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2021 IHSA Class 2A Cross Country Sectional Previews

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2021 IHSA Class 2A Cross Country Sectional Previews

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Some great races will take place on Saturday. The fact is it will be great that we have real sectional meets. The fact is that these sectionals will qualify runners and teams to a real state meet.

By Saturday night, 72 Boys and Girls Teams will be whittled down to 28 teams (or more if ties) that will know if they have one more week to the season.

Here is a look at each of the four sectionals that will take place on Saturday.

Note: Teams were re-ranked after the regional races that took place on October 23.

[Class 1A Sectional Preview](#) | [Class 3A Sectional Preview](#)

Bensenville (Fenton) Sectional – Fenton Campus Course, Bensenville

Girls – 10:00 AM

Teams - #4 Chicago (Latin School), #16 Chicago (Payton Prep), #17 LaGrange Park (Nazareth Academy), #20 Chicago (St. Ignatius Prep), #27 Wheaton (St. Francis), #28 Chicago (Marist), Darien (Hinsdale South); Oak Park (Fenwick), Maple Park (Kaneland), Riverside-Brookfield, Evergreen Park, Burbank (St. Laurence), Chicago (Agricultural Science), Chicago (Kenwood), Chicago (Solorio Academy), Chicago (Noble/ITW Speer), Chicago (Westinghouse), Chicago (Mather)

Preview - Six ranked teams have a good chance of being one of seven teams that will advance to next week's state meet. **Latin School** has the advantage with **Ava Parekh** and **Mia Kotler** the top two runners in this race. The Romans had a 58 second split between third runner **McKenna Fellows** and fifth runner **Marin Creamer** in last week's regional race. That pack just needs to move up five seconds a runner in order to take home the sectional title. **Payton Prep**, **Nazareth Academy**, and **St. Ignatius Prep** are the teams that should challenge for the second spot. St. Ignatius Prep edged Payton by 14 points in the Mather Reginal with **Lizeth Motes**, **Ella Hwang**, and **Lexi Noonan** finishing in the top 10 separated by 38 seconds. The Wolfpack will need that kind of race again on Saturday. Payton was missing their #1 runner **Josephine Dziedzic** and #3 runner **Katie Gillespie** in last week's regional race. A full lineup could mean Payton finishing ahead of St. Ignatius and getting closer to Latin School. Kaneland Regional team winner **Nazareth Academy** could get that second spot especially with **Sarah Owen** and **Colette Kinsella** finishing in the top 10. **St. Francis** and **Marist** are strong enough to finish in the top seven in this meet getting them to state. **Hinsdale South**, **Kaneland**, and **Fenwick** all will be challenging for the seventh and final state qualifying spot.

Individual Preview - 2A state individual favorite **Ava Parekh** should win this race easily with teammate **Mia Kottler** in the runner-up spot. **Bella Daley** of Fenwick along with **Josephine Dziedzic** have sometime during the season run under 18-minutes for three-miles during the season. Watch for these two runners to challenge for third place. Some of the other runners to watch for in the front pack include **Colette Kinsella** and **Sarah Owen**, **Olivia Raemisch** of Payton Prep, St. Ignatius Prep's **Ella Hwang**, **Lizeth Montes**, and **Meghan Semmer**, **Bryce Pacourek** of Riverside-Brookfield, and **Keyaira Moore** of De La Salle Institute.

Boys – 11:00 AM

Teams - #3 Oak Park (Fenwick), #4 Chicago (Payton Prep), #6 Riverside-Brookfield, #7 Maple Park (Kaneland), #8 Chicago (Mather), #10 Wheaton (St. Francis), #13 Glen Ellyn (Glenbard South); #23 Aurora (Marmion Academy), #28 Chicago (Marist), Oak Lawn (HL Richards), Chicago (Brother Rice), Burbank (St. Laurence), Chicago (St. Patrick), Chicago (Kenwood), Evergreen Park, Chicago (Noble/ITW Speer), Chicago (Noble/Street Charter), Chicago (Noble/Bulls)

