

### Linux Kernel Scheduling and Split-LLC Architectures

Overview, Challenges, and Opportunities

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## 

### **Challenges of Split-LLC**

Cross LLC communication overhead in schbench

#### **Challenges with schbench**

- schbench at lower worker count shows a large amount of run-to-run variance based on how the tasks are spread around in the system.
- schbench prefers messenger and worker to be co-located on the same LLC with 99th %ile latencies degrading as the distance between the worker and messenger increases.
- schbench uses Futex to signal the waiting worker to wakeup, recording the time elapsed between signaling and the worker waking up.
   Wakeup from Futex doesn't have WF\_SYNC flag set hence, the scheduler will not be aggressive at consolidating the messenger and worker on the same LLC.

schbench worker and messenger on same LLC p99 latency (normalized) = 1.00



Figure: Variation in the tail latency reported by schbench based on placement of messenger and worker.



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schbench worker and messenger on different LLCs p99 latency (normalized) = 2.50

### **Variance in Tail Latencies Reported**

Surprising tale of consolidation

- We observe that the schbench messenger and worker are eventually co-located on the same LLC, not as a result of wakeup migration, but because of new-idle balance.
- During the runtime, there arises a scenario where a **kworker** thread triggered by schbench and the **schbench thread are placed on the same run queue**.
- The messenger, having just went to sleep, will trigger a new-idle balance on the CPU where it was running, and this will pull the schbench worker thread towards messenger's LLC as the kworker cannot be migrated.
- When the **messenger wakes up** later, it'll find the CPU it previously ran on busy and **will find an idle CPU on same LLC**, thus leading to **colocation of worker and messenger**.



Figure: Series of events resulting in schebench messenger-worker consolidation

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### **Challenges with Split-LLC**

Inconsistency in Stream after NUMA Imbalance Rework

#### **Challenges with Stream and Initial Placement**

- With the NUMA Imbalance rework by Mel Gorman, we start exploring LLCs in the non-local NUMA node when we have equivalent of one task per LLC in the local NUMA node.
- With the current logic, we can **optimally place the Stream threads out of the box** and get **same performance as case with pinning**.
- However, when there is an external task running in the system, the current logic will default to local LLC when there is a tie in number of idle CPUs between the local LLC and the idlest LLC thus leading to a pileup and performance degradation of 8-12% is observed between good runs and bad runs.
- Before the NUMA Imbalance rework, the Stream results were consistently poor as a result of the fact that we were never exploring the LLCs from the non-local NUMA node, and we always had at least one LLC with more than one Stream thread.



Figure: Two Stream treads being placed on the same LLC as a result of bias towards local LLC when there is a tie in number of idle CPUs in the local LLC and the idlest LLC



### How to detect if the Workloads are Bandwidth Intensive? (like Stream)

Lack of cached metrics to spot bandwidth-oriented task

- The bias toward local group when both the local group and the idlest group have same number of idle CPUs is unfavorable for workloads such as Stream.
- Going by the **utilization to break the tie** helped to an extent but was not foolproof because:
  - Kernel threads such as **kcompactd** bumped up the utilization, there by biasing towards the local group yet again.
  - Workloads such as hackbench which preferred consolidation regressed.
- Stream has a large memory footprint right from the moment the Stream threads are forked. Can metrics such as the memory footprint be used as a proxy for the cache busyness of the local group thereby facilitating better spread?

# of groups	Prefer Local Group	Choose Based on group_util	Difference (%)
1	1.00	1.02	-2%
2	1.00	0.99	+1%
4	1.00	1.00	0%
8	1.00	1.02	-2%
16	1.00	1.06	-6%

#### Hackbench – runtime (less is better)



Figure: Potential tie breaking metrics

### **Challenges with Split-LLC**

tbench: Thundering Herd Scenario

#### Thundering herd in tbench

- tbench tasks have a peculiar initial wakeup behavior where the tasks, **once placed** on the CPU **will wake up and soon go to sleep**.
- With the **initial wakeup path** depending on the **number of idle CPUs**, this pattern is not favorable as the task that goes to sleep soon after waking up will not change the number of idle CPUs for long.
- With only few tasks running in the system, the NUMA imbalance threshold is rarely crosses and most tasks will be placed on the local NUMA node.
- When the tasks wakeup later, they storm the small LLC and thus end up overloading it, later depending on the load balancer to reach an optimal state later.
- We've observed that with a more balanced initial placement, we can not only reduce the number of migrations required later to reach an optimal stable state, but also improve thench throughput in several different cases.



