

Sandpiles and pmaj for $\nabla^k e_n$

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q,t -Combinatorics in Cortona - June 13, 2025

Index

- 1 The sorted sandpile model
- 2 ...and the Shuffle Theorem
- 3 A generalization of delay and pmaj

Section 1

The sorted sandpile model

Basic definitions: graphs

Graphs: finite, undirected, connected, without loops.

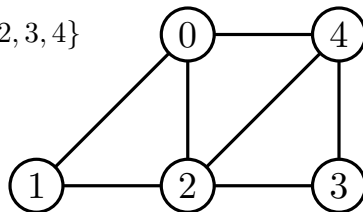
Let $G = (V, E)$ be a graph, with

→ $V = \{0, 1, \dots, n\}$ **vertex set**,

→ E **edge set**.

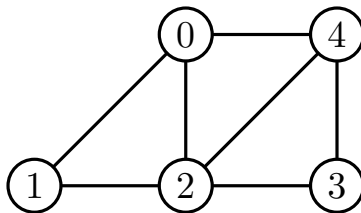
For example:

$$V = \{0, 1, 2, 3, 4\}$$



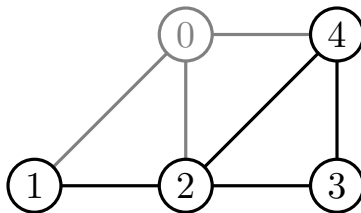
Basic definitions: configurations

Fix a vertex called **sink**, in our case let it be $0 \in V$.



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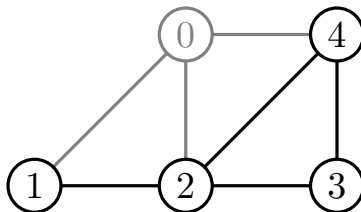
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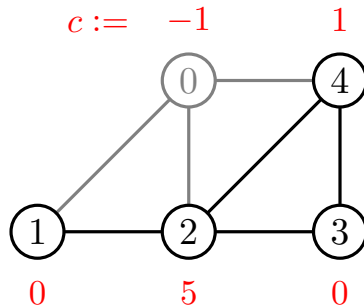
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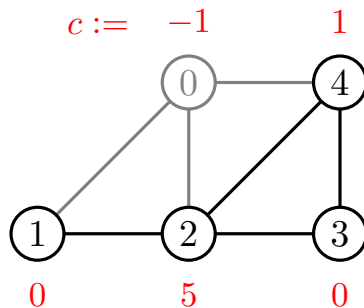
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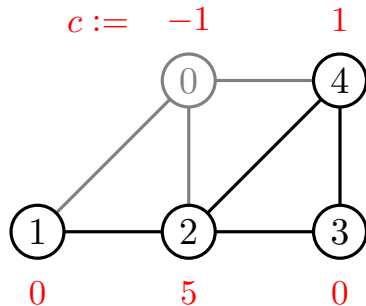
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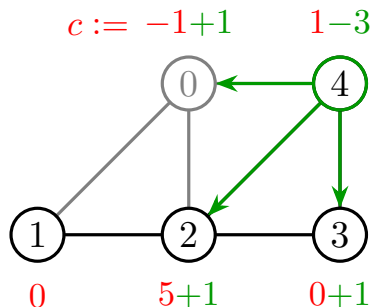
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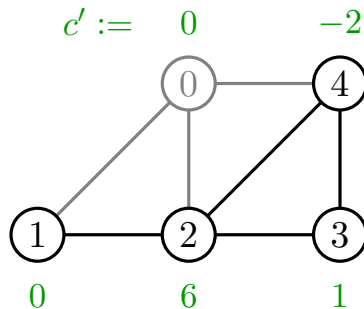
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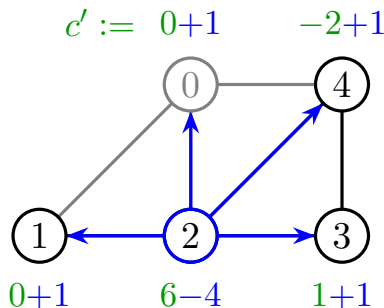
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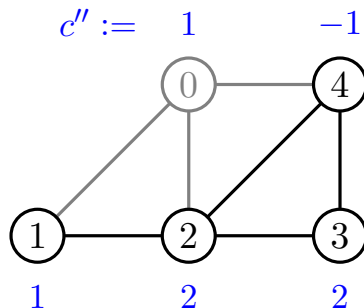
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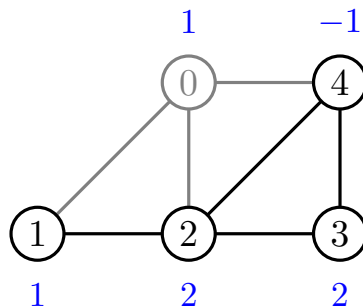
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Basic definitions: sandpiles

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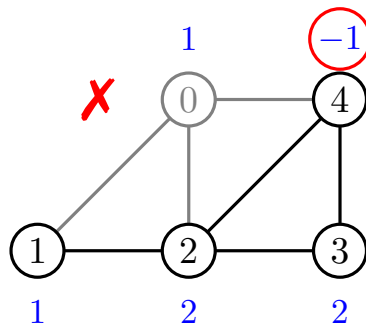
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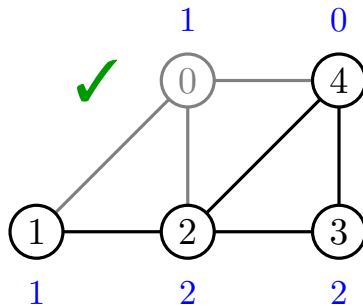
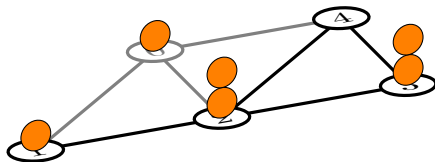
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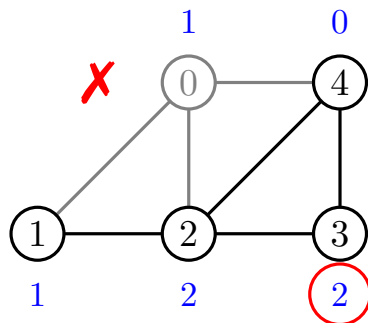
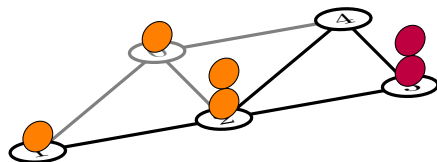


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Let $V = \{0, 1, \dots, n\}$ and let 0 be the sink.

A configuration is **non-negative** if $c(v) \geq 0$ for all $v \geq 1$.

A configuration is **stable** if $c(v) < \deg_G(v)$ for all $v \geq 1$.

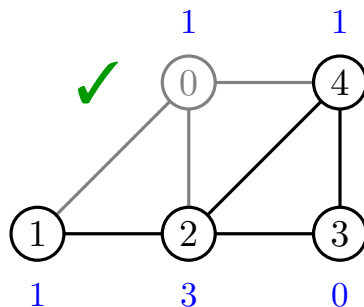
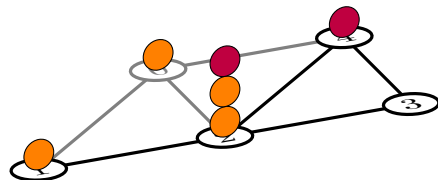


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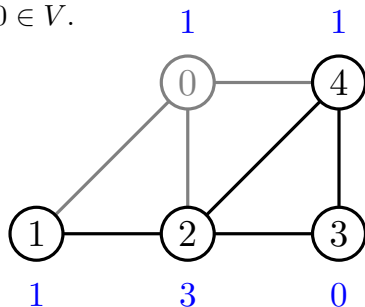
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We ignore the values on the sink $0 \in V$.

Thus, consider $c \in \mathbb{Z}^{V \setminus \{0\}}$.



Basic definitions: recurrent configurations

Let $V = \{0, 1, \dots, n\}$ and let 0 be the sink.

A configuration $c \in \mathbb{Z}^{V \setminus \{0\}}$ is **recurrent** if it is stable and there exist $\sigma \in \mathfrak{S}_n$ such that

$$c \rightsquigarrow \phi_0(c) \rightsquigarrow \phi_{\sigma(1)}\phi_0(c) \rightsquigarrow \dots \rightsquigarrow \phi_{\sigma(n)}\dots\phi_{\sigma(1)}\phi_0(c)$$

are all non-negative configurations.

