



# State Championship Celebrates Sweet 16

By Chris Kane

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The Tennessee State ES/MS XC Championship makes a return to the site for the first 14 years – Victor Ashe Park. Last year due to COVID, the meet was held at Knoxville Livestock Center but still featured amazing competition with all the top athletes in the state. With some of the athletes graduating to the next level, there will be some new champions while a couple defending champions hope to return to the top of the podium. The team competition is expected to be tough as ever and there are some toss up individual races that should be really fun to watch.

## Regional Recaps

**Chattanooga:** Chattanooga continues to be the fastest growth region led by Chattanooga Youth Running.

### Elementary Girls

**Addison Cotter** (46<sup>th</sup> in 2020) Unattached was the Chattanooga in 6:17 separating from the field by 12 seconds over **Ally Osborne** of St Jude (20<sup>th</sup> in 2020) and **Callie Cooper** (Unattached). 2020 14<sup>th</sup> place finisher **Kenley Pryor** (Unattached and 14<sup>th</sup> in 2020) was 4<sup>th</sup>.

**St Jude** plans a return to Knoxville with the goal of repeating their top 10 finish from last year. **Bright School** finished 1 point back 71-72 and look prepared to compete for a top 10 finish as well. **Wallace Eagles** was 3<sup>rd</sup> with 117 points.

### Elementary Boys

Normal Park's **McCorey Jones** was the lone athlete to break 6 minutes running 5:59 narrowly outkicking **Jax Pas** (23<sup>rd</sup> in 2020) from Silverdale who ran 6:00. **Hudson Wingfield** (27<sup>th</sup> in 2020) from Chattanooga Christian placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in 6:14.

**Silverdale** boys were 10<sup>th</sup> last year at state and placed first at the region with just 33 points (perfect score is 15). They look poised to finish strong led by Pas who is expected to finish top 20. **CSTHEA** was second at region (55 points) and return to state where they were 5<sup>th</sup> in 2020. **Normal Park** led by Jones was third with 63 points.

#### Middle Girls

**Nora Armstrong** of Girls Preparatory (13:35) returns after finishing 50<sup>th</sup> in 2020 at state looking much improved winning her region. Team is a big deal for GPS going 1-2 with **Helen Kates** 13:39. **Mary Kingsley** (93<sup>rd</sup> in 2020) led CSTHEA with her 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish.

**CSTHEA** is a stable at state including last year where they placed 6<sup>th</sup>. They are ready to finish strong again winning their region by 27 points with a low score of 32. **GPS** hopes to improve immensely from 2020 after placing second with 59 points. **Baylor** was 3<sup>rd</sup> just 5 points back with 64 points.

#### Middle Boys

What a great finish with three boys within 1 second! McCallie's 1-2 duo **Andrew Smith** (18<sup>th</sup> in 2020) and **Ian Jacobs** (30<sup>th</sup> in 2020) outkicked **Ethan King** (69<sup>th</sup> in 2020) from CSTHEA with all three running 11:40 or 11:41. All three look ready to be all-state with that preparation through competition.

**McCallie** continues year after year to be a tough team to compete against and this seems to be one of their stronger teams. Last year they were third at state behind Brentwood and Hardin Valley. At region they scored just 20 points and seem ready to battle for the title. **CSTHEA** scored a strong 52 points led by King as they hope to improve on their 20<sup>th</sup> place last year.

**West: The west side of Tennessee continues to be grow in strength due to great organizations like Memphis Youth Athletics. Last year they came in full force and look to return with a great group of qualifiers.**

#### Elementary Girls

**Hudson McDaniel** of Dresden looks to be the next in line in the long list of Dresden elite athletes. She won her regional by 4 seconds running 6:21 leading her team to victory. She looks poised for a top 5-10 placing. **Amaya Edwards** of Bailey Station (15<sup>th</sup> in 2020) was in second running 6:25 and is pushing for a top 10 position as well. Her experience at the state meet will be a boost of confidence. **Chloe Tankersley** from Forest Hill (24<sup>th</sup> in 2020) is another athlete who expects to finish All-State in her return to the State Championships. She finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in 6:32.

