

Sonning Deanery branch – 8-bell Striking Competition rules

1 Organisation of the striking competition

The organiser (usually the Ringing Master) shall be responsible for:

- 1 Checking that a suitable tower is booked for the competition
- 2 Booking the judge(s)
- 3 Notification of the competition at least 6 weeks in advance to Branch towers, with contact details for the organiser, and the rules of the competition.
- 4 Appointing two stewards for the duration of the competition ringing (duties below)
- 5 Making the draw for the order of ringing of the teams in the competition
- 6 Notifying the judges which teams (by running order) have elected to ring either call changes or rounds.
- 7 Organising a vote of thanks to the judge(s) and providing them with a gift.

2 Teams

- 1 The names of the team members and the conductor shall be notified to the organiser before ringing.
- 2 Every ringer in a team must be a resident ringing member, a life member or an honorary ringing member of the branch.
- 3 No person shall ring for more than two teams, but in extreme cases this rule may be waived.
- 4 The competition shall be open to the following types of team:
 - a) A **band team** whose members usually ring together at the same tower or towers for Sunday services. The team may be chosen by the band in any way it thinks fit. One or two substitute members per band team shall be permitted regardless of how many teams the band enters.
 - b) A **combined team** whose members are from up to three bands. A combined team cannot use substitute members.
 - c) A **youth team**, whose members are under the age of 22 or still in fulltime education, from any band within the branch. One or two substitute members who are not young ringers shall be permitted per youth team.
 - d) An **Elementary Team** consisting mainly of inexperienced ringers who attend the Elementary Practices.

3 Ringing

- 1 The bells will be up.
- 2 Only the test piece will be judged and scored.
- 3 Open handstroke leads will be assumed unless otherwise notified beforehand.
- 4 The order of ringing of the teams shall be drawn at the start of the competition. If there is good reason (for example, ringing for a wedding) why a team needs to ring early or late in the order, the team shall request this before the day of the competition and the organiser (at his/her discretion) will attempt to satisfy the request.
- 5 All teams must be ready to ring when the draw takes place, except those teams that requested in advance to ring late in the order of ringing.
- 6 Two minutes practice shall be allowed to each team before ringing the test piece.
- 7 The test piece shall be one of the following types:
 - a) **Method** – Consisting of at least one minute of rounds followed by at least 210 and at most 252 changes of any method or methods of Triples or Major. Plain courses shall be acceptable. The test piece finishes immediately the team returns to rounds.

- b) **Call Changes** – Consisting of ten minutes of call changes including at least 30 changes with at least 5 different bells leading. There is no penalty for not returning to rounds at the end. Any team intending to ring call changes must notify the organiser at the time of entry.
 - c) **Rounds** – Consisting of ten minutes of rounds. Any team intending to ring rounds must notify the organiser at the time of entry.
- 8 The steward will assist with time-keeping, as agreed with the team conductor. There is no penalty for a few seconds deviation from any time limit.
 - 9 Any team failing to obey any of the rules of team composition and ringing rules 5, 6, 7 and 8 above may be disqualified.
 - 10 The competition will be judged on striking alone. The test piece will be scored on the average number of faults per hundred rows.
 - 11 The judges' decisions on what constitutes a fault and the quality of striking will be final.

4 Stewards' duties

There shall be two stewards for the duration of the ringing, one to supervise entry of teams into the tower and the other to take charge in the ringing area.

4.1 Tower steward

The duties of the tower steward are:

- 1 Know the order of the teams taking part
- 2 Marshall the next team near the tower, ready to compete
- 3 Ensure that members of any previous team have left the tower before the next team enters.

4.2 Ringing steward

The duties of the ringing steward are:

- 1 Before each team starts, establish if it intends to ring call changes or rounds only
- 2 Know the rules of the competition and remind a team of the relevant ones if asked
- 3 Time the two minutes practice session and notify the conductor with ten seconds to go
- 4 Agree with each team what time keeping support is needed and then monitor the time and give the agreed notifications for each time.

5 General points

- 1 Teams should notify their entry at least a week in advance, together with numbers for tea. The organisers may at their discretion accept late entries (if unavoidable) up to and including the day of the competition.
- 2 The band of the host tower for the competition usually provides a tea (chargeable, to cover costs).

6 Document history

These are new rules in 2025 for the Branch competition following Reading Branch's decision to withdraw from the joint event. They are broadly based on the joint 8-bell rules and the Branch 6-bell rules with minor improvements.

They were adopted at the AGM in February 2025