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A. Adare *et al.* (PHENIX Collaboration)

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Pseudorapidity dependence of particle production and elliptic flow in asymmetric nuclear collisions of p +Al, p +Au, d +Au, and ^3He +Au at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV

A. Adare,¹³ C. Aidala,⁴¹ N.N. Ajitanand,^{57,*} Y. Akiba,^{52,53,†} M. Alfred,²³ V. Andrieux,⁴¹ K. Aoki,^{31,52} N. Apadula,^{28,58} H. Asano,^{34,52} C. Ayuso,⁴¹ B. Azmoun,⁷ V. Babintsev,²⁴ M. Bai,⁶ N.S. Bandara,⁴⁰ B. Bannier,⁵⁸ K.N. Barish,⁸ S. Bathe,^{5,53} A. Bazilevsky,⁷ M. Beaumier,⁸ S. Beckman,¹³ R. Belmont,^{13,41} A. Berdnikov,⁵⁵ Y. Berdnikov,⁵⁵ D.S. Blau,^{33,44} M. Boer,³⁶ J.S. Bok,⁴⁶ K. Boyle,⁵³ M.L. Brooks,³⁶ J. Bryslawskyj,^{5,8} V. Bumazhnov,²⁴ C. Butler,²¹ S. Campbell,^{14,28} V. Canoa Roman,⁵⁸ R. Cervantes,⁵⁸ C.-H. Chen,⁵³ C.Y. Chi,¹⁴ M. Chiu,⁷ I.J. Choi,²⁵ J.B. Choi,^{10,*} T. Chujo,⁶¹ Z. Citron,⁶³ M. Connors,^{21,53} N. Cronin,^{42,58} M. Csanád,¹⁷ T. Csörgő,^{18,64} T.W. Danley,⁴⁷ A. Datta,⁴⁵ M.S. Daugherty,¹ G. David,^{7,16,58} K. DeBlasio,⁴⁵ K. Dehmelt,⁵⁸ A. Denisov,²⁴ A. Deshpande,^{7,53,58} E.J. Desmond,⁷ A. Dion,⁵⁸ P.B. Diss,³⁹ D. Dixit,⁵⁸ J.H. Do,⁶⁵ A. Drees,⁵⁸ K.A. Drees,⁶ M. Dumancic,⁶³ J.M. Durham,³⁶ A. Durum,²⁴ T. Elder,²¹ A. Enokizono,^{52,54} H. En'yo,⁵² S. Esumi,⁶¹ B. Fadem,⁴² W. Fan,⁵⁸ N. Feege,⁵⁸ D.E. Fields,⁴⁵ M. Finger,⁹ M. Finger, Jr.,⁹ S.L. Fokin,³³ J.E. Frantz,⁴⁷ A. Franz,⁷ A.D. Frawley,²⁰ Y. Fukuda,⁶¹ C. Gal,⁵⁸ P. Gallus,¹⁵ P. Garg,^{3,58} H. Ge,⁵⁸ F. Giordano,²⁵ A. Glenn,³⁵ Y. Goto,^{52,53} N. Grau,² S.V. Greene,⁶² M. Grosse Perdekamp,²⁵ T. Gunji,¹² H. Guragain,²¹ T. Hachiya,^{43,52,53} J.S. Haggerty,⁷ K.I. Hahn,¹⁹ H. Hamagaki,¹² H.F. Hamilton,¹ S.Y. Han,^{19,52} J. Hanks,⁵⁸ S. Hasegawa,²⁹ T.O.S. Haseler,²¹ K. Hashimoto,^{52,54} X. He,²¹ T.K. Hemmick,⁵⁸ J.C. Hill,²⁸ K. Hill,¹³ A. Hodges,²¹ R.S. Hollis,⁸ K. Homma,²² B. Hong,³² T. Hoshino,²² N. Hotvedt,²⁸ J. Huang,⁷ S. Huang,⁶² K. Imai,²⁹ J. Imrek,¹⁶ M. Inaba,⁶¹ A. Iordanova,⁸ D. Isenhower,¹ Y. Ito,⁴³ D. Ivanishchev,⁵¹ B.V. Jacak,⁵⁸ M. Jezghani,²¹ Z. Ji,⁵⁸ J. Jia,^{7,57} X. Jiang,³⁶ B.M. Johnson,^{7,21} V. Jorjadze,⁵⁸ D. Jouan,⁴⁹ D.S. Jumper,²⁵ S. Kanda,¹² J.H. Kang,⁶⁵ D. Kapukchyan,⁸ S. Karthas,⁵⁸ D. Kawall,⁴⁰ A.V. Kazantsev,³³ J.A. Key,⁴⁵ V. Khachatryan,⁵⁸ A. Khanzadeev,⁵¹ C. Kim,^{8,32} D.J. Kim,³⁰ E.-J. Kim,¹⁰ G.W. Kim,¹⁹ M. Kim,^{52,56} M.H. Kim,³² B. Kimelman,⁴² D. Kincses,¹⁷ E. Kistenev,⁷ R. Kitamura,¹² J. Klatsky,²⁰ D. Kleinjan,⁸ P. Kline,⁵⁸ T. Koblesky,¹³ B. Komkov,⁵¹ D. Kotov,^{51,55} S. Kudo,⁶¹ B. Kurgis,¹⁷ K. Kurita,⁵⁴ M. Kurosawa,^{52,53} Y. Kwon,⁶⁵ R. Lacey,⁵⁷ J.G. Lajoie,²⁸ E.O. Lallow,⁴² A. Lebedev,²⁸ S. Lee,⁶⁵ S.H. Lee,^{28,58} M.J. Leitch,³⁶ Y.H. Leung,⁵⁸ N.A. Lewis,⁴¹ X. Li,¹¹ X. Li,³⁶ S.H. Lim,^{36,65} L. D. Liu,⁵⁰ M.X. Liu,³⁶ V.