

# Exciting Team Races and Record Chasers Head to State

By Chris Kane

## Tennessee State ES/MS XC Championships Preview



**10/17/2019 Knoxville, TN** – Knoxville is finalizing preparations which is already set to be the largest state meet yet with over 2050 entries at the deadline! Races are shaping up to be super competitive as athletes are set to prove who the best racers are this season. Reports from around the state have shown most regions are growing and this means better and better athletes at the state championships! After a brutally hot season for most (it was a very rainy season in 2018), the weather Saturday looks great with a chilly morning followed by a mild afternoon with a chance of pop up showers later in the day.

### **DISCLAIMER:**

**These meet reviews/previews are produced by myself with advice from regional coordinators. All predictions are simply a guess, guaranteed to be wrong and should not be taken seriously or as fact. Have fun with it and run fast Saturday!**

## State Qualifier Recaps:

### West Region



Houston Girls Photo Credit: Houston MS

### Middle School Girls

Last year's State Runner-up (to her Houston MS teammate) **Zoe Marsh** has remain largely unchallenged this season and looks poised to come to Knoxville and keep the Girls State Title in the Houston MS halls. On the strength of their 1-2 overall finish last season, Houston also won the state title. They look like they have reloaded and will come to Knoxville looking to defend. **Maui Boles** (Lakeland) and **Maya McCloskey** (West Collierville) finished top 3 at the state qualifier. **Houston MS** won with a score of just 32 points against a strong **West Collierville** team (61 points) not to be confused with **Collierville Middle** who took home third (111 points). Collierville was 5<sup>th</sup> at State last year.

### Middle School Boys

**Will Skinner** (Collierville) won a very competitive race against three other top racers who finished with 7 seconds of the winner. **Kaleb Smith** (Appling) and the 1-2 punch of Camden Jr High, **Ayden Melton/Ridge Bruce** were the top finishers and all four seem poised to attain a top 20 All-State position in their race. None of these boys were All-State last year but I am told they have competed hard all season and won't be shying away from the increase in competition Saturday. **Houston MS** was state runner-up as a team last fall and defended their regional title. **Collierville Middle** (78 points) and Camden Jr finished in the next two positions. Collierville was 6<sup>th</sup> last year at state.

### Elementary School Girls

Briarcrest returns **Melaya Weisner** as the second-best returner in the state finishing 10<sup>th</sup> last year. She has continued that development winning her region by 9 seconds (7:02) on the Memphis course that had to be altered due to heavy rains and was at least 1.1 miles. Expect her to run much faster Saturday and be contending for a top 5 spot. **Evelyn McKenna** is Dogwood's latest star taking over for Rachel Tankersley who was last year's top 10 finisher. She was 13 seconds up on third place finisher **Anne Frances Buffington** from Forest Hill. **Evangelical Christian** packed in the racers with a 1-5 spread of just 30 seconds to take the win with 75 points winning by 13 points over Farmington. **Lakeland** narrowly beat **Dogwood** by 1 point to take 3<sup>rd</sup> (128 points).

### Elementary School Boys

Narrowly finishing out of an all-state position last fall but is the second-best returner in his grade. Daniel Hudnall (Unattached) was 22<sup>nd</sup> last year and has plans on cementing a top 20 and maybe to 10 result this year. Running 6:48 on the long course, Daniel won by a strong margin of 9 seconds. **Michael Serino** (Campus) and **Miles Pleasants** (Dogwood and 33<sup>rd</sup> last year) came home with matching times of 6:57 for second and third in the race respectively. Dogwood had a great finish last year taking a 4<sup>th</sup> place plaque home. This year they set themselves up for another top 5 finish dominating their region with just 45 points winning over **Farmington** (96 points) and **Briarcrest** (138 points).

