

## 2016 NXR MIDWEST REGIONAL PREVIEW - DYESTAT



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The dynamics have changed in the team races at this year's Nike Cross Midwest Regionals this Sunday on the Lavern Gibson Championship course in Terre Haute. Michigan schools made a presence a year ago with Northville finishing second in the Girls Championship race and qualifying for nationals. Their road to get there after that was a problem as they faced off against the rules of the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) that do not allow Michigan High School teams to compete in national competitions. After weeks of negotiations, Northville was allowed to

compete. The struggles of Northville from a year ago had its effects on this year's entries for the meet. There are some Michigan teams that are competing in the open races but none in the Championships races that will determine which teams will go to Portland for this year's National Meet on December 3.

Illinois teams could have a big presence in both races. Carmel IN had to wait for an at-large bid a year ago after years of finishing in the top two teams. They will be the favorites entering Sunday's race. Neuqua Valley IL is ranked #2 nationally after a strong win in the Illinois 3A Boys State Meet. They will be the favorites in the Boys Championship race but a number of Illinois schools will be chasing them along with Ohio D1 Champions Solon and Indiana State Champion Fort Wayne Carroll.

Here is a look at each of the championship races that will take place on Sunday.

## [Entries](#) | [Meet Homepage](#)

### Girls Championship Race – 1:30 PM EST

#### Teams

How good is Carmel IN this season? The Greyhounds dominated the Indiana State Meet two weeks ago scoring only 44 points. They did that with their normal #1 runner **Sarah Leinheiser** as the team's fifth runner. I don't think we will see Leinheiser in that position in this race as she could be one of the individual favorites. Carmel has strength up front with **Maddie Dalton**, **Christina Geisler**, and **Phoebe Bates** finishing within 10 seconds of each other at the state meet. They had a perfect score of 15 points in their semi-state race with only a 29 second split on their scorers. That type of race could make them tough to beat on Sunday.

The top three schools in the Illinois 3A State Meet should be the squads that will be challenging for the other automatic qualifying spot. It would not surprise me if 4 schools make it to Portland in this regional. Naperville North, Yorkville, and Minooka have all been ranked in DyeStat's top 30 National Rankings most of the season. Naperville North won the 3A title last Saturday with 3 all-state runners led by **Sarah Schmitt**. We could see her in the top 10 in this race. **Hannah Ricci** and **Alex Morris** were 23 seconds behind Schmitt last week and will need to be a little closer in this race. The split on their top five last week was 57 seconds. That needs to go under 50 seconds in order to secure the second spot.

Yorkville IL ran a good race last week in finishing second behind Naperville North. The Foxes could have a better race on Sunday to overtake Naperville North. **Nicole Greyer** was the team's first runner finishing 13 seconds behind North's Schmitt. The split for Yorkville last week was 46 seconds on their scorers. The field will be larger in this race. That type of split perhaps 5 seconds faster could get this team to Portland. Minooka IL has the fire power up front as they had four all-state runners (in the top 25) in the state race. **Emily Shelton** and **Mackenzie Callahan** could finish in the top ten. **Ashley Tutt** and **Vivian Van Eck** were within 8 seconds of each other and 24 seconds behind Shelton/Callahan. What hurt Minooka last week was that their split on their scorers was 110 seconds. That gap needs to come down to 84 seconds if this squad wants to finish in the top two teams.

Centerville OH won the regional title a year ago and could be in the mix again. The Ohio D1 champions had a 37 second split on their top five in winning last week led by **Grace Kilroy's** 19<sup>th</sup> place finish. What could hurt this team is that they do not have the front runners like they did a year ago in this race. The pack needs to move up in order to finish in the top five. Troy OH finished second in the D1 race and could surpass Centerville on Sunday. **Morgan Gigandet** and **Olivia Tyre** could finish in the top 30. Their split needs to come down in order to get into the top five. Fort Wayne Carroll IN and Downers Grove South IL are two other teams that we should watch that could finish among the first five teams.

## Individuals

This should be a fascinating race with any number of runners able to win this race. **India Johnson** (Hilliard Davidson OH) had a strong race in winning the Ohio D1 title a week ago by 7 seconds ahead of **Allison Guagenti** (Olentangy Orange OH). Both runners will be up front in this race. **Katelynne Hart** (Glenbard West HS IL) finished three seconds ahead of teammate **Lindsey Payne** in last Saturday's Illinois 3A Finals. I expect both runners to be in the front on Sunday. **Maggie Farrell** (Battle Creek Lakeview MI) has showed dramatic improvement in the past year. She finished 97<sup>th</sup> in the Michigan D1 State meet in 2015. She improved her time by over two minutes in winning the D1 championship last Saturday. She could push Hart and Payne in this race.

One runner to keep an eye on is **Anna Sophia Keller** (St. Anthony IL). The 4 time IL 1A State champion was under the weather in last Saturday's race, but still managed to win by 48 seconds. She also had the second fastest time on the course in the meet only 1 second behind that of Hart. It would not surprise me to see her finish in the top five. **Sarah Leinheiser** will lead the Carmel pack and could be in the top ten. **Mikayla Reed** (Washington MO) and **Abby Green** (Fort Wayne Carroll IN) along with **Emily Shelton** and **Mackenzie Callahan** (Minooka HS) will be challenging for spots in the top ten.

