

DIVISION III

The team competition in this division is about as ill-defined as at any time in my memory. No team stands out in any respect, and even attempting to make a list of the dozen or so top teams is difficult. No team has more than one wrestler rated at the favorite at a weight class -- and few schools have more than two boys rated in the top five. What this suggests is that a very low point score could win the team title, and that it will be crucial for each contending team to place their best wrestlers in the optimal weight classes. That's why you can expect a maximum of weight class shifting in this division.

103#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ^① LeCONTE MERRELL (MANSFIELD ST. PETER)

TOP CONTENDERS

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ④ 2. Firem (Chanel) | 14. Davlin (Sandusky St. Mary) |
| 3. Frohnapfel (Bridgeport) | 15. Mescan (Columbia Station) |
| ③ 4. Kosins (Bellbrook) | 16. J. Klco (Perry) |
| 5. Kinzel (Wellsville) | 17. Amicon (Bishop Ready) |
| ② 6. Zeno (Margaretta) | 18. Grime (Archbold) |
| 7. Passerini (St. Thomas Aquinas) | 19. Ostapuck (Tuscarawas CC) |
| ① 8. Sibrel (Kansas Lakota) | 20. Sigler (West Salem Northwestern) |
| 9. Sauter (Batavia) | 21. Arnold (West Jefferson) |
| 10. ✓Kline (Mapleton) | 22. Payawal (Sidney Lehman) |
| 11. Palm (Gibsonburg) | 23. Stoner (New Lebanon Dixie) |
| 12. Layman (Jackson Milton) | 24. Walz (Ayersville) |
| 13. Ziegler (Cardinal) | 25. Cole (Union Local) |

This is one of those weight classes where the eventual state champion can pretty well be identified before the competition begins, but so, too, can the one or two major obstacles he will have to surmount. Merrell has now wrestled four years at 103#, and has finally grown into that weight class. Last year, somewhat undersized, he was state runner-up including pulse pounding wins in the first and third rounds. This year there won't be a need for many close victories, as he has too much talent and experience for the field. That was demonstrated at the Gorman where he romped through his weight class including an 11-3 win over the excellent Fratta in the finals. Only Firem, who we'll discuss later, has the firepower to challenge Merrell -- and Merrell beat him 6-2 last year in the quarter finals.

As always, the Fostoria District has a number of solid contenders. Merrell, of course, is supreme, but state qualifiers Palm and Sibrel return and are joined by the excellent freshman Davlin and solid performers like Grime, Zeno, and Walz. Of the group Sibrel has struggled most but he surprised at tournament time last year and will probably do so again in 1992. Palm has not yet competed because of injuries, but is expected back in time to qualify. Davlin has been a finalist at three important tournament and is another in a long of great freshman lightweights at St. Mary's. Grime won the "A" Classic and Gibsonburg while

placing 2nd at Beavercreek. He has shown good improvement. However the wrestler to really watch is Zeno who I think is wrestling so well he could be a finalist.

Frohnafel and Kinzel should prove to be a powerful duo at Steubenville. The former is a state qualifier who has wrestled brilliantly all year, while the latter dropped from 112# where he has been very good. Both boys have strong placement potential -- even possibly as a finalist. There is a major fall-off after them with the listed Amicon, Ostapuck, and Arnold my top choices for the last two spots. Other possibilities include Cole, Pugh (Waterford), and Partlow (Shenendoah).

At Dayton Kosins is a dominant figure with major tournament wins at Dayton Carroll and Bellbrook, and a very strong 3rd at the giant GMVWA (his only loss by disqualification). If he's away from Merrell he, too, has great finalist potential. Sauter is a first year varsity wrestler, but has performed nearly as well as the other vaunted Batavia lightweights led by Terry Shinkle. He should score points at the state level. The last qualifier will be a quantum jump behind these top two and will likely be first round cannon fodder.

The big news at Cuyahoga Hts. in this weight class was Firem's drop to 103#. He won two bouts at state last year and missed placement by a single point. One of those losses was to Merrell, but he probably has the best chance of pulling the major upset at this weight class. He has been excellent at 112# all year -- champ at Troy and finalist at Solon and Wadsworth -- and will be a major force at this weight. Kline is another wrestler who has been at 112# all year, but expect to see him at this weight class come late February. He has placement potential. One to really watch, however, is Passerini who may be better than ranked, based not so much on his many wins, but on the basis that his only loss was to the highly ranked Division I competitor, Bruce Daniels, 1-0. This district has the most depth at this weight with Layman, Ziegler, Klco, and Mescan all reasonable candidates for qualification, or even placement. There is the potential for a lot of back and forth action here with sectional results not necessarily an accurate reflection of what will happen at districts. Sigler, for example, has good upset potential because of his high scoring style while Tonsing, Zeid (Beachwood), and Kasarda (Streetsboro) are possibilities. The qualifiers who escape from this district will be battle-hardened veterans by the time they get to Wright State.

112#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: 4 TIM DERNLAN (WEST LIBERTY SALEM)

TOP CONTENDERS

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| 2. ✓ Workman (Coventry) | 13. Gardner (Columbus Academy) |
| 3. ✓ Jim Boardman (Streetsboro) | 14. Parsons (Galion Northmor) |
| 4. Clemens (Lima Central Catholic) | 15. Platt (Licking Hts.) |
| 5. ✓ T. Klco (Perry) ✓ | 16. ✓ Gleckler (Evergreen) ✓ |
| 6. Al-Samkari (Dayton Oakwood) ✓ | 17. Williams (New London) |
| 7. N. Spencer (Edison North) | 18. Ballard (Barnesville) |
| 8. Roskovich (Bridgeport) ✓ | 19. Tester (Genoa) |
| 9. Steiner (Batavia) | 20. Booth (Smithville) |
| 10. Dilger (Norwalk St. Paul) | 21. Morency (Madeira) |
| 11. Zientek (Liberty Center) | 22. Dunstan (Elyria Catholic) |
| 12. DiTurno (Chanel) | 23. Tyson (Kansas Lakota) |

This is a strong and deep weight class, but it doesn't really make any difference. Dernlan is clearly the pre-eminent competitor at 112# as he seeks his third consecutive state crown. As always he is exquisitely trained and conditioned and is vulnerable here only to injury or a superhuman effort by a Workman or a Clemens. As everyone knows by now Dernlan had a chance to become the first wrestler in Ohio history to go completely undefeated four consecutive years. That possibility was destroyed by Jim Johnson in a brilliantly wrestled overtime final at Medina that ended with Dernlan losing 7-5. He had at that point won his first 87 high school bouts. An often overlooked point is that Dernlan and his coaches could have maximized his chances of establishing that four-year standard by staying in southwestern Ohio and not venturing to the toughest tournament in the State. That they did so is a measure of their respect for this sport and their willingness to match up with the very best competition available.

Besides Dernlan, the Dayton District also features two other competitors of outstanding talent. State qualifiers Al-Samkari and Steiner, while several big steps behind Dernlan, both have placement possibilities and are competitive with whoever else shows up at Wright State. Al-Samkari, in particular, has had an outstanding season winning several important tournaments. These three face no real competition here.

The Cuyahoga Hts. District is very strong and deep as well. Three of the four state qualifiers at 103# last year return, along with the runner-up two years ago, and are joined by several other strong competitors. Workman, 5th last year, took Dernlan into overtime in semi-final action last year before losing 2-2, 9-3 OT. This year he has won at Coventry and Wadsworth -- pinning Firem in the latter final. He beat Klco 8-0 in the district final last year. Klco was 3rd last year -- catching Workman right after his loss to Dernlan -- and beating him handily. His only loss at States was an 8-8, 13-10 OT heartbreaker in the quarter-finals. Boardman, 2nd two years ago and 6th last year, has moved down to 119# and will apparently stay there. He will both skilled and huge. The other state qualifier, Booth, may have substantially more trouble than the first three winning a repeat ticket to Wright State. DiTurno placed in three major tournaments at 119# and if he performs at the same efficiency at 112# he is

better than Booth. There are a whole host of other hopefuls like Dunstan and Nicolosi (Aurora). This district could place as many as three behind Dernlan.

There are lots of possibilities at Fostoria. Two-time state qualifier Clemens, 6th last year, is back with a go-for-broke style that eschews caution and, sometimes, defense. State qualifiers Dilger, Zientek, and Williams (twice a qualifier) also return, but none of them have had overwhelmingly successful seasons. Williams in particular, has struggled and may be at risk for a third trip to states. Tester, Gleckler, Tyson and DeAmicis (Carey) all look capable of unseating the top quartet with Gleckler, in particular, having a fine season. Except for Clemens, though, I don't see much scoring punch at the state level.

There are strong wrestlers from both the Central and Eastern Districts at Steubenville and how they'll match up head-to-head is difficult to ascertain. State qualifier Nick Spencer has had an exceptional season winning over a tough field at Bishop Ready and triumphant at Bellaire. He lost 15-11 to Merrell in the first round at states and generally is involved in high scoring bouts. If he and Clemens meet you'll need a high speed computer to keep score. Rated behind him, but only marginally is the truly outstanding freshman Roskovich. He has won four tournaments including a 6-5 final round decision over Spencer at Buckeye Local. His only loss was to the strong two-time state Division II qualifier Scott McDaniel of Claymont -- in overtime. My sole reason for putting Spencer ahead of him was the latter boy's experience. Gardner and Platt are both solid competitors, but I question whether they are quite as strong as Spencer and Roskovich. State qualifier Parson has had kind of a wasted season battling injuries and weight. If he makes 112# and is healthy he would almost certainly be a major force in this district. Ballard has performed well all year and could sneak in if one of the top boys falter. Other possibilities are Filipovich (Bellaire St. John), Messmer (Bishop Hartley) and Dubinsky (Union Local).

119#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽²⁾ STEVE WALKER (AKRON MANCHESTER)

TOP CONTENDERS

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|--|------------------------------------|
| ⁽³⁾ 2. Wilkovich (Columbia Station) | 12. Heany (Aurora) |
| 3. Maiani (Sandusky St. Mary) | 13. Slack (Shadyside) |
| 4. Kosins (Bellbrook) | 14. Schaffer (Jackson Milton) |
| 5. Roth (Kansas Lakota) | 15. Kline (Crestview) |
| 6. Steiner (Batavia) | 16. Terrill (Brookville) |
| 7. Goodson (Union Local) | 17. Merrell (Mansfield St. Peters) |
| ⁽⁴⁾ 8. Circle (Delta) | 18. Francis (Bellaire) |
| 9. Nightengale (Wellsville) | 19. Meyer (Fostoria St. Wendelin) |
| ⁽⁵⁾ 10. Ellison (West Jefferson) | 20. Biribilas (Dayton Oakwood) |
| 11. Smith (Edison North) | 21. Tompkins (Mogadore) |

This is an exceptionally strong and deep weight class with at least 11 returning state qualifiers and seven returning state place-winners. Still, I think it will come down to a rematch of last year's state final where Wilkovich avenged a district defeat by upsetting Walker in overtime. Walker, only a junior, has already placed 4th and 2nd the last two years, and he has been

extremely sharp all season. I watched him at Medina give the highly rated Fichter (Division I) all he could handle before losing 9-8, and then going on to take a strong 3rd. He and Wilkovich split last season, and may do so again, but this time I believe it will be Walker winning on the last Saturday of the season. Wilkovich, also a junior, is also tremendously solid and the difference between he and Walker is paper-thin. He has wrestled once at 112#, but I assume that is strictly as a hedge in case Dernlan goes to 103# (which he won't). Clearly the odds favor matching up with Walker (who he has already defeated) then challenging Dernlan. This top duo looks safe for qualification purposes, but the next group of Schaffer, Heany, and Tompkins, while all excellent, look to be battling for two state berths. However, Heany did upset Boardwine the first week of the season so anything could happen here. Hider (West Salem Northwestern), Kish (Wickliffe), and Friedl (Brooklyn) are also very good and so some of this large group may opt for 125# where this district is much weaker.

Two-time state qualifier Maiani was 3rd as a freshman and then disqualified in the first period of his first bout at states last year in what could only be called a highly controversial decision. It's one of those times when you wonder about justice. Anyway, Maiani and former state runner-up Roth are clearly the best at this weight at Fostoria. Two years ago Roth beat Maiani 1-0 for the district and it's liable to be that close again. Coincidentally both of them beat Walker at states then, but a lot of things have changed in the interim. Circle, another state qualifier, is probably a short step below the top two, and then there is a big fall-off to Kline, Merrell, and Meyers -- who will have two spots to shoot for. Forward (Archbold), Logsdon (Fremont St. Joseph), and Selhorst (Coldwater) are also in that hunt.

The Dayton District has two top-notch competitors in Steiner and Kosins at this weight class -- both with previous state experience as they finished 3rd and 4th respectively last year. This time around I look for Kosins to reverse that positioning based on his fine year -- so far totally at 125#. However, it would seem ludicrous for him to stay there and butt heads with Shinkle and Lapinski. Terrill is a reasonable third choice with Biribilas and Greene (Madeira) as possible challengers.

State qualifiers Goodson, Nightengale, and Slack head the field at Steubenville as the Eastern District dominates here. Ellison is good and so is Smith, so we will have five good performers vying for four spots. Francis, Barcalow (Steubenville), and Jacobs (Cadiz) also could be contenders. Placement for any of this group will be difficult though it is certainly a possibility.

125#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽²⁾ TERRY SHINKLE (BATAVIA)

TOP CONTENDERS

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|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ① 2. Lipinski (Brookville) | 13. King (Brooklyn) |
| ③ 3. Joe Boardwine (Streetsboro) | 14. Dunn (Kenton Ridge) |
| ④ 4. Moody (New London) | 15. Dodd (Marion Pleasant) |
| 5. Ruoff (Hicksville) | 16. Goeltzenleuchter (Ayersville) |
| 6. Castro (Otsego) | 17. Shipman (Cardinal) |
| 7. Larkins (Edison North) | 18. Littleton (Shadyside) |
| 8. Lynch (Perry) | 19. Grime (Archbold) |
| 9. Fowler (Apple Creek Waynedale) | 20. Hanes (Barnesville) |
| 10. Rex (Tinora) | 21. Edling (Middletown Fenwick) |
| 11. Yeager (Bellaire) | 22. Sears (Hopewell-Loudon) |
| 12. Parmer (Licking Hts.) | 23. Dieckman (Columbia Station) |

At the beginning of the year I would have said that Terry Shinkle would stand pretty much unchallenged at this weight class. After all, he was 4th as a sophomore and 2nd at 119# last year where he lost a 14-13 thriller to defending champ Jimmy Smiles -- his only loss in 38 outings. However, the sheer brilliance of Kelly Lipinski now puts that confident prediction in substantial doubt. A state qualifier last year Lipinski has this season won at Brookville, the GMVWA (9-0 over state 4th placer Kosins), at Troy (12-1 over Byers), at Fairfield (6-5 over Shinkle), and then at Eaton (on a fall over Enright), plus three OW awards. Suddenly it's a whole new ballgame with, maybe, Lipinski, in the driver's seat. Still my feeling is that Shinkle -- who has wrestled a far more gentle schedule -- will make a renewed commitment to his craft and take the title. The last spot at Dayton will likely go to either Dunn or Edling, but they'll be non-factors at Wright State.

The Fostoria group is solid but not brilliant. State qualifier Moody has performed best this season in that area and should place. Last year he lost his bout to place when Ruoff avenged his district loss to Moody. Ruoff ended up 6th and he should, perhaps, gain a spot or two this year. Castro qualified at 130# last year and also has placement potential. Rex, something of an unknown, will surprise a lot of people and should qualify, too. Goettzenleuchter, another state qualifier, has had a shaky season and has dropped down from my pre-season list. Grime and Sears could put his return trip in jeopardy. Spero (Fostoria St. Wendelin) and Yerkes (Fremont St. Joseph) are other thoughts.

Former state placers Boardwine and Fowler -- both 6th -- are the nominal leaders of the Cuyahoga Hts. group. Lynch could be a dark horse candidate to do some real damage here while state qualifier King has substantial experience. This is not an exciting quartet, but there are few challengers to them currently at this weight. However, some of the excess 119s may choose to try it here. If not, Shipman and Dieckman look to be the main competition.

At Steubenville the cast of potential qualifiers is large, but the quality is somewhat lower than even at Cuyahoga Hts. If Garcia or Amicon drop that would make a substantial difference, but as presently constituted this group is not a real threat at the state level. Currently the only real threat would be a

healthy Larkins who has had some big wins this year. He took the Bishop Ready Classic when Amicon was at 135#, and won at Bellaire and Buckeye North. He missed state qualification by one bout last year. One thing, though, is that this district should be very competitive with not much to choose between the top eight or ten. Besides the six listed Cheuvront (Cadiz), Lones (West Jefferson) and Ransom (Galion Northmor) are possibilities.

130#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ^{(3) AT 125} ALEX GARCIA (COLUMBUS ACADEMY)

TOP CONTENDERS

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ① 2. Amicon (Bishop Ready) | 13. Wright (Valley View) |
| 3. Barnes (Delta) | ⑥ 14. Kerr (Mapleton) |
| ③ 4. McKeever (Cadiz) | 15. Meade (Clear Fork) |
| 5. Fuentes (Liberty Center) | 16. Moritz (Brookville) |
| 6. Soto (Otsego) | 17. Breuer (Cardinal Stritch) |
| 7. Allen (Brookfield) | 18. Dreher (Black River) |
| ② 8. Rosin (Sandusky St. Mary) | 19. Miller (Hopewell-London) |
| 9. Soppitt (Perry) | 20. King (Dayton Oakwood) |
| 10. Walz (Ayersville) | 21. Long (Sandy Valley) |
| 11. Pinkerton (Waterford) | 22. Pletz (Cincinnati Reading) |
| 12. Bennett (Akron Manchester) | 23. Perzanowski (Bridgeport) |

On the surface this seems pretty much a conventional choice since Garcia was state runner-up at 125# last year finishing with a 38-2 record. This year he has performed well and would seem to be a solid favorite. A couple of problems, however. First, his only loss this year was to Amicon 8-4 in the finals at West Jefferson. Second, Garcia had real squeakers in the first two rounds at States last year indicating a lack of any real domination. I came very, very close to picking Amicon -- after all he is now rated ahead of Garcia in Columbus, but somehow Garcia's 12-1 district final win last year still made me believe that when it really counts Garcia will be there. Incidentally, this is the third successive weight class where the top two choices are from the same district. That Steubenville District is rugged. State qualifier McKeever is back at this same weight and he'll be a factor. Last year he lost to Feckanin in the quarter-finals. That leaves state qualifier Pinkerton as the fourth choice here.

Barnes failed to get our of his sectional last year, but that is still hard to believe. He won the large GMVWA tourney at a weight class that featured state champs from Kentucky and West Virginia -- and did it with a fall in the finals. Fuentes is a tough, hard-nosed competitor who was 4th last year at 125#. Just down from 135# he could play a major role in the final outcome of this competition. Last year he won an epic 19-11 first round win over Lipinski and had two other falls as well. This year his only loss was via slam disqualification at the "A" Classic where he finished 3rd. The erratic Soto and state qualifier Rosin are both sophomores with immense potential. Each could place this year. State qualifiers Walz and Meade are also tough although they are up three and two weight classes respectively. Walz cruised through the "A" Classic and has been impressive even though I expect him to drop. State qualifier Breuer will have problems here because he'll need two of the top sixto

falter to qualify. The second echelon of people like Bordner (Seneca East), Hubley (Genoa), and Weiging (Delphos St. John) are way behind. The exception is Miller who has won several important tourneys including the Van Buren Invitational.

The Cuyahoga Hts. District is not terribly strong although infusion of Hartman should he drop would change its complexion dramatically. However, as it is presently constituted Allen, 4th last year at 119#, in the principal threat here. Only 4th in the district he wrestled well in the consolations after a first round loss by technical fall to Shinkle. He won those three bouts by a total of four points. Soppitt was one bout from states last year and should qualify handily while Bennett and Kerr are my other two choices. Both could do far better than I have rated them. Dreher and Long are possibilities here, although they rate several steps behind my top quartet.

The Dayton District is weak with little to offer in the way of excitement. Wright and Moritz are probably the best with the latter serving as a state alternate last year. You'll want to draw into this set of qualifiers if you can.

135#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽²⁾ STEVE FECKANIN (LEDGEMONT)

TOP CONTENDERS

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ① 2. Hartman (Wellington) | 12. Price (Tri-Village) |
| ④ 3. Tipton (Cadiz) | 13. Caprella (Lima Central Catholic) |
| ③ 4. Paul (Doylestown Chippewa) | 14. Lewis (Mapleton) |
| ③ 14 5. Spencer (Edison North) | 15. Krzynowek (Cuyahoga Hts.) |
| ⑥ 6. Reineck (Fremont St. Joseph) | 16. Johnson (North Baltimore) |
| 7. Wilson (Jonathan Alder) | 17. Tissander (Blanchester) |
| 8. S. Allen (Brookfield) | 18. Crupe (Bridgeport) |
| 9. Mirolo (West Jefferson) | 19. Schmenk (Sandusky St. Mary) |
| 10. Brown (Edgerton) | 20. Knapke (Versailles) |
| 11. Hamblin (Galion Northmor) | 21. Wilson (Valley View) |

A lot of question marks exist at this weight class which are somewhat tangential to the actual wrestling itself. Issues like the final certification weights for Hartman, Fuentes, and Spencer, and the impact of long inactivity on Tipton and Allen. In the end, though, those answers may only marginally affect the final outcome if Feckanin maintains his current level of performance. His exceptional four year career has met every expectation except that of a state title. Runner-up as a freshman, he has placed every year but never won it all. Last year he was 46-1 but that single loss was in the state semi-finals to eventual champ Abbott. Now with 140 career victories he is wrestling at peak form. His final round Medina loss to Chandler 13-11 OT at 140# was one of the finest bouts we have televised in the past 25 years. This, as presently constituted, is a very rugged weight class, but Feckanin has to be the clear favorite.

The Cuyahoga Hts. contingent will be very strong. Hartman, a state champ at 112# two years ago, is very tough and finished 3rd at Medina after a first round

upset. He has never quite wrestled with the same bulldog ferocity that he exhibited as a sophomore -- although injuries did slow him down last year. Paul, twice a state qualifier, was 4th in Division II at 130# last year. He has been very consistent the past few years and I look for him to place at this weight. Allan is one of the standouts at a Brookfield team that wrestles almost an invisible (to me) schedule so it's always difficult to make a complete assessment of performance. However, past effort suggest that he will be the best bet for the 4th spot. Other possibilities are Lewis, Krzynowek, and Picone (Streetsboro) Sommer (Chagrin Falls), but expect an unknown to make some noise at this weight.

Tipton caught fire at the end of the year and made it all the way to finals at both district and state only to be demolished by the brilliant DiSabato each time. Now back at the same weight he has missed some time in the first half of the season and struggled to some close wins when able to compete. The feeling is that he'll have a strong second half and make a second strong run at the title. However, I don't think he can match Feckanin's speed in their possible individual encounter. Spencer, up three weight classes -- assuming he doesn't stay at 140# -- was 5th last year and has consistently exhibited an ability to score points in bunches. He won at Bishop Ready and cannot be overlooked in any overall assessment of this weight class. Mirolo and Hamblin are a respectful step behind this to duo, but are good enough to qualify and, perhaps, even place. Mirolo was a strong 2nd to Hilliard's Davis at Licking Hts. and won at West Jefferson against a competitive weight class. His only shaky performance was at Bishop Ready where he was 5th. Crupe and Winkler (Hannibal River) have possibilities here, especially if Hamblin is not in peak form. The young Thatcher (Bishop Ready) is probably not ready for state action yet, but he looks like a real "comer" for the future.

The Fostoria District really is divided into two disparate portions. The top group consists of only one member -- Reineck -- while the second much larger grouping consists of everybody else. State qualifier Reineck has placement potential and being a district winner should allow for an easier draw at Wright State. Reineck qualified two years ago, but then last season after an outstanding year was inexplicably bounced out of the districts on a first round loss. This season he has been even better winning tournaments at Northwood and Van Buren and losing a 15-13 final to Robertson at Fremont St. Joseph. Brown is a pinner and can be a dangerous foe as witnessed by his wins at the "A" Classic and Edgerton, but he also can be handled. Caprella could really help Lima Central Catholic's team chances, but he is probably overmatched by the good wrestlers here. Johnson has won several big tourneys including the Outstanding Wrestler Aware at Hopewell-Loudon, but Reineck is still a quantum jump ahead of him. Other possibilities are Schmenk, Schmeltz (Kansas Lakota), and Forward (Archbold).

Again, the Dayton District appears to be several steps behind the other three qualifying sites. The one exception may be Price who blasted through a tough Graham Invitational field at this weight class including a fall in the finals. Last year he pushed eventual state champion Abbott to the very brink in a district quarter-final before losing 9-8, and then lost by disqualification in the consolation round. If he's hot he'll challenge anyone here and have strong placement hopes. Tissander, who was a state alternate last year, and should be the second choice in this district. However, Knapke won the Wayne Invitational defeating a "cold" Price in the finals 12-9. He may be improving more rapidly than anticipated. Wilson and Bryant (Dayton Christian) are other possibilities

while the younger Shinkle (Batavia) may get caught in Batavia's other successes and do some damage here.

140#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ¹ERIC LIPPERT (KANSAS LAKOTA)

TOP CONTENDERS

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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Kessen (Lima Central Catholic) | 14. Peace (Batavia) |
| 3. Ford (Delta) | 15. Roth (Norwalk St. Paul) |
| 4. LaManna (Ledgemont) | 16. Peppo (Dayton Christian) |
| 5. Gregory (Williamsburg) | 17. Hochstetler (Orrville) |
| 6. Wise (Rootstown) | 18. Paige (Bishop Hartley) |
| 7. Courtot (Newark Catholic) | 19. Gondol (Jackson Milton) |
| 8. Broud (Wellington) | 20. Hanes (Barnesville) |
| 9. Deere (Jonathan Alder) | 21. Davis (Coventry) |
| 10. Hampton (Richmond Hts.) | 22. Pratt (Carey) |
| 11. Case (Cadiz) | 23. Bolanz (Waterloo) |
| 12. McKinney (Manchester) | 24. Miller (Evergreen) |
| 13. Kepling (Otsego) | 25. Ferryman (Springfield NE) |

The Fostoria District appears set to dominate this weight class as the three top rated performers all exit from this district. In fact, the district results may be a crucial determinant of final state success since the champion at Fostoria will be away from the other two standouts -- and have only one other district champ in his half bracket. I think that all three of these contenders are closely bunched indicating fierce competition and the possibility that even with all its inherent advantages the district champ may have difficulty winning two weeks in a row.

Lippert has now twice placed at the state level, grabbing a 4th as a sophomore in Division III and a 6th last year in Division II at 130#. The latter placing is deceptive since he gave the eventual champ Calhoun his only real battle, losing 4-2 in the semi-finals. This year he has been at 145# but should drop by tourney time. His only loss there was to Wellmeier although Weider took him into overtime. His problem at States seems to be a total lack of aggression, and he's going to have come out of his shell and wrestle the way he does in his home gymnasium if he is to win. Kessen, 4th last year at 130#, is having another exceptional season and he is a dynamite kid. He has competed at three different weight classes with outstanding success including a fall at 140# to win at Van Buren. He has made 135#, but my feeling is that this class offers him the best opportunity to win it all. Ford was 6th last year after losing a narrow 7-6 semi-final decision to Tipton. A district champ last year he was 3rd this season at GMVWA losing only to Cochran of West Virginia, but was upset in a dual by the undervalued Miller. State qualifiers Kepling and Roth are next best here but they do not appear to have the firepower to place at the state level. After that there is pretty much with chaos with Pratt and Miller trying to beat one of the five state qualifiers here. Zeller (Genoa), Farnsworth (Clear Fork), Kimmert (Delphos St. John) and Dreschel (Margaretta) are other possibilities.

LaManna was 5th last year splitting two bouts with Ford at States. He has Feckanin as a workout partner and he keeps showing good improvement. He placed 4th at Medina at 145#, and should be even better at this class. It's a topsy-turvy district at Cuyahoga Hts. State qualifiers Wise, Hampton, and Gondol return, but none of them is anything like a sure shot to go again -- although Wise has looked very good this year. Broud who lost a 20-16 go-to-state bout with Hampton is back while McKinney, Hochstetler, and Davis are all excellent. One mistake at this district is likely to get you a ticket home, because of the parity among the competitors. While we won't be seeing superstars at this weight class the overall level of competition is likely to be unusually fierce. So much so that some may opt for 145# at tourney time.

I see results that include Gregory, maybe, once or twice a year, but then last year he finished a strong 3rd at Wright State with wins over Ford and Wise. He is certain to be a factor again this year. State qualifier Peppo returns, but I think Peace is much better. However, Peppo did catch Peace for a fall in their go-to-state bout. Other possibilities are Ferryman, Conover (Blanchester) and Martin (Madeira).

Courtot has had a big year at 145#, but I anticipate him at 140# at tourney time. He missed state qualification by a takedown last year, but will be in the hunt for a state place this year. His only drawback is a relatively weak schedule -- although he did defeat the top ranked 145#er at North Union two weeks ago. Case, a state qualifier at 119# last year, is probably better suited to 135#, but Tipton, of course, bars the way. Case did defeat state place winner Spencer 11-7 at this weight in a recent dual. He and the excellent Deere stand just behind Courtot. The 4th spot is wide open with Paige and Hanes having the inside track. However, there are at least three or four other possibilities here.

145#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ① DAVID WELLMEIER (LIMA CENTRAL CATHOLIC)

TOP CONTENDER

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ③ 2. Mokros (Shadyside) | 13. Versch (Aurora) |
| ② 3. Bergman (Versailles) | 14. Bollas (Perry) |
| 4. Al-Samkari (Dayton Oakwood) | 15. Howard (Licking Hts.) |
| 5. Ebert (Apple Creek Waynedale) | 16. Demorest (Edgerton) |
| ④ 6. Joyce (Chanel) | 17. Reed (Barnesville) |
| 7. Tate (Elmwood) | 18. Pilcher (Kenton Ridge) |
| 8. Huggins (Sandy Valley) | 19. Kern (Gibsonburg) |
| 9. Price (Spencerville) | 20. Rupp (Fostoria St. Wendelin) |
| ⑤ 10. Dailey (West Jefferson) | 21. McCombs (Johnstown Monroe) |
| 11. Dean (Wellington) | 22. Tucker (Valley View) |
| 12. Zimmerman/Ott (Cadiz) | 23. Mitchell (New London) |

Wellmeier apparently can wrestle at 145# or 152# and in either case he would be accorded the favorite role. After Van Buren it looks likely that he'll move down to 145# based primarily on team considerations. Lima Central Catholic certainly will be a major factor in the team competition and they need to

position their middleweights as perfectly as possible to maximize this opportunity.

Wellmeier is an outstanding competitor who has just devastated everyone he has wrestled this year. He beat Andres (4th in Division II last year) 22-9 at the 152# final at Northwood, decked Villareal in the "A" Classic final, beat DeJohn to win the OCCs at 152#, and then dominated Lippert at 145# to win at Van Buren. Wellmeier was the only Division III wrestler, incidentally to win an OCC final. Last year he was 3rd at 140# after winning his district title -- the only loss a one pointer to Fow which he later avenged in the consolation final.

State qualifier Tate has not yet wrestled, but if he does compete he will be a real factor at this weight. Last year as a sophomore he took a district 3rd that included five victories and then lost a narrow 8-6 decision to eventual state champ Homer Wright. The remainder of the field is weak with Price, Demorest, state alternate Rupp, Kern, and Mitchell as possibilities.

The Steubenville District divides itself into two parts -- Mokros and everyone else. State runner-up as a freshman three years ago at 103#, he has qualified for states the past two years but has only a 5th place medal to show for it. He had spent most of the year at 152# where he has been sensationally successful, but his history suggests he'll drop to 145# by tourney time. This year he has won at Shadyside and St. John -- taking home the outstanding wrestler trophy at the latter meet. He is very strong and mobile and Wellmeier will need all of his immense talent to defeat him. After that the field is a little threadbare with no particular distinguishing characteristics. The last three qualifiers are unlikely to see second round action at Wright State.

State qualifiers Bergman and Al-Samkari head the field at Dayton. Both have had very successful seasons winning important tournaments -- but have not yet met. Al-Samkari won two bouts at Wright State last year as a sophomore, and missed by one bout of placing, Bergman lost in the first round and was eliminated. Behind these two -- way behind -- are Pilcher, Tucker, Mobley (West Liberty Salem) and Kelly (Brookville).

The Cuyahoga Hts. District is not strong. State qualifier Ebert heads the field, but has not been particularly sharp this year. He was hammered by Wise in the finals at Smithville and finished 6th at Medina. However, he did win a bout at state last year. Joyce missed state qualification by a single bout, but he, too, has not been a world-beater so far this year. He has wrestled some at 140#, but when he sees the line-up at these two weight classes I think he'll reconsider 145#. Dean and Huggins are my next two choices with Versch, the sophomore Bollas, Sohl (Black River), and Kasarda (Streetsboro) as possibilities.

152#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: JASON LUKASIK (AURORA)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ⑥ 2. Link (Oberlin) | ② 13. Jefferies (Barnesville) |
| 3. Pittman (Ontario) | ⑥ 14. Worst (Carey) |
| 4. Moyer (Brookville) | 15. Spoores (Kansas Lakota) |
| ④ 5. Fisher (Garrettsville Garfield) | 16. Greer (Corey-Rawson) |
| 6. Wolford (Delta) | 17. Wolfe (Apple Creek Waynedale) |
| ① 7. Sedlick (Wellington) | 18. Villareal (Gibsonburg) |
| 8. Dorley (Lima Central Catholic) | 19. Dillon (Newark Central Catholic) |
| 9. Tyson (Elmwood) | 20. Austin (Hillsdale) |
| 10. Flesher (Sandy Valley) | 21. Smith (Bellaire) |
| 11. Tucker (Cadiz) | 22. Madding (Summit County Day) |
| 12. Blain (Kenton Ridge) | 23. Vucelich (Hannibal River) |
| | 24. Stuller (Cardinal Stritch) |
| | 25. Alltop (Crestview) |

Now that both Wellmeier and Mokros have apparently deserted this weight class parity has become a fact of life at 152#. At least a half dozen wrestlers could win the title and the competition is likely to be very fierce even if not at the highest level.

The Cuyahoga Hts. District is very strong with excellent depth as seven contestants are of state qualification caliber. The two best are probably Link and Lukasik. Link was sectional and district runner-up at this weight losing both times to Connelly last year and then finished 4th at Wright State -- again losing to Connelly in the consolation finals. His only loss this year has been at 160#. Lukasik is totally undefeated with big wins at Hudson, Aurora, and Woodford (Ky.). He has apparently moved up several levels from what he displayed last year. Link defeated him 10-7 in a district bout, but I think he has made up that difference and will take the title winning a series of close bouts. State qualifier Fisher returns at this weight (although I expected him at 145#) and could be an important factor. After a great season Sedlick "bombed out" in his sectional, but is unlikely to let that happen again. Flesher finished 28-4 last year but missed state qualification. This year he defeated Division II place winner Shipley at Coshocton and was second at Canal Fulton Northwest. Wolfe also has done well this year, but state qualifier Austin has not looked good. His chances of advancing past the district look quite small.

Moyer, a state qualifier at 145# last year, stands way above everyone else at Dayton. He pulled a huge upset beating Buster Vcelka in the first round 7-6, but was then injured and had to withdraw from the tourney. He won big at Fairfield and Brookville, and placed 2nd at Troy and 4th at the GMVWA -- in a difficult weight class. He could place. The rest of the field there is rather weak with Blain and Madding, a state alternate, possibly being next best. Bourne (Dayton Oakwood) and Gibbons (Dayton Northridge) are also contenders.

The Steubenville District is very weak and is pretty much a non-factor at this weight class. Nobody here has previous state experience, and for the most part have not had enormous amounts of success in regular season action either.

Marginally the best here is Tucker who missed state qualification by a single point last year. He is part of the fine group of middleweights that highlight the Cadiz line up. Jefferies, Dillon, and Smith are next in line here, but certainly none of them are guaranteed qualification. Jefferies was 3rd at Shadyside and is up from 130# last year where he missed state qualification by one bout. Dillon was 2nd at both North Union and Bucyrus and will be a factor here. Smith won recently at Bellaire and was second at Shadyside when Mokros slaughtered him. Other possibilities are Vucelich, Snodgrass (Jewett Scio), Montis (Granville) and Hoderfield (Johnstown Monroe).

The Fostoria District is very crowded, but only Pittman stands out from the multitudes. I wrote a lot about Pittman last year and his predilection for 15-14 bouts, and he returns this year wrestling pretty much the same way. He missed the first month of the season but returned for the Gorman where he looked rusty and was pinned in the second round by Couch. He ended up 3rd avenging the earlier defeat with a 21-11 victory -- so nothing has changed. He was 5th at states last year, and, if healthy, could better that effort this year. There is a precipitous drop to the next level manned by such folks at Wolford, state qualifier Tyson, and Spoores. None of this trio has a lock on qualification with Greer, Worst, Stuller, Villareal, and Alltop all possibly playing a role in the eventual resolution of this district.

160#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ⁽⁶⁾ BO RAMSEY (LICKING HTS.)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| ⁽¹⁾ 2. Gibeaut (Union Local) | 13. Wilson (West Jefferson) |
| ⁽²⁾ 3. Seim (Dayton Oakwood) | 14. Stafford (Edgerton) |
| ⁽³⁾ 4. DiFranco (Ledgemont) | 15. Edwards (Berkshire) |
| 5. Conrad (Kansas Lakota) | 16. Esposito (Chagrin Falls) |
| ⁽⁴⁾ 6. Cover (Ashland Mapleton) | 17. Raglow (Cardinal Stritch) |
| ⁽⁵⁾ 7. Lambdin (Black River) | 18. Neate (Liberty Center) |
| 8. Noble (Bellbrook) | 19. Mohammad (Liberty) |
| ⁽²⁾ 9. Conte (Cuyahoga Hts.) | 20. Ryder (Cadiz) |
| 10. Patrick (Galion Northmor) | 21. Stemen (Lincolnview) |
| 11. Perkins (Kenton Ridge) | 22. Gehret (Versailles) |
| 12. Surmay (St. Thomas Aquinas) | 23. Bockbrader (Elmwood) |

This is a weight class that will showcase a pleasing array of different styles. In such circumstances the probability of upset increases dramatically and I think that is likely to happen here.

My top choice is the solid senior from Licking Hts., Bo Ramsey. Last year he had an outstanding season at 152# finishing as runner-up at Medina and copping the district title. Then matched against Fuduric in the first round of states he lost a 17-10 OT bout and was eliminated -- finishing at 30-4. This year he has been excellent including runner-up finishes at Medina and Franklin Hts. and a title at Licking Hts. Don't expect to see him upset in the first round this year. He exits a district that features one other outstanding competitor, John Gibeaut, and these two could conceivably meet for both the district and state

titles. Gibeaut won two bouts at states last year after taking the district crown at this weight. He was also the OVAC champ. This season he has won at Bellaire St. John, Shadyside, and Barnesville (over Henry). Below this pair are Wilson, Patrick, and Ryder. Patrick was runner-up to Ramsey at districts, but wrestled only 110 seconds before being pinned and eliminated at States. Wilson ended up 26-9 last season missing state qualification by one bout, while Ryder is a transfer from Jewett-Scio who has previous state experience. A real solid group.

Seim was also a district champ last year and won a bout at Wright State before being injured. This year he has received few challenges in his own area winning at Oakwood, Springfield Catholic, and Edgewood. He collects a lot of falls which helps reduce mat time. Noble who was kind of a mediocre 145# wrestler last year (20-13) has suddenly blossomed at 160#. He was a finalist at the giant GMVWA losing only to the excellent Olson. Then he won at Carroll and Bellbrook in impressive style. How he'll match up at the state level I cannot predict, but he has had a great season already. Perkins is about the only opponent who did challenge Seim -- losing 14-10 at Springfield Catholic. He is a strong performer, and with Seim and Noble creates a formidable trio of wrestlers from this area.

However, the strongest, deepest district is at Cuyahoga Hts. State qualifier DiFranco is a rough, tough competitor who likes to get physical and brawl. Last year at Wright State he ended up losing twice -- to Evans and Gibeaut. He's been a small 171 pounder all year, but he'll be a large contestant at this weight. Lambdin had a great season last year and then had the wheels come off at the sectional and didn't get out. This year he has again performed at a high level including a win over Link. Conte, after a fine 19-2 regular season ran into a tough district last year. He lost his semi-final bout to Link 12-10 and then his go-to-state bout to Fuduric 10-9. It had to be heartbreaking. This year he has performed at that same high level, but will have to be at his best to qualify. Surmay, too, had his share of tough luck. Also a district semi-finalist he lost back-to-back bouts -- the last by a single point -- and was eliminated. Edwards and Esposito are also both good while Mohammad and Hnottavange (Chanel) are not far behind. A weight class so good that you might expect a couple of boys to flee to the easier 171#.

There is no such depth at Fostoria. Cover has kept me guessing qualifying for states as a 10th grader at Crestview, qualifying again as a junior at Mapleton, and now back again at Crestview. He has never won a bout beyond the district level, but that should change this year. He has already won titles at Hillsdale, Bucyrus (where he was voted outstanding wrestler), and the Gorman. He has had an outstanding year. His only real challenge at Fostoria is Conrad, a Division II state qualifier last year. After that the competition is not likely to unsettle either of the top two.

171#

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ³ JOEL GODWIN (OTSEGO)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Blubaugh (Clear Fork) | 13. Rutledge (Columbia Station) |
| 3. Green (Columbus Academy) | 14. Mueller (Blanchester) |
| ⁴ 4. Fuduric (Cardinal) | 15. Sheehy (Cardinal Stritch) |
| ¹ 5. Perkins (Beallsville) | 16. Steiner (Orrville) |
| 6. Sheets (Licking Hts.) | 17. Zimmerman (Valley View) |
| 7. Hupp (Bridgeport) | 18. Zenz/Cole (Aurora) |
| 8. Vanderhorst (Covington) | 19. Dimel (West Jefferson) |
| 9. Theis (Sycamore Mohawk) | 20. Sintobin (Delta) |
| ² 10. Daily (Woodridge) | 21. Coleman (Brookville) |
| 11. Jarrett (Margaretta) | ⁵ 22. Belknap (Coventry) |
| 12. Ladrach (Tuscarawas Valley) | 23. Spielman (Edgerton) |

I don't have a clue here. There are only six returning state qualifiers at this weight and no returning state place winners. In fact the qualifiers, as a group went 5-10 at Wright State last year. My choice is the senior state qualifier Joel Godwin who has compiled a fine, consistent record over the past two seasons. Last year he was district champion beating Shad Evans 2-1 in the final. At Wright State he split four matches and failed to place. Ironically, Evans never had a close bout at he romped to the 160# title winning in the final 8-1. This year Godwin's only defeat was to the fine Division I wrestler Joyce of Dayton Wayne, 6-4. Everything would have to go just right, but Godwin has as good a chance as anyone to win here.

There are a lot of other possibilities at Fostoria. The barrel-chested Blubaugh is another state qualifier who has now won three Gorman titles. He is powerful and experienced and should be one of Godwin's toughest rivals. A plus for him is that the two of them should be in opposite brackets at Wright State. Theis, as a sophomore last year, made the district 171# semi-finals and then lost three straight bouts (the last two by a pair of points) to finish as the state alternate. He wrestles a very small school schedule, but will challenge both of the top two choices. Jarrett and Sheehy have both been consistent placers throughout the season and have to be narrow favorites the for the last two spots. However, there are a whole boatload of other contenders including yet another Sintobin, Spielman, Wurts, (Seneca East), Ellerbrock (Columbus Grove), and Ankney (Ayersville).

Besides the fact that this weight class has few standouts for the erstwhile prognosticator, Green provides a second intriguing puzzlement. Last year, as a sophomore, competing at heavyweight he captured the Steubenville District title, and then even won a bout at states. This year he will apparently be at this weight with results that are difficult to foretell. He has clearly done well up to this point although he has also competed at 189#. He must exit from a strong district that features six solid participants, and is the toughest in the state at this weight. The powerful Perkins was one point from qualification last year as he lost in overtime to state runner-up Williams and 3-2 to state 4th placer Rocchi. He has won at Shadyside and St. John defeating Hupp in the latter final. Hupp was a state qualifier at 160# -- finishing 4th in the district -- and then

suffered first round elimination. He wins consistently against all but the very best. Sheets looked good at Medina, and has been very strong in the Columbus area. That is a solid quartet, but overlooks two other possibilities. Ladrach was a state qualifier at 152# last year and has been transformed into a muscular 171# this year. Dimel, who could be at 160#, is another possibility at this class, but I would rate him as least likely to make Wright State.

Fuduric had a great sophomore campaign including two wins at the state tournament. Now up two weight classes he's the best the Cuyahoga Hts. District has to offer. He placed at Medina and is undefeated everywhere else. After that it's anybody's guess as to whom will qualify as this district is very shallow at 171#. Expect the unexpected here, and what that may portend is the arrival of a couple of the 160s.

