



## **SECONDS BEFORE THE STARTER'S GUN**

The Maple Leafs are in box #2

### **LEAFS GRAB FINAL QUALIFYING SPOT AT THE GENESEO IHSA SECTIONAL MEET**

On Saturday, November 1st, the Leafs hosted one of the 4 IHSA 2A Sectional Cross Country meets in the State of Illinois. The meet was held at Geneseo's Richmond Hill Park. The field included teams from: Bloomington, Chillicothe (Illinois Valley Central), Dunlap, Geneseo, Harvey (Thornton), Lemont, Metamora, Midlothian (Bremen), Morris, Morton, New Lenox (Providence Catholic), Normal (U-High), Normal (West), Oak Forest, Ottawa, Peoria (Notre Dame), Tinley Park, & Washington. On the line was a trip to the IHSA State Finals to be held at Peoria's "Historic" Detweiller Park on Saturday, November 8th. The top 7 teams plus the first 10 individual finishers not on qualifying teams.

The teams were treated to near perfect racing conditions. The race time temperature was 45° and there was virtually no wind. The course was also hard and fast. Geneseo entered the meet ranked 10th by Illinois Running News. The team also had a streak of qualifying for the State Meet in each of the last 5 years. The main team goal all season long was to extend that streak to SIX and QUALIFY. It wouldn't be easy. Ranked ahead of the Leafs were six "State-Ranked" teams. Morton (3rd), Peoria Notre Dame (5th), Morris (10th), Normal U-High (14th), Metamora (17th), and Washington (22nd). Thus, "On Paper" the top 6 spots were gone and the Leafs would

battle Chillicothe (Illinois Valley Chillicothe), Lemont, and Dunlap for the final qualifying spot. The tension was high but it sure was nice to be racing at home.

On to the race. The starter's pistol "Cracked" at "High Noon". The Leafs got out nicely in the highly talented field. Coach Ehlert and Geneseo's Athletic Director Joe Nichols "Did it Right" once again (this is the 2nd time the Leafs have hosted this meet in the last 3 years). Hiring a timing company isn't cheap and they both earned an A+ by also paying for timing mats at both the mile and 2 mile marks. The end result was feedback online to follow the race and actually get team scores at those points. I will discuss each of the Maple Leafs' Varsity 7 below. At the mile, the Leafs were in 6th place. They were still there at the 2 mile mark. However, the 9th place team was only 7 points behind us. Yup, it was a true "Dog Fight".

Leading the way for the Leafs was "Super-Soph" Henley Bourne who has been the Leafs' number one man for much of the season. Athletic.Net projected Henley to place 23rd overall. He really "Popped One" and placed 19th and was timed in 16:08. His time was another Sophomore School Record for the Richmond Hill Course. He took 17 seconds off his previous best time run at the WB-6 Conference Final. He is also now the 3rd fastest Maple Leaf EVER on the course and has 3 of the Top 25 Performances ever on the course. Let me remind you that he is ONLY A SOPHOMORE. Great Race, Henley. What a great start to the Maple Leafs' team score. All the best next Saturday at "Historic" Detweiller Park.

The Leafs' number two man on the day was "Mr Dependable", Senior Leader Jaxson Sottos. Jaxson took it "Deep to the Well" and placed 26th overall (Athletic.Net projected him 29th). Thus, after two men the Leafs were already 7 points ahead of the Athletic.Net projections. Every single point was HUGE and the Leafs were "Rolling". Jaxson was timed in 16:16 which was a lifetime best on the course by 6 seconds. He now "Sits" in 3rd place on the GHS Senior Top 25 List and 4th on the All-Time 25 List. He now has 6 of the Top 25 Times ever at Richmond Hill Park's Course. Great Stuff, Jaxson. After the race he shared that this race was the hardest effort he had ever been able to put forth. Call it "Guts", call it "Senior Pride", call it whatever you want. The Leafs were in a desperate struggle to qualify and it all mattered. We are Very Proud of You. All the best next weekend.

