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2021 Richard Spring Classic Meet Preview

Boys and Girls races will be eye openers Saturday at Detweiller Park

By Michael Newman

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Saturday's races at Detweiller Park should be some of the top cross-country racing that we have seen in Illinois in almost two years. The 40th edition of the Richard Spring Classic will have 80 Girls teams in which 32 teams that are ranked. The Boys race will have 76 teams with 26 teams that are ranked. The Girls race should be the highlight of the season as top runners such as **Ava Parekh** and **Josephine Welin** lead an all-start line-up that will start just after 10:30 AM. The conditions will be warmer later in the day. The races in the morning could have temperatures in the mid 70's. The course was in great shape last weekend for First to the Finish Invitational. It should be just as good for this meet.

The Richard Spring Invitational began in the fall of 1982. Upon the consolidation of Academy/Spaulding with fellow catholic school Bergan in the fall of 1988, under the new name of Peoria Notre Dame, the meet took the name Notre Dame Invitational, and was soon to be dedicated to the memory of former Bergan runner Richard "Rich" Spring (Bergan, Class of 1982).

Rich Spring ran cross-country as well as in track for Bergan. He ran on two IHSA Class A State Championship teams and finished third in the IHSA Class A Meet in 1981 during his senior year. Spring, who loved running, sadly died in 1985 while a student/athlete at Augustana College.

Here is a look at both Varsity races to give you an idea of some of the top runners and teams in this meet.

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Girls Varsity Race – 10:40 AM

Girls Teams (80)

Ranked Teams (32 Total): (3A-17) - #1 York, #3 Prospect, #5 Downers Grove South, #9 Loyola Academy, #10 Hinsdale Central, #12 Oak Park-River Forest, #13 Glenbard West, #14 Maine South, #15 St. Charles East, #16 Downers Grove North, #19 Oswego East, #23 St. Charles North, #24 Wheaton-Warrenville South, #25 Hersey, #26 Palatine, #28 Normal Community, #30 O'Fallon; **(2A-7)** - #3 Latin School, #9 Normal University, #16 Mahomet-Seymour, #19 St. Ignatius Prep, #24 Peoria Notre Dame, #27 Deerfield, #30 Marist; **(1A-7)** - #2 Monticello, #5 Rosary, #6 St. Joseph-Ogden, #12 Joliet Catholic Academy, #14 Springfield Sacred Heart-Griffin; #15 Stanford Olympia, #20 DePaul College Prep; **Out of State (1)** - Lincoln OR.

Unranked Teams Entered (In Alphabetical Order) - Astoria, Bartlett, Belleville East, Belleville West, Chicago Noble ITW/Speer, Chrisman, Deer Creek-Mackinaw, Eisenhower, El Paso-Gridley, Geneva, Glenbard East, Glenbard North, Grant Community, Heyworth, Hinsdale South, Joliet Central, Joliet West, Lake Park, Lake Zurich, Lane Tech, Lincoln Park, Lincoln-Way East, Lincoln-Way Central, Lincoln-Way West, Machesney Park Harlem, Mother McAuley, Neuqua Valley, Pekin, Plainfield Central, Plainfield East, Plainfield South, Providence Catholic, Quincy, Rantoul, Riverdale, St. Thomas More, Sandburg, South Elgin, Springfield, Springfield Lanphier, Springfield Southeast, Stagg, Stevenson, Taylorville, Urbana, Waubonsie Valley, West Aurora.

Preview – York enters the meet as the big favorite after solid wins at St. Charles East and then last week at Lake Park. The Dukes ran a 42 second split in their win led by **Kaitlyn Winton**, **Katherine Klimek**, and Bria Bennis. All three runners have stepped up early in this season. **Brooke Berger** and **Michaela Quinn**, who were the team's top runners last season, raced for the first-time last week and could be closer to the front trio on Saturday along with **Maggie Owens** who has showed improvement over the last year. York is ranked nationally. We could see how good this team is in this race.

Prospect has finished second behind powers like Minooka and then last week against York. This team is good led by **Hailey Erickson** and **Lily Ginsburg**. The team had a 75 second split on their top five last week. Getting that time lower gets them closer to the front. **Downers Grove South** should challenge Prospect for a top 3 spot in this race. **Holly Johnson**, **Sophia Mc Nerney**, and **Kelsey Casella** finished in the top 7 at Fenton on September 4. Their gap between three and four was 56 seconds. That split will need to drop in this race to challenge for a top spot.

