

Failure Predictions of Out-of-Autoclave Sandwich Joints with Delaminations under Flexure Loads

Nikolas A. Nordendale*, Vinay K. Goyal, Eric C. Lundgren
Structures Department
The Aerospace Corporation

Dhruv N. Patel
Materials Science Department
The Aerospace Corporation

Babak Forrokh, Justin Jones, Grace Fischetti, Kenneth N. Segal
NASA Goddard Space Flight Center

**Presenting author*

Vehicle Systems Division/Engineering and Technology Group
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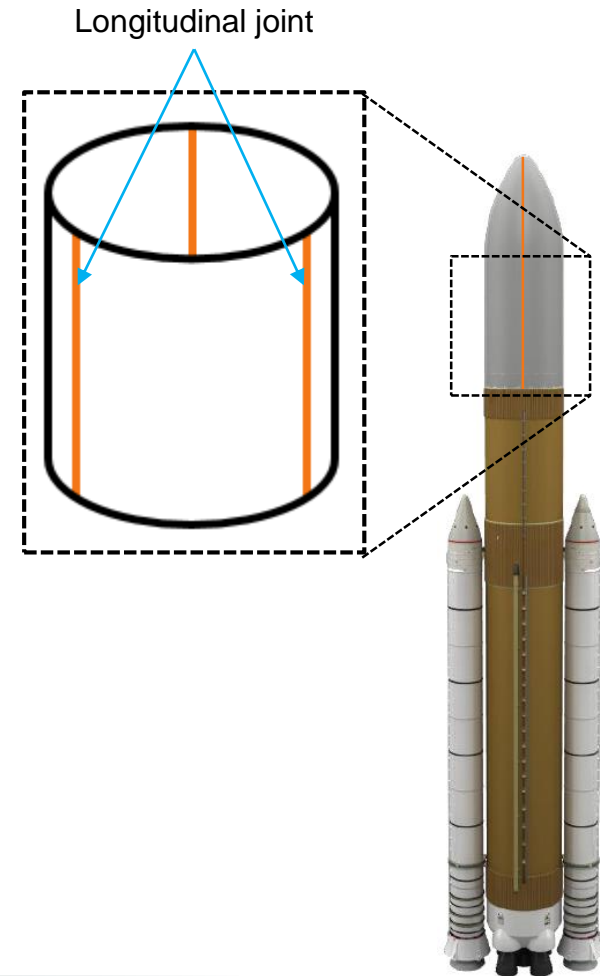
Overview

- Introduction
- Characterization of Material Systems
- Fabrication, Test Setup, and Results
- Finite Element Model
- Finite Element Results
- Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

Brief Background on Out-of-Autoclave Manufacturing; Research Motivation

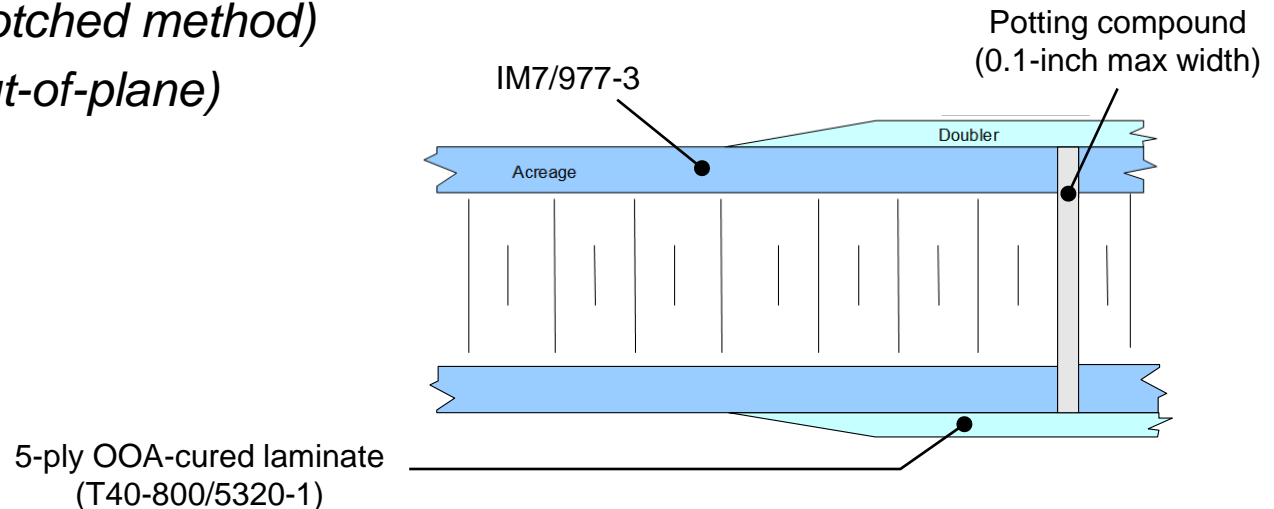
- Composite structures for heavy-lift launch vehicles projected to be largest composites ever built
 - *No autoclaves large enough to process large composite barrel section structures of this size*
- Approach considered is to join in-autoclave (IA) composite sections with bonded out-of-autoclave (OOA) doublers to achieve large full-barrel section
- Two aspects investigated:
 1. *Strength reduction associated with large flaw between OOA and IA materials*
 2. *Predictive capability of fracture methods to estimate failure load due to flaw in joint*



