

K-Factor Updates

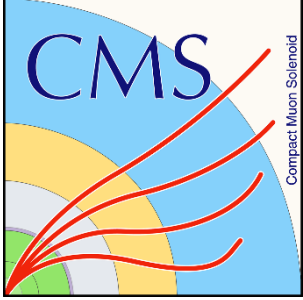


Mohit Srivastav
LHCHWG Meeting
February 20, 2026

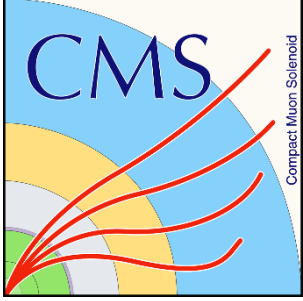




ggH k-factor

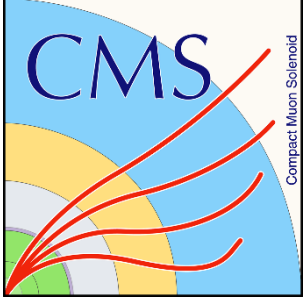


- Gluon-fusion k-factor is done currently using HNNLO
 - LO \rightarrow NLO
 - LO \rightarrow NNLO
 - NLO \rightarrow NNLO comes for “free” from this since we calculate NLO/NNLO anyways
- K-factor is applied to background as well, using theory assumptions that the bkg, signal, and interference k-factors differ by $< 10\%$
- Need to make a slew of changes to HNNLO code to make it work!
 - Change string length maximum for a bunch of variables internally to allow for NNPDF names as well as designators for systematic variations
 - Edit Higgs width for all resonant points to be 4.14 MeV in br.sm2 file
- Nominal values are calculated, systematic variations require a **lot** of resources.



PDF Set

- The old PDF set used was something different than what we use today for the NLO Powheg samples
- We also have decided to use a slightly different PDF set at NNLO that is hessian
- As such, we revise the Run-2 kfactor as well as the Run-3 value
- We use NNPDF30_lo_as_0130 for LO (same)
- NNPDF31_NNLO_hessian_pdfas for NLO samples
- NNPDF31_NNLO_as_0118_mc_hessian_pdfas for final NNLO calculation

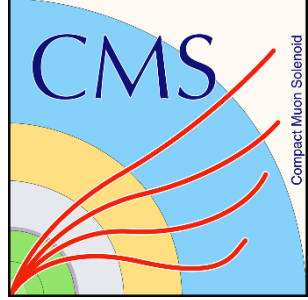


Mass Points

- Mass points are sampled individually
- Points below 100 GeV in HNNLO with very unphysical cross-sections at higher orders
 - i.e., 70 GeV
 - LO $\rightarrow 3.3973338433323967E-003$
 - NLO $\rightarrow 8.2368421491823014$
 - NNLO $\rightarrow 1.6262855329656050$
- Go from 100 GeV to 6000 GeV in spaced points

```
hmasses = (  
    # be very precise in the H125 on-shell region  
    list(np.arange(100, 140, 2, dtype=int)) +  
    # between on-shell and off-shell don't sample too much  
    list(np.arange(140, 180, 10, dtype=int)) +  
    # starting at 2mZ start sampling a lot relative to the size  
    list(np.arange(180, 1000, 5, dtype=int)) +  
    # above a TeV things start to break down anyways  
    list(np.arange(1000, 6000, 50, dtype=int))  
)
```

Figure 6: The hmasses as defined in Python code with GeV sampling. There are 228 of them.



Systematic Variations

- 9-point variation for the QCD-scales jointly
 - New guidance on k-factors likes an enveloped profile instead of separate uncertainties
- 100 PDF uncertainties
- 2 α_S variations
- **~50k jobs required per run**

$$\begin{aligned}
 N_{\text{jobs}} &= N_{\text{hmasses}} + 2 \times N_{\text{hmasses}} \times (N_{(\mu_F, \mu_R)} + N_{\text{PDF}} + N_{\alpha_S}) \\
 &= 228 + 2 \times 228 \times (9 + 100 + 2) \\
 &= 50,844
 \end{aligned}$$

- 166 • μ_R, μ_F Nominally set to $\frac{m_{4\ell}}{2}$, this number is varied to $\frac{m_{4\ell}}{4}$ and $m_{4\ell}$. The 2 values are
 167 changed side-by-side to profile the whole space of Eq. 3.
 168 , where $\{\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}\}$ denotes the nominal case, in order to derive an uncertainty using
 169 Eq. 4, where the maximum and the minimum cross-sectional variations are chosen
 170 to define the uncertainty band around the nominal point.

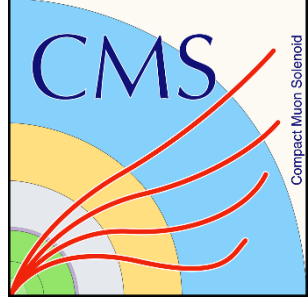
$$(\mu_R, \mu_F) = \left\{ \left\{ \frac{1}{4}, \frac{1}{4} \right\}, \left\{ \frac{1}{4}, \frac{1}{2} \right\}, \left\{ \frac{1}{4}, 1 \right\}, \left\{ \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{4} \right\}, \left\{ \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2} \right\}, \left\{ \frac{1}{2}, 1 \right\}, \left\{ 1, \frac{1}{4} \right\}, \left\{ 1, \frac{1}{2} \right\}, \{1, 1\}, \right\} \quad (3)$$

$$(\delta\sigma)_{\text{QCD-scale}} = \frac{\sigma_{\max}(\mu_R, \mu_F) - \sigma_{\min}(\mu_R, \mu_F)}{2} \quad (4)$$

- 171 • PDF set Nominally PDF set 0 is used. However, in the hessian PDF sets chosen in
 172 Table. 2, there are 100 extra sets to choose from. The systematic uncertainty is then
 173 defined by Eq. 5, where $\sigma^{(i)}$ denotes PDF set i , with 0 being the nominal case.

$$(\delta\sigma)_{\text{PDF-set}} = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{100} (\sigma^{(i)} - \sigma^{(0)})^2} \quad (5)$$

- 174 • α_S value The final 2 PDF sets (101 and 102) for the hessian keep the PDF the same
 175 but change α_S from its nominal value of 0.118. There is a variation up (0.116) and
 176 a variation down (0.120). These variations are simply taken at face value, with the
 177 systematic variations up and down being the calculations from HNNLO.



