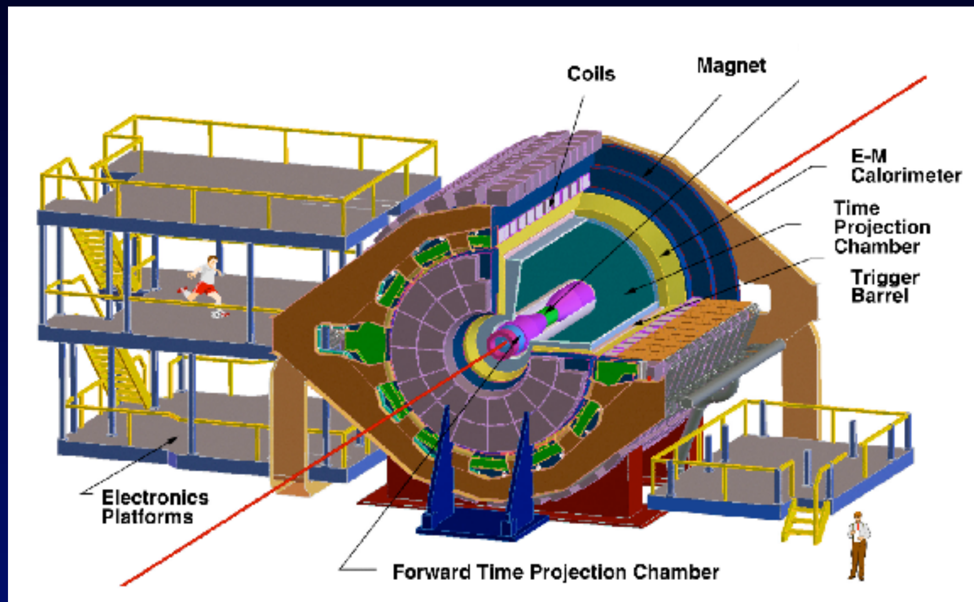
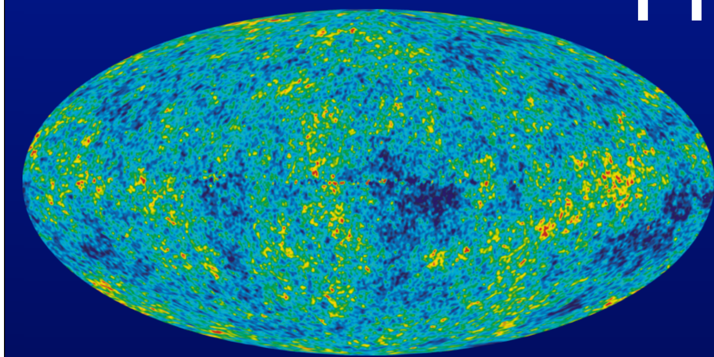
Analysis of fixed target collisions with the STAR detector



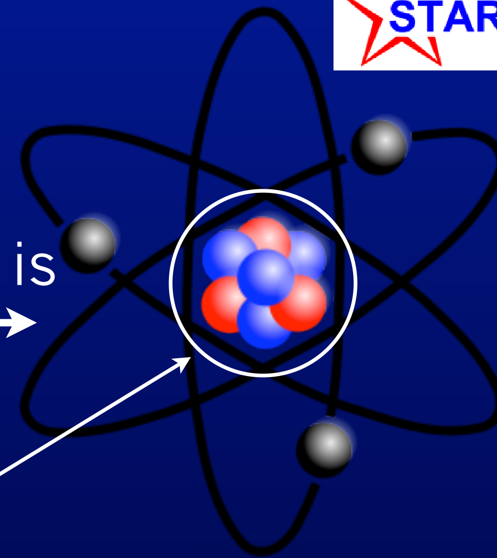
Brooke Haag for the STAR Collaboration
Hartnell College / University of California, Davis
Presented at the Meeting of the California Section of the APS
November 11, 2011

