing them.

If some want a 6/2/70 contest then start one. Easter is a prime weekend for it. Want Es then pick a weekend in Dec. Kill off microwave in the John Moyle and just make the VHF section 6/2/70. Ticks all the boxes then. Try fixing the Ross Hull first before fiddling with a contest that works and is becoming more popular each time it happens.

I am pleased that distance based scoring is being considered as it will encourage people to build and operate gear for greater distance than just a few rovers dancing around a grid junction within 20 feet of each other. it will also encourage working moonbounce on 2,70 ,23cm and above as well.

I do enjoy the field days and participate whenever I can. I'd like to see qrp operators acknowledged and perhaps a shorter period. I'd like to see a better range of logging software to cater for those who don't run Windows systems.

I favour the current grid based scoring system as it provides variety, there are already two distance based contests in the calendar. However, the suggestion to create another entry category for 50MHz to 500MHz is a good idea, although 1.2 and 2.4GHz should probably be included to make it VHF-UHF category and provide incentive for improvement of equipment without going to microwaves. Congratulations anyway on a well thought out and prepared proposal. Good luck.

I have been building microwave transverters to go out portable and have some fun, even if I don't make any contacts. I could stay at home, as I live on the third floor, and have uninterrupted views from the South to West... also to ZL. But it is fun to go out on one of the hills around here, even if I get chased off by storms or bad weather!

I have difficulty [understanding] why the proposed changes would be opposed by existing participants unless they are in an area with favourable grid square orientation. To me it would seem difficult to oppose the changes on grounds of equity and those wanting to operate portable will still be able to do so without needing to move between gridsquares to maximise points. Should lead to a more enjoyable weekend with more available operating time and less travelling time. Not to mention reduced carbon emissions.

I have not participated in a field day contest for quite a few years. I hope this will change

I have participated in the VHF/UHF field days for about 6 years, sometimes under my own call and sometimes in a group with [others], we operate on all bands up to 24GHz as a group and usually do quite well because of the number of bands activated and the hilltop locations chosen. I can't see any need to change to a distance based scoring system at all. I think some people are never satisfied if they don't win and I have noticed that after many field days a bitch session starts on some internet resource about the need for change, I find this whinging a negative to the hobby but I guess it will always be there. My vote is to leave the rules pretty much as they are now. The suggested VHF grouping seems ok.

Q22. Any other comments

I have probably been there done that a bit too often re field days. I'm more interested in SOTA where I can choose my own field day combined with some exercise. Of course I can do both at the same time. Rules should be reviewed by current participants probably every 5 years. Having all decisions made by a small committee that is unchanged over decades might not be the best management technique. Having said that, changing rules without regard to past history re rule changes is asking for dissent. Usually the people asking for rule changes want to tilt the playing field in their direction. For this reason I am cautious about changes. Some years ago 6 m was made pretty useless for contests, which disadvantaged the inland guys and the VK4,6,8 guys. You cannot satisfy all participants or potential participants so if you satisfy say 60% or more you have succeeded. The enjoyment aspect is often determined by the members of the group you belong to. A badly organised group with warm beer, burnt snags and cask wine won't get me coming back. The "706" section would be well worth putting in place. Even if the WIA does not find itself able to make that change pronto there is no reason why I can't offer a Certificate of Commendation to the best scorer on 50/144/432 in each call area. Score to be simply the sum of grid square based distances on each band multiplied by 50/100/400 for the 50/144/432 MHz bands. Any consecutive hours of contacts stations to be worked no more than twice at least 3 hours between these contacts. Stations may "spot" but no confirmation of reports by text, email reflector etc. Logs to be sent by email.

