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H I G H S C H O O L W R E S T L I N G

F O R E C A S T

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INTRODUCTION

The object of these annual reports encompasses two basic goals. First, is to acquaint everyone with the basic character of each weight class, and identify the participants who are likely to play a major role in its resolution. In addition, each regional is examined as to whom its representatives might be. Second, is to stimulate interest in the whole state tournament process throughout Ohio. Naturally, accuracy is also of primary concern so care is taken to develop the most comprehensive list possible of outstanding wrestlers, though of necessity, the evaluation of their final place is, in part, subjective.

In terms of calibre of wrestling, Ohio has probably been blessed with the strongest group of seniors since the halcyon days of 1982 when Heffernan, Elinsky, Jordan and a number of other outstanding wrestlers matriculated. There are, for example, three outstanding wrestlers who seemed destined to win their fourth state titles (Burnett, Hanson and Ramsey) thereby doubling the number accomplishing this feat during the past 50 years. In addition, other high-powered seniors like Palker, Taylor, Landolfo and Genovese are potential All-Americans with outstanding potential. There is good depth behind this group with a number of high-quality performers at most "AAA" weight classes. Mix this "dynamite" class with a solid set of juniors and the year's tournaments should be exceptionally entertaining.

One of the exciting elements of the 1987 season is the quest by three wrestlers to capture their fourth state crown. Substantial media attention will be focused on this trio as they bid to double (in just one year) the number of four-time champs produced within the state. It is interesting to reflect on this phenomenon and place it within some kind of historical context. Ohio started crowning state champs in 1938 and it was more than forty years before Mark Zimmer broke the barrier and won four state titles. Since that time the Jordan brothers both took four championships, and this year it seems likely that Burnett, Hanson and Ramsey will all accomplish that feat. All six of these wrestlers are "AA" or "A" competitors and, while it can never be proven, there is reason to believe that no Ohio wrestler has been the absolute best at his weight class for four successive years. (In my mind Mark Zimmer comes closest to that standard.) No "AAA" wrestler has, since the classification split, made a serious run at four successive titles although Mike DeAnna had a 4th and three championships (even then a senior Lee Kemp was the "AA" state champ at DeAnna's weight when he won as a sophomore). Prior to the split when an undisputed champ was crowned each year, Carl Hoppel finished 1-3-1-1 only a semi-final loss his sophomore year preventing him from four overall state titles.

I've often used these reports as a forum to discuss ways in which wrestling in Ohio could be improved--particularly in the context of the individual wrestler. This year there are four issues that need addressing:

1. Again, equivalently sized regionals are important elements in providing fair competition for both teams and individuals. Clearly, the "A" regional set-up this year is a classic example of inequity and, as discussed in the "A" section, probably will be the single largest factor in determining the team outcome. A system which penalizes either teams or individuals because of the accident of geography ought to be changed as rapidly as possible. There would appear to be many solutions to this problem, and, perhaps a blue-ribbon panel should be assigned the task of discovering the best alternative.
2. As I said last year, we ought to be reevaluating the wrestle-back system used at the district, regional and state level. The requirement of losing to a finalist before being allowed in the consolation rounds is archaic and unfair. It is unlikely that anyone in the state receives more tournament bracket sheets than I do. Yet during the past two years, I did not receive even one 16-team tourney brackets that conducted consolation rounds in the same manner as at the district, regional and state level. Instead, everyone has opted for, at the minimum, the much fairer procedure of permitting wrestlers into the consolations if the competitor defeating them makes the semi-finals. It adds only one round to the tournament, but pays off in fairer placements. The state tournament system has been developed as a way of recognizing the outstanding performance of individuals. A low cost/no cost alternative such as this that so dramatically increases the fairness of the tourney system ought to be adopted in record time--and yet it isn't. Why doesn't the coaches' organization do something to make this happen?
3. New studies need to be made to upgrade the quality of competition at the "A" level. Instead of treating that group as an unwanted step-child, alternatives need to be discussed as to improving the number of schools in that category.
4. The weight certification rules are in need of revamping. In the past, wrestlers certified in December and were then given two pounds in January, and one pound in each succeeding month as a "growth" factor. Now we do not certify until the end of January, but we still give the weight allowance although the original reason for it has changed. It seems to me that all this system does is seduce wrestlers into losing even more weight at certification time because they are so close to the next lower weight class. For example, a wrestler who has competed at 138# all year is terribly tempted to lose just 4 more pounds to make 134#. So instead of a growth factor virtually everyone cuts even more weight as the season progresses. A better system might be the original Holiday Season certification with the subsequent growth factors or to provide growth factors only after certification in January at the scratch weight.

One last item. It appears that each year, more and more coaches get this report. One thing that would really help me is if they would send me bracket sheets for tournaments that they enter--particularly the districts and regionals this year. This is a good way to get a report mailed to you when it is first prepared. My address is:

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AAA

There has been some discussions as to whether the Northeastern District still dominates "AAA" wrestling as it did in the past. While that certainly remains a matter of opinion it is relevant to note that 22 of last year's 26 finalists emerged from Northeast District schools. That figure suggests old patterns are difficult to eradicate.

98#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KEITH SMITH (NORTH OLMSTED)

TOP CONDENTERS:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Nelson (North Royalton) 1 st | 11. McLain (Sidney) |
| 3. Emmerling (East Liverpool) 3 rd | 12. Bell (Dublin) |
| 4. Castellana (St. Edward) 5 th | 13. Bruseau (Anthony Wayne) |
| 5. Kynard (Toledo St. Francis) 2 nd | 14. Williams (West Chester Lakota) |
| 6. Eberhardt (Cincinnati Purcell) | 15. Monachino (Maple Hts.) |
| 7. Canitano (Solon) | 16. Murray (Fairfield) |
| 8. Newsome (Toledo St. John) | 17. Karrenbauer (Massillon) |
| 9. Prendergast (Minerva) | 18. Roche/McChrystal (St. Ignatius) |
| 10. White (Shelby) | 19. Bjorkstein (North Canton) |
| | 20. Baker (Grove City) |

ROBERTSON (WARRENSVILLE HIGHTS.) 4TH
Whitmer (LAKE) 6TH

This should be one of the tightest, most hotly contested weight classes in "AAA" this year. During the last several weeks, a number of highly ranked 105's have moved down to 98# to improve an already strong weight class. It also provides a number of strong contrasts with regards to style, age and, even, size. As always at this weight, most of the best contestants come from the Mentor Regional, but each regional has at least one strong candidate for state success. My choice is the amazingly quick takedown artist Keith Smith who has not been tested so far this year. Injured at regionals last year, he missed sure qualification then, but has come back with a vengeance. His major problem will be his size--he'll be the smallest 98# in my top half-dozen choices. He'll neutralize that disadvantage with speed, conditioning and coaching.

Smith will find exceptional competition at Mentor. Nelson was 5th last year losing only to Elsass and Fried, and he will have a size advantage over Smith. He, too, has not been tested this year and it's almost like the irresistible force and the immovable object. There are just as many good reasons to pick Nelson as Smith. Castellana is another outstanding wrestler in this regional who has not lost in Ohio. Very good in the top position, he may lack that natural quickness of Smith or Nelson. Canitano is my fourth choice here, but I'm beginning to have some doubts. His results have deteriorated in January and it may be the strain of making 98#. He lost to Castellana at North Canton, but wrestled well in that bout. His recent setbacks have not been against as highly rated opponents. The pairings should

be good since these boys exit--two at a time--from Midview and Normandy. However, at Normandy, there are a myriad of other contenders. Both Roche/McChrystal and Monachino are there and they could really challenge Canitano, but probably not Nelson. Roche, just a freshman, has been solid but lost big to Nelson and Castellana. Mihalic (St. Joseph) has had some strong tourney successes, but is a real long-shot to place at regionals, while Robertson (Warrensville Hts.) is probably just a little bit further behind.

Smith and Nelson will be severely tested by Emmerling--6th last year following a 2-0 loss to Nelson. He'll be a huge 98# and is an exceptional rider. However, twice last year he chose up in the 2nd period and had his opponent select down in the 3rd and rode the entire four minutes only to lose to a first period takedown. He must not expect to turn the really good 98's and, thus, must do better on his feet. He'll face relatively weak competition at the Massillon Regional with Prendergast, Karrenbauer and Bjorkstein as main competitors. None of this group except Prendergast reached regional competition last year, and Emmerling pinned him early. Other possibilities like Turner (Nordonia) and Whitmer (Uniontown Lake) have even less chance to contend anywhere, but here.

At Toledo, state qualifier Kynard should dominate and certainly has a good chance of placing at the state level. Tremendously strong and quick, he can be "outslicked" by the better boys. Newsome would seem to be second best, but was majored by Castellana's back-up. Only a freshman Newsome may just have been the victim of a bad beginning. White, Bruseau and Bell are also strong contenders with Baker as a possibility. After Kynard, this group will have real difficulty at the state level.

The Southwest Regional also lacks a lot of top talent. Eberhardt was a state qualifier last year, but did not distinguish himself there. McLain has notched some solid tournament victories while Williams and Murray have been inconsistent. I anticipated a strong year from Williams, but that so far has not happened.

In summary, the top five at this weight class are all outstanding and should provoke exceptional interest. The question mark will be the final ordering and whether an outsider like Canitano or Eberhardt can break into this top group.

105#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MIKE ELSASS (NORTH CANTON) 1ST

PACIOREK (PARMA NORMANDY) 4TH
ALONZE (ELYRIE) 6TH

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 2. J. Laflin (Fairfield) 2 ND | 11. McWhorter (Grove City) |
| 3. Minadeo (Solon) 3 RD | 12. King (Euclid) |
| 4. Cameron (Hilliard) 5 TH | 13. Miller (New Philadelphia) |
| 5. Ramirez (Waite) | 14. Drake (Nordonia) |
| 6. Yackin (Valley Forge) | 15. Ehlinger (Defiance) |
| 7. Biehl (Uniontown Lake) | 16. Palermo (Cincinnati Moeller) |
| 8. Boulton (Lebanon) | 17. Russo (Amherst) |
| 9. Combs (Fairborn) | 18. Croft (Lima Shawnee) |
| 10. Henessey (Cincinnati Elder) | 19. Taylor (Miami Trace) |
| | 20. Arnold (Upper Arlington) |

Last year, Mike Elsass pulled off a monumental upset by wrestling an exquisite tactical match to upset Alan Fried 8-6 in the semi-finals. Then he had a number of things go wrong, not the least of which was the officiating, and lost his potential state crown in overtime. This time I think he'll retain his aggressiveness and his concentration to grab the 105# title. He has already defeated the next two rated boys, although Minadeo beat him last year for the state crown. It is Minadeo's only win over Elsass in three bouts.

Elsass emerges from a solid regional at Massillon. I've been impressed with Biehl who has lost only to top-rated foes. Last year in the regional, he lost by one point to state champ Minadeo and two points to state placer Emmerling. Miller and Drake are both large 105's with good skills with the former a past regional qualifier. There are a whole host of other possible candidates with Taylor, Lewis (Ravenna) and state qualifier McGhee (Steubenville) three of the top possibilities.

However, Elsass' major foe is likely to come from the Dayton Regional where the rapidly improving Laflin competes. Although he has lost to Minadeo at North Canton, his results would indicate that that is unlikely to occur again. He is an impressive wrestler for just a sophomore and while he may not win it this year, a state crown has to be on the horizon. However, he'll have tough competition at Dayton. State qualifiers Boulton, Combs and Henessey are all at this weight, and although none of them really won a match at Columbus (Henessey advanced on an injury disqualification), they should do better the second time around. Palermo and Cooper (Vandalia-Butler) are other possibilities.

State champion Minadeo leads the Mentor Regional. Minadeo is a master at winning the tight, low-scoring bout, but he cannot afford any slip-ups. Like last year, he has lost several bouts already, but he is so tough to score on that he is in every bout. State qualifier Yackin returns at this weight, but he takes chances and Minadeo will penalize him for those errors every time. This is probably the weakest of the four regionals--at least in terms of depth--with King and Russo my choice for the last two spots. There will be opportunities for state qualification at this weight for the opportunistic performer. Expect at least one unknown to cash in on that fact.

The Toldeo Regional will be a real shoot-out. Two-time state qualifier Cameron has just moved down to 105# where he'll be a force to be reckoned with. Last year, sporting a 30-1 record and a regional title, he fell completely apart in the first round and lost on a technical fall to Topoly. The first round problem may recur if he has problems making 105#. Ramirez lost a quarter-final state match to Fried and then was eliminated on Fried's upset loss due to the poor consolation system. He will place this year with an outside chance as a finalist. McWhorter and Ehlinger have had good seasons, but lack extensive experience and could be ripe for an upset. Croft and Arnold are two such possibilities since their drop from 112#. However, the last two qualifiers will be eagerly sought first-round opponents in Columbus.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ALAN FRIED (ST. EDWARD) 1st

ANDRASSY (NORDONIA) 5th
MILLER (ZENIA) 6th

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 2. Kintner (Galion) 4 th | 11. Lemon (GlenOak) |
| 3. Pattie (Elyria) 2 nd | 12. Rhodes (Eastlake North) |
| 4. Pergram (Middletown) | 13. Mattingly (Uniontown Lake) |
| 5. Deikun/Kaminski (Stow) 3 rd | 14. Croft (Lima Shawnee) |
| 6. Shrock (Shelby) | 15. E. Laflin (Fairfield) |
| 7. Campbell (Westerville North) | 16. Miller (Gahanna) |
| 8. Utt (Fairborn) | 17. Levine (Shaker Hts.) |
| 9. Alves (Anthony Wayne) | 18. Zipfel (Defiance) |
| 10. Manning (Willoughby South) | 19. Spangler (Sidney) |
| | 20. Kovacs (Strongsville) |

This is a tremendously strong weight class and it's difficult to figure out why since Alan Fried would seem to be such a dominant figure. After all Fried was one of the most highly touted freshmen in Ohio history last year and over the summer beat two defending champs on his way to the USWF national title. Besides Fried finished with a 35-1 record and a 3rd place medal last year and has not yet gone the distance this season in winning over 20 bouts.

Still many will remember a nervous and strangely passive Fried at Columbus and hope for a recurrence, and they know he is really a 105# and by state time will be smaller than many of his best competition. It's also true that all of St. Ed's 25 state champs in the last 9 years have been juniors or seniors and no sophomore has ever won a title for them. Nonetheless, Fried this year will win that crown, and he'll do it by wrestling strongly and aggressively at Columbus in contrast to last season.

The Mentor Regional is loaded. Fried, of course, is the target, but many, I believe, aim for qualification knowing they wouldn't see Fried until the finals at Columbus. Pattie is extremely quick and strong and demolished tough competition at Medina. He will be big-time college material as a senior and could wrestle Fried three weekends in a row. If so he might "catch" him at least once. Manning and Rhodes were both one bout from state qualification last year, and will be strong regional contenders. Manning looked excellent at Brecksville and took Burnett down twice in the finals. Rhodes started slowly at 119# but decisioned Manning recently. Levine also has regional experience and the moves to win at the state level if he can get there. State qualifier Atienza (Maple Hts.) looks to be shut out at this weight and may head for 119#. Three other excellent contenders are Lally (Solon), Priebe (Holy Name) and Carreras (Lorain Southview) and any of this trio could work his way into a ticket for Columbus.

The immensely strong Kintner should lead the very strong Toledo Regional which contains seven state qualifiers, and several other strong performers. Kintner was 5th as a sophomore and then was upset in first-round action last year by freshman sensation Cianciola. He has not quite improved to the level anticipated two years ago, but he is still a daunting competitor. Shrock was 6th last year (also losing to Cianciola) and has consistently placed behind Kintner this year. He wrestled with abandon at Columbus and showed some fine moves. One of them pinned two-time state qualifier Campbell who returns at this weight looking for a state place. Tall and clever, Campbell has a style that can be difficult to confront. Alves is one of those wrestlers who has seemingly never quite cashed in on his immense talent. When he is right, he can be an outstanding wrestler capable of defeating anyone in this regional. Croft and Miller are experienced former state qualifiers who may not be quite strong enough to qualify out of this fierce competition. Both are seniors with outstanding records, but have never had much luck winning the big match. Zupfel is also a state qualifier and, in fact, won a bout at Columbus last year. However, the Defiance wrestlers have not shown the improvement in recent years that is required to reach the state level. For example, Croft already holds a 6-2 decision over Zipfel. Two other possibilities are Bland (Tiffin Columbiana) the Outstanding Wrestler at the Tiffin Invitational and Doud (Sandusky) who is a dynamo in search of a little better technique. Boroff (Dublin) has beaten Miller and could cause a bit of a ruckus at this weight class, too.

It's much the same story at Dayton with a bracket-full of strong contenders. State qualifier Pergram is outstanding, but wrestles a weak schedule. He may not be ready for the very best. Utt and the other Laflin twin are excellent, but Pergram beat the latter 15-0 last year. It suggests that Utt may be the stronger contender. Spangler looks like the best bet for

the fourth spot, but Curry (Lakota), always a close loser to Laflin, will battle not to be left out. Other possibilities are Nice (Milford), state alternate Bolton (Tecumseh) and Miller (Xenia).

The Massillon Regional is really confused now that Deikun appears to be going at 112#. He has wrestled extremely well at 119# including the Brunswick title and certainly would merit strong consideration for state placement. Lemon and Mattingly both have had good seasons and look ready for state competition. Neither of them could go with Deikun. Kenston champ Kovacs was also a district champion last year, but was unable to compete at the regional level. He is not well-known so he may sneak up on a number of folks. This should be the four qualifiers, but Clarke (Ravenna) has strong potential for an upset while the freshman Andrassy (Nordononia) is a free-style wizard with an assortment of big moves. He cannot be relaxed against without serious jeopardy.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BILL VIANCOURT (ST. EDWARD) 1ST

KLUMB (CIN. ELDER) 5TH

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Hoskins (Xenia) | 11. Clasen (Perrysburg) |
| 3. Topoly (Lake Catholic) | 12. Hunter (Lima Sr.) 6 TH |
| 4. DeWeese (Amelia) 4 TH | 13. Pagniano (Upper Arlington) |
| 5. Gillmor (Nordononia) 3 RD | 14. Richner (Painesville Riverside) |
| 6. Marinis (Fremont Ross) | 15. Picolo (Springfield North) |
| 7. Baudendistel (Dayton Wayne) | 16. Petti (Mentor) |
| 8. Parker (Centerville) | 17. Pfaff (Whitehall) |
| 9. Kopp (Lorain Southview) | 18. Huff (Miami Trace) |
| 10. Hamm (Solon) 2 ND | 19. Murray (Minerva) |
| | 20. Nadeau (Massillon Jackson) |

The way this report is constructed centers around writing 39 short reports (one for each weight class) over a six or seven day period. There is no reason to write them in any particular order (thanks to the word processor) so I start first with those that seem easiest--like ones that contain names such as Burnett, Holman or Hanson. That gives me a little more time to collect information on the difficult weight classes hoping something will turn up that will make things clearer. Gradually they all get done until I'm left with the single most difficult case--and this is it.

Viancourt is, clearly, the obvious choice with an unblemished record in Ohio and two victories over the tenacious Topoly. And, yet, I feel most uneasy about the choice because of Viancourt's tournament inexperience (see the 126# report) and the rash of upsets that have occurred all season in this weight class. Unlike some St. Edward's wrestlers, Viancourt is an excellent rider along with the usual quota of takedown wizardry. He seems relatively cool and unruffled and has the patience to wrestle down-tempo people like Topoly or Hoskins.

The Mentor Regional will provide Viancourt with plenty of challenges. Topoly was 3rd at 105# in 1986 and he is an intense competitor. Last year he was literally choked into unconsciousness, but hung on to a leg to grab 3rd place honors. He is difficult to score against and has an assortment of nice takedowns. He also has a history of doing better each time he wrestles a particular opponent--a thought that cannot comfort Viancourt. State qualifiers Kopp and Hamm were both first-round losers last year, but they may be able to improve on that--if they can repeat at the regional level. Both Richner and Petti are very good and are in their third varsity year. Petti has had a lot of ill-fortune in his career and may be due for some good luck. Other possibilities are Dagati (North Olmsted) and Griggs (Lisbon Beaver Local).

