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2001

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

FORECAST

(30th Annual Edition)

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DIVISION I

103 #

Projected Champion: Nino Paglia (Strongsville)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|----|------------------------|
| 2 | Gilsdorf (Maumee) | 14 | Iovine (Pickerington) |
| 3 | Ondecko (Upper Arlington) | 15 | McClain (St. Edward) |
| 4 | Riggs (Massillon Perry) | 16 | Ocasio (Fairfield) |
| 5 | Federico (Willoughby South) | 17 | Felton (Elyria) |
| 6 | Metcalfe (Perrysburg) | 18 | Bates (East Liverpool) |
| 7 | Wornoff (Garfield Hts) | 19 | Dearwester (Harrison) |
| 8 | LaFollette (Akron Springfield) | 20 | Spellacy (Brunswick) |
| 9 | Candy (Moeller) | 21 | Belcher (Mt. Vernon) |
| 10 | Watson (Fairmont) | 22 | Mathis (Princeton) |
| 11 | J. Smith (Wilmington) | 23 | Mossar (Groveport) |
| 12 | Weaver (Waite) | 24 | LaScala (Padua) |
| 13 | Feldman (Coffman) | 25 | Hinton (Celina) |
| | | 26 | Doggett (Tecumseh) |

Very often in state competition the weight classes with the fewest returning qualifiers are 103 pounds and heavyweight. The latter because of the general dominance of experienced, mature seniors and the former

because it is the first stop for freshman and sophomores who quickly outgrow it. In many years at 103#, I struggle identifying appropriate contenders and a potential champion. However, in 2001, that general rule has been turned upside down. There are nine wrestlers with state experience at 103#--the most in any weight class. So, that the task is not identifying contenders, but in sifting through such an abundance. In addition, as a further complication, there are at least four other contenders with no previous state experience who have moved into the forefront at this weight class.

Despite this abundance of talent the top choice is relatively straightforward. Paglia, at 103#, has been totally dominating. At Brecksville he crushed Wornoff 13-5 in the final after earlier defeating LaScala, 12-4. At Mayfield he destroyed a good field, and he comes off a freshman year which saw him win a district title and finish 5th in the state. Even that might have been a disappointment as he lost to eventual finalist Cundall 5-3 in overtime and barely to Vickers in the consolations. The real issue is whether, he will be able to wrestle at peak efficiency when having to make weight three weeks in a row. It's a tough cut for Paglia and he will have to control it so that he is not undone by the weight.

The Perry District has four outstanding 103's. five if you count Riggs backup Johnstone. all of, whom could place. Riggs is very impressive. He hammered Candy at the Ohio Duals and beat Division III choice Wade at the Ironman. He shares the weight issue with Paglia. Riggs is tall and it is a rugged path to 103 pounds. Johnstone (Massillon Perry) has to be the best back-up in the state. I watched him pin Feldman and he was 3rd at the Top Gun losing only to the champ from Erie Cathedral Prep. Wornoff was 2nd at Hudson, Brecksville and the Dies as he has forged a strong consistent season. He has wins over Riggs, LaFollette, and Federico among others. LaFollette is clearly fourth best, but with Paglia and Wornoff exiting the same sectional the pairings could be unbalanced. That would give Spellacy, LaScala, or, maybe, Wise (Wadsworth) an opportunity. Keep an eye on Spellacy who was a district semi-finalist last year, but has not yet matched that effort this year. He can spring the big upset.

In many circles Gilsdorf is rated the favorite at this weight class. After all, he was 4th last year with four consolation wins and he has been perfect this season with wins at Tiffin and Waite. He's an attractive choice, but I still think Paglia is better. Mentor has six legitimate state possibilities, but the most unpredictable may be Federico. He blasted Watson to win at the Midwest Classic, but lost heart-thumpers to Wornoff and LaFollette at Brecksville - - his only defeats. He has a big upside. Metcalfe, son of the great 1972 state champ, Jerry, is a little dynamo. He and state qualifier Zychowicz both certified at 103#, but I believe Metcalfe will wrestle at this weight. He beat Wornoff to win at Hudson and will challenge anyone I've listed. State qualifier Weaver is probably fourth best at Mentor in what will be a real struggle for qualification. Both McClain and Felton have had excellent seasons, but unless they can trip up one of the Toledo 103's, they'll be left at home.

State qualifier Ondeko has had an undefeated season winning at Upper Arlington, Ready, Sylvania Southview and Toledo Central Catholic. He won one state bout last year, and held Paglia to a 1-0 margin in the consolation round. The rest of the contenders here are a little suspect. While they've had success in their own area they have received rough treatment in state-wide events. I've listed Feldman, Iovine, Belcher and Mossar, but they're likely to struggle at the Schottenstein. OVAC champ Bates is also here and he has the firepower to qualify.

There is much the same situation at Fairfield. State qualifiers Candy, J. Smith, Ocasio, and Watson all have substantial experience, but whether that will translate into wins at Columbus is open to question. Candy, nominally the best in the Cincinnati area (he was 2nd at the SWOCA) lost big to Riggs, and Watson, probably the best in Dayton had the same result with Federico. I think this district will be extremely spirited, but the qualifiers will have to move it up a level to compete the following week.

112 #

Projected Champion: Mark Moos (St. Edward)

Top Contenders

2	Luke (Massillon Perry)	15	Mantini (Willoughby South)
3	Phillips (Howland)	16	Spencely (Fairfield)
4	Costello (Maple Hts.)	17	Murray (Fitch)
5	Passafiume (Strongsville)	18	Brown (Scioto)
6	Puckett (Beavercreek)	19	Schaffer (Amelia)
7	Randazzo (Padua)	20	Camburn (Stow)
8	Zychowicz (Perrysburg)	21	Fulton (Mentor)
9	Cunningham (Groveport Madison)	22	Stewart (Delaware Hayes)
10	Meissner (Jackson)	23	Goodman (Lakota West)
11	Selover (Wapakoneta)	24	Dutton (Pickerington)
12	Cottone (Moeller)	25	Buhacevich (Grove City)
13	Edminister (Mt. Vernon)	26	Lamplot (Loveland)
14	Luce (Sidney)	27	Miller (New Philadelphia)

An important use of statistics is testing hypotheses in a rigorous, mathematical manner. Clearly there are two kinds of errors that can be made-- accepting the null hypothesis when in fact it is false (alpha error) and rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true (beta error). In many cases statisticians test at the 95% (two standard deviation) confidence level to minimize the alpha error. Each year I identify wrestlers that I believe are two standard deviation choices (95% certain) to win their weight class. In most years there are at least three or four competitors in Division I that fall into that classification. For example, last year Ott, Jayne, Percival, Lammers, and Bertin would have been in that category, and they definitely help my accuracy percentages. This year there is only one wrestler that fits into that 95% classification and that is the brilliant junior, Mark Moos.

Moos is probably the best junior lightweight in the country after winning at the Ironman, Beast of the East, Powerade, and Mayfield. He has dominated every opponent and should capture his first state title with relative ease. In fact, Moos could conceivably have been on track for four state titles were it not for Kyle Ott. As a freshman, Ott defeated Moos 4-1 in the semi-finals and then dominated Pflug in the finals, and then last year Ott came off three technical falls to beat Moos in the finals 5-2. If you want to see the consummate wrestler watch Moos as he coolly, methodically dismantles foe after foe.

This may be the most unbalanced weight class I have ever seen. In a perfectly just world at least eight of the sixteen qualifiers should come out of the Perry District. In fact, six of my Top Ten choices will wrestle at Perry, meaning that two will not make it out. The best, I believe, is the outstanding freshman, Steve Luke who is an absolutely exceptional prospect. After a 5th at the Ironman (nerves?) he won decisively at Brecksville over a field that included Randazzo, Costello, Passafiume, Murray and Mantini. The only issue might be his inexperience. Phillips was a state semi-finalist last year, and has lost only once this year, by one point, to a Pennsylvania state runner-up. He is difficult to score against. Costello qualified for Columbus two years ago as a back-up 112-pounder, but didn't make it last year—losing to Moos and Pollock and ending up 4th. At Brecksville he lost in the first round to Luke and then came back with seven straight wins including a fall over Randazzo for 3rd. That still leaves state qualifier Passafiume and State Division II 3rd place medalist, Ricky Randazzo-- both of whom would surely be finalists at the other three districts. In addition, Meissner, a district semi-finalist in 2000, has dropped from 125# to 112# while Murray and Camburn (another district semi-finalist last year) are in for a tough time. Not only that, but Schmock (Berea) was a strong 4th at the Top Gun losing only to Luke and Zupancic while Kee beat Murray in placing at Brecksville. The match-ups at the district will be brutal starting in the very first round.

There's not much beyond Moos at Mentor. Zychowicz was a state qualifier at 103# last year and should get out at 112 - - perhaps as a finalist. Mantini and Selover are good performers while Fulton, Ash (Start) Fluker (Lorain Southview) and DeJesus (Admiral King) are other possibilities. Actually the second best 112-pounder

at Mentor should have been state alternate Paz (Eastlake North). A very tough kid he apparently moved to Nevada - - which is even further west than this district extends..

There is pretty much mass confusion at Darby. In fact the two I've rated highest have not yet competed at this weight - - Cunningham because he has been at 119# all year and Edminster, because of a pre-season injury. Clearly, this is bit of a stretch, but the incumbents have not been overly impressive. Brown, currently rated #1 in the Columbus area , was 4th at Kenston losing twice to Bryan Hurley 13-0 and 10-0.

Kyle Puckett wrestled up at 119# last year while brother Kevin went to state at 112#. This year at the more normal 112# he has doubled up winning the SWOCA (by fall over Cottone) and the GMVWA (by decision over Browning). That would seem to elevate him to the top step in this district, and provide state placement chances. Cottone, Luce and Spencely lead a legion of other possible qualifiers by a very narrow margin. Goodman and Schaffer have far better records than Cottone or Spencely, but the former finished behind them at the SWOCA while latter wrestles an easier schedule.

119 #

Projected Champion: John Foster (Massillon Perry)

Top Contenders

2	Pollock (Mentor)	15	Reiman (Delaware Hayes)
3	Mendez (Lorain Southview)	16	McCoy (Elder)
4	Kist (Hamilton)	17	Biglar (Davidson)
5	Sebourn (Wayne)	18	Colello (Solon)
6	Lakia (Riverside)	19	Aggozzino (St. Edward)
7	Hansen (Pickerington)	20	Bishop (Gahanna Lincoln)
8	Alban (Fairmont)	21	Loebker (Anderson)
9	Basso (Jackson)	22	Jang (Westerville North)
10	Gray (Lebanon)	23	Jaynes (Dayton Carroll)
11	McKirnan (Celina)	24	Evans (Mansfield Madison)
12	Gross (Padua)	25	Rose (Perrysburg)
13	Guerra (Waite)	26	Pniewski (Cloverleaf)
14	Effner (Garfield Hts.)	27	Hansis (Marietta)

Initially this was going to be one of the easiest weight classes in Division I to forecast correctly. After all, the expectation was that the brilliant two-time state champion, Kyle Ott, would cruise to his third state title at 119#. However, six summer knee surgeries, conflict with the Wayne medical staff and administration and an eventual transfer to

St. Paris Graham has dispatched Ott to Division II competition. What remains is a weight class in disarray with only two returning state placers (and one of those from Division III). It should provide substantial opportunity for the many experienced performers returning at this weight class to improve on their past results, and for some of the excess 112's at Perry. In the end you'd have to conclude that this is the weakest weight class in Division

As a sidebar I've correctly predicted the first three winners in Division I for the past four years. Ott's defection substantially lessens the probability of increasing that total to five consecutive years with both 103# and now 119# lacking definitive favorites. Still at both of these classes the competition should be sharp and appealing.

Last year John Foster was kind of my mystery man. He was hidden away at tiny Dalton High School where he compiled an enormous string of consecutive falls. He was quickly a Division III sectional champ and then

district champ entering the state meet at 38-0. Then ahead in the first round, he was pinned with 15 seconds remaining. He quickly won five more bouts to finish 3rd and cap a wonderful freshman season. This year, now that his brother has graduated, he's at Massillon Perry. Early in the year he was at 125# where he finished 5th (losing to Lang) and 2nd at Brecksville (losing to Bosley from Parkersburg). However, he has been devastating at 119#, and must be accorded the favorite role.

Foster should dominate the Perry district. No other wrestlers have had state experience and none come close to his credentials. Basso was a district semi-finalist last year and ended up as a fourth place state alternate. He was 3rd at Wadsworth, this year. Gross has had a solid campaign, but still has not yet made a finals bout. He could do it at this district. Effner is an excellent freshman who I may have rated too low. He was impressive at Brecksville, and seems absolutely fearless. I really like Colello, and again, he should probably get up a few notches. He lost to Jagers, 5-4 and easily won the WRC. Watch for him. Stellato (Boardman) and Spencer (Maple Hts.) are other thoughts.

There is a lot of heavy artillery at Mentor - - at least in the context of this weight class. State qualifier Pollock has had a bit of slow start, but he can be very good. I think he has finalist potential with the right bracketing and attitude. Mendez lost to McKirnan in the first round at States and then finished 6th at this class last year. He's involved in a lot of high scoring bouts that keep fans breathless and coaches gray. Laskia, another state qualifier is very smooth, but may not have the horsepower to go with the very best. That leave McKirnan with a tenuous hold on the fourth berth with Sylvania champ Guerra right behind. A dark horse here is Aggozzino who has not wrestled much against Ohio competition, but who upset Jagers at Mayfield and was perfect at the Ohio Duals (three tech fall shutouts). He can turn people which erases a lot of mistakes. Evans is a state qualifier from several years ago while Rose is rated first in the Toledo area. They'll have to be very sharp to qualify. A long-shot here is Thomas who will be a very dangerous opponent.

Hansen is already a two-time state qualifier, but has not fared well at the State Meet. He is 0-4 at that event outscored by a margin of 54-12. Of course it hasn't helped

that he met Lenhard and then Pflug in the first round. As a potential district champ, he should drastically improve on those draws. He was 6th at 125# at Medina, but won at Toledo Central Catholic, never having to go six minutes in any of his five bouts. Rieman was 3rd at Waite nipping Guerra, 2-1, and should be in the hunt for a qualifying berth. Biglar and Bishop are possibly next best, but I'm thinking there'll be at least one surprise qualifier.

There are boatloads of contenders at Fairfield, and it is very difficult to sort them out. Kist was a state qualifier at 125# last year. After starting the season at that weight he finished 4th at the SWOCA, and shortly thereafter moved down. He will be a very large 119-pounder. State qualifier Seibourn has been in and out of the line-up, but when he is hitting on all cylinders he is very tough. Alban was 2nd at the GMVWA to Guerra, but I think he'll better that result if there's a next time. SWOCA champ Gray, the tough McCoy, and state qualifier Loebker should also be in the mix for a qualifying spot.

All three could upset those rated above them at this district. Jaynes has been out of action for some time but this former state qualifier can wrestle. I would rate him much higher if I thought he was healthy and in good form. Also potential qualifiers are Gill (Loveland), Kunkel (Colerain), Hahn (Fairfield) and Sellers (St. Xavier).

125 #

Projected Champion: Ryan Lang (St. Edward)

Top Contenders

2	Zinkan (Moeller)	14	K. Wilson (Akron-Springfield)
3	Enright (Westland)	15	Bellman (Wapakoneta)
4	Wolf (Northmont)	16	Frederickson (Anthony Wayne)
5	Glavan (Mentor)	17	Cowan (East Liverpool)
6	Wolery (Lakota West)	18	Teis (North Canton)
7	Thompson (Kenmore)	19	Lewis (Clay)
8	Maxwell (Butler)	20	Oswalt (Mt. Vernon)
9	Januszewski (Strongsville)	21	Breiner (Mason)
10	Hill (Maumee)	22	Farber (Gahanna Lincoln)
11	Uhas (Davidson)	23	Cook (Wiloughby South)
12	Mason-Strauss (Sycamore)	24	Callahan (Thomas Worthington)
13	Pietropinto (Mayfield)	25	Mattheis (Greenville)
		26	Coleman (Kent Roosevelt)

I'm always amused by incongruities and anomalies and by things that lie askew of normality things like bumper stickers that proclaim "honk if you love peace and quiet" and by ideas like "time is nature's way of stopping things from happening all at once" that point to subtle truths. If you're like me in this respect than 125# should be a weight class we'll both enjoy. Where else will you find a bracket sheet whose key match-up may well feature last year's 103# state champ versus last year's 130# placer? Where else will we have returning state qualifiers from five different weight classes and contenders that run the gamut from A (Alexiou) to Z (Zinkan)? It should be interesting as we look at the skills of three state placers and at least seven returning state qualifiers.

I think there's a slight, but definite gap separating my top trio from the six contenders directly below them. That's not to label the top three upset-proof, but to suggest that, generally, they should come out on top in such battles. My choice among that top triad is the amazing sophomore Ryan Lang. Last year he finished 37-2 (both losses outside of Ohio) with a state title at 103# - - defeating seniors in the last two rounds. His coolness under fire won him the title. For example, in the third period of his tied semi-final bout, Nate Vickers struck with a beautiful takedown attempt.

For nearly 30 seconds, Lang appeared to be seconds from losing the two crucial points, but always moving, he skirted disaster and almost miraculously wound up on top. That was the bout and yet, you know that against 99 out of a 100 wrestlers, Vickers gets that takedown. This year Lang is up three weight classes, and has been very successful. His only in-state loss was to my Division II choice Wooten who over-powered him the first week of the season.

Zinkan was 5th at 130# last year, losing two close 3-1 bouts to Spires and Tepley. He won the SWOCA at 130#, but shortly thereafter moved to 125#. He crushed the field at the CIT, but the interesting bout was with Lang at the Ohio Duals. In both the first and third periods, Zinkan had great takedown shots, but, again, Lang, somehow, staved him off. You wonder how many such minor miracles he has given to him before he gets caught. In the second period, Lang rode him out and got a turn as well. So the final score was 4-0 for Lang - - but if Zinkan scores early it's a different bout.

Enright came on in the second half of last season with an amazing rush. By state tourney time I thought he might be a finalist. However, when the pairings came out with Ott and Moos in opposite brackets that was no longer possible. Still he maxed out with a 3rd place finish at 112#. Now a junior he was 3rd at Medina losing to Wooten (but not as badly as Lang) and winning everything else. I think there is a chance he could overpower Lang and out-quick Zinkan. We'll see. He and Lang should be apart so Zinkan would have to beat them both to win.

The strongest district is at Fairfield. State qualifiers Wolery, Wolf, and Maxwell join Zinkan in what should be a great competition. I've rated Wolf second best here based on his win over Wolery and on a better overall record than Maxwell. He missed placement by one bout last year. Wolery and Glavan split two bouts at

Brecksville with Glavan winning in the championship round by two and Wolery taking 3rd on tie breaker. They are obviously, very evenly matched. Should the pairings be bad Mason-Strauss is a good candidate to get a berth with Breiner and Mattheis other considerations.

Enright should have no trouble at Darby. This is not a particularly strong year in the Central District for Division I teams. My view is that at many weight classes there isn't a lot of depth - - and this is one of them. After Enright, most of the possible qualifiers would struggle at any of the other three district sites.

Lang's biggest obstacle at Mentor is the experienced Glavan. He was a state alternate last year at 119# losing a tough semi-final bout to Lenhard, and ending up 4th. Cook, Pietropinto and, perhaps, Perle (Madison) are next best in the Northeast District. However, there is mass confusion in the Toledo area. I've listed Hill, Bellman and Frederickson, but that is based on incomplete results. You could also easily factor in Vargas (Waite), Lewis (Clay) and Rivera (Libbey). They keep trading wins so that no definitive pattern is emerging.

State qualifier Thompson is an aggressive wrestler with lots of speed. He was a Perry District champ at 119# last year defeating Hewitt 19-10. Then after a 1-1 start at Columbus he lost an overtime bout to Hewitt in the second consolation round. This year he was a champion at the Dies and was 5th at Medina losing to Opfer and Blunk. Januszewski is a solid second choice with good placement potential. He was 2nd at Mayfield losing only to Lang and 5th at Medina (at 130#) losing only to Schlatter and Tepley. After this duo this district is substantially weaker.

130

Projected Champion: Joe Pflug (Maple Hts.)

Top Contenders

2	Spatola (Elder)	15	B. Marzec (Toledo St. Francis)
3	Tepley (Garfield Hts.)	16	Cox (Xenia)
4	Herrera (Mayfield)	17	Ringle (Westerville North)
5	Vondruska (St. Edward)	18	Sanchez (Dayton Carroll)
6	Doucher (Coffman)	19	Walters (Massillon Perry)
7	Ducher (Nordonia)	20	Schuller (Toledo Central Catholic)
8	Harris (Woodward)	21	Jones (Mentor)
9	Varner (East Liverpool)	22	Link (Uniontown Lake))
10	Reiter (Wayne)	23	Bush (Lakota East)
11	Flake (Lakota West)	24	Visocky (Brush)
12	N. Lafia (Riverside)	25	Hess (Mt. Vernon)
13	Williamson (Pickerington)	26	Wisecup (Wilmington)
14	Schleucher (Celina)	27	Dowell (Admiral King)

There are five returning state placers competing at this weight - - the most of any class - - and they all have finalist potential. Lets look at each in a little more detail.

Of the top quintet Joe Pflug, now, a junior, has the best credentials and, perhaps, the most ability. In both his freshman and sophomore season he opened with 36 consecutive victories and then lost his state finals bout--once to three- time champ Lenhard and once to probable, three-time champ Ott. That is a marvelous record generated by Pflug's incredible quickness and ability to counter. This year he won at Franklin Hts, but was 2nd at Brecksville defeating Tepley in a tough semi-final before losing to Schlatter by four in the finals. The only negative with Pflug is his unwillingness to initiate aggressive takedown attempts against topnotch competition.

In his state finals bout with Lenhard last year (who he defeated at Mentor) he surrendered an early takedown, and did not pursue an aggressive course that might have resulted in a takedown or generated stalling calls. Instead he stayed in his stance waiting to capitalize on a poor Lenhard shot. Again, at Brecksville I did not see the level of aggressiveness against Tepley that could have made a nail-biter into a more decisive win.

Herrera was a strong and, perhaps, surprising 4th last year including a brilliant run at Columbus. A district third place winner he cruised into the semi-finals against the undefeated Smith. There in a titanic struggle marred by some bizarre officiating he battled into the sudden death overtime losing, on of all things, a penalty point for false starts. I thought he had out-wrestled Smith. He came back to claim 4th. This year he won at Wadsworth and the WRC and was 3rd at Mayfield and the Top Gun. He is a persistent, mentally tough competitor who is especially good with a lead.

Tepley, tall and slender, was also 4th last year losing to the excellent West in the first round and then winning four consolation bouts before again losing to West in the consolation finals. He was 4th at Brecksville losing by a point to Pflug and by criteria to Ducher. He is a consummate defensive wrestler with solid riding skills. He could win it all, like Spires last year, by winning a succession of close low-scoring bouts.

Spatola is very tall and has a boatload of experience. He was 5th as a freshman at 103# and then 4th his sophomore year at 119#. Last year, plagued by injury, he was forced to default two bouts at the Southwest District and did not qualify. This year he was champion at the GMVMA and 2nd at the SWOCA losing to Zinkan as his last second takedown bid that meant the title was fended off. He was also 2nd at the CIT losing to the brilliant Schlatter. He can score and has a higher proportion of pins than the others.

Vondruska was the huge surprise last year at 135#. He entered district action with 14 losses, but put up three solid wins to make the finals where he lost to eventual state runner-up Vince DiGiovanni in overtime. Then at the State Meet he beat both Baria and Dysart in overtime, before falling to 6th place. This year at 130# he was 3rd at the Ironman and Powerade looking solid at both events. Very disciplined, he is especially dangerous if he can keep it close early on.

I think this is the year that Joe Pflug wins his first state title. It appears that recently it has been recognized that Pflug can and needs to be more aggressive in big matches. At Mayfield, he twice took Schlaatter down with offensive moves, and, in fact, was the slightly more aggressive boy. They both had two takedowns in the 7-6 Schlatter win, but Pflug might have had more shots. It was a great bout and confirmed many of our suspicions that an aggressive Pflug is a superior product.

At Perry, both Pflug and Tepley could be challenged by the very solid Ducher - - who beat Tepley for 3rd at Brecksville after a strange loss to Flake. Walters, up from 125#, Link and White would be co-favorites for the last berth.

Spatola faces a crowded field at Fairfield, but he is a clear step ahead of all of them. State qualifier Reiter, the erratic Flake, and Cox look to be next best. This would seem to be a wide-open competition with Spatola dominating at the top, but a lot of activity and surprises in other parts of the bracket.

I think very highly of Ducher who has had an excellent season except for the Sunday of the Ohio Duals. Even then, he defeated Reiter, 9-3, before losing to Pierce and Walters. I'm ignoring it and assuming he'll be in the hunt for a place at Columbus. A Ducher - Ducher match-up there would certainly stress the public address announcer. Varner won at Solon and was a strong 2nd at the OVAC, while Williamson, Ringle and Hess have been solid, if unspectacular, in their own locale. Graham (Marion Franklin) is just now starting to compete, and could be a factor in this district.

The Mentor District is not particularly strong at this weight class. We've already discussed Vondruska who would seem to be the premier player here. The big unknown is Harris who won two district bouts last year at 130# - - including a win over Doucher. He was a titlist at Woodward, but does not wrestle a real strong schedule. The enigmatic Jones is another mystery, which, I expect, will be resolved at this district.