Basic definitions: recurrent configurations

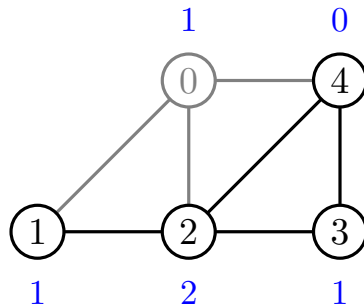
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For example:

$\sigma =$

Configuration: c



Basic definitions: recurrent configurations

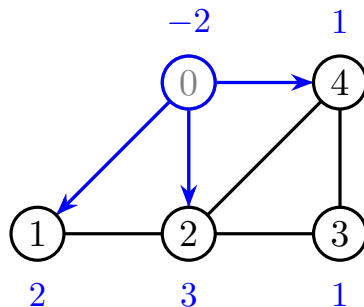
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Configuration: $\phi_0(c)$



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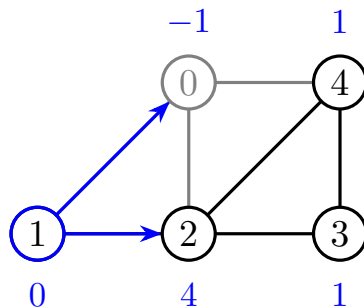
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For example:

$$\sigma = 1$$

Configuration: $\phi_1\phi_0(c)$



Basic definitions: recurrent configurations

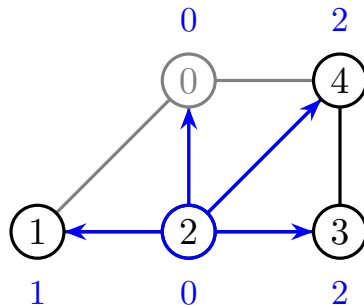
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For example:

$$\sigma = 1 \ 2$$

Configuration: $\phi_2\phi_1\phi_0(c)$



Basic definitions: recurrent configurations

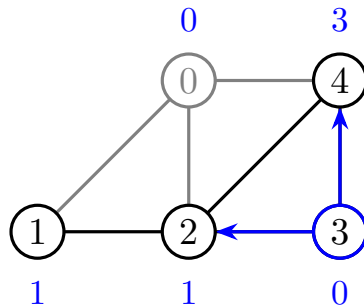
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For example:

$$\sigma = 1 \ 2 \ 3$$

Configuration: $\phi_3\phi_2\phi_1\phi_0(c)$



Basic definitions: recurrent configurations

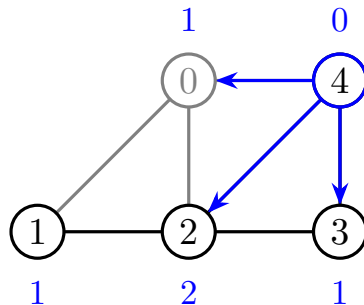
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For example:

$$\sigma = 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4$$

Configuration: $\phi_4\phi_3\phi_2\phi_1\phi_0(c)$



Basic definitions: recurrent configurations

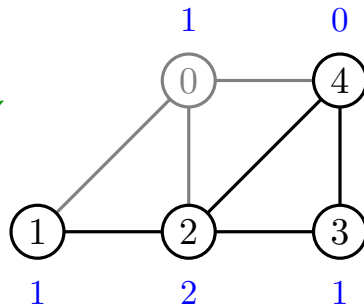
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For example:

$\sigma = 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4$ c is recurrent ✓

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Basic definitions: recurrent configurations

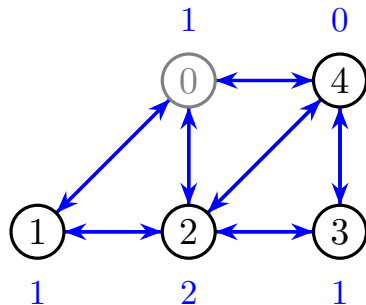
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Observe that

$$\phi_{\sigma(n)} \circ \dots \circ \phi_{\sigma(1)} \circ \phi_0(c) = c.$$

We say $c \in \text{Rec}(G)$.

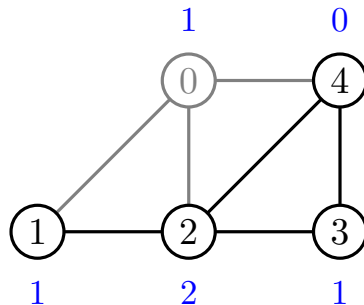


Basic definitions: level statistic

Let G be a graph on $V = \{0, 1, \dots, n\}$ and $c \in \text{Rec}(G)$.

We define the **level** of c as:

$$\text{level}(c) := \sum_{i=1}^n c(i) - \#\{\text{edges non-incident to } 0\}.$$



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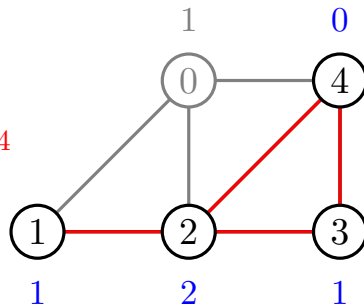
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In the example:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{level}(c) &= (1 + 2 + 1 + 0) - 4 \\ &= 0 \end{aligned}$$



Sandpile model: some motivation

- Mathematical Physics: self-organized criticality (Bak-Tang-Wiesenfeld, 1987)
- Geometry: divisors on tropical curves
- Probability: limit configurations for Markov chains on sandpiles
- Combinatorics:

Theorem

The number of recurrent configurations on a graph G equals the number of its spanning trees.

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A variation: sorted sandpiles

Consider a graph G on $V = \{0, 1, \dots, n\}$ and fix sink 0.

Let $\Gamma < \text{Aut}(G)$ be a subgroup of the stabilizer of 0 (the sink).

We define **sorted recurrent configurations** the elements of

$$\text{SortRec}_\Gamma(G) := \text{Rec}(G) / \Gamma.$$

Let K_{n+1} be the complete graph on $V = \{0, 1, \dots, n\}$ and consider $\Gamma = \mathfrak{S}_n$ the stabilizer of 0. Then:

$$|\text{Rec}(K_{n+1})| = (n+1)^{n-1}$$

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Section 2

...and the Shuffle Theorem

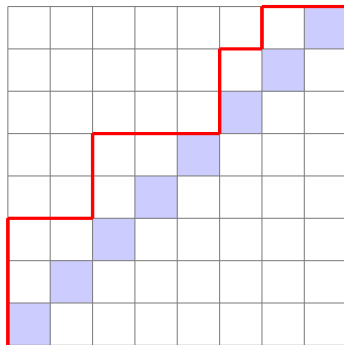
Catalan numbers: Dyck paths

Catalan numbers are counted by **Dyck paths**:

$$\text{Dyck}(n) := \{\text{Dyck paths of size } n\}.$$

It follows that:

$$C_n = \sum_{P \in \text{Dyck}(n)} 1.$$



q -Catalan numbers: Dyck paths

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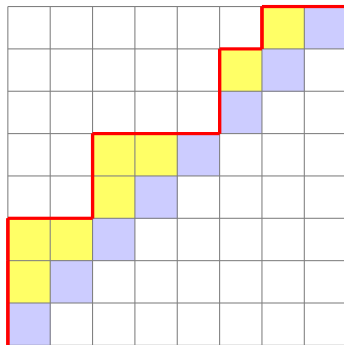
$$\text{Dyck}(n) := \{\text{Dyck paths of size } n\}.$$

It follows that:

$$C_n(q) = \sum_{P \in \text{Dyck}(n)} q^{\text{area}(P)}$$

where in the example:

$$\text{area}(P) = 8.$$



q, t -Catalan numbers: Dyck paths

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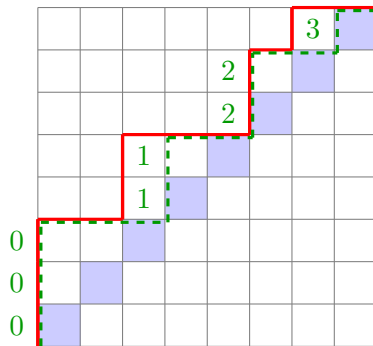
It follows that:

$$C_n(q, t) = \sum_{P \in \text{Dyck}(n)} q^{\text{area}(P)} t^{\text{bounce}(P)}$$

