

Results of the 2015 CQ DX Marathon

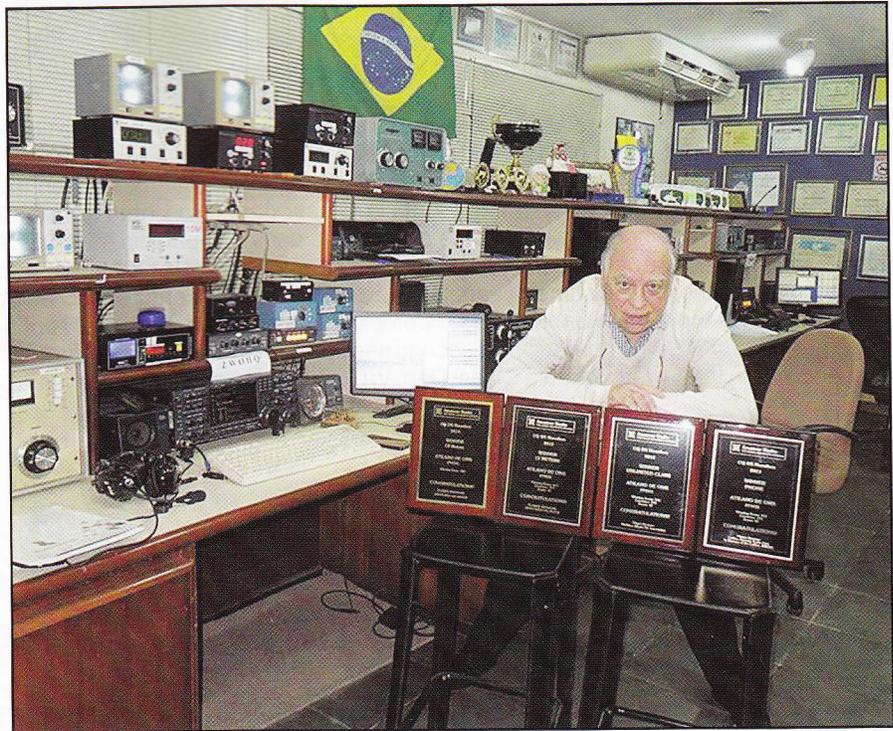
BY JOHN SWEENEY,* K9EL/VA3CDX

The higher HF bands are not dead! We all expected reduced propagation in 2015, but CQ DX Marathon participants went against the odds and came up as winners. Compared to 2014, participation increased 25%, total QSOs were up over 8% and more countries were available. We were not surprised that 2015 was a record-breaking year, with many all-time high score records broken. The 10-, 12-, and 15-meter bands accounted for over 50% of all QSOs — very similar to 2014. Ten-meter-only submissions were double those of 2014. Overall, there was a 50% increase in participants chasing single-band or single-mode awards. Much of the increase in participation came from the many new DX Marathon participants in Brazil and Turkey. In addition, participation in Limited Class, introduced last year, was up substantially, with over 25% of logs claiming Limited Class. If you run 100 watts and a small Yagi or equivalent, check out Limited Class.

As a result of the good conditions and increased participation, many new all-time high scores were set: Unlimited Class, Limited Class, Phone, three continental records, nine zone records, 15 country records plus the club score record. Many of these records were significantly broken and will be hard to surpass in the future. One of the reasons so many records were broken was the availability of workable entities. Over 300 entities plus 40 zones were available in 2015 — the highest number ever since the Marathon has been run. We thank the many expeditions to rare locations. CW continues to be the most popular mode used in the Marathon, but the percentage of CW QSOs was slightly lower in 2015, due mainly to a significant increase in digital QSOs.

And the Winners Are ...

Since 2008, Oms, PY5EG, has been a major participant and supporter of the Marathon, including plaque sponsorship through the Araucaria DX Group. Oms holds six all-time record high DX Marathon scores <www.dxmarathon/



Not only is Oms, PY5EG, a repeat overall Unlimited Class winner, but he set a new world record for the DX Marathon in 2015. Here he is in his shack with his previous DX Marathon plaques.



