

## Splitting of elliptic flow in a tilted fireball

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The splitting of elliptic flow measured in different regions of the momentum space of produced hadrons has been recently studied in transport models and proposed as a sensitive probe of the angular momentum carried by the fireball produced in a relativistic heavy ion collision. The initial-state angular momentum also gives rise to rapidity-odd directed flow which has been measured. We consider a relativistic hydrodynamic framework with the initial matter distribution suitably calibrated to describe the observed directed flow and apply it to study the split in the elliptic flow. Our study suggests that the split in the elliptic flow is mostly driven by directed and triangular flows and may be used to constrain models of initial-state rapidity distribution of matter in the fireball.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The system of two noncentral colliding relativistic heavy ion nuclei carries large angular momentum. In the aftermath of the collision, a part of this angular momentum is deposited in the locally thermalized fireball. The hydrodynamic response results in fluid vorticity and possibly spin polarization which may be finally observed in the phase-space occupation and polarization states of the emitted particles [1–9].

There have been several attempts to model the initial longitudinal distribution of various hydrodynamic fields like the energy density and fluid velocity which after hydrodynamic evolution and hadronization can leave their imprint on different observables [4,6–26]. While for quite some time the rapidity dependence of directed flow has been used to discriminate such models of the initial three-dimensional matter distribution [10,11,23–26], recently it has been demonstrated that even polarization measurements of the final-state hadrons can constrain such ansatz of initial matter distribution [24,27].

It has been pointed out that the nonzero angular momentum of the fireball results in the splitting of elliptic flow in the momentum space of the final-state hadrons [28]. This makes the splitting of elliptic flow a sensitive observable to constrain models of the initial-state three-dimensional matter distribution of the fireball. In a subsequent work, it was argued that this splitting is mainly driven by the directed flow [29]. These studies were conducted in a transport model framework and they do not describe the data on directed flow [30]. This raises concern on their model prediction of the elliptic flow splitting.

The various models of the longitudinal profile of the fireball that have been explored so far can be broadly divided into two categories: shifted initial condition (SIC) [31] and tilted initial condition (TIC) [11]. In SIC, the rapidity profile at each

point on the transverse plane is shifted according to the local center-of-mass rapidity. TIC is inspired from the ansatz that a participant nucleon deposits more energy along its direction of motion [32–37]. It has been shown that SIC fails to describe the rapidity slope of directed flow at midrapidity in Au + Au at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$  GeV while TIC succeeds to describe the experimental data on directed flow, albeit with a free parameter  $\eta_m$  that parametrizes the forward-backward asymmetry in the energy deposition of a participant in the initial state [11]. In this study, we discuss the contrasting nature of the splitting of the elliptic flow in different regions of the momentum space for both SIC as well as TIC, underlying the significance of this observable in our efforts to comprehend the longitudinal dynamics of the fireball.

### II. INITIAL RAPIDITY PROFILE

We study Au + Au collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$  GeV. The initial condition for the hydrodynamic evolution of the fireball is obtained from the optical Glauber model. Here, the nucleus is modeled as a Woods-Saxon distribution  $\rho(x, y, z) = \rho_0/[1 + \exp(\frac{z-R}{a})]$  where  $r = (x^2 + y^2 + z^2)^{1/2}$ ,  $R = 6.38$  fm, and  $a = 0.535$  fm [38]. The  $z$  axis is taken along the beam axis while the  $x$  axis is along the impact-parameter direction. The nuclear thickness function  $T(x, y)$  is obtained as

$$T(x, y) = \int \rho(x, y, z) dz, \quad (1)$$

using which one can define the total forward-going ( $N_+$ ) and backward-going ( $N_-$ ) participants along the beam axis at a point  $(x, y)$  on the transverse plane,