135 #

Projected Champion: Matt McIntire (Lakota West)

Top Contenders

2	West (Dayton Carroll)	14	Springer (Mt. Vernon)
3	Moore (Westland)	15	Beach (Clay)
4	Baria (Moeller)	16	Penn (Solon)
5	Evans (Thomas Worthington)	17	Stehlin (Fairfield)
6	Kovach (Massillon Perry)	18	Elliott (Olentangy)
7	A. Morris (Rogers)	19	Orlando (Wadsworth)
8	Allen (Strongsville)	20	Carraher (St. Xavier)
9	Sandquist (Fitch)	21	Felton (Elyria)
10	McGee (Cuyahoga Falls)	22	Danes/Gvora (Eastlake North)
11	Bookman (Logan)	23	Crumbley (East Liverpool)
12	Pierce (St. Edward)	24	Hynd (Geneva)
13	Wright (Start)	25	Hafer (Butler)

On the surface this would appear to be a two-man competition although there are several wrestlers on the periphery of challenging the top duo. The favorite has to be the junior dynamo from Lakota West, state runner-up Matt McIntire. Last year he was 38-0 entering the state meet and then added three more victories before losing a 3-1 finals bout to the defensive specialist Spires. McIntire wrestles six in-your-face minutes and is again undefeated this year - - including a win over Division II champ Jason Barnett. The only way to beat him in my judgment is to make it a one-move match (if you can) and hope for the best. In a contest with lots of scoring I think McIntire is unbeatable.

West has had a brilliant high school career finishing 6th, 4th and 3rd the last three years, but never quite reaching the finals. He now has a career record of 144-12, but may still be searching for the right weight class this year. He has been at 130#, and 140#, but I think right here is the best fit. Both 130# and 140# are crowded with contenders while 135#, at least for now, is strangely empty. Better yet, he has split two bouts with McIntire (in 1999) and they exit the same district so that he would not see him until the finals. This year, West has won four titles - - Ironman, GMVWA, CIT and Carroll—while finishing 3rd at Medina and he also holds a victory over Barnett. He seems very ready in this, his last attempt at a state title.

McIntire and West isn't all there is at Fairfield. Baria wrestled up a weight class last year, but he is a hard working guy. He qualified for Columbus, and then after a first round loss, worked his way back to 4th place at 135#. This year he has been one of the team's steadiest performers. He approaches every bout with a hard-nosed attitude that gives warning of his determination. He was 4th at the CIT losing to Division II and Division III projected champs Barnett and Hurley, and beat Kovach, Pierce and Evans at the Ohio Duals. After him there is a substantial drop-off back to Stehlin, Carraher and Spence.

There will be some good competition at Darby. Moore was 5th at 112# two years ago, but missed placement last year by one win. He was 5th at Medina in what was a blockbuster field that included Hurley, Smith, West, and Finneran. He has wrestled at 140# part of the year, but this will be a perfect fit. State qualifiers Evans and Bookman also return and have performed well this year. Bookman lost a one-pointer to Baria last year. Both of these boys could scramble to a low place. Springer is probably the best bet for the fourth berth but Elliott,

Crumbley, and Gibson (Westerville North) will be challengers. Smith (Chillicothe) could be a factor here, although he may compete at 130#.

The Perry district is again, very strong. Kovach was a district champion and state qualifier as a freshman 130-pounder and after an opening win he lost twice to Zinkan and Salyers. He was 3rd at Brecksville defeating Allen in overtime. Allen was 4th at Brecksville and 2nd at Mayfield - - losing to Barnett for a second time. Allen was 5th at Ironman where he upset Moore earlier in that tourney.

State qualifier McGee and Sandquist are also strong with the latter seeming on the verge of real success. Somehow, though, he always seems to lose that unexpected early bout. A dark-horse contender will be Deonte Penn. Since he moved down to 135 pounds he has been dominating opponents. He should be a sectional champ providing good district bracket position. He could be a surprise

The Mentor District is the toughest to analyze. It has two sectionals from the Northeast District melded in with two from the Northwest. This is the initial year for this arrangement so there is no past history. Even worse, there has not been much competition between the Toledo and Cleveland schools so that direct comparisons or even common opponent analysis is not available. Okay, that's enough excuses for now. This is by far the weakest district at this weight class. There are no returning state qualifiers, and no one here has a large probability of placing. Morris and Pierce might be the best, but then again, maybe not. Two to watch closely are Beach (just down from 140#) and Felton (lots of upside potential).

140 #

Projected Champion: Jason Bake (Massillon Jackson)

Top Contenders

2	J. Zinkan (Moeller)	14	Cronin (Mt. Vernon)
3	Neely (Thomas Worthington)	15	Gerwe (Milford)
4	Galchick (Fitch)	16	Trepal (Wiloughby South)
5	Dunstan (St. Edward)	17	Riley (Wadsworth)
6	DeMarco (Hudson)	18	Eynon (Fairfield)
7	Sommer (Dayton Carroll)	19	Lamonica (Coffman)
8	Rike (Kilbourne)	20	Parker (Amherst)
9	Ware (Westlake)	21	Marlow (Butler)
10	Amerine (Franklin Hts.)	22	Munson (Anthony Wayne)
11	Middendorf (Teoumseh)	23	Dobies (Garfield Hts.)
12	Hutchen (Waite)	24	Harris (Princeton)
13	Krieg (Ashland)	25	Cooperwood (Maple Hts)

Its 2:00a.m.as I write this, and as I ponder what still must be done I'm reminded of Egon's reply to Dr. Vinkman in "Ghostbusters" as they spot the Sta-Puff Marshmallow Man. "I'm terrified beyond the capacity for rational thought". But then you long-time readers knew that anyway.

The first six wrestlers at this weight class are, as a group, as good as any in this year's 42 weight classes. The winner here will have surmounted exceptional obstacles to claim the crown, and a smidgen of good fortune may be an essential ingredient in reaching that end. I've selected the winner here eight of the last nine years missing only in 1996 when my choice was 2nd.

Jason Bake had a special season last year. After losing to Percival in Ironman finals during the opening week, he won 26 consecutive bouts to take home a state title. Most of his wins were by big scores ad he pinned

DiGiovanni in the finals. This year he seems intent on repeating that process having lost in the Ironman finals, and, then again, having gone undefeated. This year, however, the competition will be much tougher and, Bake will be much more severely challenged. Remember DiGiovanni took Bake down twice in the first period and was ahead when he got caught. With experienced challengers like Neely, Zinkan, and Galchick, he cannot afford to fall far behind. Ryan Hurley gave Bake a very tough battle at Wadsworth. He can expect many more at the district and state level.

There were some curious parallels between Bake and Zinkan last year - - both lost just one bout and both lost it to Percival. However, Zinkan's loss was in the state finals after he had beaten Huddle, Dimitris, and Spivey quite handily. Zinkan has had a bit of a shaky season, too. At 145# he lost a 7-2 bout to Ruth in the SWOCA semi-finals and finished 3rd, and did not wrestle at the CIT. At 140# he looked a little wobbly at the Ohio Duals beating Neely, who had outwrestled him, in overtime, and then losing a 3-2 bout to Dunstan. However, at Easton he won three straight to get back on track.

Neely lost to Hurley at the Medina finals, but, as mentioned, wrestled Zinkan to a stand-still at the Ohio Duals. He is a "full go" wrestler who never stops. Galchick has won at Brecksville and the Top Gun with great quickness and strength. A transfer from Salem he has made progress at Fitch. Dunstan was twice a one-point loser at last year's States and the Zinkan win was his highlight of this season. He may not be as physically strong as some of the others. Demarco won the GMVWA at 145# and the WRC at 140# over Penn. He is the least known of this top half-dozen, but surely in their class in terms of performance.

The pairings may be a problem. Three of my Top Six, are at Perry so conceivably Zinkan could have Galchick, Demarco and Neely or Dunstan in his half bracket. Such an unbalanced bracket would potentially skew the eventual placement outcomes.

The Perry district is again, exceptional at the top. With Bake, Galchick and Demarco competing here there isn't a lot of room for anybody else. Interestingly there is a huge gap between them and folks like Riley and Clark. Getting the right bracketing will be crucial to qualification.

Neely should dominate at Darby. No one else there should be within a half dozen points. State qualifier Rike and Amerine are probably next best with Cronin and Lamonica a short half step behind.

Zinkan, too, should have little trouble at Fairfield. However, Sommer has had substantial experience, and could provide at least some challenge. After that, the last state spots are wide open. A dark-horse candidate might be Harris who at 18-3 has one of the best records in the group.

Dunstan's plan would be to win his district and then be paired in a half bracket with only Bake. That would almost certainly gain placement, and, perhaps, even more. State qualifier Ware is back after a marvelous district run last year. He was the only first round loser at Mentor who won five consolation bouts to get the third and last qualifying spot. Unfortunately, that strategy failed at the state level where he lost his first two outings.

145#

Projected Champion: Vinnie DiGiovanni (Solon)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|----|---------------------------|
| 2 | Wahoff (Fairfield) | 14 | Ja. Kuhner (Pickerington) |
| 3 | D. Blanks (Moeller) | 15 | Beyerlein (Lakota West) |
| 4 | Spivey (Thomas Worthington) | 16 | Konyesni (St. Edward) |

5	Ruth (Winton Woods)	17	Josey (Brookhaven)
6	Mahone (Bedford)	18	Wymer/(Rhodes (Sylvania Southview)
7	Clouse (Massillion Perry)	19	Berger (Valley Forge)
8	Ghrist (East Liverpool)	20	Barnard (North Olmstead)
9	Ashby (Mentor)	21	Helmer (Piqua)
10	A. Huddle (Marion Harding)	22	Craiglow (Lancaster)
11	Ambrose (Green)	23	Shamakian (Mayfield)
12	Berlingeri (Lorain Southview)	24	Tennant (Milford)
13	Jones (Akron Springfield)	25	King (Loveland)

If you look at potential stars, top-line strength, and overall depth this is the best weight class in division I. I will be amazed if some of these folks don't migrate to 152#. And with all this we have the added bonus of featuring some of the most aggressive wrestlers in the state. Mahone is a slam-bang get-a-fall kind of wrestler, while Blanks and Spivey are very active and offensive minded. Wahoff is a pinner who has had a particularly high percentage of falls this year, while DiGiovanni runs up high point totals. Its nice to see success with that style because wrestling is a sport that is teetering close to being out of balance at the upper levels. And, frankly, sports that lose that critical balance between offense and defense rapidly fall out of favor. I mean I was glad to see Rulon Gardner upset the Russian, but wasn't it about the most boring nine minutes of your life. You can always tell when a sport is out of balance when they start devising off-the-wall rules to jump-start scoring. Every year now FILA tries some half-baked idea just to try and get some points on the board. We must continue to find ways to reward the attacking wrestler by giving the benefit of the doubt on takedowns to the offensive wrestler and not to the defender.

There is only one reason that I've selected DiGiovanni - - I believe he is better on his feet than anyone else here. That should give him the opportunity to grab an early lead against wrestlers who are stronger and more physical than he is. The problem is that DiGiovanni is sometimes impetuous and impatient, and finds himself with poor positioning. He has been pinned by Ghrist and Woodruff this year, and Bake in last year's final. He'll have to avoid such situations with the back specialists we have at this class. DiGiovanni was 2nd last year at 135# in a somewhat surprising run. He went into the Mentor district with six losses, but had little trouble with the weak field until finals when he had to go overtime to defeat Vondruska. There was little indication that he would catch fire at the State meet and blast his way to the finals easily beating Yetzer and Neely. Then with shocking suddenness, he twice took Bake down and led 8-4 after one period before the early second period disaster.

As always the Perry District is strong. Mahone placed at this weight last year, and is, for three minutes, absolutely devastating. At the Mentor District final last year, he led 15-4 in the second period, but had to score late to seal a 20-14 win. If he can go for six minutes like he does for three, he'll be very difficult to beat. I thought state qualifier Clouse looked absolutely devastating at Brecksville until the finals when Jones' legs slowed him down. Ambrose is not as well known as the others, but he is very good. He pinned Sutcliffe at Smithville for the title, but was 2nd at the Dies when he had to forfeit to him. He was 4th at Medina losing once on an illegal slam. Jones will probably not like his rating. He has beaten Ashby and Clouse, but I'm still not totally convinced. He was 5th at the Dies, but there is no question, he is tough on top. Berger can be very good. He has beaten Ashby and lost to Ghrist in overtime. Both he and Horner, (Uniontown Lake) could pull an upset here.

The top three at Fairfield are just super. Wahoff is a three-time placer (6-6-4) whose only losses at States last year were to National High School champ Dave Bolyard. This year he has become super aggressive winning at both the SWOCA and at Kenston. He might be DiGiovanni's most dangerous foe. Blanks was ranked 2nd at 152# last year, but had some tough luck. He lost three times by scores of 4-3, 8-7 (OT), OT tie break. I still think he should have met Bertin again, in the finals. This year he won at SWOCA and swept through the Ohio Duals. His only losses have been out-of-state- defeats. Ruth is a solid block of muscle who is a returning state qualifier. At the SWOCA. he beat Zinkan, but lost a one-pointer to Wahoff. The last spot is up for grabs.

Spivey was 4th at 140# last year with wins over Dunstan and Terbay. This year he dominated at Medina and Franklin Hts., but was 3rd at the Midwest Classic losing 6-4 to DiGiovanni. His only other loss was to the Moeller back-up 145-pounder who caught and pinned him at the Ohio Duals. State alternate Ghrist, had a fall over DiGiovanni to win at Solon, but was only 4th at the OVAC. State qualifier Huddle also returns and has had a strong season. He was 2nd at both the Gorman and Marion Harding. The sophomore, Jake Kuhner, was a junior high state runner-up and is probably fourth best here. Josey, down from 152#, is a bit of an unknown quantity, both in terms of past performance and how he'll react to the lower weight. He cannot be overlooked.

The Mentor district is clearly the weakest at this weight class. Only Ashby has had state experience, but its been a bit of an up-and-down year for him. This will be another weight class where it will be interesting to see the Cleveland sectionals face

off against those from Toledo. I know the expectation is that Cleveland will dominate, but neither of those Northeast sectionals are as strong as normal this year. I would say the issue is still in doubt. Besides those listed, watch for ,White (Madison), Fischer (Bowsher) and Avsec (Geneva).

152 #

Projected Champion: Chris Kallai (Wadsworth)

Top Contenders

2	Terbay (Dayton Carroll)	14	Franke (Clay)
3	Bauer (Ashland)	15	Settles (Brunswick)
4	Kaney (Wayne)	16	Holztrager (Normandy)
5	Leabu (St. Edward)	17	White (Coffman)
6	Jo. Kuhner (Pickerington)	18	Partee (Davidson)
7	Johnson (Waite)	19	Dotson (Groveport Madison)
8	Gray (Fitch)	20	Harris (Lorain Southview)
9	C. Marzec (Toledo St. Francis)	21	Sacksteder (Harrison)
10	Fogliano (Maple Hts.)	22	Gasparro (Strongsville)
11	M. Blanks (Moeller)	23	Brady (Massillon)
12	Ross (Wilmington)	24	Hoehn (Wapakoneta)
13	Gadson (Fairfield)	25	Feeney (Grove City)
		26	Schein (Logan)

When I worked in Advertising, we had a slogan that perception is reality, and you see that every day. For example, the common, housefly became the second creature to have its full genome decoded by a very dedicated group of scientists. Fly people as Drosophila researcher call themselves, get so immersed with their work that they come to think of people as large flies without wings. Like I said, perception is everything and my perspective looking at the 152-pound weight class is that as presently constituted it is very weak. After the dynamite contests anticipated at 140# and 145#, this might be one of the weakest weight class in Division I. I was stunned when both, Mahone and David Blanks dropped to 145# when this weight class seemed so much more congenial. Perhaps we'll see one or both return to this class, and, if so, they will be high impact items.

Saying that one weights class is weaker than another does not mean it will be less competitive. That can be true, but, oftentimes, it just suggests that the battle will be fought with wrestlers who have less credentials. That is my view here. I anticipate a lot of close, hard-fought bouts with some real surprises.

My choice is the Wadsworth senior, Chris Kallai. It's been over 20 years since a Kallai has won a state title so I think this wrestling family is overdue. Kallai was a district runner-up last year at this class, but lost a tough

opening round match-up to eventually runner-up Patzakis, 9-7. Two consolation wins put him in position to place, but a loss to Kapustka finished him. This year he beat Bauer in overtime to win at Wadsworth and lost a 13-12 heartbreaker to Division II champ Keith Cupp in the Top Gun final. He was perfect at the Ohio Duals bombing Leabu, 11-2. To win he'll have to have superior match management because one can anticipate some very close bouts.

However, that probably won't be true at the district level. I think there is a clearly discernible gap between him and a bevy of other contenders. Gray, Fogliano, Settles, Holztrager, and Gasparro are all very close and if you add Brady, Herchick (Hudson) and Hood (Medina) into the mix it spells donnybrook. I like Fogliano because he can be a pinner while Settles just won the Dies at this class. Finishing first in these crowded sectionals could provide the bracket edge needed to qualify.

Terbay has been absent for a bit, but if he's healthy and at weight he would be a very close second choice at this class. He won the Ironman with a 5-4 win over Leabu and pinned Mahone to take the Medina title. He did not wrestle at the Carroll Invitational but their excellent 160-pounder Merkle, took the 152# title – so maybe we are seeing a possible switch. Last year, as a sophomore, Terbay was a state quarter-finalist and ended up 5th. By the time you read this where he will wrestle is likely to have been resolved. State qualifier Kaney, is up five weight classes, but seems to have adjusted well. Marcus Blanks, David's identical twin, missed all of last year, but won the SWOCA at 160# on a fall. I saw him at the Ohio Duals where I thought his conditioning was suspect. He moved reasonably well, but Leabu got him at the end and won 12-4. Division II state qualifier Ross, will be here this year, but Merkle beat him at Carroll. Gadson was 2nd at Kenston and looked like a wrestler with great potential, but clearly is still rough around the edges.

Bauer heads a strong quartet at Mentor. He lost to Kallai in overtime at Wadsworth for 2nd and to Hahn at Smithville for 3rd, but was an easy winner at the Gorman. He has finalist potential. Leabu has looked very shaky recently. He does not seem to be wrestling with the kind of confidence his skills should command. He was 3rd at Mayfield just nipping Fogliano and 3rd also at the Powerade. It's time to pick-up the pace. State qualifier, Marzec and Johnson are strong representatives from the Toledo area. Marzec won at Oak Harbor and Tiffin and was a finalist at the CIT while Johnson was a champion at Perrysburg and Waite utilizing final round crushes. That's a strong quartet with Harris, and Franke not far behind.

There is not a lot at Darby. Kuhner was 3rd at Medina and was a state alternate last year. White is capable of the big upset so he must be handled with care while everybody else here is likely to be first round fodder at the Schottenstein Center.

160#

Projected Champion: Anthony Magistrelli (Maple Hts.)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 2 | Stephens (Brookhaven) | 15 | White (Firestone) |
| 3 | Ruberg (Harrison) | 16 | Williams (Wayne) |
| 4 | Patzakis (Madison) | 17 | McGee (Cuyahoga Falls) |
| 5 | Dysart (Coffman) | 18 | Merkle (Dayton Carroll) |
| 6 | Wiseman (GlenOak) | 19 | Pechinney (Upper Arlington) |
| 7 | Ostholthoff (Moeller) | 20 | Sima (Gahanna Lincoln) |
| 8 | Shaver (St. Edward) | 21 | Bailey (Mt. Vernon) |
| 9 | McDaniel (Libbey) | 22 | Schutte (Maumee) |
| 10 | Horne (Wilmington) | 23 | Ryan (Strongsville) |
| 11 | Johansson (Scioto) | 24 | Fuhrmann (Lakota West) |
| 12 | Egan (Perry) | 25 | Gross (Brush) |

13 Jamerson (Canton McKinley)

26 Sartor (Sandusky)

14 Elsen (Fairfield)

Last year I spent some time looking at the future prospects of underclassmen who make the state finals, but lose and finish as runners-up. Somehow it intuitively seemed that in the natural order of things most of those runners-up would become champions. Yet, as this chart shows, that is far from a sure bet.

YEAR	RETURNING STATE RUNNERS-UP	NUMBER WHO WERE CHAMPS	PERCENTAGE
2000	19	10	52.6%
1999	19	8	42.1%
1998	19	7	36.8%
1997	16	7	43.8%
TOTAL	73	32	43.8%

In fact, less than half triumph the following year which suggest that perhaps, 7 of our 15 returning runners-up this year will move up one step on the championship podium. That has significance at this weight class as Patzakis returns after finishing 2nd last year at 152#.

For the last two years Magistrelli, has been on the cusp of greatness, and I believe this is his breakthrough year. He was 5th as a sophomore and 3rd last year losing only to eventual champ, Schweda, 3-0. This year he has suddenly gotten very aggressive, very physical and the results are startling - - an undefeated season, three tournament titles, and a boatload of pins. He'll be a marked man at Columbus, but I think he'll handle the pressure.

Magistrelli's chief competition from the Perry District should come from the swift Wiseman. At 171# much of the year this returning state qualifier has been tough to beat. He was an overtime loser at 171# in the Brecksville final and was 3rd at that same weight class at North Canton. His only loss at 160# was an injury default at the Top Gun. Egan is a solid, workmanlike performer, who gets middle to low places at this weight. Jamerson is the best Canton McKinley has to offer while White and McGee will be in the hunt as well. Its the top duo that you will want to watch.

Stephens was 5th last year at 160# and heads a rugged Darby district. He has the potential to defeat Magistrelli, but may have trouble with his style the first time he sees it. He is undefeated this year, including wins at Tiffin, Kilbourne, and Upper Arlington. Dysart was a district champ and state qualifier at 135# last year, where he just failed to place. He is a very athletic 160-pounder with wins just about everywhere except the Medina final where Ruberg outscored him. He has strong placement potential. Johansson's a good third choice here, but after that, its all nebulous and hazy.

Patzakis parleyed a trio of narrow victories to the state runner-up spot last year and this excellent all-around athlete could well do the same this year .he was an easy champion at Wadsworth and the CVCA duals. He's not flashy but they keep raising his hand at the end of every bout. He has two potential challengers for the district crown at Mentor. Shaver has had a great season in his first year in a starting role at St. Edward. He was 2nd at the Ironman, Powerade, and Mayfield Duals. His only really crushing defeat was Magistrelli tech falling him at Mayfield. McDaniel is the other challenger and he has been a terror in the Toledo are while going undefeated. A powerful pinner , he'll have to be handled with care.

Ruberg and Ostholthoff lead a solid Fairfield contingent. Ruberg was 3rd last year at 152# losing only to the incomparable Bertin. Still this two-time state qualifier is inconsistent. He won the Medina in a tough field, but was 7th at Brecksville losing to Galvan and Carmony. Ostholthoff is just down from 171#. He was the

SWOCA champ at that weight pinning in the finals. He will be a problem for anyone in the state bracket sheet. State qualifier Horne, comes over from division II with good credentials while remainder of the field is a step behind. Of course, that all changes if Terbay ends up competing here.

171 #

Projected Champion: Hetag Pliev (Lakota East)

Top Contenders

2	M. Kallai (Wadsworth)	15	Swift (St. Edward)
3	Camargo (Berea)	16	Andy (Ashland)
4	Lukens (Moeller)	17	Tucker (Cofman)
5	Fairman (Mayfield)	18	Edwards (Mansfield Madison)
6	Cesear (Amherst)	19	Crowthers (Mt. Vernon)
7	Snyder (Massillon Perry)	20	Oravec (Padua)
8	Westbeld (Fairmont)	21	Gregorek (Lorain Southview)
9	Bartlett (Wapakoneta)	22	Saylor (Fairfield)
10	Grutsch (Thomas Worthington)	23	Schoolcraft (East Liverpool)
11	Miller (Bedford)	24	May (Elder)
12	Haws (Butler)	25	Alexander (Howland)
13	Garcia (Libbey)	26	Carpenter (Maumee)
14	Henderson (Solon)	27	Woltz (Logan)
		28	Baute (St. Xavier)

Bach wrote six suites for unaccompanied cello - - they were nearly lost, the original manuscript was never found, and only a few copies handwritten by his wife made it through. Once rediscovered, they were, for the longest time, simply ignored, mistaken for exercise etudes. Then, at the age of 13, the prodigy Pablo Casals was rummaging around in a second hand shop in Barcelona, and he found a dusty copy of these pieces he had never heard of. He bought them, took them home, studied them and was later to describe the experience as the greatest revelation of his life. He worked at them every day for 12 years until he had the courage to play them in public, and then he seemed to never stop performing them, and with absolutely intimidating authority. These pieces have become to cellists what Shakespeare's plays are to actors or Rembrandt's painting to painters - - the foundation of the repertoire, the music that can be returned to and never exhaust.

Thus, it was on the slender threads of chance that one of the great musical works can be enjoyed today. My question, in this connection is whether it was the slender threads of chance that catapulted Nick Lukens to a state title last year. Make no mistake, Lukens earned that title with solid wrestling and masterful match management. Still he was a district 3rd losing to Clemens 9-0 in the semi-finals for his sixth loss. Then after capturing 3rd place by a point he won four bouts at Columbus - - two in overtime and the other two by a total of three points. In the finale he defeated Clemens with an overtime takedown. This year he was pinned by Rios at the Beast of the East, barely defeated Chambers in the semi-finals before being thumped by Keough 7-1 in the SWOCA finals, and then was majored by Rios 13-5 in the dual meet. All this was at 189#. At the CIT he dropped to 171, but lost to Morrison, 13-5 in the finals although the first week after his cut might have proven difficult. Again, at Easton, he lost two out of three to drop his record to 14-7.

There are three other challengers. Kallai was freshman of the year in 1999 when he was a district champ at 145# and the finished 3rd at Columbus losing only to three-time titlist Ty Morgan. Last year at 160# he repeated as district champ, but was a disappointing 6th at States losing twice to Stephens. This year he won at Wadsworth and Mayfield, but was 5th at the Top Gun. He has split two one-point bouts with Camargo. He is clearly the biggest Kallai that we've seen in the past 30 years.

Camargo is a great looking athlete with tremendous upside potential. He was a district champion at this weight class last year and beat Pliev in the first round 12-11--losses to Hallahan and Clift then quickly eliminated him. This year he was 2nd (to Kallai) at Wadsworth and won at the Top Gun. He's a real "horse" at this weight.

