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- [DuPage County](#)
- [Kane County](#)
- [Lake County](#)
- [McHenry County](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Illinois](#)
- [Nation/World](#)
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- [Newspaper ads](#)
- FastTrack CLASSIFIED**
- [Autos](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Homes](#)
- [Personals](#)
- [Place an ad](#)
- Business**
- Sports**
- Prep Sports**
- Entertainment**
- [TV Listings](#)
- [Comics](#)
- [Crosswords](#)
- Opinion/Editorial**
- [Letters](#)
- Commitments**
- Food**
- Health & Fitness**
- Homes**
- Suburban Living**
- Travel**
- Special Sections**
- Resources**
- [EZ Links](#)
- [7-Day Search](#)
- [Archives Search](#)
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Scouting DuPage County boys track teams

Daily Herald Reports
 Posted 4/2/2004

DuPage Valley Conference

Glenbard East

Coach: Jack Brady (20th year).

Last year: Fifth in conference. Tied for seventh at the Class AA Naperville Central sectional; tied for 53rd at state; five qualifiers.

Top returners: Jameel Clark, sr. (throws); Joe Gajewski, sr. (800); Matt Henning, sr. (long jump); Alton Nobles, jr. (sprints); John Oakley, sr. (high jump); Justin Pratt, jr. (hurdles); Derek Walker, sr. (throws).

Newcomers to watch: Sean Angst, so. (distance); Nate Greene, fr. (sprints); Jaron Johnson, so. (jumps); Matt Ravenscraft, jr. (long jump); Eric Valquisti, sr. (pole vault).

Outlook: The Rams have top-notch talent in Division I-recruit Gajewski, fifth in the 2003 Class AA 800 at 1:55.8; state-qualifier Walker's school-record discus throw of 175-10; and two-time qualifier Oakley, whose 6-6 high jump tied for the DVC indoor title. Brady also sees success for Johnson, who went 43-11 to win the DVC indoor triple jump. Lacking a standout sprinter, the Rams nonetheless won the indoor Maine East Relays for the first time since 1982. Greene, who owns the DVC frosh record in the 200, may help. "We're pretty much a big-meet team where we don't have the depth," Brady said, "but our good is pretty good."

Glenbard North

Coach: Eric Manuel (10th year).

Last year: Fifth in conference. Fourth at the Class AA Lake Park sectional; tied for 53rd at state; four qualifiers.

Top returners: Quintin Bailey, sr. (sprints); Joe Collins, sr. (400/800); James Ellis, jr. (pole vault); Joe Gaskill, jr. (distance); Nick Petrich, jr. (400); Charles Smith, sr. (sprints); Brandon Weston, sr. (sprints).

Newcomers to watch: Brian Bescher, jr. (800); Mike Horejs, jr. (hurdles); Josh May, jr. (distance); Kevin Schwiekle, jr. (jumps); Qubia Walls, sr. (sprints).

Outlook: Even holding his fastest sprinters, Bailey and Walls, out of the open 55 indoors at Proviso West on March 26, Manuel's Panthers finished second to

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• [A snip of celeb](#)

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• [As gas prices r](#)
[GOP's turn to p](#)

Sports

• [Friendship put](#)

• [Gordon has tak](#)
[UConn](#)

• [What you need](#)
[MLS kicks off t](#)

• [Nelson, Martell](#)
[awards](#)

• [The icing on th](#)

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• [Mistrial in Tyco](#)

• [Sun sets on tea](#)

• [Alpine wins bid](#)
[May](#)

• [Private investm](#)
[buys industrial](#)

• [Government w](#)
[tougher air con](#)

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Glenbard South, both ahead of two-time Class A champ Leo. Bailey and Walls went 1-2 in the 200 there, and others like Collins and Petrich give Manuel choices in all four relays. Bailey went 51.5 to win the Proviso 400, taking over for graduated all-stater Chris Purifoye. Glenbard North has had a state finalist nine years running and a medalist in eight of 10. "Balance-wise," Manuel said, "this is probably as good as we've been in the last couple years."

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Naperville Central

Coach: Steve Wiesbrook (first year).

Last year: Tied for seventh in DVC. 12th at the Class AA Naperville Central sectional; four qualifiers.

Top returners: Jeff Helberg, jr. (jumps, hurdles); Jeremy Jewel, sr. (sprints); Jon Hughley, sr. (jumps); Adam Liss, sr. (800); Matt Petti, sr. (jumps); Jack Susin, sr. (800); Chris Vasich, jr. (hurdles); Weston Welnack, sr. (throws).

Newcomers to watch: Brian Beard, so. (800); John Duffy, so. (800); Jon O'Conner, so. (400); Colin Riley, so. (distance); Ryan Summers, so. (distance).

