SARL General Contest Information Sheet

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This document provides guidance on how to go about contesting in SARL contests.

Which Contests you want to participate in?

The SARL Contest Manual is available at https://mysarl.org.za/contest-resources/ and contains all the contests that the SARL organises.

Look in the Contest Manual on page 3 where you will find a clickable link to all the SARL contests in the manual.

There is also a section starting on page 4 which lists every contest in date order.

The Contest Manual on mysarl.org.za will be the latest version of the manual, which is also referred to as the Blue Book by old timers.

Decide on a contest and read the rules for the contest

Decide on the contest that you want to enter.

Then read the contest's rules. Each contest has contest specific rules.

Determine what the required exchange or exchanges for the contest is or are.

Download latest contest log sheet before each contest

Log sheets for contests are available at https://mysarl.org.za/contest-resources/, most are excel sheets, so you will need Excel or a program like Open Office to use them.

Good practice is to download a contest's log sheet immediately before each contest as the log sheet may have been recently updated/corrected.

Set up your logging mechanism

Either draw up a manual log sheet, or use a stand-alone computer based log program / excel sheet, or set up your rig and interface it to a computer logging program.

If you elect to use a sheet of paper then draw up the necessary information columns that you will need to fill in as you make QSOs, a QSO being the term for an on air contact with another radio amateur. You can determine the information that has to be logged by looking at the excel log sheet, or alternatively at the contest rules for specific contest exchanges that you need to log, such as the other party's grid square or name.

With your computer you can either open your downloaded excel log sheet and enter information directly into it as you QSO in the contest, or you can set up a computer logging program that can be connected to your rig and capture each QSO's data into it. This does take time and there are many options available, so allow for time before the contest to set things up for yourself. It is suggested you ask at your club or ask an experienced OM to assist you in setting up your computer to log. There is some guideline information at

https://mysarl.org.za/contest-software-and-logging/ that can serve as a starting point. Many contesters use computer logging that interfaces to their rig.

Determine your Grid Square

Determine your Maidenhead grid locator (grid square). Links and mobile apps can be found at https://mysarl.org.za/contest-software-and-logging/

Participate in the contest

There is an online contest calendar at https://mysarl.org.za/contest-resources/ which you can add to your phone/computer's calendar, a link to do this is available above the calendar. The calendar entries have reminders set a day ahead of each contest.

While participating in a contest, if using a computer, check that it is saving each QSO as you progress.

Prepare your log

Add 5 days to end of contest to determine submission upload deadline.

Many OMs prepare and submit their log immediately after the contest ends.

The SARL allows multiple uploads of a log and will by default take the last submitted log as the submission to evaluate, this allows for the upload a corrected log.

Fill in the excel log sheet that you downloaded (or for the contests that require a Cabrillo format log generate one from your log program)

Check your log sheet to see if you have made entry errors and that the information that you supply about yourself and operating conditions are correct in the sheet.

Typical log errors are, time not in UTC, incorrectly entered callsigns, characters typed wrong or missing, an 'o' captured instead of 0 9zero), an 'i' instead of a 1, grid square J G F K in the wrong order or swapped, abbreviated club callsign wrong. Also check that your own information is correct and complete.

The evaluator may at their discretion return your log to you to correct.

Upload your log

Check through your log before uploading so as not to lose points due to typos and missing information.

Upload process – go to https://mysarl.org.za/contests/uploads.php fill in the details and select your log and submit.

Issues

If you want to raise anything e-mail contest@sarl.org.za.

Additional information

Getting your callsign and details on the web

Most ZS RAs register themselves on the QRZ.com system. Log4om and other logging programs query the QRZ.com database to retrieve information, so it is in your interest to be registered there.

Online Log Systems

For chasing a Worked All ZS (WAZS) award https://mysarl.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/WAZS-Information-and-Rules.pdf - upload your log to the SA-QSL system on mySARL.org.za at https://www.mysarl.org.za/SAQSL/ Any licensed RA in South Africa and surrounding countries can register by emailing your call sign and a request for registration on SA-QSL to webmaster@sarl.org.za. There is a help screen at https://www.mysarl.org.za/SAQSL/help.php . Good practice is to upload your logs to the SA-QSL system after each contest / regularly as it then assists others who are working towards their WAZS.

For those who want to chase DX QSOs and QSLs and DXCC consider registering at the ARRL logbook of the world https://lotw.arrl.org/lotw-help/getting-started/?lang=en .