

# Storms in Fla. delay space shuttle launch again

November 4 2010, By MARCIA DUNN , AP Aerospace Writer

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Storm clouds roll over the space shuttle Discovery after sunset Wednesday, Nov. 3, 2010, at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla. Space shuttle Discovery's launch Thursday has been postponed because of stormy weather. (AP Photo/Terry Renna)

(AP) -- Storms prevented Discovery from blasting off on its final journey Thursday, the latest in a series of postponements for NASA's oldest and most traveled space shuttle.

Just before daybreak, mission managers called off the afternoon liftoff and said they would try again Friday.

Rain was pounding the area, and meteorologists said there was little chance the weather would break in time for Thursday's planned launch. The official forecast was 80 percent "no go."

"As crazy luck would have it," the area's monthlong drought ended Thursday, said Pete Nickolenko, assistant launch director.

"If it looked like there was any possible chance of giving it a shot, then I think we would have," he said. "It was really very clear today that it just wasn't looking to be our day weather-wise," Nickolenko said.

On Friday, the weather outlook improves dramatically. There is a 60 percent chance that conditions will be acceptable for launch, although wind will be a concern once the front passes through.

Managers will meet again early Friday to evaluate the weather. If they feel they have a decent shot, they will give the go-ahead to fuel Discovery for liftoff. Liftoff on Friday would be at 3:03 p.m.

Discovery already has been delayed by gas leaks and an electrical problem.

The mission to the [International Space Station](#) is now running four days late. It will be the final flight for Discovery, which faces a museum retirement as the shuttle program winds down.

Six veteran astronauts are assigned to the 11-day flight. They have been at Kennedy Space Center for the past week, waiting out all the delays.

NASA has until Sunday to launch Discovery, otherwise the shuttle will remain grounded until the beginning of December because of unacceptable solar angles.

It's officially NASA's next-to-last shuttle flight. Endeavour is scheduled to lift off at the end of February. An extra mission may be added in mid-2011, if money is forthcoming.

The White House wants NASA focused on next-generation rockets and spacecraft that could carry astronauts to asteroids and Mars. The plan, for now, also calls for private business to develop rockets capable of carrying [astronauts](#) to the space station. Until then, American space travelers will need to hitch rides on Russian Soyuz spacecraft.

**More information:** NASA:

<http://www.nasa.gov/mission-pages/shuttle/main/index.html>

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