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Powell, Gilbreath-Glaub ready for 2018 2A championship challenge.

By Michael Newman

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Photo – Mathias Powell is the top returning 2A runner from the 2017 State Meet (Laura Duffy Photo)

Last May's 3200 Meter Run at the 2A State Meet finals was just a foreshadowing of what we could see at Detweiller Park in November. In the race in Charleston, it was **Adam Gilbreath-Glaub** of Metamora that had the final move passing Mahomet-Seymour's **Mathias Powell** in the final 50-meters to win the state championship.

We enter the 2018 cross-country season with the same two runners in a similar scenario. Powell and Gilbreath-Glaub stand out ahead the rest of the 2A field this season. It does not mean that they will be the overwhelming favorites. **Daniel Chen** of IMSA, **Riley Wells** of Rockford Christian, and **Charlie Smith** of Antioch are itching to make their point of why they could be state champions. The races this fall will define who could be among the best in this classification.

As we enter into September, it will be Powell and Gilbreath-Glaub that we will keep a close eye on.

Here is a look at some of the top runners that you can expect to see in the front this fall.

1 – Mathias Powell

SR – Mahomet-Seymour

Notes – Powell is the top returning runner from last year's 2A State Meet running 14:45 to finish fourth overall. He finished in the top nine in every race he competed in winning both the 2A Metamora Regional and the 2A Normal University Sectional. After state, he had a great race at the NXR Midwest Regional finishing ninth overall. He was all-state during the track season finishing second in the 3200 Meter Run. He achieved personal bests at 3200-meters (9:14.76) and 1600-meters (4:27.45).

"Mathias Powell is a great runner to have on our team," said his coach **Neal Garrison**. "He loves to compete and handles the pressure well. He has about as much experience as any runner could hope to have going into their senior year. He is very focused mentally on doing well. He really wants to give himself the best chance to place even higher than his 4th place finish last year, but he also respects the returning competition. While he is the fastest returning runner from State, he knows there are no guarantees. I am hopeful that I can help best prepare him mentally and physically to give him a chance to have a great season and State meet performance."

2 – Adam Gilbreath-Glaub

JR – Metamora

Notes – The one runner that could challenge Powell is Gilbreath-Glaub. The junior demonstrated that last track season when he came from behind in the 3200 Meter Run to pass Powell and win the 2A 3200 Meter Run state title. Adam showed he is ready for this fall from last track season. He did not finish last cross-country season with his last race of the season a win in his conference meet (15:06.8 at Detweiller Park). Big things are ahead for this junior this fall. "Adam put in a solid summer of training," his coach **Gene Jones** said. "He knows he will have a "bullseye" on his back after winning the 3200 Meter Run as a sophomore."

3 – Daniel Chen

SR – Aurora Illinois Math & Science Academy

Notes – Chen does not get the exposure that other 2A runners get due to not running in any of the Peoria races during the fall. His past races have proved that he could be one of the best 2A runners in the state this fall. Daniel earned all-state honors last fall by finishing 11th in the state meet. He has been all-state twice in track finishing eighth as a sophomore and then third last year in the 1600 Meter Run at the 2A State Meet. Chen achieved a personal best of 4:20.19 last spring for 1600-meters.

“Daniel ‘The Unlikely’ Chen has worked tirelessly this past track season to have a career PR in the 1600 two days in a row,” said Coach **Grant Bell**. “He continues to amaze me with his drive and determination. He can come out of nowhere in a meet to run with the best runners in the state and will never cease to surprise me with the results he produces. Daniel will be working harder and more rigorously this season than he ever has before, and I am confident he will be ready to reap the rewards.”

