

1992

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

FORECAST [©]

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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 an eight-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 about an average recruiting year in Ohio with the usual number of blue chip prospects. Two-time Junior National champion Luke Fickell, of course, has already committed to playing football and wrestling at Ohio State, and he is probably the single most incredible heavyweight I have ever seen. In addition, there are other outstanding seniors like Nutter, Pariano, Chandler, and several others who will almost certainly be outstanding at the collegiate level. However, what is startlingly evident is the incredible number of standout juniors and sophomores already at the highest levels in our state. I don't believe that we have ever had a junior class this good, and the sophomore trailing immediately behind may turn out to be even better. Without question Ohio will be a prime recruiting state the next two years, and fans of high school wrestling here will be the prime beneficiaries of an influx of tremendous wrestlers for the next several years as well.

As faithful readers know, this report has long been used as a vehicle to promote change in the administration of high school wrestling -- particularly at the tournament level. While it has not been a rapid process, progress continues to be made in establishing real equity for every competitor. Perhaps the high water mark of that struggle was reached last year with expansion of the wrestle-back system to include all participants who have lost to a semi-finalist. This system guarantees a proper balance between fairness and interminable consolation rounds that can be provoked in double-elimination tournaments. The first year's results were most heartening. Thirty-seven wrestlers who would not have placed under the old system rightfully earned medals in 1991. This means there was a 47.4% change over from the old, archaic process -- just about at the predicted 50% level. I cannot imagine that we will ever consider taking a huge step backward and go back to the old system, since, currently, there is not one tournament in Ohio that employs the old format.

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

Several weeks ago the weight classes looked very unbalanced with some very strong and others packing little punch. However, as generally occurs, a "smoothing out" process is now underway which has begun to even out these differences. One thing that cannot be erased is the preponderance of excellent sophomores and juniors in this classification. If LaCure decides to wrestle at 152#, seven of the first 10 weight classes would have underclassmen as favorites -- an unheard phenomenon in Division I. In addition, there are large quantities of other underclassmen who are in the very top echelon of every weight class waiting impatiently for the slightest misstep by the higher rated seniors.

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ① EDDIE JAYNE (ST. EDWARD)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ③ 2. Contos (Toledo St. John) | 12. Mendez (Lorain Southview) |
| 3. Daniels (Canton Timken) | 13. Marinelli (West Carrollton) |
| ② 4. Pender (Cincinnati Princeton) | 14. Peloso (Alliance) |
| 5. Calderon (Bowling Green) | 15. Perry (Holland Springfield) |
| 6. Carioti (North Canton Hoover) | 16. Rockey (Cincinnati St. Xavier) |
| 7. Raney (Westerville North) | ⑤ 17. Trinetti (Eastlake North) |
| 8. Campbell (Hilliard) | 18. Pozdol (Shaker Hts.) |
| 9. Phou (West Chester Lakota) | ④ 19. Gamble (Massillon Perry) |
| 10. Lambers (Cincinnati Elder) | 20. Wright (Fairfield) |
| 11. Cirino (Painesville Riverside) | 21. Plouse (Walsh Jesuit) |

There is always something of an aura of mystery that hovers around the 103# weight class because of the large influx of newcomers that debut here. In most years, at least two or three of the placewinners are freshmen (Wineberg, Johnson, and Jayne last year) with no previous track record. The competition this season, however, may yield no freshmen medal winners as there is a very strong nucleus of returning contenders.

And, yet, it now appears that despite a strong field the ultimate champion is almost surely going to be one of two outstanding contenders -- either the splendid sophomore Jayne or the brilliant junior Contos. The vexing question is, of course, which one? Let's look at the facts. Jayne was 5th last year and then placed 2nd in the Cadet Nationals. This season he dominated at Medina and has wrestled a difficult schedule with a hard-nosed, energetic style that demonstrates nothing less than 100% effort. Contos was a state qualifier last year, but failed to place. He was small for the weight and was overpowered by the bigger 103s like Wineberg or Johnson. Last summer he won the Junior Nationals in both styles and did one other important thing -- grow much bigger. This year he was at 112# until the OCCs and did very well at the higher weight -- losing only once (to Owens of Norwalk). Contos defeated Jayne 9-7 in the OCC finals -- a bout which evoked two responses of about equal size. One either believed that Contos dominated the contest and will beat Jayne consistently, or felt that the match turned on a 5-point move in a flurry at the edge of the mat

and that otherwise Jayne was the better boy. My belief leans toward the latter viewpoint with Jayne my choice to nip Contos in a hard-fought bout which will hopefully kick off the final round at Wright State. This one, however, is really a toss up.

Jayne should dominate the Mentor District. The veteran Cirino is probably the second choice here, but Jayne buried him 11-1 in a district semi-final. The rapidly improving Mendez may soon surpass Cirino, but he is not yet close to Jayne or any other of the top state contenders. After this trio there is a major drop off in talent, with the 4th qualifying berth wide open. I've listed Trinetti and the recently shrunk down Pozdol, but any of a half dozen other 103s could grab that last berth. For example, Phillips (Mayfield), Gonzales (North Royalton) and Lipps (Parma) certainly match up with either Trinetti or Pozdol.

Contos will face much sterner competition at Hilliard. Calderon, a state qualifier last year, is a powerful competitor who can score points in bunches. He will probably be out-slicked by the very best boys, but his ability to put people on their back makes him very dangerous. Both Raney and Campbell are excellent and have been trading narrow, hard-fought victories all year. Both have strong placement potential, but they'll have to be in top form to realize that goal. This would seem to be the four qualifiers, but there is still substantial strength here. Perry was runner-up at both the giant GMVWA tourney (losing by default to a Pennsylvania wrestler) and the Rogers. Kennedy (Mount Vernon) is a dark-horse contender who may be able to pull a few surprises here. Watch out for him. Other possibilities are Corron (Groveport) and, when he makes weight, Heidleberg (Fremont Ross).

There are also a bevy of contenders at Dayton. I like Pender the best and foresee him capturing a low to middle place at this weight. He is quick and very physical and will be a large 103. Phou has been at 112# all year and so it is somewhat difficult to judge how well he'll do at the lower weight. His record there does include a win over state 6th place winner Lambers, who I feel, will have difficulty retaining a placement medal. Marinelli and Rockey will also battle for state qualification with only Pender seemingly assured a spot. Wright and Anderson (Greenville) are also possibilities in what should be an outstanding competition.

At Perry there will be two distinct battles. Daniels and Carioti will compete for the district crown while everyone else vies for the last two spots. Daniels, a state runner-up in Cross Country, defaulted his first round battle to Jayne last year in overtime when he crashed to the mat in a heap after a violent flurry. Some felt there was unnecessary roughness, but it was, clearly, correctly judged and Daniels was eliminated. This year he is undefeated, but his schedule is very soft, certainly not preparing this veteran senior for the battles to come. Carioti won three district bouts last year, but did not qualify for Wright State. This year he was 4th at Medina losing to Jayne and splitting with Raney. The loss to Jayne was 4-3 but was not indicative of the manner in which Jayne dominated. A huge chasm exists between this duo and everyone else. Besides Peloso, Gamble and Plouse you might look for Seryak (Wadsworth) and Alessi (Buckeye Local).

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ³JIM JOHNSON (WALSH JESUIT)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ① 2. Wineberg (Fairfield) | 13. Collier (Sycamore) |
| 3. Whitmer (Uniontown Lake) | 14. Nieman (Groveport) |
| 4. Boda (Fremont Ross) | 15. Anderson (Medina) |
| 5. Kaleal (Mayfield) | 16. Mayes (Maple Hts.) |
| 6. Friedle (St. Edward) | 17. Miller (Cincinnati Oak Hills) |
| 7. Colucci (Westerville North) | 18. Ramos (Massillon Perry) |
| ② 8. Cameron (Hilliard) | 19. Garrett (Oxford Talawanda) |
| 9. Hickin (Kent Roosevelt) | 20. Cole (Ashland) |
| 10. Quimbaya (Lorain Southview) | 21. Fowler (Vandalia Butler) |
| ⑤ 11. Diefenbacher (Grove City) | 22. Grove (West Chester Lakota) |
| 12. Singleton (Alliance) | 23. Hawkins (Cleveland Hts.) |

Again, as we saw at 103#, it appears to be strictly a two-man competition for the state title at this weight class. Both Johnson and Wineberg are outstanding sophomores who have already compiled glittering records in less than two years of varsity wrestling. Wineberg was the first freshman in over 30 years to win a state title in the large school division (Musser followed about 20 minutes later), and he did it against a truly formidable field. This year he stands totally undefeated including wins at the SWOCA and Kenston tourneys. Last year he was the master of the close bout, but this year he has been winning with comfortable ease. Johnson was 3rd last year, but has been a quantum jump better this season. He snapped Tim Dernlan's 87 consecutive victory streak while handing him his first high school loss at Medina -- and he did so by taking him down three times at vital junctures in the bout. Since then he has dominated every opponent including impressive wins at the OCC. This duo met in the state semi-finals last year which Wineberg won 2-1 when a referee unnecessarily and ill-advisedly interjected himself into a dead-even bout. The decisive stalling point was one of the few times when officiating clearly changed the course of an entire weight class. This time I think Johnson will win because of a major change in attitude. Last year it seemed that Johnson and Musser were equally talented but the latter boy was more successful mainly because he remained supremely confident no matter what the circumstance. Now Johnson has acquired that attitude and big victories over Dernlan and Friedle have made him far more confident and aggressive than before. This time, against Wineberg, that new outlook should translate into a victory.

Johnson emerges from an excellent district. Whitmer, another sophomore, is a budding star and he will give everyone but the top two all they can handle. He just gets better and better. Hickin beat Whitmer and Anderson last year for a state berth, but he'll be hard pressed to repeat that feat. He has been at 119# all year, but the reality is that his chances of qualifying here are dramatically better. Singleton is something of a sleeper who like the little girl with the curl can either be very good or very bad. The times when he is very good -- watch out. Anderson had a tough draw at Medina losing to Dernlan and McDaniel, but he could qualify with the new four-man format. Last year he was the alternate with a 4th place effort. A second quartet of hopefuls seems clearly behind this first group, but they certainly have upset chances. For that second

group I like Ramos the best, but Distler (Geneva) who upset Jason Franklin last year is back while Krieger (Austintown Fitch) and Long (Akron Buchtel) have done well in recent competition.

At Dayton, Wineberg stands well above another six to eight wrestlers with qualifying potential. However, it is unlikely that any of this second group has realistic chances for placement at this weight. I've listed Collier, Miller, Garrett, Fowler and Grove and there is really very small differences between any of these competitors. All have been consistent placewinners, but none has captured the top spot in a major tourney this year. Other possibilities are Morvatz (Dayton Wayne), Fillback (Fairborn Baker) and White (Cincinnati LaSalle). Morvatz, in particular, may well deserve a higher rating than he has been given here.

At Mentor, Kaleal and Friedle are strong, solid seniors with the savvy to capture a middle to low place at Wright State. Last year Kaleal was a quarter-finalists losing to Wineberg by a single point while Friedle was the state alternate with a district 4th. This year Friedle was buried twice by Johnson and also lost to Dernlan and Whitmer -- so he has been defeated by only the best. Kaleal lost to Boda at Kenston, but he is the kind of wrestler who keeps bouts close and always within reach. If he scores early he is very tough to come back against. The rest of Mentor is weak with Quimbaya and Mayes the marginally best bets for the last two qualifying spots. Hawkins was a district semi-finalist at their weight last year, but his performance this year has been very erratic. Falcioni (North Royalton) should he be here and, possibly, Topoly (Shaker Hts.) or Hall (Valley Forge) are other contenders.

At Hilliard two-time state qualifier Dave Boda heads a solid field. A rapid-fire pinner, he has never done quite as well in state competition as anticipated. This is his last attempt and he has the tools to place. He beat Kaleal at Kenston, but dropped the final to Wineberg. He seems to have trouble on the bottom. Colucci has been injured all year, but he was a state qualifier last season and like Boda this is his last chance. State qualifier Cameron will also be here and his recent victories suggest a possible place -- although he was only 6th at Medina. The last berth is wide-open with Columbus area stalwarts like Nieman and Diefenbacher battling Toledo area competitors like Cole, Monaghan (Toledo Bowsher), and Puntieri (Toledo Rogers).

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ¹ CLINT MUSSER (WALSH JESUIT)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Lanese (Brush) | 16. Lewis (Reynoldsburg) |
| 3. Fichter (Massillon Perry) | 17. Anderson (Medina) |
| 4. Schork (Solon) | 18. Rozick (Mentor) |
| 5. Ratliff (Marion Harding) | 19. Seig (Oak Hills) |
| 6. Allen (Worthington Kilbourne) | 20. Dennis (Colerain) |
| 7. Cameron (Hilliard) | 21. Tiggett (Warren Harding) |
| 8. Haro (Cincinnati Princeton) | 22. Cummings (Euclid) |
| 9. Clement (St. Edward) | 23. Glodich (Strongsville) |
| 10. Herbert (Uniontown Lake) | 24. Badgely (Centerville) |
| 11. Marroquin (Defiance) | 25. Allen (Mansfield Madison) |
| 12. Wahl (St. Ignatius) | 26. Massie (Fairfield) |
| 13. Carver (Valley Forge) | 27. Tyburski (Toledo Start) |
| 14. Butler (Bowling Green) | 28. Rust (Sycamore) |
| 15. Bender (Sidney) | 29. Roe (Marietta) |

There are probably more state caliber wrestlers at this weight class, as it is currently constituted, than anywhere else in Division I competition. There are by my count at least 16 former state qualifiers presently competing at 119# and another dozen or so with nearly equivalent skills. This crush of bodies is particularly acute at the Hilliard District. Eight wrestlers with previous state experience and another handful with solid credentials will battle for but four state berths.

Nonetheless, the clear favorite must be the brilliant sophomore Clint Musser who capped a sensational freshman season by upsetting defending champion Karl Grove to win the 112# title. This year he is even better and is, I believe, on the verge of becoming a true superstar in this sport as early as the 10th grade. An outstanding athlete, he also possesses that inner fierceness that when called upon can take him to another, higher level of performance. Watching him during the dual meets with Bedford, Michigan and St. Edward's, one could see him gripped with a competitive fever that elevated his performance.

There is a solid crop of performers behind Musser at Perry. Most prominent of these is another great sophomore Fichter -- a state alternate last year. Years of youth wrestling has given Fichter more insight into Musser's style than anyone else possesses, and his defensive genius is well suited to take advantage of this knowledge. He beat Musser 6-5 during the opening week of the season, but lost in the Medina Final by a point. He will be away from Musser at Wright State and could well be the other finalist. Herbert, also a sophomore, is third best here after a state qualifying performance last year (including one win at States). He failed to place at Medina at 125#, but lost two one-point bouts to past state place-winners. He is probably cutting a lot of weight to make 119#, but if he can handle that obstacle, he has state placement potential. Herbert beat Anderson 2-1 in last year's district, but with four qualifying spots now that may prove just enough for Anderson to qualify. Glodich, Roe, and Tiggett are other possibilities.

Lanese was 4th at 112# last year losing to Musser 16-10 in the semi-finals after stunning Barden in the quarter-finals. This year his only loss was an overtime thriller to Blair (Division II) in the Kenston final. Only a junior, he has a history of coming on strong at the end of the season and veteran coach Dom Iammarino has always had a great touch with lightweights. Two time Division II state runner-up Schork has been at 125# the past two years, but will almost certainly move down to 119# at tournament time. He is not physically strong, but has exceptional technical skills and has always wrestled brilliantly in the state setting. At 119# he will be a real factor in the final resolution of this weight class. I think there is a clear difference between Lanese and Schork and the trio of Clement, Carver and Wahl. Clement, only a freshman, has already defeated such outstanding performers as Wahl, Cameron, Anderson and defending Michigan state champion Schumaker. However, he is still very young and is a long-shot even to place this year, but, trust me, he'll win at least two state titles before he graduates. Carver and Wahl are wily seniors who have vast experience and good skills. Wahl qualified last year while Carver, with a difficult draw, wrestled a bad district. That's my top four picks out of Mentor, but state qualifier Cummings -- if he doesn't head for the far more congenial 112# class -- and the great sophomores Rozick and Falcioni (North Royalton) are also possibilities.

At Hilliard the crush of competitors at this weight class is almost ludicrous and I expect to see movement to 112# or 125#. Already the excellent Penn (Franklin Hts.) appears headed to 125# and it seems likely others will follow his lead. Topping the competition are state qualifier Rocky Ratliff and former state runner-up Jason Allen. The indefatigable Ratliff has been sensational all year at 130#, but should have little trouble making 119#. His draw at Wright State last year was incredible hitting Lanese and Barden back-to-back and going two and out. This year he has already won four major tournaments at 130# and will be very difficult to beat at this weight. Allen was 2nd at 103# two years ago and then opened last season at 119# and was having some trouble making that adjustment. Then a season ending injury cost him any opportunity for state action last year, but he seems reasonably fit this season. As he did two years ago he could well be a finalist (or even a champ) if everything stays on track. Cameron placed 5th last year and has bounced between 119# and 125# so far this season. He will be a factor at either weight class. Ratliff beat him 6-4 for the district title last year. Also here are state qualifiers Marroquin, Butler, Tyburski and Smith, all theoretically competing for the last qualifying spot. Marroquin has been particularly excellent this year and may be the slight favorite at this time. Lewis has been solid all year, but a real darkhorse candidate is Greg Allen who has won a number of important tournaments including both the Marion Harding and Gorman back-to-back. Alejandro (Fremont Ross) and Bedell (Upper Arlington) would both be terrific candidates at most weights -- Bedell was a state alternate last year -- but are likely to be crushed by the competition at 119#.

The only weak district is at Dayton where only state place-winner Haro and state qualifier Bender have past state experience. Haro beat Butler 16-12 and Herbert 6-3 on his way to a 6th place finish and he stands way above the rest of the Southwest field. Bender lost to Haro at Districts for 3rd place 16-4 and then was walloped twice at Wright State -- 18-5 by Musser and 12-0 by Marroquin. Seig may have surpassed him by this point, while Dennis is a tenuous choice for the fourth qualifying spot. Squadrons of people like Massie, Badgely, Rust and Zorb (Glen Este) are also candidates.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMP: SEAN KIOUSIS (MEDINA)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| ④ 2. Rizer (Marion Harding) | 13. McQuery (Brunswick) |
| 3. Franklin (Massillon Perry) | 14. Pluhar (Maple Hts.) |
| ③ 4. Minick (Uniontown Lake) | ⑥ 15. Schillig (Gahanna Lincoln) |
| 5. Ford (Walsh Jesuit) | 16. Estep (Fairfield) |
| ② 6. Parks (Toledo St. Francis) | 17. Penn (Franklin Hts.) |
| 7. D. Jones (Cleveland Hts.) | 18. Monroe (Centerville) |
| 8. Richner (Painesville Harvey) | ⑤ 19. Denholm (Akron Springfield) |
| 9. Newsome (Toledo St. John) | 20. Smith/Metzger (Cincinnati Oakhills) |
| ① 10. Bentley (Valley Forge) | 21. Thompson (St. Ignatius) |
| 11. Orellano (Lorain Southview) | 22. Tessofo (Amelia) |
| 12. Miller (Ashland) | 23. Mlod (Fairborn Baker) |

In the first three weight classes, one or two contestants are so dominant that it would take an upset of some substantial proportion to bring others into the title picture. However, at 125# there are probably eight to ten candidates who could take the championship without causing any major dislocations in the laws of probability. My choice is the solid senior from Medina, Sean Kiousis. Not blessed with the greatest natural ability in the world, he uses all resources wisely and is excellent when leading. He never carelessly throws away a lead and can husband a one-point margin through the last minute of a match as well as anyone. A state runner-up last year and already a three time state qualifier, he is my favorite to take the crown winning a succession of close hard fought bouts.

Kiousis emerges from a dynamite district. Franklin has been exceptional all year winning at Medina and Massillon Perry. His only loss was to Ford the first week of the season, and he avenged that at Medina. Last year he was the victim of a shocking first round upset at the district level, but that will not happen again. Minick qualified for states as a freshman, but injuries kept him from competing last year. An absolutely brilliant performer, his only loss was at 130# to the Louisiana state champ (whom Kiousis beat in the finals). On a hot weekend he could win it all. Ford is an enigma. Several times I have seen him wrestle four outstanding minutes and then collapse. Whether it's conditioning, weight loss, or hyperventilation, it makes him vulnerable to someone who pushes him hard. I keep thinking he might be better off at 130# (switching with O'Neil), but he does have a chance to win it all here -- a chance which probably doesn't exist there. McQuery, a state qualifier last year, seems only fifth best here, but he has proven he has upset potential in the past. He has lost to Orellano and drew with Bentley. Denholm is excellent winning four tournaments this year while Kallai (Wadsworth), Ferrar (Akron Kenmore), and DeYarmon (Buckeye Local) are also strong. This will be a fabulous district competition.

Rizer heads the Hilliard contingent after a 4th place finish at Wright State last year -- which included wins over Parks and Richner. He has the huge advantage of Ratliff as a workout partner and four years of varsity performance. Parks and Newsome are very close, alternating victories with both having low place potential. Newsome won the OCCs with a 9-8 win over Parks, but I like the latter competitor a little bit better. I may not be giving state qualifier

Miller enough credit especially since he won two bouts at Wright State last year including a fall over McQuery. He has spent some time at 119#, but it seems to me the odds are better here. This quartet would leave state qualifier Schillig out in the cold, but he has shown good resourcefulness in the past and could easily move ahead of one of the four I've rated above him. Penn, up from 119#, will also be a threat while state qualifier Fisher is back from Division II status and may be a factor here.

There is a lot of talent at Mentor, but it's difficult to sort out the ordering. Jones, a district semi-finalist last year, has made incredible progress and this fine junior can beat anyone on a good day. He lost to Bentley 1-0 at Brecksville, but beat him 8-2 in a dual keyed by a late 5-point move. Two-time state qualifier Richner is always tough -- last year taking out my top choice, Herbie Russell, in district competition. Kiouis pinned him in the state quarter-finals. Bentley is extremely strong and solid and started the year with a brilliant triumph at Solon, including the MVP award. The recent loss to Jones, and draw with McQuery drops him somewhat in my overall evaluation. Pluhar pinned Jones in district action last year and he could be a real factor now that he moved down from 130#. On a hot weekend he could be the district champ, but everything would have to be perfect. Orellano and Thompson are both battlers with the latter also having a very unorthodox style. They cannot be overlooked.

The Dayton District looks to be very weak. Estep seems best but he appears to have minimal placement potential while the other candidates seem even less formidable. They could end up being first-round fodder for the more powerful districts.

