

The GLUEX Start Counter Detector

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Abstract

The design, fabrication, calibration, and performance of the GLUEX Start Counter detector is described. The Start Counter detector was designed to operate at photon intensities of up to $10^8 \gamma/\text{s}$ in the coherent peak and provides a timing resolution of $\approx 250 \text{ ps}$ thus providing successful identification of the photon beam buckets to more than 99% accuracy. Furthermore, the Start Counter detector provides excellent solid angle coverage, $\sim 90\%$ of 4π hermeticity, a high degree of segmentation for background rejection, and is utilized in the level 1 trigger for the experiment. It consists of a cylindrical array of 30 thin scintillators with pointed ends that bend towards the beam at the downstream end. Magnetic field insensitive silicon photomultiplier detectors were selected as the readout system.

Keywords: Attenuation, F1 TDC, Flash 250 MHz ADC, GLUEX, Multi-Pixel Photon Counter, Particle Identification, Plastic Scintillator, Polishing Scintillators, Propagation Time, Silicon Photomultiplier, Time of Flight, Time-walk, Trigger

1. Introduction

The GLUEX experiment, staged in Hall D at the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility (TJNAF), primarily aims to study the spectrum of photo-produced mesons with unprecedented statistics. The coherent bremsstrahlung technique is implemented to produce a linearly polarized photon beam incident on a liquid H₂ target. A Start Counter detector was fabricated to properly identify the photon beam buckets and to provide accurate timing information.

2. Design

In this section we discuss the details of the GLUEX Start Counter design. The general engineering specifics pertaining to the scintillators, support structure, detector readout system and electronics are discussed.

2.1. Overview

The Start Counter (ST) detector, seen in Fig. 1, surrounds a 30 cm long super cooled liquid H₂ target while providing $\sim 90\%$ of 4π solid angle coverage relative to the target center. The primary

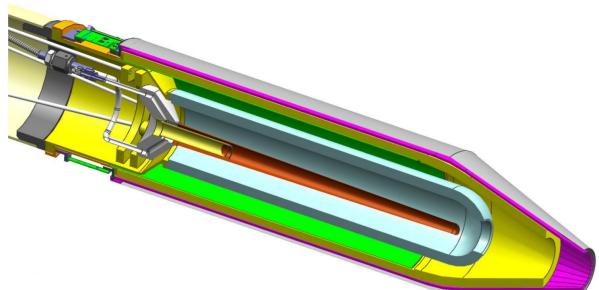


Figure 1: The GLUEX Start Counter mounted to the LH₂ target.

purpose of the ST detector is, in coincidence with the tagger, to properly identify the photon beam bucket associated with detected particles produced by linearly polarized photons incident on the target. It is designed to operate at tagged photon intensities of up to $10^8 \gamma/\text{s}$ in the coherent peak. More-

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over, the ST has a high degree of segmentation for
 30 background rejection, is utilized in particle identification, and is a primary component of the level 1 trigger of the GLUEX experiment during high luminosity running[1].

The ST detector consists of an array of 30 scintillators with pointed ends that bend towards the beam at the downstream end. EJ-200 scintillator
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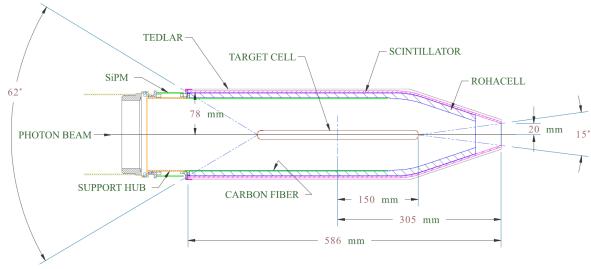


Figure 2: Labeled 2-D cross section of the Start Counter detector.

material from Eljen Technology[2], which has a decay time of 2.1 ns and a long attenuation length[3], was selected for this application. The amount of support structure material was kept to an absolute minimum in the active region of the detector and is made up of low density Rohacell[4]. Silicon Photomultiplier (SiPM) detectors were selected as the readout system. The detectors are not affected by the high magnetic field produced by the superconducting solenoid magnet. Moreover, the SiPMs were placed as close as possible to the upstream end of each scintillator element, thereby minimizing the loss of scintillation light[1].
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2.2. Scintillator Paddles

Each individual paddle of the Start Counter was machined from a long, thin, EJ-200 scintillator bar that was diamond milled to be 600 mm in length, 3 mm thick, and 20 ± 2 mm wide, by Eljen Technology. Each scintillator was bent around a highly polished aluminum drum by applying localized infrared heating to the bend region. The bent scintillator bars were then sent to McNeal Enterprises Inc.[5], a plastic fabrication company, where they were machined to the desired geometry illustrated in Fig. 3.
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The paddles consist of three sections and are described from the upstream to the downstream end of the target. The straight section is 39.5 cm in length while being oriented parallel to both the target cell and beamline. The bend region is a
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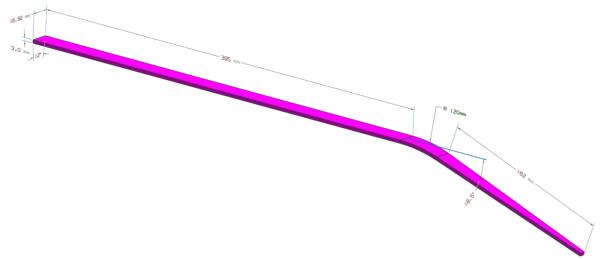


Figure 3: Start Counter single paddle geometry

18.5° arc of radius 120 cm and is downstream of the straight section. The tapered nose region is downstream of the target chamber and bends towards the beam line such that the tip of the nose is at a radial distance of 2 cm from the beam line.
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After the straight scintillator bar was bent to the desired geometry, the two flat surfaces that are oriented orthogonal to the wide, top and bottom, surfaces were cut at a 6° angle. During this process, the width of the top and bottom surfaces of the straight section were machined to be 16.92 mm and 16.29 mm wide respectively. Thus, each of the paddles may be rotated 12° with respect to the paddle that preceded it so that they form a cylindrical shape with a conical end. This geometrical design for the ST increases solid angle coverage while minimizing multiple scattering.
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2.3. Support Structure

The ST scintillator paddles are placed atop a low density Rohacell ($\rho = 0.075 \text{ g/cm}^3$) foam support structure which envelopes the target vacuum chamber seen in Fig. 4. The Rohacell, which is 11 mm
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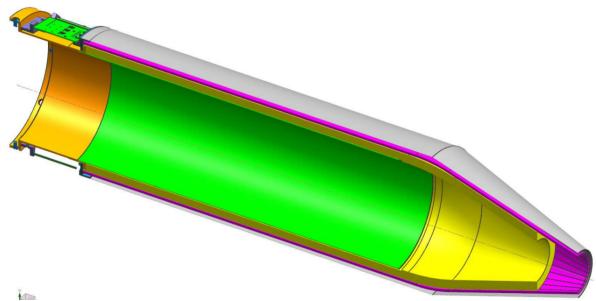


Figure 4: Cross section of the Start Counter support structure.

thick, is rigidly attached to the upstream support chassis and extends down the length of paddles however, not to include the last few centimeters of
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the conical nose section. Glued to the inner diameter of the Rohacell support structure are 3 layers of carbon fiber ($\rho = 1.523 \text{ g/cm}^3$) each of which are 95 $650 \mu\text{m}$ thick. A cross section of the ST can be seen in Fig. 4 where the carbon fiber is visible. The carbon fiber provides additional support during the assembly process as well as long term rigidity.

The various layers of material that comprise the ST support structure is illustrated in Fig. 5. In

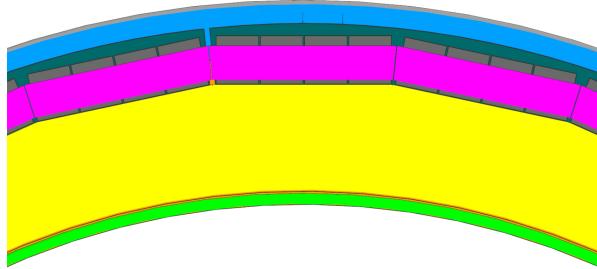


Figure 5: Start Counter materials. Neon green corresponds to the 3 layers of carbon fiber, orange is the upstream support chassis, yellow is the Rohacell support structure, and magenta is the scintillator paddles. The gray squares are the individual SiPM detectors, dark green is the ST1 PCBs, blue is the light tightening collar, and the light-gray is Tedlar.

order to ensure that the detector was light-tight, a plastic collar was placed around the top of the SiPMs at the upstream end as seen in Fig. 5. The collar served as a lip to which a cylindrical sheet 100 of black Tedlar was taped too. At the tip of the nose, a cone of Tedlar was then connected to the aforementioned cylindrical section. To make the downstream end of the ST light-tight, another cone 105 of Tedlar was taped to the nose of the inner Rohacell support structure and then attached to the top Tedlar cone layer.

2.4. SiPM Readout Detectors

Each scintillator bar was read out using magnetic field insensitive Hamamatsu S10931-050P multi-115 pixel photon counters (MPPCs)[6]. An individual $3 \times 3 \text{ mm}^2$ MPPC, also known as a SiPM, in the aforementioned configuration is comprised of 3600 individual, $50 \times 50 \mu\text{m}^2$, Avalanche Photo-Diode (APD) pixel counters operating in Geiger mode. 120 The signal output from each SiPM is the total sum of the outputs from all 3600 APD pixels[7]. The scintillation light from an individual scintillator bar is collected by an array of four of these SiPMs.

The SiPM detectors are housed in a ceramic case 125 which is surface mounted to a custom fabricated

printed circuit board (PCB). The PCB is held in a fixed position while being attached to the lip of the upstream chassis *via* two screws as illustrated in Fig. 6. The individual ST scintillators are coupled *via* an air gap ($< 250 \mu\text{m}$) to groups of four SiPMs set in a circular arrangement as can be seen in Fig. 6.



Figure 6: ST1 of Start Counter readout system. The ST1's are rigidly attached to the upstream support chassis. Approximately 72% of the scintillator light is collected at the upstream end. The red box indicates a group of 4 SiPM detectors which are summed to readout a single scintillator paddle.

2.5. Readout Electronics

The SiPMs reading out one individual paddle, are current summed prior to pre-amplification. The 135 output of each preamp is then split; buffered for the analog to digital converter (ADC) output, and amplified for the time to digital converter (TDC) output by a factor five relative to the ADC. The ADC outputs are readout by JLab VME64x 250 MHz Flash ADC modules while the TDC outputs are input into JLab leading edge discriminators, followed by a high resolution 32 channel JLab VME64x F1TDC V2 module. Furthermore, each group of 140 four SiPMs utilizes a thermocouple for temperature monitoring. There are 120 SiPMs in total, for a total of 30 pre-amplifier channels as seen Fig. 7.

There are three components that comprise the ST detector readout system. The first component 150 (ST1), will collect light from three paddles individually and consists of 3 groups of 4 SiPMs as can be seen in Fig. 6. In order to fit the geometry of the 155 30 paddle design, one group of SiPM's is rotated by 12° relative to the central group, while the other adjacent group is rotated by -12° . The ST1 implements the current sum and bias distribution for each group of 4 SiPMs. It also has a thermocouple for temperature monitoring.

The second component (ST2), seen in Fig. 8, 160 houses the signal processing electronics of the read-

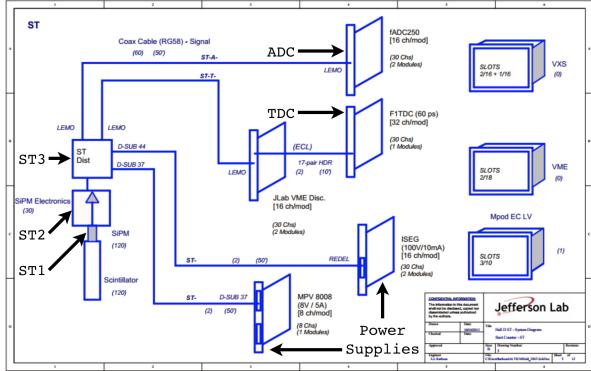


Figure 7: Start counter readout electronics diagram.

out system. It has 3 channels of pre-amplifiers, 3

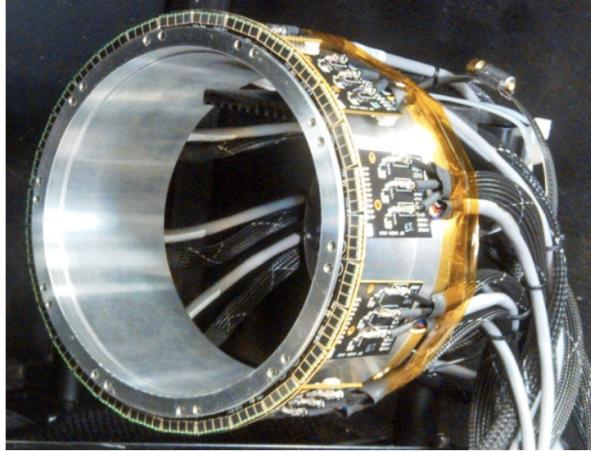


Figure 8: Fully assembled ST readout system.

buffers, and 3 factor-five amplifiers. Furthermore, it has 3 bias distribution channels with individual temperature compensation *via* thermistors.

The third component of the readout system (ST3) seen in Fig. 9, provides the interface to the power and bias supplies. It also routes the ADC and TDC outputs as well as the thermocouple output. The ST3 connects to the ST2 *via* a signal cable assembly seen in Fig. 8 and Fig. 9. The ST3 is installed upstream of the Start Counter and next to the beam pipe.

3. Simulation

In this section, Monte Carlo (MC) simulations of the performance and characteristics of machined scintillators are discussed. These studies were performed using the GEANT4 tool-kit which simulates



Figure 9: Start counter ST3 readout system.

the passage of particles through matter [8]. Comparisons are made with data observed in experiments conducted on the bench in Sec. 5.2 and with beam data in Sec. 7.

3.1. Simulating a Simplified Model of the ST

As discussed in Sec. 2.2, the ST scintillator paddles have a unique geometry in which the nose section tapers in width as the paddles approach the beam line at the downstream end. This tapering effect results in a unique phenomenon in which the light output of the scintillator paddle begins to increase as the source moves further away from the readout detector. This phenomenon is completely contrary to what one might expect. In the traditional sense when the source moves further away from the end being readout, the photons have a larger effective path length and thus, have an increased probability in being lost for detection. However, this is antithetical relative to what is observed on the bench and in Hall-D.

A simple GEANT4 simulation was conducted to investigate the aforementioned phenomenon. The details of the simulation are discussed in Ref. [1]. Only the two trapezoidal regions of a machined scintillator paddle were considered. Namely, the wide straight section and the tapered nose section which are illustrated in the GEANT4 event display seen in Fig. 10.

In order to sample the entirety of the two sections, 10,000 optical photons were generated at 16 different locations inside the medium of the scintillator. The photon energies ranged between 0.5–3.0 eV [9] and were generated randomly in 4π along a 3 mm path (y -axis) in the scintillator medium. The path was oriented orthogonal to the wide surface of the scintillator. The number of photons collected by the SiPM at each of the source locations was

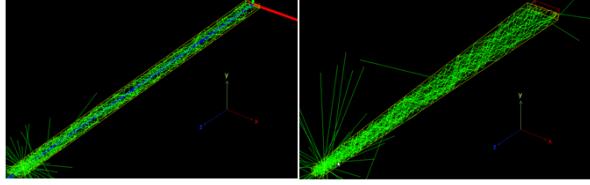


Figure 10: 100 Optical photons generated in the straight & nose sections. Left: wide straight section. Right: tapered nose section. The neon green lines are the paths of the optical photons. It is clear that some photons do in fact escape the scintillator medium, while others are collected in the simulated SiPM detector.

counted and correlated to the source location. The results can be seen in Fig. 11.

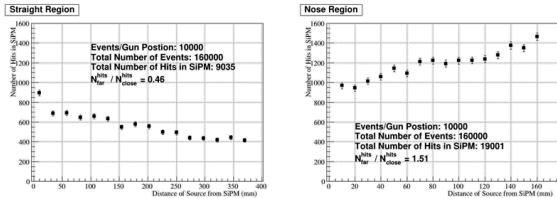


Figure 11: Simulation results for simplified two section scenario. The total number of photons which were collected by the SiPM detector at each of the 16 source locations is plotted against the sources distance from the sensitive detector. Left: wide straight section. Right: tapered nose section.

From the data it is clear that the geometry of the nose section results in an improvement of light collection as the source moves further away from the readout detector. In fact, there is a factor $\approx 1/2$ light loss observed in the straight section upon comparing the number of hits collected at the closest and furthest locations relative to the readout detector. However, there is factor $\approx 3/2$ light gain observed in the nose region.

These results are primarily due to the tapering trapezoidal geometry in the nose section. This phenomenon is not observed in the quasi-rectangular straight section as it exhibits a more conventional behavior. However, this behavior in the nose region is advantageous since the majority of forward going charged particles will traverse through the this region.

3.2. Simulating Machined Scintillator Geometry

Further simulations were conducted to simulate more realistically the effects of light collection that results from the ST scintillator geometry and optical surface quality. The ST scintillator geometry

was imported into GEANT4 from a Vectorworks CAD drawing utilizing the CADMesh utility [10] and is shown via the GEANT4 event display in Fig. 12. The SiPM was constructed as a $12 \times 12 \times 10\text{mm}^3$

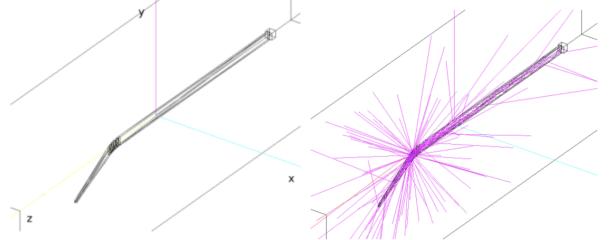


Figure 12: Scintillator geometry imported into GEANT4 utilizing the CADMesh Utility. The scintillator is coupled to a SiPM detector. Left: isometric view. Right: isometric view with 100 optical photons being generated in the middle of the bend section. The tapering of the nose section is clearly visible.

volume with a $100\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ air gap between it and the wide end of the straight section. Furthermore, the volume surrounding the scintillator volume was air. The EJ-200 scintillator material, SiPM silicon detector, and optical photons were defined in an identical manner discussed in Sec. 3.1.

To simulate the imperfections of the scintillator surfaces due to manufacturing and machining, an optical surface “skin” was defined. The “skin” material was defined to be of the type “dielectric-dielectric” and made use of the UNIFIED physics model [11] to define an imperfect scintillator surface. Both the transmission efficiency and reflection parameters were implemented as free parameters to study their various effects on light transmission.

The UNIFIED model allows one to define the finish of the scintillator surface as *polished*, *ground*, or *unified* and is illustrated in Fig. 13 [11]. The details

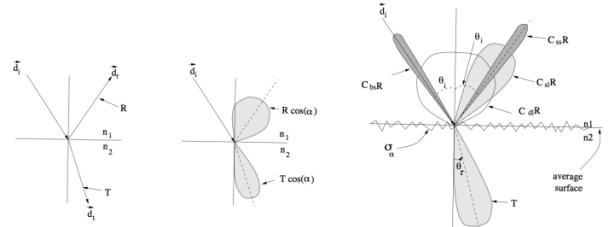


Figure 13: UNIFIED Model of scintillator surfaces. Left: Polar plot of the radiant intensity of the polished (left) and ground (right) models. Right: Polar plot of the radiant intensity in the UNIFIED model.

of the UNIFIED model parameters are discussed in detail in Ref. [1].

As was done in section 3.1, 10,000 optical photons were generated in the scintillator medium every 2.5 cm and the number of hits collected in the SiPM were recorded. The results of these simulations are show in Fig. 14.

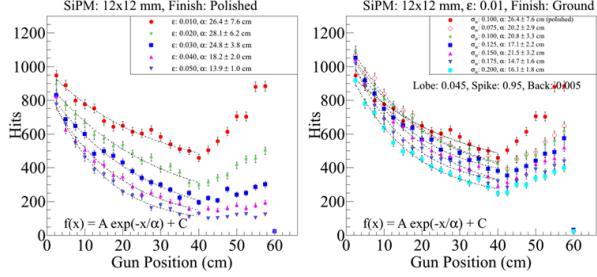


Figure 14: UNIFIED Model results. Left: polished model while varying the transmission efficiency. Right: ground model with varying σ_α which characterizes the standard deviation of the surfaces micro-facet orientation.

It is clear that if the transmission efficiency is increased while assuming a polished surface, the amount of light collected in the SiPM also increases as illustrated in Fig. 14. Similarly, as the number of micro-facet orientations increase, meaning a more coarsely ground surface, the amount of light collection in the SiPM decreases. Moreover, in the instances where the surface quality of the machined scintillators are good, the phenomenon of light increase in the nose region as the source moves further from the readout detector is observed.

