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CONTACT: Liana Susott or Bryn Lucht
(406) 254-7426 or info@bigskygames.org

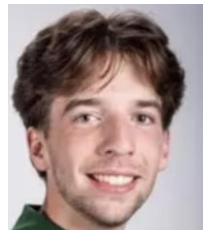
Montana Mile Kicks Off State Games

The 2026 Montana Mile, sponsored by Billings West End Walmart, marks the 35th race for men and the 27th race for women. The race is one of the most anticipated events of the Big Sky State Games Opening Ceremonies at Lockwood High School Stadium and is scheduled at approximately 8:15-8:30 p.m. Friday, July 17. The Montana Mile is an invitational race featuring some of the state's fastest high school, college, and post-collegiate milers.

Men's

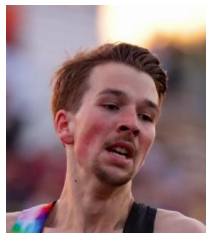
Anthony Ackerman

Anthony Ackerman will be a sophomore at Black Hills State University. He is a two time cross country all state track runner from Dawson County High School.



Ase Ackerman

Ase Ackerman has competed in the Montana Mile six times and has been on the podium four times. He is from Glendive and ran collegiately at MSU Billings, but now continues to run during medical school. Ackerman holds the 1500 record at MSU Billings, received GNAC All-Conference in 3000 steeplechase and 1500, and holds the 8K and 1500 school records.



Benonaiah Bird

A returning Montana Miler, Benonaiah Bird will be a senior at Hardin High School and is from St. Xavier. He holds the 1600 and 3200 records at Hardin High School. Bird won the MHSAA Class A state title in the 1600 as a freshman and 3200 as a sophomore.



Bryon Fanning

Bryon Fanning is an incoming junior at Montana Tech from Three Forks. He was All-State in cross country in 2022 and 2023 and All-State in the 3200m in 2023 and 2024. He also helped Montana Tech set the distance medley relay school record. Fanning is a three-time All-Conference cross country athlete and has received Champion of Character twice.



Tyler Inabnit

Tyler Inabnit is an incoming sophomore at Montana Tech and Missoula Sentinel High graduate. As a high school student, he was All-State for cross country and in the 1600. He is a member of Montana Tech's school record teams in the distance medley relay 4x800 relay.



Thomas Oylear

Thomas Oylear, who runs at Blacks Hills State, is a junior from Ashland. He has records in the 1600, 3200, and 5k at Powder River County High School. He was also a seven-time All-State athlete in track and field. Oylear has been a Second-Team All-RMAC in outdoor track in the steeplechase during his collegiate career.



Auston Schellig

Auston Schellig is an incoming freshman at Massachusetts Institute of Technology from Joliet. He holds the 800 Class B state record along with school records in the 800, 1600, 4x400, and 5k cross country. Schellig was the 2025 MHSA Class B State Champion in the 800 and 1600. He was All-State in cross country four times.



Owen Smith

Returning for the mile for the sixth time, Owen Smith is a former Montana State University athlete originally from Billings. He was All-State in cross country and twice in track at Billings Senior High. Smith was a part of the 2024 Championship Team for the Big Sky Conference. He was a NCAA Honorable-Mention All-American, as well. Smith has also competed in the World University Games 2025 UniUSA Steeplechase event. Most recently, Smith won the Missoula Half Marathon.

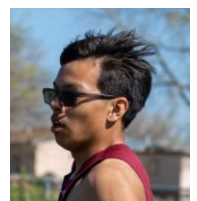


Carson Steckelberg

Carson Steckelberg will be entering his senior year at the University of Montana and is from Bozeman. He has participated in the Montana Mile five times. He broke records at Gallatin High School in the 1600 and 3200, and helped his teams at Bozeman and Gallatin win state titles. He is three-time all-state in cross country, and was a team captain as a sophomore, junior, and senior in high school.



Peyton Summers



Peyton Summers is a student athlete at Dawson Community College and is from Wolf Point. He will be participating in his third Montana Mile. Summers has school records in the 5k, 3200, 1600, and 800. He is a three time state champion in those events and was All-State 11 times at Wolf Point. In college, he was named an All-American in D2 Juco.

