



Find something...

Login / S

RS/Home News Events Results Central Videos Photos Blogs Sites & Teams Rankings Live Webcasts Athletic.TV Tools Help



HomePhotosBlogNewsFollowsVideos

News

[Write News](#)

Folders

- [Featured \(118\)](#)
- [Misc News \(1234\)](#)
- [Cross Country \(0\)](#)
- [2020 Cross Country \(13\)](#)
- [2020 IL XC Season Previews \(7\)](#)



[2020 Illinois High School Cross Country Team Previews - HOME PAGE](#)(Aug 19th, 4:36pm)



[2020 Illinois High School Cross Country Team Previews - Class 3A](#) Boys(Aug 19th, 4:20pm)



[2020 Illinois High School Cross Country Team Previews - Class 2A](#) Boys(Aug 19th, 4:15pm)



[2020 Illinois High School Cross Country Team Previews - Class 1A](#) Boys(Aug 19th, 4:10pm)



[2020 Illinois High School Cross Country Team Previews - Class 3A](#) Girls(Aug 19th, 4:06pm)



[2020 Illinois High School Cross Country Team Previews - Class 2A](#) Girls(Aug 19th, 3:59pm)

- [2019 Cross Country \(176\)](#)
- [Put Your Hand on Seven - Updated 2018 \(21\)](#)
- [ILXCTF XC Record Book \(18\)](#)
- [2018 Cross Country \(237\)](#)

News

[RSS Feed](#)

2020 Illinois High School Cross Country Team Previews - Class 2A Boys

Published by



[ILXCTF - Mike Newman](#) , Aug 19th, 4:15pm



2020 Illinois High School Cross Country Team Previews - Class 2A Boys

Class 2A wide-open led by Chatham-Glenwood, Mahomet-Seymour, and St. Ignatius

By Michael Newman

[2017 Cross Country \(297\)](#)
[2020 Track & Field \(25\)](#)
[Track & Field \(762\)](#)
[Athletes Blog \(33\)](#)
[2019 Track & Field \(192\)](#)
[Misc News \(1\)](#)
[All \(388\)](#)
[All \(3791\)](#)

mike@dyestat.com

The IHSA announced on July 29 that there would be fall sports in the state of Illinois. Coach Mike Garber of Chatham-Glenwood breathed a sigh of relief. He wanted his kids to be able to run this fall so badly. At the same time, he wanted all the kids in the State of Illinois to have a cross-country season.

If there would be state meet this fall (that is yet to be determined), it would be wide-open in this classification. The two teams that I would focus on are Chatham-Glenwood and Mahomet-Seymour. Both teams have state meet experience. Both teams are deep in talent. Both teams want a state championship oh so bad.

St. Ignatius Prep, who finished third at last year's state meet lost their top two runners. They are maybe a millimeter behind these two central Illinois teams. Morton and St. Francis are other teams to also watch for. In reality, seeing these teams race against each other in November would be oh so good.

The main thing is that these kids get to run with their friends and race. That is what this sport is all about. It might not be invitational meets. It might be just dual meets and that is okay with me.

In February, when things changed with the formatting of sectionals in the state series, I made the decision to increase the weekly rankings that I do from 25 to 30 teams to reflect the change with the IHSA. At this time, I have yet to determine if we will do weekly rankings due to the fact that it is mathematically tough to compare teams on just dual meets (That might change).

The previews that have been written are focused on IF we have a state series and IF we have a state meet. As of this time, that is yet to be determined.

There was never the chance that these would not be written for the upcoming season. It is more of a tribute to the student/athletes that did not get a chance to compete this spring and now have that opportunity this fall. This preview is for all of you.

Class 2A Boys Teams

1 Chatham-Glenwood

Coach – Mike Garber

2019 Finish – 6th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Thomas Herbst SR (43, 15:47), Cameron Smith SR (52, 15:53), Aidan Peterson SR (77, 16:08), Drew Verenski SO (92, 16:15), Nathan Michael SR (102, 16:21), Caden Settlemyer JR (116, 16:27), Samson Dessalines JR (169, 16:54), Lleyton Turk SO, Landon Verenski SR, Eli Morsch SO, Garrett Kroeschel FR.

Preview – Last year's state meet came down to what it seemed Kaneland against the rest of the state. The year before Chatham-Glenwood and Springfield came down to a handful of points before Chatham-Glenwood claimed the state championship.

We could see the 2018 version of the state meet. The loss of the track season last spring did not give us an indication of the improvement of all the teams. The loss of the track season for the Titans was a matter of not being able to prove themselves before the start of this season. Their sixth-place finish was not what they wanted. They could get a state trophy to match the one they won in 2018.

"Spring was tough, but we got through it," Coach **Mike Garber** said. "I had my squad shut down for a week after we lost track season to allow them to refocus. I wanted to make sure we did not train from January to XC season. The mental and physical health of our kids are important to me. I have been more involved in the training in late spring and throughout summer than any other year. Many runners needed guidance or a training plan. Just running on their own was not going to be fruitful. We used Strava in previous seasons, but it was useful this training cycle. The ability for our kids to connect and keep each other accountable was amazing."

What makes this team the #1 team in Class 2A entering this season do not have everything to do with the desire to be the best in this group. One of the other reasons is that they are the deepest out of all the Class 2A teams this season. All seven runners that toed the line at last year's state meet return plus a number of runners itching to get a chance to run at Detweiller Park.

"We have a pretty simple message. We have one shot to get everything right," stated Garber. "This season could be taken away in an instant, so we are working on doing everything right when it comes to running practice, socially distancing and following guidelines outside practice and not putting yourself at risk in public. Our mentality as competitors has not changed, though how we compete might change. We are working to continue to grow as a program and have a blast doing it."

The Titans only had a 35 second split on their top five runners in last November's race. The problem was that the top five pack was too far back. What will help them in this season is more runners towards the front. **Thomas Herbst** was the team's top runner at state. He also traded off as the second and third runner in the meets previous to that. **Drew Verenski** did not run as a freshman for most of the season trading off the first and second spots before sectionals. He was fourth runner at that meet and also at state. "Drew Verenski put in a lot of work this summer," added Garber. "He lifted and worked on full body fitness. He is in for a major jump from his freshman year."

Cameron Smith was the team's #1 runner in the meets before state. It will not be a surprise if he is in the front ahead of Verenski and Herbst. **Samson**

Dessalines and Aidan Peterson had good summers of training which could boost them to the front. A senior, **Garrett Kroeschel**, is one runner to keep an eye on. He has never run cross-country before. He did run track in middle school but played soccer. He could make an immediate impact according to Garber.

This team has the same mentality as the Glenwood state championship had in 2018. It is not the same team with the runners in the front. It could just be a pack of hungry runners staying close together all with the same goals.

"The 2020 Glenwood team is ready to perform" Garber concluded. "They have been waiting to race since March and I am excited to see what they can do over 3 miles. The depth we have on this squad is unlike any I have coached. In 2018, we had some strong front running with some distance between our 4 and 5. We return our entire 2019 State team this year and that squad had a split of 9 seconds at the Central State 8 Conference Meet. We could have around 10 guys that could replicate that type of performance this season. There is a strong desire in this group to bring home a state trophy. If given the chance, they will lay it all on the line to obtain one."

2 Mahomet-Seymour

Coach – Neal Garrison

2019 Finish – 11th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Nick Mies SR (47, 15:49), Kyle Nofziger JR (53, 15:54), Jonah Singer JR (72, 16:06), Joseph Scheele JR (115, 16:27), Hayden Grotelueschen SO (159, 16:47), Joe Taylor SR (182, 17:09), Josh Wilcoski JR (215, 17:48), Caleb Dowers SR, Gage Williams SO, Taylor Fan JR.

Preview – Mahomet-Seymour has also been down this road before on their way to a state championship. The development of this team mirrors on how Chatham-Glenwood has built this year's team. Last year's team for the Bulldogs was young and experienced. They finished 11 at last year's state meet. Mahomet-Seymour returns all of their runners that finished last year at Detweiller Park.

Their coach **Neal Garrison** does not coach these distance runners during the track season. So when their track season was put on hold, Garrison did reach out to his team. "I don't coach track, but I did catch a large group of the runners before we left for spring break to let them know that the track season would likely be cancelled," said Garrison. "I also told them that I thought our summer would likely be shut down as we know it. Unfortunately, my prediction came true. I wish I had been wrong. I only email my runners. I have not had a practice with them since November and haven't been around them since before we went to spring break."

This is not news to this group. Garrison is usually not around them during the summer. The team has learned from previous teams on what the routine is supposed to be. They also knew after last year's state meet that they would be among the top teams in Class 2A.

"At least half of our team really learned to love running this summer," added Garrison "I think running was one time when they got to be around young people their age. Some of them will really improve if they get a chance to race this fall. We had some other runners get injured or had a hard time getting started running. Overall I think it was a good summer for the runners as far as connecting with each other and just enjoying running for running sake."

