







TIC 5724661: A Long-Period Binary with a Pulsating sdB Star and δ Scuti Variable

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13 ABSTRACT

14 Using the novel *TESS* 20-sec cadence data, we have discovered an unusual combination of pulsating
15 stars in what we infer to be a binary system. The primary is a standard δ Scuti star with pulsations
16 over the range 32-41 d⁻¹; this is in an inferred wide orbit with a hot subdwarf B (sdB) secondary,
17 which itself has a large-amplitude p-mode pulsation at 524 d⁻¹. We establish an constraints on the
18 period of the putative binary by using radial velocity measurements of the δ Scuti star and show that
19 any sdB-mass companion star must have an orbital period greater than ~ 35 d. Our identification of
20 this sdB binary serves as an important addition to the relatively small amount of sdB binaries known
21 to have a period longer than a few days. We show that such a binary can be formed through stable,
22 nonconservative mass transfer, without undergoing a common envelope phase.

23 1. INTRODUCTION

24 1.1. *Observational properties of hot subdwarfs*

25 Hot subdwarf stars are core helium-burning stars with
26 a thin hydrogen envelope that exhibit significant chemi-
27 cal peculiarities. Such stars represent late stages in stel-
28 lar evolution and are believed to be the stripped cores
29 of red giants. They typically lie on the blue end of the
30 Extreme Horizontal Branch (EHB) of the Hertzsprung-
31 Russell Diagram (HRD; see, e.g., Heber 1986; Saffer
32 et al. 1994; Heber 2016). These stars have surface tem-
33 peratures ranging from 20,000 $\lesssim T_{\text{eff}} \lesssim$ 60,000 K, with
34 $5 \lesssim \log g \lesssim 6.5$. While their spectra appear similar
35 to main-sequence (MS) stars of the same spectral type,
36 they tend to be much smaller and greatly underlumi-
37 nous for their T_{eff} , but are rather overluminous for their
38 mass – with masses close to 0.45 M_{\odot} . Of this, 0.01 M_{\odot}
39 is contained within a thin hydrogen shell at the surface.

40 There are several classes of subdwarf stars; this fact
41 is supported by the work of (Senhadji 2019), who calcu-
42 lated a grid of ~ 3000 subdwarf progenitor binary mod-
43 els. It was found that subdwarf B (sdB) stars tend to
44 have lower values of T_{eff} and $\log g$ when compared to
45 subdwarf O (sdO) stars. The overlying hydrogen layer
46 appears to become more depleted as these stars evolve
47 from sdBs into sdOs. A more recent class, the sdA stars
48 (identified by Kepler et al. 2016), have spectra consistent
49 with $5.5 \lesssim \log g \lesssim 6.5$, and $T_{\text{eff}} \lesssim 20,000$ K. However,
50 there has not been a definitive explanation as to the true
51 nature of these objects. This paper will primarily focus
52 on sdB stars, and occasionally mention sdO stars, when
53 relevant in an evolutionary context.

54 1.2. *Pulsating subdwarfs*

55 The first pulsating sdB (sdBV) star, EC 14026-2647,
56 was discovered by Kilkeny et al. (1997), who found a
57 pulsation with a period of 144s. Since then, over 100
58 such pulsating stars have been discovered (Holdsworth
59 et al. 2017). These stars fall into three categories – rapid
60 (sdBV_r) pulsators, with p mode oscillations on the order
61 of a few minutes; slow (sdBV_s) pulsators, with g mode

oscillations on the order of a few hours, and hybrid pulsators, which exhibit both p and g mode oscillations. While the different classes of sdBV are fairly well-defined, the formation of these objects remains somewhat of a mystery. In brief, for sdB stars in short-period binaries, the most promising theory is that of common-envelope evolution, in which the sdBV progenitor overfills its Roche lobe and achieves a sufficiently high mass transfer rate onto its companion (Mengel et al. 1976). Such a high accretion rate precludes the companion star from accreting all of the deposited matter, leading to the formation of a common envelope (see, e.g., Kuiper 1941; for a description of common envelopes in the context of sdB evolution, see Han et al. 2002). The relatively high proportion of sdB stars observed in short-period binaries suggests that this evolutionary scenario is the most common (Han et al. 2003), but there exists an observational bias that favors the discovery of such systems. Theories for the formation of medium- and long-period sdB binaries center on the role of stable, (non)conservative mass transfer. A detailed discussion of the evolution of different types of binaries containing sdB stars can be found in Section 6.1, the references therein, and in the seminal papers of Han et al. (2002) and Han et al. (2003).

1.3. TIC 5724661

As part of its goal to enable precision asteroseismology, the Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (*TESS*; Ricker et al. 2015) has been observing a subset of stars using a novel 20-second cadence since Sector 27, which occurred during July 2020. This mode can probe frequencies up to a Nyquist limit of 2160 d^{-1} , corresponding to periods as short as 40 s. *TESS* short-cadence observations are invaluable in the detection and characterization of new subdwarfs, especially pulsators (see Section 6 of Lynas-Gray 2021, and references therein). TIC 5724661 was chosen to be observed at 20 s cadence because it was a known A star in the instability strip on the HRD. Observations of this star and our subsequent analyses revealed two sets of pulsational frequencies – one in the typical δ Scuti frequency range and two other, unexpected, peaks at 524 d^{-1} and 580 d^{-1} . These two are in the characteristic pulsational frequency range of hot compact stars, like white dwarfs and sdBV_r stars. In this paper, we first analyze the frequencies of the δ Scuti pulsations and discuss the modes they represent. Then, we show that the spectrum of TIC 5724661 does not exhibit the chemical abnormalities of a roAp star. Moreover, no significant variations in radial velocity are found over a series of unequally-spaced observations, suggesting a long-period ($\gtrsim 70 \text{ d}$) orbit. We next discuss the strong evidence for a hot compact compan-

Table 1. Properties of TIC 5724661

Parameter	Value
RA (J2015.5) (h m s)	23:11:07.84
Dec (J2015.5) ($^{\circ}$ ' ")	-17:13:19.424
T^a	11.204 ± 0.007
G^b	11.286 ± 0.001
G_{BP}^b	11.353 ± 0.001
G_{RP}^b	11.154 ± 0.001
B^a	11.431 ± 0.129
V^a	11.231 ± 0.010
J^c	10.998 ± 0.020
H^c	10.962 ± 0.024
K^c	10.919 ± 0.023
W1 ^d	10.889 ± 0.023
W2 ^d	10.917 ± 0.020
W3 ^d	10.851 ± 0.162
W4 ^d	> 8.607
$R (R_{\odot})^e$	$1.32^{+0.09}_{-0.11}$
$L (L_{\odot})^e$	5.737 ± 0.8
Distance (pc) ^b	611 ± 15
μ_{α} (mas yr ⁻¹) ^b	-4.5197 ± 0.0375
μ_{δ} (mas yr ⁻¹) ^b	$+4.941 \pm 0.0304$

Notes. (a) exofop.ipac.caltech.edu/tess/index.php. (b) *Gaia* eDR3 (Gaia Collaboration et al. 2016a; Gaia Collaboration et al. 2016b; Gaia Collaboration et al. 2021). (c) 2MASS catalog (Skrutskie et al. 2006). (d) WISE point source catalog (Cutri & et al. 2014). (e) This work; see Table 4 for details regarding the radius estimate, as well as Table 2 for RV data.

ion suggested by the excess ultraviolet (UV) flux in the Spectral Energy Distribution (SED). We then explore possible formation pathways for such a system and contextualize our discovery of a novel system. Note, we will hereafter refer to the A-star component of the binary as the “secondary”, and the sdB component as the “primary”, for reasons regarding the evolution of the binary that will be more thoroughly explained in Section 6.

2. OBSERVATIONAL DATA

2.1. *TESS* Observations of TIC 5724661

TIC 5724661 was observed by *TESS* in Sector 29 (from 2020 August 26 to September 21) and Sector 42 (from 2021 August 20 to September 16) in both 2 min and 20 s cadence. The data are available in both SAP (simple aperture photometry) and PDCSAP (presearch data conditioning SAP) forms. Data processing was done using the SPOC pipeline at NASA Ames (Jenkins 2015). We used the PDCSAP data from only Sector 29 for our analysis after converting the given flux intensity to mag-

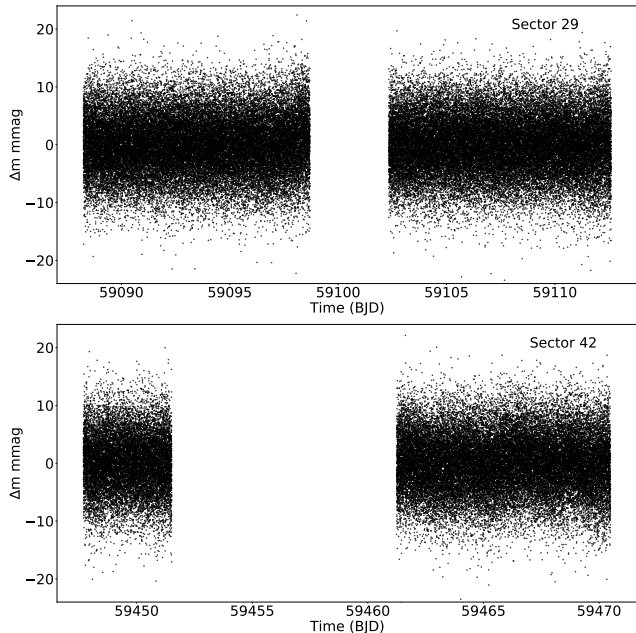


Figure 1. The light curve of TIC 5724661 obtained in 20 s cadence in *TESS* Sectors 29 and 42 after processing with the SPOC pipeline (Jenkins 2015). The pulsations are too rapid and too low in amplitude to discern visually in this compressed figure. Its purposes are (i) to show the two gaps in the data, which affect the spectral window, and (ii) to show the noise level in the 20-s data points. The ordinate scale is Barycentric Julian Date – 240 0000.0.

