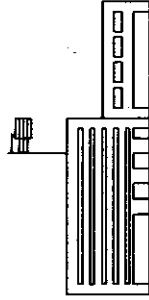


1993

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

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FORECAST

(22nd Annual Edition)



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 ten-day period in mid-January ending January 30 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 really 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 will be a better than average recruiting year in Ohio with more than the usual number of top prospects. In addition, there is substantial depth in this senior class with a relatively large number of wrestlers who, while not instant stars, may turn out to have outstanding long-term potential. Waiting in the wings, however, is the junior class which has more blue-chip prospects than any group I have seen in the 35 years I have followed the sport in Ohio. Musser, Owens, Jayne, Neider, Johnson, Denholm, Wineberg and a whole host of others will make this area a veritable paradise for college recruiters next year. And the sophomores behind them also appear to have exceptional promise making for what should be outstanding competition for the next several years.

The expansion of the wrestle-back system to include all participants who have lost to a semi-finalist remains of continuing interest. This system guarantees a proper balance between fairness and interminable consolations that flow in double elimination tournaments. Last year 43 wrestlers who would not have placed under the old system rightfully earned medals in 1992. This means there was a 55.1% change over the old archaic process. One issue that would be interesting to measure -- if it were possible -- is the extra day of rest the Southwest District wrestlers will receive this year between district finals and the state meet. Because of scheduling conflicts, the three districts at Dayton will be wrestled on Thursday and Friday providing, I presume, some advantage to that region though how large that might be is certainly a matter of conjecture.

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:

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DIVISION I

Last year I tallied the win/loss records for each of the four Division I districts that feed into the state meet. Since each district sent four qualifiers, it provides a fair comparison of total district strength and as part of this process I ignored state bouts between wrestlers emerging from the same district.

	<u>Bouts</u>	<u>Wins</u>	<u>Losses</u>	<u>Pct.</u>
Mentor	161	96	65	.596
Massillon Perry	146	72	74	.493
Olentangy	142	64	78	.451
Dayton	139	62	77	.446

What has happened since last year is that the Northeast District Board has reconfigured the Mentor and Massillon Perry districts to bring them into numerical concordance with the qualifying formula. Obviously that could have been accomplished any number of different ways, but what actually occurred was to place virtually all of the strong teams at Mentor. Now I'm sure the District Board will self-righteously take the position that team strength should carry no weight in these kind of decisions and that only geographical consideration merit attention. Still we all know that there are more than 20 "fringe" schools which could be assigned easily to either district, and it seems to me that their job is to provide relatively equal opportunity to all wrestlers under their stewardship. One can hope that next year a more sensible distribution of schools can be made both from a geographical and competitive viewpoint.

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BRAD WRIGHT (FAIRFIELD)

TOP CONTENDERS

- Plouse (Walsh Jesuit)
- Calderon (Bowling Green)
- Conner (St. Edward)
- Dempsey (St. Ignatius)
- K. Contos (Toledo St. John)
- Lambers (Cincinnati Elder)
- Harris (Pickerington)
- Anderson (Greenville)
- Peloso (Alliance)
- J. Clark (Padua)
- Mendez (Lorain Southview)
- Plouse (Franklin Hts.)
- Howard (Glen Este)
- Boerner (Solon)
- Smith (Massillon Perry)
- Henson (Sandusky)
- Osborne (Troy)
- Grove (West Chester Lakota)
- Keith (Barberton)
- Doerrer (Hilliard)
- Novak (Austintown Fitch)
- Dubendorfer (Toledo Whitmer)

Last year Wright and Plouse met in the first round at Dayton, but their meeting this year could conceivably determine the state title at this weight class. Although both are sophomores they have literally wrestled most of their lives and carry a wealth of experience into this competition. Last year Wright was far more successful, pinning Plouse in their bout and going on to take a

strong 4th overall. His only two state losses were to Junior National Champ Shawn Contos, 7-6 in the second round and 3-1 in OT in the consolation finals. This year he has lost only to the excellent Taylor from West Virginia (who also beat my Division II choice that same day), and has dominated every other opponent he has faced. A negative factor, however, has been the fact that he has wrestled a relatively weak schedule meeting only Kitsos in my top ten. However, having a two-time state champ Wineberg as a workout partner may alleviate that problem. Last year, Plouse, unlike the Grinch, had a body two sizes too small, although his fighting heart was unmatched by anyone. Big 103s like Jayne and Wright just overpowered him despite his array of outstanding moves. Well this year Plouse is a legitimate 103 -- although not as big as Wright -- and he still has all the great moves and the fiery spirit. As I write this he has already beaten Conner, Harris, Mendez, Smith and Cahill -- losing only once to Conner at the OCC.

At the Dayton District it initially looked like Wright would cruise to a relatively easy district title. Then, the old war-horse Lambers apparently decided to give it one more try at 103#. Already twice a state qualifier he always wrestles at his best in state action -- placing sixth two years ago and coming up a takedown short of placing last year. His great durability -- never having missed a bout in four years -- also plays to his advantage. He lost twice to Wright last year in tourney action by just 2 points, but I wonder if he'll wear down over the three weekends of competition fighting the scale. Anderson won 28 bouts as a sophomore last year, but ended up one win short of nailing a state appearance. He has missed the entire season due to injuries, but his anticipated return moves him into the third spot in this district -- although a substantial distance behind Wright. Howard vaulted into state contention based on his outstanding win at St. Xavier where he upset Dempsey on a late 5 point move in the semis and then whipped Franz in the finals. Osborne, a sectional champ last year, and Grove are the top choices for the final spot with Franz (Lebanon) and the rather small Reckman (Milford) as dark horse candidates.

Plouse heads a very strong Mentor District contingent at this weight. Conner, a senior, was behind state champion Jayne the past two years, and is finally getting his chance this season. His two losses have been to Harris (rather decisively) and Plouse (in the last five seconds), but he has defeated Dempsey, Smith and Boerner. When he wrestles aggressively, he shows enough to be a finalist, but a touch of inconsistency drops him down in the ratings. State qualifier Dempsey has also been plagued by inconsistent results, but he could challenge all but the top duo. He was a surprise district finalist as a sophomore last year, but will struggle to do as well this year. Two other struggling 103s with great credentials are Mendez and Boerner. Mendez, who clearly must battle the scale, was 29-3 last year when Dempsey upset him in a wild third period 6-5 at the district semi-finals. He then failed to qualify for Dayton losing to Boerner in his go-to-state bout. This year he has already lost four times and was smashed by Plouse at Worthington. If he gets comfortable with the weight, watch out. Boerner, a state qualifier last year has not yet made the final in any of the three tournaments he has wrestled. Still he has a history of coming on strong at year's end and cannot be discounted. The sensational freshman Clark is a wild card here. He had wrestled none of the top boys before the OCC, but he dominated everyone while winning at Brecksville and Avon Lake. Then at Cincinnati, he showed he was at about the same level as the very best. Other possibilities are San Filippo (Strongsville), Connett (Madison) Nicholson (Elyria) and Steadman (Eastlake North).

At Rogers there will be a whole host of contenders for the five state berths. One of the favorites has to be the freshman Harris who was so impressive at Medina, he beat Boerner by eight points and Conner by six, on his way to the finals before succumbing to Plouse. He is a very large 103 and continued growth could make for weight problems by March. Calderon, now a senior, is a two-time state qualifier with lots of pinning power, although he can be out-slicked. Kevin Contos based on recent performances has clearly made real improvement, and may yet turn out to be the best 103# here. He seems to be about equal with Conner and Dempsey, but perhaps a half step behind Plouse and Wright. Kitsos, Corron (Groveport) and Cahill (Worthington Kilbourne) are all tough Central District competitors who have good state chances. Kitsos has lost only to Wright at 103# and missed a state berth by one bout last year. Henson may be underrated here since he has spent virtually the entire season at 112#. Only time at this weight will give us a better indication as to how well he will do. Doerrer, Wilcox (Marysville) and Henderly (Toledo Start) are other possibilities.

Massillon Perry is by far the weakest district with very little up-top strength or depth. The gangly Peloso looks to be best -- if he remains comfortable at the weight -- as he did well at Solon losing only to Dempsey in two overtimes. Smith, Roe and Novak are all rated, but will be pushed by Logan (Uniontown Lake), Roe (Marietta) and Gilmore (Wadsworth) among others. Except for Peloso this group will be the place to draw into for first round state action.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: SHAWN CONTOS (TOLEDO ST. JOHN)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Quimbaya (Lorain Southview) | 13. Tucceri (Euclid) |
| 3. Phou (West Chester Lakota) | 14. Russo (Strongsville) |
| 4. J. Anderson (Medina) | 15. Price (Fairfield) |
| 5. Worley (Lebanon) | 16. Philipps (Mayfield) |
| 6. Ramos (Massillon Perry) | 17. Maloney (Boardman) |
| 7. Trinetti (Eastlake North) | 18. Favaro (Walsh Jesuit) |
| 8. Hatta (St. Edward) | 19. Sheets (Westland) |
| 9. Frohnappfel (Groveport) | 20. Sackett (Akron North) |
| 10. Raney (Westerville North) | 21. Murnan (Harrison) |
| 11. Farmer (Mount Vernon) | 22. Isaacs (Toledo Waite) |
| 12. Cole (Ashland) | 23. Kinser (West Carrollton) |

As it now stands Contos dominates this weight class and should take his first state title with relative ease. However, there is still talk of Wineberg dropping to 112# (which I feel is a low probability event) or Jayne returning to 112# (where he won handily at Medina) either of which would suddenly greatly, and perhaps fatally, complicate Contos' quest. However, no matter who participates, Contos will remain a major force here. Last year -- coming off a Junior National title Contos fell to Jayne (who he had split with in the regular season) in the semi-finals 4-3 in a bout that wasn't quite that close. Still he is the only Ohio wrestler to beat Jayne during the past two years. Now, as a senior, Contos again seems to be a giant step ahead of everybody else thanks mainly to his solid

takedown skills and his ability to hit the big move for either five points or the fall. His pin of Worley at GMWA would have made him, at least to me, the strongest Candidate for OW at the huge tourney.

Again, that five-man Rogers District is a crowded one with as many as ten candidates vying for the last four spots. I've rated the Groveport move-in Todd Frohnafel second in this district based on this year's strong performance. Last year at Bridgeport (his family obviously likes towns ending in port) he was a Division III state qualifier, but somewhat disappointingly failed to place. Behind him are state qualifier Raney -- first at DeSales and North Canton and second to only to Jayne at Medina -- state qualifier Cole, and the excellent Farmer. That still leaves Sheets, Isaacs, Cleveland (Dublin), Froehlich (Marysville), and Whitmeyer (Gahanna Lincoln) as other possibilities. It should be a real donnybrook for all the placement spots except first.

State qualifier Quimbaya heads the Mentor District and has finalist possibilities -- although I do not see him matching up well with Contos. Last year he was second at Mentor at this weight and then pinned in his first-round state match. However, a draw which had him meet state runner-up Cameron and two-time place winner Johnson did him in. Still only a junior he has gone undefeated in Ohio this year winning at the mammoth Worthington Tourney and Uniontown Lake. Behind him is state-placer Trinetti, who has been at 119# all year. He was third at Mentor last year and then grabbed a strong fifth at Dayton. This year he has been solid at 119# losing only to Kish, 6-5, at Richmond Hts. -- although he has not wrestled a particularly demanding schedule. Hatta will be here should Jayne opt for 119#. He has shown flashes of brilliance, but has also been inconsistent as well. Like Conner, his workout partner, he has been behind Jayne for two years and faces the pressure of wrestling St. Edward's high powered schedule for the first time as a senior. Behind this trio are a number of potential state qualifiers. Tucceri, only a freshman, won at both Richmond Hts. and Brunswick and is a future star. Russo and Philipps were both district qualifiers last year who won two bouts at that level. Favaro, another freshman, is coming on strong and could be a surprise qualifier (almost certainly if his team was back at Massillon Perry) while Horvath (Maple Hts.) is another possibility. Nicholl (Westlake) is yet another long-shot in a competition that promises to be exciting and well balanced.

There is very little depth at Massillon Perry, but the two top contenders -- Anderson and Ramos -- are both good. Anderson qualified for Wright State last year by winning the district title, but then was unable to participate due to illness. Now a senior he is lightning quick and a real goer. He gave Jayne three tough minutes at Medina before wearing down under the ceaseless pressure. Ramos is a tough, sturdy competitor who is difficult to score against. He missed state qualification by a single point last year. He lost in overtime to Contos and by just two points to Jayne this year. Watch for him to pull a big upset. After this the well runs quickly dry. State qualifier Maloney looked shaky at Solon, and will struggle to qualify without major improvement. Sackett, Duus (Logan), and Pieron (Austintown Fitch) are, perhaps, other possibilities. Look for a real surprise to emerge here.

I've rated Phou at the top of the Dayton District, but to paraphrase Winston Churchill he is a mystery wrapped in an enigma. Last year he made a desperate cut to 103# where he flamed out in the sectional. This year he apparently will go at 112# -- where if comfortable with the weight -- he will be a real challenge

for everyone. At 119# he was third (losing only to Wilkovich) at Medina and in the dual took Wineberg down four times, but still lost 11-9. He has undeniable skills that somehow have not yet led to outstanding results.

Division II state qualifier Worley is near the top of the Southwest contingent based on a string of outstanding performances marred only by the loss to Contos. He was particularly impressive at the SWOCA holiday tourney shutting out Lambers 7-0 in the final. The last two spots are wide open. I've listed Murnan, Kinser and Price but folks like Fowler (Vandalia Butler), Lipps (Oak Hills) or Miner (Springfield South) are nearly as likely to qualify.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: WILLIE WINEBERG (FAIRFIELD)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Jayne (St. Edward) | 12. Nieman (Groveport) |
| 3. Haro (Princeton) | 13. Seryak (Wadsworth) |
| 4. Whitmer (Uniontown Lake) | 14. Puntieri (Toledo Rogers) |
| 5. Hammons (Hilliard) | 15. Collier (Sycamore) |
| 6. Alejandro (Fremont Ross) | 16. F. Anderson (Medina) |
| 7. Magistrelli (Maple Hts.) | 17. Carreras (Lorain Southview) |
| 8. Kramer (Strongsville) | 18. Karvasales (Dublin) |
| 9. Rocky (Cincinnati St. Xavier) | 19. Gamble (Massillon Perry) |
| 10. Pool (Toledo St. Francis) | 20. Sheridan (West Chester Lakota) |
| 11. Nichols (Madison) | 21. Kennedy (Mt. Vernon) |

A meeting of defending state champions always creates tremendous anticipation and excitement, but when the combatants are also both brilliant collegiate prospects it can raise emotions to a fever pitch. Wineberg, a sensational junior, is on track to become the first wrestler in Ohio history to capture four big school titles while Jayne, also a junior, has, perhaps, made the most rapid progress capped by his title last year. It's no sure thing that they'll both be at this weight. Wineberg could probably make 112# but it would be a struggle and, after all, why should someone so dominant at 119# this year feel obligated to move? Jayne has already made 112# (for Medina), but it is also a difficult cut, and team considerations also may play a role as well. St. Edward's, locked in a titanic struggle with Walsh Jesuit to defend its team title, may conclude that Hatta could score state points at 112# while assuming Jayne could be a finalist at either 112# or 119#.

In any event such a match up should it occur would be of surpassing interest. Wineberg, the consummate defensive wrestler, has won more 3-2 battles than Nolan Ryan. A practically mistake-free wrestler he combines tremendous strength, intelligence and execution in a flawless mix that generates win after win (80-2 in the first two and one half year of varsity wrestling). As a freshman he won his last three state bouts by a total of four points while in his sophomore season he won his final three contests by a total of six.

Jayne, on the other hand, is six minutes of non-stop movement and scoring. He continually elevates the pressure on his opponent until he breaks through with

a deluge of points or a fall. In his semi-final bout with Contos last year he used that constant pressure to seize the initiative both to gain the two takedowns that won the bout, but also to prevent Contos from creating any offensive action of his own. Another major plus is his pinning ability which shortens mat time and conserves energy resources.

One would hope that the gods of wrestling (or even better the OHSAA) would find a way to separate this duo so that such a match would be a final. In any case, my choice would be Wineberg by a hair for several rather tenuous reasons. First, Jayne seems to do better the second or third time he has met an opponent and he and Wineberg will not meet until the state tournament. Second, Wineberg's defensive skills may well frustrate Jayne causing him to over-extend and become vulnerable. And third, Wineberg has substantially more experience in close bouts and can use that edge in what promises to be a tight struggle. Wineberg will be able to keep it a down-tempo bout which works to his advantage. Frankly, the hell-for-leather style of Jayne is far more appealing to me personally, but one cannot deny that at the end of every match they always raise Wineberg's right arm. One other important factor is that for Jayne to win he'll have to beat both Wineberg and Haro -- no easy task.

Speaking of Haro he is the wild card in this weight class. Already a two-time state place winner this gifted senior athlete missed the finals at 119# last year by an overtime takedown in his great semi-final bout with Lanese. He has been outstanding at 125# all year and dropped to 119# for the St. Xavier where he cruised to an easy title. Should Wineberg and Jayne be paired in the same half bracket Haro might well have a relatively easy trip to the finals.

The Southwest District is very strong at this weight class with, of course, Wineberg and Haro leading the way. State qualifier Collier, the exciting Rocky, and the stolid Sheridan are all state caliber competitors looking to capture one of the two remaining state berths. Collier was a district finalist last year losing to Wineberg while Sheridan may turn out to be better at 119# then he was as a successful 112 pounder. Rocky put Wineberg on his back at the SWOCA -- for the first time in his high school career -- but eventually lost 9-6 and took a third by defeating Collier. Myrick (Dayton Meadowdale) may also be a contender here.

Jayne dominates at Mentor. He should cruise through his district in a much easier fashion than Wineberg -- although Wineberg gains that extra day of rest between district and state action. Below him is the quartet of Magistrelli, Kramer, Nichols and Carreras who look to be ahead of the rest of this field. Magistrelli has won two titles including a big win over Nieman at Franklin Hts. Kramer has been solid all year losing only to Division II place winner Grucella. Nichols missed state qualification by two points last year while Carreras can score. Other possibilities are Taylor (Cleveland Hts.) and Spachman (Hudson); also watch for the freshman Rawlings (Walsh Jesuit) who could be a district surprise by season's end.

The Medina champ Whitmer is another solid junior who should do well at this weight. With a style in the Wineberg mold he has been a hot wrestler of late and gave Jayne all he could handle at Alliance. He does wrestle a lot of low scoring bouts and could be subject to the unexpected upset. However, that would seem unlikely at Massillon Perry where the competition is not very strong. Seryak and Anderson would seem to be the other two most likely candidates for state

advancement, but the field is really wide open. Look for Hoover (Akron Springfield) to seriously challenge anyone in this district but Whitmer.

The Rogers field is again a diverse and reasonably strong one -- although there are no standouts capable of challenging the top three contenders. Instead, this mixture should generate a close, exciting competition with pairings playing an important role in its overall resolution. Hammons was impressive at Medina, losing a 2-1 finale to Whitmer after beating former Division III state champ Bo Wilkovich. I have not seen Pool or Puntieri, but both are experienced competitors with the ability to win at the district level. Alejandro won 29 bouts last year, but has not wrestled a rigorous schedule this season. The Columbus contingent like Nieman, Karvasales and Kennedy may have gone by him.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMP: JASON ALLEN (WORTHINGTON KILBOURNE)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Parks (Toledo St. Francis) | 13. Rozick (Mentor) |
| 3. Clement (St. Edward) | 14. Shepard (St. Ignatius) |
| 4. Marroquin (Defiance) | 15. Dillon (West Chester Lakota) |
| 5. Averell (Boardman) | 16. Bowman (Hudson) |
| 6. Orellano (Lorain Southview) | 17. Glodich (Strongsville) |
| 7. Herbert (Uniontown Lake) | 18. Bulugaris (Beavercreek) |
| 8. Fichter (Massillon Perry) | 19. Stinson (Princeton) |
| 9. Clingman (Hilliard) | 20. Altman (Holland Springfield) |
| 10. Frederick (Milford) | 21. Funk (Logan) |
| 11. Hickin (Kent Roosevelt) | 22. Mayes (Maple Hts.) |
| 12. Tyburski (Toledo Start) | 23. Cannon (Groveport) |

This is a weight class where the two top-rated wrestlers are somewhat ahead of everyone else. In this case, however, since both exit from the same district a final round confrontation would be inevitable. Again, that bout should draw major interest since it pits two of the better seniors in the state against one another.

Allen was a finalist at 103# as a freshman, and I can well remember articles that day pondering the possibility of a four-time champion. As it turned out Allen lost that particular bout and has never quite made it back to that level. His sophomore year was erased by injuries and last year's 35-1 record was marred only by a semi-final defeat (by fall) to Musser as he grabbed a third place medal at 119#. This year Allen has been really outstanding showcasing the complete package of skills needed to be a state champ. He has completely controlled every situation and quite, frankly, looks close to unbeatable.

Parks burst on the scene at last year's state meet moving into the finals at 125# after three solid victories. Then for some reason he wrestled defensively, indeed passively, for five minutes of the bout losing four stalling points. Then suddenly galvanized he showed some offensive fireworks but in one of mankind's saddest songs, it was too little too late. This year he has become much more aggressive rolling up huge scores against virtually every opponent. And yet, I

see Allen somehow outmaneuvering and outscoring Parks early on -- gaining a quick lead and nursing it into a championship.

The Rogers District is obviously loaded, but remember Allen and Parks are a quantum step above everyone else in the state. Two-time state qualifier Marroquin is very good and he should be able to make the semi-finals because he'll be paired in a different quarter bracket than either Parks or Allen. Last year he lost his state placement bout by a narrow 8-7 margin to the brilliant Clement. I was more impressed by that loss than by any of his victories. Unfortunately, he wrestles for a team that appears to have limited ambitions and may not have a schedule to adequately prepare him for the rigors of state action. I've rated Clingman and state qualifier Tyburski as the best candidates to receive the last two state tickets, but both Altman and Cannon are just a hair's breadth behind. However, it would not surprise me if Altman opts for 119#, although that is also a crowded weight class. Last year Clingman, at 125#, lost two tough district bouts -- 8-7 to Newsom and 9-7 to Medina -- and has improved this year as part of Hilliard's sparkling lightweights. Tyburski made it to the state meet two years ago as a 112# sophomore, but last year he, too, lost a pair of razor thin district bouts 9-7 and 13-12. He also could decide to compete at 119#. That leaves Cannon on the bubble and with few options. He cannot drop with Nieman and Frohnafel just below and his second at Franklin Hts. and fourth at Marion Harding may not be good enough at this level. Pirrone (Dublin) is another recent factor here further jeopardizing Cannon's qualification hopes. The excellent sophomore Bucher (Toledo Rogers) may be overmatched by this field unless there is a significant exodus to other weights, but he will be a force in the future. Certainly a prime candidate at this class would have been Troy Cameron (Hilliard) who wrestled brilliantly at last year's state meet. He upset Johnson 11-10 in the first round and then cruised to the finals before losing 3-2 to Wineberg. He would obviously been a major factor here but apparently a season-ending injury will shut him out of this year's competition.

I was very much impressed with Averell at Solon and his big win at Massillon Perry (smashing Fichter) projects him into a low to middle place at Wright State. Last year at 130# he won two district bouts and now down a weight his mistake-free style will make him difficult to defeat. At year's beginning state qualifier Fichter would have been my runaway choice in this district. Last year he opened the season upsetting Musser and then lost a one-point decision to him just two weeks later at Medina. However, he tailed off slightly at year's end -- although winning two bouts at the state level and failing to place by a single-point is scarcely having a bad year for a 10th grader. This year he won at DeSales but failed to place at Medina and lost the aforementioned match to Averell at Massillon Perry. He may be in-between weights right now as he grows, and 130# may not be that difficult a weight at his district. Herbert, yet another junior, is also a returning state qualifier who lost two tough bouts to Allen and Clement last year in his unsuccessful bid to place. This year he has wrestled primarily at 130#, but this looks to be his final resting place. Hickin and Allison (Logan) are other possibilities although there is some quality drop-off after the top trio.

The brilliant sophomore Clement heads the field at Mentor. He was fourth at 119# last year as a freshman losing twice to the redoubtable Allen, my top choice...by scores of 7-6 and 7-5. This year he has wrestled at 130# until the Alliance tourney, and done well even though I perceived him as being slightly undersized. He was 2-2 with Johnson when he got "stuck" in the dual meet and

then lost to him 6-2 at the OCC. He is the one wrestler here who would be close to even money against Parks and have some chance of beating Allen. As discussed in the "Teams" section, this drop makes sense from an individual point of view, but may cost St. Ed's a few team points by moving Augustine -- a possible low placer -- up to 135#. Next best here is state qualifier Orellano who continues to improve this year. Competing solely at 130# to this point he lost one-pointers to Johnson and Herbert, but dominated the field at Dublin. His powerful style should be even more effective at 125# -- and he avoids a crowded 130# weight class. I've liked the junior Rozick since he was a freshman, but the rather conservative Mentor system has taken a takedown wrestler and tried to convert him into a control artist. He has not wrestled since the second week of the season, and his eventual status is currently unknown. Shepard showed real improvement at St. Xavier -- losing 9-7 to state runner-up Lanese -- in the finals. His other defeats were at the Solon final to Averell and in a dual to Augustine. His stubborn style -- not unlike Augustine's -- could be a factor here. Mayes is also a strong state candidate after his big win at Brecksville while Glodich who has struggled somewhat this season proved last year with his strong finish that he is a force to be reckoned with. Only an overtime loss to Herbert prevented him from reaching Wright State. Currie (Elyria), Wade (North Ridgeville), Skerl (Holy Name) and Willingham (Euclid) are good performers who may not have enough firepower here, although Willingham -- fifth at Brunswick -- does have an upset win over Mayes.

Frederick is the defending district champion out of the Southwest -- a title he captured last year as a freshman. While he lost his two state bouts his future looked very good. This year he has fulfilled some of that promise winning most impressively at Brunswick, but stumbled somewhat on his own home ground losing two extremely close bouts to Bulugaris and Stober at the SWOCA. Still, I see him as best here with state qualifier Dillon (sixth at Medina and fifth at the SWOCA) somewhat behind him. Bulugaris, Stinson and Rust (Sycamore) are also in that narrow band that includes the top five here while Ebbers (Oak Hills), Breeden (Cincinnati Elder) and Ault (Clayton Northmont) are not far behind. This should be a very even competition with the unexpected perhaps playing a key role. And that surprise could be Trainer (Springfield South), who won two bouts at the district level last year.

