

**Light Meson Form Factors from Deep  
Exclusive Meson Production**

**Stephen JD Kay  
University of York**

**ePIC Physics Forum  
24/02/26**

# Why Meson Structure - Hadron Mass Budgets

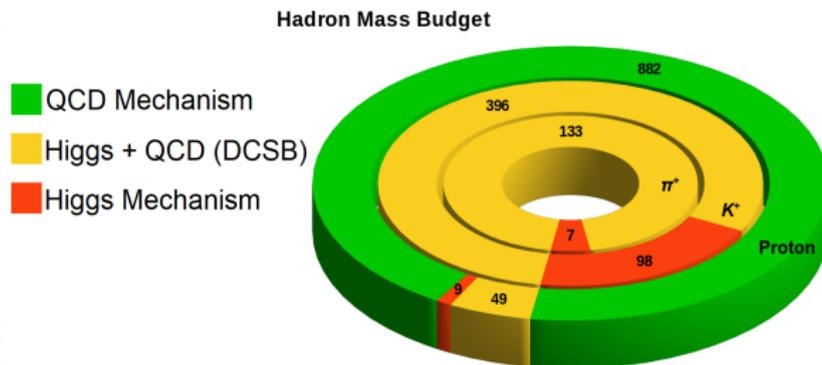
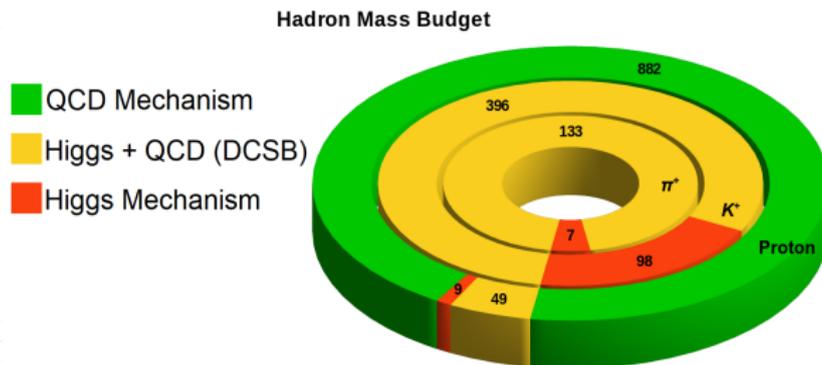


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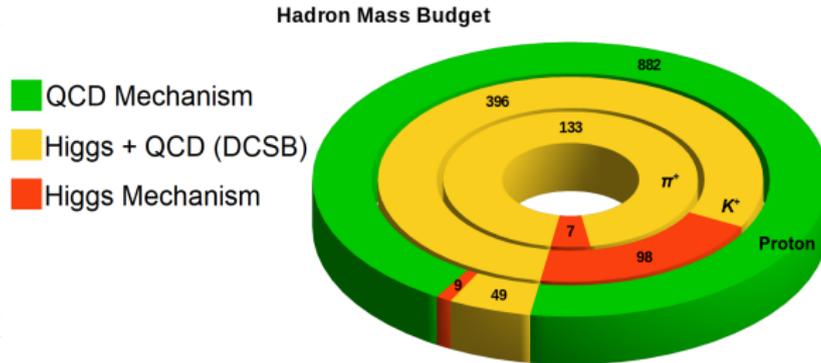
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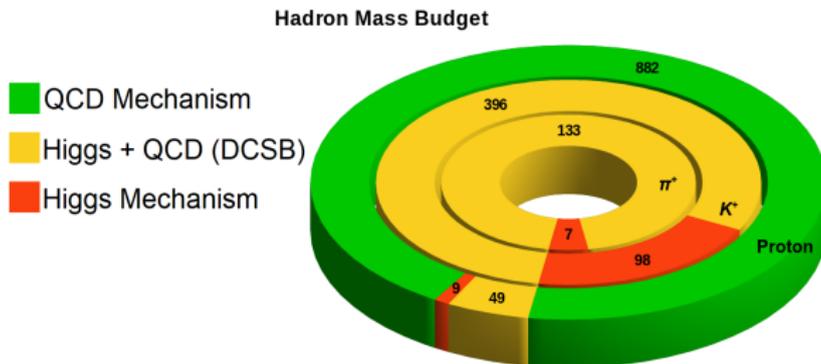
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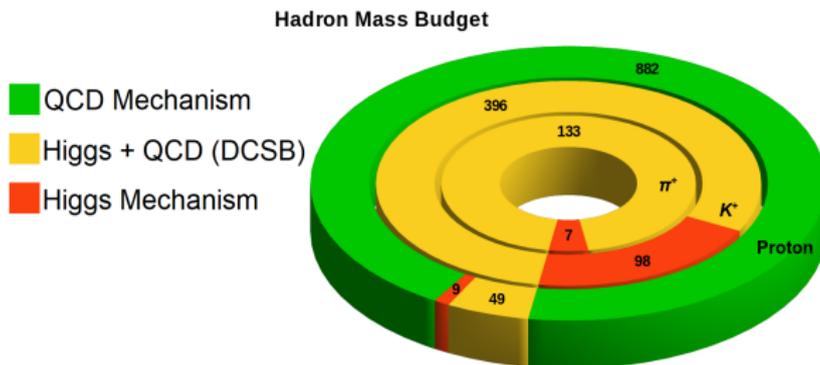
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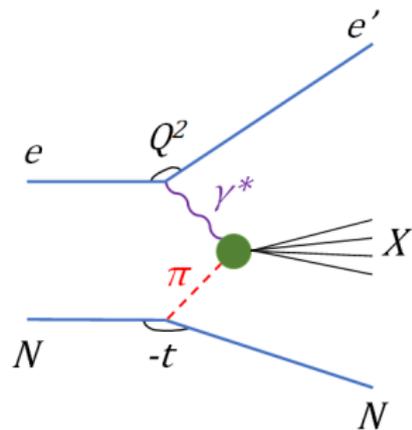
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- How can we examine their structure?

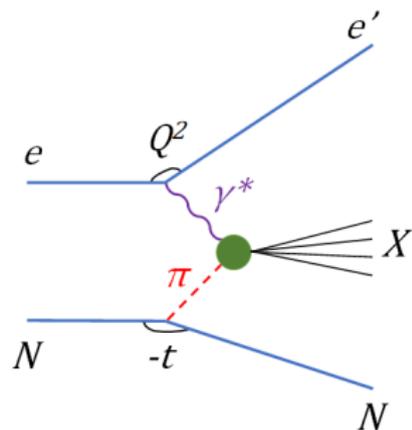
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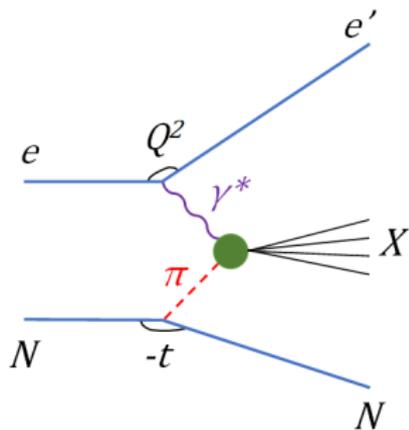
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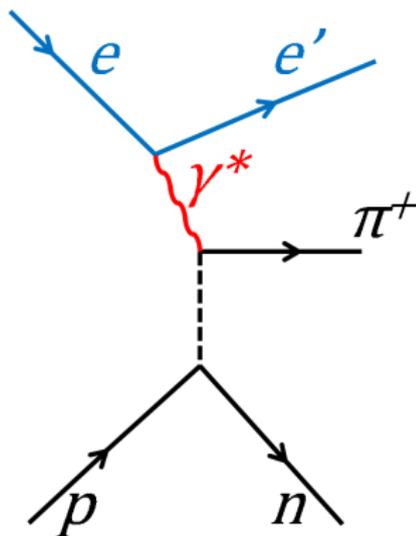
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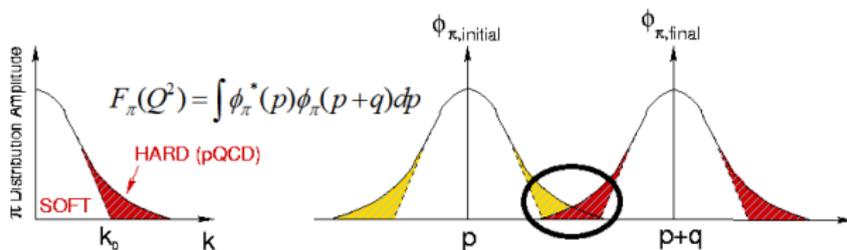
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- OR, if X is restricted to a single  $\pi$  or  $K$ , have **Deep Exclusive Meson Production (DEMP)**
  - Access to meson form factors
  - $F_\pi$  and  $F_K$



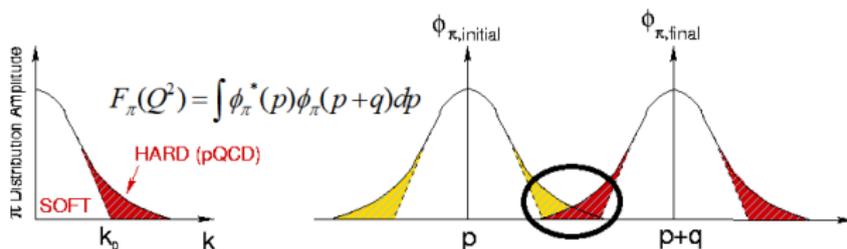
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- Charged pion ( $\pi^\pm$ ) and kaon ( $K^\pm$ ) form factors ( $F_\pi$ ,  $F_K$ ) are key QCD observables
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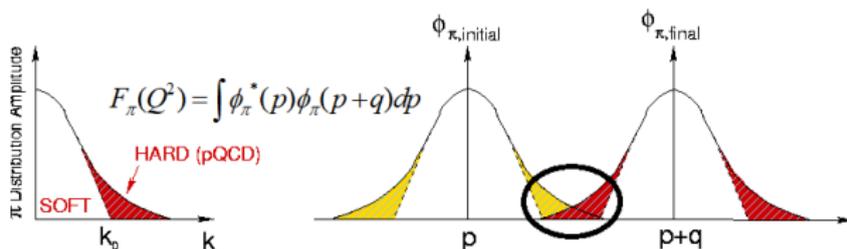
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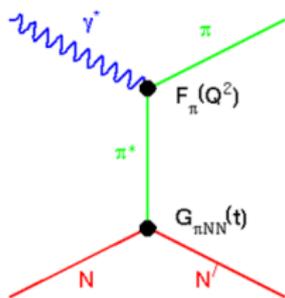
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  - Form factor is the overlap between the two tails (right figure)
- $F_\pi$  and  $F_K$  of special interest in hadron structure studies
  - $\pi$  - Lightest QCD quark system, simple
  - $K$  - Another simple system, contains strange quark

## Measurement of $F_\pi$ at High $Q^2$

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  - Use the “pion cloud” of the proton via  $p(e, e'\pi^+n)$

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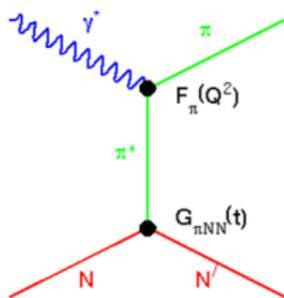
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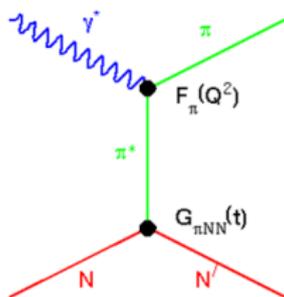


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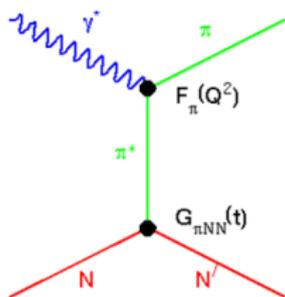


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  - Theoretical uncertainty in  $F_\pi$  extraction
    - Model dependent  
(smaller dependency at low  $-t$ )

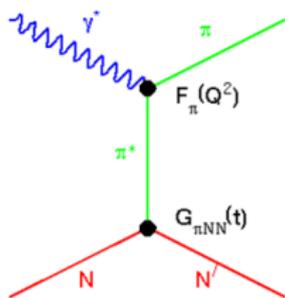


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  - At a collider, isolate  $d\sigma_L/dt$  from  $d\sigma_{uns}/dt$ , using a model
  - Measure Sullivan **D**eep **E**xclusive **M**eson **P**roduction (**DEMP**)

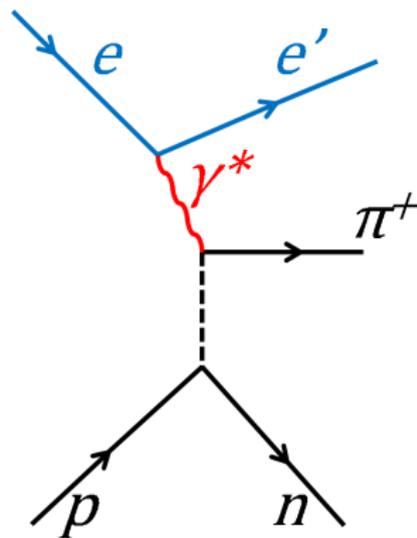


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- Sullivan DEMP as a process is fairly self descriptive!
- Consider the  $p(e, e'\pi^+n)$  reaction

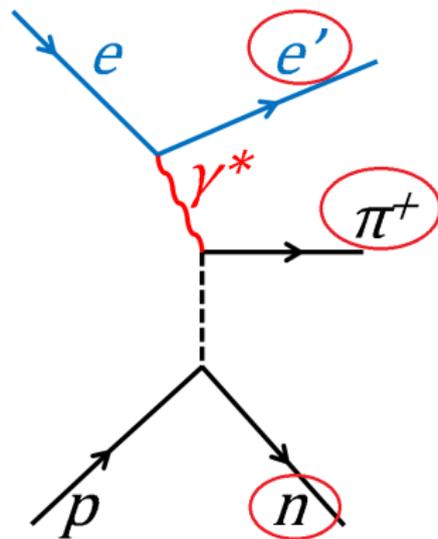
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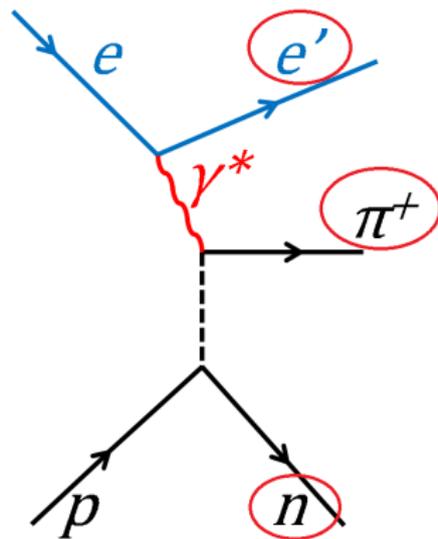
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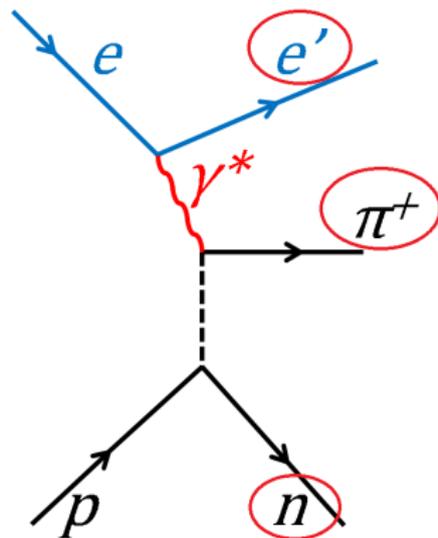
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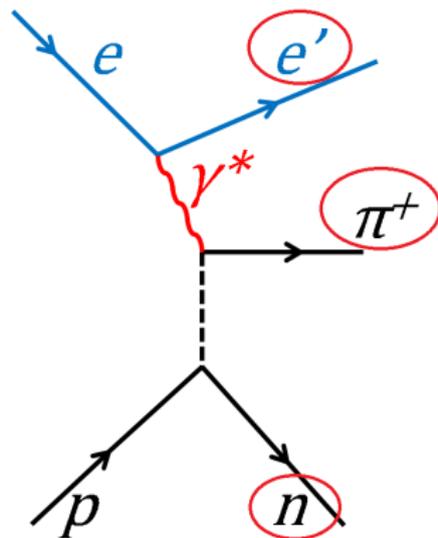
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- Can also measure  $n(e, e'\pi^-p)$  in  $e + D$
- Kaon DEMP,  $\pi^+ \rightarrow K^+$  and  $n \rightarrow \Lambda^0$ 
  - $p(e, e'+\Lambda^0)$
  - $p(e, e'+\Sigma^0)$
  - **Hyperons decay!**