$$N_+(x, y) = T(x - b/2, y) \{1 - [1 - \sigma_{NN} T(x + b/2, y)]\}, \quad (2)$$

$$N_-(x, y) = T(x + b/2, y) \{1 - [1 - \sigma_{NN} T(x - b/2, y)]\}. \quad (3)$$

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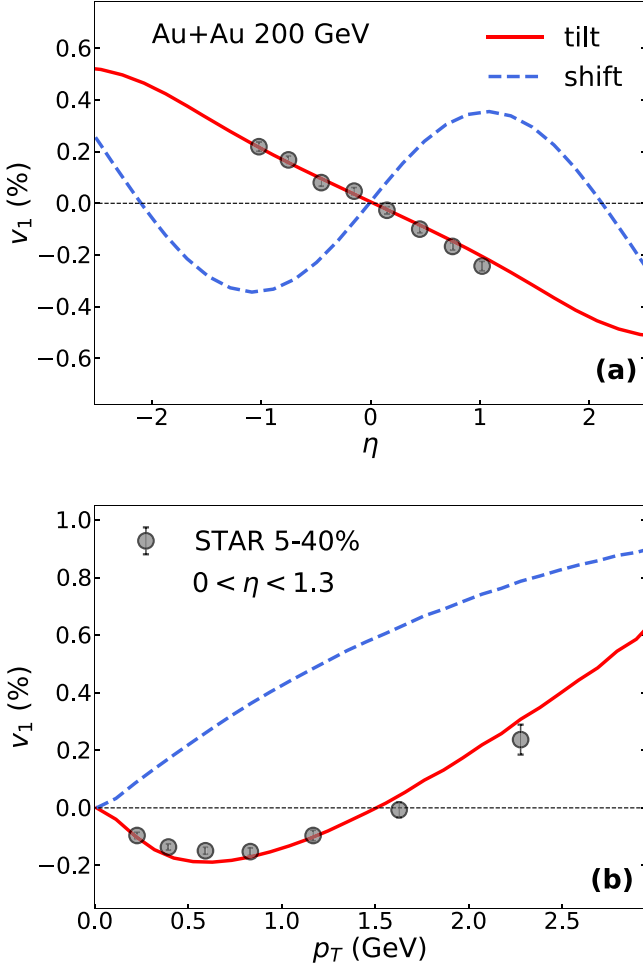


FIG. 1. Phase-space dependence of  $v_1$  is computed both for tilted initial condition (red solid line) and shifted initial condition (blue dashed line) for 5%–40% centrality Au + Au collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$  GeV. The model expectations are compared with measurements from the STAR Collaboration [30].  $v_1$  vs  $\eta$  is shown in panel (a) and  $v_1$  vs  $p_T$  is shown in panel (b).

We have compared between two models of  $\epsilon(x, y, \eta_s)$ , the initial energy density deposited at a constant  $\tau$  hypersurface at  $(x, y, \eta_s)$ : SIC [31] and TIC [11].

In case of SIC, the following ansatz is adopted for  $\epsilon(x, y, \eta_s)$ :

$$\epsilon(x, y, \eta_s) = \epsilon_0 \left\{ [N_+(x, y) + N_-(x, y)] \frac{(1 - \alpha)}{2} + N_{\text{coll}}(x, y) \alpha \right\} \epsilon_{\eta_s}[\eta_s - \eta_{sh}(x, y)], \quad (4)$$

where  $\epsilon_{\eta_s}[\eta_s - \eta_{sh}(x, y)]$  gives the  $\eta_s$  distribution at  $(x, y)$ :

$$\epsilon_{\eta_s}(\eta_s) = \exp \left( - \frac{(|\eta_s| - \eta_0)^2}{2\sigma_\eta^2} \theta(|\eta_s| - \eta_0) \right). \quad (5)$$

We have used  $\epsilon_0 = 13.2$  GeV/fm<sup>3</sup>,  $\alpha = 0.14$ ,  $\eta_0 = 1.3$ , and  $\sigma_\eta = 1.5$ , which provides a good description of the  $\eta$  –

