The Future of RTTY Contesting
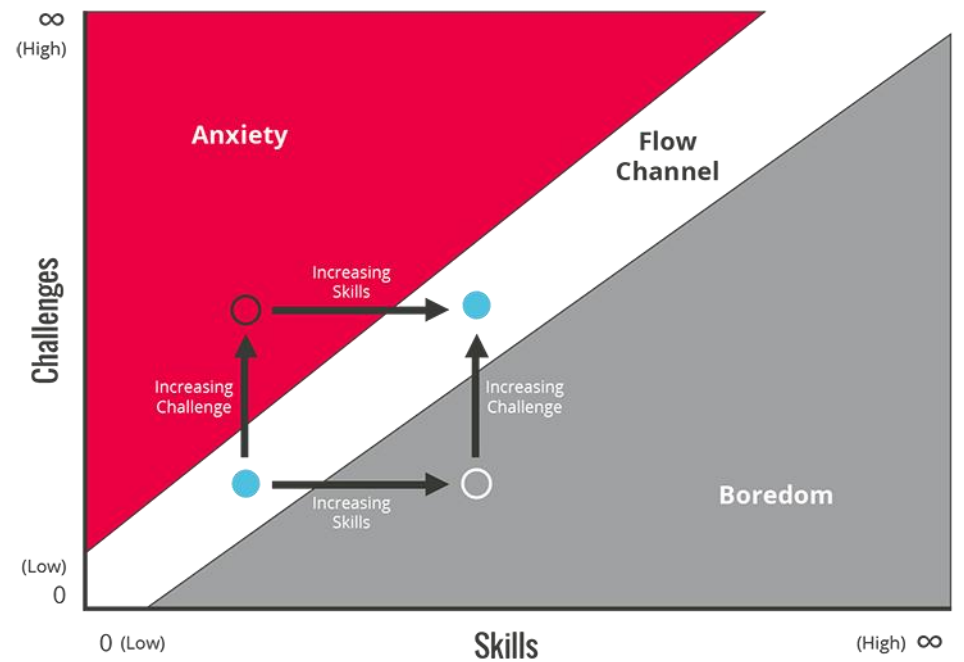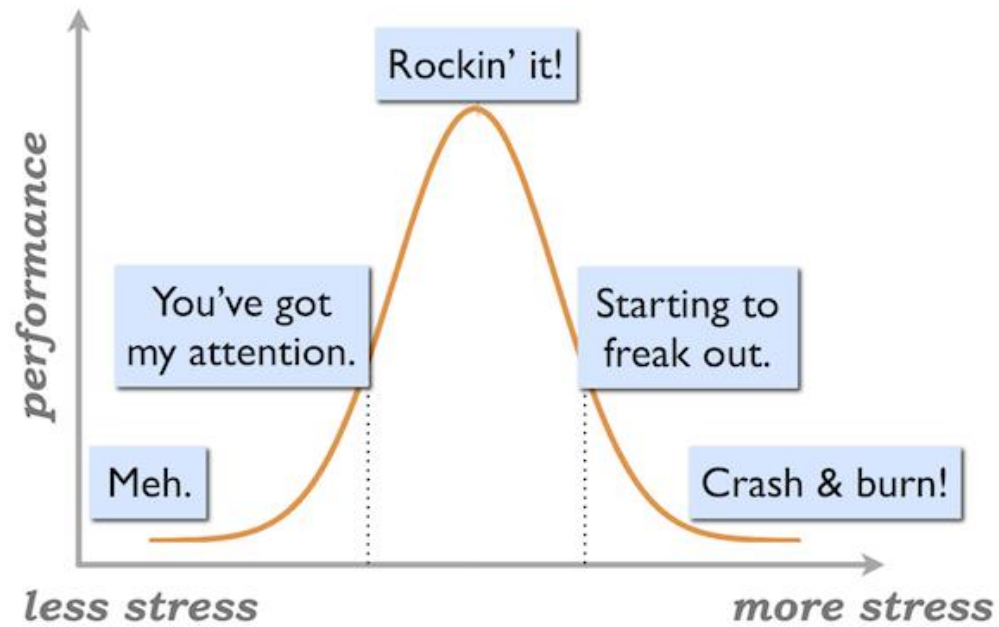
JEFF BLAINE - ACØC

