



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

**Update prepared by  
Climate Prediction Center / NCEP  
November 3, 2014**



# Outline

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



# Overview

- **The MJO remained largely incoherent during the past week.**
- **Although an eastward propagating envelope is apparent in the velocity potential fields, other modes of tropical intraseasonal convection continue to play a large role in the overall pattern. Additionally, there continues to be some interference between weak subseasonal variability and a weak low-frequency state.**
- **There is considerable spread among the dynamical model forecasts of the future evolution of the MJO.**
- **Based on recent observations and model guidance, the MJO is not expected to be a major contributor to anomalous convection across the global tropics.**

**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>**

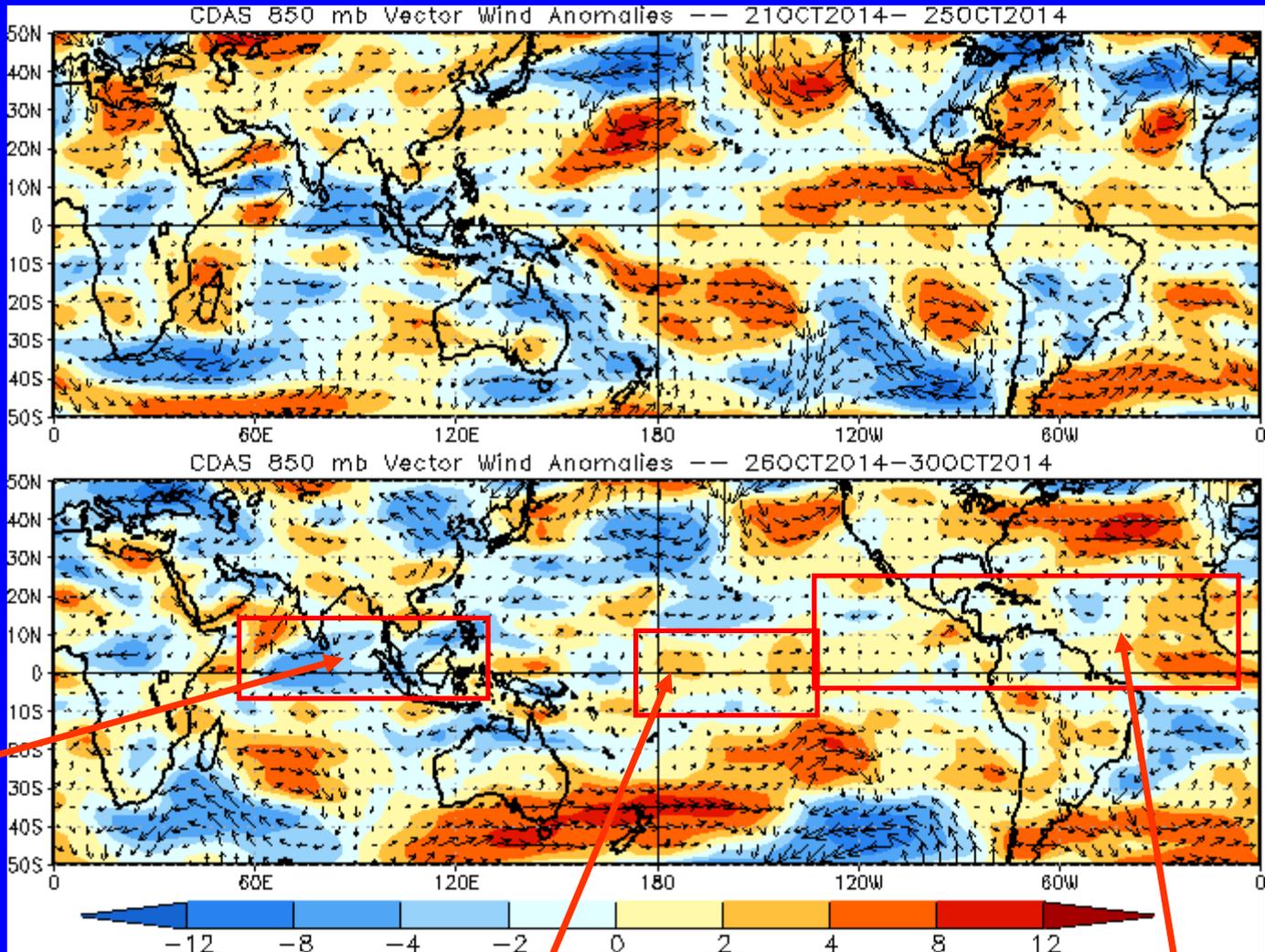


# 850-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ )

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies



Easterly anomalies were observed over parts of South Asia, the Indian Ocean, and the Maritime Continent.

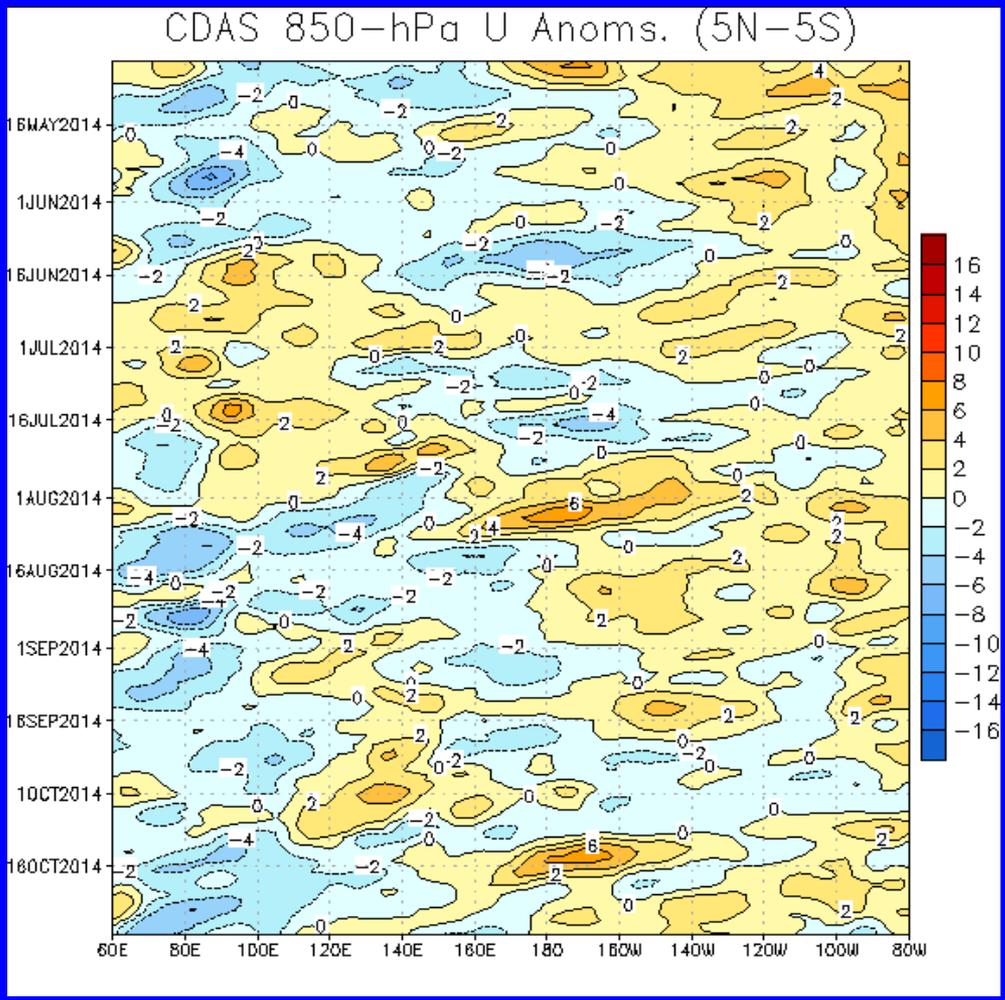
Weak westerly anomalies persisted across the central Pacific during the previous 5 days.

Westerly anomalies weakened over the eastern Pacific and persisted over the tropical Atlantic.



# 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 much of May and June, westerly anomalies were observed over the eastern Pacific. An enhanced South Asian monsoon circulation developed during much of June and July.

From late July to August, westerly (easterly) anomalies shifted westward over the eastern and central Pacific (western Pacific, Maritime Continent, and Indian Ocean).