Senior Leader Aidan Bries saved the greatest race of his life for the right day. Athletic.Net projected him to place 58th. He placed 52nd. 6 more big places. He was timed in 16:51. That was a personal best of 22 seconds on the course. That time moved him into 5th on the GHS Senior List and 7th on the All-Time (any grade) list. Great Stuff, Aidan. The best way to lead is via example and that is what you have done ever since you entered the doors of Geneseo High School. Aidan ended up as the Maple Leafs' 3rd Man and truly was a huge "Difference Maker". We are extremely proud of you and everything you have given to this team. What an amazing career you are having. The "Four Horsemen" will be riding tall next Saturday in the IHSA State Finals. Don't forget to enjoy the journey. All the best.

Up next was Senior Leader Graysen Carlson who was racing hurt. He has a possible stress fracture in his lower leg. He and Coach Ehlert decided to have him race after he biked most of the week (staying off it). Athletic.Net projected him to place 46th. How he still was able to place 53rd with a serious injury is a true testament to Graysen's commitment to his team. He is

"All In". He has run as the Leafs' 3rd man all season long and finished only 1 second behind Aidan. Amazing, Graysen tied his lifetime best on the course anyway. He previously ran the same time in the WB-6 Conference Meet HEALTHY. He was timed in 16:52 and placed 53rd overall in the race. His time ranks him 6th on the GHS Senior Top 25 list and 8th on the GHS All-Time Top 25 list. Simply amazing, Graysen. Highly Inspirational. The 'Four Horsemen" led the way. All the best at State.

Closing the scoring for the Maple Leafs (Top 5 Runners) was "Super-Soph" Greyson Claerhout who sprinted across the finish line 58th place and was timed in 17:00 Athletic.Net projected him to place 65th. Greyson's time moved him into the 4th spot on the GHS Top 25 Sophomore Top 25 List for the Richmond Hill Park Course. It also moved him into 10th on the All-Time Individual List (any grade level). Without Greyson's remarkable improvement this season the Maple Leafs would NOT have qualified. Great Job, Greyson. You have had a remarkable season. You just keep getting better and better. Greyson dropped 31 seconds off his lifetime best on the course (WB-6 Conference meet). With you and your fellow "Super-Sophs" leading the charge, the Maple Leafs look ready to extend "da Streak" to 7 next fall. Before that, go have some fun at Peoria's "Historic" Detweiller Park when you race in the IHSA STATE FINALS. All the best, Greyson.

Senior Leader Kaden Elmer was the next Leaf to "Break the Tape". Kaden has been struggling the last couple of weeks but really dug deep and somehow finished only 3 seconds off of his lifetime best time on the course of 17:39. He was timed in 17:42 and placed 94th in the "Loaded Field". Athletic.Net projected him to place 92nd so he was spot on. Kaden is a key member of Geneseo's "Four Horsemen". They really have provided a Plethora of leadership all season long and were truly rewarded for those efforts on Saturday as the team narrowly qualified for the State Meet for the SIXTH TIME IN A ROW. That is AMAZING. All the best next Saturday when you will be "Toeing the Line" at Peoria's "Historic" Detweiller Park in the IHSA STATE FINALS. Don't forget to enjoy the journey. Thanks for always being such a great guy.

GHS "Super-Soph" Kael McCord ran another great race himself and raced to 96th place overall in the talented field. Athletic.Net projected him to place 106th so he "Blasted" that. His time of 17:42 was a personal best on the challenging Richmond Hill Park Course by 39 Seconds. SERIOUSLY!!! Holy Moley. That time moved him into 11th on the GHS Sophomore Top 25 list for the course. It also moved him into 17th on the All-Time Top 25 Individual List (any grade level). Please remember that Kael is Only a Sophomore. The Leafs have some "Big Shoes" to fill for next year but the cupboard is certainly far from empty. It will be a Lot of Fun watching you guy go after 7 in a row next season. All the best on Saturday in the IHSA State Finals. We are Very Proud of You, Kael.

A special thank you goes out the the Geneseo "Hype Squad", family, and friends who put forth a plethora of support for the team on Saturday. Coach Ehelrt estimated a couple thousand spectators were in attendance. The park was "Packed". Every time anyone encouraged the GHS Varsity Squad it helped them a little. A Lot of "Little Bits" added up to a tremendous home course advantage. It helped the Leafs to overcome a tremendous challenge in qualifying. The Leafs were picked to place 10th by Illinois Running News. They placed 7th. Congratulations to everyone.

