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Observation of a Narrow Meson State Decaying to $D_s^+ \pi^0$ at a Mass of $2.32 \text{ GeV}/c^2$

B. Aubert,¹ R. Barate,¹ D. Boutigny,¹ J.-M. Gaillard,¹ A. Hicheur,¹ Y. Karyotakis,¹ J. P. Lees,¹ P. Robbe,¹ V. Tisserand,¹ A. Zghiche,¹ A. Palano,² A. Pompili,² J. C. Chen,³ N. D. Qi,³ G. Rong,³ P. Wang,³ Y. S. Zhu,³ G. Eigen,⁴ I. Ofte,⁴ B. Stugu,⁴ G. S. Abrams,⁵ A. W. Borgland,⁵ A. B. Breon,⁵ D. N. Brown,⁵ J. Button-Shafer,⁵ R. N. Cahn,⁵ E. Charles,⁵ C. T. Day,⁵ M. S. Gill,⁵ A. V. Gritsan,⁵ Y. Groysman,⁵ R. G. Jacobsen,⁵ R. W. Kadel,⁵ J. Kadyk,⁵ L. T. Kerth,⁵ Yu. G. Kolomensky,⁵ J. F. Kral,⁵ G. Kukartsev,⁵ C. LeClerc,⁵ M. E. Levi,⁵ G. Lynch,⁵ L. M. Mir,⁵ P. J. Oddone,⁵ T. J. Orimoto,⁵ M. Pripstein,⁵ N. A. Roe,⁵ A. Romosan,⁵ M. T. Ronan,⁵ V. G. Shelkov,⁵ A. V. Telnov,⁵ W. A. Wenzel,⁵ K. Ford,⁶ T. J. Harrison,⁶ C. M. Hawkes,⁶ D. J. Knowles,⁶ S. E. Morgan,⁶ R. C. Penny,⁶ A. T. Watson,⁶ N. K. Watson,⁶ T. Deppermann,⁷ K. Goetzen,⁷ H. Koch,⁷ B. Lewandowski,⁷ M. Pelizaeus,⁷ K. Peters,⁷ H. Schmuecker,⁷ M. Steinke,⁷ N. R. Barlow,⁸ J. T. Boyd,⁸ N. Chevalier,⁸ W. N. Cottingham,⁸ M. P. Kelly,⁸ T. E. Latham,⁸ C. Mackay,⁸ F. F. Wilson,⁸ K. Abe,⁹ T. Cuhadar-Donszelmann,⁹ C. Hearty,⁹ T. S. Mattison,⁹ J. A. McKenna,⁹ D. Thiessen,⁹ P. Kyberd,¹⁰ A. K. McKemey,¹⁰ V. E. Blinov,¹¹ A. D. Bukin,¹¹ V. B. Golubev,¹¹ V. N. Ivanchenko,¹¹ E. A. Kravchenko,¹¹ A. P. Onuchin,¹¹ S. I. Serednyakov,¹¹ Yu. I. Skovpen,¹¹ E. P. Solodov,¹¹ A. N. Yushkov,¹¹ D. Best,¹² M. Chao,¹² D. Kirkby,¹² A. J. Lankford,¹² M. Mandelkern,¹² S. McMahon,¹² R. K. Mommensen,¹² W. Roethel,¹² D. P. Stoker,¹² C. Buchanan,¹³ D. del Re,¹⁴ H. K. Hadavand,¹⁴ E. J. Hill,¹⁴ D. B. MacFarlane,¹⁴ H. P. Paar,¹⁴ Sh. Rahatlou,¹⁴ U. Schwanke,¹⁴ V. Sharma,¹⁴ J. W. Berryhill,¹⁵ C. Campagnari,¹⁵ B. Dahmes,¹⁵ N. Kuznetsova,¹⁵ S. L. Levy,¹⁵ O. Long,¹⁵ A. Lu,¹⁵ M. A. Mazur,¹⁵ J. D. Richman,¹⁵ W. Verkerke,¹⁵ T. W. Beck,¹⁶ J. Beringer,¹⁶ A. M. Eisner,¹⁶ C. A. Heusch,¹⁶ W. S. Lockman,¹⁶ T. Schalk,¹⁶ R. E. Schmitz,¹⁶ B. A. Schumm,¹⁶ A. Seiden,¹⁶ M. Turri,¹⁶ W. Walkowiak,¹⁶ D. C. Williams,¹⁶ M. G. Wilson,¹⁶ J. Albert,¹⁷ E. Chen,¹⁷ G. P. Dubois-Felsmann,¹⁷ A. Dvoretzkii,¹⁷ D. G. Hitlin,¹⁷ I. Narsky,¹⁷ F. C. Porter,¹⁷ A. Ryd,¹⁷ A. Samuel,¹⁷ S. Yang,¹⁷ S. Jayatilke,¹⁸ G. Mancinelli,¹⁸ B. T. Meadows,¹⁸ M. D. Sokoloff,¹⁸ T. Abe,¹⁹ T. Barillari,¹⁹ F. Blanc,¹⁹ P. Bloom,¹⁹ P. J. Clark,¹⁹ W. T. Ford,¹⁹ U. Nauenberg,¹⁹ A. Olivas,¹⁹ P. Rankin,¹⁹ J. Roy,¹⁹ J. G. Smith,¹⁹ W. C. van Hoek,¹⁹ L. Zhang,¹⁹ J. L. Harton,²⁰ T. Hu,²⁰ A. Soffer,²⁰ W. H. Toki,²⁰ R. J. Wilson,²⁰ J. Zhang,²⁰ D. Altenburg,²¹ T. Brandt,²¹ J. Brose,²¹ T. Colberg,²¹ M. Dickopp,²¹ R. S. Dubitzky,²¹ A. Hauke,²¹ H. M. Lacker,²¹ E. Maly,²¹ R. Müller-Pfefferkorn,²¹ R. Nogowski,²¹ S. Otto,²¹ K. R. Schubert,²¹ R. Schwierz,²¹ B. Spaan,²¹ L. Wilden,²¹ D. Bernard,²² G. R. Bonneaud,²² F. Brochard,²² J. Cohen-Tanugi,²² Ch. Thiebaux,²² G. Vasileiadis,²² M. Verderi,²² A. Khan,²³ D. Lavin,²³ F. Muheim,²³ S. Playfer,²³ J. E. Swain,²³ J. Tinslay,²³ M. Andreotti,²⁴ D. Bettoni,²⁴ C. Bozzi,²⁴ R. Calabrese,²⁴ G. Cibinetto,²⁴ E. Luppi,²⁴ M. Negrini,²⁴ L. Piemontese,²⁴ A. Sarti,²⁴ E. Treadwell,²⁵ F. Anulli,^{26,*} R. Baldini-Ferrolli,²⁶ A. Calcaterra,²⁶ R. de Sangro,²⁶ D. Falciari,²⁶ G. Finocchiaro,²⁶ P. Patteri,²⁶ I. M. Peruzzi,^{26,*} M. Piccolo,²⁶ A. Zallo,²⁶ A. Buzzo,²⁷ R. Contri,²⁷ G. Crosetti,²⁷ M. Lo Vetere,²⁷ M. Macri,²⁷ M. R. Monge,²⁷ S. Passaggio,²⁷ F. C. Pastore,²⁷ C. Patrignani,²⁷ E. Robutti,²⁷ A. Santroni,²⁷ S. Tosi,²⁷ S. Bailey,²⁸ M. Morii,²⁸ M. L. Aspinwall,²⁹ W. Bhimji,²⁹ D. A. Bowerman,²⁹ P. D. Dauncey,²⁹ U. Egede,²⁹ I. Eschrich,²⁹ G. W. Morton,²⁹ J. A. Nash,²⁹ P. Sanders,²⁹ G. P. Taylor,²⁹ G. J. Grenier,³⁰ S.-J. Lee,³⁰ U. Mallik,³⁰ J. Cochran,³¹ H. B. Crawley,³¹ J. Lamsa,³¹ W. T. Meyer,³¹ S. Prell,³¹ E. I. Rosenberg,³¹ J. Yi,³¹ M. Davier,³² G. Grosdidier,³² A. Höcker,³² S. Laplace,³² F. Le Diberder,³² V. Lepeltier,³² A. M. Lutz,³² T. C. Petersen,³² S. Plaszczynski,³² M. H. Schune,³² L. Tantot,³² G. Wormser,³² V. Brigljević,³³ C. H. Cheng,³³ D. J. Lange,³³ D. M. Wright,³³ A. J. Bevan,³⁴ J. P. Coleman,³⁴ J. R. Fry,³⁴ E. Gabathuler,³⁴ R. Gamet,³⁴ M. Kay,³⁴ R. J. Parry,³⁴ D. J. Payne,³⁴ R. J. Sloane,³⁴ C. Touramanis,³⁴ J. J. Back,³⁵ P. F. Harrison,³⁵ H. W. Shorthouse,³⁵ P. Strother,³⁵ P. B. Vidal,³⁵ C. L. Brown,³⁶ G. Cowan,³⁶ R. L. Flack,³⁶ H. U. Flaecher,³⁶ S. George,³⁶ M. G. Green,³⁶ A. Kurup,³⁶ C. E. Marker,³⁶ T. R. McMahon,³⁶ S. Ricciardi,³⁶ F. Salvatore,³⁶ G. Vaitsas,³⁶ M. A. Winter,³⁶ D. Brown,³⁷ C. L. Davis,³⁷ J. Allison,³⁸ R. J. Barlow,³⁸ A. C. Forti,³⁸ P. A. Hart,³⁸ F. Jackson,³⁸ G. D. Lafferty,³⁸ A. J. Lyon,³⁸ J. H. Weatherall,³⁸ J. C. Williams,³⁸ A. Farbin,³⁹ A. Jawahery,³⁹ D. Kovalskyi,³⁹ C. K. Lae,³⁹ V. Lillard,³⁹ D. A. Roberts,³⁹ G. Blaylock,⁴⁰ C. Dallapiccola,⁴⁰ K. T. Flood,⁴⁰ S. S. Hertzbach,⁴⁰ R. Kofler,⁴⁰ V. B. Koptchev,⁴⁰ T. B. Moore,⁴⁰ S. Saremi,⁴⁰ H. Staengle,⁴⁰ S. Willocq,⁴⁰ R. Cowan,⁴¹ G. Sciolla,⁴¹ F. Taylor,⁴¹ R. K. Yamamoto,⁴¹ D. J. J. Mangeol,⁴² M. Milek,⁴² P. M. Patel,⁴² A. Lazzaro,⁴³ F. Palombo,⁴³ J. M. Bauer,⁴⁴ L. Cremaldi,⁴⁴ V. Eschenburg,⁴⁴ R. Godang,⁴⁴ R. Kroeger,⁴⁴ J. Reidy,⁴⁴ D. A. Sanders,⁴⁴ D. J. Summers,⁴⁴ H. W. Zhao,⁴⁴ C. Hast,⁴⁵ P. Taras,⁴⁵ H. Nicholson,⁴⁶ C. Cartaro,⁴⁷ N. Cavallo,⁴⁷ G. De Nardo,⁴⁷ F. Fabozzi,^{47,†} C. Gatto,⁴⁷ L. Lista,⁴⁷ P. Paolucci,⁴⁷ D. Piccolo,⁴⁷ C. Sciacca,⁴⁷ M. A. Baak,⁴⁸ G. Raven,⁴⁸ J. M. LoSecco,⁴⁹ T. A. Gabriel,⁵⁰ B. Brau,⁵¹ T. Pulliam,⁵¹ J. Brau,⁵² R. Frey,⁵² C. T. Potter,⁵² N. B. Sinev,⁵² D. Strom,⁵² E. Torrence,⁵² F. Colecchia,⁵³ A. Dorigo,⁵³ F. Galeazzi,⁵³ M. Margoni,⁵³ M. Morandin,⁵³ M. Posocco,⁵³ M. Rotondo,⁵³ F. Simonetto,⁵³ R. Stroili,⁵³ G. Tiozzo,⁵³ C. Voci,⁵³ M. Benayoun,⁵⁴ H. Briand,⁵⁴ J. Chauveau,⁵⁴ P. David,⁵⁴ Ch. de la Vaissière,⁵⁴ L. Del Buono,⁵⁴ O. Hamon,⁵⁴ M. J. J. John,⁵⁴ Ph. Leruste,⁵⁴ J. Ocariz,⁵⁴ M. Pivk,⁵⁴ L. Roos,⁵⁴ J. Stark,⁵⁴ S. T'Jampens,⁵⁴