I hope your proposal or parts of the idea gets to help with the local contacts and dense population in some areas and it would be great to log a VK8 or VK6 in the very next contest. I THINK BOTH YOU ANND THE WIA HAVE THE 6 METRE BAND WRONG AND 1 POINT IS ENOUGH OR 1 EXTRA TO THE ABOVE BANDS. BEST OF LUCK

I must admit after the switch off of CH5A I was keen to come up on 2M and put up a basic antenna and promptly worked three ZI3's and thought whats all the biug deal about this 2M ZI stuff. So then put up a larger M2 import and can hear VK5 VK7 and VK3RGI all the time. I monitor 0.1 each day and have had 4 qsos for October. Activity is low and I am surprised at this. Unsure why but I suspect the fall off in Field days is the same. People get up and turn on the laptop and check the logger. Then maybe go and turn on the radio if there is any reason to do so. Also DATA WSPR modes seem to dominate and SSB CW dropped off. Now TV has gone 6M activity has plummeted as there is nothing to listen to. I set up and run a higher power 75 W 6M beacon, have you listened for it yet? I think the malaise that has beset us is just not about the field days but IMO the field day participation has really dropped off. It has been a cold winter so we will see this summer... I will be here always will be. Good luck

I think a major factor why not too many stations enter is because of the ham population in VK; a large element are home-installed stations and do not go /P, and a large chunk are also of an older age that might consider going /P is beyond their capabilities. The ageing ham population is the main threat to ham radio overall, for any of its disciplines.

I think that the proposed changes to the scoring & categories are a positive step forward in trying to create greater participation for all operators, either new or existing Field Day contestants.

I will see how it goes and maybe I might get back into it.

I would be very interested in participating in a trial. (see my comments on the Yahoo group). A distance-based scoring system would certainly change it quite a bit. It would have it's own challenges in terms of trying to achieve a high score, and participate using all 10 bands!

I would certainly like to see distance based scoring happen. What I hope not to see in the discussions that will no doubt ensue, is criticism of the the contest manager or the current system which has served us well for a very long time. The current system is not 'broken' but I do believe that distance based scoring will encourage more activity in areas where the potential for local contacts is much lower than, for example, a portable location within 100km of Melbourne. To Andrew & Colin - great work!

If there is interest in more field days, try and make one of the field days on a National long weekend (or where the majority of states have a long weekend) and run the contest over 48 hours (maybe with 8 and 24 hour categories).

Improving club participation can strengthen both clubs and overall participation.

Q22. Any other comments
In my opinion it is well covered by the [Distance Based] scoring proposal and so fully support 1DA/5DK are to be congratulated on a well thought out [proposal] with meaningful survey.....long overdue!!
In past years my site selection process was based on trying to activate dead squares. [] These are typically 400-700 km from [city], and my home square. This was primarily in order to activate the square, but had the accompanying benefit of investigating/proving propagation modes from these areas. I will be interested to see if the focus on distance-based scoring encourages this amongst others - if at all. Or whether participants will simply sit in their usual haunts and hope that the propagation god will be kind. I'm also assuming here that there is only one propagation god, and not gods, because if there are many propagation gods then the likelihood of massive missive mix-ups and miscommunication between them greatly increases our chances of disappointment. 73...
In the interest of increasing participation in the VHF/UHF Field Days the WIA should seriously consider the proposed changes to a distance based contest!
It's good to be reviewing the V-UHF Field Days from time to time, well done and I hope it results in more folks having more enjoyment of them. 73,
Just keep having the field days please.
Keep it simple, make it fun for the rookies, keep it fun for the pros and you can't go wrong.
Keep up the good work!! [The rules have been wrong for years!!] I tried many years ago to get rule changes but it never happened. Would love to have more activity in [state] but with the death over the last 12-18 months of 6 of the most active portable operators it is a lonely part of Oz!!
No comment has been made re EME contacts which are entirely possible. I presume though that nobody would ever attempt to claim the distance however its a common practice in VK [that I disagree with] to refer to terrestrial distances (down to the last 100 metres no less!) following a QSO via the moon when of course it makes no difference in terms of difficulty where the two stations are located. This practice really irks me! It's assumed I guess that such contacts come under the category of satellite, repeater etc but I believe it should be stated as a specific exclusion. Your proposal is excellent & I hope it gets somewhere. The changes re 50 MHz scoring are entirely logical. The current rules cater for mediocrity in operating skills & equipment. I am all in favour of quality over quantity.
Perhaps a bonus points system for country operators 50 kms or more from the city GPO. This would enhance their participation as they are sometimes left out of city operators equation. Any contribution that will encourage foundation licence operation, such as a "buddy system" when going bush or to remote sites that would enable experienced operating techniques to be passed on. Encouragement of QRP operation with specified power limits that would enable the production of effecient aerial systems etc.
please don't publish my direct comments, but feel free to use the content of them in any reply/ edit them and paraphrase them up.. thanks [this was done, input from this response was very detailed but appreciated]
Specific points: (1) Encourage 6 metres by making the multiplier for 6, 2 and 70 the same. (2) Separate VHF section (3) No advantage in going from grid square based to distance based, in fact, it might be counterproductive, as very well setup multi-op field day stations, are far more likley to work distance stations over the more casual field day operator - this could actually be a disincentive when they hear these contacts and cannot make them themselves. (4) We already have a distance based contest in the JMFD VHF/UHF section - variety and hence subtle changes in tactics adds to the different styles of contests.
Thanking for keeping the hobby of radio alive. Good luck Thankyou 73
Thanks for your effort to try and improve the events - I believe it is important to continually review the procedures so that there can be changes for the better
Thanks taking effort to initiate changes in the field days. I hope to have more time off work to participate more :-)

