# Status Report on the Analyses of Proton-Number Cumulants in the STAR Fixed-Target Program

*Meeting of the APS Division of Nuclear Physics and the Physical Society of Japan*

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**University of California, Davis**
**For the STAR Collaboration**

*11/30/23*
*Waikoloa Village, Hawaii*

*Supported in part by*

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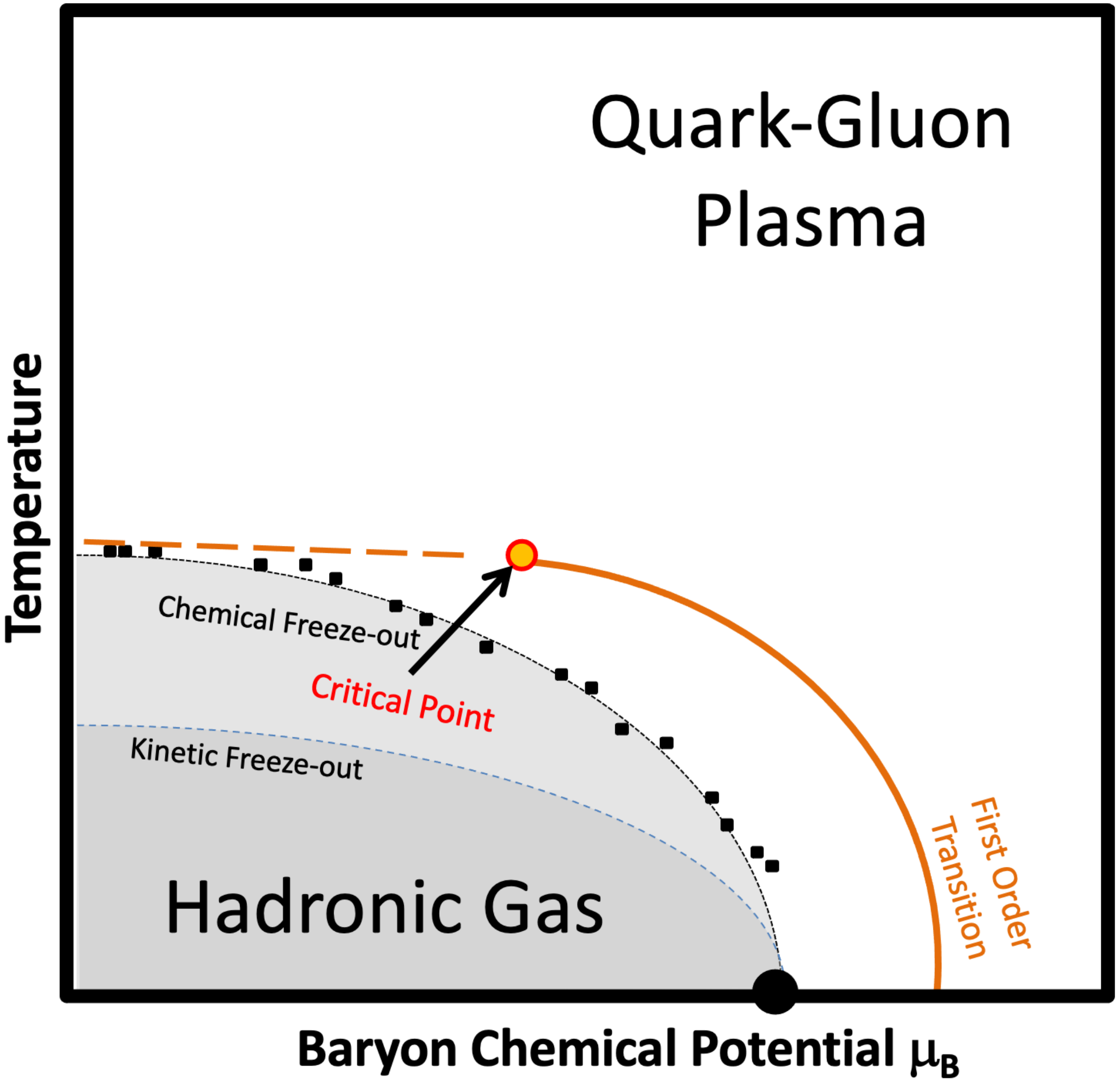
# Phases of QCD Matter

## QCD Phase Diagram

- Quarks and gluons experience confinement at low temperatures and densities.
- At high temperatures and densities, there is a deconfined phase, a quark-gluon plasma.

## Beam Energy Scan (BES)

- BES program at the Relativistic Heavy-Ion Collider scans phase space of QCD matter by colliding gold ions at varying energies
- Seeking to map onset of deconfinement, and the predicted QCD critical point



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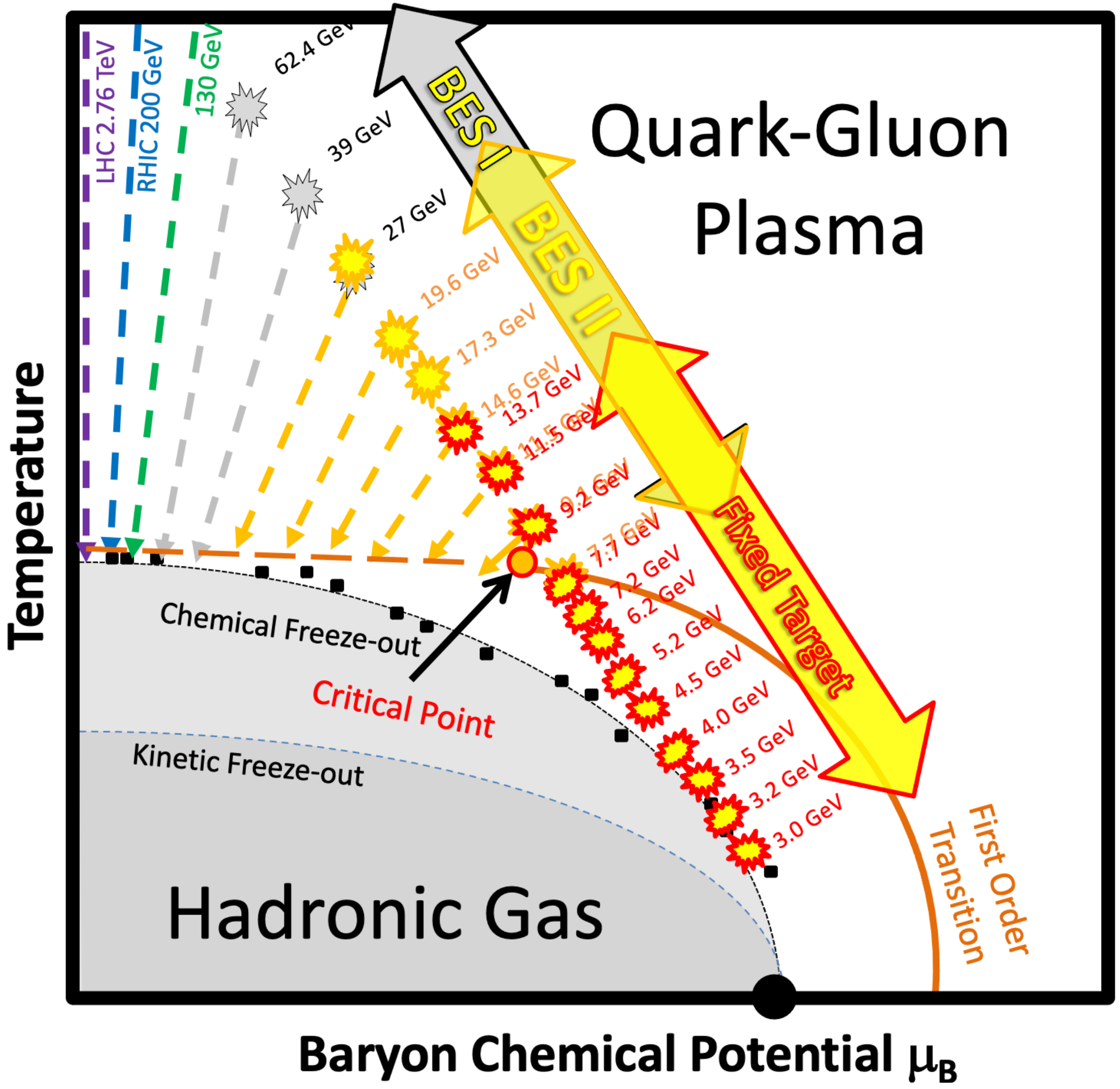
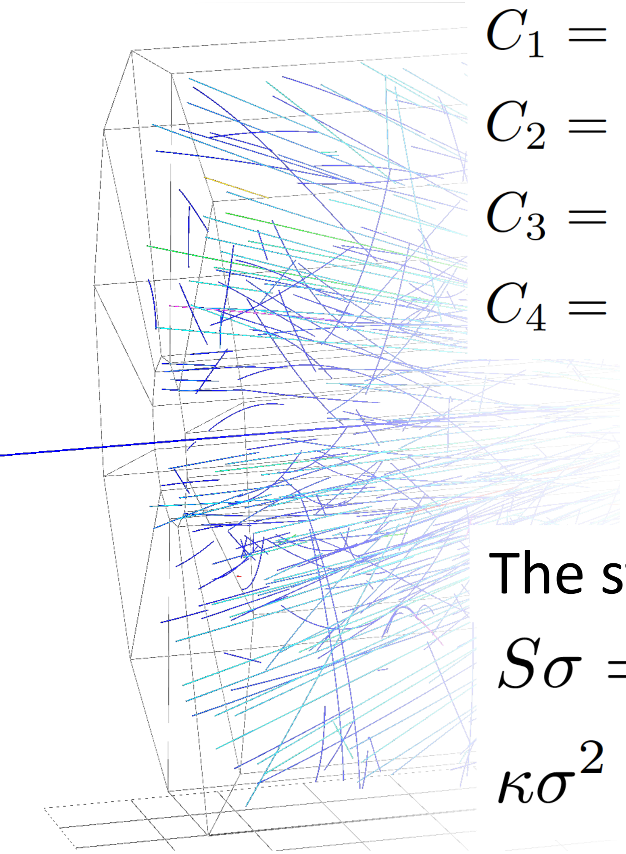


