Post-Minkowskian Theory Meets the Spinning Effective-One-Body Approach for Bound-Orbit Waveforms

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Driven by advances in scattering amplitudes and worldline-based methods, recent years have seen significant progress in our ability to calculate gravitational two-body scattering observables. These observables effectively encapsulate the gravitational two-body problem in the weak-field and high-velocity regime [post-Minkowskian (PM)], with applications to the bound two-body problem and gravitational-wave modeling. We leverage PM data to construct a complete inspiral-merger-ringdown waveform model for nonprecessing spinning black holes within the effective-one-body (EOB) formalism `SEOBNR-PM`. This model is closely based on the highly successful `SEOBNRv5` model, used by the LIGO-Virgo-KAGRA Collaboration, with its key new feature being an EOB Hamiltonian derived by matching the two-body scattering angle in a perturbative PM expansion. The model performs remarkably well, showing a median mismatch against 441 numerical-relativity (NR) simulations that is somewhat lower than a similarly calibrated version of `SEOBNRv5`. Comparisons of the binding energy with NR also demonstrate better agreement than `SEOBNRv5`, despite the latter containing additional calibration to NR simulations.

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Introduction—Since the initial detection of a gravitational wave (GW) from a binary-black-hole (BBH) merger [1], the LIGO-Virgo-KAGRA Collaboration [2–4] and independent analyses have identified about 100 mergers of compact binaries [5–10]. These observations have begun to reveal the distributions of BH masses and spins [11], improved constraints on the neutron-star equation of state [12], obtained independent measurements of the Hubble-Lemaître parameter [13,14], and validated general relativity [15–17].

Enhancements in the sensitivity of current GW detectors, coupled with the development of next-generation observatories like the Einstein Telescope and Cosmic Explorer [18–20], as well as future space-based detectors such as LISA [21], TianQin [22], or Taiji [23], are poised to dramatically increase the number of detectable GW sources. These advancements will enable observations with a signal-to-noise ratio up to 2 orders of magnitude higher than what is currently achievable [24], necessitating a commensurate improvement in the accuracy of waveform models. Recent research [25] has demonstrated that even state-of-the-art waveform models, designed for quasicircular, spin-precessing BBHs, exhibit systematic biases when applied to future LIGO-Virgo-KAGRA runs and next-generation detectors. This bias becomes pronounced, especially for high-spin rates and significant asymmetries in spins and masses. Addressing the challenge of waveform accuracy is essential to realizing the full scientific potential of future runs and detectors [24,26–29] and avoiding false claims of general relativity violations [30,31].

Waveform models for compact binaries are crafted by synergistically combining analytical and numerical relativity (NR) results. NR tackles the formidable task of solving Einstein's equations on supercomputers [32–34], a process notorious for its time-intensive nature. On the other hand, perturbative methods are used to obtain approximate solutions to Einstein's equations, offering analytic formulas that are swift to evaluate. Three primary perturbative approaches have been developed: post-Newtonian (PN) theory [35–50] applicable in the weak-field and small-velocity limit, post-Minkowskian (PM) theory [51–60] in the weak-field regime, and the gravitational self-force (GSF) formalism [61–74] for the small mass-ratio limit. These analytical results are then synthesized in the effective-one-body (EOB) approach [75–79], which efficiently resums the perturbative calculations for the inspiral while retaining known nonperturbative results for BHs, achieving high accuracy for current observing runs via calibration to NR [80–94].

