



Contribution ID: 37

Type: **Poster**

Partial deconfinement

Monday, 24 June 2019 17:00 (20 minutes)

We argue the existence of “partially deconfined phase” in some $SU(N)$ gauge theories, that is in between the confined and deconfined phases. We characterize this phase in terms of the Polyakov line phases and study examples of theories in which the partially deconfined phase exists. We find that this phase is closely related to the Gross-Witten-Wadia phase transition. The partially deconfined phase is conjectured to be the counterpart of the small black hole phase in the context of the gauge/string duality. We also discuss possible applications in this context.

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Session Classification: Poster session