Characterization of Material Systems

Composite Descriptions

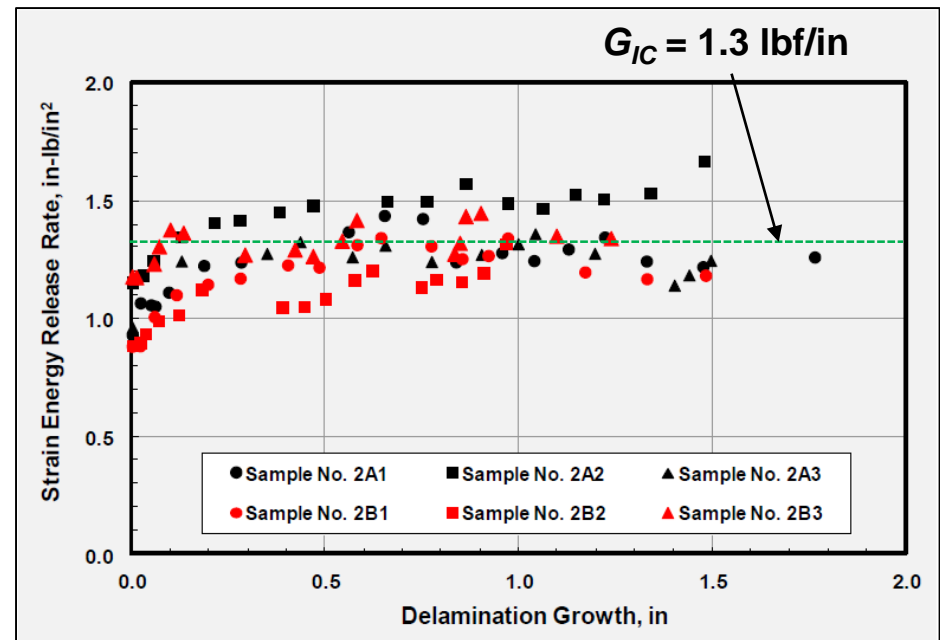
- Panels fabricated with IA curable unidirectional prepreg IM7/977-3 and OOA woven fabric T40-800/5320-1
 - *Both materials produced commercially*
- Mechanical tests performed to verify the T40-800/5320-1 material
 - *In-plane tension (panel 0-degree aligned with axial)*
 - *Compression (panel 90-degree aligned with axial)*
 - *In-plane shear (V-notched method)*
 - *Flatwise tension (out-of-plane)*



Characterization of Material Systems

Bond Property Characterization

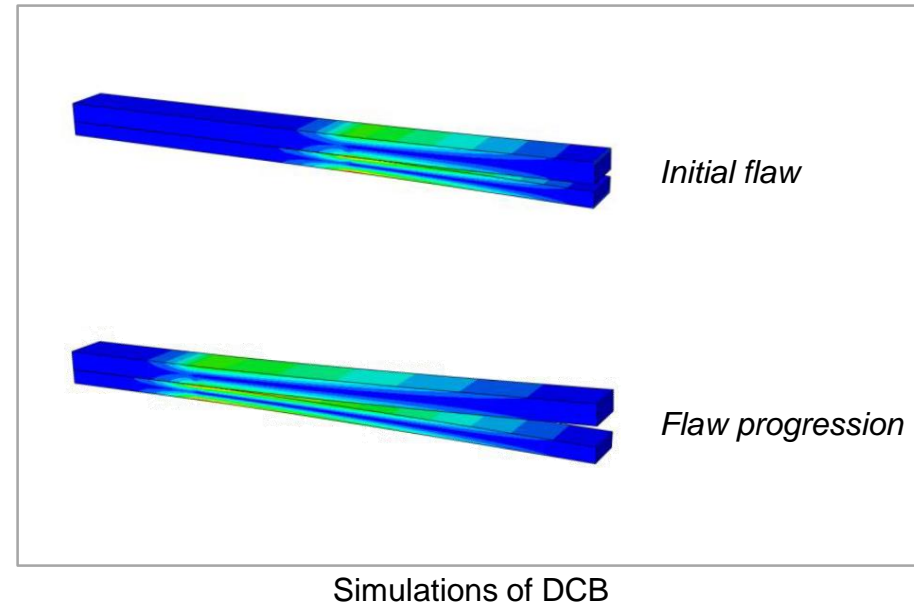
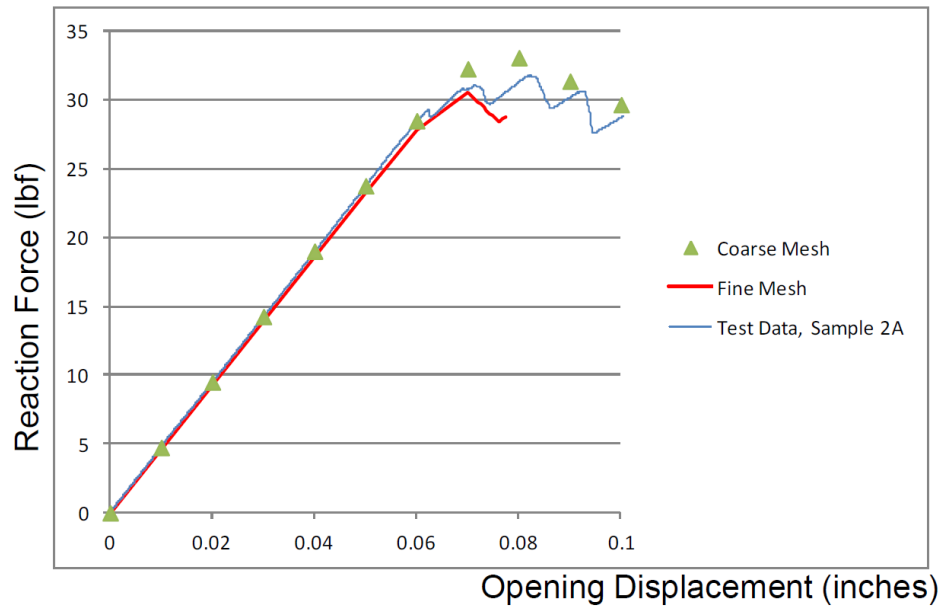
- Two panels fabricated to measure Mode I interlaminar fracture toughness (G_{IC}) using double cantilever beam (DCB) test
 - *Finite element modeling used to size the stacking sequence to ensure bending stiffness of each cantilever arm was nearly equal*
- Six coupons tested
 - 2.5-inch flaw (x3)
 - 3.5-inch flaw (x3)
- G_{IC} consistent between six coupons



