



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

**Update prepared by  
Climate Prediction Center / NCEP  
January 13, 2014**



# Outline

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



# Overview

- The MJO further weakened during the past seven days as the patterns of anomalous convection and winds are not consistent with large scale MJO activity.
- There are large differences in MJO index dynamical model forecasts and the majority do not indicate substantial strengthening of the MJO during the upcoming two week period. Statistical tools also do not indicate MJO activity moving forward.
- Based on the latest observations and most model forecasts, the MJO is forecast to remain weak during the next 1-2 weeks.
- The MJO is not expected to contribute substantially to the pattern of anomalous convection during the outlook period.

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>

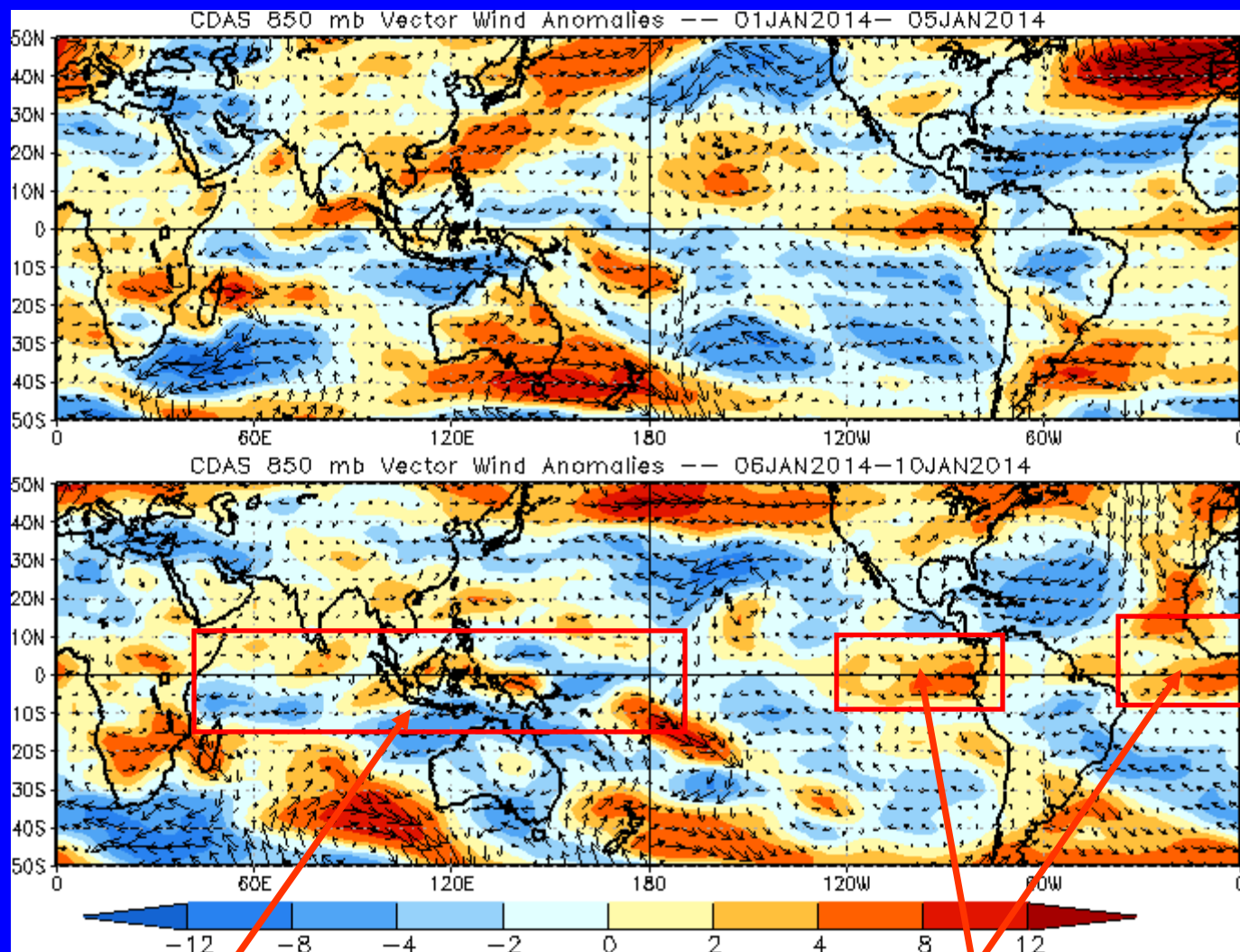


# 850-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ )

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies



Winds are close to average over much of the equatorial Indo-Pacific warm pool region.

Westerly anomalies persisted west of South America and over portions of Africa during the past five days.

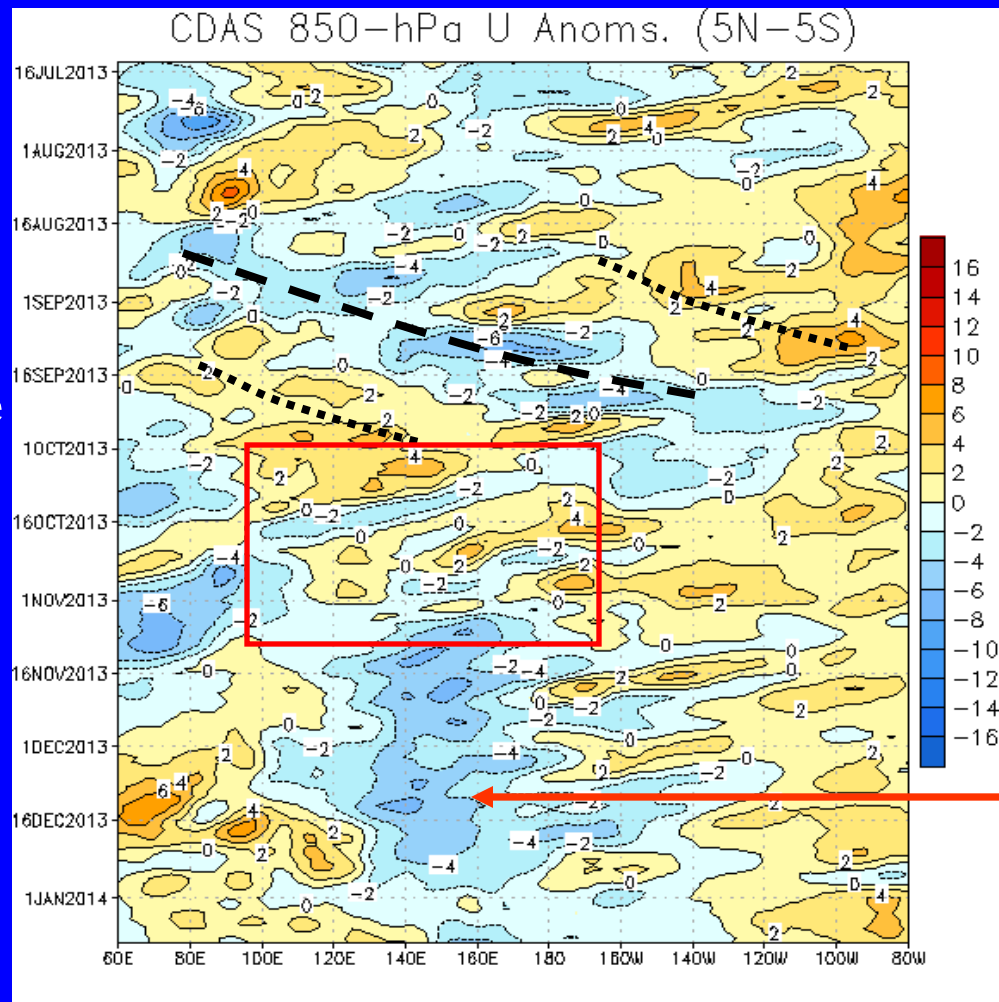


# 850-hPa Zonal Wind Anomalies ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ )

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

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

Time  
↓



Longitude

During late July through mid-August, the MJO was weak.

In late August and early September, westerly (easterly) anomalies increased over the eastern (western) Pacific in associated with renewed MJO activity.

During October, equatorial Rossby wave activity was strong from 160E to 100E as westward movement features are evident (red box). MJO activity was less coherent during this period.

