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**2008 Arkansas High School Cross Country Championship Preview**  
**Saturday, November 8, 2008**  
**Oaklawn Park Infield, Hot Springs, Arkansas**

Previews are always problematic in that it is very easy to think in terms of predictions when nothing of the sort is meant. Predictions are a notion of who is expected to win rather than what has been shown up to this point. This Preview is based on the Arkansas Track Coaches Association Weekly Coaches Poll which is compiled and hosted by ArkansasTrackStats.net. The teams listed below are those who rank high in the last weekly poll. Could someone else sneak up and win? Absolutely. Could a "favorite" have a bad race and be upset? Of course. Otherwise, the race would not be run and the trophies and medals would just mailed to the winners.

There are races expected to be down to the wire. Comments are provided for each race that, hopefully, add some background. There are some races with strong favorites, intense rivalries and long traditions. All that is great but only one thing counts at State and that is who gets home with five runners tallying the lowest core. Which races will be decided by those 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> runners or even the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>? Meets are often decided by the runners who do not score but who block. This is a team sport, after all.

Good luck to all.

**Team Races:**

**Classification 1/2A (smallest schools):**

Girls: Des Arc, Greers Ferry Westside, Trinity Christian, Johnson County Westside

Boys: Trinity Christian, Acorn, Magazine

Des Arc's Lady Eagles trying to defend 2007 title and take home their 2<sup>nd</sup> win to the Grand Prairie....Trinity Boys have come on strong in recent weeks and are in line to take first ever win...never count out Acorn Boys who have taken a trophy home 7 of last 10 years...the Lady Eagles led the poll all year although tied with Trinity Christian in Weeks 2 and 3....GF Westside has come on strong in the last two weeks and coaches seem to be impressed with their progress...the Acorn Boys led the poll all season until the last week when Trinity finished a climb from 5<sup>th</sup> in Week 2 to barely slip ahead of Acorn at the end...

**Classification 3A:**

Girls: Elkins, Mansfield, Green Forest, Genoa Central

Boys: Mountainburg, Elkins, Green Forest

Looks like a good chance for a first time ever winner in Boys and Girls.....Green Forest defends Girls title and could pull the upset...The Lady Elks boast the state's top runner among the Girls in Grace Heymsfield who has run 17:50 for 5k but will need others to run well to out last Mansfield and Green Forest....these three dominated the Top 3 spots in the poll all fall with Elkins hanging on to the lead....in the Boys meet, Mountainburg and Elkins have duked it out in the polls all year and State could be a footrace for sure...

#### **Classification 4A:**

Girls: DeQueen, Heber Springs, Berryville

Boys: DeQueen, Heber Springs, Shiloh Christian

DeQueen seeks a sweep with Girls going for first win since 2003 and Boys look to defend their 2007 title...The Lady Leopards have been atop the poll since Week 4 while the Boys have been there the entire season...Heber Springs Girls have been quietly sneaking up and might be eyeing the upset....DeQueen Girls finished the regular season ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in the Top 10 Combined Poll while the Boys ended up 6<sup>th</sup> overall...

#### **Classification 5A:**

Girls: Batesville, Greene County Tech, Harrison

Boys: Siloam Springs, Greene County Tech, Harrison, Vilonia

Batesville Girls favored to win 5<sup>th</sup> straight.....Siloam Springs Boys have six in the trophy case and are favored to return to the top spot last won in 2006...Benton County expects to Panthers to bring home some hardware each year and the polls who second that as they have been on top all season but GCT and Harrison should not be overlooked....Batesville Girls not only lead the 5A poll but have ranked high in the Top 10 Combined Poll all season with a solid #3 ranking behind Bentonville and Rogers....GCT should not be ignored as the coaches poll has been moving them closer to Batesville in recent weeks....Natalie Meinzer has posted a fine 18:54 for 5k to lead Batesville and is the leader in 5A and 4<sup>th</sup> overall....watch Tai Canady of Morrilton who ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the State at 16:25 but who thrives on competition and could drop her time with a good effort....

#### **Classification 6A:**

Girls: Lake Hamilton, Mountain Home, Watson Chapel

Boys: Lake Hamilton, Marion, Mountain Home, Sheridan

Lake Hamilton is line to take a double win and get 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> team wins....Girls look to avenge last year's close loss to Mountain Home who is back in the hunt....Boys hope to extend streak to three...the Boys Top 5 Poll has not changed at all this fall with lake Hamilton resting at the top...with two of the state's Top 10 Boys in Amos Gerber (4<sup>th</sup>) and David Mills (7<sup>th</sup>), the Wolves have the upfront power to place a big hurdle for the rest of the field although Chris Marchman (Sheridan, 2<sup>nd</sup>) looks to stop a 1-2 finish.....the Lady Wolves should have their hands full with the Mountain Home Lady Bombers as the two teams have been a close 1-2 the last few weeks in the poll but watch Watson Chapel who has been hanging around near the top.....

### **Classification 7A:**

Girls: Bentonville, Rogers, Rogers Heritage

Boys: Rogers, Conway, Bentonville

Rogers Boys looking to win 7<sup>th</sup> in a row and 8<sup>th</sup> in last 10.....Conway shooting for 2<sup>nd</sup> and first since 1987...Rogers and Conway both wear blue and it should be a sea of blue on the course as the two teams battle down to the wire...Conway soundly beat the Mountie Big Blue Train at the Chile Pepper and no doubt irritated Rogers to lose "their" race ...since CP, Rogers has seen the injury bug clear up and their depth has surged to the forefront as the 7A West meet showed ending the regular season with five of the Top 10 best times led by Cameron Efurd's superb 15:20... the Wampus Cats run in a pack after overall #3 Markus Pearson (15:45) who could challenge Efurd.....Pearson best not ignore Jordan Falls of Rogers who ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in 7A and 5<sup>th</sup> overall with a speedy 15:48 just a step ahead of Caleb Hanson of Ft Smith Southside also at 15:48.....if Rogers runs at top form, the Cat pack will get split .....the two teams have ranked 1-2 in the 7A Poll and the Top 10 poll all fall and clearly are the teams to beat....

Bentonville Girls have won six and 2 of last 3 and are defending champ....the Lady Tigers are loaded and, short of some calamity, should take the top trophy back to Benton County with ease...they have five of the Top 15 7A runners and no one else has more than three, that being Rogers.....the 7A West was a good preview of state and Bentonville had little trouble taking the win....Katie Dalton leads the Lady Tigers with a best of 18:28 and put away the field at 7A West after the halfway point...Courtney Efurd runs her last State meet for Rogers and her season best 18:48 is deceiving as she has been dogged by injuries and looks to now be in top form...look for Efurd to push Dalton and not let the race get away early....MacKenzie Bloom of Bentonville has run a nice 18:56 as well...Roger Heritage in their first season could pick up a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish which would be a nice achievement for a school with no seniors in the tough 7A.....

### **Individuals:**

### **Top 30 Girls:**

1. Grace Heymsfield, Elkins (3A), 17:50
2. Katie Dalton, Bentonville (7A), 18:28
3. Courtney Efurd, Rogers (7A), 18:48
4. Natalie Meinzer, Batesville (5A), 18:54
5. MacKenzie Bloom, Bentonville (7A), 18:56
6. Valerie Reina, Springdale Central JH (7A), 19:11
7. Erica Owen, Rogers (7A), 19:14
8. Erika Setzler, Conway (7A), 19:24
9. Tai Canady, Morrilton (5A), 19:25
10. Dani David, Rogers Heritage (7A), 19:30
11. Elena Sanz, Bentonville (7A), 19:34
12. Kayla Nehus, Mount St Mary's (7A), 19:35
13. Brandy Herrera, Springdale (7A), 19:44
14. Ashley Myers, Van Buren (7A), 19:49
15. Hope Burrell, Rogers Heritage (7A), 19:53
16. Bailey Sisson, Vilonia (5A), 19:54
17. Kaitlin Bounds, Russellville (7A), 19:54
18. Mary Kate Brelsford, Bentonville Washington JH (7A)), 19:58
19. Shannon Sullivan, Bentonville (7A), 19:58
20. Reilly McAtee, Cabot (7A), 20:01
21. Logan Bishop, Batesville (5A), 20:05
22. Kate Bucknam, Fayetteville (7A), 20:11
23. Olivia Campbell, Harrison (5A), 20:12
24. Kelsey Wheelhouse, Bentonville (7A), 20:16
25. Samantha Mohler, Mountain Home (6A), 20:17
26. Jordan James, Rogers (7A), 20:19
27. Carolyn Tran, Lake Hamilton (6A), 20:21
28. Katy Flanigan, Rogers Heritage (7A), 20:25
29. Annika Harms, DeQueen (4A), 20:28
30. Abby Wise, Nettleton (5A), 20:30

### **Top 30 Boys:**

1. Cameron Efurd, Rogers (7A), 15:20
2. Chris Marchman, Sheridan (6A), 15:33
3. Markus Pearson, Conway (7A), 15:45
4. Amos Gerber, Lake Hamilton (6A), 15:47
5. Jordan Falls, Rogers (7A), 15:48
6. Caleb Hanson, Ft Smith Southside (7A), 15:48
7. David Mills, Lake Hamilton (6A), 15:50
8. Michael Allen, Russellville JH (7A), 16:02
9. Jeremiah Fleeman, Rogers (7A), 16:02

10. Shelby Shaffer, Mountainburg (3A), 16:14
11. Alex Tully, Little Rock Catholic (7A), 16:19
12. Austin Simpkins, Fayetteville (7A), 16:19
13. Anthony Melia, Rogers (7A), 16:20
14. Clayton Carter, Greenwood (5A), 16:22
15. Henry Wildenborg, Rogers (7A), 16:23
16. Scott Compton, Bentonville (7A), 16:25
17. Will Aenchbacher, Fayetteville, (7A), 16:26
18. Tabaris Earnest, Conway (7A), 16:30
19. Matthew Friant, Conway (7A), 16:31
20. Brendan Tucker, Van Buren (7A), 16:32
21. Chris Moutos, Pulaski Academy (5A), 16:33
22. Danny Saldana, Rogers (77A), 16:35
23. Tataris Earnest, Conway (7A), 16:36
24. Benjamin Harp, Rogers (7A), 16:37
25. Max Higendorf, Union Christian (2A), 16:39
26. Alex Chiffin, Little Rock Catholic (7A), 16:41
27. Luke Allen, Harrison (5A), 16:41
28. Bradley Russell, Mountainburg (3A), 16:47
29. Morgan Warneke, Conway (7A), 16:47
30. Andrew Evans, Shiloh Christian (4A), 16:48

Meet results expected to be posted at [www.ArkansasTrackStat.net](http://www.ArkansasTrackStat.net)