

CLASS AAA STATE JAZZ PREVIEW

Sections were not introduced until the 1999-2000 season. Prior to this all teams were able to compete in the State Tournament with a portion of teams advancing to finals each season. Dancefo has records of the State Tournaments in Jazz dating back to 1997 (see State tab). 1997, 1998 and 1999 only include the finishing places of the teams who advanced to finals. This writeup also includes State Champion stats titles won prior to 1997 as that information is available on MSHSL. If you have State Jazz Results prior to 1997 please email travis@dancefo.com with any results, screenshots of programs, etc. I am unable to confirm participation/results of prior tournaments unless they are available based on the above parameters. Please pardon the omission of any non-champion results (2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.) for years prior to 1997.

Please note that the State Leaderboard averages represent a team's section score along with their two most recent regular season scores. The State Leaderboard is meant to further highlight how the scoresheet is evaluated and how an individual team has been scoring. It is not meant and cannot be meant to be a perfect science of comparing one team to another. Every competition is scored independently. For example, in Football or Soccer you can have variables that can affect a team's performance (field conditions, health conditions, etc.). Dance Team also has factors unique to the sport that can affect how a team is scored (number of competitors, order of competition, number of officials, etc.). Please keep this in mind as you reference the State Leaderboard or read through this State Preview.

As a spectator and dance team enthusiast I wish every athlete and coach a big Good Luck this weekend. You already won by being able to finish your season on the state floor. This site and this writeup is meant to further highlight and champion the visibility and education of this sport that we often see with other sports through various sites and publications.

HOPKINS – The Royelles return to state in jazz after a ten-year hiatus. In 2013, their last appearance, the team took fourth place and have appeared in finals six other times since 1997; this includes jazz titles in 1997, 1999, and 2001. The team's jazz routine is averaging an 85 heading into the tournament with an average of 9.6 coming from the Routine Effectiveness category. If you needed data to show that your team can be successful while small but mighty (and still use the scoresheet effectively) this routine is it. Their routine is set to Michael Jackson's "They Don't Care About Us" which carries a ton of energy and emotion which certainly helps the team earn that great score in Routine Effectiveness. The Royelles are ranked sixth on the State Leaderboard, but average scores are incredibly close. Dancing first can sometimes be a hinderance regarding advancing to finals (ask 2016 kick team Yellow Medicine East), but Hopkins just has that extra sparkle attack of their choreography that may help them secure a finals performance this season.

LAKEVILLE SOUTH – The Cougar Dance Team has punched their ticket to state once again making this the program's seventh appearance. In 2015 the team made program history by advancing to finals where they finished in fifth. In 2021 the team came in eighth and in both 2022 and 2023 the team came in ninth. This year's routine is averaging an 81.9 on the State Leaderboard with their strongest scores coming from the Routine Effectiveness category where they average an 8.7.

BRAINERD – The Kixters have put together a jazz routine that has earned them a fifth-place rank and an average score of 85.1 on the State Leaderboard. The teams highest score comes from the Choreography categories of the scoresheet where they average a 9. This will be the team's 16th State Jazz appearance since 2004 and eighth consecutive appearance since 2017. The team has made finals four times previously and is looking for number five this year. A program best of fifth place has occurred two times: the first in 2020 and again, just last season, in 2023. If the team makes finals, they will have their eyes on taking their program a step further for a program best of fourth place or better.

LAKEVILLE NORTH – This will be the 13th trip to state in Jazz for the LakeLiner Dance Team and the ninth in a row since 2016. In their history the team has placed in the top six five times with the most recent being 2021. In both 2022 and 2023 the team narrowly missed out on finals by finishing in seventh. This season the team is ranked seventh on the State Leaderboard and are averaging a score of 84.1. The team's strongest scores come from the Routine Effectiveness category where they average a 9. The passion for dance this team exudes really helps to further solidify their strong scores in Routine Effectiveness and could help push them into advancing into finals for the seventh time.

