

# Girls cross-country: North Jersey team-by-team previews

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Take a team-by-team look at each squad in North Jersey.

## BIG NORTH

### American

**Cliffside Park** Hopes as usual to win the division championship and with seniors Tasnim Eissa and Aleyna Koro and soph Leah Fedouchik leading the way.

**Dumont** had a great spring season and hopes seniors Joie-Anne Jarilla and Angel Durve, juniors Sarah Lynch and Rachel Reagan and soph Emily Moscarelli can propel the Huskies to a fine fall.

**Dwight Morrow** will rebuild behind soph Salome Lokesh.

**Fort Lee** hopes seniors Tiffany Park and Suebin Choi and junior Hannah Choi can lead to a league title.

**Ridgefield Park** has improved numbers led by senior Amelia Santos and junior Josephine Carroll and will field a full team with newcomer sophomore Gabriella Ramos its top runner.

## **Freedom**

**Hackensack** is in rebuilding mode led by seniors Lorena Nunez-Cruz and Litzzy Reyes and hopes to put down a great base for the ensuing track seasons.

**Indian Hills** is usually one of the powers in North Jersey and despite having a great returning senior in Allison Lounsbury and a very good one in Abbey Churchill may have a hard time fielding a full team.



**Northern Highlands** has one of the best teams in New Jersey and returns six of its top seven from last year's team which won its fifth straight North 1 group 3 title and is favored to make it six. Seniors Jess Reilly, Michaela Powell and Sydney Schildiner, junior Margaret Bainbridge and sophs Autumn Ritter and Abby Gamarello are returnees and the Highlanders have picked up some solid support.

**Paramus** returns senior Diane Kao, juniors Erin Jyung and Sei Park and a very good soph in Hana Weisinger and figures to improve.

**Ramapo** could be a sleeper team. Junior Brianna Braver is the defending sectional champ, and is ready to have impact on the state level. Soph Amelia Keogh, junior Samantha Judd and senior Natalie Jackson give the Raiders a strong foursome. And the addition of track standouts Carly Griffin (junior)

and Kendra Phillips (senior) could make things very interesting by the end of the season.

**Ridgewood** is again in the state and national conversation as the senior corps of AnnaMarie Tretola, Olivia Shattuck, Lily Williams, Lucia Rabolli and Caroline Deiss complete their unprecedented high school careers. The Maroons have a good incoming freshman class and have some depth behind the top five as they seek a State Meet of Champions title and a second berth in the Nike Cross Nationals.

## **Independence**

**Fair Lawn** has a new head coach, former Cutter star George Alexandris, a Division 3 national long jump champion. He welcomes six runners back from last year's team including Megan Viелlette, Angela Bermudez and Evangeline Campbell and thinks their hard work will bring success.

**Lakeland** won its first ever sectional title a year ago and returns everyone from that team hoping to earn its first state group championship. The Lancers are led by multiple all-Passaic honorees Abigail Horevay and Caitlin Fahy and senior Faith Norrell, junior Reaghan Lomascola and soph Kayla Barnhardt add talent and depth. Of course Lakeland also returns all-American senior Angelina Perez, the favorite for the State Meet of Champions title.



**Passaic Valley** has an excellent number one in junior Katherine Cottone.

**Wayne Hills** has an impressive 1-2 punch in seniors Kyla Leathers and Leah Strauss and also welcomes back junior Gina Lee. But the Patriots need some depth to contend for second place in this division.

**Wayne Valley** has a fine returning senior in Katarina Rehberger, a new senior with promise in Isabella Vazquez and several freshmen and sophomores who can develop quickly.

**West Milford** has four returning letter winners back from a very good 2020 team led by senior Jenna Hodgson, junior Emily Coppola and soph Lauren Frey. The Highlanders will miss all-Passaic junior Cassidy Clinton, who will be able to play high school soccer for the first time. But the Highlanders always perform well as a team.

**Liberty**

**Bergen Tech** has a record turnout for both boys and girl and looks for a solid junior class led by Nicole Lesiczka, Gabrielle Swain and Maria Bocxe to nurture a young team.

**Clifton** has some excellent talent led by junior Remy Dubac, one of the area's best. Senior Isabella Carmagno and sophs Deborah Amoh and Mary Jo Martinez return. And sophomore triplets Emma, Olivia and newcomer Viktoria will make the Mustangs dangerous despite a smaller than normal turnout.



**Eastside** is hopeful of improving, led by junior Paris Higgs.

**Kennedy** is hoping new runners step up for its program.

**Passaic** is led by senior Marilyn Diaz.

**Passaic Tech** has seniors Carolina Vazquez and Dayanna Montalvo returning.

## National

**Bergenfield** returns only Valentina Ramirez and is rebuilding.

**NV/Demarest** lost two of the top runners in school history but has great senior leadership in Ava Miller, Lydia Kim, Grace Anguilla, Ana Velcic, Isabel Levy and Isabella Cain. Soph Finley Aspholm is the top returnee but junior track standout Lily Dipple should be the top runner.

**NV/Old Tappan** was hit hard by graduation too, but returns a standout in Holly Latz, two solid returnees in Breelyn McNamara and Samantha Kosmark and adds some very good track and field talent, in all-Bergen star Cara Hliboki and Katie Meeks. The Golden Knights could be the season's surprise team.

**Pascack Valley** has three steady performers in Mary Looes, Hailey Jacobson and Sarah Dinnell and coach John Murtaugh is pleased by the team's enthusiasm.

**Teaneck** returns the multi-talented Deja Young and hopes Zuri Williamson and Zoe Branch can help bring improvement.

**Tenafly** could be a team to watch led by soph Sophia Cheesman and senior Isabel Dubov.

## Patriot

**Mahwah** returns a veteran and talented team led by senior Meg Dursema, Carissa Weber, Tai Weiss and Angela Ho and juniors Alexandra Klanke and Zoe Merryman. The Thunderbirds should be in contention at Bergen groups, leagues and sectionals.

**Pascack Hills** has a top returnee in senior Riley Hughes.

**Ramsey** is always competitive and with seniors Rebecca Francis, Brianna Salvo, Maya Winger and Sarah Pitcher leading the way, should be again. Freshman Maddie Sovak should have an immediate impact.

**River Dell** has one of the state's top runners in soph Christina Allen, who is ranked in the top 25 nationally. But the Golden Hawks also return senior Alex Grivas, junior Sarah Cookson and soph Isabella Gabay, who give them very good upfront strength. They have five good candidates for the back three spots.

**Westwood** has just one senior, Marta Bystrowska, a low turnout and is rebuilding.

## **United**

**DePaul** has a new head coach in veteran Joel Pasternack who returns a good junior in Taylor Ghee and hopes to field a full team.

**Holy Angels** has had problems keeping runners healthy in recent years but with a group that includes one of the state's top sophs in Kate Hurst and veterans Eliza Hoover, Amanda Donahue, Frederica Zazzali, Hollie Melia, Clara Diggle and Celine He, the Angels could be a contender if they overcome that hurdle.

**IHA** has a pair of top runners in juniors Leanna Johnston (a possible top 20 runner in the state) and Grace Kelleher and seniors Camryn King, Kylie Galiger, Lindsay Keogh and Natalie Ronen will keep the Blue Eagles near the top in every race they run.

**Paramus Catholic** welcomes a new coach in Bill Leonard, who enjoyed a lot of success at Bergen Catholic. He'll have to develop a young team here, but he's optimistic because of the enthusiasm of juniors Christina Michael and Lara Colome and soph Jasmine Perez.



# NJIC

## Colonial

**Dwight-Englewood** has an excellent young runner in junior Maggie Yan.

**Eastern Christian** is led by senior Anneke Reitsma.

**Elmwood Park** has just two returning runners, senior Nya Duran and sophomore Tiara Duran but has a good group of newcomers hoping to build a program together.

**Garfield** returns seniors Selma Cazimoska and Natalie Salas as veteran head coach Meghan DeCarlo shoots for her 100th dual meet win.

**Glen Rock** could be a surprise team in group 1 with a veteran group led by Lily McNair, Isabel Shea, Emma Leishear, Kaylee Doyle, Mackenzie Scarpelli and Gracie Gault.

**Harrison** has a solid returnee in senior Domenica Bohorquez.

**Leonia** moves to a different state section but could be a contender in the league, Bergen group and state sectionals. Seniors Lucia Kutner and Elizabeth Baksh, juniors Daniela Ruiz and Nina Twomey and freshman Sasha Raskin all have earned all league honors in the past and if they stay healthy it'll be a fine season.

**Lodi** is starting a program with new head coach Chelsea Tirico.

**Lyndhurst** is another contender in this very strong division. The Golden Bears are led by junior Tara Kibbe, sophomore Lynn Doke and senior Ariana Perez, all of whom were all division last year.

