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Search for the standard model Higgs boson decaying to W^+W^- in the fully leptonic final state in pp collisions at $\sqrt{s}$ = 7 TeV

The CMS Collaboration*

Abstract

A search for the standard model Higgs boson decaying to W^+W^- in pp collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV is reported. The data are collected at the LHC with the CMS detector, and correspond to an integrated luminosity of 4.6 fb^{-1}. The W^+W^- candidates are selected in events with two charged leptons and large missing transverse energy. No significant excess of events above the standard model background expectations is observed, and upper limits on the Higgs boson production relative to the standard model Higgs expectation are derived. The standard model Higgs boson is excluded in the mass range 129–270 GeV at 95% confidence level.

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*See Appendix A for the list of collaboration members

1 Introduction

One of the open questions in the standard model (SM) of particle physics [1–3] is the origin of the masses of fundamental particles. Within the SM, vector boson masses arise by the spontaneous breaking of electroweak symmetry by the Higgs field [4–9]. The existence of the associated field quantum, the Higgs boson, has yet to be established experimentally. The discovery or the exclusion of the SM Higgs boson is one of the central goals of the CERN Large Hadron Collider (LHC) physics program.

Direct searches at the CERN e^+e^- LEP collider set a limit on the Higgs boson mass $m_H >$ 114.4 GeV at 95% confidence level (CL) [10]. Precision electroweak data constrain the mass of the SM Higgs boson to be less than 158 GeV at 95% CL [11]. The SM Higgs boson is excluded at 95% CL by the Tevatron collider experiments in the mass range 162–166 GeV [12], and by the ATLAS experiment in the mass ranges 145–206, 214–224, 340–450 GeV [13–15]. The $H \rightarrow W^+W^- \rightarrow 2\ell 2\nu$ final state, where ℓ is a charged lepton and ν a neutrino, was first proposed as a clean channel at the LHC in [16]. A previous search for the Higgs boson at the LHC in this final state was published by the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) collaboration with 36 pb^{-1} of integrated luminosity [17]. This search is performed over the mass range 110–600 GeV, and the data sample corresponds to $4.6 \pm 0.2\, fb^{-1}$ of integrated luminosity collected in 2011 at a center-of-mass energy of 7 TeV. A similar search was conducted by the ATLAS collaboration [13].

2 CMS detector and simulation

In lieu of a detailed description of the CMS detector [18], which is beyond the scope of the letter, a synopsis of the main components follows. The superconducting solenoid occupies the central region of the CMS detector, providing an axial magnetic field of 3.8 T parallel to the beam direction. Charged particle trajectories are measured by the silicon pixel and strip tracker, which cover a pseudorapidity region of $|\eta| < 2.5$. Here, the pseudorapidity is defined as $\eta = -\ln(\tan\theta/2)$, where θ is the polar angle of the trajectory of the particle with respect to the direction of the counterclockwise beam. The crystal electromagnetic calorimeter (ECAL) and the brass/scintillator hadron calorimeter (HCAL) surround the tracking volume and cover $|\eta| < 3$. The steel/quartz-fiber Cherenkov calorimeter (HF) extends the coverage to $|\eta| < 5$. The muon system consists of gas detectors embedded in the iron return yoke outside the solenoid, with a coverage of $|\eta| < 2.4$. The first level of the CMS trigger system, composed of custom hardware processors, is designed to select the most interesting events in less than 3 μs, using information from the calorimeters and muon detectors. The High Level Trigger processor farm further reduces the event rate to a few hundred Hz before data storage.

The expected SM Higgs cross section is 10 orders of magnitude smaller than the LHC inelastic cross section, which is dominated by QCD processes. Selecting final states with two leptons and missing energy eliminates the bulk of the QCD events, leaving non-resonant diboson production ($pp \rightarrow W^+W^-$, WZ, $W\gamma$, ZZ), Drell-Yan production (DY), top production ($t\bar{t}$ and tW), and W + jets and QCD multijet processes, where at least one jet is misidentified as a lepton, as the background sources. Several Monte Carlo event generators are used to simulate the signal and background processes. The POWHEG 2.0 program [19] provides event samples for the $H \rightarrow W^+W^-$ signal and the Drell-Yan, $t\bar{t}$, and tW processes. The $q\bar{q} \rightarrow W^+W^-$ and W + jets processes are generated using the MADGRAPH 5.1.3 [20] event generator, the $gg \rightarrow W^+W^-$ process using GG2WW [21], and the remaining processes using PYTHIA 6.424 [22]. For leading-order generators, the default set of parton distribution functions (PDF) used to produce these samples is CTEQ6L [23], while CT10 [24] is used for next-to-leading order (NLO) generators. Cross section calculations [25] at next-to-next-to-leading order (NNLO) are used for the $H \to W^+W^-$ process, while NLO calculations are used for background cross sections. For all processes, the detector response is simulated using a detailed description of the CMS detector, based on the GEANT4 package [26]. The simulated samples are reweighted to represent the distribution of number of pp interactions per bunch crossing (pile-up) as measured in the data.

3 W^+W^- event selection

The search strategy for $H \to W^+W^-$ exploits diboson events where both W bosons decay leptonically, resulting in an experimental signature of two isolated, high transverse momentum (p_T), oppositely charged leptons (electrons or muons) and large missing transverse energy (mainly due to the undetected neutrinos), E_T^{miss}, defined as the modulus of the negative vector sum of the transverse momenta of all reconstructed particles (charged or neutral) in the event [27]. To improve the signal sensitivity, the events are separated into three mutually exclusive categories according to the jet multiplicity: 2ℓ with E_T^{miss} + 0 jets, 2ℓ with E_T^{miss} + 1 jet, and 2ℓ with E_T^{miss} + 2 jets. Events with more than 2 jets are not considered.

Furthermore, the search strategy splits signal candidates into three final states denoted by: e^+e^-, $\mu^+\mu^-$, and $e^\pm\mu^\mp$. The bulk of the signal arises through direct W decays to charged stable leptons of opposite charge, though the small contribution proceeding through an intermediate τ lepton is implicitly included. The events are selected by triggers which require the presence of one or two high-p_T electrons or muons. The trigger efficiency for signal events is measured to be above 95% in the $\mu^+\mu^-$ final state, and above 98% in the e^+e^- and $e^\pm\mu^\mp$ final states for a Higgs boson mass $\sim$130 GeV. The trigger efficiencies increase with the Higgs boson mass.

Two oppositely charged lepton candidates are required, with $p_T > 20$ GeV for the leading lepton ($p_T^{\ell,max}$) and $p_T > 10$ GeV for the trailing lepton ($p_T^{\ell,min}$). To reduce the low-mass $Z/\gamma^* \to \ell^+\ell^-$ contribution, the requirement on the trailing lepton p_T is raised to 15 GeV for the e^+e^- and $\mu^+\mu^-$ final states. This tighter requirement also suppresses the W + jets background in these final states. Only electrons (muons) with $|\eta| <2.5$ (2.4) are considered in the analysis. Muon candidates [28] are identified using a selection similar to that described in [17], while electron candidates are selected using a multivariate approach, which exploits correlations between the selection variables described in [29] to improve identification performance. The lepton candidates are required to originate from the primary vertex of the event, which is chosen as the vertex with highest $\sum p_T^2$, where the sum is performed on the tracks associated to the vertex, including the tracks associated to the leptons. This criterion provides the correct assignment for the primary vertex in more than 99% of both signal and background events for the pile-up distribution observed in the data. Isolation is used to distinguish lepton candidates from W-boson decays from those stemming from QCD background processes, which are usually immersed in hadronic activity. For each lepton candidate, a $\Delta R \equiv \sqrt{(\Delta\eta)^2 + (\Delta\phi)^2}$ cone of 0.3 (0.4) for muons (electrons) is constructed around the track direction at the event vertex. The scalar sum of the transverse energy of each particle reconstructed using a particle-flow algorithm [27] compatible with the primary vertex and contained within the cone is calculated, excluding the contribution from the lepton candidate itself. If this sum exceeds approximately 10% of the candidate p_T the lepton is rejected, the exact requirement depending on the lepton η, p_T and flavour.

Jets are reconstructed from calorimeter and tracker information using the particle-flow technique [27, 30], combining the information from all CMS subdetectors to reconstruct each individual particle. The anti-k_T clustering algorithm [31] with distance parameter $R = 0.5$ is used, as implemented in the FASTJET package [32, 33]. To correct for the contribution to the jet energy due to the pile-up, a median energy density (ρ) is determined event by event. Then the pile-up contribution to the jet energy is estimated as the product of ρ and the area of the jet and subsequently subtracted [34] from the jet transverse energy E_T. Jet energy corrections are also applied as a function of the jet E_T and η [35]. Jets are required to have $E_T > 30\,\text{GeV}$ and $|\eta| < 5$ to contribute to the event classification according to the jet multiplicity

In addition to high momentum isolated leptons and minimal jet activity, missing energy is present in signal events but not in background. In this analysis, a *projected* E_T^{miss} variable, defined as the component of E_T^{miss} transverse to the nearest lepton if that lepton is within $\pi/2$ in azimuthal angle, or the full E_T^{miss} otherwise, is employed. A cut on this observable efficiently rejects $Z/\gamma^* \to \tau^+\tau^-$ background events, where the E_T^{miss} is preferentially aligned with leptons, as well as $Z/\gamma^* \to \ell^+\ell^-$ events with mismeasured E_T^{miss} associated with poorly reconstructed leptons or jets. The E_T^{miss} reconstruction makes use of event reconstruction via the particle-flow technique [27]. Since the *projected* E_T^{miss} resolution is degraded by pile-up, a minimum of two different observables is used: the first includes all reconstructed particles in the event [27], while the second uses only the charged particles associated with the primary vertex. For the same cut value with the first observable, the $Z/\gamma^* \to \ell^+\ell^-$ background doubles when going from 5 to 15 pile-up events, while it remains approximately constant with the second observable. The use of both observables exploits the presence of a correlation between them in signal events with genuine E_T^{miss}, and its absence otherwise, as in Drell-Yan events.

Drell-Yan background produces same-flavour lepton pairs (e^+e^- and $\mu^+\mu^-$): thus, the selection requirements designed to suppress this background are slightly different for same-flavour and opposite-flavour ($e^\pm\mu^\mp$) events. Same-flavour events must have *projected* E_T^{miss} above about 40 GeV, with the exact requirement depending on the number of reconstructed primary vertices (N_{vtx}) according to the relation *projected* $E_T^{\text{miss}} > (37 + N_{\text{vtx}}/2)$ GeV. For opposite-flavour events, the requirement is lowered to 20 GeV with no dependence on the number of vertices. These requirements remove more than 99% of the Drell-Yan background. In addition, requirements of a minimum dilepton transverse momentum ($p_T^{\ell\ell}$) of 45 GeV for both types and a minimum dilepton mass ($m_{\ell\ell}$) of 20 (12) GeV for same- (opposite-) flavour events are applied. Two additional selection criteria are applied only to the same-flavour events. First, the dilepton mass must be outside a 30 GeV window centered on the Z mass, and second, to suppress Drell-Yan events with the Z/γ^* recoiling against a jet, the angle in the transverse plane between the dilepton system and the leading jet must be less than 165 degrees, when the leading jet has $E_T > 15\,\text{GeV}$.

To suppress the top-quark background, a *top tagging* technique based on soft-muon and b-jets tagging methods [36, 37] is applied. The first method is designed to veto events containing muons from b-quarks coming from the top-quark decay. The second method uses b-jet tagging, which looks for tracks with large impact parameter within jets. The algorithm is also applied in the case of 0-jet bin, which can still contain jets with $E_T < 30\,\text{GeV}$. The rejection factor for top-quark background is about two in the 0-jet category and above 10 for events with at least one jet passing the selection criteria.

To reduce the background from WZ and ZZ production, any event that has a third lepton passing the identification and isolation requirements is rejected. This requirement rejects less than 0.1% of the $H \to W^+W^- \to 2\ell 2\nu$ events, while it rejects 60% of WZ and 10% of the ZZ processes. After the E_T^{miss} requirement ZZ events are dominated by the $ZZ \to 2\ell 2\nu$ process, where there is no 3rd lepton. The $W\gamma$ production, where the photon is misidentified as an electron, is reduced by more than 90% in the dielectron final state by γ conversion rejection requirements.

After applying all selection criteria described in this section, which is referred to as the "$\mathrm{W}^{+}\mathrm{W}^{-}$ selection", 1359, 909, and 703 events are obtained in data in the 0-jet, 1-jet, and 2-jet categories respectively. This sample is dominated by non-resonant $\mathrm{W}^{+}\mathrm{W}^{-}$ events. The efficiency at this stage for a Higgs boson with $m_{\mathrm{H}} = 130\,\mathrm{GeV}$ is about 5.5%. Figure 1 shows the distributions of the azimuthal angle difference ($\Delta\phi_{\ell\ell}$) between the two selected leptons after the $\mathrm{W}^{+}\mathrm{W}^{-}$ selection, for a SM Higgs boson with $m_{\mathrm{H}} = 130\,\mathrm{GeV}$ and for backgrounds in the 0- and 1-jet categories. The scale of the figures allows for comparing the background contributions between the 0-jet and the 1-jet channels.

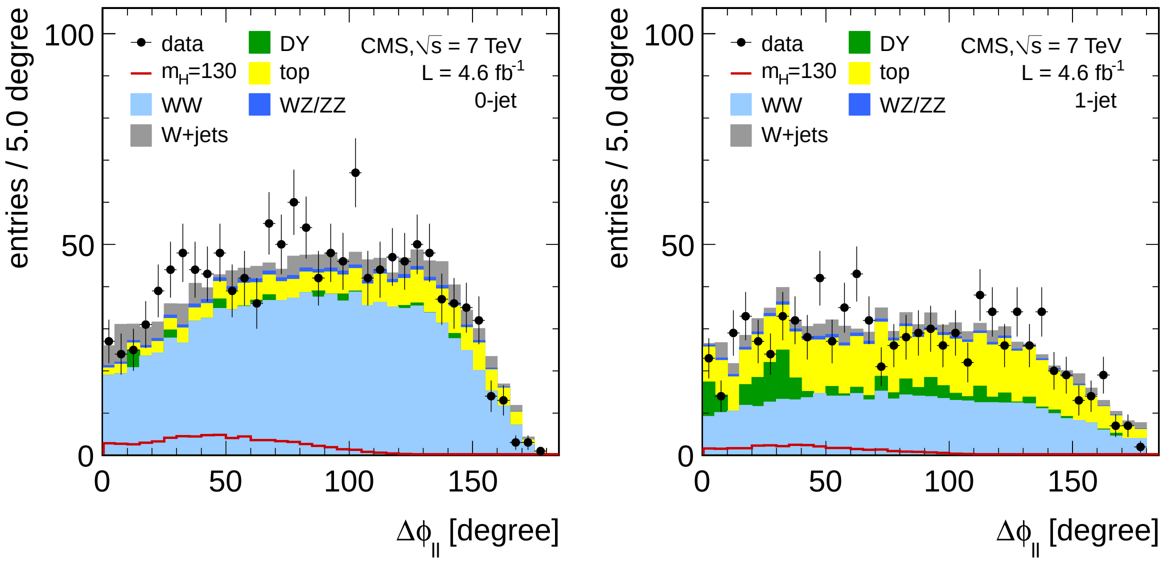

Figure 1: Azimuthal angle difference between the two selected leptons in the 0-jet (left) and 1-jet (right) categories, for a $m_{\mathrm{H}} = 130\,\mathrm{GeV}$ SM Higgs boson and for the main backgrounds at the $\mathrm{W}^{+}\mathrm{W}^{-}$ selection level.

4 $\mathrm{H} \rightarrow \mathrm{W}^{+}\mathrm{W}^{-}$ search strategy

To enhance the sensitivity to a Higgs boson signal, two different analyses are performed in the 0-jet and 1-jet categories, the first utilizing a cut-based approach and the second using a multivariate technique. Both cover a large range of Higgs boson masses. As the kinematics of signal events change as a function of the Higgs mass, separate optimizations are performed for different m_{H} hypotheses. Only the cut-based approach is applied to the 2-jet category, as its relative impact on the sensitivity is limited with the current integrated luminosity.

In the cut-based approach extra requirements, designed to optimize the sensitivity for a SM Higgs boson, are placed on $p_{\mathrm{T}}^{\ell,\max}$, $p_{\mathrm{T}}^{\ell,\min}$, $m_{\ell\ell}$, $\Delta\phi_{\ell\ell}$ and the transverse mass m_{T}, defined as $\sqrt{2p_{\mathrm{T}}^{\ell\ell}E_{\mathrm{T}}^{\mathrm{miss}}(1-\cos\Delta\phi_{E_{\mathrm{T}}^{\mathrm{miss}}\ell\ell})}$, where $\Delta\phi_{E_{\mathrm{T}}^{\mathrm{miss}}\ell\ell}$ is the angle in the transverse plane between $E_{\mathrm{T}}^{\mathrm{miss}}$ and the transverse momentum of the dilepton system. The cut values, which are the same in both the 0- and 1-jet categories, are summarized in Table 1. The $m_{\ell\ell}$ distribution of the two selected leptons in the 0-jet and 1-jet categories, for a $m_{\mathrm{H}} = 130\,\mathrm{GeV}$ SM Higgs hypothesis and for the main backgrounds, are shown in Fig. 2.

Table 1: Final event selection requirements for the cut-based analysis in the 0-jet and 1-jet bins. The values of $p_T^{\ell,\min}$ in parentheses at low Higgs masses correspond to the requirements on the trailing lepton for the same-flavour final states.

m_H [GeV]	$p_T^{\ell,\max}$ [GeV]	$p_T^{\ell,\min}$ [GeV]	$m_{\ell\ell}$ [GeV]	$\Delta\phi_{\ell\ell}$ [°]	m_T [GeV]
	$>$	$>$	$<$	$<$	[,]
120	20	10 (15)	40	115	[80,120]
130	25	10 (15)	45	90	[80,125]
160	30	25	50	60	[90,160]
200	40	25	90	100	[120,200]
250	55	25	150	140	[120,250]
300	70	25	200	175	[120,300]
400	90	25	300	175	[120,400]

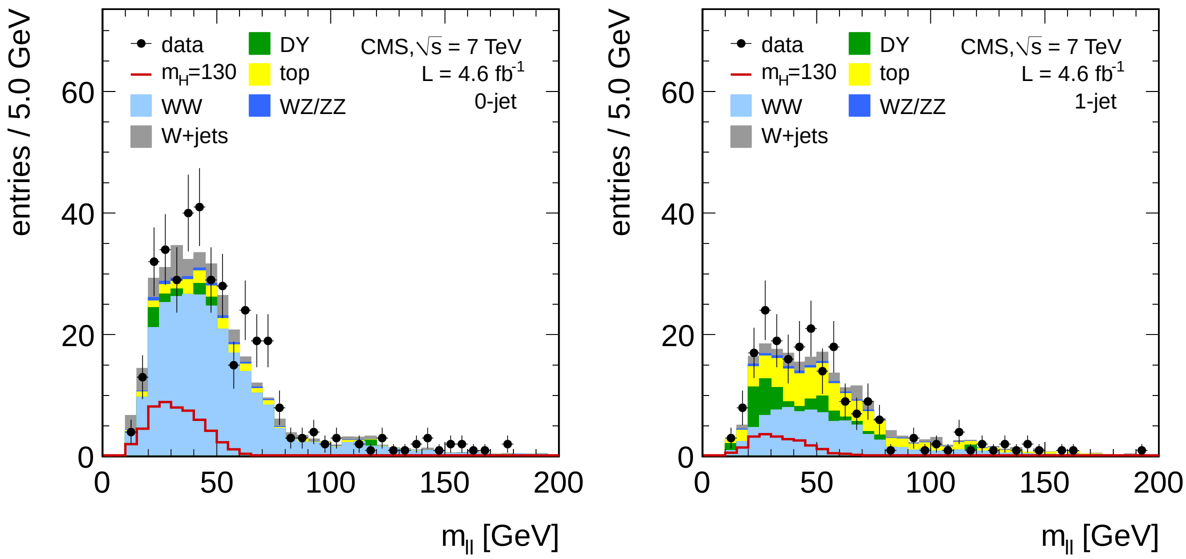

Figure 2: Dilepton mass in the 0-jet (left) and 1-jet (right) categories, for a $m_H = 130\,\mathrm{GeV}$ SM Higgs boson and for the main backgrounds. The cut-based $H \to W^+W^-$ selection, except for the requirement on the dilepton mass itself, is applied.

In the multivariate approach a boosted decision tree (BDT) is trained for each Higgs boson mass hypothesis [38] and jet category to discriminate signal from background. In addition to the W^+W^- selection, loose m_H dependent requirements on $m_{\ell\ell}$ and m_T are applied to enhance the signal-to-background ratio.

The multivariate technique uses the following observables in addition to those used in the cut-based analysis: $\Delta R_{\ell\ell} \equiv \sqrt{(\Delta\eta_{\ell\ell})^2 + (\Delta\phi_{\ell\ell})^2}$ between the leptons, the transverse mass of both lepton-E_T^{miss} pairs, and finally the lepton flavours. The BDT training is performed using $H \to W^+W^-$ as signal and non-resonant W^+W^- as background. Exhaustive studies demonstrate that the inclusion of other processes does not improve the performance, because the kinematic variables within the jet category and phase-space region are quite similar among various background processes. The BDT classifier distributions for $m_{\mathrm{H}} = 130\,\mathrm{GeV}$ are shown in Fig. 3 for 0-jet and 1-jet categories. In the analysis, the binned BDT distributions of Fig. 3 are fitted to templates for the signal and backgrounds BDT distributions. The analysis is repeated using both a likelihood approach, where the correlations among the variables are neglected, and a single variable approach based on $m_{\ell\ell}$. We also perform an analysis using a Matrix Element method as previously done in [39], to compute the differential cross section for signal and background hypotheses on an event-by-event basis. At low masses of the Higgs boson, all approaches yield results consistent with those from the BDT analysis, which is chosen as default because of the superior sensitivity in the entire 110–600 GeV mass range.

The 2-jet category is mainly sensitive to the vector boson fusion (VBF) production mode [40–42], whose cross section is roughly ten times smaller than that for the gluon-gluon fusion mode. The VBF channel with a different production mechanism offers the possibility to test the compatibility of an eventual signal with the SM Higgs. The VBF signal can be extracted using simple selection criteria especially in the relatively low background environment of the fully leptonic $\mathrm{W^+W^-}$ decay mode, providing additional search sensitivity. The $\mathrm{H} \to \mathrm{W^+W^-}$ events from VBF production are characterized by a pair of energetic forward-backward jets and very little hadronic activity in the rest of the event. Events passing the $\mathrm{W^+W^-}$ criteria are selected requiring $p_{\mathrm{T}} > 30\,\mathrm{GeV}$ for both leading jets, with no jets above this threshold present in the pseudorapidity region between them. To reject the main background, which stems from top-quark decays, two additional requirements are applied to the two jets, j_1 and j_2: $|\Delta\eta(j_1, j_2)| > 3.5$ and $m_{j_1 j_2} > 450\,\mathrm{GeV}$. Finally, a m_{H} dependent requirement on the high end of the dilepton mass is applied.

The selection with the requirements described in this section is referred to as the "Higgs selection" for both the cut-based and the multivariate approaches.

5 Background predictions

A combination of techniques are used to determine the contributions from the background processes that remain after the Higgs selection. Where feasible, background contributions are estimated directly from the data itself, avoiding large uncertainties related to the simulation of these sources. The remaining contributions taken from simulation are small.

The $\mathrm{W} + \mathrm{jets}$ and QCD multijet backgrounds arise from leptonic decays of heavy quarks, hadrons misidentified as leptons, and electrons from photon conversion. The estimate of these contributions is derived directly from data using a control sample of events where one lepton passes the standard criteria and the other does not, but satisfies a relaxed set of requirements ("loose" selection), resulting in a "tight-fail" sample. The efficiency, $\epsilon_{\mathrm{loose}}$, for a jet satisfying the loose selection to pass the tight selection is determined using data from an independent multijet event sample dominated by non-prompt leptons, and parameterized as a function of p_{T} and η of such lepton. The background contamination is then estimated using the events of the "tight-fail" sample weighted by $\epsilon_{\mathrm{loose}}/(1 - \epsilon_{\mathrm{loose}})$. The systematic uncertainties stemming from the efficiency determination dominate the overall uncertainty of this method, which is estimated to be about 36%.

The normalization of the top-quark background is estimated from data as well by counting the number of top-tagged (N_{tagged}) events and applying the corresponding top-tagging efficiency. The top-tagging efficiency ($\epsilon_{\mathrm{top\ tagged}}$) is measured with a control sample dominated by $\mathrm{t\bar{t}}$ and tW events, which is selected by requiring a b-tagged jet. The residual number of top events ($N_{\mathrm{not\ tagged}}$) in the signal region is given by: $N_{\mathrm{not\ tagged}} = N_{\mathrm{tagged}} \times (1 - \epsilon_{\mathrm{top\ tagged}})/\epsilon_{\mathrm{top\ tagged}}$.

