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# Ranked teams to run for Corn Belt crown

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Three Class A state-ranked high school teams and Class AA power Pontiac should pump the quality of today's Corn Belt Conference Cross Country Meet to an all-time high.

On Saturday, Normal Community figures to battle for the Big 12 Conference cross country crown.

## Corn Belt Conference

Pontiac will be gunning for its eighth straight league title on the "White Barn" course north of Mahomet-Seymour High School today.

Action begins with the girls race at 4:30 p.m. The fresh-soph boys follow at 4:40 p.m. and the varsity boys at 5:05 p.m.

"It's going to be a close race," said Pontiac coach Keven Forney, whose team will have to fend off No. 4-ranked Mahomet-Seymour, No. 11 University High and No. 12 Clinton. "Our guys take this conference thing pretty personal."

Individual favorites include Mahomet-Seymour's Dan Nielsen, defending champion Craig Black

of Pontiac and Pontiac sophomore Marc Balota.

In the girls race, Pontiac and Olympia are the teams to beat although Clinton has received mention in a state poll. Pontiac freshman Michelle Myers, Clinton's Tiffany Burns and Olympia's Sheila Bowles are top contenders.

## Big 12 Conference

Competition begins at Urbana's Illini Meadows with a fresh-soph boys race at 9:30 a.m. and will be followed by an open race at 10 a.m., a girls varsity race at 10:30 a.m. and a boys varsity race at 11:15 a.m.

"I feel like we have a shot at it," said NCHS coach Tom Patten, whose boys team has not lost to top challengers Bloomington and Decatur MacArthur this season.

Rantoul's Enos Ross, who placed second at the Peoria Invitational, is the individual favorite.

In the girls race, Decatur MacArthur is the favorite followed by Champaign Centennial, NCHS and BHS.

Two-time champion Amy Bersig of Rantoul figures to be pushed by Centennial's Deb Knieja.