Table 2. Radial Velocity Measurements of TIC 5724661 from the Tillinghast Reflector Echelle Spectrograph (TRES)

Observation Date (BJD-2400000)	Radial Velocity (km s ⁻¹)	LSD Error (km s ⁻¹)	Multi-Order Error (km s ⁻¹)
59190.6081	-39.85	± 0.17	± 1.08
59196.5855	-39.54	± 0.73	± 0.89
59199.5753	-41.06	± 0.80	± 0.92
59200.5938	-40.24	± 0.66	± 0.93
59202.5893	-41.05	± 0.69	± 1.18
59484.7757	-39.03	± 0.63	± 0.93
59487.7216	-38.98	± 0.38	± 0.97
59519.6938	-37.51	± 0.47	± 0.57

132 nitudes.¹ The data from Sector 29 span 24.33 d with a
 133 temporal center point of $t_0 = \text{BJD } 2459100.41122$, and
 134 comprise 88937 data points (after clipping by SPOC to
 135 remove outlier points, e.g., those arising from cosmic ray
 136 strikes on the detector).²

137 Figure 1 shows the SPOC-processed light curves with
 138 the data gaps between the two orbits making up each
 139 *TESS* sector. These arise from the lack of observations
 140 during data downlink, or saturation of the CCDs due
 141 to scattered light from the Earth and the Moon. Such
 142 data gaps affect the spectral window, necessitating ei-
 143 ther analysis with a Discrete Fourier Transform (DFT;
 144 see, e.g., Kurtz 1985) or appropriate corrections, such as
 145 re-binning the data into equally-spaced temporal bins.

146 2.2. Spectroscopy

147 We obtained spectroscopic observations of the tar-
 148 get TIC 5724661 with the Tillinghast Reflector Echelle

¹ The data from Sector 42 have a large data gap during the first orbit (see Figure 1) due to saturation of the CCDs arising from the moon being in the *TESS* field-of-view.

² *TESS* Sector 29 Data Release Notes: https://archive.stsci.edu/missions/tess/doc/tess_drn/tess_sector_29_drn43.v02.pdf

149 Spectrograph (TRES, Furesz 2008), on the 1.5-m reflec-
 150 tor at the Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory (FLWO)
 151 in Arizona, USA. TRES is a high-resolution fiber-fed
 152 echelle spectrograph, with a spectral resolving power
 153 of $R = 44\,000$ over the wavelength region of 3900 –
 154 9100 Å. A total of seven observations were obtained for
 155 TIC 5724661 during 2020 December, and between 2021
 156 September and 2021 November, with peak signal-to-
 157 noise ratios per resolution element of ~ 30 in the Mg
 158 b triplet wavelength region. The spectra were extracted
 159 and reduced as per Buchhave et al. (2010), with wave-
 160 length solutions derived from bracketing Th-Ar lamp ex-
 161 posures. The observing schedule was designed to be sen-
 162 sitive to a companion with an orbital period $P_{\text{orb}} \lesssim 30$ d.
 163 To derive the spectroscopic broadening profiles and
 164 radial velocities from each observation, we performed a
 165 least-squares deconvolution (LSD, Donati et al. 1997)
 166 of each spectrum against a synthetic non-rotating tem-
 167 plate; this provided both a value for the radial velocity,
 168 along with an uncertainty value. We also conducted
 169 a multi-order velocity analysis of the spectra, and de-
 170 rived another set of uncertainties for the radial velocity
 171 values. We observed that the multi-order uncertainties
 172 were around 50% greater than the LSD uncertainties.
 173 These values are presented in Table 2.

174 Visual examination of the broadening profiles for a
 175 set of lines from the sdB companion remained negative,
 176 but the line profiles did show night-to-night variability
 177 consistent with typical spectroscopic line variations ex-
 178 hibited by δ Scuti stars. The broadening profiles were
 179 fitted with a model kernel accounting for the rotational,
 180 macroturbulent, and instrumental broadening terms, as
 181 well as the velocity shift of the spectrum. The compari-
 182 son to model spectra and further analyses (including the
 183 use of a rotating template) are described in Section 4.

184 -39.85025 -39.5396 -41.06128 -40.24003 -41.04946 -
 185 39.0269 -38.98179 -37.5082

186 The set of seven measured radial velocities obtained
 187 with TRES is given in Table 2.

188 3. FREQUENCY ANALYSIS

189 The *TESS* data from both Sectors 29 and 42 were an-
 190 alyzed using a fast Discrete Fourier Transform (Kurtz
 191 1985) to produce amplitude spectra. The top panel in
 192 Fig. 2 shows the amplitude spectrum out to about half
 193 the Nyquist frequency of 2160 d^{-1} , calculated using the
 194 Sector 29 data. A cluster of peaks in the δ Sct fre-
 195 quency range is seen between $26 - 46 \text{ d}^{-1}$, and a sin-
 196 gle, high-frequency peak is clearly detected at 523.99 d^{-1}
 197 (6.065 mHz). These are shown at higher frequency reso-
 198 lution in the two middle panels, with appropriate labels
 199 indicating the sector whose data was input to the DFT.

200 We fitted the 13 δ Sct frequencies and the most promi-
 201 nent sdBV_r frequency to the Sector 29 data using a
 202 non-linear least-squares algorithm in order to (a) op-
 203 timize the frequencies, amplitudes and phases, and (b)
 204 determine their uncertainties. Those best-fit paramet-
 205 ers are provided in Table 3. The frequency range is
 206 narrow, and the number of excited modes is relatively
 207 small for a δ Sct star. The bottom panel of Figure
 208 2 shows the amplitude spectrum of the residuals after
 209 a non-linear least-squares fit of the 14 aforementioned
 210 peaks was subtracted from the data. We believe that
 211 the highest-frequency peak, at 523.99 d^{-1} arises from a
 212 pulsation mode in an sdBV_r star, as discussed later.

213 A simple zeroth order relation for a pulsator (first de-
 214 rived using a toy model in Ritter 1879) that relates the
 215 pulsation period P and mean density $\bar{\rho}$ is:

$$216 \quad P \sqrt{\frac{\bar{\rho}}{\bar{\rho}_{\odot}}} = Q, \quad (1)$$

217 where Q is a constant for a given pulsation mode, which
 218 is defined by this equation. This can be rewritten in
 219 terms of observables as follows:

$$220 \quad \log Q = \log P + \frac{1}{2} \log g + \frac{1}{10} M_{\text{bol}} + \log T_{\text{eff}} - 6.454, \quad (2)$$

221 Here, P is in days and $\log g$ is in cgs units. As a first-
 222 order estimate, we use the *TESS* input catalog (TIC)
 223 values of $T_{\text{eff}} = 8400 \text{ K}$ and $\log g = 4.3$ (Stassun et al.
 224 2019) and estimate $M_{\text{bol}} = 1.6 \text{ mag}$ from the *Gaia* par-
 225 allax and V magnitude. Thus, we can calculate the Q -
 226 values for the δ Sct frequencies, which enables us to es-
 227 timate the radial overtone for these frequencies' modes
 228 by comparing them with previously-calculated models,
 229 such as those in Table 1 of Stellingwerf (1979). Note
 230 that the putative sdB companion is significantly fainter

231 in the *TESS* and *Gaia* passbands (i.e., in the optical -
 232 see Figure 4), so its contribution to the total absolute
 233 magnitude of the system can be neglected here.