4. Misalignment Studies

In order to protect both the active area of the SiPMs and the scintillator surface at the upstream end, a small air gap was necessary between these two surfaces. Similarly, during assembly the scintillator paddles were also shimmed radially such that the top edge of the scintillator was level with the top edge of the active area of the SiPM thereby maximizing light collection. In this section we discuss the relative alignment of a machined scintillator paddle and a SiPM readout detector array and its effects on light collection and time resolution,

4.1. Experimental Set-up

A custom fabricated test stand, further discussed in Sec. 5.2, and a polished scintillator machined to the nominal ST geometry, were utilized for the misalignment studies. The readout SiPM sat atop a Newport MT-XYZ (MT) compact dovetail XYZ

linear translation stage[13] with three fine adjustment screws consisting of 80 threads per inch. Each knob for the three axes provides a translation of 318 μm per rotation. For each location of the SiPM, the source and trigger PMT were located 24.5 cm downstream from the readout end.

Utilizing an Edmund Optics complementary metal oxide semiconductor (CMOS) camera, the vertical alignment and coupling distance of the active area of the SiPM and scintillator were measured with 25 μm accuracy. A micrometer, with

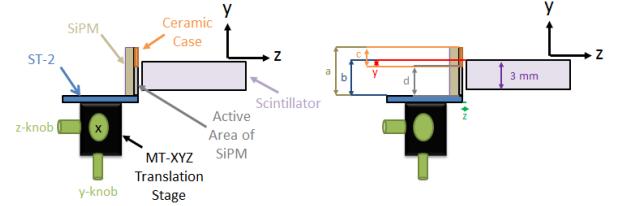


Figure 15: Optics setup for misalignment studies. Left: labelled cartoon of SiPM & scintillator vertical alignment. Right: variables used to quantify the intentional misalignment. The misalignment parameters of particular interest in the schematic are y & z

25 μm resolution, was utilized in order to cross check the optical measurements and to provide absolute measurements of fixed distances in the experimental set-up. Further details of the experimental set-up are discussed in Ref. [1].

4.2. Vertical Alignment of SiPM & Scintillator

In order to measure the time resolution at various vertical alignment configurations, the scintillator remained fixed while the SiPM scanned across the upstream end of the scintillator. The coupling distance between the active area of the SiPM and scintillator (z) was set to a distance of 100 μm and monitored closely during the vertical alignment scan. We have defined that at $y = 0$ the SiPM and scintillator are aligned vertically.

“Coarse” measurements were then taken at half turn intervals (159 μm) while “precise” measurements were taken in quarter turn intervals (79.5 μm). The results of these measurements can be seen in Fig. 16. The results indicate that there is no significant variation of time resolution within a $\pm 300 \mu\text{m}$ range of the optimal alignment.

Vertical misalignments were also simulated in a manner similar to what was discussed in section 3.2 and the results are seen in Fig. 17. The GEANT4 simulations indicate that the acceptable range of

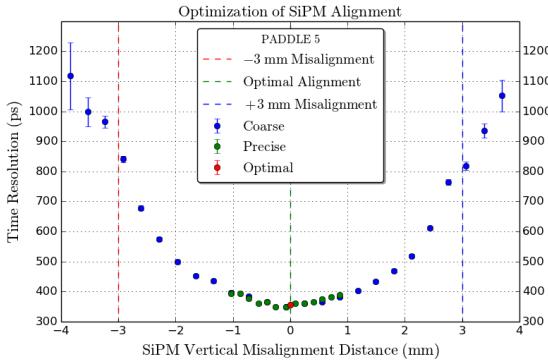


Figure 16: Vertical misalignment results. The minimum time resolution obtained was approximately 350 ps which was expected. Once the SiPM exceeded $y = \pm 3$ mm, no active area of the SiPM was directly coupled to the face of the scintillator.

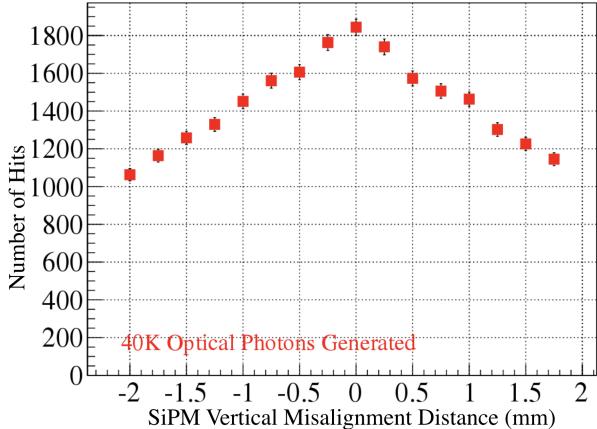


Figure 17: Vertical alignment simulation studies [14].

vertical misalignment is approximately ± 250 μm [14] which is consistent with what was measured on the bench.

4.3. Coupling Distance of SiPM & Scintillator

With the vertical alignment between the scintillator and SiPM optimized, the effects of varying the coupling distance were also studied. Using an identical set-up as was described in section 4.2 the coupling distance, and resulting time resolutions, were measured at various locations along z illustrated in Fig. 15. While the coupling distance was varied, the vertical alignment was kept constant at the optimal location and was monitored both optically and manually with a micrometer.

The SiPM was moved *via* the MT translation stage along the z -axis. We defined $z = 0$ to be the

instance when the active area of the SiPM was flush against the face of the machined scintillator paddle. Further details regarding the three coupling intervals are discussed in Ref. [1]. The results of this study is illustrated in Fig. 18.

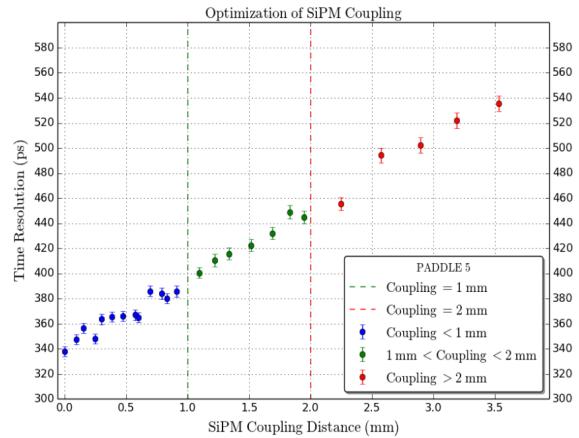


Figure 18: Coupling distance studies. It is useful to note that at a coupling distance of 251 μm the time resolution was identical to what was measured in Fig. 16 while conducting the vertical alignment studies.

It is clear from the data that the optimal coupling range was $50 \mu\text{m} < z < 350 \mu\text{m}$ and there was no significant reduction in time resolution performance over a $0 \mu\text{m} < z < 600 \mu\text{m}$ range. Similarly, the simulation results seen in Fig. 19 also indicate that there is no significant reduction in light collection in the $0 \mu\text{m} < z < 600 \mu\text{m}$ range [14].

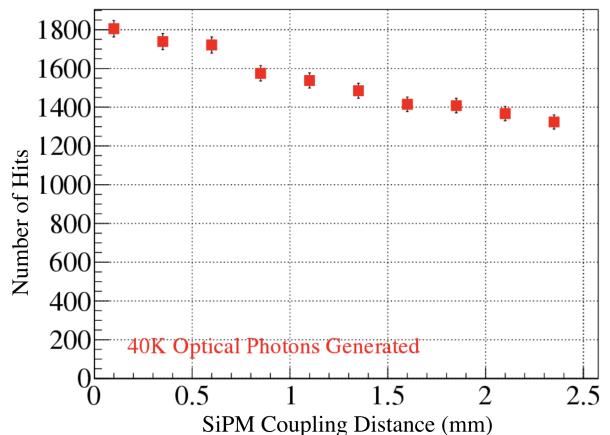


Figure 19: Coupling distance simulations. Simulations indicated that the optimal coupling distance is in the $50 \mu\text{m} < z < 350 \mu\text{m}$ range.

5. Fabrication

In order to successfully identify the 2 ns electron beam bunch structure delivered by the CEBAF to within 99% accuracy, the GLUEX Start Counter time resolution is required to be < 350 ps. In the following section the details of polishing and characterizing machined scintillators, as well as the construction of the Start Counter are discussed.

5.1. Polishing Machined Scintillators

The surfaces of the machined scintillators incurred a plethora of surface defects and chemical contaminants known to harm scintillator surfaces while undergoing edge polishing at McNeil Enterprises. Therefore, in an effort to recover the performance capabilities, polishing was required.

Prior to polishing the machined scintillators, a coarse measurement of the paddles performance was conducted. The time resolution and light output was measured at three precise locations along the length of the scintillators. One measurement was taken in the middle of the straight section, one in the middle of the bend, and one at the tip of the nose.

Figure 20 illustrates the erratic fluctuation and poor performance that existed from paddle to paddle prior to polishing. On average the 50 paddles

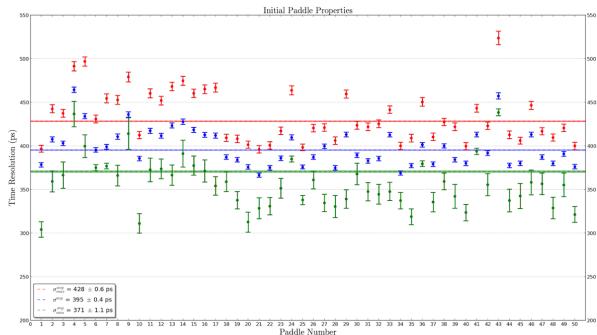


Figure 20: Coarse time resolution measurements prior to polishing. Paddle number is on the x-axis and time resolution in ns is on the y-axis. The red points are the resolutions in the bend region, the blue points are the weighted average of the three measurements, and the green points are the resolutions at the tip of the nose. The horizontal lines are the weighted averages of the individual measurements.

did not meet the design resolution of 350 ps.

To polish the machined scintillator surfaces, Buehler Micropolish II deagglomerated 0.3 μm alumina suspension was utilized [15]. The polishing suspension was diluted with a 5:1 ratio of de-ionized

H_2O to alumina and applied to a cold, wet 6" \times 0.5" Caswell Canton flannel buffering wheel [16] operated at < 1500 RPMs. All surfaces of the scintillators were carefully buffed until all large, uniform surface defects were removed. In order to eliminate small, localized surface defects hand polishing with a soft NOVUS premium Polish Mate microfilament cloth [17] and diluted polishing suspension was applied. These polishing procedures made the scintillators void of virtually all scratches and surface defects.

