

1999

## HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

### FORECAST

(28th Annual Edition)

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### DIVISION I

The biggest issue in Division I was the creation of five districts instead of the usual four, and the consequent problems with regard to state bracketing. Inserting five district champs into the bracket sheet automatically creates some imbalances which must be (and has been) spread over all the districts. Still, it is an awkward situation which will hopefully be rectified next year.

#### Division I Teams

1. **St. Edward** -- With four returning high placers (two state champs and two state 3rds), St. Edward was early on an overwhelming favorite to capture its' 3rd consecutive team title. However, they may now need scoring from more than this top quartet -- although Lenhard, Jayne, Bertin and Tolar should score about 90 points. That added punch should come from the brilliant freshman Moos and Mazzola, while Mann could also be a big help. If Schweda can qualify out of that difficult 160# Mentor District he, too, can score at the state level. The margin for error is now much smaller than it was six months ago. With the double elimination format, depth should play a bigger role than in the past.

2. **Wayne** -- The addition of two-time champion Morgan gives this team three favorites for individual state titles -- Ott, Lammers and Morgan. Bond can score at the state level, but people like Padilla, Williams, Dill and McDaniel are going to have to step up if they want to be the first public school team to win since 1977.

3. **Wadsworth** -- Watters is the favorite at 152# and all three of the Kallai boys can score at the state level. Add in a healthy Lance and maybe one of the other big boys and they have a long shot chance for 2nd place. The big problem is that they qualify out of the toughest district.

4. **Akron Springfield** -- They return two state finalists and a two-time state place winner in Dies, Bolyard and Saley. Unfortunately each is at a difficult weight class and they have struggled a bit this year. However, they were a whirlwind last year at state tournament time and there's no

reason to believe it won't happen again. If Whitacre, Barron, Lowell, Demastus, or Hawk can qualify that would be an added bonus.

5. **Maple Hts.** -- A team that will peak next year, but that still has good scoring potential in 1999. Magistrelli, Phillips, Pflug and Cundall are all returning state qualifiers. Factor in Hasenohrl and the younger Pflug and there could be a lot of points on the board. However, the tough Perry District may well beat them down.

6. **Nordonia** -- Basically a two-man team but both should be finalists -- and that's close to 50 points. Tack on help from someone like Varga and Baraga and they could easily make the top five.

7. **Marion Harding** -- Two-time state champion Jeff Ratliff always loves the big bout, the big challenge and so he'll score a lot of points. Smith and Townsend have placement potential, while McCreary, Potts, Owens and Rieman have to help.

8. **Eastlake North** -- Sabin and Osolin should be high placers at their respective weight classes while Miocic, Delguyd and Dominick have state scoring potential.

9. **Solon** -- Penn could be a finalist and, if so, Lenhard won't have it easy. If Mahone can score at the tough 160# class and Krajnak has a hot weekend, this team could be a top five candidate. The freshman DiGiovanni could be a crucial element while Cost, Ilodi, Smith and Camino are possible helpers. Smith is improving rapidly and might be able to score at the state level.

10. **Sandusky** -- It would be helpful if McKinney drew away from Jayne and Prophet got comfortable at 112#. Let Walls, Carr, Aaron and Cherry qualify and you have the recipe for a top ten finish. Also qualifying out of the weakest district doesn't hurt either.

11. **Fairfield** -- Always a tough team, this year is no exception. Wahoff, Ramsey and Padgett are the big guns, but as per usual there is also good depth. Quimby, Leugers and Burd could qualify and have scoring potential at the state level.

12. **Olentangy** -- They have a dynamite stretch of wrestlers from 112# to 135# in Evans, Worley, Maehl and Robbins. The big question is the jump from Division II to Division I and how it will impact this squad.

## 103#

Projected Champion: Kyle Ott (Wayne)

### Top Contenders

- |                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Sabin (Eastlake North)     | 15. Ondecko (Upper Arlington)    |
| 3. Moos (St. Edward)          | 16. Nadeau (Defiance)            |
| 4. Pflug (Maple Hts.)         | 17. Bradley (Sylvania Southview) |
| 5. Purcell (Coffman)          | 18. Walters (Pickerington)       |
| 6. Januszewski (Strongsville) | 19. Pollock (Mentor)             |
| 7. Leugers (Fairfield)        | 20. Demastus (Akron Springfield) |
| 8. Hewitt (Medina)            | 21. Luther (Glen Este)           |

- |                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 9. Langdon(Harrison)          | 22. Baumann(Bowsher)     |
| 10. Vickers(MassillonPerry)   | 23. O'Bryant(Anderson)   |
| 11. Thompson(Kenmore)         | 24. Gease(Darby)         |
| 12. Herrera(Mayfield)         | 25. Puckett(Beavercreek) |
| 13. Rose(Perrysburg)          | 26. Howe(Hudson)         |
| 14. Simmons(WestervilleNorth) | 27. Andaverde(Toledo CC) |

This should be one of the most interesting and actionfilled weight classes in Division I. The top four are all excellent and, in addition, they are all &quot;goers&quot; who like to score. I believe there is some drop off after the top quartet, but Purcell and Januszewski have upset potential. My choice is the rugged sophomore Kyle Ott who was a strong 3rd last year. A quarterfinal upset by the excellent Penn cost him a possible state final spot, but he finished strong with four straight wins the last reversing the tables on Penn. He has been essentially unchallenged this year winning big at Reno and dominating smaller tourneys and the state duals.

Sabin, also a state qualifier last year, won a bout at Columbus after a district 3rd which coincidentally included a loss to Penn. He split two bouts with Moos at the Ironman getting pinned when ahead the first time and finished behind Ott at Reno. A savvy senior, he may feel most at home in a close bout.

The two freshman, Moos and Pflug, are both sensational. Moos was a double cadet national champ and has been excellent this year splitting two matches with Sabin, losing to Ott and winning everything else. He looks to have a brilliant career ahead of him. I rate Pflug just a hair behind Moos, but there are no common yardsticks, so that's purely a guess. Pflug is undefeated with nothing resembling a close bout, but has not wrestled any of my top ten. Generally, one thinks of this weight class as a great chance for freshmen to win a state title, but it's only happened once in the past 20 years.

State qualifier Purcell falls just outside my big four, but he is very strong and could well overpower one of the freshmen. He's someone to watch out for in the bracketing. Last year he lost a narrow 6-5 decision to Sabin and was immediately eliminated. With the new double elimination format, that cannot happen again. The rest of this district is relatively average although Simmons could be a factor.

Clearly, Ott will dominate at Fairfield where there is good depth, but not much real placement material. Langdon or, perhaps, Leugers could get a very low place, but the trio behind Ott will not be worrisome to the top five. Stumpf (Piqua) and DePoy (Greenville) are other good wrestlers who did not make the ratings grid.

The Rogers District gets three qualifiers and in many cases, it will be the group you'll want to draw into. Rose lost by 6 to Herrera at Hudson, but gave Purcell a struggle at Perrysburg before losing 9-7. Nadeau has been at 103# for two years now with some success, while Andaverde was the CIT runner up. There could be some surprise qualifiers here.

Pflug should win at Perry, but it's a solid district. Hewitt, Vickers and Thompson are all tough, with the last mentioned a fast improving freshman. Hewitt won the Dies and North Canton and was 3rd at Medina where he defeated Vickers (who was 5th) 12-5.

I've also rated Howe and Demastus, but Van Winkle (New Philadelphia), Mihalia (Hoover) and Pniewski (Cloverleaf) are close behind. This is deepest of the five districts as noted by the fact that Demastus upset Langdon in the state duals. Sabin and Moos are well above the rest of the field at Mentor and you can hope that they'll be finalists at Mentor. Sometimes semifinal losers have problems coming back and winning those two extra bouts to qualify. Januszewski has been outstanding as well, and certainly has placement potential. He has made giant strides from a freshman year where he was a district qualifier and won over 20 times. Bivins (Cleveland Hts.) and Camerato (Brush) could also be factors here.

## 112

Projected Champion: Mason Lenhard (St. Edward)

### Top Contenders

- |                              |                                      |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Penn (Solon)              | 14. Theodore (Boardman)              |
| 3. Brooks (North Royalton)   | 15. Josefowicz (Holland Springfield) |
| 4. DiSalvo (Carroll)         | 16. Cundall (Maple Hts.)             |
| 5. R. Evans (Olentangy)      | 17. Ware (Westlake)                  |
| 6. Eibel (Massillon Perry)   | 18. Hansen (Pickerington)            |
| 7. Townsend (Marion Harding) | 19. Maxwell (Vandalia Butler)        |
| 8. Prophet (Sandusky)        | 20. Baum (Ashland)                   |
| 9. Spiccia (Cuyahoga Falls)  | 21. Jaynes (West Carrollton)         |
| 10. Dew (Stow)               | 22. Kee (Shaker Hts.)                |
| 11. Zinkan (Moeller)         | 23. Bamonte (Harrison)               |
| 12. Moore (Westland)         | 24. Keckstein (Scioto)               |
| 13. Weaver (Waite)           | 25. Christy (Piqua)                  |
|                              | 26. M. Evans (Mansfield Madison)     |

This is an exceptionally strong weight class with more than a dozen returning state qualifiers including a defending state champion and three other placers. This power is particularly evident at the Perry District where at least six state caliber wrestlers will struggle for only half that number of qualification tickets. At the same time there are at least five legitimate contenders for the State title with no assurance for anyone that they'll be wrestling Saturday evening.

The outstanding junior Mason Lenhard, the 1998 state champion at 103#, moves up to 112# this year. He was undefeated at 103# last year and swept to the title by winning his last three bouts by a combined score of 14-6 low scoring bouts all won by 2 or 3 points. This year he was 2nd to Lester at both the Ironman and Medina and barely beat DiSalvo 1-0. He looks like he's wrestling not to lose rather than to win, and his offense against good wrestlers seems reactionary. He's wonderful at converting opponents' mistakes and controlling the top position, but he just doesn't seem to initiate many scoring moves. When he falls behind, it becomes very difficult to catch up and that creates a lot of internal pressure that may reduce effectiveness.

On the other hand, DeAngelo Penn remains on an upward learning trajectory and has retained his aggressiveness. Strong and powerful, he just hasn't had any close bouts, but he still makes mistakes. Last year in the district final Lenhard caught and pinned him in the 3rd period. Brooks is kind of a super secret, but he is very good. He has won at Wadsworth and Perrysburg without a close match. Last year he took state runner up Percival into overtime in the district semifinals. Had he won that bout, Jaynes and Percival would have had to wrestle off in the consolation

finals. Instead, they actually met in the state finals after Jaynes beat Brooks for 3rd. Brooks then lost two tough overtime bouts at Wright State. DiSalvo is very tough to score upon and even in his rare losses gives up very few points. He won the CIT and was 3rd at Medina after the aforementioned 1-0 loss to Lenhard. Evans, a transfer from Johathan Alder, is a huge 112 pounder who is also totally undefeated (thanks, Dan Loy). He could be a surprise finalist at this class.

The Mentor District is straightforward. You'd like to see Lenhard and Brooks meet in the finals with everyone else chasing that 3rd slot. I've listed Ware and Kee as slight favorites, but Lokia (Riverside), Passafiume (Strongsville), Mendez (Lorain Southview), or almost anybody could be challengers. Evans has two state qualifiers in this weight class at Darby, but he should be the champion. Moore and Hansen are both looking for return trips to States but Townsend is my choice to derail those hopes for one of them. A Townsend/Evans final would be exciting and could be a critical issue with the new five champions; bracketing.

State placer Prophet has been 125# much of the year, but had to drop to 112# to bypass the excellent McKinney. Prophet was 6th last year as a huge 103 pounder (if that's not an oxymoron) and will be one of the biggest 112s this year. So far he has not been stunningly successful at 112#, but this is not a difficult district. Weaver and Josefowicz look to be next best, but I sense a lot of uncertainty at this district. Baum could be a big surprise, perhaps.

DiSalvo could have his hands full with the flashy Zinkan the latter being a full speed type competitor. However, DiSalvo did notch a 3rd period pin at the CIT. I'm impressed with the freshman Jaynes who could qualify this year with a few breaks. It's hard to see any of the rest matching up well with what's around the rest of the state.

The real battle is at Perry. Penn is, I believe, ahead of the field, but he is certainly not upset proof. State qualifier Eibel was 4th at Medina losing a close consolation final to DiSalvo and finished ahead of Lenhard in Wisconsin. Spiccia, who missed state qualification last year by one point in a 10-9 loss, has already handily beaten state qualifier Dew. He might just make it to Columbus this year. However, Dew, Theodore and Cundall are all returning state qualifiers and I'm not sure I've ever seen a situation where three former state performers fail to get out of the same district.

## 119#

Projected Champion: Mark Jayne (St. Edward)

### Top Contenders

- |                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. McKinney (Sandusky)              | 14. Earich (Defiance)              |
| 3. Pflug (Maple Hts.)               | 15. Garro (Uniontown Lake)         |
| 4. Saley (Akron Springfield)        | 16. Trepal (Willoughby South)      |
| 5. Spatola (Elder)                  | 17. Fukuzawa (Holland Springfield) |
| 6. Worley (Olentangy)               | 18. Cooke (Colerain)               |
| 7. Smith (St. Xavier)               | 19. Sites (Dublin Coffman)         |
| 8. Hickey (Mayfield)                | 20. Palumbo (Hudson)               |
| 9. Golembiewski (Massillon Jackson) | 21. Bill (Harrison)                |
| 10. Heldman (Marietta)              | 22. Incorvaia (Strongsville)       |
| 11. Smith (Marion Harding)          | 23. Harpster (Wapakoneta)          |

12. Percifull (West Carrollton)  
13. Schraibman (Dublin Scioto)

24. Brulport (Sidney)  
25. Pope (Shaker Hts.)

Mark Jayne is one of the finest juniors in the country. Strong, super quick and possessing a devastating arsenal of moves, he is relatively close to unbeatable at this time. Last year he wrecked the state tourney bracket pinning in the finals in 94 seconds. He was 39-1 and his only loss was on a slam disqualification in the district semifinals. This year he is even better, and only McKinney has a realistic shot at beating him. For this year and next we are looking at a future college star.

At Mentor, Hickey is the only other participant that has a reasonable chance at state placement. He won at Wadsworth over Golembiewski and remains undefeated at this point. The sophomore Trepal, the powerful Pope and the enigmatic Incorvaia have the best looks at the last berth, although Williams (Lorain Southview) could be a factor. Incorvaia went 15-13 in a loss to Hickey, but didn't come close to placing at Brecksville.

As is often the case this year, the Perry District will exhibit brutal competition. Two-time state place winner Saley and state place winner Pflug are probably best here with Pflug having a slight edge. He is the very picture of determination at tournament time. Golembiewski has had a lot of luck the last two years most of it bad. Always an outstanding competitor, injuries have forced him to miss tournament action for the last two years. State qualifier Garro will have to really hustle to get out this year, while Solon runner up Palumbo and Tepley (Garfield Hts.) will have to have a very hot weekend to make it to Columbus.

Spatola and Smith have been battling toe-to-toe for the past two years. Last year at 103#, Smith seemed to have an advantage, but in the last and most crucial meeting of that season, Spatola prevailed 7-6 in their go-to-state contest. This year they've split two bouts, but the tide, I believe, has swung to the Spatola side. Both can score at the state level, but I'm not sure the other two qualifiers from Fairfield will be able to do so.

McKinney is light years ahead of anybody else at Rogers and is probably the biggest threat to Jayne's repeating as champion. He has won everything entered this year and the scores haven't even been half close. At Brecksville, only his 1st round bout against Trepal went the full 6 minutes and that score was 10-. He is very strong and likes to go full steam. He and Jayne would light-p the scoreboard, although there would be substantially more illumination on the Jayne side.

There are five solid candidates for qualification at Darby. State qualifiers Worley, Heldman and Schraibman all return, although none of them have won a bout in the championship bracket. However Smith has had a great year and could easily displace one of the top trio. The super strong Sites was impressive at Medina, while Leshner (Westerville South) could be a factor.

## **125#**

Projected Champion: Kevin Maehl (Olentangy)

Top Contenders

2. Wilcox (Oak Hills)

14. Bloomfield (Tiffin Columbian)

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 3. West (Fairborn)            | 15. Balk (Davidson)          |
| 4. Dies (Akron Springfield)   | 16. Smallwood (St. Ignatius) |
| 5. Bake (Massillon Jackson)   | 17. Staehler (Wapakoneta)    |
| 6. Spires (Lancaster)         | 18. Baria (Mason)            |
| 7. Mann (St. Edward)          | 19. Balog (Medina)           |
| 8. Simon (Hoover)             | 20. Blair (Strongsville)     |
| 9. Kresser (Sandusky)         | 21. Williams (Wayne)         |
| 10. M. McIntire (Lakota West) | 22. Rieman (Marion Harding)  |
| 11. Beasley (Mayfield)        | 23. Adams (Toledo St. John)  |
| 12. Doggett (Tecumseh)        | 24. Spitzer (Mt. Vernon)     |
| 13. Beckley (Hudson)          | 25. Drake (Butler)           |

Two-time Division II state champion Kevin Maehl moves up to Division I with the rest of his Olentangy team and must be accorded the favorite's role. Last year he won all 42 of his bouts, but things have been a little tougher this year. He lost convincingly to Blackburn at 135# and has had narrow one-point wins against Honaker and Allen. Still this is a wrestler who always looks a weight class bigger than his opponent, and one who knows how to win at tourney time. I've thought a lot about Wilcox culminating a great season with a win over Maehl, but eventually rejected it although that's not to say it won't happen. However, Maehl has the tools to win when it counts, and there is no question that he is well prepared by his coaches for each bout.

There would be a certain irony if Jason Wilcox were to take the title after being overshadowed for the last three years by his fourtime state place winner brother, Justin, who never did win a title. Jason has, indeed, had a great year winning big at the SWOCA and dominating at St. Xavier. He won two state bouts last year, and he is much better this year. West, a state semifinalist last year as a freshman, eventually finishing 6th. He has high placement potential and could be a finalist particularly if Wilcox and Maehl get paired in the same half. State qualifier Doggett returns, as do Drake and Williams, but watch out for two excellent freshman. Both McIntire and Baria are solid although I think the former is little ahead at this point. Don't be surprised to see one or both in Columbus.

State finalist Dies, state placer Simon and the rapidly improving Bake stand a clear notch above everyone else at Perry. Dies has gotten very big, moving up three weight classes from 103#. He won at North Canton, but was 2nd at Brecksville and 3rd at the Dies. He seems to have a little trouble scoring against topnotch opponents. Simon and Bake are very close, but Bake did win at Wadsworth. Still, Simon's more extensive experience could pay off at year's end. Beckley and Balog have to hope for something wonderful to happen, while the freshman DiGiovanni (Solon) and Collins (Bedford) have upset potential.

Mann has moved to the top of this weight class at the weak Mentor District. He was 5th at Medina losing by 2 to Barnett and Spires. He doesn't beat himself as evidenced by his upset win at the Ironman. State qualifier Beasley drew Ratliff and Simon back to back last year, so he's hoping for much better bracketing in 1999. Smallwood and Blair should battle for the last spot with Alli (Cleveland Hts.), or Skully (Mentor) a possibility.

Smallwood wrestles few close matches he either wins big (the more usual case) or loses big. It is also relatively weak at Rogers. Kresser has done a good job for Sandusky placing at every tourney and looking excellent in the duals. Two-time state qualifier Bloomfield will probably

make it for the 3rd time. He seems always to have a lot of regular season losses, but comes through at district time. Last year he had 12 defeats, but did win a bout in the consolation round. Three years ago he scored 5 points at the end of his first round bout with Gary Skoch to pull one of the bigger upsets that year. Staehler, Adams and Wensinger (Fremont Ross) all have qualification chances, too.

There is a lot of depth at Darby. Maehl, naturally, is the top rated wrestler, but junior Johathon Spires is already a two-time state qualifier and a 6th place finisher two years ago. He wrestles with real intelligence and has won four state bouts in two years. After that, it could be Balk or Rieman or Spitzer and Dysart (Dublin Coffman) and Sheets (Westland) are also possibilities. You'll earn your ticket to the States here.

## 130#

Projected Champion: Jeff Ratliff (Marion Harding)

### Top Contenders

- |                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Percival (Amherst)             | 14. Federico (Willoughby South) |
| 3. Z. Kallai (Wadsworth)          | 15. Ruth (Winton Woods)         |
| 4. Wiles (Holland Springfield)    | 16. Clarke (Dublin Scioto)      |
| 5. Williamson (Massillon Perry)   | 17. McCoy (Elder)               |
| 6. Walls (Sandusky)               | 18. Melsser (Toledo CC)         |
| 7. Smith (Hamilton)               | 19. Bowersock (Wapakoneta)      |
| 8. Gottke (Franklin Hts.)         | 20. Lybarger (Mt. Vernon)       |
| 9. Cost (Solon)                   | 21. Allen (North Royalton)      |
| 10. M. Neely (Thomas Worthington) | 22. Summer (West Carrollton)    |
| 11. Adams (St. Ignatius)          | 23. Porter (Firestone)          |
| 12. J. Zinkan (Moeller)           | 24. McDowell (Troy)             |
| 13. Sheffield (Loveland)          | 25. Jordan (East Liverpool)     |

The great warriors of ancient Greece, the Spartans, decorated their shields with a proud lambda for their country Lakedaemon. That is almost all of them. The story was told of the Spartiate whose shield bore no crest at all, but only a common housefly painted life size. When his rank mates made sport of him for this, the Spartan declared that in the line of battle he would get so close to his enemy that the housefly would look as big as a lion. To his opponents that too would appear to be the strategy adopted by Jeff Ratliff. One of the titanic match ups in the entire tournament process should take place Saturday at 130#. The favorite will be the great, two-time champion Jeff Ratliff who loves the challenge of a big bout. Two years ago he moved up to challenge Merrell and lost and this year did the same with Simok. Those are his only two losses in three years. He has already signed at Ohio State and winning his 3rd title especially over Percival would cement his claim as one of the great lightweights of this decade. He wrestles with a passion and ferocity that inflicts his will on his opponent.

Percival will be a very worthy opponent. Runner up at 112# to Jayne last year (and 3rd as a freshman), he seems to run into great opponents at the state level. He has had nothing resembling a close bout this year. At Brecksville he won by technical fall 17-0 over a quality opponent like Walls. I'm not sure any of his bouts have gone six minutes. He is demonic in the top position, able, at least so far, to turn everybody. This is the bout everyone wants to see. Percival should have absolutely no trouble at Mentor. Federico, a state qualifier at 103# two seasons ago, missed

all last year and is probably second best at Mentor. Adams was a strong 3rd at the CIT losing only to Boyd and has been a high placer everywhere. Allen took Wiles into overtime at Perrysburg, while Magyar (Brush), Dennison (Mentor) and Hronek (St. Edward) have a long way to go.