-R. Loggins,²⁵ S. Lökös,^{17,18} K. Lovasz,¹⁶ D. Lynch,⁷ T. Majoros,¹⁶ Y.I. Makdisi,⁶ M. Makek,⁶⁶ M. Malaev,⁵¹ A. Manion,⁵⁸ V.I. Manko,³³ E. Mannel,⁷ H. Masuda,⁵⁴ M. McCumber,³⁶ P.L. McGaughey,³⁶ D. McGlinchey,^{13,36} C. McKinney,²⁵ A. Meles,⁴⁶ M. Mendoza,⁸ W.J. Metzger,¹⁸ A.C. Mignerey,³⁹ D.E. Mihalik,⁵⁸ A. Milov,⁶³ D.K. Mishra,⁴ J.T. Mitchell,⁷ I. Mitrakov,⁵⁵ G. Mitsuka,^{31,52,53} S. Miyasaka,^{52,60} S. Mizuno,^{52,61} A.K. Mohanty,⁴ P. Montuenga,²⁵ T. Moon,⁶⁵ D.P. Morrison,⁷ S.I. Morrow,⁶² T.V. Moukhanova,³³ T. Murakami,^{34,52} J. Murata,^{52,54} A. Mwai,⁵⁷ K. Nagai,⁶⁰ K. Nagashima,^{22,52} T. Nagashima,⁵⁴ J.L. Nagle,¹³ M.I. Nagy,¹⁷ I. Nakagawa,^{52,53} H. Nakagomi,^{52,61} K. Nakano,^{52,60} C. Nattrass,⁵⁹ P.K. Netrakanti,⁴ T. Niida,⁶¹ S. Nishimura,¹² R. Nishitani,⁴³ R. Nouicer,^{7,53} T. Novák,^{18,64} N. Novitzky,^{30,58} R. Novotny,¹⁵ A.S. Nyanin,³³ E. O'Brien,⁷ C.A. Ogilvie,²⁸ J.D. Orjuela Koop,¹³ J.D. Osborn,⁴¹ A. Oskarsson,³⁷ G.J. Ottino,⁴⁵ K. Ozawa,^{31,61} R. Pak,⁷ V. Pantuev,²⁶ V. Papavassiliou,⁴⁶ J.S. Park,⁵⁶ S. Park,^{52,56,58} S.F. Pate,⁴⁶ M. Patel,²⁸ J.-C. Peng,²⁵ W. Peng,⁶² D.V. Perepelitsa,^{7,13} G.D.N. Perera,⁴⁶ D.Yu. Peressounko,³³ C.E. PerezLara,⁵⁸ J. Perry,²⁸ R. Petti,^{7,58} M. Phipps,^{7,25} C. Pinkenburg,⁷ R. Pinson,¹ R.P. Pisani,⁷ A. Pun,⁴⁷ M.L. Purschke,⁷ P.V. Radzevich,⁵⁵ J. Rak,³⁰ B.J. Ramson,⁴¹ I. Ravinovich,⁶³ K.F. Read,^{48,59} D. Reynolds,⁵⁷ V. Riabov,^{44,51} Y. Riabov,^{51,55} D. Richford,⁵ T. Rinn,²⁸ S.D. Rolnick,⁸ M. Rosati,²⁸ Z. Rowan,⁵ J.G. Rubin,⁴¹ J. Runchey,²⁸ A.S. Safonov,⁵⁵ B. Sahlmueller,⁵⁸ N. Saito,³¹ T. Sakaguchi,⁷ H. Sako,²⁹ V. Samsonov,^{44,51} M. Sarsour,²¹ K. Sato,⁶¹ S. Sato,²⁹ B. Schaefer,⁶² B.K. Schmoll,⁵⁹ K. Sedgwick,⁸ R. Seidl,^{52,53} A. Sen,^{28,59} R. Seto,⁸ P. Sett,⁴ A. Sexton,³⁹ D. Sharma,⁵⁸ I. Shein,²⁴ T.-A. Shibata,^{52,60} K. Shigaki,²² M. Shimomura,^{28,43} T. Shioya,⁶¹ P. Shukla,⁴ A. Sickles,^{7,25} C.L. Silva,³⁶ D. Silvermyr,^{37,48} B.K. Singh,³ C.P. Singh,³ V. Singh,³ M.J. Skoby,⁴¹ M. Slunečka,⁹ K.L. Smith,²⁰ M. Snowball,³⁶ R.A. Soltz,³⁵ W.E. Sondheim,³⁶ S.P. Sorensen,⁵⁹ I.V. Sourikova,⁷ P.W. Stankus,⁴⁸ M. Stepanov,^{40,*} S.P. Stoll,⁷ T. Sugitate,²² A. Sukhanov,⁷ T. Sumita,⁵² J. Sun,⁵⁸ Z. Sun,¹⁶ S. Suzuki,⁴³ S. Syed,²¹ J. Sziklai,⁶⁴ A. Takeda,⁴³ A. Taketani,^{52,53} K. Tanida,^{29,53,56} M.J. Tannenbaum,⁷ S. Tarafdar,^{62,63} A. Taranenko,^{44,57} G. Tarnai,¹⁶ R. Tieulent,^{21,38} A. Timilsina,²⁸ T. Todoroki,^{52,53,61} M. Tomášek,¹⁵ C.L. Towell,¹ R. Towell,¹ R.S. Towell,¹ I. Tserruya,⁶³ Y. Ueda,²² B. Ujvari,¹⁶ H.W. van Hecke,³⁶ S. Vazquez-Carson,¹³ J. Velkovska,⁶² M. Virius,¹⁵ V. Vrba,^{15,27} N. Vukman,⁶⁶ X.R. Wang,^{46,53} Z. Wang,⁵ Y. Watanabe,^{52,53} Y.S. Watanabe,^{12,31} F. Wei,⁴⁶ A.S. White,⁴¹ C.P. Wong,²¹ C.L. Woody,⁷ M. Wysocki,⁴⁸ B. Xia,⁴⁷ C. Xu,⁴⁶ Q. Xu,⁶² L. Xue,²¹ S. Yalcin,⁵⁸ Y.L. Yamaguchi,^{12,53,58} H. Yamamoto,⁶¹ A. Yanovich,²⁴ P. Yin,¹³ J.H. Yoo,^{32,53}