Contesting factors
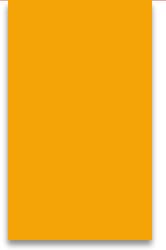
- Mode independent – prop, gear, endurance, etc

- Contest structure – scoring method, op time limit, etc

- Enjoyment factors:
  - Decoding
  - Fatigue
  - Sequencing & pacing
  - Reward for improving skill level

Another view – "in the zone"

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Flow Channel, Adapted from 1990 Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience

Traditional Contest Modes

Mode: SSB

- SSB

    - + Native decoding (speech)

    - - Fatigue factor - Multiple signals in the passband; filtering limited benefit
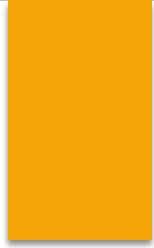
    - + Pacing – highly variable

Mode: CW

- CW

  - + Filtering effective

  - - Fatigue factor → 2nd language human decoding

  - ~ Pacing – variable

Mode: RTTY

▶ RTTY

  ▶ + Machine decoding

  ▶ - Fatigue factor – timing

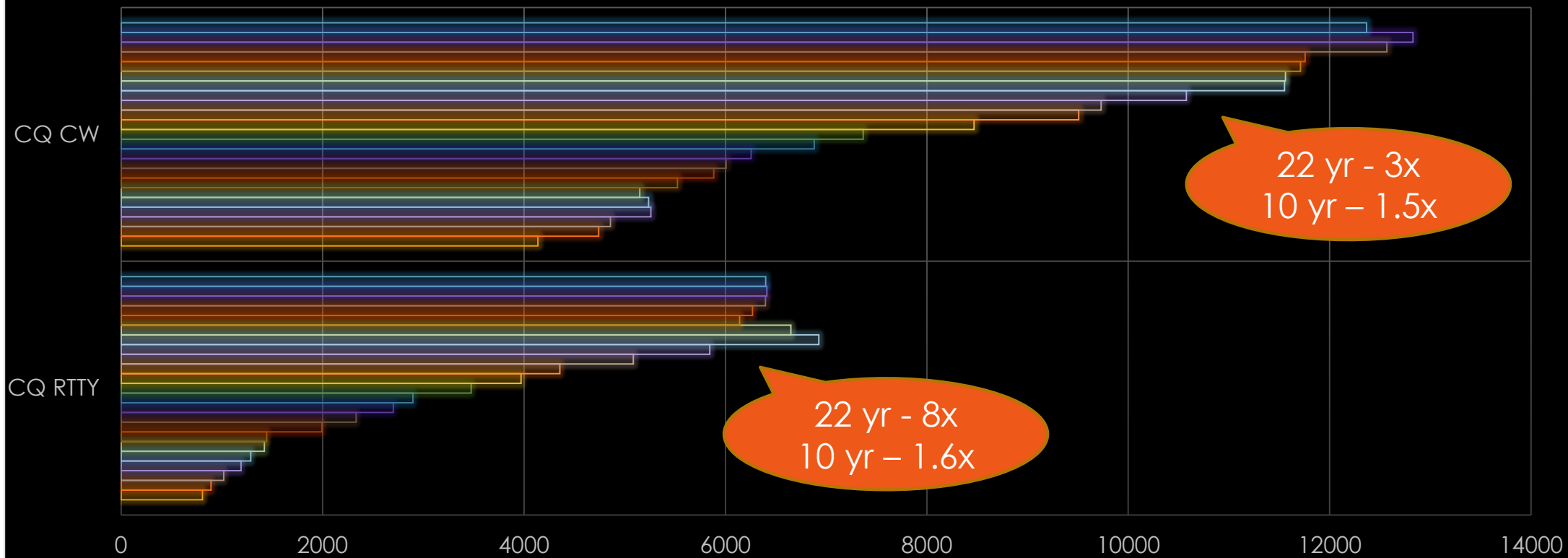 ▶ + Pacing: somewhat variable, strong So2r benefit

RTTY Popularity

RTTY Popularity

▶ Unique combination of skill & automation

    ▶ Machine decoding – less mental work → improves BIC staying power

    ▶ Emphasis on execution – rewards So2r skills

    ▶ Contest rules complement the mode
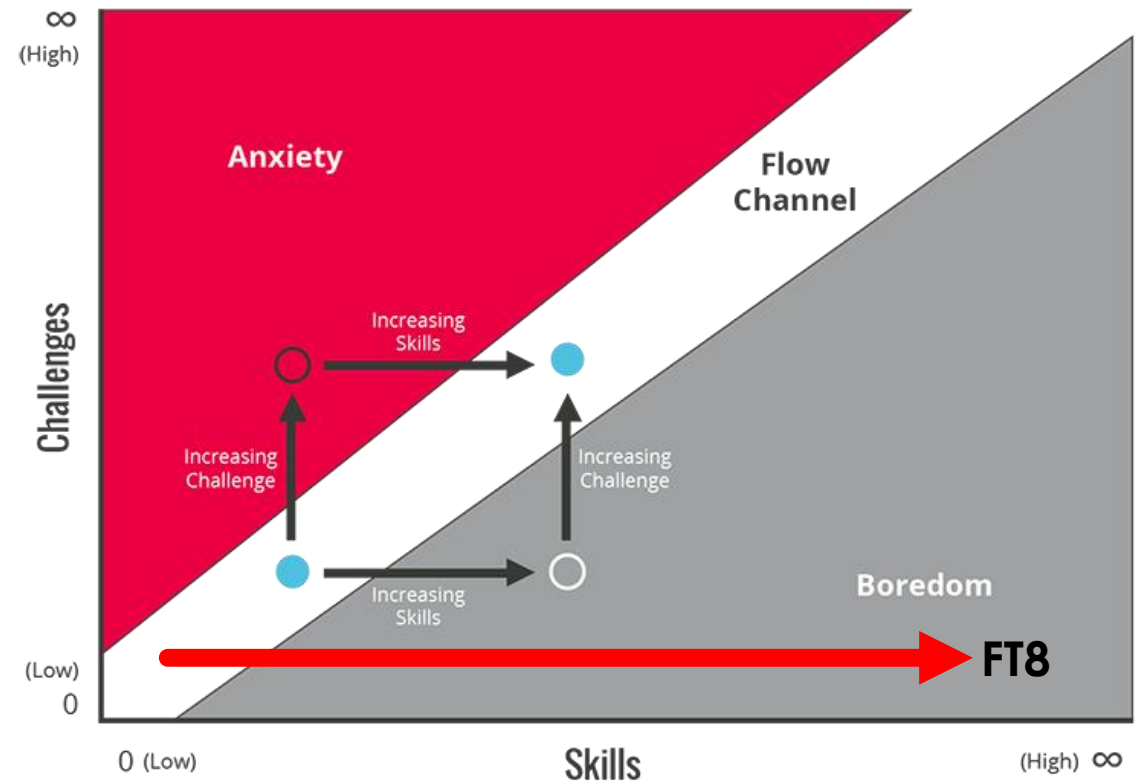
Contest Participation - CW vs. RTTY

CQ DX + CQ WPX - Logs Submitted – 1996-2018

What about FT8 contesting?

▶ Tic-Tac-Toe – *for now*

  ▶ Minimal learning curve →
     Easily mastered

  ▶ No skill challenge/reward →
     Easily bored

  ▶ Solution? →
     Dedicated contests
     built around FTx strengths

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Flow Channel, Adapted from 1990 Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience

Conclusion – Future of RTTY Contesting

▶ Unique blend of contest attributes → drives enjoyment

▶ Mode is less degraded by age than SSB/CW

▶ Participation trend remains solid

▶ FT8? FT8 is not RTTY. Different mode. Needs it's own mode-specific contests to bloom

The future of RTTY contesting is bright!