

A search for CP violation and a measurement of the relative branching fraction in $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ decays

B. Aubert,¹ R. Barate,¹ D. Boutigny,¹ F. Couderc,¹ Y. Karyotakis,¹ J. P. Lees,¹ V. Poireau,¹ V. Tisserand,¹ A. Zghiche,¹ E. Grauges-Pous,² A. Palano,³ A. Pompili,³ J. C. Chen,⁴ N. D. Qi,⁴ G. Rong,⁴ P. Wang,⁴ Y. S. Zhu,⁴ G. Eigen,⁵ I. Ofte,⁵ B. Stugu,⁵ G. S. Abrams,⁶ A. W. Borgland,⁶ A. B. Breon,⁶ D. N. Brown,⁶ J. Button-Shafer,⁶ R. N. Cahn,⁶ E. Charles,⁶ C. T. Day,⁶ M. S. Gill,⁶ A. V. Gritsan,⁶ Y. Groysman,⁶ R. G. Jacobsen,⁶ R. W. Kadel,⁶ J. Kadyk,⁶ L. T. Kerth,⁶ Yu. G. Kolomensky,⁶ G. Kukartsev,⁶ G. Lynch,⁶ L. M. Mir,⁶ P. J. Oddone,⁶ T. J. Orimoto,⁶ M. Pripstein,⁶ N. A. Roe,⁶ M. T. Ronan,⁶ W. A. Wenzel,⁶ M. Barrett,⁷ K. E. Ford,⁷ T. J. Harrison,⁷ A. J. Hart,⁷ C. M. Hawkes,⁷ S. E. Morgan,⁷ A. T. Watson,⁷ M. Fritsch,⁸ K. Goetzen,⁸ T. Held,⁸ H. Koch,⁸ B. Lewandowski,⁸ M. Pelizaeus,⁸ T. Schroeder,⁸ M. Steinke,⁸ J. T. Boyd,⁹ N. Chevalier,⁹ W. N. Cottingham,⁹ M. P. Kelly,⁹ T. E. Latham,⁹ F. F. Wilson,⁹ T. Cuhadar-Donszelmann,¹⁰ C. Hearty,¹⁰ N. S. Knecht,¹⁰ T. S. Mattison,¹⁰ J. A. McKenna,¹⁰ D. Thiessen,¹⁰ A. Khan,¹¹ P. Kyberd,¹¹ L. Teodorescu,¹¹ A. E. Blinov,¹² V. E. Blinov,¹² V. P. Druzhinin,¹² V. B. Golubev,¹² V. N. Ivanchenko,¹² E. A. Kravchenko,¹² A. P. Onuchin,¹² S. I. Serednyakov,¹² Yu. I. Skovpen,¹² E. P. Solodov,¹² A. N. Yushkov,¹² D. Best,¹³ M. Bruinsma,¹³ M. Chao,¹³ I. Eschrich,¹³ D. Kirkby,¹³ A. J. Lankford,¹³ M. Mandelkern,¹³ R. K. Mommsen,¹³ W. Roethel,¹³ D. P. Stoker,¹³ C. Buchanan,¹⁴ B. L. Hartfiel,¹⁴ A. J. R. Weinstein,¹⁴ S. D. Foulkes,¹⁵ J. W. Gary,¹⁵ O. Long,¹⁵ B. C. Shen,¹⁵ K. Wang,¹⁵ D. del Re,¹⁶ H. K. Hadavand,¹⁶ E. J. Hill,¹⁶ D. B. MacFarlane,¹⁶ H. P. Paar,¹⁶ Sh. Rahatlou,¹⁶ V. Sharma,¹⁶ J. W. Berryhill,¹⁷ C. Campagnari,¹⁷ A. Cunha,¹⁷ B. Dahmes,¹⁷ T. M. Hong,¹⁷ A. Lu,¹⁷ M. A. Mazur,¹⁷ J. D. Richman,¹⁷ W. Verkerke,¹⁷ T. W. Beck,¹⁸ A. M. Eisner,¹⁸ C. A. Heusch,¹⁸ J. Kroeseberg,¹⁸ W. S. Lockman,¹⁸ G. Nesom,¹⁸ T. Schalk,¹⁸ B. A. Schumm,¹⁸ A. Seiden,¹⁸ P. Spradlin,¹⁸ D. C. Williams,¹⁸ M. G. Wilson,¹⁸ J. Albert,¹⁹ E. Chen,¹⁹ G. P. Dubois-Felsmann,¹⁹ A. Dvoretskii,¹⁹ D. G. Hitlin,¹⁹ I. Narsky,¹⁹ T. Piatenko,¹⁹ F. C. Porter,¹⁹ A. Ryd,¹⁹ A. Samuel,¹⁹ S. Yang,¹⁹ S. Jayatilleke,²⁰ G. Mancinelli,²⁰ B. T. Meadows,²⁰ M. D. Sokoloff,²⁰ F. Blanc,²¹ P. Bloom,²¹ S. Chen,²¹ W. T. Ford,²¹ U. Nauenberg,²¹ A. Olivas,²¹ P. Rankin,²¹ W. O. Ruddick,²¹ J. G. Smith,²¹ K. A. Ulmer,²¹ J. Zhang,²¹ L. Zhang,²¹ A. Chen,²² E. A. Eckhart,²² J. L. Harton,²² A. Soffer,²² W. H. Toki,²² R. J. Wilson,²² Q. Zeng,²² B. Spaan,²³ D. Altenburg,²⁴ T. Brandt,²⁴ J. Brose,²⁴ M. Dickopp,²⁴ E. Feltresi,²⁴ A. Hauke,²⁴ H. M. Lacker,²⁴ R. Nogowski,²⁴ S. Otto,²⁴ A. Petzold,²⁴ J. Schubert,²⁴ K. R. Schubert,²⁴ R. Schwierz,²⁴ J. E. Sundermann,²⁴ D. Bernard,²⁵ G. R. Bonneau,²⁵ P. Grenier,²⁵ S. Schrenk,²⁵ Ch. Thiebaux,²⁵ G. Vasileiadis,²⁵ M. Verderi,²⁵ D. J. Bard,²⁶ P. J. Clark,²⁶ F. Muheim,²⁶ S. Playfer,²⁶ Y. Xie,²⁶ M. Andreotti,²⁷ V. Azzolini,²⁷ D. Bettoni,²⁷ C. Bozzi,²⁷ R. Calabrese,²⁷ G. Cibinetto,²⁷ E. Luppi,²⁷ M. Negrini,²⁷ L. Piemontese,²⁷ A. Sarti,²⁷ F. Anulli,²⁸ R. Baldini-Ferroli,²⁸ A. Calcaterra,²⁸ R. de Sangro,²⁸ G. Finocchiaro,²⁸ P. Patteri,²⁸ I. M. Peruzzi,²⁸ M. Piccolo,²⁸ A. Zallo,²⁸ A. Buzzo,²⁹ R. Capra,²⁹ R. Contri,²⁹ G. Crosetti,²⁹ M. Lo Vetere,²⁹ M. Macri,²⁹ M. R. Monge,²⁹ S. Passaggio,²⁹ C. Patrignani,²⁹ E. Robutti,²⁹ A. Santroni,²⁹ S. Tosi,²⁹ S. Bailey,³⁰ G. Brandenburg,³⁰ K. S. Chaisanguanthum,³⁰ M. Morii,³⁰ E. Won,³⁰ R. S. Dubitzky,³¹ U. Langenegger,³¹ J. Marks,³¹ U. Uwer,³¹ W. Bhimji,³² D. A. Bowerman,³² P. D. Dauncey,³² U. Egede,³² J. R. Gaillard,³² G. W. Morton,³² J. A. Nash,³² M. B. Nikolich,³² G. P. Taylor,³² M. J. Charles,³³ G. J. Grenier,³³ U. Mallik,³³ J. Cochran,³⁴ H. B. Crawley,³⁴ J. Lamsa,³⁴ W. T. Meyer,³⁴ S. Prell,³⁴ E. I. Rosenberg,³⁴ A. E. Rubin,³⁴ J. Yi,³⁴ N. Arnaud,³⁵ M. Davier,³⁵ X. Giroux,³⁵ G. Grosdidier,³⁵ A. Höcker,³⁵ F. Le Diberder,³⁵ V. Lepeltier,³⁵ A. M. Lutz,³⁵ T. C. Petersen,³⁵ S. Plaszczynski,³⁵ M. H. Schune,³⁵ G. Wormser,³⁵ C. H. Cheng,³⁶ D. J. Lange,³⁶ M. C. Simani,³⁶ D. M. Wright,³⁶ A. J. Bevan,³⁷ C. A. Chavez,³⁷ J. P. Coleman,³⁷ I. J. Forster,³⁷ J. R. Fry,³⁷ E. Gabathuler,³⁷ R. Gamet,³⁷ D. E. Hutchcroft,³⁷ R. J. Parry,³⁷ D. J. Payne,³⁷ C. Touramanis,³⁷ C. M. Cormack,³⁸ F. Di Lodovico,³⁸ C. L. Brown,³⁹ G. Cowan,³⁹ R. L. Flack,³⁹ H. U. Flaecher,³⁹ M. G. Green,³⁹ P. S. Jackson,³⁹ T. R. McMahon,³⁹ S. Ricciardi,³⁹ F. Salvatore,³⁹ M. A. Winter,³⁹ D. Brown,⁴⁰ C. L. Davis,⁴⁰ J. Allison,⁴¹ N. R. Barlow,⁴¹ R. J. Barlow,⁴¹ M. C. Hodgkinson,⁴¹ G. D. Lafferty,⁴¹ J. C. Williams,⁴¹ C. Chen,⁴² A. Farbin,⁴² W. D. Hulsbergen,⁴² A. Jawahery,⁴² D. Kovalskyi,⁴² C. K. Lae,⁴² V. Lillard,⁴² D. A. Roberts,⁴² G. Blaylock,⁴³ C. Dallapiccola,⁴³ S. S. Hertzbach,⁴³ R. Kofler,⁴³ V. B. Koptchev,⁴³ T. B. Moore,⁴³ S. Saremi,⁴³ H. Staengle,⁴³ S. Willocq,⁴³ R. Cowan,⁴⁴ K. Koeneke,⁴⁴ G. Sciolla,⁴⁴ S. J. Sekula,⁴⁴ F. Taylor,⁴⁴ R. K. Yamamoto,⁴⁴ P. M. Patel,⁴⁵