### **Nashville Region**

#### Middle School Girls



Sophia Brame-Goldthwaite. Photo Credit: KYA

The Nashville region is known for producing state contenders and this year is no different. **Sophia Brame Goldthwaite** (MLK) is going to be a contender this weekend. A name we have heard for many years, she was 12<sup>th</sup> in Knoxville last year and should be viewed as a top 5 contender this year. **Searcy Mooney** (Mill Creek) has come a long way from her 90<sup>th</sup> place finish last year. Finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in that region shows she is an all-state contender this year. An impressive athlete she narrowly defeated was third place finish **Lia Banovac** of Brentwood who was 2018's Elementary State Champion. Led by Banovac, Annmarie Stallman, Paige Percy and Lauren Banovac, **Brentwood Middle** placed 4 in the top 10 and finished with just 26 points. They finished 9<sup>th</sup> last year and will certainly finish higher in 2019. The middle school girls team competition is going to be unbelievable. **St Matthew** finished with 65 points and beat **Davidson Academy** who had 81 points for second and third. Both teams are familiar with the state meet and look ready for some great finishes. St Matthew was 8<sup>th</sup> last year.

#### Middle School Boys

In 2018, the race had some great competitors but one that could not attend due to a schedule conflict was **Callahan Fielder** from Brentwood. This year is here and ready to go. Running away from the field by 35 seconds, Callahan looks to be one of the top 3 favorites in the field. **Parker Harris** (Grassland) and **Payne Fielder** (Brentwood) also are aiming at top 20 finishes. Harris was 32<sup>nd</sup> last year. **Brentwood** despite missing their #1 in 2018 finished 7<sup>th</sup>. They should be a top 5 team as they had 3 of their athletes finish top 10 in their state qualifier and finished with just 26 points. **St Matthew** finished 9<sup>th</sup> last year and was 2<sup>nd</sup> in their region with 71 points. **Davidson Academy** made sure that the boys matched the girls top 3 finish as they had 126 points.

### Elementary School Girls

The Banovac girls led the way for the Nashville region in 2018. With the two athletes now in middle school, a new generation of top talent is leading the charge to state. **Margaret Page Baker** (Oak Hill) and **Siena Thompson** (Hunter's Bend) had a great race at the front with Baker winning by just 3 seconds (5:59). **Lydia Brunner** (St Matthew) came up for third. It was Thompson who led her team to a team title as **Hunter's Bend** finished with 41 points to beat **St Matthew** (7<sup>th</sup> last year) led by Brunner and Libby Helmer by 12 points. **Ensworth** was third with 83 points.



Ally and Porter at the City Championships Photo Credit: Wendy Fielder

### Elementary School Boys

The top 6 boys in the Nashville region had a great race with all racers finishing within 8 seconds. Led by St Henry's **Ty Eden** in 5:52, he looks set for an all-state position based off the runners he beat including last year's 19<sup>th</sup> place finisher at state, **Simon Ally** who was 5<sup>th</sup> in the region and **Gabe Guillamondegui** (St Bernard Academy) who was 37<sup>th</sup> last year and 4<sup>th</sup> at region this year. **Jacob Porter** from Scales finished in 5:55 followed by **Jack Fruin** of Overbrook in 5:56. None of the top teams this year were top 10 last year but **Scales** looks to change that this year as they had 3 boys within 20 seconds and in the top 10. With just 25 points, they won their region by 34 points over **Overbrook**. **Hunter's Bend** was third with 106 points.

### **Knoxville Region**

#### Middle School Girls

Improvement might be the name of the game for Knoxville. **Kate Robinson** of Bearden was just 68<sup>th</sup> last year. This year should leap up to a top 10 finish as she won several of the program races including the region in 13:21. She defeated some top state returners including 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher **Jenna Clements** (Sacred Heart and 14<sup>th</sup> in 2018), 4<sup>th</sup> place finisher **Kyndra West** (Hardin Valley, 28<sup>th</sup> in 2018), 5<sup>th</sup> place finisher **Madison Archdale** (Cedar Bluff and 8<sup>th</sup> in 2018), 7<sup>th</sup> place finisher **Anna Graves** (Unattached and 15<sup>th</sup> in 2018, 8<sup>th</sup> place finisher **Emma Zimmerman** (Hardin Valley and 20<sup>th</sup> in 2018. Add in 2018's Elementary state race's 6<sup>th</sup> place finisher **Elizabeth Wolski** of Sacred Heart (9<sup>th</sup> place at 2019 region) and 23<sup>rd</sup> placer **Carolina Areheart** of Hardin Valley (6<sup>th</sup> in 2019 region), the Knoxville region looks set to continue a deep finish against the state's best. Another contender for top three favorites in the team race is **Hardin Valley**. With just 35 points and 3 top 10 finishes, they look strong to at least match their runner-up finish in 2018. Robinson led **Bearden** finished 2<sup>nd</sup> with 70 points and should battle for a top 10 finish. **Farragut** who was 6<sup>th</sup> last fall finished 3<sup>rd</sup> at region with 141 points. **Knoxville Amassadors** was 4<sup>th</sup> with 161 points after their 7<sup>th</sup> place state finish last year.



Keegan Smith and Cade Crum

### Middle School Boys

Trevor Coggin and Zal Ilagan were the top boys last fall for the region. With both athletes in HS, we look to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade class for the top boys from this region. **Keegan Smith** (Sacred Heart) and **Cade Crum** (Bearden and 31<sup>st</sup> in 2018) have rarely been more than a few steps apart and both should be top 5-10 contenders. Keegan ran away for victory at the region winning in 11:26 (course record is 11:01 by 2019 top TN High School runner Silas Winders). Crum's 11:52 would have been 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2018 state so look for him to improve Saturday on that time with more competition up front. **Radek Molchan** (Hardin Valley) will not be overlooked with his sub 12 time of 11:55 after his 2018 5<sup>th</sup> place finish in the elementary race. **Hardin Valley** led by Molchan finished with 33 points and look to carry that momentum into the state meet where they finished 4<sup>th</sup> in 2018. Defending Champion **Farragut** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the region with 72 points followed by **Webb** who seems like a team on the rise after their early 2010's domination of the state finished with 121.

### Elementary School Girls

**Marely Ortega** (Farragut) has become one of the top athletes in the state on the heels of her 5<sup>th</sup> place finish last year. Her 5:41 would have won last year as well so look for her near the front. **Mary Mac Emery** (Sequoyah) was 35<sup>th</sup> last year but ran almost a minute faster at region this year and matched Banovac's winning time. **Anna Ogle** and **Emma Cissna** broke the 6 minute barrier as they led their **Hardin Valley** team and a total of 7 in the top 10 to a very strong win. They were 2<sup>nd</sup> at the state meet in 2018 by just 2 points to **Farragut**. This year, they swapped places with Hardin Valley winning by 40 points 28-68. **Sequoyah** finished 3<sup>rd</sup> and look like a strong contender to match their 4<sup>th</sup> place finish this year.

### Elementary School Boys

There were two boys in the region who went home with a win this fall in the program, but it was **Andrew Cabaniss** (Farragut) who won the most. He took home the region crown running 5:16 (5:13 is the state meet record, 5:01 is the course record). **Cade Duncanson** of AL Lotts (5:24) and **Cameron Hardy** from Fairview (5:28) ran under 5:30 and last year's winning state time so look for them towards the lead pack. **Quinten Smith**, **Colt Areheart** and **Nathan Weiss** finished 4-6<sup>th</sup> place to lead **Hardin Valley** to victory over a very strong challenge from **Farragut**. The two teams were basically always within 5 points each week even tying one race. Hardin Valley is the defending champion and Farragut finished 3<sup>rd</sup> last year 11 points back of HV. **Sequoyah** was runner-up last year but finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the region. **AL Lotts** led by Duncanson finished third at region in front of Sequoyah 107-109.

