How Far Can Nim in Disguise be Stretched?

Uri Blass
Electrical Engineering
Tel Aviv University
Ramat Aviv 61391, Israel

Aviezri S. Fraenkel
Applied Mathematics and Computer Science
Weizmann Institute of Science
Rehovot 76100, Israel

Romina Guelman
Institute of Mathematics
Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Jerusalem 91904, Israel

September 16, 1998

Abstract

A move in the game of nim consists of taking any positive number of tokens from a *single* pile. Suppose we add the class of moves of taking a nonnegative number of tokens jointly from *all* the piles. We give a complete answer to the question which moves in the class can be adjoined without changing the winning strategy of nim. The results apply to other combinatorial games with unbounded Sprague-Grundy function values. We formulate two weakened conditions of the notion of nim-sum 0 for proving the results.

1 Introduction

A cardinal theme in the theory of combinatorial games is how to generate new games from a given game or from a restricted class of games. The most widely used method is that of producing a game which is the *sum* of given games, but there are several other, less well-known methods; see e.g., chapter 14 of [Con1976].

A typical game consists of a finite collection of piles of finitely many tokens, where the moves are to remove a positive number of tokens from any single pile, or a positive number from several piles, according to specified rules. Such games often have equivalent manifestations, say in the form of board games, but for concreteness we shall restrict attention to the former.

A central role in such games is taken by the game of *nim*, in which only removal from any single pile is permitted. Most of our discussions will be centered about nim, but actually our results hold for any game which has unbounded Sprague-Grundy function values. Basic facts on the theory of combinatorial games can be found, e.g., in [BCG1982], [Con1976], [Guy1991], [Now1996].

Recently we began investigating the generation of new games by adding to given games classes of new moves [FrL1991], [FrO1998]. For a brief expository description of this approach, see [Fra1996, §6]. To conduct this program in an efficient way, it is very useful to find first the precise class of moves that can be adjoined to nim *without* changing its winning strategy. This then allows to adjoin moves for which we will know that they modify the strategy of nim.

Fundamental to investigations in combinatorial game theory is the notion of nim-sum. Let $S = \{a_1, \ldots, a_n\}$ be a multiset set of nonnegative integers which has some 1-bit in a least significant position k, so to the right of position k all the a_i have 0-bits only. (Note that S is a multiset rather than a set; the a_i are not necessarily distinct.) If S has nim-sum $\sigma = 0$, we also say that S is *even*, since every column in the binary expansions of $a_1, \ldots, a_n$ has then an even number of 1-bits. We define S to be *baLanced*, if σ has a 0 in position k, since then the *L*east significant binary position in which the a_i have 1-bits has an even number of 1-bits. For S to be balanced, no parity requirements are imposed on any digital position to the left of k. Finally, we say that S is *smooTh* if it is balanced and σ has a 0 also in position $k+1$, since then the last *T*wo binary positions in which the a_i have 1-bits have an even number of 1-bits. Note that every even multiset is smooth, and every smooth multiset is balanced. A balanced multiset is a weaker form of a smooth multiset, and a smooth multiset is a weaker form of an even multiset.

Let $S = \{a_1, \ldots, a_n\}$ $(n \geq 2)$ be a multiset of nonnegative integers with at least two distinct $a_i > 0$. Let Γ be a game consisting of n piles of finitely many tokens where $a_1, \ldots, a_n$ tokens can be removed from the n piles (in addition to the option of removing any positive number of tokens from any *single* pile, as mentioned above). The player making the last move wins, and the opponent loses.

Let $t_1, \ldots, t_n$ be nonnegative integers with $t_i \geq a_i$ for all i. For any integer s, write $s(b)$ for the binary representation of s, and $\sum'$ for nim-summation. We distinguish between three cases.

1. $\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} t_i(b) \neq \sum_{i=1}^{\prime n}(t_i(b) - a_i(b))$ for all $t_i \geq a_i$ $(i \in \{1, \ldots, n\})$. Then the strategy of Γ is that of nim. This is so, because the nim-sum of position $(t_1 \ldots, t_n)$, which is $\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} t_i(b)$, is distinct from the nim-sum of its follower $(t_1 - a_1, \ldots, t_n - a_n)$, which is $\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n}(t_i(b) - a_i(b))$. Hence the nim-sum is the Sprague-Grundy function of Γ. In terms of the game-graph of Γ, the move options of removing $a_1, \ldots, a_n$ are equivalent to new edges in this digraph between vertices of *distinct* S-G function values.

