

reaching an
acceptable and
stable solution

/ James Saunders

/ 2018

[for 3-10 players]

reaching an acceptable and stable solution creates a situation in which players must balance the use of a shared resource in order to make a specified sequence of different sounds while helping others do the same. The requirement is made harder by having more players and/or fewer objects, such that in some situations it might not be possible to complete the task accurately. The piece continues my interest in collaborative decision making and consensus forming as a way to organise music.

The title comes from Garrett Hardin's 1968 article 'The Tragedy of the Commons', in which he explores contexts where individuals draw on shared resources with no regard for others, leading to their depletion, with potentially catastrophic results.

It was first performed by Parkinson Saunders at Snape Maltings on 22 August 2018, and by Parkinson Saunders with Michael Duch at NonfigurativMusikk, Tønsberg, Norway on 3 November 2018.

SETUP

The players need a shared resource of 10 sound-producing objects that are within reach, ideally placed between them on a shared table. Objects should be capable of producing short and sustained sounds. Given the shared nature of the resources, it is best to avoid blown sounds. Each player needs their own score, chosen at random from those provided, and duplicates are fine. Players also need a stopwatch.

PERFORMANCE

The aim of the piece is for players to find a distribution of resources such that they can all play the available sounds at the indicated times. Selections of objects by one player may cause difficulties for another player.

Players begin their stopwatches. They do not need to be precisely synchronised but should start within 0-10" of each other.

The score indicates 10 sound producing objects which are chosen from the available pool.

Players independently assign one of the available objects to a number (e.g. bell = 4, plastic bag = 7 etc.). This may be done gradually during the performance or in advance (by marking up the score).

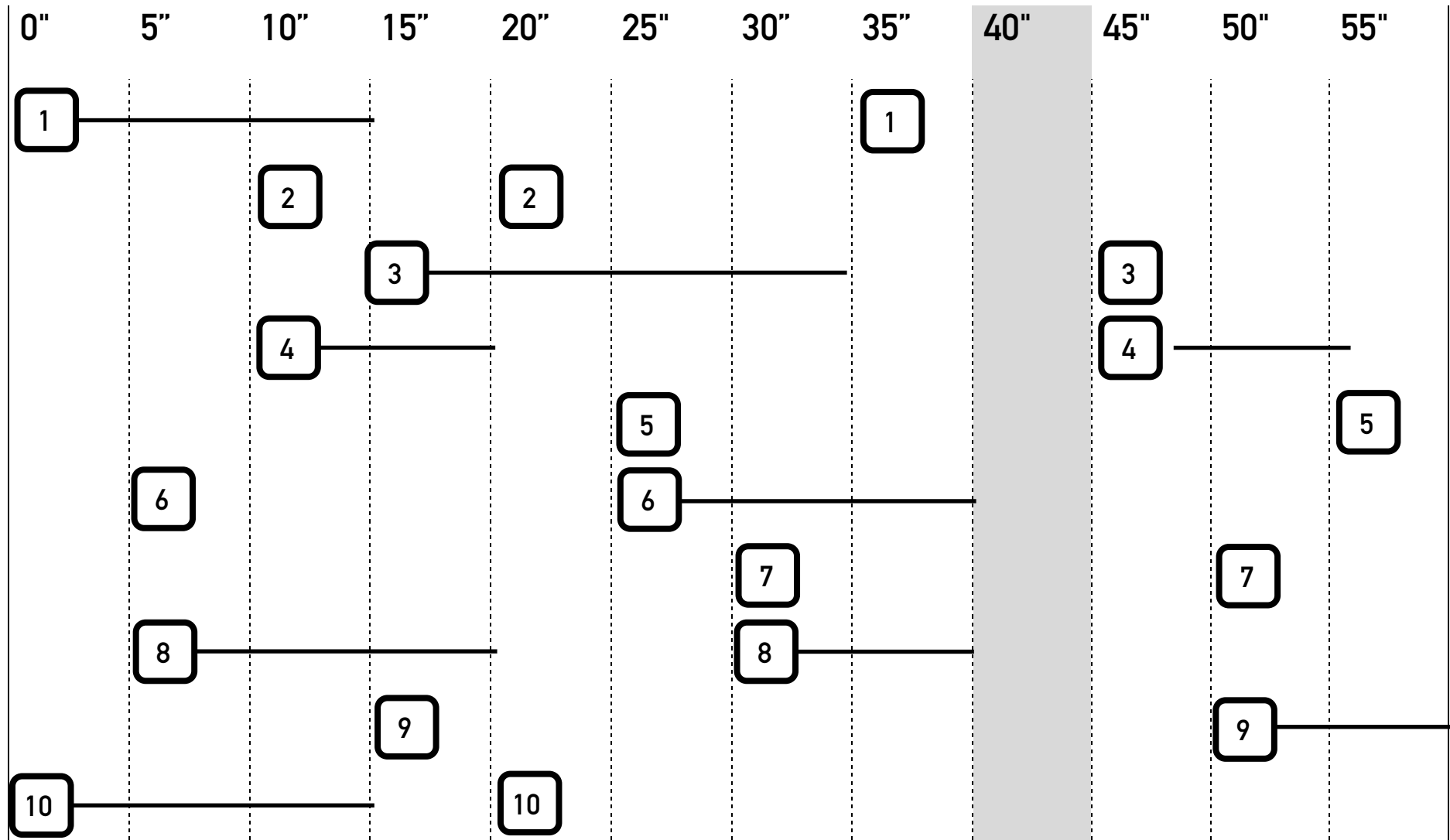
The numbers show when an object should be used, and for how long. The timings repeat, so a sound made at 25" should also be made at 1'25", 2'25", 3'25" and so on. The score indicates 5" blocks, with sounds being either short (a boxed number), or sustained (a boxed number with an extender line). All sounds can start at any point in each of the 5" blocks. Sustained sounds may end at any point the subsequent 5" block.

Players should begin by playing their chosen sound 1 at the appropriate points in the first minute. In the second minute, players add their chosen sound 2, so that they play sounds 1 and 2. They continue in this manner until the final minute, when all 10 sounds are active.

The piece concludes at the end of the final minute.

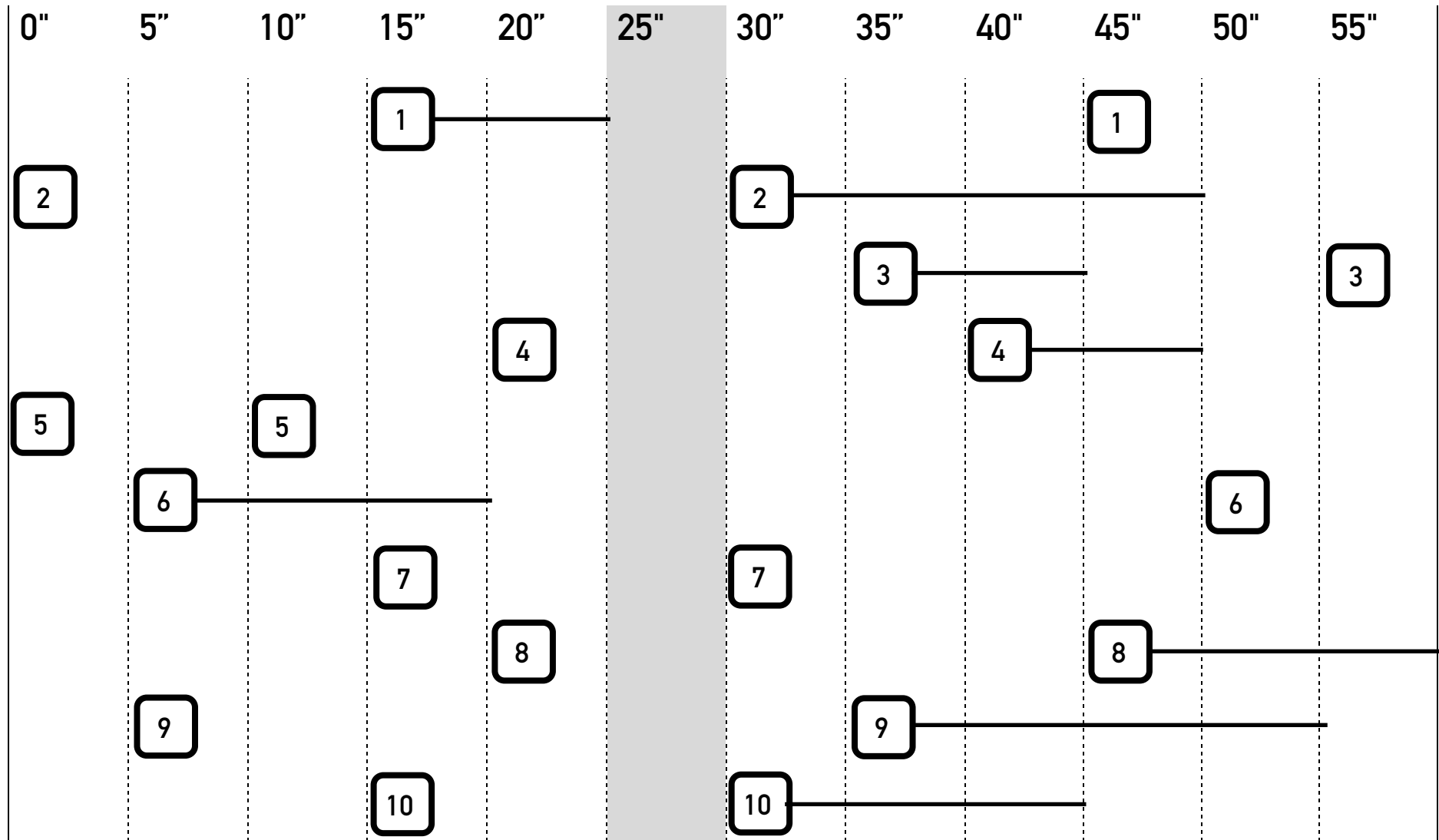
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