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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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Brian F. Brakeman

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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 district 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. This report was written during a seven-day period in mid-January based on the information available at that time. It's kind of a snapshot in time with a picture that will surely change in many ways by tournament time. The new weight certification rules (there aren't any) have made switching of weight classes much simpler so that I anticipate many changes from what is shown here. In fact, some of those moves may well be precipitated by information contained within this document.

This is a recruiting year in Ohio that has substantial up-top strength, but not a whole lot of depth. The incomparable Fried is without peer in the high school wrestling ranks anywhere in the United States, and his talents are pretty much self-evident. Mike Buddie is one of the best upper weight wrestlers in the land from a state that has consistently produced at least one exceptional big man every year. The scintillating trio of lightweights (Nelson, Cianciola, and Dontae Smith) are all excellent collegiate prospects. In addition, the usual quota of almost superstars led by those like Yetts are also available. However, there is not much depth after the first ten or so standouts. Next year, however, Ohio will probably have the best crop of seniors in the nation. The junior class this year is overflowing with outstanding talents and those wrestlers will only get better. People like Splete, Robbins, Petche and Millson are just the tip of an iceberg that will contain, maybe, two dozen top-flight talents in 1990. It will indeed be a spectator and recruiter feast next year.

One of the exciting prospects in 1989 is close team title competitions in two of the three school classifications. In both Division II and Division III there should be furious team struggles for the top spot, and, in both cases, it will be a mixture of past winners and schools looking for their first team titles. Last year I mentioned the resurgence in wrestling in the Eastern District particularly the schools located near the Ohio River. That continues this year with that area putting forth strong team challenges in all three school classifications. Another geographical area that seems to be moving forward is the Division III segment of the Southwest District. Traditionally this has been the region you most hoped to draw into at the small school level. Except for isolated individuals (like the Dernlans) this was always the weakest district in the state. That appears to be changing with the emergence of solid Division III schools like Versailles, Brookville and Bethel-Tate. While parity has not yet arrived, respectability certainly has, and no longer will small school wrestlers and teams from the southwest automatically be consigned to the bottom of the rankings page.

As faithful readers know this report has long been used as a vehicle to promote change in the administration of high school wrestling -- particularly at the tournament level. While it has not been a rapid process, progress continues to

be made in establishing real equity for every competitor. About the only issue outstanding is the expansion of the wrestle-back system during the state tournament progression to include those who have lost to losing semi-finalists. Even there individual districts can now opt for this far fairer system and my hope is that they all will do so. That would leave only the state tournament itself as a last bastion for the archaic and unfair current system. I have always hoped to live long enough to see two things -- another World Series in Cleveland and fair wrestle-backs in Columbus. It now seems possible that this latter event could occur first.

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 sectionals and districts this year. This is a good way to get a report mailed to you when it is first prepared. My address is:

Brian Brakeman
The East Ohio Gas Company
P. O. Box 5759
Room 818
Cleveland, Ohio 44101-0759

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DIVISION I

Last year the Mentor District dominated Division I activity winning ten individual titles along with eight runner-up trophies. In addition, the six top teams all exited from Mentor in what proved to be a refreshing struggle for team honors. This year that imbalance is likely to be somewhat mitigated with the Massillon Perry District strong in a number of weight classes, and the Upper Arlington and Southwest Districts having a number of good individuals. In the team competition, we'll return to the one-team dominance that has been so prevalent during the decade of the '80's.

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: GARY DeFINE (MASSILLON PERRY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| 2. White (Xenia) | 4 | 12. Richner (Painesville Riverside) |
| 3. Schork (Solon) | | 13. J. Miller (Defiance) |
| 4. Gustovich (St. Edward) | 3 | 14. Burkle (Upper Arlington) |
| 5. Clatterbuck (Northland) | | 15. Derr (Fitch) |
| 6. Darden (Sandusky) | | 16. Bray (Franklin) |
| 7. Hegarty (Holy Name) | 5 | 17. Srihanovong (Lima Shawnee) |
| 8. White (Fairfield) | | 18. Skilton (Mentor) |
| 9. Ranallo (Mayfield) | | 19. McGriff (Greenville) |
| 10. Kelley (Holland Springfield) | | 20. Pfeiffer (Toledo Central Catholic) |
| 11. Grove (Lakota) | | 21. Retherford (Ravenna) |
| | | 22. Barnhizer (Toledo Whitmer) |

This report is organized so that it always begins with the lightest weight class in Division I. Embarrassingly, of all 39 weight classes annually forecasted this is the one where I have had the least success recently, and, in fact, have been shutout during the decade of the 1980's. It's gotten so bad that I even missed the correct winner in 1986 when Alan Fried was my choice. Well, this year I'm determined to reverse this trend and Gary Define is the perfect choice. An experienced senior, Define is a returning state qualifier who has totally dominated his weight class this year while winning both the North Canton and Tiffin tournaments. His closest bout was a 10-1 victory over Gustovich in the finals at North Canton, and he appears ready to dominate a weight class that does not appear as strong as in recent years.

Another plus is that Define exits from by far the weakest district. I've ranked the recently shrunk-down Retherford and the injured Derr in my top group, but they are light years behind Define. Derr, in fact, has yet to compete but lost a chance for state qualification last year when Define shut him out in the consolation semi-finals. Other possibilities are Baldoz (Glen Oak) and Sackett (Akron North).

In the Southwest, a pair of Whites lead the way. Brent White, a state qualifier from Xenia, is a potential finalist with an undefeated record and two major

tournament championships. He will be pushed in his area by the unheralded senior Glen White who will drop to 103# after a very successful campaign at 112# and by Grove whom he beat by a single point at the St. Xavier Tourney. Glen White has finally had a chance to come into his own after being behind all those great lightweight Fairfield always seems to turn out and he has been outstanding. Bray and McGriff look to challenge for the last qualifying spot with a host of other contenders just a short step behind.

As in recent years, the deepest district at this weight will be at Mentor. The freshman Schork and the sophomore Gustovich have both been brilliant with the latter losing only to DeFine while the former's only loss was a one point defeat at the Medina finals to Gustovich. Still, I think Schork will prove to be the stronger of the two and could well be a finalist. He has enormous potential for a freshman. Hegarty and Ranallo both have low placement potential, but are clearly behind my top duo. There is good depth here with Richner and Skilton top-notch talents from the eastern portion of the district, while Nathanson (Shaker Hts.), Pham (Cleveland Hts.) and Ramsey (Strongsville) have long-shot potential.

The mammoth Upper Arlington district is headed by two very experienced competitors. Both Darden and Clatterbuck have done well in the past and have outstanding current year records. They have the ability to challenge all of those rated ahead of them with the exception of DeFine. There are a whole host of possibilities for the last three qualifying spots with few real measures with which to make judgments. I've listed Kelley, Miller, Burkle, Srihanovong, Pfeiffer and Barnhizer, but that is, at best, an educated guess. A youngster to watch out for is Miller who has been pinning opponents at every turn. Certainly Carr (Toledo Rogers) or Henry (Eastmoor) have the ability to beat any of this listed sextet. It should be extremely interesting at every weight class at Upper Arlington as Northwest and Central wrestlers compete head-to-head. I anticipate a lot of surprises at this district.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JASON LAFLIN (FAIRFIELD) ^{1st}

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 2. D. Smith (Akron Kenmore) | 13. Dodson (Hilliard) |
| 3. Castellana (St. Edward) | 14. U. Robinson (Lorain Southview) |
| 4. Duke (Midview) | 15. Fowler (Vandalia Butler) ⁵ |
| 5. Leemaster (Walsh) | 16. Freshwater (Mentor) |
| 6. Whitmer (Uniontown Lake) | 17. T. Miller (Defiance) ⁴ |
| 7. Duncan (Findlay) | 18. Scherer (Kettering Fairmont) |
| 8. Stout (Upper Arlington) | 19. Graham (Wooster) |
| 9. Rocco (Lakewood) | 20. Thompson (Elida) |
| 10. McDonald (Shaw) | 21. Davis (Sidney) |
| 11. Kimmerly (Amelia) | 22. Dolder (Gahanna Lincoln) |
| 12. DeLong (Cincinnati Mt. Healthy) | 23. Smith (East Liverpool) |

In reality one is almost forced to make two choices at this weight class. Smith, the defending state champ, is the pick, if eligible to compete, while the highly

credentialed Laflin is the choice should Smith not appear. Let me explain. Smith the brilliant lightweight from Akron Kenmore has not yet competed this season because of a classroom problem that would apparently be rectified at the end of the first semester (about February 3). Even with such a late start this multi-talented athlete would have to be favored on his last year's performance which included a 33-0 record and three falls and a major decision at Columbus. However, the Akron teachers' strike could well delay the end of the first semester past the sectional starting date eliminating Smith from contention.

If so, Laflin would be a solid choice based on his 2nd and 3rd place state finishes the past two years. He easily could have won at this weight last year but a tying takedown at the end of a match was at first allowed and then waved off costing him the title opportunity. He has started slowly this year at 125# and 119# finishing 4th at North Canton and, generally, looking a little lethargic. Once he is cut down to 112#, he should be a determining force at this weight--particularly based on his takedown skills.

The district analysis is interesting at this weight. At Perry, Smith, if competing, would be a commanding figure, but would not go unchallenged. Duke, 4th last year at 103#, will shrug off his poor Brunswick Tourney (he lost twice) and be a real factor here. His skill with the legs make him a formidable competitor for anyone, particularly if he grabs an early lead. At that point he becomes almost unbeatable. Whitmer, 6th two years ago, will drop to avoid the crowded 119# field and will be a potent force, too. He won at Medina ahead of a star-studded field that included Marchette, Emmerling and Sias. Very experienced he will not throw away a won bout and is very tough in close matches. That would leave state qualifier Graham, Smith (East Liverpool), and Tesler (Cloverleaf) if at this weight, apparently eliminated from state qualification. Hurford (Alliance) and Cerjan (Geneva) who would be strong contenders further south have little chance here.

The Southwest District is also jam-packed with possibilities. Laflin, of course, has the inside track, but state qualifiers DeLong, Fowler and Scherer are all solid. None of them, though, has a lock on qualification and, indeed, it would be surprising if all of them made a return trip to Columbus. I believe that DeLong and particularly, Scherer are vulnerable with Kimmerly, Davis and Yeager (West Chester Lakota) as potential spoilers. Two long-shot choices are Newberry (Milford) and Stumpf1 (Dayton Stebbins).

The Mentor District is very competitive and all of the four that emerge from this area will have placement potential. Castellana, twice a state place winner, has, with one exception, looked very strong this year and has finalist potential. He was pinned by Laflin for 3rd last year at this weight, but has looked far better this year. His one stumble was against the brilliant sophomore Leemaster in the finals at Medina. Leemaster is clearly a budding superstar but may be a year away from a state title -- and then again, maybe not. He cannot be overlooked by anyone. Rocco wrestles a schedule that so far has kept him away from strong competition but he is a solid talent with a winning touch. McDonald can get emotional, but he is exceptionally strong and missed state qualification by one match last year. He shredded Duke at the Brunswick and then lost to Stout in the finals by a point. Robinson and Freshwater may be slightly behind the top four but state qualification for either of them would be a mild surprise at best. Robinson, in particular, has the "horsepower" to challenge all but the top duo.

At Upper Arlington, state placer Duncan and state qualifier Stout head an otherwise undistinguished field. Both have done very well this year and appear ready to challenge for top places. After that the contenders below them do not appear so strong although two younger wrestlers, Miller and Dolder could pull some upsets. They are both very young and still on the steep part of the learning curve so that they cannot be taken for granted.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: SHAWN NELSON (NORTH ROYALTON) /

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Emmerling (East Liverpool) | 12. Knaze (St. Edward) |
| 3. Gray (Cincinnati Princeton) | 13. Guess (Toledo Start) |
| 4. Russo (Amherst) | 14. Newsome (Toledo St. John) |
| 5. Marchette (North Canton Hoover) | 15. Pitroff (West Carrollton) |
| 6. St. John (St. Joseph) | 16. Roehlig (Massillon) |
| 7. Sias (Solon) | 17. Dickerson (Sandusky) |
| 8. McCollins (Massillon Perry) | 18. D. Robinson (Lorain Southview) |
| 9. Stevenson (Marion Harding) | 19. C. Miller (Oregon Clay) |
| 10. Murray (Fairfield) | 20. Lemle (West Chester Lakota) |
| 11. Tritsch (Fairborn Baker) | 21. Fetter (Pickerington) |

This year's state competition will be highlighted by the senior farewells of some of the finest wrestlers this state has produced in some time. One of this group is the brilliant Shawn Nelson -- already a two-time state champion with an 80+ consecutive winning streak. Moreover, he has performed with such determination and class that his victories seem almost effortless. He doesn't appear particularly strong or outstandingly quick, but he has had but one close bout since his freshman year. The secret is the relentless pressure that he applies that almost inevitably wears down an opponent both physically and mentally. In many cases in the past, the 3rd state title is little more than a formality -- a congratulatory parade through the bracket sheet. That will not be true for Shawn Nelson despite his very evident skills. While a strong favorite there is a very real possibility of defeat as he faces, perhaps, the strongest field we'll see in any of the 39 weight classes this year. A field so strong that Laflin and Whitmer have already moved to 112# and some of the others mentioned here may seek the more congenial competition at 125#. Nonetheless, Nelson will truly have to earn a 3rd state title and should it become his, would well rate the OW award if it were given. Coincidentally, if form was to prevail, all there winners at 119# this year (Nelson, Cianciola and Zapadka) would be rare three-time champs.

Even qualification out of Mentor will not be a surety for Nelson. State runner-up Russo remains undefeated and his efforts last year were most impressive. Being runner-up as a junior is often the prelude to a state title in the senior year, and Russo would like to cash in on such an analysis. He should be away from Nelson at Columbus and has the talent for one magnificent upset. Sias and St. John are two underclassmen with tremendous talent. Both have strong placement hopes this year and state championship potential in the future. Knaze beat Laflin at North Canton but was majored by Sias and would appear to be along

with Robinson, left out of state qualification. Both would be strong possibilities to do something at other weights. The rapidly improving Humphrey (Padua) could also be a factor at this weight class and cannot, therefore, be overlooked.

At Perry, there is another sensational field. Emmerling seems intent on competing at this weight and he has also had a brilliant four-year career that has lacked only for a state title. The 1st four-time OVAC champ since Bobby Douglas he could well have captured a state crown last season but for an injury that struck before district competition forcing him to withdraw. He left with an undefeated record. This season both Sias and Marchette have beaten him in close bouts, but they will be hard pressed to duplicate the feat. Emmerling is so good in the top position with his assortment of hooks and bars that he pins virtually all of his foes -- a real advantage in tourney competition. Three years ago, when they were both freshmen, Nelson met Emmerling for 5th place at Columbus. After an initial takedown by Nelson at the end of the first period, Emmerling rode Nelson for four minutes, but lost 2-0 when unable to turn him. Their next meeting could be for the state title. The sophomore Marchette is a slam-bang wrestler with a style that can't help but be appealing. Like St. John and Sias, he has tremendous long-term potential that could come to fruition as early as March. Watch his bouts, they are all interesting. McCollins, a state qualifier last year, was OW at Tiffin and was runner-up at North Canton. He, too, is but a junior with the skills of a battle-hardened senior. Those three should qualify, but if Whitmer wrestles here the competition will be exceptionally fierce. The very fine Roehlig would appear to have no chance here.

Gray was a state qualifier at 130# last year and has dropped two weight classes to go at 119#. Nobody has been close to him in the Southwest and that is particularly impressive in light of the quality performers there. He could well be a finalist, although his style, in my mind, is perfect for Nelson to capitalize upon. Murray wrestled up a weight at 119# last year because Laflin was at 112#, and he still qualified for state action. This year he should do very well at 119#, and would normally have been rated higher except for the extraordinary competition there. I've rated state qualifier Tritsch ahead of Pitroff based on experience, but the latter has secured two narrow victories over him. This quartet has the inside track for qualification, but there is a vast array of other competition. I've listed Lemle, but Rocky (Cincinnati LaSalle), Neidich (Cincinnati Elder), and the young Bulugaris (Beavercreek) are certainly other possibilities.

The one district that seems overshadowed by all this firepower is Upper Arlington. State qualifier Stevenson has lost only once, but McCollins shut him out last year in Columbus. State qualifier Newsome was upset by Guess at the St. John's Invitational and his two previous trips to Columbus ended early with first round losses (last year to Tritsch). State qualifier Miller met a similar fate last year and may move to 112#. Other possibilities are Dickerson and Fetter with Wilcox (Gahanna Lincoln) and Walton (Toledo Central Catholic) having real state potential. The quintet that exits here will be in for a bad time the following weekend.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BILL LALLY (SOLON) /

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Powell (Cincinnati Princeton) ? | 13. Karrenbauer (Massillon) |
| 3. Biehl (Uniontown Lake) ? | 14. Beemer (Wapakoneta) |
| 4. Leonti (St. Edward) | 15. Biros (Stow) |
| 5. Boroff (Dublin) | 16. Spangler (Sidney) |
| 6. Ranallo (Mayfield) | 17. Coker (Toledo Rogers) |
| 7. Kimble (Fairborn Baker) | 18. Bermudez (Lorain Southview) |
| 8. Kassinos (Wilmingon) | 19. Stacy (Norwood) |
| 9. Turner (Amherst) | 20. Donahue (Canton South) |
| 10. Mihalic (St. Joseph) | 21. McCord (Columbus Eastmoor) |
| 11. Gribben (Gahanna Lincoln) | 22. Haller (Lakewood) |
| 12. Hennessey (Cincinnati Elder) | 23. Perz (Toledo Central Catholic) |
| | 24. Gallagher (Ravenna) |

This weight shows in stark contrast to the 119# class that immediately precedes it. While there are a number of journeyman performers here, the "up top" quality is pretty much missing. That's why I suspect there may be some flow here from 119# although pinpointing individuals is difficult. Nonetheless, whatever the field, Billy Lally will prove very difficult to defeat. A consummate defensive wrestler who can also score he was 4th last year after losing a semi-final thriller 10-7. One of the impressive features about Lally is his consistency -- he just doesn't wrestle many bad matches, and he is very tough to takedown. He'll need those skills to win it because I anticipate a number of close, low-scoring bouts here.

At Mentor there are five wrestlers rated in my top ten with only four qualifying spots. Leonti, 6th last year, has much the same style as Lally, but lacks his ability to score big. He dropped a narrow 3-2 bout to him at Medina. Ranallo lost a 1-0 bout in the Solon finals and has been very impressive throughout the year. His only other defeat was to Division II choice McCumber. He could place. Turner has been a whirlwind all year crushing everyone. He has not faced the good competition yet. Last year he was upset in the first round at Mentor, Mihalic is up three weight classes, but has had little trouble so far. Of course, St. Joseph really doesn't compete much until mid-January. Five outstanding wrestlers and only four qualifying spots -- somebody is going to lose out. In addition, both Bermudez and Haller have exceptional skills, the former having defeated my #5 ranked Boroff in overtime at the Brunswick final. What will be really interesting is that the Southview Sectional will feature Leonti, Turner, Bermudez and Haller so that even a small error in that venue could be fatal. State qualifier Roche, projected at this weight, apparently will not compete reducing marginally the strain here.

None of the other districts are of comparable difficulty although the Southwest features some strong performers. Powell was 4th last year and will challenge Lally in every aspect of the sport. His speed and power could well break down Lally's defensive skills. However, he has shown inconsistency as witnessed by his recent 8-6 loss to Kimble. That wrestler along with state qualifier Kassinos are certainly challengers for state places, and clearly Kimble has the weapons to

accomplish that. State qualifier Hennessey has the inside track for the 4th spot but he has struggled some this year. A drop to 119# might look attractive until one sees the competition there. Stacy, who has already defeated Hennessey, and Spangler have qualification hopes here.

The situation is unsettled at Perry. Biehl, 5th last year, with a thunderous 12-2 decision over Leonti has not yet completed this season. It's likely that a staph infection of his knee will keep him out of the lineup until, perhaps, sectional weekend. Whether he will be able to compete at a high level in such a situation is problematical. Still he gave Lally two great bouts last year losing one of them in overtime. Fortunately for him the competition in his district is not particularly fierce with Biro, Karrenbauer and Gallagher a giant step behind a healthy Biehl. A wild card entry might be Emmerling should he decide to move up to 125#.

I'm not particularly impressed with the Upper Arlington District at this weight either. Boroff, a state qualifier, is a major exception, although his loss to Bermudez was surprising. Gribben has done well in the Columbus area and should qualify. His smashing win over two-time state qualifier Newsome was impressive. The unknown Beemer is far better than expected as witness his triumph at the Marion Harding Tourney. An overtime loss cost him a state trip last year. Coker, McCord, Perz and Lalonde (Toledo Start) are other possibilities, but they will not cause much consternation elsewhere in the state.

