

Shuttle Discovery at Launch Pad

October 1 2007

With space shuttle Discovery now at its launch pad at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, the next major milestone for the upcoming STS-120 mission is a full launch dress rehearsal.

The shuttle arrived at the pad near noon EDT Sunday on top of a giant vehicle called the crawler-transporter. The crawler-transporter began carrying Discovery out of Kennedy's Vehicle Assembly Building at 6:47 a.m., traveling less than 1 mph during the 3.4 mile journey. Discovery was firmly on the launch pad, or hard down, at 1:15 p.m.

Discovery is targeted to launch Oct. 23 on a 14-day mission to the International Space Station. The shuttle's seven crew members will add a module to the space station that will serve as a port for installing additional international laboratories. The crew also will move the station's first set of solar arrays to a permanent location and redeploy them.

Discovery's crew members are Commander Pam Melroy, Pilot George Zamka and mission specialists Scott Parazynski, Stephanie Wilson, Doug Wheelock, Daniel Tani and Paolo Nespoli of the European Space Agency. Tani will remain aboard the station and return with the STS-122 crew, targeted to launch Dec. 6. Current station Flight Engineer Clayton Anderson will return to Earth aboard Discovery.

The STS-120 astronauts and ground crews will participate in a launch dress rehearsal, known as the terminal countdown demonstration test, or TCDT, from Oct. 7 to 10 at Kennedy. The test provides each shuttle

crew with an opportunity to participate in various simulated countdown activities, including equipment familiarization and emergency training.

Source: NASA

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