**Dresden** led by McDaniel will be looking for a top spot on the podium Saturday. They only return 2 of their top 5 from 2020's 4<sup>th</sup> place team. It appears they have reloaded and plan on being a contender. **ECS** Girls brings in a similar 1-2 punch as Dresden led by Anderson Cummins and Sarah Hunt. They were 13<sup>th</sup> last year and look to finish top 10 in 2021.

#### Elementary Boys

Dogwood's **Rook Janda** won by a dominant 7 seconds in a tough region running 5:48. He was 16<sup>th</sup> last year at state and has his eye on a top 5 position this time. **Jaden Boyd** has really improved from last year when he finished 82<sup>nd</sup> at state. His confidence should carry him to an all-state position after running 5:55 at region to place 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Elliott Dormer** (Westminster Academy) also broke 6 minutes running 5:58 and could place all-state with a solid race. **Hudson Bobo** of St Louis ran 5:59 to finish 4<sup>th</sup> and lead his team to 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Farmington** boys placed 6<sup>th</sup> in 2020 as a team and returns 2 of their Varsity squad and continued to compete well winning the West region with 104 points defeating **Grace-St Luke's** who scored 117. Bobo led the **St Louis** boys to 3<sup>rd</sup> place with 137 points.

#### Middle Girls

**Rachel Tankersley** (84<sup>th</sup> in 2020) of Houston had to race all the way to the finish line pushed by **Melaya Weisner** – 98<sup>th</sup> in 2020 (Briarcrest) with both runners stopping the clock at 12:52. **Maui Boles** (8<sup>th</sup> in 2020) from Lakeland finished just behind in 12:54. Based off of Maui's placing last year, we should expect to see all three racing in the top 10 most of the race.

**Houston** is always a contender in the state meet and looks ready once again after dominating their region with just 38 points. They were 5<sup>th</sup> last year at state and return 2 of the top 7 with Martha Kate Jessop improving greatly into a strong number 2. **Arlington** (18<sup>th</sup> in 2020) placed 2<sup>nd</sup> with 109 points and **St Louis** finished 3<sup>rd</sup> with 121 points.

#### Middle Boys

**Dylan Hunter** (Elmore Park) has been at the front in most of the MYA meets this season. He capped off his Memphis racing with a win in 10:46. He was 26<sup>th</sup> in 2020 and looks poised for a top 5-10 finish. **Yianni Sinis** (Tipton-Rosemark) has improved a lot from his 148<sup>th</sup> placing in 2020 running 10:47 one second behind Hunter. **Frank Plumley** (Grace-St Luke) ran 10:51 and should be contending for All-State improving on his 44<sup>th</sup> place finish in 2020.

**Houston** finished just 21<sup>st</sup> in 2020 but look like they have loaded up with top runners Garrison Hickey and George Church. They finished with a tight 32 second spread at their West region. **Memphis University School** placed 2<sup>nd</sup> with 125 points narrowly defeating **Camden** who had 128 points. Camden was 6<sup>th</sup> place in state 2020 returning 3 of their top 7.

**Knoxville: Region returned to Victor Ashe Park after a one year hiatus. Some top athletes look ready to compete for titles and some teams have reloaded for another push to the top.**

#### Elementary Girls

**Maggie Mewett** of Episcopal has simply picked up where she left off last year. She pushed state champion Siena Thompson who moves on to Middle School finishing runner-up and the top returner. Her time of 5:56 is typically a top finish at state and should be one of the top 5 athletes in the meet. **Shiloh Mays** from Karns (113<sup>th</sup> in 2020) has elevated her game to where she should be considered a contender for a top 10 finish. **Ava Brinley** (Farragut and 6<sup>th</sup> in 2020) and continues to be a contender every time she races.

**Hardin Valley** was the state champion last year but lost most of their top 7. However, they have reloaded with a strong 1-2 of Linley Lawhorn and Lydia Ogle. **Knoxville Ambassadors** placed top 5 last year at state and placed 2<sup>nd</sup> at the region meet with 105 points. **Karns** led by Mays placed third with 110 points.

