

Mass-unspecific classifiers for mass-dependent searches

J.A. Aguilar Saavedra, S. Rodríguez Benítez
Instituto de Física Teórica, UAM/CSIC, Madrid

Based on: 2503.20926

Motivation

Motivation

Collaborations have been extensively searching for **new physics** at colliders for years, continually improving their analysis techniques.

Home > Journal of High Energy Physics > Article

Search for new particles in events with a hadronically decaying W or Z boson and large missing transverse momentum at $\sqrt{s} = 13$ TeV using the ATLAS detector

Regular Article – Experimental Physics | Open access | Published: 22 November 2024, article number 126, (2024) | Cite this article

[Download PDF](#) | You have full access to this open access article

The ATLAS collaboration, G. Aad, E. Aakvaag, B. Abbott, S. Abdelhameed, Abidi, M. Aboelela, A. Aboulhorma, H. Abramowicz, H. Abreu, Y. Abulaiti, Adam Bourdarios, L. Adamczyk, S. V. Addepalli, M. J. Addison, J. Adelman, Affolder, Y. Afik, ... L. Zwalinski | Show authors

837 Accesses | 1 Altmetric | Explore all metrics →

Search for heavy majorana and $e^{\pm}\mu^{\pm}$ final states in pp collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 13$ TeV using the ATLAS detector

The ATLAS Collaboration*

Letter

Search for pair-produced higgsinos decaying via Higgs or Z bosons to final states containing a pair of photons and a pair of b -jets with the ATLAS detector

The ATLAS Collaboration*

Show more

+ Add to Mendeley | Share | Cite

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physletb.2024.138938>

Under a Creative Commons license

Physics Letters B
Volume 856, September 2024, 138938

OPEN ACCESS | GO MOBILE » | ACCESS BY CENTRO DE FISICA MIGUEL A. CATALAN

Search for production of a single vectorlike quark decaying to tH or tZ in the all-hadronic final state in pp collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 13$ TeV

A. Hayrapetyan¹, A. Tumasyan^{1,b}, W. Adam¹, J.W. Andrejkovic², T. Bergauer¹, S. Chatterjee¹, K. Damanakis¹, M. Dragicevic¹, P.S. Hussain¹ et al. (CMS Collaboration)

Show more

Phys. Rev. D 110, 072012 – Published 21 October, 2024
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevD.110.072012>



Physics Reports
Volume 1115, 17 April 2025, Pages 448–569



Dark sector searches with the CMS experiment

BILE » | ACCESS BY CEN

long-lived in proton- p

CMS Collaboration

Show more

A. Tumasyan^{1,b}, W. Adam¹, P.S. Hussain¹ et al. (CMS Collaboration)

+ Add to Mendeley | Share | Cite

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physrep.2024.09.013>

Under a Creative Commons license

Get rights and content

Open access

107 – Published 6 August, 2024

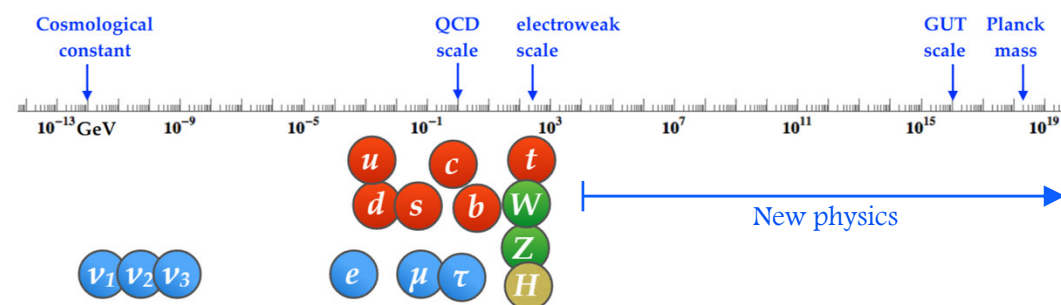
10.1103/PhysRevD.110.032007

Open access

Motivation

Machine learning techniques play a critical role in experimental analyses. How can ML help with **new physics searches**?

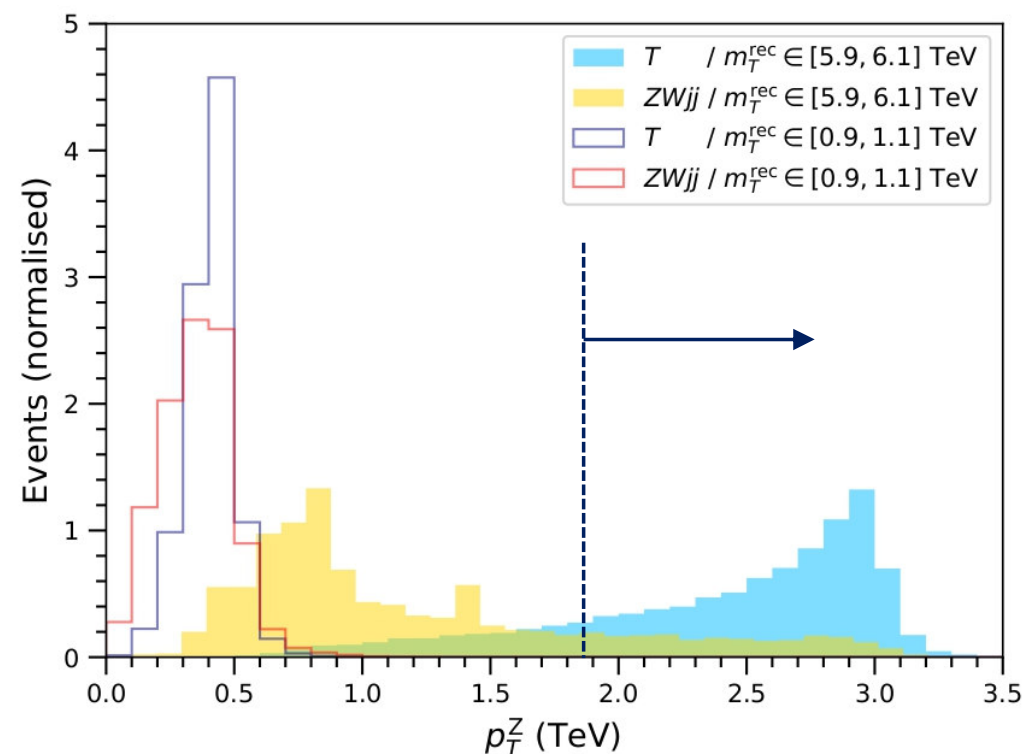
- ❑ Searches for new physics must be sensitive to the entire allowed parameter space.
- ❑ Fixed cuts cannot be simultaneously optimized for new particles over a wide mass range.



Motivation

Machine learning techniques play a critical role in experimental analyses. How can ML help with **new physics searches**?

- ❑ Searches for new physics must be sensitive to the entire allowed parameter space.
- ❑ Fixed cuts cannot be simultaneously optimized for new particles over a wide mass range.



