



Sept. 4, 2020

20-01

Examining PBS Awards

****UPDATE****

The word "Wednesday" was inadvertently omitted from the "Potential Schedule" depictions. These examples have been corrected in this document

This publication is the first in a series of articles that will examine actual bid results to help pilots improve their PBS knowledge and bidding skills. We've found that one of the best ways for pilots to improve their bidding skills is to consistently review their bid results with the results of those pilots in their category with similar seniority. We hope these articles will replace much of the trial and error that typically occurs, which, while an effective way of learning over time, is often a very frustrating one in the short term.

The case study below is from actual bid results; however, we've partially sanitized the information to protect the identity of the bidding pilot.

Situation

August 2020 Bid Period, Aug 1 – Aug 30 (30-day bid period).

ALV Table Extract

Category	ALV	LCW	RES GUAR	RES RULE	EXTRA XDAY	RLL LIM
ATL765B	82:00	74:30-89:30	80:00	4-99-4	Yes	26

Pilot is approximately 40% in category.

Bid Results

Minimum window <074:30> Threshold <078:30> Maximum window <089:30>

RES	2020-07-27 00:00	2020-07-27 23:59	(000:00)
RES	2020-07-28 00:00	2020-07-28 23:59	(000:00)
RES	2020-07-29 00:00	2020-07-29 23:59	(000:00)
RES	2020-07-30 00:00	2020-07-30 23:59	(000:00)
RES	2020-07-31 00:00	2020-07-31 23:59	(000:00)
14PV	2020-08-02 00:00	2020-08-15 23:59	(052:30)

(6 Pre-Awarded, Running total: 052:30)

<< Current Bid >>

1. Reserve Bid Group
2. Prefer Off Aug 21, 2020, Aug 22, 2020, Aug 23, 2020, Aug 28, 2020, Aug 29, 2020, Aug 30, 2020, Aug 16, 2020
3. Prefer Off Weekends Else Start Next Bid Group

Start Next Honored

4. Pairing Bid Group
5. Avoid Pairings If Any Layover In JFK
Honored
6. Avoid Pairings If Any Landing In JFK
Honored

Award Pairings

[3 pairings awarded here]

Schedule is complete: 114

(3 Awarded, 117 Matching, Running total: 078:54)

Pairing Bid Group

Award Pairings

Reserve Bid Group

What Happened?

This pilot had 14 days of vacation from Aug 2-15. Their primary bid strategy was reserve with X-days on the remaining weekends and Mondays. Unfortunately, their initial plan failed, and the backup line bid was executed and awarded.

Due to their vacation, the allocated X-days are prorated under the Reserve Proration Table found on the Info tab in PBS. With an ALV of 82:00, the Reserve Guarantee is 80:00, so the **Reserve Guarantee 75:00-80:00** section of the proration table is used.

Reserve Proration Tables

Reserve Guarantee 72:00-74:59				Reserve Guarantee 75:00-80:00			
# Res days in 30 day Bid Period	# X days in 30 day Bid Period	# Res days in 31 day Bid Period	# X days in 31 day Bid Period	# Res days in 30 day Bid Period	# X days in 30 day Bid Period	# Res days in 31 day Bid Period	# X days in 31 day Bid Period
1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
2-3	1	2-3	1	2-3	1	2-3	1
4-5	2	4-5	2	4-6	2	4-5	2
6-8	3	6-7	3	7-8	3	6-8	3
9-10	4	8-9	4	9-11	4	9-10	4
11-12	5	10-12	5	12-13	5	11-13	5
13-14	6	13-14	6	14-16	6	14-15	6
15-17	7	15-16	7	17-18	7	16-17	7
18-19	8	17-18	8	19-21	8	18-20	8
20-21	9	19-21	9	22-23	9	21-22	9
22-24	10	22-23	10	24-26	10	23-25	10
25-26	11	24-25	11	27-28	11	26-27	11
27-28	12	26-27	12	29-30	12	28-29	12
29-30	13	28-29	13			30-31	13
		30-31	14				

Reserve pilots in this category received an extra X-day for the bid period since projected reserve lines were at least 20% of the number of pilots in the category.