130#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JIM JOHNSON (WALSH JESUIT)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Enright (Lebanon) | 12. Bowman (Hudson) |
| 3. Wallace (St. Edward) | 13. Medina (Perrysburg) |
| 4. Denholm (Akron Springfield) | 14. Pitzzen (Toledo Whitmer) |
| 5. D. Jones (Cleveland Hts.) | 15. Smith (Strongsville) |
| 6. Newsom (Toledo St. John) | 16. Bouscher (East Liverpool) |
| 7. Thomson (St. Ignatius) | 17. Reckman (Milford) |
| 8. Kallai (Wadsworth) | 18. Hawks (West Chester Lakota) |
| 9. Monroe (Centerville) | 19. Wisler (Marion Harding) |
| 10. Estep (Fairfield) | 20. Carr (Pickerington) |
| 11. Campbell (Hilliard) | 21. Glover (Buckeye Local) |

Except for the vagaries of chance, Jim Johnson could easily be in the same situation as his teammate Clint Musser -- going for his third state title on his way to a possible four. As a freshman at 103#, he battled Wineberg into the third period tied at 1-1 in their semi-final when inexplicably, unbelievably he was penalized for stalling and lost a heart-breaking 2-1 decision and finished third. Last year after snapping Dermlan's 87 bout winning streak, he roared into the state meet only to lose 11-10 on a late five-point headlock by Cameron, and then crushed everyone else to take yet another third. This year he has grown three weight classes and still remained exceptionally effective. He has already dominated at Medina, Worthington and the OCC only losing a two-overtime bout to Lorne of Oklahoma in a bout where twice he failed to convert a wonderful opportunity into the winning takedown. Nonetheless, the possibility of another mis-step is readily available at this weight class as it features a number of outstanding underclassmen.

Johnson, still only a junior, will emerge from the most difficult district. Wallace, the Medina champ, is excellent on his feet and has a lightning fast style that is difficult to control. He has been at 135# all year knocking heads with Musser and Vaughn and this drop to 130# gives him an opportunity, albeit a small one, to win at all. Johnson beat him at Alliance by only two points. Jones has been impressive the past two years and should be a real factor here. Last year he handed eventual state champion Kyle Bentley one of his two losses, but lost to Rozick in a tough district draw. This year he crushed Monroe for the Brecksville title and pinned for the Richmond Hts. crown. On a very good weekend he could win it all. The unorthodox Thomson is my selection for the fourth and last slot although he has not yet made this weight all year. He can score from every position, but at the same time he can give up points in the same manner. He could upset anyone with his unusual style. State qualifier Bowman would seem to be left out here, but I would have said that last year as well. I have a continuing feeling that he may drop one or even two weight classes. Smith, former state qualifier Falcioni (North Royalton), Leicher (Maple Hts.) and the sophomore Welsh (Solon) are other candidates, but would not match up well with the top trio. The exception might be Smith, who was a district semi-finalist last year but was then eliminated with back-to-back losses to state placers Kiouasis and Minick.

Denholm is another rock-solid junior with a strongly physical approach to wrestling. He placed fifth last year as a sophomore beating Newsom among others. This year he beat Clement but lost to Johnson at Medina finishing second and has dominated everybody else. Kallai is a very tough 135 pounder who just this week moved down to 130# -- where he was a strong fourth at Alliance. At 135# he was the Wadsworth and North Canton champ and had been a very strong performer the entire year. As it currently stands, Denholm and Kallai really stand unchallenged here. I've listed Bouscher and Glover, but that third slot is wide open. My guess is with Averell, Fichter, Herbert and Hickin all currently at 125# -- one of that quartet will move back here.

There is again a crowded field at Rogers, but this group will struggle to place more than one of their number. State qualifier Newsom is finally down to weight, and he has been very successful even at 135# and 140# including a title at the GMWA. He lost to Denholm by two points in state action last year. State qualifier Campbell is up from 103# and remains solid -- placing at every tournament entered to this point. I've also rated state qualifier Medina, Pitzen, Wisler and Carr in a spirited battle of journeyman wrestlers. Other

possibilities are Weyard (Westerville North), Reed (Toledo Rogers) and Steiner (Wapakoneta).

Division II state champion Enright will be a powerful force at this weight class. He dominated both the SWOCA and GMVWA winning every bout by fall or huge point spreads. At St. Xavier he captured the Outstanding Wrestler award, but struggled to a 15-12 win over Rust in the first round and was trailing Ambroziak (his state semi-final victim) in the third period of the final when he gained a quick fall. Clearly, he will not be intimidated by Division I competition, but the loss of Noble via graduation as a workout partner cannot be a long-term plus. His ability to consistently put people on their back, on the other hand, is a major advantage not really shared by Denholm, Wallace, or Jones. State qualifier Monroe is a giant step behind Enright and could well be supplanted in this district by the fast improving Estep. Reckman, Hawks, and Peck (Clayton Northmont) are other conventional possibilities, with DeWeese (Miamisburg) a long shot.

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CLINT MUSSER (WALSH JESUIT)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Vaughn (St. Ignatius) | 13. Runyan (Princeton) |
| 3. J. Jones (Cleveland Hts.) | 14. Griffith (Hilliard) |
| 4. McCullough (Wapakoneta) | 15. Drake (Clayton Northmont) |
| 5. Minick (Uniontown Lake) | 16. Clayton (Milford) |
| 6. Kim (West Chester Lakota) | 17. Gumto (Mayfield) |
| 7. Kellhoffer (Geneva) | 18. Keween (Holland Springfield) |
| 8. Kotlyn (Strongsville) | 19. Massie (Fairfield) |
| 9. Simon (Westland) | 20. Kellhofer (Geneva) |
| 10. Bernheisel (Perrysburg) | 21. Sarge (East Liverpool) |
| 11. Augustine (St. Edward) | 22. Will (Dublin) |
| 12. Jamison (Centerville) | 23. Hull (Massillon Perry) |

The probability of having a two-time state champion and a defending state champ compete at the same weight class is a most unlikely prospect. Having it occur twice in one year in one school classification stretches the laws of probability all out of shape -- and yet it appears that is just what is likely to happen this season. Wineberg and Jayne still seem on track to meet at 119# while two-time champ Musser and defending champ Vaughn look to be on a collision course here.

Musser is a tremendous champion. As a freshman he publicly proclaimed what seemed an outlandish goal -- four state titles. And now he already has two -- winning brilliantly as a freshman 16-10 in the semis and 17-10 OT in the finals -- and then last year cruising to the title with wins over Allen and Lanese. Now up three weight classes he has that indomitable will to win, and the heart and talent to back it up. I keep thinking that Walsh will drop everyone from Johnson through O'Neill to change the pairing dynamics, but apparently that is not going to happen.

Vaughn didn't have a close bout last year. He won the title 13-1 in a bout that had him ahead by 9 points in the first 90 seconds. Already a three-time state qualifier he improved about as quickly as any high school wrestler I've seen (he started in the 8th grade). A brilliant student and an admirer of Robert E. Lee, he can chose to wrestle with Musser here or move to 140# and meet state champion Zinkan.

The way the schedule plays itself out these two should meet five times -- including sectional, district and state action. I'm not sure who that will help, perhaps no one. At the OCC Vaughn won in the second overtime by riding Musser out, but the officiating was widely discussed with regard to a Musser first period near takedown and a near (very, very near) Musser escape at the end of the bout. Vaughn had the only takedown. I'm not so sure that all of the bouts will be low scoring as many have speculated since early takedown by either boy next time could well engender a flurry of points. Vaughn does have an advantage in that he can ride Musser, but Musser is more aggressive on his feet. It should be a dandy.

The Mentor District is very good. State qualifier Jones, Kotlyn and Augustine are all fine performers and it would not be impossible that all four of the Mentor qualifiers place. Jones was sixth last year at 130# winning three bouts in the process. Augustine has proven to be a very tenacious performer finishing a strong second at Medina and third at the OCC. Of course that was when he was competing at 125#. How he'll do up two weight classes is still problematical. Kotlyn, the Brunswick champion, may well move ahead of him for the last spot. State qualifier Whitman (Berea), Miller (Hudson), Pollard (Shaker Hts.), and Gumto all will face difficult odds here despite good credentials. As I mentioned at the beginning of this classification it would seem that a fairer split of teams (with an equally good geographical look) could have been made so as to provide equal state opportunity to all the participants.

The Rogers District is also very crowded, but at a very much lower level. McCullough qualified two years ago as a sophomore at 125#, but was eliminated in first round state action. I thought he had exceptional promise. Then last year at 140# he suffered two district losses and got left home the next weekend. This year now at 135# he would seem to lead this group with a chance for a low place. State qualifier Bernheisel, only a junior, has not wrestled recently, and may not compete. If so that opens up the competition to a wider range of qualifiers. I've listed Simon, Griffith, Keweenaw and Will -- all of whom have shown good potential this year. Griffith won five bouts at Medina including a solid win over Kim. Other wrestlers who are at virtually the same level as the above quartet are Briceno (Toledo Rogers), Krysty (Thomas Worthington), Raney (Westerville North) and Pence (Toledo Central Catholic).

At Massillon Perry state third place winner Minick would normally be an easy choice. However, there is real reason to believe that this excellent competitor may not even wrestle because of a knee injury -- and even should he return he may not be able to go at 100 percent. Now a senior this is an apparently unfortunate ending to a fine performer. Kellhofer and Sarge are next best with the first named a particularly good long shot. For the past two years he has been on the fringes of stardom. His third at Alliance (including a near win over Vaughn) should cause every opponent to prepare carefully for him. Hull -- whose older brother placed last year -- and Robertson (Wadsworth) also have qualification chances.

It's a confusing mix of individuals at Dayton. Clayton, Runyan, and Kim seem to stand best here, but none but the latter would seem to have placement opportunities. State qualifier Drake struggled at 140#, but may do better here. Massie and Jamison have also had successes -- the former winning at Kenston and the latter a finalist at Brecksville. Leon (Trotwood Madison), Mlod (Fairborn) and Hartman (Cincinnati Moeller) also have the tools to place at this district. You'll want to draw into this group at Wright State.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TOM ZINKAN (CINCINNATI MOELLER)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Ratliff (Marion Harding) | 12. I. Williams (Lorain Southview) |
| 3. Lewis (Reynoldsburg) | 13. Spencely (Fairfield) |
| 4. Donovan (Garfield Hts.) | 14. Woodring (Midpark) |
| 5. Wimmers (Marysville) | 15. Poling (Toledo Rogers) |
| 6. Angione (Uniontown Lake) | 16. Thiel (Canton McKinley) |
| 7. Shepard (Beavercreek) | 17. Wyrick (Logan) |
| 8. Dawson (St. Edward) | 18. Nossaman (Brunswick) |
| 9. Ford (Walsh Jesuit) | 19. Strunck (West Chester Lakota) |
| 10. Blake (Massillon Perry) | 20. Schiavone (Oregon Clay) |
| 11. Layman (Dublin) | 21. Proudfoot (Greenville) |

This is one mixed-up weight class. Nothing is quite what it seems as wrestlers with good credentials keep losing, while unknowns continue to win tournaments. This year there are so many truly outstanding weight classes that 140# is kind of like spotting an Andy Warhol print on a museum wall full of works by Rembrandt and Vermeer. It isn't bad, it's just a little disconcerting. As we examine this weight class so many incongruities and anomalies will appear that we're likely to end in total confusion.

Perhaps, the clearest part of the picture is right at the top where the excellent Tom Zinkan is an easy choice as champ. I first saw him two years in the first round at states as he squared off with overwhelming favorite Pete Nathanson. It didn't seem like it would be much of a bout, but Pete was the district champ from Mentor so I watched. And it wasn't much of a contest with Zinkan totally dominating the proceedings winning 11-1. My first thought was a fluke -- Nathanson must be injured or sick or something. But it was no accident and Zinkan methodically won three more bouts -- close battles -- to take the state title. He was, clearly, for real. Then, last year, wrestling probably one weight class higher than optimal (staying away from 140#), he won 39 consecutive bouts before falling to LaCure in the state finals. This year he has dropped to 140# where he remains undefeated, although it took a whirlwind finish in the last 25 seconds to force Malloy into overtime at the OCC and eventually reach victory by the narrowest of margins. He'll be difficult for any 140 pounder in Division I to defeat -- unless, of course, Musser or Vaughn decide to move up.

The Rogers District is by far the toughest. Ratliff is a mystery. Every time I see him or his results he looks to be a world beater, but at tournament time something goes awry. He is a less-than-sparkling 0-3 in state

action. Last year, for example, he wrestled principally at 130# with almost complete success. Then he dropped to 119# where he grabbed a district third, and then lost a first round bout at Wright State 9-1. He's better than that. Right now he would seem to be at an ideal weight tucked away safely between the state champs at 135# and the big horses at 145#. After all, he was the OW at the Gorman tourney, wrestling at this weight. Lewis, another state qualifier, won a bout at Dayton last year after a very fine season. This year he has been even better, and there is very little difference between he and Ratliff. Wimmers missed the first half the season after a great junior year which saw him capture the Division II state title at 130#. It is a measure of the strength of this district that he is ranked only third best within it. He lost his first week back to Ratliff, but it was reasonably close all the way through. Should that be just a base to start from and he improves relatively quickly, he may yet turn out to be best at Rogers. All three of these fellows have finalist potential -- at least as far as the weight is presently constituted, but the key will be drawing away from Zinkan. State qualifier Layman is a fourth choice here with Poling favored for the last qualifying berth. Schiavone, Eppert (Upper Arlington) and Studer (Mansfield Madison) need to create an upset to qualify.

At Mentor things are really confusing. State qualifier Donovan is an excellent junior who won two bouts at Wright State last year. Still on the steeper part of the learning curve, his only loss was to the fabulous Coventry freshman John McGee in the finals at Wadsworth. He has been by far the most consistent performer in this district at 140#. Dawson, fourth last year at 130#, has been inconsistent and injured all year. He has had to default a number of bouts and, perhaps, what really needs to happen is for him to overcome his competitive instincts and recuperate for several weeks. As it is this is just not the same wrestler we saw last year. Ford is an even stranger case. He was fourth as a freshman at 103# three years ago with almost unlimited potential. His sophomore year was in injury laden, but last year as a junior he beat state runner-up Kiousis in the district final hiking his record to 28-2. While he did not look sharp he still won two bouts at Wright State before defaulting his placement bout. This year it almost seems that we're looking at a different person. After winning at the mammoth multi-state Worthington Classic he has lost seven bouts -- many of them in almost incomprehensible ways. The pattern is for two or three minutes of solid action and performance and then the last three minutes in an almost immobile position. It's so sudden that it's as if some hidden switch was suddenly turned to the off position. Trust me -- when Ford wrestles he still has many of the same great skills, they haven't eroded, it's just that they are only utilized for a short period in many bouts. Ishmal Williams has been a consistent finalist all year, but has lost to Ford (at Worthington) and Angione (at Uniontown Lake). He has scoring potential at the state level. Woodring was a district semi-finalist last year before dropping out, but has not been as dominating as anticipated so far this year. He was third at Brecksville -- losing incomprehensibly to Murphy in the first round -- and then winning five straight consolation bouts for third. Another possibility is Nossaman -- second at Brunswick -- and Uber (Maple Hts.) who was second at Franklin Hts. and Brecksville. Higham (Euclid) has been at both 135# and 145#, but 140# may be his best chance for qualification.

There is also confusion at Massillon Perry. State qualifier Angione has done well all year with high placements in every tourney, but was upset in the dual meet by Blake. I still think Angione will do better in the long run. Both boys could have placement potential. Thiel was a bout from states last year

while Wyrick was eliminated one round earlier. They would seem to be the favorites for the last qualifying ticket. Rollins (Kenmore), MacKinnon (East Liverpool) and Wilson (Geneva) are other possibilities.

Zinkan towers over the rest of the field at the Southwest District. State qualifier Shepard also seems to have schizophrenic results. He defeated Ford at Medina, but lost to Rupanovic (Division II) and Angione finishing fifth. He was third at the SWOCA again losing in the semi-finals. Last year he was a district runner up and won his opening state match before being outscored 29-4 in his next two. After this duo the district is very weak with the last two qualifiers unlikely to win a state bout. Spencely seems next best with Proudfoot, Strunck, Simms (Milford), and Mays (Franklin) way behind. A real scramble for the last two spots.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: STEVE KOSARKO (MAPLE HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Bloomer (Toledo Start) | 13. Ball (Dublin) |
| 3. O'Neill (Walsh Jesuit) | 14. A. Williams (Lorain Southview) |
| 4. Mahaffey (Toledo Woodward) | 15. Hinton (Oak Hills) |
| 5. Goodman (Dayton Wayne) | 16. Charlton (Westerville North) |
| 6. Morr (Barberton) | 17. Blalock (Madison) |
| 7. Harris (Uniontown Lake) | 18. Nicol (Marysville) |
| 8. Frasher (Anderson) | 19. Miller (Clayton Northmont) |
| 9. Furlong (Howland) | 20. Keppel (Massillon Jackson) |
| 10. McCormick (Upper Arlington) | 21. Rogers (Bedford) |
| 11. Brady (Cincinnati Elder) | 22. M. Gumto (Mayfield) |
| 12. Huddle (Cincinnati St. Xavier) | 23. Cook (Ashtabula) |

Wrestling more than almost any other sport demands heavy dues from those who choose to participate. Even for the most talented and athletic there is a long apprenticeship that can weary the body and dull the mind. Clearly, Kosarko as superb a talent as he is, has had to pay those dues just like everyone else. His brilliant state debut as a sophomore, when he defeated seniors Chris Dodson and Ken LaCure, brought him to the semi-finals where Roger Chandler "hammered" him as he had done at districts, 13-1. Still Kosarko gained a fourth -- an effort he matched last year despite wrestling up a weight class (avoiding Chandler), as he could only be satisfied by the possibility of a state title.

Well, the dues have been paid, the accounts settled in full, and this year it's Kosarko's turn to take charge. While it won't be easy for him to capture Maple Hts.' state leading 41st individual crown, he must still be positioned as a solid favorite. Originally the prospect of Tom Zinkan participating here reduced the odds to something close to 50 percent, but with Zinkan committed to 140# Kosarko now is the clear front runner. However, he is not invincible and in a weight class rife with solid performers he will certainly be subject to the real possibility of an upset. Still his huge wins at Franklin Hts. and Brecksville indicate that those who seek to beat him will themselves have had to make the same kind of commitment as Kosarko.

Kosarko is a very large 145 pounder, but, potentially, his closest rivals have spent virtually the entire year at 152# -- so they will not be noticeably overmatched in this context. Last year as a sophomore Bloomer swept into the state semi-finals with a perfect record and 24 consecutive wins. He left that bout (less than two minutes with Chandler) in a state of shock and plummeted all the way to fifth. This year he is once beaten and almost unchallenged at 152#; and could well be Kosarko's biggest obstacle. Also at Rogers is state qualifier Mahaffey who is excellent on his feet and solid in every other area. His draw at Wright State last year was unbelievable -- runner-up Zinkan and third place Sturghill back to back -- but, again it's part of paying your dues. He should be away from Bloomer, and should Kosarko also be in the other half he has some finalist potential. In my mind there is a clear drop off at this district after this duo with a group of Central District wrestlers -- McCormick, Charlton, Ball, Nicol and Evans (Brookhaven) -- likely to capture those last three spots. Another possibility is Lugo (Bowling Green).

Kosarko and O'Neill exit from the same crowded sectional which is easily the best at this weight class in the state. O'Neill, but a sophomore, was brilliant at Medina walloping the two-time state champ from Tennessee 24-13 in the finals. A many-times champion youth wrestler he has raw talent to spare, but has several times given away bouts he probably should have won. Last year he missed state qualification by a single point at 130#, and he is gaining in strength and confidence every day. He could be a finalist, too. Also at Mentor is Alshi Williams who has wrestled consistently well all year, and state qualifier Blalock who has struggled at 152#. Last year Blalock won three close consolation bouts to qualify, and won another at Wright State. Based on performance to date he is vulnerable here, but once at 145# he may turn it all around. There are a lot of other possibilities. Rogers has consistently caught my eye when I've seen him perform, but he seems to lose a lot of close bouts. Just a mild improvement could gain him qualification. Gumto spent most of the year at 160# but he has now vaulted under White and will be a threat at this weight. Angersola (Garfield Hts.), Dockery (Cleveland Hts.), and Waldvogel (Mentor) are much less likely candidates. Also watch the freshman Boross (Solon) who is on the fast-track in this sport.

There are three possible place-winners at Massillon Perry. Morr missed state qualification by one bout last year and has already won four tournaments this year. Harris was fifth at Medina after a runner-up performance the previous year. He is a strong 145 pounder whose biggest problem has been unfortunate tendency to go to his back. Furlong wrestles in places where the reporting of wrestling scores is currently viewed as an arcane art that is best avoided. He was a district semi-finalist last year before losing his two go-to-state bouts to Owens (8-0) and Hull (8-6). We may see him at 140#. Keppel, Cook, Godenschwager (Lancaster), Oney (Alliance) and Robson (Buckeye Local) are all possibilities only if one of the top three does not appear here. Cook may have the best shot although a weak schedule may fatally harm his chances.

There are four returning state qualifiers in the Dayton District -- Goodman, Frasher, Hinton, and Brady -- but I like Goodman by far the best. He wrestled two tough matches at states -- winning one and losing the other -- and showing real potential all the while. This year he has absolutely destroyed everyone -- everyone but Kosarko who defeated him 14-7 at Franklin Hts. He, too, could be a finalist which would lend a sort of symmetry to his season -- meeting Kosarko in the first week of the season and the last. Frasher, Hinton and Brady were an

unremarkable 0-4 in state action and it would not surprise if one of them dropped to 140# behind Zinkan. Huddle, Miller, Stebbins (Greenville), and Middleton (Miami) are other possibilities with Huddle gaining stature after a strong fourth at the OCC. The big question mark is Hinton who was a district champ last year, but has already lost six times this year to a not particularly difficult schedule. His rating reflects both his past success in 1992 and the problems he has faced this year. Reese (Glen Este) won the St. Xavier tourney with an overtime win over Scolaro, but the question remains as to whether that level of performance will occur on a week-to-week basis.

152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BILL LaCURE (NORTH CANTON HOOVER)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. White (Mayfield) | 13. Campolo (Solon) |
| 3. Carroll (Cincinnati St. Xavier) | 14. Coleman (Westland) |
| 4. Overholt (Walsh Jesuit) | 15. Lyons (Cincinnati Moeller) |
| 5. Nuckols (Colerain) | 16. Mullen (Medina) |
| 6. Deubel (Maple Hts.) | 17. Hupp (Gahanna Lincoln) |
| 7. Stebleton (Lancaster) | 18. Smith (Toledo St. John) |
| 8. Archer (Groveport) | 19. Buzene (Toledo Whitmer) |
| 9. Paulus (Uniontown Lake) | 20. Snyder (Sidney) |
| 10. Couch (Mansfield) | 21. Hamilton (Lorain Southview) |
| 11. Pierce (Troy) | 22. Johnson (Akron Firestone) |
| 12. Scott (Milford) | 23. Neverman (Westlake) |

Over the past three decades or so North Canton Hoover and their marvelous Hall-of-Fame coach Walt Tolarchyk have produced a steady stream of great teams and legions of outstanding wrestlers. Were it not for the juggernaut that wore the green and gold of St. Edward's, the 1980s, in fact, might well have been looked on as the decade of Hoover High School. Fueled by such great wrestlers as two-time champ Dan Willaman, future national champ Brian Dolph, and the brilliant John Grasinger this school developed a tradition of excellence that has rarely been matched. And, yet, it now seems clear that the greatest product of this program will be a competitor of the '90s -- the brilliant Billy LaCure. Undeclared the past two seasons, LaCure not only wins -- but does so with a style and grace not often seen. A brilliant student LaCure show a penetrating intelligence as he practices his craft on the mat, and his third period actions show how quickly he learns and adjusts in the course of a single bout. An outstanding pinner LaCure possesses all the requisite skills of a great wrestler, but his real forte comes during the brief 10-15 second flurries that true wrestling fans devour. He is unsurpassed at such moments always coming out of such action on top -- and, generally, putting his opponent on his back at the same time. It would be an upset, indeed, if LaCure fails to win his second consecutive title.

Certainly, there will be little challenge at Massillon Perry where the battle will be for the other two qualifying spots. State qualifier Stebleton returns and certainly has to be the favorite for a return trip to Wright State. His big win at Dublin is a solid harbinger of victories to come. I've liked

Paulus for some time and except for a shaky disqualification call he would have matched up with Overholt in the Medina finals. Mullen and the Golden Gloves champ Johnson are two other possibilities here, although I would not be surprised to see Mullen drop to 145#. Good (Kent Roosevelt) has just returned to 152# and could play a role in this competition. Other thoughts are Betteridge (East Liverpool), Dodds (Buckeye Local) when he returns, Truitt (Buchtel) and Profusek (Boardman).

The one wrestler with the athleticism and talent to conceivably compete with LaCure in this field is two-time state qualifier Shaun White. There are bouts where White wrestles with such skill and ease that it seems that he could never lose. At other times he somehow is suddenly transformed into something just a little bit more than the ordinary. Last year at Mentor he blitzed the field winning the district title on a technical fall. Then at Wright State he won 16-12, lost 13-12, and "got decked" in 45 seconds in a turnaround that was hard to comprehend. This year he won at Solon and Kenston, but a pattern of erraticism still seems discernible. However, when he is "on his game" White is a prime-time performer.

The sophomore Overholt looks like a future state title winner should he continue to improve. Last year he qualified as a freshman at 145# and gave Kosarko a strong 9-7 bout. This year he won easily at Medina while finishing a strong second at Worthington. He will be a factor here particularly if he can learn to string six solid minutes together for every bout. Duebel won at Brecksville and Franklin Hts. and is undefeated in duals, but has not wrestled many highly ranked boys (though he blew away Archer 12-5). Only a junior he gains by having Kosarko as a workout partner. There is a large chasm between this top trio and the rest of the field. Campolo has been a consistent placer, but lost to Duebel 15-0 and White 18-5. Hamilton, Neverman and Vodraska (Midpark) are journeyman performers with a chance for that fourth qualifying spot with a perfect draw and a perfect weekend.