Thus far, the EOB waveform models utilized by the LIGO-Virgo-KAGRA Collaboration [95] have primarily relied on resummations of the PN expansion, with the exception of Refs. [94,101], which included second-order GSF results [73] for the gravitational modes and radiation-reaction force. Given recent advancements in PM [102–118] and GSF [73,74], there is now significant interest in exploring and developing waveform models that combine information from various perturbative methods in innovative ways. The aim is to address the waveform-accuracy challenge. In this regard, the PM approach is particularly interesting since an $(n+1)$ PM-order (G^{n+1}) Hamiltonian includes all information up to the nPN order (wherein $v^2/c^2 \sim GM/(rc^2)$), and additional weak-field, high-velocity information from infinitely higher PN orders, making it suitable for systems with high velocities or large eccentricities at fixed periastron distances [119]. Using sophisticated quantum-field-theory-based methods, tremendous progress has been made on the precision PM frontier using both scattering amplitudes [120–122] and worldlines [123–126]. This progress is largely due to a blend of a clever and efficient organization of perturbative calculations and formal mathematical developments in understanding the properties of multiloop integrals [127–133]. These developments were primarily driven over the past several decades to address precision-collider physics. Furthermore, several sophisticated techniques, such as generalized unitarity [134,135], double copy [136–139], supersymmetry [116], and massive higher spins [140–147] have also been used to further enhance these computations.

In this Letter, leveraging on Refs. [93,148,149], we present the first PM-informed spinning EOB waveform model, SEOBNR-PM, encompassing the inspiral, as well as the merger and ringdown phases. This model incorporates the most recent findings from PM theory into the EOB Hamiltonian, and it is mildly calibrated to NR waveforms. The SEOB-PM Hamiltonian (so named as it does not include an NR calibration term) includes the nonspinning (conservative) 4PM [121,123] and spinning 5PM terms [125,142,150–155], alongside the known nonspinning 4PN [41–45] contributions, which also corrects the tails from unbound to bound orbits up to that order [156]. Our PM counting is a physical one, with spin orders contributing in addition to loop orders (see Table II in Ref. [149]). We construct our SEOBNR-PM model within the PYSEOBNR code [158], which was recently built to make the development of SEOBNR models, including the calibration to NR waveforms, highly efficient. As an example, we show in Fig. 1 the agreement between the (mildly) calibrated SEOBNR-PM and NR for a spinning BBH coalescence.

EOB framework for waveforms—We use geometric units $G = 1 = c$, and set $M = m_1 + m_2$ and $\nu = m_1 m_2/M^2$, where m_1 and m_2 are the BH's masses. In the EOB formalism, the binary's conservative dynamics is described by the EOB Hamiltonian $H_{\rm EOB} = M\sqrt{1 + 2\nu(H_{\rm eff}/\mu - 1)}$, where $H_{\rm eff}$ is the Hamiltonian of an effective test body of mass $\mu = \nu M$ moving in the (deformed) Kerr spacetime,

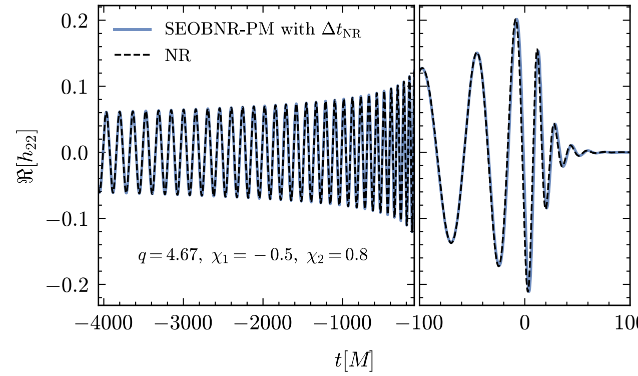

FIG. 1. An SEOBNR-PM inspiral-merger-ringdown waveform generated using the PYSEOBNR code [158], compared against the NR simulation SXS:BBH:1445, after a low-frequency alignment by a time and phase shift. The time $t = 0$ corresponds to the peak of the (2,2) mode of the NR waveform.

with $0 \le \nu \le 1/4$ the deformation parameter. We also introduce the mass ratio $q = m_1/m_2 > 1$. We limit to nonprecessing spins (i.e., aligned spins) and introduce the spin lengths $a_i = m_i \chi_i$, with $a_\pm = M\chi_\pm = a_1 \pm a_2$.

In the center-of-mass frame, the inspiral-plunge dynamics, for aligned-spin BHs, is computed from the EOB equations of motion [76,83]:

$$\dot{r} = \frac{\partial H_{\rm EOB}}{\partial p_r}, \qquad \dot{p}_r = -\frac{\partial H_{\rm EOB}}{\partial r} + \frac{p_r}{p_\phi}\mathcal{F}_\phi, \tag{1a}$$

$$\dot{\phi} = \frac{\partial H_{\rm EOB}}{\partial p_\phi}, \qquad \dot{p}_\phi = \mathcal{F}_\phi, \tag{1b}$$

where (r,ϕ,p_r,p_ϕ) are the canonical variables in polar coordinates. (The construction of $H_{\rm eff}$ will be described in the next section.) Employing results from the SEOBNRv5 model [93,148], the radiation-reaction force $(\mathcal{F}_\phi)$ is computed by summing over the PN GW modes (augmented with GSF information [101]) in a factorized form [82,93,159–161], which are used to obtain the inspiral-plunge modes after enhancing them by non-quasi-circular corrections [86,87,93,162] during the plunge.

For the merger-ringdown part of the EOB waveform, we use instead a phenomenological ansatz [87,93,163,164], informed by NR and BH perturbation theory, as realized in the SEOBNRv5 model [93]. The start of the merger-ringdown waveform is enforced to be at the peak of the (2,2)-mode amplitude. The gravitational polarizations can be written as $h_+ - ih_\times = \sum_{\ell,m} {}_{-2}Y_{\ell m}(\varphi,\iota) h_{\ell m}(t)$, where ${}_{-2}Y_{\ell m}(\varphi,\iota)$ are the -2 spin-weighted spherical harmonics, with φ and ι being the azimuthal and polar angles to the observer, in the source frame. In the EOB approach, the inspiral-merger-ringdown (ℓ,m) modes are given by

$$h_{\ell m} = \begin{cases} h_{\ell m}^{\text{insp-plunge}} & t < t_{\rm peak}^{22} \\ h_{\ell m}^{\text{merg-RD}} & t > t_{\rm peak}^{22}, \end{cases} \tag{2}$$

where $t^{22}_{\rm peak}$ is the time at which the (2,2) mode has a peak, generally associated to the merger time. Such a time is suitably chosen to agree with the corresponding time in NR waveforms (see below).

PM-informed EOB Hamiltonian—We employ an effective Hamiltonian similar to that recently introduced in the SEOB-PM scattering model [149]:

$$H_{\rm eff} = \frac{M p_\phi (g_{a_+} a_+ + g_{a_-} \delta a_-)}{r^3 + a_+^2 (r + 2M)} + \sqrt{A\left(\mu^2 + \frac{p_\phi^2}{r^2} + (1 + B^{\rm Kerr}_{\rm np}) p_r^2 + B^{\rm Kerr}_{\rm npa} \frac{p_\phi^2 a_+^2}{r^2}\right)}, \tag{3}$$

where $\delta = (m_1 - m_2)/M$, while $B^{\rm Kerr}_{\rm np} = \chi_+^2 u^2 - 2u$ and $B^{\rm Kerr}_{\rm npa} = -(1 + 2u)/[r^2 + a_+^2(1 + 2u)]$, where $u = M/r$ is the dimensionless PM counting parameter. In the probe limit $\nu \to 0$, $H_{\rm eff}$ reduces to the Hamiltonian of a probe μ moving under the influence of a Kerr BH with mass M and directed spin length a_+. This Hamiltonian is determined by computing the scattering angle and matching it to established PM results, but here we use only the conservative part of the angle containing terms with even powers in the center-of-mass momentum $p_\infty = \mu\sqrt{\gamma^2 - 1}$, where $\gamma = E_{\rm eff}/\mu > 1$ for scattering trajectories.