I. Yoon,⁵⁶ H. Yu,^{46, 50} I.E. Yushmanov,³³ W.A. Zajc,¹⁴ A. Zelenski,⁶ S. Zharko,⁵⁵ S. Zhou,¹¹ and L. Zou⁸

(PHENIX Collaboration)

- ¹Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas 79699, USA
²Department of Physics, Augustana University, Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57197, USA
³Department of Physics, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi 221005, India
⁴Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Bombay 400 085, India
⁵Baruch College, City University of New York, New York, New York, 10010 USA
⁶Collider-Accelerator Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York 11973-5000, USA
⁷Physics Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York 11973-5000, USA
⁸University of California-Riverside, Riverside, California 92521, USA
⁹Charles University, Ovocný trh 5, Praha 1, 116 36, Prague, Czech Republic
¹⁰Chonbuk National University, Jeonju, 561-756, Korea
¹¹Science and Technology on Nuclear Data Laboratory, China Institute of Atomic Energy, Beijing 102413, People's Republic of China
¹²Center for Nuclear Study, Graduate School of Science, University of Tokyo, 7-3-1 Hongo, Bunkyo, Tokyo 113-0033, Japan
¹³University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309, USA
¹⁴Columbia University, New York, New York 10027 and Nevis Laboratories, Irvington, New York 10533, USA
¹⁵Czech Technical University, Zikova 4, 166 36 Prague 6, Czech Republic
¹⁶Debrecen University, H-4010 Debrecen, Egyetem tér 1, Hungary
¹⁷ELTE, Eötvös Loránd University, H-1117 Budapest, Pázmány P. s. 1/A, Hungary
¹⁸Eszterházy Károly University, Károly Róbert Campus, H-3200 Gyöngyös, Mátrai út 36, Hungary
¹⁹Ewha Womans University, Seoul 120-750, Korea
²⁰Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida 32306, USA
²¹Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia 30303, USA
²²Hiroshima University, Kagamiyama, Higashi-Hiroshima 739-8526, Japan
²³Department of Physics and Astronomy, Howard University, Washington, DC 20059, USA
²⁴IHEP Protvino, State Research Center of Russian Federation, Institute for High Energy Physics, Protvino, 142281, Russia
²⁵University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Illinois 61801, USA
²⁶Institute for Nuclear Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences, prospekt 60-letiya Oktyabrya 7a, Moscow 117312, Russia
²⁷Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Na Slovance 2, 182 21 Prague 8, Czech Republic
²⁸Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011, USA
²⁹Advanced Science Research Center, Japan Atomic Energy Agency, 2-4 Shirakata Shirane, Tokai-mura, Naka-gun, Ibaraki-ken 319-1195, Japan
³⁰Helsinki Institute of Physics and University of Jyväskylä, P.O.Box 35, FI-40014 Jyväskylä, Finland
³¹KEK, High Energy Accelerator Research Organization, Tsukuba, Ibaraki 305-0801, Japan
³²Korea University, Seoul, 136-701, Korea
³³National Research Center "Kurchatov Institute", Moscow, 123098 Russia
³⁴Kyoto University, Kyoto 606-8502, Japan
³⁵Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California 94550, USA
³⁶Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico 87545, USA
³⁷Department of Physics, Lund University, Box 118, SE-221 00 Lund, Sweden
³⁸IPNL, CNRS/IN2P3, Univ Lyon, Université Lyon 1, F-69622, Villeurbanne, France
³⁹University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742, USA
⁴⁰Department of Physics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003-9337, USA
⁴¹Department of Physics, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1040, USA
⁴²Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania 18104-5586, USA
⁴³Nara Women's University, Kita-uoya Nishi-machi Nara 630-8506, Japan
⁴⁴National Research Nuclear University, MEPhI, Moscow Engineering Physics Institute, Moscow, 115409, Russia
⁴⁵University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131, USA
⁴⁶New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003, USA
⁴⁷Department of Physics and Astronomy, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio 45701, USA
⁴⁸Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831, USA
⁴⁹IPN-Orsay, Univ. Paris-Sud, CNRS/IN2P3, Université Paris-Saclay, BP1, F-91406, Orsay, France
⁵⁰Peking University, Beijing 100871, People's Republic of China
⁵¹PNPI, Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute, Gatchina, Leningrad region, 188300, Russia
⁵²RIKEN Nishina Center for Accelerator-Based Science, Wako, Saitama 351-0198, Japan
⁵³RIKEN BNL Research Center, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York 11973-5000, USA
⁵⁴Physics Department, Rikkyo University, 3-34-1 Nishi-Ikebukuro, Toshima, Tokyo 171-8501, Japan
⁵⁵Saint Petersburg State Polytechnic University, St. Petersburg, 195251 Russia
⁵⁶Department of Physics and Astronomy, Seoul National University, Seoul 151-742, Korea
⁵⁷Chemistry Department, Stony Brook University, SUNY, Stony Brook, New York 11794-3400, USA
⁵⁸Department of Physics and Astronomy, Stony Brook University, SUNY, Stony Brook, New York 11794-3800, USA
⁵⁹University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996, USA