Originally, I had listed Bloomer at this weight and he was easily the best 152 pounder in the Rogers District. Now that he has moved down to 145#, what remains is rather weak and chaotic. Archer is marginally best here based on seconds at Franklin Hts. and Hamilton Twp., but he has not wrestled since the second week of the season so his current status is unknown. State qualifier Couch possesses a strange record with some sparkling triumphs and some very unexpected losses. Last year he grabbed a district third and then lost a tough overtime bout in the first round at Wright State. On a hot weekend he could grab a low state place, because he does have the ability to score points in great clumps. Smith started the year off strong but has dropped back lately while Coleman and Hupp have moved forward. Hupp was Reynoldsburg champ and a strong second at Tiffin while Coleman lost to Smith in OT for the GMVWA crown, but has moved forward in recent days. Taylor (Toledo Rogers) and Brown (Marion Franklin) are other threats here. A dark horse will be Buzene who has been at 160# all year, but may drop to 152# at tourney time.

Carroll like LaCure and White dominates his own particular district. A state qualifier at 145# last year (losing only 10-8 to Zinkan in the finals), he won one match at Dayton before losing 13-4 to LaCure. This year he has been undefeated until an upset loss in the OCC semi-finals to Division III competitor Dorley. State qualifier Nuckols is listed here but has not competed as of yet. Should be appear he would be a factor at this weight class. The remainder of

this district is weak with Scott, Pierce and Lyons as other possibilities. Pierce won two bouts at the district level as a sophomore last year at 140#. He has been at 160# most of this year with solid results. Another possibility is Snyder who 23 bouts last year including two at the district level. Gross (Northmont), like Nuckols, is another returnee from last year with good credentials who has still not wrestled to this point; while Manderschied (Cincinnati Elder) continues to struggle at this weight.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: RODRICK (JUGGY) FRANKLIN (LORAIN SOUTHVIEV)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Sanders (Massillon Jackson) | 13. Cassese (Medina) |
| 3. Landenberger (Groveport) | 14. Glass (Reynoldsburg) |
| 4. Dailey (Mount Vernon) | 15. Gilliam (Princeton) |
| 5. Jarvis (Cloverleaf) | 16. Short (Euclid) |
| 6. Kuhn (Padua) | 17. Brown (Mentor) |
| 7. Shelton (Westerville North) | 18. Boiselle (Holland Springfield) |
| 8. Staggs (Fairfield) | 19. Krollman (Oak Hills) |
| 9. Warren (West Chester Lakota) | 20. Groudle (Walsh Jesuit) |
| 10. Eddings (St. Ignatius) | 21. Gilmore (Toledo Rogers) |
| 11. Kaple (Fairborn) | 22. Altic (Logan) |
| 12. Nelly (Maple Hts.) | 23. Johnson (Dayton Meadowdale) |

With the exception of defending state champion Juggy Franklin, this looks to be the weakest weight class in Division I this year. And it's likely to remain that way with few 171 pounders able to make such a large cut and with the prospect that any 152 pounder moving up to avoid LaCure is likely to lose his life insurance at the prospect of meeting Franklin. The last essay discussed the many successes of the North Canton Hoover program but many of those same accolades could also be applied to Lorain Southview, as well. Dan and Tom Ternes have been splendidly successful operating in an environment that can raise more than the normal coaching dilemmas, and they continue to consistently turn out fine teams -- this year's being one of the best. And the leader of this squad is Franklin who was totally undefeated during his junior season and who has -- but for one day -- been equally successful this year. He is on track to become the first two-time champ in the school's distinguished wrestling history, and it would be an upset of the first order should he somehow be derailed. Extremely physical and yet terrifically quick, he will be an outstanding college wrestler just as he has been at this level.

While no one in this district can match up with Franklin, the rest of the field is closely matched, relatively deep, and should provide some exciting wrestling. Kuhn, winner at Avon Lake, second at the OCC, and third at Brecksville, is a solid performer who won two bouts at the district level last year. He seems perfectly positioned at this weight class to contend for a low place. Eddings has been a consistent placer at 171# and 160# and while his style makes bacon-slicing seem fascinating it is effective. Nelly looks to be a relatively small 160# who has a win over Kuhn to his credit and a one-point loss to Landenberger. Behind this quartet is the improving Short -- first at

Brunswick, but fifth at Richmond Hts. -- who has been erratic but only lost a 14-12 OT bout to Nelly. Also just returning is Brown who missed all of the early season, but who won two district bouts at this weight class last year. The person to really watch for, however, is Groudle. In reality a 145# he is up this high only because O'Neill and Overholt block his appearance at lower weights. Once he gets comfortable his quickness will make him formidable and his hard-nosed approach dangerous. He could slip into the qualifying group with the right draw. Barnes (Berea), Krawczyk (St. Edward) and Ernst (Hudson) are other contenders.

State place winner Sanders and state alternate Jarvis help make this one of the better districts at this weight class. Sanders was a state semi-finalist at 152# last year including the big 13-12 over White. This year he has won at Solon but was second at both North Canton (losing by 11 to LaCure) and Wadsworth (losing 6-4 to Jarvis who he had defeated in OT at last year's district). Jarvis is currently undefeated -- also winning at Richmond Hts. -- but I think Sanders previous experience gives him a narrow edge. Both have excellent placement chances. Cassese wrestled a brutal schedule at Medina and did wonderfully well in just placing. He is a reasonable choice as third best here. After him the quality quickly tails off with Altic, Greaves (Buckeye Local), Myers (Barberton), Webb (Massillon) and Reese (New Philadelphia) as other possibilities.

At Rogers there is an aura of mystery since I would have anticipated the junior, Tim Schilling (Sylvania Southview) here, and he has so far, not competed and remains unrated. He would have strong placement potential were he to appear. As it is Landerberger, in my mind, has moved past state qualifier Dailey as the best 160# at this district. He has already won Franklin Hts., Hamilton Twp., and Marion Harding including big wins over Nelly and Lester. Dailey, on the other hand has struggled at times although his past record certainly provides a strong foundation for a district title at Rogers. Shelton is also very good -- especially at 160# -- and he may really be the best of this trio. At this point there is a real line of demarcation between the top group and all the rest. I've listed Glass, Boisselle, and the improving Gilmore although candidates like Green (Marion Franklin), Dewhurst (Defiance) and Garcia (Toledo St. John) abound. I particularly like Gilmore's chances of sneaking through this five-man district and qualifying for state level action. Just a small increase in effectiveness would be enough to make this happen.

While it will be a very crowded field at the Southwest District the odds of any of the four qualifiers placing the next weekend are not high. Staggs missed state qualification by one bout last year, and his performance this year has been at a high level marred only by his illness at Kenston which dropped him to fourth. The win at SWOCA is more indicative of his abilities. He has not lost in his district and is narrowly best there. The big news, however, is that Warren is just down from 171# and could play a very significant role at this district. He placed at Medina at the higher weight including wins over Paulsen and Duck. He could be a major threat to Staggs supremacy here. Kaple is probably third best at this district after posting some excellent results this year. Gilliam and Krollman are other possibilities but Johnson has considerable performance upsides. His win at Rogers suggests that he may be undervalued in the above rating. Finally, Bowser (Sidney) has begun to move forward and his losses have all been by very narrow margins to good people like Gilliam or Dobyms.

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: SAM NEIDER (ST. EDWARD)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. James (Lorain Southview) | 14. Ward (West Chester Lakota) |
| 3. Wagner (Mayfield) | 15. Tomcik (Dublin) |
| 4. Rednour (Fairfield) | 16. Goff (Geneva) |
| 5. Padgett (Howland) | 17. Studer (Strongsville) |
| 6. Dillow (Troy) | 18. Krollman (Oak Hills) |
| 7. Patterson (Barberton) | 19. Nash (Kent Roosevelt) |
| 8. Paulsen (Westerville North) | 20. Huber (Groveport) |
| 9. Waugh (Akron Firestone) | 21. Richardson (Cleveland Hts.) |
| 10. Ellis (Worthington Kilbourne) | 22. Henry (Gahanna Lincoln) |
| 11. Fucito (Cincinnati St. Xavier) | 23. Braun (Massillon Jackson) |
| 12. McGee (Toledo Rogers) | 24. Lentz (Toledo St. Francis) |
| 13. Platzar (Willoughby South) | 25. Billian (Toledo Whitmer) |

During the half dozen or so years of its existence the 171# weight class has been one where conventional wisdom seems generally to have been proven correct. The early favorite (at least my favorite) has every year gone on to take the title, and usually without major obstacles being thrust in his path. There is some potential of this occurring again this year, although I suspect Neider will be severely tested at least once at Wright State. Neider is not a large 171 pounder, but he has such talent and skill that even the untrained eye quickly recognizes that he is better than almost anyone else. As a sophomore last year he took a strong third losing only to Franklin in the semi-finals and winning all of his other four bouts in convincing style (the closest was 8-3). This year he is even better and will be a big-time recruit next year. He crushed everyone at Medina -- pinning three times and winning 17-2 and 19-6. His only real loss was at the Super Quad when weighing in at 171# he got pushed up to 189# (as St. Ed's tried desperately to save the lost dual meet) and succumbed to the excellent Williams in a classic battle that had a number of unexpected turning points.

Neider's biggest obstacle may be virtually a handful of miles from St. Ed's. Two-time state qualifier Jimmy James (sixth last year at this weight) has finally reached about 170#. During the last two years he was giving up all kinds of size, and still winning with exceptional quickness and defense. Still only a junior, he has incredible balance making it very difficult to score against him. And as the match unwinds he is able to take advantage of the opponents' frustration as their best shots are countered. As he becomes more aggressive he will become even a greater threat. He and Neider could well meet three successive weekends, and I'm not sure who that will help. State qualifier Wagner has failed to win all three tournaments entered this year -- each time losing to a different Division II competitor. However, he has a history of coming on strong at year's end, and could be a major factor although I don't believe his style matches up well with Neider. Wagner did defeat Rednour earlier this year, and beat James in a district semi-final match last year. The fourth Mentor berth should go to Platzar, another junior, who has improved tremendously this year. Undeclared, he won convincingly at Richmond Hts. and has been consistent in dual meet action. Last year he won three district bouts, but was handled by Neider 10-4. There is a major drop off after this group with Studer, Richardson, and

Kumar (Maple Hts.), maybe, the next best. Since Neider and James exit the same sectional as do Platzer and Wagner -- unfortunate early bracketing could conceivably deprive one of this quartet from placing (two of the top boys meet in the quarter finals and then must meet one of the others in the consolation semi-finals). That would truly be a shame.

At Dayton, Rednour, Dillon, and Fucito look to be the three best. State qualifier Rednour wrestles a huge number of close bouts but he seems to win an outlandish majority of them. Wagner has beaten him twice, however, in the past two seasons. Dillon and Fucito have good credentials with Fucito losing two one pointers to Rednour and Division II choice Ferritto. Ward could be a major surprise here while Krollinan is also strong -- having won convincingly at the GMVWA. Other possibilities are Cochrane (Jecumseh), Darby (Harrison), and Leciejewski (Fairborn).

The Massillon Perry District has some very strong, but, basically unknown competitors. Warren Howland wrestles a schedule that provides about the same level of information that I get from Sumatra. Still, even with that little input it's clear that Padgett is a force to be reckoned with. Last year he was a district semi-finalist at this weight but then lost to state placer Williams in the semis and state runner up Gary in the consolation, 3-2. This year he cleaned house in the three-state Brooke Invitational winning in the finals 16-5. He's for real. Patterson is the leader of a resurrected Barberton team that has moved from the depths to excellence in a few short years. A state qualifier last year at 160# he got caught in a tough draw and took the "two and out" disappointment. This year he has won at Wadsworth, Norton, and Springfield, but has not faced a lot of tough competition -- which may well hinder him later in the year. State qualifier Waugh won at Solon, but was pinned by Neider at Medina and lost narrowly (again) to Patterson. Still he should gain that third qualifying spot with relative ease. Below this trio are a second group of three consisting of Braun, Nash, and Goff who are most likely to fashion an upset if one should occur. Goff, in particular, is a threat based on two district wins last year (but was pinned by Patterson), and an excellent record this year including a strong third at Worthington. Watch for him.

The quintet emerging from Rogers may be a little suspect. State qualifier Ellis (at 152#) is very short and stocky and may struggle making 171#. He lost to Paulson in the dual -- while both were at 189# by a 14-5 count. Paulson was the state alternate last year and has done relatively well this year although he failed to place at Medina. Tomsik, Henry and Huber are three other Central District wrestlers with good qualification chances and I particularly like the latter who was second at Marion Harding and Franklin Hts. while winning at Hamilton Twp. In the Northwest McGee would seem to stand out as easily best although Billian could be a threat. Both Lentz and Fink (Toledo Central Catholic) could challenge Billian for the spot behind McGee. Not a particularly fearsome group.

189#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DAN MIHACEVICH (BRUNSWICK)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Williams (Walsh Jesuit) | 12. Tormasi (Delaware Hayes) |
| 3. Angles (Franklin Hts.) | 13. Inglis (Fitch) |
| 4. Gary (Akron Springfield) | 14. Hesselshwardt (Defiance) |
| 5. Gizzi (St. Ignatius) | 15. Messina (Padua) |
| 6. Hammond (Fairborn) | 16. Samu (Howland) |
| 7. Randolph (Wadsworth) | 17. Pennix (West Chester Lakota) |
| 8. Clay (Troy) | 18. Lake (Euclid) |
| 9. Willman (Greenville) | 19. McCloy (Reynoldsburg) |
| 10. Wood (Ashland) | 20. Wynkoop (Dayton Wayne) |
| 11. Flanary (West Carrollton) | 21. Miller (Findlay) |

This is exceptionally well-balanced weight class with fine wrestlers emerging from all four districts. It promises to be a competition that could hinge on many of the imponderables like the draw, the officiating, the injuries, and just plain luck. Many of the previous weight classes pretty much come down to two or three wrestlers with no one else having much of a chance. That is not true here where almost any of the top ten or so are at least plausible choices for the crown. My choice is two-time state place Dan Mihacevich who has wrestled some of the most exciting bouts the last two years at states. As a sophomore he pulled off a major first-round upset with heart-stopping 15-13 win over Uphouse. Then last year in the semi-finals he took co-favorite Joe Myers into overtime before losing 12-10. This year there has been no such drama as Mihacevich has pretty much had things his own way dominating every competitor to this point. For example, he won the Brunswick on a technical fall.

His strongest competition may come from his own district. Williams, fourth last year at 171#, is a tremendously solid competitor who gives nothing away. He has won at Worthington, Medina and the OCC meeting many of the top wrestlers along the way. His only loss was to that behemoth from Lawton Oklahoma who somehow is in a different league than anyone else. Mihacevich and Williams should be away since they come out of the same district. Right behind them will be Gizzi who lost 5-4 to Williams at the OCC. Just rounding into shape after helping win a state football title, he is an extremely physical and rugged competitor. Messina, injured of late, is the fourth choice based on solid wins at Brecksville and Avon Lake while the powerful Lake is also good. Other possibilities albeit low probability ones are Feruito (Mayfield) and Harteis (Hudson).

The competition will also be fierce at Massillon Perry. Gary lost twice in district competition at 171# last year qualifying for states by a single point. Then at Dayton he caught fire and rolled into the finals including a close win over Williams. This from a sophomore. Now the state runner up is up at 189# and has struggled somewhat with the bigger boys. Still his fifth at Medina could easily be converted into an appearance in the finals except for a very close 9-8 defeat. Remember Gary lost five times last year and still was strong at year's end. Expect that to happen again. Randolph, another state qualifier, has not been quite as sharp this year as I anticipated. A long-time rival of

Mihacevich their bouts follow no form sheet and anything can happen. Still Randolph struggled at Wadsworth and may now be a step behind the top four. Inglis and Samu are also old rivals with the former defeating the latter for a coveted state berth last year. They could be faced with that same prospect this year. Lautenschlager (Massillon Perry) is the only other contender here.

I'm not sure how good Angles is. He crushed everyone at Franklin Hts. and did pretty much the same thing at the SWOCA, but in neither case has he faced any of the other big timers. Never a state qualifier he could burst upon the scene in a flurry of pinning combinations and falls. The rest of the Rogers District is solid, but I think only Angles has much of a chance of placing. Wood, Tormasi, Hesselschwardt, McCloy, and Miller add up (along with Angles) to one more than Rogers' qualifies so the competition should be fierce. Wood lost two heartbreakers in district action last year, but has won at Wayne and the Gorman -- avenging there his lone defeat to Tilton. Hesselschwardt won two district bouts last year, but lost by six to Angles in the consolations. Still he ended up with 25 wins. McCloy and Miller are the best possibilities for the last spot with Valentino (Westland) a possible contender.

The field is very strong and deep at the Southwest District. State qualifiers Hammond and Willman are back and although they went 0 for 4 at Wright State, they will certainly be contenders for a low place this year. The excellent Clay may have moved ahead of them based on a series of strong performances marred only by a third place finish at Kenston. If you hypothesize that these are three of the four qualifiers only one spot is left for Planary, Pennix, Wynkoop, and Jaeger (Cincinnati Northwest). The pairings could well play a big role in deciding that dilemma.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: AIRRON RICHARDSON (TOLEDO START)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Santiago (St. Edward) | 12. Olinger (Cincinnati Moeller) |
| 3. Wise (Massillon Perry) | 13. Hast (Anderson) |
| 4. Mackintosh (Carrollton) | 14. Thompson (Euclid) |
| 5. Robinson (Toledo Woodward) | 15. Gray (Perrysburg) |
| 6. Finkes (Piqua) | 16. Green (Shaker Hts.) |
| 7. Brookins (Cincinnati Princeton) | 17. Williams (Fitch) |
| 8. Jarina (Garfield Hts.) | 18. Wojciechowski (Toledo Bowsher) |
| 9. Waring (Thomas Worthington) | 19. Major (Elyria) |
| 10. Huffman (Centerville) | 20. Breitfield (Dayton Wayne) |
| 11. Cogar (Uniontown Lake) | 21. Shively (Hilliard) |

I figure that there are about a dozen heavyweights who could win the state title -- a surprising number when you remember that last year's second and third place winners return. Still, last year state field was very weak decimated by upsets, injuries and a poor crop of seniors. This year it could be very different with many evenly-matched participants scrambling to win it all. The heavyweight classification is always one where officiating, the draw and startling turnabouts occur and when you mix 12 to 14 relatively comparable

heavyweights in such a competition almost anything can happen. Actually, what I'm trying to tell you is that I have no idea who will win -- nor, for that matter, does any other reasonably unbiased observer.

When I began writing this report I started with Division I and completed every weight class but the very confusing one at heavyweight. Then I moved on to the other school classifications, hoping that in the intervening period that new results would somehow clarify this tangle at heavyweight. Nothing of the sort has happened and, if anything, the situation is more muddled than before. Rarely have I seen a competition that I believe is more dependent on the pairings. Given the perfect draw any of the top dozen or so heavyweights could become the champion. So from that perspective the final outcome will depend not only on talent and strength, but also on simple good fortune.

There are two tremendous talents in the Toledo area. Richardson was fourth last year at 189#, but has matured into an outstanding heavyweight. He has the moves and technique of a 160 pounder and the power of a heavyweight to make them work. He is totally undefeated including a 13-8 win over Robinson. The only problem could be the 270 pounders like Olinger who are terrifically physical and tough to move. On the other hand, he tossed the 265# Division III runner-up Hart around while building a 20-6 lead before pinning him. Robinson has burst on the scene like a rocket. He is 20-1 with virtually all of his victories on falls. I think he may be the best prospect here with terrific athleticism for a 260 pounder. The only issue is whether he has the experience to endure the tight strategic bouts that often occur at this weight class. Again, there is a real drop off after this top pair. State qualifier Waring is next best and has won a number of important bouts this year. Wojciechowski and Gray also look like qualifiers although Shively, Armstrong (Groveport) and Litschewski (Toledo St. Francis) are possibilities.

At Massillon Perry there are four fine heavyweights vying for three state tournament spots. Wise, the defending state runner-up, is probably the most consistent of this group. Except for a two-week period when he was weakened by injury he has strung together a number of good performances. Even during that early part of the season when ill, he lost by a single point to Santiago and placed at Medina. He took tremendous advantage of a great state draw last year to get second. Mackintosh is a real talent. He was the district champ last year -- pinning Wise, but then immediately lost two bouts at states and was eliminated. He has been outstanding this season. Cogar has missed most of the year due to mononucleosis. Just back he placed fourth at Alliance -- losing to Santiago and Jarina. Williams was the champ at North Canton and was fifth at Alliance. Last year Wise whomped him 10-1 in district action. He may be the odd man out here.

Santiago and Jarina look like they should dominate Mentor. The former was behind state champion Terebeniec the last three years at St. Edward and wrestled brilliantly on the St. Ed's varsity green team. He upset Terebeniec in a preview bout last year and many felt he could have placed in the 1992 states. This is his last opportunity and so far he has made the most of it winning at Warren (PA), Medina, the OCC and Alliance. His only loss was a dual meet defeat by Dennis. He has an uncanny knack of winning one-point bouts, and it is of concern that he wrestles so many of them. Jarina, only a junior, is a wonderfully mobile heavyweight who should have qualified last year. After being upset in the semi-finals, 5-2, he came back and was pinned in 13 seconds in his go-to-state bout.

He has won several tourneys and suffered his only loss at Alliance to Division II Barlow -- a bout where he failed to utilize his skills to greatest advantage. Thompson, Green and Major are all better-than-average heavyweights who still are a cut below the top pair. They have the best opportunity to take the last two spots with Salti (Lakewood) also a possibility.

The Southwest District is crowded with good heavyweights. Finkes was third last year -- losing only to Wise 6-1 -- and has been excellent this year, although losing to Rose at Troy (he had defeated him earlier in the year). Brookins is a powerhouse who may need to be in better shape to beat the best boys, but he has a lot of ability. The old maxim, "On any given day . . .", applies to him. State qualifier Hoffman raced through the Brecksville pinning in the finals, but was only third at the Bill Dies. Hast won the SWOCA -- beating Brookins -- but that may have been a one-time thing. The massive Olinger lost on penalty points to Santiago and at 270# he is hard to move. Physically he is one of the toughest wrestlers around -- although Brookins did "deck" him. State qualifier Breitfield may be in serious jeopardy here, while Miller (Sycamore) and Hershner (Hamilton) are good enough to qualify but probably won't.

DIVISION I TEAMS

1. Walsh Jesuit -- A team that is led by a half dozen brilliant underclassmen who have the talent and experience to win their second state title in three years. Musser and Johnson are marvelous juniors who have two titles (Musser) and two near titles (Johnson). The sophomores O'Neill, Overholt, Plouse and Groudle (despite wrestling up two classes) are nearly as good with the first two potential superstars in their own right. Even the freshmen Favaro and Rawlings could help out. Still it is likely to come down to the two seniors -- the steady reliable, consistent Williams and the talented but enigmatic Ford. Imagine where they would be if the incomparable Owens, Martin and Kevin O'Neil had returned this year as originally anticipated.
2. St. Edward -- My secret team formula complete with esoteric statistics and arcane knowledge and usually wrong shows St. Ed's a couple of points ahead of Walsh -- but I just don't think it will happen. St. Ed's has more placement opportunities than Walsh, but there are also more question marks. Neider and Jayne are superstars, but the latter is at a most difficult weight. Santiago also could be a finalist, but in the final analysis it's the middleweights that are crucial. Dawson has got to get healed and back on track at 140#, while Clement and Wallace need to be in the top four. The drops by the latter two while making sense from an individual viewpoint probably lost the team points because Wallace and Clement probably won't score many more points down a class, but now Augustine won't be able to contribute. Hatta is being counted on at 112# for placement points, but that seems real shaky. Still, like Walsh, I think 140# is the key weight class.
3. Fairfield -- Wineberg and Wright are narrow choices to win individual titles, but after that the outlook is hazy. While they may qualify seven or eight boys, only Rednour, Staggs and Estep have any chance of scoring at the state meet -- and then, except for Rednour, probably only at a minimal level.
4. Lorain Southview -- Franklin is the lone super-star, but James is a potential finalist while Quimbaya and Orellano could be major players at their individual weight classes. If the Williams brothers can contribute and Mendez gets comfortable at 103# they could easily move up a spot -- or, perhaps, even more.
5. St. Ignatius -- A rapidly improving team with six potential qualifiers and a couple of potential finalists. Vaughn, of course, leads the way, but Gizzi has come on strong at 189#. Shepard and Eddings could qualify and grab some vital team points, but the real keys are Thomson and Dempsey. They need to find exactly the right weight for the former and get the latter back on track at 103#. If everything goes well, they could get third.
6. Uniontown Lake -- This team has had a lot of bad luck and, maybe, that'll turn around in time for tournament action. Whitmer has continued to improve and while 119# is a dynamite weight, his style could still score big points. After that there are plenty of possibilities for low to middle places. Herbert, Angione, Harris and Cogar are all in that group and Paulsen is not

- that far behind. Of course, a huge momentum gainer would be if the exceptional Minick somehow defied medical forecasting and returned.
7. Toledo St. John -- Shawn Contos is a likely champ with the present configuration of opponents and Newsom certainly has placement potential. A key is Kevin Contos and how he will match up with the squadron of 103s from the Mentor District. With five qualifiers at Olentangy they also have hopes of getting one or two more to Wright State, but only a revitalized Smith could score there.
 8. Maple Hts. -- Kosarko is an outstanding wrestler and should win at 145#. After him it's pretty much an all junior team that features Deubel, Nelly and Magistrelli, and a number of other possibilities like Mayes. Unfortunately they exit the toughest sectional and the absolutely brutal Mentor District is liable to chew them up.
 9. Massillon Perry -- Wise could be first at heavyweight, but then ten other guys could say that. Ramos, Blake and Smith are other possibilities, but the key man is Fichter. If he regains top form, he's got a great chance for a high place.
 10. Toledo Start -- A team that could really surprise at Wright State. Richardson has been brilliant all year at heavyweight and has at least as good a chance as anyone else at heavyweight. Add in potential finalist Bloomer and you have a lot of points. If state qualifier Tyburski or the rapidly improving Henderly can pitch in this team could move up a few places.
 11. Groveport -- A team with no superstar who is sure to score big at Wright State. Still the lightweight of Frohnafel, Nieman, Cannon and Corron could qualify and the upper weights of Landenberger, Archer, Huber and Armstrong could do the same. The problem could be that none of them can score at the state level.
 12. Lebanon -- Enright and Worley are the sum and substance of this team, so there is no margin for error. Still between 30 to 35 points would not seem excessive.
 13. Hilliard -- Hammons, Clingman, Campbell and Griffith are tough in the middle of the line up, although none of them can hope for much more than a low place. Doerrerr has come on strong while Shively is still a threat, too. What they really need is Cameron to be healthy, but apparently he's done for the year.

