

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



Update prepared by:
Climate Prediction Center / NCEP
10 August 2015

Outline

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Recent Evolution and Current Conditions

MJO Index Information

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MJO Composites

Overview

The MJO remained weak over the past week.

Other types of variability, ranging from equatorial Rossby waves to the low-frequency ENSO state continue to dominate the pattern of tropical convection.

Dynamical models generally indicate a stationary or even westward-moving intraseasonal signal over the next one to two weeks.

The MJO is not expected to play a substantial role in the pattern of tropical convection during the next two weeks. The low frequency ENSO state, modulated by more transient modes of variability, is forecast to remain the most important factor in the global tropical convective pattern.

Additional 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>

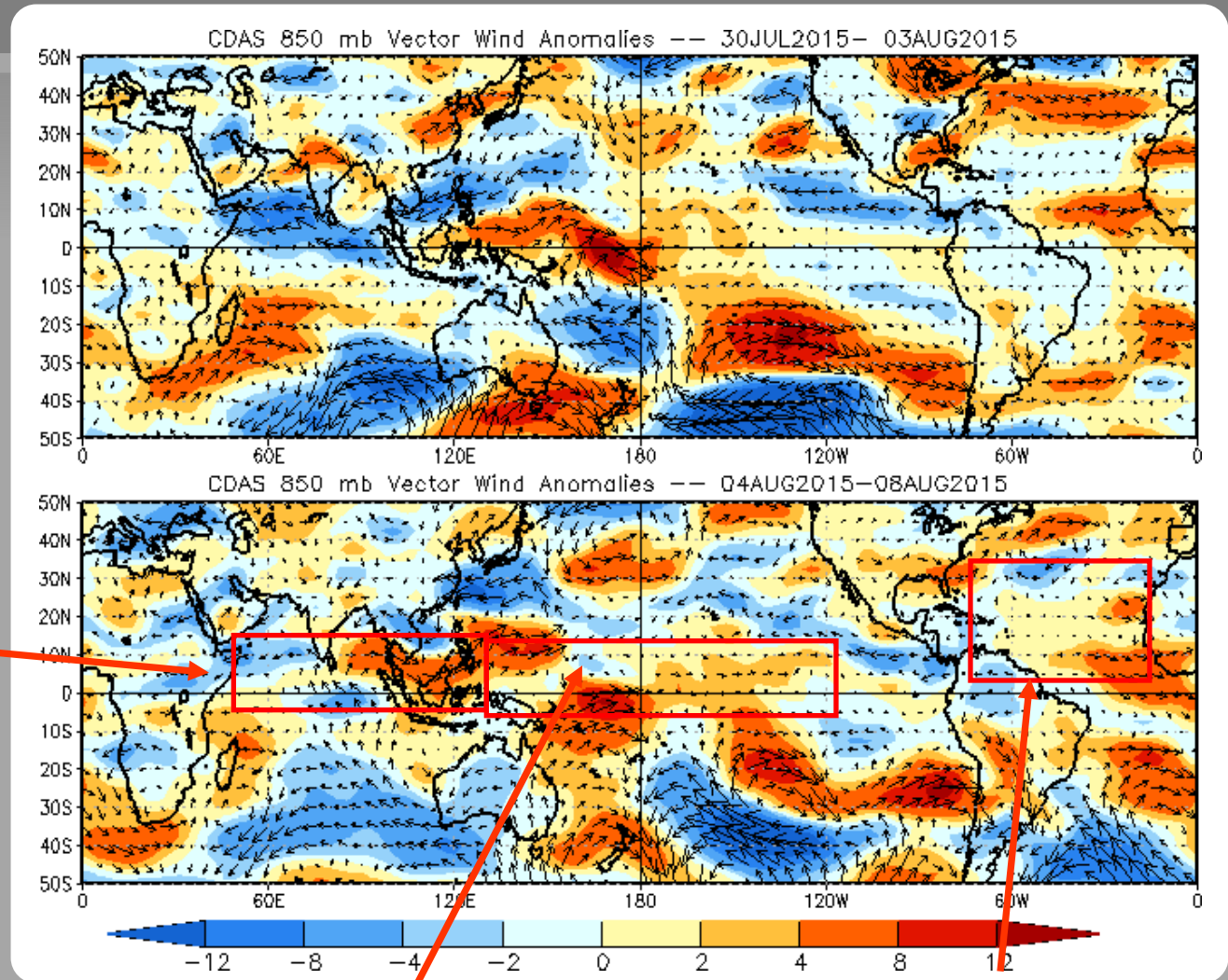
850-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies

Easterly anomalies weakened across much of the Arabian Sea while westerly anomalies shifted westward across the Maritime Continent.



Westerly anomalies persisted across most of the equatorial Pacific.

Generally weak anomalies persisted over the tropical Atlantic.

850-hPa Zonal Wind Anomalies (m s⁻¹)

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

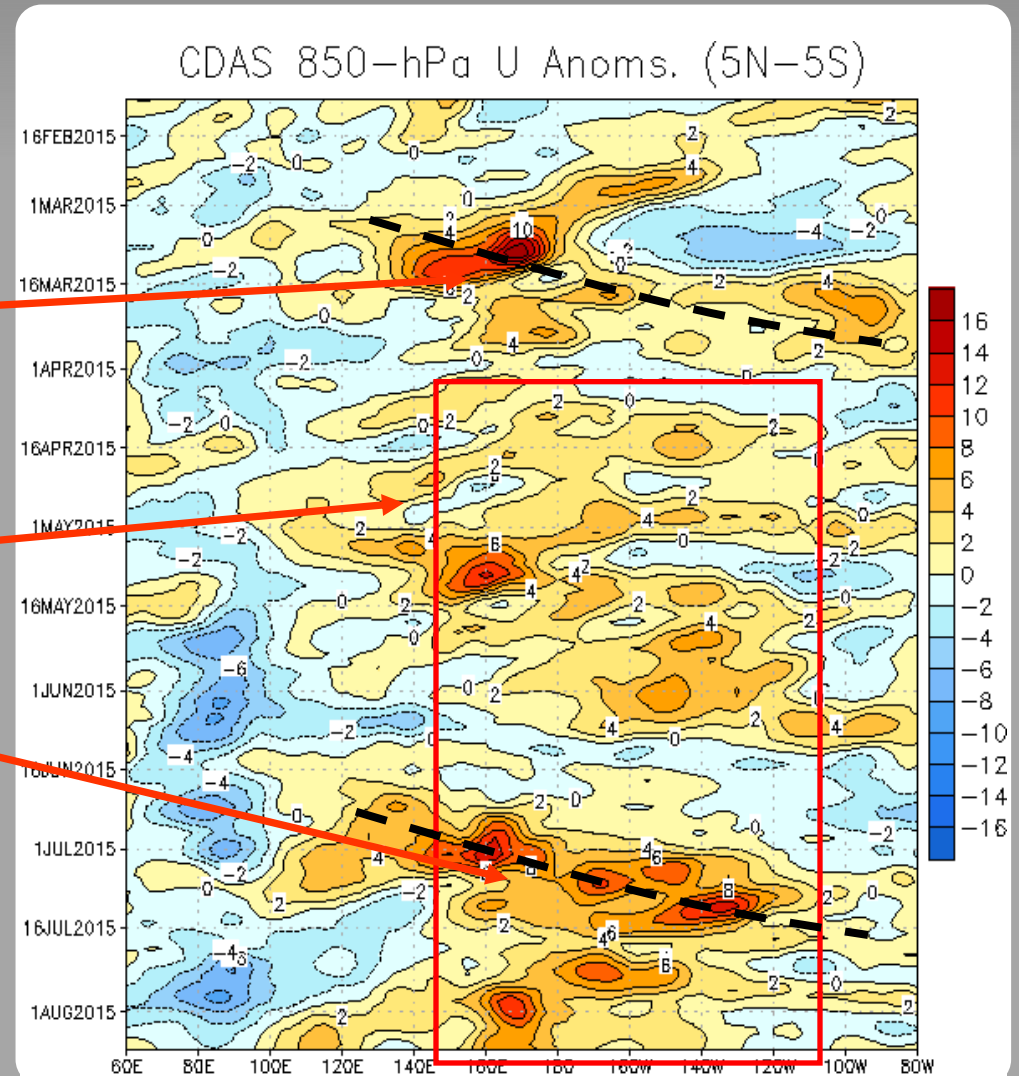
Easterly anomalies (blue shading) represent anomalous east-to-west flow

The MJO, Rossby wave activity, and El Niño conditions contributed to a strong westerly wind burst in early March.

The red box highlights the persistent low-frequency westerlies wind anomalies associated with ENSO. Some transient variability is observed as well.

A robust MJO event was observed in late June through mid-July, constructively interfering with the background state.