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- So just need  $e + p$  or  $e + D$  collisions



# Simulating Events - DEMPgen

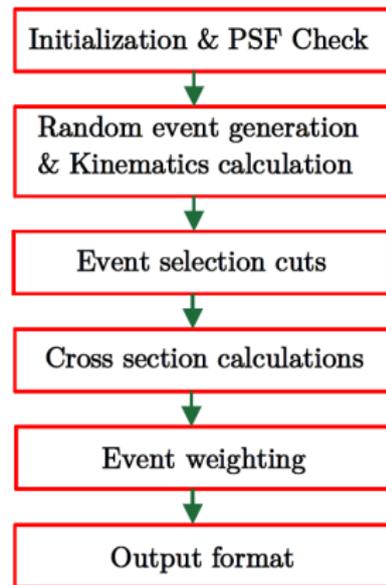
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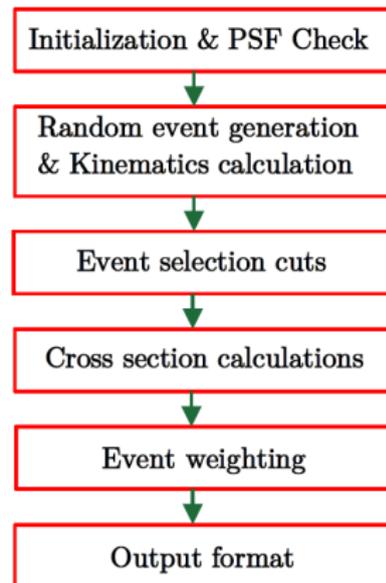
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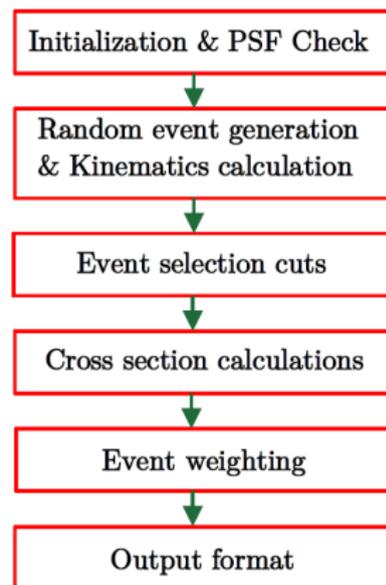
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- Further details in [recent paper](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpc.2024.109444)

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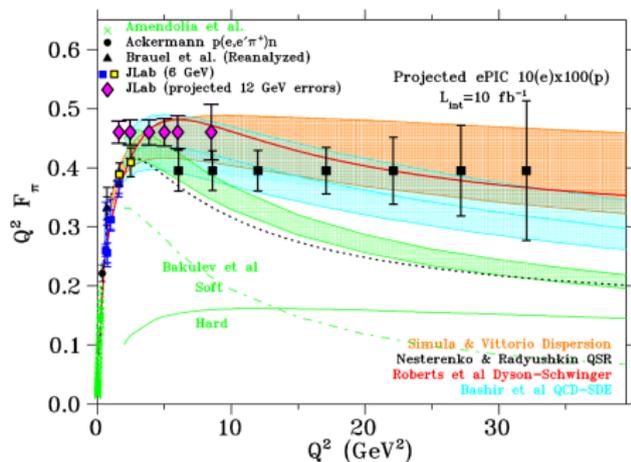
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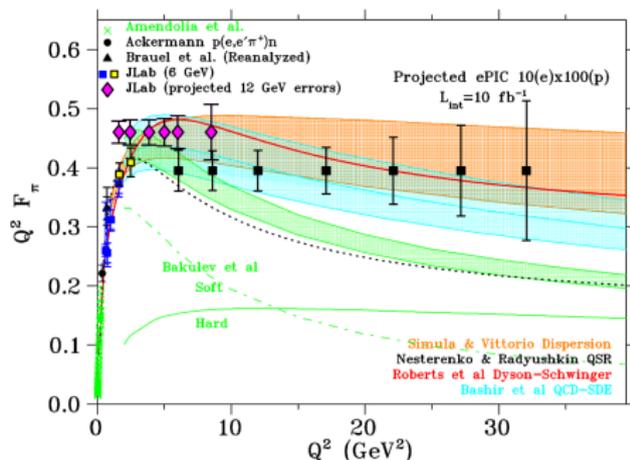
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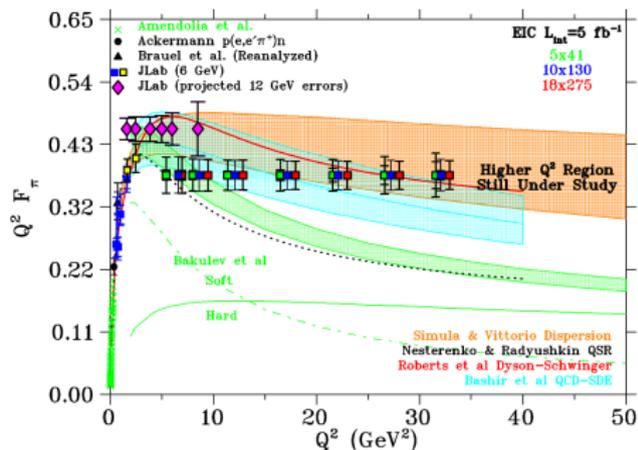
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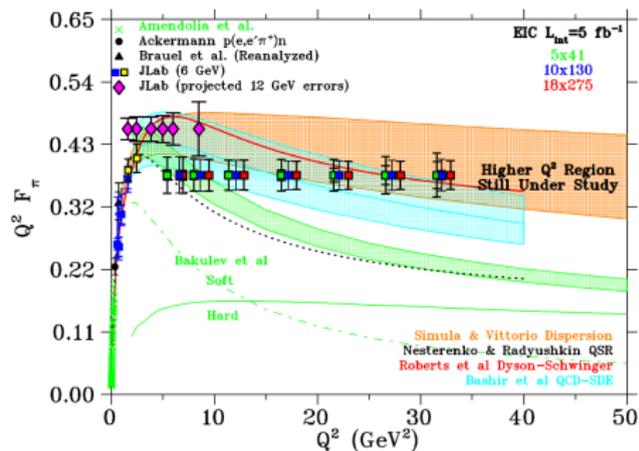
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# Latest Simulation Campaign Input

- Generated new 10x130 and 10x250 files from DEMPgen
- Used [DEMPgen v1.2.4](#) to generate new files
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Used  $\mathcal{L} \approx 0.2629 \times 10^{33} \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ , based upon assumptions on per fill  $\int \mathcal{L}$  in [Elke's slides](#).