P. F. Manfredi,⁵⁵ V. Re,⁵⁵ L. Gladney,⁵⁶ Q. H. Guo,⁵⁶ J. Panetta,⁵⁶ C. Angelini,⁵⁷ G. Batignani,⁵⁷ S. Bettarini,⁵⁷ M. Bondioli,⁵⁷ F. Bucci,⁵⁷ G. Calderini,⁵⁷ M. Carpinelli,⁵⁷ F. Forti,⁵⁷ M. A. Giorgi,⁵⁷ A. Lusiani,⁵⁷ G. Marchiori,⁵⁷ F. Martinez-Vidal,^{57,‡} M. Morganti,⁵⁷ N. Neri,⁵⁷ E. Paoloni,⁵⁷ M. Rama,⁵⁷ G. Rizzo,⁵⁷ F. Sandrelli,⁵⁷ J. Walsh,⁵⁷ M. Haire,⁵⁸ D. Judd,⁵⁸ K. Paick,⁵⁸ D. E. Wagoner,⁵⁸ N. Danielson,⁵⁹ P. Elmer,⁵⁹ C. Lu,⁵⁹ V. Miftakov,⁵⁹ J. Olsen,⁵⁹ A. J. S. Smith,⁵⁹ E. W. Varnes,⁵⁹ F. Bellini,⁶⁰ G. Cavoto,^{59,60} R. Faccini,^{14,60} F. Ferrarotto,⁶⁰ F. Ferroni,⁶⁰ M. Gaspero,⁶⁰ M. A. Mazzone,⁶⁰ S. Morganti,⁶⁰ M. Pierini,⁶⁰ G. Piredda,⁶⁰ F. Safai Tehrani,⁶⁰ C. Voena,⁶⁰ S. Christ,⁶¹ G. Wagner,⁶¹ R. Waldi,⁶¹ T. Adye,⁶² N. De Groot,⁶² B. Franek,⁶² N. I. Geddes,⁶² G. P. Gopal,⁶² E. O. Olaiya,⁶² S. M. Xella,⁶² R. Aleksan,⁶³ S. Emery,⁶³ A. Gaidot,⁶³ S. F. Ganzhur,⁶³ P.-F. Giraud,⁶³ G. Hamel de Monchenault,⁶³ W. Kozanecki,⁶³ M. Langer,⁶³ G. W. London,⁶³ B. Mayer,⁶³ G. Schott,⁶³ G. Vasseur,⁶³ Ch. Yeche,⁶³ M. Zito,⁶³ M. V. Purohit,⁶⁴ A. W. Weidemann,⁶⁴ F. X. Yumiceva,⁶⁴ D. Aston,⁶⁵ J. Bartelt,⁶⁵ R. Bartoldus,⁶⁵ N. Berger,⁶⁵ A. M. Boyarski,⁶⁵ O. L. Buchmueller,⁶⁵ M. R. Convery,⁶⁵ D. P. Coupal,⁶⁵ D. Dong,⁶⁵ J. Dorfan,⁶⁵ D. Dujmic,⁶⁵ W. Dunwoodie,⁶⁵ R. C. Field,⁶⁵ T. Glanzman,⁶⁵ S. J. Gowdy,⁶⁵ E. Grauges-Pous,⁶⁵ T. Hadig,⁶⁵ V. Halyo,⁶⁵ T. Hryn'ova,⁶⁵ W. R. Innes,⁶⁵ C. P. Jessop,⁶⁵ M. H. Kelsey,⁶⁵ P. Kim,⁶⁵ M. L. Kocian,⁶⁵ U. Langenegger,⁶⁵ D. W. G. S. Leith,⁶⁵ S. Luitz,⁶⁵ V. Luth,⁶⁵ H. L. Lynch,⁶⁵ H. Marsiske,⁶⁵ S. Menke,⁶⁵ R. Messner,⁶⁵ D. R. Muller,⁶⁵ C. P. O'Grady,⁶⁵ V. E. Ozcan,⁶⁵ A. Perazzo,⁶⁵ M. Perl,⁶⁵ S. Petrak,⁶⁵ B. N. Ratcliff,⁶⁵ S. H. Robertson,⁶⁵ A. Roodman,⁶⁵ A. A. Salnikov,⁶⁵ R. H. Schindler,⁶⁵ J. Schwiening,⁶⁵ G. Simi,⁶⁵ A. Snyder,⁶⁵ A. Soha,⁶⁵ J. Stelzer,⁶⁵ D. Su,⁶⁵ M. K. Sullivan,⁶⁵ H. A. Tanaka,⁶⁵ J. Va'vra,⁶⁵ S. R. Wagner,⁶⁵ M. Weaver,⁶⁵ A. J. R. Weinstein,⁶⁵ W. J. Wisniewski,⁶⁵ D. H. Wright,⁶⁵ C. C. Young,⁶⁵ P. R. Burchat,⁶⁶ A. J. Edwards,⁶⁶ T. I. Meyer,⁶⁶ C. Roat,⁶⁶ S. Ahmed,⁶⁷ M. S. Alam,⁶⁷ J. A. Ernst,⁶⁷ M. Saleem,⁶⁷ F. R. Wappler,⁶⁷ W. Bugg,⁶⁸ M. Krishnamurthy,⁶⁸ S. M. Spanier,⁶⁸ R. Eckmann,⁶⁹ H. Kim,⁶⁹ J. L. Ritchie,⁶⁹ R. F. Schwitters,⁶⁹ J. M. Izen,⁷⁰ I. Kitayama,⁷⁰ X. C. Lou,⁷⁰ S. Ye,⁷⁰ F. Bianchi,⁷¹ M. Bona,⁷¹ F. Gallo,⁷¹ D. Gamba,⁷¹ C. Borean,⁷² L. Bosisio,⁷² G. Della Ricca,⁷² S. Dittongo,⁷² S. Grancagnolo,⁷² L. Lanceri,⁷² P. Poropat,^{72,§} L. Vitale,⁷² G. Vuagnin,⁷² R. S. Panvini,⁷³ Sw. Banerjee,⁷⁴ C. M. Brown,⁷⁴ D. Fortin,⁷⁴ P. D. Jackson,⁷⁴ R. Kowalewski,⁷⁴ J. M. Roney,⁷⁴ H. R. Band,⁷⁵ S. Dasu,⁷⁵ M. Datta,⁷⁵ A. M. Eichenbaum,⁷⁵ H. Hu,⁷⁵ J. R. Johnson,⁷⁵ P. E. Kutter,⁷⁵ H. Li,⁷⁵ R. Liu,⁷⁵ F. Di Lodovico,⁷⁵ A. Mihalys,⁷⁵ A. K. Mohapatra,⁷⁵ Y. Pan,⁷⁵ R. Prepost,⁷⁵ S. J. Sekula,⁷⁵ J. H. von Wimmersperg-Toeller,⁷⁵ J. Wu,⁷⁵ S. L. Wu,⁷⁵ Z. Yu,⁷⁵ and H. Neal⁷⁶

