# Lesson 21. Solving the Points-After-Touchdown Problem

- Let's solve the stochastic dynamic program we formulated for the points-after-touchdown problem in Lesson 20.
- Before doing anything else, let's import StochasticDP from the stochasticdp package:

```
In [2]: from stochasticdp import StochasticDP
```

### Setting up the data

• In Lesson 20, we worked with the following data:

```
T = \text{total number of possessions}
p_n = \Pr\{1\text{-pt. conv. successful for Team } n \mid 1\text{-pt. conv. attempted by Team } n\} for n = A, B
q_n = \Pr\{2\text{-pt. conv. successful for Team } n \mid 2\text{-pt. conv. attempted by Team } n\} for n = A, B
b_1 = \Pr\{1\text{-pt. conv. attempted by Team B}\}
b_2 = \Pr\{2\text{-pt. conv. attempted by Team B}\}
t_n = \Pr\{\text{TD by Team } n \text{ in 1 possession}\} for n = A, B
g_n = \Pr\{\text{FG by Team } n \text{ in 1 possession}\} for n = A, B
z_n = \Pr\{\text{Team A wins in overtime}\}
```

- Let's begin by defining numerical values for this data.
- We can find most of these values from Pro Football Reference.
- For now, let's assume that Team A and Team B are both average 2014 NFL teams.
  - Recall that in 2014, 1-pt. conversions started at the 2-yard line.
- Also, let's assume that Team A wins in overtime with probability 0.5.

```
# Possession outcome probabilities - Team A
# TD: (Scoring Offense: ATD) / (Drive Averages: #Dr)
# FG: (Scoring Offense: FGM) / (Drive Averages: #Dr)
tA = 0.218
gA = 0.172
zA = 1 - tA - gA
# Possession outcome probabilities - Team B
tB = 0.218
gB = 0.172
zB = 1 - tB - gB
# Probability that Team A wins in OT
```

# Initializing the stochastic dynamic program

• Stages:

```
t = 0, 1, \dots, T - 1 \leftrightarrow \text{end of possession } t
              t = T \iff \text{end of game}
```

```
In [4]: # Number of stages
       number_of_stages = T + 1
```

• States:

```
(n, k, d) \leftrightarrow \text{Team } n\text{'s possession just ended} \text{ for } n \in \{A, B\}
                                                                for k \in \{0, 3, 6\}
                     Team n just scored k points
                                                                for d \in \{..., -1, 0, 1, ..., \}
                     Team A is ahead by d points
```

- In Lesson 20, we did not assume a lower or upper bound on d, the values that represent Team A's lead.
- Since we need to have a finite number of states, let's assume  $-20 \le d \le 20$ .
- Some Python reminders:
  - We can construct a list by
    - first creating an empty list,
    - and then adding items to it using .append().
  - For example:

```
my_list = []
for i in range(10):
    my_list.append(i)
  o range(a) iterates over the integers 0, 1, ..., a - 1, while range(a, b) iterates over the integers a, a
    + 1, ..., b - 1.
```

