

PLAIN BOB DOUBLES

What it is

The trouble with Plain Hunt is that it comes back to rounds so quickly. When the bells have rung once in each position on the way out and on the way back, they return to rounds. This means that you only get 10 changes on five bells, 12 changes on six bells, and so on. This is rather a limitation, since there are $5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 120$ possible changes on five bells.

There are many ways of extending the number of changes before you get back to rounds. One of the simplest is for the bells to plain hunt until they are just about to come in to rounds. Then, when the treble is leading at backstroke (the lead end), the other bells make a change to their work, instead of plain hunting. In Plain Bob, the bell which is in second's place at handstroke stays there at backstroke. This forces the other bells to vary their work also. The bells in thirds and fourths have to dodge back to their previous positions, whilst the bell in fifths place has to stay there.

At the next change—which is at handstroke—all the bells now resume their plain hunting paths, until the treble returns to lead again. The bells now do the special variation again, only this time they are in different places, so they each do a different part of the special variation. After four leads, they are once more back in rounds. Thus completing a plain course.

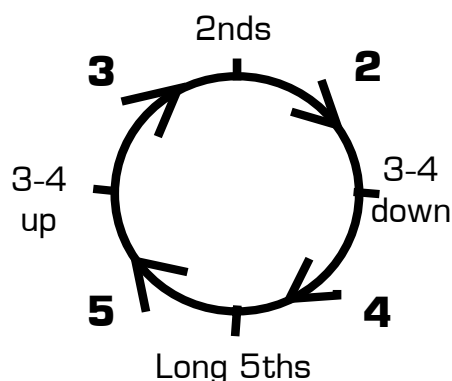
The paths of the treble and third bell are shown in the diagram. The treble plain hunts throughout, whilst all the other bells actually follow the same path, but they start in different places along it. The bottom of the diagram could be joined up with the top to form a continuous loop. For example, the second bell is making seconds during rounds, so its first work is to dodge 4-3 down, then long fourths, then 3-4 up, and finishing making seconds again. The starting place of each bell is shown on the diagram.

Plain Hunt	Plain Bob	Work of 3rd Bell	Start for:
12345	12345		3
21435	21435	Hand	
24153	24153	Back	
42513	42513	H	
45231	45231	B	
54321	54321	H	
53412	53412	B	
35142	35142	H	
31524	31524	B	
13254	13254	H	
12345	13524	B - Make seconds	2
21435	31254	H	
24153	32145	B	
42513	23415	H	
45231	24351	B	
54321	42531	H	
53412	45213	B	
35142	54123	H	
31524	51432	B	
13254	15342	H	
12345	15432	4-3 Down	4
21435	51342	H	
24153	53124	B	
42513	35214	H	
45231	32541	B	
54321	23451	H	
53412	24315	B	
35142	42135	H	
31524	41253	B	
13254	14523	H	
12345	14253	Long fifths	5
21435	41523	H	
24153	45132	B	
42513	54312	H	
45231	53421	B	
54321	35241	H	
53412	32514	B	
35142	23154	H	
31524	21345	B	
13254	12435	H	
12345	12345	3-4 up [Rounds]	3

Ringling Bob Doubles

You have already learned how to plain hunt: plain bob is plain hunting except at the treble's backstroke lead. At that point, you

either dodge back one place, or stay where you are. How do you know when to do this? We have noted that the dodges always come in the same order, whichever bell you ring, and that the work of the bells forms a continuous loop. This can be shown another way:



The bold numbers show the starting point for each bell and the marks show what work you do at the lead end. The work moves clockwise round the circle, as the arrows show.

The position of the Treble

You will note that the bells follow each other round the circle in the coursing order that you learned for Plain Hunt. This diagram doesn't show the position of the treble, which is not fixed, but moves its place in the coursing order at each lead end, as it hops over the bell making seconds. You can turn this complication to your advantage. Ringers often find that even though they have learned the order of the dodges, they forget which one they did last time, so they don't know which is next. But you can use the treble as a marker, as shown in the table below.

