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**Suppression of microtearing transport in a diamagnetic well induced at high-beta in the low-aspect-ratio Pegasus spherical torus**[1] DAVID R. SMITH, M. BONGARD, R. FONCK, G. MCKEE, J. REUSCH, P. TERRY, Z. WILLIAMS, U. of Wisconsin - Madison, M.J. PUESCHEL, U. of Texas at Austin — A diamagnetic well and local minimum |B|region is readily accessed in high-$\beta$ plasmas driven by local helicity injection in the $A \sim 1$ Pegasus ST. This magnetic topology may afford novel, favorable characteristics affecting turbulent transport. $\nabla$B reversal on the low-field-side is stabilizing for drift waves, reduces the trapped particle fraction, and expands the parameter space for fast ion trapping. The high-$\beta$ plasma, however, remains net-paramagnetic with near omnigeneity ($|B| \approx |B|(\psi)$) in the bad curvature region. Here, we report on the gyrokinetic stability of microtearing modes in the Pegasus minimum |B|regime. Multiple classes of microtearing instabilities at $k_y\rho_s \sim 0.1$-1 arise in the magnetic well region at $\psi_N \sim 0.3$-0.9. Collisionless high-k modes ($k_y\rho_s \approx 1$) with narrow parallel mode structures are destabilized at $\beta_{crit} \approx 3\%$, and collisional low-k modes ($k_y\rho_s \approx 0.3$) with extended parallel mode structures are destabilized at $\beta_{crit} \approx 12\%$. Nonlinear gyrokinetic simulations for a conventional monotonic |B|equilibrium show that the low-k modes produce electromagnetic electron thermal transport, but the transport and low-k instabilities are suppressed in the diamagnetic well configuration.

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David Smith
U. of Wisconsin - Madison

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