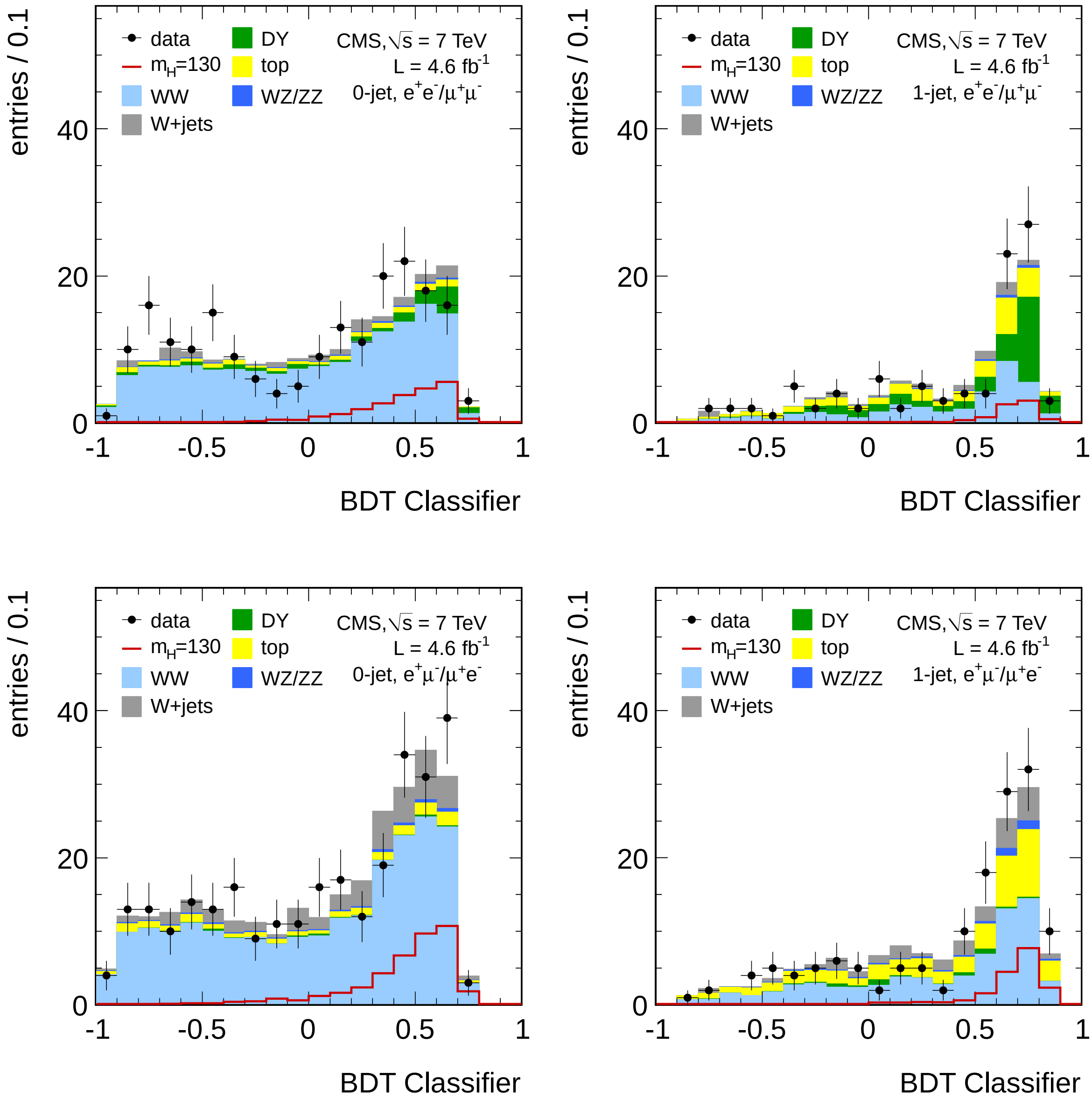

Figure 3: BDT classifier distributions for signal and background events for a $m_{\mathrm{H}} = 130\,\mathrm{GeV}$ SM Higgs boson and for the main backgrounds at the $\mathrm{W^+W^-}$ selection level: (upper-left) 0-jet bin same-flavour final state, (upper-right) 1-jet bin same-flavour final state, (lower-left) 0-jet bin opposite-flavour final state, (lower-right) 1-jet bin opposite-flavour final state.

The main uncertainty comes from the statistical uncertainty in the control sample and from the systematic uncertainties related to the measurement of $\epsilon_{\text{top tagged}}$. The uncertainty is about 25% in the 0-jet category and about 10% otherwise.

For the low-mass $H \rightarrow W^+W^-$ signal region, $m_H < 200\,\text{GeV}$, the non-resonant W^+W^- contribution is estimated from data. This contribution is measured using events with a dilepton mass larger than 100 GeV, where the Higgs boson signal contamination is negligible, and a simulation is used to extrapolate into the signal region. The total uncertainty is about 10%. For larger Higgs boson masses there is a large overlap between the non-resonant W^+W^- and Higgs boson signal, and simulation is used for the estimation.

The $Z/\gamma^* \rightarrow \ell^+\ell^-$ contribution to the e^+e^- and $\mu^+\mu^-$ final states is based on extrapolation from the observed number of events with a dilepton mass within $\pm7.5\,\text{GeV}$ of the Z mass, where the residual background on that region is subtracted, using $e^\pm\mu^\mp$ events. The extrapolation to the signal region is performed using the simulation and the results are cross-checked with data, using the same algorithm and subtracting the background in the peaking region which is estimated from $e^\pm\mu^\mp$ events. The largest uncertainty in the estimate is related to the statistical uncertainty of the control sample and it is about 50%. The $Z/\gamma^* \rightarrow \tau^+\tau^-$ contamination is estimated using $Z/\gamma^* \rightarrow e^+e^-$ and $\mu^+\mu^-$ events selected in data, where the leptons are replaced with simulated τ decays, thus providing a better description of the experimental conditions with respect to the full simulation of the process $Z/\gamma^* \rightarrow \tau^+\tau^-$. The TAUOLA [43] package is used in the simulation of τ decays to account for τ polarization effects.

Finally, to estimate the $W\gamma^*$ background contribution coming from asymmetric virtual photon decays [44], where one lepton escapes detection, the MADGRAPH generator with dedicated cuts is used. To obtain the normalization scale of the simulated events a control sample of high purity $W\gamma^*$ events with three reconstructed leptons is defined and compared to the simulation prediction. A measured factor of about 1.6 with respect to the leading order cross section is found.

Other minor backgrounds from WZ, ZZ (when the two selected leptons come from different bosons) and $W\gamma$ are estimated from simulation. The $W\gamma$ background estimate is cross-checked in data using the events passing all selection requirements, except that here the two leptons must have the same charge; this sample is dominated by W + jets and $W\gamma$ events.

The number of estimated events for all processes after the W^+W^- selection are summarized in Table 2. The number of events observed in data for the cut-based selection, with the signal and background predictions, are listed in Table 3 for several mass hypotheses.

6 Efficiencies and systematic uncertainties

The signal efficiency is estimated using simulations. All Higgs production mechanisms are considered: the gluon fusion process, the associated production of the Higgs boson with a W or Z boson, and the VBF process. Since the Higgs p_T spectrum generated by POWHEG is harder than that predicted by more precise calculations [45, 46], the Higgs boson p_T distribution is re-weighted to match the prediction from NNLO calculations with a resummation up to next-to-next-to-leading-log accuracy, following the method proposed in [47]. The SM Higgs boson production cross sections are taken from [25, 40–42, 48–63].

Residual discrepancies in the lepton reconstruction and identification efficiencies between data and simulation are corrected for by data-to-simulation scale factors measured using $Z/\gamma^* \rightarrow \ell^+\ell^-$ events in the Z peak region [64], recorded with dedicated unbiased triggers. These factors

Table 2: Observed number of events and background estimates for an integrated luminosity of 4.6 fb^{-1} after applying the W^+W^- selection requirements. Only statistical uncertainties on each estimate are reported. The $Z/\gamma^* \to \ell^+\ell^-$ process corresponds to the dimuon and dielectron final states.

	data	all bkg.	$q\bar{q} \to W^+W^-$	$gg \to W^+W^-$	$t\bar{t} + tW$	W + jets
0-jet	1359	1364.8 ± 9.3	980.6 ± 5.2	58.8 ± 0.7	147.3 ± 2.5	99.3 ± 5.0
1-jet	909	951.4 ± 9.8	416.8 ± 3.6	23.8 ± 0.5	334.8 ± 3.0	74.3 ± 4.6
2-jet	703	714.8 ± 13.5	154.7 ± 2.2	5.1 ± 0.2	413.5 ± 2.7	37.9 ± 3.6

	WZ/ZZ	$Z/\gamma^* \to \ell^+\ell^-$	$W\gamma^{(*)}$	$Z/\gamma^* \to \tau^+\tau^-$
0-jet	33.0 ± 0.5	16.6 ± 4.0	26.8 ± 3.5	2.4 ± 0.5
1-jet	28.7 ± 0.5	39.4 ± 6.4	13.0 ± 2.6	20.6 ± 0.4
2-jet	15.1 ± 0.3	56.1 ± 11.7	10.8 ± 3.6	21.6 ± 2.1

Table 3: Observed number of events, background estimates and signal predictions for an integrated luminosity of 4.6 fb^{-1} after applying the $H \to W^+W^-$ cut-based selection requirements. The combined statistical and experimental systematic uncertainties on the processes are reported. Theoretical systematic uncertainties are not quoted. The $Z/\gamma^* \to \ell^+\ell^-$ process corresponds to the dimuon, dielectron and ditau final state.

m_H	data	all bkg.	$pp \to W^+W^-$	top	W + jets	$WZ + ZZ + W\gamma^{(*)}$	$Z/\gamma^* \to \ell^+\ell^-$	$H \to W^+W^-$
0-jet category								
120	136	136.7 ± 12.7	100.3 ± 7.2	6.7 ± 1.0	14.7 ± 4.7	6.1 ± 1.5	8.8 ± 9.2	15.7 ± 0.8
130	193	191.5 ± 14.0	142.2 ± 10.0	10.6 ± 1.6	17.6 ± 5.5	7.4 ± 1.6	13.7 ± 7.8	45.2 ± 2.1
160	111	101.7 ± 6.8	82.6 ± 5.4	10.5 ± 1.4	3.0 ± 1.5	2.2 ± 0.4	3.4 ± 3.4	122.9 ± 5.6
200	159	140.8 ± 6.8	108.2 ± 4.5	23.3 ± 3.1	3.4 ± 1.5	3.2 ± 0.3	2.7 ± 3.7	48.8 ± 2.2
400	109	110.8 ± 5.8	59.8 ± 2.7	35.9 ± 4.7	5.5 ± 1.8	9.3 ± 1.1	0.2 ± 0.2	17.5 ± 0.8
1-jet category								
120	72	59.5 ± 5.9	27.0 ± 4.7	17.2 ± 1.0	5.4 ± 2.4	3.2 ± 0.6	6.6 ± 2.3	6.5 ± 0.3
130	105	79.9 ± 7.7	38.5 ± 6.6	25.6 ± 1.4	6.5 ± 2.5	4.0 ± 0.6	5.3 ± 2.5	17.6 ± 0.8
160	86	70.8 ± 6.0	33.7 ± 5.5	27.9 ± 1.4	3.2 ± 1.4	1.9 ± 0.3	4.2 ± 1.4	60.2 ± 2.6
200	111	130.8 ± 6.7	49.3 ± 2.2	59.4 ± 2.8	5.2 ± 1.8	2.2 ± 0.1	14.6 ± 5.3	25.8 ± 1.1
400	128	123.6 ± 5.3	44.6 ± 2.2	60.6 ± 2.9	6.2 ± 2.1	3.9 ± 0.5	8.3 ± 3.2	12.2 ± 0.5
2-jet category								
120	8	11.3 ± 3.6	1.3 ± 0.2	5.5 ± 2.8	0.7 ± 0.6	1.8 ± 1.5	1.9 ± 1.4	1.1 ± 0.1
130	10	13.3 ± 4.0	1.6 ± 0.2	6.5 ± 3.2	0.7 ± 0.6	1.8 ± 1.5	2.7 ± 1.9	2.7 ± 0.2
160	12	15.9 ± 4.6	1.9 ± 0.2	8.4 ± 3.9	1.2 ± 0.8	1.8 ± 1.5	2.7 ± 1.9	12.2 ± 0.7
200	13	17.8 ± 5.0	2.2 ± 0.2	9.4 ± 4.2	1.2 ± 0.8	1.8 ± 1.5	3.2 ± 2.1	8.4 ± 0.5
400	20	23.8 ± 6.4	3.5 ± 0.3	14.1 ± 5.8	1.1 ± 0.8	1.9 ± 1.5	3.3 ± 2.1	2.5 ± 0.1

depend on the lepton p_T and $|\eta|$, and are typically in the range (0.9-1.0).

Experimental effects, theoretical predictions, and the choice of Monte Carlo event generators are considered as sources of uncertainty for both the cut-based and the BDT analyses. For the cut-based analysis the impact of these uncertainties on the signal efficiency is assessed, while for the BDT analysis the impacts on both the signal efficiency and the kinematic distributions are considered. The experimental uncertainties on lepton efficiency, momentum scale and resolution, E_T^{miss} modeling, and jet energy scale are applied to the reconstructed objects in simulated events by smearing and scaling the relevant observables and propagating the effects to the kinematic variables used in the analysis. Separate $q\overline{q} \to W^+W^-$ samples are produced with varied renormalization and factorization scales using the MC@NLO generator [65] to address the shape uncertainty in the theoretical model. The kinematic differences with respect to an alternate event generator are used as an additional uncertainty for $q\overline{q} \to W^+W^-$ (MADGRAPH versus MC@NLO) and top-quark production (MADGRAPH versus POWHEG). The normalization and the shape uncertainty on the $W +$ jets background is included by varying the efficiency for misidentified leptons to pass the tight lepton selection and by comparing to the results of a closure test using simulated samples. For the BDT analysis, the $Z/\gamma^* \to \ell^+\ell^-$ process is modeled using events at low E_T^{miss} to gain statistical power in the extrapolation to the signal region. The effect of the limited amount of simulated events on the shape knowledge is addressed by varying the distribution used to set the limits by the statistical uncertainty in each histogram bin.

The uncertainty on the signal efficiency from pile-up is evaluated to be 0.5%. The assigned uncertainty corresponds to shifting the mean of the expected distribution which is used to reweight the simulation up and down by one interaction. A 4.5% uncertainty is assigned to the luminosity measurement [66].

The systematic uncertainties due to theoretical ambiguities are separated into two components, which are assumed to be independent. The first component is the uncertainty on the fraction of events categorized into the different jet categories and the effect of jet bin migration. The second component is the uncertainty on the lepton acceptance and the selection efficiency of all other requirements. The effect of variations in parton distribution functions and the value of α_s, and the effect of higher-order corrections, are considered for both components using the PDF4LHC prescription [67–71]. For the jet categorization, the effects of higher-order log terms via the uncertainty in the parton shower model and the underlying event are also considered, by comparing different generators. These uncertainties range between 10% and 30% depending on the jet category. The uncertainties related to the diboson cross sections are calculated using the MCFM program [72].

The overall signal efficiency uncertainty is estimated to be about 20% and is dominated by the theoretical uncertainty due to missing higher-order corrections and PDF uncertainties. The uncertainty on the background estimations in the $H \to W^+W^-$ signal region is about 15%, which is dominated by the statistical uncertainty on the observed number of events in the background-control regions.

7 Results

After applying the mass-dependent Higgs selection, no significant excess of events is found with respect to the expected backgrounds, and upper limits are derived on the product of the Higgs boson production cross section and the $H \to W^+W^-$ branching fraction, $\sigma_H \times BR(H \to W^+W^-)$, with respect to the SM Higgs expectation, σ/σ_{SM}.

To compute the upper limits the modified frequentist construction CL_s [73–75] is used. The likelihood function from the expected number of observed events is modeled as a Poisson random variable, whose mean value is the sum of the contributions from signal and background processes. All the sources of systematic uncertainties are also considered. The 95% CL observed and expected median upper limits are shown in Fig. 4. Results are reported for both the cut-based and the BDT approaches. The bands represent the 1σ and 2σ probability intervals around the expected limit. The *a posteriori* probability intervals on the cross section are constrained by the assumption that the signal and background cross sections are positive definite.

The cut-based analysis excludes the presence of a Higgs boson with mass in the range 132–238 GeV at 95% CL, while the expected exclusion limit in the hypothesis of background only is 129–236 GeV. With the multivariate analysis, a Higgs boson with mass in the range 129–270 GeV is excluded at 95% CL, while the expected exclusion limit for the background only hypothesis is in the range 127–270 GeV. The observed (expected) upper limits are about 0.9 (0.7) times the SM expectation for $m_{\mathrm{H}} = 130\,\mathrm{GeV}$.

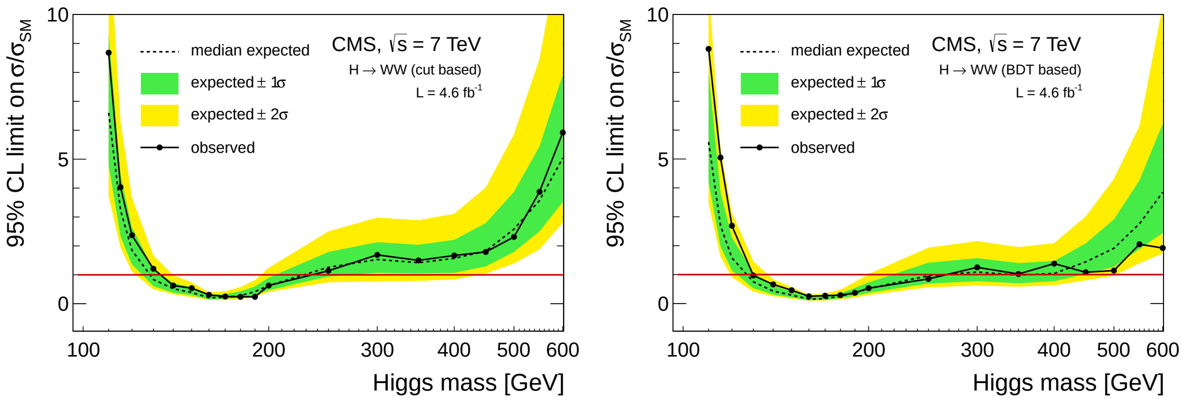

Figure 4: Expected and observed 95% CL upper limits on the cross section times branching fraction, $\sigma_{\mathrm{H}} \times \mathrm{BR}(\mathrm{H} \to \mathrm{W}^+\mathrm{W}^-)$, relative to the SM Higgs expectation, using cut-based (left) and multivariate BDT (right) event selections. Results are obtained using the CL_s approach.

8 Summary

A search for the SM Higgs boson decaying to $\mathrm{W}^+\mathrm{W}^-$ in pp collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 7\,\mathrm{TeV}$ is performed by the CMS experiment using a data sample corresponding to an integrated luminosity of $4.6\,\mathrm{fb}^{-1}$. No significant excess of events above the SM background expectation is found. Limits on the Higgs boson production cross section relative to the SM Higgs expectation are derived, excluding the presence of the SM Higgs boson with a mass in the range 129–270 GeV at 95% CL.

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A The CMS Collaboration

Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia
S. Chatrchyan, V. Khachatryan, A.M. Sirunyan, A. Tumasyan

Institut für Hochenergiephysik der OeAW, Wien, Austria
W. Adam, T. Bergauer, M. Dragicevic, J. Erö, C. Fabjan, M. Friedl, R. Frühwirth, V.M. Ghete, J. Hammer[1], M. Hoch, N. Hörmann, J. Hrubec, M. Jeitler, W. Kiesenhofer, M. Krammer, D. Liko, I. Mikulec, M. Pernicka[†], B. Rahbaran, C. Rohringer, H. Rohringer, R. Schöfbeck, J. Strauss, A. Taurok, F. Teischinger, P. Wagner, W. Waltenberger, G. Walzel, E. Widl, C.-E. Wulz

National Centre for Particle and High Energy Physics, Minsk, Belarus
V. Mossolov, N. Shumeiko, J. Suarez Gonzalez

Universiteit Antwerpen, Antwerpen, Belgium
S. Bansal, L. Benucci, T. Cornelis, E.A. De Wolf, X. Janssen, S. Luyckx, T. Maes, L. Mucibello, S. Ochesanu, B. Roland, R. Rougny, M. Selvaggi, H. Van Haevermaet, P. Van Mechelen, N. Van Remortel, A. Van Spilbeeck

Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel, Belgium
F. Blekman, S. Blyweert, J. D'Hondt, R. Gonzalez Suarez, A. Kalogeropoulos, M. Maes, A. Olbrechts, W. Van Doninck, P. Van Mulders, G.P. Van Onsem, I. Villella

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium
O. Charaf, B. Clerbaux, G. De Lentdecker, V. Dero, A.P.R. Gay, G.H. Hammad, T. Hreus, A. Léonard, P.E. Marage, L. Thomas, C. Vander Velde, P. Vanlaer, J. Wickens

Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium
V. Adler, K. Beernaert, A. Cimmino, S. Costantini, G. Garcia, M. Grunewald, B. Klein, J. Lellouch, A. Marinov, J. Mccartin, A.A. Ocampo Rios, D. Ryckbosch, N. Strobbe, F. Thyssen, M. Tytgat, L. Vanelderen, P. Verwilligen, S. Walsh, E. Yazgan, N. Zaganidis

Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium
S. Basegmez, G. Bruno, L. Ceard, J. De Favereau De Jeneret, C. Delaere, T. du Pree, D. Favart, L. Forthomme, A. Giammanco[2], G. Grégoire, J. Hollar, V. Lemaitre, J. Liao, O. Militaru, C. Nuttens, D. Pagano, A. Pin, K. Piotrzkowski, N. Schul

Université de Mons, Mons, Belgium
N. Beliy, T. Caebergs, E. Daubie

Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Fisicas, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
G.A. Alves, M. Correa Martins Junior, D. De Jesus Damiao, T. Martins, M.E. Pol, M.H.G. Souza

Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
W.L. Aldá Júnior, W. Carvalho, A. Custódio, E.M. Da Costa, C. De Oliveira Martins, S. Fonseca De Souza, D. Matos Figueiredo, L. Mundim, H. Nogima, V. Oguri, W.L. Prado Da Silva, A. Santoro, S.M. Silva Do Amaral, L. Soares Jorge, A. Sznajder

Instituto de Fisica Teorica, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Sao Paulo, Brazil
T.S. Anjos[3], C.A. Bernardes[3], F.A. Dias[4], T.R. Fernandez Perez Tomei, E. M. Gregores[3], C. Lagana, F. Marinho, P.G. Mercadante[3], S.F. Novaes, Sandra S. Padula

Institute for Nuclear Research and Nuclear Energy, Sofia, Bulgaria
V. Genchev[1], P. Iaydjiev[1], S. Piperov, M. Rodozov, S. Stoykova, G. Sultanov, V. Tcholakov, R. Trayanov, M. Vutova

University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria
A. Dimitrov, R. Hadjiiska, A. Karadzhinova, V. Kozhuharov, L. Litov, B. Pavlov, P. Petkov

Institute of High Energy Physics, Beijing, China
J.G. Bian, G.M. Chen, H.S. Chen, C.H. Jiang, D. Liang, S. Liang, X. Meng, J. Tao, J. Wang, J. Wang, X. Wang, Z. Wang, H. Xiao, M. Xu, J. Zang, Z. Zhang

State Key Lab. of Nucl. Phys. and Tech., Peking University, Beijing, China
C. Asawatangtrakuldee, Y. Ban, S. Guo, Y. Guo, W. Li, S. Liu, Y. Mao, S.J. Qian, H. Teng, S. Wang, B. Zhu, W. Zou

Universidad de Los Andes, Bogota, Colombia
A. Cabrera, B. Gomez Moreno, A.F. Osorio Oliveros, J.C. Sanabria

Technical University of Split, Split, Croatia
N. Godinovic, D. Lelas, R. Plestina[5], D. Polic, I. Puljak[1]

University of Split, Split, Croatia
Z. Antunovic, M. Dzelalija, M. Kovac

Institute Rudjer Boskovic, Zagreb, Croatia
V. Brigljevic, S. Duric, K. Kadija, J. Luetic, S. Morovic

University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
A. Attikis, M. Galanti, J. Mousa, C. Nicolaou, F. Ptochos, P.A. Razis

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
M. Finger, M. Finger Jr.