4 – Riley Wells

SR – Rockford Christian

Notes – Wells would have been the favorite for a state title if his school remained in 1A. Nevertheless, it won't surprise me if he is among the top 2A runners this fall. Riley won five races last fall on his way to a fifth-place finish in the 1A State Meet. He finished eighth as a sophomore in 2016. His credentials on the track are even more impressive. Wells has won back to back 1A 800 Meter Run titles in 2017 & 2018 with his 1:52.84 time in 2017 his personal best. He was also a part of Rockford Christian's winning 3200 Meter Relay team as a freshman, winning 1600 Meter Relay as a sophomore, and part of the team's second place finish in the 1600 Meter Relay as well as his team's second-place overall finish. He also ran a personal best of 4:23.44 for the 1-Mile Run. Wells hates to lose and has a finishing kick that demonstrates that. He runs with heart but in a smart manner.

“There will be a bit of symmetry to Riley's cross-country experience,” said his coach **Randy Moore**. “As freshman he helped navigate our squad through a very tough 2A Woodstock Sectional to qualify. Now as a senior he will attempt to do the same. The difference is that now he possesses the confidence and skill set of a seasoned veteran. He's been in Michigan working at a Christian retreat camp all summer and every mile he's logged has been on his own. He's been diligent and disciplined, but I'm anxious to see what kind of shape he's really in. And the team is anxious to get their friend and leader back.”

5 – Charlie Smith

JR – Antioch

Notes – There are only 10 all-state runners back from last year's 2A state race. Smith is the second returning runner finishing 10th in that race running 15:02. He started the season last fall running 15:25 to finish 11th at the First to the Finish Invitational in early September and moved up from there. Racing on the 3A level during the track season will benefit Charlie this fall. He achieved a personal best of 4:22.79 for 1600-meters in April at Distance Night in Palatine. He won the 3A Huntley Sectional at that distance qualifying him for the 3A State Meet.

“Charlie has had his best summer of training,” said Antioch Coach **Chris Bailey**. “He's been consistent and is getting stronger every week. He is extremely coachable and loves competing. He has goals of winning an individual state championship, however, what makes Charlie unique is that he wants his team to qualify for state more than winning an individual championship. He has the strength and tools to compete for a state championship in November.”

6 – John Bruce

JR – Marion

Notes – Bruce had a strong sophomore season last fall that culminated in a 15:08 time and a 14th place finish at the 2A State Meet. John finished 13th in his second race of the year at Granite City Invitational. He finished no worse than sixth in the next seven races before state winning the 2A Highland Regional and finishing second in the Decatur MacArthur Sectional. Bruce was part of Marion's team that finished second in the 3200 Meter Relay last May in the 2A State Meet. He also qualified for the finals in the 2A 1600 Meter Run where he finished 10th. John also achieved personal bests running 4:25.64 for 1600-meters and 9:46.30 for 3200-meters. A name that you may not be familiar with now. You will know him after November 3.

7 – Nathan Schmitt

JR – Lake Forest

Notes – Schmitt did not get the exposure last year as Lake Forest competed in 3A for the 2017 cross-country season. With his team moved into 2A for the 2017 season, this junior could be ready to step into the spotlight. Nathan just missed qualifying for the 3A State meet by one spot and two seconds by finishing 13th at the 3A Hoffman Estates Sectional. His track season demonstrated why he could be an all-state runner this fall running under 9:32 three times in the 3200 Meter Run. His 9:30.51 that placed him eighth in his sectional race missed state qualifying by one second making him hungry for success this fall.

8 – Chris Gilbert

SR – Peoria Notre Dame

Notes – If there was one surprise runner in 2A last fall it had to be Chris Gilbert. He finished a dynamite junior campaign by finishing 20th in the 2A State Meet earning all-state honors. Not bad considering that last fall was his first year of running cross-country. He improved his time down almost one-minute running 16:12 at Detweiller at the end of September to his 15:15 state time. He was also all-state in track running 1:56.31 to finish eight in the 2A 800 Meter Run. His time dropped in his final three races for that distance. “Gilbert has some high ambitions to go along with his status as a Top-10 returnee for 2A Boys,” said Notre Dame Coach **Dan Gray**. “A strong season and State showing followed by an All-State effort in the 800m during track season, will help him as he pursues opportunities as a collegiate runner down the road.”

