

3rd Milton XC Invitational Preview

By Coach Andy Carr

For the 3rd time in the new school's history, Milton will play host to 10 schools this weekend in their bi-annual Invitational. Milton's home course, one of the most difficult in the state will host its largest meet to date in school history!

Looking over the teams that will be competing this weekend it looks more like a preview of the Class AAAA state meet than just a plain-old invitational. First-off, on the boy's side, host Milton, 5th in AAAAA and 7th-All-Class will have to deal with #1 AAAA (and 6th-all-class) Lakeside-Evans. The matchup should be a close one with Lakeside-Evans having an off-week and a solid 3rd place at UGA Invite 2 weeks ago. Milton counters with a 2nd place at Volunteer Invite losing to top-ranked Beardon (TN) and a 5th at Berry. Then throw in other ranked teams such as Pope (5th in AAAA), North Hall (9th all-class and 2nd in AAA and just behind Milton at Berry), Riverwood (3rd in AAA) and Lovett (2nd in AA) and the team battle should be a close one on the boy's side.

The girl's teams provide just as an intriguing matchup with Lakeside-Evans (4th all-class & #1 in AAAA), taking on host Milton (8th in AAAAA). Milton is coming off a narrow 2-pt win at Volunteer Invite over high-ranked Spruce Creek (FL) and Lakeside-Evans tied for the win at UGA losing on their 6th runner to 2010 AAAAA state champs Walton. Ranked teams make up most of this incredible field with John's Creek (#6 in AAAA), Pope (#10 in AAAA), North Hall (7th in AAA) and Riverwood (8th in AAA) and then throw in the mix #1 ranked Lovett in AA and you will have a top-notch team battle.

Unique to this meet, the awarding of the Eagle Cup, goes to the lowest combined score of each school's varsity & JV teams, both boys and girls and in this go-around Milton will have its hands full trying to retain the cup.

On the individual race side the girl's race is littered with state champs, top-contenders and a deep field that will make this the race one to watch. After resting last weekend, Pope's Molly Schenck looks like the pre-race favorite but do not count out Hailey Branch of Lovett who has a lot of experience on this slow and difficult course. Throw in the mix the likes of AAA state champ Alli Buchalski (3rd here in 2009 in 21:16 and breaking the standing course record at that time), Lakeside-Evans Sarah Bowles, Dunwoody's amazing sophomore Alex Cameron and tough -as-nails Annie Kelly of Milton and you are gonna have a show up front the entire race. The girl's high school course record is 19:52 (Brett McDaniel, Riverwood,

2009).

The boy's counter with Lakeside-Evans top-3 with Sid Vaughn, Chase Flowers and Nicholas MacDonald. All 3 have run sub-16:35 and Sid has gone sub-16 and could scare the high school course record (17:49-Austin Ulich, Chattahoochee, 2009). Top contenders also include Patrick Fleming of Pope, Trevor Grant of Lambert and Brandon Lawson of North Hall and all could win and be close to the course record as all have run 16:05 or better!!! Throw in Riverwood's top-3 of James Ryden, Eric Dietrich & Conner McDaniel (4th in 2009, 19:06) a strong race up front is a guarantee.