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Authors

Del Amo Sanchez, P
Lees, JP
Poireau, V
[et al.](#)

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Search for CP violation in the decay $D^\pm \rightarrow K_S^0 \pi^\pm$

P. del Amo Sanchez,¹ J. P. Lees,¹ V. Poireau,¹ E. Prencipe,¹ V. Tisserand,¹ J. Garra Tico,² E. Grauges,² M. Martinelli,^{3a,3b} D. A. Milanese,^{3a} A. Palano,^{3a,3b} M. Pappagallo,^{3a,3b} G. Eigen,⁴ B. Stugu,⁴ L. Sun,⁴ D. N. Brown,⁵ L. T. Kerth,⁵ Yu. G. Kolomensky,⁵ G. Lynch,⁵ I. L. Osipenkov,⁵ H. Koch,⁶ T. Schroeder,⁶ D. J. Asgeirsson,⁷ C. Hearty,⁷ T. S. Mattison,⁷ J. A. McKenna,⁷ A. Khan,⁸ V. E. Blinov,⁹ A. R. Buzykaev,⁹ V. P. Druzhinin,⁹ V. B. Golubev,⁹ E. A. Kravchenko,⁹ A. P. Onuchin,⁹ S. I. Serednyakov,⁹ Yu. I. Skovpen,⁹ E. P. Solodov,⁹ K. Yu. Todyshev,⁹ A. N. Yushkov,⁹ M. Bondioli,¹⁰ S. Curry,¹⁰ D. Kirkby,¹⁰ A. J. Lankford,¹⁰ M. Mandelkern,¹⁰ E. C. Martin,¹⁰ D. P. Stoker,¹⁰ H. Atmacan,¹¹ J. W. Gary,¹¹ F. Liu,¹¹ O. Long,¹¹ G. M. Vitug,¹¹ C. Campagnari,¹² T. M. Hong,¹² D. Kovalskyi,¹² J. D. Richman,¹² C. A. West,¹² A. M. Eisner,¹³ C. A. Heusch,¹³ J. Kroseberg,¹³ W. S. Lockman,¹³ A. J. Martinez,¹³ T. Schalk,¹³ B. A. Schumm,¹³ A. Seiden,¹³ L. O. Winstrom,¹³ C. H. Cheng,¹⁴ D. A. Doll,¹⁴ B. Echenard,¹⁴ D. G. Hitlin,¹⁴ P. Ongmongkolkul,¹⁴ F. C. Porter,¹⁴ A. Y. Rakitin,¹⁴ R. Andreassen,¹⁵ M. S. Dubrovin,¹⁵ B. T. Meadows,¹⁵ M. D. Sokoloff,¹⁵ P. C. Bloom,¹⁶ W. T. Ford,¹⁶ A. Gaz,¹⁶ M. Nagel,¹⁶ U. Nauenberg,¹⁶ J. G. Smith,¹⁶ S. R. Wagner,¹⁶ R. Ayad,^{17,*} W. H. Toki,¹⁷ H. Jasper,¹⁸ A. Petzold,¹⁸ B. Spaan,¹⁸ M. J. Kobel,¹⁹ K. R. Schubert,¹⁹ R. Schwierz,¹⁹ D. Bernard,²⁰ M. Verderi,²⁰ P. J. Clark,²¹ S. Playfer,²¹ J. E. Watson,²¹ M. Andreotti,^{22a,22b} D. Bettoni,^{22a} C. Bozzi,^{22a} R. Calabrese,^{22a,22b} A. Cecchi,^{22a,22b} G. Cibinetto,^{22a,22b} E. Fioravanti,^{22a,22b} P. Franchini,^{22a,22b} I. Garzia,^{22a,22b} E. Luppi,^{22a,22b} M. Menerato,^{22a,22b} M. Negri,^{22a,22b} A. Petrella,^{22a,22b} L. Piemontese,^{22a} R. Baldini-Ferroli,²³ A. Calcaterra,²³ R. de Sangro,²³ G. Finocchiaro,²³ M. Nicolaci,²³ S. Pacetti,²³ P. Patteri,²³ I. M. Peruzzi,^{23,†} M. Piccolo,²³ M. Rama,²³ A. Zallo,²³ R. Contri,^{24a,24b} E. Guido,^{24a,24b} M. Lo Vetere,^{24a,24b} M. R. Monge,^{24a,24b} S. Passaggio,^{24a} C. Patrignani,^{24a,24b} E. Robutti,^{24a} B. Bhuyan,²⁵ V. Prasad,²⁵ C. L. Lee,²⁶ M. Morii,²⁶ A. J. Edwards,²⁷ A. Adametz,²⁸ J. Marks,²⁸ U. Uwer,²⁸ F. U. Bernlochner,²⁹ M. Ebert,²⁹ H. M. Lacker,²⁹ T. Lueck,²⁹ A. Volk,²⁹ P. D. Dauncey,³⁰ M. Tibbetts,³⁰ P. K. Behera,³¹ U. Mallik,³¹ C. Chen,³² J. Cochran,³² H. B. Crawley,³² W. T. Meyer,³² S. Prell,³² E. I. Rosenberg,³² A. E. Rubin,³² A. V. Gritsan,³³ Z. J. Guo,³³ N. Arnaud,³⁴ M. Davier,³⁴ D. Derkach,³⁴ J. Firmino da Costa,³⁴ G. Grosdidier,³⁴ F. Le Diberder,³⁴ A. M. Lutz,³⁴ B. Malaescu,³⁴ A. Perez,³⁴ P. Roudeau,³⁴ M. H. Schune,³⁴ J. Serrano,³⁴ V. Sordini,^{34,‡} A. Stocchi,³⁴ L. Wang,³⁴ G. Wormser,³⁴ D. J. Lange,³⁵ D. M. Wright,³⁵ I. Bingham,³⁶ C. A. Chavez,³⁶ J. P. Coleman,³⁶ J. R. Fry,³⁶ E. Gabathuler,³⁶ D. E. Hutchcroft,³⁶ D. J. Payne,³⁶ C. Touramanis,³⁶ A. J. Bevan,³⁷ F. Di Lodovico,³⁷ R. Sacco,³⁷ M. Sigamani,³⁷ G. Cowan,³⁸ S. Paramesvaran,³⁸ A. C. Wren,³⁸ D. N. Brown,³⁹ C. L. Davis,³⁹ A. G. Denig,⁴⁰ M. Fritsch,⁴⁰ W. Gradl,⁴⁰ A. Hafner,⁴⁰ K. E. Alwyn,⁴¹ D. Bailey,⁴¹ R. J. Barlow,⁴¹ G. Jackson,⁴¹ G. D. Lafferty,⁴¹ J. Anderson,⁴² R. Cenci,⁴² A. Jawahery,⁴² D. A. Roberts,⁴² G. Simi,⁴² J. M. Tuggle,⁴² C. Dallapiccola,⁴³ E. Salvati,⁴³ R. Cowan,⁴⁴ D. Dujmic,⁴⁴ G. Sciolla,⁴⁴ M. Zhao,⁴⁴ D. Lindemann,⁴⁵ P. M. Patel,⁴⁵ S. H. Robertson,⁴⁵ M. Schram,⁴⁵ P. Biassoni,^{46a,46b} A. Lazzaro,^{46a,46b} V. Lombardo,^{46a} F. Palombo,^{46a,46b} S. Stracka,^{46a,46b} L. Cremaldi,⁴⁷ R. Godang,^{47,§} R. Kroeger,⁴⁷ P. Sonnek,⁴⁷ D. J. Summers,⁴⁷ X. Nguyen,⁴⁸ M. Simard,⁴⁸ P. Taras,⁴⁸ G. De Nardo,^{49a,49b} D. Monorchio,^{49a,49b} G. Onorato,^{49a,49b} C. Sciacca,^{49a,49b} G. Raven,⁵⁰ H. L. Snoek,⁵⁰ C. P. Jessop,⁵¹ K. J. Knoepfel,⁵¹ J. M. LoSecco,⁵¹ W. F. Wang,⁵¹ L. A. Corwin,⁵² K. Honscheid,⁵² R. Kass,⁵² N. L. Blount,⁵³ J. Brau,⁵³ R. Frey,⁵³ O. Igonkina,⁵³ J. A. Kolb,⁵³ R. Rahmat,⁵³ N. B. Sinev,⁵³ D. Strom,⁵³ J. Strube,⁵³ E. Torrence,⁵³ G. Castelli,^{54a,54b} E. Feltresi,^{54a,54b} N. Gagliardi,^{54a,54b} M. Margoni,^{54a,54b} M. Morandin,^{54a} A. Pompili,^{54a,54b} M. Posocco,^{54a} M. Rotondo,^{54a} F. Simonetto,^{54a,54b} R. Stroili,^{54a,54b} E. Ben-Haim,⁵⁵ M. Bomben,⁵⁵ G. R. Bonneaud,⁵⁵ H. Briand,⁵⁵ G. Calderini,⁵⁵ J. Chauveau,⁵⁵ O. Hamon,⁵⁵ Ph. Leruste,⁵⁵ G. Marchiori,⁵⁵ J. Ocariz,⁵⁵ J. Prendki,⁵⁵ S. Sitt,⁵⁵ M. Biasini,^{56a,56b} E. Manoni,^{56a,56b} A. Rossi,^{56a,56b} C. Angelini,^{57a,57b} G. Batignani,^{57a,57b} S. Bettarini,^{57a,57b} M. Carpinelli,^{57a,57b,||} G. Casarosa,^{57a,57b} A. Cervelli,^{57a,57b} F. Forti,^{57a,57b} M. A. Giorgi,^{57a,57b} A. Lusiani,^{57a,57c} N. Neri,^{57a,57b} E. Paoloni,^{57a,57b} G. Rizzo,^{57a,57b} J. J. Walsh,^{57a} D. Lopes Pegna,⁵⁸ C. Lu,⁵⁸ J. Olsen,⁵⁸ A. J. S. Smith,⁵⁸ A. V. Telnov,⁵⁸ F. Anulli,^{59a} E. Baracchini,^{59a,59b} G. Cavoto,^{59a} R. Faccini,^{59a,59b} F. Ferrarotto,^{59a} F. Ferroni,^{59a,59b} M. Gaspero,^{59a,59b} L. Li Gioi,^{59a} M. A. Mazzoni,^{59a} G. Piredda,^{59a} F. Renga,^{59a,59b} C. Buenger,⁶⁰ T. Hartmann,⁶⁰ T. Leddig,⁶⁰ H. Schröder,⁶⁰ R. Waldi,⁶⁰ T. Adye,⁶¹ E. O. Olaiya,⁶¹ F. F. Wilson,⁶¹ S. Emery,⁶² G. Hamel de Monchenault,⁶² G. Vasseur,⁶² Ch. Yèche,⁶² M. T. Allen,⁶³ D. Aston,⁶³ D. J. Bard,⁶³ R. Bartoldus,⁶³ J. F. Benitez,⁶³ C. Cartaro,⁶³ M. R. Convery,⁶³ J. Dorfan,⁶³ G. P. Dubois-Felsmann,⁶³ W. Dunwoodie,⁶³ R. C. Field,⁶³ M. Franco Sevilla,⁶³ B. G. Fulsom,⁶³ A. M. Gabareen,⁶³ M. T. Graham,⁶³ P. Grenier,⁶³ C. Hast,⁶³ W. R. Innes,⁶³ M. H. Kelsey,⁶³ H. Kim,⁶³ P. Kim,⁶³ M. L. Kocian,⁶³ D. W. G. S. Leith,⁶³ P. Lewis,⁶³ S. Li,⁶³ B. Lindquist,⁶³ S. Luitz,⁶³ V. Luth,⁶³ H. L. Lynch,⁶³ D. B. MacFarlane,⁶³ D. R. Muller,⁶³ H. Neal,⁶³ S. Nelson,⁶³ C. P. O'Grady,⁶³ I. Ofte,⁶³ M. Perl,⁶³ T. Pulliam,⁶³ B. N. Ratcliff,⁶³ A. Roodman,⁶³ A. A. Salnikov,⁶³ V. Santoro,⁶³ R. H. Schindler,⁶³ J. Schwiening,⁶³ A. Snyder,⁶³ D. Su,⁶³ M. K. Sullivan,⁶³ S. Sun,⁶³ K. Suzuki,⁶³ J. M. Thompson,⁶³ J. Va'vra,⁶³ A. P. Wagner,⁶³ M. Weaver,⁶³ W. J. Wisniewski,⁶³ M. Wittgen,⁶³ D. H. Wright,⁶³ H. W. Wulsin,⁶³ A. K. Yarritu,⁶³ C. C. Young,⁶³ V. Ziegler,⁶³