DIVISION II

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: LUKE WORKMAN (OLMSTED FALLS)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Meek (Millbury Lake) | 13. Tucker (Martins Ferry) |
| 3. Kosins (Bellbrook) | 14. Philabaum (Canal Fulton NW) |
| 4. Russell (Dover) | 15. Hager (Bethel-Tate) |
| 5. Lamson (Clyde) | 16. Hardman (Hoban) |
| 6. Creech (Milton Union) | 17. Vreeeland (Oak Harbor) |
| 7. Puthoff (Cincinnati Purcell) | 18. Davidson (Miami Trace) |
| 8. Corbiere (Firelands) | 19. Rich (Ravenna) |
| 9. Zeller (Marlington) | 20. Mayne (Little Miami) |
| 10. Ramos (Wauseon) | 21. Clemons (Hillsboro) |
| 11. Furry (Conneaut) | 22. King (Olentangy) |
| 12. M. Everhart (Springfield Shawnee) | 23. Spurlock (Bellevue) |

Last year this weight class was loaded with a wide assortment of talent ranging from freshmen like Marder and Pariano through some great underclassmen like Daugherty and Reynolds up to the senior champion Santa Maria. This season has just the opposite situation with the 103# category weaker than it has been for some time. Unless there is a deeply hidden sleeper in this group only the top three have a chance of winning with Workman a clear favorite. Last year he was a semi-finalist at this class before losing to Santa Maria and eventually falling to sixth. Both consolation losses were by a single point. He has been primarily at 112# coming down only at Kenston where he lost (as did Wright) to the West Virginian Taylor. Two years ago I was told that Luke would soon be a state champion by an unimpeachable source and it now seems that such an outcome could be at hand.

There is not a lot of power at Firestone. The young Corbiere has been very good, winning at Black River and Edison in impressive fashion. Strength of schedule, however, has not been one of the highlights of his season. How he'll do against the top boys is still unclear, but he seems to have real upset potential. Zeller who won at Wadsworth could be someone to watch while Furry, Hardman and Rich look more like low district placers. Something to look for might be Philabaum -- apparently coming down from a solid season at 112# -- and who could be a big factor at the lower weight class. The same is also true although to a lesser extent if Foster (Canton South) can make 103#. A dark horse candidate is the Young Walters (Lake Catholic) who has been hardened by a tough, tough schedule. The interesting point is that possibly the third or fourth best 103 pounder here is the freshman Burkhardt (Olmsted Falls) who will probably be shut out when Workman and Atkins move down.

The senior Meek has also had a big season losing only to Division I Calderon in overtime. He paid his dues last year in that murderous Olentangy District -- getting a fourth -- but then had a horrendous state draw losing to Santa Maria, the champion, and Dominique, a placer, back to back. His only real competition here should come from the excellent Lamson who has won at Fremont Ross, Clyde,

Tiffin and Fremont St. Joseph. His only close championship bout was 3-1 to Division I Dubendorfer. There is a major drop off after this duo, although Ramos is in kind of in a no-man's land between the top duo and everyone else. After that Vreeland, King and Spurlock are another step back, but still with chances for a qualification berth.

Russell stands out at Warren. A district runner up and state qualifier last year, his season ended with consecutive defeats by Daugherty and Worley. This year he is bigger and stronger and will be a standout in his district and very competitive at Wright State. He won handily at Smithville. Tucker is probably next best, but all of his competition has been right in the Ohio Valley so it's difficult to judge him against the rest of the state. Davidson and Clemmons are probably the favorites for the last berth, but the little freshman Woomer (Vincent Warren) should make things interesting.

Kosins is very good. He won the mammoth GMVWA and whipped Kevin Contos 6-1 in the finals. He was a Division III third place winner last year but now his school has moved up to Division II in 1993. He would be a strong title favorite had they remained in Division III, but could well win it here although I believe Workman is a shade better. Last year Kosins lost to Firem at Wright State 7-0, but then avenged it in the third place bout 11-4. Greech is also good and could be a placer while Puthoff has to be put in the same category. Mayne and Hager are also rated with M. Everhart (Springfield Shawnee) and Kenny (Loveland) as other possibilities. This will be an excellent district competition.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: STEVE DAUGHERTY (RAVENNA)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Reynolds (Port Clinton) | 13. Fugate (Dayton Northridge) |
| 3. Dominique (Bryan) | 14. Stopperich (Twinsburg) |
| 4. Cope (Salem) | 15. Ollom (Vincent Warren) |
| 5. Fratta (Williard) | 16. Pace (Revere) |
| 6. J. Roe (Meadowbrook) | 17. La Fountain (Paulding) |
| 7. K. Atkins (Olmsted Falls) | 18. McCafferty (Fairfield Union) |
| 8. Moore (Springfield Shawnee) | 19. Ewing (St. Clairsville) |
| 9. Wobser (Perkins) | 20. Dimitris (Brecksville) |
| 10. Ricker (Dover) | 21. Jacobs (St. Paris Graham) |
| 11. Page (Swanton) | 22. Weaver (Washington Courthouse) |
| 12. Simmons (Lake Catholic) | 23. Arden (Clyde) |

A good number of excellent 103s from last year appeared to have settled at 112# making for something of an encore presentation -- although this go-around may turn out to have a different ending. The top four choices are all returning state place winners and there are another eight former state qualifiers. Still, you've got to look first at Daugherty, runner up at 103# in 1992, and a powerful force all through this season with big wins at Solon and Kenston. Last year he suffered an early district loss, but came back to get a third -- including wins over Workman (1-0) and Marder (6-4 OT). Then at Wright State he caught fire earning a finalist berth. He is so much bigger and stronger this year that he

will be difficult to derail. A major change is the reclassification of CAPE to Division III meaning defending state champion Shantell Sanders will now compete in a different division.

The Firestone District has good depth with solid contenders from every sectional. Cope, sixth at 112#, upset state runner-up Jake Davis in the first round last year, and missed being a finalist by two points. He has been at 119# with somewhat less effectiveness than anticipated and will probably be at 112#. Atkins has also switched between 112# and 119# and his 7-5 OT loss to Daugherty gives good measure to his potential. Pace was a state alternate last year -- losing to Workman and could be another factor here. Stopperich was very impressive at Solon and Hudson and is a very large 112 pounder. The clever Simmons cannot be overlooked especially as Lake Catholic gains team momentum. He won two district matches last losing only to Daugherty and Marder. He could well move into the top trio at this district. Dimitris or Caruso will represent Brecksville at this district, and both have big wins this year. Dimitris recently upset Russo (Strongsville) -- a Division I power -- and his wide youth experience is beginning to pay off. He was second to Workman at Massillon Perry and a strong third at Brecksville. I've rated him here and left Caruso at 119#. Two others to watch for are Mowrer (Triway) who has collected some big wins this year, and Bristow (Avon Lake) a great freshman just down from 119#.

The Olentangy District may be even stronger than Firestone and all the top contenders are from the Northwest District leaving the Central competitors well behind. The tenacious Reynolds was fourth last year beating Pariano, Workman and Worley and he has been very successful this season. He beat Frohnafel for the Marion Harding title and also won at Sandusky St. Mary. He was the district champ last year over Dominique. That could well be the match up this year with Dominique (fifth last year at Wright State) still a major force. Unlike Reynolds he has spent much of the year at 119#. Fratta has been terrific winning at the Gorman, Wadsworth and Edison with machine-like precision. A state qualifier last year he won two bouts before being eliminated by Dominique 8-6 -- one bout short of placing. Page is a two-time state qualifier who has been plagued by injuries the past two seasons. I'm not sure he has kept up with the top trio. LaFountain is a seasoned campaigner while Wobser has been very strong this year. Any of this top six could place. McCafferty and Wears (Hamilton Twp.) are the best Central District hopes to crack this Northwest domination -- with Arden another Northwestern contender. He could vault past both Page and LaFountain. One other possibility is Fabian (Oak Harbor) who has been in and out of the line up all season.

Roe was dominant at the OVAC -- at least until the finals -- and that may presage a strong state performance. A state qualifier at this weight last year he was eliminated in the first round. This year he has been pretty much untouchable in his geographical area. There are four returning state qualifiers fighting here for three spots. Roe looks safe and Ricker is probably a reasonably sure bet as well. However, that means Ollom and Ewing are on the bubble with nothing much to choose between them. Ewing wrestled a very gutsy state bout losing only 3-2 to Pariano while Ollom was "two and out." Roe holds an 8-0 victory over Ewing. Weaver looks like his excellent season will end at the district level.

Moore and Fugate are returning state qualifiers but neither won a bout at Wright State. Again I don't see anyone out of this district as a potential

finalist, but Moore could possibly grab a low place. He lost to Fratta 4-3 in OT at States. This year he has been the touchstone for all the excellent Springfield Shawnee lightweights -- compiling a 24-2 record. Fugate would seem to be second best, however, Peterman (Indian Lakes) upset him 10-8 early in the season and could be a factor. Jacobs and Ray (Hamilton Ross) also could have a role at this district.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KELLY SHIELDS (EDISON SOUTH)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Marder (Twinsburg) | 14. L. Everhart (Springfield Shawnee) |
| 3. Haverdill (Lake Catholic) | 15. Zaborowski (Maumee) |
| 4. Tye (Cincinnati Purcell) | 16. Ruehling (Canal Fulton NW) |
| 5. Pariano (Fairview Park) | 17. Johnson (West Holmes) |
| 6. Grucella (Revere) | 18. Ohl (Bellevue) |
| 7. Mease (Bucyrus) | 19. Lengefield (Hillsboro) |
| 8. Derr (Ravenna) | 20. DeTray (Oak Harbor) |
| 9. Thomas (Beechcroft) | 21. Duffy (Washington Courthouse) |
| 10. Kev. Shamblin (Ravenna Southeast) | 22. Piacentini (Teays Valley) |
| 11. Creech (Milton Union) | 23. Jacobs (Urbana) |
| 12. Caruso (Brecksville) | 24. Gonzalez (Clyde) |
| 13. Dillon (Martins Ferry) | 25. Ross (Big Walnut) |

This promises to be an excellent weight class with outstanding performers, close bouts, and unexpected winners. It brings together good wrestlers from all around the state with a wide spectrum of body types and wrestling styles. It also presents a real dilemma as to who will eventually nail down the top spot. Despite substantial indecision I've gone with former state champion Shields with the recognition that several other choices are probably equally likely.

Shields, a very rare four-time OVAC champ (only Bobby Douglas and Mark Emmerling are in that club), will also be a four-time state qualifier. As a sophomore he crushed the assembled field at 103# winning the title on a first period fall. An overwhelming favorite last year at 112# he struggled losing twice in the early going and failed to place. Only later was it revealed that a painful rib injury undoubtedly contributed to his unexpectedly poor performance. This year he has been at 125# until last week -- and while undefeated had far more close bouts than would be expected considering the level of competition. A very strong 119 pounder -- he crushed the younger Roskovich for the OVAC title -- he is still only a marginal favorite at this weight.

Marder has a world of talent. Third last year at 103# he has been dominating all year losing only to Wineberg. He could almost be considered a co-favorite with Shields. His enormous leverage and vast experience make him very difficult to defeat. Pariano, too has been solid with his lone loss to Marder at Solon 9-3. He, too, is a very large 119 pounder and his tremendous youth wrestling experience gives him a real edge in the flurries. Haverdill, fourth at 119# last year, is another top placement candidate. Marder beat him 10-2 at Kenston, but that margin was unexpectedly large. He has wrestled the most

rigorous schedule here and should be ready for Lake Catholic's annual tournament charge. Grucella was third last year -- defeating Shields 8-6 -- and losing only to the champion Shantell Sanders. He won handily at Brunswick and will match up well with the other top Firestone contenders. That's four outstanding performers at this district, but there are still many other possibilities. Derr, a former state qualifier, slumped last year, but has been on a real roll in 1993. He beat Haverdill 8-2 at Kenston and handled state placer Cope in a dual. State qualifier Shamblin will probably drop to 119# when Bailey comes down and will add to the confusion. That still leaves Caruso, Ruehling and Grubach (VASJ) as possibilities any of whom could well qualify elsewhere. O'Donaghue (Bay Village), Wayt (West Branch) and Tomscik (Norton) need to think about returning to 125#, while Grubach (VASJ), a fine freshman, will use this experience as a springboard for next season.

Tye is the sole standout in the Southwest District. Only a sophomore he was a district finalist last year (losing to state champ Sanders 17-10), but then lost an early down-tempo match and was eliminated. This year I have him at 17-1 -- the only loss a 3-2 squeaker to two-time champ Wineberg. He could be a finalist. State alternate Creech is a clear step behind although he is a tenacious competitor. He is about the only person in that area to go six minutes with Dernlan -- which he has done twice although losing by half dozen points each time. Creech beat Everhart in the districts last year, but this duo is about on the same level. Jacobs and Humphries (Hamilton Ross) are yet another level below.

Shields does not face strong district competition at Warren. The one exception is state qualifier Dillon who was 18-1 at 125# going into the OVAC tourney and has won a lot of the internecine competitions that proliferate in the valley. Making 119# will probably be a struggle, but an almost sure state berth will reward that effort. I've also listed Johnson -- a surprise winner at the Gorman -- second but he is no real threat to Shields. Lengefield and Duffy may be next best with Schein (New Lexington) and outside choice. Except for Shields and, perhaps, Dillon, this group will struggle at Wright State.

There is plenty of quantity at Olentangy, but the quality is suspect. Mease has won at Bucyrus and Clyde while finishing third at the Gorman. A state qualifier last year he is the logical top choice, but I'm not sure he has made much improvement this year. State qualifier Thomas is very strong, but shows a lack of experience in big matches. He won three district consolation bouts last year to qualify. Zaborowski and Ohl may have improved the most -- the former winning at Tiffin while the latter took the crown at Bellevue. I've also rated DeTray, Piacentini, Gonzalez and Ross toward the bottom of the chart but Burba (Kenton) and Peterreit (Olentangy) could be spoilers. It wouldn't be a big surprise if some of the excess 112s land here.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMP: BRIAN LANESE (LAKE CATHOLIC)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. R. Bailey (Ravenna Southeast) | 13. Fashinpaur (Revere) |
| 3. Blair (Rossford) | 14. Kavulis (VASJ) |
| 4. Smith (Martins Ferry) | 15. Boggess (Vermillion) |
| 5. Stober (Bethel-Tate) | 16. N. Spencer (Edison South) |
| 6. Mullins (Nordonia) | 17. Zuercher (West Holmes) |
| 7. Davis (Paulding) | 18. Wisecup (Carlisle) |
| 8. Wright (Louisville) | 19. Losie (Oak Harbor) |
| 9. Cyphers (Dayton Northridge) | 20. Ralston (St. Clairsville) |
| 10. Gill (Fairview Park) | 21. Heinle (Bucyrus) |
| 11. French (Eaton) | 22. Gonzalez (Springfield Shawnee) |
| 12. Sony (London) | 23. Hill (Beechcroft) |

As it is currently constituted this is one of the weaker weight classes in Division II. However, that could well change as it becomes clear how crowded the 130-pound class has become. Perhaps as many as a half dozen 130s could well drop to this much more congenial class. Should that occur it will surely change the present dynamics of the competition.

I'm not sure Lanese has wrestled quite as well this year as in 1992, but he has maintained a perfect record including big wins over Parks, Blair and Augustine. Already twice a state place winner in Division I (second and fourth) he was beaten both years by the incomparable Musser (once in the semis and once in the finals). This year he has won at the OCC and Kenston, but has wrestled more close bouts than I would have anticipated. He, however, remains the easy choice here because the field is not strong -- at least not yet.

Bailey, a two-time state qualifier, is one of those 130 pounders who will drop and he could be a real force here. Last year he was a state semi-final loser to the unsung Meyer 7-5, and then dropped to sixth with two further losses. He is totally undefeated and the winner at Smithville, but Ravenna Southeast's schedule seems soft to me and that could adversely impact him. He and Lanese should be in opposite brackets so they could easily be finalists. State qualifiers Mullins, Gill and Kavulis along Wright would seem to be the conventional choices for the other three qualifying berths. In bouts actually wrestled to completion the qualifying trio was actually 0-6 although they picked up three advancements on forfeits and defaults. None of them have been overpowering this year and there are enough other competitors of similar skills to knock them out. I've listed Fashinpaur, but Pfeiffer (Buckeye), Lazar (Trinity), Balog (Ravenna) and Clark (Warrensville Hts.) are other such possibilities.

Blair and Davis are the only returning state qualifiers at Olentangy, but the former is much more of a threat to the top boys. His two losses have been to former state runners-up Lanese (10-7) and Jake Davis (10-5). He has definite placement potential. Paulding wrestles a much easier schedule, but I am not yet willing to discount Davis. He crushed the third rated wrestler at this district 14-6 last year. I've rated a number of other possibilities but none of these are

likely to send your pulse racing. This is one of the districts where there are a lot of superfluous 130s who could drop.

Stober was sixth last year at 119# including impressive wins over Mullins and Beard. This year he was second at the SWOCA to the excellent Haro 9-7, and that is an impressive score. He has also won a number of smaller tourneys and should be a factor here. Again the rest of the entourage is relatively weak with Cyphers and French looking next best. Cyphers was a strong second at the huge GMWA while French has won several smaller competitions. Cannon (Loveland), Cooper (Urbana) and Hicks (Springboro) are other possibilities.

While Shields has moved to 119#, the excellent Smith looks like he will drop to help fill the void. He cruised to a district title last year and won two state bouts as well. He is undefeated in the valley and with 24 consecutive wins and will be pretty much unchallenged at the district level. His title as the OVAC, at 130#, certainly seems to guarantee that. He looks like a potential state placer. Nick Spencer has also reappeared moving from Edison North -- where he was a Division III state qualifier (he met Wilkovich and Dernlan in his only two state bouts with predictable results) -- and is now at Edison South. Having Shields as a workout partner has to be a plus. Zuercher and Ralston are the top choices for the last two spots with squadrons of folks just behind them.

130#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DAN AMBROZIAK (LAKE CATHOLIC)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. S. Shaw (Claymont) | 14. Faulkner (Little Miami) |
| 3. Keller (Maumee) | 15. Butler (Revere) |
| 4. Walker (Milton Union) | 16. Preston (Miami Trace) |
| 5. Keske (Bellevue) | 17. Martinez (Port Clinton) |
| 6. Singleton (Crestwood) | 18. Dawson (Clermont NE) |
| 7. Andres (Clyde) | 19. C. Miller (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 8. Kosins (Bellbrook) | 20. Papay (Shelby) |
| 9. Roman (Canfield) | 21. Stoner (St. Clairsville) |
| 10. Waskiewicz (Twinsburg) | 22. Reuss (Bay) |
| 11. Whitlatch (Rossford) | 23. Kruse (Hillsboro) |
| 12. Russell (Martins Ferry) | 24. Osborne (Licking Valley) |
| 13. Samblanet (Vermillion) | 25. Rowland (Rocky River) |

In similar fashion to 119# this is a weight class that should provide a feast to the dedicated wrestling fan. It is strong and deep with the possibility of any number of fascinating match ups. It's one of those classes where returning state qualifiers can get rated 18th because of the overall strength of the competition, and where each provides wrestlers who can compete at the highest levels.

And yet I find the task of choosing a future champ surprisingly easy. Dan Ambroziak has now been third the last two years losing to Lebanon state champs Noble and Enright each time. Now that Lebanon has moved to Division I clearly the last obstacle to a state crown has been removed. This year he won at Kenston

and finished second on tie breaker at the OCC. His big dual victory over Clement was impressive and his command of the sport makes him extremely difficult to score on. This year should be his year.

Shaw -- a two-time state qualifier -- could be Ambroziak's closest rival. His only loss was to Johnson albeit by a much bigger score and he, too, owns a win over Clement. Shaw has not enjoyed good luck at the state meet never winning a bout there. This year things will be substantially different with the possible promise of a finalist berth on Saturday. Russell, soon to be down from 135#, is another in a series of fine middleweights at Martins Ferry. The quartet of Dillon, Smith, Russell and Valentine are the foundation of this OVAC championship team. Russell is 22-4 with victories at Bellaire St. John and Shadyside and second at Barnesville where Shaw defeated him 22-7. His fifth at the OVAC should be but a temporary setback, and I would anticipate him qualifying out of this district. It seems likely that state qualifier Preston -- down from 135# last year -- will be the third qualifier but he has had some uneven results. Either Stoner or Kruse could challenge as might Barrett (Warren), Miller (Maysville) and Talbott (New Lexington). This should be a fine district.

Again at Olentangy the Northwest competitors seemingly overwhelm those from the Central District. Any of a half dozen could qualify and any that do should have placement potential. I've put defending district champ and state qualifier Ken Keller first, but he had better be super prepared to defend. Last year at Wright State he opened with a win, but was then tech failed by Enright and could win no more. He has won at St. Johns and Tiffin in impressive fashion this year. Keske is a whirlwind. He has won everything again this year, and looks primed for a return trip to Wright State. Keller beat him in the district final last year, and then an upset loss to Meyers whom he had previously defeated took him out of the competition. Andres cut like crazy last year to 112# and it paid off with a state berth. While he lost twice it had to be great experience for a sophomore. This year his only losses were to Keller (12-6) at Tiffin and Keske (6-4) at Clyde. Samblanet, state alternate Whitlatch and state qualifier Martinez are possible choices for the last two spots. I think that Papay -- winner at the Gorman and Tiffin, may also be a strong contender while Osborne, Boval (Olentangy) and Dierckman (Columbus DeSales) are also possibilities.

At Dayton, Walker, a state alternate, has made major progress this year, and certainly has placement potential. State qualifiers Kosins is his chief rival here. They were 2-3 at the GMVWA behind Enright and have both won smaller tournaments. They outpace the remainder of the pack. That is lead by Faulkner and state qualifier Dawson while Cummins (Indian Lake) is another possibility. That third state berth is wide open.

At Firestone things should be exciting. Ambroziak, of course, is top rated. After him Singleton looks next best. He was a Division I qualifier for Alliance at 112# last year and then went to the state semi-finals before losing back to backers with Wineberg (4-2) and Johnson (6-1) and finishing fifth. He was second to Ambroziak at Kenston losing 3-1. He has some dynamite moves. Waskiewicz is also a transfer -- from Walsh -- and this sophomore won at Solon and Hudson before getting a third at Kenston behind Ambroziak and Singleton. He is currently ineligible and I am unsure as to his availability by tournament time. Roman is now down to 130# and he was impressive at Solon losing only to Thomson. Butler, Rowland, Miller and Reuss are other rated possibilities while Fink (Nordonia), Seacrist (Chardon) and Edwards (Fairview Park) are other thoughts.

Both Seacrist and Rowland are good, but Rowland has not had the kind of year I anticipated after his good finish last season.

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DENOVA WRIGHT (RAVENNA)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2. Tye (Cincinnati Purcell) | 14. Cleary (Canfield) |
| 3. Clark (Mason) | 15. Franks (West Holmes) |
| 4. Balogh (Brecksville) | 16. Carney (Nardonla) |
| 5. Byers (Urbana) | 17. Valentine (Martins Ferry) |
| 6. Fultz (Bellevue) | 18. Hector (Vermillion) |
| 7. Christ (Bay Village) | 19. Putnam (Lima Shawnee) |
| 8. Dawson (Green) | 20. Scarberry (Sheridan) |
| 9. Buhrow (Oak Harbor) | 21. Eichelbarger (Springfield Shawnee) |
| 10. Mosure (Columbus DeSales) | 22. Eisnaugle (Edison South) |
| 11. Jacobs (Crestwood) | 23. Decembly (Benedictine) |
| 12. Burger (Norwalk) | 24. Jones (Hillsboro) |
| 13. Keith Shamblin (Ravenna Southeast) | 25. Buck (Maumee) |

I also chose DeNova Wright to win last year at this weight although at the time I did not realize that my 130# choice Jody Withrow would also compete here. I still felt pretty good about the selection when Wright tech falled Malloy in the district final after Withrow had earlier lost a 12-10 barn burner. At states, Withrow was brilliant and Wright stumbled in the semi-finals losing by one point and getting his second state placement -- this time a third. Well, Wright hasn't grown even a half-inch in the last year so he should be back here once again after competing all year at 140#. His quickness and strength set him apart from this field although not to the extent that makes him upset proof. Still if he is healthy and in good form he should finally win a well deserved title.

Wright emerges from a district with up to 12 potential state qualifiers -- half of whom could conceivably place given a hot weekend. With only five state berths open the competition will be fierce. Balogh, for example, qualified at 130# last year, and took the eventual champ Wimmers into overtime before losing his first round bout. This year he has won the Early Bird, Coventry, Brecksville, and Massillon Perry titles (including a big win over Fichter) and has one hotly disputed 16-5 dual meet loss to Kotlyn. Christ is a two-time state qualifier who wrestles a down-tempo, mistake-free bout that he manages to perfection. Dawson has shown great improvement while state qualifier Jacobs has just moved down to 135# after spending all his time at 140#. He was third at Kenston. Shamblin, Carney, Cleary and Decembly are all good performers who will pressure that top quartet. Three dark horses to watch are Kirk (West Geauga), Nutter (Buckeye) and Grubach (VASJ) who have an arsenal of moves that can create upsets. Bourne (Chardon) is also down from 140# and he, too, was a semi-finalist at Kenston before losing to Malloy. What a great competition with fireworks starting in the first round.

Wright's top competition is likely to exit the Southwest District. Tye finished fifth last year at 125# after winning his district championship. This year he won the SWOCA and dominated at Sycamore winning a tech fall finale. Clark also placed last season -- fourth at 130# -- losing twice to the excellent Damsa while defeating Balogh and Scott Shaw. He was third at the SWOCA losing a one-point semi-final bout to Division I Estep. However, a broken wrist has kept him inactive for the last month, but he should return by sectionals. In a way if everything heals correctly it's almost a plus as Clark will be much fresher than anyone else. I've seen it work to the injured wrestler's advantage many times as he comes into state competition sharp and strong having not had to make weight for some period. State qualifier Byers also returns and he is excellent, too. Already twice a qualifier and still a junior he has been eliminated in first round action both years with tough draws. He had 40 wins last year and is undefeated with over 20 already this season. Urbana wrestlers always have great records -- because they field a fine squad and because they wrestle a soft schedule. I wouldn't think anybody else had much chance here.

At Olentangy the best that could be hoped is to qualify people with hopes for a low place. Fultz is probably best with state sixth place finisher Buhrow at about the same level. Wright beat him 12-8 in the first round in a bout that wasn't quite that close. State qualifier Mosure is back for a third try, and he could well be a factor. Burger, Hector and state qualifier Putnam are also possibilities with Buck waiting in the wings.