The Basics

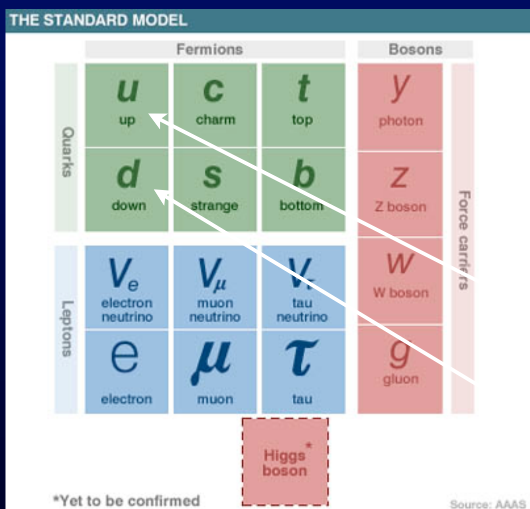


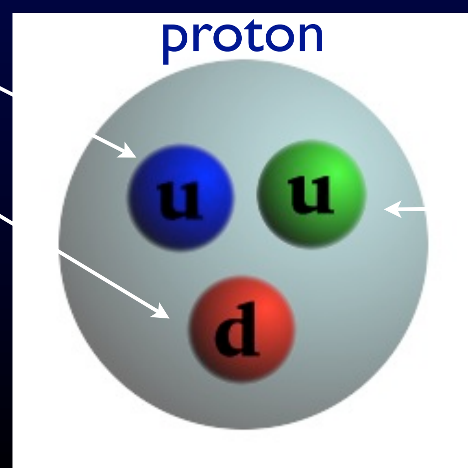
matter in the universe is

made of atoms



nucleus = protons
+ neutrons



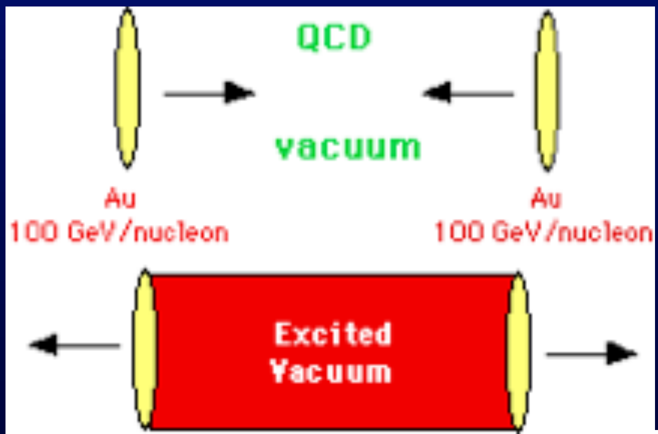


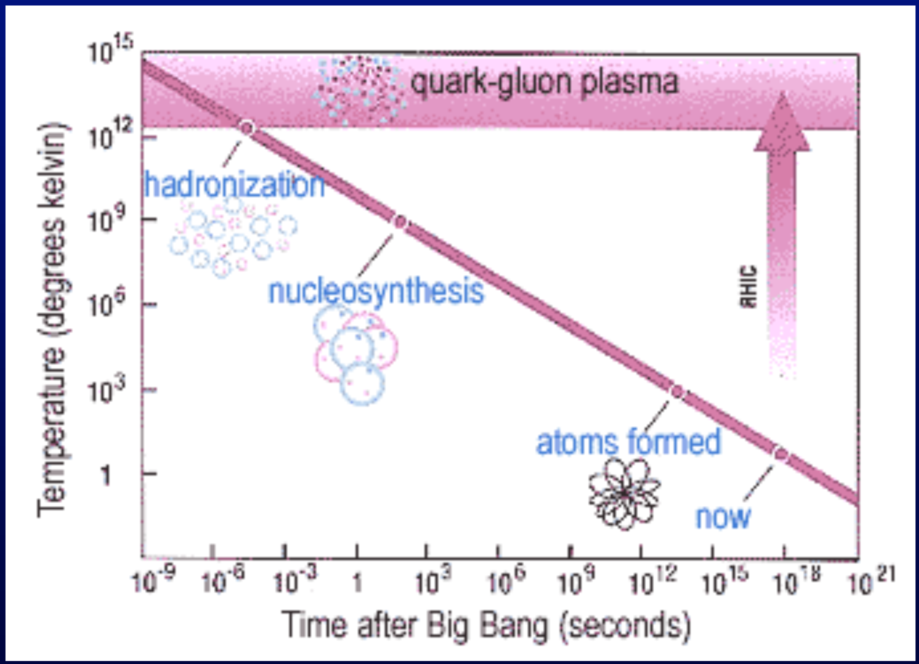
nucleons are hadrons
(made of quarks)

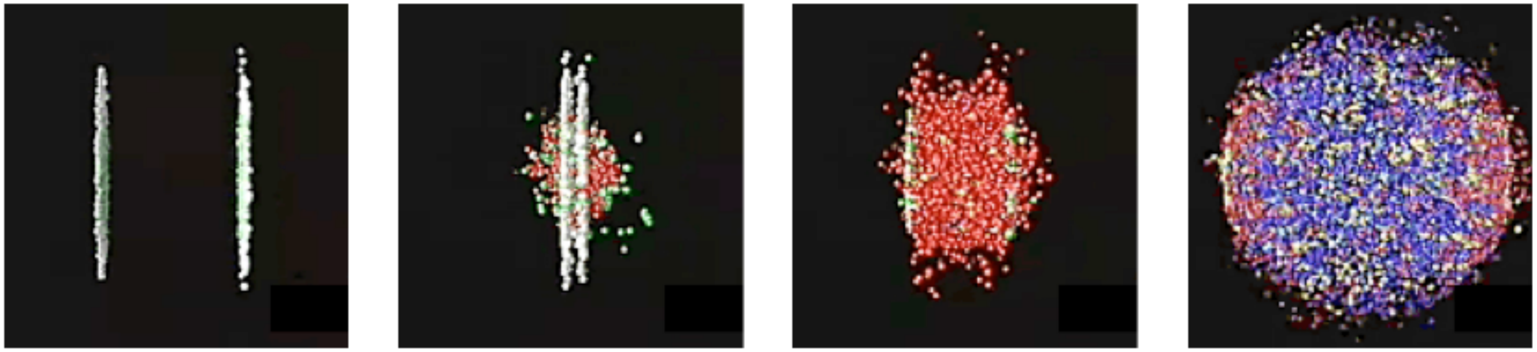
mesons = 2 quarks
baryons = 3 quarks

Creating mini-big bangs in the laboratory

Goal: Use relativistic collisions of nuclei to create hot dense matter which reproduces the earliest stages of the universe

