

Here is a solution to problem B1 of the the 2018 Putnam exam.

Comment: the construction I provide seems to require an inordinate amount of annoying fiddling with detail.

There are $3 \times 101 = 303$ vectors in \mathcal{P} , and the sum of all of them is

$$\sum \binom{a}{b} = \binom{101(0+1+2)}{3(0+1+\dots+100)} = \binom{303}{3 \cdot (100 \cdot 101)/2} = \binom{303}{15150}$$

So we must partition all but one of these vectors into two sets \mathcal{S} and \mathcal{T} , each with 151 elements, and each summing to $((303 - a)/2, (15150 - b)/2)$, where $v = (a, b)$ is the vector to be removed.

Note that a must be odd, and hence $a = 1$. Similarly b must be even.

Conversely, for each $k = 0, 1, \dots, 50$, we will show how to partition $\mathcal{P} \setminus \{(1, 2k)\}$ into two such sets.

When k itself is odd (and hence $k \leq 25$) we will let \mathcal{S} consist of the following vectors:

- (1) All 51 vectors $(0, b)$ with b even, except $(0, k+1)$
- (2) All 50 vectors $(1, b)$ with b odd, together with $(1, 0)$
- (3) All 51 vectors $(2, b)$ with b even, except $(2, 24)$

Then \mathcal{S} contains 151 vectors (so $\mathcal{T} = \mathcal{P} \setminus \mathcal{S} \setminus \{v\}$ will also contain 151 vectors.) The sum of the elements in \mathcal{S} is $(0, 50 \cdot 51) + (50, 50^2) + (2 \cdot 51, 50 \cdot 51) - (0, k+1) + (1, 0) - (2, 24) = (151, 7575 - k)$. That will leave 152 other vectors, which sum to $(303, 15150) - (151, 7575 - k) = (152, 7575 + k)$, so if \mathcal{T} is formed by removing $v = (1, 2k)$, then \mathcal{S} and \mathcal{T} will have the equal cardinality and equal sum.

In a similar way, when k itself is even (and hence less than 25), let \mathcal{S} contain:

- (1) All 51 vectors $(0, b)$ with b even, except $(0, k)$ and $(0, 50)$, together with $(0, 49)$
- (2) All 50 vectors $(1, b)$ with b odd, together with $(1, 2)$
- (3) All 51 vectors $(2, b)$ with b even, except $(2, 26)$

Then \mathcal{S} contains 151 vectors which sum to $(0, 50 \cdot 51) + (50, 50^2) + (2 \cdot 51, 50 \cdot 51) - (0, k) - (0, 50) + (0, 49) + (1, 2) - (2, 26) = (151, 7575 - k)$, so as before \mathcal{T} will have the correct cardinality and sum after $(1, 2k)$ is removed.

Note that care has been taken to include only one vector of the form $(1, 2k)$ in the set \mathcal{S} , and that the parity of this k differs from that of the vector v we wish to remove from $\mathcal{S} \cup \mathcal{T}$.