2. $\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} t_i(b) = \sum_{i=1}^{\prime n}(t_i(b) - a_i(b)) = R$ for some $t_i \geq a_i$ $(i \in \{1, \ldots, n\})$. In this case there is a "short-circuiting" of the S-G function value R of Γ. If R is never 0, then the strategy of Γ is still the same as that of nim, but if Γ is a component in a sum with another game, say with S-G function value R, then the move option of removing $a_1, \ldots, a_n$ *does* change the strategy of this sum.

3. $\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} t_i(b) = \sum_{i=1}^{\prime n}(t_i(b) - a_i(b)) = 0$ for some $t_i \geq a_i$ $(i \in \{1, \ldots, n\})$. In this case a 0 of the S-G function is short-circuited, so the strategy of Γ is necessarily different from that of nim.

It is easy to see that case 3 holds if S is an even multiset. In Theorem 1 we prove that case 2 holds if and only if S is a balanced multiset. In Theorem 2 we give necessary and sufficient conditions for the stronger case 3 to hold. It turns out that the condition of a balanced multiset has to be strengthened only slightly for case 3 to hold.

The precise forms of Theorems 1 and 2 are formulated in §2. Proofs are given in §3. The proof of Theorem 1 is constructive; it provides an algorithm for producing the integers $t_1, \ldots, t_n$ such that $\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} t_i(b) = \sum_{i=1}^{\prime n}(t_i(b) - a_i(b))$. Similarly for Theorem 2.

2 The Main Results

It is useful to preface the following definition before stating our first result.

Definition 1. Let $S = \{a_1, \ldots, a_n\}$ be a multiset of nonnegative integers. Denote by σ the nim-sum of the a_i. Let k be the maximum integer such that $2^k | a_i$ for every $i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$. If $\sigma^k = 0$ (the bit in position k of σ), then S is *balanced*. Otherwise it is *imbalanced*. If $\sigma^k = \sigma^{k+1} = 0$, then S is *smooth*. If $\sigma = 0$, then S is *even*.

Note that position k is the least significant position in which any of the a_i has a 1-bit, so $a_i(b)^j = 0$ for all $j < k$. For example, $\{2, 3, 4\}$ is imbalanced $(k = 0)$, $\{1, 2, 5\}$ is balanced $(k = 0)$ but not smooth, $\{2, 3, 5\}$ is smooth but not even, and $\{1, 2, 3\}$ is even.

If $S = \{a_1, \ldots, a_n\}$ is an even multiset, then case 3 holds, since it holds, in fact, for $t_i = a_i$. A special case is when all the a_i are the same and n is even, in which case even $\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} la = \sum_{i=1}^{\prime n}(l - 1)a = 0$ for every positive integer l. Since the notions of balanced and smooth multisets are weak forms of that of even multisets, we may expect a weaker result for the former. This is indeed the case; the interesting point is that the result is not all that weaker.

THEOREM 1 . *Let $S = \{a_1, \ldots, a_n\}$ be a multiset of nonnegative integers, $n \geq 2$, with at least two $a_i > 0$. Then there are integers $t_1, \ldots, t_n$ with $t_i \geq a_i$ for all i, such that*

$$\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} t_i(b) = \sum_{i=1}^{\prime n}(t_i(b) - a_i(b)) \tag{1}$$

if and only if S is a balanced multiset.

The proof that if S is imbalanced then there are no integers t_i satisfying (1) was already given in [FrL1991], where the truth of the opposite direction was conjectured. Since the known direction is the easy one, and in order for this paper to be self-contained, we repeat the short proof below.

Our second theorem gives necessary and sufficient conditions for the stronger result (case 3 above) to hold. It turns out that though S even is certainly a sufficient condition, it is by no means necessary.