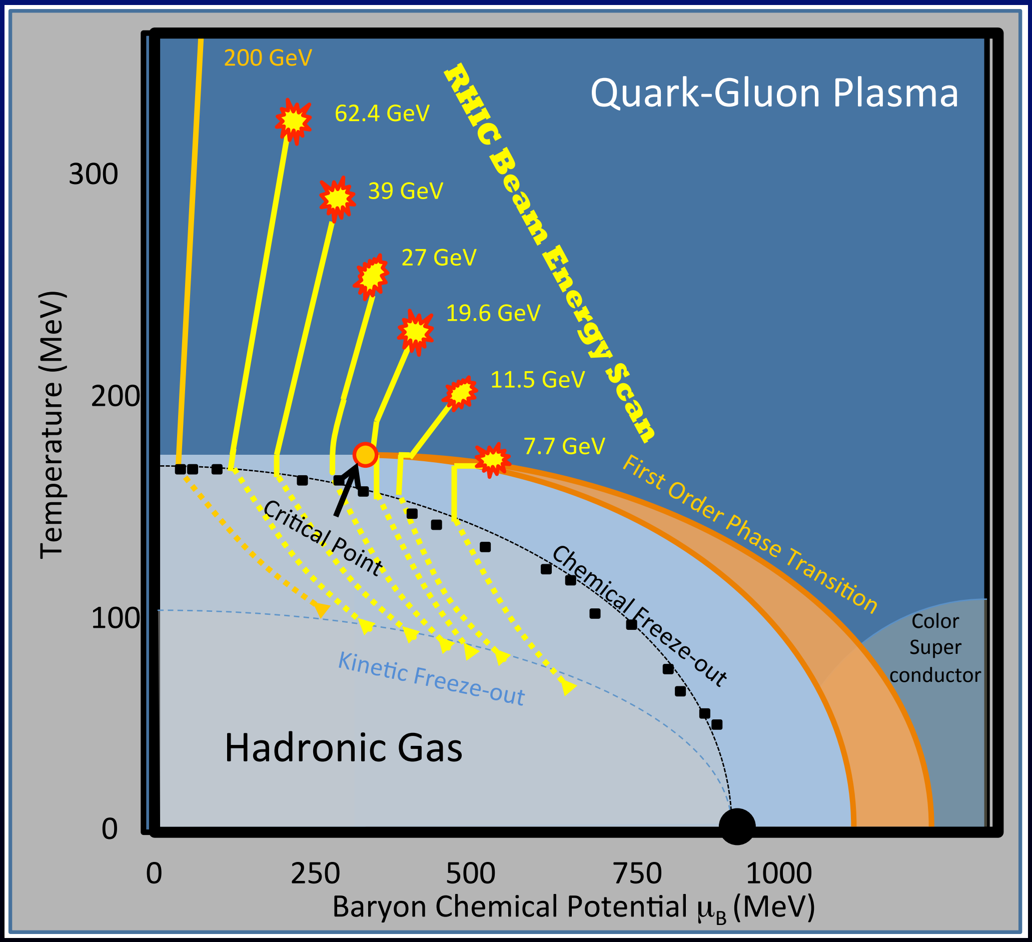






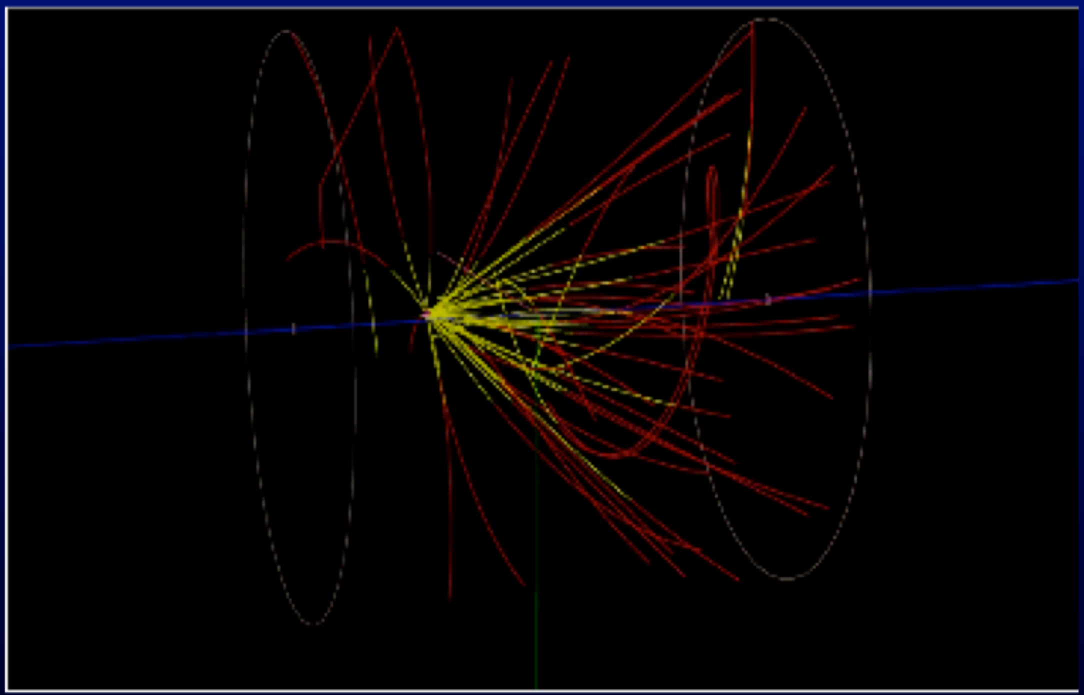
1. Ions about to collide* 2. Ion collision 3. Quarks, gluons freed 4. Plasma created