## Chattanooga Region

### Middle School Girls

Marsh from Houston mentioned earlier may be the pre-race favorite, but if you are looking for contenders, you must consider **Mae Mae Powe** (St Jude) and **Hannah Faudi** (CSTHEA Patriots). Both athletes were top 5 last season finished 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively. At their region, they went 1-2 in that order with Powe winning 12:07 to 12:13. **Lily Dodd** of **CSTHEA** (11<sup>th</sup> last year at state) helped Faudi lead her team to brilliant win with 6 in the top 8 and just 18 points scored. They finished 3<sup>rd</sup> last year and look like that is probably at least where they should finish this year. **Chattanooga Christian** and **Tullahoma** both scored 72 with Chattanooga Christian winning the tie break.

### Middle School Boys

The top of the race had two runners way out front through one mile before **Evan Simpson** (Unattached) opening up a margin of 13 seconds at the finish over **Grady Outlaw** (McCallie). Both runners top 50 last fall with Outlaw finishing 29<sup>th</sup> and Simpson placing 37<sup>th</sup>. Third place finisher 40 seconds back of Outlaw was last year's final all-state winner in 20<sup>th</sup>, **Ian Etheridge** of CSTHEA. This should indicate at least two if not all three are poised for top 10-15 finishes. This reason has become much more competitive in recent years and it should be expected that we will see some significant Chattanooga presence on the awards stand. Outlaw led 3 other **McCallie** athletes to top 6 finishes and they almost matched CSTHEA girls dominance scoring just 20 points. This team was 5<sup>th</sup> last year and should be poised for a top 5 finish again. **CSTHEA** was 8<sup>th</sup> in the state but placed third in the region this year as **Chattanooga Christian** scored 64 points to defeat CSTHEA by 8 points.

### Elementary School Girls

**Kaci Lambeth** of CSTHEA was 51<sup>st</sup> last fall. This year she is ready to be All-State. She held off a strong challenge from **Brindley Duncan** of Robert E Lee 6:29-6:34. **Lina Farmer** of **Bright** placed third but was able to help her team hoist the region champion trophy as they held off **CSTHEA** 46-59. Bright had three finishers in the top 10 and is the top returning team from the region as they were 6<sup>th</sup> in 2018 at state. **Chattanooga Christian** placed third as a team with 96 points.



### Elementary School Boys



This was the most exciting finish of the day with it coming down to a photo finish! **Gage Allen** of Robert E Lee (6:03) pictured above on the right took the win by .02 seconds over **Deacon Bustamante** of Chattanooga Christian. They were followed 6 seconds back by third grader **McC Corey Jones** of Normal Park. Would not surprise anyone if two or three manage to finish top 20 Saturday with a depth of competition around them pulling them to some fast performances. **CSTHEA** played the team game in the race placing their top three in 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> place and taking the team title with 40 points. They defeated **Bright** and **Normal Park** who scored 61 and 87 points. CSTHEA brings their 7<sup>th</sup> place finish experience with them into this year. As packed as the front of the team race is, this team looks ready to mix it up for a top 5 finish.

## Mid-State



Ella VanVranken Photo Credit: Lynn Dawson

## Middle School Girls

**Dekalb Co** came in with one goal. Win the individual race and win the team race. Mission accomplished as **Ella VanVranken** of Dekalb Co took home the victory over teammate **Zoe Keys** 13:02-13:18. **Laykin Ellis** of Macon Co came up for third with a great time of 13:30. On the strong 1-2 finish plus three other teammates in the top 10, Dekalb held up the champion trophy scoring just 25 points to win over **Gladeville** who scored 45 points. **Cookeville** who is always very familiar with the state meet, placed third in 66 points.

## Middle School Boys

**Gladeville** boys must have had a competition with Dekalb girls for who could win the team/individual events. They also went 1-2 individually led by **Braden Huynh** and **Ian Vlk** (his sister is a nationally ranked thrower for Wilson Central). The two ran 12:25 and 12:34 to lead their team to a team score of just 41 points. **Kaleb Spears** of Dekalb Co held off a challenge from **Conor Gammons** of Macon Co. Gammons led his team to a runner up finish with 102 points. **West Wilson** was third winning the tie break with **Dekalb Co** with both teams scoring 105 points.

