

1998 California High School Cross-Country Preview By Doug Speck -

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CROSS-COUNTRY TIMES QUOTED IN THE FOLLOWING PREVIEW ARE FROM THE WOODWARD PARK COURSE FROM LAST YEAR'S STATE MEET WITH THE TRACK TIMES LISTED BELOW FROM THE OBVIOUS 800, 1600, OR 3200 METER DISTANCE.

As the State's "harriers" look to the exciting Fall season there should be another campaign of great competition with individuals and teams certainly ending the year among the best in the entire nation. The 1997 season had three California Boys, Isaiah Festa (Morro Bay 3rd), Ronnie Buchanan (Righetti 7th), and Michael Altieri (Jesuit, Sacramento 8th) among the top ten in the Foot Locker National Finals, with Poly (Long Beach) (4th), Nevada Union (Grass Valley) (8th), and Jesuit (11th) ranked among the top dozen Boys' squads in the country by "Harrier" magazine. On the Girls' side in 1997 underclass stars Sara Bei (Montgomery, Santa Rosa 10th), Lauren Fleshman (Canyon, Cany on Country 14th), and Allyson Marquand (University, Irvine 28th) joined senior Kimi Welsh (Yucaipa 16th) among the top Foot Locker National individual Finishers, with Yucaipa declared "Co-National Champions" along with Saratoga Springs (NY) by Harrier Magazine, with Esperanza (Anaheim 14th) and Ayala (Chino Hills 25th) highly rated nationally by the same publication.

1998 will be another season of success. In the "Harrier" magazine pre-season poll for the current season Poly (Long Beach) had its Boys' group ranked third nationally with Nevada Union (GV) seventh. On the Girls' side Esperanza (Ana) was eighth, with Yucaipa eleventh. In a "Harrier" listing of the top fifty Boys and Girls in the country, Jason Finch (Granite Hills, El Cajon), Mike Gregg (Nevada Union, GV), Ryan Mack (Ukiah), Sara Bei (Montgomery, SR), Trina Cox (Santa Rosa), Desiree Davila (Hilltop, Chula Vista), Lauren Fleshman (Canyon, CC), Katie Hotchkiss (Mission San Jose, Fremont), and Allyson Marquand (University, Irvine) were listed. Bei (10th first frosh finisher nationally), Fleshman (14th), Cox (24th) and Marquand (28th) were competitors in last year's Foot Locker National Championship Finals, a competition that brings together the top eight girls from four regions around the nation each mid- December. The Four California girls who return for the 1998 prep and Foot Locker series (Bei, Fleshman, Cox, and Marquand) are as good a group as have returned in California in a while.

What follows is a look at the season beforehand, with "move-ins" and "move-outs", transfers, coaching changes, and the like always affecting things in a serious manner for some. It is done from a standpoint of fun and it is hoped that it will add to one's enjoyment as they watch the season build towards championship time, and as a bit of a guide for those schools who are far and wide in our huge state with nearly a thousand schools taking part in Cross-Country.

One point that became a bit glaring as one looked at things is that the State should go over the make-up of the Fall harrier divisions each year, as with the average growth that is going on among many of the state's schools, a significant number of schools jumped divisions (up as their student body rolls grow which figures show will continue for many years in our state). The teams that went from Division II to Division I on the Boys' side had a significant affect on the strength of both divisions (I became quite a bit tougher, II had the bottom fall out). Also, while Division V is nice to have at 400 and below in enrollment for those smaller schools, to arbitrarily take an even division of the state's schools between the five different levels to favor this smaller group of teams does not seem fair. A number of very strong teams are bumped out of the smaller school division (Div V to Div IV) to compete against schools

with almost 500 more students than themselves. (Div V 1-400, Div II 401-907, so a school with 400-500 students is faced a huge enrollment difference involving the squads it must face at championship time). Also, it would be nice if all sections could make an effort to put grade information on their Section Championship results. Our sport is battling for publicity and ink against a ton of better well-financed activities (pro and otherwise), and what little we can squeeze out depends upon those wishing to give the activity a bit of press (if you have anything to do with Section Championship meets this is a small detail that is some work, but helps give a sense of the future depending upon who returns for the next season).

Enough political comment for now----

One of the reasons we have the season is to prove these previews wrong. It is done in the spirit of enjoyment of our activity and give a little bit of sense beforehand to the whole operation.

Division I Girls

Esperanza (Anaheim) and Yucaipa have super recent traditions. The teams offer quite different styles, with Yucaipa racing very hard during a number of weekends during the season, including in their 1997 plans a trip back east to New Hampshire. Esperanza, on the other hand, rarerly races in big Invitationals, attempting to peak right at the end of the year. Coach Jim Clendaniel (Yucaipa) and Rich Medellin (Esperanza) have been down the road of heavy competition many times, with 1998 an interesting year to watch. The teams return four good scorers from 1997, with Esperanza averaging 19:21 for that group at Woodward Park, and Yucaipa 19:28. Esperanza will lead with Pam Smith 19th 18:59, Lisa Massoth 27th 19:14 and Nicole Distefano 19:15. Frosh Maribeth Buche raced 2:14.12 for 800 meters for Esperanza in the spring--she was not a part of the 97-98 Fall Cross-Country team. Yucaipa counters with Beth Grossheim 7th 18:28-11:16.57, Heidi Walker 17th 18:58, and Jenny Petite 30th 19:17-2:15.31 to lead its 1998 squad. Yucaipa scored 41 points in the 1997 State Meet, with Esperanza 92 in second. Clovis West (Fresno) was extremely strong in 1997, but did not move out of the tough Central Section when fine frosh Kim Smith (19:02-5:09.27-11:01.60) did not run in the Section meet. With Andrea Palacio (19:15) and Jennifer Toler (19:22- 11:20.03) returning CW is on paper "in the ball park" with Esperanza and Yucaipa. The Central Section is a darn good argument this year for allowing "at-large" entries into the State Meet, with Madera and Clovis also very strong Girls Division I squads, but the Section will be limited to two teams per division. University (Irvine) welcomes back Foot Locker National Finalist from last Fall, Allyson Marquand (4:55.43-10:43.35), who concentrated on possible Junior national team soccer possibilities last Fall. Along with Jessica Howard (39th Div I 19:23) the Uni group will be very tough!

Rancho Bernardo (San Diego) has developed into one of the nation's stronger Track and Cross-Country programs, with an excellent group returning here. Kaleena Yee (8th Div I 18:30 11:16.8) and Julie Manson (4th Div I 18:53 5:08.83-11:13.55) lead a group that returns under 99 minutes at Woodward Park.

Ayala (Chino Hills 3rd 1997 115 points) and Valhalla (El Cajon 5th 169) are back a step from the above teams. Ayala has Tess Cendejas (33rd 19:21-2:18.30) and Erin Uyeshima (46th 19:34) leading five returnees from its 97 State group, with Valhalla Laura Trask (36th 19:22) and Elaine Lassen (62nd 19:45) team leaders as they battle Rancho Bernardo locally.

Quartz Hill has a strong threesome in Carly Harill (19:23), Jennifer Yadon (19:32) and Shelly Blevins (19:35) returning from its 1997 4th place Div I squad (136 points). Peninsula (Rolling Hills) has great tradition, with Breanne Sandberg leading its scoring five back from 1997. Mission Viejo, 6th Div II in 1997 has grown to this level in enrollment, with its top five back

from that group. April Lopez (8th Div II 18:52) and Kendal Billingsley (13th Div II 19:13) are tough on top for the Orange County power.

Birmingham (Van Nuys) is probably the best LA City Girls' squad in a while, with Erika Dolezal (50th 19:36), Dina Melendez (53rd 19:37), and a healthy Tiffany Burgess (64th 19:46, but 5:02.74 in the spring for 1600m) leading what could be a very solid squad at the end of the season. Clovis and Madera will battle with Clovis West out of the Central Section. Clovis was eighth last year Div I with 228 points, with Chrisie Gregory (16th 18:55) out front, and Madera was tenth last Fall (262 points), with Griselda Barraza (29th 19:16) and Teri Wilson (60th 19:44) leading.

Mission San Jose (Fremont) has Katie Hotchkiss (18:16 1st Div II State 1997 - 4:49.77) as one of the nation's top runners leading a good foursome back from 1997, with the team 4th Div II last year with 138 points.

Lincoln (Stockton) looks like the best from their area, with Ali Nicolas (19:37 5:10.7) and Becky Lindenberg (19:46) two good returnees. West Hills (Santee) has moved to this level enrollment-wise, with Heather Shurtleff (9th Div II 97 18:55) on top of a good squad that was 8th Div II 1997 with 183 points.

Nevada Union (Grass Valley) has Bronwen Tomb (20:15) and four others back from a 1997 14th place Div I squad.

Individual winner here last year, Trina Cox (Santa Rosa 17:46 10:33.75) has her school at Division III in enrollment numbers, but may move here to continue the school's string of Div I individual champions started by Julia Stamps. Latesha Jones (Rialto 9th 18:32), with Michelle Basanda (Aliso Niguel, Aliso Viejo 12th 18:51), and Michelle Stein (North Hollywood 13th 18:53) last year here. Country Baird (Helix, La Mesa) third Div II last Fall (18:31) and 5:01.71 in the spring for 1600 meters, moves up to Division I this year.

Pre-Season Division I Girls Rankings

1. Esperanza (Anaheim)
2. Yucaipa
3. Clovis West (Fresno)
4. University (Irvine)
5. Rancho Bernardo

Division I Boys:

Poly (Long Beach) is ranked high nationally in the pre-season, but Santa Ana is a minute better on paper than the Poly group, with Saugus very tough in a move up from Division II. The battles of these tough squads down south should be interesting, with others certainly in the hunt.

Santa Ana its top five and six of its top seven back from a fourth place Div I group in 1997 (120 points). Alfonso Leon (10th 15:49), Juan Salgado (11th 15:51), and Jorge Pena (26th 16:05) come back with solid experience and ready for championship honors. Saugus moved up here from Division II in enrollment since last year, with a seventh place finish there with 155 points. The top five from that team return! Jacob Boeding (21st 16:20 Div II) and John Mahar (16:38) lead a good squad. Saugus returns a team with bests on the tough Mt. SAC course that adds up to 80:49! Poly lost numbers one and four from its 1997 Championship team here (67 points), with Martin Conrad (14th 15:56), Tyler Noesen (18th 15:57 4:22.38), and Aaron Durham (16:24 9:29.35) solid vets from that group.

Belmont (L.A.), third in 1997 (118 points), lost only its second and third scorers from that group and are just a hair behind Poly on paper. Humberto Vargas (19th 15:58) and Henry Briseno (16:20) lead the traditional LA City power. Nevada Union (Gr Valley) has tremendous depth at the lower levels, with three back from its high nationally ranked 1997 team that was second to

Poly (72 points). Mike Gregg (6th 15:35 9:24.86) and Brian Wood (16:15) lead the Sac Joaquin Section power.

West Hills (Santee), another bump-ee up from Div II last year (they were second there with 118 points, and welcome back four from that team. Evan Fox (8th Div II 15:45 and 1:54.96 and 4:22.73 as a soph in track in 1998) ably leads WH. Central Coast power Bellarmine Prep (San Jose), 6th Div I 1997 at 204 points, has four back off that team, with Daniel Galindo (16:36) the top returning finisher at state.

Mission Viejo, led by fine Australian triathlete Chris Kemp (1:54.86 4:13.54 9:22.22), moves up to this level, as does Mission San Jose (Fremont), led by Andrew Golden (16:37) and Micah Strom (16:37), with the teams third and fourth 1997 at that level. As we indicated earlier, this Division I is becoming quite crowded with fine teams!

Granite Hills, with 1997 runner-up Jason Finch (15:25 4:19.18 9:16.69) back, Peninsula (Rolling Hills Estates), 5th in 1997, and Poway, 8th last Fall, are other teams with a good nucleus to work from. Justin Neuroth (Vista 13th 15:55 4:17.65) and James DeBruhl (Chino 23rd 16:02 1:55.07 4:15.07) are other strong individual runners.

Pre-Season Division I Boys Rankings

1. Santa Ana
2. Saugus
3. Poly (Long Beach)
4. Belmont (L.A.)
5. Nevada Union (Grass Valley)

Division II Girls

The Division II grouping should be a very competitive one between squads from around the State. Defending Champs Woodbridge (Irvine) said good-bye to fine team leader, Mary Moore, but welcome back the next five scorers from that group that had a 101 point total in 1997. Ellie Stephens (29th 19:42) and Nicole Scott (37th 19:57) lead Coach George Varvas's crew in 1998. Placer (Auburn) was seventh in 1997 with 176 points, and they return the top six from that team. Placer's Lindsey Hyatt (12th 19:09 2:06.30 4:48.62 10:51.7) was injured much of last Fall before becoming the nation's leading prep middle distance runner in the spring--she had the nation's fastest 800 and 1600 times by a high-schooler this past spring on the way to competition at the World Junior Track Championships. Randi Fee (19th 19:26 5:10.04) will help Hyatt and the team challenge for the State title.

Newport Harbor (Newport Beach) moved up to this level in enrollment, with a solid trio in Carrie Foss (12th Div III 19:08), Amber Steen (5:06.19), and Alicia McFall (21st Div III 19:26 11:08.65) making them very, very competitive. Sultana (Hesperia) was sixth in the Southern Section Division I contest last year, with Sami Delagardelle leading a scoring squad that returns at between 19:30 and 20:10 for its top five--they will be tough this Fall. Brea-Olinda (Brea) was fifth in 1997 Div II (152 points), with six back off that team, led by Jenny Thune (26th 19:39) and Christy Burdet (34th 19:51). Amador Valley (Pleasanton) was ninth here last year (213 points), with everybody back from that team. Marcie Silva (22nd 19:30) and Kristin Bergesen (53rd 20:25) lead what will be a good squad. Rubidoux (Riverside) and Santa Margarita (Rancho SM), led by Lori Mann (11:11.12) are also strong from the South. St. Lucy's (Glendora) has fine recent tradition, and finished third here in 1997 (126 points). They return the DeJesus twins, Desiree (36th 19:54) and Tiffany (39th 20:00), and Jennifer Barnett (20:37) and one other from that team.

Scripps Ranch (San Diego), runner-ups here in 1997 (123 points), has numbers three through seven back, with Shanna Cohen (33rd 19:51) leading what can develop into a fine squad.

Desiree Davilla (Hilltop, Chula Vista) had an outstanding frosh year in 1997-98, second in Div II in the Fall at 18:25, then 4:59.59 and 11:16.0 in the spring in track. Robyn Stevens (Vacaville) was 11th 19:05 and 10:53.60 for 3200 in the spring. Escondido's Lanelle Cox was 14th Div II 19:19 and 11:13.53 last year.

Division II Girls Pre-Season Rankings:

1. Woodbridge (Irvine)
2. Placer (Auburn)
3. Newport Harbor (Newport Beach)
4. Sultana (Hesperia)
5. Brea Olinda (Brea)

Division II Boys

As we indicated above, a number of the top returning teams in this division had their enrollment go up just enough to bump them to Division I.

Katella (Anaheim) was eighth Div II in 1997 with 199 points, with the top four and number six back. Danny Mejia (34th-16:33) and Matt Levassieur (42nd-16:37) lead a group that has about a minute on the rest of the division on the "team-time" watch.

San Pasqual (Escondido) was ninth Div II last year (251 points), with six back this year. Adam VanWart (23rd 16:23) and Kyle Combe (16:47) lead the San Diego section team. Newport Harbor (Newport Beach) bumped up here in numbers from Division III, with a fourth place finish there last Fall. Curt Herberts 21st Div III 16:27) and Steve Jensen (31st 16:39) lead NH in 1998. College Park (Pleasant Hill) was eighth Div III last year, with numbers two through seven on that team back this season. Jeff Wang (45th Div III 16:52) leads the North Coast team. Rubidoux (Riverside) was third Div II in 1997 (131 points), with five back. Albert DeLaFuente (18th 16:12) and Alex Murcio (24th 16:24) lead what could develop into a very strong team.

Division II Boys Pre-Season Rankings

1. Katella (Anaheim)
2. San Pasqual (Escondido)
3. Newport Harbor (Newport Beach)
4. College Park (Pleasant Hill)
5. Rubidoux (Riverside)

Division III Girls

Santa Rosa was seventh Division I last Fall with 189 points, with everyone back from that team. They are at this level in enrollment numbers, and may decide to move up again. Should they stay here they will be very tough, led by defending State Div I Champ Trina Cox (17:46 10:33.75), Katie Stafford (19:43), and Lindsay Johnson (19:44).

La Canada took the title here last Fall with 96 points and return their top six, totalling well under 100:00 (20:00 average) at Woodward Park. Kim Garnic (8th 18:55), Nicole Bonino (14th 19:09), and Christina Ellis (29th 19:40) lead the Southern Section power. Rumors have it that Kim's frosh sister and another first year runner will make La Canada very, very tough this Fall! Clayton Valley (Concord) was another who moved all the way to Division I last Fall, finishing ninth there. CV returns numbers two through six this year, with Kristine Musante (19:43), Michelle Howisey (19:48), and Kathleen Ferrari (20:12) a strong threesome back for 1998.

Palo Alto was fourth last Fall Div III (142 points), with four back off that team, with super Katie Brizgys (10th 18:59 and fine 4:58.91 and 10:31.99 times in the spring) and Lauren Currie (23rd 19:27) good team leaders. Foothill (Redding) was sixth last year here (159 points), with everyone back! Rachele Hastings (15th 19:11) and Candace Joseph (20:17) lead the North Section power.

El Modena (Orange), with one of the State's great traditions, was second last year with 108 points, with a trio back for 1998. Leaf Williams (19:59) and Christine Eckstaed (20:10) lead a good nucleus for this Fall. South Hills (West Covina) third last year at 126 points, has four back from that team, with Kim Goitia (20:01) and Amanda Wilson (20:34) two top runners.

Fabulous Sara Bei (Montgomery, Santa Rosa) just continues to get better. During a "story-book" frosh year she was the individual champ here at 18:11 before going on to Foot Locker National Cross-Country honors (she was the top frosh finisher there!). In track she amazed with a poised State Distance double win in the 1600 (4:49.21) and 3200 (10:31.66). Katie Martin (Irvington, Fremont) was 4th Div III last Fall (18:36) and 5:03.81 in the spring. Kim Pac (Santana, Santee) was 5th here last Fall at 18:46, with Meghan Andrade (Carondelet, Concord) 7th Div III at 18:49 (5:07.47-11:18.9). Julia Fischer (Granada, Livermore) was 9th Div III at 18:55 in 1997, with Jamie Witt (Folsom 18th 19:15 and 10:45.64 in the spring).

Division III Preseason Girls Rankings

1. Santa Rosa
2. La Canada
3. Clayton Valley
4. Palo Alto
5. Foothill (Shasta)

Division III Boys

St. Francis (Mountain View) was third here last year with 113 points, with five of the top seven returning. Eric (18th 16:23) and Dan (27th 16:37) Chavez lead the Central Coast Section power. Bosco Tech (Rosemead) was the 1997 Team Champs here (72 points), with Armando Solis and Aaron Ponce (16:40) leading four back from that team. South Hills (West Covina) was second here last year (111 points), with three to build from on that team. Jesse Hodges (16th 16:21) leads SH. Livermore was all the way up in Division I last year, where they finished fifteenth (374 points). They return four from that squad, led by Donovan Jones (16:29), with a great tradition in distance running. St. Ignatius (San Francisco) was sixth Div III last Fall (139 points), with three juniors returning, led by Neil McDonagh (5th 16:00 4:19.04 in spring). La Jolla was seventh last year here (144) and returns four, with Eric Koster (16:45) and Alejandro Mares (17:03) top runners.

Defending individual champion Justin Willingham (East Union, Manteca 15:37 4:13.3 and 9:22.35) returns for what should be a super senior year. Celedonio Rodriguez (Elsie Allen, Santa Rosa) was 11th Div III at 16:08, with Brian Harrington (Del Mar, San Jose) 12th at 16:09. Ryan Mack (Ukiah) was 19th at 16:24, but ran 4:13.81 in the Spring for 1600 meters. David Ulibarri (Sierra, Manteca) was 6th Div IV last year at 16:09, with 4:20.27 and 9:29.2 track clockings later in the year. Steve Laurie (Maria Carrillo, Santa Rosa) was 11th Div IV last year at 16:14 (4:21.20), with his school having its first senior class this year.

Division III Boys Preseason Rankings

1. St. Francis (Mountain View)
2. 2. Bosco Tech (Rosemead)
3. South Hills (West Covina)

4. Livermore
5. St. Ignatius (San Francisco)

Division IV Girls

Corona del Mar (Newport Beach) returns six from a 1997 fourth place Division IV squad that scored 86 points. Lindsey Yourman (17th 19:53), Jill Quye (18th 19:57), Katie Quinlan (20:05), Jenny Cummins (20:16), and 2:12.07 800m runner Liz Morse are the big early favorites here. St. Joseph (Santa Maria) was fifth last year with 165 points, with all that squad returning, led by Michelle (22nd 20:02) and Kara (20:20) June. McFarland was eighth last year with 195 points, with its top five scorers returning. Laura Davis (5th 18:58) and Wendy King (20:24) lead the Central Section group. Defending Champs here, Costa Mesa (51 points) has five from that top seven back, losing numbers two and three. Jamie DeNoewer (3rd 18:54) and Sarah Cotton (19:43) ably lead a team that could develop strongly. Nordhoff (Ojai) finally graduated Elaine Canchola (to UCLA), with four and Coach Ken Reeves' coaching magic returning this year. Rae Stumbough (6th 19:00) and Natalie Darling (20:23) lead for a team that was third last year with 81 points.

West Valley (Cottonwood) was sixth last year (194 points), with six returnees back for 1998, led by Jenee Erickson (12th 19:31). San Lorenzo Valley (Felton) was 10th in 1997 (259 points), with Shiloh Whiting (20:53) out front. Bret Harte (Altaville) was ninth last Fall (209 points), with Yuki Nelson (20:53) the top returnee. San Marin, led by Emily Nielsen, and Campolindo (Moraga), second last year here at 80 points, and led by Karen Lee (19:58) and Laura Cherdack (20:11), are ranked 1-2 in the North Coast Section pre-season poll.

Samantha Michel (Morro Bay) was 7th (19:01) here last Fall, with Angela Sanchez (Capuchino) (9th 19:21 and a fine 4:56.76 in track).

Division IV Preseason Girls Rankings

1. Corona del Mar (Newport Beach)
2. St. Joseph (Santa Maria)
3. McFarland
4. Costa Mesa
5. Nordhoff (Ojai)

Division IV Boys

Nordhoff (Ojai) was the 1997 champs in another crushing team performance, taking three of the first four places. That trio, Victor Ochoa, Matthew Torres, and Dusty Herman, graduated, with the next four back from the team, led by Aidan Short (16:40) and Roberto Conreras (16:44). Estancia (Costa Mesa) was second here last year with 121 points behind Nordhoff (46). The Orange County school (there are a ton of schools in the Newport Beach-Costa Mesa area ranked in this article!) has six athletes back from its 1997 award winning squad, led by Alberto Munoz (8th 16:10 9:26.68) and Manuel Orozco (27th 16:39).

Morro Bay sent Isaiah Festa to Arizona State Universtiy, but returns everyone else from its 1997 third place finishers at State. Matt Epperheimer (31st 16:46) and Seamus Perry (16:57) lead the squad from the pleasant Central Coast beach community. Notre Dame (Sherman Oaks) was 6th in 1997 (192 points), with six returning, led by fine Kevin Lelles (7th 16:09 4:19.42). Central Valley was 10th here last year at 248 points, with six back and five sophs on the 97 Varsity. Steven Springhorn (17:08) leads the Northern power who will try to stay ahead of other area strong teams on the way to State. Half Moon Bay has strong tradition (7th 1997 with 197 points), with four averaging about 17:30 back led by Matthew Benda (17:02). Gunderson (San Jose) was 8th last year and has four back off that team, led by 16:58. Shafter was 12th in 1997,

with six back, with Jordan Lewis (17:11) leading a group that will try to unseat traditional Central area champ McFarland. Yreka and McFarland are other teams that have fine traditions and a nucleus back for the 1998 season. Vic Moreno (Escalon) was 14th 1997 Div IV at 16:23, with Bruce Hancock (Costa Mesa) 16th at 16:29 before a fine 4:17.75 in track.

Division IV Boys Preseason Rankings

1. Nordhoff (Ojai)
2. Estancia (Costa Mesa)
3. Morro Bay
4. Notre Dame (Sherman Oaks)
5. Central Valley

Division V Girls

One of recent prep history's finer dynasties is frighteningly in control here. Coach Mike McManus's University of San Francisco squad dominated last year (and the year before, and the year before, if you get the picture). Their totals the last three years in winning State here were 18, 24, and 24, which means they beat the entire division put together. Guess what! They return everyone from the eighteen point 1997 group, with the only suspense this year seemingly around whether they will pick a higher division (maybe I?) to tackle some real competition. Kira Morser (1st 97 18:47 5:04.65), Linden Bader (3rd 97 19:20), Aliza Cohen (5th 97 19:25), Diana Clock (7th 19:48), and Kristin Ferrell (10th 19:55) give the San Francisco group actually the top returning team time on the Woodward Park Course from any division! This is truly one of the fine small school teams in U.S. prep history, with national "under-500" rankings, which would be a nice idea if it could be pulled off (the private co-ed Uni has 299 students in the CBED State enrollment summary) certainly having the school #1 in the entire country. A Tri-Valley (Grahamsville) group from New York once came to Mt. SAC, with statistic types once figuring that one girl out of every twenty-five or so in the school could run 19:00 for a flat 5k, the only comparison this author can bring to mind. If they stay at this level they can print the Division V trophy in late August!

Back in mortal land, Chadwick (Palos Verdes) was third in 1997 with 82 points, with six back from that team, with Veronica Herrera (19:47) and Aggie Noble (19:52) leading what is a good Division V group. Santa Clara (Oxnard) was fourth last Fall (94 points), with six back. Ana Guerra (13th 20:06) and Evana Capron (20th-20:19) were successful last Fall for the Saints. L.A. Baptist (North Hills) was fifth in the Southern Section last Fall, with Rachel Davis leading the scoring five returning there. Viewpoint (Calabasas) was seventh in that same area, with Lauren Phillips heading back a good group this Fall. Desert Christian (Lancaster) was sixth here in 1997 with a 138 point total, as the team won the "packing award" at last year's state meet, finishing their first four within 9 seconds of soph Deann Matteson at 21:48. Angela Petersen (F. Parker, San Diego) was second at this level last year (18:58) with fine 5:02.64 and 10:58.67 clockings in track. Katie Scangos (Crystal Springs-Uplands, Hillsborough) was 8th in 1997 at 19:51, with Kaili Shumilak (Bishops, La Jolla) 12th at 20:04.

Division V Preseason Girls Rankings

1. University (San Francisco)
2. Chadwick (Palos Verdes)
3. Santa Clara (Oxnard)
3. L.A. Baptist (North Hills)
4. Viewpoint (Calabasas)

Division V Boys

This division should be a good battle among a number of capable under 400 enrollment schools. Maranatha (Sierra Madre) added another Championship trophy to the case with their 1997 win here, with four back off that team given the early narrow edge at this level. Paul Miser (12th 16:57) and Ryan George (17:25) will need to step up for the Southern Section power if they are to repeat this Fall. Crossroads (Santa Monica) was fourth here last year with 118 points, with supers Jeff (3rd 16:28 9:22.12) and Mike (5th 16:39) Tomlinson leading five back from that squad. Calvin Christian (Escondido) was seventh in 1997 (148) with six back from that group. Bart Conner (17:05) leads the San Diego power that can challenge for the win here. St. Joseph's-Notre Dame (North Coast Section) was fifth last year (127 points), with Alex Mason (22nd 97 17:25) leading the top-ranked North Coast Section team. Flintridge Prep (La Canada) has four back from its 1997 runner-up squad (108 points), with team leader Doug Hall finally graduated, but Imran Ahmad (17:47) returns. University (San Francisco) was third in 1997, with Eric Fischer (29th 17:34) headlining the 1998 group. Desert Christian (Lancaster) was sixth here last year (147 points), and returns a group that can average right at about 18:00 (90:00 team time) at Woodward Park. Avenal is potentially a strong group out of the Central Section.

Tony Kubler (Viewpoint, Calabasas) was 8th 1997 at 16:46, with Tony Herr (L.A. Baptist, North Hills) 9th at 16:50, and Redwood Christian's Jacob White 16th (17:09) and Tim Greenaway (18th 17:12) for the San Leandro school.

Division V Preseason Boys Rankings

1. Maranatha (Sierra Madre)
2. Crossroads (Santa Monica)
3. Calvin Christian (Escondido)
3. St. Joseph-Notre Dame (North Coast Section)
4. Flintridge Prep (La Canada)