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Sensitivity of IceCube-Gen2 to measure flavor composition of Astrophysical neutrinos

The IceCube-Gen2 Collaboration

(a complete list of authors can be found at the end of the proceedings)

E-mail: neha.lad@desy.de

The observation of an astrophysical neutrino flux in IceCube and its detection capability to separate between the different neutrino flavors has led IceCube to constraint the flavor content of this flux. IceCube-Gen2 is the planned extension of the current IceCube detector, which will be about 8 times larger than the current instrumented volume. In this work, we study the sensitivity of IceCube-Gen2 to the astrophysical neutrino flavor composition and investigate its tau neutrino identification capabilities. We apply the IceCube analysis on a simulated IceCube-Gen2 dataset that mimics the High Energy Starting Event (HESE) classification. Reconstructions are performed using sensors that have 3 times higher quantum efficiency and isotropic angular acceptance compared to the current IceCube optical modules. We present the projected sensitivity for 10 years of data on constraining the flavor ratio of the astrophysical neutrino flux at Earth by IceCube-Gen2.

Corresponding authors: Neha Lad^{1,2,*}

¹ *Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron DESY: Zeuthen, Germany*

² *Institut für Physik, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: Berlin, Germany*

* Presenter

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1. Introduction to IceCube-Gen2

IceCube is a cubic-kilometer neutrino detector buried deep in the ice of the geographic South Pole [1]. The first ever discovery IceCube reported came within only 3 years of its active time, when it discovered diffuse astrophysical neutrino flux measured on earth[2]. By utilizing the special properties of neutrinos, IceCube offers a unique window into understanding the fundamental workings of our universe. IceCube-Gen2 [3] will be an extension of the existing IceCube array designed to investigate the high-energy neutrino sky. With help of 120 new strings, 240m apart from each other, 9600 new optical modules will be deployed around current IceCube, making its volume about eight times bigger. Additionally, a large surface array [4] will be implemented to improve the identification of neutrino interactions in the Southern sky by enhancing the veto of cosmic-ray (CR) air showers and lowering the energy threshold. The primary objective of the radio array [3] is to detect neutrinos with energies surpassing 100 PeV.

2. Flavor Composition of Astrophysical Neutrinos

While discovery of astrophysical neutrinos provides a valuable insight into diffuse spectrum of neutrinos, it does not offer direct insights into the sources or the processes through which they were produced. Depending on mechanism at production site ($\nu_e : \nu_\mu : \nu_\tau$), measured fractions of neutrino flavors on earth is different due to neutrino oscillations. Thus, studying the flavor content of these neutrinos can significantly deepen our understanding of the diverse high-energy particle-generating phenomena in the universe.

IceCube, by using 7.5 years of High Energy Starting Events (HESE) [5], for the first time put constraints on the flavor content of astrophysical neutrinos with non-zero ν_τ fraction [6]. The HESE sample is an all-sky, all-flavor neutrino sample with very high astrophysical purity. In this study, IceCube's ability to identify the three different event topologies, cascades, tracks and double cascades was taken advantage of, as a particle identifier. All of these topologies are specific to the flavor of neutrino and its interaction type. Charged-current (CC) ν_e interactions and all-flavor Neutral-current (NC) interactions produce single cascades. Tracks on the other hand are produced by CC ν_μ and atmospheric muons (excluding those muons originating CC ν_τ). Most interesting and difficult to reconstruct topology is double cascade, a topology specific to only CC ν_τ events, where a ν_τ interacts with nucleon to produce a tau lepton, which then travels some distance in ice ($\propto E_\tau$) and decays to produce charged leptons or multiple hadrons. Excluding the muonic decay of tau, all other decay channels produces a second hadronic or electromagnetic cascade, this yields a topology with two causally-connected cascades that can be reconstructed using a multi-source likelihood method.

In this proceeding, we discuss IceCube-Gen2's capability to detect ν_τ induced double cascades and its sensitivity to measure the flavor composition of the astrophysical neutrino spectrum. Moreover, we also show its sensitivity to detect a changing flavor composition as a function of neutrino energy, which will allow us to distinguish different acceleration scenarios and source environments expected within GRBs, AGN cores, or AGN jets [7].