234 For the two highest amplitude modes which span
 235 the frequency range of the δ Sct pulsations, we find
 236 $Q = 0.019$ for the 32.0888-d^{-1} frequency and $Q = 0.015$
 237 for the 39.8553-d^{-1} frequency. Comparing these with
 238 model 4.4 in Stellingwerf (1979) suggests that modes in
 239 the δ Sct star range in radial overtone between $n \sim 2 - 4$.
 240 This is a narrow range of overtones, and the number
 241 of observed frequencies in the range requires most of
 242 the associated modes to be nonradial. At first glance,
 243 TIC 5724661 seems to be a relatively hot δ Sct star,
 244 and since hotter stars tend to pulsate in higher radial
 245 overtones (Breger & Bregman 1975), $n \sim 2 - 4$ radial
 246 overtones are not unexpected. However, we are also cog-
 247 nizant of the fact that the temperature estimate given
 248 in the TIC may be inflated due to an unresolved sdB
 249 companion; more details are discussed in Section 5.

251 Three of the peaks are nearly equally spaced in fre-
 252 quency: 34.3520 , 35.0681 and 35.7721 d^{-1} . The separa-
 253 tions between pairs of these peaks are 0.7161 ± 0.0025
 254 and $0.7040 \pm 0.0024 \text{ d}^{-1}$; these separations themselves
 255 differ only by $0.012 \pm 0.003 \text{ d}^{-1}$. Despite this small
 256 difference, the formalism provided in Dziembowski &
 257 Goode (1992) appears to suggest that this triplet does
 258 not arise from rotational splitting. However, if we do
 259 assume rotational splitting, we can crudely estimate
 260 $P_{\text{rot}} = 1.4 \text{ d}$ (neglecting the Ledoux rotational split-
 261 ting constant $C_{n,\ell}$). Moreover, because we know that
 262 the binary contains a δ Scuti star, we can use the il-
 263 lustrative values $\log g = 4.3$ and $M \sim 2 M_{\odot}$ to derive
 264 a crude radius estimate of $R \sim 1.6 R_{\odot}$. These values,
 265 along with the rotational period estimate, predict that
 266 $v_{\text{eq}} = 60 \text{ km s}^{-1}$. The spectroscopic estimate of $v \sin i$,
 267 $39.9 \pm 0.9 \text{ km s}^{-1}$, suggests that the rotational axis of
 268 the star is tilted $\sim 40^\circ$ with respect to our line of sight
 269 (here, we use the convention that 0° is parallel to our line
 270 of sight). We emphasize that these are only first-order
 271 estimates; further analysis and modeling (discussed in
 272 Sections 5 and 6) can better constrain these parameters.

273 Most A stars with $v_{\text{eq}} \lesssim 100 \text{ km s}^{-1}$ are either Am or
 274 Ap stars, meaning they exhibit strong metal lines (the
 275 distinction arises from the presence of a strong dipole
 276 magnetic field in Ap stars; see, e.g., Murphy 2014).
 277 So, we would expect TIC 5724661 to show abundance
 278 anomalies when examined at high spectral resolution,
 279 most probably of the Am kind, as nearly half of A stars
 280 near this temperature are Am stars (Smith 1973). How-
 281 ever, as discussed in Section 4, no abundance anomalies
 282 were detectable in our spectra; we may need a data with
 283 a higher spectral resolution to see such anomalies. More

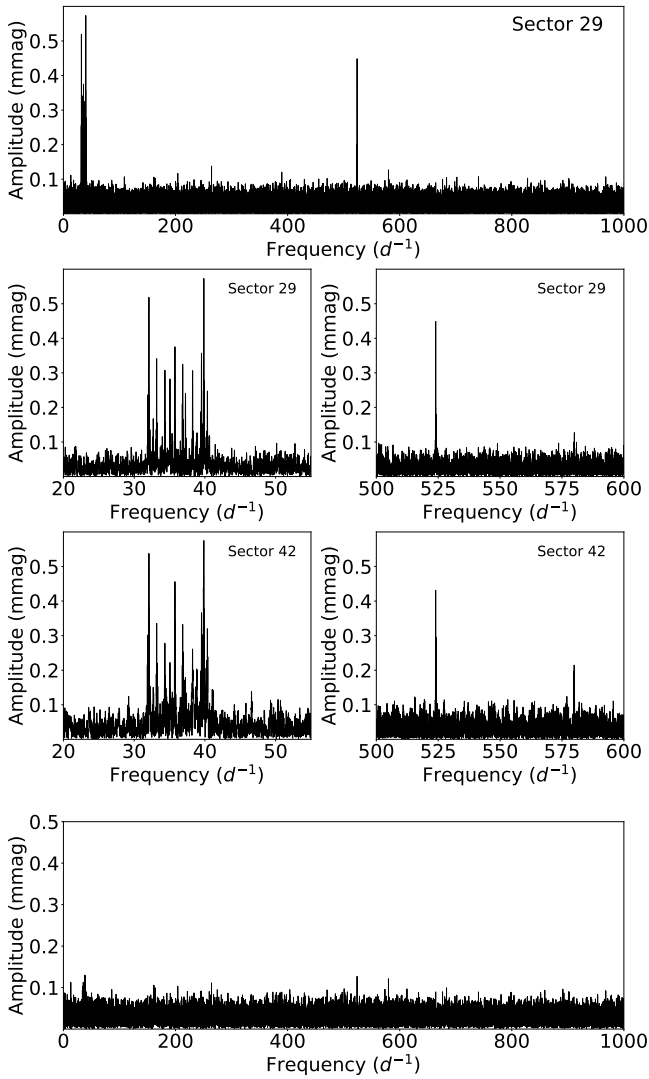


Figure 2. The top panel shows the Fourier amplitude spectrum to 1000 d^{-1} from the Sector 29 light curve; there are no significant peaks between 1000 d^{-1} and the Nyquist frequency, 2160 d^{-1} . The second panel zooms into a cluster of peaks in the δ Sct frequency range between $20 - 55 \text{ d}^{-1}$, along with a single, high-frequency peak at 523.99 d^{-1} (6.065 mHz). The third panel shows the δ Scuti and high-frequency pulsations observed in Sector 42; the peak at 579.85 d^{-1} (6.711 mHz) increases in prominence between Sectors 29 and 42. The bottom panel shows the Fourier spectrum of the residuals after a non-linear least-squares fit of the 13 highest-amplitude δ Sct peaks and the peak at 523.99 d^{-1} (from the sdB star) is subtracted from the data.

284 evidence against the idea that the 523.99 d^{-1} pulsation
 285 arises from a roAp star is the fact that this frequency
 286 is more than twice the theoretical acoustic cutoff fre-
 287 quency for such a star. While supercritical roAp pulsa-
 288 tions have been observed, none of them have deviated

Table 3. A non-linear least squares fit of 13 δ Sct frequencies and 1 sdBV frequency to S29 data. The zero point for the phases, $t_0 = 2459100.41122$, is the center in time of the data.

frequency d^{-1}	amplitude mmag ± 0.024	phase radians
31.9317 ± 0.0021	0.246	-1.534 ± 0.102
32.0888 ± 0.0010	0.522	-2.884 ± 0.047
32.7019 ± 0.0032	0.160	-1.931 ± 0.151
33.1820 ± 0.0015	0.341	1.555 ± 0.071
34.3520 ± 0.0017	0.300	0.531 ± 0.081
35.0681 ± 0.0019	0.267	-1.539 ± 0.091
35.7721 ± 0.0014	0.362	-0.086 ± 0.067
36.8673 ± 0.0015	0.330	2.064 ± 0.073
37.2562 ± 0.0021	0.243	-1.097 ± 0.100
38.2666 ± 0.0016	0.314	3.071 ± 0.077
39.5224 ± 0.0014	0.356	-2.691 ± 0.068
39.8553 ± 0.0009	0.585	1.304 ± 0.042
40.3589 ± 0.0020	0.258	-1.756 ± 0.094
523.9899 ± 0.0011	0.449	2.917 ± 0.054

289 from the cutoff as strongly (see, e.g., Holdsworth et al.
 290 2018, and references therein).

291 Another possible explanation for the high-frequency
 292 pulsation observed at 524 d^{-1} is a white dwarf. Many
 293 white dwarfs are known to pulsate in this frequency
 294 regime, with frequencies associated with g modes, as
 295 opposed to p modes, which underlie the oscillations
 296 in sdBV_r stars (Winget & Kepler 2008). However, as
 297 shown in Figure 2, the amplitude of the high-frequency
 298 oscillation is 0.394 mmag . This is 0.036% of the entire
 299 system’s light. Using $L = 4\pi\sigma R^2 T^4$, and adopting il-
 300 lustrative values of $0.01 R_{\odot}$ for the white dwarf radius
 301 and $20\,000 \text{ K}$ for the temperature, we expect the lumi-
 302 nosity ratio of the two bodies to be 10^{-3} , implying the
 303 white dwarf pulsates with an amplitude that is $\sim 35\%$
 304 of its luminosity. Typical WD pulsation amplitudes are
 305 between 1 and 2% (Winget 1998); as a result, this is not
 306 a plausible option able to explain our observations.

