

Re: Shuttle – how many flights as pilot before becoming commander?

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Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.space.shuttle/2005-08/msg01864.html>

- *From:* "Andrew Lotosky" <skylon@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 10 Aug 2005 19:35:50 -0700
-

alex wrote:

- >
- > When Rick Husband was assigned to command STS-107 it was the first time
- > a PLT went straight to CDR on his second flight since 1993 (Frank
- > Culbertson on STS-51). At that point there was a shortage of CDRs (the
- > 1992 class only had four PLTs, several astronauts had retired or moved
- > to management decisions. As a consequence folks like Curt Brown, Jim
- > Wetherbee, and Kent Rominger were lucky enough to turnaround rapidly
- > and fly multiple commands over a couple of years). STS-107 was the
- > least dynamic mission (no spacewalks, no robot arm ops, no docking with
- > ISS or Hubble) so it made sense to give it to the PLT with the least
- > spaceflight experience in the office.
- >
- > Now it seems like NASA wants to get several PLTs promoted to CDR
- > quickly to build up for the future before they become too old, so
- > several 1996 PLTs are getting promoted to CDR on their second flights.
- >

To name a couple, Scott Kelly has been assigned to command STS 118 even before the loss of Columbia. He's only flown on STS 103, though he did a backup stint for an ISS Crew.

Mark Polansky, originally assigned as pilot for STS 117 was bumped up to command STS 116 when its original commander, Terry Wilcutt was moved into a management position. He's so far only flown in STS 98.

The only 1996 PLT not assigned to anything right now as PLT or CDR is Steve Frick, and he's so far only flown on STS 110. I wouldn't be surprised if he gets a shot at CDR on his second flight.

I guess its safe to say Brown and Rominger, like Wetherbee were a couple of the "bubbas"?

By far the most ridiculous turnaround was Bob Crippen, from STS 7 in 1983, to STS 41-C to STS 41-G, BOTH in 1984. I'm sure that pissed some people off in the Astronaut Office.

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–A.L.

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◆ **Re: Shuttle – how many flights as pilot before becoming commander?**

◇ From: Justa Lurker

• **References:**

◆ **Re: Shuttle – how many flights as pilot before becoming commander?**

◇ From: alex

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