Lincoln travels from Portland OR to race on the same course as their coach **Eric Dettman** did when he ran for York between 2002 to 2005. Dettman brings into Illinois a team that finished fourth at the Ash Creek XC Festival in Oregon last Saturday. **Kendall York** will be among the leaders in this race and will lead this team that could be among the top five squads in this race. **Loyola Academy** won last Saturday at DePaul led by **Morgan Mackie** but without their full lineup. The Ramblers had a 76 second split from their second through fifth runners. That should come down in this race. **Hinsdale Central** looked good opening their season 2 weeks ago on their home course. **Catie McCabe** should be among the front runners. The Red-Devillettes split from 2 to 5 in that race was 56 seconds. A team that could challenge for the top five, Oak Park-River Forest has not had their top runner **Josephine Welin** in their lineup, but she is scheduled to race in this meet. Her low numbers along with a tight pack behind her could get this team up in the standings.

Latin School finished 10th last week at First to the Finish but without their top runner **Ava Parekh**. The combination of her along with freshman **Mia Kotler** could put this team in the running for a top five finish. 1A power Monticello has 3 runners that could finish in the top 40 in this race with Mabry Bruhn, Estella Miller, and Rachel Koon. Their top 4 split at Springfield was only 51 seconds. Their top five split was close to four minutes.

There are 32 ranked teams in this race. There will be some surprises on Saturday in the top five.

Girls Runners to Watch (In Alphabetical Order)

Audrey Allman, Glenbard West; **Gianna Arizzi**, Lincoln-Way West; **Brooke Berger**, York; **Mabry Bruhn**, Monticello; **Jenna Buchanan**, Bartlett; **Bella DiCrosta**, St. Charles North; **Alyssa Elliott**, Belleville West; **Hailey**

Erickson, Prospect; **Ava Giblin**, Sandburg; **Lily Ginsberg**, Prospect; **Ava Gorrie**, Chatham-Glenwood; **Kate Guderjan**, Lincoln-Way East; **Anna Harden**, Hersey; **Ali Ince**, Normal Community; **Holly Johnson**, Downers Grove South; **Brooke Johnston**, Lake Zurich; **Abigail Jordan**, Palatine; **Katherine Klimek**, York; **Mia Kotler**, Latin School; **Morgan Mackie**, Loyola Academy; **Catie McCabe**, Hinsdale Central; **Sophia Mc Nerney**, Downers Grove South; **Estella Miller**, Monticello; **Aly Negovetich**, Grant Community; **Ava Parekh**, Latin School; **Naomi Ruff**, South Elgin; **Morgan Sandlund**, St. Charles East; **Grace Schager**, Glenbard North; **Peyton Schieppe**, O'Fallon; **Anna Scheuring**, Quincy; **Audra Soderlind**, Oswego; **Lianna Surtz**, Rosary; **Josephine Welin**, Oak Park-River Forest; **Kaitlyn Winton**, York; **Kendall York**, Lincoln OR.

Preview – It would not be a stretch that this could be the best Girls race in Illinois this year. That includes the state meet that we will see in November since there is no separation of divisions Saturday morning. **Ava Parekh** has raced once this year winning at Hinsdale 2 weeks ago running 17:08. Parekh's best for 3-miles in cross country is 16:33. This will be the first race of the season for **Josephine Welin**. The last time that we saw her race she put down a 10:02 for 3200-meters at the end of June. Welin has a 16:33 best from last fall's Whitney Young Sectional race. The big surprise in Illinois this season has been **Grace Schager**. The junior jumped from a 18:21 season's best in 2020 to last weekend's 16:57 win at Lake Park. She will be in the mix for the win in this race.

Aly Negovetich has won both of her races at Lake County and Fenton this fall and will be with the front runners in this race. **Lianna Surtz** has gone undefeated this fall in her races and will be in this front pack. Freshman **Holly Johnson** and her teammate **Sophia Mc Nerney** pushed Negovetich at Fenton. They will be near the front. **Audrey Allman** has run great so far this year including 17:12 at Lake Park last Saturday. She could go under 17-minutes in this race. **Anna Harden** finished third at Fenton and could play a factor in this race. **Kendall York** comes from Oregon after running 17:50 for 5k to finish second last week at the Ash Creek XC Festival. I would not count her out of finishing in the top five on Saturday.