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  - $3 < Q^2 < 10$ ,  $10 < Q^2 < 20$  and  $20 < Q^2 < 35$
  - Roughly  $\sim 400\text{k}$  generated per  $Q^2$  range

Technically, actually a cut on the range of  $\theta_{e'}$  values, directly feeds into  $Q^2$

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- Constrained  $-t$  to  $< 0.4 \text{ GeV}^2$
- Submitted for October campaign
  - Used 10x130 and 10x250 epic-craterlake detector config
  - ip6\_ep\_130x10 and ip6\_ep\_250x10 afterburner configs applied

# Latest Simulation Campaign Input

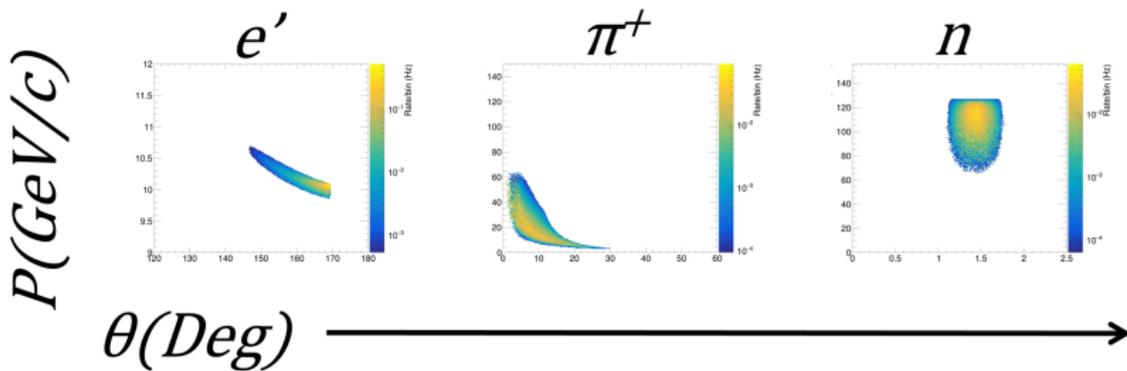
- Generated new 10x130 and 10x250 files from DEMPgen
- Used [DEMPgen v1.2.4](#) to generate new files
  - Assume  $\int \mathcal{L} = 5 \text{ fb}^{-1}$  in projections
- Ran  $p(e, e'\pi^+ n)$  split into three  $Q^2$  ranges
  - $3 < Q^2 < 10$ ,  $10 < Q^2 < 20$  and  $20 < Q^2 < 35$
  - Roughly  $\sim 400\text{k}$  generated per  $Q^2$  range
- **Constrained  $-t$  to  $< 0.4 \text{ GeV}^2$**
- Submitted for October campaign
  - Used 10x130 and 10x250 epic-craterlake detector config
  - ip6\_ep\_130x10 and ip6\_ep\_250x10 afterburner configs applied
- **Results shown (and in Analysis Note) are all from 25.10.2 simulation campaign output unless otherwise stated**

## DEMP Kinematics - Truth Distributions

- For 10 GeV electrons on 130 GeV protons (10x130), where do products go?

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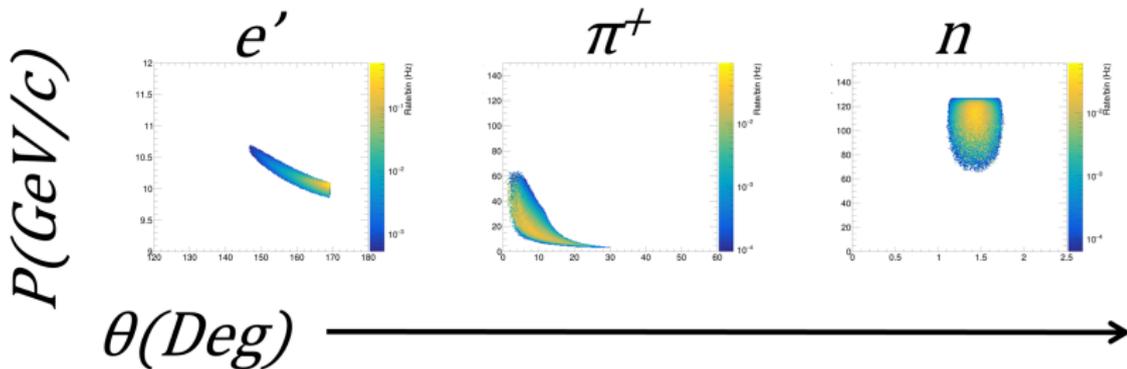
- For 10 GeV electrons on 130 GeV protons (10x130), where do products go?
- $e'$  and  $\pi^+$  hit the central detector, neutron in FF detectors
  - ZDC in particular critical for low  $-t$  neutrons



Beam effects *not* removed here. Note, in  $\eta$  the ranges are  $-1.15 < \eta_{e'} < -2.45$ ,  $0 < \eta_{\pi^+} < 0.9$  and  $4 < \eta_n < 5.1$ .

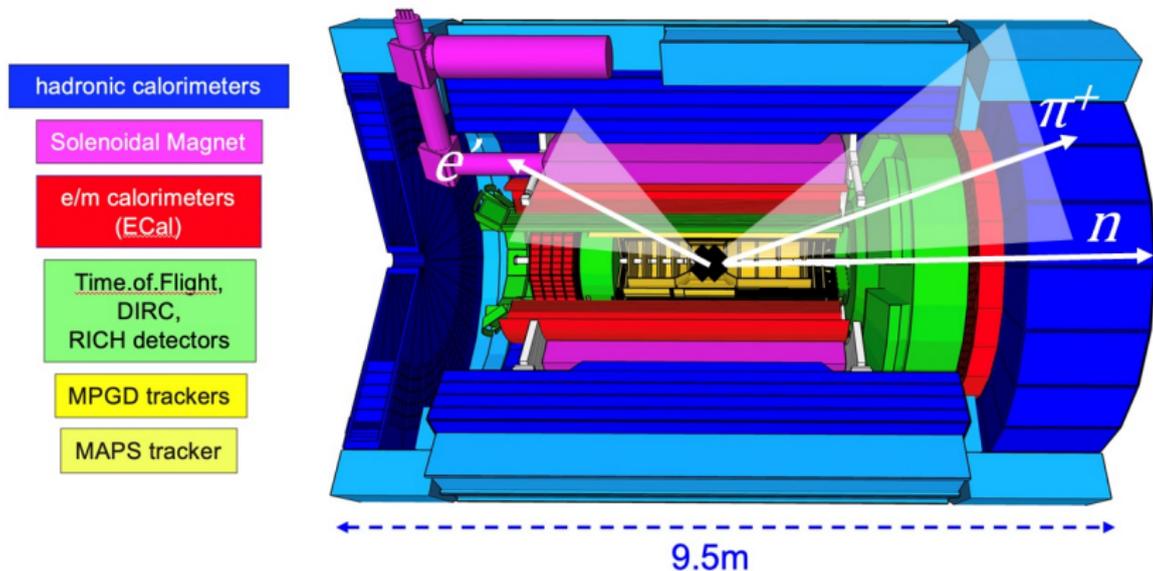
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- Note that the Z scale is a rate in Hz



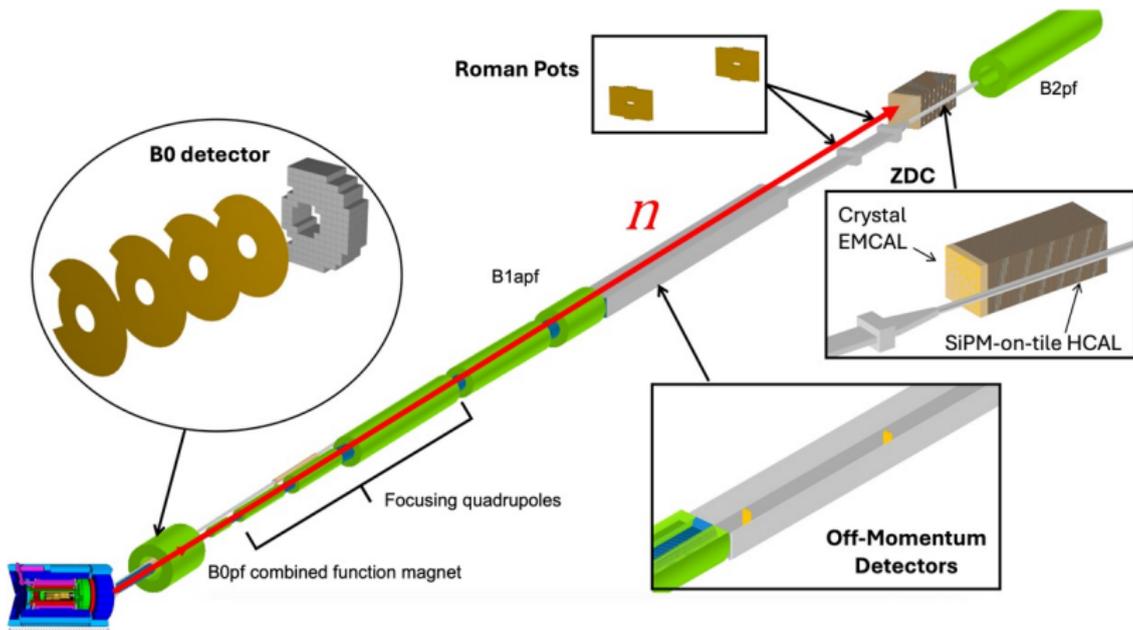
# DEMP Kinematics - Visualising with ePIC

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- $n$  very forward focused, ZDC or B0



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    - $E_n > 40 \text{ GeV}$
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$E_n > 120 \text{ GeV}$  for 10x250,  $\theta^*$  is after a rotation of 25 mRad around the proton axis to remove the crossing angle

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- Full analysis code on [on GitHub](#), details in [Analysis Note](#)

[https://github.com/sjdkay/ePIC\\_DEMP\\_Analysis](https://github.com/sjdkay/ePIC_DEMP_Analysis) and <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18681414>

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See WG presentation for details

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- **If event retained after this cut, use track info as e'**
- For tracks with  $160^\circ < \theta < 163^\circ$ , use **track info only** if it is good. Do not require a good cluster too
  - Poor cluster reconstruction in endcap/barrel overlap region

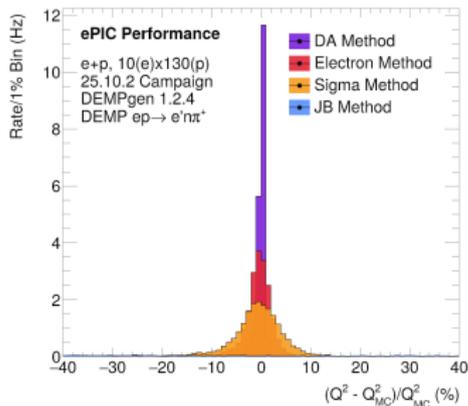
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See details of each calculation in [this tutorial](#)

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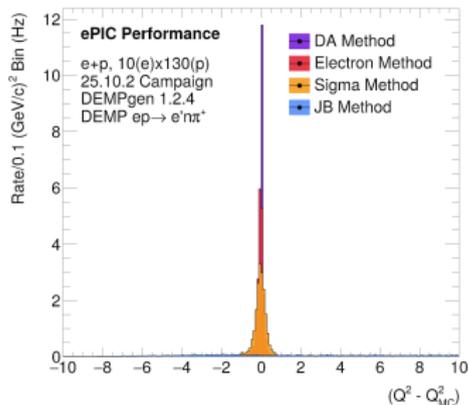
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- **DA method** appears to perform best for DEMP across broad kinematic range
- **DA** method correlates well with truth
- **Electron** and **sigma** methods perform OK, but not as well.
- **JB** method clearly not valid for these kinematics



$$\sigma(DA) = 1.205, \sigma(Electron) = 3.144, \sigma(Sigma) = 6.054, \sigma(JB) = N/a.$$

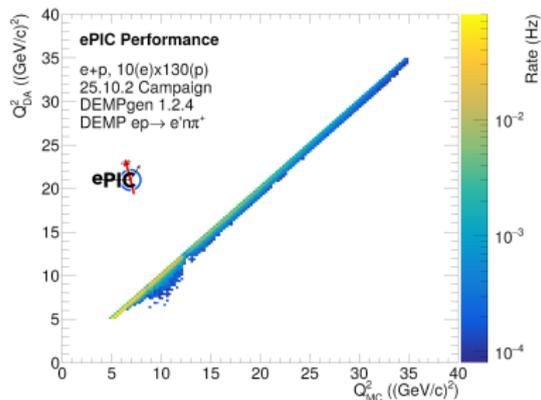
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- Evident when looking at absolute difference too



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- Cut on  $5 < Q_{DA}^2 < 35 \text{ GeV}^2$  before further event processing

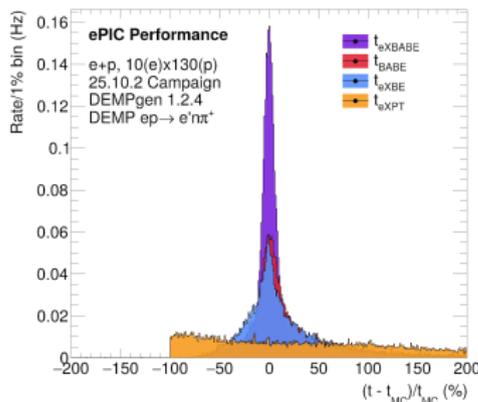


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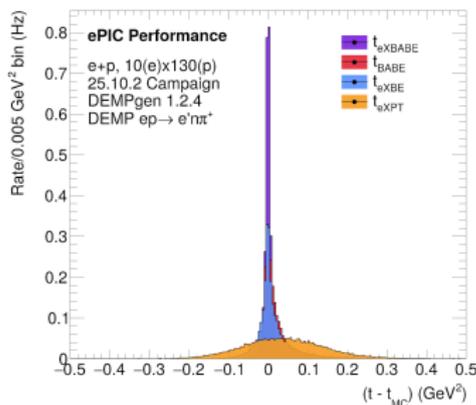
- Can reconstruct  $-t$  in multiple ways (see  $t_{RECO}$  document)
- “Best” way for DEMP is  $\rightarrow -t_{eXBABE} = (\vec{p} - \vec{n}_{Corr})^2$
- Exploit exclusive nature of the reaction, generic implementation [available in code here](#)
- $-t_{eXBABE}$  correlates well with truth
- Far better than methods using **uncorrected neutron track** ( $t_{BABE}$ ) and methods utilising **electron information** ( $t_{eX}$ ) and **electron  $P_T$**  ( $t_{eXPT}$ ) info



