PA CFTC Net Spec Z-Score

Spec positioning extremes are documented 60-90d contrarian indicators across commodity markets.

David Stendahl · Market Lab Analytics · November 6, 2026

What this signal is

Spec positioning extremes are documented 60-90d contrarian indicators across commodity markets.

The composite is bounded between minus one and plus one through tanh. On 2013-02-13 it reached its series maximum plus 0.997 and on 2012-05-23 its series minimum minus 0.993.

Today the composite reads near −0.69. See live page for current state.

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How the inputs compose

Spec positioning extremes are documented 60-90d contrarian indicators across commodity markets.

The engine also computes four confirming features: five-day velocity, 60-day volatility regime, 60-day correlation with palladium returns, 63-day lag-1 autocorrelation.

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What the state-conditional returns have actually done

The palladium forward-60-day return baseline (unconditional) is mean plus 1.82 percent, median plus 1.79 percent.

> **Reference baseline (3,669 palladium-aligned forward-60-day windows over the live engine window)**
>
> Palladium forward-60-day return baseline: mean plus 1.82 percent, median plus 1.79 percent. Phase 0 source: Z32357 engine parquet joined with NYMEX palladium back-adjusted continuous closes.

Crowded long specs (Phase +1), 1,115 trading days, returned on average plus 1.55 percent.

Normal (Phase +0), 486 trading days, returned on average plus 2.07 percent.

Crowded short specs (Phase −1), 2,068 trading days, returned on average plus 0.84 percent.

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Three cases that frame how to read the signal

Case 1: 2013-02 composite series maximum

On 2013-02-13 the composite reached its series maximum plus 0.997. Palladium subsequent 60-day behavior aligned with the crowded long specs regime pattern.

Case 2: 2012-05 composite series minimum

On 2012-05-23 the composite reached its series minimum minus 0.993. Palladium subsequent 60-day behavior aligned with the crowded short specs regime pattern.

Case 3: March 2020 COVID shock window

The March 2020 COVID liquidity shock drove violent regime shifts across palladium drivers. The composite oscillated as the underlying mechanism repriced.

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How to use the signal today

This is a regime detector on a 60-day forward horizon.

Three best uses. First, as a regime filter for palladium exposure (Phase +1 equals crowded long specs). Second, as a cross-check against positioning and price-momentum signals. Third, as a transition-window warning, pairing with price-based signals for conviction.

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Methodology notes

Spec positioning extremes are documented 60-90d contrarian indicators across commodity markets.

The 2012 start reflects the earliest reliable source coverage.

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What this signal does not cover

Four caveats. The signal is a regime detector, not a timing signal. State-conditional means hold on average, not for every individual window. Regime persistence varies with macroeconomic backdrop. Individual windows can run much longer or shorter than mean sample. State-conditional edges are backward-looking empirical averages. Future regimes may differ. The baseline is NYMEX palladium back-adjusted continuous (PA_1240BD).

Not investment advice. Signal readings and empirical statistics are derived from publicly available data sources. (c) 2026 David Stendahl.