1995 NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER FORECAST VERIFICATION

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Introduction

The National Hurricane Center issues every six hours a 72-hour track and intensity forecast for all tropical cyclones in the north Atlantic and east Pacific basins. Forecasts are verified by comparison with a best-track post analysis of all available track and intensity data. The best-track data used for verification excludes extratropical, subtropical and tropical depression stages. Climatology and persistence forecasts are used as standards for skill in comparing forecasts (CLIPER model forecasts for track and SHIFOR model forecasts for intensity).

Track forecast errors are determined as the great circle distance between a forecast position and a best-track position for the same time. A tropical cyclone's intensity is defined as the maximum one-minute wind speed ten meters above the ground. This maximum speed can occur anywhere within the cyclone's circulation. Intensity forecast errors are determined as the difference between the forecast wind speed and the best-track wind speed for the same time. Unlike the positive distance error associated with track, intensity errors can be positive or negative. Therefore, intensity errors are presented two ways: as the algebraic average error (the bias) and as the average of the absolute magnitude of the error. Also note that forecast and best-track intensities are rounded to the closest five knots.

Model objective track guidance is of two types, late or early. Late models require the completion of the Aviation Run of the MRF model and are run every twelve hours, three hours after synoptic time. Although they provide the best guidance each model is capable of, they arrive too late and too infrequent for the forecaster to use. Various strategies used by modelers and others provide the forecaster with more timely guidance than that derived from the late models. These modified models are classified as early and are available every six hours, one hour after synoptic time. Table 1 defines the model abbreviations used in this report.

North Atlantic

The active 1995 North Atlantic hurricane season had 19 tropical storms and hurricanes and was second only to 1933 with 21. There were 446 official forecasts issued for tropical storms and hurricanes, exceeding the combined total for the previous three years. The average official forecast track errors by storm are listed in Table 2.1. Table 2.2 gives the average official and CLIPER track errors for 1995 and the previous ten-year average. The 1995 departures from the ten-year average error are given by forecast period in the latter portion of the Table. Although in a absolute sense the official forecast errors are low compared to the ten-year average, almost half the error reduction can be accounted for by this year's lower CLIPER error over its ten-year average.

Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 are homogeneous comparisons of the late and early Atlantic track guidance models. This year, the official forecast has the smallest error in either Table, except for the late GFDL

model at the 36-, 48- and 72-hour forecast periods. The implication is that the available guidance is being optimally used. The UKMET and NOGAPS global models' track forecasts were obtained after hurricane season, truly late. They are included because of these global models' remarkable performance over the Atlantic.

The average official and SHIFOR wind speed forecast errors (the biases) for 1995 and 1990 - 1994 are given in Table 4. The departure from the five-year average is given by forecast period in the latter portion of the Table. Except for the initial time period, the 1995 official and SHIFOR bias departures are positive and much larger than the five-year biases. The large negative SHIFOR bias for this year indicates the model's tendency to consistently under predict intensification. Table 5 is similar to Table 4, except for the absolute error. Official departures for 1995 from the five-year average are the same or less than the SHIFOR departures for all forecast time periods.

Table 6 displays the intensity objective guidance models. The official bias is near SHIFOR, except where it is less at 72 hours. SHIPS has a strong negative bias while the GFDL has a strong positive bias. For the absolute error, the official is less than all other models through 36 hours while SHIFOR's error is the smallest at 48 and 72 hours.

East Pacific

The 1995 East Pacific hurricane season had only 10 tropical storms and hurricanes, second only in inactivity to 1977 with 8. There were 186 official forecasts issued for tropical storms and hurricanes in the basin this year, ten percent less than last year. The average official forecast track errors by storm are listed in Table 7.1. Table 7.2 gives the average official and CLIPER track errors for 1995 and the previous seven years, 1988 to 1994. This year's error departures from the seven-year average error is given in the latter portion of the Table. This year's CLIPER errors are nearly identical to their seven-year average error, except at the 24- and 36-hour forecast periods. The official forecast error departures tend to correspond to the CLIPER departures, save at 72 hours where the improvement is fifteen percent over its seven-year average.