Outlook: Wiesbrook, a Redhawks assistant since 1985, succeeds retired Hall of Famer George Cyr. Wiesbrook inherits solid horizontal jumpers Petti and Hughley, 2002 qualifier Vasich and 1,600 and 3,200 relays led by Susin and Liss. Those two helped the 3,200 relay place sixth in state in 2002 and with Beard and Duffy won the DVC Indoor 3,200 relay. The Redhawks finished seventh at the DVC indoor but Wiesbrook seeks a middle third outdoor finish while youngsters like O'Conner develop. Wiesbrook's goal: "Make sure they're having fun and working toward (personal records)."

Naperville North

Coach: Jack Wright (second year).

Last year: Third in conference.

Postseason: Tied for fourth at the Class AA Naperville Central sectional; four qualifiers.

Top returners: Kirk Baleskie, sr. (distance); Dwight Carter, sr. (sprints); Dan Curran, sr. (distance); Joe Curran, sr. (distance); Tom DeBerge, sr. (distance); Jason Marsden, sr. (throws); Scott Pavel, jr. (sprints, jumps); Jeff Rynex, sr. (jumps); Steve Schick, jr. (hurdles); Mac Scarle, sr. (jumps); Dan Walton, sr. (distance).

Newcomers to watch: Mike Beese, so. (pole vault).

Outlook: The Huskies hope to parlay its DVC indoor title into a top-half outdoor finish and some state qualifiers. Dan and Joe Curran ran 1-2 in the Top Times Indoor Classic 3,200 and headed a sixth-place squad at the 2003 cross country meet. The Huskies have 2003 double state qualifying sprinter Carter, whose 51.6 at the DVC indoor 400 was Naperville North's indoor DVC record. The field offers jumpers like Pavel, Rynex and Scarle, Marsden in the shot put and Beese, who has vaulted 13-6. Talent and the confidence of winning indoor may not equal a DVC outdoor title for the first time since the mid-1980s, but "We want them to think that way," Wright said.

West Chicago

Coach: Paul McLeland (14th year).

Last year: Sixth in conference. Seventh at the Class AA Lake Park sectional; three qualifiers.

Top returners: Greg Callahan, jr. (hurdles, high jump); Tom Harwood, jr. (distance); Jeff Raymond, sr. (pole vault); Sean Reynolds, sr. (400); Mike Savegnago, sr. (high jump, sprints); Mike Smolucha, sr. (800/1,600); Elliott Tinnes, sr. (sprints).

Newcomers to watch: Jeff Gilbert, jr. (throws); Erik Hernandez, jr. (throws); Steve Ramirez, jr. (3,200); Dave Reynolds, sr. (sprints, jumps); Ryan Stuhr, sr. (jumps).

Outlook: Strong afield with triple-jumper Callahan, 50-foot shot putters Gilbert and Hernandez and especially state-qualifier Raymond and Savegnago, unbeaten in the high jump in the indoor regular season. Encouraged, McLeland, aims for an upper-half DVC finish. He likes his distance squad; Smolucha and Harwood both missed the DVC indoor (WeGo took sixth) recovering from injury. Savegnago will fill two field events, an open sprint and sprint relay. The Wildcats also have veteran Tinnes for sprint relays, typically a strength. "We're definitely looking to qualify more guys than we've had before," McLeland said.

Wheaton North

Coach: Don Helberg (12th year).

Last year: Second in conference. Second at the Class AA Lake Park sectional; tied for 15th at state; seven qualifiers.

Top returners: Clark Benson, sr. (800); Brian Cairns, sr. (sprints); Ian Clausen, sr. (1,600); Mark Delew, sr. (hurdles); T.J. Griffin, sr. (hurdles, sprints); Adam Harris, jr. (hurdles, sprints); Mike Heim, sr. (throws); Malcolm McCreary, sr. (sprints).

Newcomers to watch: Tom Fox, jr. (3,200); Eric Kuehl, jr. (800); Pat Long, jr. (throws); Curt Mademann, jr. (distance); Luke Newman, jr. (high jump); Brian Pinta, so. (jumps); Max Pinkevich, sr. (distance); Kyle Vock, sr. (sprints).

Outlook: At the DVC indoor Harris won the 55, the 200 and the 55 hurdles. Seemingly only injury can stop him, as in 2003 when hurt hip flexors limited him to a Class AA second-place 800 relay. McCreary, Cairns plus a runner from a 15th-place cross country squad have Helberg thinking state in four relays; he Falcons were ranked No. 1 in the two sprint relays indoors. Heim came 5 inches from qualifying in the shot, and Long's 50-41/4 at the DVC indoor was a 5-foot PR. State medals are possible for some - Helberg even suggested a trophy chance. His Falcons haven't won the DVC since 1994. "Warrenville is tough as usual," he said of his brother's club, "but I think we're going to need some help from some other teams."

