

Contents

Table of Contents	i
Preface	ix
To the Instructor	xiii
1 Tilings	1
1.1 Squaring the rectangle	2
1.1.1 Continue experimenting	3
1.1.2 Focus on the smallest square	3
1.1.3 Where is the smallest square	4
1.1.4 What are the neighbors of the smallest square?	5
1.1.5 Is there a five square tiling?	7
1.1.6 Is there a six, seven, or nine square tiling?	9
1.2 A solution?	10
1.2.1 Bouwkamp codes	12
1.2.2 Summary	13
1.3 Tiling by cubes	14
1.4 Tilings by equilateral triangles	15
1.5 Supplementary material	16
1.5.1 Squaring the square	16
1.5.2 Additional problems	19
1.6 Answers to problems	20
2 Pick's Rule	29
2.1 Polygons	30
2.1.1 On the grid	30
2.1.2 Polygons	30
2.1.3 Inside and outside	31
2.1.4 Splitting a polygon	32
2.1.5 Area of a polygonal region	33
2.1.6 Area of a triangle	33
2.2 Some methods of calculating areas	36

2.2.1	An ancient Greek method	37
2.2.2	Grid point credit—a new fast method?	38
2.3	Pick credit	41
2.3.1	Experimentation and trial-and-error	41
2.3.2	Rectangles and triangles	44
2.3.3	Additivity	45
2.4	Pick’s formula	46
2.4.1	Triangles solved	47
2.4.2	Proving Pick’s formula in general	48
2.5	Summary	49
2.6	Supplementary material	50
2.6.1	A bit of historical background	50
2.6.2	Can’t be useful though	51
2.6.3	Primitive triangulations	51
2.6.4	Reformulating Pick’s theorem	54
2.6.5	Gaming the proof of Pick’s theorem	54
2.6.6	Polygons with holes	56
2.6.7	An improved Pick count	58
2.6.8	Random grids	60
2.6.9	Additional problems	62
2.7	Answers to problems	63
3	Nim	95
3.1	Care for a game of tic-tac-toe?	96
3.2	Combinatorial games	97
3.2.1	Two-marker games	98
3.2.2	Three-marker games	99
3.2.3	Strategies?	100
3.2.4	Formal strategy for the two-marker game	101
3.2.5	Formal strategy for the three-marker game	101
3.2.6	Balanced and unbalanced positions	102
3.2.7	Balanced positions in subtraction games	106
3.3	Game of binary bits	107
3.3.1	A coin game	107
3.3.2	A better way of looking at the coin game	108
3.3.3	Binary bits game	109
3.4	Nim	113
3.4.1	The mathematical theory of Nim	113
3.4.2	2-pile Nim	114
3.4.3	3-pile Nim	115
3.4.4	More three-pile experiments	115
3.4.5	The near-doubling argument	117
3.5	Nim solved by near-doubling	120

CONTENTS

iii

3.5.1	Review of binary arithmetic	121
3.5.2	Simple solution for the game of Nim	123
3.5.3	Déjà vu?	124
3.6	Return to marker games	126
3.6.1	Mind the gap	127
3.6.2	Strategy for the 6–marker game	128
3.6.3	Strategy for the 5–marker game	130
3.6.4	Strategy for all marker games	131
3.7	Misère Nim	132
3.8	Reverse Nim	133
3.8.1	How to reverse Nim	133
3.8.2	How to play Reverse Misère Nim	135
3.9	Summary and Perspectives	135
3.10	Supplementary material	136
3.10.1	Another analysis of the game of Nim	136
3.10.2	Grundy number	137
3.10.3	Nim-sums computed	139
3.10.4	Proof of the Sprague-Grundy theorem	139
3.10.5	Why does binary arithmetic keep coming up?	142
3.10.6	Another solution to Nim	143
3.10.7	Playing the Nim game with nim-sums	143
3.10.8	Obituary notice of Charles L. Bouton	145
3.11	Answers to problems	147
4	Links	181
4.1	Linking circles	182
4.1.1	Simple, closed curves	183
4.1.2	Shoelace model	183
4.1.3	Linking three curves	184
4.1.4	3–1 and 3–2 configurations	185
4.1.5	A 4–3 configuration	185
4.1.6	Not so easy?	185
4.1.7	Finding the right notation	186
4.2	Algebraic systems	188
4.2.1	Some familiar algebraic systems	188
4.2.2	Linking and algebraic systems	189
4.2.3	When are two objects equal?	189
4.2.4	Inverse notation	190
4.2.5	The laws of combination	191
4.2.6	Applying our algebra to linking problems	191
4.3	Return to the 4–3 configuration	192
4.3.1	Solving the 4–3 configuration	192
4.4	Constructing a 5–4 configuration	194