Recently, the background ENSO is exerting more influence, but some Rossby wave activity is again evident.



OLR Anomalies - Past 30 days

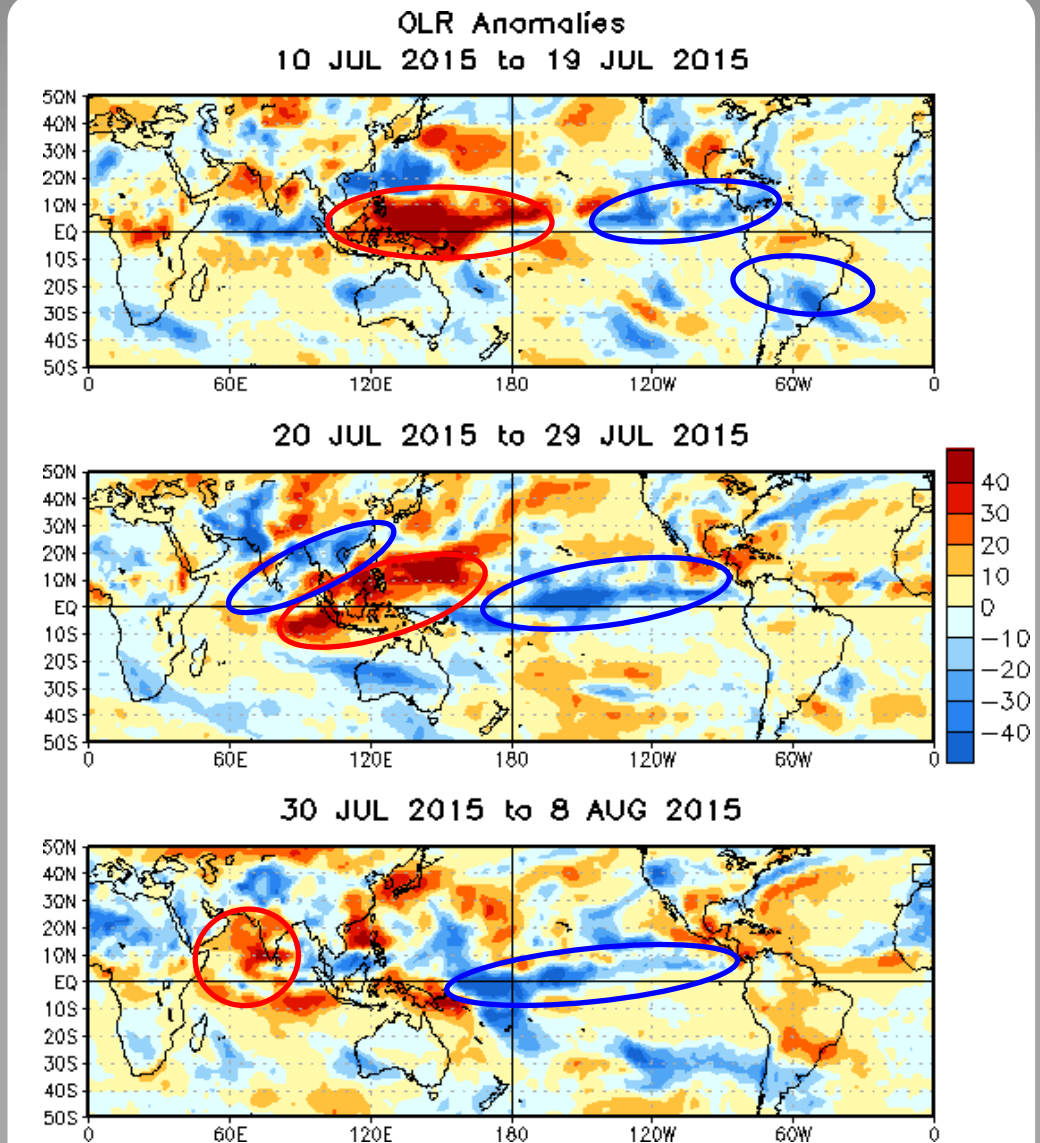
Drier-than-normal conditions, positive OLR anomalies (yellow/red shading)

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

During mid-July, the background ENSO pattern was evident with suppressed (enhanced) convection over the West Pacific (East Pacific).

Suppressed convection shifted westward over the Maritime Continent during mid to late July as the MJO signal began to weaken and other modes became more influential.

During late July and early August, enhanced convection associated with the El Niño remained in place from the central to eastern Pacific, with more a mixed pattern of enhanced/suppressed convection over the Maritime Continent. Suppressed convection did spread to over the Arabian Sea.



Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR) Anomalies (2.5°N-17.5°N)

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

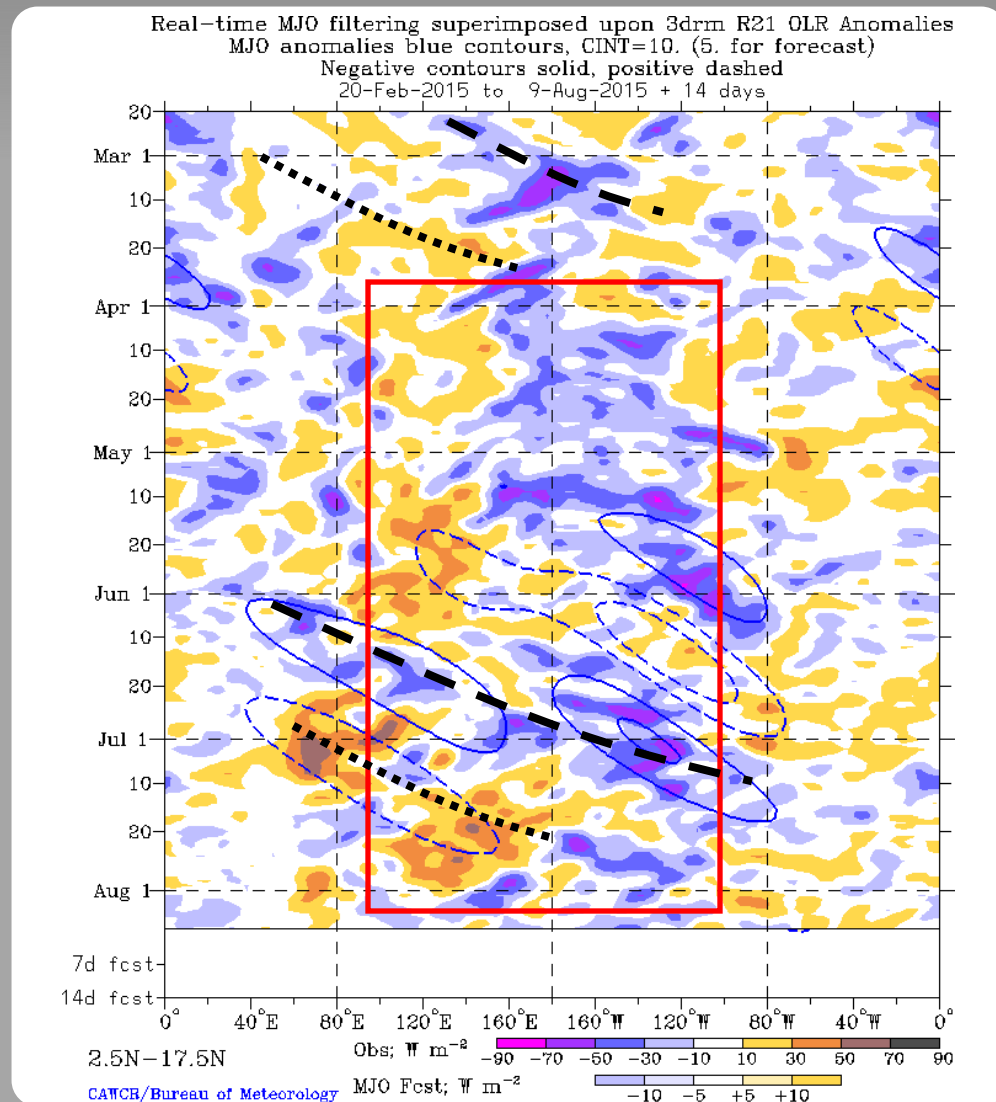
Wetter-than-normal conditions, negative OLR anomalies (blue shading)

The MJO become active during March, with eastward propagating anomalies readily observed.

Since April, the ongoing El Niño is observed (red box) as a tendency toward a dipole of anomalous convection extending from the Maritime Continent (suppressed) to the East Pacific (enhanced).

During June and early July, the MJO become active, interfering with the ENSO signal at times.

Recently, the MJO signal has weakened and other modes are more influential.



