

The Georgia QSO Party



2022 Georgia QSO Party by Andrew Goss , AA5JF

The Georgia QSO party was held on April 9th and 10th of 2022. As in most other years, it competes for attention with that other Georgia event, The Masters. But the exciting golf during the weekend did not diminish interest in the QSO party, as there were 505 submitted logs. There was nearly a 20% increase from last year in the number of logs from Georgia (129), and 376 logs from out-of-state was comparable to last year. And even with 20 hours of operating possible, activity remained high throughout the weekend. The deep pile-ups for the rovers and portables during the final two hours indicates just how much fun we were all having.

This was our second year back after the lock-down edition of 2020, again with rovers, in-person multi-ops, and portable operations. For the second year in row, we featured a portable category, and this is proving popular, with many more Georgia amateurs operating Field Day style from multiple counties (minimum of two was required). With Georgia's 159 counties (second only to Texas), there were plenty of multipliers to chase, even more so as each county counts on both phone and CW. All but a handful were on at one point or another during the weekend. Although overall entries were slightly down from last year, and conditions were not quite as good as in 2021, higher scores especially from Georgia stations suggests many spent more time in the QSO party. Thank you all for participating.

Conditions were good both days, although the long skip on 15M and 20M might have better suited a DX contest. 10M was not seriously in play (but OM2VL did connect with K4PI), and only a small percentage of total contacts were made on 15M. Skip on 20M was very long, limiting contacts between Georgia and the Midwest. Reviewing my own log, I find I did not make a single contact on 20M with Ohio, which is unusual in a domestic contest. For the Georgia operators, 40M was open to somewhere pretty much all of the time. There was non-stop activity on both phone and CW, occasionally making it challenging for Georgia ops to find a good run frequency. Noisy conditions cut down on 75M phone activity, and also diminished topband activity, even on CW. Six meter contacts are allowed, but none were reported.

Laci OM2VL reminds all of us in Georgia that Europeans on 40M phone can only operate below 7.200 MHz (that explains why I missed him). Remember that for next year.

Activity from out of state was again high with 376 submitted logs, only slightly down from 2021. The State QSO Party Challenge continues to draw casual and serious operators onto the air many weekends.

Out-of-state W/VE operators probably suffered most with the long skip on 20M. Still, out-of-state winners (W/VE) turned in some impressive logs, with many of the winners connecting with the rovers in almost every county they visited. In the high-power categories, K9CT's all CW effort again led to a win, with 239 QSOs and 47,800 points. The mixed-mode effort by ND4Y in Kentucky resulted in 241 QSOs and 50,826 points—and that includes 7 CW contacts on 15M. And WW5L made 82 QSOs on SSB to win the HP phone competition. In the low power categories, NX3A made an impressive 318 contacts from Virginia to win the mixed mode competition (and beating his winning score from last year). K9CW completed 140 contacts (and 77 counties) with 21,560 points to top the CW category. And on SSB, N4ATU in Tennessee won the out-of-state lower power category, with 97 contacts and 6,014 points. In the QRP contest, K3TW in Florida won the mixed category with an impressive 176 contacts and 31,941 points, significantly improving on last year's score. K9UIY's 74 contacts and 5920 points was enough to win the CW category, while W4BBT's tidy 85 QSOs and 4420 points was top of the phone QRP category for out of state operators.

In addition to the top out-of-state W/VE awards, the GA QSO party offers a number of plaques for operators farther afield, who did very well this year. The best score from W6/W7 was won by KA6BIM in Oregon with 156 contacts, all on CW. The mixed-mode DX plaque was won by Laci OM2VL, with 105,435 points from 373 contacts, who in fact had the highest out-of-state score, beating out everyone else in W/VE. Laci really outdid himself this year, and worked 113 counties on CW and 52 on phone, and completed a stunning 149 QSOs with the three main mobile rovers. The CW DX plaque goes to DL3DXX with a very impressive 270 QSOs, 118 counties, and 63,720 points, which was a little higher than last year. There was good DX participation this year, and a total of 11 European operators submitted logs. Thanks to Laci and Dietmar as well as DL3GA, LY5W, LA8OM, SP5SA, DK2OY, HB9DCM, SP6JOE, F6EPO and 9A9CW for participating in our state QSO party.