Following Ref. [149], the ν corrections with respect to the probe limit are built into the A potential and the gyro-gravitomagnetic factors as $A = (1 - 2u + \chi_+^2 u^2 + \Delta A)/[1 + \chi_+^2 u^2 (2u + 1)]$ and $g_{a_\pm} = \Delta g_{a_\pm}/u^2$. These respectively carry the even- and odd-in-spin corrections, and are PM expanded up to a physical 5PM (u^5) order (see Table II in Ref. [149]):

$$\Delta A = \sum_{n=2}^{5} u^n \Delta A^{(n)} + \Delta A^{\rm 4PN}, \qquad \Delta g_{a_\pm} = \sum_{n=2}^{5} u^n \Delta g^{(n)}_{a_\pm}. \tag{4}$$

The γ-dependent coefficients $\Delta A^{(n)}$ and $\Delta g^{(n)}_{a_\pm}$ are series expanded in even powers of the spins, up to a highest quartic order at 5PM. We lack an analytic 5PM term only in the nonspinning case, where the complete result is not currently known (see Ref. [165] for the recently derived 1GSF conservative contribution). Technically, as $\gamma = E_{\rm eff}/\mu \equiv H_{\rm eff}/\mu$, the Hamiltonian (3) is self-dependent. To produce an expression depending only on the canonical variables (r, p_r, p_ϕ), we interpret $\gamma = H_{\rm Kerr}/\mu$ within these deformations, plus whatever corrections are required in order to ensure the full Hamiltonian $H_{\rm EOB}$ is correct up to the desired PM order. This procedure was used previously in the nonspinning case [119,166,167], and is fully described in the Supplemental Material [168].

An important subtlety within our Hamiltonian is the presence of non-local-in-time contributions (tails). These imply a dependence on the full past history of the binary, and thus distinguish between elliptic and hyperbolic (scattering) trajectories. In the scattering Hamiltonian presented in Ref. [149], tails are signaled by factors of $\log(\gamma^2 - 1)$, which develops an imaginary part when $\gamma < 1$ for bound orbits. To produce a real Hamiltonian, we therefore replace $\log(\gamma^2 - 1) \to \log(u)$ (see Supplemental Material for details [168]). We also include the 4PN nonspinning bound-orbit correction $\Delta A^{\rm 4PN}$ in Eq. (4),

$$\Delta A^{\rm 4PN} = u^4 (\gamma^2 - 1) c_1 + u^5 (c_2 + c_3 \log u), \tag{5}$$

ensuring the correct bound-orbit dynamics at 4PN order in the nonspinning case (the numerical coefficients c_i are provided in the Supplemental Material). We verify our complete EOB Hamiltonian up to 4.5PN order [41,169–172] by finding a suitable canonical transformation to its PN-expanded counterpart. The nonspinning component is determined only up to quadratic order in eccentricity (p_r^2) in the tail integral, as higher powers in eccentricity appear at lower PM orders. Thus, we ensured that the 1PM–3PM (tail-free) nonspinning dynamics are unmodified by the presence of the 4PN correction (5) [173].

Finally, let us comment on the appearance of special functions in $H_{\rm eff}$. Starting at 3PM order we encounter the combination $\operatorname{arccosh}(\gamma)/\sqrt{\gamma^2 - 1}$. As $\operatorname{arccosh}(\gamma)$ and $\sqrt{1 - \gamma^2}$ are both imaginary valued when $\gamma < 1$, we find it convenient to replace this combination by $\arccos(\gamma)/\sqrt{1 - \gamma^2}$, which has the same small-velocity expansion for scattering kinematics. At 4PM order we then encounter logarithms, dilogarithms (Li_2), and elliptic functions (K/E) of the first and second kind, all evaluated as functions of γ. In this case, we also find it convenient to introduce the inverse tangent integral $\mathrm{Ti}_2(x) \coloneqq \int_0^x (\mathrm{d}t/t) \arctan t$, analogously to what is done above. Fast numerical routines exist for evaluating all of these functions in Cython [174], and this leads to an efficient numerical evaluation within PYSEOBNR [158].