Wheaton Warrenville South

Coach: Ken Helberg (16th year).

Last year: First in conference. First at the Class AA Naperville Central sectional; tied for third at state; 13 qualifiers.

Top returners: Brett Barnett, sr. (throws); Tom Cassady, jr. (hurdles); Tywon Green, sr. (sprints); Justin Harrison, sr. (sprints); Rick Herda, sr. (sprints); Brett Jackson, sr. (pole vault); Nick Panno, sr. (middle distance); Jon Popejoy, so. (distance); Mike Popejoy, sr. (distance); Adam Van Iten, jr. (hurdles); Nick Warrens, jr. (pole vault);

Josh Williams, sr. (distance).

Newcomers to watch: Pat Atkinson, jr. (sprints); Kyle Brady, so. (distance); Anthony Prignano, jr. (sprints).

Outlook: Helberg says there are "a whole lot of things to figure out" - namely relay experiments - but there really aren't many holes. Eight of 10 individual state qualifiers return from a team that won its ninth straight DVC title by a 153-106 margin over Wheaton North. Harrison will be a state favorite in the 400 dash. He won the event at the Top Times Classic in 49.20, ahead of his future Kentucky roommate, Thornwood's Jeremy Johnson. While relays should still be strong, Helberg cites a lack of sprinting depth and horizontal jumpers. Captains Barnett, Harrison, Green, Brett Jackson and Mike Popejoy will help smooth it out. "All teams have a personality," Helberg said, "and I think this one is still trying to define itself."

East Suburban Catholic Conference

Benet

Coach: Kevin Renicker (first year).

Last year: Second in conference. Seventh at the Class AA Naperville Central sectional; two qualifiers.

Top returners: John Case, sr. (hurdles, sprints); Will Kress, sr. (high jump); Matt McCabe, so. (distance); Pat McMahon, jr. (jumps, 200); Derek Meyer, sr. (sprints); Kyle Mikowski, sr. (distance); Mike Schubert, sr. (throws); Dan Tatro, jr. (throws); Kevin Veselik, jr. (distance).

Newcomers to watch: Bob Brown, fr. (200/400); Nick Geyer, fr. (distance).

Outlook: Succeeding 41-year, Hall of Fame coach Joe Fedinec, Renicker calls this a rebuilding year. If so, Schubert, McCabe, Mikowski, Kress and Co. are a good start. Schubert, a state qualifier with a partial scholarship to Notre Dame, threw the shot a personal-best 54-8 at the Top Times Classic; McCabe, who with Mikowski helped Benet's 3,200 relay qualify last spring, dropped his 1,600 to 4:23.63. The Redwings will get a boost from athletes who missed first place in the sophomore ESCC by 1 point, as did the varsity. Benet ran two indoor meets, its first in 20 years, Renicker said. "We're trying to get the kids excited about the program again," he said.

Interstate Eight Conference

Lisle

Coach: Ken Jakalski (19th year).

Last year: First in conference. Fourth at the Class A Lisle sectional; two qualifiers.

Top returners: Brandon Dapper, sr. (triple jump); Steve DeSitter, so. (distance); Sean Russell, sr. (throws); Pat Schau, jr. (sprints, jumps); Matt Schmitz, so. (high jump, 400); Brad Vodicka, jr. (800);

Newcomers to watch: Karl Geweniger, jr. (1,600); Josh McLeod, fr. (sprints); Dan Modaff, sr. (distance); Dan Rychtarik, so. (hurdles).

Outlook: The Lions missed a second straight indoor title by 5 points to Sandwich.

That may change after Schmitz can do some reps in the vault. The Lions return state-qualifying triple jumper Dapper and most of a state-qualifying cross country team, led by DeSitter and first-time track athlete Modaff. Jakalski hopes a strong freshman class can claim the 18 frosh/soph title; he'd also like to see Schau, Schmitz, Vodicka and Dapper end up in Charleston. The 42 Lions are the most Jakalski's had. "Any time you have over 40 athletes, you definitely have a lot of areas you know you're going to fill."

Private School League

Timothy Christian

Coach: John Vander Kamp (16th year).

Last year: Fifth in conference. Eighth at the Class A Lisle sectional; tied for 69th at state; one qualifier.

Top returners: Jay Stine, sr. (distance); Erik Van Kampen, jr. (distance).

Newcomers to watch: Nathan DeJong, so. (triple jump); Dave Voss, so. (hurdles).

