

1978

**High School Wrestling
Forecast
(7th Annual Edition)**

**Written By
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INTRODUCTION

Wrestling, at least in Ohio, seems to move in cycles where we go from an outstanding crop of seniors to a group that is just average. Last year we had an explosion of talent that compared favorably with any year in the past. Literally dozens of last season's seniors are now starting at major colleges as freshmen. This year will not see such a development as the great majority of talent is found among 11th graders. In terms of collegiate recruiting this will be a less active year -- but watch out in 1979.

One consequence of this leveling off is that competition for titles will be extremely keen. Last year there were a number of superstars that made the forecasting business an easy one. This year few such sure winners exist. This makes the predictive process even less secure, and makes such factors as the tourney draw even more important. In addition, the new weight rule (which I'll discuss again later) makes it difficult to ascertain exactly where many wrestlers will finally compete. All this means that I'll have even more excuses if my choices bomb out in March.

From time to time I use this document to urge improvement in the sport. Last year, for example, "AAA" bracketing was shown to be quite unfair, and as a consequence it was changed to a completely equitable system which is perfectly fair to every section of the state. This year I would like to campaign for a return to the old rule on weight certification, tougher and quicker reaction by referees to unnecessarily rough wrestling, and abolition of one and two man districts.

What seems to have occurred as a result of the later and less severe certification process is that many wrestlers and coaches are hunting around for a weight class. Many boys are going down one more weight class than they should because they get that two pound allowance in January and it seems so attractive. It is illogical that a boy should compete at 112# without ever having made that weight.

I have seen many more unnecessarily rough bouts this year than ever before. Hard face slaps, cross-faces thrown in like forearm shots, and general roughhousing is just too prevalent. Everyone recognizes that a substantial element of force is present in this sport, but at that the same time skill, finesse, and intelligent tactics are also important. Too often, referees have allowed rough tactics to persist way too long until it escalates into something ugly or dangerous.

Finally, these primitive one and two man district qualifiers are ridiculous and patently unfair. We award six places and yet conspire to keep possibly the second best contestant out of the State Meet altogether. In addition, this kind of districting makes a huge difference in the team competition. I would like to see a State Dual Meet competition where one weekend a year would be devoted to who had the best team. A sixteen team bracket would be arrangeable and would be complete in a two day tourney.

Finally the team competition will be drastically altered for two rather unusual reasons. First, several prominent teams have changed classifica-

tion -- Vermillion ("AA" to "AAA"), Bishop Ready ("AA" to "A"), Archbold ("A" to "AA"), and Jonathan Alder ("A" to "AA"). These changes affect "AA" most with Columbus DeSales and Cardinal Stritch being principal beneficiaries. Vermillion and Bishop Ready both had the potential to send five or six boys to the "AA" State Meet.

A second factor is the unusual rash of injuries this year. In "AA" particularly, three defending state champs are highly questionable. Rick Sorkin (Beachwood) suffered torn knee cartilage in practice, but will probably participate, though at "certainly less than 100 percent. Jerry Burgy (Woodridge) broke a collarbone while skiing and has only a slim chance of competing. Bill Potts (Coventry) suffered a dislocated shoulder in practice and while he will participate his injury is extremely serious. I'll be amazed if he can win. In "AAA", Doug Drew (Elyria), a top contender, broke his ankle and might be ready the week of sectionals. Again, "AA" is most affected with Columbus DeSales receiving a tremendous boost. These injuries will help Schneider and Dowds while reducing Coventry's chances. What appeared a sure thing at season's start will now be very close.

Two last points. First, Ohio wrestling is very strong. In the Collegiate East-West All-Star Meet, seven of the 20 men in the line up are from Ohio. Second, this year the Top Contenders will be ranked in order. In most instances then, I will list the top five at each weight in order (as I see it now).

AAA

98#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Dane Tussel (Nordonia)

TOP CONTENDERS: Jim Mason (St. Eds)
Tom Kelly (Wadsworth)

DARK HORSE: Rick Wilde (Defiance)

Yes, I know. Mason pinned Tussel at Brecksville, and did it in a convincing display of power wrestling. Yet, I think Tussel will win for two reasons. First, I could see Mason upset somewhere in the process while Tussel should win against everyone else. Second, in a rematch I expect to see Tussel alter his strategy. He'll dart in for takedowns and do as little mat wrestling as possible. Remember, Tussel got all the takedowns in their first bout. Don't overlook Tom Kelly, either. He was 6th at Columbus last year and is undefeated this year. He should also be away from Tussel at the States. He could overpower Tussel and outscore Mason.

My feeling is that many of the best 98's are in the Cleveland District. Besides Mason, both Scholz (North Royalton) and McFarland (North Olmsted) are excellent and could place. Scholz is particularly tenacious and his strong ride will give everyone trouble. Colon (SV) and Asp (North Ridge) will also challenge.

In Akron, Lorence (Crestwood) should be just a step behind Tussel and Kelly and will contend with Hare (Revere) for that third qualifying position. He comes from a great wrestling family

Wilde (Definace) is my long shot because of his experience and size. He was one point from Columbus last year. Williams (Mansfield) and Walterbach (A. Wayne) will be after the other state spot there.

Crawford (Westerville South) stands out in the Columbus area while Dodson (Oakhills) and Blondie (West) head a weak Southwest delegation. Crawford can really score and might gain a place.

105#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Brian McFarland (North Olmsted)

TOP CONTENDERS: Eugene Leonard (Akron Kenmore)
Randy Fee (Groveport)
Eugene Collins (St. Josephs)
Ray Jenkins (Nordonia)

One of those real evenly-balanced weight classes where any of a half-dozen boys could win on a hot weekend. McFarland, second last year at 98#, has the experience and strength, and is probably the best all-around contestant. Still he has matches where he seems to fall apart and lose when there is no reason to let it happen. He beat Wilhelm 8-1 in the District Finals and after dominating the first three minutes blew the state finals to the same boy. He needs a good, sure escape since he can be ridden.

Leonard is tough and his loss at North Canton can be blamed on a hand injury. Fee was 4th last year and lost to McFarland by only 10-6. Collins is a huge 105#, but seems to tire in the 3rd period. He has trouble coming from behind so a bad first period will "kill" him. Jenkins beat McFarland at the Brecksville Tourney after being behind 4-1 in the first period. He can be overpowered. He and Collins are the only two juniors in this group but both of them are just as experienced as the three seniors so that should not be a factor.

In the Toledo area, Gerken (Vermillion) was second last year in "AA", but will see the difference "AAA" will make. He won't place. Neither will Stalter (Rogers) or Mayer (TSF) out of that same district.

Again, Cleveland has some other tough boys at this weight class. Romero (Southview), Childers (Bruns.), and LaGuardia (John Marshall) stand just a shade behind the top kids. I like Romero, but he may be cutting too much weight to win consistently under tourney conditions.

Weingartner (Oakhills), the U.C. Champ, is tough and could place, but I see few others from that area that could challenge.

Finneran (Hilliard) was a state qualifier last year and certainly has a chance to place. However, the Columbus area is quite weak this year in "AAA".

112#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Dan Foldesy (St. Edwards)

TOP CONTENDERS: Randy Jenkins (Nordononia)
John Churchill (Vermillion)
Scott Pagenstecher (Mentor)
Mike Ahern (Cincy St. X)
Russ Wilhelm (Southview)

DARK HORSE: Ron Cantini (Fairview)

Another beautifully balanced weight with a great group of contenders. I've picked Foldesy, not because he's a great wrestler, but because he has tremendous desire and drive. His match with Jess Heidleberg last year at

Columbus was a classic in showing character. He'll win the close matches. A junior (like Jenkins, Pagenstecher, Wilhelm, and Cantini) Foldesy will be an outstanding collegiate wrestler.

Jenkins could win. He beat Foldesy at Columbus last year and might do it this year, too. Great on his feet with outstanding upper body strength he also has a super attitude. Foldesy will have to go some to outhustle this lad.

Pagenstecher 4th at Columbus -- Jenkins was 3rd, Foldesy 5th, and Ahern 6th -- may also challenge. A questionable call got him disqualified at Medina or he would have met Cantini in the finals -- which would have been most interesting. Pagenstecher is another boy who seems to find a lot of ways to win.

The big unknown is Churchill. Second at this weight last year in "AA" he has the credentials to wrestle with anyone. Whether he can run the gauntlet at the tough juniors in the field is open to question, but there's no doubt this boy can wrestle.

Can you imagine a defending state champion rated as low as I've placed Russ Wilhelm. But remember last year when I dismissed this boy as being only tough. I'm still not convinced that he is solid enough to beat all those ahead of him, but it could happen.

Ahern was 6th last year and missed by one point from making the finals. He's already been beaten twice this year and been generally unimpressive. But a hot weekend could catapult him to the title.

