Evaluation of the Maximum Wind Value and Level Finder Code

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JUNE 1982

This is an unreviewed manuscript, primarily intended for informal exchange of information among NMC staff members.
Introduction

During the past year, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has continued to express an interest in adding maximum wind information to the Aviation Digital Forecast code (ADF). In early 1981, as part of NMC's services to the aviation community, we (in SEB) devised a method of calculating, from mandatory level winds, the value of the maximum wind speed and the pressure level at which the maximum wind was found. Documentation may be found in NMC Office Note 229 (Ref. 1). Recently, we tested this method and evaluated the data produced.

This report presents statistics obtained from comparisons between calculated maximum wind data and observed max wind data. This report also describes the results of comparisons (10 cases) between experimental charts of maximum wind fields produced at NMC and charts of maximum wind fields produced at the British Meteorological Office (Bracknell). However, because we did not receive Bracknell's charts that display the pressure levels of these max winds, comparisons were not attempted.

The numerical method used at Bracknell to produce the maximum wind data is briefly described in an article that was presented by W. L. Hughes (Ref. 1) before the ICAO, Area Forecast Panel in Montreal, Canada.

Maximum Wind Finder Method

Using only mandatory level wind data (i.e. 500-100 mb), the maximum wind value and its level are calculated by repeated applications of available mathematical codes. These codes, will (1) fit a 4th order polynomial to 5 points of data (2) calculate the derivative (3) find the real (and imaginary) roots of the derivative polynomial and (4) using the real roots, find the greatest of the maxima (or smallest of the minima) of the initial 5 point polynomial.
In use, the "data points" are winds as a function of pressure - thus the selected root is the level of max wind and the value of the polynomial is the maximum wind itself.

Comparisons Between NMC and Bracknell Charts

The charts collected for comparison are for the period 1200 GMT 4 January through 0000 GMT 9 January 1982. Figures 1-10 show examples of the experimental charts (gridpointed fields of the computed speeds) produced at NMC and Figures 1a-10a show examples of the charts prepared at Bracknell. Both sets of charts display the wind speed in knots, contoured in 20 knot intervals. The speeds displayed on NMC's charts are derived from the Hough Analysis and the speeds shown on Bracknell's charts are derived from Bracknell's operational ten-level model. Notice that Bracknell prints the max wind strength only when its value is greater than 60 knots.

In general, comparisons revealed that the charts are in reasonable agreement. In some areas, however, the wind speeds are markedly different. This is especially noticeable in regions of fairly well defined jets. In these regions, it appears (at least in these examples) that Bracknell's method produces slightly higher speeds. In areas where these differences were noted, we attempted to resolve the discrepancies by referencing soundings.

For example, at 1200 GMT 4 January, Figure 1 shows a maximum wind value of 120 knots in the broad area of high winds—greater than 90 knots—over the western United States. Figure 1a, on the other hand, shows a value of 142 knots in a similar isotach pattern. Examination of radiosonde data, in this case, suggested that the value shown in Figure 1a is more reasonable. Also, observations indicated that the speeds shown
in Figure 1 in the vicinity of Lake Huron (about 46°N latitude, 80°W longitude) are too weak.

Another example is observed in Figures 3 and 3a (1200 GMT 5 January). As seen in the previous example, the isotach patterns are similar, but there are areas where the wind speeds differ noticeably. For example, the wind speeds shown throughout the flow over the central United States in Figure 3a are in excess of 120 knots. In contrast, Figure 3 shows speeds below 110 knots. In this case, the referenced radiosonde data indicated that Figure 3 is in better agreement with the observations, except in the vicinity of 43°N latitude and 109°W longitude. In this area the values shown in Figure 3a are more reasonable.

Two other figures worth noting are Figures 4 and 4a (0000 GMT 6 January). Figure 4a shows a region of high wind speeds (above 120 knots) over the central United States, with a max of 129 knots located about 44°N latitude and 99°W longitude. In comparison, Figure 4 displays somewhat weaker winds throughout the region. Radiosonde data referenced in this vicinity indicated that the values shown in Figure 4 are more reasonable. In the area of strong winds (in excess of 110 knots) located over the eastern U.S., soundings suggested that the value (137 kts) shown on Figure 4a (about 39°N latitude, 76°W longitude) is somewhat higher than the observed value (120 kts) and the value shown on Figure 4 is slightly lower. In general, Figure 4 appears to be better correlated with the observations.

Further comparisons revealed that, in spite of the differences noted above, (and other differences that were observed) the data produced by Bracknell and NMC are generally comparable. (It should be mentioned here, that Figures 1-10 (NMC) agree quite well with the NMC's 250 mb height/isotach analysis charts.)
Twice per day, programs were run to extract radiosonde station reports from NMC's 0000 GMT and 1200 GMT ADP files (observational data in O. N. 29 format). These reports were extracted from stations located within the area between 25°N to 60°N latitude and 50°W to 145°W longitude. To be useful, the report had to contain (1) seven levels of mandatory data (500-100 mb) in category 01 (mandatory constant-pressure data) and (2) maximum wind information in category 03 (wind at variable pressure). If category 03 contained information for more than one max wind (between 500-100 mb), the wind with the greatest speed was selected.