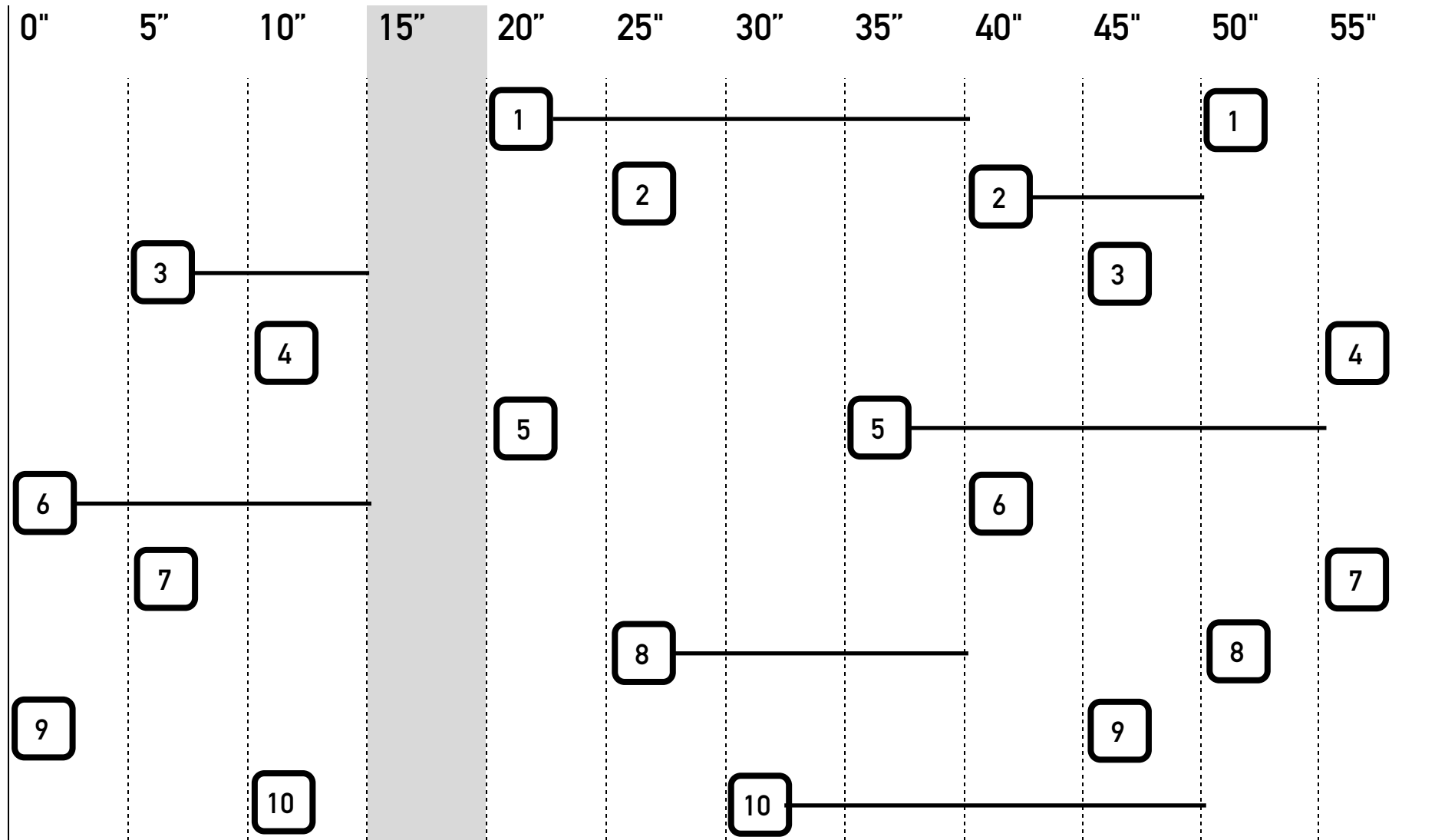
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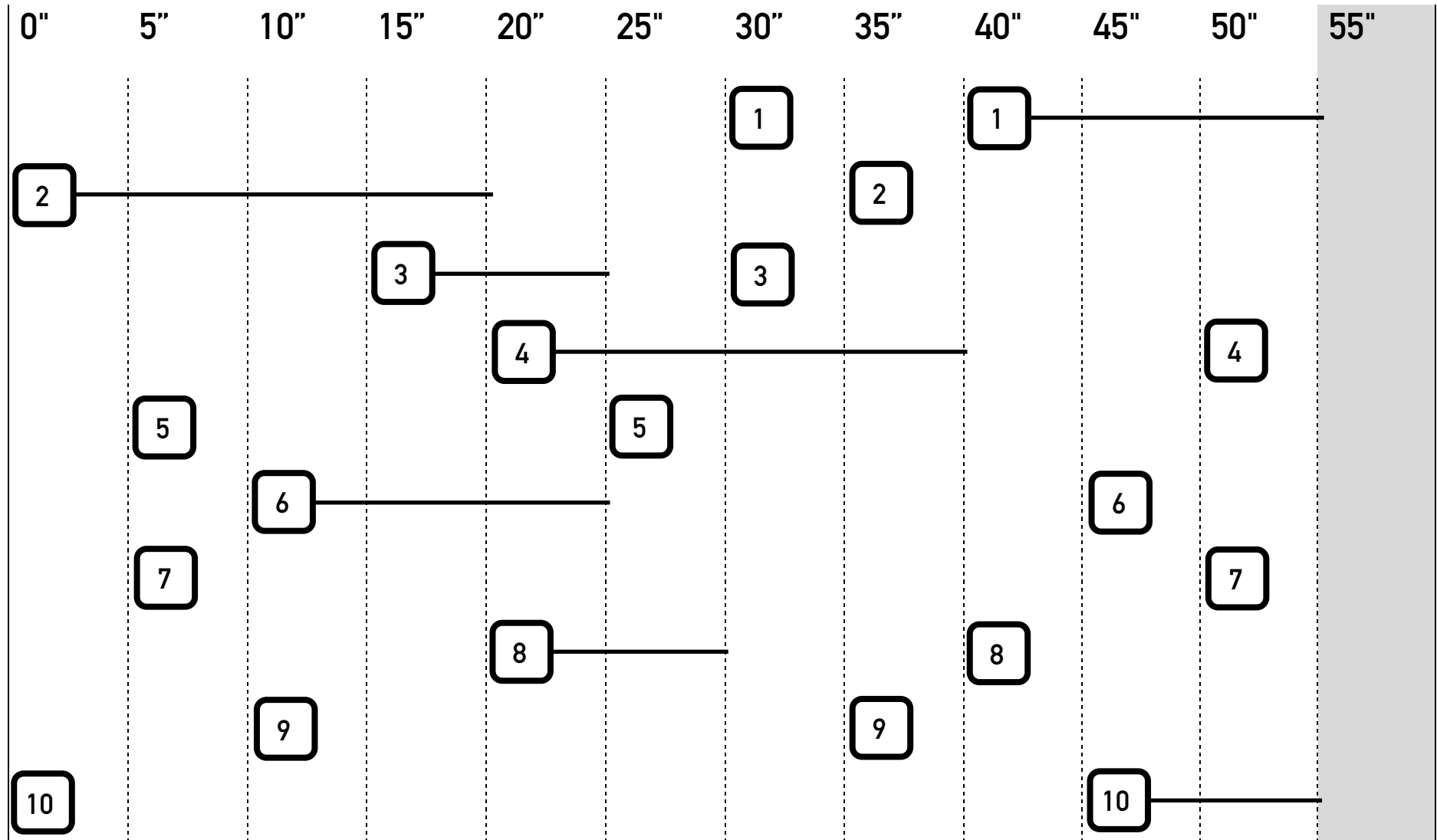
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