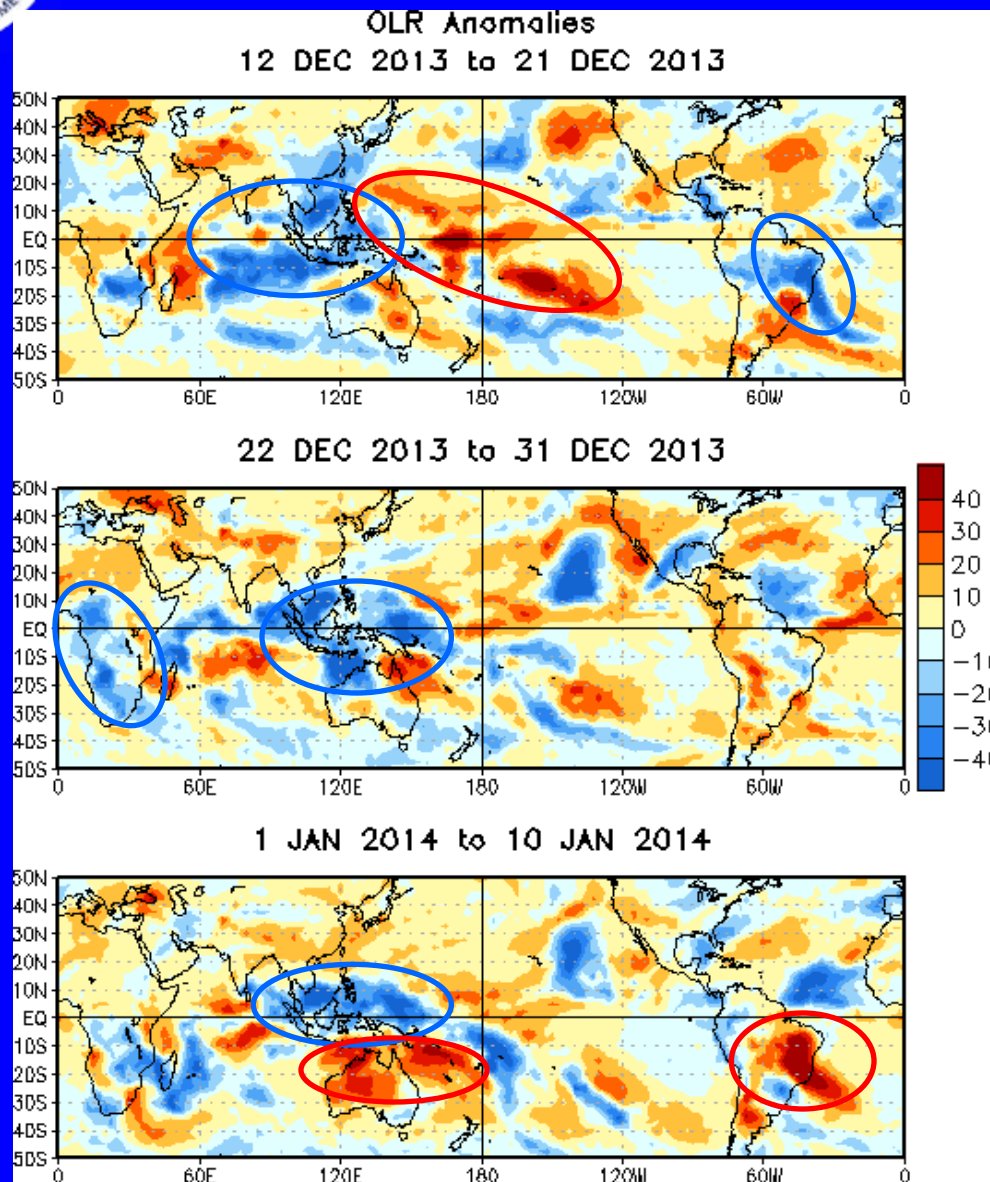
During November and December, easterly anomalies were persistent from 120E to near the Date Line. Westerly anomalies were also evident across the Indian Ocean during this period. These anomalies have decreased some during late December and anomalies are small through much of the equatorial Tropics.



# 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 December, enhanced convection shifted east to the Maritime Continent with suppressed convection persisting across much of the western and central Pacific. Enhanced convection intensified across Brazil with suppressed convection indicated over parts of south-central South America.

In late December, enhanced convection persisted across parts of the Indian ocean and Maritime continent, increased over portions of the western Pacific and increased in coverage over parts of central and southern Africa.

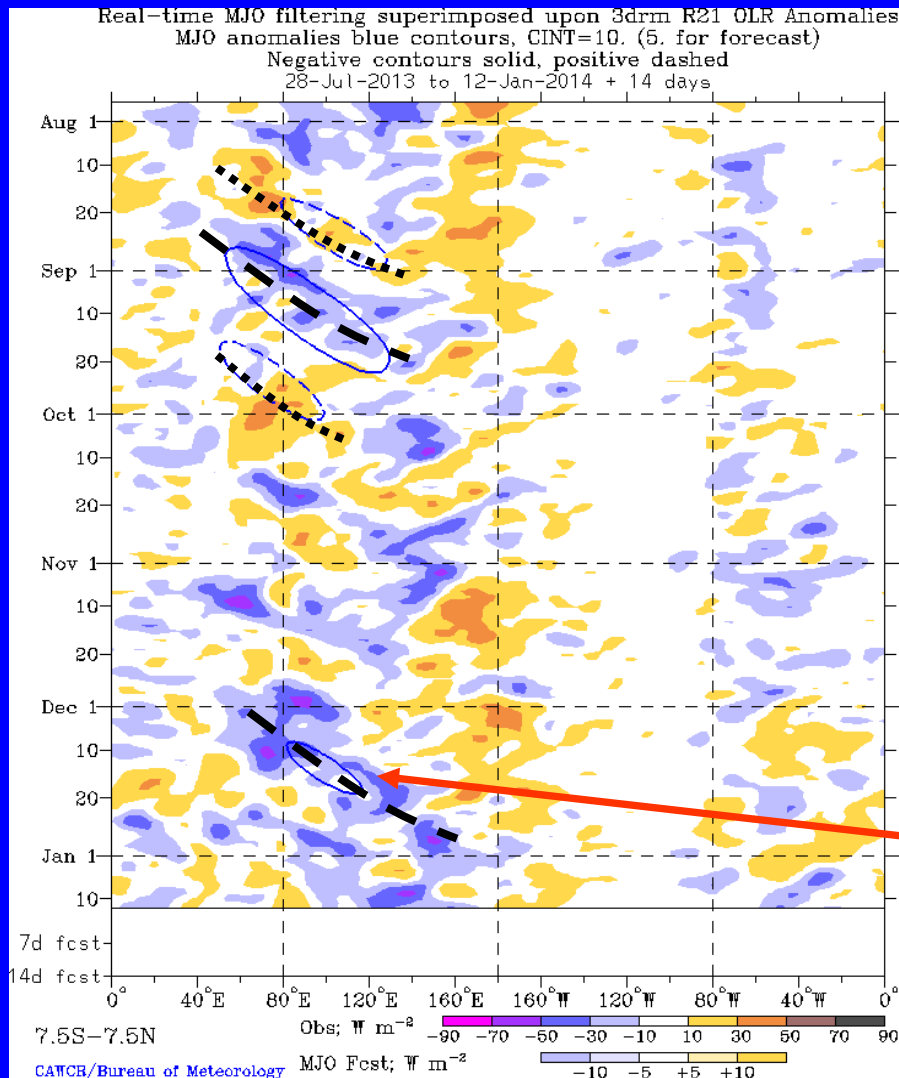
Early January saw enhanced convection focused over the northern Maritime continent and parts of the western Pacific, while suppressed convection developed over Australia, the southwest Pacific Islands and over Brazil.





# Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR)

## Anomalies (7.5°N-7.5°S)



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)

The MJO was active from late August through early October with the enhanced phase propagating eastward from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific Ocean over this period.

The MJO was generally weak or incoherent for much of November and other types of coherent tropical subseasonal variability were very active.

During late November, a large area of enhanced convection developed in the Indian Ocean and propagated eastward to the west Pacific Ocean. Most recently enhanced convection has persisted near 120E to 140E.

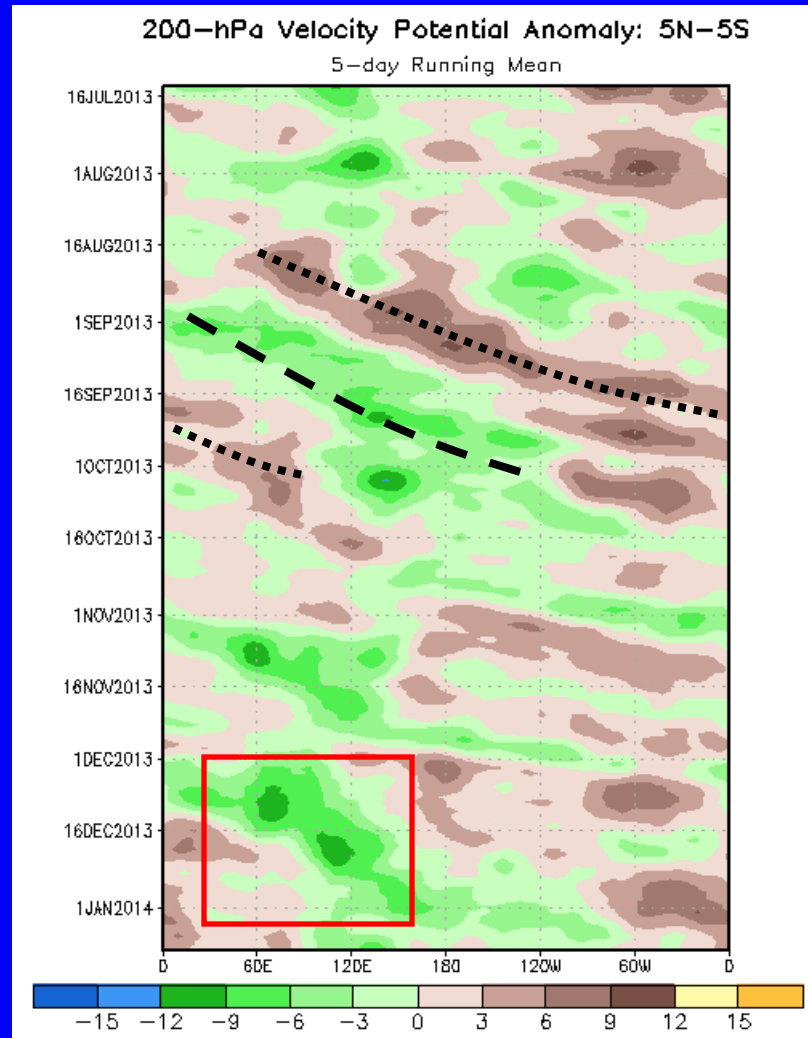


# 200-hPa Velocity Potential Anomalies (5°S-5°N)

Positive anomalies (brown shading) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation

Negative anomalies (green shading) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation

Time



Longitude

The MJO was not active during late July and much of August, but strengthened during late August and September, with eastward propagation of robust upper-level velocity potential anomalies (alternating dashed and dotted lines). Other modes of tropical intraseasonal variability are also evident.

From late October to early December, the MJO was not very strong or coherent. There was evidence of coherent eastward propagation at times during this period, but much of this activity exhibited fast propagation speeds more consistent with atmospheric Kelvin waves.

A slower eastward propagation of 200-hPa velocity potential anomalies was observed during mid-December across the Indo-Pacific warm pool region (red box). A clear suppressed convective phase has not been evident.

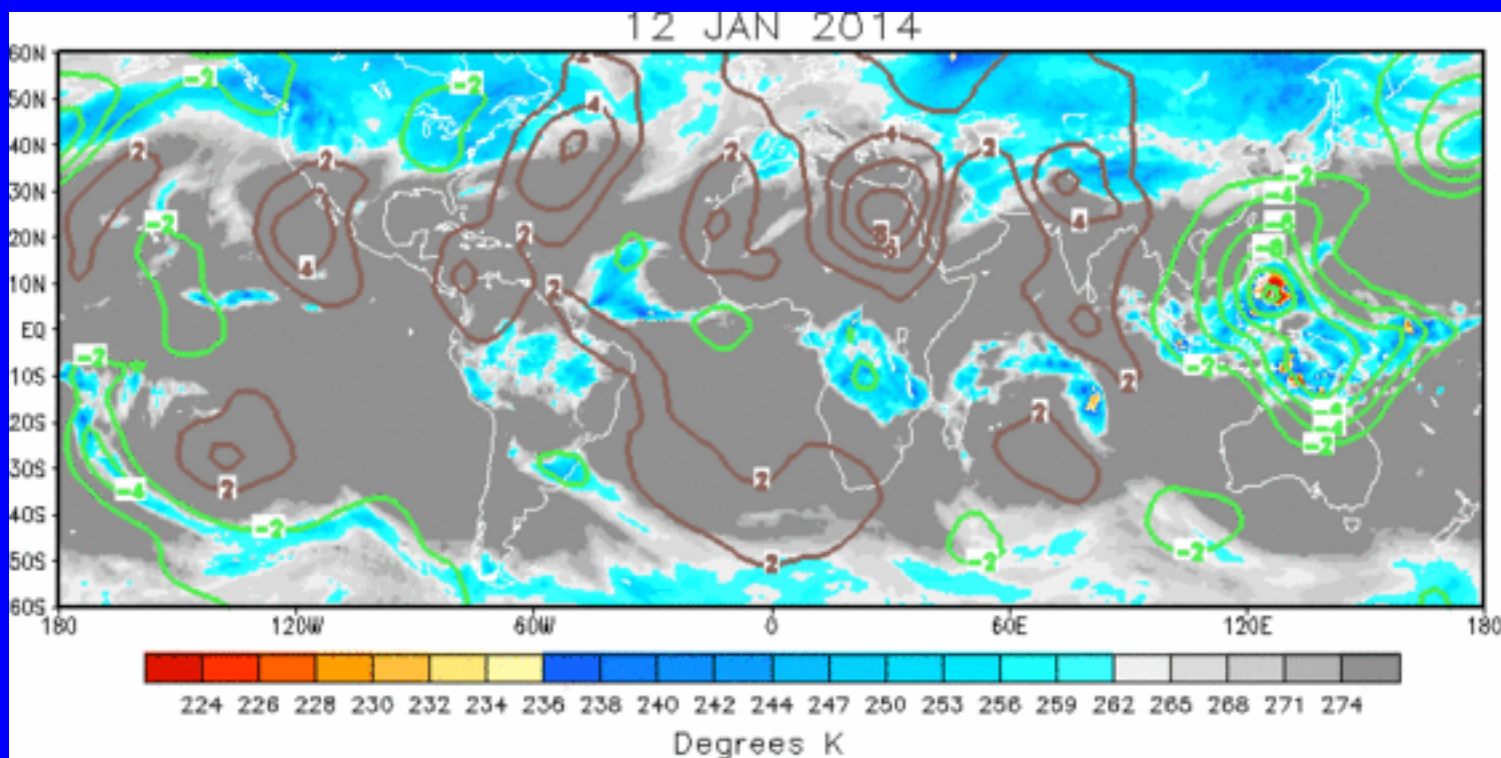




# IR Temperatures (K) / 200-hPa Velocity Potential Anomalies

Positive anomalies (brown contours) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation

Negative anomalies (green contours) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation



The current velocity potential data no longer indicates a coherent pattern of large scale anomalies of upper-level divergence or convergence. There is, however, a continued strong signal for upper-level divergence over the Maritime continent.

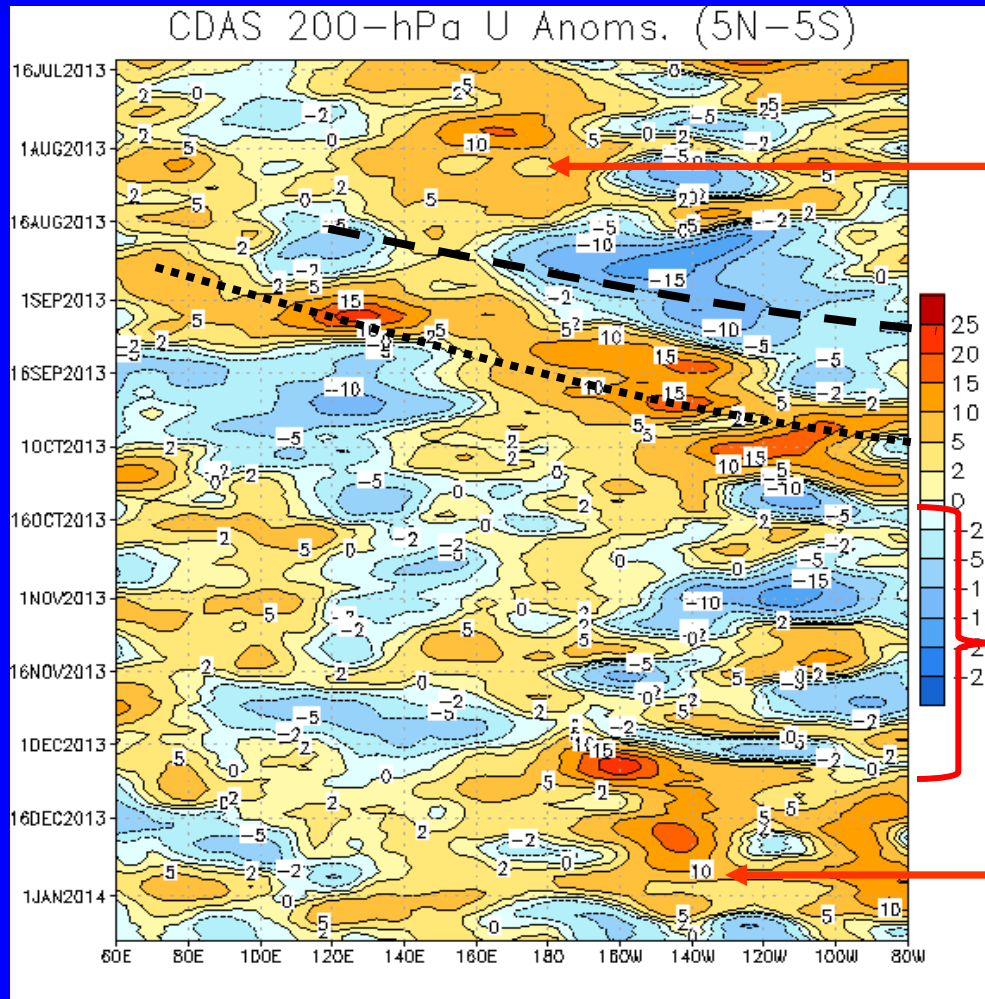


# 200-hPa Zonal Wind Anomalies ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ )

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

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

Time



Longitude

During August, westerly wind anomalies were generally persistent just west of the Date Line.