Q22. Any other comments

The best aspect for me is the chance to use bands I don't regularly get to use otherwise. It's great fun, and whether the points system is maidenhead or distance based I will continue to have fun as the points come second. However, during the winter field day I was a little disappointed with our points total given that we had 30+ contacts and most of the people we spoke to were giving us much lower serial numbers. So it was a little disappointing that our final points tally was low. I think distance based would give a more equal reward as our location is quite central to the grid square. People on edges of squares are much more richly rewarded. In summary, agree that the proposed changes are a step forward but I will continue to participate in and enjoy the events regardless.

The biggest problem in Southern VK7 is getting good WX independent of the time of the year - there is no solution to that. I am not sure what you propose for the repeated contacts every 3 hours but it seems silly to me that one gains the same distance score for repeating the same contact every three hours.

The distance based scoring concept requires that the portable (and home) stations know their exact grid location to 6 chars. Some occasional operators don't know it to 4 chars, and some even ask what a grid locator is. Education and better planning required. Self-satisfaction is probably the major outcome from a FD : did you make the most contacts from your equipment - or - do you need to do it better (or make the gear better) ? I don't participate for the certificate, rather for the enjoyment of participating and achieving.

The proposed scoring system will shift the emphasis to 6m and 2m and thus provide more activity on these bands. While this in itself is not a problem, I am concerned about how this will affect the workload and equipment requirements for the single operator like myself operating on all bands from 50MHz to 24GHz (with plans to go higher). I would also not be happy to see the contest evolve into something where all the operators are hunched over computer screens watching waterfall displays for some hint of a signal that can be worked with the latest WSJT offering. I've nothing against weak signal work of this type; it's just not what I call 'fun' (which is a primary contest goal). After some consideration my preferred option is to have a new distance based contest for 6m/2m/70cm (and maybe 23cm) on a separate date(s) to the current contest.

The survey is a great idea. The only thing I would suggest is to reward those that go portable by awarding them additional points for actually being portabe. this would encourage more stations to participate in portable operation and encourage higher micr wave band participation.

The VK Logger Annual Grid Square table (AGT) should be supported by all operators as it would provide incentive for operators to be on air looking for contacts on a year long basis, reset each year, rather than just a brief burst of operation run 3 or 4 times a year. The changes to the rules for the field days mentioned sounds good though, well done.

The WIA contests need more promotion at club level to get single operators on air even if only for an hour or 2 to increase activity. When I am on some sort of elevated site it means I have made a substantial effort to get there and set up & I like to be busy not bored. Maybe have a set of golden hours or RF NOW of some sort on Sat PM and evening and maybe Sun AM to encourage these stations to get on air.

We need to get the newer amateurs started and introduction of distance based scoring and FM (as an alternative option to SSB) would help do this. I think your proposal is very thoughtful and worth at least a 5 year trial. Thanks for the opportunity to respond

well done on the proposal