130#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ① JON VAUGHN (ST. IGNATIUS)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| ③ 2. Whitaker (Warren Harding) | ④ 13. Steely (Kettering Fairmount) |
| 3. Ranallo (Mayfield) | 14. Dawson/Kaufman (St. Edward) |
| ⑥ ③ ④ 4. Lovejoy (East Liverpool) | 15. Gasper (Cloverleaf) |
| ② ③ ④ 5. Hollo (Cincinnati St. Xavier) | 16. Miller (Springfield South) |
| 6. Caldwell/Cannon (Groveport) | 17. I. Williams (Lorain Southview) |
| 7. Miller (Canton McKinley) | 18. Clingman (Hilliard) |
| 8. Madia (Thomas Worthington) | 19. Davis (Lakewood) |
| 9. Medina (Perrysburg) | 20. Chiamonte (West Chester Lakota) |
| ④ 10. J. Jones (Cleveland Hts.) | 21. Kotlyn (Strongsville) |
| 11. Peterson (Pickerington) | 22. Allison (Toledo Bowsher) |
| 12. Smith (Sycamore) | 23. Whitman (Berea) |

This is a weight class that I expect to be dominated by the exceptional junior, John Vaughn. Already a two-time state qualifier Vaughn was a semi-finalist last year when injuries caused him to forfeit to Marchette and eventually drop to 5th place. This year he has looked sensational and it's difficult to anticipate anyone really challenging him -- unless Nathanson unexpectedly moves down. Up until now, nobody has been within a half dozen points of Vaughn.

The Mentor District also features the experienced Ranallo -- who twice now has been beaten twice after reaching the district semi-finals. He's due to qualify and probably place. Jerome Jones has also shown rapid development winning at Richmond Hts. and placing 3rd at Brecksville only because of an overexuberant slam. Basically a first-year varsity wrestler, he has moved forward at an extraordinary pace. The fourth spot is wide open. Dawson, the current incumbent down from 135#, at St. Ed's has done well but last year varsity starter Kaufman will soon return from an injury to challenge him. Both are good. Whitman, a state qualifier two years ago, is beginning to adjust to his new size and is always dangerous. Davis is another candidate for that fourth slot, while West Tech transfer Goins (Shaker Hts.) has all kinds of big move ability. Also check out Smith (North Royalton) who upset Kiouisis in a recent dual and won at Copley.

Whitaker is the quintessential big move wrestler who is never out of a bout. Last year in the state semi-finals he trailed Gustovich of St. Eds 8-2 with a minute to go when he escaped, hit a five-point throw to tie, and then cranked a cradle to win. He will be a real threat to Vaughn, but may also be an easy victim for Vaughn's clever leg rides. Lovejoy pinned for a district title last year and then won two bouts at Wright State -- losing to Whitaker by but 6-3. He has good placement potential. State qualifier Miller will also exit Perry, but his relatively weak schedule may not adequately prepare for the rigors of state competition. Kotlyn, Gasper, Angione (Uniontown Lake), and Blake (Massillon Perry) are all state caliber wrestlers who could get caught in the numbers game at this weight. An intriguing candidate is the freshman O'Neil -- who while probably better suited to 125# -- may still qualify here. He has lost five times -- all to top quality opponents with only Kiouisis blowing him out.

Hollo has been at 140# all year but the scuttlebutt is that he'll cut to 130# for state competition -- he was at 119# last year. If true, he should dominate the relatively weak Dayton District. He won at St. Xavier and was runner-up to Chandler at the OCCs. The rest of that district is quite mediocre with the listed wrestlers having the best shot to qualify. Two other possibilities are Gatto (Cincinnati Moeller) and Dotson (Cincinnati Elder).

The Hilliard District is also relatively weak with few placement candidates. An exception might be state alternate Cannon or teammate Caldwell both who have wrestled very well at this weight. At the same time Madia -- just down from 135# -- is also a possibility for placement, but good fortune would be needed for it to be much higher than a 5th or 6th. I would not be surprised to see one or possibly two unknowns qualify out of this district. Another very distinct possibility is that some of the excess 135s discussed next will drop to this weight class.

135#

①
PROJECTED CHAMPION: PETER NATHANSON (SHAKER HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ② | ③ | 2. Owens (Walsh Jesuit) | 13. Clayton (Milford) |
| ④ | | 3. Arnold (Cincinnati St. Xavier) | 14. Petro (North Canton Hoover) |
| | | 4. Davis (Hilliard) | 15. Finding (Valley Forge) |
| | | 5. Jageman (Fairborn Baker) | 16. Dailey (Defiance) |
| | | 6. Lindsey (Col. Independence) | 17. Sackett (Akron North) |
| | | 7. Merrill (Elyria) | 18. Cottrell (North Royalton) |
| | | 8. Mays (Fairfield) | 19. Collett (West Chester Lakota) |
| | | 9. McKee (Medina) | ⑤ 20. Kuntz (Cincinnati Oak Hills) |
| | | 10. Steinmetz (St. Edward) | 21. Priestas (Gahanna Lincoln) |
| | | 11. Lewis (Reynoldsburg) | 22. Buemi (Maple Hts.) |
| | | 12. Summerlin (Warren Harding) | 23. Ramsey (Strongsville) |

Peter Nathanson had a brilliant season last year going 30-0 up through his district title including a 9-1 drubbing of eventual state runner-up Bryan Gron in the finals. Then at Wright State somebody who looked very much like Peter Nathanson but must have been someone else began wrestling a first round bout but was immediately "found out" when he lost 11-1 to Zinkan and then later 8-3 to Dobosh. This person was clearly not the same wrestler we had seen all year -- at least that's how it appeared.

This year the real Peter Nathanson is again totally undefeated and I'm sure will this time show up at Wright State. If so, he has to be considered the best choice to win at this weight. It seems to me that his only real challenger is Owens and the real Nathanson has to be the favorite in that confrontation. A brilliant youth wrestler, Nathanson has some marvelous set-ups and his wide experience should enable him to avoid the wicked throws that Owens specializes in. So while it won't be easy, Nathanson should be Shaker's first state champ since Tim Karpoff more than 20 years ago.

Nathanson will dominate at Mentor. However, both Merrill and Steinmetz are rumored to be headed toward this weight, and they will shake up the remainder of the field if the stories are accurate. Merrill has been on the fringes of excellence for a long time, but has never quite reached it. Steinmetz is the prototypical St. Ed's wrestler -- beautifully trained, good on his feet and in superb condition -- but he cannot match Nathanson in either strength or speed. Finding has had an excellent senior season marred only by a draw with Ramsey while winning at Solon and Brecksville. But again, his physical gifts are limiting when matched against the really good boys. Cottrell has also been excellent, winning at Copley and Brunswick, and he could grab a qualifying spot. Pressing this top group are Buemi, Hess (Midpark), Norris (Elyria) and Waldvogel (Mentor).

Nathanson's biggest threat is the explosive Owens -- only a sophomore -- who has begun to demonstrate why he was one of the great youth wrestlers in this area. Ineligible last year he capped his summer efforts by finishing second at the Cadet Worlds in Budapest. This year he has wrestled up a weight or two all year with sometimes spectacular results. A tremendous "thrower" he picked up a

large percentage of falls, and can never be considered out of any bout. His only losses were one pointers, at 140#, to the excellent Feckanin and Merrill. At this weight he will be awesome as evidenced by his OCC title. McKee will lead a whole bevy of excellent challengers to Owens at Perry. A state alternate last year he was runner-up at Medina and is a solid hard-nosed competitor. Summerlin, the North Canton champ, has the advantage of Whitaker as a daily workout partner and he is rapidly improving. Petro is a scoring machine with a somewhat shaky defense so he has a lot of 13-10 bouts. It's a difficult task to convert that style into a consistent winner at the very highest levels, but is made-to-order in terms of upset. Furlong wrestles nearly an invisible schedule for me, but he won the very tough Brooke Classic and he has excellent talent. He will be a big unknown in this competition. Sackett and Hull (Massillon Perry) are also very good and you begin to wonder whether some of these boys might consider moving to 140# -- where this district is much easier -- except for Grammes. Other possibilities are Ramsey, MacKinnon (East Liverpool) and Harrison (Akron Kenmore).

State qualifier Arnold heads a strong field at Dayton as six fine candidates vie for four spots. Last year he lost to eventual champ Zinkan by one point in the district consolation finals and then succumbed in the first round at states to Leemaster, 14-9, in a hard fought battle. This year he has won several major tournaments with his only loss to Malloy at the OCCs -- an upset since he had crushed that same wrestler a week earlier at St. Xavier. Mays was runner-up at Kenston at 145# but has dropped all the way to 135# -- a class below what he wrestled last year. He won the Fairfield at this weight and, if effective here, really improves his team's overall chances. Jageman is solid -- winning at the mammoth GMVWA and Troy -- and missed qualification last year by a single point. Clayton and Kuntz are both good while Collett will drop to this weight and become a factor. Shepherd (Xenia Beaver creek) was one point from state qualification last year but has had a disappointing season. Unless he makes a real turnaround the quality of this field will make short work of him. Those that emerge from this district at 135# will be a battle-hardened crew.

State qualifier Davis looked terrific at Medina crushing McKee in the finals and that has been indicative of his season -- except for a one-week lapse at the Hamilton Invitational. With a great draw (away from Nathanson and Owens) he could be a potential finalist. Lindsey was MVP at Circleville pinning Cain in the finals and should be a factor here. His biggest disadvantage is a relatively weak program that may not challenge him. Dailey is undefeated in the Northwest District, but he seems to wrestle an inordinate number of close bouts -- giving him few breathing spells and always keeping him in imminent danger. Last year he lost his first round district bout 2-1 and his consolation bout 6-5. He'll go further this year. Other possibilities are Priestas (who defeated Lewis), Cain (Delaware Hayes) and Ruiz (Toledo St. Francis).

140#

①
PROJECTED CHAMPION: ROGER CHANDLER (ST. EDWARD)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ② 2. Grammes (Strongsville) | 12. Blind (Wadsworth) |
| 3. Tammerine (Perrysburg) | 13. McDaniel (Xenia Beaver creek) |
| ⑤ 4. Bloomer (Toledo Start) | 14. Deubel (Maple Hts.) |
| 5. Hinton (Cincinnati Oak Hills) | 15. Murphy (Marion Harding) |
| 6. McCullough (Wapakoneta) | 16. Blalock (Madison) |
| 7. Whitehead (Sycamore) | 17. Barringer (Warren Howland) |
| 8. Stackhouse (West Chester Lakota) | 18. Wyrick (Logan) |
| 9. Francis (North Royalton) | ③ 19. Duganier (Parma) |
| 10. Miller (Clayton Northmont) | 20. Morr (Barberton) |
| 11. Boeding (Toledo St. John) | 21. Burdette (Lakewood) |

Three weeks ago this weight seemed incredibly overcrowded with the best middleweights around. But then Nathanson and Owens opted for 135#, Hollo will probably drop to 130#, and Zinkan and Kosarko decided to stay at 145#. That thins out the competition but it still leaves a star-studded cast at the top of the charts.

Chandler, none too affectionately nicknamed "The Hammer," is one of the finest wrestlers in Ohio. Intensely physical, he dominates opponents with speed and power and on top he is positively brutal. Last year he was runner-up at 135# losing a narrow 7-5 decision to Steve St. John -- one of Ohio's finest last season -- in the finals. Indicative of his skills was the quarter-final dismantling of Buck Miller (then 32-0) where he focused his tremendous talent for two and a half minutes of sustained fury. This year he has crushed everyone except the nearly equally brilliant Feckanin who pushed him to the limit in the Medina final before losing 13-11 in overtime. Chandler, already signed with Indiana, is something special, but he'll have to be at his absolute best to beat back the challenge of Grammes.

Grammes, runner-up at 140# last year, will not be intimidated by Chandler. He, too, has had a brilliant career, and his loss in the finals was bitter medicine considering he had beaten Sabo just the week before. His semi-final bout where he dominated the excellent Strunck was indicative of his skills. He has not been pushed this year. We can only hope that the wrestling gods intervene so this dream match-up takes place late Saturday afternoon with the state crown in the balance. As my long-time telecasting partner Mike Massa would say, "It should be a real beauty."

Both Chandler and Grammes will dominate their districts. Chandler has already TFed Merrill and driven him to 135#, and everybody else left here was already behind him. I've listed Francis, Deubel, Blalock, and Burdette, but they are just marginally better than a cadre of other candidates. Another possibility is Duganier -- who has tried 135# -- but may now see that with all the drops to avoid Chandler the numbers game favors him back at 140#.

There is a real opportunity for state advancement at Perry. Except for Grammes no one really stands out as state material. Several of them Blind (at

North Canton), Morr (at Wadsworth), Barringer (at Brooke) and Rollins (at North Canton) have had good weeks but no one has shown sustained excellence. O'Neill (Boardman) and Paulus (Uniontown Lake) are two others that pretty much fall into that same pattern, but at a slightly lower level. There are 11 excellent 135s in this district competing for four openings. Do not be surprised if some of them decide that 140# is a far more attractive setting.

The best district -- top to bottom -- is probably at Hilliard. Tammerine lost two overtime bouts -- either of which would have taken him to States -- as a sophomore and then was district champ at this weight last year. He had a wobbly state tournament, failing to place, but he's a finalist if the pairings tragically turn out having Grammes and Chandler meeting in the semi-finals. I like Tammerine's philosophy. He didn't worry about protecting his perfect record but moved up two weight classes to challenge Ovall at 152# -- losing narrowly 10-9. Bloomer was a sophomore state qualifier at 140# last year and won two state bouts. Grammes crushed him 11-3, however. McCullough also qualified last year as a sophomore winning the district title at 130#. He has very good potential. After this trio there is an enormous drop-off with Murphy, Boeding, Poling (Toledo Rogers), and Mamais (Dublin) as potential contenders. A dark horse is the rapidly improving Goldsmith (Grove City).

Dayton may have the most competitive district. Nobody here has previous state experience, but all of them have shown good ability. Their role is likely one of mopping up the lower district qualifiers from other areas, and then, themselves, becoming cannon fodder for the really top boys. I like Hinton the best here based on his impressive SWOCA title and a record which includes only one loss -- an upset 6-4 defeat to Hollo. Whitehead, Miller and Stackhouse are my other three choices here, but McDaniel is also good. Maybe one placer from this group.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽⁴⁾ STEVE KOSARKO (MAPLE HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---|--|
| ⁽²⁾ 2. Zinkan (Cincinnati Moeller) | 13. Denholm (Akron Springfield) |
| ⁽⁵⁾ 3. Anderson (Pickerington) | 14. Mahaffey (Toledo Woodward) |
| ⁽⁶⁾ 4. Shanklin (Fairfield) | 15. Johnson (Akron Firestone) |
| 5. Goodman (Dayton Wayne) | 16. Bennett (Elyria) |
| 6. Periandri (Padua) | ⁽⁴⁾ 17. Guorno (Grove City) |
| ⁽³⁾ 7. Sturghill (Mentor) | 18. Grosz (Wadsworth) |
| ⁽⁶⁾ 8. Mohr (Delaware Hayes) | 19. Gross (Clayton Northmont) |
| 9. Harris (Uniontown Lake) | 20. Overholt (Walsh Jesuit) |
| 10. Evans (Dayton Colonel White) | 21. Williams (Lorain Southview) |
| 11. Jardine (Strongsville) | 22. Sneider (Toledo Central Catholic) |
| 12. Immel (Franklin Hts.) | 23. Gorski (Westlake) |

It now appears certain that Billy LaCure will remain at 145# and, if so, the competition at this weight becomes wide open. LaCure would probably be a step above the rest of a good field, but with his absence there are now any number of participants who could be finalists. In fact, this will now be one of the most

competitive weight classes in Division I from the first round onward. While Zinkan is a defending state champ, I've selected another junior, Steve Kosarko. Call it a hunch or a premonition, I've gone with the long-shot here based simply on the fact that I believe he has the tools to win. I had Kosarko already pencilled in as a State champion next year, but now it seems to me, next year has come early. As a sophomore last year, he grabbed a strong 4th losing only to his old nemesis Chandler and Miller. This year he could probably make 140# easily, but the percentages with Chandler and Grammes there are not in his favor. Instead he will be far more conformable here. His only loss was to Division II favorite Tony Pariano at Brecksville where he trailed only 1-0 until a last second desperation takedown attempt expanded Pariano's margin of victory to three.

Defending state champion Zinkan is up three weight classes, but remains a formidable force at this weight. His physical style is intimidating and he remains undefeated at this point winning the SWOCA, GMVWA, and OCC tournaments. His only close bout was a 7-6 battle with the equally physical Periandri. Last year he blasted Nathanson in the first round at states, nipped Grant 9-8 in the semis, and then won an 8-7 overtime bout with Gron in the finals. He undoubtedly faces the choice of dropping to meet Chandler or Grammes or staying here to hook up with Kosarko, Anderson, and Shanklin. Shanklin will also be at Dayton with Zinkan and he was 4th at this weight last year. He has been at 152# where he seemed very shaky -- possibly the result of illness or injury. Again, not real spectacular, he is a wrestler who knows how to win in a variety of situations. Goodman is the dark horse here. He has had spells where he has wrestled like a potential finalist. Last year he had the misfortune to draw Chandler and Buck Miller back-to-back with poor results. Kosarko beat him handily earlier in the season for his only loss. Last year three Dayton qualifiers placed at this weight and it could happen again. Evans is also excellent and should be the fourth qualifier. Behind him are Gross, Pierce (Miamisburg), and Harrison (Dayton Meadowdale).

At Mentor there is a trio of proven performers leaving, perhaps, only one state berth for everyone else. Kosarko, of course, leads the way. State qualifier Periandri is very physical, and when healthy, can go with anyone here as attested by his one-point loss to Zinkan. Sturghill was a state quarter-finalists last year and showcases a wide variety of nice moves. However, Kosarko beat him by four points at Brecksville and LaCure pinned him at states last year. He may have trouble with real physical contenders. After that it's wide open. Bennett and Williams are both tough with Gorski another possibility.

Harris, a steady performer, was runner-up at Medina and is marginally best at Perry. A solid grinder he is excellent at converting opponent's mistakes into points. Jardine was a state alternate at this weight last year and won handily at Brunswick. At a less well-balanced weight he would have strong placement potential. Denholm wrestles a schedule peppered with Division II and III schools, but his fall over state place winner Wilson shows his mettle. He may be severely underrated here and may merit top ten consideration. Johnson was runner-up at Solon and Wadsworth losing to Denholm in the latter final. That's four state level performers, but both Grosz and Overholt have strong skills as well. Overholt, only a freshman, pinned the defending state champion from Michigan with as pretty a lateral drop as you'll ever see, and then took a strong 3rd at the OCC. Look for him to ponder a move down to 140#.

At Hilliard state qualifiers Anderson and Mohr head the field. Last year Anderson was about 20 seconds from placing when he crashed DeNova Wright to the mat and was disqualified when Wright was seriously injured. This year he won at Medina in fine fashion and has lost only at 152#. Mohr is undefeated including a narrow win over Mesenburg at Marion Harding and easier victories at Hamilton Township and Upper Arlington. He has wrestled some at 140#, but his district is much more difficult at that weight class than here. On reflection I believe he'll be back at 145#. Behind this duo are a solid group of candidates including Immel, Mahaffey, and Guorno with Sneider and Griffith (Hilliard) another step behind. Immel has been hot lately and may make a solid run at the two top boys in this district.

152#

D145
PROJECTED CHAMPION: BILLY LaCURE (NORTH CANTON HOOVER)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ① 2. Lawless (Xenia Beavercreek) | ⑥ 14. Sanders (Massillon Jackson) |
| 3. White (Mayfield) | 15. Cameron (Medina) |
| ③ 4. Ovall (Holland Springfield) | ④ 16. Nash (Sycamore) |
| 5. Marx (Cincinnati Oak Hills) | 17. Folk (Maple Hts.) |
| 6. Miller (Valley Forge) | 18. Stebleton (Lancaster) |
| 7. Whalen (Cincinnati Moeller) | 19. Kuhn (Padua) |
| 8. Anderson (Oregon Clay) | 20. Van Gundy (Groveport) |
| 9. Jarvis (Cloverleaf) | 21. O'Neil (Walsh Jesuit) |
| 10. Price (Fairfield) | 22. Eddings (St. Ignatius) |
| 11. Bouscher (East Liverpool) | ⑤ 23. Gyongyosi (Akron Kenmore) |
| 12. Carroll (Cincinnati St. Xavier) | 24. Matheou/Rock (Strongsville) |
| 13. Carter (Toledo St. Francis) | 25. Allen (Middletown) |

A quartet of outstanding wrestlers -- two seniors and two juniors -- dominate this weight class. Since each will qualify from a different district the semi-final pairings will be tremendous. Let's first discuss each of the top four.

Lawless is exceptionally talented and has been a State caliber wrestler for the past three years. Last year at 145# he upset the top ranked Foston in the quarter-finals (after getting drilled in their dual meet), and then gave the eventual State champ Gron his only tough bout (he was unscored upon, otherwise) before losing 6-5 in overtime. He eventually captured a 5th place. This year he has crushed everyone -- including Shanklin and Wilson -- but was caught by LaCure in headlock for five points in a close match and was dealt a solid loss in the Brecksville finals.

You could tell LaCure was going to be something special when during his freshman year he won the North Canton Tourney. Then last year, he placed 5th in the toughest weight class in Division I. Grammes beat him 7-6 in district action to give you an idea of overall quality. This year he has been fabulous at 152#. At North Canton nobody was close, and at Medina he pinned the defending Louisiana state champion in the semis and, as mentioned, hit the big 5-point move to put away Lawless in the finals. Not a big 152 pounder, he still has that uncanny

balance, and woe to those who flurry with him. The only negative is that he seems to wrestle a very casual first period almost as if to set a fitting handicap for himself. That won't work well here on a consistent basis.

White has improved more quickly than just about any wrestler this year. Last year he put on an ending season spurt and became a State qualifier at 145#, but was knocked out in the first round at Wright State. This year he has been awesome. He crushed the angular Miller 14-6 at Solon, and Miller is undefeated and virtually unscored upon otherwise. At Kenston it was more of the same as White has become a scoring machine, running huge scores against good opposition. He is potentially a high school superstar by his senior season.

Ovall, twice a State qualifier and a State placer as a sophomore, is the fourth member of this all-star quartet. Undefeated the entire season he won the giant GMVWA -- pinning the probable West Virginia state champ in the first period of the finals. He has not faced the level of competition, however, that the other three have been hardened by.

The choice here is difficult and might, in part, be determined by the pairings. I believe LaCure's chances are maximized by meeting Lawless in the semi-finals rather than the finals -- when the size advantage would swing rapidly in Lawless' favor. In any case, after several days of agonizing I've decided to go with LaCure no matter what the situation based primarily on his ability -- not matched by any of the other contenders -- to score the big move. The last two rounds will be wonderful.

At Mentor, Miller will easily be second best behind White and his incredible length and his unorthodox style may cause real havoc with downstate boys who have never seen him before. They won't have an opportunity to figure him out. After this duo the competition is quite weak presenting an opportunity for almost anyone on a hot weekend to earn a ticket to Wright State. Besides the listed contenders Ware (Westlake), Bowers (Hudson), and Leitert (Madison) are possibilities.

Lawless will face much better competition at Dayton -- although none of them can perform at his level. Marx missed state qualification by two points last year and has been excellent at 160# all year. He won at St. Xavier and was the top Division I placer at the SWOCA. Behind him are state qualifier Whalen who lost two straight at Wright State after a District fourth. He has been erratic this year, looking excellent at times and not so good occasionally. He must still be factored into a possible placement spot. Carroll also was a state qualifier -- at 125# -- but has begun to adjust to this much higher weight class. He was 3rd at the OCC, 4th at the SWOCA, and 2nd at St. Xavier. Price and Nash are also possibilities in what promises to be a spirited fight for the last two spots. The unknown Allen could be a surprise.

