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State cross country primer



For The Pantagraph

Mahomet-Seymour High School's top-ranked cross country team is well represented at the front of most races as it was in the Corn Belt Conference Meet where Alex Keeble led followed by teammate Andrew Walmer, University High's Jack Franklin, and fellow Bulldogs Brian Butcher, Gabe Pommier, Jack Hyde, Ryan Hodge and Ben Craw.

2 hours ago • By [Randy Sharer](#)

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State cross country primer

Where: Peoria's Detweiller Park

Saturday start times: Class 1A girls – 9 a.m.; Class 1A boys – 10 a.m.; Class 2A girls – 11 a.m.; Class 2A boys – noon; Class 3A girls – 1 p.m.; Class 3A boys – 2 p.m.

Class 1A qualifiers

Central Catholic: In their previous state trips, the Saint boys were 14th in 2008 and fifth in 2006. In the sectional, No. 18-state ranked Central ran fourth ahead of No. 12 Pleasant Plains among others. That race saw Adam Schlenker finish eighth, a minute ahead of the team's No. 2 runner, but the next four Saints finished within 31 seconds of each other.

El Paso-Gridley: The No. 8-ranked Titan boys won their first sectional in school history by upsetting No. 3 Elmwood, 79-85. EPG is making its third consecutive state trip after placing 13th a year ago and 12th in 2013. The Titans are led by senior Hunter Cobbly, who finished a school

record 16th last year in 15:23. His lieutenant is junior Andy Layden, who was only seven seconds behind in the sectional where EPG's five-man split was 1:33. ... Representing the Titan girls will be freshman Cate Atkins, the third female qualifier in school history.

Eureka: Brett Charlton, who guided Eureka's boys to five state titles, has returned to the Hornets' coaching helm this season in a big way as they head back to state for the first time since running 14th in 2009. The No. 9-ranked Hornets had a 63-second five-man split while placing third in the sectional where junior Logan Ogg led the way in 13th. Also scoring were a senior, another junior and two freshmen. ... The No. 6-ranked Eureka girls are making their 15th state visit. Their best finish was second in 2007 and 1999. While placing fourth in the sectional, the Hornets put four girls under 21:02 led by freshman Emma Argo in 11th (19:09), but their fifth runner clocked 21:59.

Gardner-Dwight: Third in 2013 in 17:30 and second a year ago in 16:52, Daly Galloway will try again to catch fellow junior Anna Sophia Keller of Effingham St. Anthony, the two-time defending champion. Galloway is unbeaten against 1A foes this fall. Keller, unbeaten the past three seasons, hopes to become the first small-school girl to win three titles since Carthage's Katelyn Bastert won four from 2003 to 2006. ... For the boys, senior Michael Mankowski will make his state debut.

Illini Central: Last year, Emilio Rivera was the state's only freshman boy to qualify individually, but he is among seven sophomores to make it individually this year. He was 84th a year ago in 16:19.

Olympia: The Shelby Siltman-led Spartans are making their ninth state trip and first since placing ninth in 2011. A junior sectional champion, Siltman is joined in Olympia's top five by a sophomore and three freshmen. Siltman was 31st last year in 18:40, 13 seconds shy of a medal. The best finish in school history was Janelle Birky's fourth in 1996 and the best 3-mile time was Naomi Springer's 17:51 for fifth in 2012.

PBL: A first-time qualifier, senior Nick Porter is coached by Eureka native Dustin Franckey, the 1999 state champion. Porter took third in last spring's state 1,600.

Prairie Central: Sophomore Jacob Maquet's state berth marks the fourth straight year the Hawks have had a state entrant. He sped 17:01 at Peoria on Sept. 12.

Deer Creek-Mackinaw: Sophomore Gary Cates is his school's first state qualifier. He ran 16:07 at Peoria on Sept. 19.

Class 2A qualifiers

Mahomet-Seymour: Ranked No. 1 all season, the Bulldog boys are favored ahead of No. 2 Grayslake Central and No. 3 Yorkville, the two-time defending champion. A 14-time qualifier, Mahomet-Seymour won its first trophy last year while placing second. Of the 12 men Coach Neal Garrison could enter on Saturday, six are 2014 state returnees: senior Alex Keeble (4th, 14:49), junior Andrew Walmer (41st, 15:28), senior Jack Hyde (60th, 15:37), junior Ben Craw (67th, 15:41), junior Brian Butcher (69th, 15:42) and sophomore Riley Fortune (78th, 15:48). The No. 2 man in the sectional was junior Gabe Pommier. Keeble's best time at Peoria is a school record 14:36. ... Mahomet-Seymour's No. 15-ranked girls are making their 13th state trip. Their best finish was fourth in 2007. Four-time qualifier Lauren Whitehouse will look to improve on last year's eighth-place finish (17:42). She was 26th as a sophomore and 41st as a freshman. The best placing in school history was Amy Clawson's sixth (17:55) in 2008.

University High: The No. 5-ranked Pioneer boys, 10th a year ago, are making their 24th state trip with one of Coach Lester Hampton's youngest squads. The leader is sectional champion Jack Franklin, a junior who owns the school record at Peoria of 14:54. The No. 2 man is freshman Zach Wolford, last year's junior high state champion. Rounding out the top five in the sectional were sophomores Jared Schuckman and Tanner Gillam and senior Aidan Vaughn. The Pioneers had a 45-second gap between their third and fourth men in the sectional, a margin they hope to shrink. ... The lone U High representative in the girls race is four-time qualifier and two-time all-stater Shannan Supan. She ran 18:34 at Peoria on Oct. 3.