Renewed MJO activity (alternating dotted and dashed lines) occurred during late August and September with westerly wind anomalies shifting east to the eastern Pacific.

Anomalies of alternating sign are evident over the eastern Pacific, due in part to extratropical Rossby waves breaking into the Tropics (red bracket).

Westerly anomalies increased in December across the western Hemisphere and persisted into early January.

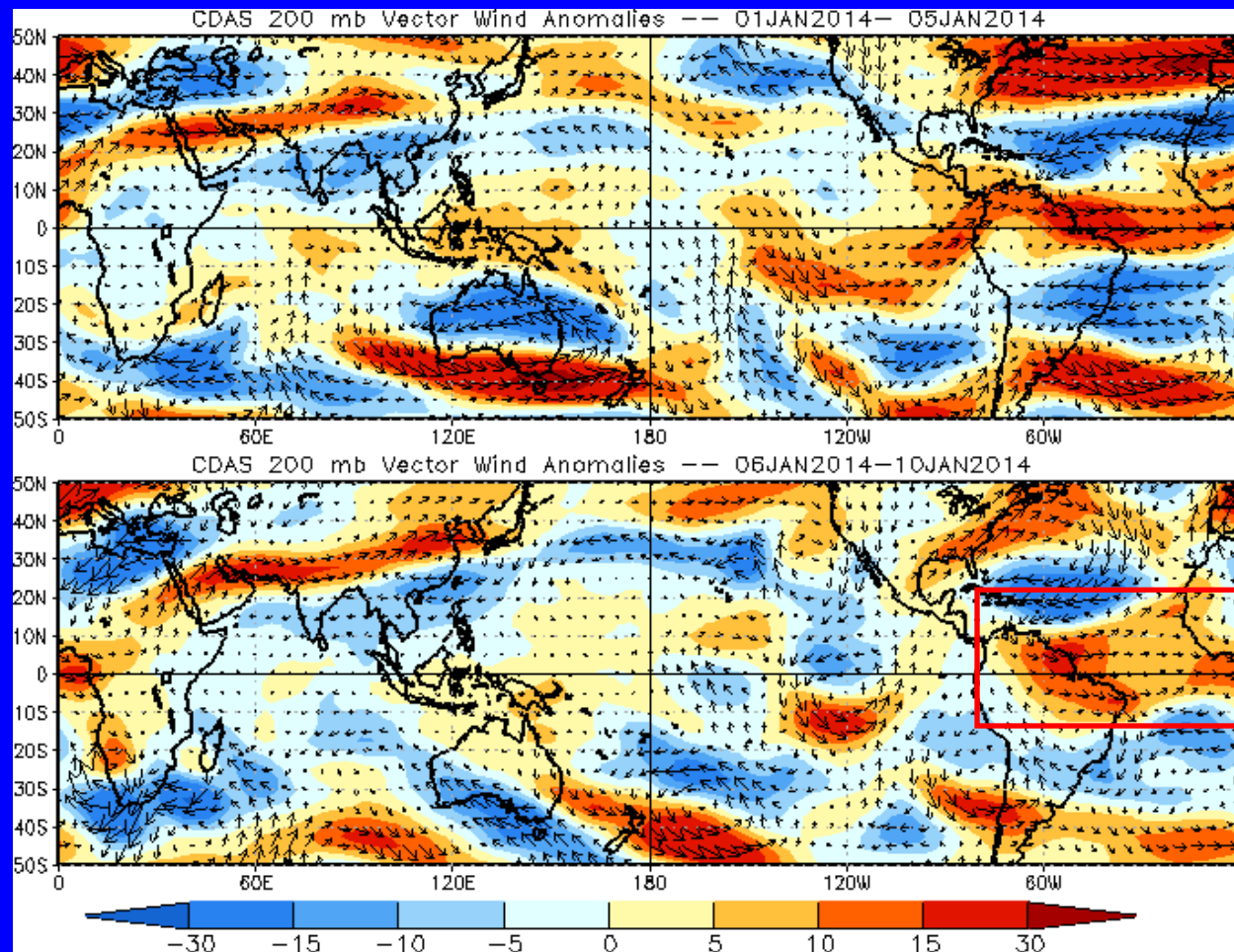


# 200-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ )

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies

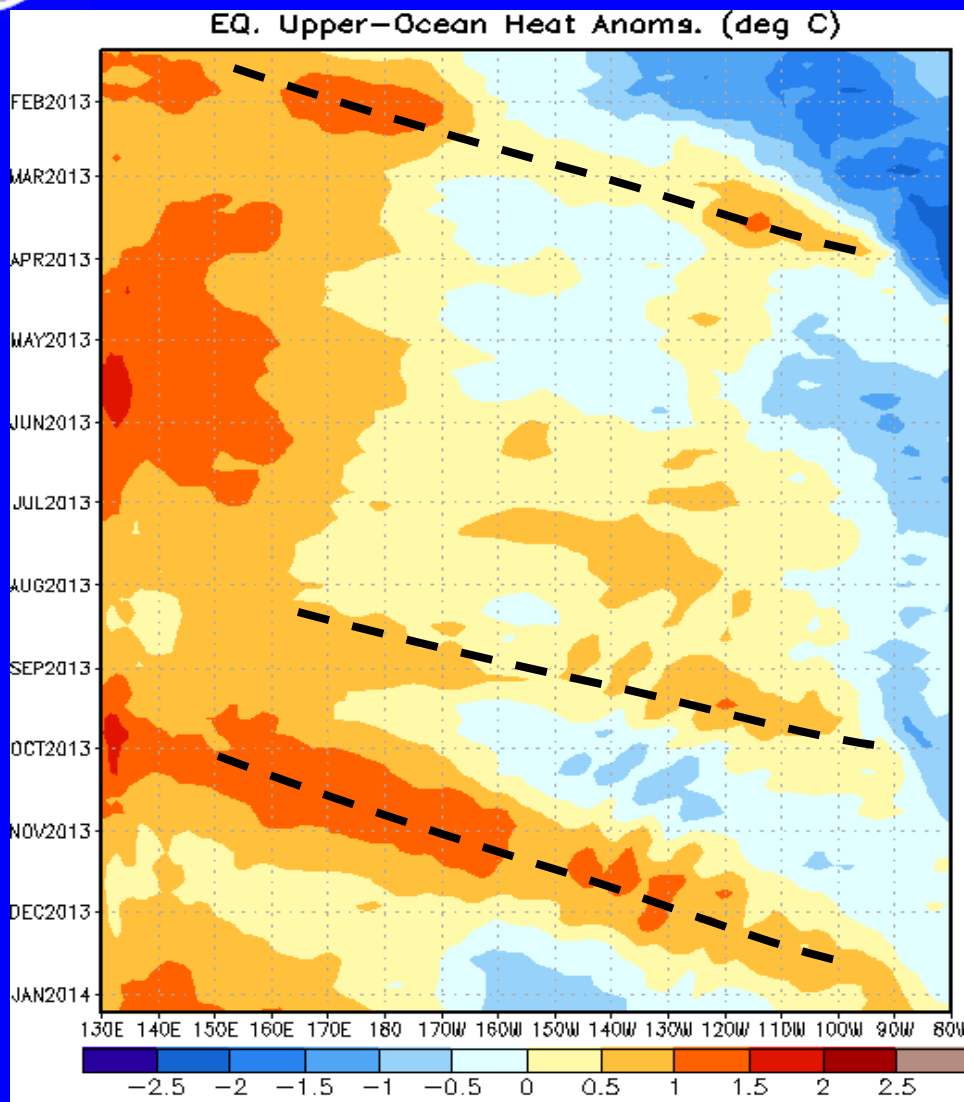


The coverage of westerly anomalies in the Western Hemisphere decreased, but continued over northern South America, the Atlantic Ocean and Africa during the previous five days (red box).



# Weekly Heat Content Evolution in the Equatorial Pacific

Time



Longitude

Positive (negative) anomalies developed in the western (eastern) Pacific during January 2013 and persisted into early March. The influence of a downwelling oceanic Kelvin wave (dashed line) can be seen during late February and March as anomalies became positive in the east-central Pacific.

Oceanic downwelling Kelvin wave activity is evident in late August and once again during October through early December, the latter being the strongest wave during 2013.





