

Beyond The Learning Curve

Five Rings Triples (& Doubles)

Many ringers will ring at some time or other to mark the Olympics. You probably know that the Central Council won one of the 20 commissions from New Music 20x12 to work with musical composer Howard Skempton on the creation of a piece of music suitable for change ringing to mark the Olympics.

This partnership worked very well, and the result is a method called Five Rings Triples. It doesn't quite obey the minutiae of current CC method rules, but to an ordinary ringer it is just as much 'a method' as Grandsire or Stedman. The feature that gives it its name, and links it to the Olympic emblem, is that the Treble rings five blows in some places (3rd place hunting up and 5th place hunting down).

Don't be put off by that unusual feature, after all, Bob Doubles has four blows behind, and several methods have bells pausing for the odd blow while hunting up or down. Just think of it as a bit more of the same. Work of the other bells is pretty orthodox – a mixture of dodging and hunting. So it shouldn't be too hard to learn. Ringing it can be a bit more tricky, and those who have done so will tell you that it can trip up the unwary.

So let's look at the method, see how it works, think how to learn it, and try to anticipate things that might catch you out.

As before, we'll start by 'walking around' the method, looking at it from different perspectives to spot features that might help you learn it.

The grid

The most conspicuous feature of the grid is the Treble path, with its extended pauses on the way up and down.

Also prominent is the white area either side of the sets of five blows. When the Treble stops moving, nothing can cross it, so the other bells are trapped, either above the Treble or below it. The pair trapped on one side are forced to do a double dodge with each other, and the four on the other side just hunt in the available space.

When the Treble starts moving again, normal hunting on 7 resumes. That alternation between free hunting and bells being trapped in small groups is what gives the method its interesting musical characteristics.

To complete the picture, it has a normal Plain Bob lead end (2nds, 3-4 and 5-6 dodges, and long 7ths).

The line

How does this simple, elegant structure translate into the line that you ring? The first thing to notice is that the lead end order is the same as Plain Bob (2-4-6-7-5-3) which is handy.

Another pretty obvious feature is that all the double dodging comes in the first two leads (2nd & 4th place bells). If this were a conventional method, the same would be true of the last two leads, but it isn't, because this method doesn't have end to end symmetry. It can't be symmetric, because the Treble's path has the five blows in different places hunting up and hunting down.

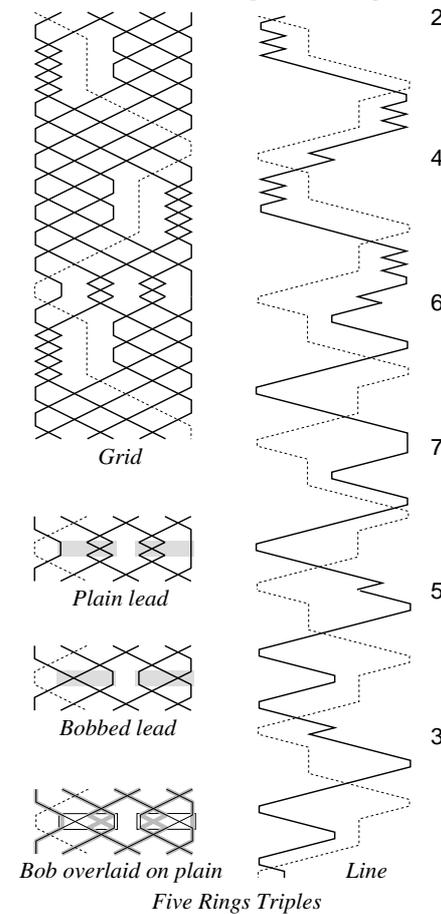
To see which way round the dodges come, if you turn the Treble from the back/front, then

you lie/lead before the double dodge, and if you don't (ie you pass it in 2-3 down or 5-6 up) then you do the double dodge first.

The only dodges in the rest of the line are the familiar lead end dodges, which come in the same order as they do in Plain Bob.