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

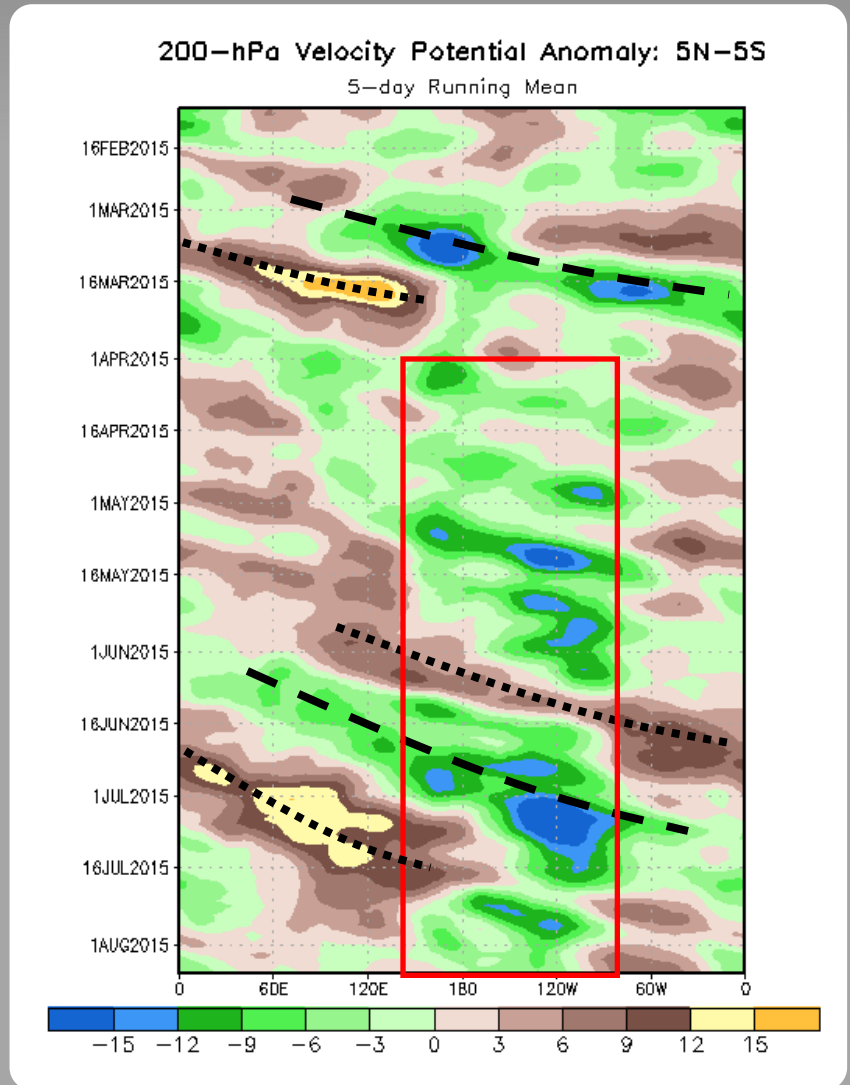
Positive anomalies (brown shading) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation

Negative anomalies (green shading) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation

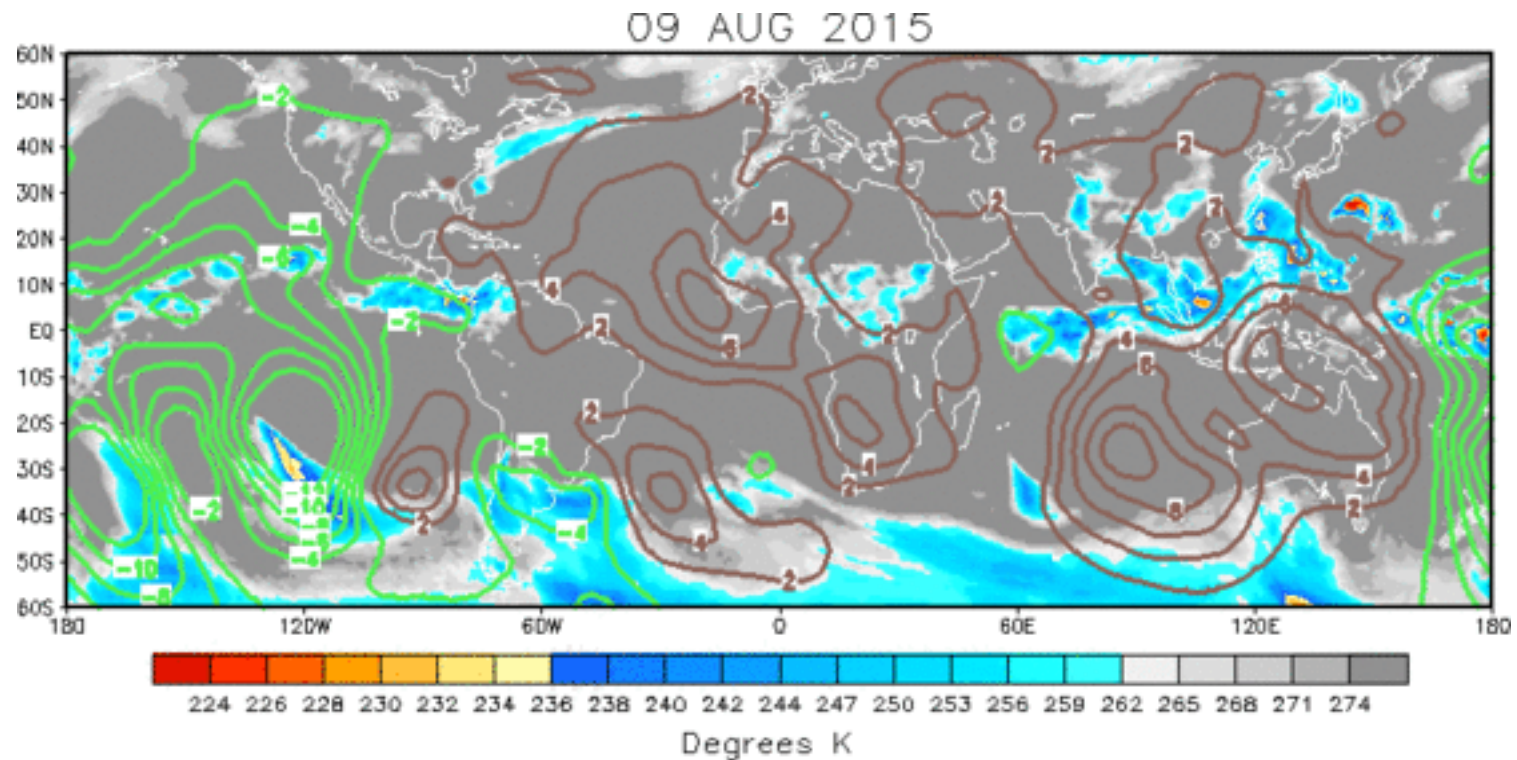
The MJO strengthened in early March as seen in the upper-level velocity potential anomalies.

The developing ENSO state is highlighted by the red box, showing anomalous divergence over the central and eastern Pacific. This pattern has only been temporarily interrupted by strong Kelvin wave/MJO activity at times.

During June and early July, a high-amplitude MJO event is observed, constructively interfering with the El Niño signal in early July. By the end of July, the MJO weakened as the low-frequency state dominated the pattern of tropical variability.



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



The upper-level velocity potential pattern currently depicts mostly a Wave-1 structure, with some interference over the Indian Ocean. Generally, anomalous divergence (convergence) was measured over the central and eastern Pacific (Atlantic Ocean to the Maritime Continent).

Positive anomalies (brown contours) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation
Negative anomalies (green contours) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation

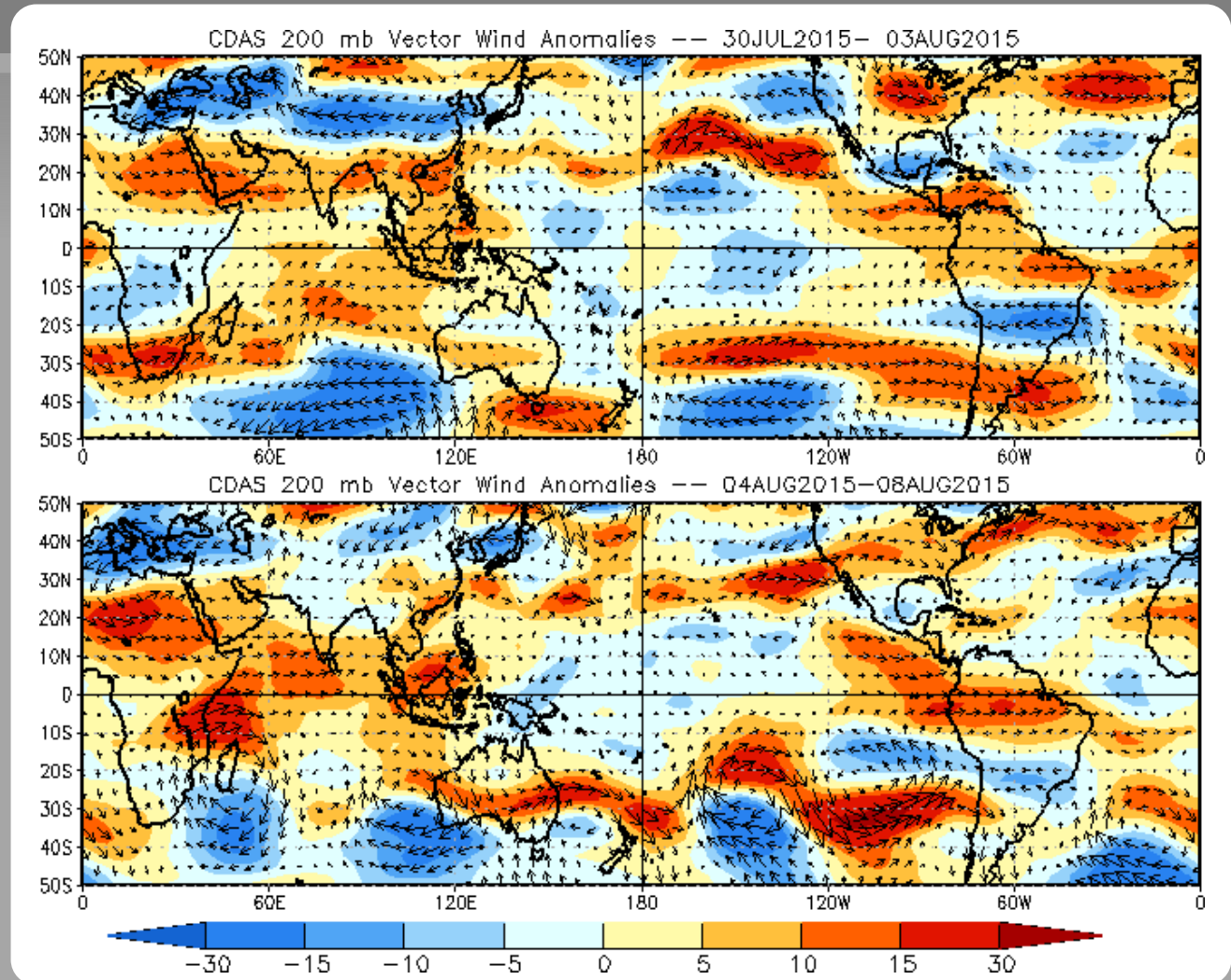
200-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies

Westerly anomalies are observed over the far eastern Pacific and Caribbean Sea, while reduced wind shear is observed south of Hawaii associated with the anomalous subtropical ridge, consistent with El Niño.



200-hPa Zonal Wind Anomalies (m s⁻¹)

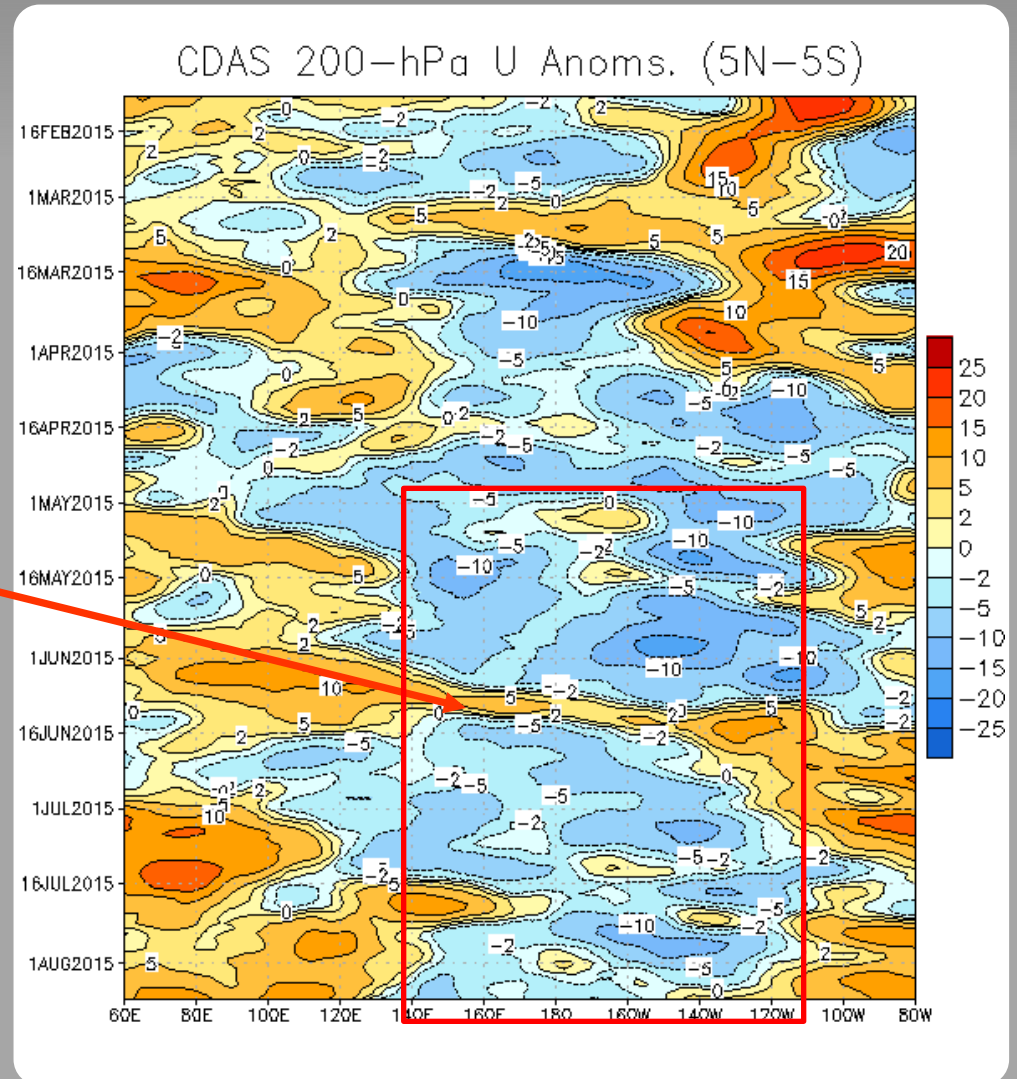
Westerly anomalies (orange/red shading) represent anomalous west-to-east flow

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

Easterly anomalies have persisted over the central and eastern Pacific associated with El Niño since mid-April (red box).

During June, these easterly anomalies were interrupted by a robust atmospheric Kelvin wave/MJO activity.

Recently, some westward movement of the anomaly pattern is also evident.



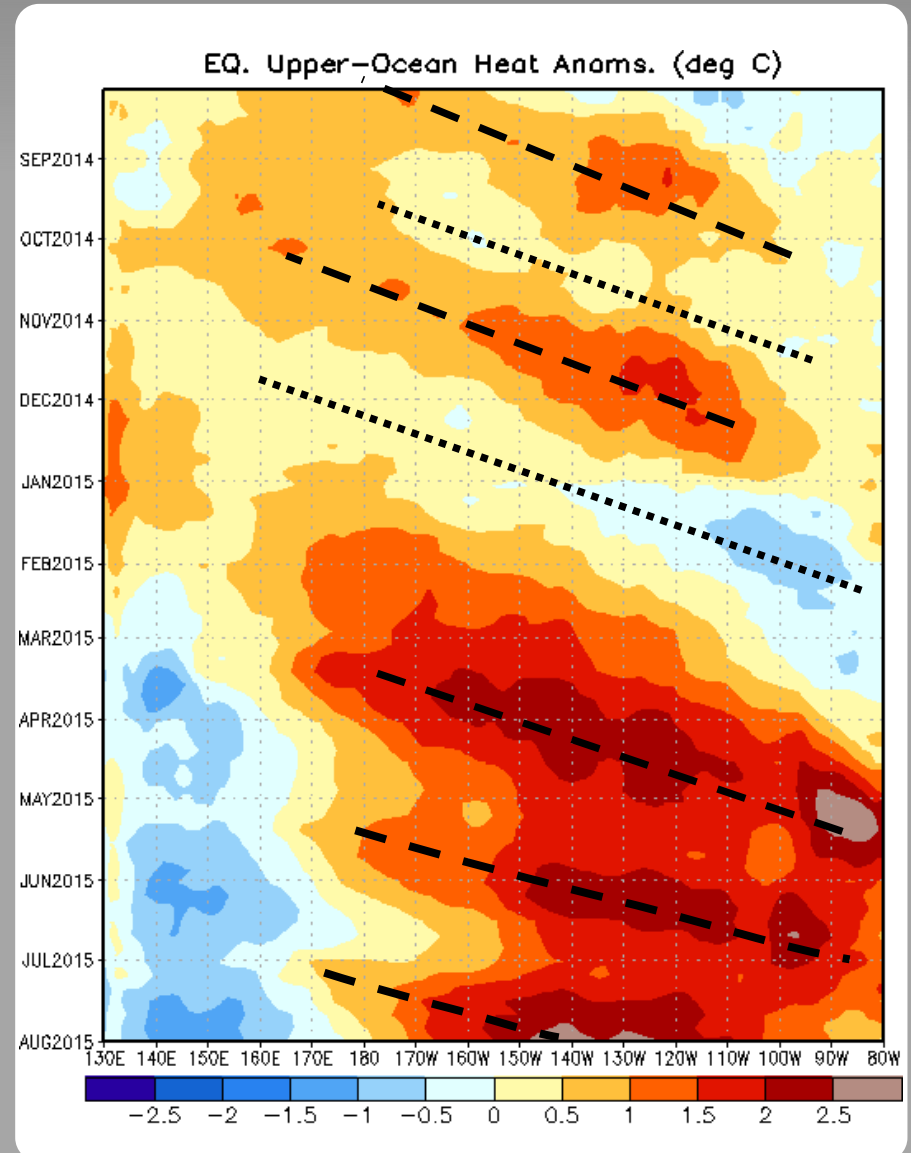
Weekly Heat Content Evolution in the Equatorial Pacific

