Abstract Submitted
for the DFD12 Meeting of
The American Physical Society

Generation of a large-scale barotropic circulation in rotating convection

ANTONIO RUBIO\textsuperscript{2}, KEITH JULIEN\textsuperscript{3}, JEFFREY WEISS\textsuperscript{4}, University of Colorado, Boulder — We recently reported on the existence of a slow-growing large scale barotropic mode in DNS of rotating Rayleigh-Benard convection using the non-hydrostatic balanced geostrophic equations (NHBGE) (Julien et al 2012). Such large scale modes had been previously observed as an inverse cascade in stable layer quasi-geostrophic dynamics or via instability mechanisms of thermal Rossby waves occuring in presence of sloping endwalls (i.e quasi-geostrophic beta-convection). In this talk we report on the early time history of this large scale mode and discuss the generating physical mechanism as a “symmetry-breaking” forcing function of the barotropic vorticity equation. Impacts of the large scale barotropic mode on the smaller scale baroclinic components of the flow are detailed with a specific emphasis on the changing nature of the heat transport as the barotropic mode evolves.

\textsuperscript{1}This work was supported by the National Science Foundation under FRG grants DMS-0855010 and DMS-0854841. Computational resources supporting this work were provided by the NASA High-End Computing (HEC) Program through the NASA Advanced Supercomputing (NAS)

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Date submitted: 10 Aug 2012 Electronic form version 1.4