130#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: AUDIE ATIENZA (MAPLE HTS.) /

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Grant (Westerville North)
3. Van Cucha (Strongsville)
4. Millson/Rupanovic (St. Edward)
5. Cyrus (Fairborn Baker)
6. Bell (Dublin)
7. E. Laflin (Fairfield)
8. K. Wilson (Stow)
9. Williams (Oak Hills)
10. Wilmington (Lorain Southview)
11. Boivin (Centerville)
12. Andy (Ashland)
13. Marconi (Alliance)
14. Gray (Wilmington)
15. Harlow (Worthington)
16. Baum (Cincinnati Elder)
17. Gambatese (Euclid)
18. Piasecki (Toledo St. John)
19. Fritz (Solon)
20. Curry (Toledo Waite)
21. Herbert (Uniontown Lake)

This is a weight class that seems clearly dominated by two outstanding wrestlers. They should pretty much have their way with the rest of the competition but their meeting will be something special. Atienza, a 3-2 loser in the state finals last year, is a marvelous mat wrestler. He can score from the top in a variety of ways and is a consistent pinner. His only loss in the past two years was in the state finals to Kopp, and it has whetted his desire for that elusive state title. Grant is short, stocky and immensely strong with a quickness that cannot be taught. He was 4th last year losing to the self-same Kopp in the semi-finals 6-2. This year he has been outstanding winning the North Canton and devastating much of the best in the Southwest while winning the St. Xavier (he won 16-4 in the finals). His only close bout was his second match with Rupanovic where he

won by two. The hope is that they will be bracketed apart in Columbus. At Mentor, Atienza will be challenged by a wide array of competitors. If Millson is at this weight, their bout could be exciting. Last year when I saw Millson I thought he had the talent to be something really special. So far that quality has not yet emerged although he had a season that could only be called successful. Still, 3rd's at North Canton and Medina and a dual meet loss to Knox are a little less than anticipated. In the matches I've seen, he wrestles three strong minutes and then seemingly slows down. The senior, Rupanovic, the other half of this tandem is not as flashy as Millson, but very solid and mistake-free. His relatively close loss to Grant bespeaks his potential. The junior Van Cucha barely missed state qualification last year after a narrow semi-final loss to Hackett and then elimination by state champ Richner. He looked very strong at Kenston defeating Knox in the finals. The 4th spot could fall to Wilmington, another Admiral King transfer to Southview, or could be taken by a journeyman like Gambatese or Fritz.

State qualifiers Bell and Andy will be at Upper Arlington with Grant and should do well there. However, Andy, a qualifier as a sophomore, is not upset proof and could face real struggles with Curry, Piasecki and Harlow. He beat Perz in overtime to reach Columbus last year. With the five-man qualifying scheme this year he'll have a wider margin of error.

As mentioned, Grant pretty well destroyed most of the Southwest's 130's, but neither Cyrus or Eric Laflin competed there. Cyrus, in fact, went to 135# to win while Laflin has also been shuffling between the two weights. Along with Williams, they are the best this area has to offer. However, Division II qualifier Gray, Baum, Boivin and Ary (Xenia) will battle for the 4th spot. This group will be doing well if even one of them places in Columbus. The one surprise package might be Boivin who has wrestled a low-profile schedule with great success. A wildcard contender might be Slater (Dayton Stebbins) who has recently been very impressive.

The contingent at Perry looks quite weak and will probably be headed by the exceptional freshman Wilson. The last of the Wilson brothers, he seems well headed in the direction of exceptional wrestling success. He shares the same tenacity and spirit as his older brothers and that has already translated into a 1st at Hudson and a 4th at Brunswick which included two overtime losses. I understand he's thinking about 125# but state qualification seems surer here. Keep your attention on him. Marconi, recently down from 135#, seems inconsistent, but has state caliber skills. He should be a finalist here with Wilson. Herbert looked solid at Medina and could benefit from a team surge by Uniontown Lake. State qualifier Kirtley (Kent Roosevelt) has been beaten several times this year and people like Provonozac (Howland) or DelMonaco (North Canton) could do well.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JASON HACKETT (ST. EDWARD) 3

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Martinez (Uniontown Lake) / | 11. Martin (Wapakoneta) |
| 3. Bucher (Toledo Rogers) | 12. Doll (Cincinnati Elder) 6 |
| 4. E. Ramsey (Strongsville) | 13. Johnson (West Chester Lakota) |
| 5. Taylor (Xenia) | 14. Lanese (Brush) |
| 6. Johnson (Marion Franklin) | 15. Newman (Galloway Westland) |
| 7. Oyer (Westerville South) | 16. Purvis (Hamilton) |
| 8. Sedwick (Sycamore) | 17. Joyce (Lakewood) |
| 9. Reed (Maple Hts.) | 18. Botosan (Akron Firestone) |
| 10. Hayden (Kent Roosevelt) | 19. Timberlake (Fairfield) |
| | 20. Nathanson (Shaker Hts.) |

This is a weight class that may well receive an influx of new blood when it becomes evident that Alan Fried will, indeed, compete at 140#. At that time, those who seek only a state crown may well emigrate to other weights while those to whom placement is the ultimate objective may be content to stay as other competitors change. As it currently stands this is pretty much a non-descript class featuring some solid seniors but without the flash of some other classes.

Last year Hackett defeated both the boys who were state finalists in the Mentor District. Then as sometimes inexplicably happens, he lost a quarter-final bout at Columbus and was quickly eliminated. This season he is undefeated with victories over the two competitors ranked just below him. However, he must retain a high intensity approach because three or four of those ranged just below him are only a move or two behind. Ramsey and Reed have both shown solid skills this year and these juniors seem intent on stringing together a string of consistent successes. Already this year Reed defeated defending Division II champ Mario Marinelli to win the Brecksville while Ramsey lost by a single point at Kenston to Division II pick Jeff Harris. Joyce, Lanese and Nathanson are possibilities for the fourth qualifying spot, but pairings will be a major determinant in their success. Bellinger (Solon) and Brown (Shaw) are other possibilities for that last qualifying berth.

It was a surprise to find Martinez down at 135# this year. He was 3rd at Columbus the past two years at 138# and 140# respectively. He has an unbroken string of solid success throughout his career and has beaten a number of outstanding wrestlers. Last year he twice defeated state champ Barto before being ambushed by him in the first round at Columbus and blown away. It says much about his character that despite that disappointment he wrestled flawlessly through the consolation rounds to capture another 3rd place medal. This year Hackett beat him by two, but, perhaps, turnaround time may be at hand in Columbus. The rest of this district is very weak with the exception of the above ranked Hayden and Botosan. Martinez is well ahead of everyone else here.

I was impressed with the Rogers finalists at Medina and state qualifier Bucher was very good even in a losing final-round effort. He won one match at Columbus last year. The Upper Arlington District has good depth here with a number of possible placers. Johnson has also beaten Marinelli and has generated a number

of glowing reports as to his skills. He is rated #1 in Columbus ahead of state qualifier Oyer who also poses a significant threat at this weight. This strong trio is backed by solid wrestlers like Martin and Newman.

The Southwest District does not look very strong. Taylor and state qualifier Sedwick would appear to be strongest there, but don't look like threats to the top wrestlers in other areas. The other rated quartet are even less likely to advance past the first round in state competition. There should be very lively competition within this district, but the survivors will have serious problems against the rest of the state.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ALAN FRIED (ST. EDWARD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Orolin (Akron North) | 12. Tzagournis (Upper Arlington) |
| 3. Taylor (Toledo Rogers) | 13. Smith (Fairborn Baker) |
| 4. Berdysz (Mentor) | 14. Harmon (Toledo St. Francis) |
| 5. Lofton (Maple Hts.) | 15. Fuller (Troy) |
| 6. Andrassy (Nordonia) | 16. Albert (Brunswick) |
| 7. Blymer (Elida) | 17. Smith (Bedford) |
| 8. Betteridge (East Liverpool) | 18. B. Schwartz (Worthington) |
| 9. Frasier (Eastmoor) | 19. Walker (Warren Howland) |
| 10. Villaboy (Cincinnati St. Xavier) | 20. Kent (Westerville South) |
| 11. Hollis (Kettering Fairmont) | 21. L. Genovese (Solon) |
| | 22. Eberly (Stow) |

There is a certain volume of opinion that now believes that Alan Fried is the greatest wrestler ever produced in Ohio. That is a marvelous compliment to his skills when placed in the context of such giants as Lee Kemp, Pat Milkovich, Bobby Douglas, or Jim Heffernan, and only time will test the validity of such a hypothesis. Certainly nobody from this state has accomplished so much by age 17, or attracted such nationwide attention. It indicates the kind of awe we all feel when we watch him perform as he wins with a style and grace few are blessed with. He has set a new standard in terms of how future Ohio high school wrestlers will be evaluated. All this, while competing at weight classes generally one or two levels higher than others his size wrestle. When, in time, he ponders his impact on the sport his proudest moments will not revolve around becoming the first ever four-time USWF freestyle champ or St. Edwards first three-time Ohio winner. Instead it will be his impact on youth wrestlers throughout the state where his example has inspired a whole new generation of competitors.

At Mentor, Fried will again have Berdysz has his chief competitor and these two old rivals, in fact, could conceivably be finalists at Columbus. Berdysz has never quite reached the heights that were anticipated, but some of that has been the result of a series of nagging injuries that have plagued him. That and a certain inconsistency which follows an exceptional district final bout with Fried last year with a slow-paced first round loss at Columbus. State qualifiers

Lofton and Andrassy follow right behind and form a strong qualifying quartet. Andrassy may be the vulnerable link, but Smith and Genovese do not look capable of taking advantage of any such problems.

At Perry, Orolin who was 3rd last year leads a not terribly strong contingent. Orolin is, however, something special and is excellent on his feet. He could well be a finalist -- although Fried won by technical fall against him last year -- or he could well drop to 135#. However, the Akron teacher's strike may take away practice time and competition making him vulnerable to upsets. Betteridge and Albert are nominal favorites for the last two spots with state qualifier Walker and Eberly other possibilities.

Taylor leads the Upper Arlington group and this junior is very good. He was a quarter-finalist last year and should place this time. There will be frantic competition for the other four spots here with state qualifier Blymer, barely ahead of a whole "boatload" of competitors. Fritz was very impressive at St. Xavier, but did less well up a weight at North Canton. Harmon and Schwartz have district experience while Kent and Rush have done well this season. Even with all these names, though, I think we'll see a number of unknowns qualify out of this district. There are just too many wrestlers grouped so closely in ability for that not to occur. Three such possibilities are Flynn (Toledo St. John), Gerken (Toledo Central Catholic), and Webb (Chillicothe).

The really weak district in my mind, though, is at Dayton. There Villaboy, Smith, a state qualifier, and Hollis lead what appears to be a weak contingent. Smith, the only one with state experience, was a first round loser, and this season was 3rd at the GMVA and 2nd at St. Xavier. Villaboy has been a consistent performer, but may be overmatched in Columbus. Fuller is my top pick for the 4th spot, but Rapin (Centerville), Corey (Oak Hills) and Pates (Princeton) are possibilities.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOSH ROBBINS (CINCINNATI ST. XAVIER)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Gillmor (Nordonia) | 11. Ramirez (Fremont Ross) |
| 3. G. Genovese (Solon) | 12. Longo (Boardman) |
| 4. Lutz (Toledo Whitmer) | 13. Rice (Cincinnati Moeller) |
| 5. Elbin (St. Edward) | 14. Snider (Uniontown Lake) |
| 6. Tallett (Centerville) | 15. Kuzma (Beavercreek) |
| 7. McDannald (Westerville North) | 16. Bravard (Reynoldsburg) |
| 8. Fletcher (Fitch) | 17. T. Schwartz (Worthington) |
| 9. Smith (Shaker Hts.) | 18. Franklin (Walsh) |
| 10. Wimsatt (Fairborn Baker) | 19. Marcelli (Massillon Perry) |
| | 20. Wideman (Trotwood-Madison) |

In the introduction I mentioned that there were a number of excellent juniors in Ohio this year which would make Ohio prime hunting ground for recruiters in 1990. One of the best of this group is Josh Robbins who was my upset pick of the year last season, and who fulfilled every prediction by defeating everyone, but the

unexpectedly appearing Fried. This season he has yet to be challenged in his own area, but stiffer opponents are evident in other areas of the state. Nonetheless talent and dedication are powerful tools and Robbins has both in abundance.

Look for the real battles to be with the Mentor qualifiers. Gillmor has four solid years of experience including a strong 3rd as a sophomore in 1987. Last year unbelievable pairings cost him dearly at the district level, but he has bounced back with a vengeance. His match with Genovese was an early season highlight although that victory will be tough to duplicate. Genovese is perpetual motion and this junior is still improving rapidly. His only defeats were the narrow loss to Gillmor and a substantially worse one to Fried, and he has won all the rest by a lot. Unfortunately, I think his style is made-to-order for Robbins. The tall, lanky Elbin is a third potential finalist from Mentor. Like Gillmor he, too, suffered from misfortune last season. After winning the District over Barto, he blew out his knee in the first round of states while far ahead. Barto then went on to capture the title. This year Elbin has spent the early season at 152# after recovering from a broken hand. While he did win at Medina, his overall performance has been shaky and he has, uncharacteristically, been mistake prone. He will undoubtedly do much better at 145# where his unusual body length will really pay off. Smith is the best shot for the fourth spot, but he is pretty much an unknown factor as far as I'm concerned. Somebody to watch is another of those emerging Walsh Jesuit talents, Mike Franklin. He may be improving rapidly enough to do some damage at Mentor. I do know that after him there is a major drop-off in talent here.

Lutz leads a reasonably strong field at Upper Arlington. He was 6th last year at Columbus and wrestled well in four of his five bouts there. Victories over Berdysz and Bailey were solid performances, but more impressive were narrow one point losses to Robbins and Pinckney. Outside of the Mentor group he may have the best shot at upsetting Robbins. McDannald was second to Robbins at St. Xavier and 3rd at North Canton at 152# losing in a first-round upset and then capturing five successive bouts. His contest with Robbins, however, was not that close. Ramirez, Schwartz and Bravard are all reasonably good performers with a good shot at state qualification. Ramirez, in particular, could do well based on his strong 4th place at Medina. An intriguing quantity is Delrue (Toledo Rogers) who has done very well at 135#, but was pushed up here when Bucher and Taylor went down. At this weight, he will have problems although his skills are evident. If he can make 130#, he could be a real force there.

The Southwest District has a series of solid performers, after Robbins, but none quite able to break into that top echelon. Tallett and Wimsatt both captured state berths last year, but were first round victims and never reappeared. Tallett, in particular, seems to have good pinning potential, but that may not extend to the state level. Wimsatt lost to McDannald and Division II contender Cruze, but has a solid record against all but Robbins in this area. Rice, Kuzma and Wideman are other state possibilities, but there looks to be but one open slot. McDaniel (West Chester Lakota), a consistent placer, is another contender.

The Perry District features one of the more enigmatic competitors at this weight. Fletcher is one of those wrestlers who can surprise either way. Last year he whipped Martinez in the district and won his first two matches at State before getting hammered three times and finishing 6th. This year he has alternated between excellent and something far less and what he'll do at tourney time is at best, a guess. His district is weak with little in the way of state threats.

Longo, who upset Fletcher, and Snider appear to be the two others most likely to qualify with Fletcher. Marcelli is another possibility albeit a slim one. Nauer (Canton Timken) is so far undefeated but a weak schedule may come back to haunt him at district time.

152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: LEE WILSON (STOW)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Petche (St. Joseph) | 13. Campbell (St. Ignatius) |
| 3. Corso (Sandusky) | 14. Mitchell (Massillon Jackson) |
| 4. Margioras (Xenia) | 15. O'Comer (Worthington) |
| 5. Mollica (Walsh) | 16. Aldrich (East Liverpool) |
| 6. Hakaim (Strongsville) | 17. Donaldson (Wapakoneta) |
| 7. Hoeflin (Toledo St. Francis) | 18. Cornist (Princeton) |
| 8. Niffenegger (Oak Hills) | 19. Chance (Springfield) |
| 9. Drago (St. Edward) | 20. Lucius (Toledo Central Catholic) |
| 10. Price (Franklin Hts.) | 21. Hottinger (Marion Harding) |
| 11. Steigerwald (Anderson) | 22. Shepherd (Nordononia) |
| 12. Matyac (Gahanna Lincoln) | 23. Gannon (Kettering Fairmont) |
| | 24. Holland (Euclid) |

This weight class has to be viewed as a struggle between three very fine, but dissimilar wrestlers. While there is no question that there are a multitude of potential contenders, it should all come down to Wilson, Corso and Petche. A close examination of the three, points out some real stylistic differences.

Wilson wrestles like a college wrestler right now. Very strong and physical he is extremely difficult to score upon and almost impossible to hold. However, he does not do a lot of scoring either, although he rides well so he is involved in a lot of close, low scoring bouts. Certainly he has been toughened for them by constant workouts with his older brothers. Last year he beat Andrassy in the district finals on criteria and then met him again for the state title. In a scoreless tie in the 3rd period, Wilson, in the down position, was uncharacteristically cradled and lost. That should not happen this year.

Corso is a pinner combining speed and power to lever over opponent after opponent. Last year at the insanely difficult 152# class, he finished 6th -- losing by 4 to Collins and by 2 to Schetter and Splete. This year he has not yet been challenged and pinned in the finals at Brecksville. He prospers, in part, because he has Randleman as a natural workout partner.

Petche is the classic case of the good little guy suddenly getting big and strong. Two years ago he was losing to Fried by a point at 112# and now he has competed as high as 171#. A flashy, exciting wrestler who enjoys high scoring, action packed bouts he is the direct antithesis of Wilson. Only a junior, he has enormous potential and will be mammothly recruited next year. The question is whether he will be able to match up strength-wise with Wilson and Corso. Last year Petche won the Mentor District at 130# demolishing Hackett in the finals.

Then at state in the semi-finals lost a one point match to Rodriguez (who he had beaten at Mentor) and took a 4th.

The district match-ups are interesting only, in so far, as they relate to the anticipated struggle for the last three places. The real action will be at Mentor where a handful of outstanding boys will vie for the three places behind Petche. Included in the group are the sophomore Mollica, the slam-bang Hakaim, and the recently cut down Drago. Mollica looked tremendous at both Hudson and Medina and he just keeps getting better. Very physical he defeated Michigan State 3rd Rodriguez and state qualifiers Mitchell and Miller already this year. Wilson beat him by 3 points at Hudson. Hakaim, 4th last year at Columbus, beat Mollica 8-7 in the first round at Mentor last year. In the state meet he wrestled brilliantly in the consolation rounds. He, too, loves the high scoring bout and against Petche they'll need a computer to keep track of the score. Drago has not fashioned the kind of senior season he had hoped for, but much of that may be placed on competing at 160#. Now at 152# his more conservative style may match up well with Petche and Hakaim. If St. Ed's conjures up their expected team momentum, he may be swept along by the general tide. Campbell is not well known but he dropped a 13-12 decision to Mollica and beat Elbin. He looks like a candidate to be left out here, but could get a spot at 145#. Watch out for him at either weight. Shepherd, Holland and Visalden (Lorain Southview) would seem to be a giant step behind this top quintet.

At Perry, Wilson is competing virtually unopposed. State qualifier Mitchell has not been impressive this year, but will probably qualify anyway. Aldrich was 4th at Medina and could make it out of this rather depleted weight class. Chance is a total unknown, but he may be able to grab that 3rd qualifying spot. Bullock (Massillon Perry) who barely survived a horrendous car accident last year was given another semester of eligibility, but that will run out before the state meet. Wilson's real work, unlike Petche and Corso, will begin in Columbus.

At Upper Arlington, Corso will face some very experienced competition. Price won three bouts at Columbus last year to finish 3rd at 145#, but he has not impressed this year. The fact that he barely makes my Top Ten indicates the depth of competition at this weight. He'll need a great pairing to place this year. State qualifier Hoeflin has looked solid this season and has moved past Price in my mind. Neither of them will match up well with Corso. I've listed a number of other contenders in this district which is loaded with good wrestlers. This should be one of the most lively and energetic weights at this district.

In the Southwest, there will also be solid competition. State quarter-finalist Margioras heads the list and could claim a low place. Niffenegger, down from 171#, has not yet adjusted to the new weight, but should be a force here in the future. Steigerwald, Cornist and Gannon should battle for the last two spots.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TOM SWEENEY (ST. EDWARD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Ankrom (East Liverpool) | 12. Mihacevich (Brunswick) |
| 3. Randleman (Sandusky) | 13. Stewart (West Chester Lakota) |
| 4. Dennis (Alliance) | 14. Woloschuck (Uniontown Lake) |
| 5. Davis (Marion Franklin) | 15. Ray (Grove City) |
| 6. Strochinsky (Oak Hills) | 16. Basham/Zachary (Princeton) |
| 7. Machovina (North Olmsted) | 17. J. King (Euclid) |
| 8. Nowak (Toledo St. John) | 18. Carter (Fremont Ross) |
| 9. Naegele (Troy) | 19. Dugan (Massillon Jackson) |
| 10. Righi (Worthington) | 20. Neidich (Cincinnati Elder) |
| 11. McMahan (Solon) | 21. Schenk (Willoughby South) |
| | 22. Cagle (Sidney) |

This should be one of the most exciting and best wrestled weight classes in Division I. It brings together a number of solid talents from around the state in what should be a bonanza for the average fan. It should produce some highlight bouts that will be remembered for some time.

My choice is the huge senior from St. Edward's, Tom Sweeney. At 171# all year he has already won both the prestigious Medina and North Canton tournament. He, certainly, will be the largest 160#er in the field and combined with his exceptional takedown skills he will be difficult to defeat. However, he does seem to have lapses in concentration when he lets an opponent back into what seemed an already won bout. Machovina, 5th at 145# last year, is up to a solid 160#, but has not, so far, done as well up to weight classes. He has lost to both Dennis and Randleman. Watch out for him, though, he gets very tough at tournament time. McMahan may move down to this weight, sensing I trust, the innate weakness in the Mentor District. In so doing, he would improve his chances for state qualification and with it his ability to improve Solon's team chances as well. It would appear, at the same time, that such a weight loss might put his skills and strength in jeopardy. Uncharacteristically for Mentor, there is absolutely no one else at their weight class that has state placement potential. It will certainly be the weakest weight class there.

