2027 North Carolina QSO Party Contest Rules

Updated 11/07/2026

Object

For amateur radio operators outside the state of North Carolina make contact with North Carolina stations. For amateur radio operators within North Carolina activate as many NC counties as possible and make contact with everyone.

Contest Period

1500 UTC February 28 to 0100 UTC March 1, 2027. (10 am to 8 pm EST on February 28, 2027). All stations may operate the entire contest period.

Categories

Single Operator (Single-Op)
One person performs all operating and logging functions operating from only one fixed location used for permanent amateur radio operation. This category allows QRP, Low Power, or High Power.

Multi Operator (Multi-Op)
More than one person performs transmitting, receiving and logging functions using the same call sign. All apparatus to be located in the same location within a 1000' diameter circle. A maximum of two simultaneous transmitted signals may be on the air at a given time. If two transmitters are used, they may be on the same or different bands. The operation is required to be in, and stay in, one fixed location for the duration of the contest. This category allows Mixed Mode operation using High or Low Power. Submit one combined electronic Cabrillo log file. Each participant's call sign should be listed in the Cabrillo header on the "OPERATORS:" line. Individual participants may not use their own call sign to work their own multi operation for QSO credit at any time during the event.

Mobile
One or more persons perform operating and logging functions from a self-contained vehicle capable of operating while in motion. Motion is optional. All apparatus used must be capable of operating while in motion and wholly contained in, on, or attached to the vehicle. Attention to driving and safety is top priority. Use of a separate driver (whether an amateur radio operator or not) is allowed and encouraged. Mobile stations that choose to move to a new county may work everyone again for QSO credit. If returning to a previously activated county, only new stations, respective of band and mode, not previously worked from there, may be counted as QSO credit. Mobiles may give out two counties in one QSO if part of the vehicle is physically and safely located in both counties simultaneously. See County Line Contacts paragraph below. This category allows only Mixed Mode Low Power award class.

Portable
One or more persons operating from a temporary, stationary location using portable antennas and radios. No permanent radio installations or antenna structures may be used. Use of trees, buildings, etc., to raise antennas is allowed as long as it is safe to do so and not originally intended for that purpose. Mobile radios, equipment, and antennas installed in, on or attached to a vehicle are permitted. All operating must take place while stationary. No QSOs may be made for credit when in motion at any time. All apparatus are to be located in the same location within a 1000' diameter circle during operation.

Portable category stations that choose may move to a new county and work everyone again for QSO credit. When moving, all radio, antenna, and related accessories must be moved also, and this same equipment used/moved for the duration of this event. If returning to a previously activated county, only new stations, respective of band and mode, not previously worked from there, may be counted as QSO credit.

Portable category stations may give out two counties in one QSO if part of the radio, feed line, or antenna is physically and safely located in both counties simultaneously and all equipment is still within the 1000' diameter circle. See County Line Contacts below. This category allows only Mixed Mode Low Power award class.

Expedition
Same as Portable above, except:
The station operation is required to be in, and stay in, one fixed location for the duration of the contest.

Operating Details

Non-NC participants: Work stations located in 100 North Carolina Counties only.
NC Participants: Work all stations.

Exchange
North Carolina (NC) stations work everyone, send call sign and NC county. Use county abbreviations as needed. Stations outside of North Carolina (Non-NC) work NC stations only. Send call sign and state/province or "DX". Sending signal report (i.e., 59) is optional. All stations use abbreviations as needed.

Bands
Operate on 80/75, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, and 2 meters. No 160, WARC, or above 2 meters.
Suggested operating frequencies (MHz) CW: 3.540, 7.040, 14.040, 21.040, 28.040, 50.040, 144.040. Phone: 3.860, 7.260, 14.260, 21.360, 28.360, 50.160 (SSB), 52.040 (FM), 144.260 (SSB), 146.520 (FM). Digital: Use standard digital frequencies per band plan. Check the North Carolina Facebook Group for latest info on the most active areas. No cross-band QSOs are allowed. No repeater, satellite, or other relaying device may be used to complete a QSO for award credit.

Power
Highest power used determines the award class entered
QRP - 5 watts or less for CW/Digital, 10W-PEP for Phone
Low - 150 watts or less
High - Legal limit power

Modes
Phone - Includes SSB, AM, and FM voice
CW - All CW QSO's for award credit must take place in the CW sub portion of the band.
Digital - Except for FT-8/4 as noted below in Weak Signal Showcase, all other digital modes are allowed and considered one mode. (Note: QSO's made using FT-8/4 should not be included.)
Mixed Mode - Use of one or more modes as described above. No cross mode QSOs are allowed. (Digital mode QSOs, except for FT-8/4, are part of a Mixed Mode category operation.)