THEOREM 2 . *Let $S = \{a_1, \ldots, a_n\}$ be as in Theorem 1. Then there are integers $t_1, \ldots, t_n$ with $t_i \geq a_i$, $i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$, such that*

$$\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} t_i(b) = \sum_{i=1}^{\prime n}(t_i(b) - a_i(b)) = 0 \tag{2}$$

if and only if either

1. *n is odd and S is balanced.*
2. *n is even, and: either S is balanced and there is $i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$ such that $a_i(b)^k = 0$ (where k is as in Definition 1); or S is smooth and $n \geq 4$; or S is even.*

We then have,

COROLLARY 1 . *For $n = 2$, (2) holds if and only if S is even, if and only if $a_1 = a_2$.*

To summarize, adjoining the moves of removing $a_1, \ldots, a_n$ from the piles results in a game with a strategy different from nim if and only if (2) is satisfied, which, for $n = 2$, is equivalent to $a_1 = a_2$. If only (1) is satisfied, then the resulting game has the same strategy as nim, but the strategy will be different if the game is a component in a sum of games.

The new notions in this paper are those of balanced and smooth sets, which are weakened conditions of the notion of nim-sum 0.

3 Proofs

Notation

1. For any real number x, denote by $\lfloor x \rfloor$ the largest integer $\leq x$.
2. For any positive integer s, denote by $s(b) = \sum_{j=0}^{m} s^j 2^j$ the *binary representation* of s, where $m = \lfloor \log_2 s \rfloor$, and $s^j \in \{0, 1\}$ for all j.
3. Whenever we add nonnegative integers, say $a_1, \ldots, a_n$, we put

$$m = \max(\lfloor \log_2 a_1 \rfloor, \ldots, \lfloor \log_2 a_n \rfloor),$$

which is consistent with m in 2.

4. $\sum'$ and $\oplus$ denote nim-summation.

Note that for any positive integers a and d, $a(b) + d(b) = (a + d)(b)$.

Definition 2. In the (binary) addition $a(b) + d(b)$, there is a *carry integer* $c(b)$, where $c(b)^{j+1}$ is the carry-bit generated by $a(b)^j + d(b)^j + c(b)^j$, to be added to $a(b)^{j+1} + d(b)^{j+1}$, namely, $c(b)^{j+1} = 1$ if $a(b)^j + d(b)^j + c(b)^j > 1$, and $c(b)^{j+1} = 0$ otherwise, where $c(b)^0 = 0$ and $j \in \{0, \ldots, m\}$; m as in Notation 3.

The addition rule, based on Definition 2, is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

$a(b)^j$	$c(b)^j$	$d(b)^j$	$\big(a(b) + d(b)\big)^j$	$c(b)^{j+1}$
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	1	1	0
0	1	0	1	0
0	1	1	0	1
1	0	0	1	0
1	0	1	0	1
1	1	0	0	1
1	1	1	1	1

LEMMA 1 . *Let a and d be two integers. Then, in the above notation, $a(b) + d(b) = a(b) \oplus d(b) \oplus c(b)$, where $c(b)$ is the carry integer of $a(b) + d(b)$.*

Proof. The sum $a(b) + d(b)$ is given in the 4-th column of Table 1. We see that it has a 1-bit precisely in those rows in which the first 3 columns have an odd number of 1-bits, i.e., precisely in rows in which $a(b) \oplus d(b) \oplus c(b) = 1$. □

Proof of Theorem 1. Let $d_i = t_i - a_i$. Then (1) holds if and only if

$$\textstyle\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} (a_i(b) + d_i(b)) = \sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} d_i(b). \tag{3}$$

It thus suffices to examine under what conditions $d_1, \ldots, d_n$ can be constructed such that (3) holds.

By Lemma 1, for every $i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$, $a_i(b) + d_i(b) = a_i(b) \oplus d_i(b) \oplus c_i(b)$, where $c_i(b)$ is the carry integer of the sum of $a_i(b)$ and $d_i(b)$. Substituting into (3), we get $\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} (a_i(b) \oplus d_i(b) \oplus c_i(b)) = \sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} d_i(b)$. Thus (3) holds if and only if

$$\textstyle\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} (a_i(b) \oplus c_i(b)) = 0. \tag{4}$$

In every position $< k$, $a_i(b)$ has no 1-bits for all i, hence in every position $\le k$, $c_i(b)$ has no 1-bits for all i, where k is as in Definition 1. Thus if S is imbalanced, then in position k there is an odd number of 1-bits, so (4) cannot hold. Hence there are no integers $t_1, \ldots, t_n$ satisfying (1).

So from now on we can assume that S is balanced. To construct $d_1, \ldots, d_n$ satisfying (3) we first construct $c_1, \ldots, c_n$ satisfying (4), in Algorithm NotNimdi below, and then show how to construct the d_i.