The toughest regional at this weight, though, is at Dayton. There are just so many high-quality wrestlers that some may re-certify (as Duncan has already done in going to 132#). Hoskins (4th) and DeWeese (3rd) were both state place winners last year and return with outstanding 1987 records. DeWeese was the real surprise. He came out of nowhere to snare a regional title and then wrestled beautifully to capture 3rd in Columbus. This, in spite of a schedule that fails to provide many challenges. Somehow, I believe he'll have trouble repeating that success this season now that everyone will be peaking for him. Hoskins is always good and could be a finalist while Parker may be the same kind of surprise DeWeese was last year. Baudendistel, a strong contender for longest last name, should also qualify based on his quality performances this year. Still both he and Parker will face a lot of competition here with Picolo, Klumb (Cincinnati Elder) and Utt (Fairborn Baker) all having solid credentials. There are several other top-notch underclassmen, as well, in what should be the best weight class in Dayton.

In contrast, the Massillon Regional is very weak especially now that Deikun has moved to 112#. He and Gillmor would dominate the regional together, but now the young sophomore is all alone. Gillmor was tremendous last year in a magnificent regional battle with state runner-up Kundtz only losing in overtime. He has the flash and brilliance of an exceptional athlete. The big problem seems to be a slow start that gets him 6 or 8 points down in the first three minutes. Then comes the mad dash to catch up which is not always successful. One other point--this boy is an exceptional pinner. After him the regional is frightfully undermanned with no clear favorites for qualification.

At Toledo, we'll have a battle of contrasting styles and skills. Marinis has been on the fringes of real success for some time and may be ready to finally break through. State qualifiers Clasen, Hunter and Pfaff all must be reckoned with and provide real depth at this class. A fast-rising star has been Pagniano who spent much of the year at 132#. Now at 119#, his devastating headlocks are racking an impressive quantity of pins. After this quintet are a boatload of other contenders the most prominent of which are Brandt (Westerville South), Shadler (Toledo Rogers), Borrer (Holland Springfield) and Cain (Shelby).

126f

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TIM McCLELLAN (UPPER ARLINGTON) 2ND

RODRIGUEZ (LOR. SOUTHVIEW) 6TH

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2. Hamad (Akron Firestone) | 12. Walendzak (Oregon Clay) |
| 3. Skelton (St. Edward) 1 ST | 13. Robbins (Cincinnati St. X) |
| 4. Baker (Fairfield) 4 TH | 14. Gluck (Holy Name) |
| 5. Roberto (Ravenna) | 15. Hartshorn (Minerva) |
| 6. Daher (Mayfield) | 16. Prusha (Maple Hts) |
| 7. Decker (Vandalia Butler) | 17. Rhodes (Cuyahoga Falls) 3 RD |
| 8. Klever (Toledo St. John) 5 TH | 18. Franklin (Marion Harding) |
| 9. Langfitt (Glen Oak) | 19. Berdysz/Del Rosa (Mentor) |
| 10. Ingle (Centerville) | 20. Jesse (West Chester Lakota) |
| 11. Lemon (Massillon Perry) | 21. Noble (Solon) |

This should be one of the most interesting struggles at the "AAA" level if only because of the psychology of the situation. In my mind, there are four principal contenders--three experienced seniors (McClellan, Hamad and Baker) all of whom have placed at the state level, and one exceptional senior (Skelton) who'll be making his first tournament appearance. Deep down I think Skelton is the best wrestler, but I don't think he will win the crown. Too often, I've seen St. Edward's wrestlers who've had to wait until their senior year to compete, fail to win the state title even, though, they were probably the best overall competitor. For example, Venesile and York last season or Terry Kennedy several years ago all should have won, but none did, all losing a close bout at a critical time. That's why I've gone with the steady McClellan who grinds out win after win in a methodical style. Last year, he defeated Auer in the state meet, the wrestler who kept Skelton out of the tournaments, and then lost a 2-point decision to state champion Malcuit. Interestingly, my top four all head a different regional.

McClellan and Klever should dominate the Toledo Regional. Klever, at 132# last year, was a regional quarter-finalist and has been successful this year at that same weight. If he can handle 126#, he will be large and tough.

Walendzak is a logical third choice, but the fourth spot is wide open. I've listed Franklin, but there are a number of other contenders--Bellows (Lima Shawnee), Kunze (Galion) and Harmon (Toledo St. Francis).

The enigmatic Hamad returns at 126# after beginning the year at 138#. A sensational 4th as a 105# sophomore two years ago, Hamad moved up three weight classes last year and did poorly in the regional and failed to qualify. This year he seems back in his old form and should be a real handful. He won the Norton and Hudson tourneys and slaughtered Gregan in the latter, and lost at Solon only to state runner-up Andrassy at 138#. His regional presents a lot of familiar faces. Roberto, a state qualifier as a sophomore, was sent to Mentor last year and also failed to qualify for a Columbus trip by one bout. This year he should have fewer problems. Langfitt also qualified as a sophomore and do you believe in coincidences didn't make it last year due to injury. The fourth state berth will be slippery to hang onto. Lemon has consistently placed well and could get that fourth Columbus ticket. However, state qualifier Hartshorn is now at this weight and will be a threat. When I saw him he kept getting headlocked to his back, but last year he was able to outscore his mistakes. Finally, Rhodes qualified for Columbus two years ago--and you guessed it--failed to go last year. This year he won't go again.

Skelton faces an uncharacteristically weak regional. Daher is a solid junior who dominated the Kenston Tournament, and is very tough, indeed. He could place. There is a big fall-off after him with Gluck and Prusha two possible choices. I think that Mentor's fine sophomore Berdysz--injured much of the year--could upend either of these two and, perhaps, qualify. However, he'll need to find consistency. Noble, another of Solon's fine lightweights, has a chance.

The Southwest Regional probably has the most depth. Baker, a former state place winner, is excellent, his only loss to Skelton at North Canton. State qualifier Decker is up two weight classes, but still performing well. He has 18 straight wins, all but five by fall. Ingle was strong at 132# and should be a "bear" at this weight. A tremendously impressive newcomer is the freshman, Robbins, who lost only to Baker by a single point in the Fairfield final. He will be a force for the next four years in Ohio wrestling. Jesse has been on the brink of success for some time, and he may have to wait longer at this weight. Widenhouse (Roger Bacon) and Carder (Trenton Edgewood) are other possibilities.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JEFF LYONS (ELYRIA) 1ST

MARTINEZ (LAKE) 3RD

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2. Slevinski (Maple Hts) 2 ND | 11. Barto (Solon) |
| 3. Smith (Xenia) 5 TH | 12. Furlong (Warren Howland) |
| 4. Long (Galion) 4 TH | 13. Navarre (Maumee) |
| 5. Brickey (Toledo Rogers) | 14. Victor (Mentor) |
| 6. Tomkovicz/Ciccarello (St. Edward) | 15. Duncan (Fairfield) |
| 7. Talley (Clayton Northmont) | 16. Heid (North Canton) |
| 8. Pinckney (Marion-Franklin) | 17. Burchfield (Gahenna) |
| 9. Voth (St. Ignatius) | 18. Cuba (Massillon Jackson) 6 TH |
| 10. Carpenter (Cincinnati Princeton) | 19. Ernst (Troy) |
| | 20. Jones (Louisville) |

Jeff Lyons has not been a lucky wrestler during his three-year Elyria career. As a sophomore, wrestling up a weight (because of state champ Saxton), he was a regional semi-finalist before twice losing and being eliminated. Last year, as one of the top favorites at 126#, he again reached the semis losing a close two-point struggle that could have gone either way to state runner-up Maddox and then being stalled to death in a 1-0 consolation loss. So, one of the best wrestlers in the state has not yet been to Columbus. This year, he won the power-packed 138# class at the Medina including a win over 3-time state champ Ken Ramsay and the Outstanding Wrestler award. Again, I've picked him to win a state title, but that can only occur if he escapes the Mentor Regional. This year that should happen and give the entire state a chance to enjoy his skills.

Lyon's most difficult challenge will be at Mentor. Slevinski has been totally awesome all year including a raft of technical falls against quality opponents. His skills have not been showcased as they should because Maple Hts. failed to schedule any strong tournaments. He attacks other people and that is the style Lyons also employs making their meetings potential barnburners. Tomkovicz will probably represent St. Edwards and he looked exceptional at their Quad. He is not as flashy as Ciccarello, but makes far fewer mistakes. He has placement potential. State qualifier Voth is a very shaky choice for that fourth qualifying spot based on past record and his St. X championship. However, both Barto and Senquiz (Lorain Southview) have defeated him, and they are only two of a number of possible contenders. Also included is the persistent Furlong, the still-recovering Victor and the freshman sensation Machovina (North Olmsted). Lyons will not lack for competition at this regional.

Smith qualified for Columbus as a sophomore last year and he is a potential state finalist. He'll totally overpower his regional, and almost everybody else but the very best three or four. It is not out of the question that he could win the whole thing. Talley beat Smith last year, but never will it happen again. However, he should qualify--as he did last year--and, possibly, place. Both he and Smith were quarter-finalists last year. Carpenter won the Fairfield Invitational and looks like the third best at the weight. What will be interesting to watch is the course of Duncan's campaign for a state berth. He went to 119# when Baker dropped, but it was obviously too much. So he has moved to 132#. One of two things is likely to happen--either he'll be overpowered or he'll feel so good that he'll begin using the excellent moves he hasn't been employing and he'll do very well. Ernst is a more conventional choice for that fourth qualifying spot.

Long heads a strong Toledo regional. Like Lyons, he has never qualified even though last year he was very highly rated. He dropped a pair of one-point decisions at the regional and went home early. This year, should he choose to really focus on Columbus, he should qualify and place. State qualifier Brickey is right behind him. He was impressive in a win over Schetter at Columbus before being bombed by state champion Chaddock. This year he had won the Rogers Inv. and lost at Medina to the excellent Hamad at 138#. He'll do well. Right behind this duo is the strong and determined Pinckney--the best in the Columbus area at this weight. He missed state qualification by two points last year. There is a big drop in quality at this level with Navarre and Burchfield a respectful distance behind. For example, Pinckney beat Navarre 18-5 at last year's regional.

The Massillon Regional is very weak. I have had substantial trouble unearthing any name that might have the ring of state qualifier attached to them. Sadly, I failed in that effort so it's clear that all the survivors of this struggle are likely to be little-known. They'll remain that way in Columbus.

138#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOE ANDRASSY (NORDONIA) 1ST

CORSO (SANDUSKY) 6TH

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2. Yetts (Steubenville) | 12. Newcomb (Worthington) 3 RD |
| 3. Sweeney (Toledo Macomber) | 13. Lauric (Lake Catholic) |
| 4. Haas (Louisville) | 14. Womack (Akron Buchtel) 2 ND |
| 5. Helderman (St. Edward) 5 TH | 15. Bratton (Clayton Northmont) |
| 6. Randleman (Sandusky) | 16. Splete (Cleveland St. Joseph) 4 TH |
| 7. Homewood (Lima Shawnee) | 17. Potter (Fremont Ross) |
| 8. Doll (Dayton Wayne) | 18. Chandler (Galion) |
| 9. Buckalew (Westerville North) | 19. Dosen (Holy Name) |
| 10. Ferguson (Ashland) | 20. Stanton (West Chester Lakota) |
| 11. Duffer (Toledo Waite) | 21. Walker (Xenia) |

Last year Joe Andrassy was one of the finest sophomore middleweights I had seen in years. He crushed state champion Chaddock and split a pair of bouts with the talented state champion Palker. His loss being in the state finals after capturing the regional title with his victory. Early this year he had gone from a "never-stop" wrestler to a "when are you going to start" competitor. It looked a little like sports burnout (he is an excellent football player, too), but now it seems to have corrected itself and Andrassy should grab the title. It may well be a two-man struggle with Andrassy meeting the superbly talented "AA" runner-up, Donyasha Yetts. Only a sophomore, Yetts is a superb athlete who reminds me a lot of Shawn Garel, but I think Andrassy will punish his every mistake and wear him down. Yetts takes "injury" timeouts to the limit in every tough bout he has which may indicate a conditioning problem, but he is so quick and strong that he "mentally cracks" tough opponents--as he did Helderman at North Canton.

Andrassy and Yetts head a regional that is rife with uncertainty. Haas, my third choice here, has just moved down from 145#, where he wrestled with uneven results. How he'll do at 138# is uncertain. Last year he was pinned in the first round of regionals. Womack has put together an undefeated season, but has not wrestled a strong schedule. Last year he did not compete in the state tourney process. Clearly, the possibility exists for darkhorses to grab a state berth. The question still unanswered is exactly who they might be.

The Toledo Regional has seven or eight high-quality performers most of whom are distinguished by the ability to score a lot of points and a tradition of uneven results. Sweeney and Randleman both fit that mold, but they also possess outstanding athletic ability. Sweeney is ready to show what he can do after some stops and starts while Randleman has already done some amazing things. Last year he wrestled on the freshman team until year's end when he (and several others) were brought up to fill some vacancies. He then qualified for the state tourney and came within a point of placing. Like many younger wrestlers, he has peaks and valleys. Homewood has probably been the main man on a strong Lima Shawnee team. He has won several major tourneys (Rogers and Tiffin) and has a solid chance of qualification. Ferguson, my fourth choice, has been a consistent performer all year, and will surprise a lot of better known people at this regional. Duffer, a possible fourth choice, recently upset Sweeney and has placed high in every tourney effort. The Columbus duo of Newcomb and Buckalew may not quite match up talent-wise, but they are steady performers. One or both could slip into the top four by taking advantage of small mistakes by the top group. Chandler and Potter would seem to have little chance here, but the latter has a way of placing in big tourneys. Watch out for him.

The Mentor Regional is not particularly strong since the defection of Slevinski and Barto to 132#. In fact, this is a real opportunity weight where some darkhorses can get to Columbus. Helderman has never been all that impressive, but he may be the best of this group. Dosen and Lauric are journeyman performers who can consistently beat the average wrestler, but have trouble with the top-echelon boys. The freshman Splete is on a high-impact learning curve, but few freshmen qualify for Columbus at the middle weights from this regional. It would not surprise me to see some of the fine 132's who look to get left out re-certify at this weight class.

There is much the same situation at the Southwestern Regional. Doll and Bratton head up what appears to be a very weak group with Stanton, perhaps, a half-step behind. Walker, who switched places with the redoubtable Smith, was a solid 132#, but how he'll do at this class is unclear. Look for some surprises here.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: GUY PALKER (ST. EDWARD)

Vaughn (WORTHINGTON) 5TH

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 2. J. Collins (St. Ignatius) | 12. Connors (Lake Catholic) |
| 3. R. Taylor (Lorain Southview) 1 ST | 13. Brown (Massillon Perry) |
| 4. Schetter (Dayton Wayne) 2 ND | 14. Burch (Mansfield) |
| 5. Mullen (Cincinnati Elder) | 15. DeNero (Galion) |
| 6. McFarland (Tiffin) | 16. Anderson/Herrara (Oregon Clay) |
| 7. Luebke (Clayton Northmont) | 17. Holman (Lebanon) 3 RD |
| 8. Legan (Willoughby South) | 18. Hutchings (Hillard) |
| 9. Holder (Springfield South) 4 TH | 19. Haefele (Worthington) |
| 10. Saultz (Amherst) | 20. Patterson (Norton) |
| 11. Wilson (Stow) 6 TH | 21. Lomano (Westerville South) |

Defending state champion Guy Palker is rated as one of the best seniors in Ohio, but he has, as of this writing, not wrestled a single bout this year. A dislocated elbow at an early scrimmage has sidelined him for eight weeks now and cast doubt on his ability to repeat as champion. Questions include conditioning and the lingering effects of an injury that often hampers wrestlers for up to a year or more. Nonetheless, Palker is so physical and determined that he still should control a weight class that boasts no one of his same stature. In some ways Palker's biggest foe may be himself as he must overcome the fears of re-injury.

The Mentor Regional is brutally strong at this weight class. Everybody will, of course, be watching and measuring Palker's progress, but many of the best 145's are here. Collins, down from 155#, is undefeated so far and has won the Solon, Brunswick, and St. X tourneys, defeating both Taylor and Schetter. Whether he can sustain the strong early performance is the only question. Taylor, a state qualifier last year, is a devastating thrower whose loss to Collins may have been more a matter of conditioning than ability. Also injured for much of the season, he needs to reach top form early because his district is loaded and one slip could cost him even a regional appearance. Legan has been on the fringes of greatness for some time, but has never cashed in on it. Should he be ready to go six hard minutes every time, he could well be the fourth qualifier. However, Brecksville champ Saultz is so strong and physical he cannot be overlooked while Connors was one match from Columbus last year. So far we've listed six high-quality performers all of whom are in the top dozen within the state and only four who will qualify. In addition, this regional features Sayre (Midpark), Ocheltree (Midview), Loy (Lakewood, Chonko (Padua, Maric (North Royalton) and Cardaman (Maple Hts.). All of these boys are quality performers who have been unlucky enough to fall into the wrong weight class.

The Southwest Regional is also strong, but not to the same level or depth as Mentor. Schetter, Luebke and Mullen were all state qualifiers last year although they were 0-4 at that competition. Schetter is probably the best of this trio although he has lost to Collins at St. X. Only a junior, he should place. Mullen was eliminated by Taylor last year but, again, he looks ready to claim a low place. The OCC should be an interesting test of his abilities. Luebke got a tough draw at Columbus last year and was outscored 38-7 in surrendering two technical falls. He will be far readier in 1987. The fourth spot should be a duel between Holder and Holman. I favor the former although Holman has made amazing progress.

At Toledo, there are a lot of wrestlers who are equivalent to the second echelon at Mentor, but here they'll have a chance at qualifying. I like McFarland the best and I see him in the hunt for a low place. After that, it's chaos with the potential for a real donnybrook. Burch and DeNero were both state qualifiers last year although neither of them lasted six full minutes there. They have their own private war based on geographical proximity. Anderson (or maybe Herrera) will be here and both scored regional wins before being eliminated last year. The Columbus area's Hutching, Haefele and Lomano are long-shots at this class, but have the possibility of qualification. Ramirez (Fremont Ross) is another darkhorse possibility.

The Massillon Regional is the weakest of the four, and, is also wide open. I've listed Wilson and Brown as nominal favorites, but their results do not lend real confidence to this assessment. Wilson was 5th at Brunswick, for example, while Brown was 5th at North Canton. Patterson is another possibility as is Lenzo (Kent Roosevelt), but we're not talking heavy-duty here. This regional's qualifiers will never see the second round at Columbus.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JAY LANDOLFO (ST. EDWARD) 1st

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Mayse (Marion Harding) 3 rd | 11. Cone (Clayton Northmont) |
| 3. Fringer (Medina) | 12. Chamberlin (New Philadelphia) |
| 4. Morgan (Normandy) | 13. Orazen (Upper Arlington) |
| 5. M. Collins (St. Ignatius) 2 nd | 14. Miller (Milford) |
| 6. Alspaugh (Sylvania Northview) 4 th | 15. Lovelace (Cleveland Hts) |
| 7. Jarvis (Uniontown Lake) | 16. Karns (Fairborn) |
| 8. Gibbs (North Canton) 6 th | 17. Haely (Defiance) |
| 9. Shaut (Cincinnati Oakhills) | 18. Hoppel (Lisbon Beaver Local) |
| 10. Doss (Gahanna) 5 th | 19. Christian (Fairfield) |
| | 20. Shattuck (Valley Forge) |

Winning individual state titles at adjacent weight classes is an unusual achievement for any "AAA" team. Since 1981, for example, only two schools have accomplished that feat -- Walsh Jesuit once and St. Edward's five times including rare triples three times. Again this year it seems likely to happen once more with Palker and Jay Landolfo. Indeed the weak link in this chain is probably Palker since Landolfo towers over this field and should win comfortably. Last year he finished 36-1 -- his only loss in the state semi-finals to Dave Walters. While not exactly an upset the final 14-5 margin was startling and suggests that Landolfo lost his concentration when behind. This year that is not likely to happen.