Once the appropriate polishing procedures had been developed and implemented the surface quality was greatly improved as can be seen in Fig. 21 which illustrates the same scintillator paddle before and after polishing. A red laser beam was shone

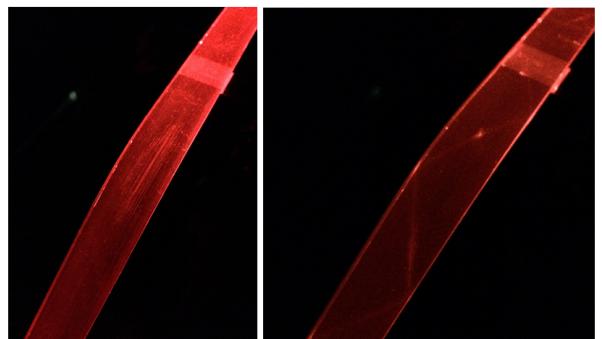


Figure 21: Effects of polishing scintillators. Left: non-diffuse laser incident on an edge, before polishing, at the upstream end of the straight section. Right: non-diffuse laser incident on the same edge, after polishing, at the upstream end of the straight section.

into the scintillator medium from the upstream end aimed at one edge so that the total internal reflection towards the tip of the nose was visible. The unpolished scintillator had such poor surface quality that the reflections in the bend region could not be seen due to the multiple scattering of light at the scintillator boundaries. However, the reflections in the polished scintillator can clearly be seen traversing down through the nose region.

Once the scintillators were polished, their performance was remeasured so that a quantitative measure of the polishing effects were understood. The measurements were performed in an identical manner outlined above and the pre-polished results were illustrated in Fig. 20. As expected, the time resolutions were improved as seen in Fig. 22. On average, at the tip of the nose, the scintillators exhibited a $\approx 15\%$ improvement in time resolution. Moreover, there was a substantial reduction in erratic fluctu-

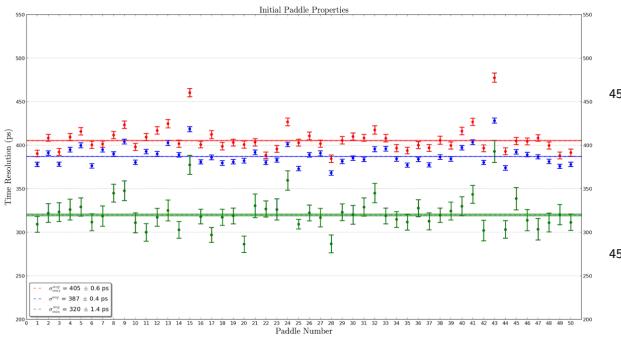


Figure 22: Coarse time resolution measurements after polishing. The details are identical to Fig. 20

ations in performance.

5.2. Testing

The polished scintillators were tested in order to determine their light output and time resolution properties. They were measured in an identical and reproducible manner utilizing a custom fabricated test stand shown in Fig. 23. The test stand fa-

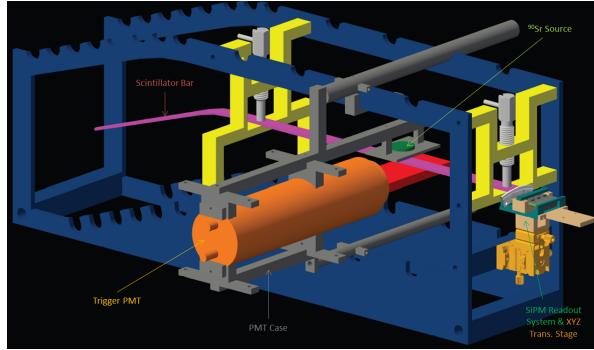


Figure 23: CAD Drawing of custom test stand.

cilitated the precise measurement of the aforementioned scintillator properties at 12 well-defined locations along the length of the scintillator paddles. Specifically 4 locations in the straight section, 3 in the bend, and 5 in the nose were tested.

The measurements were conducted with a collimated ^{90}Sr source oriented orthogonal to the wide flat surface of the scintillators. The ^{90}Sr source provided minimum ionizing electrons ranging in energy from 0.5 – 2.3 MeV via beta-decay [18][19]. A trigger photo-multiplier tube (PMT) was placed underneath the scintillator on the opposite side of the ^{90}Sr source and provided the TDC start time and ADC gate. A SiPM detector array identical to the

ones installed in the final ST assembly, was used for readout.

The signals from the SiPM and the trigger PMT were then recorded in our data acquisition computer configured with the CEBAF on-line data acquisition (CODA) software. 10,000 event triggers and associated data were collected at each of the locations along the scintillator path. Subsequently, the ADC and TDC data were analyzed to measure the light output and time resolutions respectively of the whole lot of polished machined scintillators.

Once the 30 machined scintillator paddles which exhibited the best time resolution and light output properties from the lot of 50 were selected, they were carefully wrapped in Reynolds food grade aluminum foil. The aluminum foil is $16.5\ \mu\text{m}$ thick and possesses good reflectivity properties. Moreover, the aluminum foil protects the surfaces of the scintillators during both the testing and assembly processes.

The measured time resolutions for the 30 best scintillators, which comprise the ST, were found to be satisfactory and even well below design resolution in the nose region which is illustrated in Fig. 24.

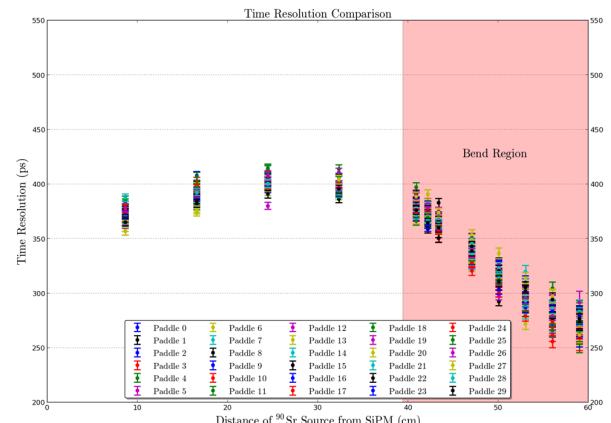


Figure 24: Time resolution of 30 the best scintillator paddles. The time resolution performance of the selected scintillators is remarkably similar while illustrating a spread of $\approx 50\ \text{ps}$ in the nose region.

The unique geometry of the machined scintillator paddles exhibit a phenomenon of an increase in light collection in the nose region as the light source moves towards the tip at the downstream end. It is hypothesized that the relatively poor time resolution in the straight section is due to a reflective smearing effect in which light is able to traverse

480 from the straight section down to the tip of the nose, and then back up to the upstream end.

The average time resolution of the individual scintillators selected for the final ST assembly are 500 shown in Fig. 25.

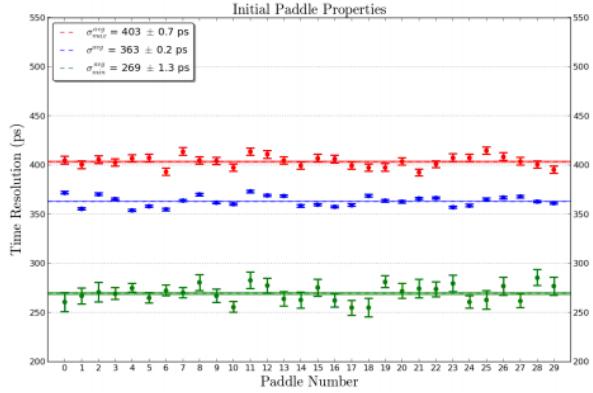


Figure 25: Average time resolution of 30 best scintillator paddles. The red data points correspond to the maximum time resolution obtained in all 12 data points. The blue data points are the weighted average of all 12 data points. The green data points indicate the minimum time resolution obtained in all 12 data points.

485 5.3. Assembly

In order to assemble the ST an assembly jig, illustrated in Fig 26, was fabricated. The jig consisted 520

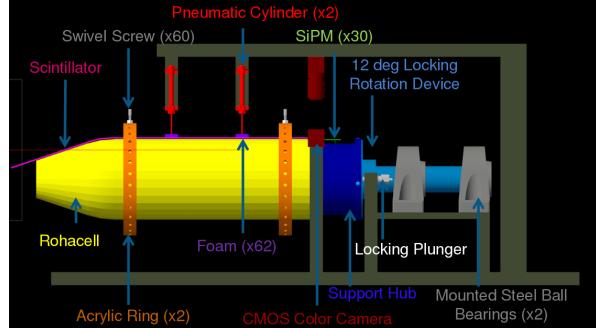


Figure 26: CAD drawing of the ST assembly jig.

490 of a rotating cylindrical mounting bracket (light-blue) rigidly attached to a 2" diameter shaft (light-blue) housed in two cast iron mounted steel ball bearings (gray). The rotating bracket was engineered such that it was free to rotate unless engaged by a spring loaded locking plunger (light-gray) which would cause the assembly jig to move in discretized 12° intervals. This provided the ability 495 to orient paddles (magenta) parallel to the table top

so that alignment and coupling could be performed reliably and reproducibly.

While mounted to the assembly jig, the upstream chassis (dark-blue) and Rohacell (yellow) was attached to the rotating bracket. A vertical bar (dark-green) running parallel to the table above the Rohacell served as a mount for the pneumatic cylinders (red) so that the scintillators could be held firmly in place during installation. Furthermore, it provided a surface in which a portable flex arm could hold a machine vision camera (dark-red) to monitor the coupling of the scintillators and SiPMs.

A pressurized gas system was implemented to provide manual control of the two pneumatic cylinders with soft, semi-dense rubber feet (purple) attached to the ends. The rubber feet would hold the scintillator being installed firmly in place by activating two switches which controlled each pneumatic cylinder independently via bi-directional solenoids connected in a 5 psi nitrogen gas system.

Two free floating acrylic rings (orange), with 30 tapped holes 12° apart, were fabricated so as to firmly hold the scintillator paddles in place during assembly. Each tapped hole housed a 10° swivel pad thumb screw (light gray) which had silicone foam foot (0.25 × 0.25 in²) adhered to it in order to provide a soft barrier between swivel pad and the scintillator surface.