Piero, IK5FKF, a repeat winner, won the digital plaque for 2015. Here Piero shows his previous DX Marathon awards in his well-equipped shack.

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Records> and shared the Unlimited Class overall record high score of 330 with OM3EY — until 2015. Oms has now set the bar very high with an incredible score of 336! He missed only four entities that were active in 2015 — we can only imagine the hours Oms spent working DX. He also submitted a perfect log with no errors. Following Oms in Unlimited Class was Tony, IK0OZD, the 2014 DX Marathon Unlimited Class winner, at 333 points, a new European record. In third place was Serge, R6YY, at 329 points — a new Russian and new Zone 16 record. There was a three-way tie between OM3EY, K2TQC, and N0UN for fourth place at 328 points, with the final order determined by the earliest date of the last entity QSO.

A new record high score was also set in Limited Class by John, OM5XX, with a score of 319 — very impressive for only 100 watts. N0AH and SP3NYC were second and third, respectively, with scores of 296 and 290. In Formula Class, Joe, W4TV, has taken top honors with a score of 293. Joe uses a dipole and inverted-V antennas from his Florida QTH. Joe has come in second the previous three years, so it is great to finally see his call at the top of Formula Class. Completing the top three positions were N4RI and W2NK in second and third place, respectively. In the 5-watt Formula Class, Dan, WG5G, retains

New Plaques!

As participation in the CQ DX Marathon grows each year, we continue to expand our award program. We are pleased to announce two new plaques to be awarded each year. Beginning with the 2015 results, we will award plaques to the highest CW only scores in North America and in Europe. We welcome HamSupply.com as a new sponsor for the North American CW plaque. The inaugural plaque goes to Erik, K9EU. We also welcome the CW Operators Club as the sponsor of the European CW Plaque. OK2PAY is the inaugural winner and he also took top CW worldwide honors.

his first place title with a score of 283. Dan was first in the QRP class in 2012, 2013, and 2014 and second in 2011. Congratulations on this great accomplishment. Rounding out the top three were OK2FD at 274 points and longtime DX Marathon participant W8QZA at 255 points.

In 2015, we added awards for top mode scores for each continent in addition to the worldwide top mode awards. Initially the continental mode winners received certificates, but we have now changed the CW winners in Europe and North America to plaques (see sidebar). We welcome and

