



Madden-Julian Oscillation: Recent Evolution, Current Status and Predictions

**Update prepared by
Climate Prediction Center / NCEP
February 2, 2015**



Outline

- **Overview**
- **Recent Evolution and Current Conditions**
- **MJO Index Information**
- **MJO Index Forecasts**
- **MJO Composites**



Overview

- **The MJO was weak during the past week. Most observations and index values depict a notably less coherent and considerably weaker signature than previous weeks.**
- **In addition to a weaker MJO signal, other coherent subseasonal tropical variability is interfering with the current MJO signal. This increases uncertainty for Week-2.**
- **Dynamical model MJO index forecasts show a slight strengthening of the signal through Week-1, with a westward moving signal during Week-2.**
- **Based on the latest observations and several forecast tools, the MJO is forecast to be weak over the next 1-2 weeks, with anomalous convection over the Central Pacific during Week-1 and more uncertainty about anomalous convection during Week-2.**
- **The MJO may contribute to suppressed (enhanced) rainfall for portions of northern Australia and the southern Maritime Continent (Southwest Pacific Ocean).**

**A forecast map of potential impacts across the global Tropics and a discussion for the U.S. are available at:
<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/ghazards/index.php>**

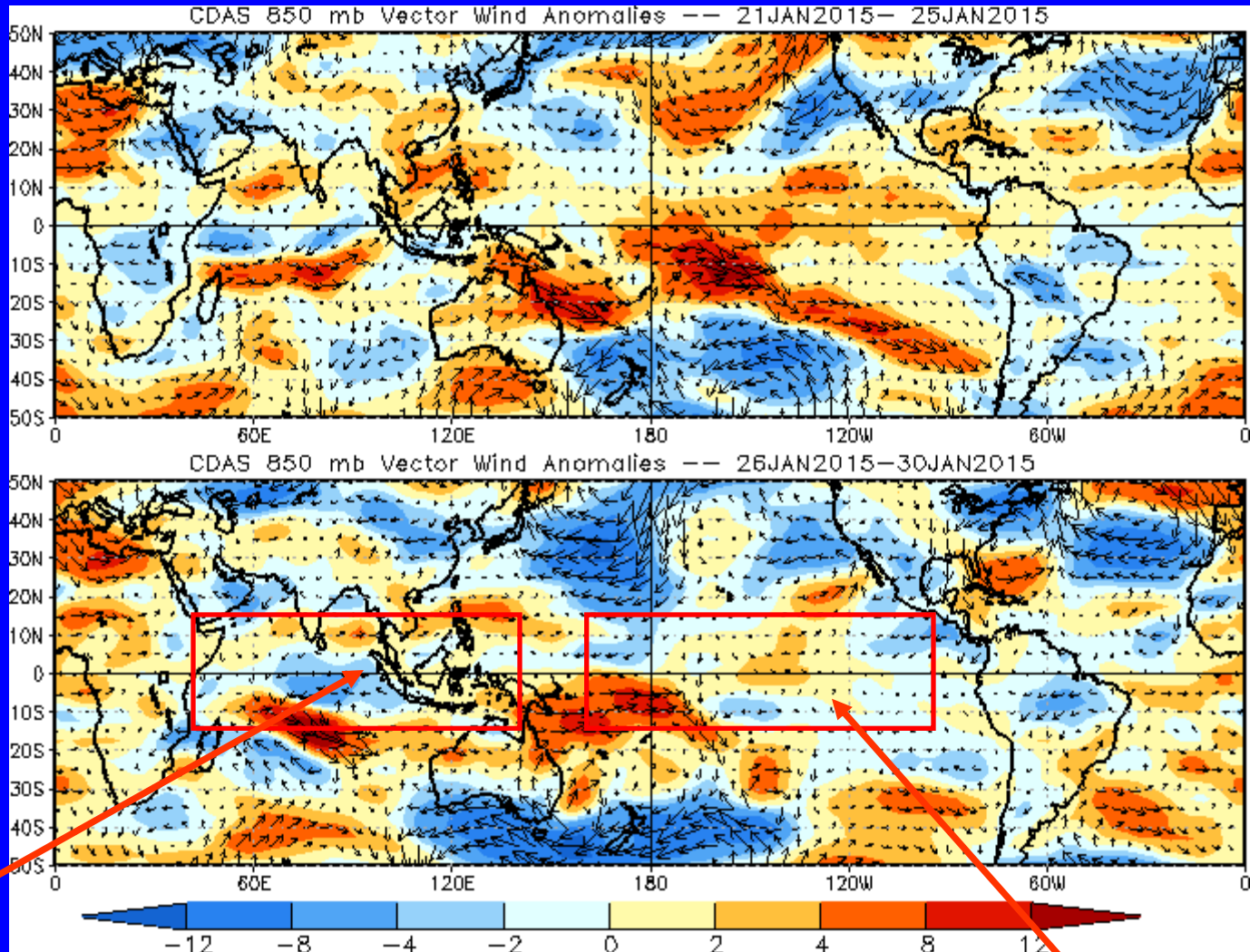


850-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies



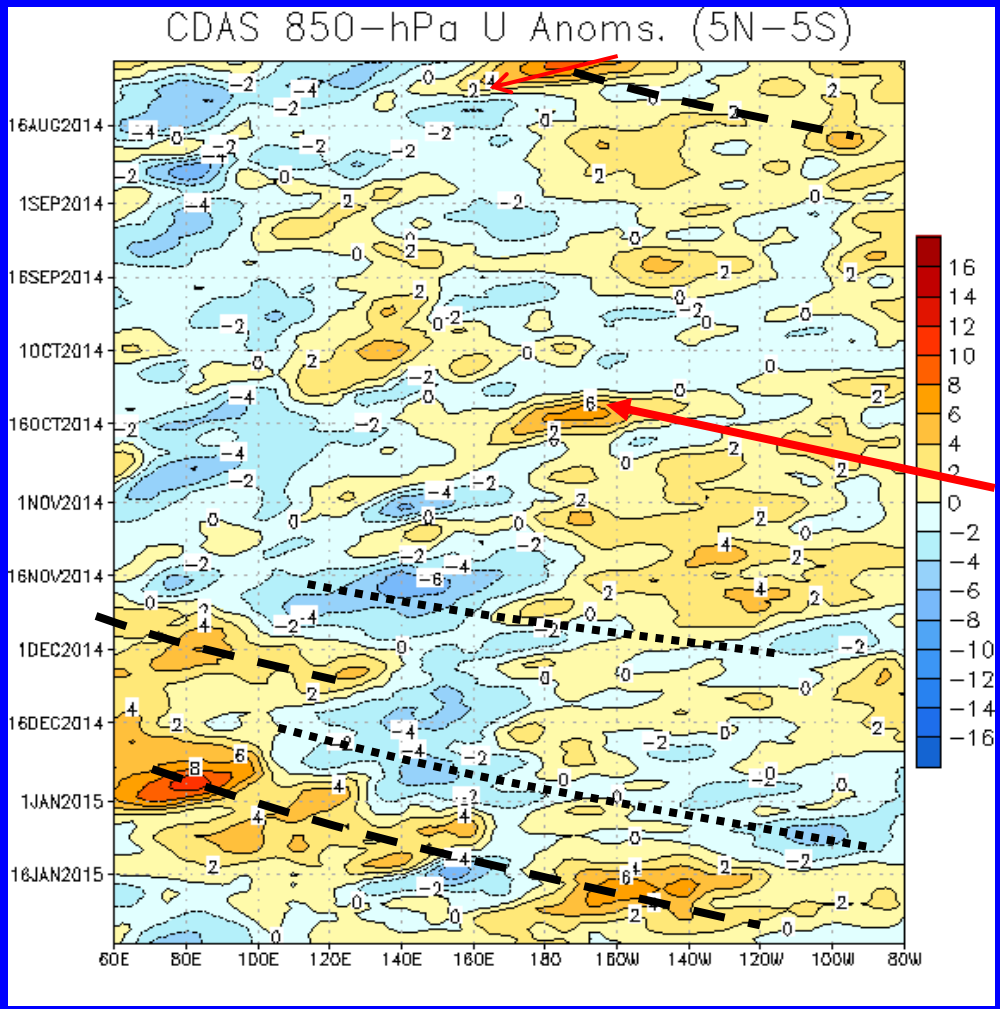
During the more recent five days, equatorial winds easterly wind anomalies increased over the eastern Indian Ocean and remained near average over the Maritime Continent.

Westerly anomalies diminished over portions of the east-central Pacific while increasing near the Date Line, just south of the Equator.



850-hPa Zonal Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Westerly anomalies (orange/red shading) represent anomalous west-to-east flow
Easterly anomalies (blue shading) represent anomalous east-to-west flow



Time
↓

Longitude

During early August, an envelope of westerly wind anomalies shifted eastward across the Pacific associated with weak MJO activity (dashed line). Embedded within this envelope at times were strong westward moving high frequency features (red arrow) over the east/central Pacific.

