

DIVISION II

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KELLY SHIELDS (EDISON SOUTH) (1)

TOP CONTENDERS

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Wheaton (Greenfield McClain) | 13. Habermehl (Hamilton) |
| (10) 3. Santa Maria (Kenston) | 14. Bourne (Chardon) |
| (4) 4. Dominique (Bryan) | 15. Acklin (Columbus DeSales) |
| 5. Sanders (CAPE) | 16. Zeno (Margaretta) |
| 6. Henderson (St. Paris Graham) | 17. Hickman (Camden Preble Shawnee) |
| 7. Gaca (Canfield) | 18. LaFountain (Paulding) |
| 8. Beard (Clyde) | 19. Toye (Olmsted Falls) |
| 9. Lovejoy (Martins Ferry) | 20. Haverdill (Lake Catholic) |
| (2) 10. Davis (Milan Edison) | 21. Meek (Milbury Lake) |
| 11. Kramer (Wooster Triway) | 22. Worley (Lebanon) |
| 12. Warner (Claymont) | 23. Falcioni (North Royalton) |

Somehow this is a weight class that just hasn't developed into a clear picture over the first half of the season. Part of the reason is that several of the prime contenders wrestle isolated schedules that gives them little contact with those from other parts of the state. In addition, as is always the case at this introductory weight, there has been an influx of freshmen and sophomores whose overall impact has yet to be fully evaluated. What this all leads up to is that any of a half dozen contenders could win the title and, that if a couple of the good 112s drop down, it could dramatically change the outcome.

My choice is Kelly Shields, the outstanding sophomore from Edison South. Last year as a freshmen, Shields blitzed all opposition in winning four tournaments, including the mammoth OVAC, and taking sectional and district titles as well. He came to States with 31 consecutive victories and extended that by one with a technical fall in the first round. Then Lang quickly took him down twice in the quarter-finals (once to his back) and Shields seemed to disintegrate. He ended up losing 16-4 and was eliminated when Lang was edged in the next round. This year Shields has again gone undefeated, winning the OVAC once more (he could become the second in history to win four times) and looking very sharp. Whether he has gotten mentally tougher will probably not be truly tested until the districts -- but the answer looks to be totally in the affirmative.

Shields toughest competition might be right there at the St. Clairsville District in the person of Jesse Wheaton. A state qualifier last year when he won 45 matches, he, too, was eliminated in the quarter-final round. Now an experienced senior, Wheaton will be a severe test for anyone at this weight. He and Shields have never met. This leaves only one remaining opening at St. Clairsville and that should be a real struggle. I was mightily impressed with Warner at the MIT as he finished a strong fourth -- losing to St. Ed's Jayne in overtime 13-11 in the consolation finals. However, Lovejoy defeated him easily at Barnesville and has to be accorded the favorite's role. A possible

dark horse is Ricker (Dover), although Warner beat him 12-5 in their dual meeting.

At Firestone, state alternate Santa Maria has to be accorded the favorite's role and consideration as a possible state finalist. He has been runner-up at North Canton (to Johnson) and Kenston (to Wineberg) and has wrestled a perfect schedule against Division II competition. Gaca, a senior, has the experience and strength that many of the younger wrestlers here lack, but, at the same time, may not possess their athletic abilities. He won at Solon and was a strong third at Brunswick, losing a 1-0 heartbreaker in the semis. Kramer, who was a district qualifier last year and has lost only once this year, may be something like third best here, but it really is difficult to tell. Freshmen like Falcioni, Bourne and Haverdill are possibilities. Toye, if he can make 103#, will also be a contender for state qualification. There are a lot of other possibilities like Beal (Tallmadge), Beros (Canton South) and Herrick (Highland).

The Galion District will probably be dominated by the very physical Dominique. A real pinner, he was a district semi-finalist last year losing 5-4 to Smith. He then took a nose dive all the way to sixth place. Undefeated this year, he really may be better than I've placed him. Beard has lost twice this year (once to Division I powerhouse Boda and once to Zeno), but has been very consistent overall. He has beaten a number of the good 103s (including Zeno) and should grab a qualifying spot. Davis Acklin, Zeno and LaFountain are good with the last of those mentioned currently appearing to be left out of state qualification. Clearly, the differential between everyone here, but Dominique, is tiny and small variations in individual performance could have a large effect on overall outcome. I also like Meek, Reynolds (Port Clinton) and Denman (Oak Harbor). Missing here is state qualifier Page (Toledo Swanton) who beat Dominique 3-2 last year, but who will miss the entire season due to injury.

As Dominique is dominant at Galion, so, too, should Sanders be at the Dayton District. Only a sophomore, he was very close to state qualification last year and has been even better in 1991. He was third at the Cincy Holiday, losing only to the excellent Wineberg. Rated directly behind him is Brett Henderson, whose tournament plans are not known to me. He has been at 112# most of the season and has done reasonably well. For example, at Licking Hts. he defeated Colucci in the quarter-finals before losing the title bout to Blackburn. He wrestled at 103# at the MIT losing to Dernlan there in sudden-death overtime. Should he be at 103#, his close, conservative style will be difficult to defeat. Behind them are two other district qualifiers who have also performed well this year -- Habermehl and Hickman. While they certainly have appropriate qualifications for state qualification, they would have difficulty winning a bout once there. Also listed is the improving Worley, who could surprise for a qualification berth, and old rivals Everhart (Springfield Shawnee) and Baugh (Kenton Ridge).

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CHARLIE SAMPSON (MARLINGTON) 119 (4)

TOP CONTENDERS

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|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. Lang (Brecksville) | 12. Kersten (Oak Harbor) |
| 3. Bernardo (Trinity) | 13. Brettell (Steubenville) |
| 4. Roe (Byesville Meadowbrook) | 14. Srihanouvang (Lima Shawnee) |
| 5. McDaniel (Uhrichsville Claymont) | 15. Lucas (Akron St. Vincent) |
| 6. Roth (Kansas Lakota) | 16. Frey (Cincinnati Purcell) |
| 7. Sommer (Crestwood) | 17. Scott (Watkins Memorial) |
| 8. Smith (Lexington) | 18. Cunningham (Martins Ferry) |
| 9. Hess (Kenton Ridge) | 19. Behrens/Reisinger (Marysville) |
| 10. Payne (Fairview Park) | 20. Garafalo (North Royalton) |
| 11. Enright (Lebanon) | 21. Benham (Dayton Northridge) |

This is the third consecutive year that 112# in Division II has one of the deepest, classiest fields in all three school classifications. Why that is I don't know, but, maybe, instead of lots of analysis we should just sit back and watch the action unfold once more.

Last year the Firestone District dominated at 103#, finishing first, second, third and fifth. This year, most of those folks are back at 112# and it creates a real dilemma. It's kind of like the old game -- rock, scissors, paper -- where each element can defeat one of the other ones, but loses to the remaining object. Sampson beats Lang decisioning him at Districts (3-2) and States (7-4). Lang beats Bernardo at Districts (3-2) and at a tourney (12-4). Bernardo beats Sampson at Wadsworth. So I copped out and picked the defending state champ Sampson, although I think it might be Lang's turn this year. Sampson is very tall and methodical, cashing in on his consistency with a state runner-up trophy as a sophomore and the state title last year. Lang can be a whirlwind, scoring points in huge bunches. Bernardo is also a tremendous scorer, but has had third period problems in the past. Of course, Roe might actually be better than any of them, but more on that later.

The Firestone District is very deep. Besides that top trio, both Sommer and Payne are solid Top Ten candidates. Sommer, in particular, is impressive and his Kenston win attests to his abilities. Payne has probably improved more than any of the other Top Five mentioned here, but may still have a short way to go. Lucas beat state runner-up Boardwine the first week of the season, but it remains to be seen if he can go with the top boys. Garafalo is kind of a "shot in the dark" here, edging out such folks as Hamad (Nordonia), Audrick (Warrensville Hts.), Ross (Highland) and Spencer (Canton South) for that last rated position.