Pliev is truly amazing. A recent Russian emigrant, he likes only free-style and is negative on the way we conduct high school bouts. He is only a junior, but already a two-time state qualifier, though never a placer. At Brecksville, weighing 180 pounds, he tossed the 189's, good ones like Nagel, Poe and Robertson, all over the mat. He made it look frighteningly easy. I can't imagine what he'll do at 171# nor, frankly, can anyone else. There is a certain inconsistency to his performance - - sometimes almost a certain lack of interest.

So where do we stand? Where we always seem to in recent years at this weight class, in a state of confusion shaking our head at the number of options. This has been a jinx weight class in recent years with surprises like Lukens and Osolin winning. My original choice was Kallai based on consistency and experience, with Camargo almost an equal co-favorite. But how can you overlook Pliev's dominating performances where he shreds first-class wrestlers. I worry about his focus and his predilection for unusual losses, but he has to be the choice.. Lukens is extremely intelligent - - as witness, his Stanford acceptance (my 11th grade daughter is terribly jealous) and, I'm sure will right the ship. However, the slender threads of probability are not often repeatable.

Kallai and Camargo stand tall at Perry, but Snyder is a strong third choice. He has good placement potential. Miller is somewhat overshadowed by Mahone at Bedford, but he has had a great season winning a number of tournaments. His only disappointment was at Medina where he didn't seem ready. Henderson and Oravec have both been impressive, but there is not a lot of qualification room. Alexander and Tesch are both good long-shot choices.

Pliev and Lukens should dominate at Fairfield. Two Dayton entrants, Westbeld and Haws, look to be next best although Haws stumbled recently against Tesch. Should any of this top group falter Saylor, May and Baute wait in the wings. Gadd at 19-4 is a possibility here. Clum (Greenville) would have been a qualification threat here, but shoulder surgery has apparently erased his season.

It is very confusing at Mentor. Fairman and the undefeated Cesear look to be best, but both have some issues - - particularly the strength of Cesear's schedule. State qualifier Edwards was 6th at the Top Gun and 5th at the Gorman and may struggle to qualify. Bartlett was a state alternate last year and should play an important part at this district. Garcia, Carpenter, Andy and Akenberger (Bowsher) are strong Toledo entrants, but the real mystery is Swift. He has beaten some strong boys but he also falls victim to first period pins. Avoiding that he might make it through this crowded field.

There is very little at Darby. Tucker is rated first in the Columbus area , but Swift and Snyder pinned him at the Ohio Duals and he lost early at Medina. I've also listed Crowthers and Grutsch in my Top Twenty, but this is a district you'll want to draw into at Columbus

189 #

Projected Champion: Jeff Clements (Dayton Carroll)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 2 | Delguyd (Mayfield) | 15 | Wenzdorfer (Cuyahoga Falls) |
| 3 | Rios (St. Edward) | 16 | Cramer (Reynoldsburg) |
| 4 | Robertson (Normandy) | 17 | Creeden (Moeller) |
| 5 | Poe (Cloverleaf) | 18 | Bookmiller (Northview) |

6	Klaus (Wadsworth)	19	Muir (Solon)
7	Hiller (Greenville)	20	Lawson (Fairfield)
8	Beechum (Marion Harding)	21	Chapman (Bedford)
9	Klimkowicz (Madison)	22	Jones (East Liverpool)
10	Horton (Pickerington)	23	Chambers (Elder)
11	Springer (Northmont)	24	Galbraith (Anthony Wayne)
12	Griffiths (Darby)	25	Plogsted (Coffman)
13	Schultz (Harrison)	26	McKiernan (Anderson)
14	Killian (Brush)	27	Fink (Willoughby South)

When you see numbers like St. Edwards 60 individual state titles or the 30 or more by teams like Maple Hts., Walsh Jesuit, Richmond Hts., and Columbus, DeSales, you forget how difficult it is to produce a state champion. Many fine programs are pleased to boast one or two champions in their wrestling past. A good example is St. Xavier, which has had fine teams for decades but has had only one champion or Fremont Ross whose last (and only) titlist happened way back in 1960. I bring this up because Dayton Carroll, has annually been represented by fine teams and excellent individuals, but are still looking for their first title. With Clemens Terbay, West and Barrentine, this would seem to be their year to experience that magic moment.

This would appear to be strictly a three-man contest with Clemens, Delguyd, and Rios, the only possible winners. Clemens was the state runner-up at 171# last year losing to Lukens in overtime after having defeated him, 9-0, in the districts. This year he was a very strong 2nd at the Ironman losing to out-of-state Backes and then winning in dominating fashion at Medina, Carroll, the GMVWA, and the CIT. He has a well-rounded style that shows strength in every element of the sport. His only lack is overwhelming horsepower.

Delguyd, only a junior, is already a two-time state qualifier who was 4th last year. Very, very strong he was beginning, I feared, to become one of those upper-weight wrestlers who abandon offensive actions for the safe, sure defensive posture. He took refuge in his strength and experience, and took no risks. At last year's districts, for example, he had three low-scoring overtime bouts that included two that went to the 30-second tie-breaker. It was like watching paint dry - - only not as interesting. That trend continued at Columbus with two more overtime struggles, and this year has been much the same. in the last two rounds of tournaments.

It was always a cautious low-scoring bout. Then suddenly against Rios, we saw a different Delguyd. Attacking from the start, we saw two thigh-high doubles that led to back points and an eventual fall against a wrestler who had just defeated the #1 189-pounder in the country. Now, which Delguyd will show up in Columbus?

Rios has to be the most improved wrestler in Ohio. A backup 189-pounder at St. Ed's last year he couldn't make the varsity team at a weight class where his team was not particularly strong. Then in the summer, he dedicated himself to getting better. He drove himself in every aspect of the sport and honed his not inconsiderable physical talents to the maximum, It paid off. He was 3rd at the Ironman (losing by a point to Backes), but pinned Lukens at the Beast of the East, won at the Powerade, and dominated everybody since including Lukens (again) and the #1 Hard. The Delguyd episode will only strengthen his resolve. His big negative is experience, which cannot be acquired overnight no matter how good the high school program. His strength is a fierce attacking posture, which leads to lots of points, and normally a victory.

Rios and Delguyd exit at Mentor in what one would hope pairings wise would be a rematch in the finals. I see Klimkowicz and Killian as next best with Fink and the Toledo contingent – Bookmiller, Galbraith and Maldonado (Whitmer) - - as other possibilities.

Clemens should have little trouble at Fairfield. State qualifier, Hiller, returns but Clemens finished ahead of him at the GMVWA as Hiller lost before he could reach my top pick. The rest of this group is relatively innocuous with little chance of state placement.

There should be a sharp struggle at Perry. State placer Poe, state qualifier, Klaus, and Robertson make for a formidable trio. All three might grab a low place. Robertson has lost only to Pliev this year, and I believe, he is marginally best here. Klaus was 3rd at Wadsworth and had a close low scoring bout with Delguyd (who hasn't), but was bombed by Rios 19-7. Poe was 6th last year after defeating Hiller and Camino to make the semi-finals. Two possible upset specialists are Muir and Chapman.

State qualifier Beechum heads a very representative Darby contingent which may not have horsepower to battle the top half-dozen wrestlers. Horton might be the exception as he seemed in good form at Medina. I like Griffiths, who won at Waite and Darby. Look for some upsets at the district level at this weight class.

215 #

Projected Champion: Matt Koz (St. Edward)

Top Contenders

2	Ritzenthaler (Kilbourne)	15	Cutting (Anderson)
3	Katafiasz (Northview)	16	Dulik (Whitmer)
4	Barrentine (Dayton Carroll)	17	Strange (Winton Woods)
5	Legg (Fremont Ross)	18	Riegler (Coffman)
6	Mohler (Wadsworth)	19	Espinosa (Massillon Perry)
7	Campea (Padua)	20	Kershaw (Madison)
8	Juby (Garfield Hts.)	21	Tabor (Mayfield)
9	Burgei (Darby)	22	Tornello (Boardman)
10	Slaven (Lebanon)	23	Drew (Lakota West)
11	Adams (Scioto)	24	Hudson (Maumee)
12	Naltner (Elder)	25	Dearing (Athens)
13	Baker (Libbey)	26	Hennessey (Harrison)
14	Haddox (Groveport Madison)	27	Ankney (Sidney)

Since the advent of this weight in 1995, the eventual champ was rated either 1st (four times) or 2nd (twice) in this report. This year that mark will be put to the test as we confront a weight class that is ill-defined and weak. There are only four returning state qualifiers - - none of whom have reached state placement. Last year, for example, there were eight wrestlers with previous state experience and three who had placed. What this portends is a wide-open competition where a dark horse contender or even a relative unknown can win.

Only one sophomore has ever won a state title at 215# in any school classification, and that was three-time state champ Jeff Knupp. This year there are two possibilities with both Matt Koz and Pat Barrentine, strong contenders. In my view this is probably a four man competition with Legg, an outside possibility. I also believe that the last two rounds will feature very close bouts where match management will be crucial.

Koz won two state bouts last year and has built on that to fashion an outstanding 2000-01 campaign. He won titles at Mayfield and the Ironman and was 2nd at the Beast of the East. His huge pin at heavyweight gave St. Ed's a 28-27 win over Easton and he was perfect at the Ohio Duals. His only close bout was an overtime win over Mohler, and he has developed as a strong pinner.

Ritzenthaler could easily win and he has been at the top of my 215-pound list at various times this year. I undervalued him last year and he made that crystal clear by making it to the state tournament and then winning two bouts there. Unlike Koz, he is undefeated this year, but wrestles a far gentler schedule. It will not be a surprise if he takes it all.

Katafiasz has spent the last 12 months preparing for his senior season. It has paid off in an undefeated season that includes pinning every opponent, but Hudson. A state qualifier last year, he was eliminated by Ritzenthaler in a close bout. He seems very determined to win it all this year and the Toledo Blade calls him an obvious top choice - they could be right.

Barrentine is a transfer from West Carrollton, who has quickly filled the 215# niche. He was 4th at the Ironman, 3rd at Medina, 2nd at the GMVWA and 1st at Carroll and the CIT - - in that order. That's the right kind of progression and he should benefit from a relatively easy district.

Koz and Katafiasz are at the Mentor District and the winner there should have a 67% chance of being away from Ritzenthaler as well, at the state meet. That would be a big advantage and certainly improve state title chances. It will also be interesting to see if Katafiasz can run roughshod over Koz as he has done to everyone in the northwest. Tiffin champ, Legg, is also there in what is the most difficult district. There will be some real battles for the fourth state berth with bracketing playing an important role.

Ritzenthaler has already proven he can beat all the Central district 215's and should have little trouble taking home his first district title. The quartet of Burgei, Adams Haddox, and Riegler is solid, but one will have to stay home. My feeling is that any of the three who qualify have outside placement possibilities.

There is also strong competition at Fairfield with Barrentine on top, but not nearly as dominant as Ritzenthaler at Darby. State qualifier Slaven, should reach Columbus once again, but placement may be a reach. Naltner and Cutting are very close, but they are, perhaps, slightly ahead of the remaining 215's after Barrentine. This group will struggle at Columbus.

There are three potential placers at Perry. Campea is big and strong and just plain tough to score against. He won at Brecksville over Juby in overtime and was 2nd at Avon Lake holding Moran to a 3-1 win. He was a 2-1 loser away from a possible state berth in last year's district, but should qualify this year. Juby has put together strong back-to-back seasons. He, too, is good defensively and it will be close with almost everyone. Mohler is huge and moves well, too. He gave Koz all he could handle at the Ohio Duals. He was a one-point finalist loser at Wadsworth and was 2nd at Mayfield when Koz caught and pinned him.

HVY.

Projected Champion: Kenny Leckrone (Fairmont)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|----|------------------------------------|
| 2 | Olds (Coffman) | 14 | Moxie (GlenOak) |
| 3 | Bendau (Mayfield) | 15 | Winbush (Westerville North) |
| 4 | Cannings (Waite) | 16 | Golden (Green) |
| 5 | Bevington (Mt. Vernon) | 17 | Wendolowski (St. Edward) |
| 6 | Wernke (Wapakoneta) | 18 | Rosing (St. Xavier) |
| 7 | Vallos (Boardman) | 19 | Huber (Elder) |
| 8 | Gray (Marion Harding) | 20 | Garner (Lakota West) |
| 9 | Dooley (Mason) | 21 | Smith (Cleveland Hts.) |
| 10 | Redman (East Liverpool) | 22 | Verheist (Toledo Central Catholic) |
| 11 | Murray (Tecumseh) | 23 | DiTomasso (Pickerington) |
| 12 | Ardo (Stow) | 24 | Hurst (Cleveland East) |
| 13 | Booth (Anthony Wayne) | 25 | Allen (Loveland) |

This would appear to be a two-man battle in much the same manner as we saw at 135#. Of course, at this weight class the upset potential is enormous as just one small mistake can quickly end the quest for a state title. Last year was unusual, in that, the two dominant heavyweights met in the finals having survived all upset attempts. This year Leckrone and Olds would seem to be a clear step above the rest of the field. I view Olds as, perhaps, the slightly better athlete, but Leckrone as the more accomplished wrestler.

Leckrone made it to semi-finals last year before being crushed by Stepanovich and then losing again to Padilla for 3rd. Purely by chance I shared an elevator with him after the semi-finals and he was most pleasant despite the defeat. However, he vowed he wouldn't be thrown around like that again - - and he has kept his word. His only loss was to long-time nemesis Lane, last year's Division III runner-up, at the Mid-West Classic, which he avenged by fall at the GMVWA. He also hammered Cannings 8-0, but has not met some of the other good heavies (not that there are that many).

Olds, a football signee at Ohio State, is now right at about the weight limit and is undefeated this year. Last season he was 30-2 going into States but lost in the quarter-finals to Padilla and didn't place. This year he won impressively at Medina majoring Turner (Division III choice) in the finals after pinning Bryant and decisioning Cottrell. He also won at Perrysburg, Upper Arlington, and Dublin. He wrestled Cannings in the Perrysburg finals and, significantly or not, won 8-5.

This wild card here is Bendau. Only a sophomore he has a wide repertoire of free-style moves that make him very dangerous. He's had some injury problems. But if healthy, he can be a deadly pinner. He pinned state qualifier Ardo in the WRC finals and had five first period falls at Wadsworth. Watch for him, again, watch for him

Leckrone should have no trouble at the Fairfield District. There is a big drop-off down to SWOCA runner-up Dooley, not only in performance, but in weight (about 40 pounds). Murray has had some big wins while Rosing has been a consistent placer. The ultra-light Huber - - who apparently cannot beat out Naltner at 215# - - was 2nd at the CIT and his agility could tie up some of the bigger boys.

It will be much tougher for Olds at Darby. Bevington is a mobile heavyweight with good skills. He has but two losses, one to my Division III choice Turner, and the other to Division II Cullin. He was 3rd at the Top Gun, beat Cannings to win at Waite, and defeated Gray for the Gorman title. The 265-pound Gray had four falls including one over Wernke to win at Marion Harding. Last year he was often passive, but is more aggressive this year. Redman and Winbush are both good, and I'm always amazed that Redman doesn't win just about everything. He always looks great when I see him at solon.

Bendau is the most active heavyweight in the state as he leads the Mentor District. His big challenge will be Cannings who is right at the weight limit. A Toledo scouting paper on Cannings reports that "he's a bull and when he wants can be very good but sometimes is content to be passive." Leckrone beat him 8-0, but Olds decisioned him by a closer 8-5 mark. State qualifier Wernke has not been consistent this year, but should still be a force here. The relatively small Booth has won 19 of his last 20 bouts after a slow start.

The mammoth Vallos won at Kenston and was a strong 4th at the Top Gun losing only to division II choice Raber and Bevington. State qualifier Ardo is about 270 pounds and can be very dangerous. He was 3rd at Brecksville after a very early loss. Golden is the first wrestler to be designated by two colors in this report, and is a possible state qualifier along with Moxie. Hurst could be a real surprise. At 270 pounds he has the size to

compete, and he won a district bout last year. He may have the best chance of any Cleveland Senate wrestler to qualify.

Teams

1. **St. Edward** – This is a team that last year graduated seven starters, four state champs and 127 points. It was supposed to be a rebuilding year and, in a sense, it is. They only start five seniors, but still should score over 100 points in their quest for a 17th team title. Moos, Lang, Rios and Koz are potential state champs, but they'll need the middleweights - - Vondroska, Dunstan, Leabu and Shaver - - to score at least a little to lock down the team trophy. I think it might be closer than most people are expecting.
2. **Moeller** – No team from the Southwest District has ever won a Division I team title and only Wayne and Moeller the last two years have been runners-up. Moeller returns the most state points (70.0), but they have not looked sharp all year. Still, both Zinkan boys, Blanks, and Lukens could be finalists and Baria is sure to place high. That means Candy, Ostholthoff, M. Blanks and Creeden need to chip in. The big worry is Lukens who already has lost seven times.
3. **Carroll** – This is a team with four potential state placers in West, Terbay, Clemens, and Barrentine. Better yet any (or all) of this quartet could be finalists. The key elements are to get Terbay at 152#, West in tip-top form and Clemens to defeat Rios and/or Delguyd. If Sommer helps out they could surpass Moeller..
4. **Massillion Perry** – Rarely has a team had so many excellent freshman and sophomores. Foster and Luke are sensational, but Riggs, Kovach, and Johnstone are just a half-step behind. If the seniors Clouse, Snyder, and Egan can chip in this team could be in the hunt for the runner-up trophy. The next two years it will be between Perry and St. Edward at they try to become the first public school since 1977 to win a Division I state title..
5. **Maple Hts.** – They had a great all-around team last year that ended up scoring 58 points at the State Meet. This year there are probably only three who can score at the state level - - Costello, Pflug, and Magistrelli - - but they should just about match that total. That would make it three consecutive years in the Top Five.
6. **Wadsworth** – The brutal Perry District will knock out some potential state scorers on this team. Still both Chris and Matt Kallai are potential champions, and Mohler and Klaus should score some. After that its pretty much hoping for a miracle..
7. **Mayfield** – This is a good dual meet team that should be able to bring some potential scorers through that weaker than normal Mentor District. Delguyd and Bendau are the heavy-hitters, but the former has to stay aggressive and the latter has to stay healthy. Herrera was 4th last year, but he'll have to score at a tough weight class while Fairman needs to be super-sharp. It would help if Tabor, Shamakian, or one of Pietropintos came to Columbus, too...
8. **Coffman** – Bob Stoll is a superior coach whose team will be tested both at the District and State level. Still they qualify out of the smallest and easiest district which should maximize their state numbers. Olds could be a finalist while Dysart, Doucher, and White should score. They need Tucker or Lamonica or somebody to step up big time..
9. **Strongsville** – If its going to happen for them it has to be in the lower weights. Paglia is a potential champ and Passafiume and Januszewski can place if they get through that brutal Perry District. They need White and Allen to qualify and maybe, Gasparro to sneak through at 152#. .

10. **Mentor** – This is a long-shot choice, but the potential is there. Pollock, Glavan, and Ashby should all score at the state level - - but I'm worried about the last of those three. Can Jones help? Probably not, so that big three will have to be in top form.
11. **Garfield Hts.**—Tepley, Wornoff, and Juby should all place and that might be worth 35 points. That's generally enough to be in the Top Ten, and possibly the freshman Effner can score at the weak 119# class.
12. **Thomas Worthington**—They have two sure high placers in Neely and Spivey. They'll need help from people like Evans, Grutsch, or Callahan if they want to move up.

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2001

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

FORECAST

(30th Annual Edition)

Written By:
Brian Brakeman

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DIVISION II

103#

Projected Champion: Ricky Deubel (Kenston)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|----|---------------------------|
| 2 | Smith (Olmsted Falls) | 15 | Wertz (Springboro) |
| 3 | Meinking (Purcell) | 16 | Herasuta (NDCL) |
| 4 | Laughlin (Canton South) | 17 | Bowers (Dayton Christian) |
| 5 | Compton (Willard) | 18 | Sponseller (West Holmes) |
| 6 | Kahn (Orange) | 19 | Kline (Oak Harbor) |
| 7 | Sandy Walsh Jesuit) | 20 | Hoover (Beaver Local) |
| 8 | McCarthy (Perkins) | 21 | Cain (Meadowbrook) |
| 9 | Pizzuro (Columbus DeSales) | 22 | Ysguirre (Clyde) |
| 10 | Franklin (Franklin) | 23 | Riley (Milton Union) |
| 11 | Reichman (Claymont) | 24 | Valliant (Otsego) |
| 12 | Bowers (Miami Trace) | 25 | Lee (Hamilton Ross) |
| 13 | Lindquist (Bexley) | 26 | Mathey (Orrville) |
| 14 | Rabung (North Ridgeville) | | |

I was wandering through Borders, the other day and I started to page through one of those new dictionaries that have lots of illustrations. Imagine my surprise when I got to the definition of “wide open” and saw next

to it the 103# bracket sheet for Division II. Actually I wasn't all that shocked since this is by far the most difficult weight to forecast. In contrast to Division I, there is only one returning state qualifier at this class and he went two and out last year. There are some exceptional freshman, but their schedules have been such that they have not met (or even had many common opponents). It reminds me of the reply by the theater owner in "Shakespeare in Love" when he asked how he knew everything would be okay. His reply, "It's a mystery" - - and so it is

There are so many possible choices at this class, but I've gone with the flashy freshman, Ricky Deubel. He is undefeated this year winning at Avon Lake, Kenston and the WRC - - and winning with real style as well. It is slightly unnerving to know that he finished behind Smith and Compton at the Junior High State Tourney, but I think at this age, things can rapidly change. Clearly with so many new faces almost anything could happen, but my view is that Deubel has a slight edge.

Part of the difficulty this year is the re-arrangement of the four districts. It makes past year comparisons difficult and creates a new set of rivalries. We now have the Northwest district tied in with one of the Northeast sectionals and the Central District placed with the Eastern teams. In a year or two we'll appreciate even more, this new system.

The Firestone District has some excellent strength and some upset potential, too. Deubel heads my list here but the trio of Laughlin, Sandy and Kahn are all very good. Laughlin, now a sophomore, won at Wadsworth after a 4th place finish at North Canton, where he lost a one-point decision to McCarthy. The thing I see is good improvement and ascending results with Laughlin. Even more dramatic has been Sandy's improvement. At the beginning I would have said no chance for state qualification, but that now seems very possible. He was 5th at the Top Gun splitting two bouts with Reichman and beat Ryan Smith at the CVCA duals while almost defeating Wornoff. He is on an upward spiral. Kahn crushed Monsman to win at Solon and has lost only to LaScala. He is very good on top - - and enormous advantage when you can score from that position. Albaugh and Herasuta are not far behind my top quartet at this district. Strange bracketing (which could easily happen with Deubel, Kahn, and Sandy exiting the same sectional) or a single upset puts them in Columbus the following week.

The Galion district is nearly as strong. Smith is a two-time junior high school champion. He won titles at both the Dies and Medina against excellent competition. He is very good at setting tempo and then grinding out victories, and does not seem nervous in close struggles. A big factor is that he can ride which makes him excellent with a lead. Compton is also excellent and has finalist potential. He exits from that very tough Oak Harbor sectional which also feature McCarthy, Kline Ysguirre, and Q. Smith (Bellevue). McCarthy and Rabung look next best, but as we discussed regarding the Firestone district there is lots of dept here. With the Oak Harbor Sectional strong, we could have bracket issues which might help propel Ysguirre, Valliant or Williams (St. Marys Memorial) to a state berth.

Meinking seems best at Wilmington, but a recent 7-2 upset loss to Franklin at least muddies the picture slightly. Meinking whipped Candy to take the SWOCA title, blasted Herasuta to win the CIT, and beat state qualifier Jed Smith to win at Carroll. It would be no surprise to see him as a finalist. Franklin, Wertz, and Ron Bowers are my choices for the other three spots, but the latter two are far from sure things. By the way that is Ron Bowers at this district and Ren Bowers at this weight class at the Buckeye Local district - - and you thought this was easy.

There are even more possibilities at Buckeye local than at the other three districts. I was impressed with Pizzurro at Mayfield and Brecksville, but not at the CIT. Still, he could be a critical component in DeSales hopes for a team title. Reichman should probably be rated higher, but where, exactly, I'm not sure. He went 11-10 with Smith and split with Sandy while being dominant in his own area. He has a chance to make me look bad here. Lindquist and Bowers are strong but Sponseller, if he can make the weight, could potentially defeat them both. Hoover and Cain both placed high at OVAC with the latter boy having an especially good district competition last year at this weight. This should be a real donnybrook.

112#

Projected Champion: Kyle Stoffer (Olmsted Falls)

Top Contenders

2	Kendjorsky (Buckeye Local)	15	Morgan (Tri-Valley)
3	Zupancic (Walsh Jesuit)	16	J. Smith (Bellevue)
4	Turchetta (Twinsburg)	17	Midlam (Chaminade)
5	Velez (Kings)	18	Conger (McClain)
6	Hurley (Kenston)	19	Naso (Canal Fulton NW)
7	Schmidt (Perkins)	20	Penny (Milton Union)
8	Klofta (Indian Lake))	21	Hickman (Alter)
9	Giambrone (Aurora)	22	Wells (New Richmond)
10	Browning (Bellbrook)	23	Dailey (Miami Trace)
11	Brown (Columbus DeSales)	24	Bergman (Port Clinton)
12	T. Shearer (Clyde)	25	Co. Apperson (Morgan)
13	French (Minerva)	26	Perez (Vermillion)
14	Bridenbaugh (Defiance)	27	Inghram (Lake Catholic)

Early each year the distribution of truly excellent wrestlers is uneven and shows a clumping pattern. Then as the season progresses little by little changes occur. Accommodations are made, and the distribution becomes far more uniform. Its never perfect and there will always be some weight classes more challenging and difficult than others. But kind of like Adam Smith's "invisible hand" the distribution finds an equilibrium that overall, maximizes the probabilities of the best wrestlers becoming state champs. Only at the end-points (103# and heavyweight) does the logic of these changes fail because of physical factors.