(BABAR Collaboration)

¹Laboratoire de Physique des Particules, F-74941 Annecy-le-Vieux, France²Università di Bari, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-70126 Bari, Italy³Institute of High Energy Physics, Beijing 100039, China⁴University of Bergen, Institute of Physics, N-5007 Bergen, Norway⁵Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and University of California, Berkeley, California 94720, USA⁶University of Birmingham, Birmingham, B15 2TT, United Kingdom⁷Ruhr Universität Bochum, Institut für Experimentalphysik 1, D-44780 Bochum, Germany⁸University of Bristol, Bristol BS8 1TL, United Kingdom⁹University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6T 1Z1¹⁰Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH, United Kingdom¹¹Budker Institute of Nuclear Physics, Novosibirsk 630090, Russia¹²University of California at Irvine, Irvine, California 92697, USA¹³University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California 90024, USA¹⁴University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, California 92093, USA¹⁵University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, California 93106, USA¹⁶University of California at Santa Cruz, Institute for Particle Physics, Santa Cruz, California 95064, USA¹⁷California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California 91125, USA¹⁸University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221, USA¹⁹University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309, USA²⁰Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado 80523, USA²¹Technische Universität Dresden, Institut für Kern- und Teilchenphysik, D-01062 Dresden, Germany²²Ecole Polytechnique, LLR, F-91128 Palaiseau, France²³University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH9 3JZ, United Kingdom²⁴Università di Ferrara, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-44100 Ferrara, Italy²⁵Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, Florida 32307, USA²⁶Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati dell'INFN, I-00044 Frascati, Italy²⁷Università di Genova, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-16146 Genova, Italy²⁸Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138, USA

- ²⁹Imperial College London, London, SW7 2BW, United Kingdom
³⁰University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242, USA
³¹Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011-3160, USA
³²Laboratoire de l'Accélérateur Linéaire, F-91898 Orsay, France
³³Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California 94550, USA
³⁴University of Liverpool, Liverpool L69 3BX, United Kingdom
³⁵Queen Mary, University of London, E1 4NS, United Kingdom
³⁶University of London, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX, United Kingdom
³⁷University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky 40292, USA
³⁸University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL, United Kingdom
³⁹University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742, USA
⁴⁰University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003, USA
⁴¹Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Laboratory for Nuclear Science, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
⁴²McGill University, Montréal, Québec, Canada H3A 2T8
⁴³Università di Milano, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-20133 Milano, Italy
⁴⁴University of Mississippi, University, Mississippi 38677, USA
⁴⁵Université de Montréal, Laboratoire René J. A. Lévesque, Montréal, Québec, Canada H3C 3J7
⁴⁶Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075, USA
⁴⁷Università di Napoli Federico II, Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche and INFN, I-80126, Napoli, Italy
⁴⁸NIKHEF, National Institute for Nuclear Physics and High Energy Physics, NL-1009 DB Amsterdam, The Netherlands
⁴⁹University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556, USA
⁵⁰Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831, USA
⁵¹The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210, USA
⁵²University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403, USA
⁵³Università di Padova, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-35131 Padova, Italy
⁵⁴Universités Paris VI et VII, Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire H.E., F-75252 Paris, France
⁵⁵Università di Pavia, Dipartimento di Elettronica and INFN, I-27100 Pavia, Italy
⁵⁶University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104, USA
⁵⁷Università di Pisa, Dipartimento di Fisica, Scuola Normale Superiore and INFN, I-56127 Pisa, Italy
⁵⁸Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas 77446, USA
⁵⁹Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey 08544, USA
⁶⁰Università di Roma La Sapienza, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-00185 Roma, Italy
⁶¹Universität Rostock, D-18051 Rostock, Germany
⁶²Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Chilton, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 0QX, United Kingdom
⁶³DAPNIA, Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique/Saclay, F-91191 Gif-sur-Yvette, France
⁶⁴University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina 29208, USA
⁶⁵Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, Stanford, California 94309, USA
⁶⁶Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305-4060, USA
⁶⁷State University of New York, Albany, New York 12222, USA
⁶⁸University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996, USA
⁶⁹University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, USA
⁷⁰University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas 75083, USA
⁷¹Università di Torino, Dipartimento di Fisica Sperimentale and INFN, I-10125 Torino, Italy
⁷²Università di Trieste, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-34127 Trieste, Italy
⁷³Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee 37235, USA
⁷⁴University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 3P6
⁷⁵University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, USA
⁷⁶Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut 06511, USA