Pass treble in:	Next dodge:
5th's (turn treble from behind)	4-3 down
4th's	Long 5th's
3rd's	3-4 up
2nd's (treble turns you from lead)	2nd's and lead again

Bobs

We have seen that there are 10 changes in a lead of Plain Bob Doubles, and that there are four leads in a plain course (ie before the bells come back to rounds). This means that there are 40 changes in a plain course. This is better than plain hunt, but a long way from ringing all 120 possible changes on five bells. To ring the remaining changes, we need a further variation to the method. The solution adopted in Plain Bob is to use a different variation at the lead-end, known as a *Bob*. (The origin of this term is lost in the mists of time.)

Plain Lead	Bob Lead	Work at Bob for 5th Bell
12345	12345	
21435	21435	
24153	24153	
42513	42513	
45231	45231	
54321	54321	
53412	53412	
35142	35142	
31524	31524	[Bob called]
13254	13254	
13524	12354	Make 4ths
31254	21534	Hunt down to lead
32145	25143	
23415	52413	
24351	54231	
42531	45321	
45213	43512	
54123	34152	
51432	31425	[Plain Lead]
15342	13245	
15432	13425	Long 5ths
51342	31245	
53124	32154	
35214	23514	
32541	25341	

Plain Lead	Bob Lead	Next Lead (if plain)
4-3 down	Run in	4-3 down
Long 5th's	Unaffected	3-4 up
3-4 up	Make Bob	Long 5th's
2nd's	Run out	2nd's

The work at a Bob

At a bob lead, the bell that was going to dodge 3-4 up makes fourth's and immediately turns round and goes back to the lead. This is called *making the bob*. The bells in 2nd and 3rd position continue to ring as in *plain hunt*. This means that the bell in seconds place hunts straight out to the back. This is called *running out*. The bell in thirds place, that was going to dodge 3-4 down, continues straight down to lead, again as in plain hunt. This is called *running in*. The bell in fifth position makes long fifths as at a plain lead. It is said to be *unaffected*. Thus, a bob affects the work of all bells below fifths place. At the *next* lead end, the bell that made the bob will do long fifths, and the bells which ran in and out do the work they missed: ie the bell that ran out makes second's next lead, and the bell that ran in dodges 3-4 down next lead. The bell that did long fifths does its expected work at the next lead, it dodges 3-4 up. This is summarised in the table, which you *must* learn.

When the bob is called

The conductor calls *Bob* at the treble's back-stroke just before it leads. This gives you a whole-pull warning before the bob actually affects your work, which is not very long. Therefore, as the lead-end comes up, remember not only which dodge you are intending to do at a plain lead, but also what you would do if a bob is called. As soon as you have passed the lead-end, work out what you should do at the *next* lead-end, which might be plain, or another bob might be called.

Plain Bob on Six or more Bells

Plain Bob can be extended to six or more bells without you having to learn a lot more theory. On six bells, the bells in 5-6 dodge at the lead-end, as well as those in 3-4. On eight bells, the bells in 7-8 dodge at the lead end, as well as those in 5-6 and 3-4. The cycle of work becomes 4-3 down, 6-5 down, 8-7 down, 7-8 up, 5-6 up, 3-4 up, seconds. On an odd number of bells, eg on seven, the bells in 5-6 dodge as they would on six, but this leaves the bell in seventh's with no-one to dodge with, so that bell makes long seventh's, in ex-

actly the same way that a bell makes long fifth's in doubles. Long seventh's replaces the 7-8 dodges in the cycle of work. The diagram below shows the first lead of Bob Minor, and the work at the calls. You should write out the whole plain course for yourself.

Bobs

Bobs are the same as in doubles: bells above fourths are unaffected, and do the same work as at a plain lead.

Singles

To obtain all the possible changes on six or more bells, Plain Bob requires another variation at the lead end, called a *Single*.

This is a sort of combination of a bob and a plain lead: a bell makes fourths as at a bob, but the bells in 2-3 do not plain hunt. Instead, one bell makes seconds, as at a plain lead. This leaves the other bell in thirds sandwiched between the one making seconds, and the other making fourths. It has no choice but to make thirds between them. This bell was hunting down from the back, and would have dodged 4-3 down at a plain lead. Now it must turn round and hunt out to the back again. The bell then makes seconds at the next (plain) lead end. The work of this bell is tricky, and you will need to count your place carefully to avoid a mistake.

Plain Bob Minor

123456		
214365		
241635		
426153		
462513		
645231		
654321	Bob	Single
563412		
536142		
351624		
315264	315264	315264
132546	132546	132546
135264	123564	132564
312546	215346	315246
321456	251436	351426