

2023 Analysis and Commentary de N9JF

The 2023 ILQP was smiled upon by the gods of weather and propagation. Most participants did not have to battle the elements; and as a result, there was an unprecedented number of successful portable operations. Several of those were in parks for the added benefit of the POTA and WWFF park-chasers. There was a decent amount of propagation on the high bands, though many did not spend very much time on the bands above 20 meters. There was enough DX to be worked that many of the Illinois entrants managed to snag the permitted five DXCC multipliers.

The number of logs submitted (357) was a new record, as was the number of contacts in the Master Log (50966). Largely due to the Excel wizardry of WA9GBC, log checking was completed in record time. Log submissions were mostly prompt, decipherable and in proper format. Each year, there are fewer “oopsies” requiring resubmission and clarification, and for this I thank each of you!

Each year, we try valiantly to recruit and organize in order to get all 102 Illinois counties on the air for a portion of the eight hours. Portable, rover and mobile operations are critical in achieving this. In 2023, we fell a bit short. There were a few counties along the southern Illinois/Indiana border who did not appear in logs. That is a great area to plan for one of those operations in 2023!

We can't possibly exaggerate the appreciation we feel for those who come in from out of state to help put counties on the air!

Winners and record holders:

The full list of plaque and certificate winners is posted in a separate document, but here are some of the highlights:

Illinois Fixed: K9CT once again topped the IL Fixed High Power list and also had the most Mixed Mode QSOs. His 2023 score lands in the Top Ten just behind his score in 2021. KG9X won the IL Fixed Low Power plaque, narrowly edging out K9PW though Pete had a higher multiplier count. The difference came down to CW vs SSB contacts and the points for each. Both landed in the Top Ten all-time for low power entries. KX9X turned in a fine QRP score that was top for Illinois and in the Top Ten all-time for QRP. KD9GY had the highest score for a phone-only entrant and did it with low power.

Illinois Mobile: Once again, AD4EB came up from Tennessee to put in a tremendous effort and won the plaques for Illinois Mobile and Most CW QSOs. In doing so, he set a new ILQP Mobile record for score, eclipsing his own record from 2021, set a new record for CW contacts (raw 1415, net 1442) and averaged 180 contacts and hour for the 8 hours. That is a monumental testimony to planning, skill, endurance and a good driver! There were some other really good mobile efforts who were critical in making numerous counties available, notably WT9P, NU0Q, N9EP, KA9FZR and K9LY.

Illinois Rover: KY0Q topped the Rover scores, putting five counties in the Quad Cities area on the map. KG9IL activated nine counties, not an easy task, and WA9LEY was on the air from four counties in the Chicago area. ND9E helped fill in some holes in the far southern portions of the state.

Illinois Portable: There were unprecedented numbers of portable operations, with 31 submitting logs from all over the state. Two of them entered as “unlimited/multi-transmitter” operations, achieved some tremendous scores and no doubt had a lot of fun! K9D’s (operated by AA0Z, KK0U, WB0SND and WB0TUA) 420080 points topped all entrants, and W9W’s (operated by KD9WHO, KM9SPL, and KD9LSV) 285,318 was also remarkable. Both of these were achieved from two-county lines.

There were no 4-county corner operations in 2023. The high-scoring 3-county corner operation turned in by K7DZE (with WB7PMZ). The winning 2-county operation (single transmitter) was from KD0NEO/9 (with WA0IYY). N9JF as a contest sponsor declined the plaque for this category but set new records for Adams and Brown. The highest single-county score was from N9TTK who came over from Indiana to activate Edgar County and set a new record for that county. KM9O set a new record for HARD, WY9S submitted the first ever non-mobile/rover log from ALEX, K9ZA set new records for MORG and SCOT, and K7DZE set a new record for PERR.

Illinois Club Competition:

The top spot was hotly-contested this year with Metro DX narrowly edging out the PRIME group, each with 14 entries. McHenry County Wireless, with 13 entries, was not far behind in total score. Each year, numerous entrants list Society of Midwest Contesters as their club, which is fine, except that it’s not a “local club”. Those who wish to support their local club in this competition should double-check with submitting logs to be sure the Club listed matches their desire for club credit!

Outside Illinois:

The group of QRP entrants from outside the state was topped by K3TW who narrowly edged out KE0TT and KR4AE. Perennial entrant AF5CC came through with a low-power win this year, using a big multiplier count to best N8II and NM2A. The high-power winner, and DX winner, was OM2VL, though W0BH and KV0I, both with higher multiplier numbers, were close behind.

The “Gold Medal Achievement” award winners this year numbered nine. The benchmark for number of counties worked to qualify was dropped from 75 to 70 due to several counties not being on the air. Each of the nine worked either 200 QSOs, 70 counties or both. Those doing so were OM2VL, W0BH, KV0I, AF5CC, AA3R, K4BAI, N8II, W8PI and WA0JCO.

New state/province records: AC5XK submitted the first ever log from the District of Columbia. F8PDR sent in the first log from France. AI0Y broke his '22 record from North Dakota as did KV0I from Nebraska. N7MZW broke the record for Wyoming. Though no records were broken, there was a great group of logs sent from Canada with VE3AQ’s score topping the list.

QSOs by mode: Of the approximately 51,000 contacts logged, 33,000 were on CW with almost all of the remainder on SSB. There were a few FM contacts on VHF. A few dozen digital contacts, all on FT8 were submitted. However, the near impossibility, or at least impracticality, of exchanging the required information on this mode means that in 2024, *no digital contacts will be accepted for ILQP credit.*

QSOs by band: Eighty/seventy-five meters accounted for about 6000 log entries, with about 28,000 on 40 meters, 15,000 on 20 meters, about 600 on 15 meters and the remainder almost entirely on 10 meters. The higher bands were obviously “open” but finding someone to work there was often not very productive.

There is non doubt a lot of relevant information to be gleaned from 51,000 lines of log data and interesting comments to be pulled from the comments submitted. However, the limits of dedication by this analyst have been reached. Thanks again to all who participated in 2023, and we look forward to seeing you on the air in the 2024 event on October 20, 2024!