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$$\text{area}(P) = 8$$

$$\text{bounce}(P) = 9.$$



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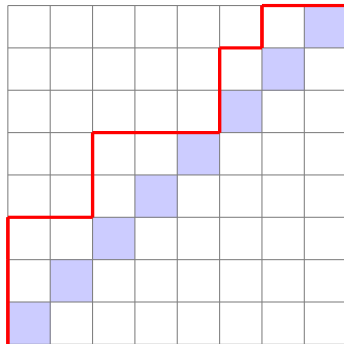
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q, t -Catalan numbers: parking functions

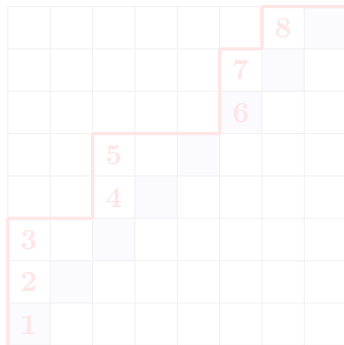
Dyck paths are described by *some* **parking functions**:

$$\overline{\text{PF}}_n((n); \emptyset) := \{n\text{-labelled Dyck paths with increasing labels}\}.$$

In particular for $\pi \in \overline{\text{PF}}_n((n); \emptyset)$:

$$\text{area}(P(\pi)) = \text{area}(\pi)$$

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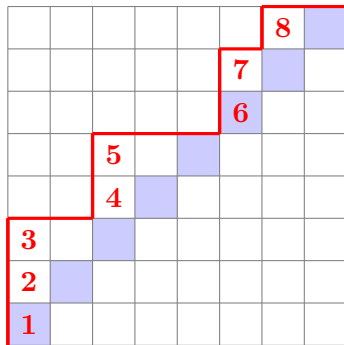
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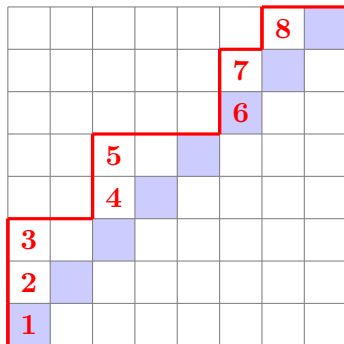
The pmaj statistic

We compute **pmaj** using an algorithm. Let $B = \emptyset$, $\sigma_0 = n + 1$.

For $m = 1, 2, \dots, n$:

- add labels of column m in B .
- let $X = \{i \in B \mid i < \sigma_{m-1}\}$.
- remove from B element

$$\sigma_m := \begin{cases} \max(X) & X \neq \emptyset \\ \max(B) & X = \emptyset. \end{cases}$$



The pmaj statistic

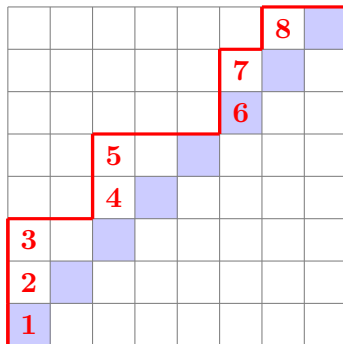
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$$\sigma_m := \begin{cases} \max(X) & X \neq \emptyset \\ \max(B) & X = \emptyset. \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{array}{ll} m = 0 & B = \emptyset \\ \sigma_0 = 9 & X = \emptyset \end{array}$$



The pmaj statistic

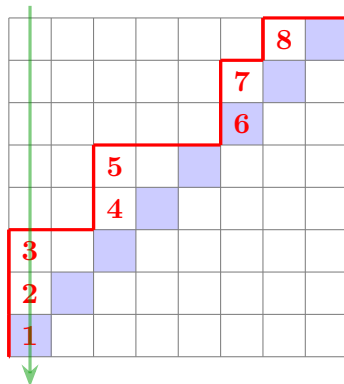
We compute **pmaj** using an algorithm. Let $B = \emptyset$, $\sigma_0 = n + 1$.

For $m = 1, 2, \dots, n$:

- add labels of column m in B .
- let $X = \{i \in B \mid i < \sigma_{m-1}\}$.
- remove from B element

$$\sigma_m := \begin{cases} \max(X) & X \neq \emptyset \\ \max(B) & X = \emptyset. \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{array}{ll} m = 1 & B = \{1, 2, 3\} \\ \sigma_0 = 9 & X = \emptyset \end{array}$$



The pmaj statistic

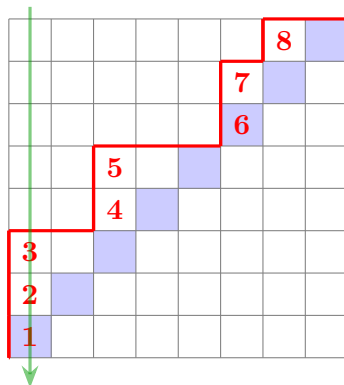
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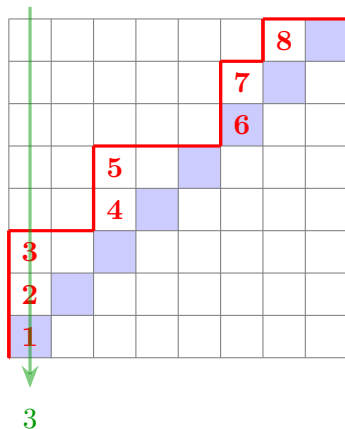
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$$m = 1 \quad B = \{1, 2, \cancel{3}\}$$

$$\sigma_0 = 9 \quad X = \{1, 2, 3\}$$



The pmaj statistic

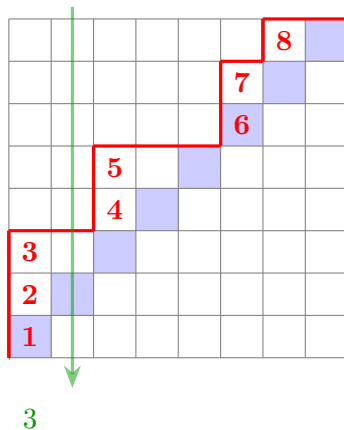
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- let $X = \{i \in B \mid i < \sigma_{m-1}\}$.
- remove from B element

$$\sigma_m := \begin{cases} \max(X) & X \neq \emptyset \\ \max(B) & X = \emptyset. \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{array}{ll} m = 2 & B = \{1, 2\} \\ \sigma_1 = 3 & X = \{1, 2, 3\} \end{array}$$



The pmaj statistic

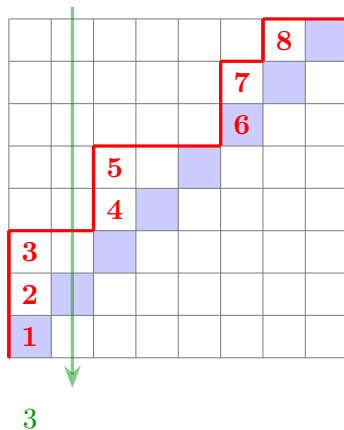
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The pmaj statistic

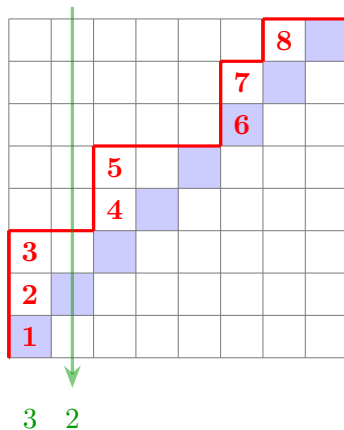
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$$\begin{array}{ll} m = 2 & B = \{1, \textcolor{red}{X}\} \\ \sigma_1 = 3 & X = \{1, 2\} \end{array}$$



The pmaj statistic

We compute **pmaj** using an algorithm. Let $B = \emptyset$, $\sigma_0 = n + 1$.

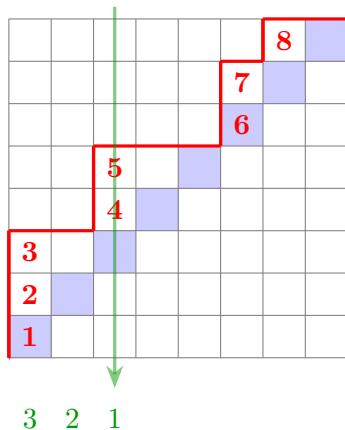
For $m = 1, 2, \dots, n$:

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- remove from B element

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$$m = 3 \quad B = \{1, 4, 5\}$$

$$\sigma_2 = 2 \quad X = \{1\}$$



The pmaj statistic

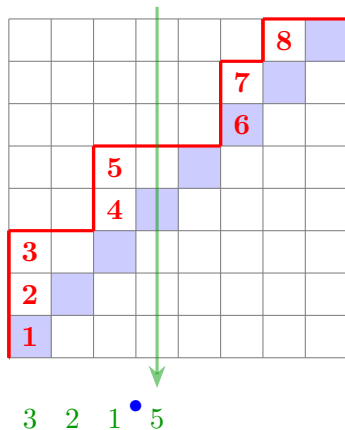
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- remove from B element

$$\sigma_m := \begin{cases} \max(X) & X \neq \emptyset \\ \max(B) & X = \emptyset. \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{array}{ll} m = 4 & B = \{4, 5\} \\ \sigma_3 = 1 & X = \emptyset \end{array}$$



The pmaj statistic

We compute **pmaj** using an algorithm. Let $B = \emptyset$, $\sigma_0 = n + 1$.