⁶⁰ *Department of Physics, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Oh-okayama, Meguro, Tokyo 152-8551, Japan*

⁶¹ *Tomonaga Center for the History of the Universe, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Ibaraki 305, Japan*

⁶² *Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee 37235, USA*

⁶³ *Weizmann Institute, Rehovot 76100, Israel*

⁶⁴ *Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Wigner RCP, RMKI) H-1525 Budapest 114, POBox 49, Budapest, Hungary*

⁶⁵ *Yonsei University, IPAP, Seoul 120-749, Korea*

⁶⁶ *Department of Physics, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb, Bijenička c. 32 HR-10002 Zagreb, Croatia*

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Asymmetric nuclear collisions of $p+\text{Al}$, $p+\text{Au}$, $d+\text{Au}$, and $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV provide an excellent laboratory for understanding particle production, as well as exploring interactions among these particles after their initial creation in the collision. We present measurements of charged hadron production $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ in all such collision systems over a broad pseudorapidity range and as a function of collision multiplicity. A simple wounded quark model is remarkably successful at describing the full data set. We also measure the elliptic flow v_2 over a similarly broad pseudorapidity range. These measurements provide key constraints on models of particle emission and their translation into flow.

Asymmetric nuclear collisions with a light projectile nucleus striking a heavier target nucleus have proven to be an excellent testing ground for particle production models and the longitudinal dynamics following the initial collision – for an early review see Ref. [1]. Many calculations have successfully described the longitudinal (or rapidity) distribution of produced particles in proton-nucleus ($p+A$) collisions via the fragmentation of color strings and with counting rules based on the number of “wounded” or struck nucleons or quarks in the projectile and target. Recently, a proposal for testing the wounded-quark model [2] was put forth that specifically called for the measurement of $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ over a broad range of pseudorapidity in $p+\text{Au}$, $d+\text{Au}$, and $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ collisions [3]. Fully three-dimensional hydrodynamical models also require input on the longitudinal distribution of initial deposited energy and gradients thereof [4]. Once the initial partons or fluid elements are populated, the models evolve the system dynamically. Measurements of elliptic flow as a function of pseudorapidity provide constraints on the longitudinal dynamics of the evolution.

As the incoming hadrons or nuclei break up, the rapidity distribution of liberated partons may be determined by the longitudinal parton distribution functions [5, 6] or via a universal color field breakup for each struck nucleon or quark [7]. For that reason, calculations based on Monte Carlo Glauber models have been developed to calculate the number of struck nucleons and struck quarks (see for example Refs. [8–10]). The PHOBOS collaboration has previously published charged hadron $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ measurements over $|\eta| < 5.4$ in $d+\text{Au}$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV [11]. PHENIX has also published $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ measurements in high-multiplicity $d+\text{Au}$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200, 62, 39$, and 19.6 GeV [12]. The wounded-quark model has been constrained by the $d+\text{Au}$ data and found to be in reasonable agreement with the centrality dependence, while the wounded-nucleon model cannot describe the data [3]. A crucial test of the wounded-quark model is to see if it is universal across different colliding systems. Additional measurements in light and heavy systems at the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC) and the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) can also be tested in this context—see for example different geometry tests in Refs. [13–15].