County Line Contacts

A Mobile while stationary, Portable, or Expedition may operate on a county line and contacts can be used as credit for two counties. A maximum of two counties may be worked simultaneously under this provision. Some part of the vehicle, radio apparatus, or antenna must rest within and be located in each of the two counties on the county line. The methods to determine the county line are dictated by MARAC County Hunter rules outlining the definition of a county border. (http://www.marac.org/awards/Award-rules.pdf page 6) Note that this reference to MARAC is officially part of these rules. Entering a two county QSO into the log consists of two lines in the log, one for each county with all other information on the two lines the same.

The entrant is responsible to document any county line determination, but this is not submitted with the log entry. County line information is subject to audit and the committee will request this from the participant should the need arise.

Scoring

QSO Points
Phone - 2 points each
CW - 3 points each
Digital - 5 points each

It is permissible to work the same station on each mode (Phone, CW, Digital) on each band for credit. A valid QSO logged for award credit consists of date, time, mode, call sign, and location as described in Exchange above. For in state NC Mobile or Portable participants: It is permissible to include two counties in a QSO where applicable. A two county QSO must be logged as separate QSOs with two lines in the log, one for each of the two counties.

Multipliers
Count each multiplier worked only once across all modes, bands, and operating location.

Non-NC participants: Work 100 North Carolina Counties

NC participants: Work 100 North Carolina Counties, 49 other US States plus DC, 13 Canadian Provinces/Territories (AB, BC, MB, NB, NL, NS, NT, NU, ON, PE, QC, SK, and YT), plus one DX. 164 total possible. Note: NC stations may include the county from which operation takes place in the Multiplier count regardless of whether any QSOs are logged from that same county. This includes Mobile and Portable stations where operations may take place in more than one county. In that case

this provision is applied to each county activated where at least one QSO was completed.

Any location not listed above is considered DX. This includes US Territories, Mexican provinces, and DXCC countries. No restriction on NC stations to work DX for QSO credit, but only one "DX" multiplier is applied in the calculation of the final score representing all DX worked.
Non-NC participants: Count each NC county worked.

Bonus Points [Celebrating the Mountain-to-Sea Trail 50th Anniversary]

SPELLING BEE: Six bonus stations this year will be on the air with special 1x1 call signs with the suffix letters spelling "HIKENC" to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Mountain to Sea trail which is wholly contained within North Carolina.

The call signs will be: N4H, N4I, N4K, N4E, N4N, N4C. Work them to add additional points to your score and sweep them all for more!

Earn 50 points each during NCQP for working these bonus stations. (300 possible). In addition, 200 extra bonus points will be awarded for working a sweep of all six. (Maximum 500 points.) Additional prizes and certificates will be given for working these stations, see http://www.ncqsoparty.org on the NC QSO Party home page for details.

Note to Mobiles and Portables only: 100 bonus points will be awarded additionally for each county activated where at least one QSO was completed.

Final Score
Multiply the total QSO points times the total multiplier value. Add bonus points to score (as applicable) after the multiplication.

Awards

Plaques for first place, and electronic certificates for second place (if applicable) will be awarded in the following categories:

Single-Op / NC / Phone (Low Power)
Single-Op / NC / Phone (High Power)
Single-Op / NC / CW (Low Power)
Single-Op / NC / CW (High Power)
Single-Op / NC / Mixed Mode (Low Power)
Single-Op / NC / Mixed Mode (High Power)
Single-Op / NC / Mixed Mode (QRP)
Multi-Op / NC / Mixed Mode (Low Power)
Multi-Op / NC / Mixed Mode (High Power)
Mobile / NC
Portable / NC
Expedition / NC
Weak Signal Showcase / NC / FT-8/4
Single-Op / Non-NC / Phone (Low Power)

Single-Op / Non-NC / Phone (High Power)
Single-Op / Non-NC / CW (Low Power)
Single-Op / Non-NC / CW (High Power)
Single-Op / Non-NC / Mixed Mode (Low Power)
Single-Op / Non-NC / Mixed Mode (High Power)
Single-Op / Non-NC / Mixed Mode (QRP)
Weak Signal Showcase / Non-NC / FT-8/4
Top DX Score
100 County Sweep (if achieved)

Submitting Logs

Cabrillo format is required for all electronic logs submitted via the website. Carefully check and verify the category items that are in your log's header with these valid selections to ensure proper scoring.

Cabrillo Header Requirements
CATEGORY-OPERATOR: Single-Op, Multi-Op, Mobile, Portable, Expedition, or Checklog
CATEGORY-MODE: CW, SSB, or MIXED
CATEGORY-POWER: HIGH, LOW, or QRP
ARRL-SECTION: <Your ARRL Section>
ADDRESS: <Address where your awards should be mailed: (Use as many lines as needed
ADDRESS: for address)>
EMAIL: Valid email address of submitter
OPERATORS: <At least two participating operator call signs required for Multi-Op category,
OPERATORS: one for Single op category, and one or more for Mobile, Portable, or
OPERATORS: Expedition.>

General
All logs must be received by March 9, 2027. Electronic submission via the website is required. Go to web page http://www.ncqsoparty.org and select "LOGS" tab to submit.

