

1991

DIVISION I

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KARL GROVE (WEST CHESTER LAKOTA) ② 112

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| ③ 2. Johnson (Walsh Jesuit) | ⑥ 13. Hickin (Kent Roosevelt) |
| ① 3. Wineberg (Fairfield) | ⑥ 14. Lambers (Cincinnati Elder) |
| 4. Colucci (Westerville North) | 15. Cameron (Hilliard) |
| ⑤ 5. Jayne (St. Edward) | 16. Forbes (Perrysburg) |
| 6. Jeter (Sandusky) | 17. Kaleal (Mayfield) |
| ④ 7. Conyers (Trotwood Madison) | 18. Stultz (Groveport Madison) |
| 8. Boda (Fremont Ross) | 19. White (Cincinnati LaSalle) |
| 9. Wheeler (Massillon Perry) | 20. Simpson (Shaw) |
| 10. Cummings (Euclid) | 21. Cariotti (North Canton) |
| 11. Contos (Toledo St. John) | 22. Lemley (East Liverpool) |
| 12. Pender (Cincinnati Princeton) | 23. Venugopalkrishna (Xenia
Beavercreek) |

There is a clear difference between defending champion Grove and the rest of the field assembled at this weight class. By electing to compete at 103#, Grove maximizes his chances for a second state title -- assuming that he can perform at normal levels at this lower weight. Last year Grove took the title by engineering three close victories in succession, but this year he should triumph much more easily. Even had he remained at 112#, he would have been one of the top three contenders and, perhaps, the most logical choice. He won the giant Medina Invitational (MIT) at that weight with few problems displaying a workmanlike, professional approach that permitted no mistakes. The rest of the field will have to hope for a major upset if they intend to dethrone this wily senior.

Grove exits from an exceptionally deep and strong district. Most prominent of the remaining group is the sensational newcomer Wineberg, who has reeled off 20 consecutive triumphs including championships in three major tournaments (Cincy Holiday, Kenston and Fairfield). Right behind him is state qualifier Conyers, who won the GMVWA and the Wayne. None of this top trio has met. There are another half dozen wrestlers with solid potential here. Pender gave Wineberg his only close match -- losing in overtime -- and has shown rapid improvement this season. The veteran Lambers has defeated both Pender and White, while winning places at every tourney entered. White has been erratic, but can score a lot of points. A common opponent has been Contos, who defeated White and Pender but was shut out by both Wineberg (4-0) and Conyers (1-0). Other possibilities include Venugopalkrishna, Marks (Fairborn Baker) and Marinelli (West Carrollton). This district will be a war.

Many will be surprised with the freshman Johnson as second choice, but I've been impressed with his skills and his technique. He has won at both the OCC and North Canton, but finished fifth at the MIT. He has twice lost to Jayne (beating him once), but when he is "on a roll" he can be close to awesome. The key in my mind is a high confidence level, which he needs to establish momentum. He, too,

wrestled Contos shutting him out 5-0. Wheeler and Hickin are both good winning at Marion Harding and Hudson respectively. Wheeler was handled by Johnson at their second meeting, while Wineberg beat Hickin. Other possibilities are Cariotti, Evangelista (Geneva) and Szittai (Barberton).

Colucci, if he can stay comfortable at 103#, is a quantum step ahead of anybody else at Hilliard. Clearly the recipient of a favorable draw, he was runner-up at the MIT to Dernlan, which included a solid win over Jayne. Cameron and Sturtz look like the next best, although two wrestlers from the Eastern Sectional could challenge. Lemley and Glover (Buckeye Local) were in the top three at the mammoth OVAC and have performed well all year.

The Mentor District is uncharacteristically weak at this weight. Usually there are six or seven state caliber wrestlers vying for three openings, but this year there is no such entanglement. I've rated Jayne, another freshman, best here, but this may be somewhat speculative. He has, after all, beaten Johnson twice, but he may well be overpowered by the more mature 103s. He is very scrappy and wins bouts that might get away from others. Cummings, Kaleal and Simpson are three other possibilities, but none are likely to send your pulse racing. The other candidates are Melendez (Lorain Southview) and Cirino (Painesville Riverside), but it's likely that the three qualifiers will include at least one major surprise.

The Rogers District is the one that I may be underestimating. All three state qualifiers from last year return at this weight and it seems like I ought to be rating them higher. However, they didn't win a bout last year at States and they haven't been super impressive this year. Still both Jeter and Boda are enormous 103s and very strong and could well overpower the slicker freshmen like Johnson and Jayne. Boda, in particular, has had a lot of quick falls this year. Forbes, the third qualifier, is in real peril of not qualifying with the rapidly improving Contos rated above him. Puntieri (Toledo Rogers) is another possibility, losing by only two points to Boda earlier this year.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MARC GRAHAM (SHAW)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Barden (Fairfield) | 12. Bedell (Upper Arlington) |
| ②/103 3. North (Cincinnati Princeton) | 13. Bentley (Valley Forge) |
| 4. Allen (Worthington) | 14. Best (Xenia Beaver Creek) |
| 5. Musser (Walsh Jesuit) | 15. Alejandro (Fremont Ross) |
| 6. Ratliff (Marion Harding) | 16. Lanese (Brush) |
| 7. Wahl (St. Ignatius) | 17. Penn (Franklin Hts.) |
| 8. Friedle (St. Edward) | 18. Butler (Bowling Green) |
| 9. Franklin (Massillon Perry) | 19. Bender (Sidney) |
| 10. Worthington (Mansfield) | 20. Geitgey (Glen Oak) |
| 11. Huesing (West Chester Lakota) | 21. Pool (Toledo St. Frances) |
| | 22. Herbert (Uniontown Lake) |

There is no clear-cut choice at this weight with five legitimate contenders,

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| | 11. Huesing (West Chester Lakota) | 21. Pool (Toledo St. Frances) |
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There is no clear-cut choice at this weight with five legitimate contenders,

each with a reasonable chance at the title. I've picked Graham who was hampered by an early injury at the State Meet and eventually defaulted to sixth place. Interestingly, Robinson, whom he beat for the District crown, ended up second. Graham, a senior, is an outstanding athlete with enormous power and speed and has not really been challenged so far this year.

Barden and North are both seniors who have competed against each other on a regular basis. Last year North won their district bout, but Barden won the only meeting this year. They are both excellent and could easily win the title on a hot weekend. North lost to 103# pick Grove at the Cincy Holiday Tourney by a single point.

Allen was state runner-up at 103# last year as a freshman, losing only to Grove in the finals. This year he has been given rough treatment at 119# and will, I'm sure, move down to 112# at certification time. He is good in close matches. Musser could be the freshman sensation of this year's state meet. No wrestler in Ohio has ever won four big school state titles -- not Fried, not DeAnna, not Milkovich. Musser has a stated goal of being the first and it could happen. A sensational youth wrestler, he has lost to Graham and Grove, but not by irretrievably large scores.

The Mentor District should be very interesting. Graham, of course, leads the way, but there are other possible place winners. Friedle has a "grind it out" style that has won a lot of bouts and he is particularly tough when ahead. Wahl, down from 119#, has also been solid all year, beating Friedle twice and these two have the best chances for the qualifying spots behind Graham. Bentley was very impressive at Solon, but apparently has enormous problems making the weight -- he was at 130# the last I looked. Still, should he make 112#, he will be very tough. Lanese has been erratic. Sometimes he looks tremendous -- at other times not quite that good. Only a sophomore, he could be very good. Two other possibilities are the great little freshman Rozick (Mentor) and Carreras (Lorain Southview).

Barden and North stand well ahead of the rest of the pack at the Dayton District. The big unknown is Huesing, who will just now get an opportunity to compete at his best weight. Should he do well, it will help West Chester Lakota in the team competition. The other contenders like Best and Bender will have real trouble at the State level. Other possibilities are Gregg (Dayton Wayne) and Serve (Springfield North).