Preview - This is the roughest of the four Class 2A Boys Sectional races on Saturday with nine ranked teams in the field. Two of those teams will not get a chance to race next week in Peoria. There is a separation with the top seven in this race all ranked in the top 13 in the state. **Fenwick** showed that they should be one of the state team favorites with a great race in Peoria at the beginning of the month. **Grayden Rill** and **Nathaniel McKillop** could lead four Fenwick runners in the top 10 in this race. Fenwick wins the team title if all of their top five finishes in the first 20. **Payton Prep** has made a charge in the past couple of races to put them in position for a state trophy. They first need to get out of this sectional meet in the top seven. The Grizzlies ran a 61 second split in last week's regional win led by **Ritvik Viniak** and **Griffin Braunreiter** finishing in the top three. Both runners need to finish in the top 10 individuals while the team's top five places in the first 25 to challenge Fenwick for the win. **Riverside-Brookfield** has the power in the front with **Paul Proteau** and **Cooper Maars** both finishing in the top five. **Jack O'Brien** needs to be near the top 10 for the Bulldogs to contend for the title. Keeping their first five runners in the top 40 gets this team back to the state meet. **Kaneland** has come on strong in the last month and has the talent to challenge for the sectional win. Freshman **Evan Nosek** has stepped up as the team's #1 runner and should place in the top 10. **Christian Phillips** will be close to Nosek but the leads the pack that will need to have all of their runners in before 30th place to make it to the state meet. The Knights run a tight pack. They will need their top five split under 40 seconds in this race. **Mather** was only three points behind Payton in their own regional race. **Muhyadin Ali** won the individual title and should be in the top 10 in this race. Their top four split was 37 seconds in that race with their top five split at 106 seconds. That kind of gap could hurt them on Saturday. **St. Francis** and **Glenbard South** both exhibit strong pack running. That kind of racing could get both teams out of this sectional. St. Francis could have a 25 second split or under with **Andrew Hernandez** fighting for a top 15 finish. **Glenbard South** needs their pack in before 35th place with a split of 40 seconds or under to get them to Peoria. **Marmion Academy** would qualify in any other sectional with the way they have been running. This meat grinder of a sectional may not allow them to Peoria unless one of the teams ranked ahead of them has a bad race and falls back. **Marist** has a

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have their sights on a 1-2 finish. **Grayden Rill** and **Nathaniel McKillop**, **Muhyadin Ali**, and **Ritvik Viniak** all have the talent to finish in the top five. Some of the runners that you might see in the front include **Victor Vasquez** of Fenton, **Evan Nosek**, **Zac Daley** and **Lee O'Bryan** of Fenwick, **Griffin Braunreiter**, **Christian Phillips**, and **Caleb Walter** of Glenbard South.

Decatur (MacArthur) Sectional – Hickory Point Golf Course, Decatur

Girls – 12:00 PM

Teams - #5 Chatham (Glenwood), #13 Mt. Zion, #14 Waterloo, #23 Mahomet-Seymour, #24 Mascoutah, #29 Highland, Troy (Triad); Springfield, Champaign (Central), Rochester, Lincoln, Champaign (Centennial), Effingham, Urbana, Bethalto (Civic Memorial), Taylorville, Carbondale, Charleston

Preview - The pack running of **Chatham-Glenwood** should prevail in this team race. The top four split led by **Nia Gibson** and **Ava Gorrie** should be under 20 seconds with that group possibly in the top 12. Getting their fifth runner in before 24th place gets the Titans the win. **Mt. Zion** is the one team that could win if Glenwood has an off race. **Ashleigh Anderson** and **Hailey Betzer** should be in the top 10. The Braves need to keep 5

runners in the top 21 with a split under 46 seconds to stay close for the team win. Waterloo has a strong pack in the front with **Angelynn Kanyuck** finishing in the top 5 and possibly **Danielle Mudd** and **Cameron Crump** in the top 10 that should make it to the state meet. **Ava Boyd** won at Olney Richland County to lead **Mahomet-Seymour** to the regional win. Five teams are in contention to qualify for the final four qualifying spots. The Bulldogs could be one of those teams. **Mascoutah**, led by **Jayda Williams** and **Addison Heard**, is currently running strong and could be one of those qualifying teams along with **Troy Triad** and **Highland**. **Springfield** could be the team not making it out unless one of the teams ahead of them has an off day and the Senators keep all their scorers in the top 65 with an under-minute split.