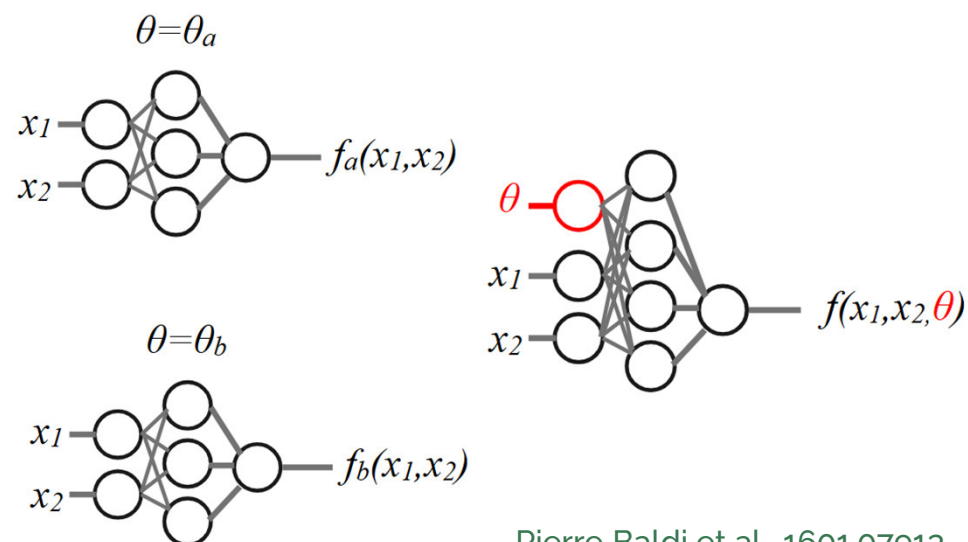
Motivation

Machine learning techniques play a critical role in experimental analyses. How can ML help with **new physics searches**?

- ❑ Searches for new physics must be sensitive to the entire allowed parameter space.
- ❑ Fixed cuts cannot be simultaneously optimized for new particles over a wide mass range.



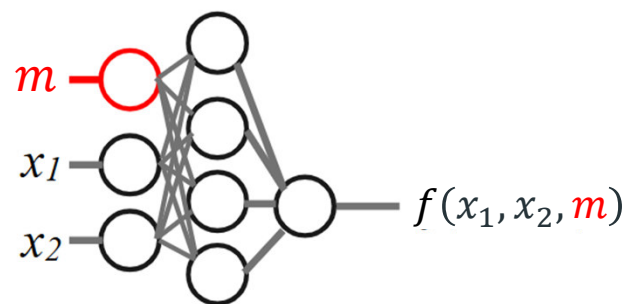
The ATLAS and CMS experiments use a **parameterized neural network** (pNN).



Pierre Baldi et al., 1601.07913

Motivation

PNN aims to learn the **conditional** signal distribution for any value of m



$$f(x_1, x_2, m) \rightarrow p(x_1, x_2 | H_1(m))$$

How are **pNNs** trained?

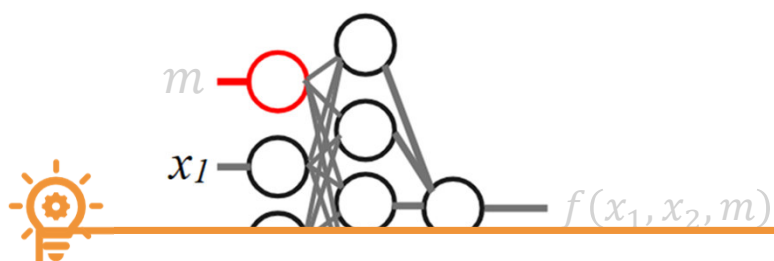
- ❑ The **real mass** is added as an input feature.
- ❑ For **background** events, a **random** mass value is assigned



Mass-background
correlations are ignored

Motivation

PNN's goal is to learn the **conditional** signal distribution for any value of m



$$f(x_1, x_2, m) \rightarrow p(x_1, x_2 | H_1(m))$$

How are pNNs

Make use of classifiers that fully exploit the **correlations** between the signal and background features and the explored **mass scale**

- ❑ The *real mass* is added as an input feature.
- ❑ For background events, a **random** value is assigned



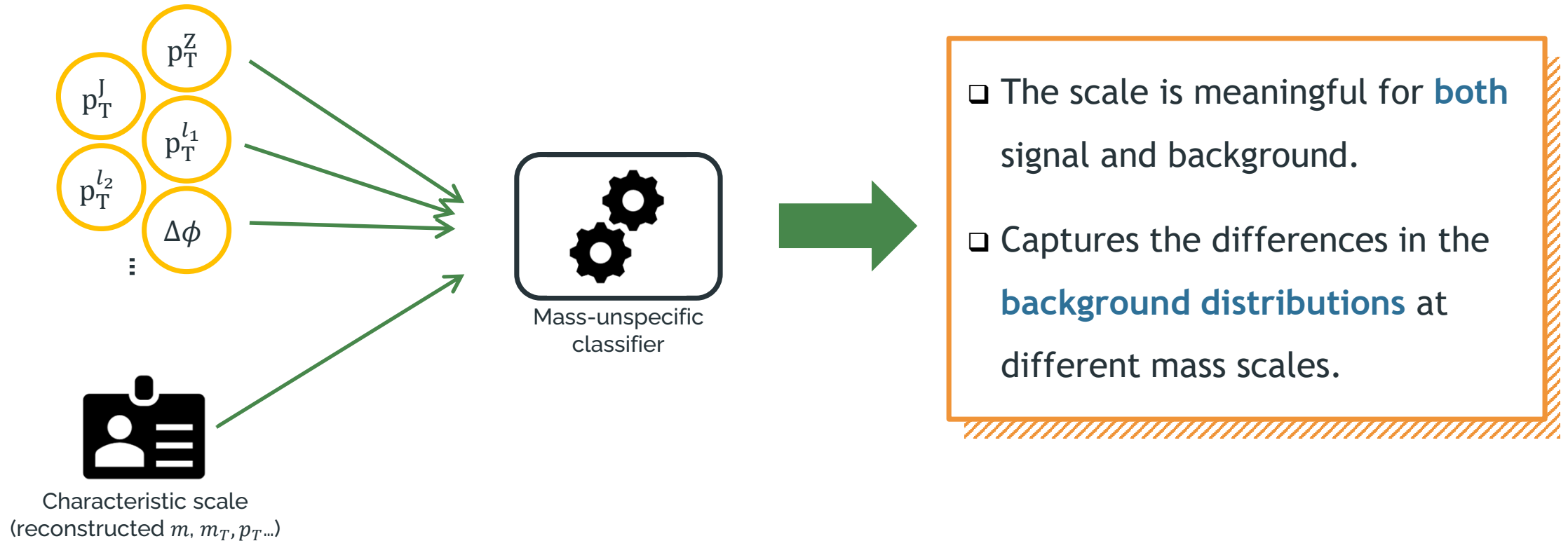
Mass scale-background correlations are ignored

Method overview

Method overview

The **mass-unspecific classifiers** implement two improvements:

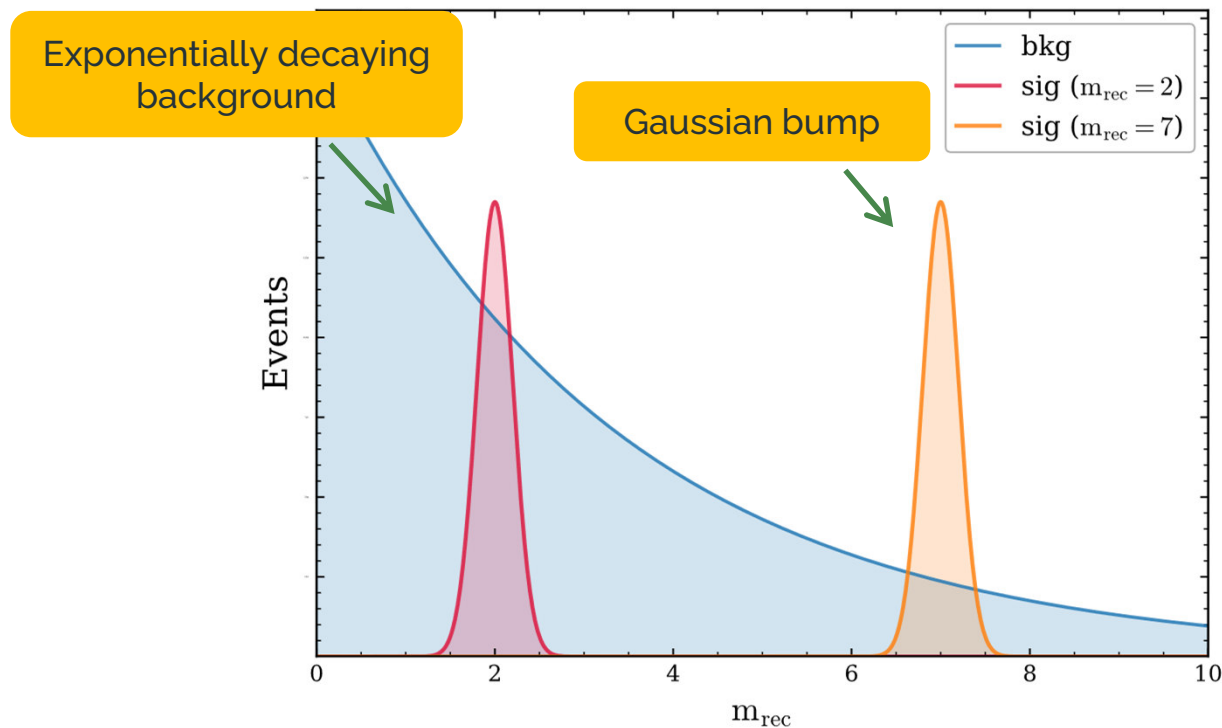
1. Introduce a *new* characteristic mass scale



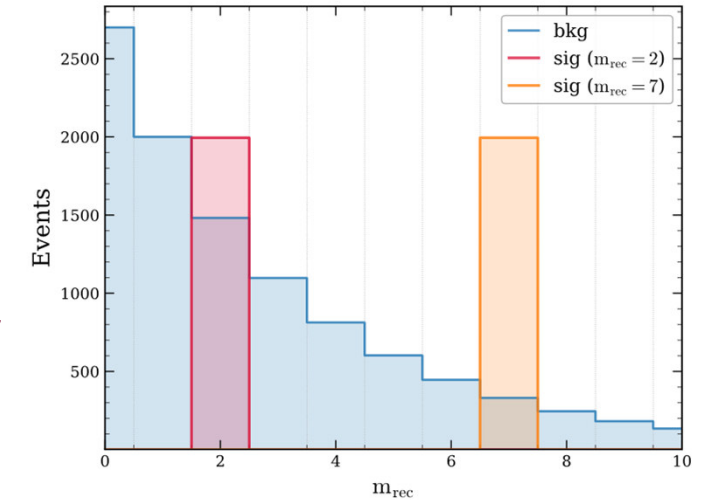
Method overview

The **mass-unspecific classifiers** implement two improvements:

2. Use a **balanced set** for training

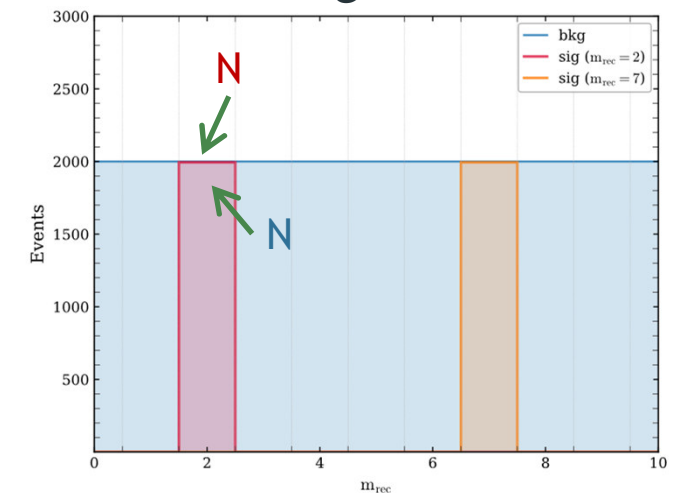


Inclusive generation



Binning
choice

Binned generation

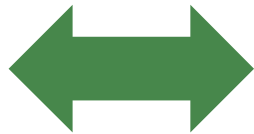


Benchmark signal

Benchmark process

The cross-section is proportional to the square of the **mixing angle** and also depends on the **quark mass**. The process can probe:

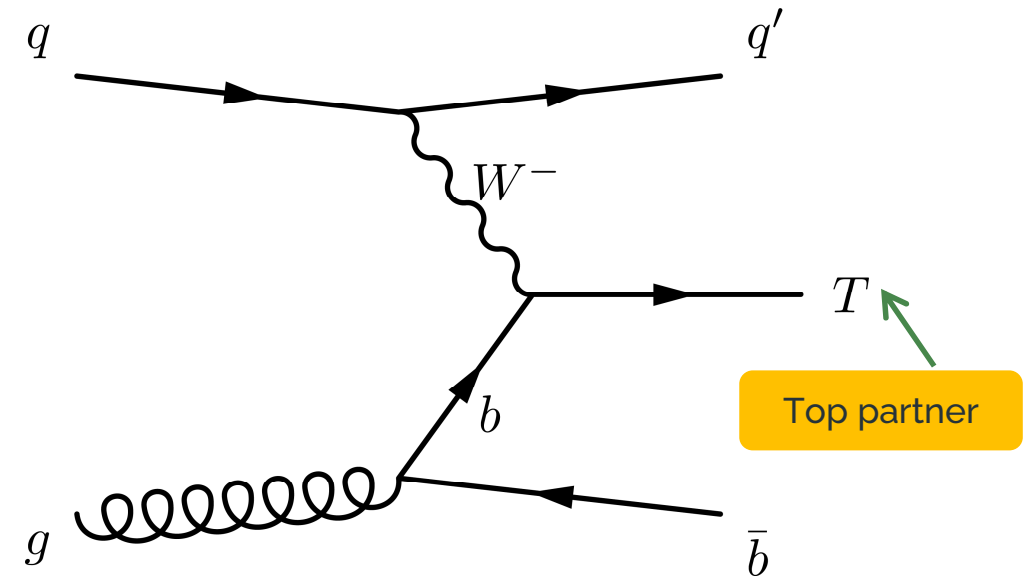
$m_T \sim \text{several TeV}$
with $V_{Tb} \sim 1$



$m_T \sim 1 \text{ TeV}$
with small V_{Tb}



Suited to test the mass-unspecific
classifiers for a mass-dependent search



Training

The main difference between our **mass-unspecific classifiers** and the parameterized NN (pNN) lies in the training strategy:

μ NN & μ BDT

Training dataset:

- ❑ **Samples:** Use binned generation for **background**.
- ❑ **Selection:** 5000 **background** + **signal** events per interval of m_T^{rec} .