At Hilliard, Allen will face some good competition. I've always liked Ratliff and at 112# he'll be very tough. He lost to Allen 5-4 in district competition last year. He could easily place. Bedell and Penn are, in my mind, somewhat behind the top duo, although Bedell was MVP at the recent Beaver Creek Invitational. Freeman (Columbus East) is a talent, but may be overmatched at the district level.

There'll be a most interesting confrontation at Perry. Easily the top two 112s there are Musser and Perry who, until December, were teammates at Walsh. Then Franklin transferred to Massillon Perry and has been transformed into a whirlwind winning, for example, at Tiffin. It is very reminiscent of the Elinsky/McNulty situation at St. Edwards's in the last '70s when McNulty left for Elyria after losing some wrestle offs. Their meeting at the Mentor District drew tremendous attention as McNulty won and the following year took a state title.

Elinsky was third the next weight up that year, as well, despite being the early favorite. Herbert is a real comer and along with Geitgey and Fehn (North Canton) are strong possibilities for the third spot. Fehn did beat Musser in the consolations at North Canton. Averill (Youngstown Boardman) is another dark-horse here, hampered, in part, by not wrestling a real difficult schedule.

The Rogers District is very weak. Worthington might be the best, but it will all be pretty much irrelevant at the state level. Besides those listed -- Worthington, Alejandro, Butler and Pool -- other possible qualifiers are Foster (Maumee) and Tyburski (Toledo Start).

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: HERB RUSSELL (ST. EDWARD)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|
| ① 2. | Benjamin (Dublin) | ⑤/12 13. | Cameron (Hilliard) |
| 3. | Minick (Uniontown Lake) | 14. | Ranallo (Mayfield) |
| ④ 4. | Dolder (Gahanna Lincoln) | 15. | Richner (Painesville Riverside) |
| ⑤ 5. | Kirkbride (GlenOak) | 16. | Hunter (Sandusky) |
| ⑥ 6. | Kiousis (Medina) | 17. | Knudsen (West Chester Lakota) |
| 7. | Harrison (Fairfield) | 18. | Fichter (McFarland) |
| ③ 8. | Durkalec (Midpark) | 19. | Olinger (New Philadelphia) |
| ④ 9. | Rizer (Marion Harding) | 20. | Parks (Toledo St. Francis) |
| 10. | Gerome (VASJ) | 21. | Hollo (Cincinnati St. Xavier) |
| 11. | Ford (Walsh Jesuit) | 22. | Hemsath (Cincinnati Elder) |
| 12. | Newsom (Toledo St. John) | 23. | Bukowski (Toledo Whitmer) |

Sometimes when you begin to analyze a weight class that seems very complicated and difficult, there's suddenly that one flash of insight that makes everything clear. Unfortunately, that hasn't happened here and I remain as befuddled as before. There are just so many possibilities that it's difficult even to accurately assess what are high probability events. At any rate, my choice is the undefeated St. Edward's senior Herb Russell, who qualified last year at 103#. Already the champ at the OCC (third time) and North Canton tournaments, he brings a cerebral, analytic approach to the sport. An excellent student, he always seems to do better the second time he wrestles an opponent. His biggest shortcomings might be physical strength and a propensity for injury. Last year he lost in the quarter-finals although he had apparently pinned his opponent for the last 70 seconds of the bout. He cannot afford to get behind this year.

Russell faces a great field even with the defections of Allen and Barden to 112#. At Hilliard, Benjamin, Dolder, Rizer and Cameron will vie for only three qualifying spots. They each are excellent wrestlers and the draw may play an important role in who advances. Benjamin has been flat-out excellent all year, wrestling with great confidence. Rumors persist that he may drop to 112#, but I've rated him second here. At the Cincinnati Holiday Tournament he was voted tourney MVP after defeating state qualifier Barden, state runner-up Allen, and state champion Noble in succession. Dolder wrestles a lot of low-scoring bouts and has lost only to Benjamin while Rizer and Cameron have won several major

tournaments apiece. Also good are Olinger and Sarge (East Liverpool), but their chances seem somewhat remote. However, Olinger was a state alternate last year and could surprise. MacKinnon (East Liverpool), who might have ended up here, broke his arm and will miss the rest of the season.

It's a dynamite field at Perry. There are at least five standout competitors with several other possibilities lurking in the background. My favorite is the wonderful sophomore Chris Minick -- who last year was one of only two freshmen to qualify for state competition above 103#. A real dynamo, he can score lots of points in a hurry. Kirkbride is extremely slender and tall and uses body length to real advantage. Last year he was 27-1 going into Districts where he failed to make weight ending what had been a brilliant season. This year he has been a little erratic -- for example, losing in the first round of the MIT and then winning seven consecutive bouts to finish third -- including victories over four state qualifiers. A big plus is his pinning ability which gets him back into lots of bouts. Down by six to Minick the first time, he won on a late fall -- but was unable to repeat that in their second meeting which he lost. Kiouisis, a two-time state qualifier, is a fooler. He always does better than I predict, so by my reckoning he should place high at States. A winner at the incredibly difficult MIT, he does well because he appears comfortable and mistake-free in tense, low-scoring bouts. He'll probably have ample opportunity to demonstrate that qualify this year. Ford was fourth last year at 103# and yet he'll have a real struggle qualifying. Only a sophomore, he must learn to wrestle bigger, stronger kids and he is working well toward that goal. Don't count him out. Fichter is something of the unknown in this star-studded cast, but he is also excellent. He beat Ford to win at Coventry and won handily at Perry while finishing a strong third at Tiffin. He is a strong darkhorse in this field. At the same time, McFarland, who had been the starter, is about recovered from a knee injury and may supplant Fichter. Other possibilities are excellent wrestlers like Rhodes (Cuyahoga Falls), Tiggett (Warren Harding) and Ferrar (Akron Kenmore), but their chances are really limited with this strong a field.

At Dayton, only Harrison would seem to have placement potential. He should dominate a relatively weak field at this district and that title could well give him a good slot in the state draw. Knudsen, possibly down from 119#, is probably second best here, but the rest of the cast is quite weak. I've listed Hollo and Hemsath, but those last two qualifying spots are up for grabs. Davis (Oxford Talawanda) and Rudd (Piqua) are other possibilities. A notable absentee will be Aaron Armstrong (Fairborn Baker) who was fourth at 112# last year, but decided not to compete this season. He'd have been a top contender again this year.

At Mentor, Russell will face some strong competition, too. Durkalec won easily at Brecksville and has come on strong. He doesn't wrestle a schedule that puts him up against most of the other top contenders so he remains a little bit of a mystery. Last year he lost a state trip by 2 points to third in the state, Gustovich. Ranallo was a district semi-finalist last year, but then lost twice and was eliminated. He has done well at 125# all year and will be very tough at this weight. Right behind him for that last qualifying spot are Richner and Gerome. Richner, a state qualifier as a freshman, lost twice last year at Districts and went home early. This year he won handily at Richmond Hts. and lost by a point in the finals at Kenston to Barden. Gerome was third at the OCC, beating Ford in the process. Last year a tough overtime loss eliminated him early at Mentor, but he should go much further this time. Carver (Valley Forge)

is an outside choice here, while state qualifier Whitman (Berea) would seem to have no chance. Of course, I would have said that last year, too.

At the Rogers District, only Newsom appears to have any chance at state placement. At the large GMVWA he was voted Outstanding Wrestler (OW) for defeating two small-school state placers and the Kentucky State Champion. However, he was fifth at the OCC. Hunter could be an upset specialist from this District. Now at 125#, he appears to have both speed and power, but his results have not been commensurate with the apparent talent. He will need to be carefully considered by all opponents. Parks, Bukowski, Allison (Toledo Bowsher) and Meyer (Toledo Rogers) are among the contenders for the third spot.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMP: JOHN MARCHETTE (NORTH CANTON HOOVER) ①

TOP CONTENDERS

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|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ⑤ 2. Vaughn (St. Ignatius) | 13. Schillig (Gahanna Lincoln) |
| ③ 3. Hickin (Kent Roosevelt) | 14. Knight (Shaker Hts.) |
| ⑥ 4. Gustovich (St. Edward) | 15. Carroll (St. Xavier) |
| ④ 5. Kern (Maumee) | 16. Griffith (Dublin) |
| ⑤ 114 6. Philipps (North Olmsted) | 17. Torres (Lorain Southview) |
| 7. Lawhorn (West Carrollton) | 18. Ashton (Perrysburg) |
| 8. Lovejoy (East Liverpool) | ② 19. Whitaker (Warren Harding) |
| 9. Sackett (Akron North) | 20. Walton (Austintown Fitch) |
| 10. Combs (Fairborn Baker) | 21. Glover (Toledo St. Francis) |
| 11. Stevenson (Massillon Perry) | 22. Tye/Bonner (Cincinnati Princeton) |
| 12. Miller (Ashland) | 23. Allbaugh (Groveport) |

This is a weight class that features a variety of styles and, as such, the state draw will, in my mind, be critical to the final outcome. My choice is the non-stop senior, John Marchette, who goes six of the hardest minutes in Ohio. It is a frenetic pace that wears down most opponents especially in combination with Marchette's great strength and exceptional takedowns. A fourth place finisher last year, Marchette's only defeat this season was to two-time Division III champ, Matt Dernlan.

Vaughn, a qualifier last year as a freshman, is by contrast a down-tempo wrestler who utilizes the legs. Injured part of this season, he is just beginning to regain his conditioning. He won at both Solon and Brunswick and lost to Gustovich (who he defeated at Districts last year) in the OCC final. Gustovich is a tough, grind-out wrestler who never quits and whose slick little single is outstanding. He has been third the last two years, and could well do so for a third time.

Kern was fourth last year, losing to Gustovich in consolation finals at 119#. Much smoother than the other three, he has not wrestled a very demanding schedule so far this year, which may leave less prepared for the rigors of state bracket sheet. Finally, Hickin, the only non-state qualifier in this top group, has been marvelous, winning at both Kenston and Hudson with ease. He missed

state qualification by a takedown last year and that will not happen again. He is a very large 125# wrestler.

At Perry, Marchette and Hickin should dominate, but there are several other top-flight kids there. Sackett was fifth at Medina, losing only to Gustovich and Withrow (which he easily avenged) and is my favorite for the third qualifying spot. Walton is very good, but the person to really watch is state qualifier Whitaker. Up from 103#, he is a real "load" for anybody. If he drops to 119#, he could be a factor, although this district is very strong there, too. Stevenson, the Tiffin champ, faces an uphill struggle, but he already has defeated some top contenders, including Schilling. One who will be missing here is Chad Owens, the outstanding freshman from Walsh Jesuit. A fabulous youth wrestler, he made a very impressive high school start, but apparently fell victim to academics. Watch for him next year.

At Mentor, Vaughn and Gustovich are strong, but they will not lack for competition. Philipps may drop to 119#, but he has been excellent at 125# -- winning at Brecksville. Knight nearly upset Gustovich at last year's districts and contributes a dash of excitement at every meet he wrestles. Torres, Hayek (Midpark) and Pluhar (Maple Hts.) are all possibilities. I particularly like Torres should he get the right draw.

After Kern, the Rogers District does not look strong. Ashton was clobbered by Hickin 16-3 at Hudson, while Miller has been steady, but not spectacular. He has been second at the Ashland, Gorman and Smithville tourneys -- a kind of consistency that he would hope continues for the remainder of the year. Glover, fourth at the OCC, and Lindsey (Toledo Start) are other possibilities.

The Dayton District looks very weak with Dobosh likely to stay at 130# and, thus, Lawhorn would appear to be the best of the rest. Combs has done reasonably well, while Carroll was a finalist at the Cincy Holiday. Besides this trio, either Tye or Bonner of Cincinnati Princeton could make an impact with Burns (Cincinnati Oakhills) or Sheperd (Xenia Beaver Creek) as possibilities.

The Hilliard District is also weak, now that Rizor has moved to 119#. The top contender here is Lovejoy, who missed state qualification by a single point in the consolation finals at 130# last year. Now down at 125#, he was a strong second at the OVAC and appears ready to take a real shot at a state place. The Columbus duo of Schillig and Griffith are probably the top contenders for the last two spots, but that battle is really wide open. Certainly, Allbaugh has an excellent shot at qualification with lesser chances for state qualifier Ireton (Logan) and Schultz (Westerville North).

PROJECTED CHAMPION: DAN LEEMASTER (WALSH JESUIT) (3)

TOP CONTENDERS

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|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Dobosh (West Chester Lakota) | 12. McCullough (Wapakoneta) |
| 3. Gron (VASJ) | 13. Daugherty (Ravenna) |
| 4. Nathanson (Shaker Hts.) | 14. Arnold (Cincinnati St. Xavier) |
| 5. Grant (Westerville North) | 15. White (Akron North) |
| 6. Bulugaris (Xenia Beavercreek) | 16. Caldwell (Groveport) |
| 7. Smith (Gahanna Lincoln) | 17. Liberti (Alliance) |
| 8. Jackson (Dayton Patterson) | 18. Camp (Troy) |
| 9. Reece (Toledo St. John) | 19. Medina (Perrysburg) |
| 10. Ortiz (Lorain Southview) | 20. Lewis (Reynoldsburg) |
| 11. Geers (Cincinnati Mt. Healthy) | 21. Weisner (Holland Springfield) |

Defending state champion Dan Leemaster should dominate what is otherwise a relatively weak weight class. Already committed to Michigan, Leemaster stands out as one of the top half dozen seniors in the State. However, he is not upset-proof as was clearly demonstrated by a Parkersburg sophomore, but that defeat is not likely to be replicated during this season. When he wrestles with concentrated fury like the first period with Gustovich in the dual or after Dobosh put him on his back at the MIT, he is truly devastating. So the key might be simply staying focused on the task at hand -- not always easy when you're usually way ahead.

Leemaster emerges from a district with lots of journeymen wrestlers, but no one else that really stands out. I've listed Daugherty, White and Liberti and they all would make reasonable state qualifiers, but with, perhaps, very little placement potential. Other possibilities are Stahl (Medina) and Harris (Uniontown Lake).

Dobosh had Leemaster on his back at Medina, but that turned out to be a mistake as Leemaster unleashed a furious assault resulting in the fall. Except for that, Dobosh, fifth last year, remains undefeated. Rumors abound about a possible drop to 125#, but there would seem to be problematical gain -- except for a much easier district competition. Dayton has the best and deepest field at this weight, including the steady Bulugaris, state qualifier Jackson, the undefeated Geers, Arnold and Camp. Bulugaris won at both the GMVWA and Beavercreek and lost in the finals to Division II pick Calhoun at the Cincy Holiday. He may not be explosive enough for the top quintet. Jackson went 29-4 last year, but lost an overtime bout in the first round at States, which seemed to indicate a conditioning problem. Jackson handily beat Geers in first round district action last year, but it may be a lot closer this year, while Camp is duplicating last year's fine record. Gaskins (Vandalia-Butler) is also a solid candidate here. This will be a very good competition, where some state-caliber wrestlers will be left home.

Frankly, I had some trouble coming up with the requisite 21 names at this weight -- that's almost never a problem -- and it's because of some real weaknesses at the Mentor, Hilliard and Rogers Districts. For example, state qualifier Nathanson and state alternate Gron stand out at Mentor, with Ortiz

certainly a strong third choice. After that, there just didn't seem to be anywhere near the usual Mentor District quality. It may be an opportunity for folks at other weights to think about. Anyhow, Nathanson is up from 112# and may be mulling a move down to 125#. There seems to be no good reason to do so. He is undefeated at 130# and with the right draw could be a possible finalist. Gron could well fit that same mold -- losing only to Leemaster in the OCC and Coventry finals. Ortiz is also strong and it's difficult to guess who might even challenge this trio. Incidentally, state champ Van Cucha last year pinned Ortiz in 25 seconds in the consolation semi-finals and Gron in 26 seconds in the consolation finals for the final state berth. The third place finisher here could be a finalist in 1991, as well.

Grant leads the Hilliard District, although the really good people have hammered him hard in the past. Smith is a strong second choice with placement potential. He won at Tiffin and Gahanna. Caldwell is my third pick with Lewis somewhat behind -- he pinned Smith earlier in the year, but will have difficulty qualifying for States. Davis (Hilliard) and Ongalibong (Marion Harding) should both be here and could be a factor.

State qualifier Reece is the best out of the Rogers District with the sophomore McCullough somewhat behind. Reece has lost to Gron, Arnold twice and Gaskins among others, but has an uncanny knack of coming back and grabbing a high place. Medina is a possible third choice, but it could just about be anybody. The best 130# in this area is probably Todd Hicks -- who was third in Division III as a freshman at Stritch, a Division I state qualifier as a sophomore at Toledo St. John, but is now a standout for Bedford, Michigan. He would have had placement potential here.

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: STEVE ST. JOHN (VASJ) ①

TOP CONTENDERS

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|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ② 2. Miller (Oregon Clay) | 12. Downward (Westerville North) |
| ③ 3. Chandler (St. Edward) | ①/30 13. Zinkan (Cincinnati Moeller) |
| 4. Franklin (Walsh Jesuit) | 14. Anderson (Pickerington) |
| 5. Dodson (Hilliard) | 15. Lazzara (Sandusky) |
| 6. Giovonozzo (Akron North) | 16. Furlong (Warren Howland) |
| 7. K. LaCure (North Canton Hoover) | 17. Sperber (Cincinnati Elder) |
| ④ 8. Kosarko (Maple Hts.) | 18. Immel (Franklin Hts.) |
| ⑤ 9. Guillozet (Greenville) | 19. Stackhouse (West Chester Lakota) |
| 10. Graham (Perrysburg) | 20. Turner (Cleveland Hts.) |
| 11. Jageman (Fairborn Baker) | 21. White (Youngstown Boardman) |

Steve St. John is one of the best wrestlers in Ohio and is a virtual certainty to capture his second consecutive state crown. Unbeaten during the past two years, St. John has really dominated since his sophomore year when only the presence of three-time state champ Shawn Nelson kept him from going unbeaten that year as well. As I said last year, he is not particularly flashy, but his mistake-free technique just gives his opponent no opening to exploit. He will be

a superior collegiate wrestler at Arizona State and I'm anxious to measure his progress in the collegiate ranks.

I thought Chandler might have been the most physical sophomore wrestler I had ever seen last season. He just kept reminding me of the words Howard Ferguson had used at our last luncheon meeting when he said, "you are really going to like the way this little Chandler wrestles -- he is really something." He had everything but good luck, losing to St. John four times (but who doesn't) and then missing state qualification because of some horrible strategic decisions (for which the coaches get blamed). Now he's back with St. John again and he has not wrestled with the same intensity I saw last year. Somehow that indefinable spark just doesn't seem to be there. The one exception was the dual meet with Walsh where he exhibited much of his past physicality in defeating state place winner Franklin. A big plus is that he should be away from St. John at States.

The third Mentor qualifier is likely to be the excellent sophomore, Kosarko, who has blossomed into a standout competitor. He may not win it this year, but he still has two more chances to make good on his exceptional promise. There is little depth after this trio.

Miller was fifth last year at 130# and has been devastating all year, winning by huge margins everywhere. The right draw could make him a finalist, but it would be an enormous upset for him to defeat St. John. There is a large drop off at the Rogers District after him, with Graham and Lazzara nominal choices for the last two spots. Sneider (Toledo Central Catholic) and Hasenaur (Holland Springfield) are two other possibilities.

Franklin placed sixth last year at 140# and has dropped a weight class this year -- although with some difficulty. He won at Medina, but failed to make weight at the OCC -- certainly a sign of his struggle. He has lost to St. John and split with Chandler among the top group and delivers a consistently good effort. The unorthodox Giovonozzo, an old teammate from last year, is back this year for Akron North. He was a state quarter-finalist last year and his very unusual moves are difficult to combat when seen for the first time. He will be a real problem for those from other parts of the State. State qualifier LaCure has moved from 119# to 135# and remained effective. Dobosh beat him by a point to deny him a place last season. There is good depth at Perry with Furlong and White, both excellent wrestlers from the Youngstown area, and Wright (Ravenna).

State qualifier Dodson parallels LaCure in moving up three weight classes and he, too, lost a hard-fought battle to Dobosh at States last year. Up till now, he has gone at 140# -- winning at Hilliard and Gahanna and finishing fourth at the MIT. His losses there were to the top pair of 140s in Division I -- Strunk and Sabo. Behind him, the Hilliard District is very shaky with a lot of unproven talent. I like Downward the best of this group.

At Dayton, the field is in total disarray. Guillozet is a state qualifier who has wrestled well and may be the best state placement candidate. Jageman, Zinkan and Sperber are other top choices to qualify. An intriguing possibility is Stackhouse, who has just dropped to 135# with very positive results. He could be a factor in the team competition if he can qualify out of this relatively weak district.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: BRIAN STRUNCK (WEST CHESTER LAKOTA) (3)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ① 2. Sabo (Walsh Jesuit) | 14. Kirby (Tiffin) |
| 3. Fetter (Marion Harding) | 15. Bertone (Painesville Riverside) |
| 4. Tammerine (Perrysburg) | 16. Turba (Maple Hts.) |
| ② 5. Grammes (Strongsville) | 17. Craft (Galloway Westland) |
| 6. Curry (Cincinnati Mt. Healthy) | 18. Roche (St. Ignatius) |
| 7. Saxton (Akron North) | 19. Marinelli (West Carrollton) |
| ③ 8. B. LaCure (North Canton Hoover) | 20. Crockrel (Toledo St. John) |
| ④ 9. Clement (St. Edward) | 21. Link (Wadsworth) |
| 10. Seesholtz (Hilliard) | 22. Bloomer (Toledo Start) |
| 11. Gearheart (Vandalia Butler) | ⑤ 23. Polson (Xenia Beaver creek) |
| 12. Merrill (Elyria) | 24. Tibolla (Austintown Fitch) |
| 13. Evans (Dayton Col. White) | 25. Tran (Findlay) |

I face a real dilemma when it comes to the top choice here at 140#. In my own mind, Eric Sabo seems an easy choice after a sparkling fourth place finish last year and an outstanding season this year marred only by an upset loss to Homer Wright. A great pinner, Sabo ends a lot of bouts early -- a major advantage during long, arduous tourneys. And, yet, every uninvolved coach tells me that Strunck will win because Sabo is "perfect" for his style. Not that Strunck doesn't have good credentials, including previous state qualification and this year's MIT title. My concern is that Strunck -- not a pinner -- wrestles more low scoring bouts which certainly increases the risk factor. I do believe Strunck has more chance of being the victim of an upset than Sabo. However, when the preponderance of choice is so great on one side, I'll string along with Strunck, but will not be at all surprised should Sabo triumph.

Strunck wrestles in the most crowded district, featuring a number of possible state qualifiers. Curry was one bout from state qualification last year and has but a single loss this season. He, too, is a pinner. Gearheart, Evans and Marinelli are also steady performers with reasonable chances for qualification, but not places. Polson, one the other hand, is more up-and-down, but on successive good weekends could qualify and place. Other possibilities are Blazer (Cincinnati LaSalle) and Mays (Fairfield).

Sabo, however, exits from most talent-laden area. No one, not even Sabo, has a guaranteed ticket out of Perry. Grammes, a state qualifier at 125# last year, has wrestled very well all year, including a big win at Brunswick. The very physical Saxton has kept me puzzled all year with different weights and results each week. He is really "on the bubble" at this district. LaCure, just a sophomore, has loads of talent and might be Sabo's toughest challenger. He has been awesome lately and could have been ranked at high as third. Both Tibolla and Link are Top Twenty material, but that will not be good enough to get to States. I suspect some of this group may look at the somewhat easier 145# district as a possibility here.

Fetter was pinned by Sabo in the first round of States and never got back in the competition -- although this year he will. He is a fierce competitor with an

undefeated record and he will be a tough challenger against the top duo. I'm not sure what to think about Seesholtz. He was a great third at 145# at the MIT and otherwise lost only to Smith (narrowly) at that weight. Then he moves down to 140# and loses to St. Ed's second-stringer (albeit a very good one) at Licking Hts. Like Fetter, he, too, qualified at 130# last year losing to him 11-8 in the finals. That differential may be greater this year. Craft is a distant third choice and after him there is total confusion. Possibilities might be Hupp (Gahanna Lincoln) or Rice (Mount Vernon).

Tammerine stands out at the Rogers District, but placing him fourth overall may be a stretch. I was really impressed with his Hudson victory, including a last round fall over Saxton, but he has not wrestled a strenuous schedule after that. Still, the victories have piled up in impressive fashion, indicating that his rating might not be so far off after all. The rest of this district is really mediocre at best. Kirby and Crockrel are my next two, but they won't win a bout at States. There are probably better people that I've missed, but right now it's not clear who they might be. I've listed Tran and Bloomer, or maybe Russ (Defiance) is the answer.

The Mentor District is unusual in that there are a number of journeyman wrestlers, but nobody really outstanding. This makes two consecutive years that this district has floundered at this weight. An exception might be Clement who seems finally ready to make good on the early promise he showed. He started slow with a third at North Canton and a fifth at the MIT, but was a tough third at the OCC losing only to Sabo. He has placement possibilities. Merrill is good, but something always seems to go wrong. Still, he should qualify. Bertone and Turba are the journeyman types I mentioned earlier, while Roche has lost five times, but is always in a match. Roche could possibly drop all the way to 130# -- although that may still not really improve his qualification chances.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: RICHARD FOSTON (NORTH CANTON HOOVER) (6)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Ovall (Holland Springfield) | 12. Beres (St. Edward) |
| 3. Smith (Dayton Wayne) | 13. Mohr (Delaware Hayes) |
| 4. Shanklin (Fairfield) | 14. Swagler (Harrison) |
| 5. Lawless (Xenia Beaver Creek) | 15. Anderson (Oregon Clay) |
| 6. Geese (Dublin) | 16. Chiudoni (Massillon Perry) |
| 7. Wilson (Stow) | 17. Bennett (Elyria) |
| 8. Retherford (Ravenna) | 18. Chawdry (Hilliard) |
| 9. Oden (Cleveland Hts.) | 19. Mahaffey (Toledo Macomber) |
| 10. Tiberi (Gahanna Lincoln) | 20. Pangallo (Cincinnati Oakhills) |
| 11. Zellner (Mansfield) | 21. Page (Maple Hts.) |

Santa Claus came early at North Canton this year and the prize package he delivered was Richard Foston. While at Bridgeport the past two seasons, Foston finished fourth and second in Division III, losing a 6-5 heartbreaker in last year's final. Already the possessor of speed, strength and good skills, Foston has been dramatically improved by veteran coach Walt Tolarchyk. Long recognized

as one of the absolute best in Ohio, Tolarchyk has transformed Foston into a polished product who should take the big school crown this year. Only Division II Becks is in the same league as Foston and a match up somewhere between these two would be fun.

The Perry District contains two enigmas. First, Wilson, the last of that fine wrestling family, has had an up-and-down career already -- and he's only a junior. A state qualifier as a freshman, Wilson did not compete in the tournament process last year despite a 21-2 regular season record. This year he won handily at Hudson, but was upset at Brunswick and wound up third. Rumors persist that he may go 140#, but he should really do better here. Retherford was a state qualifier two years ago at 103#, but has campaigned all year at 152#. He has had some injuries, but won the Solon Tourney rather easily. He should be at 145# and as he grows into his new, larger body, he could become very good. Chiudoni, Jardine (Strongsville) and Denholm (Akron Springfield) are other thoughts.

State fifth place finisher Ovall returns at 145# for his junior year and certainly has finalist potential. He totally dominates his district, which may not be totally positive in terms of developing conditioning and mental toughness. The trio of Zellner, Anderson and Mahaffey are the best I could find, but they will not cause other qualifiers to lose much sleep. Farrell (Mansfield Madison) and Mayes (Toledo Central Catholic) are other possibilities.

State qualifier Smith has lost only to Division II standout Bryant in a bout that many saw him for the most part dominating. He is a big 145# and has lots of experience. He could possibly be a finalist. Shanklin won both the Cincy Holiday and Kenston at 152# and then crushed good opposition to win the Fairfield at 145#. He is a force to be reckoned with and may well surpass Smith. Lawless is one of these refugees from the holocaust at Xenia High School. Unbelievably, they have cancelled all sports for at least one year, dismantling the once proud Xenia wrestling team in the process. Using every possible tool, these wrestlers have fled to Beavercreek and Bellbrook in order to compete. Lawless' older brother is starring at Bellbrook, while he continues to perform wonderfully well here -- and it can't be easy. Incidentally, Toledo is likely to be next in this latest round of budget cutting. Lawless beat Geese to win the Cincy Holiday and also won the GMVWA and Beavercreek. His only loss was to Foston and he, too, has strong placement potential. After this excellent trio, the quality drops sharply. I've listed Swagler and Pangallo, but there are a number of other possible contenders.

Defending district champ Geese (at 135# last year) returns to head a strong field. Streets missed qualification by one bout as did Mohr. Tiberi also has good experience and that is already one more excellent contender than spots available. An even more intriguing possibility in Chawdry, who campaigned with good success at 171#, but now with Dodson and Seesholtz dropping has moved down to 145#. There hasn't been a lot of interaction within this group so far, which makes it difficult to establish a pecking order. I think Geese is reasonably safe for qualification, with Streets and Tiberi both shaky -- I'd be surprised if both made it.

The Mentor District shouldn't have a place winner here. Oden is very strong, but seems to have real lapses out on the mat. Beres is a fine wrestler

and overall athlete, but seems to lose every close bout he wrestles. Bad luck and injuries have plagued him. After that, it's really wide open. There is substantial opportunity here for some of the excess 152s.

152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOE PLOUSE (AKRON NORTH) ①

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ① 145 | 2. Gron (VASJ) | 12. Ruddy (Toledo Central Catholic) |
| ② | 3. Dennis (Fairfield) | 13. Taylor (Xenia Beaver creek) |
| | 4. Cummings (Dublin) | 14. Turns (Uniontown Lake) |
| ④ | 5. Riklik (New Philadelphia) | 15. Miller (Valley Forge) |
| | 6. Ramsey (Shaw) | 16. Ryan (Hilliard) |
| | 7. Hiller (Centerville) | ⑤ 17. Odita (Upper Arlington) |
| | 8. Boston (Stow) | 18. Jankowski (Toledo Whitmer) |
| | 9. Franklin (Lorain Southview) | 19. Dobson (Norwood) |
| ③ | 10. DeYarmon (Buckeye Local) | 20. Olson (Holland Springfield) |
| | 11. Tobin (Clayton Northmont) | 21. Markham (Ashland) |

This is an extremely fine weight class featuring four returning state place winners and eight returning state qualifiers and, yet, it really looks like no contest. State runner-up Joe Plouse has advanced to a higher plateau unmatched by any other in this field. Undefeated this year, he destroyed a good Medina field and roared through the Hudson despite a fine effort by Division III contender Futo. Last year he lost the 145# title to Jim Andrassy in a hard-fought 4-2 bout and that small margin is all the more impressive when we examine the sensational freshman year Jimmy is having at Kent State. Yes, it's a fine field, but Plouse should dominate.

There are at least four solid contenders for the runner-up spot. One is Chad Gron, fourth last year at 135#, who has grown into a relatively small, but extremely effective 152#. Undefeated and really almost untested, he should dominate the Mentor District. It's an interesting field behind him. Ramsey began the year virtually unknown and yet won at Brunswick over Cummings and lost to the Pennsylvania state champ by only two points at North Canton. It's hard to know if he's for real, but so far nobody has convinced me that he's not. The sophomore Franklin is another one of those prodigies we see so often at Lorain Southview. A district qualifier last year, he has lots of tools. The extremely angular Miller is a possibility, but the weight may be a real problem for him. Other possibilities are Lima (North Olmsted), Tenaglia (St. Edward) and, maybe, Vernon (Mentor).

A second potential finalist is Dennis, fifth last year at this weight. He won both the Cincy Holiday and the Kenston at 160# and was equally effective at 152# at Fairfield. State qualifier Hiller and Tobin are strong opponents at Dayton, but are probably a good half dozen points behind Dennis. Kaleb Taylor, another victim from Xenia, could well gain the fourth qualifying spot. He has just joined the team within the past month. Dobson is also excellent, while Jackson (Cincinnati St. Xavier) and Whalen (Cincinnati Moeller) are long shots.

A third possible finalist is Cummings. He was sixth last year losing to Robbins and Petche back-to-back before falling to Dennis for fifth. He's had some tough luck this year, losing 9-7 to Ramsay at Brunswick and 8-7 to Shanklin at the Cincy Holiday. He'll be ready by March. There is good depth at Hilliard. State qualifier Riklik is excellent and is, himself, the fourth potential finalist. He suffers from a slightly under-nourished schedule for a team that must compete at the Division I level. DeYarmon, a Division II district champ and state quarter-finalist, is a slight favorite for the third qualifying spot. He'll be challenged by Ryan and Odita from the Columbus area -- each of whom has scored some big upsets. Pomeroy (East Liverpool) is also a factor here while Wahoff (Pickerington) cannot be overlooked. It will be a real donnybrook at this district.

At Perry, Plouse should have little trouble with state qualifier Boston, who heads the rest of a not very strong field. I've given Turns a nod for the third spot, but it's really wide open. Xeloures (Massillon Jackson) is the first wrestler whose last name begins with "X" ever to be in this report, but that probably will not be a great help toward qualification.

At Rogers, there just is not much to discuss. Ruddy is just down from 160# and he appears to be the best candidate here. I've also listed Davis, Olson and Markham, but this is probably not a good example of fact-based decision making. Two other possibilities are Dadzie (Toledo St. Francis) and Davis (Perrysburg).

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: RICH HEPP (ST. EDWARD) ①

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. Deer (Toledo Waite) | 12. Lunardi (Willoughby South) |
| 3. King (West Chester Lakota) | 13. Fickes (Centerville) |
| ② 4. See (Galloway Westland) | 14. Knaul (Gahanna Lincoln) |
| ③ 5. Drake (Oregon Clay) | 15. Sheck (Euclid) |
| 6. Beasom (Warren Howland) | ⑤ 16. Hawker (Perrysburg) |
| 7. Ruiz (Lorain Southview) | 17. Poulos (Akron North) |
| 8. Caraffi (Strongsville) | 18. Sweet (Dayton Wayne) |
| 9. Calihan (Hamilton) | 19. Leonard (Cloverleaf) |
| 10. Seymour (Hilliard) | 20. Smith (Sidney) |
| 11. Schilling (Sylvania Southview) | 21. Carroll (Westerville North) |

It just didn't seem right that two of Ohio's finest seniors would face off at 171#, so I'm pleased that Rich Hepp decided to drop to 160#. I really think it's his natural weight and it provides him with his best shot at a state title. Last year a freak home injury kept out the last half of the season after a tremendous start. He had lost only to two-time state champ Genovese in Ohio and lost an 8-2 lead even then. This year both of his losses have to defending state and national champ Mollica -- one a third period blowout at Medina, the other a tight 8-6 dual loss decided by a takedown in the last 20 seconds. Extremely intelligent, Hepp should, with one big exception, dominate this field through a combination of exceptional physical tools and analytical skills.

At Mentor, Hepp should cruise to the championship with only Lolly Ruiz a possible contender. Since they compete at the same sectional, they'll be apart at the District level. Ruiz is very physical and has good state placement potential. After him there is a big gulf before competitors like Lunardi, Sheck and Boiani (Valley Forge) appear.

The one real threat to Hepp is Josh Deer, third at 160# last year. He is yet another contender who dropped from 171# and his speed and power will be difficult to neutralize. Very confident, he can be extremely flashy on the mat, but it's backed up by some solid skills. He has some terrific head and arm combinations. Last year he lost 7-6 in the first round and then won three relatively easy bouts for third. Drake was fifth at this weight last year and has been even better this year, losing only to Deer. Schilling and Hawker are the best candidates for the last spot, with Kokensparger (Holland Springfield) a long shot. This district will send three fine wrestlers at 160#.

A possible threat to Hepp is likely to come from King, who also just dropped to 160#. His only loss was a technical fall to Mollica in the MIT finals and he will be very difficult for everyone at this weight. A state qualifier at 160# last year, he appeared to have first-round jitters and lost a tough overtime match. A victory there might have made him a finalist. Calihan lost an overtime bout to King in the consolation semi-finals, costing him a state appearance last year, but he should rebound well this year. Fickes has lost only to top contenders like Dennis, while Sweet has been a consistent placer. That would leave state qualifier Smith at home the second week end in March. Other possibilities are Hall (Dayton Patterson) and Margioras (Xenia Beaver creek).

See has been very consistent at both 171# and 160# this year and he has finalist potential. His only loss was an overtime defeat to state third Josh Deer at 171#. He'll be very tough at this weight. Seymour has been solid all year, winning at Hilliard and Gahanna and missing the MIT finals by a single point. Knaul is also good, losing a 15-13 shoot out to Seymour earlier and dropping a 4-point bout to Drake at Tiffin. This trio should all qualify with Carroll as a possible dark horse.

There's an interesting mix of candidates at Perry. Beasom may be the best wrestler in the Warren-Youngstown area and has definite placement possibilities. Caraffi was a district finalist last year at this weight while only a sophomore. He beat Farmer in the semi-finals before losing to McKean. Then at States, he takes a first round exit, while Farmer goes on to place second. This year he has lost a number of close, low-scoring bouts, none of which taken singly mean much. However, they do paint an overall picture that is not as positive as anticipated in terms of improvement. Even so, this district is relatively weak with this top duo trailed by Poulos, Leonard and a host of others.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MARK MOLLICA (WALSH JESUIT) ①

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ② 2. Keiner (North Canton Hoover) | 12. Patrilla (Toledo St. Francis) |
| 3. Hager (East Liverpool) | 13. Joyce (Dayton Wayne) |
| ④ 4. Spaulding (Miamisburg) | 14. Yuskewich (Cincinnati St. Xavier) |
| ⑤ 5. Robinson (Worthington) | 15. Nolfi (Youngstown Boardman) |
| ⑥ 6. Eckle (Upper Arlington) | 16. Materni (Holland Springfield) |
| ⑦ 7. Kocsis (North Ridgeville) | 17. Palmer (Logan) |
| ⑧ 8. Auerbach (Bedford) | 18. Peterson (Pickerington) |
| ⑨ 9. Sawyer (Strongsville) | 19. Cohen (Brush) |
| ⑩ 10. Hoy (North Olmsted) | 20. Salter (Toledo St. John) |
| ⑪ 11. Westerbeck (Sidney) | 21. Pontius (Toledo Bowsher) |

After the Larry Kaufman upset loss last year at 189# snapped a decade-long string of correct choices, this is now the weight class in Division I where I've chosen the most consecutive winners. That streak is certainly not in jeopardy in 1991 with Mark Mollica now an overwhelming favorite to capture his second consecutive state title. Mollica cruised to his first championship last year -- pinning in the finals -- and then went on to take the Junior Nationals, as well, last summer. Undefeated the past two years, it has been a real pleasure watching him develop from a promising freshman to one of the top high school performers in the country. His pinning ability may also be a crucial element in Walsh's favor should the team competition be as tight as forecasted. One other interesting sidelight is that a Mentor District qualifier has won the last four state titles at 125#, 145# and 171#, but will be favored at none of these weights in 1991.

The second finalist at this weight could also come from the Perry District. State qualifier Keiner will have the advantage of being "away" from Mollica in the state bracket and with Hepp, Deer and King moving to 160#, he has good finalist chances. Keiner has lost only to Hepp (twice) and Mollica this year and has shown good improvement. There will be a real dogfight for the last spot featuring four possible contenders. These include the blocky Sawyer who won two district bouts last year, the pin-or-be-pinned Nolfi, the fine sophomore Mims (Ravenna) and Gash (GlenOak).

State qualifier Hager leads the Hilliard contingent and had been perfect this year until an injury default at the OVAC. Assuming full recovery, he should be poised for a high state place. Just about as good is state qualifier Robinson, who lost to Hager in last year's district. He split two bouts with King -- before he dropped to 160# -- and has been a bright star for Worthington. Eckle is also excellent, winning at Beavercreek (over Westerbeck), Brunswick and Upper Arlington. He, too, has placement potential. This would eliminate both Palmer and Peterson, who might well qualify at most other districts.

Spaulding was a state quarter-finalist last year and has been solid this season as well. He pinned Joyce to win the Wayne Invitational, but suffered his only loss to Westerbeck, 13-12, at Troy. Westerbeck is my second choice at this district, while Yuskewich and Joyce make up my picks for the four qualifying spots. Yuskewich, just down from 189#, was fourth at the OCC. Other

possibilities are Pater (Fairfield), Johnston (Wilmington) and Zang (Cincinnati Oakhills). If Walker (West Chester Lakota) moves to this weight, he could well be a factor.

At Mentor, state alternates Kocsis and Auerbach lead the way. Kocsis and Myers form a great one-two punch for North Ridgeville and I'm sure they push each other in the room. Auerbach had a great sophomore season last year, but has not looked quite as good this year -- although injuries have played a part. At this weight he probably has the most upside potential. Hoy and Cohen should battle for the last qualifying spot and one of them will be a tough first-round candidate for some other district champ.

Now that Deer has moved to 160#, the Rogers District is in total disarray. Patrilla and Materni are probably marginally the best, but that is not saying a whole lot. I've also listed Salter and Pontius and evaluate Wampler (Perrysburg) as having, perhaps, the most upset potential. The rest of the 171s will be hoping to draw into this district.

189#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JERMAIN DANIELS (DAYTON WAYNE) ①

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ② 2. Rivera (Oregon Clay) | 14. Davidson (Xenia Beaver creek) |
| 3. Eaton (Groveport) | 15. Altman (Holland Springfield) |
| ③ 4. Uphouse (Hilliard) | 16. Lindimore (Westerville North) |
| 5. Ostholthoff (Cincinnati Moeller) | 17. Yates (VASJ) |
| ④ 6. Myers (North Ridgeville) | 18. Smith (Wooster) |
| ③ 7. Caniglia (Hudson) | 19. Wilson (Youngstown Boardman) |
| 8. Lisco (St. Edward) | 20. Mendoza (Lorain Southview) |
| 9. Dekany (Sylvania Southview) | 21. Walker/Uhl (West Chester Lakota) |
| 10. Dudley (Clayton Northmont) | 22. Pelton (Gahanna Lincoln) |
| 11. Rosser (Lancaster) | 23. Turley (Massillon) |
| 12. Cook (North Olmsted) | 24. Habel (Toledo Whitmer) |
| 13. Grant (Sandusky) | 25. Anderson (Newark) |

With a 4-3 victory in the State finals, Jermaine Daniels capped his junior season with a 35-0 record and a coveted state title. An enormous 189#, he wears down opponents and last year seemed to own the third period. This year he has been very impressive, but not perfect. Lonny Rivera, the senior from Clay, caught him as he worked a cradle and "stuck him" in the finals at Tiffin. Just as interesting was Daniels' narrow escape over Division II star Philipps at the St. John's Invitational pulling out a 9-8 triumph. So he's not invincible, but it will take a mammoth effort to dethrone him -- although, I believe, there are several in this field capable of that effort.

Daniels exits a very fine district. The big junior Ostholthoff was a rare sophomore state qualifier at the heavier weights and accomplished it on a bad knee. Quite healthy this year, he blitzed the field at both the Cincy Holiday and OCC. However, Rivera eliminated him 12-2 in the first round last year. Dudley won at the GMVWA and missed state qualification by two points last year.

The fourth spot is probably the only one still unaccounted for. Davidson is probably a narrow favorite, but the shrunk-down heavyweight Maloney and Walker are also strong possibilities. Right on the fringes might be Thomas (Cincinnati Princeton).

As mentioned, Rivera upset Daniels and has wrestled an unblemished schedule so far -- in fact, he has not really been pushed hard the entire year. That will likely continue through his district competition as well. It will only be at the state level that Rivera will begin to be pressured -- and, of course, respond in kind. Dekany is a pinner and should back up Rivera in this area. At the state level, he's going to have problems. The third slot will be a dogfight. My favorite is the recently shrunk-down Grant, who has wrestled heavyweight all year. He could be very tough at this weight class. Altman, Habel, Moreno (Fremont Ross) and Martin (Wapakoneta) could all be involved, too. Notable by his absence is state qualifier Michael Jackson (Toledo Scott) who 32-3 last year as a junior. He apparently will not be competing.

State qualifiers Eaton, Uphouse and Rosser all return at Hilliard and must be accorded favorites to qualify once again. Eaton is flat out excellent and is a potential finalist. He has dominated all three tournaments entered and should go much farther than last year's quarter-final effort. Uphouse, weighing only about 180#, has crushed everyone but Daniels (who TFed him), including the championship at the MIT. On a comparative score basis, he has actually done better than Eaton. He faces a real dilemma, however. Clearly, the exodus of talent make 171# look very attractive when you can make that weight. On the other hand, he has performed so brilliantly at 189# it doesn't seem to make a lot of sense to change. Oh well, that's why the coaches make the big money. Rosser is clearly on the bubble here. He was third at Tiffin and may be vulnerable to the likes of Lindimore, Pelton, Anderson, or Hysell (Galloway Westland).

Again, I would be surprised if any of the Mentor qualifiers are able to earn more than a low place. Myers, only a junior, has real talent, but his toughest matches have to be in the room with Kocsis. He may not be psychologically ready for the Daniels, Riveras and Uphouses. Lisco, another junior, has made solid progress and a low place is a distinct possibility. He doesn't seem super strong to me. Cook, another reformed heavyweight, won the Brecksville and could be a factor even at the state level, but his big problem might be Yates, who hardly anyone has ever seen. A fine sophomore wrestler at Painesville Harvey last year, Yates went 18-7, but did not reach the district level. This season he transferred to St. Joseph and has improved dramatically under the tutelage of Coach John Storey -- long recognized as one of the best developers of big men in the state. Yates won at Perry and was second at Coventry behind Turley. He was not able to compete at the OCC, but his progress has been rumored to be exceptional and he may be a qualifying threat. Other Mentor possibilities are Bolden (Midpark) and Cash (Elyria).

The weakest district is at Perry, where Caniglia looks easily to be the best. Two years ago, as a sophomore, Caniglia captured a sixth place thanks to an excellent effort and good bracketing. Last year he was a district semi-finalist -- lost two quick bouts -- and was gone. This year he should be a strong favorite to take the district crown, although a state place could be a stretch. After him all is chaos. I've listed Smith, Wilson and Turley with the last mentioned maybe being a real "sleeper." Susec (Geneva) is another

candidate, but Geneva's schedule really permits no true evaluation of their talent until tourney time.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ERIC POEHLER (HILLIARD) ①

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ② 2. Green (Fremont Ross) | 12. Hansen (VASJ) |
| ③ 3. Rohrbacher (Worthington) | 13. Jones (Groveport) |
| ④ 4. Middleton (Perrysburg) | 14. Esterle (Cloverleaf) |
| 5. Clay (Akron Firestone) | 15. Wolford (Findlay) |
| 6. Miree (Cincinnati Princeton) | 16. Baytos (Youngstown Boardman) |
| 7. Terebeniec (St. Edward) | 17. Dillon (Troy) |
| 8. Hammerstein (Wapakoneta) | 18. Ogletree (Trotwood Madison) |
| ③ 9. Patty (Mayfield) | 19. Holmes (Berea) |
| 10. Ross (Mentor) | 20. Asher (Fairfield) |
| 11. Allen (Wooster) | 21. Robinson (Hamilton) |

I have spent the entire season looking for good Division I heavyweights and I have not found very many. For whatever reason, there are probably five heavyweights in Division II that, competing here, would probably be considered favorites. One thing anyway, the competition should be even, unpredictable and exciting and it just may uncover that superior heavyweight who has been around the entire time, unrecognized by most of us.

My pick is the 220# dynamo from Hilliard, state qualifier Eric Poehler. He has won titles at Hilliard, Gahanna and Licking Hts. and finished second at Medina to Ray Edmonds, a Division II competitor. Poehler is quick, well-schooled and a pinner who has already defeated a number of the other top heavies. His cause would be helped with a state draw that didn't contain a lot of the 275# heavyweight types.

The heavyweight that I really like is also at the Hilliard District, but Chris Rohrbacher lacks experience. Behind Bateman the past couple years, he lacks experience in the tight bouts, but he is truly going to be outstanding. If he had one more year varsity experience, he probably would have been my choice. He won at the Cincy Holiday and Worthington and lost a sudden death bout to Edmonds at the MIT. If he keeps progressing, he could well surpass Poehler by March. Jones is a possible third choice at this district with Wilson (Marion Harding) -- who had defeated Jones this year -- and Jackson (Westerville North) as other possibilities.

Another real threat to Poehler is the mammoth Green. A state qualifier last year, he got "bombed" in the first round and eliminated. This year he is undefeated, but probably still now consistently wrestling up to his potential. That entire Rogers District is strong. Middleton was also a first-round state loser who, like Poehler and Rohrbacher, has lost to Edmonds. He seems like definite placement potential. Any time I see the name Hammerstein from Wapakoneta I know the boy will be big and strong. Jon is no exception and he

could be the third qualifier. Other possibilities include Wolford, McLaren (Toledo DeVilbiss), Crampton (Toledo Start) and Wojciechowski (Toledo Bowsher).

Clay heads a relatively weak Perry District. A state alternate last year, he has lost a couple of close bouts which have reduced his visibility. At Solon, Patty pinned him in the semis after being behind the entire bout, while at Hudson, Middleton hung a 3-2 semi-final loss on him. Clay did win at Coventry pinning Hansen. Behind him are Allen (who also lost a close bout to Edmonds -- who seems to have beaten every Division I heavyweight) and Esterle. There should be some upsets here with Baytos, Cogar (Uniontown Lake) and Zoul (Strongsville) possible being involved.

State quarter-finalist Terebeniec heads the Mentor District, but he looks in need of a little retrofitting. Somehow he doesn't seem to have any shot at all and only his incredible strength keeps him winning. The talent is clearly there, but somehow it has been hidden most of this year. He looks like he's wrestling not to lose rather than going out and making his moves. Don't forget he has beaten Rohrbacher twice this year, along with a number of other good heavyweights. Ross was second at North Canton, losing in the last seconds to Terebeniec and then was runner-up at Brecksville to Fickell. Patty won at both Solon and Kenston and remains undefeated currently. Both these boys could create waves at the State level. Hansen is also a certain contender, while Holmes remains undefeated -- including a big win over Dool. The huge Swift (Lakewood) is yet another possibility.

At Dayton, the cupboard seems almost bare. Miree has potential and could score at the State level. The rest of that area is not very strong.

TEAMS

1. Walsh Jesuit -- While St. Edward has beaten them in both dual meets and tournaments during the season, the State confrontation will likely turn in a different direction. They have two sure champs in Mollica and Leemaster, and state placers Sabo and Franklin should score heavily as well. A key element is that at least one of the great freshmen -- Johnson or Musser -- needs to strongly contribute, but that looks like a reasonable possibility. If state placer Ford gets hot, or Williams does well at the weak 160# class, it could be a runaway.
2. St. Edward -- If they are to win a state title for Greg Urbas, it will truly have to be a total team effort. While Hepp and Russell are favorites, there is not the same level of surety as with the Walsh duo. Gustovich can score, but the two other big guns, Chandler and Terebeniec, have, at times, seemed listless. What could win it for St. Ed's is if a couple of the next level boys -- like Jayne, Friedle, Clement, Beres, or Lisco -- get hot, qualify and score at States. The odds say that is unlikely. Remember, though, that the new consolation gives teams with depth like St. Edward and West Chester Lakota a much better chance to win.
3. West Chester Lakota -- The big four of Grove, Dobosh, Strunck and King could all be finalists, but that is pushing good fortune kind of hard. Still, Grove seems like a sure winner at 103#, while the other three are certainly very heavy potential scorers. They match up at three weights with Walsh -- 103#, 130# and 140# -- and need to win two of those. They also should qualify another four wrestlers out of their district, but whether that second quartet can score at the State level is very problematical. In perfect circumstances, they could win it all.
4. North Canton Hoover -- Again, a team with two projected champions -- Marchette and Foston -- and some great potential in some other areas. Foston is a high probability winner, but the linchpin of the team is Marchette. Should he do well, we could see heavy scoring from some of the others like Keiner, Billy LaCure and Ken LaCure. In my mind, Bill LaCure is a key player. He has been red hot lately and the 140# weight class is not super strong; a lot of points could be gained right there. If the top teams falter, North Canton could conceivably be champs.
5. VASJ -- Yet one more team that has the horsepower to win in perfect circumstances -- and wouldn't it be something if they repeated. St. John is a sure champ (though Miller is very tough) and Chad Gron has been splendid all year. If Bryan Gron comes through, this trio could score 60 points. After that, people like Gerome, Yates, or Hansen have to create a miracle.
6. Fairfield -- Another deep team that could benefit by the new, superior consolation rules. Wineberg, Barden and Harrison -- the first three weights -- all have placement potential, while Shanklin and Dennis are excellent middle weight competitors. They may qualify some other fringe wrestlers out of their district, but not folks who contribute at the State level. A big problem is that there is no super star who can provide guaranteed big points.

7. Oregon Clay -- The Rogers District is relatively weak, but the big three of Miller, Rivera and Drake are big-time scorers at the State level. The first two have finalist potential and will pick up some additional pin points as well. Unlike VASJ, they have no other scoring possibilities.
8. Hilliard -- A team that could vault four or five places upward in the standings if they can cash in at some critical weights. Uphouse and Poehler are sure to be strong scorers, particularly the latter boy at the weak heavyweight class. After that, they have an enormous number of possible State qualifiers from the likes of Dodson, Seesholtz, Seymour, Ryan, Chawdry, Davis and the two Camerons. This is a team made for the new consolation format and it will be their challenge to see how they can utilize it best.
9. Worthington -- A team that features a trio of stars -- State semi-finalist Allen, Robinson and Rohrbacher. If Allen regains form at 112# both Robinson and Rohrbacher should score heavily at weak 171# and heavyweight classes. There's no margin for error here since back-up scoring is non-existent.
10. Perrysburg -- This is kind of a mystery team, but one with substantial potential. Middleton and Tammerine are the principal factors, but Ashton, Graham and Forbes have State caliber records. If someone like a Hawker or Wampler can help, they're up a few more notches.
11. Akron North -- A nice team that may not be able to score much above the District level -- Plouse, of course, being an enormous exception. Still Sackett, Saxton, White and Giovonozzo are all good possibilities -- and, if one or two can come through, they could make the Top Ten.
12. Dayton Wayne -- Jermaine Daniels is the principal scorer here and Smith may be able to contribute substantial points. What has to happen is for people like Joyce, Sweet and Gregg to contribute.