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S. H. Robertson,⁴⁵ A. Lazzaro,⁴⁶ V. Lombardo,⁴⁶ F. Palombo,⁴⁶ J. M. Bauer,⁴⁷ L. Cremaldi,⁴⁷ V. Eschenburg,⁴⁷ R. Godang,⁴⁷ R. Kroeger,⁴⁷ J. Reidy,⁴⁷ D. A. Sanders,⁴⁷ D. J. Summers,⁴⁷ H. W. Zhao,⁴⁷ S. Brunet,⁴⁸ D. Côté,⁴⁸ P. Taras,⁴⁸ H. Nicholson,⁴⁹ N. Cavallo,^{50,*} F. Fabozzi,^{50,*} C. Gatto,⁵⁰ L. Lista,⁵⁰ D. Monorchio,⁵⁰ P. Paolucci,⁵⁰ D. Piccolo,⁵⁰ C. Sciacca,⁵⁰ M. Baak,⁵¹ H. Bulten,⁵¹ G. Raven,⁵¹ H. L. Snoek,⁵¹ L. Wilden,⁵¹ C. P. Jessop,⁵² J. M. LoSecco,⁵² T. Allmendinger,⁵³ G. Benelli,⁵³ K. K. Gan,⁵³ K. Honscheid,⁵³ D. Hufnagel,⁵³ H. Kagan,⁵³ R. Kass,⁵³ T. Pulliam,⁵³ A. M. Rahimi,⁵³ R. Ter-Antonyan,⁵³ Q. K. Wong,⁵³ J. Brau,⁵⁴ R. Frey,⁵⁴ O. Igonkina,⁵⁴ M. Lu,⁵⁴ C. T. Potter,⁵⁴ N. B. Sinev,⁵⁴ D. Strom,⁵⁴ E. Torrence,⁵⁴ F. Colecchia,⁵⁵ A. Dorigo,⁵⁵ F. Galeazzi,⁵⁵ M. Margoni,⁵⁵ M. Morandin,⁵⁵ M. Posocco,⁵⁵ M. Rotondo,⁵⁵ F. Simonetto,⁵⁵ R. Stroili,⁵⁵ C. Voci,⁵⁵ M. Benayoun,⁵⁶ H. Briand,⁵⁶ J. Chauveau,⁵⁶ P. David,⁵⁶ Ch. de la Vaissière,⁵⁶ L. Del Buono,⁵⁶ O. Hamon,⁵⁶ M. J. J. John,⁵⁶ Ph. Leruste,⁵⁶ J. Malcles,⁵⁶ J. Ocariz,⁵⁶ L. Roos,⁵⁶ G. Therin,⁵⁶ P. K. Behera,⁵⁷ L. Gladney,⁵⁷ Q. H. Guo,⁵⁷ J. Panetta,⁵⁷ M. Biasini,⁵⁸ R. Covarelli,⁵⁸ M. Pioppi,⁵⁸ C. Angelini,⁵⁹ G. Batignani,⁵⁹ S. Bettarini,⁵⁹ M. Bondioli,⁵⁹ F. Bucci,⁵⁹ G. Calderini,⁵⁹ M. Carpinelli,⁵⁹ F. Forti,⁵⁹ M. A. Giorgi,⁵⁹ A. Lusiani,⁵⁹ G. Marchiori,⁵⁹ M. Morganti,⁵⁹ N. Neri,⁵⁹ E. Paoloni,⁵⁹ M. Rama,⁵⁹ G. Rizzo,⁵⁹ G. Simi,⁵⁹ J. Walsh,⁵⁹ M. Haire,⁶⁰ D. Judd,⁶⁰ K. Paick,⁶⁰ D. E. Wagoner,⁶⁰ N. Danielson,⁶¹ P. Elmer,⁶¹ Y. P. Lau,⁶¹ C. Lu,⁶¹ V. Miftakov,⁶¹ J. Olsen,⁶¹ A. J. S. Smith,⁶¹ A. V. Telnov,⁶¹ F. Bellini,⁶² G. Cavoto,^{61,62} A. D'Orazio,⁶² E. Di Marco,⁶² R. Faccini,⁶² F. Ferrarotto,⁶² F. Ferroni,⁶² M. Gaspero,⁶² L. Li Gioi,⁶² M. A. Mazzoni,⁶² S. Morganti,⁶² M. Pierini,⁶² G. Piredda,⁶² F. Polci,⁶² F. Safai Tehrani,⁶² C. Voena,⁶² S. Christ,⁶³ H. Schröder,⁶³ G. Wagner,⁶³ R. Waldi,⁶³ T. Adye,⁶⁴ N. De Groot,⁶⁴ B. Franek,⁶⁴ G. P. Gopal,⁶⁴ E. O. Olaiya,⁶⁴ R. Aleksan,⁶⁵ S. Emery,⁶⁵ A. Gaidot,⁶⁵ S. F. Ganzhur,⁶⁵ P.-F. Giraud,⁶⁵ G. Hamel de Monchenault,⁶⁵ W. Kozanecki,⁶⁵ M. Legendre,⁶⁵ G. W. London,⁶⁵ B. Mayer,⁶⁵ G. Schott,⁶⁵ G. Vasseur,⁶⁵ Ch. Yèche,⁶⁵ M. Zito,⁶⁵ M. V. Purohit,⁶⁶ A. W. Weidemann,⁶⁶ J. R. Wilson,⁶⁶ F. X. Yumiceva,⁶⁶ T. Abe,⁶⁷ M. Allen,⁶⁷ D. Aston,⁶⁷ R. Bartoldus,⁶⁷ N. Berger,⁶⁷ A. M. Boyarski,⁶⁷ O. L. Buchmueller,⁶⁷ R. Claus,⁶⁷ M. R. Convery,⁶⁷ M. Cristinziani,⁶⁷ G. De Nardo,⁶⁷ J. C. Dingfelder,⁶⁷ D. Dong,⁶⁷ J. Dorfan,⁶⁷ D. Dujmic,⁶⁷ W. Dunwoodie,⁶⁷ S. Fan,⁶⁷ R. C. Field,⁶⁷ T. Glanzman,⁶⁷ S. J. Gowdy,⁶⁷ T. Hadig,⁶⁷ V. Halyo,⁶⁷ C. Hast,⁶⁷ T. Hrynowska,⁶⁷ W. R. Innes,⁶⁷ M. H. Kelsey,⁶⁷ P. Kim,⁶⁷ M. L. Kocian,⁶⁷ D. W. G. S. Leith,⁶⁷ J. Libby,⁶⁷ S. Luitz,⁶⁷ V. Luth,⁶⁷ H. L. Lynch,⁶⁷ H. Marsiske,⁶⁷ R. Messner,⁶⁷ D. R. Muller,⁶⁷ C. P. O'Grady,⁶⁷ V. E. Ozcan,⁶⁷ A. Perazzo,⁶⁷ M. Perl,⁶⁷ B. N. Ratcliff,⁶⁷ A. Roodman,⁶⁷ A. A. Salnikov,⁶⁷ R. H. Schindler,⁶⁷ J. Schwiening,⁶⁷ A. Snyder,⁶⁷ A. Soha,⁶⁷ J. Stelzer,⁶⁷ J. Strube,^{54,67} D. Su,⁶⁷ M. K. Sullivan,⁶⁷ J. Thompson,⁶⁷ J. Va'vra,⁶⁷ S. R. Wagner,⁶⁷ M. Weaver,⁶⁷ W. J. Wisniewski,⁶⁷ M. Wittgen,⁶⁷ D. H. Wright,⁶⁷ A. K. Yarritu,⁶⁷ C. C. Young,⁶⁷ P. R. Burchat,⁶⁸ A. J. Edwards,⁶⁸ S. A. Majewski,⁶⁸ B. A. Petersen,⁶⁸ C. Roat,⁶⁸ M. Ahmed,⁶⁹ S. Ahmed,⁶⁹ M. S. Alam,⁶⁹ J. A. Ernst,⁶⁹ M. A. Saeed,⁶⁹ M. Saleem,⁶⁹ F. R. Wappler,⁶⁹ W. Bugg,⁷⁰ M. Krishnamurthy,⁷⁰ S. M. Spanier,⁷⁰ R. Eckmann,⁷¹ H. Kim,⁷¹ J. L. Ritchie,⁷¹ A. Satpathy,⁷¹ R. F. Schwitters,⁷¹ J. M. Izen,⁷² I. Kitayama,⁷² X. C. Lou,⁷² S. Ye,⁷² F. Bianchi,⁷³ M. Bona,⁷³ F. Gallo,⁷³ D. Gamba,⁷³ L. Bosisio,⁷⁴ C. Cartaro,⁷⁴ F. Cossutti,⁷⁴ G. Della Ricca,⁷⁴ S. Dittongo,⁷⁴ S. Grancagnolo,⁷⁴ L. Lanceri,⁷⁴ P. Poropat,^{74,†} L. Vitale,⁷⁴ G. Vuagnin,⁷⁴ F. Martinez-Vidal,⁷⁵ R. S. Panvini,⁷⁶ Sw. Banerjee,⁷⁷ B. Bhuyan,⁷⁷ C. M. Brown,⁷⁷ D. Fortin,⁷⁷ P. D. Jackson,⁷⁷ R. Kowalewski,⁷⁷ J. M. Roney,⁷⁷ R. J. Sobie,⁷⁷ J. J. Back,⁷⁸ P. F. Harrison,⁷⁸ G. B. Mohanty,⁷⁸ H. R. Band,⁷⁹ X. Chen,⁷⁹ B. Cheng,⁷⁹ S. Dasu,⁷⁹ M. Datta,⁷⁹ A. M. Eichenbaum,⁷⁹ K. T. Flood,⁷⁹ M. Graham,⁷⁹ J. J. Hollar,⁷⁹ J. R. Johnson,⁷⁹ P. E. Kutter,⁷⁹ H. Li,⁷⁹ R. Liu,⁷⁹ A. Mihalyi,⁷⁹ Y. Pan,⁷⁹ R. Prepost,⁷⁹ P. Tan,⁷⁹ J. H. von Wimmersperg-Toeller,⁷⁹ J. Wu,⁷⁹ S. L. Wu,⁷⁹ Z. Yu,⁷⁹ M. G. Greene,⁸⁰ and H. Neal⁸⁰

(The BABAR Collaboration)

¹Laboratoire de Physique des Particules, F-74941 Annecy-le-Vieux, France

²Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona, E-08193 Bellaterra, Barcelona, Spain

³Università di Bari, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-70126 Bari, Italy

⁴Institute of High Energy Physics, Beijing 100039, China

⁵University of Bergen, Inst. of Physics, N-5007 Bergen, Norway

⁶Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and University of California, Berkeley, California 94720, USA

⁷University of Birmingham, Birmingham, B15 2TT, United Kingdom

⁸Ruhr Universität Bochum, Institut für Experimentalphysik 1, D-44780 Bochum, Germany

⁹University of Bristol, Bristol BS8 1TL, United Kingdom

¹⁰University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6T 1Z1

¹¹Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH, United Kingdom

¹²Budker Institute of Nuclear Physics, Novosibirsk 630090, Russia

¹³University of California at Irvine, Irvine, California 92697, USA

¹⁴University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California 90024, USA

¹⁵University of California at Riverside, Riverside, California 92521, USA

- ¹⁶*University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, California 92093, USA*
¹⁷*University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, California 93106, USA*
¹⁸*University of California at Santa Cruz, Institute for Particle Physics, Santa Cruz, California 95064, USA*
¹⁹*California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California 91125, USA*
²⁰*University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221, USA*
²¹*University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309, USA*
²²*Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado 80523, USA*
²³*Universität Dortmund, Institut für Physik, D-44221 Dortmund, Germany*
²⁴*Technische Universität Dresden, Institut für Kern- und Teilchenphysik, D-01062 Dresden, Germany*
²⁵*Ecole Polytechnique, LLR, F-91128 Palaiseau, France*
²⁶*University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH9 3JZ, United Kingdom*
²⁷*Università di Ferrara, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-44100 Ferrara, Italy*
²⁸*Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati dell'INFN, I-00044 Frascati, Italy*
²⁹*Università di Genova, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-16146 Genova, Italy*
³⁰*Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138, USA*
³¹*Universität Heidelberg, Physikalisches Institut, Philosophenweg 12, D-69120 Heidelberg, Germany*
³²*Imperial College London, London, SW7 2AZ, United Kingdom*
³³*University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242, USA*
³⁴*Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011-3160, USA*
³⁵*Laboratoire de l'Accélérateur Linéaire, F-91898 Orsay, France*
³⁶*Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California 94550, USA*
³⁷*University of Liverpool, Liverpool L69 7ZE, United Kingdom*
³⁸*Queen Mary, University of London, E1 4NS, United Kingdom*
³⁹*University of London, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX, United Kingdom*
⁴⁰*University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky 40292, USA*
⁴¹*University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL, United Kingdom*
⁴²*University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742, USA*
⁴³*University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003, USA*
⁴⁴*Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Laboratory for Nuclear Science, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA*
⁴⁵*McGill University, Montréal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2T8*
⁴⁶*Università di Milano, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-20133 Milano, Italy*
⁴⁷*University of Mississippi, University, Mississippi 38677, USA*
⁴⁸*Université de Montréal, Laboratoire René J. A. Lévesque, Montréal, Quebec, Canada H3C 3J7*
⁴⁹*Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075, USA*
⁵⁰*Università di Napoli Federico II, Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche and INFN, I-80126, Napoli, Italy*
⁵¹*NIKHEF, National Institute for Nuclear Physics and High Energy Physics, NL-1009 DB Amsterdam, The Netherlands*
⁵²*University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556, USA*
⁵³*Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210, USA*
⁵⁴*University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403, USA*
⁵⁵*Università di Padova, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-35131 Padova, Italy*
⁵⁶*Universités Paris VI et VII, Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire et de Hautes Energies, F-75252 Paris, France*
⁵⁷*University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104, USA*
⁵⁸*Università di Perugia, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-06100 Perugia, Italy*
⁵⁹*Università di Pisa, Dipartimento di Fisica, Scuola Normale Superiore and INFN, I-56127 Pisa, Italy*
⁶⁰*Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas 77446, USA*
⁶¹*Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey 08544, USA*
⁶²*Università di Roma La Sapienza, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-00185 Roma, Italy*
⁶³*Universität Rostock, D-18051 Rostock, Germany*
⁶⁴*Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Chilton, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 0QX, United Kingdom*
⁶⁵*DSM/Dapnia, CEA/Saclay, F-91191 Gif-sur-Yvette, France*
⁶⁶*University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina 29208, USA*
⁶⁷*Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, Stanford, California 94309, USA*
⁶⁸*Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305-4060, USA*
⁶⁹*State University of New York, Albany, New York 12222, USA*
⁷⁰*University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996, USA*
⁷¹*University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, USA*
⁷²*University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas 75083, USA*
⁷³*Università di Torino, Dipartimento di Fisica Sperimentale and INFN, I-10125 Torino, Italy*
⁷⁴*Università di Trieste, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-34127 Trieste, Italy*
⁷⁵*Universidad de Valencia, E-46100 Burjassot, Valencia, Spain*
⁷⁶*Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee 37235, USA*
⁷⁷*University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 3P6*
⁷⁸*Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, United Kingdom*
⁷⁹*University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, USA*

