

Unstacking

What it is, and how to deal with it.

What is Unstacking

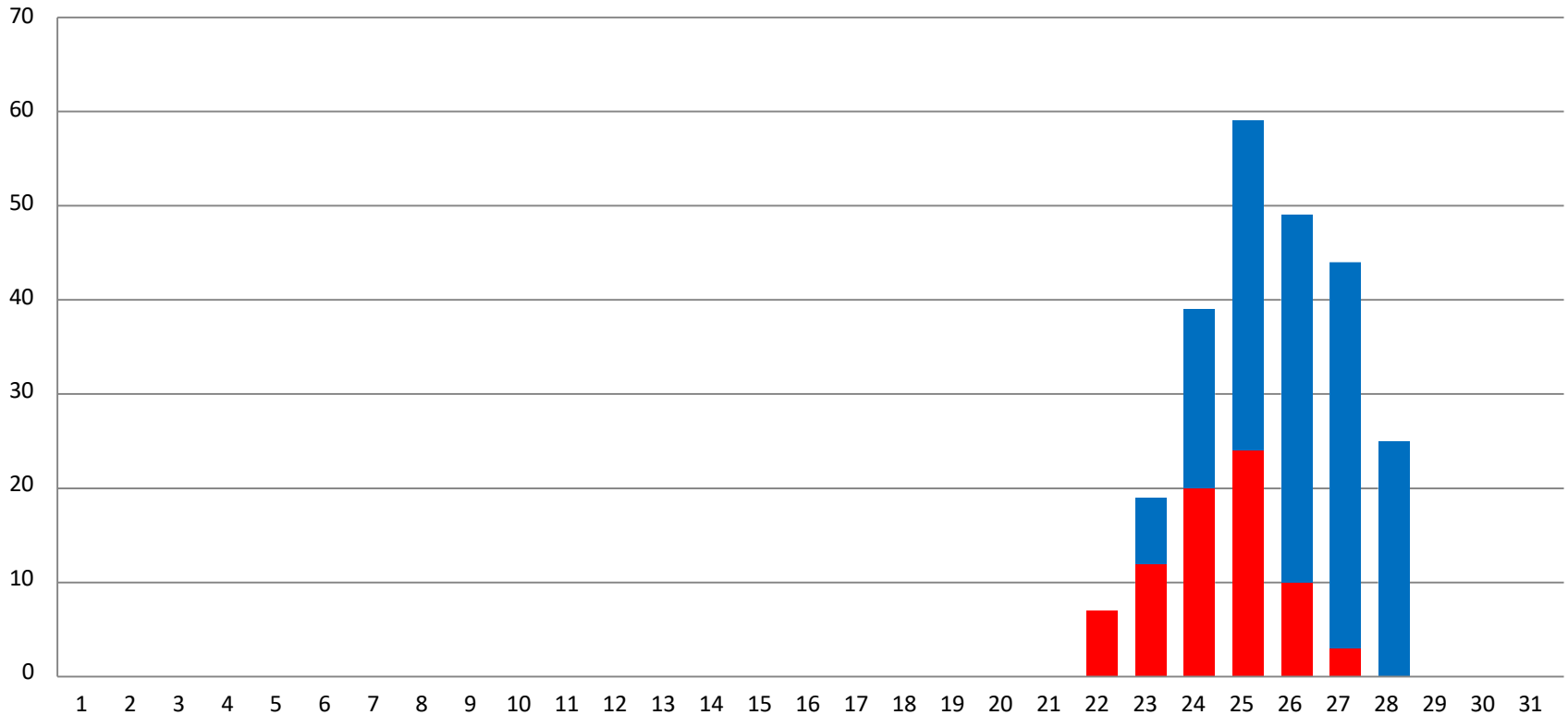
- Unstacking is the method used to assign trips when the number of Flight Attendants (FAs) requesting particular days off greatly exceeds the days off that are available on those dates. In other words, if all FAs were given those particular days off, a Stack of pairings that operate on those dates would remain. This happens primarily when a large percentage of FAs want days off, but there is an increase in flying on those dates. The best examples of this are Holidays. On Holidays, there is an increase in flights to accommodate our travelling public that want to travel for the Holidays, but we also would like to be off on those days to enjoy the Holidays in our own ways. Especially since those are some of the most potentially profitable times of the year for our company, it is vitally important that those flights be staffed and operate.

How does Unstacking work?

- During the bid run process, Crew Planning and your AFA Scheduling Committee will begin to see patterns of remaining trips that result from a disproportionate number of FAs requesting the same days off on days with heavier than typical flying to cover. When this happens, Unstacking may be necessary to cause those trips to be more fully assigned. Unfortunately, there isn't any way to know exactly which dates will be affected until after the bids are all submitted and a few runs have been conducted. If changing various sorting methodologies in the bid run process isn't successful in eliminating the stack (or stacks) of trips, then unstacking must be initiated. (See example on Next Slide)

Example of a Stack of Trips around a Holiday

Red indicates the Start of a trip, Blue indicates the Continuation of a trip (ie. days 2, 3, etc.)



