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2020 IHSA Class 2A XC Regional Meet Previews



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By Michael Newman

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The next two weeks take up more importance than they usually do during the normal season. COVID-19 has eliminated the state meet in Peoria. The change of format in which Regional Meets will be more in the forefront than usual. Instead of cake walk city in most every regional meet, the change of only five teams advancing to the sectional meets make this Saturday even more important.

You wanted a tougher regional meet? Well, you've got it.

Here is a look at each of the 12 regional races that will take place in Class 2A.

Chicago Latin School Sectional

Chicago Mather Regional

Things to Watch – The one runner to watch in the Girls race is **Elia Ton-That** of Chicago Northside. The junior comes off a great race last week at the Chicago City Championships where she ran 17:48 for the city title. She should not be pushed for the win this week. Ridgewood's **Angela Borek** has a seasonal best that is almost three minutes behind that of Ton-That. Borek should be leading that chase pack. Northside Prep could place their scorers in the top 10 and should be the team favorite. St. Viator should be the only other team in double digit numbers. It be close for the final three qualifying spots. Senn, Resurrection, Elmwood Park, Mather, and Ridgewood will make it close for those three spots.

The Boys race is wide open with **Kavin Nagpal** of Senn, **Brady Verdon** of Niles Notre Dame, **Yasir Hirsi** of Mather, and **Michael Schumacher** of St. Viator all capable winning the regional title. The team title should be just as tight as Niles Notre Dame, Mather, Senn, and St. Viator could all be within 10 points of each other. Northside Prep, Elmwood Park, and St. Patrick will all challenge for the final sectional qualifying position.

Chicago St. Ignatius Regional

Things to Watch – No question in who will win the Girls Team race. Latin School has the top four runners in the field led by **Ava Parekh** and **Marianne Mihas** and should roll to the team title. Parekh has run 16:43.8 for 2.98 miles in September as will be the favorite. The Romans should place five runners in the top 10. Payton Prep and St. Ignatius Prep are evenly matched and should challenge for the second spot. Solorio Academy and De La Salle Institute have a good chance also advance back to Lincoln Park next week.

St. Ignatius Prep could score a perfect 15 points in winning the Boys Regional title led by **Liam Linnen** along with **Nick** and **Zach Kiley**. Payton Prep and Solorio Academy will challenge for spots behind St. Ignatius.

Wheaton St. Francis Regional

Things to Watch – The best of the three regional meets in this sectional complex. Defending 2A State Champion Benet Academy has the runners to put them in front in this race led by individual favorites **Elisabeth Camic**, **Louisa Diamond**, and **Joy Jackson**. The Redwings could put all seven of their runners in the top ten. Fenwick has a good trio that could contend with the Benet group led by **Bella Daley** and **Maggie O'Malley**. Moving the rest of their pack (4-7) 4 to 6 spots gets this team closer to Benet. **Colette Kinsella** could surprise some finishing in the top five individually and getting Nazareth Academy back to sectionals. St. Francis and Trinity are also good bets to advance to next week.

Julian Watson of Hinsdale South is having a strong senior season and should be the favorite in the Boys race. **Niklas Anderson** of Benet Academy should be his chief competition. It will be close between Benet Academy and St. Francis for the regional team title. Benet will have Anderson in the front and hopefully their first four runners in the top 10. St. Francis has a tight pack led by Luke Orwig. Getting their third runner ahead of Benet's fourth, putting six runners in the first 15, and a split of under 35 seconds could host St. Francis to the team title. Riverside-Brookfield could be in the top five with a good race. Hinsdale South, Fenwick, and Glenbard South should also contend for a top five spot.

Lake Villa Lakes Sectional

Antioch Regional

Things to Watch – This meet will be run at Lakes Community HS, the same course that the sectional races will be run on. **Brooke Stromsland** of Lakes Community ran 17:12 on this course last week to finish second in the NLCC Meet. She will be the favorite on Saturday and could win by 30 seconds or better. That does not mean this field is bad. There is quality in the pack behind Stromsland led by Vernon Hills' **Rose Sheridan** and **Anna Todd**, **Rachel Soukup** of Prairie Ridge, **Bella Domier** of Grayslake Central, and **Jessie Pakaski** of Wauconda. Six runners total under 18-minutes on Saturday is a possibility.

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The team race for Girls should be great with any of four teams capable of winning. Lakes has Stromsland leading them with a strong 2-5 pack that will need to stay within 25 seconds of each other and all in the top 20. Grayslake Central could have three runners in the top ten but will need their fourth and fifth runners in the top 18 to win. Prairie Ridge is coming off a win two weeks ago at the FVC Championships. They will need the same formula similar to Grayslake Central with two in the top ten with all five scorers in the top 17. Vernon Hills could win after a good CSL performance. Two runners in the top five is possible. The next three scorers need to finish in the top 19 for the win. Antioch, led by **Sarah Benes**, could be the fifth team qualifier.