Ovall will dominate at Hilliard with really only minimal competition to worry about. My guess is that no one is within eight points of him there. Anderson is probably next best, but after that chaos reigns. One person to watch for is Carter who was a state alternate at 160# last year and is now going at 152#. Other potential candidates in addition to those listed are Figliola (Reynoldsburg), Couch (Mansfield), and Landenburger (Groveport).

After LaCure, the cupboard is bare at Perry. While there are a number of good journeyman performers no one has distinguished himself to the point where we are talking about state placement. The two unknowns are Stebleton and Bousher who were bracketed in the Central District last year. Both came close to state qualification there, but do not, especially in Stebleton, face strong weekly competition. Bousher faces an interesting dilemma, OVAC champ at 145#, he is, in my mind, an almost sure state qualifier at 152# but, of course, his chances of placing are very small. At 145# the qualification may be tougher, but the ending rewards could be greater. A possible long-shot would be if O'Neil (Walsh Jesuit) dropped to 152# and performed well at this weight class.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ¹RODRICK FRANKLIN (LORAIN SOUTHVIEW)

TOP CONTENDERS

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|-----|-------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------|
| 2. | Olson (Holland Springfield) | 13. | Drews (Brush) |
| 3. | Sweet (Dayton Wayne) | 14. | Shelton (Westerville North) |
| 4. | Neider (St. Edward) | 15. | Farley (Solon) |
| 5. | Boiani (Valley Forge) | 16. | Brown (Elyria) |
| 6. | Margioras (Xenia Beavercreek) | 17. | Jackson (Cincinnati St. Xavier) |
| 7. | Fickes (Centerville) | 18. | Johnson (Dayton Meadowdale) |
| 8. | Gizzi (St. Ignatius) | 19. | Daily (Mount Vernon) |
| 9. | Martin (Walsh Jesuit) | 20. | Green (Austintown Fitch) |
| 10. | Wahoff (Pickerington) | 21. | Stillwagon (Clayton Northmont) |
| 11. | Leonard (Cloverleaf) | 22. | Patterson (Barberton) |
| 12. | Stahl (Defiance) | 23. | Boros (Padua) |

Except for heavyweight, this may be the weakest weight class in Division I. The major exception to that generalization is the exceptional junior, Rodrick (Juggy) Franklin, who stands head and shoulders above everyone else. Last year as a sophomore he captured the Mentor District at 152# with his only loss at that time to Pennsylvania state champion in overtime. However, for whatever reason, he did not look himself at Wright State, losing two tough overtime bouts in a row. This year nobody has come close to him as he had devastated the field at both Dublin and Brunswick. For example, returning state qualifier Stahl lost 15-4 in the Dublin finale. Barring injury or incredibly bad misfortune Franklin should capture his first state title -- giving him a chance next year to surpass his cousin, G. T. Taylor, by one.

Below Franklin at Mentor there is a nice representative field vying for the last three spots. I particularly like the sophomore Neider who was 3rd at both Medina and the OCCs. He is still on the steep part of the learning curve and gaining confidence quickly. Physically he just can't go against Franklin at this time, but since they exit the same sectional he should be away from him at both the district and state level. Boiani won at both Solon and Brecksville and is a solid, dependable performer. His biggest accomplishment may have been moving up to 171# and trapping the excellent Caraffi with a cradle for the fall. A real unknown is Gizzi who always seems banged up with injuries. Neider pounded him 13-4 in the dual, but Gizzi has since won the OCC and finished a strong second at St. Xavier. He may well be second best at this district by tourney time.

Another contender is Brown who won three bouts at Mentor last year but failed to qualify. He has been at several weight classes, but I think he'll land here. He cannot be overlooked. Finally, Drews has dropped back to 160# after a great half season at 171#. He won big at Richmond Hts. and was a strong 3rd at Kenston at that weight. Other possibilities are Farley, Boros, and Vassar (Cleveland Hts.).

Olson failed to escape his sectional (albeit a very tough one) last year, so this second ranking may be something of a stretch. Still he has Oval as a sparring partner and an undefeated season including three major championships already in hand. Of course, the question still persists as to how well he'll perform in the state pressure cooker. Wahoff is the best the Central District has to offer and he has placement potential. He lost to Neider for 3rd at Medina. State qualifier Stahl is undefeated except for his loss to Franklin, while Shelton and Daily have put together solid seasons. Other possibilities are Mayes (Toledo Central Catholic), Schultz (Galloway Westland), and Timmons (Grove City).

I think the best district overall is at Dayton. There at least a half dozen solid contenders will vie for the four berths with two or three other reasonable dark horses. Sweet was one bout from states last year, but ran into the unlucky King who was coming back from a disqualification and lost. This year he has won big at Franklin Hts. over Ramsey, at Wayne over Zickafoose, and St. Johns over Mayes. He also has Joyce at the next weight class to work out with. Margioras was a state qualifier too who has not reached peak form as of yet. He was unimpressive at Medina failing to place and was 3rd at the SWOCA at 171#. Still he has the track record and the skills to place. Fickes missed that state spot 7-6 to Margioras and has had a curiously parallel season -- possibly because of Centerville's extended football schedule. He was drilled in the Kenston final 17-7 and at St. Xavier he finished 5th after losing to Gizzi and Jackson. Again the track record is there and it's way too early in the season to write him off. Jackson and Stillwagon have both been impressive while Monroe may show well at this weight class. Amos Johnson has dropped from 171# and he is a powerful competitor with real upset potential. He could be the factor that really stirs this weight class up. Stillwagon was a strong 3rd at the GMVWA losing only to Olsen. Behind this duo are Harden (Amelia) a state place winner last year in Kentucky, Vines (Winton Woods) the best product of a newly consolidated school, and Nuckols (Colerain).

The big question at Perry will be whether Andrae Martin will be able to return from knee surgery and, if so, at will be at 152# or 160#. My guess is that he'll not be asked to make a big cut so soon after surgery and thus end up here -- which somehow coincidentally turns out to be a relatively easy weight class. The real issue is whether this exceptional junior will have the same quickness and speed he exhibited last year as district runner-up and state qualifier, and whether reasonable conditioning has been possible. Jarvis is a solid competitor, but after that the field weakens appreciably. Again the smaller 171s may be eyeing this weight class as a desirable landing spot. Tickets to Wright State will come easiest from Perry.

171#

①
PROJECTED CHAMPION: MIKE AUERBACH (BEDFORD)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Joyce (Dayton Wayne) | 12. Pontius (Toledo Bowsher) |
| 3. Caraffi (Strongsville) | 13. Hammond (Fairborn Baker) |
| ③ 4. DiMacchia (St. Edward) | 14. Angione (Uniontown Lake) |
| ⑤ 5. Calihan (Hamilton) | 15. Parsons (Galloway Westland) |
| 6. Wagner (Mayfield) | 16. Gardner (Austintown Fitch) |
| ④ 7. Williams (Walsh Jesuit) | ② 17. Fucito (Cincinnati St. Xavier) |
| ⑥ 8. James (Lorain Southview) | 18. Gary (Akron Springfield) |
| 9. Long (West Carrollton) | 19. Dubois (Watkins Memorial) |
| ② 160 10. Montgomery (Madison) | 20. Miller (Oregon Clay) |
| 11. Wilson (Mt. Healthy) | 21. Shoupe (Holland Springfield) |

This should be an exceptionally interesting and competitive weight class and it's one I'll watch with interest because my longest consecutive string of successes in Division I (six years) is here. Unfortunately, there is no overwhelming favorite, and, in fact, any of a half dozen competitors have close to equal probabilities of winning. Auerbach was 4th at 160# last year losing narrowly, 10-7, to Hepp in the quarter-finals, and then winning a succession of close bouts in the consolation bracket. He has been at 189# all year, but I'm confident he'll drop to 171# by tourney time. Not that he hasn't done well there (he's undefeated), but this will be the higher probability opportunity in this his senior season.

There are five very qualified candidates for the four state berths given to Mentor -- which means someone is going to be disappointed or that someone (perhaps Montgomery) will go to 160#. DiMacchia was a state qualifier last year with a district 3rd -- beating among others Wagner 6-1. It was two and out at states, but drawing Mollica in the opening round will never be construed as good fortune. This year he lost a one-pointer to Williams at Medina, but overwhelmed him later in the dual -- a bout, I believe, more in line with their relative rankings. He has finalist potential. Wagner also spent time at 189# losing to Auerbach there 5-3 at Solon. Only a junior he seems capable of a low to middle place. James surprised everyone last year. Only a freshman and weighing 158# he was a Mentor district finalist at 171# winning two overtime decisions and a 5-4 squeaker to get there. Then the bubble quickly burst at Wright State, but it was a fantastic run. The key was James' uncanny balance which made him extremely difficult to score against. There are major eligibility questions surrounding his move to Clearview High School and back during a levy failure and whether he will be able to compete is still problematical. Montgomery was 2nd at Kenston to the excellent Mims and has solid abilities, but if James shows up he'll be on the bubble at this weight class. Harteis (Hudson) and Lake (Euclid) are other possibilities here.

Joyce has one of those recurring nightmares wrestlers sometimes dream about actually happen to him. Ahead by a dozen points in his go-to-state bout he suddenly was put on his back and pinned with only 20 seconds left. It deprived him of a possible state place and I'm sure countless nights of sleep. Well, he's back and leads a strong Dayton contingent at this weight. A possible finalist he

has been troubled by injuries and to beat the top performers like Auerbach and DiMacchia he'll have to be at 100%. Right behind is state qualifier Calihan, a solid, dependable workman, who went 34-4 last year. He won both the SWOCA and Fairfield and has the ability for a high place. Long, Wilson and Hammond are all strong performers whose bouts could go either way. My guess is that the draw will make a large difference here. Fucito is also a possibility along with Cutarelli (Greenville) and Krollman (Cincinnati Oak Hills). Incidentally, Bahns (Xenia Beaver Creek) the other participant in Joyce's nightmare, has not yet wrestled this year.

Caraffi was a state qualifier as a sophomore, but then last year lost two one-point matches (the last one to Auerbach) that cut his season short by one week. This year -- except for a surprise fall by Boiani -- he has looked dominating; especially so at Brunswick where he cruised through his bracket. Williams was runner-up at Medina and has split two bouts with DiMacchia. He seems second-best here. Angione and Gardner are standard choices for the next two spots, but watch for Gary, who won at Wadsworth Doylestown, and Mogadore, this year and could be a real surprise. Other candidates are Braun (Massillon Jackson) and Bernhardt (Wooster).

I'll be really surprised if the Hilliard contingent wins two bouts overall at Wright State. There is not much to choose from with Pontius and Parsons the two best. Perhaps some of the journeyman 189s could find success here, but that's a big cut for almost everyone.

189#

①
PROJECTED CHAMPION: SCOTT OSTHOLTHOFF (CINCINNATI MOELLER)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ② 2. Lisco (St. Edward) | 12. Hysell (Galloway Westland) |
| ③ 3. Myers (North Ridgeville) | 13. Walk (Eastlake North) |
| ④ 4. Mihacevich (Brunswick) | 14. Csurik (Padua) |
| 5. Randolph (Wadsworth) | 15. Anderson (Newark) |
| ③ 6. Materni (Holland Springfield) | 16. Kolesar (Elyria) |
| 7. Whitehead (Cincinnati Princeton) | 17. Rednour (Fairfield) |
| ④ 8. Stephens (Hamilton) | 18. Wood (Ashland) |
| 9. Richardson (Toledo Start) | 19. Inglis (Austintown Fitch) |
| 10. Marshall (Strongsville) | 20. Czerwinski (Maple Hts.) |
| 11. Maloney (Cincinnati St. Xavier) | 21. Bizjak (Walsh Jesuit) |

There is a major drop-off in quality after about the 5th place on this ranking. What that really means is that only those in the top five have any realistic chance of taking the title. My choice is Ostholthoff -- already a two-time state qualifier -- who is completely dominant in the Southwest district. Last year his three losses were to Daniels, Rivera, and Uphouse -- the top three placers in Ohio all of whom graduated. Rivera's matriculation was particularly good news to Ostholthoff who lost to him twice in the first round of states -- at least that cannot happen again. This year he was 14-0 with 14 falls entering the OCC as defending champ, but that was probably not a total positive. Meeting Lisco -- who he beat last year -- in the finals he appeared to tire badly in the

third period and suffered his first regular season loss in two years. The key was Lisco's dramatic improvement this year and Ostholthoff's lack of conditioning. Now the ball is in his court because it should now be clear what needs to be done to win the state title. My view is that by tourney time Ostholthoff will have made the conditioning improvements and mental adjustments to win -- but it is assuredly not going to come easily. One thing that will come easily is a district title since Ostholthoff has pinned everyone of consequence there.

At Mentor it would seem to be a two man battle between Lisco and Myers. Since they exit the same sectional they'll be apart at both the district and state level meaning Ostholthoff will have to defeat them both (or their conquerors) to win. Myers was district champ last year and parlayed 25 consecutive victories to a state semi-final berth, but then lost to Daniels, Uphouse and Caniglia to finish 6th. Last year he was clearly superior to Lisco. That may have changed. Myers lost his excellent workout partner Kocsis to graduation and wrestles a schedule that is far less testing than Lisco's. Meanwhile Lisco now has three-time NCAA placer John Heffernan to work out with alongside Terebieniec and DiMacchia and rapid improvement is apparent. Certainly a major plus will be which of the two draws away from Ostholthoff. Everyone else at Mentor is well behind this duo and the second pair that does qualify are very unlikely to place.

Back in the fall of 1989 it was duly noted in Medina County that two families with outstanding wrestling backgrounds both had freshmen -- entrants at the upper weight -- entering school, and there was speculation on the battles these two might have over the years with one another. Dan Mihacevich seemed to mature a little more quickly and last year as a sophomore he placed 4th at states including a 15-13 epic win over Uphouse (just about destroying Hilliard's team chances) and an overtime win over Bolden. Back again at 189# he now will face Rex Randolph who has had two older brothers make it to the state finals. I well remember his brother Tom commenting before his finals match with Rex Holman on the coincidence of having a younger brother with the same first name. Randolph has been devastating this year, but it's still too early to tell whether he's caught Mihacevich yet. Both these boys will be obstacles for the top trio -- Mihacevich with his unorthodox style and Randolph with his burgeoning strength. Marshall has almost improved as much losing by only a point to Mihacevich at Brunswick while Inglis and Bizjak fight for the last spot. Bizjak, the only senior on the Walsh Squad, has gotten tremendous mileage out of his talents already this year.

State qualifier Materni and state alternate Richardson head the Hilliard district. Materni is crushingly strong but Ostholthoff decked him at the GMVWA. Richardson, tall and lean, is unorthodox and could be an upset victim. Hysell is also good but Anderson may not be rated high enough since his schedule makes an accurate assessment difficult.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ¹STEPHEN TEREBIENIEC (ST. EDWARD)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Kinard (Kettering Fairmount) | 12. Crampton (Toledo Start) |
| 3. Turley (Massillon) | 13. Wojciechowski (Toledo Bowsher) |
| 4. Brookins (Cincinnati Princeton) | 14. Valentino (Galloway Westland) |
| 5. Allan (Wooster) | 15. Cogar (Uniontown Lake) |
| 6. Soika (Padua) | 16. Altman (Holland Springfield) |
| 7. McGuire (Brunswick) | 17. Williams (Austintown Fitch) |
| 8. Dodson (Springfield North) | 18. Favors (Eastlake North) |
| 9. Hudson (Delaware Hayes) | 19. Thompson (Euclid) |
| 10. Wise (Massillon Perry) | 20. Studt (Cincinnati Elder) |
| 11. Glaser (Vandalia Butler) | 21. Jarina (Garfield Hts.) |

How many ways are there to say "I don't know?" This essay may provide the definitive answer to that question because nothing seems certain at heavyweight -- except, maybe, that it is the weakest weight class in Division I competition. Only three underclassmen reached state qualification last year and Vitantonio (Walsh Jesuit) suffered a horrible knee injury prematurely ending his season and Slone is now in Division II at 189#. That leaves Kinard as the only returning qualifier -- although Terebieniec did qualify as a sophomore. That means for the second consecutive year that the real depth at heavyweight is in Division II.

My choice is Terebieniec who seems finally to be cashing in on the promise he showed two years ago. He appears to be in great shape and he has become more aggressive -- a trait that deserted him last season. As long as he doesn't let his annual exercise in humility (with Fickell) put him back into a shell he has a good a chance as anyone of winning. Possibly the second best heavyweight in Division I is Louis Santiago (St. Edward) who defeated Terebieniec in their preview bout and has crushed everybody while wrestling a varsity schedule on their Green team. He has already won tournaments at Licking Hts., Ledgemont, Alliance, and Howland. Watch for him next year.

At Mentor the pin-or-be-pinned Soika would seem to be Terebieniec's principal obstacle. He won at Brecksville and was 3rd at both Avon Lake and the OCCs. One big advantage is that he gains a lot of quick falls reducing mat time and the vagaries of officiating. After that who can say. I've listed Favors and Thompson who have split two bouts while garnering 3rds and 4ths at major tourneys. Jarina was a district qualifier at heavyweight as a freshman last year, but doesn't appear to be making the anticipated improvement. Other possibilities are Foy (Painesville Riverside), Green (Shaker Hts.), and Banks (Cleveland Hts.).

Kinard may be the only returning state qualifier at Dayton, but I think Brookins may be better. However, Kinard has far more experience and is adept at the tactics required to win close heavyweight bouts. He was 3rd at the GMVWA losing only to Division II competitor, Anders. He is difficult to score against and can take advantage of mistakes and therefore, will probably be wrestling on the last Saturday of the season. Agananda Brookins was behind district champion Miree last year so he lacks varsity experience, but his talent is undeniable. He

was 3rd at the SWOCA (his only loss by disqualification for an illegal slam) and then won at both St. Xavier and Fairfield. By season's end he may well be ahead of Kinard. I like the pin-happy Dodson for his aggressiveness. At Troy he had four falls to the title in 6:42, and most of this bouts end in less than 60 seconds. He could send any of the favorites home in a hurry. Glaser and Studt have the inside track on the last qualifying medal, but Finkes (Piqua), Olinger (Cincinnati Moeller), and Hoffman (Centerville) are all possibilities.

The one district with good depth is at Perry, but the final outcome is still uncertain because there are at least six contenders of about equal ability. The most impressive competitor so far has been Brandon Turley -- up from 189# last year. He has posted a sensational skein of victories -- including the Wadsworth title -- mostly on quick falls.

My reservation here is that he has looked good against basically inferior competition. He has yet to go head-to-head with the other, more experienced contenders. Allen, Cogar, and Wise are very familiar with one another with no one gaining a real obvious upper hand. They finished 3-4-5 at Medina. McGuire yet another district qualifier did pin Cogar last year and falls right into the main stream of this group. The other unknown besides Turley is Williams, who won handily at North Canton, as another top candidate. His coach, Brett Powell, knows a lot about heavyweight wrestling and he may make a difference if things are tight. Thompson (Chillicothe) has little chance here.

At Hilliard, Hudson has performed consistently well including a 1st at Upper Arlington, a 2nd at Marion Harding (losing to Podraski) and a 3rd at Hamilton Township (losing to Anders). Relatively quick he can score points in bunches, but may be susceptible to the really big heavies having been at 189# last year. Crampton, Wojciechowski and Altman all hail from the Toledo area, and must be rated as narrow favorites for the last three spots. I've always liked Crampton and it may finally be his turn to do well at states. He and Altman both were two and out in district competition while Wojciechowski was the state alternate.

Valentino is not that different than any of the four rated ahead of him while Wauford (Findlay), Foust (Elida), and Slaughter (Newark) are only possibilities.

TEAMS

1. St. Edward -- They look ready to make one last, all-out effort to take the state title away from Walsh. It seems clear that if they don't win it this year it might be a long time before they'll be able to get it back. Two keys to victory seem evident -- first, Terebieniec has got to score strongly at the weak heavyweight class and, second, the other seniors like Chandler, Lisco, DiMacchia, and Friedle need to put points on the board. If Neider, Clement, and one of the junior middle weights contribute it could be a runaway.
2. Walsh Jesuit -- This team was dealt a double barreled blow when State qualifier Vitantonio and Martin went down with major injuries. Still they have impressive firepower in the sophomores Johnson, Musser, and Owens in combination with juniors Williams and Ford. Again two key factors -- that Ford wrestles up to his true ability and that someone like an Overholt or one of the two O'Neils catches fire at just the right moment.
3. Mayfield -- There is a major gap between the top two teams and everyone else. Mayfield has a quartet of stars all of whom must contribute if they are to reach this lofty level. White has been sensational and Kaleal very solid, but Ranallo has never made it to States and Wagner may have a difficult district weight class. They have to do it because there doesn't seem to be anyone else to help.
4. Strongsville -- A wonderful dual meet team that may lack scoring punch at the State level. Two who can score there are Grammes and Caraffi, but they'll need help from Marshall, Jardine, Ramsey or Kotlyn. If everything went just right they could be third.
5. Dayton Wayne -- A long-shot choice, but one worth considering. The trio of Joyce, Sweet, and Goodman all look to be State placement potential -- scoring possibly 50 to 60 points. If Morvatz or Anderson can help they'll solidify this position.
6. Cincinnati Moeller -- Ostholthoff and Zinkan look to be finalists and that's a boatload of points. If, somehow, Whalen or Gatto pitch in they might even move up a place.
7. St. Ignatius -- A surprise team that needs a good break along the way. Vaughn looks like 25 points, while Gizzi and Wahl have placement potential. If Thompson or Eddings can help, things will be a lot easier.
8. Fairfield -- Always a good team in their area, they don't have as much up-top firepower as usual. Wineberg is, of course, great, but Shanklin has not yet been at full efficiency. If Mays and Price at the middleweights or Estep and Wright at the lower weights can contribute, they'll move up quickly.
9. Holland Springfield -- Olson and Oval are the big guns, but neither has been really tested this year. There are other possibilities like Materni, Shoupe, Perry, and Altman, but they are problematical at best. Still they're the best the Toledo area has to offer.

10. Massillon Perry -- This is a team with some real upside potential. Fichter and Franklin look to be the big State scorers, but, if Wise, at the weak heavyweight class, can come through or Blake, Ramos, or Hull help they could move up real quickly.
11. Uniontown Lake -- This is next year's team just getting ready for the future. They have lots of possibilities, but no proven State scorers at this time. I like Minick and Whitmer the best, but Herbert (with that big cut), Angione, Harris, and Cogar are all good. Wait until next year when they're all back.
12. Marion Harding -- Strictly a two-man team, but both Rizer and Ratliff are excellent. Murphy looks like the only other possibility.
13. Hilliard -- A better dual meet team, but one with some potential State scoring as well. The two Camerons are solid and the little Campbell has been a great addition. However, Davis probably has the best chance at scoring heavily -- although his district is tough at 135#. Clingman has an outside chance to help -- if he can get healthy.
14. Lorain Southview -- An unsettled team that could move up quickly. Franklin is outstanding, but they need James eligible for support. Otherwise it's up to Mendez, Quimbaya, and the two Williams.
15. Valley Forge -- A five-man team that might not qualify enough to score heavily at Wright State. Bentley may be their best hope, but he seems inconsistent. Boiani has had a fabulous year, and could surprise at the weak 160# class. If Carver, the steady Finding, and Miller chip in this team could easily be in the top ten.
16. Maple Hts. -- A team that needs a huge performance from Kosarko and Pluhar, and then back-up support from Mayes, Buemi, Deubel, and Folk. That may be asking too much.