Finally, Ron Cantini. The wildest of the seven mentioned, its hard to know how good he is. Outstanding in the free-style arena, his performance might be the key for Fairview in the team race. When I've seen him, he has looked absolutely sensational. If only he had been wrestling someone. How I would have loved to see a Pagenstecher-Cantini final at Medina.

You'd think after all this I would have exhausted this weight class, but wait, there are others. In Cleveland, DeCesare (N. Olmsted) and Rocco (N. Royalton) are solid and remember Doug Drew (Elyria). Drew was 4th as a sophomore at Columbus and then upset last year. Up until he broke his ankle I rated him 3rd at this weight. If he should come back in time for sectionals, it's hard to picture him healthy enough to beat all the above. But this boy is a real talent and he, to my mind, could beat any "AAA" 112# in the state in a dual.

Marshall (Copley) and Otani (Glen Oak) rate behind Jenkins in the Akron District. I particularly like Marshall. O'Coner (TSF) is the best in the Toledo area, but that's not saying much and nobody in Columbus impresses me.

However, in the Southwest there are some boys with good potential. Strahorn (Walnut Hills) is a returning state qualifier who took Ahern in the finals of the U. of C. Tourney. Hiteman (Lebanon) is another tough kid as is Chris Lewis (Wilmington). What a grand weight class.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Jim Deubel (Maple Hts.)

TOP CONTENDERS: Elmer Velez (Southview)
Tony Leonino (Stow)

Maybe, I'm missing something, but I think those three juniors listed above are by far the class of this weight. All three are outstandingly tough and have state experience (Deubel 4th, Velez 6th, and Leonino twice a qualifier). I put Deubel just a shade above Velez because I think Frank Romano, his coach, will devise the right strategy to win at Districts and States.

A dark horse might be a healthy Evans (St. Joe) or a Jeff Hannon (Lake Cath.) if he could wrestle six tough minutes. Alusheff (E-N) and Palivoda (N. Royalton) could also make it to Columbus.

I rate Marinell (Northland) as the best in Columbus and with a chance to place. Ritchey (W.R.), state qualifier Schuyler (Reynoldsburg), and Bates (Gahenna) are also good.

State qualifier Joe Reagan (TSF) has had an unimpressive season, but does have a lot of experience. Rogers Invitational Champ Jeff Scribner (Rogers), Hinjosa (Clay), and Sampson (Vermillion) might also qualify. Of course, Vince Petrella (Mansfield) might have something to say about that.

Another interesting District is the one held in Dayton. Duncan (Fairfield), DeFelice (F.W.), and state qualifier Bizzari (Oakhills) should make for an interesting time when they butt heads in that district.

After Leonino, the Akron District is unclear. I keep expecting Daryl Guyette (Crestwood) to do something, but he hasn't so far. Davis (Akron East), Smith (Nordonia), and Hindmarch (Glen Oaks) also have a chance to qualify.

126#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Ed Wohlwender (Cincy St. X)

TOP CONTENDERS: Matt Oddo (St. Edwards)
Ricky Horton (Alliance)
Gary Stretar (Fairview)
Doug Finch (TSF)

DARK HORSE: Mark Cicarello (N. Olmsted)

I know everyone is going to say I'm crazy for picking Wohlwender over Oddo, but there are good reasons. Wohlwender was 3rd as a sophomore and then after a great start as a junior suffered a terrifying bone disease, a broken ankle, and then a busted wrist missing just about an entire year. Whether his formidable skills have eroded is, of course, a legitimate concern, but his attitude and outlook are still first-rate.

If the state championship was just one bout, Oddo vs. Wohlwender, I'd go with Matt, but you have to win about a dozen times to take it all. Somehow Oddo just doesn't seem fated to win a title. Remember great wrestlers like Hollis Frierson, Jimmy Perko, and Bruce Trammell never won a title, and Oddo will probably suffer the same end. Both as a sophomore and junior, Matt has panicked in a bout and lost. Sure, Wenger was tough last year, but he wasn't 12-4 better than Oddo, and how could Koch pin him. No, it's that last strand of mental toughness that could cost Oddo his title.

Horton, only a junior, is already twice a state qualifier and should place at this weight or at 119# if it turns out he is certified there. The acrobatic Stretar, like his teammate Cantini, has some sensational moves, but can be out-steadied by the real stars. Doug Finch has been campaigning at 132# this year with good success. Still Nemeč took him into over-time, and he was less than sensational in other bouts. Too much hanging on to really beat the good boys.

Ciccarello (N.O.) threw Oddo all over the mat in the 3rd period at Brecksville, but was too far behind to catch up. Sometimes, Mark looks like he should never lose, and maybe that'll happen in March. Remember Horton, Stretar, and Ciccarello are all juniors.

Rich Cohen (Cleve. Hts.) and Jim Nemeč (Maple Hts.) are solid, but a notch below the listed boys, but could qualify for Columbus. In Akron, state qualifier Catrouch (Glen Oak), Wilson (Stow), and Grasinger (North Canton) could challenge Horton in the Akron District.

A real tough kid is Tex Miller (Fremont Ross) but does not have the moves to beat the top kids. While in Southwest District a real donnybrook will occur for state qualifying places. State qualifiers Dave Larrick (Beaver-creek) and Frank Schreier (KFE) will vie with Jett (Princeton), Stroud (Baker), and Closer (Lebanon) for places behind Wohlwender.

132#

PROJECTED CHAMP: John McNulty (Elyria)

TOP CONTENDERS: Chauncey Bass (W. Carrollton)
Dick Leffler (T.S.F.)
Craig Miller (Belmont)

DARK HORSE: Paul Snyder (Maple Hts.)

A weak weight class with few outstanding wrestlers. I like John McNulty, but I recognize that he can be an erratic performer. If he was still at St. Edwards, there would be no doubt what team would be state champs. McNulty defeated both Leffler and Bass last year during the State Meet.

Bass and Miller are both from the Southwest District and its rare I find two solid contenders at the same weight from that area. Still, both made it to the state quarter-finals last year and both have improved. Leffler also has state experience and was 2nd at the Medina Tourney -- losing to Snyder. Snyder has wrestled all year at 138#; and if he stays at 132#, this solid junior will give everyone trouble. An outstanding prospect for next year.

Another great prospect is the immensely talented Jimmy Moon (St. Joseph). Already having a draw with Oddo, Moon could surprise with a high state finish. Randy Viviani (Lake Cath.) and John Ice (N. Ridgeville) might also grab a state qualifier place.

Dave Cavalier (Fitch) and Huddleston (Norton) will do well in the Akron District and have outside potential to place at the state level. DeCamp (Centerville) a state qualifier as a sophomore last year also could score.

138#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Chris Coffing (West Chester Lakota)

TOP CONTENDERS: Mike Elinsky (St. Edwards)
John Beljan (Centerville)
Jon Fox (Garfield Hts.)

DARK HORSE: Bob Fleck (Elyria)

A weak weight with few outstanding wrestlers. Coffing, only a junior, has had an outstanding season, and is rated marginally ahead of Elinsky. He beat "AA" choice Talbott 15-4 at the U. of C. Beljan is a solid wrestler with state credential, but he lacks that little flair that makes for a state crown. Fox, is an unknown, who I look for to surprise a lot of people. With both Snyder and Leffler dropping to 132#, Fleck has a chance to place, but will have to gain consistency. However, the most unpredictable contender is Frank Regalbuto (Brush) who can beat anybody on certain days, but loses to others for no reason at all. Still he's only a junior. The fact that this is a weak weight class will help him.

In the Toledo area "AA" State Qualifier Rich Hillen (Vermillion) and McIntire (Maumee) appear to be the best of that lot. Maxwell (Beavercreek) and Smith (Elder) should qualify for the state, but will not trouble Coffing. In the Akron District the two North Canton finalists McLaughlin (North Canton) and Hernan (Fitch) are rugged and should represent that area.

State Qualifier Mitch King (Upper Arlington) is back but, so far, has had a bad year. It's a weak group of 138's in that area, though, so he should qualify.

This is a weak weight and Elinsky should be able to pick up some important points for St. Edwards in the team race.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Lance Anzivine (Nardonia)

TOP CONTENDERS: Rich Chapman (Willoughby South)
Tom Gallagher (Mayfield)
Jeff DeVilbiss (Mansfield)
Lou Matteo (Lake Catholic)

An interesting weight with an interesting contrast in styles. In November my choice was Matteo who was 4th at this weight last year. But Lou looks like he's cutting too much weight and he tires in the third period. He could be vulnerable the first day of tourneys when he has no weight allowance. Still Anzivine looks like he has put it altogether and the former Age-Group World Champion should win. He beat Gallagher handily and has looked very solid. If he retains confidence in himself nobody should beat him.