The two dynamos from St. Clairsville may be every bit as good as the Firestone trio -- or, perhaps, better. Roe was district champ at this weight last year and won a bout at state before losing to Todd Hill. This year he has been crushing all opposition, including a 16-5 final round drubbing of a West Virginia state runner-up at the OVAC. I thought very seriously about projecting him as champion. McDaniel is a tough little character who got third at Barnesville (lost in the semi-finals on an illegal slam) and fifth at Medina

losing his semi-final bout to Musser 5-4. He, too, was a state qualifier at this weight losing to the very tough Rich Randall in the first round. Brettell has been very sharp of late -- second at Richmond Hts. and fourth at the OVAC -- and should grab the third qualifying berth. Cunningham, Kruse (Hillsboro) and Lamberson (Bellaire) are other contenders, but not very serious ones.

State Division III runner-up Cody Roth will probably do well in District competition, but may be in for a real surprise at States. Undefeated this year with over 20 wins, he will likely do no better than a low-to-middle place. State qualifier Dan Smith is a steady competitor who is always there at the end. He's won two Gormans and was district runner-up last year. Kersten got the fourth and last qualifying spot last year and then captured a sixth at the States. He has just dropped from 119# where he competed with good success. He'll do even better here. Now that Lima Shawnee is Division II this year, we'll see more of their headliners. Srihanouvang is solid state qualification material. All four of this top quartet are from Toledo sectionals. Weaker at this particular weight class, the Central District qualifiers will have to fight hard to get any places. Scott, Reisinger and Hammond are their best shots, with Barouh (Bexley) a possibility. Owens (Norwalk) and Gonzalez (Clyde) are other Toledo competitors also looking at that fifth spot.

I think that Dayton District is somewhat weaker. State qualifier Enright and state alternate Hess look best here with each winning some important tourneys. Enright shredded Kersten at Oak Harbor while Hess has won several smaller tournaments. Frey and Benham are nominal choices for the last spot.

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOHN NOBLE (LEBANON) 2

TOP CONTENDERS

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|------------------------------------|--|
| <u>5</u> 2. Hegarty (Highland) | 12. McKinney (Clermont NE) |
| 3. Kersten (Oak Harbor) | 13. Lunsford (Circleville) |
| 4. Llewellyn (Steubenville) | 14. Kitchen (Twinsburg) |
| 5. Stoll (Milan Edison) | 15. LeBeau (Miami Trace) |
| 6. C. Shaw (Uhrichsville Claymont) | 16. Bailey (Ravenna Southeast) |
| 7. Carone (Toledo Swanton) | 17. Anderson (Dayton Carroll) |
| 8. Butterfield (Bexley) | <u>3</u> 18. Ambroziak (Lake Catholic) |
| 9. Mrosko (New Lexington) | 19. Meade (Watkins Memorial) |
| 10. Corso (Sandusky Perkins) | 20. Fiocello (Buckeye) |
| 11. Nye (Revere) | 21. Byers (Urbana) |

If they would have held a vote for the Outstanding Wrestler in the Division II State Tournament last year, mine would probably have gone to John Noble. He began by knocking off a defending state runner-up on a technical fall, pinned a state placer, beat another state runner-up 9-2 and then beat a defending state champ for the title 11-2. It was quite a performance, especially for a sophomore. This year things have not gone quite as smoothly. At the GMVWA he pulled out a last-second 9-8 win over Newsom, then lost to Benjamin 4-3 and barely held on to beat Barden 3-2 for third. Granted, those are all Division I wrestlers, but there just didn't seem to be the flash and dash of last year. At

Oak Harbor, things seemed to turn around once more and Noble began to look like the devastating terror of last year. If true, the state title is well in hand even though, as presently constituted, this is a relatively strong weight class. Had it not been for an overtime loss his freshman year, this would have been his third state title.

At Dayton, Noble should be joined for state action by two returning qualifiers -- McKinney and Anderson. Both are well behind Noble and are probably not in much danger of becoming place winners. The undefeated Byers and, perhaps, Snider (Springfield NW) are other possibilities.

Hegarty was my Division I choice at 103# last year when wrestling for Holy Name, but fell just short losing to Grove in the semi-finals and finishing third. At 103#, he was devastating in the top position utilizing his great strength to gain a carload of pins. His only weakness was a lack of quickness in gaining takedowns. At 119#, he has had mostly success, although some disturbing lapses as well. He has already lost to Kiouisis, Kirkbride and Rowland, but has beaten such stalwarts as Minick and state runner-up Allen. I think Noble's quickness may be too much for him. State qualifier Nye and Kitchen look to be quite a distance behind him at this district and, in fact, all four of the other qualifying berths are pretty much open. I would expect to see some real surprises here.

Initially, the Galion District did not seem terribly strong, but recent events have changed that assessment. State qualifiers Kersten, Stoll, Butterfield and Lunsford are all at this weight now. While none of them have the octane rating to go with Noble or Hegarty, all of them need to be considered for a low place. Butterfield was sixth last year, but won only one bout, 3-2, over Mrosko. Kersten and Lunsford were shut out in their state appearance, although Kersten has really shown improvement recently. Stoll was a state qualifier at 103# last year and ended up a strong fourth. He has been up three weight classes (125#) all year without missing a beat, winning at Edison and Bellevue and finishing second at Marion Harding. Carone, also just down to 119#, missed State action last year, but beat Heuerman at Rogers and wrestled a perfect dual schedule. That's five solid candidates already. Someone to watch here is Corso, who was second at Tiffin to Dolder 3-2, and has a wealth of experience. Meade, Blair (Rossford) and Mosure (Columbus DeSales) are other possibilities here, but with a five-man qualifying format, they can't have very high hopes.

Two wrestlers who I think have made amazing progress are Craig Shaw and Chris Llewellyn. Both fell short in state qualification bids last year, but may have vaulted ahead of better known competition in 1991. Shaw has beaten the excellent Kirkbride twice while compiling a 17-2 record. He is a tough, feisty competitor. Llewellyn won the OVAC at this weight and looks very ready for state action. That puts state qualifier Mrosko in some jeopardy here with LeBeau possibly out in the cold. Last year, LeBeau beat Shaw 8-0, but I would be surprised if that happens again. Napier (Hillsboro) is another legitimate contender here.

PROJECTED CHAMP: LENNY SCHORK (SOLON) ²TOP CONTENDERS

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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Giffin (Watkins Memorial) | 12. Corvin (Milan Edison) |
| 3. Galeazzo (Lake Catholic) | 13. S. Shaw (Uhrichsville Claymont) |
| 4. Possage (Lisbon Beaver Local) | 14. Yeager (Bellaire) |
| 5. Taylor (Clyde) | 15. Ream (Springfield NW) |
| 6. Withrow (Wooster Triway) | 16. Coler (Morgan) |
| 7. Wilson (Byesville Meadowbrook) | 17. Heuerman (Anthony Wayne) |
| 8. Fisher (Marion Franklin) | 18. Huhn (Goshen) |
| 9. Rust (Tipp City) | 19. Kelty (North Royalton) |
| 10. Eggar (Fairfield Union) | 20. Madden (Dayton Alter) |
| 11. Stone (Akron St. Vincent) | 21. Philabaum (Canal Fulton NW) |

Again, this is not a particularly strong weight class, although it does contain quite a number of former state qualifiers. Most of them, however, have been shut out at the State level and have never been thought of as top-echelon performers. A real exception to that generalization is the slick junior from Solon, Lenny Schork. Last year he wrestled brilliantly at the State level losing the championship only in the last seconds. This year he got off to a slow start at the Solon Classic, but looked good at the MIT losing only to long-time nemesis Gustovich. Included among his victims there were state champion Hartman, Shaw and Withrow. While not the largest 125# in the State, he has the advantage of not having to make a severe weight cut on a week-after-week basis. That type of draining regimen may affect some of the others here. Certainly no one in this field has better moves than Schork and I foresee him winning the title in relatively straight-forward fashion.

At Firestone, Schork will face one of his principal rivals in Galeazzo. He has had an excellent year -- second to Hickin at Kenston and third at the OCC losing to Gustovich -- and is a large 125# (but not as big as Hickin). His problem is a total lack of real experience at the district and state level. Almost never does such a wrestler win a state title without at least some hard district competition in his background. A plus for Galeazzo will be that he and Schork should be on opposite sides of the draw. Possage was fourth just two years ago and has beaten everyone this year, but the excellent Nathanson from Division I. Last year he reached district semi-finals in good shape and then dropped three bouts to miss a state trip by one place. He may well supplant Galeazzo as second best here. Withrow is also excellent and should make the trip to States. There is a major gap between this quartet and everyone else. I've listed Stone, Kelty and Philabaum, but there are plenty of other candidates. Two such would be Carroll (Marlington) and Seacrist (Chardon).