# Cumulants and Moments



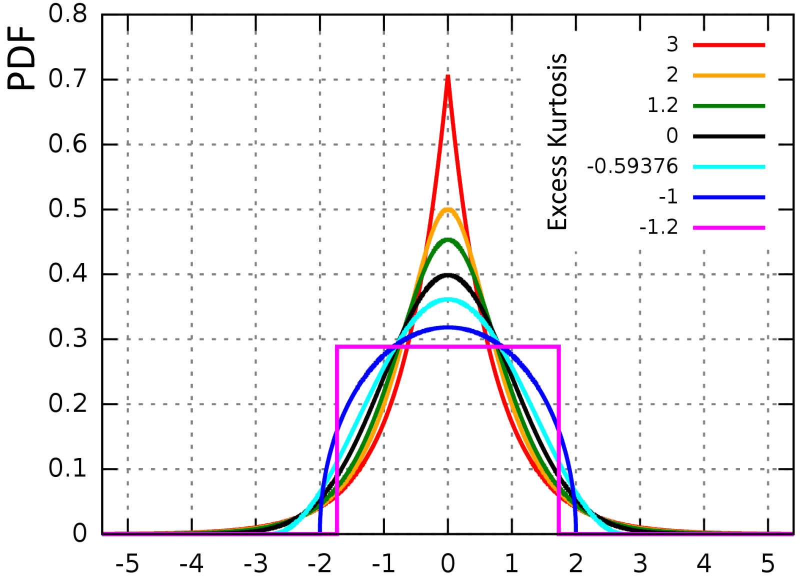
Cumulants of a distribution are defined as

$$C_1 = \langle N \rangle \equiv \mu \ [\text{mean}]$$

$$C_2 = \langle (N-\mu)^2 \rangle \equiv \sigma^2 \ [\text{variance}]$$

$$C_3 = \langle (N-\mu)^3 \rangle$$

$$C_4 = \langle (N-\mu)^4 \rangle - 3\langle (N-\mu)^2 \rangle^2$$



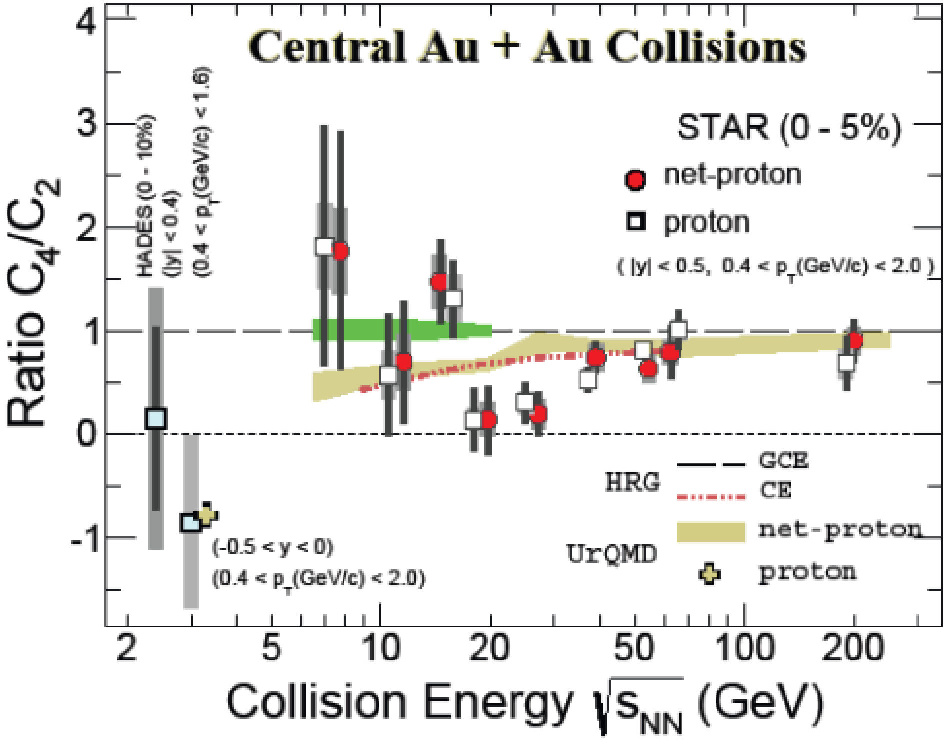

Kurtosis, Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurtosis)

The standardized moments of a distribution are

$$S\sigma = C_3/C_2 \ [\text{skewness}]$$ measure of distribution's asymmetry

$$\kappa\sigma^2 = C_4/C_2 \ [\text{excess kurtosis}]$$ measure of distribution's tails

# Current Status of Cumulants Analysis




STAR, Phys. Rev. Lett. 128, 202303 (2022) ; arXiv : 2209.11940.
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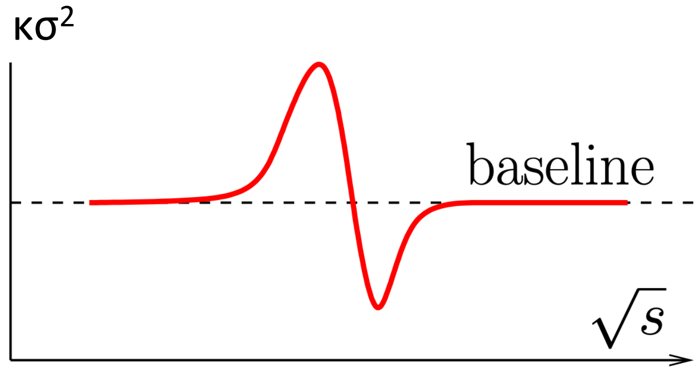
Predicted Fluctuation in $C_4/C_2$ Near Critical Point




M. Stephanov. J. Physics G.: Nucl. Part. Phys. **38** (2011) 124147

- Non-monotonic energy dependence was observed in BES-I
- Recent measurement at 3 GeV demonstrates a return to the UrQMD baseline.
- High-statistics data (BES-II collider mode) with detector improvements have been taken from 7.7 GeV to 27 GeV.

