

## Morning Madness - Solution

The answer is  $M = \frac{(2n)!}{2^n}$ .

Denote by  $F_i$  the sock that Mike puts on on foot  $i$  for  $1 \leq i \leq n$ . Denote  $S_i$  analogously for the shoes. Now we can denote a correct ordering by a sequence of  $F_i$  and  $S_i$ . For example, if  $n = 2$ , a correct ordering is  $F_1 F_2 S_2 S_1$ . Let  $V_0$  be the set of any orderings of these  $2n$  symbols. For any such ordering  $\sigma \in V_0$ , denote by  $\sigma(F_i)$  the index whose symbol is  $F_i$ . It should be clear that  $|V_0| = (2n)!$ . Let  $V_1 = \{\sigma \in V_0 : \sigma(F_1) < \sigma(S_1)\}$  be the set of orderings such that Mike has put the sock on foot 1 before he puts a shoe on foot 1. Now the function  $\phi : V_1 \rightarrow V_0 \setminus V_1$  given by

$$\phi(\sigma)(i) = \begin{cases} S_1 & \text{if } \sigma(i) = F_1; \\ F_1 & \text{if } \sigma(i) = S_1; \\ \sigma(i) & \text{else,} \end{cases}$$

i.e. by switching  $S_1$  and  $F_1$  in the ordering, is clearly a bijection. Hence,  $|V_1| = |V_0|/2$ .

Now letting  $V_j = \{\sigma \in V_{j-1} : \sigma(F_j) < \sigma(S_j)\}$  be the set such that the first  $j$  socks are put on in the right order, we see that analogously to the argument above we have  $|V_j| = |V_{j-1}|/2$ . Hence

$$M = |V_n| = \frac{|V_0|}{2^n} = \frac{(2n)!}{2^n},$$

as wanted.