# **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.**

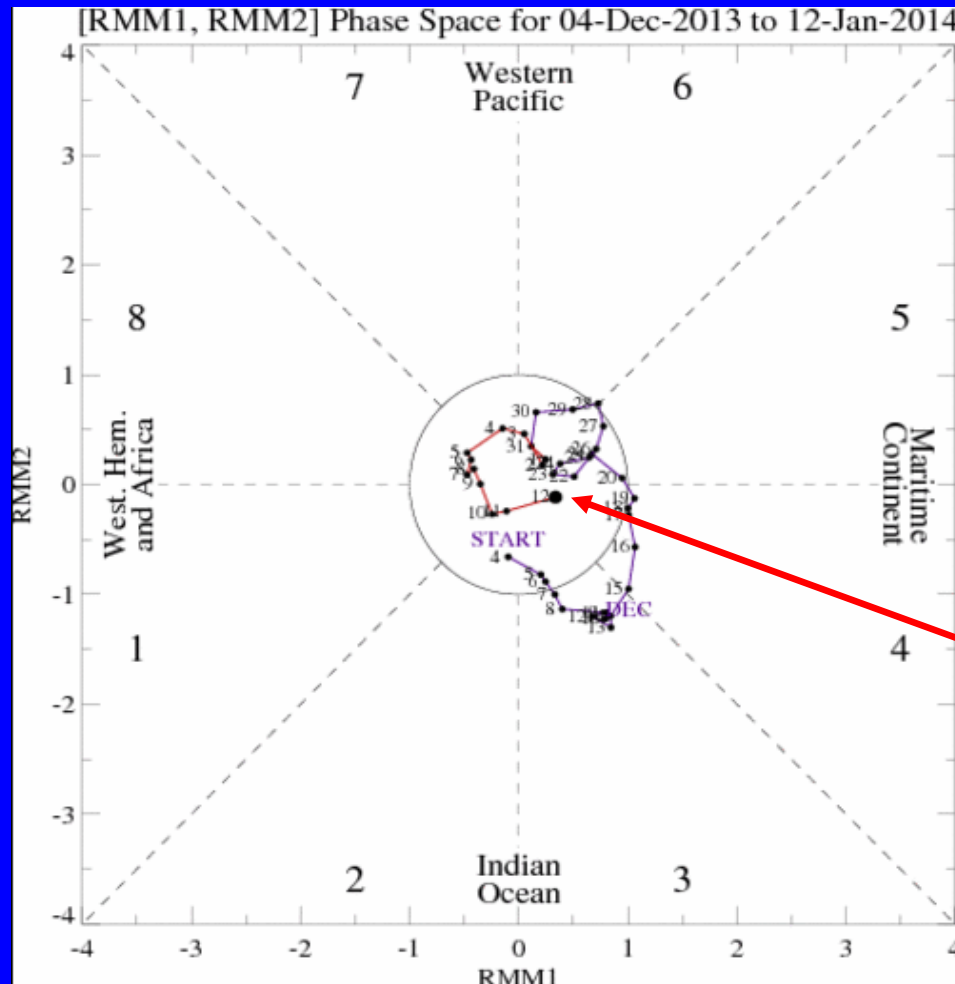
- The methodology is very similar to that described in WH2004 but does not include the linear removal of ENSO variability associated with a sea surface temperature index. The methodology is consistent with that outlined by the U.S. CLIVAR MJO Working Group.

**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



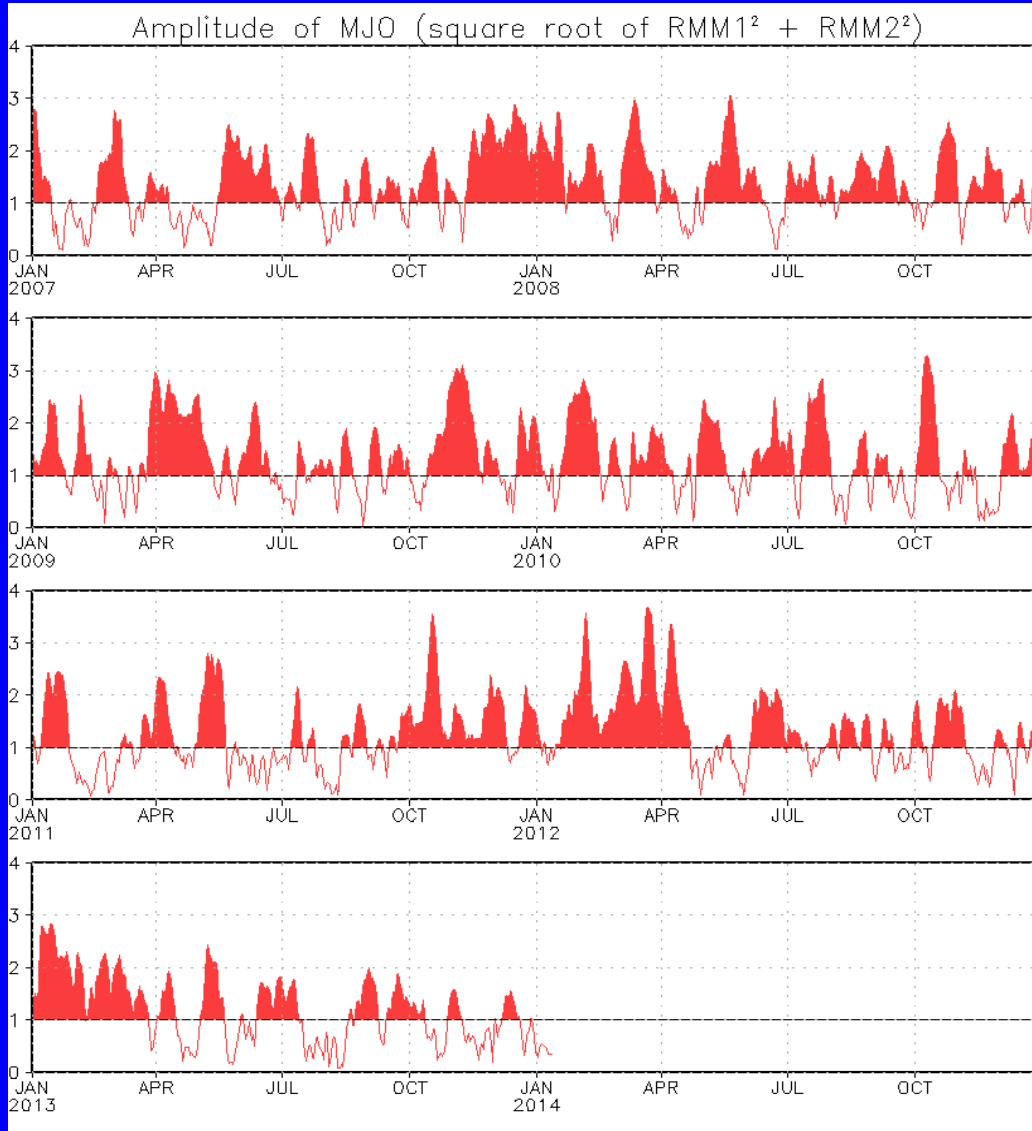
- The axes (RMM1 and RMM2) represent daily values of the principal components from the two leading modes
- The triangular areas indicate the location of the enhanced phase of the MJO
- Counter-clockwise motion is indicative of eastward propagation. Large dot most recent observation.
- Distance from the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

The MJO index continues to indicate a weak signal during the past two weeks.