DIVISION II

Somehow this is always the classification that provides the heart-stopping action in the team competition. Last year it was the three-cornered battle between Ravenna Southeast, Clyde, and Lake Catholic that was not decided until nearly the last bout. This year, again, we are likely to witness, not only another classic battle for the team title, but some great individual battles as the competition unfolds. Only several weight classes are dominated by a single individual portending frantic struggles at most of the other weights.

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽³⁾ DANA MARDER (TWINSBURG)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ① 2. B. Santa Maria (Kenston) | 15. Meek (Millbury Lake) |
| ② 3. Daugherty (Ravenna) | 16. Wobser (Sandusky Perkins) |
| 4. D. Pariano (Fairview) | 17. Mayne (Little Miami) |
| 5. Page (Swanton) | 18. Fabian (Oak Harbor) |
| ④ 6. Reynolds (Port Clinton) | 19. Jones (Tri-Valley) |
| 7. Worley (Lebanon) | 20. Wilcox (Marysville) |
| ⑥ 8. Workman (Olmsted Falls) | 21. Ollom (Vincent Warren) |
| 9. Lovejoy (Martins Ferry) | 22. Simmons (Lake Catholic) |
| 10. Warner (Claymont) | 23. Lavender (Lewistown Indian Lake) |
| 11. Fratta (Willard) | 24. Burton (Warrensville Hts.) |
| 12. Fugate (Dayton Northridge) | 25. Helton (Norwalk) |
| 13. LaFountain (Paulding) | 26. Pace (Revere) |
| 14. Ewing (St. Clairsville) | 27. Ohl (Bellevue) |

The way this report is constructed centers around writing 39 short essays (one for each weight class) over about a seven-day period. There is no reason to write them in any particular order (thanks to Kim and her facility with the word processor), so I start first with those that are easiest -- like ones that have the name Fickell or Pariano (Tony that is) that gives me a little more time to collect information dealing with the difficult weight classes -- always hoping something will turn up to make things easier. Gradually they all get done until I'm left with the single most difficult case -- and this is it.

At any rate, at this most crowded weight class the best wrestlers seem to be at the Firestone District. Marder, only a freshman, has been an exceptional youth wrestler, and has a wealth of experience. He lost to Pariano 2-1 in the Solon final and 1-0 in double overtime to Santa Maria at Kenston. In between he dominated the large Hudson tourney never having to go six full minutes. He has not been taken down all year, but by the same token he has not shown that he can score against top-level competition either. Santa Maria was district champ last year and 6th at Wright State. Now a senior, 103# is a tough cut, but one he must make if he is to make a run at the title. Daugherty has lost to Pariano and Santa Maria this year, but has outstanding potential and may be the most powerful of this top quartet. Pariano, another freshman, defeated both Daugherty and Marder by narrow scores at Solon and romped at Brecksville. He, too, was a

sensational youth wrestler who can only get better. At last year's sectional telecast a very attractive young lady, providing dinner to the media, assured me that Luke Workman would be a state champion the following year, and that it was a guaranteed scoop for my report. Well, it may still be a year away yet for Workman but he certainly has the best chance of grabbing the last qualifying spot. He was 5th at Kenston -- behind Santa Maria, Marder, Daugherty and Cirino -- and recently drew with Pariano in a dual. Other possibilities include Simmons, Burton, and Pace with Mihalek (Benedictine) a real long shot.

There is exceptional depth at Galion with ten solid wrestlers competing for five slots. The most interesting candidate is probably Page, who qualified as a freshman, but then missed all last season with injuries. He is clearly back winning the Rogers in handsome style while shutting out Perry in the final. State qualifier Reynolds was getting some serious battering at 112#, but will be a major factor here. A district finalist last year he won his first three bouts by a combined score of 48-5. However, a tough overtime loss eliminated him immediately at Wright State. LaFountain is solid while Fratta, Meek, and Wobser are all seasoned 103s with lots of good experience. Probably more talented the freshman, Fabian, faces tough odds to qualify but he won the recent Panther Classic and Oak Harbor Invitational against strong competition. He has to wrestle-off with the excellent DeTray just to make the team. Also worthy of note are Ohl -- if he can stay at 103# -- and Helton who has been a steady finalist all year. Note all nine listed are from the Northwest sectionals. The Columbus area contingent will be overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers here.

Worley has been at 112# all year, but will probably be here by sectional time. A state qualifier last year he should dominate the field here, and possibly grab a low place at States. Fugate and Mayne have district experience and have the inside track for the last two spots. Lavender and Jacobs (St. Paris Graham) are possibilities with Moore (Springfield Shawnee) coming on strong.

Warner had the misfortune to be in, perhaps, the toughest district at 103# last year, and when he wrestled at something less than peak efficiency he could gain only a 4th -- one place from state qualification. This season he apparently has struggled with the weight cut and, perhaps, the motivation and not performed to what we know is his level. My guess is that he'll be around at tourney time and still be an impact participant. In the meantime, Lovejoy has gone right past him while Ewing, Jones, and Ollom would eagerly seek the extra qualifying berth that opens up if Warner does not compete. Two others to watch for are Russell (Dover) and Miller (Hillsboro).

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KELLY SHIELDS (EDISON SOUTH)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ⑤ 2. Davis (Milan Edison) | 13. Barouh (Bexley) |
| ① 3. Sanders (CAPE) | 14. Windisch (Sandusky Perkins) |
| ② 4. McDaniel (Claymont) | 15. Puskar (West Geauga) |
| 5. Owens (Norwalk) | 16. Everhart (Springfield Shawnee) |
| 6. Tye (Cincinnati Purcell) | 17. Lemley (Beaver Local) |
| 7. Ricker (Dover) | 18. Andres (Clyde) |
| 8. Huszczo (Lake Catholic) | 19. J. Roe (Meadowbrook) |
| 9. Derr (Ravenna) | 20. Herrick (Highland) |
| 10. Whitlatch (Rossford) | 21. Wrobel (Benedictine) |
| ③ 11. Grucella (Revere) | 22. Piacentini (Teays Valley) |
| 12. Aubrey (Urbana) | 23. Mease (Bucyrus) |

Last year Kelly Shields finished a brilliant undefeated season with a flourish by pinning Jake Davis in under a minute to take the state crown. Already a two-time state qualifier Shields had his streak of 50 consecutive wins snapped this year by the aggressive Ric Roe at 119#, but at this weight class he remains close to invincible. He should feel very confident as he seeks a second consecutive state title.

One of Shields' principal antagonists at 112# will be in his own district where two-time state qualifier Scott McDaniel returns for his third consecutive year. Feisty and very rugged, McDaniel will be seeking his first state placement and should get it this time. He was 5th at Medina in a dynamite weight class, losing only to Division I stars Whitmer and Friedle. He does seem to have trouble with the super quick boys, however. State qualifier Ricker also returns creating an outstanding trio of athletes at this district. Ricker won two bouts at state and lost to Davis by a close 11-9 score. He won at Smithville this year including a crush of Lemley. One wrestler to watch is Jon Roe who has seemingly overnight made substantial improvement, while Larimore (West Holmes), just down from 119# could also play a role.

Davis was 3rd at his sectional, but then caught fire and won his district (including an OT win over long-time rival Beard) and then cruised to the state finals before running into Shields. This year he has won at Edison, Bellevue and Marion Harding, and could well see Shields again on a late Saturday afternoon in March. However, his district is deep and talented. Owens has had just a splendid year including a huge win at St. John's when he was awarded the Outstanding Wrestler trophy for defeating Junior National Champ, Shawn Contos. In my mind the next batch at 112# here, clearly, has to be ranked below this top duo, and includes such contenders as Whitlatch, Barouh, Windisch and Andres. Andres, who has wrestled at 125# all year with reasonable success, is the most interesting element in this grouping. It's close to impossible to guess how he'll perform, but, certainly, he'll bear watching. After that I've listed Piacentini and Mease with Schrock (Shelby), Foster (Maumee) and Thompson (Logan Elm) possibilities.

After the state tournament last year I was sure I had identified the best 103# wrestler for 1992. Shantell Sanders is only about 4 feet, 10 inches tall and he had devastating quickness as he collected a 4th place medal at 103#. Apparently, however, he will compete at 112# where his whirlwind style is always unpredictable and dangerous. Shields, in particular, might find his style unappetizing, and have real trouble with him. Tye has also been impressive in that Dayton District and both these competitors have good placement opportunity. Aubrey and Everhart should battle for the 3rd qualifying spot. A real intriguing possibility is that Toby Clark (Lebanon) who has had to wrestle at 130# because he cannot beat Noble and Enright may make a major effort to reach 112#. Should he succeed and retain his ability to compete he could be heard from at this class, and would certainly increase Lebanon's team chances.

At Firestone the field does not seem as strong as usual. Huszczo was a district semi-finalist at this weight a year ago but then lost three consecutive matches won by a point and another in overtime to fall out of the qualification picture. Derr was a Division I state qualifier despite a total of 13 losses last year. He was 5th at both Solon and Kenston, but cannot be ignored at tournament time. After that the field is very weak with all kinds of possibilities available. Don't be surprised if several relative unknowns like Sherman (Conneaut), or Cope (Salem) qualify.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION ¹ JOHN NOBLE (LEBANON)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ³ 2. R. Roe (Meadowbrook) | 13. Fashinpaur (Revere) |
| 3. Anderson (Dayton Carroll) | 14. Wright (Louisville) |
| ² 4. C. Shaw (Claymont) | 15. Kruse (Hillsboro) |
| 5. Beard (Clyde) | 16. Jo Davis (Milan Edison) |
| 6. Blair (Rossford) | 17. Isaac (Twinsburg) |
| 7. Butterfield (Bexley) | 18. Nicely (Bellevue) |
| 8. J. Byers (Urbana) | 19. Dillon (Martins Ferry) |
| 9. Jacobs (Crestwood) | 20. Balog (Ravenna) |
| 10. Brettell (Steubenville) | 21. Samblanet (Vermillion) |
| ⁶ 11. Stober (Bethel-Tate) | 22. Snider (Springfield NW) |
| 12. Sony (London) | 23. DeRamo (Canfield) |

While this weight class has some up top strength, it is, in general, neither very strong nor very deep. It is also likely to be dominated by former state champion John Noble who appears to be wrestling well. When physically healthy and untroubled, Noble is one of the finest wrestlers in the state. As a freshman he lost a tough, overtime semi-final battle and finished 3rd in the state, and then as a sophomore devastated an outstanding field to win at 112#. Last year hampered by a variety of problems which kept him inactive during part of the season he, nonetheless, blew through the first three rounds of states before Taylor caught him with a last second takedown to take away his crown 8-7. This year nobody has been close, and barring misfortune Noble should win easily. At Dayton, two-time state qualifier Anderson is back and should place for the first time while Byers who Anderson beat in overtime last year and state qualifier

Stober battle for the last spot. Snider and Cannon (Loveland Hurst) are also solid making for an outstanding district competition here.

Another very strong district will be at Steubenville -- jammed with three past state qualifiers. Roe who has gone to States twice is the boy to watch -- especially if he remains as hot as he has been recently. Last year he beat Enright in state quarter-finals and then took a 12-3 second period lead against Lang in the semis. Suddenly Roe just collapsed eventually dropping a 16-14 struggle to the eventual champ and falling all the way to 6th. This year he has been on a tear handing Shields his first loss in two years in a dual, beating Maiani at St. Mary's, and then ripping the field at the OVAC. Shaw was district champ last year, but like most of the Claymont qualifiers went "belly up" at Wright State. He has wrestled well all year and with the right draw has finalist opportunities -- assuming he wrestles at peak efficiency. State qualifier Brettell never seems to look that good but he seems to win all the time, and what more can you ask for. He should grab the last qualifying spot though Kruse and Dillon could press him.

At Galion we don't see the normal depth this district exhibits. State qualifiers Beard and Butterfield have placement potential as does the rapidly improving Blair. This latter wrestler whipped a strong field at Kenston including an overtime, final round win over Division I state place winner Brian Lanese. There is a major fall-off after this trio with those listed having the best opportunity to qualify. I also like Owens (Norwalk), Heinle (Bucyrus) and Abella (Northland).

The Firestone District is uncharacteristically weak here, and we might expect some of the excellent 125s to drop here by tournament time. As it currently stands no one here really could be considered a top candidate for placement -- with Jacobs and Isaac being closest to that designation. Those listed below the top duo -- Wright, Fashinpaur, Balog and DeRamo -- have generally had consistent years, but this time look for the upset artist. People like Miller (Ravenna Southeast), Mullins (Nordonia), Caruso (Brecksville), or Pfeiffer (Buckeye) are tailor made for such a role.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMP: ① SHAWN ENRIGHT (LEBANON)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ④ 2. Henderson (St. Paris Graham) | 14. Jones (Hillsdale) |
| ③ 3. Ambroziak (Lake Catholic) | 15. Kramer (Kenston) |
| ⑤ 4. Tye (Cincinnati Purcell) | 16. Hinkle (Philo) |
| 5. Keske (Bellevue) | 17. Crosby (Wooster Triway) |
| 6. Keller (Maumee) | 18. Behrens (Marysville) |
| 7. Carone (Swanton) | 19. Corbiere (Firelands) |
| 8. Kersten (Oak Harbor) | 20. French (Eaton) |
| ⑥ 9. Bailey (Ravenna Southeast) | 21. Carney (Nordononia) |
| 10. Christ (Bay) | 22. Suitt (Cambridge) |
| ② 11. Meyers (Milan Edison) | 23. Knaze (Fairview Park) |
| 12. Smith (Martins Ferry) | 24. Bennett (New Concord John Glenn) |
| 13. White (Clyde) | 25. Cyphers (Dayton Northridge) |

This is one of those weight classes that just won't seem to come into focus. There are some 119s that might show up here -- and, possibly, a couple of the 130s as well. At the same time not many of the top-rated contenders have met so there is a real lack of solid information. If that's not enough there are at least a half dozen wrestlers here who might move down to 119# as well. So it's very confusing particularly since there are probably a number of claimants to the title with solid, if not overwhelming, credentials.

The most impressive wrestler so far has been Enright, 3rd last year at 112#, who has post some outstanding numbers. He won the Lebanon Duals, the huge SWOCA Tourney, Beaver creek, and Oak Harbor -- smashing Keske 23-13 there. The only blemish was a loss, very recently, to the incredibly improving Lipinski. He's probably a legitimate 119#, but with Noble the incumbent there, he has fit very nicely into the 125# slot. Right behind Enright is state runner-up Brett Henderson who lost the 112# crown in overtime last year. The consummate, down-tempo wrestler he is difficult to score against. He looks like he, too, could make 119#, but Enright might be slightly easier than Noble (but not by much). Tye has also had an excellent season -- winning at Sycamore and Carroll -- but losing to Enright at the SWOCA. This trio should dominate at the Dayton District and potentially all place at Wright State.

The Galion is loaded with outstanding talent. Keske started off the season in a blaze of glory defeating Division I state place winner Rizer the first week of the season, and not really stopping since then. He has won several tournaments losing only the aforementioned bout to Enright. State qualifier Carone won at Rogers while Division I state qualifier Keller has bounced between weight classes, but won big at 125# at Stritch. State qualifier Kersten also returns -- probably at this weight class -- but he has failed win in any tournaments, although a consistent placer. He did take Keske into overtime at Oak Harbor. White and Meyers are my top choices for the last slot with both having dropped recently -- White from 130# and Meyers from 135#. Behrens is another solid possibility with Burger (Norwalk) and Williams (Teays Valley) other thoughts. Getting through this district will be a character-building assignment,

and you have to wonder whether the five qualifiers will have sufficient recovery time for Wright State the following Thursday.

Ambroziak heads a Firestone District that should be rich in action, but relatively poor the following week in state results. The one exception is Ambroziak, 3rd last year at 119#. A stolid wrestler who wins an amazing percentage of his close bouts he was also 3rd at his district last year and 3rd at both Kenston and the OCC this year. Hence his ranking here. I'd be surprised if anyone else here can place. State qualifier Christ and Bailey may have the best chance while Crosby and Corbiere have outside opportunities. Two possibilities are up-and-coming sophomore Knaze and the recently cut down Kramer. If they string a couple of hot weekends together they could well be factors at this weight despite their relatively low overall ranking. Two other thoughts here are Bourne (Chardon) and Grubach (VASJ).

At Steubenville this district has five major components -- none of whom would seem to be a real threat at States. Smith has had the most success winning at Barnesville, and getting runner-up trophies at Shadyside, St. John's, and the OVAC. Jones has been a power in the southeast area while state alternate Hinkle has not yet competed. Last year, however, he won four district bouts. Suitt has been at 130#, but I think he'll make the cut to maximize his state chances while Bennett won at Coshocton and has past district experience. Getting through this district won't be so difficult, but Wright State is likely to be another story.

130#

DAT 135
PROJECTED CHAMPION: JODY WITHROW (TRIWAY)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Eggar (Fairfield Union) | 13. Payne (Fairview Park) |
| 3. Clark (Mason) | 14. Bucalo (Cincinnati Roger Bacon) |
| 4. Wolff (Twinsburg) | 15. Napier (Hillsboro) |
| 5. S. Shaw (Claymont) | 16. Sears (Miami Trace) |
| 6. Corvin (Milan Edison) | 17. Hammond (Hamilton Twp.) |
| 7. Kent (Lake Catholic) | 18. Ream (Springfield NW) |
| 8. Walker (Milton Union) | 19. Jones (Steubenville) |
| 9. Wimmers (Marysville) | 20. Stone (Akron St. Vincent) |
| 10. R. Byers (Urbana) | 21. Balog (Brecksville) |
| 11. Mosure (Columbus DeSales) | 22. Fultz (Bellevue) |
| 12. Fankhauser (Ravenna Southeast) | 23. DeTray (Oak Harbor) |

There are an inordinately large number of weight classes in Division II that are difficult to forecast. That is because there are few dominant wrestlers in this classification in 1992, and because parity has truly arrived at least for one year. Clearly, 130# is another of these hard-to-figure weights with a number of journeymen contenders, but no real standouts.

My top choice here -- by the most narrow of margins -- is Triway's fine senior, Jody Withrow. Last year Withrow was district runner-up losing to eventual state champ Passage 4-3 in the final. Then, at Wright State, he dropped an overtime decision to the excellent Knight and a criteria overtime decision to

Eggar and failed to place despite winning two bouts. This year he won at Smithville and Triway, but failed to place at Medina losing a pair of close decisions. He's due to win the close bouts that will be inevitable at the state level.

There's a lot of solid contenders at Firestone. State placer Wolff shocked everyone (well, at least me) with his 6th place finish at 119# and has been in the top three in every tourney wrestled. Kent and Fankhouser had parallel districts with each winning 7-6 bouts to become semi-finalists and then dropping three consecutive bouts to finish one spot from qualification. I think Kent -- a finalist at the OCC -- is the better of the two, and has placement potential. State qualifier Payne is up three weight classes from 112# and has not adjusted readily to his new size. He may not be physically strong enough to get through this district. State qualifier Stone has been notably absent from the Akron St. Vincent line up, and questions abound as to whether he will even compete. Balog, Berger (Highland), and Tomcik (Norton) are all performers who could grab the 5th qualifying spot on a hot weekend. State qualifier Nye (Revere) has not yet wrestled, but would be a factor should he compete.

As always Galion presents a strong line up of contenders. Eggar, 5th last year, has been at 135# all season, but will be an impact player at 130#. He defeated Clark 17-4 in the consolations last year. Corvin battled injuries last year, but has been relatively healthy this year. He won at Edison and was runner-up at Marion Harding where he was leading Ratliff in the 3rd period when he got "stuck". State qualifier Wimmers has also dropped -- allowing Marysville to maximize the use of their fine middleweights -- and should be a factor. Last year his four district and state losses were by a combined score of 56-23, but he has turned that around by winning major tournaments at 135# like the Gorman. State qualifier Mosure won a bout at states last year and should qualify once again. That leaves state qualifier Hammond battling DeTray, the excellent sophomore Fultz, and Buck (Maumee) for the last berth.

I think the district at Dayton will be very competitive. Clark was 6th last year, but he was really manhandled in his three losses. He was sharp at the SWOCA winning impressively, but, certainly, is not guaranteed of qualification (although he is defending district champion). State qualifier Walker pinned Byers earlier this year and should be a real factor here. Byers -- only a freshman last year -- qualified for Wright State by defeating Bucalo for the last berth, but then was TFed by Withrow in the first round. Bucalo and Ream were both close to qualification last year, but may still fail this year considering the competition at this weight class. Both may be considering jumping back to 135#. Dawson (Clermont NE) is a real long-shot here.

Shaw would seem to dominate at Steubenville. Runner-up to Knight last year at this district, he should be substantially better than most of the competition. Like several other Claymont qualifiers he too had a bad first round being shut out 3-0. Napier was 2nd to Amicon at Bishop Ready and then won big at the Kiwanis Invitational. Shaw crushed Sears 18-9 last year at districts, but Sears has looked better this year. He was a strong 5th at the mammoth GMVWA. Jones and Valentine (Martins Ferry) are two other possibilities.

152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽⁶⁾ STEVE ZICKAFOOSE (TIPP CITY)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ① 2. Kline (Wooster Triway) | 13. Halaiko (New Lexington) |
| 3. Houser (Milan Edison) | 14. Lisachenko (Chardon) |
| ② 4. Andres (Clyde) | 15. Planck (New Richmond) |
| ③ 5. Gifford (Miami Trace) | ③ 16. DeJohn (Benedictine) |
| 6. Collier (Steubenville) | 17. Rossiter (Meadowbrook) |
| ④ 7. Ray (Bellevue) | 18. Gibson (Utica) |
| 8. Payne (Rossford) | 19. DeNune (Big Walnut) |
| 9. Van Pelt (Nordonia) | ④ 20. Tillinghast (Copley) |
| 10. Prologo (Youngstown Ursuline) | 21. Coiffard (Sandusky Perkins) |
| ⑤ 11. French (Olmsted Falls) | 22. Fares (Springboro) |
| 12. Schlater (St. Paris Graham) | 23. Koledin (St. Clairsville) |

This is one of the best balanced and most interesting weight classes in Division II. It features a number of state qualifiers, strong competitors from every district, and a number of potentially exciting match-ups. My feeling is that there'll be a large number of very close bouts wrestled at this weight meaning the competitor who can best execute the little things will end up winning the crown.

My choice is Steve Zickafoose, 3rd in the state last year, who wrestled nicely controlled bouts in winning four times last year at Wright. He should be able to neutralize the high scoring wrestlers in the field with his defense and riding ability, and use his fine takedown skills to defeat those who would opt for a down-tempo match. His only loss this season was when he went to 160# to challenge Sweet and ended up losing 4-3. If he does win, he'll be the first Tipp City wrestler ever to win a state wrestling title.