Chapman, Gallagher, and Matteo are all in the Cleveland District and along with Roberts (Brunswick), Mastantuono (N.O.), and Bishop (C.H.) this should make for real excitement. Matteo with three losses and Gallagher with one still have the potential to upset the undefeated Chapman and go all the way at Columbus.

After Anzivine the Akron District boast Scavuzzo (Revere), Dies (Firestone), and Brumbaugh (Tallmadge). It is my understanding that John Trgovac (Fitch) the Kenston Champ at 155# will wrestle at this weight, and if that's true he should take the second place. He is tough--very tough.

Soroka (Worthington) is the best out of Columbus and he might place at the State. Deetz (Dover) qualified last year, but he'll not do much this year -- even if he makes it back. A real long shot is Dave Cozad (Xenia) who has been coming on strong this year. One last mention might be Giles Perry (Vermillion), an "AA" qualifier last year. He has wrestled most of the year at 155# and could now be ready to place at the lower weight.

155#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Ray Tusick (North Olmsted)

TOP CONTENDERS: Todd Sabo (Maumee)
Phil Kennedy (Fairview)
Clarence Parks (Fremont Ross)

DARK HORSE: Kirk Wyatt (Sandusky)

A very balanced weight with any of half a dozen kids capable of winning. I've chosen Tusick because of his solid virtues of good takedown, strong rides, and good tactical sense. Sabo, at Columbus last year, is strong while Parks is super strong, but not so good on his feet. Kennedy has recurring back problems, and cannot score enough if he gets behind. Tusick and Kennedy will meet as many as five times yet, and I don't expect the same boy to win them all.

Brozina (Lake), Burneson (Westlake), and Squires (Brun.) could all be factors in the Cleveland District with the Southwestern Conference sending three outstanding candidates at this weight.

In Toledo, besides Parks and Sabo, we have Kirk Wyatt (Sandusky) who qualified for Columbus at 175# last year. Unfortunately, only two out of Parks, Sabo, and Wyatt can go out of that district.

Jim Gordon (Dover) is one of the few wrestlers in the Southeast District who could do something this year. In Columbus the good 155#'s are in "AA", but Unger (Reynoldsburg) and Hinton (Grove City) are the best of the lot.

Bud Ruffing (Elder) who qualified at 167# last year leads the Southwestern District. Tom Mercer (OH), who owns a victory over Ruffing, and Herr (Northmont) are also solid. Again, though, not too much here. It looks like a Cleveland and Toledo District show at this weight.

167#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Joe East (Grove City)

TOP CONTENDERS: Mark Lucas (Clayton Northmont)
Paul DeBaggis (Cleveland Hts.)
Dan Kay (TSF)
Marty Lowry (John Marshall)
Rex Luckage (Fitch)
Mark Phillips (Normandy)
Vince Sakas (E-N)
Jim Little (KFE)
Nick Mizenko (Midpark)

There's always a weight like this every year in "AAA". In 1977, it was heavyweight and this year I'm overburdened with contenders at 167#. It's

not that any of these guys are super, it's just that they're all evenly matched and quite competent.

And you're right -- East has lost three times and the big junior from Grove City has finished 2nd in all three tourneys he's entered this year. Still he is making rapid improvement, is great on his feet, and his superb desire. I see him winning a lot of close matches at the State.

The rest of the contenders I've put into three classes -- riders, scorers, and orthodoxists. I put Lucas, Lowry, and Sakas into that first class. These are kids who aren't that good on their feet, but who ride tough, and get involved in a lot of low scoring bouts. Lucas is the best of this group and owns a 2-0 decision over East. Lowry has one big advantage in that his leg rides often work their way into fall positions, but he is bad on his feet. Sakas better never get behind because he just won't be able to score enough to catch up.

I've placed East, DeBaggis, and Luckage in the scorers classification, because their wide-open style of wrestling. They can score, but, of course, they can also be scored upon. DeBaggis, a tough junior (like East) holds a 10-9 decision over my pick and is undefeated. Luckage, 4th in the State at this weight has not looked as impressive as anticipated. He failed to make the finals at both the Kenston and North Canton Tourneys.

Kay, Phillips, Little, and Mizenko are more orthodox in approach. State qualifier Phillips holds a decision over Mizenko 12-11 and also seems stronger than state qualifier Little. Kay has campaigned at 175# most of the year and is rugged -- he won the Watterson Tourney at that weight. Mizenko has had several narrow losses, but could easily beat any, but the very top boys.

Jeff Cole, 6th in the State last year, will have trouble making it to Columbus. Besides Luckage he must worry about Turchin (Norton), Pegg (Howland), and Blazeff (Stow) to make it to Columbus. He could not place at Brecksville and was pretty badly beat up by East.

A real dark horse might be Kloke (Lebanon) who upset East early in the year. Ted Lockmiller (Maple) will also be a factor if he chooses to compete at this weight. Tall and slender Lockmiller is good on his feet. Dave Hunt (St. Edwards), the Brecksville Champ, will also be at this weight, but it's hard to see him challenging.

It should be a real donnybrook.

175#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Craig Newburg (Northmont)

TOP CONTENDERS: Mark Sullivan (Lake Catholic)
Brad House (Wadsworth)
Noel Abood (St. Josephs)
Mark Ovall (Rogers)
Frank Vlassich (Edgewood)

An outstanding weight class with outstanding college prospects and real depth. Newburg should win with his excellent combination of speed and power. He was 27-1 last year losing only to superstar Ted Kopacko and finished 3rd in the State. House was 5th at this weight losing to Kopacko and Newburg (by 4-1) and stands undefeated this year including a MVP award at Brunswick. I put Sullivan second, though, because of his fantastic speed and sensational single leg. If he can quit playing to the crowd and concentrate, he will give Newburg all he can handle. I know Newburg already has had one scouting report on Sullivan.

Abood cannot be overlooked either. He was 6th at 185# last year and while his style is as dull as dishwater -- it wins. He could overpower a lot of folks and surprise again this year. Mark Ovall is also excellent and except for being ⁱⁿ the District, would have placed at Columbus. He won the tough Rogers Invitational and is very solid. Two years and only the one loss.

Several other strong contenders are Frank Vlassich (Edgewood) -- 4th at this weight in "AA" -- Reilly (Cincy St. X) -- whose only loss has been to Newburg -- and Hauck (Oakhills) with a 12-1 record and 12 pins.

Roger Rohde (Crestwood) is a solid contender out of Akron while Dan Schoen (TSJ), Randy Kosel (Sandusky), and Chris Sheehe (Vermillion) are all good. I particularly like Sheehe. Besides Sullivan, Abood, Vlassich the Cleveland area has several solid 175's like Bob Schmitter (Normandy), Ted Lockmiller (Maple Hts.), and Bob Kanda (St. Ed) while in Akron Turchin (Norton) and Bolles (Akron North) stand out.

185#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Eric Hehl (Fairview)

TOP CONTENDERS: Mark Urban (Maple Hts.)
Ben Lee (Canton McKinley)
Tony Awad (Oakhills)
Bruce Wolfe (Parma)
Jeff Esmont (N. Canton)

DARK HORSE: Chris Burkett (Revere)

Another weight where flipping a coin is about as good as any other method in selecting from the top eight. I've gone with Hehl, a junior, because

he seems to be improving at a faster rate than the seniors. Urban, 4th last year, beat Hehl 6-5 at Medina, but Hehl had a super tough semi-final match beating Bloom from Pennsylvania 1-0.

Lee is super strong and tremendous potential along the lines of Harold Smith. Awad, Wolfe, and Esmont were all at heavyweight last year with Esmont only one match from State and Wolfe making it to Columbus. Wolfe is also strong, but lacks techniques and can be finessed. Burkett lost only 9-6 to Urban last year at States and has improved.

I also like Bill Pressler (Westland) and Vic Ventresca (Mayfield) as wrestlers with the ability to pull a big upset and knock one of the favorites out of the title picture, Pressler is another state qualifier that gets a second chance, but it will be tough for him because of the calibre of competition.

It's really unusual since 185# has been a traditionally weak weight, but this year it's been turned around. For example, in Cleveland -- behind Hehl, Urban, and Wolfe -- we have Kenston Champ Vic Ventresca (Mayfield), Pete Larkin (Lake Catholic), and Tony Stallman (E-N) all of whom would do well in a more normal year.

Other potential State qualifiers are Henry (Rogers), Donahue (Worthington), Haines (Xenai), and Snyder (Ravenna). This weight will be much more satisfying than in recent years since there will be more quality participants and better competition.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMP: Vern Broadnax (Xenia)

TOP CONTENDERS: Jay Allison (Westerville North)
Brian Heffernan (St. Edwards)
Ray Myers (Toledo Bowsher)

A relatively weak crop of heavies in contrast with the past few years but still a weight class that will evoke substantial interest.