Mia Kotler ran 17:30 basically by herself last week on this course to finish second in the 2A First to the Finish race. How much faster will she run on Saturday? **Ali Ince** will have her first big test on Saturday after finishing second in Springfield last week behind **Mabry Bruhn**. Both runners could produce some fast times in this race. **Brooke Johnston** opened her season at Veteran Acres 2 weeks ago running 18:39 on that hilly course. She has a 17:19 XC best. It is a good bet we could see her run under 17-minutes. York has a great pack led by **Kaitlyn Winton**, **Michaela Quinn**, **Katherine Klimek**, and **Brooke Berger** that could all be in the low 17's in this race. **Audra Soderlind** came off a convincing win last week at Joliet and will challenge for a top finish. **Catie McCabe** opened her season finishing third at Hinsdale 2 weeks ago. Watch for a big race from her on Saturday. **Morgan Mackie** opened her season last week winning at DePaul. We should see a big race from her. **Naomi Ruff** is a big race runner. We could something special from her when she toes the line on Saturday morning.

This field is deep as we can see. Temperatures will be in the mid-80's by afternoon in Peoria. It should be in the mid-70's by the time the race goes off with a fast ground underfoot. I can't predict a winner in this race. This field is so talented, so deep. I am wondering how many runners are under 17-minutes at the finish. I am wondering if the winning time goes in the low 16's. One of those races to sit back and watch how it develops. It should be an instant classic.

Boys Varsity Race – 11:15 AM

Boys Teams (76)

Ranked Teams (26 Total): (3A-15) - #3 Oswego, #4 Sandburg, #5 St. Charles East, #8 York, #10 Lake Zurich, #11 Wheaton-Warrenville South, #12 Loyola Academy, #14 Palatine, #17 Oswego East, #18 Hersey, #20 Barrington, #22 Wheaton North, #24 Naperville North, #27 Lane Tech, #30 Prospect; **(2A-3)** - #1 Mahomet-Seymour, #10 Chatham-Glenwood, #21 Peoria Notre Dame; **(1A-8)** - #1 Latin School, #2 St. Joseph-Ogden, #3 Stanford Olympia, #6 DePaul College Prep, #8 Normal University, #9 Riverdale, #16 Monticello, #23 Niles Northridge Prep; Out of State (1) - Lincoln OR.

Unranked Teams Entered (In Alphabetical Order) – Astoria, Bartlett, Belleville East, Belleville West, Brother Rice, Chicago Noble/ITW Speer, Chrisman, Deer Creek-Mackinaw, Downers Grove South, El Paso-Gridley, Elgin, Geneva, Glenbard East, Grant Community, Heyworth, Hinsdale South, Joliet Catholic, Joliet Central, Lake Park, Lincoln Park, Lincoln-Way East, Machesney Park Harlem, Marist, Oak Park-River Forest, O'Fallon, Pekin, Plainfield Central, Plainfield East, Pleasant Plains, Providence Catholic, Quincy, Rantoul, Rockton Hononegah, St. Charles North, St. Thomas More, St. Viator, Shepard, South Elgin, Springfield, Springfield Lanphier, Springfield Sacred

Heart-Griffin, Springfield Southeast, Stagg, Taylorville, Urbana, West Aurora.

Preview – 26 ranked teams are in this race. The hot team so far this fall has been **Oswego** with some impressive pack running. The Panthers had a 5-runner split of 36 seconds in their title at Yorkville in August led by the individual win from **Ethan Forsell**. Their split dipped to 27 seconds in their win the following week at UW-Parkside. Top five runners **Balin Doud** and **Braden Cardamone** did not race last week at Joliet. Oswego still had a 14 second split on their top 4 runners in their win over York. Oswego goes 6 deep with their runners. They know how to pack race. If one of their runners can place in the top 10 with those kind of team splits, the Panthers could be tough to beat on Saturday.