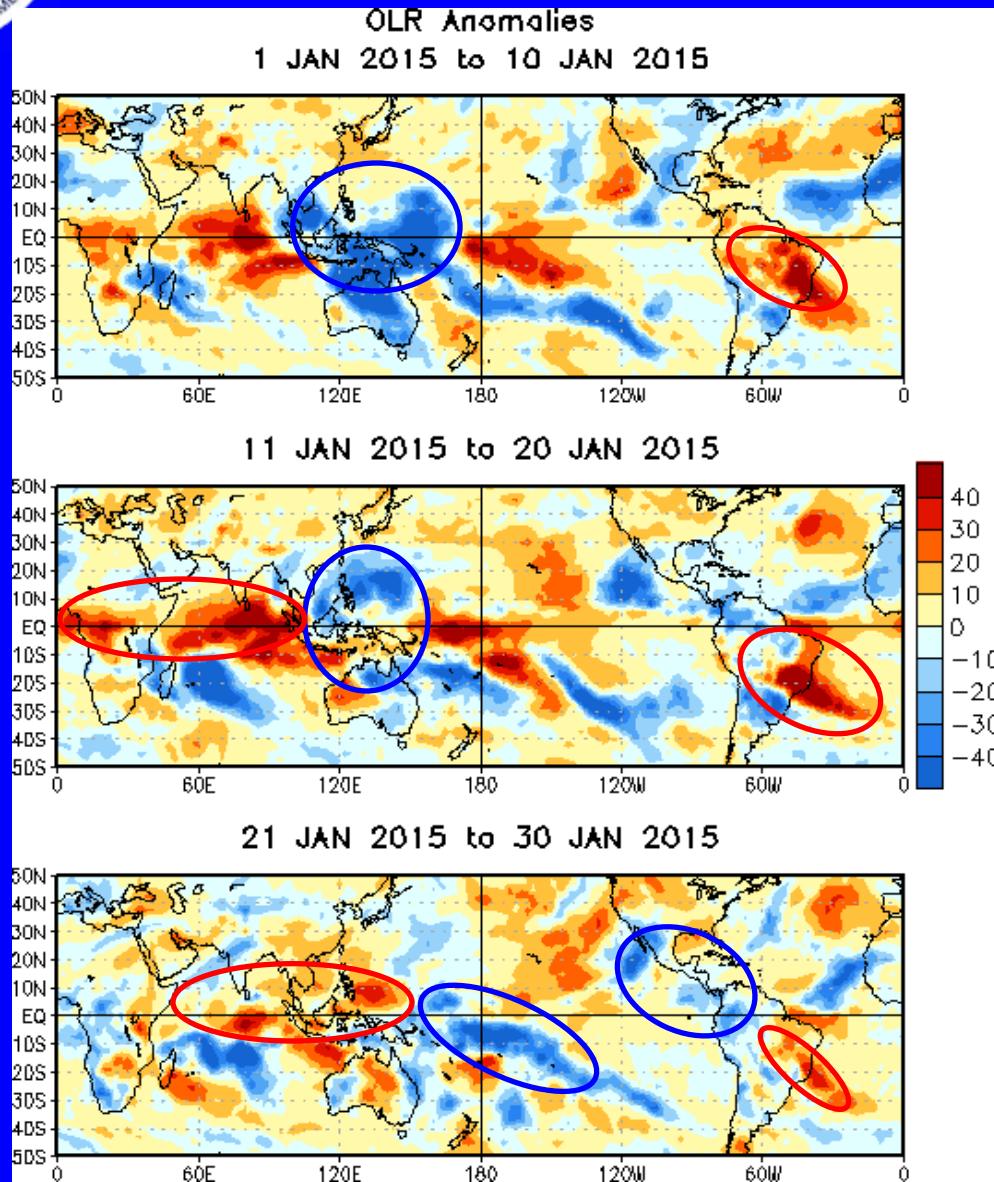
A westerly wind burst was observed near the Date Line during mid-October

MJO activity was observed beginning in late November into December and a second stronger event has evolved during late December and January 2015, with westerly anomalies shifting eastward to the western hemisphere by mid-January. Recently, anomalies have been weak, with some easterly anomalies near 80E.



OLR Anomalies – Past 30 days

Drier-than-normal conditions, positive OLR anomalies (yellow/red shading)
Wetter-than-normal conditions, negative OLR anomalies (blue shading)



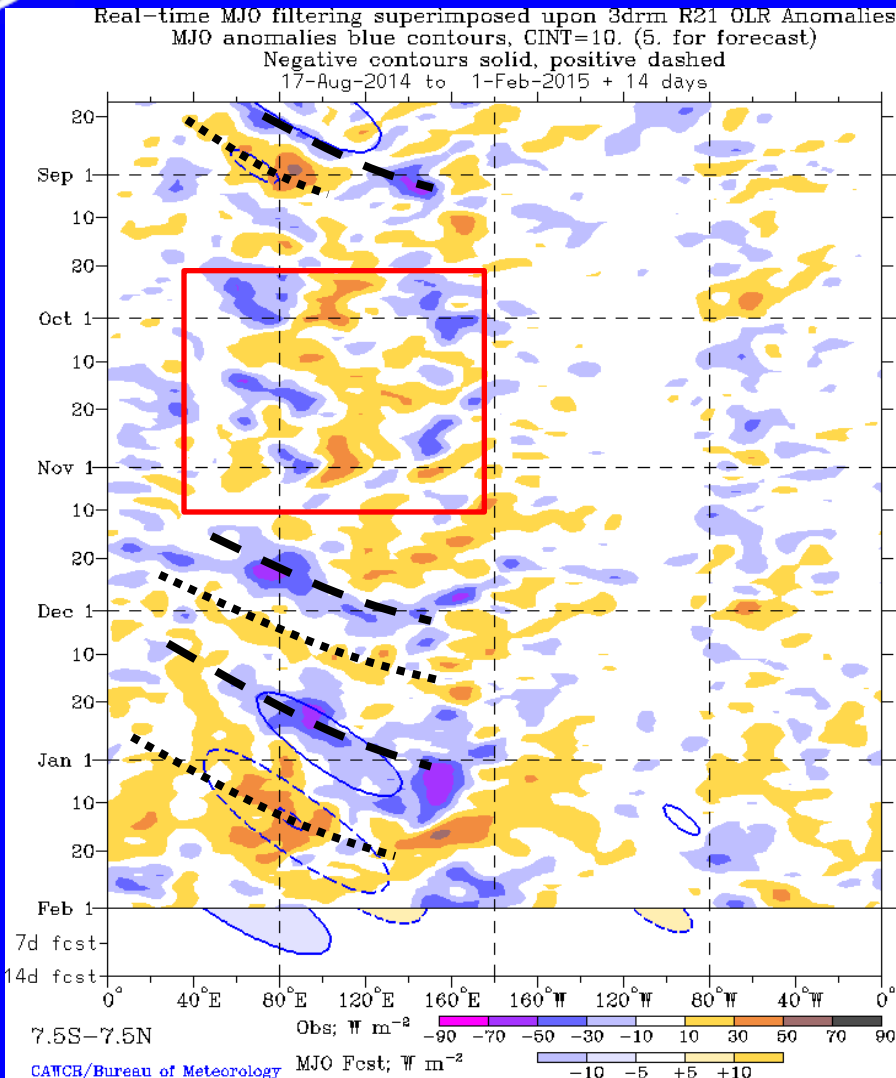
In early-to-mid January, a coherent pattern continued, with enhanced convection then centered over the Maritime Continent. Suppressed convection intensified over the Indian Ocean as well as near and east of the Date Line. Suppressed convection persisted over Brazil.

By mid-January, enhanced convection over the Maritime Continent began to wane, while some enhanced convection developed over the Americas. Suppressed convection over the Indian Ocean shifted slightly eastward.

During late January, enhanced convection was evident across the South Pacific and the Americas, with suppressed convection from the Indian Ocean to the West Pacific.



Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR) Anomalies (7.5°S-7.5°N)



Drier-than-normal conditions, positive OLR anomalies (yellow/red shading)

Wetter-than-normal conditions, negative OLR anomalies (blue shading)

(Courtesy of CAWCR Australia Bureau of Meteorology)

Some MJO activity was evident during August, as enhanced and suppressed convection phases shifted eastward from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean during this period (dashed/dotted lines).

The pattern became less coherent with respect to canonical MJO activity by September and the MJO remained weak till late November (red box).

The MJO strengthened in late November with alternating areas of enhanced and suppressed convection moving from the Indian Ocean to the Date Line through January.