QCD phase diagram



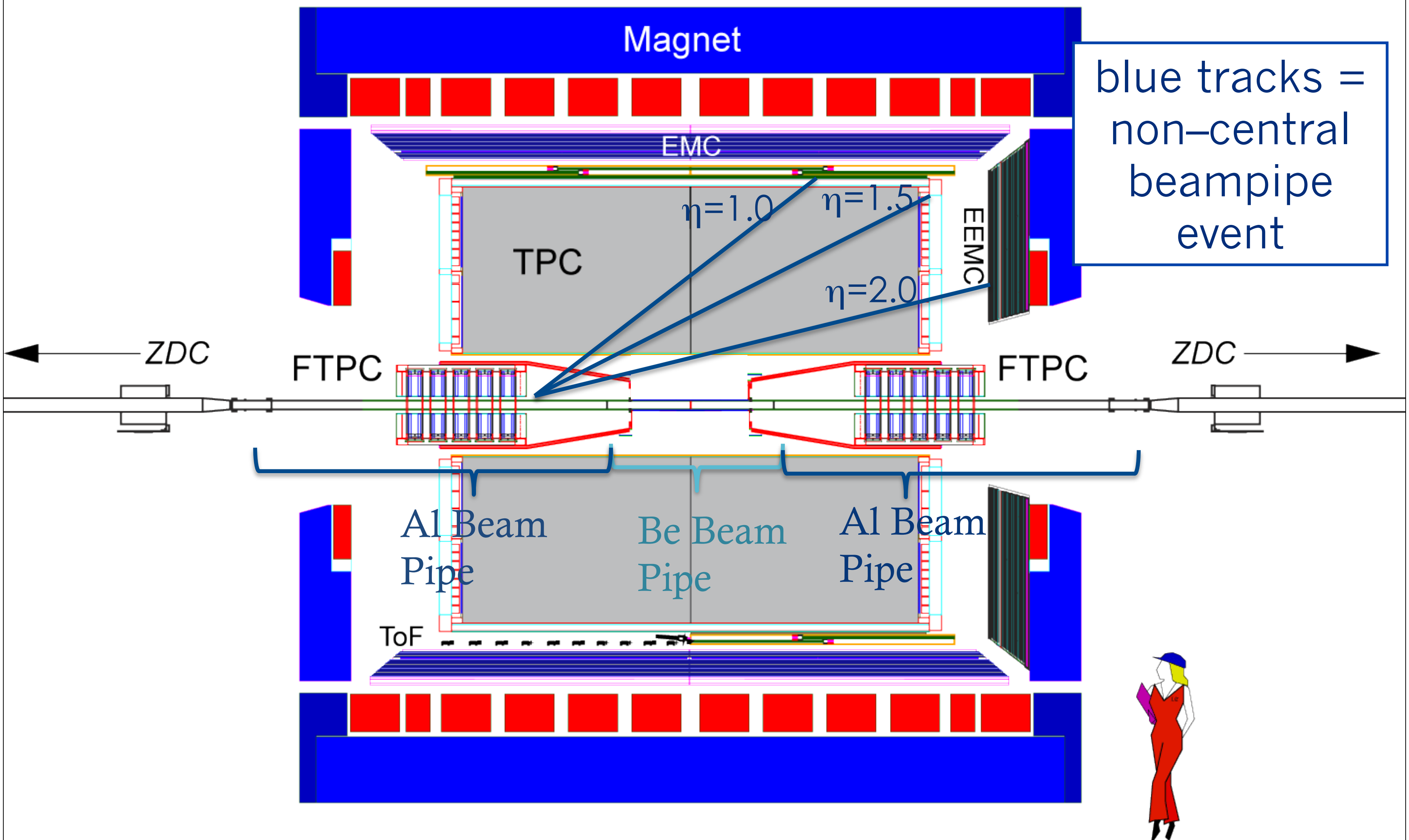
- We have created a new state of matter consistent with the QGP !
- In 2010 (and continuing through 2011) an extensive beam energy scan was undertaken at RHIC with a major goal to find the critical point.
- Fixed target collisions could extend the physics analysis to even lower √s.

STAR has fixed target events?



- gold beam ions collide with aluminum beam pipe atoms
- the events are asymmetrical
- acceptance is not optimal ...

STAR detector array



blue tracks = non–central beampipe event

Kinematic Calculations

Collision Energy (GeV)	Single Beam Energy	Single Beam P_z (GeV/c)	Fixed Target $\sqrt{s}$	Single Beam Rapidity	Center of Mass Rapidity
19.6 Au+Au	9.8	9.76	4.47 Au+Al	3.04	1.52
11.5 Au+Au	5.75	5.67	3.53 Au+Al	2.51	1.25
7.7 Au+Au	3.85	3.74	2.99 Au+Al	2.10	1.05

$\sqrt{(s_{NN})}$ = center of mass energy

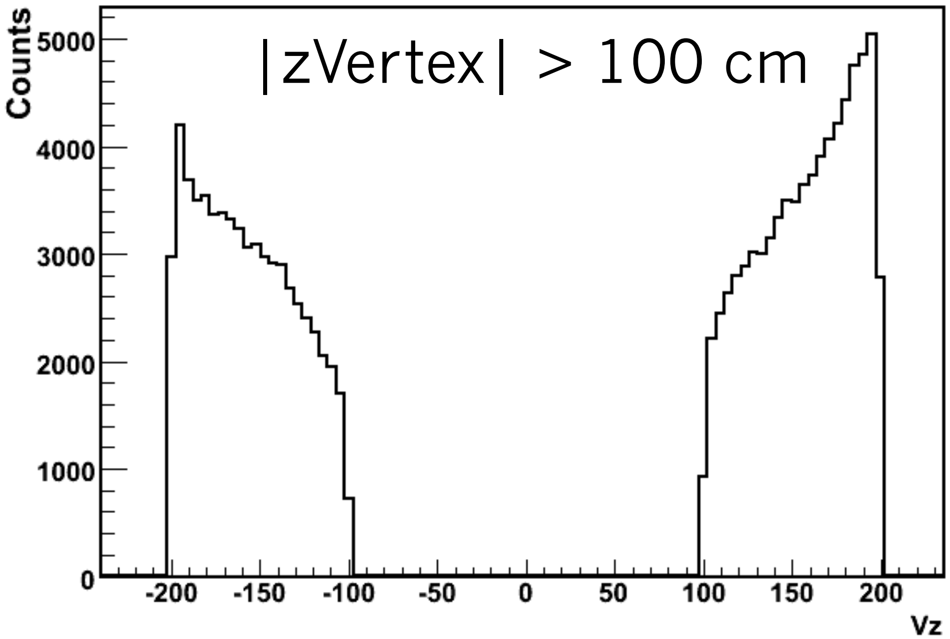
- $\sqrt{(s_{NN})} = \sqrt{(2m^2 + 2Em)}$
  $m = 0.9315$ GeV/c^2 ; $E = 9.8$ GeV
- $\sqrt{(s_{NN})} = 4.47$ GeV
- $p_z = \sqrt{(E^2 - m^2)} = 9.76$ GeV/c