$\sigma(eXBABE) = 11.03$ ,  $\sigma(BABE) = 42.67$ ,  $\sigma(eXE) = 43.26$ ,  $\sigma(eXPT) = 83.92$ . All  $e^+ \pi^+ n$  triple coincidence

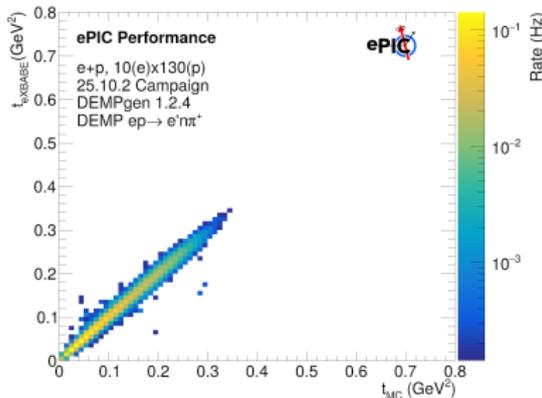
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- $-t_{eXBABE}$  correlates well with truth
- Cut on  $-t_{eXBABE} < 0.45 \text{ GeV}^2$
- For form factor extraction, want lowest  $-t$  bins



Note, events only generated to  $-t \ 0.4 \text{ GeV}^2$

## Exclusivity Cuts - $\Delta\theta^*$ and $\Delta\phi^*$ Cuts

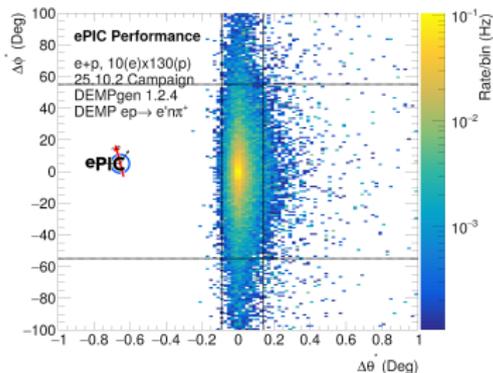
- Under the assumption that an exclusive  $p(e, e'\pi^+n)$  event is detected, the vector  $\underline{P}_{Miss} = (\underline{e} + \underline{p}) - (\underline{e}'_{Rec} + \underline{\pi}_{Rec})$  **should** roughly correspond to  $n_{rec}$
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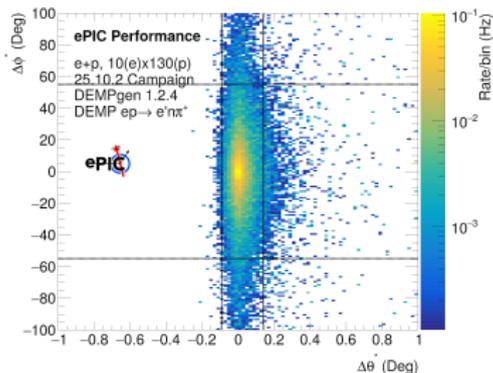
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- Use difference in angles between  $\underline{P}_{Miss}$  and  $\underline{n}_{rec}$  -  $\Delta\theta^*$  and  $\Delta\phi^*$



$\Delta\theta^* = \theta_{PMiss}^* - \theta_{ZDC}^*$  and  $\Delta\phi^* = \phi_{PMiss}^* - \phi_{ZDC}^*$ , \* denotes this is after 25 mRad rotation about proton axis.

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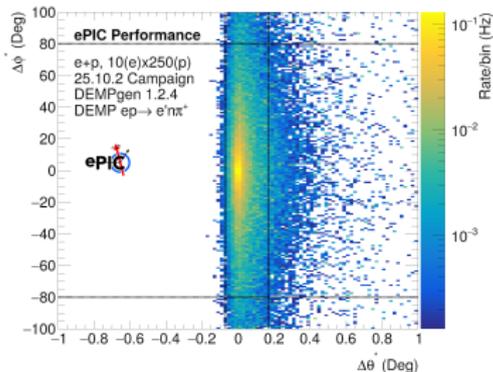
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- Cut values differ for 10x250

$$-0.07^\circ < \Delta\theta^* < 0.17^\circ \text{ and } -80^\circ < \Delta\phi^* < 80^\circ$$



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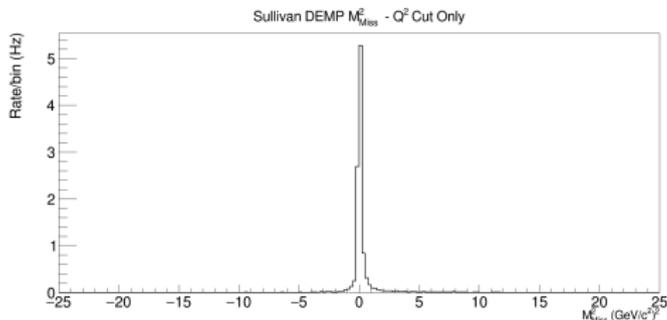
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- Should remove any non-exclusive events, e.g. DIS

Cut on  $\underline{P}_{M\_DEMP}.M2() > -1 \text{ (GeV/c}^2\text{)}^2$  and  $|\underline{P}_{M\_DEMP}.M()| < 0.75 \text{ GeV/c}^2$

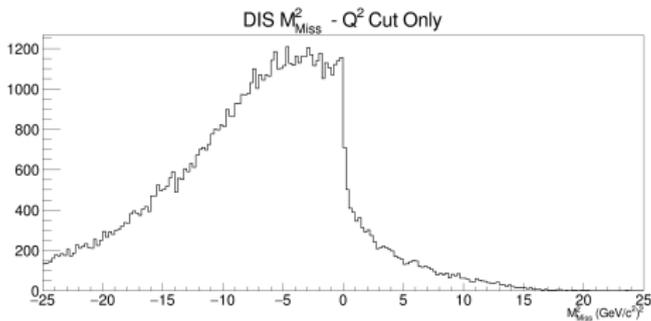
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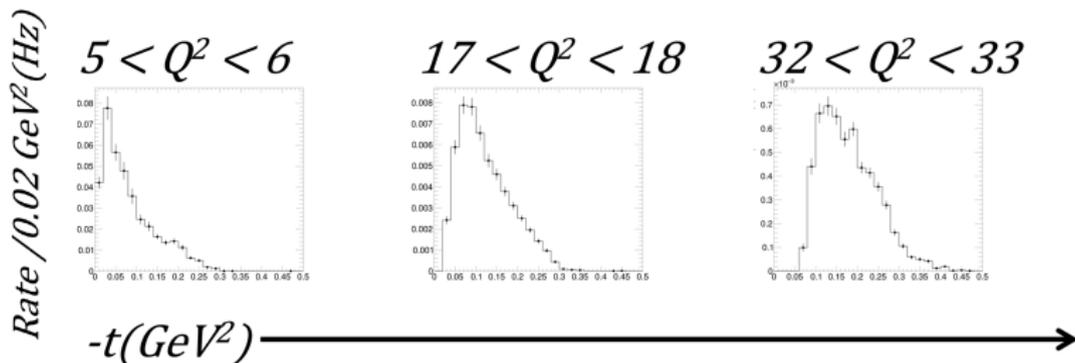
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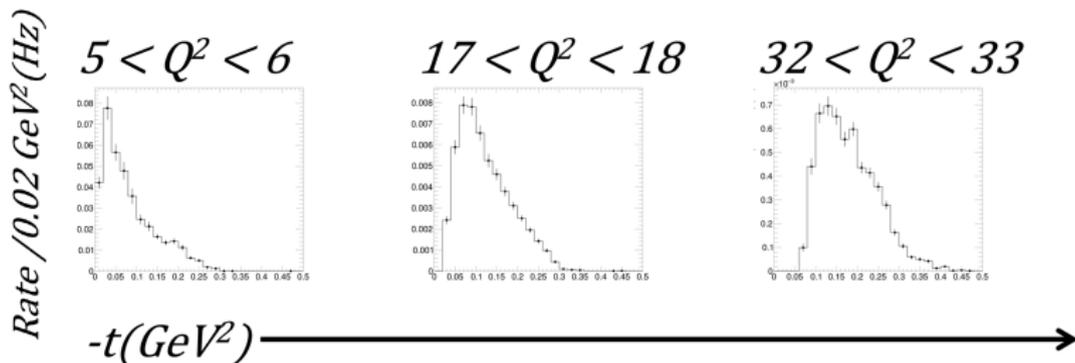
# DEMP Analysis Results - $Q^2$ , $-t$ Binning

