



2018 PREVIEW



Competition and excitement blend their magic each fall as Iowa high schools' best cross country runners and teams descend on Fort Dodge's Lakeside Golf Course for the 2018 Iowa High School State Cross Country Championships. The meet is a premier event and officially crowns the state's first champions of the 2018-19 school year. This year marks the 40th year the boys and girls meet provides a fall spectacular on the same day and same course, and the 27th year the event has been hosted by Fort Dodge.

The numbers provide evidence of how competitive the meet could be. The field features the return of all eight 2017 team champions, six individual champions – including five from 2017 – the top-rated teams and 68 individuals who earned state meet medals a year ago. Featured are 1,083 athletes (544 girls, 539 boys) from 221 schools. Twenty-four schools have qualified a full complement of girls' and boys' teams.

Center Point-Urbana's Adrianna Katcher can add her name to a list of five other girls who have won three titles. Seeking a second State Meet gold medal are Marie Hostettler of Mid-Prairie, Wellman, Paige Horner of Johnston, Tim Sindt from Ankeny, and Emily Staal from Springville-Central City, moving up to Class 2A from 1A. Kate Crawford from ACGC won in 2016 and was third last fall. Nodaway Valley's boys are going after their fourth straight crown, a feat that was last done by a small school when Mechanicsville chalked up titles from 1943-46. Coach Darrell Baumeister also led the Wolverines to the 2002 crown.

Since the move to Fort Dodge, Eastern Iowa schools have dominated the team championships, winning 129 of 186. However, Central and Western schools have claimed 81 of the last 136 individual titles. In the past five years, the West has won 27 team crowns and 32 individual races. Regardless of the math, the meet always has its share of surprises, and emphasizes why "the course" settles any issues.

This fall's finale celebrates the 89th year the IHSAA has sanctioned titles in cross country and the 53rd year for the IGHSAU. Each is among the oldest state association sponsored state meets in the nation.

A preview of each class follows. The coaches' rankings listed below are those at the time of the State Qualifying Meets.

- By IHSAA historian Bud Legg

Class 4A Girls

<u>State Qualifying Meet Champs</u>	<u>No. 1 Ranked Team</u>	<u>Returning 2017 Medalists</u>
Dubuque, Senior	Johnston	1. Paige Horner, Johnston
Southeast Polk		4. Brooke McKee, Johnston
Valley, West Des Moines	<u>No. 1 Ranked Runner</u>	6. Helen Gould, Valley, W.D.M.
Waukee	Ashlynn Kenney, Iowa City, Liberty	7. Laurdyn Meyer, Prairie, Cedar Rapids
Pleasant Valley		8. Reagan Gorman, Cedar Rapids, Washington
	<u>2017 Top Teams</u>	9. Peyton Kelderman, Waukee
	1. Johnston 74	10. Lilly Geelan, Linn-Mar, Marion
	2. Dubuque, Senior 118	12. Sydney Schaffer, Waukee
	3. Waukee 154	14. Mackenzie Michael, Cedar Falls
		15. Hannah Brown, Dubuque, Hempstead

Johnston has dominated the last two meets and gets the nod to secure their third consecutive title, and fourth overall since 2014. The top-rated Dragons of coach Pat Hennes were edged by a point in the SQM by conference rival, No. 6 Valley, West Des Moines. The Dragons return defending champion Paige Horner, who was seventh as a freshman in 2016. Brooke McKee has been third and fourth in the last two state meets, and Johnston has two others who are ranked in the state's top 30 – freshman Aleah Tenpas (11th) and Clara Toot (15th).

Valley is led by Helen Gould, who was sixth in 2017 after being 11th in 2016; sophomore Lauren Schulze who was runner-up at the SQM, and a competitive pack led by freshmen Madeline Hollander, and Emily Bright.

Second-ranked Waukee, the third-place team in 2017, brings back two medal winners – Peyton Kelderman, who debuted at ninth last fall and Sydney Schaffer who took 12th. No. 3 Southeast Polk can bring back four from last year and is led by sophomores Mattison Plummer, Grace Larkins and Magda McCowan.

Fourth-ranked Dubuque, Senior (runner-up a year ago) is led by Claire Edmonson and Lillian Schmidt, ranked third and fourth respectively. Four-time champion and fifth-rated Pleasant Valley figures in the mix with seniors Maddy Minard, Mallory Lafever, and Abby Riley, with junior Lauren Buechel.

