

January 17, 2021 WC-ARES Net Training: Field Day at Home

Rules for the 2020 ARRL Field Day were temporarily modified to accommodate conditions caused by Covid-19. In my case, I took advantage and setup a field day station at home. I put up a temporary antenna that did not meet community association standards due to location and height) that was better than my home antenna. I also setup emergency power.

Antenna: I built an off center fed dipole (OCFD) usable on 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10 meters. It was mounted at the feed point on a portable aluminum flagpole that was almost 40 feet high. The ends sloped down as an inverted V. Since this was a one man operation, a couple failed attempts were made to get the flag pole up in the air. Finally, it was tied to the trunk of a tree.

Emergency power: The golf cart has four 12 volt batteries wired in series. It has a 12 volt inverter that I could not find access. I rewired the batteries in parallel to supply 12 volts. This fairly simple job took longer than expected.

I decided to operate QRP (maximum of 5 watts output) to get the 5X multiplier versus the 2X multiplier for 100 watts.

What was learned:

- I wasn't as ready as thought. I now know how to put up the OCFD antenna in about 1/3 of the time.
- I'll solve the 12 v output from the golf cart so that it does not have to be rewired.
- QRP went better than expected. I finished at the 96th percentile in the 1E category. If I were running 100 watts, I doubt that I would have made 2 ½ times as many contacts for the same score. I learned some tricks to compensate for a weaker signal. It also proves that an antenna is the most important part of a station.

Winter Field day starts in 13 days. If you are not attending the WC-ARES event, please consider operating from home as the rules have been temporarily modified for Covid-19.

- You can setup a portable antenna and operate in your back yard and get a 1500 point bonus.
- You can earn a 1500 point bonus for running emergency power.
- While your score is its own entry, you can also combine it with WC-ARES for a group score.
- And most important, it will improve your preparation and emergency operation skills.

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