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Who Is #1: Jack Aho Is The Top Choice Boys

ILLINOIS: WHO IS #1

Raymond Lewis

Oct 23, 2016

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Jack Aho has cleared himself from many fields this season (Itai Epstein photo)

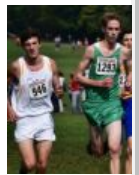
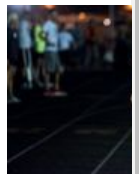
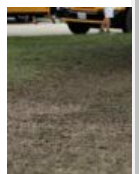
The most often used phrase in cross country is 'it's not about the times.' Well sometimes it is. How else are we to know to judge our sport. If it's not about time then why do we have the state meet at the "Indy 500 Speedway" known as Detweiller Park? In this case if not for one time before the start of the state championship series we wanted to have some fun and produce our own subjective individual rankings.

1. **Jack Aho, Sr., Grayslake (Central)**

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title contenders in 3A. This past weekend, he ran 14:14 in a race where only 6 runners even broken 16 minutes. Aho is surely looking beyond the state meet this year to national competition.

2. **Jack Franklin, Sr., Normal (University)**

Normal U-High has emerged as the #2 team in the state by a wide margin, a title achieved with the help of Jack Franklin's frontrunning. The Pioneers have been Peoria often this year, and Franklin has made his mark by finishing in the top 5 of each race and making significant strides each race (15:25 to 14:57 to 14:31). Franklin's lone win came at ACC's Charger Classic, but expect a couple more wins in regional and sectional competition before chasing Jack Aho for the team title.

3. **Matt Aho, Sr., Grayslake (Central)**

Aho is certainly the best #2 runner in 2A and his improvement last year was a major reason the Rams walked away with a team title--yet Matt is much better than he was in 2015. His most impressive performance may have been at Palatine, where he turned in a top 10 finish. Aho finished second at NLCC behind his triplet brother and could run his way into a 1-2 performance for Central at state.

4. **Ben Flowers, Sr., Jerseyville (Jersey)**

Flowers has run early and often, winning over 10 races in the past two seasons for Jersey and turning in impressive performances at Peoria, including a 2nd place finish at First to the Finish ahead of Jack Franklin, and a 14:45 at Peoria Central. He will defend his regional and sectional titles from last year, and looks sure to improve upon his 13th place at state last year.

5. **Filip Pajak, Sr., Crystal Lake (Prairie Ridge)**

Pajak has not had the same firepower in large invitational wins as Northern IL rival Jack Aho has, but Pajak IS a 2-time cross country all-stater and did finish 14th at Palatine. He has victories at the Racine Horlick Rebel Invite and St. Charles North, and finished 3rd at the FVC conference champs.

6. **Jacob Gebhardt, Jr., Sterling (H.S.)**

Gebhardt's 14:46 was good enough to win the small school race at the Peoria Central invite by nine seconds. He has made wide strides since last year, when he ran 15:41 for 59th at the state meet.

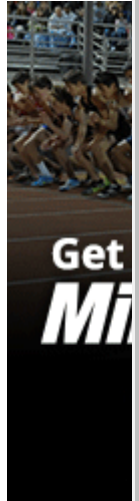
7. **Andrew Walmer, Sr., Mahomet (M.-Seymour)**

Walmer is the pack leader for nationally ranked Mahomet-Seymour. He has run 15:05 for 3 full miles and has won three races (Lee Halberg, Charleston, East Peoria).

8. **Matthew Richtman, Jr., Kaneland**

Richtman added a NIB-12 conference title to individual wins at Kaneland Eddington and the Harvest Fall Classic, as well as 5th place at First to the Finish. Richtman's sister Rachel is also ranked in the "Who's #1 list" at #23.

9. **Jake Gillum, Sr., Metamora**





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10. Jared Schuckman, Jr., Normal (University)

Schuckman is the best #2 runner in the state outside of Matthew Aho. His best on the year is 14:52 at the Peoria Invite on October 1 and he backed up teammate Jack Franklin with top 5 performances at the Corn Belt conference champs and at the ACC Charger Classic.

11. Zach Young, Sr., Marion

Good season so far with top 5 finishes in every one of them; clocked 15:05 at the Peoria Invite.

12. Stephen Poorten, Jr., Sycamore

2nd at the NIB championship; won the Wheaton Academy Invite

13. Atlantis Green, Sr., Carbondale (H.S.)

5th at Peoria Invite is top mark on resume

14. Jeremy Wallace, Sr., Lake Villa (Lakes)

Career best 15:09 is best performance at the Peoria Invite; top 20 finishes in all races this season

15. Jonathan Landis, Sr., Sterling (H.S.)

Top 15 performances in race this season; 4th place at NIB-12 is his performance thus far along with a 15:09 best

16. Riley Fortune, Jr., Mahomet (M.-Seymour)

14:49 will be a performance to watch for later in season

17. Michael Church, Sr., East Peoria

The 95th place finish at Richard Spring Invite turned out to be a real bad race; dropped almost a minute at second Detweiller performance with a solid 15:12.

18. Gabe Pommier, Sr., Mahomet (M.-Seymour)

Cornbelt champion at 14:47 who is one the key factors in the Mahomet-Seymour express train

19. Ryan Hodge, Jr., Mahomet (M.-Seymour)

Ran a few performances like a 28th place finish at PND; 14:58 is personal best

20. Eli Minsky, Jr., Grayslake (Central)

Has held down the all important #3 spot for one of the state's top team; runs behind twins Jack and Matt Aho everyday in practice is a tremendous plus.

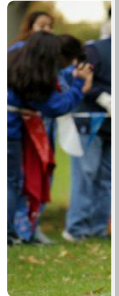
21. Patrick Bruch, Sr., Peoria (Notre Dame)

Rebounded from a 53rd place at the Richard Spring Invite to run 15:14 at the Peoria Invite

22. Augie Darrow, Sr., Rock Island (Alleman)

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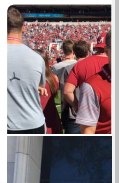
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23. **Cole Barkocy**, Sr., Crystal Lake (Central)

Another outstanding Crystal Lake Central distance runner who ran 9:13 on the track; placed 13th in the state last year with a PB of 14:57.

24. **John Bruce**, Fr., Marion-

One of the top freshmen in the state with a 15:19 mark.

25. **Brian Butcher**, Sr., Mahomet (M.-Seymour)-

Ran personal best 14:45 at the Cornbelt Conference.

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