Individual Preview - Becca Heitzig of Lincoln and **Colleen Zeibert** of Rochester raced against each other last week at the Jacksonville Regional with Heitzig running 17:08 on the 2.9-mile course for the win. Zeibert finished 30 seconds back. The two will be the runners to watch in this race. It could be closer between the two on Saturday. **Hannah Meisner** of Bethalto Civic Memorial should lead the race pack that could also include **Angelynn Kanyuck**, **Nia Gibson** and **Ava Gorrie**, **Ashley Anderson** and **Hailey Betzer**, along with **Ava Boyd** of Mahomet-Seymour and **Brooklynn Sweikar** of Champaign Centennial.

Boys – 1:00 PM

Teams - #5 Mahomet-Seymour, #12 Springfield, #16 Chatham (Glenwood), #20 Highland, #26 Marion, Mascoutah, Urbana; Champaign (Central), Bethalto (Civic Memorial), Taylorville, Rochester, Mt. Zion, Waterloo, Carbondale, Mt. Vernon, Lincoln, Mattoon, Olney (Richland County)

Preview - Mahomet-Seymour comes into this race with the edge ahead of the rest of this 18-team field. The Bulldogs did not have their full lineup, but still won their regional meet at Olney last week. **Joseph Scheele**, **Kyle Nofziger**, and **Jonah Singer** should finish in the top 10 and gives this team power in the front compared to the other teams. **Springfield** is peaking at the right time having finished ahead of **Chatham-Glenwood** the past two meets. **Ethan Sommers** and **Jack Casey** led the pack that had a 17 second split on those top four runners. The key is keeping their pack starting with a runner in the top 10. Samson Dessalines finished in a photo finish at Jacksonville and could finish in the top 10 in this race. Glenwood also has a tight pack that will challenge Springfield. The two teams were within one point of each other in their conference meet. Both should make it to Peoria, and it could be just as close as their CS-8 race. **Highland** and **Marion** are solid choices to make to Peoria. **Mascoutah** and **Urbana** are unranked and are sixth and seventh in projections. **Bethalto Civic Memorial** and **Champaign Central** are close enough to finish among the top seven in this meet.

Individual Preview - Alex Partlow of Carbondale ran 14:23 at the beginning of the month at Detweiler Park. It is hard to see anyone challenging him in this race. The race for second will be more exciting than Partlow crushing this field. **Joe Schwartz** of Waterloo, **Joseph Scheele** and **Kyle Nofziger** of Mahomet-Seymour, **Sam Lambert** of Urbana, and **Brendan Heitzig** of Lincoln are the runners that you see in that chase pack. Some of the other runners to keep an eye on include **Cale Smith** of Decatur Eisenhower **Julian Baker** of Mt. Zion, **Jackson Collman** of Bethalto Civic Memorial, **Andrew Pace** of Troy Triad, and **Lance Miller** of Mascoutah.

Metamora Sectional – Black Partridge Park, Metamora

Girls – 10:00 AM

Teams - #3 Dunlap, #7 Normal (University), #12 Peoria (Notre Dame), #18 Metamora, #21 Morton, #22 Normal (Community West), Washington; East Peoria, Morris, Geneseo, New Lenox (Providence Catholic), Ottawa, Lemont, Oak Forest, Calumet (Thornton Fractional North), Midlothian (Bremen), Chicago Heights (Marian Catholic), Harvey (Thornton)

Preview - Two top 10 state ranked teams Dunlap and Normal University lead the way in this sectional meet. **Dunlap** has the pack to win this meet led by freshman **Kate Robertson** and sophomore **Morgan Phillips**. The Eagles could get their scorers in the top 12 in this race clinching a sectional win. **U-High** has **Delaney Fitzgerald** and **Zoe Carter** that could finish 1-2 in this race. The Pioneers' pack is behind that of Dunlap's. **U-High** would need 5 runners in the top 25 to challenge Dunlap for the title. **Peoria Notre Dame** and **Metamora** will challenge for the third spot with **Morton** and **Normal West** close enough to also challenge for third. Three teams have the talent to make it to the starting line in Peoria in the seventh qualifying spot. Only one gets to go. **Washington** and **East Peoria** are close enough to each other to be interchangeable. **Morris** could be the dark horse of the three teams and get in.

Individual Preview - Delaney Fitzgerald continues to get stronger after her win at the beginning of the month in Peoria. She would be the runner to watch in capturing the individual race. Teammate **Zoe Carter** should be close along with **Teagan Cover** of Notre Dame. Morton's **Emma Skinner** and **Adeline Smith**, Dunlap's **Kate Robertson**, **Morgan Phillips**, and **Saniya Mathew**, **Olivia Nordheim** of Washington, **Addysen Clark** of Normal West, and **Kate Lalumandier** of Metamora are some of the runners that you should see in front in this race.

Boys – 11:00 AM

Teams - #1 Morton, #19 Peoria (Notre Dame), #24 Metamora, #25 Washington, #27 Dunlap, #29 Bartonville (Limestone), #30 Geneseo; Normal (Community West), East Peoria, Chicago Heights (Marian Catholic), Lemont, Oak Forest, Bloomington, Morris, LaSalle-Peru, Calumet (Thornton Fractional North), Midlothian (Bremen), Harvey (Thornton)

Preview - Top ranked **Morton** tunes up for next week's state meet with an easy win in this sectional meet. All five runners, led by **Cade Zobrist**, should finish in the top 10 with possibilities of the Porters to score under 32 points to win. Six other teams are state ranked in this race. All of those teams are ranked between 19th and 30th so determining that order could be problematic. **Peoria Notre Dame** is the team that has the edge for the second spot with **Trey Socha** leading the Irish finishing in the top 15. Metamora and Washington are the teams that should challenge for third. **Dunlap** has a strong pack with no front runners but still could finish fifth in this race. **Geneseo**, with **Gavin Allison** and **Justin Johnson** finishing in the top 15, could also advance out of this sectional. Limestone could be the seventh team in especially with **Wilson Georges** the individual favorite and teammate **Reece Dusek** possibly in the top 10. The key for them is having all 5 runners in before 75 place to get this team to the state meet. **Normal West**, **East Peoria**, or even **Marian Catholic** could be the surprise team to reach the top seven.

Individual Preview - It will be **Wilson Georges** winning the race on Saturday in this sectional. The question is who will finish second? Georges is a lock to win this race having the fastest time in the field by close to 30 seconds. **Jackson Ward** of Washington could be one of the runners that might be up front. Morton's trio of **Josh Weeks**, **Cade Zobrist**, and **Yonas Wuthrich** could be among the top five. **Reece Dusek** of Limestone, Matt Clark of Morris, **Justin Johnson** and **Gavin Allison**, **TJ Polen** of Lemont, **Trae Helwig** of Metamora, and **Trey Socha** of Peoria Notre Dame are some of the runners you might see in the front pack during this race.

Woodstock (North) Sectional – Emricson Park, Woodstock

Girls – 10:00 AM

Teams - #1 Crystal Lake (South), #2 Vernon Hills, #6 Chicago (Northside Prep), #8 Grayslake (Central), #9 Crystal Lake (Central), #10 Lake Forest, #11 Lake Villa (Lakes); #15 Crystal Lake (Prairie Ridge), #19 Dixon, #25 Deerfield, #26 Cary-Grove, #30 Rockford (Boylan), Burlington (Central), Mundelein (Carmel Catholic), Sycamore, River Forest (Trinity), Wauconda, Sterling

Preview – This is the toughest of the 2A Girls Sectionals in the state. 12 ranked Class 2A teams are in this field. Five or less teams (if there is a tie) will not be able to race at Detweiller Park next week. With rain expected the two days before this meet, the conditions at Emricson Park could be less than optimal making surprises in the team standings a possibility. Top ranked **Crystal Lake South** is the favorite in this meet with **Isabella Gonzalez, Abby Machesky, and Addie Frisch** all able to finish in the top 15. The Gators placing 5 runners in the top 30 could give South the team win. **Vernon Hills** rested one of their top runners **Reina Hill** last week in their regional race. Hill along with **Anna Todd** could have two runners in the top 10. Vernon Hills needs their scorers in the top 35 and ahead of Crystal Lake South's fifth runner to win this race. **Northside Prep** travels 53 miles to get to this sectional. They ran without their #1 runner **Elia Ton-That** in the lineup. They still finished second at Burlington Central. Ton-That in their lineup, along with her sister **Lucia**, won the Chicago City Championships. They are a team that could be one of the top seven teams in this race. **Grayslake Central** is bouncing back after a mid-season slump that involved some injuries to their top seven. The Rams could win this race with **Bella Domier** in the top 5 and their top five runners finishing in the top 25. **Crystal Lake Central**, led by **Hadley Ferrero**, made a surge during mid-season and now is on the verge of making it back to Peoria. **Lake Forest** has **Isabela Marasco** that could finish in the top 5 and **Sophia Lane** finish in the top 20. A good race from this team advances them to the state meet. Lakes has a solid pack up front with **Becca Runyan** and **Madison Perez** possibilities finishing in the top 15. Getting their top five runners in the first 50 could get the Eagles to the state meet. **Prairie Ridge** has not had their top runner **Rachel Soukup** in their top seven for the past two weeks. A healthy Soukup could get their team into the top seven. If not, it could be tough for Prairie Ridge to make it back to state. **Dixon** won at Burlington Central with strong races from **Emma Dixon** and **Emily Conderman**. The Duchesses need their best race of the year to make it as a team back to Peoria. **Deerfield**, and **Cary-Grove** are ranked in the top 30 and are good teams. It is tough to see them advancing to state from this sectional.

Individual Preview - Mary Grace Hegberg of St. Viator has run under 17-minutes twice this season including last week at Lakes where she ran 16:50 for the win. **Elia Ton-That** is her chief competition. Ton-That ran 17:08 to win the Chicago City Championships two weeks ago and should be side-by-side with Hegberg in this race. **Isabella Marisco, Isabella Gonzalez, Bella Domier, Hadley Ferrero, Lucia-Ton-That, and Anna Todd** should all be part of that front pack. Some other runners to watch include **Emma Smith** of Dixon, **Jocelyn Onstot** of Cary-Grove, **Reina Hill**, and **Becca Runyan**. It should be a great race.

Boys – 11:00 AM

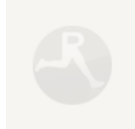
Teams - #2 Deerfield, #9 Grayslake (Central), #11 Belvidere (North), #14 Sycamore, #15 Crystal Lake (Prairie Ridge), #17 Crystal Lake (Central), #18 Woodstock; #21 Cary-Grove, #22 Vernon Hills, Lake Villa (Lakes), Sterling, Burlington (Central), Chicago (Northside Prep), Rockford (Boylan), Antioch, Arlington Heights (St. Viator), Chicago (Amundsen), Rochelle

Preview - Deerfield has emerged during the progression of this season as one of the 2A teams to beat in Peoria. The Warriors entered this meet as the favorite. Their pack is tight with **Cole Bernstein** and **Lucas Moskovitz** possibilities to finish in the top 10. Watch for this team to have their scorers finishing in the top 22 with a top five split under 33 seconds. **Grayslake Central** and **Belvidere North** are the two teams that could get close to Deerfield. **Evan Horgan** has been the #1 runner for the Blue Thunder and could finish in the top five. Belvidere North could get their top 5 in the first 25 places. **Grayslake Central** should have **Trey Sato** in the top 10 in this race. They could also **John Vagnoni** and **Bryan Vale** in the top 20 to help the rams get to Detweiller Park. **Sycamore** will have **Naif Al Harby** in the top 20. They will need their top 5 in the first 50 for this team to advance. **Prairie Ridge** has one of the individual favorites with **Will Gelon**. They will need one of their best races to make it to state. It could be close for the final two spots with **Crystal Lake Central, Woodstock, Cary-Grove, and Vernon Hills** all vying for trips to Peoria and the spot on the starting line.

Individual Preview - Michael Schumacher of St. Viator and **Yusuf Baig** of Burlington Central both have run under 15-minutes this fall. Schumacher ran 14:46 at Detweiller Park at the Richard Spring Invitational in September. Baig won the regional title on his home course running 14:51. These two runners will be chasing after a sectional title in this race. **Dale Johnson** of Sterling finished behind Baig last week and will be also in the hunt for a top five finish. **Evan Horgan, Cole Bernstein, Will Gelon, and Trey Sato**. This is a deep field with **Karson Hollander** and **Daniel Hamill** of Crystal Lake Central, **Ian Barnes** of Cary-Grove **Tedros Mekonen** of Chicago Senn, and **Naif Al Harby** all with possibilities of finishing in the top 10.

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