



MEC TOPIC: 3-DAY PAIRINGS, HNL BASE

MARCH 19, 2023

Dear Fellow AFA members,

Yes, it me again, but before you swipe right, I thought I'd give everyone an insight as to why there are now so many more 3-day pairings - ugh. So as usual, I went out to collect data for our Local Presidents at each base, in order for us to have an analytical discussion about this topic. Here is what I learned and now passing along to all of you.

Changes. First of all, of course many do not like it when 2-day pairings become 3-day pairings with the same credit. Well maybe there are those who enjoy exploring their layover cities with an extra day off. But for others, this limits their ability to work more, earn more. This change, as most know, was driven by a newly implemented Federal Law recognizing Flight Attendants' that recognizing good rest as being paramount to our health and well-being. This new 10 hour rest requirement deserves its own coverage and I will try to address that in another communique.

Figuring out how to apply the new rest rule. It's interesting to note that our AFA Contract has had a minimum 10 hour rest for layovers away from domicile for quite some time. However, the rest could be reduced down to 9 hours and even more with short hotel rest. So, since these allowances were provided, 9 hours became the norm for figuring out how to build pairings. Crew Planning would build a pairing with a buffer of 9:30, providing us with the common 2-day West Coast trips we grew to know. As an aside, Aloha Airlines Flight Attendants loved their 3-day Mainland trips and never went to 2-day pairings in Contract concessionary talks. Go figure.

Calculating the 10 hours. The change to accommodate the new 10 hour rest rule could no longer be teased down to 9 hours or less, it is an absolute because of the FARs. The 10 hour rest begins 15 minutes after block-in (when the first door opens, could be cargo) and ends at check-in for the next flight, so in our case that's 1:15 before departure. The pilots' check-in is only 1:00, so that's how they can have some 2-day pairings when we have 3-day groupings to the same destination. Starting next month, they will have the same rest as us. A potentially tricky part for us may be if we are still on duty 15 minutes after block-in. For example, if there are a number of wheelchair passengers and we are onboard with them past the 15 minutes; we would then still be considered on-duty until our release which is when our rest clock begins.

New buffers to ensure operational integrity. Crew planning initially tried using a 10:15 buffer in February to meet the rest rule and maintain a larger number of 2-day pairing. Over the course of the month this all began, it became apparent that 10:15 was cutting it too close and the operation was feeling the pressure of meeting the schedule. So, a new buffer of 10:30, similar to the 9:30 buffer when our rest could be 9 hours or less, was used which resulted in fewer delays and a better operation, well if you take productivity out of the picture.

Juggling quite a few balls. The result of the 10:30 buffer decision was that many of the 2-day trips morphed into 3-day pairings. This meant lower productivity for not only the Flight Attendants, but also for the company as a whole. There was a mutual desire to find a way to create more productive pairings overall. Crew Planning worked closely with Network Planning to find pathways towards increased crew utilization. Network Planning was not against moving

times around to get more 2-day trips, but multiple factors came into play, with each part of the operation requiring that their needs were also met. Here are just a few to illustrate.

- **Marketing** wanted to ensure that passengers from the West Coast could still connect without International and Interisland flights
- **Operations** concern was gate availability at our West Coast stations. If we only use 1 gate but multiple flights also need to use that gate, then those flights need to be spaced apart so that the first one in is out of the way for the next arrival
- **Maintenance** has a finely choreographed dance and certain planes need to be in certain places on certain days for maintenance
- **Staffing** coverage at the different stations need to be in place with any changes to the schedule
- **Airport runway construction** projects are happening in HNL and LGB which directly impacts when our planes can arrive and depart

And the list goes on and on. It really is quite a juggling act to get everything in place. Moving the departure times a few minutes is not as simple as it would seem.

Possible return to more 2-day pairings. Yup, you read that right. A key strategy the company is using going forward is to lock-in a few strategic pairings as 3-day trips. Once certain trips are locked in place, then the time and slots they had originally occupied may be better used to construct more 2-day pairings while still maintaining the 10:30 buffer.

Daylight ahead. When speaking with Crew Planning, the department felt they could create enough 2-day pairing, percentage wise, in May as we had before the 10 hour rest rule in January of this year. (The law was implemented in February.) West Coast flying broke out this way:

- January (before the new rest rule): 58% 2-day trips + 35% 3-day trips
- February (1st month with rest rule but only 10:15 buffer): 54% 2-day + 38% 3-day trips
- March (this month with rest rule and 10:30 buffer): 42% 2-day + 50% 3-day trips
- April (next month with rest rule and 10:30 buffer): 54% 2-day + 38% 3-day trips
- May (projection): 58% 2-day + 31% 3-day trips

Importance of facts. I'm a big believer in trying to get data to better understand any situation that comes before us as a Union. That way we can better navigate the landscape in front of us. Sorry if this information was a bit long-winded, but I wanted to share what I learned with everyone. There is actually a creep up in the % of 2-day trips in April so for those of you who missed those pairings, brighter days are ahead for you.

In Unity,
Ka'imi Lee, MEC President

(For those who got this far, mahalo for not swiping right.)