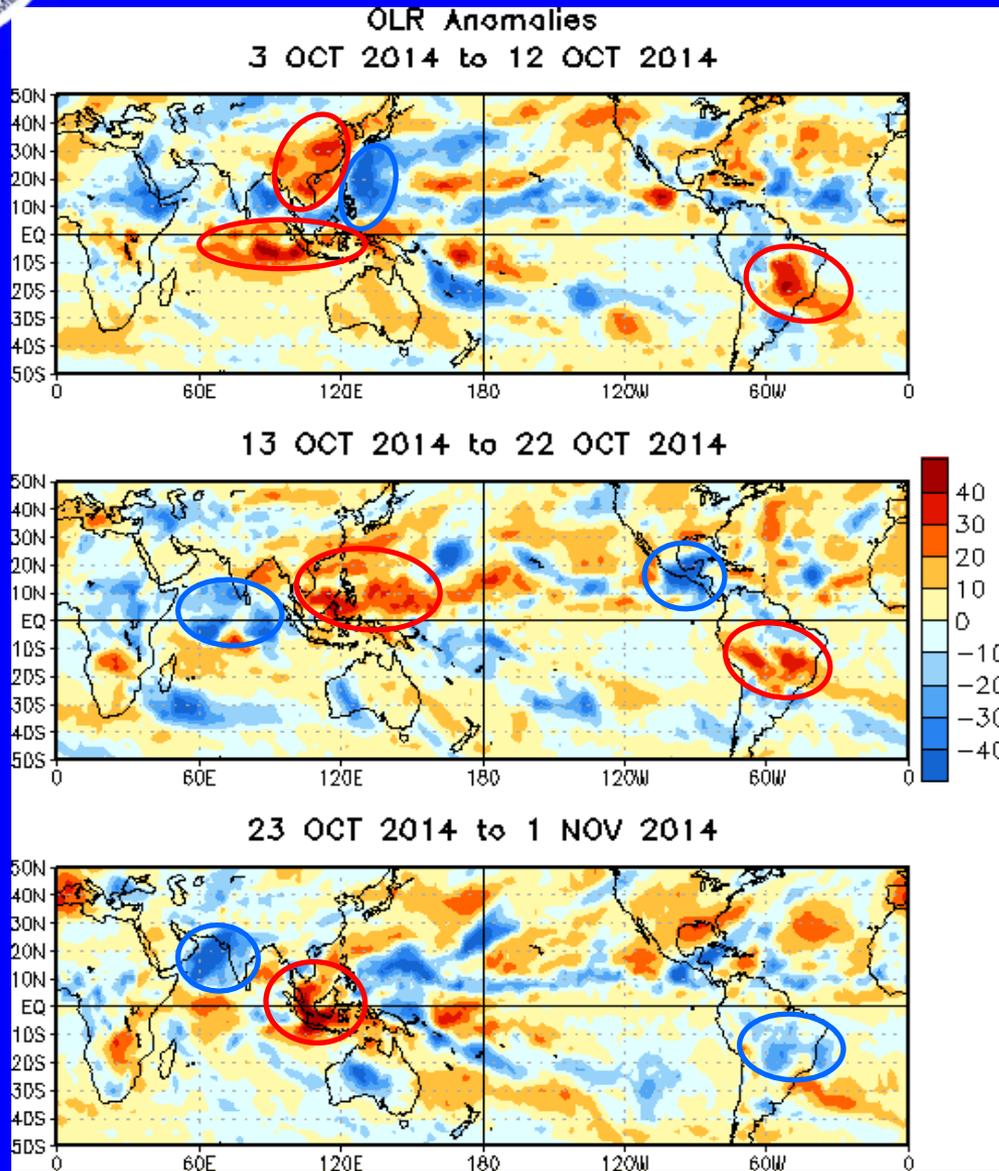
A westerly wind burst was observed near the Date Line during mid-October

More recently, easterly (westerly) anomalies were observed over the Indian Ocean and Maritime Continent (Western Hemisphere) with little evident eastward propagation.



# OLR Anomalies – Past 30 days

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



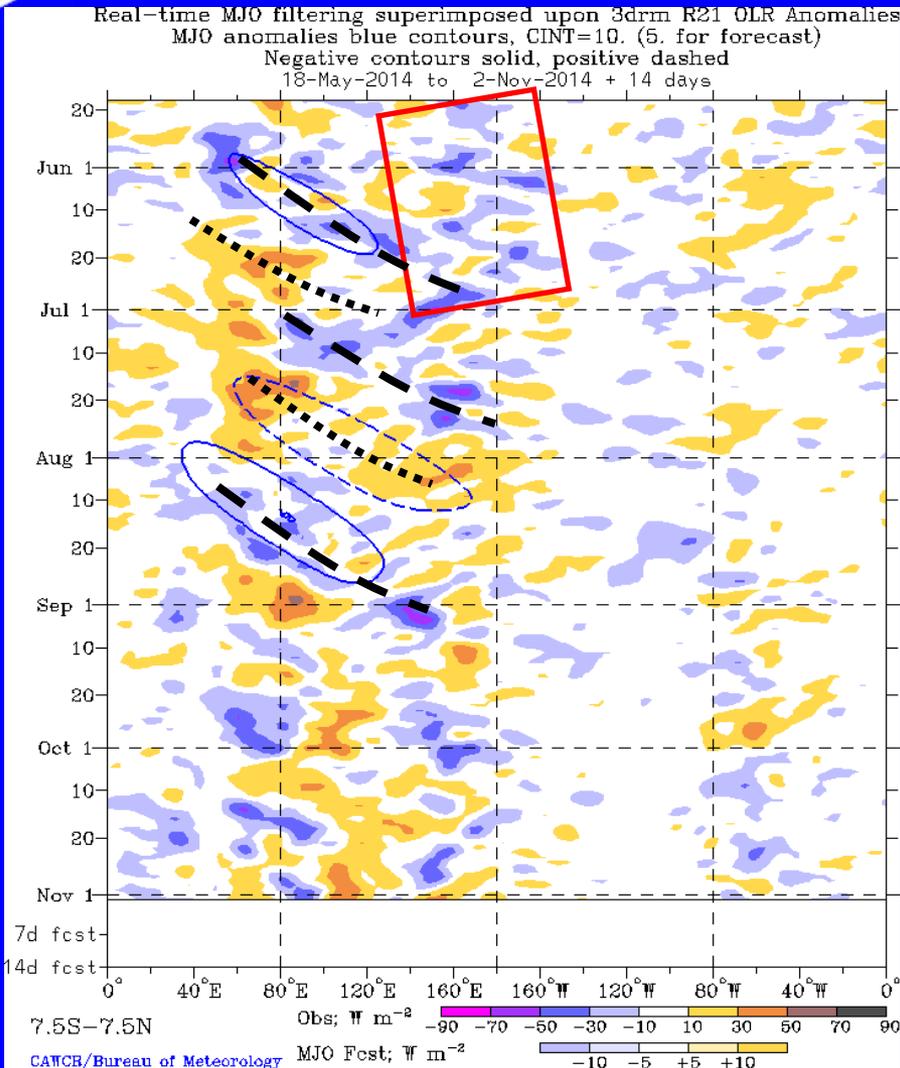
In early October, TC activity contributed to enhanced convection over the far western Pacific, while suppressed rainfall was observed over parts of eastern Indian Ocean, Maritime Continent, eastern Asia, and Brazil.

Suppressed convection prevailed over much of the West Pacific and Maritime Continent during mid-October, while enhanced convection developed over parts of the Indian Ocean. Suppressed convection was observed across eastern Brazil.

During late October, suppressed convection persisted over the western Maritime Continent while TC activity contributed to enhanced rainfall over the Arabian Sea and western India. Some reversal of the persistently dry conditions over parts of Brazil was evident.



# 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)**

During late May and June, enhanced convection propagated slowly eastward toward the central Pacific (red box).

The MJO became more organized during June and July, primarily over the Indian Ocean, but the pattern became less coherent with respect to canonical MJO activity by September.

There is evidence of westward-moving subseasonal variability from mid-August onward. Some evidence of faster, eastward moving waves is also evident recently, although nothing appears consistent with robust MJO activity on a broad scale.