• Quick check. Let's inspect what we just created:

```
In [6]: # Print the list of states
    print(states)
```

```
 [('A', 0, -20), ('A', 0, -19), ('A', 0, -18), ('A', 0, -17), ('A', 0, -16), ('A', 0, -15), 
('A', 0, -14), ('A', 0, -13), ('A', 0, -12), ('A', 0, -11), ('A', 0, -10), ('A', 0, -9), ('A', 0, -8), ('A', 0, -7), ('A', 0, -6), ('A', 0, -5), ('A', 0, -4), ('A', 0, -3), ('A', 0, -2), ('A', 0, -1), ('A', 0, 0), ('A', 0, 1), ('A', 0, 2), ('A', 0, 3), ('A', 0, 4),
 ('A', 0, 5), ('A', 0, 6), ('A', 0, 7), ('A', 0, 8), ('A', 0, 9), ('A', 0, 10), ('A', 0, 0, 10)
11), ('A', 0, 12), ('A', 0, 13), ('A', 0, 14), ('A', 0, 15), ('A', 0, 16), ('A', 0, 17),
 ('A', 0, 18), ('A', 0, 19), ('A', 0, 20), ('A', 3, -20), ('A', 3, -19), ('A', 3, -18),
 ('A', 3, -17), ('A', 3, -16), ('A', 3, -15), ('A', 3, -14), ('A', 3, -13), ('A', 3, -12), ('A', 3, -11), ('A', 3, -10), ('A', 3, -9), ('A', 3, -8), ('A', 3, -7), ('A', 3, -6),
 ('A', 3, -5), ('A', 3, -4), ('A', 3, -3), ('A', 3, -2), ('A', 3, -1), ('A', 3, 0), ('A'
3, 1), ('A', 3, 2), ('A', 3, 3), ('A', 3, 4), ('A', 3, 5), ('A', 3, 6), ('A', 3, 7), ('A',
3, 8), ('A', 3, 9), ('A', 3, 10), ('A', 3, 11), ('A', 3, 12), ('A', 3, 13), ('A', 3, 14), ('A', 3, 15), ('A', 3, 16), ('A', 3, 17), ('A', 3, 18), ('A', 3, 19), ('A', 3, 20), ('A',
6, -20), ('A', 6, -19), ('A', 6, -18), ('A', 6, -17), ('A', 6, -16), ('A', 6, -15), ('A', 6, -14), ('A', 6, -13), ('A', 6, -12), ('A', 6, -11), ('A', 6, -10), ('A', 6, -9), ('A',
6,\ -8),\ ('A',\ 6,\ -7),\ ('A',\ 6,\ -6),\ ('A',\ 6,\ -5),\ ('A',\ 6,\ -4),\ ('A',\ 6,\ -3),\ ('A',\ 6,\ -8),\ ('A',\ 6,\ 
-2), ('A', 6, -1), ('A', 6, 0), ('A', 6, 1), ('A', 6, 2), ('A', 6, 3), ('A', 6, 4), ('A',
6, 5), ('A', 6, 6), ('A', 6, 7), ('A', 6, 8), ('A', 6, 9), ('A', 6, 10), ('A', 6, 11), ('A', 6, 12), ('A', 6, 13), ('A', 6, 14), ('A', 6, 15), ('A', 6, 16), ('A', 6, 17), ('A', 6, 18), ('A', 6, 19), ('A', 6, 20), ('B', 0, -20), ('B', 0, -19), ('B', 0, -18), ('B
-17), ('B', 0, -16), ('B', 0, -15), ('B', 0, -14), ('B', 0, -13), ('B', 0, -12), ('B', 0, -12),
-11), ('B', 0, -10), ('B', 0, -9), ('B', 0, -8), ('B', 0, -7), ('B', 0, -6), ('B', 0, -5),
 ('B', 0, -4), ('B', 0, -3), ('B', 0, -2), ('B', 0, -1), ('B', 0, 0), ('B', 0, 1), ('B', 0,
2), ('B', 0, 3), ('B', 0, 4), ('B', 0, 5), ('B', 0, 6), ('B', 0, 7), ('B', 0, 8), ('B', 0, 9), ('B', 0, 10), ('B', 0, 11), ('B', 0, 12), ('B', 0, 13), ('B', 0, 14), ('B', 0, 15),
 ('B', 0, 16), ('B', 0, 17), ('B', 0, 18), ('B', 0, 19), ('B', 0, 20), ('B', 3, -20), ('B',
3, -19), ('B', 3, -18), ('B', 3, -17), ('B', 3, -16), ('B', 3, -15), ('B', 3, -14), ('B',
3, -13), ('B', 3, -12), ('B', 3, -11), ('B', 3, -10), ('B', 3, -9), ('B', 3, -8), ('B', 3, -7), ('B', 3, -6), ('B', 3, -5), ('B', 3, -4), ('B', 3, -3), ('B', 3, -2), ('B', 3, -1), ('B', 3, 0), ('B', 3, 1), ('B', 3, 2), ('B', 3, 3), ('B', 3, 4), ('B', 3, 5), ('B', 3, 6), ('B', 3, 7), ('B', 3, 8), ('B', 3, 9), ('B', 3, 10), ('B', 3, 11), ('B', 3, 12), ('B', 3, 12), ('B', 3, 13), ('B', 3, 13), ('B', 3, 14), ('B', 3, 15), 
13), ('B', 3, 14), ('B', 3, 15), ('B', 3, 16), ('B', 3, 17), ('B', 3, 18), ('B', 3, 19),
 ('B', 3, 20), ('B', 6, -20), ('B', 6, -19), ('B', 6, -18), ('B', 6, -17), ('B', 6, -16),
 ('B', 6, -15), ('B', 6, -14), ('B', 6, -13), ('B', 6, -12), ('B', 6, -11), ('B', 6, -10), ('B', 6, -9), ('B', 6, -8), ('B', 6, -7), ('B', 6, -6), ('B', 6, -5), ('B', 6, -4), ('B', 6, -8)
6, -3), ('B', 6, -2), ('B', 6, -1), ('B', 6, 0), ('B', 6, 1), ('B', 6, 2), ('B', 6, 3),
 ('B', 6, 4), ('B', 6, 5), ('B', 6, 6), ('B', 6, 7), ('B', 6, 8), ('B', 6, 9), ('B', 6, 9)
10), ('B', 6, 11), ('B', 6, 12), ('B', 6, 13), ('B', 6, 14), ('B', 6, 15), ('B', 6, 16),
 ('B', 6, 17), ('B', 6, 18), ('B', 6, 19), ('B', 6, 20)]
```

