

## CROSS COUNTRY

### Girls cross-country: North Jersey team-by-team previews for 2025 season



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Get set for the 2025 girls cross-country season with Paul Schwartz's team-by-team previews.

#### **Big North**

##### **American**

**Cliffside Park** did not submit information.

**Dumont** returns a trio of talented juniors in Rihanna Ramos, Kaitlyn Reagan and Erin Reuter. Soph Zsanett Balog and junior Abigail Villanvicencio complete the varsity and hope to keep the Huskies competitive.

**Dwight Morrow** returns seniors Johanna Motatey and Hannah Kim and adds freshman Giselle Rodriguez.

**Fort Lee** returns just three runners from last year's varsity, seniors Martina Gomez and Elisha Kim and junior Kiera Tung. The Bridgewomen welcome a talented freshman in Mabel Leon and expect to be in the mix in league competition.

Defending divisional champ **Ridgefield Park** return three members of the title winning team in seniors Shania Perry and Kim Marshall and soph Julianna Ricca. If the Scarlets can add at least two solid performers they can contend again.

##### **Freedom**

**Hackensack** has senior co-captains Valerie Nunez and Salome Arroyance and juniors Claudia Ortega and Angelica Juca returning from a team that reached the state Group 4 meet for the first time in 23 years last fall.

**Northern Highlands** had a rare down year last year, missing the state group meet for the first time since 2004 but look ready to make a comeback with seniors Maggie Burchell and Laney McCrossin, juniors Sophie Smith and Libby Ewing and soph Abigail Skripak leading the way. The Highlanders have a strong freshman turnout.

**Paramus** returns just one varsity runner, junior captain Olivia Gatti but adds seniors Katelyn Tiro, Deanna Russo and Gianna Tripodi, junior Allison Grabowski and freshman Olivia Park as newcomers and should be much improved as a team.

**Ramapo** has great leadership, talent and experience in seniors Lauren Seals, Meghan Prendergast, Sandra Vitolo, Taylor Loia and Caroline McDermott. If they get a little help from younger runners, the Raiders can return to the Bergen Meet of Champions and state Group 3 meets.

**Ridgewood**, the best program in North Jersey history lost three sensational seniors in Ayla Cooke, Eilat Kissel and Lola Jacqueline, who helped the Maroons to three consecutive appearances in the State Meet of Champions and a pair of medals. This year's team is likely to be better. The Maroons return all North Jersey standouts, junior Katharine Keating and soph Natalie Knowles and second teamers junior Anika Mukkatira and soph Penelope de Valance. And if each of those girls missed a race, junior returnees Maeve Schoeler and Ella Rechutti and soph Hunter Witham, could join newcomers, soph Abby Marino and freshmen Kayla Fortujnato and Caroline Keating and the Maroons would be favored in most meets. Ridgewood has finished second in the last six group 4 meets, a state record. The Maroons look to end their mark with their first group title since 1999.

### **Independence**

**Fair Lawn** hopes to continue rebuilding behind senior Paige Byrne and soph Gisella Grzetic and adds Rachel Berlin. The Cutters have worked hard in the summer as a group and have great motivation to improve.

**Lakeland** won both the league and Passaic County championships last year and return all-Passaic runners Hope Walker (senior) and Sarina D'Orilla (senior) and Addison Parker (sophomore). Freshmen Mollie Horevay and Elizabeth Clifton should have an immediate impact as the Lancers attempt the repeat.

**Passaic Valley** has a tight knit group of five returning varsity runners led by seniors Victoria Astolkowski and Eliza Lima, juniors Olivia Scrivanich and Merika Corpuz and soph Sydney Sopov and adds sophomore Britney Gomez and senior Christina Englehart as newcomers and help the Hornets be competitive.

**Wayne Hills** has only one returning runner, sophomore Lilianna Martinelli.

**Wayne Valley** returns three lettermen in seniors Becky Machado and Chloe Krawczak and sophomore Ariella Chapnik. If newcomers April Zaremba and Samantha Kohles continue to develop, the Indians should be competitive in league and county action.

**West Milford** is looking to have its best season ever with all seven runners returning from last year, including two-time Passaic champion Ciara Clinton, who has committed to Siena College and Amanda Harvey, who won the league title and outran Clinton in the North 1, group 2 section. West Milford also returns a third All-Passaic runner in Brenna Traverso. The Highlanders are favored to win the league and county and are prime contenders to win its first sectional title.

### **Liberty**

**Bergen Tech** is rebuilding with sophs Aylin Miller and Aki Mihara the top returnees. Both are potential all-league and sectional qualifiers.

**Clifton** coach John Pontes starts his 42nd season as the Mustangs head coach and may have another contending team led by senior all-Passaic runner Alexis Smith, vastly improved senior Hillary Batista and junior Ashley Vargas, who is a quiet leader for many of the new girls on the squad.

**Eastside** did not field a varsity team in either county or sectional competition last year but had a solid group of freshmen and sophomores. The girls are athletic and determined to improve and achieve varsity status this season.

**Kennedy** returns Gabriella Raymond and adds Blanca Jovel as the Knights try and break a winless streak.

**Passaic** did not submit information.

**Passaic Tech** did not submit information.

### **National**

**Bergenfield** returns only junior Nicole Borosky from last year's varsity but hopes senior Kismery Presna and junior Francine Nunez can help turn things around.

**Demarest** has a new coach in Owen Ross, who was the girls track co-head coach at Old Tappan a year ago and the Norsemen return six starters from last year, including junior league champion Sophee Estrems and seniors Aviv Mosavov, Erika Gargano and Claire Ross. The Norsewomen look for their first sectional title ever and a top 10 state group 2 finish. That might depend on the development of Andrea Jimenez and Idalia Sawicki. Demarest was second in league, county group and sectionals last year. They hope to turn silver into gold.

**Old Tappan** has the largest turnout in team history and returns seven varsity runners, including four starters. Junior Emme Fermin won the Bergen B title and reached the SMOC last year while senior Claire Bailey, juniors Riley O'Rourke and Orlee Drillich and sophs

Christina D'Andrea and Lillian Oster were mainstays. Senior Chloe Parisi is a co-captain. The Golden Knights add senior quarter-miler Angie Kelley and a large and talented freshman class.

**Pascack Valley** didn't win a dual meet last year. But the Panthers return seniors Mia Boretti and Emily Pincus and juniors Jenna Arregui and Ruth Pothen who have all improved and soph Keira O'Cathain, who had a terrific track season once she recovered from injury. PV should be much better.

**Teaneck** returns only one letter winner, Awa Fofana, and adds long sprinter Diamond Cannon as it tried to climb into divisional contention.

**Tenafly** returns a terrific upfront trio in Makenna Wolmer, Jasmine Storr and Elia Roeca and have some newcomers in Evelyn Nicholls and Eleanor Rezin. The Tigers are hoping to qualifying for BMOG and the state Group 3 meet.

#### **Patriot**

**Indian Hills** loses almost every runner from last year except for soph Ella Romanzo. The Braves are rebuilding and still recruiting runners.

**Mahwah** has a solid core of returnees in senior Gabriella Kaplan and sophs Abigail O'Malley, Kathryn Brentnall and Sophia Mahvidi and adds freshman Tess Monks and Isobel Crowe, who should make the varsity lineup.

**Pascack Hills** has three veterans returning in Brianna Barrett, Lillianna Maragliano-Terhune and Nina Indugula and some talented depth in Miriam Rosenberg, Noa Shatzel, Angelina Vukel and Allie Cohen. That combination should allow the Broncos to be competitive in a strong division.

**Ramsey** returns five starters from last year's solid contending team, led by junior Kaylee Finnegan, a second team all-North Jersey performer. Seniors Anna Lynch, Alisha Bunagan and Ann Sutherland are also back and soph Arden Zimmer played a key role a year ago. A very strong soph class and newcomers Julia Mabie and Anna Steines add depth to this team that can contend in a brutally tough group 2 section.

**River Dell** has some great athletes in seniors Amy Yamauchi and Abby Rhi, juniors Brooke Marchetti and Alicia Grivas and sophomore Elery Driscoll. If they all can succeed as distance runners, the Golden Hawks will be dangerous.

**Westwood** graduated all-North Jersey star Alice Rappazzo, who's now at Binghamton, but return its 2-3-4 runners from the season, senior Ava Colella, junior Madison Mahoney and soph Brooke Colella and the reigning sectional champions hope that Mahoney's freshman

twin sisters Samantha and Taylor Mahoney and Emma Perez can help them retain the title. Senior Danielle Arcuri and a lot of newer runners add depth.

## **United**

**DePaul** will not field a team this year.

Veteran Demarest coach Mike Ippolito takes over at **Holy Angels** and is starting a rebuild of the program with all underclassmen. Soph Hailey Chan should be the Angels top runner and newcomers Averie Celona (junior lacrosse player), Jane Gorohovsky (junior sprinter), sophomore Vivian Van Ost and freshman Camila Martinez could be the rest of the early season top five.

**IHA** has no senior letter winners returning. The Blue Eagles are led by junior Madeline Schlereth and sophs Mary Cate Roberts, Alison Petrie and Abigail Silvera and has a strong and deep freshman class that should provide depth and quality.

**Paramus Catholic** did not submit information.

## **NJICColonial**

**Becton** returns only senior Meghan Fraser from last year's varsity. Kennedy transfer Dalia Mecelti is a promising addition.

**Dwight-Englewood** has only returning senior in captain Maya Rosenberg. Soph Paige Barnes was the freshman NJIC champ a year ago and the Bulldogs add talented newcomers in soph Lila Rosenberg (Maya's sister) and freshman Kaitlin Currie.

**Elmwood Park** did not submit information.

**Garfield** has put together a series of very good seasons and they should be ready for another one led by senior Julia Jablonska, an all-league selection last year. The Boilermakers also return seniors Yuliana Ramirez and Angelica Carnaja and junior Carla Miotto and add a good turnout of freshmen and other newcomers this fall.

**Glen Rock** returns seniors Jenna Yim, Amber Wang and Michaela Schappert, junior Jasneet Kochar and soph Grace Herman from last year's solid team and has a large turnout of younger runners.

**Harrison** did not submit information.

**Leonia** is stacked. The defending league champs return county champion Dominique Cameron, who was fifth in last year's State Meet of Champions, her twin sister Daniella, who got better with every race last year, Annabel Sohn, Sophia Jorge and Juliet Gramuglia and captain Luna Tavares, a great leader. Now add freshman Eleanor Jang, who ran 5:09 for

a mile and 11:23 for two miles and you have the makings of a team that can contend in every meet they enter all the way to State Group 2.

**Lodi** return juniors Alyssa Mcfarlane and sophs Khloe Andrews and Ariana Rodriguez.

**Lyndhurst** returns all league standouts Cathia Nogueira and Madison Mason, both juniors, and if the young runners come along quickly enough could compete for league and county group titles.

**Manchester** did not submit information.

**Rutherford** has an experienced and talented senior group of returnees in Maya Tenn, Angel Patel, Arainna Eugene and Marina Abadir and junior Mya Stadler and can be a league, county group and sectional contender. The Bulldogs could use some depth.

### **Meadowlands**

**Butler** has a competitive trio in juniors Samantha Merrick and Christie Boudaher and soph Sophia Villano.

### **Eastern Christian**

Greg Kelly's 32nd and final year at the head coach at **New Milford** starts with returning juniors Sabrina Santee and Alisha Choe. Junior Kristine Capul joins the team and Kelly hopes the Knights can stay healthy and field a full team at every meet.

**North Arlington** has a new coach in track coach Kevin Blackford. Senior Sophie Lasek is the top returning runner.

**Palisades Park** has several experienced returnees in all-league performers Valerie Ramirez and Kate Park as well as Giselle Jimenez, Dayana Castro Bor and Sihoo Yang. Newcomers Jacquelin Camaja and Aideen Cabrera add depth as Palisades Park looks to break a four year winless skein.

Freshmen Sarah Boyle and Adriana Waldorf are working hard and should be important parts of **Park Ridge/Emerson's** rebuilding plan.

**Pompton Lakes** has no seniors on the roster but a lot of returning talent after sharing the divisional title a year ago. The Cardinals have no seniors and are led by juniors Pola Gospodarzec and Jocelyn Brock and soph Evelyn Lavigne.

**Saddle Brook** has a shot at winning the division and county group meets with senior Olivia Poplawski and sophs Raya Thomas, Adianna Polanco and Hanan Ibrahim leading the way. The Falcons have a deep squad that might their biggest strength.

**Saddle River Day** has a full team for the first time in years and sophomore Naho Matsuda had an excellent freshman season.

**Secaucus** has just two returning runners in all-division first team selection, junior Ananya Bajpai and senior Elaine Zhang, the co-captains. The other 10 runners are new but have put in the summer mileage to be competitive. How competitive remains to be seen.

#### **Patriot**

**Bogota** returns a veteran senior core of Ana Michel, Fergie Onate and Isabella Cruz and junior Maya Schiatura from a very good team last year and with sophs Anna Ter-Meliksetian and Paulina Montesinos gaining experience, should contend for league, county group and sectional honors.

**Cresskill** has just three runners out, the best of whom is likely Nayeon Kwon.

**Hasbrouck Heights** returns just one varsity starter and hopes seniors Aryana Sanchez and Andrea Estrada and juniors Lena Kaiser and Shaquana Reynolds and youngsters Angie DiLascio, Leah Melendez, Natalie Bari and Arielle Sanchez can speed the rebuilding process after the Aviators won back-to-back league, county and sectional titles and took second in last year's BMOC.

**Hawthorne Christian** did not submit information.

**Mary Help** did not submit information.

**Midland Park** elevates Paul Marino from assistant to head coach and junior Kaleigh Liebmann and soph Finley Fells are committed to improvement.

**Passaic Charter** did not submit information.

**Ridgefield** did not submit information,

**St. Mary's** did not submit information.

**Waldwick** returns all-league selection senior Brenna Heelan among four returnees. A fine junior class of Katie Pikul, Maggie Seifert, Mia Kelly, Faye Burke and Kendall Szabo could help the Warriors make the group meet for the first time since 2008.

**Weehawken** did not submit information.