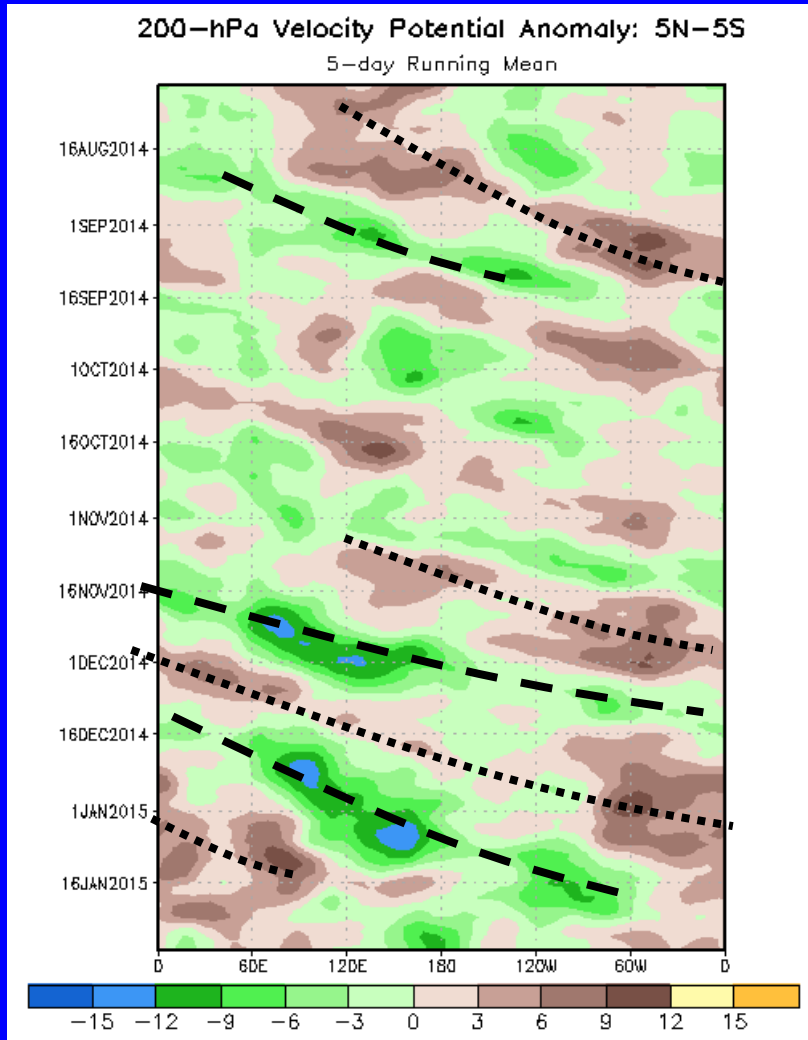
Since mid-January, the signal began to become less coherent as other variability interfered.



200-hPa Velocity Potential Anomalies (5°S-5°N)

Positive anomalies (brown shading) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation

Negative anomalies (green shading) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation



The pattern became more organized during late July as the MJO strengthened. This is observed as a coherent “Wave-1” canonical MJO-like structure that developed and shifted eastward with time.

The MJO weakened and remained incoherent through September and October.

Beginning in November the MJO strengthened as indicated by eastward propagation of alternating anomalies into January 2015. At times, the signal has been dominated by faster-moving Kelvin wave variability, but from late December through mid-January the signal has been more consistent with canonical MJO activity.

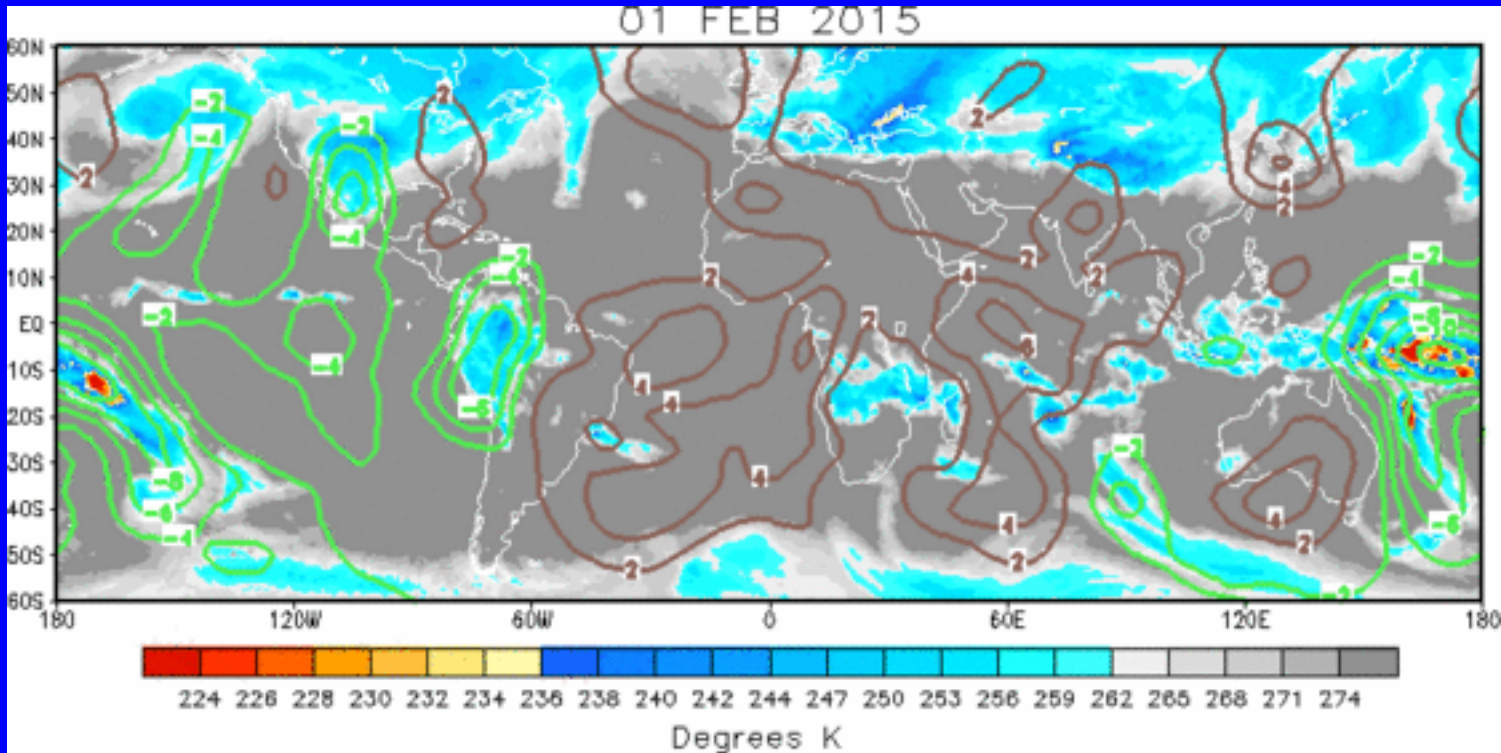
Since mid-January, the signal has broken down, with other modes of variability dominating the upper-level velocity potential anomaly pattern.



IR Temperatures (K) / 200-hPa Velocity Potential Anomalies

Positive anomalies (brown contours) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation

Negative anomalies (green contours) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation



The upper-level anomalous velocity potential spatial pattern exhibits a wave-1 structure, typically associated with MJO activity. The strongest support for convection is located over the South Pacific. Some evidence of other modes is visible over Africa.

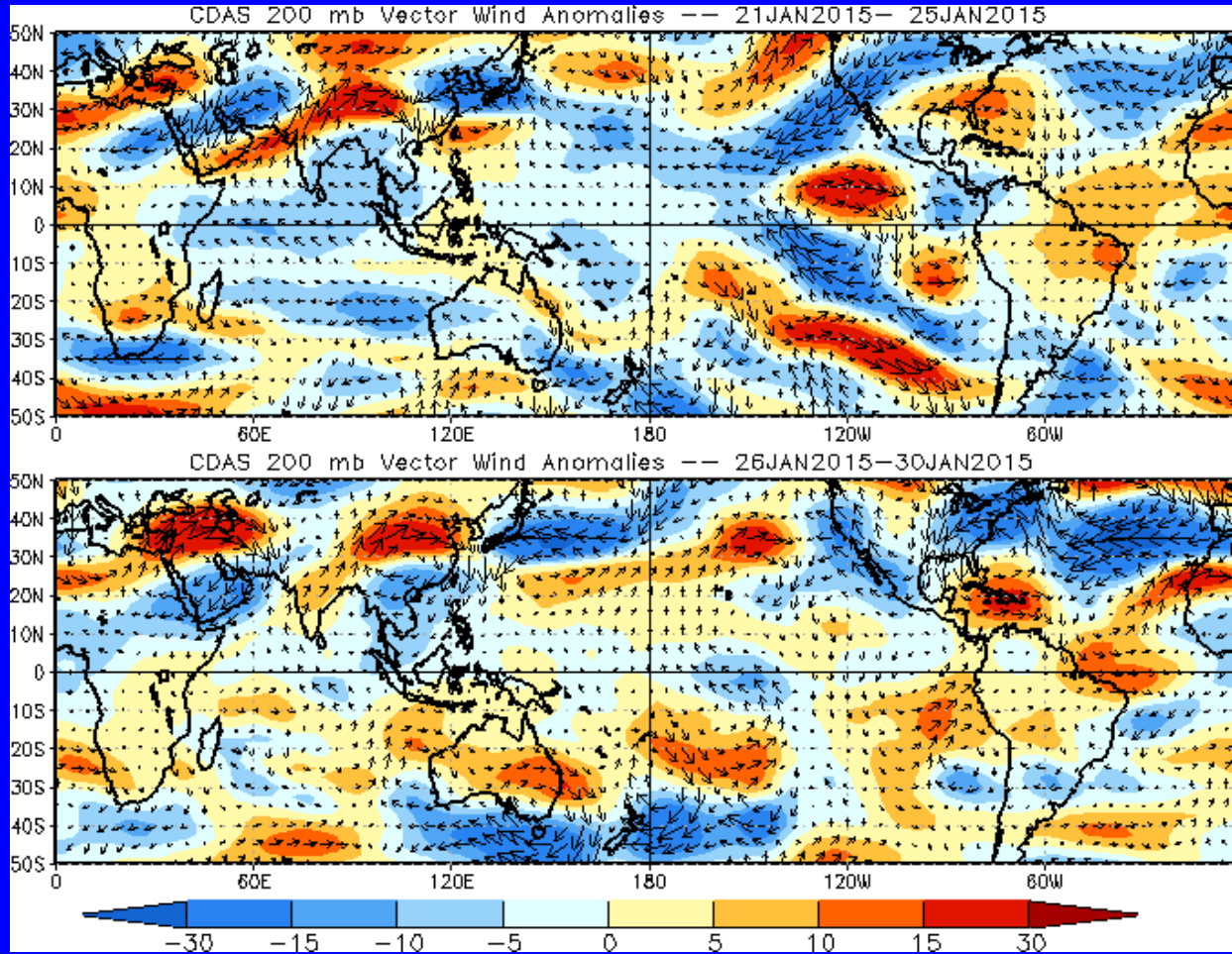


200-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies



Anomalies over the east Pacific have become much weaker.