In $\text{Au}+\text{Au}$ and $\text{Pb}+\text{Pb}$ collisions at RHIC and the LHC, the created medium is well described by low viscosity hydrodynamics [16, 17]. A host of recent experimental observations indicate that hydrodynamics may also be applicable to the asymmetric collisions of small nuclear systems, e.g. $p+A$, $d+\text{Au}$, $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$, and perhaps even $p+p$ (for a recent review see Ref. [18]). In heavy ion collisions, the hydrodynamical flow of the medium is characterized via a Fourier decomposition of the final hadron momentum anisotropy in the direction transverse to the incoming beam directions [19] as

$$\frac{dN}{d\phi} \propto 1 + \sum_n 2v_n \cos[n(\phi - \psi_n)], \quad (1)$$

where n is the harmonic number, ϕ is the particle azimuthal angle, ψ_n is the n^{th} order symmetry axis, and v_n is the Fourier coefficient, with v_2 referred to as elliptic flow. The pseudorapidity dependence of v_2 has been measured in $\text{Au}+\text{Au}$ and $\text{Pb}+\text{Pb}$ collisions at RHIC and the LHC, and the elliptic flow is smaller in regions with smaller final hadron $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ – see for example Refs. [20, 21]. The data have been interpreted in terms of hydrodynamics and imply a shear viscosity to entropy density, η/s , that is temperature dependent [22]. Similar measurements in small nuclear collisions of different sizes are a key test for how local rapidity density relates to hydrodynamical evolution into flow.

In this Letter, we present a comprehensive set of measurements of $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ and elliptic flow v_2 over a broad pseudorapidity range in $p+\text{Al}$, $p+\text{Au}$, $d+\text{Au}$, and $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV. The data sets analyzed were recorded in 2014 for $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$, 2015 for $p+\text{Al}$ and $p+\text{Au}$, and 2016 for $d+\text{Au}$. All data sets were recorded with a minimum-bias trigger that required at least one hit in each of the PHENIX beam-beam counters (BBC). The BBC is composed of two detectors each containing 64 quartz radiators read out with photomultiplier tubes [23]. The BBC covers positive and negative pseudorapidity $3.1 < |\eta| < 3.9$. Following the procedure from Ref. [24], the minimum-bias trigger is determined to fire on $88 \pm 4\%$, $88 \pm 4\%$, $84 \pm 3\%$, and $72 \pm 4\%$ of the total inelastic cross section of 2.30, 2.26, 1.76, 0.54 barns for $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$, $d+\text{Au}$, $p+\text{Au}$, and $p+\text{Al}$ respectively. The $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ analysis has negligible statistical uncertainties and thus a subset of runs with the most stable detector configuration are utilized and the run-to-run variation is used in the determination of systematic uncertainties. For the elliptic flow v_2 analysis in high-multiplicity events, also referred to as central events, an additional trigger was used that required the number of fired BBC tubes to be above a set number, roughly corresponding to the 0%–5% highest multiplicity events.

The characterization of the different collision systems and centralities follows the procedure detailed in Ref. [24]. The multiplicity class is selected by the total charge in the BBC covering negative pseudorapidity, i.e. in the Al- or Au-going direction. The total charge is found to scale with the total number of struck nucleons from the Al or Au nucleus folded with a negative binomial distribution representing the fluctuations in the number of particles produced and measured by the BBC. The 5% most central events have an average number of participating nucleons of 5.1 ± 0.3 , 10.7 ± 0.6 , 17.8 ± 1.2 , and 25.0 ± 1.6 for $p+\text{Al}$, $p+\text{Au}$, $d+\text{Au}$, and $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ respectively.

Charged hadrons are reconstructed at midrapidity $|\eta| < 0.35$ with a combination of drift chambers and pad chambers [25]. Midrapidity tracks have their momentum reconstructed via their bend in a magnetic field and are efficiently measured for $p_T > 0.2$ GeV/c. At backward $-3.0 < \eta < -1.0$ and forward $1.0 < \eta < 3.0$ rapidity, the forward-silicon-vertex detector (FVTX) measures the traversal of charged tracks in four detector layers as detailed in Ref. [26]. FVTX tracks are efficiently measured for $p_T > 0.3$ GeV/c, but with no momentum information, because the silicon strips are oriented lengthwise along the magnetic field bend direction.

For the $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ results, the absolute acceptance and efficiency for track reconstruction can be determined with the PHENIX GEANT-3 Monte Carlo simulation. However, in the last years of data taking, the PHENIX experiment had increasingly significant dead regions and run-to-run variations that became challenging to fully account for. Thus, we determine the acceptance and efficiency for a given running period in a control data set by taking the ratio $R(\eta)$ of published PHOBOS $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ to the PHENIX raw $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ as a function of pseudorapidity. The control PHOBOS data sets are Au+Au in 2014 [27], $p+p$ in 2015 [27], and $d+\text{Au}$ in 2016 [11] all at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV. This “bootstrapping” procedure is described in detail in Ref. [12]. Sources of systematic uncertainty come from varying the track selection cuts, run-to-run variations, and considering high and low luminosity running periods with different double interaction contributions. We also find good agreement within uncertainties comparing results in the FVTX with an absolute acceptance and efficiency calculation and the “bootstrapped” results.