Figure: Illustration of tbench initial wakeup behavior leading to thundering herd scenario

### tbench Initial Placement Imbalance

Current Situation and Consequences

	Initial	LLC Distribution			Initial NUMA Distrib	ution	
+	Task Spawn Count	<pre>+   % of total task</pre>	Overloaded?	+   NUMA Node	+   Task Spawn Count	+   % of total task	+-
+	+4	+	++ 	0   1	23   105	17.96   <b>82.03</b>	
1	1	0.78		+	+	+	-+
2	2	1.56					
3	1	0.78					
4	3	2.34					
5	3	2.34			V		
6	2	1.56			Distribution ofter 100	00 Migrations	
7	7	5.46		++	+	+	-+
8	15	11.71		NUMA Node	Task Spawn Count	% of total task	
9	12	9.37		+	+   67	+	+- 
10	13	10.15			61	47.65	i
11	11	8.59		+	+	+	-+
12	2	1.56		Note: We've ob	oserved the number of <b>n</b>	nigrations come dow	'n
14	32	25.00	Overloaded	<b>by 85%</b> with	n a more optimal initial	<b>placement</b> and an	
15 +	20 +	<b>15.62</b>	Overloaded   ++	improvement of case and an im <b>128 client</b> c	t 20% in the reported b aprovement of 12% in re ase on a dual socket s	endwidth for 64 clier eported bandwidth for ystem featuring 3 <sup>rd</sup>	nt or

Generation EPYC processors

### Why do we face these challenges only on Split-LLC Architectures?

- Often, a unified LLC architecture will have a greater number of CPUs attached to same L3 cache compared to the Split-LLC offerings. With the current scheduler heuristics in the wakeup path, there is a higher probability that communicating tasks get consolidated onto CPUs belonging to same LLC.
- Crossing an LLC boundary in a unified LLC architecture almost always results in crossing the NUMAboundaries. With optimizations such as Auto NUMA in place, there is a greater chance for the task to be placed on the most optimal NUMA node and hence on the most optimal LLC.
- Thus, with the current scheduler heuristics, the *probability of getting the placement decision incorrect is lower on unified LLC architectures* as opposed to on the split LLC architectures.



<sup>9</sup> Linux Plumbers Conference 2022 - September 13, 2022

### **Potential solution**

What we have tried out



### **Userspace Hinting for Scheduler**

Defining expected scheduler behavior for the workload

### Peter Zijlstra's case for hints based on workload characteristics (https://lore.kernel.org/lkml/YVwnsrZWrnWHaogN@hirez.programming.kicks-ass.net)

I'm also thinking that adding more heuristics isn't going to improve the situation lots. For the past # of years people have been talking about extendng the task model for SCHED\_NORMAL, latency\_nice was one such proposal. If we really want to fix this proper, and not make a bigger mess of things, we should look at all these various workloads and identify \*what\* specifically they want and \*why\*. Once we have this enumerated, we can look at what exactly we can provide and how to structure the interface. The extention must be hint only, we should be free to completely ignore it. The things I can think of off the top of my head are: - tail latency; prepared to waste time to increase the odds of running sooner. Possible effect: have this task always do a full select idle sibling() scan. (there's also the anti case, which I'm not sure how to enumerate, basically they don't want select\_idle\_sibling(), just place the task wherever) - non-interactive; doesn't much care about wakeup latency; can suffer packing? - background; (implies non-interactive?) doesn't much care about completion time either, just cares about efficiency - interactive; cares much about wakeup-latency; cares less about throughput. - (energy) efficient; cares more about energy usage than performance

### **Userspace Hinting for Scheduler**

Exploration : RFC Patches at https://lore.kernel.org/all/20220910105326.1797-1-kprateek.nayak@amd.com/

- Task placements and movement decisions are taken by the scheduler only at the following points:
  - During fork() / exec()
  - During subsequent task wakeup.
  - During load balancing.
- We can have a hint for each decision point to influence task placement in a desired way.
- Hints explored for initial placement:
  - FORK\_AFFINE: Wakeup close to parent
  - **FORK\_SPREAD**: Spread regardless of NUMA imbalance threshold restriction. Use utilization as a tie breaking metric when number of idle CPUs in groups are same.
- Hints explored for subsequent wakeup:
  - WAKE\_AFFINE: Wakeup close to waker
  - WAKE\_HOLD: Wakeup on same LLC where the task previously ran
- Hints are ignored if the preferred LLC or the currently running LLCs are overloaded. Scheduler is aware if the task is on a preferred LLC and will try to avoid moving the elsewhere during load balancing if LLC has capacity.
- For a user consumable API these hints needs to be further abstracted and possibly be paired with other optimal tunable values that favor the characterized workload.



Figure: Low level hints that define task's wakeup behavior

### **Userspace Hinting : schbench**

#### ✓ schbench (correct hints) – tail latency (Less is better)

# of clients	Default (Normalized)	Hint: FORK_AFFINE (Normalized)	lmprov. (%)
1	1.00	0.86	+14%
2	1.00	0.91	+8%
4	1.00	0.90	+10%
8	1.00	0.77	+23%
16	1.00	0.86	+14%
32	1.00	0.92	+8%
64	1.00	0.97	+3%
128	1.00	0.96	+4%
256	1.00	1.03	-3%

### ✓ schbench (incorrect hints) – tail latency (Less is better)

# of clients	Default (Normalized)	Hint: FORK_SPREAD (Normalized)	lmprov. (%)
1	1.00	2.04	-104%
2	1.00	1.82	-82%
4	1.00	1.16	-16%
8	1.00	1.06	-6%
16	1.00	0.99	+1%
32	1.00	1.00	+0%
64	1.00	1.00	+0%
128	1.00	0.98	+2%
256	1.00	0.99	+1%

All benchmarks were run on a dual socket (2 x 64C/128T) system featuring 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation EPYC processors running modified kernel based on the baseline tip:sched/core at sched-core-2022-08-01

### **Userspace Hinting : Hackbench and tbench**

Hackbench (correct hints) – runtime (less is better)

# of clients	Default (Normalized)	Hint: FORK_AFFINE + WAKE_AFFINE (Normalized)	Difference (%)
1	1.00	0.97	+3%
2	1.00	0.98	+3%
4	1.00	0.98	+2%
8	1.00	0.96	+4%
16	1.00	0.96	+4%

✓ tbench (Correct Hint) – Bandwidth (More is better)

# of clients	Default (Normalized)	Hint: FORK_SPREAD (Normalized)	Difference (%)
1	1.00	0.98	-2%
2	1.00	0.97	-3%
4	1.00	0.99	-1%
8	1.00	1.03	+3%
16	1.00	1.08	+8%
32	1.00	1.18	+18%
64	1.00	1.24	+24%
128	1.00	1.12	+12%
256	1.00	1.00	0%

# of Default Hint: FORK SPREAD Difference (Normalized) clients (Normalized) (%) 1.00 1.03 -3% 1 2 1.00 1.06 -6% 1.00 0.98 4 +2% 1.00 0.98 8 +2% 16 1.00 0.98 +2%

#### Hackbench (incorrect hints) – runtime (less is better)

▲ tbench (Wrong Hint) – Bandwidth (More is better)

# of clients	Default (Normalized)	Hint: FORK_AFFINE (Normalized)	Difference (%)
1	1.00	1.00	0%
2	1.00	0.98	-2%
4	1.00	1.00	0%
8	1.00	0.93	-7%
16	1.00	0.95	-5%
32	1.00	0.93	-7%
64	1.00	0.78	-22%
128	1.00	0.64	-36%
256	1.00	0.45	-55%

All benchmarks were run on a dual socket (2 x 64C/128T) system featuring 3rd Generation EPYC processors

running modified kernel based on the baseline tip:sched/core at sched-core-2022-08-01

### **Discussion** What are your thoughts? What is the way ahead?



## AMD Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Linux Kernel Scheduler community for its continued efforts at optimizing the Linux Kernel Scheduler for Split-LLC Architectures and testing the changes on various hardware configuration out there.

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**Backup** Data and accounts to aid the discussion



### **Challenges from the Past**

Modelling the MC Domain

#### Why does it matter?

 Without a properly modelled MC domain, tasks that are waking up, would have been placed on an idle CPU without considering if the CPU is from a cache-hot LLC.

#### Solution

- With a MC domain modelled to represent a group of CPUs sharing the same L3, we can target the CPUs from a cache hot LLC during the task wakeup.
- The **CPU search space** for subsequent task wakeup has been **narrowed down** to relevant cache-hot CPUs.

#### **Side Effects**

 If a latency sensitive task, which doesn't benefit from cachehotness, targets an LLC with no idle CPUs, it'll be queued on a busy run queue until the load balancer is triggered and the task is migrated to an idle CPU. Without the restriction of an MC Domain, the task could have found an idle CPU on the system and wouldn't have been dependent on the load balancer to find an idle CPU to run on.



Previously: Entire Socket 128 Possible CPUs

Now: Cache Hot LLC 16 Possible CPUs

Figure: MC Modelling in EPYC Processors



### **Challenges from the Past**

Consequence of not having an MC Domain

#### hackbench - runtime (less is better)

# of clients	tip (Normalized)	tip + CONFIG_SCHED_MC = n (Normalized)	Improvement (%)
1	1.00	1.78	-78%
2	1.00	1.57	-57%
4	1.00	1.45	-45%
8	1.00	1.46	-46%
16	1.00	1.70	-70%

#### ✓ Stream – Bandwidth (more is better)

# of clients	tip (Normalized)	tip + CONFIG_SCHED_MC = n (Normalized)	Improvement (%)
1	1.00	0.57	-43%
2	1.00	0.55	-45%
4	1.00	0.50	-50%
8	1.00	0.51	-49%

### ▲ tbench – Bandwidth (More is better)

# of clients	tip (Normalized)	tip + CONFIG_SCHED_MC = n (Normalized)	Improvement (%)
1	1.00	0.77	-23%
2	1.00	0.82	-17%
4	1.00	0.91	-9%
8	1.00	0.90	-10%
16	1.00	0.93	-7%
32	1.00	0.94	-6%
64	1.00	1.02	+2%
128	1.00	1.25	+25%
256	1.00	1.11	+11%

All benchmarks were run on a dual socket (2 x 64C/128T) system featuring 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation EPYC processors running modified kernel based on the baseline tip:sched/core at sched-core-2022-08-01



Consequence of limiting search space

#### ▲ tbench – Bandwidth (More is better)

✓ schbench – tail latency (Less is better)

# of clients	tip (Normalized)	tip + CONFIG_SCHED_MC = n (Normalized)	Difference (%)	# of workers	tip (Normalized)	tip + CONFIG_SCHED_MC = n (Normalized)	Difference (%)
1	1.00	0.77	-23%	1	1.00	0.71	+29%
2	1.00	0.82	-17%	2	1.00	0.64	+36%
4	1.00	0.91	-9%	4	1.00	0.80	+20%
8	1.00	0.90	-10%	8	1.00	0.89	+11%
16	1.00	0.93	-7%	16	1.00	0.84	+16%
32	1.00	0.94	-6%	32	1.00	0.99	+1%
64	1.00	1.02	+2%	64	1.00	1.03	-3%
128	1.00	1.25	+25%	128	1.00	0.99	+1%
256	1.00	1.11	+11%	256	1.00	0.99	+1%

All benchmarks were run on a dual socket (2 x 64C/128T) system featuring 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation EPYC processors running modified kernel based on the baseline tip:sched/core at sched-core-2022-08-01

### Why schbench improves after disabling CONFIG\_SCHED\_MC?

- Following sched tracepoints can be enabled to observe the reason for the improvements:
  - sched\_wakeup\_new: To verify the LLCs where the tasks are initially places
  - sched\_waking: To verify if a migration is a wakeup migration or a load balancer migration
  - sched\_wakeup: To verify if a migration is a wakeup migration or a load balancer migration
  - sched\_migrate\_task: To track task movement through out the system
- Without the MC Domains to detect the split-LLC design, the NUMA imbalance value is now 16 for the dual socket system.
- More often than not, most schbench threads are placed on the same LLC



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### **Challenges from the Past**

NUMA Imbalance

#### Why does it matter?

- With a generous threshold of 25% of total CPUs in the • sched domain with **SD\_NUMA** flag set, a dual socket offering wouldn't have placed any task initially on an external NUMA node until the threshold is crossed.
- Bandwidth oriented workloads, such as **Stream**, took a . huge toll on performance due to the inevitable piling up of tasks on same LLC leading to cache contention.

#### Solution

With Mel's NUMA imbalance rework, the threshold for split-LLC architectures is set to number of LLCs in **NUMA nodes**, the Stream threads are placed ideally right from the start.

### **Side Effects**

- Communicating tasks are now spread across NUMA boundaries early on thus relying on subsequent wakeups for task consolidation.
- With lower imbalance threshold, the initial placement of • Stream threads is more sensitive to external tasks running in system and can cause run-to-run variance.



Previously: NUMA Imbalance = 64 (25% of the total CPUs in the sched domain)

NUMA Node 0

Currently: NUMA Imbalance = 8 (Number of LLCs in each of the NUMA Node)

We would like to thank Mel Gorman, and everyone involved in development, discussion, and testing of the NUMA Imbalance rework.

### **Challenges from the Past**

NUMA Imbalance Rework

Following are the results comparing the results of Stream on dual socket 2 x 64C/128T system featuring 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation AMD EPYC processors before and after Mel's rework:

Stream Kernel	Before Rework (Normalized)	After Rework (Normalized)	Difference (%)
Сору	1.00	1.33	+33%
Scale	1.00	1.70	+70%
Add	1.00	1.70	+70%
Triad	1.00	1.70	+70%

Stream (10 runs) (NPS2) – B	Bandwidth (more is better)
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Stream Kernel	Before Rework (Normalized)	After Rework (Normalized)	Difference (%)
Сору	1.00	2.67	+167%
Scale	1.00	3.46	+246%
Add	1.00	3.35	+235%
Triad	1.00	3.37	+237%

Stream (10 runs) (NPS1) – Bandwidth (more is better) Stream (100 runs) (NPS1) – Bandwidth (more is better)

Stream Kernel	Before Rework (Normalized)	After Rework (Normalized)	Difference (%)
Сору	1.00	1.70	+70%
Scale	1.00	1.69	+69%
Add	1.00	1.79	+79%
Triad	1.00	1.74	+74%

#### Stream (100 runs) (NPS2) – Bandwidth (more is better)

Stream Kernel	Before Rework (Normalized)	After Rework (Normalized)	Difference (%)
Сору	1.00	2.71	171%
Scale	1.00	2.47	147%
Add	1.00	2.67	167%
Triad	1.00	2.59	159%

### **Challenges from the Past**

Search latency in a busy LLC (Thank you Chen Yu!)

#### Why does it matter?

- In the absence of an idle core in an LLC, the Stop Idle
   Search algorithm previously used the average LLC scan cost and amount of time a CPU was idle to limit the search space for an idle CPU with a lower limit set to 4.
- The metric was not only inaccurate but also led to wasted search effort when LLC is fully loaded.

#### Solution

- With the **SIS\_UTIL** algorithm, we can better estimate how idle an LLC is based on its utilization and limit the search more accurately.
- The initially proposed linear function was not optimal for split-LLCs.
- Based on the feedback in the community, a quadratic function was adopted, which allowed for a larger search of the LLC space when LLC was less utilized and cut off the idle CPU search when LLC was overloaded.
- With SIS\_UTIL algorithm, the run-to-run variance observed in the the system is fully loaded disappeared and a stable 79% improvement was observed for the same.



We would like to thank Chen Yu, and everyone involved in development, discussion, and testing of the SIS\_UTIL algorithm.



### schbench: Tracing events leading to variation in tail latencies

Verifying the timeline

The described scenario can be confirmed by enabling the following schedtracepoints:

- **sched** wakeup new: To verify the LLCs where the tasks are initially places
- **sched\_waking**: To verify if a migration is a wakeup migration or a load balancer migration
- **sched** wakeup: To verify if a migration is a wakeup migration or a load balancer migration
- sched migrate task: To track task movement through out the system



### **MM Statistics to Influence Initial Task Placement**

Predicting Task Behavior from Memory Footprint

#### Initial Task Placement Strategy

- Use total number of pages allocated by a task as a proxy for the LLC utilization by the task.
- Mark an LLC as overloaded if it has no more idle CPUs or if the sum of memory footprint of the tasks running is the LLC is 4 times the size of the LLC.
- Use the **best-fit algorithm** to bias the task placement of incoming task towards an LLC with **the smallest memory-hole** that can **fulfil the memory requirement of the incoming task without overloading**.
- In case all LLCs are overloaded or cannot accommodate the memory footprint of the incoming task, use the current logic based on number of idle CPUs. In case of a tie between the number of idle CPUs, the total memory footprint of tasks running in the LLC is used as a tie-breaking metric.



Figure: Illustration of task placement strategy based on memory footprint of task running in an LLC

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### **MM Statistics for Initial Task Placement**

# of groups	Default Logic (Normalized)	MM Statistics Rework (Normalized)	Difference (%)
1	1.00	0.93	+6%
2	1.00	0.97	+3%
4	1.00	0.97	+3%
8	1.00	0.94	+6%
16	1.00	0.99	+1%

#### hackbench-runtime (less is better)

#### tbench – Bandwidth (More is better)

	# of clients	Default Logic (Normalized)	MM Statistics Rework (Normalized)	Difference (%)
<b>c</b>	1	1.00	1.01	+1%
s S	2	1.00	1.01	+1%
0	4	1.00	0.96	-4%
	8	1.00	1.02	+2%
у	16	1.00	1.04	+4%
6	32	1.00	1.01	+1%
al	64	1.00	1.02	+2%
	128	1.00	1.04	+4%
	256	1.00	0.76	-24% *

#### Stream – Run to Run Variance (less is better)

Stream Kernel	Default Logic (Normalized)	MM Statistics Rework (Normalized)	Difference (%)
Сору	1.00	0.38	-63%
Scale	1.00	0.40	-60%
Add	1.00	0.40	-60%
Triad	1.00	0.39	-61%

#### schbench - tail latency (Less is better)

# of workers	Default Logic (Normalized)	MM Statistics Rework (Normalized)	Difference (%)
1	1.00	0.69	+31%
2	1.00	0.57	+43%
4	1.00	0.66	+33%
8	1.00	0.70	+30%
16	1.00	0.78	+22%
32	1.00	0.88	+12%
64	1.00	0.94	+6%
128	1.00	0.99	+1%
256	1.00	0.97	+3%

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\* Note: tbench regresses at higher worker count as all tasks wake up on parent's LLC since we only account the memory footprint of running tasks and the tbench tasks sleep soon after the initial wakeup thus leading to overloading.

All benchmarks were run on a dual socket (2 x 64C/128T) system featuring

<sup>29</sup> Linux Plumbers Conference 2022 - September 13, 2022

3rd Generation EPYC processors running modified kernel based on the baseline tip:sched/core of 5.17.0-rc5

### **Userspace Hinting : schbench with Two Level Wakeup**

▲ schbench (correct hints) – tail latency (Less is better)

# of clients	Default (Normalized)	Hint:FORK_AFFINE + WAKE_HOLD + WAKE_WIDE (Normalized)	Difference (%)
1	1.00	0.81	+19%
2	1.00	0.96	+4%
4	1.00	1.00	+0%
8	1.00	0.91	+9%
16	1.00	0.95	+5%
32	1.00	1.00	+0%
64	1.00	0.93	+7%
128	1.00	0.97	+3%
256	1.00	0.96	+4%

All benchmarks were run on a dual socket (2 x 64C/128T) system featuring 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation EPYC processors running modified kernel based on the baseline tip:sched/core at sched-core-2022-08-01

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