2016 DyeStat Pre-Season Rankings August 19, 2016

Mahomet-Seymour and Grayslake Central entered last year’s 2A Boys State Meet as the top ranked teams in the classification. Grayslake Central prevailed with a dominating team performance putting 5 runners in the top 26 to win by 67 points ahead of Mahomet-Seymour. Yorkville was the next team in placing third. With Yorkville now in 3A, Grayslake Central has lost some runners to graduation but will be tough. Mahomet-Seymour only lost 2 of their top 7 to graduation and have reloaded to go after a state championship. Normal University jumped into contention last October, but ran out of steam at the state meet finishing 10th.

Those 3 teams have separated themselves from the rest of the pack heading into this season. You never know. There could be a team just waiting to jump into the top 5. It usually happens with Cross Country teams in this state.

**2A Boys Top 25 Teams**

**1 – Mahomet-Seymour**

**Coach – Neal Garrison**

**2015 Finish – 2nd, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Andrew Walmer SR (10, 14:48), Gabe Pommier SR (42, 15:27), Brian Butcher SR (61, 15:43), Ben Craw SR (68, 15:47), Ryan Hodge JR (78, 15:54), Riley Fortune JR, Bryson Keeble SO, Mathias Powell SO, Garret Williams JR, Joe Churm JR, Lucas Chittick SO, Kaelan Davis SO, Evan Burge JR.

**Preview** – It looked like Mahomet-Seymour was under control and ready to capture its first state championship by the way they were running during October into the state series. The problem was that no one told Grayslake Central about Mahomet-Seymour’s plans. It was just one of those days that the Bulldogs ran well, but their competition was head over heels ahead of them. Their second place trophy was acceptable to them, but they had another trophy in mind. They will miss their graduated seniors led by Alex Keeble. But this team is still strong with 5 runners back from hat state team along with a deep bench.

“Our team was glad they won a trophy last year at State,” said Neal Garrison “I think they knew Grayslake is an impressive team and really ran well at State.  While it would have been ever better to have won, we knew it would have been extremely challenging on our best day to beat such an impressive team.” Andrew Wallmer ran his best race of the season at state finishing 10th overall. Prospects look good that he should be finishing higher this November. He has a good senior group behind him with Gabe Pommier, Brian Butcher, and Ben Crew. This team is deep with 5 runners able to step up to the final 3 spots.

This team could run a 60 to 65 second split with Walmer up towards the front. So concentration on the pack behind him will be key. It would be good if this team runs a 2 to 5 runner split of under 30 seconds with an overall split of 50 to 55 seconds. That could put the Bulldogs in position to capture the state championship. Lots of work will need to be put in from now to November to accomplish that. “We haven't set any goals.  My goal for them is to improve every year as individuals and as a team.  We can't really control what other teams do so my focus has always been on getting my runners and teams to focus on improving (which is more in their control),” added Garrison. “I do think winning a trophy is motivating.  It is fun to have hard work rewarded.  I think it encourages hard work to continue.  I think not winning State leaves a sense that there is something left unaccomplished.”

**2 – Normal University**

**Coach – Lester Hampton**

**2015 Finish – 10th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Jack Franklin SR (6, 14:42), Zach Wolford SO (33, 15:20), Jared Shuckman JR (102, 16:02), Tanner Gillam JR (114, 16:08), Harris Porter JR (168, 16:40), Jackson McClure SO, Dane Alexander SO, Matt Zacharias JR, Josh Nepomuceno SO, Grayson Will SR, Alok Kamitar JR, Simon Heinrich JR.

**Preview**– It started at the Richard Spring Invitational last September when Normal University dominated the Frosh/Soph division of that meet. A group of the runners where then moved up to varsity for the Peoria Central Invitational where they won the 2A team competition. The Pioneers moved on from there getting close to then top ranked Mahomet Seymour in their conference, regional, and sectional meets. It seemed that they ran out of steam as this young team finished 10th. That experience should be beneficial for Lester Hampton’s squad. 5 runners are back from that state team. There is plenty of depth behind these 5 that makes this team dangerous this season.

Jack Franklin has emerged as one of the top runners in the state and the #1 man on this team. Considering he ran 17:37 as a freshman, Franklin has made huge strides as he ran 14:42 at state last year. Franklin looks to be the only senior in the top 5. The remaining returning runners are either juniors or sophomores. Zach Wolford finished 33rd as a freshman last year and should be among the top 25 this season. Jared Shuckman showed improvement during track and could be the team’s surprise this fall. “We’re hoping to build on the momentum from last year where we felt we competed very well at Conference, Regional, and Sectional, but didn’t quite have enough left to finish where we hoped at State,” Hampton said. “Jack Franklin will certainly be our team leader, but our team success will depend on how many of his teammates he can bring with him!  It is imperative that we get back to “Pack” running, if we do, then this will be one of my most fondest teams to watch compete.”

U-High could be competing for a trophy. We might not see their “true” top 7 until the Peoria Central Invitational where they will be competing in the 3A level this season. The depth that they have will be able to give some runners a little rest to get ready for the drive in October. The pack is the key as Hampton said. A 40 second 2 to 5 split off of possible #2 man Wolford could mean big things for this team in November.

**3 – Grayslake Central**

**Coach – Jimmy Centella**

**2015 Finish – 1st, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Jack Aho SR (1, 14:25), Matt Aho SR (7, 14:42), Eli Minsky JR (25, 15:09), Ben Steinbeck SR, Noah Boelens SR, Luke Reblin JR, Matthew Droessler SO, John Sullivan JR, Jared Marcus SR, Godson Okpu JR, Dylan Sulzer SR, Evan Nordman SR, Ethan Boelens FR, Dominic Giannini FR.

**Preview** – No one was going to beat Grayslake Central when they stepped to the starting line last November. The Rams were dominant taking back the individual and team championship. Even though they lost 4 runners to graduation, it does not hurt to build your 2016 team with 3 all-state runners returning. “Summer training has gone well.  Our “Big 3” all have all logically upped their training volumes from the previous summer,” Jimmy Centella said. “The rest of the team was consistent as well this summer.  It will be interesting to see how our returning sophomores, juniors, and seniors will respond to fighting for varsity spots.  There was a nice group of consistent runners that are making the push to enter the top 7.”

It helps your team when you have the defending 2A state champion coming back. Jack Aho enters this season as perhaps the top Boys Distance runner in the state running 4:08 for the mile and 9:00 for 3200 last spring. His brother Matt had a good cross country season finishing 7th last fall. He should be among the top 5 best runners in 2A. Eli Minsky came on strong at the end of last year also finishing 25th. The question will be finding a #4 to #5 runner. Seniors Ben Steinbeck and Noah Boelens look to be the runners that could step into those positions. Luke Reblin had a good summer and could step into those spots as well.

“Obviously, it’s always a goal to defend your state title the following year and that is something that we hope to do.  However, we lost a lot of veteran seniors from last year and will need lots of runners lacking true varsity experience to step it up big time if we are to have a chance at defending,” Centella added. “What we are focusing on this season is improving the talent that we have.  If we can find some 4-7 runners to make some big, but realistic gains, we will put ourselves in a position to be in the mix come November.” Figure that this team will put their top 3 in least their top 12 this season. Finding the next two scorers is their challenge but not as bad as it seems especially when you have all that power up front. It will be something to be watched the first month especially when they run at Palatine at the end of September. The key will be watching the split from Minsky to his teammates behind him. 40 seconds looks like the time to watch especially if this team wants to repeat their state championship.

**4 – Chatham-Glenwood**

**Coach – Mike Garber**

**2015 Finish – 12th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Chris Durr SR (53, 15:36), Logan Capps JR (116, 16:08), Dathan Maton SO (123, 16:11), Drey Maton SO (151, 16:25), Cooper Peterson SO (182, 16:48), Jack Carnduff SR, Eli Rudin JR, Jacob Olson SR, Grant Edwards SO, Cody Miner SR, Matt Wendel SO, Jacob Roach JR, Graham Turk FR, Marti Carter JR.

**Preview**– The Titans showed some growing pains during last season including the state meet when they finished 12th. That will happen when you have 3 freshmen and a sophomore among your top 7. Those runners are back along with senior Chris Durr to pursue after a state trophy. “Summer training was great. We had kids at summer runs nearly every day and many of them will be pushing for 500 miles (or 300 if they are first time runners/freshmen),” Mike Garber said. “I always have to remind my runners is to get off the roads and find grass. We did that very well this summer. Legs should be healthy and fresh for the start of our training.”