⁸⁰Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut 06511, USA

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We report on a search for the CP asymmetry in the singly Cabibbo-suppressed decays $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ and in the resonant decays $D^+ \rightarrow \phi \pi^+$ and $D^+ \rightarrow \bar{K}^{*0} K^+$ based on a data sample of 79.9 fb^{-1} recorded by the *BABAR* detector. We use the Cabibbo-favored $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ branching fraction as normalization in the measurements to reduce systematic uncertainties. The CP asymmetries obtained are $A_{CP}(K^- K^+ \pi^\pm) = (1.4 \pm 1.0(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.8(\text{syst.})) \times 10^{-2}$, $A_{CP}(\phi \pi^\pm) = (0.2 \pm 1.5(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.6(\text{syst.})) \times 10^{-2}$, and $A_{CP}(\bar{K}^{*0} K^\pm) = (0.9 \pm 1.7(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.7(\text{syst.})) \times 10^{-2}$. The relative branching fraction $\frac{\Gamma(D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+)}{\Gamma(D^+ \rightarrow K^- \pi^+ \pi^+)}$ is also measured and is found to be $(10.7 \pm 0.1(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.2(\text{syst.})) \times 10^{-2}$.

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INTRODUCTION

Singly Cabibbo-suppressed (SCS) D -meson decays are predicted in the standard model (SM) to exhibit CP -violating charge asymmetries of the order of 10^{-3} [1]. Direct CP violation in SCS decays could arise from the interference between tree-level (Fig. 1a) and penguin (Fig. 1b) decay processes. Doubly Cabibbo-suppressed and Cabibbo-favored (CF) decays are expected to be CP invariant in the SM because they are dominated by a single weak amplitude. Measurements of CP asymmetries in SCS processes greater than $\mathcal{O}(10^{-3})$ would be evidence of physics beyond the standard model [2].

We define the CP asymmetry by

$$A_{CP} = \frac{|\mathcal{A}|^2 - |\bar{\mathcal{A}}|^2}{|\mathcal{A}|^2 + |\bar{\mathcal{A}}|^2}, \quad (1)$$

where \mathcal{A} is the total decay amplitude for D^+ decays and $\bar{\mathcal{A}}$ is the amplitude for the charge-conjugate decays. A_{CP} is non-zero only if there are at least two different decay amplitudes with a CP -violating relative weak phase and a CP -conserving relative strong phase due to final-state interactions. Eq. (1) can be expressed as an asymmetry of branching fractions. We assume that the total decay rates for D^+ and D^- are equal (CPT invariance). Assuming further that CF decays are invariant under CP , we use branching fractions for CF decays as normalization factors to reduce experimental systematics due to

particle identification (PID) and tracking:

$$A_{CP} = \frac{\frac{\mathcal{B}(D^+ \rightarrow K^+ K^- \pi^+)}{\mathcal{B}(D_s^+ \rightarrow K^+ K^- \pi^+)} - \frac{\mathcal{B}(D^- \rightarrow K^+ K^- \pi^-)}{\mathcal{B}(D_s^- \rightarrow K^+ K^- \pi^-)}}{\frac{\mathcal{B}(D^+ \rightarrow K^+ K^- \pi^+)}{\mathcal{B}(D_s^+ \rightarrow K^+ K^- \pi^+)} + \frac{\mathcal{B}(D^- \rightarrow K^+ K^- \pi^-)}{\mathcal{B}(D_s^- \rightarrow K^+ K^- \pi^-)}}. \quad (2)$$

(Throughout this paper we assume that the production of D^+ and D_s^+ mesons is charge symmetric.)

We also measure the CP asymmetry in the resonant decays $D^+ \rightarrow \phi \pi^+$ and $D^+ \rightarrow \bar{K}^{*0} K^+$, and determine the relative branching fraction $\frac{\Gamma(D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+)}{\Gamma(D^+ \rightarrow K^- \pi^+ \pi^+)}$.

