**State cross country primer**

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State cross country

**Where:** Peoria’s Detweiller Park

**Saturday start times:** Class 1A girls – 9 a.m.; Class 1A boys – 10 a.m.; Class 2A girls – 11 a.m.; Class 2A boys – noon; Class 3A girls – 1 p.m.; Class 3A boys – 2 p.m.

Class 1A qualifiers

**Central Catholic:** A senior, Will Dionesotes, broke through last spring when he qualified for the state track 800-meter final and placed 12th. In the 2015 state cross country meet, he was 122nd (16:54). He ran 15:59 to qualify 15th from the Elmwood Sectional. The only state medalist in school history was 2008 seventh-placer John Curran.

**Deer Creek-Mackinaw:** In 2015, then-sophomore Gary Cates became his school’s first state qualifier. A year later, the Chiefs placed 10th as a team led by Cates in 37th (15:45). With six state veterans on the roster, Dee-Mack is ranked sixth this year. Two weeks ago, they won Dee-Mack’s first regional title. Last week, they came within two points of upsetting No. 2 Elmwood for the sectional crown.

**El Paso-Gridley:** The No. 16-ranked EPG boys are making their fifth consecutive state trip and fifth in school history. They were 12th in 2013, 13th in 2014, seventh in 2015 and ninth in 2016. The Titans are led by Bo Halvorsen and Noah Smith, who were 78th (16:14) and 113th (16:36) in last year’s state meet. The No. 22-ranked EPG girls are making their second straight state trip and second in school history. The Titans were 15th last year when Cate Atkins took 40th (18:41).

**Eureka:** The No. 10-ranked Eureka girls are making their third consecutive state trip and 17th overall. They finished 11th a year ago with Emma Argo leading the way in eighth (17:52). The junior won the Elmwood Sectional by 21 seconds in 17:59. The only other sectional champion with such a big margin was Elgin Harvest’s Nygia Pollard. The lone Hornet boy to qualify was junior Kyle Johnson, who was 12th in the sectional in 15:53. In last year’s state meet, he placed 66th (16:07) as only 11 sophomores were better.

**Tremont:** Tremont will be represented by sophomores Lizzy Freidinger and Leland Sumer. A year ago, Sumer was the state’s fourth freshman, placing 54th overall (15:58). He ran 15:48 for ninth in the Elmwood Sectional. Freidinger finished eighth in the sectional in 18:43. Last spring, she helped the Turks place 11th in the state track 3,200 relay.

**Olympia:** The No. 11-ranked Spartans are making their 11th state trip and third in a row. A year ago, Olympia finished 13th. This year's leader is junior Payton Wille, who finished 128th a year ago in 20:12.

**Clinton:** Last year, Payne Turney was the first freshman, placing seventh overall (17:49), which was the best finish in school history. The only returnee statewide to finish higher was Tolono Unity’s Jordan Harmon in sixth. Turney finished seventh (18:41) in the Elmwood Sectional after taking sixth (18:51) in the Eureka Regional. In last spring’s state track meet, Turney was ninth in the 2A 800 (2:20.22).

**Delavan:** A junior, Katie Springer qualified by placing 10th (18:50) in the Elmwood Sectional. Last spring, she took third in the 1A state 800 (2:18.16) and fourth in the 300 hurdles (46.02). The most recent of Delavan’s seven state medalists was Maddison Zimmer, who was 24th in 2009.

Class 2A qualifiers

**Bloomington:** The No. 10-ranked Purple Raiders are making their 18th state trip and first since 2011. They hope to surpass the school-record ninth-place finish of the 1994 squad, which scored 262 points. This year’s team had a season-best five-man finishing split of 43 seconds while finishing third in Saturday’s U High Sectional where Austin Bicknell and Nick Doud were eighth (15:39) and 10th (15:40), respectively.

**Lincoln:** Eleventh (15:40) in the U High Sectional, senior Blake Jones hopes to become the second state medalist in Lincoln history after Arthur Gimble, who was eighth in 1950. No Railsplitter has run faster at Detweiller Park than Jones at 15:22. In last year’s state meet, he sped 15:27 in 45th.

**Normal West:** This is the No. 13-ranked Wildcats’ fourth state trip. They were 17th in 3A in 2010, 24th in 3A in 2009 and 25th in Class AA in 1999. West has a pair of state-medal hopefuls in senior Tyler Dunn and sophomore Charlie Wetzel. The only state medalists in school history were J.B. Hedges (25th in 1995) and Cory Nanni (25th in 2006).

**University High:** The No. 1-ranked Pioneers are making their 27th state trip since 1987. Their state trophy collection includes six for third, two for second and two for first, the latter coming in 1993 and 1994. U High topped No. 2 Mahomet-Seymour for the regional title, but lost to the reigning state champion in the sectional.

Third a year ago, the Pioneers are led by Jared Schuckman, who placed 11th in last year’s state meet in 14:53. His Detweiller best is 14:47. U High will be represented in the 2A girls race by freshman Lyndsey Wolters, who has run 17:59 at Detweiller, a time that would have placed 33rd a year ago. U High has only had 10 girls crack the top 25 in school history.