X-Day Proration Math

30	–	14	=	16	→	6	+	1	=	7
Days in Bid Period		Vacation Days		Days Available		X-Days		Extra X-Day		Total X-Days

In *line 2* the pilot asked for a total of 7 X-days:

2. Prefer Off Aug 21, 2020, Aug 22, 2020, Aug 23, 2020, Aug 28, 2020, Aug 29, 2020, Aug 30, 2020, Aug 16, 2020

PBS was able to grant all 7 of these X-days:

Potential Schedule After Processing Line 2

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S		
VACATION															X					X	X	X							X	X	X

Key: X = X-Day / Blank = Reserve Day

In line 3 the pilot then asks for all weekends off with an Else Start Next (ESN) Bid Group option.

3. Prefer Off Weekends Else Start Next Bid Group

Start Next Honored

This is the line that caused the reserve bid group to fail. After PBS assigned all seven available X-days in *line 2*, Aug 1 remained as a RES day. Since Aug 1 was not off, and all X-days were already allocated, PBS could not comply with *line 3*, and thus the ESN caused the group to fail. PBS was not allowed to go back to *line 2* and reallocate those 7 X-days differently because *line 2* was a higher priority than *line 3*.

The Fix

There are a couple of different ways this bid can be changed to meet the pilot’s intent better. Both methods involve moving the ESN up to the pilot’s highest priority bid line.

Method 1 – Swap lines 2 and 3 if having Weekends off is more important than Mondays:

1. Reserve Bid Group
2. Prefer Off Weekends Else Start Next Bid Group
3. Prefer Off Aug 21, 2020, Aug 22, 2020, Aug 23, 2020, Aug 28, 2020, Aug 29, 2020, Aug 30, 2020, Aug 16, 2020

In this bid PBS would prioritize weekends and would have likely built this schedule:

Potential Schedule with Method 1

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	
X	VACATION														X					X	X	X						X	X	X

Key: X = X-Day / Blank = Reserve Day

In this case, PBS processes *line 2* first and allocates five X-days on the weekends (Aug 1, 21, 22, 28, and 29). In *line 3* it then assigns the remaining two X-days on Aug 23 and 30. It ends up not honoring the Prefer Off Aug 16 because it’s the lowest priority day, and all 7 X-days have already been allocated.

Method 2 – Move the ESN to line 2 IF having the Monday after the vacation is more important than having all weekends off:

1. Reserve Bid Group
2. Prefer Off Aug 21, 2020, Aug 22, 2020, Aug 23, 2020, Aug 28, 2020, Aug 29, 2020, Aug 30, 2020, Aug 16, 2020 Else Start Next Bid Group

This bid places the ESN on *line 2*, which is presumably the bidder’s highest priority. Because this line requests a total of seven days off, there is no need for *line 3*, as PBS will be forced to the next bid group if it cannot award all seven requested days off.

Discussion

PBS processes bids in a top-down fashion. In a reserve bid, this means that once an X-day has been allocated by a higher priority Prefer Off, PBS won’t “undo” that award with a lower priority Prefer Off. More to the point, **any** lower priority bid line that conflicts with a higher priority bid

line will be disregarded by PBS. If that lower priority bid line happens to have an ESN attached to it, then the bid group will fail.

In general, the ESN option intends to designate a line as being a must-have, telling PBS to move to the next bid group if it cannot honor that line in its entirety. For this reason, we **highly recommend** that ESNs be placed at the top of your reserve bid groups. We routinely see reserve bid groups fail due to misplaced ESNs.

Summary

We hope this is beneficial. If you have a question about a bid, please submit a PBS Bid Inquiry before the bid window closes. You can find the PBS Bid Inquiry link on the Crew Resources/Scheduling page of DeltaNet. We much prefer to review your bid *before* it is processed rather than after. Once you have your bid results, there is very little we can do to help you.

As always, we value your feedback. If you have follow-up questions or recommendations on the format or content, please email us at dalpbs@alpa.org. If you think you have a bid result that you believe might be worth a case study, please let us know, and we'll be happy to look at it.

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