3. Simulation and Software

IceCube-Gen2 will incorporate innovative optical sensors like mDOMs and D-Eggs [3]. The multi-PMT DOM (mDOM) is an optical module equipped with 24 3-inch photo-multipliers (PMTs). This particular type of DOM offers a photocathode area that is about 2 times larger than that of IceCube pDOM. It provides isotropic sensitivity and enables the extraction of information from individual "pixels" (24 PMTs). To facilitate the utilization of established techniques for reconstructing simulated events with the new sensors, for this study, mDOMs were simulated as pDOM-type modules. These simulated modules feature approximately three times higher quantum efficiency and isotropic angular acceptance (Fig. 1 iso-pDOM). Chosen Geometry of the detector strings for this study is "sunflower" geometry, with strings 240m apart from each other, a most optimal geometry for IceCube-Gen2 [8]. Monte Carlo events were produced assuming these so called iso-pDOM for all-flavor neutrinos having energy between 100TeV to 50PeV.

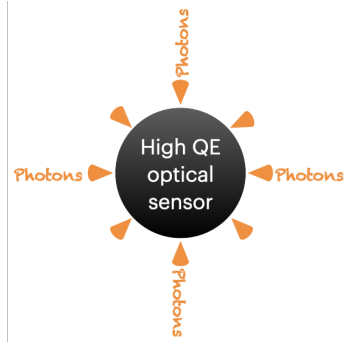


Figure 1: Conceptual representation of Simulated sensor with isotropic angular acceptance (iso-pDOM)

To apply a similar particle identifier that was used in HESE-7.5 to reconstruct events, a HESE-like event selection was implemented. We only select events that have reconstructed energy greater than 100 TeV and has neutrino interaction vertex starting inside the detector. Chain of reconstruction and sub-classifications remains identical to that used before.

Sensitivity projections for flavor measurement were performed using `toise` [9], a framework designed to perform sensitivity studies for neutrino detectors. It uses parameterised detector responses which can be further used to project sensitivities such as effective area, energy and angular resolutions etc.

4. Sensitivity to measure flavor

`toise`, as mentioned before, requires parameterized detector responses to project sensitivities. For flavor measurement, it requires classification efficiency (Fig. 2) and selection efficiency (Fig. 3), which are parameterized and used by `toise` to create asimov sensitivity contours. Classification efficiency is defined as the fraction of topology per energy bin for a given flavor of neutrino. Diagonal plots in Fig. 2 defines flavor identification efficiency and off-diagonal plots represent mis-identification fractions. Selection efficiency, on the other hand, is defined as, the ratio of the number of neutrinos that end up being classified into any topology to number of neutrinos that interacted in active volume.

Result of this study is shown in Fig. 4 and Fig. 5. Fig. 4 shows flavor measurement sensitivity of IceCube-Gen2 assuming the pion-decay scenario of neutrino production at high energy astrophysical sources. Above a critical energy, the flux of electron neutrinos is suppressed due to the presence of sufficiently strong magnetic fields, resulting in the damping of muons. Fig. 5 shows sensitivity