Lastly, congratulations to Head Maple Leaf Coach Todd Ehert and his "Right Hand Man" Jeff Brown. They have done a wonderful job of leading the program of tremendous success. Hosting a meet of this magnitude isn't an easy assignment but the pros far outweigh the cons. They organized a large work force to help pull it all off (along with the Girls Staff of course). The Maple Leafs have now qualified for SIX STRAIGHT IHSA 2A STATE FINALS. That is simply "Jaw-Dropping". Geneseo is Lucky to have each of you working with our young men. God Bless each of you. All the best next Saturday at the State Meet.

<b>Date:</b> 11/01/2025							
<b>Meet:</b> IHSA Geneseo Sectional							
<b>Site:</b> Geneseo's Richmond Hill Park							
<b>Conditions:</b> Racetime Temp of 45° w/ WNW winds of 6 mph. Dry & Fast							
<b>Racing Distance:</b> 3.00 miles							
<b>Team Finish:</b> <b>Varsity Boys:</b> 7th Place (Qualifying for the State Meet)							
	<b>TIME</b>	<b>ATHLETE</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>1-M</b>	<b>2-M</b>	<b>3-M</b>
1	16:08	Henley Bourne-10	19	V	5:17	5:30	5:21
2	16:16	Jaxson Sottos-12	26	V	5:20	5:31	5:23
3	16:51	Aidan Bries-12	52	V	5:37	5:38	5:35
4	16:52	Graysen Carlson-12	53	V	5:32	5:42	5:37
5	17:00	Greyson Claerhout-10	58	V	5:35	5:46	5:38
6	17:42	Kaden Elmer-12	94	V	5:45	6:04	5:52
7	17:42	Kael McCord-10	96	V	5:46	6:02	5:54
	15:01	Varsity Race Leader	1	V	5:00	5:01	5:00
		<b>Geneseo Spread</b>					
		1-5	0:52				
		1-7	1:34				

# IHSA Class 2A XC Sectional - #2 Geneseo HS

OFFICIAL Sat, Nov 1, 2025 Richmond Hill Park, IL US

## 3 Miles Varsity

### Official Team Scores

1. Morton	71
2. Peoria (Notre Dame)	73
3. Normal (University)	116
4. Washington	121
5. Morris	128
6. Metamora	188
7. Geneseo	196
8. Lemont	203
9. Chillicothe (Illinois Valley Central)	204
10. Dunlap	255
11. Normal (Community West)	298
12. Oak Forest	332
13. Tinley Park	352
14. Bloomington	380
15. Ottawa (Twp.)	424
16. New Lenox (Providence Catholic)	445
17. Harvey (Thornton)	466
18. Midlothian (Bremen)	529

