

# PBS Holiday Bidding

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## Overview and scope

We often get e-mails asking for tricks to getting the holidays off. While none of this information is new, we thought we would consolidate some of the information in past Notepads and the PBS Gouge to create a holiday bidding guide. The scope of this document is to give you some of the top tips as a quick summary. We would highly encourage you to look at the full coverage logic in the PBS Gouge which is available at [pbshelp.info](http://pbshelp.info).

## How to bid around coverage

There is no way to bid around coverage. However, you can bid for the best coverage solution.

## Nomenclature

Coverage is the name for what was originally called unstacking.

## Purpose of Coverage

We often get e-mails complaining that PBS could have completed a line without needing to award coverage pairings. The purpose of coverage is not to complete your line, but to prevent having excessive concentrations of open time on days.

## Basic Coverage Logic

### Regular

PBS goes through your preferences in a bid group line by line comparing it to possible coverage solutions. PBS will stop and award a coverage solution when it finds an Award preference that matches one of the possible coverage solutions. As PBS goes through your preferences, it will try to honor Avoid and Prefer Off preferences unless doing so will eliminate all of the potential coverage awards. PBS does not consider Set Condition preferences as part of the coverage process, but will consider them as it builds your line after coverage.

Once PBS has awarded coverage pairing(s), it will build the rest of the line around the coverage award. If PBS is unable to complete the line, it will jump to the next bid group.

If awarding a coverage pairing would violate a Prefer Off or Avoid with an Else Start Next Bid Group, PBS will jump to the next bid group. A Clear Schedule and Start Next Bid Group has a similar effect in that all restrictions, Prefer Off, Avoid, and Set Condition preferences must be met or PBS will jump to the next bid group.

### Reserve

PBS will have a set of reserve days that it must cover. Once PBS has awarded the coverage day(s), it will build the rest of the line around the coverage award.

## The Easiest Technique

If there is one technique we recommend, it is to ask for the dates off.

If you live in base and want to have the morning of Dec 25<sup>th</sup> with the family, then a break between pairings may be adequate. The following example asks for the dates around the 25<sup>th</sup> in order of preference, but also tell PBS to attempt to award the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> off if it cannot award the full date:

```
Start Pairings
Prefer Off Nov 25, 24, 26 ....
Prefer Off Dec 25, 2014 Between 00:00 And 16:00
```

If you commute, then having a short period between trips might be of little use and simply mean spending Christmas in a hotel room. To prevent this, you can use the range bid with the “Apply Time Range to Date” and “All or Nothing” to specify a period of time longer than a single day. The “All or Nothing” is critical to tell PBS that the dates are only of use if you have all of the dates in the Prefer Off preference.

The following bid tells PBS to attempt to give the whole period from the 24<sup>th</sup> through the 26<sup>th</sup> off. If it cannot do that, then give the minimum of Dec 24<sup>th</sup> 11:00 through Dec 26<sup>th</sup> 14:00. If PBS can do neither, then it will simply ignore both preferences.

```
Start Pairings
Prefer Off Dec 25, 2014 – Dec 26 All or Nothing
Prefer Off Between Dec 24, 2014 11:00 And Dec 26, 2014 14:00 All or Nothing
```

At one time, we emphasized that you must put your less restrictive Prefer Off preferences above your more restrictive Prefer Off preferences. With the implementation of the Top Down Inclusion logic for denial, this is no longer a concern. Put your most important Prefer Off preferences first.

## Reserve as a contingency

It is possible to tell PBS to jump back and forth between reserve and regular Bid Groups.

```
Start Pairings
  Prefer Off Dec 25, 2014 Between 00:00 And 14:00 Else Start Next Bid Group
  Prefer Off Dec 25, 24, 26 ....
Avoid bad pairings
Award good pairings
Award Pairings
Start Reserve
```

Prefer Off Dec 25, 2014 **Else Start Next Bid Group**  
 Prefer Off <other dates that would be nice to have>  
 Start Pairings  
 <A bid group to tell PBS what you want if you have to work Nov 27>

The above example applies to jumping from regular to reserve, but the same logic applies if you would like to primarily try reserve and then jump to a regular line as a contingency.

## Awarding contingency pairings

You can ask for pairings that you would like to get if PBS cannot award the dates off that you want. For Example:

Start Pairings  
 Prefer Off Dec 24, 2014, Dec 25, 2014 All or Nothing  
 Prefer Off Dec 25, 2014  
 Award Pairings If 1234 <This gets into XYZ at 1300 on Dec 24, 2014  
 Award Pairings

This bid is telling PBS:

Prefer Off Dec 24,2014, Dec 25, 2014 All or Nothing	The primary goal is to have the 24 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> off. The all or nothing prevents PBS from giving the 24 <sup>th</sup> off in isolation because it would cause PBS to be unable to award the pairings below if you had to work on the 24 <sup>th</sup> .
Prefer Off Dec 25, 2014	If it is not possible to get both the 24 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> off, it might be possible to get the 25 <sup>th</sup> off.
Award Pairings If 1234	If you have to work on Dec 25 <sup>th</sup> , at least this layover would allow you to visit family in XYZ as part of a layover. The important thing to realize is that this award does not contradict or affect PBS honoring Prefer Off Dec 25. The preference is not a contradiction, but a contingency.
Award Pairings	

## Award Pairings around the holidays may not work

PBS awards coverage pairings before the normal bid process. A common error is that pilots attempt to find pairings that work around the holidays. Let's say the following pairings are long international pairings that work around the holidays and will put you into the ALV:

Start Pairings

Award <good pairing 1> Departing On Dec 1  
Award <good pairing 2> Departing On Dec 2  
Award <good pairing 3> Departing On Dec 3  
Award Pairings

The erroneous idea is that if PBS built a line using these awards, then it would not need to award a coverage solution. The problem is that PBS awards the coverage solution first. Furthermore, you cannot bid around coverage. In this case, PBS may award a coverage pairing even though it could build a line without awarding coverage pairings.

The next example is slightly different in that there are multiple bid groups. Since Clear Schedule and Start Next Bid Group is before the system generated Award Pairings, PBS would not award coverage from the first two bid groups. Since PBS was unable to award coverage, it would have moved on. There is still an issue that there is no guidance to tell PBS what to award if there is a coverage solution in the last bid group.

Start Pairings  
Award <good pairing 1> If Departing On Dec 1  
Award <good pairing 2> If Departing On Dec 2  
Award <good pairing 3> If Departing On Dec 3  
Clear Schedule and Start Next Bid Group  
Award Pairings

Start Pairings  
Award <good pairing 4> If Departing On Dec 1  
Award <good pairing 5> If Departing On Dec 2  
Award <good pairing 6> If Departing On Dec 3  
Clear Schedule and Start Next Bid Group  
Award Pairings

Start Pairings  
Award <good pairing 7> If Departing On Dec 1  
Award <good pairing 8> If Departing On Dec 2  
Award <good pairing 9> If Departing On Dec 3  
Award Pairings

There is nothing wrong with the style of bidding as long as you realize that you need to provide guidance to PBS in your final bid group should you be susceptible to coverage.

Start Pairings  
Award <good pairing 1> If Departing On Dec 1  
Award <good pairing 2> If Departing On Dec 2  
Award <good pairing 3> If Departing On Dec 3  
Clear Schedule and Start Next Bid Group

Award Pairings

Start Pairings

Award <good pairing 4> If Departing On Dec 1

Award <good pairing 5> If Departing On Dec 2

Award <good pairing 6> If Departing On Dec 3

Clear Schedule and Start Next Bid Group

Award Pairings

Start Pairings

Prefer Off Dec 25, 2014

...<rest of your bid>