WAYZATA – The Wayzata Dance Team once again came out on top in Section 2AAA. These athletes know how to put together an engaging routine seeing as they currently average a well-deserved 10 in Routine Effectiveness (a 9.9583 if you want to get very detailed). Be sure to watch as this program attacks the floor with confidence, poise, athleticism, and artistry. Since 1998 the team has advanced to finals 26 consecutive times only missing medals in Jazz five of those years (1998, 2000 and 2003 the team placed fifth and in 2004 and 2017 the team finished fourth). This year should be no different when it comes to securing a medal; the question is what color. 2018 and 2019 the team won back-to-back State Titles in AAA jazz and additionally have 11 more State Titles dating back to 1978.

MAPLE GROVE – The Crimson Dance Team returns to State and looks to defend their 2023 AAA Jazz Title. Their jazz routine has gone undefeated this season and remains at the top of the State Leaderboard where they average a 92.1. On top of being the leader in average score they are also the leaders in Choreography with a 9.5 and Execution with a 9. Since 2002, the Crimson have advanced to the State tournament every year and have advanced to finals each season. In fact, the team has won a medal at all but four of their state appearances (2002 where they placed fifth and 2003, 2006 and 2019 where they placed fourth). A finals appearance this year should be expected with a medal likely in their favor. If the team takes home the championship this will be their eighth title and the 20th anniversary of their very first. The team last won back-to-back state Championships in 2004 and 2005.

BLAINE – The Bengalettes advance to state for the 25th time since 1998. In their history during that time the team has placed in the top six fourteen times (most recent being 2021) and they won medals in 2000, second place, and 2008, third place. This season the team is averaging a 72.9 on the State Leaderboard with their strongest scores coming from the Choreography categories where they are averaging a 7.5. Blaine is ranked 10th on the State Leaderboard heading into the tournament.

FOREST LAKE – This will be the fourth time Forest Lake has advanced to state in Jazz and the first since 2015. They finished second in the 3AAA Jazz tournament behind Blaine. The team averages a 70.1 on the leaderboard with their top scores coming from the Routine Effectiveness category where they average a 7.2. Forest Lake is ranked 12th on the State Leaderboard heading into the tournament.

SARTELL – This will be the 19th consecutive and 19th overall state appearance from Sartell in jazz. Since 2008, the team has consistently advanced to jazz finals collecting seven medals in the process including a AA jazz title in 2021. The Sabre Dance Team enters the tournament averaging an 83.4 this season where they are currently ranked eighth on the State Leaderboard. Based on averages, this team's lowest score comes from the Execution categories where they average a 7.9 (fantastic for that to be considered a "low" score for a program). With two weeks of practice and refining their routine from Sections to State we should see this score improve. Sartell has been in AAA since 2022 and are seeking finals for a third straight season in the class.

EDINA – The Edina Dance Team advances to State for the 10th time in program history (the first coming in 2015). Each season the team successfully advances to finals and have won medals in both 2017 where they finished third and 2019 where they finished second (after losing the tiebreaker for first). This year the program has returned to a lyrical styled jazz routine to a cover of "Forever Young" after doing a more in-your-face hard hitting jazz routine last season. Edina's top scored category is Routine Effectiveness where they average a 9.2 and the program is currently ranked fourth heading into the tournament. Finals should be a safe bet for the program where you will be able to see this elegant routine compete for a chance at a medal Friday evening.

SPRING LAKE PARK – This will be the 21st jazz appearance from the Pantherettes since first advancing in 2003. The only tournament they missed out on was 2022. The team took home third in the 3AAA Section Tournament last Saturday and they are averaging a 71.3 on the State Leaderboard with their highest scores coming from the Choreography categories. The last time Spring Lake Park advanced to finals was in 2013.

EASTVIEW – The Lightning Dance Team has advanced to state for the 27th consecutive season. In their history, the team has advanced to finals every single year and have won a medal 20 times. Nine of the medals are third place, four of the medals are second place, and seven of the medals are state titles with the most recent title coming in 2022. In fact, Eastview is the longest running medal winner in AAA having won a medal every season since 2009. This year appears to be no different for the program with both a finals advancement and a medal all but guaranteed. This year's routine is averaging a 90.5 on the State Leaderboard with their strongest scores coming from Routine Effectiveness where they are scoring a 9.6.