DETECTOR AND DATA SAMPLE

This analysis is performed with a data sample recorded on and below the $\Upsilon(4S)$ resonance with the *BABAR* detector at the PEP-II asymmetric-energy e^+e^- storage rings at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center.

The *BABAR* detector is described in detail in Ref. [3]. The silicon vertex tracker (SVT) and the 40-layer cylindrical drift chamber (DCH) embedded in a 1.5-T solenoid measure the momenta and energy loss (dE/dx) of charged particles. A ring-imaging Cherenkov detector (DIRC) is used for charged-particle identification. Photons are detected and electrons identified with a CsI(Tl) electromagnetic calorimeter (EMC).

We split the 89.7 fb^{-1} data sample into a randomly selected subsample of 9.8 fb^{-1} to optimize the selection criteria and the remainder (a 79.9 fb^{-1} sample) for the final analysis. This procedure eliminates selection bias. We apply the same selection criteria to the CF and SCS modes whenever possible. We determine selection efficiencies from a sample (145 fb^{-1} equivalent) of Monte Carlo (MC) [4] generated $e^+e^- \rightarrow c\bar{c}$ events.

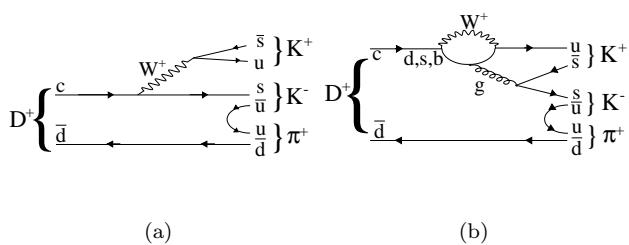


FIG. 1: Parton-level diagrams for $D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ decays: (a) a tree diagram, and (b) a penguin process.

DATA ANALYSIS

We reconstruct D^+ and D_s^+ [5] decays by selecting events containing at least three charged tracks. Tracks

are required to have at least 12 measured DCH coordinates, a minimum transverse momentum of 0.1 GeV/c, and to originate within 1.5 cm in xy (transverse to the beam) and ± 10 cm along the z -axis (along the e^- beam) of the nominal interaction point. Kaons are identified by a selection on the ratio of likelihood functions derived from dE/dx in the SVT and DCH, and from the Cherenkov angle and number of photons in the DIRC. Pions are identified as tracks that fail a loose kaon identification criterion. The three charged tracks are further constrained to originate at a common vertex, the fit for which is accepted if the χ^2 satisfies $P(\chi^2) > 1\%$. We reject D^+ and D_s^+ mesons from B decays, and thereby reduce backgrounds, by requiring that their momenta in the center-of-mass (CM) frame be above 2.4 GeV/c.

In order to reduce the remaining combinatorial background we consider likelihood ratios formed from the probability density functions (PDFs) of the following discriminating variables for the D^+ and D_s^+ decays: CM momentum (p_{CM}), vertex-fit probability with a beam-spot constraint ($P_{BS}(\chi^2)$), and the distance in the xy -plane from the interaction point to the D^+ or D_s^+ vertex (d_{xy}). The quantity $P_{BS}(\chi^2)$ is the probability that the decay tracks form a vertex within the beam spot region. Most of the D^+ mesons decay outside this region, thus the probability $P_{BS}(\chi^2)$ is small for the D^+ signal and is large for combinatorial background. Background distributions are taken from sidebands in the $K^-K^+\pi^+$ mass, while signal distributions are obtained from the signal regions, with the normalized sideband distributions subtracted.

For D^\pm decays, the $m_{KK\pi}$ signal band is defined as [1.840, 1.896] GeV/ c^2 and the sideband mass regions as [1.805, 1.833] GeV/ c^2 and [1.903, 1.931] GeV/ c^2 [see Fig. 2 (a)]. Product likelihoods are constructed for the signal, $\mathcal{L}_{sig} = \prod_i \mathcal{L}_{sig}^i(x_i)$, and the background, $\mathcal{L}_{bkg} = \prod_i \mathcal{L}_{bkg}^i(x_i)$, where i runs over two or more of the variables described.

About 16% of the events have more than one D^+ meson candidate. For such events the candidate with the highest likelihood ratio is selected.

The sensitivity $S/\Delta S$, where S and ΔS refer to the signal yield and its uncertainty, is optimized as a function of the product likelihood ratio $r \equiv \mathcal{L}_{sig}/\mathcal{L}_{bkg}$ formed using p_{CM} and $P_{BS}(\chi^2)$; the optimal selection is found to be $r \geq 4.3$. This criterion is applied to both CF and SCS decays. When we use the analogous ratio r_1 obtained by including the PDF for d_{xy} in \mathcal{L}_{sig} and \mathcal{L}_{bkg} , the sensitivity is nearly as good. The results we find using r_1 provide a measure of systematic uncertainty.

The subsamples for the decays $D^+ \rightarrow \phi\pi^+$ and $D^+ \rightarrow \bar{K}^{*0}K^+$ are selected by requiring that the invariant mass of the resonant decays be within 10 MeV/ c^2 and 50 MeV/ c^2 of the nominal ϕ and \bar{K}^{*0} masses, respectively [6]. In addition, the resonant signal samples are enhanced by a selection on the cosine of the helicity an-

gle ($\cos \theta_H$). In the $D^+ \rightarrow \phi\pi^+$ decay mode, the helicity angle is defined as the angle between the K^- and the π^+ in the ϕ rest frame. In the $D^+ \rightarrow \bar{K}^{*0}K^+$ decay mode, the helicity angle is defined as the angle between the K^- and the K^+ in the \bar{K}^{*0} rest frame. Maximum sensitivity is obtained when $|\cos \theta_H| \geq 0.2$ and $|\cos \theta_H| \geq 0.3$ for $D^+ \rightarrow \phi\pi^+$ and for $D^+ \rightarrow \bar{K}^{*0}K^+$, respectively.

