

For what it's worth, we can actually compute the probability vectors v_n . Multiply each equation

$$(n+1)v_{n+1} = nv_n + R(v_n)$$

by x^n and sum from $n = 1$. Letting $V(x)$ be the vector-valued power series $\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} v_n x^n$, our sum may be written

$$V'(x) - v_1 = xV'(x) + R(V(x)) \quad \text{or} \quad (1-x)V'(x) = R(V(x)) + v_1$$

Equivalently, we may separate out the components $V(x) = (A(x), B(x), C(x))$ and then present this as a system of three ODEs:

$$(1-x)A'(x) = C(x) + a_1, \quad (1-x)B'(x) = A(x) + b_1, \quad (1-x)C'(x) = B(x) + c_1$$

This can be made simpler: if $\bar{C}(x), \bar{A}(x), \bar{B}(x)$ are the three right sides of these equations and $u = 1 - x$, then

$$\bar{C} = -u \frac{d\bar{A}}{du}, \quad \bar{A} = -u \frac{d\bar{B}}{du}, \quad \bar{B} = -u \frac{d\bar{C}}{du}$$

which we may substitute back to get a linear ODE satisfied by $Y = \bar{A}, \bar{B}$, or \bar{C} :

$$u^3 \frac{d^3 Y}{du^3} + 3u^2 \frac{d^2 Y}{du^2} + u \frac{dY}{du} + Y = 0$$

From the Ansatz $Y = u^r$ we discover solutions of this type iff $r^3 = 1$. In real terms this means the general solution may be expressible in closed form:

$$Y = \frac{\alpha}{1-x} + \beta \sqrt{1-x} \sin\left(\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \log(1-x)\right) + \gamma \sqrt{1-x} \cos\left(\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \log(1-x)\right)$$

Matching the initial conditions we deduce the precise functions whose Taylor coefficients give the probabilities a_n, b_n, c_n :

$$\begin{aligned} A(x) &= \frac{2}{3} + \frac{1/3}{1-x} - \frac{\sqrt{1-x}}{\sqrt{3}} \sin\left(\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \ln(1-x)\right) - \frac{\sqrt{1-x}}{3} \cos\left(\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \ln(1-x)\right), \\ B(x) &= \frac{-1}{3} + \frac{1/3}{1-x} + \frac{\sqrt{1-x}}{\sqrt{3}} \sin\left(\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \ln(1-x)\right) - \frac{\sqrt{1-x}}{3} \cos\left(\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \ln(1-x)\right), \\ C(x) &= \frac{-1}{3} + \frac{1/3}{1-x} + \frac{2\sqrt{1-x}}{3} \cos\left(\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \ln(1-x)\right) \end{aligned}$$

I don't see how exactly this helps with the Putnam problem but I can also use a computer while I'm here to run some numerical experiments. When $n = 1$ of course player A will win, and when $n = 2$ it's a tie between A and B . When $3 \leq n \leq 13$, the odds favor B ; when $14 \leq n \leq 144$, the odds favor C ; when $145 \leq n \leq 1607$, the odds favor A again, and finally when $1608 \leq n \leq 18040$, the odds favor B again.