

2021 Class 2A boys pre-season unclassified preview

ILLINOIS XC 2021: PRESEASON PREVIEW SERIES

Carson Vittorio
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It appears to be multiple schools of thought presented by the head coaches below. But one of the main sentiments is the loss of quality personnel due to student-athletes returning to their original fall sports. In addition, it will be interesting to see if some of the unclassified teams can improve their status and make some noise among favorites in their regional, state, and even the state championship.

[Bartonville \(Limestone\)](#)

Head Coach/Assistant Coaches: Brian Glaza/Angelique Garro

Key Returners: [Wilson Georges \(Sr.\)](#), [Reece Dusek \(Jr.\)](#), Clayton Bell

Last year's finish: Peoria Notre Dame Sectional- 9th place

-There is some work to do for the Rockets after last season. A new freshman, **Caiden Bell**, has an

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opportunity to add depth and perhaps earn a spot among the scoring corps. Coach Glaza believes senior [Clay Schneider](#) has a chance to help out. Schneider's previous contribution has been on the track as a quarter-miler. Once again superstar runner Wilson Georges will lead the charge and that notoriety will be good for the program. Coach Glaza adds: "I think that this group will only accomplish what they are willing to work for. They have lots of talent, and there's lots of potential, but talent and potential aren't going to take anyone too far without consistent hard work."

[Bethalto Civic Memorial](#)

Head Coach/Assistant Coaches: Jake Peal / Clint Walters

Last Year's Finish: Richland County Sectional- 12th place

Key Returners: [Jackson Collman \(Jr.\)](#), [Justice Eldridge \(So.\)](#), [Lucas Naugle \(So.\)](#), [DJ Dutton \(So.\)](#), [Trevor Kroeshel \(Sr.\)](#), [Deacon Anderson \(Sr.\)](#), [Gabe Roberts \(Sr.\)](#)

-This could be a better year than the one that finished near the bottom of the sectional round in 2020. Senior Bryce McMurray returns after not competing during his junior year. Coach Pearl believes this could be his best team in school history. "The boys all took huge steps forward in confidence and fitness this track season and we look to carry that momentum and fitness forward to the fall and onto the grass," he said. Look for Dutton, Eldridge and Naugle to make big sophomore jumps and to be closer to Collman up front. It sounds like if hard work meets action, then BCM is going to have a good year.

[Oak Forest](#)

Head Coach/Assistant Coaches: Ed McDaniel / Mike Brown, Matt Kachlik

Last Year's Finish: Peoria Notre Dame Sectional- 13th place

Key Returners: [Ivan Corral \(Sr.\)](#), [Liam McGoldrick \(Sr.\)](#), [Prem Patel \(Sr.\)](#), [Brandan Bagnara \(Sr.\)](#), [Andy Damon \(Jr.\)](#), [Carter Birk \(Sr.\)](#), [Smith Patel \(Sr.\)](#)

-A basketball player by the name of Myles Henderson joins the program. Whether or not he makes the top seven, he will bring an invaluable spark to a team that finished their last season in 13th place at sectionals. In a continued rebuilding season, Coach McDaniel believes the team's main goal is winning a conference championship. Anything after that is a plus.

[Lakes \(Lake Villa\)](#)

Head Coach/Assistant Coaches: Travis Shepherd / Christine Zucker, Dan Jazo

Last year's finish: Lakes Sectional- 12th place

Key Returners: [Micah Lind \(Jr.\)](#), [Gavin Murrie \(Sr.\)](#), [Payton Whitehead \(So.\)](#), [Quin Maloney \(Jr.\)](#), [Zack Wigginton \(Jr.\)](#), [Ethan Carr \(Sr.\)](#), [Jordan Hornbuckle \(Sr.\)](#)

-There is some uncertainty in the air according to coach Shepard. "Over the past 5 or 6 years, we have had a typical roster that is predominantly junior/ senior-led with a mix of freshmen and sophomore contributors," he said. "This usually results in our team having a nice mix of veteran experience and leadership and youthful exuberance each year. However, everyone from our state qualifying and trophy-winning teams has graduated."

Gavin Murrie, Micah Lind, and Payton Whitehead will be the key ingredients this fall. But don't sleep on Quin Maloney, Zack Wigginton, and Ethan Carr all gained varsity experience last Fall. Assuming the summer training went well, this could be a team on the rise.

[Chicago Payton](#)

Head Coach/Assistant Coaches: Dan Dziubski / Adam Palumbo

Last year's finish: Chicago Latin Sectional- 9th place

Key Returners: [Ritvik Viniak \(Jr.\)](#), [Griffin Braunreiter \(Sr.\)](#), [Elias Wilkin \(Sr.\)](#), [Mark Zhu \(Sr.\)](#), [Gavin Lee \(Sr.\)](#), [Aiden Hu-Lowenthal \(So.\)](#), [Colin Symons \(Sr.\)](#)

-Newcomer Tristian Zhu (Fr), Younger brother of Senior Mark Zhu, has been training with the top group this summer per coach Dziubski. But a big loss is [Evan Rainville](#) whose first love is soccer. Dziubski believes his team is ready for the next step after a rebuilding season. It's time to step up and be known!

[Mattoon](#)

Head Coach/Assistant Coaches: Troy Haacke / Liz Schumacher, Dale Righter

Last Year's Finish: Richland County Sectional- 13th place



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Key Returners: [Brock Davee \(Sr.\)](#), [Sam Ferrar \(Sr.\)](#), [Chase Armstrong \(Sr.\)](#), Colton Smith (So.), Cale Fogerty (Jr.), [Aiden Hudson \(So.\)](#)

-This may another rebuilding season for Mattoon who lost several kids who returned back to soccer. However, the bright spot will be Brock Davee who has an opportunity to earn all-state honors. Coach Haacke will welcome Colton Smith and Aiden Hudson to the mix.

Metamora

Head Coach/Assistant Coaches: Gene Jones / Pete Bachfischer, Jess Mellican, Dan Herring, Cory Shoopman, Angie Kimbro **Key Returners:** [Carson Cowling \(Jr.\)](#), [Andy Foster \(Sr.\)](#), [Nathan Haines \(Sr.\)](#), [Nate Theiler \(Jr.\)](#), [Carter Grantham \(Sr.\)](#), [Drew Mischler \(Jr.\)](#), [Grant Ruach \(Sr.\)](#)

-New additions Trae Helwig (Fr.), Zeke Metcalfe (Sr.), Oliver Truelove (Fr.), and Yishak Weinman (Fr.) could be enough to cover the loss of Ben Roth who returned to Soccer. A nice mix of experience and youth will rule the day for coach Jones' squad. He hopes that the good Peoria area competition will rub off on the team and prepare them for the post-season.

Darien (Hinsdale South)

Head Coach/Assistant Coaches: Jim Dickerson / Paul Faeh

Last year's finish: Chicago Latin Sectional- 8th place

Key Returners: [Adam Fournier \(Jr.\)](#), [Aaron Koehler \(Jr.\)](#), [Owen Atkinson \(Jr.\)](#), [Quartus Rassi \(Sr.\)](#), [Mason White \(So.\)](#), [Kayden Miller \(Jr.\)](#), [Jaitin Pallath \(Jr.\)](#)

-Sophomore Leyton Mueller was technically on the team last year but was a freshman who missed all season with a stress fracture according to coach Dickerson. "He had a solid track season and has been running with the varsity all summer. He is very dedicated and tough and I expect him to be right in the fray," said Dickerson. Another freshman Andrew Peterson is ready to show his talent. He split time with swimming.

Coach Dickerson's Outlook: In the years I have been coaching here most teams have had a front runner or two and a wide 1-5 split. This year will be very different than that. We could have a super tight split, maybe within 30 seconds. If that happens, we will have a very good season. We have a good, dedicated, young core who enjoys running and if there improvement goes as well as I think it can, we will have a very solid, definitely fun team. Last season was the worst season I've had for freak injuries, coupled with our conference's restriction on outside meets, so I think we are off the radar. But hopefully we will surprise!

Urbana

Head Coach/Assistant Coaches: Forrest Farokhi / Zach Boehmke

Last year's finish: Richland Sectional- 15th place

Key Returners: [Sam Lambert \(Sr.\)](#), [Park Mitchell](#), [Julio Angrave \(Jr.\)](#), [Jackson Gilbert \(Jr.\)](#), [Hudson Coady \(So.\)](#), [Parker Schroeder](#), [Michael Allison](#), [Brian Allison](#), [Emmanuel Lokango](#), [Feras Hamayel](#)

-Look for the Tigers to improve mightily after placing last in the sectional round a year ago. Coach Farokhi welcomes Dereje Jahiel to the team and he should be ready to shine. Though there have been just several weeks of training as a unit.

Coach Farokhi adds: "I think Coach Boehmke and I are just excited to share a season with a little more sense of normalcy. Coach Boehmke expressed recently that this group of upperclassmen includes several boys whom he taught back in middle school. So, he's seen them go through the paces of training, life, and everything in between. Our goal of course is to chase that team state qualifier, but we've got to take things one day at a time. We are ready to take on the season, with no expectations other than to train hard, enjoy each other's company, and hopefully throw down some good performances when it matters most."

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