Smoothing done via Gaussian Regression

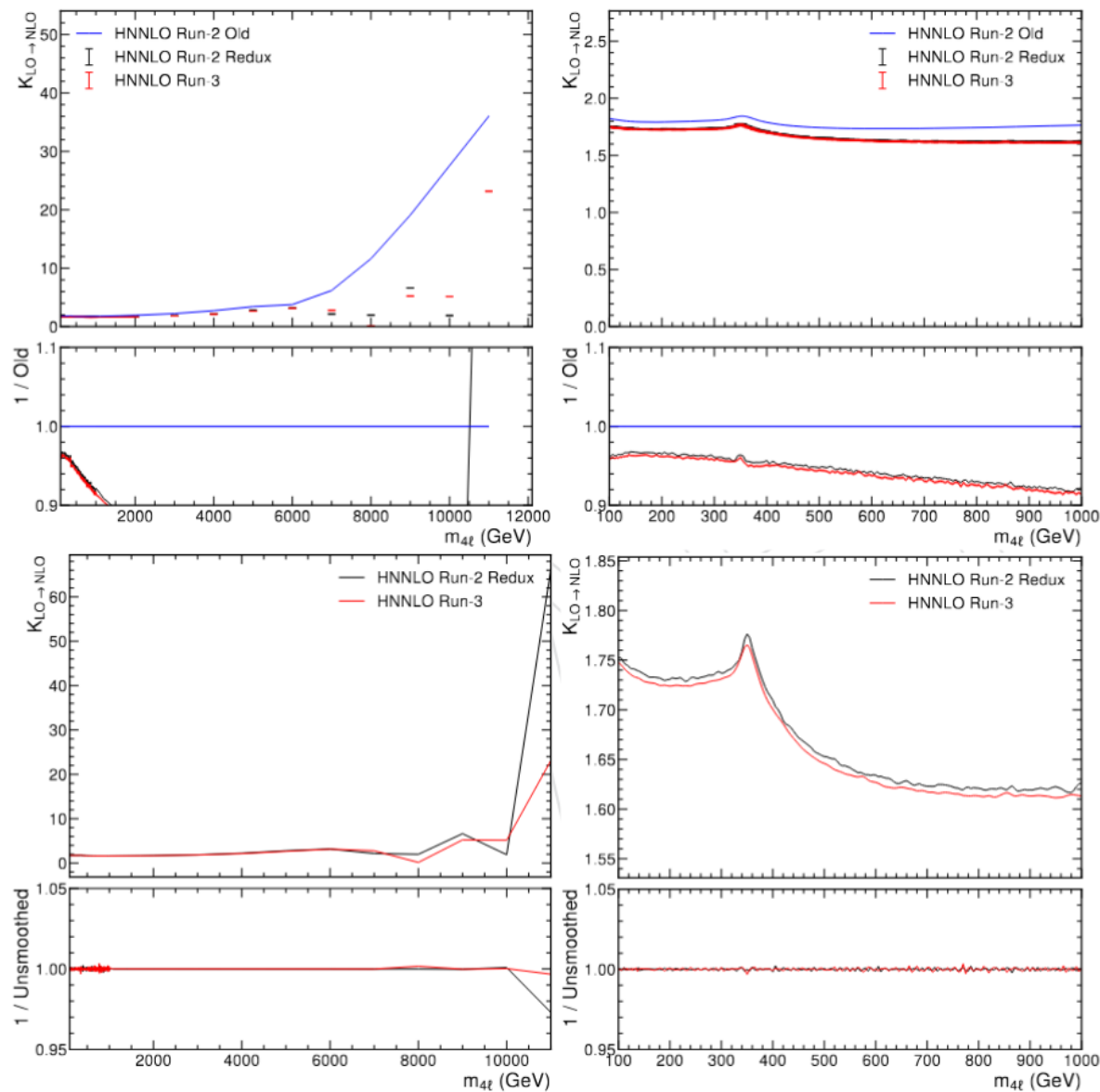
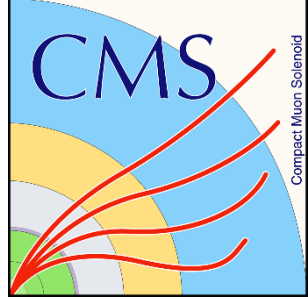


Figure 7: The gluon-fusion NLO k-factor as a function of $m_{4\ell}$, for the whole range (left), and zoomed in to the range [100, 1000] GeV (right), for the unsmoothed case comparing to the old k-factor (top) and the smoothed case comparing to the unsmoothed case (bottom).



Smoothing done via Gaussian Regression

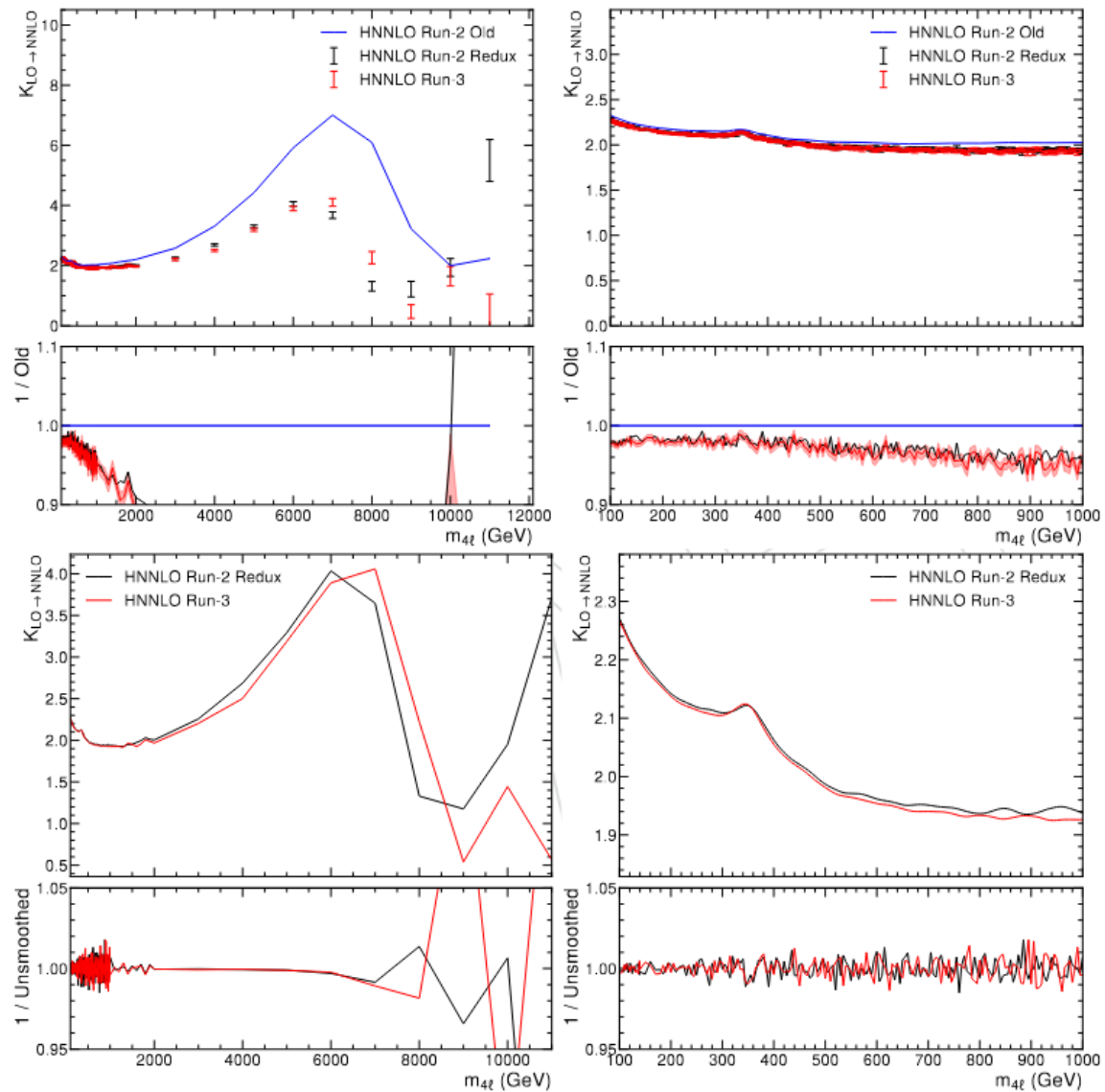


Figure 8: The gluon-fusion NNLO k-factor as a function of $m_{4\ell}$, for the whole range (left), and zoomed in to the range [100, 1000] GeV (right), for the unsmoothed case comparing to the old k-factor (top) and the smoothed case comparing to the unsmoothed case (bottom).



Smoothing done via Gaussian Regression

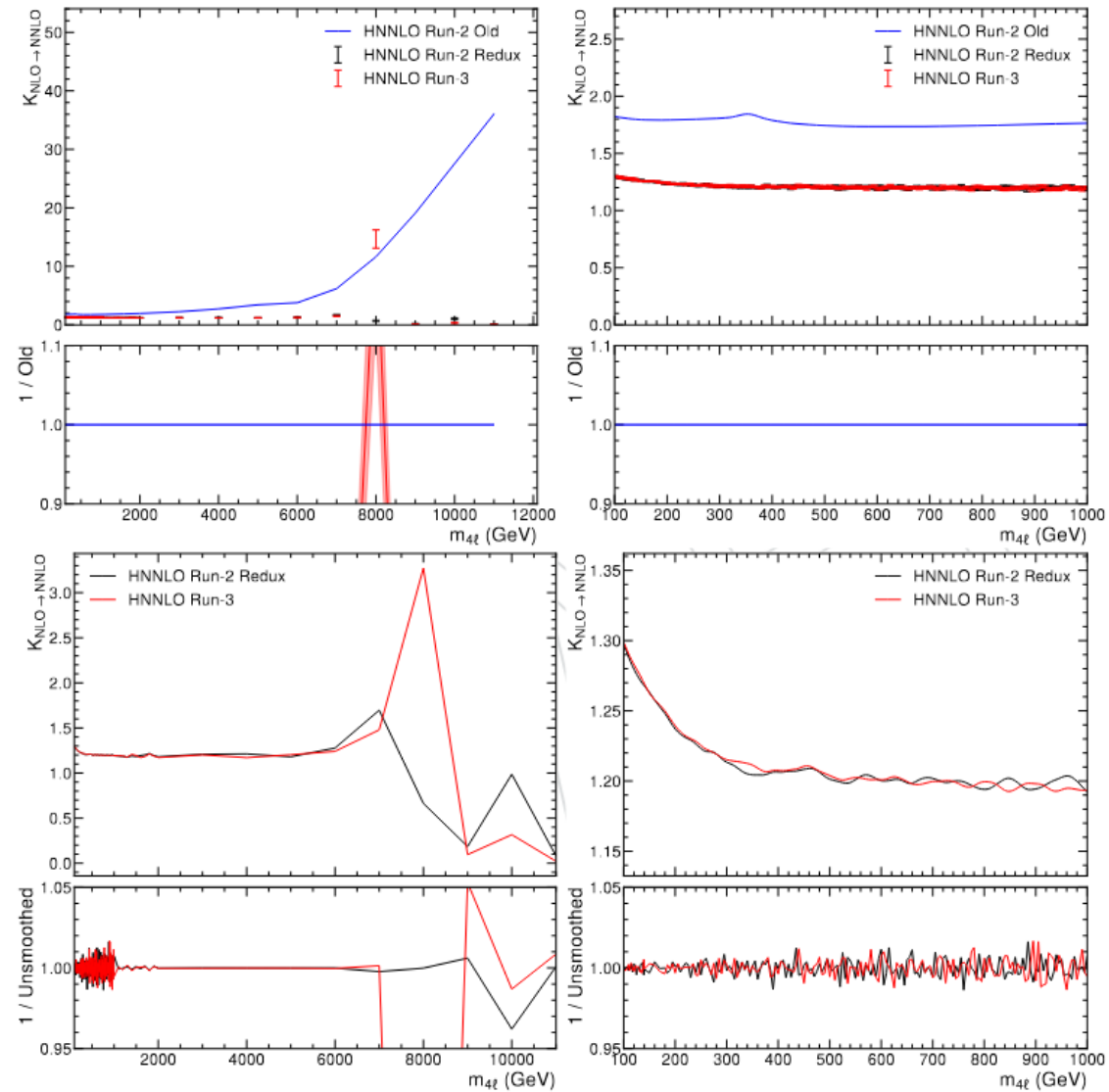
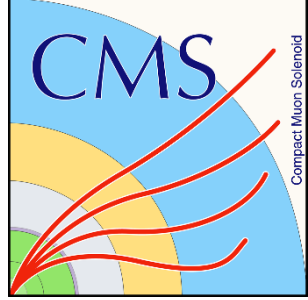
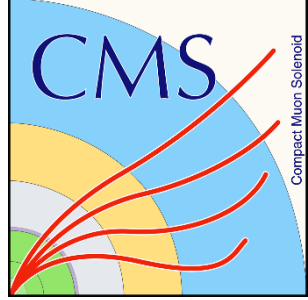


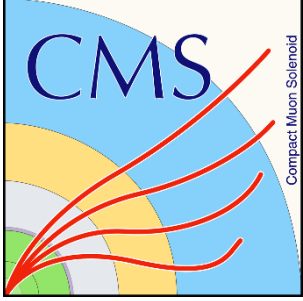
Figure 9: The gluon-fusion NLO \rightarrow NNLO k-factor as a function of $m_{4\ell}$, for the whole range (left), and zoomed in to the range [100, 1000] GeV (right), for the unsmoothed case comparing to the old k-factor (top) and the smoothed case comparing to the unsmoothed case (bottom).



qqZZ k-factor



- Here we use MATRIX
- Lots of work done here since November to try and understand the EW correction
- Back and forth with MATRIX authors
- Running MATRIX on afs requires some small changes to the code internally that had to be iterated when at higher precision
- This background is a very important quantity used for a slew of analyses, and we need to run them again for Run-3



Setup

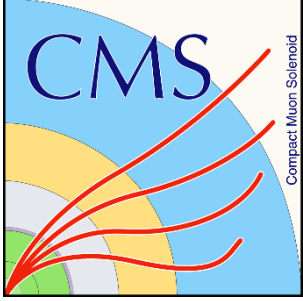
44 The exact values for cuts are shown in Table 1 amongst other quantities, which are also taken
45 from the cuts utilized in analyses shown in Ref. [10]. The photon ΔR becomes relevant once
46 EW effects are included.

variable	cut
muon p_T	$\geq 5 \text{ GeV}$
muon $ \eta $	≤ 2.4
electron p_T	$\geq 7 \text{ GeV}$
electron $ \eta $	≤ 2.4
photon ΔR	≤ 0.5

Table 1: Cuts and other particle quantities for the K-factor setup

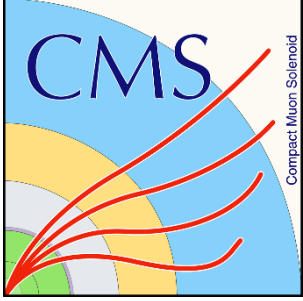
PDF: NNPDF31_nnlo_as_0118_mc_hessian_pdfas

$$\mu_{F,R} = 1$$



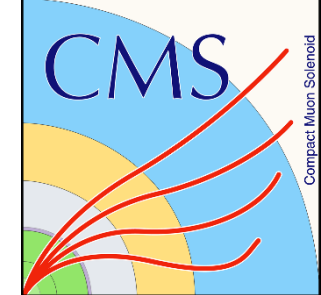
Dealing with EW Photon Emission

- **This was by far our hardest problem to deal with**
- MATRIX emits an extra photon as either FSR or ISR, but does not distinguish the 2
- Photons are merged back into the leptons around a ΔR cone, but are otherwise lost to the user
- These FSR/ISR effects warp the distribution!



Dealing with EW Photon Emission

- Large deviations seen on the left side of the Z-peak and $2m_Z$ threshold due to EW photon emission.
- Peak gets shifted to the right due to missing energy from unmerged FSR for the EW correction, and things look weird!
- We decided to check what we do in experiment...

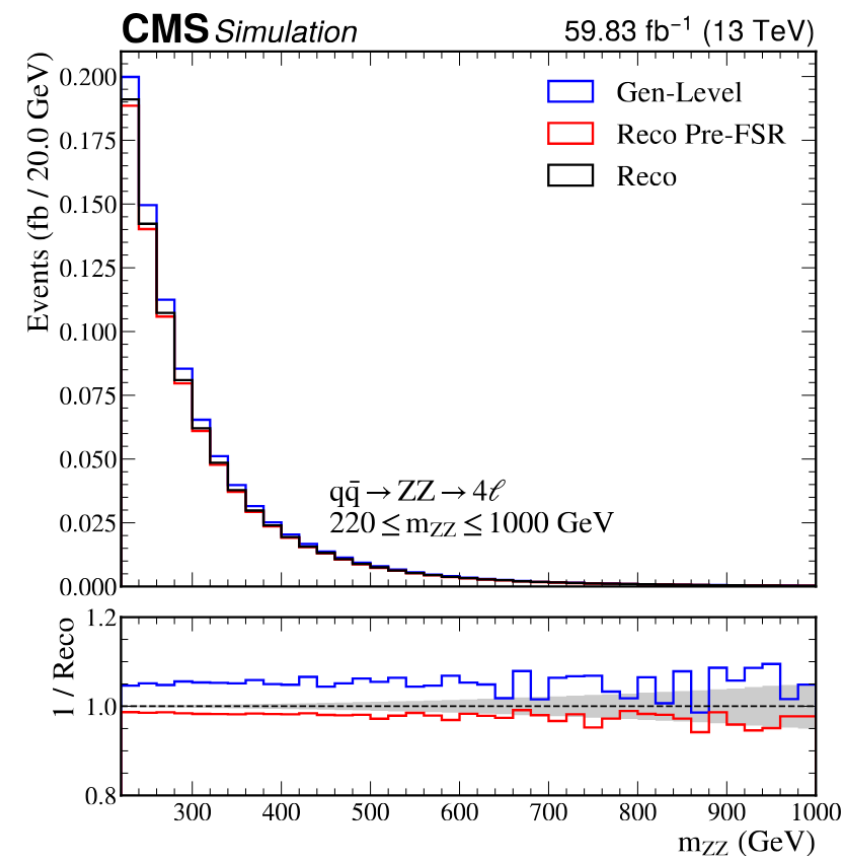
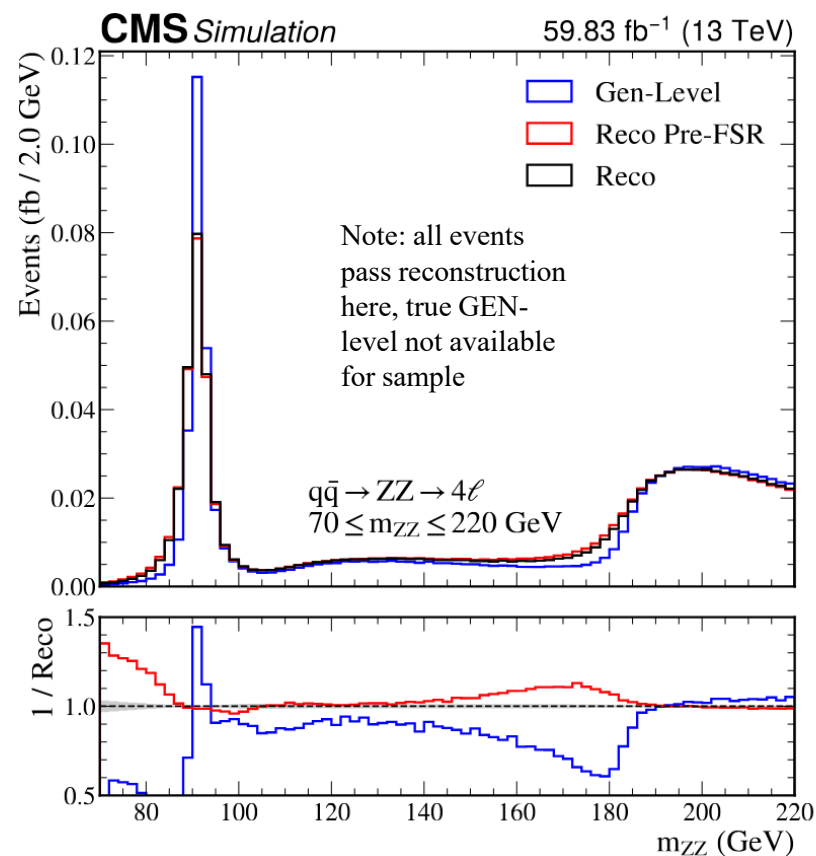


Dealing with EW Photon Emission

- You can see similar behavior in reconstructed Monte-carlo for qq4l!

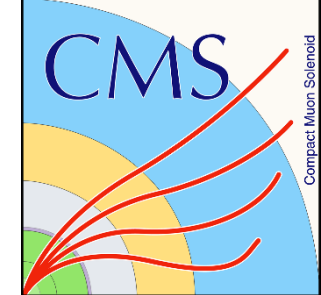
- Nominally flat in off-shell region, but makes a large difference at the Z and $2m_Z$ thresholds

- MATRIX not *exactly* the same, since GEN-level distribution looks different

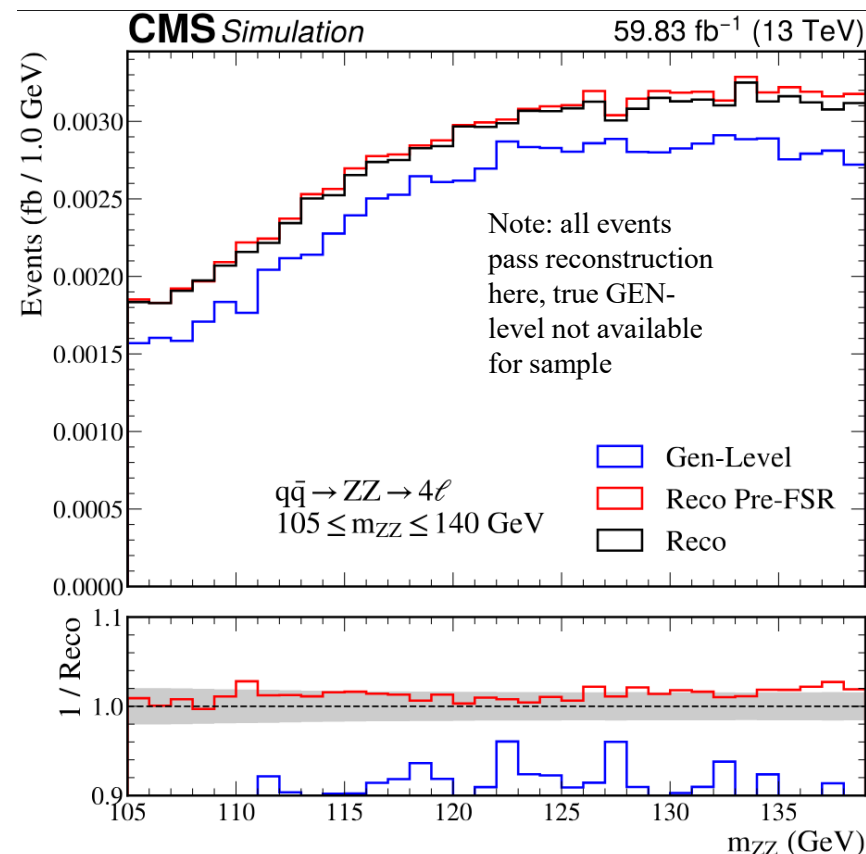




Dealing with EW Photon Emission

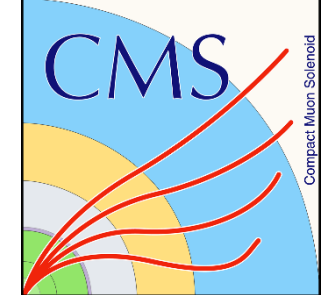


- The normal on-shell analysis region is also relatively flat in reconstructed MC
- NOT the case in GEN (necessarily)

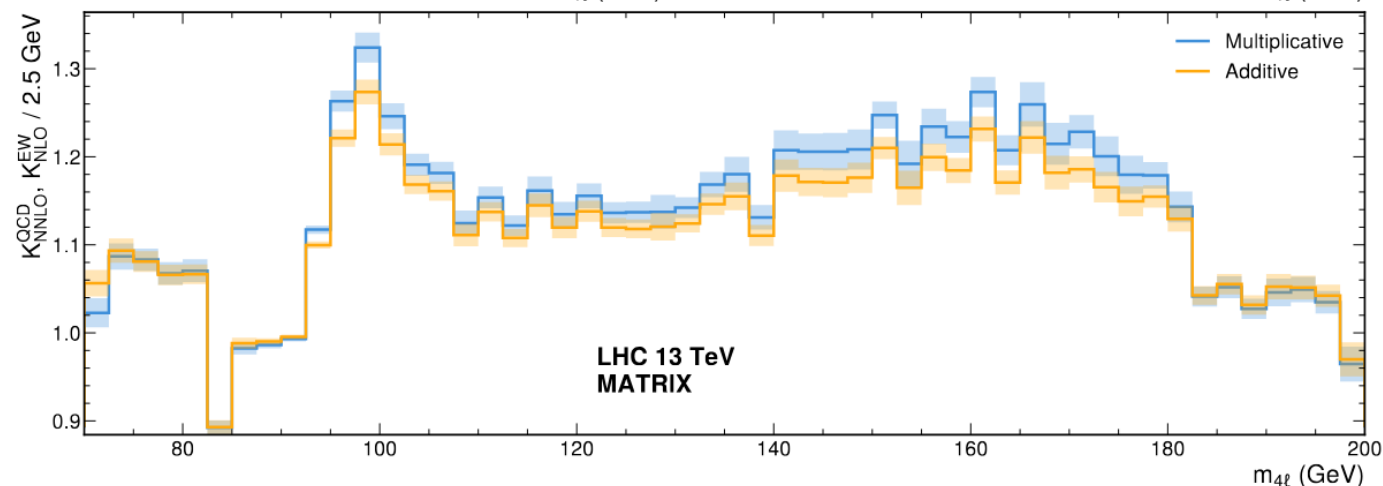
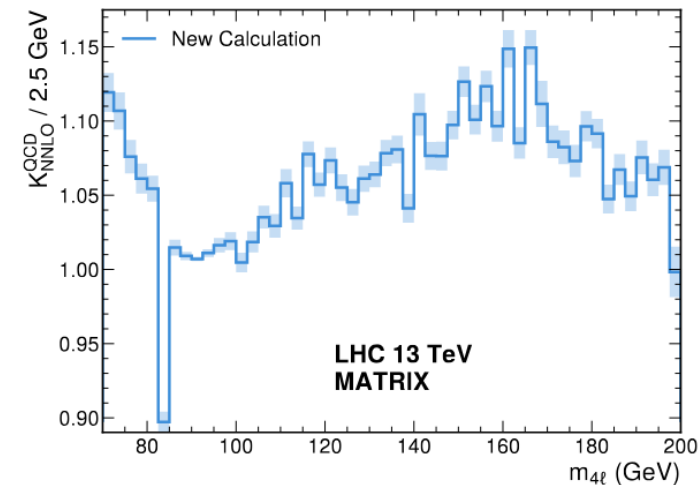
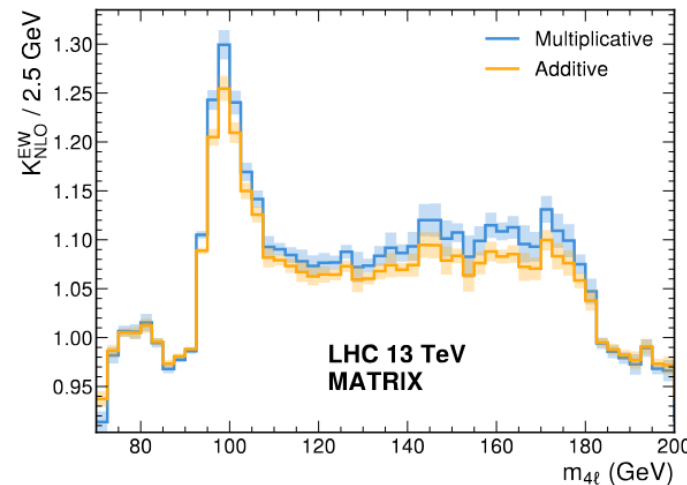




Dealing with EW Photon Emission

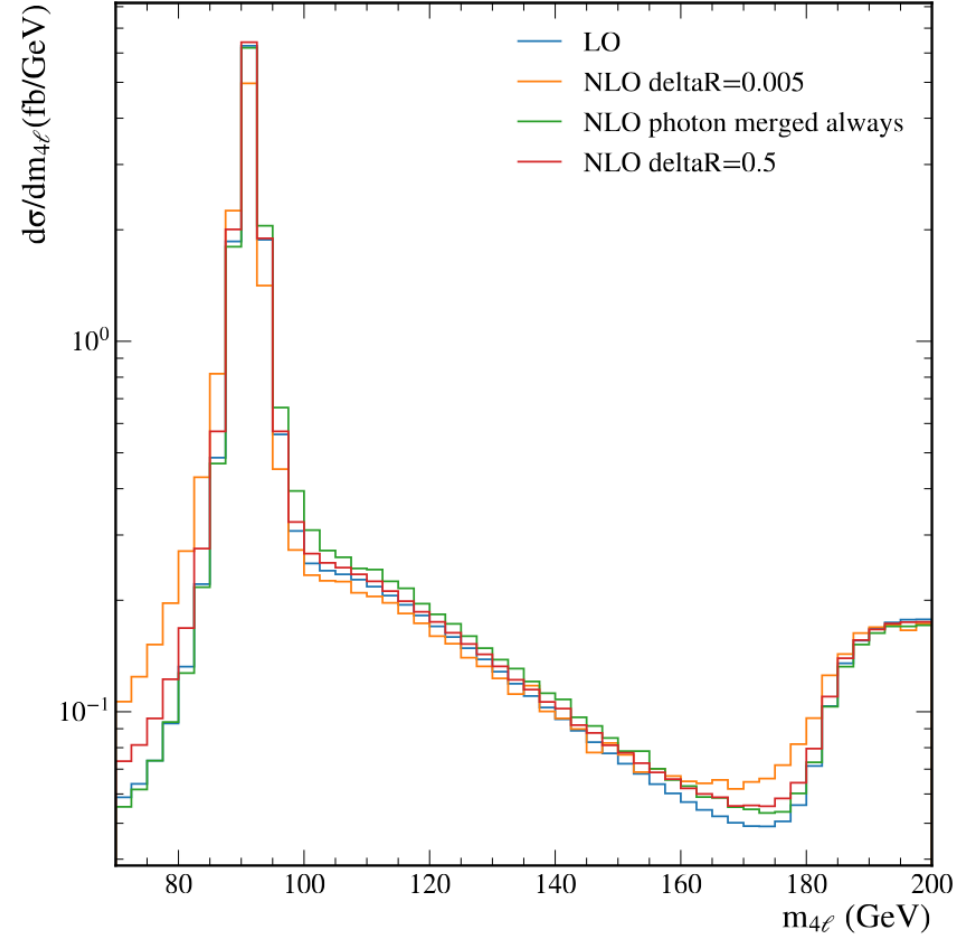
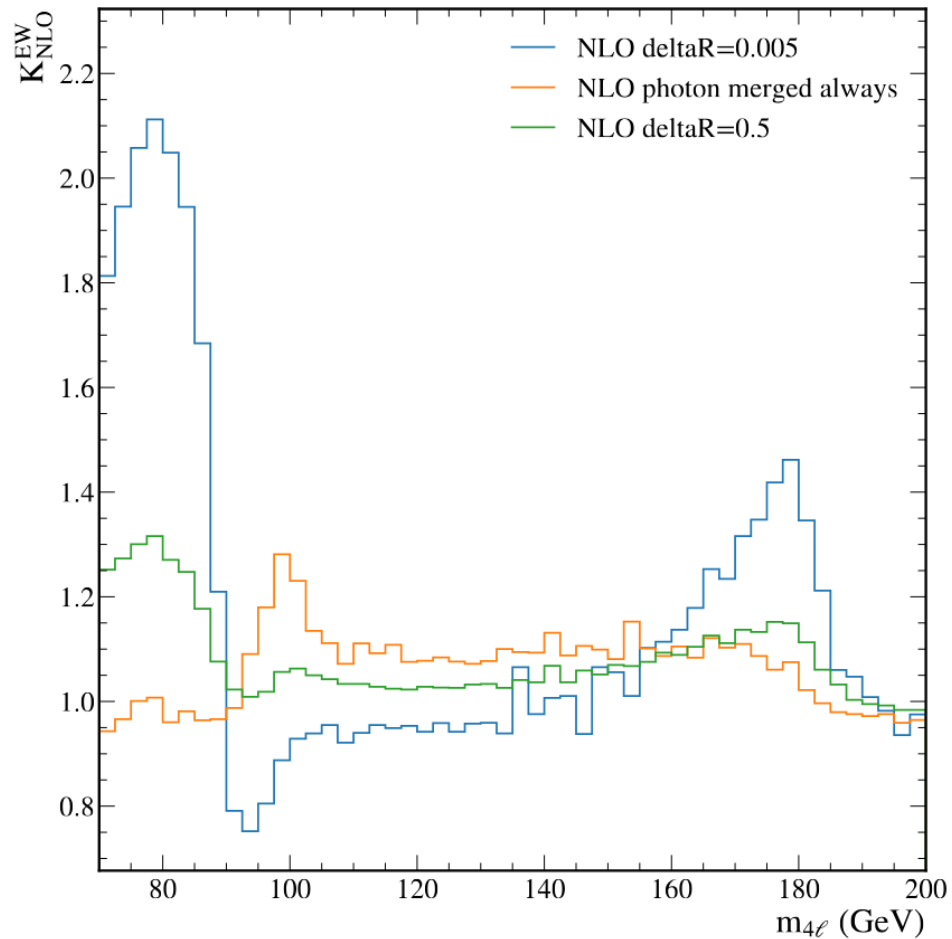
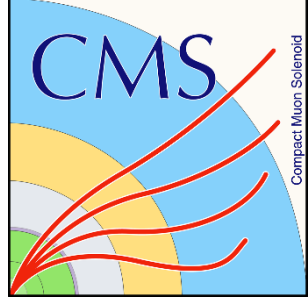


- We have the original distributions for $\Delta R = 0.1$
- Talked to MATRIX authors and changed the code such that the photon is always added into the mass distribution
- **Distribution gets shifted the other way!**



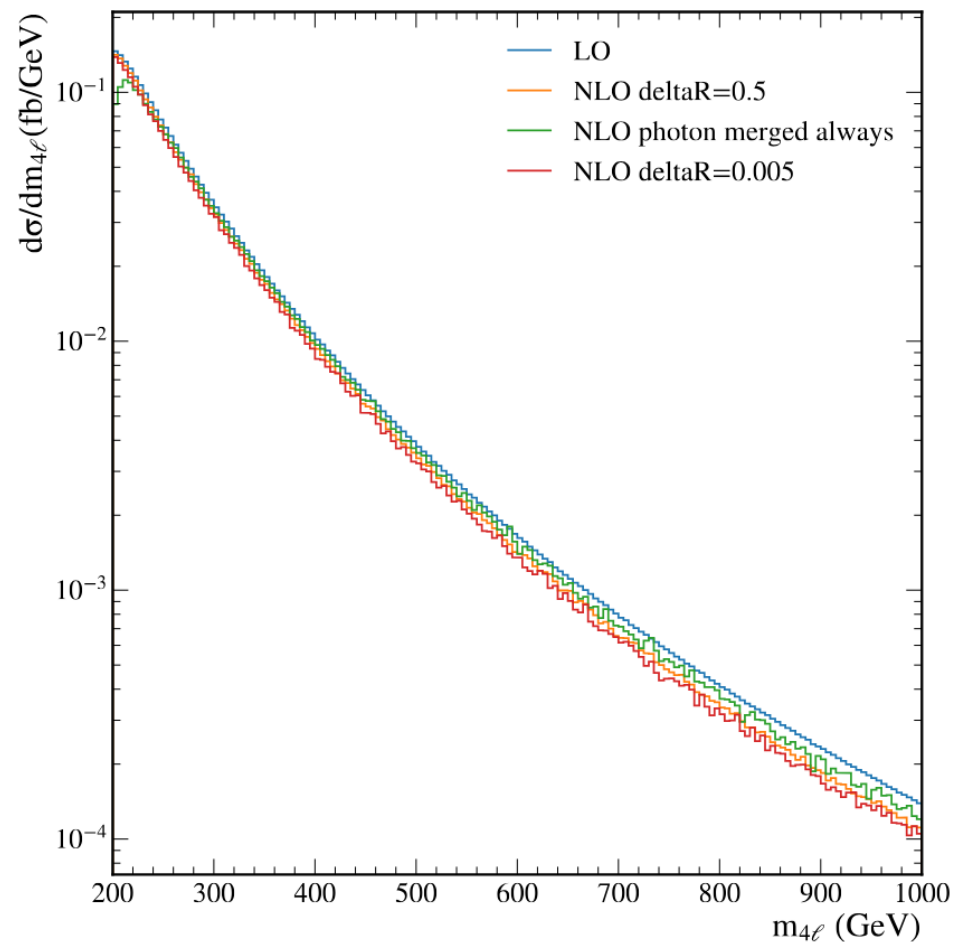
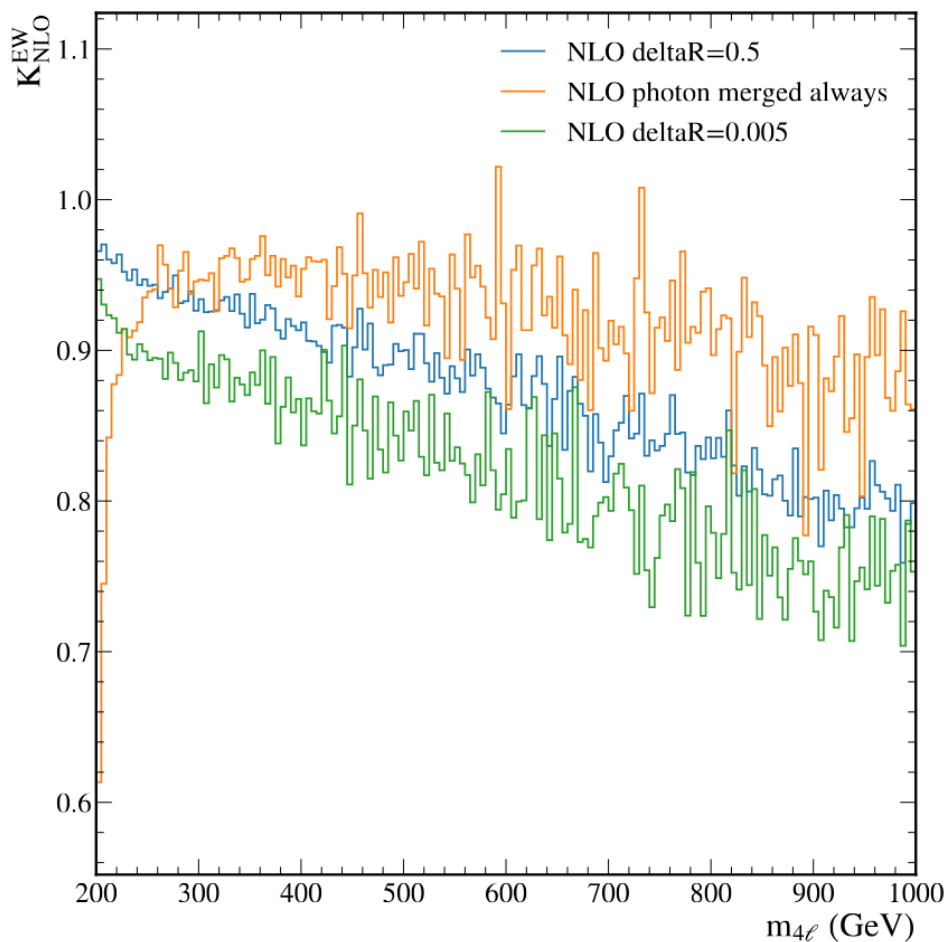
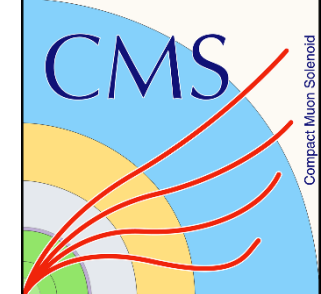


Dealing with EW Photon Emission



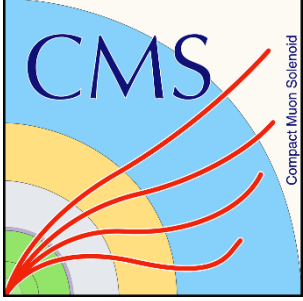


Dealing with EW Photon Emission

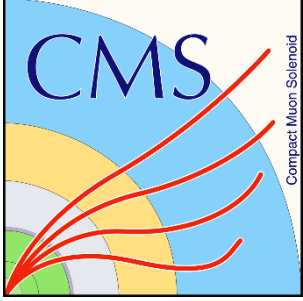




Dealing with EW Photon Emission



- Including every photon from ISR/FSR is probably the wrong thing to do
- $\Delta R = 0.005$ is too small, probably too much missing energy and/or unable to pass cuts without photon
- In our analysis, the value for $\Delta R = 0.5$, so that is what we will do moving forward



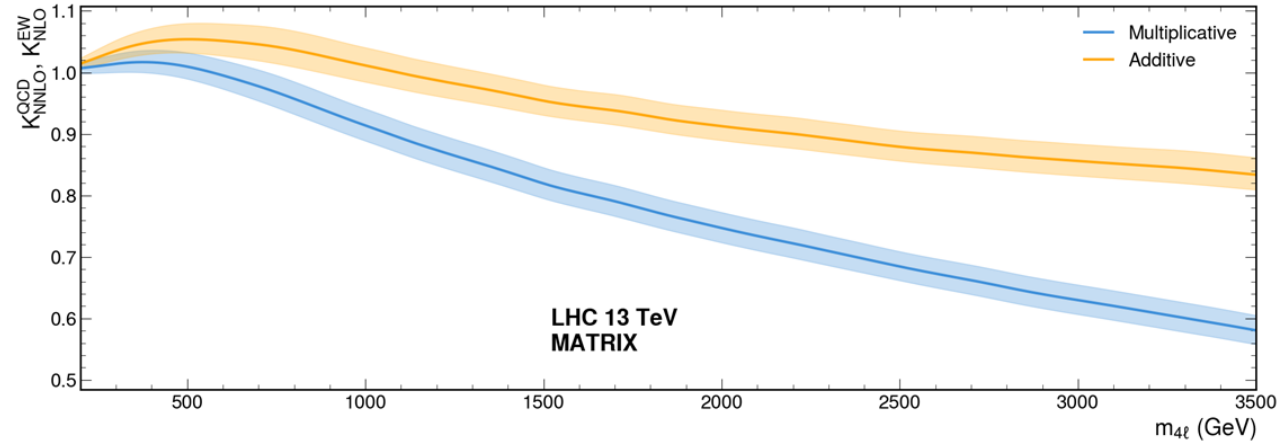
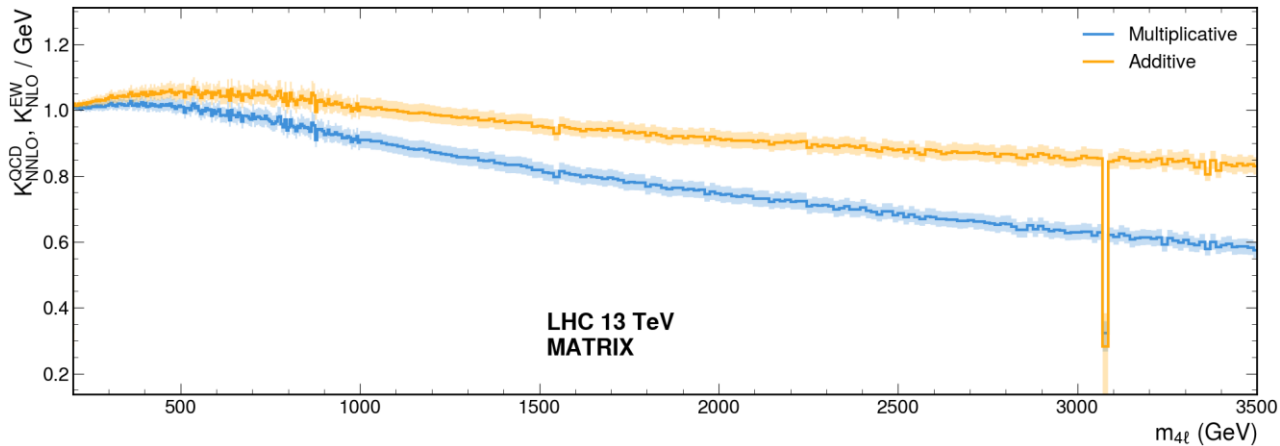
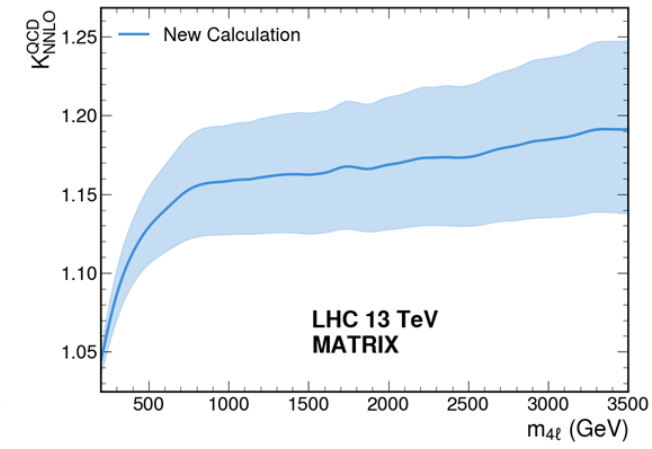
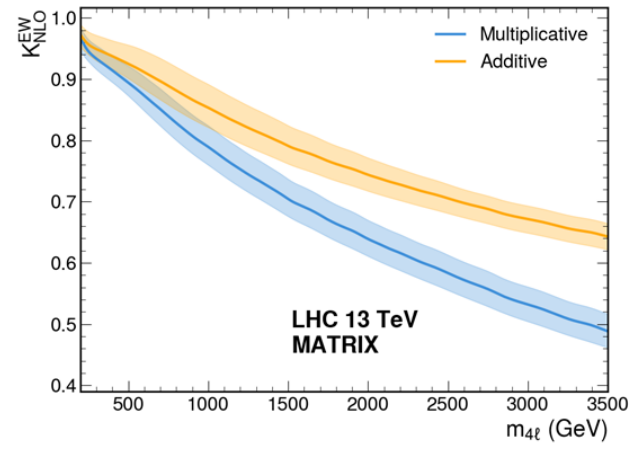
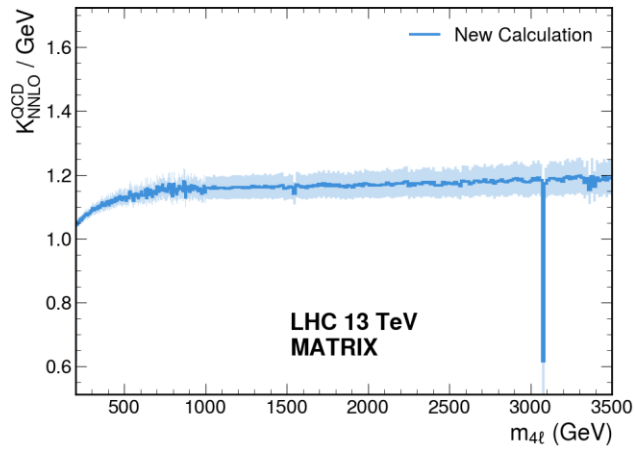
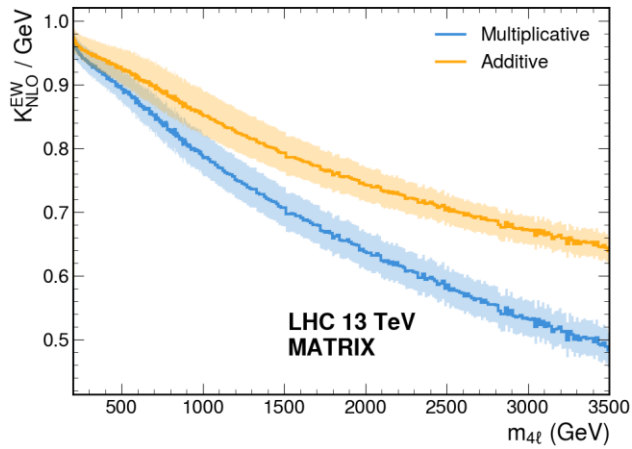
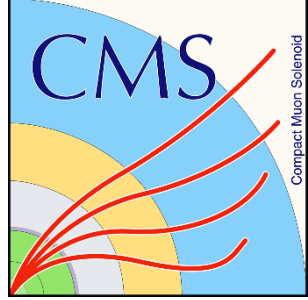
Total Calculation

- Currently, the only variable that we use is $m_{4\ell}$. We are investigating whether more variables would help considerably.
- The results that we show are for the pure $m_{4\ell}$ k-factor
- Will also run an instance of NLO EW corrections for the 4e final-state to see if there are any large differences
- 2 options for systematics
 1. Have separate QCD and EW k-factors with their own systematic variations for $\mu_{F,R}$
 2. Use MATRIX inbuilt functionality to calculate $K_{QCD} \times K_{EW}$ and $K_{QCD} + K_{EW}$ with a combined systematic variation for $\mu_{F,R}$

We prefer option 2

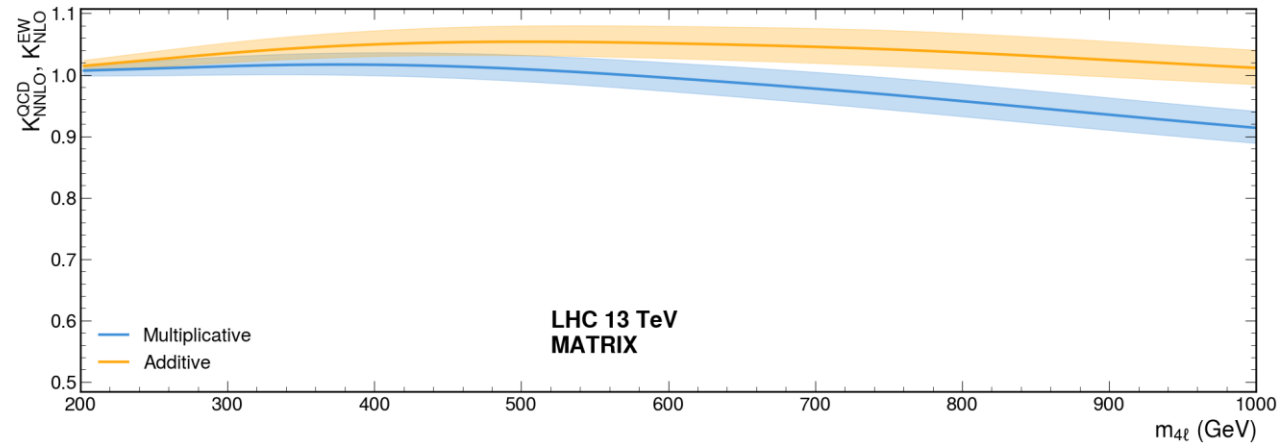
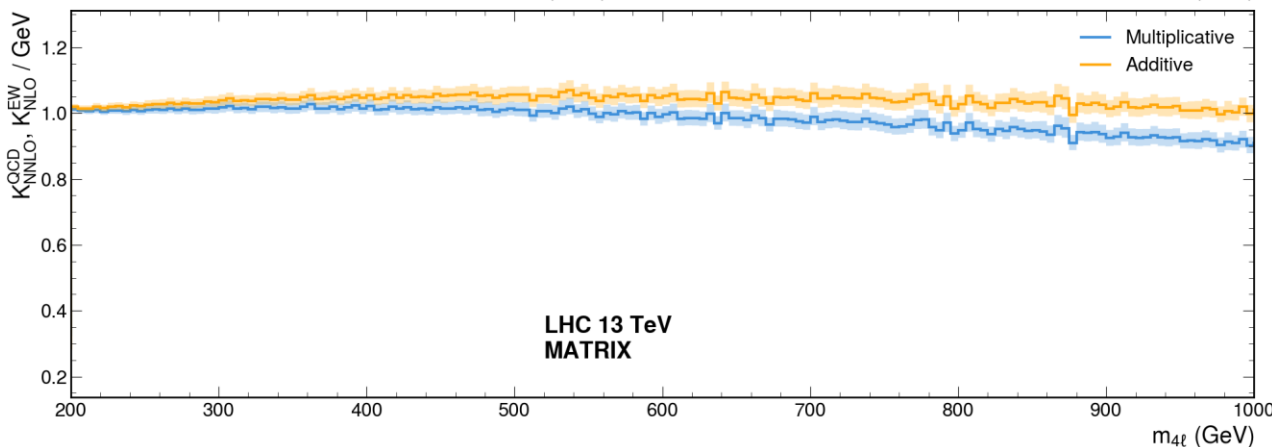
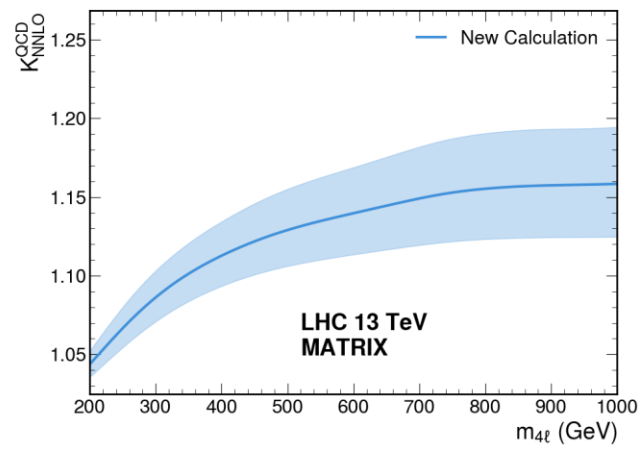
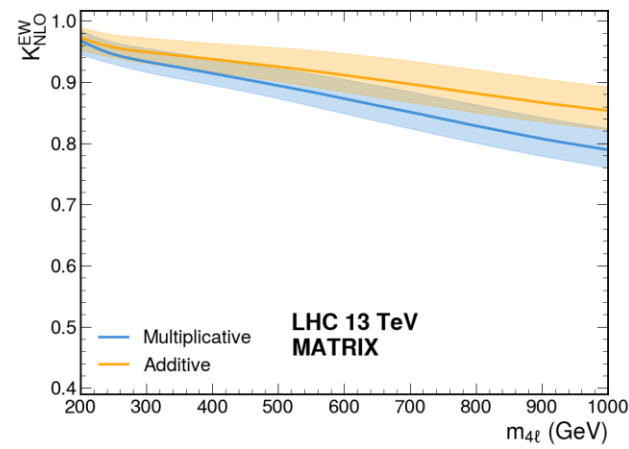
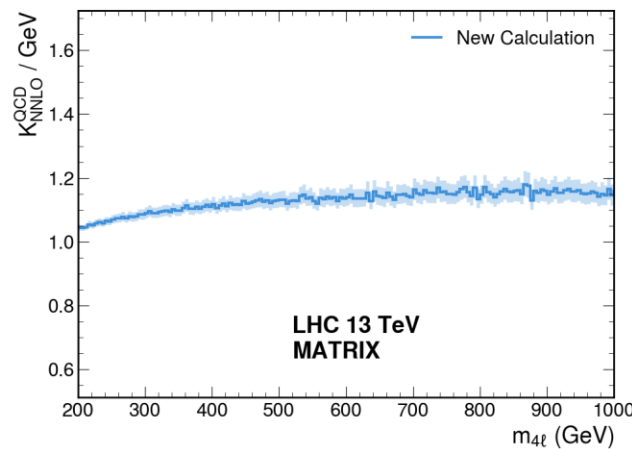
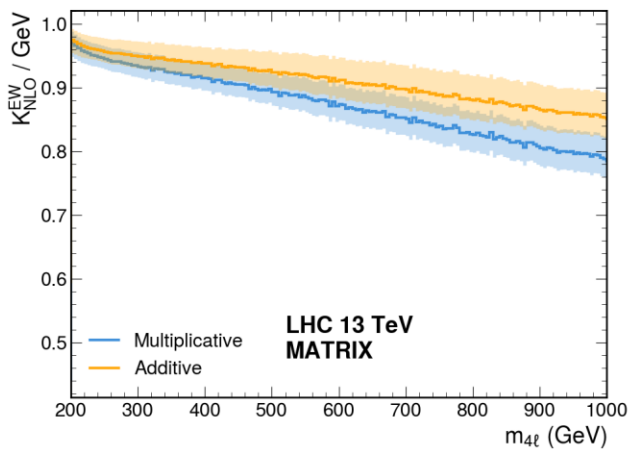
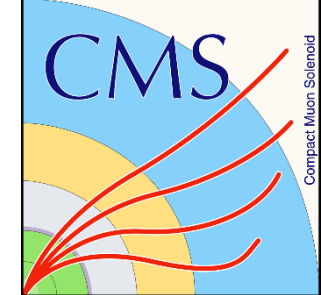


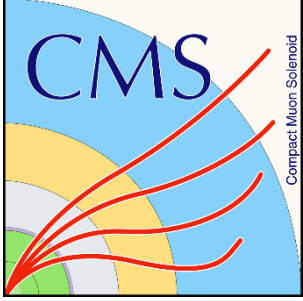
Total Calculation





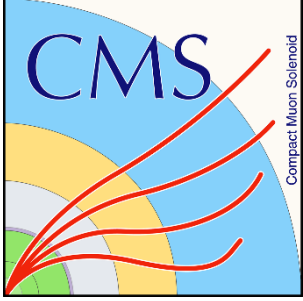
Total Calculation





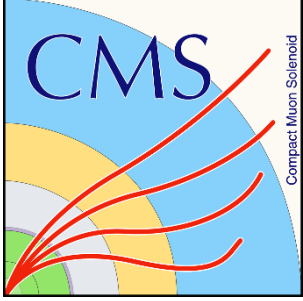
Systematic Variations

- μ_F and μ_R variations are handled internally by MATRIX in a 7-point variation
- K-factor's inherent uncertainty is in the difference between $K_{QCD} \times K_{EW}$ and $K_{QCD} + K_{EW}$
- Recommend that the native sample's PDF uncertainties be used (unless someone wants to run MATRIX 100 times!)
 - If anyone has a different suggestion this would be useful
- α_S uncertainties **could** be done, but would require 2 more runs of MATRIX for the overall calculation



Further Work

- The assumption that the ggH k -factor can be used for signal processes holds, but adds an uncertainty to the background/interference distributions
 - One of the most impactful uncertainties in off-shell!
- New products for NLO calculation exist and can help to lessen this uncertainty
 - Gluon-fusion continuum POWHEG production is at NLO for H signal, diboson background, and interference
 - MATRIX has NLO gluon-fusion calculations available in QCD
- We have been trying to get MATRIX with NLO ggH to work to little success lately
- Personal suggestion: Submit central production to CMS for POWHEG samples (they are **very** useful for background with jets anyways) and check those cross-sections compared to LO.
 - POWHEG generates LO cross-sections anyways too
 - Go from LO to NLO with that factor, then NLO to NNLO with computed k -factor
 - Could make the case to make uncertainty smaller (maybe 5% instead of 10%)



Conclusion

- The k-factor for ggH and $qq\bar{q}$ is now well documented and in the final stages of moving forward
 - We need to do a final investigation on the variables needed for $qq\bar{q}$ and push forward with systematic variations for ggH
- It would also be a bonus to calculate the k-factors for signal, background, and interference separately for gluon-fusion to try and get the uncertainties down in analysis
- **These are important quantities that are beneficial to a wide array of analyses on both CMS and ATLAS**