#### Elementary Boys

**Colt Areheart** from Hardin Valley (5:23) leads his team motivated by missing the 2020 state meet due to injury. He leads his two younger twin brothers who placed 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> at region. **Owen Bannister** returns as the top runner from last year's meet where he placed 9<sup>th</sup>. Bannister finished second at region in 5:43. **Micah Kirkland** of North finished in 5:52 to finish 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Hardin Valley** loses their top 2 from last season's 33 point scoring team. They reloaded with three Arehearts who all are shooting for All-State. HV should be contending for a top 3 finish at state after scoring 24 points at region. **Farragut** led by Ayden Lee and Jack McDonnell's top 10 finish to score 53 points. They were 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2020 as well. **Knoxville Ambassadors** were 3<sup>rd</sup> last year at state and were 3<sup>rd</sup> in Region with 119 points. These three teams were top 3 in that order at state. Expect all three to finish top 5-10.

#### Middle Girls

**Carolina Areheart** of Hardin Valley is undefeated in 2021 with her last loss being at the two-time defending State Championship to Sarah Potter. Expect her to once again be at the front with Potter trying to keep Potter from winning three years in a row. Her time of 13:07 led the way at region over her teammate **Emma Cissna** (16<sup>th</sup> in 2020) who finished in 13:30 and will be contending for a top 10 placing. **Allie Vesser** – 13:41 has improved greatly off of her 2<sup>nd</sup> place JV finish at state to finish 3<sup>rd</sup> in the region positioning herself for an all-state finish.

**Hardin Valley** lost narrowly to TW Hunter last year by 7 points. The two teams faced off at the 2021 Victor Ashe Park Fall Classic winning by just 1 point so this should be really fun to watch. **Knoxville Ambassadors** 93 points secured them a runner up finish at region looking to improve on their 9<sup>th</sup> place finish last year. **Alcoa** narrowly defeated **Farragut** to place 3<sup>rd</sup> 111-112.

#### Middle Boys

Keegan Smith has moved on to high school after an illustrious Elementary/Middle career. **Nicholas Burke** (Bearden) and **Radek Molchan** (Hardin Valley) have stepped into the leadership role for the region. Radek started off with the first win of the season and Burke has led ever since. Expect both to be confident near the front after finishing 7<sup>th</sup> (Radek) and 8<sup>th</sup> (Nicholas) last year. They are also both the top returners in the state. **Andrew Cabaniss** (47<sup>th</sup> in 2020) led Farragut to the team win with his 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish.

Brentwood and **Hardin Valley** had a great competition last year but it is **Farragut** who now steps into one of the top contending positions. They were 5<sup>th</sup> last year but return several of their top guys. They won region over Hardin Valley 40-57. **West Valley** led by 7<sup>th</sup> grader Cade Duncanson looks to contend at state for a top 10-15 position scoring 112 at region.

**Mid-State: Under new regional coordinator Pete Groesbeck, the mid-state continues to send great quality of the state meet.**

### Elementary Girls

**Carter West** from **Red Boiling Springs** is one of the top returners from last year after her 26<sup>th</sup> place finish at state. She showed that experience winning her region running 6:43. **Carleigh Barrett** of Southside led her team to a runner up finish with her runner up finish in 6:49. **Gracie Whitt** (131<sup>st</sup> in 2020) of **Providence Christian Academy** used her 7:08 in 3<sup>rd</sup> to lead her team to a title.

The top 3 individuals led their teams to top 3 finishes but in reverse. West led her team to 3<sup>rd</sup> place, Barrett-led **Southside** matched her 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish and Whitt was the one hoisting the team trophy with her Providence Christian Academy teammates. 41-53-56 were the team scores and they hope to be finishing top 10 with the right combo of leader and pack.

### Elementary Boys

**Ace Meador** of Macon County was the 4<sup>th</sup> returner (21<sup>st</sup>) from last year and has stepped up as leader of mid-state winning his region with a time of 6:13 with plans of a top 10 finish this year. **Glynlee Cowan** (Red Boiling Springs and 47<sup>th</sup> in 2020) stayed close finishing in 6:19 finishing 11 seconds on **Jonathan Barrett** in 3<sup>rd</sup> representing Providence Christian Academy.

**Macon County** led by Meador returns their 9<sup>th</sup> place team looking stronger this fall scoring just 29 points in their region with all scoring 5 finishing top 10. **Providence Christian Academy** finished with a low score as well with 39 points with **Red Boiling Springs** finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> with 52 points.

### Middle Girls

**Mercy Whitt** (4<sup>th</sup> in Elementary 2020) of Providence Christian Academy has moved right up to middle school and is already running away with the region running 13:25. **Chloe VanVranken** (DeKalb County) placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in 13:32 looking ready to improve on her 58<sup>th</sup> finish from a year ago. **Kinslee Cox** (Unattached) has improved greatly from last year when she was 62<sup>nd</sup> in Elementary. She finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in her region running 14:02.

TW Hunter didn't run their top squad as they qualified for state at TMSAA which we will get to later. **Mt Juliet** has improved immensely in a year and scored a great low 28 points. Look for them to push for top 10 if their 3-4-5 can finish well. **Stewarts Creek** secured 2<sup>nd</sup> with 91 points with VanVranken-led **DeKalb** placing 3<sup>rd</sup> with 102 points (15<sup>th</sup> in 2020).

### Middle Boys

TW Hunter pivoted after a 6<sup>th</sup> place finish at TMSAA and stepped up led by a 1-2 finish of **Jacob Cox** (12:17) and **Will Gulotta** (12:17 and 100<sup>th</sup> in 2020). If both continue this trajectory, they will be contending for all-state certificates. **Grayson Copeland** from Overton finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> running 12:37.

**TW Hunter** had a tight 52 second spread led by Cox/Gulotta with all 5 in the top 14 scoring just 29 points. They were 7<sup>th</sup> place last year and fight for top 5 this year. In second was **Cookeville** with 92 points with plans on improving their placing in 2020. **Macon County** on their home course placed 3<sup>rd</sup> with 110 points. They were 26<sup>th</sup> last year.

**Nashville: NYA overcame adversity the week of the meet and put on another top quality event. They do it for the athletes and the athletes came through with another strong performance.**

### Elementary Girls

**Olga Maroti** (West End) ran away with the region running 6:14 to win by 9 seconds which is a lot over a mile. **Violet Ortner** (St Bernard Academy and 63<sup>rd</sup> in 2020) ran a strong 6:23 holding off a challenge from **Lillian Owen** of JT Moore in 6:28. **Audrey Garfinkle** (99<sup>th</sup> in 2020) and **Grace Richter** (69<sup>th</sup> in 2020) came in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> to lead their St Matthew's team.

**St Matthew** looks to improve on their 14<sup>th</sup> place finish a year ago and look set to do so scoring just 25 points in the region. **JT Moore** was 2<sup>nd</sup> with 48 points and **Bellevue** scored 93 points to finish 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### Elementary Boys

**Axel Tinoco** (KIPP Academy) was one of two to break 6 minutes at The Hermitage running 5:56 to take the region title. **Elliott Shapland** (Bellevue) also broke 6 running 5:59 to secure second place. **Ethan Taber** of Overbrook ran 6:00 to complete a really strong top 3 finish.

Taber led **Overbrook** to a team title with an almost perfect 20 points. Led by a 3-4-5 overall finish and a tiny 23 second spread, look to this team to be a contender especially if their 4-5 have a great day. **St Matthew** returns to where they finished 11<sup>th</sup> last year with the goal of improving on that scoring 60 points at their region. **JT Moore** with 88 points placed third.

### Middle Girls

**Kyrian Sychareune** (Meigs) had a great region day winning in 12:08 to hold off **Maggie Baker** of Ensworth who ran 12:10. Both will fighting for top 10 finishes with another great day. **Lillian Goodwin** from Rossvie placed 3<sup>rd</sup> hoping to improve on her 44<sup>th</sup> place finish a year ago and fight for all-state this year.

**St Matthew** was 4<sup>th</sup> last year and appear set to contend for top 5 once again after scoring 59 points led by a strong 1-2. If they can move 3-5 up they should have a good Saturday. **Sovereign Grace** finished just 7 points behind with 66 points. **Overbrook** finished another 7 points behind with 73 led by Caroline Perri's 4<sup>th</sup> place overall finish.