TOP SCORES

BOLD = Plaque Winners

* = Certificate Winners

Call sign is followed by Score

Unlimited Class

PY5EG	336
IK0OZD.....	333
R6YY.....	329
OM3EY.....	328
K2TQC.....	328
N0UN.....	328

Limited Class

OM5XX	319
N0AH.....	296
SP3NYC.....	290
LU1FAM.....	283
PY1SX.....	274

Formula Class - 100w

W4TV	293
N4RI.....	289
W2NK.....	267
LX1IQ.....	267
IN3FHE.....	247

Formula Class - 5w

WG5G	283
OK2FD.....	274
W8QZA.....	255
IV3AOL.....	245
IZ3NVR.....	176

CW

OK2PAY	312
K9EU.....	298
W4QN.....	297
N4KW.....	294
K6XT.....	289

Phone

N0UN	328
PA2LO.....	305
EA8AXT.....	287
N3CDA.....	287
PY1SX.....	274

Digital

IK5FKF	258
AA8R.....	249
IK0PEA.....	242
HK3W.....	231
SP3BGD.....	207

Africa

EA8MT	289
EA8AXT.....	287
CT3HF.....	249
ZS6C.....	213
6W7SK.....	121

Asia

A65CA	322
JE1FQV.....	321
JA0DAI.....	302
JA6BZI.....	294
9K2NO.....	294

Europe

IK0OZD	333
R6YY.....	329
OM3EY.....	328
EA1DR.....	325
OK2SG.....	321

North America

K2TQC	328
N0UN.....	328
KA9CFD.....	327
W1NG.....	325
WN4N.....	323

Oceania

ZL2IFB	317
YB1AR.....	285
VK3VT.....	277
VK3SIM.....	263
YB2TX.....	250

South America

PY5EG.....	336
PY2XU.....	306
PY4ZO.....	306

LU1FAM.....	283
PY1SX.....	274
PY2RJ.....	274

6 Meters

LU5FF*.....	113
IW2CAM.....	91
PY3KN.....	79
YV4NN.....	72
PU3LYB.....	45

10 Meters

KB0EO	262
PY2UD.....	242
LW6DG.....	187
ZY2B.....	179
TA2AKG.....	179

12 Meters

WK3N	284
PP1CZ.....	228

15 Meters

W3NA	300
GM7TUD.....	288
K9NB.....	284
K4MM.....	265
PU8YPL.....	133

17 Meters

N6ML	298
LY5M.....	281

20 Meters

VE3VEE	321
W9KNI.....	320
CO2QU.....	136
YU1WAT.....	68

30 Meters

LY2FN	252
9A2EU.....	226
FG4NO.....	155

40 Meters

IZ0AEZ	289
K9CJ.....	224

80 Meters

N5KM	172
N3QE.....	164

160 Meters

N4IS*.....	150
K7ZV.....	104
K4IQJ.....	102
FS/K9NU.....	17

Zones

3.....	W9KNI*	320
4.....	N0UN.....	328
5.....	K2TQC.....	328
6.....	XE2AU.....	218
8.....	WP4U.....	233
9.....	HK3W.....	231
11.....	PY5EG.....	336
12.....	CE1AT.....	242
13.....	LU1FAM.....	283
14.....	EA1DR.....	325
15.....	IK0OZD.....	333
16.....	R6YY.....	329
17.....	R9AB.....	280
20.....	SV9COL.....	273
21.....	A65CA.....	322
22.....	VU2CPL.....	238
23.....	JT1PB.....	102
25.....	JE1FQV.....	321
26.....	XV4Y.....	182
28.....	YB1AR.....	285
29.....	VK6DW*.....	209
30.....	VK3VT.....	277
32.....	ZL2IFB.....	317
33.....	EA8MT.....	289
35.....	6W7SK.....	121
38.....	ZS6C.....	213
40.....	TF3DC.....	208

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

thank our new sponsors! With a 50% increase in single-mode submissions, there was a significant increase in competition for those awards. Lada, OK2PAY, came out on top of the CW pileup with a score of 312 to take the CW plaque. Erik, K9EU, was second with a score of 298 and winner of the new North American CW plaque. In 3rd place was Norm, W4QN, with a score of 297. Wayne, NØUN, really topped everyone with his incredible score of 328 on phone. He broke the previous record – which he held – by 5 points. Gert, PA2LO, last year's phone winner, was second this year with a score of 305. Ed, EA8AXT, was third with a score of 287. For the digital modes, Piero, IK5FKF, claims top honors with a score of 258. This is Piero's third first-place digital finish — congratulations! AA8R at 249 points and IKØPEA at 242 points rounded out the top three digital scores.

Plaques are also awarded to the top score on each of the 10- through 80-meter bands plus the top score on each continent. In the single-band competitions, there was a very tight race on 20 meters between DX Marathon veteran Bob, W9KNI, and newcomer Marvin, VE3VEE. In the end, Marvin took top honors, just one point ahead of Bob. Of interest, Marvin's station is 100% remote. No new band records were set in 2015, but with top scores of 262, 284, and 300 (10, 12, and 15 meters respectively), the higher bands clearly produced a lot of DX. Many of the continental battles were also very close, with A65CA on top in Asia with a score 322, just one point ahead of last year's winner, JE1FQV. Dunia, EA8MT, once again took top Africa honors, but EA8AXT was only 2 points behind. The battle in North America was particularly close with both K2TQC and NØUN finishing with scores of 328. In the case of ties, we use the earliest date of the last entity worked to determine placement.