Other runners who medaled last fall and return include seventh-place finisher, Prairie, Cedar Rapids' Laurdyn Meyer; Cedar Rapids, Washington's Reagan Gorman, who was eighth and has been a three-time top 20 performer; Lilly Geelan from Linn-Mar, who was 10th, along with Cedar Falls' Mackenzie Michael (14th) and Dubuque, Hempstead's Hannah Brown (15th).

Joining the above runners in the chase for the overall gold medal are the state's top two ranked runners - Iowa City, Liberty freshman Ashlynn Kenney and Linn-Mar's Micah Poellet (16th in 2017). Also expected to be near the top are Dowling four-time qualifiers Kate Timboe and Kelsey Schweizer.

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Class 4A Boys

State Qualifying Meet Champs

Cedar Rapids, Washington
Dowling Catholic, W.D.M.
Johnston
Waukee
Pleasant Valley

No. 1 Ranked Team

Dowling Catholic, W.D.M.

No. 1 Ranked Runner

Tim Sindt, Ankeny

2017 Top Teams

1. Pleasant Valley	61
2. Dubuque, Hempstead	106
3. Dowling Catholic, W.D.M.	106

Returning 2017 Medalists

1. Tim Sindt, Ankeny
8. Ben Hermiston, Dubuque, Hempstead
9. Max Locher, Cedar Rapids, Washington
10. Payton Marrs, Urbandale
13. Gavin Smith, Pleasant Valley
14. Will Ode, Dowling Catholic, W.D.M.
15. Sam Schmitz, Johnston

Top-rated Dowling Catholic lost a 2017 tiebreaker for runner-up with Dubuque, Hempstead, but coach Tim Ives's club could snag their seventh crown and fifth in the last eight years. Will Ode is ranked seventh, but may not be available. Their talent well is not dry with ranked teammates Sam Hall, Cole Schroeder, Zach Fry and Kevin Conner.

Strong challenges are expected from 2017 runner-up and second-rated Hempstead, led by Ben Hermiston, who was eighth in 2017, and David Holesinger. Defending champion and third-ranked Pleasant Valley is usually Team October. The Spartans' Gavin Smith (13th last fall and a state performer the previous three years) has been injured, but ran in SQM. They have a deep cast led by ranked runners Kent Nichols, Max Murphy; Parker Huhn, and Ian Kaffenberger, who finished 20th overall in 2017.

No. 4 Johnston has a solid team led by 2017's 15th place finisher Sam Schmitz, along with Luke Perman and Carter Borwick. Waukee, ranked fifth, can return six runners led by Moe Smith, rated third, and Travis Loecke, rated 20th. Sixth-rated Ankeny could get into the mix with four-time qualifier Tim Sindt. The defending champion and top-ranked performer was also eighth as a sophomore. Earlier this fall, he became the first Iowa prep to dip under 15 minutes for cross country's 5K.

Eighth-ranked Cedar Rapids, Washington is led by Max Locher – ninth last fall and 24th in 2016 – and a strong pack with Paul Schneidermann, Khory Nobles, and Lewis Kleman.

The remaining chase for the top 15 medals is led by Iowa City, West's Kolby Greiner, who has fought with injuries but returned for the SQM. He was 11th in 2016. Also expected in the battle are Urbandale's Payton Marrs who finished tenth in 2017; Prairie, Cedar Rapids', Jack Pendergast, ranked second; Jacob Green from Cedar Rapids Kennedy (ranked fifth and who was 18th in 2017), Dylan Dolezal of Linn-Mar (ranked 10th), Sioux City North's Jaysen Bouwers (ranked 17th) and Cedar Falls' Brandon Conrad (rated 14th).

Class 3A Girls

State Qualifying Meet Champs

North Polk, Alleman
Harlan
Dallas Center-Grimes
Ballard
Wahlert Catholic, Dubuque

No. 1 Ranked Team

Wahlert Catholic, Dubuque

No. 1 Ranked Runner

Ainsley Erzen, Carlisle

2017 Top Teams

1. Wahlert Catholic, Dubuque	72
2. Pella	104
3. Decorah	150

Returning 2017 Medalists

1. Adrianna Katcher, Center Point-Urbana
2. Mary Blanchard, Grinnell
3. Gabby Moran, Wahlert Catholic, Dubuque
5. Bryce Gidel, Humboldt
6. Kiki Connell, Charles City
9. Megan Sievers, Carlisle
11. Caroline McMartin, Pella
12. Raegan Andersen, Denison-Schleswig
14. Whitney Martin, Charles City
15. Amber Aesoph, Bishop Heelan, Sioux City

Defending champion Wahlert Catholic, Dubuque, led by sophomore Gabby Moran, the third-place finisher in 2017, relies heavily on a "pack attack" which suits this class well. The Golden Eagles of coach Cynthia Wagner are seeking their fifth crown. They also feature senior Gracie Long and junior Anna Huseman (rated 20th) from their title team plus sophomore newcomer Alix Oliver (ranked 21st).