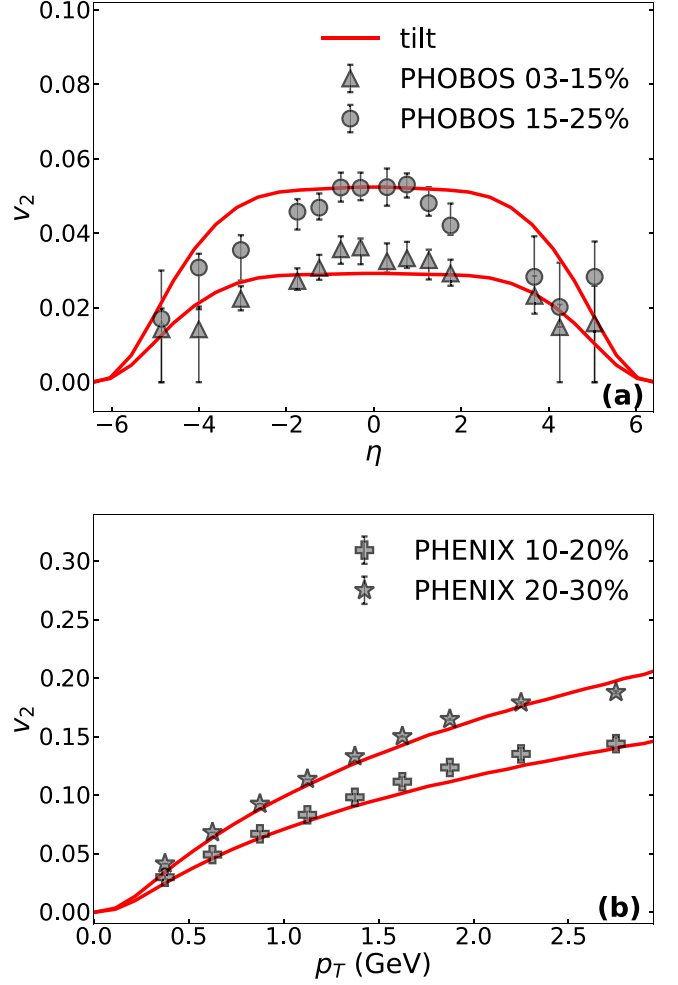


FIG. 2. Phase-space dependence of charged particle  $v_2$  is computed for tilted initial condition (red solid line) for Au + Au collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$  GeV. The model expectations are compared with measurements from the PHOBOS [53] and PHENIX [54] Collaborations.  $v_2$  vs  $\eta$  is shown in panel (a) and  $v_2$  vs  $p_T$  is shown in panel (b).

$dN_{ch}/d\eta$  data.  $\eta_{sh}(x, y)$  is given by

$$\eta_{sh} = \frac{1}{2} \ln \frac{N_+(x, y) + N_-(x, y) + v_N [N_+(x, y) - N_-(x, y)]}{N_+(x, y) + N_-(x, y) - v_N [N_+(x, y) - N_-(x, y)]}. \quad (6)$$

Here,  $v_N$  is the initial longitudinal velocity of each nucleon with mass  $m_N$ ,

$$v_N = \sqrt{1 - (4m_N^2)/(s_{NN})}. \quad (7)$$

The second initial condition that we have studied is the TIC. In this case  $\epsilon(x, y, \eta_s)$  is given by

$$\epsilon(x, y, \eta_s) = \epsilon_0 \{ [N_+(x, y) f_+(\eta_s) + N_-(x, y) f_-(\eta_s)] \times (1 - \alpha) + N_{\text{coll}}(x, y) \epsilon_{\eta_s}(\eta_s) \alpha \}, \quad (8)$$

where  $\epsilon_{\eta_s}(\eta_s)$  is the rapidity-even profile as given in Eq. (5) and  $f_+(\eta_s)$  and  $f_-(\eta_s)$  introduce a rapidity-odd

component in  $\epsilon$ :

$$\begin{aligned} f_+(\eta_s) &= \epsilon_{\eta_s}(\eta_s)\epsilon_F(\eta_s), \\ f_-(\eta_s) &= \epsilon_{\eta_s}(\eta_s)\epsilon_B(\eta_s), \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

where

$$\epsilon_F(\eta_s) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } \eta_s < -\eta_m \\ \frac{\eta_s + \eta_m}{2\eta_m} & \text{if } -\eta_m \leq \eta_s \leq \eta_m \\ 1 & \text{if } \eta_m < \eta_s, \end{cases} \quad (10)$$

and

$$\epsilon_B(\eta_s) = \epsilon_F(-\eta_s). \quad (11)$$

We have used  $\eta_m = 2.5$  to describe the directed flow data [30]. For both the initial conditions, we have assumed the Bjorken flow ansatz

$$u^\mu(\tau_0, x, y, \eta_s) = (\cosh \eta_s, 0, 0, \sinh \eta_s).$$

We evolve the above deposited initial energy distribution with the publicly available MUSIC code [39–42] which implements evolution within the framework of (3 + 1)-dimensional [(3 + 1)D] relativistic hydrodynamics followed by Cooper-Frye freeze-out at  $T = 150$  MeV and finally allowing all the resonances to decay to stable hadrons under strong interaction. Thus, we obtain the momentum-space probability distribution of hadrons using which we compute various observables. We consider the lattice QCD based equation of state, NEMO-B at zero baryon density [43–46] and take the shear viscosity  $\eta$  to entropy density  $s$  ratio,  $\eta/s = 0.08$ . We have ignored the effects of bulk viscosity.