4.4.1	The plan	194
4.4.2	Verification	194
4.4.3	How about a 6–5 configuration?	195
4.4.4	Improving our notation again	196
4.5	Commutators	196
4.6	Moving on.	197
4.6.1	Where we are.	198
4.6.2	Constructing a 4–2 configuration.	198
4.6.3	Constructing 5–2 and 6–2 configurations.	199
4.7	Some more constructions.	199
4.8	The general construction	199
4.8.1	Introducing a subscript notation	200
4.8.2	Product notation	201
4.8.3	Subscripts on subscripts	202
4.9	Groups	203
4.9.1	Rigid Motions	205
4.9.2	The group of linking operations	206
4.10	Summary and perspectives	207
4.11	A Final Word	209
4.11.1	As mathematics develops	209
4.11.2	A gap?	210
4.11.3	Is our linking language meaningful?	212
4.11.4	Avoid knots and twists	212
4.11.5	Now what?	214
4.12	Answers to problems	215
A	Induction	229
A.1	Quitting smoking by the inductive method	230
A.2	Proving a formula by induction	230
A.3	Setting up an induction proof	232
A.3.1	Starting the induction somewhere else	232
A.3.2	Setting up an induction proof (alternative method)	232
A.4	Answers to problems	235
B	Nim, A Game with a Complete Mathematical Theory	239
Bibliography		245
Index		247

List of Figures

1	Andrew Wiles	
1.1	Checkerboard.	1
1.2	Greek mosaic made with square tiles.	1
1.3	Tiling a rectangle with squares	2
1.4	Tiling a rectangle with four squares?	3
1.5	Where is the smallest square?	4
1.6	Where is the smallest square? (In a corner?)	4
1.7	The smallest square has a larger neighbor.	5
1.8	The smallest square has two larger neighbors.	5
1.9	Possible Neighbor of the smallest square? (No.)	6
1.10	Two possible neighbors of smallest square? (No.)	6
1.11	Four possible neighbors of smallest square? (Maybe.)	7
1.12	We try for a five square tiling.	8
1.13	a, b, c, d , and s are the lengths of the sides of the “squares.”	8
1.14	A tiling with six squares?	9
1.15	A tiling with seven squares? With nine squares?	10
1.16	Will this nine square tiling work?	10
1.17	A tiling with nine squares!	11
1.18	Initial sketch for Arthur Stone’s eleven-square tiling.	12
1.19	Can you reconstruct this figure from the numbers?	13
1.20	Tiling a box with cubes.	14
1.21	Equilateral triangle tiling.	15
1.22	Tutte and Stone.	16
1.23	Lady Isabel’s Casket (from a 1902 English book of puzzles).	17
1.24	The “solution” to Lady Isabel’s Casket.	18
1.25	More experiments with four squares.	20
1.26	We try for a five square tiling.	21
1.27	Lengths in terms of sides of 2 adjacent squares for Figure 1.15.	22
1.28	Some square lengths labeled for Figure 1.15.	22
1.29	Realization of Arthur Stone’s eleven-square tiling.	24
1.30	A 33 by 32 rectangle tiled with nine squares.	25
1.31	A tower of cubes around K_1 .	26
1.32	S is the smallest triangle at the bottom of the tiling.	27