One of Landolfo's chief concerns is Mayse who has twice captured a state 3rd place medal at 145#. Still Gucciardo handled him last year and Landolfo likely surpasses that standard this season. Mayse, so far, has remained undefeated and should remain unblemished till meeting Landolfo. Also at Toledo are state qualifier Alspaugh, the powerful Doss, and the improving Orazen. None of the trio is upset-proof, as they have recently proven, and any or all of them could be knocked out of regional competition. The tag team of Anderson/Herrara are a potential threat while Haely and Law are strong WBL wrestlers. The last three openings should provoke strenuous competition.

State qualifier Fringer is a blocky, powerful competitor who has cruised to an undefeated record including a big win over Collins. Last year he lost a one-point overtime battle to state champion Schmidt, but Landolfo will probably beat him badly on his feet. His regional is a rugged one. Gibbs won the North Canton and wrestles an unorthodox pell-mell style that is tough to contain. I haven't seen many North Canton wrestlers use this approach, but it seems to work for Gibbs. Jarvis is strong and rather defensively oriented. Landolfo had trouble scoring on him at North Canton (when they were both at 167#) and only beat him 4-1. Chamberlin is a dominant force south of Canton and should be the fourth qualifier. Former state qualifier Ice (East Liverpool) has not been rated because of his infrequent appearances, but should he be at this weight and in shape he could well be a factor.

The Mentor Regional has three outstanding candidates and then lapses into mediocrity. After Landolfo, state qualifier Morgan has matured into a fine wrestler. Mayse crushed him last year, but its likely to be much closer this year. Morgan, an exceptional student, uses that intelligence to good advantage in his wrestling as well. The other Collins twin has won the Solon, Brunswick, and St. X titles which has included wins over Gibbs, Orazen, and Shaut. His only defeats were to Landolfo and Fringer, and this junior looks ready for state competition. The fourth state berth is certainly available. Lovelace is strong and has some lovely upper-body throws, but may lack consistency. However, he is very dangerous in every individual encounter. Hoppel and Shattuck are also potential qualifiers, but people like Benson (Amherst) Chenelle (Lake Catholic) and Weiner (Shaker Hts) are, too. The pairings will be so crucial since wrestlers in the same half-bracket with two of my top three are basically out of the picture. Thus, a district title at Mayfield or Fitch is the best hope for a solid opportunity.

The Southwestern Regional doesn't appear ready to make much impact at this weight class. Shaut was a match from state qualification at 132#, and, was a solid 3rd at Fairfield this year. He's probably the best in the area. Cone and Miller have had solid seasons and could be factors at the regional level (but assuredly not at the state meet). State qualifier Karns is a question mark and will have to hustle to qualify once again. Christian, a loser to Karns in his go-to-state bout, and Ramey (Springfield South) are other possibilities.

167#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: G. T. TAYLOR (LORAIN SOUTHVIEW) |^{5th}

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 2. S. Buddie (St. Ignatius) 2 nd | 11. Klusman (Cincinnati Elder) |
| 3. Dudgeon (Xenia) | 12. Evert (Marion Harding) |
| 4. M. Foley (Worthington) | 13. Talley (Clayton Northmont) |
| 5. Brunner (Beloit West Branch) | 14. Cullum (Holland Springfield) |
| 6. Fickes (Centerville) 6 th | 15. Lewis (Colerain) |
| 7. Wiewora (Toledo St. Francis) 4 th | 16. O'Conner (Warren Howland) |
| 8. Lackner (Madison) | 17. Hatzarides (GlenOak) |
| 9. DelRosa (Nordonia) 3 rd | 18. Filiaggi (Elyria) |
| 10. Akers (Tiffin) 5 th | 19. Staats (Norton) |
| | 20. S. Ramirez (Fremont Ross) |

This is the best and most exciting weight class in "AAA" this year, and is one that fans from all-around the state look forward to with great anticipation. It features some of the best senior talent in the state and is likely to produce some enduring masterpieces that will be woven into the memories of longtime spectators. My choice is G. T. Taylor the superstar from Lorain Southview who was 3rd last year after a mild semi-final upset.

Sensationally quick and strong, Taylor will be a college All-American as early as his freshman season, but he is no cinch to win here. I do believe he can beat anyone willing to attack and wrestle, but has trouble with those who back and stall hoping for a break. He can become impatient and over-extend himself. Steve Buddie has had a great year after finishing 4th last season at 145#. He has already defeated Dudgeon and Foley and has a dazzling assortment of moves. He will be far taller than Taylor -- as much as 6 or 8 inches. Defending state champion Dudgeon is a cautious counter-wrestler who seems to wrestle just well enough to win. While everyone watched Taylor and Genovese last year he came away with the big prize, and could well do so again. Taylor does not match up well with his style. Foley had a won match over Buddie at the St. X which he threw away, but he is very good. He captured the North Canton title at 175#, and was a state qualifier at 185# last season. Brunner and Fickes wrestled for 5th last year at this weight with Brunner winning by a point. In an average season these boys -- with normal improvement -- would be weight class favorites. This year they'll have a difficult time improving on their last year's finish.

Taylor and Buddie should dominate the Mentor Regional with their great scoring ability. Lackner is undefeated and crushed every foe at Kenston, but he is not nearly good enough to match up with the top two. There is a major fall-off after him with people like Filiaggi, O'Conner, and Zarzycki (Holy Name) as possible fourth qualifiers. Anderson had he remained at this weight would have been a challenger to Lackner and an almost sure qualifier, but he seems destined to wrestle at 175#.

Defending state champion Dudgeon must deal with Fickes at the Dayton Regional. Both these boys favor low-scoring, strategical bouts which Dudgeon always wins. Fickes will have to adopt a different approach to close the gap that now exists between them. State qualifier Klusman has missed part of the year, but should be favored for the third qualifying berth. After him Talley, Lewis, and Heineman (Talawanda) are possible fourth choices. They will be over-matched at the state level.

Foley will have solid competition at Toledo. Akers missed state competition by two points last year while Wiewora is equally good. They have split a pair of bouts this year and given the unfairness of the consolation system could possibly capture a low place. Evert is a good fourth choice, but Collum and Ramirez will challenge him. Thompson (Upper Arlington) could help his team's chances with a qualification at this weight.

The Massillon Regional will focus on state place winner Brunner and two-time Brecksville champ DelRosa. Brunner was a state semi-finalist last year losing a 5-2 bout to Dudgeon and then getting nicked by a one-point upset the next round. DelRosa had two one-point upset losses at the district level last year in a complete turnabout from his fine regular season performance. However, he was only a sophomore then and has mentally matured to the point where he'll be Brunner's main competition. The rest of the field is extremely weak with Staats or Hatzarides as possibilities.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BOB GENOVESE (SOLON) 1ST

HERCIN (AKRON GEN-HOOVER) 6TH

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2. Kerr (Toledo Waite) 5 TH | 11. Everetts (Gahanna) 2 ND |
| 3. M. Buddie (St. Ignatius) 3 RD | 12. Beier (Toledo St. John) |
| 4. Hart (Worthington) | 13. LeForce (Franklin) |
| 5. Ferguson (West Chester Lakota) | 14. Bryant (Lorain) |
| 6. Crawford (North Canton) | 15. House (Toledo Rogers) |
| 7. Ferguson (Cincinnati Princeton) | 16. Lowery (New Philadelphia) |
| 8. Fee (St. Edward) | 17. Parsons (Beloit West Brnach) |
| 9. Keenan (Steubenville) 4 TH | 18. Ford (Lebanon) |
| 10. Anderson/Eddie (Euclid) | 19. Saleeba (Fairfield) |
| | 20. Huffman (Lexington) |

This is yet another weight class where I'm picking against the defending state champion -- the third time already. However, there is just no way I can not choose Genovese based on his unblemished record and his dominating performances so far. In actuality, Genovese lost intensity after beating old rival Taylor in the semi-finals last year or he, too, would be defending a title. Already he has won the Solon, Kenston, and North Canton tourneys (all at 185#) without really being challenged. He already has the attributes of a big-time collegiate wrestler. However, it may not be all that easy. Kerr is the defending titlist here and he may surprise me again this year just as he did last season when he beat York and Bryan in consecutive appearances. He has had some injury problems, but seems healthy now, and although he has lost twice at 185# he will not lose easily at this weight. He seems to frustrate opponents and force them into errors that they don't generally make. Right behind this duo is the fabulous sophomore Mike Buddie with an undeniable talent so large that he may start cashing it in for state titles as early as this year. Last year he was a regional semi-finalist as a freshman, and this year is only defeats have been administered by Genovese and Holman.

The Mentor Regional should be dominated by Buddie and Genovese who emerge from the same district and thus should be bracketed apart. Fee and Anderson are a quantum jump behind them and will have to wrestle well to qualify. Fee is a stubborn competitor absent many of the moves of his lighter colleagues, but he can be difficult to beat. Anderson is flashier, but prone to the unfortunate mistake. Behind them are Brecksville champ Bryant and a myriad of other hopefuls. Clearly this weight class divides into two unequal classes at Mentor -- Genovese and Buddie and everybody else.

Kerr, will have to contend with some powerful competition in Toledo. Hart missed the early part of the season, but showed well on his return winning the strong St. X tourney. He was a state qualifier at this weight last year and so he should be very strong. His only loss was to Buddie by the surprisingly one-sided score of 9-1. Again as at Mentor there is a real chasm between this duo and the rest of the field. Everetts was a regional quarter-finalist before being pinned by state champion Kerr, and on the latter's upset loss disappeared because of the "time-saving" consolation system. Regional qualifiers Beier, House, and Campbell (Galion) are other possibilities along with the rapidly improving Huffman. This latter boy is the twin of the more successful 185# and came into his own at the Gorman Inv. pinning his way through the tourney including a fall over Campbell.

The Southwest is dominated by the two unrelated Fergusons who have dominated the Cincinnati area. It is still a question mark, though, as to how they'll match up to the northern boys. Again there is a big drop-off after this twosome with LeForce, Ford, and maybe, Saleeba the next best group. However, several other possibilities exist and all three may be vulnerable.

Crawford and the rapidly improving Keenan are the top choices at Massillon, but this is a weak regional and even the top two will have trouble placing at Columbus. Keenan may soon be a clear factor better as he keeps showing increasing improvement. Lowery, the powerful sophomore, is a possible third choice, but his reaction to regional pressure is unclear. Parsons and Robbins (Massillon Perry) are other choices, but this is not a strong group at all.

185#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: REX HOLMAN (UPPER ARLINGTON) ^{1st}

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2. Bryan (St. Ignatius) ^{3rd} | 12. Huffman (Lexington) |
| 3. Walczak (Maumee) ^{4th} | 13. Smith (Akron Firestone) |
| 4. Mullins (Dayton Chaminade) | 14. Randolph (Wadsworth) ^{2nd} |
| 5. Heidemann (Cincinnati Elder) ^{6th} | 15. Baker (Trotwood Madison) |
| 6. Hawkins (Austintown Fitch) | 16. Dreger (Ravenna) |
| 7. Dyar (Cincinnati Northwestern) | 17. Gold (Logan) |
| 8. Monroe (Marion-Franklin) | 18. Vanover (Fairfield) |
| 9. P. Foley (Worthington) ^{5th} | 19. Smith (GlenOak) |
| 10. Eyler (Galion) | 20. Bright (Chardon) |
| 11. Reid (Cleveland St. Joseph) | 21. Howard (Westerville North) |

In the future when we look back at the decade of the 1980's one of the distinguishing characteristics of Ohio wrestling will be development of a number of outstanding big men. Davies, Funk, Coleman, Potokar, and some others will be remembered, but then everyone will agree that the greatest of them all was Rex Holman. Bold words for someone who has yet to win his first state crown, but the big junior from Upper Arlington is a devastating force. He faces reasonably tough opposition, but I don't think it'll make any real difference. Bryan, who eliminated him in the semi-finals last year, should be his top competition, but this time their individual outcome will come out differently. My longest "AAA" winning streak is at this weight where I've chosen five champs in a row. Its kind of comforting to realize that Holman is carrying my standard here in 1987.

Some of Holman's top competition will be at Toledo. Walczak was a semi-finalist last year lost to Mitchell, suffered an injury, and defaulted down to 6th place. In a normal season he might be looking at a possible title, but his best hope is second -- and since he'll draw away from Holman at Columbus that is a distinct possibility. Monroe is a sensational all-around athlete just coming into his own in this sport. His recent victory over Kerr solidifies his stature in the Top Ten and suggests he may move even higher. This is the kind of competitor who when he becomes confident becomes very difficult to defeat. Foley got stuck wrestling heavyweight last year, but even so made it to the regional quarter-finals. This season at 185# he should check in as the fourth qualifier. However, there is still other top quality competition. State qualifier Huffman crushed Monroe last year, and will certainly be difficult to brush aside at this weight. He could easily creep into the favored four with a single mild upset. Eyler pinned Huffman at the Gorman and has been on a prolonged pinning streak. He, too, will challenge the top four at this regional.

Bryan, a state runner-up last year, has been at heavyweight all year. I don't think it has helped him any since he tried only his most basic, safest moves against the big boys. Now back at 185# he'll need to adjust to the faster, more mobile big men. Already Foley has upset him, but I expect him to be in better form by tourney time. Besides the Mentor Regional isn't all that tough, although it cannot be taken for granted either. Hawkins is an amazing physical specimen, but Genovese totally out-slicked him when he was at 185#. Do not go upper-body with this wrestler. State qualifier Reid has lost to Bryan and Hawkins and drew with Foley and is not a sure-shot for qualification. However, only people like Bright, Vennis (Warren Howland), and Vranesevic (Normandy) are competitive making the last spot very wide-open.

There is a lot of placement material at the Dayton Regional. Mullins, Heidemann, and Dyar are all rock-solid performers with good credentials. Dyar lost an overtime criteria bout at regionals last year while Heidemann was eliminated in that same round. Mullins, however, is a state qualifier. This year Dyar beat Mullins on criteria and gave Holman his closest bout to date. Heidemann won the Cincinnati Holiday Tourney and the trio, all told, is very strong. Vanover and Baker are also good 185#ers and should have the inside track for that fourth spot. Harmon (Dayton Stebbins) is another possibility.

In contrast to the other sites the Massillon Regional is defenseless. Nobody in that area has been all that impressive with Randolph and Smith, perhaps, being the best. Nobody here has to have the slightest thought about where on the mantelpiece to put their state medal. In fact, the entire qualifying quartet will be fortunate to win a bout at Columbus.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: PAUL LONG (MAYFIELD) ^{1st}

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2. Frimel (North Olmsted) ^{4th} | 13. Vaselaney (Holy Name) ^{3rd} |
| 3. Shade (Mansfield Madison) | 14. Conner (Toledo Rogers) |
| 4. Rutledge (Dayton Meadowdale) | 15. Harder (Upper Arlington) |
| 5. Boon (North Canton) | 16. Ford (Lebanon) |
| 6. Wolf (West Carrollton) | 17. Shilling (Massillon) |
| 7. Whatmore (Toledo Start) ^{6th} | 18. Kowalski (Toledo Central Catholic) |
| 8. Kintz (Canton McKinley) ^{5th} | 19. Brewer (Euclid) |
| 9. Henthorn (Ashland) | 20. Frazier (Gahanna) |
| 10. Gill (Watkins Memorial) ^{2nd} | 21. Baird (Cincinnati LaSalle) |
| 11. Davis (Milford) | 22. Lahr (Pickerington) |
| 12. Edwards (Alliance) | 23. Ramsey (E. Liverpool) |
| | 24. Phillips (Nordonia) |

Letters and cards have been pouring in from big men all over the state begging me not to choose them for the heavyweight title. Fear of the famed Brakeman Jinx has been known to cause 275# behemoths to shake uncontrollably when confronted with its awful reality. Stephen Spielberg is considering a new horror film called "Brian Brakeman and the Arena of Doom" based on some of my more recent picks. After all, only once in the past ten years has my choice actually been crowned champ (Vaughn Broadnax in 1980) and even then had the bout been five seconds longer he would have lost. I've had outstanding choices lose to freak pins, first-round falls (when ahead 9-0), poor officiating, broken ankles, one-point screamers, and California move-ins. This year I feel very confident (gulp!) that Paul Long will exorcise this jinx once and for all with a triumphant march to the crown. The last of five wrestling brothers (all heavyweights) at Mayfield he has the size, speed, and strength to win. A fifth place finisher last year, Long lost a 10-10, 6-5 ot bout that would have been the key to a state final appearance.

Long's chief threat would appear to be Frimel a beautifully proportioned 215#er with outstanding atheletic ability. Like Long he is big-time football, but he has also wrestled most of his life as so that he is skilled craftsman on the mat. Long probably is 20 pounds heavier and that could well be the difference. Nobody else in the regional has the remotest chance for a state place and, in fact, the last two qualifiers are likely to remain a mystery until the regionals are completed. I've listed Brewer and Vaselaney, but other possibilities are Aborn (Willoughby South), Pruitt (Lorain), Setta (St. Edward and Bobish (Maple Hts).

At Toledo, Schade seems to have pulled ahead of a number of other long-term foes to become #1 in this area. A state qualifier last year he has defeated a number of other regional headliners and could challenge everyone in this competition. His regional is crowded with solid candidates that are so even its difficult to differentiate them. Whatmore, Conner, and Kowalski are all from Toledo schools and all collected regional wins last year -- with Conner making it to States and a first-round loss to Long. The mobile Whatmore seems best this year with the fast-improving Kowalski a real threat. The Columbus contingent consists of Gill, Harder, Frazier, and Lahr again all were regional competitors last year, but none came close to state qualification. Gill seems strongest, but they are not that far apart. Then Henthorn and Stetter (Defiance) represent the outlying areas both having regional losses to Shade last year -- Henthorn's in overtime in the go-to-state bout. All in all, this will be a manic competition for just four spots.

Rutledge surprised nearly everyone last year by rolling (and I mean that literally) into the state semi-finals. He then was pinned 3 straight times (twice under a minute) and finished 6th. Wrestlers in the Dayton city schools don't always get a lot of good competition, but Rutledge continues to improve in spite of it. His big weapon is a cute little roll that has provided him with a boatload of falls. State qualifier Wolf may be a better all around wrestler and his 1-0 loss to Long last year indicates solid achievement. He'll be a threat to anyone. Davis was a district champ and regional quarter-finalist last year, but an unlikely draw kept him out of the consolation picture. Ford and Baird are other possibilities with Newell (Xenia) a darkhorse. Good, solid competition here.

Massillon is beset with question marks. The mammoth Boon is an inexperienced wrestler with outstanding tools. Winner of the North Canton, Medina, and St. X tourneys he should be a handful for anyone. Still heavyweights lacking experience are prime victims of the fluky fall at heavyweight. Kintz seems unknown to most, but he missed state qualification by a single point last year. Again a weak schedule hampers him and he, too, is the type wrestler who is a candidate for the upset loss. Edwards has made substantial improvement and may be better than originally projected. The rest of the crop here is very weak unless we get some quick move-ins from the Toledo Regional. Schilling, Ramsey, Phillips, Burwell (Massillon Perry), and Powell (Beloit West Branch) are only state candidates because this is a weak regional.

