



Taking Care of BID-ness

Using the CAL Preferential Bidding System

March 2007

THE BIG PICTURE FOR APRIL 2007

by David Owens

The April 2007 bid period is upon us. Easter 2007 is Sunday, April 8. April 2007 has four weekends (eight weekend days) and 30 total days (Apr 3–May 2). This month has a quirk in that it *excludes* the first two calendar days of April and *includes* the first two days of May.

If you have a trip on the first two days of April, remember you can only fly 100 domestic flight hours in the calendar month of April. Keep this in mind if you must have a HIGH line value and the first two days of May 2007 off.

Mid-level seniority pilots should be aware that the tradeoff for a weekend off line may be significantly less days off than a non-weekend off line, due to senior bidders obtaining weekend off, high day off lines.

The power of PBS is that within seniority, you do have a choice. If you have questions, contact a trainer at prefbid.com.

HAVEN'T HEARD A RESPONSE FROM YOUR DISPUTE?

We have found several instances of locally & ISP installed spam-blocking software catching the "Dispute Resolution" responses. This has been particularly prevalent with pilots using the internet provider Earthlink. If you have not heard back from anyone regarding your dispute, please check your Spam folder for your response.

APRIL 2007: WEEKENDS OFF AND A HIGH LINE!

by David Owens

April 2007 contains 22 weekdays and eight weekend days. If you are one of those few folks who flies three days a week with weekends off, you will have 13-14 days in which to get your time and still have Easter off. This should make it much easier to achieve a HIGH line value and still get that great schedule.

Because of the high ratio of weekdays to weekend days, April 2007 has the potential for more weekend off lines than March. If you are of mid-level seniority, try weekends off, but make sure you leave a contingency bid

group for the possibility that you cannot hold them. This is a good month to try the technique presented in the February 2007 *Takin' Care of Bidness* to get partial weekends off.

MISSED IT? REPEAT OF PARTIAL WEEKENDS OFF TECHNIQUE

AWARD PAIRING LENGTH RANGE 2-4 LOW

AVOID SA SU APR 07 thru 08

AVOID SA SU APR 14 thru 15

AWARD PAIRING LENGTH RANGE 2-4 NEUTRAL

AVOID SA SU APR 07 thru APR 29

AWARD PAIRING LENGTH RANGE 2-4 HIGH

Or if you want to prioritize all five weekends in order of preference, use two bid groups.

AVOID SA SU APR 07 thru 08

AVOID SA SU APR 14 thru 15

AVOID SA SU APR 21 thru 22

AWARD PAIRING LENGTH RANGE 2-4 LOW

AVOID SA SU APR 28 thru 29

AWARD PAIRING LENGTH RANGE 2-4 NEUTRAL

AVOID SA SU APR 07 thru APR 29

AWARD PAIRING LENGTH RANGE 2-4 HIGH

Continue with the next bid group.

AVOID SA SU APR 07 thru 08

AWARD PAIRING LENGTH RANGE 2-4 LOW

AVOID SA SU APR 14 thru 15

AWARD PAIRING LENGTH RANGE 2-4 NEUTRAL

AVOID SA SU APR 21 thru APR 22

AWARD PAIRING LENGTH RANGE 2-4 HIGH

And here's the third bid group (covers all combinations from all weekends off to all weekends on, with preference to weekends off).

AWARD PAIRING LENGTH RANGE 2-4 LOW

AVOID SA SU APR 07 thru APR 29

AWARD PAIRING LENGTH RANGE 2-4 HIGH

If you add SETS and additional AVOIDS to these bids, you need to FULLY relax (remove) them prior to your last Bid Group! This is controlling your own method of Denial Mode versus letting the computer do it for you. You will likely be much happier with the results.

RUSH HOUR TRAFFIC?

by David Owens

Many pilots who live local in their base face a familiar dilemma. Reporting for an assignment between 7:00 am and 9:00 am, as well as releasing from a pairing between 4:30 pm and 5:30 pm, places them in traffic jams. This adds a significant amount of time on the drive to and from work. An added factor is the predictability of arriving at the airport on time.

Consider adding AVOID statement(s) to your Bid Group that will prevent reports and releases during these timeframes. AVOID PAIRING REPORT TIME RANGE 0700-0900 and/or AVOID PAIRING RELEASE TIME RANGE 1630-1730 Remember, at some point in your later Bid Groups, it is prudent to relax these avoids.

TRAINING MATERIALS UPDATE

by John Keown

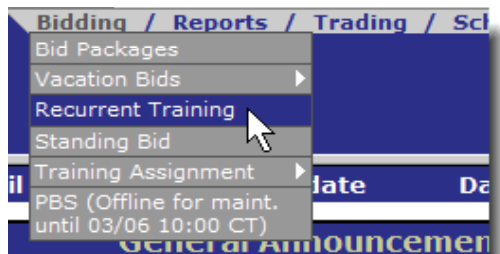
Your PBS Committee spent many long hours learning our 'original' version of PBS to produce the training materials you have currently been using. Since we began operating with PBS, many changes have occurred to the underlying software. While we have attempted to keep up with these changes with various publications, we realize our original materials have become somewhat of a dinosaur. As a result, we've begun working on re-publishing all of our training materials. Very soon, you can expect to see a revised "ABC's of PBS" as well as revised/new videos and flash tutorials.

"I HAVE TRAINING, WHEN?"

By John Keown

Under PBS, we now have a little more control over our lives. We now can bid for our training. There are two distinctive types of training bids (1) Recurrent Training and (2) Aircraft Advancement Training.

Both of these bids can be accessed in CCS, under the bidding tab. You will use the "Recurrent Training" prompt to bid for your recurrent CQ training slot and you



will use the "Training Assignment" prompt to bid for your training award, as per the "System Bid" award.

The "Recurrent Training" bid will allow you to bid for your CQ training slot for the upcoming month. This bid is open from the 22nd at 1000 CT to the 3rd at 1000 CT and will be awarded on the 5th at 1500 CT.

The "Training Assignment" bid will allow you to bid for your training award as per the "System Bid" award. You can bid for any training or advancement slot that occurs three months in the future, with an opportunity to bid for specific training classes that are unfilled in the next two immediate months. This bid is open from the 28th at 1600 CT the 7th at 1000 CT.

If you are successful in bidding for a slot, you will receive a bid award notification message in CCS. You can find your bid award on the flight operations website under "Bid notification information."



BIDDING SCHEDULE

EVENT	DATES
CQP Bidding Window Opens (For April)	Feb. 22 10:00 CT
CQP Bidding Window Closes	Mar. 3 10:00 CT
CQP Awarded	Mar. 5 15:00 CT
Last Day to Turn In Absences	Mar. 6
Monthly Bid Window Opens	Mar. 9 10:00 CT
Trip Trade Freeze for Last 7 Days Begins	Mar. 14
Monthly Bid Window Closes	Mar. 15 10:00 CT
Reserve Trade Window Opens	Mar. 18 18:00 CT
Monthly Bid Awarded	Mar. 20 10:00 CT
Trip Trade Freeze for Last 7 Days Ends	Mar. 20. w/posting in CCS
Reserve Re-designation Window Opens	Mar. 20 10:00 CT
Lineholder Trip Trade Window Opens	Mar. 21 8:00 LDT
CQP Bidding Window Opens (for May)	Mar. 22 10:00 CT
GUM Trip Trade Window Opens	Mar. 22 10:00 LDT
Reserve Re-designation Window Closes	Mar. 28 10:00 CT

PBS, SENIORITY, AND BIDDER EXPECTATIONS

by Mike Hildebrand

Six months into using PBS as a live product for bidding, we have all had to deal with the frustrations of learning a new bidding system and discovering strategies to make the system work for us. The single biggest frustration for bidders has been Overall Solution Constraints and determining exactly what that means. There have been several articles written and published, as well as numerous explanations posted on the prebid forum that describe exactly what OSC is. There will certainly continue to be questions and we, as trainers, will do our best to answer them. One of the most asked questions we get is, "What can I do about it?"

The specifics to that question are different for each bidder. However, there is one general rule that can be followed by EVERY bidder to avoid going into denial mode after several bid groups have been denied due to OSC. That rule is to RELAX your bid groups! The reasons for OSC vary, but there are a few that we see on a regular basis.

First, it is important to understand the goal of the PBS system. The number one goal of PBS is to use all available flying and complete the required number of lines with zero open time remaining, while honoring seniority. This, by the way, was the goal of the old line building system as well. The difference is that pilot preferences and legality with pre-assigned events were not considered. Of those two events, PBS will first consider all pre-assignments and THEN consider pilot preferences, in order to complete a legal solution for every bidder.

At the higher seniority levels within a BES, the playing field is wide open. There are thousands (if not more) of possible combinations of lines that will allow the solution to be completed. Bidder preferences at the upper seniority levels are almost always able to be fulfilled, as long as they are legal. Senior bidders' expectations are that they will get what they bid for. As long as the line they ask for is legal contractually, they will get that line. And, they should. That's one of the perks of seniority.