Longitude

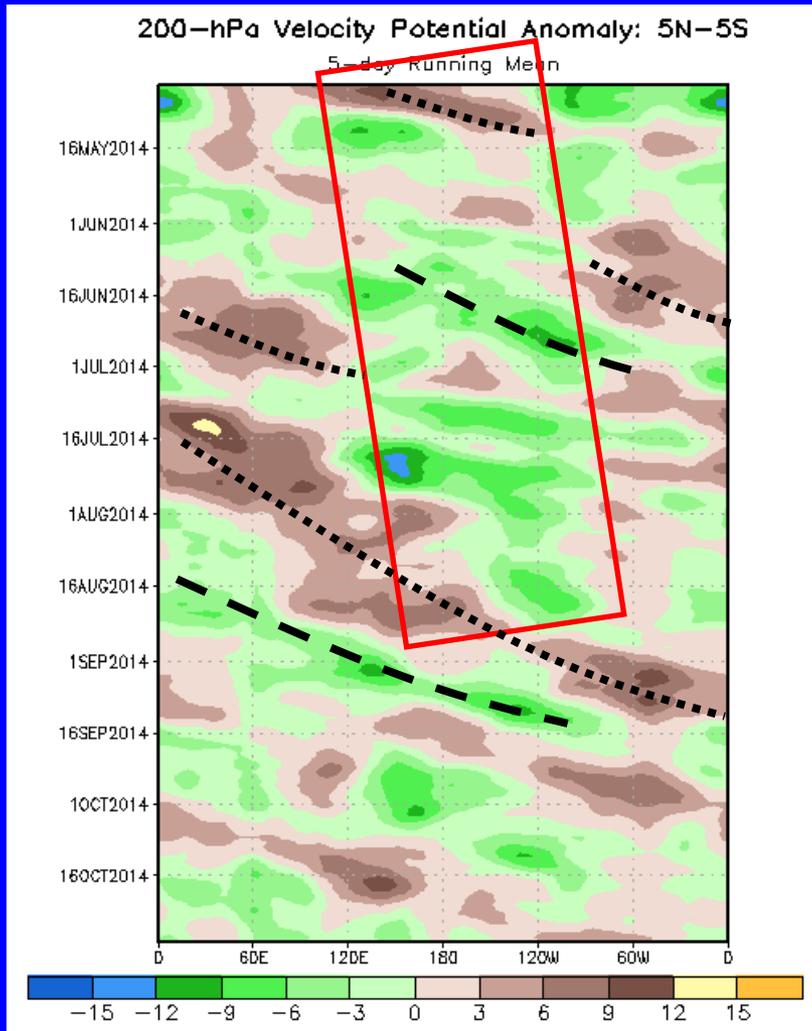


# 200-hPa Velocity Potential Anomalies (5°S-5°N)

Positive anomalies (brown shading) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation

Negative anomalies (green shading) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation

Time



Longitude

A slow eastward progression of negative anomalies was observed during the late spring and summer across the Indo-Pacific warm pool and central-eastern Pacific (red box).

The pattern became more organized during June with a more coherent wave-1 MJO-like structure with eastward propagation.

The pattern became less coherent during early July, but then organized again in late July and August, with a wide area of suppressed convection moving around the planet.

During early September, anomalies were consistent with rapid eastward propagation, before becoming stationary for the second half of the month.

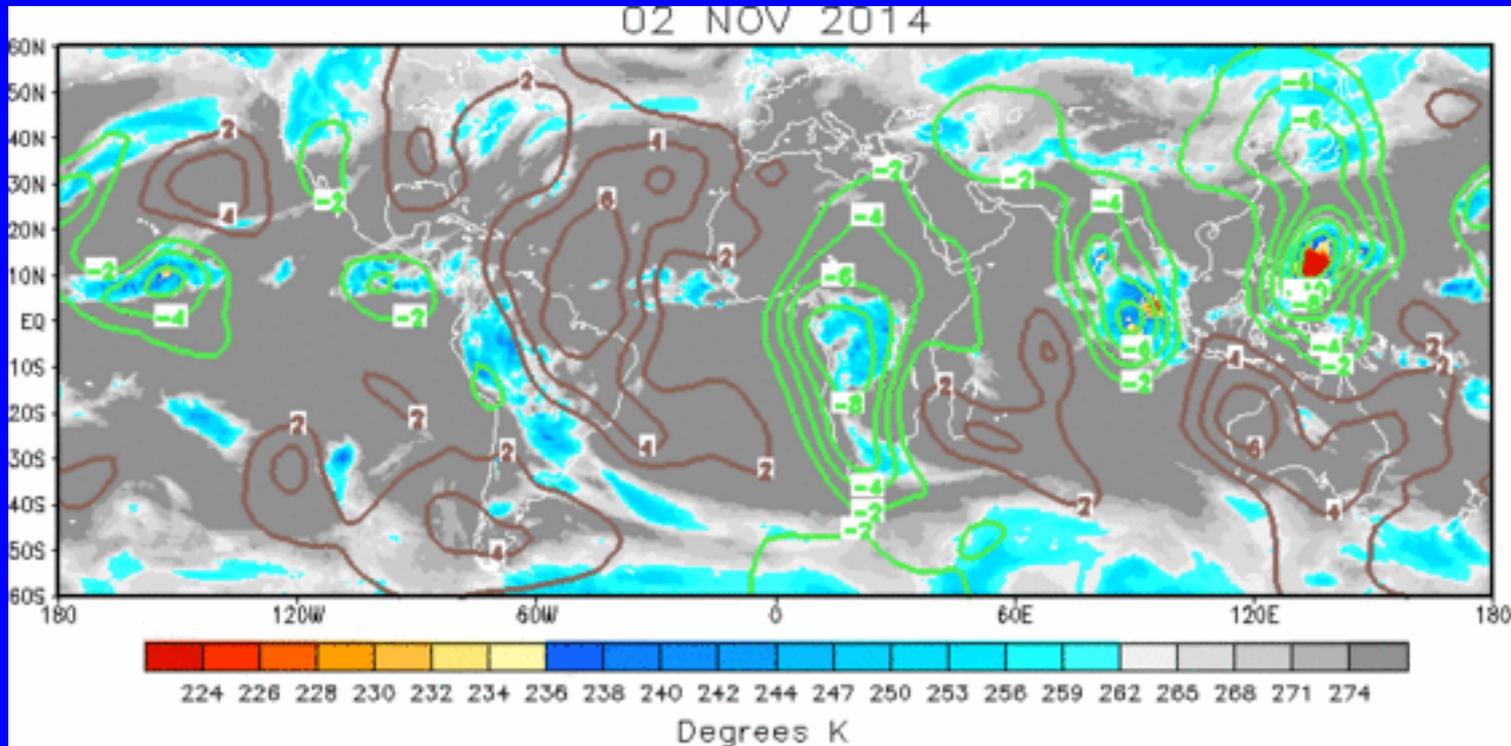
During October, some eastward propagation is evident, although other signals are interfering with the overall pattern.



# 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 indicates an increasingly incoherent pattern, with negative anomalies associated with anomalous large scale ascent observed over the eastern and western Pacific, Africa, and the Indian Ocean, with large-scale positive anomalies observed only over the Atlantic basin.

