

THE MASSIVE TORNADO OUTBREAK OF 2003

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ABSTRACT

In May of 2003, 516 tornadoes touched down in the central portion of the United States, which is a record for the most tornadoes for any single month. There were fourteen deaths associated with those tornadoes that touched down for that month. This thesis examines the events that led up to this massive outbreak at all time and space scales. For a while, meteorologists were aware that the possibility of severe weather existed; they could have not foreseen the massive quantities of severe weather that occurred. The thesis examines many possible factors. In particular, a thorough look at a rare phenomena known as “double blocking” was carried out in the region. The paper also takes a critical look at the timing involved with how it played a big role in having such a massive amount of tornadoes to occur in chaotic phenomena such as weather. We compare this outbreak to the 2004 outbreak which was fairly similar. An improved analysis at how could such a large amount of severe weather could happen in such a short time will better help everyone to be prepared if another such massive tornado outbreak occurs, even if it is not of quite the same scale as this one was.