THE WHOLE WORLD WAITS FOR THE LAST SPIKE — TRADES AROUND NVDA EARNINGS VOL

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

What would happen...if:



Of course you're thinking, 'that's ludicrous'. But until it stops perfectly correlating with last year, it can't be summarily dismissed. Can it? I'd wager you didn't expect how goofy the space has now become three months ago, when it was ramping into NVDA's November earnings.

Folks are most certainly prepared (or protected from, we are in the age of calls as insurance) for the scenario above to continue, take a gander at not only the call skew, but also the skew from just before November earnings:



Here are a few examples of why it's even more extreme this time around:

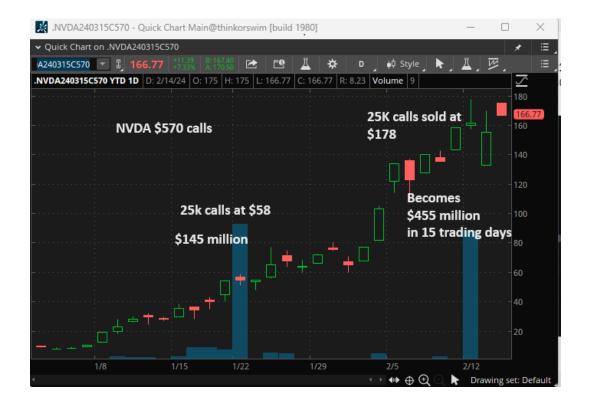


Most Ridiculous Bull Market Ever ② @MRBullMktEver · 5h

•• \$NVDA options trades going absolutely nuts. This one from Jan 22 for \$570c March at \$56 sold just now for \$176, netting the trader \$300M in a few weeks, rolled up to \$680 for March expiry

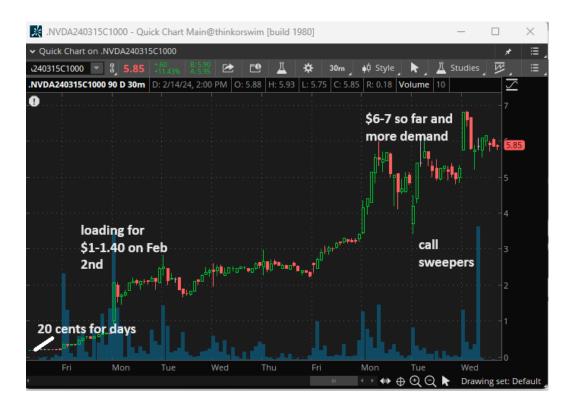


As Yakov Smirnoff would say, "What a country!"



And more out of the money calls bought at \$680 for around \$200 million, so \$100 million in the pocket, let the rest roll. But what does this do? Demand for more calls out of the money raises implied volatility and thus call skew.

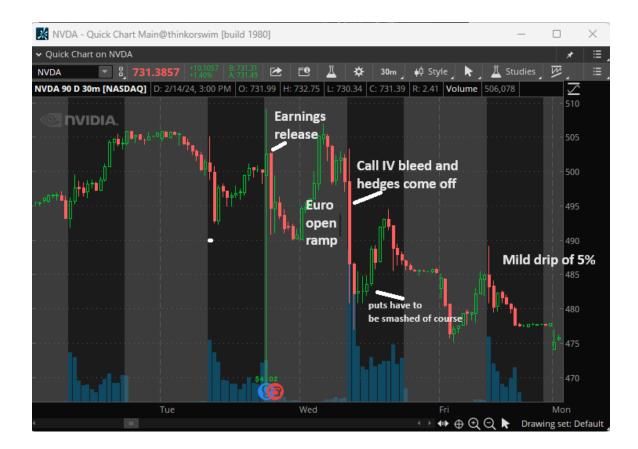
But this kind of behavior is continually occurring ahead of earnings, bolstering call implied volatility, like in the \$1000 calls for March:



And \$900 calls:



You get the point. Looking at how NVDA earnings went in November, up so much year to date, and consolidating for months, it was just simply out of gas with even less lean toward the calls:



And you can see the differences, when it rides into earnings scalding hot, it just can't seem to light the afterburners:

VOLATILITY ANALYTICS NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 15TH 2 Days After Earnings (i) 1 Day After Earnings (1) -1.8% Average Price Change -2.4% Average Price Change 5 of 6 (83%) Negative Occurrences Show in Table 5 of 6 (83%) Negative Occurrences Show in Table Stock Price Performance - Last 12 Quarterly Earnings **Before Earnings** Day of Earnings (Not Inclu (Not Including Day of Earnings) 2 Weeks Drift Open-to-Close 1 Day Date 1 Week 3 Days 2 Days 1 Day **Earnings Move** Open-to-High Open-to-Low Opening Gap 2 Days 21-Nov-2023 AMC +8.7% +0.6% +0.9% +1.3% +0.9% -2.5% 3-Aug-2023 AMC +10.7% +8.4% +8.8% +0.3% +3.2% +0.1% +6.6% +0.1% -2.4% -0.7% 1-May-2023 AMC +5.7% +1.2% +26.1% +2.5% +2.5% -5.7% -3.0% +0.5% +14.0% +13.0% +1.9% 16-Nov-2022 AMC +20.4% +15.5% -2.6% -2.4% -4.5% -1.5% -1.3% +3.6% -1.1% -0.2% -1.7% -2.3% 24-Aug-2022 AMC -4.8% -6.1% -3.5% +1.1% +0.2% +4.0% +6.5% +6.3% 25-May-2022 AMC +2.1% +0.2% +1.7% +0.5% +5.1% +5.2% -5.6% +12.9% +11.4% +4.6% 16-Feb-2022 AMC +5.0% -0.7% +10.7% +9.3% -3.4% +0.7% -4.6% +0.1% -7.6% -5.6% -4.3% -3.5% 17-Nov-2021 AMC +10.0% -0.7% -3.7% -2.5% -3.1% +8.3% +10.6% +1.3% -3.2% -2.1% +4.1% +0.9% 18-Aug-2021 AMC -6.1% -3.4% -5.7% -4.6% +4.0% +2.4% +5.1% -3.8% +1.5% +10.9% -2.2% +5.1% 26-May-2021 AMC +14.1% +11.6% +4.7% +0.6% +0.3% -1.4% 0.0% +0.3% -1.5% -1.4% +4.9% +5.0% 24-Feb-2021 AMC -2.7% -2.9% +1.0% -3.1% +2.3% -1.8% +2.5% -5.9% -5.3% +3.1% +4.0% -8.2% Simple Average Returns - Last 12 Earnings +1.3% 0.0% 0.0% +0.1% +0.4% Avg Return +4.8% +3.2% +3.6% +3.2% +0.8% -3.2%

NVDA Volatility Trades:

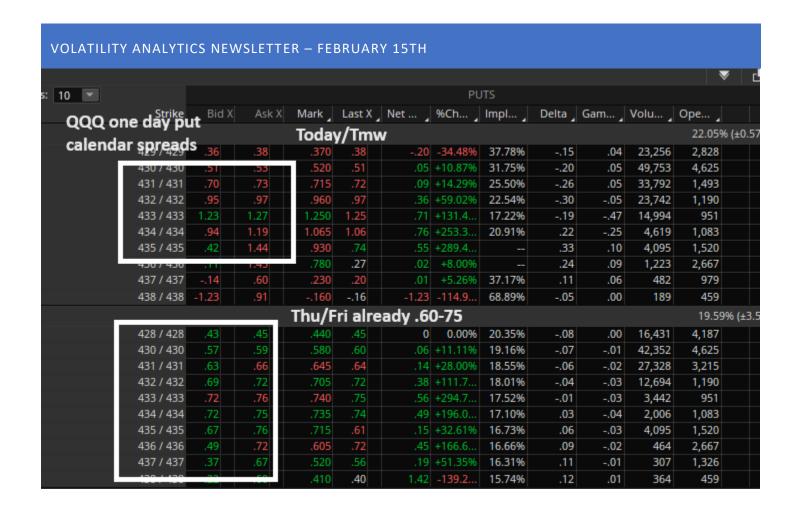
I am going to back door some long NVDA post earnings vol using some creativity:

QQQ put calendar spread

Sell \$430 Feb 21st put

Buy \$430 Feb 22nd put

Net debit: .40-.45 (.40 filled)



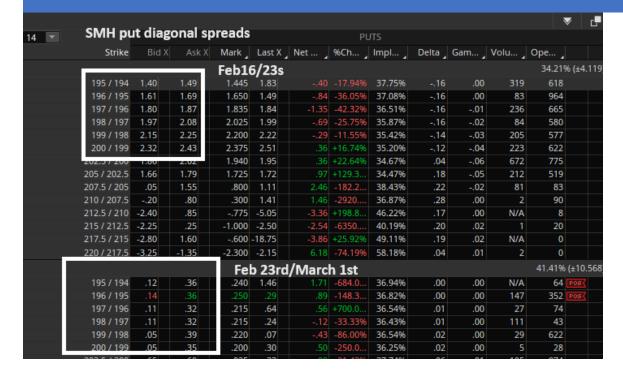
Current spreads are near the money are worth much more and there isn't exactly the Superbowl of earnings in the back legs of the above spreads. You know what NVDA means to the entire market and more so to QQQ, so owning the vol for the earnings reaction here is cheap. Will exit before earnings, target .70.

SMH put diagonal spread

Sell 196 Feb 23rd put

Buy \$195 March 1st put

Net debit: .25-.30 (.26 filled)



SMH is 20% NVDA. What if folks decide to finally lighten up on the other 80% of what's in there? Not sure it even matters, if nothing happens to SMH the day after earnings, this is going to double. Target, .65-.75.

SPX a pair of two day put calendar spreads:

Sell Feb 21st 4950 put

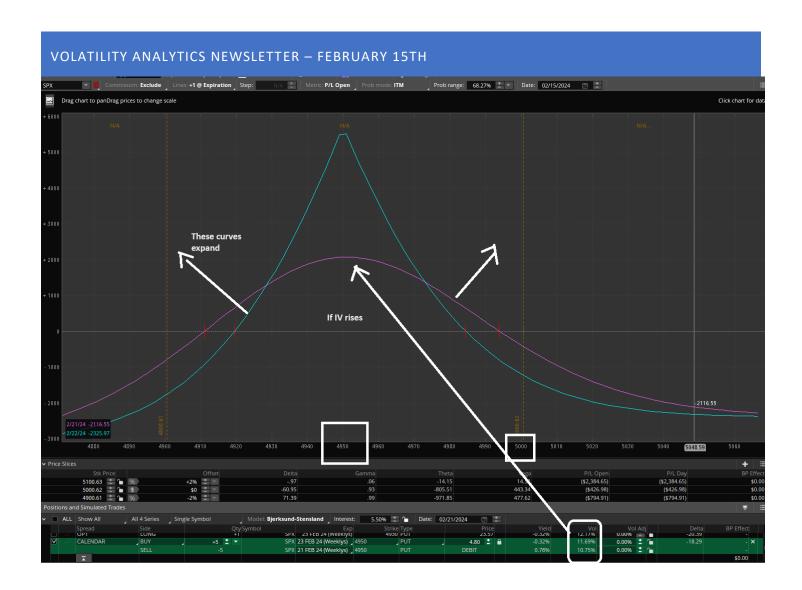
Buy Feb 23rd 4950 put

Net debit: \$4.50-5

Sell Feb 21st 5000 put

Buy Feb 23rd 5000 put

Net debit: \$5.75-6



The warnings are most certainly loud, that the historically worst period for the stock market begins after Feb opex. I wrote about it here:

<u>Most Telegraphed Future Market Weakness Ever Meets Put Smash Mafia – The Greatest</u> <u>Fear Trade = Calls as Insurance Continues</u>

The bottom line is that if the market has unclenched a bit lower and implied vol starts rising in anticipation of the NVDA post-earnings effect, this could easily turn into a double or more. Will exit before earnings, target, \$10.