### Middle Boys

**Phillip Vaughn** of Brentwood is the 4<sup>th</sup> returner (15<sup>th</sup> place) in middle school and we will likely see him battling as one of the leaders. Running 10:12 at region he ran away from the crowd winning by 20 seconds. With the team race maybe not as big of a focus for him, he can take more chances and run for the title. **Ryder Ortner** of St Bernard ran a great 10:32 time to finish solidly in second ahead of third by 16 seconds and lead his team to victory. **JP Newman** ran 10:48 to place third.

**St Bernard** with 57 points led by Ortner and **Gabe Guillamondegui's** 5<sup>th</sup> place finish. They will need more out of their 3-5 closing the spread to secure a top 5 finish but they will benefit from two low sticks. **St Matthew** returns after a 12 place finish at state with plans along with St Bernard to at least finish top 10. **Davidson Academy** with 84 points finished in 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Tri-Cities: As part of the historic Trailblazer Invitational, the Northeast region continues to grow.**

### Elementary Girls

Ashley Academy's **Iris Gewelke** won the region title with a great time of 6:00 winning by 11 seconds. She defeated **Aubrey Hudnall** who ran 6:11 (Unattached). Hudnall was 33<sup>rd</sup> in 2020. Expect both to be All-State with a great day. **Makenna Everhardt** (West Side) in 6:19 managed to finish a great 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish.

**Ashley Academy** won with a low score of 38 points on the strength of their low stick. That will be of great benefit in the bigger state championship field. **West Side** finished 2<sup>nd</sup> with 56 points hoping to improve on their 17<sup>th</sup> place finish a year ago.

#### Elementary Boys

**Bode Ward** competing Unattached won the region with a 5:43 time and will look to contend for all-state status using the experience of his 52<sup>nd</sup> place finish in 2020. Finishing 6<sup>th</sup> overall but the second Tennessee athlete, **Abe Kickliter** of Cocke County completed the race in 6:00. **Braxton Lowry** (Ashley Academy) finished a place behind and 16 seconds behind to take third.

**Grandview** scores 68 points to take the win with a 7 minute team average winning by 15 points over **St Marys** who scored 83 followed by **Ashley Academy** led by Lowry.

#### Middle Girls

Big day for the girls from TA Dugger led by region champion **Arvella Nave** (3<sup>rd</sup> in Elementary in 2020) running 13:05 winning by 14 seconds. **Emma Williams** from John Sevier placed second in a great time of 13:19 ahead of 3<sup>rd</sup> by 28 seconds. **Helen Hackett** also of TA Dugger placed 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**TA Dugger** with a 1-3-5-7 finish scored just 23 points and seem ready to improve a lot from their 35<sup>th</sup> place team finish last year and seem like a top 10 finish is in the cards. **West View** finished 21 points behind with 44 and seek to move into the top 10 after finishing 13<sup>th</sup> last year.

#### Middle Boys

**Adam Kelley** of Liberty Bell led his teammate across the line winning by 15 seconds 11:31-11:46. **CJ Vance** led his Lakeway Christian team with his 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish running 11:58. **Hank Clabaugh** from Robinson finished 1 second behind in 11:59.

**Lakeway Christian** scored a great low 39 points with a 44 second spread. CJ Vance leads the way followed by Ike Webb. **West View** placed second in 84 points trying to improve on their 19<sup>th</sup> place finish last year followed by **East Ridge** with 127 who finished 28<sup>th</sup> last year.

**TMSAA: Athletes who compete at the TMSAA State Championship can qualify for the Tennessee State ES/MS XC Championships.**

#### Middle Girls

**Larkin Johnson** from Legacy won the Small School division running 12:04 and ended up having the fastest time of the day and winning her race by 1:05. She was 11<sup>th</sup> at state in 2020 and finished 5 seconds than **Sarah Potter** in Large School who is the two-time defending champion. **Lia Banovac (not entered)** ended up with the third fastest time of the day and will seek to improve her 5<sup>th</sup> place showing last year. Sister **Lauren Banovac** was just behind her and returns after finishing 10<sup>th</sup> last year in Knoxville.

