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RRP® Nb3Sn Wire Optimization with Bruker-OST

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For cost-effective 15-16 T accelerator magnets, the critical current density $J_c(15T, 4.2K)$ of commercial Nb3Sn composite wires has to be pushed from the present state-of-the-art for RRP® wires of $\sim 1,650$ A/mm² to $\sim 2,000$ A/mm². Only so much improvement can be obtained through heat treatment optimization. Wire development was therefore carried out in collaboration with Oxford Instruments - Superconducting Technology (OST), which produced three R&D billets to optimize design and layout parameters of their trademarked RRP® process. These wires were studied and characterized virgin and deformed to at a number of sizes through flat-rolling process. The virgin OST 169-restack conductor within this study had an average $J_c(4.2K, 16T) \sim 1,300$ A/mm² and its cost was $\sim \$1,700/\text{kg}$. This was obtained with a Nb to Sn ratio of 3.4:1, which corresponds to $\sim 53\%$ at. Nb, which is presently the achievable upper limit for Nb content in a wire. Results indicate that the J_c of Nb3Sn wires has plateaued. It is clear that to achieve the cost reduction required in magnets for a Hadron Collider, the target increase in J_c can only be achieved by disruptive progress, and that for this reason it is now necessary to invest in research aimed at improving the inherent flux pinning of Nb3Sn.

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