EuCW Activity “Snakes and Ladders”

Version 2

Goal

The goal of this CW activity is to try to collect as many points, by working as many Maidenhead locator squares as possible, helped or hindered by ladder and snake squares respectively. A square worked only once by only one participant becomes ladder square for which a bonus is awarded. A square worked very often by one or more participants, may become snake square for which a penalty is given.

Conditions: **QSOs must take at least five minutes** and **stations must be European stations**.

Please QRS when needed, this activity should be equally accessible for all. Note that this is an *activity* and not a contest.

There are 9 operating periods of a full month each, from April 1st till December 31st, 2015.

Stations to work

Stations to be contacted are all stations in Europe as defined for this activity (see list in the appendix), except stations working Maritime Mobile (/MM) in international waters.

Operating frequencies

Contacts shall be made in the dedicated CW sections of all amateur bands from 160m to 2m (60m and 4m excluded). For the purpose of S&L, said sections are split into a “lower” and an “upper” portion, the latter being formed by the upper 10 kHz of the dedicated CW section as follows:

160m: 1.828 – 1.838 MHz	80m: 3.570 – 3.580 MHz	40m: 7.030 – 7.040 MHz
30m: 10.130 – 10.140 MHz	20m: 14.060 – 14.070 MHz	17m: 18.085 – 18.095 MHz
15m: 21.060 – 21.070 MHz	12m: 24.905 – 24.915 MHz	10m: 28.060 – 28.070 MHz
6m: 50.090 – 50.100 MHz	2m: 144.100 – 144.110 MHz	

For locator squares worked in an “upper” portion, double points shall be awarded. QRP calling frequencies must be avoided by non-QRP operators. Further note that 144.100 MHz is the "Random Meteor Scatter" frequency, and should be avoided. Contacts made must be point-to-point; contacts made through repeaters and satellites, as well as netted QSOs, are excluded.

Ladder, normal and snake squares

All logs received in a monthly period of activity, will be merged by the activity manager into a monthly “master log”. Locator squares only appearing once in this master log, shall be ladder squares. Locator squares appearing more than 5 times in the master log, shall be *candidate* snake squares. For every 10 *candidate* snake squares, one snake square shall be selected from the candidate snake squares using a seeded random function.

Locator squares that are neither ladder square, nor snake square, shall be normal squares.

Points

A participant's score is determined by checking the locator squares worked by the participant against the ladder, normal and snake squares. This task is performed by the activity manager (using software). For each ladder square worked, 4 points shall be awarded. For each normal square worked, 2 points shall be awarded. For each snake square worked, a penalty of 4 points shall be given. A participant cannot have more snakes than ladders (a negative score is therefore impossible).

In the upper portions of the CW band-section, points awarded for ladder and normal squares shall be doubled. The penalty given for a snake square shall, however, not be doubled.

Over the mark of 100 points, additional points (not the penalties) shall only be counted half.

If a normal square is worked in both lower and higher portion of a dedicated CW band-section, only the contact in the higher portion shall be accounted for.

Log requirements

Electronic logs may be submitted for each operating period. Logs in ".adi" format must be received by the Activity Manager by email (SL(at)eucw.org) **before** the eighth day of the month that follows the period of operation being recorded. Late filed logs may be refused.

When submitting the log, the following should be indicated:

1. period of activity
2. call sign(s) used on air
3. the operator's name and email

All entries in the .adi log must include:

1. **date and both on and off times in UTC**
    - If no Off date is given, the Off date is presumed to be the same as the On date.
    - The duration of each QSO will be calculated based on Date, and On and Off times. Any QSO shorter than five minutes shall be deemed invalid. The calculation shall be based on hours and minutes, seconds are ignored.
    - Decisive for the month a QSO shall be recorded to, is the On date.
2. **frequency in MHz**
    - Note that for this activity, only QSOs made in the dedicated CW band-sections of the amateur bands allowed shall be recorded. QSOs made outside of the dedicated CW band-sections shall be deemed invalid.
3. **call-sign of the station contacted**
    - If the call-sign is missing, the QSO shall be deemed invalid.
4. **signal report sent and received**
    - If one or both of "RST sent" or "RST received" is missing, the QSO shall be deemed invalid.
5. **operator's name of the contacted station**
    - If the name is missing, the QSO shall be deemed invalid.