At Perry both Ankrom and Dennis are flat-out excellent. Ankrom was 4th at this weight last year defaulting to Randleman while ahead. This year he won the Medina over a star-studded field beating Division III choice Soehnlen in the finals. He will not go easily to anyone. State qualifier Dennis may be just as good. He lost a hotly disputed overtime bout to Soehnlen at Medina negating a finals meeting with Ankrom. An easy winner over Machovina at Medina, Dennis will be away from Ankrom at States and possibly Sweeney or Randleman as well. Woloschuck has lost only to Ankrom and Dennis at 160# and will be a major factor for the 3rd spot along with Brunswick champ Mihacevich. These two should put on just as spirited battle for 3rd as Ankrom and Dennis do for 1st and it will mean more because the loser won't reach Columbus.

The powerful Randleman, 3rd at Columbus last year, is the other truly formidable contender at this weight. Voted the OW at Brecksville, he has yet to be

challenged this year. Last year only a 9-8 semi-final loss kept him from a chance at the state title, but he will be extended this year as early as the Upper Arlington District. If, as expected, state qualifier Davis is at this weight he should make Randleman go all out. Davis won his opening bout 15-2 last year in Columbus and then fell victim to the incredible competition at 152#. His only loss has been to the Division II prodigy Fickell (whose only loss coincidentally was to Randleman). Nowak and Righi are also solid contenders for state places, but it's difficult to see them "mussing up" Randleman. Four of my Top Ten come from this district. The battle for the fifth qualifying berth is wide open with no clear cut favorite. I've listed Ray and Carter, but Knaul (Gahanna Lincoln) and Clark (Lima Shawnee) are other possibilities.

Strochinsky heads a rather ordinary group of 160's out of the Southwest. There are no returning state qualifiers although Strochinsky would seem to have low place potential. Naegele and Stewart are other possible qualifiers, but the contest here is really wide open. One major change would occur if Zachary replaces Basham at 160# for Cincinnati Princeton. At this weight he could well be a real factor. Along with the last two qualifiers from Mentor, this group will have a difficult time reaching the second round.

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BILL SPLETE (ST. JOSEPH)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Stanley (Springfield North) | 12. O'Brien (Oak Hills) |
| 3. Lowery (New Philadelphia) | 13. Dachtler (Brunswick) |
| 4. Spinning (Massillon Jackson) | 14. McMahan (Solon) |
| 5. Eichenlaub (Holland Springfield) | 15. Barnott (Pickerington) |
| 6. Gottschalk (Kettering Fairmont) | 16. Zachary/Basham (Princeton) |
| 7. White (Strongsville) | 17. Jolley (Dayton Wayne) |
| 8. Coe (Cloverleaf) | 18. McGinnis (Toledo Rogers) |
| 9. K. Bucher (Toledo St. Francis) | 19. Uphouse (Hilliard) |
| 10. Douglas (Mentor) | 20. Wilcox (East Liverpool) |
| 11. Everett (Toledo St. John) | 21. Abbey (Findlay) |

This is something of a mystery weight where, for a variety of factors, no clear cut contenders have emerged. Perhaps, later in the year things will become clearer but it is very likely that only the state tournament itself will begin sorting out the contenders from the pretenders. Last year this report projected every champion from 145# up, but if that is to happen this year, true inspiration will be required here.

My choice is the extraordinary St. Joseph's junior, Bill Splete, who placed 3rd at 138# as a freshman and 5th at 152# as a sophomore. A wrestler of marvelous talents, Splete is growing so quickly it's difficult to know how he'll match up at a weight as high as 171#. In addition, Splete has wrestled so infrequently this year it is difficult to accurately gauge his true progress. Nonetheless, Coach John Storey's skills with big men is almost legendary so that one is bound to add to Splete's stock from that direction. In addition, each of the other

contenders suffer from some defect so that Splete's inexperience at an upper weight is only another factor to consider -- not necessarily a fatal flaw.

Another real positive for Splete is that qualification out of Mentor should be relatively routine. White who has vacillated between 171# and 189# at first appeared to be a very strong contender at this weight. However, a series of inconsistent results, has diminished his stature. It's clear, though, that his only hope for a state crown is at this weight. Douglas and McMahan are journeyman performers who can generally be counted on to perform in an adequate fashion. Both missed state qualification by one bout last year. Perhaps Kolin (Brush) or Benedick (Maple Hts.) can pull an upset and qualify for Columbus.

I'm confused about the results in the Southwest District as well. State quarter-finalist Gottschalk is back and would seem to be the natural leader for that contingent. And, in fact, he has performed flawlessly winning the giant GMVWA Holiday tournament 18-8 -- with one exception. At the finals of the Xenia Invitation, he was the victim of a technical fall by the unheralded Stanley; the same Stanley he beat by 8-4 for state qualification. Needless to say, both boys should be placement contenders this year. In addition O'Brien, Zachary and Jollay are all solid performers with fine credentials. Zachary missed state qualification last year by a single bout. Drawing into this district will guarantee a tough bout at this weight.

The Perry District will be the toughest qualification test at this weight. It is loaded with high quality performers which will be whittled down to only three qualifiers. I've moved Lowery to the head of the pack based on his championship at Smithville and his strong runner-up finish at Medina. Rather short for the weight he is very quick and has good penetration for his single leg snatch. Sweeney beat him at Medina by a single point. Spinning, 5th last year, is about equally good and both he and Lowery should place. Spinning can score big right off the takedown and can be particularly dangerous from that position. The short incredibly strong Coe is a third solid performer at this weight. His 14-12 loss to Lowery in the district quarter-finals eliminated him because a terrible half bracket draw. He has something to prove this year. Dachtler and Wilcox are both good enough to qualify but will need some major upsets to do so here. Dachtler was a Mentor district semi-finalist at 189# last year and missed state qualification by a single point in the consolation semi-finals. Wilcox, an unorthodox leg wrestler, was 5th at Medina, but showed signs of being tough to handle. He looks light for the weight.

The Upper Arlington District looks to be dominated by Toledo wrestlers here. I've moved both Eichenlaub and Bucher ahead of state qualifier Everett who has struggled this season. All three should qualify. McGinnis, Abbey, and Fleishman (Toledo Devilbiss) are three other Northwestern wrestlers with chances to do the same. The Columbus contingent does not seem very strong with Barnott and Uphouse the best chances. Nobody from that area will do well.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MIKE BUDDIE (ST. IGNATIUS)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Dye (Massillon Jackson) | 12. Perkins (Geneva) |
| 3. Curiale (Lakewood) | 13. Doerflein (Harrison) |
| 4. Johnson (St. Edward) | 14. Sheets (Miami Trace) |
| 5. Emery (Toledo DeVilbiss) | 15. Millisor (Delaware Hayes) |
| 6. Straley (Uniontown Lake) | 16. Groh (Cincinnati Elder) |
| 7. Frantz (New Philadelphia) | 17. Evans (Marion Pleasant) |
| 8. McQuate (Ashland) | 18. Exum (Cleveland Hts.) |
| 9. Bobish (Canton McKinley) | 19. Ward (Shaw) |
| 10. Crawford (Westerville North) | 20. Daniels (Dayton Wayne) |
| 11. Munger (Fairborn Baker) | 21. Catalano (Solon) |
| | 22. Smith (Cincinnati St. Xavier) |

Currently, this is the Division I weight class with the longest unbroken streak of correctly forecasted winners now dating back to 1981. In this context it's comforting to realize that defending state champion Mike Buddie is my choice in 1989. Truly one of the outstanding upper weight wrestlers in the United States, Buddie is also an exceptional football and baseball player as well as an excellent student. He approaches the sport with an analytical open-mindedness and his intelligence is a major weapon in his arsenal. He makes a lot of good decision out on the mat. But for a sophomore lapse two years ago, Buddie could well be on his way to his third consecutive title.

The Mentor District features three possible state place winners. Beside Buddie, two-time state qualifier Curiale and the recently recovered Johnson are both excellent. Curiale captured the district crown last year, but was upset in the state quarter-finals 12-11 and did not place. He has not been pushed this year. Johnson defeated Curiale in the sectional final and then lost a district semi-final heartbreaker in overtime. He could not come back in the consolations from that defeat. This year he has just returned from back problems, but appears to be much better than last year. The fourth spot is wide open with Exum, Catalano and the wonderfully named Hercules Ward as possibilities. I may not be rating Ward high enough as his only loss was to Buddie, but he has also not wrestled many other top contenders. Reinbolt (Walsh) also has potential here.

Buddie's toughest competition (outside of his Mentor District foes) is likely to come from the extremely rugged Perry District. Dye is the defending district champ there and lost a heartbreaking criteria decision in the quarter finals at Columbus. He was a convincing victor over Exum at Brecksville and crushed everyone at Hudson. He has had some nagging injuries. Bobish was 6th at Columbus last year but that was partially due to some good fortune in the bracketing. Right now both Frantz and Straley may have leap-frogged him, but Bobish also came on strong at the end of last year. Perkins lost to Spinning by one point in the go-to-state match at 171# last year. He is flat-out excellent, but suffers from a weak schedule which does not toughen him for the rigors of tourney action. Kaufman (Wadsworth) is just at the wrong weight class.

Emery is the front runner out of Upper Arlington and may follow in the footsteps of finalist Nate Lewis last year. The competition behind him looks weak but four additional qualifiers will come from that district. I've gone with McQuate, Sheets, Millisor and Crawford as qualifiers, but there are lots of possibilities here. Sheets is very powerful but comes from a technique-poor area while Crawford has consistently been a fooler with solid tournament places including a 1st at St. Xavier. Chaney (Sandusky), Szozda (Toledo St. Francis) and Ruziscka (Toledo St. John) are other possibilities here. Chaney, in particular, could be an extra boost for Sandusky's team chances if he can get to Columbus.

The Southwest District is not at all strong at this weight class. Munger won the GMVWA but was stopped by Crawford at St. Xavier. Division II state qualifier Doerflein wrestles a schedule too comfortable to prepare for state tourney activity. I've also listed Groh, Daniels and Smith, but look for plenty of upsets here. A real long-shot might be Krieger (West Chester Lakota), who is very inexperienced but learning rapidly. Campbell (Centerville) is another possibility.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: WILLIAM HOUSTON (TROTWOOD MADISON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Hearn (West Carrollton) | 11. Mascolla (Fitch) |
| 3. Johnson (Toledo DeVilbiss) | 12. Rogers (Lorain Southview) |
| 4. Turner (Dayton Wayne) | 13. Carr (Newark) |
| 5. Gregory (Stow) | 14. Czech (East Liverpool) |
| 6. Bass (Cleveland Hts.) | 15. Randolph (Wadsworth) |
| 7. Gaskins (Dayton Meadowdale) | 16. Wallis (Elyria) |
| 8. Smith (Westland) | 17. Brandstadt (Vermillion) |
| 9. Riley (St. Edward) | 18. Wink (Oak Hills) |
| 10. Nollette (Pickerington) | 19. Morris (Defiance) |
| | 20. Anderson (Alliance) |

After years of frustration, I'm on a hot streak at this weight class with two winners in a row. This season is a lean one for heavyweights with a real drop-off in quality from the last two years. In some ways that makes the selection process a little easier. Strangely enough, most of the best heavyweights seems to be in the Southwest District, which gives my ranking a bit of an unbalanced look. Four of my top seven choices are from that area.

Best of all from the Southwest is William Houston, the defending district champion from that area. Undefeated and unchallenged this year, he's as big a favorite as you can have at this weight class. After all, one slip here generally means disaster. Last year such a mistake got Houston pinned in the state quarter-finals, robbing him of a chance to place. However, this year Houston has already defeated fellow state qualifier Hearn 12-2 and can go six solid minutes to win. Absent some catastrophe, he will be difficult to contain. Hearn, too, is very good and should do much better than the two quick falls against him showed last year. His victory at St. Xavier was impressive and only Houston bested him at the GMVWA. Turner is an Indiana move-in who placed in that

state last season. He won at Tiffin and has generally acclimated himself well to Ohio wrestling. He could grab a low place. Gaskins, another state qualifier lost twice in Columbus but didn't look bad in his second bout. His progress is difficult to measure given the Dayton City school's schedules, but he cannot be overlooked. Wink, runner-up at both the Coaches Classic and St. Xavier, will be poised for any stumbles by those ahead of him while Gregory (Hamilton) and Fulmer (Cincinnati Moeller) are long shots at best.

Johnson is one wrestler from the Northern part of the state with the ability to break up this possible Southwestern monopoly. The victim of a tough district draw last year he has been outstanding this year. Others from that Upper Arlington District include Smith, Carr, Nollette, Brandstadt and Morris. None of this quintet is upset-proof and, in fact, I'll be surprised if more than two make it to Columbus. The problem is uncovering people with such upset capabilities like, perhaps, French (Independence). A proud name in heavyweight wrestling here in Ohio has again emerged with Wojciechowski (Toledo Bowsher) vying for qualification honors. To date, he remains behind the six ranked ahead of him.

At Perry 189# state placer Gregory leads the heavyweight contingent. Strictly an upper body wrestler he has won at both Hudson and Brunswick. Wrestling heavier boys did not seem ideal for his stand-up style, but apparently it has worked well. His exceptional sense of the sport also stand him well in the many close bouts his style provokes. Watch for him against the Southwestern boys who may have trouble scoring on him. Mascolla and Czech have no real tourney experience but they have done very well this year. The former winning at North Canton while the latter was runner-up to the Michigan state champ at Medina. However, lack of experience is a major defect at this weight. A dark-horse is Randolph who handily beat Division II state qualifier Johnston to win the Wadsworth. He may muscle in on a state berth in February. Early in the season I thought Anderson was a cinch state qualifier. After all, he follows in the tradition of other fine Alliance heavyweights like Edwards and Cameron. He won the Solon against a weak field, but did not look like the same boy at Medina -- finishing 5th. If he returns to early season form he could well qualify. Of course, the real sadness here is that state qualifier Chenevey (Massillon Jackson) will not be able to compete due to a season-ending knee injury. He was one of the few wrestlers from around the state who had the ability to challenge Houston.

The Division I heavyweight state champion has emerged from the Mentor District for the past four years, but that will not happen in 1989. In fact, there is reasonable chance that no one from that district will even place. I've rated Bass at the top of the heap, but he was a first-round district loser last year. Neither Riley nor Rogers have yet wrestled this season but both have impact potential. Riley twice defeated state 4th Mullin last year and looks far bigger than a season ago. He should do well as his back-up Ramser would certainly have a change at state qualification based on his performance. Rogers missed qualification by one bout last year as a sophomore and, if healthy, will do well. He beat Bass 6-3 last year. I've noted Wallis as the possible last qualifier, but that is hardly more than a wild guess. Other possibilities are Gall (Maple Hts.), Lehman (Padua) and Washington (Shaw). It's wide open.

TEAMS

1. St. Edward -- In a high turnover year St. Edwards started the season with a set team. Led by the brilliant Fried the state title is now in doubt. The major question is whether they'll be able to smash the state record for team points (currently held by the 1984 St. Edward's team with 192 1/2), and whether they'll be the first team in history to smash the 200 point barrier. While it's being trumpeted as the start of another dynasty, remember they graduate ten starters.
2. St. Joseph -- Splete and Petche are two of the brightest jewels in the great junior class, but they are wrestling at far heavier weights than last year. St. John is a coming superstar who may blossom a year early, while Mihalic is the solid rock of consistency. Good young talent is also evident on this team, and they may well be early favorites for 1990 since absolutely everyone returns.
3. East Liverpool -- Two exceptional wrestlers who will have gone to Columbus a total of six times between them lead this team. Ankrom could win, especially if Sweeney decides to stay at 171#. Emmerling may be in the tourney's toughest weight class, but he has undeniable talent. He needs to go back to wrestling to win rather than wrestling not to lose. A nicely balanced squad but state help can only come from Czech and Betteridge.
4. Uniontown Lake -- Both Martinez and a healthy Biehl could win titles. They both were close to that level last year. Whitmer should do well at 112# and, maybe, Straley at 189#. Herbert and Woloschuck are other possibilities. Biehl's knee is crucial here.
5. Solon -- A nice quartet of Schork, Sias, Lally and Genovese lead this team. All have solid placement potential and Lally could win it all. If McMahan goes to 160# that may gain them another state qualifier, but he may not be able to score in Columbus.
6. Sandusky -- Randleman and Corso lead this squad with Darden not far behind. The real question is whether anybody else can help at the State level and the answer is beginning to look more and more like no.
7. Stow -- Wilson and Gregory both placed last year and the former is my favorite for the 152# crown. The younger Wilson may do well at the relatively weak 130# class, especially with the right pairings. Then people like Biros, Eberly and Mihalbach have to help.
8. Westerville North -- Grant is probably a finalist and they should get a half dozen or so wrestlers through the district. The question remains as to which of them, if any, can score at the state level.
9. Fairborn Baker -- A beautifully balanced team that has never proven it can score at the state level. Still, Tritsch, Kimble, Cyrus, Smith, Wimsatt and Munger give them a lot of opportunities in 1989.

10. Maple Hts. -- Atienza is a real pinner and should score a bushel of points for them. Lofton and Reed have state potential, but then it gets difficult. Perhaps, Giganti and Gall can help.
11. Fairfield -- Laflin is the hub of the team and if he can wrestle effectively at 112# they'll have a shot at the Top Ten. The real key, though, is whether Glenn White can do the same at 103#. If that happens and Murray and Eric Laflin come through they'll do just fine.
12. Strongsville -- Earlier in the year they looked sensational but now I'm not so sure. Van Cucha, Ramsey, Hakaim and White are the star-studded quartet, but the latter two have not looked as good as anticipated. In addition, nobody else seems to have developed into a state scorer. Unless things get better they may not be in the Top Twenty.

DIVISION II

This classification continues to provide the best in both team and individual competition. State finalists came from every area and the team competition was again close. This year should repeat that very successful formula.

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: VAL KLINE (UNION LOCAL)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Lewis (Hubbard) | 12. Patterson (Cambridge) |
| 3. Zeno (Margaretta) | 13. Smith (Lexington) |
| 4. Mead (Watkins Memorial) | 14. Davis (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 5. Sampson (Marlington) | 15. Beam (Milton Union) |
| 6. Noble (Lebanon) | 16. Stoll (Milan Edison) |
| 7. D. Wright (Crestwood) | 17. Withrow (Triway) |
| 8. Kern (Maumee) | 18. Snair (Carrollton) |
| 9. Miller (Canal Fulton NW) | 19. Alcorn (Fairless) |
| 10. Eisenmann (Avon Lake) | 20. Wright (Valley View) |
| 11. Jenkins (Indian Lake) | 21. Heuerman (Anthony Wayne) |

Despite an enormous amount of time and energy spent analyzing and reanalyzing this weight class, I feel no closer to understanding its final resolution than I did six weeks ago. Part of the problem is that it's probably the weakest weight class in Division II with only three returning state participants -- and two of them qualified in Division III last year. In addition, the active contenders have won few of the major tournaments or defeated some of the better-known names in Division I. In my mind, two seniors stand out among all the freshmen and sophomores competing here. My choice is the compact senior Val Kline who has four solid seasons of experience at this weight and who appears ready for a breakthrough year. He was 4th last year at this weight in Division III winning impressively three times. In addition, his domination of his geographical area is so complete that he should come to Columbus a lot less battered and worn than his competition. Another plus is his pinning ability which significantly shortens his mat exposure. Lewis, very tall and lanky, will be his principal adversary. He, too, has four years of varsity experience at this weight and started winning consistently as a junior. Never a state qualifier, he nonetheless has the talent and experience to do well in Columbus.

The Firestone District has a wide variety of competitors to test Lewis. Sampson won the Wadsworth beating Miller by three points and he has performed well all year. Wright was 3rd in last year's sectional one spot behind Lewis and this year he grabbed a 4th in the strong Kenston tourney. Miller was an impressive 3rd at this year's North Canton losing only to Division I pick Gary Define. A district qualifier last year, he was nipped by Wright in sectional action by a single point, although Lewis hammered him 8-0. Eisenmann, a first-year varsity wrestler, has won a number of smaller tournaments in impressive fashion and is my marginal choice for the 5th qualifying spot. The two top contenders to upset

this order are the freshman Withrow and the more experienced Alcorn. Withrow, in particular, may be far better than ranked based on his Smithville triumph.

Kline will have a far easier time qualifying out of Lancaster. He has already shown total mastery over competition like Patterson, Snair, and McCloud (South Point). In fact, his triumph at the giant OVAC Tourney gives an insight into the stature he now has in that area. The real problem may be that the competition is so insignificant that it will not adequately prepare him for the upcoming struggles in Columbus.

State qualifiers Zeno and Mead head up a solid district lineup of 103's at Lexington. Zeno has alternated between 103# and 112# this year, but was voted OW at the 16-team Van Buren Tourney. He won a bout at States last year. Mead has missed some time this year, but was 2nd at the Hilliard Invitational. The very strong Kern may be problems for both top boys based on his win at the Lake Invitational and a fine dual record. I favor the fast improving Smith for the last qualifying spot on his home mats, and he has shown rapid improvement lately. His win at the Gorman stamps him as a fine future prospect. Davis, Stoll and Heuerman are good performers who currently look left out of state competition. Stoll might be the choice as the one competitor with the best chance of upsetting the predicted order. A dark-horse might be Lunsford (Circleville).