• Allowable decisions  $x_t$  at stage t and state (n, k, d):

```
x_t \in \{1, 2\} if n = A and k = 6

x_t = \text{none} if n = A and k \in \{0, 3\}

x_t = \text{none} if n = B and k \in \{0, 3, 6\}
```

```
In [7]: # List of decisions
          decisions = [1, 2, 'none']
```

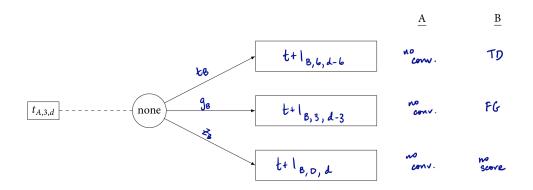
• Now we can initialize a StochasticDP object called dp as follows:

# Transition probabilities from stages t = 0, 1, ..., T - 2

• Let's start with the easier transitions and work our way up to the more complicated ones.

# From states (A, 3, d)

• Let's consider the transitions from states (A, 3, d) for  $d = -20, \dots, 20$  in stages  $t = 0, 1, \dots, T - 2$ :

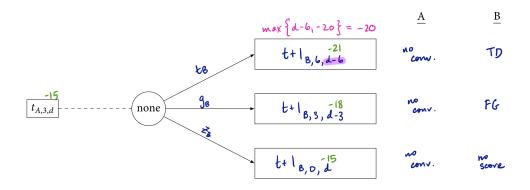


• Following the Lesson 19, we can put in these transitions like this:

```
In [9]: # Transition probabilities from (A, 3, d) up to stage T - 2
    for t in range(T - 1):
        for d in range(-20, 21):
            dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 3, d), 'none', ('B', 6, d - 6), tB, 0)
            dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 3, d), 'none', ('B', 3, d - 3), gB, 0)
            dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 3, d), 'none', ('B', 0, d), zB, 0)
```

```
KeyError
                                              Traceback (most recent call last)
   <ipython-input-9-d39ee919bf1f> in <module>()
     2 for t in range(T - 1):
           for d in range(-20, 21):
 ---> 4
               dp.add\_transition(t, ('A', 3, d), 'none', ('B', 6, d - 6), tB, 0)
     5
               dp.add\_transition(t, ('A', 3, d), 'none', ('B', 3, d - 3), gB, 0)
               dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 3, d), 'none', ('B', 0, d), zB, 0)
     6
   ~/Dropbox/Development/teaching/stochasticdp/stochasticdp/stochasticdp.py in add_transition(self, stage, from_state, decis-
   152
           def add_transition(self, stage, from_state, decision, to_state,
                               probability, contribution):
   153
--> 154
               if (self.probability[to_state, from_state, stage, decision] or
   155
                       self.contribution[to_state, from_state, stage, decision]):
```

- Why are we getting an 'Invalid state, stage, or decision' message?
  - $\circ$  Remember that in Lesson 20, we assumed that d could take on an infinite number values.
  - $\circ$  On the other hand, here, we have limited d to be between -20 and 20.
- How can we work around this?
  - Let's do this: if d is supposed to be less than -20, then we simply assume that it is the same as having d = -20.
  - $\circ$  For example, suppose d = -16 in the diagram above. Then we can model the transitions like this:

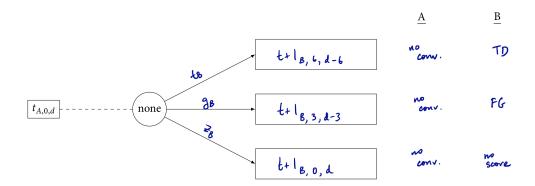


• So... let's start over:

• Using the idea above, we can write the following code to represent the transitions from states (A, 3, d) for d = -20, ..., 20 and t = 0, 1, ..., T - 2:

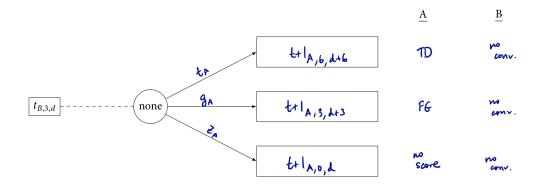
### From states (A, 0, d)

• Similarly, for the transitions from states (A, 0, d) for  $d = -20, \dots, 20$  in stages  $t = 0, 1, \dots, T - 2$ :

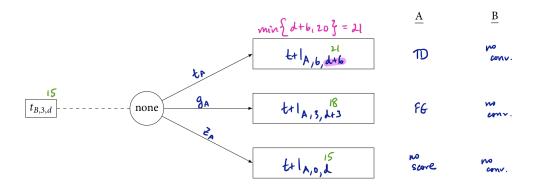


# From states (B, 3, d)

• Next, the transitions from states (B, 3, d) for  $d = -20, \dots, 20$  in stages  $t = 0, 1, \dots, T - 2$ :

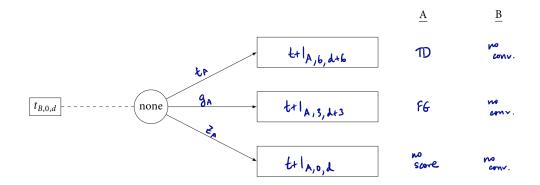


- We run into a similar problem: if we're not careful, we can end up with values of d greater than 20.
- Let's do this: if d is supposed to be greater than 20, then we simply assume that it is the same as having d = 20, like this:



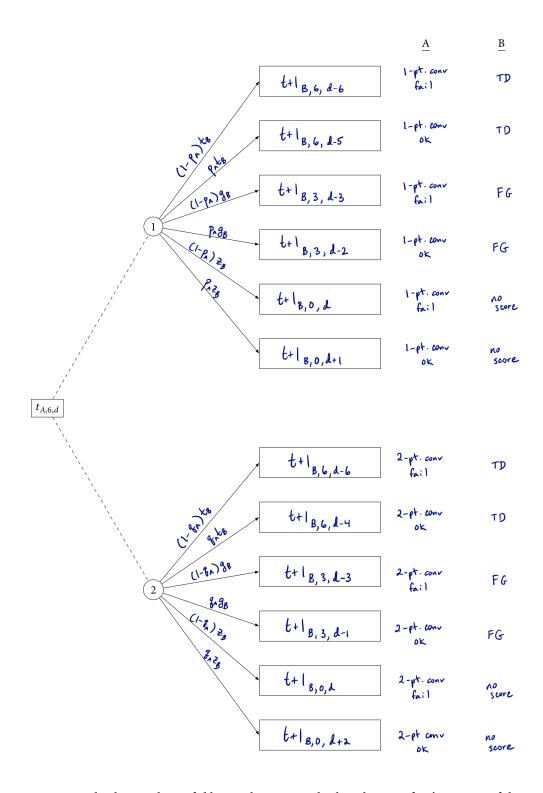
# From states (B, 0, d)

• Next, the transitions from states (B, 0, d) for  $d = -20, \dots, 20$  in stages  $t = 0, 1, \dots, T - 2$ :