Broadnax at 6'7", 360# is, of course, a monster who can pin at any time. Still he lacks some basic wrestling skills, although he moves much better than you would expect for his size. He's pinned every opponent except in the finals of the Dayton Invitational where Andy Marker (Troy) won a referee decision from refs who didn't have the same criteria of stalling for both boys. Marker, incidentally, at 5'10", 230# is a former World Age Group runner-up who could place at Columbus.

Allison is a beautifully constructed man at 6'6" who also is not a real expert in the strategies of wrestling. He beat Heffernan last year, but I wonder if it could happen again. Still, Allison has good chances of winning.

Heffernan checks in at about 240# and even as a senior he still is just beginning to really mature. Will he ever be "a load" at around age 20. He's the best wrestler of the top group and has an outstanding attitude. A possible team trophy might psych him into a championship.

Myers is the best out of Toledo and won the Medina Tourney with absolutely no trouble. He outclasses everyone else by a mile out there.

In Cleveland, ElSanadi (St. Joseph), Sandrev (John Marshall), Jenkins (Brunswick), Carraher (Geneva), and DiMattia (Lake Catholic) all could be factors. As always, this is a volatile weight and there could be a lot of excitement in this Cleveland group.

Scott Lee (Hudson) is strong in the Akron as is Rooney (Gahenna) in the Columbus area. All in all this could be a contest between the huge Broadnax and a swarm of smaller, but more active men.

TEAMS

There are no standout teams that have the power to runaway with the team trophy. I suppose if everything went absolutely right for St. Edwards they could build up a solid margin, but I do not expect that to happen.

1. Nordonia -- The defending champs have four extremely solid wrestlers -- all with the potential to make it to the State finals. Coming out of an easier district shouldn't help them much this year, because the four would qualify anywhere, and anyone else they get shouldn't be able to score at the State level. Cole, 6th in State in 1977, will not be able to help so it's all up to Anzivine, Tussel, and the Jenkins'.
2. St. Edwards -- This is the only team that I feel has five boys who can score at the state level, and by the numbers they should win. However, the Eagle jinx has never abated at Columbus (no individual or team State titles), and something will happen again to upset their well-laid plans. Still Mason, Foldesy, Oddo, Elinsky, and Heffernan could get help from a teammate or two -- and if that happens, Nordonia will be unable to compete.
3. Maple Hts. -- Don't let that dual meet loss to St. Edwards fool you. This team still has Deubel, Nemeck, Snyder, and Urban which could be enough to win a team trophy. Still people like Lockmiller or Horner have to help if that's going to happen, and that's a long shot.
4. Fairview -- A team built around Cantini, Stretar, Kennedy, and Hehl with only Neuronas as a possible helper. Cantini and Stretar are inconsistent while Kennedy has back problems. Nice try, though.
5. North Olmsted -- The McFarlands, DiCesare, Ciccarello, and Tusick all are in tough weight classes. If they could have placed some of their best kids at 138# or Hvy., they'd have a better chance. Good quality, but not quite good enough.

6. Toledo St. Francis -- With Kay, Leffler, and Finch, the Knights have a solid trio of stars. They've got to get State qualifier Reagan back on track and hope O'Coner or Mayer can help.
 7. Lake Catholic -- A team I anticipated rating much higher. Matteo and Brozina have not looked good and seem to be "cutting" a lot of weight. Sullivan's been great, but Larkin and DiMattia will be shut out in state qualification attempts. Maybe Viviani can help.
 8. St. Joseph -- Not the beautifully balanced squad of last year but state qualifiers Abood and Collins are back. In addition, ElSanadi, Novak, and Evans could help, watch out for Jimmy Moon -- a strong performance by him could move this team up five places.
 9. Clayton Northmont -- A lovely upper weight trio of Herr, Lucas, and Newburg will score a lot of points. Still they'll need more to move up.
 10. Southview -- Wilhelm and Velez are solid and Romero and Colon could help. This year people won't be so surprised by a good performance out of this team.
 11. Oakhills -- The same team they seem to have every year. Great balance but no superstars. Maybe Awad can lead the way in 1978.
 12. Vermillion -- A former "AA" team that has four state qualifiers returning plus two other boys with good potential. What will hurt is that two-man district (as compared to 3 in "AA") and the tougher level of competition.
- Dark Horse - Elyria -- With a healthy Drew and solid performances from McNulty, Fleck, and Murray this team could crack the Top 10.

AA

98#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Mark Allison (Olmsted Falls)

TOP CONTENDERS: Bob McGough (Akron Hoban)
Don May (Highland)
Mike Mulligan (Columbus De Sales)
Mike Lucas (Akron St. Vincent)

This appears to be an extremely weak weight with Allison standing head and shoulders above the rest. He beat state champ Manning in the District, and only a shaky first^{round} kept him from a return match in the finals -- he finished third. Allison is a senior and is much more mature than most of his competition.

McGough missed by a match going to state last year and won the Hudson Tourney this year. May, a freshman, and Mulligan, a sophomore, are young, but solid. However, they can't beat a healthy Allison. Lucas has an outside chance of moving up a place or two, but again is no match for Allison.

Other contenders are Cole (Lake), Bergh (Kenston), Dean (Watterson), and Mike Derr (Stritch). Not much here. A long shot might be Paul Kenyon (Chardon) or Sternberg (Beachwood).

105#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Sal Settecase (Aurora)

TOP CONTENDERS: Chuck Urse (Watterson)
Marty Lucas (Akron St. Vincent)
Mike Stalnaker (Jonathan Alder)

DARK HORSE: Phil Weirich (Oak Harbor)

A very tough decision in that this is also a weight without a lot to recommend it. Settecase is solid, but was upset in the District and never got back in. Urse is a spectacular wrestler, but undisciplined. He impressed me at Medina, and his chances at the State are good. Lucas beat an ailing Eugene Leonard at North Canton, and has built up good momentum.

Weirich really impressed me last year, but so far, has not been as overwhelming as expected. Both Ramos (Wauseon) and Wendle (Perrysburg) have pushed in the Toledo area.

Three state qualifiers returning to the Kent District are Savransky (Beachwood), Bradley (Twinsburg), and Logan (Tuslaw). Savransky seems to be the best and I expect him to garner a place.

Tony Gebhardt (Brookville) is strong from the Southwest District while in Columbus an interesting three way fight is developing for two state spots. Along with Urse we have White (DeSales) and defending "A" Champ Mike Stalnaker (Alder). At the moment I favor Urse and Stalnaker with both boys placing at the state level. In fact, Stalnaker is a good long-shot to take it all.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Mark Zimmer (Columbus DeSales)

TOP CONTENDERS: None

POSSIBLE PLACE WINNERS: Bret Wyss (Beloit West Branch)
Brad Horne (Streetsboro)

We all know that Zimmer really isn't going to have all that much trouble taking his third straight title and setting him up for his attempt on an unprecedented fourth state championship. What a college wrestler he'll make. Zimmer will have much more trouble, in fact, winning the Ohio Catholic Invitational over DiSabato and Foldesy than the "AA" laurels.

Wyss and Horne in a normal year would be favorite, but even their outstanding credentials won't help against Zimmer. Wyss is particularly good. Other possible place winners are Farber (Wyoming), Armstrong (Uhrichsville Claymont), Allen (Orrville), and Nasci (Liberty).

Long shot contenders are the erratic Sours (Highland), Kokinakes (Perrysburg), and Barton (Stritch). Still it will be all Zimmer this year and while Dave Fischer is healthy this year, he's also at Alabama.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Ron Reeb (Columbus DeSales)

TOP CONTENDERS: Mike McCahan (Coventry)
Jim Derr (Cardinal Stritch)
Terry Gallimore (Eaton)

LONG SHOT: Bob Donaldson (Kenston)

Another rather uninspiring weight with a lack of many high quality kids. I've taken a long shot by choosing a perpetual third or fourth place finisher,

Ron Reeb, and picked him to win. Reeb must have more consolation medals than anyone in history and he's due to win one. His tricky leg moves will give "AA" kids a lot of trouble.

McCahan beat Jeff May once last year and hasn't been touched this year. His loss to Reeb last year probably gave DeSales the team title and cost Coventry the first place medal. Derr was 2nd at 105# last year and will be a tough competitor. Gallimore has tremendous ability and potential, but doesn't get enough tough competition to win the close matches. He should place.

Donaldson has been outstanding this year, but his lack of experience will hurt him. He will perhaps pull off that one big upset somewhere along the line.