Table 8.1 and Table 8.2 are homogeneous comparisons of various track guidance models. Again as for the Atlantic, the official forecast has the smallest error of all the early models, indicating again, that the available guidance is being used to best advantage. For the late models, displayed in Table 8.1, only the GFDL model is substantially better at the 24-, 36- and 48-hour forecast periods. Not shown is the UKMET model's east Pacific performance, which, although comparable to the error recorded by NHC91 and the GFDL models, would have reduced the number of cases by more than half. The NOGAPS results were not processed.

The 1995 average official and SHIFOR wind speed forecast errors are given in Table 9. The official biases were less than the 5-year average from 24 through 72 hours. The SHIFOR biases displayed this same tendency but beginning at 48 hours. The absolute official errors, given in Table 10, are similar to the 5-year average except at 12 and 72 hours where the departure is 15 to 6 percent better than SHIFOR departures, respectively.

For the east Pacific, the GFDL model provides the only other intensity forecast besides SHIFOR. Its results are given in Table 11. Surprisingly, opposite to the Atlantic, the GFDL model has a large negative bias at all time periods. Even more remarkable, the magnitude of the bias is almost the same as the absolute error, indicating a consistent tendency by the model to under forecast intensity for this basin.

Conclusions

- 1. The official track forecasts for 1995 are better than the long-term average for both basins.
- 2. The early objective track guidance is being used to best advantage for both basins.
- 3. UKMET model forecasts should be obtained in a timely manner for the next hurricane season.

- (The NOGAPS forecasts are now available operational.)
- 4. A large number of good official track forecasts were made during 1995. Their impact on the tenyear average may make yearly official track forecast improvement more difficult during the next ten years.
- 5. The GFDL model's large negative bias in forecasting intensity in the east Pacific should be corrected.
- 6. Forecasting intensity remains the forecaster's greatest problem. New objective guidance must be developed to forecast intensity in tropical cyclones.

TABLE 1

MODEL ABBREVIATIONS

(Click here for model descriptions)

- **OFCL** Official track or intensity forecasts
- **CLIP** CLImatology and PERsistence track model CLIPER (Atl and Pac)
- **BAMD** Beta Advection Model Deep (Global)
- **BAMM** Beta Advection Model Medium (Global)
- **BAMS** Beta Advection Model Shallow (Global)
- A90E NHC90 Statistical-Dynamic Model...early version (Atl)
- **A90L** NHC90 Statistical-Dynamic Model...late version (Atl)
- **P91E** NHC91 Statistical-Dynamic Model...early version (Pac)
- **P91L** NHC91 Statistical-Dynamic Model...late version (Pac)
 - **PSS** EPHC77 Statistical-Synoptic Model (Pac)
- **GFDL** GFDL Model (Atl and Pac track and intensity)¹
- **GFDI** GFDL Interpolated Track (6- and 12-hour)
- **AVNO** MRF Model Aviation Run (Global)
- **UKM** UKMET Model (Global)²
- NGPS Navy Operational Global Atmospheric Prediction System NOGAPS2
- **VBAR** VICtor Ooyama's BARotropic model VICBAR (Atl)
- **OFCI** Official Track Forecast Interpolated from the previous 6 hours
- SHFR Statistical Hurricane Intensity Forecast Model SHIFOR (Atl and Pac)
- SHIP Statistical Hurricane Intensity Prediction Scheme SHIPS (Atl)¹

TABLE 2.1

NORTH ATLANTIC 1995 OFFICIAL AVERAGE TRACK FORECAST ERRORS (NM) BY STORM

¹ Intensity forecasts from these models are considered experimental. ² These global models' results were obtained after hurricane season ended.

OFCL #CASES	00 11.8 8	12 37.8 8	24 76.1 6	36 141.8 4	48 254.3 2	72 0	
FOR OFCL #CASES	ECAST EF 00 8.9 10	12	24	AL0295 36 90.7 6	48	72 0	
FOR OFCL #CASES	11.6	12 46.3	24 77.0	36 105.2	48 146.7	72 253.2	
FC OFCL #CASES	0	12	0	36	48	0	ır period)
FOR OFCL #CASES	8.7	12 53.6	24 96.9	36 103.6	48 89.0		
FOR OFCL #CASES	10.5	12 38.7	24 75.5	36 112.7	48 147.2	72 227 . 8	
FOR OFCL #CASES		RRORS (1 12 41.4 4	NM) FOR 24 116.6 2	AL0895 36	48	ELLE 72 0	
FOR OFCL #CASES		12 53.8	24 103.7	36 138.4	48 171.3	72 242.3	
FOR OFCL #CASES	9.0	12 52.3	24	36 145.2		72 275.4 39	
FOR OFCL #CASES	ECAST EF 00 15.5 3	RRORS (N 12 21.2 3	24	AL1195 36 0	JERRY 48 0	72 0	
FOR OFCL #CASES	ECAST EF 00 16.1 19	RRORS (1 12 55.4 19	M) FOR 24 100.5 17	36 113.5	48	72 253.0 9	

	FORECAST						
		12					
	12.3						
#CASI	ES 52	52	5 ()	48	46	42
	EODECA CO	EDDODG	/ NTM) T	ZOD.	7 T 1 E 0 E	MADTT	SZ NT
	FORECAST 00	ERRORS 12	(MM)	1 OR	AP1232	MARIL 48	72
OFCL		9 38.4					
	9.3 ES 35						
#CASI	55 35	33	33	5	31	29	25
	FORECAST	ERRORS	(NM) E	OR	AL1695		
	00	12	24	1	36	48	72
OFCL	13.0	5 48.0	93.	. 9	138.1	178.1	229.6
#CASI	ES 37	37	35	5	33	31	27
	FORECAST	ERRORS	(NM) F	OR	AT.1795	OPAL	
	0.0					48	
OFCL		5 42.8	102	. 4	161.5	231.0	326.2
#CASI	ES 18	18		5	14	12	8
// CHDI	10	10	10	,	11	12	O
		EDDODG	(3734) T	10 D	37.1005	DARLO	
	FORECAST						
0.000		12					72
OFCL	45.7	7 90.2	122				•
#CASI	ES 10	10	8	3	6	4	0
	FORECAST	ERRORS	(NM) E	OR	AL1995	ROXAN	NE
	00	12					
	10.8						
#CASI	ES 38	38	36	5	34	32	27
	FORECAST	ERRORS	(NM) E	OR	AL2095	SEBAS'	TIEN
	00	12	2.4	1	36	48	72
OFCL	20.1						, =
#CASI		10		3	6	4	0
" CIIDI	10	10	`	,	Ü	•	Ü
	EODEG C	EDDODG	(3T)() =	105	3.7.01.0.7	ma	
	FORECAST						
OFF	00	12	24		36	48	72
OFCL		65.1					357.9
#CASI	ES 20	20	Τ 8	3	16	14	10

TABLE 2.2

NORTH ATLANTIC 1995 OFFICIAL AND CLIPER AVERAGE TRACK ERRORS FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE

PERIOD	00	12	24	36	48	72 (h	ır)	
	OFCL CLIP			9 87 . 1 7 111.1				` ,
#CASES	446							(====,

1985 - 1994 OFFICIAL AND CLIPER AVERAGE TRACK ERRORS FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE

PERIOD	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCL CLIP							` '
#CASES	1408	1397	1225	1063	918	671	

1995 OFFICAL AND CLIPER AVERAGE TRACK ERROR DEPARTURE FROM THE 1985 - 1994 OFFICAL AND CLIPER AVERAGE TRACK ERROR

PERIOD	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCL DEPARTURE	-20	-07	-11	-14	-17	-21	(%)
CLIP DEPARTURE	-20	-09	-07	-07	-10	-12	(%)