Given an integer $a(b)$, an integer $c(b)$ can be a carry integer of the sum of $a(b)$ with an unknown integer $d(b)$, if the following *carry rules* are kept. These rules follow immediately from Definition 2.

1. If l is the rightmost 1-bit of $a(b)$, then for every $j < l$ we have $c(b)^{j+1} = 0$.

   For $j \geq l$, we have:

2. If $a(b)^j = c(b)^j = 0$, then $c(b)^{j+1} = 0$.

3. If $a(b)^j = c(b)^j = 1$, then $c(b)^{j+1} = 1$.

4. If $a(b)^j + c(b)^j = 1$, then $c(b)^{j+1} \in \{0, 1\}$.

   Indeed, in case 4 we clearly have $c(b)^{j+1} = d(b)^j$.

Let now $m = \max(\lfloor \log_2 a_1 \rfloor, \ldots, \lfloor \log_2 a_n \rfloor)$. Note that even if every $d_i(b)$ has its leftmost 1-bit in a position $\leq m$, i.e., $d_i < 2^{m+1}$ for all $i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$, any carry integer $c_i(b)$ may still have a 1-bit in position $m + 1$.

Consider the $2n \times (m + 2)$ matrix M consisting of $a_1(b), \ldots, a_n(b)$ with a blank line after each $a_i(b)$, where the carry $c_i(b)$ will be constructed in Algorithm NotNimdi1 below. Because of the anomaly, in English, of writing from left to right, yet writing numbers with their significance increasing from right to left, we will number the columns of M, contrary to the common convention, from right (0) to left $(m + 1)$. Also the carry-bits will be constructed from position (column) 0 to $m + 1$.

The following are the guidelines the algorithm will follow.

A. In every column of M, the number of 1-bits is even, which is necessary to satisfy (4).

B. Every c_i is constructed to be consistent with the above carry rules.

C. For every $j \in \{k, \ldots, m + 1\}$ there are $h, l \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$, $h \neq l$, such that $a_h(b)^j + c_h(b)^j = a_l(b)^j + c_l(b)^j = 1$, where k is as in Definition 1.

Property C is needed to ensure that A and B can be realized in every column of M. Indeed, suppose the $(j - 1)$-th column of M is the 0-vector, and the j-th column contains a single 1-bit. Then there is no way of mending the j-th column to have an even number of 1-bits, as needed for consistency with the carry rules.

Note that if S is balanced, then column k of M contains an *even positive* number of 1-bits, and all columns to the right of k are the 0-vector, provided that $c_i(b)^j = 0$ for all $j \in \{0, \ldots, k\}$, $i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$. This indeed holds by carry rule 1.

Suppose that the $(j - 1)$-th position was constructed satisfying the above guidelines, and now the j-th position must be constructed. First, to satisfy the carry rules, if $a_i(b)^{j-1} = c_i(b)^{j-1} = 1$, then we must put $c_i(b)^j = 1$. Secondly, if the number of 1-bits in the j-th column is even but C is violated, then it has to be restored so as to leave the number of 1-bits even. Finally, if the number of 1-bits in the j-th position is odd, then the algorithm must change it to even such that C is also satisfied. These requirements are reflected in Algorithm NotNimdi1 below. The word "Nimdi" was coined in [FrL1991]; it stands for *NIM* in *DI*sguise. Since in the present case we have balanced multisets, for which the moves may result in a non-nim strategy, the designation NotNimdi for the algorithm seemed appropriate.

Algorithm NotNimdi1

1. For $j \le k$, put $c_i(b)^j = 0$ for all i.
2. For j from $k+1$ to $m+1$ do:
   (a) For every $i \in \{1, \dots, n\}$ for which $a_i(b)^{j-1} = c_i(b)^{j-1} = 1$, put $c_i(b)^j = 1$; for all other i put $c_i(b)^j = 0$.
   (b) Suppose first that the number of 1-bits in column j is even. If
   $$a_i(b)^j \oplus c_i(b)^j = 0 \tag{5}$$
   for every i, then pick h and l with $h \ne l$ such that
   $$a_h(b)^{j-1} + c_h(b)^{j-1} = a_l(b)^{j-1} + c_l(b)^{j-1} = 1, \tag{6}$$
   and put $c_h(b)^j = c_l(b)^j = 1$. {We'll see later that such h and l indeed always exist.}
   (c) Secondly, suppose that the number of 1-bits in column j is odd.
      i. If for every i for which $a_i(b)^{j-1} \oplus c_i(b)^{j-1} = 0$ we have $a_i(b)^j \oplus c_i(b)^j = 0$, then pick h such that $a_h(b)^{j-1} + c_h(b)^{j-1} = 1$ and $a_h(b)^j + c_h(b)^j = 0$, and put $c_h(b)^j = 1$.
      ii. If there is i for which $a_i(b)^{j-1} \oplus c_i(b)^{j-1} = 0$, and $a_i(b)^j \oplus c_i(b)^j = 1$, then pick h such that $a_h(b)^{j-1} + c_h(b)^{j-1} = 1$ and put $c_h(b)^j = 1$.