Certificates will once again will be given to the top scorer in each country and zone, plus the top scorers on the 6- and 160-meter bands. Late last year, we added certificates for high scores in each U.S. call district for each of the four main classes plus the high score in each VE call area. Also new this year are certificates for the high single-mode score in each Continent for each of the three modes. In all, there are many certificates now available. (All certificates for all CQ contests are now provided in digital form only, due to prohibitive costs for printing and mailing. – ed.)

Club competition was very exciting in 2015, with the Araucaria DX Group in

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K5P
A35T
VK0EK
CY9C**



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Joe, W4TV, is the 2015 Formula Class winner. Joe is a long time DX Marathon participant using only simple antennas and is shown here in his shack.

Brazil setting a new club record with an amassed score of 10,359. The top three club positions were all held by PY clubs. The Carolina DX Association and the Northern Illinois DX Association placed 4th and 5th, respectively. Don't forget to include your club name on your 2016 DX Marathon submission.

Correct Your Errors

Each year the DX Marathon website publishes a large amount of information to help participants minimize errors in their submissions. The Helpful Hints page can be accessed from the DX Marathon home page. In 2015, we pub-

lished 3,881 callsign exceptions and notes to help every participant reduce the number of errors in their submissions. Unfortunately, many people are not utilizing this valuable resource. Callsign prefixes seem to multiply every year and very few logging programs will properly determine the DX location and/or CQ Zone from just the callsign. We encourage everyone to utilize the information we collect from many sources.

Perhaps due to the many first-time participants, the overall error rate in the 2015 Marathon was 2.5% — an increase over last year's 2% rate. It is always difficult to reduce someone's score due to

COUNTRY WINNERS

Callsign is followed by score
* = Certificate Winners

6W7SK*121	GUØSUP*185	SP3NYC*290
9A2AJ*308	GW4EVX*163	SV1DPI*209
9K2NO*294	HA5OV*318	SV9COL*273
A65CA322	HB9TRR*130	TA1CM*220
A92GE*288	HK3W*231	TA2AD*270
CE1AT*242	IKØOZD333	TF3DC*208
CO2AJ*185	JE1FQV*321	UN7FW*208
CT1IUA*305	JT1PB*102	VE3VEE321
CT3HF*249	K2TQC328	VK3VT*277
DL5AN*319	LU1FAM*283	VU2CPL*238
DP1POL*143	LX1EA*291	WP4U*233
EA1DR*325	LY9Y*300	XE2AU*218
EA8MT289	OH5RF*146	XV4Y*182
EI7CC*271	OK2SG*321	YB1AR*285
F5CQ*309	OM3EY*328	YO4AAC*215
FG4NO*155	OZ7YY*314	YU1WAT*68
FS/W9ILY*98	PA2LO*305	YV4NN*72
G3TXF*288	PJ2/W9VA*76	ZL2IFB317
G14SJK*224	PY5EG336	ZS6C*213
GM7TUD*288	R6YY*329	ZWQFWA*86
	R9AB*280	
	S51DX*281	
	SMØMPV*300	

Note: Top scorers in some countries received plaques.

simple errors, but proper logging is critical for a successful DX Marathon submission. Scoring is computerized, so please watch “0” (zero) vs. “O” (Oh), “1” (one) vs. “l” (Letter l) or “l” (lower case letter L), and other similarities. Only 16% of entrants submitted error-free logs.

The highest error category in 2015 was “Wrong Country.” In other words, the callsign of the DX station was logged correctly, but that callsign was submitted for the wrong country. Since the majority of participants use computer logging, the logging software is likely assigning the wrong country to the callsign. Assigning the wrong country to a callsign accounted for 28% of all errors — a large number. If your logging program has a callsign database, be sure to update it on a regular basis. Many prefixes (such as FO, E5, VK9 and others) do not indicate a country, so each callsign must be investigated. “Wrong Zone” accounted for 23% of all errors. Similar to Wrong Country, the DX callsign was logged correctly, but

the wrong zone was assigned to the prefix. The largest source of zone errors, 30%, comes from U.S. callsigns. Current FCC rules do not require hams to change prefixes when moving. It is not unusual to have a KL7 living in Florida or a W2 living in California. Please check each U.S. callsign carefully to make sure the zone matches the QTH, not the callsign prefix. Together, “Wrong Country” and “Wrong Zone” account for over 50% of all errors — errors that can easily be avoided with up-to-date country databases.