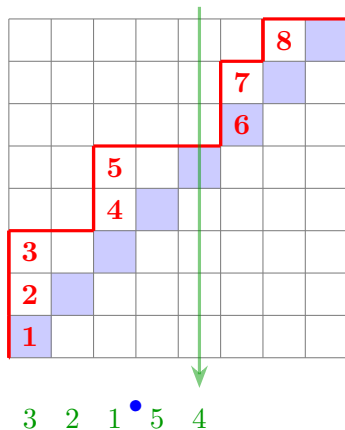
For $m = 1, 2, \dots, n$:

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$$m = 5 \quad B = \{4\}$$

$$\sigma_4 = 5 \quad X = \{4\}$$



The pmaj statistic

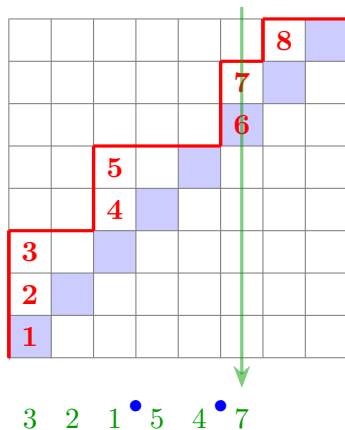
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- let $X = \{i \in B \mid i < \sigma_{m-1}\}$.
- remove from B element

$$\sigma_m := \begin{cases} \max(X) & X \neq \emptyset \\ \max(B) & X = \emptyset. \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{array}{ll} m = 6 & B = \{6, 7\} \\ \sigma_5 = 4 & X = \emptyset \end{array}$$



The pmaj statistic

We compute **pmaj** using an algorithm. Let $B = \emptyset$, $\sigma_0 = n + 1$.

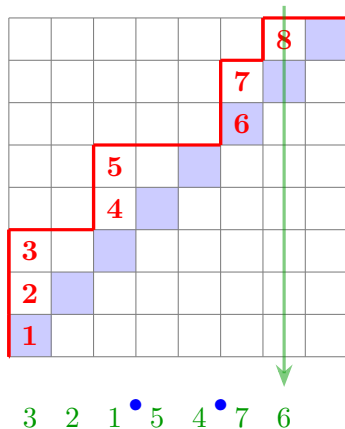
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$$\sigma_m := \begin{cases} \max(X) & X \neq \emptyset \\ \max(B) & X = \emptyset. \end{cases}$$

$$m = 7 \quad B = \{6, 8\}$$

$$\sigma_6 = 7 \quad X = \{6\}$$



3 2 1 • 5 4 • 7 6

The pmaj statistic

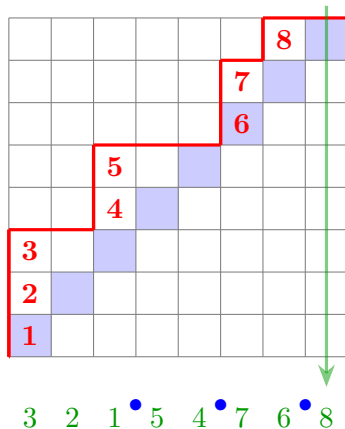
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$$\sigma_m := \begin{cases} \max(X) & X \neq \emptyset \\ \max(B) & X = \emptyset. \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{array}{ll} m = 8 & B = \{8\} \\ \sigma_7 = 6 & X = \emptyset \end{array}$$



The pmaj statistic

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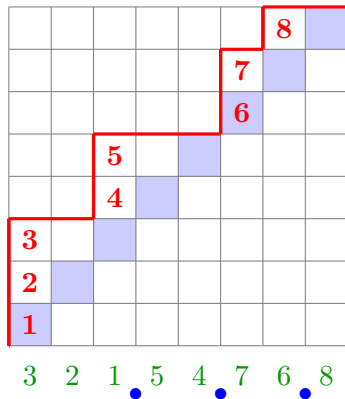
For $m = 1, 2, \dots, n$:

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$$\sigma_m := \begin{cases} \max(X) & X \neq \emptyset \\ \max(B) & X = \emptyset. \end{cases}$$

Then:

$$\text{pmaj}(\pi) := \text{maj}(\sigma_n \sigma_{n-1} \dots \sigma_1)$$



The pmaj statistic

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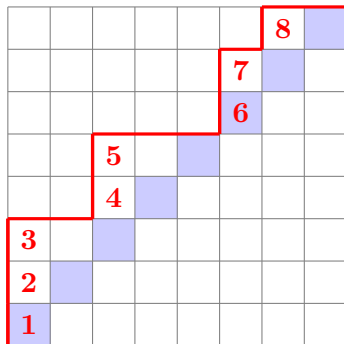
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Then:

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$$\text{pmaj}(\pi) = 9 = \text{sum of } \begin{matrix} 3 & 2 & 1 & 5 & 4 & 7 & 6 & 8 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 & 2 & 2 & 3 \end{matrix}$$



Some milestones: why parking functions?

- 1988: introduction of Macdonald polynomials
- ~2000: Haglund and Haiman define bounce and dinv for Dyck paths
- 2003: HHLRU state Shuffle conjecture for ∇e_n with parking functions and bivariate statistic (dinv, area)
- 2004: Loehr-Remmel state Shuffle conjecture for ∇e_n with parking functions and bivariate statistic (area, pmaj)
- 2018: Carlsson-Mellit prove the Shuffle conjecture

For μ, ν compositions, $|\mu| + |\nu| = n$ we have:

$$\langle \nabla e_n, e_\mu h_\nu \rangle = \sum_{\pi \in \text{PF}_n(\mu; \nu)} q^{\text{dinv}(\pi)} t^{\text{area}(\pi)} = \sum_{\pi \in \overline{\text{PF}}_n(\mu; \nu)} q^{\text{area}(\pi)} t^{\text{pmaj}(\pi)}$$

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The connection

- 2014: ADDHL the case $\mu = \emptyset$ and $\nu = (k, n - k)$.
- 2023: DDL the case $\mu = (k)$ and $\nu = (n - k)$.
- 2024: DDILLV the general case:

Theorem - D'Adderio, Dukes, Iraci, Lazar, Le Borgne, Vander Wyngaerd (2025)

Consider $|\mu| + |\nu| = n$. Then

$$\langle \nabla e_n, e_\mu h_\nu \rangle = \sum_{c \in \text{SortRec}(G(\mu; \nu))} q^{\text{level}(c)} t^{\text{delay}(c)}$$

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The proof idea: the identities

Show the last identity:

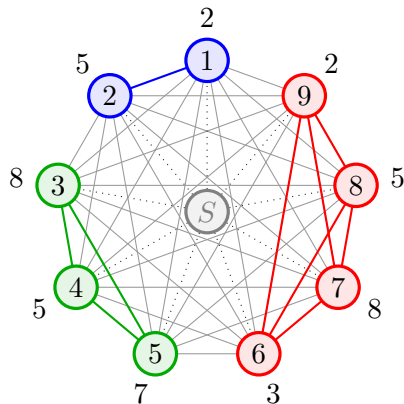
$$\begin{aligned}
 \langle \nabla e_n, e_\mu h_\nu \rangle &\stackrel{[\text{CM18}]}{=} \sum_{\pi \in \text{PF}_n(\mu; \nu)} q^{\text{dinv}(\pi)} t^{\text{area}(\pi)} \\
 &\stackrel{[\text{LR04}]}{=} \sum_{\pi \in \overline{\text{PF}}_n(\mu; \nu)} q^{\text{area}(\pi)} t^{\text{pmaj}(\pi)} \\
 &\stackrel{[\text{DDI}^+25]}{=} \sum_{c \in \text{SortRec}(G(\mu; \nu))} q^{\text{level}(c)} t^{\text{delay}(c)}
 \end{aligned}$$

via a bijection between:

$$\overline{\text{PF}}_n(\mu; \nu) \text{ with } (\text{area}, \text{pmaj}) \longleftrightarrow \text{SortRec}(G(\mu; \nu)) \text{ with } (\text{level}, \text{delay})$$

The proof idea: the bijection

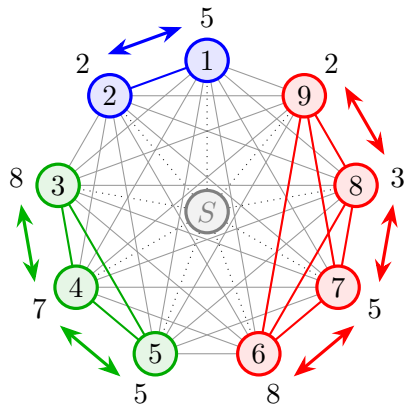
Consider $\mu = (4, 3, 2)$ and $\nu = \emptyset$.