# 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

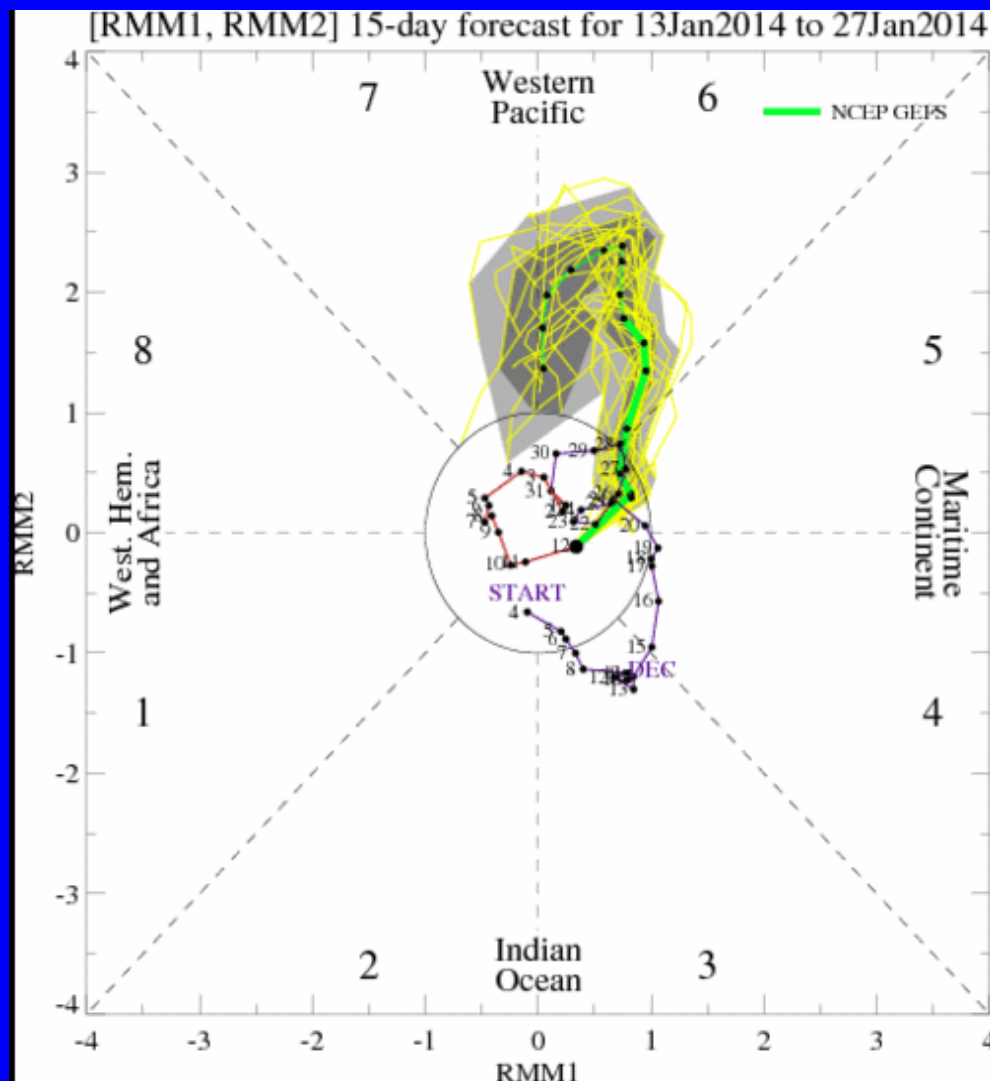
Green Line – Ensemble Mean

**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 a weak signal early in the period with a large increase in amplitude thereafter. There is no clear, long lived eastward propagation during the period, however.

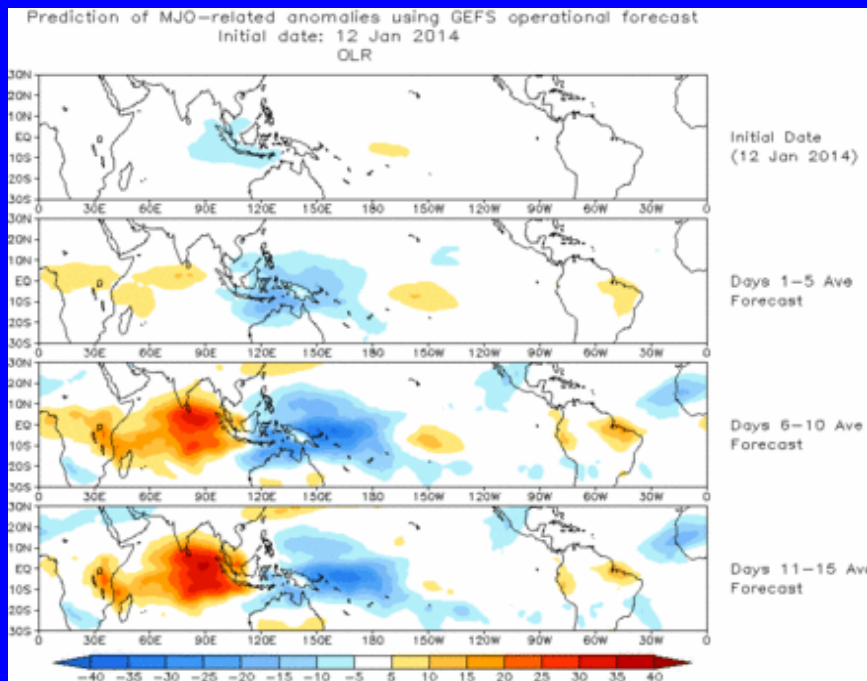




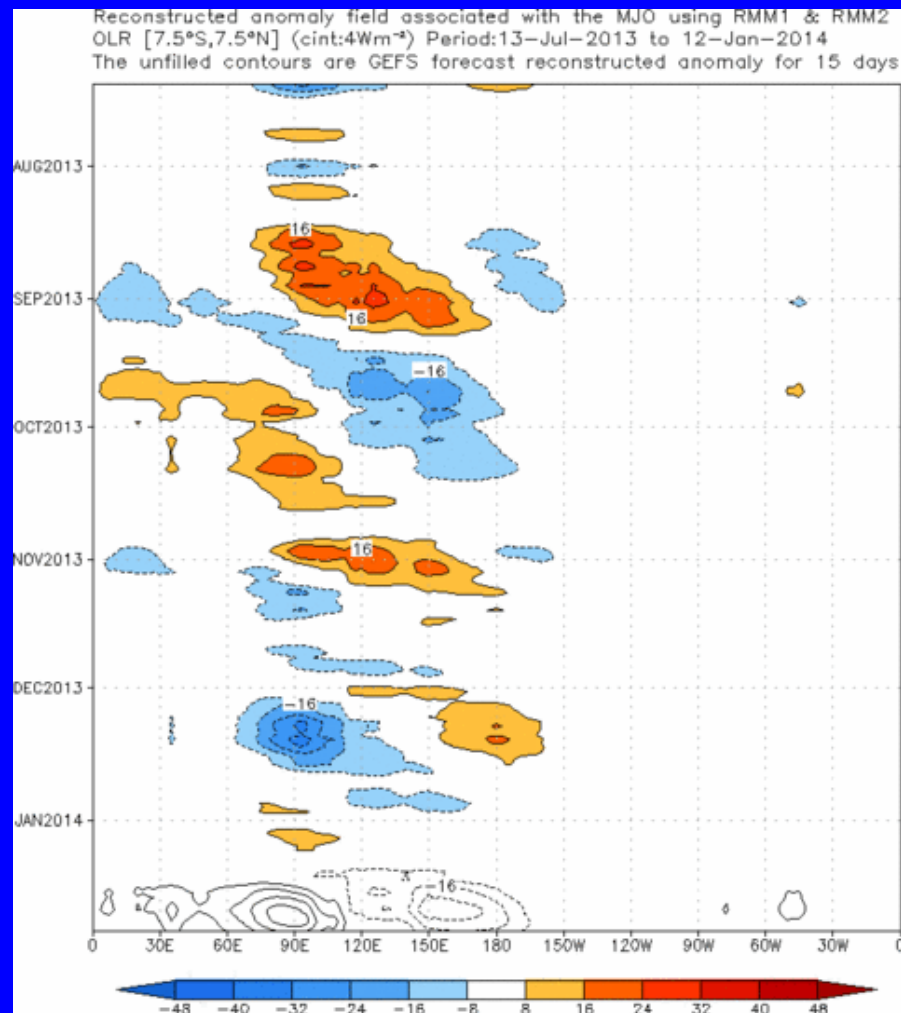
# Ensemble Mean GFS MJO Forecast

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**



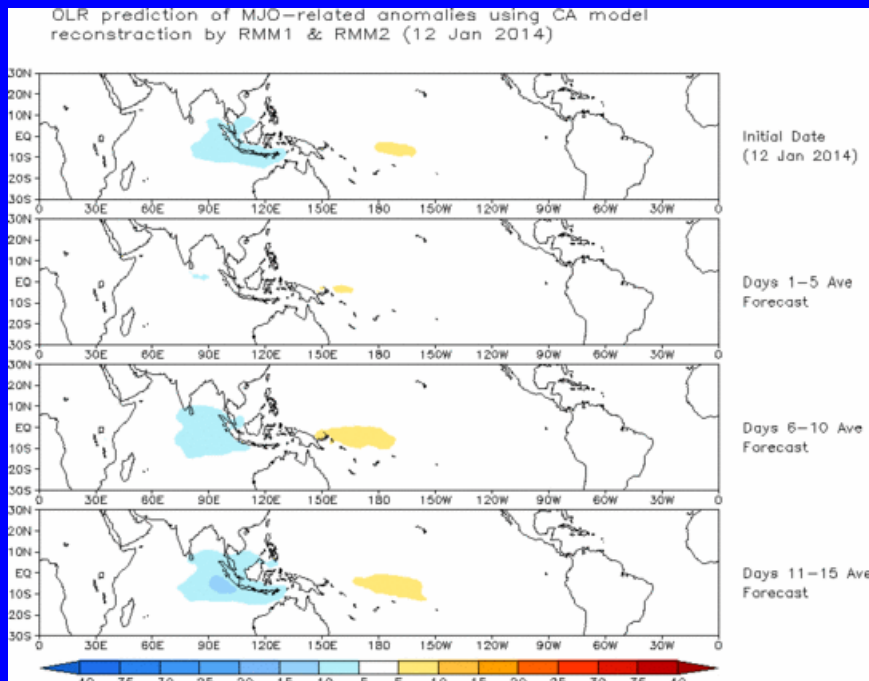
The ensemble mean GFS forecasts an increase in anomalous convection primarily during Week-2 with enhanced (suppressed) convection developing across the western Pacific (Indian) oceans.