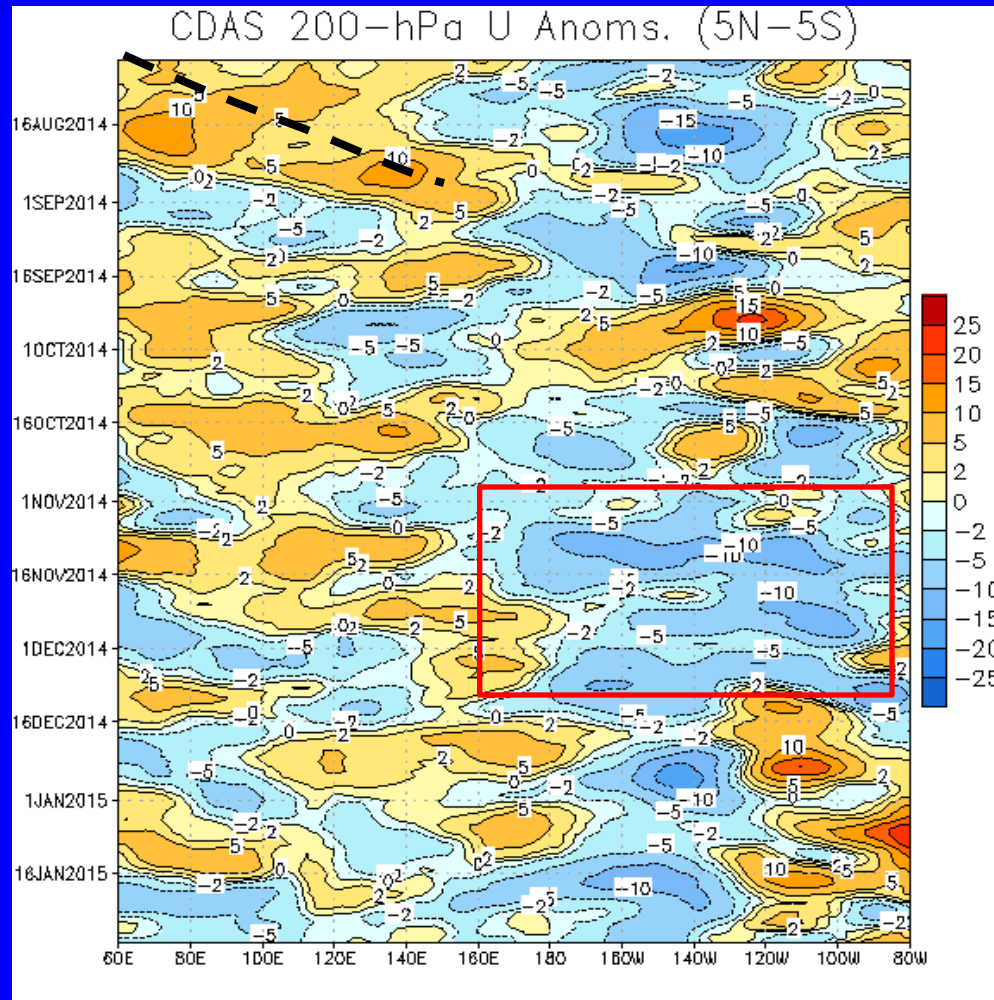
Westerly anomalies across the equatorial Atlantic have been persistent.



200-hPa Zonal Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Westerly anomalies (orange/red shading) represent anomalous west-to-east flow

Easterly anomalies (blue shading) represent anomalous east-to-west flow



Time



Longitude

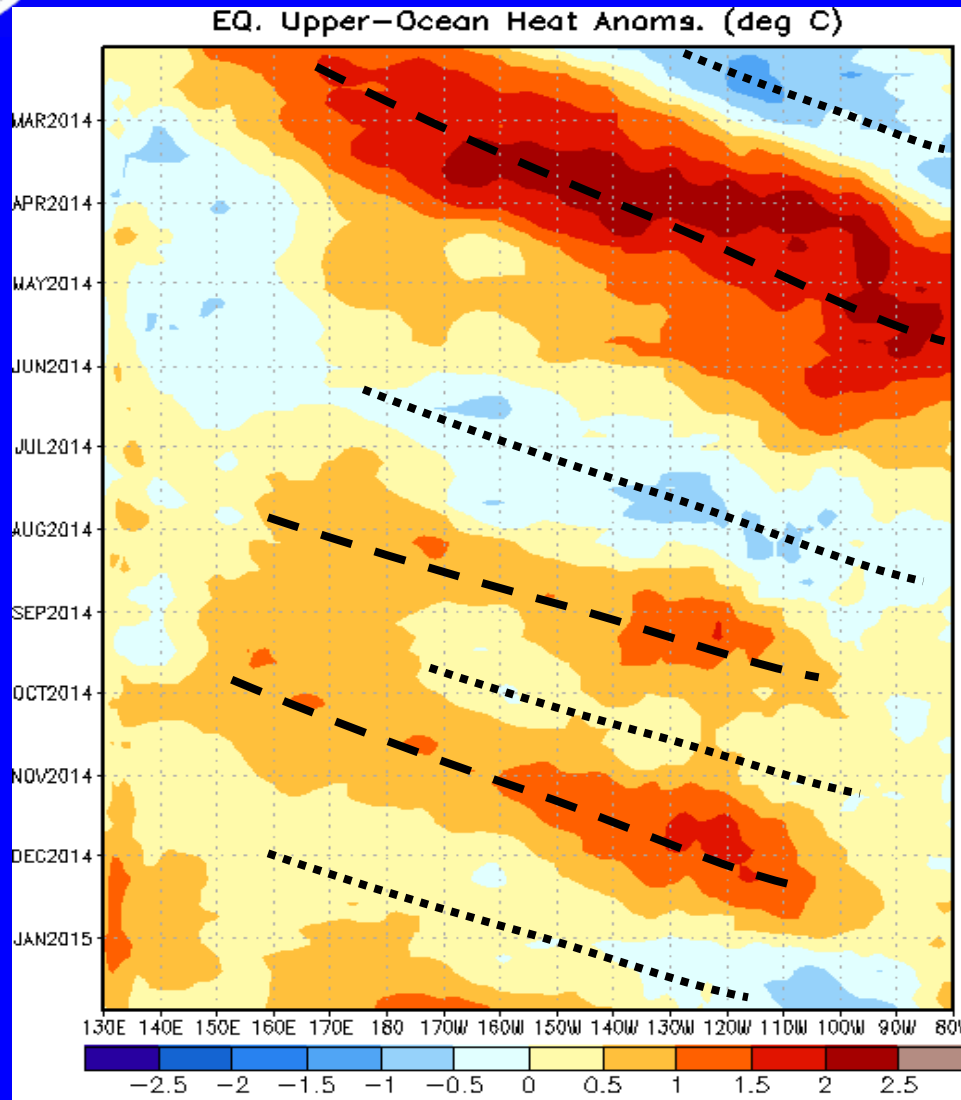
A slow, eastward progression of westerly anomalies is evident over the Maritime Continent and western Pacific during August (black dashed line). Some westward propagation is noticeable during September and early October over the eastern Pacific.

Easterly wind anomalies persisted east of the Date Line from late October through early December.

During late December and January, westerly anomalies once again increased in coverage and intensity from 120°W to 80°W similar to September and October 2014.



Weekly Heat Content Evolution in the Equatorial Pacific



A strong downwelling event began in January 2014 and propagated across the Pacific reaching the South American coast by May 2014.

Warm anomalies persisted over much of the Pacific during April and May, though basin-averaged anomalies decreased during June and July associated with an upwelling Kelvin wave (dotted line).

Warm anomalies increased across much of the Pacific basin due to another moderate downwelling Kelvin wave traversing the Pacific during October and November 2014. The upwelling phase is now evident in the central and eastern Pacific.



MJO Index -- Information

- The MJO index illustrated on the next several slides is the CPC version of the Wheeler and Hendon index (2004, hereafter WH2004).

Wheeler M. and H. Hendon, 2004: An All-Season Real-Time Multivariate MJO Index: Development of an Index for Monitoring and Prediction, *Monthly Weather Review*, 132, 1917-1932.

