

Thank you to the authors for addressing the second round of comments. See my comments below.

Introduction:

- (tracked changes version) Lines 98-111: This is overall, a nice addition to the introduction. However, the authors may be confusing distinguishing “low-frequency” climate modes with SST variability. “Climate modes” themselves are, at times, defined by variability in SSTs. The primary example is ENSO, which is driven by variability in tropical Pacific SSTs. This point is actually made by the authors in Lines 52-65 (tracked changes version). The authors should consider reframing this discussion slightly so that they aren’t distinguishing between climate modes and SST variability like they are two separate things. This might include rewriting the leading sentence of this new paragraph to something like, “There is growing evidence that SST variability outside of the tropical Pacific could provide an additional source of predictability for seasonal tornado activity.”
- “Low-frequency” climate modes: I would caution the authors on the use of this terminology. While modes of variability such as ENSO or NAO, for example, might seem relatively “low-frequency” when considering typical weather timescales, in climate, these climate modes are generally known to be relatively “high frequency.” The authors might consider removing “low-frequency” when it is mentioned, and could replace it with mode-specific timescales (i.e., ENSO is “interannual”) or just leave it at “climate modes.”

Section 3.3: Possible role of SST

- The authors should be very careful with discussion of statistical significance in this section. Regardless of whether looking at the composites of Active or Inactive TO years statistical significance is quite limited. Additionally, a limited sample size leads a reader to question the reliability of the significance testing. The authors might consider removing discussion of significance in discussion of these specific results, and maybe add a statement saying something like, “The composite anomalies of SSTs during TO Active and Inactive years had limited statistical significance.”
- (tracked changes version) Lines 479-482: This sentence should be re-worded for clarity. Perhaps it should read, “The lack of significant SST anomalies and weak 500H anomalies in the active TO years are consistent with the reduced model skill during **active** TO years and during climate mode phases that are **favorable** for tornado activity and suggest that inactive TO years are more predictable than active TO years.”
- Figure S6 should include the number of samples in each composite. Consider removing this component of the manuscript, or move the discussion to the supplement (tracked changes Lines 488-507). This discussion feels disjointed from the rest of this section. The caveat at the end of the section “Overall, the SSTs over the Pacific and Atlantic may help explain the predictability of WRs, though further investigation using longer observational

records is needed to better understand the predictability of tornado activity” is nice and might be added to the final paragraph of this section, if this discussion is removed.