Comparing SEOB-PM and NR binding energies during the inspiral—In EOB models one has access to the binary's dynamics, which enables testing their accuracy by comparing (gauge-invariant) dynamical quantities such as the binding energy [119,175–178] and periastron advance [179,180]. As SEOBNR-PM's essential new feature is its PM-informed SEOB-PM Hamiltonian, the binding energy is a particularly relevant quantity to compare with NR data. Previous comparisons in the nonspinning case [119,167] have focused on the binding energy computed for circular orbits (i.e., ignoring radiation-reaction effects), although Ref. [167] investigated the effect of neglecting dissipation (see Fig. 6 therein). We instead compute the (dimensionless) binding energy by evaluating $\mathcal{E} = (H_{\rm EOB} - M)/\mu$ along the inspiraling dynamics, and compare with NR binding-energy data from Ref. [175]. Figure 2 shows the

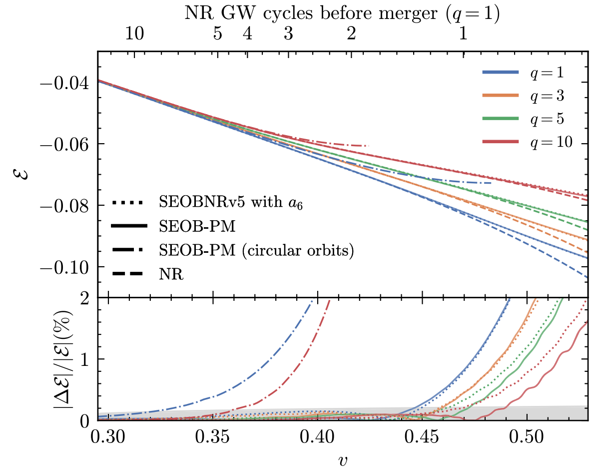

FIG. 2. Nonspinning binding energy as a function of the (quasicircular) velocity $v = (M\dot{\phi})^{2/3}$, for the (calibrated) SEOBNRv5 with a_6 and (uncalibrated) SEOB-PM Hamiltonians (both along a circular orbit [119,167] and inspiral) across different mass ratios $q = m_1/m_2$. The shaded region is an estimate of the NR uncertainty [175]. The lower panel shows the fractional difference.

EOB and NR nonspinning binding energies as a function of the (quasicircular) velocity parameter $v = (M\dot{\phi})^{1/3}$, for SEOBNRv5 with a_6 and SEOB-PM for circular orbits and along an inspiral. We stress that for the former, a 5PN-unknown parameter (a_6) in the A potential has been calibrated against 18 nonspinning simulations (see below). Both models show excellent agreement with NR during most of the inspiral, with errors within the NR uncertainty (represented by the gray region) until around 1 GW cycle before merger. The (uncalibrated) SEOB-PM maintains agreement within NR error up to slightly higher velocities for higher mass ratios, and it has much better agreement than when computed on circular orbits [119,167].

We also extract different spin contributions to the binding energy by combining results from NR simulations for various equal-mass spin combinations [175,181]: $\mathcal{E}_{\rm SO} = -\frac{1}{6}\mathcal{E}(-0.6,0) + \frac{8}{3}\mathcal{E}(0.3,0) - 2\mathcal{E}(0,0) - \frac{1}{2}\mathcal{E}(0.6,0) + \mathcal{O}(S^3)$ and $\mathcal{E}_{S^2} = \frac{3}{2}\mathcal{E}(-0.6,0) - 2\mathcal{E}(0,0) + \frac{3}{2}\mathcal{E}(0.6,0) - \mathcal{E}(0.6,-0.6) + \mathcal{O}(S^3)$, where $\mathcal{E}(\chi_1,\chi_2)$ denotes the binding energy in a simulation with dimensionless spins χ_i. In Fig. 3 we illustrate the spin-orbit and spin-squared contributions for an equal-mass BBH to the binding energy for the (uncalibrated) SEOB-PM at different PM orders, as compared with NR and with the (calibrated) SEOBNRv5 with $(a_6, d_{\rm SO})$. Despite not being calibrated to NR, SEOB-PM shows excellent agreement with the NR results, with a clear convergence toward the NR prediction, as more PM corrections are included. Its accuracy is somewhat better than SEOBNRv5, despite the latter model using a Hamiltonian calibrated in the nonspinning (a_6) and spin-orbit coupling ($d_{\rm SO}$) sector (see below).