Provided that the above criteria were satisfied, the seven mandatory wind speeds were used as input to the max wind finder code and max wind data (speed and pressure level) were computed. Then the calculated wind data were compared to the observed wind data (cat. 03) and differences were formed (i.e. calculated minus observed). These differences composed the data base from which various statistics were derived, i.e., the mean algebraic difference and the root-mean-square (rms) difference. Only observed wind speeds or computed wind speeds 60 knots or greater were used in compiling the statistics.

Table 1 presents the mean and root-mean-square difference computed for the period January 4-9. Also shown (bottom of page) are the averages of the statistics presented in the table. As indicated, the calculated wind data is in good agreement with the observed wind data. Statistics compiled for other periods revealed similar results.
Variation of average pressure differences (Table 1 values) are shown in Figure 11. Mean pressure differences are negative only on 12Z the 4th and 00Z the 6th when a large number of negative values were observed. All other periods show positive pressure differences. This suggests that there is a tendency for the max wind finder code to produce lower pressures than observed. As illustrated in Figure 12, there is very little difference between computed and observed wind speeds.

Table 2 shows the averages of the RMS differences by wind speed categories. (Namely the averages were computed for all winds greater than 60 knots, then all winds greater than 70 knots, etc.) These statistics were computed in an attempt to determine a reasonable cut-off value for reporting and/or displaying max wind information. As noted in Table 2 and Figures 13 and 14 (graphs of table 2 values), there is little difference between the values. It is interesting to note, however, that as the wind speed increases, the speed differences increase while on the other hand, the pressure differences decrease. This suggests that the polynomial fitting method does a better job finding the maximum level for stronger winds, but underestimates the value of the wind.

Conclusion

Overall, it appears that the method devised at NMC of calculating maximum wind information generally produces reasonable and reliable data. This was evidenced not only in the recent evaluations, but also in previous evaluations. Evaluations of NMC's max wind level charts, however, indicate that 70 knots seems to be the boundary between the chaotic and coherent regions. Therefore, if this information is to be used in the output sections of a forecast model, only information from winds speeds greater than 70 knots should be used.
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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>NO. REPORTS</th>
<th>MEAN PRESSURE DIFF (MB)</th>
<th>RMS PRESSURE</th>
<th>MEAN ABS WIND SPEED DIFF (KTS)</th>
<th>RMS WIND SPEED</th>
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<td>4 JAN 22</td>
<td>12Z</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.3</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
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**Averages of the above cases (10 observation periods)**

(1) Mean of the Pressure Difference 3.2
(2) RMS (Pressure) 47.4
(3) Mean of the Wind Speed Difference .1
(4) RMS (wind speed) 7.5
TABLE 2.
AVERAGES OF THE RMS DIFFERENCE (FOR ALL WINDS) BY CATEGORIES

<table>
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<th>CRIT VALUE</th>
<th>RMS (PRESS)</th>
<th>RMS (WIND SPD)</th>
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<td>&gt; 60 KTS</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; 70 KTS</td>
<td>44.9</td>
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<td>&gt; 80 KTS</td>
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<td>&gt; 90 KTS</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 100 KTS</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>8.4</td>
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REFERENCES


Captions for Figures:

Figure 1. Gridprinted field of max wind speeds in knots (contoured in 20 kt intervals) for 1200 GMT, 4 January 1982. (Produced at NMC).

Figure 1a. Chart of max wind speeds in knots. The value of the wind speed is shown only when the speed exceeds 60 kts. (Produced at Bracknell).


Figures 6 and 6a. Charts for 0000 GMT, 7 January 1982.

Figures 7 and 7a. Charts for 1200 GMT, 7 January 1982.

Figures 8 and 8a. Charts for 0000 GMT, 8 January 1982.

Figures 9 and 9a. Charts for 1200 GMT, 8 January 1982.


Figure 11. Graph of the bias statistics (pressure levels) presented in Table 1. The graph shows that the computed pressure levels are usually higher than the observed.

Figure 12. Graph of the bias statistics (wind speeds) present in Table 1. The graph shows that there is very little difference between the computed wind speeds and the observed wind speeds.

Figure 13. Graph of the average rms wind speed differences by categories (Values from Table 2.)
Captions for Figures: (Continued)

Figure 14. Graph of the average rms pressure differences by wind speed categories. (Values from Table 2.)

Table 1. Mean and RMS differences between computed and observed wind data.

Table 2. Averages of RMS differences.
MEAN PRESSURE DIFFERENCE

MB

1/4 1/4 1/8 1/8 1/6 1/6 1/6 1/6 1/8 1/8 1/8 1/8

12 002 12 002 12 002 12 002 12 002 12 002 12 002

FIG. 11
MEAN WIND SPEED DIFFERENCE

KT

-2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1/4 1/5 1/6 1/7 1/8 1/9

FIG 12