X. R. Chen,⁶⁴ W. Park,⁶⁴ M. V. Purohit,⁶⁴ R. M. White,⁶⁴ J. R. Wilson,⁶⁴ A. Randle-Conde,⁶⁵ S. J. Sekula,⁶⁵ M. Bellis,⁶⁶ P. R. Burchat,⁶⁶ T. S. Miyashita,⁶⁶ S. Ahmed,⁶⁷ M. S. Alam,⁶⁷ J. A. Ernst,⁶⁷ B. Pan,⁶⁷ M. A. Saeed,⁶⁷ S. B. Zain,⁶⁷ N. Guttman,⁶⁸ A. Soffer,⁶⁸ P. Lund,⁶⁹ S. M. Spanier,⁶⁹ R. Eckmann,⁷⁰ J. L. Ritchie,⁷⁰ A. M. Ruland,⁷⁰ C. J. Schilling,⁷⁰ R. F. Schwitters,⁷⁰ B. C. Wray,⁷⁰ J. M. Izen,⁷¹ X. C. Lou,⁷¹ F. Bianchi,^{72a,72b} D. Gamba,^{72a,72b} M. Pelliccioni,^{72a,72b} L. Lanceri,^{73a,73b} L. Vitale,^{73a,73b} N. Lopez-March,⁷⁴ F. Martinez-Vidal,⁷⁴ A. Oyanguren,⁷⁴ H. Ahmed,⁷⁵ J. Albert,⁷⁵ Sw. Banerjee,⁷⁵ H. H. F. Choi,⁷⁵ K. Hamano,⁷⁵ G. J. King,⁷⁵ R. Kowalewski,⁷⁵ M. J. Lewczuk,⁷⁵ C. Lindsay,⁷⁵ I. M. Nugent,⁷⁵ J. M. Roney,⁷⁵ R. J. Sobie,⁷⁵ T. J. Gershon,⁷⁶ P. F. Harrison,⁷⁶ T. E. Latham,⁷⁶ E. M. T. Puccio,⁷⁶ H. R. Band,⁷⁷ S. Dasu,⁷⁷ K. T. Flood,⁷⁷ Y. Pan,⁷⁷ R. Prepost,⁷⁷ C. O. Vuosalo,⁷⁷ and S. L. Wu⁷⁷

(BABAR Collaboration)

¹Laboratoire d'Annecy-le-Vieux de Physique des Particules (LAPP), Université de Savoie, CNRS/IN₂P₃, F-74941 Annecy-Le-Vieux, France

²Universitat de Barcelona, Facultat de Física, Departament ECM, E-08028 Barcelona, Spain

^{3a}INFN Sezione di Bari, I-70126 Bari, Italy;

^{3b}Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Bari, I-70126 Bari, Italy

⁴University of Bergen, Institute of Physics, N-5007 Bergen, Norway

⁵Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and University of California, Berkeley, California 94720, USA

⁶Ruhr Universität Bochum, Institut für Experimentalphysik 1, D-44780 Bochum, Germany

⁷University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6T 1Z1

⁸Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH, United Kingdom

⁹Budker Institute of Nuclear Physics, Novosibirsk 630090, Russia

¹⁰University of California at Irvine, Irvine, California 92697, USA

¹¹University of California at Riverside, Riverside, California 92521, USA

¹²University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, California 93106, USA

¹³University of California at Santa Cruz, Institute for Particle Physics, Santa Cruz, California 95064, USA

¹⁴California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California 91125, USA

¹⁵University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221, USA

¹⁶University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309, USA

¹⁷Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado 80523, USA

¹⁸Technische Universität Dortmund, Fakultät Physik, D-44221 Dortmund, Germany

¹⁹Technische Universität Dresden, Institut für Kern- und Teilchenphysik, D-01062 Dresden, Germany

²⁰Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, CNRS/IN₂P₃, Ecole Polytechnique, F-91128 Palaiseau, France

²¹University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH9 3JZ, United Kingdom

^{22a}INFN Sezione di Ferrara, I-44100 Ferrara, Italy;

^{22b}Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Ferrara, I-44100 Ferrara, Italy

²³INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, I-00044 Frascati, Italy