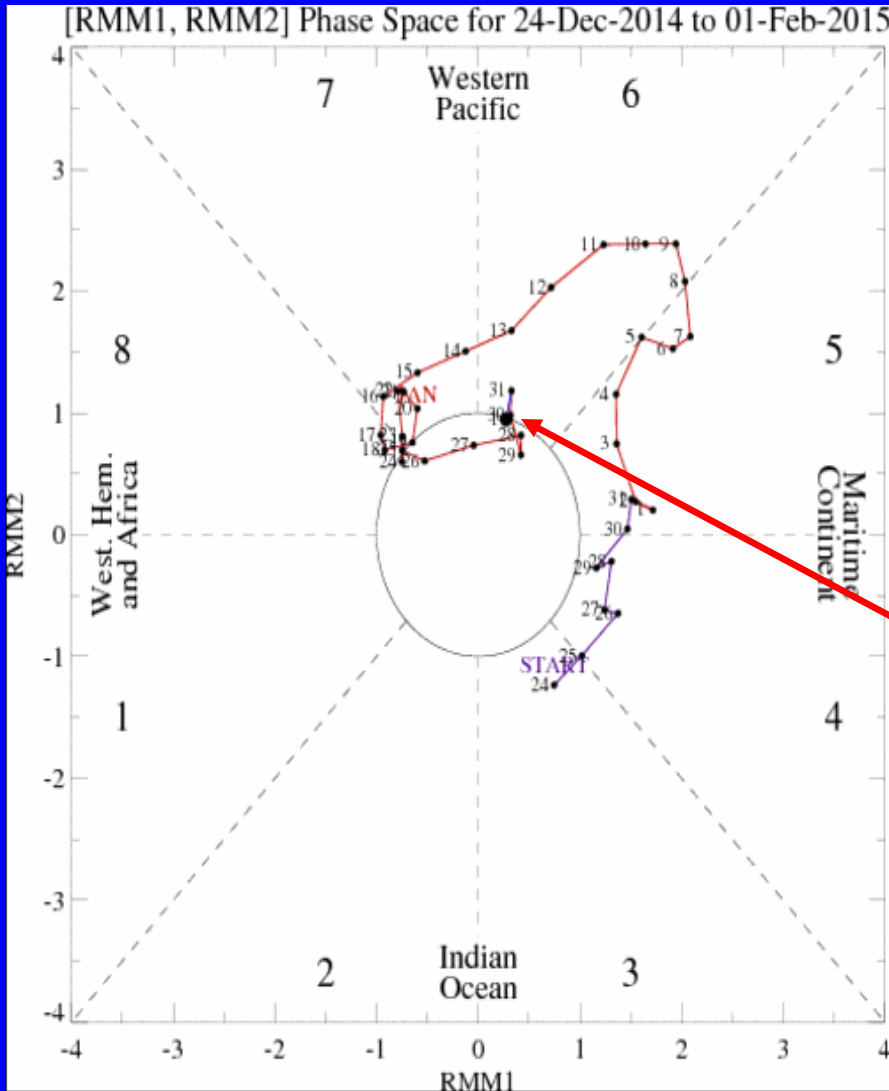
- The methodology is very similar to that described in WH2004 but does not include the linear removal of ENSO variability associated with a sea surface temperature index. The methodology is consistent with that outlined by the U.S. CLIVAR MJO Working Group.

Gottschalck et al. 2010: A Framework for Assessing Operational Madden-Julian Oscillation Forecasts: A CLIVAR MJO Working Group Project, *Bull. Amer. Met. Soc.*, 91, 1247-1258.

- The index is based on a combined Empirical Orthogonal Function (EOF) analysis using fields of near-equatorially-averaged 850-hPa and 200-hPa zonal wind and outgoing longwave radiation (OLR).



MJO Index -- Recent Evolution

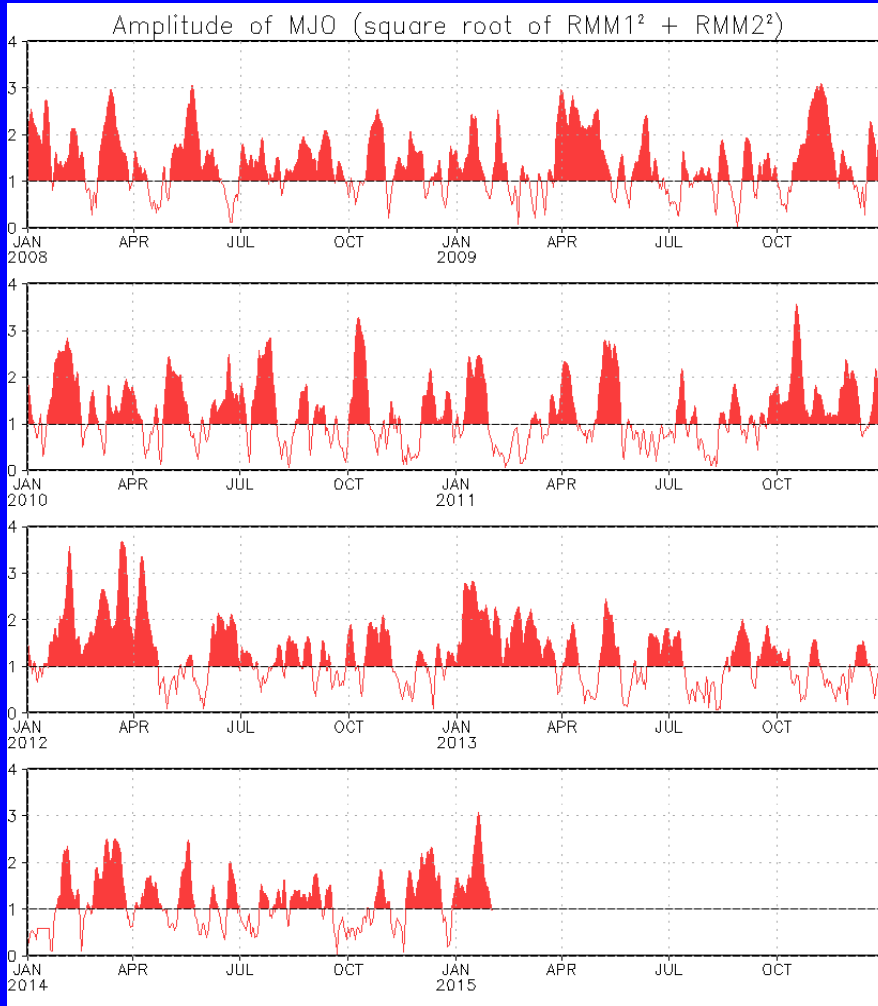


- The axes (RMM1 and RMM2) represent daily values of the principal components from the two leading modes
- The triangular areas indicate the location of the enhanced phase of the MJO
- Counter-clockwise motion is indicative of eastward propagation. Large dot most recent observation.
- Distance from the origin is proportional to MJO strength
- Line colors distinguish different months

The MJO index over the past week has shown little eastward propagation while increasing slightly in amplitude.



MJO Index – Historical Daily Time Series



Time series of daily MJO index amplitude from 2007 to present.

Plot puts current MJO activity in recent historical context.



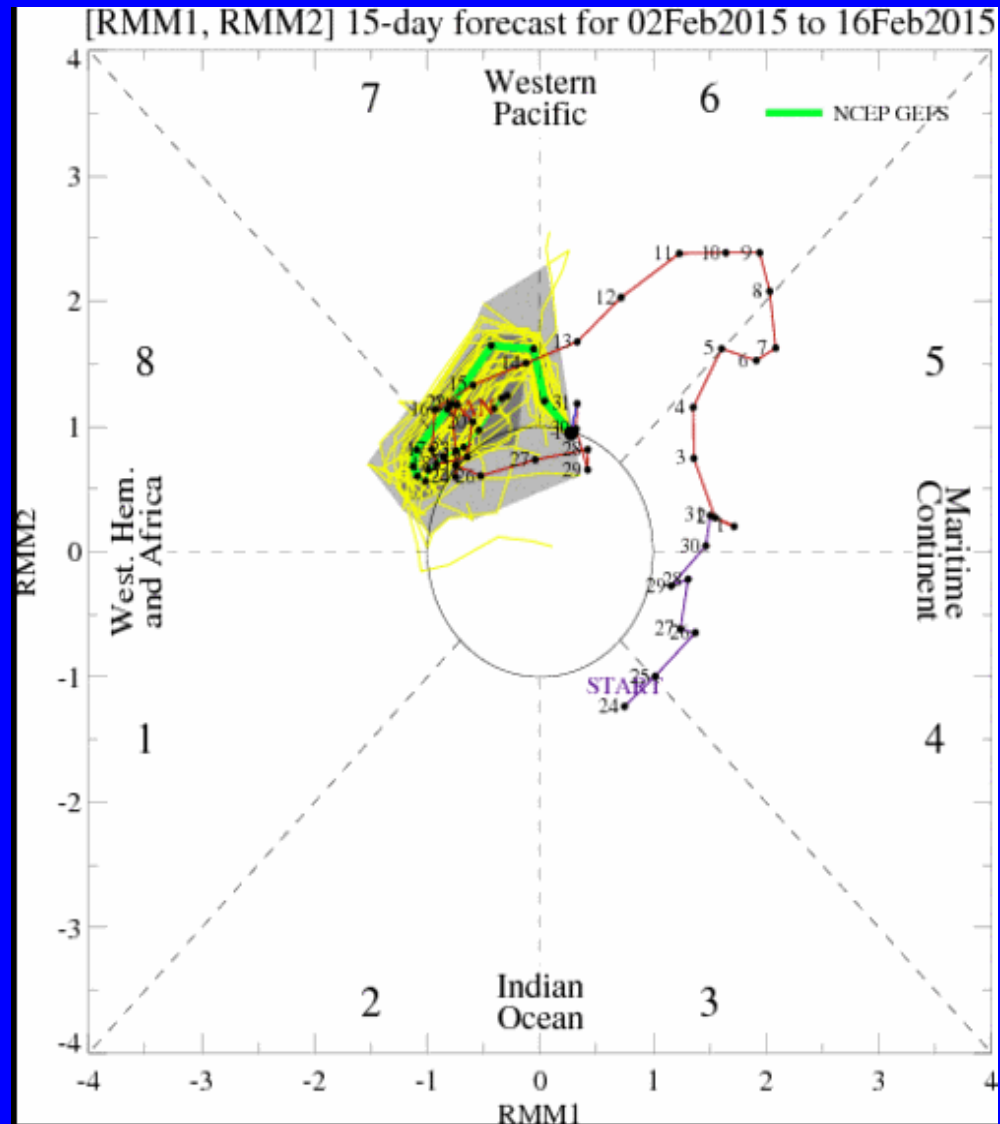
Ensemble GFS (GEFS) MJO Forecast

Yellow Lines – 20 Individual Members
Green Line – Ensemble Mean

RMM1 and RMM2 values for the most recent 40 days and forecasts from the ensemble Global Forecast System (GEFS) for the next 15 days