The Bulldogs do not have the "star" runners that could be in the lead pack at state. They do have the talent to have two or maybe three all-state runners. **Kyle Nofziger** and **Nick Mies** ran close to each other most of last season. If the training is indicative to what the Mahomet-Seymour runners have done in the past, we could see both of these guys in the top 25. **Jonah Singer** should also be looked at. He was on the average of 16 seconds behind Nofziger at the end of the season. It would not surprise me if that gap were to be cut down between the two.

Joseph Scheele was the team's second runner heading into their conference meet. He was fourth runner at state and should be close to Singer. **Taylor Fan** has showed great improvement during this off period according to Garrison and could find a spot in the top seven. **Matthew Sims** and **Justin Straub** are out for cross-country from soccer and will add depth to this team. "If we have a State series, I think our team is in the fitness level to surprise some people at state," Garrison mentioned.

Mahomet-Seymour does have the runners to match up with any other team in Class 2A. We will just have to wait and see how this season develops. "Although I enjoy competition, I believe it is over emphasized and often distracts from all the great things running provides," stated Garrison. "I want my runners to enjoy jogging with their friends and to really see how it is a lifelong healthy activity to be a part of. I think many runners on our team really saw the mental and social benefits that jogging can provide due to the Covid-19 Virus. This pandemic may end racing for a year, but it doesn't have to end the joy that jogging can bring."

3 Chicago St. Ignatius Prep

Coach – Ed Ernst

2019 Finish – 3rd, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Liam Linnen SR (39, 15:44), Zach Kiley JR (63, 16:00), Brian Moore JR (66, 16:03), Theo Conroy JR (69, 16:05), Nick Kiley JR (108, 16:25), Colin Linnen SR, Samuel Hansen JR, Henry Gilbert JR, Jack Rhyner SO, Connor Wells SR, Declan Glaysher JR, Ted Schmiedeler JR.

Preview – The Wolfpack could be one of the deepest teams, like Chatham-Glenwood, in Class 2A. St. Ignatius was moved down to Class 2A last year. They responded by bring home a trophy from Detweiller Park when they finished third.

This program lost their top two runners from last year including all-state runner **Jacob Flynn**. This 2020 team is a young team dominated by juniors...juniors that have big meet experience. "We did less than some and more than some, I suspect. Most of our key guys posted on Strava.com. We really moved pretty quickly into a kind of maintenance running, just getting in miles, but we encouraged boys to make an effort--at least a tempo--once a week in April and May. We did not do much formal time trialing. But a few guys did that, and we had some personal bests," said St. Ignatius coach Ed Ernst. "Losing the spring is an issue for us because we had a large sophomore group that we hoped would take steps to get to the next level last spring. They did not get that seasoning. But on the plus side, many of them really learned to run and train on their own."

Liam Linnen could be the one runner that will take over the role that Flynn had one year ago. Linnen was the third runner on the state team last year finishing 39. A top 20 finish could be in his cards this fall at Detweiller Park. Liam's brother **Colin Linnen** is possibly the only other senior that could make the top seven. Colin was in the top seven up to their conference meet.

It will be the pack that is behind **Liam Linnen** that should be watched for. They are all juniors. **Zach Kiley, Brian Moore, Theo Conroy, and Nick Kiley** all ran in last year's state meet. The four were only separated by 25 seconds. The team is projected to have under a 50 second split at the start of this season. The key will be tightening that pack even more as well as moving it closer to the front.

"Our school has limited our options a bit this summer, but we have gathered a good number of our group once a week or so since late-June," Ernst said. "And they have been gathering to run on their own, driving into the city to run on the lakefront after it opened. We return 14 of our top 16 from last year, and I think we have 12 of that 14 who ran more miles than they have ever run in the summer before. The boys did a really good job of organizing themselves in training groups around the city and suburbs, as well. They are motivated and fit, as they should be."

The Wolfpack may start out this season in this spot, but they are a team that will challenge for a state title. They have stayed focused on that goal. Ernst had just one simple message to his team. "Stay healthy! Wear your mask! Socialize with your friends in appropriate ways OUTDOORS! Keep social distancing! If you want to have a cross country season, you have to earn it--at practice, in school, and out of school," Ernst told his team. "Our summer meetings were mainly to drive that message home. We are also clearly expecting to compete for a state championship, so we have a lot at stake and a lot of reason to do what needs to be done."

4 Morton

Coach – **Joel Zehr**

2019 Finish – 4th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Cade Zobrist JR (44, 15:47), Tyson Martin SR (56, 15:56), Brody Zobrist SR (65, 16:02), Keegan Anderson JR (100, 16:20), Tristan Sturhahn JR (194, 17:17), Luke Kunz JR, Seth Walters SO, Josh Weeks FR, Yonas Wuthrich FR, Kyle Hartter SO, Ben Himmel JR.

Preview – The Potters just missed a trophy in 2019 finishing fourth. The dynamics of this team will change this fall. Gone is **Sam Lange** who finished second at state and has graduated. Morton does have five runners back that could pack their way to a trophy.

"There were also opportunities for time trials for runners who desired to test their fitness this spring," said their coach Joel Zehr. "I have been pleased to see our returning varsity guys training together throughout the summer. That being said, our captains, **Brody Zobrist**, and **Tyson Martin**, have done a good job of leading our boys as they prepare for whatever may be in store for us this fall."

This team has the potential to have a tight split on their first runner. That should be led by **Cade Zobrist** who was the team's second runner most of last season. Martin and Brody Zobrist, along with **Keegan Anderson**, should be within 30 seconds of each other.

What to watch for is who steps into the fifth scoring spot. **Tristan Sturhahn** ran at state last year as the team's sixth runner. He did finish 57 seconds behind Anderson in that race. It could be two freshmen, **Josh Weeks** and **Yonas Wuthrich**, that step into that spot. "These two finished 1-2 at the IESA Cross Country 3A state finals last year," Zehr added. "What has been the most exciting part of the summer is to see these young men running with our returning team members. We have shared with them that no matter what this fall may bring, that they have a great core of older guys to train with, learn from and race with."

Morton matches up with the team ahead of them. They do not have the low points like Lange provided for them last year. How high up with Cade Zobrist finish? That will be a key. Finding a fifth runner and keeping their top five split under 50 seconds could be the formula for this team to earn a state trophy.

5 Wheaton St. Francis

Coach – **Scott Nelson**

2019 Finish – 14th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Chris Covone JR (74, 16:07), Luke Orwig SR (112, 16:26), Daniel O'Connell SO (117, 16:27), Sam King SR (166, 16:49), Sam Andrejewski SO (171, 16:55), Christopher Spahn JR (192, 17:16), Tom England SR, Andrew Hernandez SO, Nate Keogh SR.

Preview – The Spartans could be a surprise among the top 10 teams in Class 2A. Six runners are back from their state team that finished 14th in Peoria. **Chris Corone** should step into the top spot for St. Francis. It could also be **Tom England** who missed the second half of the season due to an injury. He was the team's second runner when he ran. England finished eight seconds ahead of Covone at First to the Finish early in the season.

This team will be a good pack top five with that split projected to be near 40 seconds.

6 Maple Park Kaneland

Coach – Chad Clarey

2019 Finish – 2019 Class 2A State Champions

Runners to Watch – Isaiah Dallal SR (24, 15:27), Parker Malone SR (88, 16:12), Nolan Allen JR, Aaron Ludwig SR, Logan Cunz JR, Christian Phillips JR, Chris Fountain SR, Trevor Neal SO, Chris Fitts SR, Aidan Bruhl SO, Adam Smith SO, Nolan Hoskings SO, Brady Babka SO.

Preview – The one neat thing about winning a state championship as a team is that it reverberates down to each level. You may not have run at the state meet but you are part of that team running workouts together and learning what it takes to be a champion. This is the case with Kaneland heading into this season.

"What is the same about this year's team compared to 2019 is the attitude of 'we are putting in the work, we're hungry.' Our camp numbers have been higher than any other season," coach **Chad Clarey** said. "With all the changes coming in the form of limitations to practices, gatherings, formats to racing, social distancing, and the fluidity of how nothing is ever "in stone" these days... this group has done a tremendous job. Their minds and their energies are focused on the task at hand. As coaches, we could not be prouder of the way they have taken to the training and worked to improve their own personal bests each day. While we graduated a bunch of talented student athletes off the 2019 team, the young men we have this fall are giving their best each day to build a new team. We do not know what their "page in history" will read, but right now they are all in. We will focus on what we do well at Kaneland, and whatever happens with the "fruit" will be what it is. These kids are hungry, and they want to get better. You cannot ask for more than that, as a coach. It will be fun to take this weird season for whatever it will be. We will enjoy the process, and not worry about the outcome."

Three of the five runners on the state team were all-state runners. They have also graduated. **Isaiah Dallal** was the team's fourth runner and all state (24th) last season. Now he will step into the leader's role on and off the course. A top 10 finish could be in the cards for Dallal. **Parker Malone** was the teams sixth and seventh runner finishing the season. **Nolan Allen** was the team's fifth runner up to the regional meet. Both could step into second spot. The summer of training could sort out who will be in the top five. This is another team that is deep with talent.