The weakest district will be at Warren. Gorman winner Franks went to Wright State after a district runner-up finish, but lost early. He has the kind of style that will trouble some of the top boys. Valentine has been at 140# all year with solid results. He was first at Shadyside and Barnesville and second at Bellaire St. John to Pinkerton. He also grabbed a fifth at the OVAC -- losing tight two-point semi-final. Last year he was a state alternate and at this new weight may quickly surpass Franks. Eisnaugle was less than 100 percent at the OVAC and cannot be counted out based just on that performance. Jones and Scarberry are other possibilities, with the latter boy only one bout from states last year.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BRIAN MALLOY (LAKE CATHOLIC)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Henderson (St. Paris Graham) | 13. Tomscik (Norton) |
| 3. Rupanovic (Buckeye) | 14. Jones (Steubenville) |
| 4. Wolff (Twinsburg) | 15. Hammill (Loveland) |
| 5. Knaze (Fairview Park) | 16. Woodworth (Port Clinton) |
| 6. Napier (Hillsboro) | 17. Preston (Columbus DeSales) |
| 7. Harmon (Fostoria) | 18. Hunter (Bucyrus) |
| 8. Hammond (Hamilton Twp.) | 19. DiCesare (Watterson) |
| 9. LeBeau (Miami Trace) | 20. Tardt (Warrensville Hts.) |
| 10. Trevino (Bethel-Tate) | 21. Moore (Crestwood) |
| 11. Gilman (St. Clairsville) | 22. Zurcher (Claymont) |
| 12. Mershon (Springfield Shawnee) | 23. Rulon (Worthington) |

The top quintet at this weight will provide real fireworks the first few rounds at Wright State. Two-time placer Malloy will be the most intense wrestler at states -- no matter who qualifies. This year his wrestling is fueled by more than his near manic intensity as he has made a big step forward in his athleticism and skills. He had state champ Zinkan beat in every possible until an accidentally butting put Malloy in the twilight zone and set up Zinkan's dramatic comeback. He has won everything else with ease except for the Kenston finale where he squeaked by another two-time state placer, Jason Wolff, 10-9. Wolff first placed two years ago as a freshman and then last year lost an overtime semi-final bout to a wrestler he had defeated at the district level. He has been ill, but now seems ready again, and, if so, will challenge anyone. Rupanovic is yet another state placer at Firestone finishing fourth at this weight last year after losing a tough semi-final bout 4-2. His only loss was a convincing one to Henderson in the Medina finals. I believe Knaze is quicker than any of the aforementioned competitors, but he will also be the smallest. A state qualifier as a freshman last year he lost a tough 4-3 opener and never got back in. He was third at Solon losing to Wright 11-4, but did capture the Brecksville crown. This is a really fine quartet of performers. Fighting for the last spot will be Tomscik, Tartt and Forsyth (Nordonia) with Lupi (West Geauga) and Moore as other possibilities. Watch out for Tartt who will have to make 140# when Levy drops.

Henderson is actually the best pure wrestler I've seen at the weight class. He handled Rupanovic beautifully at Medina and is already twice a state place winner -- second at 112# as a sophomore and fourth last year at 125#. He has all the moves and a certain flow that makes him easy to watch. The only reason I picked Malloy is that I think he is bigger and more physical than Henderson. There is a big gap to the next duo although both Mershon and Trevino are solid. It would take some real upsets for them to get even a low place at the state level. Right behind them, and certainly on the steeper part of the learning curve is Hamill. It is very possible that by year's end he could be second best at this district. Rulon is also good.

At Warren state qualifiers Napier and Jones head a representative field. They were 1-3 at this district last year with Napier pinning Jones in the semis. This year both were beaten in one day by Gilman -- although I'm wagering that won't happen again. I don't know what to make of LeBeau. Last year Jones handled him at the district level, and he was beaten early in the season. Then at the GMWA he caught fire winning the title with first period falls in the semis and finals over two Division I state qualifiers. Also likely to be contenders are Zurcher and Rogers (West Holmes). Here's how I see it. Napier has the one great move and may do better in state rather than district action. Gilman and LeBeau look to be next best, but Jones certainly great upset potential. Any of this quartet could place at Wright State.

Harmon has been at 145# all year, but this drop moves him to the top of his district. Last year he was district runner-up to state finalist Robertson but then drew Withrow early and was eliminated. He's solid on his feet and on the mat. Hammond also qualified for Wright State, but he, too, went out early. He is easily the best in the Columbus area. Woodworth might be the sleeper here. He was second at Marion Harding behind McCormick at 145# and has since dropped to 140#. He has won an outstanding proportion of his bouts, but when he loses it seems to be by real big numbers. It'll be an interesting to see how he matches up with wrestlers from other parts of the state. After this there is a major

drop-off with people like Preston, Hunter, DiCesare and Luna (Norwalk) way down the line. Unless a couple more of the 145s drop this will be an ideal weight class from which to qualify.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: HEATH MCCORMICK (SHELBY)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Harris (Beaver Local) | 14. White (Maysville) |
| 3. Levy (Warrensville Hts.) | 15. Ma. Hill (Steubenville) |
| 4. Lutz (Minerva) | 16. DiMasso (Millbury Lake) |
| 5. Joseph (Maumee) | 17. Switzer (Loveland) |
| 6. Sivori (Fairview Park) | 18. Pierce (Dover) |
| 7. Stephenson (Lima Bath) | 19. Flanagan (Watterson) |
| 8. Bogner (Triway) | 20. Bergen (Olmsted Falls) |
| 9. Scolaro (Lake Catholic) | 21. Bayer (Roger Bacon) |
| 10. Orr (Canfield) | 22. Armstrong (Hillsboro) |
| 11. Mazzei (Lexington) | 23. Rhodes (Anthony Wayne) |
| 12. Breese (Bellbrook) | 24. Tecco (Buckeye) |
| 13. Adams (Eaton) | 25. Bruckelmeyer (Ravenna Southeast) |

Most of the weight classes in Division II either have a strong favorite or two or three highly probably candidates for the top spot. This weight class does not conform to that model since no one here could remotely be categorized as a favorite, and there are a relatively large number of possible winners -- perhaps as many as ten.

I've tried to look for "hot" wrestlers who are in the process of creating a truly great season and who have previous state experience. In my mind McCormick and Harris best fit this mold and I've gone with McCormick because he wrestles a tougher schedule. McCormick has won at both Marion Harding and the Gorman and his 16-4 win over the excellent Mazzei is persuasive. A huge 145 pounder he was a district runner up last year to Mesenburg, but won only his first bout at Wright State before being ripped by two-time champ Pariano and dropping a one-pointer to third-placer Weider. While he has the best chance of winning that probability is still probably less than 30 percent -- so there are many other reasonable possibilities.

My second choice at the Olentangy District would probably have been state qualifier Epling (Oak Harbor), but it seems rather certain that he has quit the team on a permanent basis. That leaves state alternate Joseph (at districts he was a semi-finalist and then needing to win but one of three bouts lost 7-6, 7-5 and 10-9), state qualifier Stevenson and Mazzei as the next three choices. Joseph has been the most impressive winning at Tiffin and losing only to excellent Goodnan at St. Johns. A dark horse candidate is DiMasso who has been on the fringes of success for three years while Rhodes is another rough Northwest District wrestler. Flanagan, Hale (Hamilton Twp.), or Braumbarger (Swanton) may grab the last spot with a touch of good fortune.

It's beginning to look like Harris might be right at about at the same level as McCormick. He is also a large 145 pounder with previous state qualification. He really should have placed battling Malloy into overtime during a quarter-finals before losing on a quick takedown. From a historical context I believe he is a nephew of the five-vaunted Hoppel brothers who won a half dozen state titles and numerous placements during the 1950s -- capped off by Carl who had three state titles and a third in his career. The closest so far to a four-time state champ (along with Fried) we've ever had in big school competition. This year he has had a great year capped by his dominating win at the OVAC. Nobody else here is close. I've listed White and Marlon Hill next -- both were semi-final consolation losers at the district meet last year. Hill, by the way, is now only a sophomore. Pierce, Armstrong and Suitt (Cambridge) are not that far from everyone but Harris.

Levy and Lutz were both state qualifiers at 140# last year out of Firestone, and, in fact, met in that tourney with Levy winning a squeaker 11-9. However, their paths diverged at Wright State with Levy wrestling brilliantly gaining a third while Lutz lost two bouts 9-2 and 14-3 (he had a difficult draw). This year Levy has been at 152# with solid success although losing at both Richmond Hts. and Wadsworth while Lutz has been even better at 145#. They both could be putting it all together. He was a state alternate last year, and keeps on improving. He won at Solon beating two-time placer Wolff and he could be a major factor here. I also like Bogner and doesn't triway always seem to have at least one good middleweight. This one was third at Medina and runner up at Smithville to Lutz 9-6. Scolaro and Orr are also in the hunt for a state ticket putting six from this district in the top ten. That does not leave much hope for Tecco, Brucklemeyer or Maupin (Twinsburg).

The Southwest District is really overmatched here. The only exception is Breese who could be a placement factor. Otherwise the cupboard is bare. I've listed Adams, Switsee and Bayer, but they're likely to be first-round cannon fodder should they qualify. The excellent 152s at this district may chase a few of their number this way.

152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: NEAL BAILEY (RAVENNA SOUTHEAST)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Ray (Bellevue) | 13. DeMosthenes (Lima Shawnee) |
| 3. Taylor (Clyde) | 14. Stonestreet (Ravenna) |
| 4. Wilkinson (Cambridge) | 15. Wood (New Lexington) |
| 5. Parker (Oak Harbor) | 16. Maynard (Whitehall) |
| 6. Macik (Twinsburg) | 17. Mi. Hill (Steubenville) |
| 7. Schlater (St. Paris Graham) | 18. Feeney (Big Walnut) |
| 8. J. Atkins (Olmsted Falls) | 19. Dobyns (Wilmingon) |
| 9. Abel (Claymont) | 20. Strahler (Vincent Warren) |
| 10. Walker (Tipp City) | 21. Feehan (Fostoria) |
| 11. Hochstetler (Orrville) | 22. Hoke (Milton Union) |
| 12. Calder (Brecksville) | 23. Gibson (Springfield Shawnee) |

I didn't rate Neal Bailey last year -- just totally missed him. As soon as I saw this fabulous freshman in action I knew that my scouting system had truly had a meltdown. He is just so smooth and controlled that he makes the sport look effortless. Last year he had to default his district final only 17 seconds into the bout. Then at the state level he lost only to eventual champ McDaniel, 7-5, and Rupanovic 5-1 as he finished fifth. This year Bailey has had few challenges -- maybe too few -- winning with ease at Smithville on four falls -- three in the first period. This is a superstar in the making.

The burly Macik is next best at Firestone. A state qualifier at 171# last year (I can't imagine why) he has moved to 152# this year. He was very effective at the higher weight relying on quickness and tenacity to triumph. This year he was second at Solon and second at Kenston at 152# -- losing only 10-7 to the excellent White. Hochstetler was runner up at Medina and champ at Doylestown, but only third at Black River. He's a pure grinder -- pressuring for six minutes until the opponent falters. Stonestreet is much the same with a solid defense that making scoring difficult. He was a transfer from Garrettsville Garfield, and could really help Ravenna and teamwise with scoring at the state level. Calder is much more creative and perhaps even more effective. He won the Early Bird and Massillon Perry, but lost one point at Coventry and Brecksville. He could place. Atkins is also placement material based on a big Kenston win. Six outstanding wrestlers and only five berths -- a harbinger of rugged competition. Seitz (Orange) and Messina (Green) are other possibilities albeit low probability ones.

Bailey's real competition will come from Olentangy. That where three excellent wrestler will square off -- each with state championship aspirations. Depending on the pairings Bailey might have to beat all three to win. Ray finished fifth at this class last year losing a heartbreaking 12-10 OT bout in the quarters. He has not been pushed this year winning at will to this point. Taylor suffered through one of those nightmarish sequences last year where after a great season he failed to make it out of the sectional. This year -- mostly at 160# -- he has won three major tournaments without (as with Ray) really being pushed. Parker has wrestled as high as 189# but he was at this weight at Medina where he posted a most impressive third -- losing only to Overholt. State qualifier Demosthenes is a step behind this trio while Feeney, Maynard and Feehan will have but one qualifying spot to shoot for.

There is some solid competition at Warren, but at a substantially lower level. State qualifier Wilkinson has pretty much crushed everyone including state qualifier Abel 12-2. Wilkinson won one state bout last year, but should do substantially better this year. Abel was fourth at Medina behind Parker and has been effective all year. Wood and Mike Hill have the best shot at the last spot with Wood down a weight from 160# where he three bouts at the district level. Strahler is another possibility here.

There is some good material at Dayton as well. Walker and Schlater are both state qualifiers although neither won a bout at that level. So far Schlater has wrestled a far tougher schedule winning at Graham and Troy but being shut out at Medina. He finished ahead of Walker at Troy. Both Hoke and Gibson should be challengers although the former was pinned by Schlater in 38 seconds in last year's district. Dobyns could also be a factor.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CLIFF ANDRES (CLYDE)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Sanders (Cincinnati Purcell) | 14. Thompson (Vincent Warren) |
| 3. Sannartano (Revere) | 15. Lester (Marion River Valley) |
| 4. Peters (Claymont) | 16. Taylor (Warrens ville Hts.) |
| 5. Wissman (Springfield Shawnee) | 17. Pendleton (Galion) |
| 6. Baker (St. Paris Graham) | 18. Mongenel (Ashtabula Harbor) |
| 7. Potts (Firelands) | 19. Lauer (Twinsburg) |
| 8. DeNune (Big Walnut) | 20. Moran (Kenston) |
| 9. Warren (West Geauga) | 21. Palmer (Morgan) |
| 10. Fite (Western Brown) | 22. Suzellis (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 11. Gavarkavich (Martins Ferry) | 23. McWhorter (John Glenn) |
| 12. Van Bibber (Columbus DeSales) | 24. Emigh (Olmsted Falls) |
| 13. Borjas (Oak Harbor) | 25. Cook (Loveland) |

There is good competition at this class but I don't think it's going to make much difference because Andres is likely to dominate. He was second last year at 152# winning three bouts with ease (two by fall) before losing to the excellent Kline in the final. Already twice a state qualifier he has both the experience and talent to control almost any situation. Injuries cost him the first few weeks of the season, but he has returned without missing a beat -- primarily at 171#. He could probably making 152#, but my guess is he'll end up here.

The Southwest District is loaded. Sanders was a state qualifier at 171# last year, but moved here at mid-year. His quickness and strength will cause problems for all but the very best. Wissman won 39 bouts last year, but his attempt at number 40 fell short costing him a state berth. This year he is already 26-0 against admitted fairly weak competition although he did beat Baker at Troy. Baker made it to Wright State last year and lost in the first round. St. Paris Graham has those four returning state qualifiers in the middle of the line up which has to improve their practice hours. Baker was in that murderous 160# class at Medina but did reasonably well beating Groudle and Borjas but also being dumped by Peters 5-1. This should be the qualifying trio, leaving Fite, Clapsaddle (Benjamin Logan) and Cook out in the cold.

At Warren, Peters looks to have shown the most improvement of anyone. The fifth in that distinguished line (four more to come, I believe) he should get a high place. He has lost three time but to superb quality -- defending state champs LaCure and Sedlick and state third Jefferis. Only a junior he will win it next year if he remains on the steep part of the learning curve. Nobody at Warren will touch him. I've rated Gavarkavich next knowing that he went 171# at the OVAC. Still, he has made 160# and this weight will be less difficult than 171# where he would be an underdog to qualify. He was a district semi-finalist last year and was second at the OVAC this year. Thompson, Palmer, McWhorter and Call (Edison South) are all candidates for the final berth.

At first writing the Firestone District was so incredibly weak that I struggled finding enough names to match the qualifying berths. Apparently others noticed this void, too, because in quick order Sannartano, Potts, Lauer and Emigh

will have dropped partly smoothing out the huge difference in degree of difficulty between 160# and 171#. Leading the way is state qualifier Sammartano who has had a truly excellent season. He won a thriller over Pallinger at Brunswick and has humbled opponents in dual meet competition. If he can operate effectively at 160# he has finalist potential, particularly if Sanders returns to 171#. State qualifier Potts stands next and it's difficult to ascertain exactly how well he will do. His results at 171# were such that they might not be indicative of his strength down here. Last year he placed at district, but went "two and out" an Wright State. Warren and Taylor are marginally next best, but they will likely struggle at the state level. After that it's anybody's guess as contenders emerge from all areas within the district. Two interesting possibilities are Lauer and Emigh -- both just down from 171#. They did rather well at that difficult classification, and that success may be magnified at this far easier weight. Suzelis (Ravenna Southeast) also down from 171# could also have hopes here.

Andres will dominate at Olentangy. State qualifier DeNune has won at Upper Arlington, Hilliard, and Logan Elm and will match up well with everyone but Andres. He lost early at states last year. Borjas is another returning state qualifier, but that was out of an easy district. He did not impress at Medina -- losing by fall to Baker -- and has missed several, more local tournaments. Van Bibber, on the other hand, has gone against some good competition. He won at DeSales and was an OCC semi-finalist and placer. He wrestles a lot of high scoring bouts. Lester is something of an unknown, but has had some good outings and placed in every tourney wrestled. Pendleton was a state alternate last year losing to Roberts (5-4) and Tate (4-3). He bears close watching. The rest is pretty much by guess and by golly.

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BRIAN FERRITTO (LAKE CATHOLIC)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Williams (Minerva) | 14. Snider (Steubenville) |
| 3. Roberts (Shelby) | 15. Krug (Kettering Alter) |
| 4. Bryant (St. Paris Graham) | 16. Carroll (Clyde) |
| 5. Pallinger (Avon Lake) | 17. Craig (Benjamin Logan) |
| 6. Gordon (Miami Truce) | 18. Pedmo (Buckeye) |
| 7. Rozmus (Urbana) | 19. Atkins (Cincinnati Purcell) |
| 8. Young (Vermillion) | 20. Meyer (Big Walnut) |
| 9. Grant (Bellevue) | 21. Severance (Bryan) |
| 10. Lightle (Sheridan) | 22. Hill (John Glenn) |
| 11. Hill (Bethel-Tate) | 23. Sheets (Nelsonville-York) |
| 12. Timney (Conneaut) | 24. Freeman (Claymont) |
| 13. Hampton (Ravenna) | 25. Lavender (Warrensville Hts.) |

This is kind of my upset special since Ferritto has never reached the state level in the past and is up to weight classes as well. Yet he has been outstanding losing only to Neider (twice) and generally has shown tremendous improvement. Last year he was the state alternate losing three bouts (the last

by a point) after a good run to the semi-finals. This year he won at Kenston and was second at the OCC.

The Firestone District is still solid -- although not to the same extent as two weeks ago. There have been, as mentioned in the last essay, a number of defections to 160# already. District finalist and state qualifier Williams was shaky at 189#, but has been great back at 171#. He won two bouts at States before losing out to Long 5-3 deep in the consolation rounds. He'll be a stiff challenge for Ferritto right here in his own district. Pallinger is also strong and his loss to Sammartano at Brunswick 11-9 is offset by wins at Avon Lake and Buckeye. He can score points quickly and in great quantity. This suggests that the Firestone District could conceivably gobble up three of the six places awarded at this weight. Hampton is also strong and his qualification could be a key link in Ravenna's team hopes. However, he has lost to Tinney who has been totally undefeated. I may be rating him too low based on incomplete information. He was quickly out at last year's district, but the losses were in OT to Macik and 2-1 to eventual state runner-up Tomaro. Pedmo is also a good performer who benefits by the exodus to 160# as it greatly increases his qualification chances. He won at Meadowbrook and was a solid fifth at Medina -- losing only to Waugh (by a point) and Bryant. Lavender, Davidson (Kenston) and Sieski (Bay) are other possibilities, although long-shot ones.

There is also a lot of depth at Olentangy. State qualifier Roberts is the leader here -- winning the Gorman and finishing third at Marion Harding. However, that lead is very narrow. Young has shown great improvement while Grant lost 8-7 to Andres earlier in the year. Pendleton was a state alternate last year losing to Robert (5-4) and Tate (4-3). He bears watching. Carroll down from 189# could also score while Meyer, Severance and Mellett (Olentangy) are likely to get lost in the shuffle. What it all means (I think) is that there are a number of relatively closely matched wrestlers looking to lock up one of five tickets to Wright State. In this case I've tended to place the boys who have wrestled the tougher schedule towards the top.

At Dayton there are three returning state qualifiers and a host of other good talent as well. Rozmus qualified as a freshman and sophomore, but did not compete last year when his father was tragically killed the day of districts. He has undoubtedly felt that loss this year as his results -- while excellent -- have been just a little less than might have been anticipated. Bryant qualified at 145# last year but will apparently compete up three classes. It didn't bother him at Medina as he finished third losing only to the brilliant Neider. He was also a strong second at Troy losing only to Dillow. Hill qualified at 160# winning one bout at states by fall. He has won three smaller tourneys this year and was fourth at the SWOCA. Qualifiers from three different classes, but all with solid skills. Krug was a semi-finalist at the OCC losing to Ferritto (8-5) and ending up third. Craig was the state alternate losing out to the excellent Sanders. They wrestle a vagabond schedule -- difficult to track -- but he was champion at both North Union and West Jefferson. Other possibilities are Atkins (Cincinnati Purcell), Shook (Springfield Shawnee) and Dill (Dayton Carroll). There are at least five boys good enough to go to states here.

There is also good depth at Warren. Gordon was fourth last year at this weight, but somehow I don't see him doing it again. He barely qualified -- winning 4-3 for third at this district -- and then after a first round loss rattled off three quick consolation victories. He was not terrifically

successful at 189#, but has made the needed drop. Snider was a district semi-finalist at 160# last year, and has been consistently good all year. Two years ago Sheets was fifth at 145# in Division III. Then last year he qualified in Division II at 152# and won a bout before being eliminated. I keep wondering if he'll drop to the much easier 160# class. Lightle was a state qualifier at Springsboro last year, but is a great move in for Sheridon. He went 8-6 with runner-up Tomaro in the first round before being eliminated. Hill, Freeman and DeLeonardo (Edison South) are also possibilities -- especially Hill. This will be one of the best weight classes at this district.

189#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CLIFF MIMS (RAVENNA)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Workman (Vermillion) | 12. Jordan (Benjamin Logan) |
| 3. Mitrovich (Conneaut) | 13. Fox (Logan Elm) |
| 4. McKinney (Perkins) | 14. Pavlovich (Avon Lake) |
| 5. Tate (Licking Valley) | 15. Warren (Dover) |
| 6. Fisher (Marlington) | 16. Bothwell (Mason) |
| 7. Roseberry (Steubenville) | 17. D'Amore (Anthony Wayne) |
| 8. Beane (Hamilton Twp.) | 18. Campbell (Hubbard) |
| 9. Berry (Fairview Park) | 19. Stover (Nelsonville York) |
| 10. Potter (Urbana) | 20. Wrocklage (Indian Lakes) |
| 11. McClellan (University School) | 21. Johnson (Claymont) |

Twenty years ago when they first divided wrestling into two divisions the biggest difference was the depth and quality of upper weight wrestlers -- the big school division at the state meet was always so much stronger there. More and more that huge gulf is narrowing -- and while larger schools may always be somewhat better overall -- the competitive levels are often not that far apart. A good example is here at 189# which has great depth that will provide a high level competition from the first round onward.

It will also be, I suspect, a closely fought struggle with surprises likely to occur throughout the entirety of the tournament. Luck will probably play a role here and my choice Cliff Mims is overdue for some of the good kind about now. Two years ago in Division I, Mims pinned Keiner of North Canton in the second of districts only to end up meeting him for the third and last qualifying berth. A narrow 3-2 loss eliminated Mims in a major turnaround, and then Keiner proceeded to get second at Wright State. Last year Mims -- now in Division II -- looked terrific all year and was one of a trio of outstanding prospects at this weight (along with Long and Farley). However, about midway through the year his performances inexplicably seemed to be eroding. He barely qualified for states -- finishing fifth -- before it was realized that he had a low-grade infection that required heavy-duty medication. There just wasn't enough time for recovery. Especially since Mims drew Long in the first round and was defeated -- and then eliminated when Long lost his next bout in a huge upset. Again, this year Mims has had a great early start -- demolishing the field at Solon and pinning through Kenston. And, incidentally, as the year has worn on there has been no erosion in results, so this time Mims is ready.

Mims exits the Firestone District and it provides a very representative field. State qualifier Mitrovich had a great district last year gaining the semi-finals before losing a narrow 7-5 bout to state champ Nutter. Qualifying in the third spot he won his first state bout and then got caught by McKinney and pinned in 15 seconds. He won one consolation bout, but did not place. This year he had not lost until he went to Howland where Campbell defeated him -- perhaps on a default -- and so the big confrontation with Mims did not as -- Howard Cosell used to say -- eventuate. Fisher had a fine season last year, but was unable to compete in the state tournament process. This year he copped his second consecutive runner-up medal at Wadsworth and has been outstanding in the duals. He has placement potential, although I note with apprehension that again he has not wrestled the past several weeks. Berry is not spectacular, but he is solid grind-it-out type wrestler with a style that keep of winning. He was second to Mims at Solon (4-1) and was again a finalist at Brecksville losing in overtime. Last year he was eliminated from district competition in an overtime bout. That cover four qualifying positions leaving state qualifier McClellan on the bubble. Last year he had a marvelous district coming from almost nowhere to qualify. Then at Wright State he wrestled a vastly entertaining bout with state placer McKinney losing 18-13. He is certainly not assured of qualification this year. The excellent Pavlovich and the athletic Campbell are breathing down his neck with Norvell (Green) and Brooks (Warrensville Hts.) also in hot pursuit. The consolation rounds here will be brutal.

At Olentangy, Workman stands best although state placer McKinney and state qualifiers Tate and Beane return. Last year Beane knocked Workman into the consolation bout at this district and sending him on his way to elimination. This year it will be substantially different. I came very close to choosing Workman to win it all. He is totally undefeated including two big, convincing wins over McKinney. Even the powerful Mims will struggle with him. McKinney, sixth last year as a sophomore, knows something about power, too. He wrestles few tactical bouts instead his matches generally boast an explosion of points or perhaps quick falls. As he showed last year he cannot be taken for granted by anyone. Only Workman looks consistently better out of this district. State qualifier Tate has been unstoppable in the Central District -- winning at West Jefferson, Brookhaven and Gahanna. He has in my mind moved past Beane and with a perfect draw could be a finalist. Beane has also been a consistent tourney winner and along with the other three make for a first-rate quartet of performers. The last spot will likely fall to Fox or D'Amore.