6. **Mode**
    - Mode must be “CW”, otherwise the QSO shall be deemed invalid.
7. **QTH and Maidenhead 1o by 2o locator square as four or six character reference**
    - They will be compared to a list with Maidenhead square locators that cover the European countries as specified in the appendix. If a QSO is claimed with a locator that is not in the list, the activity manager shall perform a manual check concerning the validity of the QSO. Whenever needed and required, the list shall be updated. Otherwise shall the QSO be deemed invalid.

It is recommended that essential information is exchanged over the air. Information not exchanged must be completed otherwise, the burden for this remains with the participant. Invalid QSO entries will be ignored for processing, of which the participant shall be informed.

Logs must be sent in electronic form. Only logs in compliance with the ADIF specification will be accepted so as to allow automatic processing. Any amateur radio log-book program is capable of producing ADIF compliance log files. Other formats will be refused.

Logs shall be processed electronically within a maximum of a week, and the results for a period of activity shall be ultimately published on the 14th of the month following the period of activity. In case this deadline cannot be met, all participants will be informed.

Awards

A certificate will be awarded to every entrant who submits six or more valid logs to the activity and an endorsement will be added to the certificate for those who submit a valid log for every one of the nine operating periods. Call-signs of participants who have earned 1st award, 2nd award and 3rd award, will be published after the end of the activity, but before February 1st, 2016, as part of a list of all participants and their points earned.

Notes

Decisions made by the Activity Manger will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Appendix 1: Definition of Europe.

European countries (based on and sorted by DXCC code with prefixes in parentheses; Source: ARRL DXCC List, January 2013), including all sovereign states recognised by the United Nations in continental Europe and every country that is a member state of the European Union:

005: Åland Islands (OH0)
007: Albania (ZA)
015: Asiatic Russia (UA-UI8,9,0; RA-RZ)
021: Balearic Islands (EA6-EH6)
027: Belarus (EU-EW)
029: Canary Islands (EA8-EH8)
032: Ceuta & Melilla (EA9-EH9)
040: Crete (SV9, J49)
045: Dodecanese (SV5, J45)
052: Estonia (ES)
054: European Russia (UA-UI1-7, RA-RZ)
061: Franz Josef Land (R1/F)
106: Guernsey (GU, GP, MU, 2U)
114: Isle of Man (GD, GT, MD, 2D)
117: ITU HQ (4U_ITU)
118: Jan Mayen (JX)
122: Jersey (GJ, GH, MJ, 2J)
126: Kaliningrad Oblast (UA2, RA2)
145: Latvia (YL)
146: Lithuania (LY)
149: Azores (CU)
167: Market Reef (OJ0)
179: Moldova (ER)
180: Mount Athos (SV/A)
203: Andorra (C3)
206: Austria (OE#)
209: Belgium (ON-OT)
212: Bulgaria (LZ)
214: Corsica (TK)
215: Cyprus (5B, C4, P3)
221: Denmark (OU-OW, OZ)
222: Faroe Islands (OY)
223: England (G, GX, M, 2E)
224: Finland (OF-OI)
225: Sardinia (IS0, IM0)
227: France (F)
230: Federal Republic of Germany (DA-DR)
233: Gibraltar (ZB2)
236: Greece (SV-SZ)
239: Hungary (HA, HG)
242: Iceland (TF)
245: Ireland (EI-EJ)
246: Sovereign Military Order of Malta (1A)
248: Italy (I)
251: Liechtenstein (HB0)
254: Luxembourg (LX)
256: Madeira Island (CT3)
257: Malta (9H)
259: Svalbard (JW)
260: Monaco (3A)
263: Netherlands (PA-PI)
265: Northern Ireland (GI, GN, MI, 2I)
266: Norway (LA-LN)
269: Poland (SN-SR)
272: Portugal (CT)
275: Romania (YO-YR)
278: San Marino (T7)
279: Scotland (GM, GS, MM, 2M)
281: Spain (EA-EH)
283: UK Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus (ZC4)
284: Sweden (SA-SM, 7S-8S)
287: Switzerland (HB)
288: Ukraine (UR-UZ)
294: Wales (GW, GC, MW, 2W)
295: Vatican (HV)
296: Serbia (YT-YU)
390: Turkey (TA-TC)
497: Croatia (9A)
499: Slovenia (S5)
501: Bosnia-Herzegovina (E7)
502: F.Y.R. of Macedonia (Z3)
503: Czech Republic (OK-OL)
504: Slovak Republic (OM)
514: Montenegro (4O)

