

PRELIMINARY REPORT

HURRICANE CHARLEY

13 TO 30 AUGUST 1986

INTRODUCTION

Hurricane Charley was the second hurricane of 1986 to make landfall on the continental United States coast. The first was hurricane Bonnie which moved inland on the upper Texas coast in late June. It was also the second storm of the season to require warnings along the North Carolina coast (gale warnings were issued for portions of the North Carolina coast for tropical storm Andrew). Hurricane Charley just barely reached hurricane strength, but its track required warnings over a large stretch of the east coast. In addition, during its extratropical phase, it developed rather strong winds over a very large area and moved through the North Atlantic shipping lanes all the way to Europe as a significant system.

SYNOPTIC HISTORY

The system which was to become hurricane Charley was initially noted as a trough of low pressure which persisted over south Florida and the southeast Gulf of Mexico. Showers and thunderstorms associated with this system first appeared over the Florida peninsula on August 11. This activity then spread over the extreme east Gulf of Mexico on August 12. Some surface observations in the region indicated that a very broad and weak low pressure center was forming over the southeast Gulf of Mexico on August 12. The trough of low pressure then appeared to extend from the southeast Gulf toward the north. This poorly defined and diffuse system appeared to drift to the north on the 12th and 13th where it became a little better organized over the Florida Panhandle. At that stage it merged with a decaying frontal trough over the Florida Panhandle and Georgia. The system continued to become better defined over land and finally moved off the Georgia/South Carolina coast during the morning hours of August 15th.

Satellite pictures and radar observations indicated that a tropical depression had formed off the South Carolina coast by early afternoon on August 15. A NOAA reconnaissance aircraft then flew into the system by mid afternoon and found that the depression had attained tropical storm strength.

A weak ridge was located to the north of the tropical storm Charley from August 15 through August 16 resulting in an initial slow easterly drift and later a slow northeast drift as an amplifying trough approached from the west. This trough then dug in over the eastern half of the U.S. resulting in a north to north northeast movement of Charley on August 17 and 18. A mid level vorticity center then developed in the highly amplified trough over Georgia, south of Charley. The northern portion of the trough flattened out and Charley started to move on a northeast and then east course on August 19 and weakened. At this stage the storm started to merge with a frontal trough and begin to accelerate eastward across the Atlantic. The system had been weakening steadily through this period and began to spread out, becoming extratropical. On August 21, a substantial baroclinic inten-

sification took place which resulted in a very large and relatively strong low pressure system moving all the way to Europe. This system finally dissipated over the North Sea when another center developed to the southeast of the original center and then moved over northern Europe (figure 1).

METEOROLOGICAL AND HYDROLOGICAL STATISTICS

Hurricane Charley barely attained hurricane strength (table 1) and only remained a hurricane for about 24 hours. The strongest winds measured onboard the reconnaissance aircraft were 65 knots with a maximum surface wind estimate of 75 knots (figure 3). The minimum pressure measured by the reconnaissance aircraft was 987 millibars late on August 17 (figure 2). Peak winds of 75 mph or more were recorded on the coasts of North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland and Delaware (probably also on Nantucket island where a sustained wind of 60 mph was reported). Sustained winds exceeded 50 mph at several coastal locations (table 4).

Hurricane Charley was not a heavy rain producer. Some welcome rain, however, was produced by the initial disturbance over the southeast United States where a major drought was in effect. Most of the heavy convective elements remained over the water during its stronger phases. However, storm totals of 2 to 3 inches (table 4) were produced over portions of Maryland, primarily from thunderstorms which developed ahead of the system.

Storm tides (table 4) were generally only 2 to 3 feet above normal along the affected coastal areas. However, abnormally high tides were occurring at the time which resulted in some coastal flooding and beach erosion. Tides along the North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland coasts as well as Nantucket Island were generally 4 to 6 feet above mean low water levels.

Table 5 contains reports from ships experiencing gale force or stronger winds in the vicinity of Charley during its tropical storm phase. The track of the storm through the North Atlantic shipping lanes is reflected by the large number of vessels experiencing these stronger winds. Two to three times this number of ships (not listed in table 5, but some are plotted in figure 3) experienced gale force or stronger winds during the extratropical phase of Charley as it moved across the Atlantic.

CASUALTY AND DAMAGE STATISTICS

There were five deaths reported as associated with hurricane Charley. Three of those deaths came in the crash of a light aircraft in Chesapeake Bay near Baltimore on Sunday evening, August 17. This accident occurred in thunderstorms in advance of Charley. One woman drowned when attempting to cross a flooded causeway and drove into a canal near Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. The other reported casualty was in Norfolk, Virginia where a motorist ran into a downed tree.