1.33 T is the smallest triangle that touches S .	27
2.1 What is the area of the region inside the polygon?	29
2.2 A polygon on the grid.	31
2.3 Finding a line segment L that splits the polygon.	32
2.4 A triangulation of the polygon in Figure 2.1.	33
2.5 Triangle with one vertex at the origin.	34
2.6 Decomposition for the triangle in Figure 2.5	35
2.7 The polygon P and its triangulation	37
2.8 Too big and too small approximations	37
2.9 Polygon P with 5 special points and their associated squares	39
2.10 A “skinny” triangle.	40
2.11 Some primitive triangles.	42
2.12 Polygons with 4 boundary points and 6 interior points	43
2.13 Compute areas.	43
2.14 Split the rectangle into two triangles.	44
2.15 Adding together two polygonal regions.	46
2.16 A triangle with a horizontal base.	47
2.17 Triangles in general position.	48
2.18 Polygon P with border and interior points highlighted.	49
2.19 Pick	50
2.20 A primitive triangulation of a polygon.	52
2.21 A starting position for the game.	53
2.22 What is the area of the polygon with a hole?	56
2.23 Rectangle P with one rectangular hole H .	57
2.24 Random lattice.	60
2.25 Triangle on a random lattice.	61
2.26 Primitive triangulation of the triangle in Figure 2.25.	61
2.27 Sketch a primitive triangulation of the polygon.	62
2.28 Archimedes’s puzzle, called the Stomachion.	63
2.29 First quadrant unobstructed view from $(0,0)$.	64
2.30 The six line segments that split the polygon.	66
2.31 Another triangulation of P .	68
2.32 Obtuse-angled triangle T with a horizontal base.	76
2.33 Acute-angled triangle T with a horizontal base.	76
2.34 Triangles whose base is neither horizontal nor vertical.	77
2.35 What is the area inside P ?	78
2.36 Finding the line segment L .	79
2.37 A final position in this game.	80
2.38 Polygon with two holes.	86
2.39 Several primitive triangulations of the polygon.	90
2.40 Archimedes’s puzzle, called the Stomachion.	91

LIST OF FIGURES

vii

3.1 A game of Nim.	95
3.2 Care for a game?	96
3.3 A game with two markers at 4 and 9.	98
3.4 The ending position in a game with two markers.	99
3.5 A game with three markers at 4, 9, and 12.	99
3.6 The ending position in a game with three markers.	100
3.7 Position in the coin game.	108
3.8 The same position in the coin game with binary bits.	109
3.9 A move in a 5×3 game of binary bits.	110
3.10 Which positions are balanced?	110
3.11 Which positions are balanced?	111
3.12 Which positions are balanced?	111
3.13 A game of Nim.	113
3.14 Coins set up for a game of Kayles.	114
3.15 The position $(1, 2, 5, 7, 11)$ displayed in binary.	125
3.16 The move $(1, 2, 5, 7, 11) \rightsquigarrow (1, 2, 5, 7, 1)$ displayed in binary.	125
3.17 Gaps in the 3–marker game with markers at 4, 9, and 13.	127
3.18 Gaps in the 4–marker game with markers at 5, 10, 20, and 30.	128
3.19 The three key gaps in the 6–marker game.	129
3.20 The 6–marker game with markers at 5, 7, 12, 15, 20, and 24.	130
3.21 The 5–marker game with markers at 5, 10, 14, 20 and 22.	131
3.22 An 8–marker game.	132
3.23 <i>Last Year at Marienbad</i>	132
3.24 A Reverse Nim game with 4 piles.	133
3.25 Two perspectives on Reverse Nim game with 4 piles.	134
3.26 Playing the associated 7–pile Nim game.	134
3.27 After the balancing move.	134
3.28 An addition table for \oplus	140
3.29 The game of 18 is identical to tic-tac-toe	148
3.30 The card game is identical to tic-tac-toe	149
3.31 Balancing numbers for 2–pile Nim.	151
3.32 A position in the card game.	156
3.33 An odd position.	158
3.34 How to change an odd position to an even position.	159
3.35 A position in the numbers game.	160
3.36 Playing the numbers game.	161
3.37 A position in the word game.	162
3.38 Balancing that same position in the word game.	162
3.39 A sequence of moves in a game of Kayles.	164
3.40 The same sequence of moves in a game of Kayles.	165
3.41 Positions in the game $(1, 2, 3)$	166
3.42 Sprague-Grundy numbers for 2–pile Nim.	174

4.1	Borromean rings (three interlinked circles).	181
4.2	Ballantine Ale	182
4.3	Four circles.	182
4.4	Simple curves, closed curves or not?	183
4.5	Equipment for making models.	184
4.6	Cole and Eva with model.	187
4.7	AB: First rotate the triangle T , then translate.	205
4.8	BA: First translate the triangle T , then rotate.	206
4.9	A “slips off” C .	210
4.10	Projections of squares on the x -axis.	211
4.11	This curve can be transformed into a circle.	213
4.12	Curve with “ear-like” twists.	213
4.13	Is $C = AA^{-1}$?	214
4.14	The three curves are linked in pairs.	215
4.15	A shoelace model of a 3–1 configuration.	216
4.16	Start with two separated circles for Problem 166.	216
4.17	Weave the curve through the circles.	217
4.18	Cut away the circle on the right.	218
4.19	Cut away the circle on the left.	218
4.20	$A^b BAB^b$.	219
4.21	$ABB^b A^b$	220