

# VHF-UHF Contesting!

## Other VHF Contests

When most hams think of operating a VHF contest, the “Big Four” come to mind: The ARRL January VHF Contest, the ARRL June VHF Contest, the CQ World Wide VHF Contest in July, and the ARRL September VHF Contest. A trend in the HF contest world has been for more frequent, lower-profile contests. The state QSO parties and the CWops CWT contests are good examples. These are some “minor” VHF/UHF contests to consider:

## Fall VHF/UHF Sprints

The Southeastern VHF Society sponsors the Fall VHF/UHF Sprints. These are held *after* the ARRL September VHF Contest. Six meters is typically slow, as this is after the summer sporadic-E season. Some years great tropospheric conditions occur on the higher VHF and UHF bands. These are the listed dates for the fall 2021 VHF/UHF Sprints.

Fall 2 meter Sprint, Monday, September 20 (7 PM — 11 PM local)

Fall 222 Sprint, Tuesday, September 28 (7 PM – 11 PM local)

Fall 432 Sprint, Wednesday, October 6 (7 PM – 11 PM local)

Fall Microwave Sprint (902 MHz and above), Saturday, October 9 (8 AM – 2 PM local)

Full information on the upcoming 2021 Fall VHF/UHF Sprints appears on the Southeastern VHF Society website, [www.svhfs.org](http://www.svhfs.org).

## Spring VHF/UHF Sprints

The Central States VHF Society sponsors the Spring VHF Sprints. They allow “all modes” including SSB,

CW, and WSJT-X digital modes. It is a great way to check out your station in preparation for the ARRL June VHF Contest. The dates for 2022 were not yet published at the time this was written. Full information on the 2022 Spring VHF/UHF Sprints will appear on the CSVHFS website, <https://sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints/home/2021-information>.

## Legacy VHF/UHF Sprint

Jim, AC9EZ, proposed a “legacy mode” VHF/UHF Sprint. He and the Fort Wayne Radio Club sponsored a 2-meter “classic” sprint on April 24 of this year, with two points for CW contacts and one point for SSB contacts. Multipliers were grids worked. If there is interest and participation, this contest may return in 2022. Rules and more information are posted on the club’s website, <https://fwrc.info/2021/02/15/vhf-ssb-cw-2m-sprint-classic/>.

The VHF/UHF Sprints are a great way to increase activity on our VHF/UHF bands. Consider entering one.

## Effect of WSJT-X on VHF/UHF Contesting

We’ve heard considerable controversy regarding the effect of WSJT-X on VHF/UHF contest participation and activity. After every major VHF contest, a flurry of posts appear on the VHF Contest Reflector regarding the WSJT-X modes. Ed, K3DNE, has

done some research and looked at the effect of the WSJT-X modes on the activity on 50 MHz in the September VHF Contest. He posted the following on the VHF Contest Reflector:

“Since you’re discussing just 6 meters, that’s the data I’ll include here. It is from the September contest only, between 2017 and 2020. (See below.)

“This chart shows the dramatic percentage increase (and number) of contacts that took place on 6 meters in the September VHF contests between 2017 and 2020. In 2020, only 29% of 6 meter QSOs were made on legacy (i.e., SSB, CW, FM) modes and only 63% of 2 meter QSOs were made on legacy modes. If you subtract the non-weak signal mode of FM from the legacy category, the percentage drops to 28% on 6 meters and 58% on 2 meters.

“Essentially, only about one-quarter of 6 meter QSOs and about one-half of 2 meter QSOs were made via a traditional weak-signal mode. This compares with the 2017 event where 80% and 99% of QSOs were made on 6- and 2-meter legacy modes, respectively. I’d hypothesize that prior to FTx (2017), both the 6 meter and 2 meter legacy percentages were most likely well over 90%.

“So, yes, if there was any doubt — more contacts are being made on 6 meters due to the increase in digital contacts.”

Year	CW, FM, SSB	Digital (all types)	Total	%QSOs/Band
2020	29.13% (9,200)	70.87% (22,387)	31,587	45.7%
2019	41.22% (9,277)	58.78% (13,230)	22,507	40.25%
2018	69.2% (10,265)	39.8% (4,568)	14,833	33.16%
2017	79.79% (8,868)	20.21% (2,246)	11,114	30.39%