Damages were reported to be about \$400,000 in the North Carolina area primarily due to tidal flooding and downed trees. Some building damage and aircraft damage was also reported. Damage in the city of Norfolk was estimated to be \$310,000, and \$80,000 for Virginia Beach. Some of the major

damage on Virginia Beach included a motel roof partially blown off and two homes under construction blown down. Other areas in eastern Virginia reported minor damage of trees and signs blown down and a few windows blown out. Total damage for the area was estimated to be about \$1 million. Only isolated and minor damage occurred along the Maryland and Delaware coasts (some street flooding in Ocean City). The final area of significant damage occurred on Nantucket Island. There was considerable street flooding due to high tides and rain and several boats were damaged, including one large boat sunk and others beached. Damage in Nantucket Harbor was estimated at \$75,000. Damage from heavy rains in advance of Charley over Berkshire County in Massachusetts was estimated at \$150,000.

WATCHES AND WARNINGS

Hurricanes moving nearly parallel to the mid Atlantic and New England coasts of the United States often result in rather complicated warning zone definitions. This results from the generally highly populated barrier islands and coastal zones with high degrees of vulnerability, irregular coastlines, numerous large bays and estuaries as well as numerous political and social boundaries, all complicated by the degree of uncertainty in the forecast strength and track of the hurricane. The complication of the warning process for this type of situation, even for a system barely of hurricane strength, is somewhat illustrated by table 3. Numerous coastal zones are listed for areas of gale warnings, hurricane watches and hurricane warnings, all progressing north and northeastward as the system moved toward the north and northeast.

Table 2 lists the probabilities of the core of the hurricane passing over various coastal locations for each forecast period. Values exceeding 30 percent within the next 72 hours are noted for the North Carolina coast by 6 PM EDT on August 16 and then progressed northward to Virginia and Maryland and Delaware (by interpolation) by noon on August 17, and New Jersey by 6 PM on August 17. Maximum values then became increasingly smaller in later time periods as the forecast track turned toward the northeast and east. However, a value exceeding 40 percent is noted for Nantucket, Massachusetts for a forecast issuance time of 6 PM on August 18. The storm was forecast to pass to the south but close to that location at that time.

As indicated earlier (meteorological data), most of the warned zones experienced gale force winds and many of these areas experienced peak winds of hurricane force. However, the only sustained hurricane force wind at a coastal location was recorded on the Chesapeake Bay bridge (97 mph with a peak wind of 104 mph.)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much of the information contained in this report was obtained from excellent storm summaries supplied by the National Weather Service offices at Wilmington and Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, Norfolk, Virginia, Baltimore, Maryland, Wilmington, Delaware, New York City, New York, and Boston, Massachusetts.

Table 1. PRELIMINARY BEST TRACK - HURRICANE CHARLEY - AUGUST 1986.

DATE	TIME (GMT)	POSITION		PRESSURE (MB)	WIND (KT)	STAGE
		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE			
8/13	1200	30.1	84.0	1009	10	Subtropical Low
"	1800	30.8	84.0	1012	10	" "
8/14	0000	31.4	83.6	1013	10	" "
"	0600	32.0	83.1	1014	10	" "
"	1200	32.5	82.5	1015	10	" "
"	1800	32.4	82.0	1015	10	" "
8/15	0000	32.3	81.2	1013	15	" "
"	0600	32.3	80.0	1013	15	" "
"	1200	32.2	79.0	1009	30	Trop. Depression
"	1800	32.2	78.5	1007	35	Tropical Storm
8/16	0000	32.3	78.1	1004	40	" "
"	0600	32.4	77.9	1002	40	" "
"	1200	32.6	77.6	999	45	" "
"	1800	32.9	77.4	997	50	" "
8/17	0000	33.2	77.1	995	55	" "
"	0600	33.7	76.9	993	60	" "
"	1200	34.4	76.6	991	65	Hurricane
"	1800	35.4	76.2	988	65	"
8/18	0000	36.5	75.8	987	65	"
"	0600	37.4	75.2	990	65	"
"	1200	38.2	74.1	992	60	Tropical Storm
"	1800	39.0	72.6	994	60	" "
8/19	0000	39.7	70.9	997	55	" "
"	0600	40.4	69.1	999	50	" "
"	1200	40.9	67.5	1000	45	" "
"	1800	41.3	65.8	1002	45	" "
8/20	0000	41.5	64.0	1003	40	" "
"	0600	41.6	62.5	1004	40	" "
"	1200	41.7	60.2	1005	40	" "
"	1800	41.7	58.4	1005	40	" "
8/21	0000	41.6	56.6	1000	40	Extratropical
"	0600	41.5	54.8	997	40	"
"	1200	41.4	53.2	992	40	"
"	1800	41.3	51.2	991	45	"
8/22	0000	41.3	49.4	990	45	"
"	0600	41.3	47.6	989	45	"
"	1200	41.4	46.2	989	45	"
"	1800	41.5	44.8	989	45	"
8/23	0000	41.8	43.2	988	45	"
"	0600	42.3	41.6	989	45	"
"	1200	43.0	39.6	989	45	"
"	1800	43.9	37.2	989	45	"
XX						
8/17	1400	34.7	76.5	990	65	LANDFALL
8/17	2200	36.2	76.0	987	65	MINIMUM PRESSURE *