# Constructed Analog (CA) MJO Forecast

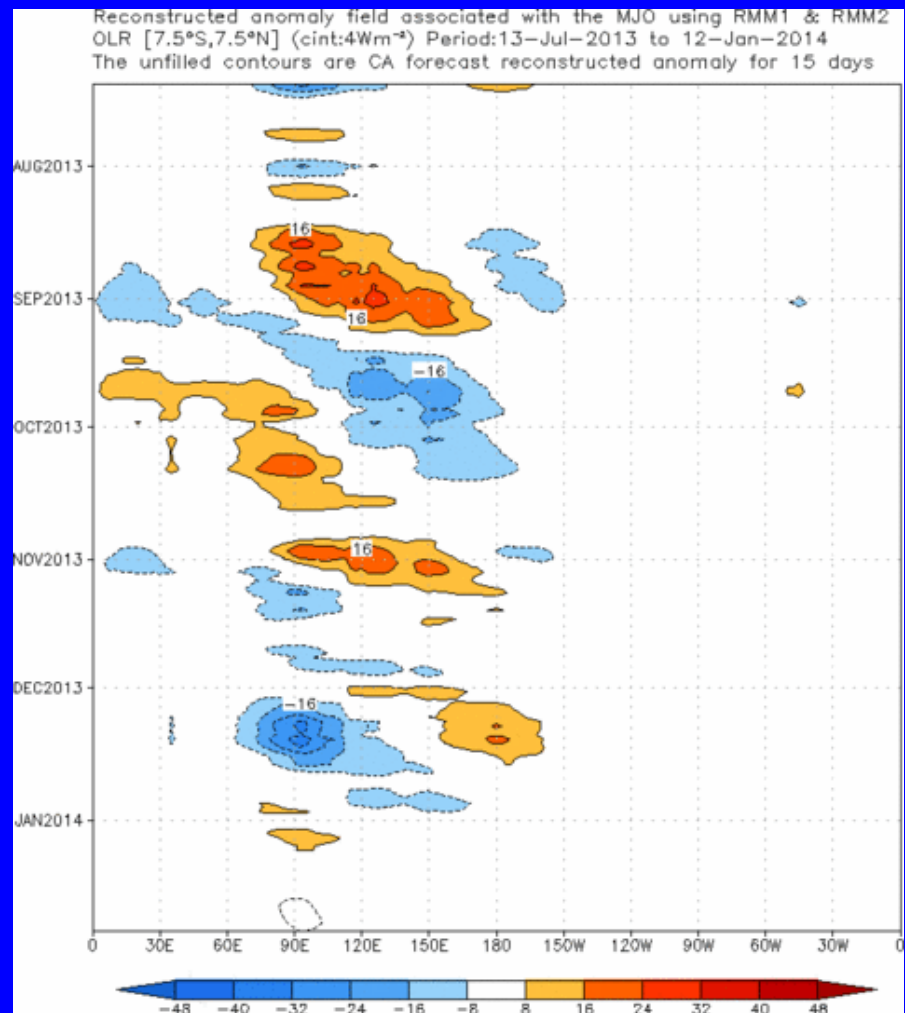
Figure below shows MJO associated OLR anomalies only (reconstructed from RMM1 and RMM2) and do not include contributions from other modes (*i.e.*, ENSO, monsoons, etc.)

**Spatial map of OLR anomalies for the next 15 days**



The constructed analog MJO forecast indicates very weak anomalies during the outlook period.

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

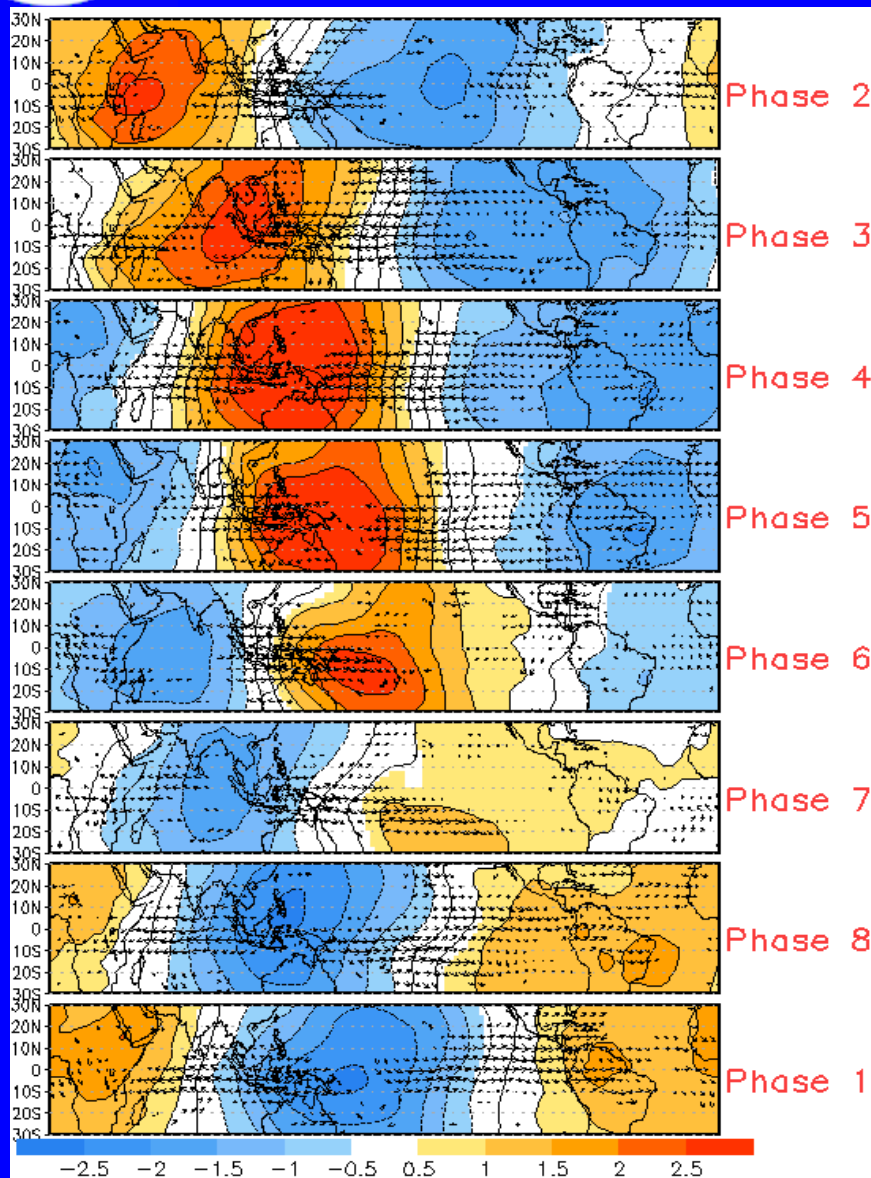




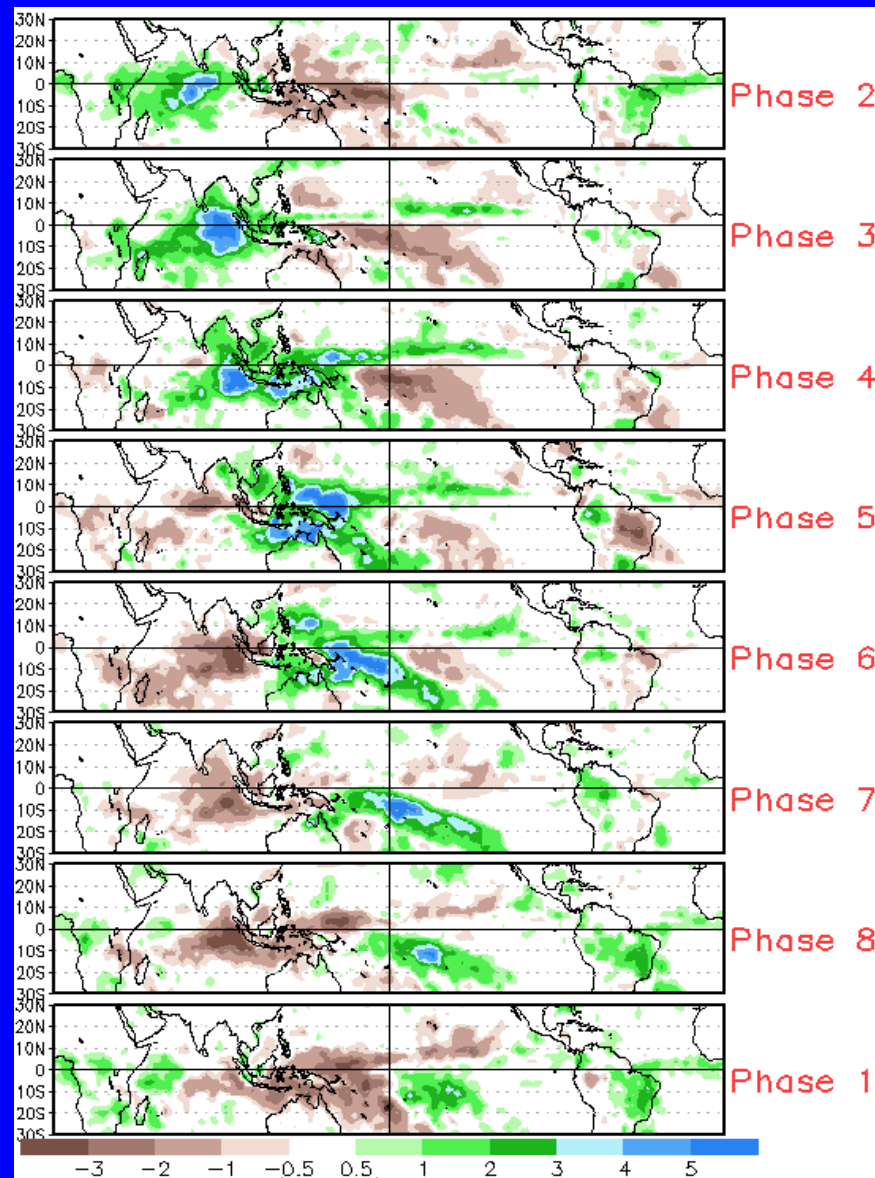


# MJO Composites – Global Tropics

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



Precipitation Anomalies (Nov-Mar)