The Southwest District is totally open at this point. Noble was impressive at the Coaches Classic and has good genes and, thus, received the top rating in his area. Jenkins won the Marion Harding in most impressive fashion, but the competition was weak there. Beam and Wright are my choices for the last two spots, but Calbeck (Eaton) and Monebrake (Preble Camden Shawnee) are two other possibilities. My feeling is that only Noble and Jenkins have place potential here.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TODD HILL (MEDINA HIGHLAND)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Randall (St. Paris Graham) | 12. Jones (Willard) |
| 3. Bowers (Rocky River) | 13. McAtee (Big Walnut) |
| 4. Slates (Canal Fulton NW) | 14. Brady (Little Miami) |
| 5. T. Clark (Lebanon) | 15. A. Fondale (New Lexington) |
| 6. Zamiska (Twinsburg) | 16. Rosalina (Orange) |
| 7. Trunck (Eaton) | 17. Knight (Steubenville) |
| 8. Smith (Lexington) | 18. Ashton (Perrysburg) |
| 9. Carcelli (Benedictine) | 19. Lindemann (Bellbrook) |
| 10. White (Shelby) | 20. Hall (Vincent Warren) |
| 11. Jazwa (Olmsted Falls) | 21. Saft (Cambridge) |

In contrast to the preceding weight class, the competition at 112# will be absolutely outstanding. It will be a bracket of great depth and achievement and should produce some of the more memorable bouts of this state competition. It features nearly a dozen returning state qualifiers including six who have placed in past tourneys. It also brings together fine wrestlers from every part of the

state, none of whom could be considered a strong favorite for what should be a real donnybrook. I've correctly projected the actual champion in this weight class every year since 1981, but getting it right this year will be extremely difficult.

I've vacillated for days on my top choice, but finally settled on state runner-up Todd Hill. A scrappy, perennially active wrestler, Hill performed wonderfully well last year defeating a defending state champion and falling only in the finals to an exceptionally strong senior. This year the stocky junior was 2nd at North Canton to Castellana by a single point, but only 5th at Medina while battling the flu. I prefer to believe that the first result is a far truer indicator of his ability. His major problem may be that he is a little small for the weight. Bowers, 3rd last year, managed to confound my predictions at every turn last year, and he did so with a knowing smile constantly on his face. He learns so rapidly -- Hill crushed him in the Sectional, but at the District level Bowers only lost by two points. Former state runner-up Zamiska had a rocky road last year, but still compiled a 21-5 record and qualified for Columbus. He won the Solon Tourney and was 2nd at Hudson and Kenston (at 119#) so he may well be regaining his top form of two years ago. If he masters the weight problem, he will be very tough here. Slates has placed the last two years including a 3rd at Columbus last year. He seems always to wrestle best at tourney time and he can score points in bushel basket quantities. State qualifier Carcelli is my choice for the 5th spot out of Firestone and the quality at this district is evident. All five are listed in my Top Ten rankings. However, the quality does not end there. Jazwa and Rosalina are both state caliber wrestlers with apparently nowhere to go. In addition, Gainey (Ursuline), Sherman (Wickliffe) and Cwiak (Lake Catholic) would all be potential threats in other districts.

Randall heads up a very rugged Southwestern District. A state qualifier last year he drew into a hornets' nest losing to Nelson and McCumber back-to-back in hard fought matches. He was a very strong 3rd at Medina, and, clearly, has finalist potential. Clark has campaigned at 119# all year, but I think he'll be at 112# in March. A state qualifier last year at 103#, he lost to both Gonzalez and Bowers. Randall may beat him on superior physical strength. Trunck (who wrestled under the name of Corder last year) was 5th last year at 103#, but was dominated by Hall who collected a first period fall and a 13-1 decision over him in district and state action. Brady is my choice for the fourth qualifying spot and while he is a step behind the top three they form a most formidable quartet going into action. Also ranked is Lindemann, the OW at the Carroll Invationals who along with Eyerman (Loveland) will stand poised for an error by the top quartet.

The Lexington District is not quite as strong but still features some solid competition -- most of it from the Northwestern District. Smith and White have been rivals most of their lives with Smith winning the big ones like for state qualification and Gorman titles. They are very closely matched Jones is no stranger to either boy and when he climbs back into action he should capture a qualifying spot. McAtee and Ashton are the top threats for the last spot with the first named having, I believe, a lot of upside potential.

The qualifiers out of Lancaster are in for a tough time. Former state qualifiers Fondale and Knight just do not have the firepower to compete at this level although they should do well in their own district. Knight, for example, was only 6th at Richmond Hts. Hall is marginally the third choice here, but he will

be challenged by Saft and, possibly, Baker (Union Local). The rest will want to draw into this group.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: NICK CIANCIOLA (GENOA)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Macklin (Lake Catholic) | 12. McKendrick (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 3. Hall (Tipp City) | 13. Lavender (Steubenville) |
| 4. Haring (Twinsburg) | 14. Rodriguez (Revere) |
| 5. Weaver (Anthony Wayne) | 15. Beane (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 6. McGarvey (Dayton Carroll) | 16. Abbott (St. Paris Graham) |
| 7. Harstine (Coshocton) | 17. Kuchnicki (Kenston) |
| 8. Pitingolo (Wickliffe) | 18. Wright (Carlisle) |
| 9. Sprague (Carrollton) | 19. Tecco (Buckeye) |
| 10. Najem (Canfield) | 20. Plantz (London) |
| 11. Tammerine (Perrysburg) | 21. Stewart (River Valley) |

This is a rather weak weight class dominated by the senior, two-time state champion Nick Cianciola. His closest bout last year at States was 18-7, and it will be pretty much the same story this year. He is so excellent on his feet that no one at this level has any hope of matching him move-for-move. He'll be one of the proliferation of three-time titlists this year and, but for a criteria loss in the Division I semi-finals his freshman year, he would be a rare four-time champ. The battle here will be for second place.

The trio that qualify along with Cianciola from the Lexington District are not likely to be a formidable lot. Weaver and Tammerine have had reasonable success in their own area and now that the latter has dropped to 119# he should be even better. Beane on the fringes of state qualification in the past should be the fourth qualifier. His championship at the Barnesville was impressively won and cemented in my mind his top-flight rating in the Columbus area. Should this be accurate state qualifier Plantz would be eliminated. A long-shot at this weight is former Division III state qualifier Colvin (Norwalk) who has had reasonable success in that part of the state.

At Firestone, the rapidly improving Macklin heads an interesting field. His 13-3 drubbing of state runner-up Zamiska (up a weight) in the Kenston final is indicative of the progress he has made. Last year he lost 6-5 to Division I state runner-up Monachino in district competition. Haring, a move-back from Texas, was a fine youth wrestler who has picked up just where he left off. Competing up a weight at 125# he was 2nd at both Hudson and Kenston and 3rd at Solon. If the weight situation becomes comfortable he will be very tough. Pitingolo defeated state qualifier Lavender at Richmond Hts. to highlight what has so far been a banner season for him. His ability to score heavily against most foes will put in good stead in the competition, but he cannot afford 16-14 losses like the one that removed him from district competition last year. The very experienced Najem and state qualifier McKendrick would appear to be the best choices for the last two spots. Najem always seems ready to explode into stardom, but it just hasn't happened. State qualification his sophomore year

remains the highlight of his career. McKendrick's state experience lasted less than a minute and he may be small for 119#. He failed to place at Kenston after an impressive 1st at Smithville. A trio of talented wrestlers await any misstep by the top quintet in this deep weight class at Firestone. Rodriguez, Kuchnicki and Tecco have done well in 1988-89 and have state ability. All three are very experienced and have had moments of real success. Van Such (Liberty) upset state qualifier Bailey last year and could be "spoiler" again this year.

The Southwest District also has good depth. State qualifiers McGarvey, Hall and Abbott are all strong performers although the latter pair are up two weight classes. Last year, at this weight, McGarvey lost to tourney favorite Shocklee 4-3 and was eliminated when Shocklee subsequently lost. His big drawback is a weak schedule. Hall, 4th last year at 103#, is a real "tiger", who dropped narrow one-point bouts to both Hill and Bowers. The struggle for the final qualifying berth is wide open with Wright only a slender favorite. Frost (Indian Lake), Thompson (Green Hills) and Clark (Eaton) are all solid possibilities as well.

The Lancaster District should be very interesting. Sprague, 6th at 103# last year, has the best credentials, but has had rough going at 125#. Even when he drops I wonder if he'll be able to handle Harstine who majored him 10-2 early in the season. State qualifier Lavender is rated behind this duo, but may be the best in the long run. State qualifier Stewart will have to pull an upset to qualify again while Brown (Washington Court House) is a long shot.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOHN McCUMBER (ROSSFORD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Walborn (Swanton) | 12. Bailey (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 3. McGhee (Steubenville) | 13. Itnyre (Marysville) |
| 4. Harris (CAPE) | 14. Pariano (Fairview) |
| 5. McCoy (Vincent Warren) | 15. Burroughs (St. Paris Graham) |
| 6. Thomas (Washington Court House) | 16. Mungo (Manchester) |
| 7. Harris (Canal Fulton NW) | 17. Patterson (Warrensville Hts.) |
| 8. Galli (Watterson) | 18. Pipo (Edison South) |
| 9. Folden (Coventry) | 19. Hitchcock (Eaton) |
| 10. Peters (Watkins Memorial) | 20. Owens (West Geauga) |
| 11. Johnson (Milton Union) | 21. Alexander (Firelands) |

Almost every year Rossford produces one or two state championship caliber wrestlers. This year it's the fine junior John McCumber who has already placed twice in an outstanding career. This time I anticipate a coveted state title based on the strength of a consistent series of fine performances. Last year McCumber entered the state quarter-finals totally undefeated, but still a heavy underdog to the vaunted Shawn Nelson. He gave Nelson his first tight match in two years eventually succumbing 6-4. This year he was the OW at Kenston totally dominating a good field and won at St. Johns defeating DiSabato. He will go into the tourneys as a solid favorite to win his first state title.

Perhaps the stiffest competition he'll face will be at the same district. Walborn was 4th last year at this weight after a slow start. This season he was 2nd only to Division I pick Lally at Medina and looked impressive. Unfortunately, a recent injury, the extent of which is currently unknown, may hamper his ability to compete. The Lexington District will also feature two strong performers from the Columbus area -- state qualifier Galli and Hilliard champ Peters. Galli lost a one-point overtime bout in the state quarter-finals to fall out of placement hopes, but Peters is currently ranked above him in the Columbus area. In any case they are both rugged competitors although they do not match up well with McCumber or a healthy Walborn. Itnyre is an alternate choice should Walborn be unable to compete.

The Lancaster District is also very strong at this weight class. State qualifiers McGhee, McCoy and Thomas have all been outstanding this year devastating competition from every area. McGhee won the Richmond Hts. with a 14-1 final round drubbing and may be the most improved wrestler on that fine team. McCoy was the OW at Bishop Ready with an exciting 10-9 victory over state runner-up Dom DiSabato. McGhee gets the higher rating by virtue of his 2-0 district final win last year. Thomas, several times a state qualifier is right on the edge of being a state placer, but needs tougher competition during the season for that to happen. Moving him up to 130# was a good start in that direction. The talent is definitely there, but so is the tough competition in this district. He might be better off at 130# competing in a slightly easier district. It would take something of a miracle for Pipo or Baldwin (Ironton) to grab a qualifying berth.

The Southwest District also has a solid, representative contingent at this weight. It's headed by state qualifier Keith Harris whose only loss was in the semi-finals at St. Xavier where he finished a strong 3rd. Still only a junior he has the speed and power to place. Behind him are Johnson, Burroughs and Hitchcock for a second level of competitor -- probably good enough to qualify, probably not strong enough to place. Of this group Burroughs has the most "upset potential".

The Firestone District features Mike Harris, 6th at this weight last year, who has developed into a good all-around wrestler. He was 4th at North Canton losing a 13-12 "screamer" to Marchette in the consolation finals. Walborn beat him by 5 points last year. Behind him is a weak field where you can anticipate a lot of surprises. Folden never seems to wrestle at his best during tourney time, but I believe that will turn around this year. Former state qualifier Bailey failed to get out of his sectional at 112# last year, and continues his up and down results this year. He may not qualify again. Mungo, Patterson and Owens are journeyman performers, at best, who might just qualify because they're fortunate to be at an easy district weight class. One wrestler to watch, though, is the young Pariano who has real talent, but is still inexperienced at the high school level. Talent tends to emerge at tournament time, and, if so, this boy will go a long way. Yeiser (Field) is a dark-horse from an obscure school who could do well.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MARIO MARINELLI (COLUMBUS DeSALES)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Weilbacher (St. Marys Memorial) | 12. Sexton (Shelby) |
| 3. Knox (Kenston) | 13. Henderson (St. Paris Graham) |
| 4. Keith (Meadowbrook) | 14. Gentile (Vincent Warren) |
| 5. Connelly (Rocky River) | 15. Tolliver (Lebanon) |
| 6. Woods (Triway) | 16. Scott (Steubenville) |
| 7. Carcelli (Benedictine) | 17. Kain (Big Walnut) |
| 8. Shannon (Milton Union) | 18. Taylor (Dayton Northridge) |
| 9. Teasdale (Bellaire) | 19. Harkins (Bexley) |
| 10. Long (Galion) | 20. Wilmoth (Trenton Edgewood) |
| 11. Futo (Twinsburg) | 21. Hixson (Green) |

This is a weight class that has a number of solid, experienced wrestlers, but somehow lacks a focus. That may have changed now that defending state champion Mario Marinelli was moved down to a more reasonable weight class. Last year Marinelli had everything go his way on his march to the 119# title. A narrow 6-5 quarter-final win was followed by a 19-15 win over Shocklee that ended just in the nick of time, and then a 7-6 title win that was manufactured by a late 4-point move when seemingly lost. The real question for Marinelli is, "Can this much go right again?" So far this year at 135# it hasn't as Marinelli lost in the Brecksville finals and was upset by Johnson in a dual. Things will probably go better at 130#.

My initial choice at this weight was Weilbacher who wrestled so well in gaining a 3rd place medal last year. A hard worker on the mat I think he is susceptible to the big upset if he gets behind early. Nonetheless, head-to-head with Marinelli in the finals would basically be an even match. Marinelli's edge, if any, would be on his feet. They should be apart in Columbus since they both emerge from the Lexington District. There are a number of other fine 130's exiting from this same area. Many are from the Mansfield area where Long, Sexton and Layne (Bellevue) compete. Kain and Harkins are other central area competitors which makes for a crowded weight class. I would not be surprised to see several of this group move to the somewhat easier 125# class here.

Knox has had a fine year against very tough competition -- much of it from the Division I ranks. He pinned Millson in a dual meet and was a strong 3rd at North Canton losing by only one point to Grant. He was 2nd at Kenston to Van Cucha, and has not yet lost to a Division II rival. He starts a string of marvelous middleweights for Kenston, and he is one of the best. I think his style matches up better with Marinelli than Weilbacher's. Connelly, 4th last year at 119#, is another top-flight contender who'll be back next year again. The same is true for the dynamic Woods who has high potential, but who has stumbled a few times as well. The elder Carcelli puts four wrestlers from this district in the top seven arrayed against Weilbacher, Keith, and Marinelli. It should be excellent competition. State qualifier Futo is behind my top quartet, but should also qualify. There is a big fall off in talent after him with Hixson and Beck (West Branch) at a lower level. An exciting sophomore Becks (Lake Catholic) has terrific moves, but may not be strong enough at this weight.

The Lancaster District also features some battle hardened veterans with good records. Two-time state qualifier Keith is a point machine racking up technical fall after technical fall in the Eastern District at 140#. His explosive power, however, will, I believe, be blunted by Marinelli's superior technique. But there is no question about Keith's scoring ability -- his two state matches last year (which he split) were 12-10 and 11-10. He is exciting to watch. Teasdale is hard to figure. A state qualifier as a sophomore after crushing everyone at the OVAC, he was able to duplicate none of those feats last year. A fearsome pinner, he cannot ever be overlooked. Defending district champion and state qualifier Gentile only rates 3rd best currently in this district, but he came on strong late last year in district competition. In the team arena, Steubenville would like to get Scott through at this weight, and that is not an unwarranted hope. He lost to Gentile by one point in district action last year.

The Southwest District is unlikely to make much of an impact here. State qualifier Shannon is marginally the best here, but Henderson has moved up quickly. The rest of the weight class is very weak with little chance of winning even one bout no matter which ones get to Columbus.

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JEFF HARRIS (KENSTON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Jones (Canfield) | 13. Nixon (Akron Hoban) |
| 3. Hubbard (Steubenville) | 14. Giffin (Watkins Memorial) |
| 4. Miller (Manchester) | 15. Hew (Rocky River) |
| 5. Sidon (Martins Ferry) | 16. Pietrowski (Genoa) |
| 6. Dotson (Hamilton Twp.) | 17. Wallace (Preble Camden Shawnee) |
| 7. Withrow (Triway) | 18. Kozinski (Bucyrus) |
| 8. Evans (Springfield Shawnee) | 19. Crow (Brookside) |
| 9. Vcelka (Union Local) | 20. Arezman (Roger Bacon) |
| 10. Bailey (Green) | 21. B. Thom (Perkins) |
| 11. George (Fairfield Union) | 22. Paul (Washington Court House) |
| 12. Buccheit (Trenton Edgewood) | 23. Collier (Goshen) |
| | 24. Shanteau (Oak Harbor) |

If you have been reading this report very long, you know that my favorite weight class had always been 138# in Division II where I correctly identified the champion the first 16 years of this report. Then last year, in the unkindest cut of all, they eliminated the 138# class and replaced it with one at 135#. Well, the streak held (barely) with Mike Coontz after being upset in the District going on to win the state title as projected. This year the bounds of good fortune will be severely tested as this is one of the most difficult classes to analyze.

This is a very crowded weight class, but possesses no one or two wrestlers who seem clearly better than the rest. Instead, it's a situation with six or eight or, maybe, ten possible winners and where the pairings, momentum and luck will be terribly crucial. My choice is the fine senior from Kenston, Jeff Harris, who has already won championships at the tough North Canton and Kenston tournaments. From his sophomore year it was clear that Harris was a superior talent and he now

appears ready to capitalize his skills. A state qualifier last year, he went into a first-round "swoon" and never got back into the competition. This year should be far different, although, good fortune will be needed to take it all.

Some of Harris' toughest competition will emerge from that same Firestone District. Jones has been sensational this year capturing the Solon and Brunswick titles in easy fashion. An injury in the sectionals cost him any hopes of advancement last year. Miller was 3rd in Division III last year totally catching me and most of his competition by surprise. It was no fluke as he amply demonstrated by winning at Smithville in fine style. He is a terrific pinner who can score a lot of points quickly. No matter what the score he is always dangerous. Withrow, a state qualifier last year was 2nd at Smithville (to Miller) and a fine 4th at Medina losing only to Bucher and Millson. He has an excellent shot at placing. The last spot is wide open, but there is lots of talent available at Firestone. State qualifiers Nixon and Bailey are tough, but Hew has really improved. He may be better than either of them already. Another state qualifier Crow is also a possibility while Joseph (Norton), Blank (Ashtabula Edgewood) and Cerar (Lake Catholic) are also very good. The competition here will be very fierce.

By competitive scores Hubbard could well be seen as best at this weight. He beat Lanese in the finals of Richmond Hts. by five, while Harris has split two close bouts with the same boy. A state quarter-finalist last year, he is vital to Steubenville's team hopes. Look for him somewhere on Saturday night. Sidon and Vcelka wrestle each other more times than perhaps any other tandem in the state. All the matches are close, but, perhaps, Sidon has a slight edge. I know last year he pulled off one of the major upsets in the state tourney when he beat Geog. This year he has placement potential with his devastating upper body moves. The fourth best here is Paul, but that's not likely to be good enough. Hubbard beat him by 12 points last year and Sidon and Vcelka are not that much worse. He'll need to spring a major upset to qualify.

That hybrid Lexington District does not seem particularly formidable at this weight. The one exception might be state qualifier Dotson who looked very good at Columbus last year. This year that same spark has not yet been ignited, but it's there. Sidon pinned him at Barnesville. George has a fearsome record but has not wrestled any of the top contenders. He has not yet proven himself in a state-wide arena. A third Columbus area wrestler, Giffin, has also wrestled well and could lead a Columbus area sweep of the top places in this district. I am not convinced I've identified all the best talents in the Northwest, but I've ranked Pietrowski, B. Thom, Kozinski and Shanteau. The first mentioned was a Division III state qualifier last year and could do well here or at 140# if in top form.