Validity Proof of the Algorithm

We begin by observing the general structure of the algorithm. In step 2(a) column j of $c_1(b), \dots, c_n(b)$ is constructed. This construction is consistent with Table 1. If we next go to step 2(b), then a correction to two of the carry bits might be done, by changing them from 0 to 1; if we go to step 2(c) instead, then a single carry bit will be changed from 0 to 1. No further corrections are done in column j.

It suffices to show that the algorithm produces carry integers $c_1, \dots, c_n$ such that A, B, C of the above guidelines are satisfied. We will do this by showing that they hold for every column j. This is clear for $j \leq k$ by step 1. In particular, C holds for $j = k$, since the multiset S is balanced. (This is the only place in the proof where we use the fact that S is balanced.) For $j \in \{k+1, \ldots, m+1\}$ we use induction on j. So suppose A, B, C hold for column $j-1$ ($j \geq k+1$), and we now apply the algorithm for column j.

After applying step 2(a), which is consistent with the carry rules, suppose first that the number of 1-bits in column j is even. We then say that column j has *even parity*. If there is h such that $a_h(b)^j + c_h(b)^j = 1$, then there is also $l \neq h$ with $a_l(b)^j + c_l(b)^j = 1$, since column j has even parity, so property C holds. Otherwise, (5) holds for every i, and so C is violated. Now h and $l \neq h$ with property (6) exist by the induction hypothesis. Moreover, in step 2(a) we have put $c_h(b)^j = c_l(b)^j = 0$. Also $a_h(b)^j = a_l(b)^j = 0$ by (5). So putting $c_h(b)^j = c_l(b)^j = 1$ restores property C; it also preserves the even parity of column j, and is consistent with the carry rules.

We now suppose that, after applying step 2(a), column j has *odd parity*, i.e., it contains an odd number of 1-bits, so step 2(c) applies.

We assume first that the hypothesis of 2(c)i is satisfied. By the induction hypothesis, there is an *even positive* number of i for which $a_i(b)^{j-1} + c_i(b)^{j-1} = 1$. For all of these i we have $c_i(b)^j = 0$ by step 2(a). Since column j has odd parity, there thus exist h and l satisfying (6), for which, say, $a_h(b)^j + c_h(b)^j = 0$ and $a_l(b)^j + c_l(b)^j = 1$. Hence putting $c_h(b)^j = 1$ restores both A and C, and is consistent with B.

Secondly, assume that the hypothesis of 2(c)i is violated. Then the hypothesis of 2(c)ii holds. So there is i for which $a_i(b)^{j-1} \oplus c_i(b)^{j-1} = 0$, and

$$a_i(b)^j + c_i(b)^j = 1. \tag{7}$$

Note that $a_u(b)^{j-1} + c_u(b)^{j-1} = 1$ implies $a_u(b)^j + c_u(b)^j \leq 1$, since $c_u(b)^j = 0$ by 2(a).

(I) Suppose that there is only a single i for which $a_i(b)^{j-1} \oplus c_i(b)^{j-1} = 0$ such that (7) holds. Since column j has odd parity, the number of u for which $a_u(b)^j + c_u(b)^j = 1$ and $a_u(b)^{j-1} + c_u(b)^{j-1} = 1$ must be even. Hence putting $c_u(b)^j = 1$ for any such u restores A and is consistent with C. Indeed any such u is distinct from i, since $a_i(b)^{j-1} \oplus c_i(b)^{j-1} = 0$, whereas $a_u(b)^{j-1} + c_u(b)^{j-1} = 1$.