light gray shading: 90% of forecasts
dark gray shading: 50% of forecasts

The ensemble GFS forecast indicates an increase in amplitude in Week-1 centered once again across the western Pacific. During Week-2, the signal is not related to the MJO.

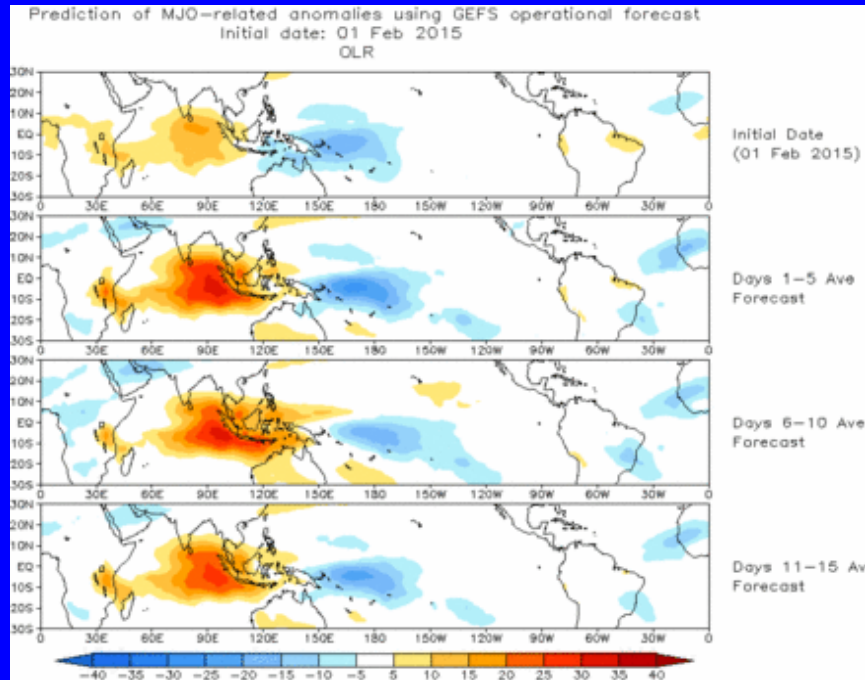




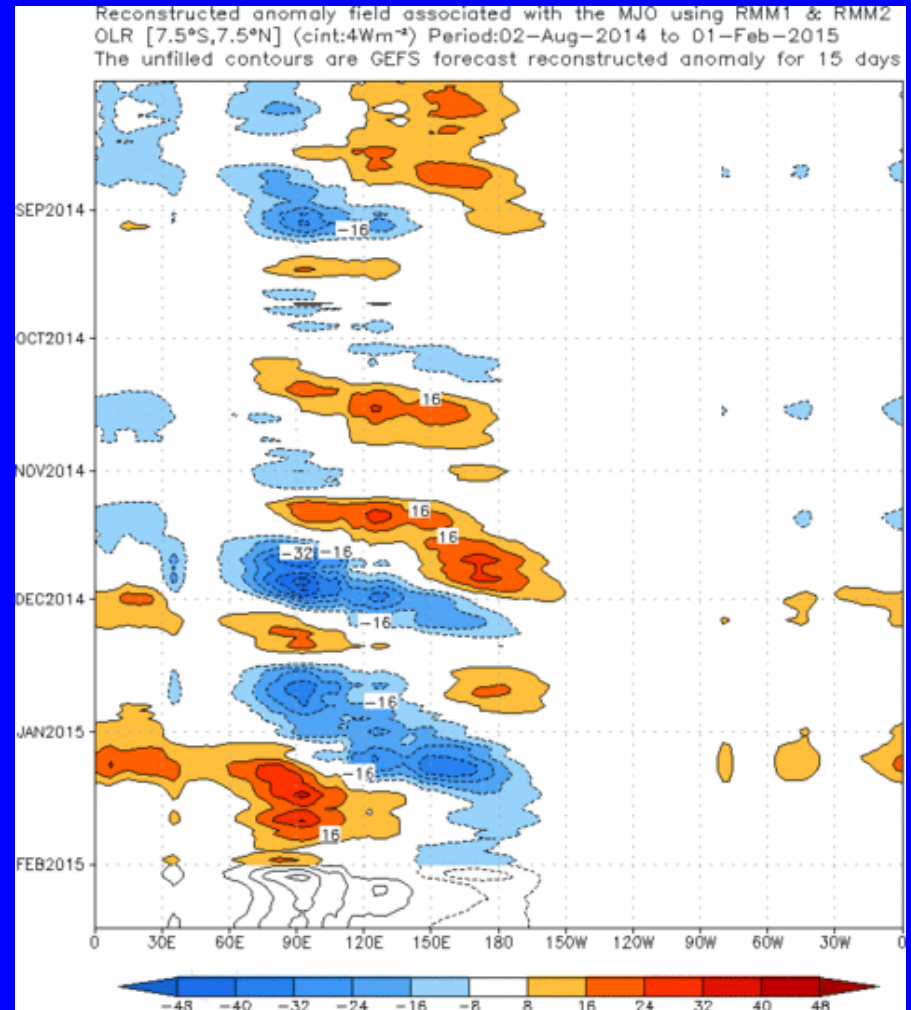
Ensemble Mean GFS MJO Forecast

Figures below show MJO associated OLR anomalies only (reconstructed from RMM1 and RMM2) and do not include contributions from other modes (*i.e.*, ENSO, monsoons, etc.)

Spatial map of OLR anomalies for the next 15 days



Time-longitude section of (7.5°S-7.5°N) OLR anomalies for the last 180 days and for the next 15 days



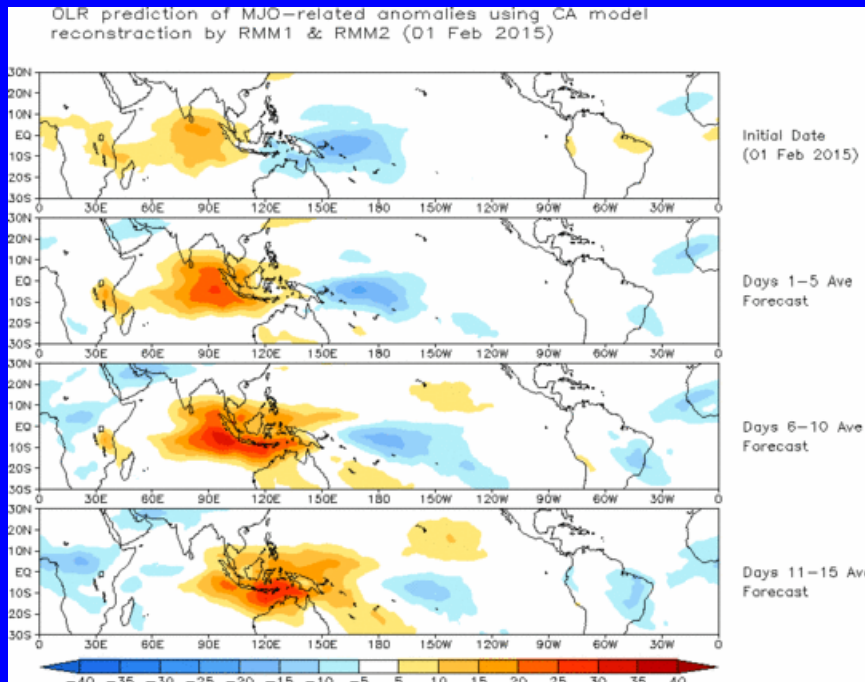
The GEFS mean MJO index based OLR anomaly forecast depicts suppressed (enhanced) convection over the Indian Ocean (West Pacific), both moving eastward during Week-1. During Week-2, the anomalies remain nearly stationary.