In Cleveland, Lenahan (Elyria Catholic), Smylie (Beachwood), and Jeff Horne (Streetsboro) may contend, but the best long shot is Ed Potter (Watterson). A former state qualifier Potter has the potential to place. In Toledo Galvan (Archbold) and Huffman (Holland Springfield) are the best of a weak lot.

126#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Rick Sorkin (Beachwood)

TOP CONTENDER: Gus Kallai (Coventry)
Frank Schneider (Columbus DeSales)
Paul Kokinakes (Perrysburg)

Even with his injury I'm afraid to pick against Sorkin. As a sophomore I overlooked him and he grabbed 2nd place. Then last year I said he had been lucky the year before and so this time he took home the first place ribbon. So I'm not going to let a little thing like a serious knee injury discourage me from choosing him. Besides 126# isn't all that strong a weight and if Sorkin can be 80 percent to 90 percent, he still should win.

Kallai and Schneider will probably be his main competition. Kallai was 3rd at 112# last year and has been impressive this year winning with relative ease every time out. Schneider, the Brecksville Champ at 132#, is a tough rider, but is shaky on his feet. I'd never go the mat with him, but instead take him down and let him go.

Kokinakes leads a tough Toledo delegation that also includes state qualifier Rod Manley (Holland Springfield) and state place-winner Daryl Thames (Swanton). All three could place and Thames up three weight classes still is a "dynamite" pinner. A very fine contingent.

The Kent District is weak after Sorkin and Kallai with Thiel (Brooklyn), Pavlick (Streetsboro), and Hettinger (Aurora) solid, but uninspiring journey-men. Randy Hoppel (Beaver Local) is a long-shot to make it to Columbus. His father and uncles were the most dominant family in Ohio wrestling history.

Art Harre (Greenhills) leads in a weak Southwestern District and he seems to be the only one in that area with the potential to place.

132#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Randy Glover (Coventry)

TOP CONTENDERS: Jeff Hardy (Pemberville Eastwood)
Fred Shumaker (Watterson)
Tim Hall (Painsville Harvey)

DARK HORSE: Jerry Boos (Huron)

A very fine weight class headed by one of the finest seniors here -- the very rugged Randy Glover. Defending champ Glover pinned in the finals while giving up only four points in the entire state tourney. He should win easily unless the injury jinx hits him too.

Hardy, 3rd last year, and the improving Shumaker are excellent and would be much better off either one weight up or down from here. Hall has really come on strong and looks very good. He lost 10-9 to Jeff May in the District last year and when May was upset he was eliminated. This year he will give everyone trouble -- good prospect.

Boos is not that sharp on his feet, but has excellent leg rides and will do well in "AA" competition. One of his losses was only 6-5 to John McNulty. He and Reindel (Stritch) will push Hardy at Toledo.

At Kent, Glover and Hall will be pushed by state qualifier Tom Skaugen (Elyria Catholic), Jay Davis (Chardon), unknown Mark Morocco (Brookfield), and Eric Wentz (Twinsburg). It's a nice slate of competitors and should make for a very interesting battle for those last three qualifying spaces.

Other potential state qualifiers are Richard (Col. DeSales), Wolbers (Loveland), and Fouts (Turpin). It's hard to see any of them placing.

138#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Dave Talbott (Cardinal Stritch)

TOP CONTENDERS: Ross Nichols (Kenston)
Joe Rankin (Watterson)
Mark Lamancusa (West Branch)

DARK HORSE: Kevin Dieckman (Olmsted Falls)

This is a pathetically weak weight class. Talbott, 3rd last year at 132#,

should be the class of the tourney, although he's been pounded twice by "AAA" competitors. Nichols, the Kenston champ, and Rankin, 3rd at Medina, are nothing special, but I haven't heard of anybody better. Dieckman can score a lot of points and so has a chance to place. His lack of experience will hurt.

Eric Brockman (Chagrin Falls), Burden (Warrensville), Wantz (Chardon), and Rosen (Beachwood) all could place at the Kent District, but three Akron kids to really watch there are Pavlick (Streetsboro), Kallai (Coventry), and LaMancusa (Beloit West Branch). Lamancusa just doesn't wrestle tough enough competition to hone his skills, but he could be very tough. Kallai may get psyched by the team competition and reach the States where he could score in the weak competition.

If there are other tough kids -- and there must be -- I don't know who they are. Where are all the Anglims, Dreniks, Welches, Muncys, Blakes, and Coffings of last year?

145#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Mark Vetter (Chardon)

TOP CONTENDERS: Scott Edwards (Kenston)
Jerry Levine (Beachwood)
Rob LaPlante (Cardinal Stritch)
Mike Houska (Highland)

DARK HORSE: Phil Tartt (Warrensville)

Just an outstanding competition awaiting us here at this classification. There are a half dozen classy, experienced competitors who could win here. Last year Levine took the title after finishing 4th in the District. This year I'm picking the boys who beat Levine for 3rd then, the sharp junior Mark Vetter.

Right behind are Edwards, Levine, Houska, and Tartt and they all exit from the same district. Don't be surprised to see a completely different order of finish between the District and State. One reason is the diversity of styles. There is the short immensely powerful Tartt, the gangly Houska, the super-quick Vetter, the solid Levine, and the steady Edwards. Tartt has great physical gifts, but is not steady enough to win, but one great week-end might be enough.

Let's not forget LaPlante. This will be his 3rd State tourney and he could break into the Cleveland phalanx. He won the U. of C. title with no trouble and has not been touched this year. While the Clevelanders knock each other off, he could sneak in. Another strong contender could be Biggert (Oak Harbor) younger brother of the Toledo University starter.

Rich Warburton (Watterson) is another strong competitor while Mike Sheets (Nelsonville York) will try again at Columbus. Still it should be a six

man race. One element of interest is that the superior field of 145's at Kent will keep Coventry's Ken Riggs from qualifying, and this lad could make it out of any other district in the state.

155#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Keith Foxx (Coventry)

TOP CONTENDERS: Joel Davia (Cadiz)
Paul Hackett (Hamilton Twp.)
George Bergman (Cardinal Stritch)
Kent Cartheuser (Turpin)

Unless Foxx has severe weight problems he should romp through the field for second state title. In fact the first four placewinners are back -- Foxx, Davia, Hackett, and Cartheuser -- and I expect only Bergman to break into this line-up. My feeling is that Foxx and Davia will meet for the second consecutive year for the title with pretty much the same result.

A couple of younger wrestler to keep your eye on are DiFeo (ASV) and Rich Walker (Oberlin). They won't challenge Foxx, but DiFeo, in particular, could nail a low place at Columbus. Other area contenders are Nocifora (Chardon), Blackwell (Warrensville), and Taggart (Streetsboro).

It looks like a replay of last year at their weight and the main focus will be on whether one of the lower place winners can move up.

167#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Ken Blaksley (Lake)

TOP CONTENDERS: Ken Cowell (Archbold)
Steve Lucas (ASV)
Bob White (Columbia St.)

SPECIAL NICHE: Bill Potts (Coventry) -- Champion if reasonably recovered from injury.

The crucial issue here is whether Potts can wrestle at near full efficiency. If he can he'll repeat as champ. This lanky senior has tremendous long-range potential, but he wrestles too many close matches for his ability. With his injury, close matches will be even tougher to win.

Blaksley, 4th in the State in 1977, is a rugged hombre. He missed by a point from meeting Potts in the finals. This will be his third trip to Columbus and even a healthy Potts could have trouble with him. Blaksley has also had good competition to hone his skills. Cowell and Carman (Oak

Harbor) are previous state qualifiers with Cowell the runner-up in "A" last year. Nonnemaker (Elmwood) may also challenge.

In the Northeast District, White and Lucas stand-out. Both boys have won beaten strong "AAA" competition. Others in this area with qualifying chances are Phil Fannin (Chardon), Dave Erkillia (Perry) and Albert Reese (Warrensville).

Wolbers (Loveland) seems best in the Southwest District while Willett (Watterson) looked reasonable at the Medina Tourney. It's hard to see boys from either of these areas challenging.

175#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Mike Ciammaichella (Highland)

TOP CONTENDERS: Dave Lewis (Kenston)
Mike Potts (Coventry)
Rick Henderson (Uhrichsville Claymont)
Dave Armbrust (Garrettsville Garfield)

This is a weight where its hard to see any of the contestants becoming state champ. Ciammaichella, a junior, looked impressive in winning the Medina Tourney and with steady improvement could cop the title. Lewis is very erratic, but on good days can be exceptional. I just don't see the steadiness there that wins championships.

Potts could be the big surprise. He is being overlooked by everyone who focus in on his brother and the other "big-name" Coventry stars. This boy is just not that bad, and at an easy weight his points could be crucial.

Armbrust, Zimmerman (Beachwood), Happ (Chardon), and Lash (Streetsboro) could all challenge for a state spot. Happ has the potential to spring a surprise.

Henderson qualified at 185# last year but got taken out early. He doesn't seem to have improved that much this season. Bosco (Archbold) is probably the best of a weak Northwest contingent while Shoemaker (DeSales) and Beddow (Alder) head a Columbus group. In Cincinnati, Pressler (Green Hills) and Ridder (Eaton) seem to be dominant.

All in all, a very weak weight but one where DeSales or Coventry could gain in the team competition.

185#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Jerry Burgy (Woodridge)

TOP CONTENDERS: Brian Dowds (Columbus DeSales)
Tony Lester (Lima Contral Catholic)
Jeff Dennis (Wyoming)
Bob Boltz (Elmwood)

Burgy had an incredible season last year. He was 2nd in the Sectional, 5th at the District, and 1st in the State. This year he looked sensational and would have repeated with ease. Now with the complication of a broken collarbone it might not happen. Still, if he can wrestle by the Sectionals he should win, because unlike Pott's injury he won't be hampered that much by the injury. He "decked" Dowds in the semi-finals last year and that will be his main competition. Dowds, 2nd at Brecksville, wrestles about three minutes a bout, but he's a clever staller and a smart, tactical wrestler. A good single leg doesn't hurt either.

Lester, Dennis, and Boltz are all returning state qualifiers who could get a place. Lester and Boltz must come out of Toledo which also features Reiner (Swanton), Baum (Archbold), and Hanudel (Stritch), so the competition will be fierce. I particularly like Baum and feel he could be a major surprise.

Outside of Burgy, the Kent District features state qualifier Mike Scott (Coventry), Karl Schlatzer (Kenston), and the powerful James Jones (Warrensville). Don't be surprised to see several of these boys place. Schlatzer, for example, lacks only experience as this is his first varsity year.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMP: Mark Shaw (Warrensville)

TOP CONTENDERS: Don Trumbull (Holland Springfield)
Alex Tuokonen (Jefferson)
Mike Holcomb (Goshen)

DARK HORSE: Ron Troyman (Loveland Hurst)

Shaw couldn't get out of the Sectional the last two years after a pair of sensational dual meet seasons. Yet this 258# pound state shot-put champ is due to explode. He has all the ability and his performance at Brecksville indicates he may be at last attaining tournament consistency.

Trumbull also failed to exit his District last year, but he is the best out there. Tuokonen, 5th at Columbus last year, could win, but more likely will have to settle for a place, while the junior Holcomb will be making his second state meet appearance.

Troyman was 2nd last year at 175# and if he chose to compete at heavyweight, he will be one of the smallest men in the competition. Still he will be tough to beat as his 10-0 record with 10 pins will attest. Still, he will be overpowered by someone.

TEAMS

Injuries are going to play a big part in the team standings in "AA". With three defending champions doubtful, at best, it could mean a reshuffling of the Top Ten teams. In particular, the injuries would seem to narrow the gap between the top two teams.

1. Coventry -- At the start of the season I was ready to award the team trophy to Coventry right then. After all they had three returning state champs -- and a 3rd -- and three other state qualifiers -- and several other returning starters. Now it's not such a sure thing. Ralph Glover, a returning state qualifier can't make the line-up. Even more seriously, Bill Potts is injured and may not compete -- certainly not in top form. Finally, other injuries (Sorkin and Burgy) to my mind help DeSales more the Coventry. Still, some bonuses have occurred -- Mike Potts has looked better than expected and Chuck Kallai could do well at the weak 138# class. It'll need to be a team effort with Glover and Foxx leading the way, but with the Kallai's, McCahan, and Scott chipping in Coventry still has too many big guns.
2. Columbus DeSales -- With the solid core of Zimmer, Reeb, Schneider, and Dowds, DeSales would be the favorite most years. If Mulligan and White can qualify and some of the weights between 132# and 175# can contribute DeSales could repeat -- barely. At least Mike Stanley can be relieved for one reason -- the heavyweight class won't decide it as it has the last two years. Neither team has one good enough to place.
3. Cardinal Stritch -- A very solid team which missed by only a hair of upsetting two time Michigan "AAA" State Champs Bedford High School. It's a typical Stritch team -- good lightweights led by Jim Derr and an awesome display of middleweights -- Talbott, LaPlante, and Bergman -- and good team depth all the way around. What they do lack is power at the upper weights.
4. Beachwood -- A team featuring two defending state champs, but hampered by the knee injury to one, and the inconsistency of the other. Still, Levine and Sorkin will get help from Savransky and Smylie and could even move up if youngsters like Sternberg, Weiss, Rosen, and Zimmerman can qualify. Has the potential to be a good tourney team.
5. Watterson -- I was greatly impressed by this team at the Medina Tourney. Urse, Potter, Shumaker, Rankin, and Warburton are good and Dean, Willett, and Kimball could help. They and DeSales will dominate the Columbus District. With luck this team could make the top three.
6. Kenston -- An erratic team that could go places. Their problem is that wrestlers like Lewis, Nichols, and Hrabak have been inconsistent. Donaldson and Edwards are the team leaders with the steady Schlatter a real bulwark. It'll all depend on those first three for Kenston to get higher.
7. Oak Harbor -- A team generally overshadowed by Stritch in their area, Oak Harbor has an outstanding team. Blay, Weirich, Biggert, Zunk, Carman,

and Lattimore are possible qualifiers. This team will have to do it on thirds and fourths to make the top ten.

8. Warrensville -- This is a team that could finish 3rd or 30th. They have good team strength in the upper weights where "AA" is generally a little weak. Shaw and Tarrt are their best, but Reese, Burden, Jones, and Blackwell aren't bad. Their challenge will be to get enough wrestlers through the District.
9. Highland -- A perennial team contender Highland is young this year but May, Ciammaichella and Houska are a solid nucleus and Sours has always had good potential if he could wrestle six minutes.
10. Chardon -- A universally overlooked team that I believe could move easily into the top six with a good team effort. What could make this team great are the middleweights of Davis, Wantz, Vetter, Nocifora, Fannin, and Happ. Perhaps Kenyon and Urquhart can help, too. The big problem will be nerves and inexperience.
11. Akron St. Vincent -- The three Lucas brothers all have a shot at scoring in Columbus, and mix in DiFeo you have a team that could squeeze into that magic top ten.
12. Eaton -- A perennial powerhouse in the Dayton area they will have to depend on overall team balance plus outstanding performances by Callimore and Ridder.

Dark Horse - Holland Springfield -- Not that highly rated in their own area, they will surprise a lot of people there. Trumbull is their team leader but they should get help from Huffman, Manley, Montague, and Flory. An overlooked team.

PROJECTED CHAMP: Mike Stefanek (Newbury)

TOP CONTENDERS: Bob Reiter (Cardinal)
Ron Beverick (Sandusky St. Mary)
Mike Carpenter (Beallsville)

DARK HORSE: Billy Adkins (Richmond Hts.)

I have to confess that there just isn't much readily available knowledge about this weight class -- especially outside the Cleveland area. I've picked Stefanek because he was one match from State last year and has beaten Reiter several times in the past. Toss in Adkins and you realize that only two of the three can escape the Northeast District so someone will be disappointed. It could be a big factor in the team competition, and since they come from the same sectional, 1st and 3rd will be paired together while lucky 2nd will be by himself. Remember, keep your eye on Adkins - he could be the big surprise.

Beverick and Carpenter appear to be strong outside the area, but Zamora (Fremont St. Joe), Minister (Acad.), and Bock (Tinora) also have good credentials. One dark horse might be Perkins (New London) winner of the Pirate Invitational. In Columbus, Kaiser (Licking Hts.) is young, but improving and could win that district qualifier. With so little information available, it is certainly possible that nobody I've ever heard could emerge out of nowhere and win it all.

PROJECTED CHAMP: Dan Eckel (Wehrle)

TOP CONTENDERS: Bob Watts (Ready)
Jude Roth (Sandusky St. Mary)
Mark Rubish (Columbiana)
Dave Berger (Versailles)
Mark Parish (Caldwell)

DARK HORSE: Tim Mascorella (Ledgemont)

A highly competitive weight with all of the boys listed above having state experience. Yet, I believe the two Columbus area boys will show as the two best. Still only one can qualify out of that ridiculous one-

man district and that's really a shame. I think it will be Eckel who was 4th in "AA" last year.

Jude Roth has really improved and a convincing 7-2 victory over "AA" runner-up Mike Gerken indicated he's ready. Rubish lost in the state semi-finals last year and should lead the Northeast contingent. Mitch Brack (Richmond Hts.) and Tim Mascorella (Ledgemont) are his main competition, and Mascorella could pull the big upset.

In the Northwest, Roth will have state qualifier Bill Ferrebee (New London) and Missler (Mansfield St. Peter) as possible colleagues in Columbus. Berger, who was 3rd last year, could be a real factor if he can stay at 105# while Parish could easily garner a place. It should be a great competition marred only by the lack of both Columbus wrestlers.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Vince DiSabato (Ready)

TOP CONTENDERS: Reuben Martinez (Stryker)
Allan Sherrill (Richmond Hts.)
Tim Beverick (Sandusky St. Mary)
Cal Humphrey (Hawken)

A lot of fine wrestlers at this weight but none will be able to compete with defending "AA" champ Vince DiSabato. He should cruise to the title facing competition, that while strong, is just not prepared to meet one of his skills.

Martinez was 2nd last year and can be spectacular and should get second again if paired away from DiSabato. Sherrill has really improved, but may again be doomed to a 3rd place finish. Beverick and Humphrey right now rate 4th and 5th, but this could change in the next 6 to 8 weeks.

State qualifier Bob Filla (Cardinal), John Strohecker (Columbia), and Curt Sandacz (Kirtland) will contest with Humphrey and Sherrill for those two Cleveland places.

Martinez and Beverick will be joined by either Kurz (New London) or Picciuto (Fremont St. Joe). It looks like the only thing to decide is 4th in the state.

110#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Bob Richards (Richmond Hts.)

TOP CONTENDERS: Jeff Waller (Van Buren)
Frank Carr (Licking Hts.)
Leo DiSabato (Ready)
Darrell Studer (Edgerton)
Rocky Meade (New London)
Andy Bray (Hawken)

This is the third year I've picked Richards to win the state title and he keeps finishing 2nd by a point or two. This year he's moved up three weight classes, partly, I believe, because he would like to be away from Vince DiSabato. Early on, he looked as if 119# was too much for him, but recently he has adjusted and looked superb. Waller was 2nd last year beating among others, Richard's teammate Ed Potokar. I suspect that Mike Papouras will devise a strategy to beat Waller as he did for Richards with Bullinger two years ago.

Studer may go down to 112#, but even so he'll be no better off there. DiSabato and Carr must contend for just that one spot out of Columbus. I favor Carr, who while only a sophomore, has the potential to be excellent. DiSabato may try to qualify at 126# if his recent dual meet efforts are any indication. Meade and Bray are solid, but unspectacular wrestlers who lack state experience. Bray is my 2nd choice out of the Northeast District but could be upset (he has never made it out of the sectional), if so Steve Prahst (Cuyahoga Hts.) could be the one to do it.

Again with Waller, Studer, and Meade, the Northwest District is tough, and Gares (Tinora) and Hill (Liberty Center) will be left out.

126#

PROJECTED CHAMP: George Tompkins (Mogadorp)

TOP CONTENDERS: Jerome Keyes (Newbury)
Tom Guyer (Fremont St. Joe)
Guy Humphrey (Berkshire)
Scott Chapman (Cardinal)
Dave Chadwell (Beallsville)
Brad Poe (Hawken)

A fascinating weight class. Both Tompkins and Poe have wrestled all year at 132# and both would be much better off there. Tompkins would surely win at 132#, he will have an epic struggle getting out of the Northeast

District -- which top to bottom will be much stronger than the state. That's because five outstanding competitors are all at this weight.

Tompkins, the sensational junior, qualified for Columbus last year, but was upset in the first round. He has the most natural talent here. Keyes is also a former state qualifier (3rd in 1975) and the Kenston champ is very solid. He pinned Chapman. Humphrey is the toughest and is down from 132#. He beat Keyes, but lost to Chapman, and tied Bruening (Ledgemont). He lost a trip to Columbus last year when he lost a 6-5 decision to state champ Pniewski. Chapman beat Potokar last year and can go with anyone. Poe is experienced and undefeated. In addition, Bruening (Ledgemont), Colaizza (Ledtonia), Blanchfield (Trinity), McPeak (Columbiana), and Bergman (Mapleton) all have district experience.

The way I sort it out is Tompkins and Keyes qualifying with Humphrey and Chapman as the best threats for an upset. Because the last three are all in the same sectional, it is imperative for them to place high to be away from Tompkins. The sectional placements are vital in this case. A sensational struggle will unfold here at this weight.

Guyer was 3rd last year while Ballinger (Hicksville) also qualified. Newcomer (McComb) could be the third man to come out of the Northwest District.

Chadwell and Brian Smith (Versailles) could be the best of the rest of the state, but will not do well at the state level. In reality, the best 6 or 8 kids are the Cleveland boys plus Guyer. But after the battle in Cleveland, who knows what two tattered survivors will represent the area.

132#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Jim Happ (Ready)

TOP CONTENDERS: Jerry Hill (Liberty Center)
Harry Weaver (Cardinal)
Darrell Carr (Licking Hts.)
Dave Grilley (Mapleton)
Scott Bernholt (Versailles)

I think Happ may be just about the toughest Ready wrestler (over even Shell and DiSabato) and believe he will win here in 1978. His biggest challenge, now that Tompkins has moved down to 126#, will be beating Carr in the District. Both boys are former state qualifiers, but Carr, up from 112#, is just a shade behind Happ. I'm surprised Carr didn't try to go at 126#.

In the Northeast Area, Tompkin's defection gives Weaver and Grilley an excellent chance to qualify. Weaver lost a referee's decision in the District Semi-Finals to Ohman, but this year should qualify easily. Other challengers will be Famera (Kirtland), and the rapidly improving

Walker (Newbury). Dan Barton (Columbiana) has challenged several times in the past, but will again fall short in 1978.

Most people rate Smith (Mansfield St. Peter) over Hill in the Northwest, but I don't see it that way, though both should qualify for Columbus. Bernholt comes from a bad wrestling area with weak competition. He would be much better with tougher caliber action but may place again -- as he did in 1977.

138#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Les Pniewski (Ledgemont)

TOP CONTENDERS: Larry Davis (Cardinal)
Andy Ohman (Newbury)
Lynn McKinney (Fremont St. Joe)

To my mind at least, the three best 138's are all from one small section of Northeastern Ohio. I've gone with the defending champ, Pniewski, even though I feel Davis has better long range potential and beat Pniewski on a referee's decision earlier in the year. And don't forget Ohman - he was only 3rd in the State last year. It's a shame -- three returning state qualifiers, but only two state qualifying places. This weight could also have a profound influence on the team competition -- both Newbury and Cardinal need to get points in Columbus at this weight.

This will be McKinney's third trip to the State and he dropped a narrow 5-4 decision to Ohman last year. Bodenbender (Liberty Center) should also get a spot out of that Northeast District. Lee Calderon (SSM) may get the other.

Steve Carpenter (Beallsville) made it to the semi-finals last year, but will be hard pressed to repeat that feat considering the power at this weight.

In the Columbus area, the obvious choice is Keith Willis (Licking Hts.), but his lack of experience will probably hurt him at the State level -- Licking Hts. may need some points from him, though.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Tim Falk (Blufton)

TOP CONTENDER: Rex Henderson (Licking Hts.)

Looks like strictly a two-man shoot-out at this weight -- and what a battle

it will be. Falk, the senior, surprise state champion after his big upset win over prohibitive favorite Glen Muncy, from, of all places, Licking Hts. Falk, a high scoring machine, with great determination and a superb attitude. And then there's Henderson. A super junior who lost in the State Finals last year and would like nothing better than to take the title back to Licking Hts. Let's hope the pairings work out right for a slam-bang final.

In the Northeast, Dave Reynolds (Mogadore) returns after finishing 3rd at this weight last year. He won't even place this year -- possibly not even qualify for Columbus which gives you the clue as to the improved quality of competition. Matt Dulka (Cardinal) has been impressive at this weight, but will be challenged by Massiello (Richmond Hts.) and possibly Blair (Newbury) or Jeff Pniewski (Ledgemont).

Pat Schoeppner (Caldwell) has been impressive this year and could challenge for a place. Out West, after Falk, we have Bailey (New London), Carpenter (Liberty Center), and Weaver (Seneca East). But Falk will dominate there as Henderson will do in Columbus beating out Eckstein (Bishop Hartley).

155#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Ed Potokar (Richmond Hts.)

TOP CONTENDERS: Dave Prentice (Ledgemont)
Steve Block (Academy)
Pat Soltis (Cardinal)
Ralph Ruta (Sandusky St. Mary)

Not as strong a weight as the last four, there will still be plenty of interest here. It will be interesting to see if Potokar can move from 119# to 155# and win -- he has been sensational so far this year. His style of wrestling will be hard for most "A" boys to combat -- since they don't see the legs that often. Besides what a wealth of experience -- state champ as a freshman and state third as a sophomore.