Durr should be the top runner for this squad. He finished 53rd last year and has his sights on a much higher finish this fall. The 2-5 split will be important for this group led by junior Logan Capps along with sophomores Dathan & Drey Maton and Cooper Peterson. Freshman Graham Turk could be fighting for one of those spots by the end of the season. This team is deep with 10-12 runners fighting for those 6 positions. They key will be keeping the split close to 30 seconds on the 2 to 5. There were points during the season that the pack was within seconds of Durr. That kind of split would be beneficial for this team to go after a state trophy. “The loss of some top 2A talent to 3A opens to door to some interesting developments this season. This team has eyes on being one of the teams to fill in the Top 5 in the state,” Garber said. “The boys have also been talking about bringing back the CS8 title to GHS and they are working hard to do so. The youth we had last season is not only back, but on fire. They want to win Conference, Regionals and Sectionals and make a run at being one of the Top 5 teams in the State. From what I've seen so far, it should be very possible.”

**5 – Danville**

**Coach – Todd Orvis**

**2015 Finish – 13th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – William Powell SR (48, 15:33), Phillip Hall JR (113, 16:08), Sincere Williams-Davis JR (133, 16:17), Brandon Bartel SO (166, 16:39), Tyler Huckelberry SR, Terry Dalton SO, Easton Towne JR, Roberto Rangel SO, Noah Hile SO, Anthony Jackson JR, Michael Moreman FR.

**Preview** – Do not sleep on this team. There is a level of progression that I like from their runners. The Maroons finished 13th at last year’s state meet. They return 4 of their top 7 from last year’s state team. There is something about this team that I see that could do some great things this fall. “Our summer training went well.  More kids are buying in and our top runners have put in solid mileage in preparation for the season,” said Coach Todd Orvis.

William Powell was their top runner last season at state placing 48th. His improvement over the past seasons show that he could finish among the top 25 this fall. Phillip Hall and Sincere Williams-Davis were part of Danville’s 4x8 team that finished 7th in the 3A State Meet last May. Hall was the #3 runner last fall and looks to close the gap between him and Powell. A big addition for Orvis will be Freshman Michael Moorman. He finished second in the IESA 1A state meet last fall in 8th grade. He is expected to be challenging for one of the top spots. Brandon Barfel and Tyler Huckelberry both have showed improvement. Watch for them in the next few months.

This team needs to keep their 1 to 5 split under 60 seconds this fall. With Powell most likely chasing a top 25 finish, that is a good thing. Staying healthy is another thing that Danville has to keep a watch out for. “One of the same goals that we have each year is winning the Big 12.  Haven't done it since 83',” Orvis added. “We should at least be in the conversation.  We also have goals of returning to the state meet and improving on our 13th place finish from last season.”

**6 – Crystal Lake Prairie Ridge**

**Coach – Judd Shutt**

**2015 Finish – 8th, 2A Woodstock North Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Filip Pajak SR (4, 14:39), Mike Ostrow SR, David Tulke SR, James Lesak JR, Brian Dorn SR, Kevin Gilbert JR, Jacob Hanacek SR, Jay Puca SR, Ryan Figgins JR, Jake Laukert JR.

**Preview** – This could be the year that the Wolves make some noise on the state-wide scene. 5 runners are back from their top 7 that finished 8th in the Woodstock North Sectional. Their big gun is Filip Pajak who finished 4th last fall at state. He showed improvement during the track season. He should be fighting for a top 3 spot at state. The pack behind Pajak will need to stay within at least 45 seconds of their star. Mike Ostrow and James Lasak look like the runners that should lead that pack. It is the gap between their 4 other scores that could be a concern. At some points last year, that gap creeped towards 90 seconds. For this team to advance and finish highly at the state meet, it has to come down to 42 seconds.

“We remained injury free and were able to gradually add miles for several runners that were injured during track, but hope to impact our varsity squad,” Judd Shutt said. “I expect our team to race more aggressively and as a tighter pack than last season.  I believe that this group has the ability to challenge for a conference title and earn a trip to the state meet if they develop greater racing toughness.  Our success will hinge on the leadership of seniors and their ability to make the most of every practice and every racing opportunity.”

**7 – Riverside-Brookfield**

**Coach – Larry Forberg**

**2015 Finish – 7th, 2A Wheaton Academy Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Mateo Nunez SR (40, 15:26), Connor O’Brien JR, Matt Zamudio SR, Jacob Wardzala JR, Jack Sagan JR, Jason Noel JR, Matt Armenta SR, Chris Maguo SO, Nathan Palmer SR, Devin Compean JR, Nick Allegretti SR, Jacob Lams SR, David Keen SO.

**Preview** – Here is a team that I feel will challenge for a top 5 team spot this season. The Bulldogs finished 7th at the Wheaton Academy Sectional last fall. They do return 6 of their top 7 from that sectional team. It could be a strong junior squad that could push this team to state this season. Mateo Nunez looks to have a good senior season after qualifying individually for state and finishing 40th. His prospects look good that he will improve on that finish. Juniors Connor O’Brien, Jack Sagan, Jacob Wardzala, and Jason Noel all had good summers of training. The four ran within 25 seconds of each other towards the end of last season. Matt Zamudio also contributed to the top 5 last fall. He injured his knee and won’t be back until the end of September. He is another runner that will contribute when the time is right.

This team ran tough towards the end of the year running 45 to 50 second splits off of Nunez. The key will be stepping up the final 2 weeks at sectionals and then at state. The talent is there to accomplish that. “Physically the guys progressed last year as well as this summer; this year I have to do a better job on preparing their mental approach to racing,” said Coach Larry Forberg.

**8 – Crystal Lake Central**

**Coach – William Eschman**

**2015 Finish – 11th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Weston Sterchi SR (43, 15:27), Cole Barkocy SR (55, 15:37), Brandon Tomasello SR (79, 15:54), Josh Johnson JR (139, 16:20), Tyler Tomasello SR (194, 17:07), Justin Jackson SR, Jack Flynn SO, Joshua Antongiovanni JR, Adam Zentner SO, Dillon Davids SR, Tyler Norris SR, Giovanny Macias SR.

**Preview**– Things look good at the beginning of this season that the Tigers will return back to Detweiller Park for the state meet. They finished 8th last year and return 5 of their top 7 runners from that squad. Weston Sterchi and Cole Barkocy will again lead this team. Both did not have the best races at state last year. Sterchi finished 43rd and Barkocy had breathing problems during the race in which he finished 55th. Both have the potential to finish in the top 25.

“Summer running went well for the most part,” said Bill Eschman. “The guys put in more miles than they ever had in the past.  Which for some doesn't mean much, but they did run on a regular basis for the most part.  I'm excited to see how the summer running translates for Josh Johnson, Tyler Tomasello, and Justin Jackson.” One runner that could step up is Brandon Tomasello. He finished 17 seconds behind Barkocy at state. We know Barkocy did not have his best race but Tomasello showed signs of improvement before that. He should lead the pack behind those 2 and could finish among the top 50 in state. The splits on the top was not good at the end of the season getting close to 2 minutes in some meets. This team could challenge for a spot in the top 5 but that 5 runner split needs to come down to at least 70 seconds."

**9 – Springfield**

**Coach – Dan Devlin**

**2015 Finish – 6th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Jackson Esela SR (44, 15:28), Barrett Kurman JR (82, 15:54), Payton Fine SR, Reece Koke SR, Shaul Latif JR, Zach Kinison SO, Jack Flesner SO, Joseph Abe-Bell SR, Jarrett Gary SR, Devon Swafford SR, Ryan Waldinger SO, Milan Parikh SR, Will Formea SR, Isaac Becker FR.

**Preview**– Some people would think that this would be a rebuilding year for the Senators. They did lose 5 runners to graduation including all-state runner Heath Warren. With that group, Springfield finished 6th in last year’s state meet. The talent was there last year behind the 5 that graduated. This team could make another appearance back at Detweiller Park in November. Jackson Esela is the top returnee from last year’s group as he finished 44th as the team’s 2nd runner. He showed improvement during the track season. We should see him challenging for a top 25 finish this fall. Barrett Kurman finished as the team’s 3rd runner in most cases 20 seconds behind. We could see some growing pains from this team in their first few meets. By the time we get to the state series in October, Springfield could be a challenger for the sectional championship and a state berth. The history of this program shows us that.

**10 – Rockford Christian**

**Coach – Randy Moore**

**2015 Finish – 18th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Riley Wells SO (71, 15:48), Josiah Vogel JR (92, 15:59), Jack Kurtz SR (130, 16:15), Noah Wells SR (153, 16:25), Will Mecklenberg SR, Nicholas Capriola SO, Cal Granite SO, Josh Hankamp SO, Tobias McIntosh JR, Brent Brunner SO, Carter Fryer FR.

**Preview** – The success of the 4x8 relay that 1A state championship last spring should have a big effect on Rockford Christian this fall. The beginning of last year was bumpy for this team as they found out that they would be running in the 2A classification. The Royal Lions rebounded nicely qualifying for the state meet placing 18th. 5 of the top 7 were tor return from last year’s state team. Andy Volk, who was the team’s #6 runner at state, will be playing soccer this fall. There is talent that will be able to overcome that. “Our summer and foundational training has been excellent. We've already seen great improvement from our rising sophomores,” said Randy Moore.

One of those rising sophomores is Riley Wells. He finished 71st last season but showed so much improvement during the track season including anchoring his team’s 4x8 to the 1A state championship. He also came back to earn all-state honors in the 1600. He could be one of the state’s surprises at Detweiller in November. It is possible to get a pack close to Wells. Josiah Vogel should lead that group. He was close to Wells during last year. This fall especially with Wells improvement Vogel should be leading that pack. The talent is there to fill that pack with Vogel, Jack Kurtz, and Noah Wells along with XC newcomers Brent Brunner and Carter Fryer. The success from this team on the 1A level has been their packing. The same thing can happen with this group. 10th or better at state is possible. “This team has adopted the theme of "Always Reppin”, Moore added. “The meaning being that we are always representing our team, our families, our school, and our faith. This is a big part of our program's expectations and tradition: how and why we train and race matter. I believe this is one factor for why their summer training has been so consistent and disciplined. They are doing the good and hard work on their own when no one else is watching. An additional target that this squad has established is to return to the 2A state meet and to be better emotionally prepared.”

**11 – Dixon**

**Coach – Ian Thorpe**

**2015 Finish – 10th, 2A Woodstock North Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Collin Grady SO, Jonah Fulton JR, Blain Masterson SR, Andrew Lohse SO, Lukas Windekind JR, Sean Masterson SR, Luke Stees JR, Mitchell Dixon SR, Jacob Heloler JR, Andrew Leslie SO, Mason Rhodenbaugh SR, Logan Griswold FR, Christian Seagren FR.

**Preview** – In a tough sectional like Dixon is in, you have to run your “A” race at sectionals. After Dixon finished 2 points behind conference rival Rockford Christian both at their conference and regional meets. The Dukes did not have their best sectional race finishing 10th at Woodstock. “This has been my favorite team to coach at Dixon,” Evan Thorpe said. “They deserve to be at Detweiller in November.”

Collin Grady finished off a good freshman XC season placing 20th in his sectional race. He did not have a great track season and looks to bounce back this fall. Dixon returns their top 6 including Grady. Blain & Sean Masterson will give this team good senior leadership. Dixon could also get some immediate help from freshmen Christian Seagren and Logan Griswold in the top 5. Dixon ran good 1 to 5 runner splits off of Grady most of last year averaging 45 seconds. It was 62 seconds in their sectional race. That pack mentality has to be a #1 priority for this team especially when they get to the state series.

**12 – Belvidere North**

**Coach – Troy Yunk**

**2015 Finish – 8th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Jared Ellingson SR (84, 15:55), Alec Scott JR (132, 16:17), Jack Macaluso JR (154, 16:25), Brandt Lerma SR, Austin Harnois JR, Virgil Munyemara JR, Chris Winters JR, Tyler Paddock JR, Roberto Avila JR, Phillip Menard SO.

**Preview**– 4 runners have graduated from Belvidere North’s 8th place state team including all-state Eryk Yunk who is now at Mississippi State. “Our 2016 Blue Thunder will be a young team with very limited varsity experience,” said Troy Yunk. “The past 9 years our team has been led by an All-State runner, but this year that won't be the case. Our team will need to be a good pack running team and our number one to number 5 split will need to be low.”

The first month of this season will be a time to figure out what kind of team Belvidere North will be. They do have 3 runners that have state meet experience led by senior Jared Ellingsen and juniors Alec Scott and Jack Macaluso. Their pack will start from those 3. There are 6 other runners that will challenge for the next 4 spots. It is going to be tougher for this team to return the state meet especially with the inexperience of most on the roster in big meet situations. The meets leading to the state series will define who this team is. But this school has been through this before. If any team in this situation can advance, it would be Belvidere North.

**13 – Maple Park Kaneland**

**Coach – Chad Clarey**

**2015 Finish – 17th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Matthew Richtman JR (18, 15:04), Andrew Kantola SR (148, 16:23), Sam Webster JR (157, 16:27), Jacob Wielgos SO, Henry Nosek JR, Christian Girolamo JR, Peyton Heiser JR, Anthony Messina SR, Noah Duffey SR, Aidan Lodwig SO, Kyle Konrad JR, Noah Duffey SR, Daniel Occhipinti FR.

**Preview** – Kaneland survived the toughest 2A sectional in the state advancing to the state meet finishing 17th. 3 runners are back from that team led by Matthew Richtman who finished 18th at state. A big bonus to the team last year was when Sam Webster stepped in to the sectional and state meet as the team’s 5th runner. Webster did not have any varsity experience prior to that. Noah Duffey was a top 5 runner in 2014 but a leg injury caused him to miss last season. He is healthy and will look to contribute to this team. The 1 to 5 runner split should be ignored especially with Richtman being up front. The split on 5 at state was 83 seconds last year, 46 seconds on the 2 to 5 runner split. The overall split needs to come down to 65 seconds with a 35 second split on the pack for this team to return to the state meet. “While our team has not set any outcomes for the end of the season yet, I would think that they have aspirations of making a run at the fifth and final qualifying spot out of our Sectional,” said Chad Clarey. “While we bring back three of our Top 7 from the State Series last fall, we welcome back a healthy Noah Duffey (sr) who was lost to injury last year. So by returning four, we are looking for at least three more to step up and meet the challenges that await our varsity. So far we see some promise with this group. It's a long season, and we need some breaks by not losing runners to injury.”

**14 – Metamora**

**Coach – Gene Jones**

**2015 Finish – 7th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Jake Gillum SR (11, 14:52), Ryan Meyer JR (97, 16:00), Nick Koval JR (111, 16:07), Ross Stanley SR (174, 16:44), Travis Roe JR, John Rapp SO, Frank DeLuca JR, Alex Blackburn SO, Nick Thelen SO, Dylan Hines SR, Jackson Doty SO, Nathaniel Jones SO, Isaiah Doty JR, Adam Glaub FR

**Preview** – 4 of the top 7 runners are back from last year’s 7th place finish for Coach Gene Jones. Jake Gillum is the key man for Metamora. He finished 11th at state a year ago with visions of finishing this year in the top 5. It is the pack behind Gillum that will need to be worked on. Ryan Meyer should lead that pack. He was more than 60 seconds behind Gillum towards the end of last season. The pack cannot start 60 seconds back. It Meyer or Nick Koval can stay within 30 seconds of their #1, things could be good. Also watch for Freshman Adam Glaub who won the IESA 2A State Championship last fall while he was in 8th grade. Jones expects him to contribute to this squad. “Of course we want to run on November 5th at Detweiller Park,” Jones said. “Metamora has a string of 4 Team appearances at the State Meet - with the last three being 6th, 5th, & 7th – we will definitely work on a higher finish.”

**15 – Sycamore**

**Coach – Mike Lambdin**

**2015 Finish – 7th, 2A Woodstock North Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Stephen Poorten JR (12, 14:56), Connor Farrell SR,Jake Carani JR, Quinton Benaschwal JR, John Lerohl SR, Riley Melton JR, Lucas McKay SO, David Lehrol SO, Jarrod Pritchett SO, Zach Zographos SO, Dayton Ward SO, Evan Jacobs SR, Paul Ruetten FR, Aaron Trier FR.

**Preview** – Sycamore aims to take the next step to the state meet after finishing 7th at the Woodstock North Sectional.  Coach Mike Lambdin returns 6 of the top 7 runners from that squad. Stephen Poorten had a breakout sophomore season placing 12th at state. He will be among the elite runners again this season. His track season was not the best because of overtraining during that season. It might take him a little while to get back up to full steam as he was rested in June. A key for this team is working on getting their split down both on the gap on Poorten and then the 2 to 5 runners. There was usually a 60 second gap on Poorten last year. That will need to decrease. The pack, which will be led by Connor Farrell, had a 45 to 50 second split between the four. A split of 25 second could help this team get to Peoria. “Our depth combined with a quality summer has us poised to improve on last year’s 7th place sectional finish,” Lambdin said. “Hopefully, the team is racing in November.”

**16 – Hampshire**

**Coach – Dennis Wozniak**

**2015 Finish – 9th, 2A Woodstock North Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Jacob Oury SR (31, 15:14), Cameron Reedy SO (transfer from Jacobs), Will Matushek SR, Kyle Blake JR, Sheldon McKittrick SR, Tommy Croissant SO, Angel Yescas JR, Alex Surprise SO, Teddy Lyon SO, Reid Coyle JR, Blake Snider SO, Elijah Stuart SO, Lenny Garcia JR.

**Preview** – This could be one of the surprise teams in the Belvidere Sectional this season. The Whips finished 9th last year in their sectional race. They return all 7 runners from that team led by Jacob Oury. The senior qualified for state individually finishing 31st. A top 25 finish is a possibility. The big question is the transfer in of Cam Reedy from Jacobs High School. The sophomore missed all of last cross country season due to an injury. He came back strong in track running 4:27 for 1600 meters and 9:43 for the 3200. If he is healthy, he could push Oury up front. Their pack off of Oury last year was close to 2 minutes. With the addition of Reedy, it could go down to 75 seconds and put this team into a position to qualify. This team has the experience and depth to be a surprise during state series time.

**17 – Salem**

**Coach – Jordan Jones**

**2015 Finish – 9th, 2A Decatur MacArhur Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Blake Quandt SR (74, 15:51), Caden Owens SR, Dawson Webster JR, Hayden Wimberly JR, Robert Stanton JR, Eli Odell SO, Lucas Sexton SO, Jennings Barnfield SR, Avery Branch SO, Braden Tate FR.

**Preview** – Jordan Jones steps in as the new coach for Salem. They started out strong last year but seemed to fade towards the end of the year placing 9th in their sectional race. 5 runners are back from that team. “The summer training has been mostly more consistent than last year with less aches and pains,” Jones said. “We are hoping to keep our top 4 healthy cause they will be key to our success in the post season.” Blake Quandt, Caden Owens, Dawson Webster, and Hayden Wimberly are the core to this team. Owens missed most of last year due to an injury. They tend to run a 30 split off of each other which is something this team will need in 2016. Braden Tate could step in as a freshman as the 5th man. Robert Stanton could also step into that spot. “This year is a big year and a last ditch effort for some of our guys. We've had the core 4 (Blake Quandt, Caden Owens, Hayden Wimberly, and Dawson Webster) the past 2 years and they've been key to our success,” Jones added. “Blake and Caden are seniors and they will be tough to replace next year. We want to make every moment of this year matter. We have our eyes set on winning conference and winning regionals. But those are small fish to fillet. We know our year will be defined by what happens past sectionals.”

**18 – Peoria Notre Dame**

**Coach – Dan Gray**

**2015 Finish – 16th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Patrick Bruch SR (94, 15:59), Mitch Maushard SR (96, 16:00), Thomas Kortz SR (176, 16:44), Tony Haddad JR (188, 17:00), John Couri JR, Patrick Menke SO, Billy Williams SO, Jack Murphy JR, Sergio Teran SO.

**Preview**– Notre Dame made it to state last year finishing 16th. They return 4 of their top 7 from that state team. The Irish ran a good pack during last season keeping it within 60 seconds on their top five. A key for this squad is moving that pack up. Patrick Bruch is the leader and was the #1 runner at state (94th). Mitch Maushard was close behind and will give this team depth up front. Notre Dame will be challenging for a top 5 finish in a competitive sectional. The key is keeping that split between 55 to 60 second and moving that pack closer to the front. “We have a good 1 to 4 pack,” Dan Gray said. “We are hoping for a top 5 finish in the Big 12 but we could be stronger than that. Time will tell.”

**19 – Wheaton St. Francis**

**Coach – Scott Nelson**

**2015 Finish – 10th, 2A Wheaton Academy Sectional**

**Top Runners**– Nick Brouch SR (63, 15:44), Alex Hernandez JR, David Keifer SR, Jon Aquino SO, Mike Hermann SR, Joe Leo JR, Nicholas Hatfield SO, Trevor Hicks SO, Mike Dahle SR, Eric Sauser SO, Tanner Hughes SR, Coleman Lacy SO.

**Preview** – The opportunity is there for St. Francis to make a trip to Peoria in November. Yorkville has moved up to 3A for 2016 while Hinsdale South will be rebuilding this year. St. Francis returns their top 5 from the sectional team that finished 10th. Nick Brouch again will be the leader of this team. He qualified for the state meet as an individual. He finished 63rd at Detweiller. He could be in the top 35 this season. Alex Hernandez will lead the pack behind Brouch. The 2 to 5 split needs to be cut down. Their overall split in their sectional race was 126 seconds and a gap of 35 seconds from Brouch to Hernandez. Watch for that split on their pack to be cut down to 60 seconds on that 4. A lower split will mean a November trip to Detweiller Park.

**20 – West Chicago Wheaton Academy**

**Coaches – Chris Fedinski & Jim Spivey**

**2015 Finish – 9th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Jonah Jones SR (27, 15:10), Jimmy Ridge SR (118, 16:09), Jeffrey Ridge JR (140, 16:20), Ryan Wittsock JR (205, 17:28), Sam Ruff SR, Jacob Prasil SO, Will Lyon SO, Nate Consoli SR, Daniel Phelps SR, Rylen Hershey SO, Jonah King SR, Nate Bierly FR.

**Preview** – Even though Jacob Robleski, their #1 runner last year, has graduated, Wheaton Academy will just reload to go after another state berth. They finished 9th in last year’s state meet and return 4 of their top 7. “I have been very happy with the number of miles that the athletes have been putting in,” said Chris Felinski. “Overall the entire team has been putting in more miles than my previous 16 years coaching, and what has been exciting is that they are doing it on their own.  So much of the long runs and times they get together are athlete-driven.”

Robleski and Jonah Jones gave this team a solid 1-2 punch last season. Jones finished 27th last year and could be in the top 15 this season. After Jones, the Warriors will have to rely on a solid pack led by Jimmy & Jeffrey Ridge. Ryan Lotz, Ryan Wittsock, and Sam Ruff will help out with the pack. The pack needs to stay within 30 seconds of each other and then 60 seconds within Jones. The talent is there to advance to state but only with a tighter pack. “We want to qualify for state for the 4th straight time as a team, which would build upon our school record for consecutive appearances at state by the boys,” added Felinski.

**21 – Morton**

**Coach – Joel Zehr**

**2015 Finish – 14th, 2A Normal University Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Ben Lange SR, Brett Hilliard SR, Andrew Rhode SR, Sean Sanders SR, John Pray SR, Tyler Timmons SO, Bryan Himmel JR, Garris Radloff JR, Trevor Seggenbruch JR, Seth Gudeman SR, Caleb Uhlman SR, Seth Gudeman SR.

**Preview** – Morton could be one of the surprise teams in 2A this season. 5 of the top 7 return from their 14th place sectional team. “Our boys’ team is led by a strong group of seniors this fall and that aided in the drive to build a strong summer base. We are bringing back two sub 16 men in Ben Lange and Bret Hilliard,” Joel Zehr said. Andrew Rhode has had a very strong summer and looks to compete right alongside the other two. Along with these three, we have several other junior and senior boys who could contribute in the 4 and 5 spots and allow our team to be the most competitive it has been since 2010.” Lange did not run his best race at sectional. He did run 15:27 at Detweiller at the beginning of October. This team is thriving for a state berth. Their top 5 should all be seniors. Morton will need to keep a split of 50 seconds on their pack off of Lange. Don’t let last year’s sectional finish fool you. The talent is there to make the top 5 in their sectional.

**22 – East Peoria**

**Coach – Brandon Shaver**

**2015 Finish – 7th, 2A East Peoria Regional**

**Top Runners** – Michael Church SR (50, 15:34), Mark Skaggs JR, Gavin O’Donoghue SR, Dawson Dobbclaire SO, Alex Binegar SR, Daniel Vangunten SO, Joel Gore JR, Austin Safford SO, Donnie Vanwinkle SO, Tyler Billingsley FR, Kolby Miller FR.

**Preview** – Just like Morton, don’t let East Peoria’s post-season performance fool you. East Peoria missed qualifying for sectionals by 9 points. All of their top 7 are back for Coach Brandon Shaver. Their big plus coming back is Michael Church. He made it to state last year finishing 50th. His track season gave him confidence having run 4:21 for the 1600. Church has run 15:11 at Detweiller. He could go under that giving this team a boost. Keep an eye on the 2 to 5 runner split which could be led by Mark Skaggs or Gavin O’Donoghue. The split of that pack last year at regionals was 110 seconds. Watch for that to be cut in half this season. “We look to qualify for the sectional as a team, but I believe if we can stay healthy, and run as expected, we have an outside shot at the state meet, and that will be our team’s goal this season,” Shaver said. “The boys want the opportunity, and they know the window is closing. When I arrived four seasons ago, we hadn’t qualified as a team in 21 years and they made it, against even my expectations. EP has never qualified two teams less than 10 years apart. This senior group looks to change that with some help from the underclassmen and if they say they will do it, I believe them. Health is key.”

**23 – Marion**

**Coach – Eli Baker**

**2015 Finish – 8th, 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Ryan Melvin JR (175, 16:44), Zach Young SR, Jade Chew SO, Julian McPhail JR, AJ Segers SO, Lukas Moake SO, Timothy Surberg SO, Chase Moake SO, Tristan Stricklan JR, Peyton Robison SR, John Bruce FR, Michael Rutkowski JR,

**Preview** – Marion had a tough time at the end of the season finishing 8th at their sectional meet. This team could be better than people think. 6 of the 7 are back from that sectional team as well as some blood that should make some immediate impact. Ryan Melvin and Zach Young ran off of each other all last year. At sectionals, Young missed qualifying for state by 1 place just behind Melvin. Young rebounded during track and will be a factor this season. Melvin did not have his best race at state. Watch also for big things from hi. Coach Eli Baker expects John Bruce to contribute immediately. The freshman ran 4:40 last year in 8th grade. Sophomore Jade Chew could give Marion a strong pack of 4 runners. The key will be getting a 5th runner within 30 seconds of those 4. “Our summer training went very well. We a low on numbers but the ones we do have a very talented,” Baker said “Zach Young our top returner put in a lot of miles and is in a better place than last year.”

**24 – Chicago Northside Prep**

**Coach – Jon Gordon**

**2015 Finish – 14th, 3A Lake Park Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Kyle Friedler SR, Alex Ortiz SR, Brian McManus SR, Owen Hering SO, Seth Nicholoff SO, Aaron Williams SO, Arjuna Lemke SR, Jacob Cosby SR, Nathan Spear SO, John Kim SO, Charlie Guthmann JR, Kyle Lowenthal JR, Cavel Jones JR.

**Preview**– Northside Prep makes the move from 3A down to 2A and could be the team to beat in the Fenton Sectional. 6 of their top 7 are back from the team that finished 14th in the 3A Lake Park Sectional. This team could be in the top 20 at state in November. The key will be addressing a possible 5 runner split of over 2 minutes between senior Kyle Friedler and Sophomore Seth Nicholoff.

**25 - Jerseyville-Jersey**

**Coach – Harold Landon**

**2015 Finish – 6th, 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Ben Flowers SR (13, 14:57), Andrew Bertman SO, Christian Cazier SO, Andrew Bryden SR, Asher Stidd SO, Lucas Ross JR, Austin Koenig JR, Grant Morgan FR.

**Preview** – Jersey got close to the state meet last year but missed qualifying by 9 points finishing 6th in their sectional. 4 runners graduated from that squad. It could still make it to Peoria. Ben Flowers should be the top runner for this team. He finished 13th at state last year. A stress fracture slowed him down the beginning of the track season but still finished 5th in the 2A 1600 Meter Run. Watch for him to challenge for a top 5 finish this fall. Sophomores Andrew Bertman and Christian Cazier will lead the pack behind Flowers. The gap for Flowers and the pack should be close to 90 seconds.  The 2 to 5 pack needs to be under 50 seconds for this team to have a chance for the state meet.

**The next 20 2A Boys Teams**

**Arlington Heights St. Viator**

**Coach – Wayne Edelman**

**2015 Finish – 25th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Sam Bray SR (90, 15:57), Kevin Goss JR (177, 16:45), Brady Collis JR (179, 16:46), Richard Rinka JR (200, 17:20), Richard Stejskal JR, Richard Varvara SO, David Silver SR, Ryan Springer JR, Dan Dababrah JR, Ian Crandall SO, Daniel Hegberg JR., Patrick Natindim FR

**Preview**– This team is a good bet to make it back to state especially since they most likely will be in the Fenton Sectional. If that happens, it would be the 4th time in the last 5 years that the Lions have made. They finished 25th a year ago with 4 of their top 7 coming back. Sam Bray is the top returnee that could finish in the top 50.

**Chicago Brother Rice**

**Coach – Tom Wazio**

**2015 Finish – 6th, 2A Wheaton Academy Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Joe Sweeney SR (128, 16:15), Steve Sloan JR, Jack Mongan SR, Justin Frias SR, Dan Spellman SO, Tommy Gleeson SO, Jack Reddington SO, Nico Perez JR, Chris Murphy SR.

**Preview** – The Crusaders just missed qualifying for state placing 6th at the Wheaton Academy Sectional. 4 of the top 7 return for Coach Tom Wazio. Joe Sweeney qualified individually placing 128th at state. A pack of 65 to 70 seconds behind Sweeney led by Jack Mongan and Steve Sloan could get this team to the state meet.

**Taylorville**

**Coach – Steve Walters**

**2015 Finish – 7th, 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Lawrence Curtin SR (60, 15:43), Luke Sloan SR (110, 16:06), Will Walton SR, Seth Sloan SO, Reese Bergschneider JR, Ryan Brown JR, Riley Barker JR, Quinton Neville JR, Sean Daly SR.

**Preview**– This is a team that we could see in the top 25 in the first couple of weeks. The Tornadoes finished 7th last fall in their sectional meet but return 2 state qualifiers along with 4 other runners from their top 7. Lawrence Curtin finished 60th individually while Luke Sloan finished 110th at state. The two traded off the top spot on this team during the season. The closer the two run to each other, the more dangerous this team could become. The 5 runner split averaged near 100 seconds towards the end of the year. A split near of 75 seconds on their top 5 could guarantee Taylorville a trip to the state meet.

**Mattoon**

**Coach – McLain Schaefer**

**2015 Finish – 23rd, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Mitchell Kremer JR (107, 16:04), Jake Ghere SO (145, 16:22), Greg Thorn SR (164, 16:38), Gavin Prior SR (185, 16:54), David Thompson SR (202, 18:00), Austen Epperson SR, Mitchell Garner JR, Garett Jones JR, Lane Wafford JR, Henry Skocy JR.

**Runners**– Mattoon just made it out of the Decatur MacArthur Sectional finishing 5th and then following it up with a 23rd finish at the state meet. 5 of the top 7 from the state team are back. The Green Wave ran a 53 second split on their top 5. The key for their success is moving their scoring pack up. Mitchell Kremer should step into the top spot. He finished 103rd last fall.

**Darien Hinsdale South**

**Coach – Jim Dickerson**

**2015 Finish – 4th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Brett Haffner JR (52, 15:35), Chris Joseph SR (109, 16:04), Trevor Schauer JR (173, 16:43), Tyler Gaytan SR, Trevor Lehmann SO, Christian Schulte JR, Tanner Booth SO, Tony Ma SO, Christian Thuruthiyil SR, Jordan Arzate SO, Tim Grady SO.

**Preview** – Hinsdale South had a dream 2015-2016 school year. Coach Jim Dickerson had 2 runners in the top 3 at the state meet, finished 4th as a team, and then had a 4x8 relay earn all-state honors last spring. Their top runners Charlie Nodus and Roman Drabchuk have graduated. 3 runners are back from that team and will provide the core for this team. Brett Haffner finished 52 last year at state. He has a good chance to finish in the top 25. Chris Joseph and Trevor Schauer should be the #2 - #3 runners. Tyler Gaytan did not run last year but is back. Dickerson feels he will be a boost in the top 5. “We have no concreate goals,” Dickerson said. “Winning conference and qualifying for and doing well at State are good targets, of course. We will be very young, but with some experience. Things really will come down to developing a solid 4th and 5th runner by the end of the season.”

**Bensenville Fenton**

**Coach – John Kurtz**

**2015 Finish – 6th, 2A Chicago University Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Jose Vasquez-Perez SR (54, 15:37), Christian Sanchez JR (142, 16:20), Henry Contreras SR, Alex Whyte JR, Anye White SR, Jeremy Ladewyck JR, Michael Lieggi JR, Eduardo Garcia SR, Nathan Irby SR, Bryan Medina JR.

**Preview** – Fenton just missed making it to state by 3 points finishing 6th in their sectional. They are a good bet to make it out of their own sectional with 4 of last year’s top 7 back. Jose Vasquez-Perez should be one of the top 30 runners in 2A this fall. He finished at 54th at state a year ago. Christian Sanchez also qualified placing 142nd.

**Geneseo**

**Coach – Don Fredericks**

**2015 Finish – 10th, 2A Normal University Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Nathan Soria SR (100, 16:01), Kaden Rink SO, Blake Duncan JR, Andrew Rizzo SO, Peter Rizzo SO, Kyle Sellers SR, Keith Elden SR, Maguire Hoon SR, Chandler Schwartz SR, Brandon Ramos SR, Christian Booth JR.

**Preview**– 4 of their top 7 runners from their sectional team are back for Coach Don Fredericks. Geneseo finished 10th last year in their sectional race. Nathan Soria did run at state finishing 100th individually. “Our goal is always to advance in the post season as far as possible,” said Geneseo assistant coach Phillip Moe. “It’s hard to predict what our team, let alone all the other teams, will look like at the end of the year.  Another goal is to peak in the postseason. Coach Fredericks is exceptional at having the team running their best late in the year.  If our last meet is our best, we will be pleased as a coaching staff.”

**Mt. Vernon**

**Coach – Clint Turner**

**2015 Finish – 10th, 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Hagen Schneider SR, Dylan Blackford SR, Michael Foutch SR, Evan Owens JR, Nate Blevens JR, Travis Johnston JR, Michael Barban JR, Brandon Rios SR, Ty Crane SO, Minh Nguyen SO.

**Preview** – The Rams return their entire top 7 from last year’s team that finished 10th in their sectional meet. Hagen Schneider was the team’s #1 runner last season and should be the team’s top man. The talent is there along with a good pack. Their split averaged near 50 seconds a year ago. The key is getting Schneider and the pack farther up towards the front in bigger meets.

**Vernon Hills**

**Coach – Mark Whitley**

**2015 Finish – 6th, 2A Woodstock North Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Shane Williamson SR (8, 14:45), Tim Krashevsky SR, Theodore Chen JR, Zak Baumann SR, Evan Webber JR, Antoni Okinczyc SO, Matt Huse SO, Bryan Shim JR, Nick Mohrdieck SR, Cameron Overbeck SO, Branden Alpert JR.

**Preview**– The Cougars just missed making it to state last year finishing 6th at the Woodstock North Sectional. Only 3 of their top 7 return. This team is deep that we could see Vernon Hills challenging for one of the top 5 qualifying spots. Shane Williamson returns for his final year after earning top 10 all-state honors the past few years. He will be one of the top runners this year in 2A. Tim Krashevsky had run within 15 seconds of Williamson early last season. An injury slowed him down keeping him out a month. He was the team’s #4 man at sectionals. He recovered in track as his 1:53 800 demonstrates. He will surprise many this fall. “This year's sophomore class should make some big improvements,” said Mark Whitley. “We have the potential for two high placing front runners in Williamson and Krashevsky. We have the talent for a strong #3 - #5, which could make us competitive in the CSL and in 2A. We don't have much depth though and at least 5-6 guys will compete for the #6 and #7 spots.”

**Dunlap**

**Coach – Chris Friedman**

**2015 Finish – 11th, 2A Normal University Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Drew Fick SR (143, 16:21), Carson Potts SR, Dotun Taiwo SR, Gabe Gavino-DaCosta JR, Shivom Paudel SO, Justin Monge JR, John Banister SR, Drake Simpson SR, Cody Anderson JR, Dane Tow SO, Jon McCracken JR.

**Preview** – Drew Fick qualified individually for state last November finishing 143rd. He will lead 3 other runners from that top 7 with hopes on finishing better in the sectional than they did a year before. Carson Potts should also be close to Fick. The Eagles will need to rely on tight pack running to advance to Peoria. “We have had a good summer. I’m pretty sure we are healthy and have built the requisite base for the season. It’s very much a workman group. No one stood out because everyone present was getting good work done,” Dunlap Coach Chris Friedman said. “The goals are always win the conference and make the state meet. We have the talent to compete for the conference title. Health will be a key for us as we will likely lack some depth. Making the state meet will require the same health and running a strong race at the right time. If we had run at sectionals last year the way we ran at conference, we likely would have qualified. As it was, health and conditions caught up to us, and we left the sectional meet disappointed.”

**Charleston**

**Coach – Derrick Landus**

**2015 Finish – 19th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Nick Oakley JR (119, 16:10), Austin Ames SO (160, 16:35), Clayton Redden SR (186, 16:54), Ryan Chambers SR (189, 17:02), Lance Niemerg JR, Spencer Stowell SR, Dylan Smith JR, Jonathan Phillips JR, Chase Cooper SR

**Preview** – Charleston will look to qualify for their 3rd straight state trip. It could be tough with their top 2 runners Colton Bell and Ross Osterday have graduated. 4 runners are back from last year’s 19th place state team. Austin Ames and Nick Oakley should battle for the top two spots. This team will have to rely on pack running and moving that pack up to move out of their sectional.

**Olney Richland County**

**Coach – Louie Gassman**

**2015 Finish – 15th, 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Michael DeMeyer SR, Nathan DeMeyer SR, Tyler Hughes JR, Owen Powelll SO, Caleb Thomas SO, Cole Simpson JR, Tristan Helm SR.

**Preview**– The top 4 return from last year’s 15th place sectional team. Seniors Michael & Nathan DeMeyer should be the leaders on this team. This team could have a 4 runner split of under 60 seconds. The key is finding a 5th man that can stay within 30 seconds of this group.

**Chicago Payton Prep**

**Coach – Thaddeus Rego**

**2015 Finish – 7th, 2A Chicago University Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Alejandro Vargas SR (171, 16:42), Charles Pillsbury SO, Matthew Marchbanks JR, Freddy Martin SO, Eli Selz SR, Jeffrey Aguirre JR, Ryan Collins JR, Thomas Gohres SO, Jesse Herr SR, Danny Zamudio SR.

**Preview** – Payton will look to get to state after finishing 7th in their sectional race. 4 of their top 7 from that sectional team are back including state qualifier Alejandro Vargas. Charles Pillsbury could challenge for the team’s top spot. He won the Chicago Public League Frosh/Soph Championship last fall.

**Waterloo**

**Coach – Larry Huffman**

**2015 Finish – 14th, 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Jake Schwartz SR, Adam Robson JR, David Lunk JR, Noah Hays SR, Sam Kreinberg SO, David Lewis SO, Logan van Britson SO, Samuel Rick SR, Jake Hays SO, Zachary Marshall SO.

**Preview** – Waterloo finished 14th in their last season’s sectional race. Hopes are high with their top 4 runners back. Jake Schwartz should be the team’s top man as he was a year ago. He could qualifiy individually. The team ran a 5 runner split between 65 seconds and 90 seconds last year. That needs to come down if this team wants to improve their sectional standings.

**Mascoutah**

**Coach – Derrick Latham**

**2015 Finish – 11th, 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Ethan Price SR, Casmir Cozzi SO, Patrick Thompson JR, Christopher Crossen SO, Broeden Williams JR, Chris Ferguson Scott SR, Kaleb Dabbs JR, Gavin Livingston SO.

**Preview**– Ethan Price just missed qualifying individually for state last year by 2 spots. Chances are good he could make it this year. 5 runners are back from last year’s team that won the Mississippi Valley Conference as well as 11th place in their sectional. The other 4 runners back are underclassmen led by sophomore Casmir Cozzi. Chris Ferguson-Scott, who was all-state in the 2A 400 last spring, could also challenge for one of the top 5 spots.

**Bloomington**

**Coach – John Szabo**

**2015 Finish – 8th, 2A East Peoria Regional**

**Top Runners** – Austin Bicknell JR, Jack Doud SR, Nick Doud SO, Zachery Bradford JR, Connell Gapinski SR, Quinn Olson SO, Eli Iverson SO, Sam Warner SR.

**Preview**– Bloomington missed advancing out of regionals last season finishing 8th at the East Peoria Regional. Their top 5 runners are back from that team led by Jack Bicknell and Jack Loud. The team ran a 110 second split in their regional race. If they can stay on a 65 to 75 second split on 5, this team could advance to the sectionals.

**LaSalle-Peru**

**Coach – John Beatty**

**2015 Finish – 12th, 2A Normal University Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Ryan Porter SR, Owen Stoneking SR, Brendan Sebastian SR, Ryan Pijanowski SR, Alec Kessel SR, Carter Sawin SR, Logan Schaefer SO, Josh Buckley JR, Connor Bean SO, Joshua Sensiba SO, Matthew Ambrose JR.

**Preview** – Chances are good that this team will improve on their 12th place sectional finish at Normal University. All 7 runners are back led by Ryan Porter and Owen Stoneking. The team ran good splits on 5 last year between 40 and 50 seconds. The key this season is moving up towards the front with that pack.

**Rock Island Alleman**

**Coach – Scott Stoll**

**2015 Finish – 7th, 2A Normal University Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Spencer Smith JR, Augie Darrow SR, Ben Weaver JR, Connor Sheley SR, Brendan Hird JR, Rian Hanlon SO, Nate Eder SR, Parker Smith SO, Gavin Baker SO, Aaron O’Hern JR, Ethan Johnson SO.

**Preview**– The Pioneers just missed making it to state last year finishing 7th at the Normal University Sectional. 6 of that top 7 are back led by last year’s #2 runner Spencer Smith. The team will need to lower their split on 5 from last year which was near 80 seconds. They will also challenge for the Western Big 6 title.

**Carbondale**

**Coach – Greg Storm**

**2015 Finish – 22nd, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Atlantis Green SR (35, 15:22), Shawn Veras JR (196, 17:12), Shawn McKitrick JR (198, 17:19), Zeyad Moustafa JR, Adam Russell SO, Jeffrey Che JR, Shayne Hale SR, DeSrse Howard SO.

**Preview** – It could be a tough year for the Terriers. Their 3rd and 4th runners did not come out for the team this year. Carbondale finished 22nd in the state and will return 3 of their top 7. Atlantis Green had a good finish to last season placing 35th. I would watch for him in the top 25 this fall. With the major loses we have had, we hope to still compete for a conference championship, which will be difficult task considering a few of the teams in our conference did not lose a whole lot,” said Greg Storm. “Team expectations are to keep the 2-5 gap within in 90 seconds and staying within 2 minutes of our low stick”

**Glen Ellyn Glenbard South**

**Coach – Doug Gorski**

**2015 Finish – 21st, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Joey Wood SR (141, 16:20), Ethan Sowl SR (191, 17:03), Andrew Fearn SR (207, 17:35), Peyton Allen SR, Orlando Gamboa SR, Allen Chung SR, Julio Reyes SO, Johnny Fargoi SR, Wesley Jedlicka SO.

**Preview** – The Raiders lost two of their top 4 runners as one will be playing another sport and one will be homeschooled. Glenbard South still has a chance making it out of the Wheaton Academy Sectional as they will have 3 returning from their 21st place state team. Joey Wood and Ethan Sowl will be the leaders on this team. It could take a month to sort out who will step up into the #4 and #5 positions. “Illiana Christian moved into our side of the conference which will improve competition,” said Doug Gorski. “Wheaton Academy has some top returnees form last year and should be tuff and Fenton and Riverside Brookfield will be in the mix as well. A Top 3 finish in Conference would be nice and to qualify as a team to the State Meet for the 7th year in a row.”

**Other teams to watch**

**(In alphabetical order)**

**Burlington Central**

**Coach – Vince Neil**

**2015 Finish – 7th, 2A Kaneland Regional**

**Top Runners –** Tate Henrikson SR, Josh Teets SR, Mitchell Roedel SR, Jack Zettl JR, Cliff Musial SR, Malcom Hermans JR, Dan Wagner SR, Evan Schmidt SO, Jack Hartmann SO, Charlie Domalski SO, Logan McFarlane SO.

**Previews** – Burlington Central just missed making it out of the Kaneland Regional finishing 7th. 4 of the top 7 from that team are back. Tate Henrikson and Josh Teets will provide senior leadership up front. The team’s 5 runner split was over 90 seconds in the regional race. Splits under 55 seconds and moving the pack forward 20 seconds will get this team into the Belvidere Sectional.

**Chicago Latin**

**Coach – Dan Daly**

**2015 Finish – 8th, 2A Chicago University Sectional**

**Top Runners** – David Haffner SO, Luccas Eagles SR, James Melonides JR, Dean Melonides JR, Johnny Gross SR, Ethan MacCumber SR, Tyler Aprati SR, Salmon Jaffer SR, Julian Lee-Zachers SO, Hunter Morgan SR, Robert Kelly SO.

**Previews**– Latin’s top runner Simon Ricci completed his successful running career at the school and has graduated. The rest of the top 7 is back from the team that finished 8th at the Chicago University Sectional. Coach Dan Daly believes that sophomore David Haffner will step up into the #1 position. The team may have a 70 second split on 5 but their 2 to 5 split could be only 15 seconds. Being in the Fenton Sectional, they could make it to state. “For the 2016 season we will be competitive in the conference and Regional.

The squad has the potential to be top 5 at Sectionals and make the trip to state,” Daly said. “Last year was the first time in 6 years the team did not advance and the boys would like to start a new streak.”

**Chicago Mather**

**Coach – Kevin Conway**

**2015 Finish – 24th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Audriel Perez JR (91, 15:59), Jeremy Bekkouche SR (155, 16:25), Carlos Arana SR (197, 17:12), Rishi Rampsadsingh JR (201, 17:23), Butoyi Anaclet SR (203, 17:23), Miguel Rodriguez JR (204, 17:26), Apollo Douglas JR, Fernando Gonzalez SO, Mujtaba Hassansada SO, Thaniat Junaidi SO.

**Preview** – Mather made it to state last season finishing 24th at Detweiller. They would like to do it again with 6 runners back from that state team. Audriel Perez is the top returnee finishing 91st at state. They had an 85 second split on 5 at the state meet. That will need to come down if they want to make a repeat trip to Peoria.

**Elmwood Park**

**Coach – Pat Sheridan**

**2015 Finish – 20th, 2A State Meet**

**Top Runners** – Devon Schumann JR (161, 16:36), Carlos Sanchez SO (162, 16:36), Amadeus Lopez SR, Alex Martinez JR, Justin Nieves JR, Jeremy Rybak SR, Mateo Rodriguez SR, Jhonny Solano SR, Mike Jones-Plasencia SO, Justin Capule JR.

**Preview** – Elmwood Park made it to state last year finishing 20th. With Illiana Christian moving to the Metro Suburban West Conference, the Tigers will be the favorites in the east division of the conference. 2 runners are back with state experience. The best runner back could be Amadeus Lopez. He did not run at state but did run 16:24 at the Chicago University Sectional. They have time to find a 4th and 5th man so that they can challenge for another trip downstate. “We graduated our 1,2,3,7 runners and that's a lot of talent, but it was even more leadership, which is something we will need to develop if we want to be successful.  But we do have a young and hungry group, and good teams don't rebuild, they reload,” said Pat Sheridan. “This year we look to grow as a team and are focused on winning the conference and regional titles and to compete for the sectional championship and to qualify for state as a team for the 4th year in a row and crack the top 20!  But success or shortcomings will be determined by the commitment of the runners.”

**Grayslake North**

**Coach – Brandon Boyd**

**2015 Finish – 15th, 2A Woodstock North Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Liam O’Connell SR, Cameron Detweiler SR, John Mutter SR, Blake Barneca JR, Andrew Keaskowski JR, Miguel Carrera SR, AJ Amadio SR, Jaime Velasco SR, Gabe Cope JR, Payton Taylor SO.

**Preview** – 5 of the top 7 return from Grayslake North’s sectional team that finished 15th. They look to improve on that finish this fall. Liam O’Connell again should be the top runner on the team. The 5 runner splits were huge last year spanning from 131 seconds at their conference meet to 83 seconds at sectionals. If the team could stay consistently under 75 seconds, they will improve on the finish from 2015.

**Jacksonville**

**Coach – Breck Van Bebber**

**2015 Finish – 13th, 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Jacob Moberly JR, Jacob Covell JR, Jacob Estabrook SR, Jacob James JR, Ryan Fatheree SR, Adam Schumacher SO, Sam Brockschmidt JR, Ethan Welch JR, Charles Veith SO, Michael Saxer JR, Austin Murphy SO.

**Preview** – The entire top 7 is back that finished 13th at last year’s MacArthur Sectional. Jacob Moberly and Jacob Covell should be the top runners on the team. Jacksonville’s split on their top 5 came down to 69 seconds at the end of the season. A combination of moving the pack up and decreasing the split to under 60 seconds will be necessary if Jacksonville wants to be close to qualifying for the state meet.

**Lemont**

**Coach – Tim Plotke**

**2015 Finish – 8th, 2A Marist Regional**

**Top Runners** – Gavin Pawell SO, Andrew Deuschle SO, Owen Ganzer JR, Adam Scribano SR, Andres De La Vega JR, Luke DeBiase JR, Matt Freese JR, Guy Calcagno SR, Paul McGrath SO, Thomas Irace JR, Adam Fugieh JR.

**Preview** – Last year’s Marist Regional was one of the toughest in the state. Lemont finished 8th in that meet after finishing 5th in the South Suburban Blue Division Meet the week before. 6 of the 7 runners from that regional meet are back led by sophomore Gavin Powell. The team had a good split in their final meet of the year under 50 seconds. That kind of split while the pack moving up could mean that Lemont will be running in sectionals in 2016.

**Lombard Montini Catholic**

**Coach – Joe Mordente**

**2015 Finish – 9th, 2A Marist Regional**

**Top Runners** – Jacob Mondschean JR, Jayden Gertsen SO, Justin Stauder SR, Nick Skalski SR, Ian Kwit SO, Dominick Moran SR, Branson Olszewski SO, Drew Bolisay SO, Kyle Acuna SR, Jack Gaughan SO.

**Preview** – The Broncos were young in 2015 with no seniors in the top 7. It showed in the regional race at Marist when they finished 9th. With all the runners coming back, Montini could make a step to sectional as well as in their conference. They finished 7th in the Chicago Catholic League Meet. Jacob Mondschean qualified for sectionals and again should be the team’s top runner. Their split on 5 was around 100 seconds most of last season. That will need to improve if this team wants to advance to sectionals.

**Midlothian Bremen**

**Coach – Bill Griffin**

**2015 Finish – 12th, 2A Wheaton Academy Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Javier Simental JR, William Fuentes JR, Elijah Trella JR, Danny Meza JR, Luis Jaime SR, Shauhamm Razvi JR, Andy Quintanilla JR, Musaab Froukh JR, Taheed Moore SO, Malachi Steinberg SO.

**Preview** – Bremen finished 12th last year at the Wheaton Academy Sectional. 5 of their top 7 is back from that team. “Our goal is to qualify as a team for the Class 2A State Meet and become the highest team finisher in Bremen History,” said Bill Griffin. “Two teams have tied for 16th place and that is what we are striving to beat.” Javier Simenthal and William Fuentes should be the top runners on this team. The team ran a 37 second split in their sectional race. That kind of split with the pack moved up 20 seconds a man could get this team to the state meet.

**Oak Forest**

**Coach – Gary Andruch**

**2015 Finish – 9th, 2A Wheaton Academy Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Tyler Vrba SR, Sam Cabrera SR, Kane Burke JR, Al Ochoa SR, Brian Kuenster JR, Ben Howe SO, Tristan Ramos JR, Zac Maher SO, Darrick Bagnera SO, Paros Stirrat JR.

**Preview** – The South Suburban Blue Division Champs finished 9th at the Wheaton Academy Sectional last fall. They do have 4 of their top 5 back from that team. The big thing will be finding a 5th runner. Most of the returnees coming back are at least 2 minutes behind Oak Forest’s 4th runner. Tyler Vrba should be the top runner on this team.

**Rochester**

**Coach – Bill Owens**

**2015 Finish – 7th, 2A Jacksonville Regional**

**Top Runners** – Josh Cable JR (106, 16:04), Mason Brown SO, Riley McKneelen JR, Danny Ryan SO, Colton Mitchell SO, Liam Higginbotham SO, Logan McKneelen SO, Bryson Taylor SO, Elliot Staley FR, Gage Brust FR.

**Preview**– There is one goal for this young team that figures not to have a senior in the top 7. They want to make it to sectionals. Rochester finished 7th in the Jacksonville Regional. Josh Cable has some fast times on the track and is slowly making a transition to cross country. He finished 5th in his sectional race to qualify for state but finished 106th the following week. The potential is there to challenge for a top 25 finish. 5 runners are back from the 2015 team that ran in the top 7. They could have a tight 2 to 5 runner split. A lot of work will be needed if they want to get to Decatur for sectionals.

**Springfield Sacred Heart-Griffin**

**Coach – Josh Bluhm**

**2015 Finish – 12th, 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional**

**Top Runners**– Brendan Fahey SO, Billy Swift JR, Michael Bracco JR, Michael Oh SR, Andrei Tarter SR, Jake Wagoner SO, Killian Davis JR, Avery McReynolds JR, Sam Coats JR, Nathan Murphy JR.

**Preview** – With state qualifier Nate Fierstos graduated, this team could be rebuilding a little during the first half of the season. 4 runners are back from the 12th place sectional team. Michael Oh and Brendan Fahey should be the top runners for this squad. “This year’s team will be a work in progress, as several of the athletes will need to raise their level of competitive greatness in order to achieve at their best levels,” said Josh Bluhm. “While the team lacks an identifiable superstar at this point, I anticipate our 1 to 5 split to be fairly tight. I suspect that this team will be one that will experience a significant improvement as the season progresses.”

**Sterling**

**Coach – Greg Hendrix**

**2015 Finish – 13th, 2A Woodstock North Sectional**

**Top Runners –** Jonathan Lands SR (20, 15:06), Jacob Gebhardt JR (59, 15:41), Mikio Martinez SO, Isaiah Moorman SO, Jonathan Abele SR, Andrew Ivarson SO, Kadin Wolf SO, Jervias Johnson SR. Bryce Tessman SR (transfer from Taylor SC).

**Preview** – Sterling could be the surprise team in the Belvidere Sectional in 2016. They have a strong front 2 led by all-state runner Jon Landis (20th last year) and Jacob Gebhardt (59th). Both could be in the top 25 this season. Sterling also received Bryce Tessman who ran at Eastside HS in South Carolina. He should step in as the 5th runner. Sophomores Isaiah Moorman and Mikio Martinez should also be in the top 5. “I expect us to improve over our sectional results from last year. Landis and Gebhardt are both state qualifiers and have gotten fitter and stronger,” said Greg Hendrix. “Mikio Martinez and Isaiah Moorman both ran in our top seven last year as freshmen and are improved, and Bryce Tessman was in the top seven on his team in SC that finished runner-up in 3A. Our goal is to make state as a team.”

**Washington**

**Coach – Tom Smith**

**2015 Finish – 15th, 2A Normal University Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Alexander Mitchell JR, Avery Davidson SO, Max Tellifson SO, Reese Borlin SO, Garrett Roberts SO, Matthew Borrowman JR, Ben Learned SO, Hayden Jackson JR, Louis Williams JR, Daniel Horton SR, Jacob Stone FR, Caden Davidosn FR, Eddie Andrews FR.

**Preview** – A strong sophomore squad may be the nucleus of this top 7 for Washington heading into this season. All received sectional experience last year as Washington finished 15th at the U-High Sectional. A higher finish is one of the goals for the team. “Summer training went great.  We had really good attendance all summer long.  Training is going great injury free.  It seems like all of our sophomores are improving,” said Tom Smith. “We would like to advance to sectionals and state as a team.” The team ran a 47 second split off of #1 runner Alexander Mitchell at sectionals. This team will improve meaning the pack should move up.

**Woodstock**

**Coach – Jay Fuller**

**2015 Finish – 11th, 2A Woodstock North Sectional**

**Top Runners** – Anthony Thomas JR, Jarod Baker SR, Julio Arellano SO, Spencer Hanson SR, Austin Castillo SR, Justin Kucharski SR, Carter Hansen JR, Tyler Peake JR, Steven Cunningham JR.

**Preview** – Woodstock moves to the new Kishwaukee River Conference where they hope to challenge for the championship in October. It could be a little harder for the team since projected #1 runner Spencer Hanson is out for the season due to an injury. 3 runners are back from the sectional team that finished 11th at the Woodstock North Sectional led by junior Anthony Thomas.

Read more: [DyeStatIL.com - News - 2016 DyeStat Illinois XC Season Previews - 2A Boys Teams](http://www.dyestatil.com/gprofile.php?mgroup_id=44774&do=news&news_id=433345#ixzz4INFDWnnd)