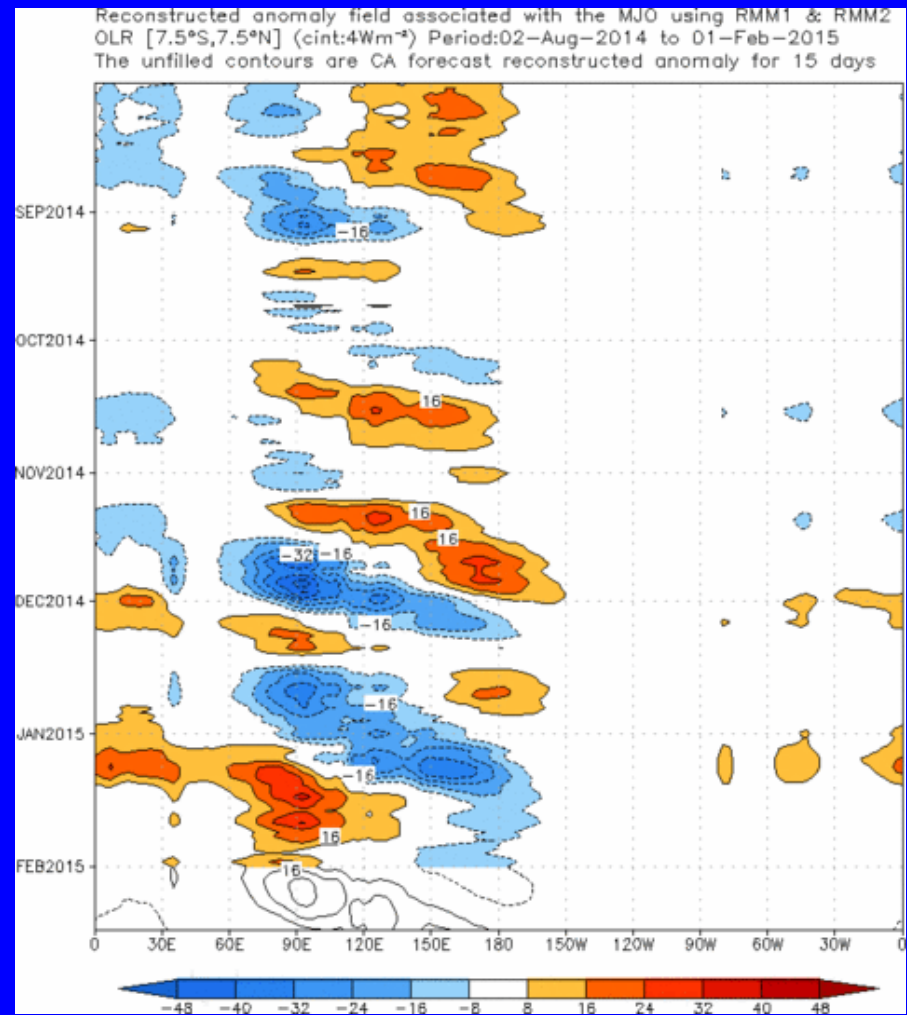
Constructed Analog (CA) MJO Forecast

Figure below shows MJO associated OLR anomalies only (reconstructed from RMM1 and RMM2) and do not include contributions from other modes (*i.e.*, ENSO, monsoons, etc.)

Spatial map of OLR anomalies for the next 15 days



Time-longitude section of (7.5°S-7.5°N) OLR anomalies for the last 180 days and for the next 15 days



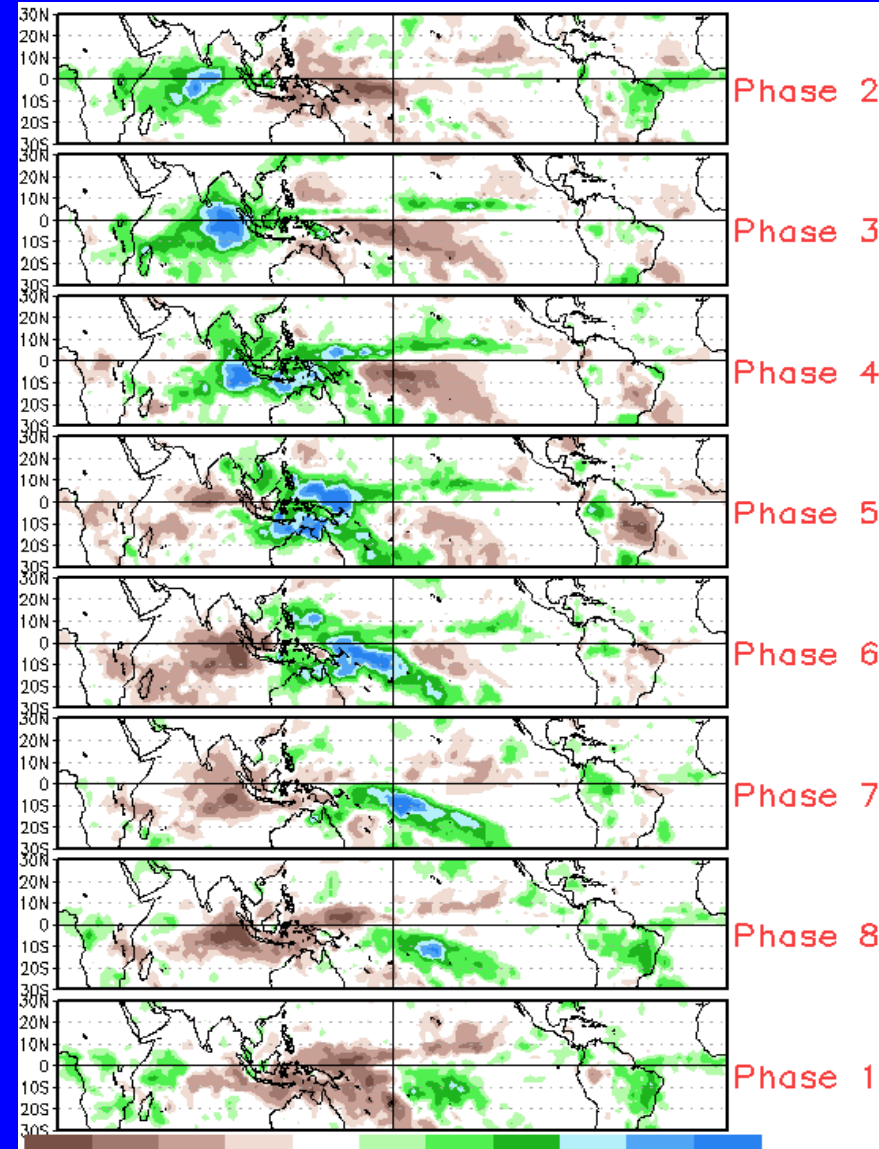
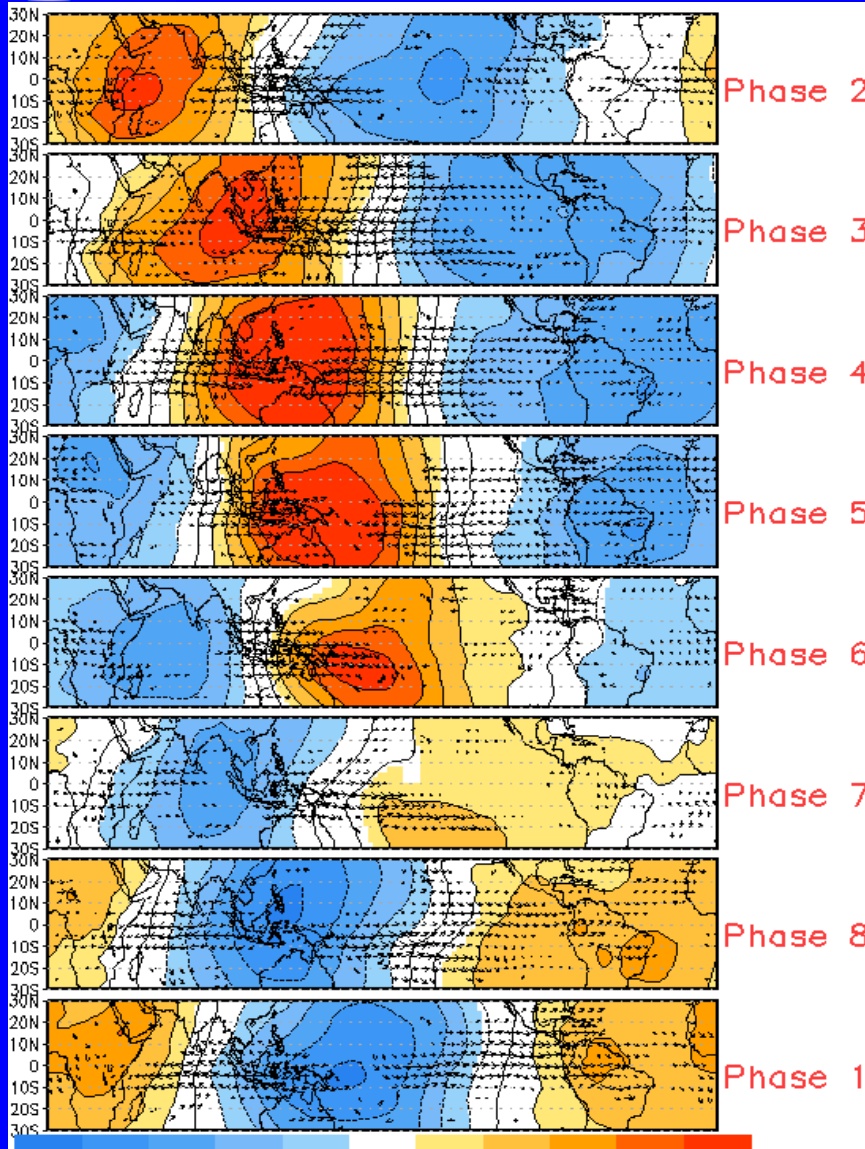
The constructed analog forecast depicts eastward propagation of weak suppressed (enhanced) convection from the Indian Ocean to the far western Pacific Ocean (West Pacific to South-Central Pacific and Americas) during the period.