**Park Ridge/Emerson** has an outstanding senior class led by all-Bergen contenders Cali Marck and Elyse von der Lieth. Ava Morgan, Shaina Whitehead and Emily Butler are veteran contributors and first year cross

country runner senior Odalys Guerrero (an all league hurdler) and freshman Sophie Walder should add needed depth.



**Rutherford** hopes to be in the top half of the league and make groups. Senior Bridget Sullivan and soph Jodi Desalvo are a good duo in front and senior Alyssa Castillo leads a pack of runners who can provide the depth.

## **Meadowlands**

**Becton** has a potential sectional medalist in junior Kyla Groh.

**Butler** has no returning runners.

**Cresskill** has a new head coach in Chris Messina and has a senior returning in Dana Chernin. But the biggest news here is the shift of Danielle Tilp from soccer to cross country. She immediately becomes a state group contender.

**Hasbrouck Heights** lost most of its league championship team to graduation. But defending league champ Isabella Drezek is back and so is the versatile Amber Barrios. And the Aviators have lots of new enthusiastic runners and a terrific tradition.

**New Milford** welcomes back senior Rachel Meyers, who did not run last year. The Green Knights have a lot of rebuilding to do.

**North Arlington** has a new head coach in Vincent Sommese and he has a rebuilding job in front of him led by junior Delia Lasek and soph Ann Marie DeJesus.

**Pompton Lakes** has an exciting group of front runners led by seniors Sophia Todoroff and Juliette Wasserman and junior Emily Pruska and Juliette Wasserman. But its the pack runners led by seniors Madison Horvath and Grace Thornhill that has the coaching staff excited. Emma Keating and Bella Polizzi and a lot of eager underclassmen might make the Cardinals a contender.

**Saddle Brook** returns five lettermen including all league selection Caroline Kaprelian. Seniors Deanna Collins, Rashvir Kaur, Katelynn McVeigh and Julia Bednarz will contribute.

**Saddle River Day** has soph Liesl Missbrenner returning.

**St. Mary's** has a new head coach in Dennis Hulse and a good senior in Synphoni Baiza.

**Secaucus** has a great 1-2 punch in two time North 2 group 1 sectional champ Haley Nowak (Jr.) and fourth place finisher Deborah Biru (soph.). Seniors

Wendy Cardona and Genna Moshner lead a good group of girls hoping to help the Patriots win their 11th set of sectional medals in 12 years.

## **Patriot**

**Bergen Charter** is rebuilding.

**Bogota** has the largest turnout in many years and with six of seven returning varsity runners should contend for the league title a usual. Junior Amandine Fernandez and soph Isabel Michel are the top runners but seniors Maryann Gesmundo, Ashley Bautista and Nathaly Frias, junior Denisse Sotomayor and soph Alyssa Ramirez are all potential all league performers.

**Hawthorne Christian** could contend after a solid 2020 season with senior Grace Yang and sophs Anna Rypkema, Katie Rappaport and Abby Camacho.

**Immaculate Conception** is rebuilding.

**Midland Park** has a new head coach in Lori Kilmurray who hopes to rebuild the program.

**Palisades Park** returns Davin Choi, Aleyna Usula, Olivia Kim and Danna Balan and could move up from third last year.

**Paterson Charter** has a completely new team and coaches James Ighoe and Drew Eckman are looking forward to building a program.

**Ridgefield** welcomes one of its finest performers, Stephanie Sinclair back as the head coach. She has five newcomers on her team and thinks star softball player Kaitlyn O'Brien can be her best runner.

**Waldwick** needs to stay healthy with only five girls on the team, senior Destiny Ayala, juniors Kelly James and Sophia Convertino and freshmen Taylor Piekarz and Jessica James.

**Weehawken** is rebuilding.

**Wood-Ridge** has a new head coach in Chris Panepinto. He is trying to recruit new runners for the program.

## Others

**Kinnelon** is small on numbers but large on talent and heart. Look for senior Rebecca Guetzov, junior Abby Monesmith and sophomore Grace Mougalian to keep the Colts in contention.

**North Bergen** is in a total rebuild.

**Pequannock** is also rebuilding.

*Paul Schwartz covers high school track and field for NorthJersey.com. For full access to live scores, breaking news and analysis from our Varsity Aces team, subscribe today. To get breaking news directly to your inbox, [sign up for our newsletter](#) and [download our app](#).*

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