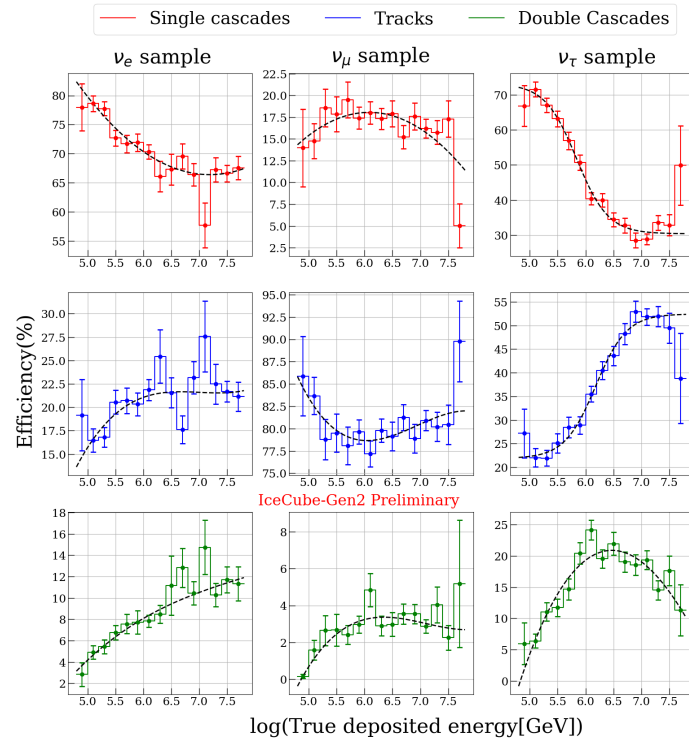


Figure 2: Classification Efficiency : Three subplot columns are true neutrino flavors, where each energy bin (true monte-carlo energy) contains fraction of topologies, summing to a 100%. Diagonal plots shows flavor identification efficiency of the classifier whereas off-diagonal plots shows mis-identification fractions.

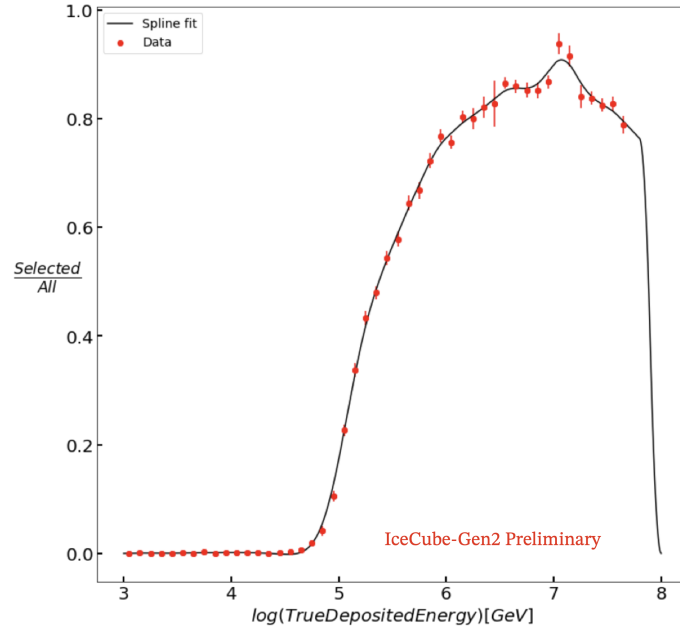


Figure 3: Selection Efficiency : Ratio of neutrinos that got classified into a topology to all the neutrinos that interacted in active volume. Data here refers to monte-carlo events per energy bin.

of IceCube-Gen2 to measure flavor ratios of neutrinos on earth assuming muon-damped scenario of neutrino production at the sources. It is to be noted that sensitivity projected here assumes a 'globalfit', that is, a combined fit of starting events and thoroughgoing tracks [10], a concept which is currently being realised in IceCube to measure spectrum [11] and flavor composition [12] of diffuse astrophysical neutrinos.

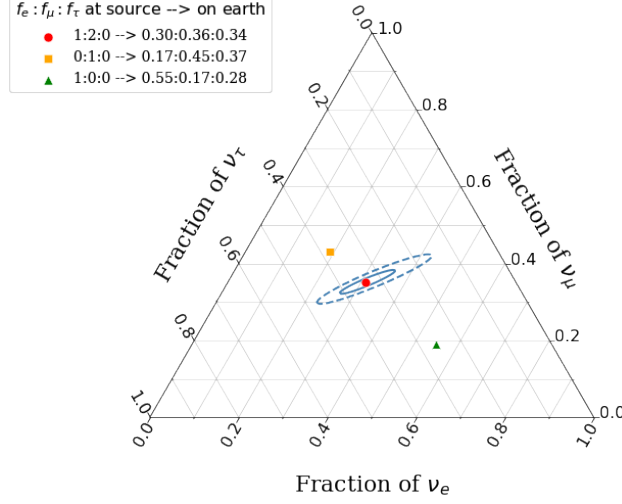


Figure 4: Projected sensitivity of IceCube-Gen2 to measure flavor composition of Astrophysical neutrino with 10 years of its lifetime. The dashed (solid) outlines depict the corresponding 99% (68%) constraints. Diffuse neutrino spectrum is assumed to be single power law with index of -2.5 and per-flavor norm of 2.3 [13].

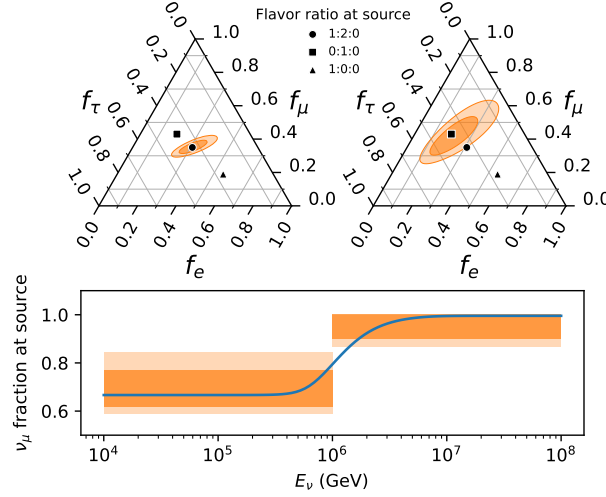


Figure 5: The bottom section displays the proportion of ν_μ at the source based on energy, with the assumption that the muon critical energy is 2 PeV. The error bars represent the 68% confidence level limitations on the ν_μ fraction below and above 1 PeV, derived from the observed flavor composition of ν_μ at Earth using IceCube-Gen2 and assuming standard oscillations. In the upper sections, the dark (light) shaded regions depict the corresponding 68% (99%) constraints, without making any assumptions about the mixing matrix.

5. Conclusions and Outlook

IceCube-Gen2 is a planned extension of current IceCube neutrino telescope at south pole. With about 8 times larger detection volume, multi PMT optical modules and extended radio detector arrays, IceCube-Gen2 will be sensitive to even EeV neutrinos. The rate of observable ν_τ events in the IceCube detector is limited by the density of instrumentation because the distance between two cascades is typically much smaller than the distance between two DOMs. By significantly increasing its size, IceCube-Gen2 will be capable of observing a considerably higher rate of these so called 'double cascade' events, resulting in more stringent constraints on the flavor ratio.

In this study, we use monte carlo simulations, which were generated using a sensor that best represents mDOM like sensor (isotropic light acceptance and high quantum efficiency). Using parameterised detector responses such as classification and selection efficiency of particle identifier in `toise`, a frame work designed to project sensitivities of future neutrino detectors, one can derive how sensitive IceCube-Gen2 will be to measure the flavor ratio of astrophysical neutrinos with its 10 years of livetime. By utilizing the substantial samples of neutrinos encompassing all flavors in IceCube-Gen2, we will be able to examine the energy-dependent variations in the flavor ratio across an extensive range of energies. The heightened sensitivity in detecting alterations in the composition of flavors with respect to neutrino energy will enable us to differentiate between various acceleration scenarios and source environments that are anticipated within various high energy particle accelerators of the cosmos.