Outlook: Stine leaped to eighth from 28th as a sophomore in the Class A 3,200. His 9:49.36 is the third-fastest 3,200 entering the season, and in Timothy's one indoor meet he ran a 4:37 leg of the 3,200 relay. Training pal Van Kampen might push for a downstate berth. DeJong and Voss - "he's going to be a great one," Vander Kamp said - are probably a year away. The 29 athletes make this one of Timothy's largest teams. Stine is the cream of the crop. "He expects big things from himself this year, more than last year," Vander Kamp said.

Wheaton Academy

Coach: Bill Bickhart (ninth year).

Last year: Fifth in conference. Fifth at the Class A Huntley sectional; tied for 46th at state; four qualifiers.

Top returners: Apollos Frusti, so. (1,600); Mark Gaydaychuk, so. (400, jumps); Hunter Long, sr. (1,600); Patrick McGrath, sr. (800/1,600); Stephen Poppe, sr. (sprints).

Newcomers to watch: Andrew Costley, jr. (distance); Jamie Forehand, sr. (sprints); Travis Nelson, sr. (400); Alex Vik, so. (300 hurdles).

Outlook: Matt Field is at Wheaton College after four all-state finishes in the 1,600 and the 2001 title. Distance remains the Warriors' strong suit. Long qualified in the 1,600 in 2003; it's Bickhart's goal to get him into the finals. Frusti has a shot to qualify. Between them, Nelson and perhaps Costley, Bickhart believes the 3,200 relay may return downstate. "We're very excited about the 4x8 and the mile," the coach said. Sprinter Poppe went 22.58 at sectionals to reach state. Gaydaychuk could pull off a strong 400. "We've got some real good, quality kids that are focused," Bickhart said.

Suburban Catholic Conference

Driscoll

Coach: Nick Cicero (first year).

Last year: Seventh in conference. Competed at the Class A Huntley sectional; three qualifiers.

Top returners: Mike Conti, jr. (200); Dan Jarach jr. (throws); Kyle Kolber, so. (long jump); Ray Lao, jr., (200); John Tranchitella, so. (long jump).

Newcomers to watch: Dominick Fontano, so. (sprints); Justin Nudo, so. (sprints); Dominick Senese, so. (sprints).

Outlook: An Addison Trail graduate and three-year assistant to former coach Mark Morgan, Cicero inherits a young squad - no seniors - that won last year's SCC's frosh-soph level. He sees Lao replacing graduated 200 qualifier Anthony Gebhart downstate and believes Conti also has a good chance. Two of the fastest sophomores, plus Lao and Conti, will try to repeat state-qualifying 400 relay and 800 relay efforts. Jarach needs 6 more feet on his shot put over the next two months. "We have some outstanding kids," Cicero said, "kids who will stand out and compete."

Immaculate Conception

Coach: Bob Cronin (first year).

Last year: Sixth in conference. Fifth at the Class A Lisle sectional; two qualifiers.

Top returners: Jack Campbell, sr. (400/800); Chris Fissette, jr. (jumps); Charlie Grobe, jr. (hurdles); Chris Larem, sr. (400); Tim Mastrino, jr. (sprints); Zach Paus, sr. (400/800).

Newcomers to watch: Alex Arman, so. (800); Dan Haggerty, so. (distance); Tim Dunne, so. (sprints.)

Outlook: The post-Joe Mastrino era begins with a new coach and a new Mastrino. Succeeding Joe Wagner is Cronin, a 1978 IC grad. Tim Mastrino was invited in four events at the Top Times Classic and is strongest in the 200 and 400. He'll try to maintain the Knights' sprint relay strength. Fissette should surpass 42 feet in the triple jump; Campbell seeks improvement upon his 2:04 in the 800 last spring. "Though we may not as a team rise as high as we have in the recent past," Cronin said, "we'll have some individuals that will certainly shine."

Montini

Coach: James Workman (second year).

Last year: Fifth in conference. Tied for second at the Class A Lisle sectional; five qualifiers.

Top returners: Mike Alban, sr. (sprints); Joe Davis, so. (throws); Mike Doan, jr. (jumps, hurdles); Jeff Farnell, jr. (sprints); Matt Guertler, jr. (middle distance); Charlie Hilding, jr. (sprints); Pat Kelly, jr. (pole vault, high jump); Mike Mucha, jr. (sprints).

Newcomers to watch: James Bajzek, so. (800); Cory Brown, fr. (sprints, hurdles); Chris Johnston, fr. (sprints, hurdles, pole vault); Jon O'Brien, soph. (distance).

Outlook: The Broncos aim to continue a strong sectional finish. Farnell ran second in

the 55 and won the 200 at the Top Times Classic. Guertler - DQ'd in the Class A 400 last year in a 50-second race - ran fourth in the 400. Sprint relays look good again, and Workman sees the 3,200 relay as a potential qualifier. Davis will push in the shot put, and Hilding's a good bet in the 200. Workman is stepping up his schedule to include DuPage County and Red Grange meets. "We're going to get smoked a lot. I know that," Workman said. "But I want these guys to know what it really means to run."

St. Francis

Coach: Scott Nelson (16th year).

Last year: First in conference. Second at the Class A Huntley sectional; tied for 55th at state; 10 qualifiers.

Top returners: Chris Buresh, jr. (pole vault, high jump); Colin Diamond, jr. (400/800); Alex Gonzalez, jr. (pole vault); Dave Jaeger, jr. (distance); Adam Nelson, sr. (400, jumps); Austin Power, sr. (distance); Dan Rigney, jr. (400); Bill Travis, jr. (400/800).

Newcomers to watch: Mike Brown, jr. (400/800); Kyle Nelson, so. (middle distance); Reagan O'Toole, fr. (sprints); Dan Prococcio, so. (sprints); Kyle Schlegel, jr. (hurdles); Kevin Smothers, jr. (hurdles); Zach Trogdon, fr. (middle distance).

Outlook: Upbeat Scott Nelson and Co. seek a ninth straight SCC title and the sectional crown they owned for three years. St. Francis has had a state qualifier 16 straight years. Power, eighth in Class A cross country and 17th in the 3,200 last spring, should make it 17. Power and Jaeger, 28th in the 3,200, led the Spartans to fourth in Class A cross country and entered the outdoor season with the state's Nos. 1-3 times. Rigney and Travis return from a fifth-place 1,600 relay; the 3,200 relay had Class A's No. 2 indoor time. Speed and field events have Scott Nelson thinking: "We're a top 10 team, if not a top five."

Suburban Prairie East

Fenton

Coach: John Kurtz (36th year).

Last year: Second in conference. 13th at Class AA Lake Park sectional; one qualifier.

Top returners: Trevor Bending, sr. (shot put); Mike Caragher, sr. (distance); Ricky Lach, sr. (sprints, jumps); Chris Sanchez, sr. (pole vault).

Newcomers to watch: Rafael Gomez, jr. (distance); Rick Malek, jr. (distance).

Outlook: Hall of Famer Kurtz graduated his sole 2003 state qualifier, 1,600 runner Larry Anzalone, and another strong distance runner, Jose Muneton. Typically a good distance school, Fenton had no runners in the 2003 state cross country meet three years after placing seventh in state. Malek ran a decent 3,200 at Proviso West late in the indoor season. The best bet for the Bison seems to be Bending in the shot put. During the indoor season he came 5 inches shy of his 2003 high of 51 feet, putting him on an arc to reach the Class AA state-qualifying distance of 52-9.

Suburban Prairie North

Glenbard South

Coach: Andy Preuss (22nd).

Last year: First in conference. Second at Class AA Naperville Central sectional; tied for 36th at state; six qualifiers.

Top returners: Chet Aliga, sr. (pole vault, sprints); Travis Hawkes, sr. (middle distance); Tyler Holland, so. (sprints); Chris Honig, sr. (distance); Eric MacTaggart, sr. (distance); Lee McGinnis, sr. (400, jumps); Rohit Nathan, sr. (jumps); Kyle Nugent, sr. (distance); Eric Seals, sr. (hurdles).

Newcomers to watch: Micah Anderson, so. (sprints); Charlie Bucheit, jr. (throws); Bruce MacTaggart, so. (distance); Matt Miraglia, jr. (pole vault).

Outlook: "Probably the best ever," Preuss said. Eric MacTaggart led the Raiders to fifth in Class AA cross country and was fourth in the 3,200; McGinnis, eighth in the 400, tops the most balance Preuss has had. MacTaggart ran a 9:10.50 3,200 meters March 26 at Proviso West. The Raiders should win the SPN and vie with WW South at the West Aurora sectional. Preuss dared consider four top-three state finishes: Eric MacTaggart, McGinnis, the 1,600 relay and maybe Honig in the 1,600. McGinnis also qualified in the horizontal jumps; Seals seeks a sub-39-second 300 hurdles. Only experienced weight men and vault consistency are soft spots. Preuss won't discount a top 5-7 state finish. "I think that's a realistic goal," he said.

Upstate Eight Conference

Lake Park

Coach: Jay Ivory (fourth year).

Last year: First in conference. Third at Class AA Lake Park sectional; tied for 28th at state; three qualifiers.

Top returners: Steve Bach, jr. (middle distance); Chris Booze, sr. (throws); Kris Fogo, sr. (middle distance); Drew Hatzold, sr. (distance); Mike Randall, sr. (high jump); Ray Reed, sr. (sprints); Adam Suchy, sr. (pole vault).

Newcomers to watch: Eric Mora, jr. (throws); Dan Probst, sr. (discus); Mike Tasch, jr. (hurdles); Wes Tredinnick, jr. (triple jump); Brad Wilk, sr. (high jump).

Outlook: The Lancers should improve upon a fourth-place UEC indoor finish, if only because Booze can sling discus. Randall's high jump was Lake Park's only win. The Lancers graduated the area's only 2003 state champion, Scott Block in the shot. Ivory can see up to nine state qualifiers, including Randall and Suchy, repeating - 200 stud Reed, the 3,200 relay and Bach, whose 1:57.26 was third at the Top Times Classic. Five Lancers pole vaulters cleared 13 feet last spring. But it's team balance that pleases Ivory. "I think we can score all over," he said. "We're not going to leave too many events uncovered."

Neuqua Valley

Coach: Dave Nolte (fourth year).

Last year: Second in conference. Tied for fourth at Class AA Plainfield sectional; tied for 33rd at the state meet; five qualifiers.

Top returners: Dan Box, sr. (distance); Matt Dakin, sr. (sprints); Nick Dunn, sr. (distance); Nick Grosso, jr. (sprints); Geoff Houtman, sr. (distance); Dave Krist, sr.

(distance); Nick Muhich, sr. (pole vault); Prince Riley, jr. (400/800); ; Alvin Smith, sr. (400, hurdles); Rich Stanek, sr. (triple jump); Pat Warren, sr. (400/800); Andrew Wehrli, jr. (hurdles).

Newcomers to watch: Buzzy Brown, so. (jumps); Kevin Sexton, sr. (sprints); Zach Splan, so. (sprints); Alex Williams, sr. (sprints).

Outlook: "Maybe this is our deepest and most well-rounded group," Nolte said. Neuqua Valley tied Waubonsie Valley for a second straight UEC indoor title and seeks its second outdoor crown in three years. Neuqua set eight indoor team records. State qualifiers Dunn and Smith return, plus three-fourths of all-state 1,600 and 3,200 relays. At the Top Times Classic Neuqua Valley was first in the 1,600 relay, second in the 3,200 relay and third in the 800 relay (the Wildcats' 3:25.21 in the 800 relay was the best indoor mark). Relay runners such as Riley and Houtman also will challenge individually. Neuqua Valley is continuing its rapid progression. "We want to take what we did last year and improve on it," Nolte said.

Waubonsie Valley

Coach: Steve Luke (seventh year).

Last year: Third in conference. Competed at Class AA Plainfield sectional; three qualifiers.

Top returners: Mike Bina, sr. (pole vault); Kevin Burns, so. (800/1,600); Marcus Caldwell, jr. (sprints); Jim Cantu, sr. (high jump); Brent Carius, so. (distance); Jac Cooper, jr. (jumps); Tom Martino, sr. (distance); Larry Russell, so. (sprints, jumps); Durrell Williams, jr. (distance); Adam Yost, sr. (distance).

Newcomers to watch: Tracey Drew, jr. (hurdles, sprints); John Layne, so. (sprints).

Outlook: The Warriors went from third at the 2003 UEC indoor to a first-place tie with Neuqua Valley this year, scoring in all but two events. Joining 800 qualifier Williams and up-and-comers Russell, Caldwell and Carius, is East Aurora transfer Drew, the 2003 UEC 110 hurdles champ and second in the 300s. Bina, a 14-6 vaulter, looks to return downstate. The Warriors have depth and balance, though the throws are a little thin. Waubonsie Valley last won both the UEC indoor and outdoor titles was in 1999. Luke isn't sure his group can defeat Neuqua Valley outside but said, "We're pretty fired up. I think we're going to be pretty good."

West Suburban Gold

Addison Trail

Coach: Bruce Kelsay (fifth year).

Last year: Seventh in conference. Competed at Lake Park sectional; no state qualifiers.

Top returners: Carl Azab, sr. (hurdles); Joel Cardenas, sr. (800); Tom Thonn, sr. (200).

Newcomers to watch: Alek Jackson, jr. (400); Bogdan Nenciu, jr. (200, jumps); Vincent Russotto, jr. (100/200), Lee Saelinger, so. (hurdles).

Outlook: Azab is the top experienced athlete here. He finished fourth in the 300 hurdles in the 2003 Gold meet as well as at the 2003 sectional and the indoor 55

hurdles. Kelsay believes Azab could be the Blazers' first state qualifier in 10 years. The sophs finished second outdoors last spring and indoors this spring, and the 57 athletes comprise the biggest varsity squad Kelsay's had. He's looking toward the future, but the present is better as well. "Finally, I'm in a situation where most coaches are," he said, "where we can spread these kids out."

Downers Grove South

Coach: David Burton (third year).

Last year: Second in conference. Tenth at Class AA Naperville Central sectional; three qualifiers.