Appendix 2: about “Snakes and Ladders” and its origin

Snakes and Ladders is a game that originated in India and arrived in the United Kingdom well over a hundred years ago. It is a classic board game, wherein the board is divided into 100 squares or fields. It has been popular in USA where it is known as Chutes and Ladders as well as Snakes and Ladders. Variants of the game are known in other countries, for example, in the southern German speaking countries: “Leiterspiel” (ladder game), and in northern Germany: “Pferderennen” (horse racing), and in the Netherlands: “Ganzenbord” or in Italy “gioco dell'oca” (goose board), etc.

The object of the game (and its variants) is to navigate one's game piece, according to dice tosses, from the start-field to the finish or end-field, helped or hindered by ladders and snakes respectively. Ladders progress a player towards the finish, snakes regress him towards the start.

The way from start- to end-field may be seen as a reflection of life. On each player's turn, the game-piece is moved forward based on the number of eyes scored by tossing one or two dices. When doing so, the player may end up on a field that brings him either good luck (ladder) or bad luck (snake). Good luck means that he receives a bonus, and that he may forward his game-piece over a number of fields higher than he scored with the dices. Bad luck means that he has to move his game-piece back towards the start a number of fields, or that he is stuck for some time to a certain field (for example, in the Dutch goose game, the goose may fall in a well, only to be liberated by another goose passing by; or the goose may end up behind bars, meaning a player has to skip a number of turns before he may proceed further).

In our version of the game the board is made up from the map of the continent of Europe, and the individual squares are the locator squares on the map. This means we have a game board that is roughly over 2000 fields large. Contrary to the board game (where a player needs an undetermined number of dice roles or turns in order to get from start- to end-field), there are no start- and end-fields defined. Instead may each player put down his game-piece on any field by claiming a radio contact, QSO, with that particular field. There is no limitation to the number of fields he may put his game piece on, or on how often he may put his game-piece on a certain field. In fact, the more, the better.

Each player gets exactly nine turns, each turn being represented by a calendar month of activity. After the end of each month, it is recorded which fields were visited by each player, and how often.

- The fields that were visited by **all** players, and how often these fields were visited by all players, is information used for determining which fields become either snake or ladder, or just normal fields.
- The fields that were visited by **each** individual player, is information used for determining a player's reward for each month of activity.

The ladders are sorted from the fields visited by **all** players. It are those fields for which only one QSO is claimed by **all** players together. This means that only one player claimed a QSO with that field, and he will therefore “climb a ladder”, i.e. receive a bonus.

The snakes are also sorted from the fields visited by **all** players. In addition, it is taken into account how often a field was visited by **all** players together. A snake can be a field for which more than five QSOs are claimed. Which of the fields with more than five QSOs become snake, is determined using a seeded random function, wherein the seed cannot be anticipated, yet delivers reproducible results (seed = N* #QSOs(all), wherein N is the period of activity for each month. For each ten fields with more than five QSOs, one field shall become snake. Fields that are neither ladder, nor snake, shall be referred to as normal squares.

Once ladder, normal and snake fields have been determined, a player's reward can be determined by simply comparing a player's fields to the lists of ladder, normal and snake fields. How often a player visited a field, is irrelevant and not taken into account.