

2022 Tri-State Cross Country Coaches Boys All-Area Team

Written by Jared Schmidt - Tri State Cross Country Coaches Committee Member

Runner of the Year – Ben Chance, Jr., Bowling Green -

It's no surprise that Ben Chance of Bowling Green High School showed up on the local and state scene in the fall of 2022 in an impressive fashion. The son of head coach, Matt Chance, Ben has running in his blood, and it was only a matter of time before Ben made the big jump and, at the starting line, put himself in contention at every race. The fall of 2022 just happened to be that time.

No stranger to making the 1st team list, 2022 marks his 3rd straight season on the list and, with a heavy senior laden list in 2021, Chance was a name that was likely to put himself in position for runner of the year honors this fall. When the season started, it was a crescendo of fitness as he just continued to get better as the year progressed. In the nine races Chance competed in, he finished no worse than 2nd in any of them. Of those nine, six were individual meet titles and the three second-place finishes were losses to national high school phenom, Connor Burns of Boone County. Burns accomplished the rare feat of becoming a sub-4 miler in the spring of 2022 on the track when he ran 3:58, only becoming the 15th US high school athlete to accomplish that feat. When looking at losses, one can't be ashamed in losing to senior, Burns.

Chance had individual titles at the QND Running Raider, Fort Zumwalt, Mexico, Camdenton and Gans Creek Invitationals. He was also the individual champion at the always strong EMO Conference meet where he ran 15:25 to win by over a minute and a half and lead the Bobcats to yet another EMO Conference team title. That meet kicked off a three-meet run to the Missouri Class 3 state championship meet. Runner-up finishes at the Bowling Green Invite and Missouri District meet to Burns, qualified Chance and his Bobcat team to the Missouri State meet at Gans Creek. The next weekend Chance would run 16:02 to earn his highest state meet finish to date, finishing runner-up and helping the Bobcats earn a 6th place team finish. If 2022 was any sort of precursor to what is in store for the 2023 season, it will be hard to dethrone Ben Chance of the Runner of the Year title next fall.

For his efforts on the course in the fall of 2022, Ben Chance has been named this year's Tri-State Cross Country Coaches Boy's Runner of the Year.

First Team All- Area - (Alphabetical Order)

Elija Henningfeld, So., Bowling Green – Henningfeld was spectacular from start to finish for the Bobcats. Being a forceful number two behind Chance, Bowling Green could go low at the top two positions, making them a formidable team. Elija was 4th overall at the Running Raider in his lone three-mile race of the year. Following that, he was able to pick up with a runner-up finish at the Mexico Invite and he placed 4th at the EMO conference meet running 17:32 for 5k. He placed 25th at the District meet to help the Bobcats advance to the Missouri State Meet where Henningfeld ran 17:54 for 5k to place 63rd overall, and helped the Bobcats place 6th as a team.

Tommy Hess, Jr. QHS – A consistent piece to the Blue Devils pack Hess made big improvements from his sophomore year. The Devils junior was able to put together top 10 finishes at Liberty and the Tom Oakley Invitionals and placed 13th overall at the Running Raider. Hess had a big breakthrough at the Western Big 6 meet where he placed 7th overall running 16:19. Look for Hess to step into the lead role for the Devils next year in his senior season.

Devon Funk, Jr., Liberty – The Eagles go-to number two man was consistent throughout the year, holding his own within the area and saving his best races for the bigger stages. He earned West Central Conference All-Conference honors placing 6th, and ran 17:05 at the St. Joseph Ogden Spartan Classic. Late in the season, he ran a seasons best of 17:02 at the Patriot Invite before narrowly missing sub 17 again at the Elmwood sectional where he ran 17:05. Look for Funk to make a major jump in his senior campaign for the Eagles.

Eric McClelland, Sr, QHS – McClelland jumped into the lead role of the Blue Devils squad in 2022. The senior gave the Devils a consistent low stick and was a leader up front. McClelland tallied three individual wins, including Jacksonville, Tom Oakley, and Liberty Invitionals. He was the Western Big 6 conference runner-up when he ran a massive personal best of 15:33 to kick off his post-season run. He went on to place 4th at the Quincy Regional and 19th at the Normal Sectional running 15:46 to qualify for his first IHSA State Championship meet. McClelland ended his senior campaign with a stellar 75th place finish in the 3A race on a sloppy Detweiller Park course where he ran 16:00.

Sam Northcut, So., Mark Twain – With a strong group of sophomores on the Missouri side of the river, Northcut finds himself near the top of that list. In his 2nd year on the 1st team list, the Mark Twain sophomore was runner-up at the Marion County Invite and 3rd at North Callaway and Centralia, running low 17 minutes for 5k. He was 11th at the strong EMO Conference meet and placed 3rd at the District meet at North Callaway to advance to the state meet. The next week at Gans Creek he was able to run 18:25 to finish 57th overall.

Lane Obert, Fr., Liberty – In a freshman campaign that only saw 2 races over the 17 minute barrier, Obert had as consistent of a runner as any coach could hope for. Landing himself in the top 10 in 6 races throughout the season, including top 5 finishes at the Tom Oakley and Liberty Invitionals, Obert was also the West Central Conference runner-up and placed 3rd at the Macomb Regional. The Eagle Freshman ran a personal best of 16:16 at the Patriot Invite at Detweiller Park in late October.

Parker Quinlan, Jr., West Hancock – The 2022 West Central Conference Champion had an exceptional junior season. Along with the individual conference title, Quinlan also qualified for his first IHSA State cross country meet where he finished 82nd overall on a sloppy, muddy day, running 16:52. He was also the Macomb regional runner-up, and placed 15th at the Elmwood sectional running 16:15.

Jackson Veile, Jr., Pittsfield – The younger of the Veile brothers finds himself on the 1st team list for the first time in 2022. An almost perfect crescendo of a season found Veile running his best when it mattered most at the end of the season. An almost 1 minute and 30 second drop from the beginning of the season to the end is how Veile ended up on this list. He was 20th at the Running Raider and 16th and 18th respectfully at the Tom Oakley and Liberty Invitionals. Veile raced to an 18th place finish at the Porta Regional before setting a huge personal best running 16:56 at the Elmwood sectional.

Joe Warning, Jr., QND – Warning became extremely consistent in 2022 as the leader of the Raiders squad. His junior campaign started off strong with two runner-up finishes at Macomb and Canton. He continued from there with a 6th place finish at the Running Raider. He was 10th at the Tom Oakley Invite and 6th at Liberty. Warning set a new personal best at the Patriot Invite at Detweiller Park where he eclipsed 17 minutes for the first time, running 16:42 for 3 miles.

Noah Wilt, So., South Shelby – Wilt burst onto the scene strong in 2022 with a campaign that only saw him finish outside the top three in two meets all season. He posted four individual race wins, including a victory at the Clarence Cannon Conference meet where he ran 17:02 for 5k. Wilt placed 3rd at the Missouri District 4 meet to advance to the Missouri State Meet where he finished a strong 14th in 17:24 on the Gans Creek Course.

Levi Wright, So., Marion County – Wright finds himself on the 1st team list for the first time after a strong sophomore season. He placed 14th overall at the Running Raider and 12th at the Tom Oakley Invite when he cross the river to race in Illinois. On the Missouri side he was able to finish 3rd overall at the Moberly XC Invitational and 7th and 9th overall at Clopton and Mexico respectfully. In the post season, he placed 6th to advance to the Missouri State Meet where he would go on to finish 90th overall in Class 1.

All-Area Honorable Mention -

Bowling Green – Brendan Finnegan, Fr., Jack Hughes, Sr., Jose Soto, Sr.

Hannibal – Eli Hess, Sr., David Munger, So.

Illini West- Chase Mudd, Fr.

Liberty- Devon Funk, Jr.

Macomb- Jack Dunseth, Fr., Kyle Glaue, So., Zak Green, Sr., Isaiah Rebman, Jr., Mathew Sadler, Jr.

Marion County – Porter Britt, So.

Mark Twain – Brandon Black, Sr., Ean Colbert, So., Gabe Howald, Sr., Colten Eisele, Jr.

Palmyra – Jacob Barnes, Jr., Connor Bross, Sr.

Pittsfield- Brayden Veile, Sr.

QHS- Cameron MacDonough, So., Jude Mintle, Sr., Gavin Slee, Fr.

Rushville – Myles Ackman, Sr.