Oceanic Kelvin waves have alternating warm and cold phases. The warm phase is indicated by dashed lines. Downwelling and warming occur in the leading portion of a Kelvin wave, and upwelling and cooling occur in the trailing portion.

During October-November, positive subsurface temperature anomalies increased and shifted eastward in association with the downwelling phase of a Kelvin wave. During November - January, the upwelling phase of a Kelvin wave shifted eastward.

Following a strong westerly wind burst in March, another downwelling phase of a Kelvin wave propagated eastward, reaching the South American coast during May.

Reinforcing downwelling events have followed, resulting in persistently above-normal heat content from the Date Line to 90W.



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

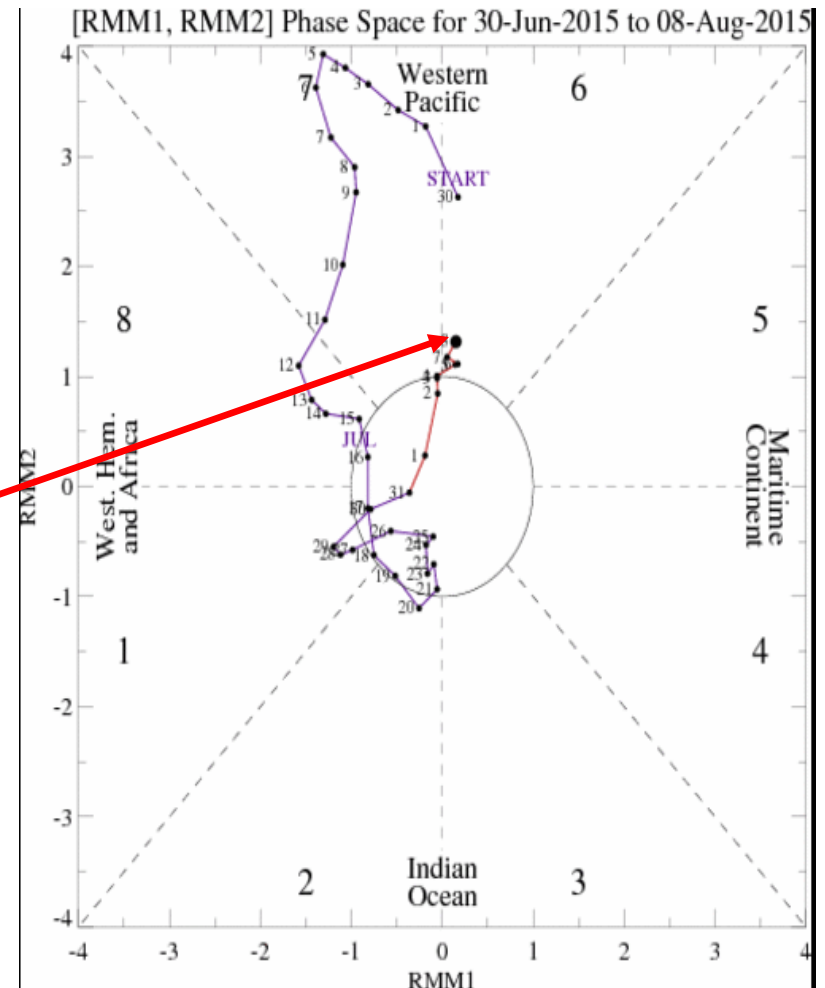
The triangular areas indicate the location of the enhanced phase of the MJO

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

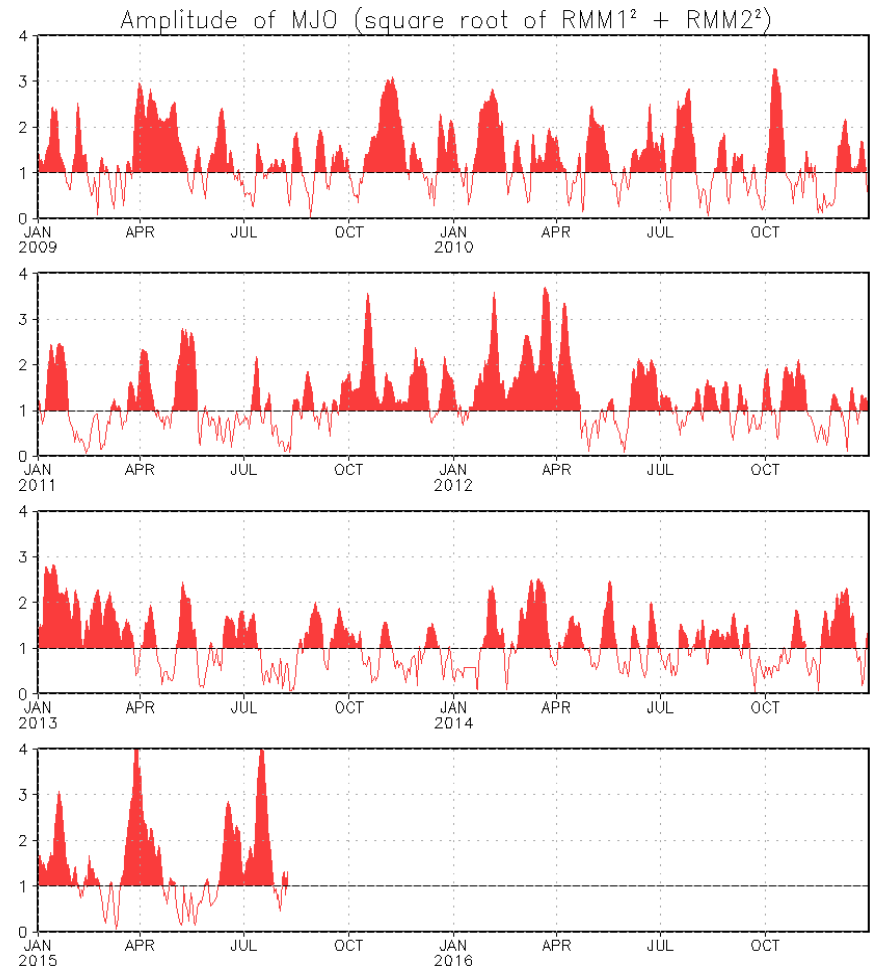
The RMM index indicated some strengthening of the MJO, likely related to other modes of variability.



MJO Index - Historical Daily Time Series

Time series of daily MJO index amplitude for the last few years.

Plot puts current MJO activity in recent historical context.



Ensemble GFS (GEFS) MJO Forecast

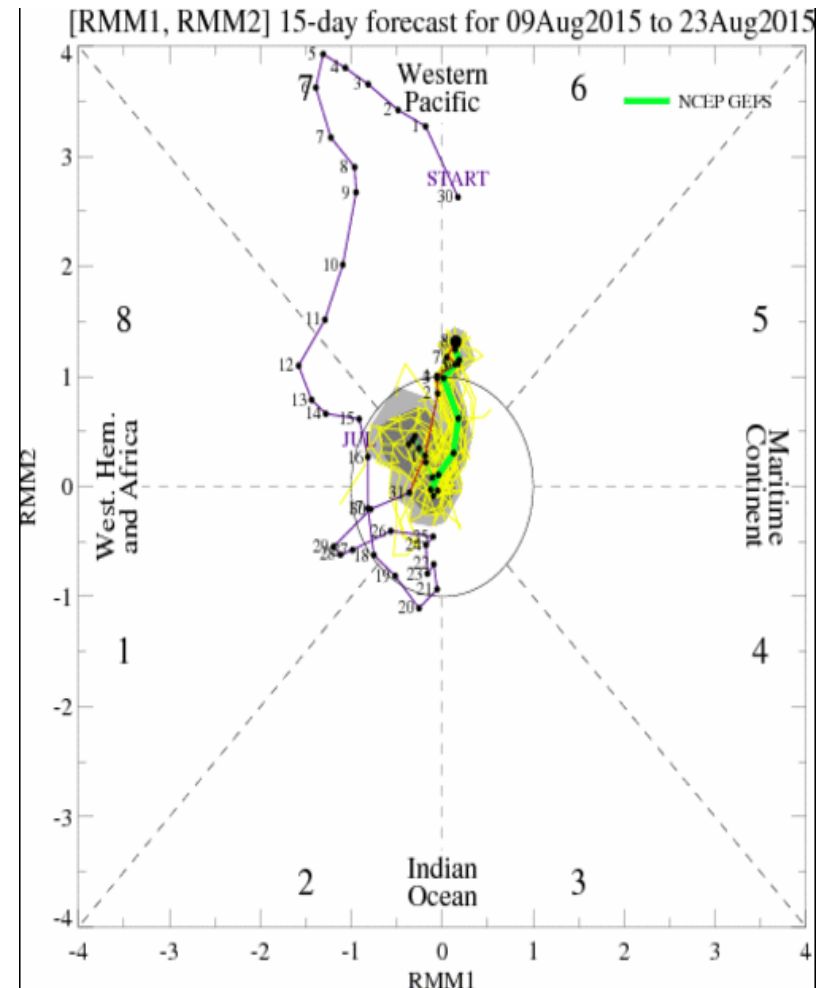
RMM1 and RMM2 values for the most recent 40 days and forecasts from the ensemble Global Forecast System (GEFS) for the next 15 days

light gray shading: 90% of forecasts

dark gray shading: 50% of forecasts

The GFS ensemble MJO index forecast depicts little to no coherent signal over the next 2 weeks.

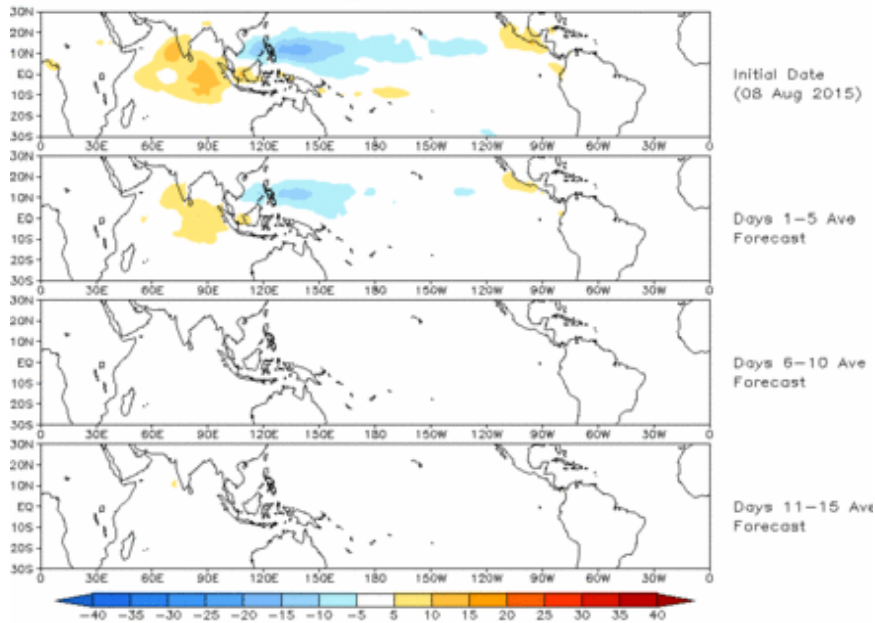
Yellow Lines - 20 Individual Members
Green Line - Ensemble Mean



Ensemble GFS (GEFS) MJO Forecast

Spatial map of OLR anomalies for the next 15 days

Prediction of MJO-related anomalies using GEFS operational forecast
Initial date: 08 Aug 2015
OLR

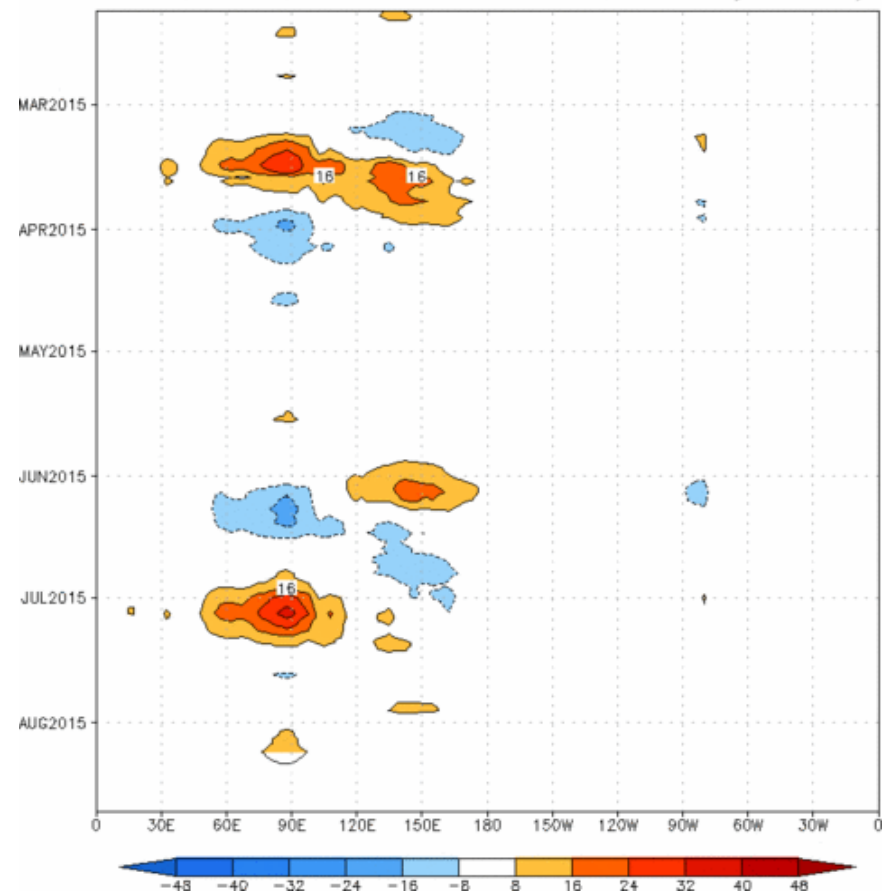


The GEFS MJO index-based OLR forecast shows generally weak anomalies over the next two weeks.

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.)

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

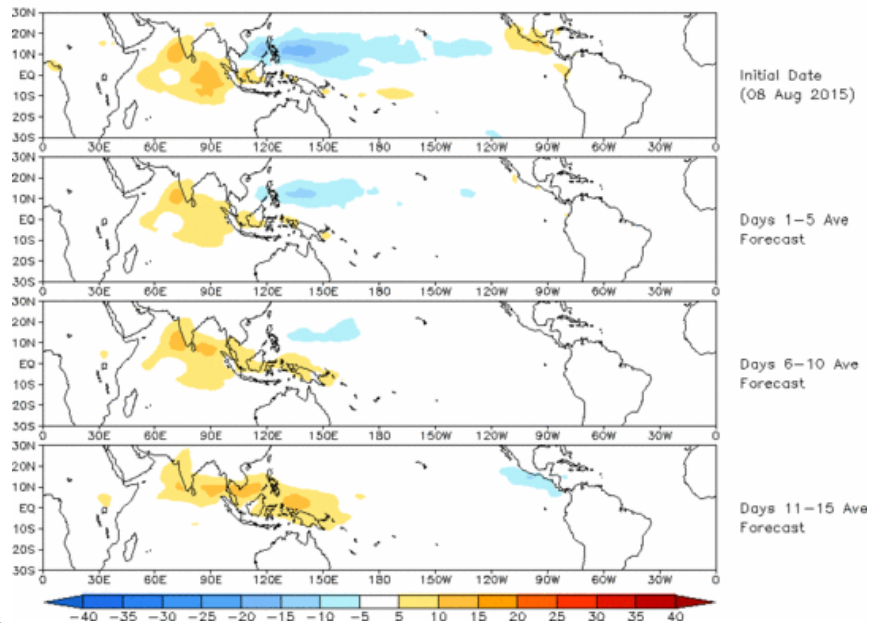
Reconstructed anomaly field associated with the MJO using RMM1 & RMM2
OLR [7.5°S,7.5°N] (cont:4Wm⁻²) Period:06-Feb-2015 to 08-Aug-2015
The unfilled contours are GEFS forecast reconstructed anomaly for 15 days



Constructed Analog (CA) MJO Forecast

Spatial map of OLR anomalies for the next 15 days

OLR prediction of MJO-related anomalies using CA model
reconstruction by RMM1 & RMM2 (08 Aug 2015)

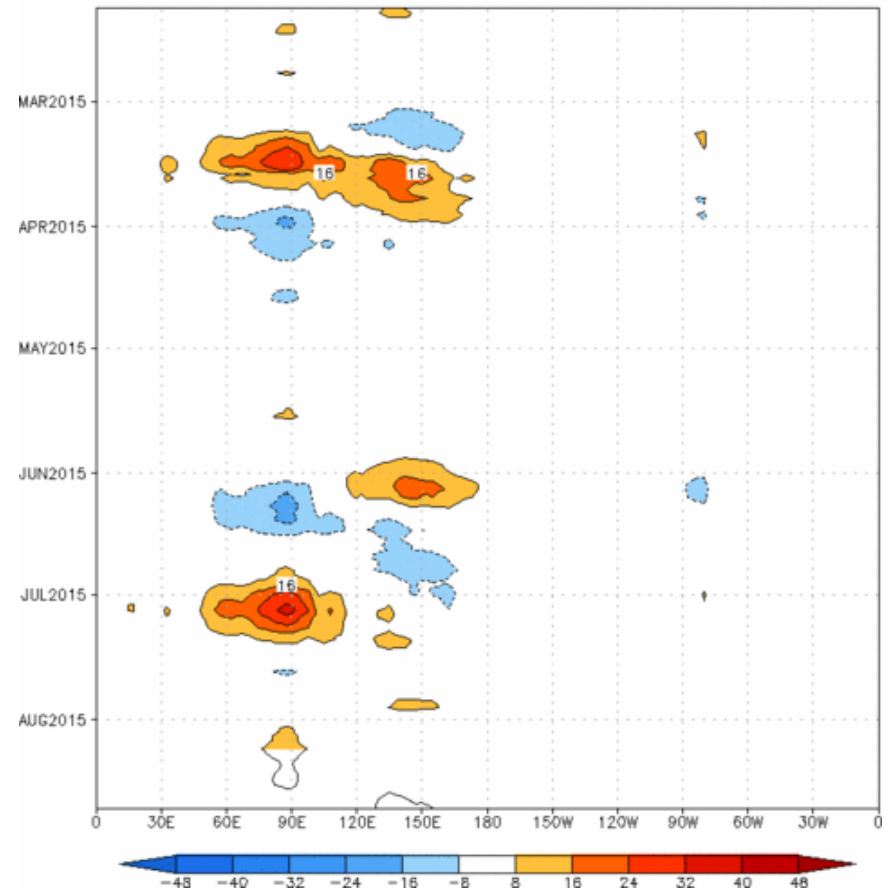


The constructed analog model shows weak anomalies, but unlike the dynamical models, the CA model continues the signal through Week-2.

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.)

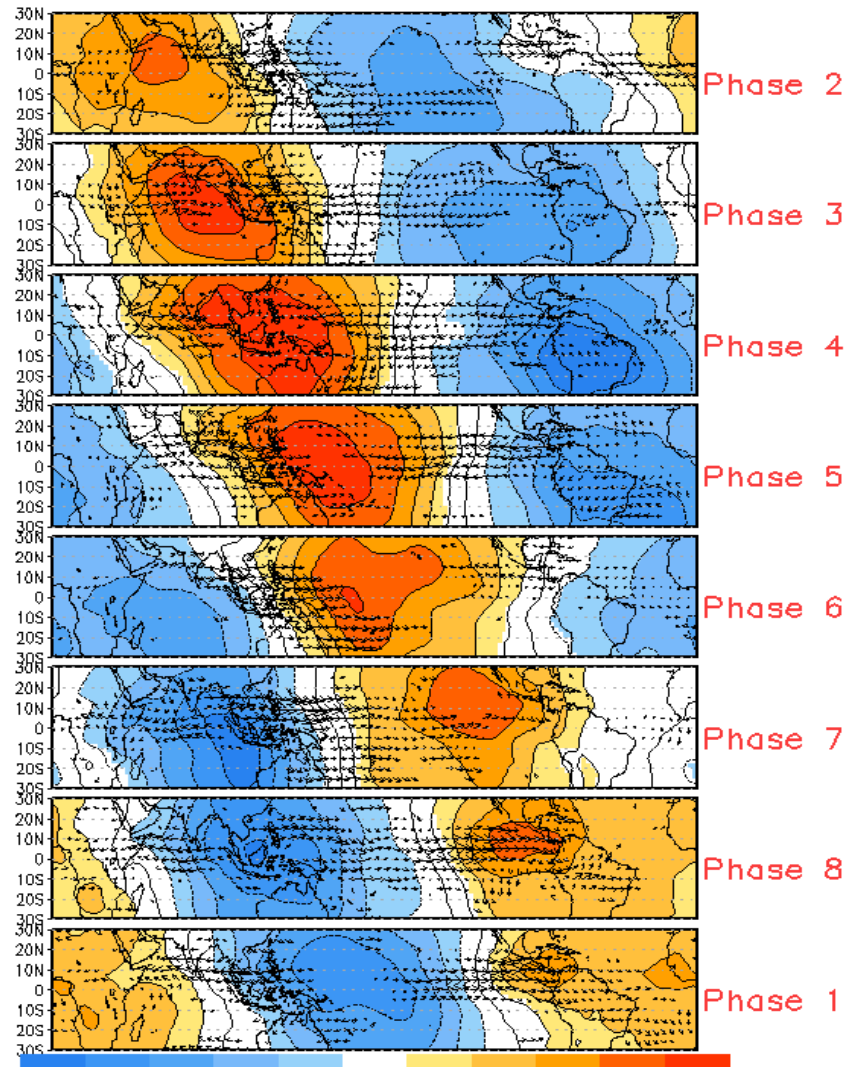
Time-longitude section of (7.5° S-7.5° N) OLR anomalies - last 180 days and for the next 15 days

Reconstructed anomaly field associated with the MJO using RMM1 & RMM2
OLR [7.5°S,7.5°N] (cont:4Wm⁻²) Period:06-Feb-2015 to 08-Aug-2015
The unfilled contours are CA forecast reconstructed anomaly for 15 days

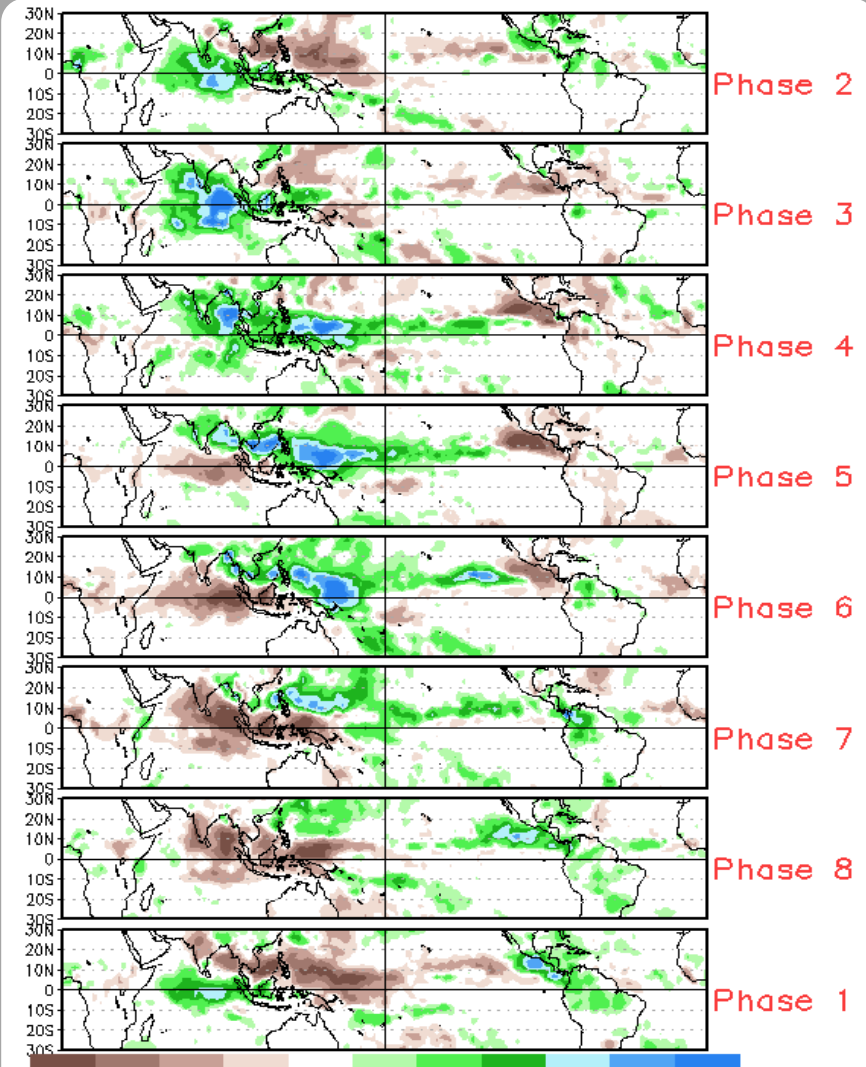


MJO Composites - Global Tropics

850-hPa Velocity Potential and
Wind Anomalies (May-Sep)



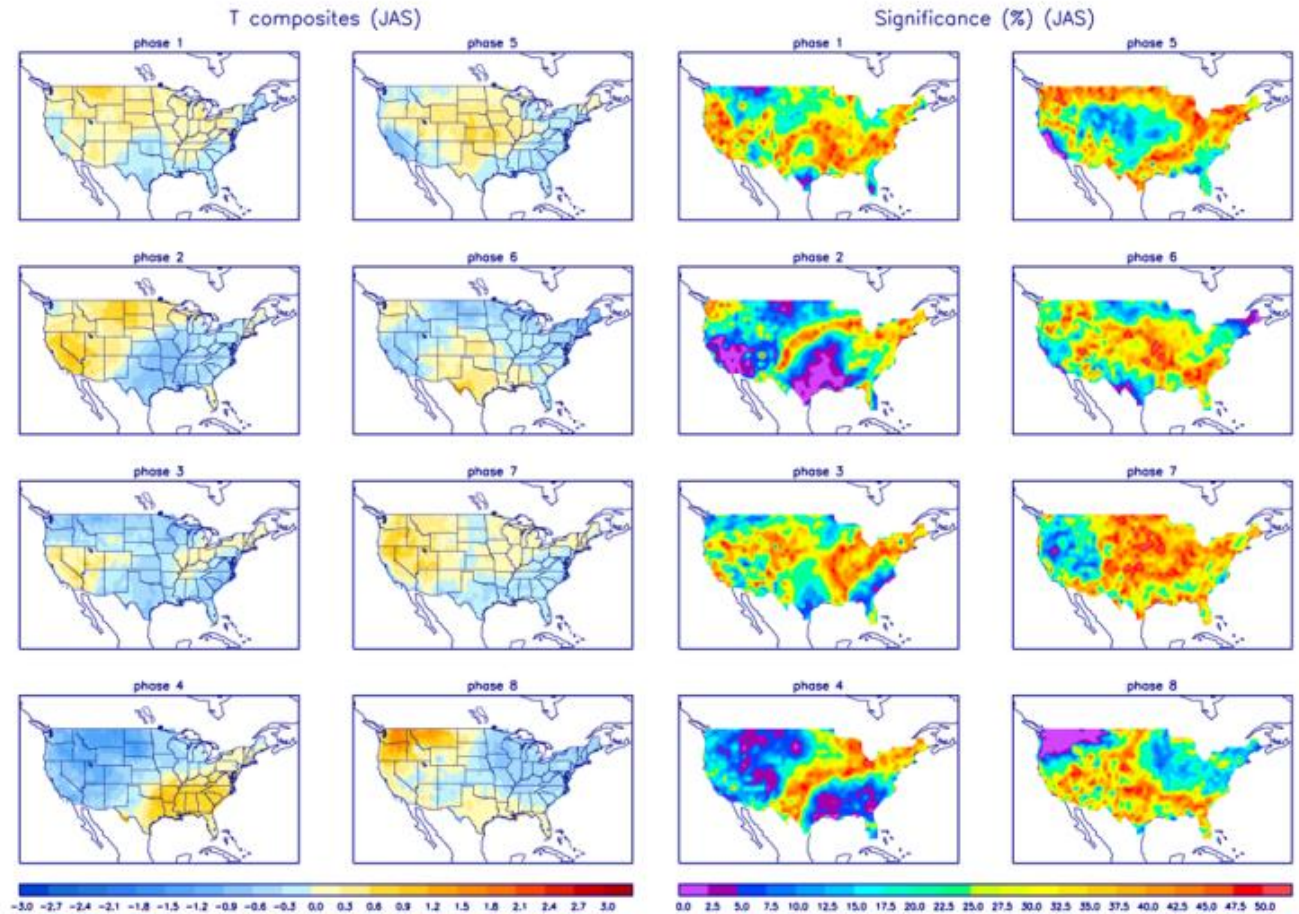
Precipitation Anomalies (May-Sep)



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.



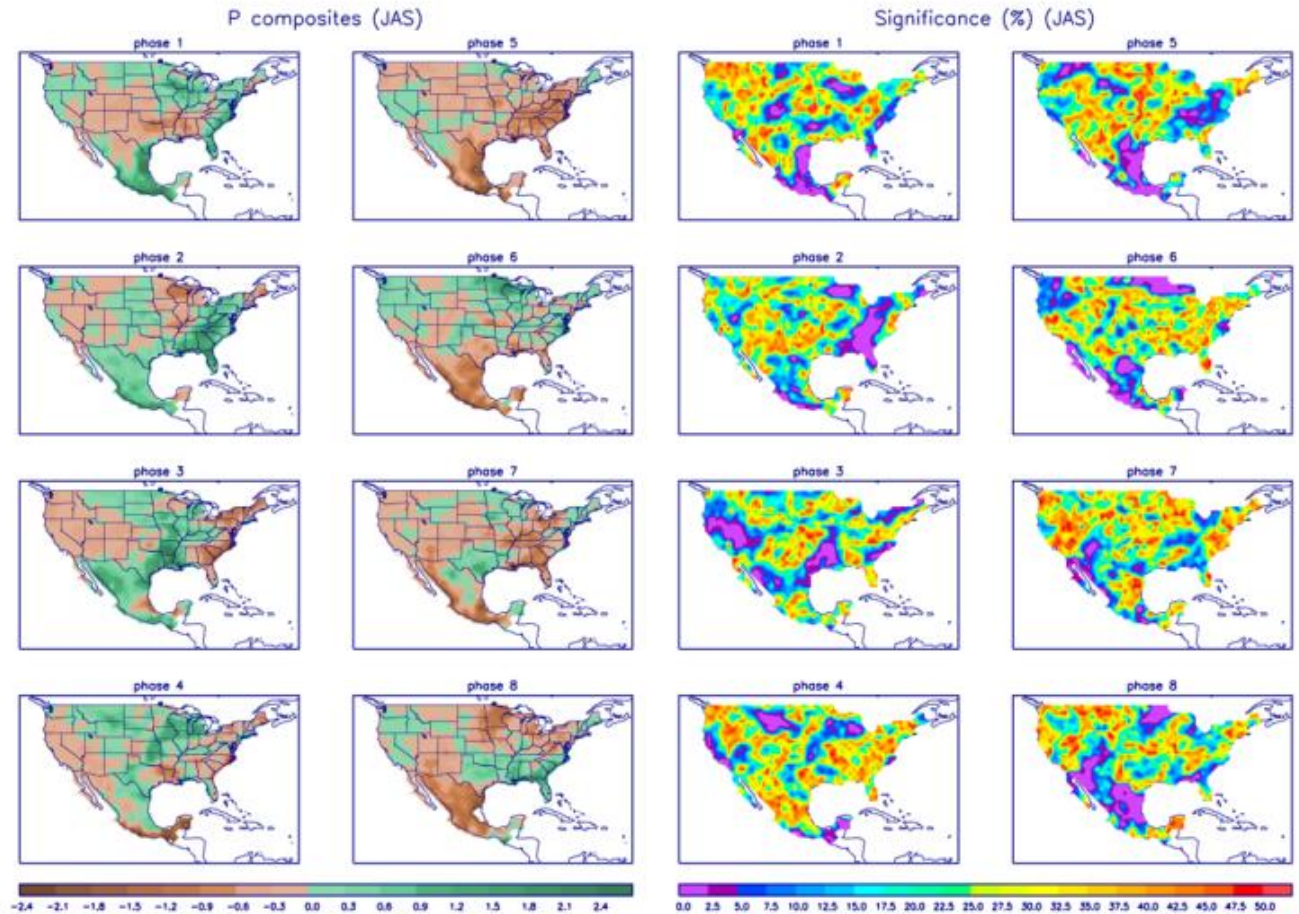
Zhou et al. (2011): A composite study of the MJO influence on the surface air temperature and precipitation over the Continental United States, *Climate Dynamics*, 1-13, doi: 10.1007/s00382-011-1001-9

<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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