"We are most pleased with the work that our team has put in this summer. All along we were not knowing if we would have a season," stated Clarey. "That did not derail the team from putting in the work. We have a digital training log that the team has been posting on since June. We feel really good about where they have been over the course of the summer with their work, and the senior class has been good at paving the way. Since camp has started, we continue to log our work virtually, and have been learning how to socially distance while still trying to be a close knit team."

Aaron Ludwig, Logan Cunz, Chris Fountain, and Christian Phillips are some of the runners that you could see make it into the team's top seven runners. There are also another half dozen runners that can also stake that claim. Healthy competition can make a team even stronger. Dallal will be the low stick providing single digit numbers up front. A key will be keeping their second through fifth runner split under 40 seconds. That is possible with this talent that the Knights have. Another key is keeping that pack within 30 seconds of their #1 runner.

"This year our focus will be on the "root" of what we do well as a program, and not worrying about the "fruit" of recognition or placement within our region or area," added Clarey. "If we focus on the "root," then all the good practices of being a good runner and solid contributing student/teammate/citizen will shine forth. The "fruit" or accolades wind up taking care of themselves. With this particular group, coming off of the 2019 success that was had, they may feel pressure. This team does not need nor own that burden. We will focus on the "root" and whatever happens in 2020 will be exactly what we are supposed to have."

7 Dixon

Coach – Simon Thorpe

2019 Finish – 2nd, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Brock Dregenberg SR (4, 14:58), Cadyn Grafton SR (33, 15:39), Brayden Bock SO (133, 16:36), Dominic Lozano SR, Jack Boss SR, Marcus Simpson SO, Jackson Ortgiesen SO, Jack Johnson SO, Brady Boedecker SO, Isaac Rollinger SR.

Preview – **Simon Thorpe** steps in as the New XC Coach at Dixon. He replaces his dad Evan who will now coach at Dixon's Middle School. The Dukes had a special season last fall finishing second in the state meet. The team will reload with just three runners back from the state team. The success has pushed this team even though there was no track season.

"Dixon's summer running got off to a slower start as compared to years past, regarding meeting as a team," Thorpe said. "Our school hosted a conditioning camp for four weeks starting in mid-June, and we were able to meet as a team mid-July. Prior to that, the Girls and Boys squads both had been meeting in groups to get their runs in. I would not think anybody was in extremely good or extremely poor shape necessarily. The major runners on the team who have been around for a number of years came prepared to run."

One of those prepared runners was **Brock Dregenberg** who finished fourth last fall in the 2A state race and is the top returning runner from that race. **Cadyn Grafton** finished 33rd as the team's third runner and could be significantly closer to Dregenberg this fall. The development of the next five runners will be something to watch for. It is projected that their top two could be close to 80 seconds ahead of the rest of the pack. The first few races will watch that pack develop. "Due to the IHSA postponing the majority of fall sports, we picked up around 15 boys," said Thorpe. "The funny thing is half of them didn't play a fall sport in prior years, but with sports being canceled for a long time they wanted to be a part of a team."

8 Troy Triad

Coach – Andrew Brendel

2019 Finish – 17th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Drake Bleier SR (19, 15:25), Luke Perry SR (96, 16:18), Caleb Bagwell SR (145, 16:40), Ethan Dudley JR (157, 16:45), Clay Barker SR (203, 17:22), Carson Dempsey JR, Ben Winslow SO, Jaden Henderson SR, Dillon Henderson SO, Andrew Wildhaber SR, Drew Pace FR.

Preview – Five runners are back for the Knights after finishing 17th at last year's state meet. The talent that is coming back could catapult this squad among the top ten in the state.

Drake Bleier could be a runner in this state to watch up front. Bleier finished 19 last year as a junior. He is also in better shape than he was in at this point last year according to his coach **Andrew Brendel**. One reason why Bleier may be in better shape is because he has someone to push him in practice. Brendel believes that **Drew Pace** could be the best freshman that he has seen come into the Triad running program. It will be interesting to see how her improves during this season.

Luke Perry was the team's second runner last year. He will be the one to lead the pack behind Bleier and possibly Pace. The projected split heading into this season on their top five is 68 seconds. That is compared to the 85 second split that they had at state. The Knights could be a team that could get close to Chatham-Glenwood in the southern most Class 2A sectional in the state.

9 Springfield

Coach – Dan Devlin

2019 Finish – 12th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Anthony Peralta JR (57, 15:56), Matthew Johnson JR (83, 16:09), Ethan Sommers JR (141, 16:39), Arnav Earve SO (151, 16:43), Jack Casey JR (163, 16:48), Braden White JR, Drake Rutledge JR, Jacob Graham JR, Sam Pasman SR, Nick Hanning JR.

Preview – The Senators could be a year away from contending for a state trophy. The top seven projected are all underclassmen. Six of the seven returning are juniors. Anthony Peralta was either the first or second runner for Springfield last year as a sophomore. He could be among the top 30 runners in the state if we get to that point. Matthew Johnson should step up to the next spot leading the second through fifth runners. He only finished 13 seconds behind Peralta at state. That gap was larger during the season. Springfield traditionally runs a top five split under 60 seconds. They will need those kind of numbers to keep a spot within the first 10 teams in Class 2A.

10 Peoria Notre Dame

Coach – Dan Gray

2019 Finish – 13th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Patrick Couri SR (70, 16:05), Logan Keene SR (79, 16:08), Owen Lynch SR (98, 16:20), Brian Coulter JR (152, 16:44), Brennan Messmer SR, Brett Dickerson SR, Christian Vargas SR, Mitch Rickey SR, Joey Cave SO, Jac Couri JR.

Preview – The top three runners from last year's team are back that finished 13th in the Class 2A State Meet. **Patrick Couri, Logan Keene, and Owen Lynch** were only separated by 15 seconds in last year's state. The key to watch is them move closer to the front. The top four split is projected to be 30 seconds. Getting a fifth runner within 10 seconds of that group will be something to look for.

11 Oak Lawn Richards

Coach – Bob Peck

2019 Finish – 21st, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – David Olmos SR (42, 15:47), Jack Weiland JR (67, 16:03), Louis Leahy JR (149, 16:42), Owen Forberg SO (156, 16:45), Luke Vana SR (189, 17:13), Josh Smith SO, Blake Attig SR, Tyrese Strong SO.

Preview – This is a team that could be a mystery to some at the beginning of the season. The Bulldogs could be in the top 10 when we get to the IHSA Regionals. Richards' top five runners return from a squad that finished 21st at state. They finished second in the Thornridge Sectional to get that spot on the Detweiller Park starting line. "My assistant coach **John Kawulia** and I set up zoom meetings with our runners all spring and summer long," said **Coach Bob Peck**. "This allowed us to still stay in contact with them to discuss training but to also just see how they were all coping with all the changes going on in the world today. We also reached out to alumni to jump in on some zoom calls to tell stories of their training and success while competing as a Richards Bulldog. Summer Camps were hard for our runners this year. We did not have one but continued to communicate with our runners virtually and track their progress using the app Strava."

This team will be better than people think. **David Olmos** emerged at the end of last season finishing 42 at state. He has the talent to finish in the top 25 this season in Peoria. **Owen Forberg** had a good freshman season. He has ramped up his running this summer and could be the team's second runner. The teams top five averaged a 58 second split at the end of last season. It could go even lower this fall. Olmos will be closer to the front. Their pack will need to follow suit. "Our team message for this year is to stay positive and hungry no matter what the outcome of the season will be," stated Peck. "There have been many obstacles for our runners this summer and our runners have been through a lot. They are excited to get back to our regular training schedule and are awaiting information from our school district as to what races we can run in and how they will be conducted."

If we do get a state series, it will be interesting to see which direction this school heads. It could go into the Chicago area pool. Richards could also be put in a regional that will feed into the Central Region Sectional in the Peoria / Bloomington-Normal area. Either way, this team has the talent to make it back to Peoria.

12 Sycamore

Coach – Michael Lambdin

2019 Finish – 5th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Alex Taylor SR (75, 16:07), Jack Cambier SR (109, 16:25), Kyle Horn SR (214, 17:48), Ethan Solfisberg SO, Danny Gramer SR, Isaac Ward JR, Caden Emmert SO, Carson Campbell SR, Magnus Keswani JR, Aiden Farrell JR, Tyler Norton SR, Roman Friedrichs JR, Nick Kocher JR.

Preview – A team to watch and see which direction they head as this season begins. Sycamore had a great season in 2019 finishing 5th in the state meet. The Spartans only return three of those runners from that state team. The circumstances that cancelled the season cancelled the chance of the new runners on this team to progress in track meets.

"Every Sunday weekly workouts were texted to the boys to run on their own. The same workouts we would have run in a normal season. Meets were replaced with time trials," said their coach **Michael Lambdin**.

All three runners that ran at state are seniors. That is a good base to work from. **Alex Taylor** and **Jack Cambier** were in the top five last year and should lead this team. The other five top seven spots are wide-open. Caden Emmert had a good summer of training according to Lambdin and could find a spot in the seven. So could **Ethan Solfisburg**, **Danny Gramer**, and **Isaac Ward**. Emmert, Solfisburg, and Ward are all underclassmen.