State qualifier Vanderhorst will apparently be at this weight for the Dayton District. He was 27-3 last year losing his last two in the district final and the opening round at States. Mueller, who Vanderhorst pounded 10-2 last season, has substantially narrowed that gap and is second best here. After that the competition falls out of focus. Zimmerman beat the excellent Division II wrestler Sean Sullivan and may slightly better than Coleman. Other possibilities are Prewitt (Lockland), Pittman (Wyoming), and Olwin (Greeneview).

189#

PROJECTED CHAMPION ¹ STEVE SCHUMACHER (WOODSFIELD)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2. Lewis (Ayersville) | 13. Teague (Williamsburg) |
| 3. Nameth (Cadiz) | 14. Frascone (Tuslaw) |
| 4. Carsey (North Union) | 15. Tilton (Clear Fork) |
| 5. Capizzi (Sandusky St. Mary) | 16. Kajfasz (Margaretta) |
| 6. Thorne (Columbus Academy) | 17. Kisner (Covington) |
| 7. Burkey (Orrville) | 18. Roberts (Plymouth) |
| 8. Smith (Edgerton) | 19. Katora (Aurora) |
| 9. Jennett (Blanchester) | 20. Sanzo (Grandview Hts.) |
| 10. Bodie (Licking Hts.) | 21. Russell (Norwayne) |
| 11. Ritter (Carey) | 22. Tessmer (Independence) |
| 12. Hoffman (Cardinal) | 23. Oliver (Versailles) |

The most distinguishing feature of this weight class is it's very unbalanced nature. One district (Steubenville) has at least six competitors with solid state qualifications while the other three districts lack anything close to the number that they are allowed to qualify. I always feel bad when such a situation arises -- especially at the two ends of the weight spectrum -- because those affected have few alternatives. Caught in a numbers game at 189# the only option is a move to heavyweight -- generally not a viable idea.

At any rate defending state champion Schumacher will be difficult to dethrone. First, he has improved from last year as he matures physically and, second, this is not a particularly strong weight class. Schumacher finished 32-1 last year losing only at the OVAC. This season no one has come close to

defeating him which may create a stamina problem for if he is really pushed somewhere along the line. Remember it's an American trait to love the underdog, but in this particular case bet on the favorite.

As I said Steubenville is loaded. State qualifier Nameth is solid, but Schumacher defeated him 8-1 in the district finals. He hasn't lost this year, but will match up with Schumacher at the OVAC. State qualifier Carsey lost to Nameth last year at districts and then was stopped twice at States. However, he has dominated his local area for two years and will be tough to dislodge from a state spot. Thorne has bounced around at the upper weights winning at this weight at Reynoldsburg. Last year he finished at 24-8. Bodie has been a real find. He was a strong 5th at Medina and was 4th at Licking Hts. despite being very sick. He could be an upset special at this weight. The sophomore Sanzo is showing rapid improvement while Keene (Jonathan Alder) could also be a factor. A great competition at this district.

Talk about a numbers crunch Lewis was caught in one last year. The starting 189# for Ayersville all last year he compiled a great record including titles at the "A" Classic and Stryker. Then state place winner Partee returned from injury and with state place winner Mangas at heavyweight there was no place to go but the bench. This year Lewis could go at either weight, but remains at 189# winning at the "A" Classic and Stryker again, and also dominating the competition in Northwest Ohio. He could be a finalist if away from Schumacher. Behind him is the excellent sophomore Capizzi -- who could place -- and will be a mountainous factor at this weight the next two years. He as 2nd at both Fremont St. Joe and Marion Harding, but his most impressive outing was a 16-6 crush of Division I, Hysell, to win the Panther Classic. He's for real. Smith, Tilton, Ritter, Kajfasz, and Roberts are all journeyman wrestlers with district experience who can be counted on to place at regular season tournaments. They will not be factors at the state level, although several of them should qualify.

At Cuyahoga Hts. there just doesn't seem to be much talent. I've searched through all my records certain that I must missed some exceptional talent, but so far, no luck. Burkey, a strong junior, seems best while Hoffman did well at Medina and Jackson-Milton. Unless there was a misprint he competed at 160# the first week of the season. The rest of those listed are marginally the best I could find, but I expect some new and different names when I get the district results.

Jennett was a state alternate last year and appears to be the best the Dayton District has to offer. He's currently 14-1, with his biggest triumph at Sycamore where he beat the powerful Bouldin (Division I) in the finals and captured the OW award as well. Teague won three district matches last year, but Kisner is just a guess based on a 27-9 record last year. Teague decked him in 76 seconds at district. Below this group are Oliver, Craft (Mechanicsburg), and McCord (McNicholas). Only Jennett has the potential to make waves at Wright State.

HVY.

PROJECTED CHAMPION: ³ NORMAN AYERS (BELLAIRE)

TOP CONTENDERS

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | 2. Pardon (Lincolnview) | 13. Smith (Streetsboro) |
| 2 | 3. Stark (Sycamore Mohawk) | 14. Wine (Clear Fork) |
| 3 | 4. Hicks (Bloom Carroll) | 15. Sponseller (Manchester) |
| 4 | 5. Dameron (Blanchester) | 16. Sweigart (Berkshire) |
| 5 | 6. Hart (Ledgemont) | 17. Thierry (Liberty Center) |
| 6 | 7. Derr (Carey) | 18. Pullins (West Jefferson) |
| 7 | 8. Tharpe (Bellbrook) | 19. Rickard (Woodmore) |
| 8 | 9. Gockstetter (Collins Western Reserve) | 20. Baker (Sidney Lehman) |
| 9 | 10. Baker (Columbus Academy) | 21. Bell (Dayton Christian) |
| 10 | 11. McKean (Black River) | 22. Kintner (Mapleton) |
| 11 | 12. Daniels (Tuscarawas Valley) | 23. Mascolino (Steubenville Central Catholic) |

I'm not nearly so positive as most people that talk to me that Ayers has this crown locked up. There is no question that this 275-pound behemoth has totally dominated the Eastern District the past two years or that he was state runner-up at 36-1 losing only to the fabulous Fickell. On the other hand he beat Dool at states 12-10 in the quarter-finals which showed some chinks in his armor or that Willits nearly won in the semi-finals as Ayers hung on to a 4-3 victory. Of the two bouts the most interesting was with Dool that showed that in flurries Ayers could be scored on heavily. That could be significant because Pardon -- my second choice -- loves to get involved in high scoring bouts in which he generally prevails. More on this later.

No question Ayers has dominated the Ohio Valley area, but state qualifier Hicks and Baker will challenge at that combined district at Steubenville. Hicks may lack the firepower, though, and Baker is too small. State qualifier Daniels is back and has won several smaller tournaments including Malvern and Northwest. He may be better than Baker. Pullins keeps placing at tourneys, but so far can't make the finals. He'll have to be in top form to qualify out of here. Other possibilities are Mascolino who won three district bouts last year and sectional champ Lucido (Beallsville) who had a shaky district. Daniels pinned both of these boys. This year they, too, have been consistent place winners.

Pardon was the Fostoria District champ last year and then crushed Daniels 17-3 in the first round. Ahead against Dameron he was disqualified in a dubious situation that was ruled a slam and then Dameron couldn't continue -- until the next session. Still, he came back to beat Dameron for 5th. He wrestles a schedule that cannot hope to prepare him for the rigors of state competition, but somehow that tourney process seems to make him better. A flopper in the best sense of the word he is big enough to roll around with Ayers and possibly come out on top. It could be a big upset or Pardon could be pinned quick. It should be interesting. State runner-up Stark captured a district 4th (losing to Carr and Chill), and then took advantage of a great draw by wrestling well all the way to the finals. He, too, might give Ayers trouble. The rest of those listed are a cut below the top duo although, Derr, perhaps, might have placement potential.