The proof idea: the bijection

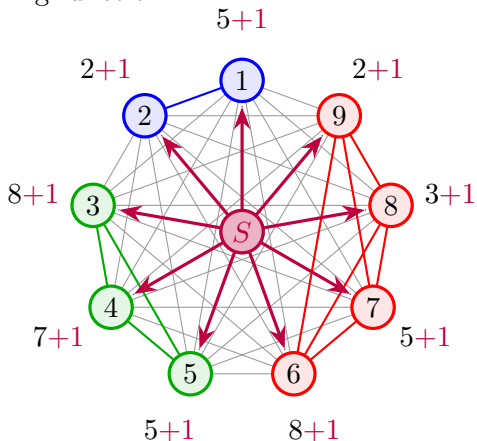
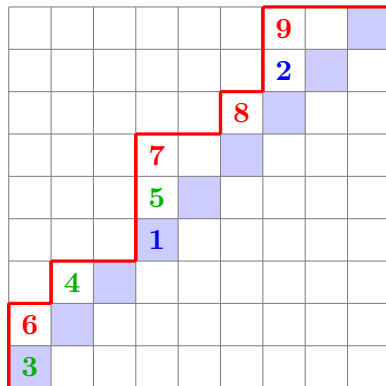
Consider $\mu = (4, 3, 2)$ and $\nu = \emptyset$.

Re-order entries in each subset, decreasingly.



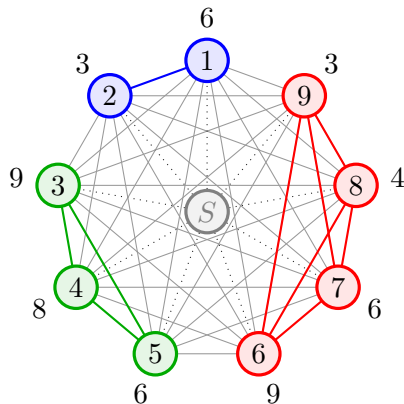
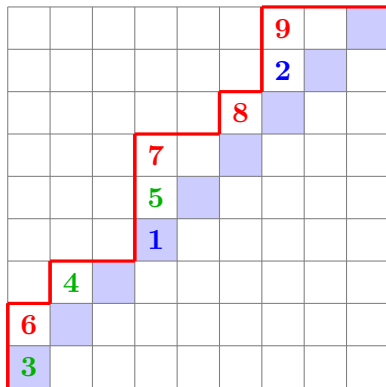
The proof idea: the bijection

Topple the sink, associate a parking function.

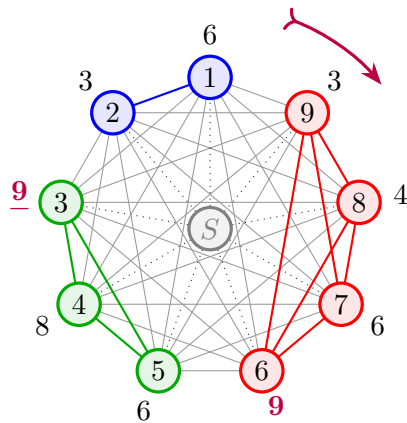
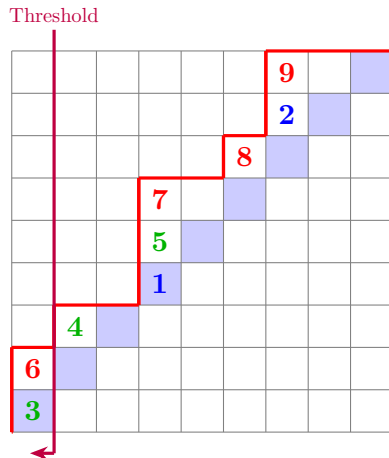


The proof idea: the bijection

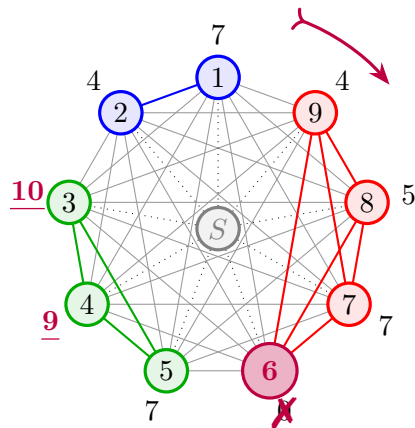
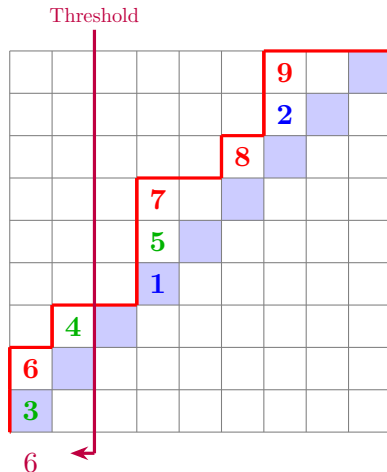
Dyck path condition \equiv Recurrent configuration condition



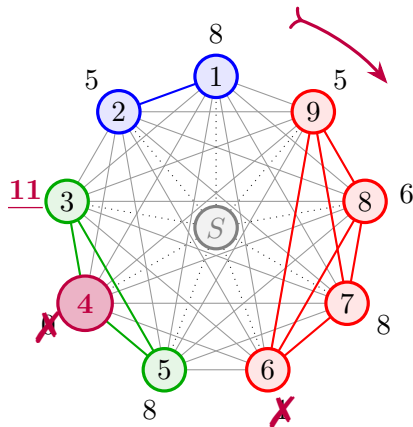
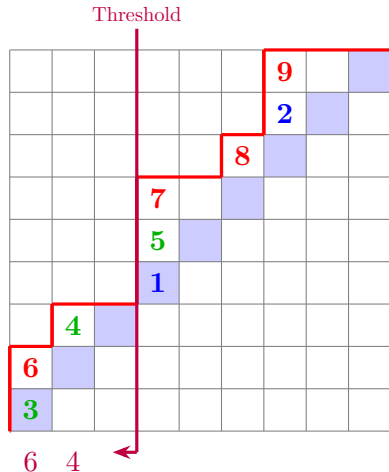
The proof idea: the delay



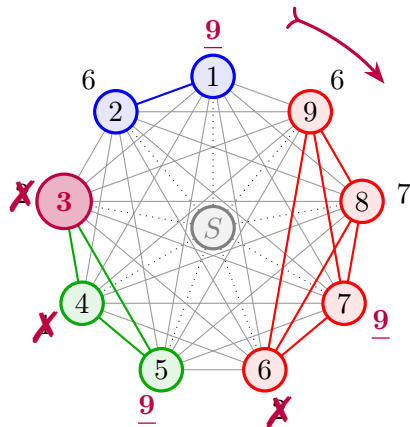
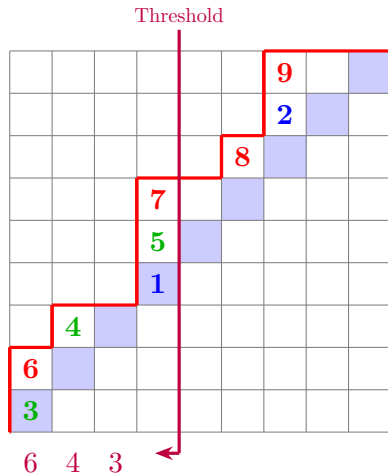
The proof idea: the delay