307 Finally, we evaluate the possibility that there is some
 308 foreground or background contamination in the *TESS*
 309 light curve, due to the large size of its pixels. The *Gaia*
 310 eDR3 catalog (Gaia Collaboration et al. 2021) shows
 311 that TIC 5724661 only has one nearby star within $80''$,
 312 and this star has $m_G = 19.5$ – too faint to exhibit pulsa-
 313 tions of the amplitude that we observe. Moreover, this
 314 nearby star’s *Gaia* BP–RP value is 1.74, suggesting that
 315 this is an extremely cool star that should not be able to
 316 pulsate at all (Andrae et al. 2018). Moreover, the Renor-
 317 malized Unit Weight Error (RUWE) for TIC 5724661 is
 318 1.482 – which is significantly greater than the expected

value of 1; relatively large RUWE values can be used as a proxy for binarity (see, e.g., Belokurov et al. 2020). As a result, we can safely discount the possibility of contamination by another source and focus on the possibility of a hot compact companion.

We thus conclude that this high-frequency mode likely arises from a p mode sdBV_r star. Constraints on its mass are discussed in Section 4, its temperature in Section 5, and its evolutionary history in Section 6.

4. SPECTRAL ANALYSES

To study the spectra we obtained, we conducted two analyses—one to establish constraints on the radial velocity variations, and hence on the mass of a potential unseen sdB companion, and another in which we directly searched for spectral signatures to check the chemical composition of the A star and identify any peculiarities.

First, we used the lack of detectable RV variations to constrain the mass of a potential companion. We fit for the K velocity, phase, and γ velocity of the RV curve for each of 10^6 trial periods evenly spaced in logarithmic space between 0.1 and 1000 d, all assuming circular orbits. To be conservative when generating our constraints, we multiplied the LSD uncertainties (described in Section 2) by 1.5 and input those as the argument `sigma` to the `curve_fit` function in `scipy`. For each trial period, we then calculated an upper limit to the value of the mass function using the best-fit K value plus twice its derived uncertainty. Finally, we solved for the corresponding limit to the mass of a potential companion by using the upper limit on the value of the mass function and an assumed mass for the A star of $2M_{\odot}$. This was done for each of three assumed orbital inclinations of 30° , 60° , and 90° . A plot of the derived upper constraints for a potential companion is given in Figure 3. The data suggest that any sdB star companion is more likely to be in an orbit longer than ~ 150 d. However, there are cases involving low inclination angles that could harbor either a short- or medium-period sdB star (e.g., 35-80 d). There is also the possibility the orbit is eccentric, which may lead to inauspicious locations along the orbit when the radial velocities were measured. The region of parameter space resulting in medium periods is explored further in Section 6.

We then turned our attention to directly analyzing the spectrum to ascertain more about the nature of the A star. We began by summing the seven TRES spectra into one, as there were no significant radial velocity differences among them. The summed spectrum had a S/N of about 65 and was, just like in Section 2.2, compared to model atmospheres using ATLAS9 (Castelli & Kurucz 2004) and SPECTRUM (Gray & Corbally 1994). An

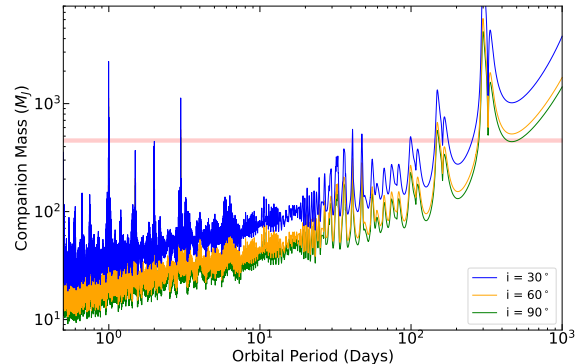


Figure 3. Upper limits on the mass of a potential companion to a $2 M_{\odot}$ star that are derived from our RV measurements for a range of assumed orbital inclinations. The shaded red region indicates the range of masses of the sdBs that resulted from the modeling of various evolutionary scenarios (described in Section 6). It is clear that the derived constraints are more stringent for periods $\lesssim 35$ d. There exist islands of marginally acceptable binary periods between 35 and ~ 60 d; more probable periods lie near 150 and ~ 300 d. Spikes represent locations at which we do not possess any information on the mass of a potential companion, as a result of our observing cadence. The narrow spikes below 3 d are aliases of the 1 d observing windows.

atmosphere with $T_{\text{eff}} = 8000$ K, $\log g = 4.0$, $[M/H]=0$, broadened to $v \sin i = 40$ km s $^{-1}$ gave a good fit to the summed spectrum. A search for chemical peculiarities indicative of a magnetic A star yielded a null result, with the possible exception of a somewhat narrow Ca K line at 393.366 nm. Likewise, searches for He lines in the summed spectrum caused by a possible sdB companion remained negative. This latter non-detection could be explained through a pure-H atmosphere, which may arise from chemical differentiation processes in the sdB: Hunger & Kudritzki (1981) and Latour et al. (2018) suggest that processes such as gravitational settling, stellar winds (for hotter subdwarf stars), and convective instability can cause the He abundance to deviate from what is expected. Or, this could simply be a consequence of such a companion being some 2.5 magnitudes fainter than the δ Scuti star in the optical (cf. Figure 4).

5. SPECTRAL ENERGY DISTRIBUTION

The spectral energy distribution (SED) obtained from the VizieR portal (Ochsenbein et al. 2019) exhibits an excess in the ultraviolet flux in both the Galex NUV and FUV bands (see Fig. 4). Thus, we fit the SED with a model for the summed spectra from an A star and an sdB star to further test the possibility of an unresolved long-period hot sdB companion to the A star.

395 We used a custom implementation of the Markov
 396 Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) algorithm to estimate pa-
 397 rameters for the temperatures and radii of the two po-
 398 tential stars in the system. Extinction was accounted for
 399 by using $A_V \simeq A_G = 0.357$ (obtained from *Gaia* DR2),
 400 along with the analytic formulas provided in [Cardelli](#)
 401 [et al. \(1989\)](#). The distance to the source was fixed at 727
 402 pc, based on the *Gaia* parallax measurements given in
 403 DR2 ([Prusti et al. 2016](#); [Brown et al. 2018](#)).³ The Vizier
 404 data points were fit with summed model Kurucz spec-
 405 tra of an A star with fixed $\log g = 4.3$ and an sdB star
 406 with fixed $\log g = 5$ ([Castelli & Kurucz 2004](#)). We set
 407 the priors on the A star to be $1 R_\odot < R < 2.5 R_\odot$, with
 408 $7000 \text{ K} < T_{\text{eff}} < 11000 \text{ K}$. The sdB star’s radius was
 409 sampled logarithmically and constrained to be within
 410 $0.1 < R < 1 R_\odot$, with $22000 < T_{\text{eff}} < 38000 \text{ K}$.

411 To ensure confidence in our assumption that fixing the
 412 value of $\log g$ would not significantly impact the SED
 413 model values, we used the Tübingen NLTE model spec-
 414 tra to vary $\log g$ for the sdB companion. This parameter
 415 was varied from $5 \leq \log g \leq 6.5$ ([Werner et al. 2012](#)),
 416 leading to only insignificant differences in the derived
 417 SED, with the largest being a few parts per thousand
 418 of the largest SED flux value. Therefore, we were confi-
 419 dent that we could fix the values of $\log g$ for both stars in
 420 the system, as described above, without losing any criti-
 421 cal information. This assumption was borne out when
 422 we plotted the posterior distribution for this parameter,
 423 which was essentially flat – suggesting that the SED is
 424 highly insensitive to this parameter. As a result of this
 425 degeneracy, we constrained $\log g$ through stellar evolu-
 426 tion modeling – see section 6 for more details.

427 We allowed the MCMC to run for 1 million steps. The
 428 best-fit parameters for the system are presented in Ta-
 429 ble 4, along with their associated uncertainties. Figure 4
 430 shows the best-fit spectrum superposed on the available
 431 data points. The fit is good, with a reduced χ -squared
 432 value close to unity. A corner plot illustrating the poste-
 433 rior distributions and their correlations between param-
 434 eters is shown in Figure 5; all parameters are somewhat
 435 correlated. There exists a strong correlation between
 436 the radius and effective temperature for the sdB star,
 437 as expected – since its radiation dominates the observed
 438 SED only in the UV region of the spectrum. We do not
 439 show the posterior distributions for $\log g$, as these are
 440 flat and do not yield new information.

³ Since *Gaia* eDR3 ([Gaia Collaboration et al. 2021](#)) does not in-
 clude a solution for A_G , we used the parallax from DR2 to ensure
 consistency with the value we used for A_G . The eDR3 parallax
 solution yields a distance of 611 pc.

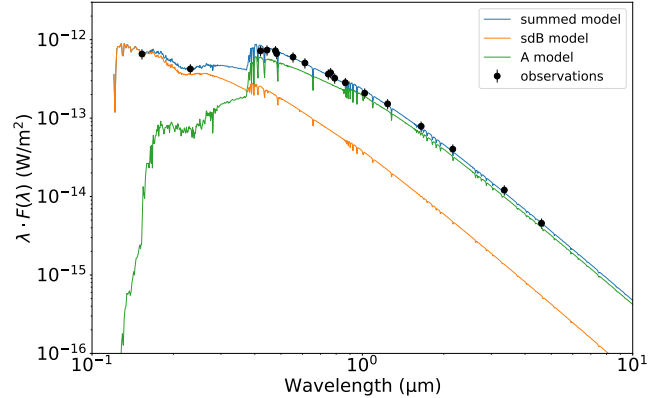


Figure 4. SED plot for TIC 5724661 (black points), where the smooth curves are the model fits using Kurucz ([Castelli & Kurucz 2004](#)) spectra for the sum of the A star and the inferred sdB star; these have been corrected for interstellar extinction. The fits are described in detail in the text. The green curve is for the A star alone, while the orange curve represents the flux of a companion sdB star. It is evident that the sum of the models for an A star and an sdB star can explain the observed SED much better than either would on their own. This lends credence to our claim that there is a compact, hot body orbiting the A star.

Table 4. Derived values for T_{eff} and R for both stars.

Parameter	Value
T_{eff} - A star	$8630^{+280}_{-260} \text{ K}$
R - A star	$1.69 \pm 0.05 R_\odot$
T_{eff} - sdB star	$29500^{+5100}_{-4900} \text{ K}$
R - sdB star	$0.23^{+0.09}_{-0.06} R_\odot$

441 These fitted parameters for the putative sdB star
 442 agree with what is expected for the temperature of such
 443 a pulsating star. Figure 51 of [Heber \(2016\)](#) shows a
 444 demarcation between short- and long-period sdB pul-
 445 sators, with the former having higher temperatures and
 446 $\log g$ values. Our results are thus reassuring, insofar
 447 our inference of a pulsating sdB companion based on
 448 the observation of a short period pulsation in the *TESS*
 449 data is bolstered by the value of our best-fit tempera-
 450 ture. However, what is unique about this sdB star is
 451 that it could potentially lie in a little-explored region
 452 of binary parameter space, as it could possibly have an
 453 orbital period that is too long to suggest formation via
 454 common-envelope evolution, and too short to evolve via
 455 stable, fully conservative mass transfer.

6. EVOLUTIONARY ANALYSIS

458 Most evolutionary channels leading to the formation
 459 of hot subdwarfs rely on a red-giant progenitor that is
 460 rapidly stripped of its deep, hydrogen-rich envelope as a

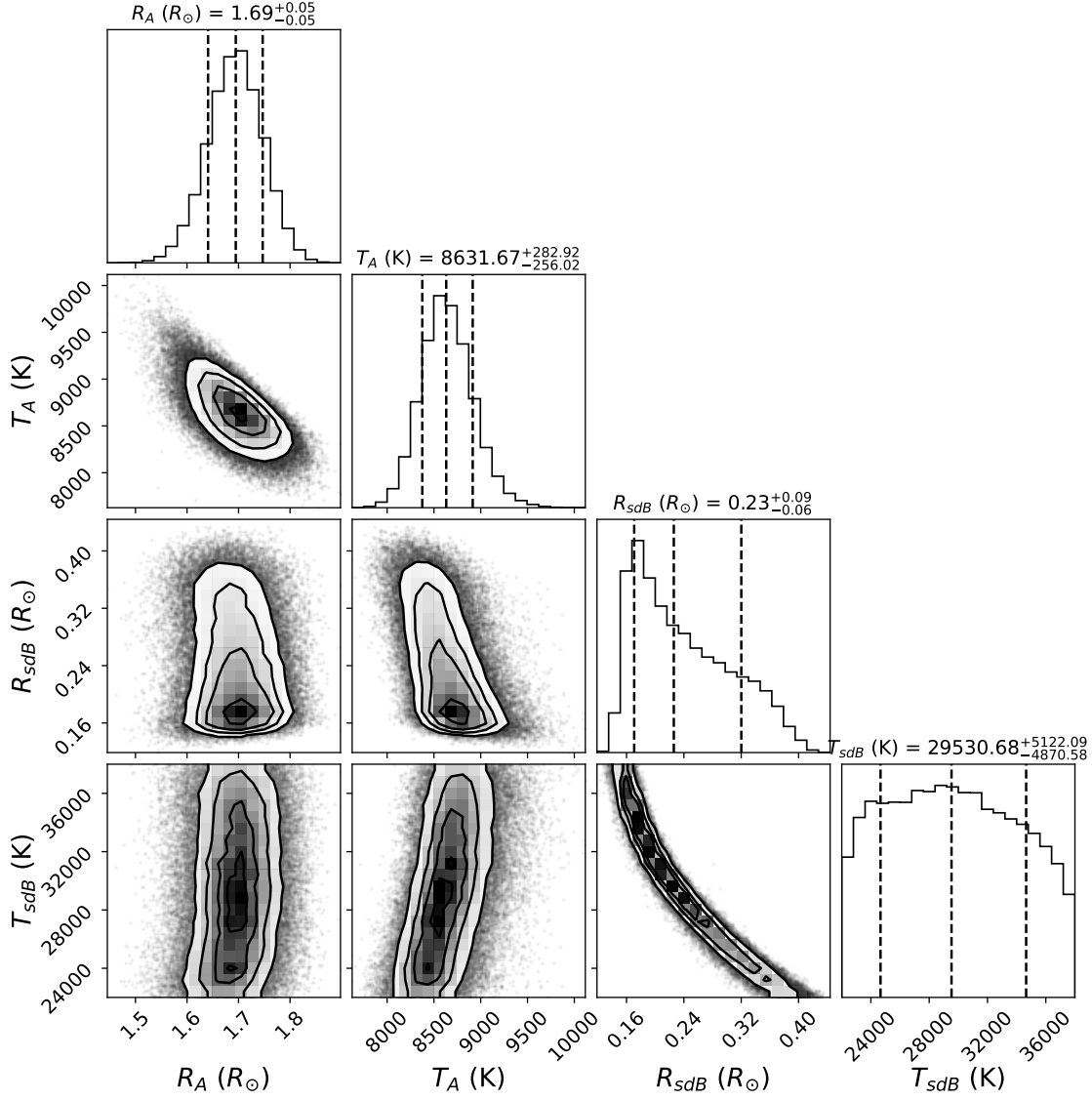


Figure 5. Posterior distributions for the parameters of TIC 5724661. This corner plot shows the best-fit parameters and the correlations between the parameters derived through an MCMC fitting code. Dashed vertical lines, from left to right, represent the 16th percentile, median, and 84th percentile. The distribution for the temperature of the sdB star seems to fall off at high temperatures, suggesting that a T_{eff} close to 29 000 K is most likely. There exists a strong degeneracy between the T_{eff} and the radius of the sdB star, as expected, given the limited region of the SED where the sdB star likely dominates the system light.

461 result of binary interactions. Once the red giant’s core is
 462 exposed, it rapidly evolves along the extreme horizontal
 463 branch (EHB; see Heber 2016, and references therein).

464 We have adopted the following working definitions re-
 465 garding hot subdwarfs and their key properties:

- 466 1. sdBs burn helium (He) in their cores, and may also
 467 undergo α -channel burning of the newly-created
 468 carbon in the core (leading to the creation of oxy-
 469 gen). This phase persists for tens of Myr, during
 470 which time the radius remains roughly constant.

- 471 2. sdO stars have a well-defined carbon-oxygen (CO)
 472 core, with helium burning occurring in a shell
 473 around the core. Simultaneous hydrogen burn-
 474 ing occurs in a thin layer near the surface. This phase
 475 is typically shorter than the sdB phase (by a fac-
 476 tor of 2 to 3), and the radius also remains roughly
 477 constant during this phase.

- 478 3. sdA stars have poorly constrained properties.
 479 Their true nature remains uncertain because there
 480 may be a variety of processes leading to their for-

481 mation. This remains an important open question,
482 but sdA stars are not of importance for this work.

483 A large fraction of sdBs are found in binary systems,
484 and the majority of these are found in short-period bi-
485 naries ($P_{\text{orb}} \lesssim 5$ d) with low-mass companions (e.g., M
486 stars). There clearly exists a selection effect favoring the
487 discovery of short-period eclipsing binaries due to strong
488 illumination effects and deep eclipses, especially for large
489 orbital inclinations. While there is extensive observa-
490 tional evidence for sdBs in short-period binaries, there
491 have been many fewer examples of observed long-period
492 binary systems ($P_{\text{orb}} \gtrsim 100$ d). Moreover, TIC 5724661
493 has an inferred period that is significantly longer than
494 many other observed sdB stars, falling in a sparsely pop-
495 ulated region of parameter space. This could possibly
496 imply a deficiency in our understanding of the (binary)
497 hot subdwarf formation process.

498 6.1. Formation of sdB stars

499 The formation and evolution of hot subdwarf stars
500 has been studied extensively by Mengel et al. (1976),
501 Castellani & Castellani (1993), Dorman & Rood (1993),
502 Han et al. (2002, 2003), Justham et al. (2011), Schindler
503 et al. (2015), and Senhadji (2019). Han et al. (2003) in-
504 vestigated various evolutionary channels that lead to the
505 formation of sdB stars and concluded that sdBs in tight
506 binaries ($P_{\text{orb}} \lesssim 5$ d) were probably formed as a result
507 of common envelope evolution. They also showed that
508 wide systems containing sdBs ($P_{\text{orb}} \gtrsim 100$ d) were likely
509 the result of stable conservative Roche lobe overflow.
510 They also showed that wide systems containing sdBs
511 ($P_{\text{orb}} \gtrsim 100$ d) were likely the result of stable Roche
512 lobe overflow onto a white dwarf companion (they did
513 not model main-sequence accretors).

514 For common envelope evolution to produce an sdB, a
515 red giant whose mass is at least 2 to 3 times greater than
516 that of its companion must overflow its Roche lobe. The
517 rapid shrinking of the giant’s Roche lobe as it loses mass
518 causes dynamically unstable mass transfer, forcing the
519 accreting companion to spiral inside the giant’s envelope
520 (see, e.g., Webbink 1976). If the change in the orbital
521 energy is sufficient to unbind the envelope, then the gi-
522 ant’s envelope can be expelled from the binary system
523 on the order of hundreds of years (Xiong et al. 2017).
524 If a merger can be avoided, the companion emerges in
525 a tight, circular orbit (periods of hours to days) around
526 the stripped core of the red giant. This stripped core
527 can then evolve onto the EHB and become an sdB/O.

528 As noted by Han et al. (2002), it is possible for a hot
529 subdwarf to be formed as a result of (stable) mass trans-
530 fer from a giant donor to a white dwarf companion as
531 the donor evolves up the red giant branch (RGB). Be-

532 cause the donor is already a giant at the onset of mass
533 transfer and because orbits widen as a result of mass
534 transfer, the sdBs are typically formed in wide binaries
535 with orbital periods of hundreds to thousands of days
536 (see, e.g., Vos et al. 2019 and references therein). It is
537 also possible to form sdB/O binary stars via stable, non-
538 conservative mass transfer to main-sequence accretors.
539 While we know that mass transfer is non-conservative
540 based on an analysis of Algol-related binaries (Eggleton
541 2000), we do not have a good constraint on systemic
542 mass loss (i.e., the fraction of mass ejected from the
543 binary). An extensive grid of progenitor models was
544 calculated by Senhadji 2019 of potential progenitors of
545 hot subdwarfs, under the assumption of partially non-
546 conservative, stable mass transfer. This work suggests
547 that sdB-containing binaries could have values of P_{orb}
548 between ≈ 5 to 500 days. Thus, they naturally bridge
549 the gap in P_{orb} between sdBs formed as a result of com-
550 mon envelope evolution and those formed from purely
551 conservative mass transfer. The question now arises as
552 to whether we can produce sdBs with $P_{\text{orb}} \gtrsim 70$ d and
553 $T_{\text{eff}} \approx 30\,000$ K, as we have estimated for TIC 5724661.

554 6.2. Evolutionary Simulations

555 In trying to determine the initial conditions needed
556 to reproduce the inferred properties of TIC 5724661, we
557 created a highly focused grid of evolutionary tracks us-
558 ing the MESA binary stellar evolution code (Paxton et al.
559 2011, 2013, 2015, 2018, 2019). We had previously used
560 MESA to successfully explain the current evolutionary
561 state of MWC 882 (Zhou et al. 2018) – which itself will
562 evolve to become an sdB – and subsequently computed a
563 grid of about 3500 models whose initial conditions were
564 chosen so as to optimize the likelihood of the formation
565 of sdBs in wide binaries (Senhadji 2019). Those models
566 assumed varying degrees of non-conservative mass loss
567 and produced sdBs with a wide range of effective tem-
568 peratures ($20,000$ K $\lesssim T_{\text{eff}} \lesssim 50,000$ K). Guidance from
569 this grid allowed us to optimize our computations by
570 concentrating on a much smaller grid corresponding to
571 cases of highly non-conservative mass transfer only.

572 The evolutionary tracks in this focused grid were com-
573 puted using MESA version r10108. The sdB progenitor
574 (i.e., the primary) was assumed to have a typical Popu-
575 lation I metallicity ($Z = 0.02$), the atmosphere was ap-
576 proximated by a simple boundary condition ($\tau = 2/3$),
577 and the local mixing-length ratio was set equal to 2.
578 We applied the default parameters for both the Reimers
579 wind formula (Reimers 1975) and the Blöcker wind for-
580 mula (Bloeker 1995). We tested a reasonable range of
581 other values for these parameters and found that they
582 had a negligible effect on the results. By far, the most

583 important factors influencing the evolution, other than
 584 $M_{1,0}$, $M_{2,0}$, and $P_{\text{orb},0}$ (i.e., the initial mass of the pri-
 585 mary, secondary, and orbital period, respectively), were
 586 the parameters α and β (Tauris & van den Heuvel 2006).
 587 The parameter α is the fraction of the mass lost from the
 588 primary (donor) and then ejected from the binary, carry-
 589 ing away the specific angular momentum of the primary.
 590 Similarly, β is the fraction of the mass transferred from
 591 the primary (donor) to the secondary (accretor) that
 592 is subsequently lost from the binary, carrying away the
 593 specific angular momentum of the secondary.⁴ (Another
 594 interpretation of β is the fraction of mass lost from the
 595 binary *after* it has crossed the L1 point.) To eliminate
 596 one extra dimension of parameter space in our computa-
 597 tions, we set $\alpha = 0$. The main justification for this strat-
 598 egy is our (empirical) finding that the value of $\alpha + \beta$ had
 599 a much greater impact on the evolution than did various
 600 combinations of those parameters corresponding to the
 601 same sum. So, our choice of β determined the degree of
 602 non-conservation of mass transfer.

603 Both binary stars are evolved contemporaneously with
 604 MESA. It is important to follow the evolution of the sec-
 605 ondary as it accretes mass because the secondary can
 606 expand to fill its Roche lobe.⁵ The reasons why the sec-
 607 ondary can potentially fill its Roche lobe are as follows:
 608 (1) if the mass accretion rate onto the secondary (\dot{M}_2)
 609 is too high, it can expand adiabatically; or, (2) if the
 610 mass of the secondary were to increase substantially on
 611 a short timescale, then it could evolve to become a giant
 612 (and fill its Roche lobe) before the primary (donor) has
 613 had a chance to complete its sdB phase.⁶ In either case,
 614 MESA halts any further computation. In order to increase
 615 the chances that the primary evolves through the sdB
 616 phase, we typically attenuated the mass accretion rate
 617 onto the secondary by requiring that $\beta \gtrsim 0.8$ (recall that
 618 $\dot{M}_2 = -(1 - \beta)\dot{M}_1$). Obviously, if mass transfer is fully
 619 non-conservative ($\beta = 1$), the secondary is not likely
 620 to fill its Roche lobe until long after the sdB phase is
 621 complete (i.e., if the primary evolves along the EHB).

622 Finally, we note that the requirement that β be large
 623 implies that the orbital periods cannot be nearly as large
 624 as those found by Han et al. (2002), who considered mass
 625 accretion from a giant donor onto a white dwarf. Other
 626 than starting from a much lower period at the onset of

⁴ Both of these cases correspond to the “fast Jeans’ mode” of angular momentum dissipation

⁵ If the primary is still transferring mass, the resulting evolution might lead to a merger.

⁶ Moreover, with respect to TIC 5724661, this would be especially problematic because the giant would be more luminous than the sdB star (contrary to observations), and it would not exhibit δ -Scuti-like pulsations.

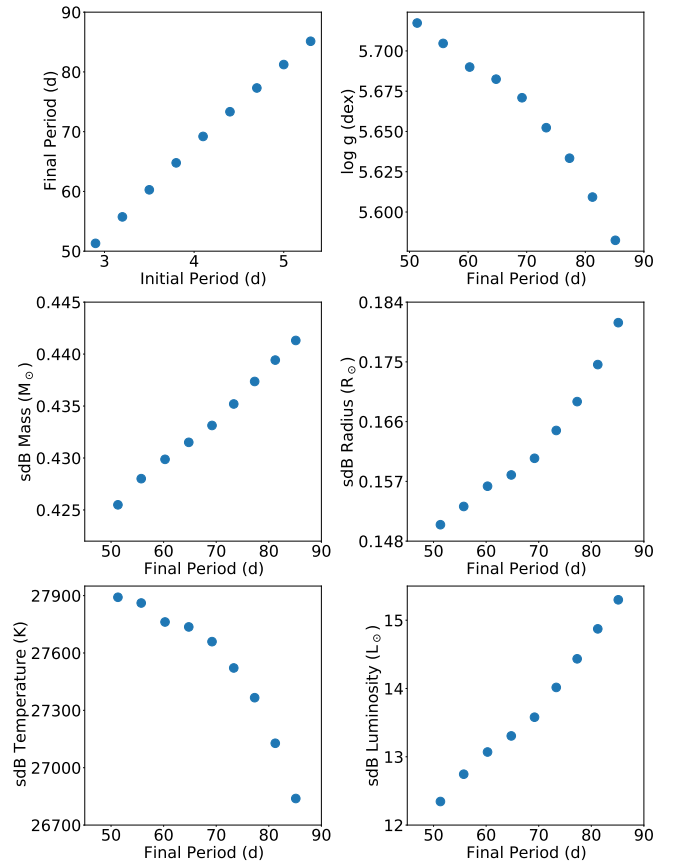


Figure 6. A multi-panel plot showing how the various properties of a representative sdB star depend on the initial period of the binary. The initial mass of the sdB star’s progenitor was $3.25 M_{\odot}$, its companion’s initial mass was $1.7 M_{\odot}$, and β was fixed at 0.95. The plots show that for larger initial periods, the sdB star’s mass, radius, and luminosity increase, as does the final orbital period; however, its effective temperature and log g decrease.

627 mass transfer compared to their models, the main reason
 628 stems from the fact that for large values of β , systemic
 629 mass loss will ensure that a significant fraction of the
 630 binary’s orbital angular momentum ($\delta J/J$) is carried
 631 out of the system. Because J^2 is proportional to the
 632 binary separation, the loss of angular momentum will
 633 cause the orbit to shrink relative to what would have
 634 been obtained had the evolution been fully conservative.

6.3. Results

635
 636 Using the methods described in the previous sub-
 637 section, we have shown that the inferred observational
 638 parameters for TIC 5724661 are reproducible, as long
 639 as we are willing to accept a large fraction of non-
 640 conservative mass transfer. By adjusting the proper-
 641 ties of the primordial binary such that $M_{1,0} \approx 3.5 \pm 0.3$
 642 M_{\odot} , $M_{2,0} \approx 1.6 \pm 0.3 M_{\odot}$, and $P_{\text{orb},0} \approx 4 \pm 2$ d, with
 643 $\beta \gtrsim 0.8$, we were able to produce multiple tracks for

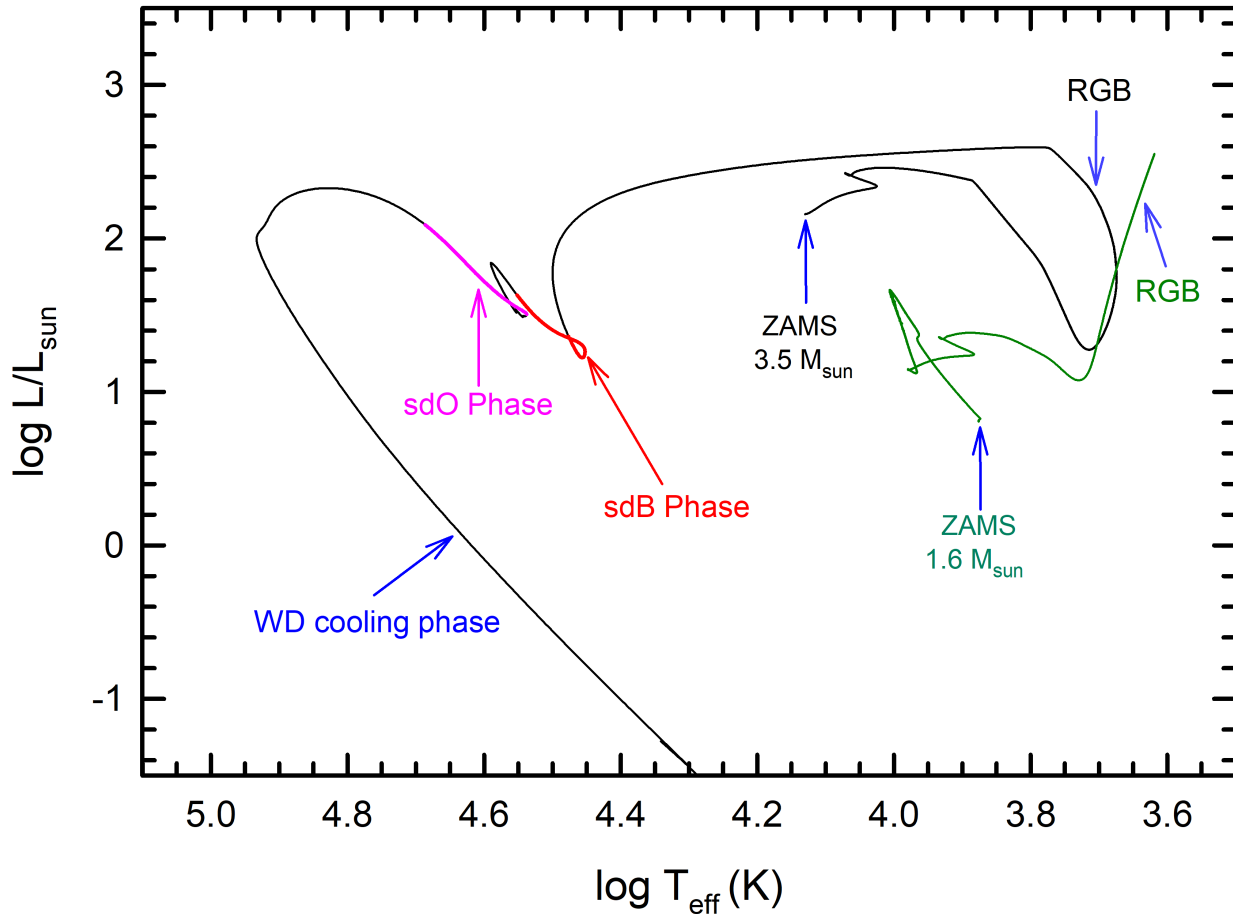


Figure 7. Evolution of a representative sdB from the zero-age main sequence (ZAMS) to the final WD cooling stage in the HR diagram (solid black line); note that the pre-main sequence has been removed for reasons of clarity. The ZAMS progenitor star has a mass of $3.5 M_{\odot}$ and an approximate solar metallicity ($Z = 0.02$). Mass transfer is initiated in the Hertzsprung Gap and continues as the progenitor ascends the Red Giant Branch (denoted as RGB). Mass transfer ceases once its mass is reduced to $0.470 M_{\odot}$ and this stripped core evolves along the horizontal branch until it reaches the sdB phase. This phase persists for almost 80 Myr (red curve) before the hot subdwarf evolves through the sdO phase (magenta curve) for an additional 40 Myr. After H-burning near the surface is quenched, the star cools as an electron-degenerate white dwarf. The evolution of the companion star is also shown (solid green curve). Its initial mass is $1.6 M_{\odot}$ and undergoes a phase of rapid accretion before it reaches thermal equilibrium (after mass transfer has ceased) and evolves normally as a $1.9 M_{\odot}$ star. The star ascends the RGB and the evolution is halted once the star is large enough to fill its Roche lobe.

644 which the sdB's effective temperature was in the range
 645 of 27,000 and 35,000 K, its $\log g$ was between 5.4 to 5.8,
 646 and the final orbital period was between 30 and 80 d.
 647 These results are in general agreement with the inferred
 648 properties of TIC 5724661 shown in Table 4.

649 Figure 6 provides an example of how the predicted
 650 properties of the sdB depend on one of the dimensions
 651 of initial parameter space (i.e., $P_{\text{orb},0}$). For this ex-
 652 ample, the initial conditions for the primordial binary
 653 were $M_{1,0} = 3.25 M_{\odot}$, $M_{2,0} = 1.7 M_{\odot}$, with $\beta = 0.95$.
 654 Not surprisingly, increasing the initial period serves to

655 monotonically increase the final period. Increasing the
 656 initial period implies that the donor star (primary) will
 657 be more evolved at the onset of mass transfer. This also
 658 implies an increased mass, radius, and luminosity of the
 659 sdB, but lowers its eventual effective temperature.

660 The HR diagram for one of our representative cases
 661 that very closely reproduces the properties of the sdB in
 662 TIC 5724661 is shown in Figure 7. The sdB progenitor
 663 has a mass of $3.5 M_{\odot}$, with a Population I metallicity of
 664 $Z = 0.02$; the value of β was set equal to 0.9. Mass trans-
 665 fer commences in the Hertzsprung Gap and continues

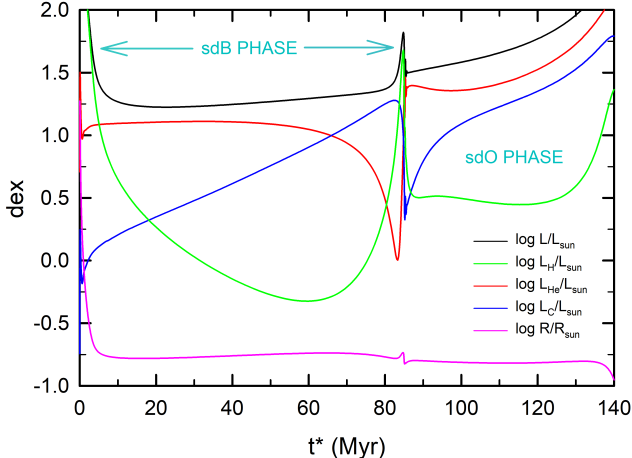


Figure 8. Evolution of the bolometric luminosity, individual nuclear luminosities, and radius of the representative hot subdwarf as a function of time. Note that $t^* = 0$ has been chosen to approximately coincide with the end of the RGB phase ($t^* = t - 211.25$ Myr). The sdB phase persists for nearly 80 Myr, during which time helium is continuously depleted due to triple- α burning and the fusion of carbon into oxygen (α -channel burning). Once a CO core forms and the subdwarf experiences He-shell flashes, it enters into a shorter-lived sdO phase. For each phase, the radius of the subdwarf is approximately constant.

666 as the progenitor ascends the Red Giant Branch. Mass
 667 transfer rates from the donor sometimes exceeded 10^{-5}
 668 M_{\odot}/yr , resulting in a large fraction of the giant donor’s
 669 hydrogen-rich envelope being lost rapidly to the inter-
 670 stellar medium. Mass transfer ceases once the highly
 671 mass-depleted envelope collapses and no longer fills its
 672 Roche lobe. After this happens, the primary is essen-
 673 tially a hot helium core of mass $0.470 M_{\odot}$, and it con-
 674 tracts very rapidly (in $\sim 3 \times 10^5$ yr) along the horizon-
 675 tal branch before entering the long-lived sdB phase (~ 100
 676 Myr); the sdB phase is denoted by the red portion of
 677 the evolutionary track in Figure 7.

678 We define this phase to extend from the point at which
 679 helium burning has increased the carbon mass fraction
 680 at the star’s center by 1% above its primordial value to
 681 the point when a (convective) CO-rich core first emerges.
 682 It is at this juncture that late-stage He flashes occur and
 683 persist briefly before the hot subdwarf enters the sdO
 684 phase (the magenta curve). During this stage, the CO
 685 core can grow substantially in mass as the result of He-
 686 burning in a shell surrounding the core. Once the CO
 687 core has grown to reach about 95% of the total mass,
 688 the radius of the hot subdwarf contracts rapidly – sig-
 689 naling the termination of the sdO phase. Subsequently,
 690 the thin H-rich layer near the surface can be compressed

691 and concomitantly heated as a result of the envelope’s
 692 rapid contraction. This temperature increase is often
 693 high enough for the star to undergo one or more cycles
 694 of H-shell flashes (see, e.g., Nelson et al. 2004, and ref-
 695 erences therein). Once the H-burning is quenched, the
 696 star descends onto the white dwarf cooling track.

697 The solid green curve in Figure 7 shows the evolution
 698 of the secondary star (i.e., the accretor). Its initial mass
 699 is $1.6 M_{\odot}$, and it undergoes a phase of rapid accretion
 700 before reaching thermal equilibrium (after mass accre-
 701 tion has ceased). It reaches a maximum mass of 1.9
 702 M_{\odot} and evolves to become a subgiant before ascend-
 703 ing the RGB. MESA halts the evolution once the star fills its
 704 Roche lobe. If we continued to follow the evolution, we
 705 would see a subsequent phase of common-envelope evo-
 706 lution resulting in the formation of a double-degenerate
 707 binary. The expected end product would be a $0.47 M_{\odot}$
 708 white dwarf (the sdB component) in close orbit with a
 709 lower mass helium white dwarf (the core of the giant).

710 Figure 8 provides more detail with respect to the sdB
 711 and sdO evolutionary phases. It shows the temporal
 712 evolution of the nuclear luminosities from the H-, He-,
 713 and C-burning channels, and the evolution of the sur-
 714 face luminosity⁷ and radius. The high luminosities seen
 715 near $t^* = 0$ ($\equiv t - 211.25$ Myr) arise from the evolu-
 716 tion of the primary star while it is a red giant. After the star
 717 settles into the sdB phase, its radius remains approxi-
 718 mately constant for ~ 78 Myr. Initially, He-burning ac-
 719 counts for most of the luminosity, but as more and more
 720 carbon is created, α -channel capture occurs, converting
 721 some of the carbon into oxygen. As both the luminosity
 722 and radius approach a local maximum, a convective core
 723 ($\approx 0.1 M_{\odot}$) of CO is formed, and the hot subdwarf ther-
 724 mally relaxes, leading to a brief phase of He-shell flashes.
 725 The subdwarf subsequently enters the sdO phase, during
 726 which time the radius is reasonably constant over ≈ 40
 727 Myr. From a theoretical perspective, we can think of the
 728 sdB and sdO phases as being long-lasting (> 10 Myr)
 729 and quasi-quiescent. The hallmark of the sdB phase is
 730 He-burning in the core. On the other hand, for the sdO
 731 phase, He-burning primarily occurs in a shell surround-
 732 ing the CO core. According to conventional wisdom,
 733 T_{eff} is lower for sdB stars than for sdO stars. Figure
 734 7 shows this holds for our representative case, but this
 735 need not always be true (Senhadji 2019).

736 Our models show that the mass of the A star compan-
 737 ion (i.e., the secondary) could lie in the range of ≈ 1.8
 738 to $1.9 M_{\odot}$. The main reason that the secondary masses

⁷ Note that the sum of the nuclear luminosities may not equate to the surface luminosity. This difference is due to the gravothermal luminosity, whose magnitude is not shown.

are so large is that: (i) the initial mass ratio ($M_{2,0}/M_{1,0}$) must be sufficiently high at the onset of mass transfer ($\gtrsim 0.4$) to avoid dynamical instability (otherwise, this could lead to a merger); and, (ii) $M_{1,0}$ must be $\gtrsim 3M_{\odot}$ so that the primary has a chance to initiate core He-burning after departing the Red Giant Branch.⁸ According to the main sequence models of Eker et al. 2015, a 1.9 M_{\odot} solar-metallicity model has a luminosity of about 15 L_{\odot} , $T_{\text{eff}} \approx 8000$ K, and $R \approx 2 R_{\odot}$. Its inferred spectral type is A2.5V. These values are in line with the inferred values shown in Table 4.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we present strong evidence for the true nature of TIC 5724661: a main-sequence A star with an inferred long-period sdBV_r star in orbit around it. First, we used radial velocity data to show that the putative hot subdwarf companion must have a period longer than a few tens of days. We then fit the spectral energy distribution using an MCMC code to constrain the parameters of the two stars in the system and provide fairly compelling evidence that this star is indeed an sdB star. To determine whether such sdBs can be produced using non-common-envelope formation channels, we modeled this system with MESA and demonstrated that we can readily produce such stars, as long as there is a high degree of non-conservative mass transfer. We expect that the current A star in TIC 5724661 could have accreted perhaps $\sim 10\%$ of the mass lost from the red giant progenitor of the sdB, implying a final mass of 1.9 M_{\odot} . This would ensure that this star, which exhibits δ Scuti pulsations, is an A star (A2.5V). A more limiting constraint on the minimum value of P_{orb} , perhaps via more spectroscopic observations, may serve to either strengthen or invalidate our evolutionary model.

Our work, therefore, adds more observational evidence for intermediate- and long-period binaries with an sdB component (for others, see, e.g., Vos et al. 2019, and references therein). Previously, many observed sdB binaries were found to have extremely short periods and were therefore thought to have passed through a common-envelope phase. Our work lends observational evidence to the fact that such common envelopes are not necessary to form sdB stars (see, e.g., Senhadji 2019 for a set of intermediate- to long-period sdB formation models), especially ones pulsating in high-frequency p modes.

Finally, this paper – which utilizes the new *TESS* 20-second cadence data – further emphasizes the power of *TESS* for precision asteroseismology. The continuous,

short-cadence nature of *TESS* data enables the detection and study of objects and pulsations that ground-based observatories would struggle to identify and characterize. As a result, we were able to identify and derive a precise frequency estimate for the sdB pulsation frequency, and recognize the presence of an unseen companion. Future work on this object will focus on long-term radial velocity monitoring of this star in order to better constrain the true period of this binary.

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Facilities: TESS, Gaia, UKST

Software: SPOC (Jenkins 2015), `numpy` (Harris et al. 2020), `matplotlib` (Hunter 2007), `scipy` (Virtanen et al. 2020), `astropy` (Astropy Collaboration et al. 2013, 2018), `pysynphot` (STScI Development Team 2013), `pandas` (pandas development team 2020; Wes McKinney 2010), `SPECTRUM` (Gray 1999)

⁸ If $M_{1,0} \lesssim 3M_{\odot}$, the primary will evolve into a helium white dwarf and never undergo an sdB phase for the range of initial conditions that we considered.

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