Academy of Scientific Research and Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Egyptian Network of High Energy Physics, Cairo, Egypt
Y. Assran[6], A. Ellithi Kamel[7], S. Khalil[8], M.A. Mahmoud[9], A. Radi[10]

National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics, Tallinn, Estonia
A. Hektor, M. Kadastik, M. Müntel, M. Raidal, L. Rebane, A. Tiko

Department of Physics, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
V. Azzolini, P. Eerola, G. Fedi, M. Voutilainen

Helsinki Institute of Physics, Helsinki, Finland
S. Czellar, J. Härkönen, A. Heikkinen, V. Karimäki, R. Kinnunen, M.J. Kortelainen, T. Lampén, K. Lassila-Perini, S. Lehti, T. Lindén, P. Luukka, T. Mäenpää, T. Peltola, E. Tuominen, J. Tuominiemi, E. Tuovinen, D. Ungaro, L. Wendland

Lappeenranta University of Technology, Lappeenranta, Finland
K. Banzuzi, A. Korpela, T. Tuuva

Laboratoire d'Annecy-le-Vieux de Physique des Particules, IN2P3-CNRS, Annecy-le-Vieux, France
D. Sillou

DSM/IRFU, CEA/Saclay, Gif-sur-Yvette, France
M. Besancon, S. Choudhury, M. Dejardin, D. Denegri, B. Fabbro, J.L. Faure, F. Ferri, S. Ganjour, A. Givernaud, P. Gras, G. Hamel de Monchenault, P. Jarry, E. Locci, J. Malcles, L. Millischer, J. Rander, A. Rosowsky, I. Shreyber, M. Titov

Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, Ecole Polytechnique, IN2P3-CNRS, Palaiseau, France
S. Baffioni, F. Beaudette, L. Benhabib, L. Bianchini, M. Bluj[11], C. Broutin, P. Busson, C. Charlot, N. Daci, T. Dahms, L. Dobrzynski, S. Elgammal, R. Granier de Cassagnac, M. Haguenauer, P. Miné, C. Mironov, C. Ochando, P. Paganini, D. Sabes, R. Salerno, Y. Sirois, C. Thiebaux, C. Veelken, A. Zabi

Institut Pluridisciplinaire Hubert Curien, Université de Strasbourg, Université de Haute Alsace Mulhouse, CNRS/IN2P3, Strasbourg, France
J.-L. Agram[12], J. Andrea, D. Bloch, D. Bodin, J.-M. Brom, M. Cardaci, E.C. Chabert, C. Collard, E. Conte[12], F. Drouhin[12], C. Ferro, J.-C. Fontaine[12], D. Gelé, U. Goerlach, P. Juillot, M. Karim[12], A.-C. Le Bihan, P. Van Hove

Centre de Calcul de l'Institut National de Physique Nucleaire et de Physique des Particules (IN2P3), Villeurbanne, France
F. Fassi, D. Mercier

Université de Lyon, Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1, CNRS-IN2P3, Institut de Physique Nucléaire de Lyon, Villeurbanne, France
C. Baty, S. Beauceron, N. Beaupere, M. Bedjidian, O. Bondu, G. Boudoul, D. Boumediene, H. Brun, J. Chasserat, R. Chierici[1], D. Contardo, P. Depasse, H. El Mamouni, A. Falkiewicz, J. Fay, S. Gascon, M. Gouzevitch, B. Ille, T. Kurca, T. Le Grand, M. Lethuillier, L. Mirabito, S. Perries, V. Sordini, S. Tosi, Y. Tschudi, P. Verdier, S. Viret

Institute of High Energy Physics and Informatization, Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia
D. Lomidze

RWTH Aachen University, I. Physikalisches Institut, Aachen, Germany
G. Anagnostou, S. Beranek, M. Edelhoff, L. Feld, N. Heracleous, O. Hindrichs, R. Jussen, K. Klein, J. Merz, A. Ostapchuk, A. Perieanu, F. Raupach, J. Sammet, S. Schael, D. Sprenger, H. Weber, B. Wittmer, V. Zhukov[13]

RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut A, Aachen, Germany
M. Ata, J. Caudron, E. Dietz-Laursonn, M. Erdmann, A. Güth, T. Hebbeker, C. Heidemann, K. Hoepfner, T. Klimkovich, D. Klingebiel, P. Kreuzer, D. Lanske[†], J. Lingemann, C. Magass, M. Merschmeyer, A. Meyer, M. Olschewski, P. Papacz, H. Pieta, H. Reithler, S.A. Schmitz, L. Sonnenschein, J. Steggemann, D. Teyssier, M. Weber

RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut B, Aachen, Germany
M. Bontenackels, V. Cherepanov, M. Davids, G. Flügge, H. Geenen, M. Geisler, W. Haj Ahmad, F. Hoehle, B. Kargoll, T. Kress, Y. Kuessel, A. Linn, A. Nowack, L. Perchalla, O. Pooth, J. Rennefeld, P. Sauerland, A. Stahl, M.H. Zoeller

Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron, Hamburg, Germany
M. Aldaya Martin, W. Behrenhoff, U. Behrens, M. Bergholz[14], A. Bethani, K. Borras, A. Burgmeier, A. Cakir, L. Calligaris, A. Campbell, E. Castro, D. Dammann, G. Eckerlin, D. Eckstein, A. Flossdorf, G. Flucke, A. Geiser, J. Hauk, H. Jung[1], M. Kasemann, P. Katsas, C. Kleinwort, H. Kluge, A. Knutsson, M. Krämer, D. Krücker, E. Kuznetsova, W. Lange, W. Lohmann[14], B. Lutz, R. Mankel, I. Marfin, M. Marienfeld, I.-A. Melzer-Pellmann, A.B. Meyer, J. Mnich, A. Mussgiller, S. Naumann-Emme, J. Olzem, A. Petrukhin, D. Pitzl, A. Raspereza, P.M. Ribeiro Cipriano, M. Rosin, J. Salfeld-Nebgen, R. Schmidt[14], T. Schoerner-Sadenius, N. Sen, A. Spiridonov, M. Stein, J. Tomaszewska, R. Walsh, C. Wissing

University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany
C. Autermann, V. Blobel, S. Bobrovskyi, J. Draeger, H. Enderle, J. Erfle, U. Gebbert, M. Görner, T. Hermanns, R.S. Höing, K. Kaschube, G. Kaussen, H. Kirschenmann, R. Klanner, J. Lange, B. Mura, F. Nowak, N. Pietsch, C. Sander, H. Schettler, P. Schleper, E. Schlieckau, A. Schmidt, M. Schröder, T. Schum, H. Stadie, G. Steinbrück, J. Thomsen

Institut für Experimentelle Kernphysik, Karlsruhe, Germany
C. Barth, J. Berger, T. Chwalek, W. De Boer, A. Dierlamm, G. Dirkes, M. Feindt, J. Gruschke, M. Guthoff[1], C. Hackstein, F. Hartmann, M. Heinrich, H. Held, K.H. Hoffmann, S. Honc, I. Katkov[13], J.R. Komaragiri, T. Kuhr, D. Martschei, S. Mueller, Th. Müller, M. Niegel, A. Nürnberg, O. Oberst, A. Oehler, J. Ott, T. Peiffer, G. Quast, K. Rabbertz, F. Ratnikov, N. Ratnikova, M. Renz, S. Röcker, C. Saout, A. Scheurer, P. Schieferdecker, F.-P. Schilling, M. Schmanau, G. Schott, H.J. Simonis, F.M. Stober, D. Troendle, J. Wagner-Kuhr, T. Weiler, M. Zeise, E.B. Ziebarth

Institute of Nuclear Physics "Demokritos", Aghia Paraskevi, Greece
G. Daskalakis, T. Geralis, S. Kesisoglou, A. Kyriakis, D. Loukas, I. Manolakos, A. Markou, C. Markou, C. Mavrommatis, E. Ntomari

University of Athens, Athens, Greece
L. Gouskos, T.J. Mertzimekis, A. Panagiotou, N. Saoulidou, E. Stiliaris

University of Ioánnina, Ioánnina, Greece
I. Evangelou, C. Foudas[1], P. Kokkas, N. Manthos, I. Papadopoulos, V. Patras, F.A. Triantis

KFKI Research Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Budapest, Hungary
A. Aranyi, G. Bencze, L. Boldizsar, C. Hajdu[1], P. Hidas, D. Horvath[15], A. Kapusi, K. Krajczar[16], F. Sikler[1], V. Veszpremi, G. Vesztergombi[16]

Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary
N. Beni, J. Molnar, J. Palinkas, Z. Szillasi

University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary
J. Karancsi, P. Raics, Z.L. Trocsanyi, B. Ujvari

Panjab University, Chandigarh, India
S.B. Beri, V. Bhatnagar, N. Dhingra, R. Gupta, M. Jindal, M. Kaur, J.M. Kohli, M.Z. Mehta, N. Nishu, L.K. Saini, A. Sharma, A.P. Singh, J. Singh, S.P. Singh

University of Delhi, Delhi, India
S. Ahuja, B.C. Choudhary, A. Kumar, A. Kumar, S. Malhotra, M. Naimuddin, K. Ranjan, V. Sharma, R.K. Shivpuri

Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Kolkata, India
S. Banerjee, S. Bhattacharya, S. Dutta, B. Gomber, S. Jain, S. Jain, R. Khurana, S. Sarkar

Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai, India
R.K. Choudhury, D. Dutta, S. Kailas, V. Kumar, A.K. Mohanty[1], L.M. Pant, P. Shukla

Tata Institute of Fundamental Research - EHEP, Mumbai, India
T. Aziz, S. Ganguly, M. Guchait[17], A. Gurtu[18], M. Maity[19], G. Majumder, K. Mazumdar, G.B. Mohanty, B. Parida, A. Saha, K. Sudhakar, N. Wickramage

Tata Institute of Fundamental Research - HECR, Mumbai, India
S. Banerjee, S. Dugad, N.K. Mondal

Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences (IPM), Tehran, Iran
H. Arfaei, H. Bakhshiansohi[20], S.M. Etesami[21], A. Fahim[20], M. Hashemi, H. Hesari, A. Jafari[20], M. Khakzad, A. Mohammadi[22], M. Mohammadi Najafabadi, S. Paktinat Mehdiabadi, B. Safarzadeh[23], M. Zeinali[21]

INFN Sezione di Bari [a], Università di Bari [b], Politecnico di Bari [c], Bari, Italy
M. Abbrescia[a,b], L. Barbone[a,b], C. Calabria[a,b], S.S. Chhibra[a,b], A. Colaleo[a], D. Creanza[a,c], N. De Filippis[a,c,1], M. De Palma[a,b], L. Fiore[a], G. Iaselli[a,c], L. Lusito[a,b], G. Maggi[a,c], M. Maggi[a], N. Manna[a,b], B. Marangelli[a,b], S. My[a,c], S. Nuzzo[a,b], N. Pacifico[a,b], A. Pompili[a,b], G. Pugliese[a,c], F. Romano[a,c], G. Selvaggi[a,b], L. Silvestris[a], G. Singh[a,b], S. Tupputi[a,b], G. Zito[a]

INFN Sezione di Bologna [a], Università di Bologna [b], Bologna, Italy
G. Abbiendi[a], A.C. Benvenuti[a], D. Bonacorsi[a], S. Braibant-Giacomelli[a,b], L. Brigliadori[a], P. Capiluppi[a,b], A. Castro[a,b], F.R. Cavallo[a], M. Cuffiani[a,b], G.M. Dallavalle[a], F. Fabbri[a], A. Fanfani[a,b], D. Fasanella[a,1], P. Giacomelli[a], C. Grandi[a], S. Marcellini[a], G. Masetti[a], M. Meneghelli[a,b], A. Montanari[a], F.L. Navarria[a,b], F. Odorici[a], A. Perrotta[a], F. Primavera[a], A.M. Rossi[a,b], T. Rovelli[a,b], G. Siroli[a,b], R. Travaglini[a,b]

INFN Sezione di Catania [a], Università di Catania [b], Catania, Italy
S. Albergo[a,b], G. Cappello[a,b], M. Chiorboli[a,b], S. Costa[a,b], R. Potenza[a,b], A. Tricomi[a,b], C. Tuve[a,b]

INFN Sezione di Firenze [a], Università di Firenze [b], Firenze, Italy
G. Barbagli[a], V. Ciulli[a,b], C. Civinini[a], R. D'Alessandro[a,b], E. Focardi[a,b], S. Frosali[a,b], E. Gallo[a], S. Gonzi[a,b], M. Meschini[a], S. Paoletti[a], G. Sguazzoni[a], A. Tropiano[a,1]

INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy
L. Benussi, S. Bianco, S. Colafranceschi[24], F. Fabbri, D. Piccolo