Will Gelon of Prairie Ridge is having a great freshman campaign finishing fourth in the FVC Championships two weeks ago. He could leave this regional as the individual champion. Vernon Hills has **Alex Utsis** and **Ian Joe**, Grayslake Central has **Trey Sato** and **Bryan Vale** that could finish in the top five.

It is hard to see how teams compare especially with a regional schedule. Vernon Hills and Grayslake Central enter this meet as the co-favorites. Vernon Hills could get their seven runners in before Grayslake Central has their fifth runner cross the line. Prairie Ridge and Lakes should make the trip back to this course next week. Antioch and Grayslake North should challenge for the final qualifying spot.

Belvidere Regional

Things to Watch – It could be a 1-2 finish by Crystal Lake South in the Girls individual race. **Bella Gonzalez** is off a great win in the FVC Meet two weeks ago. Teammate **Abby Machesky** could be close in this race. Crystal Lake Central's **Annie Ferrero** could be the closest runner to the South duo in this race. The two Crystal Lake schools should contend for the team title. South should have the edge with all their runners in the first 12. Central has a solid top seven that could all finish in the top 20. No other teams should be close. Belvidere North, Boylan Catholic, and Belvidere should be the other three team qualifiers.

Crystal Lake Central won the Boys FVC team title with a great race. They should duplicate it on Saturday with **Thomas Landt** as the individual favorite and **Karson Hollander** and **Daniel Hamill** finishing in the top five. Belvidere North and Marengo are solid picks to finish next. Crystal Lake South, Woodstock, and Boylan Catholic will challenge for the other two qualifying spots. Landt had the hot race in his FVC win. It could be **Peter Walsdorf** of Marian Central Catholic who had a convincing win last week at the ESCC Meet.

Maple Park Kaneland Regional

Things to Watch – The one thing to watch in the Girls race is Dixon bouncing back after finishing second behind Winnebago at last week's Big Northern Conference Meet. The team had a 49 second split on their top four runners last week led by **Jade Miller** and **Emma Smith**. The two runners should be the individual runners in this race. Burlington Central, led by **Corryn Kester**, should be a solid second. Kaneland, Sterling, and Sycamore should also advance to next week's sectional.

The Boys individual race should be close with any of five runners capable of winning. Returning all-state runners **Brock Dregenber** and **Cadyn Grafton** and Kaneland's **Isaiah Dallal** should be expected in the front. Burlington Central's **Robert Perry** along with **Isai Morales** and **Aidan Gonzalez** of Hampshire will also be close. Seven teams will fight for the five team qualifying spots. Hampshire will need three runners in the top 10 to help them to the win. Kaneland and Burlington Central should have two runners in the top 10 but will need their top five runners in the first 20. Marmion Academy could also make it to next week. They will need a top five split of under 40 seconds with two runners in the top 10 to get there. Sycamore, Dixon, and Sterling will need their best race of the season to race one more week.

Olney Richland County Sectional

Highland Regional

Things to Watch – The Girls individual race should be a tossup with **Madeline Prideaux** of Carbondale and **Angelynn Kanyuck** of Waterloo the runners to watch in the front. Highland has a good pack that will need to keep their top five split under 60 seconds. They could win if they could get four runners in the top 10 led by **Julia Loeh**. Mascoutah and Waterloo are close together and should challenge for second. Waterloo has received a big boost from freshmen Kanyuck and **Danielle Mudd** this fall. Troy Triad and Carbondale should make it to next week's sectional meet.

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Jacksonville Regional

Things to Watch – One thing to watch in this regional is that most of the teams in the Central State Eight were confined to a dual meet diet this season. That also meant no conference meets last week. So the reaction of their first big race will be interesting to watch for. Rochester's **Colleen Zeibert** will be the runner to watch in the Girls race. She ran 17:34 on her home course at the beginning of October. She should be the regional champion by the end of the day on Saturday. Freshmen **Becca Heitzig** of Lincoln and **Ava Gorrie** of Chatham-Glenwood should be the runners to lead the next pack.

Chatham-Glenwood should score under 30 points in this Girls meet with all their scorers in the top 10. Mt. Zion is a solid second led by **Ashleigh Anderson**. Rochester, Civic Memorial, Springfield, and Lincoln are four teams fighting for three sectional spots.

Chatham-Glenwood was figured to be one of the top Class 2A Boys teams this all in the state. As we head into the final two weeks of the season, here they are still where they belong even just running dual meets. The Titans are solid and should roll to the regional title Saturday afternoon. **Aidan**

Peterson maybe one of the most improved seniors in the state and will be the individual favorite for Glenwood. Rochester's **Matt Herren** and Glenwood's **Thomas Herbst** will be the next runners.