Calibration to numerical-relativity waveforms—As discussed, the accuracy of EOB inspiral-merger-ringdown waveforms can be enhanced through calibration to NR simulations. For the inspiral-plunge stage, this is generally achieved by introducing in the Hamiltonian high-order (still unknown) PN terms, whose coefficients are tuned to NR, and fitting the time of merger [i.e., the (2,2) mode's peak time] to NR. In the SEOBNRv5 model [93], which was built integrating PN results in the Hamiltonian, three calibration parameters were employed: $(\Delta t_{\rm NR}, a_6, d_{\rm SO})$.

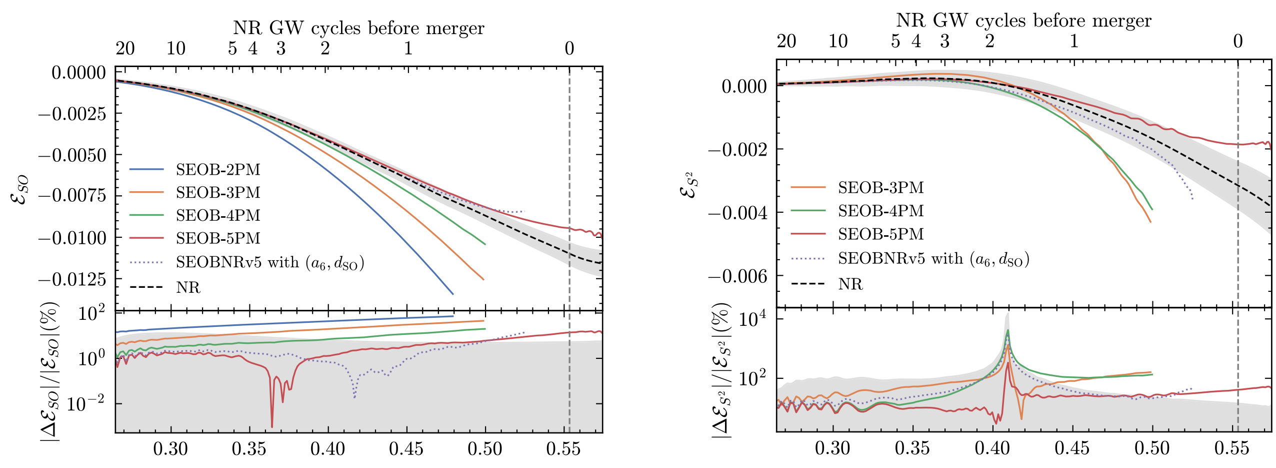

FIG. 3. Spin-orbit (left-hand panel) and spin-squared (right-hand panel) contributions to the binding energy, for an equal-mass BBH, as a function of the (quasicircular) velocity $v = (M\dot{\phi})^{2/3}$, for the (calibrated) SEOBNRv5 with (a_6,$d_{\rm SO}$) and (uncalibrated) SEOB-PM Hamiltonians at different PM orders. The vertical line represents the merger of the NR configuration (the one at the lowest velocity among those used), with the number of GW cycles (top axis) referring to the same simulation. The shaded regions are estimates of the NR uncertainty [175]. The lower panel shows the absolute value of the fractional difference. The feature in the lower right-hand panel around $v \sim 0.4$ is due to a zero crossing.

The parameter $\Delta t_{\rm NR}$ is defined by $t_{\rm peak}^{22} = t_{\rm ISCO} + \Delta t_{\rm NR}$ [see also Eq. (2)], where $t_{\rm ISCO}$ is the time at which $r = r_{\rm ISCO}$, with $r_{\rm ISCO}$ the radius of the Kerr innermost stable circular orbit (ISCO) [182] with the mass and spin of the remnant BH, as given by NR fitting formula [183,184]. The parameter a_6 is a 5PN correction to the A potential and $d_{\rm SO}$ is a 4.5PN correction in the gyrogravitomagnetic coefficients [185]. Here, for the SEOBNR-PM model, we do not calibrate high-order PN terms in the nonspinning and spin sectors of the Hamiltonian (3), but we calibrate only the merger's time through $\Delta t_{\rm NR}$. In future work, we will explore NR calibrations tailored to the particular structure of the PM terms. Henceforth, we compare the PM-informed model with several versions of the most recent PN-GSF-informed SEOBNRv5, with and without calibration.

Waveform accuracy is often quantified in terms of the mismatch $\mathcal{M}$, defined as 1 minus the overlap between the normalized waveforms, maximized over a relative time and phase shift:

$$\mathcal{M} = 1 - \max_{\phi_0, t_0} \frac{(h_1|h_2)}{\sqrt{(h_1|h_1)(h_2|h_2)}}. \tag{6}$$

The overlap is a noise-weighted inner product [186,187] $(h_1|h_2) \equiv 4\mathrm{Re} \int_{f_l}^{f_h} df \tilde{h}_1(f) \tilde{h}_2^*(f)/S_n(f)$, where $\tilde{h}(f)$ is the Fourier transform of the time-domain signal, the asterisk superscript indicates complex conjugation, and $S_n(f)$ is the power spectral density of the detector noise, which we assume to be the design zero-detuned high-power noise curve of Advanced LIGO [188].

To calibrate the SEOBNR-PM model, we closely follow the procedure outlined in Refs. [87,93,158]. This procedure essentially consists of determining values of the calibration parameters that minimize a combination of the mismatch and the difference in merger time [defined as the peak of the (2,2)-mode amplitude] between EOB and NR waveforms with the same physical parameters (q, χ_1, χ_2). This is carried out in a Bayesian fashion using the Bilby [189] package, and the PYSEOBNR code [158]. Finally, we interpolate the best-fit values for each NR simulation across the (q, χ_1, χ_2) parameter space. As said, in our SEOBNR-PM model, we only calibrate the $\Delta t_{\rm NR}$ parameter (see the Supplemental Material for its expression [168]) using 441 NR simulations of aligned-spin BBHs produced with the pseudo-spectral Einstein code of the Simulating eXtreme Spacetimes (SXS) Collaboration [87,99,190–202], which were also employed in Ref. [93] for the SEOBNRv5 model. They cover mass ratios $q = m_1/m_2$ from 1 to 20 in the nonspinning limit, and dimensionless spin values going from $-0.998 \leq \chi_i \leq 0.998$ for $q = 1$ to $-0.5 \leq \chi_1 \leq 0.5, \chi_2 = 0$ for $q = 15$.

SEOBNR-PM waveform-model performance—To assess the accuracy of the waveform model, we compute its mismatch against the set of 441 SXS NR simulations, and compare its performance to the SEOBNRv5 $(\Delta t_{\rm NR}, a_6, d_{\rm SO})$ model, as well as to a version of SEOBNRv5 calibrated only via $\Delta t_{\rm NR}$. Figure 4 illustrates the cumulative maximum mismatch against the NR simulations over the binary's total-mass range $10 M_\odot \leq M \leq 300 M_\odot$, for the $(\ell, m) = (2, 2)$ mode. The overall mismatch of SEOBNR-PM against NR falls roughly between that of the two SEOBNRv5 variations, with a median value $\mathcal{M}_{\rm median} \sim 6.1 \times 10^{-4}$. This represents a remarkably good agreement. When tuning only $\Delta t_{\rm NR}$, we observe that the accuracy of both SEOBNR-PM and SEOBNRv5 tends to degrade for configurations with large positive spins. This results in a tail of high-mismatch cases above ~1%, more pronounced for SEOBNRv5, which includes spin-orbit (3.5PN), spin-square (4PN), and spin-cube (3.5PN) effects at a lower PN order than SEOBNR-PM, which includes spin terms up to 5PM order [203]. Resumming the PM-EOB potentials and introducing calibration parameters could greatly improve SEOBNR-PM's accuracy for these cases, similar to the calibrated SEOBNRv5. We leave this important work to the future.