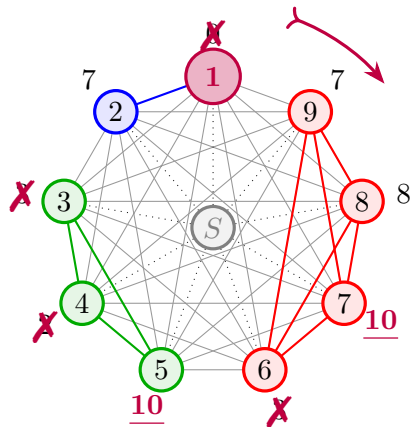
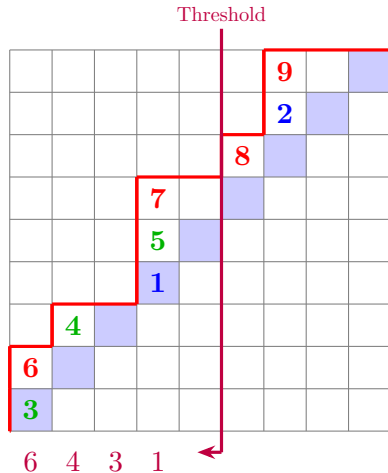
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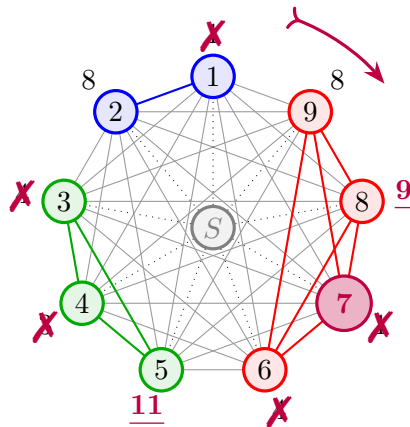
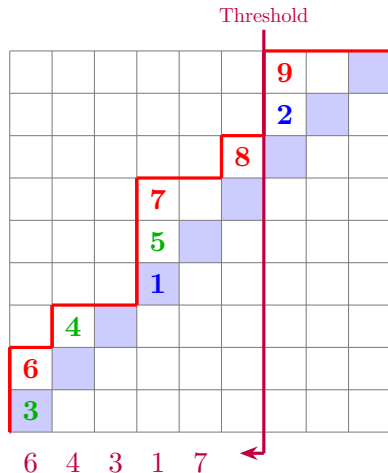
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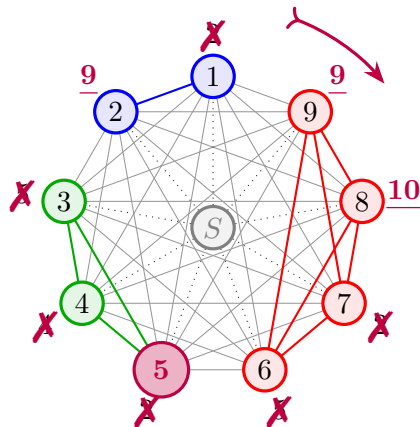
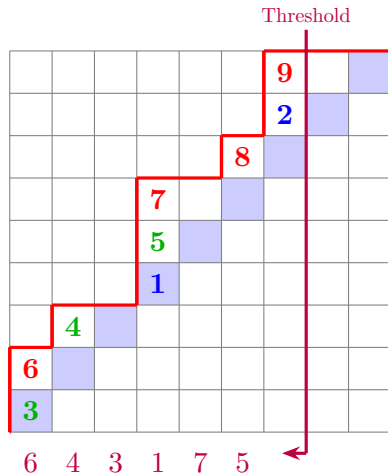
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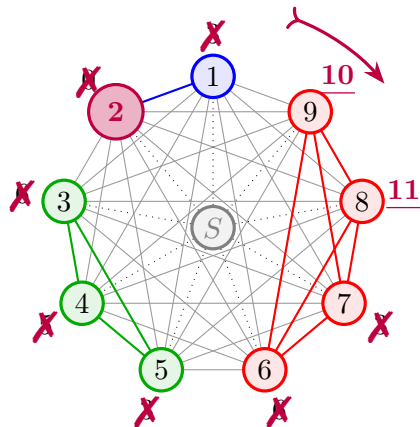
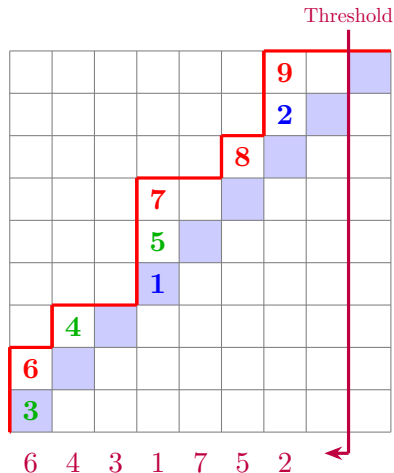
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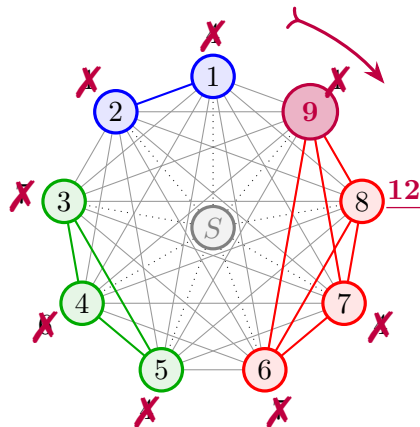
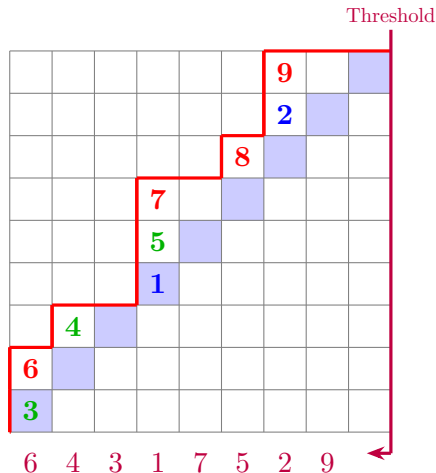
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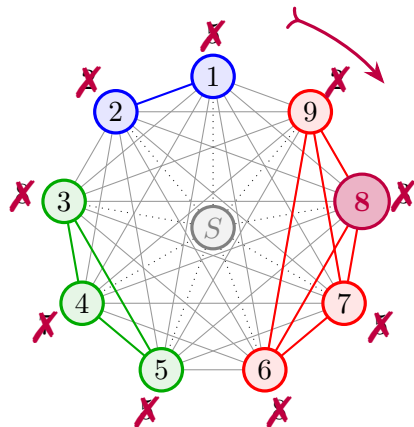
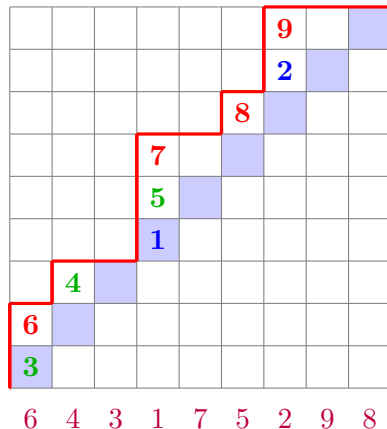


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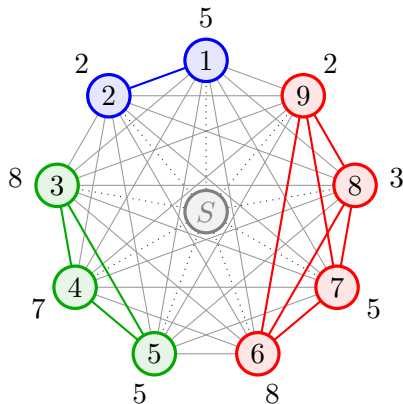
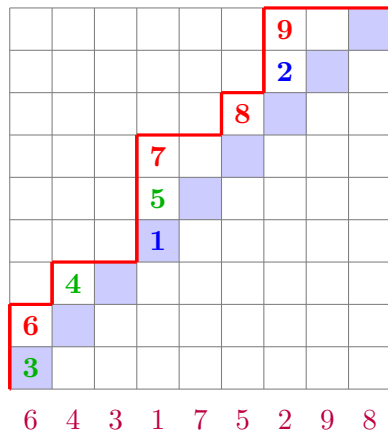
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The proof idea: the delay

pmaj contribute of label $\lambda = \#$ of loops before toppling label λ



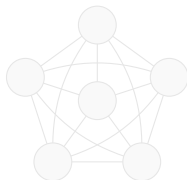
Section 3

A generalization of delay and pmaj

Our study case

Goal: study the sandpile model on other families of graphs.