17. 12 Nick Manso	16:05.32	Oak Forest
18. 12 Nikita Hovious	16:08.74	Morris
19. 10 Henley Bourne	16:08.90	Geneseo
20. 11 Hudson Nath	16:09.08	Oak Forest
21. 11 Frederic Couri	16:09.27	Peoria (Notre Dame)
22. 12 Dax Duffy	16:11.40	Peoria (Notre Dame)
23. 10 Alex Linnemann	16:12.89	Washington
24. 9 Owen Riesberg	16:14.58	Morton
25. 10 Colter Hedden	16:15.03	Chillicothe (Illinois Va)
26. 12 Jaxson Sottos	16:16.04	Geneseo
27. 11 Duke Hendrick	16:17.37	Morton
28. 11 Drew Hodel	16:20.10	Metamora
29. 11 Aaden Richards	16:20.43	Normal (University)
30. 11 Joshua Stedwill	16:20.74	Peoria (Notre Dame)
31. 11 Alex Simmons	16:21.27	Macomb
32. 11 Noah Harris	16:23.62	Morton
33. 11 Donovan Wright	16:24.00	Normal (Community V)
34. 12 Jack Nester	16:24.31	Dunlap
35. 9 Greyson Ince	16:24.33	Normal (University)
36. 10 Evan Hermacinski	16:24.75	Bartonville (Limestone)
37. 11 Scott Biedess	16:25.79	Lemont
38. 11 Jacob Czerwic	16:28.46	Lemont
39. 12 Brodie Peterson	16:28.74	Morris
40. 11 Gianni Verucchi	16:31.02	LaSalle (L.-Peru)
41. 9 Eli Hartman	16:31.79	Bloomington
42. 9 Gavin Nally	16:33.96	Lemont
43. 12 Luke Baker	16:34.01	Morton
44. 12 Sam Scoville	16:34.50	Lemont
45. 10 Lucas Layman	16:34.85	Normal (University)
46. 12 Adam Ehrhart	16:36.67	Peoria (Notre Dame)
47. 12 Kyle Szafranski	16:37.76	New Lenox (Providen
48. 11 Cullan Fahrenkrug	16:44.74	Chillicothe (Illinois Va)
49. 11 Elijah Gerkin	16:47.77	Metamora
50. 12 Peyton Beebe	16:48.18	Pontiac
51. 9 Kingston Nevarez	16:48.81	Normal (University)
52. 12 Aidan Bries	16:51.54	Geneseo
53. 12 Graysen Carlson	16:52.11	Geneseo
54. 11 Max Draksler	16:52.45	Dunlap
55. 9 Mitchell Hohulin	16:54.37	Metamora
56. 11 Gavin Abad	16:58.25	Lemont
57. 12 Wilbert Eppenger	16:59.23	Metamora
58. 10 Greyson Claerhout	17:00.05	Geneseo
59. 10 Garrison Kaufmann	17:02.48	Normal (Community V)
60. 10 Tyler Owen	17:03.05	Dunlap
61. 10 Ben Bobchik	17:06.25	Dunlap
62. 11 Jacob Bauchmoyer	17:06.60	Normal (University)
63. 10 Tyson Horn	17:06.73	Dunlap
64. 10 Alex Crull	17:07.26	Chillicothe (Illinois Va)
65. 11 William Gentle	17:07.98	Metamora

66. 11 Benjamin Loxtercamp	17:07.99	Tinley Park	121. 11 Brayden Bell	18:49.78	Bloomington
67. 9 Brody Miller	17:09.04	Chillicothe (Illinois Va	122. 10 Anthony Perozzi	18:50.40	Crete (C.-Monee)
68. 10 Alejandro Delgado	17:10.45	Plano	123. 9 Trent Kreis	18:52.10	Tinley Park
69. 12 Jonathan Zarbock	17:14.33	Morris	124. 11 Erik Esparza	19:00.22	Oak Forest
70. 12 Seth Larsen	17:14.59	Washington	125. 11 Lincoln Steers	19:01.86	Bloomington
71. 9 Sam Palacios	17:16.60	Plano	126. 12 Yahir Toledo	19:03.81	Calumet City (Thornt
72. 10 Beckett Kreinbihl	17:18.91	Normal (Community V	127. 11 Aydenn Hunter	19:13.52	Calumet City (Thornt
73. 10 Atlas Brown	17:22.24	Ottawa (Twp.)	128. 10 Daniel Tecalero	19:17.04	Midlothian (Bremen)
74. 11 Allan Watkins	17:23.11	Normal (Community V	129. 9 Omar Martinez	19:22.47	Midlothian (Bremen)
75. 12 Chase McConnell	17:23.27	Morris	130. 10 Shawn Walton	19:36.42	Chicago Heights (Ma
76. 11 Caden Harrison	17:25.16	Harvey (Thornton)	131. 10 Connor Krussell	19:36.57	Tinley Park
77. 12 Leo Halperin	17:26.43	Bloomington	132. 12 Jayden Randle	19:37.54	Harvey (Thornton)
78. 12 Parker Fleetwood	17:26.60	Morris	133. 12 Jose Hernandez	19:57.71	Midlothian (Bremen)
79. 10 Christopher Mack	17:30.35	New Lenox (Providen	134. 11 Paul Schmelter	20:04.85	Tinley Park
80. 9 David Wojciak	17:31.61	Lemont	135. 10 Jack Kibbon	20:07.12	New Lenox (Providen
81. 12 Trey Carroll	17:31.86	Tinley Park	136. 12 Daniel Fisher	20:07.21	Ottawa (Twp.)
82. 12 Owen Spiezio	17:33.82	Washington	137. 9 Dominic Doveri	20:08.18	New Lenox (Providen
83. 12 Jaxon Tomera	17:33.90	Normal (Community V	138. 12 Miguel Garcia-Sepulveda	20:18.31	Midlothian (Bremen)
84. 10 Eduardo Antonio Hernan...	17:35.07	Midlothian (Bremen)	139. 12 Luke Passwater	20:22.58	Ottawa (Twp.)
85. 9 Connor Medina	17:35.47	Ottawa (Twp.)	140. 12 Jesus Cruz	20:44.87	Midlothian (Bremen)
86. 11 Adam Murnan	17:36.32	Chillicothe (Illinois Va	141. 12 Ryan Curley	21:04.79	New Lenox (Providen
87. 10 Brayden McGuire	17:37.42	Galesburg			
88. 12 Blake Schade	17:37.91	Bartonville (Limestone			
89. 12 Shawn Golliday	17:38.15	Bloomington			
90. 12 Tyler Garrigus	17:39.10	Normal (Community V			
91. 12 Grant Smithmeyer	17:39.30	Ottawa (Twp.)			
92. 11 Evan Huntington	17:42.12	Dunlap			
93. 9 Zane Kingham	17:42.31	Metamora			
94. 12 Kaden Elmer	17:42.51	Geneseo			
95. 11 Ethan Sakata	17:42.75	Washington			
96. 10 Kael McCord	17:42.81	Geneseo			
97. 10 Ethan Marin	17:44.43	Kankakee			
98. 11 Jamari Randolph	17:46.44	Bloomington			
99. 11 Zachary Kwiat	17:46.55	Oak Forest			
100. 9 Jackson Petitgout	17:46.84	Macomb			
101. 12 Emmanuel Adedeji	17:48.44	Harvey (Thornton)			
102. 11 Gavin Banahan	17:48.46	Tinley Park			
103. 11 Connor Wiles	17:48.74	Lemont			
104. 10 Aidan O'Dea	17:49.65	Dunlap			
105. 12 Kaleb Nimke	17:51.00	Ottawa (Twp.)			
106. 12 Reece Fraikes	17:54.63	Chillicothe (Illinois Va			
107. 11 Anthony Fourte	18:02.99	Harvey (Thornton)			
108. 10 Cooper Griffin	18:03.77	Oak Forest			
109. 12 Aidan Starkey	18:09.42	Normal (Community V			
110. 10 Aries Brown	18:18.91	Ottawa (Twp.)			
111. 11 Jack Hawkins	18:19.44	Bloomington			
112. 12 Jalon Alexander	18:20.17	Harvey (Thornton)			
113. 12 Charlie Shafer	18:22.30	New Lenox (Providen			
114. 12 Cristian Perez	18:26.40	Midlothian (Bremen)			
115. 12 Christian Stepien	18:27.46	New Lenox (Providen			
116. 11 Tahari Curry	18:28.37	Harvey (Thornton)			
117. 12 Lincoln Hamrin	18:28.38	Oak Forest			
118. 11 Joseph Adewunmi	18:28.40	Harvey (Thornton)			
119. 10 Abraham Sanchez	18:42.50	Calumet City (Thornt			
120. 12 Jimmy Banialis	18:42.98	Oak Forest			



### **SENIOR JAXSON SOTTOS SELECTED AS "BELL RINGER"**

Pictured is Senior Jaxson Sottos who was selected as the team's "Bell Ringer" for the IHSA Geneseo 2A Sectional Meet

### **SENIOR JAXSON SOTTOS "RINGS da Bell"**

Senior Jaxson Sottos was selected as the Geneseo Boys Cross Country "Bell Ringer" for the IHSA Geneseo Sectional Meet held on Saturday, November 1st. The award was created by Head Maple

Leaf Boys Cross Country Coach, Todd Ehlert, with a little help from "da Committee". The "Bell Ringer Award" honors a team member selected by a committee consisting of all of the senior team leaders and the coaching staff. Each member of the committee nominates two athletes. The committee discusses each nominee until a winner has been selected. Considerations for nomination include both practice and competitive performances. Possessing high levels of both Passion and Purpose are Omnipotent. An award winner is selected after each meet.

The biggest challenge to the Maple Leafs "State Streak" occurred in Saturday's Geneseo IHSA Sectional Meet. The Leafs entered the meet ranked 10th in the field (only the top 7 teams qualify). Six of those teams were also "State-Ranked". The field was simply "Loaded". The team needed everyone to run a great race to have a chance to qualify. Mission accomplished. Jaxson and his fellow seniors, "The Four Horsemen", and the three "Super-Sophs" ran amazing races and "Punched" their ticket to the IHSA State Finals. It was very exciting to see it all play out. The margin for error was razor thin.

The best way to lead is via example and that is exactly what Jaxson has done each and every year during his high school Harrier career. He has been one team's top runners every year. He sprinted across the finish line in 26th place and was timed in a personal best time for him on the challenging Richmond Hill Park Course of 16:16. That time ranks him 4th "All-Time" on the GHS Individual Top 25 list for the course. He also has 6 Top 25 All-Time Performance listings. He ranks 3rd as a GHS Senior, 2nd as a Junior, 2nd as a Sophomore, and 5th as a Freshman. Simply Amazing, Jaxson.

Jaxson got out fast and hit the first mile in 5:20. That included a couple of big hills. He found himself in 16th place. At that point, the Leafs were in 6th place as a team. His 2nd mile was timed in 5:31 (10:52) and he was in 25th place. The team was tied with Metamora for 6th. The 6-7-8-9 teams were all closely bunched. The 9th place team was only 5 points behind us. It was going to be an intense last mile. Jaxson did a great job of fighting the whole way and sprinted home in 16:16 with his final mile taking only 5:23. The Maple Leafs team grabbed the final team qualifying spot. Lemont and IVC were only 7 and 8 points back. What a race. Goals that are not easily achieved mean a Lot More. I am pretty sure that is the case here. Job Well Done, Men. After the race, Jaxson told me that was the hardest effort he had EVER been able to pull out of himself. The fact that his teammates were depending on him certainly was a major factor. It did for all 7 of them. What a glorious day for the Leafs.

All the best at state and beyond. It has been a true honor to serve as one of your coaches. I sure wish I had been able to be around more often but I know that you understand what the circumstances are on this end. Family first. My wife's needs have increased due to her health issues. Also, thank you for all the help you have provided us over the years with projects that I needed some help with. As you know, it's hard to keep my wife on the "Sidelines". I will forever be in your debt. It has also been wonderful to watch you re-discover your passion for this sport. It was on full display in recent races. We are also very proud of how you have handled the emergence of Henley. Not everyone handles a teammate moving past them in a positive way. Egos, sometimes get in the way. The way that the two of you have worked together in practice and races is how it should be done. You get an A+ for a grade Captain Jaxson. It is Easy to "Talk the Talk". You "Walked the Walk". Your "Passion and Purpose" levels are alive and well.

Here is what Jaxson had to say about his athletic history:

**12th Grade:** "I have had a dream senior year, made it to the state finals my 4th year in a row and I have been Varsity all 4 years, I ran 15:55 so far as my season best, I got 1st team All-Conference for the 3rd time, and have had the honor to be a captain of the best Cross Country team I could ask for. I realized this year how Cross Country is all about the team and every runner is important. Excited for Track and the 4x800, and ready to run a PR at State".

**11th Grade:** "Worked super hard this year. Was running 50 miles a week. Did not do as well as I wanted or was expecting I think I burnt myself out. I ran 15:43 and that is my PR. I won the Kewanee meet. Got 29th at First to the Finish. I was 1st team All-Conference. We made it to State and I ran 15:43 for the 2nd time. Really wanted to do better but this failure taught me a lot. In Track I was Varsity in the 2 mile running 10:22, mile 4:43, 800 unofficially 2:04, and 4x8 while also being thrown in the Varsity 4x400 sometimes and unofficially splitting a :55. I really liked the 800 but only did it for the first time ever at the Conference Meet. At Sectionals we got 3rd in the 4x800 and I was the last guy and when I started we were in first but we dropped to 3rd and barely missed qualifying for State which sucked but good thing we still have senior year. This year was extremely disappointing but it made me love running in a different way. I realized it isn't always about the destination or the accomplishments or really even the journey. It is about the company. I made some really good friends this year and they all do Cross Country and they have kept me in this sport through the highs and the lows".