Features:

- ❑ m_T^{rec} included as a feature.
- ❑ Background has a **physical** value of m_T^{rec} .

pNN

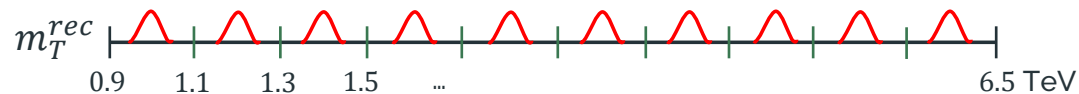
Training dataset:

- ❑ **Samples:** Uses inclusive **background** events.
- ❑ **Selection:** 5000 **signal** events for each interval of m_T^{rec} .

Features:

- ❑ Include m_T as a feature.
- ❑ Background m_T value is assigned **randomly**.

VS



Training

The main difference between our **mass-unspecific classifiers** and the parameterized NN (pNN) lies in the training strategy:

μ NN & μ BDT

Training dataset:

- ❑ **Samples:** Use binned generation for **background**.
- ❑ **Selection:** 5000 **background** + **signal** events per interval of m_T^{rec} .

Features:

- ❑ m_T^{rec} included as a feature.
- ❑ Background has a **physical** value of m_T^{rec} .

pNN

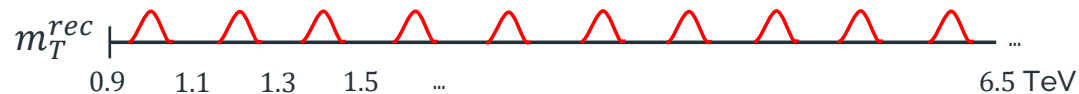
Training dataset:

- ❑ **Samples:** Uses inclusive **background** events.
- ❑ **Selection:** 5000 **signal** events for each interval of m_T^{rec} .

Features:

- ❑ Include m_T as a feature.
- ❑ Background m_T value is assigned **randomly**.

VS



Training

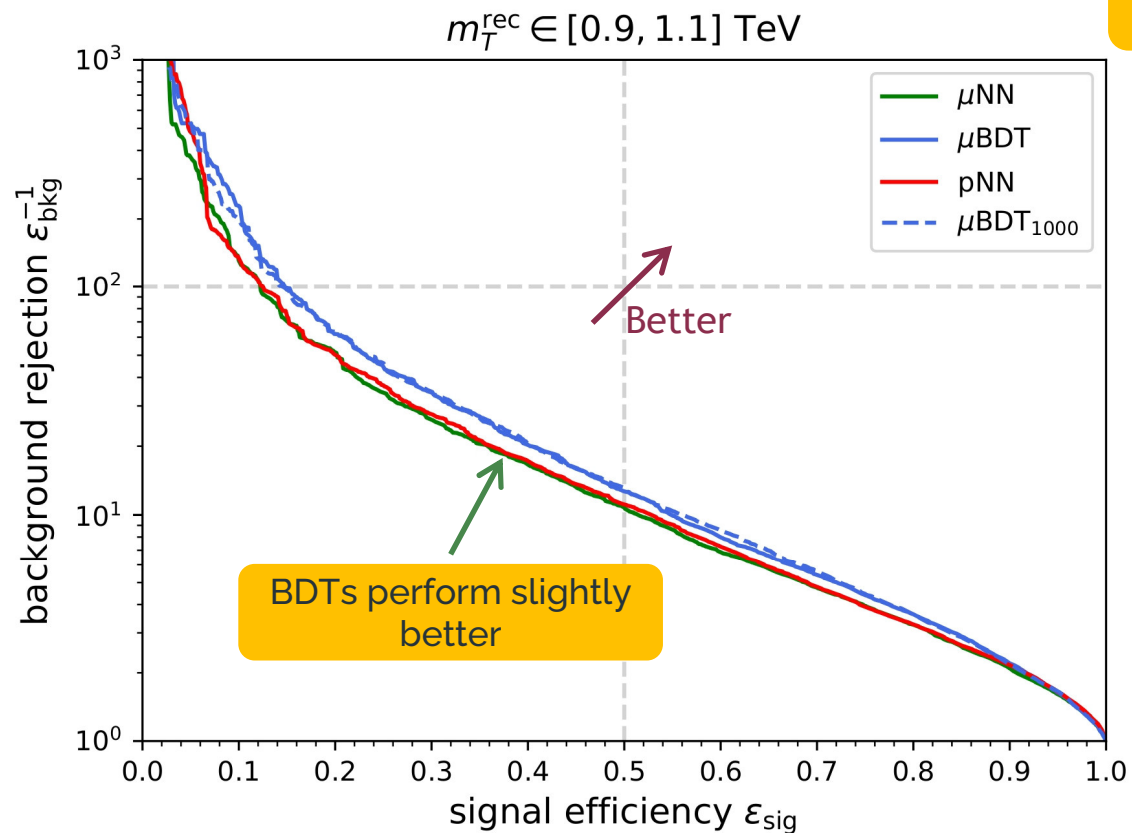
For comparison, in addition to our **mass-unspecific classifiers** we train a weighted NN (**wNN**), different parameterized NN (**pNN**) and a mass-specific BDT (**μ BDT _{m_T}**):

	Training range	Signal gen.	Background gen.	Mass label
μ NN, μ BDT	[0.9,6.5] TeV	0.2 TeV steps	0.2 TeV bins	m_T^{rec}
wBDT	[0.9,6.5] TeV	0.2 TeV steps	inclusive, weighted	m_T^{rec}
pNN	[0.9,6.5] TeV	0.2 TeV steps	inclusive, unweighted	m_T / random
pNN _B	[0.9,6.5] TeV	0.2 TeV steps	0.2 TeV bins	m_T / random
pNN _X	[0.9,6.5] TeV	0.2 TeV steps	inclusive, unweighted	(m_T / random), m_T^{rec}
wNN	[0.9,6.5] TeV	0.2 TeV steps	inclusive, weighted	m_T^{rec}
μ BDT ₁₀₀₀	[0.9,1.1] TeV	$m_T = 1$ TeV	[0.9,1.1] TeV	m_T^{rec}
μ BDT ₆₀₀₀	[5.9,6.1] TeV	$m_T = 6$ TeV	[5.9,6.1] TeV	m_T^{rec}