### III. SPLITTING OF THE ELLIPTIC FLOW

The azimuthal distribution of the hadrons in the plane transverse to the beam axis can be expanded into Fourier components in the following way:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dN}{d\phi} &= \frac{1}{2\pi} \left( 1 + 2 \sum_n \{v_n \cos[n(\phi - \psi_{RP})] \right. \\ &\quad \left. + s_n \sin[n(\phi - \psi_{RP})] \right), \end{aligned} \quad (12)$$

where  $\psi_{RP}$  is the reaction plane angle in the laboratory frame.  $v_n$  and  $s_n$  are the Fourier coefficients that characterize the distribution.

There has been a recent proposal to measure the split  $\Delta v_2$  in  $v_2 = \langle \cos[2(\phi - \psi_{RP})] \rangle$ , as measured in different regions of the final hadron momentum space,

$$\Delta v_2 = v_2^R - v_2^L, \quad (13)$$

where  $v_2^R = \langle \cos[2(\phi^R - \psi_{RP})] \rangle$  with  $\phi^R \in ((\psi_{RP} - \pi/2), (\psi_{RP} + \pi/2))$  and  $v_2^L = \langle \cos[2(\phi^L - \psi_{RP})] \rangle$  with  $\phi^L \in ((\psi_{RP} + \pi/2), (\psi_{RP} + 3\pi/2))$ . Here,  $\langle \dots \rangle$  refers to averaging over the phase space of the produced hadrons.

$\psi_{RP}$  is not directly measurable in experiments. The second-order event plane orientation  $\psi_2$  and the first-order spectator plane  $\psi_{SP}$  have been proposed as good proxies for  $\psi_{RP}$  [47,48]. However, for the determination of  $\Delta v_2$ ,  $\psi_{SP}$  alone is suitable because  $\psi_2 = \pi$  is identified with  $\psi_2 = 0$  and hence

does not distinguish between the phase spaces associated with  $\phi^R$  and  $\phi^L$ . Recently, the event plane detector has been installed at large rapidities which can also be used to estimate  $\psi_{RP}$  [49].

$v_2^R$  and  $v_2^L$  work out to be the following [29]:

$$\begin{aligned} v_2^R &= \frac{\int_{\psi_{RP}-\frac{\pi}{2}}^{\psi_{RP}+\frac{\pi}{2}} \cos[2(\phi - \psi_{RP})] \frac{dN}{d\phi} d\phi}{\int_{\psi_{RP}-\frac{\pi}{2}}^{\psi_{RP}+\frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{dN}{d\phi} d\phi} \\ &\approx \frac{v_2 + \frac{4v_1}{3\pi} + \frac{12v_3}{5\pi} - \frac{20v_5}{21\pi}}{1 + \frac{4v_1}{\pi} - \frac{4v_3}{3\pi} + \frac{4v_5}{5\pi}}, \quad (14) \\ v_2^L &= \frac{\int_{\psi_{RP}+\frac{\pi}{2}}^{\psi_{RP}+\frac{3\pi}{2}} \cos[2(\phi - \psi_{RP})] \frac{dN}{d\phi} d\phi}{\int_{\psi_{RP}+\frac{\pi}{2}}^{\psi_{RP}+\frac{3\pi}{2}} \frac{dN}{d\phi} d\phi} \\ &\approx \frac{v_2 - \frac{4v_1}{3\pi} - \frac{12v_3}{5\pi} + \frac{20v_5}{21\pi}}{1 - \frac{4v_1}{\pi} + \frac{4v_3}{3\pi} - \frac{4v_5}{5\pi}}. \quad (15) \end{aligned}$$

In Eqs. (14) and (15) we have omitted contributions from harmonics higher than the fifth order. Furthermore, from Eqs. (13)–(15) we get

$$\Delta v_2 \approx \frac{8v_1}{3\pi} + \frac{24v_3}{5\pi} - \frac{40v_5}{21\pi}. \quad (16)$$

In Eq. (16) only terms which are linear in the flow harmonics have been shown because they are sufficient to estimate  $\Delta v_2$ . Thus,  $\Delta v_2$  is sourced mainly by the odd flow harmonics. It is important to note here that all the  $v_n$  coefficients have been defined with respect to  $\psi_{RP}$ , which is different from the usual definition where they are defined with respect to the respective event planes [29]. Particularly, in case of  $v_3$ , the third-order event plane is mostly uncorrelated with  $\psi_{RP}$  [50,51].