For out-of-state operators, active rovers significantly enhanced the contest, as many out-of-state competitors chased them all around Georgia. And this year we again had crews and individuals who had outfitted their vehicles for a weekend-long rove. Three multi-person rover teams (and one single-op effort) crisscrossed the state over the course of two days. Driving down from Tennessee were AC6ZM and KV4XY for their first full-time effort at a multi-single state QSP party rove, operating as K4TCG. And they nailed it, winning the mixed-mode category, with 1336 contacts from 50+ counties. The N4N team (K5JR with KX4MZ, N5ZZ and WK4U) operated two radios from a 20-year old Yukon to activate 58 counties and make a stunning 2036 contacts, most of them on CW. They won the multiple-2 rover category. K5JR reports one challenge was that Google Maps decided to "improve" their route without telling them – not nice! KU8E and K4BAI again teamed up to operate W4AN in 48 counties, racking up 1504 CW contacts to win the multi-single CW rover category. N4JAH made 403 SSB contacts to win the single-op phone Rover category. As the comments on 3830 make clear, the presence of all these rovers really makes GA QSO Party special for the out-of-state ops.

This was our second year for the portable category, and it drew a lot of interest, with fourteen stations operating from at least two counties (with the requirements that they were not to operate while mobile). This category is sure to grow, given the usually gorgeous weather in Georgia during the second weekend of April. AA4TI drove in from Florida to win the mixed-mode category (953 QSOs for 147,220 points). KY4ID, visiting from South Carolina, won the CW category, operating from two counties on Sunday only, making 466 contacts for 42,872 points. AD4XT (with KM4SLW) won the SSB category with a very notable 754 contacts and 41,470 points.

There was tough competition for a number of the top spots in the in-state competitions. One of the most popular Georgia categories was low-power mixed, and AA4LR came out on top this year, with 911 QSOs and 130,180 points, edging out his Fulton County competitors to win the plaque. In the single operator mixed categories, AA5JF (as WA4AUG) ran high power to make 1282 contacts and 206,806 points and win that category. QRP operator N4TOL (as N4A) made a stunning 600 contacts for 82,397 points to win the mixed category. K4PI used his experience and excellent station in Douglas County to net 1072 CW QSOs and win the in-state CW high power category, this year only just surpassing W6IZT (as W4IZT). W4TM in Fulton made 575 QSOs to score 58,650 and win the lower-power CW Georgia category. There was no QRP entry in the CW only category. Single-op SSB High Power in Georgia was also closely contested, with AE4CW (as K4L) winning the plaque with 1012 QSOs, edging out W4FNZ by 13 contacts and one multiplier. Lower-power SSB in-state was won by K4BBH with 418 QSOs and 22,572 points, while the QRP in-state winner for SSB was again N4CN with a tidy 284 contacts, beating last year's QSO total.

Multi-op plaque winners included WW4LL (with K1ZZI K4NV N4EMM NN9DD) who operated two transmitters and made 2353 QSOs to take the plaque and honors in multi-two. Numerous others competed in multi-two this year – a nice development. W4ECA won the lower-power multi-single category with a score of 15,238 points, enough for plaque. There were no high-power multi-single entries this year.

Club honors and plaque again went to the North Fulton Amateur Radio League (with a whopping 40 entries) and the small club plaque was won by the Amateur Radio Club of Augusta. The Florida Contest Group beat out the Tennessee Contest Group for the out-of-state club plaque.

And we will be back next year. We look forward to another great party next time, April 8 & 9, 2023.

Andy AA5JF (Richmond County, GA)