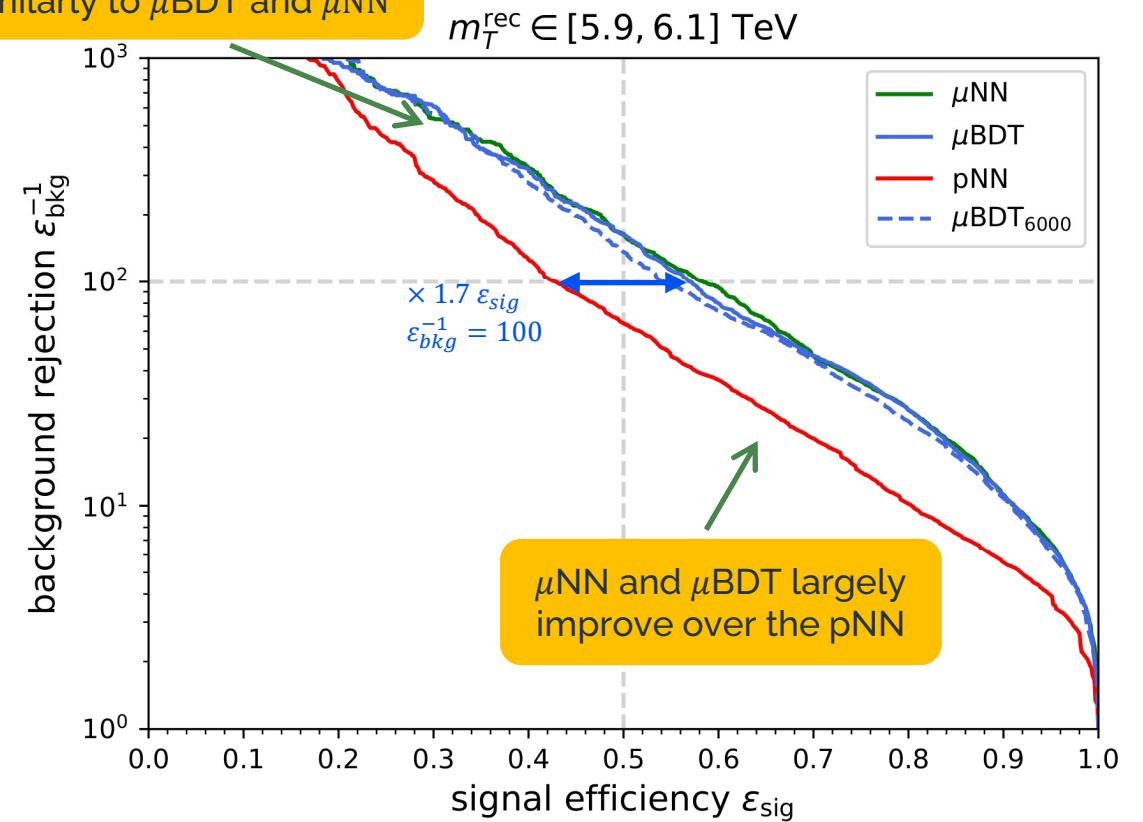
Results

Performance

Receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curves comparing different discriminators for several T mass values:



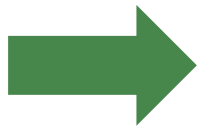
μBDT_{6000} performs similarly to μBDT and μNN



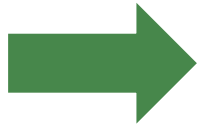
Performance

Receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curves comparing different discriminators for several T mass values:

Why do the μ NN and μ BDT perform better?

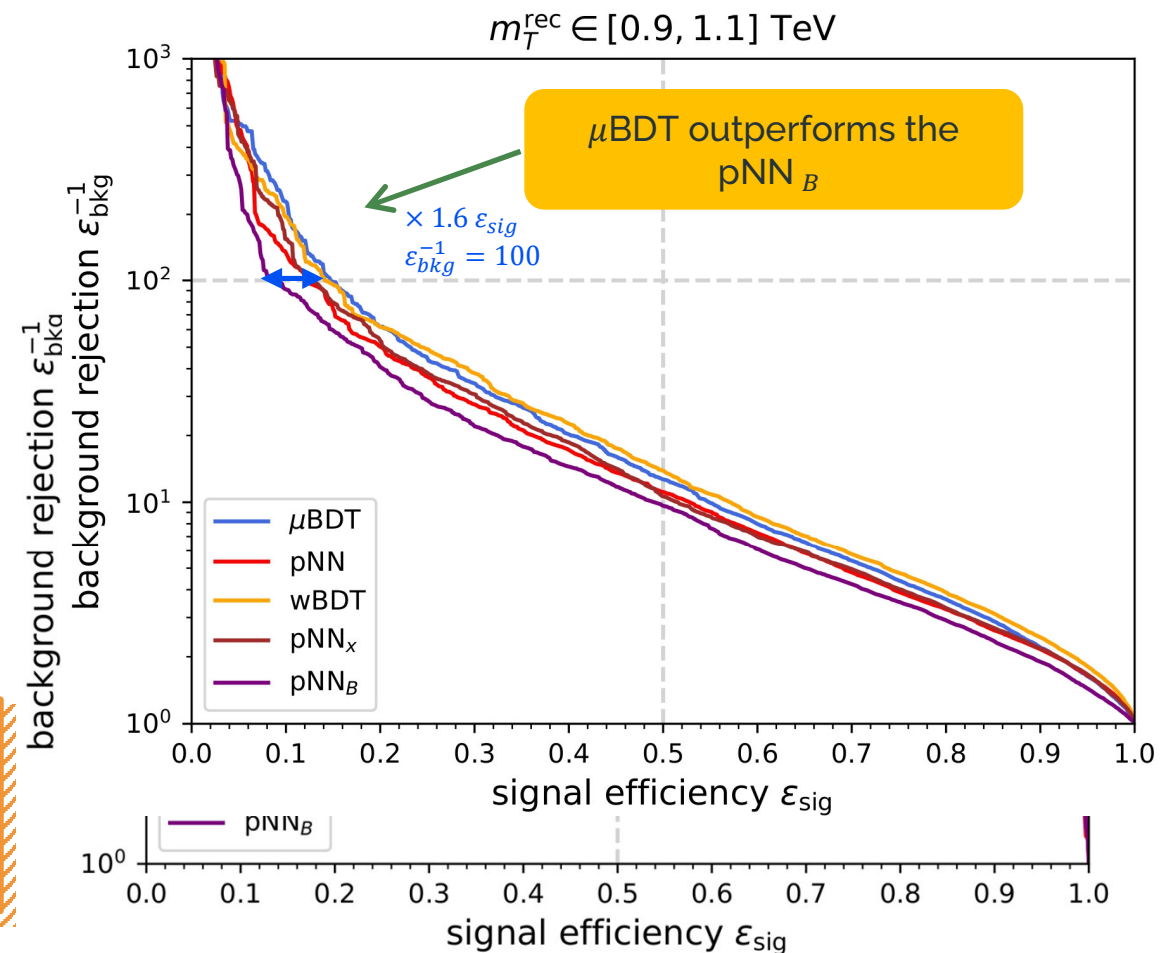


The **mass label** is meaningful for the **background**. (pNN_B vs μ BDT)



The model is trained using **balanced sets** within each m_T^{rec} bin. (**pNN** vs pNN_B)

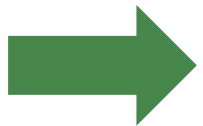
The mass-unspecific discriminator is able to learn the **correlations** between the **background** distributions and the **mass scale**.