The camera, seen in Fig. 27, and its associated software were utilized to both measure and control the scintillator/SiPM coupling distances as well as the shimming heights with a precision of < 10 μm in real time. The camera was calibrated such that

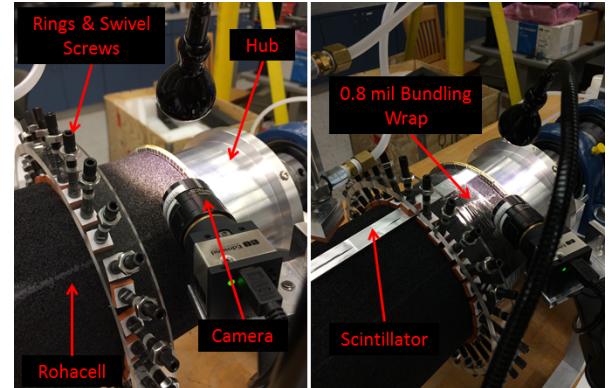


Figure 27: Aligning ST1 to support hub. Left: CMOS camera and lamp prepared to monitor ST1 positioning. Right: Reference scintillator wrapped to Rohacell during ST1 alignment.

at various magnification settings the distance to

pixel ratio was known. The 10 ST1 boards were mounted to the pre-fixed tapped holes along the lip of the upstream support hub. Black 1 mm spacers were installed between the ST1 PCB and the support hub to avoid any possibility of the electrical contact between the two. The position of the ST1 was adjusted such that the distance between the top edge of the scintillator and the top edge of the active area of the SiPM was offset by 30 mils (762 μm).
 535

On average each paddle required 30 mils of Kapton polyimide heavy duty film (type HN, $\rho = 1.42 \text{ g/cm}^3$) radial shimming. Moreover, the scintillators were coupled to the SiPM's at a distance
 545 of $< 200 \mu\text{m}$. More details regarding the assembly process are discussed in Ref. [1].

In order to make the ST light tight, an inner cone of black Tedlar polyvinyl fluoride $\rho \approx 1.5 \text{ g/cm}^3$ [20] was taped to the Rohacell as seen in Fig. 28. A

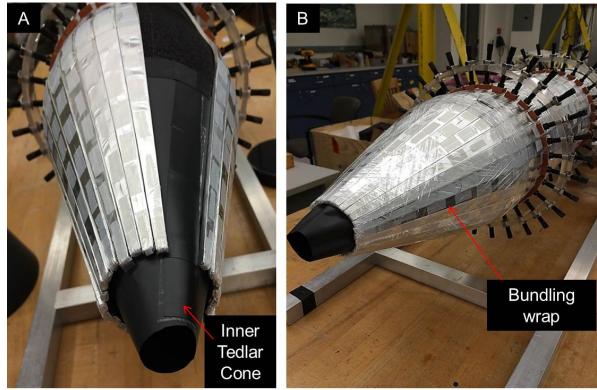


Figure 28: Inner Tedlar cone. Shown is before and after wrapping with bundling wrap. The cone was specifically engineered to have the same dimensions of the Rohacell support structure to avoid crumpling of the light tightening material.
 550

few gaps existed in the Rohacell at the glue joints, and were filled in with black RTV silicone caulking. Moreover, it was painted with black latex paint for light tightening purposes. The support hub was also wrapped with Tedlar and taped down with black electrical tape. The spacing between the ST1 PCBs along with the bottom side of the support hub, was filled with RTV black opaque silicone caulking. Similarly, RTV silicone caulking was then applied to the inner edge of the collar which encompassed the ST1 PCBs at their outer diameter.
 555
 560

In order to secure paddles to the Rohacell support structure the Start Counter was wrapped along

its length using self-adhesive transparent bundling wrap (0.8 mil thick, 6 in wide) at six different locations perpendicular to the central axis of rotation. Four locations were wrapped along the straight section at equal distance ($\approx 8 \text{ cm}$) from one another, one in the bend and one in the nose section. Five layers of bundling wrap were applied to each section.
 565
 570

A cone of Tedlar was wrapped around the nose region and taped down with electrical tape as seen in Fig. 29. The tips of the inner and outer cones in

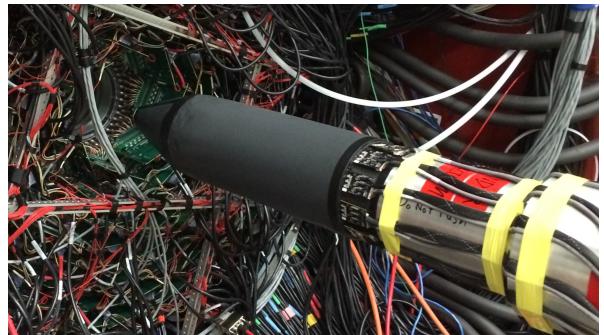


Figure 29: Light tight Start Counter mounted to the GLUEX LH₂ target.
 575

the nose region were then taped together with electrical tape and trimmed off excess material. Furthermore, a cylindrical piece of Tedlar was taped down at the bend region and to the collar covering the ST1 boards. The fully assembled and cabled ST mounted to the commissioning target can be seen in Fig. 29.
 580

6. Calibration

In this section the various calibration procedures taken in order to minimize the time resolution and enhance both the particle identification (PID) and time of flight (TOF) capabilities of the Start Counter are discussed.
 585

6.1. Time-walk Correction

The time-walk effect is a well understood consequence of leading edge discriminators (LED). Analog signals of varying amplitudes crossing a fixed threshold, as determined by the discriminator threshold setting, will do so at varying times as illustrated in Fig. 30. Thus, the corresponding logic signal output from the LED will “walk about” in time, resulting in an undesirable smearing of the measured ST TDC times.
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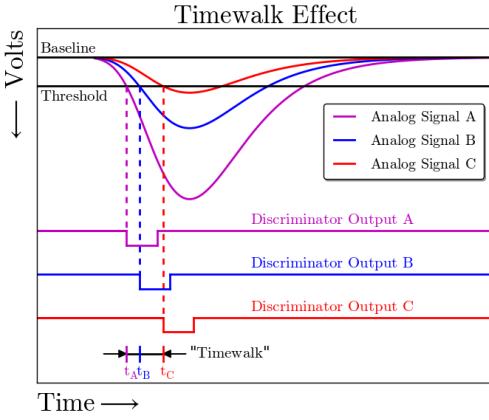


Figure 30: Example of the time-walk effect. Three coincident analog signals A, B, & C of varying amplitudes crossing a fixed threshold in a LED. The discriminator logic output signals vary in time relative to the amplitude of the incoming analog signal. The signals shown above are simulated analog signals being fed into the LED's thus, they have negative polarity.

The FADC250's provide a high resolution pulse time (62.5 ps) that is time-walk independent [1] [21].

Therefore, for events in which both the FADC and TDC register hits in the same channel, the pulse time can serve as a reference time for that event. The TDC/FADC time difference is given by Eq. 1.

$$\delta t_i = t_i^{TDC} - t_i^{FADC} \quad (1)$$

Figure 31 shows a typical time-walk spectrum, *i.e.* δt_i versus the pulse amplitude, for one sector of the ST. The FADC250's return both the amplitude and integral of events which are above threshold [21]. Since the amplitude better characterizes the rise time of the ADC pulse profile as compared to the pulse integral, it was selected for the time-walk corrections.

Fig. 31 shows the correlation between δt_i and the pedestal subtracted pulse amplitude for hits in the ST. This correlation is nonlinear and requires a polynomial functional form to describe it. Equation 2 from Ref. [22] was chosen to characterize the correlation between δt_i and the amplitude of the signal.

$$f_i^w(a/a_i^{thresh}) = c_0 + \frac{c_1}{(a/a_i^{thresh})^{c_2}} \quad (2)$$

In Eq. 2 f_i^w is the functional form of time-walk fit for the i^{th} sector, while a and a_i^{thresh} are the pulse

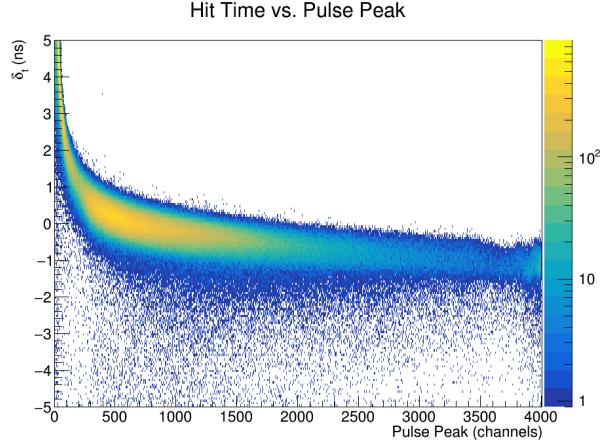


Figure 31: Typical Start Counter time-walk spectrum. Shown is the time-walk spectrum for sector 15 of the Start Counter during the Spring 2017 run. On the y-axis is δt_{15} and on the x-axis is the corresponding pedestal subtracted pulse peak spectrum. From this histogram it is clear that there is a correlation between the amplitude of the analog signal and the time in which the signal crosses the discriminator threshold.

amplitude and discriminator threshold converted to ADC units respectively. Furthermore, c_0, c_1, c_2 are the time-walk correction fit parameters.

The data in Fig. 31 were fit using Eq. 2 and ROOT's MINUIT χ^2 minimization fitting library [23] for pulse peak values ranging from [50, 2100]. An identical fit was carried out for each of the ST sectors.

The most probable value (MPV) of the minimum ionizing peak was chosen to be the location in which the time-walk correction was zero. This location effectively serves as a reference point for the correction. As seen in Fig. 32 a “pseudo” MPV was utilized. The “pseudo” MPV (a_i^0) was determined on a sector by sector basis by simply acquiring the pulse peak channel which had the most number of entries after the pulse peak channel 200. The large spike in the pulse peak spectrum at very low pulse peak values are due to electromagnetic background events clipping threshold and do not correspond to a true minimum ionizing particle traversing the scintillator medium.

Once the necessary time-walk correction parameters are determined, the correction is applied to the TDC time and is illustrated by Eq. 3.

$$T_i^w = t_i^{TDC} - f_i^w(a/a_i^{thresh}) + f_i^w(a_i^0/a_i^{thresh}) \quad (3)$$

With the time walk corrections having been applied, the corrected timing distributions appear

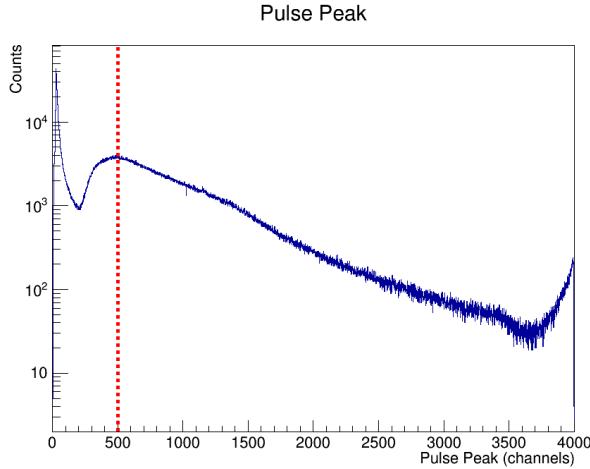


Figure 32: Typical pulse peak minimum ionizing distribution. Shown is the pulse peak minimum ionizing distribution for sector 3 during the Spring 2017 run. The red, vertical, dashed line in the histogram corresponds to the “pseudo” MPV (a_{15}^0) which was determined to be 500.

much more uniform in nature and exhibit a factor 1.75 improvement in resolution [1]. Figure 33 illustrates the vast improvement in the time difference spectrum (δt_{15}) due to the applied time-walk corrections. Figure 34 illustrates the δt_{15} distribu-

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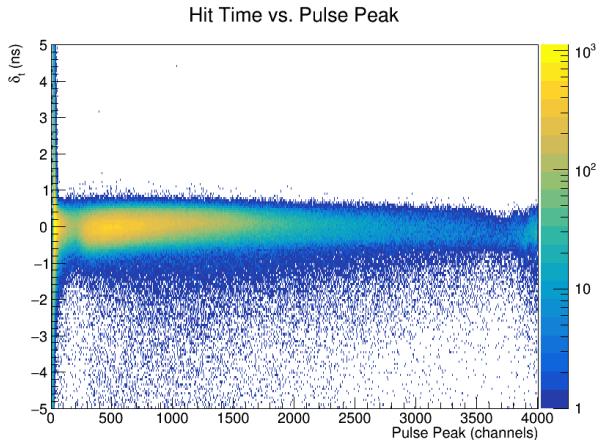


Figure 33: Time-walk corrected time difference spectrum. Shown is the time-walk corrected time difference spectrum for sector 3 during the Spring 2017 run. The time-walk corrected time difference spectrum has $\sigma_{\delta t_{15}} \approx 270\text{ps}$

tion and the relative effects of the aforementioned time-walk correction.

690

6.2. Propagation Time Corrections

As a charged particle traverses through the ST scintillator material the molecules become excited

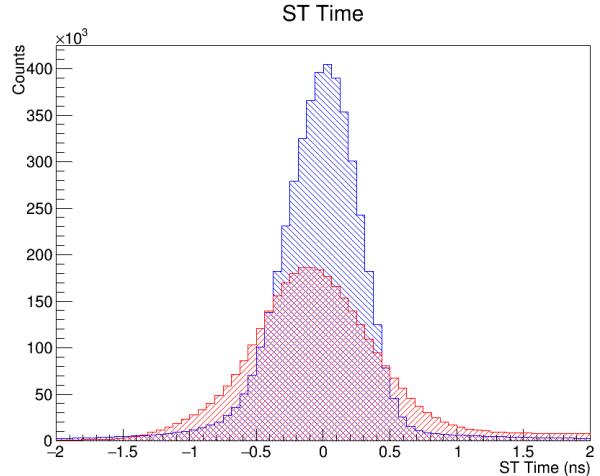


Figure 34: Comparison of pre and post self-timing distributions.

and a small fraction ($\approx 3\%$) [24] of the excitation energy is released in the form of “optical” photons. The photons produced will be emitted uniformly in all directions and some will escape the medium, some will be reflected back into the medium by virtue of the reflective Al foil wrapping, and some will be lost. However, the majority of detected photons will have undergone many total internal reflections while they propagated from their source to the SiPM detector placed at the upstream end. The time between production in the ST scintillator paddles and detection is position dependent and must be accounted for as is discussed below.

The EJ-200 scintillator material has a refractive index of 1.58 [3] and the corresponding speed of light is $\approx 19\text{ cm/ns}$. However, what is measured in the lab is known as the effective velocity which is slower due to the fact that the majority of photons are not traveling in straight lines parallel to the medium boundaries. Instead they are constantly reflecting off the boundaries resulting in increased respective path lengths which contributes to a reduced velocity known as the effective velocity.

Correcting for the time in which light spends traversing through the scintillator material is a necessary correction since the ST paddles are 60 cm in length. Thus, light produced in the tip of the nose will take on the order of 4 ns to reach the SiPM at the upstream end. Performing the propagation time corrections utilizing the common effective velocity method is not the most robust procedure for the case of the ST. Studies performed with simula-

695 tion and data showed that the unique geometry in
the nose causes the effective velocity of light to be
larger than that of the straight section and therefore
they must be treated in an independent manner.

700 In order to conduct the propagation time correc-
tions for the ST a distinct set of events needed to
be selected so that a well defined reference time was
being utilized. This reference time was utilized as
705 a measure of the event time for all other charged
tracks intersecting the ST within the same event.

710 For every charged track in a given event, two
global tracking requirements were required. First,
only charged tracks with a good tracking confidence
level were considered. Secondly all charged tracks
715 were required to have their vertex located within
the target and radially within 1 cm from the beam.
Only tracks passing these conditions were consid-
ered for analysis.

720 Two specific tracks were required in each event
in order to conduct the ST propagation time cor-
rections. One track that has hit the time of flight
(TOF) detector and not the ST provides the refer-
725 ence time for that event. A separate track that has
hit the ST and not the TOF was used to provide the
ST measure of the vertex time. This was done in
order to avoid any potential bias in the calibration.

730 The advantage of using the time associated with
a track matched to the TOF is that the time res-
olution of the TOF is the best of any detector in
Hall-D (≈ 96 ps) [25]. The calibrated (time-walk &
735 propagation) hit time returned by the TOF (T_{hit}^{TOF})
was then corrected for the flight time from the track
vertex to the TOF (T_{flight}^{TOF}).

Equation 4 is the TOF measure of the track ver-
tex time.

$$T_{vertex}^{TOF} = T_{hit}^{TOF} - T_{flight}^{TOF} \quad (4)$$

In order to determine the time in which the beam
735 bunch arrived at the interaction point (T_{vertex}^{BB}) the
 T_{vertex}^{TOF} time must first be corrected for the RF mea-
sure of the vertex time (T_{vertex}^{RF}). The RF signal
that is readout in Hall-D is provided by the CE-
740 BAF accelerator at a rate of 499 MHz (2.004 ns)
while the beam bunches are produced at a rate of
249.5 MHz (4.008 ns). The RF signal from the ac-
celerator is multiplexed into TDC's however, the
provided signal rate is too high to readout without
causing overflow in the TDC buffers thus the RF
signal is pre-scaled [26]. The pre-scale factor was
128 and consequently the RF signal was readout
every 128×2.004 ns = 256.512 ns. Thus, the time
745 associated with the beam bucket that produced the

event of interest must be calculated since it is not
provided directly.

For every event, the associated RF time is the
pre-scaled time the RF signal arrived at the center
of the target (T_{center}^{RF}). This time must be propa-
gated out to the vertex location of the track since
the photon responsible for the track spends a non-
negligible finite amount of time traversing through
the target before interacting with it. This propaga-
tion time (T_{prop}^{RF}) correction is given by Eq. 5

$$T_{prop}^{RF} = (z_{vertex} - z_{center}^{target}) \cdot \frac{1}{c} \quad (5)$$

Once the propagation time is summed with the cen-
tered RF time (T_{center}^{RF}) one obtains the measure of
the RF time at the vertex of the track and is given
by Eq. 6.

$$T_{vertex}^{RF} = T_{center}^{RF} + T_{prop}^{RF} \quad (6)$$

Due to the inherent ambiguity associated with
pre-scaling, T_{vertex}^{RF} is not the correct measurement
of the time the beam bunch actually produced
the track. Therefore, one must “step” T_{vertex}^{RF} to
the time the track was produced as measured by
 T_{vertex}^{TOF} . To do this one must first calculate the time
difference δT given by Eq. 7.

$$\delta T = T_{vertex}^{TOF} - T_{vertex}^{RF} \quad (7)$$

Next, one must calculate the number of beam buck-
ets ($N_{step}^{buckets}$) that have elapsed during the δT time
period and is given by Eq. 8, where ($N_{step}^{buckets}$) is
rounded to the nearest integer.

$$N_{step}^{buckets} = \frac{\delta T}{T_{period}^{BB}} = \frac{\delta T}{4.008 \text{ ns}} \quad (8)$$

Lastly one can now calculate the time the beam
bunch arrived at the vertex that produced the track
(T_{vertex}^{BB}) and is given by Eq. 9.

$$T_{vertex}^{BB} = T_{vertex}^{RF} + T_{period}^{BB} \cdot N_{step}^{buckets} \quad (9)$$

For every event, the first track satisfying the afore-
mentioned fiducial track selection and is matched
to the TOF will then have the associated T_{vertex}^{BB}
time calculated. This time serves as the reference
time for all other tracks that have intersected the
ST in that event.

In order to properly calculate the propagation
time (T_{prop}^{ST}) of photons produced by a charged
track intersecting the ST, a few quantities must
be known. Particularly the time-walk corrected hit
time (T_{hit}^{ST}), the flight time from the track vertex

900 to the ST intersection point (T_{flight}^{ST}), and a well defined reference time corresponding to the event (T_{vertex}^{BB}). With the reference time determined, all other charged tracks passing the previously discussed fiducial track selection and which have a match to the ST (and not the TOF) are analyzed. Equation 10 illustrates the ST measure of the vertex time.

$$T_{prop}^{ST} = T_{hit}^{ST} - T_{flight}^{ST} - T_{vertex}^{BB} \quad (10)$$

800 This time difference is a direct measure of the amount of time the detected light produced by the intersecting charged track spent traversing the scintillator medium. In order to perform the propagation time corrections the z -coordinate of the tracks intersection point with the ST (z_{hit}^{ST}) was 805 also recorded for every charged track intersecting the ST. Once both T_{prop}^{ST} and z_{hit}^{ST} were calculated, the propagation correction calculation could be performed. Figure 35 illustrates correlation between these two quantities.

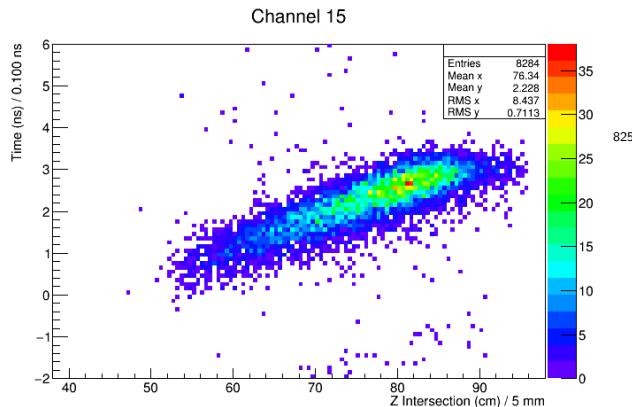


Figure 35: Typical Start Counter propagation time correlation. Shown is the ST propagation time correlation for sector 15 of the ST during the Spring 2015 run 2931. T_{prop}^{ST} is plotted on the y-axis and the z_{hit}^{ST} is plotted along the x-axis. There is a clear correlation between the time in which optical photons are detected by the SiPM and the location of the charged track intersection point with the ST. z is in hall coordinates.

810 The mean propagation times were then grouped into three distinct regions corresponding to the three unique geometrical sections of the ST namely the straight, bend, and nose regions. These three regions were then fit utilizing the χ^2 minimization technique with a linear function whose functional form is given by Eq. 11 where the index i indicates which region the fit is being performed.

$$f_i(z) = A_i + B_i \cdot z \quad (11)$$

The distributions and associated fits for the three regions are illustrated in Fig. 36.

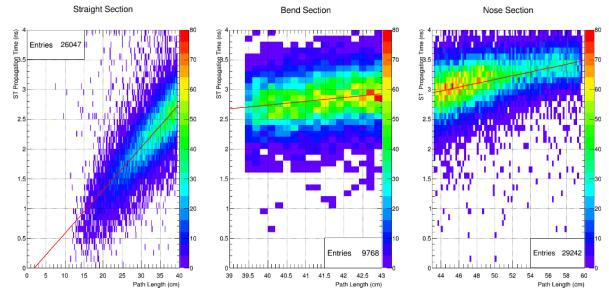


Figure 36: Typical Start Counter propagation time projection correlation. Left: Typical propagation time projection correlation for sector 15 of the ST during the Spring 2015 run 2931. The red line serves as a reference for the propagation time assuming it was a constant 15 cm/ns. The magenta line is the fit corresponding to the straight section. The green and dark blue solid lines correspond to the fits in the bend and nose section respectively. Right: zoomed in view of data points.

820 With the fit parameters determined an explicit time difference correction for each of the ST sectors could then be applied to calculate the ST measure of the vertex time given by Eq. 12 which must be a function of where the charged track intersects with the ST.

$$T_{vertex}^{ST}(z) = T_{hit}^{ST} - T_{flight}^{ST} - T_{prop}^{ST}(z) \quad (12)$$

Figure 37 illustrates the propagation time corrected ST time as a function of the z -intersection of charged tracks matched to the ST. In comparison to

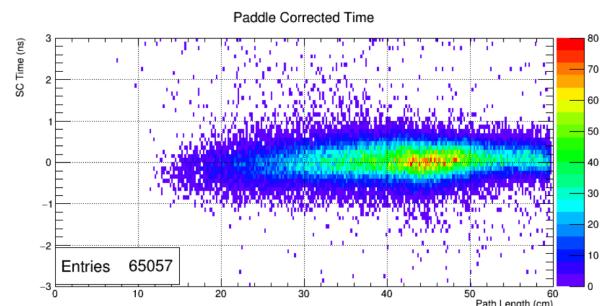


Figure 37: Calibrated ST time versus the z -intersection of charged tracks matched to the ST.

830 Fig. 35, Fig. 37 no longer illustrates a dependence on the where the charged track intersects with the ST paddles as expected.

After the propagation time corrections are applied the ST corrected time now measures the ver-

tex time for the track in the event and is discussed further in Sec. 7

6.3. Attenuation Corrections

Photons propagating in a scintillator medium can be lost through scattering, absorption, or escape at the boundaries.

The measured energy deposited (dE_{meas}) from a charged particle traversing a scintillator medium is proportional to the number of photons created, which is in turn proportional to the integrated pulse read out by the FADC250. However, since the photons created *via* ionization can be lost through scattering, absorption, or escape at the boundaries as they propagate through the scintillator medium, the energy deposition measured by the SiPM does not correctly measure the energy deposited by the charged particle at the location of intersection with the scintillator and needs to be corrected.

One can define an *attenuation coefficient* which characterizes a particular material's ability to absorb photons. The attenuation coefficient is defined to be the length in the medium in which the initial number of primary photons are reduced by a factor of $1/e$ (36.8%). Since the loss of photons in scintillators equates to the loss of information relative to the event of interest, it is desirable to have a scintillator material with a long attenuation length. For reference a flat $2 \times 20 \times 300 \text{ cm}^3$ EJ-200 scintillator has a relatively long attenuation length on the order of 4 m [3].

In order to determine the attenuation coefficients of interest tracks hitting the ST, while passing identical fiducial track selection cuts as discussed in Sec. 6.2, were selected for analysis. Furthermore the tracks pedestal subtracted pulse integral, energy deposition per unit length (dE_{meas}/dx), and z -intersection with the ST were recorded. A plot of the uncorrected energy deposition per unit length versus the track momentum (dE_{meas}/dx vs. p) for tracks matched to the ST are shown in Fig. 38. It is clear from Fig. 38 that no reliable PID can occur for tracks with $p > 0.6 \text{ GeV}/c$.

The pedestal corrected pulse integral data were binned in 1 cm z -intersection bins along the full length of the paddle. These data in the nose section are represented in Fig. 39. In order to properly quantify the pulse integral data, the most probable value (MPV) of the data was extracted utilizing the energy straggling distribution known as the Vavilov distribution [27].

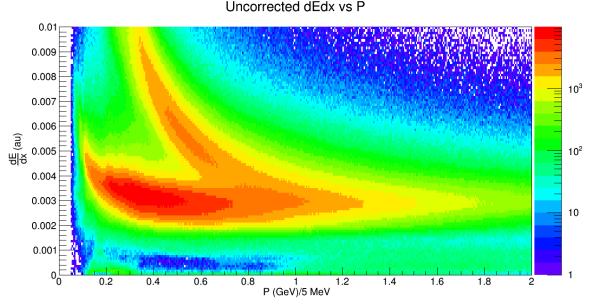


Figure 38: Typical uncorrected dE_{meas}/dx vs. p distribution in the Start Counter. Shown is the uncorrected dE_{meas}/dx vs. p distribution for tracks matched to the Start Counter in the Spring 2015 run 2931. The “banana band” corresponds to protons while the horizontal band corresponds to charged electrons, pions, and kaons.

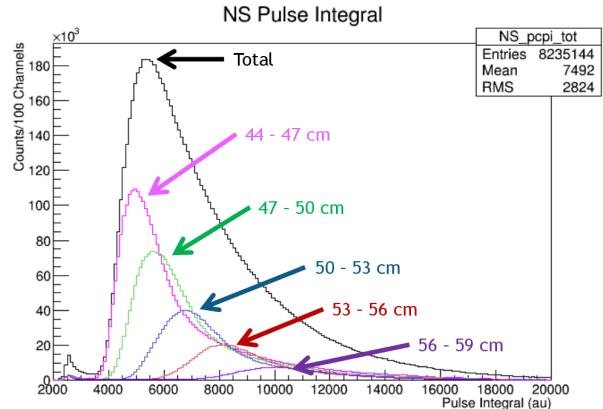


Figure 39: Pedestal subtracted FADC pulse integral spectrum corresponding to the three ST sections.

The Vavilov distribution, a generalization of the Landau distribution, is often utilized to describe the corresponding energy loss of charged particles traversing a thin layer of matter [28]. Unlike the more restrictive Landau distribution, the Vavilov distribution accounts for the maximum allowable energy transfer in a collision between a particle and an atomic electron [29]. Therefore, the pulse integral data for each 1 cm bin along the length of the ST paddles were fit utilizing the Vavilov distribution and the associated MPV was extracted. The fits to the data are illustrated in Fig. 40. With the MPV values extracted for each 1 cm z -intersection bin, the MPV values are plotted against the central value for each z -intersection bin as seen in Fig. 41. This allows for one to quantitatively measure the attenuation of photons in the ST scintillators.

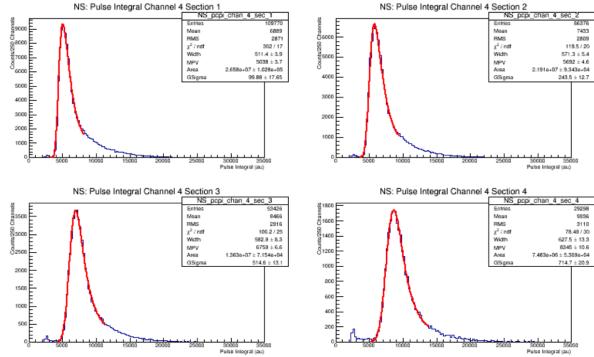


Figure 40: Vavilov fits to extract the MPV of pedestal subtracted pulse integral FADC250 data in the nose section.

As was discussed in Sec. 3.2 the unique geometry of the ST causes for the two distinct regions, *i.e* straight and nose, to have differing properties in terms of light output and thus, time resolution. Therefore, when performing attenuation corrections the two regions were treated independently in order to properly characterize photon attenuation.

It was empirically determined that the ideal fit function for the straight section would follow Eq. 13.

$$f_S(z) = A_S e^{B_S \cdot z} \quad (13)$$

Similarly, the functional form of the nose section follows Eq. 14.

$$f_N(z) = A_N e^{B_N \cdot z} + C_N \quad (14)$$

Exponential decay functions are typically used to describe the attenuations of photons in scintillator material. However, for the unique case of the nose section, an exponential growth function was utilized. In order to investigate the possibility of utilizing a single functional form to describe the entire length of a scintillator paddle, a polynomial of $\mathcal{O}(5)$ was also studied however was deemed unsuitable at the boundary regions [1].

Figure 41 illustrates the pulse integral mean vs. z -intersection along the paddle for sectors 5 and 23. It is clear that the aforementioned exponential functions, corresponding to their respective geometrical sections, fit the data in a robust manner.

Evaluating the fit function in the straight section at $z = 0$ cm is representative of a minimum ionizing particle traversing through the upstream end closest to the SiPM readout. In this instance the

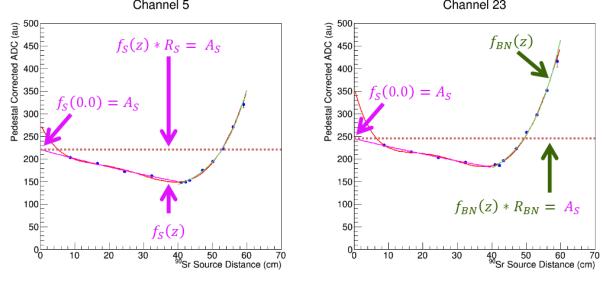


Figure 41: Two particular cases in which the polynomial of $\mathcal{O}(5)$ fits the ADC mean data relatively well. The red line corresponds to the polynomial of $\mathcal{O}(5)$ fit. The magenta line is the exponential fit to straight section [0 cm, 40 cm] while the green line is the exponential fit to the nose section [40 cm, 60 cm]. Sector 5 is on the left while sector 23 is on the right. The red horizontal dashed line corresponds to the value of the exponential fit in the straight section evaluated at $z = 0$ cm.

detected photons traverse through virtually no scintillator material, and are thus subject to no effects of attenuation. Therefore, for all charged particles passing through the ST scintillator paddles we apply an attenuation correction to the deposited energy measurement (dE_{meas}) to preserve the information regardless of where the track intersects the paddles. The corrected energy deposition (dE_{corr}) is given by Eq. 15 where the index i indicates which section the charged track intersected with.

$$dE_{corr} = dE_{meas} \cdot R_i \quad (15)$$

For the straight section we have Eq. 16.

$$R_S = \frac{f_S(0.0)}{f_S(z)} = e^{-B_S \cdot z} \quad (16)$$

For the nose section we have Eq. 17.

$$R_N = \frac{f_N(0.0)}{f_N(z)} = \frac{A_S}{A_N e^{B_N \cdot z} + C_N} \quad (17)$$

Thus, for every hit along the length of the ST paddles we find Eq. 18 & Eq. 19.

$$f_S(z) \cdot R_S = A_S \quad (18)$$

$$f_N(z) \cdot R_N = A_S \quad (19)$$

Once all energy deposition measurements have had the appropriate attenuation corrections applied as was discussed above, the PID capabilities of the ST are considerably enhanced and are discussed further in Sec. 7.

7. Performance

The Start Counter was installed in Hall-D just prior to the Fall 2014 GLUEX commissioning run. It was not until the Spring 2015 commissioning run that enough statistics were obtained with an LH₂ target to perform reliable calibrations. With the aforementioned data set, the procedures to calibrate the detector and measure its performance were developed and deployed.

As was discussed in previous sections, the geometry of the ST nose section results in an increase of the light output as the scintillation source moves towards the downstream end. While investigating FADC250 data under nominal beam conditions, this phenomenon was immediately observed through the pulse amplitude and pulse integral data. Figure 42 illustrates that similar to the bench measurements the light output increases exponentially, as the scintillation source moves towards the downstream end. This feature of the ST geom-

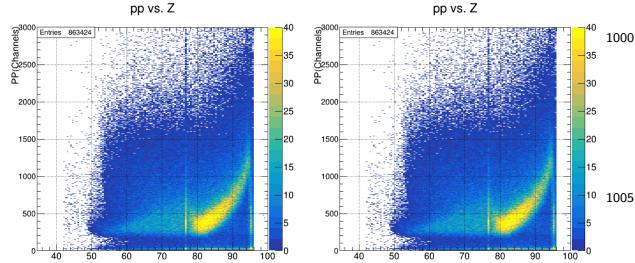


Figure 42: FADC spectra from the Spring 2017 run. Left: pulse integral versus the z-intersection of charged tracks matched to the ST. Right: pulse amplitude versus the z-intersection of charged tracks matched to the ST. The straight section corresponds to $40 \text{ cm} < z < 80 \text{ cm}$, the bend section $80 \text{ cm} < z < 84 \text{ cm}$, and the nose section $84 \text{ cm} < z < 98 \text{ cm}$.

try is quite advantageous since the majority of the charged tracks produced under the nominal GLUEX beam conditions intersect the ST in the nose region and therefore have the largest light amount of light collected by the SiPM's as the upstream end.

Once the proper attenuation corrections were applied to the data, the PID capabilities of the ST were greatly enhanced. Figure 43 illustrates the PID capability of charged tracks intersecting the ST. As compared to Fig. 38, the reliable separation of protons and other hadrons occurs for charged tracks with $p < 1.1 \text{ GeV}/c$ which is a factor two improvement from the uncalibrated data.

After the previously discussed time-walk and propagation time corrections were complete, it was

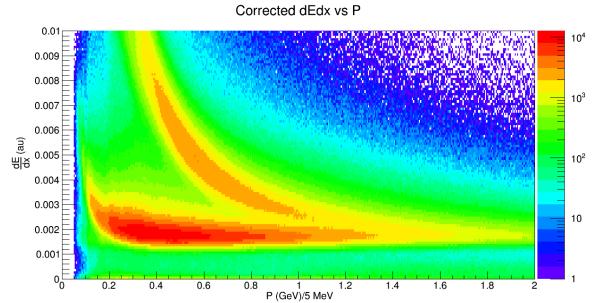


Figure 43: Typical corrected dE/dx vs. p distribution in the Start Counter. Shown is the corrected dE/dx vs. p distribution for tracks matched to the Start Counter in the Spring 2017 run. The “banana band” corresponds to protons while the horizontal band corresponds to charged electrons, pions, and kaons. It is clear that pion/proton separation is achievable for tracks with $p < 1.1 \text{ GeV}/c$.

then possible to utilize the ST to measure the time of charged track vertices for tracks that are matched to the ST. The vertex time is defined to be the time in which a polarized Bremsstrahlung photon interacted with the LH₂ target and produced a charged track that intersected the ST. An identical charged track selection process as outlined in Sec. 6.2 was utilized so that the time resolution of tracks matched to the ST could be measured.

The equation to calculate the ST measure of the vertex time is given by Eq. 10. In an identical manner outlined in Sec. 6.2, T_{vertex}^{RF} must be “stepped” to the time the charged track vertex was produced so as to obtain a proper measure of the RF time. The resulting distribution in the time difference of these two times provides a measure of the ST time resolution and is seen in Fig. ??.

The aforementioned fits were then carried out for each of the ST sectors with σ , and its associated error being calculated. Then a weighted average of the 30σ 's were calculated so that the ST could have its time resolution characterized in its entirety. The same procedure was also conducted for the three individual sections. Figure ?? illustrates the uniformity in time resolution among all sectors of the ST.

Figure ?? indicates that the average time resolution of 300 ps is well below the design resolution of 350 ps. Table ?? details the weighted average time resolution of all the ST sectors in the different geometrical regions. It is clear from Table ?? that what is observed is that measurements made with beam data exhibit the same phenomenon of substantial improvement in light collection, and thus time res-

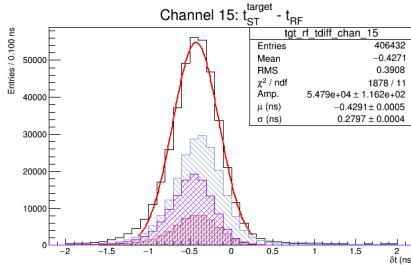


Figure 44: Typical Start Counter/RF time resolution distribution. Shown is the time resolution distribution for sector 15 during the Spring 2015 run 2931. The x-axis is the time difference between T_{vertex}^{ST} and T_{vertex}^{BB} . The blue histogram is the resolution in the straight section. The red and purple histograms correspond to the resolution in the bend and nose sections respectively. The black histogram is a sum of the three sections and corresponds to the resolution along the entire length of the paddle.

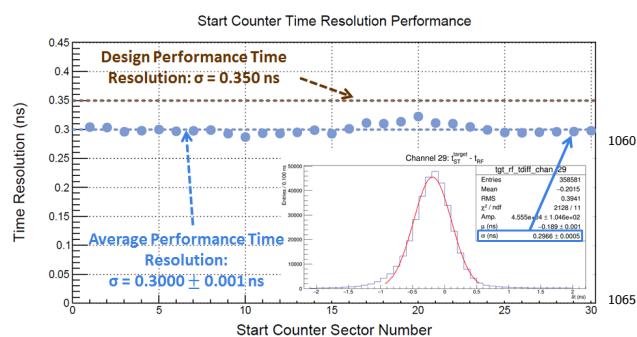


Figure 45: ST time resolutions as a function of sector number. The inset illustrates a 2σ Gaussian fit to the the ST time minus the RF time. The resulting σ of the fit provides a measure of the time resolution.

olution, as light is produced further downstream in the nose region.

When these time resolution measurements were conducted with data collected in Spring 2017, approximately 3 years had elapsed since the paddles were first tested on the bench at FIU. Prior experience with degrading scintillators indicates that degradation in time resolution will be visible in a matter of weeks. However, after 3 years no degradation has been observed and the ST is still performing well below design resolution.

8. Conclusion

The GLUEX Start Counter was designed and constructed at Florida International University for use in Hall-D at TJNAF to provide separation of the 500 MHz photon beam bunch structure delivered

Section	σ_{all}	$\sigma_{straight}$	σ_{bend}	σ_{nose}
σ_{avg}	290 ps	299 ps	292 ps	264 ps

Table 1: Average time resolutions by section. Shown is the average of all 30 ST sectors by independent geometrical regions.

by the CEBAF to within 99% accuracy. It is the first “start counter” detector to have utilized magnetic field insensitive SiPMs as the readout system. Despite the many design and manufacturing complications, the ST has proven to have performed well beyond the design timing resolution of 350 ps with an average measured resolution of 280 ps. Furthermore, the capabilities of the ST make it a viable candidate to assist in PID calculations.

The unique geometry of the ST nose section has illustrated the advantage of tapering trapezoidal geometry in thin scintillators. Through simulation, tests on the bench, and analysis of data obtained with beam it has been definitively demonstrated that this geometry results in a phenomenon in which the amount of light detected increases as the scintillation source moves further downstream from the readout detector.

Since it’s installation in Hall-D during the Fall 2014 commissioning run, the ST has shown no measurable signs of deterioration in performance. This suggests that the ST scintillators are void of crazing and will most likely be able to meet and exceed the design performance well beyond the scheduled run periods associated with the GLUEX experiment.

It is planned to incorporate the ST into the level 1 trigger of the GLUEX experiment for high luminosity ($> 0.5 \mu A$) running. Preliminary studies suggest that the high efficiency ($> 95\%$) of the ST, in combination with the calorimeters, provides good suppression of electromagnetic background in regards to the level 1 trigger. Furthermore, the ST’s high degree of segmentation has shown to suppress various background contributions associated with complex topologies while simultaneously providing precision timing information for reconstructed charged particles in GLUEX.

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