

return to state.

**FYI**

There is no admission charge for spectators who want to watch the state finals at various suburban Chicago sites. Mount Prospect is considered the host.

**PLAYER OF THE YEAR WATCH**

1. **Katarina Marjanovic, Urbana** — Sophomore has won 19 of 20 matches at No. 1 singles.
2. **Alyssa Robledo/Chelsey Keyes, Rantoul** — How do you separate the two senior doubles partners?
3. **Megan Strohoff, Centennial** — Junior has eclipsed 20 wins between singles and doubles.
4. **Mona Schlusing, Urbana** — Junior would be the top player at most schools.
5. **Lisa LeClerc, Danville** — Junior hitting peak as postseason approaches.

**BOYS' CROSS-COUNTRY**

**POSTSEASON AT A GLANCE**

Oct. 20 — 1A, 2A, 3A regionals  
 Oct. 27 — 1A, 2A, 3A sectionals  
 Nov. 3 — 1A, 2A, 3A state

**TEAMS TO WATCH**

1. **Paxton-Buckley-Loda** — Panthers seeking improvement over last year's fourth-place performance at 1A state.
2. **Mahomet-Seymour** — With the new three-class setup, the 2A Bulldogs could find themselves among the state's elite.
3. **Champaign Central** — Maroons on course to reach 2A state for the second time in past 16 years.
4. **Urbana Uni High** — Illinets pack well but will need to cut times en masse to escape the loaded 1A PBL Sectional.
5. **Monticello** — If Josh Clark can return from his foot injury, the 1A Sages could make a run at a strong state finish.

**FYI**

There are more schools in the state running cross-country (479) than ever before. Last year, the tally was 448 schools.

OF SEASON TRAINING

4. **Patrick Mazzocco, Champaign Central** — Junior dropped his time in four consecutive meets.
5. **Nick Brehm, Paxton-Buckley-Loda** — Senior and sophomore Tom Pecey a dynamic duo, often trading off as the team leader.

**GIRLS' CROSS-COUNTRY**

**POSTSEASON AT A GLANCE**

Oct. 20 — 1A, 2A, 3A regionals  
 Oct. 27 — 1A, 2A, 3A sectionals  
 Nov. 3 — 1A, 2A, 3A state

**TEAMS TO WATCH**

1. **Mahomet-Seymour** — With one senior among top seven, Bulldogs could start a long run as prominent players on the state scene.
2. **Urbana Uni High** — Illinets on path to eighth state-meet berth in the last 10 years.
3. **St. Joseph-Ogden** — Program returning to glory years when it was top 10 at state seven times in 12 years through 2000.
4. **Hoopston Area** — Competers have big meet experience, reaching state last year with an underclassman nucleus.
5. **St. Thomas More** — Senior veteran Cara Feeney leads an otherwise-youthful squad.

**FYI**

Last year at season's end, 11 area girls had 3-mile times under 20 minutes. This year, two weeks before regionals, 11 area girls already have bettered that mark.

**RUNNER OF THE YEAR WATCH**

1. **Amy Clawson, Mahomet-Seymour** — Junior the narrow leader for a strong pack of Bulldogs.
2. **Michelle Mehnert, Urbana Uni High** — Last year's recipient is still a front-runner as a senior.
3. **Hannah Hogan, St. Joseph-Ogden** — Senior has returned to the spotlight as one of the area's best.
4. **Cara Feeney, St. Thomas More** — Former honoree still on course as a senior.
5. **Affan Noon, Argenta-Oreana/Marion-Forsyth** — Senior standout is a state-meet veteran.

**GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL**

**POSTSEASON AT A GLANCE**

Oct. 23-25 — 1A, 2A regionals  
 Oct. 24-27 — 3A, 4A regionals  
 Nov. 1 — 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A sectionals  
 Nov. 5 — 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A super-sectionals  
 Nov. 9-10 — 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A state

3. **Monticello** — Sages have the ability to defend, pass and hit.
4. **St. Thomas More** — Don't be deceived by the record. Sabers, led by Brianna Jacobs, are a talented team.
5. **Bismarck-Henning** — Small squad but every-one contributes, which will be needed to survive a brutal postseason route.

**FYI**

The expansion from two to four classes means the regional semifinals and finals are played on the same night, and at sectionals, the semifinals and finals will take place on the same night. The potential for teams to travel great distances was cited as the main factor in this decision.

**PLAYER OF THE YEAR WATCH**

1. **Lucy Coleman, Monticello** — Senior a force at the net hitting and blocking.
2. **Hannah Detering, Monticello** — Eastern Illinois University recruit technically sound.
3. **Matti Nesbitt, Bismarck-Henning** — Slender senior hitter packs a powerful swing.
4. **Alexis Braghini, Centennial** — Junior middle hitter a big key to the Chargers' offense.
5. **Shelby Strang, Champaign Central** — Junior virtually unparalleled in area as a defensive player.

**GIRLS' SWIMMING**

**POSTSEASON AT A GLANCE**

Nov. 10 — Sectionals  
 Nov. 16-17 — State

**TEAMS TO WATCH**

1. **Urbana** — Tigers highly regarded on the state scene.
2. **Champaign Central** — Maroons have area Honor Roll leader in four of 12 events.
3. **Centennial** — Chargers' diving corps continues to excel.
4. **Danville** — Vikings' leaders are looking to make major drops this season.
5. **Urbana Uni High** — Not many schools the size of Uni (enrollment 247) offer the sport.

**FYI**

Area schools have had athletes place among the top four at state for six consecutive years in individual events.

seven annual area 5 mile.

5. **Notah Cetin, Centennial** — Tenth at state last year in diving as a sophomore.

**FOOTBALL**

**POSTSEASON AT A GLANCE**

Oct. 20 — Playoff pairings announced  
 Oct. 26 — First-round games  
 Nov. 23, 24 — State championship games at UI

**TEAMS TO WATCH**

1. **St. Joseph-Ogden** — If Spartans wind up in 2A, look out.
2. **Westville** — Tigers hit as hard as any team around.
3. **Mahomet-Seymour** — Bulldogs appear to have depth to overcome injuries.
4. **Tuscola** — Warriors' program solid in all phases.
5. **Villa Grove** — Blue Devils' massive line will make them a force in 1A.

**FYI**

Schlarman (1980-81) is the only area school to win back-to-back state titles in the sport, a feat Tuscola hopes to match.

**PLAYER OF THE YEAR WATCH**

1. **Caleb Pratt, Westville** — Tailback's resume soon will include career state records for rushing and scoring touchdowns.
2. **John Wienke, Tuscola** — Quarterback's resume included 32 straight regular season wins until last week and a scholarship to Michigan.
3. **Andrew Brewer, Mahomet-Seymour** — Tailback is a multisport star who is emerging as one of the area's finest all-around athletes.
4. **Mikel Leshoure, Centennial** — Tailback's resume includes big-time scholarship offers and 2006 Player of the Year honors.
5. **Zach Becker, St. Joseph-Ogden** — Impact player no longer overlooked on the Spartans' defense.

**Want to weigh in on the player of the Year discussion? E-mail us at sports@news-gazette.com or discuss it at www.news-gazette.com/forums.**