(Minimum pressure extrapolated by U.S. Air Force reconnaissance aircraft)
 * - Tropical stage.

Table 1 (cont.) PRELIMINARY BEST TRACK - HURRICANE CHARLEY - AUGUST 1986.
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DATE	TIME (GMT)	POSITION #		PRESSURE (MB)	WIND (KT)	STAGE
		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE			
8/24	0000	44.9	34.4	990	45	Extratropical
"	0600	46.0	31.6	992	40	"
"	1200	47.0	28.8	995	40	"
"	1800	48.2	26.0	997	40	"
8/25	0000	49.2	21.6	999	40	"
"	0600	50.0	16.4	1000	40	"
"	1200	50.7	11.4	994	40	"
"	1800	51.4	7.2	988	50	"
8/26	0000	52.2	4.4	981	45	"
"	0600	52.9	2.0	980	45	"
"	1200	53.6	0.0	982	45	"
"	1800	54.3	2.0E	986	45	"
8/27	0000	55.0	3.7E	984	45	"
"	0600	55.5	5.0E	983	45	"
"	1200	56.0	5.8E	985	35	"
"	1800	56.3	6.0E	989	35	"
8/28	0000	56.6	6.0E	989	35	"
"	0600	56.8	6.0E	991	35	"
"	1200	57.0	6.0E	998	30	"
"	1800	57.0	5.5E	999	30	"
8/29	0000	57.0	5.0E	1002	25	"
"	0600	56.8	5.0E	1004	20	"
"	1200	56.5	5.0E	1004	20	"
"	1800	56.2	6.0E	1004	15	"
8/30	0000	56.2	8.0E	1006	15	"
"	0600	Dissipated				

- # - Longitudes are in degrees and tenths North.
- Latitudes are in degrees and tenths West unless followed by an E which indicates degrees and tenths East.

Table 2. Chances of the center of Charley passing within 65 miles of the listed locations by date and time (EDT) indicated (probabilities in percent).

ADVISORY DATE/TIME	15/4PM	16/12AM	16/6AM	16/12PM	16/6PM	17/12AM	17/6AM
PROBABILITY THRU	18/2PM	18/8PM	19/2AM	19/8AM	19/2PM	19/8PM	20/2AM
Miami, FL	5	4	4	3	2	X	X
W. Palm Bch., FL	7	6	5	5	2	X	X
Ft. Pierce, FL	9	8	7	7	3	X	X
Coacoa Bch, FL	11	9	8	8	4	2	X
Daytona Bch, FL	13	11	10	10	6	3	X
Jacksonville, FL	14	13	12	11	7	4	X
Savannah, GA	16	16	15	14	10	7	6
Charleston, SC	22	23	23	19	14	10	9
Myrtle Bch, SC	21	29	29	24	24	18	18
Wilmington, NC	18	21	21	21	35	36	53
Morehead City, NC	15	17	18	18	33	47	75
Cape Hatteras, NC	13	14	15	15	22	30	42
Norfolk, VA	9	10	11	11	14	17	22
Ocean City, MD	6	7	8	8	11	13	14
Atlantic City, NJ	4	5	6	6	8	11	9
New York City, NY	3	3	4	4	6	9	6
Montauk Point, NY	2	3	3	3	6	9	4
Providence, RI	2	2	3	3	5	8	3
Nantucket, MA	2	2	3	3	5	8	2
Hyannis, MA	2	2	3	3	5	8	2
Boston, MA	X	X	2	2	4	7	2
Portland, ME	X	X	X	X	3	5	X
Bar Harbor, ME	X	X	X	X	2	4	X
Eastport, ME	X	X	X	X	2	4	X
St. John, NB	X	X	X	X	X	3	X
Moncton, NB	X	X	X	X	X	3	X
Yarmouth, NS	X	X	X	X	2	5	X
Halifax, NS	X	X	X	X	2	4	X
Sable Island, NS	X	X	X	X	X	3	X
Sydney, NS	X	X	X	X	X	2	X
Eddy Point, NS	X	X	X	X	X	2	X
Bermuda	2	2	2	2	3	2	X