And so it is that it seemed almost inevitable that defending state champion Kyle Stoffer would certify at 112#. As we will shortly see, 119# was truly loaded with more superior contestants than at any other class. At Medina he already seemed small at 119#, and while he didn't exactly look "buttery" he certainly didn't seem fully panned either. Thus the move to 112#, but that cut is no guarantee of a second state title as there area number of excellent contenders competing here, as well. Last year Stoffer had a fabulous season at 103# winning 39 straight bouts - -almost none of them close - - in cruising to his first state title. He defeated Zupancic in the finals 10-3. Since moving to 112# he won the Dies in a relatively close battle with my Division III choice Buzek and then nipped Zupancic 5-4 in a dual. Some (Bill Barger) have suggested that the field has finally chased down Stoffer and pulled even with him. Possibly, but there is an adjustment period especially on cuts relatively late in the season. I anticipate a far fiercer Stoffer in February and early March - - when it really counts.

I also reject the assumption that Zupancic, as good as he is will be the prime challenger. I felt last year and still do that West Virginia signee, Kendjorsky could be the real obstacle for Stoffer. Last year Zupancic defeated him by holding him in the 30-second tie-breaker. This year Kendjorsky has stomped the competition along the river, though, granted that is not the rigorous Walsh schedule. One advantage that Zupancic possesses is that he will be away from Stoffer should he win his district - - no easy task as we shall soon see. Zupancic was 2nd last year winning three bouts by a total of two points before running into Stoffer. He struggled early this year before finishing 3rd at the Top Gun and 2nd at Mayfield. Last year he went to the state meet with 13 losses and it sure didn't seem to bother him.

Stoffer faces a very crowded district. Schmidt, a transfer from Sandusky St. Mary, was 4th in Division III last year, and has performed well in his new environs. He was particularly impressive in winning up a weight class at Tiffin. Shearer is a great freshman who beat out state qualifier Hoffman for the 112# position at Clyde.

Smith is a typically tough Bellevue wrestler who just missed qualification last year. State qualifier Bridenbaugh should squeeze into that fourth state berth over Smith, but state qualifier Bergman will be a long-shot for a second trip. A wildcard is Perez who has a win over Smith and has won several tourneys. Lashaway (Eastwood), Joseph (Holland Springfield), Overholt (Elida) and D. Smith (Lexington) are also good. This will be a 16-man bracket with Nary a soft touch in it.

Kendjorsky, on the other hand, should defend his district with little trouble. State qualifier Brown should also qualify with relative ease, but after that it gets complicated. Morgan, a very accomplished youth wrestler, has had a great freshman year, and should be a major factor. Conger wrestles in a remote part of the state, but won two district matches last year, and has dominated his foes this year. He's got the horsepower to grab a state berth. State qualifier Dailey and the young Cody Apperson will also play a role with the latter, in particular, a real threat that leaves Hundley (Hebron Lakewood), Albaugh (Buckeye Valley) and Thress (Watkins Memorial) as long-shots.

There are at least six state quality wrestlers at Kenston. The top quartet is headed by Zupancic, but also has included state qualifiers Hurley and Turchetta and state alternate Giambrone. Hurley is a dynamo who won at Medina and North Canton and was 2nd at the WRC and 3rd at Kenston. He can go with anyone here. Turchetta has improved over last year's fine freshman season. He won at Hudson, Kenston and the WRC and has had a series of battles with Hurley. Giambrone almost qualified at 112# last year losing the 5th place battle to Constantino. He might be on the bubble here as the excellent French and tough Naso are breathing down his neck. Also watch for Inghram who has wrestled the tough Lake Catholic schedule with only a few nicks. He upset Hurley at Kenston, but was only 6th at the CIT.

State qualifier Velez is very strong at the Wilmington District and has excellent placement potential. He won two state bouts last year, but missed placement on a 6-3 loss to Russell. This year, as Dan Loy would say, he is totally undefeated with more than 50% falls. State qualifiers Browning, Hickman, Klofta, and Wells also return, so again we have a crowded and complex situation. Both Browning and Klofta had state wins last year, and have had strong 2001 seasons. Browning, for example, won at Eaton and Bellbrook and was 2nd at Carroll, Edgewood, and the GMVWA. Velez beat him by 5 points in their meeting. A dark-horse candidate is Midlam who pinned Browning at Carroll and was 3rd at the CIT. Also look for Steadman (Norwood), Jett (Little Miami), and Schlater (Graham).

119#

Projected Champion: Kyle Ott (St. Paris Graham)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 2 | Protz (West Geauga) | 15 | Gomez (Holland Springfield) |
| 3 | Constantino (Lake Catholic) | 16 | Henry (Claymont) |
| 4 | Fowler (Buckeye) | 17 | Maple (Edison Local) |
| 5 | Russell (Van Wert) | 18 | Kastens (Twinsburg) |
| 6 | Dotson (Hamilton Twp) | 19 | Budd (Orville) |
| 7 | Gulosh (Walsh Jesuit) | 20 | Ferri (Valley View) |
| 8 | C. Pizzurro (Columbus DeSales) | 21 | DiPietro (Watkins Memorial) |
| 9 | N. Shearer (Clyde) | 22 | Spurlock (Bellevue) |
| 10 | King (Trenton Edgewood) | 23 | Maston (Canfield) |
| 11 | Kremer (Franklin) | 24 | Giannola (Bellefontaine) |
| 12 | Lochotzki (Oak Harbor) | 25 | Begue (Louisville) |
| 13 | Weeks (Watterson) | 26 | Patton (Buckeye Local) |
| 14 | Harrison (Chaminade) | 27 | Wheatley (Cambridge) |

Over the past three years, Kyle Ott has established himself as one of the premier talents of the last half dozen years. As a freshman he lost a close state quarter-final bout to Sean Penn and it seemed he would never lose again. He compiled a consecutive win streak that had reached 85 by the end of his junior year. It included two state titles and two Reno titles, and he was beating the best with almost disdainful ease. Last year, for example, he ended every match in the state tournament process in less than five minutes except for the final against the extravagantly talented Mark Moos. A non-stop attacking genius he signed early with Illinois and his senior season seemed a certain triumphant encore.

Then over the summer, Ott underwent six knee surgeries, and the resultant fallout saw him leaving Wayne and transferring to St. Paris Graham. His first competition was in mid-January and it was no cakewalk. The Top Gun had many of the best 119's in the state and while Ott defeated Fowler and Foster, he lost a 7-6 bout to Protz in the finale. I thought it was a auspicious beginning, and while 119# is an extremely rugged weight class an improving Ott will be very difficult to beat. Even in that loss he had 3 takedowns to one for Protz. Look for him by state tournament time to be five points better than anyone else.

The Wilmington District is strong at this weight class, but not to the level where they will severely challenge Ott. Defending district champion Harrison pinned Kremer and Wooten in the last two rounds in 2000, and was a state quarter-finalist. This year he has not reached that same level. He was 5th at the CIT losing to Weeks and Gross and was bombed by the freshman Franz at Carroll. I've moved Kremer and King (who have split close bouts) ahead of him. All three are returning state qualifiers. They'll need to be sharp because Ferri has come on strong in the second half of the season winning at Valley View and Bellbrook.

If Ott is to be really challenged it'll will come from the Cleveland area. Two of the favorites at Firestone have already matched up with Ott. Protz was 6th as a sophomore and 3rd last year losing only to Rooney in the semi-finals. This year he was 2nd at the Ironman and Kenston (at 125#) and, of course, had the big win at the Top Gun over Ott, 7-6. If he wins here at Firestone (no sure thing) than he and Ott would be in opposite half-brackets - - no small advantage. I almost rated Constantino as second best here, but I'm still giving Protz the slightest of edges. Constantino, 6th last year, has won at Coffman, Kenston, and the CIT and has run up big scores in the process. His only in-state loss was to Ott at the Ohio duals by a narrow 7-5 margin. If he wins at Firestone I think he'll be a finalist the next week. I've voted Gulosh third best at this district with good placement potential. Like his brother he has suddenly blossomed toward the second half of his junior year. He won at Mayfield over a field that included Aggozino, Jagers, and Pizzuro. He's somebody the top boys cannot afford to overlook. The fourth spot is wide open with Kastens and Budd, perhaps, having the inside track. We might see Giambrone here as he must choose between 112# and 119# - - after all he did beat Kastens 7-3.

The other Cleveland area challenger will be Fowler, who has also shown huge improvement gains this year. He was the MVP at Medina after beating Stoffer and also won at the Buckeye and Chardon. He was 4th at the Top Gun after losing a 4-3 thriller to Ott. All at once he has gotten very tough. This is a crowded district - - as it seems to be at every weight class. Russell was a 5th at 112# with wins over Harrison and Constantino but, two thumpings from Protz. This year he was 3rd at GMVWA, but has won almost everything else. Shearer and Lochotzki are both state qualifiers with the latter boy finishing 5th at 103# last year. Shearer won their dual meet battle, and has a slight edge. State qualifier Gomez has moved down to Division II so he's a bit of an unknown here. He was only 8th at GMVWA. Spurlock, Rowland (Upper Sandusky) and Gliatta (Edison) are also possibilities.

The Buckeye Local District should be wild. Dotson has been hot lately and supplanted Pizzurro as my top 119-pounder in the Central District. Both have placement possibilities, but it won't be easy. Pizzurro was a state qualifier two years ago at 103#, but has found it somewhat tougher going at higher weights. He was 4th at Mayfield losing to Gulosh and Jagers. Weeks and DiPietro are also strong in the Columbus area with the former defeating Harrison at the CIT. Henry and Maple are both returning state qualifiers with the latter finishing 6th last year. Both could well struggle at this district especially with so much firepower coming in

from the Central District. Maple has been at 125 pounds much of the year, but did certify at 112#. I have not seen him perform at the weight so I'm guessing he'll be at 119# - - where he was runner-up at the OVAC.

125#

Projected Champion: Josh Wooten (St. Paris Graham)

Top Contenders

2	Finn (Perkins)	15	Reyna (Port Clinton)
3	Bowersock (Beaver Local)	16	Quevedo (Van Wert)
4	King (Liberty)	17	Rowe (Marysville)
5	Messier (Coventry)	18	Simon (Edison)
6	Mulhall (Lake Catholic)	19	Faist (Kenston)
7	Burns (Columbus DeSales)	20	Frazier (Bellefontaine)
8	Minter (North Ridgeville)	21	Taylor (Indian Lake)
9	Nelson (Hoban)	22	Deppe (Lima Bath)
10	Williamson (Kings)	23	Klingensmith (Licking Valley)
11	R. Williams (Olmsted Falls)	24	Kozusek (Valley View)
12	T. Williams (Claymont)	25	Fowler (Springfield NW)
13	Beeson (Watkins Memorial)	26	Schafer (Philo)
14	Collier (Minerva)	27	Wunderle (Ravenna)

One of the reasons 119# remained so tough was that moving up to 125# offered very little in the way of relief. It features a wide array of outstanding wrestlers representing all four districts. I count five returning state placers and, at least, an equal number of other well-credentialed challengers. However, the favorite has to be former state champion Josh Wooten who after some difficulties last year has found his perfect niche. Two years ago, Wooten took the title at 103# which included wins over Stoffer in the first round and King in the final. Last year he opted to compete at 112# -- a major help in the terms of the Graham line-up - - but he could not sustain either his performance or his weight at 112#. A late season move to 119# moved him back into the line-up, and he did qualify for the state meet. However, a first round loss to Finn dropped him immediately into the consolation bracket and he did not place.

This year he has been exceptional - - almost a replay of his sophomore year. . . At the Ironman he defeated State 3rd, Enright, and then crushed state champion, Lang, 14-3, before losing a tough battle to the nations top-rated Cory Cooperman. He crushed everybody at Graham, and then at Medina he again beat Enright before losing a last-second thriller to two-time champ Drew Opfer. Actually, I thought Wooten was the better boy that day - - sharper on his feet and in better condition - - but Opfer scored the big points. He humbled everyone at the Top Gun - - including a win over Bowersock by the shocking score of 16-3.. He is just so strong and so confident now that it will take a Herculean effort to upset him.

To make things even better, Wooten emerges from the easiest district. Williamson is my second choice, but he has never made it past a district quarter-final. Taylor did pin Minter at the Ohio Duals, but no one here except for Wooten has developed a state-wide reputation of any sort. You might see Ferri here instead of 119# with perhaps Kanta (Ross) and Binford (Purcell) in the hunt.

Finn, was 2nd at 119# last year, losing only to Schlatter (at both district and state), and capturing a place for the second year in a row. Incidentally his first three wins at Columbus were all by a 5-3 margin. This year he won at North Canton and Tiffin and has been very impressive. He moved up to challenge Schlatter at 130# but lost, and went down to defeat against Opfer at the SBC Duals. He beat Wooten in the first round last year, and must duplicate that feat to be a state champ this year. State qualifiers Minter and Reyna are also back. Minter was a

quarter-finalist before losing twice - - once to Wooten, 11-2. He won at Avon Lake and is currently 22-2. Reyna has to choose between 119# and 125#, and I think he'll wind up here. In either case a return trip will be iffy. Williams is an excellent sophomore with a great future while Quevedo and Simon have solid experience. If you factor in A. Gomez (Holland Springfield), Blackburn (Clyde), and Deppe it's a deep field.

Bowersock was 3rd last year at the 119# including an 8-6 decision over Messler in the consolation finals. He was at 130# much of the year, but dropped for the OVAC which he won for the third time. He was 3rd at the Top Gun losing to Wooten by a score that seemed almost a misprint. He'll hope Finn is in with Wooten giving him his best shot at the finals. Burns was 6th last year at 125#, but I'm not sure he can "hang" with the top quartet. He was 6th at Brecksville but didn't wrestle recently at either the CIT or Mayfield. Tommy Williams was 4th two years ago, but various injuries have plagued him for almost two years now. Slated to return it will be interesting to see what he will be able to do after such a long layoff. The freshman, Spohn (New Lexington) may compete, and would be a possible factor in the final outcome.

Life will have come full circle if King were to meet Wooten in the finals. Two years ago the top-ranked Wooten met the little-known King in the state finals at 103# - - with Wooten winning a 10-7 decision.. Last year both had some issues. Wooten's, I reviewed at the top of this essay, while King was injured after sectionals and did not compete after that. Now King and state placer Messier head up the Firestone District. Both should place and they are not that distant from Bowersock and Finn. Messier was 2nd at the Dies and won handily at Wadsworth. My big question is whether they have the horsepower to match up with the top three. Mulhall has had a great year with wins at Kenston and Coffman and a strong finish at the CIT. However, he may have a fractured leg, which would end his season. That would give state qualifier Nelson a little breathing room and, perhaps, open the door for a Collier, Faist, or Wunderle.

130#

Projected Champion: C.P. Schlatter (Columbus DeSales)

Top Contenders

2	Evans (St. Paris Graham)	15	McSorley (Trenton Edgewood)
3	Schultz (North Ridgeville)	16	Damanti (Springfield Shawnee)
4	Hensley (Lemon Monroe)	17	Vince (Upper Sandusky)
5	K. Wilson (Carrollton)	18	S. Schlegel (River View)
6	SanFilippo (Lake Catholic)	19	Henry (Ravenna Southeast)
7	Montgomery (Alliance)	20	Shaw (Washington CH)
8	Adams (Holland Springfield)	21	Roland (Twinsburg)
9	Manges (Aurora)	22	Bolton (Bellbrook)
10	Stephenson (Perkins)	23	Hayden (Copley)
11	Bennett (Fairfield Union)	24	Roush (Van Wert)
12	Teterich (Watterson)	25	Conlisk (St. Charles)

The hugely heralded C. P. Schlatter turned out to be everything he was touted to be - - and more. This fabulous freshman went, 44-0 against tough competition including a big win over three-time Ohio State Champ Mason Lenhard. His only challenge in the state tournament process came from Ryan Finn in the finals where a somewhat more conservative Schlatter won a 7-4 decision. He reminds me somehow of Jimmy Heffernan - - analytical, unflappable, and always in control of himself and his talent

Ohio has never had a wrestler go undefeated throughout a four-year career. Several had come close (Zimmer, Jordan, etc), but Schlatter seemed to be on track to accomplish that monumental task. However, DeSales wrestles a very strong schedule and Schlatter did lose earlier this year in the Beast of the East final round. Ahead 4-0, he ended up dropping a 7-5 overtime decision. He has beaten Pflug twice - - the last, a narrow 7-6

battle where both boys had two takedowns. There is no one in division II to challenge him, and the battle at Columbus will be for 2nd place. Think about the 130's in Ohio this year.

The senior, Harry Lester, the junior, Joe Pflug, and the sophomore, C. P. Schlatter. It is indeed, a fortunate time to be alive. Schlatter exits from a crowded Buckeye Local District. State qualifier Wilson was 2nd at North Canton and 6th at the Top Gun where he lost 10-9 semi-final bout to Evans. I think there's a drop-off down to state qualifier Bennett who won 33 bouts last year as a freshman. Schlegel and Teterich would then battle for a last state berth along with Shaw and Conlisk. After the top duo it really is pretty wide open. Barath (St. Clairsville) is a possibility here.

Evans got pushed out of the line-up last year when Wooten moved to 119th. He won at Graham, was 2nd at the Top Gun (to Lester) and 3rd at Medina (losing to Lester). Well, at least he won't have to face Lester anymore, but I'm thinking he won't find Schlatter a treat either. State qualifier Hensley just won very big at Eaton and he could be a major factor. He won two state bouts last year losing only to the state second and third place wrestlers. McSorley moved ahead of Damanti with a win at Franklin but both can qualify. That would leave out Bolton, Rumpke (Preble Shawnee) and Hoppe (Dayton Christian).

Schultz will be interesting to watch. Last year he won his first two state bouts - - both in overtime - - to reach the semi-finals. Then in another bitter struggle he lost in overtime again to Hiles and then quickly fell to 6th. He's the only wrestler who comes to mind who opened with three straight overtime bouts at Columbus. He has missed most of this year, but returns at 130#. How the long layoff will impact him is open to question. Assuming he can shake the rust off I believe it is an advantage. It is a long season and I, generally, believe that such a lay-off keeps a wrestler fresher and less nicked up. However, it won't be enough of an edge to dislodge Schlatter. Adams is a transfer from Toledo St. John who was 2nd at the GMVWA. He would seem to have placement potential. Stephenson and Young are both out of the SBC and have been sharpened by good competition. Vince has been outstanding. He won at Sylvania Southview and the Gorman. I may be undervaluing him here. The same might be said for Roush who placed at the GMVWA in a tough field.

In something of a rarity, the Firestone district is not particularly strong. I've identified seven wrestlers with good credentials, but none really stand out. San Fillippo has probably had the steadiest season while Montgomery and Wiles have shown flashes of brilliance. Both have generally done well in major tourneys - - most recently Wiles was 2nd at Waite and Montgomery, 5th at the Top Gun. The redheaded Manges looked like a terrific sophomore prospect last year - - making the sectional finals and district semi-finals. However, I have not seen him in many bouts this year leaving his final rating based primarily on last year.

135#

Projected Champion: Jason Barnett (Columbus DeSales)

Top Contenders

2	Romano (Walsh Jesuit)	14	Fee (Defiance)
3	Ashton (Perry)	15	Blair (Valley View)
4	Roff (Kenston)	16	Walton (Chaminade)
5	Knull (St. Paris Graham)	17	Nicholas (Holland Springfield)
6	C.. Henn (Bexley)	18	Peterson (Marlington)
7	Daugherty (Bethel Tate)	19	Seeley (Benjamin Logan)
8	Furbee (Cambridge)	20	Brandenburg (Chagrin Falls)
9	Gomoll (Bay)	21	Neville (West Holmes)
10	Munyan (New Lexington)	22	Snapp (Urbana)
11	Ferris (Jackson)	23	Shriner (Sheridan)
12	T. Simpson (Eastwood)	24	Preseren (Lake Catholic)

There is a certain pride of authorship with these reports and it generally manifests itself either in terms of comprehensiveness or accuracy. That is why this weight class is so very aggravating. In 41 of the 42 weight classes my longest streak of non-winners is two years. At 135#, however, I haven't got it right since 1994 (extra credit for knowing it was Brian Singleton) - - six consecutive years of failure. Something always seems to happen. Last year Dunfee couldn't even wrestle in the finals after being slammed by Romano, and in 1997 Ty Morgan lost his bid for four state titles at this weight class.

This year, however, I feel very confident that I can turn this around - - or rather that Jason Barnett can do so. He has had a fantastic high school career. He was 5th as a freshman and 2nd his sophomore year losing both times to Jesse Leng. Then last year he went 45-0 winning his first state title in the quiet, methodical, manner he appears to favor. Not at all flashy, he parlays strength, quickness and great defensive ability to grind out win after win - - and he should end up with close to 170 in his high school career. Very, short, he is almost impossible to score on, and we'll see him in four more years at Ohio State. Through he has lost three times this year (West, McIntyre, and Staylor) there is no one in Division II who can touch him. Let me amend that. A completely healthy Romano might make it a real bout, but that situation seems problematical at best.

By the time you read this you'll probably know whether Romano will compete. Coach Bill Barger, always the smiling optimist, guessed it was 50-50 which means its probably much less than that. Romano was 4th last year in a strange turn of events. He beat Hussein to win his sectional, but then lost to him in the district finals after Hussein had upset top-choice Dunfee, 7-6. At the state meet, Romano met Dunfee in the semi-finals and was comfortably ahead, 10-5, in the third period when he was disqualified for an illegal slam injuring an already hurt Dunfee. Dunfee could not wrestle on Saturday so Hussein took the title by forfeit. Romano, even if he returns at this late date, may not have time to prepare for the likes of Barnett and Ashton.

Absent Romano the Firestone District would look somewhat easier. Ashton was a district champ at 130# last year and made it to the semis before losing 7-4 to Barnett and finishing 5th. He won handily at Waite. Roff has had a great season winning at Avon Lake, Kenston, placing 2nd at the WRC, and 4th at Medina (losing to state champ Smith and West). He seems very ready. There is a sharp drop-off in performance after this top trio If Romano wrestles that leaves one spot open - - if not, two will qualify one of whom, will almost, assuredly be someone I failed to mention in this report

It is a pretty pedestrian group at Galion. Gomoll might be the best of the group with a 19-1 record - - his only loss a 5-3 decision to Roff. Rudy is really an excellent 130-pounder who moves up a weight now that Schultz has returned. Simpson, Nicholas, and Asbury (Wauseon) are all solid in the Northwest District. However, the one to watch may be the sophomore, Jameson Fee. He has the potential to be a big winner, but only if he becomes consistent from bout to bout. This is not a strong district and qualification this year will set him up for the next two.

Barnett will dominate at Buckeye Valley. Henn was a state alternate last year and is the linchpin of some excellent Bexley middleweights. Furbee, also a state alternate, has had an excellent season along the river. He won at Union Local, Barnesville, and John Glenn and was 2nd to West Virginia state champ Eric Noel at St. Clairsville and the OVAC. Munyan defeated state qualifier Ferris at New Lexington and may have to do so again to qualify.

The sophomore Knull keeps getting better and should place this year after qualifying in 2000. I think Daugherty is next best at Wilmington, but after that everything is a little hazy. The excellent freshman Walton certified at 130#, but we may find him here. He is someone to watch in the future.

Projected Champion: Trever Hiles (Licking Valley)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 2 | Wood (Preble Shawnee) | 15 | Pfeil (Perkins) |
| 3 | Markley (St. Paris Graham) | 16 | Harmon (Clermont NE) |
| 4 | M. Henn (Bexley) | 17 | Petro (Tipp City) |
| 5 | B. Shriner (Sheridan) | 18 | Tuttle (Copley) |
| 6 | Davids (Port Clinton) | 19 | Razzano (Columbus DeSales) |
| 7 | Radkowsky (Kenston) | 20 | Vreeland (Oak Harbor) |
| 8 | Runyon (Lake Catholic) | 21 | Garvey (Roger Bacon) |
| 9 | Garner (Walsh Jesuit) | 22 | Thurston (St. Charles) |
| 10 | Squire (Buckeye) | 23 | Cooper (Trenton Edgewood) |
| 11 | Harris (Holland Springfield) | 24 | Bartley (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 12 | Shannon (Washington CH) | 25 | Adkins (Olmsted Falls) |
| 13 | Berquist (Twinsburg) | 26 | Steffel (Defiance) |
| 14 | Jarrett (Bellevue) | 27 | Smith (Beaver Local) |

Very surprisingly all of the weight classes from 130# through 171# in Division II seem to lack any depth. That's not to say that there aren't one or two superior performers, but there just doesn't seem to be much after that. That's very unusual in Division II and my hunch was that, perhaps, last year was a senior-oriented year that graduated the vast bulk of usual contenders. As this chart shows:

125-POUNDERS & ABOVE

	2000 STATE QUALIFIER	#THAT WERE SENIORS	%	2000 STATE QUALIFIERS	#THAT WERE SENIORS	%
DIV. I	224	132	58.9	176	113	64.2
DIV. II	224	126	56.3	176	111	63.1
DIV. III	224	125	55.8	176	111	63.1

That just isn't true. In fact, its amazing how close the percentage of seniors was for all three classes. Even factoring out the three lightest weight classes there is no real difference. So at least for now, that difference in depth remains to be explained.

This is a weight class where opportunity beckons. There are no unbeatable superstars, no real depth, and a lot of wrestlers still waiting to make their mark. It is a golden opportunity for someone who gets a hot hand to do very well. The person most likely to fill that bill is 130-pound state runner-up Trever Hiles. Last year he took a tight one-point decision and an overtime semi-final win and earned a 2nd place medal. This year he comes in as the favorite after being rated 1# in the Central District all season.

The Buckeye Valley district is probably the strongest of the four. Hiles is the principal player, but state qualifier Henn has looked very good wrestling up a weight at 145#. He won at Hamilton Twp. and was a semi-finalist at Medina before being injured on a slam. State qualifier Shriner was a quarter-finalist last year before losing two bouts - - the second by only a point to the excellent Woodruff. This year he beat Shanon 7-0 at

Miami Trace and beat Goad at Sheridan. With Redmond nursing a broken arm, Razzano has moved down to challenge for a qualification berth here. Thurston, Smith, Yudaz (St. Clairsville and Shearer (Watkins Memorial) are other possibilities.