^{24a}INFN Sezione di Genova, I-16146 Genova, Italy;

^{24b}Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Genova, I-16146 Genova, Italy

²⁵Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, Guwahati, Assam, 781 039, India

²⁶Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138, USA

²⁷Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, California 91711

²⁸Universität Heidelberg, Physikalisches Institut, Philosophenweg 12, D-69120 Heidelberg, Germany

²⁹Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Institut für Physik, Newtonstr. 15, D-12489 Berlin, Germany

³⁰Imperial College London, London, SW7 2AZ, United Kingdom

³¹University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242, USA

³²Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011-3160, USA

³³Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland 21218, USA

³⁴Laboratoire de l'Accélérateur Linéaire, IN₂P₃/CNRS et Université Paris-Sud 11, Centre Scientifique d'Orsay, B. P. 34, F-91898 Orsay Cedex, France

³⁵Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California 94550, USA

³⁶University of Liverpool, Liverpool L69 7ZE, United Kingdom

³⁷Queen Mary, University of London, London, E1 4NS, United Kingdom

³⁸University of London, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX, United Kingdom

³⁹University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky 40292, USA

⁴⁰Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Institut für Kernphysik, D-55099 Mainz, Germany

⁴¹University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL, United Kingdom

⁴²University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742, USA

⁴³University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003, USA

- ⁴⁴*Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Laboratory for Nuclear Science, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA*
- ⁴⁵*McGill University, Montréal, Québec, Canada H3A 2T8*
- ^{46a}*INFN Sezione di Milano, I-20133 Milano, Italy;*
- ^{46b}*Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Milano, I-20133 Milano, Italy*
- ⁴⁷*University of Mississippi, University, Mississippi 38677, USA*
- ⁴⁸*Université de Montréal, Physique des Particules, Montréal, Québec, Canada H3C 3J7*
- ^{49a}*INFN Sezione di Napoli, I-80126 Napoli, Italy;*
- ^{49b}*Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche, Università di Napoli Federico II, I-80126 Napoli, Italy*
- ⁵⁰*NIKHEF, National Institute for Nuclear Physics and High Energy Physics, NL-1009 DB Amsterdam, The Netherlands*
- ⁵¹*University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556, USA*
- ⁵²*Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210, USA*
- ⁵³*University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403, USA*
- ^{54a}*INFN Sezione di Padova, I-35131 Padova, Italy;*
- ^{54b}*Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Padova, I-35131 Padova, Italy*
- ⁵⁵*Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire et de Hautes Energies, IN₂P₃/CNRS, Université Pierre et Marie Curie-Paris6, Université Denis Diderot-Paris7, F-75252 Paris, France*
- ^{56a}*INFN Sezione di Perugia, I-06100 Perugia, Italy;*
- ^{56b}*Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Perugia, I-06100 Perugia, Italy*
- ^{57a}*INFN Sezione di Pisa, I-56127 Pisa, Italy;*
- ^{57b}*Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Pisa, I-56127 Pisa, Italy;*
- ^{57c}*Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, I-56127 Pisa, Italy*
- ⁵⁸*Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey 08544, USA*
- ^{59a}*INFN Sezione di Roma, I-00185 Roma, Italy;*
- ^{59b}*Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Roma La Sapienza, I-00185 Roma, Italy*
- ⁶⁰*Universität Rostock, D-18051 Rostock, Germany*
- ⁶¹*Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Chilton, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 0QX, United Kingdom*
- ⁶²*CEA, Irfu, SPP, Centre de Saclay, F-91191 Gif-sur-Yvette, France*
- ⁶³*SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Stanford, California 94309 USA*
- ⁶⁴*University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina 29208, USA*
- ⁶⁵*Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas 75275, USA*
- ⁶⁶*Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305-4060, USA*
- ⁶⁷*State University of New York, Albany, New York 12222, USA*
- ⁶⁸*Tel Aviv University, School of Physics and Astronomy, Tel Aviv, 69978, Israel*
- ⁶⁹*University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996, USA*
- ⁷⁰*University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, USA*
- ⁷¹*University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas 75083, USA*
- ^{72a}*INFN Sezione di Torino, I-10125 Torino, Italy;*
- ^{72b}*Dipartimento di Fisica Sperimentale, Università di Torino, I-10125 Torino, Italy*
- ^{73a}*INFN Sezione di Trieste, I-34127 Trieste, Italy;*
- ^{73b}*Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Trieste, I-34127 Trieste, Italy*
- ⁷⁴*IFIC, Universitat de Valencia-CSIC, E-46071 Valencia, Spain*
- ⁷⁵*University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 3P6*
- ⁷⁶*Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, United Kingdom*
- ⁷⁷*University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, USA*
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We report on a search for CP violation in the decay $D^\pm \rightarrow K_S^0 \pi^\pm$ using a data set corresponding to an integrated luminosity of 469 fb^{-1} collected with the BABAR detector at the PEP-II asymmetric energy e^+e^- storage rings. The CP -violating decay rate asymmetry A_{CP} is determined to be $(-0.44 \pm 0.13(\text{stat}) \pm 0.10(\text{syst}))\%$, consistent with zero at 2.7σ and with the standard model prediction of $(-0.332 \pm 0.006)\%$. This is currently the most precise measurement of this parameter.

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*Now at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122, USA

†Also with Università di Perugia, Dipartimento di Fisica, Perugia, Italy

‡Also with Università di Roma La Sapienza, I-00185 Roma, Italy

§Now at University of South AL, Mobile, AL 36688, USA

|| Also with Università di Sassari, Sassari, Italy

In the standard model (SM), CP violation (CPV) arises from the complex phase of the Cabibbo-Kobayashi-Maskawa (CKM) quark-mixing matrix [1]. Measurements of the CPV asymmetries in the K and B meson systems are consistent with expectations based on the SM and, together with theoretical inputs, lead to the determination of the parameters of the CKM matrix. CPV has not yet been observed in the charm sector, where the theoretical predictions based on the SM for CPV asymmetries are at the level of 10^{-3} or below [2].