The team will need tight pack running. The top five split is projected to be around 40 seconds. The thing to watch is how this team improves in every race. "With all of the uncertainty and so many decisions being made by others, we need to focus on the things that we can control," said Lambdin. Those things are preparation as well as trying to turn these challenging times into an opportunity by being ready."

13 Aurora Marmion Academy

Coach -Paul McLeland

2019 Finish – 7th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Anthony Standish SR (89, 16:13), Niraj Abraham JR (91, 16:14), Charlie Schultz (124, 16:31), Nick Coffman SR (138, 16:38), Mitchell Gratz SO, Beckham Dempsey SO, Ryan Bennett SR, Joe Fuchser SR, Jack Schokora JR.

Preview – Marmion Academy made it into the top ten teams last year at state placing seventh. The Cadets could replicate that finish this fall if we get to that point. Marmion lost their top two runners to graduation. They will need to work to get back to the state meet.

"It seemed the boys were doing more mileage than they had before," said their coach Paul McLeland. "Unfortunately, I am a perfectionist so I would have liked a little higher level, but we improved this summer."

Four runners are back from the state team. It is too early to tell if the Cadets have one runner that will step up with the elites when and if we get to big races. Marmion will need to rely on pack running. It could be a great pack. **Anthony Standish** and **Niraj Abraham** crossed the line at state within a second of each other and will lead this group. **Charlie Schultz** and **Nick Coffman** also have that state experience and will be pushing for top five finishes. **Mitchell Gratz** split his time last year between running and soccer. With soccer now in the spring, his focus will be on running. He could be a surprise for the Cadets. This team is

projected to have a top five split around 35 seconds. A key will be moving that pack closer to the front.

"We just have to be thankful we have a season and do your best to improve our running and be examples of quality young men in our society," McLeland said. "The tough balance will be social distancing and being a team. Most of the boys do cross country because of the bonds they have built over the years."

14 Bartonville Limestone

Coach – Brian Glaza

2019 Finish – 9th, Class 2A Bloomington Sectional

Runners to Watch – Wilson Georges JR (7, 15:09), Kieran Bauer JR, Reece Dusek SO, Edwin Monroe SR, Cole Leach SR, Ashton Horchem JR, Bryce Baker SR, Gabe Zeller SR, Gabe Hurst SO, Lloyd Perronet FR.

Preview – The time off during the spring may have benefitted the Rockets for this upcoming season. Limestone started off strong last year but ended up finishing ninth in their sectional race at Maxwell Park. "We are a bit behind where we were from last year, but I don't foresee that as a problem," said Limestone Coach Brian Glaza. "I actually see it as a good thing, as I think we were a bit tired and ragged at the end of the season last year. Our endurance is our strength right now, but we will definitely have to work into race shape in the coming weeks."

All seven runners from that sectional race are back. Hopes are high within the Limestone program. The team starts with all-state runner Wilson Georges. The junior almost missed state due to a case of pneumonia. He ran that race and finished seventh. A strong summer of running could put him among the elite runners in the state. Reese Dusek and Kiernan Bauer should lead the pack behind Georges. Ignore the five runner split for this team. Their second through five runner split in their sectional race was only 25 seconds. The gap between Georges and the pack averaged 75 seconds. The closer the team is to their leader, the lower the score they will have.

Glaza had a message for his team for this season. "The main message is to be ready for anything and to cherish the time we have together," stated Glaza. "At this point, our season could be cancelled at any moment. While I would love to talk about racing and a potential state meet, I think the most important things for us are to become a family again and to appreciate the time we have together while we have it. This will be our focus the whole season: building a unit that loves one another and toes the line as a family, ready to fight like hell for a purpose greater than themselves."

15 Mascoutah

Coach – Darren Latham

2019 Finish – 18th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Kristian Knecht SR (78, 16:08), Joshua Sturgill SR (103, 16:22), Jordan Eddy SR (104, 16:23), Avery Cozzi SR (107, 16:24), Noah Jensen SR (165, 16:49), Josh Cophier SR, Kyle Molitor JR, Mason Steinbeck SO, Broden Wakeley SO, Isaac Irving SO, Lance Miller JR, Sam LaJoye JR.

Preview – The Indians return six out of their top seven runners from their state team that finished 18th last fall. "This summer was probably the best summer I have seen with varsity attendance at summer training camp. They have been working hard," said Coach **Darren Latham**.

This team traditionally relies on pack running. The talent is there to repeat that again. **Kristian Knecht** was the team's top runner most of last year. He could be challenged by fellow seniors **Joshua Sturgill** and **Jordan Eddy**. The top four split projects to be just over 20 seconds. Mascoutah's top five split was 41 seconds at state. Knecht is a runner that we could see among the first 40 statewide. The pack staying that close would mean big things for this program in 2020. A surprise could be **Sam LaJoye** who is out for cross-country for the first time. He was a good middle school miler and has the talent to be in the top five according to Latham.

16 Lisle Benet Academy

Coach – Kevin Renicker

2019 Finish – 9th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Sean Donnelly SR (45, 15:48), Niklas Anderson SR (55, 15:55), Sage Osborne SR (129, 16:33), Jack Robinson SR (172, 16:56), Sean Kingston JR, Emmett Tully SR, Jonas Jodwalis JR, Dominic Ullmer JR, Grant Ross JR.

Preview – Benet Academy return four runners from the state team that finished ninth. Their top two runners from that race, **Sean Donnelly** and **Niklas Anderson** are back. It will be finding runners that can step into the top five that can stay close to the front. The top five split for the team at last year's meet was 45 seconds.

"We are really happy with all the boys and the way they trained over the summer," Coach Kevin Renicker said. "As soon as we were allowed to condition, the school allowed us to participate in those immediately. And when the contact days were issued, we tried to take advantage of those days as well. Besides the training, it was really about getting everyone together safely. With that said, Niklas Anderson and Sean Donnelly have a great summer of training. **Jack Robinson, Jack Tams, Dominic Ullmer, Sage Osborne, Emmett Tully, and Sean Kingston** also had a great training block."

Osborne and Robinson were part of the team's top seven at the end of last season. Kingston appears the runner that could step into that fifth spot. The top five split is projected to be near 70 seconds to start the season. That time will come down as races occur.

"Nothing is guaranteed so enjoy the journey," said Renicker about the message he is giving his team. "We really have embraced the idea about enjoying what is in front of you. Whether it is life or training, no one knows what tomorrow brings so enjoy the daily successes. A bad run is better than no run."

17 Geneseo

Coach – Todd Ehlert

2019 Finish – 7th, Class 2A Bloomington Sectional

Runners to Watch – William Plumley SR, Justin Johnson JR, Lucas Nicke SR, Body Neff JR, Isaac Kuster JR, Malakei Schaad JR, Ricardo Chavez-Sanchez SR.

Preview – The Maple Leafs missed making it to state last year finishing seventh in the Bloomington Sectional. They do have five runners returning that have that big meet experience. **William Plumley** will be the one runner to watch for this team. He was on an average 23 seconds ahead of the rest of his teammates during the state series. **Justin Johnson** will lead the pack behind Plumley. The top five split is projected to be 63 seconds to begin the season.

18 Crystal Lake Central

Coach – Bill Eschman

2019 Finish – 6th, Class 2A Belvidere Sectional

Runners to Watch – Austin May SR, Tommy Landt SR, Karson Hollander SO, AJ Camacho SR, Julian Ryerson SR, Daniel Hamill JR, Ryan Atkinson SR, Reilly Wheeland SR, Nathan Lieb SO, Ethan Palmer SR, Aiden Schuller FR.

Preview – The Tigers missed by 21 points a chance to run in the state meet last fall. They finished 6 overall at the Belvidere Sectional. Crystal Lake Central does return six from the team that ran in that sectional race. "This has been one of the better groups I have had in 27 years," said Coach **Bill Eschman**. "With COVID-19, they have been pretty much on their own. I gave them info on what mileage they should be doing, but other than that I have not had much contact with them. They have impressed me as a whole, with the mileage and dedication. I do not know if there is one guy I could pick, because they all have done an outstanding job. Especially given the circumstances.

This team will be senior dominated in the top five with four runners projected that will be seniors. **Austin May** should lead a good group with **Tommy Landt** about 10 seconds back. A pack with a split near 45 seconds could get them within the first seven teams in their sectional.

"We know this is not going to be a normal year, but our program has always been about giving your best day in and day out," said Eschman. "So that has not changed. I believe they all understand this is a worldwide issue. Everyone is affected. They seemed to have understood that and taken it to heart. Secondly, our program is about family and they are truly a family. They just enjoy being around one another, which makes it special for me."

19 Chicago Mather

Coach – Joe Sullivan

2019 Finish – 22nd, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Kevin Gee JR (81, 16:09), Yasir Hirsi JR (97, 16:19), Daniel Bekkouche SR (128, 16:33), Emmanuel Nwatu JR (160, 16:47), Tarek Alnatsheh SR (193, 17:17), Leo Camargo JR, Mutsindashyaka Niyonzima JR.