TEAMS

1. St. Edward -- Ten consecutive state titles is a magnificent achievement that would have seemed totally impossible a decade ago. It will tie St. Edward's with Maple Hts. for most team titles and could push their number of individual titles during this time span to nearly 30. However, it may not come quite as easily as anticipated especially since St. Ed's has not wrestled up to its potential in the last two state meets. While Landolfo and Fried have performed admirably all year and should win, it has been

people like Skelton and Viancourt that have had problems in Columbus. Should that happen again only Castellana looks able to pick up the slack although Tomkovicz, Helderman, and Fee have some potential to score. The big question mark is Palker who if he can author a successful return will not only win at 145#, but inspire his teammates.

2. **ST. IGNATIUS** -- An upper-weight juggernaut that could still give Ed's a thrill or two. Both Collins twins should place with Steve Buddie and Bryan as possible finalist. Mike Buddie, a sophomore phenomenon at 175#, may lose the last bout of his high school career at States or he may not lose at all. The big problems will be to get scoring from any of the low weights including state qualifier Voth, and an easy transition back to 185# for Bryan.
3. **UPPER ARLINGTON** -- Holman is so good it is scary and he gives Upper Arlington a sure champion. McLellan could also win a title, but after that scoring points will be tough. The suddenly fierce Pagniano could help as might Orazen or Stout.
4. **SOLON** -- A group of exceptional lightweights and the marvelous Genovese make for an outstanding team. I can't quite see Minadeo repeating as champ, but should that happen and Hamm, Canitano, and Lally pitch in this team might have the runner-up trophy.
5. **NORTH CANTON HOOVER** -- Elsass is exceptional while Boon and Gibbs could both score heavily at the state. They'll need help from people like Crawford and Heid if they want to move even one place higher, however.
6. **FAIRFIELD** -- The lighter Laflin could well be a finalist while Baker has the same potential. If the other Laflin and Murray can qualify and a couple of the big men like Christian or Saleeba get lucky this team could roll. The big question mark is how Duncan will do at 132#.
7. **LORAIN SOUTHVIEW** -- G. T. Taylor may be one of the five best seniors in the state and he'll have plenty of help from his teammates as well. His brother Robert, if healthy, should place high at 145# while Kopp has the potential to do well at the unsettled 119# class. If Carreras, Senquiz, or Bermudez can chip in this team could make the top five.
8. **XENIA** -- This looks pretty much like a three-man team, but what a sensational trio. State champ Dudgeon always seems to do whatever is needed to win while Hoskins and Smith could be finalists.
9. **NORDONIA** -- A team that will benefit from the regional shifting which now puts them at Massillon. State finalist Andrassy will score in double figures, and Gillmor and DelRosa have the potential to do the same. What they need is help from Drake, Jim Andrassy, or Phillips in order to move up.

10. GALION -- A physically strong team that is laden with experienced seniors. Long and Kintner are the twin hubs while Eyler has done exceedingly well so far. If state qualifier DeNero and Chandler can pitch in this team will easily be in the Top Ten.
11. WORTHINGTON -- The team revolves around the upper weight troika of the two Foleys and Hart. However, Newcomb has been solid at 138# and Miller, if he is ready, could score at 155#. A typical well-balanced Worthington squad.
12. MAPLE HTS. -- Really more of a dual meet squad than a tourney team. However, Slevinski is flat-out excellent and could be state champ. Whether people like Prusha, Atienza, Monachino, and Cardaman can contribute is problematical, and, if not, this team will fall out of the top twenty.
13. NORTH OLMSTED -- Two finalists score a lot of points, but both Smith and Frimel will have to really battle to get there. Machovina is a great freshman and Kasler a solid junior, but they both may be a year away. If Cianciola returns this team will be dynamite in 1988.

AA

Next year promises a re-structuring of the wrestling classification in Ohio and the area most likely to be affected is "AA". Division of wrestling schools into three equal segments will mean that the 60 smallest "AAA" schools will move into "AA" and the 90 smallest "AA" schools will move into "A". This will have a profound affect on both "A" and "AA", but it will be particularly interesting in the latter classification.

The balance of power in the last half-dozen years has been with the small Catholic schools like Ready, Chanel, Stritch, and DeSales. That is likely to change in ways not easily foreseen, and will add a whole new dimension to what has recently been the most exciting classification.

98#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MIKE GLASS (GIRARD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Sasso (Chanel) | 11. Shanower (Berkshire) |
| 3. Folden (Coventry) | 12. Nguyen (LCC) |
| 4. Wegener (Swanton) | 13. Cash (Little Miami) |
| 5. Vallone (Columbus Briggs) | 14. Melrose (Licking Valley) |
| 6. Zamiska/Futo (Twinsburg) | 15. Watson (Belpre) |
| 7. Zapadka (Cardinal Stritch) | 16. Beane (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 8. Randall/Jordan (St. Paris Graham) | 17. Hitchcock (Eaton) |
| 9. Gonzalez (Fostoria) | 18. McKenna (Chagrin Falls) |
| 10. Hinkle (Sparta Highland) | 19. Connelly (Rocky River) |
| | 20. Francis (Bellaire) |

It would have been very unusual to have a senior and defending state champion return at this weight class, but that appeared to be the case. Mark Tinney had been headed in that direction until, as I understand it, scholastic difficulties sidelined him for the remainder of the season. He would have been a solid favorite to win again, but now any of a half-dozen boys could conceivably capture the crown. A logical choice might be state qualifier Sasso who upset Tinney in the regionals last year, but he has two strikes against him. First, he has had only one competitive bout all year because of a fractured hand and weight problems, and, second, he has not as of this writing made 98# and seems more interested in beating Nero out at 105#. Various rationales could be advanced for favoring any of my 6 or 8 candidates, but I've opted for state qualifier Glass as my #1 choice. Last year he sped to the regional finals before losing and then upset Marinelli in first-round state action. This year he is stronger and more confident and certainly has as good a chance as anyone.

Wegener leads a varied group at Fostoria now that Tinney will not compete. Champion at the mammoth Medina Tourney he has the potential to win it all should the Firestone contingent stumble. A top contender would have to be the freshman sensation Zapadka who has won a number of national age-group titles and has performed well this year. He is still getting better and could surpass expectations with additional improvement. Somebody to watch for at this weight is the explosive Gonzalez. He has the speed and power to upset any of the top boys, but, conversely, the style that could lose to an unknown. He will bear close watch by all at this weight. A similar candidate is Nguyen who had a first-period fall over Wegener at last year's regional and has dominated foes in the Lima area for two years. Other candidates are Connelly, Mattin (Delta) and Thom (Huron).

The Firestone Regional will be exceptional. Glass is my top choice, but a healthy, motivated Sasso would be very tough, too. Missing much of the season will make him fresher than most of the competition, but he could be rusty, too. He and Glass would be a very tough bout with Sasso, perhaps, having an advantage on his feet. Folden, undefeated to date, has had no close matches and been a dominant force in his area. He missed state qualification by one point last year. Zamiska is the second exceptional freshman at this weight whose last name begins with a "Z". He won the Kenston Tourney and has split a pair of bouts with the redoubtable "AAA" competitor Canitano. If he can escape freshman jitters he should reach and score at Columbus. That is, of course, if he can beat his equally talented teammate Futo in the wrestle-off. Should Sasso not compete at this weight or be at less than top form, the fourth qualifying berth would be wide open. I favor state alternate Shanower who has just dropped from 105#, but there are a slew of competitors. These include regional quarter-finalist McKenna, Smithville champ Woods, and up-and-coming Bailey (Ravenna Southeast). Beyond this are Jimison (Kenston) and Frechette (Akron St. Vincent) both solid competitors. Clearly the pairings will play a major role in determining the outcome.

Last year Mike Vallone entered the regional with a gaudy 27-0 record and strong district scores. A quarter-final loss eliminated him -- thanks to the archaic consolation rules -- and he returns in 1987 again undefeated and hopeful. This time he should have no such problems as the Pataskala Regional is not particularly strong. Hinkle, Melrose, Beane, and Francis are all listed in my top twenty, but only Hinkle would seem to be of similar stature. In fact, it is likely that one or, perhaps, even two unknowns will grab qualifying spots.

Dayton, however, is the really weak regional at this weight. One of the St. Paris Graham duo of Jordan or Randall should take top honors there, but neither really have state placement potential. Incidentally, Jordan is the cousin of the fabulous Jordan brothers of the early 80's. After that the situation is unclear, mainly because few quality individuals have surfaced during the course of the season. This is the group you'll want to draw into for the first round.

105#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: NICK CIANCIOLA (GENOA)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Marinelli (Columbus DeSales) | 11. McCumber (Rossford) |
| 3. Shocklee (Akron St. Vincent) | 12. Yinger (Nelsonville-York) |
| 4. Benavides (Brooklyn) | 13. Kemp (Buckeye) |
| 5. Grandison (Uhrichsville Claymont) | 14. Jordan/Randall (St. Paris Graham) |
| 6. McCombs (Springfield NW) | 15. Livengood (Bryan) |
| 7. Riglo (Olmsted Falls) | 16. Metzger (Swanton) |
| 8. Thomas (Washington Court House) | 17. Grumbling (Highland) |
| 9. Nero (Chanel) | 18. Lovejoy (Elyria West) |
| 10. Keyes (Olentangy) | 19. Jones (South Point) |
| | 20. Luda (Cardinal Stritch) |

If it hadn't been for Alan Fried, Cianciola would be remembered as one of the best "AAA" freshman in the last ten years. As it turned out, he got a little lost in Fried's shadow, but his accomplishments are worthy of note. Wrestling a weight up at 105# he was a state semi-finalist, had an overtime loss to the state champ in the regional finals, and defeated any number of outstanding boys. Now he's at Genoa and should be a dominant force at 105# this year. Basically he'll have to overcome two problems. First, he'll have to be wary of over-confidence -- a feeling that his "AAA" successes make him invulnerable in "AA". He is not upset proof. Second, he may be rusty because Genoa does not wrestle a powerful schedule and the regional and state may catch him unprepared. Still, he has to be a solid favorite to take the title.

State 3rd Benavides will provide the principal competition for Cianciola at the Fostoria Regional, and his huge height advantage could be significant -- but I doubt it. The regional is crowded with possibilities all of them with legitimate chances. State qualifier Riglo wrestled an outstanding regional last year grabbing a state berth away from a number of highly rated boys. He'll be forced to do the same thing this year. McCumber is an outstanding freshman with vast youth wrestling experience. He would be even tougher at 98# except that Rossford had state champ Tinney there. Livengood and Metzger are solid NWOAL wrestlers with the ability to skip ahead of higher ranked wrestlers. They won't make a lot of mistakes. Lovejoy is the unknown factor who combines explosiveness with a penchant for the big mistake. He can be very dangerous. Luda and Waleri (Norwalk) have gotten short shrift in this analysis, but both have qualifying potential. It should be one of the best "AA" regional weight classes this year for excitement. Enjoy!

At the other extreme is the Southwest Regional where the cupboard is nearly bare. State qualifier Thomas returns, but he is no threat to the really tough 105's. Behind him are a group of unknowns who have not yet had a major impact at the state level. Besides the listed Jordan, Jones and Yinger, possibilities include Nicely (Blanchester), and Stamper (Middletown Madison). Not much here. I've placed McCombs both here and at 112# since I'm not sure where he'll compete. Should it be at this class he would have to be rated as a strong contender to place once again.

The Firestone Regional brings together an interesting group of contenders. Shocklee had an outstanding sophomore season, but got destroyed in first-round state action. He has again wrestled well this season and again is a favorite to garner a high place. Nero, who've I've always thought highly of, has state ability -- but if Sasso can't make 98# he'll be fortunate to retain a varsity spot. Kemp has not made the anticipated progress first projected and he'll have to withstand challenges from folks like Bliss (Aurora) and McKenzie (Ravenna Southeast). A clear dark-horse is Grumbling down two weight classes from where he placed at North Canton. If he is comfortable at this weight he will be a threat. Futo (Twinsburg) should he be here also has qualification potential.

Two of my top contenders exit from Pataskala. Grandison, runner-up at 98# last year, will probably have more trouble this year. His record suggests a plateau has been reached, and if that is the case he'll have to battle just to place. He defeated Marinelli last year, but Mario has made rapid improvement and I look for a reversal at the regional level. Marinelli has the potential to beat everyone here but Cianciola, who "eats up" that kind of style. Cianciola will beat either of these boys badly on their feet. The rest of the regional is weak with Keyes a possible 3rd choice. After that its people like DeShetler (Bishop Ready), Horner (Columbus Academy), and McManus (Barnesville).

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ERIK BURNETT (OBERLIN)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Meyer (Olentangy) | 12. McCombs (Springfield NW) |
| 3. DiDomenico (Chanel) | 13. Faulkner (Clyde) |
| 4. Foss (Ontario) | 14. Raney (Cambden Preble Shawnee) |
| 5. Letzner (Medina Highland) | 15. Sarver (Bishop Ready) |
| 6. Mariola (Twinsburg) | 16. Gochenauer (Paulding) |
| 7. Williams (Hillsboro) | 17. Bixler (Blanchester) |
| 8. Mullet (Marysville) | 18. Knox (Kenston) |
| 9. Stiriz (Delta) | 19. Knull (St. Paris Graham) |
| 10. Knotts (Vincent Warren) | 20. Miller (Canal Fulton NW) |
| 11. Nixon (Akron Hoban) | 21. Balash (Bethel-Tate) |
| | 22. Whittlesley (Coventry) |

This is a fine weight class featuring a number of returning state qualifiers, but three-time state champion Erik Burnett, will nonetheless, dominate the proceeding. Blessed with incredible quickness and great stamina, Burnett always wrestles six manic minutes as he works unceasingly for points and falls. One of Ohio's finest prospects Burnett has wrestled strong competition throughout the state and risen above it. A small 112# competitor (he could, I believe, easily make 105#) Burnett has only two concerns. One, he must get a little better on the bottom for he must get out to work his takedown magic and, two, his unbelievably good barrel roll is so well known that he may have to switch to other takedowns to set up his "bread and butter" move. These are small quibbles indeed when placed in the context of a better than 90 match winning streak with a schedule that has given him the opportunity to wrestle many of the best "AAA" competitors at his weight. Certainly, barring injuries, his fourth state title seems assured, and a successful collegiate career a certainty.

At Fostoria the adept Foss will be Burnett's major competition, although he has already finished behind him at the Gorman Tourney. Still Foss was 3rd. last year and split a pair of matches with DiDomenico -- an opponent he could well meet again in 1987. State qualifier Stiriz had an awful draw at Columbus last year and it was two bouts and out. He should do better this year, but cannot compete with either Burnett or Foss. Faulkner and Gochenauer should battle for the final qualifying spot although Alfonsi (Lexington), Bohrer (Huron), and Finkhousen (Van Wert) will lead a parade of other hopefuls.

At Firestone three state place winners, DiDomenico (4th) Letzner (5th) and Mariola (6th) provide an attractive competition. I've given DiDomenico a slight edge based on his state win over Letzner last year, and some recent improvements in performance. DiDomenico has had a pattern of starting slowly -- which has happened again this season -- and then moving forward, which seems to be happening now. Letzner, 2nd at North Canton to Fried, has not been tested since then and that may put him at a disadvantage come tourney time. Last year he seemed to freeze in his first state match, but experience should prevent that this year. Mariola has excellent technique but is slight of build and not strong enough to force moves. His ability to keep matches close, his years of experience, and his ability to hit big throws make him an always dangerous opponent. The fourth qualifying spot will be sought by a host of candidates. The most intriguing is state qualifier Nixon who has not wrestled in a month. He was a surprise regional finalist last year and would be the most logical fourth choice. Otherwise listed people like Knox, Whittlesley or Miller are possibilities along with others such as Markley (Doylestown Chippewa) and Carpenter (Girard).

At Pataskala Meyer should dominate, and, depending on the pairings be one of several with a chance to challenge history by meeting Burnett in the finals. After him the field is extremely weak with Mullet and Sarver the two best of a lackluster list. I have not even rated state qualifier Rogers (Columbus DeSales) based on a series of poor outcomes, but he along with Stillion (Byesville Meadowbrook) and Manger (West Jefferson) may just qualify anyway. Except for Meyer this group will be first-round cannon fodder.

The Southwest Regional features a wide array of styles, records, and geographical location. This makes for an uncertain stew with the final outcome very much in doubt. State place winner Williams (6th at 112#) has to be the nominal favorite, but he has no lock on even qualifying. State place winner McCombs (4th at 98#) has not been comfortable at 112#, and has also been rated at 105#, while state qualifier Bixler winner of a state bout last year can be beaten. State qualifier Raney has a great record but a weak schedule so his status is still uncertain. Factor in Knull, Balash, Rase (Ironton) and Cartwright (Washington Court House) and you have the makings of a frantic competition. The one unknown is Knotts -- down from "AAA" -- and sporting a solid record. He could be the crucial factor in determining the final outcome.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BRIAN MARDER (CHANEL)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Kruse (Bishop Ready) | 11. Moyer (Casstown Miami East) |
| 3. Heil (Brooklyn) | 12. Teasdale (Bellaire) |
| 4. Bartos (Buckeye) | 13. Lohman (Milan Edison) |
| 5. Miller (Olentangy) | 14. Cleckner (Tipp City) |
| 6. Burns (Cincinnati Reading) | 15. Thetford (Uhrichsville Claymont) |
| 7. Shadoan (Oak Harbor) | 16. Reynolds (Cardinal Stritch) |
| 8. Tate (Youngstown Ursuline) | 17. Geog (Wooster Triway) |
| 9. Jenkins (St. Paris Graham) | 18. Stefanek (Berkshire) |
| 10. Biddle (Kansas Lakota) | 19. Ferguson (Coventry) |
| | 20. Allen (South Point) |

This is a relatively weak weight class that should be dominated by the strong and resourceful Brian Marder. Third as both a freshman and sophomore (once in "AAA" and once in "AA") Marder wrestled probably two classes higher than optimal (126#) giving way to two-time champ Dan Donovan. This year he has been superb at 119# and would frankly be my choice in "AAA" were he there. Should he maintain the concentration and intensity he has so far exhibited he should be rewarded with his first state crown.

His biggest challenge should come from Kruse who he defeated 5-2 at the Medina final. Like Marder, Kruse wrestled well above his normal weight (138#) because of team considerations (like Ramsey, DiSabato, and Sarver -- all state place-winners), and now has done exceptionally well at a more normal weight. Miller is also strong at the Pataskala Regional and had a big win over two-time state champ Joe Bonaventura. After that the quality drops off rapidly with state qualifier Teasdale and Thetford only marginally better than a host of potential challengers. Names that come to mind are Allen (Morgan), Zuspahn (Marion River Valley), and Brandon (St. Clairsville).

Marder heads the strongest regional. State qualifier Bartos will be a place contender, while Geog, Stefanek, and Ferguson are all capable of winning at the state level -- if they can get there. Something of a mystery is Tate who has performed reasonably well at 132# and 138# and now has dropped two weight classes. He could be a real surprise. Another long-shot possibility is Gangle (Medina Highland) who has had several consecutive dispiriting seasons. There is still reason to believe that qualifier possibilities are there. It should be a real dogfight for those last three spots.

State qualifiers Heil, Biddle, and Lohman lead the Fostoria contingent, but only Heil of this group has placement chances. He was 4th as a sophomore, but failed to qualify last year and has been very impressive in 1987. I look for Shadoan to surpass the other two state qualifiers with Reynolds a possibility to do the same. In fact Biddle and Lohman could both have trouble qualifying once again.

At Dayton state placer Jenkins and state qualifiers Burns and Moyer face a varied assortment of competitors. Burns won a match at Columbus and missed by a single point of placing. He has to be the top-rated competitor there even though Jenkins has twice qualified including a 5th last year. I don't know how Jenkins does it. Last year he started slowly losing seven times, but at year's end he was a regional champ and had three state wins. I don't believe he can do it again, although he is a master of the sub-one minute pin. Raney will have problems qualifying again with people like Cleckner, Allen and Blake (Belpre) mounting real challenges. It should be an interesting competition.

126#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ADAM DISABATO (BISHOP READY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Hivnor (Oak Harbor) | 11. Pepper (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 3. Anderson (Chanel) | 12. Savage (Delta) |
| 4. Hannah (Sandusky Perkins) | 13. McNatt (Ursuline) |
| 5. Schade (Buckeye) | 14. Rosenthal (Bexley) |
| 6. Donathan (Mt. Orab Western Brown) | 15. Frye (Bethel-Tate) |
| 7. Edwards (Akron) | 16. Everett (W. Salem Northwestern) |
| 8. Bible (Bellfontaine) | 17. Woodruff (Vincent Warren) |
| 9. Delande (St. Clairsville) | 18. Miracle (River Valley) |
| 10. Harris (Kenston) | 19. Kennedy (Navarre Fairless) |
| | 20. Steele (Milton-Union) |

Last year there was much discussion about a possible super match-up between Erik Burnett and Adam DiSabato. DiSabato, then a sophomore, seemed to be in top form easily defeating top-rated competition at both the "AA" and "AAA" level. His exceptional assortment of takedowns led many experts to believe that he had the skills to upend Burnett. Sadly the match never occurred as DiSabato was upset by the tenacious Steve Starcher who wrestled brilliantly in the top position to win a marvelous bout. Besides Starcher's excellent wrestling, DiSabato damaged his own chances with early impatience, and then succumbed to growing panic as he could not escape. This year I detect an added maturity in his efforts and foresee a relatively easy win despite a field crowded with eleven former state qualifiers.

Five of those qualifiers will be at Firestone competing in, perhaps, the strongest and deepest regional at any weight class in "AA." Let's introduce the participants. Anderson, a 1985 qualifier, missed out last year in a major turnabout. Campaigning almost exclusively at 132# he has performed well winning at Solon and Richmond Hts., but did poorly at Medina--possibly because of nagging injuries. He could be a finalist at this weight. Schade and Edwards were first-round losers at Columbus last year, but both should do better in 1987. Edwards, in particular, is subject to hot streaks that could vault him into the top echelons of this weight. That covers three spots but there is still incredible talent left. Sophomores Everett, Pepper and Harris are all excellent, the first being an "A" qualifier last year while the other two have performed very well in 1987. Harris was a finalist at North Canton while Pepper is just down from 138# where he was Smithville champ and placed at Kenston. State qualifier Kennedy receives little notice, but has the knack of placing in important tourneys and cannot be overlooked. Finally, McNatt has had a very strong year and could beat out much of this competition for one of those coveted state berths. Just a dynamite regional.

At Pataskala, DiSabato will now be facing two other state qualifiers plus several other strong contenders. However, none of this group really appears to have the weapons necessary to challenge DiSabato, or, perhaps even place at the state level. Delande and Miracle were both first round state losers who didn't get a second chance. Delande is a strong rider and probably has the best chance to place -- his style is slightly reminiscent of Steve Starcher which probably still gives DiSabato nightmares. Grossenbacher, who would be rated at the same level as Delande, has moved up to 132#, thus solidifying a qualifying spot for Miracle. Rosenthal looks to be the current favorite for that fourth state berth.

Donathan, 6th last year at 119#, heads an experienced, but not necessarily powerful southwestern delegation. His big drawback is a weak schedule that features many smaller "AA" schools. The other spots are wide-open and will depend on how the pairings develop. Bible will not have the super record, but has wrestled a competitive schedule and should be ready at tournament time. State qualifier Steele is beatable while Frye, Woodruff and Henderson (Chesapeake) all have the tools to pull an upset. None of this foursome, however, will endanger the top-ranked boys.

While the Fostoria Regional returns no state qualifiers it possesses a possible finalist in Hivnor and a strong placement candidate in Hannah. Hivnor lost in the first round at Medina and then won seven straight bouts including wins over Edwards and "A" choice Todd Dean. Right now I place him in the second spot, but the next six or seven boys are all very close in overall ability. There is a big drop-off in quality after the top two with Savage, Musca (Rocky River), Hall (Delta) and Mickey (Trinity) as possibilities for other qualifying berths. Mickey does have the potential to spring a big upset. Another interesting candidate is ex-St. Edward wrestler Tulles (Fairview Park), who is just coming off the injury list.

132#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DAVE GREGAN (TWINSBURG)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Coontz (Ravenna Southeast) | 12. Napier (Hillsboro) |
| 3. Savoia (Medina Highland) | 13. Davis (Lewistown Indian Lake) |
| 4. Henessey (Brookfield) | 14. Johnston (Tinora) |
| 5. Zeithem (Oak Harbor) | 15. Zettler (Bexley) |
| 6. Bell (Barnesville) | 16. Jones (Eaton) |
| 7. Grossenbacher (West Jefferson) | 17. Reineck (Fostoria) |
| 8. Dowdell (Wellington) | 18. Stewart (Uhrichsville Claymont) |
| 9. Watson (Olentangy) | 19. Reilly (Chanel) |
| 10. Heffner (Field) | 20. Griffin (Cincinnati Reading) |
| 11. Schuefler (Castalia Murgaretta) | 21. Houser (Milan Edison) |

It seems that everybody wants to wrestle at 132# this year -- especially in the Firestone Regional. Part of that I'm sure has to do with Ken Ramsey at 138#, but, frankly it just doesn't make much sense. Six of the top eleven wrestlers exit out of Firestone which means two of them won't even get to Columbus. This is especially hard to understand when you figure several have made tough weight cuts and 138# is fairly weak at this very same regional. Let's look at this Firestone picture in some detail.

My choice is state quarter-finalist Dave Gregan who won the Kenston at 138# and lost to Andrassy at Solon by one-point at the same weight. Now at 132# this junior is just a shade better than two or three other competitors at this regional. State qualifiers Coontz and Savoia have had outstanding seasons winning a number of major tournaments including the Medina by Savoia and the Smithville and Kenston by Coontz. They are both quick and skilled. State qualifier Henessey -- just down from 138# -- is an experienced wrestler who has suffered from a lack of tough competition. However, he was Outstanding Wrestler at both the Ursuline and Howland Tourneys. Dowdell lost a state berth to Savoia in overtime last year and lost again in the Medina finals. He is not as good on his feet as the top boys, but is a cruncher on the mat. Heffner is a complete unknown, but defeated Savoia in their league tourney last season,

and lost a 7-6 nailbiter in this year's dual. He lost a one-point decision to state champion Malcuit in their district final last year. A weak team hampers his development. Then there is Reilly -- the Richmond Hts. champ at 155# now weighing in at 132#. He is a pocket-sized version of a 175#er and wrestles in the same manner. Finally Taggart (Streetsboro) would be a contender most years, but he has no chance in 1987, and in fact, will probably move to 138#.

The Firestone qualifiers may well be shell shocked by the time they get to Columbus leaving opportunities for others. The best at Fostoria is probably Zeithem who has but one loss (a pin by Savoia at the Medina), and has dominated the "AA" wrestlers in Toledo. Two-time state qualifier Schuefler is back and he is probably second best out of this regional. Other possibilities include Johnston, Reineck, and Houser, but none of them are about to set your heart a pounding. Instead its likely that surprise wrestlers like Juhn (Fairview Park), Echols, (Paulding) or Tresch (Olmsted Falls) will capture a qualifying spot or two.

At Pataskala Watson and Zettler appeared to be clear favorites until Bell and Grossenbacher moved to 132#. Last season Bell had a technical fall over Watson to reach Columbus, and he and Watson both have placement potential -- especially since only four can qualify out of Firestone. Grossenbacher campaigned successfully all year at 126#, but will now move to 132# to enhance his placement chances. Whether this will work for the former state qualifier is still to be decided, but he is a fine wrestler and should at least qualify again. Stewart, also down from 138#, is something of an unknown but he could challenge Zettler as fourth best in the regional or, perhaps, upset one of my top three choices here. Keep an eye on him.

The Southwest Regional should be dominated by last year's state 5th at 138#--Evan Price. A year of experience and improvement coupled with a drop in weight class should make him a most formidable foe. He'll challenge the Firestone qualifiers on even terms. State qualifier Napier heads an otherwise undistinguished field--most of whom will be the first in this weight class to go home early.

138#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KEN RAMSEY (BISHOP READY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Carey (Swanton) | 12. Miller (Jonathan Alder) |
| 3. Davis (Perry) | 13. Paul (Washington Court House) |
| 4. Sigler (Belmont Union Local) | 14. Demidovich (Youngstown Liberty) |
| 5. Gallagher (Bellbrook) | 15. Knipper (Oberlin) |
| 6. Laskowski (Chanel) | 16. Kearns (South Point) |
| 7. Pierce (Oak Harbor) | 17. See (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 8. Heller (West Holmes) | 18. Graham (Lewistown Indian Lake) |
| 9. Rose (Twinsburg) | 19. Brian/Tresch (Olmsted Falls) |
| 10. Kirby (Mason) | 20. Fournier (Fostoria) |
| 11. Bisesi (Akron St. Vincent) | 21. Moyer (Casstown Miami East) |
| | 22. Stockmaster (Willard) |

This has been my favorite weight class over the years as all fifteen previous reports have correctly chosen the eventual champion. Why I have been given such uncanny success here and no where else remains a mystery, but it does motivate me each year to analyze this weight class with extra care to maintain this unblemished record. In 1987, however, that won't really be necessary as three-time state champion Ken Ramsey towers far above a rather anemic field. Ramsey will become (barring a monumental upset) Ohio's sixth four-time champion and the third crowned in 1987, and his title last summer at the USWF National merely confirmed his status as one of this state's elite competitors. Ramsey generally loses a couple of bouts during the long season (he has never finished a season unbeaten), but is devastating when the chips are down at tourney time. This season his only loss was to "AAA" choice Jeff Lyons at the Medina Tourney, but there is no one of even comparable status at this weight class. Ramsey with speed, strength, and some marvelous moves should cruise to that fourth title with few problems.

As previously mentioned, this weight has been somewhat depleted by defections to weights that are absent Kenny Ramsey. However, there is still substantial material here. Based on current knowledge, Davis, Laskowski, Rose and Bisesi would be my top four choices for qualification at Firestone. Davis has always been a good competitor, but has never really nailed down that big win. Last year he took Coontz into overtime at the regional before losing a state berth. Laskowski has been injured much of this year, but he is a formidable competitor. Rose was runner-up at Solon at 155# and has just moved down to 138#. An ex-Chanel wrestler, he would hurt his former teammates by keeping Laskowski out of Columbus. Bisesi, a finalist at Medina, is a close call over several other state caliber 138's. These include Demidovich, a state alternate last year and regional qualifier Shanower. The first of these two has an excellent chance of wrestling his way into the qualifying foursome.

The field at Fostoria is far less exciting. State place-winner Carey returns and has had a solid season including a place at the scintillating 138# class at Medina. Pierce, after a 27-1 start, lost twice in two hours at the regional last year and failed to qualify. He dropped a narrow two-point decision to Ramsey at Medina. He could be a tourney surprise. The third and fourth spots will provoke solid competition with Stockmaster, Brian, Knipper, and Fournier all ranked in my Top Twenty.

State qualifier Gallagher heads a relatively weak Southwestern contingent. Kearns and Paul come from under-publicized programs, but have qualification credentials. Kirby could be a real surprise while Graham is little more than an educated guess. Evans (Middletown Madison), Krupp (Springfield CC) and Dean (Carlisle) are other possibilities.

Finally, the Pataskala Regional presents an interesting picture. Ramsey will crush all contenders just as he did last year when his closest bout was 12-2. Second best, a respectful distance behind, is Sigler who has had a marvelous year winning several strong tourneys and Outstanding Wrestler awards. A devastating rider he has good placement potential and since he should be away from Ramsey at Columbus could be a finalist (Ramsey pinned him in 69 seconds at

the regional last year). State qualifier Heller returns at this weight and he, too, has placement potential. He wrestled Yetts tough last year, but how much he has improved since is still open to question. The last spot is wide open with See and Skeese as possibilities. Look for Peters (Uhrichsville Claymount), the third of eight brothers, to challenge vigorously now that he is down from 155#. Both the Mason and Hoppel families had five brothers qualify for state competition and the Peters have the potential to pass that mark.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MIKE HAGAN (KENSTON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Pace (Olmsted Falls) | 11. Wickham (Byesville Meadowbrook) |
| 3. Paonessa (Akron St. Vincent) | 12. Waleri (Norwalk) |
| 4. Crespo (Trinity) | 13. Robinson (Akron Hoban) |
| 5. Sturgis (Middletown Madison) | 14. Steele (Eaton) |
| 6. Hays (Utica) | 15. Pool (Bryan) |
| 7. Thatcher (Bishop Ready) | 16. Munger (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 8. Bowser (Carlisle) | 17. Harris (Sparta Highland) |
| 9. Foust (Crestwood) | 18. Hammond (Hillsboro) |
| 10. Chapman (West Holmes) | 19. Langdon (Uhrichsville Claymount) |

This weight class should be dominated by my top two choices, but they are not so far ahead that a lot of interesting surprises could not occur. Pace, the defending state champ, wrestles a lot of low-scoring, careful bouts and he doesn't make many mistakes. He is strong and solid and is very tough to score on. Last year he lost seven bouts including two to Mendicino, but he defeated him when it really counted for the title. Hagan is tremendously strong and quick and looks to be a better athlete than Pace. He was upset 7-6 in the semis and wound up settling for fourth. He has had a great season winning both the North Canton and the Kenston including a solid win over West Virginia state champ Vinnie Monseau. I favor Hagan because he'll have fewer close bouts where one mistake can eliminate you, and I think he's strong enough to take Pace down two or three times. It should be an outstanding battle.

Pace faces a tough regional road at Fostoria after having finished 3rd last year at both districts and regionals. Crespo who failed to escape that awesome 145# district last year (where the four who placed all went to state) is not far behind Pace. His big problem will be a lack of pressure experience, especially since Trinity competes in few high-powered, regular season events. Waleri lost in the regional quarter-finals last year and he should be the third qualifier. Other possibilities are Pool, Glider (Milan Edison) and possibly Payne (Fairview Park).

Hagan and the excellent state qualifier Paonessa should contend for top honors at Firestone. Paonessa was the 3rd place finisher at Medina at 155# and will be a real force at 145#. He missed state placement by one point last year to Meyers. He, like Pace, will give Hagan all he can handle. State qualifier Foust has already been pinned by Hagan, but he and Robinson have to be favorites for the last two state berths. Robinson has had some impressive results recently and may create a few problems for all the wrestlers at 145#. Munger could be a darkhorse here if completely healthy.

The Southwestern Regional possesses some wrestlers with state placement potential. Sturgis was in the midst of a strong season when an auto wreck shelved him during tourney time last year. I expect him to do extremely well in 1987. Bowser holds a decision over "AAA" Luebke and he could be a surprise element in this competition. Behind this duo are Steel and Hammond with journeyman credentials. This group will win some bouts at State.

It will be a varied group at Pataskala. Hays and Thatcher have performed well in the tough "AA" competition around Columbus and should be battle-hardened for the tournament rigors. Chapman qualified last year, but may be a small 145#'er by March and will be susceptible to brute force. Wickham is a pinner who has wrestled a suspect schedule, but last year he crushed several tough wrestlers at the regional level. Langdon is another of those solid Claymont wrestlers who benefits from excellent workout partners. This quintet will be whittled down by one at the regional level, and then should do reasonably well at State.

155#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: SCOTT ROUNTREE (SPRINGFIELD NORTHWESTERN)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 2. Mendicino (Fairview Park) | 12. Nafzger (Bloom-Carroll) |
| 3. Graziani (Columbus DeSales) | 13. Cruze (Eaton) |
| 4. Loar (Tuslaw) | 14. Vibonese (Columbia Station) |
| 5. Meyers (St. Paris Graham) | 15. Bianco (Milton-Union) |
| 6. Mlynek (Bellaire) | 16. Reicosky (Canton Central Catholic) |
| 7. Plevich (Trinity) | 17. Baird (Coventry) |
| 8. Laurendeau (Oak Harbor) | 18. Lemaster (Greeneview) |
| 9. Leonard (Ravenna Southeast) | 19. Cook (Delta) |
| 10. Quimby (Rossford) | 20. Congrove (Bexley) |
| 11. DeWitt (Milan Edison) | 21. Huberty (Twinsburg) |

This should be one of the most entertaining weights in "AA" competition this year, and should have fans from all over the state cheering in anticipation. My choice is Scott Rountree who finished 4th at this weight last year with a difficult draw. Powerful and quick he seems to suffer lapses in concentration which last season provoked district and regional upsets. Right behind him is Jay Mendicino -- runner-up at 145# -- and a polished performer.

Upset by Pace in last year's final he is undoubtedly anxious to claim a state crown that seemed to be his until the very end last season. Behind this duo are at least four other contenders with legitimate chances of winning the tournament. The State draw may well be a determining factor so closely are these boys in skill.

Rountree will need to be sharp at the Southwest Regional. Meyers was 5th last year at 145# losing a narrow 2-point decision to Mendicino. This year he has won several tourneys (including an MVP award) and placed well at the tough Medina. State qualifier Cruze has never regained his sophomore form, but he remains a dangerous opponent. That is also true of the hot-and-cold Bianco who won the GMVWA over Cruze, but then lost at Troy. In addition Lemaster has terrorized the smaller "AA" schools in that area, and has a chance at qualification.

Fostoria is also loaded at this weight. Mendicino is, of course, the leader, but there is a lot of solid competition. Plevich lost an overtime bout in his bid for state qualification last year and he and Crespo are a dynamic one-two punch at Trinity. Laurendeau placed at Medina and seems better than his current Toledo ranking. Vibonese and Cook are both solid prospects with the latter missing state qualification by one bout last year. Two other possibilities are Keirn (Olmsted Falls) and Dolin (Bucyrus). I have ranked state qualifier DeWitt 11th on past history, but his results will have to improve dramatically if he is to make a second Columbus trip. A real surprise might be Quimby who was upset in the regionals after a 26-1 record. He's been hurt all year, but should come back very strong.

The charismatic figure of Graziani stands out at Pataskala where he returns to defend the regional crown he won so easily last year. Graziani can score, but he make mistakes and good competition has punished him by taking advantage of those errors. Last year Rountree eliminated him 16-10 and they could meet in the finals this year. Mlynek, the regional runner-up also returns and he should replicate that performance. Nafzger was 4th at this regional and then placed 5th at State because of the horrible consolation system. Its hard to understand how it can remain unchanged all these years, when it is so evidently flawed and unfair. At the regional Graziani beat Nafzger 13-0 but Nafzger lost to the right wrestler at the state and got back in while Graziani never got a well-deserved second chance. The fourth spot is wide-open, but I favor Congrove over competition from all four of the incoming districts. His most serious challenger could be Fouch (Circleville).

At Firestone, Loar stands well above the rest of the field after finishing 6th last year in a most competitive state meet. He lost to state champ Pace by two points in a tough semi-final bout. Leonard has won several important tourneys this year and could be second-best at this regional. Reicosky is just now beginning to compete and his results have been spotty, but this state qualifier should round into shape before tourney time. If he does not, state qualifier Baird, Huberty, and Patsolic (Chanel) will pass him by. Patsolic, also just back wrestles a nice three minutes, but will need to get in much better condition if he is to have any chance.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JEFF MOORE (CHANEL)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Rowe (St. Paris Graham) | 11. Cox (Coventry) |
| 3. Hall (Eaton) | 12. Metzler (Youngstown Ursuline) |
| 4. Jackson (Rossford) | 13. Packard (Belpre) |
| 5. Ort/Cua (Columbus DeSales) | 14. Peura (Tipp City) |
| 6. Padgett (Mason) | 15. Lindsay (Marion River Valley) |
| 7. Peters (Olmsted Falls) | 16. Dumke (Columbia Station) |
| 8. Banker (Cincinnati McNicholas) | 17. Holcomb (St. Clairsville) |
| 9. Steck (Morgan) | 18. Bowers (Bryan) |
| 10. Black (Medina Highland) | 19. Tipton (Orrville) |
| | 20. Kohler (Fairview Park) |

This is one of the weakest weight classes in "AA" competition this year, and except for Moore, has what Pete Rozelle always strives for -- perfect parity. On any given Saturday night any of these wrestlers listed above can beat any other competitor except for Jeff Moore who can and will beat all of them. Moore was 3rd last year after winning a competitive regional championship. This year he should have little trouble mastering a far weaker field, and cruising to victory. Very sharp on his feet, Moore also can score from the top position in a variety of ways, and his intelligence and experience should help him avoid upsets (such as the one that felled his brother several years ago).

Most of the best competition should emanate from the Dayton Regional which features six state quality wrestlers. I've rated Rowe as best, but Hall and Padgett are particularly good. Packard has a marvelous record at Belpre against generally inferior competition while state qualifier Banker is up three weight classes and still winning easily. Peura has had an up-and-down season but using my parity argument, can still be a major factor in this competition. Moore met Rowe at the Medina finals and crushed him 16-6 so while this entourage is very good, they do not match up individually very well with my projected champion.

Jackson looked good at Kenston (at least until the final) and he heads a mediocre group at Fostoria. The competition there is more diffuse than at Dayton with ten or twelve possible qualifiers. I've always liked Peters and this presents a particularly good opportunity for him to show well. While he matches up well within this regional, both he and Jackson will have to scrap for a state place. Behind this duo are Dumke, Kohler, Bowers and a half dozen other possible contenders. Look for some unknowns to play a major role in the outcome here.

After Moore, the Firestone contingent will be very weak. A possible exception is Cox who I may be ranking well below his true capability. Black and Metzler look like journeyman performers who will not make major mistakes, but are also unlikely to pull a major upset. Cox, on the other hand, may be involved in an unexpected upset -- either as winner or loser. Behind this quartet lurk, as at Fostoria, a multitude of hopefuls who recognize that an inspired weekend can get them a ticket to Columbus. Thus, while the competition may not be at the highest possible level it should be fierce here. Some other names besides Tipton are Waltenbaugh (Canton Central Catholic), and Recker (Akron Hoban).

Its all kind of hazy when we start discussing the Pataskala Regional. It seems likely that who ever competes for DeSales will possess two attributes -- the shortest last name in the bracket sheet and the role as favorite. Both Ort and Cua have good skills and are a level above the rest of the competition at this regional. Steck has had an outstanding record in his area, but that opposition may not really have tested him. Last year he was a first round regional victim after posting a 23-1 record. Lindsay and Holcomb are just possibilities with the latter only a sophomore. White (Logan Elm) and Matusik (Hannibal River Valley) have regional experience while Niswonger (Hamilton Twp) has had positive results recently. This group is one you'll want to draw into at Columbus.

175#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BRET BOWMAN (BISHOP READY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Skinner (Milton-Union) | 11. Yancsurak (Canfield) |
| 3. Cassel (Manchester) | 12. Stennett (Otsego) |
| 4. Marconi (Brooklyn) | 13. Miron (Aurora) |
| 5. Trent (Kenton) | 14. Smolira (Belmont Union Local) |
| 6. Minner (London) | 15. Wilkens (St. Paris Graham) |
| 7. Mohrman (Wellington) | 16. Chmielewski (Berkshire) |
| 8. Eddlebute (Vincent Warren) | 17. Surmay (St. Thomas Louisville) |
| 9. Coleman (Lima Bath) | 18. Hutchins (Eaton) |
| 10. Enoch (Belpre) | 19. Gianangeli (Bellaire) |
| | 20. Bulian (St. Clairsville) |

The burly Bowman should muscle his way through this weight class winning a number of close bouts to capture the crown. His consolation finals loss to Moore sealed Ready's fate in the team competition last year, but if it comes down to him in 1987, expect him to win. The competition, while not at the super-star level, is still very even at this weight class and I anticipate any number of very close bouts. Particularly strong competition should come from Skinner who has returned to Milton-Union after a most successful year in "AAA" at Dayton Wayne. He came close to being my top choice and may well make me wish that I had chosen him instead of Bowman.

Bowman dominated the Pataskala Regional last season and should do so again in 1987. His top competition will be from the rugged Minner who qualified last year only to be flat in his opening state bout. After Minner there is a large gap in quality down to possibilities like Smolira, Gianangeli and Bulian. They are, however, closely matched up with the likes of Whitman (Uhrichsville Claymont), Tesmer (Coshocton) and Jones (Hebron Lakewood). It looks like strictly a two-man competition here.

Skinner should dominate in the Dayton Regional. State qualifier Enoch returns, but he is weak on his feet and will not be much of a challenge to Skinner. Eddlebutte is much the same kind of wrestler in that takedown skills are subordinate to strong mat moves. Both boys suffer from weak competition as well. Wilkens has made rapid improvement and may displace one or both of the higher rated boys in his regional. Hutchins also could be a factor as well as Bierman (Clermont NE).

The Firestone Regional is very weak. Cassel was 5th. last year. But he stands far above the remaining throng. A possible exception is Mohrman who has made solid improvement, but its difficult to see him challenging Cassel at this point in time. Journeyman performers like Yancsurak, Miron, and Surmay are potential state qualifiers, but certainly not state placewinners. Expect some surprises here as lower-rated boys like, perhaps, Albert (Ravenna Southeast) pull a mild upset.

The Fostoria Regional is by contrast strong. State qualifiers Marconi and Trent are both excellent performers with state placement potential. The latter is kind of a "diamond in the rough" with an immensely strong physique augmented with some wrestling skills. He, however, comes from a school that has not yet established a strong wrestling tradition. Last year he tossed the redoubtable Starkey around for two periods, before tiring of the sport and losing 11-9. Coleman and Stennett also come from small schools, but they have performed well in 1987. However, they will need to be in top form to preserve those last two qualifying berths. Coleman, a state qualifier in Wyoming last year, may well be better than ranked since his relatively weak schedule makes it difficult to judge how good he really is. McKinnon (Rossford) who lost to Trent in the regionals and was eliminated, and Sintobin (Delta) are other possible qualifiers. A real unknown is Montoux (Fairview Park) who oscillates between this weight and 185#. A solid competitor he has not been healthy for any extended period for the last two seasons. Should he be in top-flight condition he could be a factor.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: FERD MILLER (OAK HARBOR)TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Starkey (Uhrichsville Claymont) | 10. Sweet (Aurora) |
| 3. Grove (Marysville) | 11. Selnik (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 4. Hickman (Eaton) | 12. Bailey (Belmont Union Local) |
| 5. Perrine (Trinity) | 13. Peet (Canfield) |
| 6. Murphy (Rossford) | 14. Parsley (Nelsonville-York) |
| 7. Eramo (Bishop Hartley) | 15. Allen (Circleville) |
| 8. Nicholas (Buckeye) | 16. Walters (Galion Northmor) |
| 9. Doss (Lewistown Indian Lake) | 17. Boigner (Brooklyn) |

This is a marvelous weight class replete with exceptional wrestlers, exacting competition, and contrasting styles. It also promises to be one of the most entertaining as the big men in this weight class can score -- and score a lot. Several top college prospects add extra spice to the competition and the fact that contenders emerge from every part of the state gives it more of a universal flavor.

The dominant figure is defending state champion, Ferd Miller, who last year cruised through the competition barely being tested. This year the road may somewhat more difficult with the imposing Starkey and the vastly improved Grove being the principal obstacles. Actually the real excitement would be a Miller-Starkey match-up. Miller, strong and smooth, would be my choice to beat the incredibly strong but unpolished Starkey. Starkey, at 6'6", has incredible leverage, but Miller, I believe, would outslick him. However, Starkey can pin from virtually any position on the mat so Miller could never relax a moment.

In fact, Miller will need watchfulness at the Fostoria Regional. Perrine, 5th last year, and Murphy, a state qualifier, are formidable foes with good state placement potential. This trio is augmented by Boigner and Boes (Sherwood Fairview), but they are lukewarm favorites for the fourth qualifying spot at best. A real contender would have been junior Tyrone Nelson (Elyria West), but he contacted meningitis and was perilously close to death for several days. He won't be able to wrestle for some time.

The competition at Pataskala will also be strong, but Starkey and Grove should dominate. Grove does not look particularly formidable, but has a quick single and good mat presence. Both he and Starkey were 4th last year (at 175# and 185#) so the match should be interesting. My guess is that Starkey will overpower him, possible with his speciality -- a quick first period fall. After that the competition is much more pedestrian. Eramo has placement potential while Bailey is rated just slightly ahead of Allen, Walters, Herbst (Bexley), and Peterson (Briggs). This mini-quartet, if you will, will vie for the last state berth.

The Southwest Regional should be dominated by Hickman, 6th last year, and a solid contender for a low state place again this year. Doss has had some successes, but he is a quantum step behind Hickman and after him the regional gets really diluted. The last two qualifiers will be lucky to escape Columbus in one piece after meeting top-rated opponents from other regionals.

At Firestone the competition will be close, but none of the qualifiers will be in the top six statewide. Nicholas was runner-up at the Medina to Miller, but has not done very well since then. Sweet, Peet, and Selnik has a catchy ring to it, but this trio is unlikely to make it intact to Columbus despite my ratings. Instead upsets should abound with Ralston (Coventry), Orazen (Chagrin Falls), and Gioiello (Canton Central Catholic) the prime movers in undoing the established order. A fun competition, but one unlikely to lead to much in Columbus.

HVY

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DAL MCDONALD (BELLFONTAINE)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Flathers (Swanton) | 10. Harness (Springfield NW) |
| 3. Scherma (Chanel) | 11. Warwick (Clyde) |
| 4. Pell (Clermont NE) | 12. Kelly (Elyria Catholic) |
| 5. Pullins (West Jefferson) | 13. Cornelius (Elmwood) |
| 6. Roy (Columbus DeSales) | 14. Young (North Union) |
| 7. Cole (Hillsboro) | 15. Havens (Washington Court House) |
| 8. Bannister (Wauseon) | 16. Quinn (Aurora) |
| 9. Berta (Ravenna Southeast) | 17. Heath (St. Clairsville) |

My original choice at this weight was Starkey, but when he dropped to 185# it left a void that the remaining boys do not look particularly well fitted to fill. My eventual selection became Dal McDonald, but that choice is not one to necessarily inspire confidence. Not that McDonald doesn't have good credentials, but his first round state loss last year makes me wary. As it is McDonald will be a relatively small heavyweight with good moves and lots of experience. His recent victory over "AAA" state placer Rutledge indicates he can handle bigger men and his 185# experience should also hold him in good stead since many of the best heavyweights this year are on the small side.

McDonald heads a competitive field at the Dayton Regional. State qualifiers Pell and Cole are now both seniors and hold a wealth of experience between them. Pell won a bout at Columbus last year while Cole beat Pell for 3rd at the regional level. In both cases these boys do not wrestle a lot of big-time "AAA" competition which will hurt them at the state tourney. Harness and Havens will battle for that elusive fourth spot and will face substantial competition for that berth.

I've placed Flathers second at this weight even though he lost to Scherma at the Medina. He was 4th last year and knows how to win the close bout, and I also see him as more upset-proof. He'll be meeting a lot of "old friends" at Postoria. For example, he defeated state qualifier Bannister for 3rd place at the regional last year and they could well meet in the finals there this year. Also back is state qualifier Warwick, up from 185#, and Kelly whose regional efforts in 1986 lasted a total of twelve seconds. Cornelius also returns and he was a regional semi-finalist last year before being dumped twice. He could well surpass one or more of my top four here.

With Starkey absent the Pataskala regional will be somewhat more forgiving. The top choice is Roy who was pretty much a non-descript 185#'er last season and who missed most of the present campaign with injuries. Indications are that were he healthy he could dominate a Starkey-less regional. This is in contrast to the conventional wisdom which would favor state qualifier Pullins -- a solid and impressive junior. Beyond this duo there is a real drop-off with Young and Heath at least nominal favorites for the last two spots.

Scherma has made marvelous progress and this junior from Chanel could be a key factor in the team race. Nobody really expected him to be this good and he has a real chance to be a finalist. Again, his big problem is small size, but he is so mobile and quick that he has nullified it all year. His only losses were to "AAA" runner-up Bryan now at 185# and the "AAA" contender Boon -- a massive heavyweight. Nobody at Firestone should beat him in a six-minute match, and his major concern will be to avoid the fluke fall. State qualifier Berta has not had a sparkling senior season so far, but he had nine losses last year and still grabbed a state berth. After that its wide open with Quinn, a problematical third choice. Other possible contenders are Hamlin (Wooster Triway), Steele (Loudonville), and Bennett (Streetsboro). It is quite likely that I've missed any number of possibilities since the required level for Columbus at this weight will not be high.

TEAMS

1. CHANEL -- It will be a replay of 1986 with Chanel and Bishop Ready battling until late Saturday night for the team title. The ending will be just as familiar with Chanel once again winning a narrow victory. They'll need a total team effort to offset Ready's individual brilliance, but the depth is there. Marder and Moore lead the way, but DiDomenico and Anderson are just as vital. The unexpected bonus has been Scherma who has wrestled wonderfully well and could conceivably be a finalist. If Sasso can make 98# and Nero contribute at 105# it will make things so much easier. Anything that Reilly, Patsolic, or Laskowski can add to this mix will be icing on the cake.
2. BISHOP READY -- Ramsey and DiSabato should be easy winners while Bowman has to be the favorite at 175#. It seems that three champs should be enough, but Chanel's depth makes that unlikely. Kruse could help and, maybe, even Sarver or Thatcher, but it doesn't look like quite enough.

3. **OAK HARBOR** -- There is a gigantic gap between the top two teams and the rest of the field in terms of scoring potential. Oak Harbor, not a great dual meet team, has an almost sure champ in Miller and good scoring potential between 119# and 138#. Especially important would be the work of Hivnor and Pierce while Shadoan and Zeitheim could provide fill-in points.
4. **COLUMBUS DESALES** -- Marinelli and Graziani could both be finalists and score a lot of points. If the three-letter last names come through (Ort, Cua, and Roy) I'll feel much better about 4th place finish. Should the top two boys fail they'll not be in the first twenty-five.
5. **ST. PARIS GRAHAM** -- A team with no projected champs, but with the ability to score at a lot of weight classes. Meyers, Rowe, and Randall all have placement potential while Jenkins may well place again this year despite my doubts. They need help from Knull, Wilkins, and Jordan to do much better.
6. **RAVENNA SOUTHEAST** -- A splendid dual meet team that may not have the state scoring punch it needs. Coontz is outstanding, but many of the rest look like they'll drop out at about the regional semi-final level. State qualifier Berta must come through again while Pepper, Munger, Albert, Leonard, and Selnik do a little over-achieving. They have so many chances (even Bailey and McKenzie) that you have to figure that some will come through.
7. **TWINSBURG** -- Gregan must do very well at the difficult 132# class -- especially at his brutal regional, and Mariola must place again for this team to hit the top ten. Other help could be forthcoming from Zamiska, Rose, or Huberty.
8. **UHRICHSVILLE CLAYMONT** -- Starkey and Grandison both had the look of finalists early in the year, but now I'm not so sure. Grandison, especially, seems to be standing still while moving from Hvy to 185# in mid-season requires a major change in outlook and strategy. Crucial is whether Thatford, Stewart, Peters, or Whitman can help at the other weights.
9. **AKRON ST. VINCENT** -- I'm not sure what weights they'll compete at, but Paonessa, Bisesi, and the rest of the middleweight are reasonably good. Throw in a possible finalist in Shocklee and you have another strong finish.
10. **TOLEDO SWANTON** -- A team that has somebody at both ends and in the middle -- all three (Wegener, Carey, and Flathers) have the look of medium to low placers, but there is not much back-up help available.
11. **BROOKLYN** -- Blessed with a trio of stars in Heil, Benavides, and Marconi this squad probably won't get much more help from anybody else.

12. **HIGHLAND** -- Letzner is poised to place well at 112# while Savoia could easily win at 132#. The problem is where will the rest of the points come from. Grumbling and Black seem like the best hopes, and the latter boy should contribute at the weak 167# class.
13. **BUCKEYE** -- Schade, Bartos, Kemp, and Nicholas are a nice quartet, but the latter two have not done as well as anticipated lately. A strong performance by all four would put them into the Top Ten.
14. **EATON** -- The trio of Hickman, Hall, and Cruze would seem to be their best hopes with Hickman having an outside chance as a finalist. Steele, Jones, and Hitchcock are other possibilities.

A

One of the highlights of this classification appeared to be a frantic team competition involving up to eight teams. Now it seems likely that the outcome of this competition has already been decided by an administrative decision in terms of regional representation. The powerhouse Northeast squads (Cuyahoga Hts., Newbury and Richmond Hts.) will face a solid 18-team district and a strong 32-team regional for state qualification. The two qualifiers at each weight will really earn their state berths and a number of state-caliber boys will be left home. The equally powerful Eastern teams (Bridgeport and Cadiz), on the other hand, will be tested by 9-team districts and an 18-team regional. This obvious inequity will allow them to qualify far more wrestlers (as many as eight or nine each) and should virtually insure a one-two state finish. The regional format was advertised as a method which allows equal representation for all schools, and whatever methodology is currently being used ought, in this light, be re-examined.

Of equal concern is the system used to develop regional pairings. The formula should not pair first and third place district placers in the same half of the regional draw. Often these are the two best wrestlers thrown together in the semi-finals because of the imprecision of the district seeding mechanism. Of equal concern is the number of forfeits in the consolation finals as both boys strive to draw away from the district champ at the regional level. Double forfeits will not be an uncommon outcome should such a system remain in place.

98#

PROJECTED CHAMP: CLARK McDANIEL (WEST LIBERY SALEM)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Bollin (Ottawa Hills) | 10. Weyrick (Bellaire St. John) |
| 3. V. Nguyen (Archbold) | 11. Tille (Ayersville) |
| 4. Frohnapfel (Bridgeport) | 12. McCauley (Wellsville) |
| 5. Colvin (Norwalk St. Paul) | 13. Roeder (New London) |
| 6. Gibson (Cadiz) | 14. Grau (Lockland) |
| 7. Smith (Richmond Hts.) | 15. Gracefo (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 8. Fullman (Madeira) | 16. Rebar (Apple Creek Waynedale) |
| 9. Murdock (Liberty Center) | 17. Roynon (Carey) |
| | 18. Arnold (Waterford) |

McDaniel is one of the best 98-pounders in the Cincinnati-Dayton area regardless of classification and should overcome a lack of state experience to capture the state crown at this weight. Last year McDaniel was upset in the regional semis and missed a Columbus trip that many expected to lead to a placement medal. This year he should win the crown despite reasonably tough competition.

Perhaps, the weakest regional is McDaniel's own at Covington. He towers over the competition and should easily capture the title. I've listed Fullman and Grau as possible second choices, but there has to be stronger candidates than that. In any case the second place finisher will merely fill out the bracket sheet at Columbus.

Findlay, on the other hand, will be an extremely rugged regional at this weight. State qualifier Bollin is back and he looks better than ever. "A" Classic champ Nguyen is also strong and this pair will probably be McDaniel's stiffest competition. Nguyen, in particular, has made startling progress and could easily move ahead of Bollin. Right behind this twosome are a half dozen or so possible qualifiers. Heading my list are Murdock and Tille both of whom were shutout by Nguyen, but still may have upset potential. Core (Cory-Rawson) would have to be rated a real long-shot at this point in time.

The Eastern Regional at Dresden features three outstanding freshmen. Gibson and Frohnappel head this list and are neck-and-neck in terms of the regional crown. A possible problem is that they, along with Weyrick, all exit the same district and seedings done strictly on record may put them in the same half-bracket there. Should that occur it may not be possible for the two best to qualify out of Dresden. Weyrick, another strong freshman, is solid and McCauley, just down from 105#, is a fourth contender. Should he win his district over the tough Arnold, it would give him a slight edge in the regional pairings.

The massive Northeast Regional at Lorain possesses many contenders for state qualification, but few, if any, for state placement. Colvin and Roeder both have regional experience but the former seems to have progressed further this year. He is marginally the favorite here. Smith was one match from state last year and his qualification would be a real boost for Richmond Hts. team chances. Gracefo, by the same token, would help Cuyahoga Hts. in the team race by garnering a state berth, but he probably is out-manned right now.

105

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ANTON BURKETT (WEST LIBERTY SALEM)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Neikirk (Cardinal) | 10. Meier (New Albany) |
| 3. French (Newbury) | 11. Lyle (Bridgeport) |
| 4. Long (Liberty Center) | 12. Drayton (Mansfield St. Peter) |
| 5. Heavilin (Cadiz) | 13. Mitchell (Gibsonburg) |
| 6. Guilford (Ayersville) | 14. Aiken (Arcadia) |
| 7. Rocha (Archbold) | 15. Northcutt (Batavia) |
| 8. Merryman (Shadyside) | 16. Miller (Fremont St. Joseph) |
| 9. Musgrave (Covington) | 17. Unkefer (Apple Creek Waynedale) |

This weight should be an exceptionally interesting one as it unfolds along the regional and state trail. There are a number of excellent wrestlers from all around the state and there are several "mystery" competitors whose performance cannot be easily projected. It will be fascinating to see how the final outcome works itself out.

My choice is last year's runner-up at this weight, Anton Burkett. This victory, however, will not be easily won since the competition this year will be, in total, far stronger than 1986. Burkett is a tall, not particularly strong, competitor with lots of experience and poise. He's down from 112# because he realizes that he has to be bigger than the other guy for his moves to work. This will be his third trip to Columbus, and that part should be easy because, again, his regional is weakest. Principal competition should come from state qualifier Musgrave and I don't see that as a serious problem, or from Meier, a state alternate in 1986.

The competition, however, will really heat up at Findlay. At that location three real battlers will go all-out for two spots. Long, 4th last year, looked sharp at the Medina against big school competition, although he placed but 3rd at the "A" Classic. Somehow I see him making it to Columbus. Guilford, 3rd last year, beat Long any number of times in 1986 and may well continue that streak this year. He is a very strong wrestler in the clutch. Rocha beat both these boys in the "A" Classic and copped the Outstanding Wrestler Award as well. I don't think he can do it again although he was a state semi-finalist last year. In any case it really is a shame any of these boys will miss out, but the key efforts may well be at the district level since all three will compete together. Two distant long-shots would be Mitchell, a one-point loser to Long, and Aiken.

Two of our "mystery" wrestlers will appear at Lorain. Two years ago, French placed at 98#, and last season it was anticipated that he would be a strong candidate for that title. Health and weight problems kept him out of competition as Newbury won the team title anyway. This year he has competed sporadically at 112# but has now moved down to the lower weight. It will be interesting to see if he can regain his former stature after this long hiatus. Neikirk qualified last year at the "AA" level after a fine season. This season his results have not been as good including a 5th at Kenston. How he will perform at the "A" level is still to be determined although his ranking indicates that it should be rather well. Challenging these two is state alternate Drayton who has had a successful season including a solid 4th at the strong Gorman Inv. Should Neikirk or French stumble, this would be the wrestler most likely to take advantage of it.

In the East, state alternate Heavilin has been most impressive including wins over a number of big school rivals. He should dominate the regional, but the second spot is wide open. Merryman and Lyle are also possibilities although I favor the former because of his strong early season performance.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KYLE KERN (LIBERTY CENTER)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Douce (Blufton) | 9. Owens (Gibsonburg) |
| 3. Case (Cadiz) | 10. Hoffman (Fremont St. Joseph) |
| 4. T. Nguyen (Archbold) | 11. Haas (McComb) |
| 5. Abbruzzese (Grandview Hts.) | 12. Schott (Waterford) |
| 6. Musarra (Richmond Hts.) | 13. Rismiller (Versailles) |
| 7. Bond (Newbury) | 14. Wybensinger (New London) |
| 8. Brown (New Albany) | 15. Dorner (Sidney Lehman) |

I really expected Bonaventura at this weight with the expectation of a third state title--although not without a terrific struggle from Kern. Now Kern makes the top of the list but in a nervous sort of way since he collects injuries like other people collect stamps. Right now, he is recovering from a wrist injury, but should (?) be ready well before tourney time. When he is healthy, he can be devastating, and while the score was deceptive, he wrestled very strongly against Hanson last year--finally finishing 3rd. Note that I've placed defending state champ Case 3rd here, not because he has wrestled poorly, but only because of my admiration for Kern and Douce.

That twosome will represent an extremely strong Findlay Regional. That would eliminate the fourth-ranked Nguyen who could qualify any place, but here. Douce beat him 6-4 at the "A" Classic and should do so again. Incidentally, Douce is a very gutty performer who will not be intimidated by anyone. Also on the outside will be State 3rd placer Hoffman and the improving Haas. Hoffman wrestled a great tourney at Columbus last year nailing down that 3rd place medal, but he just doesn't have the horsepower to escape this most difficult regional in 1987.

Defending state champ Case surprised a lot of people (particularly me) by winning the 98# title last year. He could well do the same thing this year. His record is one of continuing improvement and that type of result is one that has to be respected. His regional is not strong with only Schott of nearly comparable skill. No, Case's battles won't start till he reaches Columbus.

The Southwestern Regional features Case's toughest opponent last year, Tony Abbruzzese. This year, however, Abbruzzese missed most of the early season, and has had mediocre results since his return. Had he not established his credentials in 1986, he wouldn't make my Top Ten this year. However, you have to figure that he'll round into form in time to challenge state-wide.

State qualifier Brown, down a weight from last year, should be a factor at Covington, and, perhaps, even at Columbus. So far, however, New Albany competitors have not shone at recent regional and state meets. The Cincinnati-Dayton competitors at this regional are not imposing, although Rismiller and Dorner could be factors. The latter was a state alternate last year.

It originally looked like a three-man struggle at Lorain between Musarra, Bond and Grilley. All three have previous state experience with Bond grabbing a 4th last year despite losing the regional title to Musarra. Grilley, however, has moved to 119# leaving Musarra and Bond as strong favorites. Haas and Wybensingler would seem to be way behind this duo with little chance of qualification. The two qualifiers should have an outside chance at low places.

119

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DAN HANSON (RICHMOND HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Bonaventura (Grandview Hts.) | 10. Hofstetter (Cardinal) |
| 3. Myers (Sandusky St. Marys) | 11. Marmie (Beallsville) |
| 4. A. Kern (Gibsonburg) | 12. Thompson (New Albany) |
| 5. Bozicevic (Cadiz) | 13. Miller (Waterford) |
| 6. Nye (Edgerton) | 14. Furko (Archbold) |
| 7. Voisard (Versailles) | 15. Richardson (Wayne Trace) |
| 8. Miller (Waterford) | 16. Stoakes (Wellsville) |
| 9. Grilley/Welch (Mapleton) | 17. Prendergast (Mansfield St. Peter) |
| | 18. Fritts (Mariemont) |

What was mere speculation in the 1984 report is now about to become a reality in 1987. Dan Hanson has to be a heavy favorite to capture his fourth state crown and in the process provide his family with a record 9th state title. And he should do it in the most dramatic of fashions by defeating Joe Bonaventura in the first-ever meeting of multi-champ opponents. One can only hope that this monumental match-up occurs in the finals since both boys have earned no less. As good as Bonaventura is, Hanson will beat him on his feet and be able to ride when necessary. I don't think it will be real close.

That 9th family title will eclipse the mark of eight held by the Jordan's, and also be the first time in state history that three brothers all have won two or more titles (Dan with four, Jim with three, and Tim with two). Adding in Tim's 3rd in 1979 gives the Hanson brothers ten state places second only to the Hoppels in the 1950's who captured 12 state places (including six titles). In some ways Hanson has had to handle more pressure than the two other possible four-timers since he was expected to be great from his first bout as a 9th grader. Through it all he has performed with great consistency and constant accomplishment. He has become a fine all-around performer with solid skills in every aspect of the sport.

Surprisingly, Hanson's regional at Lorain is loaded with fine wrestlers. Two-time state place winner Myers--including a runner-up performance to Hanson last year--should be the other qualifier. Should the unthinkable occur--Hanson and Bonaventura in the same half of the draw--Myers could be runner-up again, giving Hanson four state titles with only two different final-round opponents (Neikirk twice and Myers twice). Other solid entrants are Welch/Grilley, Hofstetter and Prendergast which doesn't make sense considering their chances of qualification. Therefore, don't be surprised to see some of these boys at other weights like 126# or even the very weak 132# class.

Bonaventura has already lost twice this year, but his skills and past record are outstanding. He will certainly make Hanson earn that fourth title unless doubts surface and he moves either up or down. His regional at Covington is weak with Voisard, Thompson and Fritts as principal competition. None threaten him. Other possibilities include Smith (Batavia) or Nutter (Covington), but the second qualifier whoever he is won't win a bout at Columbus.

State qualifier Kern and "A" Classic champ Nye head a relatively weak field in the Northwest Regional. Both should qualify comfortably against little more than token opposition although state alternate Richardson may have upset hopes. At the state level, pairings may well determine who is in line for a low place. I've favored Kern even though Nye upset him at the Classic, 8-6.

The Eastern Regional is not as strong as usual although state qualifiers Miller and Bozicevic may do better than expected. Both were first-round state losers who suffered early elimination and good pairings might give them a chance at those elusive low places. Marmie and Stoakes both had regional 4ths last year and unless they can construct a major upset, will be consolation round wrestlers in the regionals again this year.

126#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TODD DEAN (LIBERTY CENTER)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Adkins (Richmond Hts.) | 11. Miller (Apple Creek Waynedale) |
| 3. Pearl (Columbiana) | 12. Summit (Carey) |
| 4. T. Burk (Bridgeport) | 13. Polzin (New Albany) |
| 5. Peck (Gibsonburg) | 14. Butler (Kirtland) |
| 6. Border (Caldwell) | 15. Villareal (Archbold) |
| 7. Woods (Wellsville) | 16. Markgraf (Hopewell-Loudon) |
| 8. Phillips (Fischer Catholic) | 17. Mack (Ayersville) |
| 9. Hiltibran (West Liberty Salem) | 18. Platfoot (Versailles) |
| 10. B. Raver (Licking Hts.) | 19. Bundy (McComb) |
| | 20. Bucher (Batavia) |

The strong and extremely physical Todd Dean is a narrow choice to triumph at 126#. This weight class should be very competitive with the last several rounds dominated by close one or two-point decisions. Dean, who was 4th last year, will find his main competition coming from the northeastern quadrant of the state. Adkins was very impressive at the Brecksville and he could out-slick Dean on his feet. Pearl, also 4th last year, is a little bit erratic, but on his good days, he can be close to awesome. Dean will probably have to defeat them both to take the crown.

Adkins and Pearl will, course, dominate the Lorain Regional which leaves the excellent Miller and Summit with no place to go. The former was an "AA" regional qualifier last year while the latter was 4th in the regional last year and would have a reasonable chance of qualifying most anywhere else. However, no hope at Lorain. Markgraf and Butler are two others who will also stay home.

Dean should have little trouble at Findlay unless Staley moves down from 132#. Otherwise Peck would appear to be the main threat--but it's a minimal threat since Dean has already beaten him 14-2. Villareal, Bundy and Mack are other possibilities for that second spot, but they may be as far behind Peck as he is behind Dean.

The Eastern Regional features, as so often happens, three worthy candidates for two spots. Todd Burk missed state qualification by a 12-11 semi-final loss last year, and stands poised to join his brother in the highest echelons of a weight class. Border is excellent, but wrestles such a weak schedule that it's difficult to know how prepared he'll be for the vigors of regional and state competition. Finally there is state alternate Woods who dropped a 7-6 semi-final, go-to-state match last year and may be prepared to move ahead of Border and, perhaps, Burk as well. The key clash should be between Wood and Border at the district level with the winner drawing away from the other two at the regional and, thus, having a clear shot at state qualification.

The Southwest Regional looked rather weak until Phillips moved down. As Kenny Ransey's workout partner for two years, he has to be tough, and he could do very well here.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: STEVE DERNLAN (WEST LIBERTY SALEM)TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. D. Burk (Bridgeport) | 9. Unkefer (Apple Creek Waynedale) |
| 3. DiFranco (Ledgemont) | 10. Briseno (Ayersville) |
| 4. Galloway (Sandusky St. Mary) | 11. Bradshaw (Lincolnview) |
| 5. Staley (Blufton) | 12. Warren (Beallsville) |
| 6. Nery (Columbiana) | 13. O'Hara (Grandview Hts) |
| 7. J. Raver (Licking Hts.) | 14. Melcher (Elmore Woodmore) |
| 8. Duncan (Versailles) | 15. Sabo (Cadiz) |

This is a weight class that will be dominated by Dernlan and Burk, two classy juniors who have already made a mark for themselves at the state level. Burk, a two-time placewinner including a 2nd last year, is a very strong, conservative wrestler with great riding skills. Dernlan, 3rd last year, seeks to emulate his two-time state champion brother, and has the takedown skills to do it. I favor Dernlan not so much because of his early victory over Burk, but because of the hardening he has undergone because of a much more high-powered schedule. It's also interesting to note that he is the third West Liberty Salem wrestler I've favored showing the miracles that can be worked with a ten-man team.

Dernlan's regional is exceptional. Raver placed at the strong North Canton Tourney and is my choice for the second qualifying spot. Duncan, however, is also a fine competitor from recently "AA" Versailles where he qualified for Columbus at this weight. He certainly could upset Raver. Both O'Hara and Kimmel (Covington) are solid entries, but they have no chance here. Look for a couple of these boys to certify at the weaker 126# or even at the shallow 138#. At any rate, this is an exceptionally strong and interesting regional.

Burk, on the other hand, will dominate his regional. I've had to search even for possibilities and, so far, have come up with Sabo and Warren. Whoever qualifies will find Columbus a harsh and inhospitable place indeed. This is a spot where Cadiz could pick up an extra qualifier basically because this regional is so small.

DiFranco is a quantum jump behind the top two boys, but he could record his second 3rd place finish in as many years. He is likely to be the only Ledgemont qualifier thus ending a long streak as a top five team. State qualifier Galloway should be the second state entrant from this regional, and he had some impressive outings this season. State qualifier Nery, just down from 138#, has had a good season and could challenge any of three above

mentioned boys. He wrestled an incredible first-round state bout last year ending up in an 8-8 stand-off and then getting pinned in the overtime. If it comes down to just Nery and Galloway for the state spot, I think Nery might well win because he matches up so well with him. Like Covington this will be another fierce regional.

Surprisingly, the Findlay Regional doesn't seem that strong. State qualifier Staley has been effective and has beaten other local hopefuls like Briseno and Melcher. Bradshaw, at little Lincolnview, has lots of experience and could edge out Briseno for that second spot. It will be interesting wrestling, but the outcome is unlikely to have much effect at the state level.

138#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BRAD GIFFIN (CADIZ)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Stopar (Cuyahoga Hts.) | 10. Mendoza (Gibsonburg) |
| 3. Moran (Versailles) | 11. Alloway (Bergholz Springfield) |
| 4. Rowe (Edgerton) | 12. Radcliffe (New London) |
| 5. Scheid (Bridgeport) | 13. Hoover (Elmore Woodmore) |
| 6. Zehe (Kirtland) | 14. Musser (Delphos St. John) |
| 7. Royse (New Albany) | 15. Troiano (Carey) |
| 8. Williams (Toledo Northwood) | 16. Stevens (Newark Catholic) |
| 9. Suvak (Newbury) | 17. Day (Cincinnati County Day) |

This is pretty much of a nondescript weight class that is unlikely to set one's pulse pounding. Many of the names will appear unfamiliar to most, but nonetheless there is likely to be a series of crowd-pleasing, high-scoring bouts that should capture a certain level of attention. The wrestler likely to do the bulk of the scoring is Brad Giffin, runner-up at this weight last year, and a narrow choice to cop top honors in 1987. His crucial bout last year was with local rival Russ Scheid who he narrowly defeated 8-7 to make the state tourney. At that point he snapped up the regional title with a shutout and then cruised to the state finals before losing. Scheid returns at this weight and should challenge Giffin at the district, regional and state level this year. They should brush aside other challenges like Alloway and Benzo (Stanton), but since Scheid has missed part of the season and Giffin is improved, he continues to wear the favorite's mantle.

Both Eastern regional qualifiers will be surely tested by Stopar, 3rd at 132# last year. An excellent rider, Stopar could upset Giffin if he can capture the early takedowns. I was impressed with his efforts at Brecksville losing only to "AAA" runner-up Andrassy--and aggressively riding him the entire second period. Zehe is a workmanlike competitor back at the "A" level,

and with Nery's defection to 132#, he should be the favorite for the second qualifying berth. Both he and Stopar will face a myriad of challenges as this weight class is crowded with possible contenders. This includes regional place winners such as Suvak, Workman and Radcliffe--any of whom could upset Zehe, but probably not Stopar. Also with possibilities are Troiano, the "A" Classic runner-up and Legando (Sandusky St. Marys), although their hopes are substantially dimmer.

The Findlay Regional is again relatively weak with the elongated Rowe the principal state placement contender. Rowe, a returning state qualifier at this weight, reached the semi-finals where he then dropped two bouts by a combined score of 29-3. I never dreamed he'd be back at 138# this year (a good guess might have been 167#), but he won the "A" Classic with impressive style with but one close bout. The second qualifying spot is wide open, although, Williams has been accorded a slight favorite. Musser, though is the one to watch as he seems to wrestle to the level of his competition as witnessed by an overtime one-point loss to Rowe.

Moran heads a very thin Southwestern group. As a freshman, he qualified at 126# in "AA" last year, and just recently won the prestigious Wayne Invitational. Still improving it will be interesting to see what he can accomplish at this weight. His ranking may well be far too high or it may quickly become apparent that it is several spots too low. Royse came on well last year, and has been even better this year. However, it is basically by default that he gets the nod as second choice at this regional. The other competition just seems very weak--that is unless some of those excess 132's re-certify upward, or if Stevens is stronger than anticipated.

145

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TOM LUPICA (FREMONT ST. JOSEPH)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2. Hodous (Cardinal) | 11. Swank (Mechanicsburg) |
| 3. Epling (Elmore Woodmore) | 12. Albers (Versailles) |
| 4. Johnson (Cadiz) | 13. Nihart (Edgerton) |
| 5. K. Drobnick (Cuyahoga Hts.) | 14. Albright (Jewitt-Scio) |
| 6. Tolson (Waterford) | 15. Sears (Bridgeport) |
| 7. Bendle (Bergholz Springfield) | 16. Cole (New London) |
| 8. Keller (Liberty Center) | 17. Sowers (Covington) |
| 9. Boehm (Licking Hts) | 18. Edwards (Bluffton) |
| 10. Gates (Stanton) | 19. Profitt (Williamsburg) |

This is one of those weight classes that has a number of fine wrestlers, but I just can't picture any of them on the awards stand receiving the 1st place medal. I've finally settled on Lupica, but I'm still not sure that I've got it right. Somehow, no matter who wins the crown, it will come as a surprise to me--even if it is Lupica.

Lupica and Epling should dominate the Findlay Regional. Lupica was 4th last year at 138# and has won several strong tournaments this season. He'll need to be very good just to win his regional over "A" Classic champion Epling--who missed state qualification last year by just one point. These boys are very close overall and they could meet three weekends in a row at season's end. Behind them are Nihart--who has not wrestled in over a month--and Keller, runner-up to Epling at the "A" Classic. Dark-horse candidates are Edwards, Mack (Evergreen) and Con Wyse (Archbold).