MJO Composites – Global Tropics

850-hPa Velocity Potential and
Wind Anomalies (Nov-Mar)

Precipitation Anomalies (Nov-Mar)

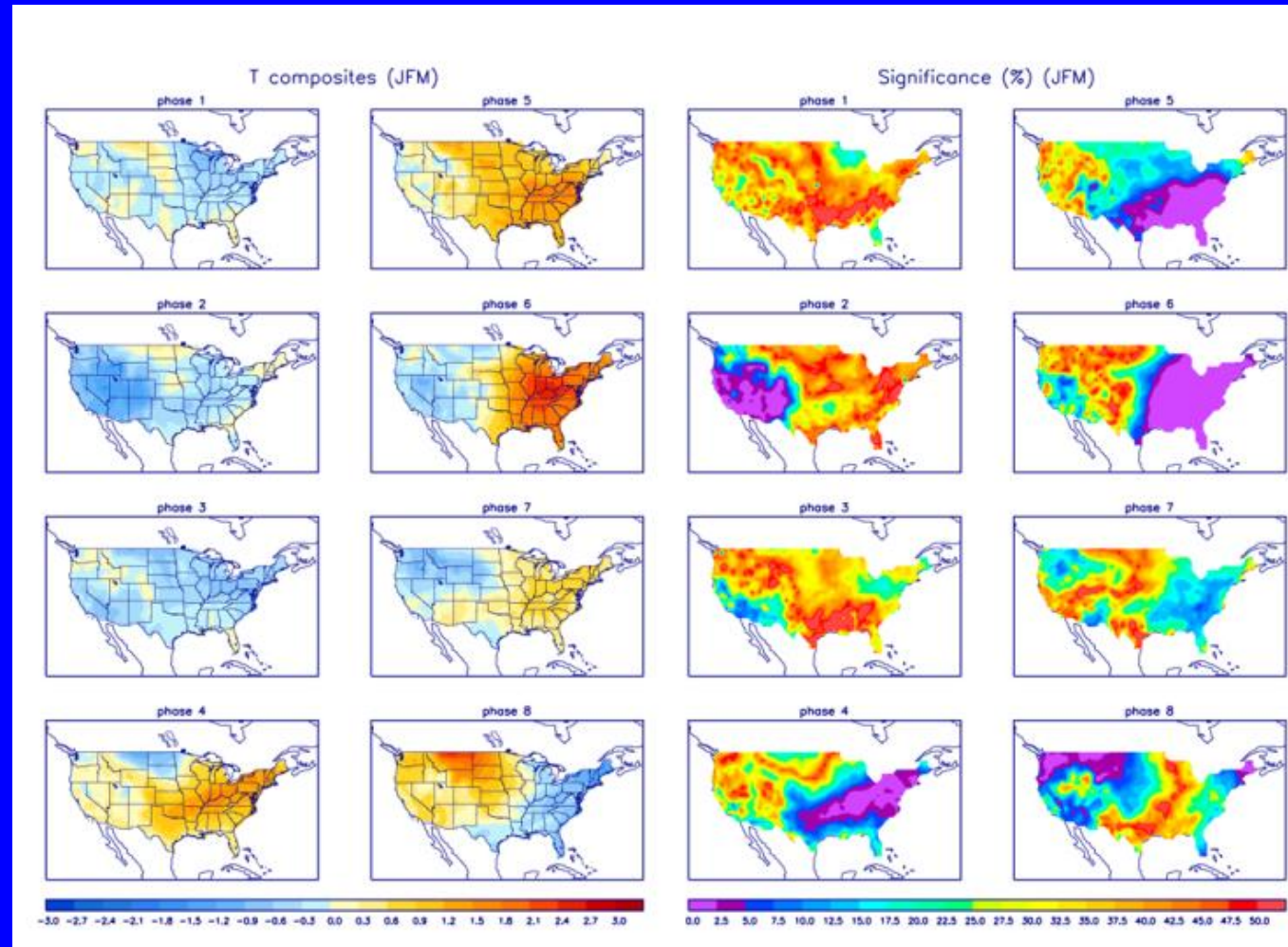




U.S. MJO Composites – Temperature

Left hand side plots show temperature anomalies by MJO phase for MJO events that have occurred over the three month period in the historical record. Blue (orange) shades show negative (positive) anomalies respectively.

Right hand side plots show a measure of significance for the left hand side anomalies. Purple shades indicate areas in which the anomalies are significant at the 95% or better confidence level.



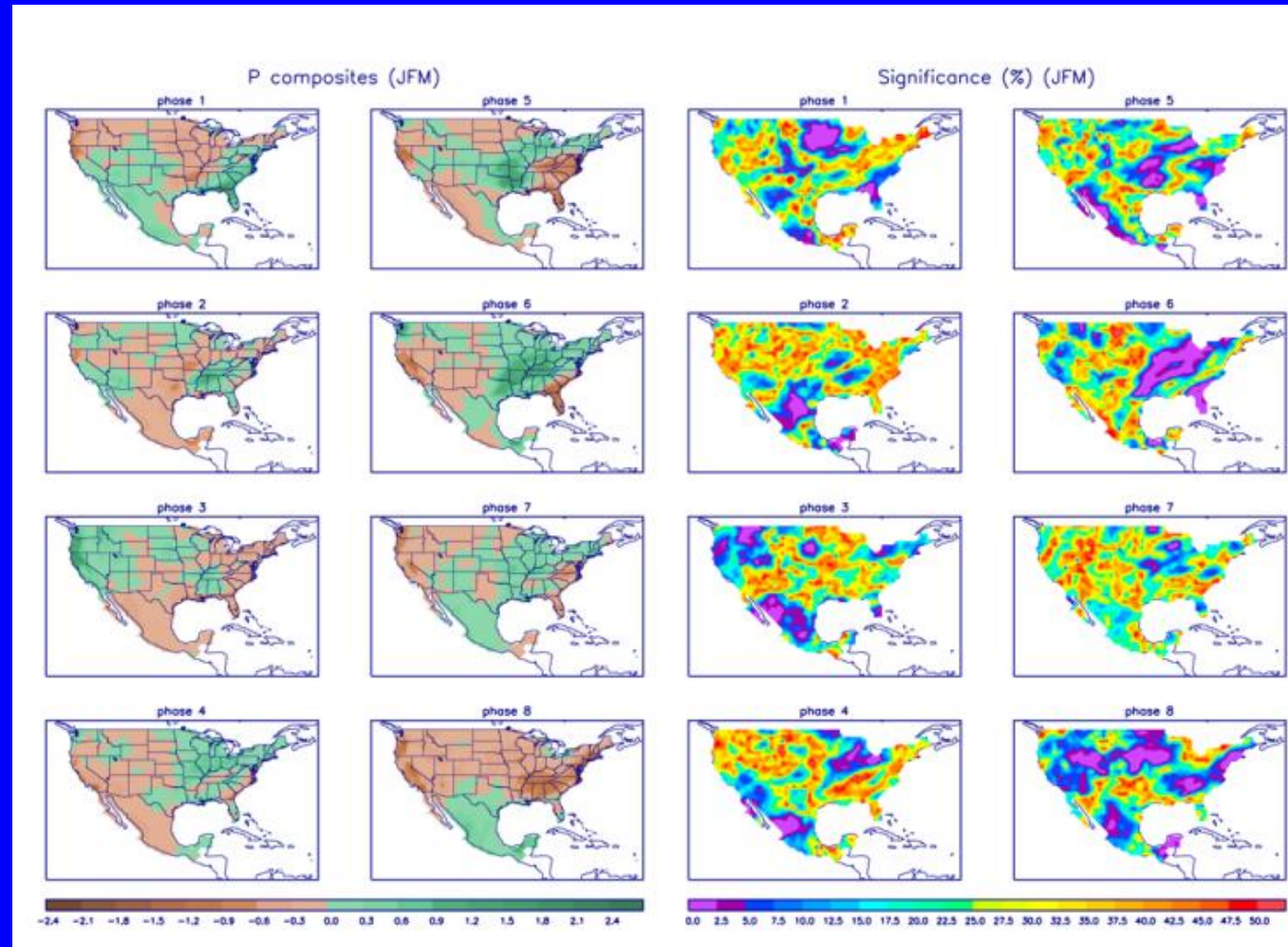
Zhou et al. (2011): A composite study of the MJO influence on the surface air temperature and precipitation over the Continental United States, *Climate Dynamics*, 1-13, doi: 10.1007/s00382-011-1001-9

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/MJO/mjo.shtml>



U.S. MJO Composites – Precipitation

- Left hand side plots show precipitation anomalies by MJO phase for MJO events that have occurred over the three month period in the historical record. Brown (green) shades show negative (positive) anomalies respectively.
- Right hand side plots show a measure of significance for the left hand side anomalies. Purple shades indicate areas in which the anomalies are significant at the 95% or better confidence level.



Zhou et al. (2011): A composite study of the MJO influence on the surface air temperature and precipitation over the Continental United States, *Climate Dynamics*, 1-13, doi: 10.1007/s00382-011-1001-9

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