The Southwest District is also weak here. State qualifier Evans gave up 30 points in his two losses at Columbus last year, and the competition this time is equally strong. The top contenders for other qualifying spots seem generally to come from smaller Division II schools who do not wrestle testing schedules. This defect will be very evident at both district and state levels.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TYRONE MOSELY (ORRVILLE)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 2. Kaufmann (Fairview) | 11. Pietrowski (Genoa) |
| 3. Bucalo (Roger Bacon) | 12. Yarian (Green) |
| 4. Linkesh (Beaver Local) | 13. Rousch (Lexington) |
| 5. Bodine (Columbus DeSales) | 14. Taylor (Cambridge) |
| 6. Williamson (Middletown Madison) | 15. Bryan (Licking Valley) |
| 7. Carson (Kenston) | 16. Edwards (Little Miami) |
| 8. Jones (Steubenville) | 17. Gregg (Union Local) |
| 9. Blunt (Willard) | 18. Dorn (Springfield NW) |
| 10. Mullett (Marysville) | 19. Henthorn (Vincent Warren) |
| | 20. Cartwright (Washington Court House) |

This is a rather weak, totally wide-open weight where almost anyone can win. It's the perfect situation for a journeyman wrestler to have a hot weekend and win the whole thing. With the 145# class really "loaded", it would not surprise me to see some of that overflow drift down to this weight looking for a more hospitable environment. However, that group will face several extremely physical wrestlers -- most evidently my first choice, Tyrone Mosely.

A state qualifier last season his first round bout with state champ Yetts will linger long in my memory. Yetts escaped with a 4-3 triumph but only by the dint of tremendous struggle and a fortuitous referee's call. Mosely then lost to Bisesi in the consolations indicating the dreadful draw he sustained. This year he has won at both Smithville and Black River at 152# but will be at 140# come tourney time. He will have to be "outslicked" to lose, because no one will out-muscle him here. The scrappy, always moving Kaufman will challenge Mosely at the Firestone District. He does not in my mind have the physical strength to topple Mosely, but he might wear him out. Linkesh was exceptional at Medina and stands ready to capture a state place. His experience and mistake-free style will serve him well in some of the close bouts he'll have to win to reach his true potential. Carson was only 6th at North Canton (in a very tough weight class) and 4th at Kenston, but he has the tools to do better than that. His narrow win over Lou Genovese in the dual is testimony to what he might accomplish. The fifth spot is really wide open with the ultimate winner of that probably the beneficiary of excellent pairings.

Now that Keith has moved down two weights, the Lancaster District does not look strong. Jones fell into a weak district bracket last year and qualified for States at 152#. This year at a more normal 140# he seems to do even better. Again this is the kind of qualifier --if he can score at Columbus -- who can give Steubenville the team title. After him, all is chaos. I've listed Taylor as second best based on his 2nd at Barnesville including a big win over Gregg, the Irish Invitational champ. Both have been T.F.ed by Keith. Henthorn and Cartwright seem best in the Southeast, but neither may be good enough to qualify.

There are some intriguing wrestlers in the Southwest District. Both Bucalo and Williamson have the potential to capture a low place, but their inexperience may be a problem. What will help in the qualification process is that no one here

has previous state experience and so the top duo should have a relatively easy path to Columbus. Once there they have the ability to win some bouts and potentially place. The rest of this district looks like the type of draw the other districts will hope to get.

The Lexington contingent is kind of a mystery group to me. I'm not sure that I haven't overvalued both Bodine and Blunt, but the general level of the district should give them ample opportunity to show their wares. Mullett is my upset pick to place here although not seemingly highly rated in the Central District rankings that I have seen. This is one of the areas where the overload at 145# is likely to flow down to this class.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DUNYASHA YETTS (STEBENVILLE)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Alvarez (Hamilton Twp.) | 12. Zoldesy (Olmsted Falls) |
| 3. Tomor (Oak Harbor) | 13. Manderschied (Taylor) |
| 4. Rigel (Springfield NW) | 14. Ryan (Jefferson) |
| 5. Cruze (Eaton) | 15. Crockett (Twinsburg) |
| 6. Wiseman (Columbus DeSales) | 16. Upchurch (Turpin) |
| 7. Cofer (Willard) | 17. Minnard (Fairfield Union) |
| 8. Maxwell (Kenston) | 18. Narewski (Avon Lake) |
| 9. Crump (Bellevue) | 19. Klaber (Middletown Madison) |
| 10. Voinovich (Lake Catholic) | 20. Hibbard (Revere) |
| 11. Henry (Uhrichsville Claymont) | 21. Fox (New Lexington) |
| | 22. Hancock (Anthony Wayne) |

We have been treated to four years of watching Yetts dispatch both opposing wrestlers and tacklers with equal skill. A very fine halfback, he is even a better wrestler as witnessed by one state title and one runner-up trophy (as a freshman). A real prodigy he'll be a strong favorite at this weight class, but his second title will come no easier than the first one. At the moment this is one of the strongest weight classes in Division II with a cadre of outstanding competitors. Yetts will have to be at his best to master this field, but at his peak he is pretty much unbeatable here. However, lapses in concentration could be fatal with this strong a group of participants.

Yetts has now gone two seasons without a loss and he won't be threatened in his own district. The lack of competition there could well lull him into a complacent state of mind in Columbus. Only the recently red-hot Henry poses even the mildest challenge to Yetts with Fox -- ranked generously at 21th -- the third choice. Two better possibilities might be Wilkens (Hillsboro) or Rich (Cambridge).

The Lexington District will host some heated battles at this weight. Alvarez, 4th at 145# last year, should lead the way. Only a junior he dropped a first-round overtime heatbreaker to the eventual finalist. The junior Tomor is the first of Oak Harbor's fierce some middleweights and one of the best. Very strong he was 3rd at Medina losing only to Genovese in the semi-finals. It would not

surprise me to see him as a finalist. Wiseman, also a state qualifier at this weight last year, is just down from 152# where he placed a solid 4th at Brecksville. He must do well if DeSales is to win the team trophy. Last year he nipped Alvarez 1-0 for the district title. Cofer has been a pinning machine this year nailing three more at the Gorman including a final round fall over Division I rival, Schwartz. There may be questions, however, dealing with his stamina. State qualifier Crump will also exit here, but he could be totally out of luck if my top four wrestle as well as anticipated. Minnard was a district champ and state qualifier as a freshman last year. Unless I am badly undervaluing him he is very likely not to qualify this year. Excellent wrestlers like Hancock, Fishbaugh (Perrysburg) and Neiter (St. Marys Memorial) seemingly have no chance here. A more congenial weight class should definitely be a top-of-the-mind item for them.

The Southwest District is dominated by two exceptionally fine state qualifiers. Rigel was disqualified in the state quarter-finals last year costing him a shot at a state place. This year he has come back with a vengeance hammering everybody at 152# with only one narrow bout (4-2) with state qualifier Shroyer. Now down at 145# he should be awesome. He crushed the undefeated Cruze at Wayne. He has finalist potential. Up to the above-mentioned loss state qualifier Cruze had dominated Southwestern 145's much as he did last year in cruising to a district title. Then he finished ahead of Rigel (who was 3rd), but did not meet him. He is also very good. There is a major drop-off after this twosome and it was difficult to find reasonable contenders for the last two spots.

The qualifiers out of Firestone are likely to be an unknown lot not favored to place, but capable of the big upset. Maxwell was 3rd at North Canton beating Schwartz 1-0 in the process (as compared to Cofer's pinning him), but was very sharp at Kenston winning the title in impressive fashion. Voinovich and Zoldesy both trailed Maxwell at Kenston, but have done very well throughout the year. Voinovich is up from 125# last year, but appears to be handling the larger boys with very few problems. Last year he came very close to state qualification in Division I. Zoldesy was totally undefeated when an injury during the week of Sectionals kept completely out of the tournament process. This year he has not yet captured that elusive spark that made him so strong last year. State qualifier Ryan has been injured much of the season, but could still qualify if he can round into form. Missing most of the Medina Tourney kept him from facing the stiff competition he really needs. When I've seen him, though, he has the qualities that win during the tournament process. Crockett is an intriguing quantity. Just down from 152# he, too, is a star running back with wrestling ambitions. Very powerful, but somewhat untutored, he wrestles in an unorthodox manner. He's someone you'll want to avoid, if possible. Narewski and Hibbard are seasoned competitors who need just a small opening to reach Columbus. Whether they'll find it at this weight is problematical.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CHAD BOYER (ORRVILLE)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Miller (Oak Harbor) | 12. Gregory (Roger Bacon) |
| 3. Mintz (Kenston) | 13. Koesel (Olmsted Falls) |
| 4. Harris (CAPE) | 14. O'Brien (Bowling Green) |
| 5. Walsh (Columbus DeSales) | 15. Howell (Union Local) |
| 6. Volpe (Lake Catholic) | 16. Frye (Washington Court House) |
| 7. Shroyer (Indian Lake) | 17. Bair (Trenton Edgewood) |
| 8. Hagan (Marlington) | 18. Chandler (Vinton Country) |
| 9. England (Teays Valley) | 19. Coontz (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 10. Nickleman (Dayton Carroll) | 20. Dunn (Hamilton Ross) |
| 11. Workman (Coventry) | 21. Bock (Beaver Local) |
| | 22. Gibeaut (Union Local) |

This is another extremely fine weight with a host of possible contenders. In this case there is no dominant figure, like Yettis at 145#, so that the competition promises to be exceptionally tough from the first round on. My choice is the hardworking Orrville senior Chad Boyer, 3rd at 140# last year. Victories at 160# both at Smithville and Black River really have not been indicative of the type of competition he'll face in Columbus, although the Smithville bracket was very strong. Instead, very strong sectional and district competition will serve as a prelude to the final clashes at Columbus.

That Firestone District will place a real premium on good sectional results at this weight. Besides Boyer, the cast there will contain at least three other contenders with legitimate state placement hopes. The best of this trio is the powerful Mintz who won at both North Canton and Kenston. A second round disqualification at Firestone cost him state qualification chances last year, but this year he continues unbeaten. I thought long and hard about choosing him to win rejecting that idea by only a narrow margin. Volpe lost to Mintz at Kenston and Petcher in a dual, but neither of those losses were by huge margins. Last year he, too, lost Division I state qualification chances due to injury after winning a sectional title. Hagan was a district champ last year upsetting Bisesi and throwing the state bracket sheet into turmoil. Once in Columbus he looked nothing like himself losing a 4-0 verdict to a 4th place finisher from the Southwest District. He was only 3rd at Wadsworth -- losing to Workman -- but he gets the benefit of the doubt based on past performance. Workman and Koesel have shown tremendous improvement and have the inside track at capturing the last two state berths. Coontz and Bock -- both from the same sectional as Boyer and Hagan -- also have state possibilities, but will need some help along the way.

Division III state qualifier Chad Miller (and what are the odds of having two wrestlers named Chad ranked one-two in the state) lost an overtime bout to place last year, and has even been more impressive this season. He will have wrestled much better competition than Boyer during most of the season. State qualifier Walsh took 2nd at Brecksville at 171#, but will be at this weight come tourney time. He'll have to be if he wants to compete because Fickell and Cua have pre-empted his options at higher weights. He looked real shaky in Columbus last year, but will a real factor this time. State qualifier England hammered Walsh

in last year's district final, but did equally poorly at the state level. My guess is that this time Walsh will beat him. O'Brien is my top choice for the 4th qualifying berth, but he is a solid step behind the top three here.

State qualifiers Harris and Shroyer lead a two-tiered Southwest District group. Both of these wrestlers are solid experienced performers who could place at the state level. Harris' added plus is explosiveness which made him the district runner-up last year. This season he was a strong 2nd at the powerful St. Xavier tourney. Now that Rigel has moved down to 145#, Shroyer leads the Dayton area contenders into this district. The second tier of contenders is far behind this top duo and consists of Nickleman, Bair, Gregory, and Dunn. The two that qualify from this quartet will likely only wrestle once in Columbus.

Now that Yetts has moved down to 145# the Lancaster District looks pretty hopeless at this weight class. Nobody from here makes my Top Ten and it's clear that several of the 145's mentioned in the preceding essay would be better off here. I've rated Howell as the marginal leader here based primarily on this big win at Shadyside. Frye was a sophomore sensation last year compiling a 32-3 record, but his nosedive in the first round of Districts was disappointing. When he is on form, Frye can go with any in this district and would have potential for a Top Ten ranking. Chandler is a terror in his part of the state, but that usually hasn't meant much beyond the sectional level in the past. The freshman Gibeaut is a star in the making, but he's probably still a year or two away from making much of a dent in the tourney process. Rose (River View) is another possibility here.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: LUKE FICKELL (COLUMBUS DESALES)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Gilbert (CAPE) | 11. Wickham (Meadowbrook) |
| 3. Adkinson (Oak Harbor) | 12. Brown (Tipp City) |
| 4. Munger (Ravenna Southeast) | 13. Chivington (Marion River Valley) |
| 5. Reineck (Fostoria) | 14. Russell (Union Local) |
| 6. Wallace (Akron Hoban) | 15. Denzer (Louisville) |
| 7. Kaczor (Milan Edison) | 16. Mays (Trenton Edgewood) |
| 8. Barber (Beaver Local) | 17. Amrose (Kenston) |
| 9. Hennigan (Springfield NW) | 18. Wingrove (Vincent Warren) |
| 10. Kaprosy (Lake Catholic) | 19. Bourdin (Dayton Carroll) |
| | 20. Hammond (Hillsboro) |

One of the most important aspects in defining a weight class is asking the right questions -- making sure that the upcoming activity is examined from the proper perspective. In this case the correct question is not "Who will win the state title at 160#?", but is instead, "Will Luke Fickell win three state championships or four?" The conditional answer, "Will Luke Fickell win three state championships believe he can win four times. Obviously, this all sounds rather premature for a wrestler who has about six weeks of varsity experience, but we are talking about somebody special here. He began by beating out a returning state qualifier for the varsity position, and since then has only lost to Division I powerhouse,

Kevin Randleman. Tall and lanky at about 6'3" he will be the dominating big man in the early 1990's as he matures. The major questions this year will be whether he can handle the very physical participants at this weight. Fickell, however, is slick enough and strong enough that he will be able to outmaneuver and outscore a relatively formidable field.

My initial choice at this weight was the very powerful Gilbert who was 3rd last year losing only to Patsolic. He seemed ready to simply overpower all opposition and, in fact, may still do so. However, I think Gilbert can be taken down, and that could well be the difference in a bout with Fickell. There is a fairly big gap between Gilbert and the rest of the Southwest District contenders. Brown barely missed qualification last year and has generally done well this year with a 2nd at Troy and a 4th at Tiffin. Hennigan, however, pinned Brown at the Wayne Invitational thus securing, at least for now, the second spot in this district. Mays and Bourdin were both district qualifiers last year, but were early first round losers. They look to be some of the best choices for the last state opening.

Fickell will have extremely difficult competition at Lexington with a number of exceptional performers opposite him there. Adkinson was a Division III state qualifier last year and finished 5th. This year he has been at 171# all year with excellent success -- finishing 2nd at Northwood and 4th at the mammoth Medina. Moving down to 160# can do nothing, but enhance his chances. State qualifier Reineck spent only 51 seconds on the mat in Columbus, but that loss does not detract from a 27-4 record. This year he has devastated the opposition in his own area. Kaczor has won two tournaments this year including the large Marion Harding Tourney. Everyone of this trio will challenge Fickell if they meet. This analysis suggests that state qualifier Chivington will be shut out of further advancement here, and he may opt for the easier 152# class. This should be an excellent competition, and great preparation for the following weekend.

There is also a strong field at Firestone. State qualifier Munger is the nominal first choice, but he has had an erratic season to date. He lost twice at Smithville to finish 5th and then came back to win the strong Kenston Tourney. Last year he was district champion at 152# and then lost in the first round at state while two others who finished behind him placed. Lakumba Wallace enjoyed a fine season last year and then was unable to compete in the tournament process. This year he won the Hudson Tourney and has been dominating in dual meets. He lacks polish, however. Barber disappointed in last year's sectional, but beat Munger at Smithville and placed at Medina. He, again, exits from a difficult sectional. Kaprosy lost to Munger in the finals at Kenston, but showed good potential in that 2-point defeat. This quartet would seem to fill four of the available qualifying spaces. Denzer or Amrose would seem to have the best chance for the fifth spot although the district is crowded with other possibilities. This will be a tough district to draw into at Columbus.

The Lancaster District seems by far the weakest although I may be under-rating state qualifier Wickham in this analysis. An exceptional scorer in his area he does not match up well the defensive specialists from other areas. Russell missed state qualification by one point in Division III last year, and has been a finalist in two tournaments this year (winning at Shadyside). Wingrove and Hammond are the best shots for the 3rd spot.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JIM SCAVUZZO (REVERE)TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Holcomb (St. Clairsville) | 11. McKenzie (Cincinnati Purcell) |
| 3. Chanoski (Steubenville) | 12. McGough (Van Wert) |
| 4. Losie (Oak Harbor) | 13. Majoy (Warsaw River View) |
| 5. Atkins (Olmsted Falls) | 14. Flaherty (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 6. Buzbee (Eaton) | 15. Larson (Fairview) |
| 7. Cua (Columbus DeSales) | 16. Keating (Indian Lake) |
| 8. Cencebaugh (Carlisle) | 17. Wheeler (Avon Lake) |
| 9. Lindsey (Uhrichsville Claymont) | 18. Smith (New Richmond) |
| 10. Wiley (Perrysburg) | 19. Coleman (Warrens Hts.) |
| | 20. Stedman (Licking Valley) |

Last year as only a sophomore Jim Scavuzzo came extremely close to winning the state title at 160#. An overtime loss to Joe Peet in the district final gave him a tougher state draw, but he reached the final only to lose to Peet once again -- this time by a single point. This year the result is likely to be even better. One of a number of brothers who have wrestled for Scavuzzo is a nice blend of power, quickness and technique. He competes in one of the most rugged weight classes in Division II, but based on previous performances he will be up to this challenge.

Tough challengers abound in every qualifying area, but none more so than from the Lancaster District. Leading the pack are Holcomb and Chanoski, both blessed with outstanding resumes. Holcomb was 5th at this weight as a sophomore and then dominated his tough district winning a 25-10 technical fall in the final. He was just so outstanding on his feet that nobody could approach him. At Columbus, however, after a terrific start he just totally ran out of steam and succumbed 13-12 and eventual elimination. It had to have been heartbreaking. Chanoski has made amazing progress since his surprise state qualification last year. This year he dominated at Richmond Hts. beating the very tough Coe by five in the final. His only loss was a narrow 6-4 defeat by Holcomb. State qualifier Lindsey lost a criteria overtime bout in the quarter-finals and was eliminated. He looked like an upcoming superstar, but it hasn't worked out that way this year. He was only 4th at Barnesville losing to both Sears (Division III top choice) and Majoy, and Chanoski crushed him in the dual. He may be hard pressed to protect that last qualifying spot. Majoy is coming on strong and seems poised to make a strong run to unseat Lindsey for that state berth. Strongman Lorente (Washington Court House) has virtually no chance here. Last year Holcomb pinned him in the first period.

Losie moved from 145# last year to 189# so far this year -- and has done so with great success. He was a solid 4th at Medina and lost only to Emery at Northwood. Now he's down to a more reasonable 171# and will be very, very strong at this weight. He will muscle his way past most of his competition at Lexington. Cua has been up at 189# most of the year, but past performance indicates he has placement potential. He'll have to be sharp to meet the competition here. Wiley, McGough, Flaherty and Stedman will be in the hunt for the last two qualifying openings.

One wrestler I may have seriously underestimated is Atkins who is with Scavuzzo at Firestone. He beat Division I stars White (at Kenston) and Splete (at Massillon Perry on this way to undefeated record. Last year he couldn't get out his own sectional losing to Wheeler in his last chance. It's difficult to guess how far he can go this year, but the finals are not out of the question. After these two the Firestone District is quite weak I've listed Larson, Wheeler and Coleman, but none of this group has ever made it past the first round of district competition. In addition, Larson hasn't wrestled since early in the year, Wheeler was "decked" by Atkins, and Coleman was only 4th at Richmond Hts. Berecak (Crestwood) might be the answer to part of this dilemma.

Buzbee, based on his convincing 8-3 triumph at the GMVWA, has moved past state qualifier Cencebaugh into the lead position in the Southwest District. That suggests that both have the potential to place, although that will be a near thing. The top five are all better right now but the vagaries of the currently used single elimination format make 5th and 6th place almost strictly a matter of chance. McKenzie has also made progress and he may have passed the two Dayton area boys since there is no good way of measuring. Keating appears to have the inside track for the last spot, but Smith after a great sophomore season last year, is still a force to be reckoned with. They will not match up well against the better boys.

189#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MATT PLUNKETT (CARROLLTON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Carr (Roger Bacon) | 12. Gaut (Fairless) |
| 3. Eddlebute (Vincent Warren) | 13. Sheldon (Willard) |
| 4. O'Bryan (Warsaw River View) | 14. Smith (Washington Court House) |
| 5. Toth (Olmsted Falls) | 15. Donley (Milton Union) |
| 6. Zezech (Columbus DeSales) | 16. Mulhollen (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 7. Houseman (Springfield NW) | 17. Lichty (Revere) |
| 8. Brock (Crestwood) | 18. Krause (Trenton Edgewood) |
| 9. Still (Edison South) | 19. Haller (Van Wert) |
| 10. Smith (Carlisle) | 20. Lucy (Hubbard) |
| 11. McCane (Galion) | 21. Durieux (Hebron Lakewood) |

Plunkett is not going to impress you with superslick takedowns or flashy pyrotechnics, but what he can do is use his immense strength to wear down his opponent aimed at third period domination. Last year he finished fourth with that basic style losing in the district final to the eventual champ Keenan by a point and being out-stalled in the state semi-finals to lose by again a single point. This year his solid, basic style sets him a bit ahead of a very representative field, and he also benefits from having one of the sharpest mat coaches in the state.