Ratliff faces a deep field at Darby, but none that will really challenge him. State qualifiers Neely, Gottke and Clarke all return to vie for the two remaining state berths. They are very close and, clearly, anything could happen. In addition Lybarger, Gulbrandsen (Dublin Coffman), Campbell Pickerington) and Sanders (Westland) are all possibilities.

One of the hottest wrestlers in recent weeks is the suddenly rejuvenated Williamson. I saw him at Medina and took him off the radar screen after being drubbed by Kibler and pinned by Neely. Then he beat Daugherty, among others, to win in Wisconsin and followed that up with dual meet decision over the very tough Simon. Go figure! Last year he was a district 4th (only three to go) at 135#, losing a 13-11 overtime bout to Jakuszewski.

Zak Kallai is also excellent placement material coming out of the Perry District, while the steady Cost should win the 3rd spot. Benton Smith, a transfer from Lemon Monroe, is likely to head the pack at the closely grouped Fairfield District. He lost to the excellent Ray in the SWOCA finals and has been the most consistent 130 in that area. Zinkan, who makes every match close, could have a hot weekend and easily qualify, or could be a first-round flame out. Division II state qualifier Sheffield should qualify, but he is no sure choice either. Factor in everyone's favorite dark horse, Ruth, the once beaten McCoy, and Sommer and you have an outstanding competition.

Wiles won at the GMVWA and established himself as a force at 130#. A state runner up in Florida, he added further luster to his record by stopping Carrizales 5-1 in the Perrysburg finals. Last weekend he came down to Earth when Carrizales avenged himself with a 14-5 win, but it's clear that Wiles is a player at this weight class. Walls, too, will be a major factor. A state qualifier last year, he has been very good except for the loss to Percival. Perhaps that was not an unexpected result, but the score was surprising. The rest of the crew here is two giant steps behind the top duo.

## 135#

Projected Champion: Gary Skoch (Madison)

### Top Contenders

- |                                  |                                      |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2. Branham (Westland)            | 14. Miller (Toledo Central Catholic) |
| 3. Wahoff (Fairfield)            | 15. Lambers (Elder)                  |
| 4. Dimitris (Brecksville)        | 16. Ma. Neely (Thomas Worthington)   |
| 5. Bolyard (Akron Springfield)   | 17. Mallue (Centerville)             |
| 6. C. McIntire (Lakota West)     | 18. Miller (Cuyahoga Falls)          |
| 7. Jakuszewski (Green)           | 19. Dunstan (St. Edward)             |
| 8. C. Kallai (Wadsworth)         | 20. Poling (Rogers)                  |
| 9. J. Yetzer (Mansfield Madison) | 21. Ilodi (Solon)                    |
| 10. Mirisciotti (Butler)         | 22. Stamper (Miamisburg)             |
| 11. Robbins (Olentangy)          | 23. Bosley (Mayfield)                |
| 12. Carr (Sandusky)              | 24. N. Eger (Coffman)                |

13. Petsanis (Willoughby South)      25. McCreary (Marion Harding)  
 26. McCord (Amelia)

It's been well documented that Gary Skoch has three times been to the State Tournament, and three times has lost in the first round. As far as I'm concerned that's ancient history. Skoch, wrestling in one of the deepest and toughest weight classes in Division I, is quite simply the best choice to become the state champ. It won't be easy because there will be some outstanding boys competing in Columbus, but he has the talent and the strength to prevail. For example, this year he remains undefeated including a championship in the big Reno extravaganza. With well over 100 victories he would seem to have the experience to win the close bouts he'll inevitably encounter. This is a very deep weight class and with the five district set up, winning that district title becomes even more important. Conceivably a wrestler might have to defeat four district champs in succession to win otherwise.

This chart looks at 1998

	Division 1	Division 2	Division 3	Total
Number of finalists	28	28	28	84
Number who were also district champs	18	20	23	61
%	64	71	82	73

In Division I there were only two weight classes where a final round bout did not include a district champ, and there were none in Division II. The toughest district is at Perry. Former state place winner Dimitris has lost only to Branham and beaten Bolyard (narrowly) and Kallai. He missed last year's tournament because of mononucleosis, but has rebounded with style this year. State runner up Bolyard has lost, by my count four times, but he is the kind of wrestler who is always dangerous. He upset state champion Merrell 15-10 when the latter began to roll around on the mat with him. He can be deadly on top. As Archilochus said 2,500 years ago, the fox knows many tricks, the hedgehog only one good one. Bolyard definitely knows one good move. Jakuszewski is also a returning state qualifier, and this incredibly lanky junior is unorthodox and difficult to handle. He too, defeated Bolyard at the Dies final. If there has ever been a Kallai who was a mediocre wrestler, I haven't heard of him and Chris Kallai is no exception. He was upset by Jakuszewski in the first round of districts 12-10 and immediately eliminated. He was the champ at Wadsworth and is the fourth member of a very tough quartet and, yet, only three can qualify. Ilodi is current 19-3 and would be a surefire qualifier at Mentor had Solon been assigned in that direction. As it is, he will struggle to get to Columbus.

Branham may be Skoch's biggest threat. He is a blocky, very powerful wrestler with a continuing and constant bias for the fall. He has pinned virtually everyone he has faced (including Dimitris) and his only loss was in the Medina final to Abbuhl. Ahead early, he was injured and could not really defend himself as the excellent Abbuhl scored twice on takedowns. Eventually he was forced to default. He looks like a finalist to me. The rest of that district is pretty pedestrian, with the exception of state qualifier Robbins who could be a significant factor.

Wahoff had a great freshman year. He was the Fairfield District champ at 130# and easily won his first two bouts at States. Then meeting Key, who he had defeated 3-2 in the district, he found himself on the wrong end of that same score and finished 6th losing to Skoch 6-1. He pinned in the Kenston final and won handily at Fairfield. His district is the second best one. State qualifiers

Lambers, Mirisciotti and McIntire all return and I especially like the last mentioned boy. He lost in overtime in the state quarterfinals and is much stronger this year. Mallue is also very good and has excellent qualification chances while Stamper and Hinson (Harrison) are a step behind.

Skoch dominates at Mentor with state qualifier Petsanis several respectful steps behind. Skoch defeated him 18-4 in the dual. Bosley, Dunstan, Gross (Brush) and Parker (Amherst) are possibilities for the 3rd berth. Only Skoch should get beyond the first round.

Josh Yetzer heads a weak Rogers District and he has the best chance to do something at the next level. There is a lot of parity here, but the quality is at a somewhat lower level than most of the other districts.

## 140#

Projected Champion: Omar Scruggs (Sycamore)

### Top Contenders

- |                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. McAdams (Brecksville)         | 15. Bauer (Ashland)               |
| 3. N. Yetzer (Mansfield Madison) | 16. Dill (Wayne)                  |
| 4. Osolin (Eastlake North)       | 17. Sabatino (Brush)              |
| 5. Lyons (Moeller)               | 18. Snyder (Tecumseh)             |
| 6. Hernan (Madison)              | 19. Giordano (Fitch)              |
| 7. Lampe (Glen Este)             | 20. Schomaker (Talawanda)         |
| 8. Strouth (Dublin Coffman)      | 21. Jackson (Holland Springfield) |
| 9. Effner (Garfield Hts.)        | 22. Mills (Groveport Madison)     |
| 10. Smith (Solon)                | 23. Mierau (Medina)               |
| 11. Zychowitz (Perrysburg)       | 24. Franke (Clay)                 |
| 12. Trentler (Massillon Jackson) | 25. Hite (Westland)               |
| 13. Leidich (Strongsville)       | 26. Zollars (Perry)               |
| 14. Reinier (Grove City)         | 27. Leabu (St. Edward)            |

The administrative decision most likely to impact Division I wrestling this year was the uncoupling of the Central and Northwest Districts into two separate tournaments. In the past the combined district sent five wrestlers to the State but this year, by what could only be called creative rounding, each district will separately send three qualifiers.

One of the more underrated seniors in Ohio is the powerful Omar Scruggs. Already a two-time state qualifier, he has twice lost one-point state quarterfinal bouts to eventual finalists. This year he shoots for his second district title and has to be accorded the favorite role in Columbus as well. He was voted the OW at both the SWOCA and Sycamore tournaments, and his only loss was to the Russian recruit Tomaev who wrestles for Blair Academy. He took the #1 (in the U.S.) rated Tomaev into overtime before losing 6-4. Scruggs exits from an excellent district. Lyons although somewhat erratic is a big winner who pins well over 65% of his opponents. He decked the very good Durkin to win at the CIT. State qualifier Lampe has also had an excellent season, while Dill and Schomaker clearly have state caliber talent. That would seem to leave Snyder, Sorrell (Miamisburg), and Willis (Lakota East) as potential outsiders, while the totally unpredictable Ruberg (Harrison) is the wild card.

Scruggs will have one of this most severe tests against Osolin. A state place winner two years ago as a sophomore, Osolin had a fine junior year including an easy sectional title. Then in one of those infamous district bracketing happenings he and defending state champion Kulczycki were paired in the same half. Both crushed their first two opponents, but Osolin was no match for the state champ. Down by a big score in the 3rd period, Osolin was disqualified for biting and thrown out of the tourney. Ironically, Kulczycki's opponent in the state finals was the same Artino that Osolin had beaten by 12 earlier in the year. Osolin has been hurt much of this year, but if 100%, he will be the favorite here. Right behind him at Mentor is state qualifier Hernan, who was 2nd to Osolin last year in sectional action. These two seem well above other state candidates like Leidich, Sabatino and Leabu.

McAdams twice a state place winner also has finalist potential. A three-time Brecksville champ, his only two losses were at the Ironman. He has, however, twice faced Scruggs losing both times once by fall (for 5th place at Wright State) and the other this year by a 14-7 margin. He seems clearly best at the Perry District, but the battle for the last two spots will be brutal. Smith has made a quantum jump in effectiveness this year, while Effner, son of the CSU coach, has been extremely effective at 145#. He should be even better at the lower weight class. Trentler, Giordano, Mierau and Zollars are all capable of winning at the state level but their big challenge will be to get there. Factor in a Costello (Maple Hts.) and district semifinalist Barron (Akron Springfield) and you're getting to a very crowded bracket. There'll be battles from the first round on. I would not be surprised to see some of this group migrate to the somewhat easier 145# class.

Strouth heads what looks like a weak Darby contingent. He did win at Perrysburg, but did not make the finals at Coffman or Medina (where he finished 6th). Reinier is a close second choice here, but the fall off after him is very severe.

State qualifier Nate Yetzer heads a representative group from Rogers. He has solid state placement chances based on his past track record. Zychowitz, Bauer and Jackson are all very close and know how to win the tough bout. Zychowitz was 2nd at Hudson, but lost a surprise 7-6 decision to Jackson to finish 3rd at Perrysburg behind Strouth and Jackson. Franke, Marzec (Toledo St. Francis) and Geib (Wapakoneta) are other state candidates.

## 145#

Projected Champion: Ty Morgan (Wayne)

### Top Contenders

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Bertin (St. Edward)           | 15. Pliev (Princeton)           |
| 3. Miglets (Fitch)               | 16. Maher (Pickerington)        |
| 4. M. Kallai (Wadsworth)         | 17. Spreng (Mt. Vernon)         |
| 5. Kaplan (Sycamore)             | 18. Sample (Madison)            |
| 6. McCabe (St. Xavier)           | 19. Young (Piqua)               |
| 7. E. Mahone (Bedford)           | 20. Barrow (Toledo St. Francis) |
| 8. Hall (Marietta)               | 21. Stevens (Hudson)            |
| 9. Blanks Moeller)               | 22. Waight (Brush)              |
| 10. Whitacre (Akron Springfield) | 23. McKinney (Davidson)         |
| 11. Risner (Perrysburg)          | 24. Haws (Butler)               |
| 12. Layton (Mentor)              | 25. DiPerna (Westerville North) |
| 13. Blevins (Start)              | 26. Davis (Sandusky)            |

This looks to be strictly a two-man battle much the same in form as we saw at 130# between Ratliff and Percival. In this particular case it is two-time state champ Ty Morgan versus state 3rd place winner Ryan Bertin. Both boys have outstanding credentials. Morgan was a Division II state champ at Graham as a freshman and junior, and was 3rd as a sophomore. He transferred to Wayne this year and the whirlwind senior has long been recognized as one of the great takedown artists in recent years. His only loss this year was in the finals at Reno. Bertin, only a junior, was a state qualifier two years ago and went into the state tourney last year as a slight favorite having won two previous decisions over Gino Iacoboni. However, this time the wheel of fate caught up with him as Iacoboni built up an early semifinal lead to win 8-6. Iacoboni took the title while Bertin finished 3rd. This year Bertin has two losses to Morgan 9-7 and Giuricich from Blair Academy, 9-7 in overtime obviously we have discovered Bertin's least favorite score. How will it turn out this time since these two should meet in the finals? Bertin will immediately recognize that he is in the opposite position from a year ago, and will feel heartened that he can duplicate the upset that Iacoboni pulled on him last year. At the same time a squadron of St. Edward coaches will be working with Bertin to combat the wicked front headlock that Morgan utilizes with such effectiveness. However, I think Morgan will win once again and for two reasons. First, despite the fact that he a good number of shots, Bertin was never able to penetrate effectively against Morgan. While there is not a lot of difference in quickness Morgan is clearly stronger equivalent, perhaps, to a good 145 pounder wrestling a good 140 pounder. Second, while Morgan did not shoot much, when he did, he was able to get inside and create scoring opportunities. The biggest negative for Morgan will be the external pressures placed upon having won the dual, two-time champ, etc.

Miglets is the wild card. A potential state placement wrestler last year, he had an unhappy district losing in two overtimes to Lattavo (who finished 4th at Wright State) and then losing the consolation final to the totally unorthodox Markovic. He should neutralize Morgan's strength, but it's unlikely he can match him on his feet. Yet another Kallai (Wadsworth's third) is also placement ready. Miglets did beat him by five in the Wadsworth final. Mahone, half-brother of the three who wrestled for Solon, is a star in the marking, while Whitacre could help Akron Springfield in the team competition.

Bertin dominates an otherwise very weak Mentor District that has only Sample with extensive district experience. Both Rogers and Darby also have slim pickings at this weight class. Hall, in the Darby District, has perhaps the best chance to have an impact in Columbus.

Morgan exits probably the strongest and deepest district at Fairfield. McCabe is a returning state qualifier who has put together a 19-4 mark. He was 2nd at the SWOCA to the improving Kaplan who I believe has moved ahead of him. Blanks, Young and Haws are all reasonably good, while Pliev is a bit of a mystery. He was only 6th at the SWOCA, but won convincingly at St. Xavier defeating McCabe in the finals 10-2. Apparently, he has just moved here from Russia and speaks very little English. Also, he is just learning our style of wrestling, but is improving rapidly. That explains his 6 losses and may make him a major factor late in the year. Keep your eye on him.

Projected Champion: Sean Watters (Wadsworth)

Top Contenders

- |                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Tolar (St. Edward)       | 15. Varga (Nordononia)        |
| 3. Padgett (Fairfield)      | 16. Aaron (Sandusky)          |
| 4. Magistrelli (Maple Hts.) | 17. Klimkowicz (Madison)      |
| 5. Kull (Toledo St. John)   | 18. Bartlett (Wapakoneta)     |
| 6. Kapustka (Centerville)   | 19. Brenneman (Green)         |
| 7. DeAnna (Westlake)        | 20. Stephens (Brookhaven)     |
| 8. Malone (Shaw)            | 21. Osting (Piqua)            |
| 9. Miller (Marietta)        | 22. Dillard (Marion Franklin) |
| 10. Braly (Lakota East)     | 23. Green (Cleveland JFK)     |
| 11. Kuhner (Pickerington)   | 24. Terry (Toledo Scott)      |
| 12. Krieger (Coffman)       | 25. Schilling (Mentor)        |
| 13. Niehaus (Harrison)      | 26. Gossen (Waite)            |
| 14. Heard (Princeton)       | 27. Miceli (Hudson)           |

Again, this appears to be pretty much a two-man battle and I know this is beginning to sound repetitive. However, like 130# and 145#, this weight class seems to be dominated by two high placing returnees from last year. While the likes of Padgett, Magistrelli, et. al., does not preclude upsets, if they do occur they will be of substantial magnitude. Watters is a very athletic, high scoring wrestler who moves well and is now also very experienced at winning. Last year he lost to Lou Iacoboni in the district semifinals, and again in the state finals. It capped a 36-win year that featured monotonic improvement. This year Watters remains unbeaten in Ohio losing only to Gibbs of Canon-McMillan 12-5.

Tolar, a transfer two years ago from Padua, also had a great junior season winning his district championship without a struggle and then moving smartly to the state semifinals where his nemesis three-time state champ Keaton Anderson defeated him once again and he dropped into 3rd place. This year Tolar has wrestled a flawless schedule except for a 5-1 loss to Watters. A bout which was dominated by Watters strength. Interestingly enough Tolar bombed Watters' conqueror, Gibbs, 13-3. In terms of a forecast, you've got to weight the head-to-head match up far higher than any single set of results between common opponents. But the scores with Gibbs the same day as their meeting would certainly provide hope for Tolar.

State qualifiers DeAnna and Malone join Tolar at Mentor to create a formidable trio. Malone missed state placement by one point last year, but it was actually DeAnna who won their only meeting 4-2. Klimkowicz is the big threat here and he will certainly challenge everyone here except Tolar. He lost his go-to-state bout last year 12-9. Green, probably the best Senate wrestler, could also be a factor along with Schilling, Lomas (Geneva) and Kartson (St. Ignatius).

Magistrelli is the principal threat to Watters at Perry. Last year he qualified at 145# as a freshman (quite a feat), and then lost his first round bout in overtime. This year he pinned DeAnna at Brecksville, but I thought he looked a little sloppy at the Milkovich Quad. He struggled against a good Michigan wrestler and then lost convincingly to Division III Klinger. I wonder whether the long snow layoff played a factor in that performance. The gritty Varga is on the bubble in the third qualifying spot, but Brenneman, Miceli and Johnson (Massillon Jackson) will struggle to beat him.

State qualifier Kull heads a relatively weak Rogers District. He beat Kapustka to win the GMVWA, but was 2nd to Monachino at the CIT. This is his second year at this weight class, and it should result in good low to middle place opportunities. Aaron and Bartlett are probably next best here, but neither made district competition last year. Terry and Goosen are even less experienced, while Hinton (Celina) and Edwards (Mansfield Madison) are other possibilities.

State qualifier Miller joins Kuhner, Krieger and Stephens at Darby as the top quartet looking to fill three state places. None of this group has shown outstanding results, but each has good experience and skills. Krieger certified at 145#, but I believe will probably compete at 152#. I always have the feeling that he is very close to being very good. Maybe it will happen at state tournament time. Stephens is very athletic and could be the one to pull the big upset in Columbus, if he can get there.

Again, the deepest district is probably at Fairfield. Padgett is undefeated this year including a monster win at Kenston. State qualifiers Kapustka and Niehaus are back, but both seem to generate erratic results. Kapustka qualified as a freshman, but then wrestled at three different classes and didn't get out last year. Osting is the one to be wary of, and I believe he may be underrated where I've placed him. He was only 4th at Tiffin and 2nd at Wapakoneta, but seems to be showing good improvement. Albers (Moeller), Stevens (Carroll) and McDaniel (Wayne) are other possibilities.

## 160#

Projected Champion: Ryan Lange (Nordonia)

### Top Contenders

- |                               |                                    |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Fenos (North Royalton)     | 15. Hoover (Willoughby South)      |
| 3. Smith (Lorain Southview)   | 16. Pace (Brush)                   |
| 4. Phillips (Maple Hts.)      | 17. Wetherby (Davidson)            |
| 5. Carraher (St. Xavier)      | 18. Blidner (Westerville South)    |
| 6. Gargiulo (Amherst)         | 19. Clemens (Carroll)              |
| 7. Abrams (Lebanon)           | 20. Wood (Ashland)                 |
| 8. Healy (Sylvania Northview) | 21. Davis/Klaus (Wadsworth)        |
| 9. Mahone (Solon)             | 22. Gizzi (St. Ignatius)           |
| 10. Schweda (St. Edward)      | 23. Smith (Perrysburg)             |
| 11. Griffith (Centerville)    | 24. Walker (Mt. Vernon)            |
| 12. Stark (Massillon Jackson) | 25. Doerflein (Harrison)           |
| 13. Covert (Sycamore)         | 26. Vandiver (Holland Springfield) |
| 14. Brown (Pickerington)      | 27. Berry (Upper Arlington)        |

It will not encourage Lange, but from a prediction point of view, this has been my worst weight class ever. I've missed it the last five years, but Lange certainly is a good candidate to halt this slide. One of the best defensive wrestlers of the '90s, he has added more offense to his arsenal. Last year state champion Gray Maynard just pounded everyone, but he escaped with two very narrow victories over Lange one in the Medina finals the other in the state finals. This year Lange has lost only once an out-of-state opponent at the Ironman where he finished 3rd.

Lange emerges from a very fine district. State qualifier Phillips returns and captured titles at Brecksville and Franklin Hts. He has twice beaten state place winner Gargiulo during the past 12

months. David Mahone is also a returning state qualifier with tremendous ability. He seems to wrestle to the level of his opponent, but has won some big bouts. Fenos defeated him twice last year. Stark is a wild card. He has results all over the map. Last year he was a district 4th just missing qualification, but you don't want to meet him in a crucial bout. Davis and Mowery (Massillon Perry) are also good. It's like old time for the Mentor District at 160#. Even with Malone moving to 152#, this weight class is loaded. State qualifier Fenos has been exceptional all year. Last year he might have had the worse state draw of 1998. He got eventual champ Sellet in the first round losing 7-4 and they drew the defending state champ (and eventual 3rd place finisher) Walker next and dropped a 4-3 heartbreaker. Another potential state finalist is the very talented junior Mike Smith. A state qualifier two years ago he won his sectional last year and came to the district level with a 38-2 record only to be forced to withdraw because of injury. Undeafated this year he walloped the excellent Division II wrestler Corey Coe 9-3.

A healthy Smith need fear no one. Gargiulo was an enormous surprise to me last year. As a sophomore he carried seven losses into district competition, but won twice convincingly to reach the semis before losing to Phillips and then lost the consolation final by nine. Yet at the state level he again reached the semifinals before losing to Maynard and ended up 4th. It was a marvelous performance and included two highscoring overtime wins. He has lost only twice this year. Schweda won the big Medina Tourney in impressive fashion, but he's the odd man out the way I have it rated. Pace, Hoover and Gizzi are also excellent, but that's seven boys for three spots. All seven of them are among the best 20 or so in the state. While Hank Kornblut said to keep quiet, an obvious strategy for some of these competitors is to look at the relative void at 171# and begin calculating probabilities. It strikes me that two or three of this group might eventually decide to go up.