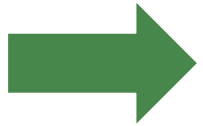
Performance

Receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curves comparing different discriminators for several T mass values:

Why do the μ NN and μ BDT perform better?

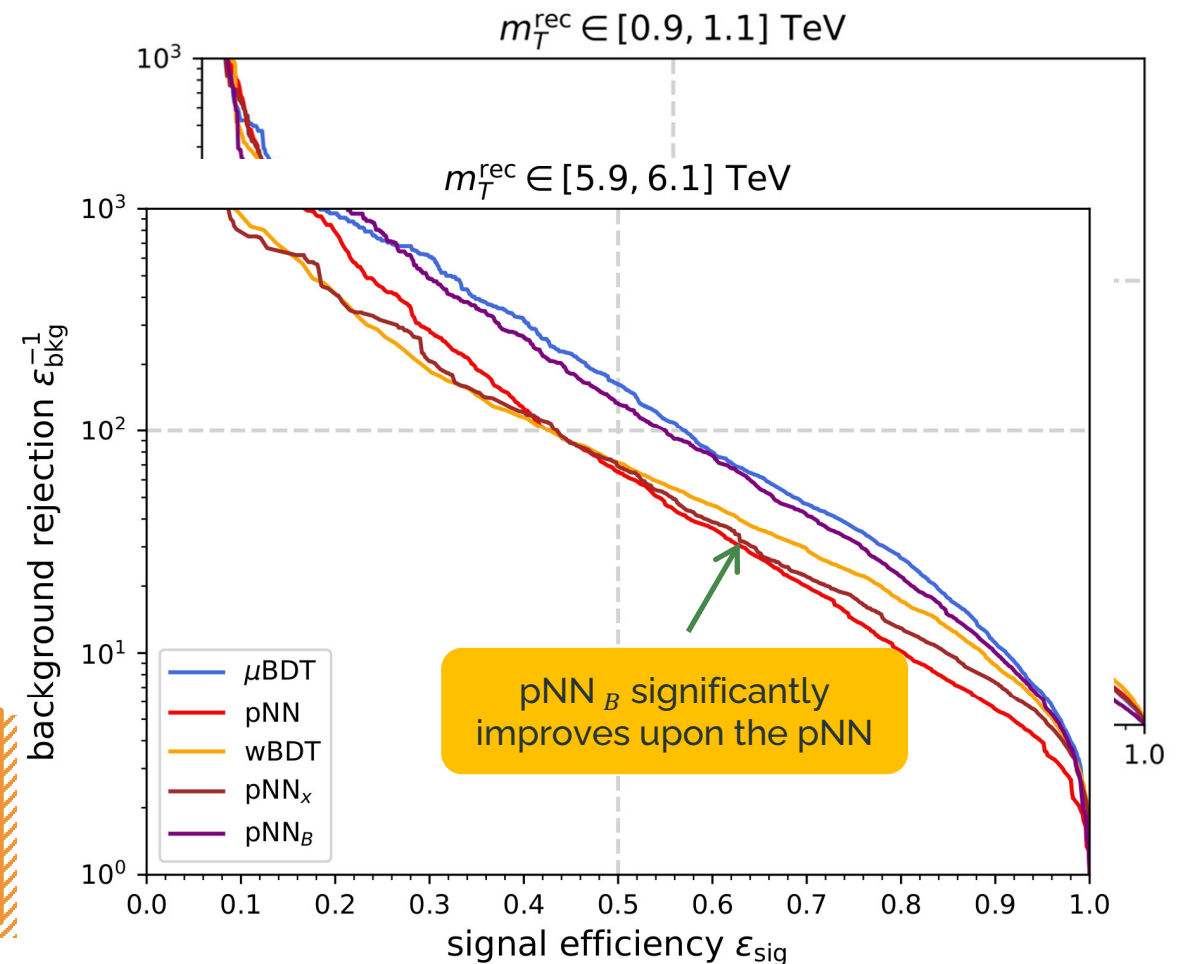


The **mass label** is meaningful for the **background**. (pNN_B vs μ BDT)



The model is trained using **balanced sets** within each m_T^{rec} bin. (pNN vs pNN_B)

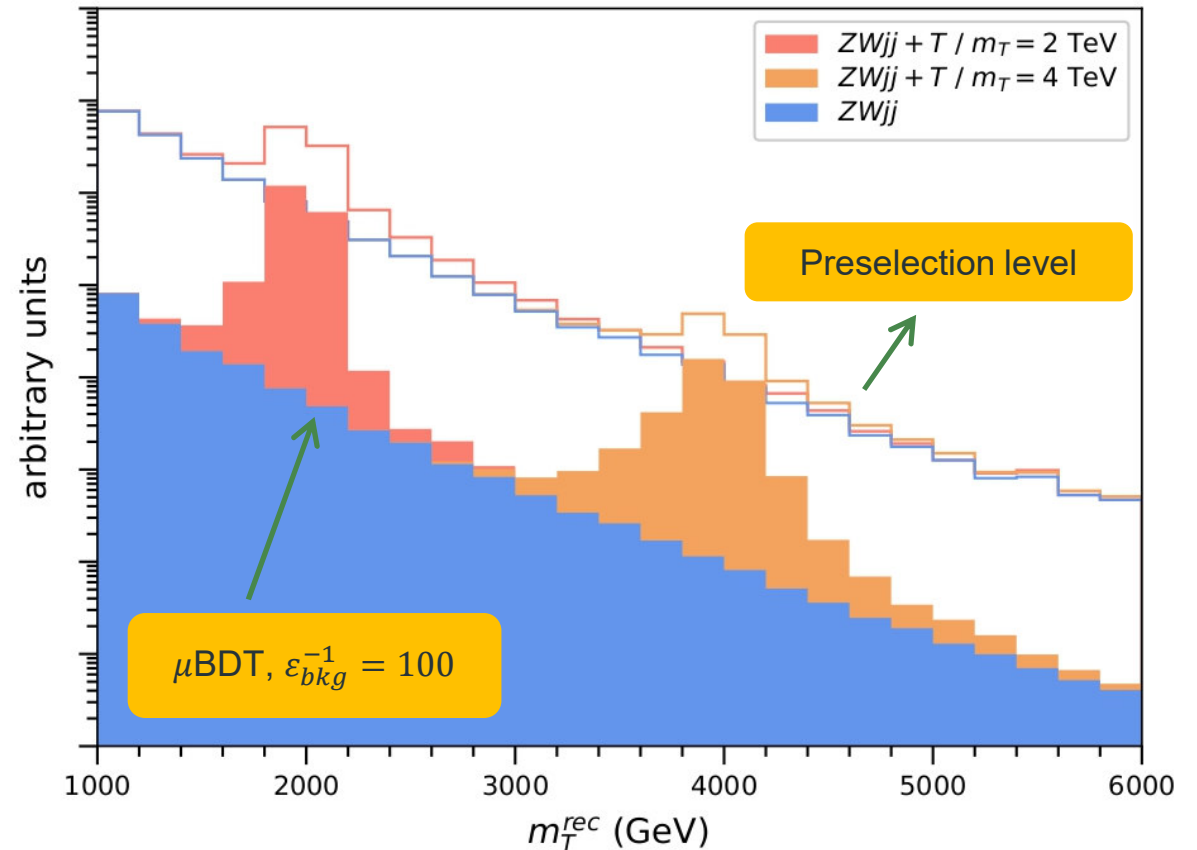
The mass-unspecific discriminator is able to learn the **correlations** between the **background** distributions and the **mass scale**.



Shape preservation

It is possible to preserve the **background and signal shape** after applying mass-unspecific classifiers by **varying the threshold**.

Despite being trained in bins of m_T^{rec} , the μ BDT produces a **continuous classifier output** across bins.



Conclusions

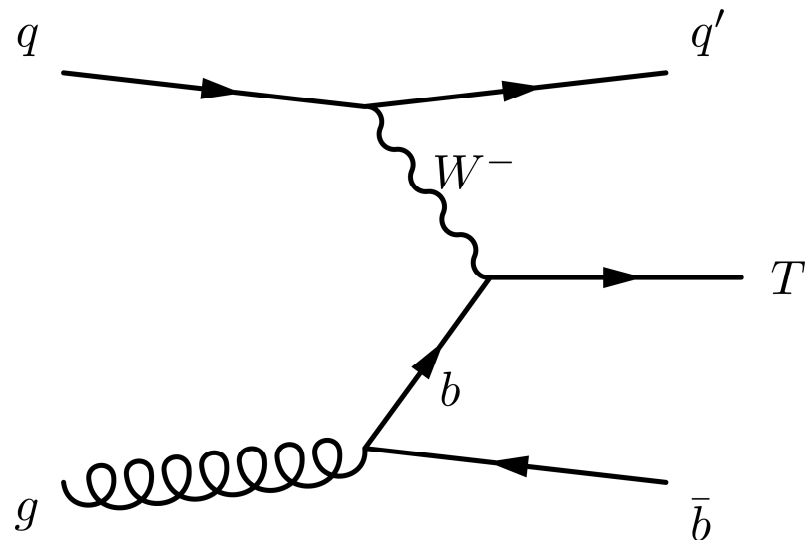
- ✓ The performance of the μ NN and μ BDT is quite close to that of the mass-specific classifiers.
- ✓ The μ NN and μ BDT perform **as well as or better** than a pNN. There are two key factors:
 - The background mass scale is correlated with the actual background shape.
 - The training sample sets equal weight for high and low scales, allowing the classifier to learn those differences.
- ✓ Despite the use of a benchmark of single T production at the HL-LHC, our conclusions **extend to other new physics processes and colliders.**

Backup

Benchmark process

We used MadGraph, Pythia and Delphes to generate and simulate the events.

- ❑ **Signal:** Single production of a T quark (top partner), $pp \rightarrow T\bar{b}j$, $T \rightarrow tZ \rightarrow l^+\nu b l^+l^-$, with $l = e, \mu$
- ❑ **Background:** We include the dominant process, $pp \rightarrow ZW^+jj$.



Signal events generated for a range of T masses:

- ❑ 1.5×10^5 events for T masses from 1 to 6.4 TeV

Inclusive and binned generation of the **background**:

- ❑ 6×10^6 events, with $m_{ZWj} > 800$ GeV
- ❑ 4×10^5 events in 200 GeV intervals of m_{ZWj}

Preselection cuts

Minimal **preselection cuts** are required to efficiently reconstruct the signal and background events.

1. ≥ 3 leptons, which we are required to have $p_T \geq 25$ GeV, $|\eta| < 2.5$ and $p_T^{leading} > 40$ GeV.
2. We require the Z boson to have $p_T^Z > 60$ GeV.
3. ≥ 1 fat jet ($R = 0.8$), with the Z leptons outside the radius, and the third lepton inside; with $p_T > 80$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.5$.
4. ≥ 1 light slim jet ($R = 0.4$) without any lepton inside the radius, $p_T > 25$ GeV and $|\eta| < 5$.
5. $\Delta R(Z, J) \geq 1$, with $\Delta R = [(\Delta\eta)^2 + (\Delta\phi)^2]^{1/2}$.

Mass	Cut 1	Cut 2	Cut 3	Cut 4	Cut 5	Cut 6
$m_T = 1000$ GeV	0.73304	0.68898	0.58860	0.30207	0.29762	0.29734
$m_T = 2000$ GeV	0.76763	0.73699	0.64231	0.50801	0.50137	0.50107
$m_T = 6400$ GeV	0.78919	0.7692	0.66545	0.60937	0.59738	0.59704

Reconstruction

After applying a minimal set of preselection cuts, the reconstruction is done:

- ❑ **Z boson:** opposite-sign same-flavour pair of leptons, $p_Z = p_{l_1} + p_{l_2}$. If more than one candidate, the pair with invariant mass closest to the Z boson mass is chosen.

- ❑ **Fat jet:** $R = 0.8$ fat jet containing the third lepton l_3 .

Boosted top quark
from the T decay

- ❑ **Neutrino:** we assumed it is produced in the W decay. $(p_\nu)_{x,y} = (E_T)_{x,y}$ and $(p_{l_3} + p_\nu)^2 = M_W^2$ provides **two solutions** for $(p_\nu)_z$.

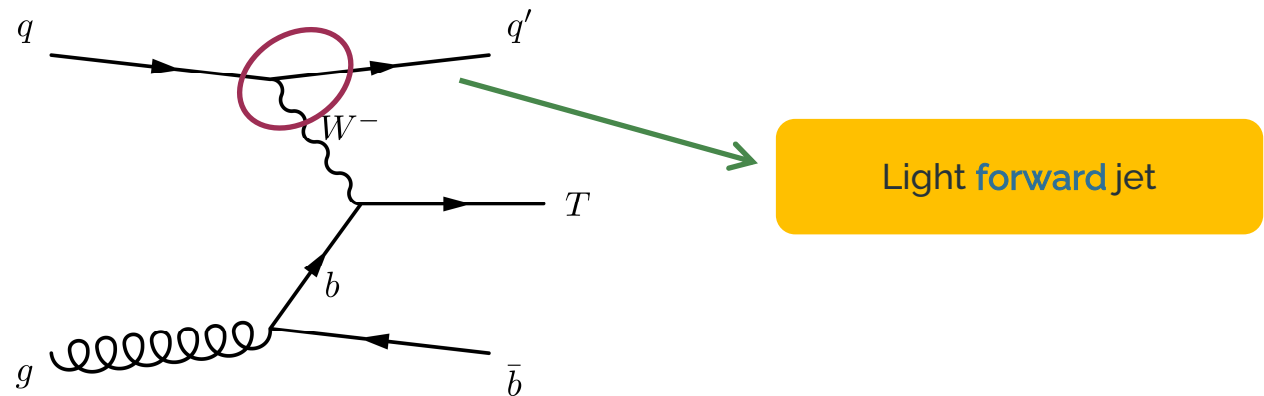
- ❑ **Slim jet:** $R = 0.4$ light jet.

Take the one such that
 $[(p_J + p_\nu)^2]^{1/2} \rightarrow M_t$

Reconstruction

After applying a minimal set of preselection cuts, the reconstruction is done:

- **Z boson:** opposite-sign same-flavour pair of leptons, $p_Z = p_{l_1} + p_{l_2}$. If more than one candidate, the pair with invariant mass closest to the Z boson mass is chosen.
- **Fat jet:** $R = 0.8$ fat jet containing the third lepton l_3 .
- **Neutrino:** we assumed it is produced in the W decay. $(p_\nu)_{x,y} = (E_T)_{x,y}$ and $(p_{l_3} + p_\nu)^2 = M_W^2$ provides two solutions for $(p_\nu)_z$.
- **Slim jet:** $R = 0.4$ light jet.



Reconstruction

After applying a minimal set of preselection cuts, the reconstruction is done:

- ❑ **Z boson:** opposite-sign same-flavour pair of leptons, $p_Z = p_{l_1} + p_{l_2}$. If more than one candidate, the pair with invariant mass closest to the Z boson mass is chosen.
- ❑ **Fat jet:** $R = 0.8$ fat jet containing the third lepton l_3 .
- ❑ **Neutrino:** we assumed it is produced in the W decay. $(p_\nu)_{x,y} = (\cancel{E}_T)_{x,y}$ and $(p_{l_3} + p_\nu)^2 = M_W^2$ provides **two solutions** for $(p_\nu)_z$.
- ❑ **Slim jet:** $R = 0.4$ light jet.

The T signal produces a peak in the reconstructed T mass

$$m_T^{rec} = [(p_J + p_\nu + p_Z)^2]^{1/2}$$



m_T^{rec} is our  for the classifier

Discriminating variables

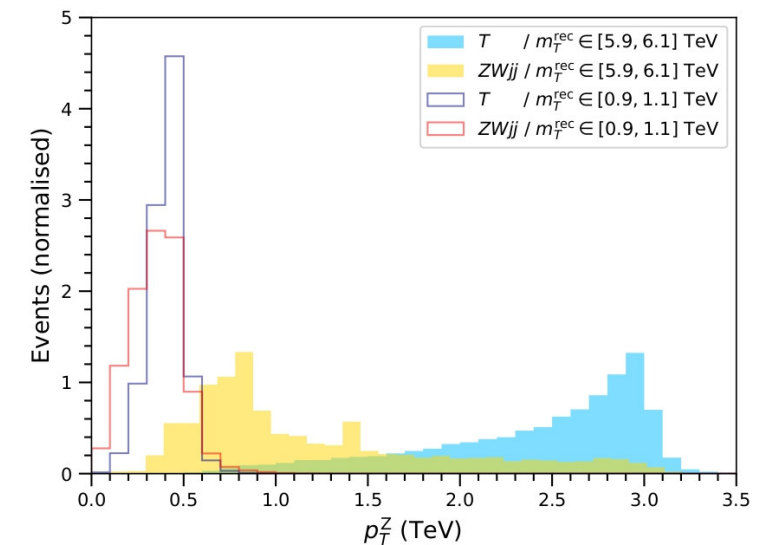
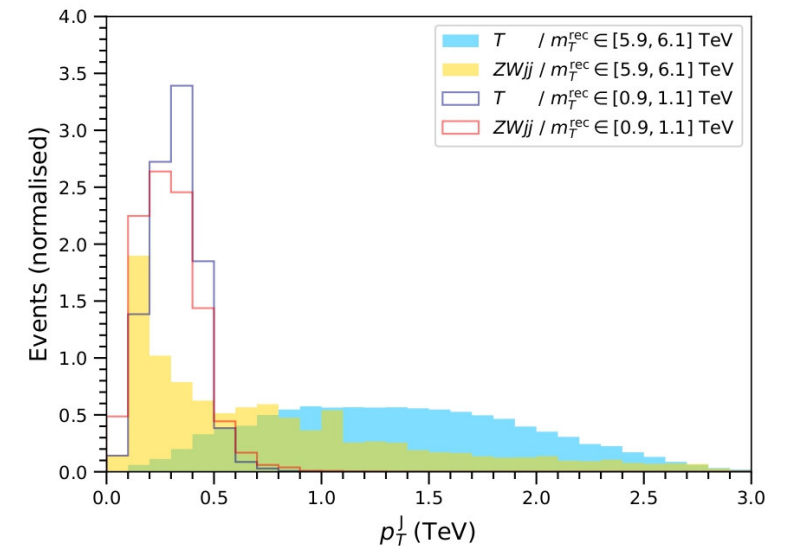
Kinematical distributions of interest in this work:

- ❑ Reconstructed T mass m_T^{rec} .
- ❑ Transverse momenta of Z leptons, $p_T^{l_1}$ and $p_T^{l_2}$.
- ❑ Reconstructed top quark mass, m_t^{rec} .
- ❑ Azimuthal angle between the reconstructed Z and the third lepton, $\Delta\phi(Z, l_3)$.
- ❑ Forward $R = 0.4$ jet multiplicity ($2.5 \leq |\eta| \leq 5$).

Correlations with the mass scale help discriminate signal from background.



mass-unspecific classifiers



Test and validation samples

In order to **prevent overtraining**, we use validation samples generated using the same procedure as the training data:

- **μ NN and μ BDT**: 3500 **signal** and **background** events per m_T^{rec} bin.
- **wNN and pNN**: 3500 **signal** events for each T mass. 9.4×10^4 **background** events from the inclusively generated sample.
- **μ BDT $_{m_T}$** : 3500 **signal** and **background** events.

For the test we used the number of events that remain after removing the ones used for the training and validation:

$m_T^{rec} \in [0.9, 1.1]$ TeV $\longrightarrow$ 51428 **signal** and 20894 **background** events

$m_T^{rec} \in [5.9, 6.1]$ TeV $\longrightarrow$ 15456 **signal** and 15752 **background** events

Model architectures

A detailed description of all the models we trained in this work:

NNs

- ❑ Implemented using **Keras** with a **Tensorflow** backend.
- ❑ **[64,64]** with ReLU activation for the hidden layers and a sigmoid function for the output one.
- ❑ **Binary cross entropy** loss function, optimization using the **Adam** algorithm.
- ❑ From 5 trainings with different initial seeds, we select the one that gives the best AUC.

BDTs

- ❑ Implemented using **XGBoost**.
- ❑ A maximum of **500 boosting trees** and a **depth of 5**.
- ❑ Learning rate of **0.15**.
- ❑ From 5 trainings with different initial seeds, we select the one that gives the best AUC.

Signal efficiency

Signal efficiencies of the μ BDT as a function of the T quark mass:

