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# Is this winter the warmest ever in Boston?

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JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

**A man stuck his arm out the window on an unseasonably warm day in Allston on Thursday.**

**By Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE STAFF FEBRUARY 25, 2016

Got spring fever yet? Thursday morning's T-shirt weather is just the latest evidence of a winter that has let us off easy.

The winter of 2015-16 will almost certainly go down as one of the five warmest on record in Boston, and it could even wind up as one of the top three, according to a review of data from the National Weather Service.

The average daily temperature in Boston so far this winter — through Tuesday — was 37.1 degrees.

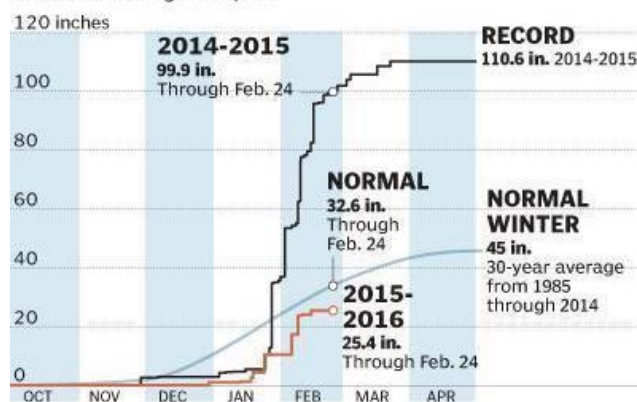
Temperatures are expected to climb toward 60 Thursday. Combine that with the forecasts for the next few days and the average daily temperature for the season would end up at 37.3 degrees.

That would put this meteorological winter (which forecasters define as December, January, and February) as the second warmest since recordkeeping began with the winter of 1872-73.



### Boston snowfall totals

Measured at Logan Airport



SOURCES: National Weather Service, Logan Airport measurements; NOAA

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The warmest on record was 2001-02, when average temperatures averaged 37.9 degrees.

It's unlikely that temperatures during the final days of February will drop low enough to drag this winter out of the top five. The fifth warmest is a three-way tie at 35.4 degrees.

This winter has marked a huge bounce back from a year ago, when Boston saw average wintertime temperatures of 28. The historical average is 30.7 degrees.

Another boon — or disappointment, if you like snow days — has been the lack of snow. This winter will also likely finish with below-average snowfall.

A total of 25.4 inches had fallen in Boston as of Tuesday, and there is no snow forecast through the end of the month.

Much of the relatively warm and snow-free conditions this winter — which featured the warmest

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December on record in Boston — has been attributed to a powerful El Niño, an area of unusually warm sea surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean that can dictate weather patterns across large swaths of the planet.

The winter has, generally, played out as long-range forecasters predicted.

In the months leading up to the start of winter, and throughout the season, meteorologists said that the strong El Niño would be a dominant factor, increasing the chance for above average temperatures. They also predicted it would cause our region to ultimately wind up with average to below-average snowfall by winter’s end.

Forecasters have also noted that the strong El Niño made their jobs a bit easier, as they tend to have more confidence predicting the impact of various climate patterns — including El Niño — the stronger they are.

## How this winter compares to last winter and historically

The following stats are based on observations recorded at Logan Airport in Boston during the meteorological winter, which runs from the start of December through the end of February. Data for 2015-16 is as of Feb. 23. Historical records date back about 145 winters; snowfall figures go back 126 winters.

	2015-16	2014-15	Historic average	Record	Year of record
Avg. temperature	37.1	28	30.7	high 37.9	2001-02
High temperature	69	64	62	high 76	1998-99
Low temperature	-9	-3	-1	low -18	1933-34
Precipitation	10.3	13.5	10.6	high 21.9	1957-58
Snowfall	25.4	99.4 (record)	33.1	low 2.7	1936-37

**SOURCE: National Weather Service**

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