I believe that there are also some good potential point scorers at Fairfield. State qualifier Carraher has been excellent beating state qualifier Abrams to win the SWOCA by two. An upset loser at the CIT, he still has good placement potential. State qualifiers Abrams and Griffith will beat most low district finishers, but will have trouble with the contingents from Mentor and Perry. Covert has been a big, new name in that area while placing at the Ironman and SWOCA and giving everyone a tough battle. Mix in Clemens, Doerflein and Schwieterman (Northmont) and this is the third most powerful district.

However, I don't see much power at either Rogers or Darby. The singular exception is state qualifier Healy who should be competitive with anyone here. The other two qualifiers out of Rogers will struggle, as well, I believe, all three from Darby. Brown, who was 25-0 in Germany last year is probably best there, but Covert, for example, beat him 8-1 at the SWOCA.

## 171#

Projected Champion: Vincent Gay (Trotwood Madison)

### Top Contenders

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Salmon (Worthington Kilbourne) | 14. Owens (Marion Harding)        |
| 3. Schnitzler (Moeller)           | 15. Casteel (Loveland)            |
| 4. Hasenohrl (Maple Hts.)         | 16. Roberts (Holland Springfield) |
| 5. Lance (Wadsworth)              | 17. Blanton (Shaker Hts.)         |
| 6. Mazzola (St. Edward)           | 18. Schwalm (Coffman)             |

- |                                      |                               |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 7. Chesher (Toledo Central Catholic) | 19. Cline (Piqua)             |
| 8. S. Foster (Stow)                  | 20. Stephenson (Reynoldsburg) |
| 9. Shepard (Oak Hills)               | 21. Smith (Chardon)           |
| 10. Livingston (Sycamore)            | 22. Braun (Wapakoneta)        |
| 11. M. Delguyd (Mayfield)            | 23. Carter (Cloverleaf)       |
| 12. Dominick (Eastlake North)        | 24. Lilly (Bowling Green)     |
| 13. Serafimov (Hoover)               | 25. Collins (Miamisburg)      |

Mozart was a genius at taking a musical theme and examining it in countless, charming variations. So, too, this year in Division I wrestling where the theme is outstanding twoman match ups. At 171# this translates into a struggle between two-time state runnerup Vincent Gay and the rapidly improving Dan Salmon. Gay is a marvelous athlete. As a sophomore he came to Wright State at 160# and crushed his first three opponents before running into Andy Hrovat and losing a one-sided final. Last year he came to the state meet with a 36-0 mark at 171# and quickly moved to the finals (with one very close bout with Dobies) only to lose to Osolin 6-4 defeated by the wrestler who for two weekends was kind of a man of destiny. This year after spending time at 189#, he returns at 171# with only one loss (at 189#). In Ohio history there have only been two wrestlers who were state runner ups three times. Gene Gibbons (Cleveland West) in 1945/46/47 and Norm Codner in 1953/54/55. Gibbons, of course, went on to win an NCAA title and is, coincidentally retiring this year after over 45 years of coaching, while Codner lost two of his three final round bouts by referee's decision.

Dan Salmon is hoping to make Vincent Gay the third member of this club. A state semifinalist last year, he lost a heart pounding 9-8 decision to Osolin or he would have met Gay in the finals last year. Particularly impressive was his 23-12 quarterfinal win over Ryan Kinley. This year Salmon has not been pushed much, and he appears ready to challenge Gay, perhaps a year later than expected.

There is a large drop-off between this duo and everybody else although you cannot totally rule out a major upset. Gay exits the Fairfield District which is quite strong. SWOCA champ Schnitzler is probably the best in the Cincinnati area, although Chesher upset him at the CIT. State qualifier Livingston has battled injuries and may have been passed by the vastly improved Shepard. That's a possible qualifying quartet, but state qualifier Casteel could also play a role here. Hampered by injuries all year, he may be held out until sectional action begins. It would be asking a lot for him to jump immediately into action and qualify. Cline and Collins are also worthy candidates, while Hermosillo (Fairmont), Schinke (Greenville) and Carpenter (Centerville) have a huge mountain to climb.

Injuries have also hampered state qualifier Lance and Hasenohrl may have passed him at Perry. Wadsworth with all kinds of excellent upper weight wrestlers still needs a healthy Lance to buoy their team hopes. State qualifier Foster also returns in what is a solid district. Serafimov may pull a surprise here while Carter could be a factor.

Ironman champion and Medina runner up Mazzola heads a rather shallow field at Mentor. A first year starter for St. Edward, Mazzola has stepped right in with exceptional success. In fact, his back up Hallahan might well be second best in this district. I've listed several other candidates for qualification, but I think you'll see this group augmented by some 160s looking for a home.

Salmon and Chesher should be dominant at the Darby and Rogers districts respectively. It is difficult to imagine anyone threatening Salmon at Darby, while Chesher may meet some opposition from Roberts. At any rate, the four other qualifiers from these two districts will likely have short passage to the early consolidation rounds.

## 189#

Projected Champion: Alex Lammers (Wayne)

### Top Contenders

- |                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Miller (Wapakoneta)           | 15. Burd (Fairfield)                |
| 3. Weppler (Marietta)            | 16. Bialowas (St. Edward)           |
| 4. N. Delguyd (Mayfield)         | 17. Kerr (Olentangy)                |
| 5. DeVitis (Green)               | 18. Good (Kent Roosevelt)           |
| 6. Freday (Hoover)               | 19. Hudson (Sycamore)               |
| 7. Thompson (Winton Woods)       | 20. Hoelter (Perrysburg)            |
| 8. R. Donley (Clay)              | 21. Davis (North Royalton)          |
| 9. Tipka (New Philadelphia)      | 22. Muntean (Worthington Kilbourne) |
| 10. Dolezal (Carroll)            | 23. B. Foster (Stow)                |
| 11. Cherry (Sandusky)            | 24. Wilson (Parma)                  |
| 12. Mi. Delguyd (Eastlake North) | 25. Seitz (Milford)                 |
| 13. Fink (Willoughby South)      | 26. Forshtay (Fremont Ross)         |
| 14. Chilcote (Groveport Madison) | 27. Nutter (Defiance)               |

Of my 14 picks in Division I last year, two were eliminated in quarterfinal action and three more during the semifinals. That left nine remaining and, surprisingly, all nine won their final round bout. It marked the second consecutive year that all my choices who made it to the final won. Going back to 1996, the last 20 finalists that I've selected have won the issue, of course, is that a fair number of selections get eliminated before they can reach that state final round.

This weight class presents some severe forecasting problems because the top contenders have not met and in fact wrestle schedules that make it difficult for me to see them. Lammers, now a junior, was a state semifinalist last year, before losing to McCaffrey and eventually falling to 4th. His only loss was at Reno where Division III pick Sintobin caught him early for 5 points, and he could never quite catch up. He has not wrestled a lot of the top contenders, but his past record indicates a high percentage of probable success. Miller is a mystery man. Last year he was a district champion and rolled into Wright State undefeated only to get a horrendous draw in the form of Richie Root in the first round and then was gone when Root lost in the next round. This year he has again crushed every opponent, but we're not talking about the biggest tournaments in Ohio, either. Still a wrestler with his kind of results suggests a very, very dangerous opponent. He could well be something of a champ if he remains on a tear during the first week of March. District champ and state qualifier Weppler also wrestles in kind of an out-of-the-way part of the state, but he, too, has great credentials. He was 2nd at Medina at 215#, and lost only because he was at a significant size disadvantage. He should be dynamite at 189#. Last year he missed placement because of a 1-point loss to Delguyd but he looks better than Delguyd this year.

Miller should dominate at Rogers. Donley is probably next best, but hasn't competed in a while, and I've heard, second-hand, that he's done for the year. Cherry can either be very good or very mediocre. Hoelter, Forshtay and Nutter look like the best candidates for the third berth (if

Donley is indeed absent), with the hard-to-spell Katafiasz (Sylvania Northview) a short step behind.

Lammers, probably, won't have that much trouble at Fairfield, but Thompson has surprised everyone winning the SWOCA and Sycamore in fine fashion. He has come out of nowhere to win and win often. The quartet of Dolezal, Burd, Hudson and Seitz are all reasonable alternatives for qualification, while Wegley (Tecumseh) and Wawsczyk (Troy) are also possibilities.

State qualifier Chilcote is well behind Wepler but there is not much else at Darby to worry him. Most of the other apparent contenders failed to reach the district level last year.

All is confusion at Mentor and Perry. Nick Delguyd finished 5th last year, and looks on target to, perhaps, match or slightly better that result. The two-ranked Delguyds from Mayfield are brothers and they are I believe Nick's uncles or perhaps, vice-versa. At any rate I've also ranked Mike here along with state qualifier Fink, Bialowas and the surprisingly good Wilson. Also in the hunt are Hageman (Westlake), D'Amico (Euclid) and Adams (Midpark).

Freday and DeVitis are essentially dead even with little to choose between. For example DeVitis won 9-8 at Wadsworth. I've ranked Tipka at 189#, but it could just as easily be his teammate Miller. They're both good. Not rated but solid contenders are Camino (Solon) and Hawk (Akron Springfield).

## 215#

Projected Champion: Jared Tanner (Nordonia)

### Top Contenders

- |                                    |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Lenix (Toledo Central Catholic) | 14. Fails (Madison)              |
| 3. Bond (Wayne)                    | 15. Theodore (Boardman)          |
| 4. Miocic (Eastlake North)         | 16. Zeller (Butler)              |
| 5. Krajnak (Solon)                 | 17. Miller (New Philadelphia)    |
| 6. Salsberry (East Liverpool)      | 18. Dawson (St. Edward)          |
| 7. Hudson (Westland)               | 19. Rosekelly (Sandusky)         |
| 8. Andria (Thomas Worthington)     | 20. Carmichael (Carroll)         |
| 9. Morris (Harrison)               | 21. McCoy (Findlay)              |
| 10. Householder (Ashland)          | 22. Findlay (Moeller)            |
| 11. Quimby (Fairfield)             | 23. Maldonado (Lorain Southview) |
| 12. Bessen (Davidson)              | 24. Hreben (Perrysburg)          |
| 13. Spreng (Mt. Vernon)            | 25. Null (Troy)                  |
|                                    | 26. Clawson (Massillon)          |

We've dealt with a lot of weight classes where there are two or three obvious candidates for a state title and will do so again at heavyweight. However, at 215# the race for the championship is wide open, with no one wrestler or even one small group of contenders high probability items. Instead, this is one of those competitions where someone I've ranked in double-digits could play a significant or winning role in this little drama.

My choice is the senior from Nordonia, Jared Tanner. He as a 4th place finisher last year at this class, losing a close quarterfinal bout to the eventual champ Brad Hensley 11-8. This year he

beat Miocic 8-7 for 3rd at the Ironman and squeaked by Hampton to win the WRC. A good, solid wrestler he is a steady performer, but certainly not an invincible one. Krajnak lost to Tanner in overtime at States last year and twice more this season. He is probably second best and has good chance for placement or even as a finalist. State qualifier Salsberry is a highscoring pinner who can beat anybody in this field on a good day. This is a remarkably good trio coming out of Perry, but they are not bullet proof. The excellent Miller and Clawson are here while Theodore is the big unknown. Last year he was district semifinalist but ended up 4th at this three-man district. That same unhappy fate could await him again this year. Kaufman (Wadsworth) and Wendolowski (Normandy) are other very longshot possibilities.

Miocic and Fails look to be the two best out of Mentor. After them all is confusion and darkness with very few candidates even approaching state ability. Dawson, with a good record wrestling a tough schedule might be marginally the top choice for the third spot. The pairings should be good with Miocic and Fails exiting the same district.

The powerful Lenix is a returning state qualifier and district champ. He won two bouts at Wright State, but lost to Tanner in the state placement bout. He is undefeated this year, except for a 1-0 point loss to Rowlands in the CIT final when he became one of the few competitors to go the full 6 minutes with Tommy. Householder was a heavyweight qualifier last year, but only wrestled one bout after getting pinned by the mammoth Davie. He has had injury problems this year, but should be a factor by state time. The rest of the district, like at Mentor, does not send one's heart pounding. Hudson was 5th last year, but will, I believe, struggle to duplicate that result.

Andria and Bessen are also returning state qualifiers at Darby while Spreng has shown rapidly improving results. This is one of the better districts (though not as strong as Perry) and whichever three qualify will provide honest and difficult competition for every opponent.

At Fairfield, Morris is the returning state place winner, but I think Bond may have passed him. Add in the redoubtable Quimby and again there is in place a solid trio of performers.

## **HVY.**

Projected Champion: Edward Thomas (Cleveland Hts.)

### Top Contenders

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 2. Stepanovich (Berea)                  | 14. Padilla (Wayne)            |
| 3. Davie (Perrysburg)                   | 15. Billingsley (Defiance)     |
| 4. Ramsey (Fairfield)                   | 16. Alli (Boardman)            |
| 5. King (Mt. Vernon)                    | 17. Arocho (Lorain Southview)  |
| 6. Walling (Piqua)                      | 18. Finley (Pickerington)      |
| 7. Leckrone (Fairmont)                  | 19. Howell (Garfield Hts.)     |
| 8. Piccirillo (Mayfield)                | 20. Stuckey (Winton Woods)     |
| 9. Bowers (Westerville South)           | 21. Watkins (Meadowdale)       |
| 10. Irving (Mansfield)                  | 22. Griffin (Admiral King)     |
| 11. Potts (Marion Harding)              | 23. Hyams (Sycamore)           |
| 12. Burtscher (Toledo Central Catholic) | 24. Townsend (Toledo Woodward) |
| 13. Carbone (Massillon Perry)           | 25. Stone (Cuyahoga Falls)     |

I think this is basically a three-man competition between Stepanovich, Thomas and Davie although with the rash of upsets always possible at heavyweight a case for Ramsey can also be made. In terms of the big three I first would eliminate the huge Davie. While he scores well against less than topgrade competition he doesn't do much against topcaliber boys. Of course, he is so big that nobody has much luck scoring against him either. So you end up with a lot of low scoring bouts that drive referees crazy. Davie won one state bout last year, but he will have to be more aggressive to beat both Stepanowich and Thomas.

The battle between the two Mentor District contestants is in my mind a toss-up. Stepanovich won 3-2 at districts last year, but Thomas was state runner-up and Stepanovich was upset in the first round by Ramsey. Thomas also pinned Davie on his way to the final. This year Stepanovich again won with a lightning fast pin, but that was just capitalizing on a fluky mistake. The only advantage Thomas seems to have is that he pins more, thus reducing the margin for error. I flipped a coin and it came up Thomas. You can do the same. Thomas and Stepanovich should dominate at Mentor, but Piccirillo is also pretty good. He will not be one of those outsized heavyweights (he wrestled some at 215# this year), but has good movement. He may look at lot more active to the referees than some of the really big boys and that could help him in a close bout. Arocho and Griffin are longshots to qualify while Adamczyk (Strongsville) and Orsky (St. Edward) are even further back.

Ramsey has the best shot of defeating someone in that top triumvirate. As a sophomore last year he caught Stepanovich in the first round, but then was twice pinned in the next two rounds. He was an easy winner at Kenston, but lost to Leckrone at his home tourney. There are a lot of relatively good heavyweights with Ramsey at Fairfield. Walling missed state qualification by one point last year, but he gives up 20 pounds to Ramsey and 35 to Stepanovich, Thomas and Davie. The afore-mentioned Leckrone is also solid while the huge Padilla could sneak into a qualification spot. Mix in Stuckey, Hyams and Watkins and you have a potent brew of heavyweights. Look for a couple of them to place.

King is perhaps best at Darby, but he has lost to Potts (when ahead) and Bowers has lots of talent. A key here might be how healthy Bowers is in late February he has to work his way back from a broken hand. King seems to score more heavily this year, but he has to avoid the big mistake but then again which one of us does not.

Davie should have little trouble at Rogers although there are some other good heavyweights there. Burtscher is quick and can be effective against certain styles. Irving, who missed the last couple years is making up for lost time by winning a lot of impressive bouts. I would like to have seen him at the Gorman because it might have provided a good yardstick by which to measure his progress. Billingsley and Townsend are both experienced and certainly will be satisfactory replacements should any of the top trio fail. I also like Gibson (Sandusky) and Gibson (Holland Springfield) at Rogers.

The Perry District is uncharacteristically very weak. Carbone is as big as the rules allow and has had some success including a semifinal appearance at Medina. However, whoever qualifiers here will have rough sledding the next weekend.



1999

## HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

### FORECAST

(28th Annual Edition)

**Written By:**  
**Brian Brakeman**

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### DIVISION II

As always, this classification is the most difficult to forecast, both on a team and individual basis. Last year's winner was (among many other things) ultimately decided by a slam disqualification that provided the critical points for Graham. In 1999, the team competition is again likely to be so close that it could be decided by one such event.

#### Division II Teams

1. **Ravenna** -- The team title is theirs to lose. They have four potential champs in Hayes, Hampton, Bauer and Zmith and a bevy of potential back-up scorers like Lara, Dunfee, Ramsey and Shrewsberry. Steve Reedy in the last year of a brilliant coaching career could win his second state title (the first in 1993) if he can get his team to peak at the right time.
2. **Clyde** -- Another team that is outstanding year in and year out. They already have five top five finishes in the 90s including one team title (they missed a second team title by 1 point). This year they have defending champion Anderson, Blackburn, West and Coe as their nucleus with potential scoring help from Smith, Townley, Shearer and Cockrell. A healthy Sosa would be a big plus because if Ravenna falters, this team could easily win it all.
3. **Walsh Jesuit** -- The team likely to be the heavy favorite next year would like to start celebrating a year early. They have more potential state scorers than anybody, but getting it all to mesh is tough. The biggest surprise is that defending state champion Rooney may not be able to make the team. Daugherty is the best hope for an individual title, but Jones, Romano, Goulosh, Verner, Woodruff and Sveda need to help. The brilliant freshmen Hurley and Lowery could be a hidden source of points.
4. **Perkins** -- Quick and Pentorn are of state finalist caliber while Tommy Hermes could be a huge factor if he goes at 152#. Finn is probably a little small for 119#. He's good enough to score there anyway. The young wrestlers Schnittker and Tieche could be factors, while Leibacher and Dave Hermes are long shots.

5. **Claymont** -- Another squad that won a team title in the '90s and could do so again. Peters, Abbuhl and Toukonen are the key players, but each has to be healthy and at the right weight class. Add in both Groves and Williams and they must generate some team points if Claymont is to move up. Two surprise helpers might be Edwards and Cottrell.

6. **Twinsburg** -- If it's going to happen for this team, it has to happen at the middle weights. State finalist Michalek and state qualifiers Brooks and Turle are the key elements while Kugler and Grimsley are outside hopes.

7. **Olmsted Falls** -- A team that has plenty of upward potential if they can get enough people through the brutal Firestone District. Hodermarsky and Pfaff are exceptional and both could be state finalists. Other help could come from Stofer, Gross, Jones and Hoy, while Mazella and Hammond could be factors. Real help, though, could come from the young heavyweight Bryant who has loads of talent.

8. **Bellevue** -- A team that always looks great on paper, but hasn't been in the Top Ten since 1993. This year is one of their best squads with real power at the middle weights with DePolo, Coleman, Fisher and Smith. Add in Didion and Sanchez at the upper weight classes and they could be in the Top Five.

9. **Watterson** -- Hockaday and Keenan have finalist potential, while Burkhardt and Bowen could help at the upper weights. If Paniccia and Weeks can score, they'll justify this ranking.

10. **Galion** -- Hieber and Gilmore are the heart of this team, but they must wrestle up to their potential at Columbus. The only other hopes for points are state qualifier McClintock and Tyrell.

11. **West Holmes** -- If they can surmount their plague of injuries, this could be a Top Ten team. State qualifier T. White should score heavily at 103# while D. White, Hart and Hummel are an excellent threesome at 171# through 215#. The only other scorer might be Baker. The key, though is for Hart and D. White to be at 100% by district time.

12. **Columbus DeSales** -- Most of the upper weight stars are gone, but this team still has the firepower to generate points. Barnett is a potential finalist and Redmond could score heavily if he can go at 103#. Canty has had some big wins this year, while Gilstrap might do well at heavyweight.

## 103#

Projected Champion: Josh Wooten (St. Paris Graham)

### Top Contenders

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 2. White (West Holmes)                 | 15. Shearer (Clyde)            |
| 3. Blackcloud (Dover)                  | 16. Egnor (Dayton Northridge)  |
| 4. Sell (Louisville)                   | 17. Vondruska (Bay)            |
| 5. Stofer (Olmsted Falls)              | 18. Kendjorsky (Buckeye Local) |
| 6. Redmond/Pizzurro (Columbus DeSales) | 19. Russell (Van Wert)         |
| 7. Barker (Maysville)                  | 20. Henderson (Preble Shawnee) |
| 8. Protz (West Geauga)                 | 21. Meinking (Purcell)         |

- |                             |                                    |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 9. Bowersock (Beaver Local) | 22. Randazzo (Padua)               |
| 10. Klofta (Indian Lakes)   | 23. Sosbe (Rossford)               |
| 11. Burns (Jefferson)       | 24. Don Collier (Minerva)          |
| 12. Gilsdorf (Maumee)       | 25. Smith (Wilmington)             |
| 13. Weeks (Watterson)       | 26. Ball (Licking Valley)          |
| 14. Maple (Indian Creek)    | 27. Damianti (Springfield Shawnee) |

I had spent most of the season with the anticipation that defending state champion Dan Rooney would compete at 103#. However, after making the scratch weight the first week of the season for the Ironman, he eventually concluded it was too great a task and moved up to 112#. This has left something of a void at this class, although there are several solid candidates to replace him.

My choice is the canny sophomore Josh Wooten who has put together an unblemished season including titles at Graham and Medina. He is the defending district champion at this weight and won one state bout last year. Wooten dominated the Wilmington District last year, and should probably do so again in 1999. He has already pinned what look like his strongest rival in Klofta, and is far ahead of the remainder of the pack. Now that this district sends four qualifiers, there is probably more margin for error, and more opportunities for gain than in the past. Besides Klofta, I think that Egnor and Henderson have the best chance for qualification with the former missing by one win of going last year when he finished 4th. Meinking has put together a fine season and could challenge while Damianti, Smith, Kleppinger (Milton Union) and Bolton (Bellbrook) are other contenders. My guess is that only Wooten can place out of this district.