The rest of the line is hunting, some of which turns round in 4ths when the Treble is in the way, and some of which doesn't. 2nd & 4th place bells have no turn rounds. 6th & 7th place bells start with a turn round and then hunt through for the rest of the lead, whereas 5th & 3rd place bells start by hunting through and then have a turn round.

One 'obvious' way to know whether to turn round in 4ths is to keep an eye on the Treble, since its presence is what makes you turn round. There is a catch though. If you meet the Treble when it is striking its five blows, it matters which. Meet it on its first or, third blows, and you turn round, but meet it on its 5th blow, and you hunt through. That is one of the 'bear traps' that can even catch out experienced ringers.



Five Rings Triples

The bob is rather unusual. In most methods, a bob swaps three bells around, leaving the others unaffected. (In methods like Kent or Bristol a 4th place bobs affects all but two bells, but it still swaps round three bells in the coursing order.) Five Rings is different – the bob affects all the working bells, and it swaps round two separate groups of three bells. In the diagram of the plain lead, the grey rectangles show the two groups of three. Comparing that with the bobbed lead shown below, you can see how each bell is affected. The effect on the front group is just like Plain Bob (in, out, make 4ths). The work of the other group mirrors this. The bell that would have dodged in 5-6 down makes 5ths and up again, like a single in Plain Bob but

shifted up a couple of places, and the other two bells just hunt, like an Old Single in Doubles.

You need to know what happens next, after the bob, and as in any other method the best way to do this is to know the starts for each place bell, so you can pick it up immediately. But there is an extra check on what to expect. Look at the effect on each bell, and you will see that all the bells that hunt at a bob go back and repeat the previous lead, while the bells that make a place skip forward two leads.

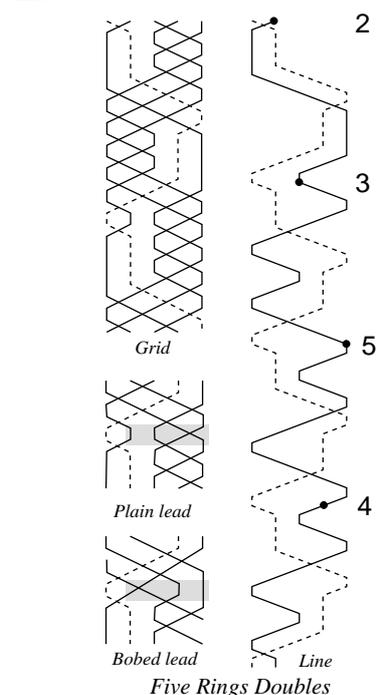
Five Rings Doubles

The Treble's line is a shrunken version of the Triples line, and it has a similar effect, as shown by the grid, but instead of trapping a dodging pair, the Treble's five blows trap a single bell, forcing it to lead or lie for six blows.

There the similarity ends, since the lead ends are not like Plain Bob, but like an Old single.

Looking at the line shows that the lead end order is also different – the reverse of Plain Bob.

The sets of 'trapped places' both come in the first lead (2nd place bell) which is similar to Triples. The reduced space, and the different lead ends, combine to make the rest of the line very regular – it alternates between turning round in the middle and running through the Treble. Don't just rely on that though. You still need to know where all the place bells start, so overlay that knowledge on the regularity of the line.



Five Rings Doubles

The call is like Plain Bob, but because the plain lead isn't, it affects all the bells

Points to watch include counting the long places front an back. For the working bells they are hand ... back, which is normal at the front, but not normal in 5th place. For the Treble, they are made hand ... hand.

Tail End

Read about Five Rings Triples & Doubles at: <http://cccb.org.uk/olympics/five-rings/>

You can download a crib sheet with the grid, line, Diary format, calls and notes from: <http://allsaintswokinghambells.org.uk/methods/five-rings/crib.pdf>

For information on Olympic ringing, see: <http://cccb.org.uk/olympics/>