In this paper we present a search for CPV in the decay $D^\pm \rightarrow K_S^0 \pi^\pm$ by measuring the CPV parameter A_{CP} defined as

$$A_{CP} = \frac{\Gamma(D^+ \rightarrow K_S^0 \pi^+) - \Gamma(D^- \rightarrow K_S^0 \pi^-)}{\Gamma(D^+ \rightarrow K_S^0 \pi^+) + \Gamma(D^- \rightarrow K_S^0 \pi^-)}, \quad (1)$$

where Γ is the partial decay width for this decay. This decay mode has been chosen because of its clean experimental signature. Although direct CP violation due to interference between Cabibbo-allowed and doubly Cabibbo-suppressed amplitudes is predicted to be negligible within the SM [3], $K^0 - \bar{K}^0$ mixing induces a time-integrated CP -violating asymmetry of $(-0.332 \pm 0.006)\%$ [4]. Contributions from non-SM processes may reduce the value of the measured A_{CP} or enhance it up to the level of 1% [3,5]. Therefore, a significant deviation of the A_{CP} measurement from pure $K^0 - \bar{K}^0$ mixing effects would be evidence for the presence of new physics beyond the SM. Because of the smallness of the expected value, this measurement requires a large data sample and precise control of the systematic uncertainties. Previous measurements of A_{CP} have been reported by the CLEO-c $(-0.6 \pm 1.0(\text{stat}) \pm 0.3(\text{syst}))\%$ [6] and Belle collaborations $(-0.71 \pm 0.19(\text{stat}) \pm 0.20(\text{syst}))\%$ [7].

The data used in this analysis were recorded at or near the $Y(4S)$ resonance by the *BABAR* detector at the PEP-II storage rings. The *BABAR* detector is described in detail elsewhere [8]. The data sample corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 469 fb^{-1} . To avoid any bias from adapting the analysis procedure to the data, we perform a “blind” analysis where all aspects of the analysis, including the statistical and systematic uncertainties, are validated with data and Monte Carlo (MC) simulation based on GEANT4 [9] before looking at the value of A_{CP} . The MC samples include $e^+e^- \rightarrow q\bar{q}$ ($q = u, d, s, c$) events, simulated with JETSET [10] and $B\bar{B}$ decays simulated with the EvtGen generator [11]. The coordinate system defined in [8] is assumed throughout the paper.

We select $D^\pm \rightarrow K_S^0 \pi^\pm$ decays by combining a K_S^0 candidate reconstructed in the decay mode $K_S^0 \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^-$ with a charged pion candidate. A K_S^0 candidate is reconstructed from two oppositely charged tracks with an invariant mass within $\pm 10 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ of the nominal K_S^0 mass [4], which is equivalent to slightly more than $\pm 2.5\sigma$ in the measured K_S^0 mass resolution. The χ^2 probability of the

$\pi^+ \pi^-$ vertex fit must be greater than 0.1%. To reduce combinatorial background, we require the measured flight length of the K_S^0 candidate to be greater than 3 times its uncertainty. A reconstructed charged track that has $p_T \geq 400 \text{ MeV}/c$ is selected as a pion candidate, where p_T is the magnitude of the momentum in the plane perpendicular to the z axis. At *BABAR*, charged hadron identification is achieved through measurements of ionization energy loss in the tracking system and the Cherenkov angle obtained from a detector of internally reflected Cherenkov light. A CsI(Tl) electromagnetic calorimeter provides photon detection, electron identification, and neutral pion reconstruction [8]. In our measurement, the pion candidate is required not to be identified as a kaon, a proton, or an electron. These selection criteria for the pion candidate are very effective in reducing the charge asymmetry from track reconstruction and identification, as inferred from studying the large control sample described later. A kinematic vertex fit to the whole decay tree is then performed with no additional constraints [12]. We retain only D^\pm candidates having a χ^2 probability for this fit greater than 0.1% and an invariant mass $m(K_S^0 \pi^\pm)$ within $\pm 65 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ of the nominal D^+ mass [4], which is equivalent to more than $\pm 8\sigma$ in the measured D^\pm mass resolution. Motivated by Monte Carlo simulation studies, we further require the magnitude of the D^\pm candidate momentum in the e^+e^- center-of-mass (CM) system, $p^*(D^\pm)$, to be between 2 and $5 \text{ GeV}/c$. This criterion reduces the combinatorial background to an acceptable level, but also keeps some D^\pm mesons from B mesons decays (they are $\approx 8\%$ of the selected sample) [13]. Additional background rejection is obtained by requiring that the impact parameter of the D^\pm candidate with respect to the beam-spot [8], projected onto the plane perpendicular to the z axis, be less than 0.3 cm and the D^\pm lifetime $\tau_{xy}(D^\pm)$ be between -12.5 and 31.3 ps . The lifetime is measured using $L_{xy}(D^\pm)$, defined as the distance of the D^\pm decay vertex from the beam-spot projected onto the plane perpendicular to the z axis.

To further improve the search sensitivity, a Boosted Decision Tree (BDT) algorithm [14] is constructed from seven discriminating variables for each D^\pm candidate: $\tau_{xy}(D^\pm)$, $L_{xy}(D^\pm)$, the CM momentum magnitude $p^*(D^\pm)$, the momentum magnitudes and transverse components with respect to the beam axis for both the K_S^0 and pion candidates. Because all the input variables contains no charge information, no charge bias is expected to be introduced by the algorithm and this assumption has been verified using a large sample of MC simulated events. The final selection criteria are based on the BDT output and optimized using truth-matched signal and background candidates from the MC sample. For the optimization, we maximize the $S/\sqrt{S+B}$ ratio, where S and B are the numbers of signal and background candidates whose invariant mass is within $\pm 31 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ of the nominal D^\pm mass.