The determination of hadron yields in centrality bins has a known bias effect (see Ref. [24]). In $p+p$ collisions, inelastic events fire the BBC trigger $55 \pm 5\%$ of the time, while in events with a π^0 or charged hadron at midrapidity that percentage is larger, $79 \pm 2\%$. This increased trigger efficiency is correlated with a 1.55 times larger BBC multiplicity. This effect results from the diffractive portion of the $p+p$ inelastic cross section disfavoring midrapidity particle production. This bias has been confirmed for midrapidity hadron production down to $p_T \approx 0.5$ GeV/c [28] and for J/ψ measured in the PHENIX muons arms [29], and thus we expect that this bias affects all charged hadrons over the pseudorapidity range studied here. We remove this bias via correction factors that are calculated following the procedure detailed in Ref. [24]. The bias corrections are largest in the smallest system and range from 0.75 ± 0.01 for central 0%–5% $p+\text{Al}$ to 0.91 ± 0.01 for central 0%–5% $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$. We apply these bias correction factors to all our $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ results.

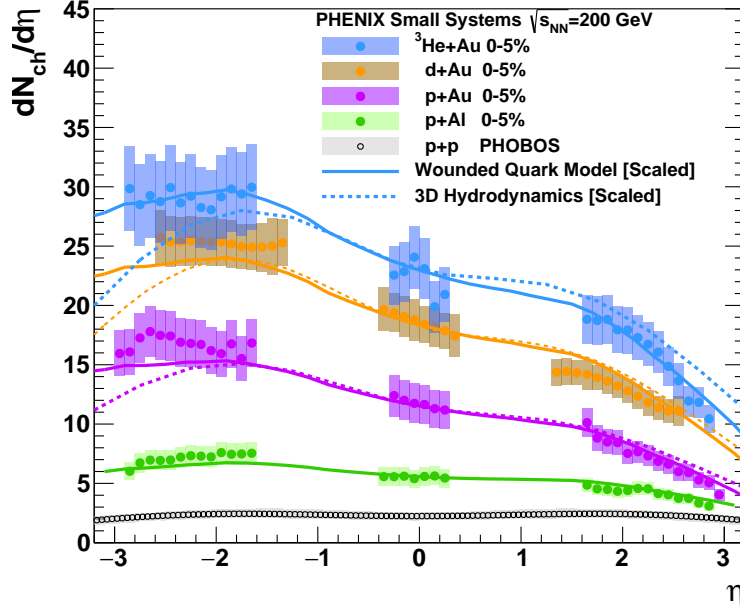


FIG. 1. Charged hadron $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ as a function of pseudorapidity in high-multiplicity 0%–5% central $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$, $d+\text{Au}$, $p+\text{Au}$, and $p+\text{Al}$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV. Also shown are results in inelastic $p+p$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV as measured by the PHOBOS Collaboration [27]. Predictions from the wounded-quark [3] and hydrodynamical [4] models are shown. The calculations have an overall normalization factor (S) to best match the data. These factors are $S=0.88, 0.93, 0.85, 0.77$ for the wound quark model for $p+\text{Al}$, $p+\text{Au}$, $d+\text{Au}$, $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ respectively, and $S=0.81, 0.96, 0.75$ for the hydrodynamical model for $p+\text{Au}$, $d+\text{Au}$, $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ respectively.

Figure 1 shows the $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ results for $p+\text{Al}$, $p+\text{Au}$, $d+\text{Au}$, and $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV for the 5% highest

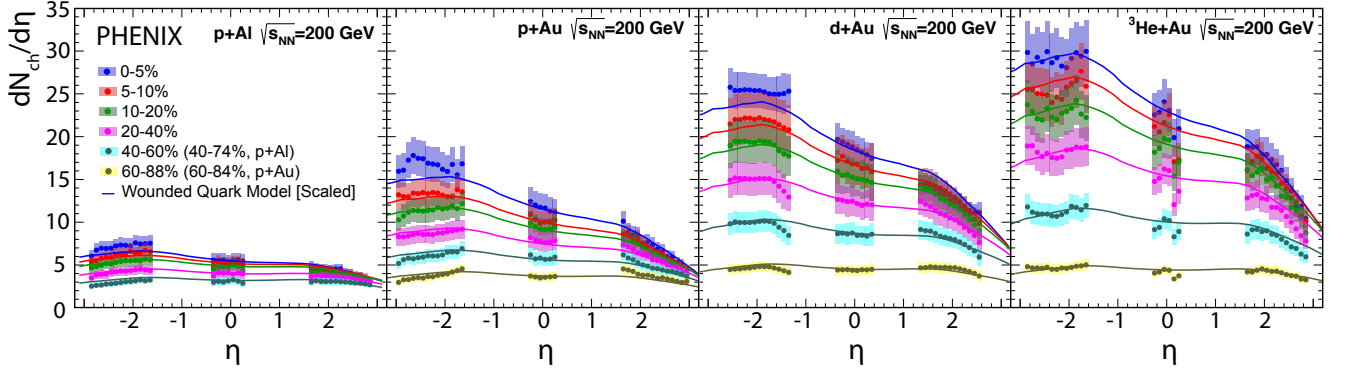


FIG. 2. Charged hadron $dN_{ch}/d\eta$ as a function of pseudorapidity in various multiplicity classes of $p+\text{Al}$, $p+\text{Au}$, $d+\text{Au}$, $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV. Predictions from the wounded-quark model [3] are shown.