The most powerful district will be at Steubenville. Defending district champ and state qualifier Trent White heads a strong field. White's only loss this year was in the Brecksville semifinals to Division I contender Januszewski. Last year he breezed through sectional and district competition, but it may not be so easy this year. That's because state qualifier Blackcloud and Barker have both shown solid improvement. Blackcloud, who took West and Laughlin into overtime in the state quarterfinals and consolation brackets has had a particularly fine year, while Barker won at Tiffin. Bowersock could qualify at any other district, but may have trouble here. Maple won impressively at Edison including an overtime victory over Shearer and if you add in, Fetty (Athens), Kenjorsky (Buckeye Local) and Henry (Claymont), it gets really crowded. Should state qualifier Williams (Claymont) elect to wrestle here the competition would heat up even more.

Surprisingly the usual strong Marion District does not look particularly deep or powerful. If Redmond, who was a district semifinalist at 112# last year remains certified at 103#, he would seem to be the kingpin here. He pinned Quick in first round action to highlight his district tournament, but lost in overtime to go to Wright State. He has not competed much in 1998-99. His backup Pizzurro is also quite good and would have an outside chance of qualification. I've listed a number of other possibilities headed by Weeks, Shearer and Gilsdorf, but this will not be the usual, powerful contingent of 103's that generally emerges from this district.

I'm not sure how to evaluate the talent at Firestone. There are no returning state or district qualifiers at this weight class, so there is not an extensive track record with this group. Both Sell and Stoffer have had excellent years with Sell holding a 5-1 decision over his top rival. Stoffer can score points in big bunches and has dominated some good performers. Protz and Burns have

had excellent seasons although the latter competitor wrestles a weak schedule. I've also listed Vondruska, Randazzo and Collier, but Inghram (Lake Catholic), Mendes (Orange) and Bement (North Ridgeville) could be other contenders.

In summary, the absence of Rooney casts an entirely different light on the state tournament process at this weight class. It moves from one likely to be dominated by a single wrestler to one with lots of options for a wide range of contenders. Instead of pointing for a Herculean confrontation, each of the contenders now understand that solid, consistent wrestling each round can have a state championship payoff.

## 112#

Projected Champion: Josh Quick (Perkins)

### Top Contenders

- |                            |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Laughlin (Canton South) | 14. Wisecup (Wilmington)         |
| 3. Rooney/Goulosh (Walsh)  | 15. Ashworth (Bellbrook)         |
| 4. West (Clyde)            | 16. DeLeon (Maysville)           |
| 5. Brock (Taylor)          | 17. Weight (Fairview Park)       |
| 6. Blankenship (Bucyrus)   | 18. Cronkleton (Benjamin Logan)  |
| 7. Rogers (Purcell)        | 19. Sharples (Oak Harbor)        |
| 8. Triscaro (Kenston)      | 20. Dave Collier (Minerva)       |
| 9. Williams (Claymont)     | 21. Carter (Springfield Shawnee) |
| 10. Kasler (Circleville)   | 22. Reeder (Wauseon)             |
| 11. Grassi (West Geauga)   | 23. Francis (Bellaire)           |
| 12. Wimmers (Marysville)   | 24. King (Trenton Edgewood)      |
| 13. Kostko (Bryan)         | 25. Long (Paulding)              |

Defending state champ Dan Rooney can no longer make 103#, but beyond that he has been unable, at least so far, to beat Nate Goulosh in the wrestle off at 112#. Now Goulosh is good, but as a first year varsity wrestler he has not been tested in the crucible of pressure as has Rooney. If he can make the team, Rooney could win it all, but that might not happen. Rocky Laughlin is completing his third excellent varsity season, including state qualification last year. Last year Rooney beat him by 3 and West defeated him in overtime and he did not place. This year he was 4th at Medina, including an overtime loss to the redoubtable Harry Lester.

Josh Quick, another state qualifier, has to be the biggest, strongest 112 pounder in Division II. He's had a great year, but he has not wrestled well at the State level in the past. Last year, for example, he was pinned by Kemble and Brock. Doug West is a superb talent who last year collected 42 victories including two overtime wins to reach the state semifinals. However, Rooney beat him 10-1 at that point, and Quick has defeated him this year.

As is so often there is no easy answer here and even the most sensible call seems elusive. I've gone with Quick, but look for the unexpected at this weight class.

At Firestone, Laughlin and the Walsh entrant, either Rooney or Goulosh, should qualify. After that there is a major drop off with the currently injured Triscaro and Grassi next best. However, the freshman Weight, Collier and Thompson (North Ridgeville) are all reasonable choices with Messier (Coventry) and Scianna (Hoban) having qualification potential.

Quick and West along with 6th place winner Blankenship are the class at Marion. All three could place and quite frankly, any of them could be a finalist. There is a substantial drop off after that with at least five solid journeyman wrestlers battling for that last spot.

The Steubenville District is quite weak and it's unlikely that any of that area's three qualifiers will place. Willilams, in fact, may move to 103#, but his qualification chances are probably better at 112#.

There are four returning place winners at Wilmington, but look for at least one of them to stay home this year. Brock was 6th at this weight class last year including a fall over Quick. He should easily repeat as district champ and has the potential to move up a few places at the state level. Rogers is next best, but state qualifiers Ashworth and Cronkleton are both "on the bubble." People like Wisecup, Carter, King and Montgomery (Blanchester) could pass them by.

## 119#

Projected Champion: Brandon Hayes (Ravenna)

### Top Contenders

- |                          |                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Pfaff (Olmsted Falls) | 15. Black (Purcell)             |
| 3. Smith (Copley)        | 16. Schultz (North Ridgeville)  |
| 4. Spellman (Canfield)   | 17. Dillon (St. Clairsville)    |
| 5. Toukonen (Claymont)   | 18. Charles (Marysville)        |
| 6. Kramer (Crestwood)    | 19. Day (Preble Shawnee)        |
| 7. Smith (Cambridge)     | 20. Holm (Turpin)               |
| 8. Trostel (Graham)      | 21. Reisinger (WCH)             |
| 9. Moody (Buckeye)       | 22. Moore (Wauseon)             |
| 10. Clemens (Paulding)   | 23. Hedric (Franklin)           |
| 11. Townsley (Clyde)     | 24. Frye (Ontario)              |
| 12. Simmons (Conneaut)   | 25. Tilley (Tipp City)          |
| 13. Finn (Perkins)       | 26. Bartley (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 14. Taylor (Carrollton)  | 27. Thompson (Teays Valley)     |
|                          | 28. M. Henn (Bexley)            |

This is an exceptionally strong weight class with most of the power located at the Firestone District. Last year the five qualifiers out of Firestone at 112# took the first five places at Wright State. Part of that group is now going at 119#. In fact, there are at least eight or nine 119's at Firestone who have solid state qualification credentials. That's why six of my top seven choices are competing at that district.

I chose Hayes last year at 103#, but he fell victim to a first round upset and finished 3rd. He has not lost in Ohio this year and was dominant in the first part of the season. He needs to sustain that momentum throughout the state tournament process a task which should be somewhat easier because he does not have as severe a weight cut.

Pfaff has been absolutely brilliant all year. His only loss was at 125# and he has won three major tourneys, including a 42 second final round fall at the Dies a tournament where he also pinned twotime Division I placer Barry Saley. Smith is a huge, rock solid 119 pounder who qualified for state tournament action last year, but could not compete because of a skin infection. This year he

has won at Copley, took 2nd to state runnerup David Dies on overtime criteria at North Canton, and was 3rd at Wadsworth (losing to Golembiewski). Spellman was the state runner up at 112# last year, but has been a little shaky this year losing, for example, to both Moody and Saley at the Dies. Krammer was 4th at 119# last year with wins over Toukonen and Hiles and a 1point loss to Barnett. He has done well this year at a very tough class. Moody and Simmons are both very good, the former defeating Spellman this year, and the latter a state alternate at 112# last year. Add in Schultz, Roff (Kenston), Bartley (Ravenna Southeast) and Hodges (Walsh) and you have a wonderful competition at Firestone and a powerhouse group going to Columbus. Missing here is state third place medalist Mike Kembie who was superb last year. He smashed both Brock and Quick and defeated Hodermarsky and Machinics as well. A bulging back disc has prevented him from competing this year.

The wrestler with the best shot at breaking up this Firestone dominance is Toukonen. Two years ago he was state runner up at 103#, but last year's move to 119# was not as successful. His style requires him to be "bigger" than his opponent and that will be true this year. He is very tall. District champ Jose Smith won two state bouts last year and could reach placement level this year. He and Toukonen should dominate at Steubenville.

Three returning state qualifiers return to Marion. District champ Clemens is a twotime qualifier, but has lost all three of his state bouts. Townsley and Finn have both had great years in that tough Sandusky Bay Conference with Townsley winning their dual. Finn, who is really a 112 pounder moved up when Quick failed to make 103# and opted to go at 112#. The last state berth is wide open.

Four qualifiers at Wilmington is probably an excess at this class. Trostel was a state alternate last year (he wishes they had changed the ratio one year earlier) and gives everyone a tough battle. He was 3rd at Medina and a solid 1st at Graham earlier this year. Day was a state qualifier in Division III last year, and has wrestled well this year. The rest of this district's qualifiers will struggle big time in Columbus.

## 125#

Projected Champion: Jesse Leng (Medina Highland)

### Top Contenders

- |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Barnett (Columbus DeSales)  | 15. C. Henn (Bexley)           |
| 3. Hodermarsky (Olmsted Falls) | 16. Jolliff (Preble Shawnee)   |
| 4. Brooks (Twinsburg)          | 17. Hilliard (Minerva)         |
| 5. Hensley (Lemon Monroe)      | 18. Shaw (WCH)                 |
| 6. Hurley (Walsh Jesuit)       | 19. Heiser (Fostoria)          |
| 7. Black (Miami Trace)         | 20. Beach (Tri Valley)         |
| 8. Hiles (Licking Valley)      | 21. Ames (Willard)             |
| 9. Machinics (Kenston)         | 22. Daugherty (BethelTate)     |
| 10. Huelzman (Tipp City)       | 23. Kirtz (Swanton)            |
| 11. McClintock (Galion)        | 24. Saum (Sheridan)            |
| 12. Schultz (North Ridgeville) | 25. Errett (Graham)            |
| 13. Henry (Springboro)         | 26. Trosse (Indian Valley)     |
| 14. Culbreath (Hillsboro)      | 27. Linich (University School) |

This should be an interesting weight class with some very hard fought match ups bound to occur, and, perhaps recur. My choice is defending state champ Jesse Leng, the senior star from Medina Highland. Last year he moved down to 119# and won 12 straight bouts including an 8-2 final over Michalek. Very short, only 5'-3", he is very strong benching well over 300# and has excellent quickness as well. He won handily at Medina, beating the very tough sophomore Barnett in the finals repeating his state semifinal win of last year.

The Firestone District is again loaded. It is very possible that Leng will meet Hodermarsky in both the district and state finals. Hodermarsky was 2nd at Firestone last year at 112#, but dropped to 5th at Columbus as three of the competitors he finished ahead of at districts ended up above him. This year he has won three tourneys (Milan Edison, Bellevue and Wadsworth) and was 2nd to Leng at the Dies losing a 6-4 decision. State qualifier Brooks will be a huge 125 pounder and has lots of tourney experience. An intriguing competitor will be the absolutely brilliant freshman Hurley a superstar of the future. He could meet Leng at the sectional, district and state level. You can bet the mortgage that Coach Barger will pound at the freshman/senior angle trying to place all the pressure on Leng, while counseling Hurley he has nothing to lose. Machinics has been injured all year, but he was 4th at Wright State last year beating Hodermarsky and Brock among others. That a great quintet, but don't forget the undefeated Schultz and the tough Hilliard. The latter boy's brother came out of nowhere two years ago to grab the 135# title over Morgan and Santiago. Waiting in the wings, but facing long odds are Linich, Hussein (Orange), D'Agostino (NDCL), Kirven (Triway) and Bourquin (Canton South).

Barnett should dominate at Marion. Only a sophomore, he is even shorter than Leng, but is a superb wrestler. While last year was a senior dominated season, it is still very difficult for a sophomore or freshman to win. Hiles, also a returning state qualifier, is second best at Marion with state qualifier McClintock and Henn further behind. It would seem that only Barnett will place from this group. Others beyond those listed include Estrada (Wauseon) and Bennett (Clyde).

Hensley and Huelsman are both returning state qualifiers and could well be the district finalists. I like Hensley and believe he has solid placement potential. He was second only to Wilcox at the SWOCA and has routed most of his opponents. He had trouble with Toukonen last year because a down tempo match does not suit his style. Huelsman won a state bout last year, but I see relatively few of his results during the regular season although those seen have been good.

The Steubenville District is not very strong. Black, who missed qualification by one win last year, should lead the way and he has been very good finishing 2nd, for example, at the GMVWA. The rest of my choices come primarily from the Southeast area, which in the past has not had good luck at either the district or state level. There could be some surprises here, and I wouldn't be shocked if Saunders (Steubenville) moved up to this class.

## **130#**

Projected Champion: Nate Daugherty (Walsh Jesuit)

Top Contenders

2. Michalek (Twinsburg)

14. Glover (Buckeye Local)

- |                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3. Ray (Hamilton Ross)         | 15. Klofta (Indian Lake)    |
| 4. Ramsey (Ravenna)            | 16. Hall (Indian Creek)     |
| 5. Dunfee (Ravenna Southeast)  | 17. Hopkins (Coventry)      |
| 6. Battles (Springboro)        | 18. Lensman (Graham)        |
| 7. White (Hubbard)             | 19. Paniccia (Watterson)    |
| 8. Allen (Springfield Shawnee) | 20. Shannon (WCH)           |
| 9. Trivisonno (West Geauga)    | 21. Gross (Olmsted Falls)   |
| 10. Edwards (Claymont)         | 22. King (Elida)            |
| 11. Swisher (Clear Fork)       | 23. Tennant (Bexley)        |
| 12. Campbell (Ontario)         | 24. Kender (Bellbrook)      |
| 13. Leibacher (Perkins)        | 25. Westover (Beaver Local) |
|                                | 26. Horne (Hillsboro)       |

Only one school has produced a state champion during every year during '90s and Nate Daugherty may be Walsh's best hope to extend that streak to 10 consecutive years the longest in Ohio. St. Edward has had a champ for eight consecutive years, and for 20 of the last 21. The only break occurred in 1990 when Adam Millson lost 4-2 in the state finals. Incidentally, Coventry has the third longest with six years, but will have trouble extending it to seven.

I'm not sure that Nate Daugherty would have been the 119 pound champion as I had predicted last year, but it would have been better had he at least been given the opportunity. No one covered themselves in glory with competing doctors, harried officials and vindictive coaches all confused about a possible skin infection. Nonetheless, after winning his first district bout, Daugherty was forced to pull out of the tourney. At any rate Daugherty state runnerup two years ago is a slight favorite to win this year. As he has done in previous years Daugherty has wrestled a rigorous schedule with substantial and appears to be improving on a weekly basis. The only real bump in the road was his upset loss in Wisconsin to Division I Williamson of Massillon Perry.

As usual, the Firestone District is loaded. State runner up Michalek returns, also up two weight classes. He was sensational at Solon, Hudson and Kenston. The powerful Ramsey and experienced Dunfee are both excellent, but Daugherty has crushed both of them this year. Add in the highscoring White, the very physical Trivisonno and the state qualifier Hopkins, and it is a very deep field. In addition, Gross was a finalist at Milan Edison and Bellevue (where he won), and was 5th at both the Dies and Wadsworth. Schmidt (Marlington), Kibler (Medina Highland) and Long (Copley) could also be factors in this contest.

While no other district can match Firestone for overall depth, the Wilmington District is also strong. Ray could be a finalist and this excellent junior has all the tools. As a freshman he garnered a 4th at 112#, but last year after an opening win, lost a two-overtime 8-7 heartbreaker to Pfaff and was later eliminated. A big plus for him is that Claymont's Abbuhl will compete at 135# he has beaten Ray twice at the state level. Battles was a state qualifier as a sophomore, but then did not compete last year. He has shaken off the rustiness to put together an excellent record winning, for example, at Graham. Klofta and Allen are very close. Klofta was a district 4th last year and has lost narrow bouts to both Battles and Allen, while the latter boy has come on strong losing 7-6 to two-time state champ Kevin Maehl. Lensman could also be a factor, as witnessed by his recent win over Leibacher, while Kender, Boehmer (Alter) and Gillespie (Turpin) will be looking for the upset.

Both Steubenville and Marion would seem to be substantially weaker than the other two districts. At the former, Edwards, a state alternate last year with his 4th place finish, should lead the way as Abbuhl's choice to move to 135# opens the door for Edwards to move to his best weight class. State qualifier Hall is up three classes at 130#, but has had some big early season wins. Besides those listed check out Founds (St. Clairsville), Holiday (Hillsboro) and Swaldo (Indian Valley).

Swisher, Leibacher and Campbell look to be strongest at Marion. While none of them reached the state level, they all have substantial district experience. Swisher was 6th in this district last year when five qualified. He should do better this year. The rest of this district is solid, but not spectacular.

## 135#

Projected Champion: Rondall Blackburn (Clyde)

### Top Contenders

- |                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Burns (Hillsboro)             | 15. Busnick (Canton South)          |
| 3. Abbuhl (Claymont)             | 16. Jones (Springfield Shawnee)     |
| 4. Hickman (Alter)               | 17. German (Vermillion)             |
| 5. DePollo (Bellevue)            | 18. Fink (Aurora)                   |
| 6. Hathy (Conneaut)              | 19. DeLong (South Point)            |
| 7. Romano (Walsh Jesuit)         | 20. Horne (Wilmington)              |
| 8. Monogioudis (Buckeye Local)   | 21. Parrish (Hebron Lakewood)       |
| 9. Rea (Salem)                   | 22. Stough (Copley)                 |
| 10. J. Dunfee (Ravenna)          | 23. Heiland (Shelby)                |
| 11. Emrich (Buckeye Local)       | 24. Mills (Philo)                   |
| 12. Valerio (Trenton Edgewood)   | 25. Carter (Franklin)               |
| 13. Weichman (Ravenna Southeast) | 26. St. Angelo (Ashtabula Edgewood) |
| 14. Marsh (Indian Creek)         | 27. Ewig (Dayton Christian)         |
|                                  | 28. Fogliano (Big Walnut)           |

This weight class seems to spiral round and round and so it's difficult to reach any firm conclusions. In design, it looks like a three-man battle with each participant having previous state placement experience. For the previous two years I've picked Richard Burns and, believe me, I am very tempted to do so once again. Burns was 4th as a freshman and then state runner up the next year losing to Maehl 3-2 in a battle of sophomores. Twice that year once against Wentz at Medina and against Maehl he lost bouts he should have won. Then last year, injured and ill, he won one state bout before dropping back-to-back encounters the last by a 9-0 score. He was clearly not himself. This year he is again undefeated, but he has not wrestled the most challenging schedule. He could easily win it all.

Sky Abbuhl also placed as a sophomore finishing 3rd at 112#. Last year, up two weight classes, he got drilled by Pfaff and failed to place. This year he has spent substantial time at 130#, but apparently is more comfortable at the higher weight. At Medina he looked strong and physical in a match with Branham that he eventually won by default. He and Burns exit the same district and thus will be in opposite brackets at Columbus.

Rondall Blackburn, the only junior of the top trio, is already a twotime state qualifier. Last year he was 4th at 135#, losing the consolation final 17-13. Interestingly, he was well ahead in that

bout, but apparently just ran out of gas. Assuming that is rectified, he is a narrow choice to take this title. Very physical, he should be able to handle the strength of Abbuhl and Burns and score heavily on his feet. Last year he lost an overtime district decision to eventual champ Mike Cox in a rough and tumble battle, and this year handed twotime champ Kevin Maehl a solid 7-1 thrashing.

This is probably the strongest weight class at Steubenville. Obviously Abbuhl and Burns are slated for two of the three qualification spots, leaving just one for a half dozen deserving competitors. Monogioudis was the top seed at the OVAC as a reward for excellent season, while Marsh was a district semifinalist last year. DeLong has dominated down in the far southern part of the state, while Mills has had two excellent backtoback seasons. However, I've rated Mills at 140# because I think that's where he may end up. Add Hickman (Beaver Local) and Detwiller (McClain) to this stew and it's easy to see that there will be very rugged competition. Some of this group may consider 140# before the start of sectionals.

Hickman would seem to dominate at Wilmington as this multitime state qualifier has kept winning most recently at the CIT. Valerio has been at 140# most of the year and will be a rugged competitor at this lower class. Jones and Horne might be narrow favorites for the last two spots, but it will not come easily.

Blackburn and state qualifier DePolo look to be strongest at Marion, with Emrich a respectful halfstep behind. Bellevue has upgraded their schedule this year and I think it will pay off at tourney time. The last berth is truly a wide open race with somebody not mentioned in this report likely to capture it. Two such possibilities are Distal (Fostoria) and Hornish (Paulding) although they have now been mentioned.

It's very competitive at Firestone, but at a somewhat lower level than in the previous weight classes. State placer Hathy returns and has competed in a number of good tourneys. He lost to Abbuhl by 3 points in the Medina semifinal. Rea dropped a 4-3 go-to-state decision to Hathy last year, and that's not much to make up. The sophomore Romano moved from 112# to 125# this year, and then to make the team went up two more weight classes to 135#. It's worked like a charm as he has caught fire beating good people with points to spare. Dunfee and Weichman are old rivals with Dunfee beating him out for the fifth qualifying spot, 118, last year. Busnick is a great young freshman who may far outpace the relatively low rating I've given him. Watch out for Fink who is capable of the big, big upset. As a freshman he beat state champion Roger Merrell two years ago.

## **140#**

Projected Champion: Jim Hockaday(Watterson)

Elliott Peters is my choice if he competes at 140#

### Top Contenders

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 2. Coleman (Bellevue) | 16. Piccin (Claymont)     |
| 3. Turle (Twinsburg)  | 17. Baker (West Holmes)   |
| 4. Lara (Ravenna)     | 18. Jenkins (Indian Lake) |
| 5. Smith (Clyde)      | 19. Brenner (Canfield)    |
| 6. T. Ashton (Perry)  | 20. Trippett (Vermillion) |

- |                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 7. Horner (Canton South)      | 21. Dunahey (Elida)         |
| 8. Durkin (Padua)             | 22. Woodruff (Walsh Jesuit) |
| 9. Spicer (New Lexington)     | 23. Walters (Milton Union)  |
| 10. Wheeler (Steubenville)    | 24. Meisler (Perkins)       |
| 11. Wood (Preble Shawnee)     | 25. Komar (West Geauga)     |
| 12. Hada (Harvey)             | 26. Lawton (Avon Lake)      |
| 13. Renwick (Sparta Highland) | 27. Shisler (Chaminade)     |
| 14. Mills (Philo)             | 28. Wells (Franklin)        |
| 15. Phillips (BethelTate)     | 29. Wheatley (Meadowbrook)  |

This is easily the weakest weight class in Division II this year. Nobody stands out as a potential state champion, especially now that Elliott Peters is apparently committed to 145#. The Firestone District, which often seems to have the strongest slate of candidates, does have a long list of possibilities, but most seem to me to be one level below what I think it takes to win.