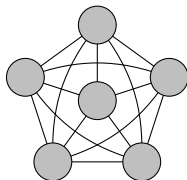
Starting from the family of graphs from [DDI⁺25], we allow edges with **multiplicities**:



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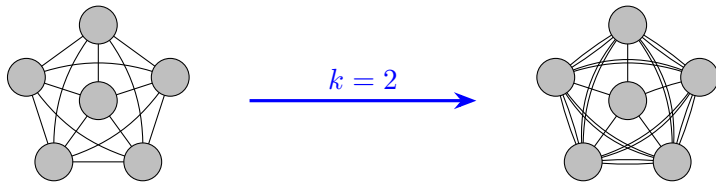
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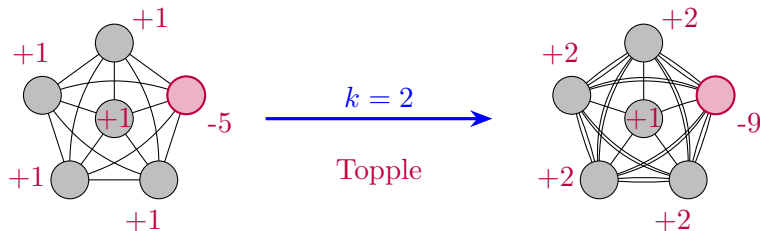
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New sorted sandpile statistics

The definition of (sorted) recurrent configurations is the same.

For $V = \{0, 1, \dots, n\}$ and $c \in \text{SortRec}(G)$ the **statistics** are:

- level: same definition as before

$$\text{level}(c) := \sum_{i=1}^n c(i) - \#\{\text{edges non-incident to the sink}\}.$$

- $\text{level}(c)$ is the toppling algorithm count

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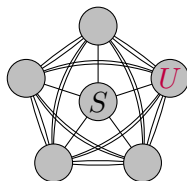
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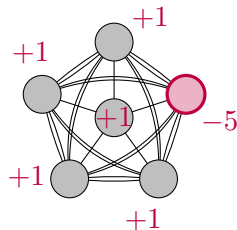
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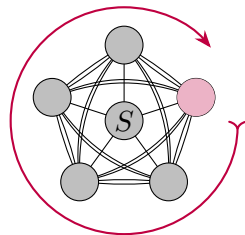
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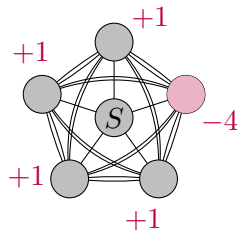
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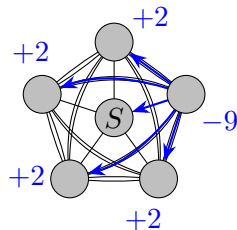
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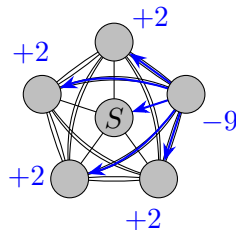
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→ Implementation on [Sgu24]!



Interpretation of $\nabla^k e_n$

Theorem - D'Adderio, Dukes, Iraci, Lazar, Le Borgne, Vander Wyngaerd (2025)

Let $|\mu| + |\nu| = n$. Then

$$\langle \nabla e_n, e_\mu h_\nu \rangle = \sum_{c \in \text{SortRec}(G(\mu; \nu))} q^{\text{level}(c)} t^{\text{delay}(c)}.$$

Interpretation of $\nabla^k e_n$

Conjecture - D'Adderio, S. (In preparation)

Let $|\mu| + |\nu| = n$ and $k \geq 1$. Then

$$\langle \nabla^k e_n, e_\mu h_\nu \rangle = \sum_{c \in \text{SortRec}(G_k(\mu; \nu))} q^{\text{level}(c)} t^{\text{delay}(c)}.$$

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The idea is to follow the same proof of [DDI⁺25]:

- Mellit proves an interpretation of $\langle \nabla^k e_n, e_\mu h_\nu \rangle$ by $n \times nk$ parking functions with $(\text{dinv}, \text{area})$.
- No known statistic pmaj for $nk \times n$ parking functions.

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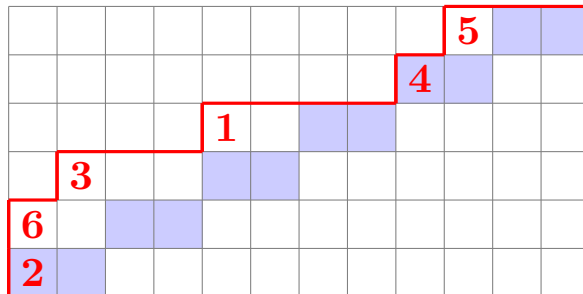
New pmaj statistic

The new delay statistic on sandpiles gives an idea for a pmaj on $n \times nk$ parking functions.

$$n = 6$$

$$k = 2$$

$$B = \emptyset$$



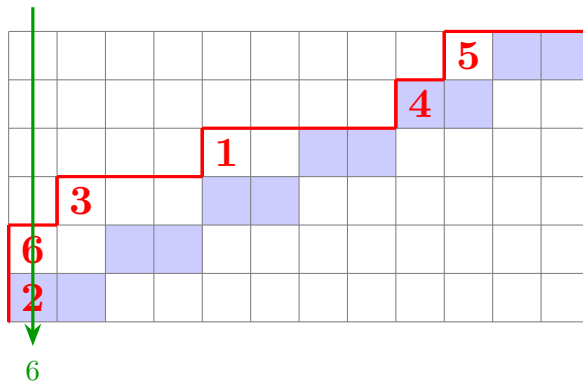
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$$n = 6$$

$$k = 2$$

$$B = \{2, 2, 6, 6\}$$



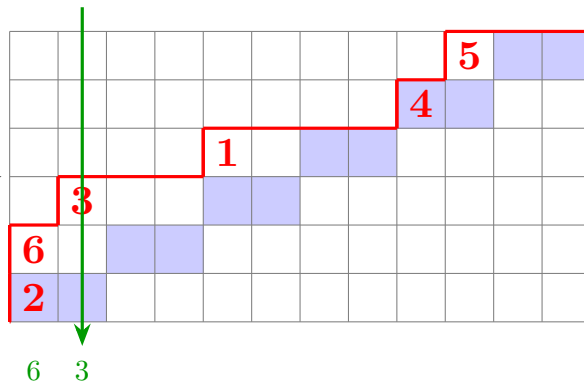
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$$k = 2$$

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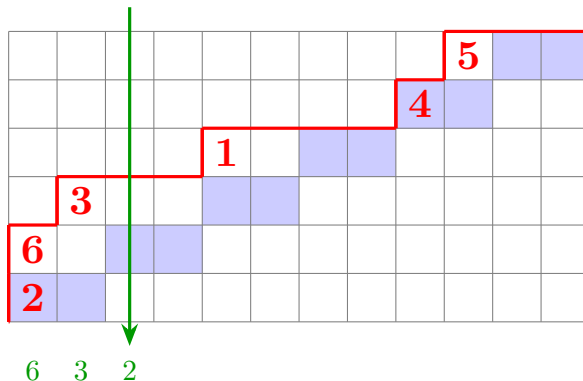
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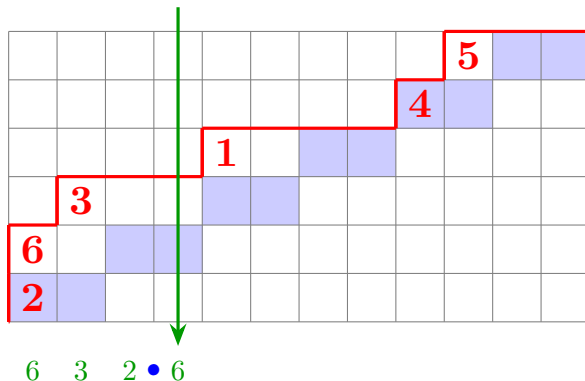
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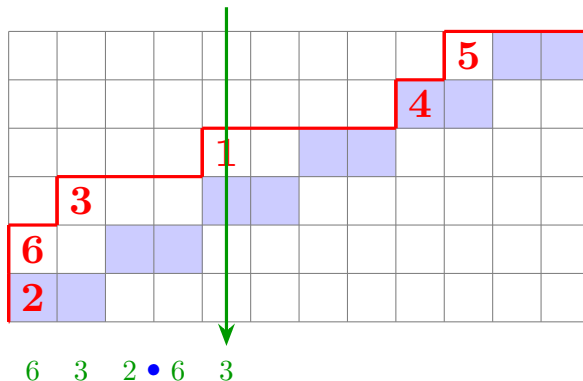
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$$n = 6$$