Until recently, the best and deepest district overall was the one at Galion. Then both Stoll and Carone opted for 119# providing a little breathing space for those that remained here. This "evening out" procedure should improve the quality at 119# while, at the same time, not eliminating some good people here. State qualifier Giffin was injured in first round state action last year and could not continue. This year he has won impressively at Licking Hts., Hilliard and DeSales, although none of those tourneys featured super-tough 125s. Bubba

Taylor has already twice qualified for State action --each time winning his first round bout and then losing a tough quarter-final match. And each time he failed to get to the consolation bracket under the old format -- something, thankfully, that cannot happen this year. Taylor has won three tourneys this year and remains unbeaten at this time. State qualifier Eggar may be rated too high, based on some of his early season results. He did not place at Licking Hts. (130#) and seems to have been in a small slump. Last year, though, he beat Giffin 10-9 at Districts. Fisher is a powerful competitor and should be able to qualify. Corvin has been very successful at 130# and could be the fifth qualifier, although Heuerman, Keske (Bellevue) and Mayer (Bexley) will push him.

There's a lot of experience at St. Clairsville, but I'm not sure how well these qualifiers will match up with those from other districts. Wilson lost to District champ Yeager in last year's semis 15-13, but still qualified in the third spot. He beat Rust in first round action before losing to eventual champ Zamiska and finishing sixth. He looked good early in the year destroying Shaw in the Barnesville final, but then didn't make the final at Hamilton Twp. and was sixth at the OVAC. Yeager was the District champ last year, but did not wrestle well at States and has struggled some this year losing at least three times. Shaw beat Kersten at the Medina, but then lost twice including a 17-1 drilling by Schork. State qualifier Coler won a first round bout at States and lost a tough quarter-final bout. He has not looked as good this year losing to Pinkerton at Marietta and Case at Cadiz. Four good wrestlers -- none of whom seem to be operating at maximum efficiency right now. At Steubenville, state alternate Jones (Steubenville) has wrestled only sporadically and mainly at 119#. With Llewellyn seemingly having that position nailed down, we may see him here at 125#.

While there's experience at Dayton as well, it, too, has not had much success at the State level. Both Rust and Huhn were first round losers who did not much impress. Rust, however, was a strong third at Tiffin this year, second at Troy (to Ream) and second at Wayne (to Combs). He has the most chance of placing -- even though splitting with Ream this year -- because of his experience. Madden and Byers (Urbana) are other possibilities.

130#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JOEY CALHOUN (BETHEL-TATE) (1)

TOP CONTENDERS

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| (2) 2. Wright (Crestwood) | (5) 13. McDaniel (Uhrichsville Claymont) |
| (3) 3. Knight (Steubenville) | 14. Fraley (Cincinnati Turpin) |
| (4) 4. McAtee (Big Walnut) | 15. Behnfeldt (Napoleon) |
| (6) 5. Lippert (Kansas Lakota) | 16. Armstrong (Hillsboro) |
| (3) 6. Scherf (Oak Harbor) | 17. McCauley (Louisville) |
| 7. Mancuso (Milan Edison) | (4) 18. Paul (Doylestown Chippewa) |
| (2) 8. Rupanovic (Buckeye) | 19. Dunlavy (Anthony Wayne) |
| 9. Silcox (Sandusky Perkins) | 20. Besecker (Tipp City) |
| 10. Klempa (Bellaire) | 21. Taylor (Morgan) |
| 11. Cottrell/Francis (North Royalton) | 22. Sizemore (Western Brown) |
| 12. Shook (Fairview Park) | 23. Kent (Lake Catholic) |

Basically there are five prime candidates to win the title here and, statistically, each of their probability of success probably does not differ by much. It's one of those situations likely to be decided by something like the shape of the draw or the vagaries of officiating or someone with a "hot" hand. Let's look at each of the principals here.

Calhoun is a two-time state qualifier who finished fifth his sophomore year after reaching the semi-finals and lost an overtime bout to place last year. He may have the greatest raw potential of the quartet, but wrestles in an area where he is rarely pushed. Generally wrestling up two weight classes, he still barely breaks a sweat in most bouts. His mid-season highlight, the very tough Cincinnati Holiday, saw him win easily against Division I competition including both Arnold and Bulugaris.

Wright was state champ at 103# as a sophomore winning a key bout in overtime against Noble in the semi-finals. Last year Noble caught him in the 112# finals and took revenge with an 11-2 drubbing. This year he has outgrown Noble moving all the way to 130# and done so with great success. Extremely quick, he should be a half step ahead of many of the 130s, though possibly not as strong. He is an excellent competitor.

Knight began the year at 125# -- same as last year -- and was outstanding in early duals and at Richmond Hts. Then he moved to 130# presumably to accommodate growth and has been even better. He won the Big Red Invitation in smashing style then beat a two-time West Virginia state champ for the OVAC crown. A state qualifier as a freshman and not since, he could be the tournament surprise.

McAtee is the most consistent of this group. Already a two-time state qualifier, he was fourth last year after capturing the district title. This year his only loss was up at 135# against Dodson where he was just too small. A strong pinner, he can save himself with early falls.

Lippert was fourth in Division III last year and finished with 40 victories. This year his only loss was a dual meet defeat at the hands of Soto. He won tournaments at Van Buren, Fremont Ross, Fremont St. Joseph and Clyde. All this has been accomplished at 135# and yet I'm told he will compete at 130#. It's a gamble that could result in a State finals berth or, perhaps, no place at all.

No one is close to Calhoun at Dayton. State qualifier Fraley lost to Calhoun 10-2 last year and the rest of the group is even farther behind. I've rated Besecker and Sizemore, but don't overlook Clark (Lebanon).

There is some depth at Firestone. Wright, as discussed, is very good, but not so much so that he could not be upset by several in this field. Rupanovic has wrestled both here and at 135#, but with Pariano and Carcelli at 135#, my guess is he'll be here at tourney time. A state qualifier last year, he was eliminated in the quarter-finals in a tough struggle with Scherf. They could well meet again. Cottrell has been a surprise this year winning, for example, at Brunswick, while Shook is finally coming into his own at Fairview. McCauley was a finalist at North Canton, but only fifth at Wadsworth, hence he currently is "on the bubble" in this district. Paul and Kent are two other possibilities here.

McAtee and Lippert are not sure shots at Galion. State place-winner Scherf returns at the same weight and will be difficult to beat. A state semi-finalist last year, he could be the one potential finalist I may have overlooked in the opening of this discussion. Mancuso was the state alternate last year at 119# and has been outstanding this season as well. He has won three major tournaments and should be a major factor at the district level. Silcox and Behnfeldt do not have the same gaudy kind of credentials as the top three, but they are proven winners. Dunlavy, Schrock (Galion) and Laughlin (Clyde) are another step behind and will need to be at their very best to have any hope of qualification.

At St. Clairsville, Knight will meet some rugged competition. Klempa was district champion at this weight last year, before losing to Scherf in the first round at States. This year he won at Bellaire, but was second at Barnesville at fifth at the OVAC. Knight trounced him 10-3 there. McDaniel should drop to 130#, although his chances of qualification are probably not significantly greater here. He didn't place at Barnesville, but was a semi-finalist at the MIT before falling to sixth. Former state qualifier Taylor, Armstrong and Gilman (St. Clairsville) are other possibilities.

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TONY PARIANO (FAIRVIEW PARK)

1ST AT 140

TOP CONTENDERS

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|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ① 2. Carcelli (Benedictine) | 12. Didion (Bellevue) |
| 3. Shanteau (Oak Harbor) | 13. Greatorex (Loveland Hurst) |
| 4. Lemasters (Edison South) | 14. Fondale (New Lexington) |
| 5. Shaw (Clermont NE) | 15. Brown (Camden Preble Shawnee) |
| 6. Mesenburg (Milan Edison) | 16. Touvell (Byesville Meadowbrook) |
| 7. Ferritto (Kenston) | 17. Evans (Canton Central Catholic) |
| ④ 8. Romp (Rossford) | 18. Johns (Lima Shawnee) |
| 9. Driscoll (Nordia) | 19. Cockerham (Carlisle) |
| 10. Brown (Washington Court House) | 20. Voegeli (Canfield) |
| 11. Ianaggi (North Royalton) | 21. Wimmers (Marysville) |

The essence of this weight class is a titanic two-man struggle between two of the finest wrestlers in the state. Since both exit from Firestone, they should meet in the state finals for the final confrontation. Senior Dan Carcelli is the defending state 130# champion and a two-time state qualifier. Last year he finished third in the district losing a tough 10-6 semi-final bout to Mike Rodriguez. Then at States he caught fire triggered by a 5-4 upset decision over favored John McCumber. In the final, he this time defeated Rodriguez, ironically, by that same 10-6 count. This year he remains totally undefeated including a Richmond Hts. title and an OCC crown over two-time state champ Dominic DiSabato. He won the coveted Outstanding Wrestler award there. It's not quite good enough. Pariano, just a junior, has already twice finished fourth in the state -- last year at 135#. Last year Pariano won the Firestone District in impressive style beating the tough Jim Jones 8-4. Then in the state semi-finals, defending state champ Babe Sidon caught him in that fluky step-over for five points winning the bout. Jones then beat Sidon for the state title in the finals. Pariano is also undefeated this year.

This pair has met once with Pariano winning 1-0. My choice is Pariano simply because I perceive an extra shred of talent that will carry the day. It should be close and exciting and it's kind of a shame either has to lose. And, in point of fact, they probably don't since either could probably win at 140#.

The fireworks at Firestone may not be confined strictly to the top duo. Ferritto won an Kenston and was runner-up at North Canton to Chandler. Last year he lost both his district bouts in what was a very difficult draw. Driscoll was a district semi-finalist in Division I last year and has won at Solon and Brecksville. He is very tough. Ianaggi got a late start, but is currently undefeated. He won two district bouts last year. This is my quintet of qualifiers, but that would leave out state qualifier Evans who is 17-2 and the stolid Voegeli. Other possible qualifiers are Levy (Warrensville Hts.) and Rupanovic (Buckeye).

There would have been a second terrific struggle, though at a lesser level, at Galion -- but then Lippert moved to 130#. Now two-time state qualifier Shanteau stands alone here and should cruise to the district crown and could well place in the top three at States this year. He has been excellent this year. Mesenburg was a state qualifier at 112# and is up four weight classes. Actually, he has campaigned all year at 140# and done very well, so 135# would seem to be an excellent fit for him. Romp, too, has really improved and along with Didion and Johns, should comprise the final three parts of the qualifying quintet. There really is a lot of talent here. Wimmers is excellent and may well nudge out one of those rated above him. Also good is Smith (Watkins Memorial), Thom (Perkins) and Hisey (St. Marys Memorial).

State qualifier Lemasters is a level up above everybody else at St. Clairsville. He started the year at 145# winning the River Valley title and then dropped to 135# where he won at Steubenville and then finished second to West Virginian star Shelek at both Buckeye Local and the OVAC -- losing by a single point each time. Behind him are state qualifier Brown, state alternate Fondale and Touvell. All of these wrestlers would certainly be appropriate state qualifiers, but only two can make it. A second trio of Hershberger (West Holmes), Wilkinson (Cambridge) and Gregan (St. Clairsville) have little chance.

There is not a lot of fiercesome talent at Dayton. Two-time state qualifier Shaw heads the field, but he has never won at States. After him there just isn't much. Greatorex has a great record against generally inferior opposition -- may not have even been taken down once so far -- but that will not help against the battle-hardened veterans he'll meet at Nutter. I've also listed Cockerham and Brown with Daniels (Urbana) someone to carefully watch. Puskar (Dayton Carroll) could also play a role here.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CHAD KLINE (WOOSTER TRIWAY)

TOP CONTENDERS

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|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Pipo (Edison South) | 12. Gibson (Utica) |
| 3. McKendrick (Ravenna Southeast) | 13. Periandri (Padua) |
| 4. Tyson (Kansas Lakota) | 14. Gifford (Miami Trace) |
| 5. McKinney (Warrensville Hts.) | 15. Francis (North Royalton) |
| 6. Jenkins (Lewistown Indian Lakes) | 16. Dietrich (Napoleon) |
| 7. Wright (Sandusky Perkins) | 17. Kyer (St. Clairsville) |
| 8. Taylor (Clyde) | 18. Atkinson (Tipp City) |
| 9. Jones (Uhrichsville Claymont) | 19. Akenhead (Marlington) |
| 10. Howard (Doylestown Chippewa) | 20. Crabtree (Springfield NW) |
| 11. Jackson (Clermont NE) | 21. McCormick (Shelby) |

This is a weight class where there is lots of potential for upward mobility. Nobody currently here is anywhere near invincible and the winner is likely to be someone who couldn't win their district the week before.

My choice is Chad Kline who has wrestled all season at 145#, but will drop at tourney time. Last year Kline won two district bouts, but lost an overtime heartbreaker to Bryant which basically doomed his qualification chances. This year he won the Smithville and Triway on major decisions and at the MIT lost in the first round, then won six straight before losing to Seesholtz and finishing fourth. At 140#, he should be very strong.

The Firestone District is about as good as it gets at this weight class. McKendrick is a former 103# state qualifier who has gotten big. He also won at Smithville (at 140#) and had a recent big win over Bryant. He could win it all. McKinney was fifth at 145# last and will apparently drop to this level for States. If so, he will be a real "load" and will be able to challenge anyone. He has been somewhat erratic this year, winning at Richmond Hts., but placing third at the small West Geauga Invitational and eventually defaulting to sixth at Brunswick. This trio should qualify relatively handily. Below them are Division III fourth place finisher Howard, who did not originally choose to participate this year. Then he returned less than a month ago and hasn't missed a beat. Periandri, Francis (if he decides not to go 130#) and Akenhead will all be on the lookout for the last spot.

Pipo was sixth last year at this weight, but should be a finalist this year. He won at River Valley, Buckeye Local and the OVAC -- the latter in particularly impressive style over Gallantine. His only loss -- an overtime upset to the rated Kyer -- does not, in my mind, diminish his season-long efforts. State qualifier Jones also has placement potential and he could be a big factor in the team struggle. He pinned Kyer at Barnesville. At Medina, he lost a sudden death bout to Dean Wright and then won four before succumbing to LaCure. Gifford and Kyer should battle for the last state berth.

At Galion, state placer Tyson may be the best or may be supplanted by Wright and Taylor, who are both very good. However, Tyson beat Taylor 8-5 at Fremont St. Joseph and 5-2 at Fremont Ross before Taylor turned the tables at Clyde with

a 14-4 thumping winning him the OW. Gibson, Dietrich and McCormick are the top favorites for the last two spots, with Weider (Bellevue), Rice (Marysville) and Obert (Hamilton Twp.) also in the hunt.

Jenkins heads a relatively weak Dayton District. A state qualifier last year at 130#, he lost two straight bouts. This year should be substantially different. Nobody else here is a state threat as I've listed Jackson, Atkinson and Crabtree. A long shot here is Vodenik (Mason).

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: CHARLES BECKS (LAKE CATHOLIC) ①

TOP CONTENDERS

③ WILSON - ST.V.

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ④ 140 | 2. Bryant (Kenston) | 12. Bishop (Mason) |
| | 3. Pilarczyk (Chardon) | 13. DeNune (Big Walnut) |
| ④ | 4. Houser (Milan Edison) | 14. Mesaros (Ravenna Southeast) |
| ⑤ | 5. Alvarez (Hamilton Twp.) | 15. Rhodes (Toledo Swanton) |
| | 6. Exline (Canfield) | 16. Anders (Clyde) |
| ⑤ | 7. Shipley (John Glenn) | 17. Halaiko (New Lexington) |
| | 8. Planck (New Richmond) | 18. Dunn (Kenton Ridge) |
| | 9. Weider (Bellevue) | 19. Keller (St. Clairsville) |
| | 10. Culler (Buckeye) | 20. Johnson (Clermont NE) |
| | 11. Roseberry (Steubenville) | 21. Hassey (Columbus DeSales) |

Everybody knew that Charlie Becks was going to be somebody special in wrestling, even as a freshman in high school. After all, he had the genes -- his father was a state runner-up and college star -- and he had the fluid moves that no one can really teach. That promise surfaced last year as he returned from injury to finish as state runner-up, battling the undefeated Woods to the final seconds in a close 9-7 loss. In 1991, he has to be rated as a strong favorite at this weight, although he is certainly not upset proof. Having been down the tournament road all the way to the finals will be a major advantage since there is very little such experience here. But, in the end, he'll have to wrestle four solid matches -- and if that occurs, he will win. If so, it will extend my longest Division II streak of consecutive winners to five.

Becks competes in the best district. State qualifier Bryant has lost only three times -- to Foston, McKendrick and Becks in sudden death overtime -- and could be the top challenger here. He has beaten some top people and has the ability to ratchet up his performance when he meets the very best. He will be a dangerous foe. Pilarczyk was something of a surprise qualifier (at least to me) last year, as he worked his way through the consolation round winning four bouts. He also won one at States before succumbing to Vcelka. He has good placement potential. This trio would seemingly be assured of qualification. The next group is good, but will necessarily be involved in a wide-ranging struggle for the last two berths. Exline has come on strong recently and would seem to be the best of the rest. He was third at Solon and Brunswick and has been very strong in eastern Ohio. Culler was second at Buckeye to Division III pick Homer Wright and was fifth at the MIT, losing to Division I pick Foston and Division II 140#

pick Kline. He has met the best this year and done reasonably well. Mesaros is another possibility here, along with Payne (Solon) and Gasier (Jefferson).

The Galion District is also crowded with good talent -- though not quite at the level of Firestone. Alvarez has spent much of the year at 152#, but should be down here come tournament time. His brother was runner-up at 145# last year. Alvarez was one bout from qualification last year and has won several tourneys this year -- the most recent at Barberton over the excellent Riklik. Houser is another of the Edison wrestlers up a bunch of weight classes and he is one of the best. A district qualifier last year, his only loss was to Mohr of Delaware Hayes after a late start which saw him miss the early part of the year. Weider, DeNune and Rhodes are other candidates here, but watch for Anders to make a splash by district time. Schnell (Sandusky Perkins) and Sherman (Napoleon) are other possibilities here, but the interesting figure is Hassey (Columbus DeSales). Somehow when I watch him there always seems to be a lot of real talent that somehow gets submerged during the ebb and flow of the bout. Should the ability ever really surface, he could be a factor.

Both the St. Clairsville and Dayton Districts seem a little under-nourished at this class. State qualifier and placer Shipley did not qualify last year and has had injury problems this year. He gets the top ranking at St. Clairsville more on past record than victories this year. Roseberry has been a steady performer placing sixth at Richmond Hts. (injury default), fourth at the OVAC and first at Steubenville. Not a record sheet to send the pulse pounding, but one that may augur well for state qualification. Halaiko, Keller and Butcher would seem to be the top candidates for the last berth. Last year, Roseberry was the state alternate at 140#, while Halaiko won two bouts at that weight. Butcher was at 152# as a district qualifier, but lost in the first round.

The Dayton District is not very strong. Planck was a fine 135# last year, but did not see tournament action. He has been excellent this season. Bishop, Dunn and Johnson are those that were rated, but nobody here can win bouts at the State level.

152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KIRK HENRY (UHRICHSVILLE CLAYMONT) (6)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Johnson (Marion Franklin) | 13. Hurrell (Oak Harbor) |
| 3. Collier (Steubenville) | 14. Alexander (West Holmes) |
| 4. McClain (Norwalk) | 15. Orosky (Lake Catholic) |
| 5. Grether (Nordonia) | 16. Miller (Fostoria) |
| 6. Armstrong (Chardon) | 17. Wuethrich (Mason) |
| (3) 7. Zickafoose (Tipp City) | 18. Koledin (St. Clairsville) |
| (5) 8. Benham (Dayton Northridge) | 19. Johnson (Galion) |
| 9. Slone (Willard) | 20. Mishnick (Olmsted Falls) |
| 10. Dunn (Hamilton Ross) | 21. Schmittel (Kenston) |
| 11. Gruezke (Logan Elm) | 22. Murphy (Miami Trace) |
| 12. Montgomery (Madison) | 23. Greene (North Royalton) |

This is one of my long-shot specials in 1991. I'm breaking one of my normal rules by selecting a wrestler with no previous state tournament experience over good people who have been there before. Yet Henry has some great credentials in his own right and will have the added impetus of a tough team competition. He has had a career of injuries times some bad luck and the wrestling gods may finally smile upon him in his senior year. The ability is there, believe me, and all it will take is the right circumstances to unlock it. That will happen in March. Henry beat the formidable Vcelka to win at Barnesville and copped the OW as well. Injuries prevented him from competing at Medina and it would have been interesting to see his progress in that cauldron of activity. Last year Henry was the state alternate losing two difficult bouts at crucial times. That shouldn't happen this year.

At St. Clairsville, Henry will face long-time rival Jon Collier again. Last year Collier beat him 10-9 at Districts and went on to reach the State Meet. This year he won at both Steubenville and Richmond Hts, but lost to Vcelka in the OVAC semi-finals and finished third. This duo is well ahead of anybody else here. I've listed Murphy, Koledin and Alexander as possible third qualifiers. None of that group can match either Henry or Collier.

Erik Johnson was a Division I state qualifier at this weight last year and will be a formidable rival to Henry this year. Very strong, he ripped through the field at Licking Hts., including a sound thrashing of state qualifier Bo Ramsey. Every year Marion Franklin produces a couple of outstanding wrestlers and this year Johnson leads the way for them. That entire Galion District is rich in talent. State qualifier McClain has been a terror all year ripping just about everyone. He has finalist potential. Slone won handily at Wadsworth and lost a wild one-point decision to Pittman at the Gorman. Last year he was a district semi-finalist before losing to state runner-up Alvarez and state third-placer Miller in consecutive rounds and being eliminated. It was extremely tough luck and he could well place this year. I may not have ranked high enough -- but there were so many candidates here. Gruezke has been sharp all year and should qualify, while state qualifier Hurrell looks like a shaky fifth qualifier. He has not looked as good as last year when he peaked in the late portion of the season. Foster has beaten Hurrell and could easily be a factor here. That's six good candidates, but there are still some other solid possibilities. Johnson of Galion was a Division I state alternate in 1990, but his sixth place finish at the Gorman is cause for concern. His title at Marion Harding, on the other hand, is cause for optimism. Conrad (Kansas Lakota) has won some small tourneys and gave McClain a struggle before dropping a 14-10 battle. There'll be some upsets here with this many good kids all in one spot.

While five will qualify out of Firestone, only two will play a major role in the resolution of this weight at Wright State. Grether was pretty much an unknown 140# last year flailing away in obscurity. This year somebody turned on the switch and it's a whole different wrestler. He won at Solon and was even with Connolly at Brecksville when a "header" into the spectators forced him to default. He has been outstanding all year and should impact the State meet with authority. State qualifier Armstrong is also very good, but their schedule is such that it is impossible to judge his overall progress. Like teammate Pilarczyk, he was an early round district loser who swept through four consolation bouts for a third. Among his victims was the impressive Farley of Buckeye. His luck ran out in Columbus and he was a first-round loser. I've

rated four wrestlers who placed at Kenston, but there must be some good talent in the Akron-Canton area I've missed.

At Dayton there are three wrestlers with legitimate state placement hopes. State qualifier Zickafoose leads this group. He was runner-up in district action last year, but lost in first-round state action. He was fourth at Tiffin at 160#, but won at Tipp city and Wayne at 152#. Only a junior, he'll be a very top contender next year. Benham was the District champ at 145# last year winning impressively and then was a state quarter-finalist before being eliminated. He benefits from having the excellent Roberts as a workout partner and his record this year has been unblemished. He will challenge Zickafoose. Dunn was 24-4 last year including two district losses -- both to state qualifiers -- and he has been equally strong this year. Wuethrich also won two district bouts last year and he will be a stiff challenge for Dunn. Also a strong candidate is Hickey (Cincinnati Turpin) who won two bouts at the 160# Districts last year.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: MARTY COONTZ (RAVENNA SOUTHEAST) ①

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ② | 2. Minnard (Fairfield Union) | 12. Grabarczyk (Toledo Swanton) |
| ① 152 | 3. Matson (Miami Trace) | 13. Booth (Bellaire) |
| ④ | 4. Roberts (Dayton Northridge) | ② 152 14. Chaddock (Minerva) |
| ④ | 5. Farley (Buckeye) | ③ 171 15. Hinkle (Jefferson) |
| ④ 152 | 6. Pelfrey (Eaton) | 16. Shumard (Edison South) |
| ③ | 7. Loeffler (North Royalton) | 17. Tommas (Sandusky Perkins) |
| | 8. Mapes (West Geauga) | 18. Sullivan (Springboro) |
| | 9. Burger (Norwalk) | 19. Dubois (Watkins Memorial) |
| | 10. Duff (New Richmond) | 20. Abram (New Lexington) |
| | 11. Lucy (Galion) | 21. Kucia (Cincinnati Purcell) |

This is really an excellent weight class with a number of fine performers in each of the four districts. It has the potential to be a great competition -- for second place. Towering over this assembly is defending state champ Marty Coontz who won in fine style last year and seems to have pushed it up a notch or two this year. He literally hasn't been challenged in any form throughout this entire season -- although he has met none of the top rated boys. A two-time state qualifier, he looks out of reach for even a field as good as this.

The Firestone District is well stocked with good competitors. Farley qualified as a sophomore at 152# last year. He has been a mainstay of Buckeye's fine team all year, winning several smaller tournaments and finishing third at the MIT (winning seven straight consolation bouts after a first-round loss to eventual champ Evans). He is a good pinner. Loeffler has been very steady for North Royalton winning a whole series of close bouts against strong opposition. It should make him mentally tough for tournament time. He won the Brunswick and has twice defeated Division I state qualifier Caraffi. Mapes is a transfer from Berkshire where he was a Division III state qualifier. He was involved in some confusion on the second day and was not able to compete in the consolation rounds. He won at Brecksville. Chaddock looks much too slender to compete at

this weight, but has a whole variety of stratagems to utilize his body length and technical knowledge to win. Right now he is 15-0 and a real factor here. Hinkle was runner-up at the MIT and has some real strange moves that are very effective. That is the top six from which five will qualify. On my "possibility" list I have another 11 names which indicates the depth present. Tops on that list are Breeden (Lorain Brookside), Daso (Fairview Park), Hall (Ashtabula Edgewood) and Marusek (Padua). Missing this year is Damani Wallace (Akron Hoban) who, for whatever reason, is not participating. He would have been a major factor.

At Galion there is excellent quality as well. Minnard has been outstanding this year, including a first-period fall over Seymour at Licking Hts. Already a two-time state qualifier, he finished sixth last year at 152# -- he won his first two bouts and then lost to eventual state champ Cruze by a heartbreakingly close 7-6 score. He quickly lost two more in the consolation rounds. He has an excellent headlock. Lucy was second at the Gorman to Blubaugh, but avenged that loss in a later dual. He is a steady performer -- who is probably a step behind Minnard. Grabarczyk waltzed through the Rogers, winning the final 11-0. Many rank him the best at this weight in the Toledo area. He was a state alternate last year, losing his go-to-state bout to Minnard 12-4. This trio is trailed at a respectful distance by about six other potential qualifiers who will vie for the two remaining berths. Best of this second group is Burger, who won Edison and Fremont St. Joseph while losing a 17-11 final to Ruddy at St. John. He did not, however, see district action last year. Also contenders are Tommas and Dubois, with Shaw (Hamilton Twp.) a possibility should he drop from 171#.

State qualifier Matson dominates the St. Clairsville District. Last year he swept through this tournament winning by a technical fall in the finals and having only one semi-close bout with Shumard. He won a round at state, but then ran into the unorthodox Bartos and was eliminated. This year he won the giant GMVWA, beating Division I state qualifier Smith in the finals 11-2 (his semi-final win was 14-1). He could easily be a finalist, but I don't see him beating Coontz. Booth and state alternate Shumard are next best, but they are way behind Matson. There could be an opportunity here for a less well-known competitor to qualify.

The Dayton District is also strong. The best here is defending district runner-up and state qualifier Chad Roberts, like Matson, he, too, lost to the unorthodox Bartos and under the new consolation rules they would have met last year. His high point this season was the OW at the Carroll invitational which included a big win over Sean Alex. Roberts beat Pelfrey 12-6 in the district semis last year and there's no reason to think that margin has shrunk. Pelfrey still managed state qualification, but met Coontz in the first round and lasted 79 seconds. He won this year at Edgewood and was second at Wayne. Duff beat Sullivan last year 11-6 as they placed fifth and sixth in district competition. They will be the top choices for the third qualifying slot.

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: TROY WEBB (HAMILTON TWP.)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ⑤ 2. Farmer (Fairfield Union) | 13. Bell (John Glenn) |
| 3. Schumm (Trenton Edgewood) | 14. Cadez (Sandusky Perkins) |
| 4. Prather (Canfield) | 15. Reynolds (Uhrichsville Claymont) |
| 5. Rozmus (Urbana) | 16. Simpson (West Geauga) |
| 6. Kendig (Lima Shawnee) | 17. Warr (Warrensville Hts.) |
| 7. Caldwell (Miami Trace) | 18. Tate (Licking Valley) |
| ① 8. Long (Clyde) | ② 19. Dodd (Tipp City) |
| 9. Parton (Loveland) | 20. Simmerman (Little Miami) |
| 10. Carney (Nordonia) | 21. Anderson (Steubenville) |
| 11. Davis (Marysville) | 22. Tomaro (Brecksville) |
| ④ 12. Maag (Orrville) | 23. Cassady (Edison South) |

The way this report is constructed centers around writing 39 short essays (one for each weight class) over a six or seven day period. There is no reason to write them in any particular order (thanks to the word processor), so I start first with those that seem easiest -- like ones that contain names such as Dernlan, St. John, or DiSabato. That gives me a little more time to collect information of difficult weight classes hoping something will turn up to make things easier. Gradually, they all get done until I'm left with the single most difficult case -- and this is it. I have probably made ten calls seeking guidance and help, but the best one I made was to the Hamilton Twp. coach who told me that Troy Webb was going to compete at 171#. Suddenly things got a little brighter.

Webb competed at 160# last year, finishing a strong third at Districts (losing only to state runner-up Cofer) and then won his first match at State before being eliminated. This year he has wrestled at 189# all year and has been nothing less than sensational -- winning three tournaments in easy style. For example, he crushed Rippey at Barberton and handled Siddle to win at Hamilton Twp. I had thought he might be light for 189#, but his results were so good it didn't seem to make any difference. At any rate, he intends to certify at 171# and has to be considered the favorite at that class.

He exits from the strongest of the four districts, not that that means a tremendous amount here. Farmer was a state qualifier at 171# last year and won a first round bout before falling to Kelly Keenan in the quarter-finals. Undefeated this year, he won the Hamilton Twp. on a fall. He will be one of Webb's principal competitors. Kendig was a Division I district qualifier last year (not so easy in the Northwest) and has done reasonably well this year -- including a second at Tiffin. I really don't know what to expect from him. Someone that I may have underrated is Long, who currently stands 17-1 on the year. He was first at Clyde, Fremont St. Joseph and Fremont Ross indicating excellent tournament discipline. He was a state qualifier last year at 160# -- losing to Webb 4-1 in the district consolation finals -- while at States, Matson put him out in the first round. Davis is my choice for the fifth qualifying spot making up a solid quintet of qualifiers. That would leave out the experienced Cadez who missed state qualification at 189# by a single point last year. He has

not seemed as sharp this year. Tate (Licking Valley), who lost to Long 7-6 in the first round of districts and to Webb 15-9 in the consolations, is also back. He is a long shot here as is McCormick (Shelby).

At Dayton, Schumm and Rozmus are both state qualifiers who have failed to win at that level. I like Schumm the better of this pair. He was third at the district last year and then lost a competitive match to Losie at States. This year he won at Edgewood and was second at Fairfield suffering a narrow loss to Pater. Rozmus was a state qualifier at 189# last year as a freshmen. He pretty much came out of nowhere to nail three falls and a technical fall in the consolations to finish third, but was pinned by Bateman in the first round at Cincinnati. This year he has lost only once, but Urbana wrestles a relatively light schedule. Parton has to be evaluated in much the same manner. He is undefeated this year -- almost no close matches -- but Loveland wrestles a schedule that cannot be called demanding. Remember, though, Parton was a district semi-finalist last year -- losing 3-2 in the semis and then falling in the consolations. Dodd was also one match from States at 160#, while Simmerman has been excellent this year after a 21-7 mark last year. Dodd was fourth at Tiffin and third at Wayne.

The Firestone District does not have much to challenge the top echelon. Prather is a solid journeyman performer whose biggest triumph was at Solon over Auerbach. He won one district bout last year. Carney won at both Solon and Brecksville and was extremely good at the first mentioned tourney. Rumors continue that he will drop to 160#, but it's difficult to find much strategic justification for that move. Maag has been very positive winning at Wadsworth and finishing second at Doylestown. He was a district semi-finalist last year before losing three straight bouts 4-2, 3-1 and 1-0 to fall to state alternate. That will not happen this year. Simpson and Warr have the best shots at the last two spots, with Tomaro a real possibility. Simko (Louisville) and Hoopes (Beloit West Branch) are other thoughts.

Caldwell was sensational at GMVWA with a strong fourth place finish losing only to Division III top guns, Sintobin and Philipps. Injured during the mid-part of the season, he still looks like the best at St. Clairsville. He is up from 145# -- which is quite a leap. Bell was fifth in the District last year with three wins and I expect him at this weight at tourney time. He would be the second qualifier, but that third spot is really wide open. Anderson and Cassady are two possibilities, but the most intriguing thought is Reynolds. A district semi-finalist last year, he lost to Manteau and then Shumard in overtime to get fifth. This year he was third at Barnesville. He, in my mind, could play a significant role at this weight class and, if so, could be a major contributor toward Claymont's team hopes.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JEFF PHILLIPS (NORWALK) ③

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ④ 2. Peters (Uhrichsville Claymont) | 13. Van Hoene (Cincinnati Purcell) |
| 3. Bateman (Edison South) | 14. Holtz (Lake Catholic) |
| 4. Nutter (Buckeye) | 15. Heard (Marysville) |
| 5. Groves (Big Walnut) | 16. Bouldin (Forest Park) |
| 6. Kamalie (Field) | 17. Crutcher (Washington CH) |
| ⑤ 7. Burress (Steubenville) | 18. Eyler (Galion) |
| 8. Monak (Oak Harbor) | 19. Weaver (Revere) |
| 9. Linger (Springfield NW) | 20. Delph (Carlisle) |
| 10. Francis (North Royalton) | ⑥ 21. Siddle (Byesville Meadowbrook) |
| 11. Rise (Goshen) | ⑦ 22. Antram (Beloit West Branch) |
| ① 12. Dorn (Ravenna SE) | ⑧ 23. Coats (Warrensville Hts.) |

This is weight class where it's likely we'll see a whole spectrum of styles put on display at the State meet. As we discuss the players in each district, it will be interesting to speculate on how these match ups will be resolved.

My choice is Jeff Phillips, the highly mobile 189#er from Norwalk. Last year he qualified at 171# and lost a close 10-8 decision in the first round to eventual state runner-up Buzbee. This year he has become a devastating pinner, winning both the Edison and Fremont St. Joseph tourneys on falls. However, the highlight of his season was his only loss at the St. John Invitational when he dropped a tight 9-8 decision to defending Division I state champ Jermaine Daniels. Right behind Phillips is another returning State qualifier. Groves, a big 189#, qualified with a tight 8-7 win over Cadez at last year's district in this weight class. He was hammered in the first round at States and eliminated. Despite his great record, he has never really impressed me, which is undoubtedly more of a flaw on my part than on his. The mountainous Monak rates third in this district, but in the top ten overall. He won at Oak Harbor and Sandusky St. Mary and was fifth at the MIT losing narrowly to Peters and being pinned by Nutter. Heard and Eyler are the top contenders for the last spots, with Heard winning their individual match up 3-2 at the Gorman finals. Two other possibilities are Bernard (Anthony Wayne) and Brown (Napoleon).

The very strong and fundamentally solid Peters is down to his last chance for state placement. Three older brothers all placed and, with a number of younger male siblings, this family might well challenge for most brothers placed at States. Currently, the DiSabato family, with six, and the Hoppels, with five, lead the way. Peters qualified last year and after a first-round win, lost to Fickell. He then lost an overtime bout for placement. This year he beat Siddle easily at Barnesville and finished second at the MIT to Uphouse. Bateman won at Buckeye Local, Steubenville and the huge OVAC tourney defeating Burress twice in the process. His only loss was to Hager at River Valley. Last year he was a state quarter-finalist losing there to the excellent Rakoczy. Burress is one of those tall, whipcord slender wrestlers who generate power far out of proportion to their apparent physique. As mentioned, Bateman has beaten him twice, but at Richmond Hts., he won the title pinning all four of his victims in the process. He lost to Peters in overtime last year in the consolation finals to decide the

last qualifying berth. Crutcher may get left behind once more. Burress eliminated him 6-5 last year after Bateman had defeated him in the semi-finals. Siddle has only marginal hopes.

At Firestone, the effervescent Nutter heads the field. He is six minutes of non-stop action that just wears down the opposition. He won two matches at Districts before elimination last year. He was third at the MIT (losing only to the champion Uphouse) and pinning Monak. Right behind him is state qualifier Kamalie who has blitzed an easy schedule this year. A fifth place district qualifier, he lost early at State. Francis has gotten really big this year and has generally had things his own way during the season. He won at Brunswick and is undefeated. He does not always seem to utilize his good shot. Dorn and Holtz are two possibilities for those last two vacancies, but neither is a sure shot. Both Weaver and Antram could challenge, as well as Coats and Clapper (Padua). Among the missing here will be Hunt (Kenston) who was fifth last year, but who has sustained a season-ending injury.

State qualifiers Linger and Rise lead the Dayton District, which is probably the weakest of the four. Both lost first round state matches. Linger gets the nod because he wrestles a rougher schedule, which has included a runner-up trophy at Wayne (losing to Daniels on a TF). Bouldin is a fabulous athlete, but not a particularly experienced wrestler, while Van Hoene is injured and may miss the rest of the season. That leaves the stolid Delph as the possible third place winner here. Other thoughts are Armbrust (Lebanon) and Martin (Greenon).

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: LUKE FICKELL (COLUMBUS DeSALES) (1)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (2) 2. Ayers (Bellaire) | 14. Fox (Willard) |
| 3. Edmonds (Akron Hoban) | 15. Anders (Miami Trace) |
| (5) 4. Willits (Greenon) | 16. Brendle (Louisville) |
| 5. Jenkins (Lewistown Indian Lakes) | 17. Dokes (Steubenville) |
| 6. Johnson (Sandusky Perkins) | 18. Hassan (Edison South) |
| 7. Hunter (Roger Bacon) | (4) 19. Soika (Padua) |
| 8. Dool (Lorain Brookside) | 20. Stepic (Wickliffe) |
| 9. Casey (Oak Harbor) | 21. Pennington (Eaton) |
| 10. Schulz (Little Miami) | 22. Paxson (Kansas Lakota) |
| 11. Paglio/Bronson (Lake Catholic) | 23. Sheets (Meigs) |
| 12. Dietz (Shelby) | 24. Diehl (Lima Shawnee) |
| 13. Coats (Warrensville Hts.) | 25. Krug (Kettering Alter) |

In the last half-dozen or so years, we, in Ohio, have had the pleasure of seeing some excellent upper weight wrestlers. People like Mike Davies, Mark Coleman, Mike Funk, Rex Holman and Mike Buddie come to mind. All of them were measured against the best Ohio has ever produced and placed at the highest level. Now, once again, we're seeing another great big man perform in our state -- and he may surpass all the others. Last year as a sophomore, Luke Fickell won the 189# championship in Division II and then took the 220# title at the Junior Nationals. He is just so phenomenal in the top position that he cannot be

resisted. This year, as a heavyweight, he has devastated all that he has wrestled and seems a sure shot to win his second state title. And this crown will come against the best heavyweights in the state -- because they're all in Division II this year. It's no accident that the most prestigious titles around the state have been won by Division II participants. The MIT, OVAC, Brecksville, GMVWA, Wayne, Gorman, Tiffin, Marion Harding, Hudson, OCC and Brunswick, to name just a few, were all won by wrestlers in Division II. It certainly has never happened before.