196 multiplicity events. Statistical uncertainties are negligible and systematic uncertainties are shown as boxes around
 197 the points. The systematic uncertainties are point-to-point correlated and can in principle move the backward, mid,
 198 and forward rapidity points separately because they are measured in different detectors. Also shown are the yields
 199 in inelastic $p+p$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV as measured by the PHOBOS Collaboration [27]. The full set of
 200 multiplicity-selected results for the four asymmetric nuclear collision systems are shown in Fig. 2.

201 The results are compared to predictions from the wounded-quark model. Within the wounded-quark model, each
 202 wounded-quark is posited to yield hadrons following a common emission function $F(\eta)$ [3]. $F(\eta)$ is constrained by
 203 $d+\text{Au}$ collision data, and the model then predicts $dN_{ch}/d\eta$ for all collision centralities and systems. The calculations
 204 are normalized, with factors listed in the Fig. 1 caption, to best match the data integrated over pseudorapidity,
 205 because the exact normalization can be influenced by modest differences in the centrality selection and thus the
 206 mean number of wounded quarks. Within the systematic uncertainties on the experimental measurements, the model

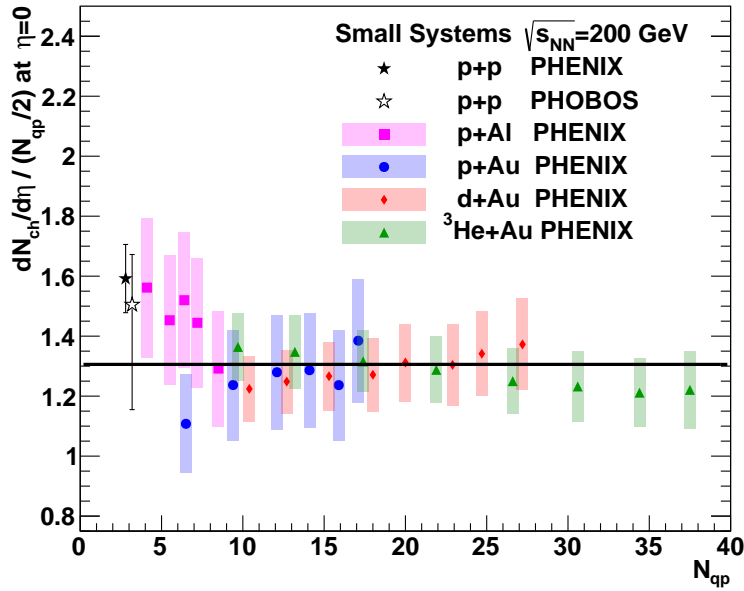


FIG. 3. Midrapidity charged hadron $dN_{ch}/d\eta$ per participating quark pair ($N_{qp}/2$) as a function of the number of participating quarks (N_{qp}). Results are shown for $p+\text{Al}$, $p+\text{Au}$, $d+\text{Au}$, and $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ collisions in various multiplicity classes. Also shown are previously published results in $p+p$ collisions from PHENIX [15] and PHOBOS [27]. The line is the best fit to all the data to a constant level.

provides a good description of the complete data set across collision systems and centrality classes. The results are also compared in Fig. 1 with a hydrodynamical calculation [4] for 0%–5% central collisions. The calculation includes Monte Carlo Glauber initial conditions with longitudinal entropy distributions [30], 3+1D viscous hydrodynamics [31] with $\eta/s = 1/4\pi$ and temperature dependent bulk viscosity, followed by statistical hadronization. Again, the calculations are normalized to the data with factors listed in the caption. The agreement in this case is also good within systematic uncertainties, except for a more significant drop in particle yield in the calculation at the most backward rapidity region $-3.0 < \eta \lesssim -2.0$.

Midrapidity $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ per participating quark pair, $N_{qp}/2$, scales as a function of the number of participating quarks from d +Au and ^3He +Au collisions [15]. The previously reported results [15] were not corrected for the modest bias previously discussed. Figure 3 shows the results testing this scaling for all small collision systems, each with the bias correction factors applied. Within the systematic uncertainties, all systems at all centralities follow a common scaling for midrapidity particle production.

In d +Au collisions, the elliptic flow v_2 was observed to have a similar pseudorapidity dependence as the particle yield $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ [12]. For the other systems we have followed the same procedure for measuring elliptic flow v_2 using the event plane method, where the event plane is defined by the Al- or Au-going BBC covering $-3.9 < \eta < -3.1$. The results are corrected using AMPT [32] and a GEANT-3 simulation of the detector to correspond to v_2 integrated over hadrons at all p_T within each pseudorapidity bin. Systematic uncertainties are determined by varying the track selection cuts, collision z -vertex cuts, and AMPT input parameters.