Characterization of Material Systems

Finite Element Model Predictions

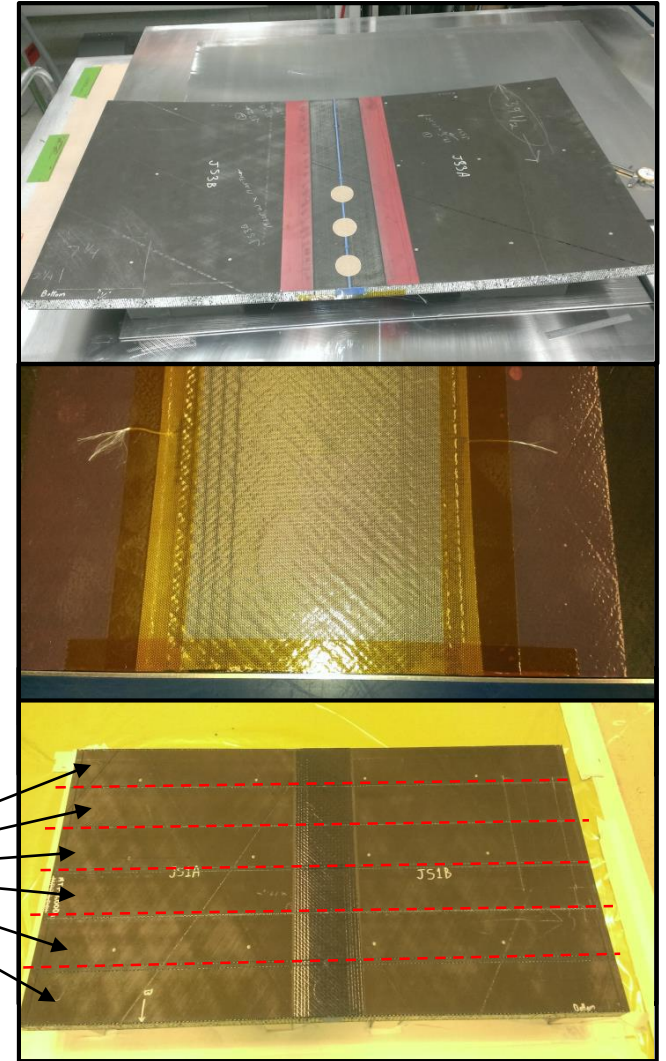
- Load-displacement response from finite element simulations using cohesive elements showed good agreement with experimental response
- Response was relatively insensitive to mesh density



Fabrication, Test Setup and Results

Panel Fabrication

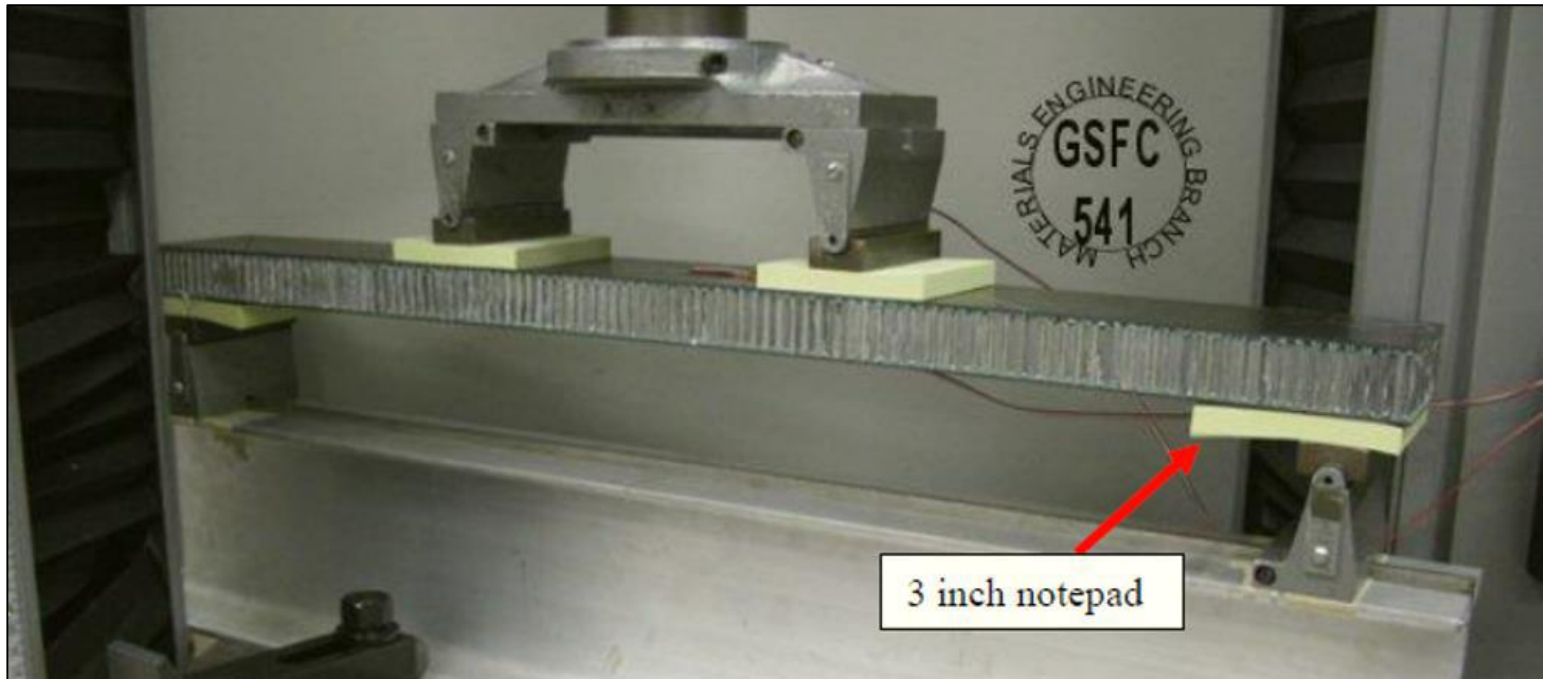
- Panel segments manufactured by NASA Light Spacecraft Structures and Materials program
 - *Radius of curvature = 198 inches*
1. Segments joined with splice adhesive
 2. Teflon[®] inserts placed, doublers bonded to join panel segment
 3. Individual four-point-bending (4PB) coupons excised from fabricated composite joint