9 – Luke Manolakes

JR – Champaign Centennial

Notes – After his transfer from St. Thomas More in the summer of 2017, Manolakes showed he was ready for the Class 2A stage finishing in the top ten in his state series races. Luke finished fourth in the Charleston Regional and then eighth in the Decatur MacArthur Sectional qualifying him for the state meet. He ran 15:16 to finish 23rd in the 2A State Race. Manolakes did not make it to state in track since Centennial competes in 3A during the spring. He did achieve personal bests of 9:48.92 for 3200-meters and 4:27.84 for 1600-meters.

10 – Drey Maton

SR – Chatham-Glenwood

Notes – One of three possible 25 runners in November for the top ranked Titans. **Drey Maton** was all-state last fall finishing 25th in the 2A State Meet and the top runner for his team in that race. He has run in the state meet three times finishing 151st as a freshman in 2015 and 109th as a sophomore in 2016. His race last year was a huge step in which he should climb higher this fall. Maton was part of his team's 3200 Meter Relay that qualified for the 3A State Meet. He also ran 2:02.26 for the open 800-meters as well as running 4:30.85 for 1600-meters.

"Drey Maton is a fun young man to watch," said his coach Mike Garber. "He trains seriously but is quick with a joke after a rep in a workout. His performances last season really set him up well for his senior year. Track was also important for his development. He really wanted to find a new level in the 800 and he got there by season's end. He wants to better his All-State finish from last year and see his brother and Coop on the stage with him in November. I'm really excited to see him push to a new level again in cross."

11 – Kyle Boughter

JR – Springfield

Notes – Boughter had a standout fall cross-country season followed by a track season hampered by injuries. He earned all-state honors last fall by placing 18th in the 2A State Meet. He was the top runner for the Senators as he finished second in his conference meet, second in the Jacksonville Regional, and third at the Decatur MacArthur Sectional. Injuries slowed him down for most of the track season. He started coming back in mid-April running a season's best of 4:42.89 for 1600-meters and 10:26.07 for 3200-meters. If he is fully recovered in time for the 2018 season this fall, it would not surprise me to finish among the top seven in November.

12 – Cooper Peterson

SR – Chatham-Glenwood

Notes – Will be one of the top runners up front with the Maton Brothers. Peterson was the team's second runner last fall at state finishing 41st at Detweiller. He has showed improvement just like Drey Maton having run the state meet three times. He placed 181st as a freshman and 81st as a sophomore. A top 20 finish is within his grasp this fall. He achieved a personal best during the track season running 10:08.66 for 3200-meters and 10:03.09 during the indoor season.

"Cooper Peterson is going to have a great season," **Mike Garber** said. "His confidence is growing, and it shows. He is the type of kid that would rather do a half marathon than the mile. Longer distances with hard terrain are his bread and butter. Cooper is strong and confident and has a great group surrounding him. I expect him to be a front runner in nearly every race we run this fall. He is really pushing himself to be in the Top 25 at State."

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Notes – Doud did not run his best race at state last fall, but his track campaign last spring could carry him and his team to the top of the mountain in the next few months. Nick was one of the top runners for the team last fall as he finished fourth in his conference meet, seventh in the Metamora Regional, and then 10th at the Normal University Sectional. Then came state where he finished 67th. His track season showed what he is capable of as he ran 9:30.57 for 3200-meters just missing the state meet by one spot. He also ran a 4:29.78 personal best for 1600-meters. He showed he is ready for this cross-country season by finishing second at Detweiller at Dark in July running 15:11, a personal best on that course.

"Nick is very dedicated and has looked very strong this summer," said John Szabo. "His work ethic is second to none. He had a very good race at Detweiller last Friday and he has a great opportunity to earn All-State honors and lead our team. The sky is the limit for him."

