RobustQuant Weekly Detailed

Weekend Edition | July 26, 2026 | Prediction for July 31

COMPASS FOR EMOTIONAL DISCIPLINE - NOT TRADING ADVICE *Weekly boundaries to help reduce fear and greed in market decisions*

1 | At a Glance

Asset	Range	Width	Track Record
S&P 500 (SPX)	7,090 – 7,726	±4.3%	78/82 (95.1%)
Gold (GLD)*	339.2 – 399.4	±8.2%	51/53 (96.2%)
REITs (XLRE)*	44.21 – 49.27	±5.4%	42/43 (97.7%)

*Newsletter-exclusive coverage

Target: ~95% of weekly closes fall within these ranges Track record details → robustquant.com/predictions

2 | This Week's Summary

Strong Earnings. Lowest Claims Since 1969. Losing Week. Math Held.

Tesla posted record deliveries and Alphabet's cloud business grew 82%, while jobless claims fell to their lowest level since 1969. Every print looked like confirmation.

The best earnings season in years arrived alongside the strongest labour data in decades - and the S&P 500 still closed lower, inside a range published before any of it printed.

Key Results:

• S&P 500: 7,411.98 (lower half) ✓ • Gold: 371.9 (upper half) ✓ • REITs: 45.95 (near midpoint) ✓

Pattern of the week: The strongest data of the season didn't lift the closes. SPX finished the lower half, REITs sat near the midpoint, gold alone held the upper half - and all three finished inside.

Every good number made adding risk feel safer. The close came in lower anyway.

3 | What Moved Markets (July 20 – July 26)

The Strongest Earnings Season Since 2021 Met Its Biggest One-Day Selloff in Over a Year:

Tesla and Alphabet both reported Wednesday. Tesla booked record deliveries of 480,126 vehicles and revenue up 26%, but adjusted earnings of $0.33 missed a $0.51 estimate and capital spending jumped 142%; shares fell 14.5%. Alphabet's cloud revenue rose 82% but the company lifted 2026 capex guidance to $195–205bn; shares fell 7.1%. The move erased roughly $797bn from the Magnificent Seven in a single session Thursday - the steepest one-day drop since April 2025. Blended Q2 S&P 500 earnings growth reached 37.9%, the strongest since 2021. The index still closed the week down 0.6% at 7,411.98; the Nasdaq fell 2.1%.

Firm Data on Both Sides of the Atlantic:

US jobless claims fell to 187,000, the lowest since 1969, and the flash composite PMI hit an eight-month high of 53.6 - though the survey's author flagged that part of the strength was one-off World Cup and anniversary activity.

Oil Above $100, Then a Reversal:

Brent settled at $100.69 Wednesday, up 7% and its highest since May, before reversing about 4% Friday on mediation reports - still up 12% on the week. The move pushed the 10-year Treasury yield to 4.69%, around an 18-month high.

→ *For detailed regional breakdowns and economic data, see Appendix at end of newsletter*

4 | S&P 500 (SPX) Boundaries (July 31)

Range for Friday July 31: 7,090–7,726 Hit Rate: 78/82 weeks (95.1%)

Last Week's Performance:

Last week: Range 7,158–7,790, closed **7,411.98** (lower half) ✓

SPX closed 7,411.98, in the lower half of its range and down 0.6% on the week. The range shifts lower at both ends; width holds near ±4.3%. Track record 95.1% (78/82).

For Your Planning:

• Lower zone (7,090–7,302): Where caution tends to build • Middle zone (7,302–7,514): Normal trading area • Upper zone (7,514–7,726): Where excitement tends to build

These are weekly movement boundaries, not buy/sell signals.

5 | Gold (GLD) Coverage (Newsletter-Exclusive)

Range for Friday July 31: 339.2–399.4 Containment: 51/53 weeks (96.2%)

Last Week's Performance:

Last week: Range 334.2–391.9, closed **371.9** (upper half) ✓

GLD closed 371.9, in the upper half of its range. The range shifts higher at both ends; width holds near ±8.2%. Track record 96.2% (51/53).

For Your Planning:

• Lower zone (339.2–359.3): Where consolidation may emerge • Middle zone (359.3–379.3): Current close territory • Upper zone (379.3–399.4): Where safe-haven demand builds

Newsletter-exclusive coverage.

6 | REITs (XLRE) Coverage (Newsletter-Exclusive)

Range for Friday July 31: 44.21–49.27 Containment: 42/43 weeks (97.7%)

Last Week's Performance:

Last week: Range 43.40–48.49, closed **45.95** (near midpoint) ✓

REITs closed 45.95, near the midpoint of its range. The range shifts higher at both ends; width holds near ±5.4%. Track record 97.7% (42/43).

For Your Planning:

• Lower zone (44.21–45.90): Where rate-hike pressure tends to show • Middle zone (45.90–47.58): Normal trading area • Upper zone (47.58–49.27): Where rate-cut optimism tends to build

Newsletter-exclusive coverage.

7 | Psychology & How to Read

The traps have rhymed for weeks. A peace deal and a hawkish Fed on the same day. The best earnings, and the stock fell. Bad payrolls, and a record Dow. The best inflation number in years, and a losing week. This week added the next verse - and it was the subtlest yet: the certainty didn't arrive all at once, it arrived in instalments.

That is the harder version to sit through. A single scary headline is easy to distrust. But a week of good numbers - record deliveries, then record cloud growth, then the lowest claims since 1969 - doesn't feel like emotion. Each new print feels like more evidence, and **being more sure feels like being better informed.** By Thursday, "the story is settled" felt like a conclusion, not a feeling.

This Week's Trap: letting a run of good numbers harden into certainty.

What They Show: Weekly boundaries where the market has historically closed - a fixed reference set before the news, so you're not deciding in the middle of it.

What They Don't Show: Buy/sell signals, price targets, or guaranteed outcomes.

The Retail Trap: Each confirmation makes the next feel safer to act on. But the prints described the past; the week was still being written. The same market that cheered the earnings closed lower by Friday.

Professional Approach:

- Stay systematic within boundaries

- Lower zones: Fear creates opportunities for planned strategies
- Upper zones: Excitement may warrant risk review
- Outside ranges: Market behaviour shifting beyond normal parameters

This Week's Context: Every week offers a different emotional trap. Every week the Compass asks the same question: where did it actually close?

Key Point: SPX closed 7,411.98 - the lower half of a range published before Tesla and Alphabet reported, before jobless claims printed their lowest since 1969, before oil settled above $100. The boundary was set before the first confirmation arrived.

8 | Track Record

Performance Since Launch:

- S&P 500: 78 hits in 82 weeks (95.1%)
- Gold: 51 hits in 53 weeks (96.2%)
- REITs: 42 hits in 43 weeks (97.7%)

What This Means:

Combined across all three assets: 171 hits in 178 weekly calls since launch - 96.1% overall containment. This marks the eighth consecutive week each asset closed inside its published range.

Transparency:

All ranges published before each week starts. No retroactive changes. Complete history available at robustquant.com/predictions.

9 | Method and Limitations

How Ranges Work:

Combines current volatility patterns, trend direction, and momentum indicators. Targets ~95% weekly containment rate. Model tracks Friday closes - not earnings releases, not the jobless-claims print, not the after-hours reaction that fades by the cash close.

When Ranges Break:

Breakouts signal markets transitioning beyond normal parameters. These are not failures - they are objective signals that conditions shifted. Disciplined approaches recognise that unstable periods often create the best opportunities for planned strategies.

Current Environment:

Confirmation is seductive because it arrives in pieces - one print, then another, each one a reason to be a little more sure. A discretionary approach has to decide how much of that accumulating certainty to trade on. A systematic framework does not weigh it: the record earnings, the lowest claims since 1969, and Thursday's reversal are all inputs to how wide the range is drawn - not reasons the boundary moves. A single published range held through all of them.

Q: Tesla and Alphabet posted some of the strongest results of the season and still fell double digits in a session. If even blowout earnings sell off, what is safe to buy?

A: The range was published before either company reported and didn't move when the numbers landed. A great print changes the mood far more than it changes where the week closes - and this week the mood turned by Thursday. Your actions depend on your financial plan and strategic rules established before emotional moments arrive.

Q: Record-low claims, an eight-month-high PMI, the best earnings since 2021 - every signal pointed the same way. Doesn't that much agreement justify adding risk?

A: A week of signals that all agree is exactly the setup the range is built to absorb, and the close still landed inside it. Agreement among prints is an input to how the range is drawn, not a reason the boundary shifts. Your actions depend on your financial plan and strategic rules established before emotional moments arrive.

10 | Footer

Next Week: Boundaries for July 31 close **Updates:** Quick social media notes if exceptional volatility occurs

RobustQuant is independent practitioner research - not a fund, not a research firm, and not paid analysis. Built from systematic market research and more than two decades of studying and participating in financial markets, it is published as market context designed to reduce emotional decision-making - not as investment advice. Past performance doesn't guarantee future results. Consult qualified professionals for personal financial decisions.

Systematic over emotional. Structure over speculation.

APPENDIX | Detailed Market Review (July 20 – July 26, 2026)

For readers who want comprehensive economic data and regional breakdowns

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United States: Firm Data and a Hard Tariff Reset as the AI Trade Cracks

Jobless claims - lowest since 1969. Initial claims for the week ending 18 July fell 22,000 to 187,000 from a revised 209,000 - the lowest weekly reading since September 1969, and far below a consensus near 212,000 (Department of Labor, 23 July). The four-week moving average fell to 207,500 and continuing claims eased to 1,796,000. The print reinforced the "low-firing" character of the labour market even as the oil shock pushed inflation expectations the other way.

Flash PMI - an eight-month high, partly one-off. The S&P Global flash US composite output index rose to 53.6 in July from 51.9, an eight-month high; services rose to 53.6 and manufacturing held at 53.8 (S&P Global, 24 July). Chief Business Economist Chris Williamson said the survey was "broadly consistent with GDP growing at an annualized 2.0%," but flagged that part of the strength reflected temporary FIFA World Cup and USA 250 anniversary activity - a qualification that matters for anyone reading the print as underlying acceleration.

New home sales. New single-family home sales ran at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 628,000 in June, up 1.6% m/m and above a ~610,000 consensus (Census/HUD, 24 July). The median sales price fell to $398,300 from $409,200 a year earlier, with 9.3 months of supply at the current sales rate.

The Fed in blackout. There was no FOMC meeting in the window; the Committee convened 28–29 July, after the period closed, and the Fed was in its pre-meeting blackout from 18 July. No Fed speeches occurred. The last confirmed CME FedWatch reading on September-hike odds was 73% on 16 July, outside the window.

Section 122 lapses; Section 301 forced-labour duties take its place. The 10% Section 122 surcharge, in effect since 24 February, expired at 12:01 ET on 24 July at its 150-day statutory limit under the Trade Act of 1974 - a limit the President cannot extend unilaterally. At the same instant, USTR's final Section 301 "forced-labour" duties took effect, imposing additional tariffs of 10% or 12.5% on imports from 60 economies (CBP guidance, 23–24 July). For most importers the transition was a rate increase, not relief. The 10% tier covers Canada, India, Mexico, the United Kingdom and others; the 12.5% rate applies to China, Vietnam and Brazil among others. The EU and Taiwan are capped at 10% net of MFN duties and Japan, Korea and Switzerland at 12.5% net; EU-origin goods, already on the trade deal's 15% all-inclusive ceiling since 1 July, are unaffected. Two further actions landed: a 25% Section 301 duty on most Brazilian goods took effect 22 July, and on 20 July the President signed three proclamations imposing an additional 50% Section 338 duty on a broad range of Canadian goods, effective 19 August.

Tesla and Alphabet trigger a $797bn single-session drawdown. Tesla reported after the close on 22 July: revenue of $28.24bn (+26% y/y) and record deliveries of 480,126 vehicles (+25%), but adjusted EPS of $0.33 against a $0.51 consensus, with active Full Self-Driving subscriptions up 56% to 1.48 million. Capital expenditure jumped 142% to $5.79bn, producing a free-cash-flow deficit of $1.09bn; CEO Elon Musk called 2026 a "massive capex year." Shares closed down 14.52% at $319.69 the next session. Alphabet, also reporting 22 July, showed Google Cloud revenue of $24.8bn (+82%) with the cloud operating margin widening to 35.6% from 20.7%; it raised 2026 capex guidance to $195–205bn and warned 2027 would be higher still. Class A shares fell 7.13% to $317.69, the worst session since May 2025. The Bloomberg Magnificent 7 Index fell 4.78% that day - its steepest single-day decline since the April 2025 tariff sell-off - erasing roughly $797bn of market value, with Amazon down 4.6% and the Philadelphia semiconductor index off 4.25% on the week. The aggregate picture was nonetheless strong: FactSet's blended Q2 2026 S&P 500 earnings growth stood at 37.9% as of 24 July, the highest since Q3 2021 (25.9% excluding Alphabet). Verizon and American Express beat but slipped; Apple rose 3.5% Friday, supporting the Dow.

Markets brief (24 July close). S&P 500 7,411.98 (−0.6% on the week); Nasdaq Composite 24,975.82 (−2.1%); Dow Jones 51,947.25 (−0.4%). 2-year Treasury yield 4.33%, 10-year 4.69% (around an 18-month high). VIX 18.58. Brent crude near $97 (up more than 12% on the week) after settling above $100 mid-week.