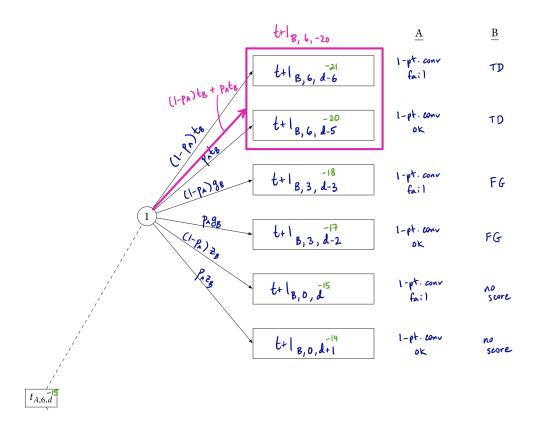


# From states (A, 6, d)

• Next up: transitions from the state (A, 6, d) for  $d = -20, \dots, 20$  in stages  $t = 0, 1, \dots, T - 2$ :



- In this case, we can also have values of d lower than -20 or higher than 20 if we're not careful.
- Because of this, we can also have multiple transitions to the same state, like this:



- To take care of this, we simply need to merge these transitions.
- The code becomes a bit more complicated, though, since we need to consider various cases.
- First, let's consider the 1-point conversion decision and break down the cases depending on the value of d:

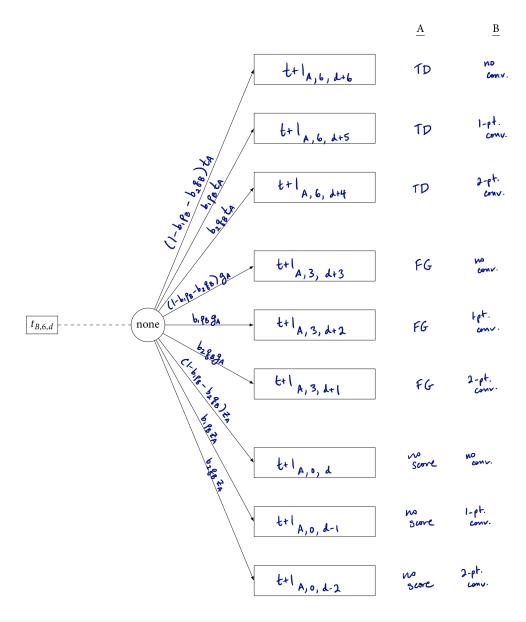
```
In [15]: # Remember:
         # dp.add_transition(stage, from_state, decision, to_state, probability, contribution)
         # Transition probabilities from (A, 6, d) up to stage T - 2
         # Decision: 1-point conversion
         for t in range(T - 1):
              for d in range(-20, 21):
                  if d - 5 <= -20:
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 1, ('B', 6, -20), (1 - pA) * tB + pA * tB, 0)
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 1, ('B', 6, max(d - 6, -20)), (1 - pA) * tB, 0)
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 1, ('B', 6, max(d - 5, -20)), pA * tB, 0)
                  if d - 2 <= -20:
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 1, ('B', 3, -20), (1 - pA) * gB + pA * gB, 0)
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 1, ('B', 3, max(d - 3, -20)), (1 - pA) * gB, 0) dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 1, ('B', 3, max(d - 2, -20)), pA * gB, 0)
                  if d >= 20:
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 1, ('B', 0, 20), (1 - pA) * zB + pA * zB, 0)
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 1, ('B', 0, min(d, 20)), (1 - pA) * zB, 0)
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 1, ('B', 0, min(d + 1, 20)), pA * zB, 0)
```

• Let's do the same for the 2-point conversion decision:

```
In [16]: # Remember:
         # dp.add_transition(stage, from_state, decision, to_state, probability, contribution)
         # Transition probabilities from (A, 6, d) up to stage T - 2
         # Decision: 2-point conversion
         for t in range(T - 1):
              for d in range(-20, 21):
                  if d - 4 <= -20:
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 2, ('B', 6, -20), (1 - qA) * tB + qA * tB, 0)
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 2, ('B', 6, max(d - 6, -20)), (1 - qA) * tB, 0) dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 2, ('B', 6, max(d - 4, -20)), qA * tB, 0)
                  if d - 1 <= -20:
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 2, ('B', 3, -20), (1 - qA) * gB + qA * gB, 0)
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 2, ('B', 3, max(d - 3, -20)), (1 - qA) * gB, 0)
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 2, ('B', 3, max(d - 1, -20)), qA * gB, 0)
                  if d >= 20:
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 2, ('B', 0, 20), (1 - qA) * zB + qA * zB, 0)
                  else:
                      dp.add_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 2, ('B', 0, min(d, 20)), (1 - qA) * zB, 0)
                      dp.add\_transition(t, ('A', 6, d), 2, ('B', 0, min(d + 2, 20)), qA * zB, 0)
```