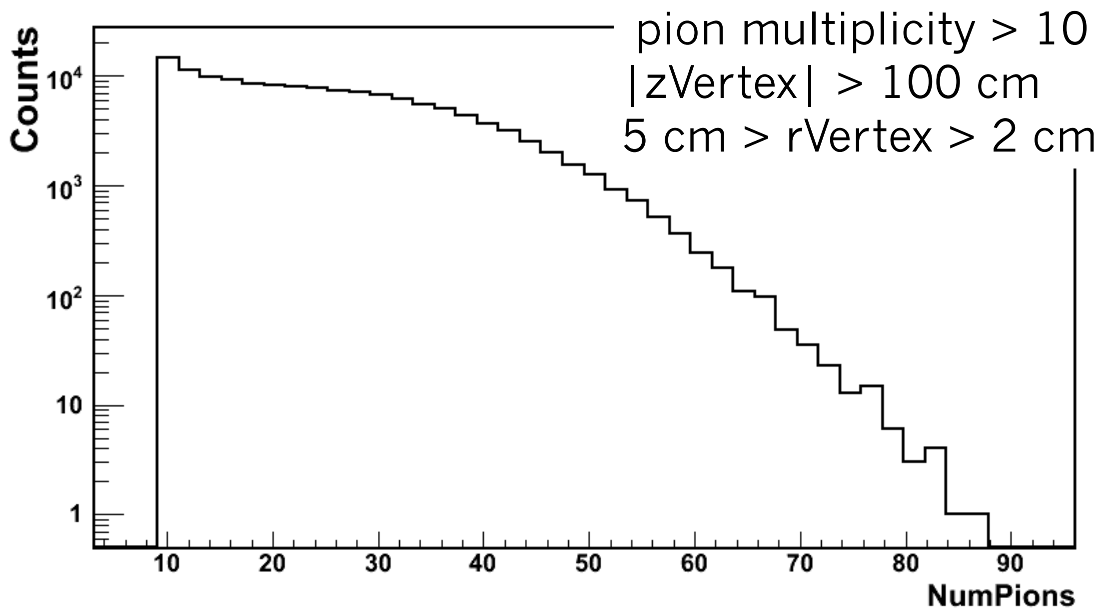
rapidity (y)

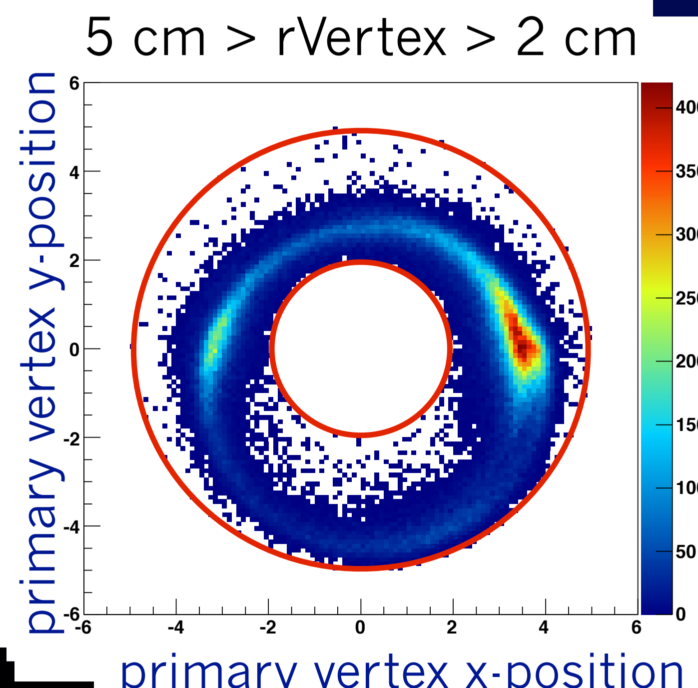
- $y_{beam} = 0.5*[\ln(E + p_z)/(E - p_z)]$
- $y_{beam} = 3.0$
- $y_{cm} = 1.5$