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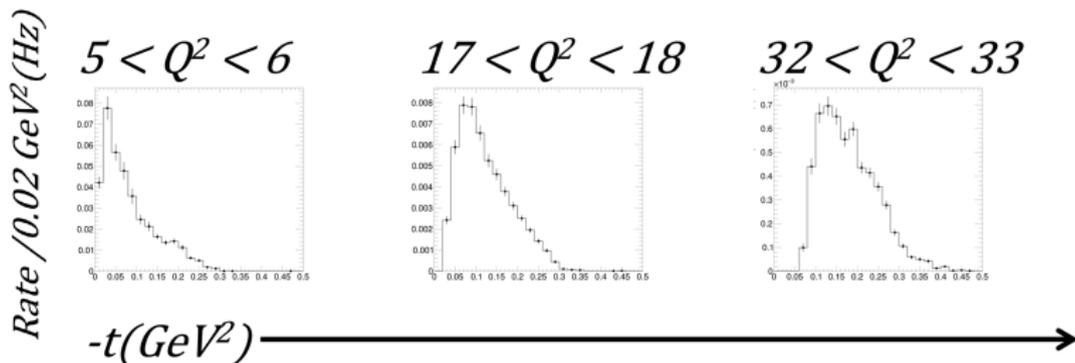
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- From rate per bin, extrapolate to number of events with  $\int \mathcal{L} = 5 \text{ fb}^{-1}$ , project to  $F_\pi$



## DEMP Analysis Results - $\Delta t$ Bin Widths

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## DEMP Analysis Results - $-t$ Bin Widths

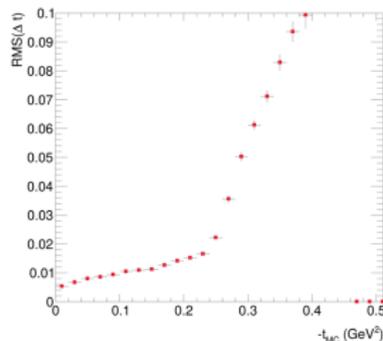
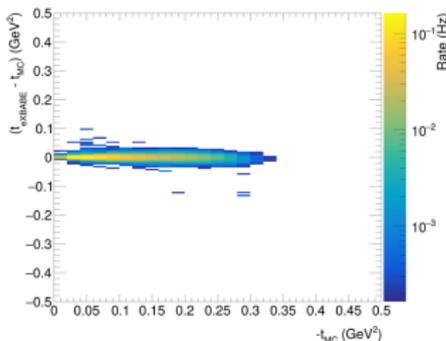
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  - Across full  $Q^2$  range and in distinct  $Q^2$  regions
- Take RMS value of slices of  $\Delta t = t_{eXBABE} - t_{MC}$  as a function of  $-t_{MC}$
- For  $F_\pi$  extraction, only lowest  $\sim 5$  viable  $-t$  bins are needed

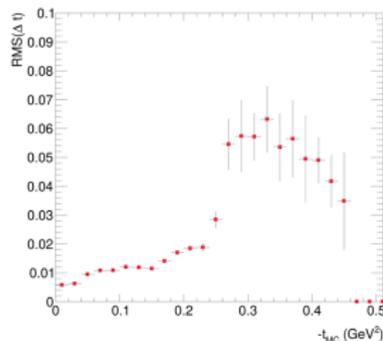
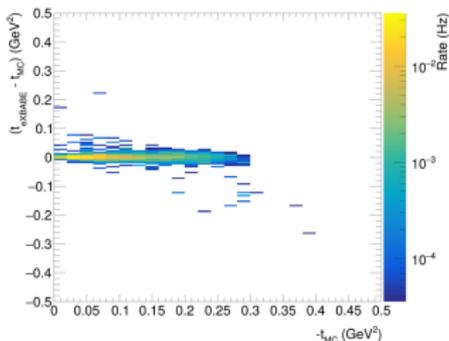
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- Want  $-t$  bins to be at least as wide as the  $-t$  resolution
- Bin migration will be a big issue otherwise
- Check  $-t$  resolution
  - Across full  $Q^2$  range and in distinct  $Q^2$  regions
- Take RMS value of slices of  $\Delta t = t_{eXBABE} - t_{MC}$  as a function of  $-t_{MC}$
- 10x130 across  $5 < Q_{DA}^2 < 35 \text{ GeV}^2$ , comfortably below 0.02 in lowest  $-t$  bins



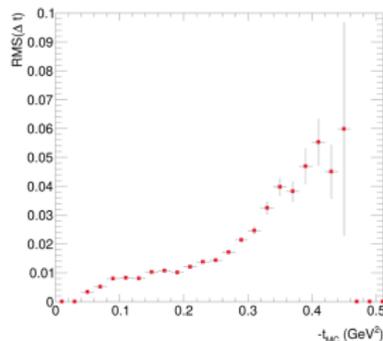
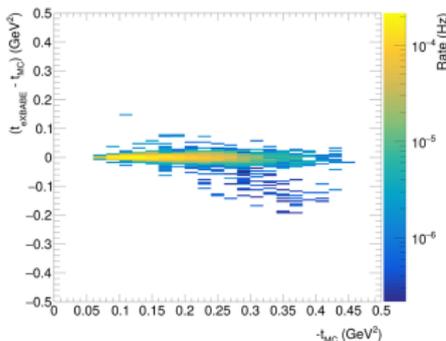
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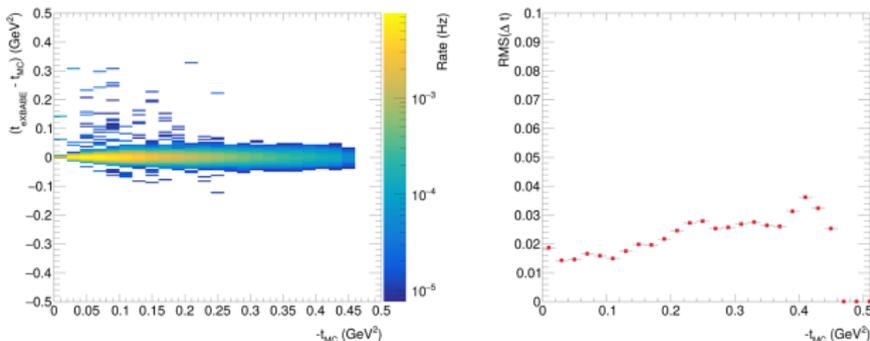
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- 10x130 across  $32 < Q_{DA}^2 < 33 \text{ GeV}^2$ ,  $-t_{min}$  migration clear,  $-t$  resolution very good