Ballard, Dallas Center-Grimes, Bishop Heelan, Harlan and Pella, rated two through six, are the top challengers. Ballard is led by Ellie Twedt (18th in 2016 and ranked 12th); Dallas Center-Grimes was one point better than Pella in the SQM and has a young team sparked by sophomores Megan Sterbenz, Emma Angus and frosh Hannah Little. The Fillies look to improve on fourth place finishes in 2015 and 2017. Bishop Heelan is paced by junior Amber Aesoph (15th last fall and 14th in 2016). Pella has been runner-up each of the last three years and has a solid stable of runners led by Caroline McMartin (11th last fall) and Makayla Kruse. Harlan has a pack team led by freshman Kaia Bieker and senior Greichaly Kaster. Eight-time champion Decorah, paced by juniors Shayla Betts and Brooke Courtney, can never be overlooked.

The individual field oozes with talent. Ten other medal-winners return, led by two-time champion Adrianna Katcher of Center Point-Urbana. She could become the IGHSAU's sixth three-time champion. She may be joined up front by Carlisle freshman Ainsley Erzen, the class's top-ranked runner and teammate Megan Sievers, who has been ninth, 12th and 14th in her previous three state trips. The following runners also grace the field: Grinnell's Mary Blanchard (second and 10th the past two seasons); Humboldt's Bryce Gidel (fifth last fall); Charles City tandem Kiki Connell (sixth in 2017) and

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Whitney Martin (14th); Denison-Schleswig's Reagan Andersen who has posted 12th and sixth place efforts; and Kourtney Delperdang from Spirit Lake who was ninth in 2016 and the runner-up as a freshman. Glenwood's Janette Schraft, a three-time qualifier with eighth and 11th-place finishes the last two years for East Mills in Class 1A; Mount Pleasant's Abby Ryon (18th in 2017); and Atlantic's Taylor McCreedy (20th last year) are all after berths in the elite 15.

Class 3A Boys

<u>State Qualifying Meet Champs</u>	<u>No. 1 Ranked Team</u>	<u>Returning 2017 Medalists</u>
Clear Creek-Amana	Gilbert	6. Rees Tyler, Gilbert
Gilbert	<u>No. 1 Ranked Runner</u>	7. Gus Hayes, Decorah
Carlisle	Rees Tyler, Gilbert	8. Cody Mertens, Mount Pleasant
Sergeant Bluff-Luton	<u>2017 Top Teams</u>	10. Nathan Patel, Gilbert
Decorah	1. Gilbert 75	11. Nate Mueller, ADM, Adel
	2. Dallas Center-Grimes 113	14. Harrison Vanderlinden, Marion
	3. Decorah 115	

Tradition has it that this class is always the toughest to forecast. Top-rated and defending champion Gilbert returns juniors Rees Tyler – top-rated after running sixth last fall – and Nathan Patel get a slight nod to repeat. With John Ockey and Griffin Ruba, the Tigers have four rated runners and three from last year's top 20. Coach Aaron Thomas graduated three off the 2017 title squad, and has been no worse than fourth in the past four state meets.

Carlisle, Marion, Clear Creek-Amana, Decorah, and Dallas Center-Grimes figure to be the top challengers, but anything can and usually does happen. No. 2 Carlisle has never finished in the top two, but only 28 seconds separate their top five runners and that balance could be critical. Juniors Kolby Fritz (21st last fall), Kyle Miller, and Tristen Kessler, join senior Carter Logue in the Wildcat pack. Harrison Vanderlinden (14th in 2017 and a four-year qualifier) and Cole Hermann show the way for 10-time champion and third-rated Marion, but their last title was in 1958. No. 4 Clear Creek-Amana has made steady progress and is also seeking its first trip into trophy territory. Just 26 seconds separate the Clippers' top five runners, with juniors Jack Sexton and Nick O'Connor being rated in the top 20.