Hockaday was a state semifinalist at 135# last year finishing a strong 4th behind three seniors. He won at Watterson, but did not place at 145# at Medina. Durkin nipped him in the CIT semifinals. Right behind him at Marion are state qualifier Coleman and the experienced Smith. Coleman was a strong 2nd at Brecksville losing only to McAdams, but was caught in overtime by Smith recently in a 5-3 loss. Renwick looks like the best choice for the 4th spot with Trippett, Dunahey, Meisler, Grambo (Teays Valley) and Butler (Licking Valley). Meisler had a big win recently tripping Piccin by a 10-7 margin.

It's a very crowded group at Firestone. There's been a lot of milling about within this class in a kind of Brownian motion pattern without a lot being decided. State qualifiers Turle, Lara, Ashton and Hada all return, but will get no guarantees. Besides those listed, also note Underation (Norton), Daley (Rocky River) and DiEgidio (Aurora).

What first catches your eye with state qualifier Spicer is his haircut (or lack of it), but underneath that mound of hair is an outstanding competitor. He won one state bout last year and took Blackburn into overtime before losing. He has good placement potential. Wheeler and his sidekick Birden are certified at 140# and 145# respectively, but have been up a weight much of the year. Both are returning state qualifiers with good placement chances. Wheeler lost by 2 points to Turle in the first round at Wright State. State qualifier Mills should be third best here (unless he stays at 135#), but he'll be pushed hard by Piccin who can wrestle at this his best weight with Peters at 145#.

The sensational sophomore Wood was a Division III state qualifier last year which included a clean takedown of three time state champ Scott Burnett. Joining him is another Division III state qualifier in Phillips who will need to step it up at Wilmington. These are the best of what is otherwise a relatively ordinary lot. This group will struggle as early as the first round.

## 145#

Projected Champion: Wes Turnbaugh (Ontario)

### Top Contenders

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 2. Peters (Claymont) | 14. Menefield (Purcell)    |
| 3. Moore (TriValley) | 15. Canoles (Canton South) |

- |                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4. Fisher (Bellevue)             | 16. Dearing (Hebron Lakewood) |
| 5. Mackesy (Indian Lake)         | 17. Amata (University School) |
| 6. Milhoan (Beaver Local)        | 18. Dato (Miami Trace)        |
| 7. Kugler (Twinsburg)            | 19. Green (Kings)             |
| 8. Stoffregan (Trenton Edgewood) | 20. Gore (West Geauga)        |
| 9. Goldsmith (Philo)             | 21. Wells (Bethel Tate)       |
| 10. Bray (Coventry)              | 22. Pycraft (Keystone)        |
| 11. Tieche (Perkins)             | 23. Collins (Van Wert)        |
| 12. Hammond (Olmsted Falls)      | 24. Schwartz (Alter)          |
| 13. Jernigan (Wauseon)           | 25. Jones (London)            |
|                                  | 26. Naser (Springboro)        |

I believe this is strictly a twoman battle with the powerful Peters and the smooth Turnbaugh facing off. Last year in Division III Turnbaugh finished with 43 victories and a state 3rd place medal. This year he has been even better winning by 10 points to take the title at Marion Harding and doing much the same at Plymouth. I am positive he would have won the Gorman had it not been snowed out, which might have taken a little sting out of his overtime loss last year.

Matched up against him (unless he does go to 140#) is Elliott Peters the 7th in a long line of brothers who have qualified at the state level. Peters was 6th last year at 135#, and has been exceptional all year wrestling at three different weight classes. His only loss was to the St. Ed's star, Ryan Bertin, in the Medina final. Should these two meet in the final round it will be a real barn burner.

State qualifier Fisher joins Turnbaugh at Marion and he, too, has put together three fine seasons in a row. He was 4th at Medina and Bellevue in tough weight classes. Last year he lost an overtime bout to Hansen (the same fellow who beat Turnbaugh in overtime) and just missed out on a second straight year of state qualification. Jernigan had much the same fate finishing 6th in a fiveman qualifying district. The great freshman Tieche, Dearing and Collins will be top contenders for the last spot, but it will truly be a wide open hunt.

Peters will have the excellent Moore facing him at Steubenville. He was the district champ at this weight class last year, and has wrestled well this year. He beat Fisher, 5-0, for 3rd at Brecksville. State qualifiers Milhoan and Goldsmith are also here which means one state qualifier won't be going back this year. Dato and Henery (New Lexington) are other possibilities.

I don't rate either of the other two districts quite as highly. There are no returning state qualifiers at Wilmington and the gathered participants are strong, honest journeymen whose best hope is probably a low place. I think Mackesy and Stoffregan have put up the best numbers, but I get a nagging feeling that Menefield might be the one with real upset potential. Because this weight class does not have a lot of good depth, this group could do okay in Columbus.

I would characterize the Firestone District in much the same manner as Wilmington. There are some solid performers who will have to be at the top of their game just to place. The Firestone District, which is so strong up to 140#, hits kind of a soft spot at this weight. In point of fact, I believe Bray and Hammond are certified at 140#, but will likely choose to compete here. Beside those mentioned, I've also checked Demma (Crestwood), Vance (Orrville) and Thompson (Perry).

## 152#

Projected Champion: Vince Zmith (Ravenna)

### Top Contenders

- |                              |                                   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Glorioso (Lexington)      | 15. Ryder (Springfield Northwest) |
| 3. T. Hermes (Perkins)       | 16. Cockrell (Clyde)              |
| 4. Birden (Steubenville)     | 17. Dixon (Purcell)               |
| 5. Raber (Marlington)        | 18. Coapstick (Copley)            |
| 6. C. Smith (Bellevue)       | 19. Andrews (Marysville)          |
| 7. Monachino (Padua)         | 20. Blair (Valley View)           |
| 8. T. Smith (Teays Valley)   | 21. Hoy (Olmsted Falls)           |
| 9. Gordon (Dover)            | 22. Kussmaul (Philo)              |
| 10. Garver (Graham)          | 23. Benton (Buckeye Local)        |
| 11. Nixon (Hoban)            | 24. Cooper (London)               |
| 12. Steil (TriValley)        | 25. Cooper (Indian Creek)         |
| 13. Cripe (Trenton Edgewood) | 26. Angle (West Holmes)           |
| 14. Lowery (Walsh Jesuit)    | 27. Willman (Kenton Ridge)        |

First of all, this choice runs counter to the experience of 1998 when 30 of the 42 state champions had last names that fell into the first half of the alphabet. By that standard, Glorioso would seem to have over a 70% chance of victory. Nonetheless, I'll stick with Zmith although I believe that the competition will be very rigorous. Zmith is a transfer from Fitch where he was twice a state qualifier. He has fit nicely into the Ravenna line up and has been outstanding except for a bad weekend at Reno. He won the Solon title defeating the favorite for the Michigan state title in overtime, and also took the tough WRC crown. He is by no means a shoo-in, and he will have to resist as will all Ravenna wrestlers, a perceived view that they tend to flatten out at year's end.

Glorioso has had a sparkling year filled with falls and major decisions and a cornucopia of victories. He will be Zmith's primary challenger, and has a solid chance of pulling the upset. A major plus will be his pinning record which should minimize his mat time. My guess is that Perkins will move state place winner Tommy Hermes down to 152# where he has certified to maximize his placement opportunities. The Marion District is very crowded at 160#, whereas Hermes has an excellent chance of being a high placer or finalist here. It's something to watch for. Both Corey and Travis Smith are returning state qualifiers who have captured high places at tough tournaments. Smith (Corey that is) was 3rd at Brecksville, while Travis lost in overtime to take 4th at Medina. Both have won smaller tourneys. Cockrell, Andrews, Cooper and O'Reilly (Columbus DeSales) are the best bets to pull an upset, but whoever makes it to Columbus will be part of an impressive quartet of qualifiers.

Zmith will probably have some close bouts starting at the district level. Raber won the Dies Tourney and state qualifier Monachino trounced the highly regarded Gilmore in the first round at Wright State last year. Monachino is coming off a big win at the CIT where he beat state qualifiers Gore and Kull. Nixon is probably 4th best, but may decide to stay at 160# where he was 2nd at the Dies. One wrestler to watch is the freshman Lowery who comes to high school wrestling as a very highly touted youth wrestler. He has done better than anticipated facing Walsh's always difficult schedule. Vanni (Medina Highland), Frankino (Orange) and Walczak (Ravenna Southeast) will also be in the fray.

There are three returning state qualifiers at Steubenville, all of whom have placement potential. I like Birden the best and he could, with good fortune, be a finalist. He is a powerful athlete and it doesn't hurt that he has state qualifiers Wheeler and VanDine on either side of him in the wrestling room. Gordon lost to Travis Smith in the first round at Wright State last year, and when he fell to eventual champ Ty Morgan, Gordon was eliminated. Double elimination takes care of that in 1999. Last year Gordon ripped Birden 10-4 in the district finals, but I'm thinking the tables will be reversed this year. Steil returns to this class and he dominates his area in the southern part of this district. At Brecksville he was 7th in an incredibly difficult weight class finishing behind five other returning state placers and state qualifiers. Buck (Maysville) and Fuller (South Point) are dark horses here.

The Wilmington District is probably weakest. I saw Garver at Medina and he lost 9-1 to Travis Smith on his way to a 6th place finish. He finished behind Ryder at Graham, but his tougher schedule makes him a better longterm bet for state success. Cripe and Ryder are next best with a trio of others behind them.

## 160#

Projected Champion: Terry Smith (Buckeye Local)

### Top Contenders

2. Santee (Perry)	15. VanDine (Steubenville)
3. Coe (Clyde)	16. Briggs (Lima Shawnee)
4. Gilmore (Galion)	17. Jones (Olmsted Falls)
5. Avery (Milton Union)	18. Warnock (Maumee)
6. Mauser (Aurora)	19. Stanford (Benjamin Logan)
7. DeLuca (Norwalk)	20. Fulk (New Lexington)
8. Knull (Graham)	21. D. Hermes (Perkins)
9. Magee (Springboro)	22. Meggyesy (Triway)
10. D. Grove (Claymont)	23. Daugherty (Bethel Tate)
11. Moran (Kenton)	24. Sowers (Cambridge)
12. Canty (Columbus DeSales)	25. Delaney (Ravenna)
13. Sveda (Walsh Jesuit)	26. Jameyson (Wellington)
14. Cooper (Paulding)	27. Thomas (Watkins Memorial)
	28. Grimsley (Twinsburg)

This is a very strong and competitive weight class, but also one with a lot of unanswered questions. Questions such as:

1. Can an Eastern District wrestler win a state when that area has been shut out for the past three years and has had only two champs in the last five?
2. Can state runner up Adam Santee bounce back from a season-long injury and compete at the highest level?
3. Will three-time state qualifier Gilmore close a very successful high school career by winning at the state level where he currently stands 0-4 having been outscored 45-6?

4. Have I seriously underrated Cory Coe and will Tommy Hermes eventually decide to compete here after all?

5. Can Artie Mauser move up to Division II and be as productive as in the past?

These are just a few of the issues that will eventually be resolved as we move toward March 6.

My choice is the athletic Terry Smith, who finished a strong 3rd at this weight class last year. His only loss was a 6-2 decision to eventual champ Becks and he pinned Ryan Hieber for 3rd. This year he has been every bit as good, and he will need to move up to the next level by March if he is to beat this starstudded field.

The Steubenville District has some good depth. VanDine and Grove are both former state qualifiers with a wealth of experience. Smith cannot overlook either of them although he did catch VanDine with a fall in 36 seconds in the district final. Fulk will challenge for the state berth that eluded him last year, while Sowers won at Sheridan and Barnesville and was a strong 2nd at St. Clairsville.

Santee was a big surprise last year as he won narrow quarter and semifinal bouts at the district level before losing a 10-6 bout in the finals. At the state level he did much the same thing losing in the finals to Biel again but by only a 1 point margin. How this long layoff will impact him to too difficult to discern, but if he can shake the rust off he will be a lot fresher than his competition.

Mauser was a sure champ at either 160# or 171# in Division III, but Aurora has finally, inevitably grown into a Division II school. Still, Mauser, a state placer last year, can wrestle with anyone here. He is a devastating early round wrestler who can score points quickly. The remainder of the Firestone District after Santee and Mauser is not nearly so strong. An exception is Moran who has good upset potential. State place winner Jameyson has struggled at this higher weight class and looks not to be a factor.

You'll not want to draw into the Wilmington District at this weight class. State place winner Avery is a dynamo who pins a huge percentage of his opponents. His two weight class gain seems not to have impacted him at all. Knull was the district champ at 171# last year, but has dropped to a more optimal class this season. He nipped Magee at Graham and was a solid 3rd at Medina defeating Canty in the process. The only puzzlement was his semifinal bout with Schweda where he was turned at will before eventually being pinned. State qualifier Magee is also very good, but the fourth berth is wide open. Any that I've rated could be challenged by Linkhofer (Bellefontaine), Parker (Valley View), or Freeman (Western Brown).

The real donnybrook will be at Marion. At various times, I've had Gilmore and Coe as my projected champion and neither of those choices are low probability events. Gilmore has been outstanding all year capped by the OW award at Marion Harding. Like Skoch, he needs to win that first one at Columbus. Coe is very tough. He was leading 8-1 in his placement match when he was called for an illegal slam and when Mark Lensman could not continue Coe was disqualified. That was a pivotal moment not only for Coe but for the team championship as well.

Lensman quickly recovered and won two more bouts to finish 3rd, earning just enough points for Graham to win the team title over Lake Catholic by 2 points. Coe could easily win it this year. State qualifiers DeLuca and Briggs are also back, along with CIT champ Canty and the undefeated Cooper. Canty, in particular, seems a dangerous foe to me. As I said, if Tom Hermes also competes here this will be very much akin to a slightly smaller state tournament.

## 171#

Projected Champion: Ryan Hieber (Galion)

### Top Contenders

- |                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. White (West Holmes)        | 14. Montano (Oak Harbor)        |
| 3. Kosch (Paulding)           | 15. Franz (Kenston)             |
| 4. Jones (Walsh Jesuit)       | 16. Edwards (Steubenville)      |
| 5. Weimer (Springboro)        | 17. Christophel (Hamilton Ross) |
| 6. Shrewsberry (Ravenna)      | 18. Bowen/Burkhart (Watterson)  |
| 7. Scholes (Lake Catholic)    | 19. Dalton (Bellbrook)          |
| 8. J. Grove (Claymont)        | 20. Shonk (Sheridan)            |
| 9. Harmon (Norton)            | 21. Hurd (Milton Union)         |
| 10. Miller (Hebron Lakewood)  | 22. Thomas (John Glenn)         |
| 11. Klepacz (Tipp City)       | 23. Garland (Miami Trace)       |
| 12. Farmer (Fairfield Union)  | 24. Rodriguez (Orange)          |
| 13. Villers (Canal Fulton NW) | 25. Moyer (Eaton)               |
|                               | 26. Baird (Marysville)          |

One of the outstanding features (and charm) of Division II this year is that there are no sure individual winners. There aren't people like Clark Forward, Mark Jayne, or Jared Opfer who you can be 90% certain that they will win. About the closest to that level of surety is Ryan Hieber who appears ready to capture his first state crown. A brilliant free styler, he is already a two-time state qualifier who has had the misfortune of competing at some excellent weight classes. He was 4th last year in a competition with state champions Mark Becks and Shawn Brightman. This year the Ohio State signee will be the one everybody will be gunning for.

Hieber's toughest foe may well show up early at the Marion District. Jeremy Kosch was a state semifinalist at this class last year and is undefeated in 1998-99. He is a very big 171 pounder and may be vulnerable in the early rounds when he has just made weight. A devastating pinner, he does not wrestle quite as good a schedule as Hieber, but that should not be a big factor. Both boys have great workout partners (Gilmore and Cooper) and they could meet two weekends in a row.

The undefeated Dave White heads a solid group at Steubenville. White was one win from state qualification last year, but has put it into a special gear this year. He easily won at Smithville and shut out his last two victims in the tough Brecksville Tourney the latter win over the tough Hasenohrl. He has been very impressive, although he has had recent injury problems. State qualifier Grove has rebounded from a slow start and should qualify, while Edwards, Thomas, Shonk and Garland vie for that last state ticket.

A Smith won both the Firestone District and state title last year, and now it may be time for the Jones boy to do the same. P. J. Jones has won a lot of big bouts this year but with Walsh's schedule, they've generally been in some distant state. Nevertheless, this very powerful junior seems ready to grab a high place at Columbus. He beat both Grove and Shrewsberry at the state duals, but didn't get White who was not competing. He could be a key factor in a Walsh title run. Shrewsberry has had to wait his turn at Ravenna, but he opened his first week with a title at Solon. Very tall, he's difficult to figure out. Scholes missed the early season events, but is undefeated in about a dozen bouts including a CIT title. I like Harmon a lot and Villers is also impressive, and they combine with others to form the top quintet. In addition to those listed, Savel (Ashtabula Edgewood), Mazzella (Olmsted Falls) and Miller (Revere) could cause problems for the top five.

Weimer stands well above the field at Wilmington. He was one win from qualification last year, but should have no problems this time. He is the only competitor here with reasonable placement potential. Being a district champ should get him a good pairing and start him off on the right foot.

## 189#

Projected Champion: Brad Bauer (Ravenna)

### Top Contenders

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Pentorn (Perkins)              | 14. (Paulding)                   |
| 3. J. Hart (Springfield Shawnee)  | 15. Karnehm (Dayton Christian)   |
| 4. C. Hart (West Holmes)          | 16. Strotman (Roger Bacon)       |
| 5. Canale (Canfield)              | 17. Botsford (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 6. Coleman (Beaver Local)         | 18. Asbury (Tipp City)           |
| 7. Snare (Oak Harbor)             | 19. Wilsterman (Claymont)        |
| 8. Verner (Walsh Jesuit)Griffiths | 20. Fruth (Napoleon)             |
| 9. Sanders (Milton Union)         | 21. Rings (Marysville)           |
| 10. Newell (Meadowbrook)          | 22. Alferio (Firelands)          |
| 11. Sinning (Van Wert)            | 23. Conner (Clyde)               |
| 12. Didion (Bellevue)             | 24. Larson (Canton South)        |
| 13. Reed (New Lexington)          | 25. Lackmeyer (Purcell)          |
|                                   | 26. Volpe (Louisville)           |

The idea that, in principle, the future of the Universe is completely determined by its present state is usually associated with LaPlace. Chaos theory has shown the impracticability of such determinism in classical physics, and in most cases it doesn't work too well in wrestling forecasts either. I think it is likely that this weight class could devolve into a twoman contest between Bauer and Pentorn. An indisputable fact is that in their only meeting this year, Pentorn won a 14-11 decision. I still think Bauer is likely to win it all even though I know this will get me a half dozen emails from Laren Wikel.

Bauer is a big, rangy 189 pounder who has wrestled superbly all year. A state qualifier as a sophomore at Rootstown, he transferred to Ravenna before his junior year and enjoyed a fine season until districts, when things unaccountably soured and he finished one place from qualification. This year at a more natural weight he has been even better. He must avoid the endofthe year blahs that seem to strike Ravenna more often than others, but I think the Pentorn

match will be just the right wakeup call. Besides, how can I pick against a guy with the initials B.B.

Don't get me wrong, Pentorn is an excellent junior. He has not lost this year and Perkins wrestles a relatively rugged schedule. Last year he won two state bouts and gave eventual champ Dave Smith a tough match before losing 11-9 in the quarterfinals. Bauer is the bigger boy but Pentorn might be a shade quicker. It would be nice if they were separated, but they have not earned that privilege, so it will be up to the gods of randomness.

John Hart is easily the top contender at Wilmington and has finalist potential. He'd like to see both Bauer and Pentorn in the other half of the draw to maximize his own chances. He, too, is a very big 189 pounder whose only loss was an early season thumping by the excellent Division I wrestler Dan Salmon. Sanders is a good second choice, but the other two qualifiers will get to the consolation rounds early at Columbus.

Pentorn should dominate at Marion, but that's not a totally sure thing. He defeated Snare 14-10 in the dual so it does not stretch credulity that an upset could occur here. Sinning and Didion both have a lot to offer, but Griffiths has been solid and could grab a qualifying spot. Despite its great overall record, a Northwest District wrestler has won this weight class only once since this weight class was introduced in 1988 (full credit to those identifying Frank Workman of Vermillion).

Jason Newell won two state bouts last year and should do at least as well this year. He is the defending district champion and has dominated competition along the river except for Coleman. A big question mark is state qualifier Chris Hart who has not competed for some time due to injuries. We've been looking for a HarttoHart match up for a couple of years, but now it may not happen. Coleman has come on strong at midyear and may yet be the best here. Reed and maybe the erratic Wilsterman will have a good shot at qualification if Hart cannot compete. If Hart, Newell and Coleman qualify, this will be a formidable trio.

Bauer should have little trouble at Firestone with the possible exception of Canale. Since they exit the same sectional, they should be apart at the district level. That sectional, in fact, also contains Botsford, Larson, Volpe and Smith (Minerva), eliminating some good quality very early in the process. Verner is almost a petite 189 pounder, but had to move up because of Jones. His persistent attacks have won him a lot of bouts at this class and he should qualify out of this relatively weak weight class. I'm sure this will not thrill Bauer, but my second choices have won three times in the last five years at this class.