**10th Grade:** "Just ran Cross Country this year. Living far outside of town and being home schooled prevented me from doing Track. I ran 15:55 as my season best time this year. I got first team All-Conference. I also won 2 Fresh/Soph races this year. We made it to State too so that was awesome. My favorite memory from this season was probably winning Conference as a team. We were pretty bad sports after winning but we were all so hyped that we had won. We then lost to sterling at Regionals when we should've won so that was a humbling moment. This team was really good and we got 18th at State. We had a lot of motivated guys this season and we all were pretty good".

**9th Grade:** "Walked into the year and my goal was just to be top 7 and go to State. I was the 4th guy all year. I medaled in a lot of races and did a lot of Fresh-Soph races. My best time was 16:55 this year. We won Regionals this year and I did not realize how hard that is to do until the 3 years after. We got 3rd place at Sectionals which allowed us to go to State. That was one of the best days of my life because that is one of the first feelings I got of hard work paying off and my goals had been accomplished. We got some really bad rain for State so we did not run well but it was a ton of fun. Did Track in the spring and I ran the mile mainly. My best mile time was 4:42 which is still my best mile time to this day and I was 14 when I ran that".

**8th Grade:** "I worked really hard and ran everyday. Was the 4th guy on the middle school team. Ran 12:50 as my 2 mile PR. We barely missed State. I did Track and ran 5:23 as my best mile, I do not remember much of this year I just know that this is when I decided I wanted to be the best I could be and started training really hard".

**7th Grade:** "Ran Cross Country and Track. Was not very good. Ran 14:08 in the 2 mile for XC and 6:57 as my mile time. I did not like being bad".

**Prior to 7th grade:** "I played Rec Soccer and Baseball. Really liked playing golf".

Jaxson is the son of Monica and Zach Sottos. He is also the proud "Baby Bro" to Alex Sottos (26), Max Sottos (22), & Grace Sottos (19.) He is also the proud "Big Bro" to Phoenix Sottos (14) & Hendrix Sottos (12).

Here are Jaxson's answers to his "Bell Ringer Questions": **Nickname:** "JJ and Jax" **School Clubs or other Organizations you have taken part in:** "Cross Country & Track and Field"; **Favorite Food:** "A good chicken sandwich"; **Favorite Movie:** "A River Runs Through it"; **Favorite Music (Genre or Group):** "Lil Wayne"; **Athletic Hero:** "Cooper Dejean, and Roman Reigns." Here's what a quick google search had to say about each of them: (Cooper Michael DeJean is an American professional football cornerback for the Philadelphia Eagles of the National Football League. He played college football for the Iowa Hawkeyes, receiving unanimous All-American honors in 2023) & (Leati Joseph Anoa'i, better known by his ring name Roman Reigns, is an American professional wrestler, actor and former football player. As a wrestler, he has been signed to WWE since 2010, where he performs on the SmackDown brand); **Favorite Quote:** "We Go; - my tour guide in Mexico"; **How did you decide to join the Cross Country team?** "My brother Max did it and he was pretty good so I decided to try it out and I did not want to quit"; **What Advice Do You Have for Anyone New to the Sport?**: "Just stick with it. It sucks but it took me super long to realize this, it does not matter how fast, talented, or motivated you are, the main part is toughness and being tough through the adversity. Which is basically life. There are gonna be failures and tribulations but there are also gonna be triumphs. I said earlier it is not about the destination, it is about the journey but the most important part is the company. Find people in the sport that You enjoy being around and it makes the sport so much more fun. Just do not ever quit and work hard."

**Other team members who were nominated and discussed for this week's "Bell Ringer Award" were:** Aidan Bries, Henley Bourne, Graysen Carlson, Rylan Carlson, Greyson Claerhout, Kaden Elmer, & Kael McCord.

**Comment from Head Coach Todd Ehlert:** "Jaxson has been a huge part of the cross country program for four years. Jaxson has qualified for state all four years he has run at the high school. An incredible feat. Jaxson has destroyed the all time list for about every course we have run on. He has been a captain the past two years and he has been an awesome leader and a great part of the four horsemen. We are excited he and all the seniors get one more shot at the Detweiller list".