

Endeavour Lands Safely In Florida

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The Shuttle Landing Facility at Kennedy Space Center, Fla., awaits the return of Space Shuttle Endeavour today. Image: NASA TV

Space Shuttle Endeavour glided in for a perfect landing at Kennedy Space Center, Fla., bringing to a close an International Space Station Assembly mission and concluding the flight of a teacher turned astronaut.

Touchdown occurred at 12:32 p.m. EDT on runway 15 with STS-118 Commander Scott Kelly and Pilot Charles Hobaugh at the controls. The STS-118 crew also includes Mission Specialists Tracy Caldwell, Rick Mastracchio, Dave Williams, Barbara R. Morgan and Alvin Drew.

Endeavour returned home two weeks after it launched from Kennedy. Endeavour arrived at the station on Aug. 10 with the seven STS-118 astronauts quickly beginning joint operations with the Expedition 15 crew.

While at the station, the astronauts conducted four spacewalks to continue on-orbit construction and perform repair work at the station. The major spacewalking tasks included the installation of the Starboard 5 truss, replacement of a faulty attitude control gyroscope and preparations for assembly work by future crews.

Mastracchio, Williams and Expedition 15 Flight Engineer Clay Anderson were the spacewalkers. Caldwell coordinated all four excursions.

STS-118's stay at the station also featured the successful test of the Station-to-Shuttle Power Transfer System, which allows power generated by the station to be routed to a docked shuttle. The system will allow shuttle missions to stay at the station for longer periods of time.

Endeavour undocked from the station Sunday to end its almost-nine-day stay and to begin the trip home.

Morgan, who is also an educator astronaut, served as the STS-118 payload master. She was first selected by NASA in 1985 as the backup to Teacher in Space Christa McAuliffe. Following the Challenger accident in 1986, Morgan continued to work with NASA on educational activities and returned to teaching elementary school in Idaho. She returned to NASA as an astronaut in 1998.

STS-118 is the 119th space shuttle flight and the 22nd shuttle mission to visit the station. The next shuttle mission, STS-120, is targeted to launch in late October.

Source: NASA

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