Miscellaneous Rules

For entrants in the Single-Op, Mobile, Portable, and Expedition categories competing for awards only one transmitted signal is permitted to be on the air at a time. Multi-Op entries may have a maximum of two transmitted signals on the air simultaneously. There are no band or mode change limits.

In order to receive any award, regardless of category, entrants must have completed at least 25 QSOs. These QSOs must be logged within the same log that qualifies for the award. This applies to all plaques, certificates, prizes, drawings, and sweeps.

Use of spotting networks, nets, Packet Cluster, Skimmer, RBN, or other assistance is allowed in all categories.

Use of remote radio equipment and antennas (via remote link) is permitted in the Single-Op category only. Both receiving and transmitting equipment are required to be at the same location. Entry category QTH is based on the location of the transmitter, receiver, and antennas. Note: In all cases,

whether operating remotely or in a conventional manner, all receiving and transmitting equipment must be located in one place together.

For the Top DX award: Any participant located outside of the 50 US states and DC is eligible. This includes US Territories, Canadian and Mexican provinces, and world-wide DXCC countries.

Final results will be posted on the NCQP web site, http://www.ncqsoparty.org. First place awards will be mailed to the recipients at the address provided in the Cabrillo log header. Second place certificates will be sent by e-mail. Other non-category certificates awarded will be sent by e-mail.

Members of the North Carolina QSO Party Committee may participate but are not eligible for individual awards. A committee member's participation within a Multi-Op, Mobile, Portable, or Expedition category activation recuses that operation from award eligibility. Members of the NCQP Advisory Committee and RARS club members are eligible for awards.

By reference, the World Wide Radio Operators Foundation (WWROF) Contester's Code of Ethics is incorporated in these rules and each entrant submitting a log for an award agrees to apply these principles before, during, and after the event. More information is found here https://wwrof.org/contester-codeof-ethics/ Each entrant submitting a log for an award agrees to be bound by the provisions, and intent, of these rules, the requirements of his or her amateur license, and the decisions of the North Carolina QSO Party committee. The NCQP and Advisory Committees are the final arbiters on all matters concerning the North Carolina QSO Party.

FT-8/4: Weak Signal Showcase

The special activity using FT-8/4 mode will be continued this year. All may participate, including NC stations and Non-NC stations. Both are permitted to submit their special ADIF log file for an award for this event.

Stations make regular FT-8/4 QSOs as is customary in usual operation during the time frame and date of the regular NCQP contest. Submit FT-8/4 log in ADIF format separately using the special form provided on the NCQP website set up specially for this purpose.

DO NOT INCLUDE FT-8/4 QSOS in the regular Cabrillo log. Making QSOs in this activity does not change the category status of a station participating in the regular contest. (i.e., A single-op/CW/Low Power station DOES NOT go into the Mixed mode if they participate in this special activity.)

The intent is to showcase NCQP to FT8-4 operators while allowing for normal operations of these modes. Below are the details:

- The Weak Signal Showcase is a separate event from the main NC QSO Party.
- This competition is open to both in-state (NC) and out-of-state (non-NC) participants.
    - QSO credit will be given for QSOs made between NC stations and any other station. No NCQP credit is given for non-NC stations contacting one another.
    - After all logs are submitted, the logs will be scored and valid NC-to-non-NC QSOs awarded credit.
    - For a non-NC station to receive QSO credit, NCQP must receive a log from the NC station involved in the contact.

    - NC stations will receive QSO credit regardless of whether the other station submits a matching log.
    - It may not be possible during the contest to determine whether a station is in NC or not; we encourage non-NC stations to work as many "CQ NCQP" stations as possible and submit logs. Sometimes it's fun to receive an award you didn't know you'd be getting.
- Stations may be worked again on a different band. There is no provision for stations moving between grid squares during the contest. Should a station move to a new grid square, the "work once per band" restriction does not reset.
- Low power (100W or less) must be used for this competition.
- Only weak-signal (FT8/FT4) digital QSOs are included in this competition.
- Stations may submit a log for the Weak Signal Showcase as well as the main NCQP contest, but weak-signal QSOs may only appear in the Weak Signal Showcase log.
- Only one weak-signal transmission is allowed at a time.
- Stations will exchange the standard weak-signal reports of grid squares and optional SNR. Call signs and grid squares for both stations in a QSO must be logged.
- Scores will be computed based on five points per QSO, multiplied by the number of grid squares (ie., FM05) worked.
- Directions for log submission will be posted to ncqsoparty.org/logs. The log deadline is concurrent with the main NC QSO Party.
- A plaque will be awarded for first-place and an electronic certificate for second place finishers in each category (NC, Non-NC)