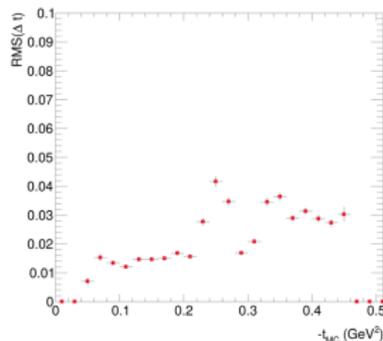
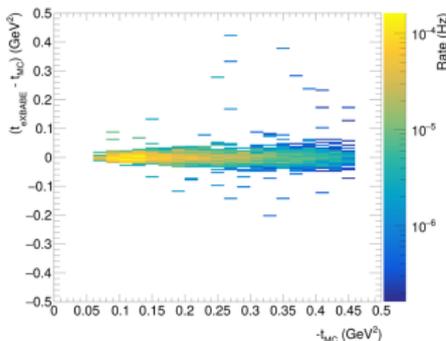
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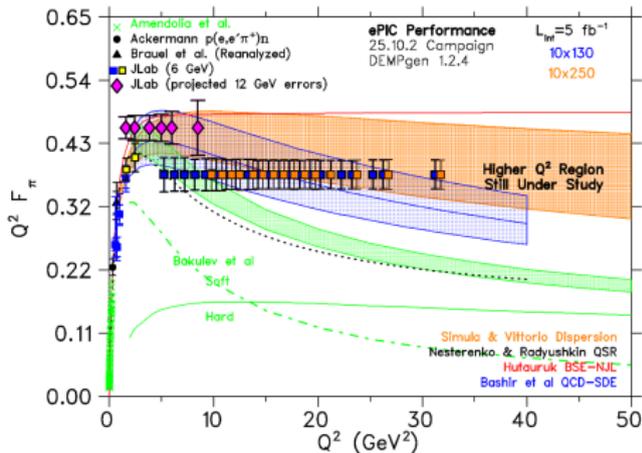


## $F_{\pi}$ Early Science Outlook

- With changes, how do things look for early science?

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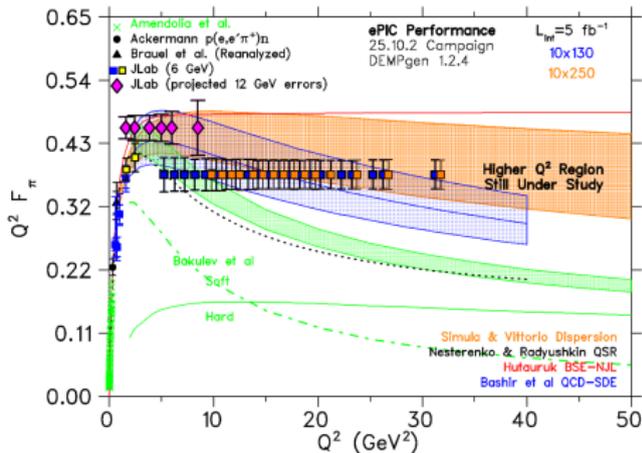
- With changes, how do things look for early science?
- $e\text{PIC} \rightarrow F_\pi$  to high  $Q^2$
- Error bars represent real projected error bars
  - Inner bar - statistical
  - Outer bar - systematic
  - $\delta R = R$ ,  $R = \sigma_L/\sigma_T$
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Projection plots by G.M. Huber, University of Regina

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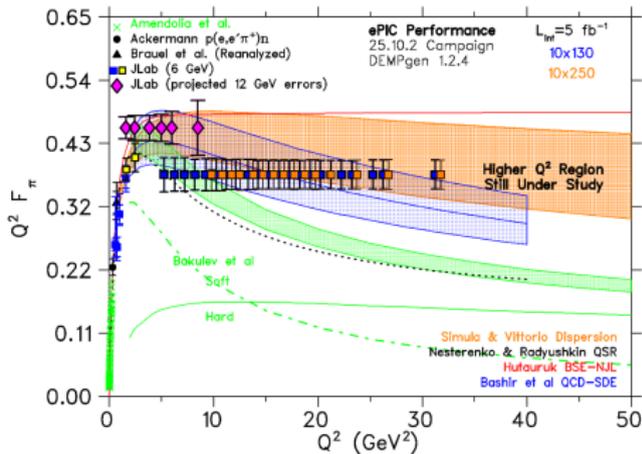
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  - Early science  $\int \mathcal{L}$ , looks promising!
  - How high in  $Q^2$  will be possible?
  - When do statistical limitations bite?



# DIS Background Studies

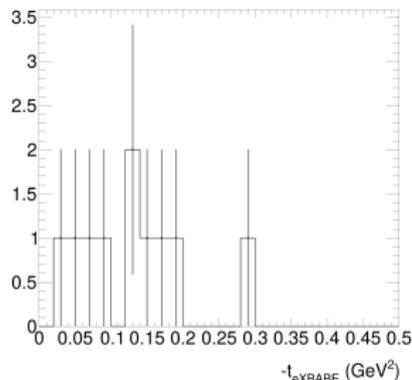
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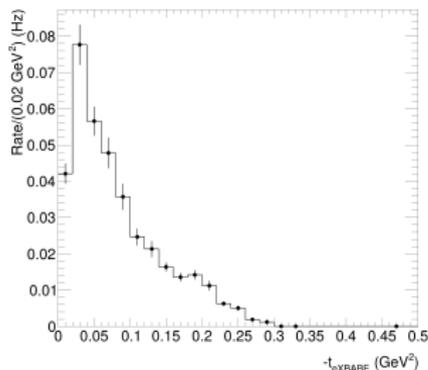
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- Bins of  $-Q^2$  and  $-t$
- $DIS\ 5 < Q^2 < 6$
- Very little leakthrough
- Even with scale factor of  $\sim 6400$ , not bad
- Probably an overestimate, majority in lower  $Q^2$  bins



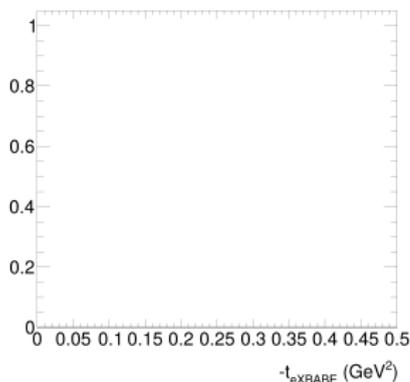
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- Bins of  $-Q^2$  and  $-t$
- **For comparison, Sullivan DEMP  $5 < Q^2 < 6$**
- Tail off as  $-t$  increases
- Note this is a rate in Hz...  
so also need to scale



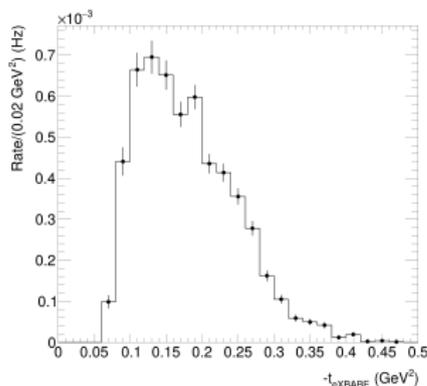
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- DIS  $32 < Q^2 < 33$
- Nothing here
- Scaling smaller ( $\sim 400$ ) in this region too



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- Bins of  $-Q^2$  and  $-t$
- Sullivan DEMP  
 $32 < Q^2 < 33$
- Rate falls strongly with  $Q^2$



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- ... including machine backgrounds, mixed event samples
  - **May need some modifications to DEMPgen to retain weights**

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  - Results for early science  $ep$  configs look very promising
  - Analysis note now available
- Sullivan process is a very good test of FF detector performance
  - Particularly the ZDC

# Thanks for listening, any questions?



UNIVERSITY

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of Regina



Science and  
Technology  
Facilities Council



With thanks to the Meson Structure Working Group

[stephen.kay@york.ac.uk](mailto:stephen.kay@york.ac.uk)

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