INFN Sezione di Genova, Genova, Italy
P. Fabbricatore, R. Musenich

INFN Sezione di Milano-Bicocca [a], Università di Milano-Bicocca [b], Milano, Italy
A. Benaglia[a,b,1], F. De Guio[a,b], L. Di Matteo[a,b], S. Fiorendi[a,b], S. Gennai[a,1], A. Ghezzi[a,b], S. Malvezzi[a], R.A. Manzoni[a,b], A. Martelli[a,b], A. Massironi[a,b,1], D. Menasce[a], L. Moroni[a], M. Paganoni[a,b], D. Pedrini[a], S. Ragazzi[a,b], N. Redaelli[a], S. Sala[a], T. Tabarelli de Fatis[a,b]

INFN Sezione di Napoli [a], Università di Napoli "Federico II" [b], Napoli, Italy
S. Buontempo[a], C.A. Carrillo Montoya[a,1], N. Cavallo[a,25], A. De Cosa[a,b], O. Dogangun[a,b], F. Fabozzi[a,25], A.O.M. Iorio[a,1], L. Lista[a], M. Merola[a,b], P. Paolucci[a]

INFN Sezione di Padova [a], Università di Padova [b], Università di Trento (Trento) [c], Padova, Italy
P. Azzi[a], N. Bacchetta[a,1], P. Bellan[a,b], D. Bisello[a,b], A. Branca[a], R. Carlin[a,b], P. Checchia[a], T. Dorigo[a], U. Dosselli[a], F. Fanzago[a], F. Gasparini[a,b], U. Gasparini[a,b], A. Gozzelino[a], K. Kanishchev, S. Lacaprara[a,26], I. Lazzizzera[a,c], M. Margoni[a,b], M. Mazzucato[a], A.T. Meneguzzo[a,b], M. Nespolo[a,1], L. Perrozzi[a], N. Pozzobon[a,b], P. Ronchese[a,b], F. Simonetto[a,b], E. Torassa[a], M. Tosi[a,b,1], S. Vanini[a,b], P. Zotto[a,b], G. Zumerle[a,b]

INFN Sezione di Pavia [a], Università di Pavia [b], Pavia, Italy
U. Berzano[a], M. Gabusi[a,b], S.P. Ratti[a,b], C. Riccardi[a,b], P. Torre[a,b], P. Vitulo[a,b]

INFN Sezione di Perugia [a], Università di Perugia [b], Perugia, Italy
M. Biasini[a,b], G.M. Bilei[a], B. Caponeri[a,b], L. Fanò[a,b], P. Lariccia[a,b], A. Lucaroni[a,b,1], G. Mantovani[a,b], M. Menichelli[a], A. Nappi[a,b], F. Romeo[a,b], A. Santocchia[a,b], S. Taroni[a,b,1], M. Valdata[a,b]

INFN Sezione di Pisa [a], Università di Pisa [b], Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa [c], Pisa, Italy
P. Azzurri[a,c], G. Bagliesi[a], T. Boccali[a], G. Broccolo[a,c], R. Castaldi[a], R.T. D'Agnolo[a,c], R. Dell'Orso[a], F. Fiori[a,b], L. Foà[a,c], A. Giassi[a], A. Kraan[a], F. Ligabue[a,c], T. Lomtadze[a], L. Martini[a,27], A. Messineo[a,b], F. Palla[a], F. Palmonari[a], A. Rizzi, A.T. Serban[a], P. Spagnolo[a], R. Tenchini[a], G. Tonelli[a,b,1], A. Venturi[a,1], P.G. Verdini[a]

INFN Sezione di Roma [a], Università di Roma "La Sapienza" [b], Roma, Italy
L. Barone[a,b], F. Cavallari[a], D. Del Re[a,b,1], M. Diemoz[a], C. Fanelli, M. Grassi[a,1], E. Longo[a,b], P. Meridiani[a], F. Micheli, S. Nourbakhsh[a], G. Organtini[a,b], F. Pandolfi[a,b], R. Paramatti[a], S. Rahatlou[a,b], M. Sigamani[a], L. Soffi

INFN Sezione di Torino [a], Università di Torino [b], Università del Piemonte Orientale (Novara) [c], Torino, Italy
N. Amapane[a,b], R. Arcidiacono[a,c], S. Argiro[a,b], M. Arneodo[a,c], C. Biino[a], C. Botta[a,b], N. Cartiglia[a], R. Castello[a,b], M. Costa[a,b], N. Demaria[a], A. Graziano[a,b], C. Mariotti[a,1], S. Maselli[a], E. Migliore[a,b], V. Monaco[a,b], M. Musich[a], M.M. Obertino[a,c], N. Pastrone[a], M. Pelliccioni[a], A. Potenza[a,b], A. Romero[a,b], M. Ruspa[a,c], R. Sacchi[a,b], V. Sola[a,b], A. Solano[a,b], A. Staiano[a], A. Vilela Pereira[a]

INFN Sezione di Trieste [a], Università di Trieste [b], Trieste, Italy
S. Belforte[a], F. Cossutti[a], G. Della Ricca[a,b], B. Gobbo[a], M. Marone[a,b], D. Montanino[a,b,1], A. Penzo[a]

Kangwon National University, Chunchon, Korea
S.G. Heo, S.K. Nam

Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea
S. Chang, J. Chung, D.H. Kim, G.N. Kim, J.E. Kim, D.J. Kong, H. Park, S.R. Ro, D.C. Son

Chonnam National University, Institute for Universe and Elementary Particles, Kwangju, Korea
J.Y. Kim, Zero J. Kim, S. Song

Konkuk University, Seoul, Korea
H.Y. Jo

Korea University, Seoul, Korea
S. Choi, D. Gyun, B. Hong, M. Jo, H. Kim, T.J. Kim, K.S. Lee, D.H. Moon, S.K. Park, E. Seo, K.S. Sim

University of Seoul, Seoul, Korea
M. Choi, S. Kang, H. Kim, J.H. Kim, C. Park, I.C. Park, S. Park, G. Ryu

Sungkyunkwan University, Suwon, Korea
Y. Cho, Y. Choi, Y.K. Choi, J. Goh, M.S. Kim, B. Lee, J. Lee, S. Lee, H. Seo, I. Yu

Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania
M.J. Bilinskas, I. Grigelionis, M. Janulis

Centro de Investigacion y de Estudios Avanzados del IPN, Mexico City, Mexico
H. Castilla-Valdez, E. De La Cruz-Burelo, I. Heredia-de La Cruz, R. Lopez-Fernandez, R. Magaña Villalba, J. Martínez-Ortega, A. Sánchez-Hernández, L.M. Villasenor-Cendejas

Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico
S. Carrillo Moreno, F. Vazquez Valencia

Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico
H.A. Salazar Ibarguen

Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, San Luis Potosí, Mexico
E. Casimiro Linares, A. Morelos Pineda, M.A. Reyes-Santos

University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand
D. Krofcheck

University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand
A.J. Bell, P.H. Butler, R. Doesburg, S. Reucroft, H. Silverwood

National Centre for Physics, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan
M. Ahmad, M.I. Asghar, H.R. Hoorani, S. Khalid, W.A. Khan, T. Khurshid, S. Qazi, M.A. Shah, M. Shoaib

Institute of Experimental Physics, Faculty of Physics, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland
G. Brona, M. Cwiok, W. Dominik, K. Doroba, A. Kalinowski, M. Konecki, J. Krolikowski

Soltan Institute for Nuclear Studies, Warsaw, Poland
H. Bialkowska, B. Boimska, T. Frueboes, R. Gokieli, M. Górski, M. Kazana, K. Nawrocki, K. Romanowska-Rybinska, M. Szleper, G. Wrochna, P. Zalewski

Laboratório de Instrumentação e Física Experimental de Partículas, Lisboa, Portugal
N. Almeida, P. Bargassa, A. David, P. Faccioli, P.G. Ferreira Parracho, M. Gallinaro, P. Musella, A. Nayak, J. Pela[1], P.Q. Ribeiro, J. Seixas, J. Varela, P. Vischia

Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, Russia
I. Belotelov, I. Golutvin, N. Gorbounov, I. Gramenitski, A. Kamenev, V. Karjavin, V. Konoplyanikov, G. Kozlov, A. Lanev, P. Moisenz, V. Palichik, V. Perelygin, M. Savina, S. Shmatov, V. Smirnov, S. Vasil'ev, A. Zarubin

Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute, Gatchina (St Petersburg), Russia
S. Evstyukhin, V. Golovtsov, Y. Ivanov, V. Kim, P. Levchenko, V. Murzin, V. Oreshkin, I. Smirnov, V. Sulimov, L. Uvarov, S. Vavilov, A. Vorobyev, An. Vorobyev

Institute for Nuclear Research, Moscow, Russia
Yu. Andreev, A. Dermenev, S. Gninenko, N. Golubev, M. Kirsanov, N. Krasnikov, V. Matveev, A. Pashenkov, A. Toropin, S. Troitsky

Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia
V. Epshteyn, M. Erofeeva, V. Gavrilov, M. Kossov[1], A. Krokhotin, N. Lychkovskaya, V. Popov, G. Safronov, S. Semenov, V. Stolin, E. Vlasov, A. Zhokin

Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia
A. Belyaev, E. Boos, M. Dubinin[4], L. Dudko, A. Ershov, A. Gribushin, O. Kodolova, I. Lokhtin, A. Markina, S. Obraztsov, M. Perfilov, S. Petrushanko, L. Sarycheva[†], V. Savrin, A. Snigirev

P.N. Lebedev Physical Institute, Moscow, Russia
V. Andreev, M. Azarkin, I. Dremin, M. Kirakosyan, A. Leonidov, G. Mesyats, S.V. Rusakov, A. Vinogradov

State Research Center of Russian Federation, Institute for High Energy Physics, Protvino, Russia
I. Azhgirey, I. Bayshev, S. Bitioukov, V. Grishin[1], V. Kachanov, D. Konstantinov, A. Korablev,

V. Krychkine, V. Petrov, R. Ryutin, A. Sobol, L. Tourtchanovitch, S. Troshin, N. Tyurin, A. Uzunian, A. Volkov

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Physics and Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia
P. Adzic[28], M. Djordjevic, M. Ekmedzic, D. Krpic[28], J. Milosevic

Centro de Investigaciones Energéticas Medioambientales y Tecnológicas (CIEMAT), Madrid, Spain
M. Aguilar-Benitez, J. Alcaraz Maestre, P. Arce, C. Battilana, E. Calvo, M. Cerrada, M. Chamizo Llatas, N. Colino, B. De La Cruz, A. Delgado Peris, C. Diez Pardos, D. Domínguez Vázquez, C. Fernandez Bedoya, J.P. Fernández Ramos, A. Ferrando, J. Flix, M.C. Fouz, P. Garcia-Abia, O. Gonzalez Lopez, S. Goy Lopez, J.M. Hernandez, M.I. Josa, G. Merino, J. Puerta Pelayo, I. Redondo, L. Romero, J. Santaolalla, M.S. Soares, C. Willmott

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
C. Albajar, G. Codispoti, J.F. de Trocóniz

Universidad de Oviedo, Oviedo, Spain
J. Cuevas, J. Fernandez Menendez, S. Folgueras, I. Gonzalez Caballero, L. Lloret Iglesias, J. Piedra Gomez[29], J.M. Vizan Garcia

Instituto de Física de Cantabria (IFCA), CSIC-Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain
J.A. Brochero Cifuentes, I.J. Cabrillo, A. Calderon, S.H. Chuang, J. Duarte Campderros, M. Felcini[30], M. Fernandez, G. Gomez, J. Gonzalez Sanchez, C. Jorda, P. Lobelle Pardo, A. Lopez Virto, J. Marco, R. Marco, C. Martinez Rivero, F. Matorras, F.J. Munoz Sanchez, T. Rodrigo, A.Y. Rodríguez-Marrero, A. Ruiz-Jimeno, L. Scodellaro, M. Sobron Sanudo, I. Vila, R. Vilar Cortabitarte

CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland
D. Abbaneo, E. Auffray, G. Auzinger, P. Baillon, A.H. Ball, D. Barney, C. Bernet[5], W. Bialas, G. Bianchi, P. Bloch, A. Bocci, H. Breuker, K. Bunkowski, T. Camporesi, G. Cerminara, T. Christiansen, J.A. Coarasa Perez, B. Curé, D. D'Enterria, A. De Roeck, S. Di Guida, M. Dobson, N. Dupont-Sagorin, A. Elliott-Peisert, B. Frisch, W. Funk, A. Gaddi, G. Georgiou, H. Gerwig, M. Giffels, D. Gigi, K. Gill, D. Giordano, M. Giunta, F. Glege, R. Gomez-Reino Garrido, P. Govoni, S. Gowdy, R. Guida, L. Guiducci, M. Hansen, P. Harris, C. Hartl, J. Harvey, B. Hegner, A. Hinzmann, H.F. Hoffmann, V. Innocente, P. Janot, K. Kaadze, E. Karavakis, K. Kousouris, P. Lecoq, P. Lenzi, C. Lourenço, T. Mäki, M. Malberti, L. Malgeri, M. Mannelli, L. Masetti, G. Mavromanolakis, F. Meijers, S. Mersi, E. Meschi, R. Moser, M.U. Mozer, M. Mulders, E. Nesvold, M. Nguyen, T. Orimoto, L. Orsini, E. Palencia Cortezon, E. Perez, A. Petrilli, A. Pfeiffer, M. Pierini, M. Pimiä, D. Piparo, G. Polese, L. Quertenmont, A. Racz, W. Reece, J. Rodrigues Antunes, G. Rolandi[31], T. Rommerskirchen, C. Rovelli[32], M. Rovere, H. Sakulin, F. Santanastasio, C. Schäfer, C. Schwick, I. Segoni, A. Sharma, P. Siegrist, P. Silva, M. Simon, P. Sphicas[33], D. Spiga, M. Spiropulu[4], M. Stoye, A. Tsirou, G.I. Veres[16], P. Vichoudis, H.K. Wöhri, S.D. Worm[34], W.D. Zeuner

Paul Scherrer Institut, Villigen, Switzerland
W. Bertl, K. Deiters, W. Erdmann, K. Gabathuler, R. Horisberger, Q. Ingram, H.C. Kaestli, S. König, D. Kotlinski, U. Langenegger, F. Meier, D. Renker, T. Rohe, J. Sibille[35]

Institute for Particle Physics, ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
L. Bäni, P. Bortignon, M.A. Buchmann, B. Casal, N. Chanon, Z. Chen, A. Deisher, G. Dissertori, M. Dittmar, M. Dünser, J. Eugster, K. Freudenreich, C. Grab, P. Lecomte, W. Lustermann,

P. Martinez Ruiz del Arbol, N. Mohr, F. Moortgat, C. Nägeli[36], P. Nef, F. Nessi-Tedaldi, L. Pape, F. Pauss, M. Peruzzi, F.J. Ronga, M. Rossini, L. Sala, A.K. Sanchez, M.-C. Sawley, A. Starodumov[37], B. Stieger, M. Takahashi, L. Tauscher[†], A. Thea, K. Theofilatos, D. Treille, C. Urscheler, R. Wallny, H.A. Weber, L. Wehrli, J. Weng

Universität Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland
E. Aguilo, C. Amsler, V. Chiochia, S. De Visscher, C. Favaro, M. Ivova Rikova, B. Millan Mejias, P. Otiougova, P. Robmann, H. Snoek, M. Verzetti

National Central University, Chung-Li, Taiwan
Y.H. Chang, K.H. Chen, C.M. Kuo, S.W. Li, W. Lin, Z.K. Liu, Y.J. Lu, D. Mekterovic, R. Volpe, S.S. Yu

National Taiwan University (NTU), Taipei, Taiwan
P. Bartalini, P. Chang, Y.H. Chang, Y.W. Chang, Y. Chao, K.F. Chen, C. Dietz, U. Grundler, W.-S. Hou, Y. Hsiung, K.Y. Kao, Y.J. Lei, R.-S. Lu, D. Majumder, E. Petrakou, X. Shi, J.G. Shiu, Y.M. Tzeng, M. Wang

Cukurova University, Adana, Turkey
A. Adiguzel, M.N. Bakirci[38], S. Cerci[39], C. Dozen, I. Dumanoglu, E. Eskut, S. Girgis, G. Gokbulut, I. Hos, E.E. Kangal, G. Karapinar, A. Kayis Topaksu, G. Onengut, K. Ozdemir, S. Ozturk[40], A. Polatoz, K. Sogut[41], D. Sunar Cerci[39], B. Tali[39], H. Topakli[38], D. Uzun, L.N. Vergili, M. Vergili

Middle East Technical University, Physics Department, Ankara, Turkey
I.V. Akin, T. Aliev, B. Bilin, S. Bilmis, M. Deniz, H. Gamsizkan, A.M. Guler, K. Ocalan, A. Ozpineci, M. Serin, R. Sever, U.E. Surat, M. Yalvac, E. Yildirim, M. Zeyrek

Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey
M. Deliomeroglu, E. Gülmez, B. Isildak, M. Kaya[42], O. Kaya[42], S. Ozkorucuklu[43], N. Sonmez[44]

National Scientific Center, Kharkov Institute of Physics and Technology, Kharkov, Ukraine
L. Levchuk

University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom
F. Bostock, J.J. Brooke, E. Clement, D. Cussans, H. Flacher, R. Frazier, J. Goldstein, M. Grimes, G.P. Heath, H.F. Heath, L. Kreczko, S. Metson, D.M. Newbold[34], K. Nirunpong, A. Poll, S. Senkin, V.J. Smith, T. Williams

Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom
L. Basso[45], K.W. Bell, A. Belyaev[45], C. Brew, R.M. Brown, D.J.A. Cockerill, J.A. Coughlan, K. Harder, S. Harper, J. Jackson, B.W. Kennedy, E. Olaiya, D. Petyt, B.C. Radburn-Smith, C.H. Shepherd-Themistocleous, I.R. Tomalin, W.J. Womersley

Imperial College, London, United Kingdom
R. Bainbridge, G. Ball, R. Beuselinck, O. Buchmuller, D. Colling, N. Cripps, M. Cutajar, P. Dauncey, G. Davies, M. Della Negra, W. Ferguson, J. Fulcher, D. Futyan, A. Gilbert, A. Guneratne Bryer, G. Hall, Z. Hatherell, J. Hays, G. Iles, M. Jarvis, G. Karapostoli, L. Lyons, A.-M. Magnan, J. Marrouche, B. Mathias, R. Nandi, J. Nash, A. Nikitenko[37], A. Papageorgiou, M. Pesaresi, K. Petridis, M. Pioppi[46], D.M. Raymond, S. Rogerson, N. Rompotis, A. Rose, M.J. Ryan, C. Seez, A. Sparrow, A. Tapper, S. Tourneur, M. Vazquez Acosta, T. Virdee, S. Wakefield, N. Wardle, D. Wardrope, T. Whyntie

Brunel University, Uxbridge, United Kingdom
M. Barrett, M. Chadwick, J.E. Cole, P.R. Hobson, A. Khan, P. Kyberd, D. Leslie, W. Martin, I.D. Reid, P. Symonds, L. Teodorescu, M. Turner

Baylor University, Waco, USA
K. Hatakeyama, H. Liu, T. Scarborough

The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA
C. Henderson

Boston University, Boston, USA
A. Avetisyan, T. Bose, E. Carrera Jarrin, C. Fantasia, A. Heister, J. St. John, P. Lawson, D. Lazic, J. Rohlf, D. Sperka, L. Sulak

Brown University, Providence, USA
S. Bhattacharya, D. Cutts, A. Ferapontov, U. Heintz, S. Jabeen, G. Kukartsev, G. Landsberg, M. Luk, M. Narain, D. Nguyen, M. Segala, T. Sinthuprasith, T. Speer, K.V. Tsang

University of California, Davis, Davis, USA
R. Breedon, G. Breto, M. Calderon De La Barca Sanchez, M. Caulfield, S. Chauhan, M. Chertok, J. Conway, R. Conway, P.T. Cox, J. Dolen, R. Erbacher, M. Gardner, R. Houtz, W. Ko, A. Kopecky, R. Lander, O. Mall, T. Miceli, R. Nelson, D. Pellett, J. Robles, B. Rutherford, M. Searle, J. Smith, M. Squires, M. Tripathi, R. Vasquez Sierra

University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, USA
V. Andreev, K. Arisaka, D. Cline, R. Cousins, J. Duris, S. Erhan, P. Everaerts, C. Farrell, J. Hauser, M. Ignatenko, C. Jarvis, C. Plager, G. Rakness, P. Schlein[†], J. Tucker, V. Valuev, M. Weber

University of California, Riverside, Riverside, USA
J. Babb, R. Clare, J. Ellison, J.W. Gary, F. Giordano, G. Hanson, G.Y. Jeng, H. Liu, O.R. Long, A. Luthra, H. Nguyen, S. Paramesvaran, J. Sturdy, S. Sumowidagdo, R. Wilken, S. Wimpenny

University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, USA
W. Andrews, J.G. Branson, G.B. Cerati, S. Cittolin, D. Evans, F. Golf, A. Holzner, R. Kelley, M. Lebourgeois, J. Letts, I. Macneill, B. Mangano, S. Padhi, C. Palmer, G. Petrucciani, H. Pi, M. Pieri, R. Ranieri, M. Sani, I. Sfiligoi, V. Sharma, S. Simon, E. Sudano, M. Tadel, Y. Tu, A. Vartak, S. Wasserbaech[47], F. Würthwein, A. Yagil, J. Yoo

University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, USA
D. Barge, R. Bellan, C. Campagnari, M. D'Alfonso, T. Danielson, K. Flowers, P. Geffert, J. Incandela, C. Justus, P. Kalavase, S.A. Koay, D. Kovalskyi[1], V. Krutelyov, S. Lowette, N. Mccoll, V. Pavlunin, F. Rebassoo, J. Ribnik, J. Richman, R. Rossin, D. Stuart, W. To, J.R. Vlimant, C. West

California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
A. Apresyan, A. Bornheim, J. Bunn, Y. Chen, E. Di Marco, J. Duarte, M. Gataullin, Y. Ma, A. Mott, H.B. Newman, C. Rogan, V. Timciuc, P. Traczyk, J. Veverka, R. Wilkinson, Y. Yang, R.Y. Zhu

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA
B. Akgun, R. Carroll, T. Ferguson, Y. Iiyama, D.W. Jang, S.Y. Jun, Y.F. Liu, M. Paulini, J. Russ, H. Vogel, I. Vorobiev

University of Colorado at Boulder, Boulder, USA
J.P. Cumalat, M.E. Dinardo, B.R. Drell, C.J. Edelmaier, W.T. Ford, A. Gaz, B. Heyburn, E. Luiggi Lopez, U. Nauenberg, J.G. Smith, K. Stenson, K.A. Ulmer, S.R. Wagner, S.L. Zang

Cornell University, Ithaca, USA
L. Agostino, J. Alexander, A. Chatterjee, N. Eggert, L.K. Gibbons, B. Heltsley, W. Hopkins, A. Khukhunaishvili, B. Kreis, N. Mirman, G. Nicolas Kaufman, J.R. Patterson, A. Ryd, E. Salvati, W. Sun, W.D. Teo, J. Thom, J. Thompson, J. Vaughan, Y. Weng, L. Winstrom, P. Wittich

Fairfield University, Fairfield, USA
A. Biselli, D. Winn

Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, USA
S. Abdullin, M. Albrow, J. Anderson, G. Apollinari, M. Atac, J.A. Bakken, L.A.T. Bauerdick, A. Beretvas, J. Berryhill, P.C. Bhat, I. Bloch, K. Burkett, J.N. Butler, V. Chetluru, H.W.K. Cheung, F. Chlebana, S. Cihangir, W. Cooper, D.P. Eartly, V.D. Elvira, S. Esen, I. Fisk, J. Freeman, Y. Gao, E. Gottschalk, D. Green, O. Gutsche, J. Hanlon, R.M. Harris, J. Hirschauer, B. Hooberman, H. Jensen, S. Jindariani, M. Johnson, U. Joshi, B. Klima, S. Kunori, S. Kwan, C. Leonidopoulos, D. Lincoln, R. Lipton, J. Lykken, K. Maeshima, J.M. Marraffino, S. Maruyama, D. Mason, P. McBride, T. Miao, K. Mishra, S. Mrenna, Y. Musienko[48], C. Newman-Holmes, V. O'Dell, J. Pivarski, R. Pordes, O. Prokofyev, T. Schwarz, E. Sexton-Kennedy, S. Sharma, W.J. Spalding, L. Spiegel, P. Tan, L. Taylor, S. Tkaczyk, L. Uplegger, E.W. Vaandering, R. Vidal, J. Whitmore, W. Wu, F. Yang, F. Yumiceva, J.C. Yun

University of Florida, Gainesville, USA
D. Acosta, P. Avery, D. Bourilkov, M. Chen, S. Das, M. De Gruttola, G.P. Di Giovanni, D. Dobur, A. Drozdetskiy, R.D. Field, M. Fisher, Y. Fu, I.K. Furic, J. Gartner, S. Goldberg, J. Hugon, B. Kim, J. Konigsberg, A. Korytov, A. Kropivnitskaya, T. Kypreos, J.F. Low, K. Matchev, P. Milenovic[49], G. Mitselmakher, L. Muniz, R. Remington, A. Rinkevicius, M. Schmitt, B. Scurlock, P. Sellers, N. Skhirtladze, M. Snowball, D. Wang, J. Yelton, M. Zakaria