- Data have been collected to fill the large gap between 3.0 and 7.7 GeV.

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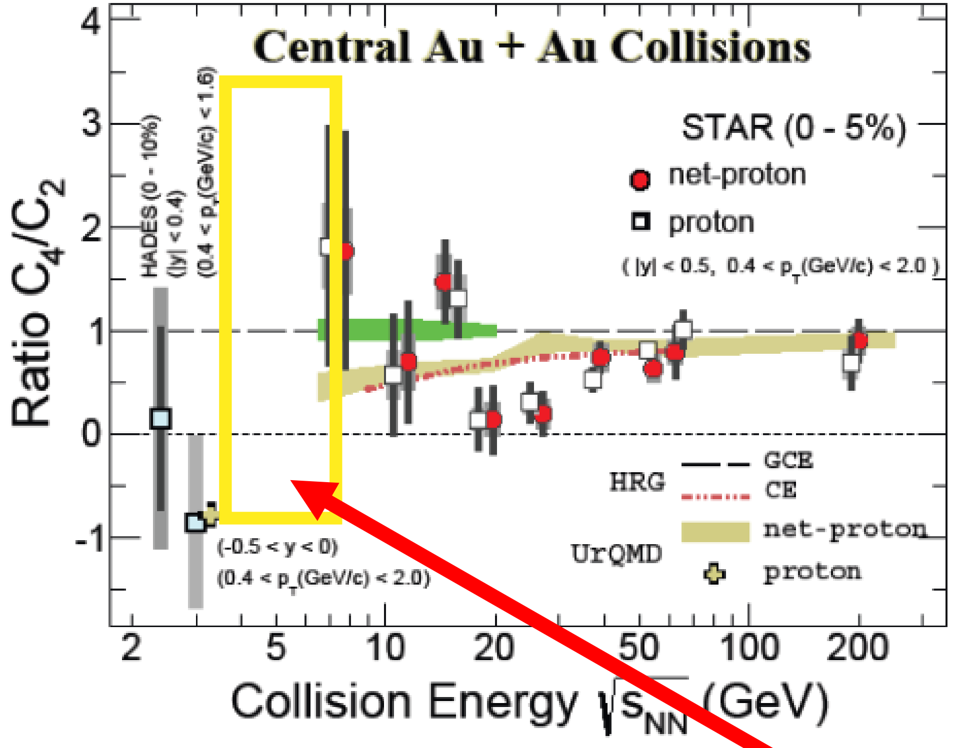


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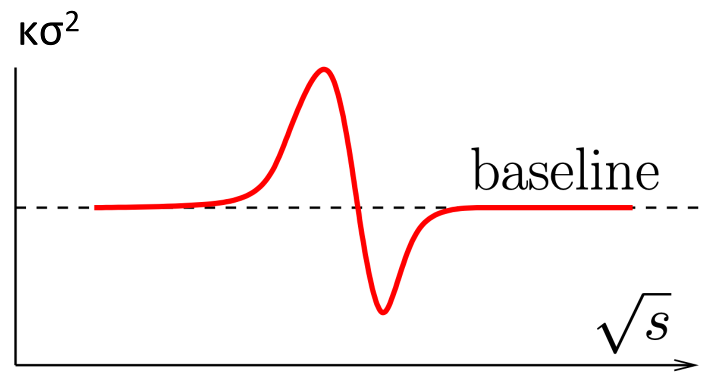


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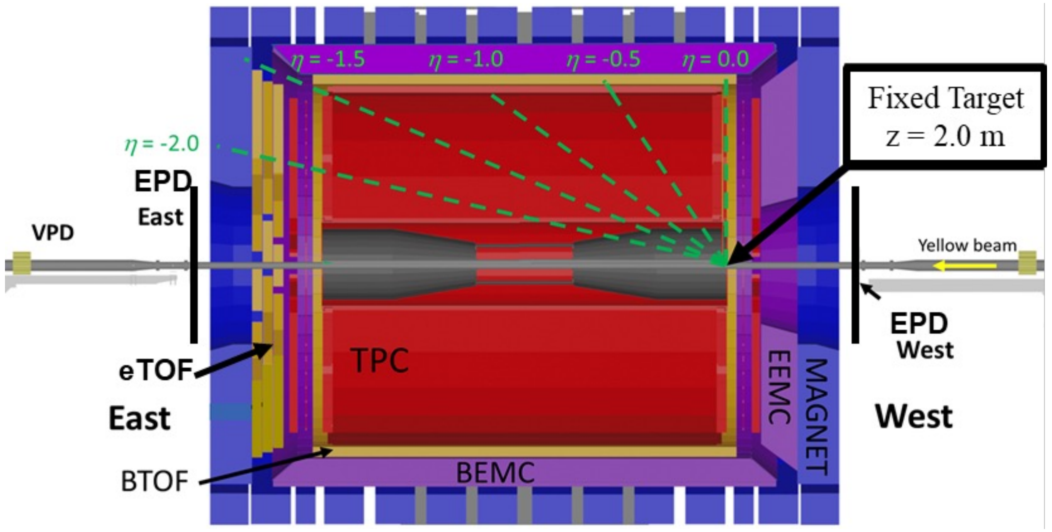
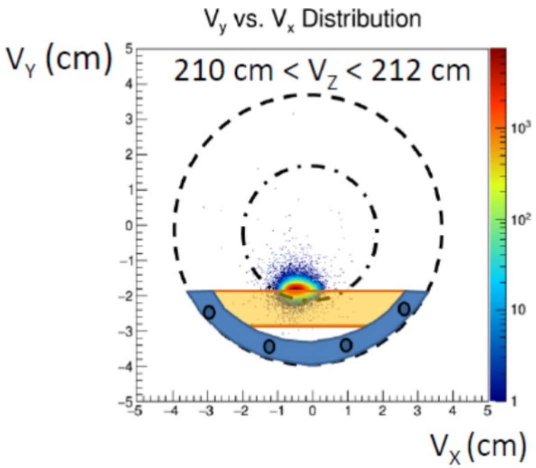
# Fixed-Target (FXT) Program at STAR

- Test run with gold target in 2015
- First physics runs at $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ = 3.0 GeV and 7.2 GeV in 2018
- Now have data at $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ of 3.0, 3.2, 3.5, 3.9, 4.5, 5.2, 6.2, 7.2, and 7.7 GeV