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Full Author List: IceCube-Gen2 Collaboration

R. Abbasi¹⁷, M. Ackermann⁷⁶, J. Adams²², S. K. Agarwalla^{47, 77}, J. A. Aguilar¹², M. Ahlers²⁶, J.M. Alameddine²⁷, N. M. Amin⁵³, K. Andeen⁵⁰, G. Anton³⁰, C. Argüelles¹⁴, Y. Ashida⁶⁴, S. Athanasiadou⁷⁶, J. Audehm¹, S. N. Axani⁵³, X. Bai⁶¹, A. Balagopal V.⁴⁷, M. Baricevic⁴⁷, S. W. Barwick³⁴, V. Basu⁴⁷, R. Bay⁸, J. Becker Tjus^{11, 78}, J. Beise⁷⁴, C. Bellenghi³¹, C. Benning¹, S. BenZvi⁶³, D. Berley²³, E. Bernardini⁵⁹, D. Z. Besson⁴⁰, A. Bishop⁴⁷, E. Blaufuss²³, S. Blot⁷⁶, M. Bohmer³¹, F. Bontempo³⁵, J. Y. Book¹⁴, J. Borowka¹, C. Boscolo Meneguolo⁵⁹, S. Böser⁴⁸, O. Botner⁷⁴, J. Böttcher¹, S. Bouma³⁰, E. Bourbeau²⁶, J. Braun⁴⁷, B. Brinson⁶, J. Brostean-Kaiser⁷⁶, R. T. Burley², R. S. Busse⁵², D. Butterfield⁴⁷, M. A. Campana⁶⁰, K. Carloni¹⁴, E. G. Carnie-Bronca², M. Cataldo³⁰, S. Chattopadhyay^{47, 77}, N. Chau¹², C. Chen⁶, Z. Chen⁶⁶, D. Chirkin⁴⁷, S. Choi⁶⁷, B. A. Clark²³, R. Clark⁴², L. Classen⁵², A. Coleman⁷⁴, G. H. Collin¹⁵, J. M. Conrad¹⁵, D. F. Cowen^{71, 72}, B. Dasgupta⁵¹, P. Dave⁶, C. Deaconu^{20, 21}, C. De Clercq¹³, S. De Kockere¹³, J. J. DeLaunay⁷⁰, D. Delgado¹⁴, S. Deng¹, K. Deoskar⁶⁵, A. Desai⁴⁷, P. Desiati⁴⁷, K. D. de Vries¹³, G. de Wasseige⁴⁴, T. DeYoung²⁸, A. Diaz¹⁵, J. C. Díaz-Vélez⁴⁷, M. Dittmer⁵², A. Domi³⁰, H. Djumovic⁴⁷, M. A. DuVernois⁴⁷, T. Ehrhardt⁴⁸, P. Eller³¹, E. Ellinger⁷⁵, S. El Mentawi¹, D. Elsässer²⁷, R. Engel^{35, 36}, H. Erpenbeck⁴⁷, J. Evans²³, J. J. Evans⁴⁹, P. A. Evenson⁵³, K. L. Fan²³, K. Fang⁴⁷, K. Farrag⁴³, K. Farrag¹⁶, A. R. Fazely⁷, A. Fedynitch⁶⁸, N. Feigl¹⁰, S. Fiedlschuster³⁰, C. Finley⁶⁵, L. Fischer⁷⁶, B. Flagg⁵³, D. Fox⁷¹, A. Franckowiak¹¹, A. Fritz⁴⁸, T. Fujii⁵⁷, P. Fürst¹, J. Gallagher⁴⁶, E. Ganster¹, A. Garcia¹⁴, L. Gerhardt⁹, R. Gernhaeuser³¹, A. Ghadimi⁷⁰, P. Giri⁴¹, C. Glaser⁷⁴, T. Glauch³¹, T. Glüsenskamp^{30, 74}, N. Goehlike³⁶, S. Goswami⁷⁰, D. Grant²⁸, S. J. Gray²³, O. Gries¹, S. Griffin⁴⁷, S. Griswold⁶³, D. Guevel⁴⁷, C. Günther¹, P. Gutjahr²⁷, C. Haack³⁰, T. Haji Azim¹, A. Hallgren⁷⁴, R. Halliday²⁸, S. Hallmann⁷⁶, L. Halve¹, F. Halzen⁴⁷, H. Hamdaoui⁶⁶, M. Ha Minh³¹, K. Hanson⁴⁷, J. Hardin¹⁵, A. A. Harnisch²⁸, P. Hatch³⁷, J. Haugen⁴⁷, A. Haungs³⁵, D. Heinen¹, K. Helbing⁷⁵, J. Hellrung¹¹, B. Hendricks^{72, 73}, F. Henningsen³¹, J. Henrichs⁷⁶, L. Heuermann¹, N. Heyer⁷⁴, S. Hickford⁷⁵, A. Hidvegi⁶⁵, J. Hignight²⁹, C. Hill¹⁶, G. C. Hill², K. D. Hoffman²³, B. Hoffmann³⁶, K. Holzapel³¹, S. Hori⁴⁷, K. Hoshina^{47, 