Preview – It was a rollercoaster for Mather's team leading up to last year's sectional race. They had written off the season. They had not run in their regional race. A last minute judicial reprieve got them to the starting line at Fenton. One week later, there they were waiting to race at Detweiller Park. Mather will be one of the elite teams in the Chicago Public League this fall.

"Considering how difficult it was for everyone to train individually in the spring and early summer, I feel our team is in a good place," said Mather Coach **Joe Sullivan**. "We are ready to take another step forward as a team this season. There have not been any big surprises. Our summer build-up has not been perfect, but since we began meeting as a team our workouts are approaching where we feel like they should be at this time of year. If we can get a little better each week, by the end of October we can be a good team. Depth is a concern. The small group we have needs to stay healthy and consistent."

The top five from that state team are back led by **Kevin Gee**. The junior could be among the top 50 in Class 2A this fall. **Yasir Hirsi** was just 10 seconds behind Gee and could be closer to his teammate this season. **Daniel Bekkouche** was the team's #1 runner at the city championships and could push for the #1 spot on this team. The top five split for this squad could be around 60 seconds. That could put the Rangers among the top 15 Class 2A teams. "This season is all about the TEAM. We want to make the most of the limited time we have together this fall," Sullivan said. "Our theme is "For the Culture." Each individual has the opportunity to improve our team culture with their attitude and actions. If we all contribute the best of ourselves to the team, we can accomplish some special things between now and October 24th."

20 Champaign Central

Coach – **Steven Kesler**

2019 Finish – 8th, Class 2A Metamora Regional

Runners to Watch – Alex Ahmari SR (35, 15:41), Quin Kolodziej SR, Cooper Sweet SO, Peter Smith SO, Flynn Bright FR, Max Dillow SR, Jacob Seraphin SR, Victor Smith JR.

Preview – This is one team that I will keep an eye on. They could be a surprise in Class 2A this fall even after not making it out of their regional last October. "I am keeping them focused on each individual workout, taking things one day at a time and not focusing too much on what the competition season will look like," said their Coach **Steven Kesler**. "We are keeping things competitive within our training pods at practice."

Alex Ahmari surprised some last season by making it to the state meet and finishing 35th. His senior season could be classic. He has trained hard enough to the point where he could finish in the top 15. The Maroons return five runners from their regional team. The surprise of this squad could be **Flynn Bright**. The freshman has been able to run with their varsity group according to Kesler. He will give a boost to their top five group. The top five split is projected to be near 100 seconds, but only 40 seconds from their second through fifth runners. Getting that pack closer to Ahmari this season will be something to watch for.

21 Olney Richland County

Coach – **Rob Kirby**

2019 Finish – 8th, Class 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional

Runners to Watch – Gavin Kirby SR (23, 15:27), Brooks Julian JR, Jarrett Doll SO, Holden Hough SO, Colin Kocher SR, Keaton Hancock SR, Barak Berger SR, Colin Gilreath SR, Drew Blank JR, Caleb Rudolphi SO.

Preview – **Rob Kirby** steps in as the new Boys Coach replacing longtime Richland County Coach **Louie Gassman** who retired. The Tigers finished eighth in last year's sectional race. They hope to take the next step up to the state meet with six of their top seven runners coming back. "The older boys did a great job getting everyone together to get the workouts in," Coach Kirby said. "We have four seniors plus **Brooks Julian** who have done a wonderful job communicating with the team."

Gavin Kirby did make it to state last year as an individual qualifier. He earned all-state honors finishing 23. He will be among the Class 2A elite runners this fall. Watch for this team to get their pack closer together. Their pack behind Kirby is projected to be under 25 seconds. Getting that pack, led by **Brooks Julian**, within 60 seconds of Kirby in big races would be a huge plus.

22 Hampshire

Coach – **Ryan Hollister**

2019 Finish – 7th, Class 2A Belvidere Sectional

Runners to Watch – Aidan Gonzalez JR (142, 16:39), Ismael Paniagua JR, Daniel Nguépi SR, Henry Nangle JR, Isai Morales SR, Sebastian Abreu JR, Damian Wegiel JR, Jason Schmidt JR, Payton Edlen SO, Brayden Garland FR, Bryce Bannerman SO.

Preview – Hampshire will again look to reload this summer after finishing seventh at the Belvidere Sectional. Four runners are back for the sectional team including Aidan Gonzalez who qualified for the state meet individually. "We did not host a team camp this summer but again, I did provide my runners with a workout program," Coach Ryan Hollister said. "They have been emailing me updates on their training and time trials. I have been extremely pleased to see the buy-in despite the remote training. **Isai Morales** ran a 16:10 in a summer time-trial, which is great to see after he lost such a big portion of his season to an

injury last year.”

Morales and Gonzalez should be the top runners on this team. Moving their top runners under 16-minutes along with having a top five split under 45 seconds could get this team among the top seven in their sectional. Newcomers **Brayden Garland** and **Bryce Bannerman** could step into top five spots.

“The message I’ve really tried to emphasize is for our runners to understand that there are a lot of things that are out of our control this season,” Hollister said. “We can, however, have control of what we get out of each and every practice. We can have control over the effort we put into each workout, our speed, our stamina, and our overall fitness level. There are so many unknowns going into the year, but cross country can be that time of day where we can set all of that aside and focus on what is directly in front of us.”

23 Lemont

Coach – Tim Plotke

2019 Finish – 7th, Class 2A Thornridge Sectional

Runners to Watch – Nicholas Kania SR (71, 16:06), TJ Polen SO (158, 16:46), Evan Schiffman JR, Niko Villianatos SR, Anish Salinis JR, Liam Carey SO, Andrew Tilly JR, Adam Bromberek SO, Kevin Dillenburg SO, Tomas Garrido JR.

Preview – The Indians could make it as one of the top seven teams in their sectional. The questions remains which sectional will that be? Lemont missed state last year finishing seventh at the Thornridge Sectional. They did have two individual qualifiers advance in that meet. Both **Nicholas Kania** and **TJ Polen** should be within 15 seconds of each other this fall. A pack behind them, led by **Evan Schiffman** will need to stay within 45 seconds of each other to improve on last year’s finish.

24 Metamora

Coach – Gene Jones

2019 Finish – 10th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Ian O’Laughlin SR (16, 15:22), Colten Barb SR (95, 16:18), Andy Foster (144, 16:40), Nate Theiler SO, Bowie Adams SR, Matthew Roberts SR, Chase Ehlers JR, David Fitzgibbons SR, Brady Schroff SR, Will Kapraun JR, Carson Cowling SO.

Preview – It could be a rough road for the Redbirds getting back to Detweiller Park if there is a state meet. Then again, with seven teams advancing out of Class 2A Sectionals, Metamora might find a way in. Only three runners are back from the 2019 10th place state meet team.

Ian O’Laughlin was the team’s top runner earning all-state honors by placing 16th at state. He is the sixth returning runner in Class 2A entering this season. **Colton Barb** and **Andy Foster** are the other runners back. After that, it will be discovering who will fill the next four spots. The team is projected to have a 72 second split from their second to fifth runners. What will need to happen is closing the gap (projected 60 seconds) on O’Laughlin to improve their chances in making it back to the state meet.

25 Belvidere North

Coach – Ken Husser

2019 Finish – 8th, Class 2A Belvidere Sectional

Runners to Watch – Caden Lendman JR, Caden McNulty JR, Nick Lanzen JR, Josh Martinez SR, Brandon Massman JR, Luke Smith JR, Zach Stegman JR, Orlando Hernandez SO, Nic Borgault JR, Solomon Foley SR.

Preview – The Blue Thunder should be young but tough as they enter this season. Four runners are back from the team that finished eight in their sectional meet. Long time Coach Troy Yunk has retired replaced by former Belvidere North Girls Coach Ken Husser. “I have been pleasantly surprised with the type of summer the team has had,” Husser said. “We have had a consistent turnout and we have a core group of runners who are motivated to improve their times. **Nick Lanzen** has looked strong as has **Cade McNulty** and **Luke Smith**.”

Caden Lendman was the team’s top runner last year and will lead that group. This will be a good pack team with their split at 45 seconds or under this season. “We still need to be consistent with our training and deal with the adversity created by the health pandemic. “Obviously, we need to take the proper precautions, but there will not be any backing off in the training and whatever structure the meets and possible state series may take, we must be flexible and willing to meet those challenges,” added Husser.

26 Riverside-Brookfield

Coach – Anthony Enright

2019 Finish – 20th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Paul Proteau JR (48, 15:49), Zach Gaynor SO (140, 16:39), Peter Kallas SR (153, 16:44), Alex Terry SO (162, 16:48), Cruz Herrera SR (213, 17:18), Cooper Marrs FR, Hayden Marrs FR, Jack O'Brien FR, Steve Sanduski JR, Jovani Nava SR, Mike Samundo SR, Taylor Baird SO, Leo Martin SO.

Preview – The Bulldogs will look to better their 20th place state finish from 2019. The team has the talent to repeat the trip to Peoria. **Paul Proteau** finished in the top 50 last year as a sophomore. A top 25 finish at Detweiller is within his reach. "We will just have to deal what we can control," Coach **Anthony Enright** said. "There might not be any large invites, but we can have time trials and hopefully weekly tri-meets to measure our improvement. We have plenty of competition from within and a great work ethic."