As senior bidders take trips from the pool of available trips in the BES, the number of possible solutions for the ENTIRE BES begins to decrease. Building to zero open time legally, for all pilots, starts to become more of a factor. Pilot preferences are still able to be met within reason. The picture for the lower seniority levels is beginning to take shape at this point in the process, as there are fewer and fewer possible solutions that will work to finish the BES.

Below about 60% of lineholders, depending ENTIRELY on what the senior bidders have taken from the pool and what kind of LCRs they have chosen, the number of solutions for the rest of the BES starts to become limited. This is where bidders have to be very careful about having

realistic expectations when constructing their bid groups. You will start to see trips that appear in your pools that maybe you specifically ask for but are not awarded due to OSC. This does NOT mean that PBS isn't honoring seniority. It means that PBS is not able to award you a line using that specific trip, that also meets your other requests and still completes the solution.

Seniority within feasibility means that IF PBS can complete the solution for the BES by awarding that bid group, it will. But if the overall solution can't be completed, the system will not award that line.

Because we have greater transparency with this system, we see the actual line construction process. With the old system, we just saw the finished lines. That transparency was insisted upon when the PBS system was being developed. It is the number one reason we have OSC and the questions that come with it. But, the question of why a certain trip can't be put on a certain line is still answered the same way—and that's because the specific line wasn't available to be awarded and still allow the overall solution to be completed.

A very simplistic example of this is a bidder at 60% who had a bid group asking for a TUE-THU turn line. At that seniority, there were enough trips to build that line, but the line wasn't awarded. Why? Because those trips were needed elsewhere to augment other lines, keep everyone legal, award all flying and complete the solution. Under the old system, a 60% bidder couldn't hold a line like that, and they can't under this system either.

What has changed are expectations about what we can hold. Because senior bidders have the ability to cherry pick the great trips and build custom lines to their liking (lines that never would have been built under the old system), the junior pilots have less to choose from. And with the lack of open time, there is no way to trade into the line that you want to fly.

There is no 'fix' for this. The system must be able to complete the solution. However, there are ways to mitigate the effects at the middle to lower seniority levels.

Although there are several factors that can have an impact on bid group failure, SET and AVOID statements are the number one killers of bid groups at all levels. With SET statements, you don't limit the number of trips in your pool, but how they are assembled. By relaxing your SET statements, you can often find a solution that works with the trips that still honor your AVOID statements. You have to decide which is more important, setting work block report and release times for commutability, or avoiding red-eyes, for example. If commutability is most important, then relax your AVOID statements BEFORE relaxing your commutability requirements.

If you would rather come in a day early than do a red-eye, then relax the SET statement that defines the start time of your working block. However, be prepared to relax most of your AVOID and SET statements as you get into your lower bid groups, to avoid going into denial mode. We have seen several cases where a bidder has avoided weekend flying, gone into denial mode, and been awarded flying every weekend. Bidders below them have gotten three out of four weekends off by allowing those trips into the pool. The senior bidder would most certainly have wanted three of four off instead of having to work every weekend. And, they likely could have gotten that, if they had allowed room in their bid groups to do so.

By relaxing your bid groups, you are not guaranteeing that you will get a line that you don't like simply by allowing for that possibility. If a higher bid group can be awarded,

it will be. But if you don't allow for the possibility that you might not get EVERYTHING that you want, you are allowing yourself to go into denial mode and will almost certainly be awarded a line that you don't want.

As trainers, we're here to help you avoid that. The system works the way it was designed, within the parameters of the contract. Any changes to the way the system operates will require changes to the CBA. This will certainly be a hot item for Contract '08 negotiations. But, until that time comes, make sure that your expectations are realistic and RELAX YOUR BID GROUPS.

Trainers are available throughout the month at prefbid.com to answer any questions, evaluate your bid groups and do whatever we can to keep you out of denial mode and get a line closest to your preferences.

CHAT AT PREFBID.COM

Remember, to 'chat' with someone, go to the Forum page on prefbid.com, and find the icon at the bottom left hand side of the page. Click on the icon to chat with a trainer, or to leave an email message if a trainer is not available. The word "Available" will be shown in the icon box if a trainer is currently available to chat.



If the icon looks like this, a trainer is available to chat.

Where to Find PBS Information

PBS Page on CAL MEC Website

- *ABCs of PBS handbook*
- *CAL Pilot Book of Bids*
- *Pilot Bid Worksheet*

Flight Ops Website

- *ABCs of PBS handbook*
- *CAL Pilot Book of Bids*
- *Pilot Bid Worksheet*

Visit the CAL Preferential Bidding Forum at prefbid.com.