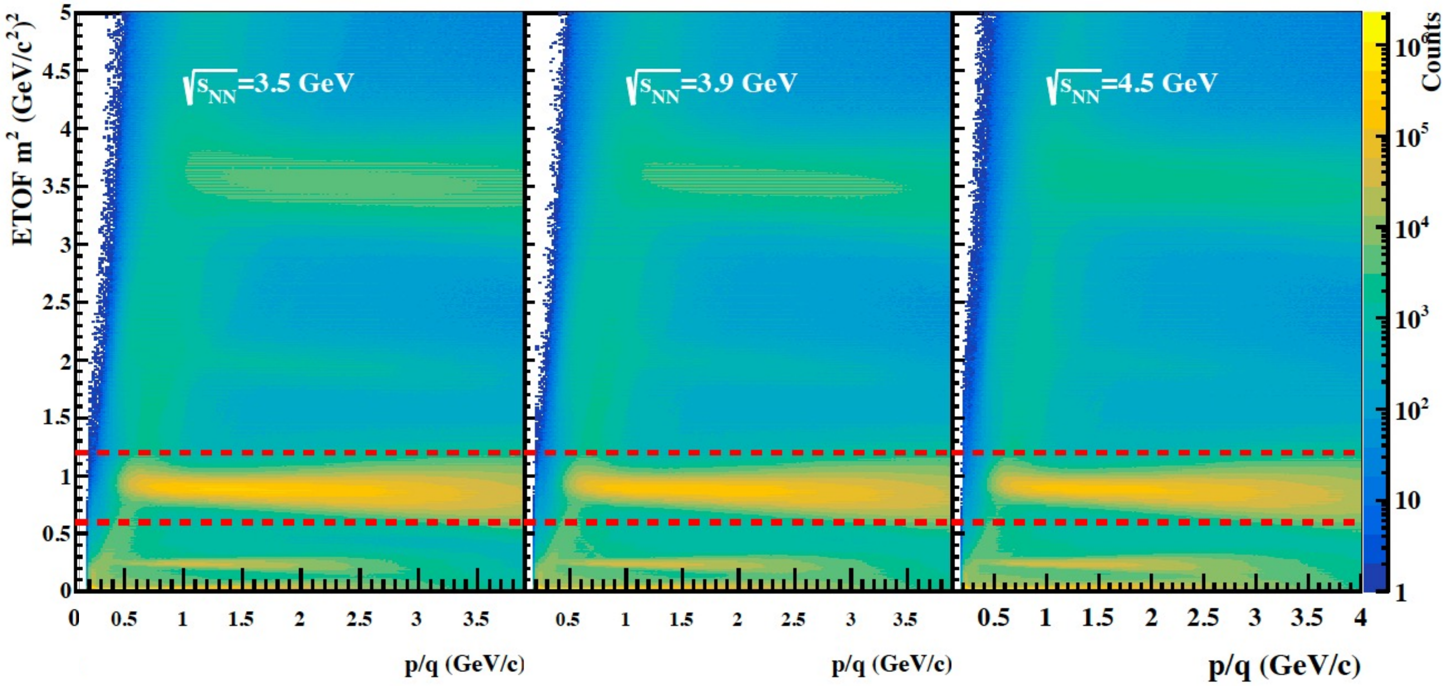

# Challenges for FXT

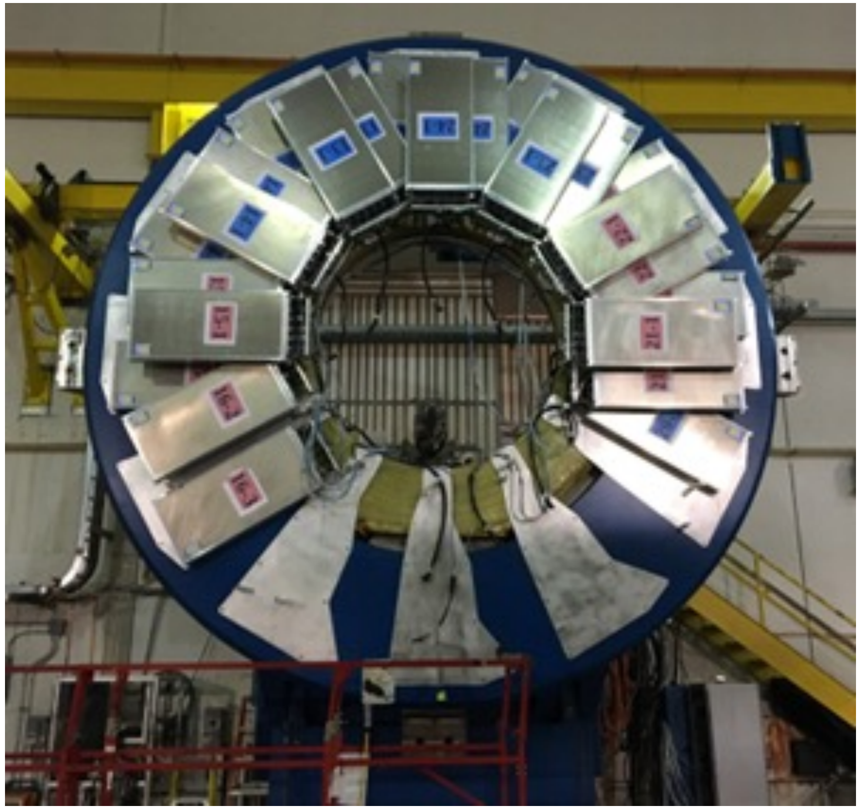
- Shifting asymmetric acceptance with respect to midrapidity
- At 7.7 GeV midrapidity moves to edge of Time Projection Chamber (TPC) acceptance
- Boost at higher energies shifts PID to rely more on TOF than TPC identification



# ETOF Details

- CBM-TOF group provided ETOF system
- Provides particle identification over 1.55<η<2.2
- Collected data for the Fixed-Target Program
- Calibrations completed at $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ = 3.5, 3.9, 4.5 GeV