**Brentwood** was the top of the team of the day led by the Banovac girls. They were 3<sup>rd</sup> a year ago and will likely be very tight in the team race with TW Hunter and Hardin Valley. They will need a big day from

their number 4-5 to close the gap to their 1-3 and give them a shot at the title. With no Lia Banovac, can they fill the gap with their 6<sup>th</sup> runner?

### Middle Boys

**Owen Clemons (not entered)** from Cleveland had the fastest time of the day running 10:19. He was the TMSAA Champion in Large School 2 years in a row. **Philip Vaughn** (Brentwood) placed well in 2<sup>nd</sup> running 10:40 followed by **Caden Costello** (Station Camp) who ran 11:06.

**Brentwood** with 49 points narrowly defeated 53 points and come into state as the defending state champions. They have a lot of pieces to replace but their top 2-3 athletes should all place well but they will need their 4-5 to have good days to return to the top.

### **PREDICTION TIME**

As always, this is for entertainment purposes and is just for fun. My hope is that this either encourages you or motivates you. Whatever makes it so you have the best day on Saturday!

### Elementary Girls Individuals

1. Maggie Mewett - Episcopal
2. Hudson McDaniel – Dresden
3. Iris Gewelke – Ashley Academy
4. Carter West – Red Boiling Springs
5. Addison Cotter - Unattached
6. Olga Maroti – West End
7. Amaya Edwards – Bailey Station
8. Shiloh Mays - Karns
9. Ava Brinley - Farragut
10. Ally Osborne – St. Jude

Darkhorse: Kenley Pryor – Off her 4<sup>th</sup> place finish in Chattanooga, she is still the 4<sup>th</sup> returner from 2020.

### Elementary Girls Teams

1. Dresden
2. Hardin Valley
3. St Matthew
4. St Jude
5. Providence Christian Academy

### Elementary Boys Individuals

1. Rook Janda - Dogwood

2. Colt Areheart – Hardin Valley
3. McCorey Jones – Normal Park
4. Alex Tinoco - KIPP
5. Owen Bannister - Unattached
6. Ace Meador – Macon County
7. Jaden Boyd - Unattached
8. Jax Pas - Silverdale
9. Bode Ward - Unattached
10. Elliott Shapland - Bellevue

Darkhorse: Ethan Taber – Overbrook – Trying to lead his team to the top of the podium may be the boost he needs to break into the top 10.

#### Elementary Boys Teams

1. Hardin Valley
2. Overbrook
3. Silverdale
4. Macon County
5. Farragut

#### Middle Girls Individuals

1. Sarah Potter - Unattached
2. Carolina Areheart – Hardin Valley
3. Larkin Johnson - Legacy
4. Rachel Tankersley - Houston
5. Lauren Banovac – Brentwood
6. Nora Armstrong - GPS
7. Arvella Nave – TA Dugger
8. Kyrian Sychareune - Meigs
9. Emma Cissna – Hardin Valley
10. Melaya Weisner - Briarcrest

Darkhorse: Maui Boles – Lakeland – 8<sup>th</sup> at state in 2020 but finished 3<sup>rd</sup> at region. Can she repeat a top 10 or maybe top 5 finish in a super deep field?

#### Middle Girls Teams

1. TW Hunter

2. Hardin Valley

3. Houston

4. Brentwood

5. CSTHEA

Middle Boys Individuals

1. Nicholas Burke - Bearden

2. Philip Vaughn - Brentwood

3. Dylan Hunter – Elmore Park

4. Radek Molchan – Hardin Valley

5. Andrew Smith - McCallie

6. Jacob Cox – TW Hunter

7. Ryder Ortner – Saint Bernard

8. Yianni Sinis - Tipton-Rosemark

9. Adam Kelley – Liberty Bell

10. JP Newman – Montgomery Bell

Darkhorse: Wyatt Boling – 16<sup>th</sup> place last year but placed just 4<sup>th</sup> in the Nashville Region. Can he call upon his state championship experience to move into the top 10?

Middle Boys Teams

1. Farragut

2. Brentwood

3. Hardin Valley

4. McCallie

5. Houston

Best of luck this weekend, the weather will be perfect fall temperatures and the course is in solid shape. We are excited to celebrate the end of your season with you and 2000 of your fellow athletes!