# From states (B, 6, d)

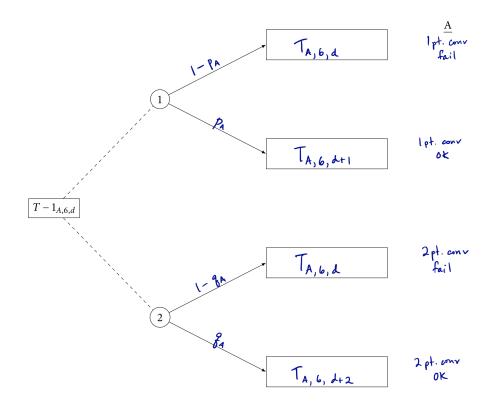
• We need to take similar care for the transitions from states (B, 6, d) for  $d = -20, \ldots, 20$  in stages  $t = 0, 1, \ldots, T-2$ :



```
In [17]: # Transition probabilities from (B, 6, d) up to stage T - 2
        for t in range(T - 1):
            for d in range(-20, 21):
               if d + 4 >= 20:
                   dp.add_transition(t, ('B', 6, d), 'none', ('A', 6, 20), (1 - b1*pB - b2*qB) *
                                    tA + b1*pB*tA + b2*qB*tA, 0
               elif d + 5 >= 20:
                   dp.add_transition(t, ('B', 6, d), 'none', ('A', 6, 20), (1 - b1*pB - b2*qB) *
                                    tA + b1*pB*tA, 0)
                   dp.add_transition(t, ('B', 6, d), 'none', ('A', 6, min(d + 4, 20)), b2*qB*tA, 0)
               else:
                   dp.add\_transition(t, ('B', 6, d), 'none', ('A', 6, min(d + 6, 20)), (1 - b1*pB)
                                    -b2*qB) * tA, 0)
                   if d + 1 >= 20:
                   dp.add_transition(t, ('B', 6, d), 'none', ('A', 3, 20), (1 - b1*pB - b2*qB) *
                                    gA + b1*pB*gA + b2*qB*gA, 0
               elif d + 2 >= 20:
                   dp.add_transition(t, ('B', 6, d), 'none', ('A', 3, 20), (1 - b1*pB - b2*qB) *
                                    gA + b1*pB*gA, 0)
                   dp.add_transition(t, ('B', 6, d), 'none', ('A', 3, min(d + 1, 20)), b2*qB*gA, 0)
```

### Transition probabilities from stage T-1

- Now, we can tackle the transitions from stage T-1.
- From states (A, 6, d) for d = -20, ..., 20 in stage T 1:



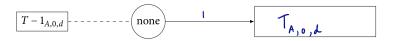
```
dp.add_transition(T - 1, ('A', 6, d), 2, ('A', 6, min(d + 2, 20)), qA, 0)
```

• From states (A, 3, d) for d = -20, ..., 20 in stage T - 1:



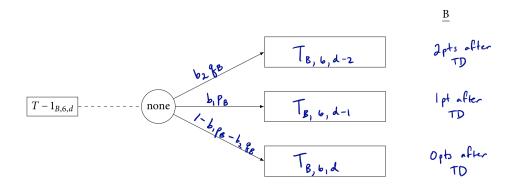
```
In [19]: # Transition probabilities from (A, 3, d) in stage T - 1
    for d in range(-20, 21):
        dp.add_transition(T - 1, ('A', 3, d), 'none', ('A', 3, d), 1, 0)
```

• From states (A, 0, d) for d = -20, ..., 20 in stage T - 1:



```
In [20]: # Transition probabilities from (A, 0, d) in stage T - 1
    for d in range(-20, 21):
        dp.add_transition(T - 1, ('A', 0, d), 'none', ('A', 0, d), 1, 0)
```

• From states (B, 6, d) for d = -20, ..., 20 in stage T - 1:



• From states (B, 3, d) for d = -20, ..., 20 in stage T - 1:



```
In [22]: # Transition probabilities from (B, 3, d) in stage T - 1
    for d in range(-20, 21):
        dp.add_transition(T - 1, ('B', 3, d), 'none', ('B', 3, d), 1, 0)
```

• From states (B, 0, d) for d = -20, ..., 20 in stage T - 1:



### **Boundary conditions**

• Finally, the boundary conditions:

$$f_T(n, k, d) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } d > 0 \\ r & \text{if } d = 0 \\ 0 & \text{if } d < 0 \end{cases} \quad \text{for } n \in \{A, B\}, k \in \{0, 3, 6\}, d = -20, \dots, 20$$

# Solving the stochastic dynamic program

```
In [25]: # Solve the stochastic dynamic program
    value, policy = dp.solve()
```

### Interpreting output from the stochastic dynamic program

• What is the maximum probability that Team A wins after scoring a touchdown in the first possession?

```
In [26]: # Maximum probability that Team A wins after scoring a touchdown in the first possession
    print(value[0, ('A', 6, 6)])
```

#### 0.7022345341399421

• What should Team A do after scoring a touchdown in the first possession?

```
In [27]: # Optimal strategy for Team A after scoring a touchdown in the first possession
    policy[0, ('A', 6, 6)]
```

#### Out[27]: {1}

- Suppose Team A just scored a touchdown, making it 4 points ahead. How does (1) the probability of Team A winning and (2) Team A's optimal strategy change depending on which possession this happened? Why do the trends you identified make sense?
  - What if Team A were 5 points ahead? 1 point behind?

*Hint*. Write a for loop that prints out the information you want.

```
Go for: {2}
Points ahead: -1
                 Possession: 0
                                               Pr(win): 0.5072953616034738
Points ahead: -1
                  Possession: 1
                                  Go for: {2}
                                               Pr(win): 0.44519240474106353
                Possession: 2
                                Go for: {2}
Points ahead: -1
                                               Pr(win): 0.50731028518891
Points ahead: -1 Possession: 3 Go for: {2}
                                               Pr(win): 0.4424885299821573
Points ahead: -1
                 Possession: 4 Go for: {2}
                                               Pr(win): 0.5074118904508018
Points ahead: -1
                 Possession: 5 Go for: {2}
                                               Pr(win): 0.43931528946076176
                  Possession: 6
Points ahead: -1
                                  Go for: {2}
                                               Pr(win): 0.5075907168890346
                                  Go for: {2}
                                               Pr(win): 0.4355105592923179
Points ahead: -1
                  Possession: 7
Points ahead: -1 Possession: 8 Go for: {2}
                                               Pr(win): 0.5078210778988483
Points ahead: -1
                  Possession: 9 Go for: {2}
                                               Pr(win): 0.4308230454850312
Points ahead: -1 Possession: 10
                                 Go for: {2}
                                                Pr(win): 0.5080497243247094
Points ahead: -1
                 Possession: 11
                                  Go for: {2}
                                                Pr(win): 0.4248444944890374
Points ahead: -1
                 Possession: 12
                                  Go for: {2}
                                                Pr(win): 0.5081772915654194
Points ahead: -1 Possession: 13
                                  Go for: {2}
                                                Pr(win): 0.41687201090463577
Points ahead: -1
                  Possession: 14 Go for: {2}
                                                 Pr(win): 0.5080221801678291
Points ahead: -1
                 Possession: 15 Go for: {2}
                                                 Pr(win): 0.40558863804792583
Points ahead: -1
                  Possession: 16
                                  Go for: {2}
                                                Pr(win): 0.5072110127638884
Points ahead: -1
                  Possession: 17
                                   Go for: {2}
                                                 Pr(win): 0.3881880953683321
Points ahead: -1
                  Possession: 18
                                  Go for: {2}
                                                 Pr(win): 0.5047762309420285
Points ahead: -1 Possession: 19
                                  Go for: {2}
                                                Pr(win): 0.3576599174598068
Points ahead: -1 Possession: 20
                                  Go for: {1}
                                                Pr(win): 0.4987950978607944
Points ahead: -1 Possession: 21
                                  Go for: {1}
                                                Pr(win): 0.30286500000000005
Points ahead: -1
                                                Pr(win): 0.4965
                 Possession: 22
                                   Go for: {1}
```