## Elementary Girls

**Mercy Whitt** was just outside of an All-State certificate last year by 8 seconds. This year, she seems set to break that barrier and go home with a trophy as she won her region by 20 seconds running 6:17. Finishing second was **Zara**

**Kocak** from Jack Anderson and **Rylee Bray** of Macon Co brought home the third-place trophy in 6:53. **Macon Co** managed to place four athletes in the top 6 and that propelled them to a 22 point total winning over **Jack Anderson** who scored 38. **Discovery** scored 68 points to finish in third.

### Elementary Boys

The boys featured a great team race and that is evident by how back and forth the individuals finished. **Discovery** scored a one-point victory over **Macon County**. Discovery placed four in the top 9, Macon County placed three in the top 7. **Cooper Carlisle** of Macon Co led his team with the individual title winning by 20 seconds as well over **Carson Phillips** from Discovery. **Alan Wheeler** from Thurman Francis held off a big pack of finishers to place third. Discovery and Macon have experience at the state meet with Macon finishing 9<sup>th</sup> last fall. Look for both teams hunting for the top 10 this year. **Jack Anderson** finished in third his time with 65 points.

### **Tri-Cities**

#### Middle School Girls

This region featured a slew of local teams facing a lot of out of state competition. The leading Tennessee finishers included **Kayee Dyke** who competes for West View running 12:51. She was 30<sup>th</sup> last year and should be pushing for an all-state finish in 2019. **Hudson Cloninger** of East Ridge finished 2<sup>nd</sup> for TN athletes in 13:08. Teammates **Daniel Sawyer** and **Allie Swan** were the next two TN finishers. **West View** was the top team scoring 27 points. A perennial state meet qualifier, look for them to improve on their 16<sup>th</sup> place finish last year. **East Ridge** finished second for TN schools and look to move up from 22<sup>nd</sup> last year.



Luke Mussard leading the MS Boys race at Trailblazer. Photo Credit: Tanner Cook

#### Middle School Boys

**Luke Mussard** battled for the overall win and has set himself up as a contender for a top 10 position. His 10:55 is quite impressive considering the next best finisher ran 11:17 from **Bereket Evans** (West View) and he was 19<sup>th</sup> last year as a 6<sup>th</sup> grader. Look for both athletes to be All-State. **Caleb Haygood** was the next TN finisher running 11:42. **West View** (10<sup>th</sup> at State last year) matched their girls team by winning with just 51 points over **University School of Johnson City** who scored 96. **Meadowview** was third with 125 points.



### Elementary School Girls

West Side ES may not have a complete team, but they have three strong runners. Led by **Vella Nave**, West Side had the top three TN finishers with **Eli Nekvasil** and **Liahna Nave** finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> best TN finisher. Vella certainly has a top 20 finish in her mind. She would have finished fourth in the Elementary boys race at the regional qualifier so look out for her. **Sulphur Springs** was the sole team to score from TN with 30 points.

### Elementary School Boys

**Jud Stapleton** came into the year with state experience finishing 38<sup>th</sup> last year. He won his region running 5:38 but was pushed all the way to the line by **Ryan Dodge** of Ridgeview. Look for both athletes to be in the All-State range when they are surrounded by a lot of great competition. **Aaron Carpenter** of Russellville wasn't far behind the top two running 5:40 which is a great time on that course. **West Side** was the only team to score from TN with 37 points.

In Summary, things I am personally excited to watch from behind my computer Saturday:

1. The Middle School Girls Team Race. SOOOO many teams in contention and only ONE can be the champion. The Individual race is stacked and we knew it was since last year. This is going to be my most-looked-forward-to race personally. A lot of fans have circled it on their schedule as the race to watch.
2. The Middle School Boys Individual Race. There are at least 8-10 boys who should be in contention. Will the course record of 11:01 from legend Silas Winders go down?
3. How low of a team score will Hardin Valley ES Girls score against the best in the state? They seem to be the clear favorite but maybe a team can surprise Saturday.
4. There is such a small margin between Hardin Valley and Farragut ES Boys. With a tie and typically within 5 points each meet, is there room for another team to upset them in their bid for a 1-2 finish?

