

STS-118 MCC Status Report #03

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Thursday, Aug. 9, 2007 – 7:00 p.m.

Mission Control Center, Houston, Texas

The Space Shuttle Endeavour's crew spent much of its first full day in space making sure the shuttle will be safe to return home.

Using the shuttle's robotic arm and orbiter boom sensor system, the crew took a close look at the heat shielding on the ship's wing leading edges. The data was sent to engineers on the ground, who will analyze it to make sure the heat shield came through Wednesday's launch in good condition.

Commander Scott Kelly, Pilot Charlie Hobaugh and Mission Specialists Tracy Caldwell, Rick Mastracchio, Dave Williams, Barbara Morgan and Alvin Drew also prepared for the planned 12:53 p.m. Friday docking with the International Space Station.

Just before that docking, Kelly will guide Endeavour through a back flip that will allow the station crew to take digital photos of the vehicle's underside, providing more data for analysis by the ground. The rendezvous pitch maneuver, as the back flip is called, provides one more way to ensure the shuttle's heat shielding is healthy.

While the robotic arm survey was under way, Kelly, Williams and Drew checked the spacesuits that will be used during the mission's spacewalks. Williams and Mastracchio will install the fifth starboard segment (S5) of the station's main truss during the first spacewalk Saturday. The subsequent spacewalks will replace a failed gyroscope, prepare for the future relocation of another truss segment and, if time permits, install a bracket for storing the shuttle's orbiter boom sensory system outside the station.

The crew also checked rendezvous tools, installed a centerline camera in Endeavour's docking system window and extended the docking system's outer ring.

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Immediately after Friday's docking, Caldwell and Mastracchio will lift the 4,000-pound truss segment using the shuttle's robotic arm and hand it to the waiting station arm, operated by Hobough and station flight engineer Clay Anderson. The aluminum spacer will remain in the station arm's grip until it's installed Saturday.

Endeavour's crew is scheduled to go to sleep at 10:36 p.m. and awaken at 6:36 a.m. Friday.

The next STS-118 status report will be issued Friday morning or earlier if events warrant.

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Jacques :-)

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