(II) Suppose there are at least two i for which $a_i(b)^{j-1} \oplus c_i(b)^{j-1} = 0$ such that (7) holds. Then C is already satisfied, so putting $c_u(b)^j = 1$ for any u as in (I) restores A and doesn't spoil C.

Note that putting $c_u(b)^j = 1$ in both (I) and (II) is consistent with B. $\square$

We now return to the proof of Theorem 1. It only remains to construct the d_i, which is done by the following algorithm.

$$\text{For every } i = 1 \text{ to } n \text{ do: for } j = 0 \text{ to } m \text{ put } d_i(b)^j = c_i(b)^{j+1}. \tag{8}$$

In other words, $d_i(b)$ is a "right shift" of $c_i(b)$.

The validity of (8) is an immediate conclusion of Table 1 and Algorithm NotNimdi1: Table 1 shows that $d_i(b)^j = c_i(b)^{j+1}$ holds except for the second and penultimate rows. But when $a(b)^j = c(b)^j = 0$, there is no reason to put $d(b)^j = 1$, and when $a(b)^j = c(b)^j = 1$, we may as well put $d(b)^j = 1$. Thus these two rows do not arise in our case. (They may arise in the proof of Theorem 2, which follows below.) $\square$

Example: Let $\{a_1, a_2, a_3\} = \{3, 5, 8\}$. This is clearly a balanced multiset (with $k = 0$).

We have $3(b) = 0011$ in the standard representation of binary numbers. Similarly, $5(b) = 0101$ and $8(b) = 1000$.

Following the steps of algorithm NotNimdi1 we get $c_1(b) = 0100$, $c_2(b) = 1010$, $c_3(b) = 0000$. From (8), $d_1(b) = 0010$, $d_2(b) = 0101$, $d_3(b) = 0000$, so $d_1 = 2$, $d_2 = 5$, $d_3 = 0$.

Since $d_i = t_i - a_i$ we have $t_1 = 5$, $t_2 = 10$, $t_3 = 8$. In binary, $t_1(b) = 0101, t_2(b) = 1010, t_3(b) = 1000$.

From all this we get that $t_1(b) \oplus t_2(b) \oplus t_3(b) = 0111 = 7(b)$, which is the same as $(t_1(b) - a_1(b)) \oplus (t_2(b) - a_2(b)) \oplus (t_3(b) - a_3(b))$.

Proof of Theorem 2. We first show that the conditions are necessary. If S is imbalanced, then even (1) doesn't hold, by Theorem 1. So suppose S is balanced but not smooth, n even, but $a_i(b)^k = 1$ for all i. We have $c_i(b)^k = 0$ for all i. Since S is not smooth, there is an odd number of $a_i(b)^{k+1} = 1$. To satisfy (4), we need an odd number of $c_i(b)^{k+1} = 1$. This holds if and only if there is an odd number of $d_i(b)^k = 1$, if and only if (2) is violated (since $d_i = t_i - a_i$).

Finally, if S is smooth but not even and $n = 2$, then there is a least column j such that $a_1(b)^j \oplus a_2(b)^j = 0$ and $a_1(b)^{j+1} + a_2(b)^{j+1} = 1$.

We first consider the case where $a_1(b)^j = a_2(b)^j = 1$. If also $c_1(b)^j = c_2(b)^j = 1$, then $c_1(b)^{j+1} = c_2(b)^{j+1} = 1$, so column $j + 1$ has odd parity. The other possibility consistent with (4) is $c_1(b)^j = c_2(b)^j = 0$. Then column $j + 1$ has even parity if and only if $d_1(b)^j + d_2(b)^j = 1$, and the latter contradicts (2).

Secondly, let $a_1(b)^j = a_2(b)^j = 0$. If $c_1(b)^j = c_2(b)^j = 1$, then again column $j + 1$ has even parity if and only if $d_1(b)^j + d_2(b)^j = 1$. If $c_1(b)^j = c_2(b)^j = 0$, then $c_1(b)^{j+1} = c_2(b)^{j+1} = 0$, so column $j + 1$ has odd parity.

For proving the sufficiency, we first consider the case where n is odd. Since S is balanced, Theorem 1 implies that there are integers $t_1, \ldots, t_n$ with $t_i \geq a_i$, $i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$, such that (1) holds. Let $d_i = t_i - a_i$. Then (3) holds.