Caleb Tomac

Caleb Tomac will be a junior at Rocky Mountain College and will be participating in his second Montana Mile. Tomac is from Havre and was a Class A State Champion in the 800. He was All-State in cross country and in track and field in the 800, 1600, and 3200. Tomac was named the MVP three times at his high school. He helped Rocky place fourth at NAIA cross country nationals.



Women's

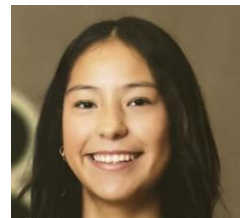
Jane Allen

Jane Allen will be a sophomore at Billings West High School. She finished All-State in cross country and track and field as a freshman, and placed second in the 1600, third in the 3200, and fifth in the 800 in her first Class AA state meet.



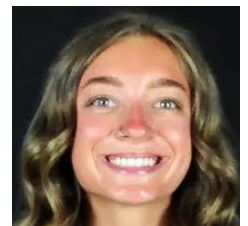
Karis Brightwings-Pease

A senior, Karis Brightwings-Pease goes to Billings Central Catholic High School, and is from Lodge Grass. She has school records at Hardin High School in the 1600 and 3200. She was the MHSA State A cross country champion in 2022 and 2023, and won the 1600 and 3200 in 2023. Outside of school sports, she won the 52-mile Bighorn Trail Run.



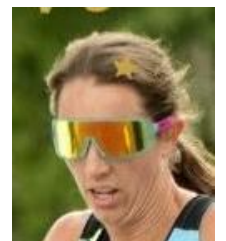
Kamryn Comba

A first time Montana Miler, Kamryn Comba is a senior at Montana Tech from Idaho Falls. In 2021, she placed fourth in the 400 at the Idaho state meet. At Montana Tech, she holds records in the 400, 600, 4x400, 4x800, distance medley relay, and 800. She was the Frontier Conference champion in the 800, 4x400, and 4x800. Comba became the Cross Country Champion of Character in 2025 as well as a 14-time All-Conference athlete and six-time NAIA national qualifier.



Mary Felig

Mary Felig is a longtime runner who competed at Montana State University-Billings and is from Broadus. She broke records in the 1600 and 3200 at Powder River County District High School. She owns PRs of 2:43.23 in the marathon and 1:15.56 in the half marathon. Mary is a Physics teacher at Skyview High School as well as a coach for cross country and track.



Ava Greenwell



Ava Greenwell is an incoming freshman at Colorado Christian from Billings Skyview High School. She was the cross country and swimming team captain at Skyview and was All-State in cross country and All-Conference in track.

Natalie Hodgskiss

Returning for the third time, Natalie Hodgskiss, is a senior at Choteau High School. She holds the school record in the 800 and 1600 and was the Class B state champion in the 1600 her freshman year and sophomore year. Additionally, she was academic all-state. Hodgskiss was all-state with a sixth-place finish at Class B state cross country.



Addison Kegel

Addison Kegel, a sophomore from Billings Central Catholic High, will be competing in her third Montana Mile. She has records in both Class A and her high school for the 800, 1600, 3200, and 5k. She also was the individual state champion in cross country and in the 800, 1600, and 3200. Kegel was named the 2025 Cross Country and 2026 Track and Field Gatorade Player of the Year. In the fall of 2025, Kegel was the state champion in cross country and also claimed the prestigious Nike Cross Regionals Northwest crown.



Ali Keith

Ali Keith competed at California State University-Monterey Bay and is from Billings. She owns the 5k record at both Billings West High School and CSUMB. In addition, she helped CSUMB establish school records in the distance medley relay and 4x400. She was All-State in cross country twice at Billings West and in 2022, she won the NXR Open Division championship.



Gracyn Rock

Gracyn Rock is an incoming freshman at Montana State University Billings and graduated from Billings Skyview High School this past spring. She was named team captain and most valuable to her high school team, and placed sixth at the Eastern AA Divisional in the 4x400 and seventh in the 3200m.



The Athlete Fun Zone at Lockwood High School opens at 5:00 p.m. Parade of Athletes at 7:15 p.m. and the Montana 100 Meter followed by the Montana Mile at approximately 8:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Admission is free to the Opening Ceremonies. For more information, call 406-254-7426 or go to bigskygames.org.

The 2026 Montana Mile is sponsored by Billings West End Walmart. Opening Ceremonies is sponsored by Wendy's. Major Sponsors of the State Games are Kampgrounds of America (KOA), First Interstate Bank, Rebel River Creative and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana.