



Be the Ball

By Mike Dinelli, N9BOR

"Be the Ball." Those were the magic words my coach would drill into me each time I stepped up to the plate. "Be the Ball?" I asked. What does that mean? His explanation never made any sense and maybe that's why I never made the jump from Little League to the Bigs. My sandlot days may be long gone, but "be the ball" stuck with me.

As I matured into a proper, sedentary, ham radio lifestyle, the new phrase I kept hearing was "Be the DX." "Oh yes," they would say, "you are not a real ham until you've been on the DX side of a pile-up." I've heard the recordings and wished that

— "Be the DX." Oh baby, this is going to be great.

I shot off an e-mail to Nancy Kott, WZ8C, head honcho at FISTS North America. I told her that whoever came up with the new FISTS USA Club callsign was a genius. I asked if there was any way I could use the callsign. After all, I am a proud, card carrying FISTS member. Nancy told me it was she who conceived KNØWCW for the club call. She also told me she was working out a method for FISTS' members to personally use the call several times a year.

A few weeks later the procedure was announced and I selected seven days scattered throughout 2003 where I would be KNØWCW — the DX. My experience operating with this call has been wonderful. It's terrific for being the object of pile-ups, and wonderful because I found a new way to have fun. Instead of calling CQ, I answer them.

If you've ever called CQ and been shocked to have a rare one come back to you, you know what I mean.

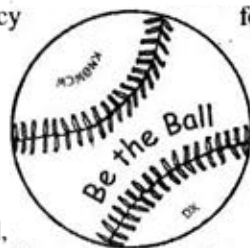
Sometimes they don't get it at first — that call is more than a call — it's an

exclamation! They might simply think KNØWCW is a real mouthful (fistful for CW ops). Then they'll either figure it out on their own, or after I tell them I am operating the FISTS USA Club station. Using KNØWCW is being the DX without leaving your QTH. It's another way to share the joy of CW with a nervous new op in the

Novice subbands. It is also entrée to a great ragchew with an old-timer. It's all good as long as I'm speaking with my fist and listening to Morse's music playing in my headphones.

If you are a member of FISTS CW Club and want to take your turn as the DX, visit www.homecomcast.net/~fistawards for more information. However, the challenge is for you to invent new and exciting ways to be the DX. It's not difficult when you use your imagination or brainstorm with your ham buddies over coffee. More help? Get your local ham club involved. You do support your local ham club, right? Your enthusiasm for a special event station will be contagious.

Editor's Note: Mike Dinelli, N9BOR, was first licensed in 1980 as a Technician. After a brief stint on 2 Meters, he realized 2-meter FM was not the ham radio he wanted to practice. He purchased a Drake C line and within a few months, upgraded to General. He's been a CW op ever since. Even though he has earned numerous operating awards, Mike's biggest joy in ham radio is settling in with a CW ragchew. You may visit N9BOR's website at www.qsl.net/n9bor or contact Mike at n9bor@qsl.net. The author would like to thank Philip Lazar, K9PL, for his assistance in editing this article.



someday I could be the DX. Maybe this was my calling — forget about being the elusive ball — be the DX!

It sounded like a good idea, as many do at first hearing. However, I learned that being the DX was very expensive and time consuming. So, I have been working on ways to be the DX without requiring the big bucks and a lot of time off from work. I operate contests and special event stations where people WANT to work ME! Imagine sending that first CQ hoping to get an answer and instead finding a waiting pile-up. It's great to be wanted!

About a year ago, FISTS CW Club announced they had a new club callsign — KNØWCW. It was so inspired I wished it had been my idea. It's a terrific way to promote Morse code on the ham bands. Then it hit me, that phrase popped into my head again, this time louder than ever

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