Top returners: Jeff Brown, jr. (jumps); Matt Cotton, sr. (high jump); Bryce Harrop, sr. (sprints, jumps); Dan Heiniger, jr. (800); Mark Monfre, sr. (sprints).

Newcomers to watch: Ben Bouwman, so. (distance); Terrel Caston, jr. (jumps); Matt Prescott, sr. (hurdles); Mark Unciano, sr. (hurdles, 100).

Outlook: The Mustangs led the Gold indoor meet until Willowbrook overtook them on the last event. Leading the effort was Unciano, who overcame a PCL tear last spring to win two hurdles races, then placed fifth at the Top Times Classic. Cotton, whose 6-0 high jump won the Gold indoor, Brown and youngsters like Caston highlight field events Burton sees as a strength. A goal is to find a front-line sprinter, possibly Harrop or Monfre. "We have a bright future, but it's hard to win a conference meet with juniors and sophomores," he said. "It's kind of a strength and a weakness all at once."

Hinsdale South

Coach: Joe Iantria (22nd year).

Last year: Third in conference. Fourth at Class AA Naperville Central sectional; ninth at the state meet; four qualifiers.

Top returners: Jeff Bayers, sr. (distance); Jeremiah Butler, sr. (800); Brandon Hatcher, sr. (400, triple jump); Jamail Mays, sr. (sprints, long jump); Karl Perschke, sr. (800); Jacob Pielet, jr. (sprints).

Newcomers to watch: Jacob Babu, jr. (sprints); Ryan Bradley, jr. (sprints); Nana Minta, so. (sprints); Mike Musilami, jr. (400); Herman Rome, so. (sprints).

Outlook: All-staters Britt Taylor and Jovica Grbic graduated, but the Hornets earned third-place finish at the Gold indoor, two spots better than their seed. Hatcher, eighth at the Top Times Indoor Classic in the 400, will be crucial to this squad, a possible qualifier in the 400, triple jump, maybe a relay or two. Along with Bayers, Perschke or Butler, Mays, Pielet and Babu have the best chances in open races. Iantria has one of his largest teams, about 100 kids. He said, "We're extremely pleased with the performance (at the Gold indoor), and we're looking forward to having some fun outdoors."

Willowbrook

Coach: Mike Brosseau (11th year).

Last year: Third in conference. Sixth at Class AA Naperville Central sectional; four qualifiers.

Top returners: Jake Allston, sr. (sprints); Ryan Boggiano, sr. (sprints, hurdles); Ankar Dar, sr. (throws); Brett Ellsworth, jr. (400, 800); Alex Granrath, jr. (throws); Brian Hayes, jr. (sprints); Brian Kastle, sr. (400, hurdles); Art Klatt, sr. (distance); Dan Klatt, jr. (distance); Jesse Luciano, so. (distance); Duane Wilson, sr. (sprints, long jump).

Newcomers to watch: Devonte Davis, sr. (sprints); Jabret Jacobs, jr. (sprints).

Outlook: Speed leads the Warriors, who won the Gold indoor meet for the first time since 1974. Hayes is the area's only returning 200 state qualifier. He joins Wilson in the 100 dash, Kastle and the 400 relay - intact with Allston, Hayes, Rahkeem Smith and Wilson - as returning qualifiers. As for distance, Luciano was 10th at the 2003 cross country meet. At the conference indoor meet Willowbrook won both the 1,600 and the 3,200. It's possible Kastle could qualify in both the 400 and a hurdles event. Also, Granrath threw the discus 163 feet in early outdoor practice. Brosseau wasn't sure about chances in a crowded West Aurora sectional but said, "I think we have a great chance at the county meet."

West Suburban Silver

Downers Grove North

Coach: Tim McDonald (sixth year).

Last year: Fifth in conference. Thirteenth at Class AA Naperville Central sectional; two qualifiers.

Top returners: John Anderson, sr. (throws); Ed Barron, jr. (distance); Nate Crider, sr. (distance); Andrew Kupisch, jr. (distance); Jeremy Madej, sr. (throws); David O'Rourke, sr. (400, high jump); Richard O'Rourke, jr. (high jump, 400); Matt Shelhamer, jr. (jumps).

Newcomers to watch: Jack Brady, so. (throws); Ed Lovejoy, so. (400/800); Luke Ryan, fr. (distance); Mike Wesolowski, jr. (400); John Wollak, jr. (pole vault).

Outlook: Led by Madej's winning shot put, field events paced a third-place Silver indoor finish, the best under McDonald's tenure. Shelhamer, Wollack, Anderson and David O'Rourke were each top five. Four high jumpers have gone 5-10. The O'Rourkes can run state-caliber 400 times - David qualified in 2003 - but depth is uncertain. Distance looks good with Barron, Kupisch, Crider and Ryan. Brother of 2003 qualifying 800 runner Jack Ryan, Luke won the Silver sophomore indoor 3,200 at 9:42 and could become the Trojans' best distance runner, McDonald said. "This is the best all-around team I've ever had in terms of ability," the coach said.

