



Stepping into Tomorrow – PBS Bidding

Edition – 2

In this edition of the Bidline Bulletin we will discuss the NavBlue PBS program in more detail. This document will give you a high-level view of the PBS program, line award process, and planned absences (vacation, training, etc.). Keep in mind that the JPWG will be hosting a volume of resources on the SPA MEC Resource website moving forward, which will provide a more in depth view into all things PBS.

How Does PBS Work - Line Award Process

PBS uses a complex algorithm to award a pilot his/her monthly schedule. The NavBlue system is designed to award lines based on seniority. It will optimize around known absences while preventing any sort of transition conflict.

In this section we will discuss how the system looks at a pilot’s bid during the line award process using an actual NavBlue PBS bid. Please take some time to review the bid example below before reading on.

1	Start Pairings	 
2	Waive Minimum Days Off To 1	
3	Set Condition Maximum Credit Window	
4	Prefer Off Weekends	
5	Prefer Off Nov 22, 2018	
6	Award Pairings If Pairing Length = 3 Days	
<i>Award Pairings</i>		
7	Start Reserve	
8	Prefer Off Weekends	

The system looks at a bid from the top down. Bid Statements 1, 2, and 3 are not positive or negative bid statements, but rather they are Conditional Statements that will apply to any line being constructed from this particular bid group.

1. Start Pairings – Tells the system the bidder wants a line awarded from the pairing pool.
2. Waive Minimum Days Off To 1 – The system is instructed to waive the contractual minimum days off down to 1 day off if necessary in order to award a schedule.
3. Set Condition Maximum Credit Window – The system is instructed to attempt to award a schedule within the Maximum Credit Window.

The PBS program will now build a pairing pool for this pilot. Using all negative bid statements, the PBS will eliminate pairings to create a pool specific to this bid bidder. In selections 4 and 5 in the above example, the system will eliminate all pairings from this bidders' pairing pool that operate on either a weekend (bid statement 4) or Nov 22nd (bid statement 5).

4. Prefer Off Weekends – the bidder is asking for all weekends off. A weekend is considered BOTH Saturday and Sunday. With this bid, Saturday and Sunday are considered a single item, unlike other Prefer Off bids which treat each day in the bid as individuals.
5. Prefer Off Nov 22, 2018 – preferences a particular calendar day off.

Preference 6 is what's called an Award Statement. This preference will instruct the PBS to try and create a line solely using 3-day trips that are *in this bidders' pairing pool*. It awards as many of these trips as possible before moving on to the next bid statement - Award Pairings (see below). PBS will now attempt to use any and all pairings *in the bidders' pairing pool* to complete the line. (Much more on this process in separate training materials.)

6. Award Pairings if Pairing Length = 3 Days – the system looks to award pairings of 3 calendar days.

Award Pairings - this bid option is ALWAYS at the bottom of a pairings bid group. It instructs the PBS to award the rest of the line using all pairings that are in the bidders' pool.

In this example, if the PBS determines a line is not possible using this first bid group (Statements 1-6 and Award Pairings Statement) it will move to the next bid group in the bid sheet, which is a Reserve bid.

7. Start Reserve – Tells the system that a pilot wants to be awarded a reserve line.
8. Prefer Off Weekends – allows the bidder to bid for as many complete weekends off as possible. With this bid statement, Saturday and Sunday are considered a single item. The system will attempt to award a pilot a Reserve line with weekends off.

Once the process has been completed and a pilot has been awarded a line based on his/her preferences, in accordance with strict adherence to seniority, the system moves onto the next bidder.

This section is meant to be a high-level overview of the line award process and provides one, simple example. Within the PBS, prior to accepting a Reserve line, there is the opportunity to tell the PBS to clear the attempt, build a line based on the specific preferences, and move on to the next set of preferences. Further communications and literature from the JPWG will contain a more micro viewing of the PBS bidding and schedule award process.

How Does PBS Work - Planned Absences

In the line bidding system, trips conflicting with planned absences are removed from a schedule after the line award. In a PBS world, planned absences are placed on a pilot's schedule prior to the bid. Each of these absences has a known pay credit (described below) or in some instances a "virtual credit". Virtual credits allow a pilot with otherwise uncredited absences to be awarded a line under PBS. An example of a typical absence with "virtual credit" would be military leave. Under line bidding military leave days would be applied after the line award and the effected trip(s) dropped with no pay credit. However, in PBS the military leave would be added prior to the monthly bid with a virtual credit applied to it. What this does is two-fold: First it allows for a more accurate staffing representation for the company, since the absence is applied pre-award. Second, it gives the PBS a credit value to use for that activity as it works to build the pilot a line that exceeds the Threshold for their applicable credit window. Using virtual credits allows pilots with short pre-planned leaves to potentially be awarded a Regular Line, when otherwise a Reserve line award would be necessary.

Planned Absence - Vacation

Vacation will work in a similar fashion. However, it will be important in a vacation month to review the vacation rules found within the PBS LOA, the future PBS MOU, and the PBS Resources section of the SPA MEC Website. During negotiations of the PBS LOA a new vacation system was crafted. The new system includes a sliding scale of vacation hours to be used, between 12 and 36 hours. Moreover, the additional concept of 2 Inviolable Days attached to the seven-day vacation week was introduced. Inviolable Days can be added to a pilot's schedule as "book ends" - one day on each side of the vacation block or two days on one specific end of the vacation block. Regular line holders may choose to apply 4 hours of vacation credit to each inviolable day. Reserve line holders must apply 4 hours of vacation credit to each Inviolable Day.

In a bid month in which a pilot has a vacation week(s), he/she will begin his/her PBS bid with between 12 and 44 credit hours to assign to between 7 and 9 days of vacation, depending on elections made electronically the month prior. For example, if a pilot chooses to assign 28 hours to his/her vacation week, and also elects 2 Inviolable Days with 4 hours of vacation credit assigned to each inviolable day, he/she would enter the PBS bid with 36-hours of credit. As PBS is awarding the pilot his/her line, the system will only have to award approximately 40 hours of credit from the pairing pool in order to award the pilot a line above the Threshold in the Normal Line Credit Window.

Bidding effectively will be the key to maximizing a vacation block and preserving the vacation experience found in traditional line bidding. Using the proration table in the PBS LOA, a pilot

using the full 9 days of vacation, 7 vacation days (VC) and 2 Inviolate Days (IV), would have a minimum of 9 additional days off due during the bid month, for a total of 18 guaranteed days off. Using our previous example of 36 vacation credit hours added to the bid line, the pilot would have 12 working days (WD) to acquire the remaining 40 hours to achieve the credit threshold. If the pilot accomplished this with two 4-day trips, both on either side of the vacation, say the first 4 days and the last 4 days of the bid month, the pilot would enjoy 22 consecutive days off (DO). Below is an illustration of this scenario using the November bid month, a vacation week beginning on November 10th and ending on November 17th, using 2 Inviolate Days as bookends, and a bid award containing pairings (WD) in the first and last 4 days of the month.

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
TH	FR	SA	SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR
WD	WD	WD	WD	DO	DO	DO	DO	IV	VC	IV	DO																		

Planned Absence - Training

Now, let’s discuss how training will affect a pilot’s schedule in the bid month. When it comes to training pairings, the process will be changing significantly. We will highlight some of the expected changes in this publication, and much more information will be forthcoming. Training pairings will now be bid as an activity in the NavBlue system. The bid will occur in the month prior to the pilot’s due month(s). Pilots will have the opportunity to select from the available pool of simulator events, which will be awarded in seniority order, taking into account the training requirements of the pilot.

At the opening of the monthly bid, if pilots require and have been awarded training, they will see it as a pre-planned absence loaded onto their calendar. The training event will have a pre-awarded credit value already applied to the pilot’s schedule. Much like what was highlighted in the vacation section of this document, training pairings will apply in nearly the same way. For example, if a pre-awarded training event worth 20 credit hours is applied to the pilots’ schedule, PBS would need approximately 55-60 hours of additional credit in order to award the pilot’s line.

Conclusion

The takeaways from this edition of The Bidline Bulletin should be a macro understanding of the PBS bid system, award process, and planned absences. In the next edition of The Bidline Bulletin, we will be diving further into the PBS line award process by discussing coverage days (unstacking), denial mode, and the remaining events on the monthly bid timeline. Please stay tuned. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to reach out to SPAJPWG@alpa.org.