

NIKE CROSS NATIONALS – A LOOK AT THE “AT-LARGE” TEAMS – DYESTAT IL



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We will know who the teams that will be running at Portland for the Nike Cross Nationals by Saturday as three more NXR Qualifying meets as well as the California State Meet will take place. There will be only four teams for each gender that will advance along with each of the top two finishers in each of the NXR Qualifying Meets.

There will be some good teams that might not get the call on Saturday. At the same time, how can we tell? There have been some schools that have been ranked high and backed it up during the season. Some schools have not received that acknowledgement even though their performances have showed that they deserved to be in the top 30. There are some schools that I just scratch my head on why they are ranked so high. We have seen that weeding out process in the regional meet showing that the only ranking that count are at the beginning of December.

Here is a look at how I see the "At-large" bids heading into the final week of qualifying.

DyeStat November 10 Rankings: **BOYS** | **GIRLS**

Boys

1 – Conroe The Woodlands TX

This team gets the top spot this week after finishing third at the South Regional. This was coming after a dominating win the week before at the Texas 6A State Meet ahead of South Regional Winner Southlake Carroll. Woodlands was without their top runner William Hunsdale who was held out of the race due to illness. Their other runners were 20 points lower in speed rankings compared to the week before without Hunsdale. Without Hunsdale in the state meet, their top five speed ranking was 884.03. In the regional meet, it was at 864.53. They were ranked #5 in the last DyeStat National Ranking (11/10). It is hard to see the committee ignoring this team especially if Hunsdale will be available for Portland.

2 – Mahomet-Seymour IL

Finished third at the Midwest Regional after winning the Illinois 2A State Championship. This team should have been ranked after their state meet performance. In the **power merge for the Illinois State Meet**, they would have finished third behind NXN qualifiers Neuqua Valley and Downers Grove North. Mahomet-Seymour did easily beat ranked Solon OH and Fort Wayne Carroll in Terre Haute. They have the best team speed rating (882.77) out of all the third place regional teams. Their ranking overall would be eighth out of all the qualifiers and the at-large. They did finish second to Neuqua Valley (65-118)

at a meet at Detweiller Park in September. They did have six runners under 15 minutes for 3 miles at their conference meet. They are running hot at the right time coming out of a tough Midwest Regional. It is something that the committee will be looking for.

3 – LaGrange Lyons Township IL

This team was on the bubble a year ago after finishing third in their regional race. They are in the same predicament this year waiting for the call after finishing fourth in a fast Midwest Regional race. Their team speed ranking (888.30) is the highest of all the non-qualifying regional teams mainly due to Danny Kilrea's individual regional win. Lyons was able to finished fourth in their 3A state race and the regional race running with two injured runners. They will be back at full strength if they get to Portland. Even injured, they defeated Lake Zurich IL who defeated them at Illinois 3A State, and then ranked Solon OH and Fort Wayne Carroll IN a week ago at NXR Midwest. They were an at-large bid last year and then finished ninth at NXN. This team is just as good as the team from a year ago.

4 – Springville UT

Finished third at the NXR Southwest Regional. Could be a surprise qualifier to Nike Cross Nationals especially after finishing third at the Utah 4A State Meet 6 points behind Timpanogos. In last Saturday's Regional race, they finished 6 points ahead. They were 28th in the last DyeStat National Rankings (11/10). They finished ahead of #10 Olympus UT, #13 Palmer Ridge CO, #14 Timpanogos, and #26 Lone Peak. Then again, were these schools over ranked. Springville had a better speed ranking (882.16) than Mahomet-Seymour IL (878.0) and Lyons Township IL (875.0) did in their state meets. When it comes to regional speed rankings and even though Springville finished third, their speed ranking was 24 points lower than Lyons Township (888.3 – 864.0). In the final two race ranking average (State Regional), Springville averages fifth among at-large teams behind Woodlands TX, Lyons Township, Mahomet-Seymour, and Timpanogos. Since Timpanogos finished behind Springville last Saturday, Springville has the edge on the fourth spot.

Notes – I know American Fork is the top ranked team in the nation and Davis ran a great race to get the second qualifier spot in Arizona, I just think that Utah was just over ranked this season. I don't see 4 Utah schools will be in Portland. Three is a possibility but Springville needs for the other four races this weekend to run true to form. It looks like only 2 schools could get out of Southeast, 2 out of New York, and 2 out of Northeast. California could be interesting. Great Oak and Dana Hills are the top two teams in the state. If Claremont can be close to the two teams this weekend in their state race (along with the power merge), we could see 3 teams from California knocking out Springville. Illinois having 4 teams advance is a possibility. The form chart needs to hold this weekend for that to happen.

Girls

1 – Minooka IL

A big lock to make it to Portland after finishing third at the Midwest Regional as they placed three runners in the first fifteen in that race. Their team speed ranking (634.08) is the highest among all the at-large eligible teams by 16 ranking points. Out of all qualifiers and at-large eligible teams, that speed ranking

for regional meets is 6th overall. It is hard not to see this team not make it.

2 – Portland Sunset OR

This could be the second Oregon team to make the short trip to Nationals. They have also been consistent with a 618.03 ranking at regionals and 614.0 in their state race. Sunset was not ranked in the last DyeStat ranking and was ranked third in the overall Oregon power merge behind Regional qualifier Bend Summit.

3 – Yorkville IL

Finished fourth behind Minooka at the NXR Midwest Regional. The week before at the Illinois 3A State Meet, they finished second. It was not their best race of the year at Terre Haute as they had the fifth fastest speed ranking among at-large eligible teams. Their speed ranking average from their last two races (614.13) is third best behind Minooka and Sunset. They were within 2 points of National qualifier Naperville North in October at the Naperville Twilight meet. They were close to Naperville North again at the Illinois 3A State Meet. I would say they are a bubble team at this point. It will come down to what happens this coming weekend.

4 – Wayzata MN

Finished third at the Heartland Regional behind Minnesota teams US #7 Edina and US #11 Willmar. Wayzata was not among the top 30 in the 11/10 DyeStat Rankings. They have the third fastest regional speed ranking team total (611.30) among the at-large eligible teams. What will hurt them is that they did not make it out of their tough 6AA State Sectional race not qualifying for the 2A state meet. That will hurt their Portland chances.

Notes – We will see changes in this list Saturday night. The New York Regional has #1 Fayetteville-Manlius, #5 Saratoga Springs, and #10 North Rockland all good bets to make it to Portland. California's state meet is loaded with #3 Great Oak and #8 Davis Senior locks to make it to Portland. #14 Palos Verdes, #18 Claremont, and #19 Arcadia are other teams that are strong enough to make it into an at-large area. Minooka IL is basically a lock unless something dramatic happens this weekend. Sunset is close but will be on pins and needles on Saturday. It could be tough for Yorkville and Wayzata to make it in.