

**How do I?**

**An occasional series**

**This week: Practice...or hope you are lucky!**

**A** few weeks ago I wrote about the upcoming Winter Field Day and how contests and Field Days are a great way to practice your radio skills. Winter Field Day has come and gone and we are now few days shy of 6 months until the ARRL Summer Field Day (4th Saturday and Sunday in June). The June 2019 edition is “early”-June 22 and 23. Not too late to start to get ready!

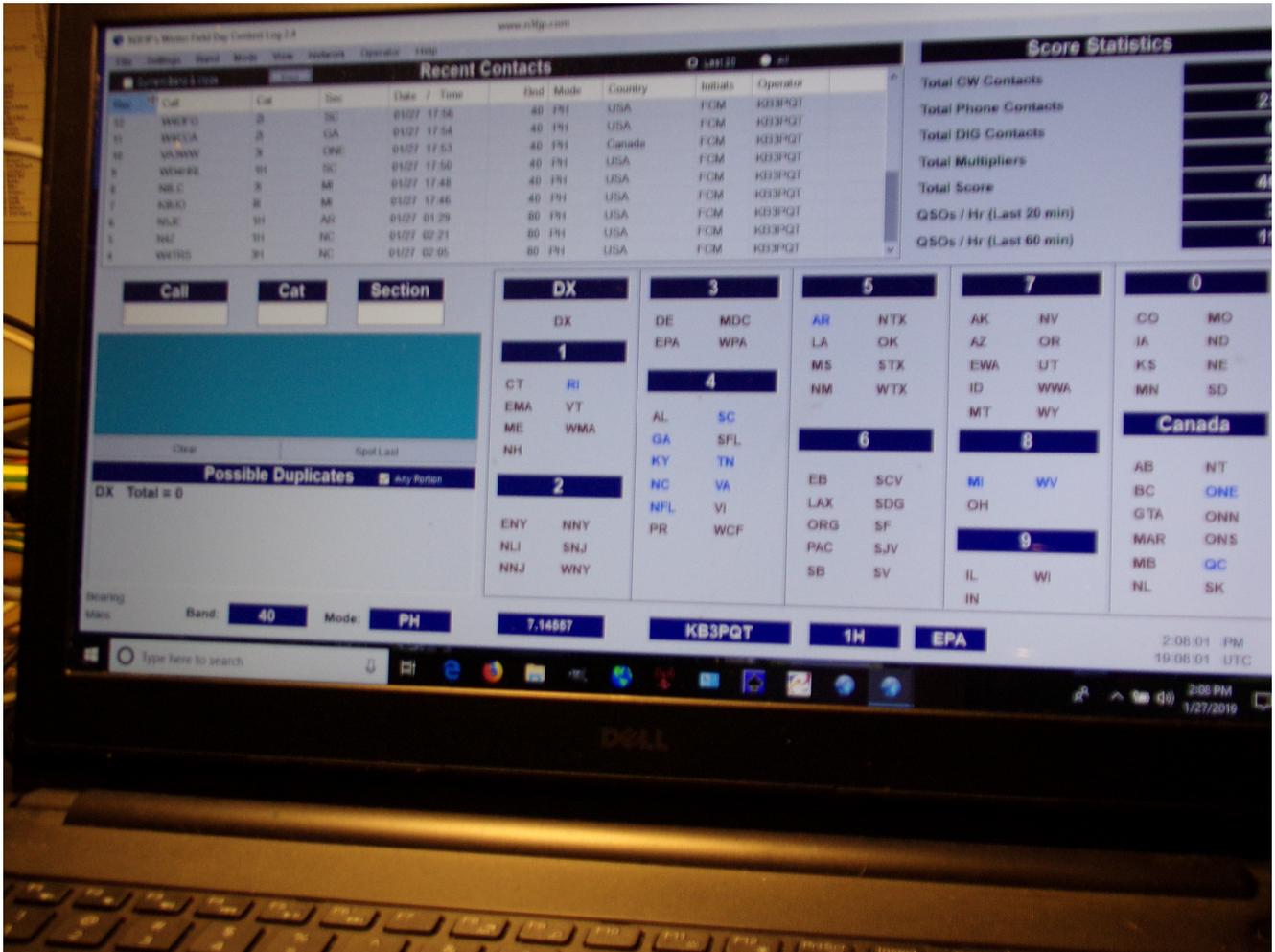
I had high hopes for Winter Field Day 2019. Then life interfered. It happens. Normally the week before a contest I make sure I have N1MM logger ready to go. A string of long days at work kept that from happening. Then Saturday I had things to do. So it was around 8 PM EST before I can try to play radio. I fired up 80 meter phone and heard a K5 call. He came back to me on my first call. Very slick, and he is in Arkansas, which I have no confirmed QSO with. I went to put him in N1MM logger and there is no drop down for Winter Field Day! I forgot you have to download some contests, and I forgot I have recently installed N1MM Logger+. So I went there, still no file. I figured maybe you use the regular field day file, but it didn't like the exchange, So I hand logged my first 3 WFD QSO's. Got up at 0530 today. bands seems pretty dead, at least WFD wise, so I played around downloading the correct N1MM files and for some reason it didn't work well. So I did what I should have done years ago: I upgraded my N3FJP software to the latest log version. It does some very cool stuff, and there should be an article in the works about it. In the meantime see *PC Programs* in this series.

When I upgraded N3FJP's AC logger, I bought the complete package. I downloaded Scott's N3FJP Winter Field Day logger and was in business. It works the same as the summer field day logger. I found a feature I love for single op-unassisted work: N3FJP interfaces with the radio via CAT control so it fills in the band and mode and frequency. No more changing bands and you forgot to change the log software!

I only operated about 3 hours total, if that, and that included lunch. Burning lunch twice while playing radio is probably a sign I shouldn't multitask! Picked up 1 new to me state, possibly a new to me Canadian section and Arkansas which I hope to get a QSL out of. And I am pretty sure I set a new personal record for contest QSO's. The Quebec station I snagged was “outdoor” and said it was -12 degrees. Didn't ask if that was Celsius or Fahrenheit!

So even though I played radio for less than 3 hours instead of the 14 or so I planned on, It was a very good day. And even though my preparation was little to none, it was a good time!

So, don't let lack of experience, or preparation, or skill, hold you back! I didn't practice, and I was still lucky!



N3FJP Winter Field Day logger 2.4 in action-KB3PQT photo