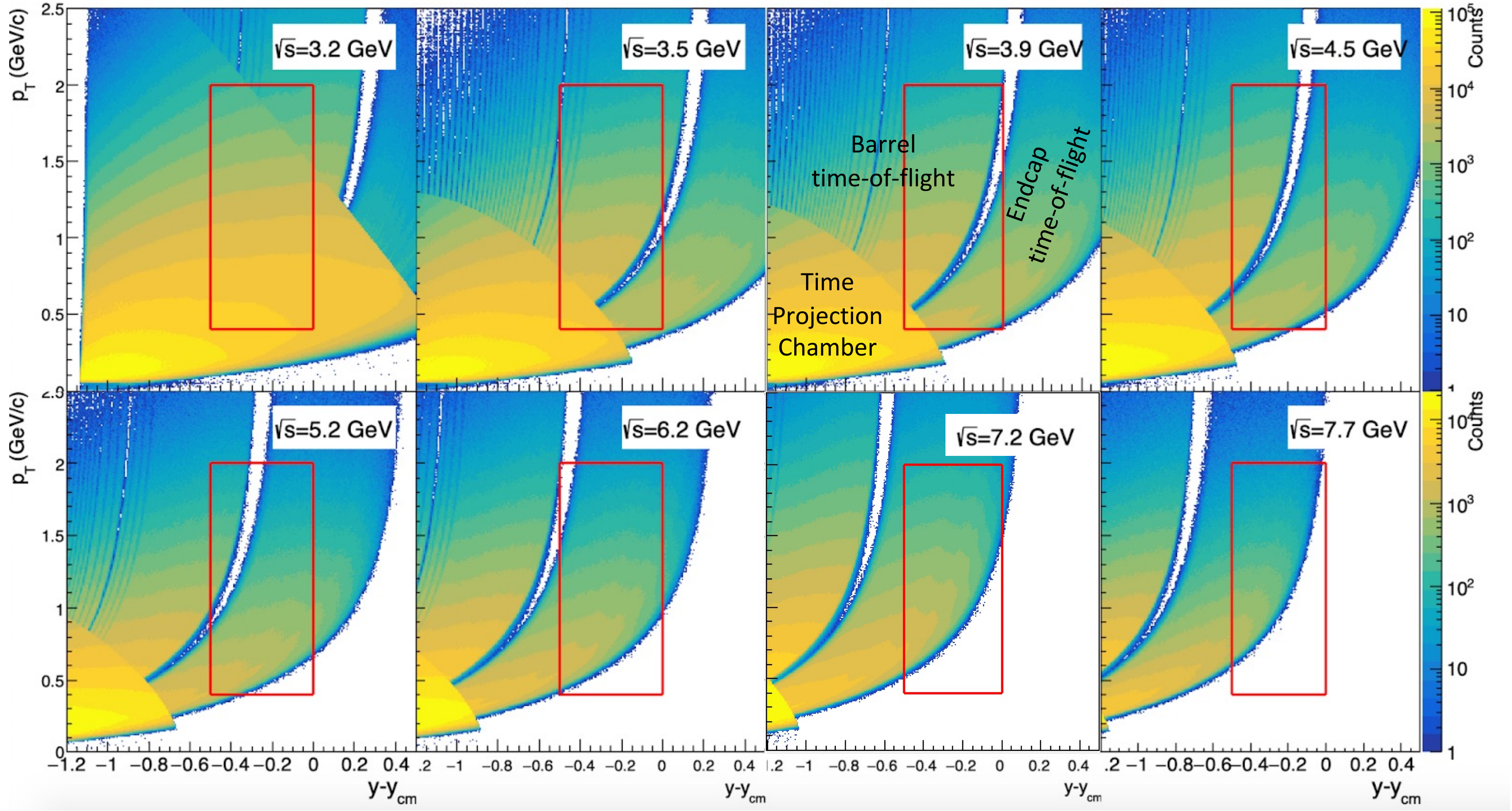



# Analysis Strategy

- Midrapidity analyses will be performed at $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ = 3.2, 3.5, 3.9, 4.5 GeV since we have near-full coverage over -0.5<y-$y_{CM}$<0 and 0.4<$p_T$<2 GeV/c
- At $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ = 5.2, 6.2, 7.2, and 7.7 GeV proton cumulants will be analyzed away from midrapidity
  - We can map proton cumulants as a function of $\mu_B$

Top priority for publication →

Secondary for publication →



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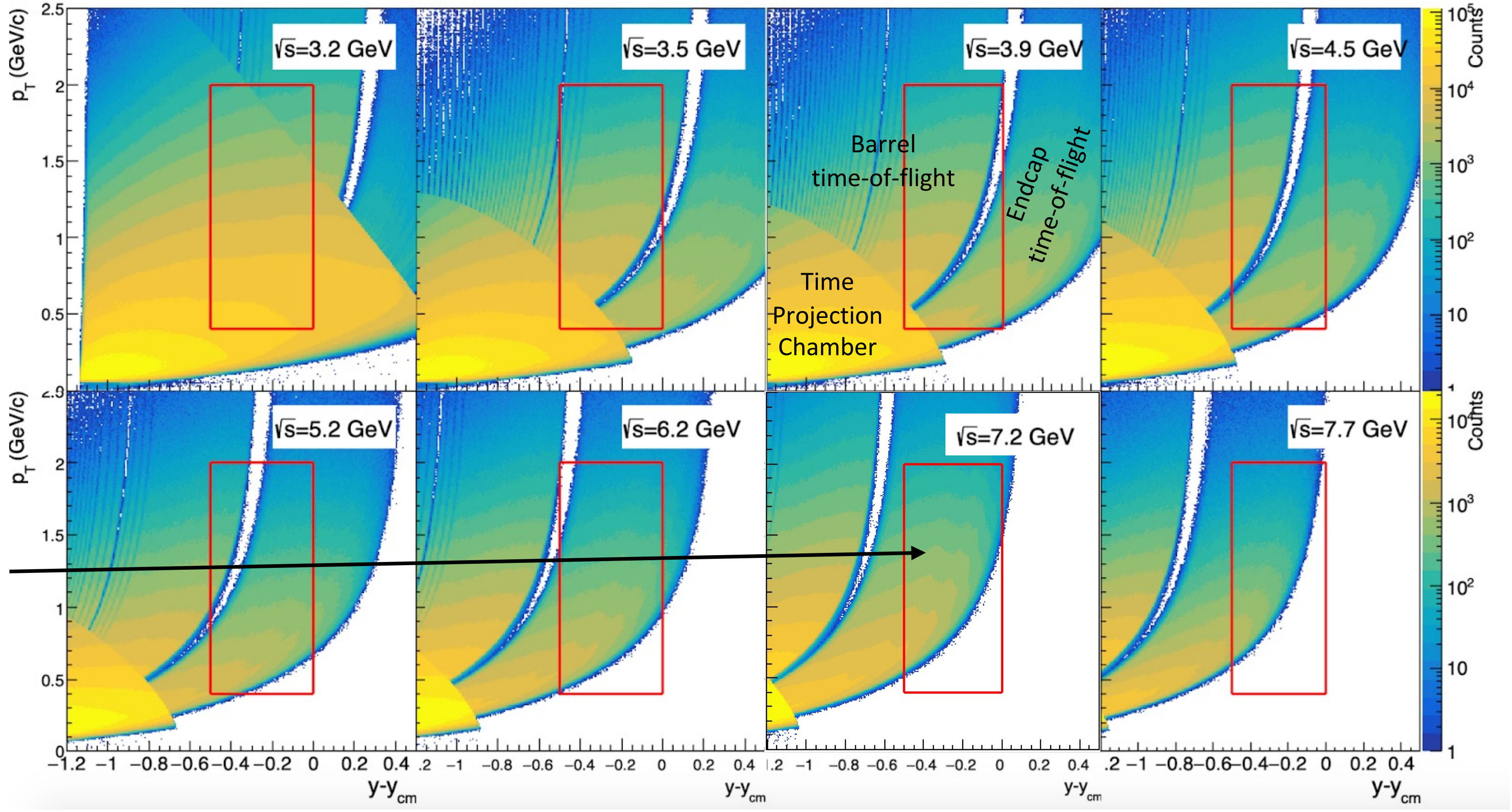
**7.2 GeV data is not yet available. The acceptance map shown here comes from 6.2 GeV, shifted to the appropriate rapidity**



# Expectations for Critical Point Location

| Nominal $\sqrt{s}$ (GeV) | Chemical Potential $\mu_B$ (MeV) |
|---|---|
| 3.2 | 697 |
| 3.5 | 666 |
| 3.9 | 632 |
| 4.5 | 589 |
| 5.2 | 541 |
| 6.2 | 487 |
| 7.2 | 443 |
| 7.7 | 420 |

**From this year's 30th International Conference on Ultra-relativistic Nucleus-Nucleus Collisions (Quark Matter 2023)**

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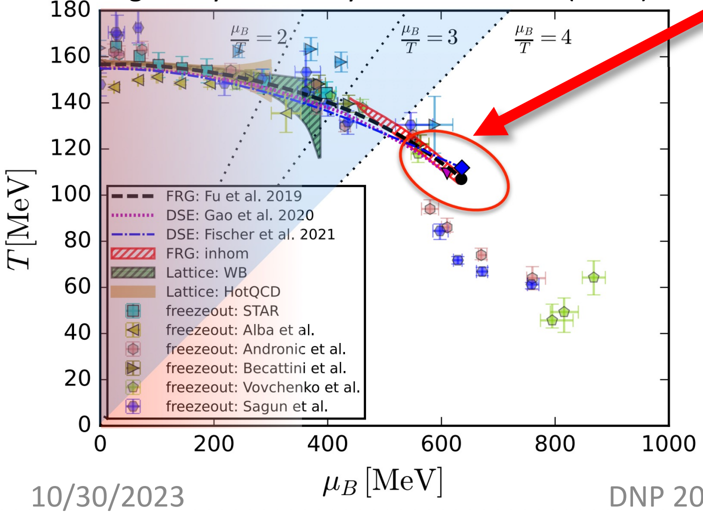