Glenwood should have a split under 35 seconds and a point total of 20 points or under to win. Rochester is a solid second and should also advance. Springfield needs to keep their split under 43 seconds to race for one more week. Mt. Zion and Lincoln are almost solid locks for the final two spots. Civic Memorial needs their best race of the season to make it to Olney.

Taylorville Regional

Things to Watch – This regional was reshuffled adding in area powerhouse Mahomet-Seymour to this group. Charleston senior **Megan Garrett** should be the runner to watch in the front with Centennial's **Brooklyn Sweikar** and Mattoon's **Kylie Haacke** close by. Mahomet-Seymour should have three runners in the top 10 with **Elizabeth Sims**, **Klein Powell**, and **Ava Boyd** leading the way. The Bulldogs are a good choice to win this team title. Charleston is a solid second with Taylorville, Champaign Central, Richland County, and Centennial to capture one of the three sectional spots.

The Boys race should be a repeat of the Apollo Conference Meet more than a week ago. **Chris Cherry** of Taylorville won that race by 12 seconds ahead of Mahomet's **Kyle Nofziger** and **Joseph Scheele**. The three will be the front again in this race. **Gavin Kirby** of Richland County and **Sam Lambert** of Urbana should also be in the top five. Mahomet-Seymour is the team favorite as they tune-up for next weeks race against Chatham-Glenwood. Mattoon, Champaign Central, and Urbana should challenge for the second spot. Richland County should be the final team to advance.

Peoria Notre Dame Sectional

Chicago Agricultural Science Regional

Teams to Watch – **Mia Nutile** of Oak Forest should be the big favorite in the Girls race and could win by more than a minute. Nutile's teammate **Hailey Gibbs** along with Agricultural Science's **Caitlin Bitunjac** will be the runners that should finish next. Oak Forest should be the team favorite in this Girls Meet. Agricultural Science and Bremen are the teams to watch next.

It could be close between Oak Lawn Richards, Brother Rice, and Oak Forest in the Boys meet. Richards' **David Olmos** will be the runner to watch in the front. Brother Rice has **Eddie Burke** and **Mickey Corcoran** to lead them in the front. Richards will need five runners in before 15th place and four runners in before Oak Forest's second runner crosses the line. Oak Forest has a good group in front led by **Ivan Corral** and **Liam McGoldrick**. Bremen is a solid fourth in this regional race.

Metamora Regional

Things to Watch – This is the toughest of the three regional meets in this sectional complex. There could be one Girls team that will not advance to the sectional next week at Detweiller Park. **Kaitlin Skeate** of Bloomington should be the favorite in this race would a good group of runners right behind her. **Emma Skinner** of Morton, **Jadyn Jacobs** of Washington, **Maria Stedwell** of Peoria Notre Dame, and **Kerrigan Vandel** of East Peoria are all among the runners that could finish second.

Peoria Notre Dame has a slight edge in this meet after finishing second in last week's conference meet. Three runners will need to finish in the first 11 with their next two runners finishing before 22nd. Morton has the power up front led by Skinner. The Potters will need runners in the top seven, their fourth runner in before 13th, and hope that their fifth runner finishes before 25th. Metamora, Dunlap, and Washington all are solid choices to finish in the top five. Bloomington will need their best race of the season to advance with their 2 to 5 split under 40 seconds. Those four runners will also need to finish in the top 32 in this meet.

It is **Wilson Georges** of Limestone and then the rest in this Boys race. Georges has been undefeated against Peoria area runners this fall including running 14:50 at Detweiller Park in September. That should not change in this meet. Metamora's **Ian O'Laughlin** and **Hunter Roedell** along with Morton freshman **Josh Weeks** will challenge for the second spot. Morton and Metamora should be within 10 points or each other as the two challenge for the team title. Morton may have the edge if they get five runners in the top 12. Peoria Notre Dame and Dunlap should be a solid third and fourth. Limestone, Washington, and Normal University all have the talent to make it to Peoria next week. Only one of these teams gets to go.

Morris Regional

Things to Watch – Geneseo's **Esther Brown** and **Avery Magerkurth** are the two runners to watch in the Girls race with Lemont's **Casey Kittridge** close behind. Geneseo is deep with six runners in the top ten and should be the team to win. Lemont always peaks during this time of the year and could be within 20 points of Geneseo on Saturday. Ottawa and Providence Catholic should make it to next week. Marian Catholic, Morris, and LaSalle-Peru should challenge for the final qualifying position.

William Plumley and **Justin Johnson** of Geneseo and **Nicholas Kania** and **Niko Valliantos** of Lemont are the four runners that you will see in the front of the Boys race. The two teams will also challenge for the regional team title. Both squads will advance to next week's sectional. Marian Catholic, LaSalle-Peru, and Morris should all advance out of this regional.

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