

Class 2A Boys State Cross Country Championship Preview



By [Tony Jones](#) / [Illinois XC 2014: State Championship Series Series](#) / November 7, 2014 9:00 AM

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Team pride will be among the elements this weekend the athletes, coaches, and fans will be holding on to (Steve Bulgarin photo)

Date: 11/8/14

Location: Detweiller Park; Peoria, IL

Course: 3.0 miles

Race Time: 12pm

Awards ceremony: 1pm

The qualifying teams: #1 Yorkville, #2 Mahomet-Seymour, #3 Lansing (Illiana Christian), #4 Vernon Hills, #5 Metamora, #7 Darien (Hinsdale South), #8 West Chicago (Wheaton Academy), #9 Springfield, #10 Crystal Lake Central, #12 Grayslake Central, #13 Crystal Lake (Prairie Ridge), #14 Bartonville (Limestone), #17 Danville, #18 Normal (University), #19 Chatham-Glenwood, #20 Charleston, Arlington Heights (St. Viator), Bensonville (Fenton), Chicago (Latin), Chicago Payton, Deerfield, Elmwood Park, Glen Ellyn (Glenbard South), Peoria (Notre Dame), Springfield (Sacred Heart-Griffin), Wheaton (St. Francis)

Let's meet the key teams:

Yorkville

Head Coach: Chris Muth

2013 state finish: State champion

Pre-season ranking: #1

Final regular season ranking: #1

Probable starting line-up: Jake Hoffert (Sr.), Luke Hoffert (Sr.), Trevor Wills (Jr.), Jake Farrantello (Jr.), Zack Price (Fr.), Cody Hornyak (Jr.), Alex Nauman (So.)

Road to state: Woodstock Regional- 1st, Maple Park (Kaneland) Sectional- 1st

Outlook: The defending state champions are not going to have it easy on Saturday. In fact, they are going to be in for a dog fight with several teams. Thankfully they have the Hoffert teams to lean heavy on. Jake and Luke are sure to finish 1-2 and that in itself will take care of itself. Trevor Wills was within 24 seconds or so of the twins. He is now a formable #3 runner. Coach Muth is optimistic as well: "Last year we were predicted to place 4th by almost everyone, had a great race and ended up winning. If they run their best race, I will be happy with however they finish. At the end of the day we can only run the best we can and we see how we stack up after the points are tallied. Illiana will be tough with their top 4 runners, Mahomet has a great pack of 5 runners that run close so they will be tough to beat."

Mahomet-Seymour

Head Coach: Neal Garrison

2013 state finish: 15th

Pre-season ranking: #6

Final regular season ranking: #2

Probable starting line-up: Alex Keeble (Jr.), William Wolf (Sr.), Jack Hyde (Jr.), Andrew Walmer (So.), Riley Fortune (Fr.), Brian Butcher (So.), Trevor Hanlon (Sr.)

Road to state: Normal (University)- 1st, East Peoria Sectional- 1st

Outlook: This squad may very well be the team to beat overall because of its front runner Alex Keeble and depth down to the seventh man. If you recall the Peoria Notre Dame Invite, the Bulldogs ran well in finishing second in a deep field littered with top notched 3A competition. Still, coach Garrison is not taking anything for granted. "Last year we were ranked 2nd in State most of the year and even won our sectional," said a guarded Garrison. "In the end we placed 15th at State. So we aren't taking anything for granted."

Lansing (Illiana Christian)

Head Coach: Jim Piaskowy

2013 state finish: State runner-up

Pre-season ranking: #2

Final regular season ranking: #3

Probable starting line-up: Nick Fiene (Sr.), Colin DeYoung (Jr.), Nick Wondaal (Jr.), Tom McGuire (Sr.), Derek Van Prooyen (Fr.), Ryan Koontz (So.), Austin Ohm (Fr.), or Jacob Thompson (So.)

Road to state: Illiana Christian Regional- 1st, Wheaton Academy Sectional- 1st

Outlook: Depth at the top of the heap will legitimize the field with this squad. The Vikings were favorites last year at this time but finished second. Maybe being under the radar may actually assist them when you consider defending champion Yorkville and then Mahomet-Seymour garnering all of the attention. Illiana has an experienced bunch back led by Nick Fiene who won the Wheaton Academy Sectional. He will be flanked closely by Colin DeYoung and Nick Wondaal. This is a team that can cancel out Yorkville on three runners, but it will come down to the fifth man. Whoever wins that battle will most likely be the state champion.

Vernon Hills

Head Coach: Mark Whitney

2013 state finish: 3rd

Pre-season ranking: #9

Final regular season ranking: #4

Probable starting line-up: Shane Williamson (So.), Tyler Smith (Sr.), Rob Williams (Sr.), Trevor Moyers (Jr.), Tim Krashevsky (So.), Alex Geier (Jr.), Caleb Ju (Jr.)

Road to state: Woodstock Regional- 2nd, Maple Park (Kaneland) Sectional- 2nd

Outlook: Can the Cougars get a repeat performance from a year ago when they put four scorers in the top 30? That may be too much to be asked from a team that graduated some firepower (Kyle Whitney). But Shane Williamson, Tyler Smith, and Rob Williams are back. They will get it done when the time comes.

Metamora

Head Coach: Gene Jones

2013 state finish: 6th

Pre-season ranking: #4

Final regular season ranking: #5

Probable starting line-up: Jake Gillum (So.), Matt Wipfler (Sr.), John Mangold (Sr.), Keaton McClure (Sr.), Matt Crotteau (Jr.), Nick Koval (Fr.), Seth Gunter (Jr.)

Road to state: Normal (University) Regional- 2nd, East Peoria Sectional- 3rd

Outlook:

Darien (Hinsdale South)

Head Coach: Jim Dickerson

2013 state finish: None

Pre-season ranking: #16

Final regular season ranking: #7

Probable starting line-up: Charlie Nodus (Jr.), Roman Drabchuk (Jr.), Vicente Perez (Sr.), Joe Eibert (Sr.), Tristan Ramirez (Jr.), Chris Joseph (So.), Trevor Schauer (Fr.)

Road to state: Aurora (Rosary) Regional- 1st, West Chicago (Wheaton Academy) Sectional- 2nd

Outlook: Coach Dickerson has transformed a dormant team into a contender for top 5-10 status after some impressive performances this season. The Hornets are led by the steady Charlie Nodus who can front run with the best of them. He will have two steady mates in Roman Drabchuk and Vicente Perez to lean on in the clutch. The Hornets are ironically built in the same mode as 3A power Neuqua Valley. Maybe that is because coach Dickerson is a disciple of vaulted coach Paul Vandersteen. That's ok because in a few years Hinsdale South will be a team that everyone is going to want to duplicate.

West Chicago (Wheaton Academy)

Head Coach: Chris Felinski & Jim Spivey

2013 state finish: 10th

Pre-season ranking: #3

Final regular season ranking: #8

Probable starting line-up: Jacob Robleski (Jr.), Jonah Jones (So.), Brandon Lach (Sr.), Mitchell Smith (Jr.), Chris Jones (Sr.), Jimmy Ridge (So.), Jeffrey Ridge (Fr.)

Road to state: Aurora (Rosary)- 2nd, West Chicago (Wheaton Academy) Sectional- 3rd

Outlook: The Warriors have been staying afloat this season with a solid three runners in Jacob Robleski, Jonah Jones, and Brandon Lach. The #4 and #5 have been timely though. But it is hard to tell really how good this team can be. We all will know on Saturday.

Springfield

Head Coach: Dan Devlin

2013 state finish: 9th

Pre-season ranking: #11

Final regular season ranking: #9

Probable starting line-up: Heath Warren (Jr.), Logan Besalke (Jr.), Mike Neposchlan (Sr.), Eric Wise (Sr.), JD Kropid (Jr.), Reece Koke (So.), Evan Northrup (Jr.)

Road to state: Jacksonville Regional- 1st, Decatur (MacArthur) Sectional- 1st

Outlook: Does an easy sectional winner make a team a candidate for big success at state? It should for Springfield who produced four runners under 16:00 and a 32 second split. If things can stay the same on Saturday, the Senators could put pressure on a few teams fighting for top 5 status. Heath Warren is the key runner for his team.

Crystal Lake Central

Head Coach: Bill Eschman

2013 state finish: 7th

Pre-season ranking: #15

Final regular season ranking: #10

Probable starting line-up: Cole Barkocy (So.), Weston Sterchi (So.), Steven Hillier (Jr.), Ryan Bush (Sr.), Brandon Tomasello (So.), Tyler Tomasello (So.), Jake Cannizzo (Sr.)

Road to state: Woodstock Regional- 3rd, Maple Park (Kaneland) Sectional- 4th

Outlook: Two youngsters in Cole Barkocy and Weston Sterchi have emerged and led this team in the post-season. The Tigers may be a year away from really contending for a state trophy and more. But in the meantime, a good goal would be course gaining experience and pushing some of the favorites to the max. Take a chance see what they have in the tank. Top 10 status is definitely written all over the Tigers.

Grayslake Central

Head Coach: James Centella

2013 state finish: 17th

Pre-season ranking: #12

Final regular season ranking: #12

Probable starting line-up: Jack Aho (So.), Max Brunk (Sr.), Jack Battaglia (Jr.), John Girmscheid (Jr.), Eli Minsky (Fr.), Danny Vincent (Jr.), Suneed Ahmed (Sr.)

Road to state: Antioch Regional- 1st, Maple Park (Kaneland) Sectional- 3rd

Outlook: Jack Aho is destined to be a star in the 2A ranks over the next two years. In the meantime, he and his teammates will be looking to finish in the top 10. The split on four runners is 45 seconds but the #5 has been a little distant. If they can get him under 1:00 then the team is ready for serious business.

Crystal Lake (Prairie Ridge)

Head Coach: Judd Shutt

2013 state finish: 21st

Pre-season ranking: #10

Final regular season ranking: #13

Probable starting line-up: Filip Pajak (So.), Mitch Kazin (Sr.), Mike Ostrow (So.), Tyler Figgins (Jr.), Chris Berg (Sr.), David Tulke (So.), Scott Hearne (Sr.)

Road to state: Woodstock Regional- 4th, Maple Park (Kaneland) Sectional- 5th

Outlook: The Wolves will approach the state meet with a balance attack. At sectionals they got all seven runners in about 1:00. Filip Pajak has been the #1 runner but Mitch Kazin and Mike Ostrow can branch out and be the top guy.

Bartonville (Limestone)

Head Coach: Scott Dunham

2013 state finish: None

Pre-season ranking: None

Final regular season ranking: #14

Probable starting line-up: Matt Carr (Jr.), Thomas Thornton (Sr.), Tyler Hiserote (Jr.), Brody Williams (Sr.), Parker Herz (Jr.), Justin Reavley (Sr.), Slade Jewell (Sr.)

Road to state: Galesburg Regional- 1st, East Peoria Sectional- 4th

Outlook: The Rockets are a pretty unknown commodity despite coming from a decent cross country conference (Mid-Illini). Matt Carr and Thomas Thornton will take the lead in races. The top five have been under 1:00 in key contests. Don't be surprised if you see this team place above its final season ranking #14.

Danville

Head Coach: Todd Orvis

2013 state finish: None

Pre-season ranking: None

Final regular season ranking: #17

Probable starting line-up: Caleb Hummer (Sr.), Carl Way (Jr.), Jeremiah Cooley (Jr.), William Powell (So.), Tyler Huckelberry (So.), Skyler Huckleberry (Jr.), Josh King (Sr.)

Road to state: Danville Regional- 2nd, Decatur (MacArthur) Sectional- 2nd

Outlook: The last time Danville competed as a team at the state meet was 14 years ago. Caleb Hummer is the only person on his team to have run at the state meet. He should be among the top pack throughout the race. His teammates will have an eye opening experience at Detweiller

Normal (University)

Head Coach: Lester Hampton

2013 state finish: 14th

Pre-season ranking: #5

Final regular season ranking: #18

Probable starting line-up: Alexander Bruno (Sr.), Eli Hill (Sr.), Jack Franklin (So.), Andrew Walch (Sr.), Jared Schuckman (Fr.), Tanner Gillam (Fr.), Grayson Will (So.)

Road to state: Normal (University) Regional- 3rd, East Peoria Sectional- 2nd

Outlook: So who is coach Hampton fooling? He is the king of possum coaching. At one point during this season the Pioneers were not even ranked. They were ghost from the scene. Now they could be fighting for a top five spot in the final standings. Alexander Bruno and Eli Hill are the rocks of the team and have been steady whenever they are in the lineup. The emergence of Jack Franklin is a key runner not seen before. There is still a little gap at the closing end but Normal U High will run their best race of the season on Saturday.

Chatham-Glenwood

Head Coach: Mike Garber

2013 state finish: 12th

Pre-season ranking: #7

Final regular season ranking: #19

Probable starting line-up: Landon Skelly (Jr.), Jonathan Durr (Sr.), Paul Giganti (Jr.), Michael Rogers (Jr.), Jack Carnduff (So.), Sam Rapp (Jr.), Jakob Thornton (Sr.)

Road to state: Jacksonville Regional- 2nd, Decatur (MacArthur) Sectional- 4th

Outlook: Hopefully this team is not overvalued after predicting them as an outside title contender but after finishing fourth at sectionals the goal now for success would be finishing in the top 20. Landon Skelly is a top talent who has an opportunity to be an all-stater.

Charleston

Head Coach: Derrick Landrus

2013 state finish: None

Pre-season ranking: None

Final regular season ranking: #20

Probable starting line-up: Ross Osterday (Jr.), Colton Bell (Jr.), Kendall Oliver (Sr.), Joe McKirahan (Jr.), Jonah Moore (Sr.), Val Walker (Sr.), Clayton Redden (So.)

Road to state: Danville Regional- 4th, Decatur (MacArthur) Sectional- 3rd

Outlook: The Trojans are a real young team last year led by Ross Osterday. Still fairly young but had a big group of guys put in a lot work this summer; solid front three pack right around 16:00. The #4 guy at sectionals is just getting healthy he should realistically be in that pack.



The Hofferts are the ones to chase-

Everyone in Detweiller Park will be eyeballing the Hofferts Jake and Luke as soon as they emerge from the scrum. It will probably take a half-mile but they should be up in the front side by side pushing the pace. They could be joined by Alex Keeble, Caleb Hummer, Nick Fiene, Shane Williamson, Eryk Yunk (Jr., Belvidere North), and several others.

It will depend on the weather conditions if the overall times will be fast or strategic. One would like to think the winning time would be in the low 14:30 range with Jake Hoffert on top. It may take 15:30 to reach the top 25 based on projections. As many as 35 different guys can earn a medal on Saturday.

Happy running and good luck to all!