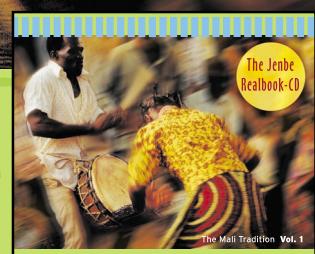


# The Jenbe Realbook

Vol. 1



This booklet contains the complete transcriptions of the CD:

"The Art of Jenbe Drumming: The Mali Tradition - Vol. 1"

performed by three master-drummers from Bamako

**Jaraba Jakite (# 1 - 5)**

**Yamadu Dunbia (# 6 - 10)**

**Jeli Madi Kuyate (# 11 - 14)**

on Jenbe and accompanied by Madu Jakite on Dunun

Transcriptions by Rainer Polak

**bibi africa**

# The Jenbe Realbook



**Vol. 1**

This book contains the complete transcriptions of the CD:

**»The Art of Jenbe Drumming: The Mali Tradition Vol. 1«**

The CD was recorded 1995 in Bamako by Rainer Polak, first released with Bandaloop Records in 1996 and re-released with bibiafrica records in 2006.

[www.bibiafrica-records.de](http://www.bibiafrica-records.de) • bibiafrica@online.de

bibiafrica records • Kölner Str. 26 • D-90425 Nürnberg • Tel. 0911-553510





The transcription follows the order of the CD tracks

no.	title	playing time	page
1	Intro + Fula	04:25	1
2	Madan	06:25	8
3	Maraka	04:44	21
4	Sogoninkun	04:43	31
5	Sabaro	04:55	39
6	Woloso	04:20	49
7	Kòmò	06:50	54
8	Kòfili	05:37	65
9	Kirin	05:12	73
10	Burun	03:48	83
11	Maa Nyuman	01:44	91
12	Jina I	04:18	94
13	Jina I	02:52	101
14	Jina III	02:41	106

The music was performed by

Jenbe: **Jaraba Jakite** (Tracks 1-5)

**Yamadu Dunbia** (Tracks 6-10)

**Jeli Madi Kuyate** (Tracks 11-14)

Dunun: **Madu Jakite** (all tracks)

## The recordings

In the recordings, three masters of traditional jenbe dance drumming present the clear beauty and explosive power of their music. Of course the music of a jenbe dance celebration cannot be adequately documented because it represents part of a dynamic event which can only be fully grasped by witnessing all its interlocking elements. The sound recording of a celebration would lack the movement of the dancers and the whole atmosphere of colors, smells, and enthusiasm. The recordings presented in this CD, moreover, were made not in the context of a celebration at all, but in a school yard in the Badialan quarter of Bamako. The drummers performed for the microphone, without rehearsals, without arrangements, and without an underlying notion on how to convey celebration music without a celebration. It was the first time to do a studio recording for all of them. They spontaneously created a kind of »art music« in a space without references, an abstract translation of music traditionally played for celebrations. The original live tracks were neither cut, nor overdubbed.



## The ensemble

The CD presents masters of the jenbe in duet performances with an accompanying bass drummer – one jenbe, one dunun, no bells. Playing in this smallest version of a jenbe drum ensemble was typical for the celebration music style of Bamako in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Today, trio, quartett, and even larger ensembles are the rule, and many stylistic influences from ballet music, the playing styles of Conakry and Abidjan, and of the international jenbe scene based in the rich West, have come to change the Bamako style. Thus the recordings featured here represent sort of a classical aesthetic ideal of Malian jenbe music as crystallized in its capital Bamako after independence.

Only mature musicians can master duet playing and know how to create its typical fascinating musical density, balancing the tension between flow and transition, between communal groove and individual expressivity, between tradition and improvisation, between form and trance. The »challenge of the void« that duet playing presents to many holds no threat for the drummers of Badialan, because their playing is based on decades of experience as performers in this sort of ensemble. Fabulously sure of their instruments, guided by close communication even in the boldest passages, the void represents space they enjoy to fill with sound.

The reduced line-up also has the advantage of very clear and transparent sonic reproduction. Thus the listener can not only perceive the fundamental musical structures, but also experience the high art of drumming, the »talking of the drum«, in its finest rhythmical nuances and timbral shades.

# The transcriptions

As has become usual since the 1960s in studies of West African percussion music, the notes are set in relation to a graphic raster that represents a linear metric system of elementary pulses (smallest time units except of rolls/flams) and beats (comprising either 3 or 4 pulses to larger units). Thus all rhythms transcribed refer to either a quaternary metric system of 16 pulse cycles (4 beats x 4 pulses) or to ternary 12 pulse cycles (4 beats x 3 pulses).

The following sound symbols are used in the transcriptions:

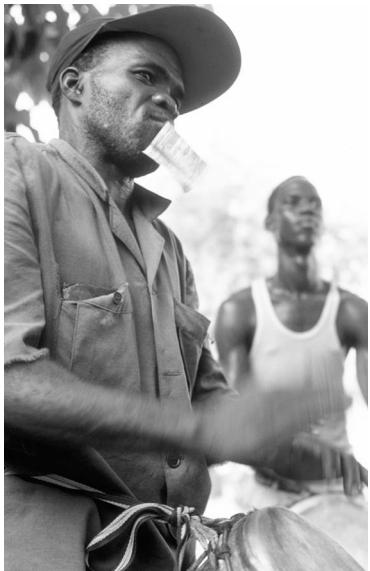


S	jenbe slap
<u>S</u>	closed or muffled jenbe slap
T	jenbe tone
<u>T</u>	closed jenbe tone
B	jenbe bass
TT, TS, BS, SS	doublestroke (flam) consisting of two equally stressed notes
X	closed or muted dunun stroke
O	open dunun stroke



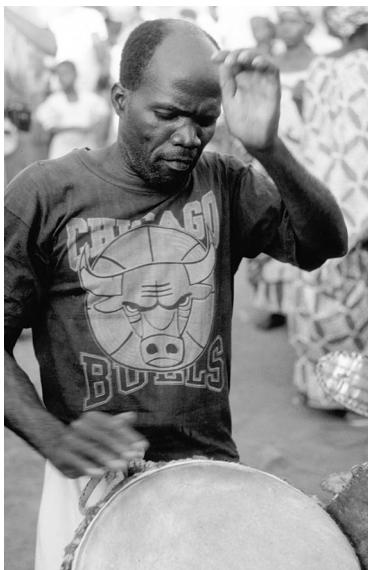
Without doubt, the transcription published here do not make an exception from the rule that a musical transcription can always be only an imprecise and incomplete approach to represent a sonic reality. Working with the book makes sense only if the reading of the music comes along with hearing the CD. Hearing the CD, plus of course hearing other jenbe music, continuous practicing basic skills like **sounds** etc, and studying with a good teacher, are much more important than working with the book, and are preconditions to being able to successfully work with the book.

Let me hint at some of the most important aspects of the music that are not adequately represented in the notation. While the basic sounds of the jenbe (bass, tone, slap) are pretty clearly discernable most of the time, they are not transcribed in their further differentiations or fluid transitions. For instance, sometimes bass tones are played so softly that you can also interpret them as "ghost notes" or "tips". Slaps as played by Dunbia and particularly by Kuyate are often almost, yet not completely closed, making it difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between open and closed slaps. While these "dirty" sound characteristics are typical for the duet playing style of Bamako, and important to the musical result, they are very hard to transcribe. This is the case even more so with the **phrasing** of the rhythmic patterns. Malian jenbe playing, and duet performance in particular, literally lives by metric feelings that make the rhythm swing. If you measure in milliseconds the densifying **ornaments** performed by the three jenbe soloists, you will find that most of them do neither go conform with any linear derivation of the basic pulsation (double-time, sextoles, or the like), nor correspond to what is termed a "flam". They are usually "broader" than a flam, and are unevenly structured: they represent patterned microrhythmic structures - the setting of which in the framework of a metric raster of elementary pulses is unjust and arbitrary.



Even the basic pulsation itself frequently is not evenly spaced, as supposed by a linear metric understanding and notational system, but compressed and stretched alternately, in ways that produce rhythmic swing. This feeling can be applied to such an extent that the distinction between binary (or quaternary) and ternary rhythms begin to dissolve. For instance, while the dunun pattern of rhythm Burun is ternary, Yamadu Dunbia consistently phrases many of his jenbe patterns in a way that is very much in between a ternary (XxxXxx) and quaternary (X.xxX.xx) feeling. This is not due to ideo-syncretic personal style or weird improvisations, it rather is inherent in the composition of the rhythm and its basic patterns. When measured, one even finds that the actual phrasing sometimes is closer to a quaternary **pulsation** (four pulses per beat) than to the dunun's ternary feeling. Or listen to Jina 1, where many an allegedly quaternary pattern turns out to feel like being ternary. Structures of micro-timing is about the hardest thing to transcribe I can imagine, yet so essential to the music in question that this difficulty really means deficiency. At the moment I have the privilege to do more research on the timing of jenbe rhythms with the generous help a the German Research Council (DFG). I hope that this research will allow me also to think over the assumptions and delimitations of raster notation, and accordingly try to develop its capability to consider micro-rhythmic phenomena.

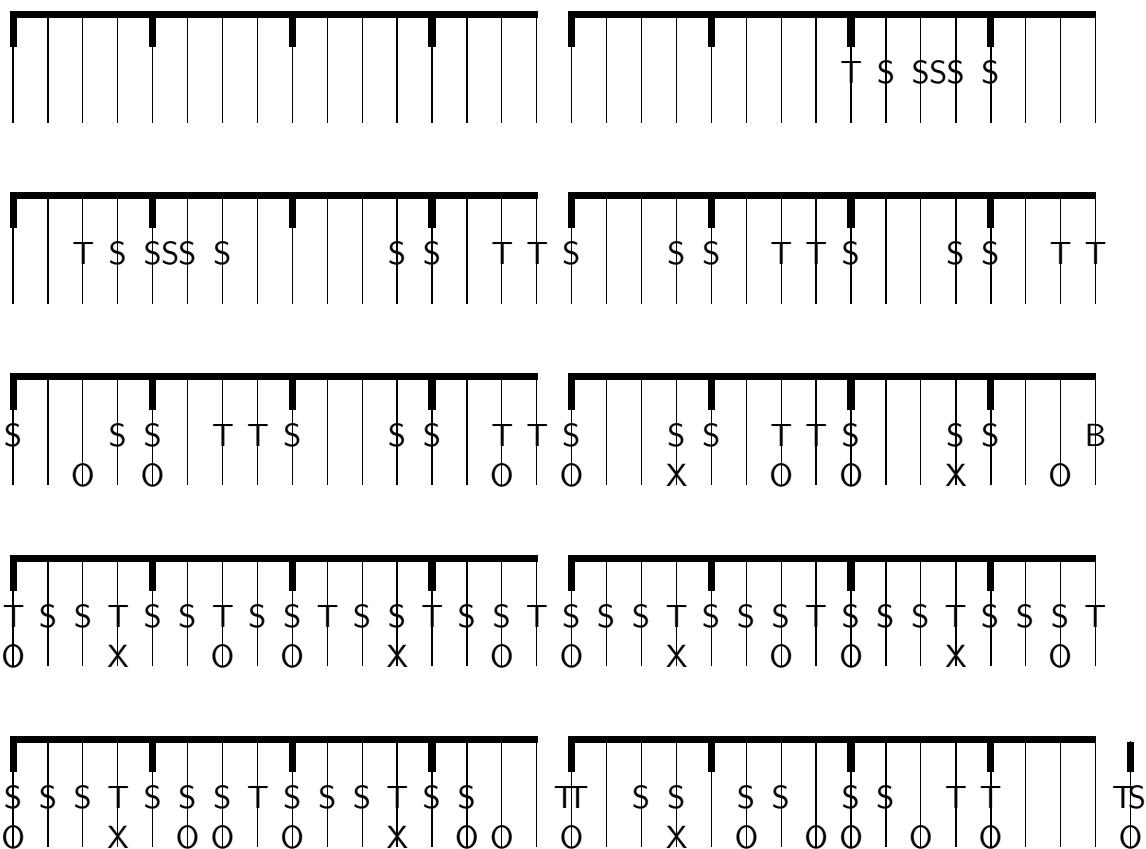
Bayreuth, spring 2006  
Rainer Polak



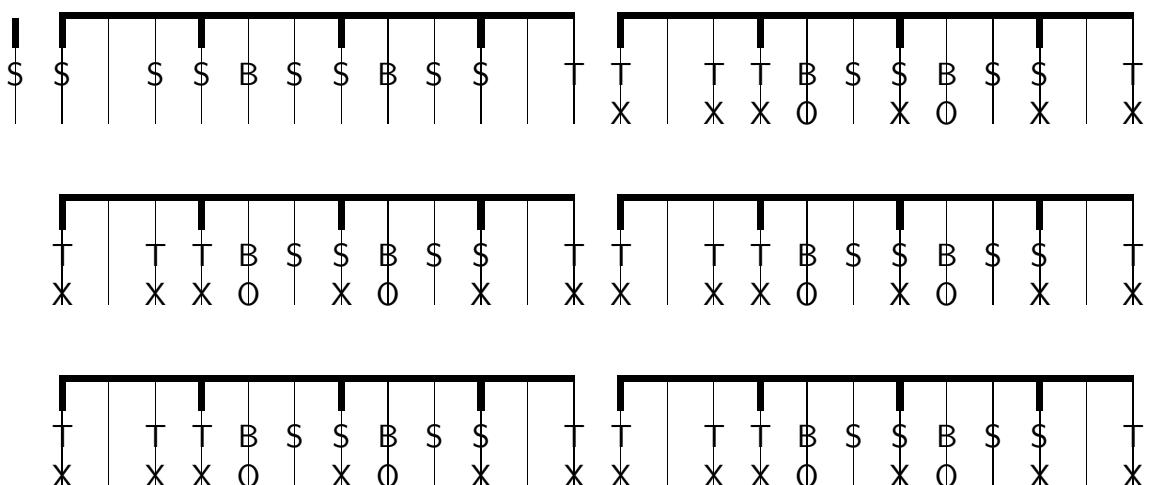
## The author

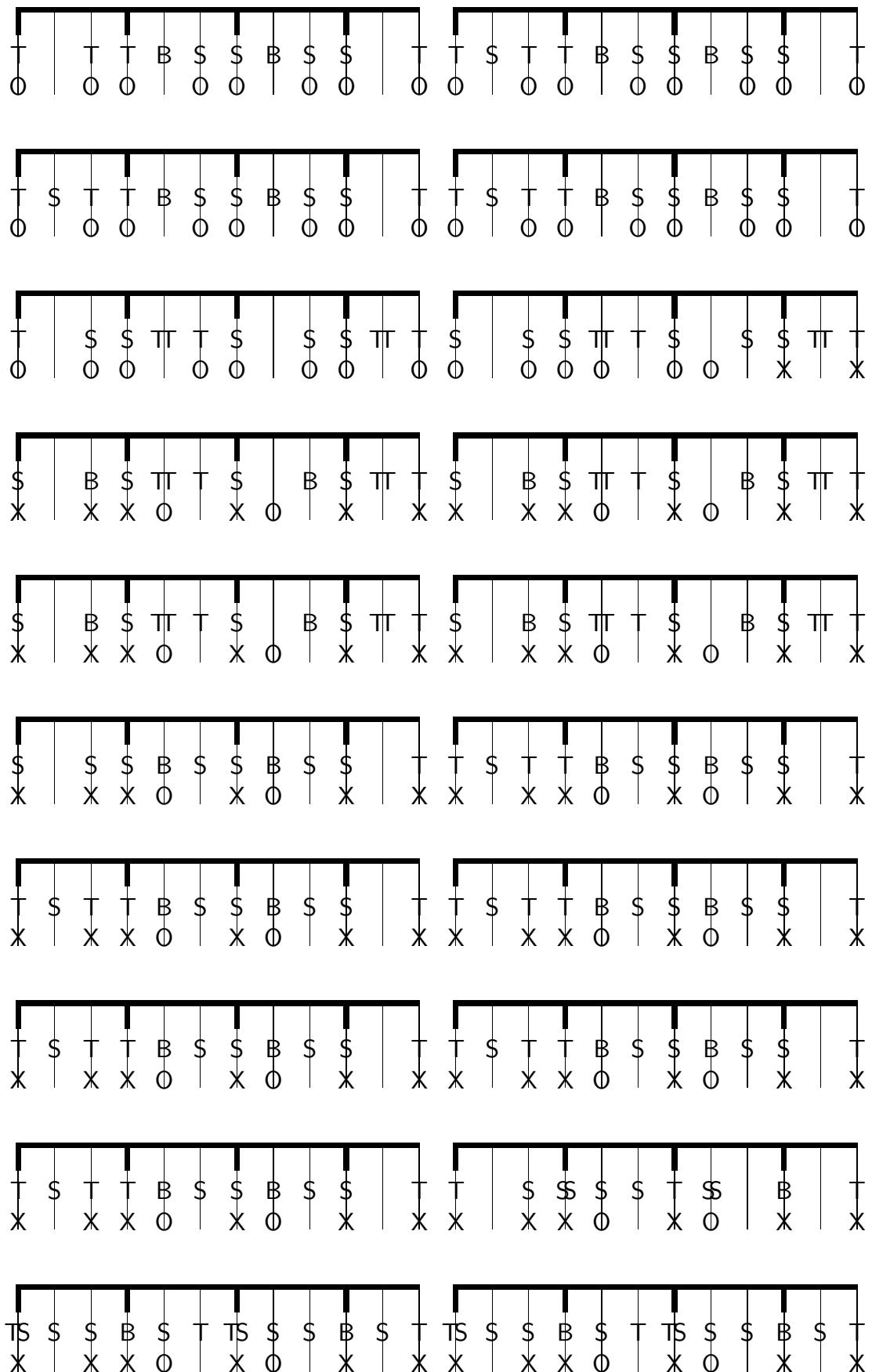
Dr. Rainer Polak studied social anthropology, African linguistics, Bambara language, and History of Africa from 1989 to 1996 at Bayreuth University (Germany), and jenbe music performance from 1991 until today in Bamako (Mali). All of his studies and work in Bamako were accomplished with the help of the musically outstanding, yet rather locally and traditionally minded drummers whose playing is presented in this book and the corresponding CD. Polak has worked as a professional jenbe player in Bamako for one year in 1997/98, performing at well over a hundred traditional weddings, spirit possession dances and other celebrations on the basis of being hired by the late Jaraba Jakite, most of the times, and occasionally by the late Yamadu Dunbia, by Jeli Madi Kuyate, and by Drissa Kone. The ethnomusicological dissertation and book he wrote on that experience won the academic prize of the German African Studies Association in 2003/04. Polak ranks as an outstanding jenbe soloist in Germany. As a teacher he has specialized in giving focussed classes on micro-timing, and master-classes in jenbe solo performance.

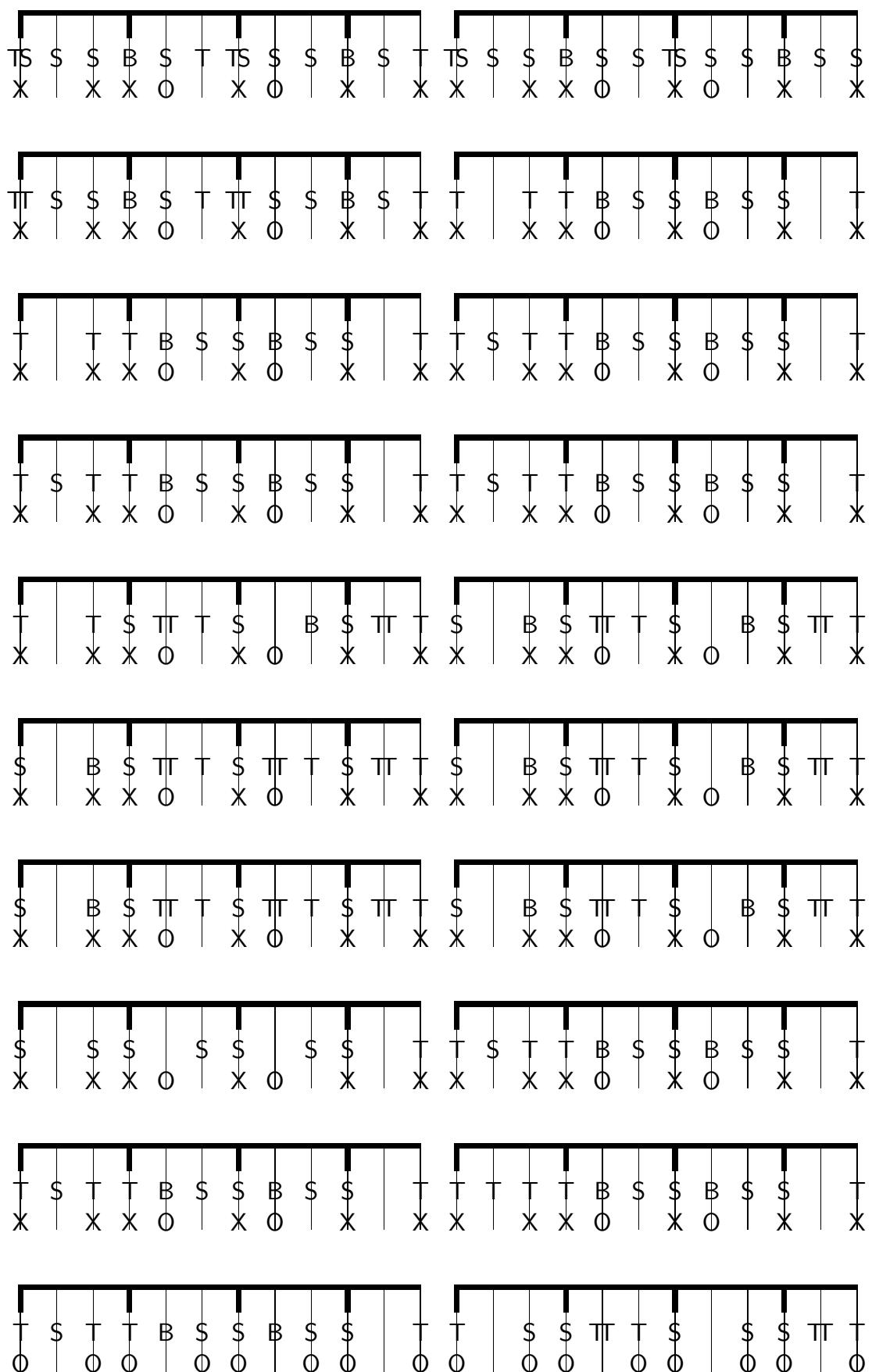
## Intro

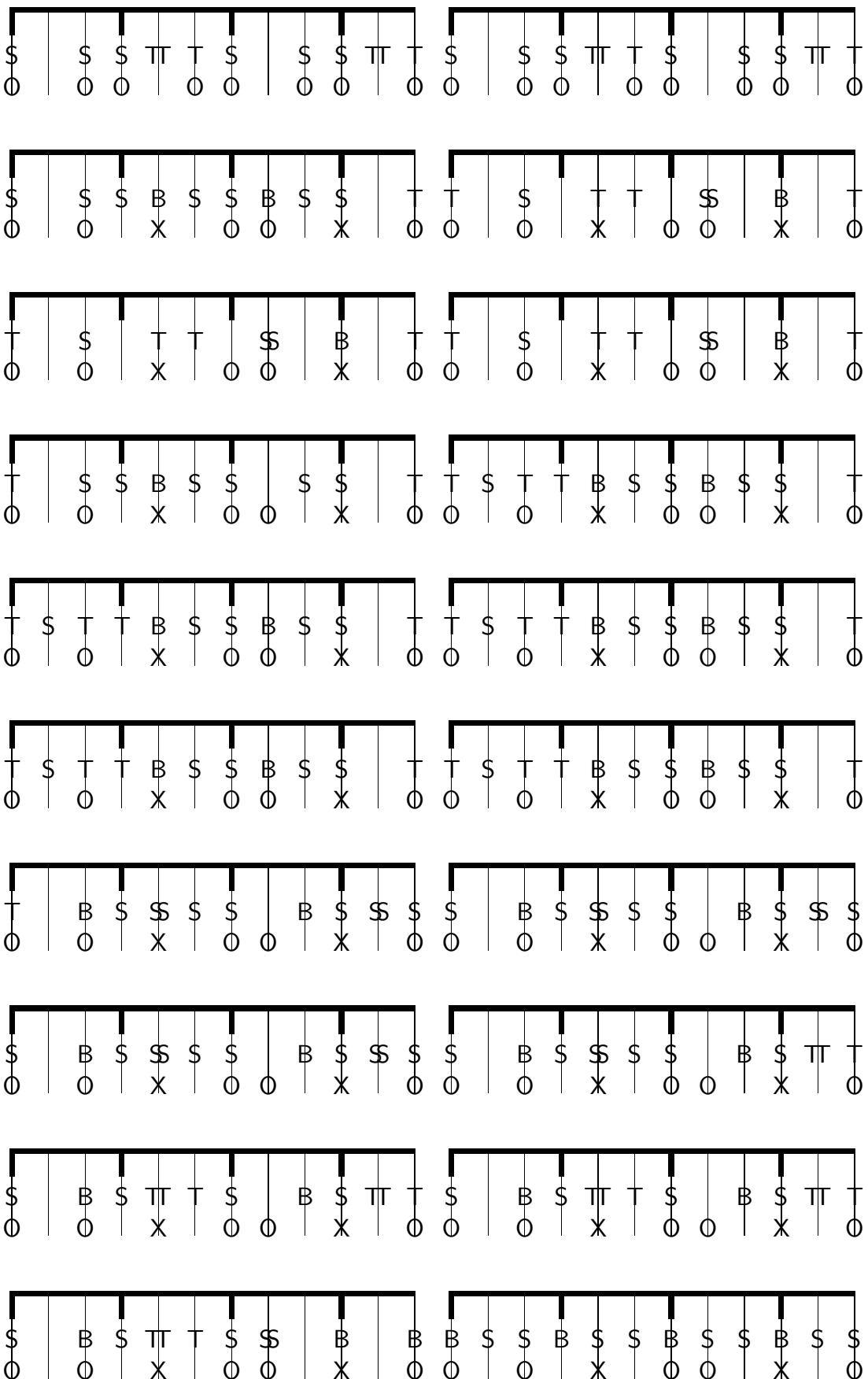


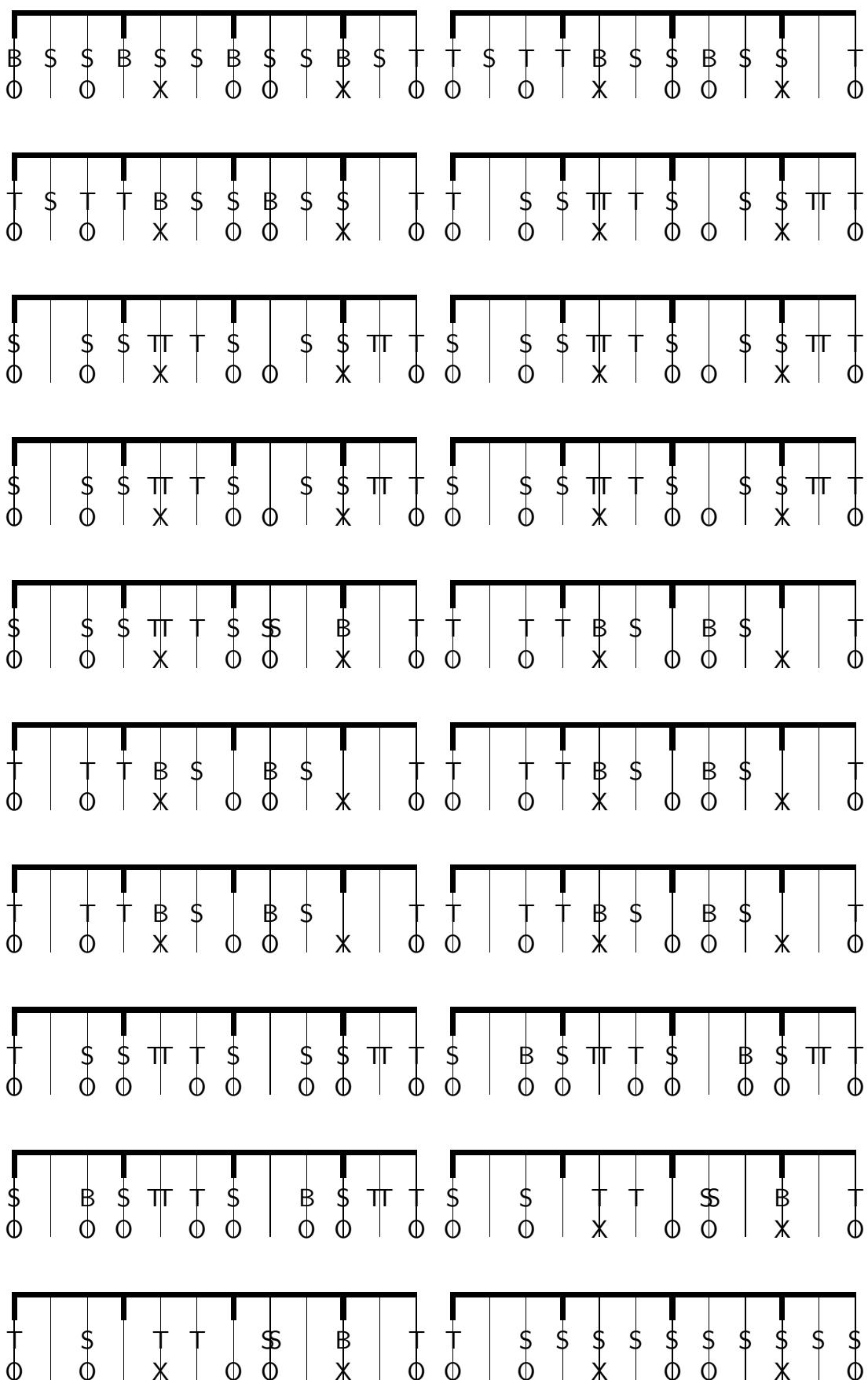
## Fula

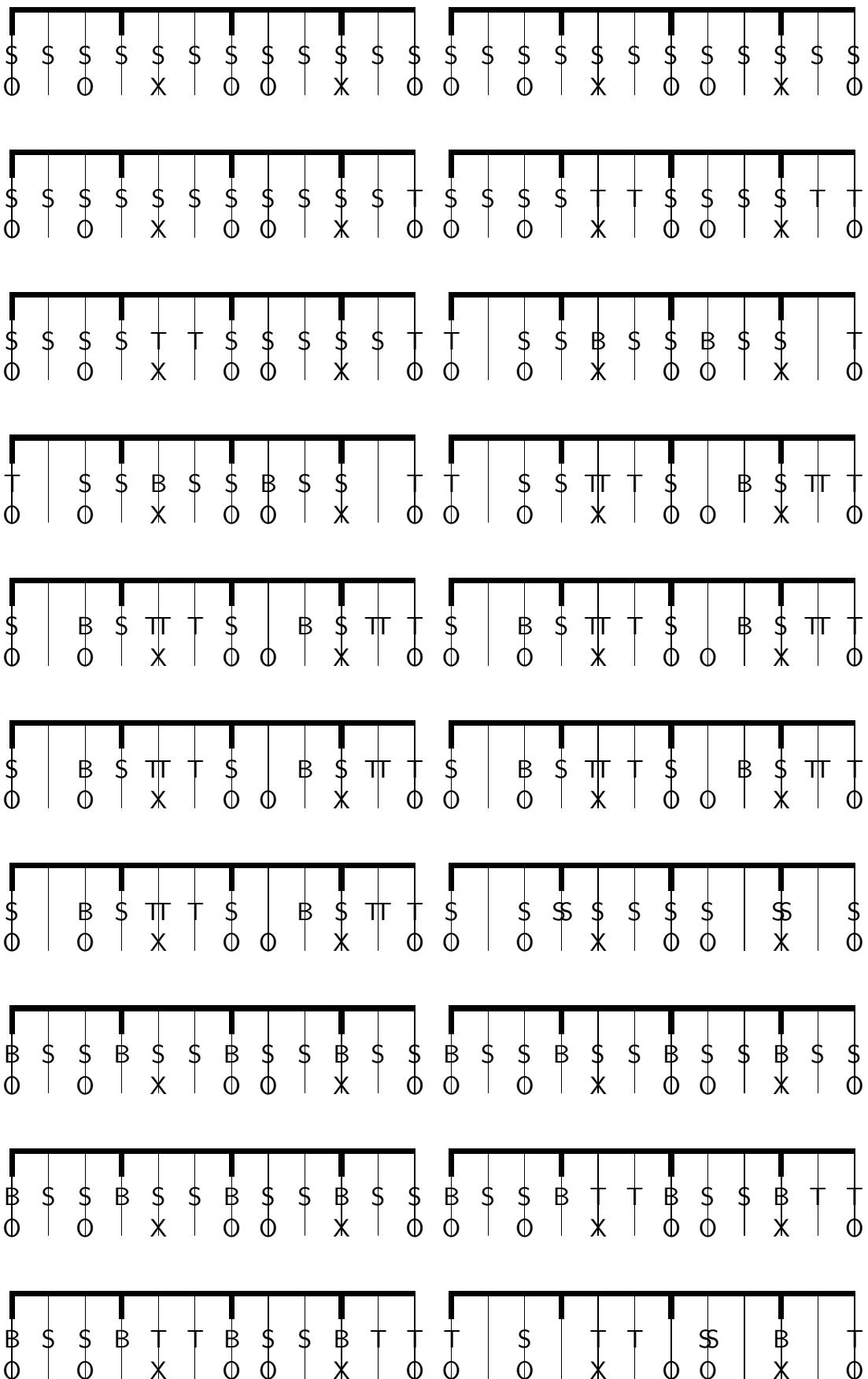


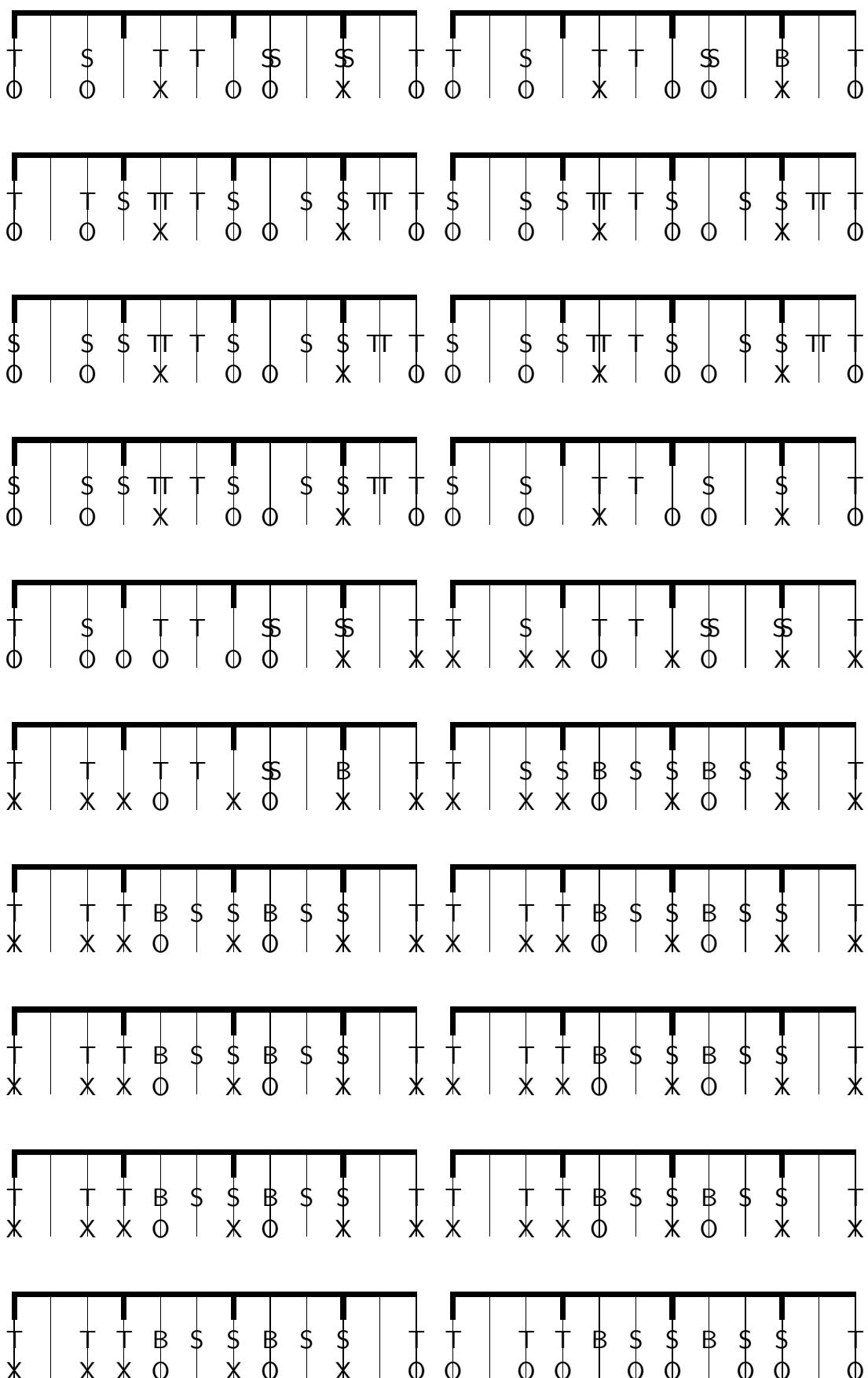


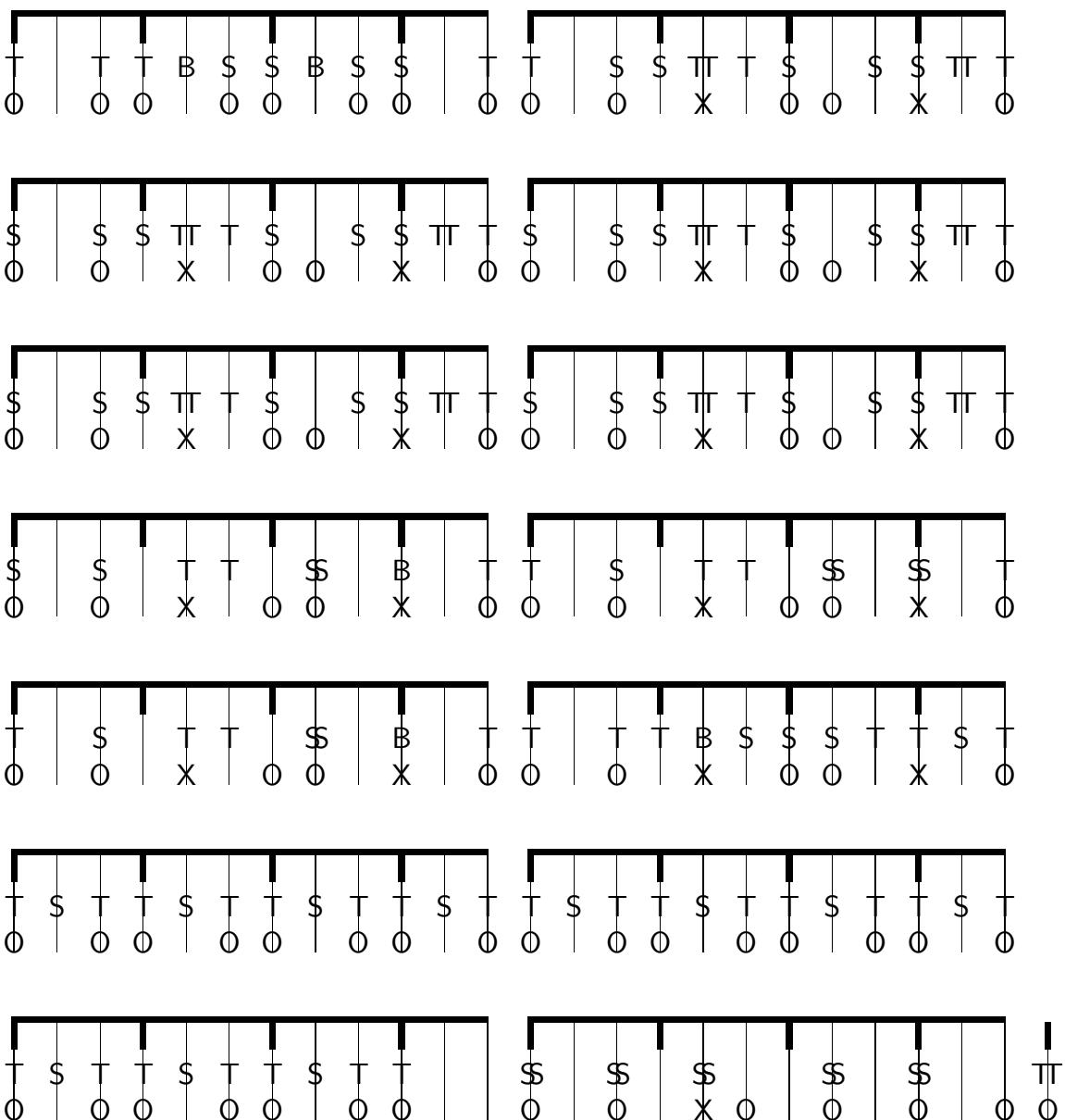




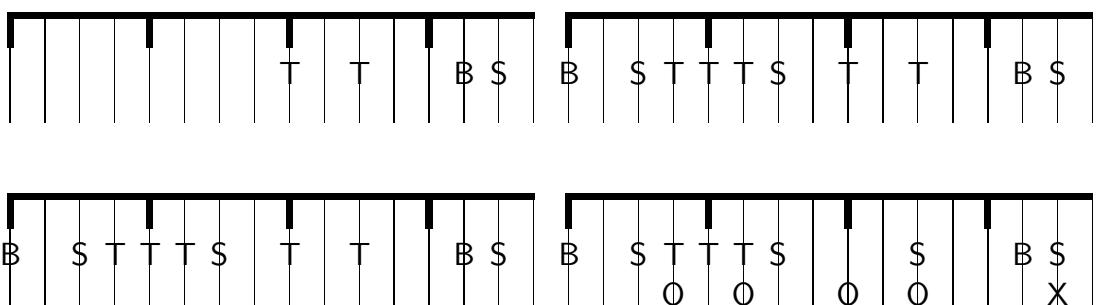


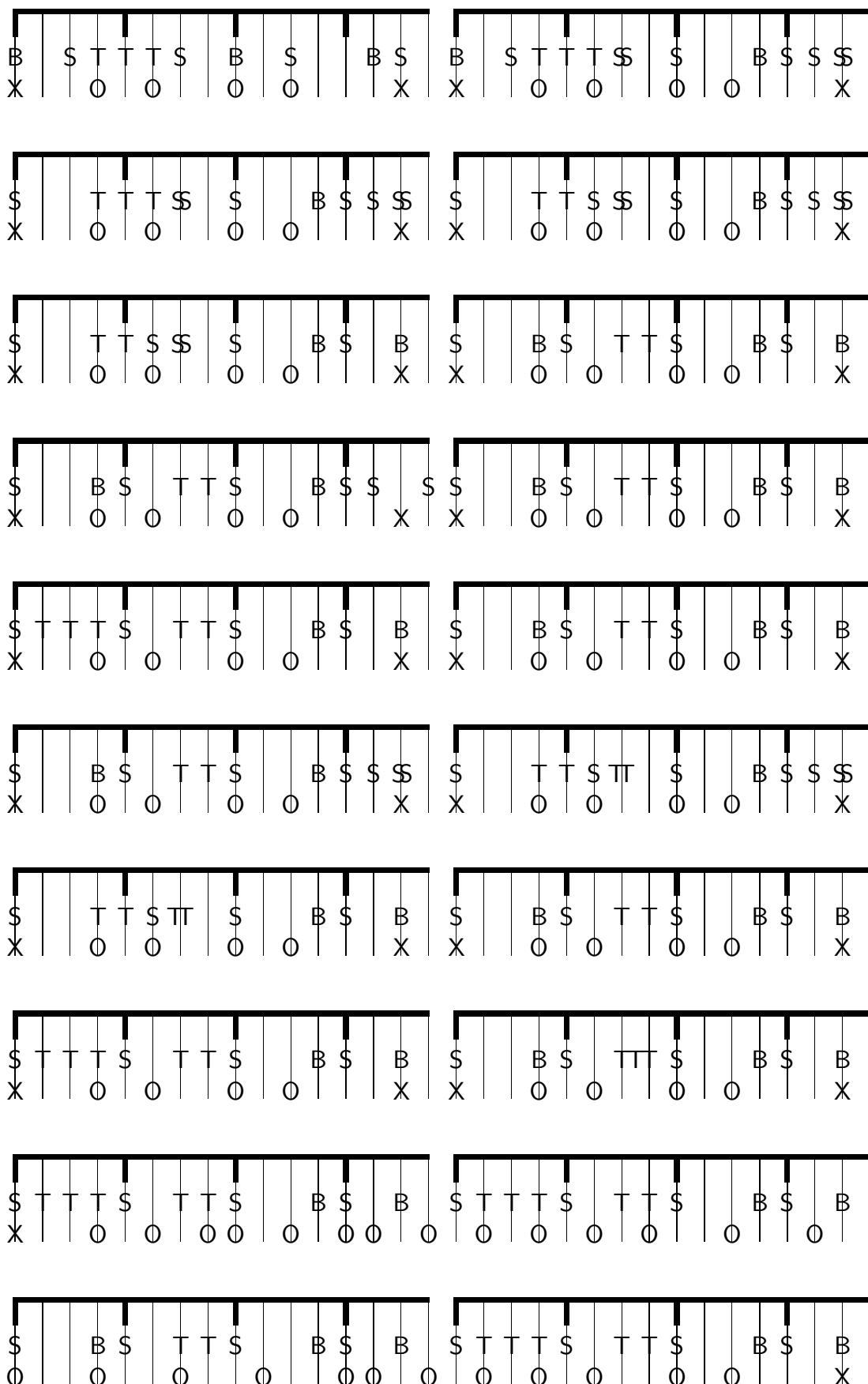


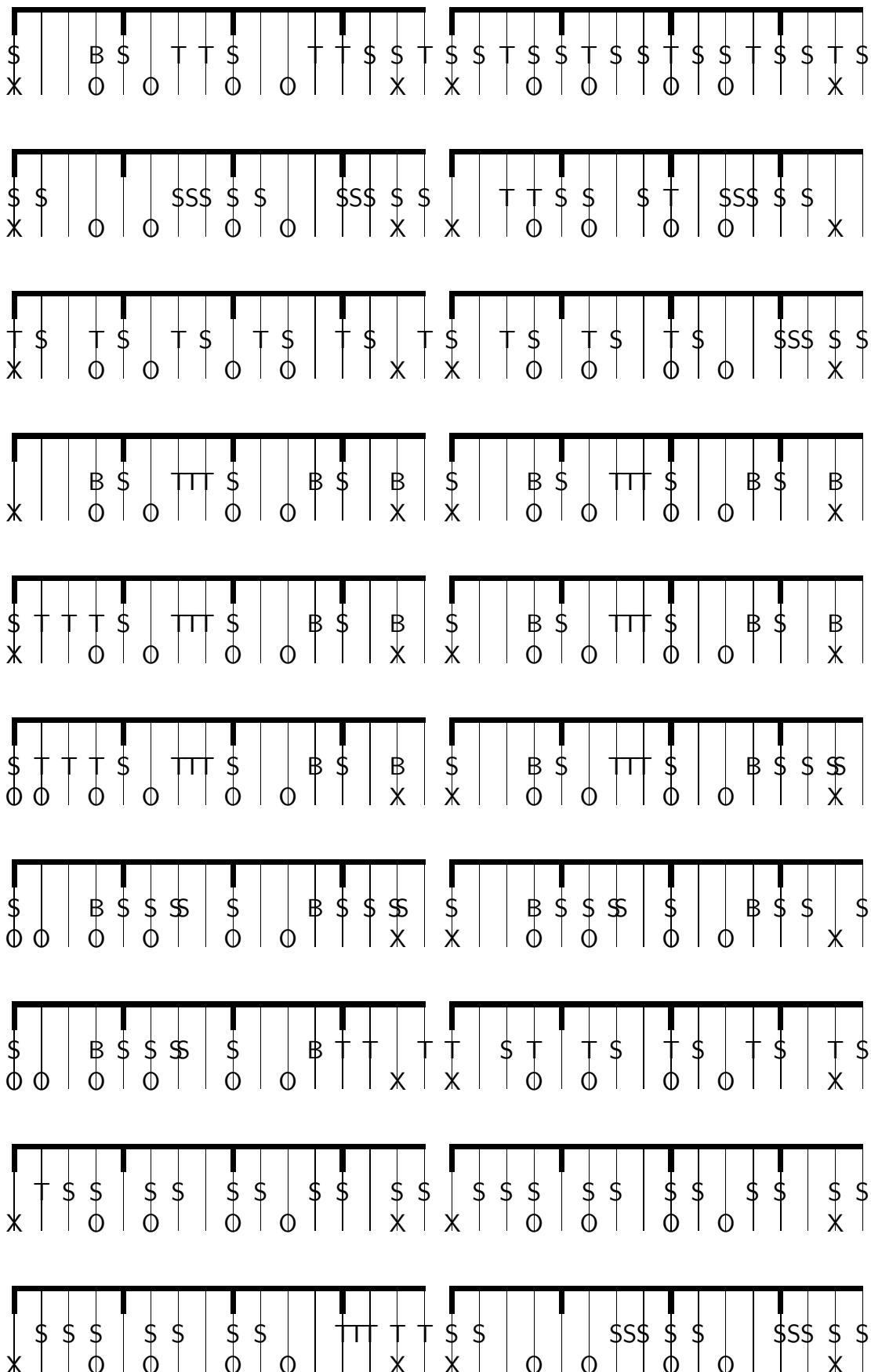


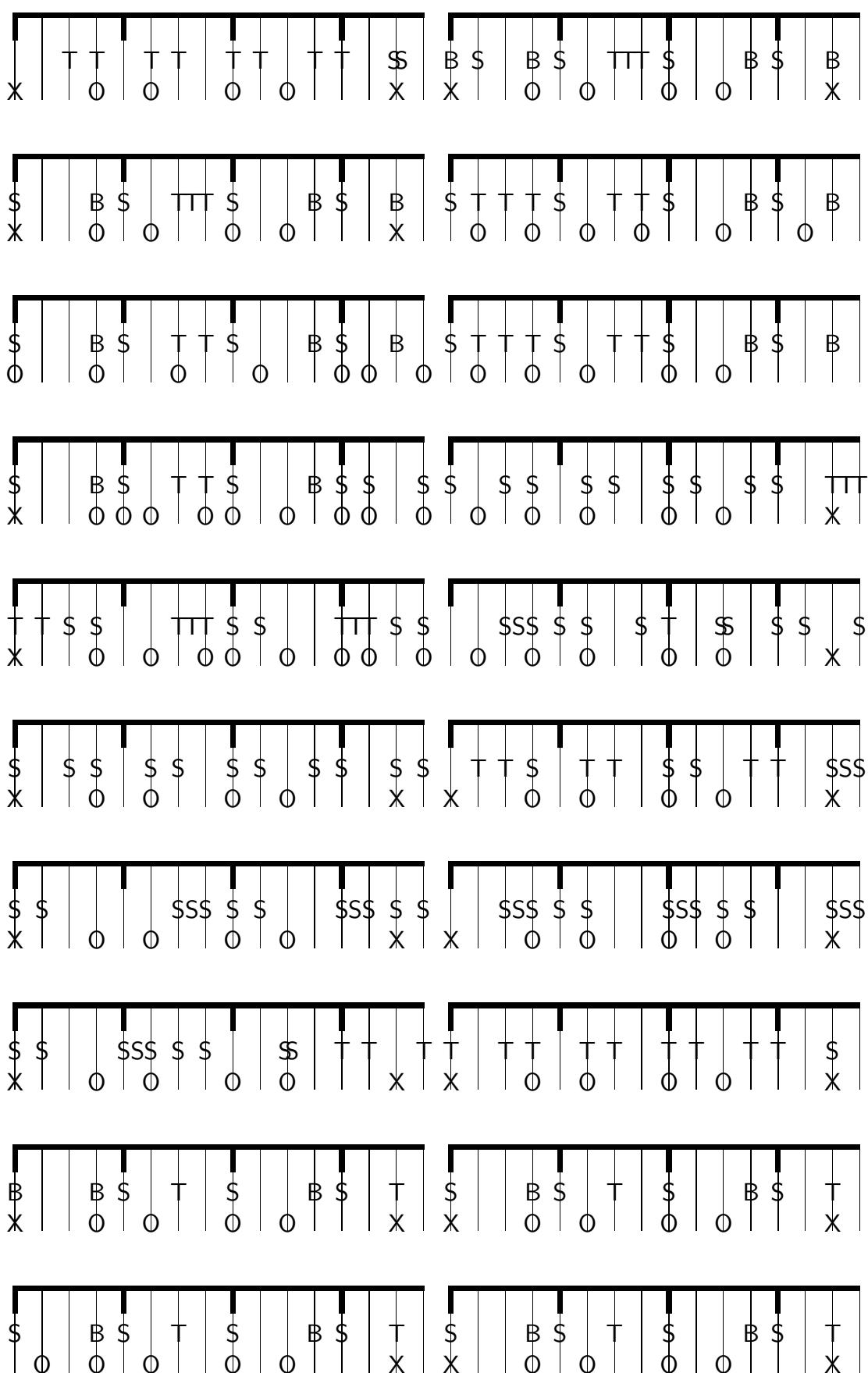


## Madan



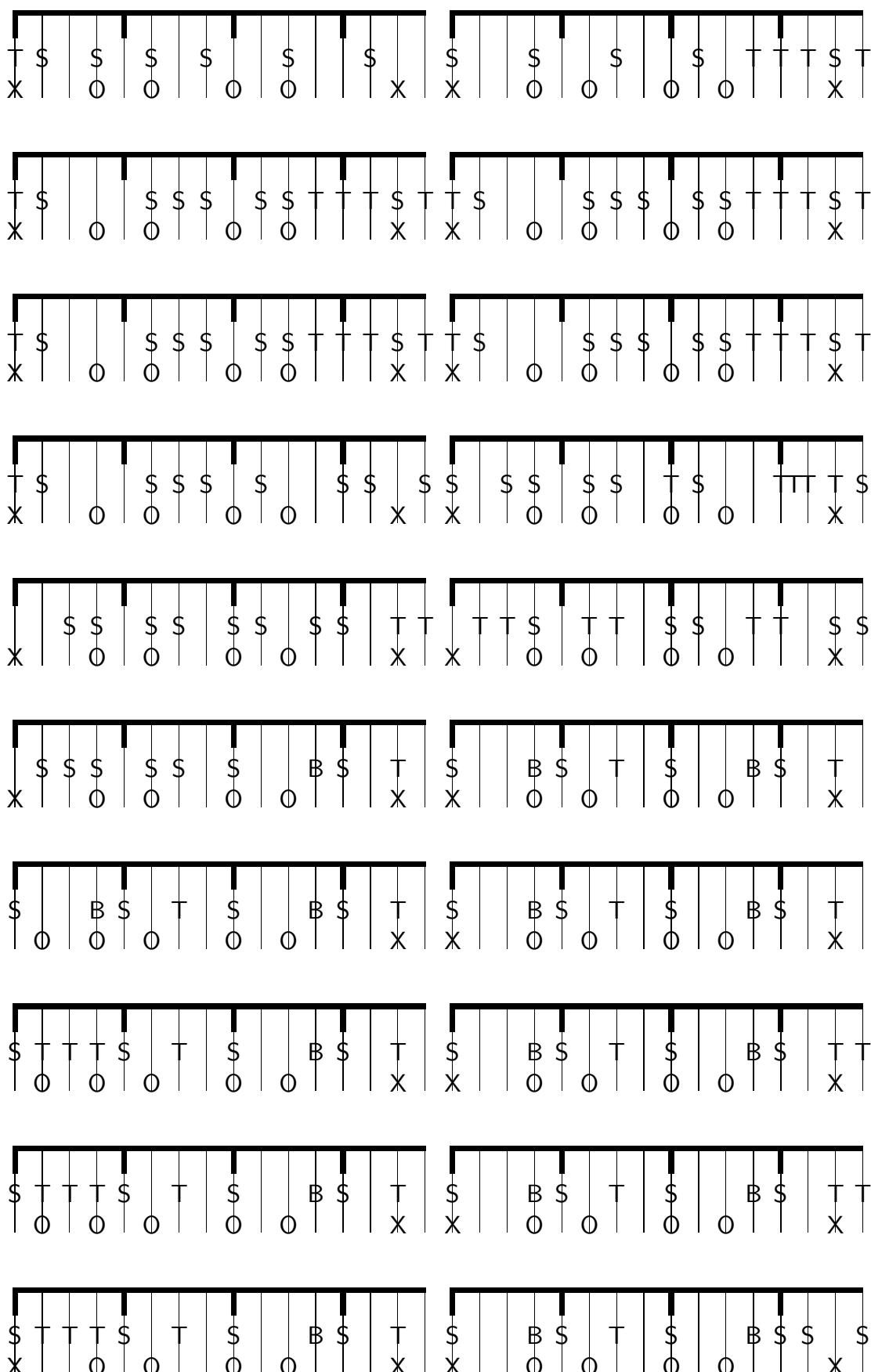


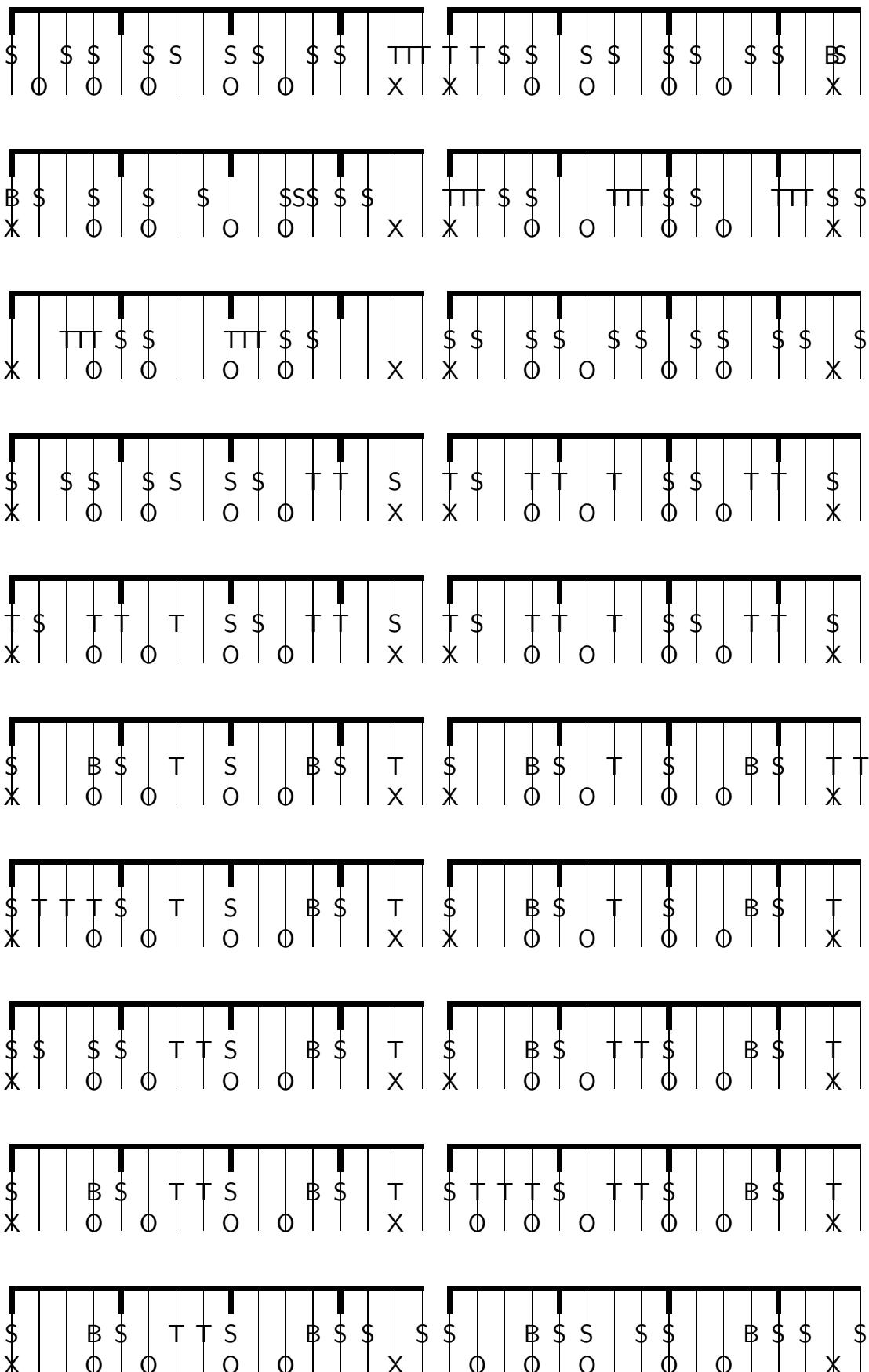




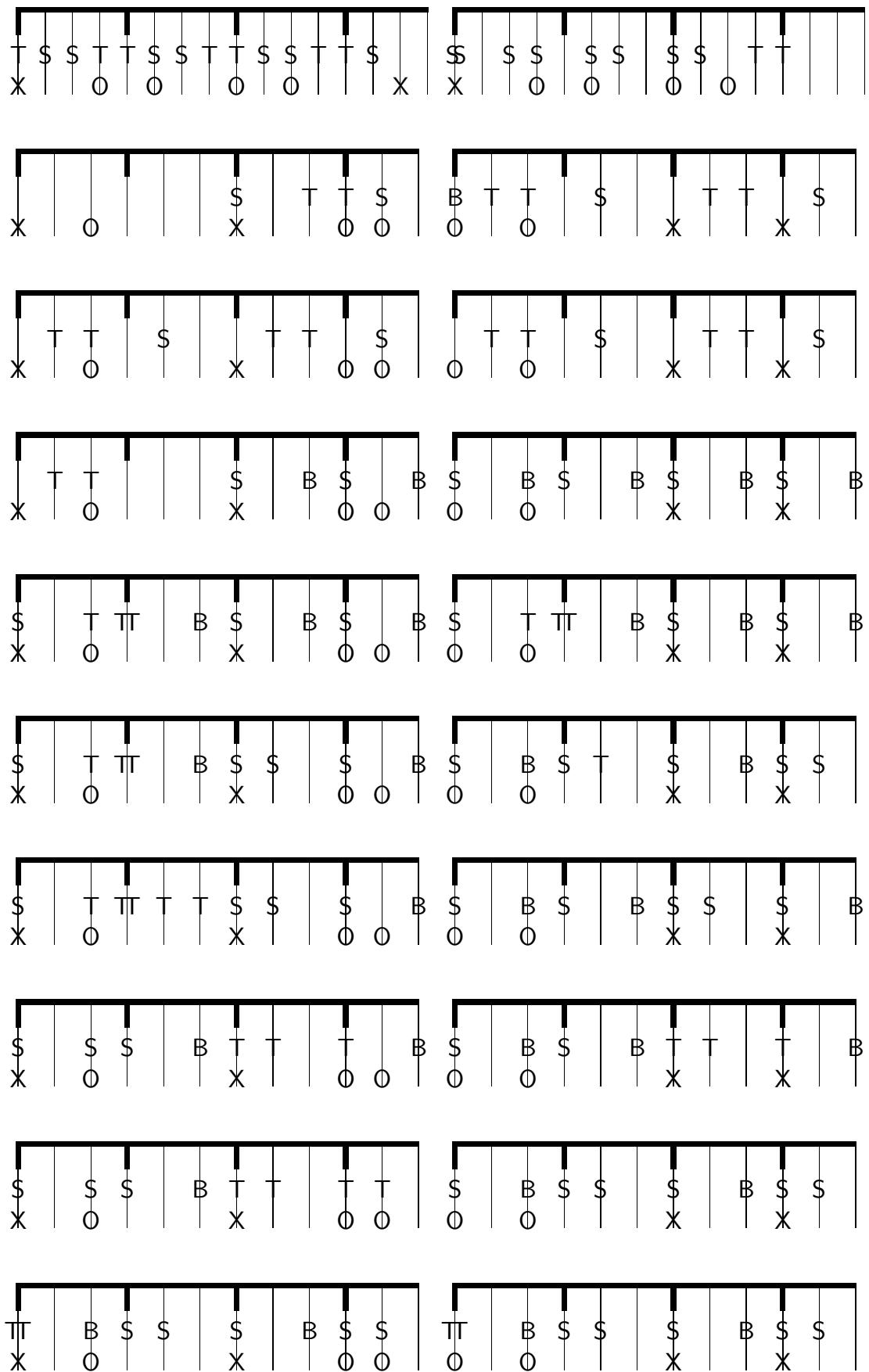
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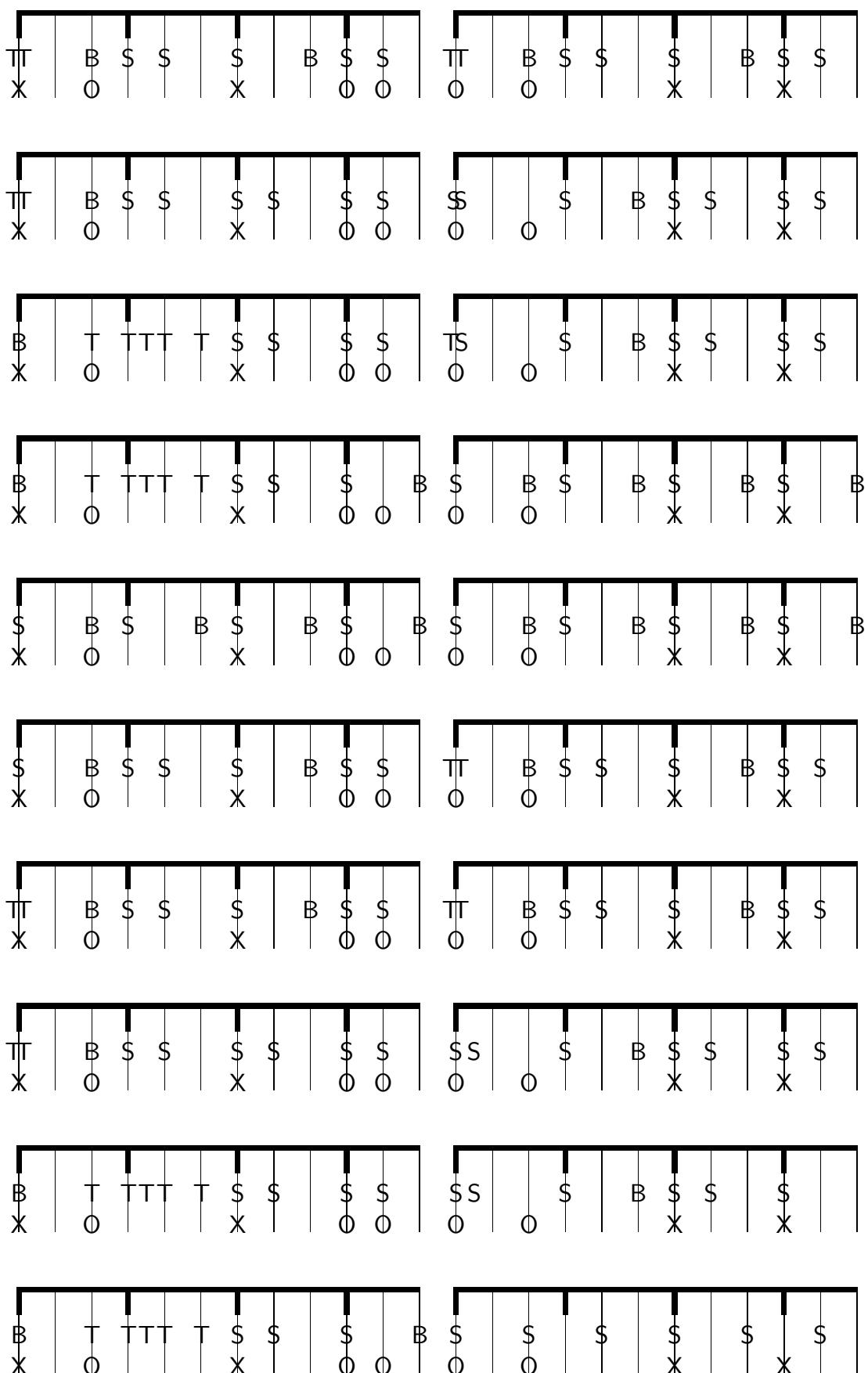
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- Diagram 2: \$ O B S O T S O B S T T X
- Diagram 3: \$ O B S O T O S O B S T T
- Diagram 4: \$ O B S O T T S O B S T T
- Diagram 5: \$ O B S O T T S O B S T O
- Diagram 6: \$ O B S O T T S O B S B O
- Diagram 7: \$ X B S O T T S O B S T X
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- Diagram 10: \$ X B S O T T S O B S S X \$ \$

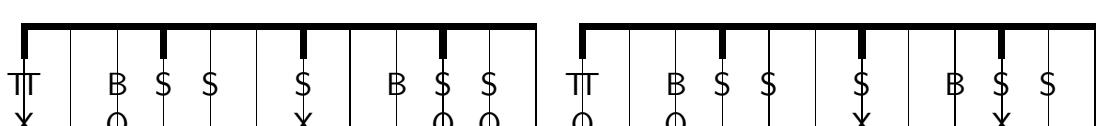
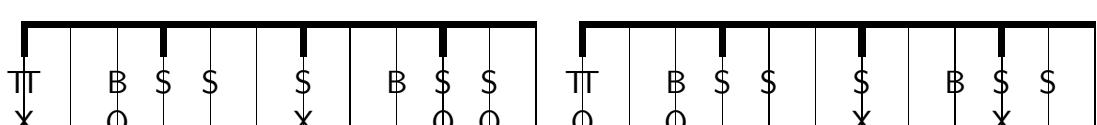
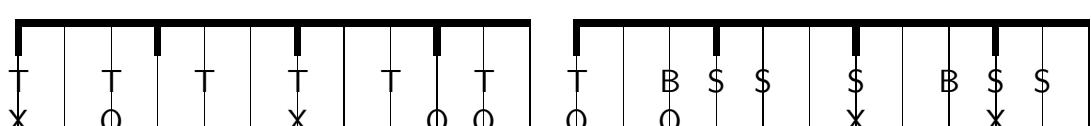
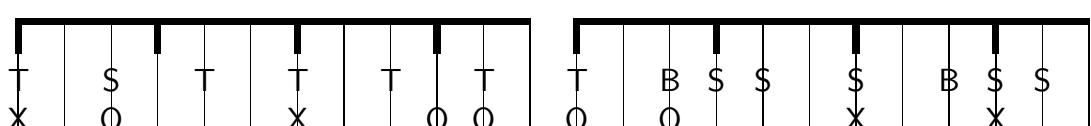
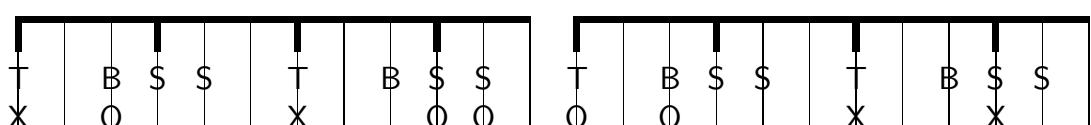
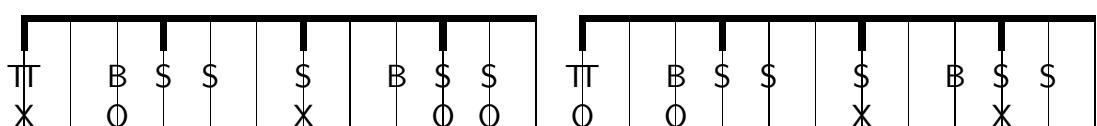
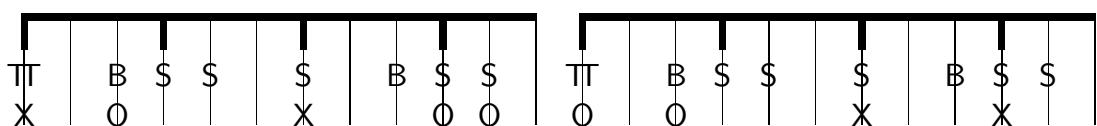
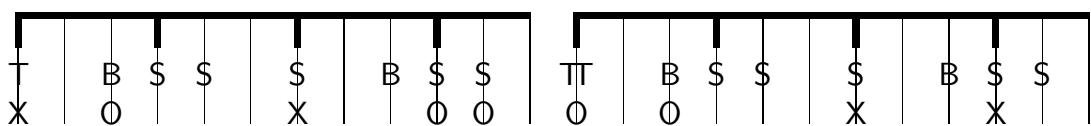
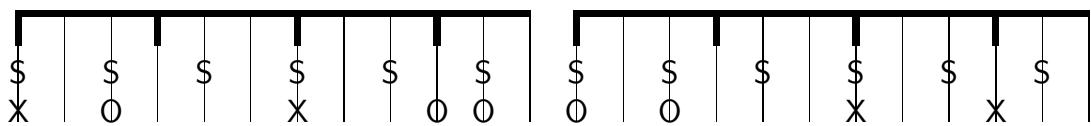
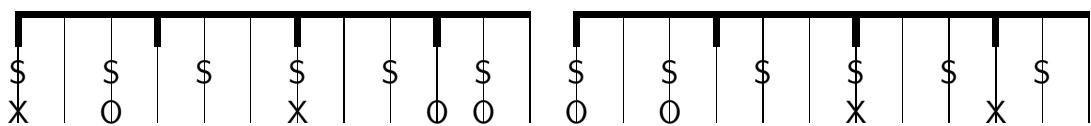


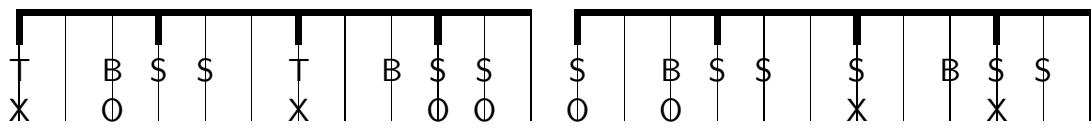
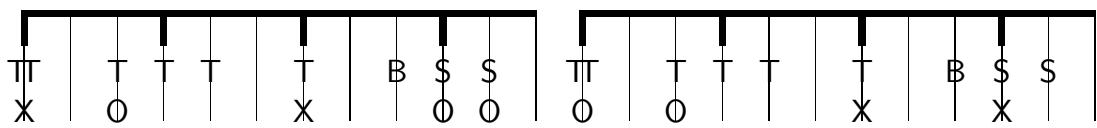
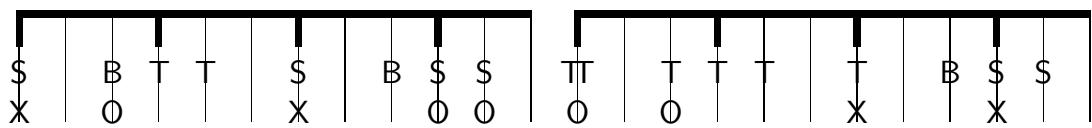
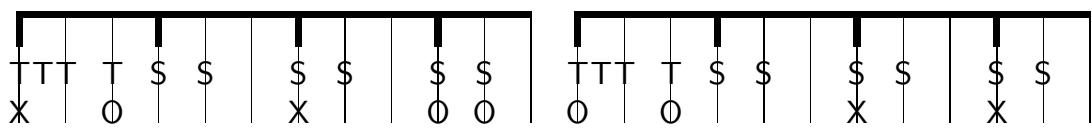
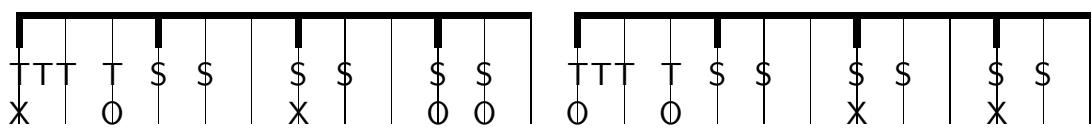
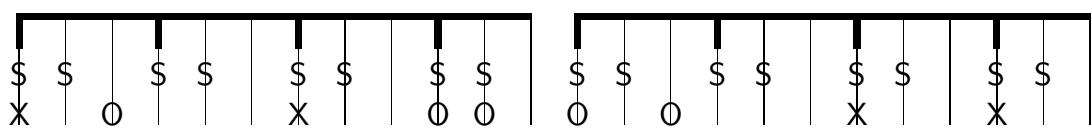
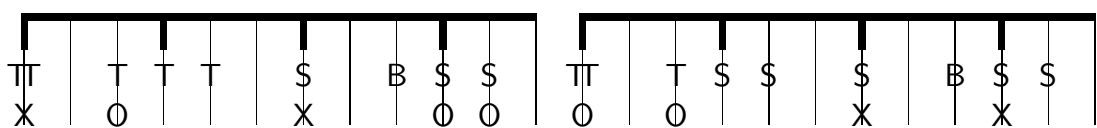
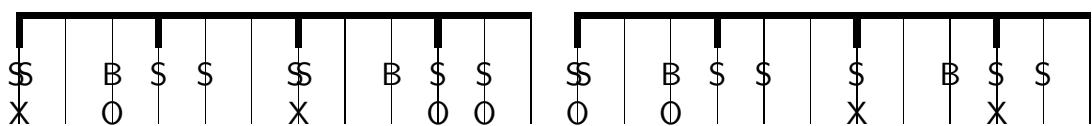
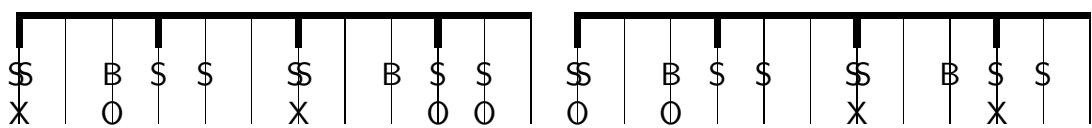
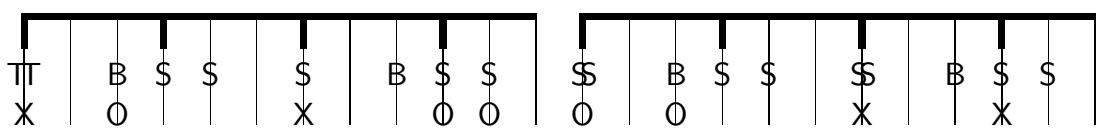


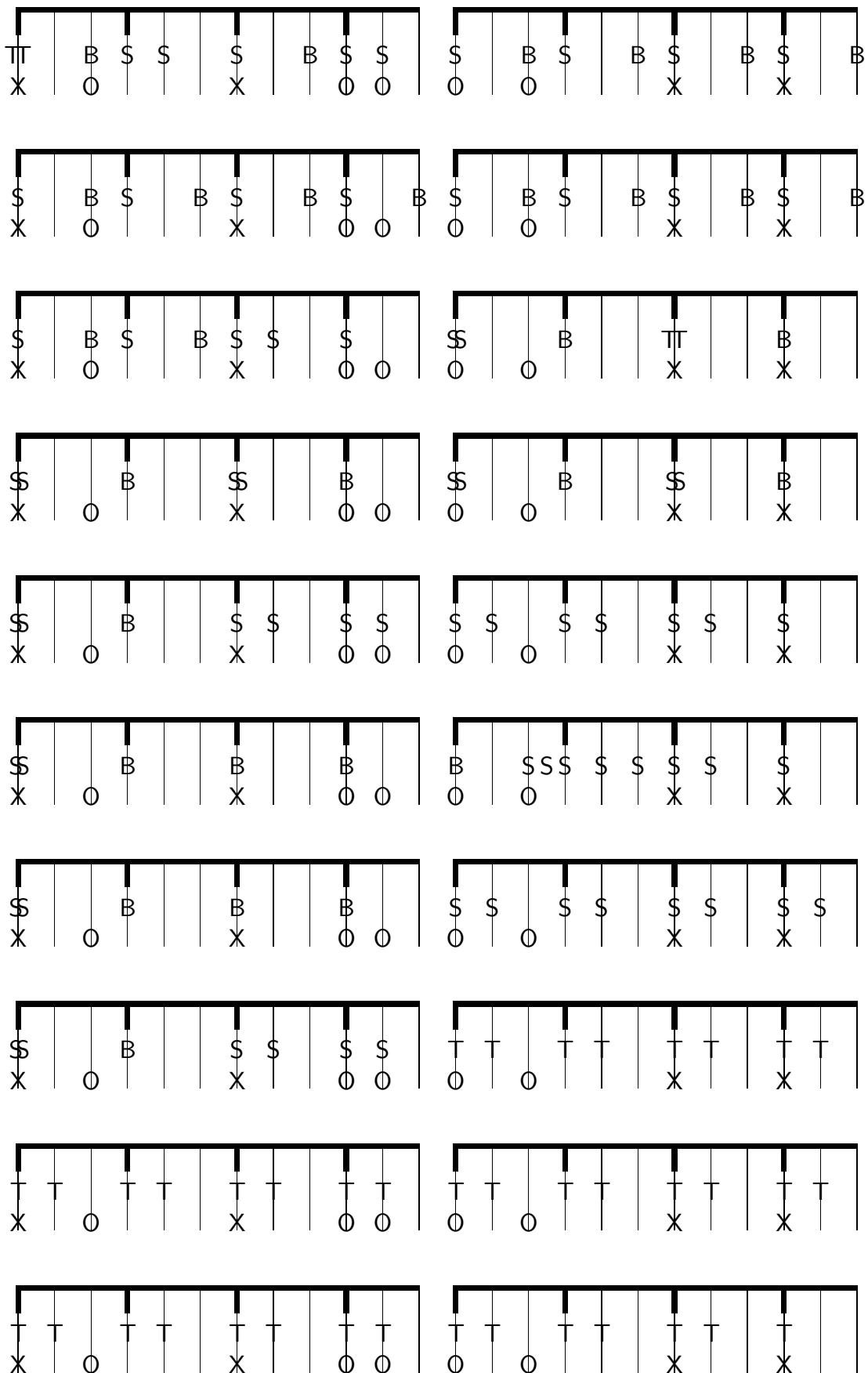


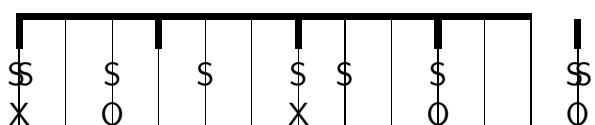




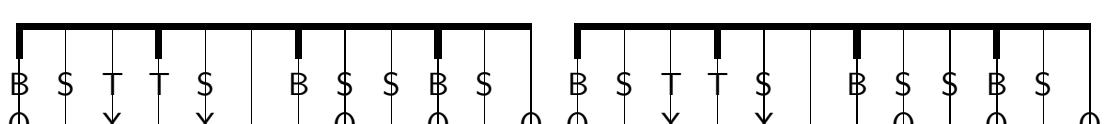
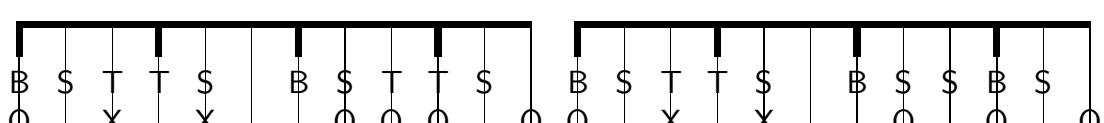
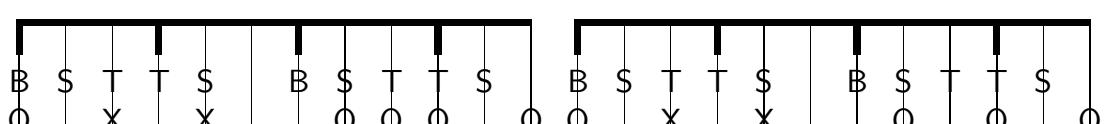
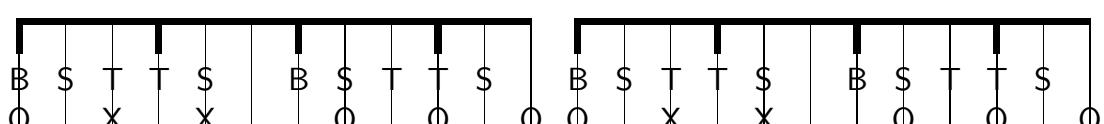
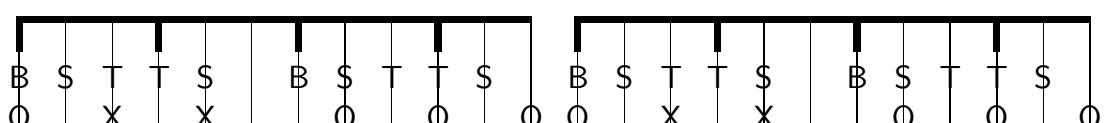
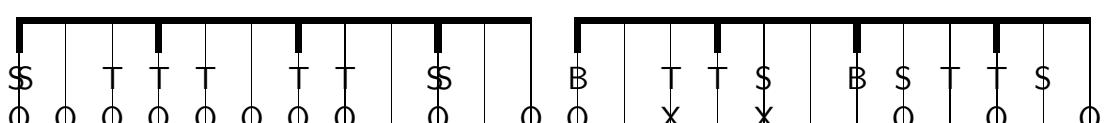
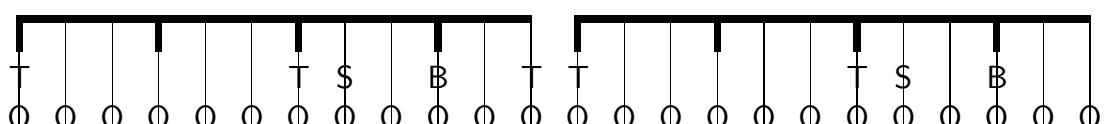
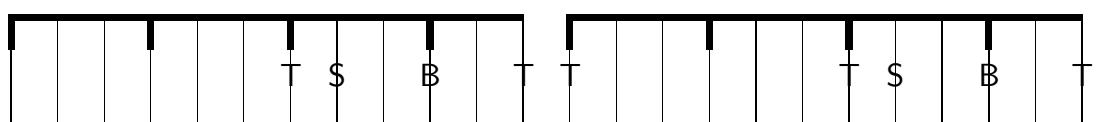


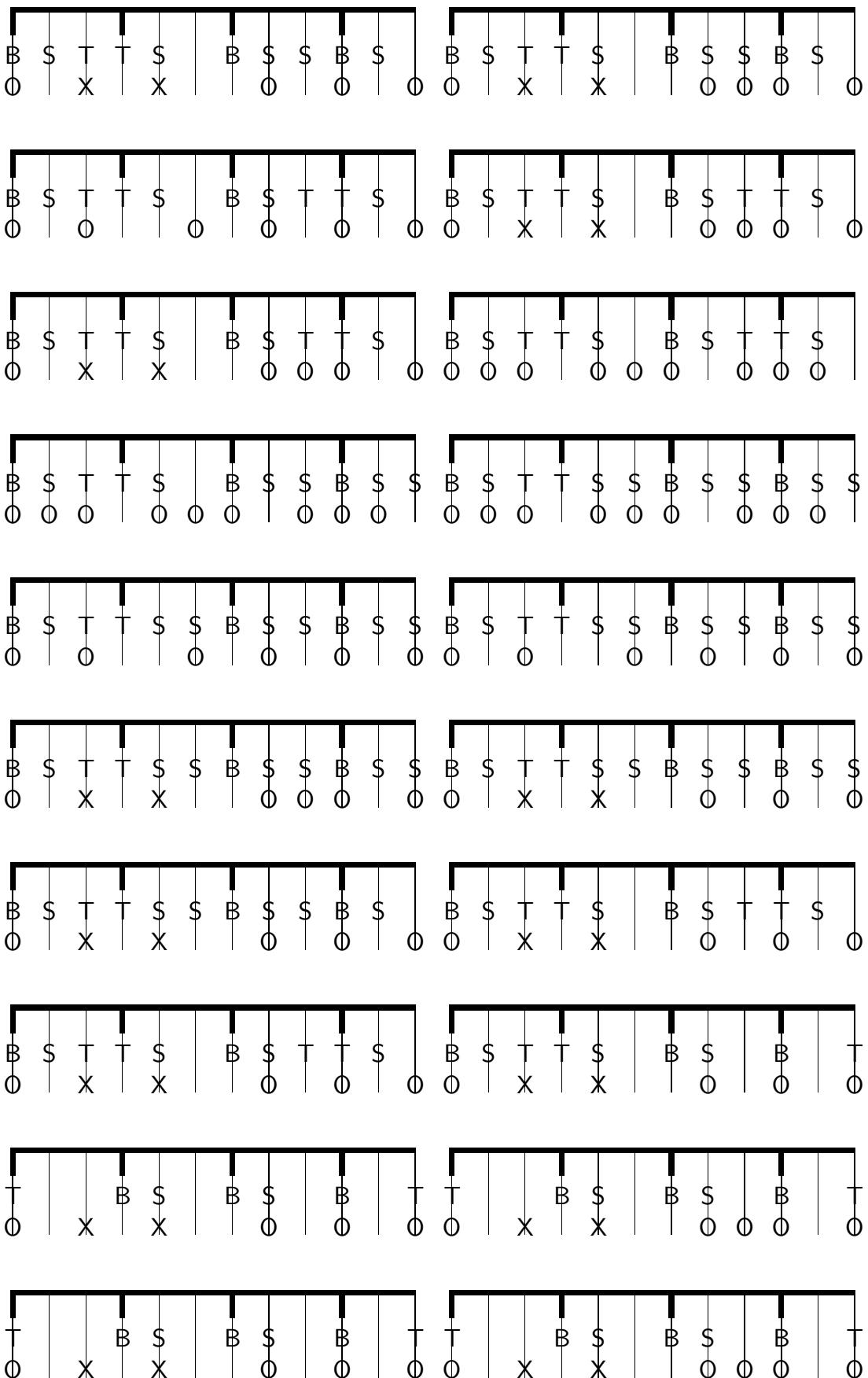


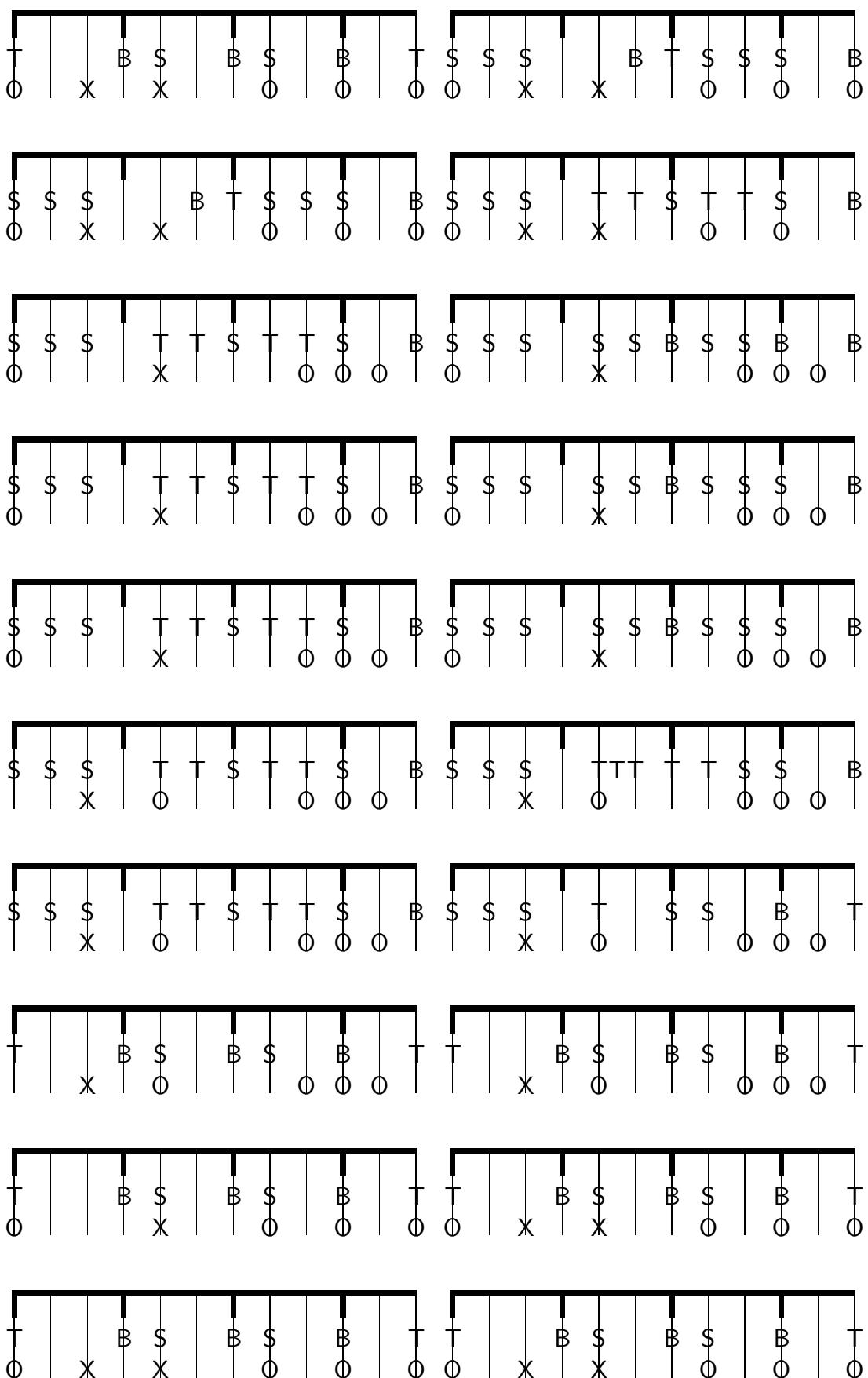




# Maraka

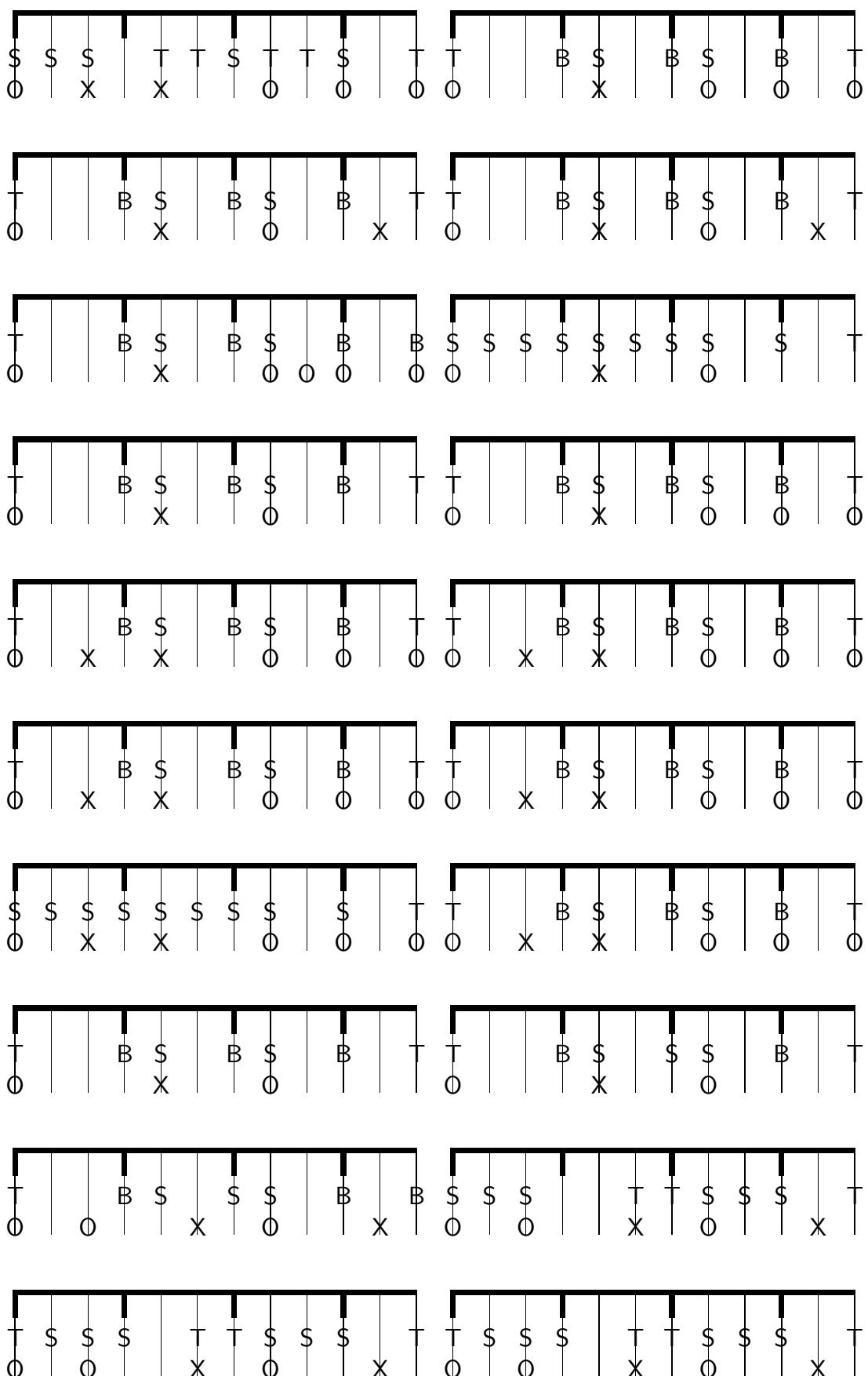


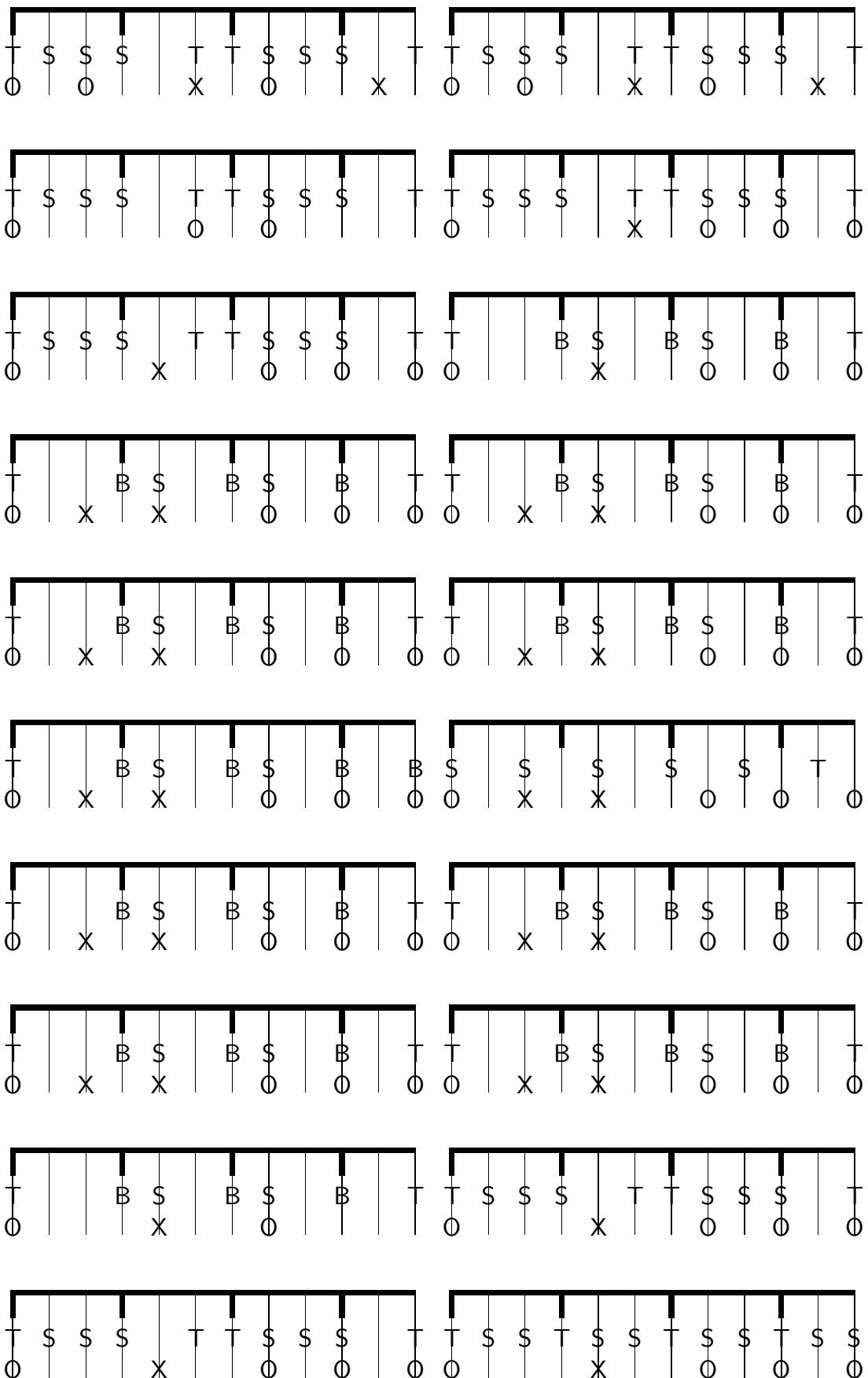


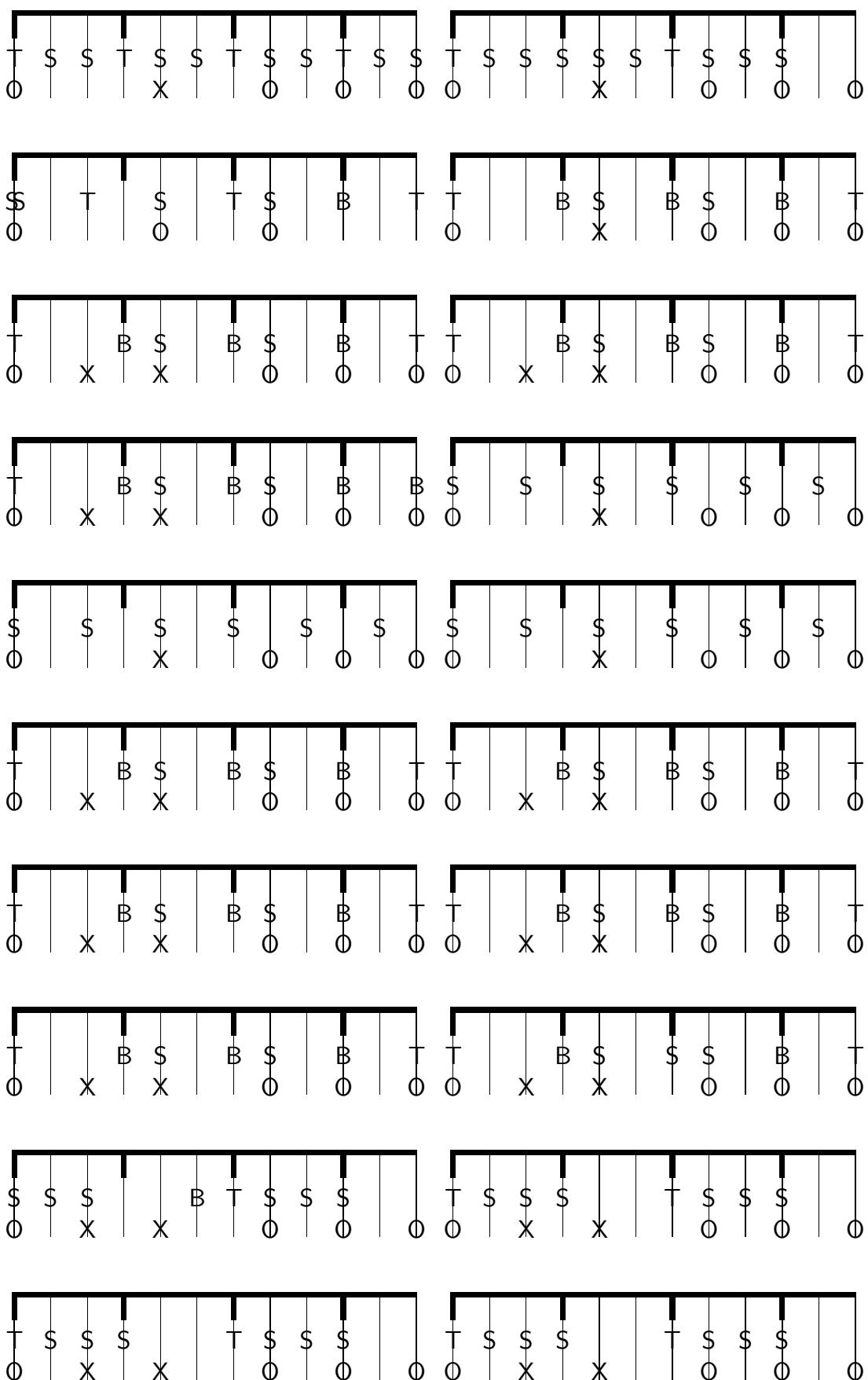


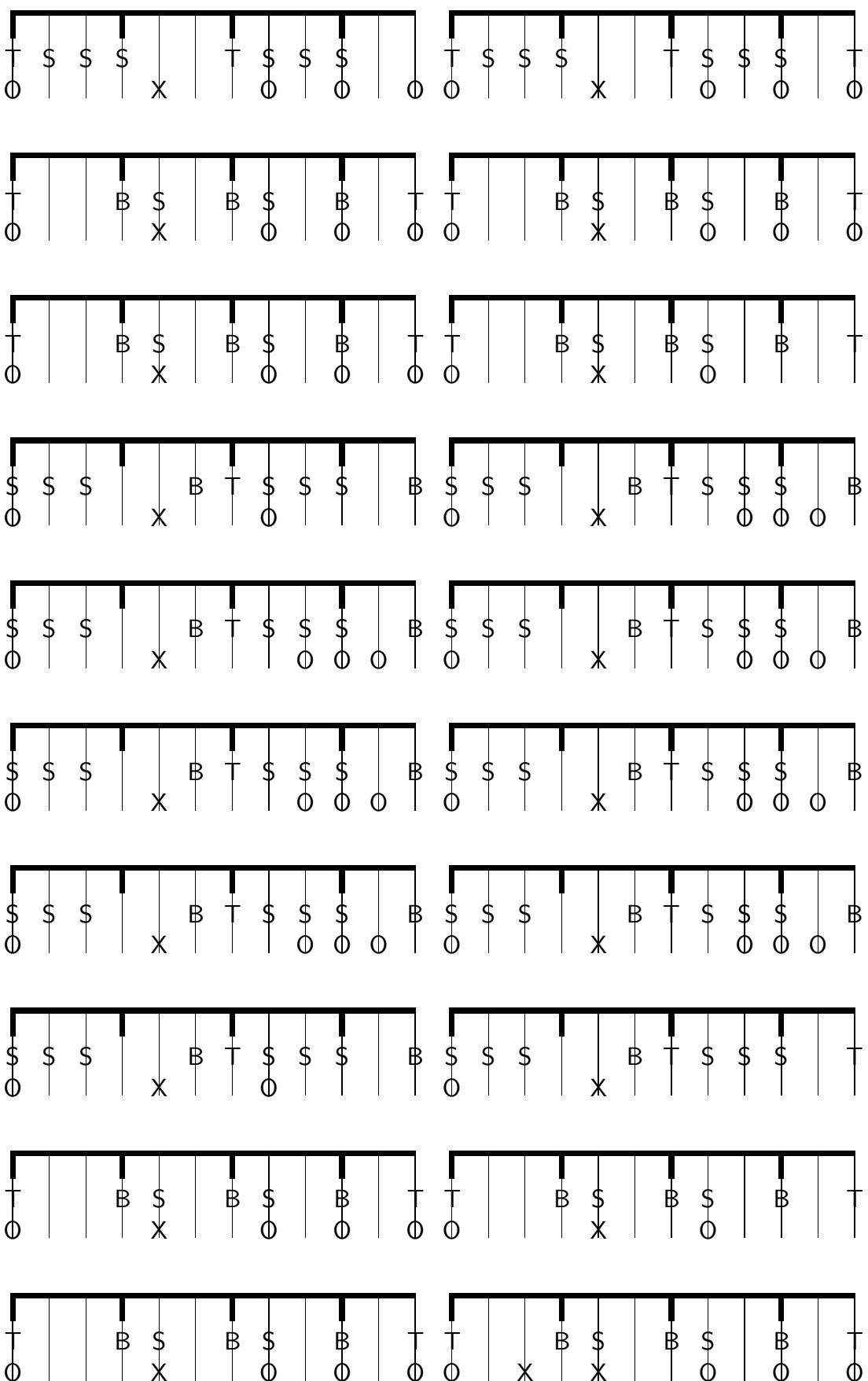
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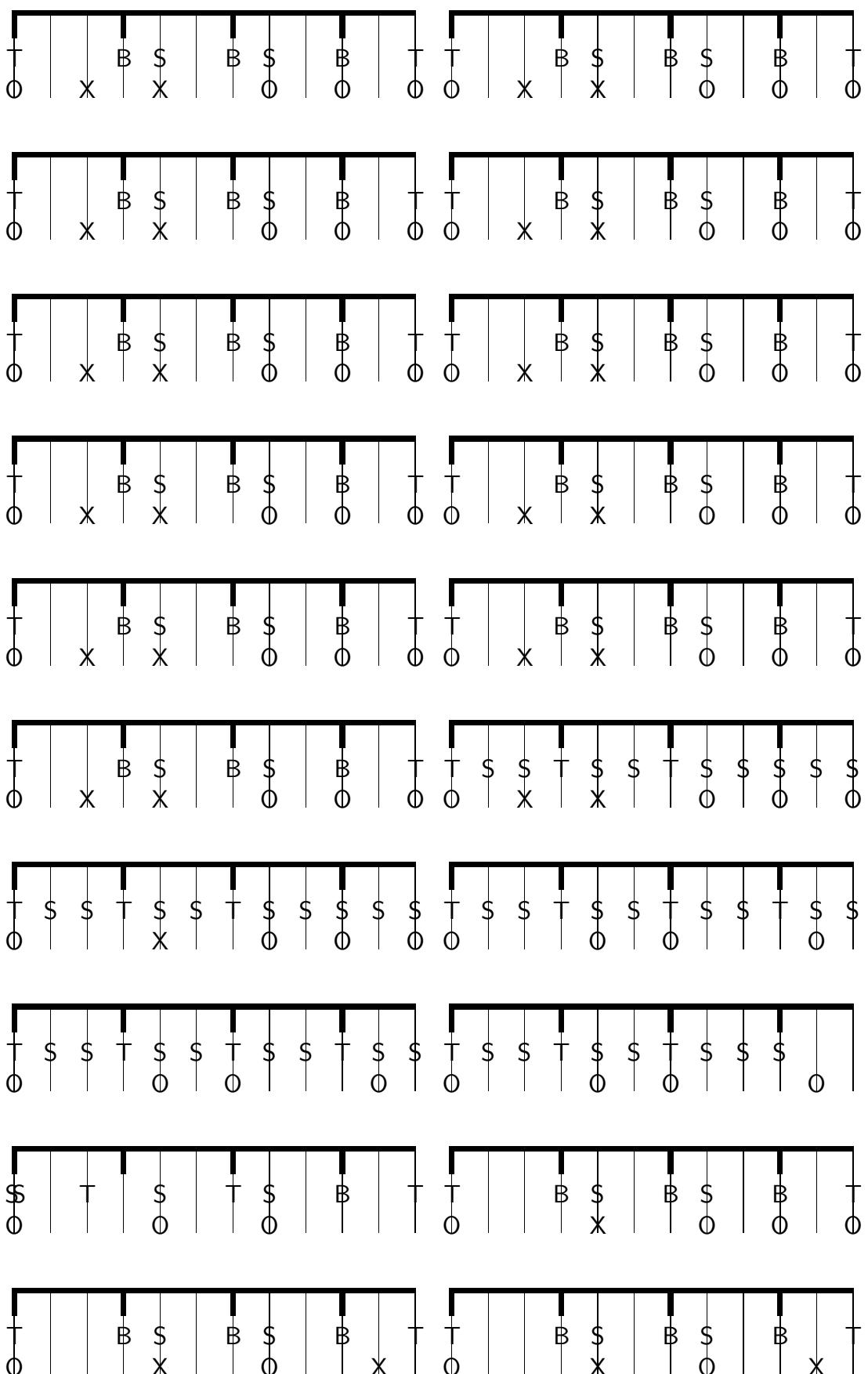
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- Row 4: S, S, S, S, X, X, O, B, O, O
- Row 5: T, X, B, S, X, B, O, B, O
- Row 6: S, S, T, X, X, B, S, O, O, B, O
- Row 7: S, S, T, X, X, B, S, O, O, B, O
- Row 8: S, S, T, X, X, B, S, O, O, B, O
- Row 9: T, X, S, S, S, X, B, O, B, O
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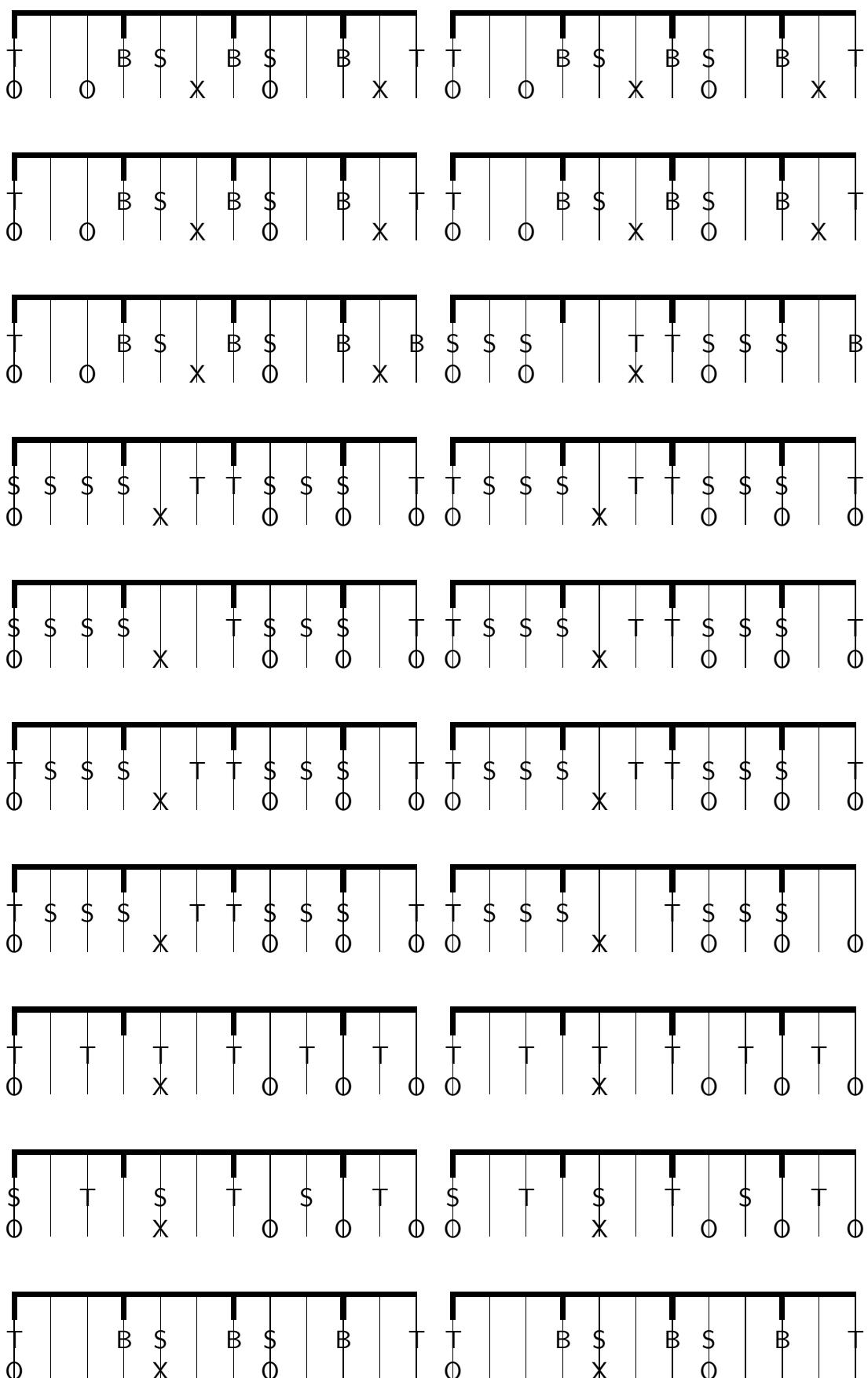


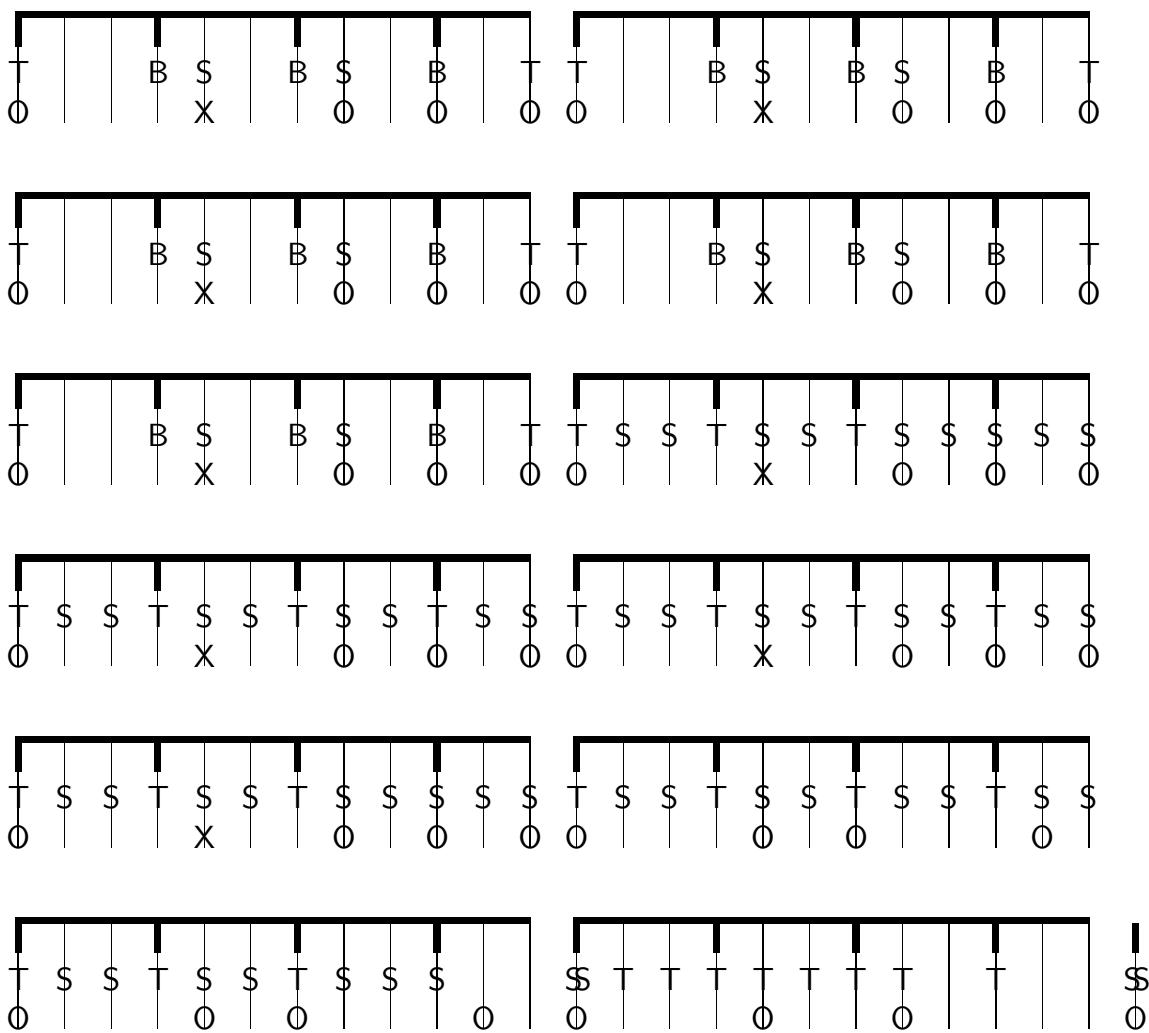




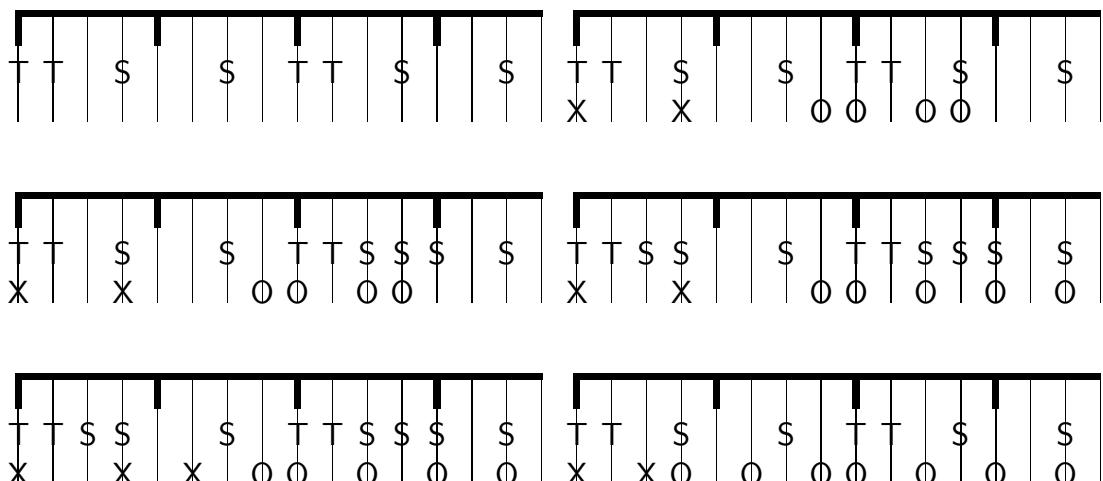


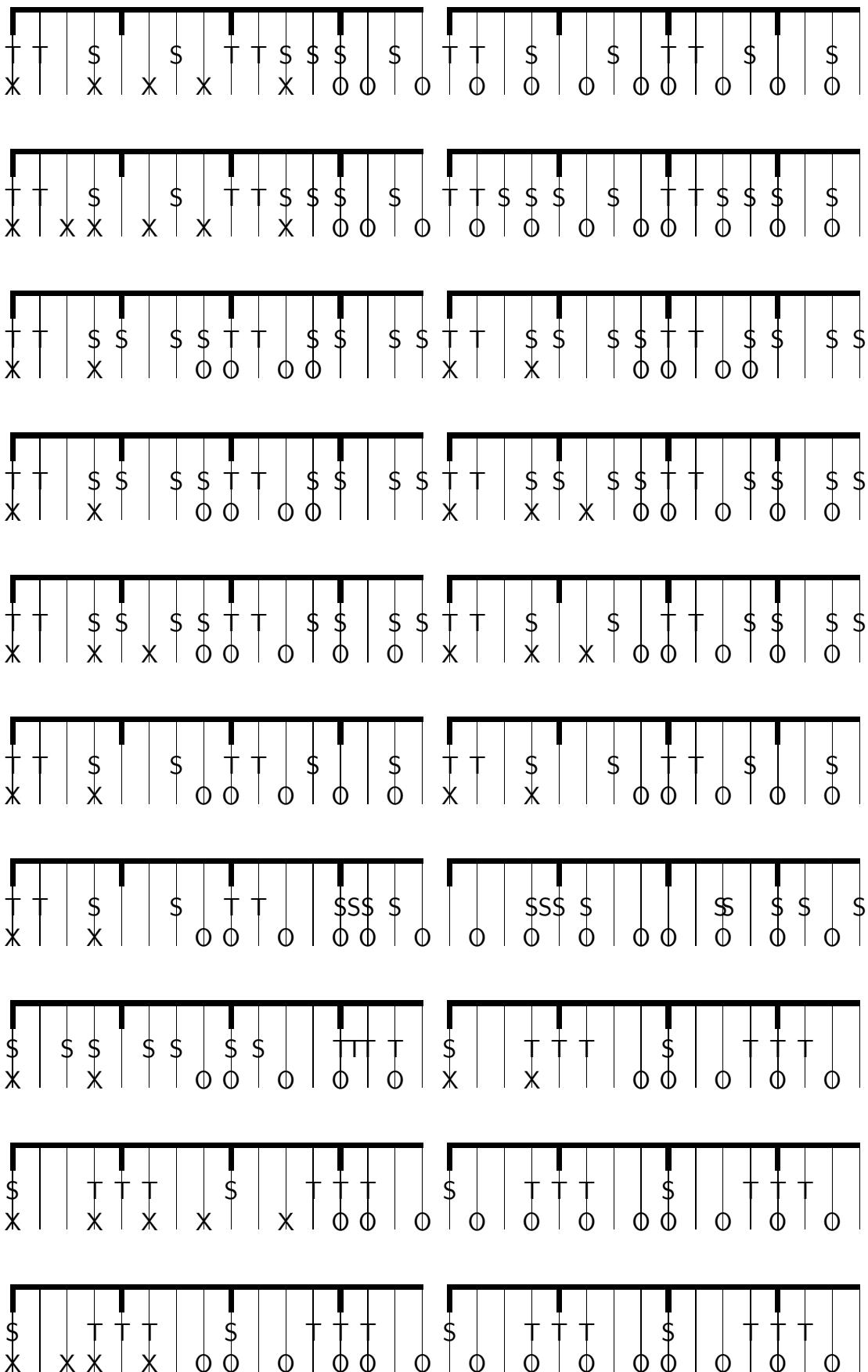


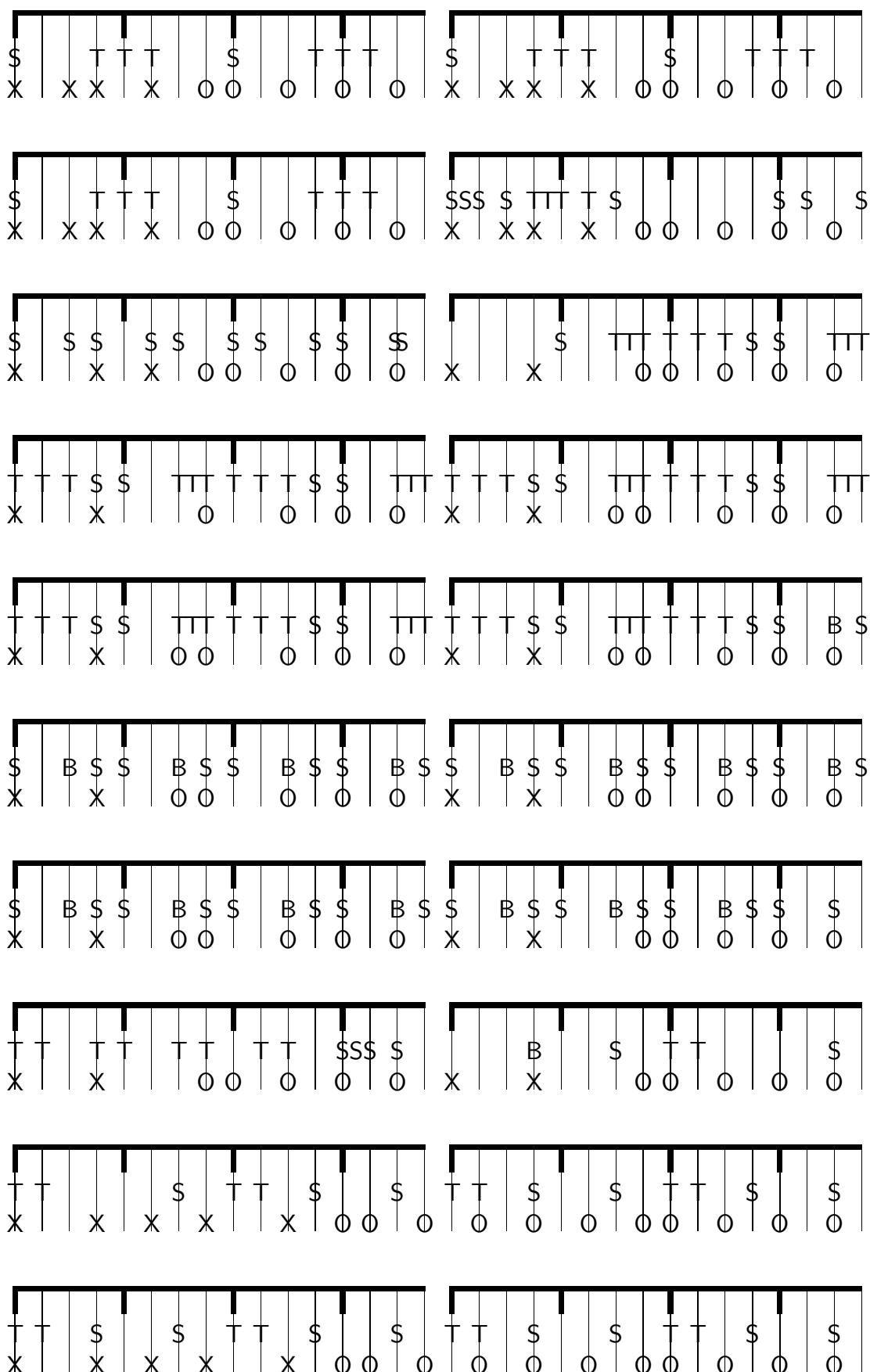


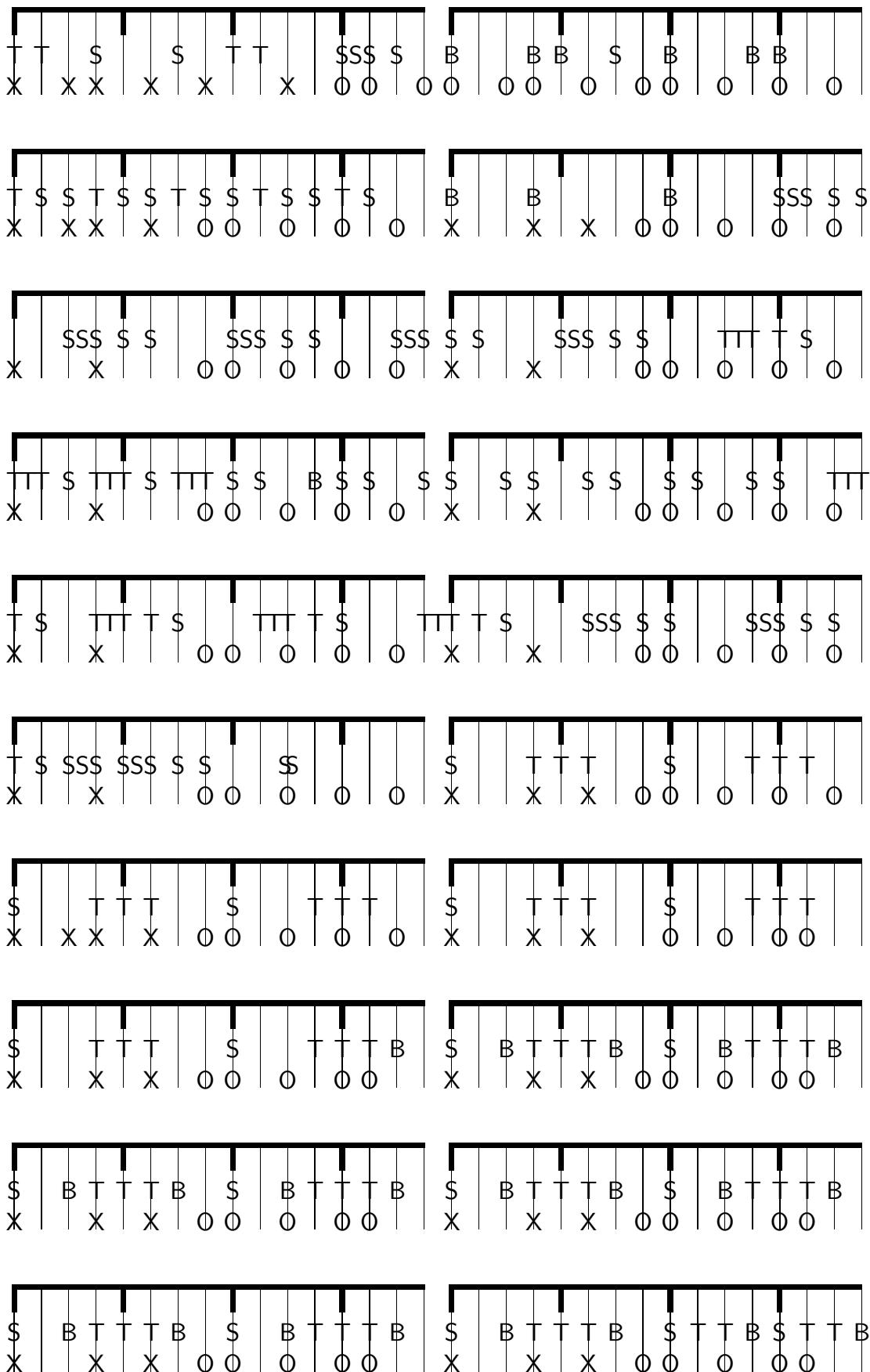


## Sogoninkun









The image displays a musical score for Sogoninkun, consisting of ten horizontal rows of vertical strokes. The rows are organized into two columns of five rows each. Each row represents a single note or stroke in the sequence. The symbols used are:

- \$ (solid vertical line)
- T (vertical line with a short horizontal tick)
- B (vertical line with a small circle)
- S (small circle)
- X (cross)
- O (open circle)

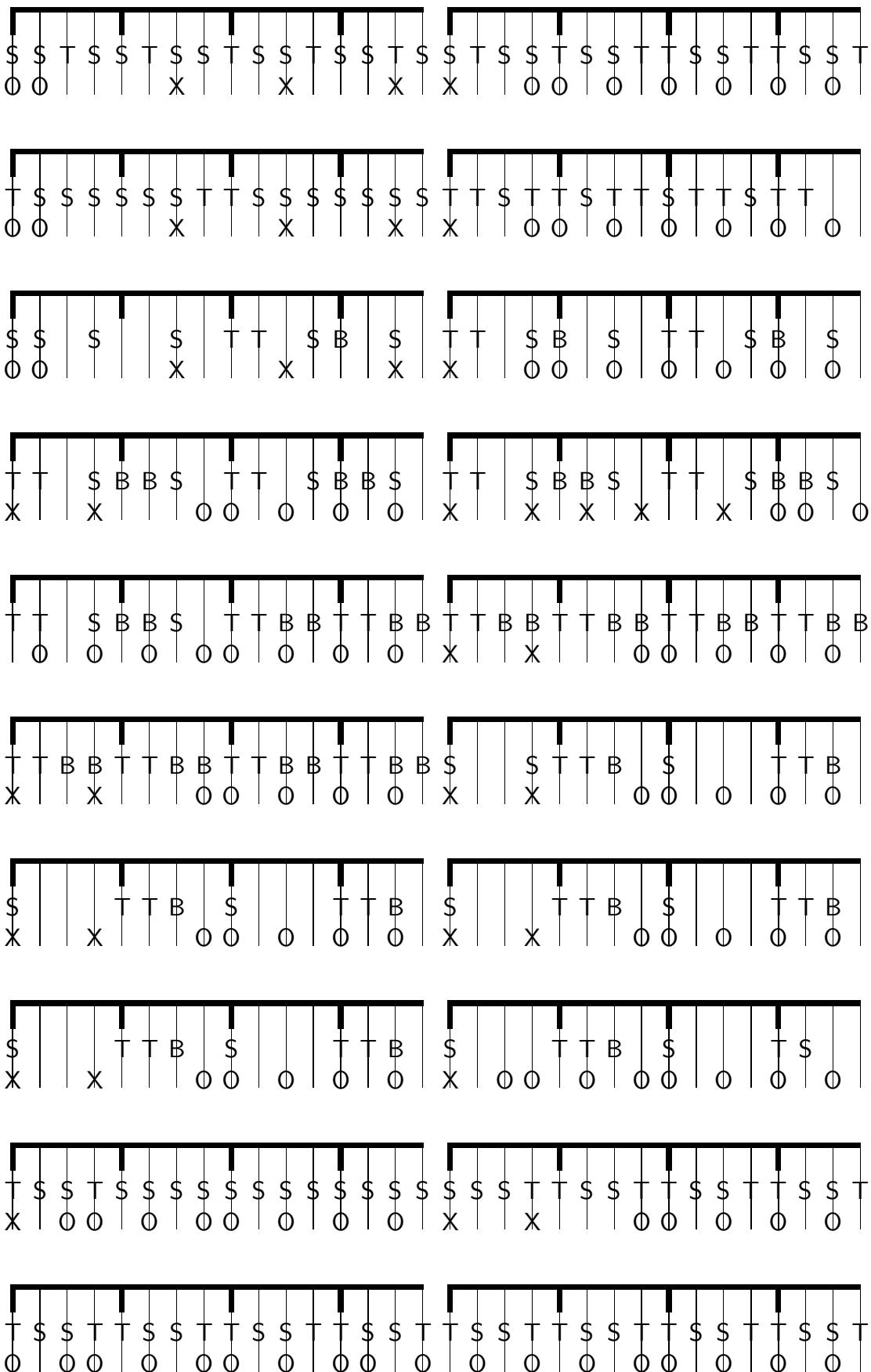
The first column of five rows starts with a sequence of \$, T, B, S, T, T, B, S, T, T, B, S, T, T, B, followed by a sequence of \$, T, T, B, S, T, T, B, S, T, T, B, S, T, T, B. The second column of five rows starts with a sequence of \$, T, T, B, S, T, T, B, S, T, T, B, S, T, T, B, followed by a sequence of \$, T, T, B, S, T, T, B, S, T, T, B, S, T, T, B.

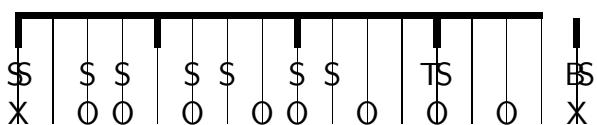
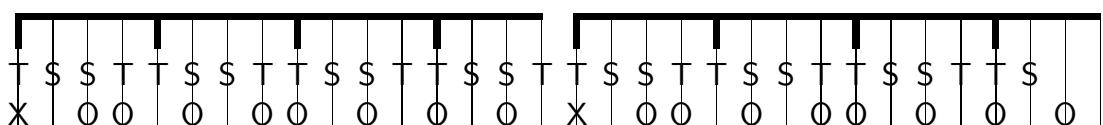
The image displays a grid of 10 rows of musical notation for a 10-hole recorder. Each row contains ten vertical lines representing the holes of the recorder. Above each hole, there is a symbol indicating whether it is open (O) or closed (X). The symbols are grouped into pairs of two-hole patterns: (X, \$), (\$, \$), (\$, T), (\$, B), (T, T), (T, \$), (T, B), (B, B), (B, T), and (T, T). The patterns repeat every two holes.

The notation consists of ten horizontal rows, each containing two staves. The staves are represented by vertical lines with stems. The symbols used on the stems are as follows:

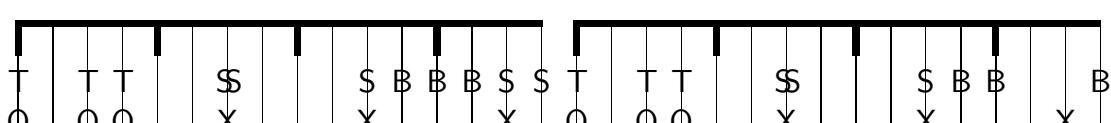
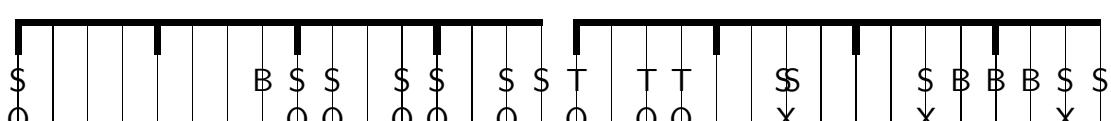
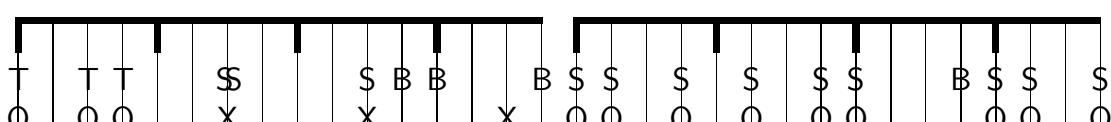
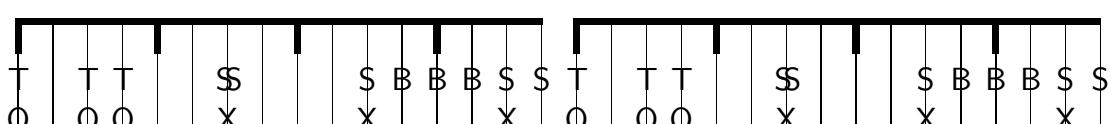
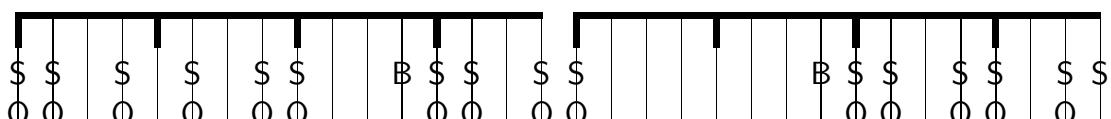
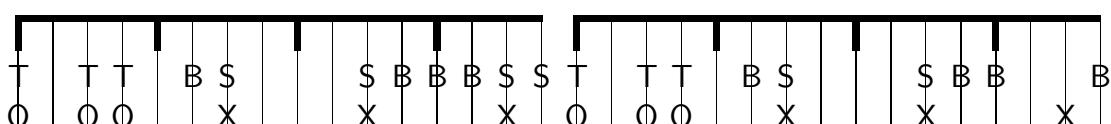
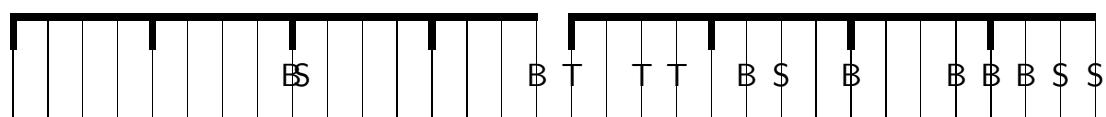
- Open circle (o):** Found at the top of stems in the first, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, eighth, ninth, and tenth rows.
- Solid black bar:** Found in the second, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth rows.
- X mark:** Found in the third, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth rows.
- T mark:** Found in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth rows.
- B mark:** Found in the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth rows.
- \$ mark:** Found in the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth rows.

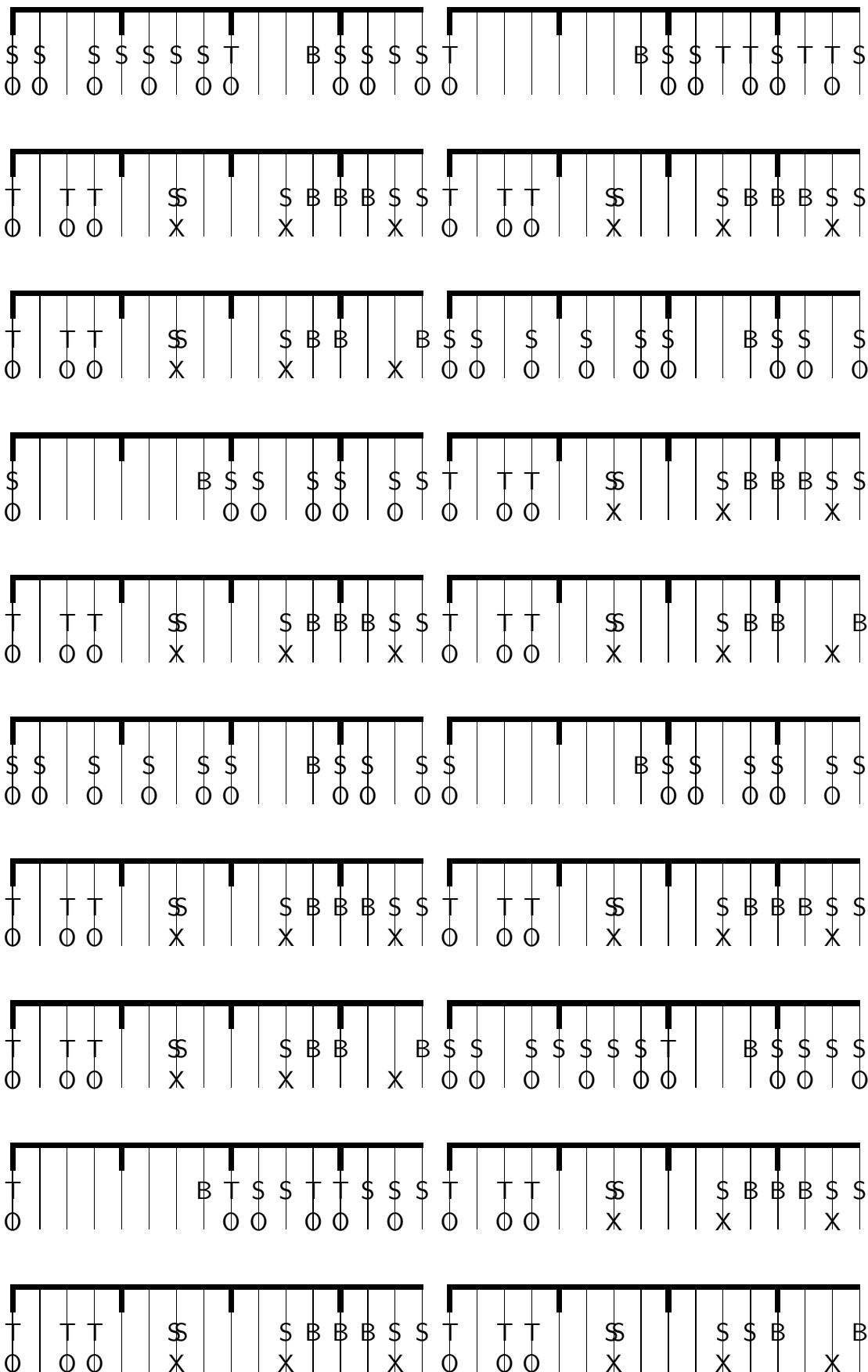
The sequence of symbols varies between rows, indicating different patterns for each staff in each row.



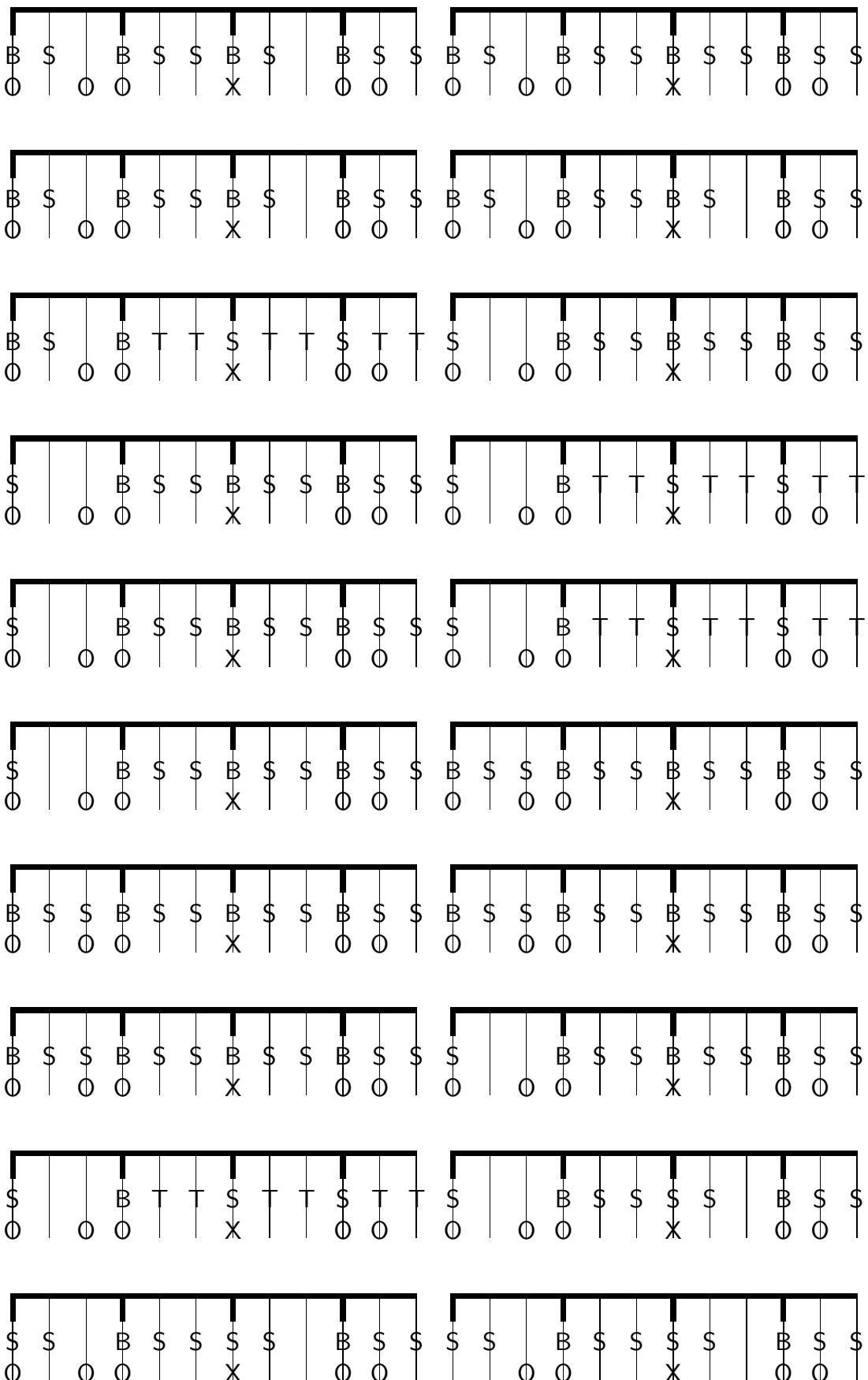


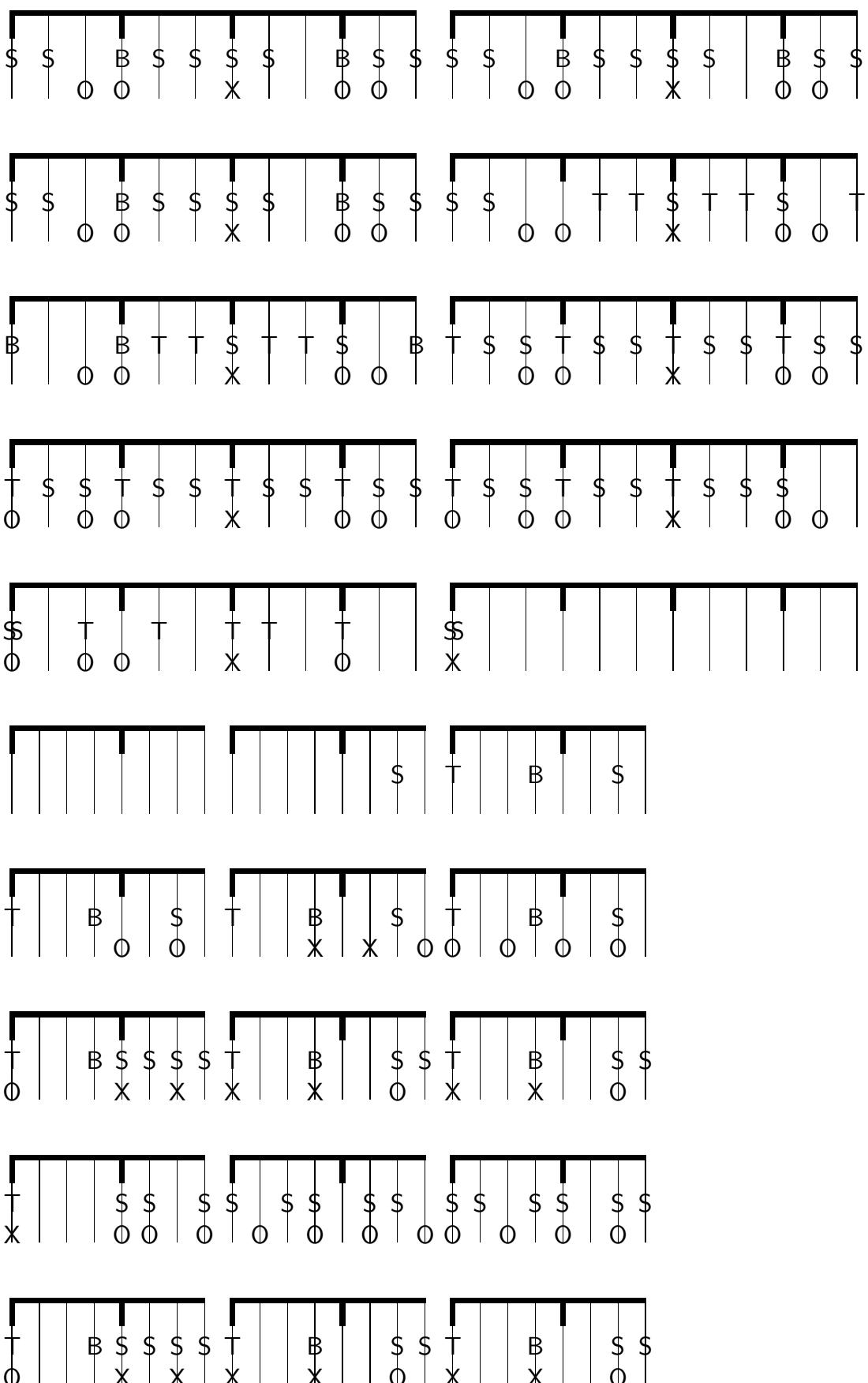
## Sabaro

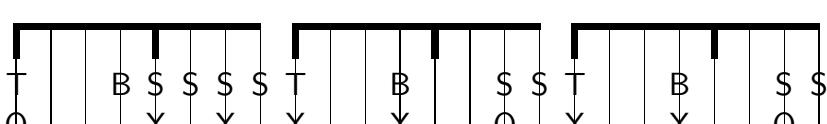
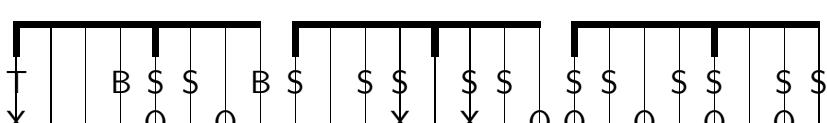
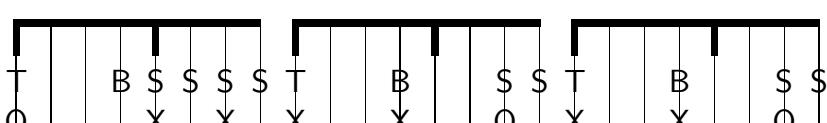
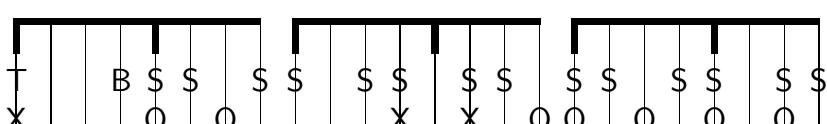
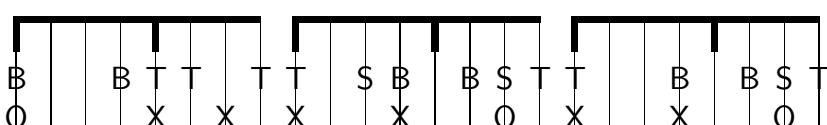
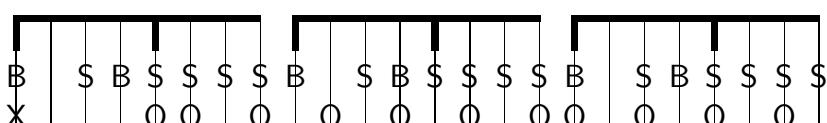
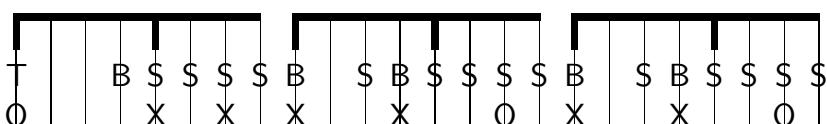
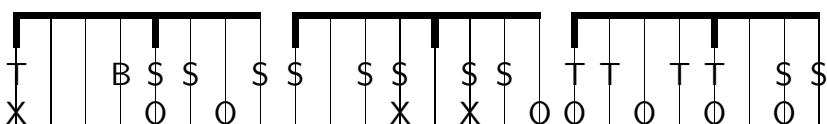
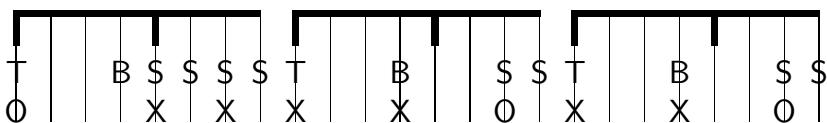
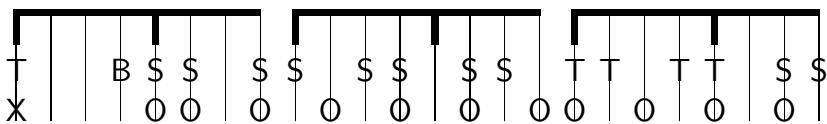


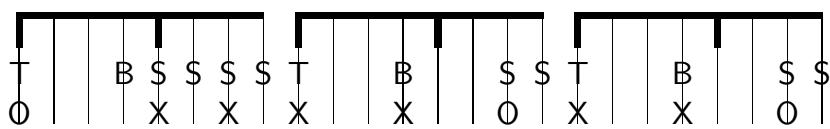
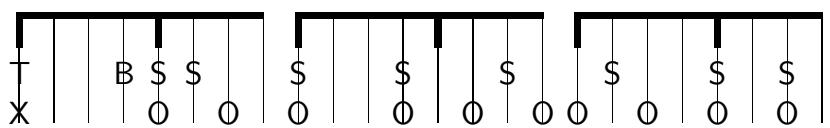
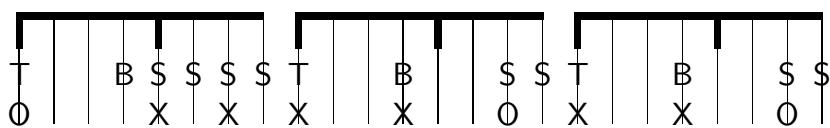
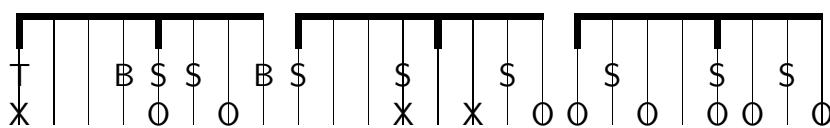
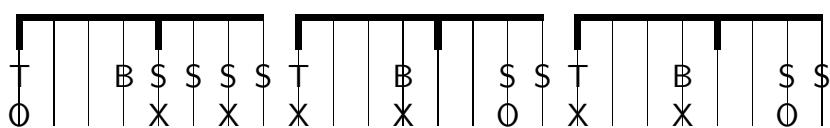
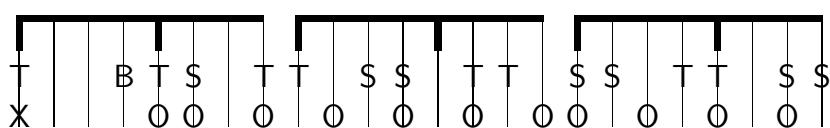
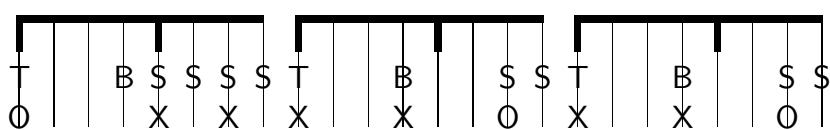
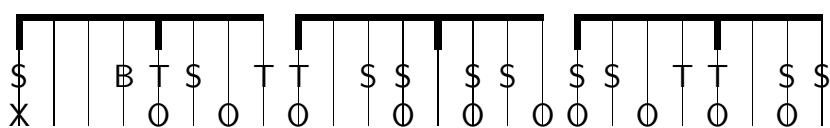
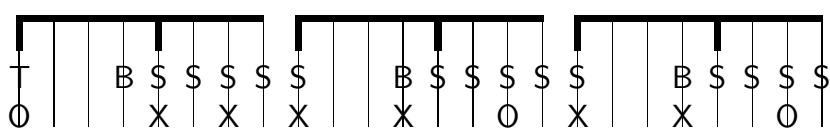
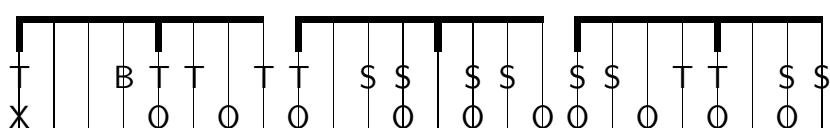


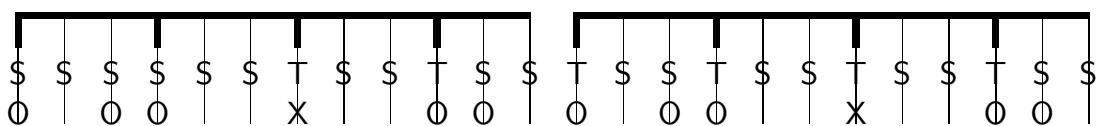
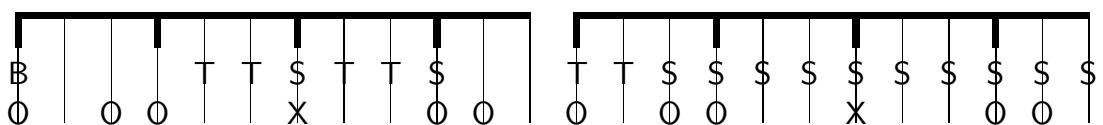
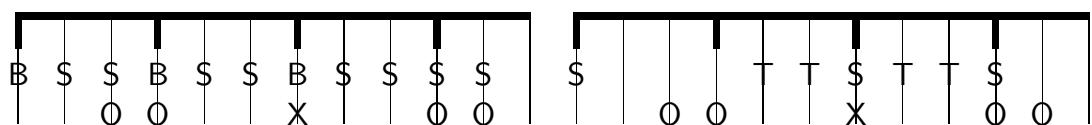
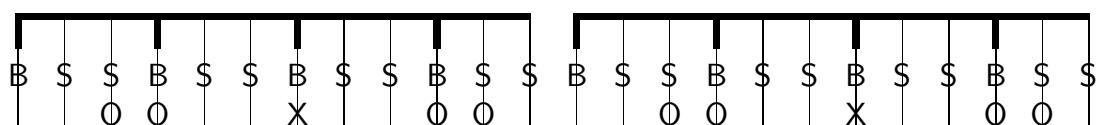
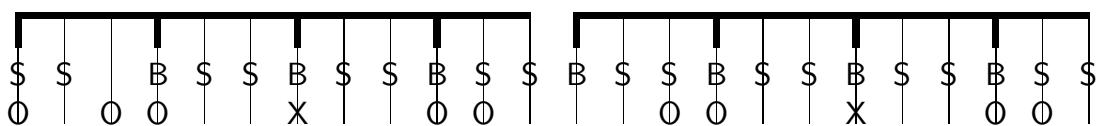
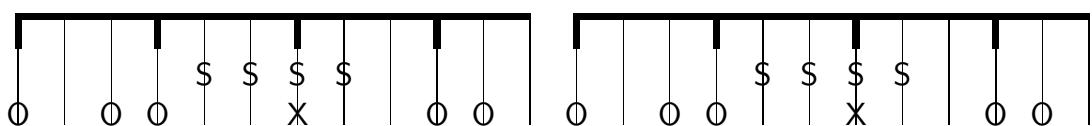
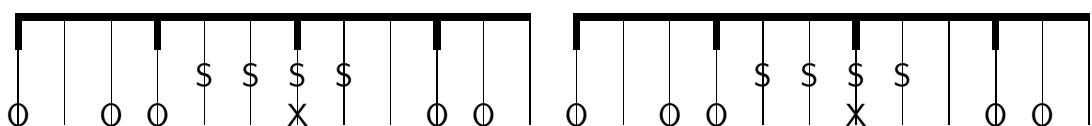
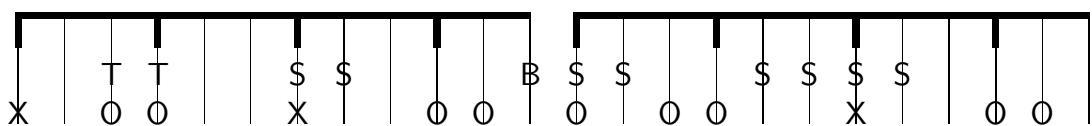
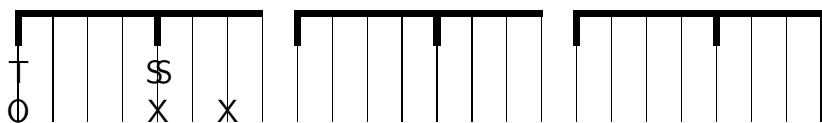
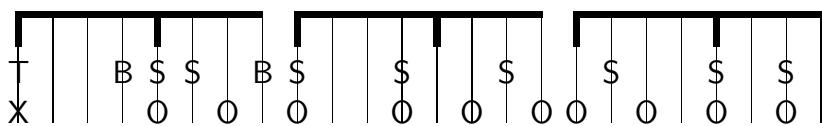
The image displays a sequence of ten horizontal staves, likely from a musical score for a stringed instrument like a guitar or banjo. Each staff consists of vertical lines representing strings and small circles (dots) representing frets. Fingerings are indicated by letters above the staves: 'S' for index finger, 'B' for middle finger, 'T' for ring finger, and 'X' for no finger. The notes are represented by open circles ('O') and closed circles ('●'). The patterns show a progression of chords and scales across the ten staves.

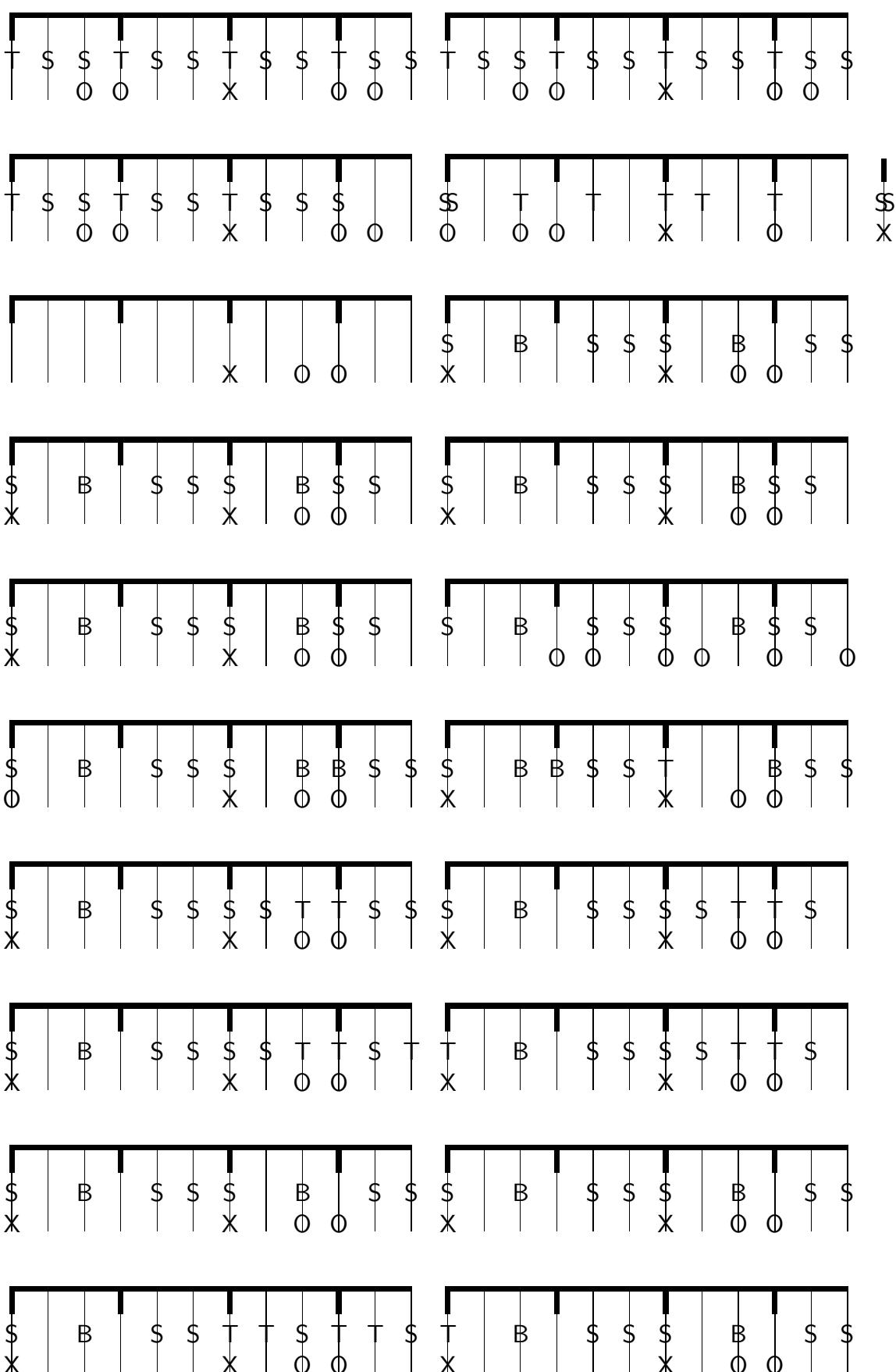


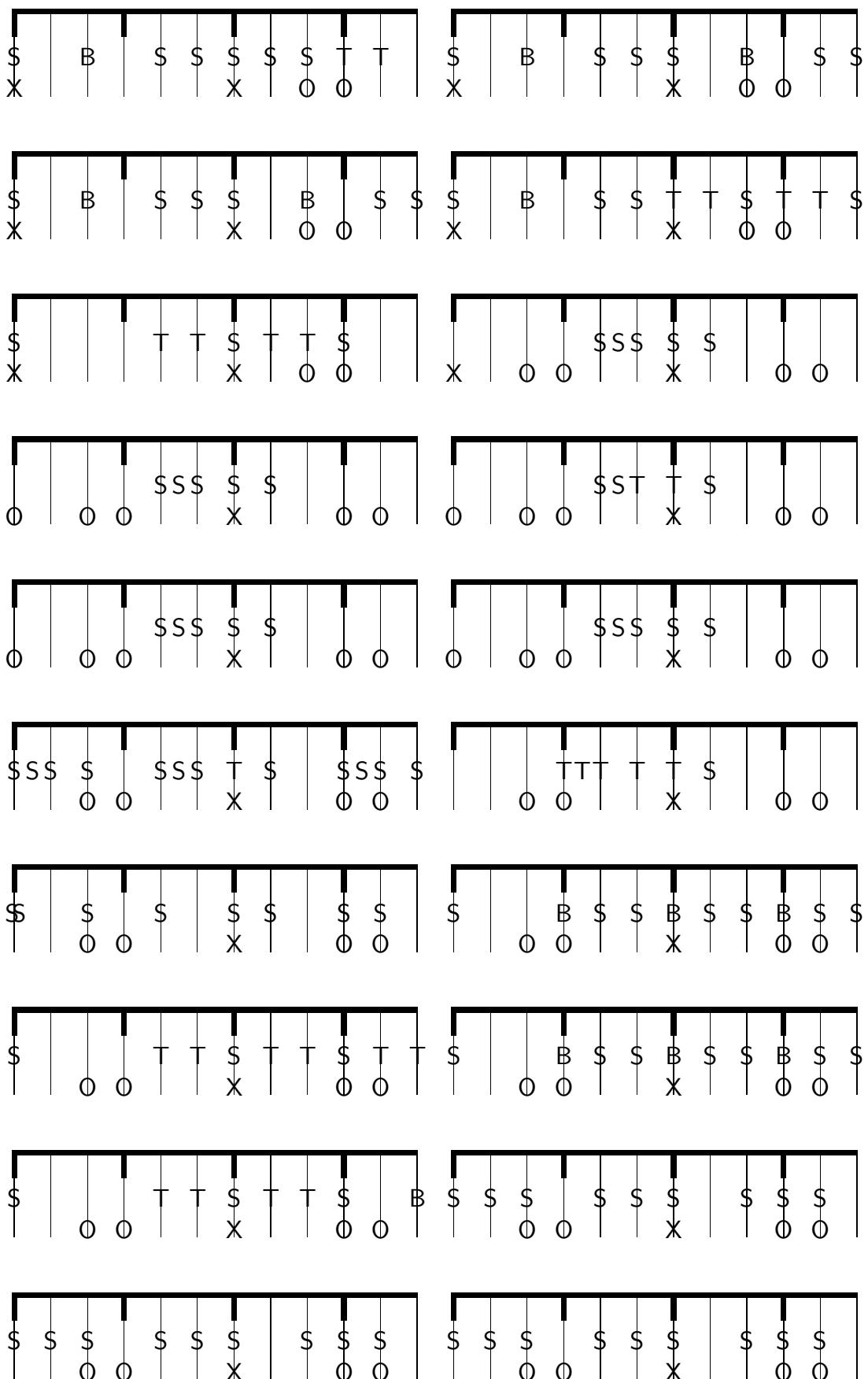


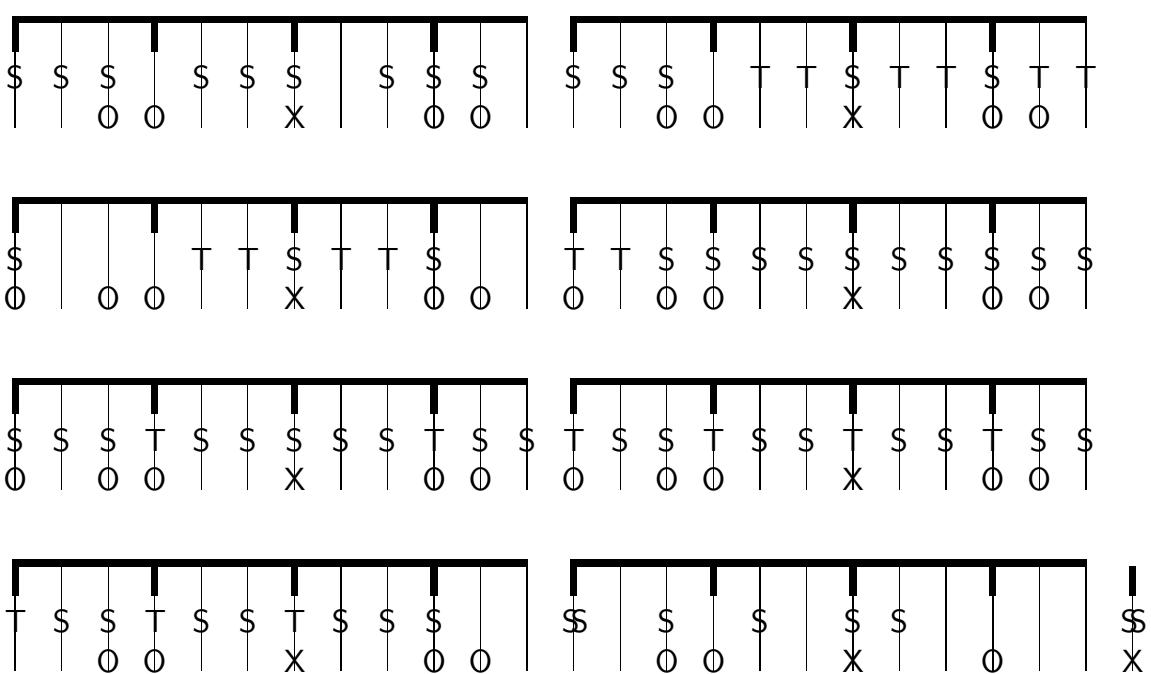




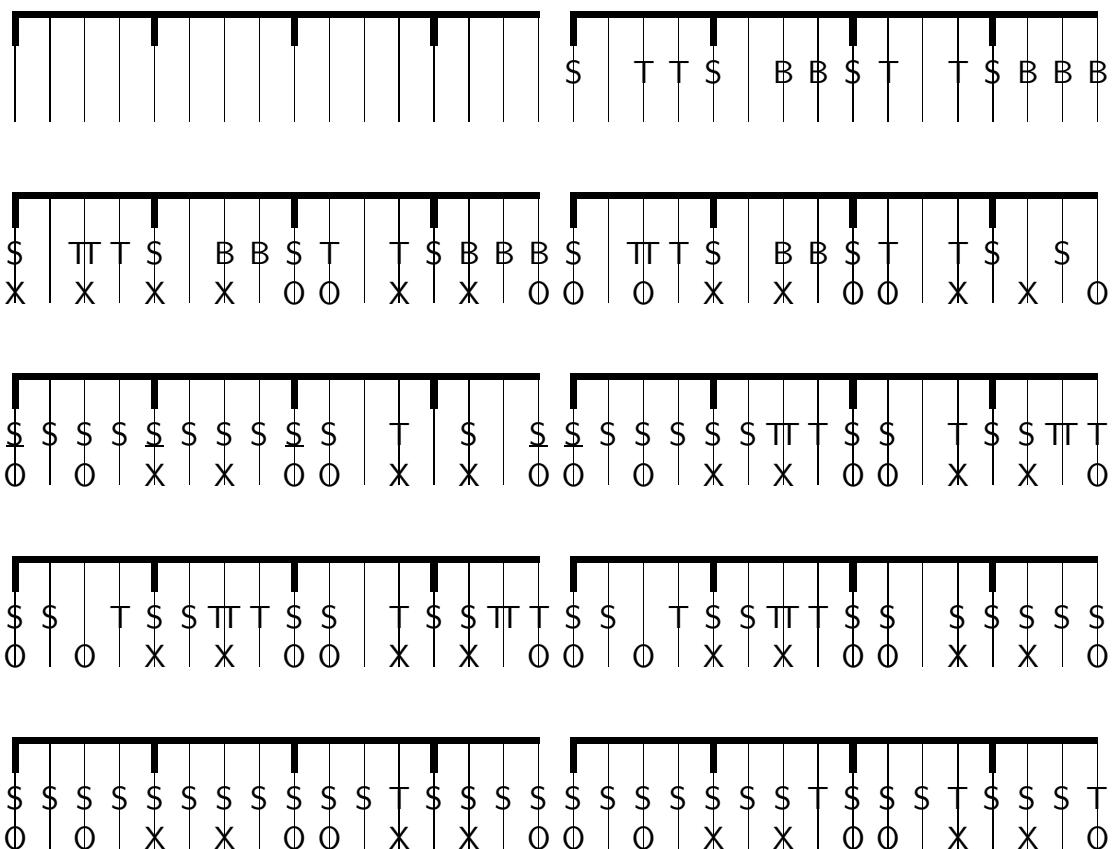


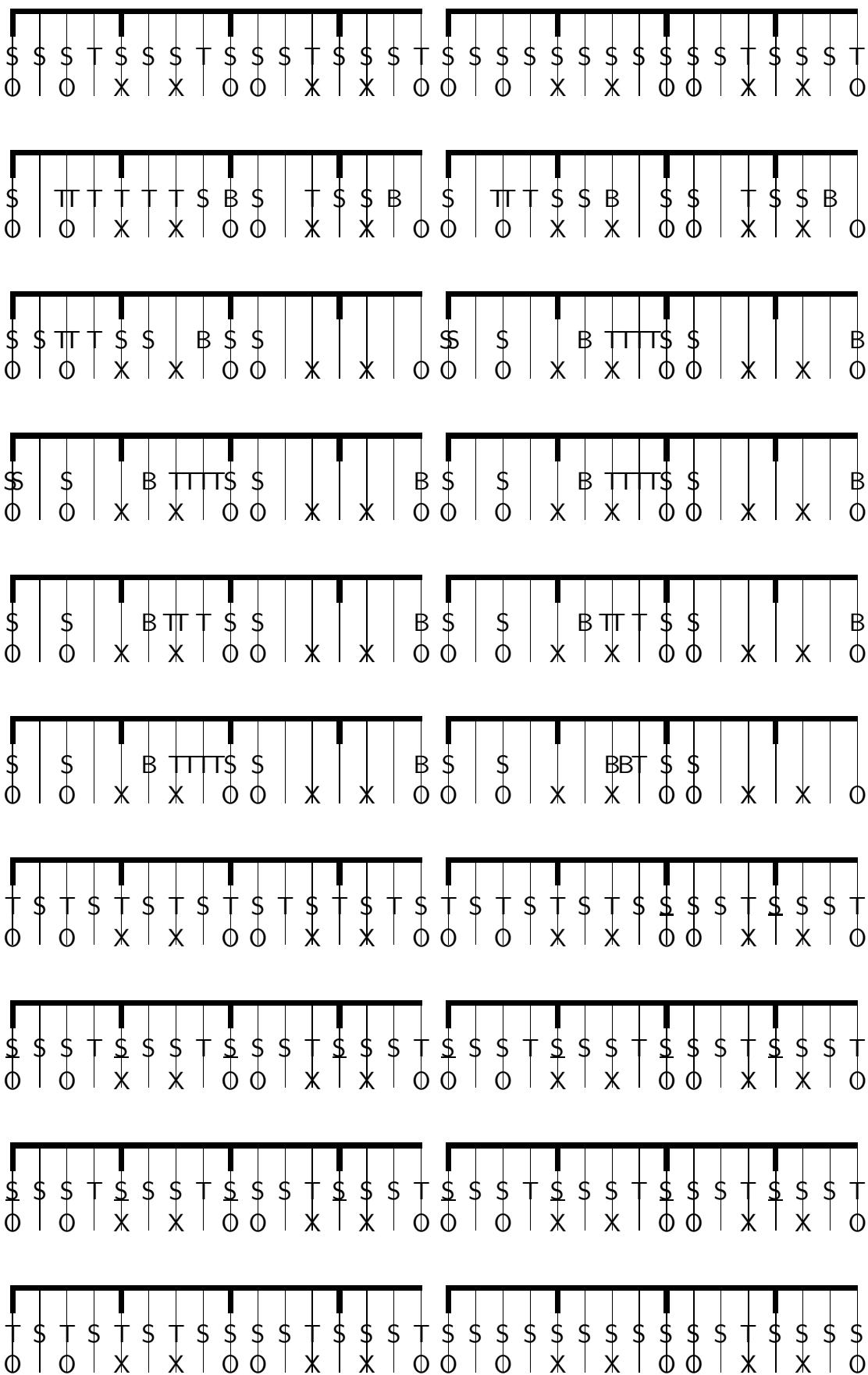


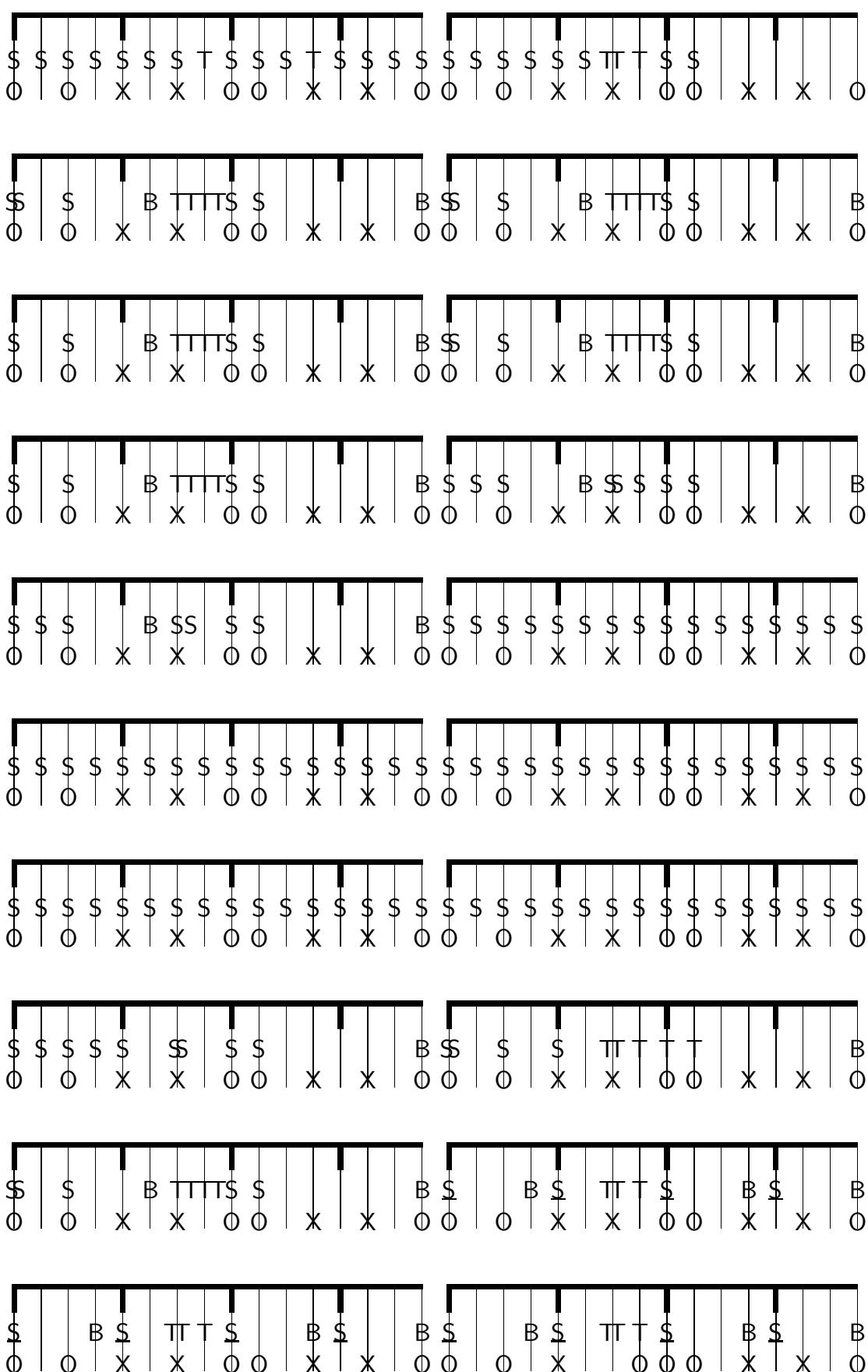


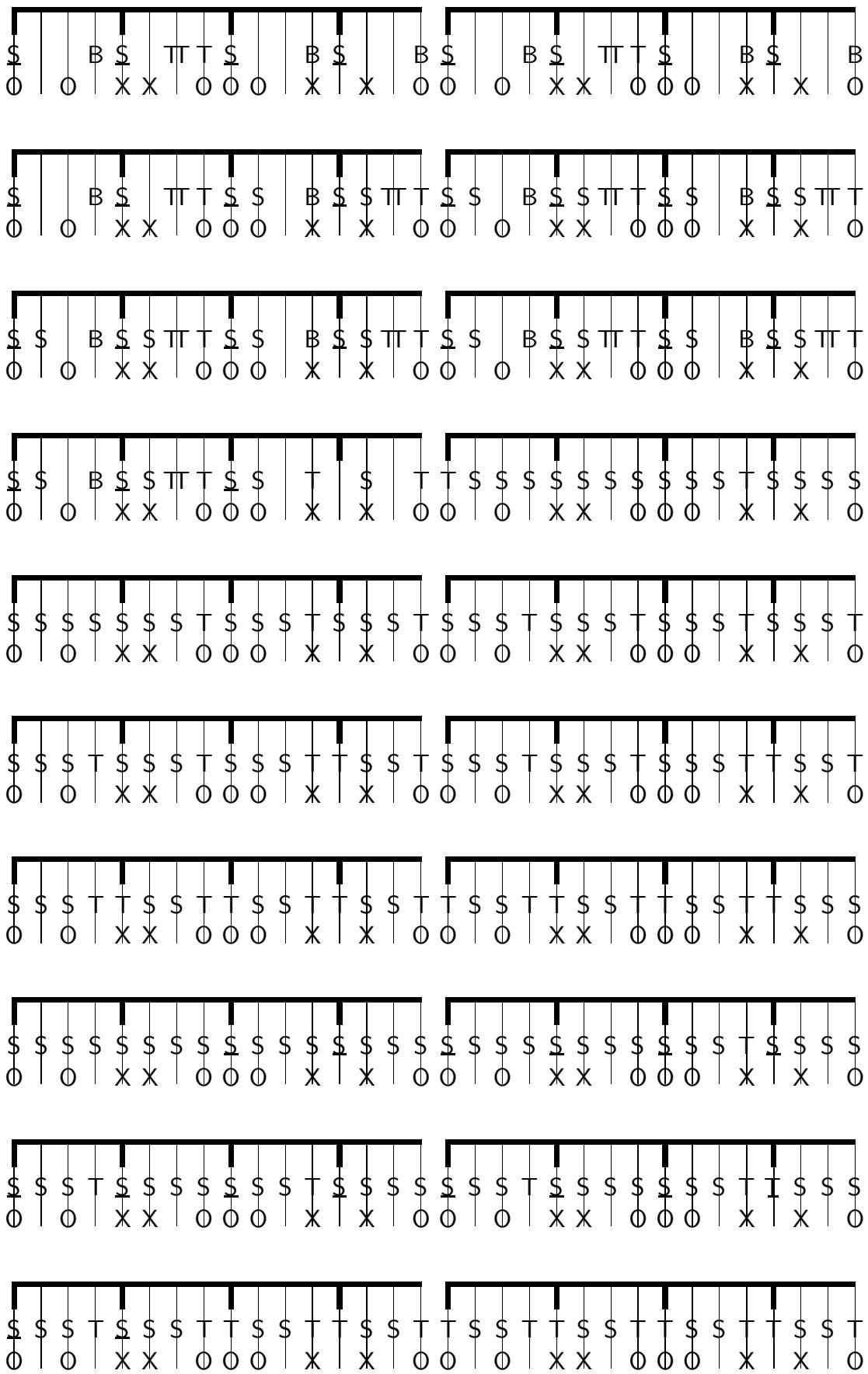


## Woloso

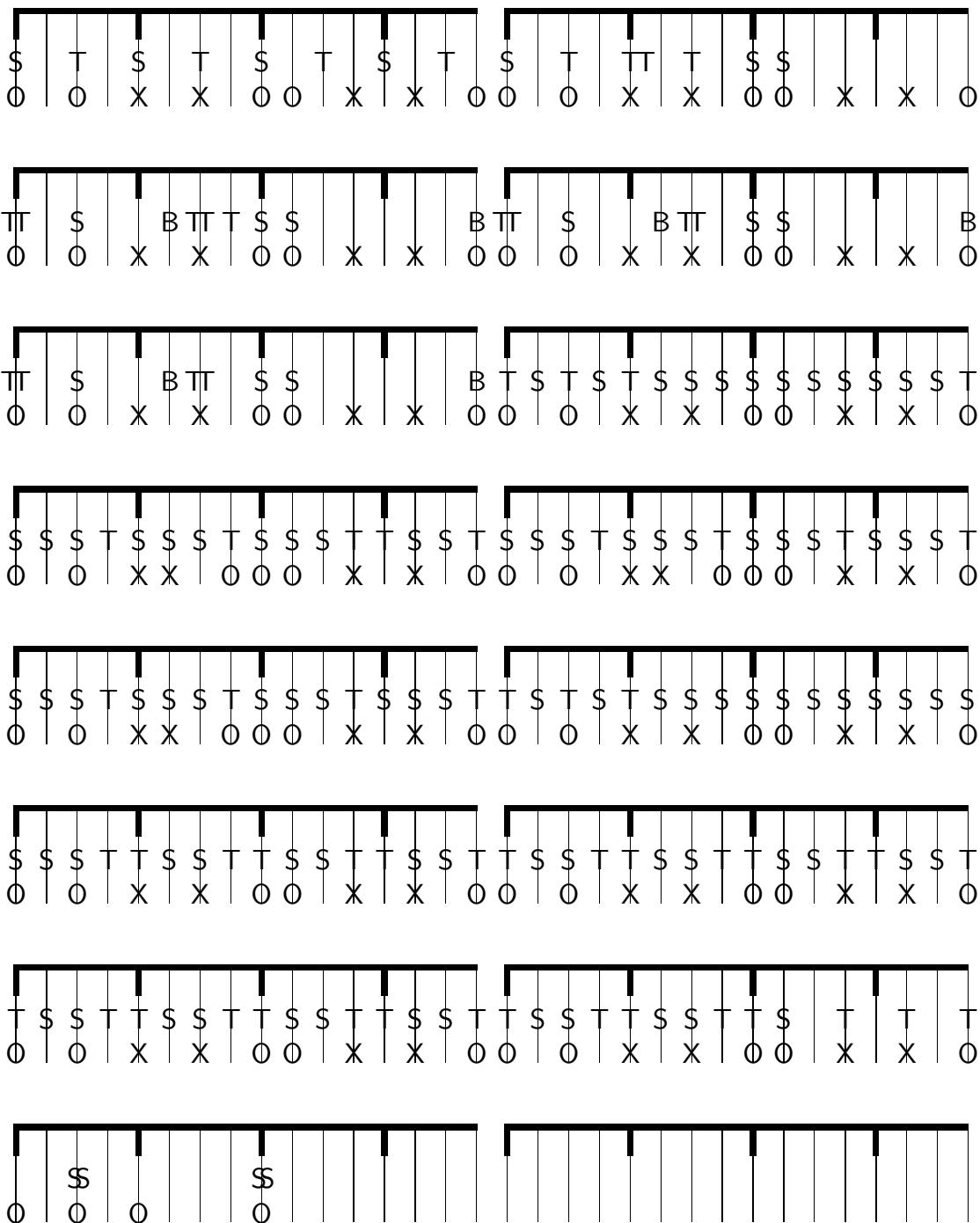
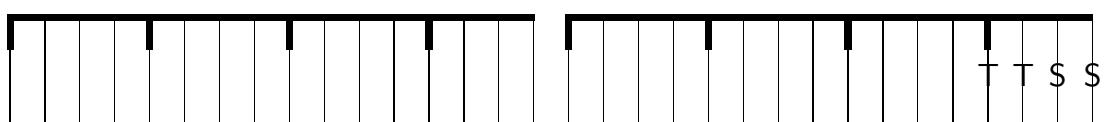




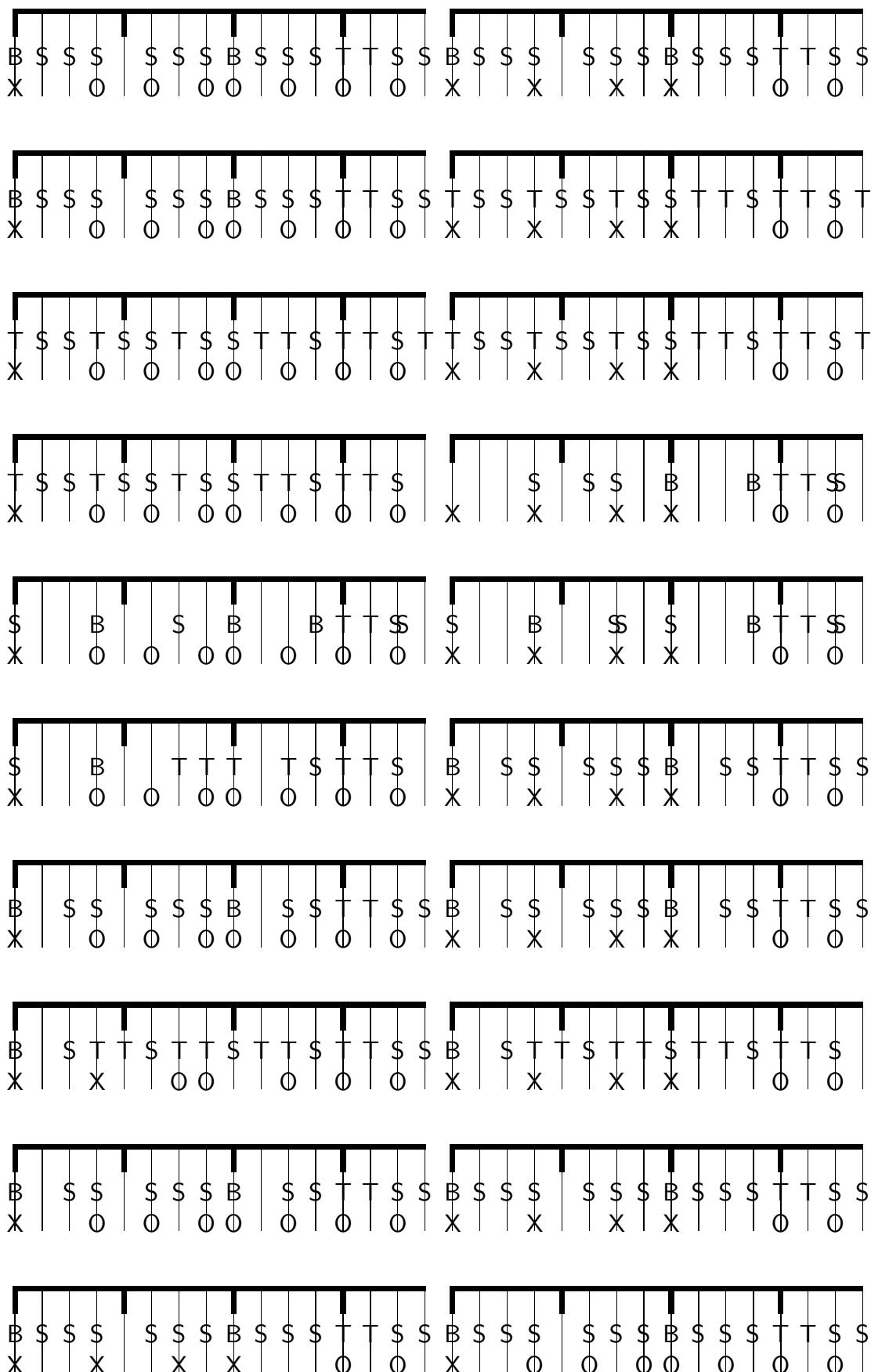




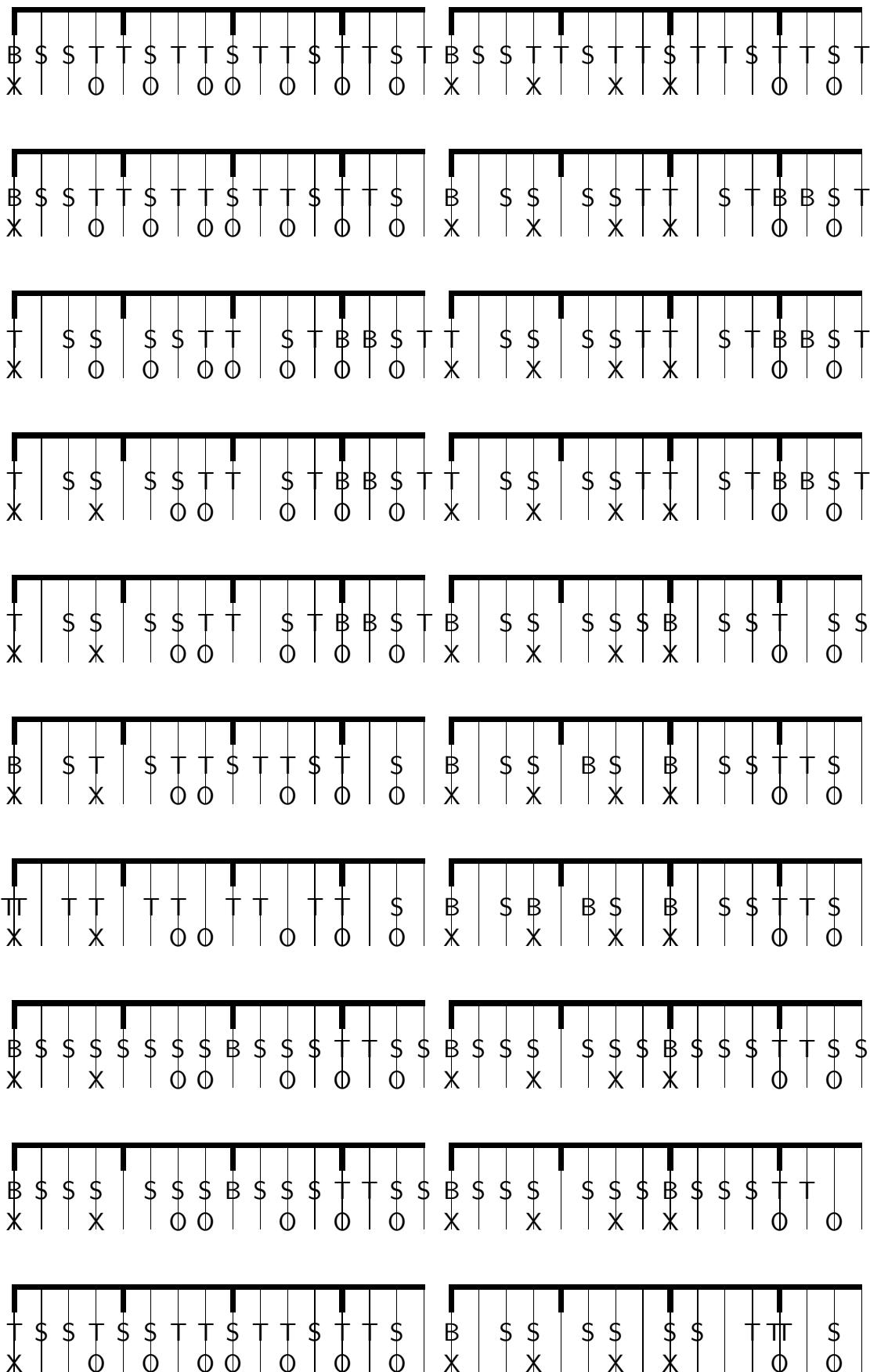


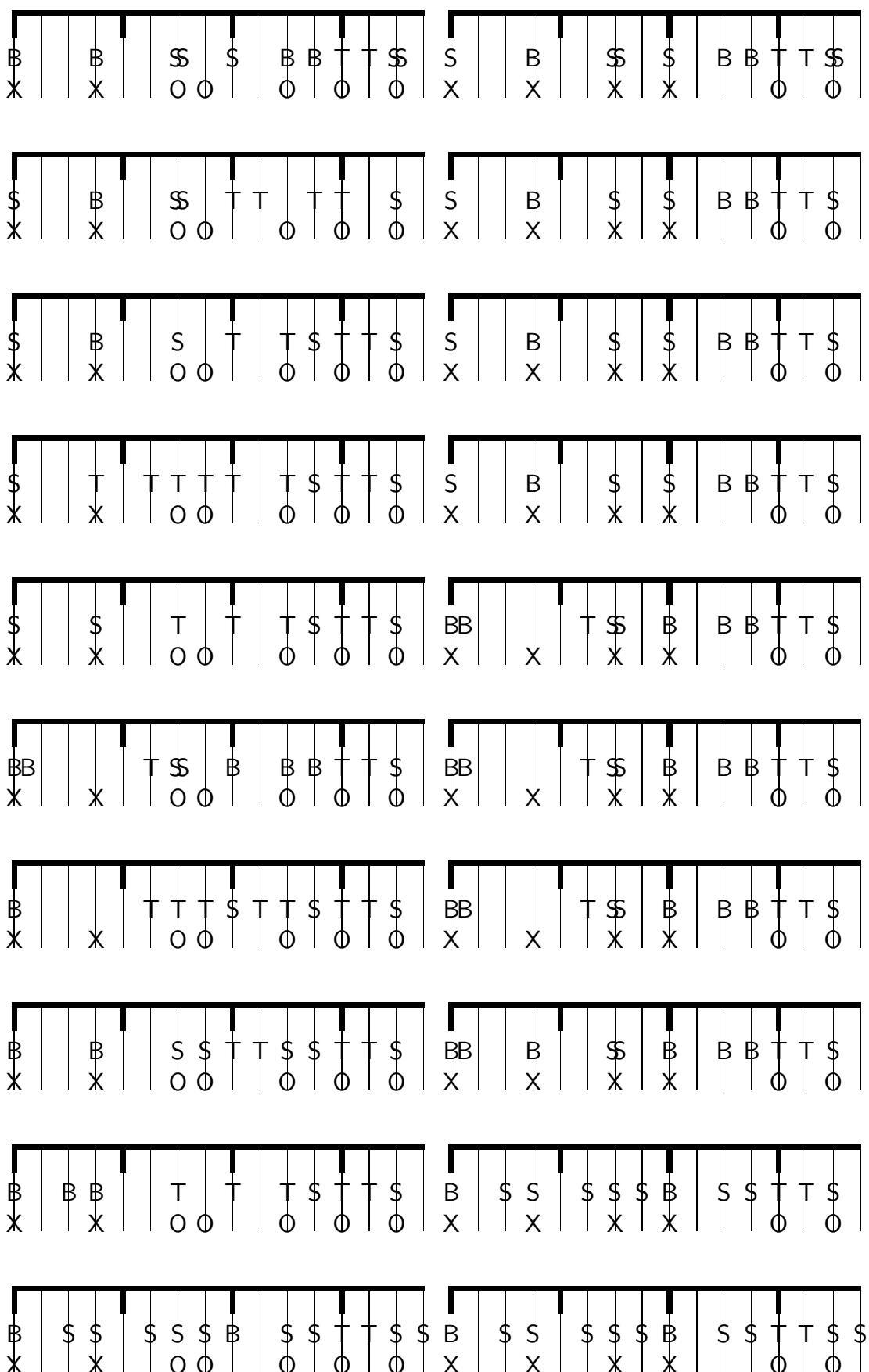
**Komo**



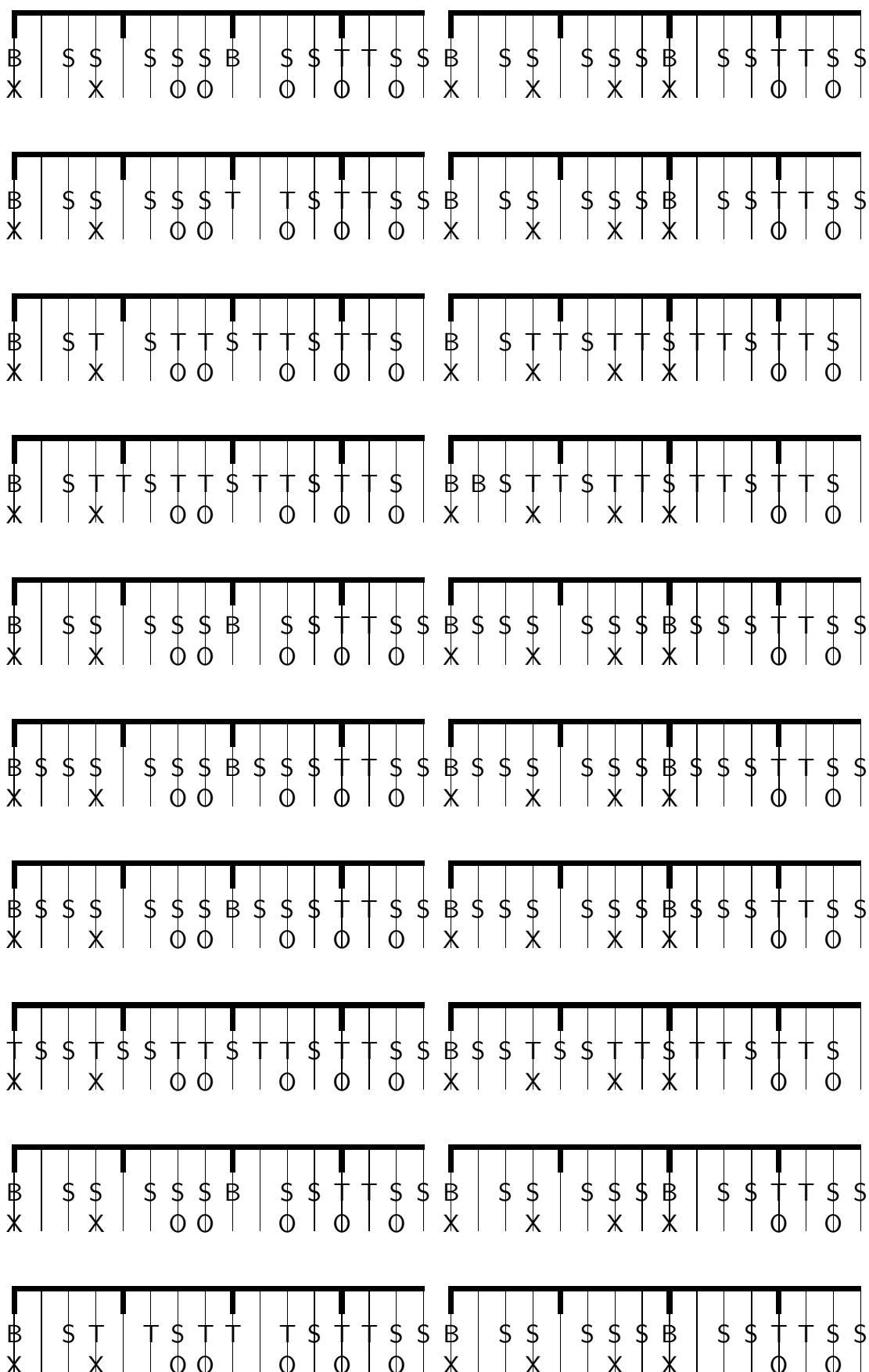


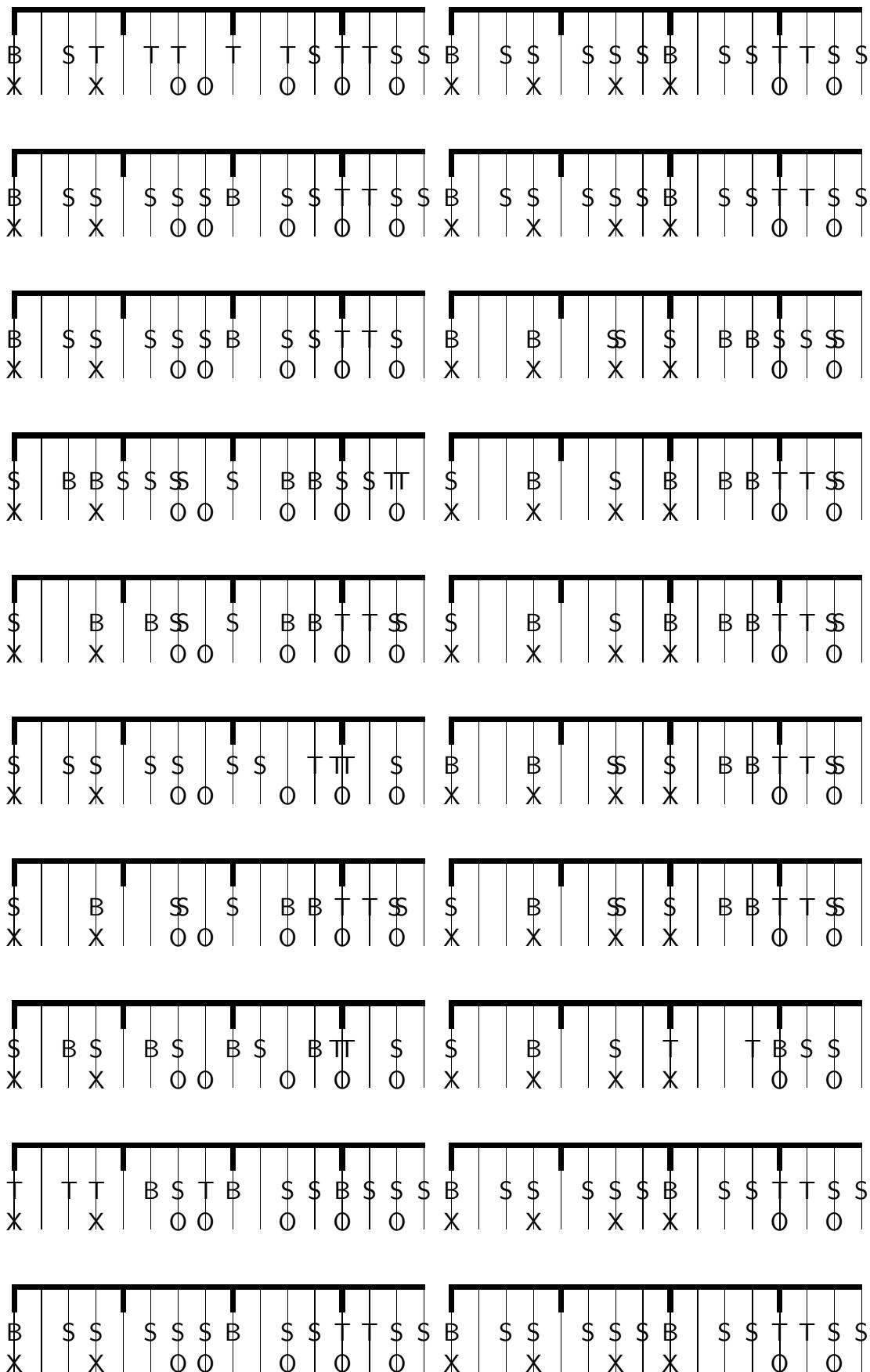


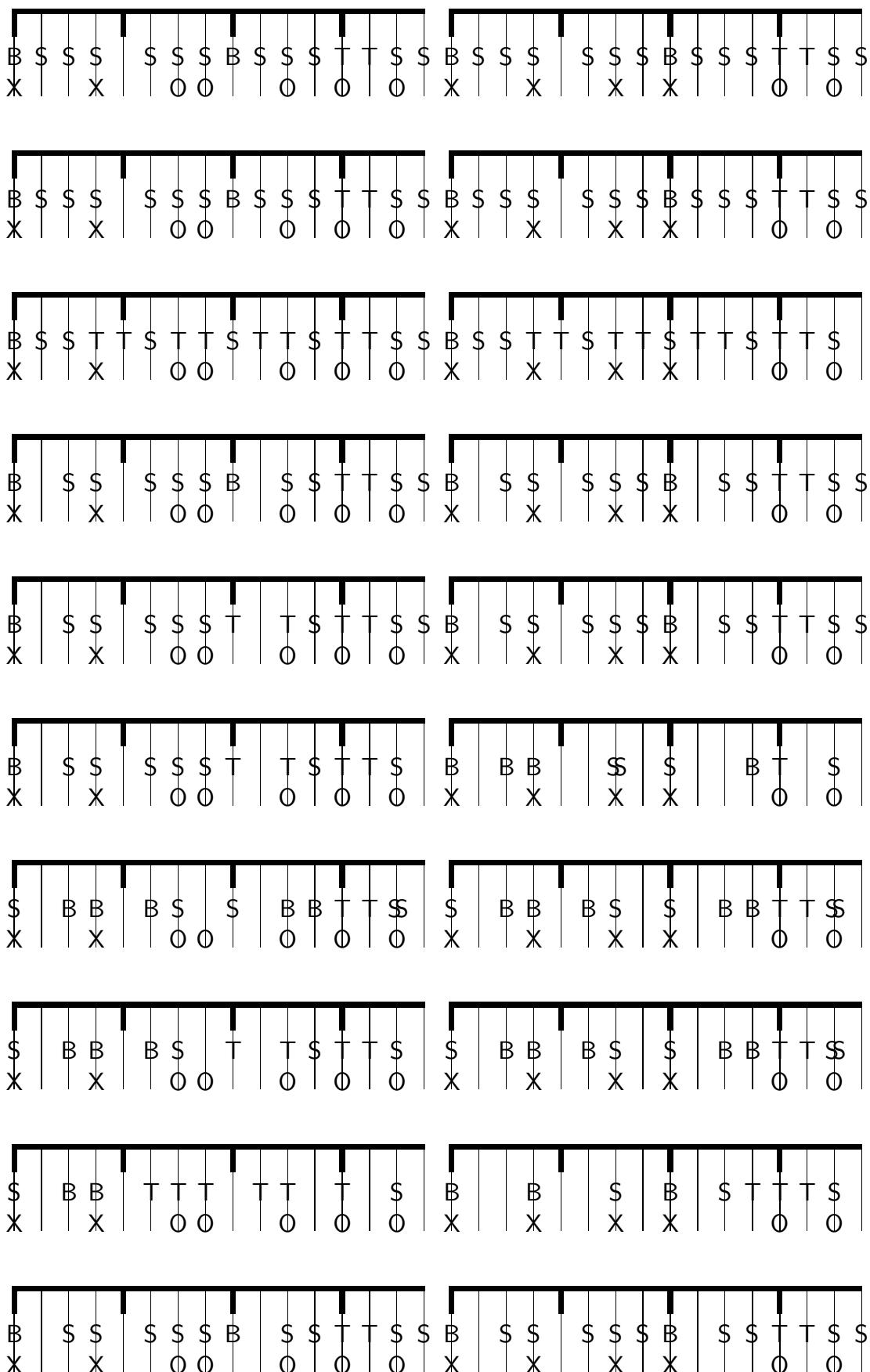




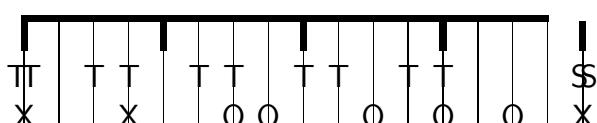
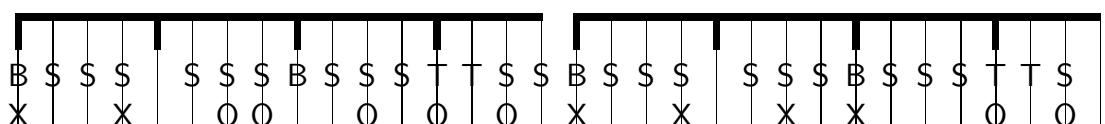
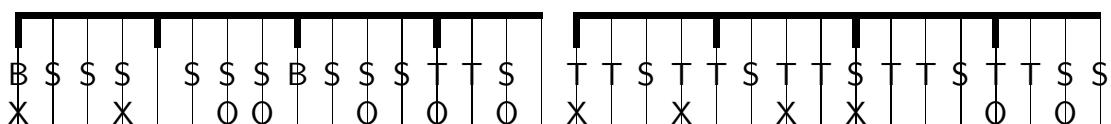
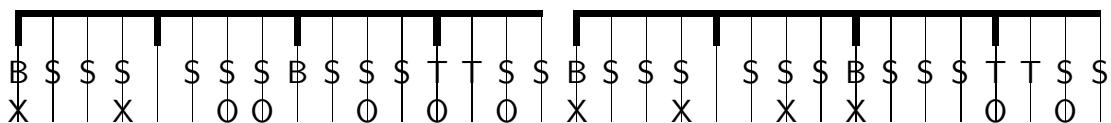
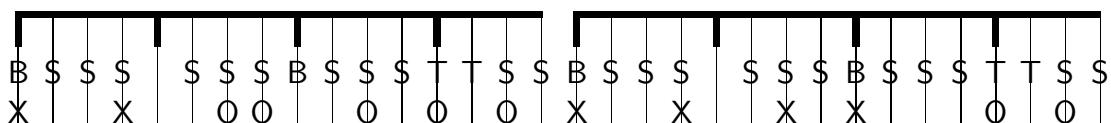




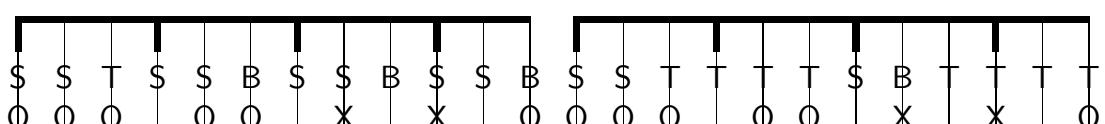
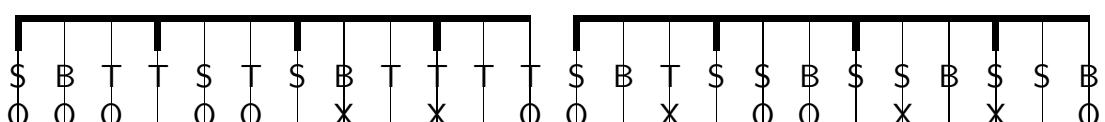
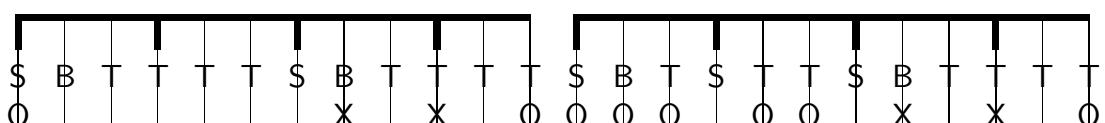
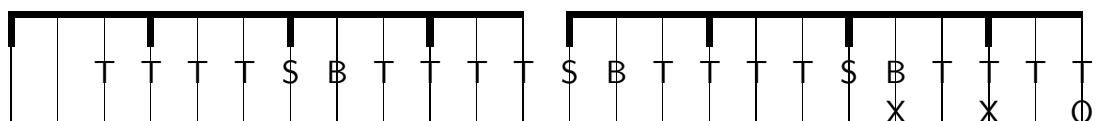


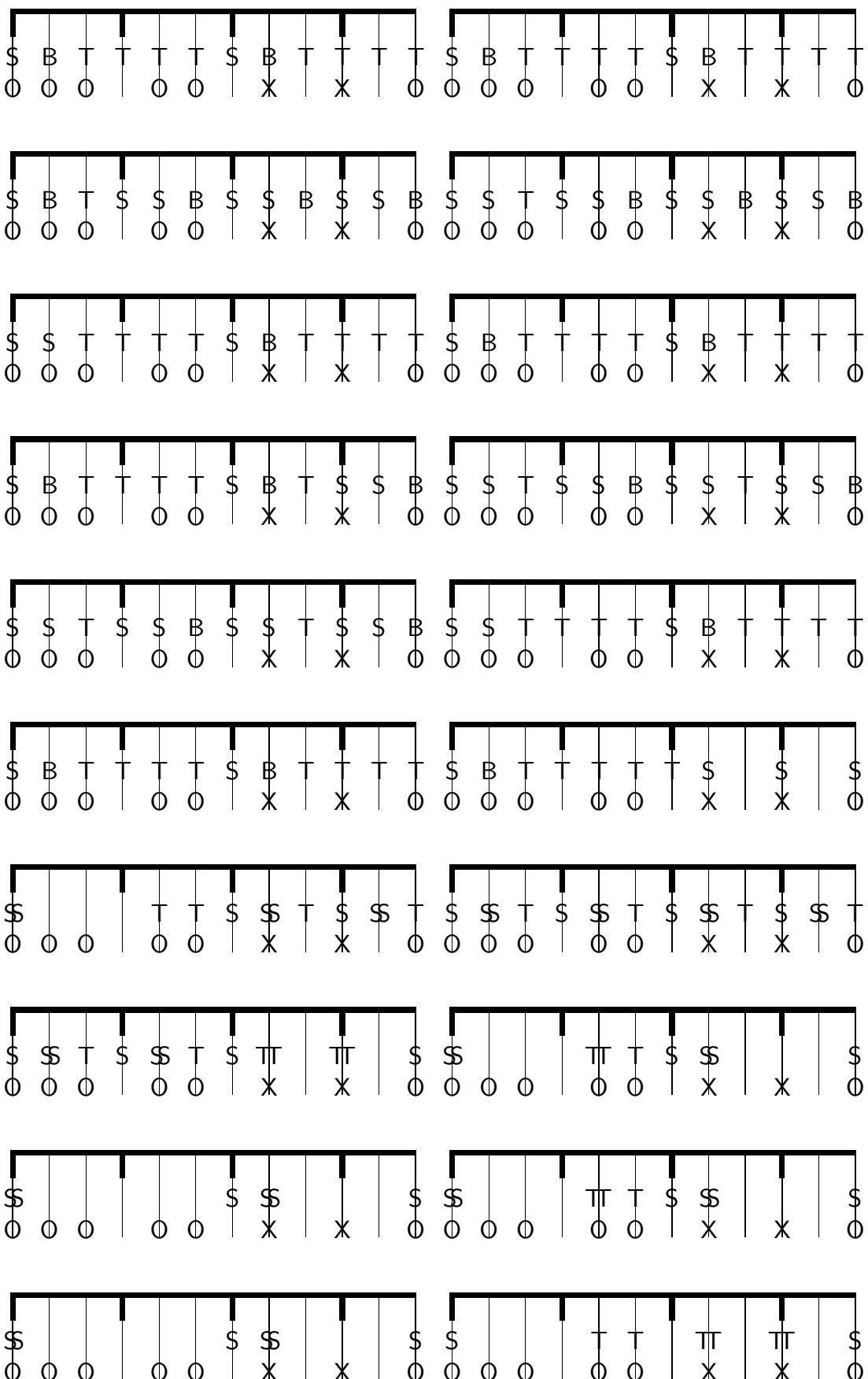


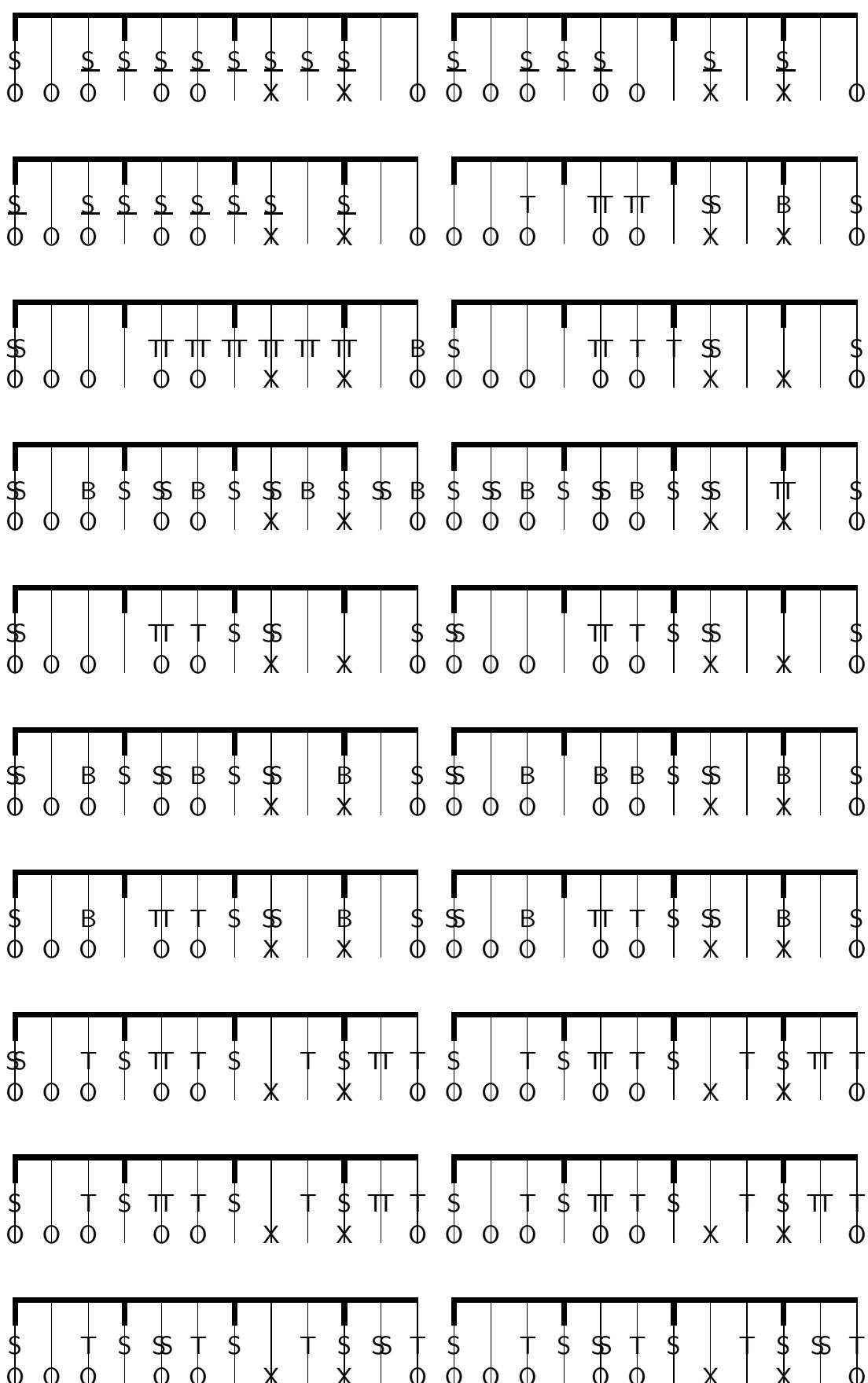
The image displays a grid of 12 rows of musical notation, each consisting of a horizontal staff with 10 vertical stems. The symbols placed on the stems are as follows:  
  
Row 1: B, \$, \$, X, \$, \$, \$, B, \$, \$  
Row 2: B, \$, \$, X, \$, \$, \$, B, \$, \$  
Row 3: B, \$, \$, X, \$, \$, \$, B, \$, \$  
Row 4: B, \$, \$, X, \$, \$, \$, B, \$, \$  
Row 5: B, \$, \$, X, \$, \$, \$, B, \$, \$  
Row 6: B, \$, \$, \$, X, \$, \$, \$, B, \$, \$  
Row 7: B, \$, \$, \$, X, \$, \$, \$, B, \$, \$  
Row 8: B, \$, \$, \$, X, \$, \$, \$, B, \$, \$  
Row 9: B, \$, \$, \$, X, \$, \$, \$, B, \$, \$  
Row 10: B, \$, \$, \$, X, \$, \$, \$, B, \$, \$  
Row 11: B, \$, \$, \$, X, \$, \$, \$, B, \$, \$  
Row 12: B, \$, \$, \$, X, \$, \$, \$, B, \$, \$

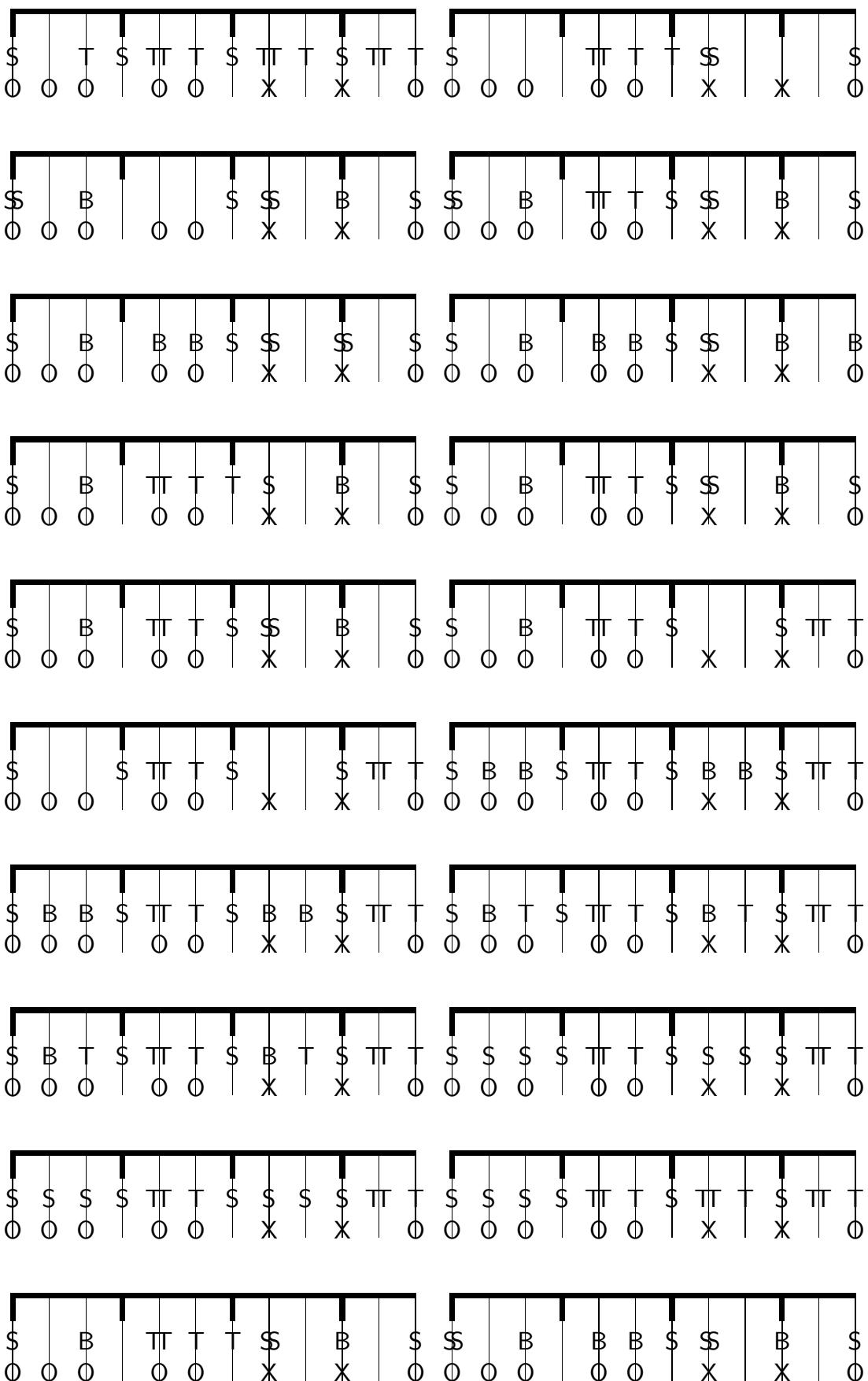


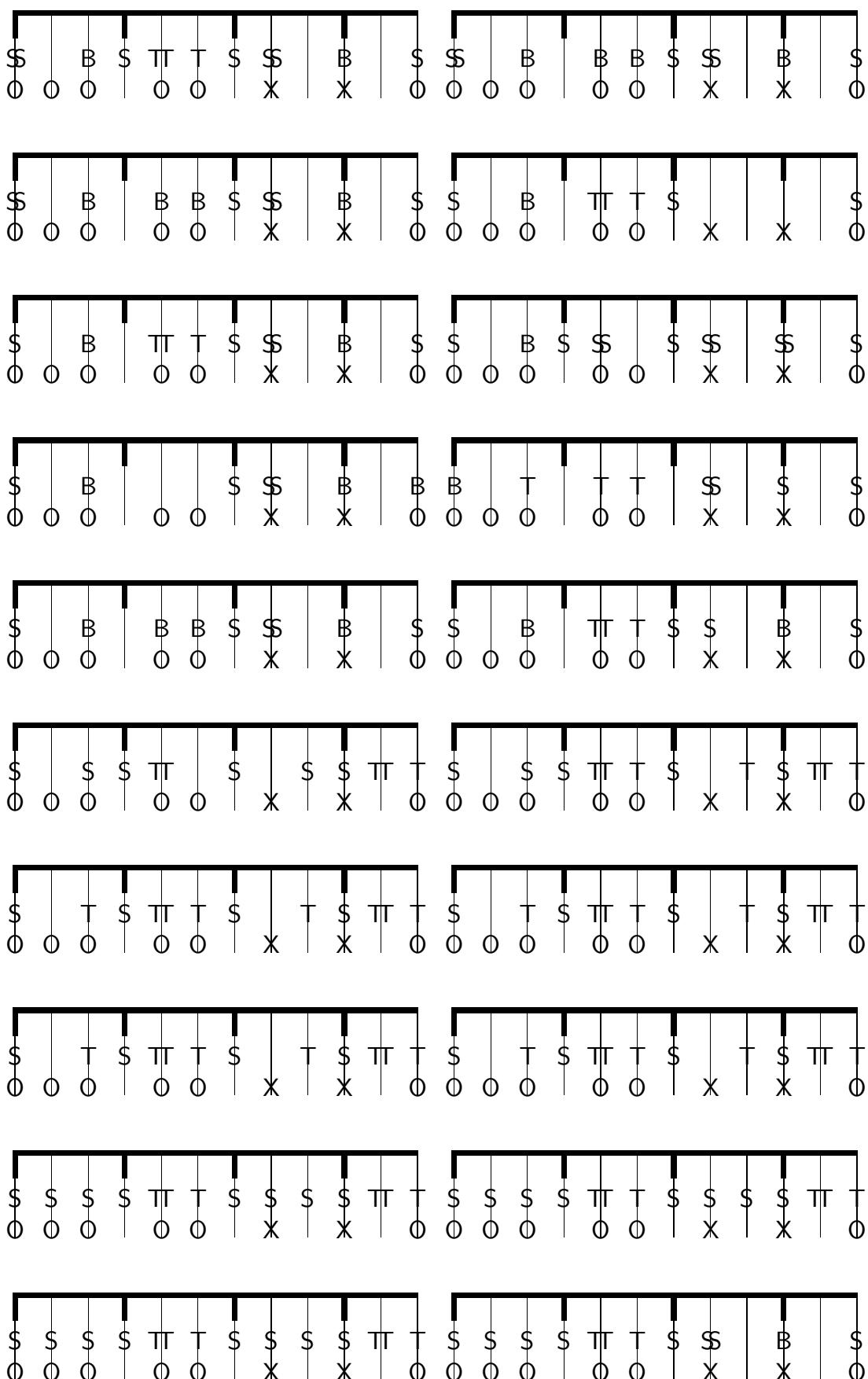
## Kofili

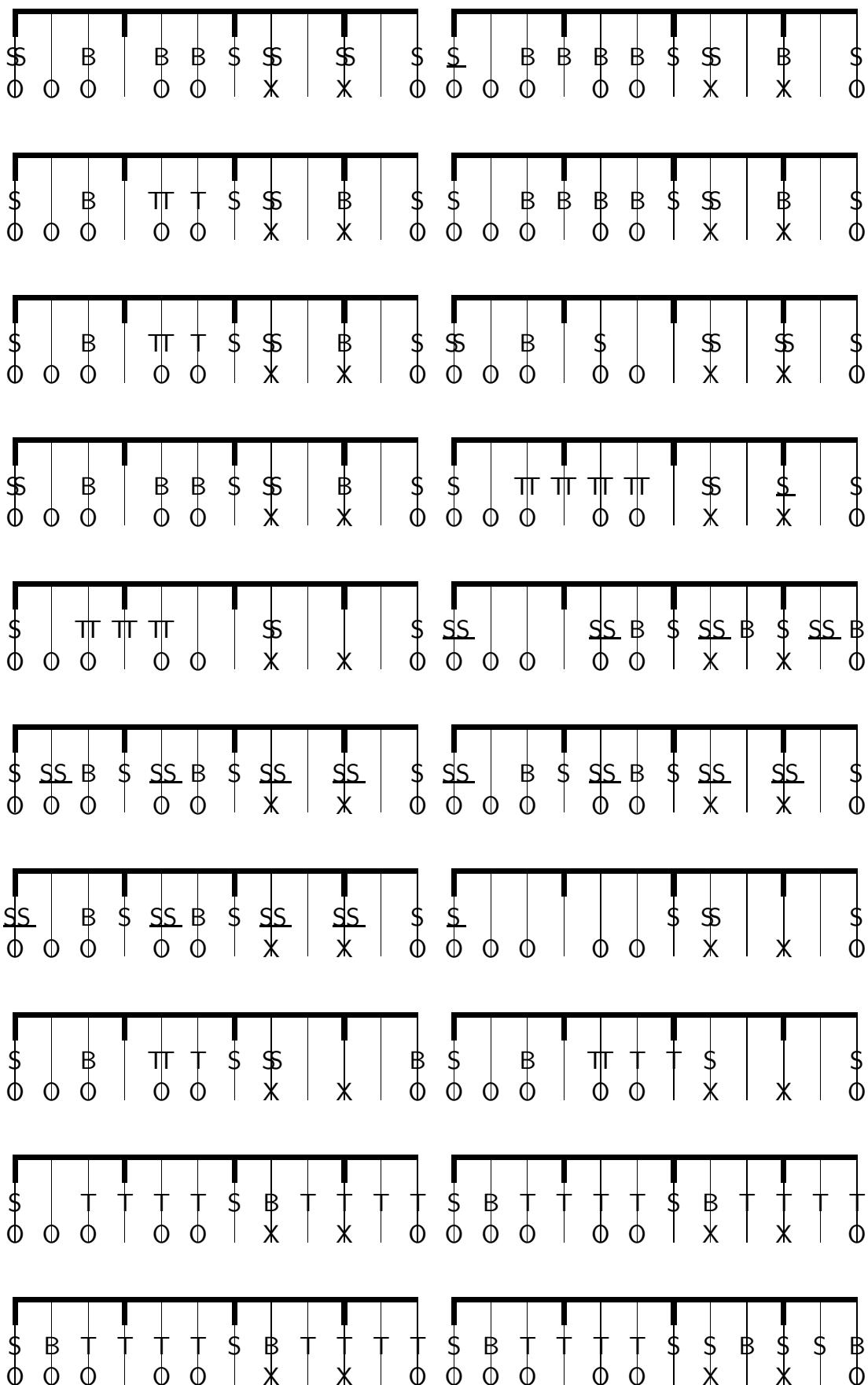


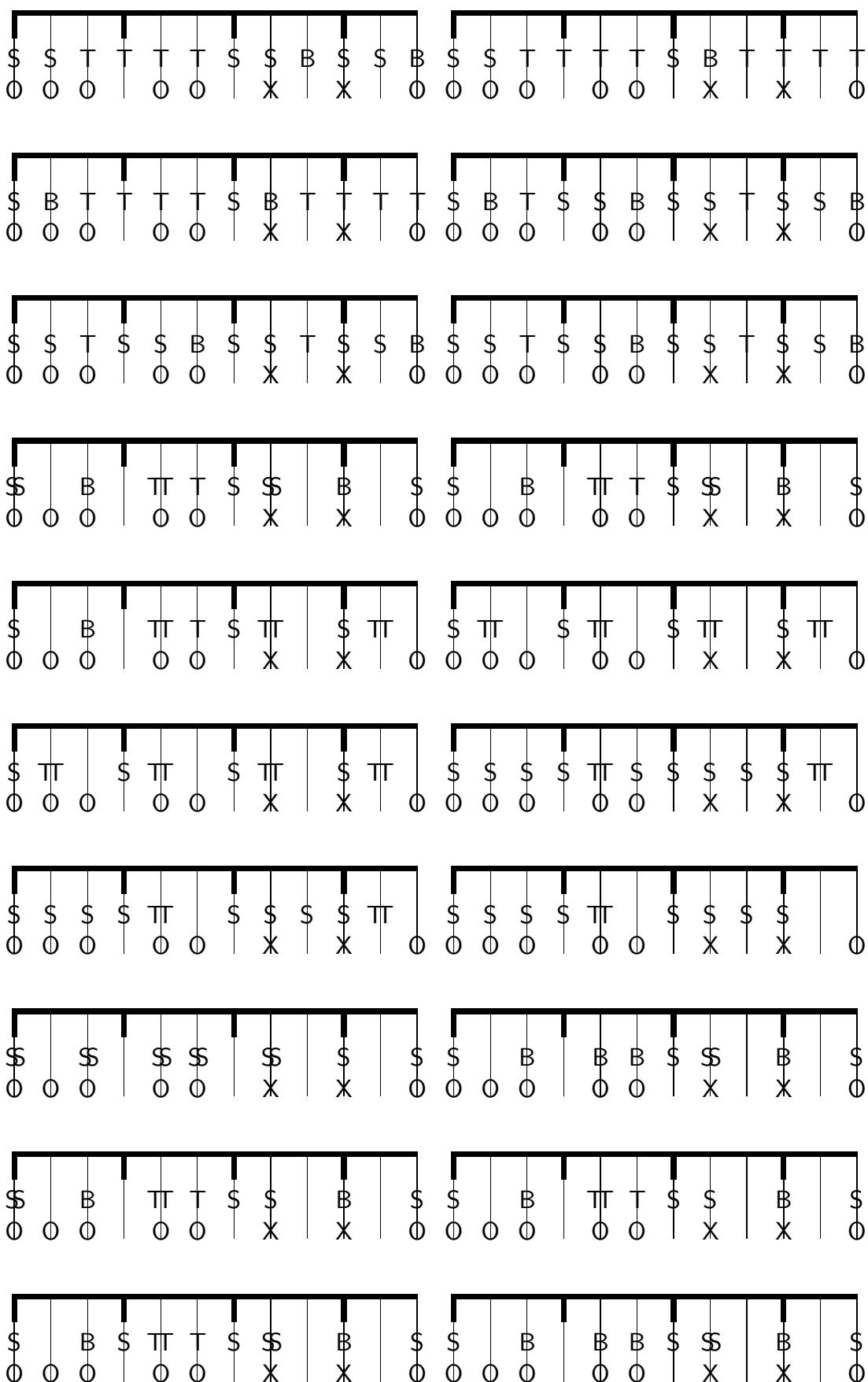


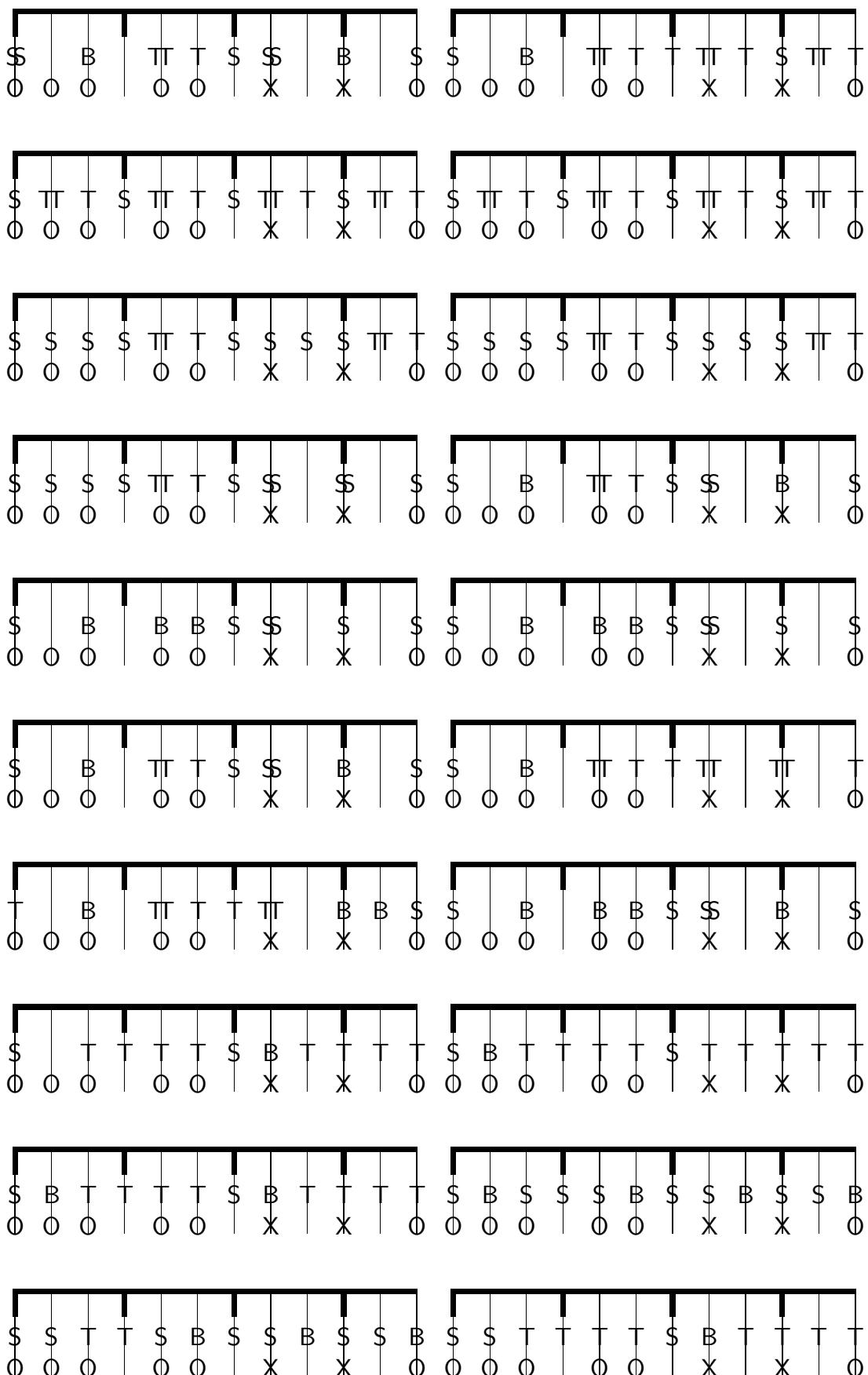


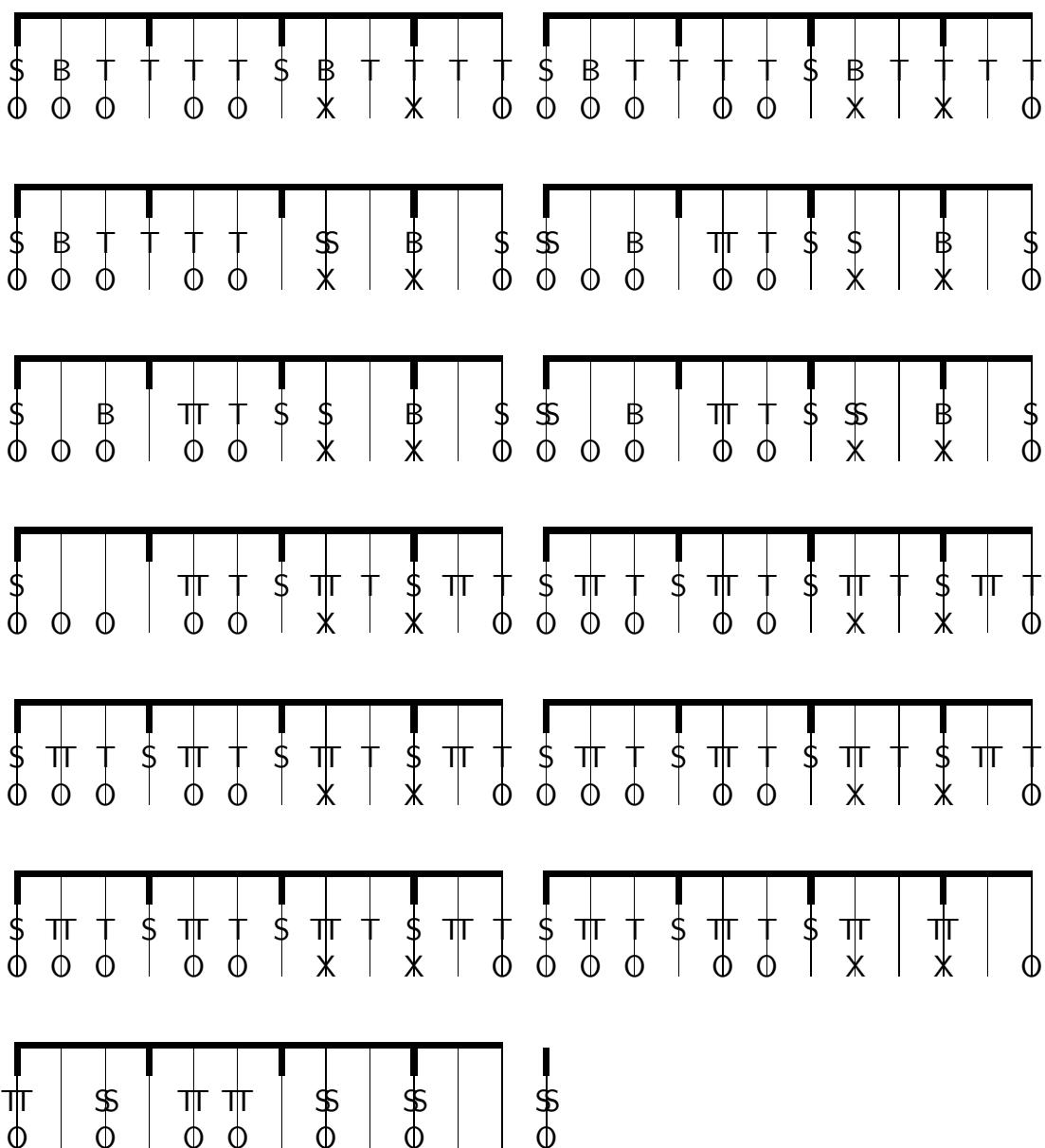






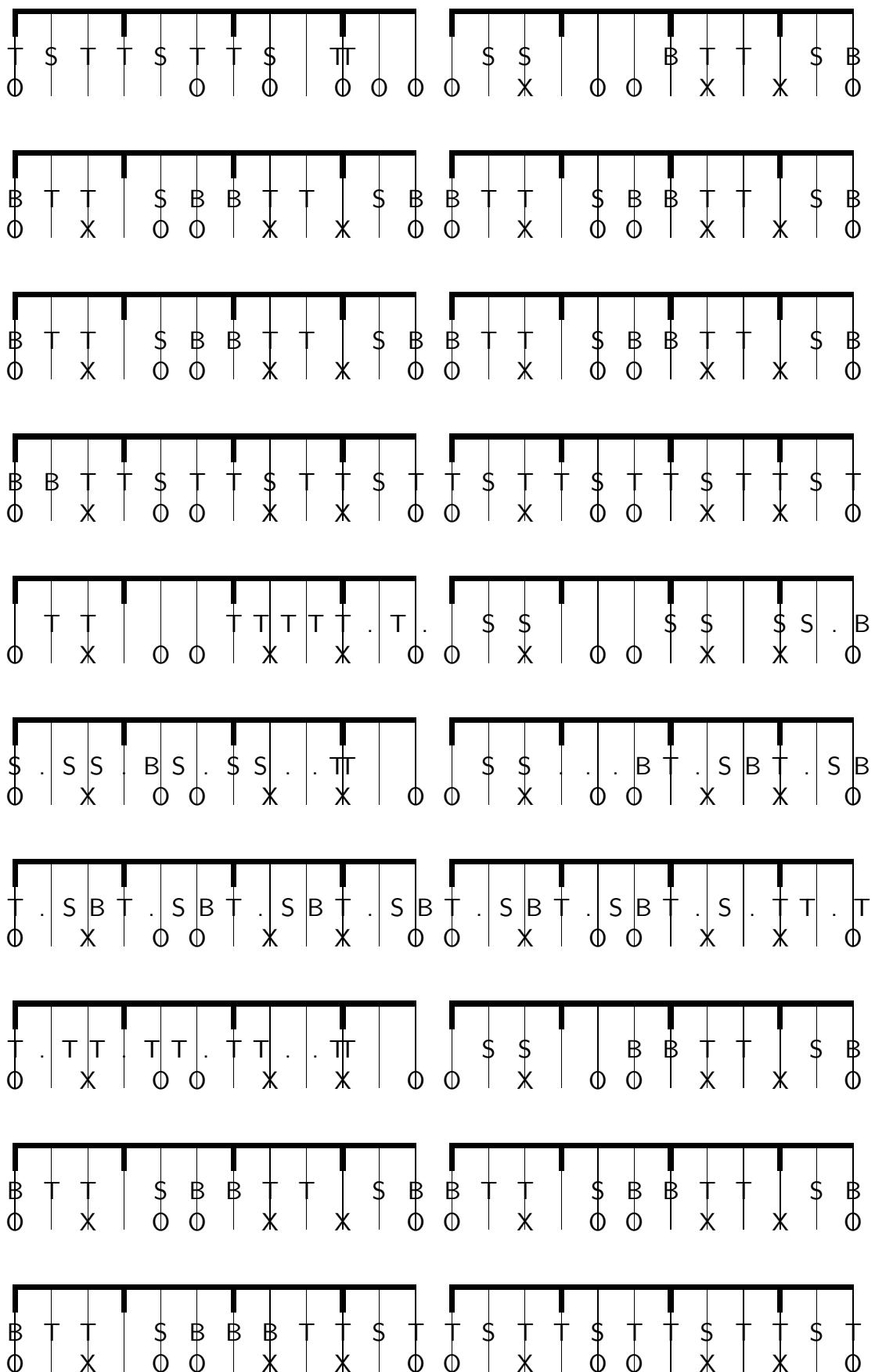


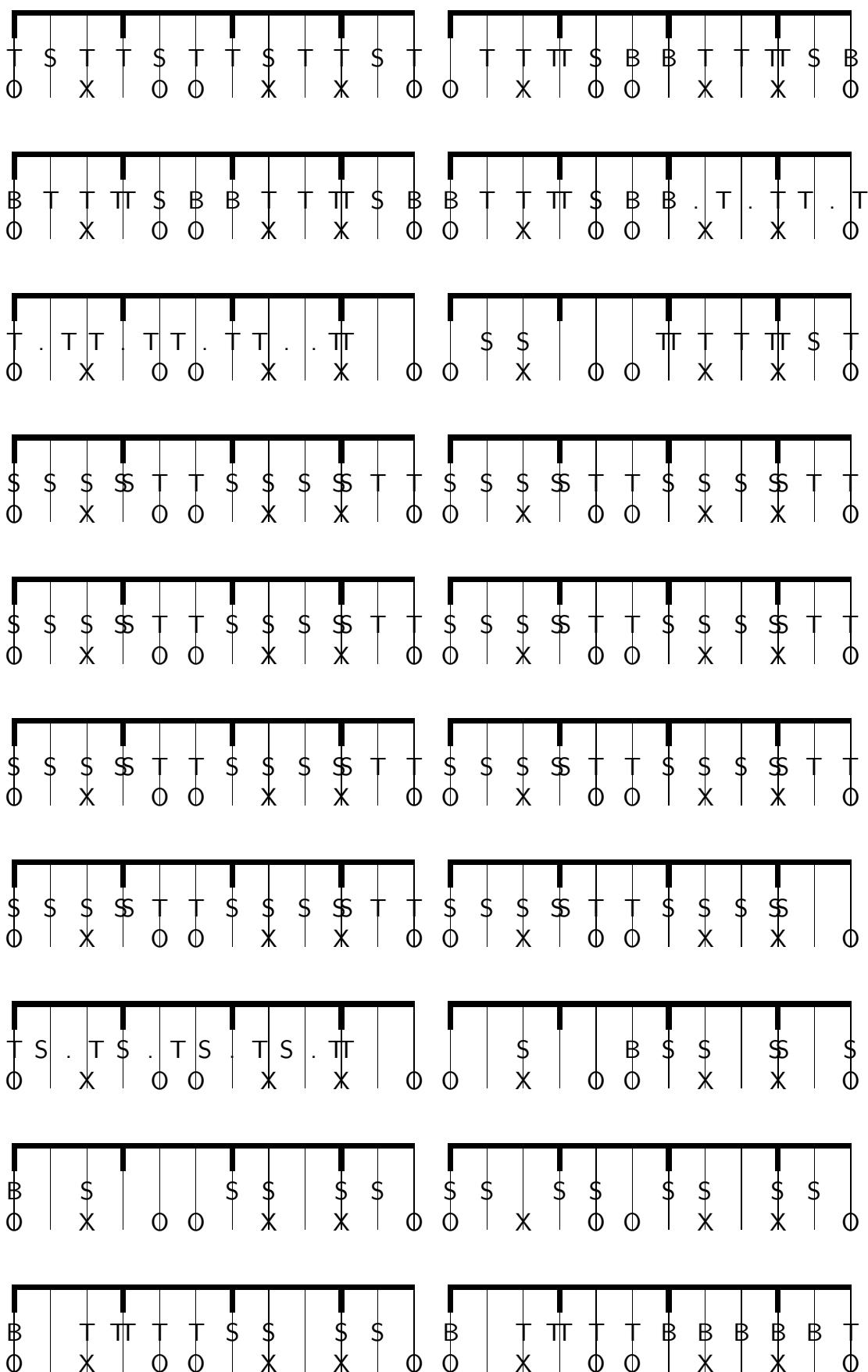




## Kirin

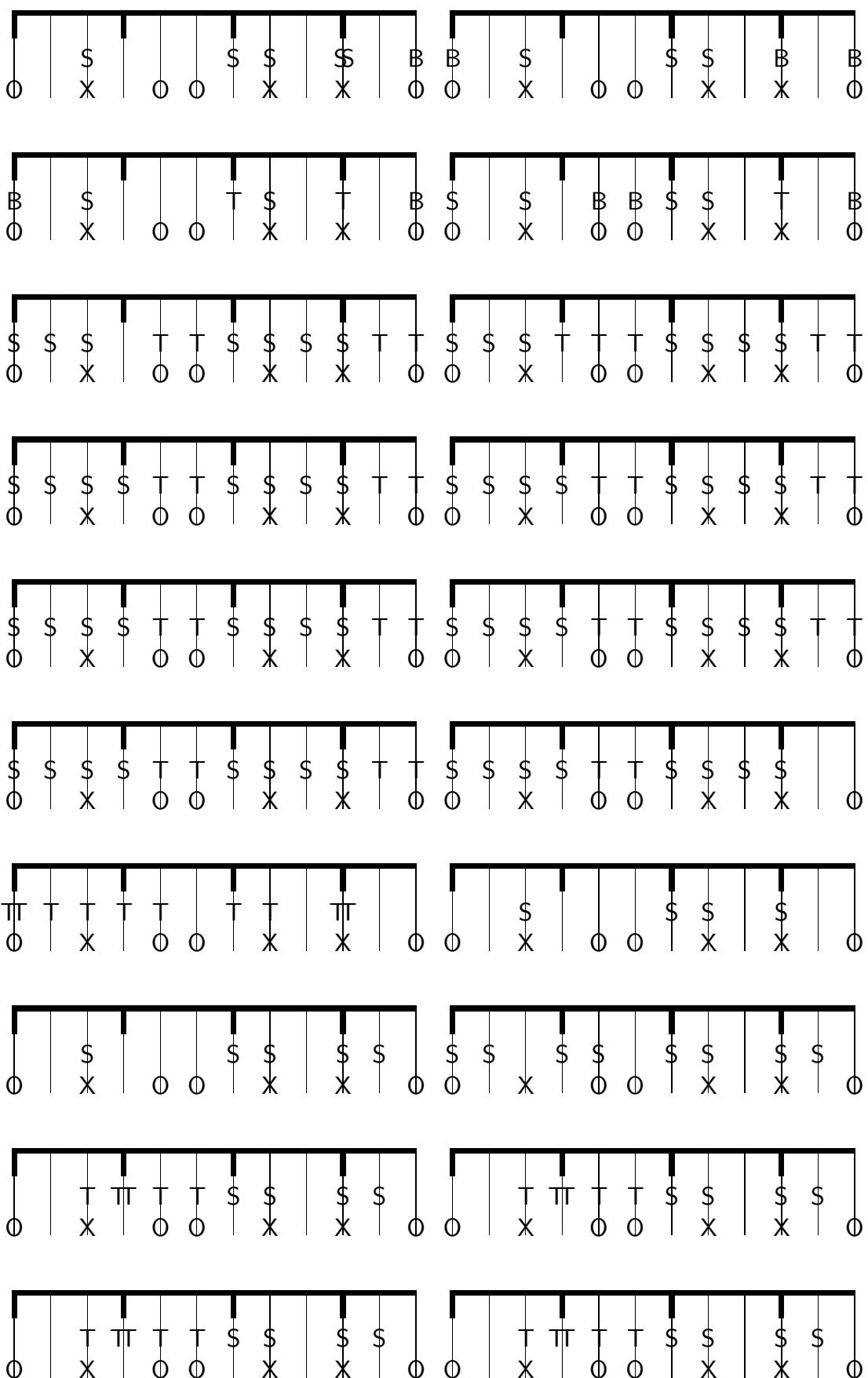
The image shows two staves of musical notation for Kirin. The first staff starts with a measure of T T followed by a measure of T T . T T . T T . S . The second staff starts with a measure of B . . B . B B B . B B B . B T.

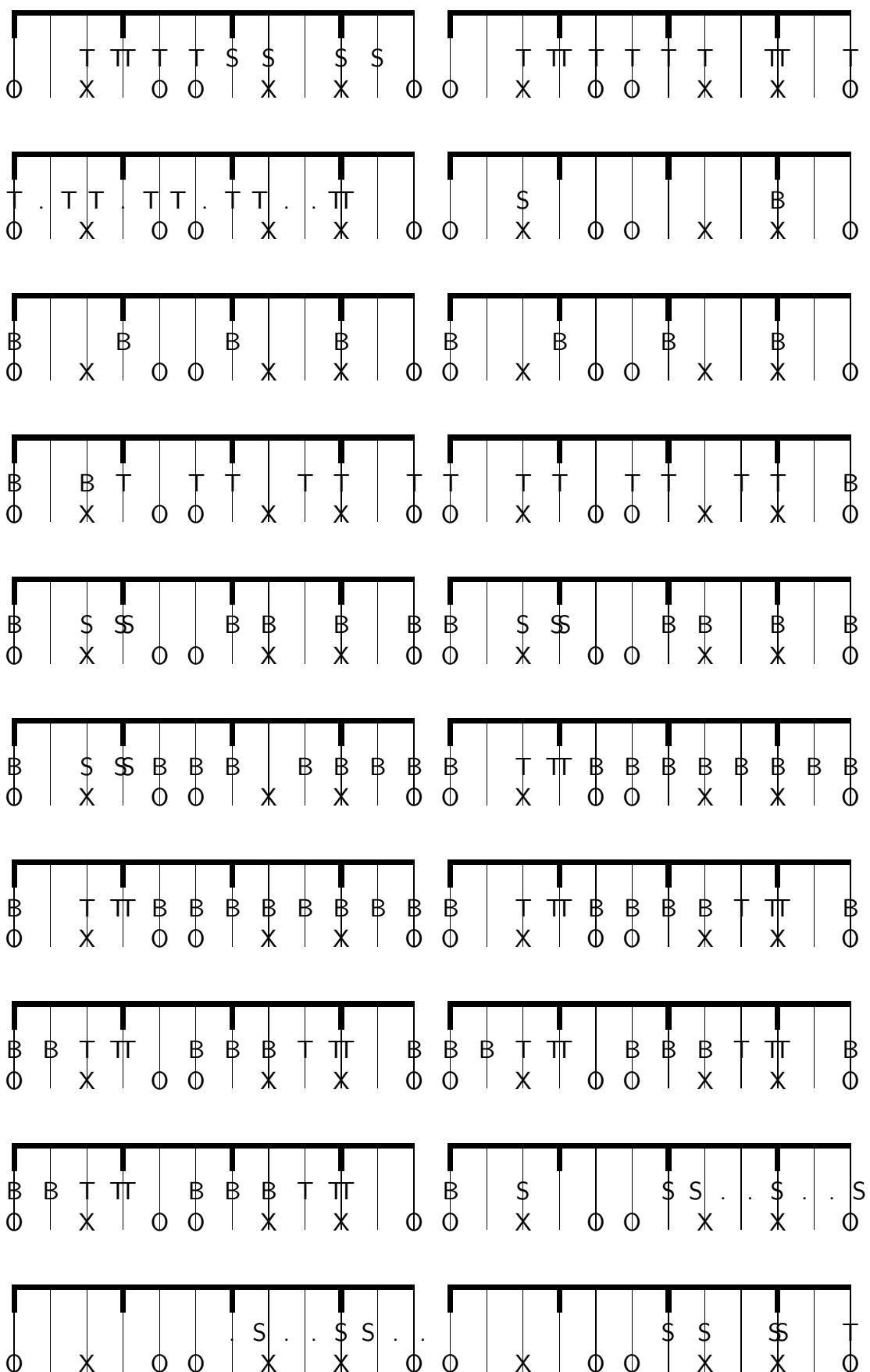


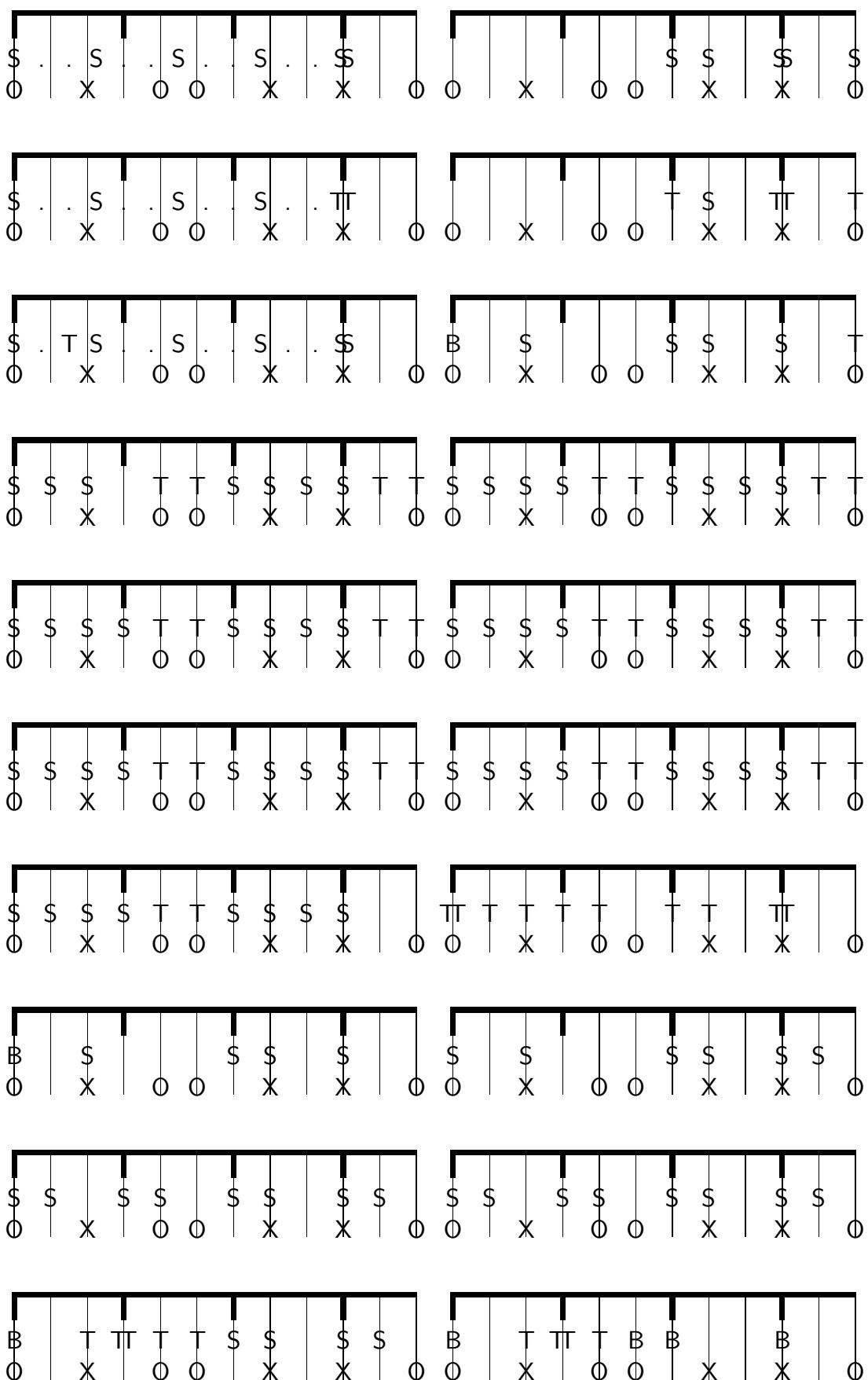


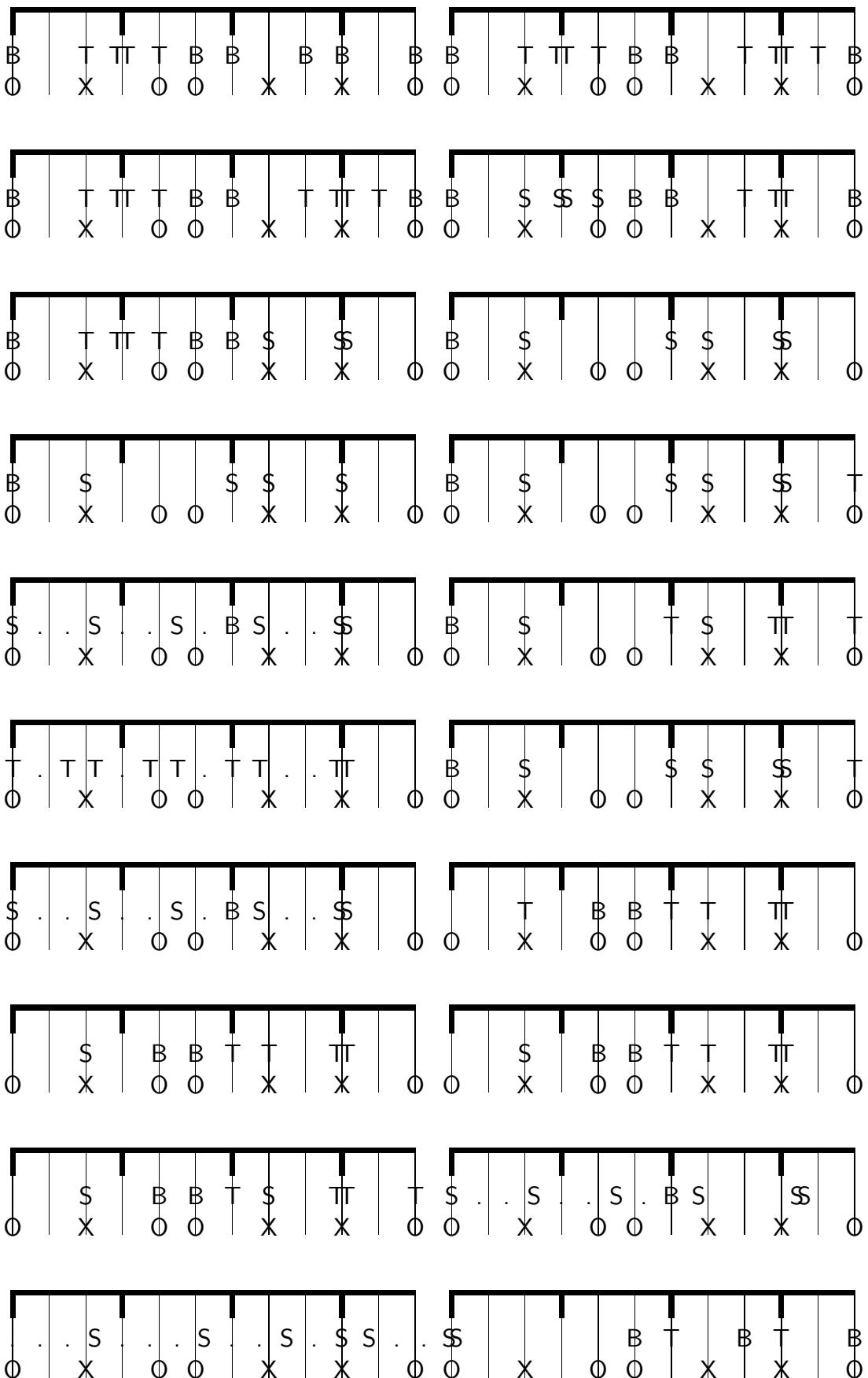
The image displays a grid of 10 rows, each representing a binary tree structure. The trees have 7 levels of nodes. Internal nodes are labeled with symbols: B, T, P, X, or S. Leaf nodes are represented by circles containing either a dot or a symbol. The symbols at the leaves are as follows:

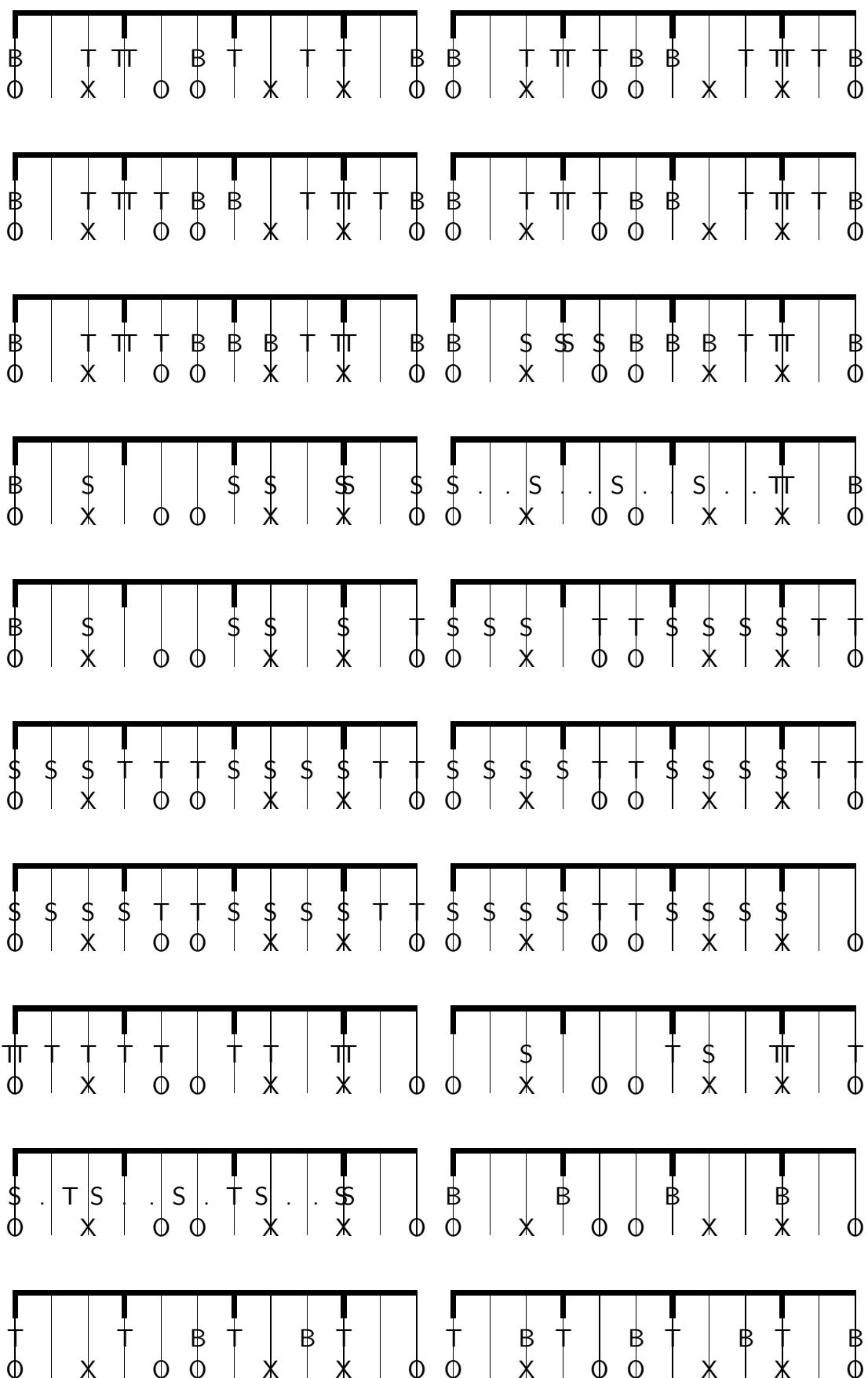
- Row 1: B, X, T, T, T, B, X, B, B, B, B
- Row 2: B, O, X, T, T, T, B, X, B, B, B, B
- Row 3: B, O, S, X, T, S, O, O, T, S, X, B, B
- Row 4: B, O, S, X, T, S, O, O, T, S, X, B, B
- Row 5: T, O, B, B, B, B, O, O, T, B, X, B, X, B, B
- Row 6: T, O, B, B, B, B, O, O, T, B, X, B, O, O, T, B, X, B, B
- Row 7: T, O, B, B, B, B, O, O, T, B, X, B, X, B, B, B
- Row 8: T, O, B, B, B, B, O, O, T, S, X, T, O, O, T, S, X, ., T, P, X, B
- Row 9: T, O, B, B, T, ., B, B, T, ., B, B, B, B
- Row 10: T, O, B, B, T, ., B, B, T, ., T, X, B, B, T, ., B, B
- Row 11: T, O, B, B, T, ., B, B, T, ., T, X, B, B, T, ., T, P, X, B
- Row 12: T, O, B, B, T, ., B, B, T, ., T, X, B, B, T, ., T, P, X, B
- Row 13: T, O, B, B, T, ., B, B, T, ., T, X, B, B, T, ., T, P, X, B
- Row 14: T, O, B, B, T, ., B, B, T, ., T, X, B, B, T, ., T, P, X, B
- Row 15: T, O, B, B, T, ., B, B, T, ., T, X, B, B, T, ., T, P, X, B

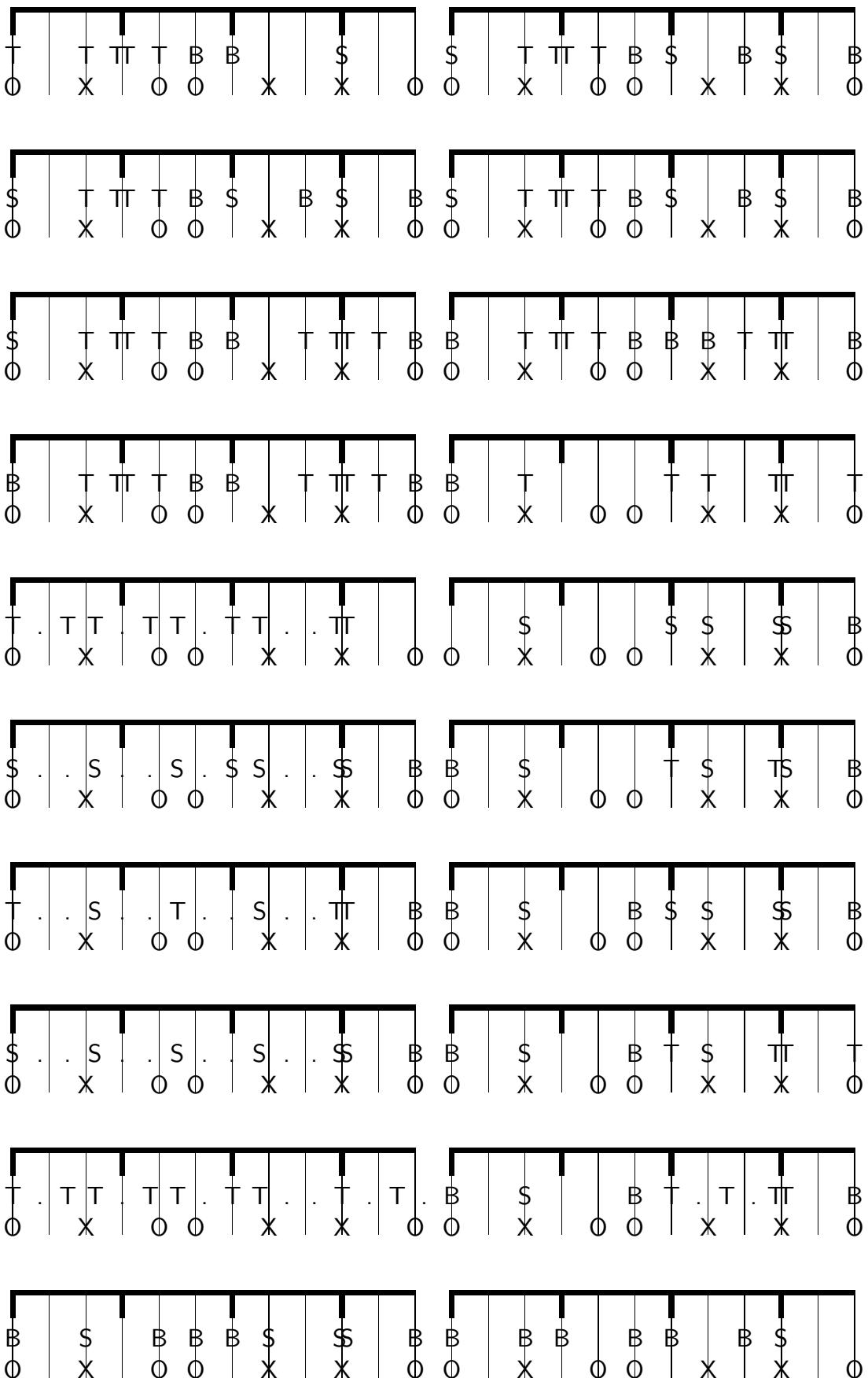


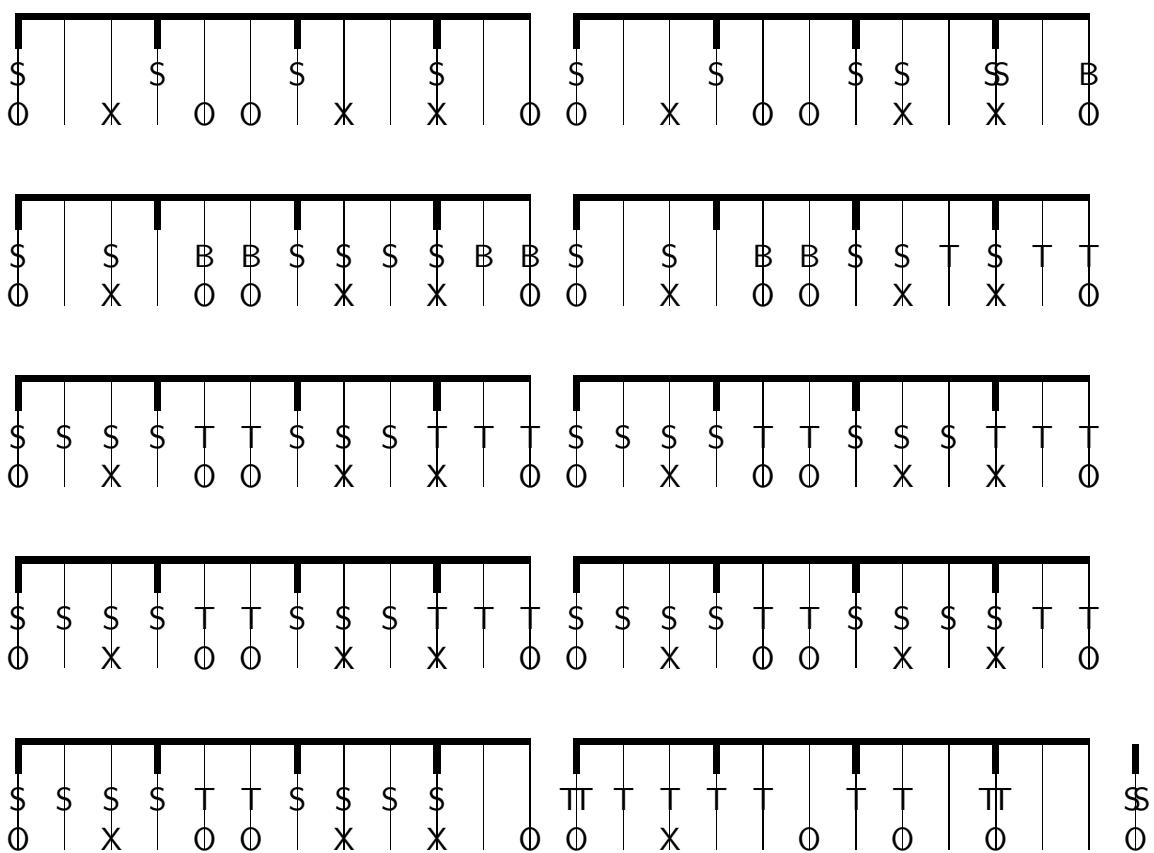




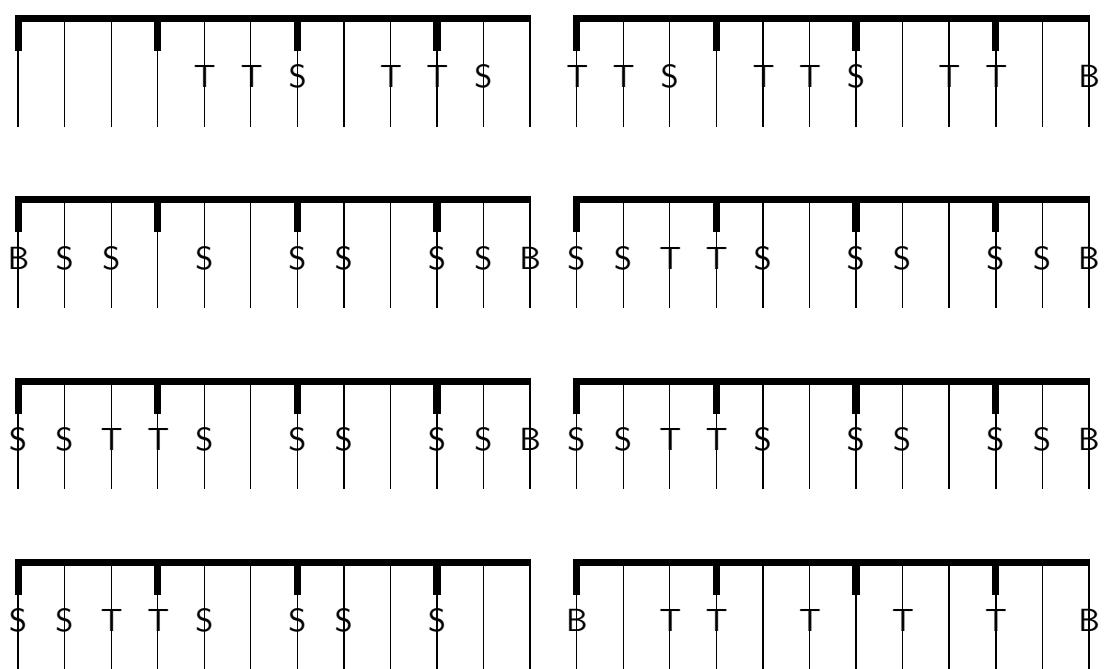


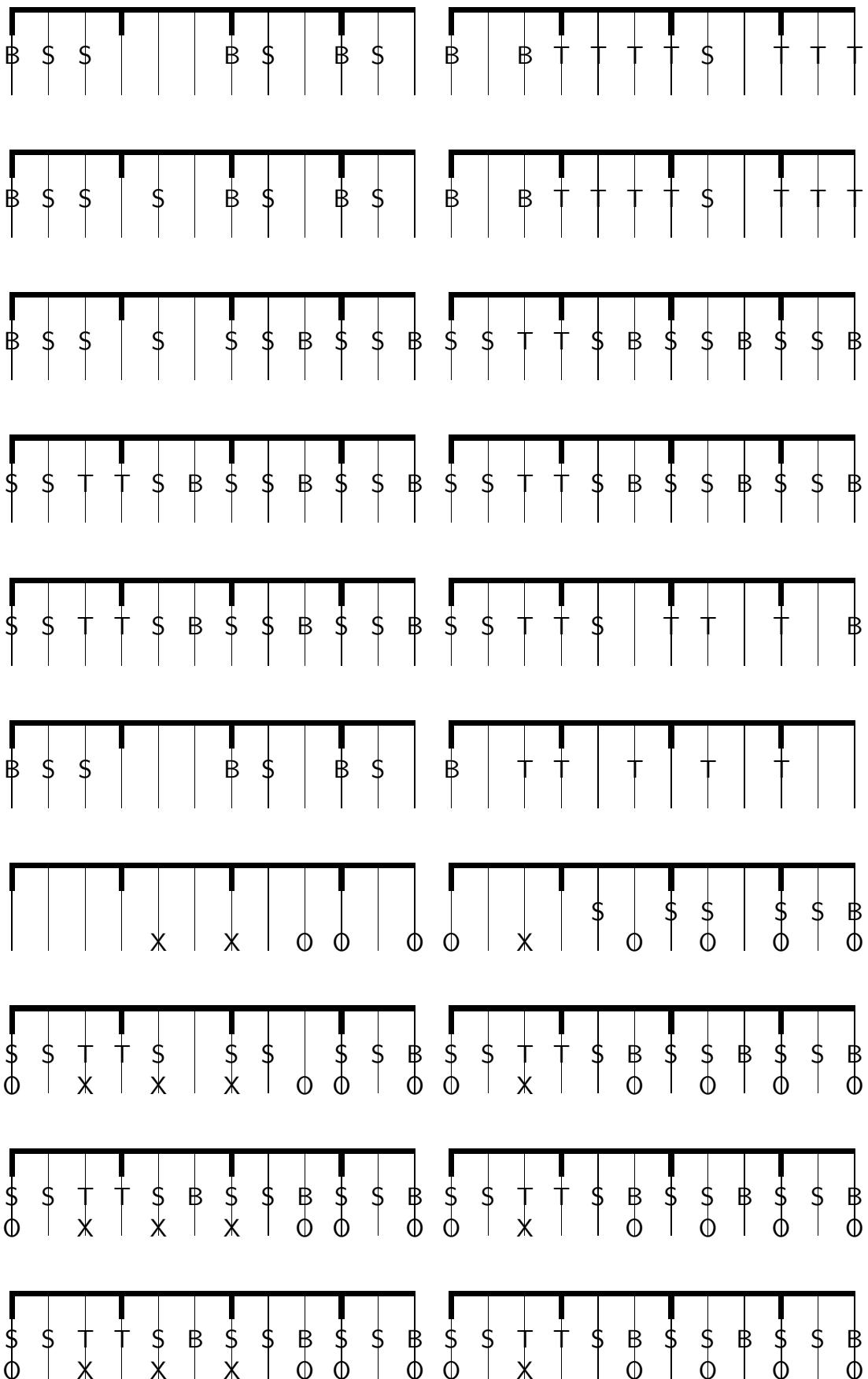


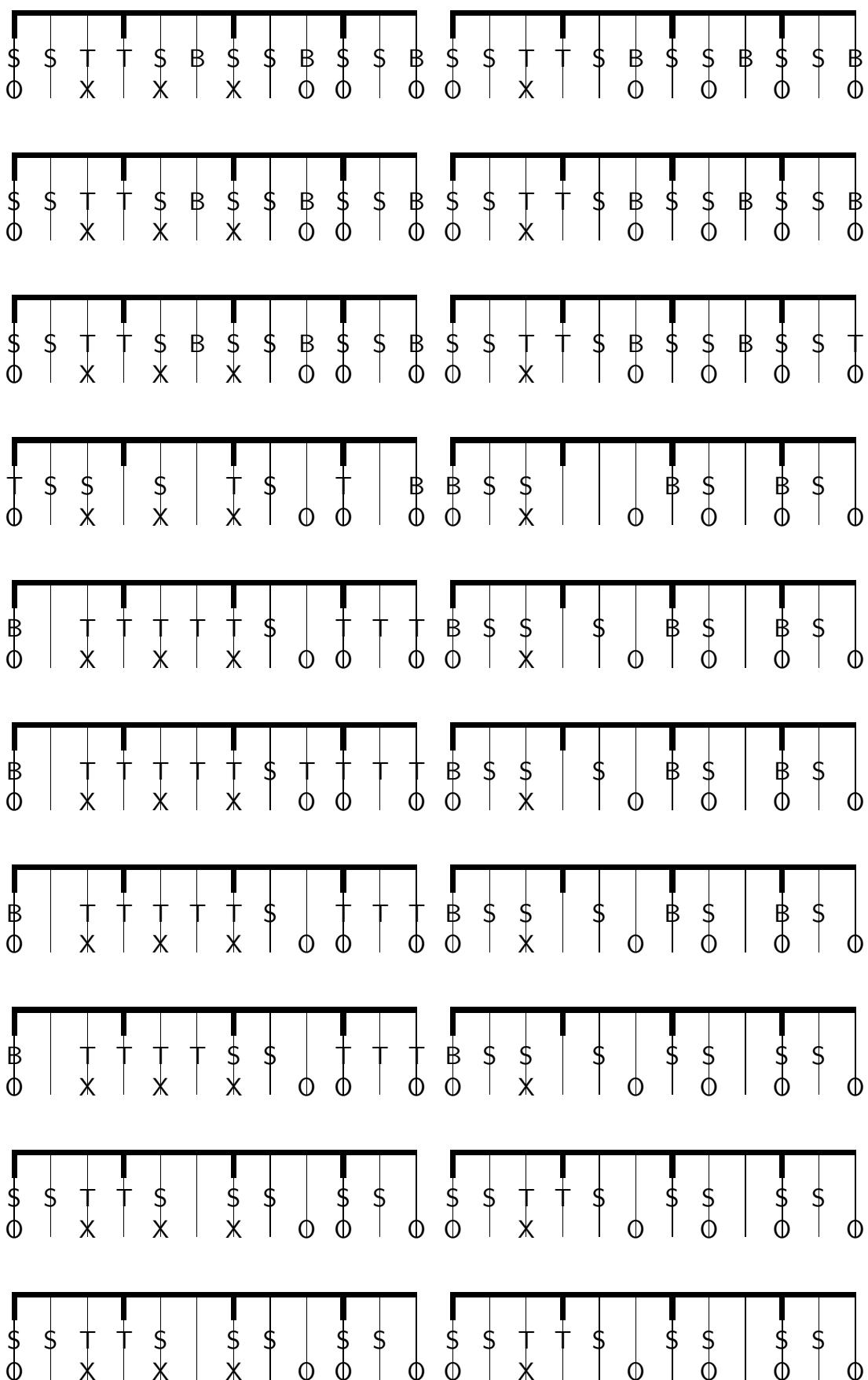


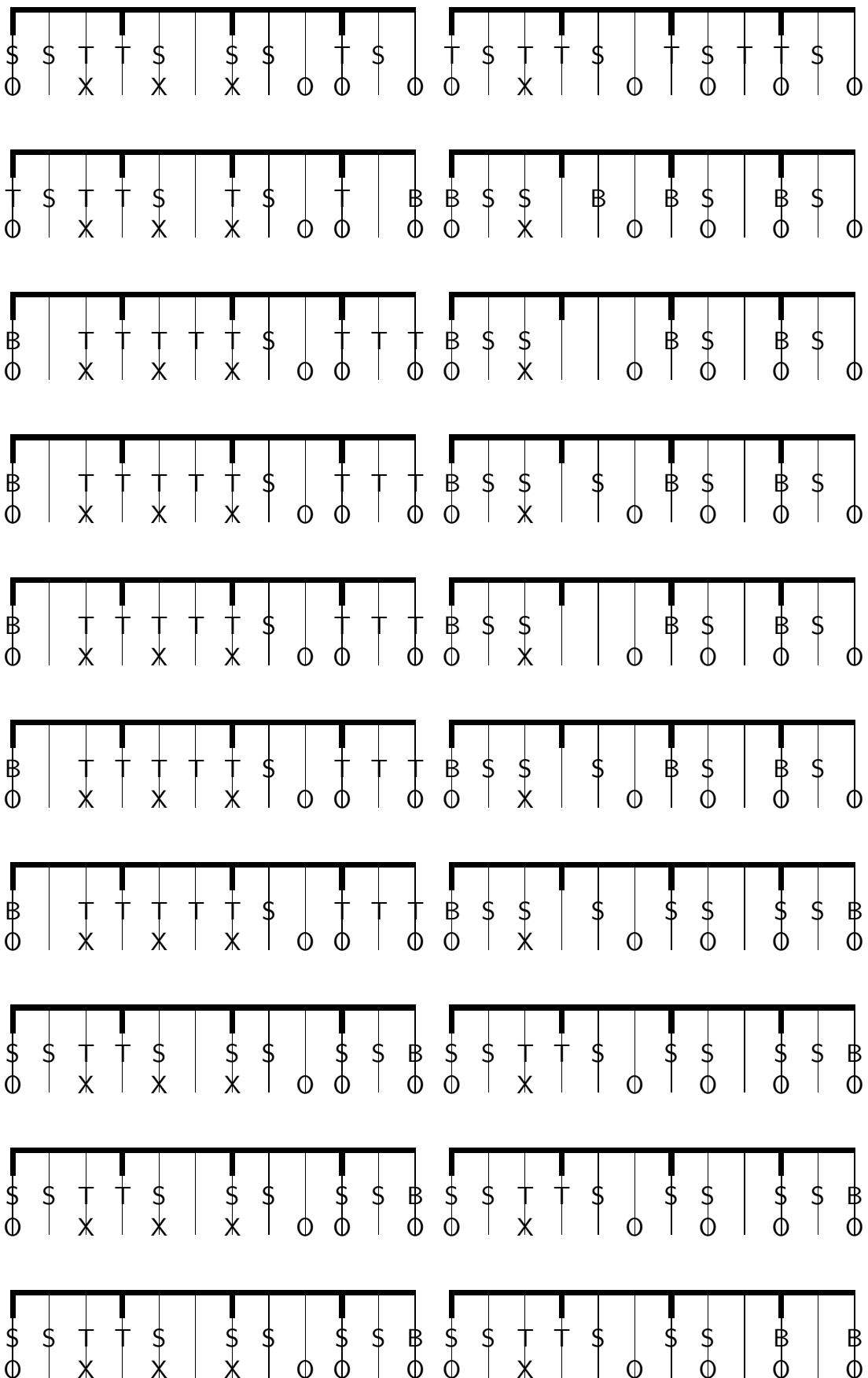


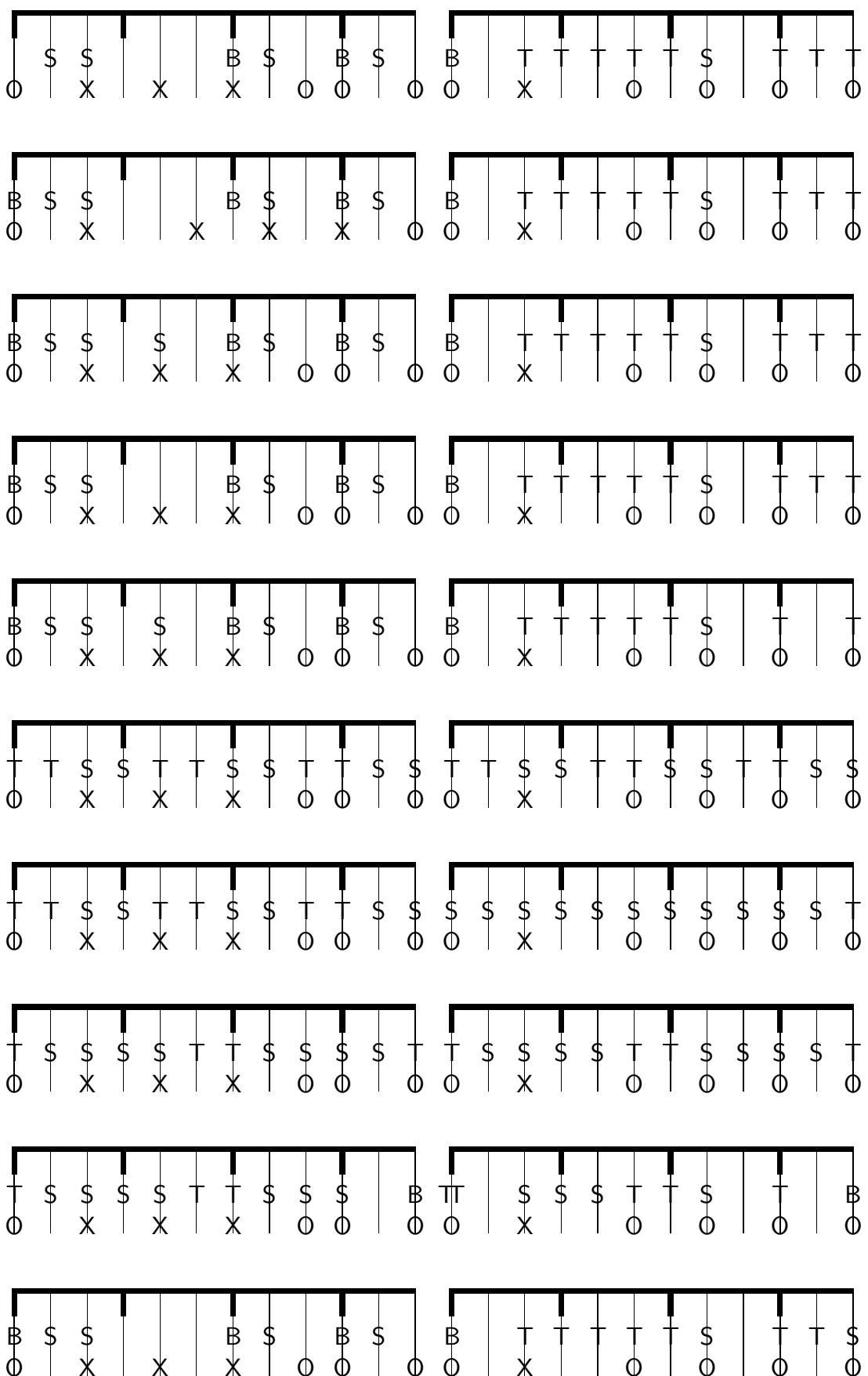
## Burun

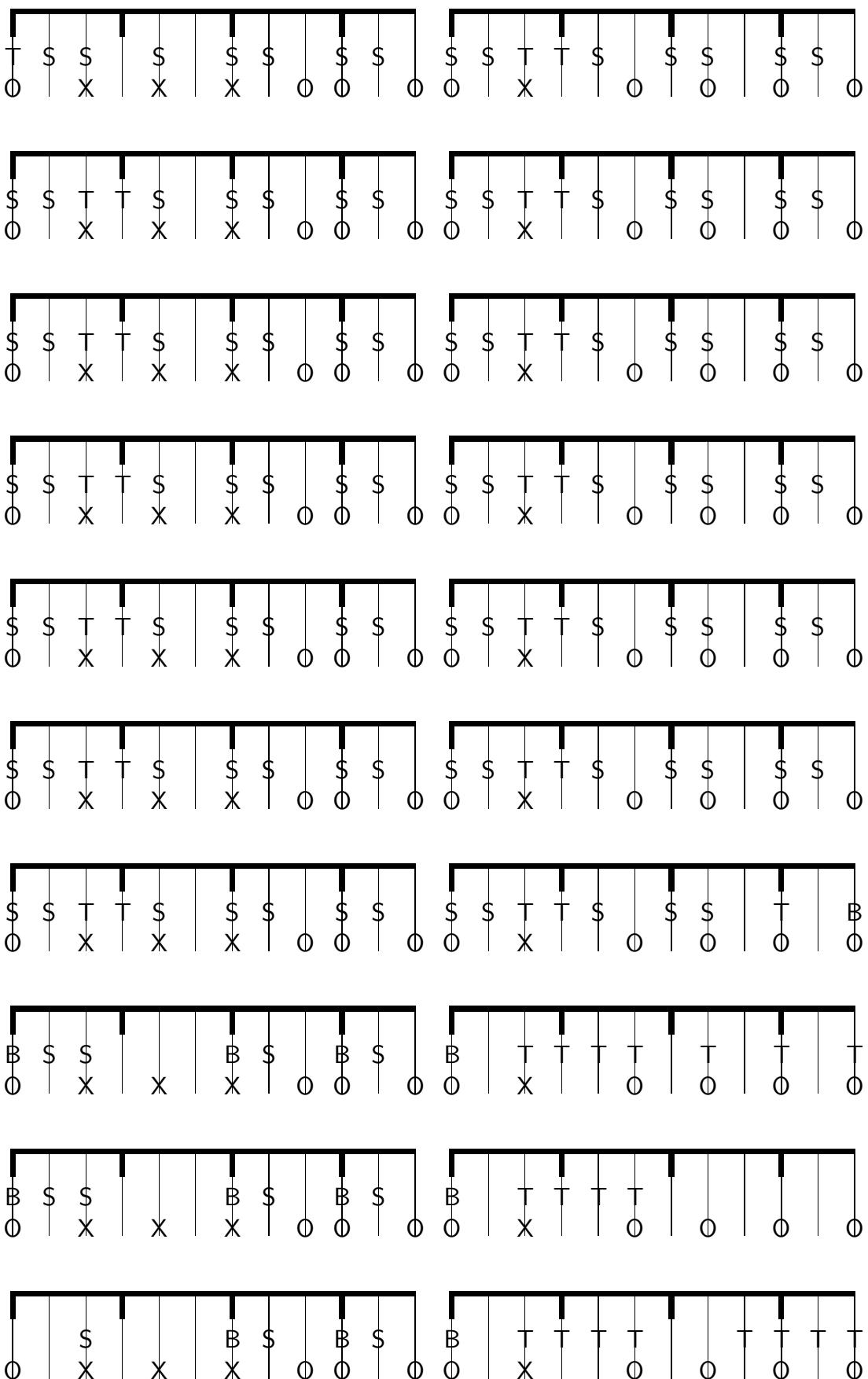


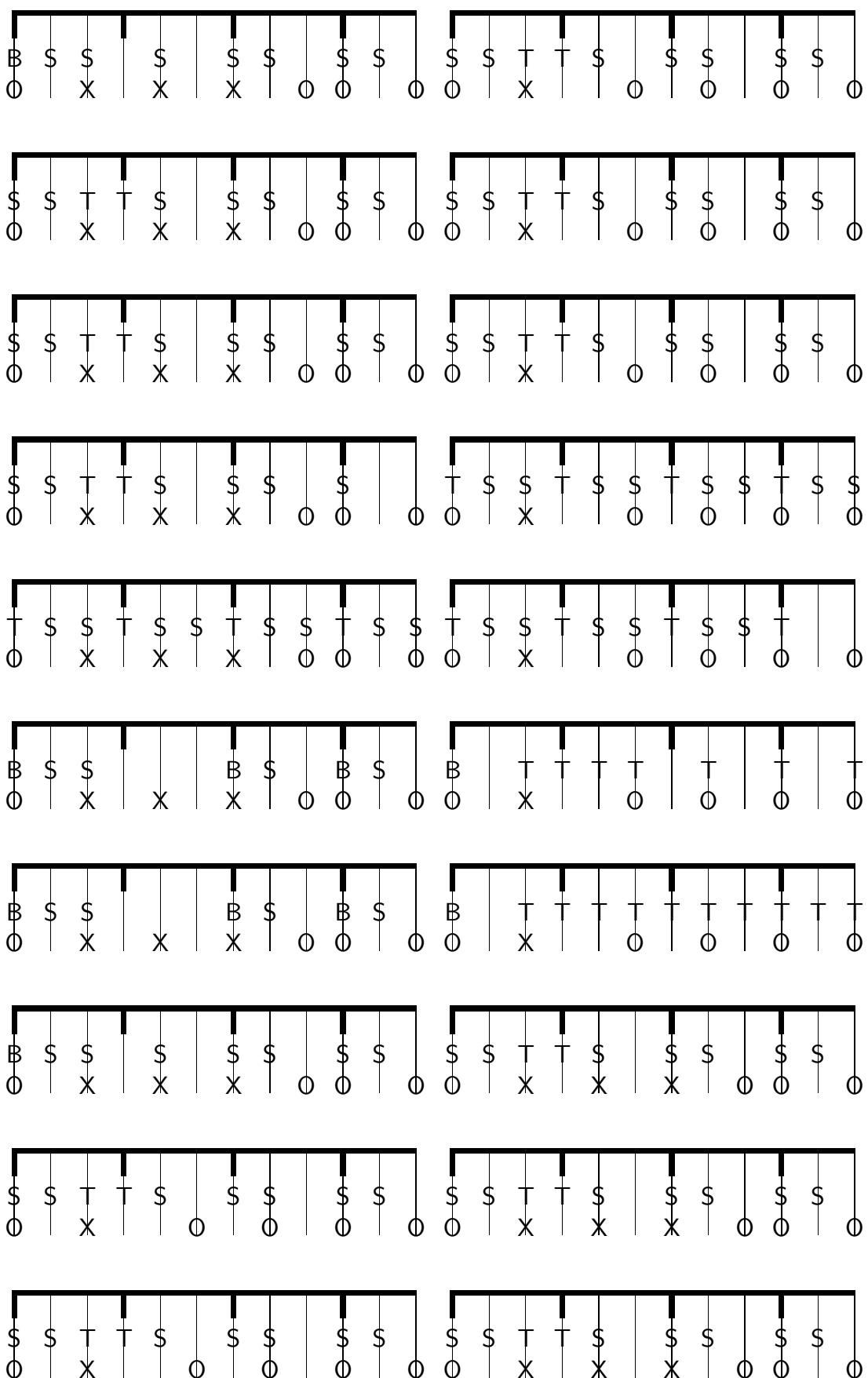


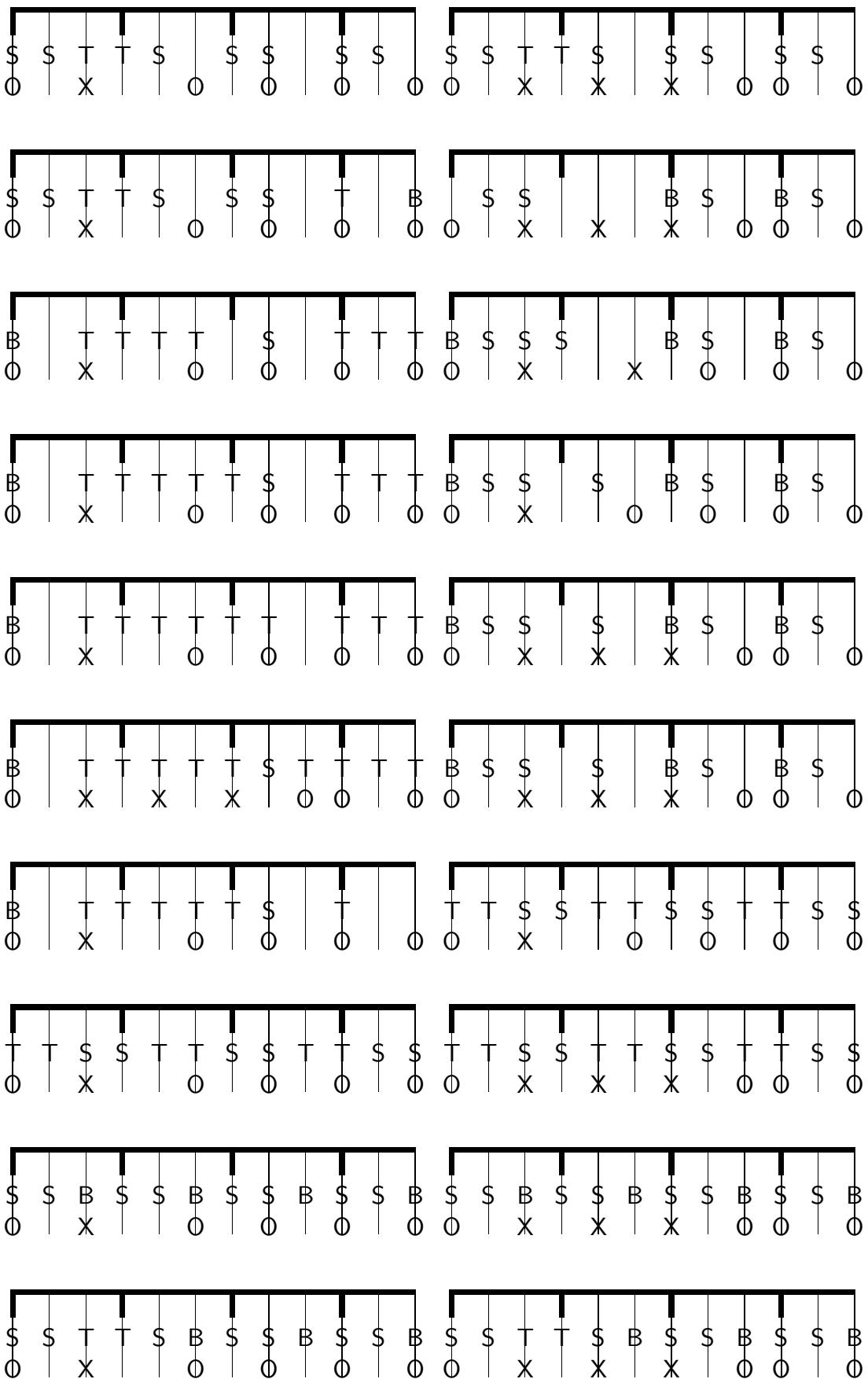


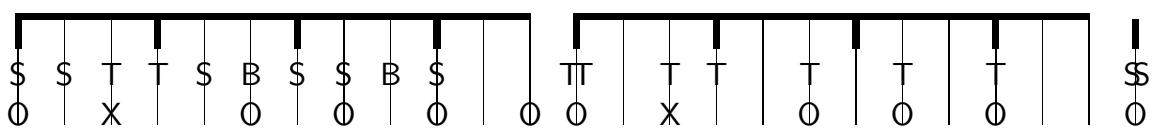






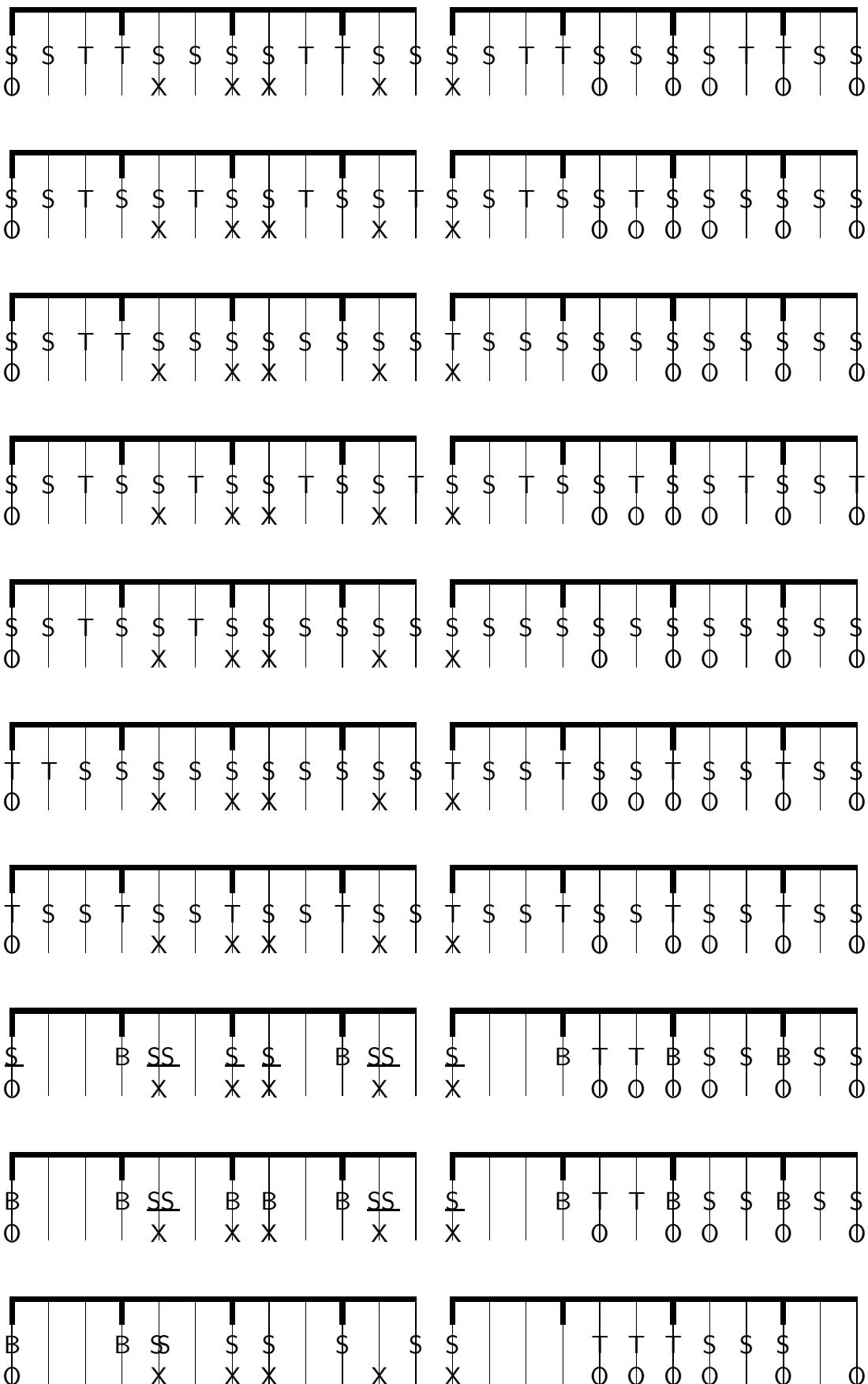


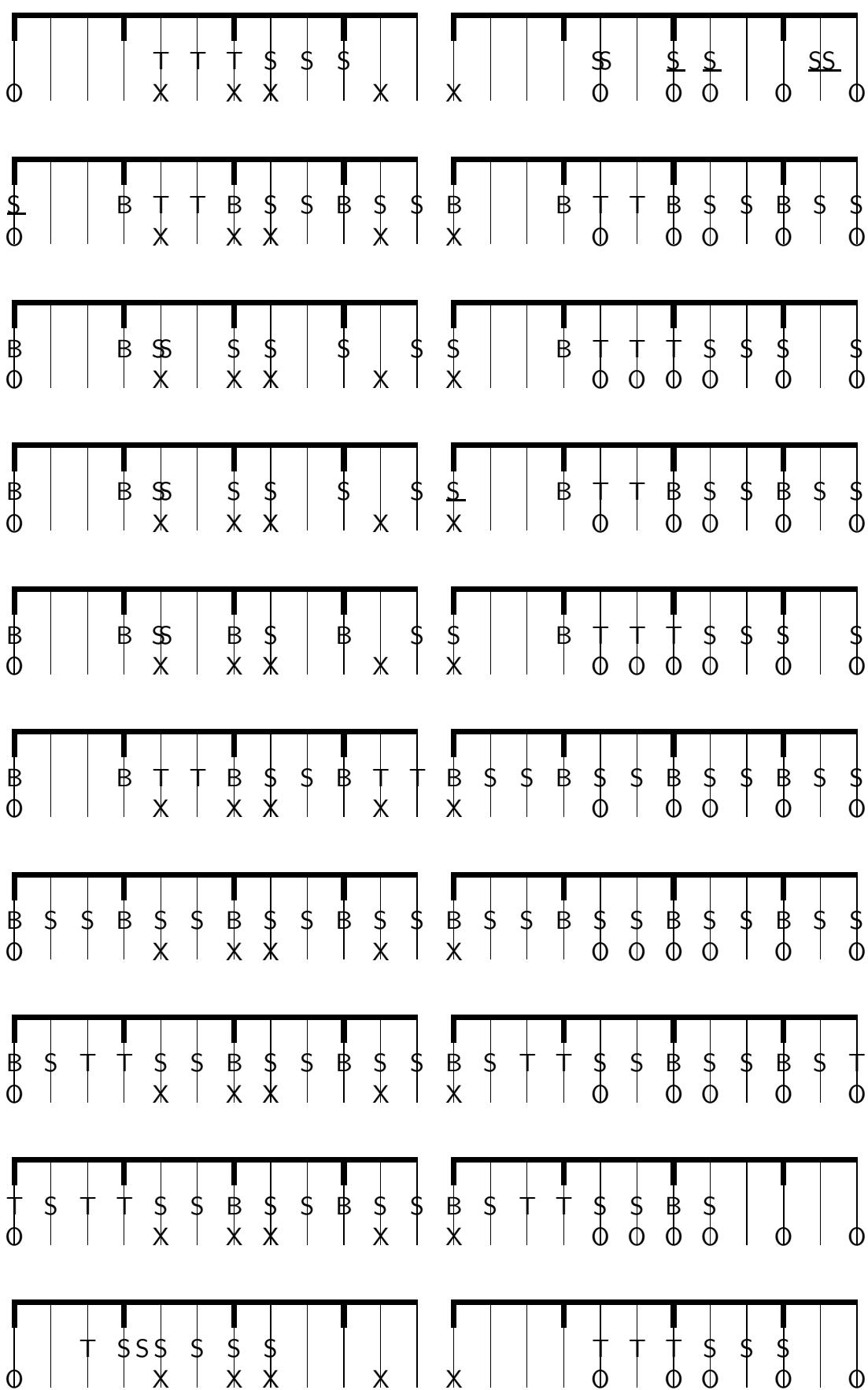


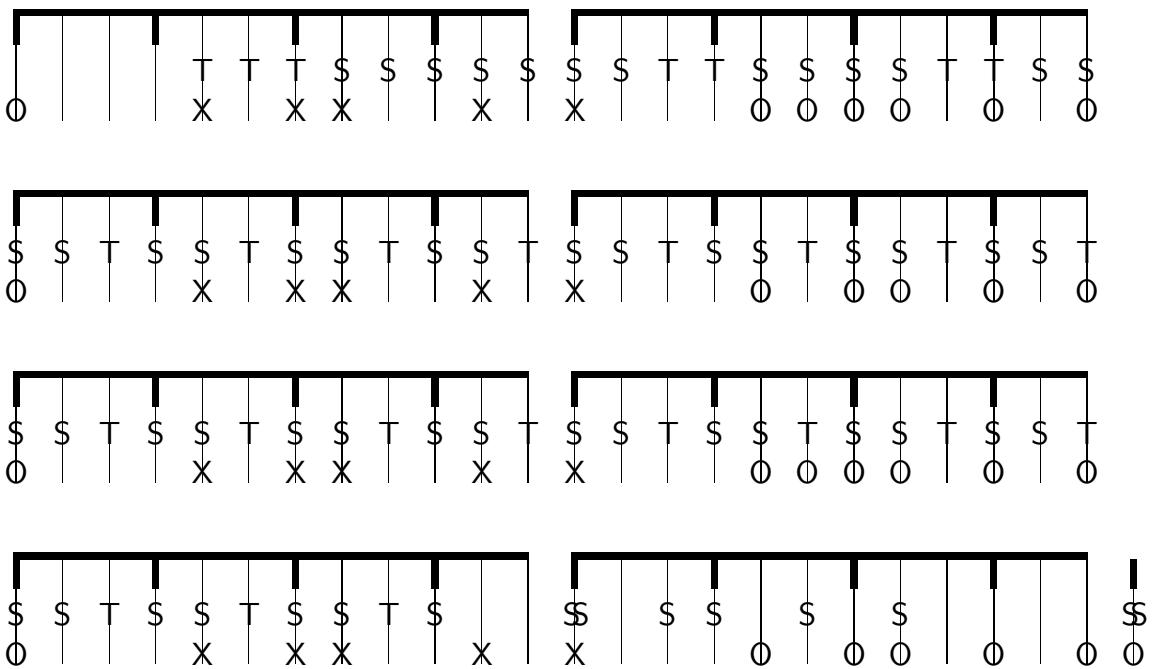
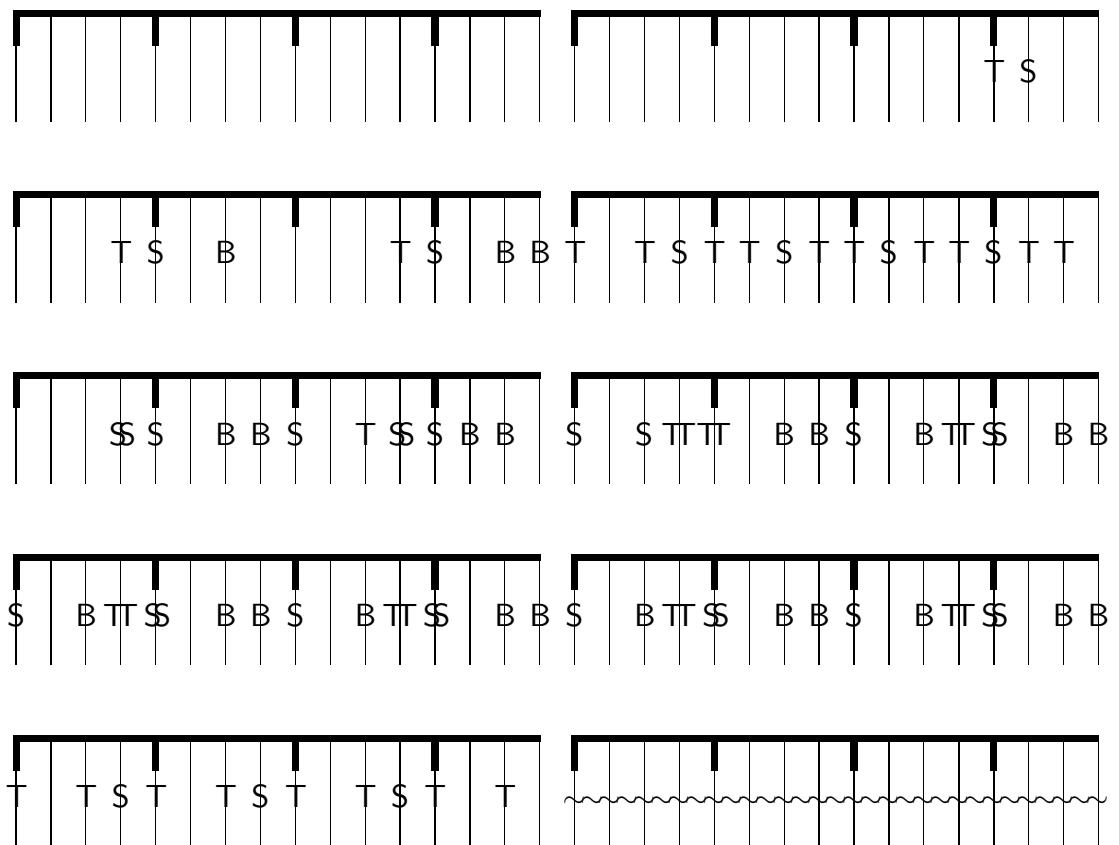


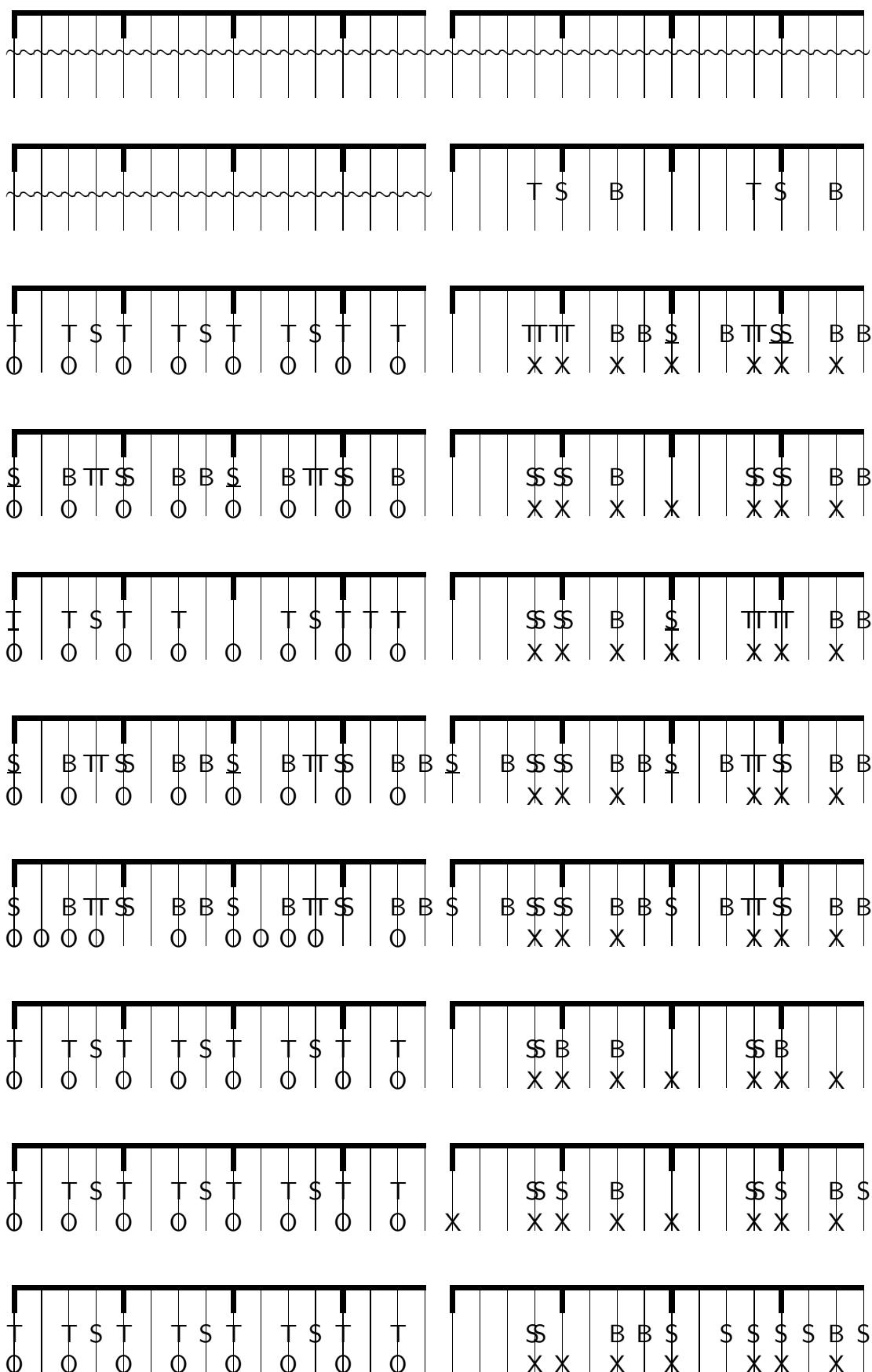
## Maanuman

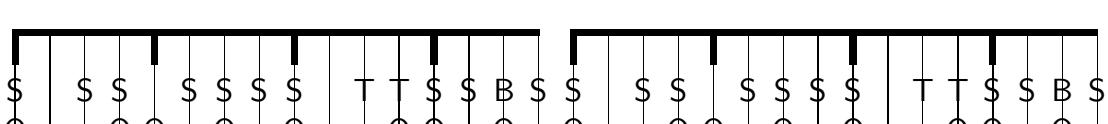
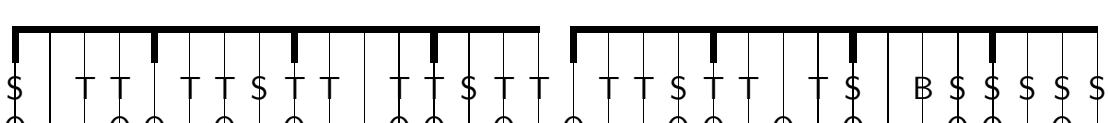
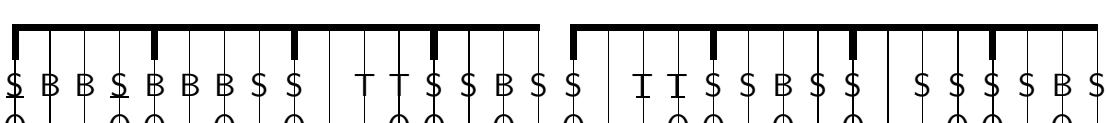
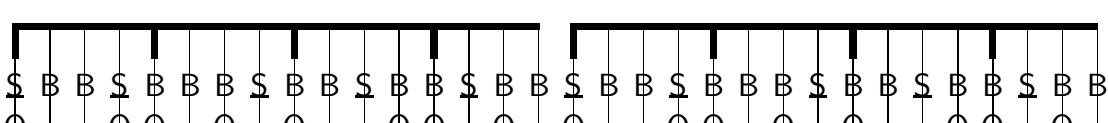
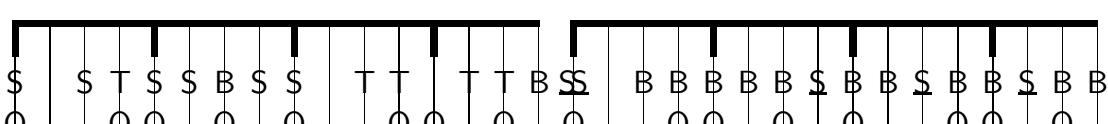
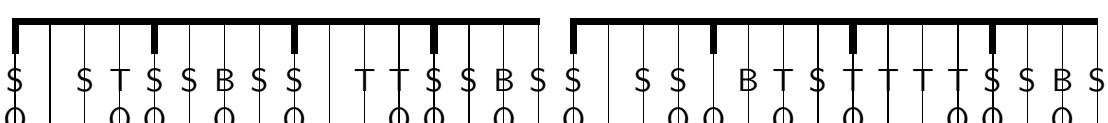
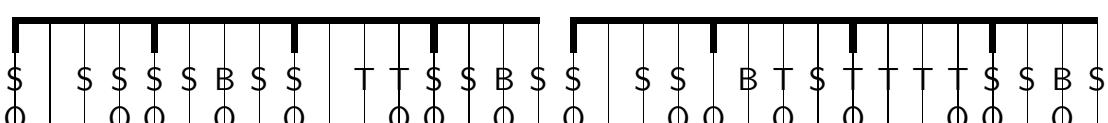
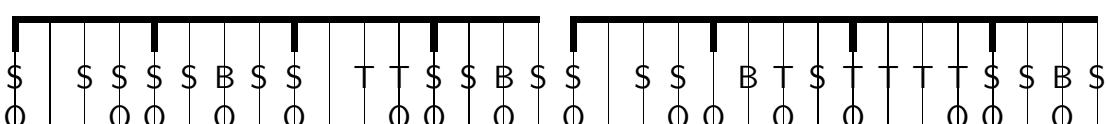
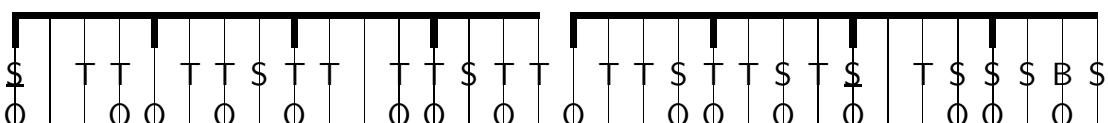
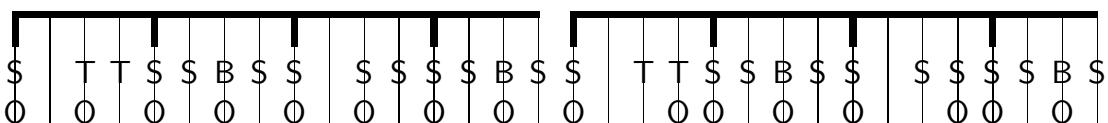
The musical notation consists of ten horizontal staves, each with five vertical lines. Notes are represented by vertical bars with specific symbols at their top or bottom. The symbols used are \$, B, T, X, and SS. The first staff shows a repeating pattern of \$, \$, T, T, \$, B, \$, \$, B, \$, \$, O. Subsequent staves show variations of this pattern, such as T, B, \$, SS, X, \$, \$, B, SS, X; and B, \$, SS, X, \$, \$, B, SS, X. The patterns repeat every two measures, creating a rhythmic cycle.

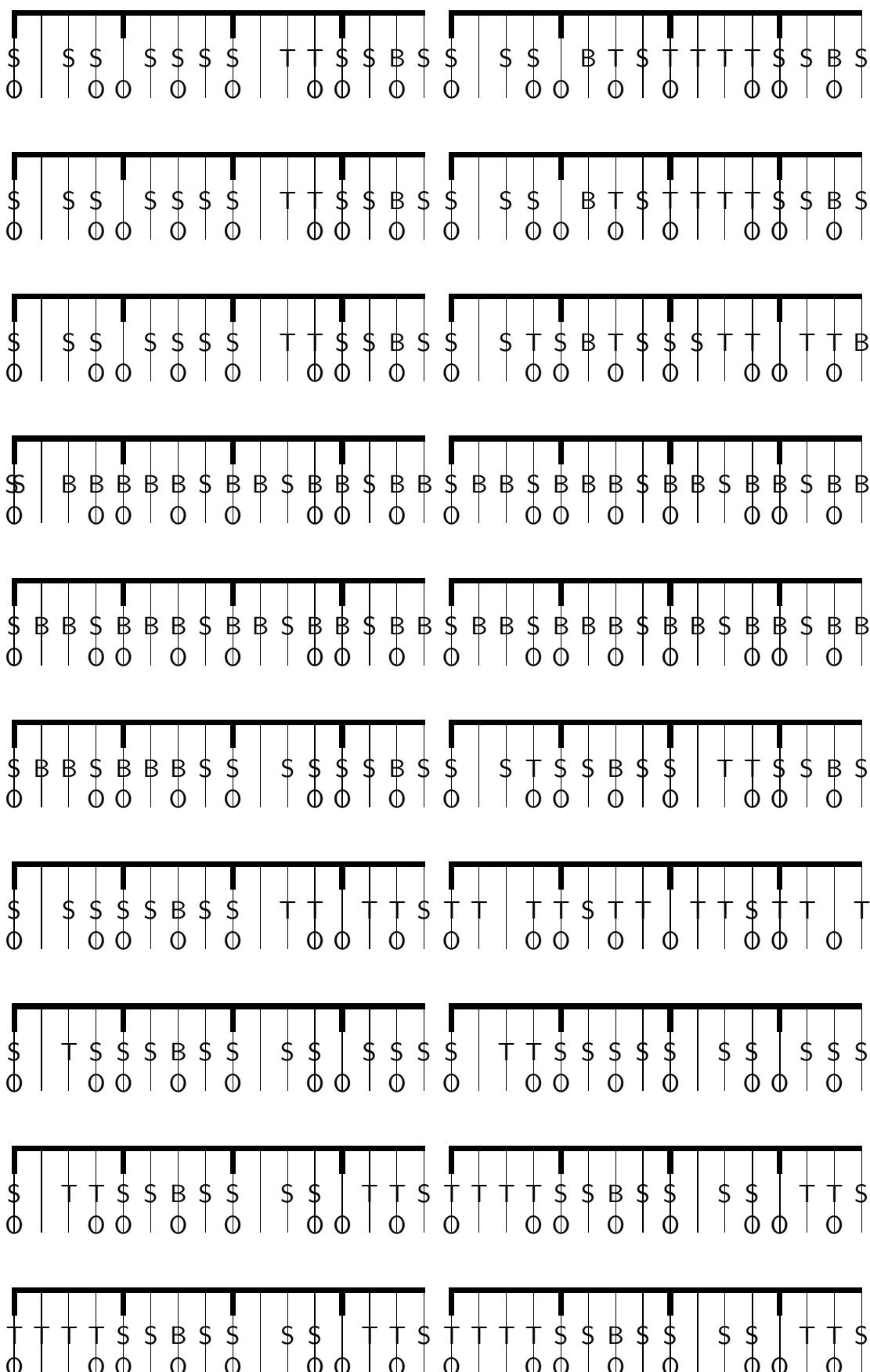


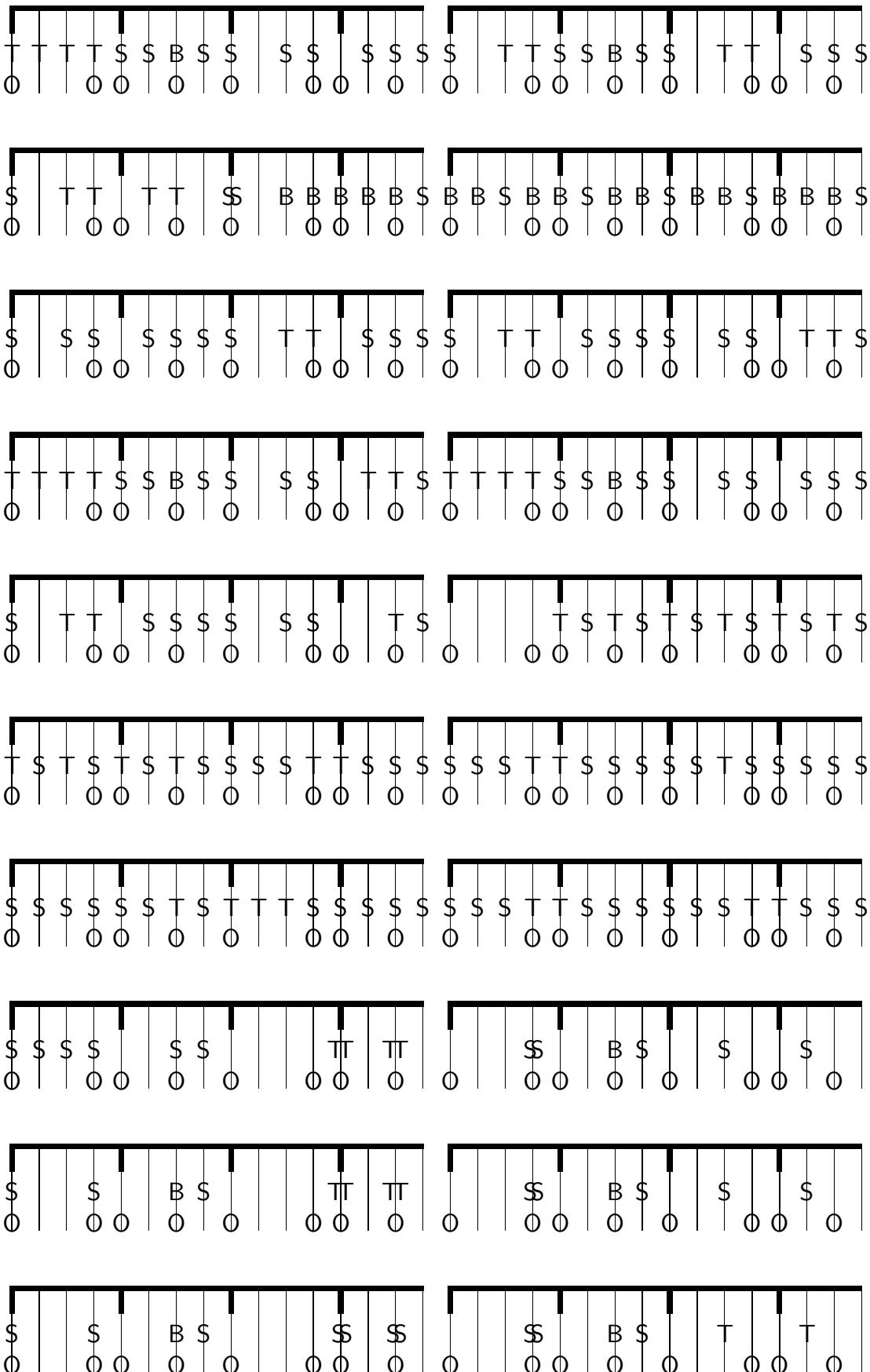


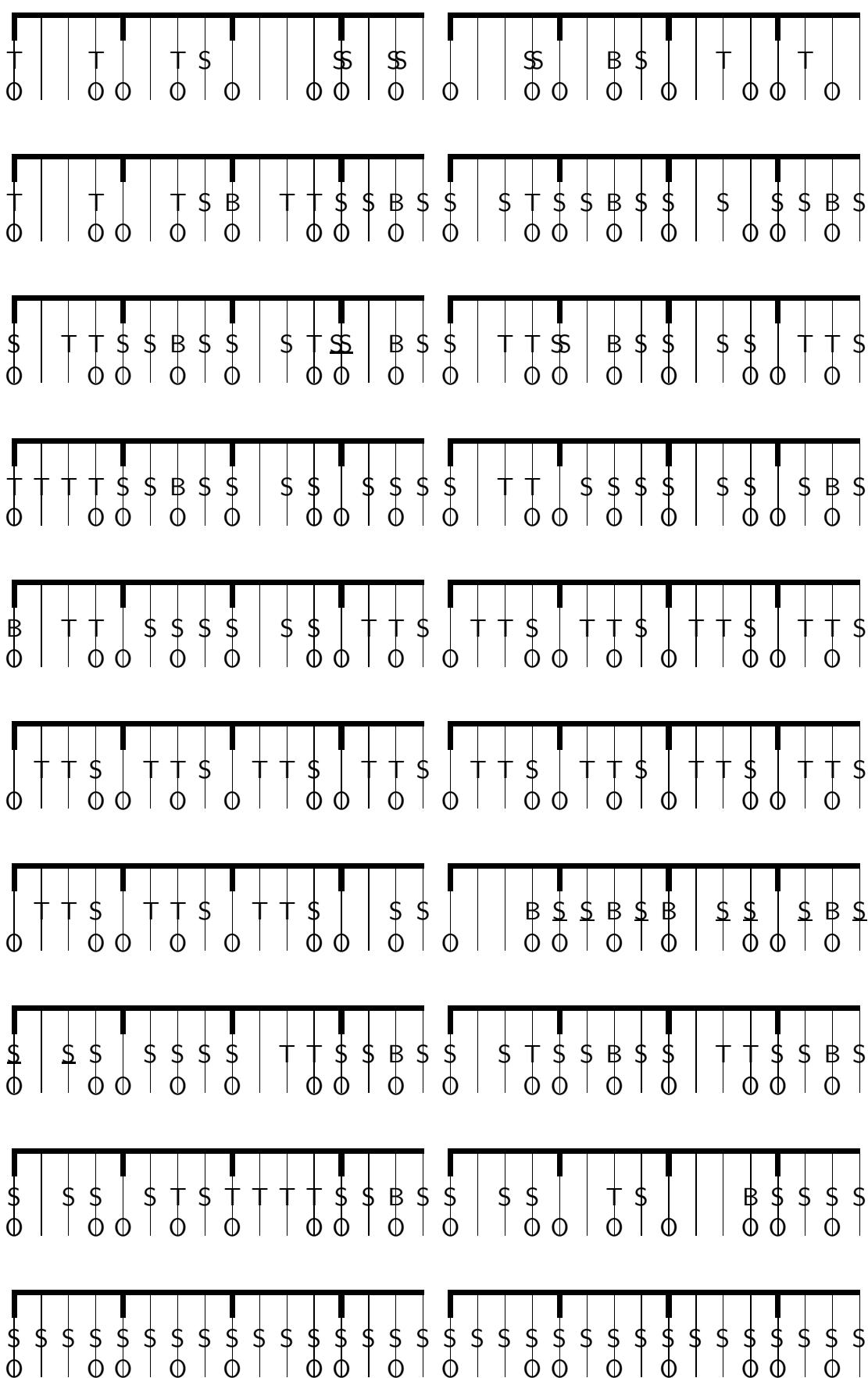
**Jina I****Jina I**





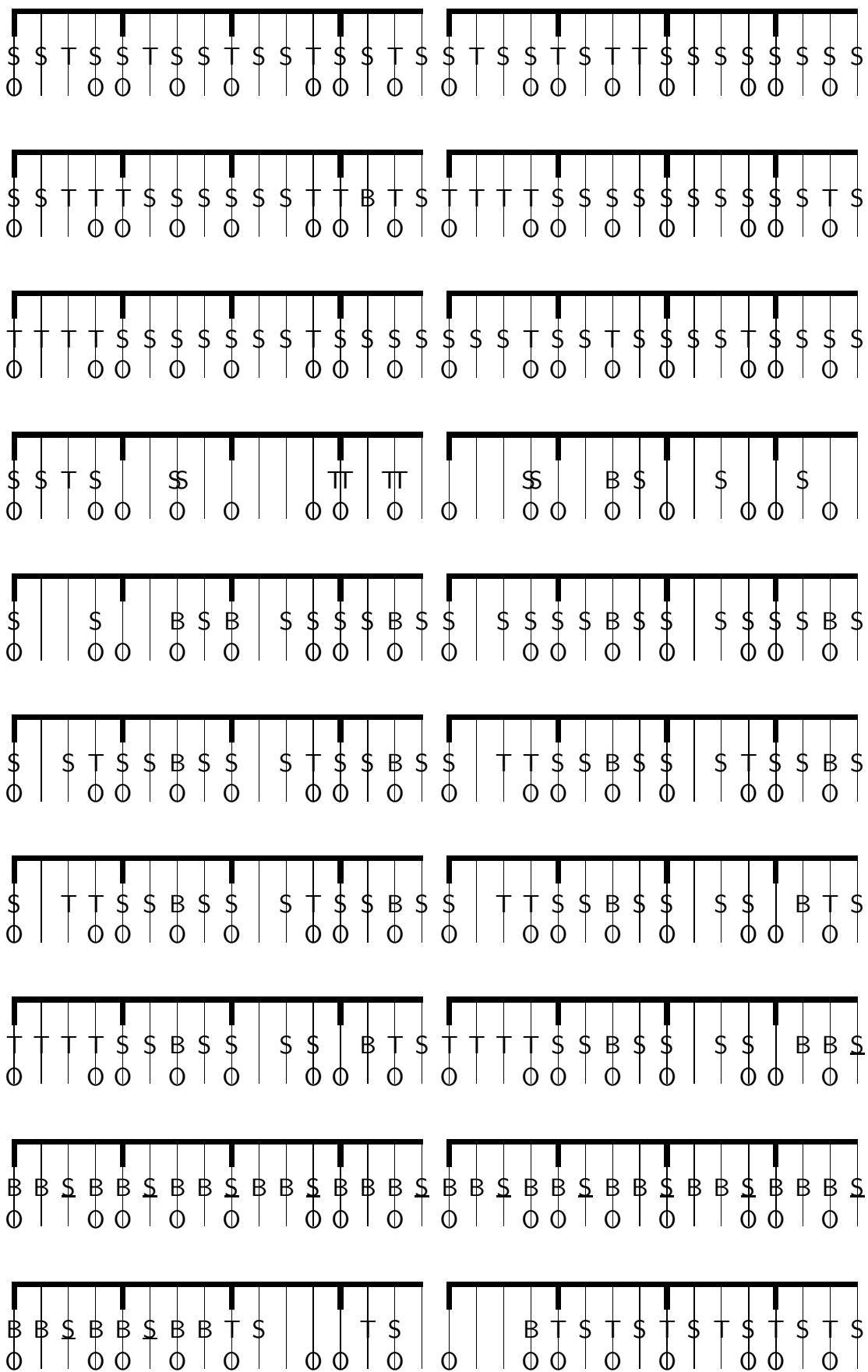


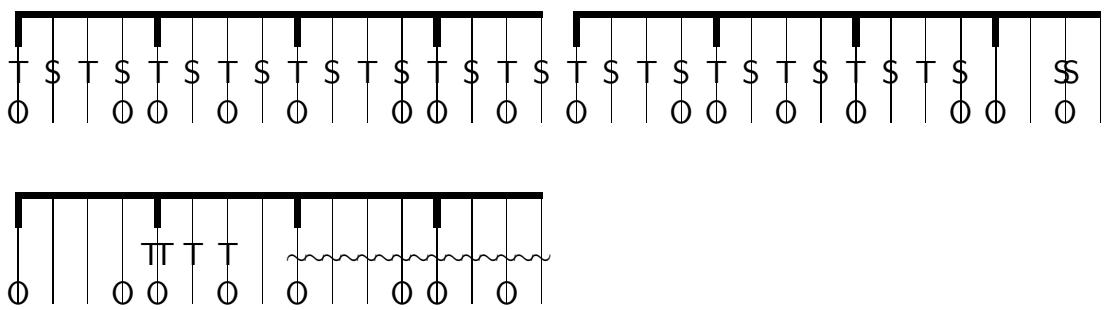




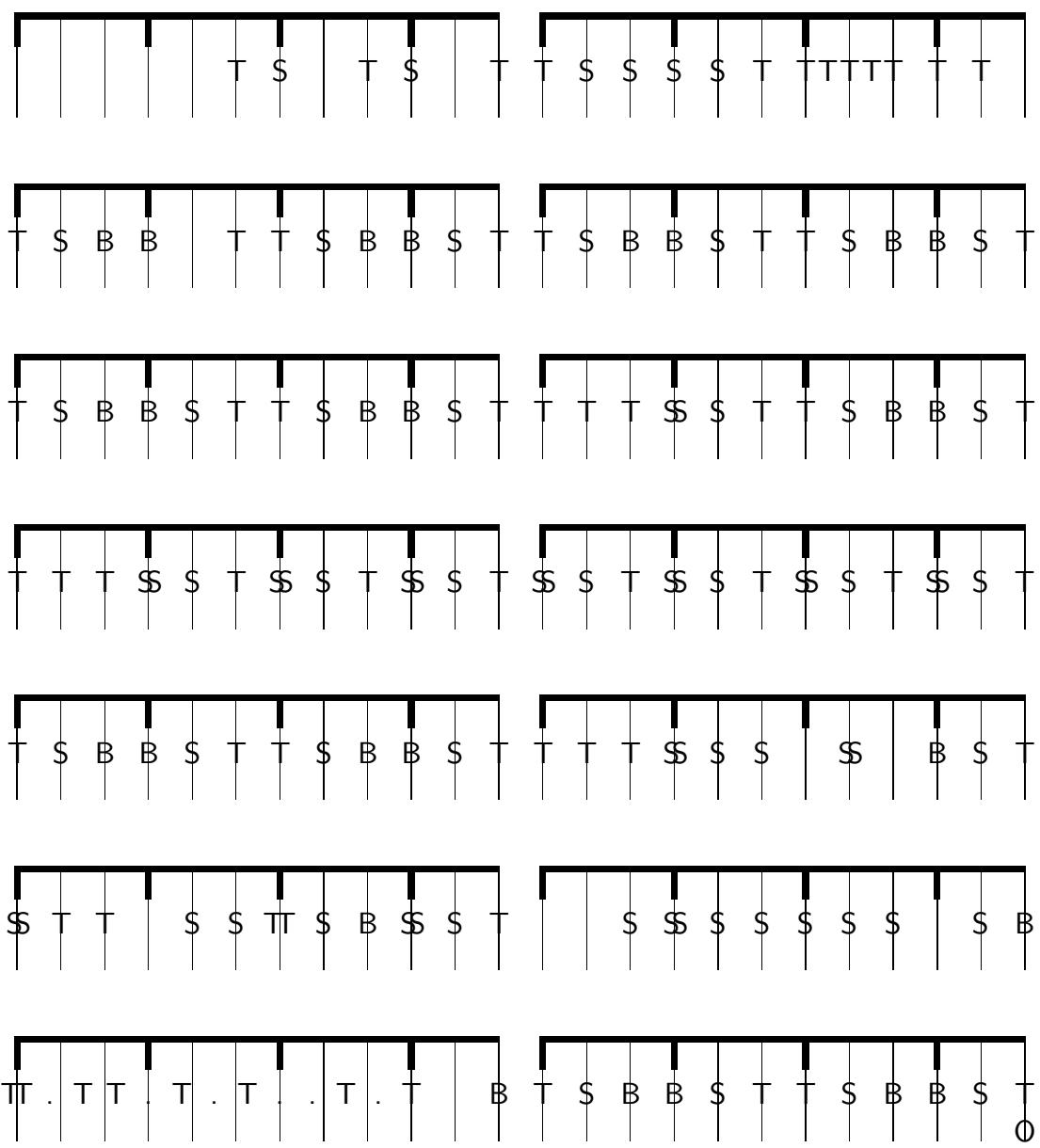
100

## Jina I

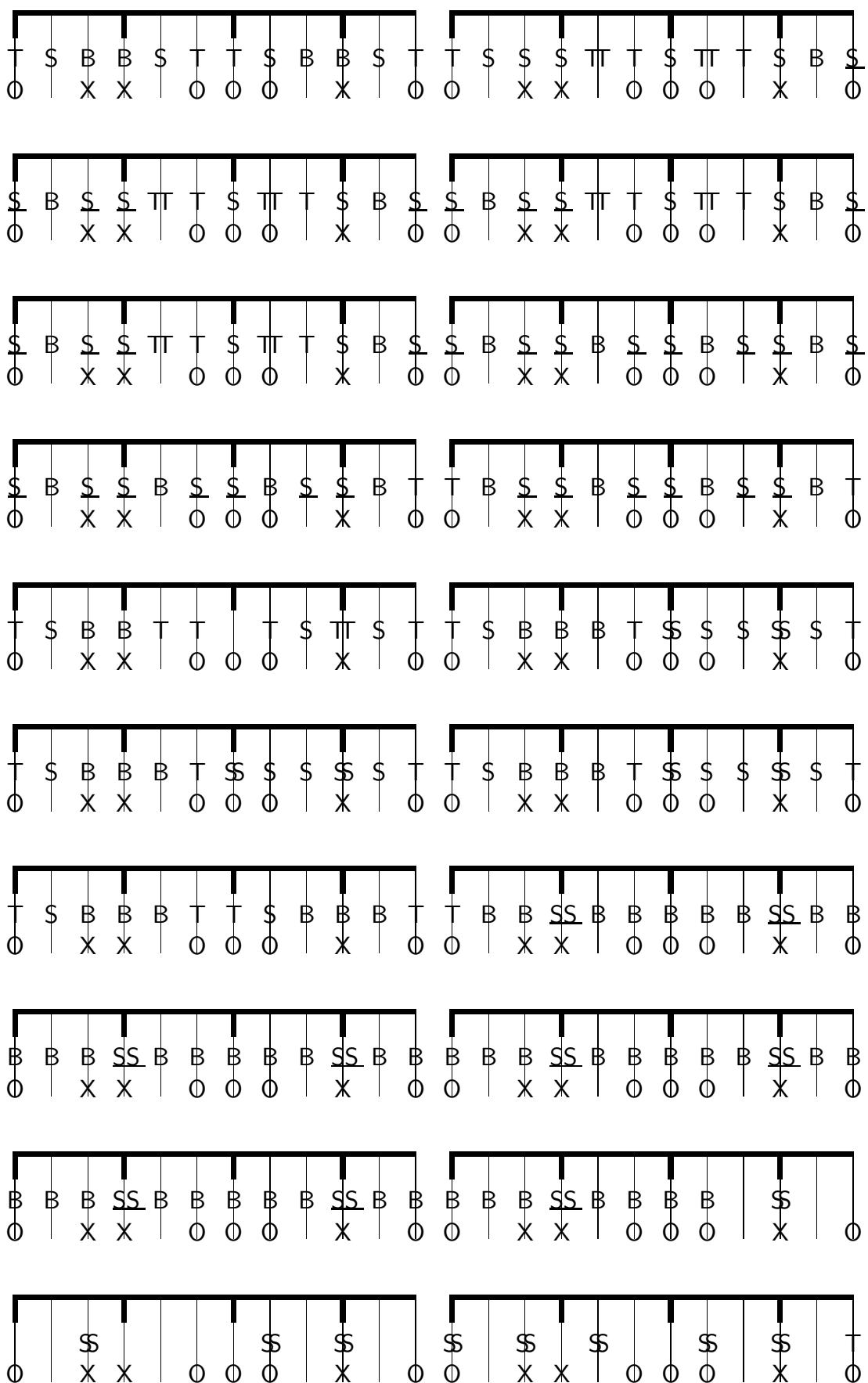


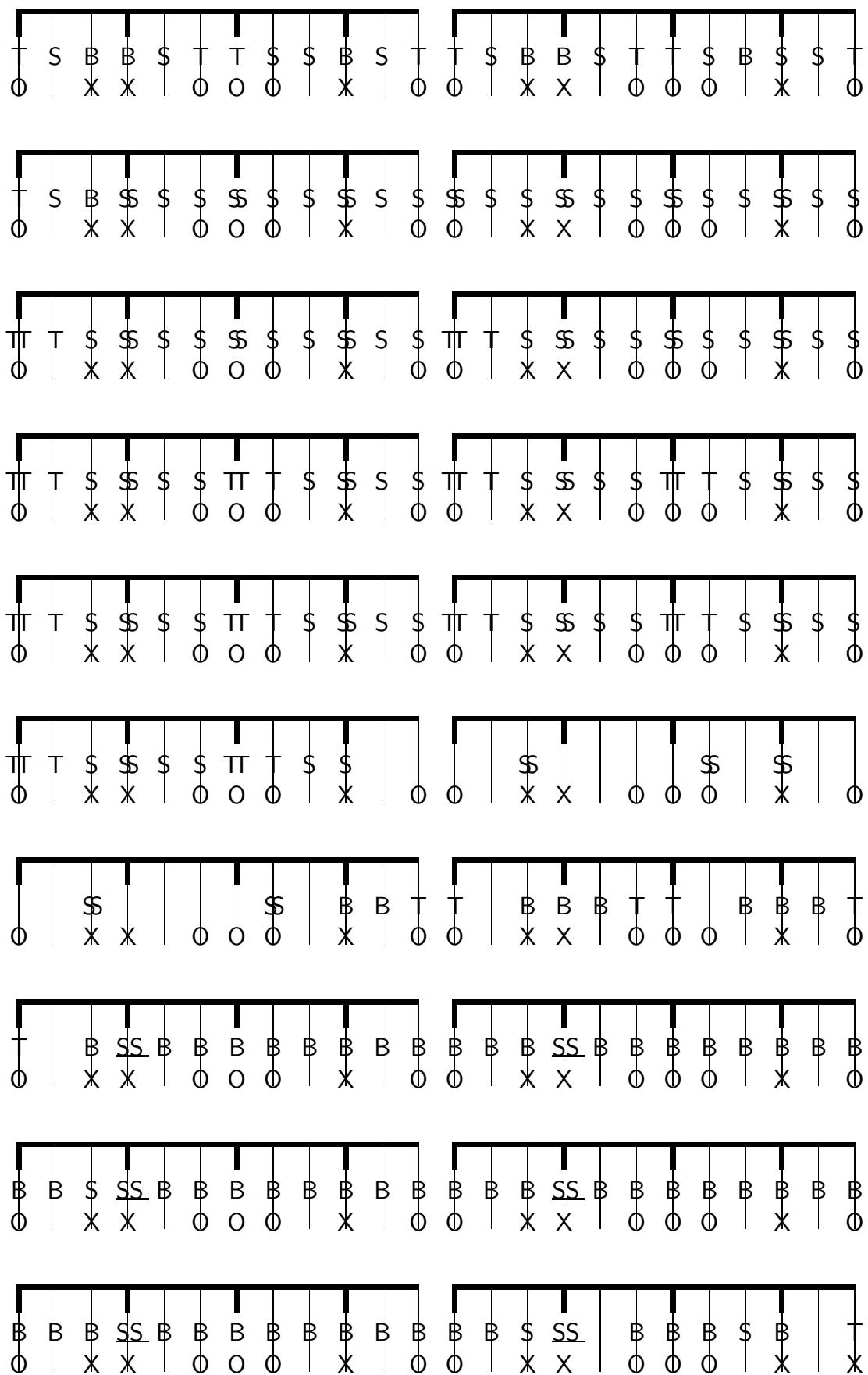


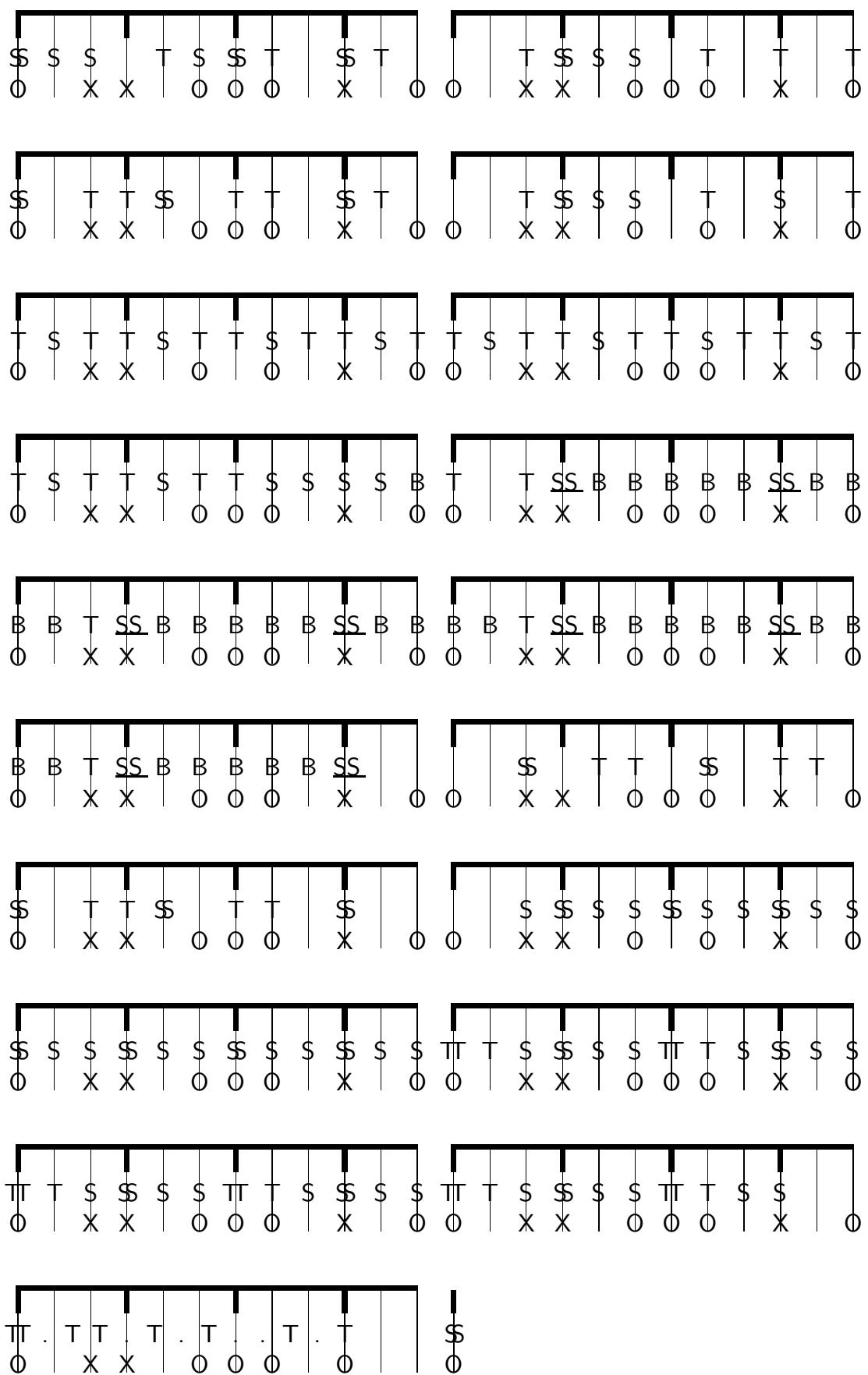
# Jina II

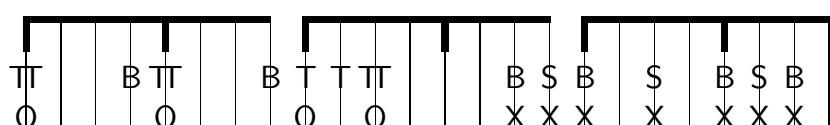
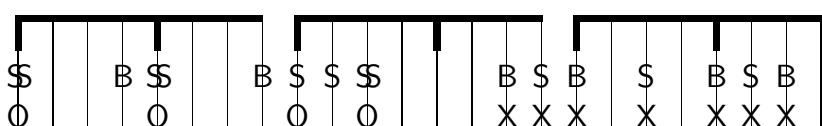
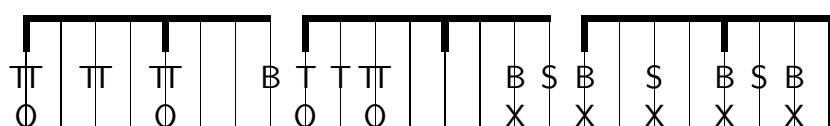
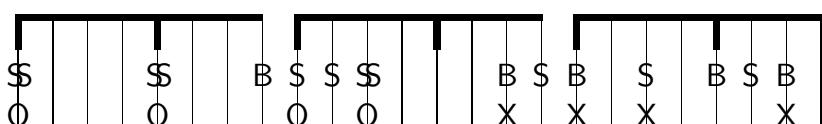
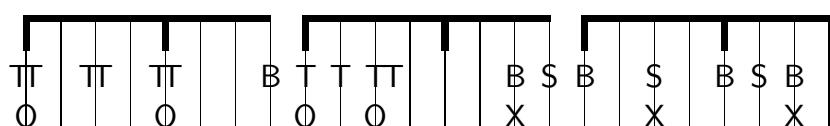
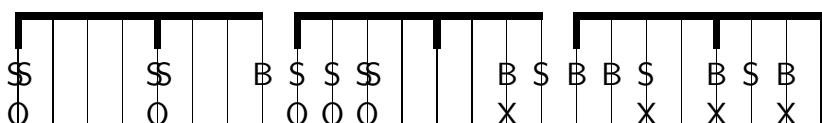
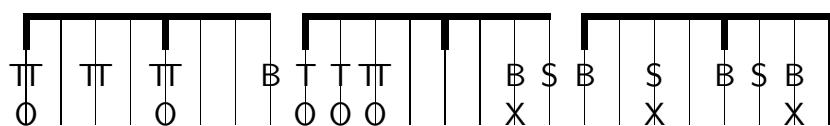
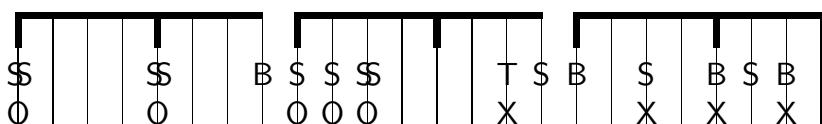
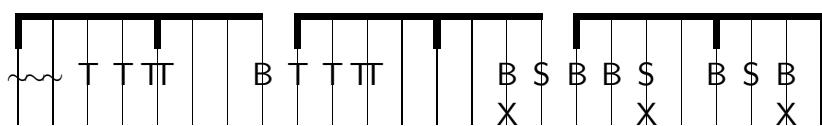


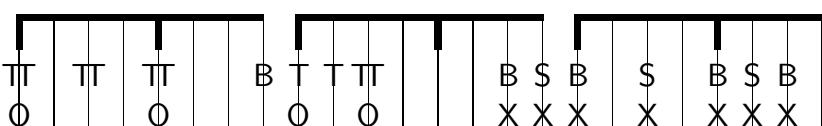
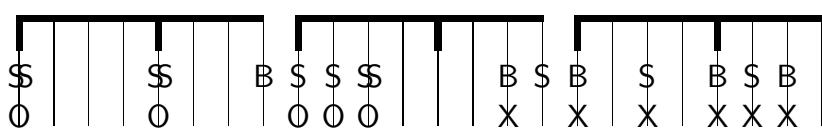
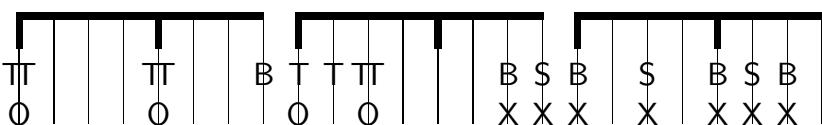
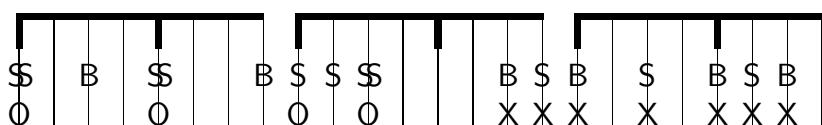
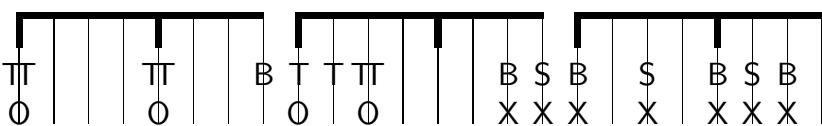
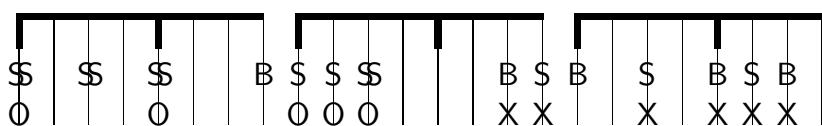
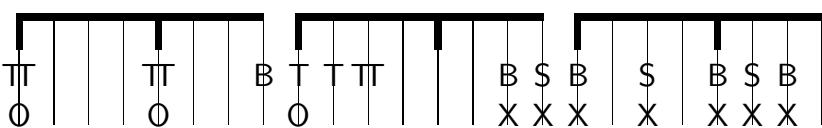
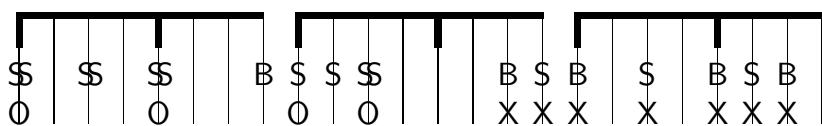
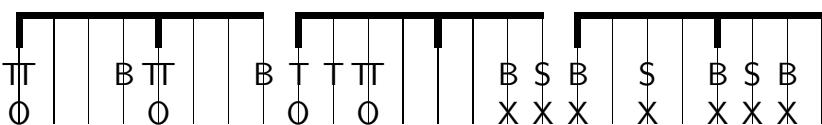
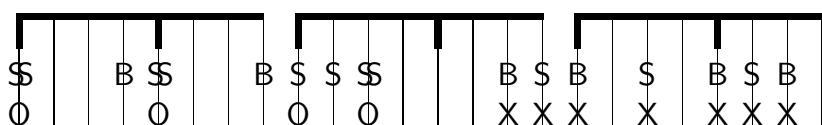


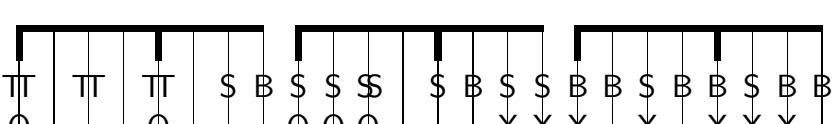
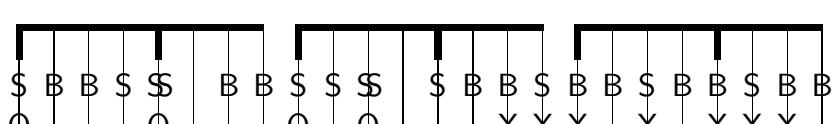
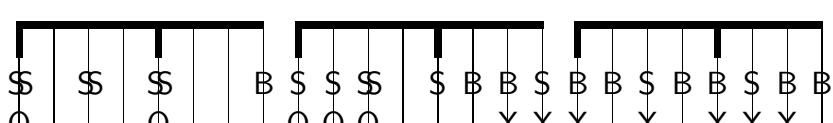
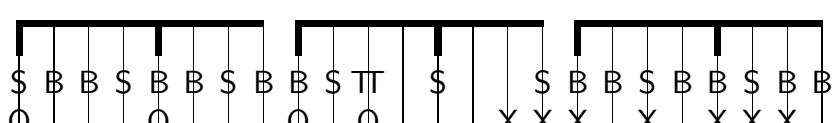
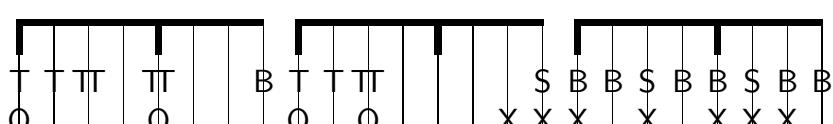
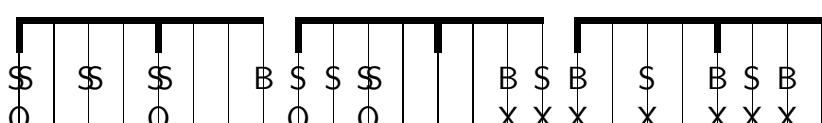
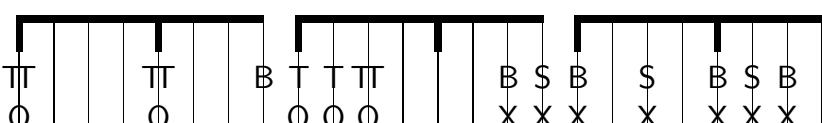
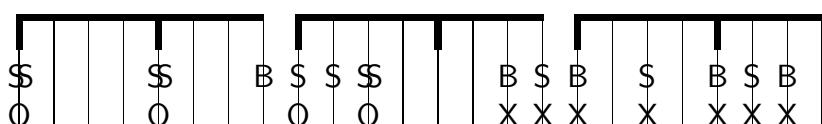
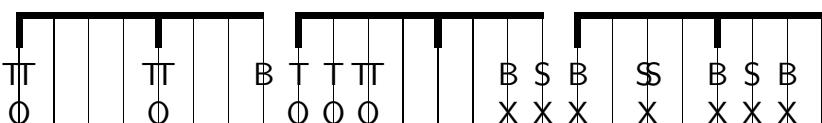
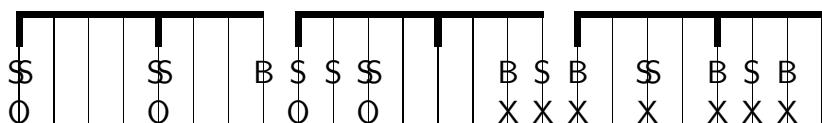


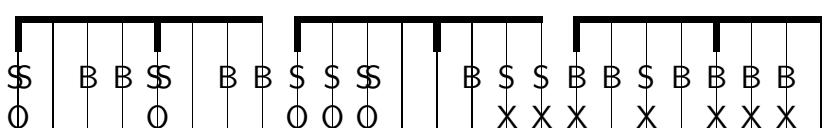
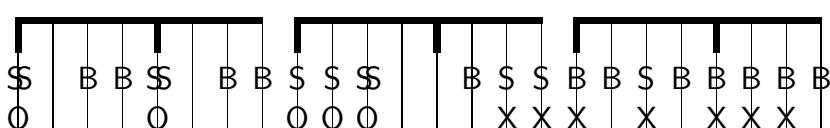
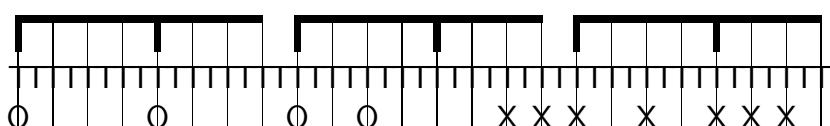
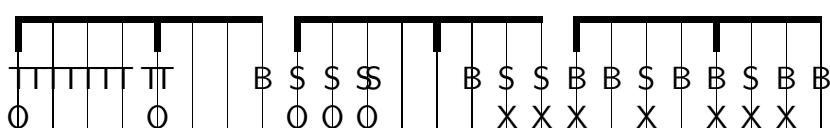
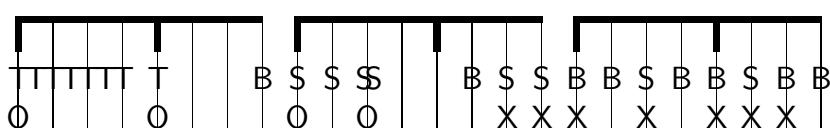
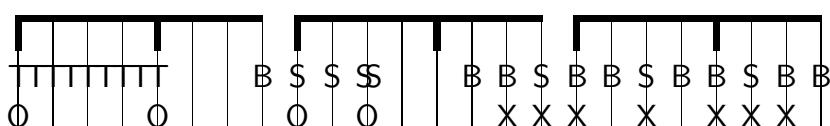
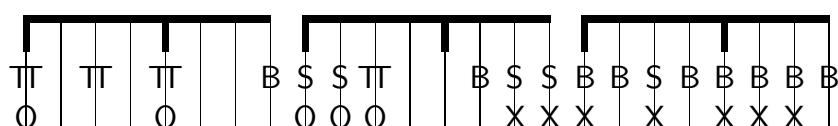
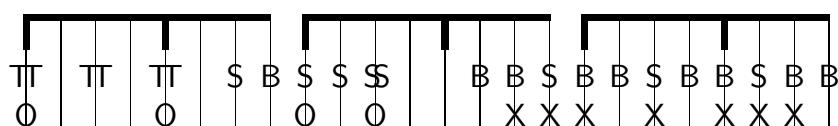
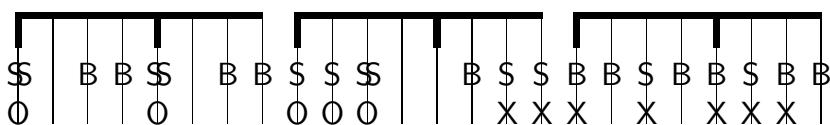
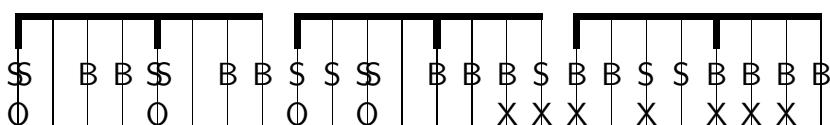




**Jina III**







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Jina III