14 – Anthony Farmer

JR – Burlington Central

Notes – Farmer had a surprise sophomore season that should translate to some great things this fall. He started early in the season finishing tenth at the First to the Finish Invitational in early September. He started to click during the state series finishing fourth in the Burlington Regional and then seventh at the Kaneland Sectional. His state race was just as good as he ran 15:16 to finish 21st in the 2A race. Farmer was on Burlington Central's 3200 Meter Relay team that finished sixth in the finals of the 2A State Meet.

"Anthony Farmer will be a major factor in large meets and at the state level," said Vince Neil. "He had a great summer of training and put in a ton of miles this summer. He looks healthy and is focused on his personal success as well as the team score. Look for Farmer to be at the top of many results."

15 – Austin Ames

SR – Charleston

Notes – Ames could climb into the top 25 this fall after a good junior season. Austin finished third in the Charleston Regional, fourth in the Decatur MacArthur Sectional before finishing 28th at state in the 2A race. He ran personal bests of 9:51.61 for 3200-meters and 4:42.36 for 1600-meters.

16 – Aaron Trier

JR – Sycamore

Notes – Could step into Sycamore's top spot left vacant by graduated all-state runner Stephen Poorten. Trier finished last fall finishing 31st in the 2A State Meet. He ran a 2:06.42 seasonal best for 800-meters and a 4:55 personal best at 1600-meters. Watch his times drop in the next year for this junior. "After finishing 31st at last year's state meet, Aaron has his sights set on the top 25 this year," said his coach Michael Lambdin.

17 – Adonaliz Hernandez

JR – Chicago Solorio Academy

Notes – Could be one of the most underrated 2A runners in the state. Hernandez should step into the spotlight this cross-country season. He started his drive up the mountain by winning the Chicago Public League Frosh/Soph Championship. He won the De La Salle 2A Regional race as well as the sectional title at the 2A Chicago University Sectional. He qualified individually for state finishing 29th at Detweiller.

18 – James McDonald

SR – Vernon Hills

Notes – Ran his first season of cross country last fall and it turned out nicely. This year should be even better for McDonald. He qualified for state finishing 33rd individually in his first try running 15:29 which was a personal best. He did not run track during the spring. He competes for Vernon Hills' Lacrosse team.

"Jimmy McDonald is a phenomenal overall athlete," said his coach **Jason Rush**. "He probably should be playing tight end on the football field as he's 6'1, 175 - easily the biggest fast kid I've ever coached. He went 15:27 at Detweiller and has wants to go 15:00 this year. He had to split his time between summer camp and summer lacrosse. I wish I had more time with him, but I think he's a low mileage kid who craves speedwork. I think I can get him close to 15:00 by November but that will likely be his last XC race of his life as his real passion is lacrosse."

19 – Dathan Maton

SR – Chatham-Glenwood

Notes – The third of the Glenwood runners that could finish in the top 25. Maton was towards the front for his team in most of the races last fall with a 15:06 personal best at Detweiller Park in the Peoria Invitational at the end of September. His state race was not the best finishing 69th at state running 15:54. He should be in the top 25 this season in November. He was part of Chatham-Glenwood's 3200 Meter Relay that qualified for the 3A State Meet. Maton also ran 4:26 for a personal best at 1600-meters.

"Dathan Maton had a great rebound season in Track (4:26 - 1600, 1:58 - 800)," **Mike Garber** said. "The end of cross country was tough for him. He was battling hip pain the last four meets of the season. A kid that ran 15:06 the end of September was struggling to break 16 by State. Dathan is resilient, but that type of situation will shake even the most confident in the sport. He wants to push for the upper 14s by mid-season, and I'm confident in his expectation. Dathan is one of the toughest kids I've coached...it will be very difficult for anyone to keep him from the stage in November."

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