79}, W. Hou³⁵, T. Huber³⁵, T. Huege³⁵, K. Hughes^{19, 21}, K. Hultqvist⁶⁵, M. Hünnefeld²⁷, R. Hussain⁴⁷, K. Hymon²⁷, S. In⁶⁷, A. Ishihara¹⁶, M. Jacquart⁴⁷, O. Janik¹, M. Jansson⁶⁵, G. S. Japaridze⁵, M. Jeong⁶⁷, M. Jin¹⁴, B. J. P. Jones⁴, O. Kalekin³⁰, D. Kang³⁵, W. Kang⁶⁷, X. Kang⁶⁰, A. Kappes⁵², D. Kappesser⁴⁸, L. Kardum²⁷, T. Karg⁷⁶, M. Karl³¹, A. Karle⁴⁷, T. Katori⁴², U. Katz³⁰, M. Kauer⁴⁷, J. L. Kelley⁴⁷, A. Khattee Zathul⁴⁷, A. Kheirandish^{38, 39}, J. Kiryluk⁶⁶, S. R. Klein^{8, 9}, T. Kobayashi⁵⁷, A. Kochocki²⁸, H. Kolanoski¹⁰, T. Kontrimas³¹, L. Köpke⁴⁸, C. Kopper³⁰, D. J. 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Nakos⁴⁷, A. Narayan⁵¹, U. Naumann⁷⁵, J. Necker⁷⁶, A. Negi⁴, A. Nelles^{30, 76}, M. Neumann⁵², H. Niederhausen²⁸, M. U. Nisa²⁸, A. Noell¹, A. Novikov⁵³, S. C. Nowicki²⁸, A. Nozdrina⁴⁰, E. Oberla^{20, 21}, A. Obertacke Pollmann¹⁶, V. O'Dell⁴⁷, M. Oehler⁷⁵, B. Oeyen³³, A. Olivas²³, R. Ørsøe³¹, J. Osborn⁴⁷, E. O'Sullivan⁷⁴, L. Papp³¹, N. Park³⁷, G. K. Parker⁴, E. N. Paudel⁵³, L. Paul^{50, 61}, C. Pérez de los Heros⁷⁴, T. C. Petersen²⁶, J. Peterson⁴⁷, S. Philippen¹, S. Pieper⁷⁵, J. L. Pinfold²⁹, A. Pizzuto⁴⁷, I. Plaisier⁷⁶, M. Plum⁶¹, A. Pontén⁷⁴, Y. Popovych⁴⁸, M. Prado Rodriguez⁴⁷, B. Pries²⁸, R. Procter-Murphy²³, G. T. Przybylski⁹, L. Pyras⁷⁶, J. Rack-Helleis⁴⁸, M. Rameez⁵¹, K. Rawlins³, Z. Rechav⁴⁷, A. Rehman⁵³, P. Reichherzer¹¹, G. Renzi¹², E. Resconi³¹, S. Reusch⁷⁶, W. Rhode²⁷, B. Riedel⁴⁷, M. Riegel³⁵, A. Rifaie¹, E. J. Roberts², S. Robertson^{8, 9}, S. Rodan⁶⁷, G. Roellinghoff⁶⁷, M. Rongen³⁰, C. Rott^{64, 67}, T. Ruhe²⁷, D. Ryckbosch³³, I. Safa^{14, 47}, J. Saffer³⁶, D. 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Toscano¹², D. Tosi⁴⁷, A. Trettin⁷⁶, Y. Tsunesada⁵⁷, C. F. Tung⁶, R. Turcotte³⁵, J. P. Twagirayezu²⁸, B. Ty⁴⁷, M. A. Unland Elorrieta⁵², A. K. Upadhyay^{47, 77}, K. Upshaw⁷, N. Valtonen-Mattila⁷⁴, J. Vandenbroucke⁴⁷, N. van Eijndhoven¹³, D. Vannerom¹⁵, J. van Santen⁷⁶, J. Vara⁵², D. Veberic³⁵, J. Veitch-Michaelis⁴⁷, M. Venugopal³⁵, S. Verpoest⁵³, A. Vieregge^{18, 19, 20, 21}, A. Vijai²³, C. Walck⁶⁵, C. Weaver²⁸, P. Weigel¹⁵, A. Weindl³⁵, J. Weldert⁷², C. Welling²¹, C. Wendt⁴⁷, J. Werthebach²⁷, M. Weyrauch³⁵, N. Whitehorn²⁸, C. H. Wiebusch¹, N. Willey²⁸, D. R. Williams⁷⁰, S. Wissel^{71, 72, 73}, L. Witthaus²⁷, A. Wolf¹, M. Wolf³¹, G. Wörner³⁵, G. Wrede³⁰, S. Wren⁴⁹, X. W. Xu⁷, J. P. Yanez²⁹, E. Yildizci⁴⁷, S. Yoshida¹⁶, R. Young⁴⁰, F. Yu¹⁴, S. Yu²⁸, T. Yuan⁴⁷, Z. Zhang⁶⁶, P. Zhelnin¹⁴, S. Zierke¹, M. Zimmerman⁴⁷

¹ III. Physikalisches Institut, RWTH Aachen University, D-52056 Aachen, Germany² Department of Physics, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, 5005, Australia³ Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, University of Alaska Anchorage, 3211 Providence Dr., Anchorage, AK 99508, USA⁴ Dept. of Physics, University of Texas at Arlington, 502 Yates St., Science Hall Rm 108, Box 19059, Arlington, TX 76019, USA⁵ CTSPS, Clark-Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA 30314, USA⁶ School of Physics and Center for Relativistic Astrophysics, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA 30332, USA

- ⁷ Dept. of Physics, Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA 70813, USA
⁸ Dept. of Physics, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA
⁹ Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA
¹⁰ Institut für Physik, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, D-12489 Berlin, Germany
¹¹ Fakultät für Physik & Astronomie, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, D-44780 Bochum, Germany
¹² Université Libre de Bruxelles, Science Faculty CP230, B-1050 Brussels, Belgium
¹³ Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Dienst ELEM, B-1050 Brussels, Belgium
¹⁴ Department of Physics and Laboratory for Particle Physics and Cosmology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA
¹⁵ Dept. of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA 02139, USA
¹⁶ Dept. of Physics and The International Center for Hadron Astrophysics, Chiba University, Chiba 263-8522, Japan
¹⁷ Department of Physics, Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL 60660, USA
¹⁸ Dept. of Astronomy and Astrophysics, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL 60637, USA
¹⁹ Dept. of Physics, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL 60637, USA
²⁰ Enrico Fermi Institute, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL 60637, USA
²¹ Kavli Institute for Cosmological Physics, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL 60637, USA
²² Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch, New Zealand
²³ Dept. of Physics, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, USA
²⁴ Dept. of Astronomy, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210, USA
²⁵ Dept. of Physics and Center for Cosmology and Astro-Particle Physics, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210, USA
²⁶ Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen, DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark
²⁷ Dept. of Physics, TU Dortmund University, D-44221 Dortmund, Germany
²⁸ Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA
²⁹ Dept. of Physics, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2E1
³⁰ Erlangen Centre for Astroparticle Physics, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, D-91058 Erlangen, Germany
³¹ Technical University of Munich, TUM School of Natural Sciences, Department of Physics, D-85748 Garching bei München, Germany
³² Département de physique nucléaire et corpusculaire, Université de Genève, CH-1211 Genève, Switzerland
³³ Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, University of Gent, B-9000 Gent, Belgium
³⁴ Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, University of California, Irvine, CA 92697, USA
³⁵ Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Institute for Astroparticle Physics, D-76021 Karlsruhe, Germany
³⁶ Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Institute of Experimental Particle Physics, D-76021 Karlsruhe, Germany
³⁷ Dept. of Physics, Engineering Physics, and Astronomy, Queen's University, Kingston, ON K7L 3N6, Canada
³⁸ Department of Physics & Astronomy, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV, 89154, USA
³⁹ Nevada Center for Astrophysics, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV 89154, USA