X MEANS LESS THAN 2 PERCENT

Table 2. Chances of the center of Charley passing within 65 miles of the listed (cont.) locations by date and time (EDT) indicated (probabilities in percent).

ADVISORY DATE/TIME	17/12PM	17/6PM	18/12AM	18/6AM	18/12PM	18/6PM
<u>PROBABILITY THRU</u>	<u>20/8AM</u>	<u>20/2PM</u>	<u>20/8PM</u>	<u>21/2AM</u>	<u>21/8AM</u>	<u>21/2PM</u>
Morehead City, NC	86	62	X	X	X	X
Cape Hatteras, NC	83	97	X	X	X	X
Norfolk, VA	43	73	X	X	X	X
Ocean City, MD	32	51	68	87	75	X
Atlantic City, NJ	22	35	42	49	40	X
New York City, NY	18	25	28	33	23	X
Montauk Point, NY	16	20	24	29	28	24
Providence, RI	15	18	21	24	22	16
Nantucket, MA	14	16	21	23	26	41
Hyannis, MA	14	16	20	22	23	28
Boston, MA	14	16	18	19	17	11
Portland, ME	12	14	14	14	12	6
Bar Harbor, ME	11	12	13	13	11	7
Eastport, ME	10	11	12	12	11	7
St. John, NB	9	11	12	12	10	7
Moncton, NB	8	9	10	10	9	6
Yarmouth, NS	10	12	14	14	14	13
Halifax, NS	8	10	12	12	12	11
Sable Island, NS	6	7	10	10	11	12
Sydney, NS	6	7	10	10	10	7
Eddy Point, NS	7	8	11	11	11	9
Pix Basques, NFLD	5	6	8	8	8	5
Burgeo, NFLD	4	5	8	8	8	5
Ile St. Pierre	4	5	8	8	9	6
Cape Race, NFLD	X	3	7	7	8	6
Hibernia Oilfield	X	X	4	4	5	4

X MEANS LESS THAN 2 PERCENT

Table 3. WATCHES AND WARNINGS FOR HURRICANE CHARLEY, AUGUST 1986.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>EFFECTIVE</u>	<u>DISCONTINUED</u>
Bogue Inlet NC to south of Oregon Inlet NC including Pamlico Sound	GALE WARNINGS TO 55 MPH	8/16/2200Z	UPGRADED 8/17/0100Z
Bogue Inlet to south of Oregon Inlet including Pamlico Sound	HURRICANE WATCH GALE WARNINGS TO 65 MPH	8/17/0100Z	UPGRADED 8/17/1000Z
Bogue Inlet to Cape Lookout, NC	HURRICANE WARNING	8/17/1000Z	8/17/2000Z
Cape Lookout to south of Oregon Inlet including Pamlico Sound	HURRICANE WARNING	8/17/1000Z	8/18/0200Z
West of Bouge Inlet to Topsail Bch. NC	GALE WARNING	8/17/1000Z	8/18/0200Z
Oregon Inlet, NC to Virginia Bch, VA including Albemarle Sound	GALE WARNING	8/17/1000Z	UPGRADED 8/17/1400Z
Oregon Inlet, NC to Virginia Bch, VA including Albemarle Sound	HURRICANE WARNING	8/17/1400Z	8/18/0200Z
Virginia Bch, VA to Fenwick Island MD/Del. including S. Chesapeake Bay	HURRICANE WATCH GALE WARNING TO 40 MPH	8/17/1400Z 8/17/1400Z	UPGRADED 8/17/2000Z
Cape Lookout, NC to Virginia Bch, VA	HURRICANE WARNING	8/17/2000Z	8/18/0200Z
Virginia Bch, VA to Cape Charles, VA	HURRICANE WARNING	8/17/2000Z	8/18/0600Z
Cape Charles, VA to Fenwick Island, MD/DEL including Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds	HURRICANE WARNING	8/17/2000Z	8/18/1600Z
South Chesapeake Bay	HURRICANE WARNING GALE WARNING	8/17/2000Z 8/18/2000Z	8/18/0600Z 8/18/1600Z
Cape Lookout, NC to Topsail, NC	GALE WARNING	8/17/2000Z	8/18/0200Z
North Chesapeake Bay	GALE WARNING	8/17/2000Z	8/18/1600Z

Table 3 (cont.). WATCHES AND WARNINGS FOR HURRICANE CHARLEY, AUGUST 1986.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>EFFECTIVE</u>	<u>DISCONTINUED</u>
Fenwick Island to Manasquan, NJ including Delaware Bay	HURRICANE WATCH GALE WARNING	8/17/2200Z 8/17/2200Z	UPGRADED 8/18/0200Z
Manasquan, NJ to Sandy Hook, NJ	HURRICANE WATCH GALE WARNING	8/17/2200Z 8/17/2200Z	UPGRADED 8/18/0200Z
Sandy Hook, NJ to to Chatham, MA	HURRICANE WATCH GALE WARNING	8/17/2200Z 8/17/2200Z	8/18/1600Z
Fenwick Island to Sandy Hook, NJ including Delaware Bay	HURRICANE WARNING	8/18/0200Z	8/18/1600Z
Cape Henlopen, Del to Watch Hill, RI including mouth of Delaware Bay	GALE WARNING TO 55 MPH	8/18/1600Z	8/18/2200Z
Watch Hill, RI to Chatham, MA	GALE WARNING TO 55 MPH TO 45 MPH	8/18/1600Z 8/18/2200Z	8/18/2200Z 8/19/0100Z
Coastal waters from Chatham, MA to Marthas Vineyard MA	GALE WARNING	8/19/1000Z	8/19/1600Z

Table 4. Selected meteorological and hydrological statistics for Hurricane Charlie August 1986.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>STRONGEST WIND (MPH)</u>		<u>MIN PRESS.</u>		<u>RAINFALL (IN.)</u>		<u>STORM TOTAL</u>
	<u>DATE/TIME</u>	<u>SUSTD</u>	<u>PEAK</u>	<u>DATE/TIME</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>24 HR</u>	
<u>North Carolina</u>							
Wilmington	17/1904Z	-	29	17/0905Z	17	0.39	0.48
				29.65			
Jacksonville	17/1656Z	21	29	17/1056Z	17	0.77	0.85
				29.62			
New Bern	17/1450Z	17	25	17/1450Z	18	1.45	1.71
				29.61			
Cherry Point	17/1230Z	30	39	17/1355Z	18	0.87	1.60
				29.49			
Cape Lookout	17/1100Z	47	58	-	-	-	-
Atlantic Beach	17/1130Z	35	58	-	-	-	-
Buxton	17/1630Z	49	65	17/1605Z	17	2.73	?
				29.51			
Frisco Camp Dare Co.	17/1725Z	55	80	17/1700Z	-	-	-
				29.51			
Swanquarter	17/1930Z	58	78	17/1850Z	-	-	-
				29.31			
Duck Coe Pier	17/2000Z	56	77	-	-	-	-
<u>Virginia</u>							
Norfolk Airpt.	18/0050Z	40	63	18/0100Z	18	1.08	?
			17/2224Z	29.50			
S. Chesapeake Bay Bridge	17/2300Z	97	104	-	-	-	-
Cape Henry	17/2300Z	54	82	-	-	-	-
Coal Piers West Norfolk	17/2300Z	-	81				
<u>Maryland</u>							
Baltimore	17/1858Z	-	28	18/0930Z	18	0.29	0.29
				29.79			
Salisbury	18/0700Z	-	48	18/1000Z	18	1.70	1.70
				29.54			
Ocean City	18/1030Z	50	78	-	17/18	-	2.70
Assateague Seashore	18/1000Z	-	73	-	17/18	-	3.25

Table 5. Ship reports in vicinity of Charley (during tropical stages).
(Wind direction in degrees, speed in knots, pressure in millibars.)