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We have observed a narrow state near $2.32 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ in the inclusive $D_s^+ \pi^0$ invariant mass distribution from e^+e^- annihilation data at energies near 10.6 GeV . The observed width is consistent with the experimental resolution. The small intrinsic width and the quantum numbers of the final state indicate that the decay violates isospin conservation. The state has natural spin-parity and the low mass suggests a $J^P = 0^+$ assignment. The data sample corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 91 fb^{-1} recorded by the BABAR detector at the SLAC PEP-II asymmetric-energy e^+e^- storage ring.

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We have found a narrow state decaying to $D_s^+ \pi^0$ at a mass near $2.32 \text{ GeV}/c^2$. This result is obtained from a 91 fb^{-1} data sample recorded both on and

off the $Y(4S)$ resonance by the BABAR detector at the SLAC PEP-II asymmetric-energy e^+e^- storage ring.

Experimental information on the spectrum of the $c\bar{s}$ meson states is limited. The 1S_0 ground state, the D_s^+ meson, is well established, as is the 3S_1 ground state, the $D_s^*(2112)^+$. Only two other $c\bar{s}$ states have been observed thus far [1]. The $D_{s1}(2536)^+$ has been detected in its D^*K decay mode and analysis of the D^* decay angular distribution prefers $J^P = 1^+$ [2]. The $D_{sJ}^*(2573)^+$ was discovered in its D^0K^+ decay mode and so has natural spin-parity. The assignment $J^P = 2^+$ is consistent with the data, but is not established [3].

The spectroscopy of $c\bar{s}$ states is simple in the limit of large charm-quark mass [4,5]. In that limit, the total angular momentum $\vec{j} = \vec{l} + \vec{s}$ of the light quark, obtained by summing its orbital and spin angular momenta, is conserved. The P -wave states, all of which have positive parity, then have $j = 3/2$ or $j = 1/2$. Combined with the spin of the heavy quark, the former gives total angular momentum $J = 2$ and $J = 1$, while the latter gives $J = 1$ and $J = 0$. The $J^P = 2^+$ and $J^P = 1^+$ members of the $j = 3/2$ doublet are expected to have small width [6], and are identified with the $D_{sJ}^*(2573)^+$ and $D_{s1}(2536)^+$, respectively, although the latter may include a small admixture of the $j = 1/2$, $J^P = 1^+$ state. Theoretical models typically predict masses between 2.4 and 2.6 GeV/c^2 for the remaining two states [6–8], both of which should decay by kaon emission. They would be expected to have large widths [6,8] and hence should be difficult to detect.

The experimental and theoretical status of the P -wave $c\bar{s}$ states thus can be summarized by stating that experiment has provided good candidates for the two states that theory predicts should be readily observable, but has no candidates for the two states that should be difficult to observe because of their large predicted widths.

The BABAR detector is a general purpose, solenoidal, magnetic spectrometer, which is described in detail elsewhere [9]. The detector components employed in this analysis are discussed briefly here. Charged particles are detected and their momenta measured by a combination of a cylindrical drift chamber (DCH) and a silicon vertex tracker (SVT), both operating within a 1.5-T solenoidal magnetic field. A ring-imaging Cherenkov detector (DIRC) is used for charged-particle identification. Electrons are identified and photons measured with a CsI electromagnetic calorimeter.

The objective of this analysis is to investigate the inclusively produced $D_s^+\pi^0$ mass spectrum by combining charged particles corresponding to the decay $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^+K^-\pi^+$ [10] with π^0 candidates reconstructed from a pair of photons. Events of interest are required to have a ratio of the second to the zeroth Fox-Wolfram moment [11] less than 0.9. In addition, they must contain at least three reconstructed tracks yielding a net charge of ± 1 and at least two photons each of which must have energy greater than 100 MeV. Charged-kaon candidates are selected based on the Cherenkov-photon information from

the DIRC together with the measured energy loss in the SVT and DCH.

A $K^+K^-\pi^+$ candidate pair is combined with a third track that fails the kaon criteria (and so is treated as a pion) in a geometrical fit to a common vertex. An acceptable $K^+K^-\pi^+$ candidate must have a fit probability greater than 0.1% and a trajectory consistent with originating from the e^+e^- luminous region. Background from $D^0 \rightarrow K^+K^-$, which is evident from the corresponding K^+K^- mass distribution, is removed by requiring that the K^+K^- mass be less than 1.84 GeV/c^2 .

A candidate π^0 is formed by constraining a photon pair to emanate from the intersection of the $K^+K^-\pi^+$ candidate trajectory and the beam envelope, performing a one-constraint fit to the π^0 mass, and requiring a fit probability greater than 1%. A given event may yield several acceptable π^0 candidates. We retain only those candidates for which neither photon belongs to another acceptable π^0 candidate.

Finally, to reduce combinatorial background from the continuum and eliminate background from B -meson decay, each $K^+K^-\pi^+\pi^0$ candidate must have a momentum p^* in the e^+e^- center-of-mass frame greater than 2.5 GeV/c .