Wood just missed state placement last year at this weight class after taking the district title. However, Markley, a state 4th at 125#, may be closing to passing him. Wood has pretty much dominated except for a match-up with Ryan West at the GMVWA. Markley started a bit slow failing to place at the Ironman or Medina, but looked very good at the Top Gun losing a one-point shootout to the excellent Galchick in the finals. After the top duo, Harmon and Petro are probably next, but there will be plenty of challengers.

The Galion District could be topsy-turvy. State qualifier Davids has had some uneven performances, but he can be very good. He was a state quarter-finalist last year. At the SBC Duals he pinned Vreeland and hammered Pfeil, 12-1, while dominating that weight class. Squire has been an impressive surprise performing well week after week. He might be able to grab a low place. Harris is also good while Jarrett should do well at this weight class. I am curious to see how the sophomore Adkins places here. He looked good at last year's district, but I'm not sure he has built on that success

Radkowsky and Runyan are very close as we saw in their exciting 8-7 semi-final bout at Kenston. Radkowsky has won at Avon Lake, was 2nd at Kenston (to state champ Linsker), and 4th at the WRC. Neither he nor Markley placed Medina, but their consolation bout was a 12-10 thriller won by Markley. The real question at Firestone is Dave Garner. He was at 145# last year and entered the district with 15 losses. Still he won three bouts there including a big upset of Joe Hada and came close to qualifying. He has missed most of this year, but I was impressed by his toughness last year. Berquist was a state alternate last season, and I always thought he was talented. Still, he seems to find ways to lose bouts when I'm around. Tuttle and Bartley would be reasonable state qualifiers and they along with Bartley have the best chance here.

145#

Projected Champion: Aaron Woodruff (Walsh Jesuit)

Top Contenders

2	Busnick (Canton south)	15	Lyons (Tipp City)
3	Black (Defiance)	16	Bowers (Elida)
4	Zadzi (Bexley)	17	Dean (Clermont NE)
5	Deering (Perkins)	18	Brenner (Canfield)
6	Sutcliffe (Ravenna Southeast)	19	Coate (Milton Union)
7	Glorioso (Lexington)	20	Bertolino (Buckeye Local)
8	Underation(Norton)	21	Long (Copley)
9	Smith (Urbana)	22	Ames (Willard)
10	Lovell (Columbus DeSales)	23	Hipp (Kenton Ridge)
11	Slattery (Lake Catholic)	24	Westhoven (Holy Name)
12	Goad (Hebron Lakewood)	25	Nolan (Coshocton)
13	Diefenthaler (Oak Harbor)	26	Ging (Kenston)
14	Goodfellow (Sheridan)	27	Dennison (Fairfield Union)
		28	Schlater (St. Paris Graham)

Bill Barger has been and continues to be one of the most successful coaches in Ohio high school history. A tremendous motivator and a master strategist he, has an uncanny sense of how to put media pressure on himself leaving his team free to perform at peak efficiency. As a Vietnam veteran, I was reminded of him while reading Tacitus not so long ago. "On the field of battle it is a disgrace to the chief to be surpassed in valor by his

companions. A disgrace to the companions not to come up to the valor of their chief". To defend him and to put down one's acts of heroism to his credit that is really what they mean by allegiance. The chief fights for victory, the companions for their chief". Somehow he has translated that philosophy into the development of wrestlers who peak at the critical moment, and who win when it counts most.

My choice at this weight class, Aaron Woodruff, is a typical Walsh product. He refuses to concede anything to an opponent. Anything you get in a match with him must be completely earned. Last year he was a district 4th and caught eventual champ Frisch in the first round - - losing 7-6. He then won five consolation bouts to finish 3rd. It was an eerie parallel to his district results where he lost an overtime tiebreaker in the first round and then won four bouts to qualify. This year he won the Top Gun, Powerade, and Mayfield Super 8, while finishing 3rd at the Ironman. He's like wrestling barbed wire. Every time he touches you it hurts.

While this is not a particularly strong weight class anywhere, the most depth clearly resides at Firestone. Busnick was a state qualifier as a freshman, but got a horrendous district draw last year losing to state runner-up Durkin and then by two points to Woodruff. He was 2nd at North Canton to the excellent Parsons and was a dominating champ at Wadsworth crushing Ames in the finals. At the Top Gun he was a very solid 3rd losing only to Paterniti of Pennsylvania in overtime. He'll be away from Woodruff and should be a finalist. Sutcliffe, Underation and Slattery, are all on the periphery of possible placement and will be a tough match-up for almost everyone. I like the sophomore Brenner, but he might still be a year away. Long, could be someone that could ride a hot weekend to Columbus, while Ging is likely to be disappointed.

Black is a Van Wert transfer who has sparkled at Defiance. A state alternate last year he has racked up an impressive number of falls while winning at Sylvania, Southview and Perrysburg. He's the kind of wrestler you'll want to draw away from, and then hope someone else upsets him. Very strong placement potential for Black. Deering was a state qualifier at 130# last year, and has moved up three weight classes. He was 3rd at Tiffin and 5th at North Canton wrestling a tough schedule. One worrisome loss was a 15-3 bombing by Bowers. Glorioso won handily at Tiffin and was 2nd at 152# at the Gorman. He could easily move ahead of Deering. Diefenthaler is a solid SBC wrestler at this weight class while Ames was runner-up at Wadsworth. A dark-horse candidate might be Westhoven Hay(Bellevue)

State qualifier Zadzi, heads a rather ill defined Buckeye Local District field. He missed much of the year recently won in impressive fashion at New Lexington. He beat Black, 7-4, last year in their go-to-state bout, but I think Black is much better this year. Lovell did not impress me much at Brecksville at 152# losing

10-0 in the first round and failing to place. However, he was 3rd at the CIT and 2nd at Mayfield losing only to Woodruff. Goad might be at 140# although he has spent most of the year at this weight. Goodfellow has dropped from 152# and could be a major factor at this district.

There is not a lot of placement potential at Wilmington. Only Smith makes the left column in my grid, and that in the ninth spot. I'm expecting very close competition at that district, but that is unlikely to translate into very many wins at Columbus.

152#

Projected Champion: Keith Cupp (Hamilton Twp.)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----|--------------------|
| 2 | Kearney (Triway) | 14 | Gibbs (Fairview) |
| 3 | Galvan (Benedictine) | 15 | Wilson (Maysville) |
| 4 | Wickert (St. Charles) | 16 | Hasting (Kenston) |

5	Rush (St. Paris Graham)	17	Heston (Fairfield Union)
6	Incorvaia (Medina Highland)	18	Walters (Preble Shawnee)
7	Hahn (Minerva)	19	Bishop (Lexington)
8	Asmus (Otsego)	20	Sammons (Marlington)
9	Quillen (Edison)	21	Leonette (West Geauga)
10	Gilkey (Perry)	22	Massey (Kenton Ridge)
11	Maxworthy (Buckeye)	23	Smith (Copley)
12	Chinn (Teays Valley)	24	McGrath (Goshen)
13	Stolly (Benjamin Logan)	25	Mullenger (Roger Bacon)
		26	South (Valley View)

Last year in what was clearly not Hall of Fame forecasting, I ranked Keith Cupp as the seventh best 152-pounder. Although I did add that “they (he and Bergman) may be far better than my ratings indicate as they have shown rapid improvement as the season progressed”. Clearly I undervalued Cupp as he finished at 34-0 while winning his first state title. He was the lowest rated wrestler to win a state title in Division II and the second lowest overall (only Lukens was lower rated). My first hint that Cupp was far better than I had realized were his final two bouts at his district where he shut out Heiland, 6-0, and tech falled Wes Adams. It was Heiland again in the state finals and he made it closer but Cupp still won by three. This year he remains undefeated including a huge win at the Top Gun. There, he won three bouts by one point including a 13-12 shoot-out with my Division I choice Chris Kallai. Wickert, his top rival in Columbus and the Brecksville champ, lasted less than two minutes with him in the dual.

Wickert did win two bouts at last year’s state tournament and was one point from placement. He won at Brecksville and Reynoldsburg, but was upset in very first round of the CIT by Galvan 14-6. He then won six consolation bouts to capture 4th place. Being away from Cupp in the bracket at Columbus should help. Chinn was a state qualifier at 140#, but started the year all the way up at 160#. He was only 1-2 at that weight at Medina including a loss to Maxworthy. Wilson, Heston, Moore (Beaver Local) and Tacosik (Union Local) are other possibilities.

The Firestone District is loaded. The very tall and angular Kearney was 4th last year at 140# and is a potential finalist this time around. He nipped Hahn to win at Smithville and was 4th at that brutal weight class at Wadsworth - - losing to Division II and III picks Kallai and Schaefer, the latter by only a point. He was 4th at the Top Gun losing again to Kallai. Almost all of his losses are by two points or less, so he keeps it close. Galvan has been a complete surprise to me. He started the year inauspiciously at 160# and then dropped for the CIT. Wow! He mashed Wickert in the first round, had a 15-0 technical fall over Caponi, pinned Marcus Blanks, and then beat Marzec by seven in the finals. He is for real. The freshman Hahn has wrestled everyone tough. He was a finalist at Smithville and won five bouts at the Top Gun to finish 7th. He’s a star in the making. Gilkey is my choice for the last berth, but Hastings, Leonette, Sammon and Smith are all close. All four of the qualifiers - - whoever they turn out to be - - should do well at the Schottenstein.

It’s not nearly as strong as a group at Gallon. Incorvia, who has success at 160# this year .has dropped back to 152# and should be a force at this weight class. He is a defending sectional champ who this year placed at Medina while winning, overall, 22 out of 27 bouts. The little known Asmus was one bout from Columbus last year and should easily qualify this year. Quillen is another one of those solid journeyman wrestlers so prevalent in SBC. He was a state qualifier two years ago. The sophomore Maxworthy was a state junior high runner-up two years ago who is starting to blossom. He has wrestled a tough schedule including both the Top Gun and Medina. Gibbs could be the upset-maker here. He was 2nd at solon and won four bouts at Brecksville. Bishop and Jacobs (Bellevue) are also solid possibilities.

There is almost nothing at Wilmington. Rush was a district finalist and state qualifier at 171# last year. However, he was a little small for that weight class and was outscored at the state level 24-2. This year after

being pinned twice at Graham, he decided to move down to 152# opening up the line-up for Hoke and Dennis. The verdict is still out on how this will work. At the very tough Top Gun he lost two close bouts. However, by tourney time, this problem should be resolved, and he is likely to perform well.

160#

Projected Champion: Grant Savelli (Lake Catholic)

Top Contenders

2	Tieche (Perkins)	15	Sergent (Vermillion)
3	Carmony (West Holmes)	16	Nestor (Buckeye Local)
4	Hoke (St. Paris Graham)	17	Schmidt (Marlington)
5	Jenkins (Indian Lake)	18	Schodowski (Rocky River)
6	Turchin (Norton)	19	Williams (Beaver Local)
7	P. Bergman (Oak Harbor)	20	Marhoffer (Walsh Jesuit)
8	Carter (Franklin)	21	Whited (Logan Elm)
9	Cooper (Indian Creek)	22	Weinardy (Bucyrus)
10	Abbott (Kenston)	23	Zugg (Hillsboro)
11	Carthen (Perry)	24	Catanzaro (Kings)
12	Lewis (Holland Springfield)	25	Hurst (Philo)
13	Brown (Columbus DeSales)	26	Stulberg (University)
14	Linkinhofer (Bellefontaine)	27	Holcomb (Goshen)

For whatever reason predicting Division II individual champions has always been a difficult task. My success ratio in this class is about 20 percentage points lower than it is in Division I or Division III. There is no obvious reason why this should be so since each class receives roughly equivalent analytical time. I had thought that as these schools emulated the big schools in traveling to larger tournaments with a state-wide make-up that my results would improve. It hasn't happened but I will comment that most close followers of wrestling have noted the same trend. Somehow there are more surprises, more upsets, more strange endings in Division II than anywhere else.

I have had Savelli as my top choice just about all season as he has maintained a narrow, but definite advantage over that time span. He is just marvelous on his feet and that should tell the tale at this weight class. Last year he was the district champ at Firestone and finished 4th with three state wins. He likes to make it a ten move "match figuring he'll win the majority of takedowns. He has been champ at Kenston and the CIT and 2nd at 171# to the much bigger Camargo at Coffman. His recent win over Tieche cements his position as the "top dog" at this weight.

State qualifier Turchin is now a sophomore and he can place this year. He was 1st at Solon 2nd at the Dies, and 5th at Medina - - losing a one-pointer to Hoke. There is a drop-off after this top duo with the tandem of Abbott and Carthen probably next best. Abbott won at Avon Lake and Kenston and was 3rd at North Canton. He lost to Hoke and Carter at Medina, the former, by only one point. Schmidt is right there needing very little more to qualify while Marhoffer has come on strong and may be the generator of upsets. Savel and Stulberg will also play a role here.

Tieche, now just a junior, is already a two-time state qualifier and defending district champion at this weight class. He pondered 152#, but will wrestle here. He lost to Patzakis by a point in the North Canton finals and was 2nd (at 152#) to Marzec at Tiffin. Savelli took him down five times in a recent 11-5 loss, but that is his only defeat by a Division II performer. Bergman is a returning state qualifier who has battled the "Bergman Injury Plague" at Oak Harbor, which seems to have affected most of the five of them on the team. After him, Lewis is probably next best, but that may not be good enough to place.

Hoke just missed state qualification last year, I believe, he has moved ahead of two who did make it - Jenkins and Carter. He defeated Jenkins to win at Graham and was 3rd at Medina losing only to Ruberg. His 5th place finish at the Top Gun included 10-7 loss to Carmony. Carter and Jenkins should still qualify easily leaving only spot open for state qualifier Linkinhofer, Catanzaro and Holcomb to battle over.

It's terribly complicated at Buckeye Local. Top Gun, champion Carmony - - a transfer from Wooster - - is probably best while state qualifier Cooper is close behind. Brown is the top-rated 160-pounder in the Columbus area and was 4th at the CIT. Nestor was 5th at the OVAC and was a state alternate last year. He has shown improvement in the second half. Zugg has already won three tourneys and has to be factored into the analysis. That leaves Whited, Gates (Warren) and Hurst, all of whom have good credentials - - including the latter's state qualification last years. Williams was 2nd at the Top Gun while Dennie (St. Charles) and Kroon Van Diest (Buckeye Valley) have had solid seasons. It will be interesting to see the final bracket sheet at this district..

#171

Projected Champion: Kenny Jones (Olmsted Falls)

Top Contenders

2	Hackett (Hamilton Twp)	14	Brown (Eastwood)
3	Mautz (Philo)	15	Crompton (Teays Valley)
4	Dymond (Clyde)	16	VanAusdal (Eaton)
5	Dennis (St. Paris Graham)	17	Hurlbert (Bryan)
6	J. Bergman (Oak Harbor)	18	Hartman (West Geauga)
7	Villers (Canal Fulton NW)	19	Watts (Franklin)
8	Everhart (Indian Lake)	20	Siler (Defiance)
9	Sowers (Cambridge)	21	Tierney (Canfield)
10	Lowry (Walsh Jesuit)	22	Razzano (Columbus DeSales)
11	Rogacki (Holland Springfield)	23	Unger (Perry)
12	Whitlatch (Dover)	24	Wilcox (Dunbar)
13	Boscarino (Bellbrook)	25	Jewell (Miami Trace)
		26	Brooksbank (Taylor)

The competition last year at this weight class was incredible. Rarely have we seen a bracket sheet with so many talented and well credentialed young men. However, P. J. Jones, Villers, Canty, Harmon and Weimer have graduated. Scholes, Meggyesy, and Rush are at different weights, and Bergman is hurt. What that leave is a wide-open competition with some new names and a few 160's who have migrated up one weight class.

Certainly a good rule of thumb when you don't know who to choose - - whether we're talking wrestling forecast or NFL draft - - is pick the best available athlete. With my choice of Kenny Jones, I have done that - - and done it well. Jones, the All-Ohio running back on the Bulldog's state championship team is a sensational athlete. Quick, agile and strong he is also an excellent wrestler. Last year he was 3rd at 160# losing only a 5-4 quarter-final bout to eventual state runner-up Birden. This year he beat Dennis, Rogacki, and Watts to win at Medina and was an easy winner at the Dies. He has to be considered a slight favorite at this weight class.

Jones emerges from the tough Galion district. Dymond and Bergman are both returning state qualifiers with Dymond shooting for his third state visit. Last year he lost his placement bout to Mautz that also deprived him of a 40-victory season. Bergman has had injury issues but was back for the SBC duals - - but did not meet Dymond there. State qualifier Rogacki has been winning low places at the big tourneys (6th at GMVWA and 5th at Medina). He'll need to pick it up to qualify again with Brown, Hurlbert and Siler nearby. Brown has been very good while Hurlbert has missed much of the year to injury. Last year he was a district semi-finalist before

being eliminated by Bergman and Crompton. Sir Louis (Medina Highland) and Imwalle (St. Marys Memorial) are other possibilities with former finishing 2nd at the Dies to Jones.

Hackett was 2nd at the Top Gun, and could be a finalist here as well. Last year he was a sectional champion, but was unable to compete at the district level. He won at Grandview. Defeating the excellent Morrison and also had a win over Divison III champion Smolk.

The Buckeye Local District is also strong. Mautz was 6th last year and has been good this year wining most recently at Miami Trace. State qualifier Crompton returns, but both Sowers and Whitlatch may have passed him. Both have had great years with Sowers winning at the OVAC, John Glenn, and Barnesville while Whitlatch won at Dover and was 7th at the Top Gun after giving Dennis a real battle. Razzano is another possibility with Jewell and Richardson (Steubenville). somehow hoping for the best. The excellent freshman Shonk who won two bouts at this district will miss the entire year due to injury.

The young Dennis is just another great freshman at Graham that began with Jim Jordan and produces at least one each year - - many at the middle or upper weights. He lost his first bout of the year to Lowry, but won at Graham and was a finalist at Medina losing to Jones. He was 4th at the Top Gun. State qualifiers, Everhart and Van Ausdal return but the unheralded Boscarino may be moving ahead of them after big wins at Carroll and Eaton. Watts has come on strong at the end of the year and has a solid shot at qualification. Lautenschlager (Benjamin Logan) and Randolph (New Richmond) are long-shot possibilities in addition to those mentioned.

The Firestone District is probably the weakest district. The sophomore Villers is already a returning state qualifier with good credentials. He won at North Canton. Lowry is another of the many Walsh mystery men. He opened the year by beating Dennis, 5-1, in an early round of the Ironman and was then injured in the next round. We have not seen him since. If back and healthy, he would be an enormous factor both at this weight class and in the team competition. The erratic Hartman is either 3rd best or 33rd best - - but who can tell. After that its wide open.

189#

Projected Champion: Justin Scholes (Lake Catholic)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| 2 | Meggyesy (Triway) | 15 | Hays (St. Marys Memorial) |
| 3 | Keough (Clermont NE) | 16 | Adelman (Alliance) |
| 4 | Kirst (Lexington) | 17 | McCune (Bellbrook) |
| 5 | McAvinew (Canal Fulton NW) | 18 | Sydebotham (Hamilton Twp) |
| 6 | Miller (Revere) | 19 | Jarrett (North Ridgeville) |
| 7 | Parrish (Buckeye Valley) | 20 | Braun (Indian Valley) |
| 8 | Moyer (Eaton) | 21 | Cassidy (Trenton Edgewood) |
| 9 | Asbury (Milton-Union) | 22 | McFarland (River View) |
| 10 | J. D. Bergman (Oak Harbor) | 23 | Gavlak (Holy Name) |
| 11 | Blomquist (Olmsted Falls) | 24 | Banfield (Sheridan) |
| 12 | Trimmer (Claymont) | 25 | Snowden (Franklin) |
| 13 | Sater (Perry) | | |
| 14 | Nardo (Union Local) | | |

Finally we come to a weight class with excellent depth and a number of outstanding performers. Its a nice mix of wrestlers who have moved up from 171#, and, those that competed at this weight class last year. I think the pairings will be critical since we have a number of different styles represented by the top performers. The

Firestone District looks particularly strong and that may in part give the pairings a somewhat lopsided look. In addition, major injuries to some of the top echelon boys like Scholes and Bergman, lend an element of uncertainty to this weight class. However, it should be one of the most entertaining and interesting contests in Division II with at least 10 returning state qualifiers and some sharp newcomers as well.

My choice is Justin Scholes who has been 4th the last two years at 171# finishing behind Jones, Villers, and Hieber in 1999 and back of Jones, Villers and Canty in 2000. If nothing else he has outlasted them and now as a senior its his turn to win - - or so it would seem. However, he was hurt early on at the Reno tournament and is just now coming back. Still he has the experience and talent to overcome this excellent field.

Much of his competition will be right with him at the Firestone District. Meggyesy is very good and will give Scholes all he can handle. A state qualifier last year, he was 1-2 at Columbus losing to state champions Jones and Canty. This year he beat Way at Smithville and split two bouts with the exceptional Delguyd at the Top Gun and Wadsworth. He'll be away from Scholes and that could be your state final pairing. State qualifiers Miller and McAvinew are also at Firestone. I undervalued Miller last year as he escaped that very tough 189# district at Firestone last year, but then lost two state bouts. He won at Solon but was 2nd at the Dies to McAvinew losing 5-1. Both of them should qualify. That would leave Sater, just down from 215# and Adelman at home the week after districts. Sater was 2nd at Waite while Adelman was 3rd at the Top Gun with wins over Klaus and Beechum.

Keough, now a junior, is a returning state qualifier who has stepped it up this year. In 2000 he beat Miller but then lost twice and failed to place. This year he won the SWOCA with a big win over state champion, Lukens, won at Reading, and was 2nd at Carroll losing to my Division I pick Clemens. That is his only loss and this fine free-styler could be a finalist. State qualifiers Moyer and Asbury are also strong. Moyer has had a great year winning at Eaton and Xenia, and finishing 2nd to Keough at Edgewood. He had a tough state draw last year - - Shrewsbury and McGovern - - and lost twice, but has placement potential now. Asbury, my Division III choice last year, should qualify leaving but one spot available for the rest of the field.

Kirst towers over the field at Galion. A tried and true pinner he was a state quarter-finalist at this class last year. He won his second Gorman on a fall, and beat Griffith to win at Tiffin.. He has an asthmatic condition which he has overcome and the results are easy to see. Bergman was a state qualifier last year, but has wrestled very little this season. His availability is questionable, but the lack of much strength after Kirst would give him cause for hope. Blomquist was a Medina finalist who should do well here while Hays, Jarrett, and Gavlak are among other possibilities. Hays won two district bouts last year and was second this season at Marion Harding in what has to be the year's fastest final - - 20 seconds.

Its very, very jammed up at Buckeye Local. Parish has been a dominant figure in Central Ohio. Its difficult to see him doing anything but winning here. State qualifier Sydebotham is up from 160# and has struggled a bit. Trimmer has won at Barnesville and placed at Medina and the Top Gun. This entire field is tightly bunched with Marczika (Watkins Memorial) the best of those not rated.

215#

Projected Champion: Tomas Rodriguez (Orange)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|----|----------------------|
| 2 | Moran (Kenston) | 14 | Theobald (Twinsburg) |
| 3 | Lackmeyer (Purcell) | 15 | Jones (Hamilton Twp) |
| 4 | Yates (Norton) | 16 | Sears (Little Miami) |
| 5 | Penton (Van Wert) | 17 | Jewell (Miami Trace) |

6	Rice (St. Paris Graham)	18	Dolce (Lake Catholic)
7	R. Edgington (Bellevue)	19	Carver (Olmsted Falls)
8	Fisher (Columbus DeSales)	20	Atkinson (Kings)
9	Balogh (Clyde)	21	Epperson (Bellefontaine)
10	Anderson (Marysville)	22	Sommer (Triway)
11	M. Warren (St Charles)	23	Levy (Oak Harbor)
12	Sabo (Eastwood)	24	Creech (Eaton)
13	Hoppel (Beaver Local)	25	Duvall (Union Local)

I have pointed out some likely two-man competitions at other weight classes - - Olds vs. Leckrone, Gordon vs. Parsons, Klinger vs. Pycraft, etc. - - but the absolute best example should be at 215#. Last year both Moran and Rodriguez were at the loaded 189# class. At the sectional Moran was 2nd while Rodriguez captured 3rd but at the district level Rodriguez won their semi-final bout on a fall..

At the state meet, Grove upset both of them by a point with Rodriguez finishing 3rd and Moran 5th. Again, this year they'll see each other at sectional, district, and state action each time as finalist. It's unlikely that either one can sweep all three bouts so the pertinent question is who will win the last one

Moran, already signed with Central Michigan, has wrestled a far more rigorous schedule this year than Rodriguez. He has won titles at Avon Lake, Medina, Kenston, and the Top Gun with outstanding efficiency and a high percentage of falls. Rodriguez is an impressive athlete who wrestles a far less testing schedule which should see him fresh and healthy at sectional time. Both have had relatively close bouts with Campea and there is little to choose by way of comparative scores. Incidentally both will be light 215's but that should not be critical. I think Rodriguez is the better athlete in terms of long term potential but loves football and so has a split set of objectives. Still at crunch time you have to go with the athlete.

I think Moran might win their first bout, but Rodriguez will have time to figure out Moran's style. By the second or third go-round, both boys will know what the other likes to do and it will come down to strength and athleticism. That's when I think Rodriguez will win.

Three of my top four choices emerge from the Firestone District. While Moran and Rodriguez are likely to dominate, Yates should have excellent placement chances. He was 2nd at Solon and the Dies both times losing to Division III choice Caponi and was 4th at Medina losing to Barrentine. The fourth berth is wide open with folks like Smithville champ, Sommer, Kenston runner-up, Theobald, and Dolce having the inside track.