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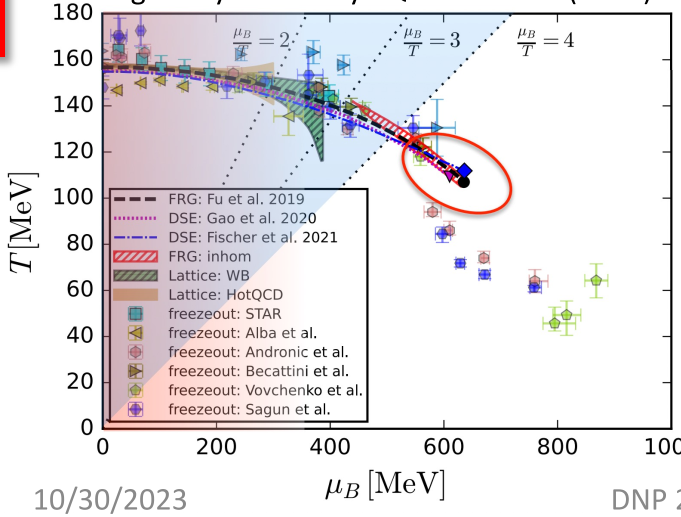
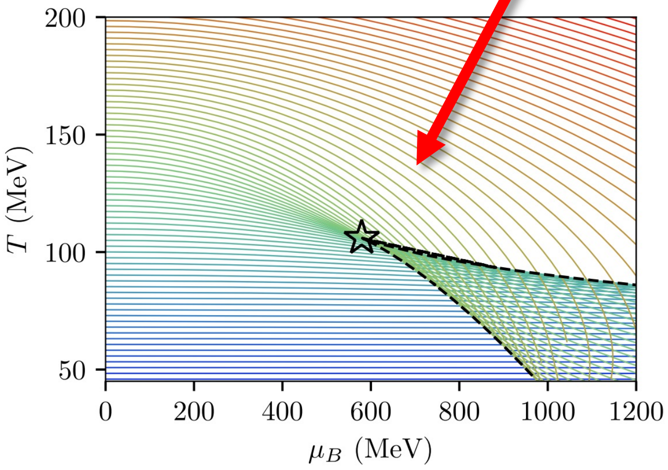



M. Hippert, et al. arXiv:2309.00579 (2023)



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- Jishnu Goswami: extrapolation using machine-learning model from hot QCD: $\mu_B$ ≅ 600±80 MeV

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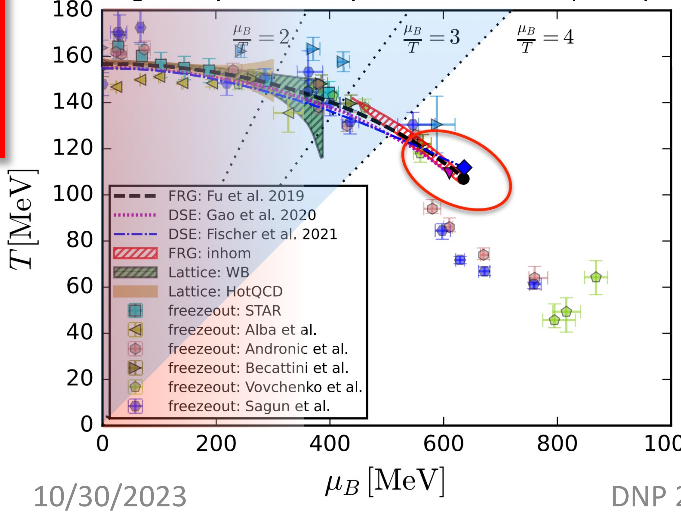


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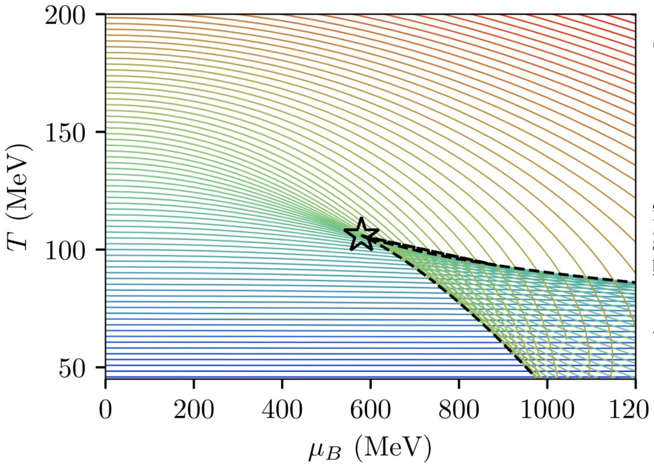
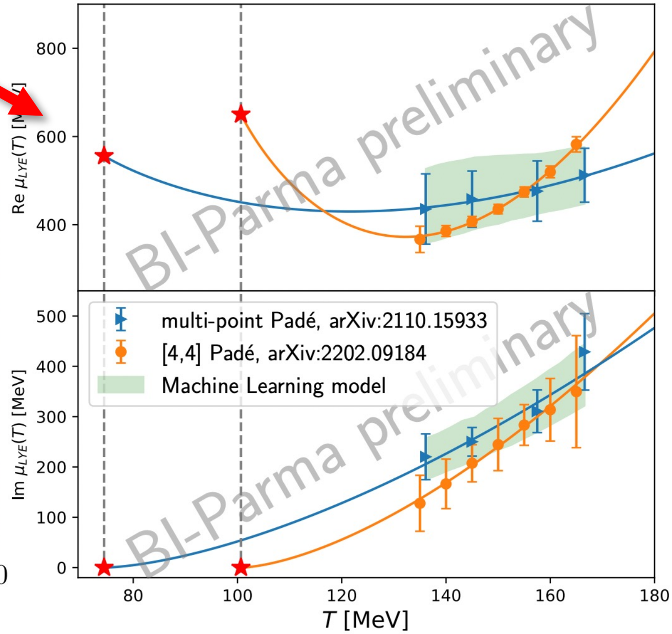
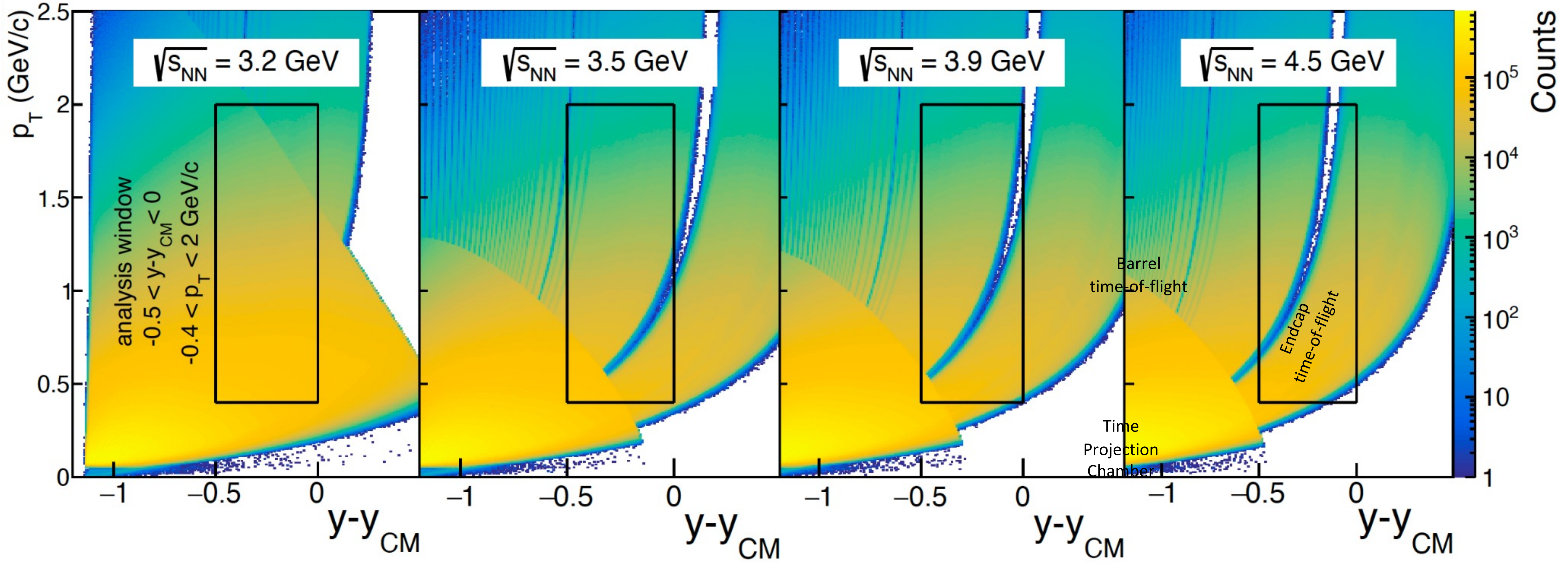