Just getting out of that brutal Lancaster District will be a real chore. Plunkett, of course, is the leader, but O'Bryan, 6th last year (although with only a 1-3 record) also has to be respected. Plunkett crushed him twice last year, though, by scores of 16-3 and 8-4. Eddlebute, 5th at 171# last year, is

the third state placer at this district. This year he has so far followed his previous script -- an undefeated regular season and then a sectional championship. The problems for him have begun at the district level. He cannot, at that level, simply overpower people as he is used to doing, and at that point improvements will have to be made if he is to do much better than a low place. Also here is a former state qualifier Still with something to prove, and the exceptionally powerful Smith. A long-shot is Keenan who would like to be the third brother to win at this weight.

Another powerful wrestler is former Division I state qualifier Carr. An easy winner over basically Division I competition at the Coaches Classic provides him with substantial prestige. His conditioning must be 100%, though, if he is to match up well with Plunkett. Smith, Houseman and Krause all have district experience with the first mentioned qualifying for Columbus last year. Donley is a fast improving wildcard who pinned Smith for 3rd at the GMVWA. The last three qualifiers should emerge from this quartet. Two other possibilities are Smith (Valley View) and the long-shot Hodge (Hamilton Ross).

The Firestone District does not appear to be much of a factor at this weight. State qualifier Toth could, with good fortune, capture a low place, but nobody else figures to do even that well. Toth was twice victimized at last year's district 16-0 and 9-0 and lost in 84 seconds at Columbus, but was first at Massillon Perry and 2nd (to Brock) at Kenston. Brock's 13-11 win over Toth gives him some credence, but his lack of tourney experience will hurt. Gaut was the state alternate last year (losing 5th place to Toth), but will be a bigger factor this year. Mulhollen, Lichty and Lucy are other possibilities here, but they're not likely to be worrying Plunkett or Carr.

It's not a very imposing field at the Lexington District either. Zezech was one bout from States last year, but he has missed much of this year with injuries. He still looks like the best here. McCane was 1st at Marion Harding and 3rd at the Gorman narrowly defeating Sheldon each time. Durieux and Haller are two other challengers with Haller a narrow choice for the last qualifying spot.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MATT SCHUMM (TRENTON EDGEWOOD)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Relitz (Buckeye) | 12. Miller (West Holmes) |
| 3. Johnston (Copley) | 13. Hickman (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 4. West (Vincent Warren) | 14. Schonauer (Lake Catholic) |
| 5. Snyder (Meadowbrook) | 15. Jenkins (Indian Lake) |
| 6. Nuber (Streetsboro) | 16. Kegarise (Milan Edison) |
| 7. Bothwell (Mason) | 17. Woodside (Fairfield Union) |
| 8. Prementine (Crestwood) | 18. Jimmar (Cincinnati Purcell) |
| 9. Suder (Steubenville) | 19. Halsey (Galion) |
| 10. Fitzpatrick (Teays Valley) | 20. Threatt (Edison South) |
| 11. Stubblefield (Taylor) | 21. Brockett (Chardon) |

About every three or four years you find a weight class where you have absolutely

no idea who will win. I mean no idea at all. In fact, it's so difficult you're not even sure who the best possibilities are. At that point you turn to damage control to try and avoid embarrassment, and find someone who at least looks like a good choice to get to Columbus. Now I realize that this is not exactly a ringing endorsement of Schumm, but it is in no way meant to denigrate him. On the contrary, he is the best available candidate that my rather extensive search process has uncovered, and he'll have no greater fan the rest of the year than me. Not an enormous heavyweight, he has good moves and an excellent mat sense that has lead to an outstanding record. Winner of both the Edgewood and Fairfield Tourneys he also has state tournament experience from last year. He appears to be the best available candidate.

Schumm faces tough competition in his own district. Bothwell was a district quarter-finalist last year and finished second to Schumm at the sectional level. He could place. Stubblefield was the state alternate last year and has wrestled a perfect schedule this year. His schedule, however, is quite weak which makes him vulnerable to the more battle-hardened boys. Jenkins is another excellent wrestler and Schumm will have no easy task exiting from here. Jimmar and Williams (Carlisle) are also good. My feeling is that Schumm will be tempered for state competition by competition with this group.

Relitz is tough to rate. At Medina he looked excellent losing only to Michigan state champion Krueger, and having four falls. He has moved up from 189# where he competed last year and has done very well. He's at his best against heavyweights who actually try to wrestle. Those who merely push and shove give him problems. Johnston has a bunch of quick pins (under 30 seconds), but I'm not sure he can go a strong six minutes. A state qualifier last year he lost to Moore on a T.F. in the first round. Moore beat Schumm by four in the consolation. Prementine and Nuber are PCL rivals who will meet later this year. Prementine has won their battles recently, but I'm wondering if Nuber hasn't moved ahead of him. Prementine was the state alternate last year losing 5th place to Johnston on a fall. A wildcard element is Schonauer. A very promising heavyweight as a sophomore, he missed all last year due to injury. He beat Prementine at Kenston and may be under-valued in this ranking. Brockett leads a host of other possibilities.

There is tough competition at Steubenville. Snyder is strong and tough with the ability to manhandle smaller men. His problem is consistency. In close bouts he makes bad decisions on the mat that can cost a bout. He can "go" with any listed heavyweight, but I wonder if he can beat a succession of good competitors. Last year he lost state qualification in overtime to Heath. West was a state qualifier and I've listed him ahead of Snyder based on consistency. He won one bout in Columbus and has been invincible this year. He beat Snyder in the district consolations last year. Suder has come on strong for Steubenville and it's possible a place by him could be the difference in winning a team title. He, too, missed state qualification by one bout. Trying to upset the applecart is Miller and Threatt. The former in my mind has one advantage in that many of the Eastern District heavies have not seen him.

The Lexington District is weak. Almost no one there has any district experience, let alone state credentials. It would be a real surprise if any of them win even a low place at States. The one exception might be Fitzpatrick, who seems to be showing the most improvement. The rest of those listed look to be bracket fillers at best.

TEAMS

1. Steubenville -- It should be a close back team struggle, but I think Steubenville has just enough to hold a Columbus DeSales surge. Yetts is the bellwether, but McChee, Chanoski, and Hubbard seem very solid as well. Suder, Jones, and Lavender are also possibilities to score. A crucial element would be to get Keenan out of his murderous district, because he could score at Columbus.
2. Columbus DeSales -- Marinelli is the top gun here and he corresponds to Yetts when matching up with Steubenville. Fickell is exceptional, but it's lots of pressure for a freshman although if Wiseman, Walsh, Cua, and Zezech come through it will ease his nerves. Steubenville has a few more opportunities, but DeSales certainly has the firepower to win should the Big Red stumble anywhere along the line.
3. Kenston -- The six exceptional middleweights are the heart and soul of this fine team. From Knox (130#) through Amrose (160#) they match up well with any Division II team. Harris can win while Knox, Maxwell and Mintz should get top places. If Carson and Amrose get hot, this team could squeeze past the top two. One problem is that they butt heads at a lot of weight classes with Columbus DeSales giving Steubenville, perhaps, a little breathing room.
4. Oak Harbor -- A tournament team with four great middleweights. Adkinson, Losie, Miller and Tomar could all be in the top four at their weight class and that's a lot of points. Two keys might be getting that top quartet at just the right weights and, somehow, having Shanteau help. Getting Palmer in the lineup would also be a plus, but he's the same size as everybody else.
5. Lake Catholic -- Probably a better dual meet team they still may be strong enough to do well at Columbus. Unfortunately many of their wrestlers, while good, may not be quite good enough to score in Columbus. Macklin has been tough while Voinovich, Volpe, and Kaprosy are just a small step behind. Again, though, the latter trio compete right at the heart of Columbus DeSales, Kenston and Oak Harbor teams. The youngsters like Becks and Cwiak could help and wouldn't it be great to see Schonauer and Cerar do well.
6. Vincent Warren -- A team that is devastating in their own area, but one which has never shown much scoring punch at States. However, this will have to be their year with Eddlebutte and McCoy as the two ringleaders. West is nearly as good and is at a much weaker weight class. That leaves Hall and Gentile as possible contributors, and Wingrove and Henthorn as long shots. Based on past experience, this high a ranking may be over-valuing this team.
7. Orrville -- Two state champions score a lot of points, but there is absolutely no margin for error here. Boyer and Mosely are just about everything, although Geiser is not bad. Unfortunately, either at 135# or 145# he's at difficult district weights. No matter, the top two should score about 45 points.

8. Hamilton Twp. -- Surely an odd choice for such a high ranking, but they have lots of possibilities. Alvarez, Dotson, and Beane are their mainstays, but Flaherty, Vacchio, and Hickman all have qualification chances. It's a team that if everything goes well could substantiate this rating or they could fall out of the top 20. A crucial element is to get Dotson wrestling well.
9. CAPE -- They have three under-rated stars, but if they all wrestle well that's enough for a top ten finish. Gilbert, in particular, is strong and could be a champion while both Harris' have placement potential. Again, there are no back ups if the top trio should falter.
10. Olmsted Falls -- They totally fell apart at last year's sectional after years of scoring well in State action. Atkins and Toth are their big guns with Zoldesy and Koesel having some opportunities to score as well. If Jazwa could help it would, maybe, put them over the top.
11. Twinsburg -- Coach Dave Mariola always puts together a strong squad and this year is no exception. Haring and Futo are both good, but the key is for Zamiska to return to the form of his freshman year. Some of the second echelon stars could help here as well.
12. Union Local -- Kline should score a lot of points and then some of the lesser known boys will have to come through. The best chances are Vcelka, Gregg and Russell. They're a long-shot at this level.

DIVISION III

The changes inaugurated last year most affected this classification and they must be evaluated as a complete success. They promoted exciting competition and crowned state champions from all across the state. No longer could a wrestler become a state champion without enduring four testing bouts against quality competition. While the traditional Division III powers continued to do well, they no longer dominate the competition to the extent that they had in the past.

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JIM SMALES (BISHOP READY)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Lambdin (Black River) | 12. M. Feckanin (Ledgement) |
| 3. Mattin (Delta) | 13. Daugherty (Richmond Hts.) |
| 4. Bey (Versailles) | 14. Delabar (Batavia) |
| 5. Nguyen (Archbold) | 15. McCrory (Cardinal Stritch) |
| 6. Graceffo (Cuyahoga Hts.) | 16. Wright (Belpre) |
| 7. McCurry (Dixie) | 17. Reichert (Norwalk St. Paul) |
| 8. Donahue (Bellaire St. John) | 18. D. Case (Cadiz) |
| 9. Stout (Brookville) | 19. Roth (Lakota) |
| 10. Mokros (Shadyside) | 20. Rowland (West Salem NW) |
| 11. Clemens (Lima Central Catholic) | 21. Raver (Olentangy) |

As is often the case, this weight class defies easy analysis. Most of the competitors are young wrestlers with little track record and few bouts outside their own immediate geographical area. Even the seasoned participants often were, at best, also-rans last year, but the high turnover in this class may put them near the top now. My choice is a wrestler who generates more confusion about his name than his mat abilities. State qualifier Jim Smales is a solid talent who, for whatever reason, likes to be known as Jim Smiles. Under any name, he appears to be the class of this field although he will have some stiff competition from other scattered parts of the state. Smales lost his district championship by but a single point to state placer Butin last year, but, as freshmen do, wrestled poorly in the first round of States and was eliminated 4-3. This year should be a totally different story.

State quarter-finalist Lambdin should be Smales' toughest competition and certainly rates a moderate chance of upsetting him. He is the defending Nordonina District champ, but last year got stuck in the same quarter-bracket with Zapadka and Gibson -- losing to both. At 112# all year, the one problem could be the cut to 103# which could leave him weak and drained -- especially the first day of tournaments. Graceffo is another experienced wrestler who has campaigned at 112#, but will make the cut to 103#. His experience and strength will make him tough to beat at this weight. Ledgement wrestles such a strange schedule and changes weight classes so often it's extremely difficult to value their performers. Feckanin was 2nd at Bishop Ready, 4th at Toledo Waite and 2nd at the Ledgement Round Robin. A district qualifier last year, he lost by only four

points to Lamdbin. Daugherty has reasonable ability and could get swept along in the general excitement of a possible team title. Rowland is from the Wooster area and has been a solid performer this year. One wrestler I may be badly under-estimating is Lynch (Perry). A strong pinner, he may be good enough to capture a qualifying berth. Other candidates are Gray (Smithville), Hartman (Wellington) and Mescan (Columbia Station). They are real long-shots, however.

As always, the Northwest District presents some strong candidates. Mattin wrestled brilliantly all year and then was unable to wrestle in the tourneys. His substitute Graber (since tragically killed in a car wreck) was a district qualifier giving you some idea of the depth Delta had at this weight. This year Mattin continued to do well finishing 2nd at Toledo Waite. Nguyen, already twice a state qualifier, rates, at least in my mind, behind Mattin. A quarter-finalist last year he lost to Butin 13-0 (note Smales lost to Butin by one). This year he remains undefeated and is a vital cog in Archbold's team hopes. He should place. There is a major drop-off in quality after this duo. Clemens heads a strong group of lightweights for Lima Central Catholic while McCrory is part of the Stritch tradition of good lightweights. Reichert and Roth are possibilities for the fifth qualifying spot, but the last couple berths are really wide open.

The Southwest District is generally the weakest district in Division III. Last year only three wrestlers from this area finished in the top four. However, they'll send a solid contingent at 103# this year. Bey and Stout both have district experience, and, more importantly, have done well against Division I and II rivals. Both have placement potential. McCurry is a newcomer who has had an undefeated season including an impressive championship at the Edgewood Invitational. Delabar is, as currently rated, shut out of state activity, but has upset possibilities.

Smales should dominate his district. He is a solid step ahead of a second group of competitors that include freshmen Case and Mokros from the Eastern area and the more experienced Donahue and Raver. Kline has dominated 103# wrestling in their part of the state, but these two much younger competitors are moving quickly up the learning curve. Case represents the proud Cadiz tradition which has placed in the top three at the introductory weight for five consecutive years. He will be hard pressed to extend that strong. A surprise here might be Wright who has toiled in virtually obscurity at Belpre. With this new district alignment, it will be interesting to see which, if any, of the three geographical areas dominate.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: WADE GIBSON (CADIZ)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Yinger (Nelsonville York) | 11. Lavender (Miami East) |
| 3. Kowatch (West Salem NW) | 12. Ducca (Kirtland) |
| 4. Haring (Ontario) | 13. Kruse (Bishop Ready) |
| 5. DePhillips (Aurora) | 14. Soto (Otsego) |
| 6. Lundquest (Marion Pleasant) | 15. Parrott (Batavia) |
| 7. Smith (Richmond Hts.) | 16. Getty (Elyria Catholic) |
| 8. Hicks (Cardinal Stritch) | 17. Garza (Hicksville) |
| 9. Calhoun (Bethel Tate) | 18. Feckanin (Ledgemont) |
| 10. Jeffries (Galion Northmor) | 19. Hopkins (Delta) |
| | 20. Henley (Sandusky St. Mary) |

On the surface at least this would appear to be a two-man affair with a pair of state runner-ups leading an otherwise average field. Gibson has been exceptional this year running up 13 consecutive victories including the Licking Hts. title where he majored the very tough Randall. As a freshman he lost a criteria decision in the state finals, and last year drew two-time state champ Zapadka in the first round losing 6-5. He finished the tourney pinning for 3rd. So far his luck, as you can see, hasn't always been good at Columbus. Yinger, in Division II, made his way in heart-stopping fashion to the finals where Nelson massacred him. Still he had a great tourney and he did it with a smile on his face. He was one of the few wrestlers who seemed to enjoy every minute of action and his slam-bang style made a lot of friends. Emerging from the same district this duo should be apart in the bracketing and their match-up will generate a lot of interest. I'm going with Gibson because he makes far fewer mistakes and because I can see Yinger getting upset in an early round far more easily than Gibson. The rest of that Steubenville District should feature match-ups with tough Columbus area wrestlers. I favor Jeffries and Lundquest to garner the last two spots, but the draw will be crucial. If you happen to get caught in the same half with Yinger and Gibson (Heaven, forbid) it's good-bye.

The Nordonia District is divided into two unequal halves. At the top are three returning state qualifiers and below them a large group of largely journeyman wrestlers. Kowatch is the best of that top trio and has lost only to old nemesis Graham (Division I). He should place, and his style might give Yinger more problems than it would Gibson. Smith has already travelled to Columbus twice, but has been a first round loser both times. This time he should deliver far more. DePhillips has alternated between 112# and 119# and wrestled a tough schedule. He was 4th a Medina and 3rd at Hudson. An interesting comparison is that Randall (who Gibson beat 11-2) defeated DePhillips for 3rd at Medina. The fourth berth is wide open. I ranked Ducca, Feckanin and Getty, but there are a lot of other possibilities.

The Northwest District is uncharacteristically weak here. An exception might be state qualifier Haring who has been at 119# all year, but is considering dropping here for the tourneys. He won the Gorman at 119# in an exciting overtime match and would do very well here assuming the weight cut was reasonable. Newcomers to state action dominate the remainder of the area and

there will be a lot of new faces in Columbus at this weight. Hicks and Soto appear to be the two best, and I've ranked them in the opposite manner from the way they finished at the Northwood Invitational. After them there are a whole bevy of possibilities, none of whom will do well in Columbus.

Calhoun and Lavender lead a Southwest District which is unlikely to place anyone in Columbus. However, the first of this twosome is quite good and cannot be overlooked by anyone here except perhaps Gibson and Yinger. Parrott is my choice for the third spot with Starrett (Dayton Christian) as a long-shot.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: SCOTT ZAPADKA (CARDINAL STRITCH)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Heavilin (Cadiz) | 11. Grau (Lockland) |
| 3. Dérnlan (West Liberty Salem) | 12. Peters (Beachwood) |
| 4. Butin (West Jefferson) | 13. Lippert (Lakota) |
| 5. E. Moran (Versailles)) | 14. Redd (Woodridge) |
| 6. Ritter (Wauseon) | 15. Barnes (Otsego) |
| 7. Quayle (Huron) | 16. Torzok (Perry) |
| 8. Hobbs (Licking Hts.) | 17. Knapp (Grandview Hts.) |
| 9. Johnson (West Salem NW) | 18. Dunstan (Elyria Catholic) |
| 10. Rinehart (Galion Northmor) | 19. Kimmet (Delphos St. John) |
| | 20. Appleton (Dayton Oakwood) |

Zapadka is yet another of those pursuing his third state title and, in fact, one of three who are doing so at 119# (Nelson in Division I and Cianciola in Division II). Zapadka is a fooler. He never looks as good as he, clearly, must be. During the season he manages to lose three or four times, but come the States and he wins and wins. Last year he twice won by narrow 6-5 margins including a final round triumph over the wrestler who was first in his district. This year, again, he faces formidable opposition, but the odds are that, somehow, he'll scrape through. We'll examine that opposition in some detail as we look at each of the four districts.

The field at Steubenville is very strong. Heavilin has finished 2nd and 3rd the last two years, both times losing narrowly in the final period. This year he has been outstanding winning the Licking Hts. by major decision over the formidable Abbott. He must feel that by now it's his turn to win it all .. and it would not strain the laws of probability even a little for that to occur. Butin, 5th last year, lost to Zapadka by three points in the semi-finals. This year after mixed results at 125# he has moved down to 119# where he will be tough. I think, however, that Heavilin will be too strong for him. Heavilin did defeat state qualifier Hobbs at Licking Hts., but not many will accomplish that feat. Butin beat him by only a single point for 3rd place. He should qualify again. I favor Rinehart for the fourth spot, but Knapp cannot be overlooked. Either of these two could score points at Columbus. Haines (Beallsville) is a real dark horse here.

The Southwest District is also strong. Derneln, the third of that fabulous brother combination, is only a sophomore, but is already wreaking havoc in his area. A state qualifier last year he won one bout at Columbus. There is no question that he'll win at least one state title somewhere along the line. I don't think it will be this year at 119#. Moran, the younger brother of the defending state champ, is also excellent. Also a state qualifier as a freshman he and Derneln will probably become well acquainted during their four high school years. He, too, has strong placement potential. State qualifier Grau has built a strong record this year against reasonably good competition, but he cannot match up against the top two. He, however, should get the last qualifying spot. Appleton, who is a solid performer, is in the wrong district.

Zapadka did not win his district last year and may not do so again this year. Ritter down from 125# last year is very good as witnessed by his winning of the Rogers Invitational. Quayle is dominating the eastern portion of this district and his added size has translated into power. Certainly a third contender would have been state qualifier Fahrer (Delta) who was a runner-up in this district last year. The tragic loss of an arm in a farm accident last summer has apparently ended such hopes. Lippert, Kimmet and Barnes are other possibilities here and cannot be discounted. This sprawling district probably spawns more upsets than any other area.