Fifth-rated Decorah has won 15 state championships, five more than its closest rival, and coach Brad Johansen's clan would like to recapture the magic of 2012, their last title. It is doable for the Vikings, but a competitive field may have other ideas. Decorah is led by Gus Hayes, a four-time qualifier who has been seventh and 15th the last two seasons, and sophomore newcomer Brody Hogan. Last year's runner up Dallas Center-Grimes is ranked sixth and led by junior Brad Ramsey who was 18th.

In addition to the above runners, the individual medal chase should include Mount Pleasant's Cody Mertens, who is ranked second and a four-time qualifier; ADM, Adel's Nate Mueller, 11th last year; plus MOC-Floyd Valley's Jakob Van Der Werff, seventh-rated and 22nd in 2017; Humboldt's Quentin Orr, sixth-ranked and 23rd in 2017; and Algona's four time qualifier Trey Engen.

Class 2A Girls

<u>State Qualifying Meet Champs</u>	<u>No. 1 Ranked Team</u>	<u>Returning 2017 Medalists</u>
Crestwood, Cresco	Mid-Prairie, Wellman	1. Marie Hostetler, Mid-Prairie, Wellman
Jesup	<u>No. 1 Ranked Runner</u>	5. Sophia Jungling, Aplington-Parkersburg
Panorama, Panora	Marie Hostetler, Mid-Prairie, Wellman	6. Madeline Rhomberg, Cascade
Mid-Prairie, Wellman	<u>2017 Top Teams</u>	10. Ana Fleming, Mid-Prairie, Wellman
Woodbury Central/Kingsley-Pierson	1. Mid-Prairie, Wellman 65	11. Cassidy Ihns, Crestwood
	2. Monticello 72	13. Hope Dohman, Crestwood
	3. Woodbury Central/Kingsley-Pierson 103	15. Madison Kelchen, Cascade

Mid-Prairie, Wellman is the defending champion and the top-rated team, paced by defending champion and 2016 runner-up Marie Hostetler, a junior who owns the fastest time in State Meet competition (17:51.2). The Golden Hawks of coach Mark Hostetler can return six runners who helped them win their first title last fall. Sophomore Anna Fleming (10th last fall) and senior Moriah Brase are rated along with freshman newcomer Mitzi Evans.

The Golden Hawks survived a strong field a year ago and will have to do the same with the likes of Williamsburg, Woodbury Central/Kingsley-Pierson, Panorama, Cascade, Jesup, and Crestwood each bringing enough firepower to make a run for team trophies. No. 2 Williamsburg was just eight points behind the defending champs at the SQM and boast a balanced team, led by Megan Rathjen (24th in 2017) and freshman Taylor Winegarden. WC-KP had their best state finish last fall when they ran third. This fall, freshman Erika Kuntz leads the team with sophomores Makayla Archer, Sarah and Mary Putze, and Kalyn Cameron returning. Only 22 seconds separates runners two through six.

No. 4 Panorama was runner-up in 1A last fall and sophomore Ella Waddle debuted at fourth. The Panthers also feature freshman Payton Beckman and sophomores Olivia and Gwen Steffen.

Cascade, ranked fifth, has a class-best of nine state titles, and was fifth last year. Four-time state qualifiers Madeline Rhomberg, 6th in 2017, and Madison Kelchen, 15th last fall, are the team leaders. Sixth-rated Jesup bested Cascade in the SQM by 10 points and features four-time qualifier Emily Treptow, who finished 25th last year, freshman Amanda Treptow, and Natalie O'Connor showing the way. Eighth-rated Crestwood has Cassidy Ihns

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(11th in 2017) and Hope Dohlman (13th) to key their hopes.

Besides the above runners, the individual hunt for top 15 medals should also include Springville-Central City's four-time qualifier Emily Staal, who won Class 1A in 2017, and her sister Janelle, who was 11th last year; Aplington-Parkersburg's Sophie Jungling, fifth and sixth in the last two state meets; along with Emmetsburg's Raven Brown (22nd last fall) and Western Christian's Whitney Minderhoud (18th last fall).