Event Selection

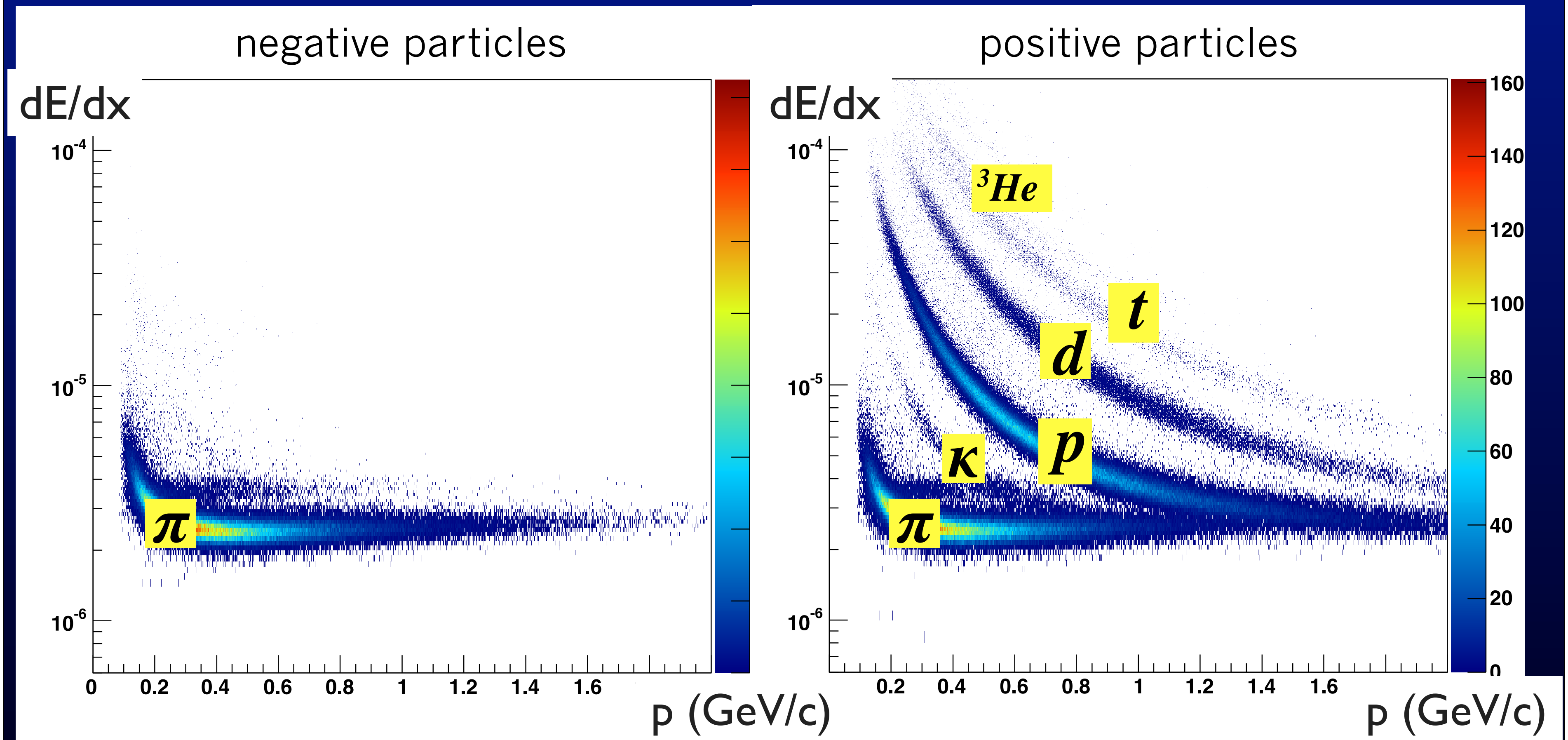
- Run 11
- Au+Al $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ = 4.5 GeV
- 137k event pass selection cuts from 146 M total events