The Northeast District at Nordonia seems very weak. Johnson is, probably, a narrow favorite along with past district performers like Redd and Torzok. Someone to watch is the newcomer Peters who has crushed most of his opposition. A real pinner he could do well in this rather shallow field. Dunstan looked good as a Division II performer last year, but failed to exit the tough Olmsted Falls sectional. I have a feeling he might be a real factor here. Wright (Wellington) and Rohr (Mapleton) are other possibilities.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TOM NEIKIRK (CARDINAL)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. DiSabato (Bishop Ready) | 12. R. Rismiller (Versailles) |
| 3. Frohnapfel (Bridgeport) | 13. Baranek (Huron) |
| 4. Vielma (Wauseon) | 14. Mullins (West Jefferson) |
| 5. Merryman (Shadyside) | 15. Brininger (Ledgemont) |
| 6. Timmons (Lakota) | 16. Savage (Delta) |
| 7. Unkefer (Waynedale) | 17. Kantor (Dayton Oakwood) |
| 8. Rudolph (Aurora) | 18. Hartzel (Ontario) |
| 9. Long (Liberty Center) | 19. Penetti (Finneytown) |
| 10. Weyrick (Bellaire St. John) | 20. Murphy (Madison Plains) |
| 11. Behrens (Hawken) | 21. Bright (Dixie) |
| | 22. Butsko (New Albany) |

Tom Neikirk would have been a strong contender for OW in Division III last year (had there been one) for triumphing over an outstanding field. In a bracket littered with past state placers and a state champ, he took control in the first round and defeated four tough boys by relatively comfortable scores. This year

he has struggled at 125#, but his strong defensive skills will undoubtedly be a key factor come tourney time. This would be his third state title and to win it he will, again, have to defeat some distinguished opposition. Right now an objective observer might rate him only third or fourth best at 125#, but nobody will be surprised is he's on the top step of the awards stand come Saturday night.

DiSabato, state runner-up last year, as a freshman, will be Neikirk's principal opposition. With five older brothers as state champs much is expected of him, and he has the talent to deliver. His match with Neikirk would center in the first period. The wrestler who gets ahead would have an enormous advantage -- especially if it were Neikirk. His defensive skills would make it tough for DiSabato to come back. That entire Steubenville District is very strong. Frohnafel, twice a state place winner, will probably do so again, and, in fact, could be a finalist. He should be away from DiSabato since they're in the same district and could be away from Neikirk as well. His height combined with good leg moves make him a difficult competitor. DiSabato would have to beat him on his feet. After winning his opening bout Merryman caught defending state champions Neikirk and McDaniel back-to-back -- losing both -- the latter by only a single point. He has solid placement potential. This entire district is very tough. Weyrick has missed much of this year, but he, too, is very good having beaten both Frohnafel and Merryman at various times. This would seem to be the qualifying quartet, but there is another strong foursome right below them. In this deep district my upset special might be Mullins, who is really a 119#er who got moved out when Butin moved down. He may well outslick the Eastern District boys. To a lesser extent Murphy, Butsko and Moore (Barnesville) have some chance to qualify as well. The competition will be brutal here.

There are five spots available in the Northwest District and really equity would suggest that one of them ought to be given to Steubenville. Vielma and Timmons are both good, and could capture a medium to low place. Long, a state place winner two years ago, was upset in the districts by Haring and didn't get out. This year he should qualify, but duplicating his 3rd of two years ago looks almost impossible. He is just about the last link with the great Liberty Center teams of past year. Baranek, Savage and Hartzel should be in the thick of the fight for the last two spots, but the competition will really be wide open. Savage could play a key role in Delta's team chances. Swartzmiller (Hopewell-Loudon) could also be a factor here.

Neikirk struggled to get out of the Northeast District last year, and could have the same problem this year. In the consolation semi-finals (the last go-to-state round) he beat Unkefer 1-0 to keep his chances for the second state title alive. This year Unkefer missed placing by one win at Medina, against a tough field, and was 3rd at Smithville losing to state qualifier Bailey. Rudolph got a 5th at both Medina and Hudson and has done well this year. He cannot be overlooked as he is a returning district quarter-finalist at this weight. State qualifier Behrens is the choice for the fourth spot, but it will not be easy. Bringer is very good, to, and could upset anyone here, but Neikirk. Radebough (Hillsdale), Cherry (Smithville) and Mauser (Brooklyn) are other low probability possibilities.

The Southwest District looks pretty feeble. There is some chance Dernlan might be here, and he, of course, would be a major factor at this weight, too. The quartet rated at this weight now, however, will not be factors at the state

level. However, if state qualifier Rismiller could win a bout there it would be a plus for Versailles' team chances.

130#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MONTY OHL (ONTARIO)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 2. Musarra (Richmond Hts.) | 12. Voisard (Versailles) |
| 3. Furko (Archbold) | 13. Foston (Bridgeport) |
| 4. Kot (Woodridge) | 14. Swint (Fremont St. Joseph) |
| 5. Parsley (Bethel-Tate) | 15. Conry (Sandusky St. Mary) |
| 6. Boyer (West Jefferson) | 16. Carney (Licking Hts.) |
| 7. Reber (Waynedale) | 17. Mathys (Norwayne) |
| 8. Miller (Sidney Lehman) | 18. Zuchegno (Canton Central Catholic) |
| 9. Mitchell (Gibsonburg) | 19. Callaway (Greeneview) |
| 10. Eldridge (Ridgewood) | 20. Roth (Bellaire St. John) |
| 11. Mazey (Chanel) | 21. Parker (Jonathan Alder) |
| | 22. Castle (Bishop Ready) |

Those wrestlers with a choice should think closely about competing at 130#. It's clearly a place to be. While there are some good competitors here, there is no dominant force and, in fact, a series of circumstances make the weight even easier than originally anticipated. My hesitant choice is 119# state runner-up Monty Ohl, but that selection faces great uncertainty. A control wrestler, Ohl was 3rd at the District, but then fell into a wonderful draw, got hot, and was an unexpected finalist. This year he was undefeated when disaster struck in the Gorman finals in the form of a knee injury. Out up to six weeks his return just about coincides with sectional weekend. Under other conditions, I would well have switched to a backup possibility, but no such candidate is evident. Thus, Ohl still gets the nod, but he'll have to get into shape as the tournament process wears on. A risky prospect at best.

Fortunately, Ohl exits from the Northwest District where there is a larger margin for error. It is also one of the stronger areas which somewhat mediates that positive. Furko was a district runner-up at this weight last year, and my guess is that he'll end up here again. This is the one weight where he could be champ. Last year a tough one-point loss cost him state placement. A starting guard on Archbold's state championship football team he is both physical and rugged. State qualifiers Mitchell and Swint could also play a role at this weight. However, I don't see them as top echelon performers. Ohl crushed Mitchell 9-2 last year while Swint got the last qualifying spot at 112# after being hammered by Fahrer and Haring. Conry is a possible qualifier while Mamere (Huron) and Wellmeier (Lima Central Catholic) are also possibilities.

Both Musarra and Kot are returning district champions, but there results at Columbus were very different. Musarra made the semi-finals and finished a solid 5th losing to Adam DiSabato in his bout to reach the finals. Kot easily beat two-time state champ Neikirk in the district semi-finals 9-1 and won over Breudigun 10-5 in the finals. He looked like a possible champ. However, he lost in the first round to the 5th place finisher from the Northwest. Such

inconsistencies could cost Kot again. Musarra, on the other hand, was impressive at Brunswick (1st) and at Richmond Hts. (2nd) -- losing in OT at the latter event. Reber was a finalist at Medina -- one of only three Division III wrestlers to make it that far. Mazej has been a consistent placer for Chanel and should qualify. That leaves Mathys and Zuchegno left out unless they can outscore one of the top quartet or Mazej drops to 125#. This is probably the strongest districts of the four at this weight.

State qualifier Parsley has had a string of good results and could break through and place this year. Only a junior, he was shut out in the state quarter-finals by Heavilin last year. Miller and Callaway wrestled for the 3rd qualifying spot with Miller winning 4-0. A first-round loser in Columbus he didn't look too bad. This year he has had successful year against wrestlers from Division I and II schools. Right now Voisard may well disappoint Callaway this year for the last spot while Weiderhold (Batavia) is badly positioned. The latter boy lost to Miller 18-11 at Districts last year. This district will send a spunky group with both Parsley and Miller able to win at the state level.

At Steubenville the pickings seem pretty slim. Boyer is a solid competitor who missed Columbus by one place last year. Eldridge did qualify, but lost early and big. Foston, the sophomore brother of two former Bridgeport stars, is 14-2, and should be ready for state action. Last year he was 3rd at District losing only to the fabulous Reed Case (only two went from his district). I am going with Carney for the fourth berth, but Roth and Parker could also be factors. Castle is a long shot possibility with good skills. If McCauley (Wellsville) makes this weight, he would be difficult to dislodge from a possible state ticket.

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ALAN EVERETT (WEST SALEM NORTHWESTERN)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Livengood (Archbold) | 11. Klima (Huron) |
| 3. Bibart (Marion Pleasant) | 12. Milhoan (Barnesville) |
| 4. Lopez (Fremont St. Joseph) | 13. J. Skoczen (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 5. Schaeffer (Brookville) | 14. Vonderwell (Delphos St. John) |
| 6. Crytzer (Richmond Hts.) | 15. Biddle (Lakota) |
| 7. Brust (Bishop Ready) | 16. Seim (Dayton Oakwood) |
| 8. Warrington (Cadiz) | 17. Snyder (Sandy Valley) |
| 9. Lukasik (Aurora) | 18. Wesbecher (Sidney Lehman) |
| 10. T. Rismiller (Versailles) | 19. Goodman (New London) |
| | 20. Balwanz (Bellaire St. John) |

This would appear to be a struggle between two very fine wrestlers. Both were state runner-ups last year and both are multi-state qualifiers. I've gone with Everett because of his extraordinary natural talent and because he should have an easier time with weight. Everett will also be fresher missing more than half the season for disciplinary reasons. Last year, Everett won his first 34 bouts, but fell in the State finals to the long overdue Bill Myers. Livengood was at Bryan High School where he finished 2nd in Division II to Mario Marinelli -- losing on a late 4-point move 7-6. This year he must choose between 135# and 140# and I

believe he'll choose this class. The odds of being state champ are much higher here. Besides, team considerations indicate he can hurt both Richmond Hts. and Cadiz here where as Archbold might likely be the sufferer were he at 140#.

Everett emerges from an otherwise very weak Northeastern District. Crytzer was highly touted as a junior high wrestler, but so far has fallen behind most of the other fine Richmond Hts. middleweights. Still, he could place. Lukasik was a semi-finalist at Mentor and his tenacity might get him a ticket to Columbus. Skoczen and Snyder are two other possibilities for state qualification, but after Everett the possibilities are endless. Beery (Smithville) and Kailburn (Perry) are two others with a chance for district placement.

Livengood pretty much dominates his district in the same way. (Coincidentally, another Todd Livengood wrestles at 189# for Painesville Riverside). I've listed people like Lopez, Klima, Vonderwell, Biddle and Goodman, but none of that group are within a half dozen points of Livengood. Their attention will not be pointed upward toward Livengood, but will, instead, be aimed the other way because of a second wave of competitors looking toward those last four qualification spots. Two such entrants might be Dunlap (Columbus Grove) and Scott (Sandusky St. Mary).

Depthwise, the Steubenville District is better than either of the first two mentioned. Bibart has the best chance of knocking off one of the top two or making the finals if Everett and Livengood are paired together. Defeating Doyle Johnson at Licking Hts. was impressive even though he had to default in the finals to Marinelli. However, Everett pinned him in the state quarter-finals last year. Brust was 2nd at the St. John Invitation which featured competition from larger schools. Warrington may be the best in the Eastern District, although Milhoan and Balwanz aren't that much behind. Miracle (Licking Hts.) and Call (Nelsonville York) are other possibilities. This should be a good competition.

Hay Schaeffer was a first round district loser last year, but has evidently made real progress this year. He was 2nd at the giant GMVWA and suffered his only loss there. How he'll stack with those from other regions is still unknown. Rismiller, Seim and Wesbecher are the top contenders for the last two spots. Only the first name had district experience last year. Hess (Springfield NE) is another possibility.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: HERB ADKINS (RICHMOND HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Case (Cadiz) | 12. Younts (Lincolnview) |
| 3. Sasso (Chanel) | 13. Windom (Waynedale) |
| 4. Planck (Bethel-Tate) | 14. Ball (Nelsonville York) |
| 5. Vesely (Berkshire) | 15. Fasnaugh (Otsego) |
| 6. Beidelschies (Hopewell-Loudon) | 16. Ellis (Columbus Academy) |
| 7. Greenbaum (Jonathan Alder) | 17. Cornacchione (Kirtland) |
| 8. Enderle (Hillsdale) | 18. Ryan (Huron) |
| 9. K. Hummel (Brookville) | 19. Price (Finneytown) |
| 10. Dwyer (Ledgement) | 20. Rosas (Perry) |
| 11. Nye (Edgerton) | 21. Linson (Springfield NE) |

An exceptionally fine weight class dominated by three outstanding contenders, any of whom is deserving of the championship. Adkins won his first 33 bouts of last year before succumbing to two-time state champion Dernlan in the finals. Nobody else in Division III gave him a real struggle all year as he won both the Richmond Hts. and Brunswick with falls. This year an early season injury put him behind, but he is back in the lineup without seemingly missing a beat. Case was the 98# state champ as a freshman and then runner-up to Adam DiSabato as a junior so his credentials are substantial as well. Up to 140# he again has dominated all opposition as witnessed by his first period fall in the Licking Hts. final. Sasso was a surprise Division II finalist last year, but he qualified for States as early as his freshman year. He wrestles a far tougher schedule than most Division III wrestlers and he's only lost (in the last seconds) to Andrassy. He has a quality of determination not easily matched.

The outcome will be close but I think Adkins has more innate athleticism than either of the other two, and that could well spell the difference. He is just so brilliant on his feet that Sasso's great defensive skills and Case's vast experience just will not be enough. This is the kind of weight class that you wish happened more often.

The Northwest District has eight wrestlers who deserve state qualification -- double the number that will qualify. My guess is that some will cut to the far easier 135# class or, perhaps, move up to 145# which is good but less crowded. Adkins and Sasso lead the way, but the six that follow are all good. Vesely was a Division II district qualifier and has had a solid year including a 3rd at Kenston over Carson. Enderle had state qualification in his hand last year as a district semi-finalist, but then fell twice and was eliminated. He has been dominate in several small tourneys this year losing only to Division II, Geiser. Dwyer won the large Toledo Waite tourney defeating Harmon and Fasnaugh. Windom was impressive at both Medina and Smithville and seems to be showing rapid improvement. Cornacchione and Rosas are long-time rivals with fine skills and lots of experience. The final result after Adkins and Sasso have as much to do with sectional placement (i.e., the pairings), the ability to win close bouts and good fortune as overall skill. In some ways the Nordonia District will be just about as deep as the state bracket.

Nowhere is there such brutal competition as is found at Nordonia. Case dominates at Steubenville with Greenbaum, Ball and Ellis a very respectful distance behind. Greenbaum has placement chances -- his one-point loss to Bibart last year cost him a state opportunity. Young (Bishop Ready) and Dimel (West Jefferson) are other possibilities.

State qualifier Planck stands out in the Southwest District. He was 2nd at the basically Division I Coaches Classic and won easily at Madeira. He matches up well with everyone, but my top three. Hummel was a surprise 2nd at the GMVWA and has done well everywhere except Fairfield. Price is undefeated but wrestles a weak schedule and is vulnerable. Linson or Bergman (Versailles) might be the ones to dump him.

The Northwest District is very easy. It must be tempting for Livengood to see the huge void here and opt to eat a lot better. However, statewide 135# is clearly the better choice. Beidelschies is my top pick here, but I had a lot of trouble finding five names that had a state qualifying look. Nye, if at this weight, and Younts are two other choices that have some chance of doing well in

Columbus, but a lot of this is even more guesswork than usual. It seems clear to me that if state qualification is the ultimate goal for a middleweight wrestler from this area, 140# is the place to be.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: PAT CAMPOLIETI (RICHMOND HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Jernigan (Archbold)
3. Badenhop (Delta)
4. Ackerman (Cardinal Stritch)
5. Moyer (Miami East)
6. Rocchi (Cadiz)
7. Wohleber (Columbia Station)
8. Kunes (Brooklyn)
9. Shepherd (Shadyside)
10. Nye (Edgerton)
11. Studer (Norwayne)
12. Kingrey (Versailles)
13. Brookbank (Deer Park)
14. Berry (Galion Northmor)
15. Desberg (Chagrin Falls)
16. DelaCerde (McComb)
17. O'Reilly (North Union)
18. Krause (Mapleton)
19. Jones (Jackson Milton)
20. Stasiulewicz (Toronto)
21. Meyers (Dixie)
22. Wistner (Wayne Trace)

This is a nicely balanced weight class with no discernible standouts. In my mind the final choice revolved around four possibilities. I picked Campolietti because he has wrestled the most demanding schedule, and because his 5th place finish last year gives him vital state experience. Twice in this laborious process Jernigan was at the top of the list, but in the end I went with Campolietti based more on intuition than facts. After all, Jernigan is undefeated, a returning state qualifier and has pinned Ackerman. He could easily win it all. Badenhop was 5th at this weight last year, and has done very well all year. However, he may not have improved as much as the others. Ackerman was runner-up last year beating Campolietti by two in the semis, but he has not been as effective this year. It would be great if these were the four semi-finalists and it could happen because of the geography of the situation. Three of the four come from the Northwest District while Campolietti exits from Nordonia.

The Northwest District shows a big drop-off after the top trio. Nye, who may be at 140#, is the next choice with DelaCerde trailing him. DelaCerde has looked good all year with the exception of a first round stumble at the Findlay A Classic (thankfully it's not called the Findlay Division III classic). Both of them are vulnerable with folks like Wistner, Babcock (Evergreen), Funk (Seneca East) and Evans (Elmwood) possible spoilers. Still the real battles to be fought here will be among the top three titans.

There are a lot of possibilities in the Northeast District. Wohleber was 6th (losing to Campolietti) at Columbus and is a hard working wrestler. He may be toying with the idea of moving to 140#, but that does not seem strategically sound. Here he has already defeated many of the other top contenders. That includes state qualifier Kunes who Wohleber majored in OT. Kunes had a wonderfully hot district last year, but the bubble burst in the second round at Columbus. Still it was a brave and unexpected effort, and could well be duplicated this year. Studer lost to Wohleber by four points at Districts, and

has won at least two small tourneys this year. It may be his turn to qualify Desberg, Krause and Jones all have district experience and solid records, but that may not be enough. Still Desberg finished two spots ahead of Campolieti at Richmond Hts. Two other contenders are Rice (Black River) and Albano (Berkshire).

State qualifier Moyer heads a Southwest District that still remains somewhat undefined. He lost to Ackerman by three points in the quarter-finals and did not place. Kingrey has done well at 152#, but moved down in concert with state champion Moran. So far he is undefeated against Division III rivals and has an excellent chance to qualify. I rate him just ahead of Brookbank this year. Meyers and Klingsmith (Dayton Oakwood) are two other possibilities while McDaniels (West Liberty Salem) is beginning to come on strong. This is one of the best weight classes at this district, and should make for excellent competition there. Its implications at state, however, will be far less.

State qualifier Rocchi surprised many (well, at least me) by qualifying out of the Eastern District and taking Burk into overtime in the finals. He then won a bout in Columbus before finally being eliminated. Shepherd may be closing on him, however, after winning the Shadyside and finishing 2nd at the Irish Invitational. The OVAC may indicate the relative standing of these two. Berry is my choice for the 3rd spot despite a somewhat in-and-out record. Stasiulewicz, O'Reilly (North Union) and Huck (Waterford) are other possibilities.

152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: AARON MORAN (VERSAILLES)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. T. Burk (Bridgeport) | 12. Grossenbacher (West Jefferson) |
| 3. Boehm (Licking Hts.) | 13. Ripley (Jackson Milton) |
| 4. Martz (Archbold) | 14. Jones (Cadiz) |
| 5. Daugherty (Richmond Hts.) | 15. Jones (Williamsburg) |
| 6. Loftis (Springfield Central Cath.) | 16. Stacklin (Seneca East) |
| 7. Bourne (Kirtland) | 17. Ready (Garrettsville Garfield) |
| 8. Suvak (Newbury) | 18. Rohr (Mapleton) |
| 9. Ford (Delta) | 19. Miller (Hicksville) |
| 10. Hummel (Brookville) | 20. Cooper (Lakota) |
| 11. Warnement (Tiffin Calvert) | 21. Wyse (Stryker) |

This is a fine weight class with solid performers from all over the state, but it will be dominated by defending state champ, Aaron Moran. A raw-boned, always-on-the-go performer, Moran just beats everyone else into the ground. Last year against a representative field he didn't have a close bout winning the finale 15-7 from a fine Kirtland wrestler. This year he is even better and will be prime recruiting material in his part of the state.

The two top contenders will come from the Steubenville District and both have outstanding records. This will be Todd Burk's fourth consecutive state appearance and he finished a strong 3rd last year. This year he is undefeated at

160# and has beaten the best the Eastern District has to offer. Still, it took Moran only 4 1/2 minutes to TF Burk last year, and while I expect the score to be much closer this year the winner will remain unchanged. State qualifier Boehm was dumped in the first round by Adkinson and never got back in. This year he, too, has been devastating including a 15-2 thrashing of Division II state qualifier Walsh in the Licking Hts. finals. Depending on the draw either he or Burk should be the finalist opposite Moran. Grossenbacher and Jones should really battle for the third qualifying spot -- their last meeting had Grossenbacher on top 7-6.

Martz is the last of the devastating Archbold middleweights and he is in line for some kind of middle-to-low place here. A state qualifier last year he got decked in 68 seconds and never got a second chance. This year he'll wrestle far more. The rest of the Northwest District field is quite weak and subject to a lot of reshuffling. Warnement was the state alternate last year while Ford (or, perhaps, Troy Sintobin) has had a hot season so far. Stacklin has also come on strong and I've rated him ahead of Miller (who pinned him last year) and the erratic Wyse. Cooper is a long-shot here as well. However, if it sorts itself out only Martz would seem to count at Columbus.

The Northwest District is tightly grouped. Daugherty was 4th in Division III at this weight last year, including a narrow win over Hummel. This year he lost to Division I pick Wilson at Brunswick and Division II pick Yetts at Richmond Hts. in a pair of close bouts. Bourne also beat him in a dual, but I'm still ranking Daugherty higher. Suvak has been very good and may have passed both these boys, but you can prove almost anything on comparative scores. A second group of performers will compete for the last opening and it includes Ripley, Ready and Rohr. Sounds like a law firm. At any rate, this trio will not provoke much fear in other districts.

The Southwest District has good depth, as well -- led, of course, by the inimitable Moran. Loftis was 6th last year beating Thatcher in a tough overtime bout and then losing to Badenhop in another one. State qualifier Hummel may have better technique that Loftis but lacks his explosiveness. Their bout could go either way. Jones is the best chance for any upset, but the top three look very solid here.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: EMIL SOEHNLEN (LOUISVILLE ST. THOMAS AQUINAS)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Ishmael (North Baltimore) | 12. Jones (Cadiz) |
| 3. Hostetler (Waynedale) | 13. Nye (Clear Fork) |
| 4. Keller (Liberty Center) | 14. Drumm (Garrettsville Garfield) |
| 5. DiFranco (Ledgemont) | 15. Wilson (Jonathan Alder) |
| 6. Born (Perry) | 16. Davis (Norwalk St. Paul) |
| 7. Leinweber (Richmond Hts.) | 17. Sowers (Covington) |
| 8. Bailey (Brookville) | 18. Hartlieb (Bellaire St. John) |
| 9. Sefert (Beallsville) | 19. Dickerson (Springfield NE) |
| 10. Briseno (Ayersville) | 20. Theis (Mohawk) |
| 11. Wall (Fenwick) | 21. Turiczek (Belpre) |

This is an extremely unbalanced weight class with, possibly, five of the seven best wrestlers at 160# exiting from the Northeast District. The competition there will be brutal as one of that group will not even make it to Columbus. The top pick, however, is relatively easy. Two-time state qualifier Soehnlen was 2nd last year losing only to the excellent Judd Smith in the finals. This year he beat Drago and Dennis (top Division I contenders) back-to-back at Medina before losing a narrow 9-7 verdict to Ankrom in the finals. He is a Division I quality wrestler who just happens to be in the small school classification. Hostetler was 6th last year losing to Soehnlen in the finals, and then was 5th at Medina losing to Woloschuck twice. Even with those kinds of credentials he'll have to hustle just to qualify. DiFranco was the District champ at 152# last year, but stumbled at the States. This year he has won the Ledgemont and Toledo Waite tournaments, but placed behind Born at Bishop Ready. Born beat Leinweber in a dual and this youngster has tremendous potential. Leinweber won at Richmond Hts. and was 2nd at Brunswick. He may be the most improved wrestler at Richmond Hts. He is also a pivotal element of their team title hopes. If he can get to Columbus, there is no question he can score there. Born, Leinweber and DiFranco all qualify from the same sectional so the champion there will be away from at least three of the other top four. That would seem almost to guarantee qualification unless Drumm was able to pull a major upset.

Ishmael beat Hostetler for 5th place last year and he is even better this year. The Van Buren and Gibsonburg champ he is a possible finalist. However, I don't think he can go with Soehnlen. State qualifier Keller and Briseno are both solid here and they along with Ishmael make up a solid qualifying trio. After them is mass confusion. I've listed Nye, Davis and Theis, but that is strictly guess work. It would have been just as simple (and equally accurate to rank Sigafoos (Crestview), DeCooman (Van Buren) and Kitchen (Otsego). Those last two qualifying spots will provoke a whole of fussing and feuding.

The Southwest District is led by a pair of state qualifiers, Bailey and Wall, who do not appear to match up with either of the top boys in the two northern districts. Neither scored a point in their short state appearances, and they'll hope to draw into the even weaker Steubenville District. Sowers and Dickerson are possible candidates for the third spot, but Whitaker (Lockland) may also challenge.

That Steubenville District has few top flight candidates now that Burk has moved down to 152#. Nobody here has state qualification experience, and several will be newcomers to district action. Sefert headed the list here based on a strong district last year where only an overtime loss kept him from Columbus. This year he is 13-1 and a winner of the Irish Invitational. A wildcard in this group is Turiczek who has pinned lots of folks, but all of them from the weak southeast portion of the state. Besides those ranked (Sefert, Jones, Hartlieb, Wilson and Turiczek). Haughn (North Union) and Walters (Galion Northmor) have outside qualification hopes.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BRIAN EDWARDS (BLUFFTON)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Sears (Bridgeport)
3. Stewart (North Baltimore)
4. Weber (Blanchester)
5. Lane (Wauseon)
6. Carver (Bethel-Tate)
7. Landrus (Ledgemont)
8. Brammell (Grandview Hts.)
9. Kattler (Cuyahoga Hts.)
10. Wasiniak (Norwalk St. Paul)
11. Davis (Kirtland)
12. Loughridge (West Jefferson)
13. McGill (Sherwood Fairview)
14. Cochran (Springfield NE)
15. Dowdell (Wellington)
16. Reynolds (Bellaire St. John)
17. McCormic (Crestview)
18. Tolson (Waterford)
19. Heidenbrand (Hillsdale)
20. Wannemacher (Delphos St. John)
21. Saho (Cadiz)

The principal question for this weight class isn't who is going to be the eventual state champion, but is, instead, who will show up here. Originally this would have been one of the easiest weights to forecast rather than one of the most difficult. State runner-up Ed Drobnick was an evident choice after his great junior season last year even though he was upset in the state finals. Then disaster struck in the form of a football knee injury so severe that it eliminated any possible participation in wrestling. At that point it appeared that the trio of Edwards, Sears and Stewart were the kingpins at this weight, and that a close, difficult analysis of each would provide a forecasted champion. However, it's now more complicated than that. Edwards is a very light 171# (remember he was 3rd last year at 152#) and he is considering moving down to 160#. Strange, since Soehnlen is there and Edwards has massacred everyone at 171#, but "the lighter the better" is conventional wisdom. Stewart was at 171# the first week of the season and then moved up to 189# since then. What he will eventually do is unclear. Sears wrestled into January at 171# and then, suddenly, bolted to 189# for the Big Red Kiwanis Tourney and has stayed there ever since. Where any of them will compete is unclear.

Given that these folks all show up here my choice is Edwards, but only by a small margin. As mentioned, he was 3rd at 152# last year and has been devastating this year. His ability to score on top has resulted in a long string of falls and technical falls. It will not be quite that easy at Columbus. Sears was 4th at 160# last year after a 3rd at 145# the year before. His match with state champ Judd Smith was quite close last year. He is an impressive physical specimen with great athletic ability. He has been winning at both 171# and 189#. Stewart was 5th last year -- losing immediately to Drobnick -- and then working his way back through the consolation process. He has not lost this year and rarely been pushed. If they all show up, it should be fascinating.

Stewart and Edwards exit from the same district so they should be apart in Columbus. State alternate Lane is another solid competitor from that same area and certainly could grab a low place. Wasiniak was also a state alternate and he, too, has come on strong of late. He won the Bellevue Invitational and was 3rd at the tough Tiffin tourney. McGill and McCormic would seem to have but one berth to battle for, but they will face good other competition for it as well. Wannemacher and Stockmeister (Seneca East) along with Krause (Hopewell Loudon)

all have good credentials and reasonable record of placement. It should be a strong competition.

Sears stands far above everyone else at Steubenville. He should glide through this district before confronting the "big boys" at State. Brammell was one bout from state last year after qualifying as a sophomore, and has the experience to do well with everyone except Sears. Loughridge was the state alternate at 160# last year, and was 2nd to Division I Ray at West Jefferson. Reynolds only a junior will be a slight favorite for the fourth berth, but both he and Loughridge will face other tough competition. Most of that should be from Tolson, Saho, and Betz (Madison Plains).

There is a solid competition in the Southwest even though state qualifier Jon Kiehl from Versailles didn't come out for the team. His absence will certainly hurt Versailles very considerable team chances. However, the cupboard is still not bare for this district. State qualifier Weber returns and remains undefeated halfway through a soft schedule. He had two first period falls in the semis and finals at this district last year. Carver qualified at 152# last year and is now at 171#. He was also a district champ and a prolific scorer. Edwards beat him 10-7 in first round state action last year -- although, I believe, that gap would be wider now. Cochran is now the top choice for the third spot, but he is at a significantly lower level than the first two named.

The Northeast District -- without Drobnick -- is not going to be much of a factor in Columbus. Landrus has wrestled very well for Ledgement winning two tournaments. Last year he lost 11-9 in the district semi-finals and then on criteria in overtime in the consolations to get shut out of a state berth. He is something of a hot and cold wrestler, but if he's "on" he will place. After him, it's pretty much everyone for himself. Kattler, dropping from 189# after Drobnick's injury, may be second best here -- winning the Fairview Tourney over Davis. Dowdell and Heidenbrand are two other possibilities. The latter was one win from Columbus last year while the former beat him handily at Black River. Other possibilities are Lapushansky (Jackson Milton), Weiser (West Salem NW) and Wise (Rootstown). The latter has had injury problems, but, if healthy, could be a qualifier.

189#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ROB SINTOBIN (DELTA)

TOP CONTENDERS:

2. Miller (Wellington)
3. Sorma (Chanel)
4. Stewart (North Baltimore)
5. Beachler (Loudonville)
6. Grisez (Versailles)
7. Fluty (Licking Hts.)
8. Neer (West Salem NW)
9. Vonderwell (Delphos St. John)
10. Wyant (Smithville)

11. Lawrence (Steubenville Cent. Cath)
12. Rospert/Clouse (Norwalk St. Paul)
13. Lloyd (Ayersville)
14. Burkhart (Shadyside)
15. Miller (Batavia)
16. Barnes (Evergreen)
17. Van Meter (Granville)
18. Crider (Coldwater)
19. Roth (Bellaire St. John)
20. Spears (Finneytown)

This is a strong, solid weight class that features a number of experienced big men. State runner-up Sintobin is a narrow choice for the crown, but the action should be both exciting and compelling. If Stewart does wrestle at 171# (I've listed him in both places), then the real struggle will be Sintobin versus the qualifiers from the Northeast District which is loaded at this class. What is interesting is that I've not missed at this weight (combined with 185#) in any of the three divisions since 1984, but that string will be severely tested here.

Sintobin is a pinner. At the States last year he pinned his first three opponents including defending state champion Edmondson before running into the invincible Burlenski in the finals. It was an outstanding show made all the more impressive by the fact that he was the district runner-up (having lost to Reighard). He also had three falls in that competition. This year he has been brilliant including a fall over Division I contender Emery in the Toledo Waite finals. Stewart, if he chooses to compete here, would be Sintobin's only challenger at the Northwest District. Clearly the added weight has been no problem as he has wracked up almost a perfect record of falls. He has pinned for the title at both Gibsonburg and Van Buren. Sintobin, however, may be too strong for him. The drop-off after these two is considerable. Vonderwell has been effective all year, but Stewart pinned him in under a minute at Van Buren. Rospert will probably be at heavyweight, but would be a factor at 189# as well. Lloyd, Barnes and Crider are just possibilities with no real hope at winning more than once if they manage to reach Columbus.

The Northeast District is awesome here. Miller came out of nowhere last year to reach state qualification. Boosted by that success he has won at Buckeye, Black River and the mammoth Medina Tourney -- the only Division III competitor to win a title there. He is, perhaps, the best here, but the margin between him and the other four is so small that even qualification is not assured. You could see it happening last year for Sorma -- Coach Graham Coghill was once again working his magic and developing a potential star. He had done it the year before with state champion Jeff Scherma and now it was happening with the identically initialed Julius Sorma. Now as a senior Sorma seems ready to step into the forefront at this weight. He has better moves than the others, but lacks the grinding strength that all the rest possess. His style sets him apart from the other four. Beachler looked terrific all last year, and then ran into problems losing to Miller twice (first at the sectional and then in the go-to-state bout at Districts). This year he won the Gorman and the Hillsdale and seems back on form. We'll see if it's flashback time when the state process begins anew. Neer had the most success last year. He beat Wyant and Miller (in overtime) to win the sectional and secure a good district pairing. Based on that, he grabbed the fourth and last qualifying spot (pinned this time by Miller). He converted that into a 6th place state finish. This year he has lost to Miller at Black River and finished 3rd at Smithville. Wyant, the fifth member of the quintet, is very good, but hasn't had much chance to show it with the behemoths previously mentioned. He needs just one upset to qualify, however. A great group with all five rated in my Top Ten, but with only four to qualify. Ironically, all but Sorma exit from the same sectional where they took the top four places last year. At least that guarantees a balanced district draw.

State qualifier Grisez faces no such problems in the Southwest. In fact, he will have no problems at all until he reaches Columbus. He may prove to be an important scorer for Versailles, and should get a good state draw. His chief

threat should be Miller who he pinned in 37 seconds to reach Columbus last year. Spears is even further back having twice been pinned by Miller.

It's a jammed up field at Steubenville, but it lacks the quality of the Northeast District. Former state qualifier Fluty looks best and may be the only one there with state placement potential. After that it's pretty much open season with the three Eastern District leaders perhaps having a slight edge over their Columbus counterparts. However, Van Meter can be a rugged foe. Myers (Marion Pleasant) and Collins (Olentangy) are also threats, but the long-shot to watch out for is Beardsley (Bishop Ready). Lately he has been showing some impressive results which might prove to be the springboard for qualification.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: PAUL HILLIGAS (CADIZ)

TOP CONTENDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Gehring (Berkshire) | 11. Boyer (Fremont St. Joseph) |
| 3. Rospert (Norwalk St. Paul) | 12. Greaves (Kirtland) |
| 4. Jones (Brookville) | 13. Metz (Mansfield St. Peter) |
| 5. Goshe (Hopewell-Loudon) | 14. Froehlich (Columbus Academy) |
| 6. Rowe (Olentangy) | 15. Green (Gibsonburg) |
| 7. First (Smithville) | 16. Binkley (Spencerville) |
| 8. Hupp (Bridgeport) | 17. Augenstein (Loudonville) |
| 9. Rogers (Reading) | 18. Crotty (Dixie) |
| 10. Vaughn (Jackson-Milton) | 19. Little (Edison North) |
| | 20. Paulus (Rootstown) |

The Division III heavyweight competition has occasionally, through the years, hit low points where the assembled field has been quite weak. This, clearly, is one such year. Despite extensive scrutiny through every nook and cranny of the state, I have been unable to uncover even one heavyweight who seems prepared to be a state champ. What you most fear in such a situation is that you've overlooked some real obvious winner who fails to gain any mention at all in the report. While my choice is not a random one, it does have aspects of a "hope for the best" philosophy, although, I believe, that the one wrestler with the best chance of wearing the state crown in Paul Hilligas. At 189# last year -- with a middling success -- he moved to heavyweight at year's end and reached the state tournament. This year he has maintained that success highlighted by a big win at the Licking Hts. Invitational. He is a mobile, not a big, heavyweight so he'll be in constant jeopardy against the bigger boys, but at the same time he won't wear down in the 3rd period either.

Hilligas will face stiff competition even in his own district. Rowe and Froehlich both have district experience with the latter missing state qualification by only one bout. Hupp is a long-time rival who has met Hilligas often losing to him by as little as a single point. Little and Meade (Licking Hts.) are other potential qualifiers in this area.

The Northeast District is unsettled with the results showing no consistent tone or tenor. Instead, upset abounds and we can well expect the same at the

sectional and district level. Gehring was behind the excellent Sheffield last year, but has come into his own this season. He was 1st at West Geauga and a strong 3rd at Kenston. He has the ability to make the most of this golden opportunity. First is a rising star who lost in the initial district round 7-6 to an eventual state qualifier. This year he won at Norwayne and Hillsdale and finished a strong 3rd at Smithville. He beat state qualifier Vaughn 13-2 at Norwayne. Vaughn and Paulus are seasoned competitors, but two 1st year varsity wrestlers, Greaves and Augenstein look to be passing them. Vaughn will have to work to qualify to Columbus again. Other possibilities are Brown (Pymatuning Valley), Miller (Lutheran West) and Lowther (Wellington).

Like Hilligras, Rospert can go at 189# and may yet decide to compete there this year. Based on the level of competition, my suggestion would be to stay here. He could easily win it all. A state qualifier as a sophomore he has been better at heavyweight where his superior mobility pays off. State qualifier Goshe is yet another smaller heavyweight who is likely to be best here rather than at 189#. A competitor to watch is Boyer who may rate as best in the Northwest District. His major defect is lack of even district experience. Metz is a real pinner, but he is also inconsistent -- as the loss to first year wrestler Augenstein showed. He could be a finalist on a "hot" weekend. Binkley and Marquette (McComb) are yet two more contenders who are really just oversized 189#ers. Other possibilities in this topsy turvy area are Alvarado (Archbold) and Moyer (Woodmore).

Jones heads a relatively weak field from the Southwest District as well. He has not been devastating this year, but most of his problems have been with boys from bigger schools. He has also missed some time as well. Rogers missed state qualification by one place and should do better this year. Jones pinned him last year. Crotty is a distant 3rd choice to the top two with Deering (Deer Park) and Zimmerman (Bethel Tate) other possibilities. Rogers pinned Crotty last year at Districts.

TEAMS

1. Richmond Hts -- Last fall I thought they'd run away with the state crown, but I'm now convinced it won't be easy -- and it might not even happen. The middleweights are crucial, but all is not well. Crytzer has not been as good as expected and Daugherty and Campolieti have both stumbled. Leinweber is stuck in a brutal district and could possibly not qualify. He may be a pivotal wrestler since if he can get to Columbus he can score there. Smith, too, has to help and little Daugherty could be a pleasant bonus.
2. Cadiz -- The top quartet of Gibson, Case, Heavilin and Hilligas all could be finalists. Hilligas could really be a plus at the weak heavyweight class, if he does as well as I project. Not only that, but Rocchi, Jones and Sabo have come on strong and could become state factors. Where would they be if state qualifier Coffland and returning starters Reed and Mays had come out for the team?

3. Archbold -- A quartet of brilliant middleweights lead a team that could easily be state champs in both football and wrestling. Furko, Livengood, Jernigan and Martz are possible finalists, and Nguyen is an experienced 103#. Their strengths almost exactly match those of Richmond Hts., and while they kill each other off, Cadiz might slip by both. The keys are to get the middle weights at the right classes and hope that people like the Alvarados or Mast can help.
4. Bishop Ready -- A team with two legitimate stars -- Smales and DiSabato -- and a lot of possibilities. I think Brust, Kruse and Beardsley are the best shots, and they always seem to have one "sleeper" who can help. Maybe it'll be Castle this year.
5. Versailles -- A team that has not proven to me that they can consistently score at the state level -- except for the isolated superstar like Aaron Moran. Still the firepower seems there this year with Ethan Moran, Grisez and Bey as the next best hopes. They have so many other possibilities as well that something has to go right.
6. Delta -- A pinning state champion like Sintobin can score a lot of points, and he is backed up by potential finalists in Mattin and Badenhop. Hopkins, Savage and Ford or Troy Sintobin could be at Columbus as well. A high potential squad who would have been rated even higher without the tragic loss of Fahrer.
7. West Salem Northwestern -- A Top Ten team finish hinges on Everett's successful return to the lineup. Given that, Kowatch, Neer and Johnson are good placement potential although Neer has that super-tough 189# Northeast District to conquer. Rowland and Weiser are possible helpers.
8. Bridgeport -- The defending state champions have suffered a devastating reversal of form, and have a squad of less than ten wrestlers. Nonetheless, Sears and Burk are possible finalists and Frohnafel has twice placed at Columbus. They need help from Hupp and Foston because there's nothing else there.
9. Licking Hts. -- Potentially a team that could score a lot of points, but everything would have to go just right. Boehm is the potential superstar while Fluty, Hobbs and Carney are state possibilities. Meade could be helper at the weak heavyweight class, and there are some other long-shot possibilities as well.
10. Ledgemont -- A mystery team that wrestles in out-of-the-way places all over the state with a fluid lineup that makes accurate forecasting all but impossible. Still, I think they are pretty good. Landrus, DiFranco and Brininger are their leaders with Dwyer and the Feckanins as back-up. They could be 5th or 50th.
11. Cardinal Stritch -- Two-time state champion Zapadka and state runner-up Ackerman leads a rather depleted Stritch squad. Both have had their problems this year, but areourney-toughened competitors. They need help to move up from Hicks and McCrory but they are both long-shots.

12. Chanel -- This may be more sentimental than factual, but this is the last gasp of a great team of the '80's. State runner-up Sasso and Sorma can score while Mazey can help if at the right weight. After that Graham Coghill and his staff need a few miracles.

13. Brookville -- A nicely balanced team that may not have state firepower, yet, but deserves mention anyway. State qualifiers Jones, A. Hummel and Bailey lead the way and K. Hummel, Schaeffer and Stout make up a solid backup trio. Like Versailles, they haven't proven themselves at the state level.