Fabrication, Test Setup and Results

4PB Configurations

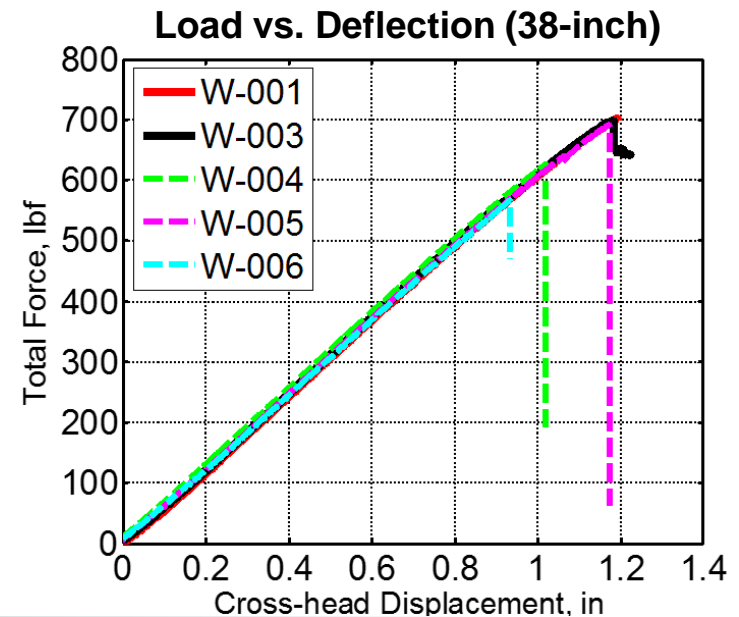
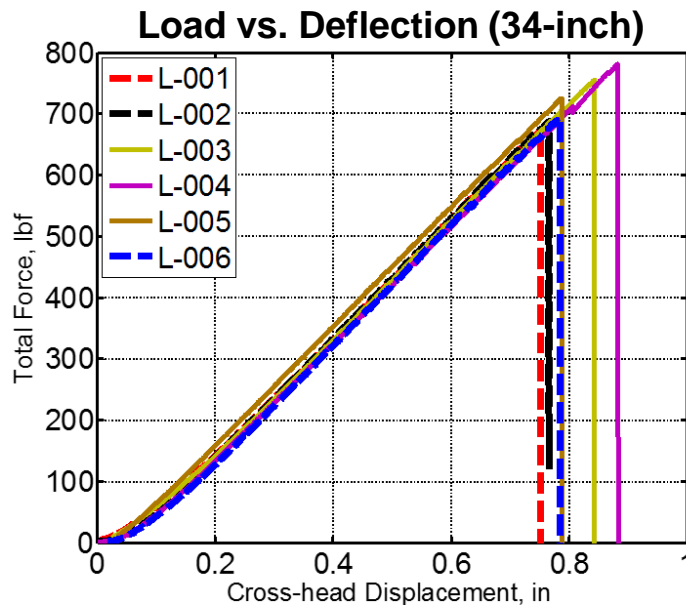
- Two different 4PB configurations used
 - *34-inch long (along zero degree ply; core ribbon direction)*
 - *38-inch long (transverse to zero degree ply; cross-ribbon direction)*
- Full panels manufactured then cut into separate samples



Fabrication, Test Setup and Results

4PB Test Results

- Six specimens of each configuration tested in 4PB
- For each configuration, only half the specimens included the 1.6-inch diameter Teflon[®] debond inserts
 - *Defect flaw size selected based on analysis to ensure failure in jointed region*
- Maximum deflections measured at centerline midspans

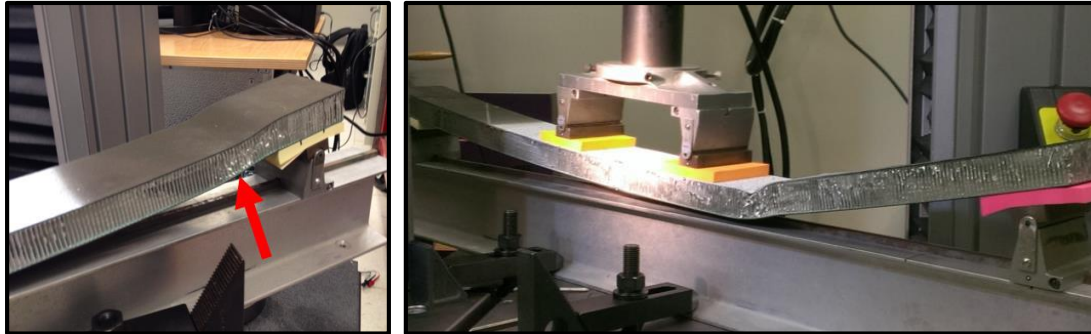


Overall strength reduction due to flaw inclusion was 9 to 10 percent

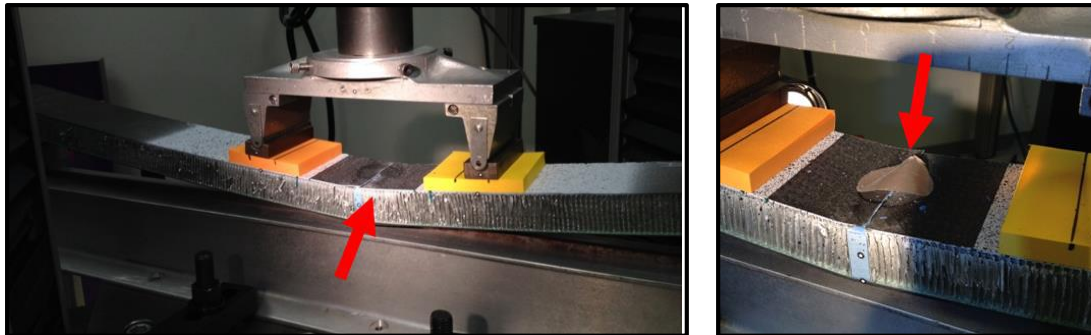
Fabrication, Test Setup and Results

4PB Test Results (cont.)

- Various failure modes observed in test as a result of whether flaw inserts were included
 - *Core shear failure (only observed in 38-inch unflawed samples)*



- *Delamination at joint (observed in all flawed samples, and all 34-inch samples)*