Another plus for Zickafoose is that while his district is representative, it is, in this case, probably the least difficult of the four. Schlater down from 160# is my choice here for the second spot while state qualifier Planck is the favorite for the third and last spot. However, Fares challenged Planck strongly in last year's district and Wissman has been on a real hot streak as of late. Other possibilities are Mitchell (Eaton) and Dobyms (Wilmington).

There is a lot of talent at Firestone in what should be an exceptionally interesting competition. Kline was my favorite to win at 140# but did not seem himself (apparently ill) and lost in the quarter-finals after barely surviving the first round. He was upset early at Medina but took a strong 3rd defeating the Louisiana state champ 8-4 and the redoubtable Wilson 9-1 in the last two rounds. He has, of course, dominated the smaller tournaments like Triway and Smithville. I look for him to rebound from last year's disappointment. Van Pelt will also be a factor although he wrestled very little last year. This season he was 3rd at Brecksville -- after leading Miller 4-1 and then getting caught in his own cradle. Prologo came out of nowhere to qualify at this weight with a district 5th. I'm not convinced he can repeat that feat, but he has wrestled well this year as well. However, French, Lisachenko and DeJohn may have gone past Prologo based on their efforts so far. DeJohn lost the OCC final to

won four bouts there at Medina. Orr and Levy would seem to be the top choices for the last two spots with Scolaro and Bogner as challengers.

McDaniel was 5th last year at 130# including a victory over Lippert. This year he dominated at Barnesville, but was only so-so at Medina losing to Merrill and Owens. He has a wealth of experience. State qualifier James is also back, but does not wrestle the difficult schedule that McDaniel does. Zwiesler had a mediocre 18-14 record last year, but has come on strong this season. His only losses have been to other State caliber people like Wimmers, Boeding, or Mohr -- who he lost to 18-13. Right behind this top trio is State qualifier Wilkinson, Harris, and Gegan (St. Clairsville). Hill (Steubenville) is an outside possibility.

At Galion there are a number of potential placers who are relatively equal in strength. That's especially true with the top trio of State alternate Weider, Epling, and Taylor. Right now Epling seems a bit ahead of the other two, but that seems to change almost weekly. Taylor has won at Northwood and was 2nd twice to Lippert, while Weider and Epling have performed at virtually the same level and lost to Lippert (Weider in overtime). They're all in the sectional so the winner there will get, at least, the best district draw. And what a district it should be. Wilson, Arnold, and John are all good while Ward and Baumbarger have upset potential. Luckily there are five slots, but that still eliminates at least three of this group.

State qualifier Greatorex, Tolliver, and Cockerhom should all be competing at this weight, but were a combined 1-6 in State action last year. Both Greatorex and Cockerhom have flirted with going at 135#, but I think they'll settle at 140# upon reflection. In my mind Tolliver has easily had the best season, and has State placement potential. The other two are vulnerable to district upsets. I've listed Lehman and Emerson, but Henigan (Springfield NW), Adams (Eaton), Jackson (Urbana), and Seiple (Miami East) are also good. This is a crowded, exciting weight class whose three ultimate qualifiers, however, may not seriously impact the State competition.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ^① TONY PARIANO (FAIRVIEW PARK)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ② 2. Wilson (Akron St. Vincent) | 13. Simpson (Martins Ferry) |
| 3. Mesenburg (Milan Edison) | 14. Jewell (Trenton Edgewood) |
| 4. McCormick (Shelby) | 15. Holbrook (Vermillion) |
| ⑤ 5. Shipley (New Concord John Glenn) | 16. Mesaros (Ravenna Southeast) |
| ② 6. Strahan (Crestwood) | 17. Vodenik (Mason) |
| ③ 7. Brian Weider (Bellevue) | 18. Moore (Columbus DeSales) |
| 8. Keller (St. Clairsville) | 19. Atkins (Olmsted Falls) |
| 9. Crider (Kenston) | 20. Switzer (Loveland Hurst) |
| 10. Johnson (Clermont NE) | 21. Bryant (St. Paris Graham) |
| 11. Schnell (Sandusky Perkins) | 22. Washington (Benedictine) |
| 12. Haman (Lake Catholic) | 23. Hill (Steubenville) |

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽³⁾ DENOVA WRIGHT (RAVENNA)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (4) 2. Malloy (Lake Catholic) | 13. Bales (Martins Ferry) |
| (2) 3. Robertson (Norwalk) | 14. Nickleman (Dayton Carroll) |
| (5) 4. Meyer (Bexley) | 15. Hinkle (Highland Sparta) |
| 5. Daniels (Urbana) | 16. Bergen (Olmsted Falls) |
| 6. Putnam (Lima Shawnee) | (1) 17. Buhrow (Oak Harbor) |
| 7. Carter (Dayton Northridge) | 18. Verstraten (Steubenville) |
| 8. LeBeau (Miami Trace) | 19. Schrock (Vermillion) |
| (1) 9. Rupanovic (Buckeye) | 20. Mershon (Springfield Shawnee) |
| 10. Gilman (St. Clairsville) | 21. Carruthers (Columbus DeSales) |
| 11. Haring (Twinsburg) | 22. Pencil (Springfield NW) |
| 12. Rice (Marysville) | 23. Yuzwa (Brecksville) |

Yet another weight class where the outcome is far from clear, but one with a little different spin. For here there is one wrestler Denova Wright who has the ability to dominate -- should he choose to do so. Last year in Division I as a sophomore he parlayed four district falls into a state berth and then in the consolation round that determines placement was slammed while well behind and won by disqualification. That clinched 6th place but he was far too badly hurt to continue (in fact, he required hospital treatment) and defaulted his last two bouts. This year he dominated at Kenston pinning state placer Wolff in the finals. At Solon, however, he was upset in the semi-finals throwing away a nice lead and letting a 125# wrestler -- who hadn't made weight -- defeat him. It's that hint of inconsistency that will give the other top contenders hope, because if Wright wrestles with intensity there isn't anyone here who can defeat him.

Wright's principal rival at will be state qualifier Malloy, who last year as a sophomore captured a district 3rd and then made it to the state semi-finals before losing three straight and finishing 6th. He had been 3rd as Kenston and 2nd at the OCC this year and his hard-nosed style will not allow anyone an easy six minutes with him. After that there is a major league fall off in quality. Rupanovic and Haring are next with the former down a weight class this year and the latter somewhat erratic. After that, chaos.

Robertson has had an outstanding year in the Toledo area winning at Edison (over Rosin), Fremont St. Joe (over Reineck) and St. John (over Joseph). Last year he seemed just a little better than mediocre, but this year he has been much, much better. State qualifiers Meyer and Putnam were both quarter-finalists and should improve on that this year. I think Buhrow has upset potential while Hinkle and Rice are both dangerous. Schrock, Carruthers, Nicely (Bellaire), Joseph (Maumee) Hector (Vermillion) and Mellett (Olentangy) could also play a role here. Considering the diversity of styles at this district the sectional results which will determine district pairings strike me as being extremely important.

There is not much depth at Dayton. Daniels, district qualifier last year, is back and is marginally best this year. Carter, the state alternate at 119# is up three weight classes with uneven success. Price pinned him in the finals at

Graham, but he did win at Carroll, and gave Jageman a good battle in the finals at Troy. Nickleman and Mershon would seem to be the best contestants for the 3rd and final state berth, but Pencil, inactive this season, would be a factor should he participate.

There is not much of substance at Steubenville. LeBeau is a seasoned performer who has been excellent in his own area, but has had trouble with opponents from other parts of the state. He didn't place at the GMVWA, but gave the highly rated Meyer a tremendous battle before losing 18-17. Gilman and state qualifier Bales have both had solid years along the river with the former having, perhaps, a slight edge currently. It is not inconceivable that one of this duo could place, but everything would have to be perfect.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JIM KITCHEN (TWINSBURG)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ③ ① 2. McDaniel (Claymont) | 14. Orr (Canfield) |
| ③ ① 3. Damsa (Ravenna) | 15. Arnold (Marysville) |
| 4. Tolliver (Wilmington) | 16. Johns (Lima Shawnee) |
| 5. Epling (Oak Harbor) | ③ 17. Levy (Warrensville Hts.) |
| 6. Taylor (Clyde) | 18. Wilkinson (Cambridge) |
| 7. Brad Weider (Bellevue) | 19. Lehman (Dayton Carroll) |
| 8. Tecco (Buckeye) | 20. Scolaro (Lake Catholic) |
| 9. Greatorex (Loveland Hurst) | 21. Harris (Beaver Local) |
| ① 10. James (Phito) | 22. Ward (Willard) |
| ① 11. Wilson (Olentangy) | 23. Emerson (Mason) |
| 12. Zwiesler (Miami Trace) | 24. Baumberger (Swanton) |
| 13. Cockerhom (Carlisle) | 25. Bogner (Triway) |

This weight class, along with 103#, are the two most difficult weight classes in Division II to select an eventual champ, but for exactly the opposite reasons. At 103# there are an over-abundance of top-notch candidates while here there doesn't seem to be anyone who I can easily envision as champion. Sure, there are at least several here who have the look of placers, but nobody whose style and demeanor just automatically projects himself as a finalist. Consequently, the final pairing will likely result from wrestlers who get a good draw, have a hot weekend, and, maybe, catch a lucky break or two.

With that ringing endorsement in mind, my top choice is Jim Kitchen, the fine 140 pounder out of Twinsburg. He's another of those wrestlers who was at 103# just a couple of years ago, but has rapidly grown. Last year at 125# he was upset in the district quarter finals, and then caught two-time State runner-up Schork in the consolations and was eliminated. This year he has won at both Solon and Kenston and suffered his only loss at the Hudson final to the excellent Tammarine. Not spectacular, he's a solid performer who won't throw away a won match. Two other wrestlers at Firestone could also place. Damsa has lost twice to Kitchen, but has otherwise wrestled a perfect schedule. He is an important part of Ravenna's team chances. Tecco was a sectional champ last year, but was upset by Orr in first-round district action. He has been primarily at 145# and

Wellmeier 10-8 the only wrestler to stay that close to the Division III star. Last year DeJohn was the state alternate, but didn't get to wrestle even though one of qualifiers skipped the state tournament to run at a track meet in Buffalo. He may (please note) be rated too low here. French got closed out of district action last year, but was excellent at Kenston beating Shanklin before running into that buzzsaw named Shawn White. Lisachenko was 3rd there also defeating Shanklin.

The Galion District is loaded. State qualifiers Houser and Andres are both excellent with little to choose between. Last year Houser won their district final battle 7-6, but then Andres took a 4th at Wright State while Houser lost in the quarters and failed to place. This year, as if to accentuate this lack of difference, they wrestled to a 4-4 draw. Other than that they've taken turns crushing opposing 152s with huge numbers -- with the notable exception of Andres' loss to Wellmeier. Ray was the state alternate last year at this weight, and has performed very well this year. However, he is, at least, one giant step behind the top two at this weight. Something of an unknown is Division I state qualifier Payne who transferred from Clay to Rossford. We have not seen him matched up with the three top rated boys in this district so his placement is at least, in part, conjecture. Gibson, DeNune, Baumbarger and Coifford would seem to be the best candidates for the last state berth. This district would have been even tougher if Alvarez -- 6th last year at Wright State -- were still competing for Hamilton Township. However, his family moved to Iowa this past summer.

The Steubenville District is also excellent. State qualifier Gifford won two bouts at State, and has been excellent this year as well. I suspect he could make 145#, but may feel more comfortable here -- where there is no one he could not beat. Collier has won four tournaments this year and that includes the giant OVAC held last weekend. He looks like a shoo-in for a qualifying spot, but I would have said that last year, too, and it didn't work out that way. Rossiter and Halaiko should be top candidates as well as Koledin, but only three qualify here. Last year Halaiko lost a one-pointer to Shipley in the district semis (after beating him in the regular season) and then was defeated again in consolations. Shipley ended 5th at Wright State. Koledin won three district bouts but he, too, fell short, while Rossiter, competing at 130#, won two bouts at districts and was eliminated. My guess is Gifford, Collier and Halaiko to qualify, but the one to watch is Rossiter who has been very hot lately.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KIRK HENRY (CLAYMONT)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ④ 2. Huff (Dover) | 13. Gregan (Twinsburg) |
| ① 3. Wuethrich (Mason) | 14. Rose (Bellevue) |
| ③ 4. Zirm (VASJ) | 15. Munger (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 5. Maschek (Crestwood) | 16. Snider (Steubenville) |
| ② 6. Slone (Willard) | 17. Grueszke (Logan Elm) |
| 7. Sheets (Nelsonville York) | 18. Waibel (Springfield NW) |
| ⑤ 8. Edwards (Fairview Park) | 19. Baker (St. Paris Graham) |
| ① 9. Grether (Nordonia) | 20. Hassey (Columbus DeSales) |
| 10. Hill (Bethel-Tate) | 21. Pallinger (Avon Lake) |
| 11. Tommas (Sandusky Perkins) | 22. Jiries (Cambridge) |
| 12. Young (Vermillion) | 23. Agosti (Anthony Wayne) |

Another weight class where the final outcome is anything but clear. Again, there is a well balanced flow of wrestlers from each district, but this time the level of quality is substantially less than either at 152# or 171#. My choice for a second consecutive year is Kirk Henry, the fine senior grappler from Uhrichsville Claymont. Last year Henry was injured in the district and while he gamely wrestled on, he was but a shadow of himself and finished 6th. This year he was brilliant at Medina winning the title 11-4 and not having a close bout. However, as was true last year, Henry will have to overcome the fact that he is not a particularly big 160 pounder.

Right behind Henry is an old rival from right up the road, Troy Huff. He, like Henry, was 6th last year at Wright State, but at 160#. Huff won very impressively at Smithville, but was facing pretty much a non-descript field. Since these two exit the same district they would not meet until the finals. Steubenville is an excellent district. Sheets also placed last year -- getting a 5th in Division III at 145#. How he will handle moving up two weight classes is a question mark, but he has a lot of natural talent. However, Sheets (and Huff and Henry, too) need to be wary of the rapidly improving Snyder who was 2nd at the OVAC and 1st at the Kiwanis. He opened the season failing to place at Richmond Hts., but since then has gone on a tear. Jiries and Anderson (Meadowbrook) also deserve consideration.

In all probability my choice at 160# would have been Chad Roberts (Dayton Northridge) had he been able to compete. A district champion last year (winning 21-9 in the finals), he won two bouts at States before he had to default from injury. Unfortunately, shoulder surgery will prevent his appearance in this his senior season. That leaves state qualifier Wuethrich as the top entry at this weight class and he has had a fine year -- highlighted by his win at the SWOCA. He won a bout at states last year and his apparent improvement makes him a strong candidate to place. Well behind him is Hill (who lost to Wuethrich 19-7 in the SWOCA final) and Waibel. Hill was the state alternate at 145# last year and could be a factor at the state level. Waibel, just down to 160#, will not beat himself and has maintained a steady pace throughout this season. Baker is very erratic pulling a major upset one day and then losing to a lesser foe the next.

At last, a weight class where one doesn't have to agonize over who to select as the eventual champ. Tony Pariano is not only the defending state champion, but one of the best high school wrestlers in the country. Fourth as both a freshman and sophomore he swept to the title last year winning all 33 of his bouts. An excellent student, a fine artist, and a superior television score keeper he exemplifies all that is best about high school sports. As good as he is, I don't believe he will go completely unchallenged at this weight. Nonetheless, it seems close to a surety that he will win.

Apparently Wilson may decide to wrestle at this weight class instead of at 152# where he has been all year. It is an interesting dilemma. His odds of being state champion are probably a little higher at 152# (though not particularly high) but his odds of being a finalist are much greater here. That's because he should be away from Pariano at Wright State and would likely be at least a slight favorite over any of those rated below him. At 152# he was 4th at the super-difficult 152# class at Medina and champ at Uniontown Lake. His venture down to 145# did not begin auspiciously when the very tough Denholm caught and pinned him in the finals at Doylestown. At either weight class he is a substantial threat. Strahan was the state alternate last year and had he beaten McKendrick for 5th, Clyde would have taken the team title. Crider won at Kenston and Haman surprised everyone at St. Xavier, and this pair have the inside track on the two qualification berths. Mesaros, Atkins, and Washington are closely bunched and will battle for the last available spot. I know I'm going to hear from Benedictine coach Ron Alexander because Moore is rated ahead of Washington who upset him overtime, but Moore, I believe, still has a better chance to qualify.

There are three excellent returning state qualifiers at Galion. The best is probably Mesenburg who qualified at 112# two years ago, but missed tourney action last year because of a fractured leg. He has dominated his region losing only once (6-5 to Division I Mohr). Now big and strong he still has the moves of the little guys. McCormick grabbed a district 3rd losing only to Fuentes in the quarters 20-14. He again lost in the quarter-finals at State and did not place. His performances this year -- especially at the Gorman -- shows he is only a half step behind Mesenburg who handed him his only loss at Marion Harding. Both of the boys should place. Brian Weider may be somewhat further behind, but still has placement potential. He has wrestled a demanding schedule, butting heads with all the good 145s in his area. The last two spots are wide open with Schnell, Holbrook and Moore the top contenders.

Shiple has a strange style, but it's very effective as witnessed by his 5th place finish last year. Apparently back at this weight he can rack up points in big bunches. Keller and Simpson are river rivals who must be favored for the last two spots. Keller, a state qualifier last year, has been the more successful of the two including titles at the Kiwanis and Barnesville Invitationals while Simpson won at Shadyside and St. Johns. Hill or Newsome could challenge here.

The three Dayton qualifiers -- whoever they are -- will be among the most popular people at Wright State. Everyone will want to draw them for first round action. I've listed five possibilities with Johnson and Jewell probably the two best from that quintet. I would be very surprised if some of the fine 152s fail to drop to this class.

He beat Rozmus early in the year at 171#, but did not place at Graham. Then wrestled well at Medina -- failing to place by one bout.

There is a lot of depth at Firestone, but there is doubt about the up-top strength here. Zirm, very slender, lost the OCCs in overtime to Gizzi after winning big at Massillon and at the Early Bird. At Brecksville Edwards beat him 14-13, but Zirm came back to get 3rd including a one point win over Grether. His somewhat unusual style may confuse first-time opponents. Maschek copped the last qualifying spot at 145# last year, but was immediately eliminated at Wright State. He won very impressively at Kenston beating Fickes by 10 points. Edwards is a real flopper, but, oh, how often he comes out on top. He lost to Boiani in the finals at both Solon and Brecksville, but has beaten a number of good people. Grether, a state qualifier last year, seems a little flat, but that should correct itself by tourney time. I thought he'd place last year, but a shaky district start got him a bad draw at the states where it was "two and out." Gregan is my choice for the 5th spot. Munger and Pallinger are a step behind this quintet, but don't be surprised if Munger pulls one upset to sneak into a qualifying spot. Pedmo (Buckeye) and Rodriguez (Lorain Brookside) are other possibilities.

The Galion District for, perhaps, the only time seems weakest here. State qualifier Slone heads the way, but his win at Edison is offset by losses at both Wadsworth and the Gorman -- both to Division III competitors. Tommas, just down from 171#, may yet prove to be the best at this district, but that is still far from clear. He failed to win a match at districts last year. Young, Rose, Gruzke, and Agosti are all solid journeyman performers who would need a huge weekend to place at the state level. Hassey, on the other hand, appears to have lots of talent, but has never quite put it all together. He could manufacture a series of upsets if totally focussed.

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ³ RAY LONG (CLYDE)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2. Mims (Ravenna) | 13. Nichols (Nordia) |
| ¹ 3. Farley (Buckeye) | 14. Doss (Indian Lake) |
| 4. Stevens (Cambridge) | 15. Woods (Columbus Northland) |
| ² 5. Tomaro (Brecksville) | 16. Bothwell (Mason) |
| 6. Rozmus (Urbana) | 17. Farrens (Washington Court House) |
| 7. Simpson (West Geauga) | 18. Broski (Lake Catholic) |
| ⁵ 8. Krisha (Milan Edison) | 19. Stanclift (Akron St. Vincent) |
| 9. Sullivan (Springboro) | 20. Gallion (Big Walnut) |
| 10. Tate (Licking Valley) | ⁶ 21. Thompson (Vincent Warren) |
| 11. Shaw (Hamilton Twp.) | 22. Robertson (Warrensville Hts.) |
| 12. Anderson (Steubenville) | 23. Grant (Bellevue) |

This is an exceptionally fine weight class that should provide a whole host of exciting match-ups. I have spent a considerable time mulling over the top choice believing that only Long, Mims, or Farley can win. Let's introduce this trio before we examine the logic behind the choice of Long.

Long is the defending state champion at this weight winning at what many considered last year the weakest class in Division II. After losing his sectional final he took the district title -- winning his last three bouts by relatively narrow margins. Then at States he won in the quarters 1-0 and squeaked by in the semi-finals 3-2, before winning on a technical fall in the finals 17-2. This year he has been absolutely devastating at 189# pinning virtually every opponent and having no close scores. I think he'll move to 171# because he only weighs about 180# normally. Mims, only a sophomore last year, pinned the eventual state runner-up Keiner in the quarter-finals in Division I, but then the two met again for the 3rd and last qualifying spot with Keiner pulling out a 3-2 decision. This year Mims has won at Solon and Kenston with relative ease. Farley, 4th at 160# last year, after losing a 11-0 semi-final lead and eventually being defeated 20-15 in overtime. This year he has also crushed everyone including a first class win at Medina.

For most of this season my inclination was to choose Mims because of his immense physical talents and his rapid improvement. However, Long's incredible record is just too much to overlook. I think he'll pressure Mims for six hard minutes, avoiding the devastating upper body throws, and winning a close, relatively low-scoring, decision. Farley will give both these wrestlers real trouble and is certainly capable of beating either one. Long does have one major disadvantage. Since Farley and Mims qualify from the same district they should be in opposite halves of the bracket so Long will have to beat both of them to win.

The Firestone District is sensational. Besides Mims and Farley both Tomaro and Simpson are top-notch. Tomaro is undefeated -- his only close bout a 2-1 decision over Simpson in the Brecksville final. Neither boy has state experience but both have solid placement potential. Nichols and Broski are probably the favored choices for the last berth but Robertson and Stanclift are also contenders. Other possibilities are Goff (Copley), Pavlovich (Avon Lake), and Ries (Kenston).

While Long towers above the field at Galion the trio of Krisha, Tate, and Shaw are all excellent and any of them could place. Again, the last spot is wide open with Woods, Gallion and Grant having the best shot.

This will be the third time Rozmus will qualify for States and he is but a junior. The problem up till now is that he has never won a bout there. Sullivan was a state alternate last year while Doss and Bothwell should contend for the last qualifying ticket. Severance (Cincinnati Purcell) has long-shot hopes here.

John Siddle lost his state semi-final bout to Long, 3-2, and then dropped down all the way to 6th place. Had his family not moved to Florida we would probably have expanded the aforementioned trio of wrestlers to a quartet. Even so, Stevens, a state qualifier at 160# last year, could be a major impact factor at this weight class. He has outstanding athletic ability and is still on the steep part of the learning curve. He cannot be overlooked. Below him there is an enormous chasm with the other two qualifiers in immediate trouble at Wright State.