## Boys Championship Race – 2:00 PM EST

### Teams

Neuqua Valley IL should be the team to beat in this race especially after the dominating performance that they had in winning the Illinois 3A State title last Saturday. This is a different team than they were a year ago when the Wildcats finished second in Terre Haute. The team time improved 19 seconds compared from the 2015 team to the 2016 team. Their team time was tied for the sixth best ever in the Illinois State Meet. Their average in this race last year was 15:52. Their pack running will get them a faster team time led by **Jackson Jett** and **Zach Kinne** along with **Jake McEaney** and **Matt Milostan**. The split on their scorers last week was 23 seconds. We could see a split similar to that on Sunday. That will get them the regional title.

Downers Grove North IL is a good bet to be in the second spot. Just like Neuqua Valley, their split on the top five at last week's Illinois State Meet was 23 seconds. **Alec Danner** and **Jacob Ridderhoff** have been the top two runners at the end of the year. For most of the season, the gap on their scorers has been under 20 seconds. That could put them in the second spot. The team that everyone will keep an eye on is Mahomet-Seymour IL. The Bulldogs were dominant in easily winning the Illinois 2A State Meet with all 7 of their runners in the top 27. This is a team that could challenge for one of the qualifying spots. Earlier in the year in their conference meet, Mahomet had 6 runners under 15 minutes for 3 miles. **Andrew Walmer** leads this team that also had a 23 second split on their scorers. In a power merge that was done with all three of the Illinois state meet races, Mahomet-Seymour would have finished third. Let's see how they finish on Sunday's race running face to face against those two teams.

Lake Zurich IL will have **Brian Griffith** and **Matt Pereira** in the top ten. The team finished third at state last week with their normal #3 runner **Kyle Griffith** farther back than normal. I could see this squad getting in the top three but will need Kyle Griffith closer to his brother and the team having a split under 60 seconds. Lyons Township IL will also have that firepower up front led by **Danny Kilrea** and **Vince Zona**. This team has the experience making it to Portland last year finishing ninth in that race. They did not have their best race of the year last week. A split of 56 seconds on their top five could put them among the top three teams.

Solon OH bounced back from a shaky regional race with great one last week to win the Ohio D1 State Championship. **Danny Cohen** has been running closer to **Joe Riordan** at the close of the year. The two were within six seconds of each other at last week's state meet. We could see both finish in the top 25. The split on their top five in

that race was 46 seconds. That needs to be lowered by 7 seconds to challenge those Illinois teams. Fort Wayne Carroll IN was somewhat of a surprise in winning the Indiana State Championship ahead of Carmel IN. The key for this team is their pack running. Sophomore **Cole Powers** led this team finishing 10<sup>th</sup> overall. The split on their scorers was only 25 seconds. The team average for the group was 16:19 at state. That kind of average a year ago in this meet would have put you in tenth place. A faster pace will get them near the top five.

## Individual Race

The field is loaded. **Soren Knudsen** (Minooka HS IL) won the Illinois 3A title with one of the fastest times ever on the Detweiller Park course (14:02). **Danny Kilrea** (Lyons Township HS IL) finished 6 seconds back in that race and will be in the front on Sunday along with teammate **Vince Zona**. **Dylan Jacobs** (Sandburg HS IL) missed going to Portland last year with his teammates due to injury. He is running hot of late running 14:10 last week at state. **Jack Aho** (Grayslake Central HS) and **Charlie Kern** (York HS IL) both ran 14:12 at state. Both runners qualified for Portland a year ago and will look to make a repeat trip. **Brian Griffith** (Lake Zurich HS) was two seconds behind Kern last Saturday and should be among the front group.

**Curtis Eckstein** (Oldenburg Academy IN) has been impressive all year including running 15:13 to win the Indiana State Championships two weeks ago by 27 seconds ahead of his closest competition. He is one runner that we should see towards the front of the pack. **Dustin Horter** (Lakota East HS OH) had a strong junior season which culminated in winning the Ohio D1 State title last weekend by 6 seconds ahead of **Matt Scrape** (Pickerington Central HS OH). The two should be battling for top five spots in this race along with **Conant Smith** (Middletown OH) and **CJ Ambrosio** (St. Ignatius HS OH) being runners that could finish near the top ten.

**Austin Hindman** (Lafayette HS MO) looked strong in winning the Missouri Class 4 Championship last Saturday running 15:22. It would not surprise me to see him in the top ten. **Victor Mugeche** (Blue Springs HS MO) finished 16 seconds behind Hindman in that race and could be a threat to finish in the top 15. **Matt Pereira** (Lake Zurich HS IL) and **Wyatt McIntyre** (Athens IL) are two other runners to watch among the top 15.

The conditions look favorable on Sunday with temperatures in the upper 50's with no rain. We could see a winning time of under 15 minutes on this course.