Jishnu Goswami, "Exploring the Critical Points in QCD with Multi-Point Padè and Machine Learning Techniques in (2+1)-flavor QCD" Quark Matter (2023)



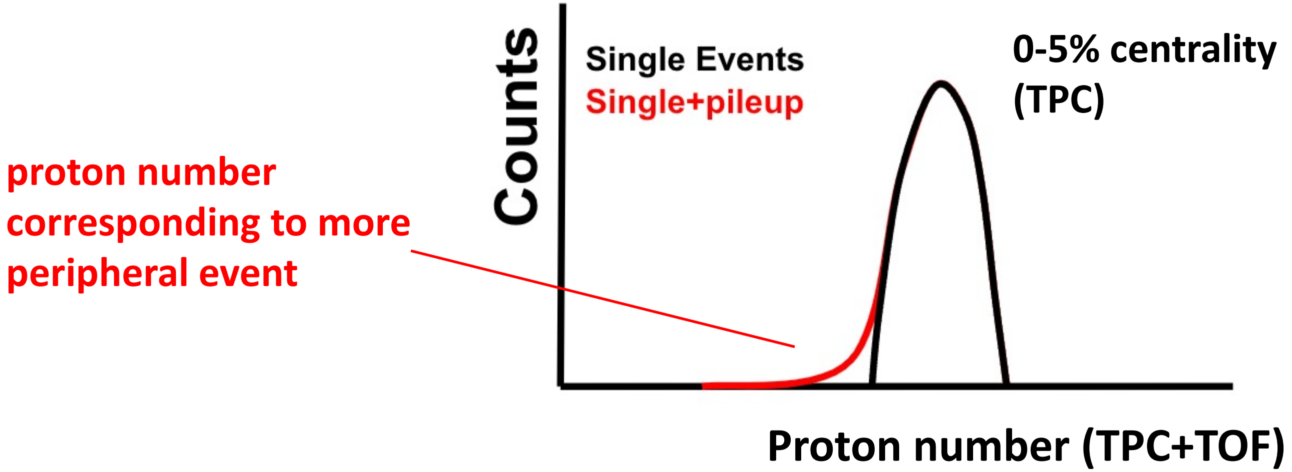
# Detector Acceptances

- We have near full acceptance in our analysis window ($-0.5<y-y_{CM}<0$, $0.4<p_T<2$ GeV/c) up to 4.5 GeV
- We rely on much more time-of-flight for particle identification for $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ = 3.5, 3.9, 4.5 GeV



# Lessons: FXT and Timing Fluctuations

- When we use the time-of-flight for particle ID, protons from out-of-time pileup are not counted by the fast TOF
- The TPC still identifies all the pileup tracks
- Centrality is determined by the TPC multiplicity
- A pileup event may be classified as very central, but have few protons
- For each centrality bin, this leads to a low-proton-number tail



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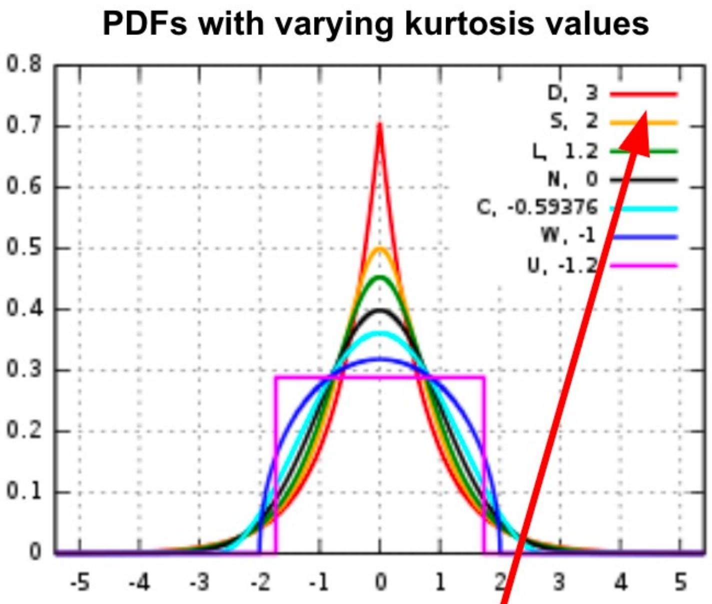
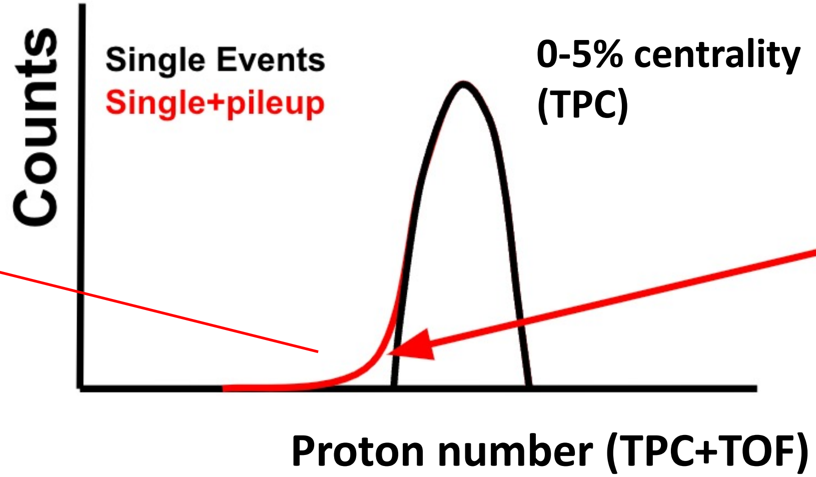
- Long tails mean large kurtosis

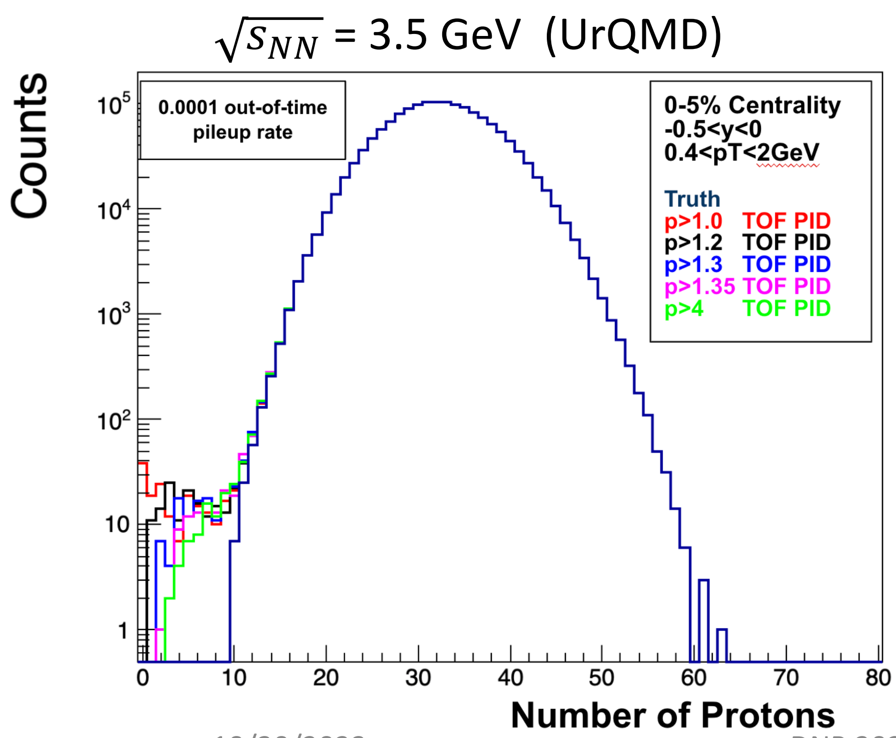


# Lessons: FXT and Timing Fluctuations

- We can simulate this in UrQMD by sampling two events at a rate of 0.0001
- In the experiment we use TOF PID for tracks above a certain momentum
- We can simulate this by only including pileup tracks with momenta below the threshold for using TOF
- The more TOF PID we use, the more the pileup causes a tail