39 seconds separate the other four returning runners that ran state led by **Zack Gaynor** and **Peter Kallas**. Enright feels that three freshmen, **Jack O'Brien** along with **Hayden** and **Cooper Marrs**, are good enough to run in their top five right now.

27 Burlington Central

Coach – Vince Neil

2019 Finish – 8th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Robert Perry JR (50, 15:51), Zac Schmidt JR (118, 16:27), Yusuf Bang JR (178, 17:02), Nathan Guy SR (198, 17:18), Payton Isola JR, Kyle Farmer JR, Ethan Leegard JR, Dean Kaliakmanis SR, Jonah Harnell JR, Ben Peterson JR.

Preview – Burlington Central will return four runners that were on their top seven from the state team that finished eighth in Class 2A. The Rockets will miss all-state runner **Anthony Farmer** and **Gio Martinez** who graduated last spring.

Robert Perry finished 50th last year as the team's third runner. He be one of the top 25 Class 2A runners this fall. The pack will need some working on heading into this season. It is estimated to be near 89 seconds for their top five runners.

28 Oak Park Fenwick

Coach – David Rill

2019 Finish – 26th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Zach Daley JR (167, 16:51), Grayden Rill SO (170, 16:55), Caden Gierstart SR (190, 17:14), Joey Schultz SR (191, 17:15), Carl Lukas JR (200, 17:19), Lee O'Bryan JR (206, 17:29), Chris Bajda SO, Jonathan Mahomes JR, Finley Huggins JR.

Preview – The Friars return six of their top seven runners from a team that made it to state. Fenwick finished 26 in that race. The team ran a 24 second split at state. Their problem was that the pack started at 167th place. **Zach Daley** and **Grayden Rill** should be the top runners on this team. This squad has the talent to move closer to the front this fall.

29 Marion

Coach – Eli Baker

2019 Finish – 7th, Class 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional

Runners to Watch – Isaac Donaldson SR, Logan Morgan JR, Benja Stone SO, Peyton Craig JR, Jack Gregory JR, Caleb Flesch SR, Gabe Kosco SR, Noah Walters JR, Chris LaChiana JR, Noah Gilley JR

Preview – A team that could be among the top seven teams in the 2A Decatur Sectional. Marion returns all seven runners that placed seventh in the sectional race. “Summer training has been great for us,” said coach Eli Baker. “I have a young team that is motivated, and they are seeing the bigger picture. The guys are buying into the process and have built some great friendships during this training process. The team’s fitness level is high considering the circumstances. Just like always, I have a few that put few miles in, but I have several that have had the best mileage summers so far.”

The team could be split into two packs starting the season. **Isaac Donaldson, Logan Morgan,** and **Benja Stone** were only separated by 25 seconds in their sectional race. There was a 46 second split before their fourth and fifth runners came in. It is something that this team most likely will successfully work on.

“My message to the guys has been to think of the future,” Baker said. “Take it one day at a time but know that we have more to be ready for and when that time comes we will be one the few that are ready

30 Normal University

Coach – Les Hampton

2019 Finish – 9th, Class 2A Bloomington Sectional

Runners to Watch – Ryan Rice JR, Mathias Culbertson SR, Zach Hutchings JR, Freddy Armstrong JR, Dylan Eble JR, Noah Davison SR, Michael Kirkton SR, Ethan Reisinger SO, TJ Supan SO, Joseph Suh SR, Jace Boree JR.

Preview – U-High has three runners back from their sectional team that finished ninth last year at the Bloomington Sectional. There will be a good pack up front. **Ryan Rice, Mathias Culbertson,** and **Zach Hutchings** were only separated by 10 seconds in last year’s sectional race. **Freddy Armstrong** should lead the next pack which will need to be within 30 seconds of the front group. U-High’s Girls team was moved two years ago to Class 1A. The Boys stayed in Class 2A due to the IHSA “Success Factor”. This could be the final year in Class 2A for the Pioneers.

Next 25 Schools (In Alphabetical Order)

Antioch

Coach – Christopher Bailey

2019 Finish – 13th, Class 2A Belvidere Sectional

Runners to Watch – Lucas Baronello JR, Ryan Johnson SR, Jacob Linck SO, Walter Winkler SR, Owen Lane SR, Kyle Miller SR, Nolan Scofield SR, Braxton Schieler SO, Mathew Watkinson JR, Luke Gutke JR.

Preview – The Sequoits finished 13 last year at the Belvidere Sectional. They will miss state champion **Charlie Smith** but will step forward returning five from that team. “We will adapt and adjust to the changes, but also understand that some things are out of our control,” said Coach **Chris Bailey**. “We also want to enjoy this time we get with each other. The runners and coaches need this, and we are going to take advantage of this opportunity to participate in cross country this fall.

Antioch will need to rely on pack running without the single digit points of Smith. **Lucas Baronello** along with senior **Ryan Johnson** should take the lead role on this squad. Their top five split is projected to be below 45 seconds. Moving the pack closer to the front will be a key.

Arlington Heights St. Viator

Coach – Wayne Edelman

2019 Finish – 24, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Michael Schumacher JR (136, 16:37), Nathan Kochera SR (176, 16:59), Connor Flynn SR (209, 17:35), Daniel Bottcher SR, Lucas Doland JR, Ryan Li JR, Christian Werba SO, Frank Scaffidi SO, Jim Hall SO, George Bayless SO.

Preview – The question for the Lions this fall on whether they will repeat their state trip depends on which sectional they are placed in. If they are shipped to the Northern Sectional, it could be tough. If they stay in the Chicago area Sectional, chances could be good. St. Viator only returns three runners from their 2019 state team.

Michael Schumacher appears to be the top runner for this team after their #1 runner **Patric Natindim** graduated. Schumacher will have hopes of breaking 16-minutes for three-miles.

Carbondale

Coach – Greg Storm

2019 Finish – 9th, Class 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional

Runners to Watch – Tucker Poshard SR (32,15:39), Alex Partlow JR, Jackson Watts SR, Ethan Stevens SR, Jackson Beaupre SR, Connor Twenhafel SO, Ajay Altman SO, Phoenix Richard SO.

Preview – The Terriers will be the team to watch in the Class 2A Southern Sectional area. Carbondale finished 9 last year in their sectional race. Six runners are back from that team.

"As far as the track season went, our HC of track/field is my assistant in the Fall so we had some good conversations on what we thought was best for our kids. We had the kids basically slow it down on their training because we were not planning any major TT in the spring. We decided to give them a short break and use the time for a big build up to the xc season since we knew many of them were coming back. We communicated regularly on what our thoughts were and what they needed to do for preparation to summer training. Once summer hit we used virtual meetings to keep everyone up to speed," Coach **Greg Storm** said. "Normally our fitness is geared towards post season and as of right now that is a little cloudy on what it will look like. With that being said, we are not going to take a rush approach to things just to prevent any injuries. I believe those kids and some others have a good base with the big build up they did and now we just need to get some better pacing to be ready for meets."

Carbondale should have a good duo up front. **Tucker Poshard** qualified for state individually finishing 32. He will be joined up front by **Alex Partlow**. The junior missed all of last season due to a hip injury. He is in god shape according to Storm. Partlow had a 15:29 best his freshman year at Detweiler Park. **Ethan Stevens** also has improved and could surprise some. The three could push each other to big things this season. The top five split is still projected to be near 100 seconds. Having the possibility of two runners that are scoring single digit points could be pleasing for this team.

Centralia

Coach – Kyle Blanchard

2019 Finish – 15th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Brooks Harlan SR (13, 15:16), Cory Fleeman SR (26, 15:31), Carson True JR (210, 17:39), Kolton Shoemaker SR, Levi Shook JR, Alex Rothlesberger JR, Alec Cross JR.

Preview – It could be a bit of rebuilding for Centralia in 2020. The Orphans return three runners from last year's state team that finished 15th. Their big plus for this season is they have two runners that could finish in the top 10 at state. **Brooks Harlan** is looked at as one of the top Class 2A runners this season after finishing 13th at state last year. **Cory Fleeman** just missed all-state finishing 26th. It is a good combination to have in the front. Coach **Kyle Blanchard** should get a boost as he is getting athletes in from other sports to run this fall. A couple of them may make it into the top seven.

Chicago Brother Rice

Coach – Tom Wazio

2019 Finish – 25th, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Eddie Burke SR (80, 16:08), Mike Corcoran SR (146, 16:41), Charlie Walsh SO (211, 17:42), Sean Deane SR, Matt Quattrocchi SR, Tom Skrypkun SR, Jack Antonsen JR, Charley Duggan FR, Sean McNally JR.

Preview – It could be a little of a rebuilding season for the Crusaders. However, they still have a chance to make it back to the state meet. Brother Rice returns three runners from that state meet team. **Eddie Burke** did not have the season he wanted according to his coach **Tom Wazio**. A good summer of training could put him among the state's best this fall.

