What you need to know.

Since late October, tropical Pacific SSTs have exceeded thresholds for a weak El Niño condition. However, not all of the atmospheric manifestations have appeared. More complete participation of the atmosphere is required to achieve the coupling needed for a lasting El Niño episode. Notably missing is a greater-than-normal amount of cloudiness and rainfall near the international dateline along the equator, required for El Niño to exert its climate impacts outside of the tropics. A more comprehensive, complete El Niño development is likely during January or February.

A new set of model runs indicates the probability for El Niño at 80-85% for the December-February season in progress, and at least 60% through the March-May season (lower chart on right). These probabilities are slightly higher than those of the official ENSO forecast issued December 4, which used both models and human judgement.

A majority of models forecast weak event strength, although a few predict moderate strength for December-February. We think a weak event is the most likely outcome.

Tony’s Take*.

IRI Chief Climate Forecaster Anthony Barnston gives a video rundown of the climate briefing in under two minutes. Feel free to embed!

Link: https://vimeo.com/114821929

*Video usually posted by 3 pm on the day of the briefing.

This month’s key graphic.

**Current Official ENSO forecast (issued Dec. 4)**

NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center and IRI jointly produce this monthly forecast every first Thursday. It stands as the official consensus forecast for ENSO.

**Updated ENSO forecast (mid-December)**

IRI and CPC issue an updated model-based ENSO forecast on the third Thursday of each month.

Additional Resources.

Powerpoint of this month’s briefing:
ir.i.columbia.edu/~tonyb/fctbriefingDec14.ppt

All of IRI’s Forecasts:
ir.i.columbia.edu/our-expertise/climate/forecasts/

IRI’s ENSO Map Room:
iridl.ldeo.columbia.edu/maproom/ENSO/

Email media@iri.columbia.edu to sign up for this bulletin

ENSO questions? Tweet @climatesociety w/ #ENSOQandA