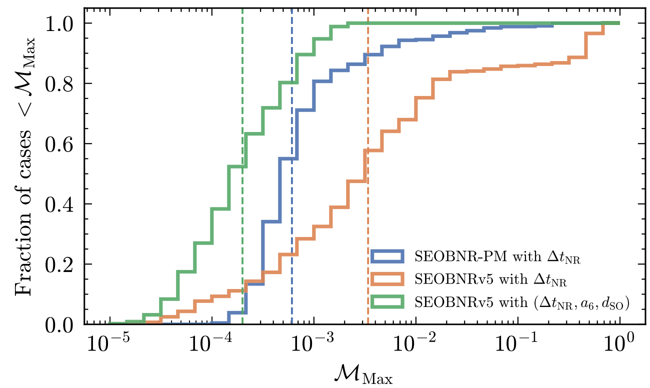

FIG. 4. Cumulative maximum mismatch over the binary's total-mass range $10 M_\odot \leq M \leq 300 M_\odot$ for the (calibrated) SEOBNR-PM and SEOBNRv5 models. The study uses 441 SXS NR waveforms, and focuses on the $(\ell, m) = (2, 2)$ mode. The vertical dashed lines indicate the medians of the mismatch distributions.

Conclusions—In this Letter, we took advantage of the flexible and efficient PYSEOBNR code [158] and recent prediction for the scattering angle in the EOB formalism [149] to build the first inspiral-merger-ringdown EOB waveform model (SEOBNR-PM) for aligned-spin BHs that uses a PM-informed Hamiltonian (i.e., expanded in G, but at all orders in the velocity). Importantly, we found that the SEOB-PM nonspinning binding energy, computed along an inspiraling trajectory, at 4PM, and its spin-orbit and spin-spin contributions through 5PM, agree remarkably well with the NR data up to 1 GW cycle before merger (see Figs. 2 and 3). The agreement is comparable and in some cases better than SEOBNRv5, which however was calibrated to NR results [93]. Furthermore, we calibrated SEOBNR-PM to 441 NR simulations provided by the SXS Collaboration [87,99,190–202] by tuning the (2,2) mode's peak time (i.e., Δt_{NR}), and found a median mismatch lower than SEOBNRv5, when the latter is similarly calibrated to NR (see Fig. 4). For now, without optimization, the SEOBNR-PM's evaluation time is an order of magnitude slower than SEOBNRv5.

Considering the recent attention to the two-body gravitational-scattering problem in quantum-field theory, with a slew of new results produced [120–126], we see the development of the SEOBNR-PM model as a watershed moment—the first true application of these methods to an astrophysically relevant inspiral-merger-ringdown waveform model. Yet, this is only a first step. Given the relevant progress at 5PM [165], we hope to incorporate the complete 5PM scattering angle into our effective Hamiltonian in the near future. Recent results separating the local from nonlocal parts of the 4PM angle [157] will likely be crucial for achieving good agreement with NR for highly elliptic bound systems—ultimately, this may be the SEOBNR-PM model's reason for being. In light of the progress in PM fluxes [204–215], PM corrections could also be fed into the EOB radiation-reaction forces and gravitational modes. The SEOB-PM Hamiltonian and fluxes will also need to be extended to the astrophysically relevant precessing-spin case. We leave these tantalizing prospects for future work.

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