SCMI put calendar spread:

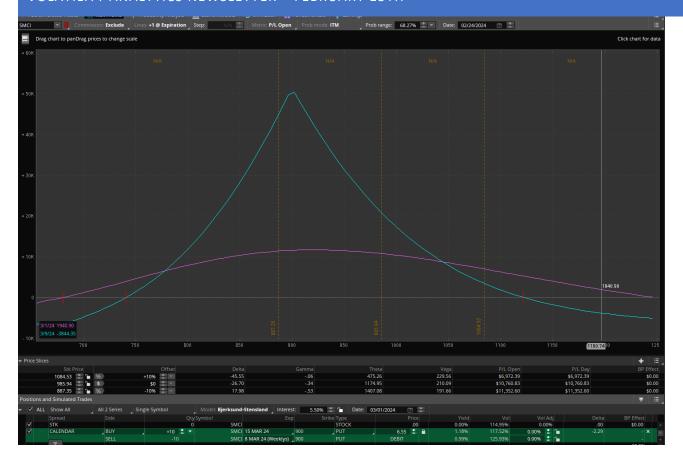
Sell Mar 8th \$900 put

Buy Mar 15th \$900 put

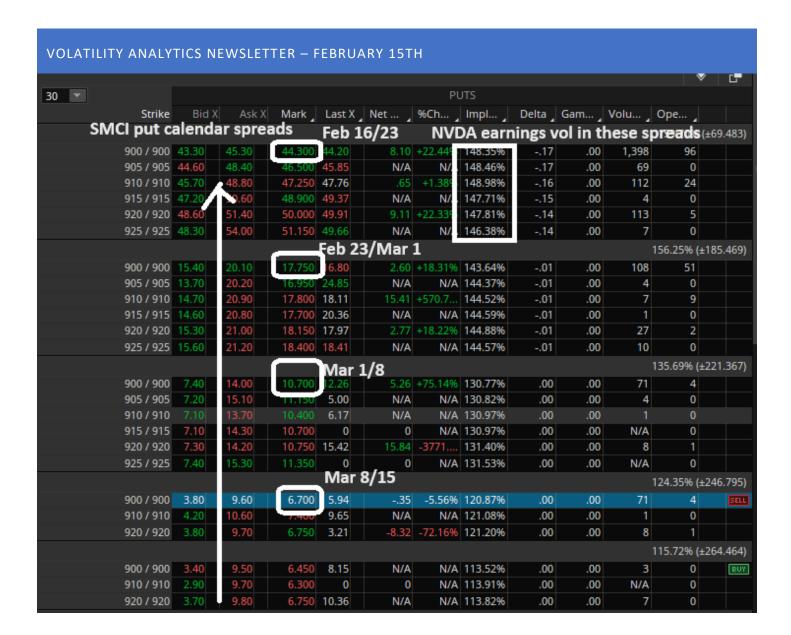
Net debit: \$6.00-6.50 (6.25 filled)

This thing, I mean, it's going to start printing higher prices going back in time:





The reason for this pair is simply the prices on the vol surface. For some reason (I didn't notice any events, although there is a huge NVDA developer conference right after March opex which SMCI will be attending, so I will have trades for that when we get nearer...) owning March opex week vol is cheap when paired with short the week prior:



If SMCI remains in the 800-1000 range and doesn't continue onto the Mutara nebula, this should widen nicely in a week or two, as you can see above. Alternatively, you could set this spread at higher strikes, I wouldn't blame you for thinking it just keeps going. Target, \$12.

Enjoy the holiday, I will be off the desk for parts of next week, but I expect to write a short note after unclench Tuesday and of course, some reaction and trades after NVDA rewards all those giant call buyers. (Kidding of course, but it wouldn't be even a modest surprise.)

CPI DAY LONG VOL QUITE UNDERPRICED YET AGAIN — WILL VIXPIRATION AFTERNOON DRUM UP SOME MORE MARKET DRAMA? — TRADES FOR ARM LOCKUP

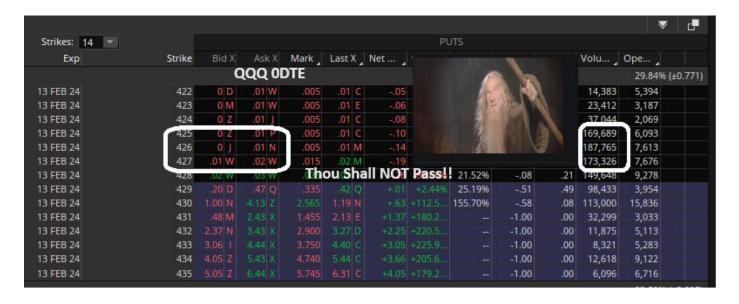
VOLATILITY SUMMARY

(You may have noticed, I've moved to Substack: https://volatilitywiz.substack.com/. This letter won't change, everything here will be behind a paywall there, but I may have some additional posts in case you might be interested in a free sub there.)

We are closer to opex and may the unclenching begin.

The forced sellers were out in the afternoon, you could see it between 1-3pm after the morning short vol crew induced a modest bounce. And we know why. CTAs, trend followers and vol control are stuffed to the gills and any realized vol was bound to be a sell trigger. Now granted, it could have been a whole lot worse, -2% would have unleashed billions more of rules-based automatic selling.

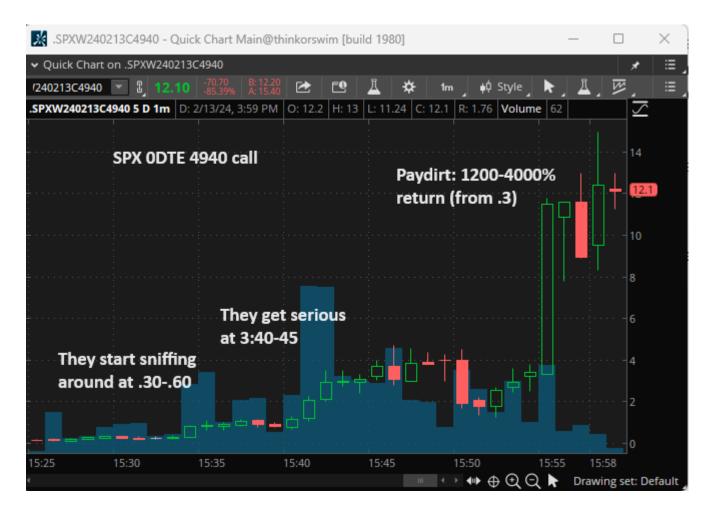
Yet, the great staff of Gandalf the Grey arrested the pressure and most of the heavy volume strikes expired worthless in QQQ, again:



And who is short vol's bae? You guessed it, .1DTE, the last 30 minutes long call yolos. These folks have quite the record as well, having turned .25 into \$10 many, many times. Even I'm

learning to ride along; I bought a few 4950-4975 call spreads for tomorrow and turned \$3.6 into \$10.55 in about the time it takes to make a frozen bagel. (and sold EOD)

The 4940 calls were popular late in the day, and someone out there printed some serious homemade QE:



9-day vix, which I like to watch for real fear/buying of vol/buying to close short puts, since almost all the volume is in the front of the vol curve, got Groundhog vol whac-a-moled:



The agnostic short vol crowd doesn't care about what events are imminent; to the short vol mafia it just means more premium to collect. This is resulting in risk events now becoming....well risky. I know, how novel.

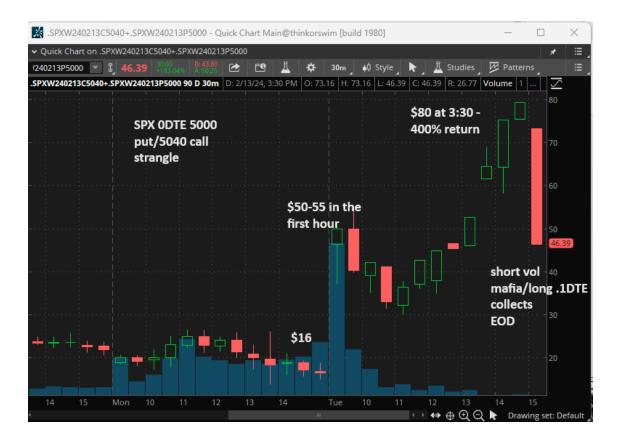
I recently wrote about the Fed straddles being very <u>underpriced before the last several</u> meetings.