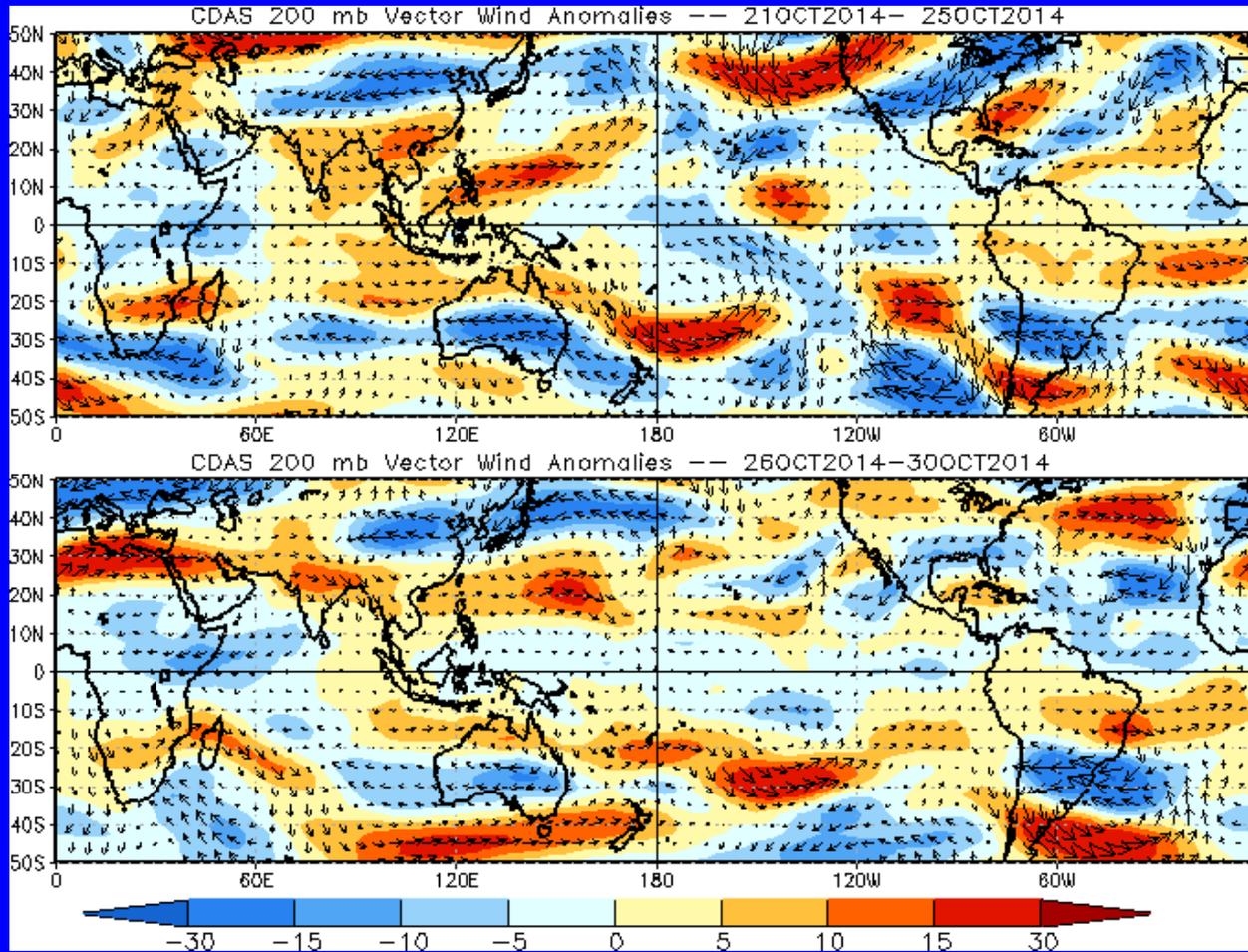


# 200-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ )

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies



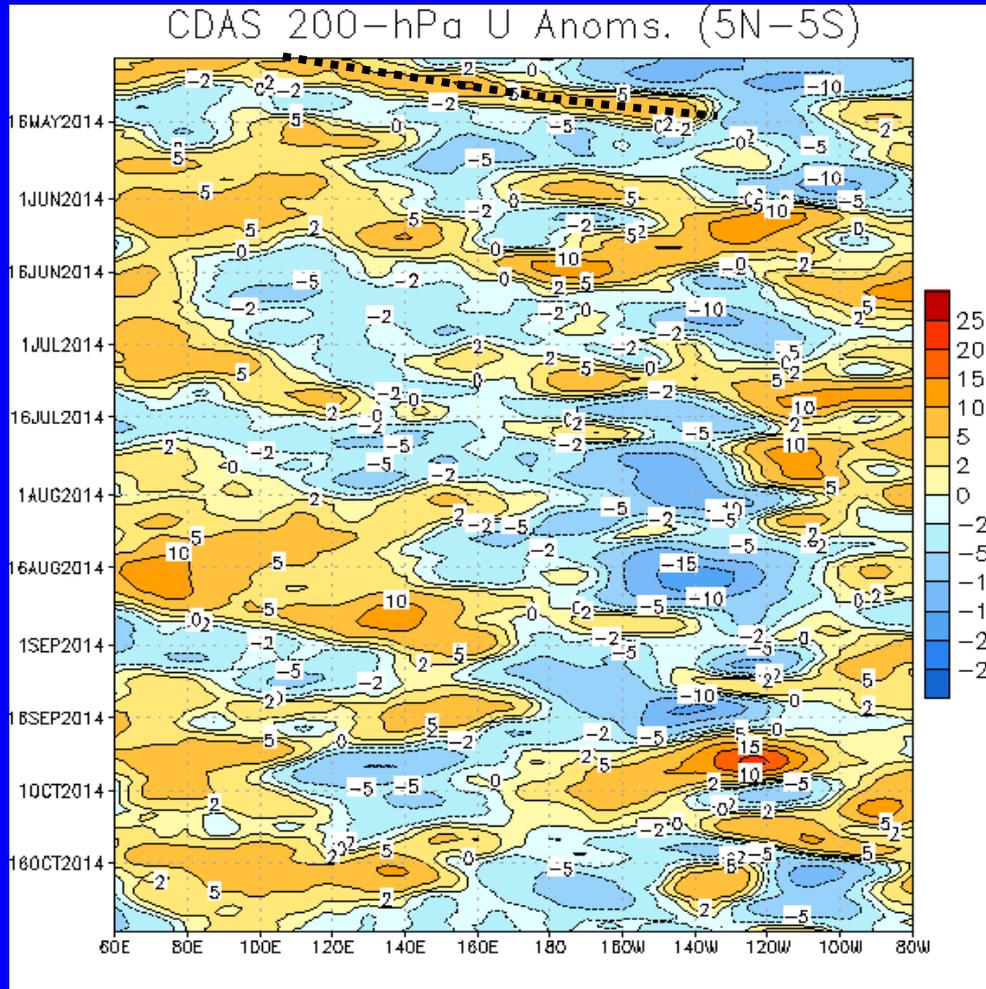
Only low-amplitude 200-hPa zonal wind anomalies were observed during the recent pentad over most of the global Tropics.



# 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

MJO activity is evident in the eastward propagation of both easterly and westerly anomalies during April and early May. This signal weakened during late May.

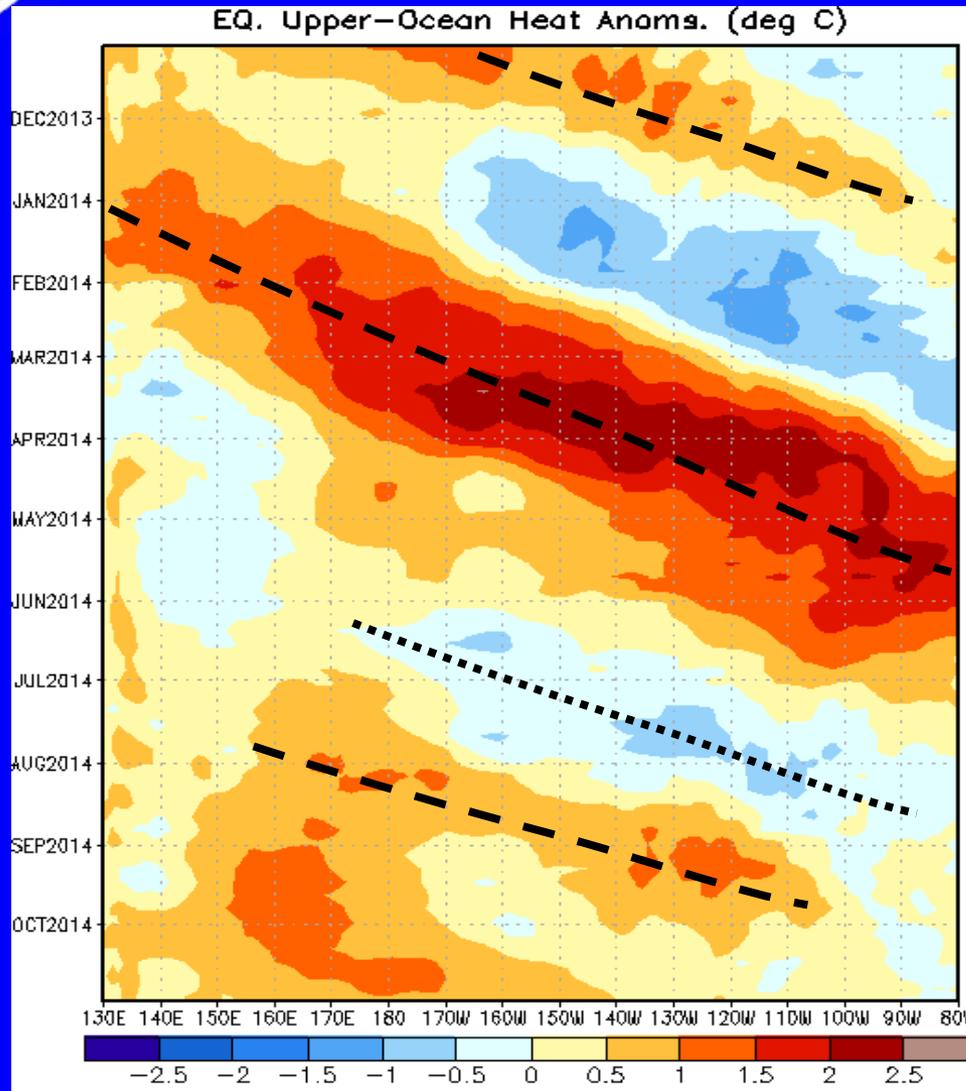
Westward propagation of westerly anomalies is evident over the east-central Pacific during June. In July, easterly anomalies intensified over the central and eastern Pacific.

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

More recently, weak easterly anomalies developed across much of the tropical Pacific.



# Weekly Heat Content Evolution in the Equatorial Pacific



Oceanic downwelling Kelvin wave activity is evident during October through early December 2013.

A considerably stronger downwelling event began in January 2014 and propagated across the Pacific.

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

Warm anomalies are again evident across much of the Pacific due to another downwelling Kelvin wave.