⁴⁰ Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045, USA
⁴¹ Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588, USA
⁴² Dept. of Physics, King's College London, London WC2R 2LS, United Kingdom
⁴³ School of Physics and Astronomy, Queen Mary University of London, London E1 4NS, United Kingdom
⁴⁴ Centre for Cosmology, Particle Physics and Phenomenology - CP3, Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium
⁴⁵ Department of Physics, Mercer University, Macon, GA 31207-0001, USA
⁴⁶ Dept. of Astronomy, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, WI 53706, USA
⁴⁷ Dept. of Physics and Wisconsin IceCube Particle Astrophysics Center, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, WI 53706, USA
⁴⁸ Institute of Physics, University of Mainz, Staudinger Weg 7, D-55099 Mainz, Germany
⁴⁹ School of Physics and Astronomy, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL, United Kingdom
⁵⁰ Department of Physics, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, 53201, USA
⁵¹ Dept. of High Energy Physics, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Colaba, Mumbai 400 005, India
⁵² Institut für Kernphysik, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, D-48149 Münster, Germany
⁵³ Bartol Research Institute and Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716, USA
⁵⁴ Dept. of Physics, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520, USA
⁵⁵ Columbia Astrophysics and Nevis Laboratories, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027, USA
⁵⁶ Dept. of Physics, University of Notre Dame du Lac, 225 Nieuwland Science Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556-5670, USA
⁵⁷ Graduate School of Science and NITEP, Osaka Metropolitan University, Osaka 558-8585, Japan
⁵⁸ Dept. of Physics, University of Oxford, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PU, United Kingdom
⁵⁹ Dipartimento di Fisica e Astronomia Galileo Galilei, Università Degli Studi di Padova, 35122 Padova PD, Italy
⁶⁰ Dept. of Physics, Drexel University, 3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA
⁶¹ Physics Department, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Rapid City, SD 57701, USA
⁶² Dept. of Physics, University of Wisconsin, River Falls, WI 54022, USA
⁶³ Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627, USA
⁶⁴ Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT 84112, USA
⁶⁵ Oskar Klein Centre and Dept. of Physics, Stockholm University, SE-10691 Stockholm, Sweden
⁶⁶ Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY 11794-3800, USA
⁶⁷ Dept. of Physics, Sungkyunkwan University, Suwon 16419, Korea

⁶⁸ Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, 11529, Taiwan

⁶⁹ Earthquake Research Institute, University of Tokyo, Bunkyo, Tokyo 113-0032, Japan

⁷⁰ Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487, USA

⁷¹ Dept. of Astronomy and Astrophysics, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802, USA

⁷² Dept. of Physics, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802, USA

⁷³ Institute of Gravitation and the Cosmos, Center for Multi-Messenger Astrophysics, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802, USA

⁷⁴ Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, Uppsala University, Box 516, S-75120 Uppsala, Sweden

⁷⁵ Dept. of Physics, University of Wuppertal, D-42119 Wuppertal, Germany

⁷⁶ Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron DESY, Platanenallee 6, 15738 Zeuthen, Germany

⁷⁷ Institute of Physics, Sachivalaya Marg, Sainik School Post, Bhubaneswar 751005, India

⁷⁸ Department of Space, Earth and Environment, Chalmers University of Technology, 412 96 Gothenburg, Sweden

⁷⁹ Earthquake Research Institute, University of Tokyo, Bunkyo, Tokyo 113-0032, Japan

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