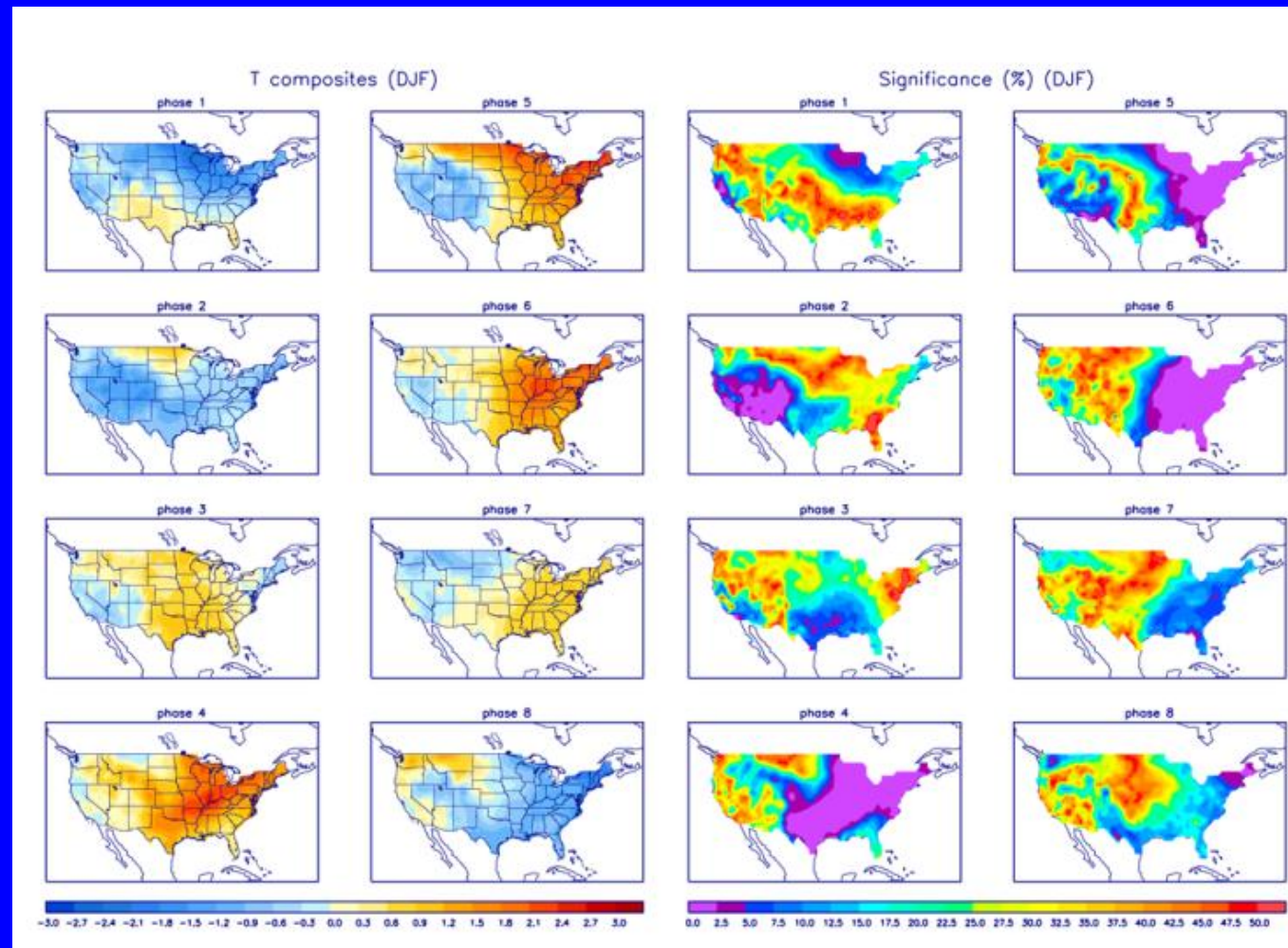




# U.S. MJO Composites – Temperature

- 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

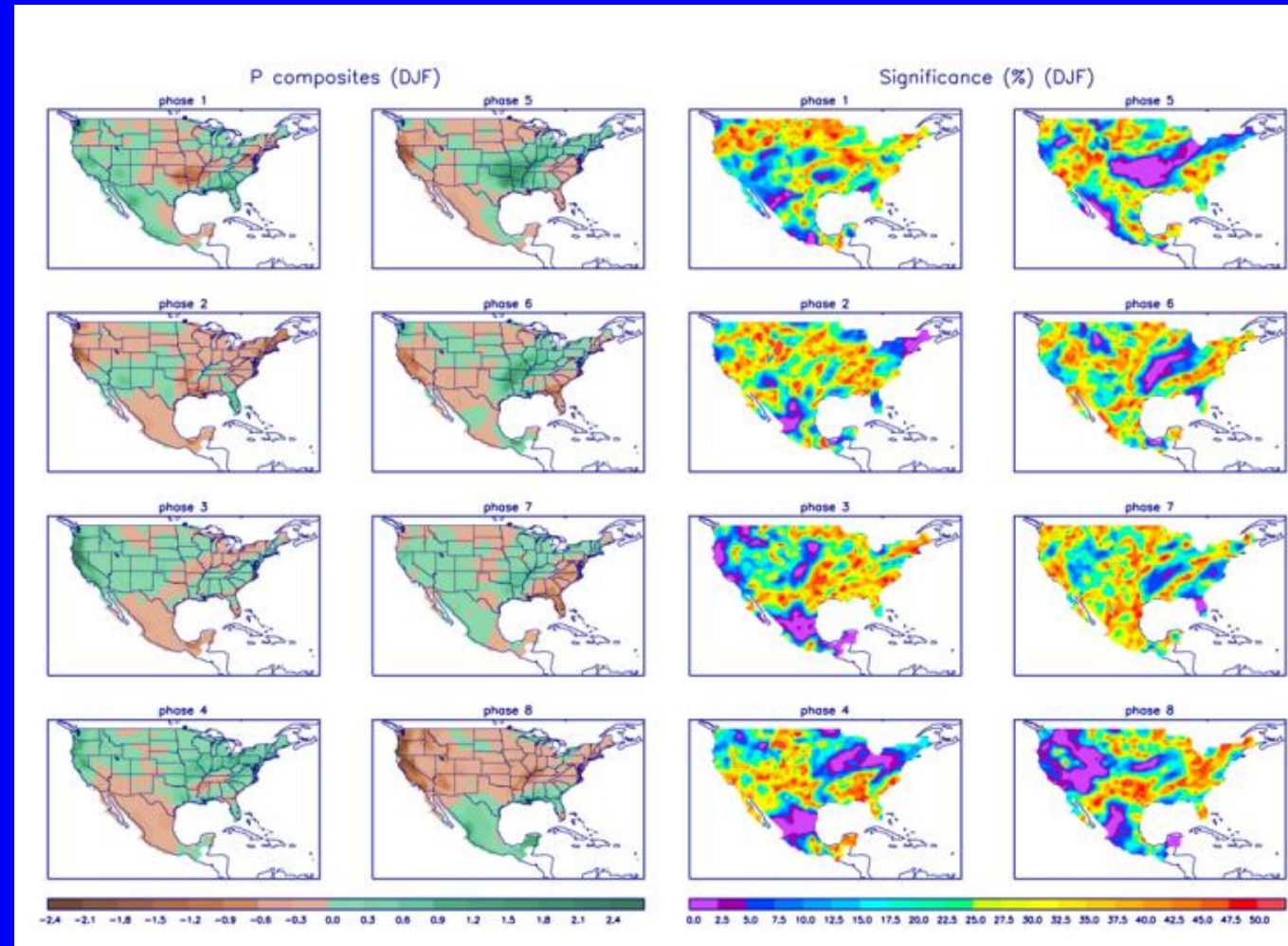
<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/MJO/mjo.shtml>





# 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.



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