Hodous has been a very impressive wrestler this year, and could be a finalist. However, he must escape from a very difficult regional where upsets will not be uncommon. All of the Cardinal wrestlers will be unknowns since they completed in "AA" last year, so it's difficult to be sure of where they'll stand at the "A" level. Drobnick, 4th two years ago, but sidelined most of last year by injury should be the other qualifier and could well place. There will be a myriad of wrestlers trying to unend this top twosome. Included in this category are Cole, who has the best shot at such an accomplishment, Dudash (Columbiana), Caddell (Clearview) and Plues (Mapleton).

The Eastern Regional also contains a number of possible qualifiers that must be pared down to the fortunate two. At the top of the list is state 4th placewinner Johnson, who, frankly, did not impress me that much. However, you cannot argue with solid achievement. Right behind him is the very under-rated Tolson who has defeated some top-notch wrestlers this year. He was a state alternate last year, and looks ready to scale much higher peaks in 1987. However, Bendle has also been excellent and he will not be easily defeated. All three of this trio has placement potential--the trick will be to get to Columbus. A second trio of Gates, Albright and Sears are nearly as good so this will be a real dynamite regional. So good and deep, in fact, that overall it will compare favorably to the state bracket.

That bears no resemblance to what we'll find in the Southwest. Nobody there would seem to have much hopes of even the lowest state place, and the qualifying duo will luck to win one bout in total. Boehm and Swank are the two I currently favor, but Albers could beat out the latter boy. Sowers and Profitt are long-shots.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: PAUL COFFLAND (CADIZ)**TOP CONTENDERS:**

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Porter (Cardinal) | 11. Rethman (Versailles) |
| 3. Foston (Bridgeport) | 12. Robson (New London) |
| 4. Tammerine (Liberty Center) | 13. Pasiuk (Bergholz Springfield) |
| 5. Kreiner (Archbold) | 14. Ishmael (North Baltimore) |
| 6. Myers (Sandusky St. Marys) | 15. Gentile (Grandview Hts.) |
| 7. Kieffer (Arcadia) | 16. Iddings (Covington) |
| 8. Beidelshies (Hopewell-London) | 17. Briseno (Ayresville) |
| 9. Ewers (Montpelier) | 18. E. Drobnick (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 10. Roth (Seneca East) | 19. Shelton (Batavia) |

Three years ago Paul Coffland burst upon the wrestling world as a 98# freshman competing in "AA" for the first time. He upset John Purcell--considered nearly unbeatable at the time--and then lost a hard-fought final to another freshman, Erik Burnett, by an 8-6 margin. How their careers have diverged from that point. Burnett remains unbeaten from that point, and already owns three state titles going for his fourth at 112#. Coffland, however, suffered a season-ending injury as a sophomore, and then began to grow--and grow. Today he has to be rated the favorite for his first state title eight weight classes higher than his near miss three years ago.

While the championship road won't be easy, 155# is not exactly top-heavy with superior talent either. One of the best is in Coffland's own district and regional represented by the strong Orlando Foston. One of the most intimidating looking wrestlers around Foston was not impressive at last year's state meet and looked particularly bad on his feet. However, his record this season has been exceptional and he will be a tough competitor for anyone. One advantage he'll have is being away from Coffland. A third very strong entrant here is Pasiuk who could be a tourney surprise.

Chip Porter is the third Cardinal wrestler I've rated second, and it remains to be seen if they can justify those lofty projections. However, he has both the tools and experience to excel although he, too, is in a very strong and very deep regional. Qualification out of Lorain at this weight will mean an exceptional individual performance. Roth was a state alternate last year and won the recent Van Buren Invitation. He is up three weight classes. Beidelshies was also a state alternate in 1986 only at this weight, and looked awesome until he stumbled at the Van Buren. Myers, too, was a state alternate at 145# last year and the trend here is clear. This regional is loaded with boys who were frustrated just inches short of state qualification last year--a group that understands what it takes to win, and what it means to lose. Also at this weight is "A" Classic champ, Robson, who upset the much higher-ranked Tammerine. I may be rating this boy way too low.

Finally, we have another state alternate, Russell, who was bounced in the regional semi-final by state champion Mike McKeon. In total, Porter must face four boys who placed 3rd in the regionals plus several others with solid credentials. Qualification here could be so tough that the states will seem anti-climactic.

Much the same type of blood bath will occur at Findlay. Tammerine, Kreiner, Kieffer, Ishmael and Briseno are all excellent and, of course, state qualifier Ewers also returns. Here's the way I sort it out. Tammerine is consistently tough to beat and looks to have the best chance of qualification. Kreiner and Kieffer, both just down from 167#, should probably battle for the second spot, but that will be complicated by the experienced Ewers. However, Ewer's record so far in 1987 has not been all that impressive. Ishmael, only a sophomore, has made rapid progress, but he's still a year from Columbus. Briseno could pull a major upset, but I think not two or three, so he looks more likely to fill the role of "spoiler" rather than qualifier. The regionals at this weight certainly seem to define parity.

The exception to all this frantic activity will be at Covington. Nobody there made my top ten and the qualifiers are likely to end up as first-round hamburger. Rethman and Iddings were early favorites, but Gentile's two weight class reduction and quick improvement could see him garner a Columbus berth.

167#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JUDD SMITH (CUYAHOGA HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Burlenski (Bridgeport) | 10. Box (Evergreen) |
| 3. Spieldenner (Fremont St. Joseph) | 11. Kiehl (Versailles) |
| 4. Miller (Cadiz) | 12. Rohrer (Waterford) |
| 5. Heiss (Cardinal) | 13. Clouse (Tiffin Calvert) |
| 6. Yoor (Columbiana) | 14. McCort (Beallsville) |
| 7. Snodgrass (Van Buren) | 15. Brammell (Grandview Hts.) |
| 8. Boundy (Batavia) | 16. Burket (Ayersville) |
| 9. Leppelmeier (Edgerton) | |

This would seem to be a struggle between two exceptional juniors both of whom were state runners-up as promising sophomores. My favorite, Judd Smith, is an excellent athlete, particularly good on his feet. He can beat Burlenski, but only if he wrestles takedowns with him and keeps mat wrestling at an absolute minimum. Smith is small for the weight and so it will be to his advantage to draw Burlenski before the finals, and when Burlenski still has to worry about making weight. He will give away a lot of size if they meet Saturday night after Burlenski has been able to eat all day. Burlenski has outstanding poise and seems never to get flustered. He must be better on his feet to beat Smith, but his size and strength may wear Smith down and make him vulnerable in the third period. Burlenski has to be in good enough shape to take advantage of it if he is to win.

Joining Smith in Columbus representing the Lorain Regional will be either Heiss or Yoor. Smith beat Yoor by six points last year and that margin, probably, remains about the same today. Heiss was an "AA" district champ at 138# last year and has just returned to the line-up. He'll do up three weight classes is like much of my Cardinal analysis this year, problematical. Clouse was runner-up at the "A" Classic, but how he'll match up with Yoor or Heiss is probably not very well. Right now he would have to be rated the underdog. McKinney (Hopewell-Loudon) is a real long-shot from this area.

Burlenski is likely to be challenged only in a perfunctory way in his regional. The real battle will be for the second spot and it should feature three contenders. Miller would seem to have the best shot with his rapid improvement this year. In my mind, he has moved ahead of Rohrer and McCort who have not faced nearly as stern competition, although they both have better records than Miller.

The Findlay Regional is confusing. Spieldenner and Snodgrass seemed well ahead of the competition until Snodgrass stumbled badly at the Van Buren Invitational. Now Spieldenner stands alone with Box and Leppelmeier ready to topple Snodgrass. The two qualifiers certainly have opportunities for a low state place, but will not challenge Smith or Burlenski.

The Southwestern Regional is particularly weak. Bundy and Kiehl were my original choices, but Brammell seems to be making rapid progress. Look, perhaps, for him to upset one of the other two and capture a state berth. None of the other regional qualifiers will much care what duo qualifies. What they'll hope for, instead, is a first-round match-up with them.

175#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JEFF EDMONDSON (NEWBURY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Taylor (Covington) | 10. Muffler (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 3. MacLellan (Richmond Hts.) | 11. Gibson (Cadiz) |
| 4. Willeman (Evergreen) | 12. Schultz (Archbold) |
| 5. Grisez (Versailles) | 13. Winston (Mansfield St. Peter) |
| 6. Krill (Edgerton) | 14. Shull (Fisher Catholic) |
| 7. White (Licking Hts.) | 15. Lyon (Montpelier) |
| 8. Romey (Bergholz Springfield) | 16. Roth (Bellaire St. John) |
| 9. Frank (Stryker) | 17. Reineck (Fremont St. Joseph) |

This will be a weight class that should be resolved by a series of hard fought, narrowly decided bouts. For the most part the top boys have not competed with one another and, in fact, have met few common opponents. This makes predictions based solely on logic difficult to develop, and make them more art form than science. My choice is Jeff Edmondson, 2nd last year by one point, and a quality competitor. This flies in the face of recent past

performance which saw MacLellan win their recent dual meet encounter. MacLellan has wrestled at 167# most of the year but the struggle to make weight was just too difficult. Now at 175#, he'll feel better and that, in the past, has translated into better performance. Still, I think Edmondson will beat him in the state finals because he'll get more aggressive each time they meet (district, regional, and, possibly state) and that will ultimately mean victory. State qualifier Muffler will be left out in this struggle, and may well move, as he did last year, to the more congenial 185# class. Winston has shown substantial improvement, but cannot match up with the top two here.

The real surprise might be at the Southwest Regional. Taylor and Olson are a dynamite upper-weight duo for Covington and both would place. Taylor will be strong at this class as will Wayne Invitational champ Grisez who is a first-class pinner. This regional is very strong at 175#. White, who placed at North Canton, and Shull will have problems here, and I look for them to test their skills at 185# instead. Taylor, who was the regional champion last year, lost by one point to the state 3rd place finisher and he may surprise both Edmondson and MacLellen if they concentrate too much on each other.

Willeman placed at the "AA" level last year and he has to be the favorite at Findley. However, he has not wrestled a taxing schedule this year, and he will face substantial challenges here. The trio of Krill, Frank and Schultz were top finishers at the "A" Classic, and they have pretty much dominated the smaller tournaments in that area. They were all regional qualifiers last year with Frank and Schultz placing. Still, I think Krill has the best chance of earning that second state berth based on recent successes. There is no question that the competition will be very close and he seems to have had good success in those type of bouts. A long-shot is state alternate Reineck who will have his hands full with this competitor.

The Eastern Regional is weak and may present Cadiz with the opportunity to grab an extra qualifying spot. Romey has had an outstanding season and has to be the favorite to take the regional title. He tied 12-12 state third-placer Dowling wrestling up a weight at 185#. The second spot is really wide-open with Gibson or Roth as good a choice as any. They would have no chance of qualifying anywhere else.

185#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MIKE VARGO (BRIDGEPORT)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Reighard (Liberty Center) | 9. Manns (Carey) |
| 3. Olson (Covington) | 10. Atkins (Madeira) |
| 4. Stemen (Delphos St. John) | 11. Glaze (Ashland) |
| 5. Dowling (Wellsville) | 12. Maynard (Fisher Catholic) |
| 6. Dahlhausen (Newbury) | 13. Wurm (Tiffin Calvert) |
| 7. Younker (Gibsonburg) | 14. Dye (Montpelier) |
| 8. Brindza (Cardinal) | |

This is a weight class that will be totally dominated by state champion Mike Vargo whose victory string will probably be somewhere in the 60's by state tourney time. Last year Vargo pulled out a last gasp 10-9 victory over Brian Beechuk in as close a bout as you'll see. This year, he'll probably win all of his bouts on falls as the competition is just not there this year. It would be far more interesting to see him competing with the Millers and Holmans in Ohio at his present level of development.

Vargo and Dowling, 3rd last year at 175#, should be their respective district champs, finish 1-2 at the regional, and then journey to Columbus. Dowling mystified me last year. He got destroyed 16-0 TF in the first round at State and then beat two former state place-winners in the consolations for his 3rd place. Will the real Eric Dowling please stand up? Since there is absolutely nobody else in the Eastern Regional, Dowling can wrestle either way and qualify, but at Columbus it will be interesting to see which Eric Dowling will appear.

Reighard and Stemen are long-time rivals who qualified together out of the Northwest last year. At that time, Stemen seemed a mite better, winning the regional and a bout at Columbus. Reighard may have turned that around winning the "A" Classic by a comfortable 5-1 margin. Both of these boys could place and both could be upset by the rapidly Younger who fought a tough battle with Reighard already this year. State alternate Dye is also at this weight, but he probably isn't good enough to beat out this trio.

Olson is also a strong candidate as a place winner. He dropped an 18-10 thriller to Stemen last year, but he has come on strong in his home area. He'll dominate that Covington Regional and could be a finalist with the right pairing. He'll have absolutely no trouble with Atkins and/or Maynard who'll fill out the Columbus bracket sheet.

Dahlhausen was a 167#er who ate like crazy last year so he could wrestle heavyweight---the only spot open on that state championship Newbury team. Lo and behold, the weight class was so weak that his speed and mobility brought him a regional runner-up trophy, and eventually, a state 4th place medal. It isn't likely to happen again. Currently he is certified at 175# and he'll probably end up at 185#. It'll be a struggle to qualify and a battle to place, but experience and poise at the upper weights can pay off--and Dahlhausen has both. Brindza, now at 175#, will undoubtedly be at 185# and should grab the second spot. His erratic record, though, leaves him vulnerable. Manns and Glaze were both regional qualifiers last year and they both have upset potential. I particularly like Manns but he'll have to be at his best to have any hope of a state berth.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOHN SLOBODA (MARION PLEASANT)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Roe (Elmore Woodmore) | 9. Gore (Seneca East) |
| 3. Harp (Liberty Center) | 10. Grimm (Stanton) |
| 4. Ferguson (Bellaire St. John) | 11. Cogswell (Pioneer North Central) |
| 5. Carlin (Stryker) | 12. Rospert (New London) |
| 6. Skaggs (Shadyside) | 13. Woodard (Sarahsville Shenendoah) |
| 7. Bostick (Mechanicsburg) | 14. Hoar (Licking Hts.) |
| 8. Schaeffer (Apple Creek Waynedale) | 15. Clark (Columbiana) |

Generally speaking, the "A" heavyweight division is not noted as being either strong or deep. Occasionally, there are outstanding individuals like a Dennis Loushin or "Boog" Nye, but oftentimes 185's choose this weight as an easy way to qualify. That is, again, pretty much the case this year with a few good individuals and a number of major question marks.

The top candidate for the championship is John Sloboda who was a "AA" regional champ at 185# last year and came within a point of placing at Columbus. He is not one of those slow-moving behemoths that we have often seen in "A", but is a quick, mobile heavyweight albeit not particularly big. He'll face tough competition from certain areas of the state, but most of the best kids are about his size so he'll not be overpowered by some 275#er. His regional is weak with the journeyman Bostick appearing to be his qualifying mate. However, those small Cincinnati schools occasionally have hidden a reasonable heavyweight and that could be the case this year. Another possibility might be Hoar if only by default.

The Findlay Regional undoubtedly has the most heavyweight depth. Roe was a regional champ and state qualifier at 185# last year losing to Reighard in the first round. He had no trouble at the "A" Classic hammering state qualifier Harp 10-3 in the finals. He should be a finalist at this weight. Harp, despite the one-sided loss, is still my second choice and if Sloboda and Roe are bracketed together could slip into the finals. Carlin is a good third choice here, but has lost to the top two boys. Cogswell had a regional 4th at this weight last year, but may not be able to compete. Pioneer North Central disbanded their squad early in the season due to lack of numbers and whether Cogswell will compete as an individual is problematical.

Ferguson, a state alternate at 175# last year, has wrestled some of this year at 185#. However, with Vargo and Dowling in his regional, he has smartly opted for heavyweight where his odds are considerably better. He'll do well at this class and, I believe, he has passed Skaggs as best in that area. Skaggs, 3rd at 185# in 1986, has not had the same good fortune at heavyweight, but should safely qualify. The next best two are Grimm and Woodard and they are way, way behind my top two picks here.

At Lorain the cupboard is almost bare. Schaeffer was 4th at the Smithville Invitational and competed with some success in "AA" last season. Gore won the recent Van Buren Invitational and was a regional qualifier in 1986. This is the best I could find with Rospert and Clark well behind my top two. I wouldn't be surprised to find Dahlhausen here although, he will probably qualify just as easily at 185#. He may, however, see an easier state placement at heavyweight since he pinned Harp last year.

TEAMS

1. BRIDGEPORT -- Their big rival in what should be a scintillating battle is neighboring Cadiz. This gives added importance to district and regional action since they can't go head-to-head at States until the final round. Bridgeport has three potential finalists in Vargo, Burlenski, and D. Burk. Crucial contributions can be made by Foston and T. Burk who need to qualify and score at Columbus. The key figures, though, may well be the freshman Frohnappfel at 98# and the unlucky Scheid at 138#. Of course, if Lyle or Sears can qualify, things could be much easier.
2. CADIZ -- This is a team that may be just a shade short of Bridgeport despite a little more depth. Case, Giffin and Coffland are potential finalists while Heavilin and Miller should capture a low place. However, Johnson and Bozicevic may disappoint and both Gibsons are long-shots to score. Get strong performances from them and Bridgeport may be clutching the 2nd place team trophy.
3. LIBERTY CENTER -- A team that has an erratic profile and a history of injuries. Still Kern and Dean look like titlists with Long, Tammerine and Reighard as placers. Get a strong performance from Harp and have Murdock or Keller pull some upsets and they'll be challenging the two river schools.
4. WEST LIBERTY SALEM -- We are not talking about a lot of depth here, but three champions can score a lot of points. Hiltibran could help, but if the big three have problems, there is no back-up aid.
5. RICHMOND HTS. -- That big Lorain Regional will hurt them because it will steal away their depth. Still Hanson should win and MacLellen and Adkins will place. They need points from Smith, Musarra or anybody else that can help.
6. CARDINAL -- A mystery team that could be 3rd or 30th. Neikirk, Hodous and Porter should all score heavily, but they'll need more than that. Somehow they have to get Heiss, Brindza and even Hofstetter to pitch in-- but how the latter can qualify in that murderous regional weight class seems impossible.

7. CUYAHOGA HTS. -- Stopar and Smith should be finalists and, perhaps, pick up some bonus points on the way. They have to get help from Ken Drobnick and hope for some of the rest to create a small miracle.
8. NEWBURY -- The defending champs have their work cut out for them. Crucial will be coaching decisions that put Edmondson and Dahlhausen at the best weights and solid motivation that gets Bond and French into top form. Should all that work out, they could move up a few spots.
9. SANDUSKY ST. MARY -- Myers and Galloway need good pairings at both the regional and state level and the larger Myers somehow has to successfully run the gauntlet at 155#. Given that and help from Conry, Smith or Legando, they'll be a top ten team again.
10. ARCHBOLD -- A lovely dual meet team that may fall apart at the regional level. They have excellent lower weights in the two Nguyens, Rocha, Furko and Villareal, but all of them face strong regional competition. Upperweight help from Kreiner and Schultz is a must.
11. VERSAILLES -- A team that I may seriously be under-estimating. They have been out of "A" for five years and with a new regional who can tell what will happen. Moran, Duncan and Grisez are their stars but they have good team depth. If they hit everything just right, they could challenge for the top five.
12. FREMONT ST. JOSEPH -- Another team that could rise well above their projected level. Spieldenner and Lupica look solid, but it's all question marks after that. State qualifier Hoffman will have regional problems while Miller and Reineck are real long-shots.
13. EDGERTON -- A team with many hopes and, probably many disappointments. Nye and Rowe are their top stars with Krill and Leppelmeier as hopefuls. Nihart must return strong, and somebody else, like Carlin, has to get hot.
14. GRANDVIEW HTS. -- Bonaventura should be a finalist somewhere, but Abbruzzes finish strongly for them to move up. While Gentile or Brammell could qualify, it's hard to see them scoring at the state level.
15. ELMORE WOODMORE -- Epling and Roe could be finalists and that's a lot of points. But help has to come from Hoover and Melcher for more to happen.