## **PREDICTION TIME!!!**

### **Middle School Girls Individuals**

1. **Zoe Marsh – Houston**
2. **Mae Mae Powe – St Jude**
3. **Kate Robinson – Bearden**
4. **Sophia Brame Goldthwaite – MLK**
5. **Hannah Faudi – CSTHEA**
6. **Jenna Clements – Sacred Heart**
7. **Kaylee Dyke – West View**
8. **Searcy Mooney – Mill Creek**
9. **Ella VanVrankin – Dekalb Co**
10. **Kyndra West – Hardin Valley**

**Darkhorse: Madison Archdale – Cedar Bluff \*8<sup>th</sup> in 2018**

### **Middle School Girls Team**

1. **Houston**

2. Hardin Valley
3. CSTHEA
4. Brentwood
5. Tie- Dekalb
5. Tie- West View

#### **Middle School Boys Individuals**

1. Callahan Fielder – Brentwood
2. Keegan Smith – Sacred Heart
3. Parker Breitling – Merrol Hyde \*TMSAA top qualifier
4. Evan Simpson – Unattached
5. Luke Mussard – Gray
6. Cade Crum – Bearden
7. Braden Huynh – Gladeville
8. Will Skinner – Collierville
9. Grady Outlaw – McCallie
10. Bereket Evans – West View

**Darkhorse: Ian Etheridge – CSTHEA. Just third at Region but 20<sup>th</sup> last year at state.**

#### **Middle School Boys Teams**

1. Hardin Valley
2. Brentwood
3. Houston
4. McCallie
5. West View

#### **Elementary School Girls Individuals**

1. Marely Ortega – Farragut
2. Melaya Weisner – Briarcrest
3. Margaret Page Baker – Oak Hill
4. Mercy Whitt – Unattached
5. Mary Mac Emery - Sequoyah
6. Vella Nave – West Side
7. Kaci Lambeth – CSTHEA
8. Evelyn McKenna – Dogwood
9. Anna Ogle – Hardin Valley
10. Siena Thompson – Hunter's Bend

**Darkhorse: Another Hardin Valley athlete. Not a question if HV will have a top 10 finisher. Can they have more than one? They haven't raced this season without 5 in the top 10 including the championship.**

#### **Elementary School Girls Team**

1. **Hardin Valley**
2. **Macon Co**
3. **Bright**
4. **Hunters Bend**
5. **Evangelical Christian**

#### **Elementary School Boys Individuals**

1. **Andrew Cabaniss – Farragut**
2. **Ty Eden – St Henry**
3. **Daniel Hudnall – Unattached**
4. **Cade Duncanson – AL Lotts**
5. **Cooper Carlisle – Macon Co**
6. **Jud Stapleton – Sulphur Springs**
7. **Gage Allen – Robert E Lee**
8. **Deacon Bustamante – Chattanooga Christian**
9. **Jacob Porter – Scales**
10. **Cameron Hardy - Fairview**

**Darkhorse: Quentin Smith – Hardin Valley. The only athlete to defeat Cabaniss this season. 4<sup>th</sup> in Region.**

**Darkhorse 2: Simon Ally – Unattached. Defeated Porter several times this season and was All-State in 2018.**

#### **Elementary School Boys Teams**

1. **Hardin Valley**
2. **Farragut**
3. **Scales**
4. **Macon Co**
5. **Dogwood**

In closing, I want to remind you that this is one person's opinion and is GUARANTEED to be wrong. If you were predicted to finish well, take it as confidence. If you were not predicted where you wanted, use it as bulletin board material (if anyone still owns one...). Have a safe trip if you are traveling from out of town and KYA wishes everyone the BEST OF LUCK!