Class 2A Boys

<u>State Qualifying Meet Champs</u>	<u>No. 1 Ranked Team</u>	<u>Returning 2017 Medalists</u>
Okoboji, Milford Bellevue Roland-Story Tipton Sioux Center	Tipton	2. Reece Smith, Garner-Hayfield-Ventura 3. Joe Anderson, GLR/CL 4. Spencer Moon, South Central Calhoun 5. Lake LeBahn, Union, LaPorte City 6. Blake Johnson, GLR/CL 7. Logan Peters, South Hamilton (1A) 8. Ethan Albright, Okoboji, Milford 13. Sam Harrison, Sioux Center 14. Peter Shippy, Sioux Center 15. Ben Ellis, Tipton
	<u>No. 1 Ranked Runner</u>	
	Reece Smith, Garner-Hayfield-Ventura	
	<u>2017 Top Teams</u>	
	1. George-Little Rock/Central Lyon 79 2. Mid-Prairie, Wellman 93 3. Tipton 143	

Enrollment changes with Bellevue and Treynor moving up from Class 1A makes this class even stronger. Top-rated Tipton finished third last year and returns five from last year's team. Coach Eric Walsh's club is led by senior Ben Ellis, sophomore Caleb Schumacher and junior Trent Pelzer each rated among the top 15. The Tigers won in 1975 and had runner-up teams from 1972-74.

The team race could get crowded with Sioux Center, Bellevue, Camanche, defending champion George-Little Rock/Central Lyon, and Okoboji, rated two through six, and each looking for a place at the top. No. 2 Sioux Center is led by Sam Harrison (13th in 2017), Peter Shippy (14th), and Avery Den Herder, key runners in last year's fourth place finish. Bellevue was runner up in 1A a year ago and the third-ranked Comets have a formidable group led by sophomore Brady Griebel who was 16th in 2017, and a veteran pack that is within 57 seconds of each other. No. 4 Camanche trailed Bellevue and Monticello in the SQM, but it is led by the state's 10th-ranked in runner Dylan Darsidan.

Defending champion and fifth-ranked George-Little Rock/Central Lyon is led by four-time qualifier Joe Anderson – rated third after finished third last year – and senior Blake Johnson, sixth last fall, who missed the SQM. No. 6 Okoboji is led by Ethan Albright, eighth last fall, and Jacob Lamb. Monticello, 10th-rated, has won four titles and finished runner-up three times and makes its 22nd straight appearance, the longest active streak in all classes. Junior Cole Cruise leads the Panthers.

In addition to the above runners, a tough field gets better with the following: Garner-Hayfield-Ventura's Reece Smith, a four-time qualifier has been runner-up each of the last two falls after taking fifth as a freshman; South Central Calhoun's Spencer Moon, a four-time qualifier who has been fourth each of the last two years; and Union's Lake LaBahn, who claimed fifth in 2017. Added to the mix are Treynor's Jerry Jorgenson, a four-time qualifier who was fourth in 2017; Jordan Hustak of Missouri Valley (23rd last fall); and Estherville Lincoln Central's Taylor Myers (24th).

Class 1A Girls

<u>State Qualifying Meet Champs</u>	<u>No. 1 Ranked Team</u>	<u>Returning 2017 Medalists</u>
Earlham Kee, Lansing Hudson Regina, Iowa City Logan-Magnolia	Logan-Magnolia	1. Emily Staal, Springville-Central City (2A) 2. Emma Lucas, Bedford 3. Kate Crawford, ACGC 4. Peyton Pogge, Tri-Center, Neola 6. Ella Waddle, Panorama (2A) 7. Taylor Sporrer, Logan-Magnolia 8. Janette Shraft, East Mills (3A, Glenwood) 11. Janelle Staal, Springville-Central City (2A) 12. Kori Wedeking, Clarksville 13. Jenna Twait, Hudson 14. Alexis Post, Riverside, Oakland
	<u>No. 1 Ranked Runner</u>	
	Emma Lucas, Bedford	
	<u>2017 Top Teams</u>	
	1. Hudson 104 2. Panorama, Panora 115 3. Kee, Lansing 133	

Top-rated Logan-Magnolia was fourth in a tight race last fall, which left the Panthers with a "TCB attitude" for this fall. Kelli Gaukel's team is led by 2017 seventh-place finisher Taylor Sporrer, who is now a junior rated third, and her freshman sister Courtney who is rated 11th and supported by a strong team in a competitive field.

Hudson, the defending champion, is ranked sixth and joins Regina, Iowa City; Denver; and Kee, Lansing as the likely challengers. The Pirates return five from last year's championship squad, with juniors Jenna Twait (13th in 2017 and 4th in 2016), Morgan Hansen and Sophie Selenke setting the pace. No. 2 Regina, Iowa City was seventh in 2A a year ago, and returns that team's top two finishers: Kennedy Scott and Molly Vittetoe.