The collision geometry is such that these odd flow harmonics have rapidity-odd components with respect to the reaction plane. Hence,  $\Delta v_2$  is also rapidity odd following the odd flow harmonics which is also evident from Eq. (13). There has been measurement of directed flow with respect to  $\psi_{SP}$  [30]. The optical Glauber model with TIC followed by hydrodynamic expansion is able to describe the  $v_1$  measurement at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$  GeV for Au + Au collisions [11]. Here, we use similar TIC within an optical Glauber model followed by hydrodynamic expansion to compute the model expectation for  $\Delta v_2$ . We expect similar results on including fluctuations in the initial condition [52].

### IV. RESULTS

We now present the prediction for  $\Delta v_2$  with respect to the reaction plane as computed with TIC as well as SIC. As seen in Eq. (16), the leading contributions to  $\Delta v_2$  arise from the odd harmonics, out of which there are STAR measurements on  $v_1$  with respect to the spectator plane [30]. Thus, we first compare the model results with the STAR data for  $v_1$  in Fig. 1. We have plotted the model expectations for  $v_1 - \eta$  and  $v_1 - p_T$  in Figs. 1(a) and 1(b), respectively and compare them to the STAR measurements [30]. The model results have been shown for both TIC (red solid line) as well as those from SIC

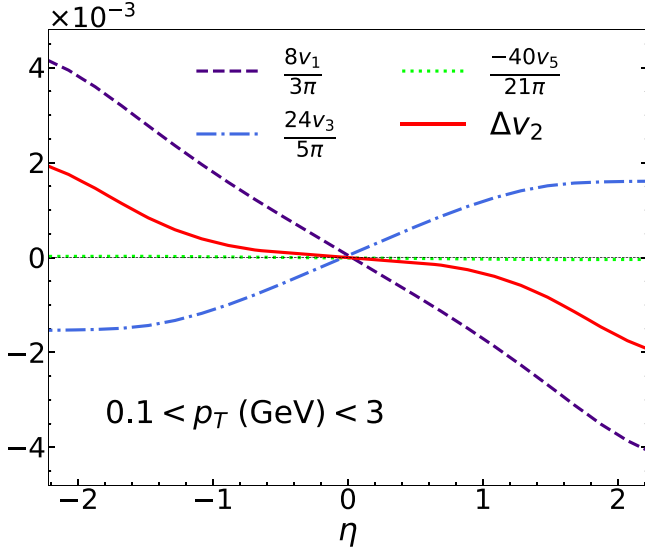


FIG. 3. The prediction for  $\Delta v_2$  vs  $\eta$  with tilt initial condition has been plotted with a red solid line. Furthermore, the first three leading flow harmonics that contribute to  $\Delta v_2$  [see Eq. (16)] are shown as well.

(dashed blue line). We find that, for both  $v_1 - \eta$  and  $v_1 - p_T$ , the TIC is able to describe the STAR data well while the SIC fails. This is in agreement with earlier studies [11,26]. Furthermore, we also show the good agreement between the TIC and data [53,54] on the  $\eta$  and  $p_T$  dependence of charged particle  $v_2$  in Fig. 2. Thus, we expect the TIC to provide a reliable prediction of  $\Delta v_2$ .

The good description of  $v_1$  and  $v_2$  by the TIC motivates us further to compute  $\Delta v_2$  vs  $\eta$  within the same scheme. In Fig. 3 we show the model predictions for the  $\eta$  dependence of  $\Delta v_2$ . Furthermore, we also plot the odd harmonics along with appropriate coefficients, as suggested by Eq. (16); these are the dominant contributors to  $\Delta v_2$ . First, we note that  $\Delta v_2$  arises as a competition between  $8v_1/3\pi$  and  $24v_3/5\pi$  because they are of opposite signs. The  $8v_1/3\pi$  term marginally wins and hence  $\Delta v_2$  follows its sign. For  $|\eta| < 1$ ,  $\Delta v_2 \approx 10^{-4}$  and grows substantially for larger  $\eta$ . The contribution from  $v_5$  is negligible in the entire  $\eta$  range.

The  $p_T$  dependence is shown in Fig. 4. The predictions for  $0 < \eta < 1.3$  and  $1.3 < \eta < 2.5$  are shown separately in Figs. 4(a) and 4(b), respectively. As expected from the  $\eta$  dependence, the magnitude of the split is larger in the  $1.3 < \eta < 2.5$ , otherwise, the trends are similar.  $\Delta v_2$  is negative for small  $p_T$ . There is a turning point around  $p_T \approx 0.4$  GeV after which it crosses zero at  $p_T \approx 1$  GeV and monotonically rises. This  $p_T$  dependence of  $\Delta v_2$  is mainly borrowed from  $v_1$ , which also has a similar trend, unlike  $v_3$  which remains positive for all  $p_T$ . It is interesting to note that, for  $p_T > 1.5$  GeV,  $v_3$  becomes the dominant contributor.

Furthermore, we present a comparative study of  $\Delta v_2$  computed with TIC and SIC in Fig. 5. The results on the  $\eta$  dependence of  $\Delta v_2$  are presented in Fig. 5(a) while the  $p_T$  dependence is plotted in Fig. 5(b). As seen in Fig. 5(a), for  $|\eta| < 1$ ,  $\Delta v_2$  is around 10–20 times larger in SIC as compared

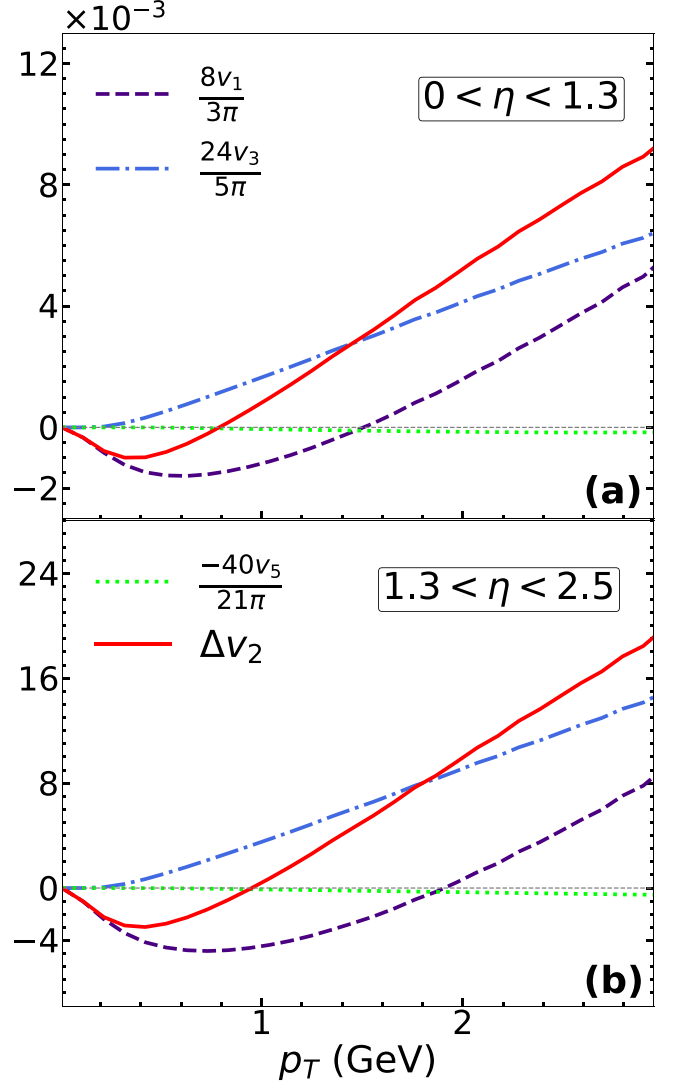


FIG. 4. The prediction for  $\Delta v_2$  vs  $p_T$  with tilt initial condition has been plotted with a red solid line. Furthermore, the first three leading flow harmonics that contribute to  $\Delta v_2$  [see Eq. (16)] are shown as well.

with the TIC. Furthermore, they are of opposite signs—at positive rapidities while the SIC gives a positive  $\Delta v_2$ , the TIC yields a negative  $\Delta v_2$ . This may be traced to the fact that  $v_1$  is of opposite sign in the two models. Furthermore, from Fig. 5(b) we note that the origin of this opposite sign is from the low- $p_T$  region because, for  $p_T > 1.5$  GeV, both models yield positive values. While we noted earlier that  $\Delta v_2$  results out of tension between  $v_1$  and  $v_3$  in the TIC, in the SIC we find that it is mostly controlled by  $v_1$  as  $v_3$  turns out to be small in this case. It is worth noting here that an earlier study of  $\Delta v_2$  within the transport framework of the AMPT model had similar conclusions as the results here with SIC [29]. Thus, the characteristics of  $\Delta v_2$  can serve as a sensitive probe of rapidity-dependent initial conditions of the fireball.

It is well known that the various model systematics of the transverse initial condition can result in the variation of  $v_2$  [55–57]. Such model dependencies can creep into our pre-

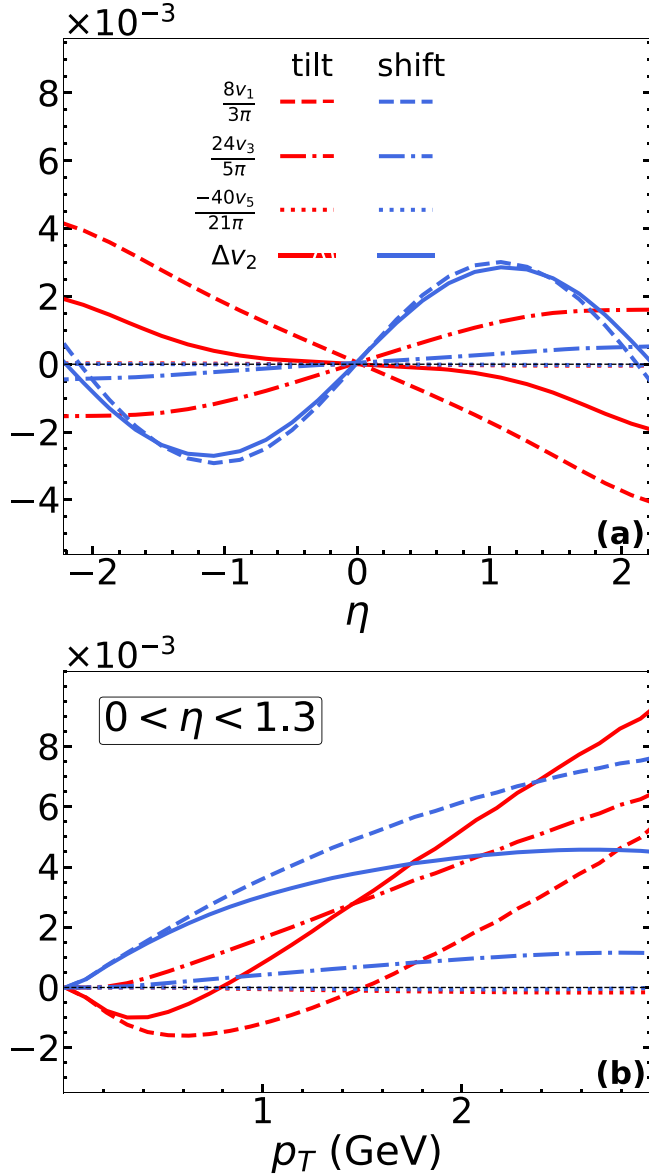


FIG. 5. The predictions for phase-space dependence of  $\Delta v_2$  has been compared between tilted initial condition and shifted initial condition. Furthermore, the first three leading flow harmonics that contribute to  $\Delta v_2$  are also shown for each model to understand the origin in the difference of their phase-space dependence of  $\Delta v_2$ .  $\Delta v_2$  vs  $\eta$  is shown in panel (a) and  $\Delta v_2$  vs  $p_T$  is shown in panel (b).

dictions of  $\Delta v_2$  as well. We suggest to scale  $\Delta v_2$  with  $v_2$  in order to cancel out such systematics of the transverse initial condition which are not of interest here. We present the results of  $\Delta v_2$  scaled by  $v_2$  in Fig. 6. The  $\eta$  dependence is plotted in Fig. 6(a).  $|\Delta v_2/v_2|$  stays below 0.005 for  $|\eta| < 1$  beyond which it has a rapid linear growth. The  $p_T$  differential values are plotted in Fig. 6(b). We obtain about 3% and 5%  $\Delta v_2/v_2$  at  $p_T \approx 1.5$  GeV for  $0 < \eta < 1.3$  and  $1.3 < \eta < 2.5$ , respectively. The ratio of phase-space integrated  $\Delta v_2$  and  $v_2$ ,  $\Delta v_2/v_2$  comes out to be  $-0.0019$  and  $-0.0268$  for  $0 < \eta < 1.3$  and  $1.3 < \eta < 2.5$ , respectively.