## **215#**

Projected Champion: Andy Hampton (Ravenna)

### Top Contenders

- |                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2. Sparks (Howland)            | 16. Groll (Napoleon)      |
| 3. Jackson (Tipp City)         | 17. Faubion (Bethel Tate) |
| 4. Williams (Trenton Edgewood) | 18. Raber (Minerva)       |
| 5. Surnear (Fairless)          | 19. Yappel (Padua)        |
| 6. Brown (Hebron Lakewood)     | 20. Tyrell (Galion)       |

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 7. Vrobel (Benedictine)     | 21. Evans (Edison Local)       |
| 8. Nixon (Milton Union)     | 22. Presby (University School) |
| 9. Doty (Upper Sandusky)    | 23. Potridge (Oak Harbor)      |
| 10. McDaniel (Teays Valley) | 24. Sosa (Clyde)               |
| 11. Menegay (Louisville)    | 25. Jones (Steubenville)       |
| 12. Schnittker (Perkins)    | 26. Taylor (Turpin)            |
| 13. Ratliff (New Lexington) | 27. Smith (Watkins Memorial)   |
| 14. Hummel (West Holmes)    | 28. Russell (Aurora)           |
| 15. Graham (Logan Elm)      | 29. Cameron (Eaton)            |

Every year several virtually unknown wrestlers perform at such a high level that they surprise everyone. This out-of-scope performance usually comes from younger wrestlers at lower weight classes who haven't yet hit the radar screen. However, last year, Drew Sparks came forth at 215# to make the state finals and bring home a runnerup trophy. I had him ranked 14th, but I'm guessing most of my readers had never heard of him.

Well, he's not unknown today and the defending Firestone District champion and state runner up will be a target for every 215 pounder in the state. As always, Howland wrestles a schedule that is virtually invisible to me, but I have Sparks with only a single loss and that to a Pennsylvania wrestler. One huge advantage he has is his ability to pin he had three of them last year at Wright State.

Still, I'm not convinced he will beat Andy Hampton. Hampton had a strong season which saw him wrestle well early on, but fade for a while possibly because of a sharp cut to 189#. After winning a sectional crown, Hampton barely won a 12-11 district quarterfinal bout, but then lost to Corrigan and Novakovich to fall to the 5th/6th state qualification bout. Winning that one took him to Wright State where three decisions (two by a single point) put him into the finals where Corrigan brilliantly defeated him 16-9. Hampton looked great at Solon this year, but was 2nd at the WRC losing to Tanner. He and Sparks should be a fabulous matchup with each boy winning one I think Hampton's will be at Columbus.

Surnear, who I rate 3rd best at Firestone, has been injured and may not compete. That expands the horizon for a whole host of contenders. I like the aggressive Vrobel and believe he'll capture a spot. The rest are wide open with those listed plus Dinehart (Lake Catholic), Wlodyka (NDCL), Indriola (Walsh Jesuit) and Gantz (Avon Lake) in the hunt. A surefire repeat qualifier would have been Tony Salisbury (Norton) who moved to Florida last summer. He won four bouts at Wright State while placing 5th.

There are four returning state qualifiers at Wilmington, but only three, at best, will get to Columbus. State placer Jackson leads the way after winning three bouts to grab a 6th. Sparks pinned him in the quarterfinals. Williams and Nixon are my other two favorites to go and both could place. I'm reasonably sure that this district has never placed all three of its qualifiers at any weight class.

There are four returning state qualifiers at Marion, but none of them are safe. The excellent Doty and the sophomore Schnittker are real threats here, while Potridge and Tyrell (who lost 7-0 pounds to make the weight) are capable of the big upset. Randy Brown might be best here although he does not wrestle a particularly vigorous schedule. A surprise here might be state

qualifier McDaniel who, as of late, has shown some excellent results. Last year he had a brutal state draw catching eventual state champion Allen and Salisbury back to back. Sosa, who I thought would be a contender, is apparently injured and unable to perform at his normal efficiency. Should he rebound rapidly, he'll blow that low rating out of the water.

State qualifier Ratliff is nominally ahead at Steubenville, but Hummel and state qualifier Graham have had big years. Hummel, in particular, has been outstanding winning at Smithville and making the finals at Brecksville. Still, any in this qualifying group will struggle to place at Columbus.

## Hvy.

Projected Champion: Tim Anderson (Clyde)

### Top Contenders

- |                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Williams (Purcell)         | 15. Cottrell (Claymont)         |
| 3. Miller (Franklin)          | 16. Tomaino (Canfield)          |
| 4. Keenan (Watterson)         | 17. Ryan (Lemon Monroe)         |
| 5. Martin (Shelby)            | 18. Benner (Van Wert)           |
| 6. Keiner (Sheridan)          | 19. James (John Glenn)          |
| 7. Dawson (Wellington)        | 20. Thompson (Walsh Jesuit)     |
| 8. Sonnie (University School) | 21. Lane (Milton Union)         |
| 9. Thurston (Teays Valley)    | 22. Gilstrap (Columbus DeSales) |
| 10. Angelica (Steubenville)   | 23. Steiner (Orrville)          |
| 11. Welch (Eaton)             | 24. Bryant (Olmsted Falls)      |
| 12. Wolf (North Ridgeville)   | 25. Thorbahn (Oak Harbor)       |
| 13. Gintz (Dover)             | 26. Grothjan (Springboro)       |
| 14. Crock (Ravenna Southeast) | 27. Beuschlein (Indian Lake)    |

You couldn't have a much better year than Tim Anderson had last season. He finished 47-0 including a 93 second pin in the state finals over Franklin's Jeremy Deaton, but it wasn't all easy. He had his share of close bouts, but each time was able to create the winning idea. This year his only loss was, ironically, to Deaton's substitute last year, Nick Miller, who took him down in overtime for a 6-4 win. Still, I think Anderson will win again, but it won't be easy since I foresee at least three principal threats. Additionally, of course, a mistake at heavyweight against any districtlevel heavyweight can result in painful defeat. One fact about Anderson, he seems to struggle in the early rounds and then gain momentum. You'll want to get him early since he pinned in both the semifinals and finals at both the district and state level.

Clearly, Miller is a significant threat. His confidence has to be much greater and the mystique of wrestling a state champion is no longer there. However, Miller isn't even the best heavyweight at Wilmington. Steve Williams has already won the SWOCA this year and was a state qualifier last season, where he met Anderson in the quarterfinals losing a close 4-2 bout. He then lost a 1-0 bout to Kobus and was eliminated. Both of these boys are 10 to 15 pounds heavier than Anderson, but are not quite as mobile. Miller also is wrestling for the first time at the varsity level, but that overtime win certainly indicates his ability to manage a bout. The rest of this district is well behind this top pair.

Keenan was 3rd at Medina losing a one point bout to Stepanovich and then won the CIT over Roger Miller. He is Anderson's biggest district challenge. Last year they went into double overtime where Anderson racked up a fall at 8:27 the latest I've seen under our current format. Keenan then lost another overtime bout in the consolation round and failed to qualify. While he is very tough to score against, Keenan needs to find a way to score more against good competition. Also at Marion is state 6th place finisher Thurston, but I believe the excellent Martin has moved ahead of him. There were a lot of good heavyweights in the Northwest District last year and Martin was certainly in that number. He was a district semifinalist, but then was decked by Anderson and lost twice more (once in overtime) to misqualification. Zenith Milton (Columbus East) and Spurgeon (Swanton) are two others that have caught my eye.

There is a lot of parity at Steubenville with four or five heavyweights all at close to the same level. State qualifier Keiner returns, but Angelica, Gintz and Cottrell are all a year better. I expect this contingent to struggle after first round action. They'll need to pick it up if any are to have placement chances.

In the same manner, I believe Firestone may be overmatched at Columbus. Division III state qualifier Dawson was 2nd at Medina and he checked in at right about the 275pound limit. District champ Sonnie also returns and he continues to wrestle smart, heady matches. He punishes mistakes. Wolf and Tomaino are both good, but the surprises may be Crock and Thompson. The latter is quick and mobile and may be able to out flank and out hustle heavier foes, while the latter has become a surprise factor at Walsh. It is not true by the way that he is former Walsh state champion Brett Thompson's little brother. Other heavies not listed but worthy of mention are Valvoda (Kenston), Morrison (Aurora) and Silvidi (Hubbard).

1999

## HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

### FORECAST

(28th Annual Edition)

Written By:  
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### DIVISION III

Never since the inception of Division III competition in 1976 has this classification contained the power and depth that it does this year. Without a doubt, the last few years of this century will be remembered as a Golden Age of Division III wrestling. With Opfer, Rowlands, Forward, Carrizales, Schuler and Taylor, to name just a few, this classification has many of the brightest stars in Ohio. At the same time, there is more depth at each weight class than ever before. This March will be a good time to savor the competition and the competitors within our smallest schools.

#### Division III Teams

1. **Delta** -- Last year they set a new Division III record by scoring 149 ½ in winning their second title in the last three years. They won't challenge that standard in 1999, but with five potential finalists (and possibly champions), they should score somewhere around 120 points. They have little depth after their top five, but with former champs Schuler and Taylor, and potential champs A. Carrizales, D. Carrizales and Sintobin, that should be more than enough.
2. **Sandusky St. Mary** -- They will score the most team points during the decade of the '90s, but it will probably lead to just one team title. This year they again have excellent depth and should Delta stumble they are the only potential challenger. Jared Opfer is looking for his fourth title while brother Drew seeks to gain his first. Add in countless Finnerans and another Whelan and this squad could get close to 100 points. Their key factors would be a big showing at the weak 103# class, and a very high finish by Whelan.
3. **Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy** -- A team with two incandescent stars in Lester and Vogel, and a potential placer in Turner. They were ninth last year, but should move up into the Top Five. Charvat could play a key role at the weak 103# class.
4. **Lima Central Catholic**-- There is substantial fragmentation after the three top teams, and so subsequent team placement can swing widely based on the performance of one or two wrestlers.

This team with Boyd, Fedeli and Bindel is one of many with Top Five chances. Obviously the key is that the top boys wrestle at peak efficiency in Columbus. Boyd deserves a title at 130# (but so do Carrizales and Simcoe), while Fedeli is only a point or two away from Jesse. Bindel is the key since Huffman and Clemens are not likely to qualify.

5. **Cadiz** -- A broader based team with a number of wrestlers on the fringe of scoring at the state level. Sedgmer should be good for 20 points, but he'll need help from Brooks, Bittinger, Rapp, Coffman and Dunlap. They'll get a lot to Columbus -- the question is whether they'll be able to score there. The double elimination format could help teams like Cadiz or Martins Ferry.

6. **Archbold** -- Forward is a superstar of the first magnitude, but he cannot score much more than 30 points. Help could arrive in the form of Bosco, Shirkey, or Grime with Young and Schittkey other possibilities. Somebody has to get hot here for them to make this ranking.

7. **Hopewell Loudon** -- Two excellent wrestlers can score a lot of points and that is exactly what Hopewell Loudon has. The two excellent juniors Jesse and Frisch are both in line for high placement and that could easily lead to a top Ten finish in this fragmented year.

8. **Martin Ferry** -- Like Cadiz this is another river squad that had substantial depth, but the issue is whether they can produce victories at Columbus. Roth, Bruney and Ware are their stars, but the two Tierneys, Curnes and Shreve could also be helpers.

9. **Chanel** -- A very young team that will be fighting for team titles the next two years. Stanek and Schaefer are exceptional sophomores, while Ralph is only a ninth grader. The key is performance at 103#, and maybe help from Adams, Hoogenbaum, or Terry.

10. **Ready** -- A team like Archbold that features one brilliant superstar, but continues to search for other state point scorers. Rowlands is marvelous, but the key will be if state qualifier Gore or Castorano can generate wins.

## 103#

Projected Champion: Dan Ralph (Chanel)

### Top Contenders

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 2. Lloyd (Manchester)                   | 15. Kuykendall (Madeira)      |
| 3. Schmidt/Finneran (Sandusky St. Mary) | 16. Bedford (Woodmore)        |
| 4. Tierney (Martins Ferry)              | 17. LaCure (Greeneview)       |
| 5. Meiring (Evergreen)                  | 18. Lint (Cuyahoga Hts.)      |
| 6. Aring (Eastwood)                     | 19. Simon (Milan Edison)      |
| 7. Charvat (CVCA)                       | 20. Tillman (Beachwood)       |
| 8. Derr (Cardinal Stritch)              | 21. Jack (Shadyside)          |
| 9. Ward (Streetsboro)                   | 22. Hammonds (Reading)        |
| 10. Ford (Delta)                        | 23. Richards (Brookville)     |
| 11. McIntyre (River Valley)             | 24. Mitchell (Brooklyn)       |
| 12. Savage (Oakwood)                    | 25. Buckingham (Mohawk)       |
| 13. Stroup (Westfall)                   | 26. Johnson (Mechanicsburg)   |
| 14. Suto (Bellaire St. John)            | 27. Eckhardt/Hasty (Carlisle) |
|   | 28. Sweeney (Mapleton)        |

This is undoubtedly the weakest and most ill-defined weight class of the 42 that will be contested at Columbus. There are no returning state placers and, in fact, only one returning state qualifier a wrestler who finished 4th in his sectional, 5th in district competition, and suffered his 13th loss in the first round at Dayton. While this is an unusually low number of returning qualifiers, even at 103#, the problem is further compounded by a lack of high powered, younger wrestlers we often find at the lower weights. There is no Harry Lester here this year or, as we saw three years ago, no sensational trio of performers like Opfer, Carrizales and Boyd at least none that I have been able to identify.

If you truly like parity and the element of surprise, this almost certainly is the weight class for you. When I do these reports I generally feel very confident that the eventual champ will emerge from my top five choices certainly from the first 10. In fact, in Division III, the last time a champ did not come from my top ten was back in 1994 when Joe Joltin ranked 14th took the title at 103#. It is very likely that 1999 will see a repeat of that phenomenon.

What is amazing is that each of the four individual districts are just as undefined as the state is in total. For example, at Elyria Catholic there are at least a dozen wrestlers with state qualification possibilities. Perhaps the two best, and this is little more than mere speculation, are Ralph and Lloyd. Ralph, only a freshman, has been a consistent placer at strong tournaments like Wadsworth, Solon and North Canton. The younger brother of two-time state champ Anthony Ralph, he may well follow in the footsteps of his older sibling who was a state finalist as a freshman. Lloyd, who started the year at 112#, has also been a consistent placer and appears to be undefeated against Division III foes. He was a strong 2nd at Wadsworth at 112# and placed at the Dies, Hoban and Dix tourneys, as well. Tillman, now a junior is no longer a small 103 pounder, while Ward and Charvat have strong qualification chances here. Charvat, in particular, could do very well, while Mitchell and Sweeney are dark horses. Other candidates are Benucci (Wickliffe) and Cavalier (Newbury) from the northern part of the district, and Scott (Loudonville) and Cherry (West Salem Northwestern) from the South.

The Fostoria District might be, top to bottom, just as strong as the one at Elyria Catholic. In this year of parity, Schmidt and Finneran both have placement potential, but one won't get out of the wrestling room. Schmidt seems to have been somewhat more successful and is likely to be the St. Mary's entrant. State qualifier Aring returns at this class and was 1st at Northwood and 3rd at Sylvania Southview behind Meiring who Schmidt defeated in the dual. Derr won the CIT and the Hopewell Loudon tourneys and cannot be overlooked. Any of this quartet has placement chances. Mix in the excellent freshman Ford, along with Bedford, Buckingham and Simon and it should be an exciting competition at Fostoria. Interestingly one of the top rated 103's in the Defiance area is Becky D'Ambrosia (Ayresville) who has district chances.

Both the Steubenville and Xenia Districts are very competitive, but at a somewhat lower level. LaCure, recently the OW at Bellbrook, and continues to show real improvement and he is probably one of the best at the Xenia District. The rest of that area remains a real mystery with the undefeated Kuykendall next best. Savage and Hammonds have shown placement results at local tournaments, while both Eckhardt and Hasty have competed well for Carlisle. Tierney and McIntyre would seem to be best at Steubenville with both having placement chances. However,

these two wrestlers will be challenged by their colleagues such as Stroup, Suto and Jack. OVAC momentum could play a role for Tierney here.

## 112#

Projected Champion: Harry Lester (CVCA)

### Top Contenders

- |                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Fazio (Manchester)              | 14. Magoteaux (Versailles)      |
| 3. Pressler (Margaretta)           | 15. Cusick (River Valley)       |
| 4. Hochwalt (Oakwood)              | 16. Zimmerman (Hillsdale)       |
| 5. Sibrel (Elmwood)                | 17. Swihart (Sandy Valley)      |
| 6. Brooks (Cadiz)                  | 18. Fernandez (Elyria Catholic) |
| 7. S. Finneran (Sandusky St. Mary) | 19. Bacon (Stritch)             |
| 8. Kuchta (Streetsboro)            | 20. Flora (Mechanicsburg)       |
| 9. Hockenberry (Northwood)         | 21. Kovach (Kirtland)           |
| 10. Curnes (Martins Ferry)         | 22. Saal (Aquinas)              |
| 11. Webb (Ayresville)              | 23. Bailey (Dixie)              |
| 12. Wenger (Northmor)              | 24. Park (Crestview)            |
| 13. Wilds (North Union)            | 25. Heyob (Fenwick)             |

There is nothing so humbling as the forecasting business, especially when January's forecast is inevitably compared with March's results. Nowhere was that more apparent than last year's prediction that Harry Lester would not win the state title at 103#. My words then indicated that I recognized his marvelous talents, but somehow I believed that when state 3rd place medalist Fazio dropped down to 103# his superior size and experience would prevail. Was I ever wrong. Lester was absolutely brilliant, defeating Fazio twice late in the season and cruising to his first state title. Fazio was 3rd yet again.

Lester continues to be outstanding as he makes the jump to 112#. He won the Ironman and the Medina by twice defeating Division I state champ Mason Lenhard and also won at CVCA and the Dies the latter with a close 3-1 win over the persistent Fazio. His incredible quickness and balance are still his trademarks as he now stands 58-1 midway through his sophomore year.

Fazio hasn't given up. He has been 3rd the last two years and another such finish would make him the first three-time 3rd place medalist in Ohio history. He has followed the same regimen as last year wrestling up a weight class early in the year and then moving down in January. I thought the cut last year to 103# might have enervated him at the end of last year when Parsons defeated him at Districts and States. This year the cut looks to be less severe and he is likely to be Lester's biggest threat. The rest of the Elyria Catholic District is a full step behind this duo with those listed being augmented by Hudock (Columbia Station), the freshman Pelz (Beachwood) and VerMerris (Hawken).

This is a most competitive weight class. There are currently 13 returning State qualifiers, including five who have placed. Five of this initial group will exit from Fostoria and it will take perfect pairings for all of them to make it once again. Pressler looks to be the best of this group. But there is not substantial differentiation between any of this quintet although I think some have improved more than others over the past 12 months. I've moved Finneran ahead of both Hockenberry and Webb, even though he finished behind both of them at Fostoria last year.

Bacon, just back, might have the best opportunity to displace one of this top group while Smith (Cory Rawson), DeCooman (Van Buren) and Young (Archbold) could pull the big upset, with Luke (Montpelier) and Estrada (Tinora) are in the background. Look for several placers out of this district.

Hochwalt stands head and shoulders above the rest of the Xenia District. Last year's district champ went on to place a strong 5th defeating Hockenberry, Wilds and Pressler in the process. While I think Pressler may have moved ahead of him he still has solid placement potential particularly entering the tourney as a district champ. State qualifier Magoteaux is a good half dozen points behind Hochwalt with Flora at about the same level. If Mangen (Mississinawa Valley) is at this weight, he could be a threat as could Schultz (Brookville), Frye (North College Hill), or Thompson (Covington).

The Steubenville District should be wild. State qualifiers Brooks and Curnes both return at 112# and look to be strongest here. State qualifier Wilds defeated Wenger 10-9 earlier in the year, but I believe Wenger has moved past him. Wilds was the district champ at 103# last year, but could well be severely challenged just to return to Columbus. Wilds gave Fazio a good quarterfinal bout last year and nipped Webb in overtime; however, Hochwalt defeated him by 10 points. Jones (Bridgeport) was one bout from States last year, while Swihart qualified at 103#, but at this moment they cannot be favored to qualify out of this district. Throw in Cusick, Francis (Barnesville) and Gibson (Belpre) and this will truly be a hardfought district.

## 119#

Projected Champion: Drew Opfer (Sandusky St. Mary)

### Top Contenders

- |                                   |                              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. Jesse (Hopewell Loudon)        | 14. Opichka (Madeira)        |
| 3. Parsons (Loudonville)          | 15. Zapadka (Stritch)        |
| 4. Fedeli (Lima Central Catholic) | 16. Tierney (Martins Ferry)  |
| 5. Morris (Carlisle)              | 17. B. Lee (Oakwood)         |
| 6. Stanek (Chanel)                | 18. Grime (Archbold)         |
| 7. Linsker (Beachwood)            | 19. Horne (Grand Valley)     |
| 8. Krokos (Columbia Station)      | 20. McCartney (Tusky Valley) |
| 9. Dunlap (Grandview Hts.)        | 21. Harmeyer (Reading)       |
| 10. Rimbert (Oberlin)             | 22. Spencer (Northmor)       |
| 11. Kleman (Blufton)              | 23. Kosa (Jackson Milton)    |
| 12. Brown (Greeneview)            | 24. Parfitt (West Jefferson) |
| 13. N. McDowell (Jonathan Alder)  | 25. Lopez (Genoa)            |
|                                   | 26. Smilek (CVCA)            |

It is my view that 119# will feature any number of close, excellently wrestled bouts in what should be a sharp and combative championship. There is a rich mixture of returning state place winners, well-schooled state qualifiers, and exceptional freshmen. Generally such a combination brews a batch of upsets and that would not be surprising here. What makes it difficult is that there are wrestlers moving down from Division II and that results to this point have not followed a consistent pattern.

The Fostoria District is not real deep at 119#, but the "up top" quality is very high. Drew Opfer, the sophomore brother of three-time-state champ Jared, is very good in his own right. Last year at 119# (a weight class higher than he wrestled most of the year) he was a state semifinalist before losing to Carrizales and Simcoe (in overtime) and finishing 5th. He finished his freshman season with 50 victories. This year he is undefeated, but certainly not unchallenged. He nipped Jesse 5-3 in the dual meet and battled to a hard fought 6-4 win over Fedeli who always seems to give him trouble.

Two years ago Jesse won his first 41 bouts before losing in the 103# state finals to Allega. Last year at 112#, he had some nagging injuries finishing 4th in the District and losing in the first round at States. Fedeli and Kleman should also qualify out of Fostoria with the former having a solid shot at state placement. Zapadka is a marginal pick for the last qualifying ticket with Grime, Lopez, Solarik (Eastwood) and Stacklin (Seneca East) other possibilities.

State runnerup Mike Parsons came out of nowhere last year to become a finalist at 103#. He was 3rd in his sectional behind Lester and Fazio, but then wrestled brilliantly at the district level defeating Fazio twice and losing only to Lester. Now at 119#, he has lost but once this year (at North Canton) and seems acclimated to the two weight class jump.