How does Unstacking work? (cont'd)

- Once it has been determined that unstacking may be necessary, then a seniority at which unstacking will begin is selected, and more runs are conducted. Where the unstacking starts is determined by a combination of factors including historical information and the number of trips in the stack that have to be dealt with. Many runs are conducted to ensure that unstacking occurs at the lowest possible seniority that still meets the requirements of assigning the trips and covering the operation.

How does Unstacking work? (cont'd)

- When the system is unstacking for certain dates, once it reaches the point in the seniority order at which unstacking is set to begin, from that first unstacked crew member until the end of the bid run, each crew member will be awarded a trip (or trips) that satisfy a portion of the stacked dates FIRST, before any of the rest of their schedule is awarded.
- If, for example, a stack of 3 dates is being unstacked, a crew member may get:
 - one trip that covers all three days
 - two different trips that cover all three days
 - three one-day trips that cover all three days
 - two different trips that cover 2 of the 3 days
 - one trip that covers 2 of the three days
 - or (least likely) one trip that covers just one of the days.
- Unfortunately, the system will NOT recognize that one of the 3 days in the stack is the actual holiday, it will treat all days in the stack as equal. If having the actual holiday off is the most important thing for you, then you may need to submit an unstack bid sheet that allows for a trip or trips that operate on all of the potential unstack dates except for the actual holiday. Tricky to do when you don't know exactly which days will be unstacked, right?

What is an Unstacking Bid Sheet?

- An Unstacking Bid Sheet (UBS) is a way for you, as a bidding crewmember, to try and still get what you would like over a period of days that are being unstacked, if you turn out to be among the seniority level affected by unstacking. It's your way of telling the system that if you are unstacked, what type of trips and days off you would still like to get. If you are affected by unstacking, and you've created an unstacking bid sheet, then the system will try to give you trips from the stack that meet your unstack preferences first, before awarding the remainder of your schedule. Whether the remainder of your schedule is assigned from your first bid sheet or from your Unstack Bid Sheet depends on the preference you set when creating your UBS.

What is an Unstacking Bid Sheet? (Cont'd)

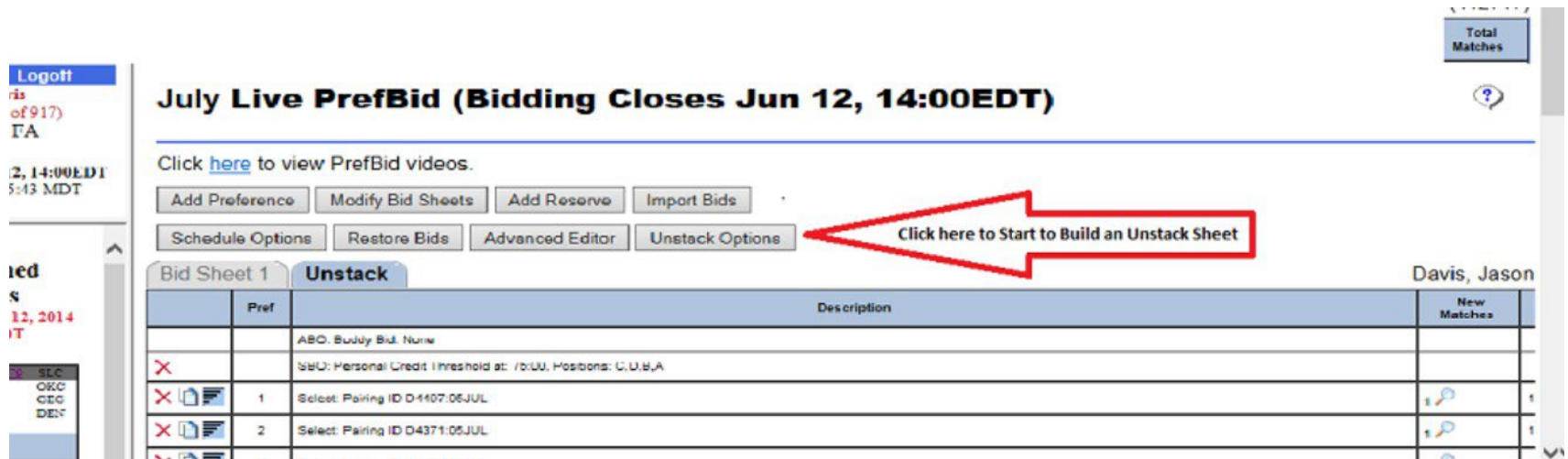
- An Unstacking Bid Sheet should not just be a copy of one of your other bid sheets if you're trying to get days off on all of the likely unstack days. If you simply make a copy of another bid sheet and still are asking for all of those days off, **it won't stop you from being unstacked**, but it will make it much more likely that you will be awarded trips from the stack that do not meet your trip and day off preferences. Your UBS should include trips that you'd still rather not have, but would prefer to other trips that you might have awarded to you on those dates.

Unstacking Bid Sheet Strategies

- If there is a particular day amongst the likely stacked days that you want to have off, there are some strategies that could help you achieve that. You could bid for trips that end early before the target day off, and trips that start late on the day after the target day to maximize your potential time off around that date. As a back up to this strategy, you could bid for trips with one leg home early on the day you want off, so that you will be home for the majority of that date.

Unstack Bid Sheet Options

To create an Unstack Bid Sheet you can either copy your last (highest number) bid sheet, then edit it, or you can start with an empty Unstack Bid Sheet. From the Live Bid Preference editor, start here.



The screenshot shows the 'July Live PrefBid (Bidding Closes Jun 12, 14:00EDT)' interface. A red arrow points to the 'Unstack Options' button in the navigation bar. The interface includes a sidebar with user information and a main table for bid sheets.

July Live PrefBid (Bidding Closes Jun 12, 14:00EDT)

Click [here](#) to view PrefBid videos.

Buttons: Add Preference, Modify Bid Sheets, Add Reserve, Import Bids, Schedule Options, Restore Bids, Advanced Editor, **Unstack Options**

Click here to Start to Build an Unstack Sheet

Bid Sheet 1		Unstack			Davis, Jason
	Pref		Description	New Matches	
			ABC, Buddy Bid, Nurse		
X			SBU: Personal Credit Threshold at: /b/00, Positions: C,U,B,A		
X	1		Select: Pairing ID D-1107:05JUL	1	
X	2		Select: Pairing ID D-4371:05JUL	1	

Unstack Bid Sheet Options (Cont'd)

FLICA.Net - Unstack Options - Internet Explorer
http://frontier.flica.net/full/PrefUNS.html?

Unstack Options

Choose how you want the award to treat bids if the system needs to assign pairings to you in unstack mode.

Use an unstack bid sheet

Fig. 1 Make a copy of my last bid sheet and make it the unstack bid sheet.

Add an empty bid sheet as my unstack bid sheet

Select the bid sheet to use to start the award in order to complete your schedule.
This will only be used if you will be awarded a pairing from any unstack window.

Unstack bid sheet only **Fig. 2**

1st bid sheet (Default)

2nd bid sheet (if available, otherwise uses 1st bid sheet)

Last regular bid sheet (i.e. 2nd or 3rd bid sheet as applicable)

Award from 1st bid sheet

Cancel Apply

Fig 1. Here is where you would choose to either copy your last bid sheet or to add an empty bid sheet.

Fig 2. Here is where you must choose how you want the Pref Bid system to complete your schedule, either from your UBS, or one of your earlier Bid Sheets. See Next Slide for further information.

Unstack Bid Sheet Options (Cont'd)

If you're not subject to unstacking, the system will never look at your UBS. If you are subject to unstacking, the system will first assign trips from the stack, using your UBS. Even if the first several lines of your UBS are asking for all the days off that are being unstacked, the system will look past those lines without assigning any trips from them, looking for trips that operate on the stacked days. If you have bid enough options and there are still trips available in the stack that meet them, you will be assigned that trip or trips to satisfy the stack.

Once the system has assigned you enough pairings to satisfy the stack parameters, if you have selected the Unstack option of "Continue to Assign Pairings from First Bid Sheet", the system will go back to the top of your first bid sheet and continue to assign the remainder of your schedule. If you selected the condition "Assign Remainder of Schedule from UBS", the system will continue to assign the remainder of your schedule from the UBS. If you choose to have the remainder of your schedule assigned from the UBS you must ensure that the UBS is complete enough to award you an entire month's schedule with which you would be satisfied.

FAQ

- **How can I avoid being unstacked?**

This is our most commonly asked question. The only answer is “Be more senior.” Unfortunately, absent the possession of a time machine, this isn’t really an option for us. The fact is, that if you’re at or below the seniority level at which unstacking is occurring, you cannot avoid being unstacked unless you happen to have vacation or pre-awarded absences on all of the stacked dates. All you can do is try to control the types of trips you are awarded through the use of an Unstacking Bid Sheet.

- **Should I use a new blank unstack sheet, or copy my last bid sheet?**

This depends on whether you would need to completely change your bid if you were to be subject to unstacking, and whether you’re approaching the limit of 200 preference lines on your entire bid. If you are only using the UBS to bid for the trips around/touching the anticipated stack days, but you’d be bidding for those days off otherwise, it may be faster to do that starting with a blank page. However, if you are not trying to be off during the anticipated stack period, copying your last bid sheet may just save quite a bit of building time, and may only require a few edits to your existing bid. If your entire month’s planned bid would have to be different if you were to be unstacked, then you may find either building from a blank UBS or editing from a copy of your last sheet to be easier depending on your comfort zone.

FAQ (cont'd)

- **If I don't use an unstacking sheet, what would happen?**

If you don't use a UBS, and you're subject to unstacking, then the system will try to find trips in the stack that meet the preference lines of your regular bid starting on sheet 1. If it goes through your entire bid without finding any available trips in the stack that meet your preferences, then it would award trips to you from the stack based on the "all remaining pairings" line. Once the stack is satisfied, the remainder of your schedule would be awarded in accordance with your bid starting from the top of sheet 1. If you're not trying to get off for the dates that are expected to be unstacked, not having a UBS may work for you.