Busted calls were the second highest error category, accounting for 24% of all subtractions. The majority of the busted callsigns were due to bad spots on the DX spotting networks. Most errors are not intentional, but the number of DX spots with callsign errors is increasing every year. Listen carefully to each DX station to make sure it is really who you think it is and that the call matches the spot. Although my personal score does not count in the Marathon, I participate

CLUB SCORES

Club	Score
ARAUCARIA DX GROUP	10359
CDR GROUP	7494
RIO DX GROUP	7123
Carolina DX Association	4014
Northern Illinois DX Association	3486
Society of Midwest Contesters	2285
METRO DX CLUB	1702
Arizona Outlaws Contest Club	1574
Willamette Valley DX Club	1517
Chiltern Dx Club	1378
VU CONTEST GROUP	1332
GPDx PORTUGUESE DX GROUP	1252
Italian Contest Club	1138
YB Land DX Club	1113
Rhein Ruhr DX Assosiation	1096
LU Contest Group	1075
GUARA DX GROUP	1045
Florida Contest group	1031
Lone Star DX Association	929
Contest Club Ontario	898
Maritime Contest Club	873
Yankee Clipper Contest Club	856
GITRAD	777
CABREUVADx	757
NERG	748
Bavarian Contest Club	746
Chilean Pacific Dx Group	739
Labre/SC	697
Southern California Contest Club	692
Mother Lode DX/Contest Club	676
Grand Mesa Contesters of Colorado	585
Southern California DX Club	585
DARC	583
HA Dx Club	567
Lighthouse Amateur Radio Alliance	535
TRAC	487
South Ural Contest Club	467
ARS La Spezia	436
Clipperton DX Club	430
WACOM	364
Croatian Contest Club	339
OM3KEG	328
EARS	322
Yokohama DX Club	321
RRDXA	319
Danish DX Group	314
Bahrain Contest Team	304
JA0-DX-Gang	302
Sveriges Sandareamatorer (SSA)	300
Central Arizona DX Association	299
Loudoun ARG	295
Adrad Kayldall	291
Contest Group du Quebec	289
Three As Contest Group	288
SEMDXA	287
Kentucky Contest Group	283
Vrhnika contesters	281
CWops	279

Club	Score
DDXG	273
Central California DX Club	272
Radio Amateurs du Luxembourg	267
WNYDXA	267
Sunday Creek Amateur Radio Federation	266
RL	264
MUTUM DX Group	263
Minnesota Wireless Association	262
Albuquerque DX Association	253
Vytautas Magnus University Radio Club	252
ARI Trieste	245
EA Contest Club	244
CE DX Group	242
SARS	242
Nixa Amateur Radio Club	231
Falmouth Amateur Radio Assoc.	230
SP DX Club	222
WVDXA	222
DUPAGE ARC	219
Grupo DXXE	218
Oklahoma DX Association	218
Allegheny Valley Radio Assoc.	216
10-10 Gold City Chapter	213
Mile High DX Association	213
West Rand ARC	213
Waterland	212
vk contest club	211
BLACKMORE VALES ARS	209
RAAWG	209
A.R.I.	200
Southwest OH DX Assoc.	198
REDWOOD EMPIRE DX ASSOCIATION	186
Bahia Dx Group	183
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SCCC	148
Tuiuiu DX	144
western washington dx club	142
North Carolina Radio Group	141
GDXC	136
Borinquen Radio Club -KP3ER	122
GARNIZE DX GROUP	114
USRA	109
TURKISH CONTEST TEAM	108
TEAM ALFA	107
Southeast Contest Club	104
ACG	102
Redcliffe and Districts Radio Club	99
Luxembourg Amateur Radio Union	70
SCDXC	64
UPPSALA RADIOKLUBB (SK5DB)	64
Northeast Wisconsin DX Assn	60
Royal Air Force Amateur Radio Society	52

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Yuri, A65CA, is the 2015 Asia Winner and is shown here in his shack.