189#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽¹⁾ NICK NUTTER (BUCKEYE)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| ⁽²⁾ 2. Yates (VASJ) | 14. Rise (Goshen) |
| 3. Delph (Carlisle) | 15. Michaelis (Oak Harbor) |
| 4. Slone (Columbus Northland) | 16. Stidd (St. Clairsville) |
| 5. Heard (Marysville) | ⁽⁵⁾ 17. Parton (Loveland Hurst) |
| 6. Potter (Urbana) | 18. Metzger (Olentangy) |
| 7. Jordan (Benjamin Logan) | 19. Cassidy (Edison South) |
| ⁽³⁾ 8. Fisher (Marlington) | 20. Carruthers (Columbus DeSales) |
| 9. Pahl (Vincent Warren) | 21. Bauer (Milan Edison) |
| 10. Armbrust (Lebanon) | 22. Goodwin (Ravenna) |
| 11. Workman (Vermillion) | 23. Patrick (Shelby) |
| 12. Schultz (Nordonia) | 24. Minello (Benedictine) |
| 13. Vickers (Martins Ferry) | 25. Stiffler (Ravenna Southeast) |

Nutter has developed into one of the finest seniors in Ohio. Last year he began a long hot streak after Medina and rolled through the sectional and district TFinng Dorn in the finals. Then he endured a terribly difficult draw at States by defeating Peters and Phillips back-to-back. And then the unthinkable upset when Dorn turned the tables 7-3 to snatch away what seemed the sure state title (and the team title from Clyde as well). No problem. Nutter goes out to the Junior Nationals and wins in both styles, and then compiles an undefeated record and his first Medina title to start off this year. This time he'll be the top-heavy favorite to win, and only Yates would seem to have any chance of going with him.

Yates was the state alternate in Division I at this weight class last year, and he is another in the long line of big men developed by John Storey. His only loss was to Division I choice Ostholthoff 9-5 at the OCC. If he can keep Nutter in a down-tempo match he could made it very close. The rest of the Firestone District after this top duo is very weak. I've listed the next six in descending order in the above table, but would also offer up in this closely packed but rather pedestrian conclave the names of Vadasz (Twinsburg) and Klie (Kenston).

State qualifiers Delph and Armbrust head the Dayton District. I really like the former who should place while the latter may be critical in Lebanon's hunt for a team title. Both lost first round bouts at Columbus and were eliminated as they both drew into that dynamite lower half of last year's bracket. I don't know where Jordon suddenly appeared from, but he has put some heavy hits on highly rated wrestlers. For example, he defeated Carsey in the North Union final and crushed Green at West Jefferson. A total unknown to me until last month he has had an impressive 30 days. Potter is excellent and has had a totally undefeated season so far. I place him ahead of Armbrust and Jordan in terms of qualification potential. He has won at Tipp City, Troy, Urbana, and Graham while stringing together 19 consecutive wins. Former state qualifier Rise and the solid Parton are also here and any of this second trio could probably qualify out of any other district except here.

At Galion there is a wide assortment of possible contenders. Slone was 6th in Division I at heavyweight, but clearly with the quantity and quality of heavyweights at this district 189# became much more attractive. Heard was also a state qualifier and lost a memorable first round bout to Linger in overtime. He has placement potential. After that there is something of a fall-off in quality, although both Workman and Michaelis are solid.

Pahl has missed the entire season because of an accident putting up Christmas decorations. So much for Yuletide cheer. When he returns he'll lead a very weak Steubenville District to States. Vickers and Stidd are next best with Cassidy and Mackey (West Holmes) waiting in the wings.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ¹ LUKE FICKELL (COLUMBUS DeSALES)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Johnson (Sandusky Perkins) | 14. Bronson (Lake Catholic) |
| 3. Edmonds (Akron Hoban) | 15. Monak (Oak Harbor) |
| 4. Podraski (Milan Edison) | 16. McFarland (Martins Ferry) |
| 5. Burress (Steubenville) | 17. Morgan (Girard) |
| 6. Messmer (Rossford) | 18. Krug (Dayton Alter) |
| 7. Roston (Galion) | 19. Adams (Trenton Edgewood) |
| 8. Anders (Miami Trace) | 20. Hall (Ashtabula Harbor) |
| 9. Schulz (Little Miami) | 21. Ruckman (St. Clairsville) |
| 10. Jenkins (Lewistown Indian Lake) | 22. Tate (Licking Valley) |
| 11. Gliba (Kenston) | 23. Crutcher (Washington CH) |
| 12. Houston (Avon Lake) | 24. Neely (Dayton Northridge) |
| 13. Diehl (Lima Shawnee) | 25. Hayn (Canton Central Catholic) |

Rarely, only very rarely, do you get that magical feeling during a concert or at the theatre or attending an athletic event that what you are seeing is as good as it gets. That it sets a standard that can never be surpassed -- like Olivier's Hamlet or a Jim Brown run. Somehow, that's the same feeling you cannot escape when you see Luke Fickell wrestle. He is quite simply the best high school wrestler of his size I have ever seen. And at 6'5" and 220#, he moves, reacts, and attacks with the speed and tactics of a wrestler half his size. Assembled here is undoubtedly the finest field of heavyweights ever brought together in Division II, and it makes not the least difference. Fickell will dominate the competition, and it will be surprising, indeed, if any of his bouts extend much beyond the second period. Already twice a State and Junior National champ, he has not lost since his freshman year when as a 160-pounder he was upset in district action -- even then favored to take the State title. He is truly incredible.

Fickell will be at Galion -- clearly, the most powerful district. Johnson, a returning state qualifier has won at Tiffin, Galion, and the SBC duals, and remains undefeated on the year against excellent competition. He was a district finalist last year losing to Fickell in 49 seconds. Podraski, also a returning State qualifier, has won at Bellevue, Edison, and Marion Harding losing only to Johnson at the SBC. A district semi-finalist last year he lost to Fickell in 76

seconds. Roston, yet another State qualifier, won the Gorman, but has lost to both Johnson and Hudson (although he beat Podraski at districts last year). Messmer has been the big surprise. Not exactly your classic heavyweight, he has won at Kenston and St. Johns, while remaining undefeated (although tied 13-13 by Freeman). State qualifier Monak is up from 189# and he is a very mobile heavyweight while Diehl has won three tournaments, but fared poorly with those rated ahead of him. In addition, to this multitude there are Tate and Freeman (Millbury Lake) who are solid performers caught in the wrong district.

The massive 270-pound Edmonds has twice been a State qualifier, but has lost all three bouts there -- last year to Johnson, in the first round. He is the best at Firestone with his only real challenger being Gliba -- winner at Solon and 2nd at Kenston to Messmer. Houston has shown tremendous improvement and won at Avon Lake and Buckeye with a tremendous fall ratio. He is a challenge. Bronson has been erratic nearly -- beating Terebieniec -- but also losing to lesser lights. Morgan and Hall are my top choices for the last qualifying berth with Carroll (Benedictine) and Huffman (Akron St. Vincent) possibilities.

State qualifier Schulz and Jenkins battled for the last State slot last year with Schulz winning 2-1. They continue to do well this season, but Krug, Adams, and Neely remain threats. This is probably the weakest district, but, certainly, both Schulz and Jenkins would normally have good placement potential.

At Steubenville, Burress, 5th at 189# last year is dominant. Tall and well proportioned, he is an outstanding all-around athlete. His only loss was to Ayres in the OVAC final. Anders has had a splendid year as well and is a serious threat to Burress. McFarland is my third choice here with Rucker and Crutcher the major competition. It will be interesting to see how this qualifying trio will match up with the rest of the state.

TEAMS

1. Ravenna -- A tremendously well-balanced team with strong performers throughout their line up. Wright, Mims, and Daugherty could conceivably all be finalists while Damsa should place. The key might be to get State qualifier Derr to score at the State level, and hope that people like Goodwin or Balog have a surprise up their sleeve.
2. Milan Edison -- Another beautifully balanced squad that would probably win the title if it were held in a dual meet format. State runner-up Davis is back as are State qualifiers Mesenburg, Houser, and Podraski. Houser is in the easiest weight class of this group and needs to score big. They have some great second-liners like Corvin, Krisha, Meyers, and Bauer and if they start to score at the State level it will be strictly no contest for the team crown.
3. Clyde -- A team that appeared to have wrapped up the crown last year when Bubba Taylor sprung a mild upset and Long wrestled brilliantly, but it was snatched away at the last second by Ravenna Southeast. Again, this year they will seriously challenge, but they will desperately need a team effort to win. Long should be a finalist and Beard, C. Andres and Taylor have placement potential. What they really need is points from M. Andres, White, and, maybe, Gonzales. They may be a few points shy of the top spot again this year.
4. Claymont -- Again, a super team on paper they just haven't been able to put it together as a team at States. They return five State qualifiers include two place winners, and, in reality, all five should probably place. What they'll need is a huge first round on Thursday to get the team really revved up. If Warner could come back and score they could be right in the thick of things until the end.
5. Lebanon -- Two State champions score a lot of points and Noble and Enright are both outstanding. However, Armbrust may not even qualify with all the tough 189s in this district, and Worley has not yet made 103#. If Clark could contribute they could move up.
6. Lake Catholic -- A fine team very similar to last year's except they don't have the one sure champ like Becks last year. However, they have a lot of chances to pick up points from Huszczo, Ambroziak, Kent and Malloy in the lower weights to Haman, Broski and Bronson in the upper weights. They generally do better than forecast so, maybe, they'll make it into the top five.
7. Twinsburg -- Marder is an extremely tough weight class and Kitchen in a weak one are both paper-thin favorites to win. Even if that comes true only Wolff looks able to score at the State level, although Isaac, Haring, and Gregan could help.
8. Buckeye -- Nutter and Farley supply most of the firepower, but could get help from Rupanovic and Tecco. Should that work out this team will challenge for top five honors.

9. Fairview Park -- The Pariano brothers are both excellent with Tony almost a sure winner, and Drew certainly capable of placing. Edwards is unorthodox and could be a real surprise at Wright State while Payne qualified last year. What they need is someone like Knaze to get really hot.
10. Triway -- It's probably only going to be Withrow and Kline at Wright State, but two finalists can score a bushel load of points.
11. VASJ -- Again, the same scenario as with Triway -- two big time scorers Yates and Zirm as team leaders. Nobody else can help.
12. Bellevue -- Another team with lots of good wrestlers, but not a great one in sight. Keske and the two Weider brothers could place while the sophomore Fultz may be a factor at 130#. After that a lot of good wrestlers (like Ohl, Frederick, Nicely, Ray, Rose, and Grant) who may fall just short of State caliber.
13. Columbus DeSales -- Fickell, of course, is good for about 30 points, but where more comes from is hard to discern. Mosure and Hassey are probably the brightest hopes, but that is a slender hope.

DIVISION III

The team competition in this division is about as ill-defined as at any time in my memory. No team stands out in any respect, and even attempting to make a list of the dozen or so top teams is difficult. No team has more than one wrestler rated at the favorite at a weight class -- and few schools have more than two boys rated in the top five. What this suggests is that a very low point score could win the team title, and that it will be crucial for each contending team to place their best wrestlers in the optimal weight classes. That's why you can expect a maximum of weight class shifting in this division.

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ^① LeCONTE MERRELL (MANSFIELD ST. PETER)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ④ 2. Firem (Chanel) | 14. Davlin (Sandusky St. Mary) |
| 3. Frohnapfel (Bridgeport) | 15. Mescan (Columbia Station) |
| ③ 4. Kosins (Bellbrook) | 16. J. Klco (Perry) |
| 5. Kinzel (Wellsville) | 17. Amicon (Bishop Ready) |
| ② 6. Zeno (Margaretta) | 18. Grime (Archbold) |
| ① 7. Passerini (St. Thomas Aquinas) | 19. Ostapuck (Tuscarawas CC) |
| ① 8. Sibrel (Kansas Lakota) | 20. Sigler (West Salem Northwestern) |
| 9. Sauter (Batavia) | 21. Arnold (West Jefferson) |
| 10. ✓Kline (Mapleton) | 22. Payawal (Sidney Lehman) |
| 11. Palm (Gibsonburg) | 23. Stoner (New Lebanon Dixie) |
| 12. Layman (Jackson Milton) | 24. Walz (Ayersville) |
| 13. Ziegler (Cardinal) | 25. Cole (Union Local) |

This is one of those weight classes where the eventual state champion can pretty well be identified before the competition begins, but so, too, can the one or two major obstacles he will have to surmount. Merrell has now wrestled four years at 103#, and has finally grown into that weight class. Last year, somewhat undersized, he was state runner-up including pulse pounding wins in the first and third rounds. This year there won't be a need for many close victories, as he has too much talent and experience for the field. That was demonstrated at the Gorman where he romped through his weight class including an 11-3 win over the excellent Fratta in the finals. Only Firem, who we'll discuss later, has the firepower to challenge Merrell -- and Merrell beat him 6-2 last year in the quarter finals.

As always, the Fostoria District has a number of solid contenders. Merrell, of course, is supreme, but state qualifiers Palm and Sibrel return and are joined by the excellent freshman Davlin and solid performers like Grime, Zeno, and Walz. Of the group Sibrel has struggled most but he surprised at tournament time last year and will probably do so again in 1992. Palm has not yet competed because of injuries, but is expected back in time to qualify. Davlin has been a finalist at three important tournament and is another in a long of great freshman lightweights at St. Mary's. Grime won the "A" Classic and Gibsonburg while

placing 2nd at Beaver Creek. He has shown good improvement. However the wrestler to really watch is Zeno who I think is wrestling so well he could be a finalist.

Frohnafel and Kinzel should prove to be a powerful duo at Steubenville. The former is a state qualifier who has wrestled brilliantly all year, while the latter dropped from 112# where he has been very good. Both boys have strong placement potential -- even possibly as a finalist. There is a major fall-off after them with the listed Amicon, Ostapuck, and Arnold my top choices for the last two spots. Other possibilities include Cole, Pugh (Waterford), and Partlow (Shenendoah).

At Dayton Kosins is a dominant figure with major tournament wins at Dayton Carroll and Bellbrook, and a very strong 3rd at the giant GMVWA (his only loss by disqualification). If he's away from Merrell he, too, has great finalist potential. Sauter is a first year varsity wrestler, but has performed nearly as well as the other vaunted Batavia lightweights led by Terry Shinkle. He should score points at the state level. The last qualifier will be a quantum jump behind these top two and will likely be first round cannon fodder.

The big news at Cuyahoga Hts. in this weight class was Firem's drop to 103#. He won two bouts at state last year and missed placement by a single point. One of those losses was to Merrell, but he probably has the best chance of pulling the major upset at this weight class. He has been excellent at 112# all year -- champ at Troy and finalist at Solon and Wadsworth -- and will be a major force at this weight. Kline is another wrestler who has been at 112# all year, but expect to see him at this weight class come late February. He has placement potential. One to really watch, however, is Passerini who may be better than ranked, based not so much on his many wins, but on the basis that his only loss was to the highly ranked Division I competitor, Bruce Daniels, 1-0. This district has the most depth at this weight with Layman, Ziegler, Klco, and Mescan all reasonable candidates for qualification, or even placement. There is the potential for a lot of back and forth action here with sectional results not necessarily an accurate reflection of what will happen at districts. Sigler, for example, has good upset potential because of his high scoring style while Tonsing, Zeid (Beachwood), and Kasarda (Streetsboro) are possibilities. The qualifiers who escape from this district will be battle-hardened veterans by the time they get to Wright State.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: 4 TIM DERNLAN (WEST LIBERTY SALEM)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <u>2</u> 2. ✓ Workman (Coventry) | 13. Gardner (Columbus Academy) |
| <u>1</u> 3. ✓ Jim Boardman (Streetsboro) | 14. Parsons (Galion Northmor) |
| 4. Clemens (Lima Central Catholic) | 15. Platt (Licking Hts.) |
| 5. ✓ T. Klco (Perry) ✓ | <u>6</u> 16. ✓ Gleckler (Evergreen) ✓ |
| 6. Al-Samkari (Dayton Oakwood) ✓ | 17. Williams (New London) |
| 7. N. Spencer (Edison North) | 18. Ballard (Barnesville) |
| <u>5</u> 8. Roskovich (Bridgeport) ✓ | 19. Tester (Genoa) |
| <u>3</u> 9. Steiner (Batavia) | 20. Booth (Smithville) |
| <u>AT 119</u> 10. Dilger (Norwalk St. Paul) | 21. Morency (Madeira) |
| 11. Zientek (Liberty Center) | 22. Dunstan (Elyria Catholic) |
| 12. DiTurno (Chanel) | 23. Tyson (Kansas Lakota) |

This is a strong and deep weight class, but it doesn't really make any difference. Dernlan is clearly the pre-eminent competitor at 112# as he seeks his third consecutive state crown. As always he is exquisitely trained and conditioned and is vulnerable here only to injury or a superhuman effort by a Workman or a Clemens. As everyone knows by now Dernlan had a chance to become the first wrestler in Ohio history to go completely undefeated four consecutive years. That possibility was destroyed by Jim Johnson in a brilliantly wrestled overtime final at Medina that ended with Dernlan losing 7-5. He had at that point won his first 87 high school bouts. An often overlooked point is that Dernlan and his coaches could have maximized his chances of establishing that four-year standard by staying in southwestern Ohio and not venturing to the toughest tournament in the State. That they did so is a measure of their respect for this sport and their willingness to match up with the very best competition available.

Besides Dernlan, the Dayton District also features two other competitors of outstanding talent. State qualifiers Al-Samkari and Steiner, while several big steps behind Dernlan, both have placement possibilities and are competitive with whoever else shows up at Wright State. Al-Samkari, in particular, has had an outstanding season winning several important tournaments. These three face no real competition here.

The Cuyahoga Hts. District is very strong and deep as well. Three of the four state qualifiers at 103# last year return, along with the runner-up two years ago, and are joined by several other strong competitors. Workman, 5th last year, took Dernlan into overtime in semi-final action last year before losing 2-2, 9-3 OT. This year he has won at Coventry and Wadsworth -- pinning Firem in the latter final. He beat Klco 8-0 in the district final last year. Klco was 3rd last year -- catching Workman right after his loss to Dernlan -- and beating him handily. His only loss at States was an 8-8, 13-10 OT heartbreaker in the quarter-finals. Boardman, 2nd two years ago and 6th last year, has moved down to 119# and will apparently stay there. He will both skilled and huge. The other state qualifier, Booth, may have substantially more trouble than the first three winning a repeat ticket to Wright State. DiTurno placed in three major tournaments at 119# and if he performs at the same efficiency at 112# he is

better than Booth. There are a whole host of other hopefuls like Dunstan and Nicolosi (Aurora). This district could place as many as three behind Dernlan.

There are lots of possibilities at Fostoria. Two-time state qualifier Clemens, 6th last year, is back with a go-for-broke style that eschews caution and, sometimes, defense. State qualifiers Dilger, Zientek, and Williams (twice a qualifier) also return, but none of them have had overwhelmingly successful seasons. Williams in particular, has struggled and may be at risk for a third trip to states. Tester, Gleckler, Tyson and DeAmicis (Carey) all look capable of unseating the top quartet with Gleckler, in particular, having a fine season. Except for Clemens, though, I don't see much scoring punch at the state level.

There are strong wrestlers from both the Central and Eastern Districts at Steubenville and how they'll match up head-to-head is difficult to ascertain. State qualifier Nick Spencer has had an exceptional season winning over a tough field at Bishop Ready and triumphant at Bellaire. He lost 15-11 to Merrell in the first round at states and generally is involved in high scoring bouts. If he and Clemens meet you'll need a high speed computer to keep score. Rated behind him, but only marginally is the truly outstanding freshman Roskovich. He has won four tournaments including a 6-5 final round decision over Spencer at Buckeye Local. His only loss was to the strong two-time state Division II qualifier Scott McDaniel of Claymont -- in overtime. My sole reason for putting Spencer ahead of him was the latter boy's experience. Gardner and Platt are both solid competitors, but I question whether they are quite as strong as Spencer and Roskovich. State qualifier Parson has had kind of a wasted season battling injuries and weight. If he makes 112# and is healthy he would almost certainly be a major force in this district. Ballard has performed well all year and could sneak in if one of the top boys falter. Other possibilities are Filipovich (Bellaire St. John), Messmer (Bishop Hartley) and Dubinsky (Union Local).

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽²⁾ STEVE WALKER (AKRON MANCHESTER)

TOP CONTENDERS

- ⁽³⁾ AT 112
- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 2. Wilkovich (Columbia Station) | 12. Heany (Aurora) |
| 3. Maiani (Sandusky St. Mary) | 13. Slack (Shadyside) |
| 4. Kosins (Bellbrook) | 14. Schaffer (Jackson Milton) |
| 5. Roth (Kansas Lakota) | 15. Kline (Crestview) |
| 6. Steiner (Batavia) | 16. Terrill (Brookville) |
| 7. Goodson (Union Local) | 17. Merrell (Mansfield St. Peters) |
| 8. Circle (Delta) | 18. Francis (Bellaire) |
| ⁽⁴⁾ 9. Nightengale (Wellsville) | 19. Meyer (Fostoria St. Wendelin) |
| 10. Ellison (West Jefferson) | 20. Biribilas (Dayton Oakwood) |
| ⁽⁵⁾ 11. Smith (Edison North) | 21. Tompkins (Mogadore) |

This is an exceptionally strong and deep weight class with at least 11 returning state qualifiers and seven returning state place-winners. Still, I think it will come down to a rematch of last year's state final where Wilkovich avenged a district defeat by upsetting Walker in overtime. Walker, only a junior, has already placed 4th and 2nd the last two years, and he has been

extremely sharp all season. I watched him at Medina give the highly rated Fichter (Division I) all he could handle before losing 9-8, and then going on to take a strong 3rd. He and Wilkovich split last season, and may do so again, but this time I believe it will be Walker winning on the last Saturday of the season. Wilkovich, also a junior, is also tremendously solid and the difference between he and Walker is paper-thin. He has wrestled once at 112#, but I assume that is strictly as a hedge in case Dernlan goes to 103# (which he won't). Clearly the odds favor matching up with Walker (who he has already defeated) then challenging Dernlan. This top duo looks safe for qualification purposes, but the next group of Schaffer, Heany, and Tompkins, while all excellent, look to be battling for two state berths. However, Heany did upset Boardwine the first week of the season so anything could happen here. Hider (West Salem Northwestern), Kish (Wickliffe), and Friedl (Brooklyn) are also very good and so some of this large group may opt for 125# where this district is much weaker.

Two-time state qualifier Maiani was 3rd as a freshman and then disqualified in the first period of his first bout at states last year in what could only be called a highly controversial decision. It's one of those times when you wonder about justice. Anyway, Maiani and former state runner-up Roth are clearly the best at this weight at Fostoria. Two years ago Roth beat Maiani 1-0 for the district and it's liable to be that close again. Coincidentally both of them beat Walker at states then, but a lot of things have changed in the interim. Circle, another state qualifier, is probably a short step below the top two, and then there is a big fall-off to Kline, Merrell, and Meyers -- who will have two spots to shoot for. Forward (Archbold), Logsdon (Fremont St. Joseph), and Selhorst (Coldwater) are also in that hunt.

The Dayton District has two top-notch competitors in Steiner and Kosins at this weight class -- both with previous state experience as they finished 3rd and 4th respectively last year. This time around I look for Kosins to reverse that positioning based on his fine year -- so far totally at 125#. However, it would seem ludicrous for him to stay there and butt heads with Shinkle and Lapinski. Terrill is a reasonable third choice with Biribilas and Greene (Madeira) as possible challengers.

State qualifiers Goodson, Nightengale, and Slack head the field at Steubenville as the Eastern District dominates here. Ellison is good and so is Smith, so we will have five good performers vying for four spots. Francis, Barcalow (Steubenville), and Jacobs (Cadiz) also could be contenders. Placement for any of this group will be difficult though it is certainly a possibility.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽²⁾ TERRY SHINKLE (BATAVIA)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ① 2. Lipinski (Brookville) | 13. King (Brooklyn) |
| ③ 3. Joe Boardwine (Streetsboro) | 14. Dunn (Kenton Ridge) |
| ④ 4. Moody (New London) | 15. Dodd (Marion Pleasant) |
| 5. Ruoff (Hicksville) | 16. Goeltzenleuchter (Ayersville) |
| 6. Castro (Otsego) | 17. Shipman (Cardinal) |
| 7. Larkins (Edison North) | 18. Littleton (Shadyside) |
| 8. Lynch (Perry) | 19. Grime (Archbold) |
| 9. Fowler (Apple Creek Waynedale) | 20. Hanes (Barnesville) |
| 10. Rex (Tinora) | 21. Edling (Middletown Fenwick) |
| 11. Yeager (Bellaire) | 22. Sears (Hopewell-Loudon) |
| 12. Parmer (Licking Hts.) | 23. Dieckman (Columbia Station) |

At the beginning of the year I would have said that Terry Shinkle would stand pretty much unchallenged at this weight class. After all, he was 4th as a sophomore and 2nd at 119# last year where he lost a 14-13 thriller to defending champ Jimmy Smiles -- his only loss in 38 outings. However, the sheer brilliance of Kelly Lipinski now puts that confident prediction in substantial doubt. A state qualifier last year Lipinski has this season won at Brookville, the GMVWA (9-0 over state 4th placer Kosins), at Troy (12-1 over Byers), at Fairfield (6-5 over Shinkle), and then at Eaton (on a fall over Enright), plus three OW awards. Suddenly it's a whole new ballgame with, maybe, Lipinski, in the driver's seat. Still my feeling is that Shinkle -- who has wrestled a far more gentle schedule -- will make a renewed commitment to his craft and take the title. The last spot at Dayton will likely go to either Dunn or Edling, but they'll be non-factors at Wright State.

The Fostoria group is solid but not brilliant. State qualifier Moody has performed best this season in that area and should place. Last year he lost his bout to place when Ruoff avenged his district loss to Moody. Ruoff ended up 6th and he should, perhaps, gain a spot or two this year. Castro qualified at 130# last year and also has placement potential. Rex, something of an unknown, will surprise a lot of people and should qualify, too. Goettzenleuchter, another state qualifier, has had a shaky season and has dropped down from my pre-season list. Grime and Sears could put his return trip in jeopardy. Spero (Fostoria St. Wendelin) and Yerkes (Fremont St. Joseph) are other thoughts.

Former state placers Boardwine and Fowler -- both 6th -- are the nominal leaders of the Cuyahoga Hts. group. Lynch could be a dark horse candidate to do some real damage here while state qualifier King has substantial experience. This is not an exciting quartet, but there are few challengers to them currently at this weight. However, some of the excess 119s may choose to try it here. If not, Shipman and Dieckman look to be the main competition.

At Steubenville the cast of potential qualifiers is large, but the quality is somewhat lower than even at Cuyahoga Hts. If Garcia or Amicon drop that would make a substantial difference, but as presently constituted this group is not a real threat at the state level. Currently the only real threat would be a

healthy Larkins who has had some big wins this year. He took the Bishop Ready Classic when Amicon was at 135#, and won at Bellaire and Buckeye North. He missed state qualification by one bout last year. One thing, though, is that this district should be very competitive with not much to choose between the top eight or ten. Besides the six listed Cheuvront (Cadiz), Lones (West Jefferson) and Ransom (Galion Northmor) are possibilities.

130#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ^{(3) AT 125} ALEX GARCIA (COLUMBUS ACADEMY)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ① 2. Amicon (Bishop Ready) | 13. Wright (Valley View) |
| 3. Barnes (Delta) | ⑥ 14. Kerr (Mapleton) |
| ③ 4. McKeever (Cadiz) | 15. Meade (Clear Fork) |
| 5. Fuentes (Liberty Center) | 16. Moritz (Brookville) |
| 6. Soto (Otsego) | 17. Breuer (Cardinal Stritch) |
| 7. Allen (Brookfield) | 18. Dreher (Black River) |
| ② 8. Rosin (Sandusky St. Mary) | 19. Miller (Hopewell-London) |
| 9. Soppitt (Perry) | 20. King (Dayton Oakwood) |
| 10. Walz (Ayersville) | 21. Long (Sandy Valley) |
| 11. Pinkerton (Waterford) | 22. Pletz (Cincinnati Reading) |
| 12. Bennett (Akron Manchester) | 23. Perzanowski (Bridgeport) |

On the surface this seems pretty much a conventional choice since Garcia was state runner-up at 125# last year finishing with a 38-2 record. This year he has performed well and would seem to be a solid favorite. A couple of problems, however. First, his only loss this year was to Amicon 8-4 in the finals at West Jefferson. Second, Garcia had real squeakers in the first two rounds at States last year indicating a lack of any real domination. I came very, very close to picking Amicon -- after all he is now rated ahead of Garcia in Columbus, but somehow Garcia's 12-1 district final win last year still made me believe that when it really counts Garcia will be there. Incidentally, this is the third successive weight class where the top two choices are from the same district. That Steubenville District is rugged. State qualifier McKeever is back at this same weight and he'll be a factor. Last year he lost to Feckanin in the quarter-finals. That leaves state qualifier Pinkerton as the fourth choice here.

Barnes failed to get our of his sectional last year, but that is still hard to believe. He won the large GMVWA tourney at a weight class that featured state champs from Kentucky and West Virginia -- and did it with a fall in the finals. Fuentes is a tough, hard-nosed competitor who was 4th last year at 125#. Just down from 135# he could play a major role in the final outcome of this competition. Last year he won an epic 19-11 first round win over Lipinski and had two other falls as well. This year his only loss was via slam disqualification at the "A" Classic where he finished 3rd. The erratic Soto and state qualifier Rosin are both sophomores with immense potential. Each could place this year. State qualifiers Walz and Meade are also tough although they are up three and two weight classes respectively. Walz cruised through the "A" Classic and has been impressive even though I expect him to drop. State qualifier Breuer will have problems here because he'll need two of the top sixto

falter to qualify. The second echelon of people like Bordner (Seneca East), Hubley (Genoa), and Weiging (Delphos St. John) are way behind. The exception is Miller who has won several important tourneys including the Van Buren Invitational.

The Cuyahoga Hts. District is not terribly strong although infusion of Hartman should he drop would change its complexion dramatically. However, as it is presently constituted Allen, 4th last year at 119#, in the principal threat here. Only 4th in the district he wrestled well in the consolations after a first round loss by technical fall to Shinkle. He won those three bouts by a total of four points. Soppitt was one bout from states last year and should qualify handily while Bennett and Kerr are my other two choices. Both could do far better than I have rated them. Dreher and Long are possibilities here, although they rate several steps behind my top quartet.

The Dayton District is weak with little to offer in the way of excitement. Wright and Moritz are probably the best with the latter serving as a state alternate last year. You'll want to draw into this set of qualifiers if you can.

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽²⁾ STEVE FECKANIN (LEDGEMONT)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ① 2. Hartman (Wellington) | 12. Price (Tri-Village) |
| ④ 3. Tipton (Cadiz) | 13. Caprella (Lima Central Catholic) |
| ③ 4. Paul (Doylestown Chippewa) | 14. Lewis (Mapleton) |
| ③ 14 5. Spencer (Edison North) | 15. Krzynowek (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| ⑥ 6. Reineck (Fremont St. Joseph) | 16. Johnson (North Baltimore) |
| 7. Wilson (Jonathan Alder) | 17. Tissander (Blanchester) |
| 8. S. Allen (Brookfield) | 18. Crupe (Bridgeport) |
| 9. Mirolo (West Jefferson) | 19. Schmenk (Sandusky St. Mary) |
| 10. Brown (Edgerton) | 20. Knapke (Versailles) |
| 11. Hamblin (Galion Northmor) | 21. Wilson (Valley View) |

A lot of question marks exist at this weight class which are somewhat tangential to the actual wrestling itself. Issues like the final certification weights for Hartman, Fuentes, and Spencer, and the impact of long inactivity on Tipton and Allen. In the end, though, those answers may only marginally affect the final outcome if Feckanin maintains his current level of performance. His exceptional four year career has met every expectation except that of a state title. Runner-up as a freshman, he has placed every year but never won it all. Last year he was 46-1 but that single loss was in the state semi-finals to eventual champ Abbott. Now with 140 career victories he is wrestling at peak form. His final round Medina loss to Chandler 13-11 OT at 140# was one of the finest bouts we have televised in the past 25 years. This, as presently constituted, is a very rugged weight class, but Feckanin has to be the clear favorite.

The Cuyahoga Hts. contingent will be very strong. Hartman, a state champ at 112# two years ago, is very tough and finished 3rd at Medina after a first round

upset. He has never quite wrestled with the same bulldog ferocity that he exhibited as a sophomore -- although injuries did slow him down last year. Paul, twice a state qualifier, was 4th in Division II at 130# last year. He has been very consistent the past few years and I look for him to place at this weight. Allan is one of the standouts at a Brookfield team that wrestles almost an invisible (to me) schedule so it's always difficult to make a complete assessment of performance. However, past effort suggest that he will be the best bet for the 4th spot. Other possibilities are Lewis, Krzynowek, and Picone (Streetsboro) Sommer (Chagrin Falls), but expect an unknown to make some noise at this weight.

Tipton caught fire at the end of the year and made it all the way to finals at both district and state only to be demolished by the brilliant DiSabato each time. Now back at the same weight he has missed some time in the first half of the season and struggled to some close wins when able to compete. The feeling is that he'll have a strong second half and make a second strong run at the title. However, I don't think he can match Feckanin's speed in their possible individual encounter. Spencer, up three weight classes -- assuming he doesn't stay at 140# -- was 5th last year and has consistently exhibited an ability to score points in bunches. He won at Bishop Ready and cannot be overlooked in any overall assessment of this weight class. Mirolo and Hamblin are a respectful step behind this to duo, but are good enough to qualify and, perhaps, even place. Mirolo was a strong 2nd to Hilliard's Davis at Licking Hts. and won at West Jefferson against a competitive weight class. His only shaky performance was at Bishop Ready where he was 5th. Crupe and Winkler (Hannibal River) have possibilities here, especially if Hamblin is not in peak form. The young Thatcher (Bishop Ready) is probably not ready for state action yet, but he looks like a real "comer" for the future.

The Fostoria District really is divided into two disparate portions. The top group consists of only one member -- Reineck -- while the second much larger grouping consists of everybody else. State qualifier Reineck has placement potential and being a district winner should allow for an easier draw at Wright State. Reineck qualified two years ago, but then last season after an outstanding year was inexplicably bounced out of the districts on a first round loss. This season he has been even better winning tournaments at Northwood and Van Buren and losing a 15-13 final to Robertson at Fremont St. Joseph. Brown is a pinner and can be a dangerous foe as witnessed by his wins at the "A" Classic and Edgerton, but he also can be handled. Caprella could really help Lima Central Catholic's team chances, but he is probably overmatched by the good wrestlers here. Johnson has won several big tourneys including the Outstanding Wrestler Aware at Hopewell-Loudon, but Reineck is still a quantum jump ahead of him. Other possibilities are Schmenk, Schmeltz (Kansas Lakota), and Forward (Archbold).

Again, the Dayton District appears to be several steps behind the other three qualifying sites. The one exception may be Price who blasted through a tough Graham Invitational field at this weight class including a fall in the finals. Last year he pushed eventual state champion Abbott to the very brink in a district quarter-final before losing 9-8, and then lost by disqualification in the consolation round. If he's hot he'll challenge anyone here and have strong placement hopes. Tissander, who was a state alternate last year, and should be the second choice in this district. However, Knapke won the Wayne Invitational defeating a "cold" Price in the finals 12-9. He may be improving more rapidly than anticipated. Wilson and Bryant (Dayton Christian) are other possibilities

while the younger Shinkle (Batavia) may get caught in Batavia's other successes and do some damage here.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ¹ERIC LIPPERT (KANSAS LAKOTA)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Kessen (Lima Central Catholic) | 14. Peace (Batavia) |
| 3. Ford (Delta) | 15. Roth (Norwalk St. Paul) |
| 4. LaManna (Ledgemont) | 16. Peppo (Dayton Christian) |
| 5. Gregory (Williamsburg) | 17. Hochstetler (Orrville) |
| 6. Wise (Rootstown) | 18. Paige (Bishop Hartley) |
| 7. Courtot (Newark Catholic) | 19. Gondol (Jackson Milton) |
| 8. Broud (Wellington) | 20. Hanes (Barnesville) |
| 9. Deere (Jonathan Alder) | 21. Davis (Coventry) |
| 10. Hampton (Richmond Hts.) | 22. Pratt (Carey) |
| 11. Case (Cadiz) | 23. Bolanz (Waterloo) |
| 12. McKinney (Manchester) | 24. Miller (Evergreen) |
| 13. Kepling (Otsego) | 25. Ferryman (Springfield NE) |

The Fostoria District appears set to dominate this weight class as the three top rated performers all exit from this district. In fact, the district results may be a crucial determinant of final state success since the champion at Fostoria will be away from the other two standouts -- and have only one other district champ in his half bracket. I think that all three of these contenders are closely bunched indicating fierce competition and the possibility that even with all its inherent advantages the district champ may have difficulty winning two weeks in a row.

Lippert has now twice placed at the state level, grabbing a 4th as a sophomore in Division III and a 6th last year in Division II at 130#. The latter placing is deceptive since he gave the eventual champ Calhoun his only real battle, losing 4-2 in the semi-finals. This year he has been at 145# but should drop by tourney time. His only loss there was to Wellmeier although Weider took him into overtime. His problem at States seems to be a total lack of aggression, and he's going to have come out of his shell and wrestle the way he does in his home gymnasium if he is to win. Kessen, 4th last year at 130#, is having another exceptional season and he is a dynamite kid. He has competed at three different weight classes with outstanding success including a fall at 140# to win at Van Buren. He has made 135#, but my feeling is that this class offers him the best opportunity to win it all. Ford was 6th last year after losing a narrow 7-6 semi-final decision to Tipton. A district champ last year he was 3rd this season at GMVWA losing only to Cochran of West Virginia, but was upset in a dual by the undervalued Miller. State qualifiers Kepling and Roth are next best here but they do not appear to have the firepower to place at the state level. After that there is pretty much with chaos with Pratt and Miller trying to beat one of the five state qualifiers here. Zeller (Genoa), Farnsworth (Clear Fork), Kimmert (Delphos St. John) and Dreschel (Margaretta) are other possibilities.

LaManna was 5th last year splitting two bouts with Ford at States. He has Feckanin as a workout partner and he keeps showing good improvement. He placed 4th at Medina at 145#, and should be even better at this class. It's a topsy-turvy district at Cuyahoga Hts. State qualifiers Wise, Hampton, and Gondol return, but none of them is anything like a sure shot to go again -- although Wise has looked very good this year. Broud who lost a 20-16 go-to-state bout with Hampton is back while McKinney, Hochstetler, and Davis are all excellent. One mistake at this district is likely to get you a ticket home, because of the parity among the competitors. While we won't be seeing superstars at this weight class the overall level of competition is likely to be unusually fierce. So much so that some may opt for 145# at tourney time.

I see results that include Gregory, maybe, once or twice a year, but then last year he finished a strong 3rd at Wright State with wins over Ford and Wise. He is certain to be a factor again this year. State qualifier Peppo returns, but I think Peace is much better. However, Peppo did catch Peace for a fall in their go-to-state bout. Other possibilities are Ferryman, Conover (Blanchester) and Martin (Madeira).

Courtot has had a big year at 145#, but I anticipate him at 140# at tourney time. He missed state qualification by a takedown last year, but will be in the hunt for a state place this year. His only drawback is a relatively weak schedule -- although he did defeat the top ranked 145#er at North Union two weeks ago. Case, a state qualifier at 119# last year, is probably better suited to 135#, but Tipton, of course, bars the way. Case did defeat state place winner Spencer 11-7 at this weight in a recent dual. He and the excellent Deere stand just behind Courtot. The 4th spot is wide open with Paige and Hanes having the inside track. However, there are at least three or four other possibilities here.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ① DAVID WELLMEIER (LIMA CENTRAL CATHOLIC)

TOP CONTENDER

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ③ 2. Mokros (Shadyside) | 13. Versch (Aurora) |
| ② 3. Bergman (Versailles) | 14. Bollas (Perry) |
| 4. Al-Samkari (Dayton Oakwood) | 15. Howard (Licking Hts.) |
| 5. Ebert (Apple Creek Waynedale) | 16. Demorest (Edgerton) |
| ④ 6. Joyce (Chanel) | 17. Reed (Barnesville) |
| 7. Tate (Elmwood) | 18. Pilcher (Kenton Ridge) |
| 8. Huggins (Sandy Valley) | 19. Kern (Gibsonburg) |
| 9. Price (Spencerville) | 20. Rupp (Fostoria St. Wendelin) |
| ⑤ 10. Dailey (West Jefferson) | 21. McCombs (Johnstown Monroe) |
| 11. Dean (Wellington) | 22. Tucker (Valley View) |
| 12. Zimmerman/Ott (Cadiz) | 23. Mitchell (New London) |

Wellmeier apparently can wrestle at 145# or 152# and in either case he would be accorded the favorite role. After Van Buren it looks likely that he'll move down to 145# based primarily on team considerations. Lima Central Catholic certainly will be a major factor in the team competition and they need to

position their middleweights as perfectly as possible to maximize this opportunity.

Wellmeier is an outstanding competitor who has just devastated everyone he has wrestled this year. He beat Andres (4th in Division II last year) 22-9 at the 152# final at Northwood, decked Villareal in the "A" Classic final, beat DeJohn to win the OCCs at 152#, and then dominated Lippert at 145# to win at Van Buren. Wellmeier was the only Division III wrestler, incidentally to win an OCC final. Last year he was 3rd at 140# after winning his district title -- the only loss a one pointer to Fow which he later avenged in the consolation final.

State qualifier Tate has not yet wrestled, but if he does compete he will be a real factor at this weight. Last year as a sophomore he took a district 3rd that included five victories and then lost a narrow 8-6 decision to eventual state champ Homer Wright. The remainder of the field is weak with Price, Demorest, state alternate Rupp, Kern, and Mitchell as possibilities.

The Steubenville District divides itself into two parts -- Mokros and everyone else. State runner-up as a freshman three years ago at 103#, he has qualified for states the past two years but has only a 5th place medal to show for it. He had spent most of the year at 152# where he has been sensationally successful, but his history suggests he'll drop to 145# by tourney time. This year he has won at Shadyside and St. John -- taking home the outstanding wrestler trophy at the latter meet. He is very strong and mobile and Wellmeier will need all of his immense talent to defeat him. After that the field is a little threadbare with no particular distinguishing characteristics. The last three qualifiers are unlikely to see second round action at Wright State.

State qualifiers Bergman and Al-Samkari head the field at Dayton. Both have had very successful seasons winning important tournaments -- but have not yet met. Al-Samkari won two bouts at Wright State last year as a sophomore, and missed by one bout of placing, Bergman lost in the first round and was eliminated. Behind these two -- way behind -- are Pilcher, Tucker, Mobley (West Liberty Salem) and Kelly (Brookville).

The Cuyahoga Hts. District is not strong. State qualifier Ebert heads the field, but has not been particularly sharp this year. He was hammered by Wise in the finals at Smithville and finished 6th at Medina. However, he did win a bout at state last year. Joyce missed state qualification by a single bout, but he, too, has not been a world-beater so far this year. He has wrestled some at 140#, but when he sees the line-up at these two weight classes I think he'll reconsider 145#. Dean and Huggins are my next two choices with Versch, the sophomore Bollas, Sohl (Black River), and Kasarda (Streetsboro) as possibilities.

152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JASON LUKASIK (AURORA)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ⑥ 2. Link (Oberlin) | ② 13. Jefferies (Barnesville) |
| 3. Pittman (Ontario) | ⑥ 14. Worst (Carey) |
| 4. Moyer (Brookville) | 15. Spoores (Kansas Lakota) |
| ④ 5. Fisher (Garrettsville Garfield) | 16. Greer (Corey-Rawson) |
| 6. Wolford (Delta) | 17. Wolfe (Apple Creek Waynedale) |
| ① 7. Sedlick (Wellington) | 18. Villareal (Gibsonburg) |
| 8. Dorley (Lima Central Catholic) | 19. Dillon (Newark Central Catholic) |
| 9. Tyson (Elmwood) | 20. Austin (Hillsdale) |
| 10. Flesher (Sandy Valley) | 21. Smith (Bellaire) |
| 11. Tucker (Cadiz) | 22. Madding (Summit County Day) |
| 12. Blain (Kenton Ridge) | 23. Vucelich (Hannibal River) |
| | 24. Stuller (Cardinal Stritch) |
| | 25. Alltop (Crestview) |

Now that both Wellmeier and Mokros have apparently deserted this weight class parity has become a fact of life at 152#. At least a half dozen wrestlers could win the title and the competition is likely to be very fierce even if not at the highest level.

The Cuyahoga Hts. District is very strong with excellent depth as seven contestants are of state qualification caliber. The two best are probably Link and Lukasik. Link was sectional and district runner-up at this weight losing both times to Connolly last year and then finished 4th at Wright State -- again losing to Connolly in the consolation finals. His only loss this year has been at 160#. Lukasik is totally undefeated with big wins at Hudson, Aurora, and Woodford (Ky.). He has apparently moved up several levels from what he displayed last year. Link defeated him 10-7 in a district bout, but I think he has made up that difference and will take the title winning a series of close bouts. State qualifier Fisher returns at this weight (although I expected him at 145#) and could be an important factor. After a great season Sedlick "bombed out" in his sectional, but is unlikely to let that happen again. Flesher finished 28-4 last year but missed state qualification. This year he defeated Division II place winner Shipley at Coshocton and was second at Canal Fulton Northwest. Wolfe also has done well this year, but state qualifier Austin has not looked good. His chances of advancing past the district look quite small.

Moyer, a state qualifier at 145# last year, stands way above everyone else at Dayton. He pulled a huge upset beating Buster Vcelka in the first round 7-6, but was then injured and had to withdraw from the tourney. He won big at Fairfield and Brookville, and placed 2nd at Troy and 4th at the GMVWA -- in a difficult weight class. He could place. The rest of the field there is rather weak with Blain and Madding, a state alternate, possibly being next best. Bourne (Dayton Oakwood) and Gibbons (Dayton Northridge) are also contenders.

The Steubenville District is very weak and is pretty much a non-factor at this weight class. Nobody here has previous state experience, and for the most part have not had enormous amounts of success in regular season action either.

Marginally the best here is Tucker who missed state qualification by a single point last year. He is part of the fine group of middleweights that highlight the Cadiz line up. Jefferies, Dillon, and Smith are next in line here, but certainly none of them are guaranteed qualification. Jefferies was 3rd at Shadyside and is up from 130# last year where he missed state qualification by one bout. Dillon was 2nd at both North Union and Bucyrus and will be a factor here. Smith won recently at Bellaire and was second at Shadyside when Mokros slaughtered him. Other possibilities are Vucelich, Snodgrass (Jewett Scio), Montis (Granville) and Hoderfield (Johnstown Monroe).

The Fostoria District is very crowded, but only Pittman stands out from the multitudes. I wrote a lot about Pittman last year and his predilection for 15-14 bouts, and he returns this year wrestling pretty much the same way. He missed the first month of the season but returned for the Gorman where he looked rusty and was pinned in the second round by Couch. He ended up 3rd avenging the earlier defeat with a 21-11 victory -- so nothing has changed. He was 5th at states last year, and, if healthy, could better that effort this year. There is a precipitous drop to the next level manned by such folks at Wolford, state qualifier Tyson, and Spoores. None of this trio has a lock on qualification with Greer, Worst, Stuller, Villareal, and Alltop all possibly playing a role in the eventual resolution of this district.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽⁶⁾ BO RAMSEY (LICKING HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | | |
|--------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ② 15 ① | 2. Gibeaut (Union Local) | 13. Wilson (West Jefferson) |
| ③ | 3. Seim (Dayton Oakwood) | 14. Stafford (Edgerton) |
| ④ | 4. DiFranco (Ledgemont) | 15. Edwards (Berkshire) |
| ⑤ | 5. Conrad (Kansas Lakota) | 16. Esposito (Chagrin Falls) |
| ⑥ | 6. Cover (Ashland Mapleton) | 17. Raglow (Cardinal Stritch) |
| ⑦ | 7. Lambdin (Black River) | 18. Neate (Liberty Center) |
| ⑧ | 8. Noble (Bellbrook) | 19. Mohammad (Liberty) |
| ⑨ | 9. Conte (Cuyahoga Hts.) | 20. Ryder (Cadiz) |
| ⑩ | 10. Patrick (Galion Northmor) | 21. Stemen (Lincolnview) |
| ⑪ | 11. Perkins (Kenton Ridge) | 22. Gehret (Versailles) |
| ⑫ | 12. Surmay (St. Thomas Aquinas) | 23. Bockbrader (Elmwood) |

This is a weight class that will showcase a pleasing array of different styles. In such circumstances the probability of upset increases dramatically and I think that is likely to happen here.

My top choice is the solid senior from Licking Hts., Bo Ramsey. Last year he had an outstanding season at 152# finishing as runner-up at Medina and copping the district title. Then matched against Fuduric in the first round of states he lost a 17-10 OT bout and was eliminated -- finishing at 30-4. This year he has been excellent including runner-up finishes at Medina and Franklin Hts. and a title at Licking Hts. Don't expect to see him upset in the first round this year. He exits a district that features one other outstanding competitor, John Gibeaut, and these two could conceivably meet for both the district and state

titles. Gibeaut won two bouts at states last year after taking the district crown at this weight. He was also the OVAC champ. This season he has won at Bellaire St. John, Shadyside, and Barnesville (over Henry). Below this pair are Wilson, Patrick, and Ryder. Patrick was runner-up to Ramsey at districts, but wrestled only 110 seconds before being pinned and eliminated at States. Wilson ended up 26-9 last season missing state qualification by one bout, while Ryder is a transfer from Jewett-Scio who has previous state experience. A real solid group.

Seim was also a district champ last year and won a bout at Wright State before being injured. This year he has received few challenges in his own area winning at Oakwood, Springfield Catholic, and Edgewood. He collects a lot of falls which helps reduce mat time. Noble who was kind of a mediocre 145# wrestler last year (20-13) has suddenly blossomed at 160#. He was a finalist at the giant GMVWA losing only to the excellent Olson. Then he won at Carroll and Bellbrook in impressive style. How he'll match up at the state level I cannot predict, but he has had a great season already. Perkins is about the only opponent who did challenge Seim -- losing 14-10 at Springfield Catholic. He is a strong performer, and with Seim and Noble creates a formidable trio of wrestlers from this area.

However, the strongest, deepest district is at Cuyahoga Hts. State qualifier DiFranco is a rough, tough competitor who likes to get physical and brawl. Last year at Wright State he ended up losing twice -- to Evans and Gibeaut. He's been a small 171 pounder all year, but he'll be a large contestant at this weight. Lambdin had a great season last year and then had the wheels come off at the sectional and didn't get out. This year he has again performed at a high level including a win over Link. Conte, after a fine 19-2 regular season ran into a tough district last year. He lost his semi-final bout to Link 12-10 and then his go-to-state bout to Fuduric 10-9. It had to be heartbreaking. This year he has performed at that same high level, but will have to be at his best to qualify. Surmay, too, had his share of tough luck. Also a district semi-finalist he lost back-to-back bouts -- the last by a single point -- and was eliminated. Edwards and Esposito are also both good while Mohammad and Hnottavange (Chanel) are not far behind. A weight class so good that you might expect a couple of boys to flee to the easier 171#.

There is no such depth at Fostoria. Cover has kept me guessing qualifying for states as a 10th grader at Crestview, qualifying again as a junior at Mapleton, and now back again at Crestview. He has never won a bout beyond the district level, but that should change this year. He has already won titles at Hillsdale, Bucyrus (where he was voted outstanding wrestler), and the Gorman. He has had an outstanding year. His only real challenge at Fostoria is Conrad, a Division II state qualifier last year. After that the competition is not likely to unsettle either of the top two.

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ³ JOEL GODWIN (OTSEGO)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Blubaugh (Clear Fork) | 13. Rutledge (Columbia Station) |
| 3. Green (Columbus Academy) | 14. Mueller (Blanchester) |
| ⁴ 4. Fuduric (Cardinal) | 15. Sheehy (Cardinal Stritch) |
| ¹ 5. Perkins (Beallsville) | 16. Steiner (Orrville) |
| 6. Sheets (Licking Hts.) | 17. Zimmerman (Valley View) |
| 7. Hupp (Bridgeport) | 18. Zenz/Cole (Aurora) |
| 8. Vanderhorst (Covington) | 19. Dimel (West Jefferson) |
| 9. Theis (Sycamore Mohawk) | 20. Sintobin (Delta) |
| ² 10. Daily (Woodridge) | 21. Coleman (Brookville) |
| 11. Jarrett (Margaretta) | ⁵ 22. Belknap (Coventry) |
| 12. Ladrach (Tuscarawas Valley) | 23. Spielman (Edgerton) |

I don't have a clue here. There are only six returning state qualifiers at this weight and no returning state place winners. In fact the qualifiers, as a group went 5-10 at Wright State last year. My choice is the senior state qualifier Joel Godwin who has compiled a fine, consistent record over the past two seasons. Last year he was district champion beating Shad Evans 2-1 in the final. At Wright State he split four matches and failed to place. Ironically, Evans never had a close bout at he romped to the 160# title winning in the final 8-1. This year Godwin's only defeat was to the fine Division I wrestler Joyce of Dayton Wayne, 6-4. Everything would have to go just right, but Godwin has as good a chance as anyone to win here.

There are a lot of other possibilities at Fostoria. The barrel-chested Blubaugh is another state qualifier who has now won three Gorman titles. He is powerful and experienced and should be one of Godwin's toughest rivals. A plus for him is that the two of them should be in opposite brackets at Wright State. Theis, as a sophomore last year, made the district 171# semi-finals and then lost three straight bouts (the last two by a pair of points) to finish as the state alternate. He wrestles a very small school schedule, but will challenge both of the top two choices. Jarrett and Sheehy have both been consistent placers throughout the season and have to be narrow favorites the for the last two spots. However, there are a whole boatload of other contenders including yet another Sintobin, Spielman, Wurts, (Seneca East), Ellerbrock (Columbus Grove), and Ankney (Ayersville).

Besides the fact that this weight class has few standouts for the erstwhile prognosticator, Green provides a second intriguing puzzlement. Last year, as a sophomore, competing at heavyweight he captured the Steubenville District title, and then even won a bout at states. This year he will apparently be at this weight with results that are difficult to foretell. He has clearly done well up to this point although he has also competed at 189#. He must exit from a strong district that features six solid participants, and is the toughest in the state at this weight. The powerful Perkins was one point from qualification last year as he lost in overtime to state runner-up Williams and 3-2 to state 4th placer Rocchi. He has won at Shadyside and St. John defeating Hupp in the latter final. Hupp was a state qualifier at 160# -- finishing 4th in the district -- and then

suffered first round elimination. He wins consistently against all but the very best. Sheets looked good at Medina, and has been very strong in the Columbus area. That is a solid quartet, but overlooks two other possibilities. Ladrach was a state qualifier at 152# last year and has been transformed into a muscular 171# this year. Dimel, who could be at 160#, is another possibility at this class, but I would rate him as least likely to make Wright State.

Fuduric had a great sophomore campaign including two wins at the state tournament. Now up two weight classes he's the best the Cuyahoga Hts. District has to offer. He placed at Medina and is undefeated everywhere else. After that it's anybody's guess as to whom will qualify as this district is very shallow at 171#. Expect the unexpected here, and what that may portend is the arrival of a couple of the 160s.

State qualifier Vanderhorst will apparently be at this weight for the Dayton District. He was 27-3 last year losing his last two in the district final and the opening round at States. Mueller, who Vanderhorst pounded 10-2 last season, has substantially narrowed that gap and is second best here. After that the competition falls out of focus. Zimmerman beat the excellent Division II wrestler Sean Sullivan and may slightly better than Coleman. Other possibilities are Prewitt (Lockland), Pittman (Wyoming), and Olwin (Greeneview).

189#

PROJECTED CHAMPION ¹ STEVE SCHUMACHER (WOODSFIELD)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2. Lewis (Ayersville) | 13. Teague (Williamsburg) |
| 3. Nameth (Cadiz) | 14. Frascone (Tuslaw) |
| 4. Carsey (North Union) | 15. Tilton (Clear Fork) |
| 5. Capizzi (Sandusky St. Mary) | 16. Kajfasz (Margaretta) |
| 6. Thorne (Columbus Academy) | 17. Kisner (Covington) |
| 7. Burkey (Orrville) | 18. Roberts (Plymouth) |
| 8. Smith (Edgerton) | 19. Kotorra (Aurora) |
| 9. Jennett (Blanchester) | 20. Sanzo (Grandview Hts.) |
| 10. Bodie (Licking Hts.) | 21. Russell (Norwayne) |
| 11. Ritter (Carey) | 22. Tessmer (Independence) |
| 12. Hoffman (Cardinal) | 23. Oliver (Versailles) |

The most distinguishing feature of this weight class is it's very unbalanced nature. One district (Steubenville) has at least six competitors with solid state qualifications while the other three districts lack anything close to the number that they are allowed to qualify. I always feel bad when such a situation arises -- especially at the two ends of the weight spectrum -- because those affected have few alternatives. Caught in a numbers game at 189# the only option is a move to heavyweight -- generally not a viable idea.

At any rate defending state champion Schumacher will be difficult to dethrone. First, he has improved from last year as he matures physically and, second, this is not a particularly strong weight class. Schumacher finished 32-1 last year losing only at the OVAC. This season no one has come close to

defeating him which may create a stamina problem for if he is really pushed somewhere along the line. Remember it's an American trait to love the underdog, but in this particular case bet on the favorite.

As I said Steubenville is loaded. State qualifier Nameth is solid, but Schumacher defeated him 8-1 in the district finals. He hasn't lost this year, but will match up with Schumacher at the OVAC. State qualifier Carsey lost to Nameth last year at districts and then was stopped twice at States. However, he has dominated his local area for two years and will be tough to dislodge from a state spot. Thorne has bounced around at the upper weights winning at this weight at Reynoldsburg. Last year he finished at 24-8. Bodie has been a real find. He was a strong 5th at Medina and was 4th at Licking Hts. despite being very sick. He could be an upset special at this weight. The sophomore Sanzo is showing rapid improvement while Keene (Jonathan Alder) could also be a factor. A great competition at this district.

Talk about a numbers crunch Lewis was caught in one last year. The starting 189# for Ayersville all last year he compiled a great record including titles at the "A" Classic and Stryker. Then state place winner Partee returned from injury and with state place winner Mangas at heavyweight there was no place to go but the bench. This year Lewis could go at either weight, but remains at 189# winning at the "A" Classic and Stryker again, and also dominating the competition in Northwest Ohio. He could be a finalist if away from Schumacher. Behind him is the excellent sophomore Capizzi -- who could place -- and will be a mountainous factor at this weight the next two years. He as 2nd at both Fremont St. Joe and Marion Harding, but his most impressive outing was a 16-6 crush of Division I, Hysell, to win the Panther Classic. He's for real. Smith, Tilton, Ritter, Kajfasz, and Roberts are all journeyman wrestlers with district experience who can be counted on to place at regular season tournaments. They will not be factors at the state level, although several of them should qualify.

At Cuyahoga Hts. there just doesn't seem to be much talent. I've searched through all my records certain that I must missed some exceptional talent, but so far, no luck. Burkey, a strong junior, seems best while Hoffman did well at Medina and Jackson-Milton. Unless there was a misprint he competed at 160# the first week of the season. The rest of those listed are marginally the best I could find, but I expect some new and different names when I get the district results.

Jennett was a state alternate last year and appears to be the best the Dayton District has to offer. He's currently 14-1, with his biggest triumph at Sycamore where he beat the powerful Bouldin (Division I) in the finals and captured the OW award as well. Teague won three district matches last year, but Kisner is just a guess based on a 27-9 record last year. Teague decked him in 76 seconds at district. Below this group are Oliver, Craft (Mechanicsburg), and McCord (McNicholas). Only Jennett has the potential to make waves at Wright State.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ³ NORMAN AYERS (BELLAIRE)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | 2. Pardon (Lincolnview) | 13. Smith (Streetsboro) |
| 3 | 3. Stark (Sycamore Mohawk) | 14. Wine (Clear Fork) |
| 10 | 4. Hicks (Bloom Carroll) | 15. Sponseller (Manchester) |
| | 5. Dameron (Blanchester) | 16. Sweigart (Berkshire) |
| 2 | 6. Hart (Ledgemont) | 17. Thierry (Liberty Center) |
| | 7. Derr (Carey) | 18. Pullins (West Jefferson) |
| | 8. Tharpe (Bellbrook) | 19. Rickard (Woodmore) |
| | 9. Gockstetter (Collins Western Reserve) | 20. Baker (Sidney Lehman) |
| | 10. Baker (Columbus Academy) | 21. Bell (Dayton Christian) |
| | 11. McKean (Black River) | 22. Kintner (Mapleton) |
| | 12. Daniels (Tuscarawas Valley) | 23. Mascolino (Steubenville Central Catholic) |

I'm not nearly so positive as most people that talk to me that Ayers has this crown locked up. There is no question that this 275-pound behemoth has totally dominated the Eastern District the past two years or that he was state runner-up at 36-1 losing only to the fabulous Fickell. On the other hand he beat Dool at states 12-10 in the quarter-finals which showed some chinks in his armor or that Willits nearly won in the semi-finals as Ayers hung on to a 4-3 victory. Of the two bouts the most interesting was with Dool that showed that in flurries Ayers could be scored on heavily. That could be significant because Pardon -- my second choice -- loves to get involved in high scoring bouts in which he generally prevails. More on this later.

No question Ayers has dominated the Ohio Valley area, but state qualifier Hicks and Baker will challenge at that combined district at Steubenville. Hicks may lack the firepower, though, and Baker is too small. State qualifier Daniels is back and has won several smaller tournaments including Malvern and Northwest. He may be better than Baker. Pullins keeps placing at tourneys, but so far can't make the finals. He'll have to be in top form to qualify out of here. Other possibilities are Mascolino who won three district bouts last year and sectional champ Lucido (Beallsville) who had a shaky district. Daniels pinned both of these boys. This year they, too, have been consistent place winners.

Pardon was the Fostoria District champ last year and then crushed Daniels 17-3 in the first round. Ahead against Dameron he was disqualified in a dubious situation that was ruled a slam and then Dameron couldn't continue -- until the next session. Still, he came back to beat Dameron for 5th. He wrestles a schedule that cannot hope to prepare him for the rigors of state competition, but somehow that tourney process seems to make him better. A flopper in the best sense of the word he is big enough to roll around with Ayers and possibly come out on top. It could be a big upset or Pardon could be pinned quick. It should be interesting. State runner-up Stark captured a district 4th (losing to Carr and Chill), and then took advantage of a great draw by wrestling well all the way to the finals. He, too, might give Ayers trouble. The rest of those listed are a cut below the top duo although, Derr, perhaps, might have placement potential.

Dameron, 6th last year is back, and has done well in the Cincinnati area losing only Hast. A mystery figure is Tharp who qualified as a sophomore, but was edged out by Dameron for the last qualifying spot. He has not, to my knowledge, competed up to this point in time, but if he does return will be a major factor at this district. Bell and Baker are possibilities for state qualification as are Staley (Batavia) and Vance (Reading).

At Cuyahoga Hts. Hart would seem to be the leader of a relatively weak field. I was surprised when he did not qualify last year, but I would be shocked if he doesn't make it this time around. He looked reasonably good at Medina. McKean, too, has some good credentials and seems to be improving as well. However, after that the cupboard is bare with the last two spots totally wide open. Besides those listed look for Swiegart (Berkshire), Steiner (Orrville) and Bowman (Sandy Valley).

TEAMS

1. Lima Central Catholic -- Wellmeier is not only a strong favorite at 145#, but his style should pick up a lot of bonus points on falls and major decisions. The key, though, is that Kessen and Clemens wrestle at peak efficiency, and capture, at least, a middle place. If Dorley or even Caprella score some state points the odds shift way in their favor.
2. Ledgemont -- A quartet of four seasoned veterans lead this always fine squad who placed 3rd last year. Feckanin is the main cog, but LaManna and DiFranco have to be big contributors -- especially the former who has missed some time due to injury. If Hart can win his district the generally, good State pairing that brings could make him a major contributor. That could mean the team title.
3. Kansas Lakota -- A team with the same kind of nucleus as most other teams (3 or 4 boys), but with more upside potential than most. Lippert, Roth, and Conrad are the heart of this squad, but they need to be more aggressive at States. Possibilities include State qualifier Sibrel, Spoores, Tyson, and, perhaps, Milligan.
4. Cadiz -- A team with some great middleweights that needs to pick up just a little additional firepower. State runner-up Tipton is pivotal and now seems to be rounding into form after his injury. McKeever is very much undervalued and Nameth should be away from Schumacher at States. A key weight class in the team competition is 140# -- because so many of the key teams have potential scorers there. Kansas Lakota, Delta, Ledgemont, Lima Central Catholic all have top rated boys while Cadiz and Otsego have potential point scorers as well. State qualifier Case is important there for Cadiz. Cadiz also have possibilities with Tucker, Zimmerman, Ryder, and Bombouis, but those are pretty distant hopes.
5. Columbus Academy -- Garcia is a shaky choice at 130#, but if he wrestles well that could spark the entire team. They need to get Greene, Thorne, and Baker perfectly placed at the upper weights, and then hope that Gardner can also score.
6. Delta -- Ford is solid, but is at that critical 140# class while Barnes has lots of talent, but will be a rookie at Wright State. Other scoring possibilities are Circle, Wolford, and you cannot overlook yet another Sintobin.
7. Licking Hts. -- A team with a lot of possibilities that should things go well could take it all. Ramsey is key while Sheets and Parmer have scoring ability. The critical elements, though, are whether Platt and Bodie can qualify at two of the toughest weight classes in the district.
8. Otsego -- This is a team that has almost always disappointed at the State level, but, maybe, this year they can surprise. Godwin, Soto, and Castro are the top possibilities, but people like Kepling could also help.
9. Batavia -- The brilliant lightweights are mainspring of this team. Shinkle is, of course, outstanding while both Steiner brothers have State

- experience. Santer has done well (against easy competition) at 103#, but the real key is to have Peace qualify and score at the State level. Nice potential here that if everything clicks could put this team near the top.
10. Brookville -- Lipinski has been incredible all year, and could score 25 to 30 points by himself. The other major hope is State qualifier Moyer, but after that, somebody is going to have to step forward and help. Possibilities are Terrill, Moritz, Coleman, or Marburger, but they're real long-shots at the State level.
 11. Bridgeport -- It has to happen in the first two weights if it's going to happen for Bridgeport. Frohnappel and the brilliant freshman Roskovich are both good, but that's a tall order for two youngsters. Hupp can contribute, but then it's up to people like Perzanowski, Crupe, and Ellsworth.
 12. Sandusky St. Mary -- Another team with lots of potential, but no main man -- a sure champion -- to provide leadership. Maiani should place and the sophomores Rosin and Capizzi will be big timers next year. Davlin is good at the initial weight, but people like Schmenk and Roesch are really needed.
 13. Edison North -- A long-shot team that could be either 4th or 40th. The Spencer brothers are the heart of the team, and they need to make the right decision on where Chuck should wrestle. If Larkins gets hot and Smith can contribute they're on their way.
 14. Bellbrook -- There are only three potential contributors here so there is no margin for error. Noble and the two Kosins are a good combination, but they need more help.
 15. Bellaire -- Ayres is worth lots of points, but after that it's a real struggle. Yeager, Francis, and a boatload of others are all the longest of long shots.

1991

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. Last year, for example, 36 of the 39 top choices reached State semi-final action. This report was written during a six-day period in mid-January ending January 28 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 one of the most interesting recruiting years in Ohio in some time. As always, there are the unmistakable blue chippers that are easily identified, such as Mollica, St. John, DiSabato and several others. This group contains about the average number of sure collegiate All-Americans. What will be the challenge is that there are an extraordinarily large number of seniors who are one level below this top group. This very large group will have to be carefully sifted through to pick out the high potential collegiates from those that just will not get any better. Certainly, the results throughout the tournament process will provide valid clues as to which group each of these individuals belong. However, in many cases, recruiters will have to look more deeply into each personal situation before an accurate (as much as possible) determination can be made.

One of the exciting prospects in 1991 is close team competitions in all three school classifications. In Division I, this could encompass as many as six teams and not be decided to the final heavyweight bout. In both Division II and III, there should be furious team struggles for the top spot with a number of schools having the potential to be champions. Teams from all around the state have the "horse power" to take the crown in these two classifications.

As faithful readers know, this report has long been used as a vehicle to promote change in the administration of high school wrestling -- particularly at the tournament level. While it has not been a rapid process, progress continues to be made in establishing real equity for every competitor. Perhaps the high water mark of that struggle was reached this year with expansion of the wrestle-back system to include all participants who have lost to a semi-finalist. This system guarantees a proper balance between fairness and interminable consolation rounds that can be provoked in double-elimination tournaments. I could not have been happier when the new system was announced, because it fulfills a commitment many of us made a long time ago to work in that direction. We must recognize that this is a one-year trial, but every coach and competitor can be nothing but thrilled about a system that guarantees placement fairness.

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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