The CF $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+\pi^+$ decays are selected by a procedure identical to that for the SCS $D^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+\pi^+$ decays. We choose the signal $m_{KK\pi}$ region to be [1.944, 1.992] GeV/ c^2 , while the sidebands are chosen to be [1.914, 1.938] and [1.998, 2.022] GeV/ c^2 , respectively [see Fig. 2 (b)]. In addition, contamination from $D^+ \rightarrow K^-\pi^+\pi^+$ decays is removed as follows: for all $KK\pi$ candidates, the kaon with the same charge as the pion is treated as a pion and then the $K\pi\pi$ invariant mass is calculated. We observe a D^+ peak, indicating that part of the D_s^+ signal is composed of misidentified D^+ candidates. Events in the region $1.855 \leq m_{K\pi\pi} \leq 1.883$ GeV/ c^2 are removed from the D_s^+ sample. Contamination from $D^{*+} \rightarrow D^0(\rightarrow K^-\pi^+, K^-K^+)\pi^+$ decays is removed by eliminating events for which $m_{K^-h^+} \geq 1.84$ GeV/ c^2 . Candidates for $D^+ \rightarrow K^-\pi^+\pi^+$ are eliminated if both $K\pi$ combinations satisfy the requirement. Partially reconstructed $D^{*+} \rightarrow D^0(\rightarrow K^-\pi^+\pi^0)\pi^+$ decays can also be misidentified as $K^-K^+\pi^+$ candidates if the π^0 is missed and the charged pion is misidentified as a kaon. Most of these decays are eliminated by assigning a pion mass to kaon tracks and removing candidates for which the mass difference $(m_{K^-\pi^+\pi^+} - m_{K^-\pi^+})$ lies in the range [0.139, 0.150] GeV/ c^2 .

Figure 2 shows the mass distributions obtained after all selection criteria are applied. The yields, listed in Table I, are computed by subtracting from the number of events in the signal region a scaled background estimate, obtained from the sideband mass region.

TABLE I: Yields of background subtracted events, separately for each charge.

Parent	Charge	+	-
$D^\pm \rightarrow K^-K^+\pi^\pm$		21632 ± 228	20940 ± 226
$D^\pm \rightarrow \phi\pi^\pm$		5452 ± 87	5327 ± 86
$D^\pm \rightarrow K^{*0}K^\pm$		5247 ± 96	5113 ± 96
$D_s^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+\pi^+$		23066 ± 217	22928 ± 214

The efficiencies needed for the A_{CP} calculation are obtained from a sample of MC generated $c\bar{c}$ events to which the same selection criteria are applied. The efficiencies for each decay mode are shown in Table II.

We obtain A_{CP} using Eq. (2) and replacing branching fractions with efficiency-corrected yields. The results are shown in Table III. We also studied the CP asymmetry in 16 bins of the $D^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+\pi^+$ Dalitz plot

and found that the asymmetry is consistent with being constant (with a probability of 51%) and zero.

We use the CF sample of $D^+ \rightarrow K^- \pi^+ \pi^+$ decays, obtained using selection criteria identical to the SCS case, to determine the relative branching fraction $\frac{\Gamma(D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+)}{\Gamma(D^+ \rightarrow K^- \pi^+ \pi^+)}$ as follows. The CF and SCS Dalitz plots are first divided into equally populated bins (16 bins for the SCS mode, 64 for the CF mode). Next, the signal and normalization yields and efficiencies are calculated bin-by-bin. The efficiency-corrected yields are then summed and divided to obtain the ratio. Figure 3 shows the mass distribution in the CF $D^\pm \rightarrow K^\mp \pi^\pm \pi^\pm$ mode, for which the average efficiency is $10.03 \pm 0.01(\text{stat.})\%$. We obtain a relative branching fraction of $(10.7 \pm 0.1(\text{stat.})) \times 10^{-2}$.

TABLE II: Efficiencies for positively (ε^+) and negatively (ε^-) charged D and D_s meson decays. Efficiencies are in percent. The stated uncertainties are due to MC statistics only.

Decay	ε^+	ε^-
$D^\pm \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^\pm$	8.20 ± 0.04	8.26 ± 0.04
$D^\pm \rightarrow \phi \pi^\pm$	7.67 ± 0.07	7.63 ± 0.07
$D^\pm \rightarrow K^{*0} K^\pm$	5.88 ± 0.07	5.90 ± 0.07
$D_s^\pm \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^\pm$	3.77 ± 0.02	3.79 ± 0.02

TABLE III: Results of the CP -asymmetry measurements, A_{CP} . Also listed are the values for $A_{CP}^{(2)}$, the asymmetry computed without the normalization mode.

Decay	$A_{CP} [10^{-2}]$	$A_{CP}^{(2)} [10^{-2}]$
$K^- K^+ \pi^\pm$	$+1.36 \pm 1.01$	$+2.07 \pm 0.84$
$\phi \pi^\pm$	$+0.24 \pm 1.45$	$+0.94 \pm 1.33$
$\bar{K}^{*0} K^\pm$	$+0.88 \pm 1.67$	$+1.58 \pm 1.57$

SYSTEMATIC UNCERTAINTIES AND CROSS-CHECKS

The only difference between the final states from D_s^\pm and D^\pm decays considered here is a slightly harder momentum spectrum for the D_s^\pm decay products. In turn, these small differences are corrected for by the efficiencies which come from MC. Any charge asymmetry in the detection of pions thus cancels when $D_s^\pm \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^\pm$ decays are used as normalization, as in Eq. (2). We estimate the systematic uncertainty on the CP asymmetries by combining estimates of the contributions from various identified sources listed in Table IV.

The uncertainty due to small differences in momentum spectra of π , K from D^+ and D_s^+ decays, 0.06%, is estimated as three times the maximum difference in π , K

asymmetries in D^+ and D_s^+ decays. We evaluate an uncertainty for the background subtraction by changing the widths of the sideband mass regions. The uncertainty is taken to be the difference in the central values of A_{CP} . The uncertainties in the likelihood-ratio technique are estimated with two variants: (i) tightening the likelihood ratio to produce a 10% change in the yields, and (ii) using the likelihood ratio r_1 (described above) in place of r . The systematic uncertainty is chosen to be the larger of the two changes. Table IV summarizes these systematic uncertainties for the observed CP asymmetries.