Dameron, 6th last year is back, and has done well in the Cincinnati area losing only Hast. A mystery figure is Tharp who qualified as a sophomore, but was edged out by Dameron for the last qualifying spot. He has not, to my knowledge, competed up to this point in time, but if he does return will be a major factor at this district. Bell and Baker are possibilities for state qualification as are Staley (Batavia) and Vance (Reading).

At Cuyahoga Hts. Hart would seem to be the leader of a relatively weak field. I was surprised when he did not qualify last year, but I would be shocked if he doesn't make it this time around. He looked reasonably good at Medina. McKean, too, has some good credentials and seems to be improving as well. However, after that the cupboard is bare with the last two spots totally wide open. Besides those listed look for Swiegart (Berkshire), Steiner (Orrville) and Bowman (Sandy Valley).

TEAMS

1. Lima Central Catholic -- Wellmeier is not only a strong favorite at 145#, but his style should pick up a lot of bonus points on falls and major decisions. The key, though, is that Kessen and Clemens wrestle at peak efficiency, and capture, at least, a middle place. If Dorley or even Caprella score some state points the odds shift way in their favor.
2. Ledgemont -- A quartet of four seasoned veterans lead this always fine squad who placed 3rd last year. Feckanin is the main cog, but LaManna and DiFranco have to be big contributors -- especially the former who has missed some time due to injury. If Hart can win his district the generally, good State pairing that brings could make him a major contributor. That could mean the team title.
3. Kansas Lakota -- A team with the same kind of nucleus as most other teams (3 or 4 boys), but with more upside potential than most. Lippert, Roth, and Conrad are the heart of this squad, but they need to be more aggressive at States. Possibilities include State qualifier Sibrel, Spoores, Tyson, and, perhaps, Milligan.
4. Cadiz -- A team with some great middleweights that needs to pick up just a little additional firepower. State runner-up Tipton is pivotal and now seems to be rounding into form after his injury. McKeever is very much undervalued and Nameth should be away from Schumacher at States. A key weight class in the team competition is 140# -- because so many of the key teams have potential scorers there. Kansas Lakota, Delta, Ledgemont, Lima Central Catholic all have top rated boys while Cadiz and Otsego have potential point scorers as well. State qualifier Case is important there for Cadiz. Cadiz also have possibilities with Tucker, Zimmerman, Ryder, and Bombouis, but those are pretty distant hopes.
5. Columbus Academy -- Garcia is a shaky choice at 130#, but if he wrestles well that could spark the entire team. They need to get Greene, Thorne, and Baker perfectly placed at the upper weights, and then hope that Gardner can also score.
6. Delta -- Ford is solid, but is at that critical 140# class while Barnes has lots of talent, but will be a rookie at Wright State. Other scoring possibilities are Circle, Wolford, and you cannot overlook yet another Sintobin.
7. Licking Hts. -- A team with a lot of possibilities that should things go well could take it all. Ramsey is key while Sheets and Parmer have scoring ability. The critical elements, though, are whether Platt and Bodie can qualify at two of the toughest weight classes in the district.
8. Otsego -- This is a team that has almost always disappointed at the State level, but, maybe, this year they can surprise. Godwin, Soto, and Castro are the top possibilities, but people like Kepling could also help.
9. Batavia -- The brilliant lightweights are mainspring of this team. Shinkle is, of course, outstanding while both Steiner brothers have State

- experience. Santer has done well (against easy competition) at 103#, but the real key is to have Peace qualify and score at the State level. Nice potential here that if everything clicks could put this team near the top.
10. Brookville -- Lipinski has been incredible all year, and could score 25 to 30 points by himself. The other major hope is State qualifier Moyer, but after that, somebody is going to have to step forward and help. Possibilities are Terrill, Moritz, Coleman, or Marburger, but they're real long-shots at the State level.
 11. Bridgeport -- It has to happen in the first two weights if it's going to happen for Bridgeport. Frohnappel and the brilliant freshman Roskovich are both good, but that's a tall order for two youngsters. Hupp can contribute, but then it's up to people like Perzanowski, Crupe, and Ellsworth.
 12. Sandusky St. Mary -- Another team with lots of potential, but no main man -- a sure champion -- to provide leadership. Maiani should place and the sophomores Rosin and Capizzi will be big timers next year. Davlin is good at the initial weight, but people like Schmenk and Roesch are really needed.
 13. Edison North -- A long-shot team that could be either 4th or 40th. The Spencer brothers are the heart of the team, and they need to make the right decision on where Chuck should wrestle. If Larkins gets hot and Smith can contribute they're on their way.
 14. Bellbrook -- There are only three potential contributors here so there is no margin for error. Noble and the two Kosins are a good combination, but they need more help.
 15. Bellaire -- Ayres is worth lots of points, but after that it's a real struggle. Yeager, Francis, and a boatload of others are all the longest of long shots.

1991

INTRODUCTION

The object of these annual reports encompasses two basic goals. First is to acquaint everyone with the basic character of each weight class and identify the participants who are likely to play a major role in its resolution. In addition, each district is examined as to whom its representatives might be. Second is to stimulate interest in the whole state tournament process throughout Ohio. Naturally, accuracy is also of primary concern, so care is taken to develop the most comprehensive list possible of outstanding wrestlers, though of necessity, the evaluation of their final place is, in part, subjective. Last year, for example, 36 of the 39 top choices reached State semi-final action. This report was written during a six-day period in mid-January ending January 28 based on the information available at that time. It's kind of a snapshot in time with a picture that will surely change in many ways by tournament time. The new weight certification rules (there really aren't any) have made switching of weight classes much simpler, so that I anticipate many changes from what is shown here. In fact, some of those moves may well be precipitated by information contained within this document.

This will be one of the most interesting recruiting years in Ohio in some time. As always, there are the unmistakable blue chippers that are easily identified, such as Mollica, St. John, DiSabato and several others. This group contains about the average number of sure collegiate All-Americans. What will be the challenge is that there are an extraordinarily large number of seniors who are one level below this top group. This very large group will have to be carefully sifted through to pick out the high potential collegiates from those that just will not get any better. Certainly, the results throughout the tournament process will provide valid clues as to which group each of these individuals belong. However, in many cases, recruiters will have to look more deeply into each personal situation before an accurate (as much as possible) determination can be made.

One of the exciting prospects in 1991 is close team competitions in all three school classifications. In Division I, this could encompass as many as six teams and not be decided to the final heavyweight bout. In both Division II and III, there should be furious team struggles for the top spot with a number of schools having the potential to be champions. Teams from all around the state have the "horse power" to take the crown in these two classifications.

As faithful readers know, this report has long been used as a vehicle to promote change in the administration of high school wrestling -- particularly at the tournament level. While it has not been a rapid process, progress continues to be made in establishing real equity for every competitor. Perhaps the high water mark of that struggle was reached this year with expansion of the wrestle-back system to include all participants who have lost to a semi-finalist. This system guarantees a proper balance between fairness and interminable consolation rounds that can be provoked in double-elimination tournaments. I could not have been happier when the new system was announced, because it fulfills a commitment many of us made a long time ago to work in that direction. We must recognize that this is a one-year trial, but every coach and competitor can be nothing but thrilled about a system that guarantees placement fairness.

One last item. It appears that each year, more and more coaches get this report. One thing that would really help me is if they would send me bracket sheets for tournaments that they enter -- particularly the sectionals and districts this year. This is a good way to get a report mailed to you when it is first prepared. My address is:

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