There appears to be five top contenders for four spots at Elyria Catholic. Parsons, of course, has to be rated the favorite, but state qualifier Stanek will be here and he is very impressive. The outstanding freshman Linsker won at Richmond Hts. and has two close losses to go with 17 wins. He upset the senior Krokos 12-5, who was a district semifinalist at this weight class last year. The big question mark is the puzzling Rimbart. He wrestles a lot of strange, high scoring bouts. Last year Krokos ripped him in the sectional finals 16-9, but Rimbart reversed that result in the district go-to-state bout with a 7-5 win. Rimbart took that district 4th and parlayed it into state wins over the excellent Simcoe and Borjas to finish 6th. He is the wild card in any bracket sheet with his name on it. Others besides those listed above are Brown (CCC), Howley (Girard), Ford (Hillsdale) and Olney (Mapelton).

State qualifier Dunlap heads a relatively weak Steubenville District, while state qualifiers Morris and Brown lead at Xenia. Morris was a Division II participant last year and would appear to have strong placement potential. Brown wrestled one of the most exciting first round bouts last year ending up on the short end of a 15-14 donnybrook.

## **125#**

Projected Champion: Jared Opfer (Sandusky St. Mary)

### Top Contenders

- |                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2. Borjas (Genoa)               | 15. Castorano (Ready)      |
| 3. Lowery (Kansas Lakota)       | 16. Hundley (Dixie)        |
| 4. Hackney (Wellsville)         | 17. Common (JacksonMilton) |
| 5. Schultz (Brookville)         | 18. O'Grady (Shadyside)    |
| 6. Jackson (Tuslaw)             | 19. Preisler (Beachwood)   |
| 7. S. McDowell (Jonathan Alder) | 20. Brink (Liberty Center) |
| 8. Davis (Elmwood)              | 21. Pontius (Evergreen)    |
| 9. Foote (Cuyahoga Hts.)        | 22. McGough (ASV)          |

- |                                  |                             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 10. Justi (Milan Edison)         | 23. Kumpf (Marion Pleasant) |
| 11. Donahue (Bellaire St. John)  | 24. Kelch (Versailles)      |
| 12. Fields (Summit Country Day)  | 25. Jellison (Union Local)  |
| 13. Roush (Mohawk)               | 26. Lang (Waterford)        |
| 14. Maurice (West Liberty Salem) | 27. Kirtley (Streetsboro)   |

Jared Opfer is an overwhelming favorite to become Ohio's 9th fourtime state champion, and it all seems to be happening with less fanfare than it deserves. Somehow Opfer has never quite been as appreciated as the other four-time winners. That's surprising considering he will have over 200 high school victories with 120 of them coming by fall. Still, his effortless, less than flashy style may well blind many to how good he really has been these past four years. No other four-time champ has faced the relentless competition that Opfer has. His two contemporaries Boyd and Carrizales have been there year in and year out, while state champion Kitt Allega matched up with him as well. The overwhelming impression of Opfer is that he knows how to win. As a freshman, he won overtime bouts versus Carrizales and Boyd in the last two rounds to take his first state title and then won one point decisions the past two years. This time it should be much easier. This is neither a strong nor a deep weight class and Opfer should have little trouble with the possible exception of Borjas. And after all, no three-time champ has ever failed to win in his senior year.

Fostoria is clearly the dominant district at this weight class. Borjas is very good having won at Sylvania Southview and Brecksville (over state runnerup David Dies) and finishing 2nd at 130# at Northwood. A district runnerup to Carrizales last year he split his first two state bouts by score of 17-13 and 19-11 before being eliminated by Simcoe. State qualifier and placer Lowery is good, but does not threaten Opfer. State qualifier Roush is well behind this top trio with Davis, Justi, Pontius and Brink other reasonable choices for state qualification. Smith (Cory Rawson) and Gray (Wayne Trace) are other possibilities.

There are six strong candidates for the four state berths out of Steubenville. Two, Hackney and Donahue, have previous state experience, although the latter has not qualified in several years. I particularly like the aggressive Hackney who won one state bout last year before running into Carrizales and West. The other wrestler to watch is O'Grady who can blow hot and cold. When he is "on" he has bigtime upset potential. Last year he lost a 9-7 district semifinal bout and then failed to qualify back through the consolation round. Along with Castorano, Jellison, Hackney and McDowell, they should be considered the favorites for Columbus. Lang is a longshot here.

The Elyria Catholic District is uncharacteristically weak so much so that there is a very real chance that none of the qualifiers here will place. This last happened two years ago at 171#. It would not surprise me if some of the 119's who are marginal in terms of state qualification move up to this weight class. I've ranked Jackson at the top based on a number of strong performances in some powerful tournaments. He beat Rimbart at Medina and lost to the excellent Percifull in overtime. The rest of the listed choices are pretty much "by guess or by golly."

Two-time district champ Adam Schultz heads the Xenia contingent, and he won two state bouts at 112# last year. He looked strong at the GMVWA finishing fourth despite losing two heartbreakers. There are at least four legitimate contenders for the two remaining berths

including former state qualifier Fields. However, both Maurice and Hundley could move ahead of Fields with Kelch lurking in the background.

## 130#

Projected Champion: Anthony Carrizales (Delta)

### Top Contenders

- |                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Simcoe (Johnstown Northridge) | 14. Weyer (Blufton)               |
| 3. Boyd (Lima Central Catholic)  | 15. Engel (Reading)               |
| 4. Miller (Beachwood)            | 16. Wyse (Evergreen)              |
| 5. Richards (Columbia Station)   | 17. Long (Wellsville)             |
| 6. Dean (Genoa)                  | 18. Griffith (West Liberty Salem) |
| 7. Tomaino (JacksonMilton)       | 19. Warner (Granville)            |
| 8. Perry (Brookville)            | 20. Crisp (Elyria Catholic)       |
| 9. Bittinger (Cadiz)             | 21. Bright (Dixie)                |
| 10. Pratt (Shadyside)            | 22. Smialowski (Milan Edison)     |
| 11. Lejeune (Fremont St. Joseph) | 23. Landals (Rootstown)           |
| 12. Davis (Loudonville)          | 24. Grygo (Tusky CC)              |
| 13. E. Lee (Oakwood)             | 25. Massaquoi (Richmond Hts.)     |
|                                  | 26. Weller (Lakota)               |

In many ways I foresee this as one of the most competitive and exciting weight classes. In Division III, it is loaded with superior performers who have a long record of outstanding accomplishments at the state level. At the same time none of this top group has won a state title although they have come agonizingly close, and so for most this is their last opportunity.

My choice by a very narrow margin is Anthony Carrizales. As a freshman he defeated Opfer at the district level, but then lost a state semifinal bout to him in overtime and ended up 4th. The last two years he has finished 2nd losing 4-3 to Opfer at 112# and 7-2 to Hughes at 119#. This is his last chance and he will need to put it all together to prevail. He has lost twice this year once 14-12 at Reno in what many call the greatest high school bout of the year, and once at Perrysburg to the surprising Wiles 5-1, which he avenged 14-5 the next week. Wiles, of course, was a state runnerup in Florida last year.

Right behind Carrizales is the undefeated, two-time state qualifier Joey Simcoe. He was 4th last year after a stunning first round upset, but has been brilliant this season. He tied two-time state champ Jeff Ratliff in the Central District preview and then won over a strong field at Medina defeating Boyd 5-1 in the semis and a Georgia state champ in the finals. He gets the first takedown and his opponent is in deep trouble.

Right at the same level of this top duo is Tristan Boyd. He has already won 11 state bouts in finishing 2nd, 3rd, 3rd. Like Fazio he could become Ohio's first three-time third place finisher, but he obviously wants much, much more. As a freshman, he beat Carrizales for the district title, but lost an overtime battle in the state finals to Opfer. He seemed, at that time, to be assured of at least a couple of titles, but it hasn't happened. He lost in the state semis to Opfer (again) at 112# as a sophomore, and a double overtime decision, 7-6, to state champion Allega last year. His only loss is to Simcoe, and he was without his longtime head coach that day as well.

Certainly the wrestler who draws away from the other two should have an advantage. For Boyd that would mean, perhaps, not having to beat Simcoe and, instead, challenging the more familiar Carrizales. One last option might be for one of this trio to move up to the somewhat easier 135 pound level, although Simok is no treat. One thing to note. I've been correct six straight years at this weight class and along with 112# it is my longest steak in Division III. This year that streak will face maximum stress as these top three boys face off.

The Fostoria District is loaded. Beside Carrizales and Boyd, state qualifiers Dean and Lejeune return. They are both experienced competitors who know how to win and have the ability to do so at the state level. Dean, for example, was 6th last year at this class, including impressive wins over Wood and Honaker. I've also rated Weller, Wyse, Weyer and Smialowski who would have good qualification chances at other districts, but who will have to be at the top of their game to make it here.

Simcoe should dominate at Steubenville. That is unless Honaker decides to compete at this weight class, but my guess is that he'll opt for 135#. Otherwise, journeyman performers like Pratt, Long, Bittinger, Minner and Warner have the inside track for the last three spots. However, it is certainly possible that a lower rated wrestler having a hot weekend could grab a spot. People like Grygo, Little (Newcomerstown), Gerber (Garaway) and Border (River Valley) are candidates for such a role.

There is a lot of placement potential at Elyria Catholic, but probably not at the finalist level. Richards was 5th two years making it to the semifinals before being bombed by Carrizales. Last year he picked up a flagrant misconduct at the end of the season and the two match suspension extended into the sectionals. This year he has been unbeaten mostly at 135 pounds. Miller, too, has been a little short of sensational this season after winning one bout at states last year as a sophomore. He is unbeaten with over 20 wins including a title at Richmond Hts. defeating the very tough Trivisonno 11-4. State qualifier Tomaino and Davis are next best with Crisp, Landals and Massaquoi behind them. Other possibilities are Fiorini (Warren JFK) and Burnett (Chagrin Falls).

Two-time state qualifier Perry leads a pedestrian group of warriors from Xenia. Engel and Lee are very close for the second spot with Griffith looking for upset to make the top three. Add to this list Bright, Alexander (Triad), Bierman (Carlisle) and Rigling (Madeira) and we have hopefully covered all the bases here.

## **135#**

Projected Champion: Steve Simok (Northwood)

### Top Contenders

- |                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Honaker (Jonathan Alder) | 14. Heller (Beachwood)           |
| 3. Frisch (Hopewell Loudon) | 15. Minner (Marion Pleasant)     |
| 4. Schaefer (Chanel)        | 16. Burns (Crestview)            |
| 5. Setmire (Evergreen)      | 17. Dunlap (Cadiz)               |
| 6. Ware (Martins Ferry)     | 18. James (Oberlin)              |
| 7. Weible (Tinora)          | 19. Hensley (North College Hill) |

- |                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 8. Turner (CVCA)               | 20. Mendenhall (Versailles)       |
| 9. Woodby (Monroe Central)     | 21. Meyer (Cuyahoga Hts.)         |
| 10. Kelly (Reading)            | 22. Guillen (Woodmore)            |
| 11. Lambert (Columbia Station) | 23. Glasser (Shadyside)           |
| 12. Wytko (Jackson Milton)     | 24. Lakes (Brookville)            |
| 13. Kiss (Rootstown)           | 25. Soellner (Summit Country Day) |

Steve Simok is one of those wrestlers who has made enormous strides over his high school career. His first two years were at 103# and 112# where he reached the state qualification level, but was no factor at States. Then suddenly last year, it all came together at 130# as he won his first 37 bouts before losing to three-time state champ Eric Burnett in the state semifinals. This year at 135#, it's been more of the same as he won brilliantly all year including a 6-3 win over two-time state champion Jeff Ratliff at Sylvania Southview. He has certified at 130#, but with Forward committed to 140# he becomes a solid favorite at this weight class. His biggest threat would be if Boyd or Simcoe move up from 130#.

In the past the Northeast District was relatively dominant in Division III wrestling with the Northwest District a step behind. That has begun to change dramatically and this year's talent pool exiting Fostoria is probably the best ever. During the past three years the Northwest District has won 19 titles compared to 14 for the Northeast. In the three years before that the Northeast had led 18 to 6. It is not inconceivable the Northwest District qualifier could win as many as 10 titles.

Three returning state qualifiers will not allow Simok to relax at the district level. Frisch was 5th at this weight class losing in the semifinals to Forward. Setmire is the best of the excellent Evergreen middle weights and will challenge everyone at the state level but Simok. Weible won a state bout last year and looked very good at Medina capturing a 4th place trophy. That quartet should capture four of the five berths available, but the last berth is wide open. Good bracketing and good luck will be a big plus for those vying for that last spot.

Simok's toughest foe is likely to be Honaker who he defeated in the state quarterfinals 5-3. This year Honaker has won at North Union and Brookhaven, and fought Kevin Maehl to the last second before losing an 8-7 preview thriller. State qualifiers Woodby and Ware both have long-term impressive credentials, while here, too, that fourth spot is wide open. Glasser, Minner and Dunlap are the leading candidates, although Minner could decide to compete at 130#. Incidentally Glasser is the best of three brothers, all of whom compete at the varsity level for Shadyside.

Kelly should dominate at Xenia facing a field that is not terribly strong. A state qualifier last year as a freshman, Kelly lost twice at Wright State but gained valuable experience. Reading's good schedule should also help.

It will be a real battle at Elyria Catholic. I count at least eight strong contenders and I'm probably missing a few. I've struggled putting them in some reasonable order and the version you now see is only the last of many. Heading the list is Chanel's rugged sophomore Tom Schaefer. A sectional champ last year defeating state qualifier Cecil he lost his go-to-state match to the self same Cecil a week later. This year he was 3rd at Solon at 140# after losing on an "illegal slam,"

3rd at Wadsworth and won the title at North Canton. He is a nice combination of speed and physicality and has great potential. Kiss and Lambert were both one win away from States last year, but Lambert seems to have had the best record so far in 1998-99. Turner has shown substantial improvement (it probably doesn't hurt having Vogel as a workout partner), while state qualifier Wytko has been steady. Heller and James have both been good, but I think Heller has the better chance of getting to Columbus. Add in Meyers and maybe Knight (West Salem Northwestern) and it's close to bedlam. With Vogel competing at 145# I would not be surprised to see some of this crew opt for 140#.

## 140#

Projected Champion: Clark Forward (Archbold)

### Top Contenders

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Peyton (Rootstown)               | 16. Hamman (Columbia Station)       |
| 3. Gordon (Mapleton)                | 17. Di Donna (Streetsboro)          |
| 4. Stoll (Milan Edison)             | 18. Vaccari (Madeira)               |
| 5. Roth (Martins Ferry)             | 19. Lucas (Barnesville)             |
| 6. Patzakis (Richmond Hts.)         | 20. Derr (Stritch)                  |
| 7. Derek Koch (Bellaire St. John)   | 21. Carnevale (Reading)             |
| 8. Smith (Girard)                   | 22. McBride (Oakwood)               |
| 9. Walker (Tinora)                  | 23. Lieux (Elyria Catholic)         |
| 10. S. Finneran (Sandusky St. Mary) | 24. Schmitmeyer (Versailles)        |
| 11. Gertz (Lockland)                | 25. Huffman (Lima Central Catholic) |
| 12. Aiello (Fisher Catholic)        | 26. Smith (Cardington)              |
| 13. Jacobs (Garaway)                | 27. Davia (Union Local)             |
| 14. Sorg (Elmwood)                  | 28. Higgins (Jonathan Alder)        |
| 15. Leeland (Huron)                 |                                     |

In a year of great senior wrestlers, Clark Forward is one of the absolute best. Were it not a two-overtime controversial loss in the 119 pound state finals during his freshman year, Forward would be headed for a fourth title. He has lost only twice in his high school career and none at all since the middle of his sophomore season. During that time he has been dominant last year winning with three falls and a 19-7 decision over the excellent Vogel. His career reminds me a little of Lee Kemp's collegiate career which began with an NCAA final controversial overtime loss in his freshman year and then total success. Of the three-time champs, Forward has come closest to winning four and the University of Michigan has recruited a real winner.

There is no one here to challenge Forward so the battle will be for those steps on the victory stand that fall below the first one. Several of those steps should be occupied by qualifiers from the Elyria Catholic District. Last year as a sophomore Peyton finished 37-2 including a 3rd place medal at 130#. He won four consolation bouts including wins over Simok and Geiger. This year has been one of similar success, but he won't sneak up on people like he did last year as something of an unknown. The sophomore Patzakis is undefeated this year with the Richmond Hts. title under his belt. He missed state qualification last year with a tough draw (he had state champion Roberts in the quarterfinals and Klinger shortly thereafter), but should easily qualify this time. State qualifier Smith also returns and has performed well this year. However, watch out for the fabulous freshman Gordon who should also qualify. He has won rave reviews while winning at Bucyrus and copping the MVP award. I may have overrated him here, but he is one of

the best freshmen in the entire state. A dynamo he is perpetual motion in human flesh and as he matures he should be sensational. Di Donna and Hamman are poised right behind this top quartet with Lieux, Adam (Chanel), Buchanan (Kirtland) and Hinman (CVCA) also in the running. Other possibilities are Snook (Wickliffe), Persinger (Waynedale) and Buckner (Waterloo).

While Forward dominates at Fostoria (or wherever else he happens to be), there is some solid talent behind him. State qualifier Stoll is excellent, but had the misfortune last year of losing to former state runner up Jones in the first round 11-7, and then getting eliminated when Jones lost in the next round. That cannot happen this year with the double elimination format. State qualifier Finneran has oscillated between 130# and 135#, but may find this weight class as ultimately best. In addition to those listed, Vance (Patrick Henry), Liss (New London) and Emery (Crestview) are possibilities. Also back is Mike Bushman (Delta) who was 5th at this weight class as a junior and was a two-time state qualifier. He barely survived a horrendous car accident last summer and lay in a coma for nearly three weeks. He has just returned to competition, but has not yet regained his former skills. A healthy Bushman would have been ranked 2nd at this class, but he is far from peak form at this time. Nonetheless, he is competing with real courage and his presence adds immeasurably to Delta's team.

Gertz should dominate at Xenia. He was a district champ last year and won a firstround bout as well. I've also rated four other contenders with Carnevale and McBride my two favorites for state qualification. Tighe (Mariemont), Combs (Indian Hills) and Landis (TriCounty North) are other thoughts. Except for Gertz, this will be a good district to draw into.

The Steubenville District should be dominated by wrestlers from along the river. State qualifiers Roth and Koch return, with the former winning one bout at Wright State, while the latter finished 5th. Rather ironic since Roth won their district encounter. Aiello is a Central District wrestler who should qualify, while Jacobs, Lucas, Higgins, Davia and Smith have the best shot at the last spot.

## 145#

Projected Champion: Andy Vogel (CVCA)

### Top Contenders

- |                                     |                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. D. Carrizales (Delta)            | 15. Parr (Shadyside)           |
| 3. Stevenson (West Liberty Salem)   | 16. Gleckler (Evergreen)       |
| 4. Kingery (Genoa)                  | 17. Harvey (Granville)         |
| 5. Garcia (Milan Edison)            | 18. Baker (Union Local)        |
| 6. Grimes (Smithville)              | 19. Rauen (Deer Park)          |
| 7. Barga (Versailles)               | 20. Hoogenboom (Chanel)        |
| 8. Karr (Tinora)                    | 21. Dollaway (Northmor)        |
| 9. Vedra (Milbury Lake)             | 22. Schmitz (Tri County North) |
| 10. Rizzo (Cuyahoga Hts.)           | 23. Manfredonia (Independence) |
| 11. Tucture (Streetsboro)           | 24. Bawtenheimer (Landmark)    |
| 12. Daniel Koch (Bellaire St. John) | 25. Conley (Plymouth)          |
| 13. Spoores (Eastwood)              | 26. Wackerly (Malvern)         |
| 14. Favaro (ASV)                    | 27. Harmon (Waynedale)         |

This looks to be a two-man battle with both boys coming to Columbus as 1998 state runners up. It's a difficult choice, but I'm going with the brilliant Vogel who has lost only to the Russian Tomaev, who wrestles for Blair Academy. Vogel was 2nd last year at 135# to Forward, getting hammered after three impressive wins including two by fall. This year he won at CVCA, Dies and Medina while getting 3rd at the Ironman. He has spent most of the year at 140#, but will move up to 145# at tourney time. An excellent student (SAT of 1,530), he appears to have analytic approach to his matches always a significant advantage.

Carrizales, cousin of my 130# choice, transferred from Napoleon after his sophomore year, and it paid immediate dividends as he cruised to the finals at 145# before losing to the St. Paris Graham late transfer Chris Schlaegel in overtime. This year he has been excellent, losing only at Reno. I favor Vogel based on a slight edge in quickness. If Delta gets on a roll, however, team energy and momentum could be a big intangible for Carrizales. In any case, it should be a great battle between two excellent seniors.

Carrizales exits from the strongest sectional. Four others competing at Fostoria have previous state experience. Kingery won two state bouts at 140# last year and has also vacillated between 140# and 145#. Karr won a first round bout at 145#, but then lost twice including a 7-6 thriller to the returning Stevenson. Garcia qualified at 160# and won a consolation bout and has now dropped two weight classes. He was the champ at Brecksville and Edison. Vedra, yet another transfer (from Rossford), has been at 152# until recently with outstanding success. This is a very strong quintet all with placement chances if they can make it through at Fostoria. Gleckler and Spoores would qualify out of any of the other three districts, but they'll need to be at their very best to have a chance here.

Vogel should have little trouble at Elyria Catholic. State qualifier Grimes returns, but he is a clear step below Vogel. After this duo, it's wide open with plenty of opportunities for all those rated.

Stevenson and Barga are a very strong duo out of Xenia. Both are returning state qualifiers with Stevenson garnering a state win last year. This season they have met once with Stevenson winning 119 in overtime. I've listed Rauen, Schmitz and Shimp, but Batdorf (Covington) and Shimp (Mariemont) are other possibilities. This top duo will be strong competition for all of the qualifiers this year.

On the other hand, it will be a weak contingent coming out of Steubenville. There are no returning state qualifiers and placement potential appears to be lacking. Koch and Baker would seem to be best, but no one has yet shown dominance. It could be a weight class of surprises at this district.

## **152#**

Projected Champion: Dean Schuler (Delta)

### Top Contenders

- |                          |                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Cannon (Milbury Lake) | 15. Hershey (West Salem Northwestern) |
| 3. Sedgmer (Cadiz)       | 16. Blair (Reading)                   |

- |                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 4. Klinger (Cuyahoga Hts.)       | 17. Hoffer (Mechanicsburg)          |
| 5. Roberts (Westfall)            | 18. Thompson (Margaretta)           |
| 6. Sampsel (Tuslaw)              | 19. Terry (Chanel)                  |
| 7. McDaniel (Belpre)             | 20. Caldwell (Northwood)            |
| 8. Jefferis (Barnesville)        | 21. Longstreath (Madeira)           |
| 9. Pedroza (Tinora)              | 22. Clemens (Lima Central Catholic) |
| 10. Gore (Bishop Ready)          | 23. Booher (Summit Country Day)     |
| 11. Rumprik (Streetsboro)        | 24. Clark (Johnstown Monroe)        |
| 12. Blevins (West Jefferson)     | 25. Haines (Norwayne)               |
| 13. J. Hartz (Grand Valley)      | 26. Scarl (Gilmour)                 |
| 14. Reineck (Fremont St. Joseph) | 27. Miller (Hopewell Loudon)        |

Participants from the Northwest District have won this weight class for the past three years and have an excellent chance of extending it to four. Schuler really didn't have a close bout, district or state, in taking this title last year. He defeated Hoff, who had beaten him earlier in the year, 18-3 for the championship and will be a strong favorite to repeat. A transfer from Whitmer after his sophomore season, Schuler has thrived at Delta losing this year only at Reno.

An unexpected threat will come from Cannon who placed in Division I last year for Oregon Clay. He has just begun to compete, but clearly has the skills and experience to challenge Schuler provided his conditioning and timing have returned. The rest of the Fostoria District is substantially below this top two. The only exception would be if Whelan should choose to compete here, but 160# would seem to offer him some clearcut advantages. Given that scenario, the last three tickets to Columbus are "up for grabs" with the winners unlikely to place.

Sedgmer is the third Division III wrestler with the prospect of finishing 3rd for three consecutive years. He is already a two-time district champ and last year entered the state tourney with 37 consecutive victories. Nevertheless, Hoff caught him in a second period fall and Sedgmer could do nothing more than win his four consolation bouts for another 3rd. This year he lost twice at Brecksville, but it may have been a good experience wrestling outside his local area, and may prove to be solid preparation for the State Meet.

He will exit a strong district. Former state qualifier Roberts was sharp at Medina with a runner up finish losing only to Tolar. He has placement potential. State qualifier McDaniel and Jefferis are my other two choices to emerge from Steubenville, and both have low placement possibilities. For McDaniel it was "two and out" at Dayton last year, but he had a tough draw with the state runner up in the first round and Bushman immediately thereafter. Even the slightest error by this top quartet could prove to be disastrous. Former state qualifier Gore and the excellent Blevins are waiting in the wings. Gore, in particular, has very high upset potential.

The Elyria Catholic District has a good mixture of talent which could be augmented if Jedick decides to move down to 152#. Klinger had a fabulous freshman season with 32 victories and a state qualification appearance. This year he has been equally good including an impressive win over Magistrelli (who defeated Sedgmer at Brecksville). The only negative was a pummeling by Whelan at the Panther Classic where he was turned twice in the first period and pinned in the second. Right behind him is the veteran Sampsel, a transfer from Wadsworth, who has given Tuslaw added muscle at the upper weights. He was 5th at Medina and a solid 2nd at the Dies. He

looks to be improving as the season unwinds. There is a substantial dropoff after this twosome as the last pair of state tickets from Elyria Catholic are clearly in play.

Xenia qualifiers will likely not play a major role in the ultimate resolution of this weight class at Columbus. Blair and Hoffer battled into overtime at Reading with Blair the narrow winner thereby inheriting the mantle of district leader at this point. Longstreath, who is undefeated, and Booher, who was one win from state qualification last year, are close behind.

## 160#

Projected Champion: Tim Hoff (Liberty Center)

### Top Contenders

- |                                      |                                |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Whelan (Sandusky St. Mary)        | 15. Schnittkey (Archbold)      |
| 3. Jedick (Lutheran West)            | 16. Gates (Belpre)             |
| 4. Brierly (Ridgewood)               | 17. Eberhardt (Tuslaw)         |
| 5. Polk (Milbury Lake)               | 18. Lohrer (Springfield CC)    |
| 6. Johnston (Sidney Lehman)          | 19. D. Hartz (Grand Valley)    |
| 7. Anthony (Columbia Station)        | 20. Davis (Tinora)             |
| 8. Rapp (Cadiz)                      | 21. Van Dyke (Milan Edison)    |
| 9. DiEgidio (Cuyahoga Hts.)          | 22. Hirt (Reading)             |
| 10. May (Mohawk)                     | 23. Poland (Crestview)         |
| 11. Bierman (Carlisle)               | 24. Comisford (Jo. Northridge) |
| 12. Tacosik (Union Local)            | 25. Kuhn (Elyria Catholic)     |
| 13. D. Statzer (Tri County North)    | 26. Kuhns (Jonathan Alder)     |
| 14. Palker (West Salem Northwestern) | 27. Haney (Sandy Valley)       |

Up to now, with the obvious exception of 103#, every weight class has provided a well-defined set of three wrestlers or less who, in aggregate, have a very high probability of producing a state champ. This is also true at 189# and above, but both at 160# and 171# there are much more chaotic conditions. In both cases a combination of oddly configured results, important tournament cancellations and injury issues obscure the end result.

My choice at 160# is Tim Hoff and as Suzanne says to her betrothed Figaro in *The Marriage of Figaro*, "giving a reason for being right amounts to admitting I could be wrong." Nonetheless, let me explain the dilemma.

Last year at 152#, Hoff won his sectional with a 4-3 triumph over Dean Schuler. In district action he was nipped by Polk 7-6 in the semifinals, but then finished a strong 3rd. At the States he opened with three falls, but then inexplicably lost to Schuler 18-3 in the finals. This year he looked very raggedy (a technical term) at Medina, but much of that was likely the result of the super long football season which saw Liberty Center in the state finals yet again. My feeling is that by late February Hoff will be back in peak shape and the slight favorite at this weight class.

There won't be much margin for error at the Fostoria District. State qualifier Polk returns and he holds the aforementioned win over Hoff. Last year he won two state bouts and missed placement as the result of a 2point loss to Sedgmer. Polk has also had some injury problems this year. Whelan is the one to watch here. Extremely strong he has certified at 152#, but may find it more congenial at this weight class. His destruction of the excellent Klinger is stark evidence of his

ability. May has been somewhat overlooked by others, but he lost by only 2 points to Whelan and has been effective all season. Schnittkey, Davis and Van Dyke are all solid and may deserve better rankings than I've given them. Davis, for example, was 6th last year at Fostoria, missing qualification by one spot.

Jedick, like Whelan, has certified at 152#, but this senior wrestler probably has a better chance at a state title at this class. A strong performer, he and Klinger traded victories last year with Klinger winning the critical district consolation semifinal bout that led to Wright State. This year he remains undefeated, but has not wrestled a particularly rigorous schedule. Anthony is probably second best at Elyria Catholic, but it seems all but certain that injuries will prevent him from competing. He roared through the Columbia tournament in his one appearance winning the final 19-5. DiEgidio is a late transfer from Aurora who could play a significant role at this weight class. He was a district semifinalist last year before bowing out and may feel even more comfortable at this higher weight. Palker, who returns after two years in Texas, is currently 17-2 and has good qualification chances. The last spot should be the subject of some very closely fought battles.

State qualifier Johnston heads a particularly deep field at Xenia. He lost a first round heartbreaker last year at Wright State, but has bounced back to fashion a fine 1998-99 campaign. He is undefeated except for two 1-point defeats at the always strong GMVWA. That leaves two state positions open for a quartet of good performers. Bierman, down from Division II, might be a slight favorite but Lohrer, Statzer and Hirt all have extensive district experience.

Brierly was very impressive at Medina and certainly has finalist potential. Last year he won two state bouts over Johnston and Blankemeyer and missed placement by a single win. This year his wins over Canty and Clemens highlighted a strong Medina runnerup finish. Rapp was a semifinalist at Brecksville, while Tacosik and Gates have had outstanding seasons. It will be a struggle for anyone else to break into this top group.

## 171#

Projected Champion: Brent Friscone (Columbia Station)

### Top Contenders

- |                                 |                                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Hoylman (West Liberty Salem) | 15. Crosier (Barnesville)          |
| 3. Wagner (Springfield CC)      | 16. Kirby (Reading)                |
| 4. Goble (Black River)          | 17. Miller (Plymouth)              |
| 5. Walton (Hawken)              | 18. Skaggs (Tuslaw)                |
| 6. Blankemeyer (Columbus Grove) | 19. Young (Westfall)               |
| 7. Bonnigson (Margaretta)       | 20. B. Statzer (Tri County North)  |
| 8. Smolik (Rootstown)           | 21. Deisch (Northmor)              |
| 9. Shuller (Monroeville)        | 22. Riedy (Sandusky St. Mary)      |
| 10. Coffman (Cadiz)             | 23. Lenhart (Fremont St. Joseph)   |
| 11. Bosco (Archbold)            | 24. Walters (JewettScio)           |
| 12. Beckett (Shadyside)         | 25. Vogel song (Sherwood Fairview) |
| 13. Everhart (Mohawk)           | 26. Day (Sandy Valley)             |
| 14. Keener (Mapleton)           | 27. Buchanan (Kirtland)            |

Each district is relatively strong, but no one has leapt out of the pack to proclaim dominance. My guess is that we'll see a large number of close low scoring bouts at this class where bracketing, refereeing, good fortune, injury avoidance and cool decision making will lead to eventual triumph.

The Elyria Catholic District boasts at least three strong contenders. State qualifier Friscone has compiled a solid 17-1 record with several tourney titles. His victory at Buckeye was particularly significant in that it featured Goble, Walton, Jameyson and Chambers. Goble had a tough district draw last year and failed to qualify. He lost by one point to Friscone at Buckeye and has crafted a solid season to this point. Walton, a district finalist last year, lost a close first round bout at Wright State and was eliminated. This year he surprised the field at Medina taking the 171 pound title with a last second flurry involving a takedown and near fall. He has the kind of style that could win it this year, particularly in terms of intelligently and patiently choosing his spots to be aggressive. Smolik, only a sophomore, made it to the district level at 160# as a freshman. Friscone beat him in the first round, but Smolik will not go so easily this year. At the tough Brecksville Tourney he finished a strong 3rd losing only to the unbeaten White and defeating defending West Virginia runner up Daggett, state qualifier Coffman and Dominick. Keener, a transfer from Ashland, could have low placement potential, but will have to be super sharp to qualify out of this district. He has been at 189# much of the year.

The Southwest District has produced at least one state champion in Division III every year since 1983. In fact, in nine of those years it was exactly one. Their best chance to do so this year is probably at this weight class since both Hoylman and Wagner are excellent. Hoylman was a district champ at 160# last year and won a state bout before being eliminated. This year he won the GMVWA and was second by a point to Weimer at Graham. Wagner placed 5th at this weight class last year, but has been hampered by injuries. He has just returned after missing the first six weeks of the season. Kirby and Statzer will battle for the last berth with Ullery (Brookville) a longshot possibility.

The Steubenville District has achieved something akin to parity, but it is likely not at a placement level. State qualifiers Coffman and Crosier each won a bout at Wright State last year, but still look to fall short of placement positions. Crosier, in particular, has suffered some difficult losses this year. Beckett is a solid 3rd choice, but after that it is wide open. Young, Deisch, Walters, "Duck" Day and Morrison (Ready) are viable candidates.

I've found it difficult to sort out the Fostoria candidates. State qualifier Blankemeyer returns and was a semifinalist at Medina. State placer Bonnigson has been bedeviled by injuries, and just recently made his 1998-99 debut losing to Everhart. Last year Blankemeyer shut out Bonnigson 5-0 at the district level only to see him win three state matches and finish 6th while he was shutout. State qualifier Shuller is a steady performer, while Everhart is very capable of the big upset. It should be fun watching things work themselves out at this class.

## **189#**

Projected Champion: Adam Sintobin (Delta)

Top Contenders

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Whitesel (Black River)         | 15. Jenkins (Fremont St. Joseph)  |
| 3. Tracy (Ayresville)             | 16. Way (West Salem Northwestern) |
| 4. Kraft (Tuslaw)                 | 17. Cole (National Trail)         |
| 5. Bruney (Martins Ferry)         | 18. Speaker (Sandy Valley)        |
| 6. Arnette (Wellsville)           | 19. Clark (McComb)                |
| 7. Bindel (Lima Central Catholic) | 20. Wells (Monroe Central)        |
| 8. Doty (Blufton)                 | 21. Wiley (Brookfield)            |
| 9. Weingart (Streetsboro)         | 22. Finfrock (Covington)          |
| 10. Grewell (Newcomerstown)       | 23. Stephens (Plymouth)           |
| 11. Harmon (Carlisle)             | 24. Sanna (Granville)             |
| 12. Border (Ridgewood)            | 25. Skowronsky (Columbia Station) |
| 13. Yancik (Brookville)           | 26. Roeder (Norwalk St. Paul)     |
| 14. Berns (Gilmour)               | 27. Jemison (Finneytown)          |

Quite a few experts have essentially conceded the title to Sintobin at this weight class, but to me things do not seem quite so clear cut or so definite. Granted, Sintobin has had a sensational season highlighted by his Reno win over my Division I choice Lammers. Still, Sintobin lost nine times last year at 171# and finished 3rd at one of the weaker classes. Compare that with Mitch Whitesel who finished 40-1 at the much tougher 189# class, also with a 3rd place medal. Whitesel's only loss in the past two years was a twoovertime criteria loss to then defending state champion Dick Engel. Other than that, Whitesel has been perfect. The way I see it Sintobin could well win, but his likely opponent in the final will be a primed and ready Whitesel, meaning Sintobin will really have to earn that first place trophy.

I see four outstanding wrestlers at Fostoria with a major dropoff after that. Obviously Sintobin stands first here, but the powerful Tracy could challenge him at the sectional, district and state level. Already a two-time state placer, Tracy has been perfect this year, including a fall over state place winner Kraft to win at Medina. He was 4th at this weight class last year losing in the consolation finals by a point. Doty is down from the Heavyweight class and has fit right in at 189#, while Bindel is just an outstanding athlete. Bindel, in particular, needs to show that he has moved up to the state placement level as a jumping off point for next year. Jenkins is my choice for the 5th qualifying spot, bit I've listed several others.

Whitesel's main competition at Elyria Catholic will be 4th place finisher Kraft moving up from 171#. He lost that consolation final after a great run for something of an unknown. This year he has built on that reputation with a 3rd at the Dies after a narrow 9-8 semifinal loss and a 2nd at Medina behind Tracy. Interestingly enough, he twice took Tracy down in the 1st period, but then got caught by the more powerful Ayresville senior in the 2nd period and decked. The lanky Berns and the sophomore Way could be the surprise elements at this weight class, but they'll face plenty of competition for those last two spots.

State qualifiers Yancik and Harmon lead a respectable group of 189's at Xenia. Harmon has been sharp for Carlisle and may yet prove to be best here, while Cole, Finfrock and Jemison all just missed state qualification last year. Finfrock and Cole both finished 4th in this threequalifier district with the latter losing a tough 9-6 battle to Yancik. So the spread is quite close for this top quintet. Cardoza (Madeira) is another possibility as is Newsome (Dixie).

There are also a covey of good wrestlers at Steubenville. Arnette, Bruney and Border all reached Wright State last year while Wells was only one bout away. In my mind though, Arnette and

Bruney have pulled away from the rest of this pack, essentially leaving open but two qualifying spots. Since many of these competitors have met numerous times, there will be few surprises during the bouts, but perhaps some very surprising outcomes.

Two wrestlers with outstanding credentials and placement potential are apparently not competing. Robinson (Richmond Hts.) was, I'm certain, ready for a breakout year with his combination of speed and strength. Physical problem will apparently prevent that happy outcome. Szymczak (Genoa), also a returning state qualifier, will seemingly not compete as well.

## 215#

Projected Champion: Tommy Rowlands (Bishop Ready)

### Top Contenders

- |                                    |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. McCoy (North Union)             | 16. Abbott (Sandy Valley)           |
| 3. Box (Liberty Center)            | 17. Garling (Cardinal)              |
| 4. Schumacher (Monroe Central)     | 18. Pohlman (Versailles)            |
| 5. Cotterman (Elmwood)             | 19. Meisner (Mohawk)                |
| 6. Steffenhagen (Margaretta)       | 20. Rahe (Indian Hills)             |
| 7. C. Schwind (West Jefferson)     | 21. Rodhe (Waynedale)               |
| 8. Turner (Kirtland)               | 22. Shreve (Martins Ferry)          |
| 9. Mirsalis (Richmond Hts.)        | 23. Penny (Fenwick)                 |
| 10. Slaughterbeck (Blufton)        | 24. Malone (Milan Edison)           |
| 11. Gallaro (Sandusky St. Mary)    | 25. Hawkins (Fostoria St. Wendelin) |
| 12. Rutherford (Streetsboro)       | 26. Linden (Black River)            |
| 13. Sayer (Deer Park)              | 27. Conrad (Gibsonburg)             |
| 14. Held (West Salem Northwestern) | 28. Crow (Arcadia)                  |
| 15. Marr (Waynesville)             | 29. Perko (Independence)            |

Rowlands does have a genius for this sport and, along with hard work, has parlayed it into the top national ranking at this weight class. Starting as a 125 pounder in his freshman year, he has grown in both accomplishment and size during the intervening period. Last year at 189#, he had two technical falls at Wright State and then two first period pins the latter over the defending state champ. This year should be more of the same at this relatively weak class. Rowlands is that classic case of a good little wrestler suddenly growing into an upper weight contestant, but retaining every bit of his coordination and athleticism. They become almost unbeatable because they wrestle a style most big men rarely see. Eddie Potokar of Richmond Hts. is another example of this phenomenon, but I believe Rowlands will surpass his college feats.

McCoy, the runner up at this weight class last year, would have anticipated in the normal course of events to be a heavy favorite this year. His big advantage will be that he won't have to face Rowlands until the finals. Last year he was pinned in the district quarterfinals, but won three bouts to finish 4th. Then at Wright State he heated up after winning by default over the favorite at the weight class in the first round. A technical fall and a 46 second pin over Goldsberry put him in the final where the magic finally wore off during a titanic 12-10 loss. Schumacher, another member of that athletic family, took a year off, but has returned with a vengeance. He is very strong. Schwind lost to McCoy in his gotostate match last year, but should qualify this time. A major absentee will be Harshbarger (Garaway) who was twice one win from states as a freshmen and sophomore losing last year 2-1. The big junior apparently will not compete this year.

Box was 3rd last year as a quick, mobile heavyweight, but has moved down to 215# this year. He should do very well and either he or McCoy should be the last high school competitor Tommy Rowlands will wrestle in Ohio. The rest of the Northwest District is uncharacteristically weak with a lot of workmanlike performers whose highest goal is likely to be state qualification.

Much the same is true at Elyria Catholic where a very pedestrian group of 215's will gather. The big junior Sean McHugh (Chargin Falls) would undoubtedly have been the top performer here unless he elected to be a heavyweight. However, like Harshbarger, he too, has decided to take a year off. As it is, Mirsalis, Rutherford and the sophomore Turner look to be best. The last mentioned is the younger brother of last year's heavyweight champion and seems to have the steepest upward improvement trajectory. He will be a real factor next year.

Xenia also lacks much up top firepower at this weight class. There are no returning state qualifiers although Sayer, Rahe, Marr and Penny all came close last year. Besides those rated Flora (Miami East) and Davis (Dixie) are also possibilities.

## Hvy.

Projected Champion: Dean Taylor (Delta)

### Top Contenders

- |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. N. Schwind (West Jefferson) | 14. Conner (Berkshire)         |
| 3. Krisha (New London)         | 15. Klotz (Fremont St. Joe)    |
| 4. Rainer (Caldwell)           | 16. Whitaker (Batavia)         |
| 5. Lewis (North Union)         | 17. Lambright (Gibsonburg)     |
| 6. Lampe (Sidney Lehman)       | 18. Farber (Sandy Valley)      |
| 7. Shirkey (Archbold)          | 19. Carte (Monroeville)        |
| 8. Fetters (Covington)         | 20. Cash (Cuyahoga Hts.)       |
| 9. Kline (Garrettsville)       | 21. Wohlgemuth (Norwayne)      |
| 10. Lucas (Barnesville)        | 22. Bridinger (Tiffin Calvert) |
| 11. Nolting (River Valley)     | 23. Herman (Loudonville)       |
| 12. Wilhelm (Elyria Catholic)  | 24. Binkley (Brookville)       |
| 13. Link (Versailles)          | 25. Alexander (Richmond Hts.)  |
|                                | 26. Sullivan (Cory Rawson)     |

Dean Taylor is not the huge, well muscled, physically imposing heavyweight you would expect of a recordsetting wrestler, but appearances can be deceptive. It is very likely that he will become the first four-time heavyweight finalist in Ohio history, a remarkable feat especially in light of the fact that only one other heavyweight since 1938 has made the finals even three times. That wrestler, Jim Dregalla (Cleveland John Marshall), was a state champion in 1952, 1953 and 1954. He will also become the first heavyweight to win titles in nonconsecutive years in Ohio history having taken the title in his sophomore season. While forecasting the heavyweight class is always a risky business, there is really no one here who can go even four minutes with Taylor. He was champion at the high-powered Reno tourney and his only loss is to the mammoth Davie in a match where no one did anything.

There is only one other heavyweight who has had state experience at Fostoria, and Kenny Krisha has so far missed the entire season nursing a football injury. Should this mammoth 275 pounder compete, and I expect him to, he could well exceed his 5th place finish of a year ago. At that

time he followed a similar strategy at both the district and state level lose in the first round and then win a bunch of consolation bouts. As far as I know he and Taylor have never met. I've placed Shirkey, Klotz and Lambright as the highest probability hopes for the last three spots, but there are probably a dozen competitors with about equal likelihood of reaching Columbus. Besides those listed, remember Merricle (Spencerville), Mosher (Crestview) and Grohoske (Columbus Grove). State qualifier Lingruen (Liberty Center) will apparently be unable to compete because of injury. The big junior would have rated right with Krisha at this district.

There is good quality at Steubenville. State qualifier Schwind won his first round bout at Wright State but fell victim to a nine second fall by eventual champ Turner. The powerful Rainer and state qualifier Lewis are also very good and that should account for three of the four qualifying berths. I look for Lucas and Nolting to be the top contenders for that last spot with about equal chances. Last year Rainer had to get by Schwind in his gotostate bout but fell short in that endeavor while Lewis came through in the other half. Lewis had the least mat time for someone who wrestled two bouts lasting a total of 72 seconds with Taylor and Hadlock.

State qualifier Lampe leads a solid Xenia delegation. He has been impressive in the Dayton area winning several small tourneys and finishing 4th at the GMVWA. Fetters, Link and Whitaker are all solid, but only two of this three can qualify. While at Elyria Catholic there is very little quality or depth at this class. This will be one of the few times when this entire district's contingent will be nonfactors at a weight class.