<u>DATE/TIME</u>	<u>SHIP</u>	<u>LAT.</u>	<u>LON.</u>	<u>WIND</u> <u>DIR./SPD.</u>	<u>PRESS (mb)</u>
16/1200Z	WFZC	33.7	76.6	140/35	1009.7
16/1800Z	WLCG	33.3	74.5	180/36	1013.8
17/0000Z	VCWZ	33.9	76.9	110/35	-
17/1200Z	CBFA6	33.9	74.1	160/35	1010.8
18/0600Z	GHZK	37.0	76.1	330/37	1000.0
18/1800Z	9VPU	40.5	72.0	070/35	1009.0
19/0000Z	WSNH	38.9	70.2	200/46	1000.8
19/1200Z	?	38.2	68.4	250/38	1006.8
"	HOQH	38.7	66.2	240/44	-
19/1800Z	PFER	39.3	63.8	230/45	1006.0
20/0000Z	PFER	39.3	64.0	260/42	1007.1
"	D5ZA	39.9	61.2	210/43	1008.0
"	?	40.6	60.8	200/38	1005.7
"	KMHF	43.8	60.1	100/49	1007.8
20/0600Z	KMHF	43.8	60.1	060/40	1005.7
"	LFMO	43.8	60.7	060/38	1005.0
"	CG3V	45.3	59.8	070/35	1013.2
20/1200Z	D5XA	39.8	63.3	320/44	1015.0
"	?	40.5	63.0	330/38	1010.9
"	9VBS	42.4	63.1	360/37	1013.5
"	KMHF	43.8	60.1	040/66	1008.8
"	LFMO	43.8	60.7	060/40	1009.3
"	VSG8	44.2	58.4	050/55	1007.2
"	GCXD	45.6	57.9	090/37	1014.2
20/1800Z	ELEA7	39.3	54.8	240/35	1005.5
"	ELDZ7	40.6	52.4	150/38	1009.5
"	VRKB	41.1	60.3	340/38	1008.0
"	KMHF	43.8	60.1	030/47	1014.1
"	CGBV	45.6	57.8	060/40	1015.4
"	GCXD	46.0	53.7	080/37	1015.3

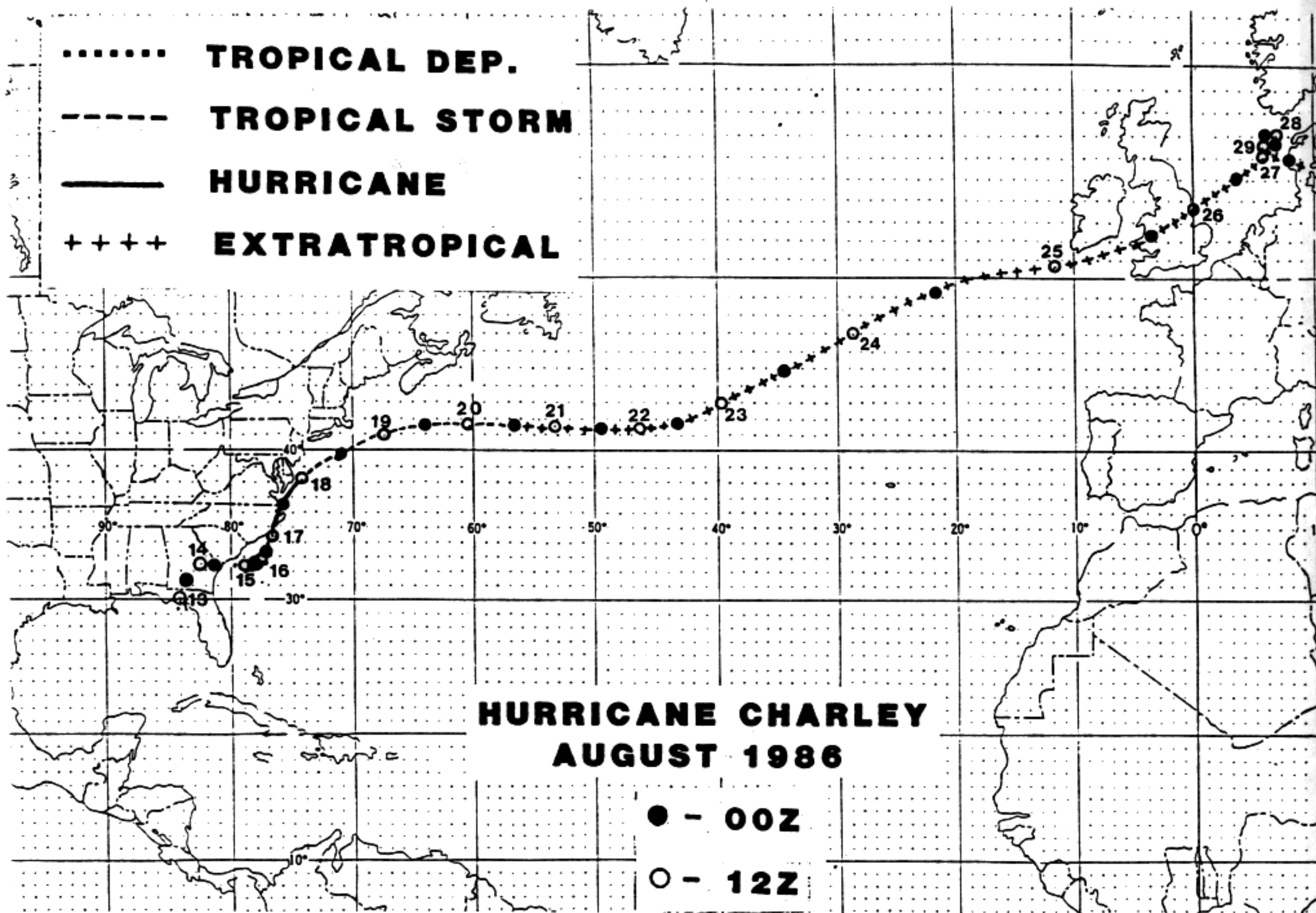


FIGURE 1. Track of Hurricane Charley - August 1986.

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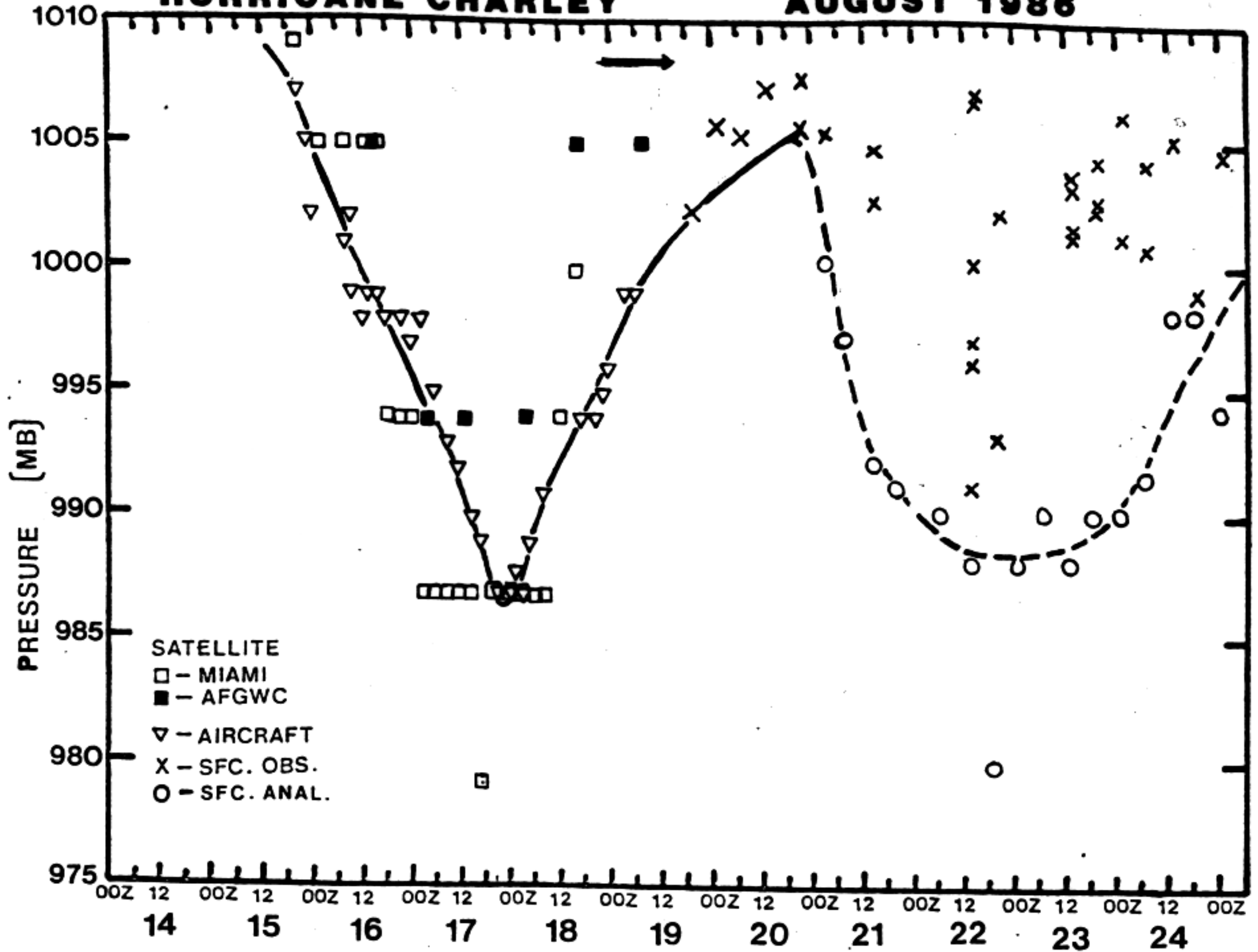


FIGURE 2. Minimum sea level pressures of Hurricane Charley - August 1986.

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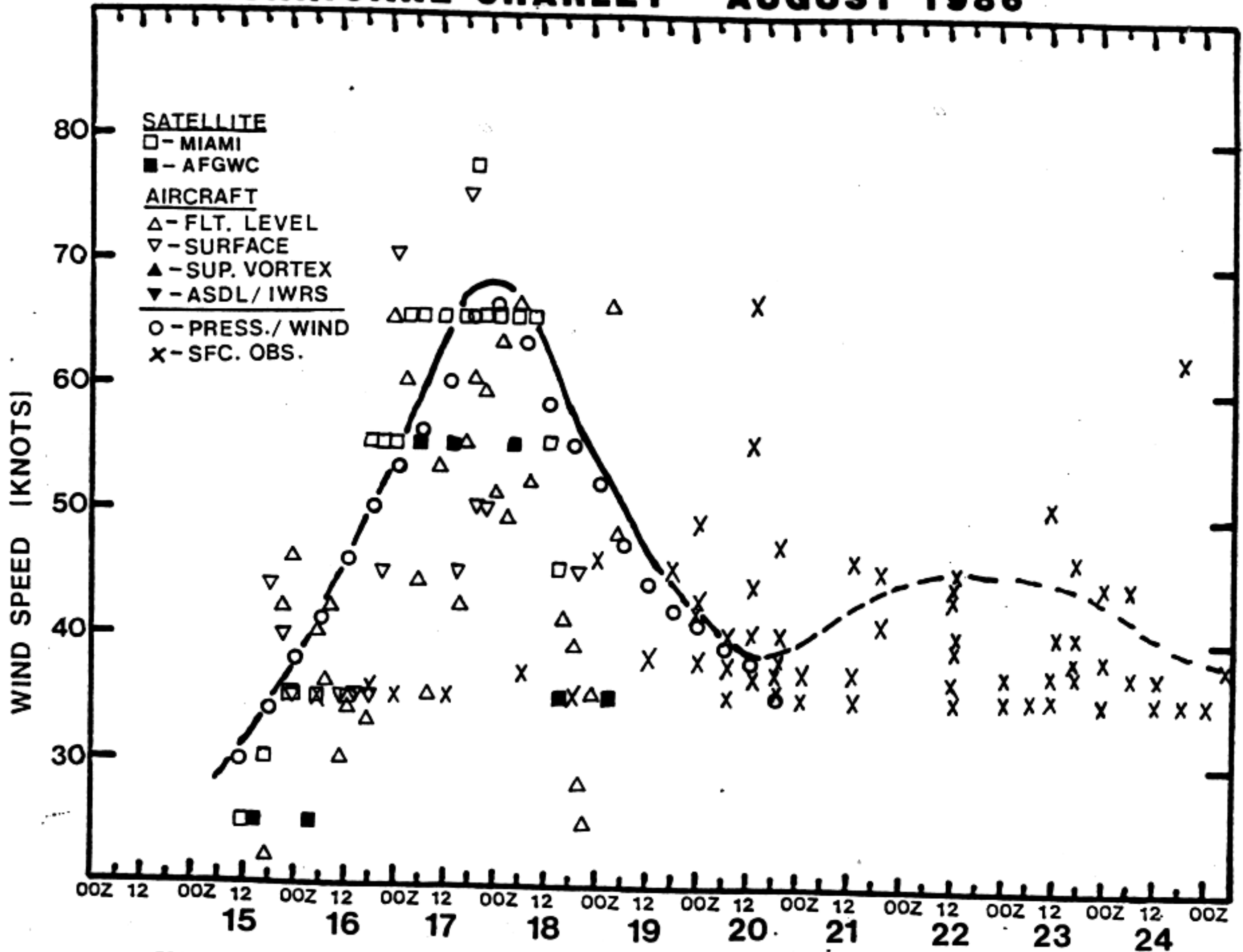


FIGURE 3. Maximum sustained surface winds for Hurricane Charley - August 1986.