

DIVISION II

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

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: <sup>(3)</sup> DANA MARDER (TWINSBURG)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KELLY SHIELDS (EDISON SOUTH)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION <sup>1</sup> JOHN NOBLE (LEBANON)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

125#

PROJECTED CHAMP: ① SHAWN ENRIGHT (LEBANON)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

130#

*DAT 135*  
PROJECTED CHAMPION: JODY WITHROW (TRIWAY)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: <sup>(6)</sup> STEVE ZICKAFOOSE (TIPP CITY)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: <sup>①</sup> TONY PARIANO (FAIRVIEW PARK)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: <sup>(3)</sup> DENOVA WRIGHT (RAVENNA)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JIM KITCHEN (TWINSBURG)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: KIRK HENRY (CLAYMONT)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: <sup>3</sup> RAY LONG (CLYDE)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

189#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: <sup>(1)</sup> NICK NUTTER (BUCKEYE)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: <sup>1</sup> LUKE FICKELL (COLUMBUS DeSALES)

TOP CONTENDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TEAMS

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

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