If $\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} d_i(b) \neq 0$, then there exists $j \in \{0, \ldots, m\}$ such that $\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} d_i(b)^j = 1$. This means that in the $n \times (m + 1)$ matrix consisting of $d_1(b), \ldots, d_n(b)$, the j-th column has odd parity. We wish to make it even, while, at the same time, preserving (3).

At the beginning of the proof of Theorem 1 we saw that (3) holds if and only if (4) holds. Note that changing $d_i(b)^j$ may change $c_i(b)^{j+1}$. Table 1 shows, however, that for fixed $a_i(b)^j$, $c_i(b)^j$, a change in $d_i(b)^j$ does *not* change $c_i(b)^{j+1}$ if and only if

$$a_i(b)^j \oplus c_i(b)^j = 0. \tag{9}$$

So it suffices to show that for every $j \in \{0, \ldots, m\}$, there is $i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$ for which (9) holds (because this enables to regulate the parity of $d_i(b)$ so as to satisfy (2)). If this is not so, then $c_i(b)^j + a_i(b)^j = 1$ for every i. Since n is odd, we then have, $\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} (a_i(b)^j \oplus c_i(b)^j) = 1$, which contradicts (4).

Thus, for every j for which $\sum_{i=1}^{\prime n} d_i(b)^j = 1$ there is i for which we can change $d_i(b)^j$ leaving (4), and hence (3), intact.

Secondly, we examine the case where n is even.

CASE I. S is balanced but not smooth, and $a_i(b)^k = 0$ for some i. In Case II below we indicate the changes the argument requires for the case where S is smooth and $n \geq 4$.

We construct the $c_i(b)$ by Algorithm NotNimdi2 below. It is a small modification of Algorithm NotNimdi1. The idea of the proof is to show that something like (9) holds for all the relevant columns j. To do this, we add another requirement to the guidelines A, B, C, namely:

D. For every $j \in \{k, \ldots, m+1\}$ there are $s, t \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$, $s \neq t$, such that $a_s(b)^j \oplus c_s(b)^j = a_t(b)^j \oplus c_t(b)^j = 0$. Algorithm NotNimdi2 will implement the four guidelines.

If S is smooth, $n \geq 4$ and $a_i(b)^k = 1$ for all i, we require D to hold only for $j \geq k+1$.

Algorithm NotNimdi2

Steps 1, 2(a), 2(c)i are as in Algorithm NotNimdi1. Steps 2(b) and 2(c)ii are expanded:

2(b) Suppose first that the number of 1-bits in column j is even. If either (5) holds for every i or $a_i(b)^j + c_i(b)^j = 1$ for every i, then pick h and l with $h \neq l$ such that (6) holds, and put $c_h(b)^j = c_l(b)^j = 1$.

2(c)ii If there is i for which $a_i(b)^{j-1} \oplus c_i(b)^{j-1} = 0$, and $a_i(b)^j \oplus c_i(b)^j = 1$, then pick h such that $a_h(b)^{j-1} + c_h(b)^{j-1} = a_h(b)^j + c_h(b)^j = 1$ and put $c_h(b)^j = 1$. If there is no such h, then pick h such that $a_h(b)^{j-1} + c_h(b)^{j-1} = 1$, and put $c_h(b)^j = 1$.

Validity Proof of the Algorithm

The validity proof is as that of Algorithm NotNimdi1, with the following additions.

In column k, C is satisfied since S is balanced and $c_i(b)^k = 0$ for all i. Also D holds there, since there is i for which $a_i(b)^k = 0$ by hypothesis, and since n is even. Incidentally, we see that $n \geq 4$.

Suppose that C and D both hold for column $j-1$. We show that they hold also for column j $(j \geq k+1)$.

We consider first the case where column j has even parity. If (5) holds for every i, then clearly both C and D are satisfied by putting $c_h(b)^j = c_l(b)^j = 1$. So suppose that $a_i(b)^j + c_i(b)^j = 1$ for every i. By the induction hypothesis, there are integers h, l satisfying (6). In step 2(a) we put $c_h(b)^h = c_l(b)^h = 0$. So putting $a_h(b)^j = a_l(b)^j = 1$ results in D being satisfied, and C is also satisfied since $n \geq 4$.