At Galion there are a carload of good heavyweight. Fickell, of course, is in a different grouping, but that still leaves four state vacancies. Topping this non-Fickell list is Chad Johnson who finished 22-10 last year, but had a poor district. This year his only loss is to Green and he won the Tiffin title with four falls. Casey was the state alternate last year losing a criteria decision to Dietz in his go-to-state bout. This year he has been consistent placing in every tournament. He was pinned by Fickell. Dietz was a state qualifier and finished sixth -- losing to Willits. He is coming back from injury and may be fresher in March than most of his competition. He won both the Gorman and the Marion Harding. Right behind Dietz is his arch-rival Fox. Fox lost 1-0 in the Gorman final, but that is certainly not an insurmountable difference. That is the top five, but Paxson and Diehl both have reasonable chances of grabbing a spot. Freeman (Milbury Lake) lost in the consolation rounds at last year's district to Dietz 2-1. Other possibilities are Roston (Galion), Podraski (Milan Edison) and Cook (Marysville).

Norm Ayers, like Fickell, a junior, is another emerging talent. Much bigger than Fickell -- he must be close to the 275# limit -- he showed amazing mobility last year for a man his size. He started slowly last year (fourth at the OVAC), but captured a state qualifying spot and had a quick fall in the opening round. State third placer Waugh then eliminated in a tight quarter-final bout. This year he has been unbeatable winning at Bellaire, Barnesville and the OVAC -- all finals ending early. At the OVAC, he won by technical fall over one of the top large school heavyweights in West Virginia. After him there are about six to eight heavyweights, all of whom are about equal. I've listed Anders, Hassan, Dokes and Sheets, but that is based generally on very tightly contested bouts. Other possibilities are Poland (Uhrichsville Claymont), McFarland (Martins Ferry) and Cunningham (Warsaw River View).

At Firestone, Edmonds has moved somewhat ahead of the rest of the field. He won at Hudson and the MIT after being a state qualifier last year. Willits beat him in overtime for a place, but I don't think that will happen again. Like Fickell and Ayers, he is a junior and has tremendous potential. At about 260#, he is a nice size for today's mobile big man. State qualifier Dool has done well this year winning two or three smaller tournaments. Edmonds beat him 11-0 for third place at Districts. Lake Catholic has two fine heavyweights in Bronson and Paglio. Last year Paglio was a district semi-finalist at 171# and then lost three straight bouts to fall to state alternate. This year at 230#, he has just returned from a hernia operation. Bronson, varsity heavyweight for three years, was third at Kenston and fourth at the OCC. Either of these boys have a good shot at state qualification. Coats has done a fine job winning at Richmond Hts., West Geauga and Brunswick. I may have rated him too low, but this is his first full year of varsity heavyweight experience. Soika, state qualifier Stepic and the mammoth Brendle are other rated possibilities. Also good are Houston (Avon

Lake) and Boone (Akron St. Vincent). A special dark horse is Atha (Field), who has come on strong in the last six weeks.

There are three top heavyweights at Dayton. Willits was fifth last year winning a lot of decisions. It was kind of unheavyweight, but all four of his district bouts and all five of his State bouts went the full six minutes or longer. This year Mr. Willits has learned to pin. At GMVWA, he had falls in the last three rounds and pinned in the finals at Springfield Catholic and Hamilton Township as well. He is a huge kid and he is beginning to take advantage of his size. He is unbeaten this year. State qualifier Jenkins, another great junior, lost an 8-7 overtime bout to Willits for the District title and was Ayers' victim in the first round at State. He was fifth at Marion Harding and second at Troy earlier in the year, so he may be vulnerable. Hunter has been terrific all year -- now at 19-1 -- losing only to Rohrbacher. Watch for him. State qualifier Schulz is back despite what the state program read and he, too, is a junior. That leaves the excellent Pennington and Krug with no place to go.

TEAMS

1. Uhrichsville Claymont -- During the last decade, this squad has produced a lot of State place winners, but this will be the first time they enter tournament as the favored team. It's a beautifully balanced squad that has the potential to pick up points at many different weights. The five munchkins that fill the opening weight classes are all tough, feisty competitors with Scott McDaniel, in particular, having high placement potential. In the middle, State qualifier Jones and Henry are both excellent, while Peters is the best of the big men. I think that Henry, McDaniel and Peters will be top placers, while some of the others will pick up points. Their key man to me is Reynolds at the weak 171# class who has the potential to be a big contributor.
2. Oak Harbor -- Another wonderfully balanced squad with scoring punch in many areas. The question is how many of their stars can score at the state level. Both Kerstens are excellent, while Scherf and Shanteau are about ready to really do well at Wright State. Scherf, however, must navigate that crowded 130# field. Hurrell also needs to reach peak form and Monak and Casey have to get excellent state draws to score.
3. Edison South -- On a strictly by the numbers count, this could be the highest-scoring Division II team. Of course, that's predicated on them doing as well as I have predicated. Still, the quartet of Shields, Lemasters, Pipo and Bateman are all returning state qualifiers and OVAC finalists. If they perform equally well at Nutter, they could win the whole thing -- not unlike a Barnesville team of a few years ago.
4. Lake Catholic -- It's still not clear to me where they are going to score at the State meet. I mean, we know Becks will win and Galeazzo will place, but who else can contribute. The heavyweights are good, but look at their competition. Can Haverdill, Orosky, Ambroziak, or Holtz score at States? Somehow, they always come up with a few more points than I anticipate.
5. Steubenville -- An uncharacteristic Steubenville team in that it has forsaken its balance for a few individual stars. However, Llewellyn, Knight, Collier and Burress are all excellent and, perhaps, a Brettell or Roseberry can help. If others falter, they could be right up there in the hunt for the championship trophy.
6. Kenston -- A team that was severely damaged by a critical injury, but which still retains good talent. Out for the season is State place-winner Hunt and that probably costs about 20 points. However, Santa Maria, Ferritto, Bryant and Schmittel are all good and can score at the State level. A little bad luck, however, could drop this team a long ways.
7. Ravenna Southeast -- Coontz will score a boatload of points, while McKendrick should contribute a fair share as well. After that, it's people like Dorn who have to make their presence felt.

8. Norwalk -- There are so many good Division II teams in Northwest Ohio that they're likely to knock each other off in the Districts. With teams like Oak Harbor, Clyde, Norwalk, Milan Edison, Kansas Lakota and others, it is really a hotbed of great wrestling. This team has two power house competitors in Philipps and McClain and some potential back-up scoring from Owens and Burger.
9. Kansas Lakota -- Only a boy to two over the Division III limit, this is a potent team with some solid individual stars. Lippert, Roth and Tyson are best, but Conrad, Paxson and Coleman are solid, too. A nice team, but can they get enough wrestlers through that tough district.
10. North Royalton -- Another great team, but possibly one that just doesn't have the fire power to score big at the State level. They have all kinds of quality people, but no one superstar that can be counted on to score 25 or so State points.
11. Fairfield Union -- An unusual choice, perhaps, but Minnard and Davis may have finalist potential. In addition, the Eggar brothers are potential scorers as well. A long-shot selection.
12. Buckeye -- A team much like North Royalton with great dual meet capabilities, but perhaps not a lot of real "heavy hitters." Rupanovic, Culler, Farley and Nutter are all good, but may not be strong enough at the State level.
13. Milan Edison -- The mystery team that has wrestled all year at weights well above what they'll certify at. It's a very good team with great depth and solid performers. However, the big question is, as always, the ability to score at the State level.
14. Columbus DeSales -- Fickell. That's worth 30 points, anyway, which will generally get you in the Top Ten.