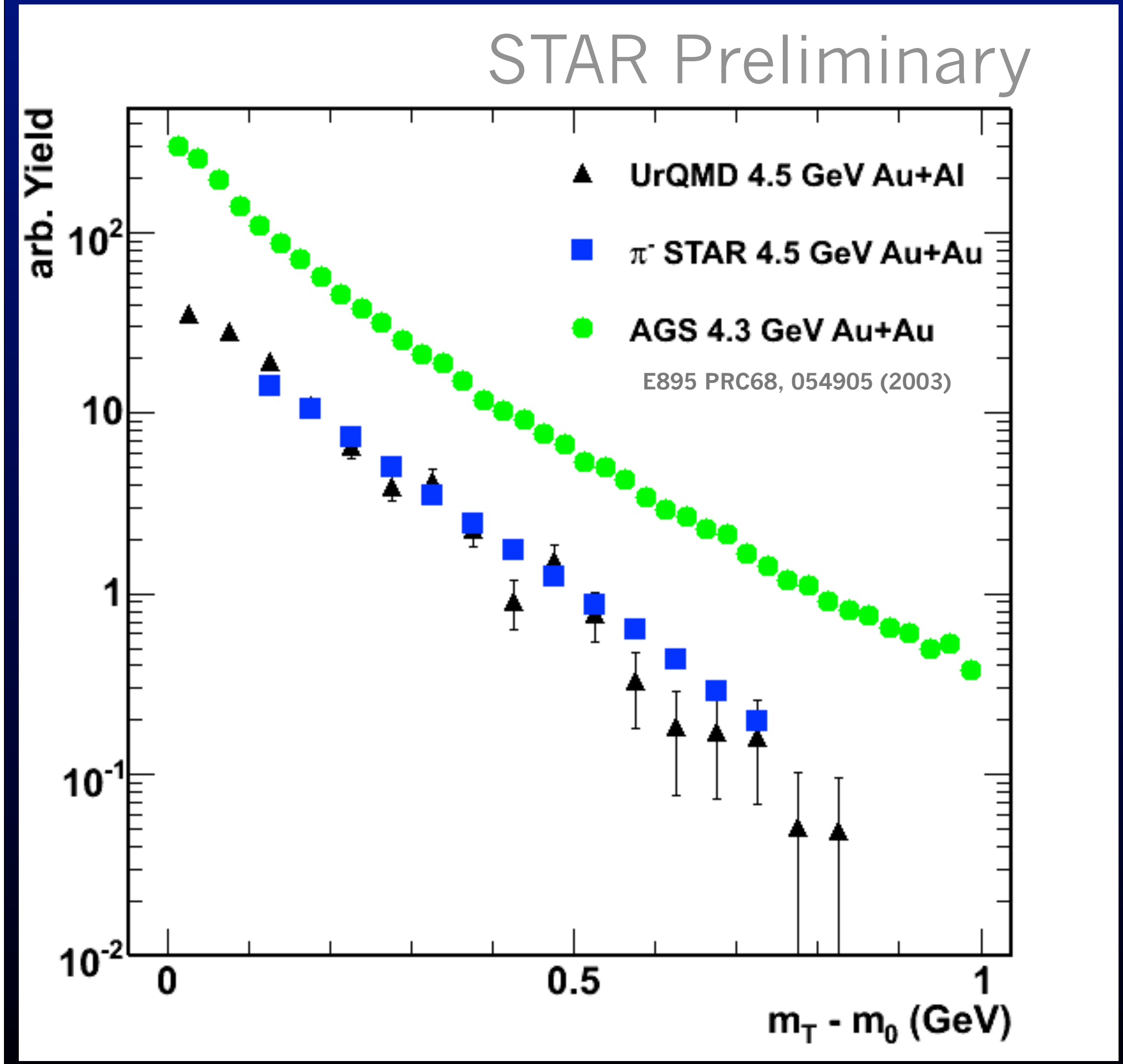


Particle identification via dE/dx



- dE/dx from beampipe events as per selection criteria in slide 8
- particle bands are well separated

π^- spectra comparisons

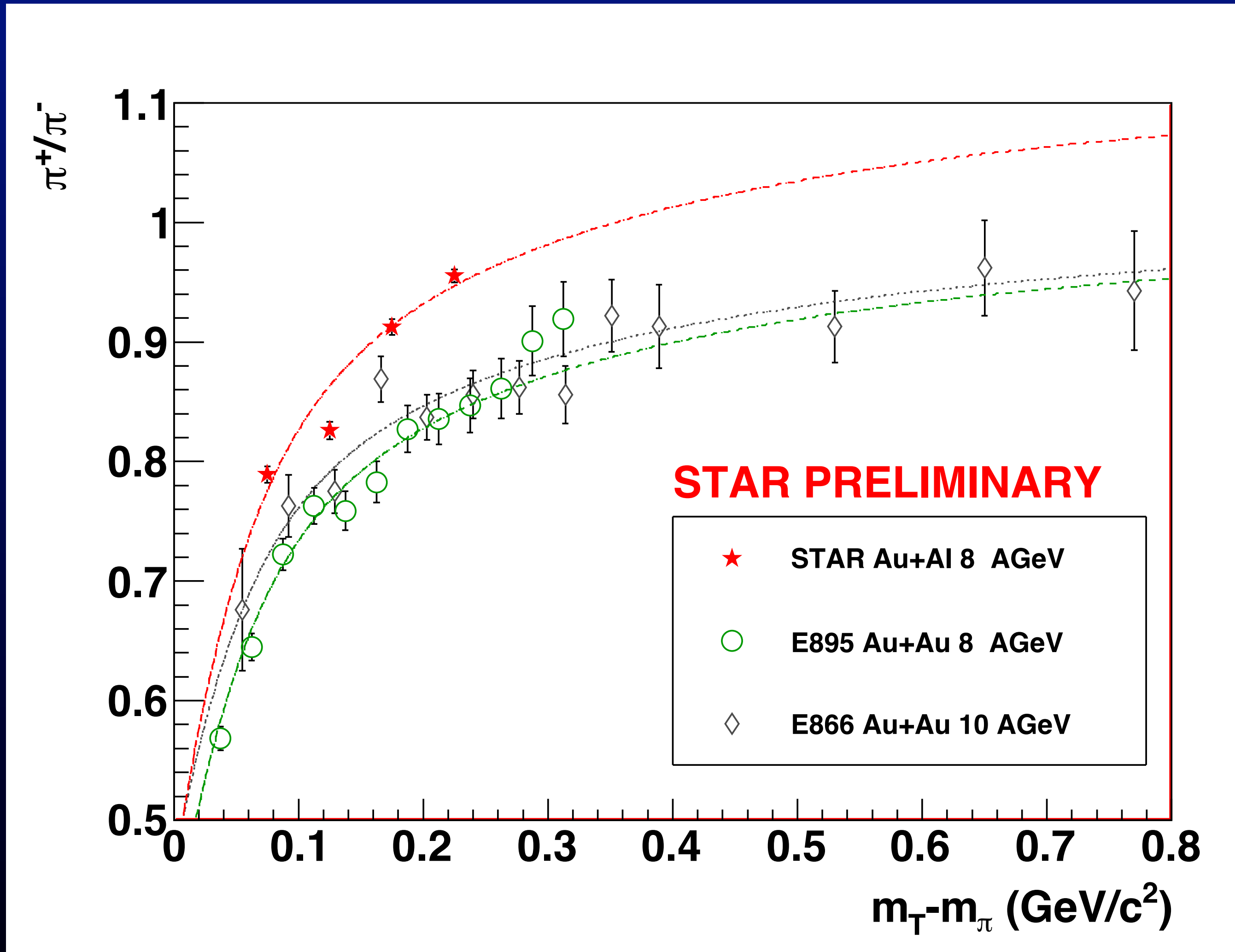


- uncorrected STAR data points
- slopes of π^- spectra STAR data, AGS data, and UrQMD compare reasonably
- AGS yields are predictably above STAR for Au+Au (AGS) vs. Au+Al (STAR)