Now consider the case where column j has odd parity. By the induction hypothesis, there exist h, l, $h \neq l$ satisfying (6), and there exist s, t, $s \neq t$, satisfying $a_s(b)^{j-1} \oplus c_s(b)^{j-1} = a_t(b)^{j-1} \oplus c_t(b)^{j-1} = 0$. In case 2(c)i, C has been restored for column j without any change in rows s and t, so D holds by the hypothesis of 2(c)i.

In case 2(c)ii, if there is h such that $a_h(b)^{j-1}+c_h(b)^{j-1} = a_h(b)^j+c_h(b)^j = 1$, then putting $c_h(b)^j = 1$ makes $a_h(b)^j \oplus c_h(b)^j = 0$. Since n is even and A has been restored, there exists an index $i \neq h$ for which also $a_i(b)^j \oplus c_i(b)^j = 0$. If, on the other hand, for every h for which $a_h(b)^{j-1} + c_h(b)^{j-1} = 1$ we have $a_h(b)^j + c_h(b)^j = 0$, then putting $c_h(b)^j = 1$ for one of these j still leaves some i for which $a_i(b)^j + c_i(b)^j = 0$. Again, since n is even, there are actually two distinct such i. $\square$

Case II. S is smooth and $n \geq 4$. If $a_i(b)^k = 0$ for some i, then Case I applies. We may thus assume $a_i(b)^k = 1$ for all i. If either $a_i(b)^{k+1} = 0$ for all i or $a_i(b)^{k+1} = 1$ for all i, put $c_u(b)^{k+1} = c_v(b)^{k+1} = 1$ for some $u \neq v$. Then both C and D are satisfied for $j = k+1$. In any other case we have $a_u(b)^{k+1} = 0$ and $a_v(b)^{k+1} = 1$ for some $u, v \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$. Since S is smooth, there is actually an even number of h satisfying $a_h(b)^{k+1} = 1$, so at least 2. Since n is even, there is an even number of s such that $a_s(b)^{k+1} = 0$, so at least 2. Putting $c_i(b)^{k+1} = 0$ for all i, we see that both C and D are satisfied for $j = k+1$.

Though D is not satisfied for $j = k$, it is clear that there is an even number of $d_i(b)^k = 1$. In fact this holds precisely for the two values u, v for which we put $c_u(b)^{k+1} = c_v(b)^{k+1} = 1$ above. Now since C and D hold for $j = k+1$, they also hold for all $j \in \{k+1, \ldots, m+1\}$ by the same induction proof used in Case 1. $\square$

In the previous example we found that $d_1(b) \oplus d_2(b) \oplus d_3(b) = 0111 = 7(b)$. For $j \in \{0, 1, 2\}$, (9) holds only for $i = 3$. This leads to the new value $d_3 = 7$, $t_3 = 15$, with $d_1(b) \oplus d_2(b) \oplus d_3(b) = 0$.

Proof of Corollary 1. In the proof of Theorem 2 we observed that $n \geq 4$ also for the case where S is balanced and $a_i(b)^k = 0$ for some i. So for $n = 2$, (2) holds if and only if S is even. $\square$

References

1. [BCG1982] E.R. Berlekamp, J.H. Conway and R.K. Guy, *Winning Ways* (two volumes), Academic Press, London, 1982.

2. [Con1976] J.H. Conway, *On Numbers and Games*, Academic Press, London, 1976.

3. [Fra1996] A.S. Fraenkel, Scenic trails ascending from sea-level Nim to alpine chess, in: *Games of No Chance*, Proc. MSRI Workshop on Combinatorial Games, July, 1994, Berkeley, CA (R. J. Nowakowski, ed.), MSRI Publ. Vol. 29, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 13–42, 1996.

4. [FrL1991] A.S. Fraenkel and M. Lorberbom, Nimhoff games, *J. Combinatorial Theory* (Ser. A) **58** (1991) 1–25.

5. [FrO1998] A.S. Fraenkel and M. Ozery, Adjoining to Wythoff's game its P-positions as moves, *Theoret. Comput. Sci.* (*Math Games*) **205** (1998) 283–296.

6. [Guy1991] R.K. Guy, editor, Combinatorial Games, *Proc. Symp. Appl. Math.* **43**, Amer. Math. Soc., Providence, RI, 1991.

7. [Now1996] R.J. Nowakowski, editor, Games of No Chance, Mathematical Sciences Research Institute Publications, Vol. 29, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., 1996.