Well, let's suppose you expected CPI to have market risk potential, and I pointed out this possibility a few weeks ago:



And let's suppose you bought an SPX strangle 20 points on either side of 5020 spot yesterday, because, you have spike PTSD (quite understandable after three months of index event upward jolts and an earnings season of huge spikes) and wanted calls as well as puts.

Well, here is how the long 5040 call paired with the long 5000 put performed during the day today, if you forgot about it for a bit, you could have really killed it when the forced sellers arrived:

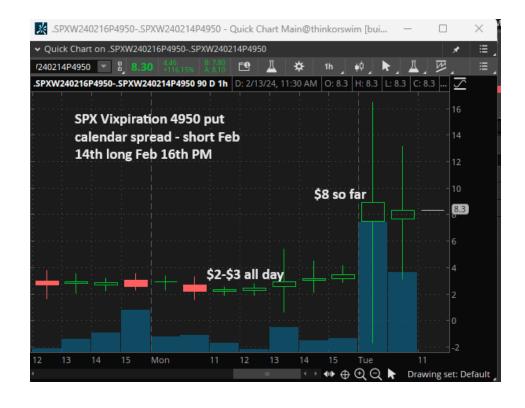


Well, not only were you ludicrously correct to be long event vol, but you also had plenty of recent evidence; just like how recent Fed meetings saw mispriced vol, in January on the last CPI release day it came in hot and intraday realized vol expanded quickly:



I suggested last week, as implied vol was nearing the lows of the option expiration cycle to consider an SPX 14th/16th PM put calendar spread at 4950 for about \$3.50-4, less than 4 SPX points in essence which would hold post-vixpiration and opex vol in the back leg.

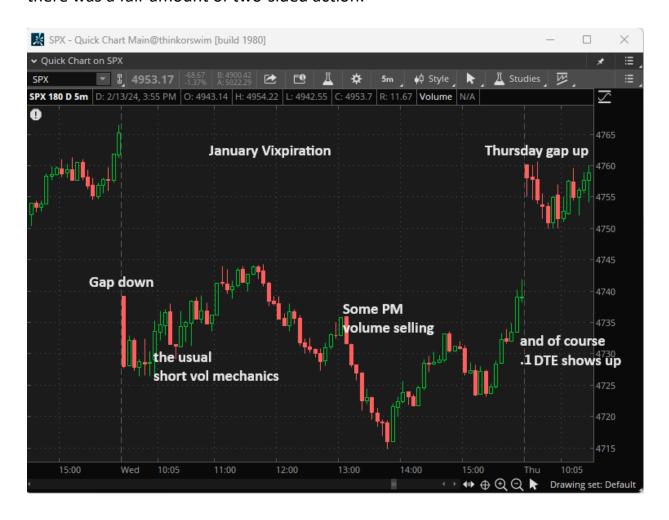
How is that spread doing?



This may bleed tomorrow if the large open interest tractor beam at 5000 pulls the index back up and as short vol continues to smash away, but as we pass opex/unclench and NVDA, I expect long vol to start making a comeback for a while, and trades like these will work nicely as realized vol that includes some downside moves reemerges.

The price target was \$8 and at nearly \$10 at the close, I took some off today.

Now, it's hard to say how vixpiration will go after today, it's easier to expect some downside in the afternoon when the markets come waltzing in on a high and oblivious, but in January, there was a fair amount of two-sided action:



Volatility Trades:

The comedy of ARM and its low float driven schizophrenic swings is actually shadowing a sublayer of humor with the stock: the raging debate of whether it even deserves the Al label mega premium:

I put this somewhat under-informed intuition to Dylan Patel, chief analyst at SemiAnalysis, a specialist research house serving both the chip industry and Wall Street. "I don't see the AI story here," he said, "but I do think there is a data centre story." The distinction is important. AI requires a huge amount of computer power, and while the core AI jobs will be done by GPUs, there are lots of ancillary computing tasks to be done: "serving web pages, gathering data, formatting it for AI".

https://www.ft.com/content/e585533d-fed8-44dc-8a4a-b08ff7f65e1f

Frankly, I don't care about fintwit battles over AI labels, because one of my favorite trade set ups is back and it involves plain old supply and demand. Here's to hoping there are a slew of IPOs this spring rushing to take 'investors' cash at all-time market highs with massive financial conditions easing and restoked inflation.