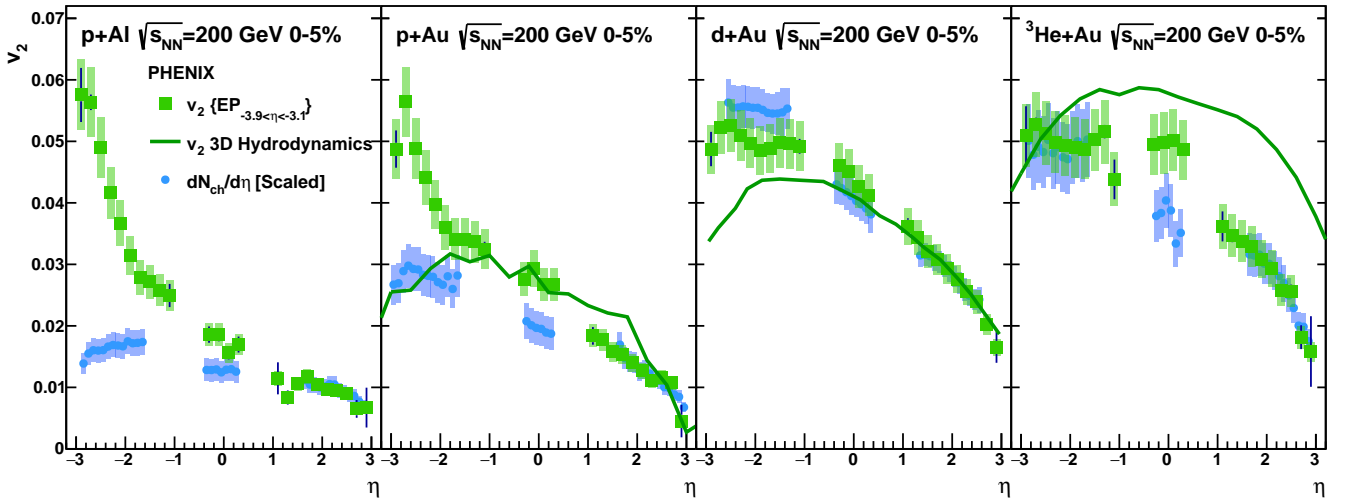


FIG. 4. Elliptic flow v_2 as a function of pseudorapidity in high-multiplicity 0%–5% central p +Al, p +Au, d +Au, and ^3He +Au collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV. Also shown are predictions from the hydrodynamical model [4]. Lastly, the measured $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ results are shown scaled to match the v_2 at forward rapidity for shape comparison with the elliptic flow coefficients.

Figure 4 shows the elliptic flow v_2 as a function of pseudorapidity in 0%–5% central p +Al, p +Au, d +Au, and ^3He +Au collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV. The experimental data have an increasing flow coefficient at forward rapidity when going from the smallest system and smallest particle production p +Al to the largest ^3He +Au. These trends are consistent with arising from the combined influence of initial geometry and particle multiplicity [33]. The v_2 also increases towards backward rapidity for each collision system. For the lowest multiplicity systems p +Al and p +Au, there is a sharp enhancement in the v_2 for $\eta \lesssim -2.0$ that is more pronounced in p +Al. This feature may be due to the nonflow contribution of short range correlations, because this is the pseudorapidity range that is within one unit of the BBC used for determining the event plane.

The data are compared with the same hydrodynamical model [4] that gave a reasonable description of the $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$. There is good qualitative agreement with the system and pseudorapidity dependence of v_2 , and good quantitative agreement of its pseudorapidity dependence in p +Au and d +Au. The only feature not qualitatively described is the enhancement at backward rapidity. This enhancement is the strongest in p +Al, weaker but still pronounced in p +Au, and rather weak in d +Au. The strength of this enhancement trends inversely with the $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$, lending additional evidence that this is due to nonflow influences not incorporated in the hydrodynamical model. In ^3He +Au collisions, the hydrodynamical model overpredicts the forward rapidity ($\eta > 1$) v_2 by more than 50% and qualitatively has the feature of a weaker forward/backward asymmetry than what is present in the data. Note that the model overpredicts

the ${}^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ by approximately 25% (but is scaled to fit the data in Fig. 1), which may help explain the overpredicted v_2 .

In Fig. 4, we also scale $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ to match the v_2 at forward rapidity to compare the shape of the distributions. Although a larger local particle density $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ is correlated with more elliptic flow, the scaling observed in $d+\text{Au}$ appears only approximate when viewed in the context of all collision systems. It is notable that although not shown in Fig. 4, hydrodynamical model calculations [4] also do not exhibit an exact scaling relation $v_2 \propto dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$.

We have presented a comprehensive set of measurements of particle production $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ and elliptic flow v_2 over a broad pseudorapidity range for a suite of asymmetric nuclear collisions $p+\text{Al}$, $p+\text{Au}$, $d+\text{Au}$, and ${}^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV. The particle production is remarkably well-described in the context of the wounded-quark model [3]. A three-dimensional hydrodynamical model qualitatively describes the particle production and elliptic flow in high-multiplicity events in all collision systems. However, it over predicts the overall $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta$ and forward rapidity v_2 in ${}^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ collisions. These data provide an important constraint on models of the longitudinal dynamics in these asymmetric collisions.

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* Deceased

† PHENIX Spokesperson: akiba@rcf.rhic.bnl.gov

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