Florida International University, Miami, USA
V. Gaultney, L.M. Lebolo, S. Linn, P. Markowitz, G. Martinez, J.L. Rodriguez

Florida State University, Tallahassee, USA
T. Adams, A. Askew, J. Bochenek, J. Chen, B. Diamond, S.V. Gleyzer, J. Haas, S. Hagopian, V. Hagopian, M. Jenkins, K.F. Johnson, H. Prosper, S. Sekmen, V. Veeraraghavan, M. Weinberg

Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, USA
M.M. Baarmand, B. Dorney, M. Hohlmann, H. Kalakhety, I. Vodopiyanov

University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Chicago, USA
M.R. Adams, I.M. Anghel, L. Apanasevich, Y. Bai, V.E. Bazterra, R.R. Betts, J. Callner, R. Cavanaugh, C. Dragoiu, L. Gauthier, C.E. Gerber, D.J. Hofman, S. Khalatyan, G.J. Kunde[50], F. Lacroix, M. Malek, C. O'Brien, C. Silkworth, C. Silvestre, D. Strom, N. Varelas

The University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA
U. Akgun, E.A. Albayrak, B. Bilki[51], W. Clarida, F. Duru, S. Griffiths, C.K. Lae, E. McCliment, J.-P. Merlo, H. Mermerkaya[52], A. Mestvirishvili, A. Moeller, J. Nachtman, C.R. Newsom, E. Norbeck, J. Olson, Y. Onel, F. Ozok, S. Sen, E. Tiras, J. Wetzel, T. Yetkin, K. Yi

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA
B.A. Barnett, B. Blumenfeld, S. Bolognesi, A. Bonato, D. Fehling, G. Giurgiu, A.V. Gritsan, Z.J. Guo, G. Hu, P. Maksimovic, S. Rappoccio, M. Swartz, N.V. Tran, A. Whitbeck

The University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA
P. Baringer, A. Bean, G. Benelli, O. Grachov, R.P. Kenny Iii, M. Murray, D. Noonan, S. Sanders, R. Stringer, G. Tinti, J.S. Wood, V. Zhukova

Kansas State University, Manhattan, USA
A.F. Barfuss, T. Bolton, I. Chakaberia, A. Ivanov, S. Khalil, M. Makouski, Y. Maravin, S. Shrestha, I. Svintradze

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, USA
J. Gronberg, D. Lange, D. Wright

University of Maryland, College Park, USA
A. Baden, M. Boutemeur, B. Calvert, S.C. Eno, J.A. Gomez, N.J. Hadley, R.G. Kellogg, M. Kirn, T. Kolberg, Y. Lu, M. Marionneau, A.C. Mignerey, A. Peterman, K. Rossato, P. Rumerio, A. Skuja, J. Temple, M.B. Tonjes, S.C. Tonwar, E. Twedt

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA
B. Alver, G. Bauer, J. Bendavid, W. Busza, E. Butz, I.A. Cali, M. Chan, V. Dutta, G. Gomez Ceballos, M. Goncharov, K.A. Hahn, Y. Kim, M. Klute, Y.-J. Lee, W. Li, P.D. Luckey, T. Ma, S. Nahn, C. Paus, D. Ralph, C. Roland, G. Roland, M. Rudolph, G.S.F. Stephans, F. Stöckli, K. Sumorok, K. Sung, D. Velicanu, E.A. Wenger, R. Wolf, B. Wyslouch, S. Xie, M. Yang, Y. Yilmaz, A.S. Yoon, M. Zanetti

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA
S.I. Cooper, P. Cushman, B. Dahmes, A. De Benedetti, G. Franzoni, A. Gude, J. Haupt, S.C. Kao, K. Klapoetke, Y. Kubota, J. Mans, N. Pastika, V. Rekovic, R. Rusack, M. Sasseville, A. Singovsky, N. Tambe, J. Turkewitz

University of Mississippi, University, USA
L.M. Cremaldi, R. Godang, R. Kroeger, L. Perera, R. Rahmat, D.A. Sanders, D. Summers

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, USA
E. Avdeeva, K. Bloom, S. Bose, J. Butt, D.R. Claes, A. Dominguez, M. Eads, P. Jindal, J. Keller, I. Kravchenko, J. Lazo-Flores, H. Malbouisson, S. Malik, G.R. Snow

State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, USA
U. Baur, A. Godshalk, I. Iashvili, S. Jain, A. Kharchilava, A. Kumar, S.P. Shipkowski, K. Smith, Z. Wan

Northeastern University, Boston, USA
G. Alverson, E. Barberis, D. Baumgartel, M. Chasco, D. Trocino, D. Wood, J. Zhang

Northwestern University, Evanston, USA
A. Anastassov, A. Kubik, N. Mucia, N. Odell, R.A. Ofierzynski, B. Pollack, A. Pozdnyakov, M. Schmitt, S. Stoynev, M. Velasco, S. Won

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, USA
L. Antonelli, D. Berry, A. Brinkerhoff, M. Hildreth, C. Jessop, D.J. Karmgard, J. Kolb, K. Lannon, W. Luo, S. Lynch, N. Marinelli, D.M. Morse, T. Pearson, R. Ruchti, J. Slaunwhite, N. Valls, M. Wayne, M. Wolf, J. Ziegler

The Ohio State University, Columbus, USA
B. Bylsma, L.S. Durkin, C. Hill, P. Killewald, K. Kotov, T.Y. Ling, D. Puigh, M. Rodenburg, C. Vuosalo, G. Williams

Princeton University, Princeton, USA
N. Adam, E. Berry, P. Elmer, D. Gerbaudo, V. Halyo, P. Hebda, J. Hegeman, A. Hunt, E. Laird, D. Lopes Pegna, P. Lujan, D. Marlow, T. Medvedeva, M. Mooney, J. Olsen, P. Piroué, X. Quan, A. Raval, H. Saka, D. Stickland, C. Tully, J.S. Werner, A. Zuranski

University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez, USA
J.G. Acosta, X.T. Huang, A. Lopez, H. Mendez, S. Oliveros, J.E. Ramirez Vargas, A. Zatserklyaniy

Purdue University, West Lafayette, USA
E. Alagoz, V.E. Barnes, D. Benedetti, G. Bolla, D. Bortoletto, M. De Mattia, A. Everett, L. Gutay, Z. Hu, M. Jones, O. Koybasi, M. Kress, A.T. Laasanen, N. Leonardo, V. Maroussov, P. Merkel, D.H. Miller, N. Neumeister, I. Shipsey, D. Silvers, A. Svyatkovskiy, M. Vidal Marono, H.D. Yoo, J. Zablocki, Y. Zheng

Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, USA
S. Guragain, N. Parashar

Rice University, Houston, USA
A. Adair, C. Boulahouache, V. Cuplov, K.M. Ecklund, F.J.M. Geurts, B.P. Padley, R. Redjimi, J. Roberts, J. Zabel

University of Rochester, Rochester, USA
B. Betchart, A. Bodek, Y.S. Chung, R. Covarelli, P. de Barbaro, R. Demina, Y. Eshaq, A. Garcia-Bellido, P. Goldenzweig, Y. Gotra, J. Han, A. Harel, D.C. Miner, G. Petrillo, W. Sakumoto, D. Vishnevskiy, M. Zielinski

The Rockefeller University, New York, USA
A. Bhatti, R. Ciesielski, L. Demortier, K. Goulianos, G. Lungu, S. Malik, C. Mesropian

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, Piscataway, USA
S. Arora, O. Atramentov, A. Barker, J.P. Chou, C. Contreras-Campana, E. Contreras-Campana, D. Duggan, D. Ferencek, Y. Gershtein, R. Gray, E. Halkiadakis, D. Hidas, D. Hits, A. Lath, S. Panwalkar, M. Park, R. Patel, A. Richards, K. Rose, S. Salur, S. Schnetzer, C. Seitz, S. Somalwar, R. Stone, S. Thomas

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA
G. Cerizza, M. Hollingsworth, S. Spanier, Z.C. Yang, A. York

Texas A&M University, College Station, USA
R. Eusebi, W. Flanagan, J. Gilmore, T. Kamon[53], V. Khotilovich, R. Montalvo, I. Osipenkov, Y. Pakhotin, A. Perloff, J. Roe, A. Safonov, T. Sakuma, S. Sengupta, I. Suarez, A. Tatarinov, D. Toback

Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA
N. Akchurin, C. Bardak, J. Damgov, P.R. Dudero, C. Jeong, K. Kovitanggoon, S.W. Lee, T. Libeiro, P. Mane, Y. Roh, A. Sill, I. Volobouev, R. Wigmans

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, USA
E. Appelt, E. Brownson, D. Engh, C. Florez, W. Gabella, A. Gurrola, M. Issah, W. Johns, P. Kurt, C. Maguire, A. Melo, P. Sheldon, B. Snook, S. Tuo, J. Velkovska

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA
M.W. Arenton, M. Balazs, S. Boutle, S. Conetti, B. Cox, B. Francis, S. Goadhouse, J. Goodell, R. Hirosky, A. Ledovskoy, C. Lin, C. Neu, J. Wood, R. Yohay

Wayne State University, Detroit, USA
S. Gollapinni, R. Harr, P.E. Karchin, C. Kottachchi Kankanamge Don, P. Lamichhane, M. Mattson, C. Milstène, A. Sakharov

University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA
M. Anderson, M. Bachtis, D. Belknap, J.N. Bellinger, J. Bernardini, L. Borrello, D. Carlsmith, M. Cepeda, S. Dasu, J. Efron, E. Friis, L. Gray, K.S. Grogg, M. Grothe, R. Hall-Wilton, M. Herndon, A. Hervé, P. Klabbers, J. Klukas, A. Lanaro, C. Lazaridis, J. Leonard, R. Loveless, A. Mohapatra, I. Ojalvo, G.A. Pierro, I. Ross, A. Savin, W.H. Smith, J. Swanson

†: Deceased
1: Also at CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland
2: Also at National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics, Tallinn, Estonia
3: Also at Universidade Federal do ABC, Santo Andre, Brazil
4: Also at California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
5: Also at Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, Ecole Polytechnique, IN2P3-CNRS, Palaiseau, France
6: Also at Suez Canal University, Suez, Egypt
7: Also at Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt
8: Also at British University, Cairo, Egypt
9: Also at Fayoum University, El-Fayoum, Egypt
10: Also at Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt
11: Also at Soltan Institute for Nuclear Studies, Warsaw, Poland
12: Also at Université de Haute-Alsace, Mulhouse, France
13: Also at Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia
14: Also at Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus, Germany
15: Also at Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary
16: Also at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
17: Also at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research - HECR, Mumbai, India
18: Now at King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
19: Also at University of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, India
20: Also at Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran
21: Also at Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran
22: Also at Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran
23: Also at Plasma Physics Research Center, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Teheran, Iran
24: Also at Facoltà Ingegneria Università di Roma, Roma, Italy
25: Also at Università della Basilicata, Potenza, Italy
26: Also at Laboratori Nazionali di Legnaro dell' INFN, Legnaro, Italy
27: Also at Università degli studi di Siena, Siena, Italy
28: Also at Faculty of Physics of University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
29: Also at University of Florida, Gainesville, USA
30: Also at University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, USA
31: Also at Scuola Normale e Sezione dell' INFN, Pisa, Italy
32: Also at INFN Sezione di Roma; Università di Roma "La Sapienza", Roma, Italy
33: Also at University of Athens, Athens, Greece
34: Also at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom
35: Also at The University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA
36: Also at Paul Scherrer Institut, Villigen, Switzerland
37: Also at Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia
38: Also at Gaziosmanpasa University, Tokat, Turkey

39: Also at Adiyaman University, Adiyaman, Turkey
40: Also at The University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA
41: Also at Mersin University, Mersin, Turkey
42: Also at Kafkas University, Kars, Turkey
43: Also at Suleyman Demirel University, Isparta, Turkey
44: Also at Ege University, Izmir, Turkey
45: Also at School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom
46: Also at INFN Sezione di Perugia; Università di Perugia, Perugia, Italy
47: Also at Utah Valley University, Orem, USA
48: Also at Institute for Nuclear Research, Moscow, Russia
49: Also at University of Belgrade, Faculty of Physics and Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia
50: Also at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, USA
51: Also at Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, USA
52: Also at Erzincan University, Erzincan, Turkey
53: Also at Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea