



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

**Update prepared by
Climate Prediction Center / NCEP
May 14, 2012**



Outline

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



Overview

- The MJO remained generally incoherent during the past week.
- There remains large spread in forecasts of the MJO index from dynamical models with many indicating continued incoherent, weak MJO activity during the period.
- Based on the latest observations and majority of model forecasts, the MJO is forecast to remain weak during the next 1-2 weeks.
- At the current time, the MJO is not expected to contribute substantially to areas of anomalous tropical convection during the period.

Additional potential impacts across the global tropics are available at:
<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/ghazards/index.php>



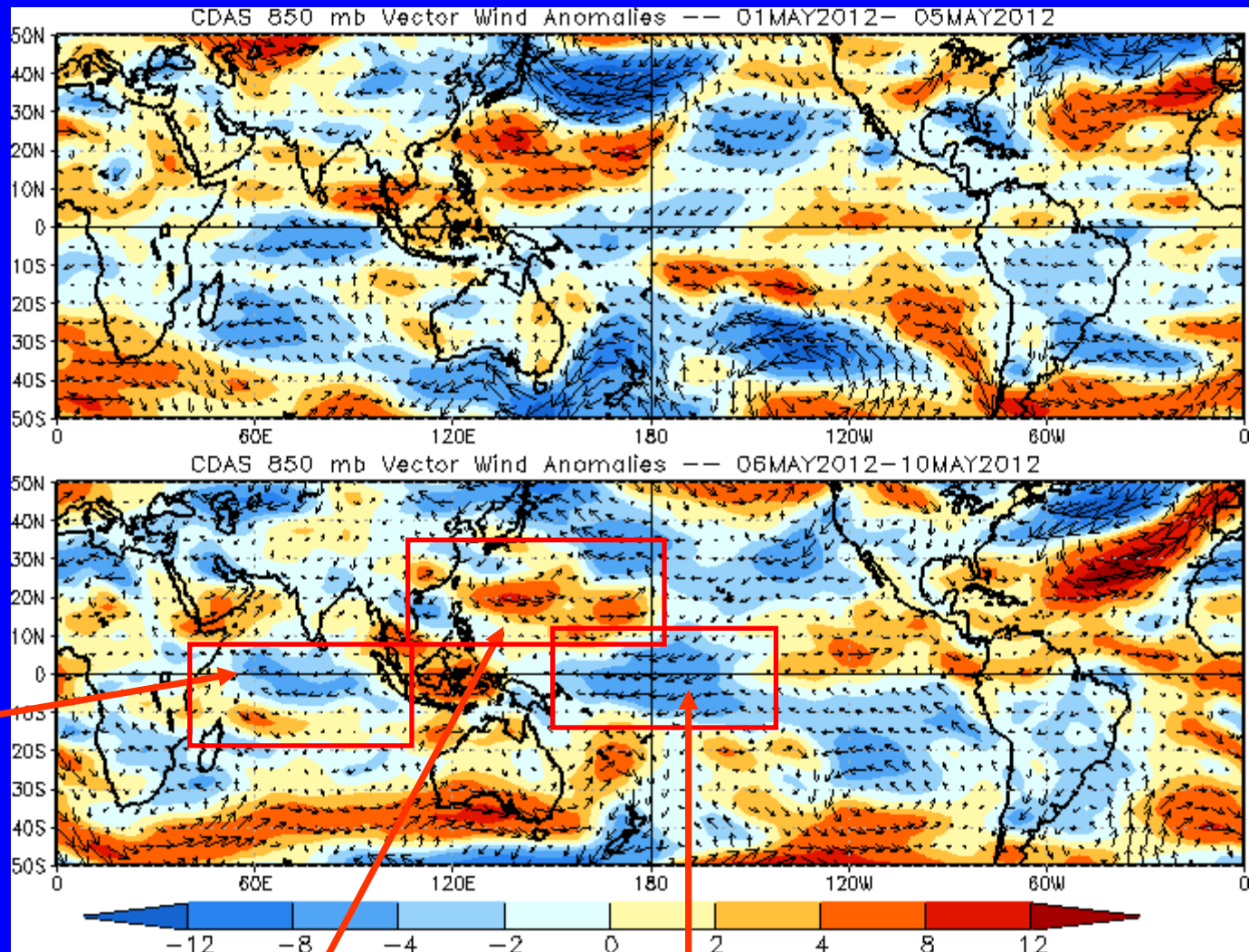
850-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies

Easterly anomalies continued across the equatorial Indian Ocean during the last five days.



Westerly anomalies continued north of the equator across the western Pacific during the last five days.

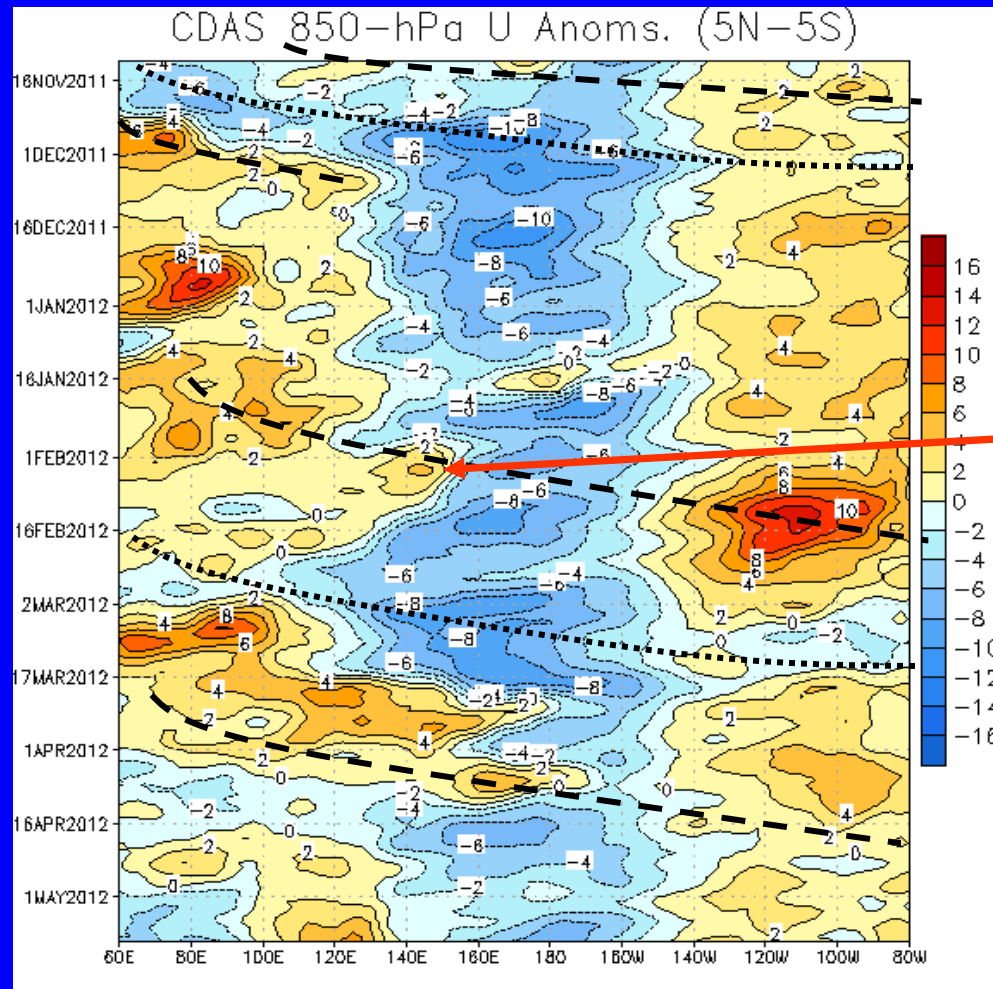
Easterly anomalies strengthened in the central Pacific.



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



MJO activity continued into December as indicated by altering dashed and dotted lines. Later during other portions of December and January, westerly (easterly) wind anomalies across the Indian Ocean (western Pacific) became more stationary.

During the first half of February, the MJO contributed to increased westerly anomalies near 140E and across the eastern Pacific while decreasing easterly anomalies in the central Pacific.

MJO activity continued into April, with westerly anomalies associated with the MJO located near the Date Line and western hemisphere early in the month.

Most recently, easterly anomalies have returned to the Date Line during mid-April, but anomalies are small.

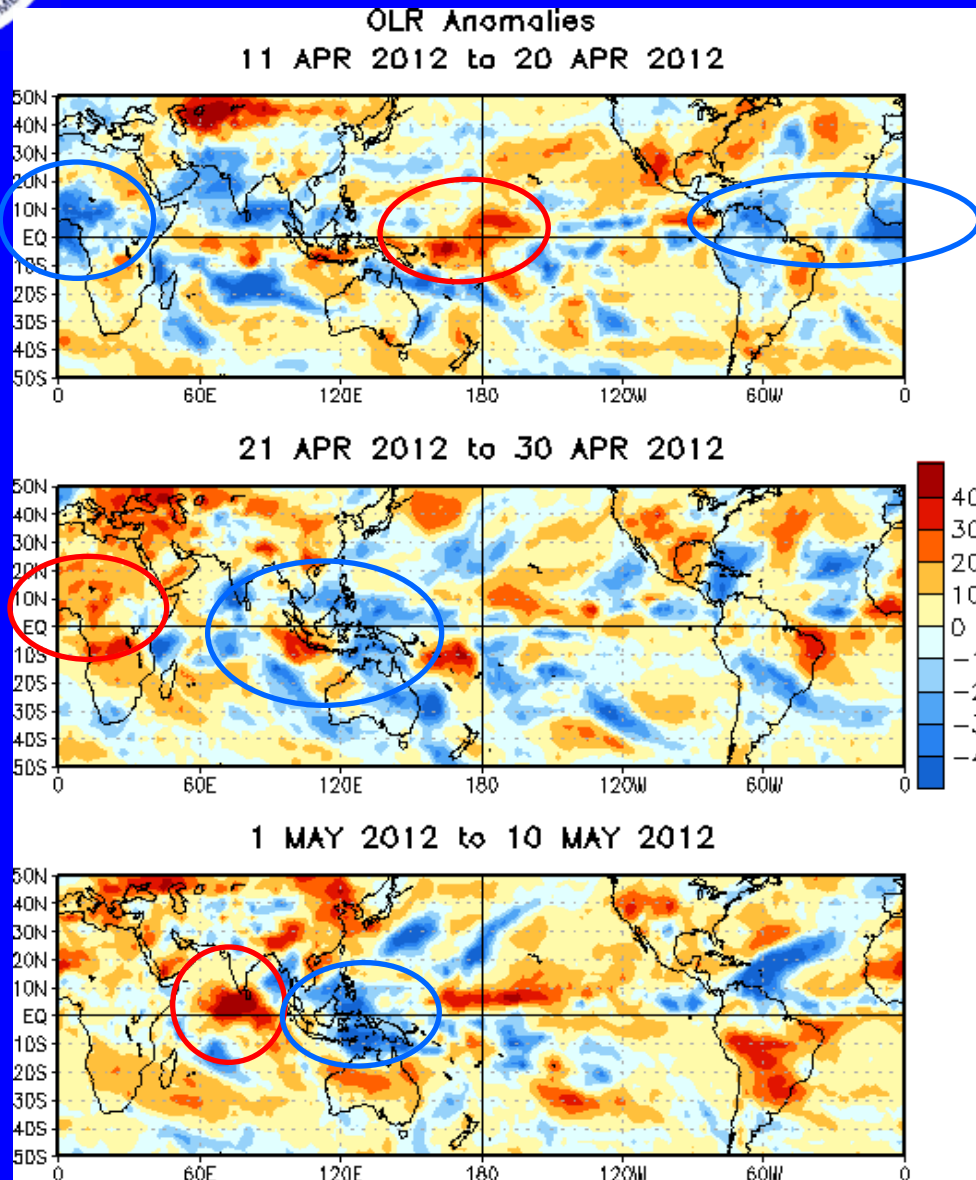
Longitude



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 April, enhanced convection continued over the western hemisphere and Africa. Suppressed convection shifted into the west-central Pacific.

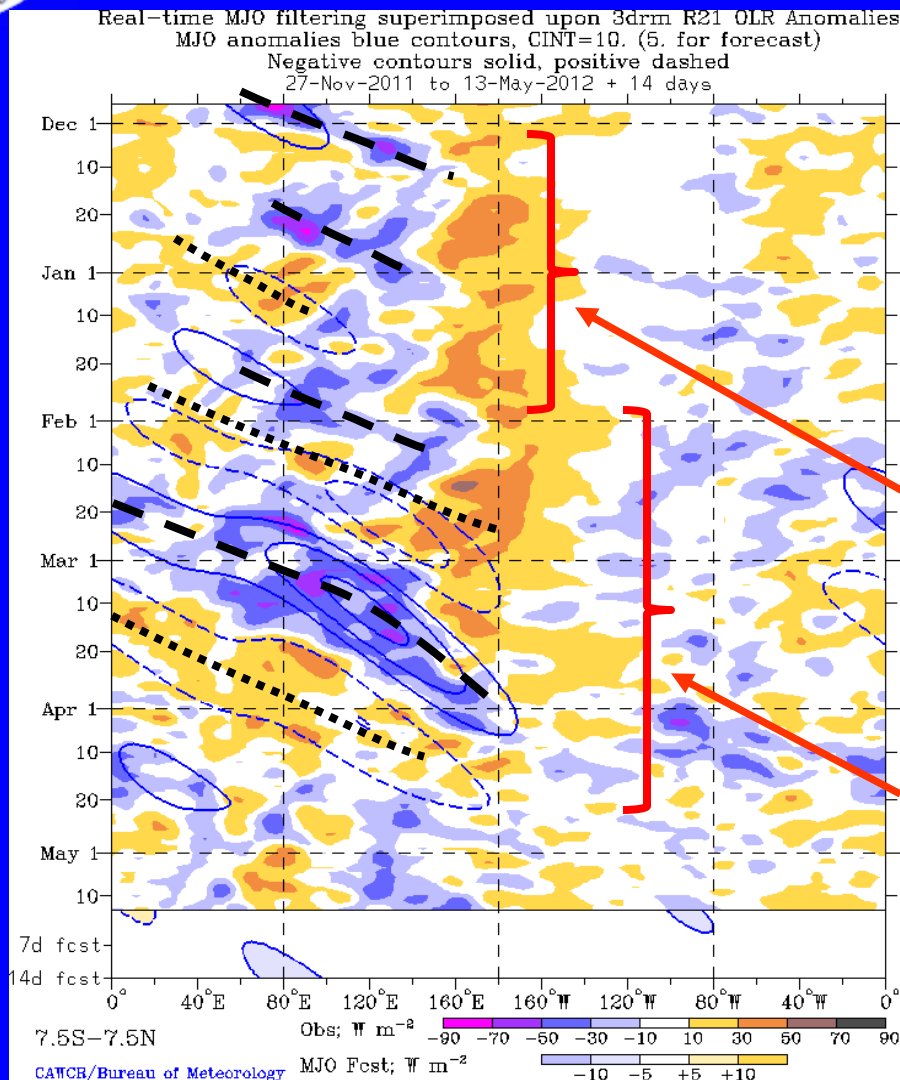
During mid to late April, suppressed convection developed across Africa and areas of enhanced convection were scattered over the Maritime Continent.

Suppressed convection developed over the Indian Ocean during early May, while enhanced convection continued over parts of the Maritime Continent.



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)

MJO activity was evident in early December and briefly again in late December and early January as alternating areas of enhanced (dashed lines) and suppressed (dotted lines) convection shifted eastward.

Strong MJO activity once again developed during late January and continued into early April. During this same period, other modes of subseasonal variability have also contributed to the observed pattern.

Anomalies have become small in most areas in early May with the strongest enhanced convection observed near 140E.

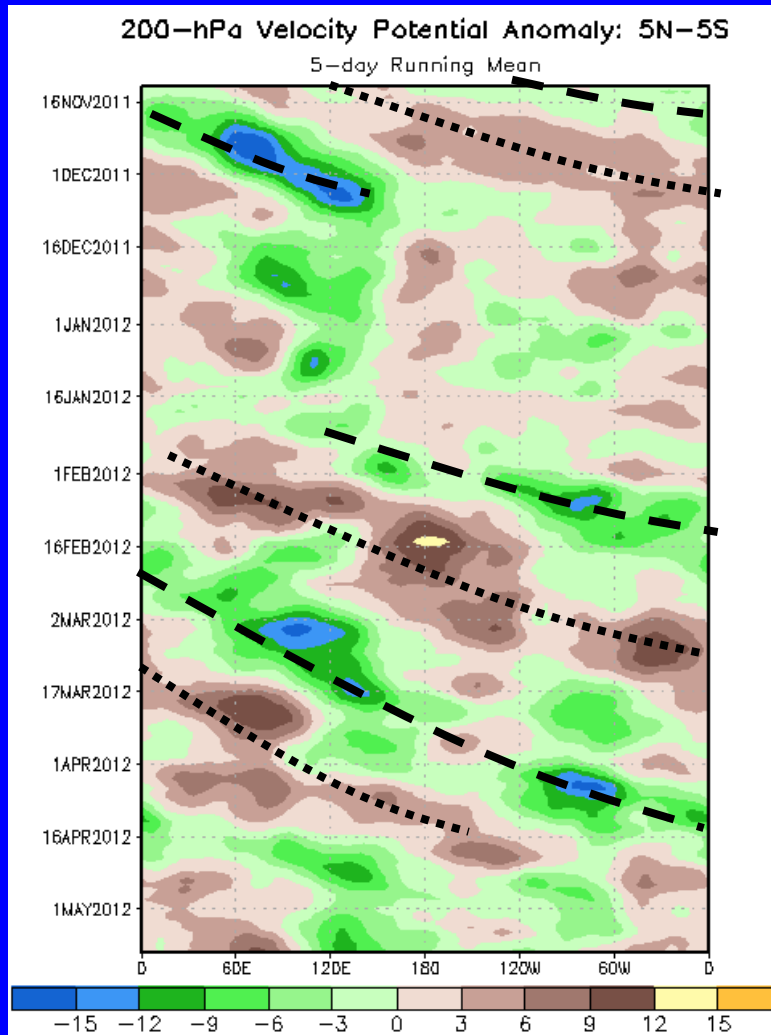


200-hPa Velocity Potential Anomalies (5°S-5°N)

Positive anomalies (brown shading) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation

Negative anomalies (green shading) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation

Time



Longitude

Alternating negative (dashed lines) and positive (dotted lines) anomalies were evident and associated with MJO activity during the end of 2011.

Eastward propagation of anomalies became less coherent during late December and early January and anomalies weakened.

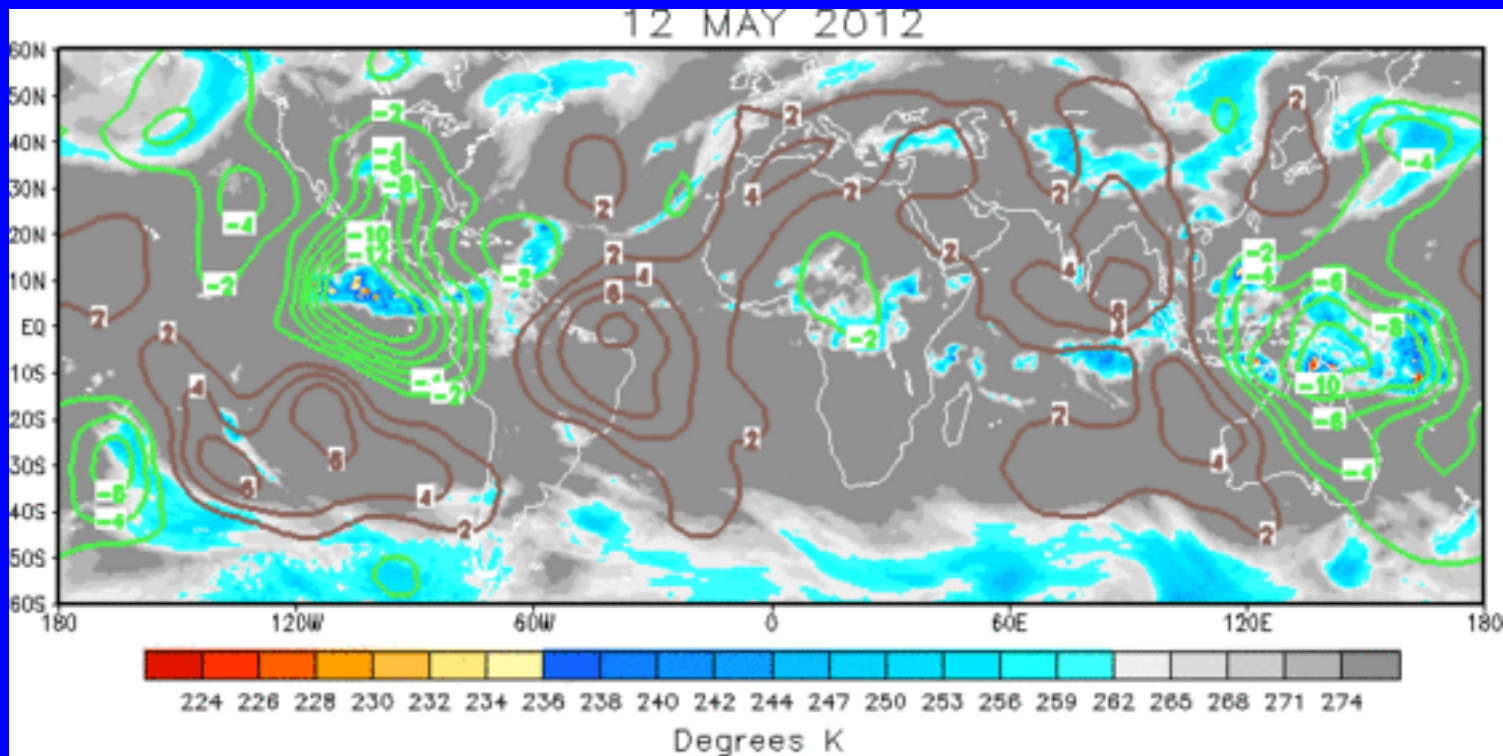
The MJO strengthened in late January and eastward propagation was evident through mid-April. Most recently, anomalies have decreased and the pattern is less coherent as the MJO has weakened.



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 large scale velocity potential pattern mainly reflects regional areas of enhanced upper-level divergence, one area in the eastern Pacific and another near the Maritime Continent and western Pacific.

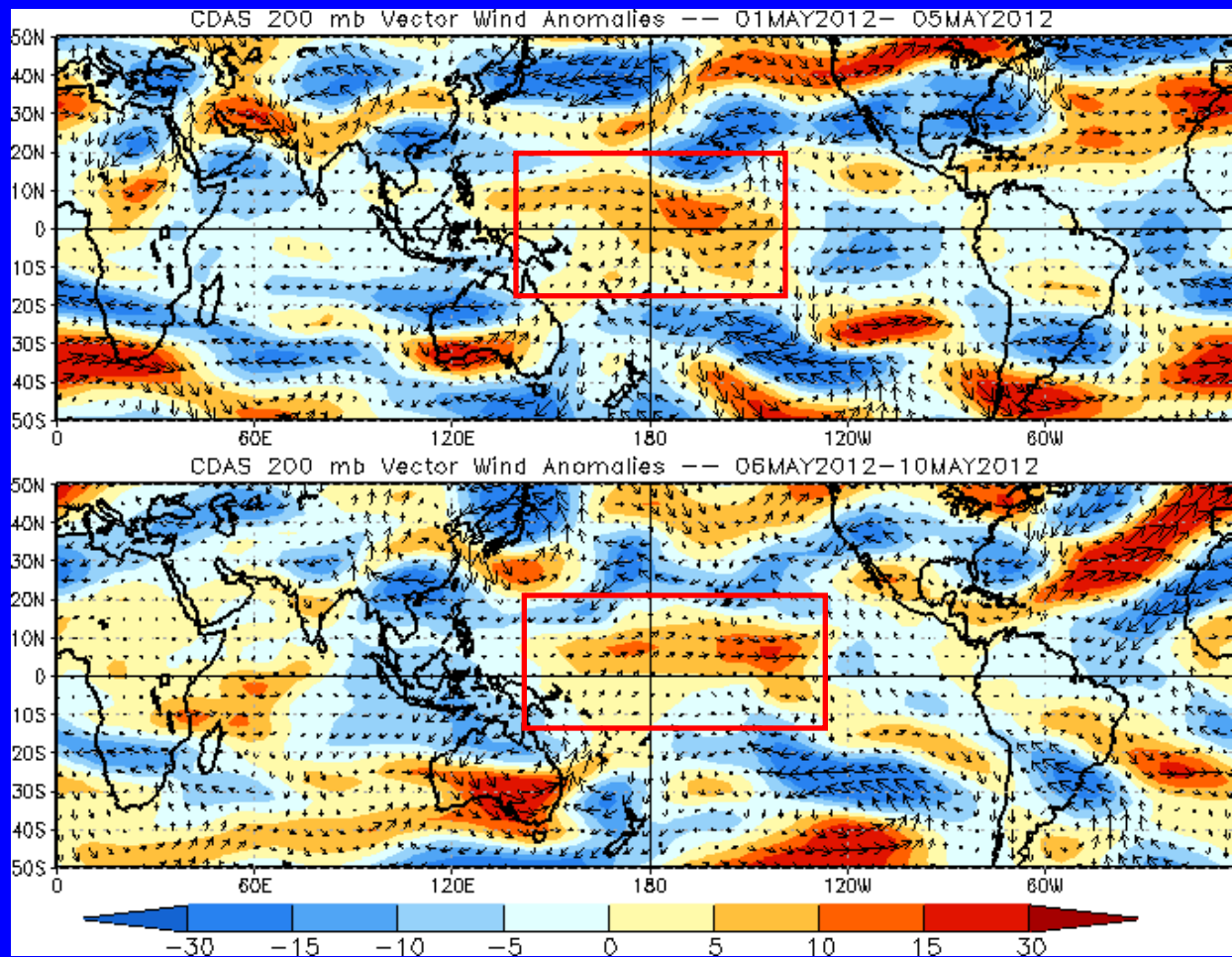


200-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies



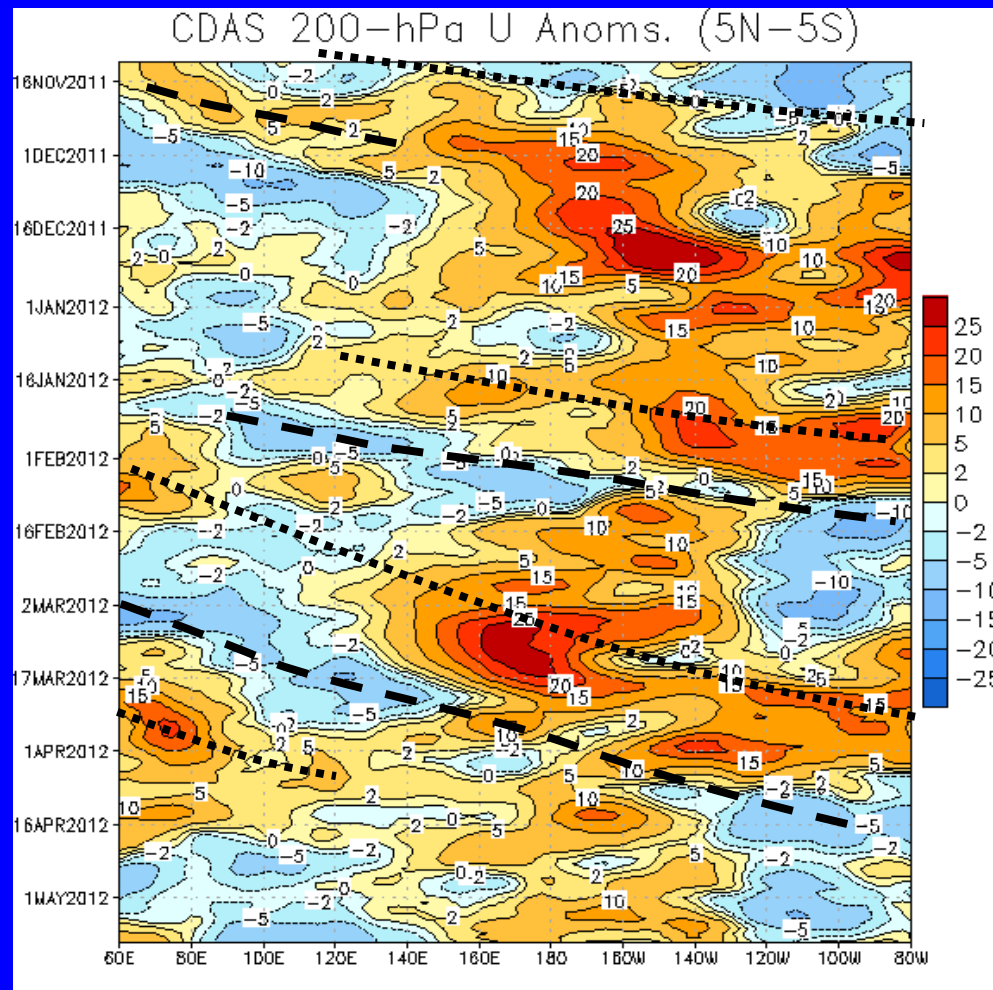
Westerly anomalies continued across the central Pacific, but are considerably weaker than earlier in the winter and spring.



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



Alternating westerly (dashed lines) and easterly (dotted lines) anomalies associated with the MJO are evident from October into December.

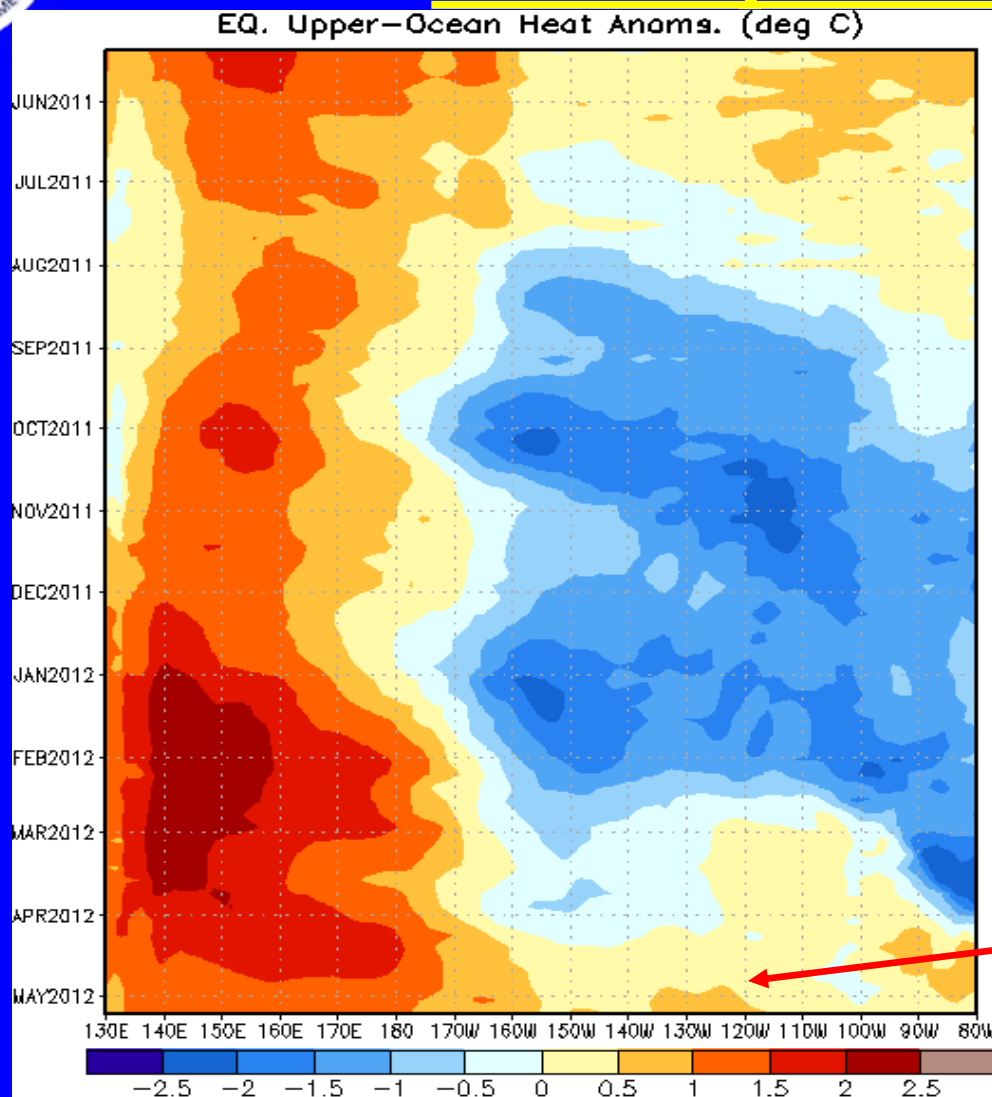
In December, westerly anomalies strengthened over the central Pacific.

Eastward propagation was again more clearly evident during late January and February, continuing into April when westerly anomalies shifted eastward, over the Americas, Africa and the western Indian Ocean.



Weekly Heat Content Evolution in the Equatorial Pacific

Time



From July 2011 through February 2012, heat content was below average in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific.

In April, heat content anomalies returned to near zero across much of the central and eastern Pacific.

Recently, heat content is now weakly positive in the east-central Pacific.

Longitude



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.

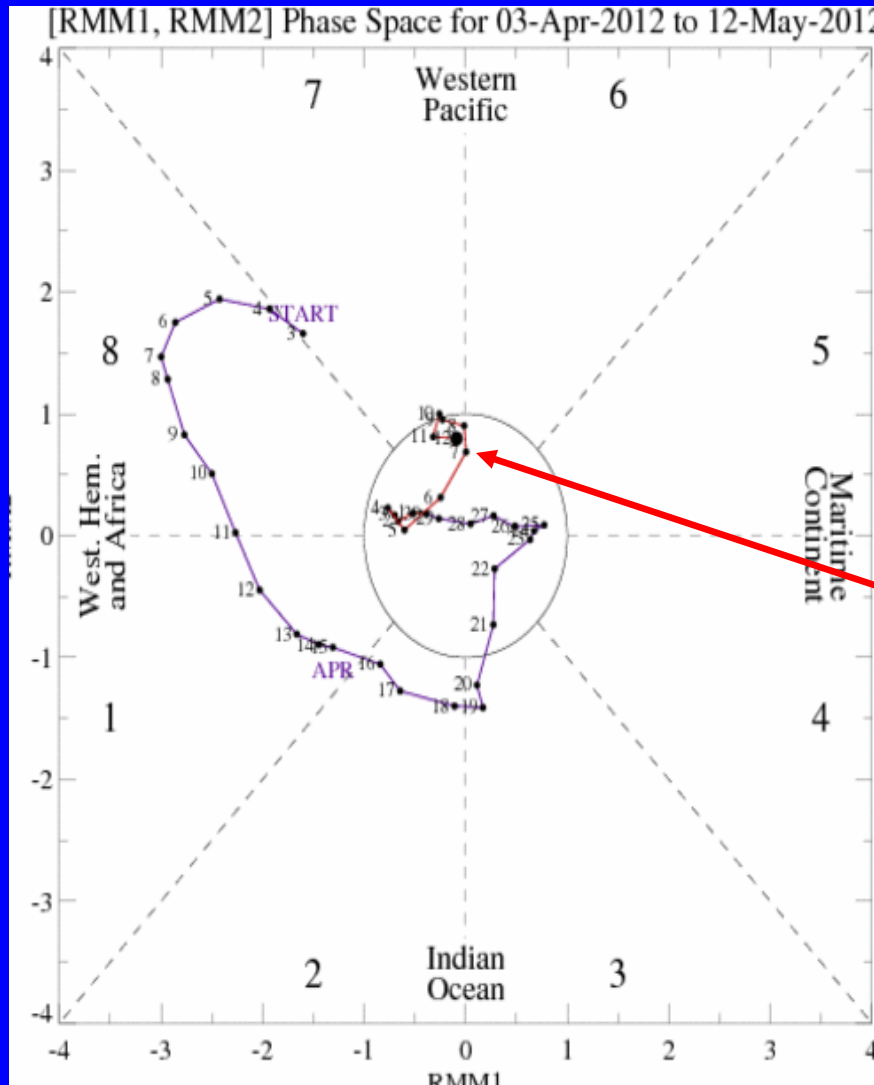
- The methodology is very similar to that described in WH2004 but does not include the linear removal of ENSO variability associated with a sea surface temperature index. The methodology is consistent with that outlined by the U.S. CLIVAR MJO Working Group.

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

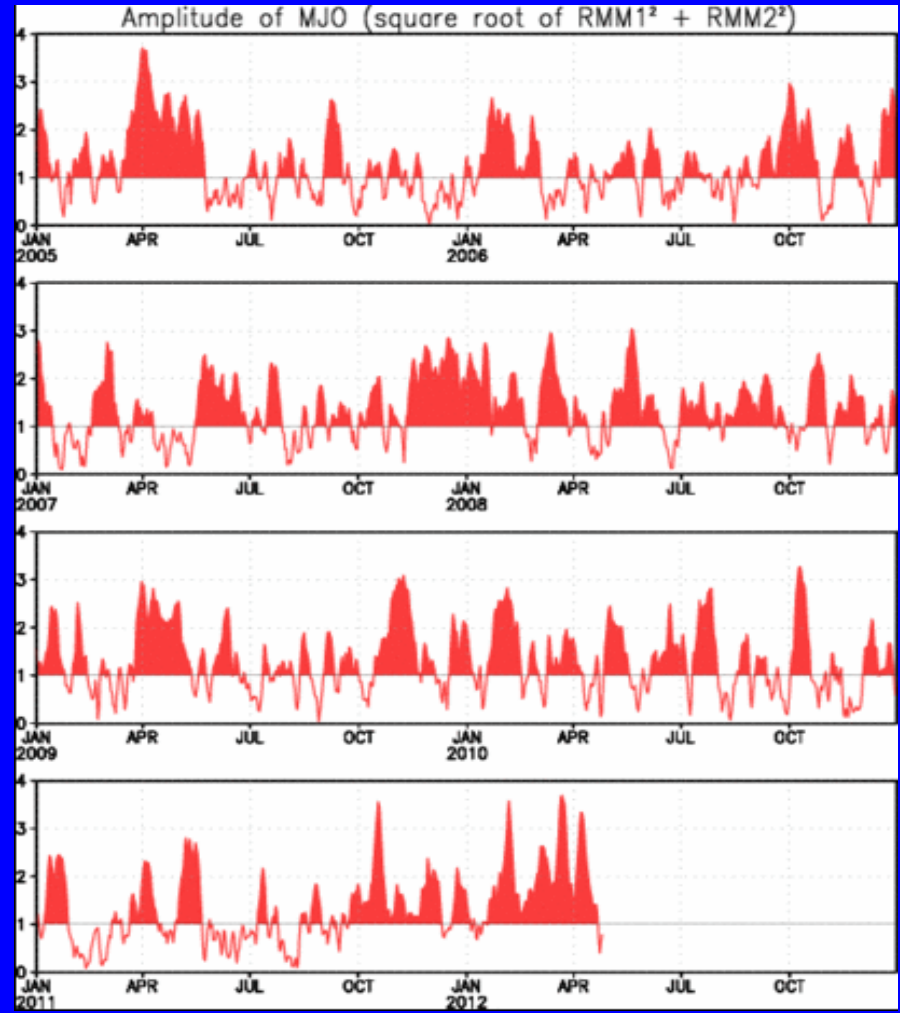
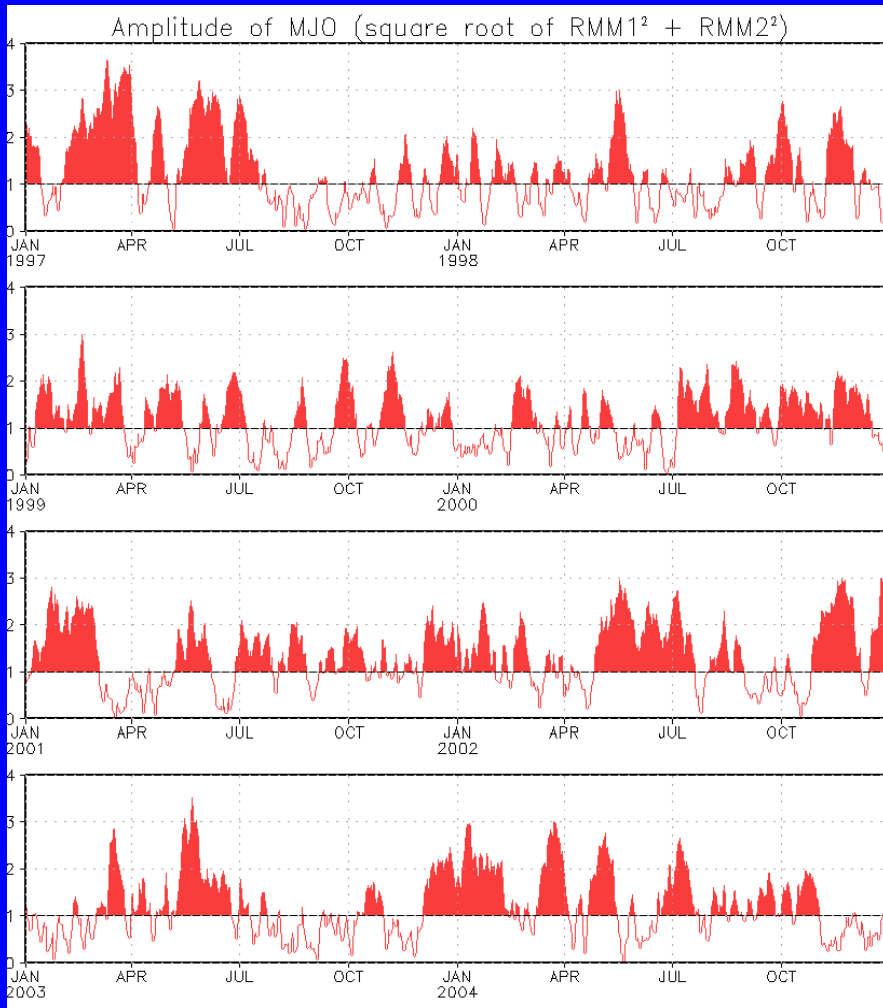


- The axes (RMM1 and RMM2) represent daily values of the principal components from the two leading modes
- The triangular areas indicate the location of the enhanced phase of the MJO
- Counter-clockwise motion is indicative of eastward propagation. Large dot most recent observation.
- Distance from the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

The MJO index continues to indicate little coherent signal.



MJO Index – Historical Daily Time Series



Time series of daily MJO index amplitude from 1997 to present.
Plots put current MJO activity in historical context.



Ensemble GFS (GEFS) MJO Forecast

Yellow Lines – 20 Individual Members

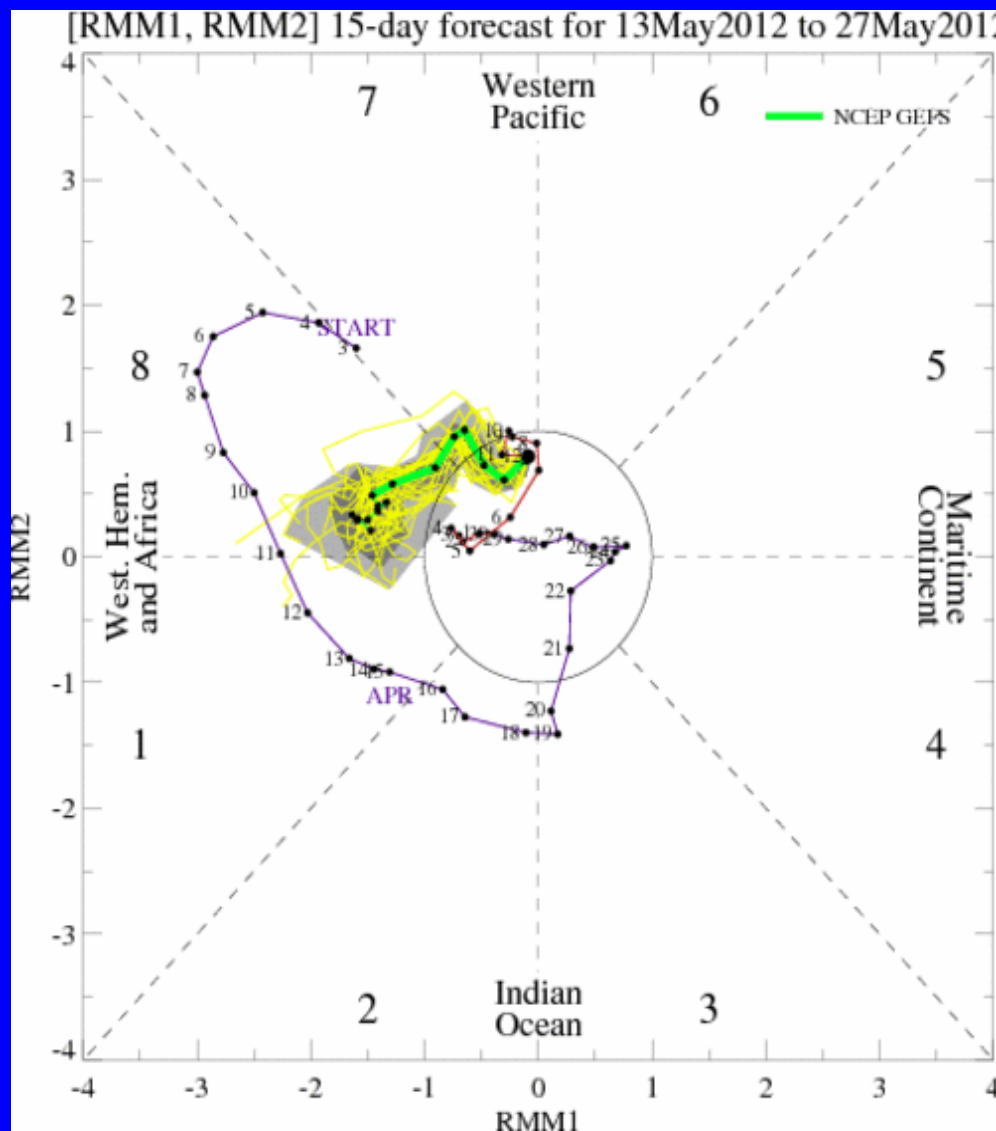
Green Line – Ensemble Mean

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 MJO index forecasts indicate an increase in amplitude with some eastward propagation during the period. Similar to recent forecasts, this is likely a result of other factors rather than a developing MJO signal.

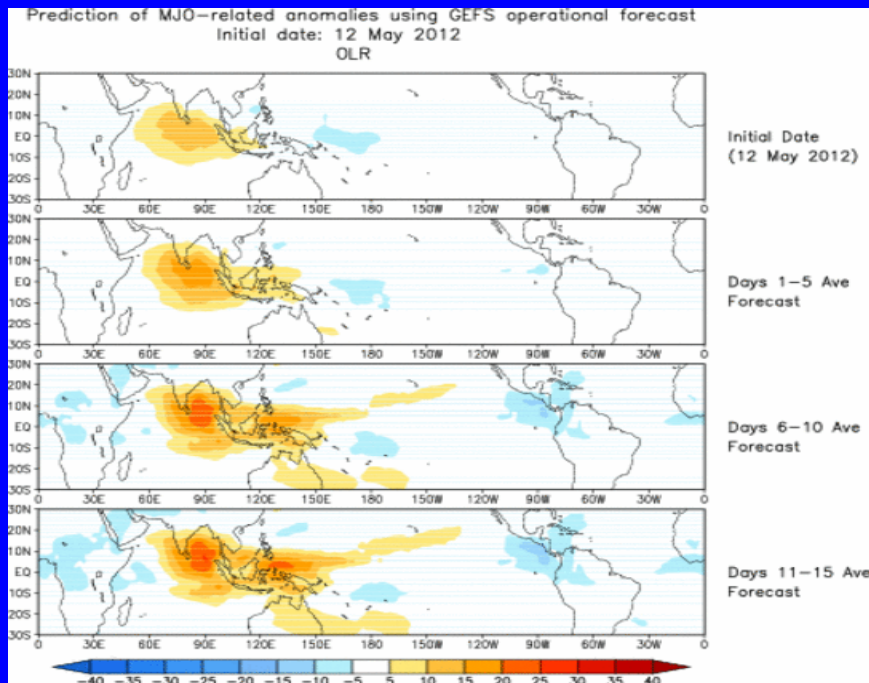




Ensemble Mean GFS MJO Forecast

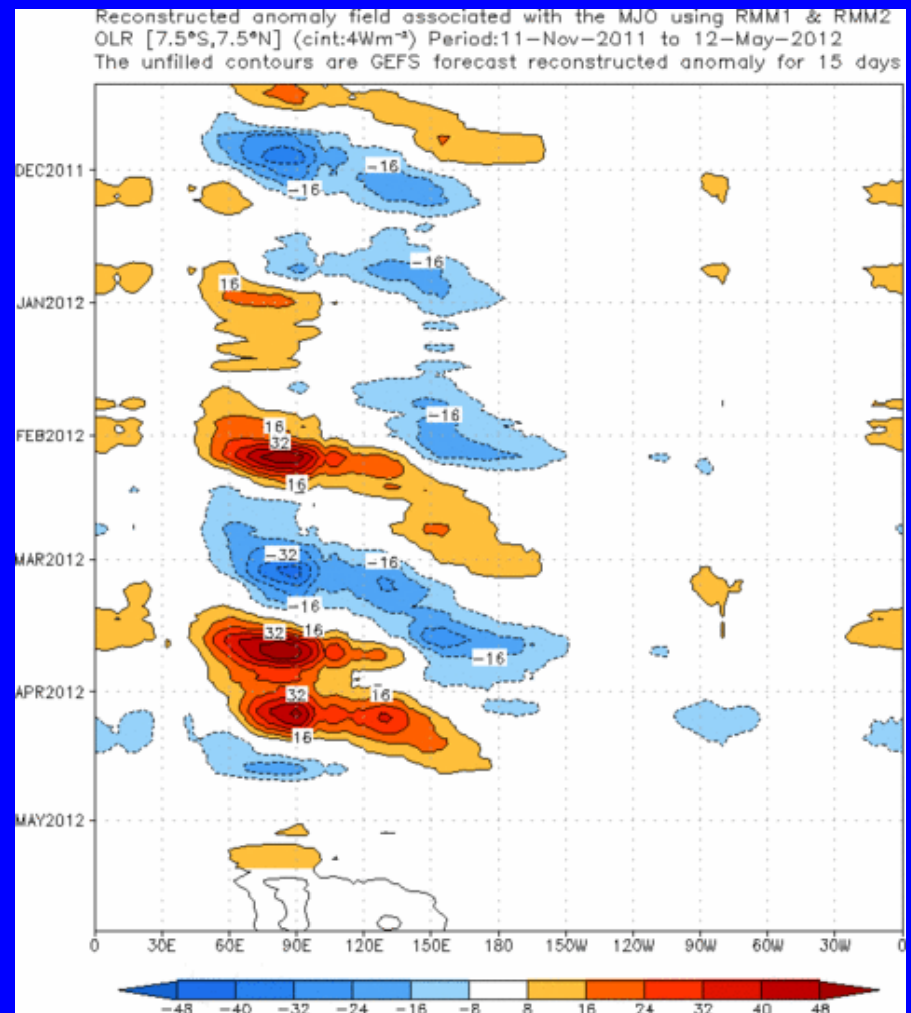
Figures below show MJO associated OLR anomalies only (reconstructed from RMM1 and RMM2) and do not include contributions from other modes (*i.e.*, ENSO, monsoons, etc.)

Spatial map of OLR anomalies for the next 15 days



The ensemble mean GFS forecast indicates suppressed convection strengthening across the eastern Indian Ocean and Maritime Continent during the period. Enhanced convection is forecast for Central America and parts of Africa during Week-2.

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

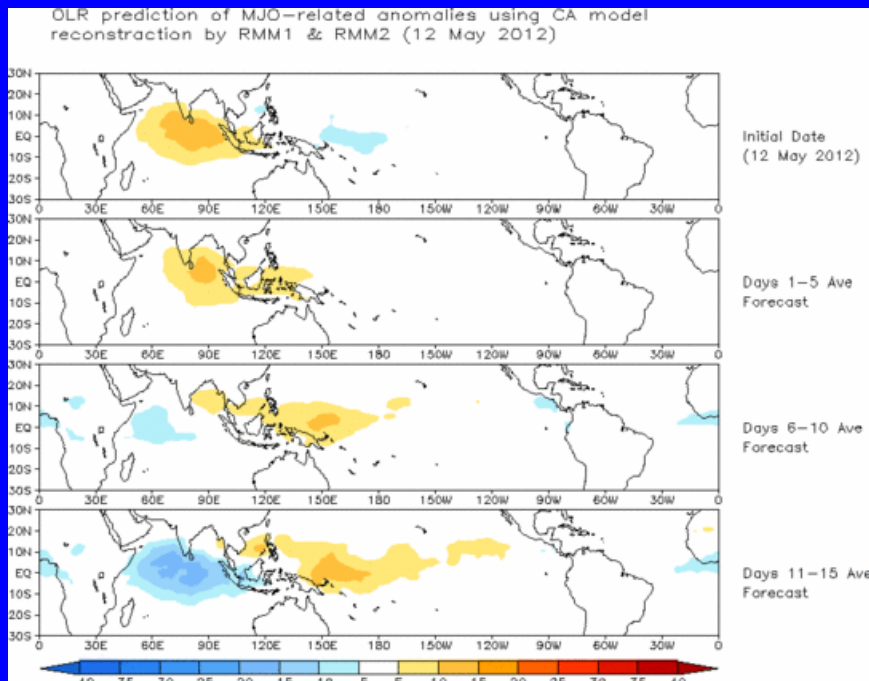




Constructed Analog (CA) MJO Forecast

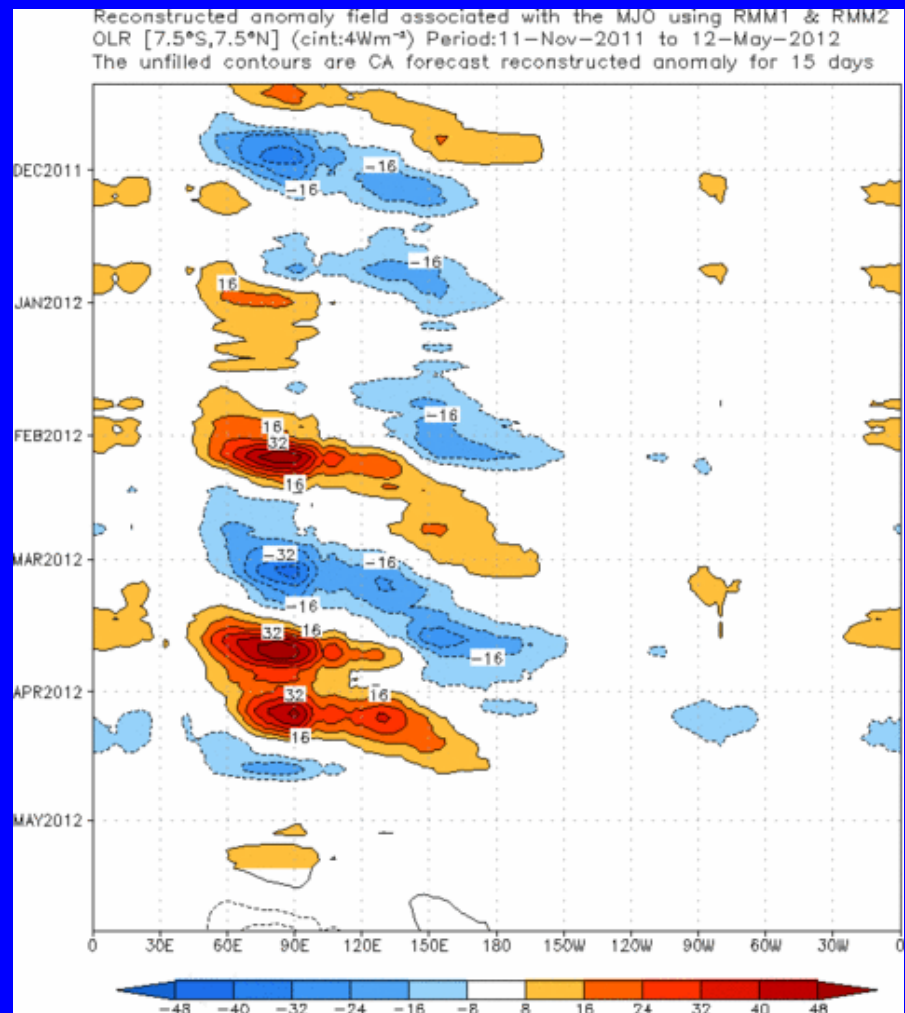
Figure below shows MJO associated OLR anomalies only (reconstructed from RMM1 and RMM2) and do not include contributions from other modes (*i.e.*, ENSO, monsoons, etc.)

Spatial map of OLR anomalies for the next 15 days



The forecast indicates suppressed convection over the eastern Indian Ocean and Maritime Continent during Week-1 and enhanced convection over the Indian Ocean during Week-2.

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

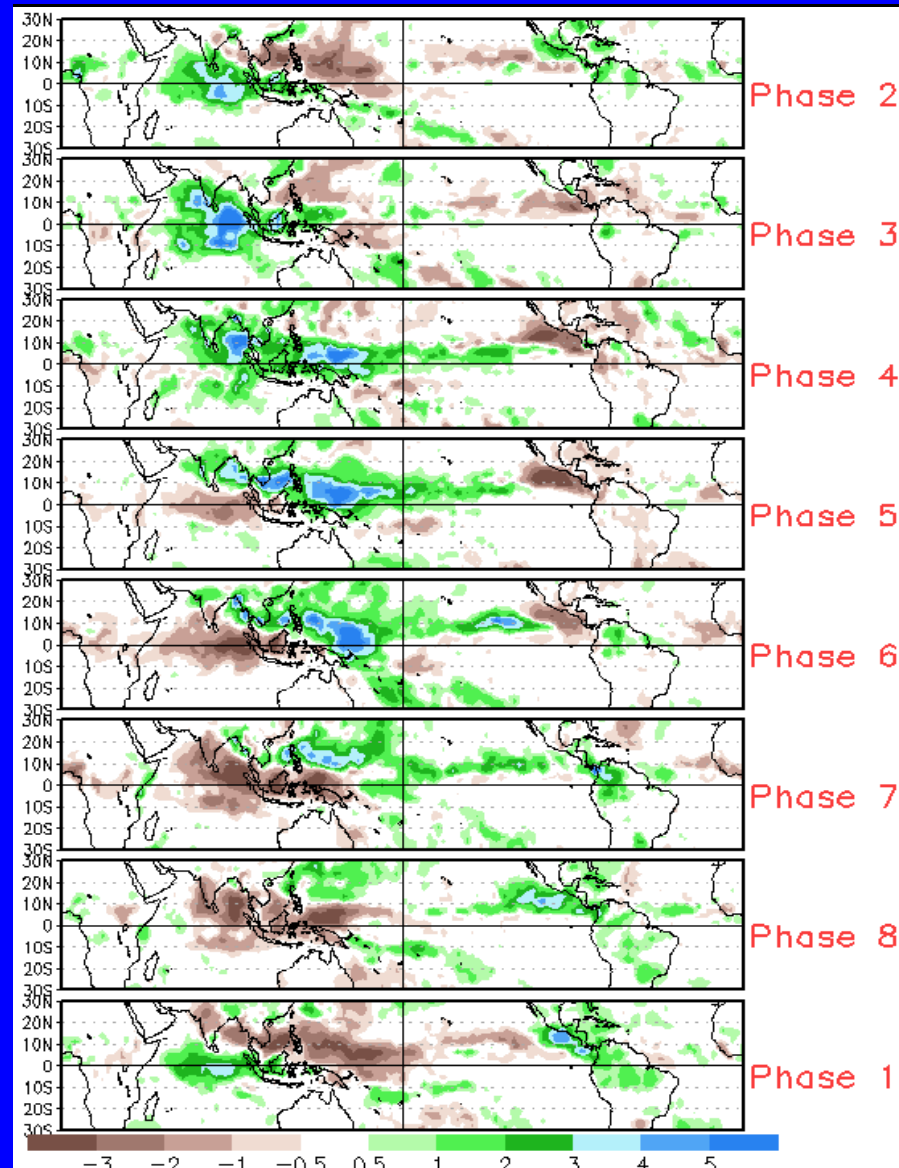
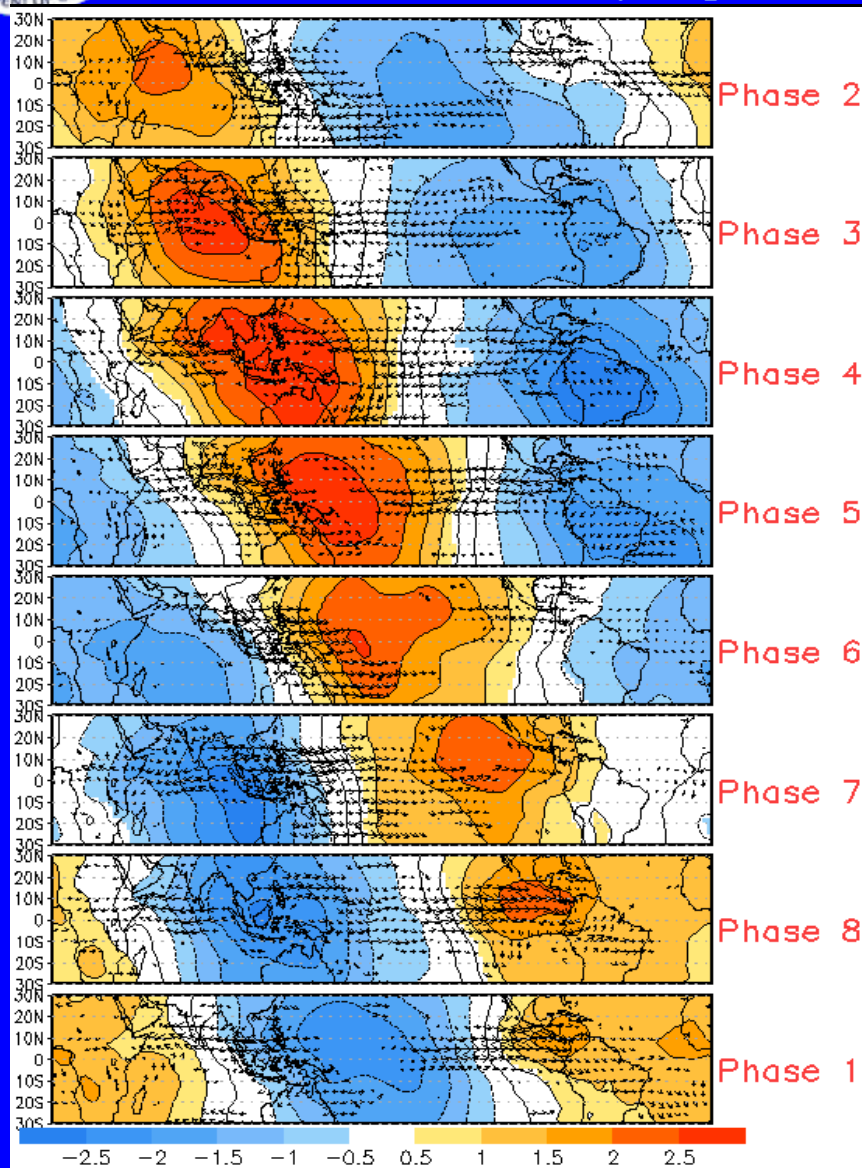




MJO Composites – Global Tropics

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

Precipitation Anomalies (May-Sep)

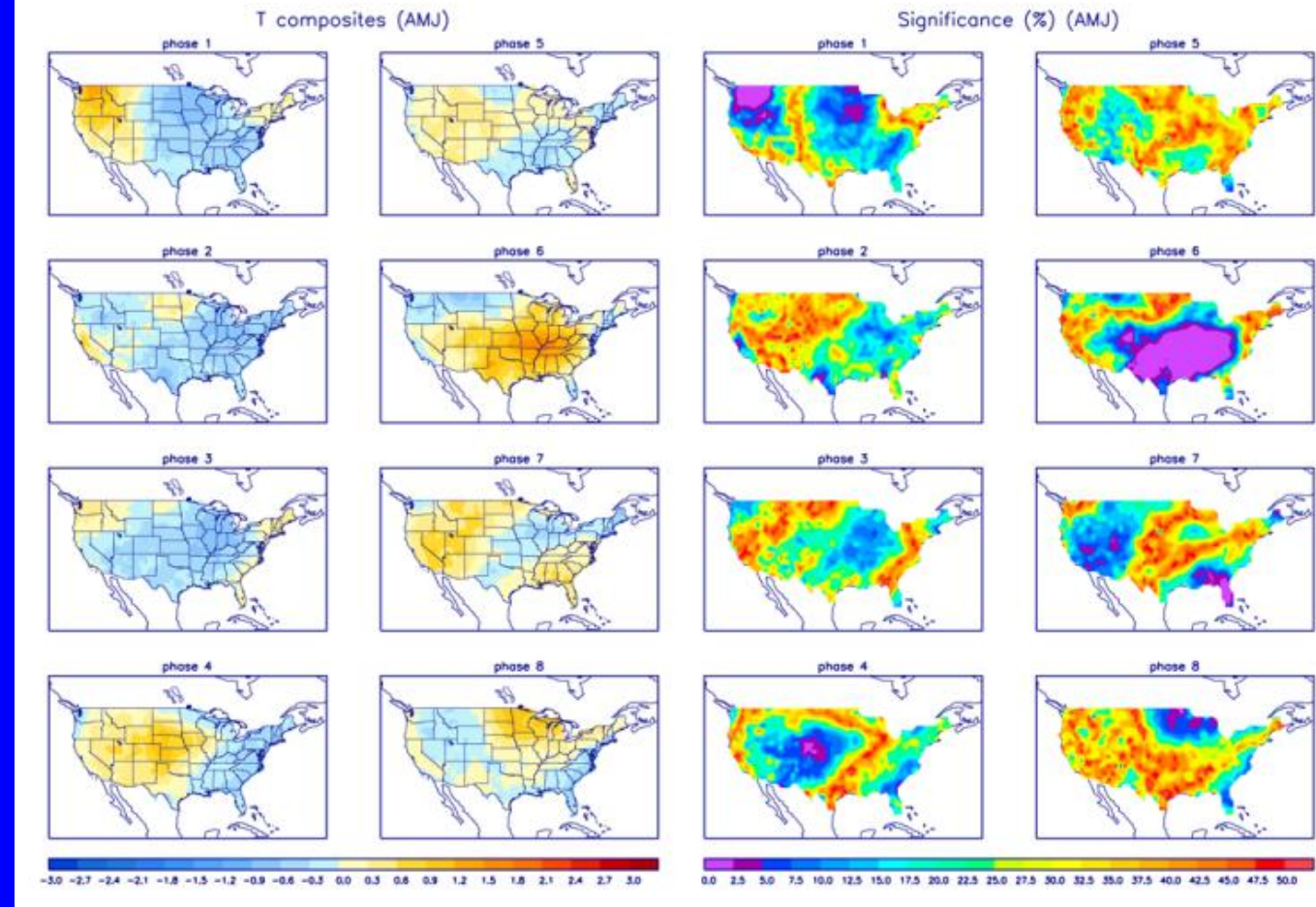




U.S. MJO Composites – Temperature

- 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.



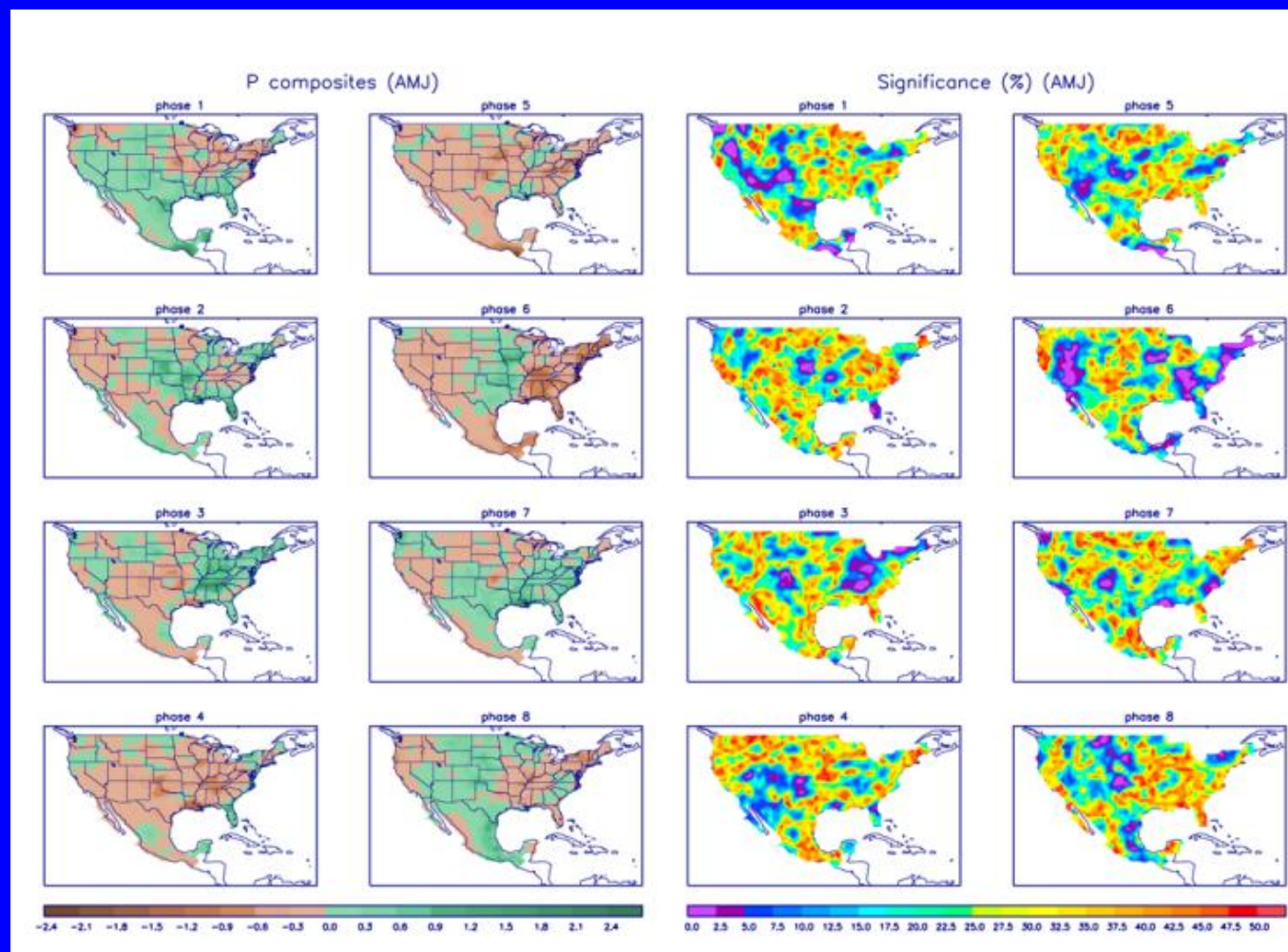
Zhou et al. (2011): A composite study of the MJO influence on the surface air temperature and precipitation over the Continental United States, *Climate Dynamics*, 1-13, doi: 10.1007/s00382-011-1001-9

<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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