Defending district champ and state 5th place finisher, Jason Lackmeyer heads the Wilmington District. Rumors have flourished about a possible move to 189#, but he has wrestled every competition I've recorded at 215#. He already has won titles at Eaton and the SWOCA, but was 2nd at both Carroll and the CIT to Barrentine. His only challenger is state qualifier, Rice - - up from 189# who has wrestled a vigorous schedule. He won at Graham and the Top Gun and placed at the Ironman. He also has placement potential. The rest of this district is well below this top duo with Sears, Atkinson, Epperson, and Creech being rated. Of this group, Epperson has the best chance of upsetting one of the highly rated boys.

The Division I star Barrentine has beaten Yates, Lackmeyer, Carver, and almost Moran. The real exception was Penton, who defeated him in overtime to win the GMVWA. Last year Penton missed state qualification by one point and ended up as state alternate. This year he has been exceptional capped by his victory over Barrentine. Both state qualifier Balogh and Edgington will challenge him at Galion. That district will send four solid wrestlers to Columbus all of whom will have placement possibilities. Balogh was a heavyweight last year, who has moved down to 215# and had a few bumps in the road including a recent loss to Levy. Edgington keeps

getting better and he could be a finalist at this district. Sabo, Levy, and Carver will battle it out for the fourth spot.

Some stiff very competition should occur at Buckeye Local. Fisher lost a close 9-7 battle to Lackmeyer at the CIT and then beat Warren and Dolce in finishing 5th. He was 3rd at Mayfield in a tough weight class and 5th at Brecksville losing to Edgington on a fall. Anderson won at the Gorman while Warren has been a steady placer. Jones was a surprise 2nd at the Top Gun, but that was not a very strong weight class there. Rice barbecued him in the finals 11-1. Hoppel, the Junior High State heavyweight champion, has had quite a freshman year capped off by the OVAC title last week. He is the son of three-time champ Carl and may well match that total with continued improvement. Jewell is good upset potential here.

Hvy.

Projected Champion: Al RABER (Marlington)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 2 | Miller (Chaminade) | 14 | Ridenour (Harvey) |
| 3 | Lane (Milton Union) | 15 | Dzurnak (Fairview) |
| 4 | Cottrell (Claymont) | 16 | T. Warren (St. Charles) |
| 5 | Ryan (Lemon Monroe) | 17 | Seal (Clyde) |
| 6 | Bryant (Olmsted Falls) | 18 | Wolfinger (Hebron Lakewood) |
| 7 | Cullin (Buckeye) | 19 | Katris (Franklin) |
| 8 | Campbell (Springboro) | 20 | Griffin (Canal Fulton NW) |
| 9 | Powell (North Ridgeville) | 21 | Johnson (Hamilton Twp) |
| 10 | Bucha (Holy Name) | 22 | Mezzacappa (Lake Catholic) |
| 11 | Reeder (Kenston) | 23 | Enck (St. Paris Graham) |
| 12 | Benner (Van Wert) | 24 | Goff (Canton South) |
| 13 | Kassner (Circleville) | 25 | Price (Cambridge) |

We have been blessed in the last decade by some dominating heavyweights who have made wining state titles look easy. People like Fickell, Anderson, Kelly and Welch have cruised to the championship with nary a close bout on the bracket sheet. That won't be the case this year as there is no standout heavyweight that towers above what is a deep and competitive field. It is also a year when there is a real diversity in style and body type among the top contenders. This will make bracketing very important, and is likely to lead to some major upsets often engendered by such clashes in build and technique. This is one of the best and most interesting of all 42 weights classes and should be a joy to watch.

My choice is Al Raber who qualified, but did not place at 215# last year. He is a fast aggressive attacking heavyweight who has won major tournaments at North Canton, Dies and Top Gun. This style is not without risk - - particularly against mammoth heavyweights like Lane, Cottrell, and Bryant. It also puts him in peril against Miller whose patented head lock is made to order for heavyweights who charge inside. Still Raber, now at 260 pounds has to muscle to deal with the big guys and the speed to defeat them. The one thing he'll need is referees who'll make the big guys do more than use their bulk to defend.

The dynamite District is at Wilmington. Miller was a Division I state qualifier two years ago at Dayton Carroll losing in the quarter-finals to Stepanovich. Then last year, now at Chaminade, he was upset in the first round

by eventual state runner-up Valvoda, and after winning three consolation bouts (including one over Campbell) finished 6th. This year his only loss was to Division I Canning, 6-5, and he has dominated everywhere else - - including all falls at the CIT. He is a devastating pinner right at the heavyweight limit, and he has the talent to win it all. Lane was in Division III last year finishing as state runner-up to Lingruen. About 10 pounds lighter than Miller he moves well and has lots of experience. Interestingly he has beaten my Division I choice, Kenny Leckrone, three times in the last two years (while losing once). Ryan is the only undefeated wrestler at this weight class at Wilmington, but I've rated him below Miller and lane. That could be a mistake. However, Miller did pin him at last year's Districts and Ryan failed to qualify. Ryans has won at the SWOCA on four falls and that is indicative of his ability. State qualifier Campbell has only lost twice this year - - once to Lane - - and is an awfully good wrestler to be rated fourth best in a district. If the district bracket sheet is ugly - - in other words its impossible for the top four to all qualify - - than Enck or Katris are probably next in line.

As you know "Kim Fifty Fingers" no longer types this report (she did about 23 of them and for Sandra - - her replacement this year it has been a long six or seven days. However this is the last one to be typed so that whooshing sound you here is one of relief. Raber exits from a far easier district. Reeder and Ridenour are both very competent heavyweights, but they shouldn't overly worry Raber. Reeder, behind state runner-up Valvoda last year, has done well wrestling a difficult schedule. He was 2nd at Avon Lake and Kenston while finishing 3rd at the WRC. Griffin and Mezzacappa have upset potential here.

The Olmsted Falls Section should dominate the Galion District. There are five state caliber competitors but only four will get out. The fiercesome Bryant looks to be the best with strong performances at Medina, the Dies (losing only to Raber), and the CVCA Duals. Cullin was runner-up at the Top Gun losing to Raber 3-2. Powell is undefeated with titles at Avon Lake and Avon. State qualifier Bucha has lost, but twice while Dzurnak won at the giant Brecksville Tourney. It's quite a sectional, and its very difficult to think that one of the group won't even reach the district level at Galion where they'll meet up with Benner, Seal, T. Edginton (Bellevue), Beier (Oak Harbor), and Brown (Napoleon) in another battle royal. The four survivors by this time may be too exhausted to perform at peak levels in Columbus.

There is not nearly that much at Buckeye Local. The one giant (no pun intended) exception is Cottrell. He's often not as aggressive as one might hope, but he knows how to win. He has excellent placement chances, and with good fortune could be a finalist. Warren and state qualifier Kassner are next best, but cannot "go" with Cottrell..

Teams

1. **St. Paris Graham** – If they wrestle to their full potential I think they'll win easily. The five lightweights should produce two champions (Ott and Wooten and possibly three placers (Knull, Evans, and Markley). The freshman Dennis is a great talent and Hoke and Rice can score at the state level. A big bonus would be Rush at peak efficiency at 152#

2. **Columbus DeSales** – Schlatter and Barnett are superstars who could score nearly 50 points between them but then what? Fisher and Brown are probably two of their best hopes with A Pizzuro and Razzano also possibilities. Burns who was 6th last year could make it very close with Graham if he grabs a high place.

3. **Lake Catholic** – Savelli, Scholes and Constantino all have finalist potential with the first two looking like favorites. If Mulhall is out for the year that will truly hurt them because he could score at the state level. That would leave it up to Runyon, Inghram, SanFillippo, and Slattery. This is a team that could move up if everything falls into place.

4. **Kenston**- Moran is a sure, big-time state scorer, but if I'm right about Deubel he'll score another 20 points himself. They have a boatload of other possible scorers headed by Hurley, Roff, and Radkowsky. If they get a Faist or a Ging or Reeder to Columbus they could move up.

5. **Olmsted Falls** – They open up with two possible finalists in the freshman Smith and the senior Stoffer. They'll follow that up with Jones, Bryant, and Blomquist at the upper weights and that is an excellent trio. If Williams, Ahern, Carver, or Adkins can help they'll have a shot at some kind of team trophy.

6. **Walsh Jesuit** They've pulled out some miracle State finishes in the past, but getting in the Top Three this year would be the topper. This is a team that is filled with unknowns. What we are sure about is Woodruff and Zupancic as potential finalists, and Gulosh as a fast-rising star. Romano is also a likely finalist if he is in top form, but no one yet knows if he'll even compete. Again, we haven't seen Garner and Lowry and those are two more state scorers. They are the mystery team.

7. **Perkins** –Two-time Pentorn is gone but runner-up Finn returns and is the rock this team is built upon. The transfer Schmndt could be a big scorer at 112# while two-time qualifier Tieche should help at 160#. Then there's McCarthy, Pfeil, Stephenson, and Deering all of whom could be a big help

8. **Hamilton Twp.**—Defending state champ Cupp needs to replicate last year's performance to jump-start his team's hopes. Hackett can be a scorer at 171# while state qualifier Sydebotham, Jones, and Dotson are also possibilities.

9. **Norton**—They have a team with three possible state scorers in Yates, Turchin, and Underation. The key will be for Underation to escape that tough Firestone District at 145#. After this trio there is no one else to help..

10. **Triway**—This is probably a two-man team with both Meggyesy and Kearney looking to be finalists. Sommer could help at 215# and, maybe, even the other Kearney at heavyweight.

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2001

HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

FORECAST

(30th Annual Edition)

**Written By:
Brian Brakeman**

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DIVISION III

103 #

Projected Champion: Andy Wade (CVCA)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|----|--------------------------------------|
| 2 | Monsman (Chanel) | 15 | Kill (Delphos St. John) |
| 3 | McIntyre (River Valley) | 16 | Weller (Lakota) |
| 4 | Ward (Streetsboro) | 17 | LeJeune (Fremont St. Joseph) |
| 5 | McCahan (Akron St Vincent) | 18 | Mosher (Mogadore) |
| 6 | Schaeffer (Monroeville) | 19 | Emery (Harrison Central) |
| 7 | Wyant (Triad) | 20 | Ellis (Bloom Carroll) |
| 8 | Wickline (Madison Plains) | 21 | Niswonger (Tri-County North) |
| 9 | Burrer (Keystone) | 22 | Ruplinger (Delta) |
| 10 | Keys (Berkshire) | 23 | Back (Waynesville) |
| 11 | M. Cavalier (Newbury) | 24 | Grosswiler (Collins Western Reserve) |
| 12 | Bey (Versailles) | 25 | Wilson (Malvern) |
| 13 | Clemans (Elmwood) | 26 | Harris (Brookville) |
| 14 | Hunt (Beachwood) | 27 | Karnes (Edgerton) |
| | | 28 | Kagey (Newark Catholic) |

A trend that had been growing probably reached its peak this year –and that is the influx of Division I and II wrestlers into the small school classification. For example, we have Buzek, Beers and the two Caponi boys transferring to Akron St. Vincent,. Paparone, moving over to Chanel and the Lichty brothers competing at Ayersville. All of this will have significant impact on the team competition as will the move of Division I state qualifier Andy Wade to CVCA.

This weight class may well be the weakest of all 42 that will be contested in Columbus. Only two wrestlers return from last year's state bracket sheet and they won a total of two bouts. Wade won that many himself as a Division I state qualifier. In November he seemed a strong favorite, but constant battles with injuries and weight have slowed him down. He did not place at the Ironman, but was 2nd at Medina and the Top Gun. If he is healthy and reasonably comfortable with the weight, he should still have too much firepower for the rest of this field.

Most of what firepower that does exist would seem to be at the Elyria Catholic District. A contented Wade is the best, but state qualifier Monsman knows how to win the close bouts. He was 2-2 at Columbus and missed placing by one win. This year he has been a consistently high placer at strong tournaments. Both Ward and McCahan are a bit of mystery at this point. Ward, a senior, missed state action by one bout last year at 112#. He has wrestled little this year so it is difficult to judge his status at this time. However, history, suggests that if he can perform at this weight he will do very well. McCahan, only a freshman, has been up and down. He lost to Monsman 6-5, but has crushed Cavalier and Kagey in this field. He's a wild card. Burrer upset Scott last year at the district almost derailing his state title express, but then lost twice (one of them to Monsman) and was eliminated. He, obviously has upset potential. Keyes, Cavalier and Mosher would be likely qualifiers at the other districts, but will have to work miracles to make it here. Hunt, a brilliant youth wrestler, has adjusted well to high school competition, but may be too small to beat the best.

State qualifier McIntyre has finalist potential –especially if Wade is not up to par. Monsman beat him by two points last year, but I believe that was his last loss. Wickline is the other one to watch at the Marion district. McIntyre beat him 6-1 in their go-to-state bout, but those two tower over the rest of this district. Wickline's only loss this year was at 112#, and he pinned in the finals at West Jefferson – in fact, he has had all falls when at 103#. The last two spots are wide open with Emery, Ellis, and Kagey slight favorites for those last two berths. Besides those listed, Ewing (Bloom Carroll) and Smith (Fisher Catholic) are other possibilities.

The Northwest District is generally loaded at the lower weights, but that is not true this year. In fact, the entire district is far weaker than usual. The one standout so far is the freshman Schaeffer, who won at Van Buren, Bucyrus, Sandusky St. Mary Duals, and the Panther Classic. He has placement potential. After that its pretty much "by guess and by golly" with results changing from week to week. Clemans, Weller and LeJeune are next in line, but they will have plenty of competition. The sectional lineup is unbalanced with the Sandusky-St. Mary sectional featuring Schaeffer, Weller, LeJeune, Grosswiler, Noel (Arcadia) and Renwand (Sandusky-St. Mary). Also watch for Amburgey (New London) who has upset potential in this evenly balanced competition.

Another freshman heads the Xenia district. Levi Wyant is a very successful and experienced youth wrestler who will have a big impact in the Southwest. He pinned McCahan in the consolation round while placing at Wadsworth and won a number of smaller tournaments including the "A" classic. He should be a district champ out of Xenia and have excellent bracket position at Columbus. I also like Bey in that district while Kill and Niswonger are nominal favorites for the last two spots. Only Wyant, I believe, has real placement potential.

112 #

Projected Champion: Adam Buzek (Akron St. Vincent)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 2 | Scott (Loudonville) | 15 | Resendez (Genoa) |
| 3 | Gambill (Miami East) | 16 | Jack (Shadyside) |
| 4 | Derr (Stritch) | 17 | Huffman (Hannibal River) |
| 5 | Paparone (Chanel) | 18 | Rhodes (Brookville) |
| 6 | Lutz (Triad) | 19 | Charvat (CVCA) |
| 7 | Rossiter (Harrison Central) | 20 | Spencer (Newbury) |
| 8 | Wyse (Grandview Hts.) | 21 | Gantz (Tusky Valley) |
| 9 | Slachta (Swanton) | 22 | Eckhardt (Carlisle) |
| 10 | Henry (Versailles) | 23 | Ollom (Lakota) |
| 11 | Buckingham (Mohawk) | 24 | Stroup (Westfall) |
| 12 | Jones (Martins Ferry) | 25 | Bugara (Trinity) |
| 13 | Chapa (Liberty Center) | 26 | McClelland (Berkshire) |
| 14 | Wittenberg (Madeira) | 27 | Francis (Blanchester) |

Sometimes at a district venue the finals seem almost anti-climactic since state qualification has already been attained. And, yet, there continues to be a consistent pattern that wrestlers who lose at the district level do not often win state titles. Last year, for example, all 14 Division II state champions were also district champs. Looking at the last three years:

	DIVISION I	DIVISION II	DIVISION III	TOTAL
NUMBER OF CHAMPS	42	42	42	126
ALSO DISTRICT CHAMPS	32	35	33	100
	76.2%	83.3%	78.6%	79.4%

Thus 4 out of every 5 state champions were also district winners

An exception to that general rule was Tyler Scott who lost (for the first time) in the district quarter-finals. Until just a few years ago he would have been eliminated from competition (his vanquisher lost in the semis) , but instead he won four consolation bouts to finish 3rd and then four more to win his state title. With three of the top contenders emerging from the Elyria Catholic District, this could be a weight class where a district champion does not prevail. I've been correct for eight consecutive years at the class, but this year, I believe, may be my biggest challenge.

With the three top teams – Akron-St. Vincent, Chanel and CVCA – competing at Elyria Catholic, this district is loaded at many weight classes – and 112# is no exception. Buzek was an excellent 103-pounder at Green last year finishing 4th in a district that qualified but three for state action. This year he won at Solon and the CIT and was a strong runner-up to state champion Stoffer at the Dies. He was 3rd at Medina and 5th at Wadsworth where he lost a couple of strange bouts – including one to Lutz. He is a battle hardened junior well suited for the rigors of this weight class.

State champion Scott has had another strong season losing only to Hurley of Kenston and Paparone. He showed excellent match management at Columbus last year winning his four bouts by one, two, three and four points respectively. Paparone, a transfer from Kenston, has been a godsend plugging a huge gap for Chanel I was impressed with him at Solon, and he has placed well in all five of their tourneys. This trio is very close. Paparone defeated Scott, 2-1, while Buzek beat Paparone 5-3 in overtime.

The battle for the fourth qualifying spot is wide open. With the top three all exiting from different sectionals the pairings will be uneven with two of them in the same half. The fourth qualifier will, at least, in part, be determined by where wrestlers fall in the bracket sheet. Besides those listed, McClelland (Berkshire), Saal (Aquinas) and Morris (West Salem Northwest) are possibilities.

A wrestler who could inject himself into the midst of this battleground is Ranzie Gambill. I barely mentioned him last year, but he proved to be sensational. After losing an overtime bout to Kuykendall in the district finals he crushed McIntyre and Aring in the first two state rounds. Then in the semi-finals trailing late in the bout he beat Smilek with a fall only 12 seconds from the end. Scott won a hard fought finale, but Gambill has certainly opened a lot of eyes. This year he has hardly missed a beat at 112# and this time will come to the state meet known to everyone. State quarter-finalist Henry is at this district as is the excellent Lutz – a 1-0 winner over Buzek at Wadsworth. Wittenberg qualified at 119# last year, but with Burroughs and Kuykendall laying claim to his normal choices he has made the cut to 112# in order to compete. That is a strong quartet, but leaves out Rhodes, Ekhardt and Frances all of whom might have strong qualification possibilities in other years. Shields (North College Hill), Schierloh (Lockland) and Mitchell (Dixie) are a second trio of long-shot contenders.

State qualifiers Rossiter, Wyse, Jones and Jack head up a strong Marion district. While they were only a combined 2-8 at Columbus they should perform much better this year. Rossiter, in particular, has had a solid year winning at Richmond Hts. and Union Local and finishing 2nd only to Kendjursky at the OVAC,. However, the other three will be challenged by the fast improving Huffman and by Gantz. Huffman defeated Jack at Shadyside and won the Red Rider Classic.

Again, the Northwest District qualifiers look a little less intimidating then in the past. Derr, a major exception, was 5th last year at 103# after reaching the semi-finals. He has won several tournaments this year, but was 5th at the CIT as Buzek majored him 16-7. State qualifier Chapa and Slachta have done well and certainly a low place is a possibility. Slachta was the champ at Tiffin and could be a surprise here. Also, competing will be state qualifier Buckingham, Resendez, Ollon and Roth (Sandusky St. Mary).

119 #

Projected Champion: Jeff Jagers (Chanel)

Top Contenders

2	Cavalier(Newbury)	14	Anderson(Barnesville)
3	M.Smilek (CVCA)	15	Napier (Jonathan Alder)
4	Bedford (Woodmore)	16	Franz (Waynesville)
5	J. Tierney (Martins Ferry)	17	Smith (Roostown)
6	Ford (Delta)	18	Stines (Lakota)
7	LaCure (Greeneview)	19	Beach (Deer Park)
8	Estrada (Tinora)	20	Chaudry (Pleasant)
9	Burroughs (Madeira)	21	Mages (Reading)
10	Ogg (Mohawk)	22	Larew (Beallsville)
11	Vaughn (Johnstown)	23	Caruso (Beachwood)
12	Bernath (Keystone)	24	Schweinfurth (River Valley)
13	Bodey (West Liberty Salem)	25	Dean (Stritch)

This weight class will test the hypothesis that a truly superior freshman can vanquish a very strong and experienced field. Jeff Jagers is a two-time state junior high school champ with outstanding credentials. He was one of the finest junior high wrestlers I have ever seen, and he has moved into high school competition with a vengeance. He was a champion at Solon, Wadsworth and Doylestown pinning in the finals each time. His only losses were to Protz (a winner over Kyle Ott) 4-2 at North Canton and an upset defeat by Agozzino 4-2 at Mayfield. To win he'll have to surmount a field that includes state placers Smilek, Cavalier, Tierney and Bedford along with six other state qualifiers.

Smilek was a district champion at 103#, and was ahead late in the state semi-finals before getting caught and pinned by Gambill. He ended up beating Schmidt for 3rd. This year he has had some difficulty settling in at 119# capturing low places at the tough tournaments CVCA schedules. Cavalier was 4th at 112# last year and has wrestled well all season. He defeated Smilek at Medina by a point where he finished 2nd and was also runner-up at Toledo Waite. He was the champion at Hawken, Cardinal and Clearview. Add in state qualifier Smith and that is a very formidable quartet (including Jaggers) that will match up at Elyria Catholic. But that's not all. Bernath was a district qualifier at Mentor last year for Elyria as a 9th grader. This year, competing for Keystone, he has, I believe moved ahead of Smith. Since Smilek, Jaggers, and Bernath all exit the same sectional, there is a danger of asymmetrical pairings at the district level. That could open the door for , Ford (Hillsdale), or Caruso (Beachwood) to grab a qualifying spot.

There will be a wave of solid contenders exiting the Waite district at this weight class. Bedford is a mercurial up and down wrestler with lots of ability. Last year he won the district title against tough competition. After reaching the state semi-finals he lost three straight bouts to finish 6th - - three wrestlers from the district where he was champion finished ahead of him at Columbus. Incidentally the championship bout between Meiring and Pressler was a unique event. It was the only time in history where a district 5th placer wrestled a district 4th for a championship. Ford was very impressive at Brecksville reaching the finals and he certainly has placement potential. State qualifier Ogg, and the powerful Estrada make my Top Ten so that four of that group will compete at 'Waite. I have also listed Stines and Dean, but they need bracketing breaks to get into the hunt.

As a freshman, John Tierney finished a strong 4th at 103# besting Bedford among others. Then last year he was a district 4th barely squeaking into the state meet. However, he went 2-2 at Columbus losing a one-pointer to Cavalier in the quarter-finals. This year he has won at Bellaire St. John and Barnesville, and was 3rd at the OVAC losing an overtime tie breaker to Maple. The Tierney brothers seem to alternate placement years so it is John's turn. I like both Vaughn and Anderson out of that district, but not enough to pick them to place. Napier is the best bet for the fourth state berth, but he'll have a host of challengers – including one of my favorite e-mail correspondents, Bubba Larew. He, along with Dornan, Kinzy and Aberegg are leading a regeneration of Beallsville wrestling --- witnessed by 2nd place in the OVAC small school division.

There's lots of state experience at the Xenia district. LaCure is a two-time qualifier while Burroughs and Bodey went last year. Only LaCure has won a state bout and this group will face tough competition this year, too. Franz, only a freshman could be the fourth qualifier, but Beach, Mages and Smith (Versailles) will be tough challengers. This group needs to get just a little better for placement. I mean, Tierney only beat LaCure by three points last year while Burrough lost in the first round by the same margin.

125 #

Projected Champion: Drew Opfer (Sandusky St. Mary)

Top Contenders

2	Lopez (Genoa)	15	Rismiller (Versailles)
3	D. Tierney (Martins Ferry)	16	Elwood (New Albany)
4	Kuykendall (Madeira)	17	Jones (Bridgeport)
5	Ralph (Chanel)	18	Reynolds (Carlisle)
6	Wenger (Northmor)	19	O'Brien (Gilmour)
7	Blunk (CVCA)	20	Cochrel (Pleasant)
8	Frye (Ontario)	21	McKinney (Batavia)
9	Solarik (Elmwood)	22	Noland (Utica)
10	Daniels (Jonathan Alder)	23	Eicher (Tuslaw)
11	Bloom (Lakota)	24	Reel (Blanchester)
12	Cook (Mohawk)	25	Steiner (Doylestown)

13 Neilson (Fairview)
14 Kertesz (Beachwood)

26 Meyers (Cuyahoga Hts).
27 Spencer (Newbury)

The deciding game of the 1912 World Series went into extra innings with the Giants and Red Sox tied at one run. When the Giants scored a single tally in the top of the 10th they were only three outs away from the World Championship. Even better they had, arguably, the greatest pitcher in National League history on the mound in the person of the incomparable Christy Mathewson. But the Red Sox fought back and had men on first and third with one out and the 24-year old Tris Speaker at the plate. To the fans' chagrin Speaker lifted a high harmless pop fly into foul territory between home plate and first base. However, confusion reigned among the Giants as Mathewson made no call and the ball dropped uncaught into foul territory. The confident Speaker turned to Mathewson, a winner of 373 games, and said, "Matty, that just cost you the winners' share" and, true to his word, he rifled the next pitch into deep right field for a long single to tie the game. Moments later a sacrifice fly gave Boston the title, which Mathewson said, was the biggest disappointment in his brilliant career.

That's the level of confidence that Drew Opfer exhibits as he competes. Already a two-time state champ (and three-time placer) Opfer has lost only two bouts since the beginning of his sophomore year. He wrestles with an air of utter confidence and is not one to diminish his own performance. Last year he had three relatively easy state wins, but was pushed to the limit in the quarter-finals by Jim Stanek winning a heart-stopping 11-10 decision.

This year he is undefeated including a title at Medina where he beat former state champion Wooten (who defeated Lang 14-3) by a 6-5 tally in the finals. It was another squeaker with Opfer starting in the down position with 11 seconds left and getting the winning reversal at the buzzer. Still he did not look sharp on his feet, and his conditioning could have been better. Nonetheless, he is still a heavy favorite to take his third title. Incidentally should he win it would mean six consecutive years of state titles for the Opfer brothers (Jared 96-99, Drew 99-01). The state record is seven years held by the Dernlans (Jeff 85-86, Steve 87-88, and Matt 89-91).

In fact, if anyone is to challenge Opfer it may well come from his own district. That wouldn't be a surprise since in both state title years Opfer has had to defeat first Jesse and then Justi to take the crown. Last year Lopez lost to Opfer in the district semi-finals, 7-2 and barely qualified at Columbus. He won 3 bouts (including a win over Stanek), but lost twice to two-time state runner-up Parsons 2-1 and 3-0. State qualifiers Frye, Cook and Solarik all return to make for a real district battle. However there may be questions about whether Solarik will be competing. Also, at this weight are Bloom and Neilson – which means seven of my top thirteen are at this district. With 130# looking substantially easier we may see some strategic moves.

None of the other districts come close to matching this kind of firepower. Tierney was 3rd last year losing only to Lester, 8-4 and is a potential finalist. His only defeats this year were an overtime loss in the OVAC semi-finals and a 10-3 mauling by Opfer. However, he should still be a major factor at this weight. Wenger, a returning state qualifier, also could place out of this district, in this his last opportunity. The rest of this field is a fairly major step down although Daniels is a possible exception.

The Xenia district would seem to have only Kuykendall as a possible placer. A two-time state qualifier at 103#, he has wrestled at 130# much of the year before dropping to 125#. He missed placement by one bout last year and is the linch-pin of a solid Madeira squad. I struggled to find other people to put into this grid from this district and that's usually a bad sign.

This is one of the few weight classes where there is not a lot of strength emerging from Elyria Catholic. State qualifier Ralph returns and he has placement potential. He is excellent at keeping himself in a bout no matter the opponent. His only win was at Doylestown but he was 2nd at Solon and Wadsworth and 3rd at Mayfield and North Canton. The freshman Blunk is very good. A little small for this weight class he makes up for it with superb wrestling. He won five bouts at Medina losing only to state

Division I. 3rd place finisher Enright by scores of 4-2 and 4-3. He was 4th at the Top Gun losing only to Wooten and Bowersock, the latter loss in overtime. Don't overlook him. After that its anybody's guess who will get the last two spots. Steiner was MVP at Hillsdale defeating Perry (Smithville) in the final. He's so very tough you'll barely notice he has but one arm.

130 #

Projected Champion: Harry Lester (CVCA)

Top Contenders

2	Finneran (Sandusky St Mary)	15	Good (Fisher Catholic)
3	Seta (Reading)	16	Tripp (Gilmour)
4	Zimmerman (Hillsdale)	17	Wright/Leffler (Chanel)
5	Lohman (Delta)	18	Weiland (Woodmore)
6	Merle (Madeira)	19	Peltz (Beachwood)
7	Borders (River Valley)	20	Lucas (Barnesville)
8	Walker (Utica)	21	Grigson (Northwood)
9	Cimino (Akron St. Vincent)	22	Blaine (Newark Catholic)
10	Fox (Blanchester)	23	Weyer (Bluften)
11	Johnson (Mapletown)	24	Benington (Newcomerstown)
12	Bugner (Fostoria St Wendelin)	25	Hunt (Cardinal)
13	Fedak (New London)	26	Hixson (North Union)
14	R. Bergman (Versailles)	27	Hasty (Carlisle)
		28	Dornon (Beallsville)

Ohio has had nine four-time state champions and they tend to show a strikingly similar pattern. They tend to be at the very lowest weights (McGhee the only exception) compete outside of Division I (Wineberg the only exception) and fail to win an NCAA title (Jim Jordan the only exception). Harry Lester fits that pattern with one exception – I will be very surprised if he fail to win that elusive NCAA championship.

There are wonderful wrestlers every year in Ohio, but only a very select few have the style and charisma that transcends the sport. Wrestlers like Alan Fried, Tommy Milkovich and Mike DeAnna transform a simple wrestling bout into an event that people will remember for decades. Lester has the speed and incredible balance that seems to make the word winning inadequate to describe the end result. Last year Lester came back from a broken leg to win his third state title, but we didn't see the total package. This year nobody has challenged him and a very fine wrestler like T. J. Tepley, always tough to score on, lost 17-4. There are some outstanding 130's in Ohio and this is one time you'd like to see a one classification event. Imagine a bracket sheet with Pflug, Schlatter and Lester, but you know what, you can only imagine Lester as the winner. Unfortunately in Division III, there is no one to challenge him and it is unlikely any of his bouts will extend much into the third period. And even that may be critical should the team race be as close as anticipated.

Zimmerman and Cimino, are both returning state qualifiers who have won at Columbus. In fact Zimmerman missed placement by a single point. Zimmerman won at Hillsdale and was a strong 3rd at Smithville – losing his only bout of the year to Henry. Cimino, on the other hand, started strong with a 2nd at Solon and a 4th at Wadsworth. But then he lost two early bouts at the CIT and did not place, got beat at the Ohio Duals by the freshmen, Whelan and Wright, and did not place at the Dies. Qualification could be in real jeopardy. Johnson missed qualification on a 3-0 loss to Cimino while Wright, Hunt, Tripp and Anthony (Columbia Station) are possibilities. Peltz out most of the year with injury is an intriguing thought. He can be very good though he may be at the wrong weight class.

Finneran has moved down to 130# and he could be a finalist. There would be kind of a capstone feeling if he were to meet Lester in the finals. Already a three time state qualifier, his very first state bout was against Lester who pinned him in the 3rd period. As a sophomore he was away from Lester, but lost to runner-up Fazio in the first round. Then as a junior he met Lester in the quarterfinals and avoided the fall, but not the loss. So he and Lester will both be four-time qualifiers at the same weight classes. Not the best way for Finneran to win a state title. By the way, he finished 4th last year. The remainder of the Waite district is not strong and only Lohman would seem to have placement chances. He was a semi-finalist at Brecksville before losing to Schlatter. The only dark-horse I have identified here is Szozda (Swanton).

It's much the same story at Marion where Borders and Walker look to be strongest. However, it is a wide open competition with little to choose from among the primary contenders. It would not be surprising if a couple of "unknowns" walked away with a tickets to Columbus.

There are some solid placement possibilities at Xenia. Seta was 6th at this weight last year after reaching the semi-finals. After a rapid fire loss by fall to Linsker, he lost a very tough overtime tiebreaker to Schultz – the same score but the opposite result of their district final. Merle was an early district loser, but fought back for a 3rd at this weight. He lost a couple of close bouts to end his year. This year he has won several tournaments mostly at 135#. State alternate Fox also returns at this class and he should get through this year. The last berth could go in any direction with those listed plus Bladen (Lincolnvew) and Rader (Lima CC) in the mix.

135 #

Projected Champion: Mike Hurley (Akron St. Vincent)

Top Contenders

2	Smilek (CVCA)	14	Foster (Swanton)
3	Smith (Cardington)	15	Hazlett (Reading)
4	Stanek (Chanel)	16	Bower (West Salem Northwest)
5	Rhoades (Versailles)	17	Tamaki (Oakwood)
6	Anderson (Fisher Catholic)	18	Burkholder (Delta)
7	Harris (Brookville)	19	Long (Utica)
8	Malott (Margaretta)	20	Hamman (Columbia Station)
9	Kosa (Jackson-Milton)	21	Alexander (Streetsboro)
10	J. Whelan (Sandusky St. Mary)	22	Peddicord (Barnesville)
11	Courtad (Pleasant)	23	Bogdan (Huron)
12	Gratz (Blufton)	24	Samsa (Shadyside)
13	Nutbrown (River Valley)	25	Higginbotham (Blanchester)

Suppose one day you're pondering the mysteries of mathematics and you come up with the expression $29 + 2x^2$. You calculate $x=0$ and get 29 and then keep increasing x by one and you get 31 (for $x=1$) and then 37 (for $x=2$) and then 47,61, and 79 (for $x=5$). Quickly you realize that each number you generated is a prime number evenly divisible by only one). Suddenly fame and fortune beckon, you may have discovered a simple formula for generating primes that has up to now, eluded every great mathematician. You go to $x=6$ and generate 101 – yet get another prime. You keep increasing x by one and still it works and works and works. By $x=28$ (where you get 1597 which you instantly recognize as prime) the formula seems foolproof. You decide to try one more increment, $x=29$ and generate 1711. That certainly looks prime, but , oh no, its evenly divisible by 29. Your dreams of glory, that moments before had seemed well within reach, have vanished.

I'm guessing that was how Mike Hurley felt last year – maybe even worse. He entered the state meet with a 45-1 record after defeating Linsker 10-6, in the district finals. At Columbus he crushed his first three opponents including a win by fall over state runner-up, Borjas. Waiting again at the championship mat, was Linsker –

someone he knew from his earliest days of wrestling at Longwood Y. Again, Hurley had a comfortable lead when with little more than a minute remaining disaster (in the form of a spladle) struck and Hurley lost on a fall. One of the most incredible turnarounds in a state finals bout had doomed his chances less than 60 seconds from the title.

That is not likely to happen this year. Hurley has been sensational winning at Solon, Medina, Wadsworth and the Dies. In doing so he has decisively defeated defending state champ Tom Smith. (who beat brother Ryan in the finals last year) three times and has done the same to Stanek, too. His only loss was to Ryan West - - one of two bouts which they split. Unless some rare misfortune occurs Hurley should win handily this year.

He comes out of a dynamite district. Smilek is very tough and he, too, knows about sudden misfortune. Ahead 8-0 in his district semi-final bout, he was pinned by Peyton and he couldn't make it back in the consolations. Stanek was 4th two years ago, but after losing 11-10 to Opfer last year at 125# he failed to place. That eats up three qualifying spots leaving only one to be contested by Kosa, Bower, Hamman, and Alexander – who may opt to compete at 130#. Hamman is young while Kosa and Bower wrestle in distant parts of the district. My choice is Kosa.

Smith exits the Marion District to defend his title. While he may have lost three times to Hurley – he only has to beat once to take the title. They will be seeded apart assuming each wins his district) so Smith could conceivably have to defeat Smilek, Stanek, and Hurley to repeat. Last year he came to Columbus as a district runner-up with 10 losses, but after surviving a 10-9 first round thriller, he easily won his next three bouts. As the only member of the Cardington team, he won't have to worry about the team title. Almost all the good 135's in this district come from the Columbus area. State qualifier Anderson, Courtad, Nutbrown, Long and Springer (Licking Hts) all come from that region. Only Peddicord and Samsa have a chance from the Eastern District.

State qualifier Harris and state alternate Rhoades head the cast at Xenia. Harris was at 140[#] last year and it was a quick “two- and out” at Columbus. Rhoades seems to get better as the year progresses and he could be a factor in state placement. It's a step down after that with Hazlett Tamaki and Higginbotham leading the remainder of the Southwest contingent. Gratz, Kimmet (Delphos St John) and Mack (Allan East) will challenge from up north. Watch out for Gratz – he was an overtime loser in the “A” Classic final and won decisively at Van Buren.

State qualifier Malott was originally higher on my grid, but he has struggled lately – possibly because of injuries. At full speed he's easily the best at Waite. Someone to watch for is the freshman twin Joe Whelan. Wrestling up a weight class he still has the firepower to qualify. He defeated Cimino at the Ohio Duals, and should be a huge factor next year. With Fedak moving to 130#, people like Bugner, Foster, Bogdan and Burkholder suddenly have twice the probability of qualifying. Also note Frankart (Fostoria St Wendelin), Suffel (Edgerton) and Garner (Elmwood).

140

Projected Champion: Ryan Hurley (Akron St. Vincent)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| 2 | Linsker (Beachwood) | 16 | Lichty (Ayersville) |
| 3 | Engel (Reading) | 17 | Wilson (Monroe Central) |
| 4 | Scarl (Gilmour) | 18 | Kinzy (Beallsville) |
| 5 | Mayhugh (Martins Ferry) | 19 | E. Olney (West Salem Northwest) |
| 6 | Stacklin (Seneca East) | 20 | Belfrage (Worthington Christian) |

7	Vogel (Grandview Hts.)	21	Coy (Mogadore)
8	Short (Carlisle)	22	Laughman (Miami East)
9	Kirtley (Streetsboro)	23	Showalter (Mechanicsburg)
10	Young (Archbold)	24	Bender (Caldwell)
11	Orlosky (Chanel)	25	Gable (Delphos St. John)
12	Dotson (Liberty Ct.)	26	Frye (Ontario)
13	Sanderson (CVCA)	27	Thobaden (Clinton Massie)
14	Madden (Delta)	28	Ellis (Madeira)
15	Gerber (Monroeville)	29	Gibson (Norwalk-St. Paul)

I'm a big movie fan, but, in general, I stay away from sequels. After Jurassic Park –part two and Speed 2 you realize that they're generally a pale imitation of the original. But there are exceptions - - Terminator2 and quite possibly here at 140#. Again we have a sensational, once beaten Hurley, in this case Ryan- - whose biggest obstacle to a state title may once again be the seemingly ubiquitous Linsker.

Last year Hurley won a trio of two-point bouts only to fall to Smith in the finals. I've often wondered whether he was still in shock after watching his brother lose only minutes earlier. Still he had 42 wins and a state runner-up trophy after his freshman year. This year he has been even better wrestling a very tough schedule he has lost only to Division I champ, Jason Bake, 3-1, and has been labeled as "unrideable" by his coach. His titles at the CIT, Medina, and Solon indicate that this former junior high state champ is ready to become the first wrestler (though there are others with a similar opportunity) to win both state titles.

Linsker, however, is a formidable obstacle. He is undefeated this year, including a big win at Kenston where none of his bouts went the distance. While he has not wrestled the exhausting and difficult schedule that Hurley has, he should be well prepared to spring another possible upset this year. Linsker, only a junior, had three falls at last year's state meet, minimizing his mat time and reducing uncertainty. Exiting the same district these two should be apart at the state level.

There are strong contenders for the last two state berths at Elyria Catholic. There are strong contenders for the last two state berths at Elyria Catholic, but by far the best is Scarl. A state qualifier at 112# last year, he gave everyone (even Foster) a tremendous match. He won at Richmond Hts. and is a devastating rider. He keeps matches close and is very tough to score against. If he gets a lead on Hurley or Linsker they are in very serious peril. Look out for him in the bracket sheet. Kirtley, a state qualifier as a sophomore, has had a couple of up and down seasons. Last year he went into district action with a 10-10 record, but reached the semis before losing two close battles. He beat Orlosky in that run. Orlosky is very good and could help Chanel mightily at the state meet, if he can get there. His unorthodox style might score well at Columbus. He has been a consistent placer this year. Sanderson is a wild card here. He has had some excellent results this year shuffling between `135# and 140#. He was 6th at the Top Gun in an excellent field. Olney, Coy, Fryman (West Salem Northwest), and Taylor (Loudonville) are solid, but that may not be enough here.

While not as strong as the Elyria Catholic District, each of the other three can boast a serious contender - - although to win you'd have to beat both Hurley and Linsker. At Xenia, Engel will be the top contender and will try to emulate his brother's state title in 1997. He was 3rd last year at 135# losing a close bout to Ryan Hurley in the first round, and then winning five consolation bouts. He could definitely compete on a nearly even basis with Hurley last year, whether he can do so against the new and improved version is problematical. State qualifier Short is a strong second choice here, and he needs better luck at Columbus. He was twice a loser by scores of 10-9 and 7-6 (to Vogel). The rest of this district is well below the top duo, and you'll want to draw into their 3rd and 4th place finishers.

Mayhugh will have to make a decision as to whether he'll compete at 140# or 145#. He and Roth (rated at the next weight) have flip flopped at these two weights with great success. Mayhugh has won at Bellaire St. John, Barnesville and the OVAC, but competed in the latter at 145#. He was 5th at Columbus last year losing a 3-1

bout to Ryan Hurley and a consolation one to Engel. His district is definitely easier at 145#, but a high place might come easier at 140#. State qualifier Vogel also returns and he has rebounded from a slow start to get the runner-up nod here. Wilson also was a state qualifier last year, and had been outstanding until OVAC. He was 2nd, but I was disappointed by a 10-4 loss in the final to Roth. Kinzy is strong, but Belfrage, Bender and Jefferies (Barnesville) will not go away.

The undefeated state qualifier Stacklin is best in the Northwest. He has swept to four tourney titles without having many tight bouts. Young and Grime are in the exact same situation as Roth and Mayhugh. Both have certified at 140# so again, a decision will have to be made. Dotson and Madden can win at the state level, but may be pushed by the freshman Lichty. Frye, Gibson, S. Mack (Tinora) and Gerber are other thoughts.

Incidentally, if both Hurleys win, they'll become the first brothers to win in the same year since the Opfers in 1999. Interesting it took 18 state tournaments before the first brother combination won in the same year. That was in 1955 when Darryl and Jim Hoppel both won. They were two of the five brothers who won more than a half dozen state titles for little Beaver Local.

145 #

Projected Champion: Michael Parsons (Loudonville)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|-----|----------------------------|
| 2 | Gordon (Mapleton) | 14 | Dobreiner (Waterford) |
| 3 | Beers (Akron St Vincent) | 15. | Reynolds (Carlisle) |
| 4 | Link (Sandusky St. Mary) | 16. | Boling (Hartley) |
| 5 | Lofay (Mohawk) | 17. | Harmeyer (Reading) |
| 6 | Grime (Archbold) | 18. | Sammons (CVCA) |
| 7 | Roppel (Chanel) | 19. | Knoop (Miami East) |
| 8 | Minner (Pleasant) | 20. | Muenzer (Stritch) |
| 9 | M. Park (Crestview) | 21. | Linebaugh (Clinton-Massie) |
| 10 | Roman (West Salem Northwestern) | 22. | Drellishak (Avon) |
| 11 | McGuire (River Valley) | 23. | Burkhardt (Shadyside) |
| 12 | Hensley (North College Hill) | 24. | Brennan (Tri-County North) |
| 13 | R. Mack (Tinora) | 25. | Tipple (Fisher Catholic) |
| | | 26 | DeCooman (Van Buren) |

The likely finalists at this weight class attend high school only a few miles apart – one just north of Ashland and the other just south of that city. Both have also been state runners-up, but they do differ in some significant ways. Gordon, only a junior, finished 6th his freshman year accumulating 49 victories at 140#. A state quarter-finalist he lost that bout to Scott Roth by a narrow 6-4 score. Then last year, he crushed his first three opponents before losing a heartbreakingly close overtime bout to the same Scott Roth. Gordon is a very strong, very physical wrestler with abundant physical tools. This year he has again been outstanding with exception of a 4th place finish at Richmond Hts, where he was twice disqualified for illegal slams. In my mind that may be his single biggest obstacle to a finals berth.

Parsons has an equally distinguished record. He won 40 bouts as a freshman at 103# , losing to Lester in the finals 11-4. The following year he won 49 times at 119#, but lost again in the finals, this time to Drew Opfer - - so we are talking exceptional competition.

Last year at 125# pounds he lost in the semis and finished a strong 3rd crushing Frye in the consolation finals. This year he is undefeated including wins at North Canton (over Busnick) and Doylestown (over Ambrose). If anyone has paid their dues it would seem to have been Parsons.

A key comparison score between the top two wrestlers brings things into sharp relief. State qualifier Huddle, defeated Gordon 2-1 in overtime, but lost to Parsons 9-2. That's an enormous difference, so you have to favor Parsons early on—like at the sectional. The question is how quickly will Gordon narrow that gap over three weekends. I believe he is physically stronger which over time is often decisive as styles are learned and counters developed. Still you'd have to think the very experienced Parson would find a way to stay ahead.

With these two at the top and a lot of equivalent wrestlers a step below them what we have is a fiendishly difficult qualification process. Roppel has come on strong, now that Schaeffer has chosen to stay at 152#. He, too, has been a steady placer with, perhaps, his pin over Beers at the Ohio Duals as his highlight Beers, another Lake transfer has had a strong second half including a title at the CIT and a 3rd at the Dies. That already provides us with four worthy state candidates meaning that its going to be tough for everyone else. Next best is Roman who has been at 152#, and may seriously consider it once again. Drellishak, Sammons (CVCA), and Goldstein (Beachwood) are possible contenders who will need a small miracle to qualify out of this district.

None of the other districts are remotely this difficult. Probably next in line would be Toledo Waite where state qualifiers Link and Lofay lead a reasonably deep field. Both were at 145# last year, but neither placed although Lofay won twice. This year Link has waged some huge battles losing to Mahone 13-12 and to Beers 14-12 in overtime. He has won just about everything else, and is a superior pinner. I'm surprised Lofay dropped from 152# considering his success this year including three tourney titles and a runner-up trophy at the GMVWA. Grime is also very good – winning at handily at Woodmere and in Michigan. They should be the top trio, but a second threesome Mack, Park and Muenzer could also play a significant role. Decooman was the first Van Buren grappler in 16 years to take home a first-place trophy at his home schools big tourney. Along with Bedford (Woodmere), Bethel (Toledo Christian) and Moss (Delta) they provide excellent depth.

If it's Roth at 145#, the Marion district will be very weak at this weight class. It's difficult to imagine anyone here having much of an impact in the final resolution of this weight class. Much the same is true at Xenia. Its almost impossible to identify someone there that will match up well with boys from Waite and Marion. Besides those listed look for Christian (Brookville), Rutledge (Madeira) and Alig (Coldwater).

I'm not sure how they'll do the pairing with those four man districts, but if they match districts for all four first round bouts – you'd hope that Waite and Elyria Catholic would be apart.

152 #

Projected Champion: Tom Schaefer (Chanel)

Top Contenders

2 Kelly (Reading)	16 T. Ohl (Ontario)
3 Campbell (Finneytown)	17 Lill (Sandusky St. Mary)
4 Glasser (Shadyside)	18 Schumacher (Monroe Central)
5 Brand (Lakota)	19 Word (Pleasant)
6 Libert (Ursuline)	20 Foote (Cuyahoga Hts.)
7 Dauski (Sandy Valley)	21 Luke (Montpelier)
8 Caponi (Akron-St. Vincent)	22 Subler (Versailles)
9 Harmon (Waynedale)	23 Schueszler (Avon)
10 Seibert (Elmwood)	24 Sefsick (Harrison Central)

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 11 P. Park (Crestview) | 25 Sims (Allan East) |
| 12 Springer ((Lincolnview) | 26 Barker (Barnesville) |
| 13 Hill (Manchester) | 27 Schultz (Brookville) |
| 14 Picazo (Grandview Hts) | 28 McNeal (Dixie) |
| 15 Ehram (Evergreen) | |

Defending state champion Tom Schaefer is an outstanding wrestler, enjoying an excellent season at a very uncrowded weight class. That is almost always the recipe for a state title and that is the situation that we have here. Schaefer, 3rd as a sophomore, won his first state title last year at 140#. After two easy wins at Columbus he had a titanic struggle with Greg Ware winning on a fall in the 30-second double overtime. I believe the 8:22 fall time is the latest I've ever seen. Then, as he did in the district he dominated Jason Miller on his feet to win the state title 13-5. This year its been more of the same - - wining at Solon, North Canton, Doylestown and Mayfield.

His only loss was to Tommy Bauer at Wadsworth and that in a down tempo 3-2 bout. Probably his biggest win was over Chris Kallai at Mayfield in a bout that hinged on an early 4-point move. However, nobody in Division III should be within a half dozen points of Schaefer this year.

The one exception might be Tim Kelly who battled Division I state placer David Blanks into overtime at the SWOCA before losing on a locked hands call. Kelly is a two-time state qualifier who missed placement last year by a single win. What he'll have to do is get an early lead against Schaefer and then ride him as long and hard as he can. Kellen Campbell also returns and he was a major surprise last year. He won two close bouts to reach the semi-finals, but then was drilled by Roth, Walker and Gore. He, again, has placement potential, but will not match up with Schaeffer.

The rest of the district is substantially weaker with a number of potential qualifying candidates. The one person I may have rated too low is Schultz, although Cox (Triad) could be a factor here, too.

Schaefer has very little to worry about at Elyria Catholic. The freshman Caponi is good, but Schaeffer defeated him 13-4. State qualifier Harmon and Goble are well rated but it will be pretty much decided on who is having a hot district weekend. Foote has been around a long time, and could make waves, while McCaroll (Brooklyn) and Blunk (CVCA) are difficult to evaluate. One because of his very tough schedule and the other because of his weak one. The one mystery is Libert. He missed going to state by one win at 160# last year. Seeing the district logjam at the class he has certified at 152# in what was an excellent strategic move. He wrestles an out-of-the-way schedule, but he can score and should be very effective at this weight class.

Glasser and Dauski both have state experience, but it is the first of the duo that I rate highly. He was undefeated until the OVAC finals where he lost a tight 3-2 bout to a West Virginia competitor. He won two state bouts last year just barely missing placement. The Columbus trio of Picazo, Word and Weis (Bloom Carroll) will certainly look to grab a couple qualifying spots with Picazo having the best chance. If you're looking for a dark-horse candidate it might be Sefsick who can pull the big surprise.

It's a pretty pedestrian group at the Waite district. With Lofay moving to 145# there is not a lot of "up-top" strength. Only Brand - - who last year had the name Ken Brewer - - has had previous state experience. He easily won at Van Buren, and seems to be rounding into top shape. Siebert, Park and Ehram are solid journeyman performers who will win most of the time. Lill, on the other hand, is a good pinner and has strong upside potential. If he gains momentum and confidence he could be very tough.

160 #

Projected Champion: Matt Klinger (Cuyahoga Hts.)