$\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ = 3.5 GeV (UrQMD)



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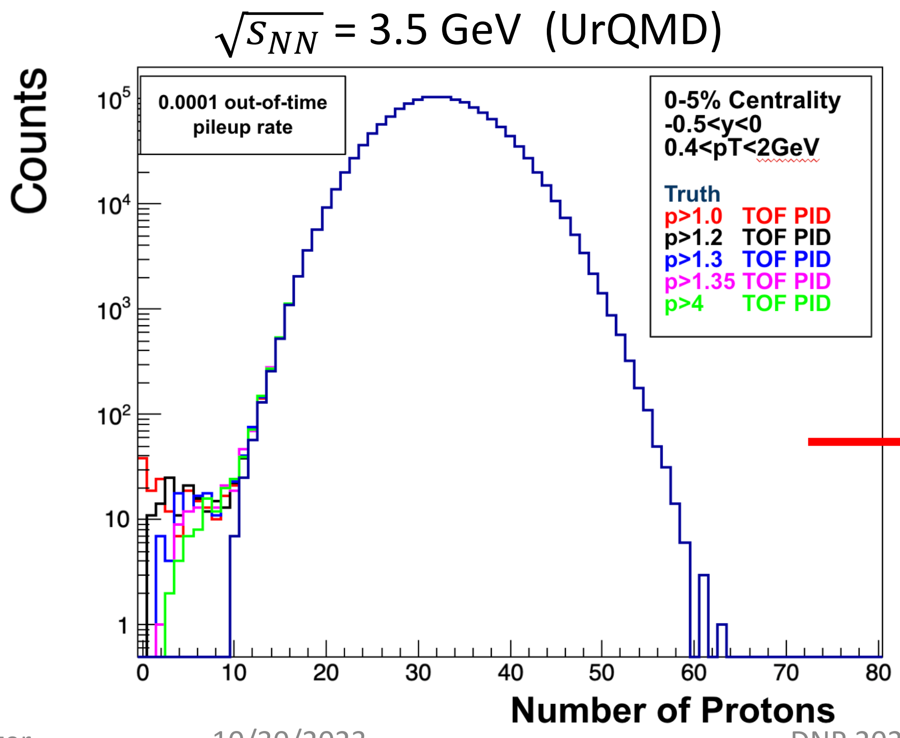
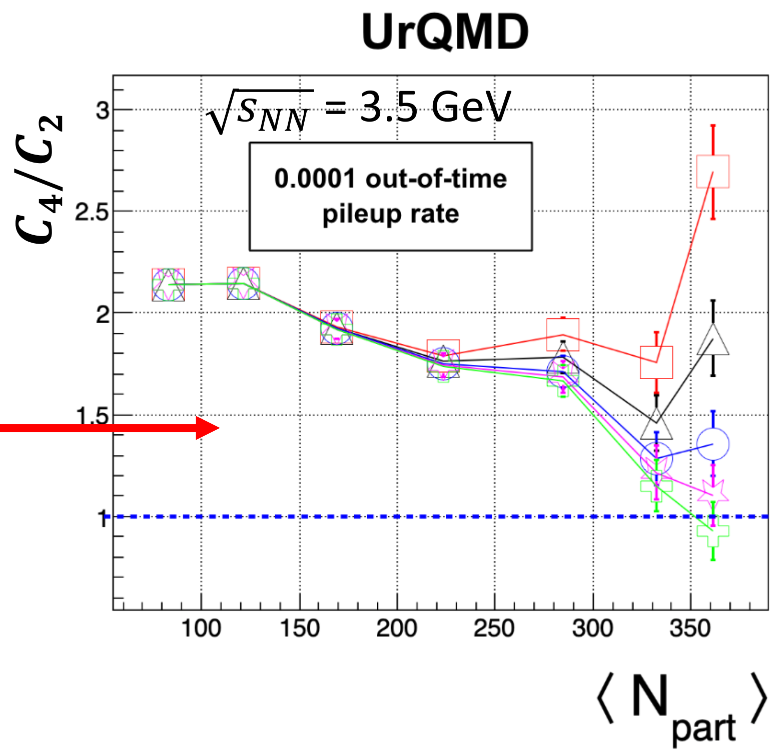
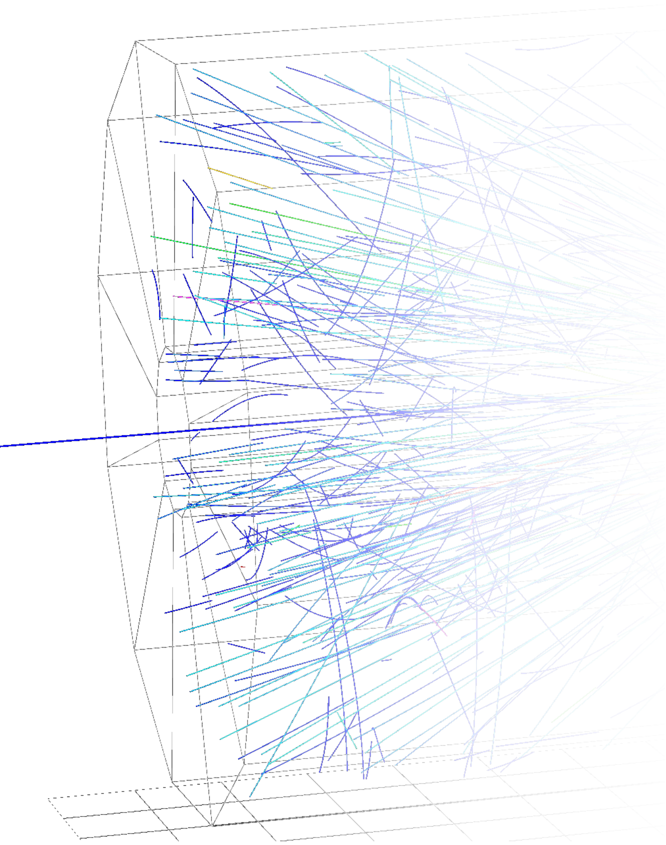
- The more TOF PID we use, the more the pileup causes a tail
- This causes instability in $C_4/C_2$ and other cumulants
- **Conclusion:** remove pileup when using TOF for proton ID. *Do not* correct for it



# Conclusions and Outlook



- Recent data from the Fixed–Target Program will extend our knowledge of the proton cumulant ratios at low energies (3.2-7.7 GeV)
- Non-monotonic variation in proton higher moments would suggest proximity to a critical point in the QCD phase diagram
- Many theoretical approaches now suggest critical point is accessible in the STAR Fixed-Target regime
- Midrapidity analyses will be performed at $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ = 3.2, 3.5, 3.9, and 4.5 GeV
- Analyses as a function of rapidity will be done at $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ = 5.2, 6.2, 7.2, and 7.7 GeV.
- The Fixed-Target analysis comes with unique challenges which we are working to understand