"The message for the team this season is to enjoy the time we have because you never know what's in store," Wazio said. "With so much uncertainty, it won't do us any good to set a goal as far as a state or invitational finish. We have been given 75 days together and the #1 priority is to make the most of it. Running & training together will be the reward itself. We want to train as best we can and be ready for whatever opportunities we will have. We are determined to make this a successful & fun season."

Chicago Payton Prep

Coach – Daniel Dziubski

2019 Finish – 9th, Class 2A Fenton Sectional

Runners to Watch – Ritvik Viniak SO, William Thakur SR, Olin Hemmingway SO, Mark Zhu JR, Elias Wilkin JR, Avery Bennett SO, Koen Powell JR, George Woodson JR, Ryan Thomas SR, Connor Roche JR.

Preview – **Daniel Dziubski** steps in as the new coach of the Boys team. He is the third coach in three years for Payton Prep. Due to Chicago restrictions, he has had over three weeks of contact with his new team. "Coming off of the COVID-19 lockdown fitness levels were all over the place," Dziubski said. "We were only able to get 3 weeks of Summer training in and have already seen progress, 20-25 kids showing up for Summer conditioning. Payton was ranked as the #9 academic school in the nation, the kids are heavily involved in summer school programs and classes. Many of the kids could not make practices due to previously planned engagements (classes, etc). We got the green light to practice so late in the city of Chicago, Summer practice schedule was very last minute. I have been happy with our turnout considering all things."

Ritvik Viniak and **William Thakur** should be the top runners for this team. The potential is there for this team to make it to Peoria if in fact we have a state meet. Their top five split could be as little as 35 seconds. The key will be slowly getting this team closer to the front.

"The message so far has mainly been to stay safe and follow all the guidelines," said Dziubski stated. "Additionally I provide the message that this is their team, their program and they have the opportunity to build a cross country culture from the ground up. They have a new head coach, new AD, new principal, and lost their top 3 men including 2 captains. It truly is a rebuilding year and their destiny is in their own hands. From what I gather their mileage has been in the 25-35 miles per week range. Another message is consistency and a slow and natural progression on the volume side. It is a young team. If we held a F/S versus JR/S intra-squad meet it would be incredibly close, the F/S team might actually have the edge."

Chicago Solorio Academy

Coach – Robert Dron

2019 Finish – 8th, Class 2A Thornridge Sectional

Runners to Watch – Filiberto Franco SR, Saul Rios SR, Alejandro Blanco SR, Osvaldo Barranco SR, Edgardo Rodriguez SR, David Seruin JR, Erwin Mundo JR.

Preview – It could be a rough year for Solorio Academy considering the conditions that they are dealing with in trying to figure out how to practice and compete in meets. Five runners are back from the sectional team that finished eighth at Thornridge. "With so much uncertainty we forged on and kept hope alive," said Coach **Robert Dron**. "The guys did their runs and workouts on their own. We scaled back the workouts and long runs a little so the guys were not overstressed to the point that their immune systems would be compromised."

Senior **Alejandro Blanco** is one of three seniors that will be leading this team along with **Filiberto Franco** and **Saul Rios**. "Alex Blanco has really buckled down even more with his training and has taken on a bigger leadership role," Dron said. "He has guided the younger guys and leads by example."

Crystal Lake South

Coach – Rich Eschman

2019 Finish – 7th, Class 2A Kaneland Regional

Runners to Watch – Alex Picchi SR, Matt Brown SR, Garrett Czajkowski SR, Charlie Davis SO, KT Silversten SR, Josh Dierson SR, Will Wakersty SR, David Welte-Hart JR.

Preview – The Gators missed making it to sectionals last year. They finished seventh in the tough Kaneland Regional. Five runners are back from that team led by sectional qualifiers **Matt Brown** and **Alex Picchi**. This is a senior oriented team with six of the seven runners being seniors.

Darien Hinsdale South

Coach – Jim Dickerson

2019 Finish – 6th, Class 2A Thornridge Sectional

Runners to Watch – Julian Watson SR (28, 15:32), Adam Fournier SO, Jake Schilling SR, Umair Arshad SR, Aaron Koehler SO, Kayden Miller SO, Quartus Rassi JR, Antonio Lavorato SO, Glen Hogan SR, Mason White FR.

Preview – The Hornets just missed qualifying for state last year finishing sixth at the Thornridge Sectional. The question will be in which direction this team will be going if we have a state meet. The only sectional that could be ruled out for them is the southern most 2A sectional. Hinsdale South returns five runners from their sectional team. Their second and third runners from a year ago graduated.

"We are not in control of so much, but we can control our attitude and our ability to get out the door and run," said their coach **Jim Dickerson**. "Cherish every practice and every run, and eventually every race. Be safe and responsible, be a good teammate and person and enjoy every day. This has taught these young people at a young age that nothing can be taken for granted, and that is a powerful lesson."

Julian Watson qualified individually for the state meet and just missed all-state placing 28th. He could finish in the top 25 this season. The pack behind him could have a split under 30 seconds. The problem is closing the gap between Watson and the pack from 110 seconds down to 65 seconds.

Dunlap

Coach – Chris Friedman

2019 Finish – 14th, Class 2A Bloomington Sectional

Runners to Watch – Elijah Blascyk SR, Henry Welsh SO, Brandt Adreon SO, Aiden Mohr SO, Gavin Dean SR, Adam Welsh SR, Isaiah Hamann JR, Noah Hopkins JR, Braden Cox SO, Andrew Luebliers JR, Nick Sell SO, Rafa Davis SR.

Preview – Dunlap's Boys team finished 14 at last season's sectional. They would like to change that narrative starting this season. "Our Boys' team also need to take advantage of the opportunities to compete," said their coach Chris Friedman. "Our reputation has been the Dunlap girls are state trophy contenders and the Dunlap boys are an average Central Illinois team. This group has an opportunity to begin to rewrite that reputation. While our competitions might look different, this group has the chance to make some noise."

The team's top five split is projected to be near 50 seconds to start the season. They return their entire top seven which will help led by **Elijah Blasczyk** and **Henry Welsh**. Friedman also stated that **Nick Sell**, who played soccer last fall but ran in middle school, has been able to run with the lead sophomores this summer. He could fight for a top seven spot by the time the season starts.

East Peoria

Coach – Brandon Shaver

2019 Finish – 12th, Class 2A Bloomington Sectional

Runners to Watch – Keaton Vardel SR (27, 15:32), Matthew Gray SO, Bailey Webster JR, Zach Alt SO, Seth Bollinger JR, Dawson Stout SO, Ben Riggerbach SO.

Preview – East Peoria will look to better their 2019 finish when they placed 12th at the Bloomington Sectional. Five of their top seven runners are back from that meet. **Keaton Vardel** qualified individually for the state meet and missed all-state by two spots placing 27. Sophomore **Matthew Gray** will be the one runner to watch leading their pack as the team's second runner.

Elmwood Park

Coach – Patrick Sheridan

2019 Finish – 10th, Class 2A Fenton Sectional

Runners to Watch – Kamel Kotarski SR (131, 16:34), Omar Gomez SR, George Gauthier JR, Uriel Delgado JR, Vincente Gureca SR, Brandon Fitch JR, Anthony Wernsing SR.

Preview – Four runners are back from the Elmwood Park team that finished 10 in the Fenton Sectional. Coach **Patrick Sheridan** would have liked to have had

a head start of this cross country schedule. In the times that we live in now, that just was not possible for the Tigers.

"Our district cancelled summer camps and the men have been on their own," Sheridan said. "Our captains have handled communication, workouts, accountability, etc. the seniors know the season relies on their example and leadership. I have not had this little of control before and I am eager to see how the team culture is and how dedicated the program is and that starts with our leaders. Several guys have been training with a mixture of long runs, fartlek, intervals, raw speed and having fun doing it." **Kamel Kotarski** made it to state last year as an individual and would like to repeat that feat. **Omar Gomez** looks to be the next runner behind Kotarski.

Glen Ellyn Glenbard South

Coach Doug Gorski

2019 Finish – 23rd, Class 2A State

Runners to Watch – Ethan Woods JR (94, 16:15), Ryan Allspach SR (125, 16:31), Caleb Walter SO (185, 17:11), Ryan Daca SR (208, 17:33), Avery Webster SO, Jonah Keating SO, Nate Perkins JR. Sean Brighton SO.

Preview^[MNI] – Glenbard South will be one of those teams that will not run in an invitational this season. The Upstate Eight Conference is only holding dual meets to decide who will be the conference champion. After that if there is a state series, the Raiders could make it back to state depending which sectional they are placed in. South finished 23 last year at state with four runners from that meet returning.

Ethan Woods and **Ryan Allspach** had a good summer of training and again will lead this team. Their split on the first four runners is projected near 55 seconds. Finding a fifth runner that can stay within 30 seconds of that group will be a key.

Grayslake Central

Coach – Jimmy Centella

2019 Finish – 9th, Class 2A Belvidere Sectional

Runners to Watch – Bryan Vale JR, Sushil Suresh SR, Andrew Koren JR, Holden Rhomberg SR, Christopher Purgol JR, Joshua Landau SR, Kyle Bianchi SO, Aashay Patel SO, Connor Larkin SO.

Preview – Central returns five from last year's sectional team that finished ninth. The team could be in the mix for one of the top seven spots in their sectional. The thing to watch for is their pack moving up closer to the front. **Bryan Vale**, **Andrew Koren**, or **Sushil Suresh** look to be the runners challenging for the top position. The top five split needs to be under 75 seconds for this team to be in position to qualify.

Jacksonville

Coach – Breck Van Bebber

2019 Finish – 14th, Class 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional

Runners to Watch – Griffin Roegge SO, Braylon Overton SO, Kallen Overton JR, Zander Davidson SO, Kellen Leifheit SO, Ben Brockschmidt SO, Steven Doss JR.

Preview – After Jacksonville finished fifth in a tough Central State Eight Conference Meet, the Crimsons came back to finish 14th in their sectional race. Their top two runners have graduated. Their top seven runners for this season will be all underclassmen. Their top runner should be sophomore **Griffin Roegge** with another sophomore **Braylon Overton** close behind.

Lake Villa Lakes Community

Coach – Travis Shepherd

2019 Finish – 11th, Class 2A Belvidere Sectional

Runners to Watch – Jack Engel SR, Ben Schneiderheinze SR, Nathan Rolla JR, Andrew Wigginton SO, Gavin Murrie JR, Micah Lind SO, Ethan Goode SR, Ty Dwyer SR, Ethan Carr JR, Aidan Gillespie SR.

Preview –It will be interesting to see how this team develops in 2020. Three runners are back from their sectional team. Seniors **Jack Engel** and **Ben Schneiderheinze** should be the top runners on this team. Sophomore **Andrew Wigginton** transferred from Libertyville High School and should be a runner that you will see in their top five. The team will need to move their pack up. That pack could have a top five split under 45 seconds.

"As we found out this Spring, everything can be taken away at a moment's notice," said their coach **Travis Shepherd**. "I want athletes to enjoy being part of our team and to make the most of every opportunity. We talk about legacy a lot and I think the best legacy that this group can leave is to persevere through this difficult time and show what can be accomplished if they work hard and enjoy what they are doing."

Marengo

Coach – Kim Hoffmeister

2019 Finish – 8th, Class 2A Kaneland Regional

Runners to Watch – Luke Chaffin SR (54, 15:55), Zach Secor SR, Aaron Moehrlin SR, Preston Bailey JR, Patrick Signore SO, Jericho Tynis SO, Camden Weirich SO, Augustin Mellors JR, Tommy Lulinski SR.

Preview – A team that I could see advancing into sectionals if we get that far. The Indians finished eighth at the Kaneland Regional but return six runners from that team. **Luke Chaffin** made it to the state meet qualifying individually. He could be among the top 30 in Class 2A this fall. **Preston Bailey** had a great summer in training changing up his routine according to his coach **Kim Hoffmeister** and could challenge Chaffin in the front.

"Our message to our team has always been that we are a family first," Hoffmeister said. "We treat each other with respect and love, and to spend a lot of time laughing. Second, we take care of ourselves and others. That means doing what is required of you to stay healthy and holding yourself, your teammates, and your classmates accountable for smart choices, pandemic and otherwise. Finally, regardless of whether we end up having a season or not--and I pray we do--we are a team. We will do whatever we can together whether it is running or otherwise, and nothing can stop us from being runners and being a team."

Mattoon

Coach – Troy Haacke

2019 Finish – 12th, Class 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional

Runners to Watch – Brock Davee JR, Sam Ferrar JR, Brandon Creel SO, Tristin Grove SR, Josh Ramage SR, Mackinley Beadles SR, Chase Armstrong JR.

Preview – We could see some growth from the Green Wave this fall. All runners return from their sectional team that finished 12th in their sectional race. **Brock Davee** was on an average 47 seconds ahead of his teammates at the end of last season. He should be the teams top runner. **Sam Ferrar** will lead a pack that will need to stay within 45 seconds of each other.

Niles Notre Dame

Coach – John Barrett

2019 Finish – 7th, Class 2A Fenton Sectional

Runners to Watch – Joey Carney SO (147, 16:41), Luke Davey SO (179, 17:05), Daniel Hadush JR, Luke Heidersback JR, Kyle Muench SO, Ryan McPhillips JR, Josh Rodriguez JR

Preview – This team it seems to fly under the radar for most of the season until the state series starts with the regionals. This might be a team to keep an eye on in 2021. The Dons finished seventh at the Fenton Sectional. They return all of their runners. All of the returning runners are underclassmen. **Joey Carney** and **Luke Davey** both qualified for state last year as freshman. We could see the experience that they had payoff this fall. They will definitely be a team to watch in a year.

Rochester

Coach – Bill Owens

2019 Finish – 11th, Class 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional

Runners to Watch – Matt Herren SR (25, 15:30), Adam Gribbins JR, Spencer Loy JR, Max Wilber JR, Mark Naumovich JR, Charles Archey JR, Blake Charles SR, Ryan Gustafson JR.

Preview – The Rockets could be a team that challenges for a top three finish in the Central State Eight Conference this fall. Rochester returns five from their sectional team. **Matt Herren** will be a runner to watch among the top state runners. Herren finished 25th at last year's state meet. **Ryan Gustafson** is running for the first time after playing soccer. He is close to Herren in every workout and could be a surprise on this team. The team could have a 20 second split from their third to fifth runners. The key will be getting close to the front duo.

Sterling

Coach – Greg Hendrix

2019 Finish – 14th, Class 2A Belvidere Sectional

Runners to Watch – Sam Brown SR, Javon Bruce SR, Ben Larkey SR, Thomas Holcomb SO, Isaac Halverson JR, Israel Grande SO, Conner Pham SO.

Preview – Sterling will have five runners back from the team that finished 14th at the Belvidere Sectional. **Javon Bruce** and **Sam Brown** ran close together most of last season. They could trade off the top position again. The team could finish among the top 10 teams in their sectional but will need to cut down their top five split under 75 seconds.

Taylorville

Coach – Steve Walters

2019 Finish – 16th, Class 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional

Runners to Watch – Chris Cherry SR (10, 15:12), Evan Morgan JR, Zack Woodall SR, Daniel Sloan JR, Keegan Maxheimer SR, Hayden Harker SO.

Preview – The Tornados would like to get back to sectional competition in 2020 but could have a tough time doing that if we have sectionals. They do return **Chris Cherry** to lead the way. The senior finished 12 in last year's state meet and is expected to challenge for the individual state title. There could be a drop off of close to two minutes between Cherry and the pack, then a over two minute split on that pack led by **Evan Morgan**.

Urbana

Coach – Forrest Farokhi

2019 Finish – 7th, Class 2A Metamora Regional

Runners to Watch – Sam Lambert JR, Park Mitchell JR, Jacob Barker SR, Jakobe Shaw JR, Framiel Kashila SR, Nathan Lasersohn SR, Johnny Wright SR.

Preview – It could be tough for Urbana to make it out of their regional again this fall. They finished 7 in last year's Metamora Regional. They only return three runners from that regional lineup. **Sam Lambert** and **Park Mitchell** qualified individually into the Bloomington Sectional. They again should be the top runners on this team. The Tigers have a projected top five split close to three minutes entering this season.

Wauconda

Coach – Marie Hamlin

2019 Finish – 7th, Class 2A Lakes Community Regional

Runners to Watch – Aiden Miller SR, Kai Keene SR, Ryan Rockey JR, Matt Jasinski SR, Ryan Rininger JR, Casjen Riedell SR, Pat Jenkins SR.

Preview – The Bulldogs did not make it out of their regional meet last year finishing seventh. They do return their entire lineup from that meet making it promising that they could advance this fall. Seniors **Aiden Miller** and **Kai Keene** both qualified individually for the sectional meet at Belvidere. Expect both to trade off the #1 position on this team. The team's top five split could be under 55 seconds. Maintaining that kind of split heading into October could mean good things for this squad.

Woodstock

Coach – Jay Fuller

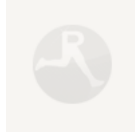
2019 Finish – 10, Class 2A Belvidere Sectional

Runners to Watch – Jack Hansen SR, Aidan Schleutermann SR, Dylan Hanson SO, Logan Hagmann SR, Max Hadory JR, Clark Shulfer JR, Thomas Sieck SO

Preview – Six runners are back from Woodstock's team that finished 10th at the Belvidere Sectional. Chances are good that they could find their way amongst the top seven teams in their sectional. Jack Hansen returns. He was their top runner a year ago. A key for this team is keeping their top five split under 65 seconds. It is projected for the start of this season at 59 seconds.

Show full article

[Like](#) [Comment](#) [Share](#) [E-mail](#)



Add a comment as Guest...

Post as:

Like 0

Tweet

History for ILXCTF - Mike Newman

Year	Videos	News	Photos	Blogs
2020	417	85		
2019	1449	440		
2018	1440	434		

Show Full History

Hashtags [#ilxctfcom](#) [#dyestatcom](#) [#illinois](#) [#high](#) [#school](#) [#cross](#) [#country](#) [#previews](#) [#ihsa](#) [#detweiller](#)