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$$B = \{1, 1, 2, 3\}$$



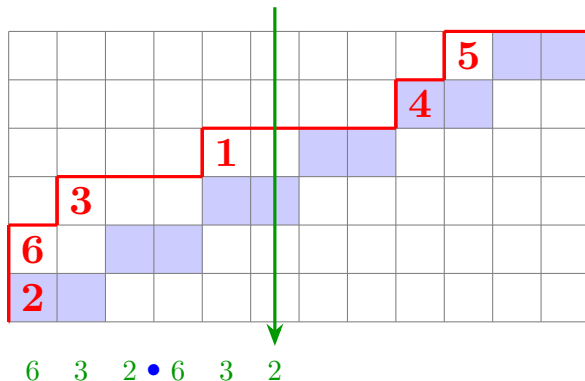
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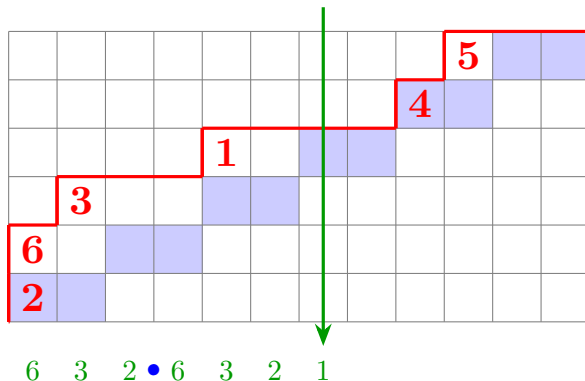
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$$n = 6$$

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$$B = \{1, 1\}$$



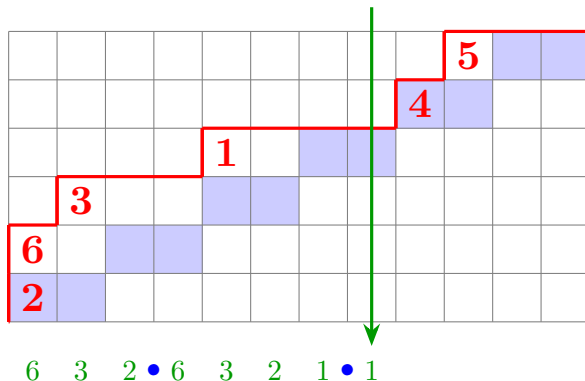
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$$n = 6$$

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$$B = \{1\}$$



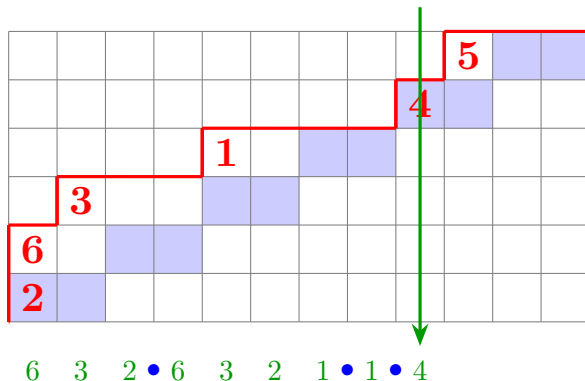
New pmaj statistic

The new delay statistic on sandpiles gives an idea for a pmaj on $n \times nk$ parking functions.

$$n = 6$$

$$k = 2$$

$$B = \{4, 4\}$$



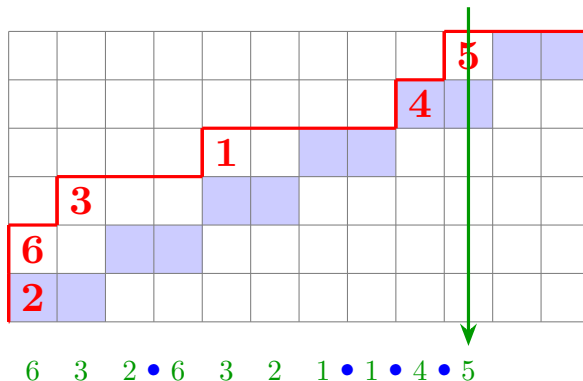
New pmaj statistic

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$$n = 6$$

$$k = 2$$

$$B = \{4, 5, 5\}$$



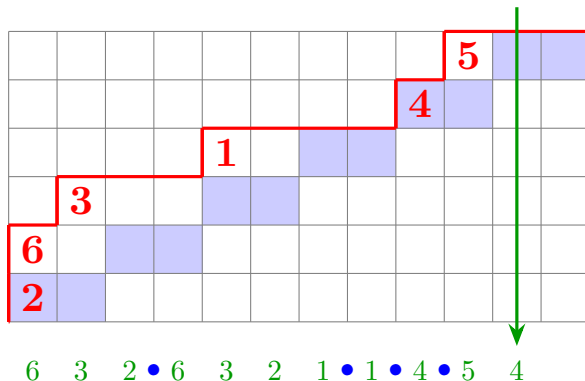
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$$k = 2$$

$$B = \{4, 5\}$$



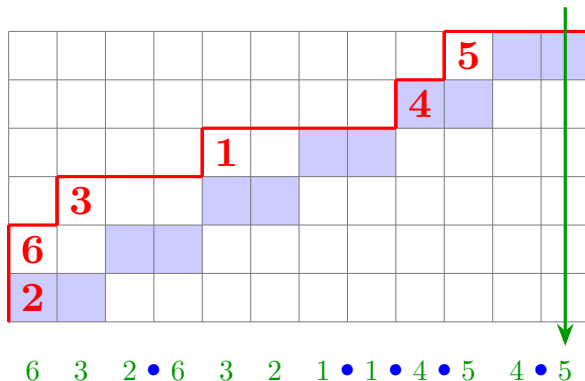
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$$n = 6$$

$$k = 2$$

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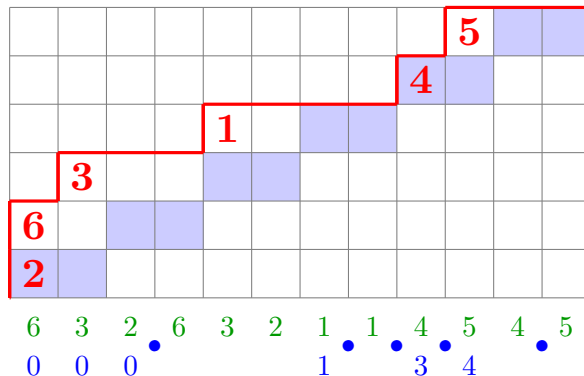


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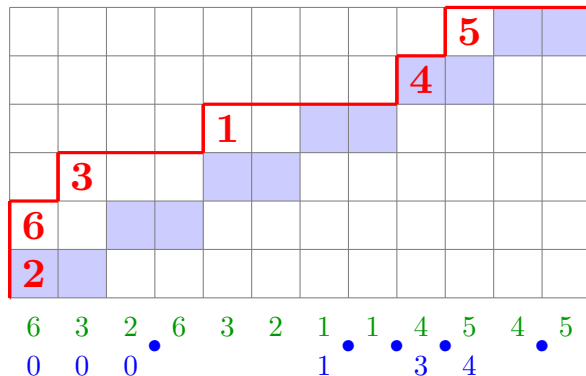


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$$n = 6$$

$$k = 2$$



$$\text{pmaj}(\pi) = 8$$

The proof

Given the new statistics, we show that:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \langle \nabla^k e_n, e_\mu h_\nu \rangle &\stackrel{\text{Mellit}}{=} \sum_{\pi \in \text{PF}_{n,nk}(\mu;\nu)} q^{\text{dinv}(\pi)} t^{\text{area}(\pi)} \\
 &\stackrel{\text{New}}{=} \sum_{\pi \in \overline{\text{PF}}_{n,nk}(\mu;\nu)} q^{\text{area}(\pi)} t^{\text{pmaj}(\pi)} \\
 &\stackrel{\text{New}}{=} \sum_{c \in \text{SortRec}(G_k(\mu;\nu))} q^{\text{level}(c)} t^{\text{delay}(c)}
 \end{aligned}$$

via the following bijections:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 \text{PF}_{n,nk}(\mu;\nu) & \longleftrightarrow & \overline{\text{PF}}_{n,nk}(\mu;\nu) & \longleftrightarrow & \text{SortRec}(G_k(\mu;\nu)) \\
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