

Recovered SpaceX Falcon 9 booster headed back to port

May 10 2016, by Ken Kremer



SpaceX ASDS drone ship with the recovered Falcon 9 first stage rocket lurking off Port Canaveral waiting to enter the port. Credit: Julian Leek

The SpaceX Falcon 9 first stage booster that successfully launched a Japanese satellite to a Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO) just 3 days ago and then nailed a safe middle of the night touchdown on a drone ship at sea minutes minutes later, is headed back to port and may arrive

overnight or soon thereafter.

The 156 foot tall booster was spotted offshore earlier today while being towed back to her home port at Port Canaveral, Florida.

The SpaceX ASDS drone ship with the recovered Falcon 9 first stage rocket is lurking off Port Canaveral waiting to enter the [port](#) until after the cruise ships depart for safety reasons. Pictured above at 7:40 a.m.

The upgraded SpaceX Falcon 9 soared to orbit on May 6, roaring to life with 1.5 million pounds of thrust on a mission carrying the JCSAT-14 [commercial communications satellite](#), following an on time liftoff at 1:21 a.m. EDT from Space Launch Complex 40 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fl.

To date SpaceX has recovered 3 Falcon 9 first stages. But this was the first one to be recovered from the much more demanding, high velocity trajectory delivering a satellite to GTO.

"First landed booster from a GTO-class mission (final spacecraft altitude will be about 36,000 km)," tweeted SpaceX CEO and founder Elon Musk.

Musk was clearly ecstatic with the result, since SpaceX officials had been openly doubtful of a successful outcome with the landing.



Recovered Falcon 9 first stage after drone ship landing following SpaceX launch of JCSAT-14 on May 6, 2016 from Space Launch Complex 40 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fl. Credit: SpaceX

Barely nine minutes after liftoff the Falcon 9 first stage carried out a propulsive soft landing on an ocean going platform located some 400 miles off the east coast of Florida.

The drone ship was named "Of Course I Still Love You."

The Falcon 9 landed dead center in the bullseye.



Base of Recovered Falcon 9 first stage with landing legs after drone ship landing following SpaceX launch of JCSAT-14 on May 6, 2016 from Space Launch Complex 40 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fl. Credit: SpaceX

Check out the incredible views herein from SpaceX of the Falcon 9 sailing serenely atop the "Of Course I Still Love You."

The commercial SpaceX launch lofted the JCSAT-14 Japanese communications satellite to a Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO) for SKY Perfect JSAT – a leading [satellite](#) operator in the Asia – Pacific region.

The landing counts as nother stunning success for Elon Musk's vision of radically slashing the cost of sending rocket to space by recovering the boosters and eventually reusing them.



Launch of SpaceX Falcon 9 carrying JCSAT-14 Japanese communications satellite to orbit on May 6, 2016 at 1:21 a.m. EDT from Space Launch Complex 40 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fl. Credit: Julian Leek

Source: [Universe Today](#)

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