π^+/π^- yield ratios

Coulomb Potential:
E895: 17.60 +/- 0.56
E866: 16.32 +/- 1.92
Au+Al: 17.60 +/- 0.86

Ratios:
E895: 0.72 +/- 0.00
E866: 0.77 +/- 0.01
Au+Al: 0.81 +/- 0.00



Conclusions and Outlook

- We can do physics with STAR as a fixed target experiment !
    - We have been able to extract pion spectra for fixed target collisions at lab rapidity
        - working to understand detector efficiency at high rapidities via simulated events
        - yields and slopes compare favorably with published data in this energy range
        - we **can** extend the search for the critical point to lower energies

Backup Slides

Source Coulomb Potential

$$\frac{\pi^+}{\pi^-}\left(m_T - m_\pi\right) = R\,\frac{\exp\left[\left(E + V_{\mathrm{eff}}\right)/T_\pi\right] - 1}{\exp\left[\left(E - V_{\mathrm{eff}}\right)/T_\pi\right] - 1} \cdot J$$

Ratio as a function of transverse kinetic energy with transformed B-E distribution

$$J = \frac{E - V_{\mathrm{eff}}}{E + V_{\mathrm{eff}}}\,\frac{\sqrt{\left(E - V_{\mathrm{eff}}\right)^2 - m_\pi^2}}{\sqrt{\left(E + V_{\mathrm{eff}}\right)^2 - m_\pi^2}}$$

Jacobian of the transformation

$$V_{\mathrm{eff}}\left(\gamma_\pi\beta_\pi\right) = V_C\left(1 - e^{-E_{\max}\left(\gamma_\pi\beta_\pi\right)/T_p}\right)$$

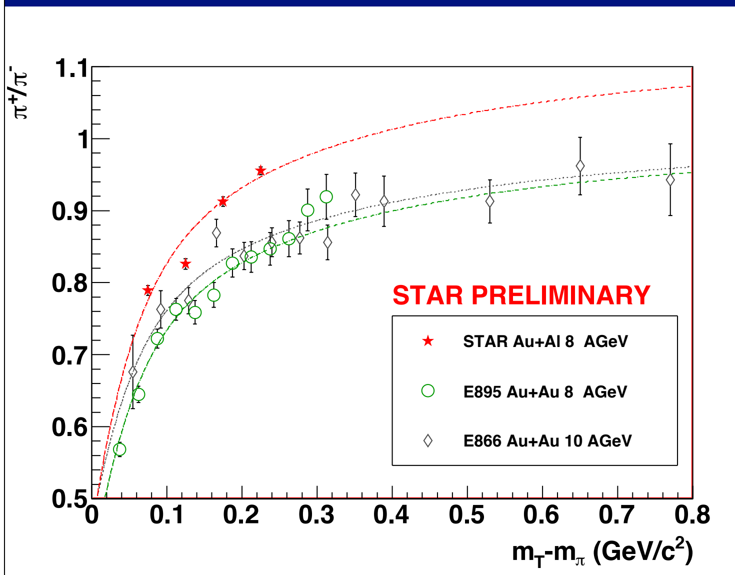
Effective Coulomb potential accounting for the reduced charge seen by low momentum π

$$E_{\max}\left(\gamma_\pi\beta_\pi\right) = \sqrt{\left(m_p\gamma_\pi\beta_\pi\right)^2 + m_p^2} - m_p$$

Maximum kinetic energy of the corresponding π velocity

- Net positive charge in the collision zone
  - Expanding spherical source → effective potential
- Coulomb potential (V_c) of the source modifies momentum distribution
  - Greater effect for low-momentum π
- R – primordial ratio from initial yields, unmodified by the coulomb source
- Extracted parameters include initial ratio R and the full coulomb potential V_c

π^+/π^- yield ratios fit parameters



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E866

EXT NO.	PARAMETER NAME	VALUE	ERROR	STEP SIZE	FIRST DERIVATIVE
1	p0	7.71114e-01	1.14871e-02	1.22945e-05	-5.15275e-04
2	p1	1.63202e+01	1.92414e+00	2.05922e-03	-1.39505e-05
3	p2	1.12800e-01	fixed		
4	p3	0.00000e+00	fixed		
5	p4	2.28900e-01	fixed		

Chi^2 1.20046

E895

EXT NO.	PARAMETER NAME	VALUE	ERROR	STEP SIZE	FIRST DERIVATIVE
1	p0	7.17317e-01	4.43901e-03	8.06105e-06	-5.22883e-05
2	p1	1.75996e+01	5.60205e-01	1.01731e-03	8.87560e-07
3	p2	9.80000e-02	fixed		
4	p3	0.00000e+00	fixed		
5	p4	2.25000e-01	fixed		

Chi^2 1.17822

STAR Au+Al

EXT NO.	PARAMETER NAME	VALUE	ERROR	STEP SIZE	FIRST DERIVATIVE
1	p0	8.07755e-01	4.77229e-03	8.15679e-06	6.14937e-03
2	p1	1.75972e+01	8.58136e-01	1.46673e-03	2.38818e-05
3	p2	9.80000e-02	fixed		
4	p3	0.00000e+00	fixed		
5	p4	2.25000e-01	fixed		

Chi^2 15.9098