**13) “Fall” of the Favorites**

There’s a reason why no one places bets on cross country.

Take Letsrun.com’s annual track and field championship prediction contests. If someone can predict the top three *for every event* for both genders, they win a huge cash prize. This year, that came to a $200,012 payout for the golden ballot.

There’s a reason why they keep doing it - it’s because you have a better chance to win the Powerball because at some point, *people actually win that*.

The whole point isn’t to win the grand prize, but to shoot for the stars and hopefully land where there’s a $150 gift card or something of that matter.

Therein lies both the difficulty (for the predictors) and the beauty (for the runners) of cross country: Anything can happen on any given day.

One particular day happened to be the NXN boys championship race. Even with data, facts, and historical analysis, some of the pre-race favorites were engulfed by the mud and had an off race.

Unfortunately, only two of our predicted top nine finished in that range. Even though the favorites fell in Portland, they’ll be back in better conditions. Can we place a bet on that?

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| **Name** | **Predicted Place** | **Actual Place** |
| Nick Ryan | 1 | 15 |
| Bernie Montoya | 2 | 22 |
| Jake Leingang | 3 | 59 |
| Jacob Burcham | 4 | 84 |
| Bryan Fernandez | 5 | 66 |
| Tony Russell | 8 | 106 |
| Juan Gonzalez | 9 | 98 |