A binned maximum likelihood (ML) fit to the $m(K_S^0\pi^\pm)$ distribution for the retained D^\pm candidates is used to extract the signal yield. The total probability density function (PDF) is the sum of signal and background components. The signal PDF is modeled as a sum of three Gaussian functions, the first two of them with common mean. The background PDF is taken as a sum of two components: a background from $D_s^\pm \rightarrow K_S^0 K^\pm$, where the K^\pm is misidentified as π^\pm , and a combinatorial background from other sources. Based on MC studies, the yield of $D^\pm \rightarrow \pi^\pm \pi^\mp \pi^\pm$ decays in the final data sample is estimated to be 0.02% of the signal and the estimated A_{CP} for this source to be less than 0.002%. Therefore a PDF to model this component is not included in the fit. The background from the decay $D_s^\pm \rightarrow K_S^0 K^\pm$ is modeled using a PDF sampled from the MC histogram for this mode. The combinatorial background is described as a second-order polynomial. The fit to the $m(K_S^0\pi^\pm)$ distribution yields $(807 \pm 1) \times 10^3$ signal events. The data and the fit are shown in Fig. 1. All of the fit parameters are extracted from the fit to the data sample apart from the normalization of the background due to $D_s^\pm \rightarrow K_S^0 K^\pm$, which is fixed to the value predicted by the MC simulation.

We determine A_{CP} by measuring the signal yield asymmetry A defined as

$$A = \frac{N_{D^+} - N_{D^-}}{N_{D^+} + N_{D^-}}, \quad (2)$$

where $N_{D^+}(N_{D^-})$ is the number of fitted $D^+ \rightarrow K_S^0\pi^+(D^- \rightarrow K_S^0\pi^-)$ decays. The quantity A is the result

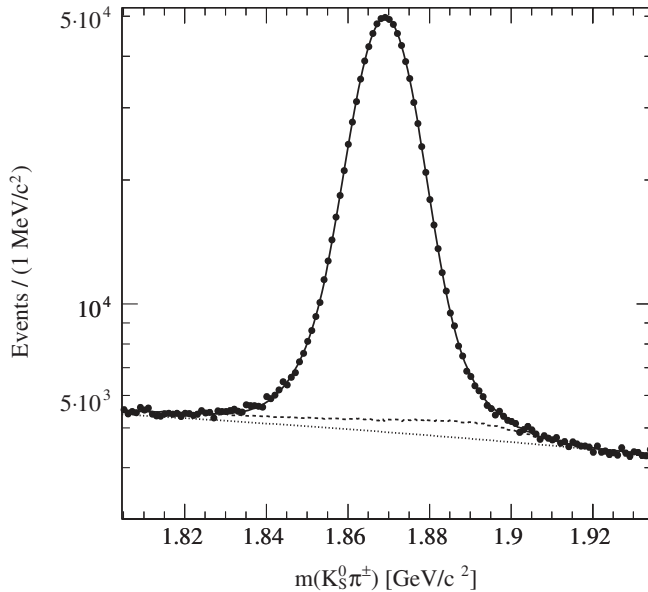


FIG. 1. Invariant mass distribution for $K_S^0\pi^\pm$ candidates in the data (black points). The solid curve shows the fit to the data. The dashed line is the sum of all backgrounds, while the dotted line is combinatorial background only. The vertical scale of the plot is logarithmic.

of two other contributions in addition to A_{CP} . There is a physics component due to the forward-backward (FB) asymmetry (A_{FB}) in $e^+e^- \rightarrow c\bar{c}$, arising from γ^*-Z^0 interference and high order QED processes in $e^+e^- \rightarrow c\bar{c}$. This asymmetry will create a difference in the number of reconstructed D^+ and D^- decays due to the FB detection asymmetries arising from the boost of the CM system relative to the laboratory frame. There is also a detector-induced component due to the difference in the reconstruction efficiencies of $D^+ \rightarrow K_S^0\pi^+$ and $D^- \rightarrow K_S^0\pi^-$ generated by differences in the track reconstruction and identification efficiencies for π^+ and π^- . While A_{FB} is measured together with A_{CP} using the selected data set, we correct the data set itself for the reconstruction and identification effects using control data sets.

In this analysis we have developed a data-driven method to determine the charge asymmetry in track reconstruction as a function of the magnitude of the track momentum and its polar angle. Since B mesons are produced in the process $e^+e^- \rightarrow Y(4S) \rightarrow B\bar{B}$ nearly at rest in the CM frame and decay isotropically in the B rest frame, these events provide a very large control sample essentially free of any physics-induced charge asymmetry. However, data recorded at the $Y(4S)$ resonance also include continuum production $e^+e^- \rightarrow q\bar{q}(q = u, d, s, c)$, where there is a non-negligible FB asymmetry due to the interference between the single virtual photon process and other production processes, as described above. The continuum contribution is estimated using the off-resonance data rescaled to the same luminosity as the on-resonance data sample. Subtracting the number of reconstructed tracks in the rescaled off-resonance sample from the number of tracks in the on-resonance one, we obtain the number of tracks corresponding to the B meson decays only. Therefore, the relative detection and identification efficiencies of the positively and negatively charged particles for given selection criteria can be determined using the numbers of positively and negatively reconstructed tracks directly from data.

Using samples of 8.5 fb^{-1} on-resonance and 9.5 fb^{-1} off-resonance data, applying the same charged pion track selection criteria used in the reconstruction of $D^\pm \rightarrow K_S^0\pi^\pm$ decays, and subtracting the off-resonance sample from the on-resonance sample, we obtain a sample of more than 20×10^6 tracks. We use this sample to produce a map for the ratio of detection efficiencies for π^+ and π^- as a function of the track-momentum magnitude and $\cos\theta$, where θ is the polar angle of the track in the laboratory frame. The map and associated statistical errors are shown in Fig. 2. Since the charm meson production is azimuthally uniform, the ϕ dependence of this ratio is found to be very small and uncorrelated with momentum magnitude and polar angle. Therefore, the ratio of detection efficiencies is averaged over the ϕ coordinate. The statistical uncertainties can be reduced by increasing the control sample

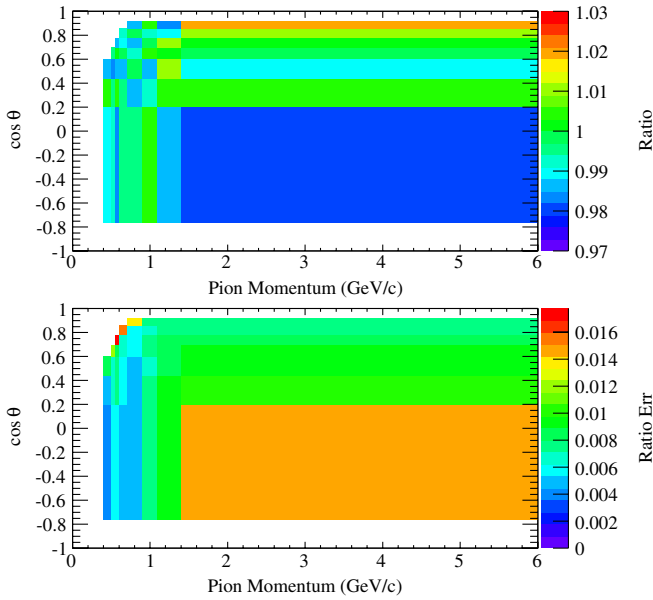


FIG. 2 (color online). Map of the ratio between detection efficiency for π^+ and π^- (top) plus the corresponding statistical errors (bottom). The map is produced using the numbers of π^- and π^+ tracks in the selected control sample.

size, but this would bring a negligible reduction in the final systematic error. In the fit procedure described below, the D^- yields, in intervals of pion-momentum and $\cos\theta$, are weighted with this relative efficiency map to correct for the detection efficiency differences between π^+ and π^- , leaving only FB and CP asymmetries. The average correction factor for each interval is -0.09% .

Neglecting the second-order terms that contain the product of A_{CP} and A_{FB} , the resulting asymmetry can be expressed simply as the sum of the two. The parameter A_{CP} is independent of kinematic variables, while A_{FB} is an odd function of $\cos\theta_D^*$, where θ_D^* is the polar angle of the D^\pm candidate momentum in the e^+e^- CM frame. If we compute $A(+|\cos\theta_D^*|)$ for the D^\pm candidates in a positive $\cos\theta_D^*$ bin and $A(-|\cos\theta_D^*|)$ for the candidates in its negative counterpart, the contribution to the two asymmetries from A_{CP} is the same, while the contribution from A_{FB} has the same magnitude but opposite sign. Therefore A_{CP} and A_{FB} can be written as a function of $|\cos\theta_D^*|$ as follows:

$$A_{FB}(|\cos\theta_D^*|) = \frac{A(+|\cos\theta_D^*|) - A(-|\cos\theta_D^*|)}{2} \quad (3)$$

and

$$A_{CP}(|\cos\theta_D^*|) = \frac{A(+|\cos\theta_D^*|) + A(-|\cos\theta_D^*|)}{2}. \quad (4)$$

Furthermore, the small fraction of the D^\pm signal yields produced from B meson decays have zero FB asymmetry. As a result, the measured A_{FB} from the $e^+e^- \rightarrow c\bar{c}$ production is slightly diluted, but the A_{CP} value is unaffected.

The selected sample is divided into ten subsamples corresponding to ten $\cos\theta_D^*$ bins of equal width and a simultaneous binned ML fit is performed on the invariant mass distributions of D^+ and D^- candidates for each subsample to extract the signal yield asymmetries. The PDF shape that describes the distribution in each subsample is the same as that used in the fit to the full sample, but the following parameters are allowed to float separately in each subsample: the yields and the asymmetries for signal and combinatorial events, the mean of the second and third Gaussians for the signal PDF, and the first order coefficient for the polynomial of the combinatorial background. The relative fractions corresponding to the second Gaussian are allowed to float only for three high-statistics subsamples, while they have been fixed to zero for other ones in order to have a converged fit. The means of the three Gaussians for the signal PDF, the width of the first Gaussian, and the second-order coefficient for the polynomial of the combinatorial background are allowed to float, but they have the same values for all the subsamples. Therefore, the final fit involves a total of 78 free parameters. Using the asymmetry measurements in five positive and in five negative $\cos\theta_D^*$ bins, we obtain five A_{FB} and five A_{CP} values. As A_{CP} does not depend upon $\cos\theta_D^*$, we compute a central value of this parameter using a χ^2 minimization to a constant: $A_{CP} = (-0.39 \pm 0.13)\%$, where the error is statistical only. The A_{CP} and A_{FB} values are shown in Fig. 3, together with the central value and $\pm 1\sigma$ confidence interval for A_{CP} .

We perform two tests to validate the analysis procedure. The first involves generating ensembles of toy MC experiments and extracting A_{CP} for each experiment. We determine that the fitted value of the A_{CP} parameter is unbiased, and that the fit returns an accurate estimate of the statistical uncertainty. The second test involves fitting a large number of MC events from the full BABAR detector simulation. We measure A_{CP} from this MC sample to be within $\pm 1\sigma$ from the generated value of zero.

The primary sources of systematic uncertainty are the contamination in the composition of particles for the data control sample used to determine the charge asymmetry in track reconstruction efficiencies and statistical uncertainties in the detection efficiency ratios used to weight the D^- yields. The charged pion sample selected to determine the ratio of detection efficiencies for π^- and π^+ contains a contamination of kaons, electrons, muons, and protons at the percent level due to particle misidentification and inefficiencies. This contamination introduces a small bias in the A_{CP} measurement due to the slightly different particle identification efficiencies between positively and negatively charged nonpion particles. The particle identification efficiencies, measured in the data for positively and negatively charged tracks using the method described in the previous paragraphs, are found to be in a good agreement with the MC simulation. We therefore study this bias using

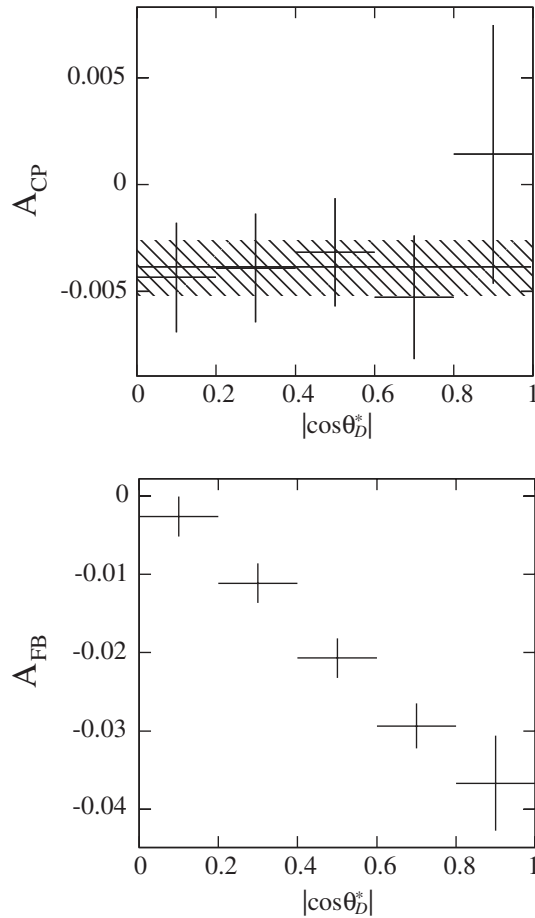


FIG. 3. A_{CP} (top) and A_{FB} (bottom) asymmetries for $D^\pm \rightarrow K_S^0 \pi^\pm$ candidates as a function of $|\cos\theta_D^*|$ in the data sample. The solid line represents the central value of A_{CP} and the hatched region is the $\pm 1\sigma$ interval, both obtained from a χ^2 minimization assuming no dependence on $|\cos\theta_D^*|$.

the MC simulated events and determine the bias to be $+0.05\%$. As a result, we shift the measured A_{CP} by -0.05% to correct for the bias and then, conservatively, include the same value as a contribution to the systematic uncertainty. Therefore the bias-corrected value of A_{CP} is $(-0.44 \pm 0.13)\%$.

The technique used here to remove the charge asymmetry from detector-induced effects produces a small systematic uncertainty in the measurement of A_{CP} due to the statistical error in the relative efficiency map ($\pm 0.06\%$). Using MC simulation, we evaluate an additional systematic uncertainty of $\pm 0.01\%$ due to a possible charge asymmetry present in the control sample before applying the selection criteria. Combining these two contributions with

the systematic contribution from the difference in the composition of the control sample compared to the signal sample ($\pm 0.05\%$), as described earlier, the total contribution from the correction technique is $\pm 0.08\%$, which is the dominant source of systematic error. We also consider a possible systematic uncertainty due to the regeneration of K^0 and \bar{K}^0 mesons in the material of the detector. K^0 and \bar{K}^0 mesons produced in the decay process can interact with the material around the interaction point before they decay. Following a method similar to that described in [15], we compute the probability for K^0 and \bar{K}^0 to interact inside the *BABAR* tracking system. We numerically integrate the interaction probability distribution, which depends on the measured nuclear cross-section for K^\pm (assuming isospin symmetry), the amount of material in the *BABAR* beam-pipe and tracking detectors, the K^0/\bar{K}^0 time evolutions, and the K_S^0 kinematic distribution and reconstruction efficiency as determined from simulation studies. From the difference between the interaction probabilities for K^0 and \bar{K}^0 , we estimate a systematic uncertainty of $\pm 0.06\%$. Minor systematic uncertainties from the simultaneous ML fit are also considered: the choice of the signal and background PDF, the limited MC data set to estimate the normalization of $D_s^\pm \rightarrow K_S^0 K^\pm$, and the choice of binning in $\cos\theta_D^*$, for a total contribution of $\pm 0.01\%$. The combined systematic uncertainty in the CP asymmetry measurement including all the contributions is calculated as the quadrature sum and is found to be $\pm 0.10\%$.

In conclusion, we measure the direct CP asymmetry, A_{CP} , in the $D^\pm \rightarrow K_S^0 \pi^\pm$ decay using approximately 800 000 D^\pm signal candidates. We obtain

$$A_{CP} = (-0.44 \pm 0.13 \pm 0.10)\%, \quad (5)$$

where the first error is statistical and the second is systematic. The result is consistent with the prediction of $(-0.332 \pm 0.006)\%$ for this mode based on the SM.

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