# 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.**

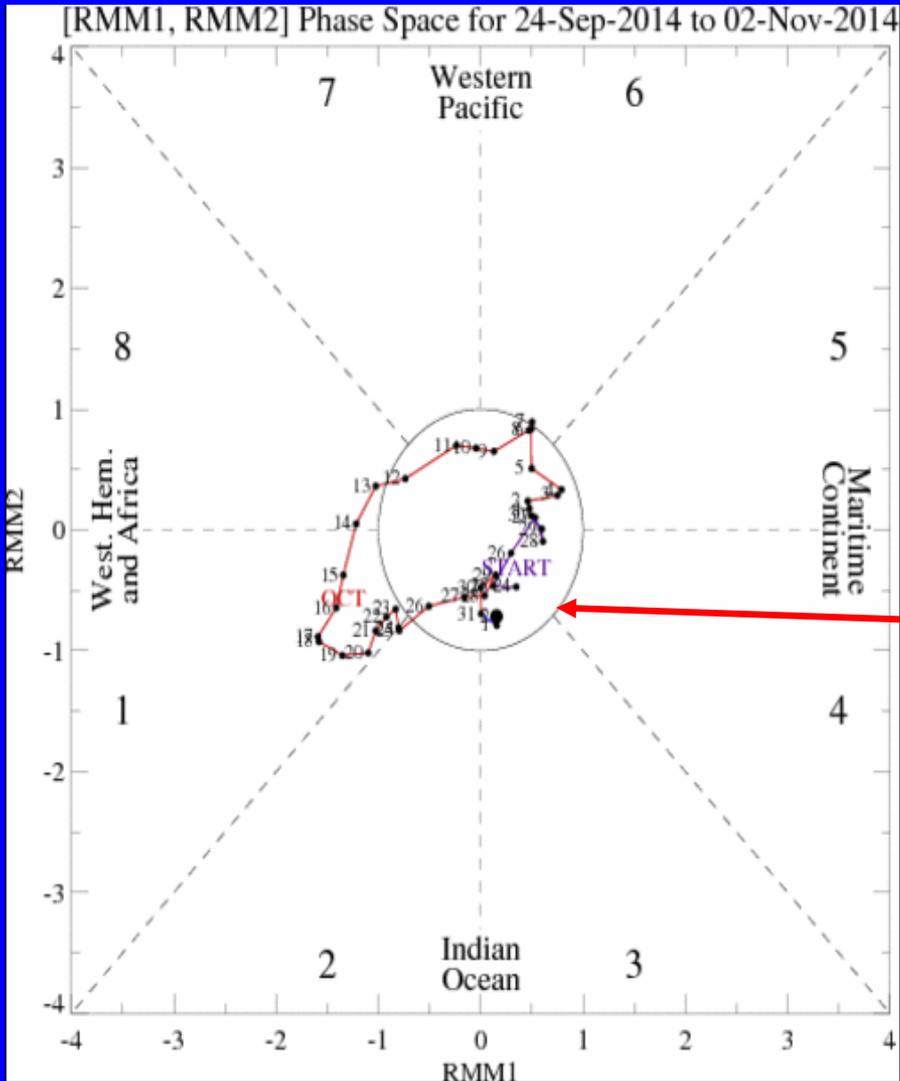
- The methodology is very similar to that described in WH2004 but does not include the linear removal of ENSO variability associated with a sea surface temperature index. The methodology is consistent with that outlined by the U.S. CLIVAR MJO Working Group.

**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

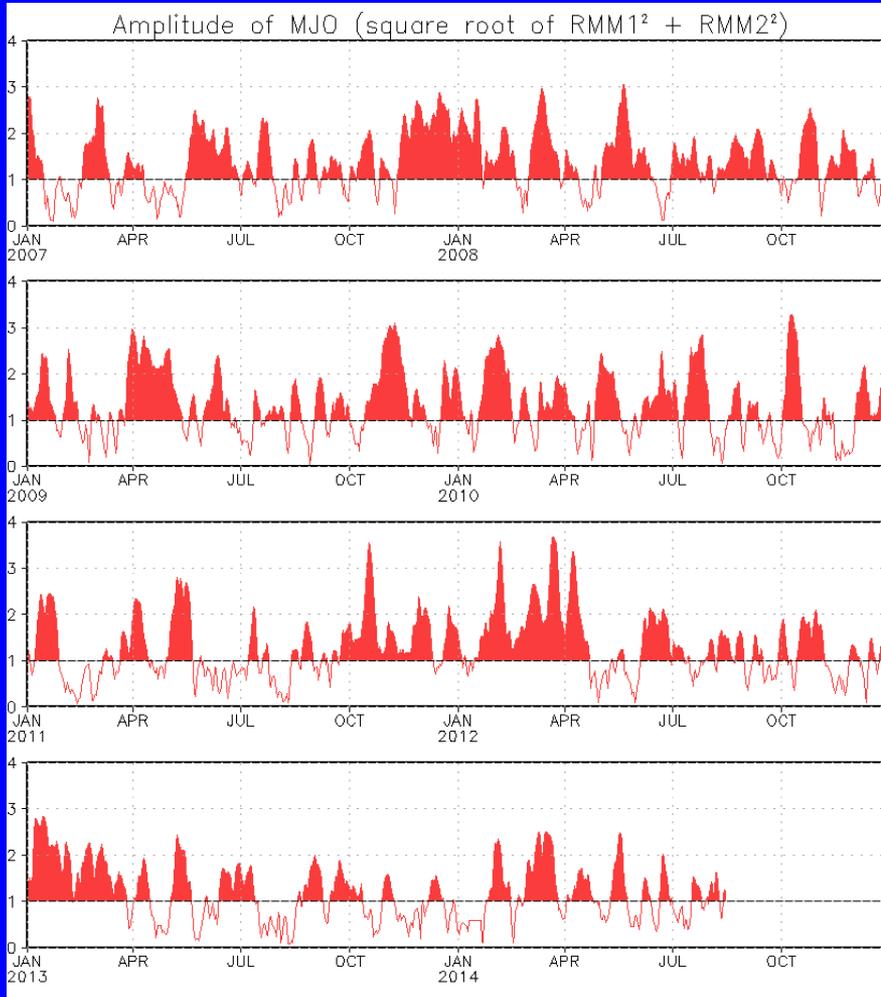


- The axes (RMM1 and RMM2) represent daily values of the principal components from the two leading modes
- The triangular areas indicate the location of the enhanced phase of the MJO
- Counter-clockwise motion is indicative of eastward propagation. Large dot most recent observation.
- Distance from the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

The RMM MJO index depicts no coherent signal.



# 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.



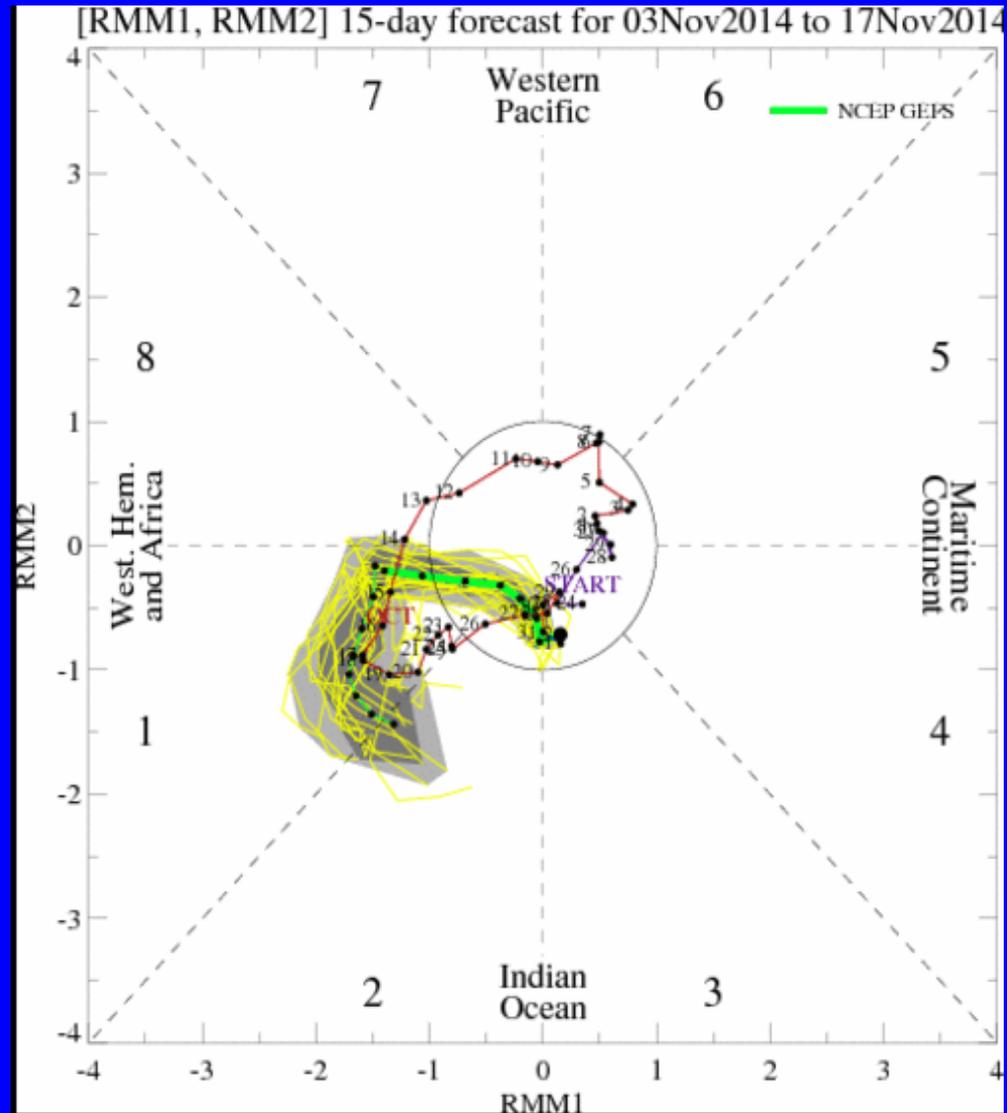
# Ensemble GFS (GEFS) MJO Forecast

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 no robust MJO activity during the upcoming week, with a potential emerging signal over the Western Hemisphere and Africa during Week-2.

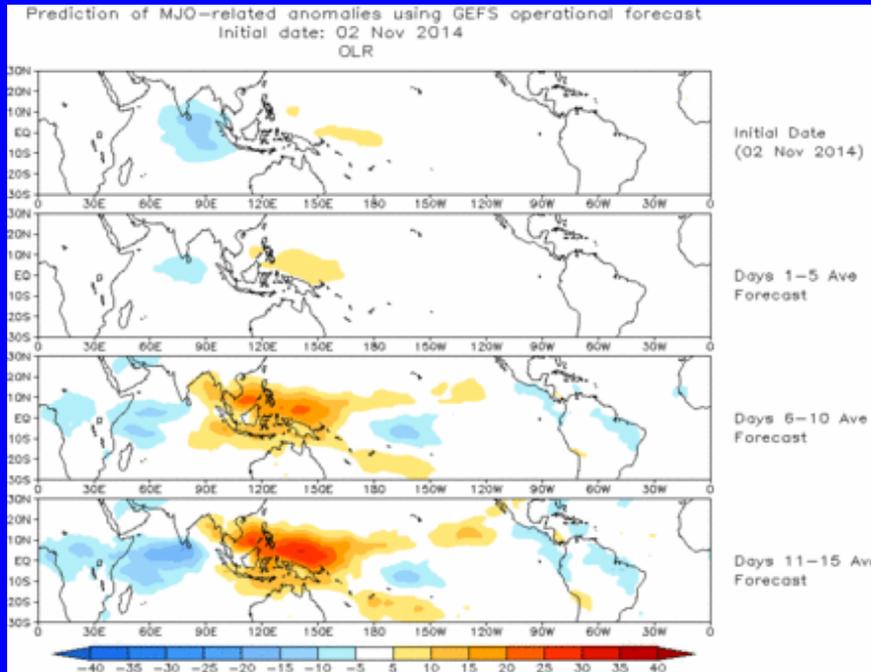




# Ensemble Mean GFS MJO Forecast

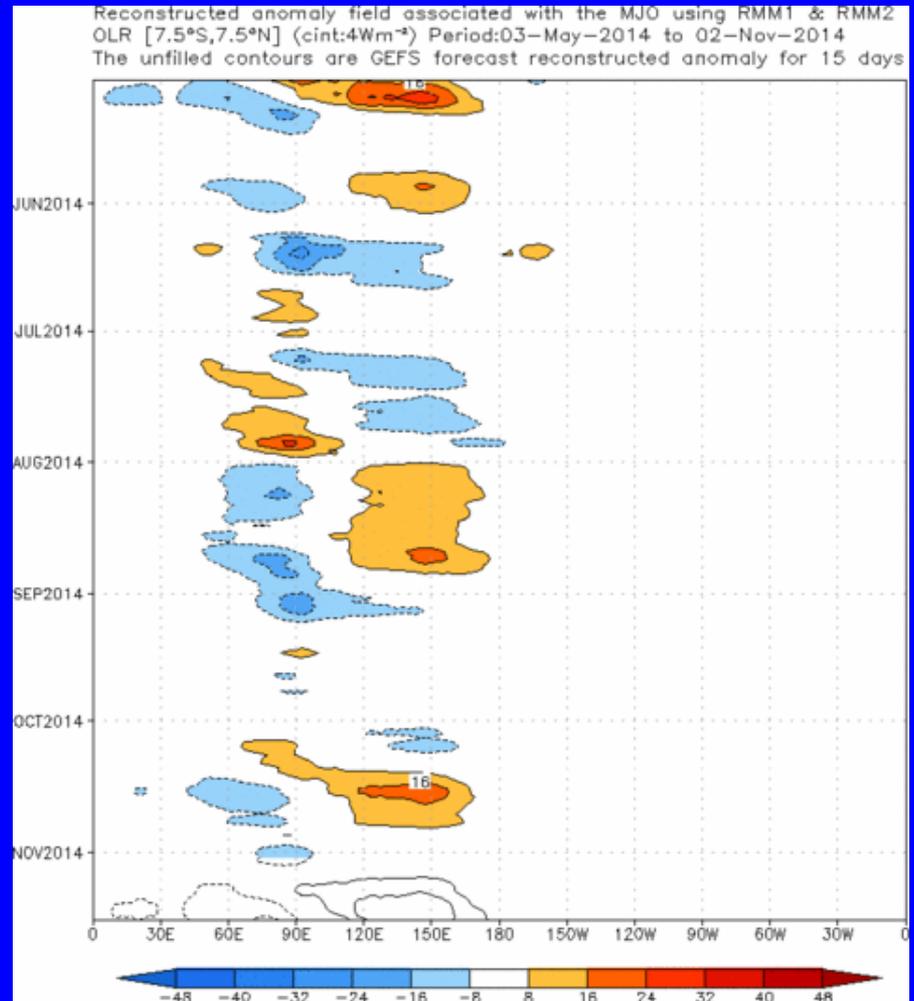
Figures below show MJO associated OLR anomalies only (reconstructed from RMM1 and RMM2) and do not include contributions from other modes (*i.e.*, ENSO, monsoons, etc.)

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



The ensemble mean GFS forecasts little eastward propagation of the anomaly field, with increasing amplitude of the suppressed convection during Week-2 over Southeast Asia, the Maritime Continent, and the western Pacific.

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

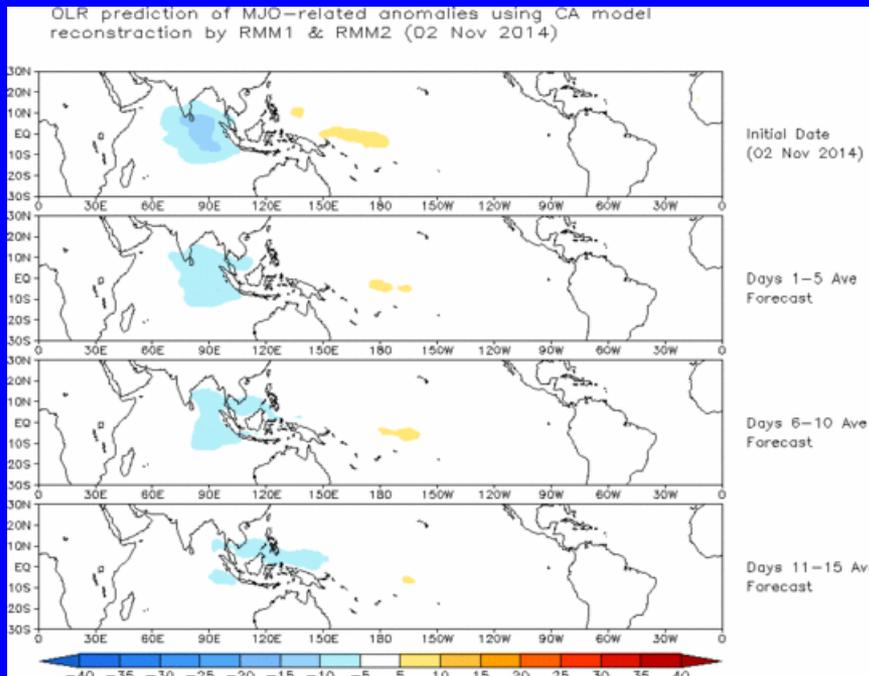




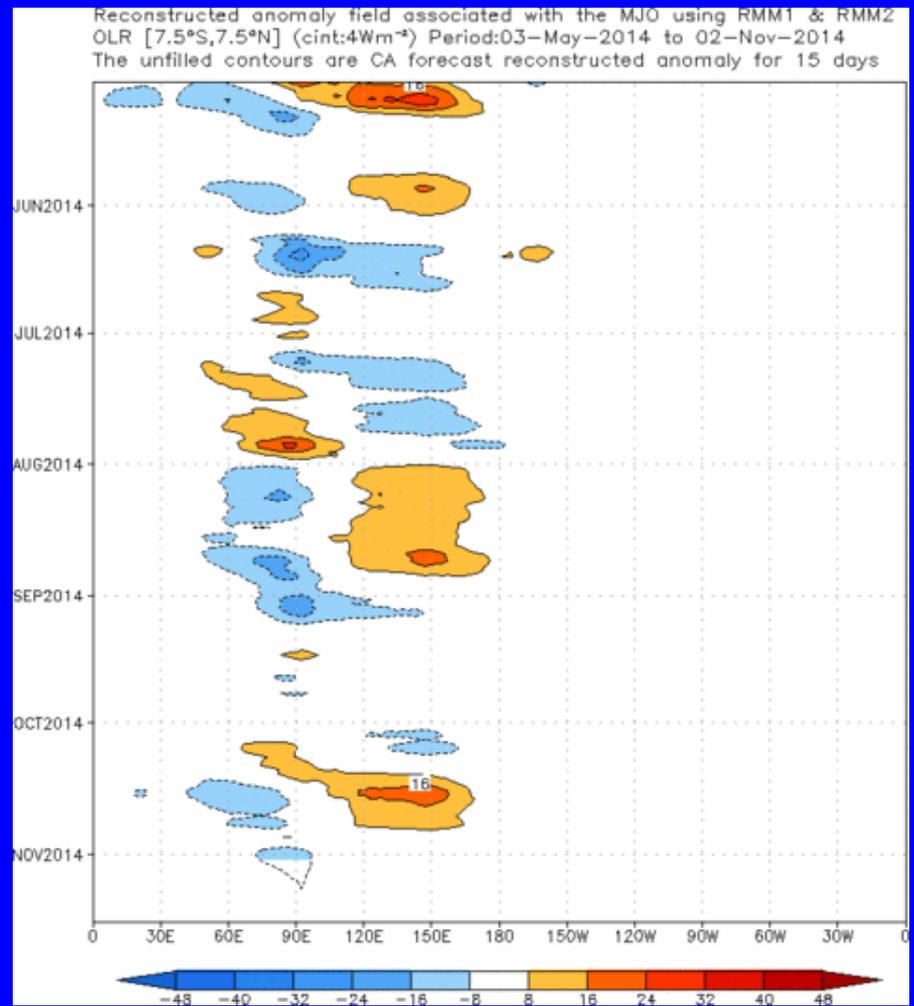
# Constructed Analog (CA) MJO Forecast

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



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



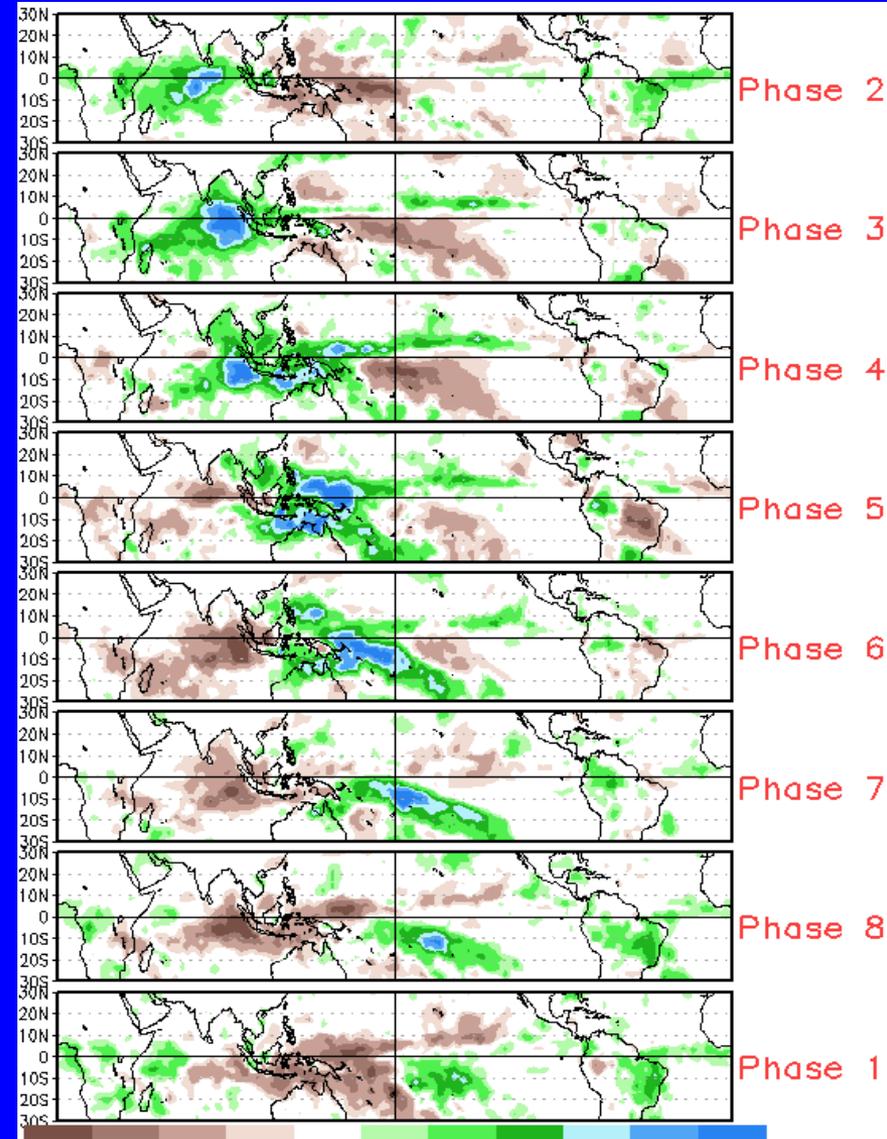
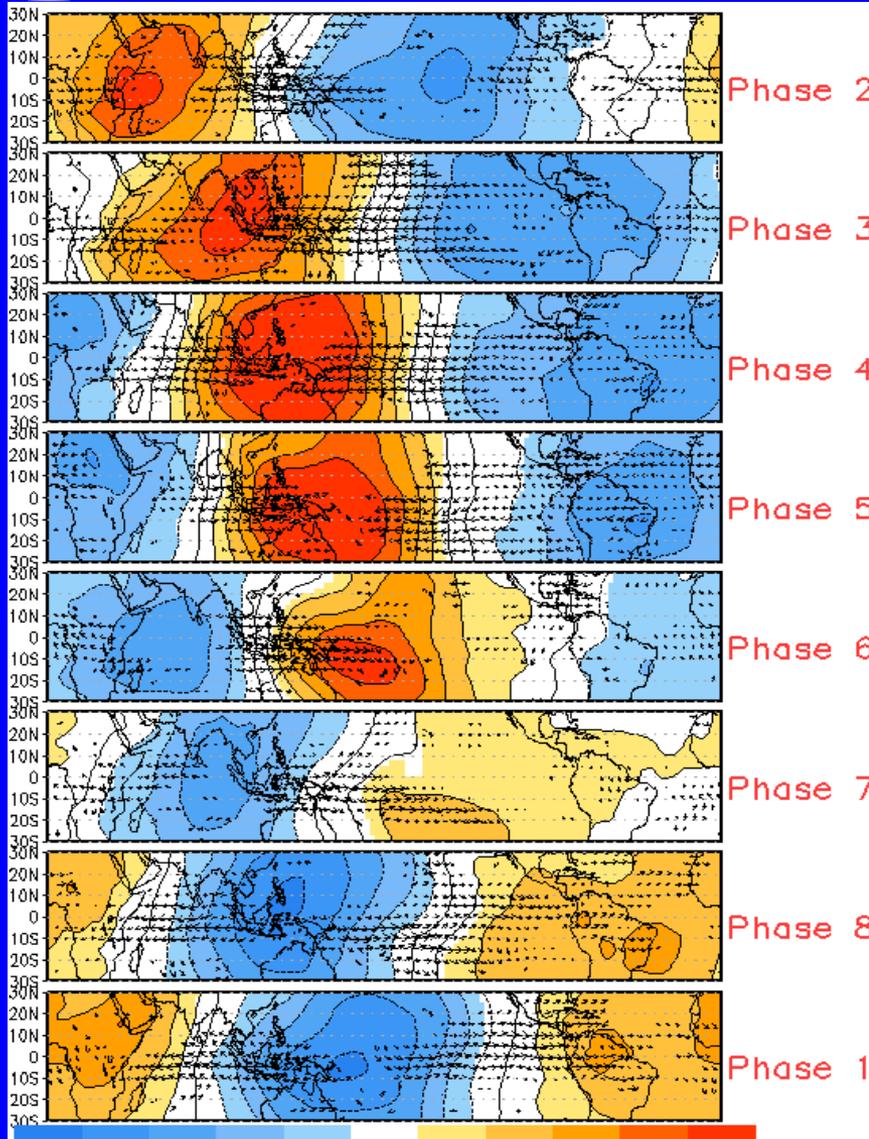
The constructed analog forecast also depicts no significant large-scale convective anomalies.