Marvin, VE3VEE, is a first-time DX Marathon participant and won the 20-meter single-band plaque. Here is a photo of his shack — no radio equipment! Marvin operates a remote station.



Dan, WG5G, is a repeat winner of the 5-Watt Formula Class and continued his streak in 2015. Dan is shown here in his shack.

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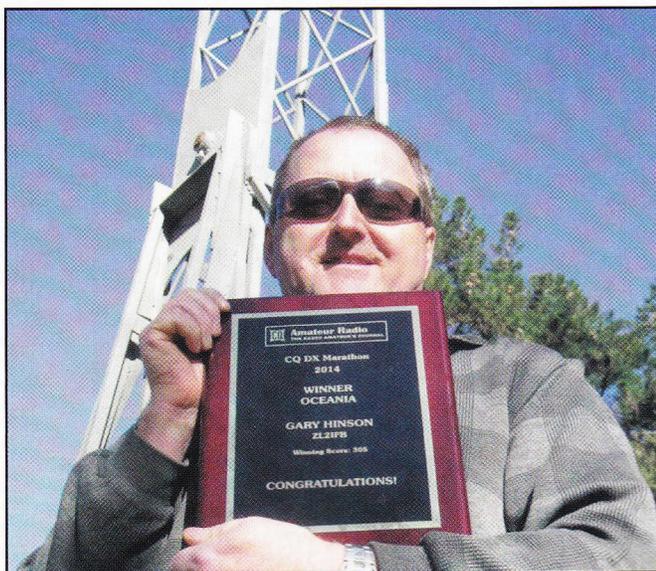
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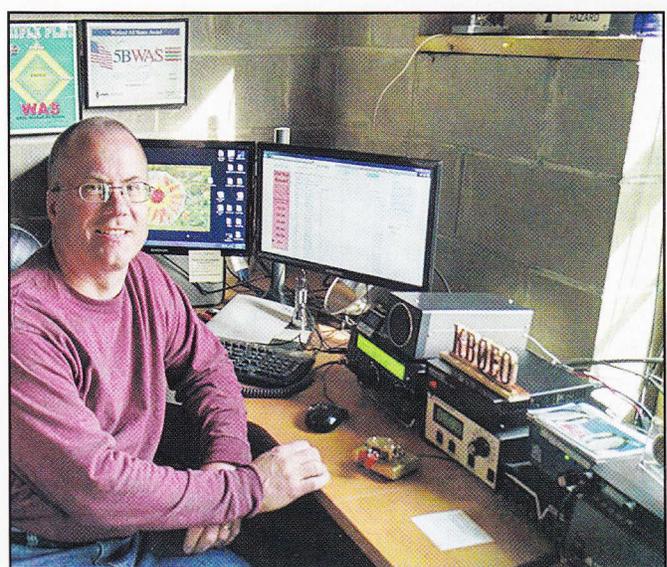
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each year to feel the pulse of the contest. I was very surprised when the computer subtracted two points off my score. Upon investigation, I found I had clicked on a DX spot to populate my logging program without listening to the callsign being sent. Sure enough, the spot was wrong. The other major error category was "Invalid Callsign," which can occur for a variety of reasons. Fortunately, pirate activity was lower in 2015 and accounted for only 31 lost points.

As part of this issue, you will find a complete listing of all scores plus a listing of the Top Scores in all available categories. The DX Marathon website will include additional information and details on the 2015 results plus photos of plaque winners as they become available. For any questions or comments about the DX Marathon, please contact the author. Thank you for your participation in 2015 and best of luck in 2016!



Gary, ZL2IFB, also a repeat winner, had the high score for 2015 in Oceania and is shown here with his 2014 winner's plaque.



Dan, KB0EO, won the 2015 plaque for 10 meters. Dan is shown here in his shack, with a previous DX Marathon plaque on his wall in the background.