OVAC champion Roseberry headlines action at Warren. Totally undefeated he was extremely impressive at Richmond Hts. -- beating Lake -- and had a strong third period at the OVAC in defeating Silverio. Last year he seemed somewhat small for this class and prone to be put on his back -- as Johnson did to him in district action. This year that won't happen and he is the only placement hope coming out of this area. Warren and Stover are my other choices for state qualification here with the aforementioned Johnson another possibility.

This same story is pretty much true at Dayton -- only here no one wrestler is even a possibility to place. While the area is loaded with 171 pounders I don't see too much at 189#. Potter was a state alternate last year, and has gone 19-2 this season. However at Troy -- the one solid tournament he entered -- he placed only fourth. Jordan dropped at 13-7 bout in district consolation last year and he put together a gaudy 15-1 record in 1992-93. However, again, this has not been against high quality competition. His only loss was to Tate at West

Jefferson. Bothwell and Wrocklage are journeyman performers who would probably be supplanted if Atkins (Cincinnati Purcell) decides to stay at 189# rather than drop to 171#.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JEREMY TATE (LICKING VALLEY)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Houston (Avon Lake) | 13. Dearmon (Hillsboro) |
| 3. Burkey (Orrville) | 14. Naugle (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 4. Barlow (Columbus DeSales) | 15. Roth (Taylor) |
| 5. Corrigan (Twinsburg) | 16. Hathorn (Bethel-Tate) |
| 6. Dennis (Lake Catholic) | 17. Grote (Vermillion) |
| 7. Neely (Dayton Northridge) | 18. Mehok (Claymont) |
| 8. Hermes (Perkins) | 19. Swanson (Clermont NE) |
| 9. Collins (Paulding) | 20. Bolon (Martins Ferry) |
| 10. Hammond (New Lexington) | 21. Eslich (Louisville) |
| 11. Horrigan (Norwalk) | 22. Lauvray (Warsaw River View) |
| 12. Dalgleish (Buckeye) | 23. Lybarger (Shelby) |

We won't often see a heavyweight field in Division II like the one that gathered at Wright State last year. Led by the incomparable Fickell it showcased quality and depth unprecedented in this school classification. At least in my mind there were a dozen wrestlers who could have placed in a normal year. Well, in 1993, the heavyweight class is back to a more normal level of competition with some solid competitors and reasonable depth at most of the districts.

The 270-pound Jeremy Tate looks best here based on the events of the last two years. He qualified out of the brutal Olen tangy District -- finishing fourth including a solid 9-1 win over Collins. In addition he won two bouts at states including an 8-5 decision over Houston -- possibly his top competition this year. In 1993 he remains undefeated with titles at three different tournaments. Right behind at the Olen tangy District is Barlow who was Fickell's back up -- as if he really needed one -- last year at DeSales. His situation parallels Santiago's in Division I in that he showed undeniable talent in his appearances last year, but had no place to showcase them. He lost to Division I state runner-up Wise 5-4 at DeSales and was third at the OCC splitting two bouts with Dennis. Hermes was behind state placer Johnson last year and this season has vaulted right into the placement picture with consistent success against good competition. He won big at Tiffin although he has struggled somewhat recently. This trio, I believe, is clearly better than the rest of the field at Olen tangy. I've rated Collins, Horrigan and Grote, but Lybarger, Stoner (Napoleon), Mallory (Port Clinton) and Rayburn (Whitehall) are other qualification candidates. This district is likely to be played out at two levels -- the top trio battling for the championship and the good pairings it brings while the remainder of the competitors will hope only to survive and qualify any way they can.

Despite his loss to Tate last year. Houston was at the top of my early season list. And while he has done well all year there have been a few bouts that do not fit into the pattern of a state titlist. Still Houston combines size

and movement in a nice package that has many times in the past been good enough to win. Part of what will decide his eventual placement will be the level of concentration he can sustain throughout the long tournament process. Burkey was a Division III district champ at 189# last year, but Orrville is two boys over the Division III limit this year so he'll move up a classification in both school size and weight. He ended up fifth at 189# and he could well better that this year. Beautifully built at around 215# he looked outstanding at Medina losing a close match to the defending state champ from Tennessee in the semi-finals and then beating Division III runner-up Hart for third place. His big disadvantage will be size.

Corrigan is new on the scene this year, but he has been most impressive while winning at Solon, and placing high at Kenston and Hudson -- losing once each time. His downside is inexperience and as that negative inevitably falls away he should bet better and better. He has a lot of nice movement for a big man. Dennis, on the other hand, is a competitor who specialty is keeping matches close -- giving himself the chance to win in the third period. While there are better athletes in the field he can wear down the opposition and come away with a victory. He was third at Kenston and fourth at the OCC, but his big win was a dual meet triumph, 6-5, over Santiago. Again that provides four top-flight possibilities for qualification, leaving only one spot open. I've listed Dalgleish and Naugle, but that position is really wide open.

Neely should dominate the Dayton District. He ripped through the giant GMVWA tourney with five wins -- including four by fall and won on a 15-1 decision. Last year he won three district bouts, but failed to qualify principally the result of a 3-2 loss to Krug. It's difficult to picture him not coming to Wright State as a district champion. After that it's pretty much chaos. I've ranked Roth, Hathorn and Swanson, but those are little more than semi-informed guesses. Also standing as possibilities are Feck (Mason), Potter (Urbana) and Austin (Eaton).

Virtually all the best heavyweights in the Warren District graduated last year. While there are some good underclassmen on the horizon this will not be a power house district in 1993. A big unknown is Hammond. He wrestles in an out-of-the-way corner of the state where there is little real competition and where results rarely make it much beyond the local weekly paper. Still, he has had an undefeated season consisting of primarily falls and forfeits -- with not much real challenge. For some reason he did not compete in last year's sectional where a better "read" on his abilities might have been obtained. I do note, however, that last year at the Tri-Valley Invitational (a point for my record keeping) that he lost a close 4-2 bout to Tate. He might be for real. Dearmon is next best and won at Streubenville to cement that spot. He was a district semi-finalist last year. Then comes the sophomore Mohok who won at Barnesville and has done well overall. He beat the other contender Bolon -- the hero of the OVAC -- at Barnesville 5-3. Bolon has three times been a finalist this year (including a win at Bellaire St. John), but he will be forever remembered for his escape in the second overtime to capture fifth at the OVAC, and much, much more importantly win the tournament for Martins Ferry.

DIVISION II TEAMS

1. Lake Catholic -- A well deserved favorite with an absolutely outstanding team. They are not a completely sure choice, but they are very close to that level. A team like Ravenna would have to wrestle brilliantly and Lake Catholic would have to suffer some mishaps for them to lose the title. The big five of Haverdill, Lanese, Ambroziak, Malloy and Ferritto all have finalist potential while Simmons, Scolaro and Dennis look like they can help. If all goes well it will be a runaway and you might even think about record point totals.
2. Ravenna -- If they garner the three individual state titles I have forecasted they have a chance to catch Lake Catholic. Derr has been red hot and he could make a difference while Stonestreet, Hampton and Rich are possibilities. This is a team good enough to win the title most years.
3. Ravenna Southeast -- Neal Bailey is a future superstar and he leads another excellent team. The middleweights of the two Shamblins, R. Bailey and Miller will need to score and Naugle, Suzelis, or Brucklemeyer will have to pitch in. Still it would be very difficult to catch either of the top two teams.
4. Clyde -- A team that could have won two years ago and is always very strong. Andres is the main man at 160# with Taylor also finalist material at 152#. The younger Andres could score and Lamson has placement potential, but then things get speculative. Arden, Gonzalez and Carroll are the only other hopes. A title seems out of the question, but they could move up one place.
5. Twinsburg -- Marder and Wolff are the two stars, but Corrigan could score strongly at the weak heavyweight division. If Waskiewicz is indeed out for the year that is a terrible blow that cannot be made up. Macik, however, could be a plus factor with a strong performance at 152#. Stopperich, Lauer, Turnbull and, maybe, Gregan are other possibilities.
6. St. Paris Graham -- it all has to happen between 140# and 171# for this team. Henderson could easily be a state champion while Schlater, Baker and Bryant could all place (though that is unlikely). Nonetheless this is a team that could make it in the top five if everything meshes.
7. Fairview Park -- This is another team with no central focus but lots of scoring opportunities. The big guns are Pariano, Knaze and Sivori with Berry and Gill just a step behind. Legarth and Edwards are other possibilities for a team that needs someone to step forward and take charge.
8. Bellevue -- They do not wrestle a real strong schedule and I think that may hurt them at the state level. Still Ray and Keske are both outstanding with Grant and Fultz not that much behind. Spurlock started like a whirlwind, but is clearly struggling now. The only other opportunities are Turner and Ohl, but that could be enough to vault into the top five if everyone performs up to expectations.

9. Revere -- The four lightweights of Butler, Fashinpaar, Pace and particularly Grucella are the heart of this squad. However, Sammartano may well be the highest placer and his points could move them up a couple notches.
10. Buckeye -- A team that is tough to prognosticate because of ceaselessly occurring line-up changes. Rupanovic is the top guy and his points are vital. Pedmo, Dalgleish, Pfeiffer and Tecco are all experienced and need to reach state qualification (where they could well score). The big unknown is Nutter -- both as to weight class and performance.
11. Avon Lake -- Houston is the top guy here and has finalist potential. Pallinger also could well place leaving Pavlovich and the fine freshman Bristow as helpers.
12. Olmsted Falls -- Workman and the two Atkins boys all have great potential -- with Workman a possible champ. Bergen is a comer and Emigh has a chance. If they could only get Burkhardt in the line-up they would be in the top ten.

DIVISION III

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: STEVE PASSERINI (ST. THOMAS AQUINAS)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 2. Amicon (Bishop Ready) | 14. Nicolosi (Aurora) |
| 3. Klco (Perry) | 15. Lopez (Woodmore) |
| 4. Breuer (Cardinal Stritch) | 16. Partlow (Shenendoah) |
| 5. Anderson (Bellaire St. John) | 17. Triscari (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 6. Kessen (Lima Central Catholic) | 18. Hoffman/Reineck (Fremont St. Joseph) |
| 7. Birch (Highland) | 19. Novel (Utica) |
| 8. Gibson (Northmor) | 20. Cullen (Margaretta) |
| 9. Ford (Delta) | 21. Crumpler (Covington) |
| 10. Kasarda (Streetsboro) | 22. Marion (Wellington) |
| 11. Nightengale (Wellsville) | 23. Surber (Brookville) |
| 12. Walz (Ayersville) | 24. Grime/Kreiner (Archbold) |
| 13. Cordes (Liberty Center) | 25. Kirby (Madeira) |

Individual state championships are decided in 39 weight classes in the State of Ohio and currently this one -- 103# in Division III -- is easily the weakest. At this moment there are no returning state qualifiers competing, although I've listed state qualifier Amicon at this weight because I believe he will eventually end up here. In addition, with the possibility that both Dernlan and Sanders will compete at 112#, I wonder if a few of the other good 112s will bail out and head toward this class. However, it is an amazing distance -- those nine pounds -- and I know many of the 112s are cutting some just to make that classification now.

My choice at the moment is Steve Passerini, the fine 103 pounder from Louisville St. Thomas Aquinas who was a state alternate last year out of the Cuyahoga District. He has been dominant all year winning at Doylestown (8-1), Springfield (0:56) and Norton (9-1). He has the experience and skills to compete with anyone here, but I worry somewhat about a too easy schedule. Right behind Passerini is Klco who has finalist potential. He should be away from Passerini at Wright State and it wouldn't take that much of a draw to put him in an ideal position to wrestle late Saturday for the title. Klco was champion at Toledo Waite and Bishop Ready and was a strong third at Richmond Hts. While it may be something of a stretch I listed Birch as third best in this district based primarily on what I saw at Medina. While he didn't place it was clear that the skills were there to reach a high level of performance. My guess is that it will all come together by tourney time. Kasarda and Nicolosi are old rivals and both have good qualification potential. Kasarda won at Hudson while Nicolosi was third, but it was reversed at Aurora with Nicolosi winning. That would seem to be the top quintet, but there are a lot of other possibilities. Triscari has lost only once while Marion has been solid all year. Even Walker (Manchester) could play a role here. Of course, all bets are off if Saturday morning of sectionals I read in the paper that Mescan and Firem are here.

The new set-up which will allow Central District school to elect, in early February, whether they wish to go west to the Dayton District or east to the St. Clairsville District make any kind of rigorous analysis at this level extremely tenuous. Instead I'll make some semi-informed guesses as to directionality but at the same time look at those six qualifiers as something of a single entity. Clearly Amicon will dominate either area and I anticipate that both he and Gibson will be at Dayton. They are the two best from the Central District and tower above the weak southwest field. Amicon has been at 112# all year, but expect to see him here come March. He was a district runner up last year, but lost early and never got back in. At 112# he was sixth at the OCC, fourth at West Jefferson and third at Bishop Ready. He'll do better at this weight. Speaking of doing better, Gibson has suddenly become a powerhouse -- winning bouts left and right. The black mark on his record is a fourth at Black River facing a not terribly strong field. About the best from the southwest is state alternate Crumpler who lost big in his go-to-state match 21-12 last year. Surber and Kirby are two other possibilities.

In the east at St. Clairsville the competition should be stronger. Anderson, only a freshman, may be better than I originally thought. He was second at Barnesville and Bellaire St. John to Division II Tucker, but reversed that outcome when winning at Shady-side. Then at the OVAC he lost to the West Virginian Taylor, 9-6, a far closer score than Division I and II picks Wright and Workman were able to achieve. Look for him to do something at Wright State. Another freshman, Nightengale and Partlow are next best here and it's likely they'll have to contend with Novel for the last qualifying spots. Cole (Union Local) is also a possibility.

All is confusion at Postoria. Despite the fact that they get five qualifiers, I've listed nine competitors in my top 25. It's been one of those situations where they keep beating up on each other so that no coherent pattern emerges. Breuer does seem to be the top choice, however, based on good results last year -- one win at the district level -- and better scores this year -- winner at the Cardinal Classic and Oak Harbor and a sixth at the tremendously tough OCC. Kessen and Ford were both at the GMWA with Kessen winning their individual meeting as both placed. Kessen has spent most of the year at 112#, however, making direct comparisons difficult. Cordes look great at Hudson taking a strong second, but has been pinned by Grime. However, he beat Lopez who defeated Grime, who . . . you get the picture. It's kind of a round robin with no end. The wrestler to watch for might be whichever 103 pounder represents Fremont St. Joseph (confusion even at this level). Hoffman's big win at Van Buren suggests that he may be coming on strong at year's end. Interestingly, despite the myriad of candidates, it is likely that only one, or, perhaps, two have a chance for a low place.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TIM DERNLAN (WEST LIBERTY SALEM)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Sanders (CAPE) | 13. Ostapuck (Tusky Central Catholic) |
| 3. Firem (Chanel) | 14. Murdock (Evergreen) |
| 4. Mescan (Columbia Station) | 15. Payawal (Sidney Lehman) |
| 5. Ziegler (Cardinal) | 16. Arnold (West Jefferson) |
| 6. Davlin (Sandusky St. Mary) | 17. Dubinsky (Union Local) |
| 7. J. Cullen (Margaretta) | 18. Bylow (Otsego) |
| 8. Mosbacher (Batavia) | 19. Myers (ASV) |
| 9. Sibrel (Kansas Lakota) | 20. Augenstein (Caldwell) |
| 10. Layman (Jackson-Milton) | 21. Batross (Johnstown) |
| 11. Lopez (Genoa) | 22. Sigler (West Salem NW) |
| 12. Ma. Wilson (Waynedale) | 23. Tonsing (Aurora) |

In the essays dealing with Division I, I discussed how rare weight classes featuring a defending state champ meeting a two-time state champion were -- and yet we currently have Jayne versus Wineberg and Musser versus Vaughn. Even more amazing is that a third such match up could occur at this weight class, as well. As we all know, Dernlan won titles as both a freshman and sophomore at 103#, and than last year ran into a buzzsaw named Wilkovich who crushed him 14-8 in the quarter-finals at 112#, and then for good measure beat him again for third place. By the way, that quarter-final bout was simply outstanding and virtually every set of eyes in the house was riveted on that mat alone. It was a classic battle or horsepower versus guile and this time horsepower was triumphant. So far this year Dernlan has been at 119# smashing everyone within reach and winning OW awards by the handful. Unfortunately, an extremely rare blunder (of the first order) by the Medina organizers prevented his participation there which would have provided even more answers as to Dernlan's improvement. It is an unhappy time when a champion wants to wrestle the best and reasons can be found to prevent it. At any rate Dernlan will be at 112#.

So, too, apparently will be Division II 112# state champion Shantell Sanders. This is an impressive talent. Only 4'11" tall, he is phenomenally strong and whirlwind quick on the mat with an arsenal of outstanding takedowns. The starting middle guard on CAPE's state champion football team, he was fourth as a sophomore and a relatively easy champ last year. Now that CAPE has been reclassified as Division III he has, at least for the moment, decided to challenge Dernlan head on for the title. I still half expect him at 119# -- what a weight class that would be -- but in direct conversation his coach said 112# is where to rank him.

They have met once before with Dernlan pulling out a 7-5 decision on a late 5-point move. They should meet twice before the state meet and that's why I'm picking Dernlan. While he may lose one of the earlier bouts, my guess is that he'll learn enough to make the necessary adjustments to win the big one -- because Sanders does make mistakes. However, it's tough to capitalize on them when faced with his raw power and speed. Somehow, I think Dernlan will find a way.

Both boys emerge from the same district which will create a real jam for the last spot. Mosbacher has had a great year. He was fifth with the big boys at the SWOCA and won at Fairfield and Bethel Tate. He has been behind the Steiners and Shinkle, but now seems ready to come into his own. State qualifier Arnold is also likely to be here and while he had a slow start this season, he is still a strong threat. State qualifier Payawal is also back and could challenge all but the top two here. Last year, he was outscored 28-2 in his two state bouts, but lost only to the excellent Kosins in his own district. This will be a great competition should things line up as they now appear.

There is real power at Cuyahoga Hts. as well. Firem is a deceptively tough kid and the Chanel coaches have done a great job of molding him into a winning wrestler. Already a two-time state qualifier -- he was fourth last year -- Firem has moved up to 112#. He was second at Solon to Daugherty (my Division II 112# choice), second at North Canton, second at Wadsworth and a big winner over Moore at Troy. He is experienced and does not panic in tight spots. Mescan is at the same level as Firem -- and is, in fact, much flashier. He defeated Firem 12-10 in the district finals last year, but then lost it at the state meet after a first round fall. This year he has won his usual quota of small tournaments, but was an interesting fourth at Medina. There he pinned Favaro, beat West Virginia state champ Life and crushed Sheridan, but in turn was hammered by Anderson and lost in OT to Ramos. I was impressed with what I saw -- and it doesn't hurt to have Wilkovich in the room either. State qualifier Ziegler is perhaps a small step behind this duo. At Medina, he lost in OT to Life and by fall to Ramos and did not place. He also was not impressive at Toledo Waite, but I think he'll be sharper by year's end. He was only one bout from placing at Wright State last year. There is a real gap between the top trio at Cuyahoga Hts. and everybody else. Layman can be tough, but does not get the level of competition he needs in his area. However, for any one bout he can be tough. State qualifier Wilson also returns, but has struggled some at 112#. Nonetheless, he cannot be overlooked based on a third at Smithville and a second at Tri-West. His nemesis has been Mowrer who has crushed him three times; Myers, Sigler and Tonsing are other possibilities with Bernardo (Highland) a long shot.

At St. Clairsville there is very little talent. State qualifier Ostapuck probably has to be rated, but I'm not sure he can win outside his own area. Last year at the state level he looked totally overmatched. Dubinsky, Augenstein and Batross are other possibilities, but there just must be stronger folks that this. Perhaps Robb (Barnesville) fits that profile.

As usual it's not simple to decipher in the Northwest District. State alternate Davlin looks to have moved in the top slot here, although he has been out of the line up for several weeks. He lost at Edison to Fratta, but won at Fremont St. Joseph defeating a major rival Sibrel in the finals 2-1. Sibrel, twice a state qualifier was a semi-finalist last year at 103# before dropping three straight to finish sixth. He gets the most out of his ability and tries to keep a bout close hoping to capitalize on a mistake. Once that happens he has pinning power. The wrestler who I think could really surprise here is state qualifier Jimmy Cullen. He has been excellent at 119# defeating all kinds of good people during the year and winning the OW at the Cardinal Classic. Now down at 112# he could be simply outstanding. A medium to high place is not out of the question here. Murdock and Lopez are two possibilities for the pair of state tickets remaining, but there are a number of other potential wrestlers who could surpass them. Bylow, if he is at this weight, could be a factor as well as

Imhoff (Carey), Aller (Bluffton) and the loser of the wrestle off at 103# between Hoffmann and Reineck (Fremont St. Joseph). It should be an outstanding competition.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BO WILKOVICH (COLUMBIA STATION)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Workman (Coventry) | 14. Tyson (Kansas Lakota) |
| 3. Davis (Milan Edison) | 15. Lewis (Union Local) |
| 4. Roskovich (Bridgeport) | 16. Barnes (Blanchester) |
| 5. Yoder (Doylestown Chippewa) | 17. Zeid (Beachwood) |
| 6. Kish (Wickliffe) | 18. Messmer (Bishop Hartley) |
| 7. Gleckler (Evergreen) | 19. Mestemaker (Versailles) |
| 8. Kinzel (Wellsville) | 20. Filipovich (Bellaire St. John) |
| 9. Parsons (Northmor) | 21. Donovan (Licking Hts.) |
| 10. Tester (Genoa) | 22. Hostetler (Tuslaw) |
| 11. Clifton (Jonathan Alder) | 23. Davis (Delphos St. John) |
| 12. Sauter (Batavia) | 24. Hamblin (West Salem NW) |
| 13. Mengerink (Carey) | 25. Timbrook (Hicksville) |

As the field is presently constituted this weight class has about as many wrestlers with great credentials as any in Division III. Should Shantell Sanders, as I deep down anticipate, end up participating at 119# this would undoubtedly be the most difficult weight class. It is a group that has a former state champion (two if Sanders is here), a pair of state runners up, three other state placers and an additional five returning state qualifiers. It will not be a place for those who like quietly sedate competitions with an established pecking order.

Each year I have an opportunity to appear on the best talk show in Cleveland to discuss wrestling with its host Geoff Sindelar and take telephone calls from listeners. Sindelar, a former heavyweight wrestler from Fairview Park, is extremely knowledgeable and he generates calls from all over Ohio. Well, last year we got into a discussion of cutting weight and I decried the notion that weighing less is always better -- and presented cases where wrestlers who went down did poorly while those who did not make radical weight cuts often did very well. And, in fact, some wrestlers cut weight and moved down to a weight class much more difficult than they left. Poor, poor strategy I lamented. Then to seal my argument, I decided to use a real-time example. Remember now, I'm in a claustrophobic studio wearing an uncomfortable headset and being bombarded by questions so there is not always time to carefully weigh one's words. Anyway, my example was Bo Wilkovich. My words were something like -- "I picked Wilkovich to win at 119# where he has already defeated my top contender and instead he cuts down to 112#, a weight class sure to be dominated by Tim Dernian. After all, he probably has a 50% chance of winning at 119#, but only about a 10% chance at 112#." With those words, I'm afraid I sealed Tim Dernian's fate. Almost immediately I got several calls from Columbia Station unhappy with my cogent analysis, and shortly thereafter, a newspaper article led me to believe that Wilkovich was not entranced with my analytical skills either. This was nothing

compared to the reaction after Wilkovich walloped Dernlan 14-8 in, perhaps, the most memorable bout of the 1992 tournament. That afternoon everyone who lived anywhere near Columbia Station managed to find me and provide a somewhat short-sighted review of my wrestling knowledge. However, it turned out to be a case of winning the battle but losing the war as Boardwine upset Wilkovich in the next round.

At any rate I'm convinced -- Bo knows wrestling and I'm picking him to win at whatever weight class he elects up through and including heavyweight. As it turns out he'll be at 119# and he is a dynamo in a green singlet. He has been hampered by injuries much of the year and one the disappointments at Medina was that we saw Bo at much less than 100#. He is a package of power and speed with horsepower to burn and when "locked in" an extremely fine performer. He was state champion as a sophomore -- winning in overtime over Walker (now at 125#) -- and third last year after the Boardwine defeat.

Workman emerges from the same Firestone District and his credentials are very close to Wilkovich's. As a sophomore he was a semi-finalist at 103# but lost an overtime bout to Dernlan and with it the state title. Then last year he made it to the finals only to lose to Jim Boardwine -- a wrestler he had defeated in the district finals the week before. One thing to remember -- when Wilkovich and Workman met in the district semi-finals, Workman handled him easily winning 9-5. This year Workman has been at 125# and 130# losing only to Walker, but will drop to 119# at tourney time. He is virtually a cofavorite at this weight. And since they are the same district he and Wilkovich should be paired apart at states.

The third member of this top trio is Jake Davis. Milan Edison is this year a Division III school and Davis is one of its top stars. Two years ago he was state runner up at 103# in Division II, losing in the finals to Kelly Shields. Last year he was a first round upset victim at 112# and eventually ended up fifth -- beating his first round conqueror for that spot. This year he has been at 125#, but can also make 119# -- creating a real dilemma. Should he go 119# and match up with Wilkovich and Workman or 125# and face Boardwine and Walker. My guess is here, but only if Sanders stays at 112#. His only loss has been to the excellent Kline who'll be discussed at 125#.

The Firestone District is very strong. Besides Wilkovich and Workman there are two other potential place winners. Yoder was sixth at this weight last year after making the semi-finals. This year he has won at Smithville and Norwayne and was a one-point final round loser at Chippewa. His great district pairing last year was a crucial element in his success. Kish upset Division I state place winner Trinetti at Richmond Hts., but then went to 130# and stayed there. I expect him here at tourney time, however. Yoder pinned him last year in district activity. Zeid, Hamblin and Hostetler are three choices to nip at the heels of the top quartet, but will struggle to upend them. Hostetler probably has had the most success of this trio winning at Hillsdale and Tallmadge and gaining runner-up honors at Canal Fulton.

Davis heads a deep Fostoria District. Gleckler, as a freshman, was sixth last year in an amazing burst of good wrestling. He was a direct runner up defeating Tester and won three bouts at states. However, to illustrate the gap between the top trio and the rest, Gleckler lost to Workman, 19-2, and Wilkovich, 16-1. Tester also a returning state qualifier won at Northwood and was second at

Genoa. He could get a low state place. State qualifier Tyson is a steady winner for Lakota, and continues to do well this year. He won at Fremont St. Joseph and has been a high placer at three other tourneys. A freshman to watch out for is Mengerink who won at Van Buren over Tyson, took the "A" Classic over Grime and triumphed at Hopewell Loudon over Reiner. He is a coming talent. Davis and Timbrook are two other possibilities as are Boyd (Lima Central Catholic) and Schnell (Sandusky St. Mary).