Geopolitics and Energy: Brent Settles Above $100 Before a Mediation-Driven Reversal

By 24 July, US Central Command had conducted a thirteenth consecutive night of strikes on Iranian targets while maintaining its reinstated naval blockade near the Strait of Hormuz, and Iran-backed Houthi militants attacked two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea. Brent settled up 7% at $100.69 on 23 July, its highest close since 22 May, with WTI up 6.2% at $92.19; Goldman Sachs said Brent "might exceed $120 a barrel in the fourth quarter." Prices then reversed on 24 July - Brent falling roughly 4% to near $97 - on reports of Pakistan- and China-backed mediation, leaving Brent still up more than 12% on the week. The oil path drove Treasury yields to around 18-month highs and shaped the ECB's communication. The next OPEC+ meeting was scheduled for 2 August, outside this window.

European Union: A Unanimous ECB Hold With a Hawkish Tilt and the Largest Russia Sanctions Package in Four Years

The ECB holds at 2.25%. The Governing Council kept all three key rates unchanged on 23 July: the deposit facility at 2.25%, main refinancing at 2.40% and marginal lending at 2.65% (ECB, 23 July). Central Banking reported the decision was unanimous. The statement said energy prices stood "close to the baseline" of the June projections, that "the full inflationary impact of the energy shock has yet to play out," and that the Council "is not pre-committing to a particular rate path." President Christine Lagarde tied the risk to the Middle East, describing "a flaring up of the conflict and serious development taking place on the commodity markets." Markets priced roughly 70% odds of a 25bp increase at the 10 September meeting; EUR/USD eased to about 1.1385.

Flash PMIs - Germany back in expansion. The euro-area flash composite PMI rose to 51.9 in July from 50.0, a five-month high (HCOB/S&P Global, 24 July). The German flash composite rose to 51.2 from 49.5, returning the economy to expansion after three months of contraction; manufacturing came in at 52.2 and the manufacturing output sub-index reached 54.7, a 53-month high.

The 21st sanctions package freezes the oil price cap. EU ambassadors agreed the bloc's 21st sanctions package on 23 July after Greece dropped its veto in exchange for a carve-out for Dynagas LNG carriers. The package carried 218 listings - 170 entities and 48 individuals, the largest number in four years - sanctioned 94 Russian banks, and for the first time targeted shadow-fleet support vessels. Critically, it froze the Russian oil price cap at $44.10/bbl for another year, forestalling the automatic revision that would otherwise have lifted it toward roughly $58. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the sanctions "continue to weaken the economic foundations of Russia's war effort."

Japan: Core Inflation Accelerates as the Yen Sets a Fresh 40-Year Low

June CPI. National headline CPI rose 1.7% y/y in June, up from 1.5%, and core (ex fresh food) rose 1.6% from 1.4%, matching consensus. Core-core eased to 1.7% from 1.8%, the lowest since August 2022 - the acceleration was energy-driven while the underlying measure continued to soften (Statistics Bureau, 24 July). The Ministry of Finance reported a June trade deficit of ¥406.9bn, more than three times the expected shortfall, as imports jumped 25.4% led by food and fuel. The au Jibun Bank flash composite PMI reached a five-month high of 53.1, a sixteenth consecutive month of expansion, with the manufacturing output index at 56.1 - the fastest factory-production growth since February 2014.

Yen and bonds. With the BOJ in blackout ahead of its late-July meeting, USD/JPY set a fresh 40-year low of 163.99 on 23 July and the yen posted its worst week since May. The 10-year JGB yield reached 2.88%–2.91%, the highest since September 1996, with the 20-year near 3.89% and the 30-year around 4.03%; a five-year auction drew a moderately firm 3.43x bid-to-cover amid fiscal-expansion concerns. The Nikkei 225 closed at 64,611.15 on 24 July, down 2.73% that day in the global semiconductor sell-off, yet ended the week with a small net gain - its first positive week in three. Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama declined to comment on specific yen levels but said Tokyo would "act as needed." Tokyo markets were closed Monday 20 July for Marine Day.

China: Rates on Hold for a Fourteenth Month as the Politburo Meeting Slips Past the Window

The PBOC left both benchmark lending rates unchanged at the 20 July fixing - the one-year Loan Prime Rate at 3.00% and the five-year at 3.50%, a fourteenth consecutive month without a change, matching all 23 forecasts in a Reuters poll. MLF, reverse-repo and yuan-fixing detail could not be confirmed to the window. The Communist Party Politburo's late-July economic meeting, which analysts had looked to for targeted fiscal support, fell outside the period - most likely convening around 28–30 July on the prior two years' pattern - as did June industrial profits. Equities followed the global tech sell-off, the Shanghai Composite down 1.61% and the Hang Seng down 0.98% on 24 July. The Section 301 transition placed China in the higher 12.5% forced-labour tier; the domestic backdrop was unchanged, with Q2 GDP at 4.3% y/y, the effective US tariff near 35% and the bilateral truce running to November 2026.

Data compiled from primary economic releases and financial newswires.