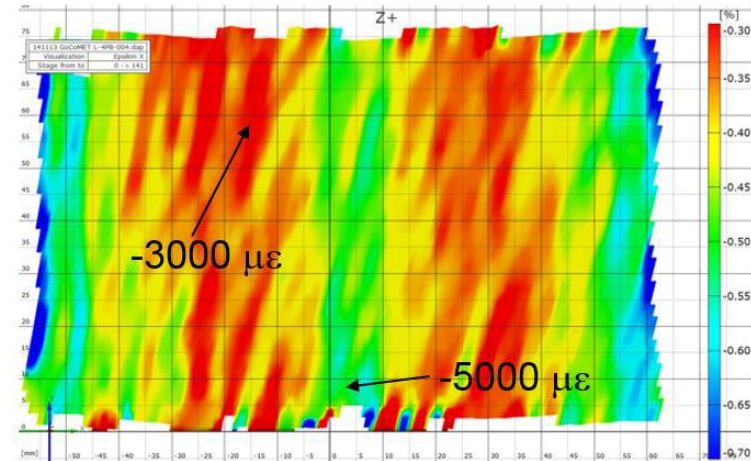
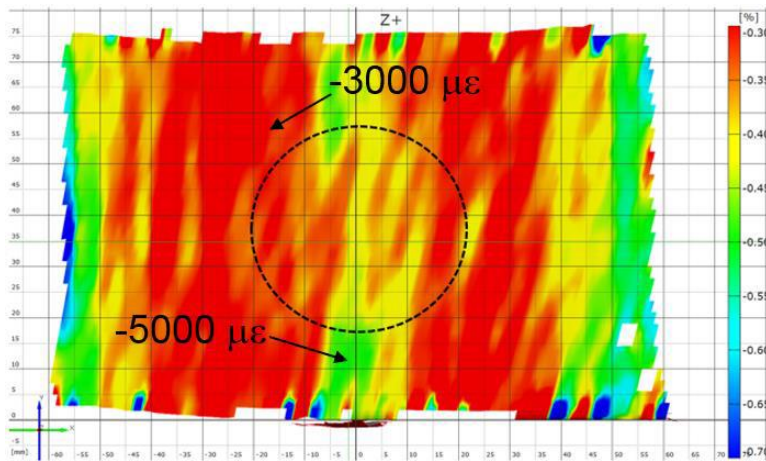
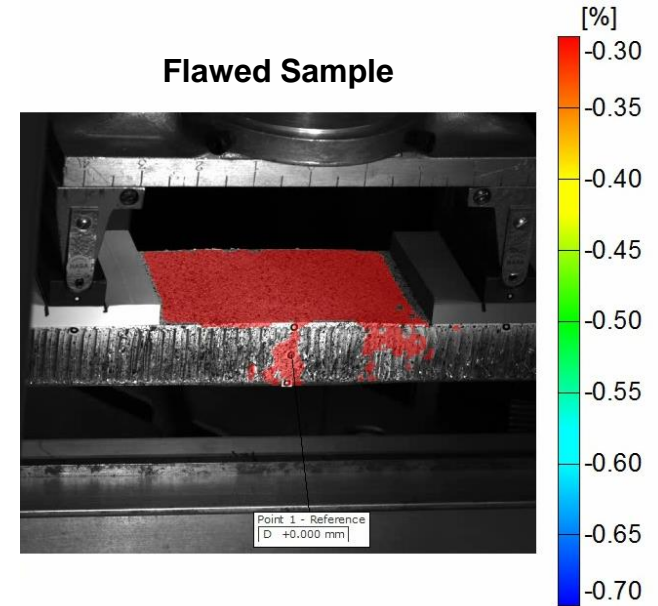


Delamination growth at joint most likely failure mode encountered in tests

Fabrication, Test Setup and Results

4PB Test Results (cont.)

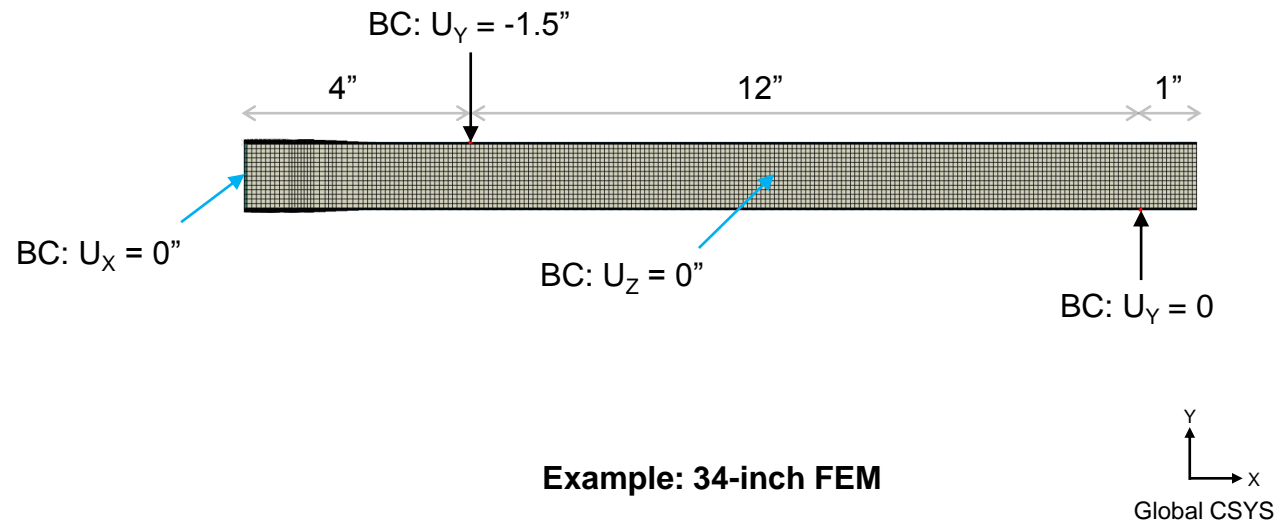
- Surface strains measured in joint region using Digital Image Correlation (DIC)
- Axial strain fields captured at last frame before failure
- Teflon[®] inserts observed to increase strain field on joint seam



Finite Element Model

Simulation Methodology

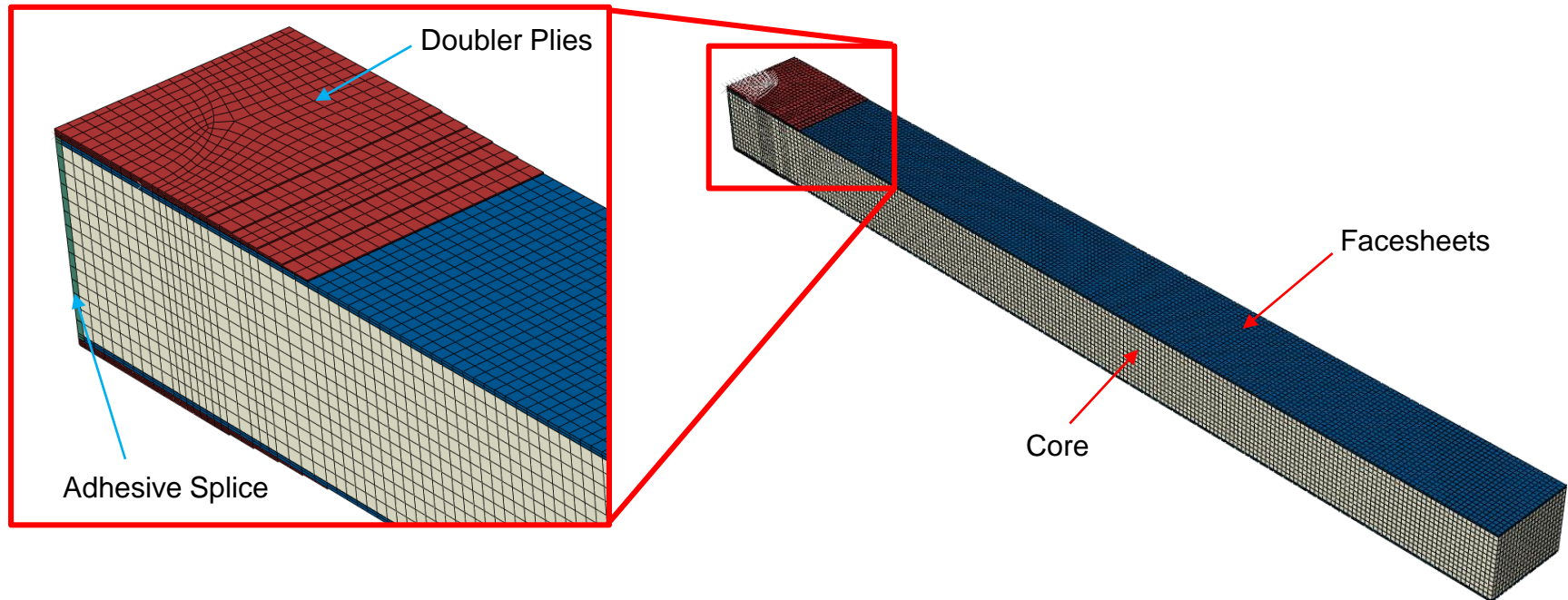
- Finite element models (FEMs) using Abaqus
- 34-inch and 38-inch specimens with and without flaws
- Two-way symmetry and displacement control utilized