Top Contenders

2	Pycraft (Keystone)	15	Hughes (Grandview Hts.)
3	Hoogenboom (Chanel)	16	Giesige (Patrick Henry)
4	Ju. Jefferis (Barnesville)	17	Hampshire (Woodridge)
5	Davis (Tinora)	18	Moffitt (Monroeville)
6	Aeschliman (Tuslaw)	19	Seals (Carlisle)
7	Lewis (North Union)	20	Whitt (Reading)
8	Fisher (Liberty Union)	21	Gramling (Liberty Center)
9	King (Elmwood)	22	Persinger (Waynedale)
10	Anglemyer (Evergreen)	23	A. Kimes (Fostoria St. Wendelin)
11	Cloran (Madeira)	24	Speakman (Westfall)
12	Hartz (Grand Valley)	25	Jewitt (Dixie)
13	McGough (Akron-St. Vincent)	26	Musselman (Batavia)
14	Batdorf (Covington)	27	Knapp (West Salem Northwest)

While it's a one-man show at 152# its likely to be a tough two-man struggle at this weight class. The favorite has to be defending champion Matt Klinger who was 4th as a sophomore and then won it all last year. Klinger dominated his district last year and then won his first three state bouts handily. However, the final was a close 3-1 battle with the tough Blair. This year Klinger has lost only in the Brecksville final to my Division I choice Magistrelli. That was a battle where Klinger led 4-3 with 30 seconds to go, but ended up getting pinned in the last second. Otherwise he's been perfect including five falls at Sandusky St. Mary's

His constant shadow will be the unorthodox Pycraft. They'll meet at the sectional district and state level and frankly that's likely to benefit Klinger. Pycraft was 3rd last year at 152# finishing with a 45-1 record. A two-time state placer he met Koch in the semi-finals for what amounted to the state title and lost a 7-6 squeaker. Koch took the title the next day by a 7-1 count. Pycraft does not wrestle quite the schedule that Klinger does but he is undefeated winning at Southview and Black River. He has kind of a different style which makes him particularly tough on first time opponents

The Elyria Catholic District is loaded. Klinger and Pycraft head my list but Hoogenboom is not far behind. He was a district finalist last year before losing on a fall to Klinger. He won four bouts at the state meet losing twice to Koch and finishing 4th. This year he was a finalist at Solon and Doylestown (winning by fall) and 4th at North Canton and Wadsworth. He pinned McGough at the Ohio Duals and this after a great year of football. The sophomore Aeschliman is also very good, and doesn't it seem that Tuslaw always has two or three outstanding wrestlers. He missed state competition by a single point last year and he may be co-equal now with Hoogenboom. That's four of my top six coming out of this district, but there is much more. Hartz was a state qualifier two years ago, but did not compete last year. Rounding back into shape, he can be a threat to all but my top duo. State qualifier McGough is also back but he will have to move up another level to qualify. He has yet to make the finals in any of five tournaments, but has placed in all but one. He did defeat Hoogenboom at Wadsworth. Also back is state alternate Hampshire who has won some smaller tourneys, but lost badly to Aeschliman at Richmond Hts - - add in Persinger and Knapp and you have a district that looks like a state meet. Certainly the possibility exists that the four state semi-finalists could all be from here. With 171# slightly easier you might get some movement in that direction.

If the Northeast District monopoly is to be broken at this weight class only two wrestlers would appear to have the firepower to challenge them - -one of them is state qualifier J. D. Davis, who returns at 160#. He was an impressive 4th at Medina and leads the way at the Waite district. He won one state bout but was pinned by Hoogenboom. State qualifier Anglemyer also returns at this weight after a season where he is rated 3rd in the Northwest District. However, Klinger has tech falled him while Hoogenboom defeated him 12-4. State

qualifier King has been a strong performer this year but will not match up well with the Elyria Catholic boys. The last spot is wide open with Giesige and Moffitt probably having the inside track

Two-time state qualifier Justin Jefferis may want to believe in omens. He was 3rd twice at the giant OVAC tourney, but this year on his third try won the event. Now comes a somewhat more daunting challenge – winning the state meet on his third attempt. Two years ago he was 5th which included a one-point loss to Klinger. Last year he lost 8-7 quarter-final bout and had to forfeit in the next round. He is strong enough to give Klinger some problems. The Columbus trio of Lewis, Fisher and Hughes look to be the other three qualifiers with not a lot below them - - of course, bracketing issues could mess that up. Fisher who was 4th in the State last year faces a tough road to match that mark

I'm anxious to see how Cloran does at 160. He certainly was a fine 171-pounder, and perhaps, this drop will make him even more formidable. State qualifier Batdorf heads a group of good Covington wrestlers who always seem to qualify one or two. King beat him by four last year and he dropped his first consolation bout as well. Seal has had a good year but Cloran, in his first week at 160#, pinned him at Valley View.

171 #

Projected Champion: Chris Smolk (CVCA)

Top Contenders

2	Morrison (Ready)	15	Glover (Akron St. Vincent)
3	Dollaway (Northmor)	16	Ullery (Brookville)
4	J. Ohl (Ontario)	17	Turner (Carey)
5	Terry (Chanel)	18	Stephen (Covington)
6	Lichty (Ayersville)	19	Burkholder (Archbold)
7	Bishop (Woodridge)	20	Howard (Finneytown)
8	Tooill (Amanda Clearcreek)	21	Hepe (Bellaire St. John)
9	Powell (Barnesville)	22	Dillon (Tri-County North)
10	Jacobs (Lakota)	23	Cash (Cuyahoga Hts.)
11	Brink (Liberty Center)	24	Fremont (McComb)
12	Howley (Girard)	25	Eilerman (Versailles)
13	M. Johnston (West Jefferson)	26	Boy (Carlisle)
14	Caywood (Toledo Christian)	27	Briscoe (Loudville)

We're in the midst of a somewhat unusual streak here at the upper middle weights in Division III. Between 152# and 189# we have a stretch of four weight classes that feature a defending state champion. At two of these classes (152# and 189#) the returning champ should have little trouble defending his title while Klinger at 160# will be involved in a tough two-man struggle with Pycraft. However, it is Smolk here at 171 that is likely to face the widest array of challengers in his quest for a second title.

Smolk was a state qualifier at Rootstown but lost to eventual champ Blankmeyer in the first round. Then last year at CVCA he dominated the Elyria Catholic District giving up only four escapes in four bouts. At Columbus he followed up a first round pin with three hard fought decisions culminating in a 5-3 win over Borowicz in the final. This year Smolik won at the Ironman and Hudson and was a solid 3rd at Medina and the Top Gun. The past two years 171 has been a relatively weak weight class, but that is not the case this season. There is substantially more strength here than at any of the other upper weights,

Smolk's strongest challenges are likely to come from the Marion district. Morrison is a two-time state qualifier who just missed placement last year. Two years ago he defeated Smolk in a consolation round, but last year lost

one round away from an anticipated rematch in the semi-finals. This year he won at Hamilton Twp., Ready, and the CIT.

At the last he whipped state champion Lukens 13-5 in the final while in the first he defeated Hackett for the crown. Hackett defeated Smolk at the Top Gun. Also at Marion is the athletic Dollaway who was 5th last year at 160#. My choice to win he stumbled when Klinger moved up to 160# and manhandled him in the quarter-finals. He has huge upset potential. The entire Marion district is strong. Tooill was state qualifier last year who missed placement by a single point. Yet I only vote him third best in this district. He lost to Dollaway by just one point last year. He has strong placement potential, but this is a tough weight class. Also returning at Marion are state qualifier Powell and the excellent Johnston. That's a quintet of state-ready boys with only four spots available. Hepe, Hepburn (Shadyside) and Lee (Tusky Valley) will struggle against this field.

Smolk will face two state qualifiers at Elyria Catholic. Terry is another wrestler who has made enormous strides the last two years. He has grabbed a high place at every tourney, but won only at Doylestown. He has beaten many of the best 171's regardless of school classification and should place Bishop has lost to Terry, but has defeated many of those ranked just below. He has won at Woodridge and Richmond Hts this year. Two wrestlers who can surprise are the senior Howley and the freshman Glover. Howley lost to Bishop 6-3 in their go-to-state bout last year, and wrestles a relatively gentle schedule. He should be fresh at tourney time, but, perhaps not battle-hardened. Glover is all over the place. He pinned Terry at the Ohio Duals, but failed to place at the CIT. Look for him to catch at least one wrestler unawares. Cash lost in overtime to Bishop while Briscoe gave Terry a good bout at Loudonville. It should be interesting.

State junior high school champion Ohl is a real talent who should win a state crown before graduation - - though it may not be this year. He was a district champ last year and won two state bouts at 160# before Hoogenboom eliminated him 12-10. He was 2nd at the Gorman to Dollaway by a 5-4 score, and he keeps getting better. Right behind is Lichty who was at Defiance last year. He has settled in nicely winning the "A" Classic and Stryker Invitational among others. Brink is a returning state qualifier who has looked a little shaky this year. I think Jacobs may have passed him and Turner is right there as well. Lichty defeated Turner in the final while Brink lost for 3rd place to Fremont. Caywood wrestlers for a small Toledo Christian school, but that name brings back memories of a wonderful wrestler some years ago. Burkholder who has been at 215# certified at 171# and whether he'll compete the is difficult to know. There is not much at Xenia. Ullery is 21-8 wrestling a tough schedule while Stephan and Howard are very close. This group, whomever qualifiers will struggle at Columbus.

189 #

Projected Champion: D.J. Grewell (Newcommerstown)

Top Contenders

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 2 | Way (West Salem Northwest) | 15 | Smith (Columbus Academy) |
| 3 | Nagel (Delta) | 16 | Hoogenboom (Chanel) |
| 4 | Sowers (Mohawk) | 17 | Cummings (Madeira) |
| 5 | Williams (Blanchester) | 18 | Poweski (Warren JFK) |
| 6 | Westhoven (Liberty Center) | 19 | Day (Sandy Valley) |
| 7 | Chappell (Streetsboro) | 20 | Locklear (Oberlin) |
| 8 | McConnell (Summit Country Day) | 21 | Barker (Crestview) |
| 9 | Barte (Grandview Hts) | 22 | Thacker (Carlisle) |
| 10 | Garber (Woodmore) | 23 | Gray (Black River) |
| 11 | Sampson (Brookville) | 24 | Zavala (Archbold) |
| 12 | Frankart (Fostoria St. Wendelin) | 25 | Perigo (Madison Plains) |
| 13 | Ucker (CVCA) | 26 | Padgelak (Martins Ferry) |

14 Springer (Licking Hts.)

27 Apple (Covington)

28 Pryor (Akron St. Vincent)

One of the truly forgotten stars of baseball was a second basemen who played most of his career in Cleveland during the 1890's. Cupid Childs was a sensational player during that long ago time and might well be the best second basemen of the 19th century. Yet, even in his own time he was undervalued and overlooked. He was an outstanding fielder and a unmatched lead-off man often walking a 100 times a year when a season was 130 games. He scored over 100 runs in seven seasons and stole bases at a rapid clip. Yet while many lesser players from that era and from more recent times are in the Hall of Fame, Cupid Childs is known only to the most dedicated historians.

And so it may be with D. J. Grewell. Probably the least publicized of last year's 42 champions he remains something of an unknown to most fans. Last year he crushed every sectional, district and state opponent until winning a 10-7 decision over Josh Riedy that really wasn't that close. This year he has yet to be tested although Newcomerstown does not wrestle a daunting schedule. How good Grewell really is remains a bit of a mystery because he wrestles at a small school in a rural part of the state with a schedule that is almost invisible to the vast majority of fans. Still when we get to Columbus expect to see Grewell on the top step of the podium once again.

Beside Grewell only one underclassman placed at 189# last year. Way finished in 3rd place after reaching the semi-finals and losing to Grewell 11-1. Way won the St. Mary's Duals, and was 2nd at Smithville losing to in-county rival Meggyessy. He heads up a relatively weak Elyria Catholic District that has only two entrants in my Top Ten. This is a weight class where none of the powerhouse schools would seem to have a place winner but each has a possible qualifier. The best of the group is Ucker who should qualify if in top form. Akron St. Vincent has Pryor, a back-up 171-pounder, who has won some big bouts. He defeated Chanel's hope Kyle Hoogenboom 13-5, in the Ohio Duals. Hoogenboom has battled injuries and his availability may not be certain. In any case they'll have to get by folks like Chappell Poweski, and Gray who have lots of district experience. Grewell has nothing to fear here.

The most difficult district will be at Waite. The brilliant sophomore Nagel may be one of the best big men Coach Robin Rayfield has ever produced – and that's saying a lot with people like Taylor, Schlatter, and Sintobin coming out of that program. He was 2nd at Brecksville losing only to Pliev. A big, rangy boy he doesn't give up anything easily. Remarkably as a freshman he came close to state qualification at this weight class. Sowers is also excellent and he, too, nearly qualified at this weight. It will be interesting to see how they're rivalry grows during the next few years. No doubt about it – they are two excellent sophomores. Westhoven was a 152-pounder last year, but has moved up three weight classes. He's really a 171# who wrestles at 189# for the team, nonetheless, he is also definite placement material. Garber lost a criteria overtime decision to Westhoven in the "A" classic finals and with consistency he could be the fourth qualifier. However, wrestlers like Frankart, Barker and Zavala will be nipping at his heels. Watch out for Haber (Ontario) or Freeh (Fremont St. Joseph) too.

After Grewell there is very little at Marion. Only Barte sneaks into the bottom of my Top Ten mainly because I liked his performance at Medina even though he did not place. In fact, the Columbus entrants should dominate after Grewell – leaving only Duck Day and Padgelak with qualification hopes. You know that its weak along the river when no Division III wrestler placed at the OVAC at this weight class.

Williams was the state alternate at this weight class last year, but should qualify easily in 2001. He is 19-1 losing only to Division II foe Robbie Moyer. I think he's moved well ahead of returning state qualifier McConnell. He was 2nd to the excellent Keough at Reading and beat Cummings to win at Madeira. Sampson is also a very strong challenger and his 17-4 record included three losses at the tough GMVMA. Two dark horse candidates are Apple and Thobaden (Clinton Massie). They finished ahead of Thacker and Schmitz at Valley View and that may be a portend of the future

215 #

Projected Champion: Angelo Caponi (Akron St. Vincent)

Top Contenders

2	N. Johnston (West Jefferson)	14	Williams (Clear Fork)
3	Clark (McComb)	15	Childers (Carlisle)
4	Stookey (Sandusky St. Mary)	16	Wilson (Reading)
5	McStoots (Fairview)	17	Abdulghani (Summit Country Day)
6	Zaranec (Chanel)	18	Austin (Hawken)
7	Shultzman (Waynedale)	19	Johns (Versailles)
8	Wade (Shenandoah)	20	Spencer (Newbury)
9	Mosbacher (Batavia)	21	Lauck (Elmwood)
10	Logan (Columbia Station)	22	Merrillat (Tinora)
11	Hutchinson (Bloom Carroll)	23	Snelling (Lockland)
12	Pattison (Madeira)	24	Cook (Tusky Valley)
13	Slepko (Berkshire)	25	Nichols (Elgin)

Last year the 215-pound weight class in Division III was exceptionally deep – especially in the Northwest District. Four of the top five placers emerged from that area and the eventual champion Chris Box, actually finished 5th in district action (this year he would have stayed home). This year the competition should be every bit as close although, perhaps, at a slightly lower level. It's a weight class that poses some interesting questions that will be examined as we look at the main players in this contest.

By New Years Day I had pretty much decided on my choices at every weight save one. That is not only unusual it is unique. I generally agonize over many of the selections to the moment I write up the weight class. Even as I write this I'm pondering choices in Division I and II (I wrote Division III first this year). The one exception was at 215#. Should I go for the brute pinning power of Clark? The rapid improvement of McStoots? The trimmed down heavyweight in Stookey? Or the past record of Johnston? In the end I went with the strength and match management of Caponi. He doesn't let bouts get away from him and there are no easy points off him. He won at Solon and the Dies shutting out Yates both times and at Wadsworth defeating the tough Mohler. He was 4th at the CIT but both losses were tight battles to outstanding foes. He has defeated Stookey and Zaranec among the top contenders and, I believe, will win a series of close rather low scoring bouts to bring home the title. It is likely that he will be the last wrestler of the top contenders to compete late Saturday afternoon, and it may well be that on his result will hang the team title.

Capone, one of the four Uniontown Lake transfers, should have few problems at the district level. State qualifiers Zaranec and Shultzman return, but he has defeated Zaranec, 14-2, and Shultzman is no stranger - - he was a distant 4th at the Dies. On the other hand, Logan can be dangerous. He is a strong pinner and that can erase a lot of mistakes. He pinned in the final of three tournaments. He lost 14 times last year, but has been brilliant in this his senior season. Slepko is 19-1, but does not wrestle a real strong schedule. However, with 17 falls this sophomore is clearly dangerous as well. Austin is only a junior but he too, has compiled an excellent record losing only twice. He pinned to win titles at Avon and Hawken. Watch for him. Also note Spencer, Shultz, (Clearview) and Hastings (West Salem Northwest).

The Waite District has three of my top five contenders. State qualifier Clark was one point from placement at 189# last year, and may now have finalist potential. I certainly don't get all the McComb scores, but I'm not sure that Clark has gone six minutes even once this year and that may not be a plus since he'll have tougher opponents at the state level who will test conditioning. Stookey was a good heavyweight last year as a freshman, but really seems more attuned physically to this weight class. I believe his only Division III loss at 215# was to Caponi, 6-3, at the Ohio Duals. McStoots has been a terror in the far, northwestern part of the

state. Last year he was 6th in that meat-grinder district losing to eventual state champ Chris Box for the last qualifying spot. Since four of that group placed he would have done well at Columbus had he reached there. Williams has to be the favorite for that last berth especially since he should come in as a sectional champ— as should the top three as well. Lauck and Merillat are possibilities while Widmer (Genoa) and Dixie (Fostoria. St. Wendelin) have a ways to go.

Johnston has been ranked #1 all year in Columbus and rightfully so. He won at North Union and Ready (pinning Fisher) and should capture an attractive spot in the bracket sheet. Wade was runner-up at the OVAC after winning at Shadyside and Union Local. He has placement possibilities. Hutchinson certified at 189# and may choose to compete at that class. I've also listed Fisher, Cook and Nichols, but Moore (Newcomerstown), Debelis (Sandy Valley) and Bachman (Tusky Central Catholic) are virtual equivalents.

Maybe, I'm overlooking someone or several someone's, but I just don't see much at Xenia. There are some solid performers competing, but no one that consistently stands out. Pattison hammered Childers, 8-3, to win at Valley View, but was defeated by Mosbacher, 13-5 at Madeira. Childers won at Edgewood while Snelling was runner-up at Lockland. My guess is a very spirited competition at the district level, but the survivors will struggle at Columbus.

Hvy.

Projected Champion: Matt Turner (Kirtland)

Top Contenders

2	Garling (Cardinal)	15	Putnam (Blanchester)
3	Allegree (Jonathan Alder)	16	Weidinger (Seneca East)
4	Binkley (Brookville)	17	Frost (Ursuline)
5	Whitmyer (Waynedale)	18	Yenser (Wayne Trace)
6	Boes (Carey)	19	Slaughterbeck (Blufton)
7	Lynch (Pleasant)	20	Klinker (Columbus Grove)
8	DeWalt (Collins Western Reserve)	21	Dailide (Chanel)
9	Parthmore (West Liberty)	22	Carothers (Harrison Central)
10	Arbogast (Hopewell-Loudon)	23	Egly (Hicksville)
11	Wright (Garaway)	24	Quinn (Richmond Hts.)
12	Stuff (Northmor)	25	Brown (Caldwell)
13	Wellert (West Salem Northwestern)	26	Lou Allen (Deer Park)
14	Wells (Shenandoah)	27	Nash (Liberty Center)

Last year Turner went in as my second choice primed to challenge Lingruen in a long anticipated final. However, a second round 10-9 upset loss to Shirkey short-circuited that match-up, as Turner wound up with four falls and a 3rd place medal. The last pin incidentally over the self same Shirkey. It was reminiscent of his brother. Rob's junior year where he lost a one-point bout and finished 3rd. If such a parallel track continues Matt is destined to win this year and its difficult not to buy into that thought.

However, it has not been completely clear sailing this year for Turner. He won at Hawken in overtime against Ridenour, but lost to Garling in a dual. He was a strong 2nd, however, at Medina losing in the finals to the powerful Olds. Still he has the experience and the talent to win Division III. Interestingly enough, should Turner win he and Rob would become the first set of brothers to win heavyweight titles in Ohio high school wrestling history. Probably the closest duo were Ned and Mark Stepanovich in the 1970's when Ned won after Mark was upset in the semi-finals the previous year while ahead 8-0.

I've correctly forecasted the winner here for eight consecutive years but at heavyweight anything can happen. That is particularly true in Division III where many teams stay within the local area when scheduling so that many of the top heavyweights have never met.

Some of Turner's biggest challenges will come from his own Elyria Catholic District. Garling has won at Cardinal and Jackson-Milton and out weighs Turner by about 25 pounds. He was one point from a state berth last year, but should easily qualify in 2001. Whitmyer is a returning state qualifier with low to middle placement potential. Last year at States he drew the eventual runner-up and a placer in the first two rounds and was twice pinned. This year he was 3rd at Smithville (victim of one of the year's worst pairings process) and did not place at Medina. Wellert is a 210-pounder with excellent speed who missed state qualification when Whitmyer caught him in the third period of their consolation semi-final and pinned him. He won at Black River but lost to Weidinger and Lauck at the St. Mary Duals. We might see him at 215#. Dailide and Frost are two big heavyweights with good placement chances. They met in the first round of districts last year with Frost winning 19-10. He placed at the CIT this year, and has excellent heavyweight size. Quinn, Cox (Columbia Station), and Borbely (CVCA) are other possibilities.

The Marion District is loaded with potential qualifiers, probably double the four they are allowed. Five of that group same from the Columbus area where there have been terrific battles all year. Allegree, a state qualifier last year, has won at Alder and West Jefferson, but was a 2-1 loser to Lynch at North Union. Lynch and Stuff have plenty of experience although the latter has had some shaky outings this year. Two dark horses are the light but quick Crabbe and Daniels (Madison Plains). Both could be qualifiers. The Eastern district has four strong entrants of they're own at the district. Wright wrestles a nearly invisible schedule for me, but he was impressive at last year's district losing to Allegree in the consolation semi-finals. He is undefeated in duals. Wells has been great. He took titles at St. Clairsville, Shadyside and the OVAC while finishing 2nd at Barnesville (to Cottrell) and Bellaire St. John (upset fall by Corothers). The second half of the season he has been unbeatable. Carothers and Brown also placed at the OVAC in the opposite order that I rated them, but I do think Carothers, has slightly better overall record. It should be quite a show at Marion.

Boes has been the best so far in the Northwest. He has met many of the contenders and won against them all to remain undefeated. He was the titlist at Van Buren, Hopewell Loudon, and the "A" classic. DeWalt is probably very close to him. He has wrestled a totally different schedule with excellent success including wins at the St. Mary Duals and Hudson – where he beat an excellent field. Arbogast and Weidinger are journeyman heavyweights who know how to win the close battles. Weidinger, in fact, is a returning state qualifier, Yenser sidelined with a broken arm will return to a sectional that includes Egly, Nash, and McPike.(Edgerton) all of who are just about at the heavyweight limit.

State qualifier Binkley heads the Xenia district. He was the district runner-up last year to the eventual state 2nd place winner Mark Lane. He won a state bout and has transformed that momentum into a fine senior season. He is currently 22-5 with three of those losses to the excellent big school heavyweights at the GMVWA. I believe there is a substantial drop-off after him with the mammoth Parthemore, Putnam and Slaughterbeck next best.

TEAMS

Only four times in Ohio history has there been a team competition where two squads scored over 100 points - - 1994, 1996, and 1998 in Division I and 1978 in Division II. In Division III we could have the unique experience of three team scoring over 100 points. Strangely enough all three exit the Elyria Catholic District where intra-district warfare may reduce each team's point potential.

1. **Chanel** - They have a chance of qualifying as many as ten wrestlers for the State Meet - - all of whom could score in Columbus. The senior Schaefer and the freshman Jagers are potential finalist while almost

everybody else can place. The key elements are Paparone, Orlosky, and Hoogenboom who need to do well to keep Chanel ahead of their two primary competitors. If Dailide and Roppel score at Columbus they'll win easily. Chanel could become only the sixth team in Ohio history to win at least five state team titles.

2. **Akron St. Vincent**-Both Mike and Ryan Hurley are favorites to be champions and score some bonus points as well. If Buzek and Caponi do as well as I have forecasted that is 90 points for just that quartet. Beers has been sharp lately and could do very well at 145#. If state qualifiers McGough and Cimino regain top form and the freshmen, McCahan, Caponi and Glover, can score they'll have a chance to sneak by Chanel.
3. **Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy (CVCA)**Lester is a sure champ and both Smileks, Smolk and Wade could be finalists. They desperately need Wade to wrestle to his potential at 103# and Charvat, Sanderson, and Ucker to score at Columbus. The hidden_resource might be the freshman Blunk who could be a super-surprise. If everything comes together they, too, could surpass Chanel, and win it.
4. **Sandusky St. Mary** - They do not have the depth that they have exhibited in past years, but they have four solid state scores in Opfer, Finneran, Link, and Stookey. Opfer of course, should get some bonus points as he goes for his third title. The freshman Whelan and Lill are other possibilities, but 4th is the best they can hope for.
5. **Reading** - Engel, Kelly, and Seta all have strong placement potential with the first two looking to be finalists. They have a lot of other opportunities to get state qualifiers, but the question will be if any of them can score at the state level.
6. **Loudonville** - This is essentially a two-man team, but both Scott and Parsons should be finalists and score somewhere in the neighborhood of 45 points. Maybe Taylor or Briscoe can add to that total, but it's a long-shot.
7. **Martins Ferry** - They return four state qualifiers including both Tierneys who have placed in the past. Finding exactly the right weight class for Mayhugh is critical as are some state points from Jones. If Roth or Padgelek can help that would be an enormous boost.
8. **Delta** - I think Ford and Nagel can be big-time scores at the state level, but Lohman and Madden need to helpout, too. Nobody else can be a helper so its up to the leading quartet.
9. **Madeira** - A team that has dominated in their own area, but have never done quite that well at Columbus. They have four state qualifiers between 112# pounds and 130# pounds with Wittenberg, Burroughs, Kuykendall, and Merle. A key element will be the upper weight trio of Cloran, Pattison, and Cummings. The first named, in particular, could be a state scorer.
10. **Mohawk** - State qualifiers Buckingham, Ogg, and Lofay should get some state points, but the key component is Sowers. If he can score big this team could make the Top Ten.