Glenbard West

Coach: Hank Haake (12th year).

Last year: Fourth in conference. Eighth at Class AA Lake Park sectional; three qualifiers.

Top returners: Rob Davie, sr. (distance); Cris Johansen, sr. (sprints); Jeremy Jordan, sr. (throws); Tim Jostrand, sr. (800); Nate Larkin, jr. (hurdles); Ben Locke, sr. (pole vault); Jeremiah Marks, sr. (sprints); Matt Ollayos, sr. (throws); Matt Rienks, sr. (sprints); Leonard Vance, sr. (jumps).

Newcomers to watch: Pat Derrico, jr. (distance); Andrew Dorgan, jr. (jumps); Ed

Gastel, jr. (hurdles); Matt Kinn, sr. (middle distance); Tre Turner, jr. (sprints).

Outlook: It would have been fun to see Larkin's results at the 2003 state meet had he not gotten hurt. Larkin went 7.4 in the 55 lows at the Silver indoor, where the Hilltoppers placed fifth. An upper-half outdoor finish might be expected since both this year's juniors and seniors took third as sophomores. Marks went downstate in triple jump in 2002. Kinn will be interesting. Like his brother Jimmy, who took second in the 2002 state 800, Matt is a soccer player in his first year of track. Haake thinks Matt may qualify in the 800 and help get the 3,200 relay downstate. "If we're all healthy," Haake said, "we're going to be pretty decent."

Hinsdale Central

Coach: Mark McCabe (ninth).

Last year: Second in conference. Third at Class AA Naperville Central sectional; 10th at the state meet; six qualifiers.

Top returners: Dave Boduch, sr. (jumps); Mark Gawriluk, jr. (hurdles); Justin Geiger, sr. (400); Scott Latto, sr. (pole vault); Alex Perkowski, sr. (sprints); Mark Perkowski, sr. (sprints); Karolis Sileika, sr. (high jump); Patrick Smith, jr. (hurdles); Matt Stone, sr. (middle distance).

Newcomers to watch: Arash Baboo, so. (jumps); Matt Kamin, jr. (throws); Joe Kotansky, jr. (pole vault); Scott Lieber, sr. (sprints); Matt Misna, jr. (800); Kyle Somerfield, jr. (distance); Matt Vachlon, jr. (800); Joe Wysopal, sr. (distance);.

Outlook: McCabe returns three-fourths of Class AA third-place 400 relay and 800 relay teams and a sixth-place 1,600 relay. He has veteran sprinters like Lewis Bullock and 2002 qualifier Miguel Ramos ready should a Perkowski or two seek an open sprint downstate. Alex's 6.1 time in the indoor 55 was a school record that led the state. The Red Devils won the Silver indoor by 2 points over York, and McCabe said that by adding 300 intermediate hurdles, discus and the 400 relay they should be better. "We're a veteran team that knows how to perform in big-meet situations," McCabe said. "That's nice to have and not something you can teach."

York

Coach: Stan Reddel (fourth year).

Last year: Second in conference. First at Class AA Lake Park sectional; tied for 17th at the state meet; nine qualifiers.

Top returners: Mike Arnold, jr. (800); Roger Bilhardt, jr. (400/800); Konrad Piotrowski, jr. (400); Eric Dettman, so. (distance); Matt Dettman, so. (distance); Mark Fruin, sr. (distance); George Giavris, sr. (sprints); Sean McNamara, jr. (distance); Matt Montgomery, sr. (distance); Paul Pizzi, sr. (sprints); Josh Sharko, sr. (distance).

Newcomers to watch: Rob Arroyo, sr. (sprints); Andre Cooper, jr. (sprints); Jeff Crowe, so. (sprints); Brian Josephs, so. (triple jump); C.J. Kari, sr. (throws); Ben Kerrigan, sr. (sprints); Steve Pfaff, sr. (high jump).

Outlook: Talk about a Long Green Line - 203 athletes! The Dukes won their 12th straight sectional in 2003 then their 23rd cross country meet, led by McNamara (fourth overall) and the all-state Dettmans. Distance will pace the Dukes here, too; McNamara ran a 4:18 1,600 meters indoors. Distance coach Charlie Kern can blend many runners who will challenge in open events and relays. Typically sprints and field are where York falls a little short, but Giavris, Piotrowski and Cooper should do

all right. Field events are led by Josephs, Pfaff and Kari. Reddel said, "We definitely have a better chance to be in the top three than we did last year."

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