TABLE IV: Systematic uncertainties for the CP asymmetries.

Source	$K^- K^+ \pi^\pm$ $A_{CP} [10^{-2}]$	$\phi \pi^\pm$ $A_{CP} [10^{-2}]$	$\bar{K}^{*0} K^\pm$ $A_{CP} [10^{-2}]$
MC simulation	0.06	0.06	0.06
Background estimate	0.63	0.32	0.49
Selection criteria	0.46	0.54	0.54
Total	0.78	0.63	0.73

We performed two cross-checks on our measurement of A_{CP} . First, we calculated an alternative measure of CP asymmetry without using $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ decays as normalization, which we labeled $A_{CP}^{(2)}$ in Table III. We find its values to be consistent with our measurements of A_{CP} . Second, we measured the CP asymmetry for a control sample: the CF decays $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ (non-resonant as well as resonant). This asymmetry is expected to be zero within the SM. In $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+$ decays, both the D_s^+ and the D_s^- decay to two oppositely charged kaons and only the pion charge differs in particle and antiparticle decays. Thus, any detector-induced asymmetry would arise only from a charge asymmetry in pion tracking and is expected to be very small. Indeed the measured value is $(+0.6 \pm 0.8) \times 10^{-2}$.

As a final cross-check, the CP asymmetry has also been studied as a function of the D^+ laboratory momentum, as well as by the run period. No significant dependence on momentum or detector operation conditions is observed.

A summary of the systematic uncertainties for the relative branching fraction $\frac{\Gamma(D^+ \rightarrow K^- K^+ \pi^+)}{\Gamma(D^+ \rightarrow K^- \pi^+ \pi^+)}$ is given in Table V. The fractional uncertainty due to PID and tracking has been estimated as 2.1%, computed as the sum in quadrature of 1.1% for PID and 1.8% for tracking [7]. The PID uncertainty is estimated from a comparison of PID efficiencies in data and MC. The tracking uncertainty, which is the uncertainty on the K/π efficiency ratio, is conservatively estimated as three times its value obtained using MC.

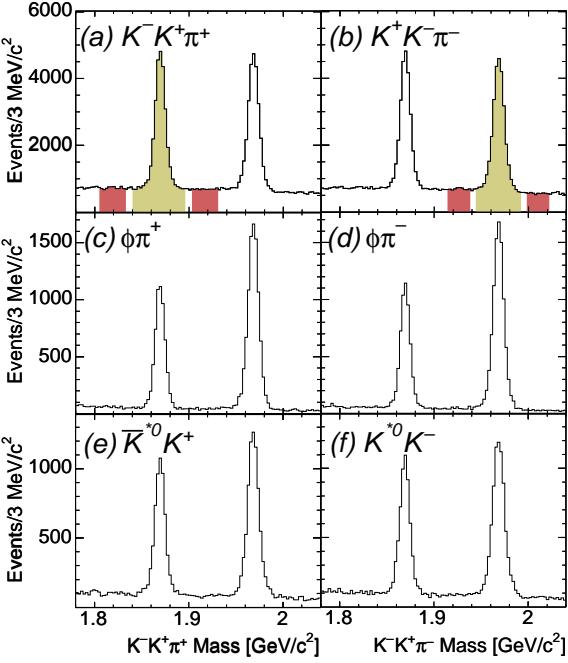


FIG. 2: $KK\pi$ mass distributions for positively charged (left) and negatively charged (right) D and D_s candidates for events satisfying the requirement $r \geq 4.3$. Figures (a) and (b) are for all $KK\pi$ candidates, while (c) and (d) are for $\phi\pi$ candidates, and (e) and (f) for $\bar{K}^{*0}K$ candidates. Signal (yellow or light shaded) and sidebands (red or darker shaded) regions are shown for D^+ and D_s^+ decays in (a) and (b), respectively.

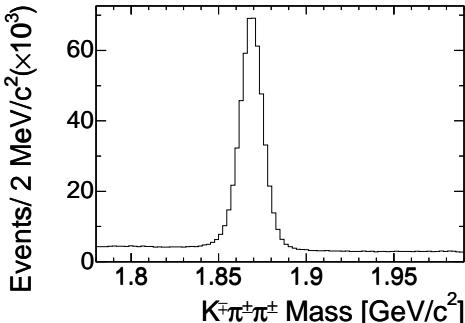


FIG. 3: Mass distribution for $D^\pm \rightarrow K^\mp\pi^\pm\pi^\pm$ decays.

SUMMARY

We have searched for a CP asymmetry in $D^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+\pi^+$, $D^+ \rightarrow \phi\pi^+$, and $D^+ \rightarrow \bar{K}^{*0}K^+$ decays and measured the relative branching fraction of $D^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+\pi^+$ decays, with a data sample of 79.9 fb^{-1} collected by the *BABAR* experiment.

The measurements of the CP asymmetries are summarized in Table VI. These results are in agreement with previous published results [8], with our results in the res-

TABLE V: Systematic uncertainties for the relative branching fraction.

Source	Uncertainty [10^{-2}]
PID + tracking	0.22
Background estimate	0.05
Selection criteria	0.02
Total	0.23

TABLE VI: Results of the CP asymmetry (A_{CP}) measurements for D^\pm decays.

Decay	A_{CP} [10^{-2}]
$K^-K^+\pi^\pm$	$+1.4 \pm 1.0(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.8(\text{syst.})$
$\phi\pi^\pm$	$+0.2 \pm 1.5(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.6(\text{syst.})$
$\bar{K}^{*0}K^\pm$	$+0.9 \pm 1.7(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.7(\text{syst.})$

onant modes having significantly smaller uncertainties.

Further, we obtain a branching fraction for $D^+ \rightarrow K^-K^+\pi^+$ decays relative to that for $D^+ \rightarrow K^-\pi^+\pi^+$ decays of $(10.7 \pm 0.1(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.2(\text{syst.})) \times 10^{-2}$. This result is a significant improvement over previous measurements [9].

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