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Denver and Kee are ranked third and fourth, but the Hawks edged the Cyclones in the SQM. Kee was third a year ago and Denver was seventh. Freshman Haley Meyer (ranked 8th) and senior Katie Brennan (19th in 2017) set the pace for the Hawks, while Denver counters with junior Grace Beck, senior Natalie Even and freshman Chloe Ristau (ranked 19th).

Pekin is seventh-rated and coach Davis Eidahl's program has run to four titles and four runner-up finishes in the previous nine seasons. They are led this fall by freshmen Lauren Derscheid and Emily Laumeier, and veteran Remi Duwa, who has been 24th and 13th the last two seasons.

Aside from the previously listed runners, the race to get into the Elite 15 should be last fall's runner-up Emma Lucas of Bedford; ACGC's Kate Crawford, champion in 2016 and 3rd last fall; Tri-Center's Peyton Pogge, fourth in 2017; and Riverside, Oakland's four-time qualifier Alexis Post, who was 14th last year. Also, expected to be competitive in the medal hunt are Nodaway Valley's Reagan Weinheimer, fifth in 2016; Clarksville's Kori Wedeking (12th in the last two state meets); North Mahaska's Cheyenne Shaw (18th last fall); Marquette Catholic, Bellevue's Halle Kilburg (15th in 2016); Saint Ansgar's Addy Carlson; Baxter's Brenna Thomson (22nd in 2017); J'lyn Knutson Melcher-Dallas (ranked 4th).

Class 1A Boys

<u>State Qualifying Meet Champs</u>	<u>No. 1 Ranked Team</u>	<u>Returning 2017 Medalists</u>
Earlham	Madrid	2. Sean McDermott, Madrid
BCLUW, Conrad		4. Jerry Jorgenson, Treynor (2A)
Madrid	<u>No. 1 Ranked Runner</u>	6. Buddy Darting, Wilton
Calamus-Wheatland	Sean McDermott, Madrid	8. Carson Rygh, Lake Mills
Sibley-Ocheyedan	<u>2017 Top Teams</u>	9. Grant Brouwer, Sibley-Ocheyedan
	1. Nodaway Valley 56	10. Hunter Rickels, Calamus-Wheatland
	2. Bellevue (2A) 82	12. Noah Nelson, ACGC
	3. Madrid 136	

Coach Kelly Grothus has awakened the echoes at Madrid. His top-rated Tigers were third last year, which was the school's highest finish since taking the title in 1965 and finishing as runner-up in 1966. Senior Sean McDermott is the top-rated runner in this class and comes into this year's fracas on the heels of second and seventh-place finishes the past two seasons. He has a strong supporting cast keyed by sophomores Jason Renze and Gabe Soda.

A stern test awaits the Tigers. Three-time defending champion Nodaway Valley, Earlham, Calamus-Wheatland, and South Hamilton, coming down from Class 2A, each will be out to state their case for getting into the trophy mix, along with Sibley-Ocheyedan and Pekin. No. 2 Nodaway Valley and ninth-ranked Earlham squared off in five meets this fall with the Wolverines winning three before the Cardinals (14th last fall) won the SQM by eight points.

Nodaway Valley is led by Joshua Baudler (17th), Tyler Breheny (19th the last two years) and Ben Breheny. Earlham features a strong pack contingent led by Michael Allen. Seventy seconds separate the Cardinals first five. No. 3 Calamus-Wheatland is led by the one-two punch of senior Hunter Rickels, a four-time qualifier who was 10th last fall, and sophomore Chase Knoche (ranked 17th).

South Hamilton is ranked sixth and returns to Class 1A after finishing sixth in 2A last year. The Hawks have a gritty squad led by four-time qualifier Logan Peters, who was seventh in 2A last fall, and junior Quinton Grove, who was 25th. Sibley-Ocheyedan is making its state debut as a team since the district/SQM format began in 1976. The fifth-rated Generals are led by four-time qualifier Grant Brouwer, who was ninth last fall, and their two through five runners are separated by a minute. Pekin, led by Brady Milliken and Colten Glosser, can never be counted out of an October competition.

The Fleet 15 medal race should also include Wilton's Buddy Darting (sixth in 2017); Lake Mills' Carson Rygh (eighth last fall and 16th in 2016); ACGC's Noah Nelsen (12th last year); Boyer Valley's four-time qualifier Justin Ambrose (18th last year); BCLUW's Caleb Silver (20th last fall); second ranked Will Roder of Gehlen Catholic, LeMars; MVAOCOU Dylan Blake (21st last year); South Winneshiek's Paul Hageman (22nd in 2017); and Ogden's Garrett Buxton, who was 24th.