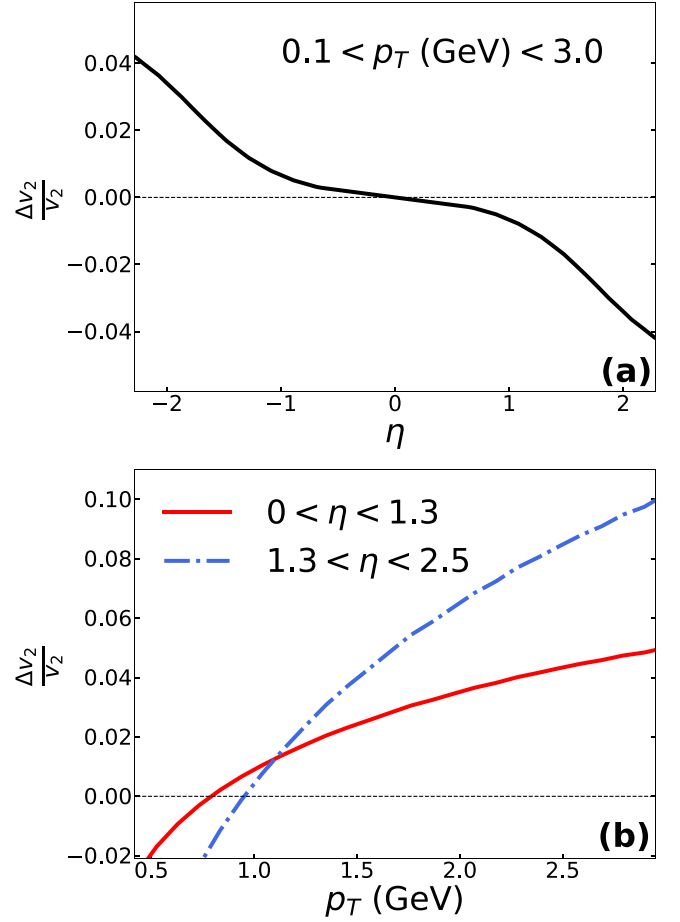


FIG. 6. The predictions for phase-space dependence of  $\Delta v_2/v_2$  has been shown for tilt initial condition. Panel (a) shows the  $\eta$  dependence while panel (b) shows the  $p_T$  dependence.

## V. SUMMARY

The collision geometry of a noncentral relativistic heavy ion collision introduces a large angular momentum in its initial state. Rapidity-odd directed flow is a natural consequence of this. Such observables probe the longitudinal profile of the fireball. Recently, it has been observed that such large angular momentum in the initial state also causes a split in the magnitude of  $v_2$ ,  $\Delta v_2$  in different regions of the final-state hadron momentum space—parallel and antiparallel to the impact-parameter direction [28,29].  $\Delta v_2$  has been proposed to be a sensitive probe of the initial rapidity profile of the fireball. A transport model framework was adopted in these works that do not describe the  $v_1$  data.

In this work, we have revisited the estimation of  $\Delta v_2$  within a (3 + 1)D relativistic hydrodynamic framework with tilted initial condition that is known to describe the  $v_1$  data [11]. We find  $v_1$  to be the leading contributor to  $\Delta v_2$ , as was reported in earlier studies. However, unlike in those transport model based studies, we find that the tilted initial condition gives rise to sizeable rapidity-odd  $v_3$  which also contributes significantly to  $\Delta v_2$ , particularly for  $p_T > 1.5$  GeV, it becomes the dominant contributor to  $\Delta v_2$ . To demonstrate the sensitivity of



$\Delta v_2$  to the choice of the initial condition, we have computed  $\Delta v_2$  also with shifted initial condition. In this case, similar to the earlier studies,  $v_3$  comes out to be negligible and hence  $\Delta v_2$  gets contribution dominantly from  $v_1$ . The  $\eta$  dependence of  $\Delta v_2$  is of opposite sign for titled versus shifted initial conditions owing to the opposite signs of their  $v_1$ . Finally, we have also presented the ratio of  $\Delta v_2$  to  $v_2$  so as to get rid of the various model uncertainties that affect  $v_2$  and hence also  $\Delta v_2$ : for  $p_T \approx 1.5$  GeV we obtain  $\Delta v_2/v_2 \approx 3\%$  and  $5\%$

for  $0 < \eta < 1.3$  and  $1.3 < \eta < 2.5$ , respectively. Our study demonstrates that  $\Delta v_2$  can play a complementary role to  $v_1$  in constraining the rapidity profile of the fireball.

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