Because lock-up trades are often high probability trades, long time readers of the Volatility Analytics newsletter (the predecessor to this space, since 2012) have seen many of these ideas work, and so gratefully back to the lockup vol well we go.

(I recently wrote about ARM and its call-fueled earnings spike: What do you get when you add these factors together: Semiconductor stock + open interest in calls above the money + low float for the stock + earnings release dripping with A.I.?)

This particular lockup trade has one huge factor going for it:

Arm now has a market capitalization of about \$145 billion, with SoftBank's stake worth more than \$129 billion, well more than SoftBank's own market cap of \$84 billion. SoftBank shares have rallied 8% on Monday, and more than 28% over the past three days.

I mean, what? Something has to be rectified here, either Softbank's valuation goes up or ARM's comes down. In fact, here is more solid ARM humor along with what appears to be a high probability event post-lockup, with these valuations coming more in line:

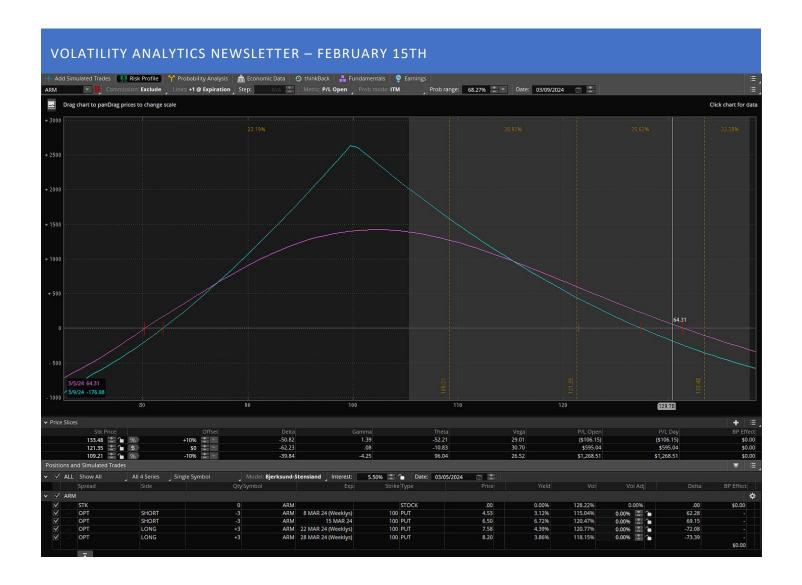
"Arm is the biggest contributor to the global AI evolution," Goto said during an earnings presentation on Thursday.

Investors will be watching what SoftBank does in March when the lock-up—the period during which the company is not allowed to sell Arm shares post-IPO—expires. Jefferies equity analyst Atul Goyal said in a note on Thursday that, when the lock-up ends, SoftBank could fuel a buyback of its own shares by selling stock in Arm.

Ok, saying that you are more vital than NVDA to the AI landscape is grandiosity squared, hype reserved for the WWE and a certain presidential candidate.

But, those numbers are runway lights to the eventual landing for ARM; there is going to be a value transfer from ARM's stock to Softbank's wallet. This is not your typical lockup where a slew of differing investors with different entry points and motives may or may not sell.

Here is the trade idea, a couple calendar spreads around the March 12th lockup:



ARM put calendar spread - two weeks wide

Sell March 8th \$100 put

Buy March 22nd \$100 put

Net debit: \$3-3.25 (3.05 filled)

Trade 2: ARM put calendar spread - two weeks wide

Sell March 15th \$100 put

Buy March 28th \$100 put (29th is Good Friday, market closed)

Net debit: \$1.70-1.75 (1.70 filled)

I expect implied vol to remain bid in both back legs while the March 8th leg has no catalyst. The second trade, I expect that to widen as we get close to the event, with current two-week spreads near the money trading for over \$6, those pairs are cheap. Targets for both, \$6.