At St. Clairsville the outstanding sophomore Roskovich is pre-eminent. A district champ last year as a freshman he was a state semi-finalist before losing a tremendous 9-8 bout to Workman and then dropping to fifth after a 4-1 consolation loss to Dernlan. This year his only loss was to Kelly Shields in the OVAC final. State qualifier Kinzel returns again with only one loss at 119# -- and that, too, to Shields. He did not wrestle to his potential at Wright State being outscored 23-5, but facing a very rugged draw also contributed to that outcome. Lewis and Filipovich are journeyman performers who could place as might Messmer and Donovan from the Central District -- assuming their teams go this way.

At Dayton, state qualifiers Sauter, Parsons, and Clifton look to be the top contenders again assuming that my guess on Central District team direction is accurate. They would clearly dominate this district with people like Mestemaker, Barnes and Layton (Academy) having little chance. None of the top trio has legitimately won a state bout, and could well struggle to do so this year.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOE BOARDWINE (STREETSBORO)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Walker (Manchester) | 13. Tompkins (Mogadore) |
| 3. Kline (Mapleton) | 14. Grime (Archbold) |
| 4. Smith (Wellsville) | 15. Buckley (Union Local) |
| 5. Dilger (Norwalk St. Paul) | 16. Priest (Newark Catholic) |
| 6. Hanes (Barnesville) | 17. Dieckman (Columbia Station) |
| 7. Merrell (Mansfield St. Peter) | 18. Lorth (Madeira) |
| 8. Ellsworth (Bridgeport) | 19. Paul (Blanchester) |
| 9. Enders (Seneca East) | 20. Lyons (Utica) |
| 10. Martin (Coventry) | 21. Selhorst (Coldwater) |
| 11. Dunn (Kenton Ridge) | 22. Enzor (Crestview) |
| 12. Goeltzenleuchter (Ayersville) | 23. Howard (Fenwick) |

It all happens at the Cuyahoga Hts. District at 125#. There's no question that the top three wrestlers will all be competing at that district and they should have a stranglehold on the top state spots unless Jake Davis decides to compete here -- and even then he would probably rate no better than fourth best based on past performance.

Leading the way is defending state champion Joe Boardwine who continues to improve. He will become a three-time state qualifier -- finishing sixth as a sophomore before winning it all last year at 119#. This year he looks even

better winning easily at Hudson and Aurora. He has developed into an outstanding champion, but defending still won't be easy. Walker, now twice a state runner up, is kind of like the Buffalo Bills -- overdue. As a freshman he lost his semi-final bout on overtime criteria (the old system was still in place then) and ended up fourth. Then in his sophomore year he lost in the state finals in overtime to Wilkovich after having defeated him the week before at districts. And, then last year, Boardwine beat Walker at districts (3-1) and at states (9-2). This is Walker's last chance and he seems ready winning at Smithville and Doylestown and getting a strong third at Medina -- losing only to Division I choice Jason Allen. He recently defeated Workman in convincing fashion at this weight. Kline is the first of a quintet of excellent Mapleton wrestlers all of whom could be factors at Wright State. Last year Kline lost in his go-to-state bout to Wilkovich and failed to qualify. This year he has won at Hillsdale, Black River and Marion Harding -- defeating state runner-up Jake Davis 10-8. He could serve as the igniter for Mapleton with strong district and state performances -- which he is certainly capable of doing. He should get a good draw at state level with Walker and Boardwine at the same district. A key here would be to win that district and then be away from the other two at states. Martin looks to be next best when he flip-flops with Workman and moves up to 125#. At 119# he has won at Copley and Coventry and was third at Wadsworth. Other possibilities are Tompkins -- who missed state qualification by one bout last year -- Enzor and Dieckman. The latter boy has wrestled reasonably well against strong opposition this year and could be a factor. Saif (West Salem Northwestern), Flynn (Aurora) and Herrick (Highland) are other possibilities at this weight class. If Herrick can escape his murderous sectional he could be a factor now that Cuyahoga Hts. qualifies five.

My guess is that the St. Clairsville District will also showcase a crowded field at this weight. Smith was runner up at the OVAC -- losing for the first time at 125# -- as he lost to a West Virginia wrestler. A state qualifier last year at Edison North he captured a solid fifth place medal including a split in two bouts with Yoder. Hanes and Ellison are just a smidgeon behind Smith. Hanes was fourth at the OVAC -- defeating the West Virginian state champ in the quarters but losing to Smith by a point in the semi-finals. He beat Ellsworth 5-2 in the tourney as well. He was a state alternate at this weight last year losing a 9-7 bout to go to states. Ellsworth has been a consistently high placer all year including a big win at Barnesville (when Hanes was at 130#). He battled Shields tough in their bout and could be third best here. I expect that state alternate Priest will also travel in this direction challenging all three of the Eastern boys. Buckley (Union Local) and Sies (New Albany) are also possibilities.

There are a lot of state qualifying prospects at Fostoria, but very few who could challenge for state placement. State qualifier Dilger, Merrell and Enders are marginally best, but they do not cast a large shadow in terms of a state perspective. Enders, a transfer from Tiffin Columbian, has perhaps, the most upside potential, but that has not yet been realized. Dilger's biggest win was at Bishop Ready while state qualifier Merrell finished third at the not-so-strong Gorman. The pocket-sized Goetzenleuchter and Grime are probably next best with Selhorst and Enzor still another step behind. Also possibilities are Mutchler (Woodmore), Haas (McComb) and Deamicis (Carey). A wild card here is Quinn Logsdon (Fremont St. Joseph) who has not competed all year, but may be ready by tournament time. Again, I think a revitalized Dilger is probably best here, but Merrell and particularly an up-tempo Enders could score.

State qualifier Dunn leads what appears to be a relatively weak district aggregation at Dayton. He lost a tough first round bout last year and seemed ready for a really big year in 1993. However, he has four losses to date and narrowly won the Springfield Catholic against generally inferior opposition. That may mean that Lorth and Paul have caught him and that Lyons is in that same classification, too. Lorth beat Paul to win at Blanchester and also won against a representative field at Bethel-Tate. Walp (Springfield Northeastern) and Pritchard (Grandview Hts.) are other possibilities.

130#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOE MAIANI (SANDUSKY ST. MARY)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Castro (Otsego) | 14. Skoczen (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 3. Ulan (Brookfield) | 15. Bergman (Versailles) |
| 4. Ford (Delta) | 16. Ja. Forward (Archbold) |
| 5. Hider (West Salem NW) | 17. Beal (Wellsville) |
| 6. Sears (Hopewell-Loudon) | 18. Cohen (Beachwood) |
| 7. Underwood (Marion Pleasant) | 19. Biribilas (Dayton Oakwood) |
| 8. King (Brooklyn) | 20. Cooper (Waterloo) |
| 9. Lones (West Jefferson) | 21. Byrd (Norwalk St. Paul) |
| 10. Mokros (Shadyside) | 22. Dreher (Black River) |
| 11. Ellis (Newark Catholic) | 23. Jacobs (Cadiz) |
| 12. Straight (Blanchester) | 24. Spero (Fostoria St. Wendelin) |
| 13. Borjas (Genoa) | 25. Robe (Williamsburg) |

This is apparently a weight classification where there are outstanding opportunities for individual advancement and team scoring. A major plus for Sandusky St. Mary is that they have an outstanding wrestler at this not too high-powered weight. Since there are not an over-abundance of 135s either, any influx of wrestler might come from 125#.

Maiani is a three-time district champion who has been outstanding since his first varsity tournament as a freshman -- where, if memory serves -- he was voted the OW. That first year he was third at 103# losing only to Dernian. However, Wright State has been nothing but a disaster for him. Two years ago as a sophomore he was disqualified in a bizarre first-round incident that still leaves me shaking with indignation. Then last year he lost a double overtime first-round decision where he seemed nervous and tentative. If luck evens out in a four-year career, Maiani should win on good fortune alone. This year he has campaigned almost solely at 135# winning at Edison, Fremont St. Joseph, Sandusky St. Mary and the SBC duals. I think his time has come.

State fourth place winner Castro could be his toughest rival and, of course, they should be in opposite half-brackets at Wright State. Castro has wrestled more big-time opponents than Maiani beating Herbert, for example, to win at Toledo Waite and losing by but a point to Keller at St. Johns. Two-time state qualifier Ford will apparently compete at this weight and he will be a major factor. He placed sixth as a sophomore at 135#, but then last year drew Feckanin and Thatcher back-to-back and lost twice. This year he was third at the GMVWA at

140# and fourth at Toledo Waite. He's difficult to score against and his experience allow him to take full advantage of mistakes. State qualifier Sears was a district runner up last year, but his results do not indicate much improvement although he has been at 135# much of the time. Still he has placement potential at this weight class. After this top trio there is a significant drop off in overall quality. I've listed Borjas, Jason Forward, Byrd and Spero, but they come from the same pot that contains Imhoff (Carey), Perez (Ayersville), McCormick (Crestview) and Salm (Coldwater). One person to watch is John Davis (Milan Edison) who has been injured all year. He should end up at 130# and while he was not impressive at the SBC Duals that is a tough meet for your first week back.

Like Fostoria where three wrestlers dominate this weight class that same pattern holds true at Cuyahoga Hts. -- although this particular trio does not have the credentials of the Fostoria group. Ulan is the defending 130# district champion -- winning last year with three first period falls and an easy 11-4 decision in the finals. Then winning four state bouts to grab a fifth place. Little information filters down to me from Brookfield except Ulan has spent some time at 135# with his usual success. Last year he was a surprise time bomb exploding in the districts. This year everyone ought be prepared. Hider missed a state berth by a single bout, but seems to have really improved this year. Not only is he winning -- he is winning big. At Hopewell Loudon he won by fall in both the semi-finals and finals while he crushed everyone at Black River including an 17-8 major decisions in the final. His only loss was to the excellent Denholm, 6-4, at Doylestown. That loss, rather than all his victories, really cemented his high place in this ranking. King, already a two-time state qualifier, has never won a states bout, but this year that should change. He has been around a long time (he was Dernlan's first ever state opponent), but this year he has been beating top notch opponents. He was champ at Copley and Wadsworth winning against solid opposition each time. Now for the rest of the field. Skoczen won two district bouts last year and has been solid this year while Cohen was second at Richmond Hts. to Jones. Cooper is by far the best wrestler at Waterloo and has won two tournaments this year. Dreher, Sprungl (Avon) and Davis (ASV) are other journeyman performers here.

Based on my guess as to Central District directionality it should be a crowded field at the Dayton District. However, two Columbus area wrestlers -- Lones and Underwood -- should dominate the competition. Underwood is a returning state qualifier at this class who won one bout at Wright State, and has had a successful season this year. Lones is probably second best with a horde of about equally good Southwest wrestlers trailing. None of this second group has much chance for anything but the last qualifying spot.

The field is also quite weak at St. Clairsville. Again, the Central District entrant, Ellis, seems best with the young Mokros -- a strong second at the OVAC -- right behind. Keep your eye on Mokros because he looks to be improving at a rapid pace and by March may be the best competitor here. Beal and Jacobs are experienced wrestlers with past district experience while Dubinsky has been a steady performer for Union Local a long time. However, it might not be a surprise to see Buckley -- now at 125# -- thinking about moving up a weight class. Ellis (Academy) is also good and, of course, along with his namesake from Newark-Catholic could set up a confusing final.

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ALEX GARCIA (COLUMBUS ACADEMY)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. McGhee (Coventry) | 13. Kuntz (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 3. Fowler (Toledo Northwood) | 14. Winkler (Hannibal River) |
| 4. Lewis (Mapleton) | 15. Bylow (Otsego) |
| 5. Hobbs (Licking Hts.) | 16. Littleton (Shadyside) |
| 6. Meade (Clear Fork) | 17. Garvin (Utica) |
| 7. Price (Tri-Village) | 18. Moyer (Brookville) |
| 8. Miller (Hopewell-Loudon) | 19. Judd (Wickliffe) |
| 9. Je. Forward (Archbold) | 20. Davis (ASV) |
| 10. Silverstein (Beachwood) | 21. Bryant (Dayton Christian) |
| 11. Schmenk (Sandusky St. Mary) | 22. Schober (Avon) |
| 12. Montgomery (Blanchester) | 23. Pittman (Ready) |

Garcia is one of those talented performers who have just been on the verge of taking a state title for a couple of years now. Two years ago he was a finalist at 125# losing to illness-weakened Dernlan in a relatively close bout. Then last year he moved down to 125# (after I picked him to win at 130#), and paid the price when he met the super-hot Kelly Lipinski who walloped him 11-5 in the semi-finals. This year he has best opportunity to win because although he faces a talented field each of them does seem to have a discernable drawback. So far this year Garcia has shown none.

I've rated the precocious freshman McGhee second best here, and I don't think that's a stretch. Many times an age-group champion, McGhee has the experience and skills of a much older competitor. Totally undefeated this year at 140# he will be a real handful at this lower class. He has already won at Coventry, Copley and Wadsworth -- including a comeback win over the excellent Division I Donovan. It also cannot hurt (except maybe physically) to have Owens, Davis and Sharp as workout partners. His only drawback is his inexperience and, perhaps, an occasional tendency to fall behind early in a bout. Right behind is state qualifier Lewis who won a state bout last year and about 25 so far this year. He was champ at Hillsdale, Black River and Marion Harding -- beating the excellent McCullough 8-7 in the final. He is a second possible challenger for Garcia, but I think Lewis lacks the needed quickness to match up well with my pick here. McGhee and Lewis stand out at Cuyahoga Hts. with the remainder of the field a good deal behind. State qualifier Silverstein was runner up at 140# at Richmond Hts. and won easily at Aurora. He should qualify again. Kuntz who I can never figure out is also back (he was third at Wadsworth) and also figures to qualify. The last spot should be a battle between Judd, Schober, Davis and, perhaps, Ferry (Columbia Station).

Fowler will also be a top threat for Garcia. Last year he was a district runner up to Rosin and then wrestled exceptionally well to capture a fourth place -- losing only to Amicon (9-6) and McKeever (6-5). This year he has beat some outstanding people (like Newsom) and he could easily be a finalist. His problem is partly schedule and partly no one else on the team anywhere near his class. Nobody else at the Fostoria District meets Fowler's standard although there are three other competitors with placement hopes. Two-time state qualifier Meade has

been injured, but he is a rugged performer. Last year he grabbed a sixth place medal including a narrow 4-3 loss to Fowler. Forward has really gotten better in a big hurry. He crushed Sears at the "A" Classic and won handily at Gibsonburg and Beaver creek -- pinning Division I state qualifier Drake in the finals. Forward has passed a lot of his competition in the last 12 months. Miller pinned Forward in district action last year, but I've put him a notch behind him now. Miller has been sensational winning at Hopewell-Louden, Gibsonburg and the "A" Classic by crushing scores. However, Reineck humbled him 12-0 at Van Buren -- although Miller is clearly a legitimate 135 pounder. He'll need to beat the good people at this weight class. Schmenk, also a state qualifier, has missed a good portion of the season, but I suspect he'll end up here. Incidentally, that would probably leave the excellent Roesch unable to break into Sandusky St. Mary's line up. Early in the year Schmenk was 140# champ at Edison and gave Reineck a tough battle (just as he did in the district final) while losing at Fremont St. Joseph. Since then he has missed a lot of time. If healthy he may be as good as anyone at this district but Fowler. That five quality performers leaving Bylow and a host of others like Eagle (Crestwood), Stull (Lima CC) and Van Horn (Hicksville) out in the cold.

At St. Clairsville I expect to see Hobbs be the dominant figure based on this state qualification success of last year, and his excellent results this season. He was one of only two Division III finalists at Medina losing 13-9 to Wallace and has also won at Licking Hts. Winkler has moved forward to the top spot in the Eastern District after a runner-up finish at the OVAC. He is not lost to a Division III wrestler this year and has moved past Littleton and Blackburn (Shenendoah) into the top spot. The latter two boys should contend for that often elusive last state berth.

Garcia will probably head to Dayton where he will be part of a solid field -- though all of them with possibly one exception is well below his performance level. That exception is state qualifier Price who has missed the entire season to this point with injuries. I've always liked him, but after a tremendous start last year he wound down getting a district third to qualify and losing to the excellent freshman Thatcher in the first round 17-11. This year another good start, considering he'll begin in late January or early February, would match perfectly with the state tournament process. State qualifier Montgomery also returns after a district third last year and one win at the state level. This year he has won at Bethel-Tate, Amelia and Blanchester, but was crushed by the excellent Division II Tye at Sycamore. That leaves Moyer who won at Urbana and Bryant a champion at Springfield Catholic and Oakwood with no room to qualify here.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: SCOTT REINECK (FREMONT ST. JOSEPH)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Rosin (Sandusky St. Mary) | 14. Brown (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 3. Gondol (Jackson-Milton) | 15. Flemming (Newark Catholic) |
| 4. Kerr (Mapleton) | 16. Smiley (New London) |
| 5. Worley (Huron) | 17. Sharp (Coventry) |
| 6. Gonzalez (Hicksville) | 18. Griffith (West Liberty Salem) |
| 7. Otto (Hannibal River) | 19. Francis (Bellaire) |
| 8. Peppo (Dayton Christian) | 20. Whitson (Lockland) |
| 9. Soto (Otsego) | 21. C. Miller (Cardinal) |
| 10. Hinkle (Highland Sparta) | 22. Zimmerman (Cadiz) |
| 11. Bennett (Manchester) | 23. Baith (Crestview) |
| 12. Pinkerton (Waterford) | 24. Slack (Shadyside) |
| 13. Parmer (Licking Hts.) | 25. Oswalt (Hillsdale) |

This should prove to be one of the most interesting weight classes in Division III because it provides a great number of fine wrestlers no one or two who stand that much better than the others. I would anticipate from the first round forward at Wright State that this bracket will be filled with close, hard fought bouts and because there is wide geographical diffusion among the top wrestlers one should also expect a large number of upsets because of unknown styles.

And yet, the two finalists are likely to be wrestlers from schools situated less than 25 miles from one another, and who have known each other for some time. That is if Reineck does not drop to 135# (although his father assures me he's at 140# to stay) or that Rosin does not get to 145# (although his coach says he committed to 140#). At any rate, both wrestlers are outstanding and it certainly looks like either has the credentials to be state champ. Reineck, already twice a state qualifier, was sixth last year at the murderous 135# weight class. He was a semi-finalist who lost to state runners-up Feckanin and Tipton back-to-back and then lost to Gondol for fifth (although he has beaten him 6-0 in the first round). This year he has been unstoppable winning three tournaments capped by his 12-0 win at Van Buren. Rosin, also a two-time state qualifier, was second last year losing to Amicon in the finals. This year at 145# he is undefeated, but has won a number of narrow decisions. Worley has been sensational all year winning every bout decisively and triumphing in three tournaments. His only loss was an 8-3 decision to Rosin. Gonzalez qualified for Wright State last year at this class, but lost out early. This has been a strong year for Gonzalez, but he competes with a schedule that does not have a lot of rigorous check points. Still he has made incredible improvement and will be a factor here. Soto, of course, is a mystery. He has been brilliant and quite a lot less than that, too. A state qualifier last year he was bombed by Ulan in the first round and eliminated. A sixth possibility is state qualifier Smiley who could be shut out if he gets stuck with a bad draw.

Gondol and Kerr stand out at Cuyahoga Hts. Gondol was fifth last year at 135# splitting two bouts with Reineck and beating the excellent Thatcher as well. This year despite wrestling in an out-of-the-way area, he won smashingly at

Hudson beating two-time place winner Wolff 9-4. He'll probably have to beat either Reineck or Rosin to be a finalist. State qualifier Kerr is up from 125# where he won two bouts at States last year. This year he had big wins at Black River, Hillsdale and lost 6-3 to Ratliff in the finals at Marion Harding. Again, he will, I believe, help show that the Mapleton wrestlers are for real. Bennett is also good and despite his #11 ranking, he has state placement potential. He missed going to Wright State by a single point last year, and has shown steady improvement in 1992-93. He won four bouts at Medina (losing only to Division I Ford and Angione) and won at Doylestown and was fourth at Smithville. Brown has been at 140# for two years at Cuyahoga Hts. and has been a steady performer. He was a strong third at Wadsworth. Sharp has been at 145# -- fifth at Wadsworth, first at Copley and second at Coventry -- but will move down to make room for Owens. He should do well here although state placement seems very unlikely. That leaves Miller and Oswalt as other possibilities with Komorek (Brookfield) as a dark horse.

It also looks like it will be a crowded field at St. Clairsville if my Central District geography text hold up. OVAC champion Otto and former state qualifier Pinkerton have both been excellent this year and are the top two Eastern District wrestlers. Otto is 19-0 and won three tourneys while Pinkerton has tasted defeat just once. It's likely that both Parmer and Flemming will join them from the Central District for a real shoot out. Parmer was a state qualifier at 125# losing a quarter-final bout in overtime after a close first round win. He was second to Henderson at Licking Hts. Also here is former state qualifier Slack, the experienced Francis and Zimmerman. It should be a very interesting free-for-all.

Much the same is true at Dayton. State qualifier Peppo had an unnerving experience in the first round at Wright State last year when his bout was never called and his opponent was originally awarded a forfeit. Thank goodness cooler heads prevailed and the match was wrestled four hours later at the end of the first round. The unnerved Peppo pinned in 56 seconds. He ended up winning two bouts at Wright State, but did not place. He has a history of quick falls so opponent need be extremely wary in the first round. Even as a sophomore I thought Hinkle showed exceptional promise, but he still has not cashed in on it. This is his last chance and he'll need to be sharp to grab a state place. Whitson and Griffith should battle for the last spot with Meyer (Versailles) a dark horse.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CHAD OWENS (COVENTRY)

TOP CONTENDER

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Fuentes (Liberty Center) | 14. Conover (Blanchester) |
| 3. LaManna (Ledgemont) | 15. Walton (Hawken) |
| 4. Caprella (Lima Central Catholic) | 16. Humphrey (Belpre) |
| 5. Pilcher (Kenton Ridge) | 17. Littleton (Shadyside) |
| 6. Deere (Jonathan Alder) | 18. Dodson (West Salem NW) |
| 7. Dreschel (Margaretta) | 19. Hanes (Barnesville) |
| 8. Risner (Tiffin Calvert) | 20. Minard (Caldwell) |
| 9. Howard (Licking Hts.) | 21. Krzynowek (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 10. Schroeder (Aurora) | 22. Trent (Greeneview) |
| 11. Milligan (Lakota) | 23. Ratcliff (Williamsburg) |
| 12. Dillon (Newark Catholic) | 24. McMahon (Wellington) |
| 13. Lesniewicz (Delta) | 25. Kimmert (Delphos St. John) |

There are several different perspectives of Chad Owens. First of all he is in my mind the single most talented high school wrestler in Ohio with virtually unlimited potential. Musser, Neider, LaCure are all outstanding high school superstars but in terms only of wrestling Owens is the best there is in this state. A cadet world runner-up, Owens is first of all a free-style and Greco-Roman artist who also wrestles the collegiate style in high school. Last year as a sophomore at Walsh -- so far the only time period he has competed -- Owens raced up the collegiate style learning curve such that at state tournament time the only possible rival was the redoubtable senior, Peter Nathanson. Nathanson won on the scoreboard 4-3 in the semi-finals, but Owens really looked, at least on that day, to be the better boy. His other four bouts against the best in the state went 14-4, 15-0, 15-1 and 17-2. In all honesty, he's awesome and could win in any school classification in Ohio. But, unfortunately, there is a second perspective -- a darker viewpoint which deals with suspensions, disciplinary actions, eligibility and the like which erased Owens' freshman year and much of this his junior season.

Now at Coventry there are only two ways Owens will not win -- he is for whatever reason unable to compete or his physical style and brilliant throws injure an opponent and he loses on a disqualification -- although he is meticulous in following the appropriate guidelines for handling an opponent. Believe me, for the real wrestling fan, Chad Owens is wonderful to watch.

Much of his competition will come from the Fostoria District. Two-time state qualifier Fuentes leads the way after placing fourth as a sophomore and then missing placement by one bout last year. He'll likely stay at this weight figuring that some other may go up or down to avoid Owens, and opening up the competition. He won both at Hudson and the "A" Classic. State qualifier Caprella has also been outstanding this year while completing a demanding schedule. He was second at the OCC, second at the "A" Classic (a 5-4 loser to Fuentes) and fifth at the GMVWA. Considering the horribly crowded field in this district at 140# this may be the ideal weight class for him. State qualifier Dreschel is also here after a "two and out" at Wright State last year. He has been a consistently high placer all year and winning at Stritch. He will not be

sorry to see Rosin drop to 140# after lost to him twice. Risner came out of nowhere as a freshman last year gaining a berth in the district finals and competing at the state level. He placed at the OCC and won at Gibsonburg as he continues to improve. This is a solid quartet each with state experience and solid credentials. Right behind them are Milligan and Lesniewicz who have shown real strength this year. Milligan has missed some time, but he was a 5-3 loser to Rosin as a finalist at Fremont St. Joseph and dropped an overtime bout in the final at Van Buren. He cannot be overlooked. Kimmet, O'Block (Norwalk St. Paul) and Jerico Speelman (Edgeton) must also receive some consideration.

Owens will face a major challenge from two-time state qualifier LaManna. He was fifth as a sophomore two years ago, but then had a season full of injuries last year which really ruined any attempt to place even higher. He did qualify for Wright State and lost a very close first round match to eventual champ Lippert, but did not place. He has still been bedeviled by injuries much of this year, but was still fourth at Medina and was brilliant at Toledo Waite in taking that title. That included wins over two of the top Division I 145s Harris and Mahaffey in the same day. With the right draw -- and he should be a way from Owens -- he could be a finalist. After Owens and then LaManna there exists some journeyman wrestlers and some real opportunities. The freshman Schroeder is probably third best and what a great year he has had with titles at Aurora, Hudson and Nova, Florida. He is currently 15-1 losing only to Varnum 8-7. Walson, Dodson, Krzynowek and McMahon are also ranked with Varnum (Chagrin Falls), state qualifier Hustin (Hillsdale) and Oberly (Waynedale) yet another step off the pace.

Deere looks best in the combined Southwest/Central District. He was a state alternate last year and his moved into another, higher gear this year. He's had big wins at North Union, Bishop Ready and Brookhaven this year. Pilcher has been outstanding in the Southwest winning at a consistent pace and getting the OW at Springfield Catholic. He also won at Graham building a 20-2 record. State alternate Conover has also had a great season winning at Blanchester, Amelia and Bethel Tate. Also participating will be state alternate Trent, state alternate Siemers and the excellent Ratcliff as well. This will be one of the best Division III weight classes at the Dayton District.

This will not be true at St. Clairsville. Howard and Dillon will come from the Central District. Howard was second at Licking Hts. and third at Franklin Hts., but lost early to LaManna at Medina although by a relatively close 10-6 margin. The Eastern District folks just aren't that strong here. I've listed Humphrey, Littleton, Hanes and state qualifier Minard, but they all may be competing for just one state berth.

152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BEN WOLFORD (DELTA)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Bollas (Perry) | 14. Mobley (West Liberty Salem) |
| 3. Thatcher (Bishop Ready) | 15. Perdue (Belpre) |
| 4. Dorley (Lima Central Catholic) | 16. Hnottavage (Chanel) |
| 5. Davis (Coventry) | 17. Heal (Seneca East) |
| 6. Demorest (Edgerton) | 18. Weber (Woodsfield) |
| 7. Patrick (Northmor) | 19. Roth (Norwalk St. Paul) |
| 8. Sohl (Black River) | 20. Montis (Granville) |
| 9. Westhoven (Liberty Center) | 21. Shinkle (Batavia) |
| 10. Al-Samkari (Dayton Oakwood) | 22. M. Miller (Cardinal) |
| 11. Collins (Blanchester) | 23. Vucelich (Hambibal River) |
| 12. Reisinger (Mapleton) | 24. Rizzo (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| 13. Schmeltz (Kansas Lakota) | 25. Blain (Kenton Ridge) |

All year I have not worried about a selection in this weight class because I felt sure that Brendan Courtot would compete at 152#. Now that I have been assured that he will stay at 160# I find myself without a sure-shot candidate. Nevertheless, it seems that the weight class divides into three segments. The first one contains only three wrestlers -- Wolford, Bollas and Thatcher -- who I believe to be best. The second group consists of only two names -- Dorley and Davis -- who are just a half step behind the first group. The third segment is everybody else.

Using such a technique certainly simplifies the issue -- it's either the juniors Wolford or Bollas, or the sophomore Thatcher. I've gone with state qualifier Wolford based on his outstanding efforts at 145# last year and his great work at 160# so far this year. He won two bouts at Wright State (well, ok, a win and a bye) before losing 6-2 to Courtot. He was exceptional in winning the GMVWA and has done equally well everywhere else. He'll be very tough at this weight. Bollas has had a great year winning at Toledo Waite, Bishop Ready and Richmond Hts. and finishing third at West Geauga. He's also defeated some great people -- pinning Division II third-placer Levy at Richmond Hts. deciding division I place winner Bloomer at Toledo Waite, and defeating Thatcher at Bishop Ready 8-7. This last score certainly does not indicate domination so we know the great sophomore Thatcher could well reverse that result at Wright State. I watched him last year at states and he looked very good for a then ninth grader -- winning two bouts and almost placing. That's where he hold an advantage over Bollas who didn't make it out of his sectional last year.

Should any of these of three falter, Dorley and Davis are certainly qualified to step right in. Dorley won at the OCC (where Thatcher was fourth) and was an excellent third at 160# at the GMVWA. He, too, has previous state experience (at this weight) as the fifth qualifier out of Fostoria. Davis missed Wright State by a single point last year and has won three tournaments this year. He will be a challenge to any opponent.

At Cuyahoga Hts., Bollas and Davis will be followed by state qualifier Sohl, the improving Reisinger and the slimmed-down Hnottavage for the last three

Sohl lost twice at Wright State last year, but has come back strong in 1992-93. He and Reisinger have battled each other Sohl winning at Hillsdale and Reisinger at Black River. Sohl also won at Buckeye while Reisinger's break though tournament was at Marion Harding where he blitzed a good field ending with a 56-second pin of Division I state qualifier Couch. Hnottavange, down from 160# after two years, won two district bouts at the higher weight last year. He could be very tough at 152#. Miller and Rizzo will challenge for a state berth with Kress (Columbia Station) and Lewis (Hillsdale) also in the hunt.

Wolford and Dorley head a reasonably strong Fostoria District. Demorest crushed Westhoven to win the "A" Classic and also won at Wayne Trace. He is part of a good foursome of upper middleweights at Edgerton -- three of whom, incidentally, have the last name of Speelman. State qualifier Westhoven's loss at the "A" Classic may not be indicative of his real value at this weight. A key member of Liberty Center's state semi-final football team, he came out very late for wrestling and is just rounding into shape. Last year, he had a district third and then lost a tight 10-8 first-round state bout. Schmeltz has been a runner up in three tournaments and has had his name spelled three different ways in the newspaper accounts. Apparently they don't spell it right in the Northwest unless you win the tourney. A dark horse and something of an unknown is Heal who is my top choice to upset one of the top quintet. He narrowly beat Schmeltz at Van Buren, won at Gibsonburg and was second at Bellevue. There is a lot of depth here. Roth, Mitchell (New London), Shiley (Hopewell Loudon) and Dillinger (Sandusky St. Mary) all could have legitimate dreams of being a state qualifier.

I believe Bishop Ready will qualify out of Dayton which will create a real crowd at that weight class. State qualifier Al-Samkari is the nominal leader of the southwest brigade but the excellent Collins, state qualifier Mobley and Shinkle are also right there. It strikes me that there could be a real log-jam here and that we could see a smoothing out process across weight classes. Al-Samkari has already been at 145# (and got beaten by Pilcher) while Mobley and Shinkle could also move down. However, I'm not sure that there is a lot of breathing space at 145#, however, 160# may be an interesting option for those 152s here who are making a tough cut. I'm particularly intrigued with Collins who was the state alternate at this weight after being a district semi-finalist. He has had huge victories at Sycamore (12-3 final), Blanchester (0:46), Bethel-Tate (13-2), but did lose at Amelia to a Kentucky champion.

The St. Clairsville District should be dominated by the interlopers from the Columbus area. State qualifier Patrick should be here, although he has been very shaky this year wrestling at 160#. Montis, Hoderfield (Johnstown) and Wiseman (Liberty Union) are other Central District 152s who will probably be here. The two major possibilities are Weber (third at the OVAC and first at Shadyside and Bellaire St. John) and the rapidly rising Perdue. Vucelich is another possibility.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: SCOTT SEDLICK (WELLINGTON)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Courtot (Newark Catholic) | 13. Gale (Sandusky St. Mary) |
| 3. Jefferis (Barnesville) | 14. Nichols (Batavia) |
| 4. Tyson (Elmwood) | 15. Mueller (Blanchester) |
| 5. Perkins (Kenton Ridge) | 16. Stemen (Lincolnview) |
| 6. Van Gundy (Bloom-Carroll) | 17. Schonauer (Tuslaw) |
| 7. Price (Spencerville) | 18. Harwell (Ayersville) |
| 8. Baird (Coventry) | 19. Walker (Jonathan Alder) |
| 9. Alltop (Crestview) | 20. Gillig (Mohawk) |
| 10. Hamway (Chanel) | 21. Huck (Waterford) |
| 11. Baker (Chagrin Falls) | 22. Lancz (Beachwood) |
| 12. Smith (Bellaire) | 23. Davis (Tinora) |

On the surface this looks like a three-man tournament with Sedlick, Courtot and Jefferis the only real players. Deep down, though, I think there is only one real choice and that's Sedlick. He's the defending state champion winning the title in sudden-death overtime with probably his easiest takedown of the year. This year he has lost only once -- a semi-final defeat by state champ LaCure 14-8 where he actually looked stronger in the third period -- and has pretty much battered everyone else. He has an indomitable will to win and that makes all the difference.

Courtot was fifth last year at 145#, but he has clearly gotten bigger. He won the OCC -- always a challenge for a Division III wrestler -- although it was not a super-strong field. Everywhere else he has been totally dominant. He will likely be in the same district as Jefferis who is also undefeated. Jefferis was third last year splitting two close bouts with Fisher who Sedlick handled quite easily. Jefferis, like the other two, has gotten better and won the OVAC on a technical fall and several other tournaments in equally dominating ways. Since he and Courtot will should be in opposite half brackets at Wright State, Sedlick may have to defeat both to remain champion. Smith and Huck are possibilities for the last berth, but they have no chance against the top duo.

Sedlick is also way ahead of what is clearly a weak Guyahoga Hts. District. I seriously doubt whether anyone else here can place at the state level. Besides those listed, Emerson (Waynedale), Smith (Perry), Rose (Cardinal) and Harvey (Columbia Station) have qualification opportunities.

There will be much more action at Fostoria. Tyson qualified two years ago, but apparently did not wrestle last year. Well, he's back with a vengeance and after an early season slip has been outstanding. State qualifier Price may be rated too high based on this year's results. He has struggled up two weight classes although a consistent placer. I've heard rumors that Alltop may drop to 152#, but I believe he may be better off here. I've also rated Gale, Stemen, Harwell and Gillig, but also remember Davis who upset Stemen in the dual.

State qualifier Perkins should dominate the Southwest contingent but may be surprised if Van Gundy shows up here. Perkins is currently 24-0 including three

tournament titles and a big win over Division II state qualifier Baker. Van Gundy, at Groveport in the past, missed state qualification by a takedown in Division I last year. I'm not exactly rolling in Bloom-Carroll results, but I haven't seen his name until very recently. If at full strength he should give Perkins a real battle. Walker would be the Central District candidate for the third spot, but state alternate Nichols and Mueller are, perhaps, better. Nichols was runner-up at the SWOCA and has won several smaller tourneys. Perkins defeated him 5-2 for the last state ticket last year.

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JASON KRISHA (MILAN EDISON)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Fuduric (Cardinal) | 13. Wurts (Seneca East) |
| 3. Daily (Woodridge) | 14. Smith (Waterford) |
| 4. Ross (Northmor) | 15. Theis (Mohawk) |
| 5. Belknap (Coventry) | 16. Wilhelmy (West Salem NW) |
| 6. Sheets (Licking Hts.) | 17. Smarella (Mingo) |
| 7. Tate (Elmwood) | 18. Mangen (Versailles) |
| 8. Dimmerling (Woodsfield) | 19. Sellers (Lincolnvie) |
| 9. Steck (Dixie) | 20. Prewitt (Lockland) |
| 10. Rychener (Archbold) | 21. Pack (New London) |
| 11. Polen (Wellington) | 22. Van Hoose (Rootstown) |
| 12. Yoder (Jonathan Alder) | 23. Allen (Waterloo) |

For most of this year I was under the assumption that Milan Edison was a Division II school. Not only has that been the classification where they've competed the past few years, but it is also the information shown in the OHSAA guidebook. However, an apparent double counting of vocational students has moved Edison back to the ranks of Division III and in the process made an already good weight class at 171# much, much more difficult.

My choice now falls to Jason Krishna who has become an outstanding competitor at Edison. He would probably have been my choice had the school remained at the Division II level based on consistently improving performance during the past two years. Last year he was district runner up to the powerful Long and then cruised into the state semi-finals before losing to eventual champ Farley and Long, again, to finish fifth. This year he has been simply awesome on his way to an undefeated season -- never having a single bout that he hasn't won by a large margin. For example at the SBC Duals he racked up seven wins -- five first period falls, a second period fall and a 19-2 technical fall. It's been like that all year.

His toughest competition will emerge from Cuyahoga Hts. in the persons of Fuduric, Daily and Belknap. I've put Fuduric just marginally above Daily even though last year Daily won their individual encounter at the district 8-5 and placed higher at the state competition. Still, Fuduric, a two-time state qualifier, is a marvelous all-around athlete who I believe will be in peak condition for this his last shot at a state title. Last year his early district loss to Daily forced him to win four consolation matches for third including a

17-8 pasting of Belknap. He then made the state semi-finals on an exciting 6-5 win over my top pick Godwin before losing to the eventual champ Perkins and finishing fourth (this time losing to Godwin). This year he lost two close bouts at Medina, but otherwise has been perfect including an OW at Jackson-Milton. Daily, second last year, is totally undefeated and hardly pressed winning any number of small tournaments. His schedule really hasn't been up to challenging him. He defeated both Belknap and Fuduric last year. Belknap was fifth last year and has won two tournaments this year losing only to the excellent Patterson at Wadsworth. He should place. The rest of the district is nowhere close to this trio. In fact, except for Polen, I have struggled finding other names to even compete for the last two qualification spots. I've listed Wilhelmy, Van Hoose and Allen, but Felty (Elyria Open Door), Lemon (Waynedale), or Courtad (Aurora) are equally likely possibilities. Whoever qualified will not last long at Wright State.

Krishna Leads a relatively weak Fostoria District. State qualifier Tate is probably next based on wins at Northwood, Hopewell-Loudon and Oak Harbor. An awesome pinner he will dominate except against Krishna. Rychener got stuck in that brutal Archbold Sectional last year with Godwin, Speelman, etc., and didn't get out. This year he should have no such problem based on a great season's record and three tournament titles. He has made the biggest leap forward (kind of a bad pun), and will challenge anyone but Krishna. I've put Wurts ahead of Theis based mainly on a full season of activity, but Theis now just back from injury may turn out to be the better of the two. This is the quintet that has the best chance to qualify, but should Wurts (who is currently injured) not be at 100%, Sellers, Pack, Lause (McComb) and Overmeyer (Woodmore) stand next. Lause was second at the "A" Classic and Van Buren -- pinning Sellers at the latter tourney. Jeriah Speelman (Edgerton) is a long-shot threat here.

At Dayton the Columbus contingent of Ross and Yoder should dominate. Ross has really moved up finishing a strong second at the Gorman (a 13-11 loser to Roberts), winning at Bucyrus, and gaining runner-up honors at Black River (an 8-7 loser to Potts). Yoder is right at the same level and these two should be finalists at both the sectional and district level. Steck leads a very weak southwest brigade with Mangen and Prewitt another step behind. None of this group will worry Ross or Yoder.

At St. Clairsville the interloper Sheets from the Central District is easily best. He was fifth at Medina, third at Licking Hts. and won at Franklin Hts. He was one bout from States last year and many will argue that he is rated too low and should be in the top three or four. One wrestler who will not is state qualifier Dimmerling who beat Sheets 10-1 in the last year's go-to-state bout. Unfortunately, I'm not sure Dimmerling has kept pace with Sheets -- although he was a finalist at both Bellaire St. John and Shadyside (winning the title at the first named). He was fifth at the OVAC, but still should qualify. Smith, an overtime loser to Dimmerling, seems next best while Smarella is also a likely challenger.

189#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KYLE RUTLEDGE (COLUMBIA STATION)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Capizzi (Sandusky St. Mary) | 13. Bormuth (Cory Rawson) |
| 3. Bodie (Licking Hts.) | 14. Hennis (Cadiz) |
| 4. Tilton (Clear Fork) | 15. Libbee (Norwalk St. Paul) |
| 5. Bauer (Milan Edison) | 16. Chambers (Mariemont) |
| 6. Kotora (Aurora) | 17. Cisternino (Wickliffe) |
| 7. Sintobin (Delta) | 18. Young (Reading) |
| 8. Ja. Speelman (Edgerton) | 19. Coljohn (Independence) |
| 9. Hoffman (Cardinal) | 20. Craft (Mechanicsburg) |
| 10. Silverio (Bellaire) | 21. Heath (Barnesville) |
| 11. Sanzo (Grandview Hts.) | 22. Lewis (Hillsdale) |
| 12. Stewart (ASV) | 23. McCoy (Blanchester) |

This should be one of the most exciting competitions in Division III. There are a lot of big men here who like to move and score so we should see a lot of action with bouts moving first in one direction and then in another.

My unorthodox choice is Kyle Rutledge who has had just an outstanding year and is, I believe, ready to move right to the top echelon at this class. One could easily argue that picking a wrestler who has never placed at the state level to beat a defending state champion is a risky move and I would agree, although I wish I done it last year when Capizzi pulled that exact same trick. At any rate, Rutledge is undefeated against Ohio wrestlers (he split with the Tennessee state champ at Medina) and was third at Medina and a champion every place else. A great pinner he will be a tremendous threat to everyone. Last year he lost his district final at 171# to eventual state runner-up Daily 8-7 and won two bouts at the state level succumbing to a draw which had him face probably the two best kids at that weight before he could place.

Capizzi, of course, cannot be overlooked. A district qualifier at this weight class as a freshman, he picked up momentum during his sophomore year -- winning the district title with ease and the motoring into the state finals with three wins before beating defending champ Schumacher 9-8. He really is the safer choice, but somehow I think Rutledge might catch him. Capizzi lost early in the year, but like last year he seems in high gear now. Tilton, Bauer and Speelman will challenge Capizzi at the district level. Tilton is awkward looking and unorthodox, but he wins. A returning state qualifier he was sixth last year based mainly on a huge upset of cofavorite Nemeth. This year he was second at the Gorman and won everywhere else. Bauer beat Capizzi, 6-3, earlier in the year to win at Edison, but has struggled as of late. At SBC duals Bauer lost to Capizzi 14-4 and to McKinney in overtime while Capizzi also lost to McKinney. State qualifier Speelman has pretty much avoided those battles staying undefeated but wrestling a far less demanding schedule. He beat state qualifier Bormuth to win the "A" Classic and has not been challenged elsewhere. Sintobin has also improved and in my mind has leaped past Bormuth for the last qualifying spot. He was third at GMVWA and won at Toledo Waite over Hoffman. That leaves state qualifier Bormuth without a spot although he was resourceful enough last year to grab that crucial fifth place. Libbee, Crockett (Fremont St. Joseph), Gunther

(Liberty Center) and Hoerig (Van Buren) are other possibilities in what should be a great weight class.

Rutledge faces tough competition at Cuyahoga Hts. Hoffman and Kitora have been excellent all year winning with a high percentage of falls. Kitora has been tucked away at Heavyweight so he has not met any of the top contenders here. Last year he was sectional champ at 189# and made the semi-finals before losing to Burkey and Hoffman, 2-0. He pinned state qualifier Osborne in the first round and then watched him sneak into a fourth spot on the easier side of the consolation bracket. At heavyweight he has been a perfect 17-0. Hoffman has also been outstanding with a 15-2 record, both losses at Medina and to Division I powerhouse like state runner up Gary and Pennix. He is undefeated everywhere else. As a state qualifier last year he looked tentative and lost a quick fall and was eliminated. Stewart seems next best with the unheralded Cisternino slotted in at the fifth qualifying spot. His only loss was at Richmond Hts. where he finished a strong third. Coljohn and Lewis are also potential qualifiers.

The competition in the Dayton District will be very weak. Sanzo, if he competes that way, should be best. He was a district qualifier last year and has been a consistent placer this year. Chambers, a state qualifier at this class last year, was overmatched at the state level. He has good potential, but wrestles a schedule unlikely to really test him. He defeated Young 5-4 to qualify last year. Both these wrestlers may be supplanted by McCoy and Craft who have done extremely well. Teague (Williamsburg) is yet another solid possibility here. It should be an excellent competition, but no one here is likely to win a bout at the state level, but Sanzo.

Bodie looks like a state place winner. He was second at Medina and Licking Hts. losing to top-notch Division I wrestlers each time. A state qualifier last year he was pinned by Capizzi in the first round and quickly thereafter eliminated. Silverio has literally come from nowhere to be the best Division III 189 pounder in the valley. He was second at the OVAC to the undefeated Roseberry and has forged a 23-2 over the entire season -- the only other loss on a default. Hennis looks to be the third qualifier with Heath and Hendershot (Hannibal River) also in the hunt.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JASON HAYN (LOUISVILLE ST. THOMAS AQUINAS)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Hart (Ledgemont) | 12. Smith (Streetsboro) |
| 3. Martz (Archbold) | 13. Blackburn (Mingo) |
| 4. Rose (Miami East) | 14. Bell (CAPE) |
| 5. Thierry (Liberty Center) | 15. Laveck (Amanda Clearcreek) |
| 6. Jarrett (Margaretta) | 16. Sponseller (Manchester) |
| 7. Kintner (Mapleton) | 17. McGrain (Elmwood) |
| 8. Viers (Genoa) | 18. Smith (Cadiz) |
| 9. Rickard (Woodmore) | 19. Stevenson (Columbus Academy) |
| 10. Stoddard (Mariemont) | 20. Haupt (Marion Pleasant) |
| 11. Sweigert (Berkshire) | 21. Deter (Hillsdale) |

This is a weight class with some good up-top people, but not a lot of depth. My choice is the 265-pound Jason Hayn, who transferred from Canton Central Catholic after last year's competition. Hayn has a perfect 24-0 record with an impressive percentage of falls. He has won three important tournaments including a recent fall over Division II Burkey. His biggest rival is likely to be from the same district -- Cuyahoga Hts. -- in the person of state runner-up Hart. Last year Hart cruised this district and then won two easy bouts to reach the state semi-finals. Against Hicks he was taken down to his back, but it was ruled an illegal slam and when Hart could not continue he was awarded the victory by disqualification. He was a first-period victim the next day in the finals. This year he was fourth at Medina (losing to Santiago and Burkey) and second Toledo Waite. At Medina he seemed to wind down in the third period and may need to get in somewhat better shape. The rest of the district is probably a step behind these top two boys. State qualifier Kintner has had a big year -- winning at Marion Harding and Black River and finishing third at Hillsdale (after getting stuck in the first round by Deter). Hart pinned him in district action last year. Sweigert and state qualifier Smith are about at the same level as Kintner. Smith had a fantastic district draw and was a finalist, but lost twice in state action. This year he lost to Kitora (when he was a heavyweight) to finish second at Aurora and was fourth at Hudson losing to Thierry (in overtime) and Corrigan. Sweigert, the Mogadore champ, was a point from Kintner last year. I've rated Sponseller -- who I always think is going to do better than he does -- and Deter. Two other possibilities are Tessmer (Independence) and Feigenbaum (Independence).

Martz was fourth last year and has reigned supreme in the Northwest this year. He is a devastating pinner with a couple big moves that are virtually unstoppable. He has a lot of first period falls. His only close bout was a 7-4 final win over Thierry at the "A" Classic. Remember he defeated eventual state champion Pardon in the district semi-finals so he has the potential to beat anyone here. Thierry has also wrestled well all year finishing second at the "A" classic and Hudson (in overtime). Last year he was a first-round district loser. Jarrett has been solid all year wrestling against much tougher competition than the top two boys faced. That may help him in the long run. Viers has also had a strong year after moving up from 189# last year. He won at Genoa, but may have trouble with the super-huge heavyweights. The puzzler to me is Rickard. He lost to Division I champ Terebeniec 11-9 in OT in a great bout which should have

convinced him he could go with anyone. He qualified for Wright State fifth out of his district but lost immediately (although to the redoubtable Ayres). This year he barely beat McGrain (10-9) to win at Hopewell-Loudon and was third at the "A" Classic. I still expect great things from this junior. I've also rated McGrain with Krishna (New London), Flugga (Riverdale) and Bowman (Lakota) as other possibilities.

At Dayton the powerful Rose should play a leading role. He has already defeated Division I third-placer Finkes this year while rolling up a 22-1 mark. Last year as a Division II wrestler he won one district bout, but he has shown great improvement. His big win at Troy avenged his only loss to Finkes while finishing second at Graham. State alternate Stoddard missed a state appearance by a single point last year. This year he has wrestled a soft schedule, but won big at Lockland. Bell and Clark (Triad) are other possibilities, but it's likely that Stevenson, a Central District competitor, has the best chance of unseating the top duo.

I really don't see much happening at St. Clairsville. Clearly, there must be some good people available that I have failed to identify. Blackburn has seemingly been most successful in the Valley finishing eighth in the OVAC (in a weight class dominated by West Virginians), but first at Shadyside and second at Bellaire St. John. Smith looked great the first two weeks of the season going undefeated and pinning Mehor of Claymont. He does not appear to have competed since then. Wehr (Shenendoah) and Meadows (Hannibal River) might be next best. Laveck and Haupt seem best from the Central District and could play a role here. This is a very weak district that the other heavyweight will want to draw into.

DIVISION III TEAMS

1. Coventry -- They won three consecutive "AA" titles in 1978-79-80 and then fell into the dumper. Well, they're back -- under the guidance of Randy Glover, a star of the title teams -- and they're for real. Owens, McGhee, Workman, Belknap and Davis give them five potential high placers with possible help from Martin, Sharp and Baird. They have three major keys -- get Workman at his best weight, have McGhee avoid the freshman jitters and keep Owens ready and healthy.
2. Sandusky St. Mary -- Maiani, Rosin and Capizzi are all potential champs and should that happen Coventry is in trouble. But they could also get back up from Davlin, Schmenk, Dillinger and a host of others. Their critical elements are to get Rosin and Maiani at the right weights and fashion the rest of the line up for maximum point scoring. It would be a plus if Roesch could be at a place where he could contribute.
3. Columbia Station -- Mescan, Wilkovich and Rutledge are about all there is, but it should be enough for a top five finish if all goes well. It's difficult to see any back-up help although Dieckman, Ferry and Kress, I suppose, are possibilities.
4. Licking Hts. -- The big timers are Sheets, Bodie and Hobbs, although none have the look of finalists. Howard, Farmer and Donovan could qualify, but it's hard to see them scoring at Wright State.
5. Mapleton -- A little known team with five big time wrestlers. Kline, Kerr and Lewis are the top threats and each of them could place. They need Reisinger and Kintner to help out if they're to move up. The new five-man qualifying format could help this team.
6. Milan Edison -- Krishna looks to be a sure champion and Davis could be a finalist. Bauer needs to be in top form at 189# and somebody else has to help. The key is for Pat Welfle needs to get Jake Davis at the right weight.
7. Delta -- A top ten finish might be a stretch for this team that lacks a main man. Wolford might be the closest to star status with Ford and Sintobin as other possibilities. They need help from people like the younger Ford and Lesniewicz.
8. Cardinal -- Fuduric is the key man and he has finalist potential. Hoffman and Ziegler are also possible placers. There are lots of other possibilities like the Millers, Ebbert and Rose.
9. Perry -- There looks to be a lot of fragmentation after the top few teams. That means if Bollas wins and Klco is in the top four that could be enough points for a top ten finish.
10. Archbold -- Again, a lack of up-top firepower might doom this team's chances for a high finish. The big hope is the big man, Martz, who could be a finalist and then there is Rycheyer, the two Forwards and a countless number of little Grimes.

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11. Lima Central Catholic -- Dorley and Caprella are the two stars and they should score a lot of team points, however, they need to decide the best weight classes for each of them. Kessen could help, but the rest of the team probably can't get to Wright State.
12. Liberty Center -- Fuentes could be a finalist at 145# with the right draw and then Thierry and Cordes need to chip in. If Westhoven or Gunther can also qualify, this team could move way up.