Finite Element Model

Simulation Methodology (cont.)

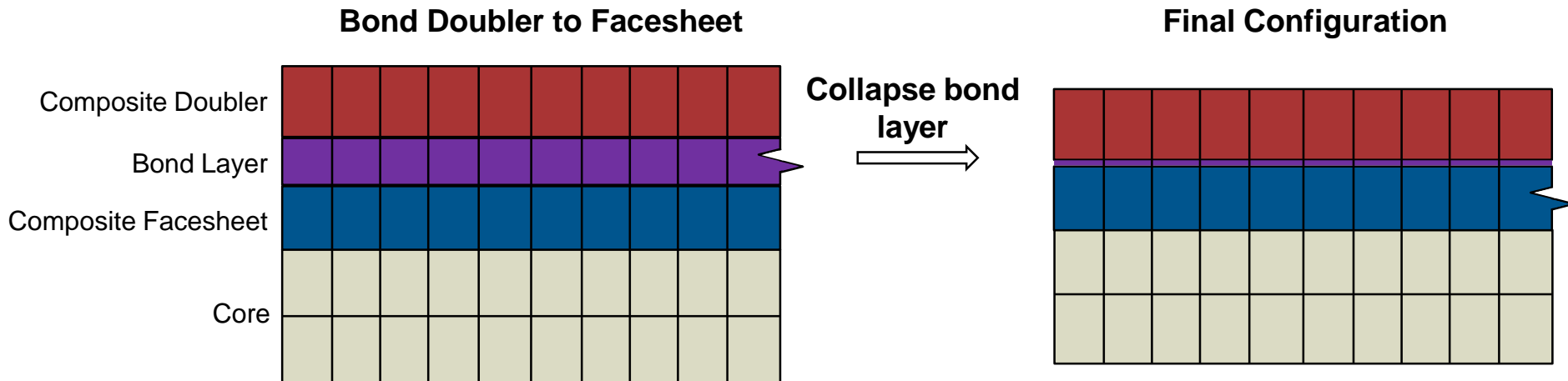
- 4PB loading creates a mixed-mode failure; therefore, necessary to formulate some basis for determining appropriate values of Mode II and Mode III fracture energies (G_{IIIC} and G_{IIIIC})
 - Analyses run for (1) $G_{IIIC} = 1 * G_{IC}$, (2) $G_{IIIC} = 2 * G_{IC}$, (3) $G_{IIIC} = 3 * G_{IC}$
 - $G_{IIIC} \approx G_{IIIIC}$



Finite Element Model

Cohesive Element Formulations – Abaqus UEL

- First cohesive layer modeling methodology simulates an irreversible exponential constitutive law for the interface
- Solid elements collapsed to zero thickness
- Flaw (or “debond”) region uses UEL while bonded region uses Abaqus built-in solid cohesive elements



Finite Element Model

Cohesive Element Formulations – Surface-based Cohesion

- Second cohesive layer modeling methodology utilizes surface-based cohesive behavior using built-in Abaqus contact formulation
- Flaw region utilizes frictionless tangential behavior coupled with hard contact normal behavior
- Bond region used cohesive behavior to transfer stresses across the interface using arbitrarily high stiffness
 - Assumptions made on max bond strength due to lack of experimental data
 - Delamination initiation predicted with strength-based criterion and propagation based on fracture criterion (power law)

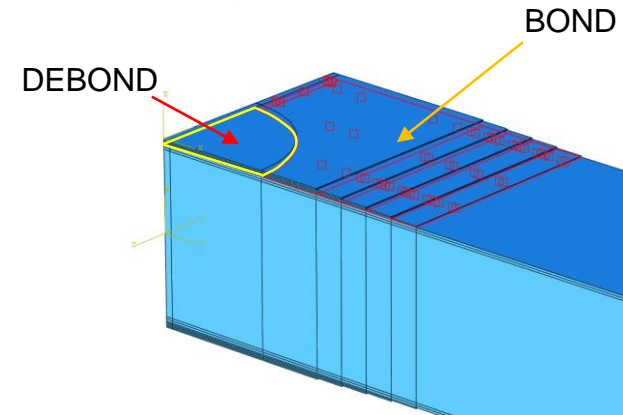
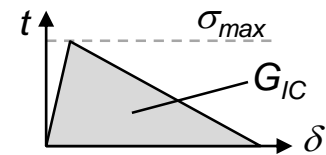
Elastic Behavior:

$$\mathbf{t} = \begin{Bmatrix} t_n \\ t_s \\ t_t \end{Bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} K_{nn} & K_{ns} & K_{nt} \\ K_{ns} & K_{ss} & K_{st} \\ K_{nt} & K_{st} & K_{tt} \end{bmatrix} \begin{Bmatrix} \delta_n \\ \delta_s \\ \delta_t \end{Bmatrix} = \mathbf{K} \boldsymbol{\delta}$$

Damage Initiation:

$$\left\{ \frac{\langle t_n \rangle}{t_n^0} \right\}^2 + \left\{ \frac{t_s}{t_s^0} \right\}^2 + \left\{ \frac{t_t}{t_t^0} \right\}^2 = 1$$

Damage Propagation:



Finite Element Model

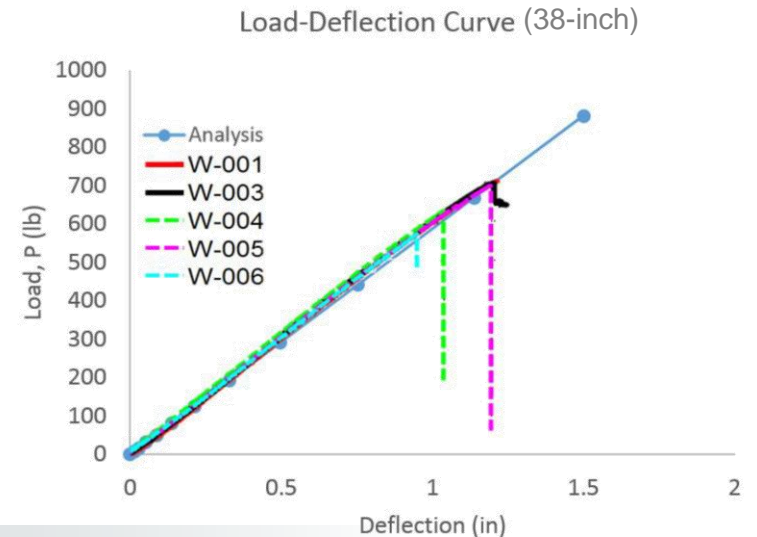
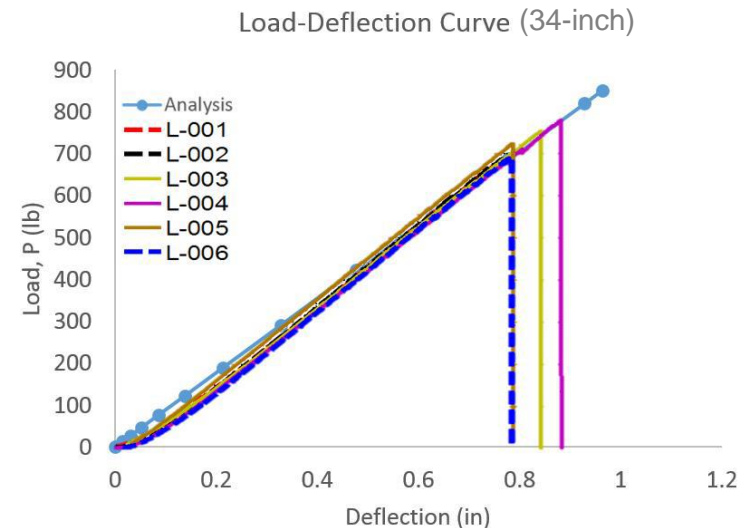
Failure Criteria

- One metric of modeling procedure was to identify likely failure mode for each simulation
- Five types of potential failure criteria:
 1. Doubler bond failure (debond)
Damage initiation criterion = 6,000 psi
 2. Core shear failure in ribbon direction (L)
Damage initiation criterion: 155-210 psi (transverse shear strength)
 3. Core shear failure transverse to ribbon direction (W)
Damage initiation criterion: 90-130 psi (transverse shear strength)
 4. Facesheet ply failure
Damage initiation criterion: 9,200 $\mu\epsilon$ maximum strain
 5. Doubler ply failure
Damage initiation criterion: 10,000 $\mu\epsilon$ maximum strain

Finite Element Results

Unflawed Samples

- Analysis of 34-inch samples predicted joint failure at peak load of 852 lbf
 - Max load seen in test = 781 lbf
 - Model prediction within 10 percent
- Analysis of 38-inch samples predicted core shear failure at peak load of 724 lbf
 - Max load seen in test = 702 lbf
 - Model prediction within 3 percent

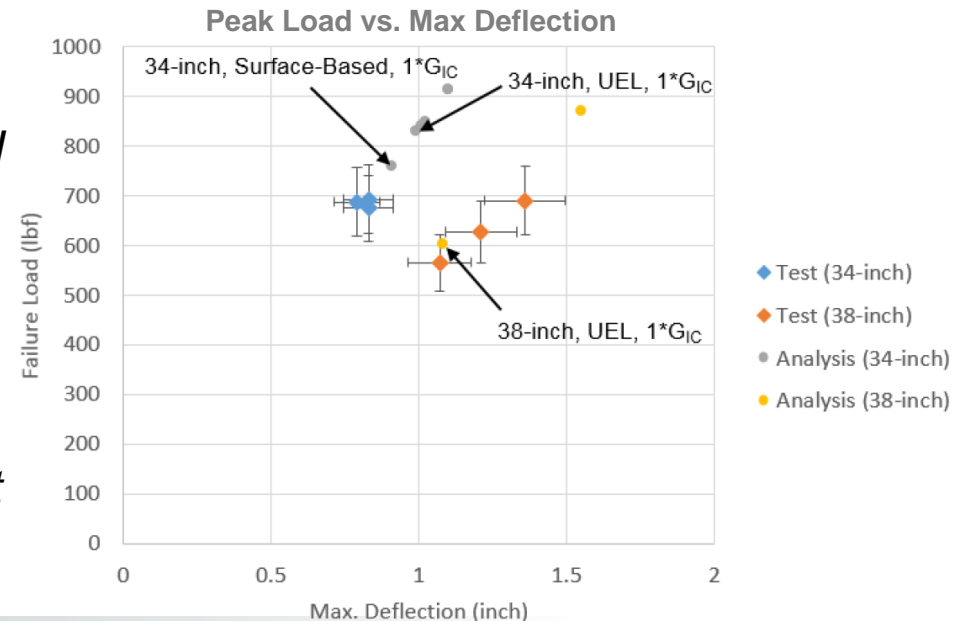


May indicate that core strength properties were lower than used in analysis

Finite Element Results

Flawed Samples

- All failures for flawed specimens occurred by joint failure due to debonding
 - *No models predict ply failure in facesheet and doubler plies*
 - *No models predict core shear failure in honeycomb core*
- For 34-inch specimens, best match to tests is surface-based cohesive elements with $G_{IIC} = 1 * G_{IC}$
 - *Peak load of 759 lbf within 11 percent of average test peak load*
- For 38-inch specimens, best match to tests is the UEL cohesive elements with $G_{IIC} = 1 * G_{IC}$
 - *Peak load of 604 lbf within 4 percent of average test peak load*