In Cleveland, Prentice, state qualifier Soltis, and possibly Gruvza (Trinity) will challenge for the other spot. Prentice has looked good and will probably edge out Soltis -- a tough team blow for Cardinal.

Another three way battle looms in Columbus with Block battling Jago (Licking Hts.) and Weidner (Hartley) for that one precious spot. I look for state qualifier Block to win.

Out West, Freech (Fremont St. Joe) is rated first, but Ruta is better, while both should place high enough to go to Columbus.

Another lively weight class -- seemingly rule this year in "A". What a final round it would be to televise.

167#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Mark Shell (Ready)

TOP CONTENDERS: Ron Suszek (Richmond Hts.)
Pat Day (Newbury)
Chuck Radovich (Licking Hts.)
Dave Frank (Stryker)

Probably the best weight in the state -- at any level. Except for Potts (from "AA") these are the best 167's in the state.

I've picked Shell -- 2nd in "AA" last year to Potts 2-0, and a very solid, if unspectacular, wrestler. He will be severely pushed by Radovich to even get out of that one-man district. Radovich lost by only 3-2 in the dual, and he, also, has previous state experience. Both these lads are extremely tough.

Both Day and Suszek are dynamite. Day clubbed Luckage (4th in "AAA" at this weight last year) and has destroyed everyone, but his old friend Suszek. These two have met eight times in the last three years with the younger Suszek (only a junior) always the winner -- but it's been close. Last year, Suszek took 3rd at Columbus and Day 4th. Incidentally, in another year, Tony Siggia (Cuyahoga Hts.) would have a good chance at state qualification.

These four are head and shoulders above the rest of the field and if Shell can run the gauntlet of Radovich in the district and Suszek and Day at States, he really deserves the title.

Frank is also a state qualifier from last year, but this is rugged competition at this weight class. He could grab 4th, at best. Other contenders for that one place are Jones (Monroeville), Wells (Shenendoah), and perhaps Harshbarger (Norwalk St. Paul).

All in all, a grand confrontation marred only by the elimination of either Radovich or Shell at that silly one-man district.

175#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Jim Kilcoyne (Licking Hts.)

TOP CONTENDERS: Dan Gray (Black River)
Jim Farnsworth (New London)
Rod Burba (Ledgemont)

Kilcoyne was your basic, pocket-sized heavyweight who, last year, made

it to the State on determination. This year, at 175#, he should win it all because the competition is just not that strong. Gray, 4th last year, is really the only good competition here, and Kilcoyne is probably just good enough to beat him.

Farnsworth, Tim Frank (Stryker), and Lenox (Woodmore) are probably the top trio in the Northwest while I see little quality in the southern half of the state -- excepting Kilcoyne.

In the Northeast, Burba and Kithcart (Richmond Hts.) along with possibly Magalski (Cuyahoga Hts.) will challenge for the second spot behind Gray. Pairings will, of course, be crucial here with Burba getting the edge. Siggia, who went down a weight this year, would be much better off here since he pinned Kithcart last year.

Newcomerstown has three tough upper weight wrestlers but the best is Barry Nolan who should qualify at this weight, and could even place.

185#

PROJECTED CHAMP: Joe Dahlhausen (Newbury)

TOP CONTENDERS: None

POSSIBLE PLACE WINNERS: Gary Weisenstein (Licking Hts.)
Craig Fitzcharles (Edgerton)
Matt Naufel (Sandusky St. Mary)
Regis Tornes (Waterford)

There is really no one here who can compete with Dahlhausen in size and strength, and if Joe decided to wrestle at heavyweight, he'd win there, too. Great college potential hampered only by the fact that he hasn't had enough top wrestlers to compete against. He won his three matches last year at Columbus by scores of 14-4, 12-5, and 19-5.

Weisenstein is good and should get 2nd over two-time state runner-up Fitzcharles (although the draw will have something to say about that). Both boys are of championship caliber caught in the wrong year with the wrong competitor. Poor Fitzcharles -- 2nd both as a sophomore and a junior, and doomed to be there or lower once again (unless - maybe he moves to heavyweight).

Naufel and Tornes both have state experience, but fall way short of the top three. Massie (Woodmore) could be the third man to make it out of that Northwest District.

In Cleveland, the second slot behind Dahlhausen could be crucial in the team competition. The leading contender is probably Omerza (Richmond Hts.), but he is certainly no cinch to make it. It could be a real struggle and drawing away from Dahlhausen will be the key.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMP Roger Weaver (Arcadia)

TOP CONTENDERS: ???

Now, don't get me wrong, Weaver isn't all that great. It's just that I can't imagine who will challenge him. I've seen nothing in the Cleveland area that will cause bodily harm to come to Weaver, and elsewhere in the state there seems to be more of the same. If I were a good 185#, this might look like pretty tempting ground.

In the Northwest, Sciarappa (Sandusky St. Mary), Zenz (LCC), and Monzingo (Lincolnview) seem like the best after Weaver. In Columbus, most of the heavyweights are complete unknowns.

In the Northeast, well, it hasn't been a bountiful year for "A" heavyweights. Stone (Mapleton) or maybe Rider (Berkshire) could challenge even though, I think Rider certified at 185#. There must be better people, but I don't know who. Somebody is missing a really opportunity.

TEAMS

The team competition in "A" is really much better than in the two other classifications. That's because team depth becomes much more of a factor. Last year, Richmond Hts. had a first, 2 seconds, and 2 thirds, and still did not win because no one else contributed. Also, there are only six or seven teams that dominate, so that match-ups between key teams happen much more often. The big hang-ups are the two man district in the Northeast and the one-man set up in Columbus. One stumble or bad draw can knock out an outstanding boy. I really dislike one and two man qualifiers at every level.

1. Richmond Hts. -- After two runner-up trophies this could be the year, but it will be tough. They still have that solid nucleus of Richards (119), Potokar (155), Suszek (167), and Sherrill (112), but that will not be enough. I think Adkins can score a lot for them at 98# and maybe Brack will help at 105#. The real key though is to get a Kithcart (175), or Omerza (185) or Massiello (145) down to Columbus, because there are some real weak boys to be beaten in the first round. Needless to say, that top four has to stay healthy, too.
2. Licking Hts. -- That one-man district could really hurt them and drop them just off Richmond's pace. I believe that they will lose state place-winners at 132# (D. Carr) and 167# (Radovich). Even so, F. Carr (119), Henderson (145), and Kilcoyne (175), and Weisenstein (185) are formidable. Toss in points from Willis (138), Jago (155), or Lewis (HVY.) and it could be three championships in a row. Needless to say, if they accomplish what they've done in the past by bringing

nine or ten out of that District, Richmond Hts. is doomed. Mike Papouras had better root for Ready at the District.

3. Newbury -- Not a great dual meet team, but one with just enough great individuals to sneak off with the crown on a hot weekend where Richmond Hts. and Licking Hts. kill each other off. Dahlhausen (185), Day (167), Ohman (138), Keyes (126), and Stefanek (98) are excellent, but the last three are stuck in tough weights at the district. They have to make it through for Newbury to have a chance. In addition, help from Walker (132) or Blair (145) would be much appreciated.
 4. Ready -- Second by a whisker last year in "AA", Ready doesn't have the powerhouse of 1977. Still, Vince DiSabato is defending state champ and Shell was runner-up. Mix in Jim Happ (132), Leo DiSabato (119), and Watts (105) and you have a potent mixture. The problem is, of course, that one-man district and Licking Hts. This is one team that could slip down if they're big names lose close matches to the Licking Hts. kids.
 5. Cardinal -- A nice dual meet team that has the misfortune of having its best wrestlers in tough district weights. Still, Reiter (98), Filla (112), Chapman (126), Weaver (132), Davis (138), Dulka (145), and Soltis (155) are all battle hardened veterans. A good district could see this team battle for the championship -- because all seven could score at the state level.
 6. Sandusky St. Mary -- Not quite the powerhouse of the past, this team still has good point scoring potential -- especially as the lower weights and at 185# and HVY. The 3-man district they exit from will help give them some depth, but it's hard to see them challenging the top five.
 7. Ledgemont -- Again, a depth problem but Mascarella (105), Pniewski (138), Prentice (155), and Burba (175) have state scoring potential. A spoiler team in both District and State competition.
 8. Stryker -- A couple big stars should score enough points to vault this team into the top ten. Martinez (112), D. Frank (167), T. Frank (175) are the big guns.
 9. Fremont St. Joe -- Another team with decent depth and a couple of almost sure place-winners. This team is building, though.
 10. New London -- Kind of an upset special, but this team could pick up just enough points in 4th places, consolation victories, and first round action to make the top ten.
- Dark Horse - Edgerton -- This team was 3rd last year and still has remnants of that great team. If Studer, Fitzcharles, and Thiel can help, they could make it up to the top eight.