The upper histogram in Fig. 1(a) shows the $K^+K^-\pi^+$ mass distribution for all candidates. Clear peaks corresponding to D^+ and D_s^+ mesons are seen. To reduce the

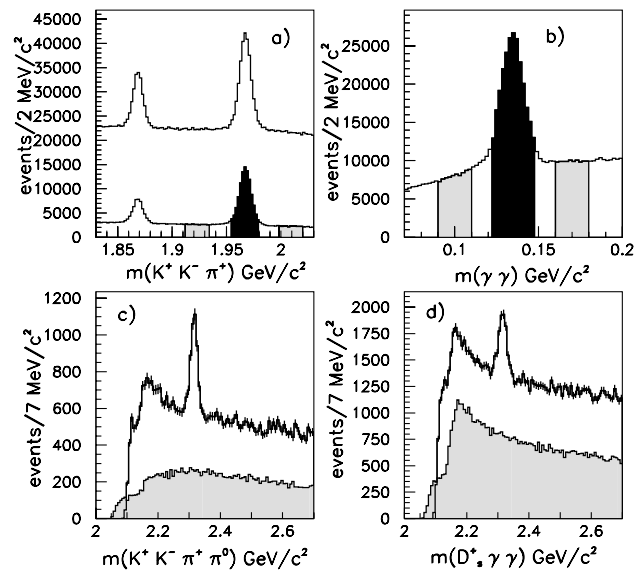


FIG. 1. (a) The distribution of $K^+K^-\pi^+$ mass for all candidate events. Additional selection criteria, described in the text, have been used to produce the lower histogram. (b) The two-photon mass distribution from $D_s^+\pi^0$ candidate events. D_s^+ and π^0 signal and sideband regions are shaded. (c) The $D_s^+\pi^0$ mass distribution for candidates in the D_s^+ signal (top histogram) and $K^+K^-\pi^+$ sideband regions (shaded histogram) of (a). (d) The $D_s^+\gamma\gamma$ mass distribution for signal D_s^+ candidates and a photon pair from the π^0 signal region of (b) (top histogram) and the sideband regions of (b) (shaded histogram).

background further, only those candidates with K^+K^- mass within $10 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ of the $\phi(1020)$ mass or with $K^-\pi^+$ mass within $50 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ of the $\bar{K}^*(892)$ mass are retained; these densely populated regions in the D_s^+ Dalitz plot do not overlap. The decay products of the vector particles $\phi(1020)$ and $\bar{K}^*(892)$ exhibit the expected $\cos^2\theta_h$ behavior required by conservation of angular momentum, where θ_h is the helicity angle. The signal-to-background ratio is further improved by requiring $|\cos\theta_h| > 0.5$. The lower histogram of Fig. 1(a) shows the net effect of these additional selection criteria. The D_s^+ signal [$1.955 < m(K^+K^-\pi^+) < 1.979 \text{ GeV}/c^2$] and sideband [$1.912 < m(K^+K^-\pi^+) < 1.934 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ and $1.998 < m(K^+K^-\pi^+) < 2.020 \text{ GeV}/c^2$] regions are shaded. The D_s^+ signal peak, consisting of approximately 80 000 events, is centered at a mass of $(1967.20 \pm 0.03) \text{ MeV}/c^2$ (statistical error only).

Figure 1(b) shows the mass distribution for all two-photon combinations associated with the D_s^+ candidates in the signal region of Fig. 1(a). The π^0 signal [$122 < m(\gamma\gamma) < 148 \text{ MeV}/c^2$] and sideband [$90 < m(\gamma\gamma) < 110 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ and $160 < m(\gamma\gamma) < 180 \text{ MeV}/c^2$] regions are shaded. Candidates in the D_s^+ signal region of Fig. 1(a) are combined with the mass-constrained π^0 candidates to yield the mass distribution of Fig. 1(c). A clear, narrow signal at a mass near $2.32 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ is seen. The shaded histogram represents the events in the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^+K^-\pi^+$ mass sidebands combined with the π^0 candidates. In Fig. 1(d) the mass distributions result from the combination of the D_s^+ candidates with the photon pairs from the π^0 signal and sideband regions of Fig. 1(b) (the sideband distribution is again shaded). In this case, all photon pairs in the signal region of Fig. 1(b) are used. In Figs. 1(c) and 1(d) the $2.32 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ signal is absent from the sideband distributions, indicating quite clearly that the peak is associated with the $D_s^+\pi^0$ system. No other signal in the region up to $2.7 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ is evident in these plots, except for a small $D_s^*(2112)^+ \rightarrow D_s^+\pi^0$ signal in Fig. 1(c).

In order to improve mass resolution, the nominal D_s^+ mass [1] has been used to calculate the D_s^+ energy for the distributions of Fig. 1(d), for the D_s^+ signal distribution of Fig. 1(c), and for all subsequent mass distributions involving D_s^+ candidates.

The $D_s^+\pi^0$ mass distribution for $p^*(D_s^+\pi^0) > 3.5 \text{ GeV}/c$ is shown in Fig. 2(a). Similar distributions produced for p^* values ranging from 2.5 to $4.5 \text{ GeV}/c$ show the same prominent peak at the same mass value. The fit function drawn on Fig. 2(a) comprises a Gaussian function describing the $2.32 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ signal and a third-order polynomial background distribution function. The fit yields 1267 ± 53 candidates in the signal Gaussian with mass $(2316.8 \pm 0.4) \text{ MeV}/c^2$ and standard deviation $(8.6 \pm 0.4) \text{ MeV}/c^2$ (statistical errors only). The systematic uncertainty in the mass is conservatively estimated to be less than $3 \text{ MeV}/c^2$. The broad peak in Fig. 2(a)