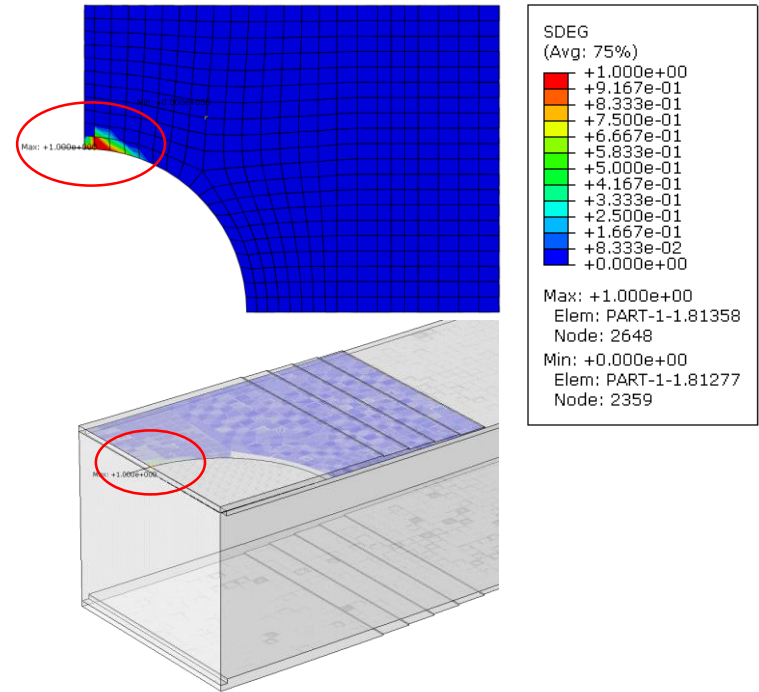
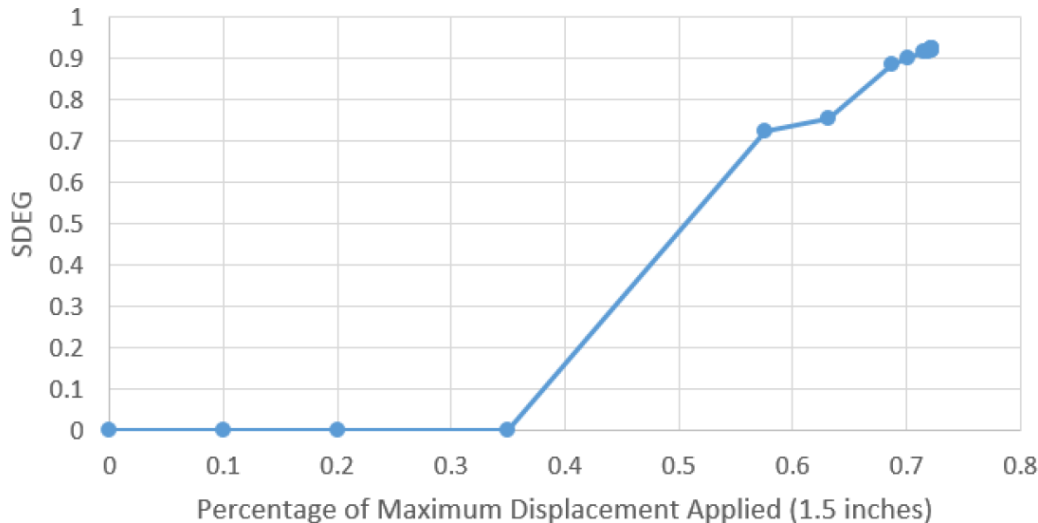


Finite Element Results

Bond Damage Propagation

- Analysis closest to tests: 38-inch sample with UEL bond and $G_{IIC} = 1 * G_{IC}$
- Results inspected for damage propagation at joint doubler interface to panels
- Scalar stiffness degradation (SDEG) monitored through analyses
 - *Bond failure initiates at ~35 percent of maximum displacement applied (~308 lbf)*

Bond Stiffness Degradation

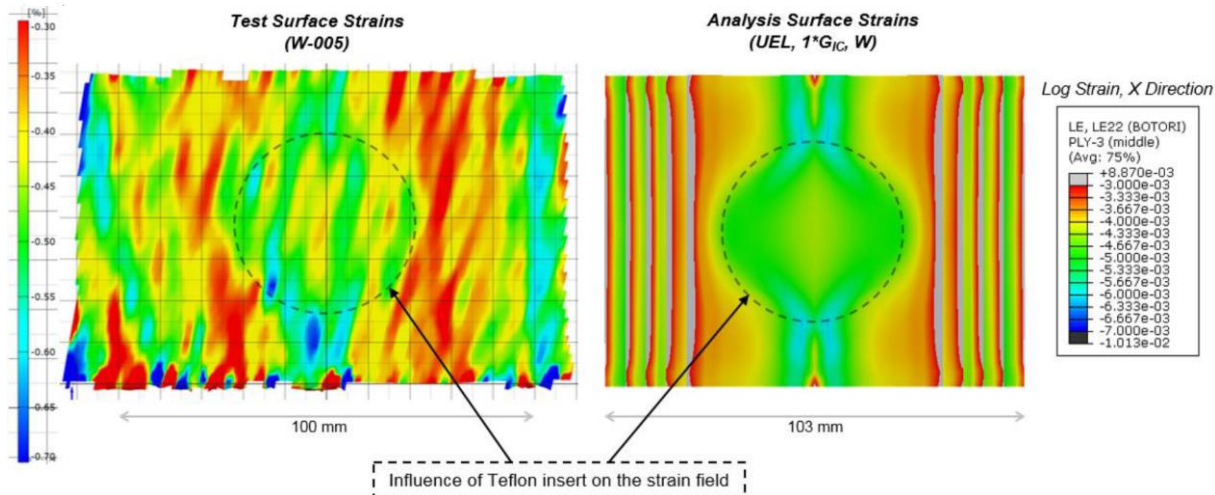


Finite Element Results

Surface Strains

- 34-inch specimens show strain in circular debond region ~5-10 percent higher in analysis than in test
 - *Corresponds to the ~11 percent higher peak load predicted in analysis over test*
- 38-inch specimen analysis show strain values matching very well with tests
 - *Correspond to within ~1 percent*
 - *Influence of Teflon® inserts seen in strain field*

38-inch



Summary

- 4PB configuration with and without flaws tested and analyzed
- Mechanical properties of joint material characterized
- Relative to unflawed samples, test and analysis demonstrated at least a 10 percent strength reduction due to 1.6-inch flaw between IA material (IM7/977-3) and OOA material (T40-800/5320-1)
- Analysis in reasonable agreement with test results both with and without flaws

Conclusions

- Investigation demonstrates OOA joint is robust to a flaw of a size that is a significant percentage of the width of the sample
- Concerns of bonding an OOA material to an IA material is mitigated for the geometries, materials, and load configurations considered
- OOA processing a good potential option
- Investigation demonstrated predictive capability of state-of-the-art analytical tools available in commercial software for assessing effects of defects at joint interface

Acknowledgments

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