

Prep Sports | updated: 10/15/2015 3:37 PM

Girls cross country: Scouting the MSL meet

By Michael Eaken
Daily Herald Correspondent

Girls cross country: Scouting the MSL meetWhere: Heritage Park, Wheeling

When: 10:30 a.m, Saturday

Host: Wheeling

Defending team champ: Palatine

Defending individual champion: Kelly O'Brien (Palatine)

MSL West Division champion: Barrington

MSL East Division Champion: Prospect

What to know: It is shaping up to be a two-way team battle for the title between Barrington and Palatine. Individually, Prospect junior Brooke Wilson, Barrington sophomore Jocelyn Long and Palatine senior Kelly O'Brien are the top threats. Heritage Park offers a new course that will deal plenty of drama.

Teams to watch: Rankings by the Oct. 6 Illinois Cross Country Coaches Poll: No. 7 Barrington, No. 8 Prospect, No. 9 Palatine, Schaumburg, Hoffman Estates

Individuals to watch: Jocelyn Long (So., Barrington), Lauren Conroy (Sr., Barrington), Samantha Samaryczew (Jr., Barrington), Sophie Hoeltgen (Fr., Barrington), Kelly O'Brien (Sr., Palatine), Sam Lechowicz (Sr., Palatine), Sabina Yosif (Sr., Palatine), Anna Buckstaff (Jr., Palatine), Maddie Marasco (So., Schaumburg), Ellie O'Connell (Jr., Schaumburg), Lauren Kubinski (So., Schaumburg), Brooke Wilson (Jr., Prospect), Marissa Valentini (Fr., Prospect),


Meagan Biddle (Sr., Hoffman Estates), Allison Schrader (So., Hoffman Estates), Sydney Davis (Jr., Conant), Emily Stegmeier (Jr., Elk Grove), Kaitlyn Ko (Sr., Buffalo Grove), Gaby Sanchez (Sr., Rolling Meadows).

Outlook: Barrington and Palatine have separated themselves from the pack. Mid-Suburban West champion Barrington nipped Palatine 27-29 in a tense MSL West dual meet on Sept. 24. Two days later, the Pirates finished in fourth place, one spot in front of Barrington, at the Palatine Invitational. The two teams are evenly matched, so it should come down to the fifth runner. Palatine has won three consecutive MSL titles and Barrington will be looking to secure its first since 2006. MSL East champion Prospect has been coming on strong with a young group of runners that continues to get better each week. Schaumburg has also been very consistent. It should be an intense individual race featuring three former MSL champions in Barrington senior Lauren Conroy (2012), Buffalo Grove senior Kaitlyn Ko (2013), and Palatine senior Kelly O'Brien (2014). Prospect junior Brooke Wilson defeated all three of those league champions in securing second place at the Palatine Invitational. But Barrington sophomore Jocelyn Long has had a sensational breakout season, which included a third-place finish at the Palatine Invitational. Long and Wilson also had a head-to-head meeting to open the season at an MSL crossover meet, with Long taking first and setting a home course record at the Fillies' home course at Beese Park. Elk Grove junior Emily Stegmeier, Schaumburg sophomore Maddie Marasco and Conant junior Sydney Davis have also had breakout seasons and will push for a top-five finish, with Hoffman Estates senior Meagan Biddle also looking to make an impact.

-- Michael Eaken

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