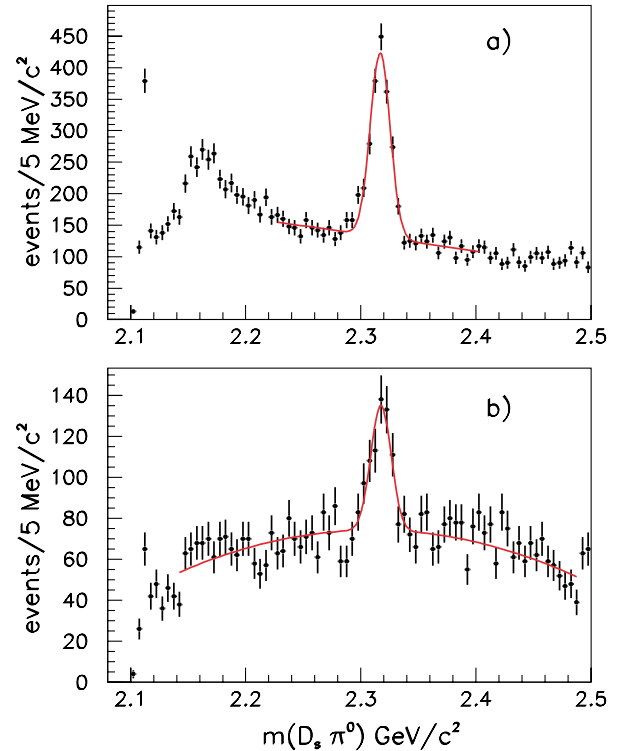


FIG. 2 (color online). The $D_s^+\pi^0$ mass distribution for (a) the decay $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^+K^-\pi^+$ and (b) the decay $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^+K^-\pi^+\pi^0$. The fits to the mass distributions as described in the text are indicated by the curves.

centered at $2.16 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ is due to random $D_s^*(2112)^+ \gamma$ combinations where $D_s^*(2112)^+ \rightarrow D_s^+\gamma$.

The signal, which we label $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$, is observed in both the $\phi\pi^+$ and $\bar{K}^{*0}K^+$ decay modes of the D_s^+ . In addition, a sample of $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^+K^-\pi^+\pi^0$ decays is selected by adding π^0 candidates (refit to the $K^+K^-\pi^+$ vertex) to each $K^+K^-\pi^+$ candidate. The purity of this D_s^+ sample is enhanced by requiring a π^0 fit probability of at least 10% and selecting the $K^{*\pm}$, \bar{K}^{*0} , ϕ , or ρ^+ mass regions for the relevant two-body subsystems. Each resulting D_s^+ candidate is combined with a second π^0 candidate with lab momentum greater than $300 \text{ MeV}/c$. A clear $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ signal is observed as shown in Fig. 2(b). A Gaussian fit yields 273 ± 33 events with a mean of $(2317.6 \pm 1.3) \text{ MeV}/c^2$ and width $(8.8 \pm 1.1) \text{ MeV}/c^2$ (statistical errors only). The mean and width are consistent with the values obtained for the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^+K^-\pi^+$ decay mode. The mass distribution of the $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^+K^-\pi^+\pi^0$ sample (not shown) peaks at $(1967.4 \pm 0.2) \text{ MeV}/c^2$ (statistical error only).

We use a Monte Carlo simulation to investigate the possibility that the $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ signal could be due to reflection from other charmed states. This simulation includes $e^+e^- \rightarrow c\bar{c}$ events and all known charm states and decays. The generated events were processed by a detailed detector simulation and subjected to the same reconstruction and event-selection procedure as that

used for the data. No peak is found in the $2.32 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ $D_s^+ \pi^0$ signal region. In addition, no signal peak is produced when the K^\pm and π^\pm identities are deliberately exchanged.

Mass resolution estimates for the $K^+ K^- \pi^+ \pi^0$ system are obtained directly from the data using a fit to the mass distribution $D_s^+ \rightarrow K^+ K^- \pi^+ \pi^0$. The measured width from this mode is consistent with that of the $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ signal. A simulation of the $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ decay to $K^+ K^- \pi^+ \pi^0$ yields a similar mass resolution after event reconstruction and selection criteria have been satisfied. We conclude that the intrinsic width of the $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ is small ($\Gamma \lesssim 10 \text{ MeV}$).

The $\cos\theta_h$ distribution of the $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ decay with respect to its direction in the $e^+ e^-$ center-of-mass frame has been investigated. The efficiency-corrected distribution is consistent with being flat, as expected for a spin-zero particle, or for a particle of higher spin that is produced unpolarized.

We have also performed a search for the decay $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+ \rightarrow D_s^+ \gamma$. Shown in Fig. 3(a) is the $D_s^+ \gamma$ mass distribution obtained by combining a D_s^+ candidate in the signal region of Fig. 1(a) with a photon with an energy of at least 150 MeV that does not belong to a $\gamma\gamma$ combination in the signal region of Fig. 1(b). The requirement that the p^* of the $D_s^+ \gamma$ system be greater than $3.5 \text{ GeV}/c$ is also imposed. There is a clear $D_s^*(2112)^+$ signal, but no indication of $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ production.

The $D_s^+ \gamma\gamma$ mass distribution for $p^*(D_s^+ \gamma\gamma) > 3.5 \text{ GeV}/c$, excluding any photon that belongs to the π^0 signal region of Fig. 1(b), is shown as the upper histogram of Fig. 3(b). No signal is observed near $2.32 \text{ GeV}/c^2$. The shaded histogram corresponds to the subset of combinations for which either $D_s^+ \gamma$ combination lies in the $D_s^*(2112)^+$ region, defined as $2.096 < m(D_s^+ \gamma) < 2.128 \text{ GeV}/c^2$. Again, no $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ signal is evident, thus demonstrating the absence of a $D_s^*(2112)^+ \gamma$ decay mode at the present level of statistics.

The $D_s^+ \pi^0 \gamma$ mass distribution, excluding any photon that belongs to any π^0 candidate, is shown as the upper histogram of Fig. 3(c). The shaded histogram corresponds to the subset of combinations in which the $D_s^+ \gamma$ mass falls in the $D_s^*(2112)^+$ region. No signal is observed near $2.32 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ in either case. A small peak, however, is visible near a mass of $2.46 \text{ GeV}/c^2$. This mass corresponds to the overlap region of the $D_s^*(2112)^+ \rightarrow D_s^+ \gamma$ and $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+ \rightarrow D_s^+ \pi^0$ signal bands that, because of the small widths of both the $D_s^*(2112)^+$ and $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ mesons, produces a narrow peak in the $D_s^+ \pi^0 \gamma$ mass distribution that survives a $D_s^*(2112)^+$ selection.

If the peak in the $D_s^+ \pi^0 \gamma$ mass distribution of Fig. 3(c) were due to the production of a narrow state with mass near $2.46 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ decaying to $D_s^*(2112)^+ \pi^0$, the kinematics are such that a peak would be produced in the $D_s^+ \pi^0$ mass distribution at a mass near $2.32 \text{ GeV}/c^2$. Such a $D_s^+ \pi^0$ mass peak, however, would have a root

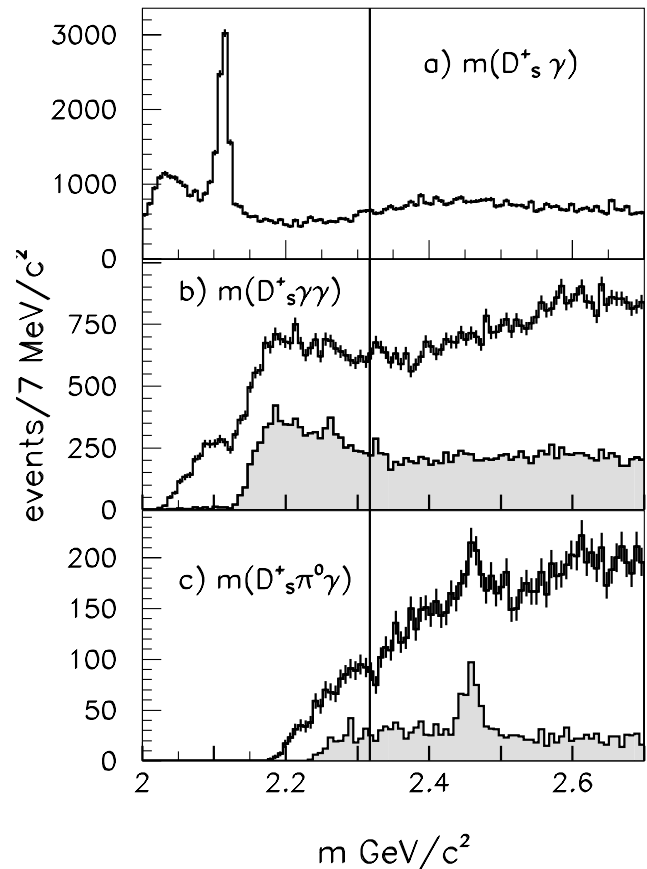


FIG. 3. The mass distribution for (a) $D_s^+ \gamma$ and (b) $D_s^+ \gamma\gamma$ after excluding photons from the signal region of Fig. 1(b). (c) The $D_s^+ \pi^0 \gamma$ mass distribution. The lower histograms of (b) and (c) correspond to $D_s^+ \gamma$ masses that fall in the $D_s^*(2112)^+$ signal region as described in the text. The vertical line indicates the $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ mass.

mean square of $\sim 15 \text{ MeV}/c^2$, which is significantly larger than that obtained for the $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ signal. In addition, Monte Carlo studies indicate that if the apparent signal at $2.46 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ were due to a state that decays entirely to $D_s^*(2112)^+ \pi^0$, it would produce only one-sixth the signal we observe at $2.32 \text{ GeV}/c^2$.

Although we rule out the decay of a state of mass $2.46 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ as the sole source of the $D_s^+ \pi^0$ mass peak corresponding to the $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$, such a state may be produced in addition to the $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$. However, the complexity of the overlapping kinematics of the $D_s^*(2112)^+ \rightarrow D_s^+ \gamma$ and $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+ \rightarrow D_s^+ \pi^0$ decays requires more detailed study, currently underway, in order to arrive at a definitive conclusion.

The decay of any $c\bar{s}$ state to $D_s^+ \pi^0$ violates isospin conservation, thus guaranteeing a small width. It is possible that the decay proceeds via $\eta - \pi^0$ mixing, as discussed by Cho and Wise [12]. For a parity-conserving decay only a spin-parity assignment in the natural J^P series $\{0^+, 1^-, 2^+, \dots\}$ is allowed. The low mass compared to those of the $D_{s1}(2536)^+$ and the $D_{sJ}^*(2573)^+$ favors

$J^P = 0^+$. In this case, decay to $D_s^+ \gamma$ is excluded. However, decay of the $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ to $D_s^*(2112)^+ \gamma$ is allowed and might compete with decay by pion emission. The shaded mass distribution of Fig. 3(b) suggests that this mode is absent, at least at the present level of statistics. This may simply indicate that decay by pion emission is favored over radiative decay.

Further studies are underway. If, however, the tentative $J^P = 0^+$ assignment is confirmed, the low mass, small width, and decay mode of the $D_{sJ}^*(2317)^+$ are quite different from those predicted by potential models [6–8].

In summary, in 91 fb^{-1} of data collected by the BABAR experiment we have observed a narrow state in the inclusive $D_s^+ \pi^0$ mass distribution near $2.32 \text{ GeV}/c^2$. We find no evidence for the decay of this state to $D_s^+ \gamma$, $D_s^*(2112)^+ \gamma$, or $D_s^+ \gamma \gamma$. Since a $c\bar{s}$ meson of this mass contradicts current models of charm meson spectroscopy [6–8], either these models need modification or the observed state is of a different type altogether, such as a four-quark state.

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*Also with Università di Perugia, Perugia, Italy.

†Also with Università della Basilicata, Potenza, Italy.

‡Also with IFIC, Instituto de Física Corpuscular, CSIC-Universidad de Valencia, Valencia, Spain.

§Deceased.

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