Sandburg looked impressive in their opening season win at Lyons Township on September 4. **Declan Tunney** and **Brock Rice** give the Eagles a formidable duo in the front. The addition of Grant Giblin from that meet's sophomore race would give the team a 52 second split for their first five. Their actual top five split was 89 seconds. Their runners in the front plus a tighter pack could give this team the win. **Lincoln OR** is a team that is ranked in the NXN Northwest Region and has a chance to win in this meet. **Aidan Smith** was fourth at Ash Creek last week and could be joined by teammate **Tucker Bowerfind** in the top 10. The team's top five split was 44 seconds. Their split from Bowerfind and fifth runner **Eamon Whitten** was only 21 seconds. This is a team to keep an eye on this Saturday.

St. Charles East ran a strong race in winning last week at Lake Park behind the individual win from **Micah Wilson** who will be the individual favorite in this meet. **Mitch Garcia** leads the pack behind Wilson a 45 second 2to five split last week. Garcia staying close to 15 minutes with the split coming down could mean the Saints finishing in the top three. **York's** opening race was a rust buster as they finished second behind Oswego at Joliet last Saturday. Their top runner **Ethan Summer** did not race last week but will be on the starting line this Saturday. The Dukes had a 4-runner split of 22 second split off **Eric Rutherford**. York has the tendency of running much better in their second race as they have shown in previous years. Summer in the top 15 with the pack within 20 seconds could mean big things for the Dukes in this race. Lake Zurich has not raced their top 7 yet this season. We will get a good indication of how good they are in this meet.

Wheaton-Warrenville South led by **Michael Atkins**, Loyola led by **Spencer Werner** and **Aidan Simon**, and Palatine led by **Mason Krieg**, all have the talent to place in the top five. 2A #1 Mahomet-Seymour and 1A #1 Latin School will see if they can finish among the top 10 teams in this meet.

Boys Runners to Watch (In Alphabetical Order)

Michael Atkins, Wheaton-Warrenville South; **Tucker Bowerfind**, Lincoln OR; **Danny Burns**, Lake Zurich; **Alexander Das**, Oswego East; **Samson Dessalines**, Chatham-Glenwood; **Balin Doud**, Oswego; **Carter Eid**, Bartlett; **Ethan Forsell**, Oswego; **Joey Furlong**, Barrington; **Ryan Hardiman**, Latin School; **Byron Jones**, Belleville East; **Mason Krieg**, Palatine; **Marcellus Mines**, Joliet West; **Tommy Murray**, Riverdale; **Tim Neumann**, Downers Grove South; **Kyle Nofziger**, Mahomet-Seymour; **Parker Nold**, Oswego East; **Connor Oiler**, Hersey; **Akili Parekh**, Latin School; **Jake Phillips**, Marist; **Brock Rice**, Sandburg; **Nolan Rogers**, Lincoln-Way East; **Fiker Rosen**, Quincy; **Eric Rutherford**, York; **Gabe Ryan**, Naperville North; **Sean Safford**, Hersey; **Joseph Scheele**, Mahomet-Seymour; **Ryan Schreiner**, Wheaton North; **Michael Schumacher**, St. Viator; **Aidan Simon**, Loyola Academy; **Aiden Smith**, Lincoln OR; **Ethan Summer**, York; **Declan Tunney**, Sandburg; **Spencer Werner**, Loyola Academy; **Hunter Whitney**, Lane Tech, **Micah Wilson**, St. Charles East; **Dylan Ybarra**, O'Fallon; **Ryan Zydek**, Wheaton North.

Preview – The Boys field in this meet is not as deep as what will be in the Girls race. That does not mean there are some great runners that are ready to put up some quick times on this fast Detweiller Park course. **Micah Wilson** comes in as one of the favorites in this race. I don't think we have seen him run all out this season after winning races at Kane County and Lake Park. He cruised across the line last week in 14:52. He could be close to 14:30 in this race. **Aiden Smith** is a runner that we should see in the front. The senior from Oregon is coming off a 4th place finish last week at the Ash Creek XC Festival. He has showed improvement from last spring when he was all-state in the Oregon 6A meet for the 3000 Meter Run. **Spencer Werner** put in some big races at the end of last track season including double all-state at Charleston and then winning at Magis Miles. He has a best of 14:47 for 3-miles from his sophomore year of 2019. He should go faster than that in Saturday's race.

Tim Neumann has the potential to rip off a fast race on this course. He has a 14:50 personal best for 3-miles in 2020. He made a statement in his opening race at Lyons Township running 15:25 for the win. **Declan Tunney** and **Brock Rice** were with Neumann until the end of the race We could see both challenging for top 10 finishes. **Alex**