# MJO Composites – Global Tropics

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

Precipitation Anomalies (May-Sep)

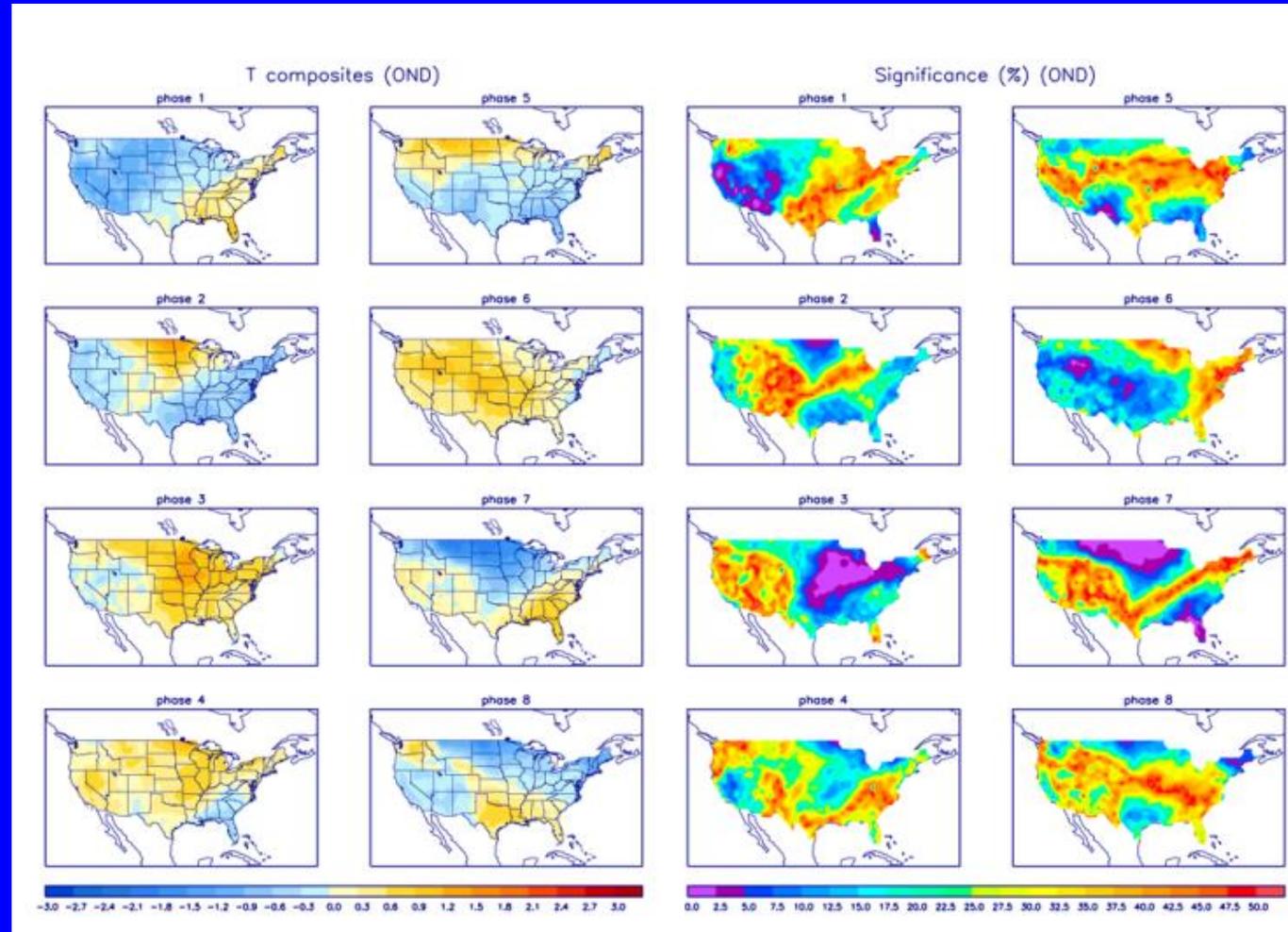




# U.S. MJO Composites – Temperature

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.



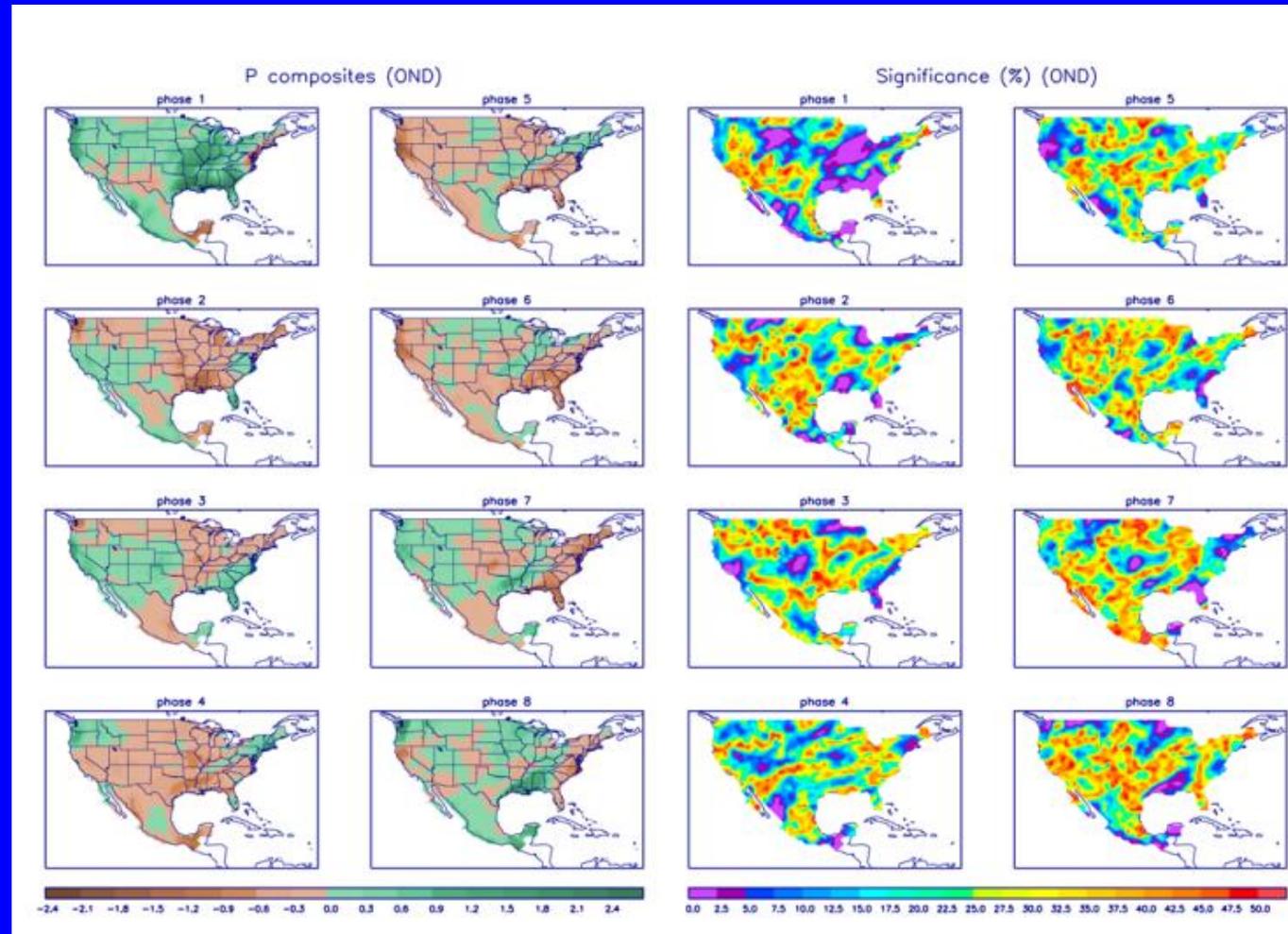
Zhou et al. (2011): A composite study of the MJO influence on the surface air temperature and precipitation over the Continental United States, *Climate Dynamics*, 1-13, doi: 10.1007/s00382-011-1001-9

<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

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