TABLE 3.1

NORTH ATLANTIC

1995 AVERAGE MODEL TRACK ERROR (NM) FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE (LATE*)

	00	12	24	36	48	72
OFCL	11.4	43.9	81.6	116.8	149.8	214.0
CLIP	11.4	49.6	102.2	153.4	208.6	314.2
BAMD	11.4	51.4	94.6	136.1	183.0	285.2
BAMM	11.4	52.6	99.6	138.1	185.3	262.0
BAMS	11.4	59.2	115.2	160.8	216.5	286.3
A90L	11.4	46.6	84.8	125.7	164.0	273.4
GFDL	11.4	48.5	84.2	112.7	144.6	206.7
VBAR	11.4	47.3	95.6	142.5	190.9	303.2
AVNO	11.4	60.5	103.2	146.7	193.3	279.9
NGPS	11.4	53.8	85.3	104.9	137.5	205.6
UKM	11.4	49.5	77.4	96.0	120.8	179.5
#CASES	152	152	150	123	119	91

^{*} Although CLIPER and BAMs are early models they are included in this Table for reference.

TABLE 3.2

NORTH ATLANTIC

1995 AVERAGE MODEL TRACK ERRORS (NM) FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE (EARLY)

	00	12	24	36	48	72
OFCL	12.1	46.4	85.7	121.5	156.4	224.8
CLIP	12.1	53.3	110.8	172.5	228.9	328.6
BAMD	12.1	53.4	95.4	137.6	181.0	282.8
BAMM	12.1	56.8	102.9	145.6	187.3	268.2
BAMS	12.1	64.7	118.4	169.0	215.5	293.3
A90E	12.1	48.5	88.1	132.2	178.6	308.7
GFDI	12.1	52.0	89.7	126.5	166.2	243.4
OFCI	12.1	52.2	94.1	131.6	170.0	243.1
#CASES	426	426	391	359	327	258

TABLE 4

NORTH ATLANTIC

1995 AVERAGE WIND SPEED ERROR FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE (BIAS)

	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCL SHFR	-1.6 -1.6						
#CASES	446	446	410	375	343	279	

1990 - 1994 AVERAGE WIND SPEED ERROR FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE (BIAS)

	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCL SHFR							
#CASES	639	631	543	471	398	292	

1995 OFFICAL AND SHIFOR AVERAGE WIND SPEED ERROR (BIAS) DEPARTURE FROM THE 1990 - 1994 OFFICAL AND SHIFOR AVERAGE WIND SPEED ERROR (BIAS)

PERIOD	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCI, DEPARTURE	-06	+20	+100	+57	+61	+58	(%)

TABLE 5

NORTH ATLANTIC

1995 AVERAGE ABSOLUTE WIND SPEED ERROR FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE

	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCL SHFR	3.3 3.3						` ,
#CASES	446	446	410	375	343	279	

1990 - 1994 AVERAGE ABSOLUTE WIND SPPED ABSOLUTE ERROR FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE

	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
	3.6						
SHFR	3.0	8.4	12.1	14.3	10.2	17.8	(Kt)
#CASES	639	631	543	471	398	292	

1995 OFFICAL AND SHIFOR AVERAGE ABSOLUTE WIND SPEED ERROR DEPARTURE FROM THE 1990 - 1994 OFFICAL AND SHIFOR AVERAGE ABSOLUTE WIND SPEED ERROR

	PERIOD	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCL	DEPARTURE	-08	-07	-15	-14	-06	-03	(%)
SHFR	DEPARTURE	-08	-07	-10	-08	-06	-03	(%)

TABLE 6

NORTH ATLANTIC

1995 AVERAGE MODEL WIND SPEED ERROR (KT) FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE (BIAS)

	00	12	24	36	48	72
OFCL	-1.4	-1.0	-1.5	-1.9	-3.3	-2.6
SHFR	-1.4	-1.1	-1.9	-2.7	-3.5	-6.0
SHIP	-1.4	-1.6	-2.7	-4.7	-7.1	-12.7
GFDL	-1.4	2	3.7	6.2	7.3	8.6
#CASES	218	218	202	184	166	131

1995 AVERAGE MODEL ABSOLUTE WIND SPEED ERROR (KT) FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE

	00	12	24	36	48	72
OFCL	3.1	6.2	9.5	11.8	15.4	18.4
SHFR	3.1	7.7	10.6	12.9	15.3	17.7
SHIP	3.1	7.4	10.5	12.9	15.7	20.2
GFDL	3.1	11.8	15.1	16.4	17.5	19.5
#CASES	218	218	202	184	166	131

TABLE 7.1

EAST PACIFIC

1995 OFFICIAL AVERAGE TRACK FORECAST ERRORS (NM) BY STORM

	FORECAST	ERRORS	(NM)	FOR	EP0295	ADOLPI	Η
		12					
OFCL	9.	4 33.	0 64	1.2	92.0	142.1	250.7
#CASE	ES 16	16	1	L 4	12	10	6
	FORECAST	ERRORS	(NM)	FOR	EP0395	BARBAI	RA
	00	12	2	24	36	48	72
OFCL	7.	7 23.	7 54	1.2	84.1	121.4	185.3
#CASE	ES 33	33	3	31	29	27	23
	FORECAST	ERRORS	(NM)	FOR	EP0495	COSME	
		12					
OFCL	12.	9 44.	3 84	1.8	127.0	188.8	319.3
#CASE	ES 11	11		9	7	5	1
	FORECAST	ERRORS	(NM)	FOR	EP0595	DALIL	A
	0.0	12	2	2.4	36	48	72

50.4 93.5 143.1 187.0 181.6

OFCL

17.9

#CASE	IS 25	25	23	21	19	15
OFCL	00 12.	12 4 39.4	(NM) FOR 24 80.7 5	36 94.1	48 85.8	
	FORECAST	ERRORS	(NM) FOR	EP0795	FLOSS	IE
	0.0	12	24	36	48	72
OFCL			43.4			
			13			5
" CIIOL	15	13	13	11	,	3
	FORECAST	ERRORS	(NM) FOR	EP0895	GIL	
	0.0	12	24	36	48	72
OFCL	12.	4 44.3	24 91.1	122.3	143.2	174.7
#CASE	S 21	21	19	17	15	11
			(NM) FOR			
			24			
			86.8			
#CASE	IS 17	17	15	13	11	7
	FORECAST	ERRORS	(NM) FOR	EP1095	ISMAE	L
			24			
			166.5			
#CASE	IS 9	9	7	5	3	0
	FORECAST	ERRORS	(NM) FOR	EP1195	JULIE'	TTE
	00	12	24 67.5 30	36	48	72
OFCL	6.3	3 35.0	67.5	78.9	71.6	104.8
#CASE	S 32	32	30	28	26	22

TABLE 7.2

EAST PACIFIC

1995 OFFICIAL AND CLIPER AVERAGE TRACK ERRORS FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE

	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCL CLIP							
#CASES	186	186	166	146	126	90	

	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCL CLIP							
#CASES	1999	1994	1804	1606	1427	1108	

1995 OFFICAL AND CLIPER AVERAGE TRACK ERROR DEPARTURE FROM THE 1988 - 1994 OFFICAL AND CLIPER AVERAGE TRACK ERROR

	PERIOD	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCL I	DEPARTURE	-16	00	08	06	00	- 15	(%)
CLIP I	DEPARTURE	-16	00	08	05	02	02	(%)

TABLE 8.1

EAST PACIFIC

1995 AVERAGE MODEL TRACK ERRORS (NM) FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE (LATE*)

	00	12	24	36	48	72
OFCL	11.0	38.8	77.1	116.1	142.5	154.5
CLIP	11.0	42.1	84.7	130.6	172.5	241.5
BAMD	11.0	49.3	87.9	126.5	156.8	173.5
BAMM	11.0	50.9	93.2	143.8	189.0	219.3
BAMS	11.0	54.2	102.4	156.2	205.5	265.1
PSS	11.0	41.8	82.1	121.5	158.5	235.2
P91L	11.0	40.8	78.7	115.0	143.5	191.3
GFDL	11.0	44.9	74.2	104.7	136.4	158.1
AVNO	11.0	52.3	90.7	138.6	208.2	305.0
#CASES	77	77	68	61	52	34

 $^{^{\}star}$ Although CLIPER and BAMs are early models they are included in this Table for reference.

TABLE 8.2

EAST PACIFIC

	00	12	24	36	48	72
OFCL	10.9	37.5	74.8	112.7	141.1	167.0
CLIP	10.9	40.1	81.6	125.6	164.0	241.0
BAMD	10.9	47.4	84.1	122.1	145.0	183.3
BAMM	10.9	48.9	90.1	141.3	184.1	238.8
BAMS	10.9	50.5	96.3	152.7	202.2	288.5
PSS	10.9	39.8	78.9	120.3	154.6	236.3
P91E	10.9	39.7	78.4	118.8	148.7	204.5
GFDI	10.9	44.5	80.3	114.2	148.4	180.4
OFCI	10.9	44.4	83.5	122.6	149.5	166.0
#CASES	167	167	148	127	107	71

TABLE 9

EAST PACIFIC

1995 AVERAGE WIND SPEED ERROR FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE (BIAS)

	00	12	24	36	48	72	(nm)
OFCL SHFR	-1.6 -1.6						
#CASES	184	184	165	145	125	89	

1990 - 1994 AVERAGE WIND SPEED ERROR FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE (BIAS)

	00	12	24	36	48	72	(nm)
OFCL SHFR		-1.4 -3.1					
#CASES	1617	1613	1471	1333	1194	943	

1995 OFFICAL AND SHIFOR AVERAGE WIND SPEED ERROR (BIAS) DEPARTURE FROM THE 1988 - 1994 OFFICAL AND SHIFOR AVERAGE WIND SPEED ERROR (BIAS)

PERIOD	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCI DEPARTURE	+78	+50	-09	-28	-36	-52	(%)

TABLE 10

EAST PACIFIC

1995 AVERAGE ABSOLUTE WIND SPEED ERROR FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE

	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCL SHFR							, ,
#CASES	184	184	165	145	125	89	

1990 - 1994 AVERAGE ABSOLUTE WIND SPEED ERROR FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE

	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCL SHFR							٠,
#CASES	1617	1613	1471	1333	1194	943	

1995 OFFICAL AND SHIFOR AVERAGE ABSOLUTE WIND SPEED ERROR DEPARTURE FROM THE 1988 - 1994 OFFICAL AND SHIFOR AVERAGE ABSOLUTE WIND SPEED ERROR

PERIOD	00	12	24	36	48	72	(hr)
OFCL DEPARTURE	-03	-03	+06	+03	+01	-17	(%)
SHFR DEPARTURE	-03	+12	+08	+02	-01	-11	(%)

TABLE 11

EAST PACIFIC

1995 AVERAGE MODEL WIND SPEED ERROR (KT) FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE (BIAS)

	00	12	24	36	48	72
OFCL	-1.3	-1.3	-1.7	-2.8	-3.6	-3.5
SHFR	-1.3	-4.1	-7.0	-9.9	-12.1	-14.8
GFDL	-1.3	-11.0	-16.8	-23.1	-26.1	-27.3
#CASES	89	89	79	70	60	39

1995 AVERAGE MODEL INTENSITY ABSOLUTE ERRORS (KT) FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SAMPLE

	00	12	24	36	48	72
OFCL	3.1	7.2	12.8	16.4	18.9	19.1
SHFR	3.1	9.0	14.3	17.4	20.3	21.7
GFDL	3.1	15.3	21.5	26.5	29.9	31.3
#CASES	8.9	8.9	79	70	60	3.9